

LIBERA

a fictional story

by
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4 Shirt Productions
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*Because kids' adventures
shouldn't always be
planned, policed and protected,
I am happy to dedicate
this story to
Lenore Skenazy
(www.FreeRangeKids.com)
who also believes this is
as it should be.*

A FEW WORDS ABOUT NAMES, SONGS AND PEPPERCORNS

The story you will download from this site is fictional. No present or past member of LIBERA or family relation had anything to do with its creation. It is solely a work of the author's imagination. Any similarity to actual persons, places and events is coincidental.

It is written in screenplay format simply because I find it easier than the straight narrative style of novels. My only hope for this text version of the story is to freely share it with other fans and soon to be fans of LIBERA.

LIBERA'S long time followers will find familiar names used for the boys and adult support team. I have purposely not described the boys and used only first names for them so you may visualize any member, past or present, as these characters. The number following a choir member's name indicates his age in the story.

When a LIBERA song is required it is listed by it's title only. Not all songs are indicated to be used in their entirety. At three points in the story a Montage/Medley of songs is called for and you may use any song not on the list below. To create a playlist to use while reading, here is the order:

Adoramus
Eternal Light and Medley
(performed outdoors "a cappella")
Prayer
Libera (partial)
Do Not Stand (partial)
Far Away
WNC Medley #1 (secular and pop)
Jerusalem
America the Beautiful (you'll get the idea)
Gloria
WNC Medley #2 (sacred and contemplative)
Rest In Peace

Sancte
Libera
Going Home
In Paradisum (instrumental)
Abide With Me
Sing For Ever

I've sprinkled some mums, mates, bloodys and blimeys here and there - probably gotten most of them wrong - so will entertain polite suggestions for corrections. And if that isn't bad enough; in Action Descriptions it's "soccer" and "bus", in British Character Dialogue it's "football" and "coach".

The incident involving the character Liam and the peppercorns may sound completely preposterous but it is based, unfortunately, on something which actually happened to me while eating a very expensive salmon steak at a restaurant whose name I have happily forgotten. I was able to breathe just fine. Even finished the meal. But I could not speak a single word for almost 24 hours until the irritation subsided. I have since consigned decorative peppercorns to the floor.

If you wish to comment or ask questions please use the email address listed. **NO CORRESPONDENCE OR CONTACT INFORMATION WILL BE PUBLISHED OR SHARED BY ME.** That is as simple and direct as I can put that.

Writing is a long time, fun hobby for me. However, when a group of exceptional people inspire a story so strongly, I cannot help but wish to share it. I hope you enjoy reading it as much as I enjoyed writing it.

Edward

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To learn more about LIBERA in England and
Washington National Cathedral in the United States,
explore their websites.

www.libera.org.uk/

www.nationalcathedral.org/

FADE IN:

I/E. ROCKET ENGINE TEST SITE, NEW MEXICO USA - NIGHT

CONTROL ROOM

Various data and video monitors show combustion test of Brentworth Nuclear Coil as countdown nears zero.

ENGINE TEST STAND - NIGHT

Glow builds in exhaust nozzle of engine bolted to the reinforced concrete block and steel structure as ignition occurs and thrust is increased.

CONTROL ROOM

CONTROLLERS' British nationality is evident by their accents and they CHEER as the test begins. Fifty year old project leader, PROFESSOR ALICIA GRIFFIN, is all smiles. She has the flags of United Kingdom and United States on her lapel next to a button with a Gregorian font capital letter "G" and a graphic arrow next to it pointing up. Monitors show data and video of the propulsion experiment as it proceeds.

ENGINE TEST STAND

Engine and fueling components are remotely manipulated to refine the thrust to an intense horizontal blueish white tapered cone two hundred feet long. Another angle of the test site from one mile away shows some distant atmospheric sensors.

CONTROL ROOM

One hundred percent thrust is quickly achieved and the "OK" is given by Prof. Griffin to go beyond. The environmental station shows data from the atmospheric sensors.

ENGINE TEST STAND

Increased power of the engine is evident by glowing gash created on the ground. Soon, the exhaust cloud is stretching out past the atmospheric sensors. In the fire filled trench a material is being uncovered and reacting with the super heated plasma in the exhaust flame.

CONTROL ROOM

All are ecstatic as 117 percent of design capacity is achieved. However; a look of concern suddenly shows on the ENVIRONMENTAL TECH'S face. Data from his airborne sensors indicate several dangerous biochemical compositions and a few that are undetermined by the computer passing the outer boundaries of the test area.

The CHEERS of the technicians and the ROAR of the engine drown out his shouts of "Shut It Down! Shut It Down!" Prof. Griffin finally catches sight of his anguished look and the warnings now flashing on the monitors. Her own expression of accomplishment dissolves to one of disbelief.

EXT. ENVIRONMENTAL SENSOR - NIGHT

Unknown elements in the exhaust cloud are drifting off site toward the lights of a small isolated camp in the distance.

FADE TO:

EXT. FRONT YARD GARDEN, SOUTH LONDON, UK - TEN MONTHS LATER, DAY

REG JENKINS, 40's exits car and calls to his wife.

REG JENKINS

Hy - Hy, I'm home.

HYACINTH JENKINS, 40's pops up from behind a shrub.

HYACINTH JENKINS

(peevied)

Hello, yourself, Reginald.

REG JENKINS

Hyacinth, I'm sorry...

HYACINTH JENKINS

You know how much I dislike you shouting my abbreviation for all the neighbors to hear.

REG JENKINS

It's just that I had the most extraordinary day at work.

HYACINTH JENKINS

The Foreign Office?

REG JENKINS

Here I am in my chair. Over here's
the American Ambassador, over
here's the Russian Ambassador.

(this last focuses her
attention)

Across from us is the Foreign
Secretary and Ian introducing that
Edwards fellow from the choir
meeting last week, explaining about
this anonymous lottery winner.

(thinks off topic)

Bit out of sorts, Ian, said he'd
just got some unsettling news.
Personal matter of some kind.

HYACINTH JENKINS

(refocuses attention)

The UNICEF mission to the Ural's,
hasn't been canceled has it?

REG JENKINS

No, no. It's all set. Your still
going.

HYACINTH JENKINS

Then something to do with Freddie
and the lads.

REG JENKINS

No - well, yes - sort of.

(collects himself)

They all started making the most
amazing phone calls. Actually, I
would never have believed you could
dial direct to some of the people
they were talking with. This Mr.
Edwards, there's quite a bit more
to him. Seems to know some very
influential people back in the
States.

HYACINTH JENKINS

What was it all about?

Reg stammers a bit. Hyacinth knows he can't say.

HYACINTH JENKINS (CONT'D)

Your bloody Secrets Act.

REG JENKINS

Well, it's my job, dear. There's still another briefing I have to attend just after you leave for Russia and the boys leave for America. I can say this; any trepidations anyone has about the choir's tour in the States this summer are ill founded. Marcus Edwards made a promise to every parent in that room and I'm here to tell you, he intends to keep it.

HYACINTH JENKINS

But Reg, the Russian Ambassador?

REG JENKINS

Dear, if you never learn the arrangement we made with them, it will be the best possible outcome.

(remembers)

Oh, you and your team will be invited to lunch with the First Lady in Moscow before popping off to Ekaterinburg.

Hyacinth looks at Reg questioningly.

REG JENKINS (CONT'D)

Don't ask.

FREDDIE JENKINS, 10 years old, runs into the yard carrying a soccer ball.

FREDDIE-10

Mum, mum. Oh, hi, Dad--

(catches himself)

--I mean, hello Dad. Um, me, Henry and Jakob are going over to the park for a bit. Is that alright?

Hyacinth begins a series of questions for which Freddie has stock answers.

HYACINTH JENKINS

What are you taking to drink?

FREDDIE-10

There's water at the park.

HYACINTH JENKINS

How are you getting across the street?

FREDDIE-10

We're going to look both ways. All three of us. That's six times!

HYACINTH JENKINS

Where's your helmet?

FREDDIE-10

Football doesn't use helmets.

HYACINTH JENKINS

They should.

FREDDIE-10

Mum, I don't ask this many questions when you go off to Africa.

HYACINTH JENKINS

That's because I tell you everything you need to know in advance.

REG JENKINS

Off you go. Back in time for supper.

Freddie runs off as his parents watch.

REG JENKINS (CONT'D)

(proudly)

How did we manage to have such a wonderful son?

HYACINTH JENKINS

(looks him over, then jokingly)

God only knows.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FOREST CLEARING, NORTHERN CALIFORNIA - TWO MONTHS LATER, JUNE, TOUR WEEK #1, DAY

AERIAL SHOT of the fog shrouded trees. The song "Adoramus" is V.O. to the following images. Shots of several boys age 8 to 15 riding dirtbikes and four wheel atv's on the muddy trails through fog dampened trees are intercut with shots of these same 26 boys, the LIBERA CHOIR, performing the song in concert the previous night in San Francisco. As the SONG FADES--

EXT. TRAIL MUD PUDDLE - DAY

Bike with two riders, TIARNAN-13 and HENRY-10, skids to stop at edge of a puddle and younger rider on back is thrown off into it. He stands in water up to his knees and removes his helmet as another bike with JONATHAN-14 and FREDDIE-10 pulls up.

HENRY-10
 (to older boy on second
 bike)
 I'm tellin' mum.

JONATHAN-14
 What did I do?

HENRY-10
 You said he knew how to drive that
 thing.

TIARNAN-13
 (on first bike)
 Not with you on the back.

Freddie jumps off and helps Henry out of the puddle. As they scrape mud off each other Henry aims a barb at Jonathan, his older brother.

HENRY-10
 Thanks, Freddie.

An atv speeds toward the group and slides to a stop. JOSH-15 lifts his helmet and yells to them.

JOSH-15
 (urgently)
 Freddie! Get on. Hurry. Hurry!

Insistent plea from the choir leader causes Freddie to abandon Henry, slam his helmet on and climb on Josh's atv. Just then, a helicopter with US military insignia flies low over the tree tops. Josh and Freddie's atv races off down the trail after it.

HENRY-10
 Hey, wait for me! Freddie's my
 mate. We're supposed to stick
 together.

Henry jumps behind Jonathan on his bike and prods him to follow which he and Tiarnan do.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - DAY

As the atv emerges from the trees it is directed to the helicopter landing in the open field. Jonathan's bike follows but Tiarnan's is stopped short by others nearby.

HELICOPTER

MARCUS EDWARDS, early 60's, in civilian dress, jumps out of the copilot seat and wasting no time, grabs Freddie off the atv as it stops.

MARCUS EDWARDS
(yells to Josh)
Get everyone back, this thing's
taking off now!

Edwards immediately puts Freddie in the copilot's seat and removes his helmet as the NAVY PILOT and another OFFICER help strap him in.

FREDDIE-10
(shouts over noise)
What's happened? Where are we
going?

MARCUS EDWARDS
(imperative)
There's no time, Freddie. Ian will
meet you at the airport. You must
do what these men tell you. Promise
you'll do exactly what they say -
promise me!

Marcus Edwards' serious plea convinces Freddie to agree.

FREDDIE-10
(sobs a bit)
I will. I - I Will, Mr. Edw---

His last syllable is cut off as Edwards slams the cockpit door and dives to the ground.

MARCUS EDWARDS
(to others nearby)
Get down! Get down!

All shield themselves from debris kicked up by the rotor racing to take off speed. Chopper lifts off and disappears beyond the tree tops.

Libera chaperone TIM WILKINSON, 40's, and other boys run to Marcus as he stands.

TIM WILKINSON

(very upset)

Marcus, are you mad? You can't send him off in that thing alone! You've got to go with him.

MARCUS EDWARDS

I can't go with him.

TIM WILKINSON

Well then I've got to go with him.

MARCUS EDWARDS

They won't let anyone else go. Tim, we didn't plan for it this way. Freddie has to go alone.

INT. HELICOPTER IN FLIGHT, SAN FRANCISCO BAY - DAY

As Freddie puts a headset microphone on, the OFFICER in back opens a United Kingdom passport to verify the photo is the mud stained kid in front, then replaces it in a packet of other documents and stuffs it in Freddie's hands.

FREDDIE-10

What's going on? Where are you taking me?

NAVY PILOT

Kid, I don't know who you are or who that guy was that got out. All I know is I've got orders to put you on a jet waiting on a runway at San Francisco airport and I don't even know how I'm supposed to do that yet.

FREDDIE-10

Where's the jet going?

NAVY PILOT

Russia.

EXT. GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE - DAY

Helicopter speeds past parallel to the bridge on its way South to the airport.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. AERIAL SHOT, WASHINGTON NATIONAL CATHEDRAL, WASHINGTON DC - FIVE WEEKS LATER, DUSK

The Cathedral and the rest of Washington DC to the south are bathed in the setting mid July sun.

INT. RECEPTION HALL, WASHINGTON NATIONAL CATHEDRAL - PRESENT, EVENING

Several GUESTS are waiting attentively for an answer to a question that's been put to some of the younger boys.

FREDDIE-10

(calmly sipping water)

Actually I'm not sure I'm allowed to tell you "the most interesting thing that happened" in the past six weeks. Would you care to hear the second most interesting?

JAKOB-10

Oh oh, that would be when me and Flynn saved Henry from falling over the edge at the Grand Canyon.

HENRY-10

You're the two who pushed me!

FLYNN-10

Well, if you're going to get all technical about it.

WASHINGTON NATIONAL CATHEDRAL (WNC) RECEPTION

Large hall is bustling with HUNDREDS OF GUESTS, some ticket holders from the just finished late afternoon Libera concert and others, special invited guests who have helped in previous cities as well as Washington dignitaries who will be attending tomorrow evening's Final Celebration Performance. President of the United States, having attended today's concert, is also on site.

Members of WASHINGTON NATIONAL CATHEDRAL BOYS CHOIR, identified by uniform dress shirts and name tags, are acting as attendants.

INT. PHOTO WALL, WNC RECEPTION - MOMENTS LATER, EVENING

The wall is labeled with names of the 21 cities Libera has visited across America in the past six weeks.

Small groups of guests and choir members, in their customary blue shirts for off stage public appearances, are discussing various pictures on the display. There are also large colored ribbons that accompany each cities pictures as well as comments from fans.

INT. BUFFET TABLE, WNC RECEPTION - EVENING

Marcus Edwards is a bit outraged by a text message he's just received from an Orlando hotel.

MARCUS EDWARDS
Six Thousand dollars!?

He stops JOSH-15 and ALFIE-15 as they approach the table.

MARCUS EDWARDS (CONT'D)
Josh, would you please tell Liam I
need to speak with him.

JOSH-15
Where is he?

MARCUS EDWARDS
(slightly upset)
Find him!

Josh heads off into the crowd past two Washington National Cathedral (WNC) boys, DAVID PENN-13 and KENNY-12.

DAVID PENN-13
Was that Josh?

KENNY-12
Yeah.

DAVID PENN-13
Think all that stuff about his
parents is true?

KENNY-12
You read the same old news article
I did.
(pause)
Not like they murdered anybody or
anything.

DAVID PENN-13
Yeah, but still. All those years of
not knowing your parents are
crooks. How do ya live with
something like that?

STEVEN, early 20's, has overheard their conversation.

STEVEN
I think Josh is coping rather well,
actually.

KENNY-12
How would you know?

STEVEN
I'm Steven - Josh's older brother.

The two WNC boys slink off as KAVANA-10 runs up and tugs on MARCUS EDWARDS' jacket. Simultaneously, an OLDER GUEST taps him on the shoulder.

OLDER GUEST
Ah, there you are Vic--

Marcus swiftly holds a finger up to the man preventing him from uttering another syllable.

KAVANA-10
(to Marcus)
Vic?

MARCUS EDWARDS
Victor - my middle name.

The older guest's attention is distracted to another matter and Marcus turns his to Kavana.

KAVANA-10
(points into crowd)
Isn't that the reporter from
Chicago who was asking questions
you didn't like? Who invited her?

MARCUS EDWARDS
I did. Basic principle of conflict.
Keep your friends close and your
enemies closer.

KAVANA-10
Did Lord Nelson say that?

A woman standing nearby, MASHA TERESHKOVA, early 50's, offers an answer.

MASHA TERESHKOVA
(Russian accent)
It is most often attributed to
Machiavelli.
(MORE)

MASHA TERESHKOVA (CONT'D)

Although this is most probably the poor translation of a Russian proverb.

After staring at her a second, Marcus stoops down to Kavana.

MARCUS EDWARDS

I may have misjudged your response at the studio in Chicago. She's all yours.

KAVANA-10

No walls this time?

MARCUS EDWARDS

(smiles)
No walls.

Kavana runs off and Marcus stands next to Masha who pretends to ignore him.

MARCUS EDWARDS (CONT'D)

And I'll handle this one. Quite surprising hearing your voice and delightful Russian accent standing right next to me here in Washington DC - General Tereshkova.

MASHA TERESHKOVA

I am afraid you are misinformed. My promotion has yet to be approved. I would expect a Military Officer of your stature to know this--

MARCUS EDWARDS

(bit irritated)
Retired Officer, retired.

Marcus indicates his civilian dress and Masha then does the same.

MASHA TERESHKOVA

I see, Marcus. And I am obviously on holiday.

MARCUS EDWARDS

Obviously, Masha. I don't recall your name on the guest list for tomorrow night.

MASHA TERESHKOVA

Sadly it is not. I had to pull some strings to get a ticket for this afternoon's performance.

(MORE)

MASHA TERESHKOVA (CONT'D)

Such beautiful music and wonderful voices. How ever did you come to be associated with them?

MARCUS EDWARDS

Long story. Perhaps I'll tell it to you some day.

MASHA TERESHKOVA

Perhaps?

Marcus sights someone across the hall and abruptly excuses himself.

MARCUS EDWARDS

Don't go away. I'll be right back - and, that quote can only be documented to a fictional American gangster.

MASHA TERESHKOVA

(as he leaves)

Poorly translated.

INT. CENTER OF CROWD, WNC RECEPTION - CONTINUOUS

Marcus makes his way through the crowd and is stopped momentarily by Libera's Producer IAN TILLEY, 40's, with his wife Fiona, 40's, and TIARNAN-13, all discussing a song with the FRENCH AMBASSADOR to the United States. A hastily assembled video from the just completed concert shows the Ambassador accompanying the Choir on the Cathedral's organ. After a brief unheard exchange, Marcus continues on and Ian heads over to Masha's location.

INT. MASHA, BAR TABLE - MOMENTS LATER

IAN TILLEY

Miss Tereshkova, I'm Ian Tilley, Libera's producer. Our benefactor's liaison tells me we are in your debt for assistance rendered to one of our boys while in your country. Please accept our thanks for the kindness you showed him and his family.

MASHA TERESHKOVA

You are most welcome, Mr. Tilley. Our two countries should be doing more for each other, not less.

IAN TILLEY

He told us all quite a story when
he got back - in strictest
confidence of course.

MASHA TERESHKOVA

Perhaps he is having better luck
with it than Captain Uzkov.

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. KAMCHATKA AIRFIELD FLIGHTLINE, RUSSIA - TOUR WEEK #1, DAY

Support crewmen are trying to strap FREDDIE-10, still wearing his muddy clothes from San Francisco, into the rear seat of an SU-30 jet trainer. CAPTAIN UZKOV stops on the ladder and orders his Lieutenant to radio him some weather info. Nearby, two other Officers are arguing the validity of Freddie's passport and visa information.

Uzkov turns to the rear seat and raps on the small boys oversize flight helmet. Freddie timidly and more than a little scared by all that is happening looks up. Uzkov points to a support in the cockpit and makes a clamping gesture with his hand.

Freddie grabs hold with his right hand but is startled with another rap for his attention. This time Uzkov makes a more forceful gesture with both hands. The boy sees there is a place to grab hold with his left hand too. After doing so he looks up to the pilot for approval. The look of worry and fright on Freddie's face is apparent but all the Captain has time for is a quick smile and wink of reassurance as he drops into the pilot seat.

KAMCHATKA AIRFIELD RUNWAY

The Russian SU-30 jet trainer takes off into the East Siberian sky.

FLASHFORWARD TO:

INT. BAR TABLE, WNC RECEPTION - PRESENT/CONTINUOUS, EVENING

MASHA TERESHKOVA

When he tells it, no one believes
him.

INT. MARCUS, WNC RECEPTION - MOMENTS LATER

Marcus finishes giving instructions to a plain clothes SECURITY AGENT who heads off. Just then BEN-15 approaches.

BEN-15

Marcus, have you seen Zack? We need him over at the signing table.

MARCUS EDWARDS

Seen him! In this crowd? Is he walking around on stilts? Demonstrating his circus high wire act?

Ben starts to laugh a bit as Marcus scans the room.

MARCUS EDWARDS (CONT'D)

There he is. In the middle of that crowd of people who look like they're standing around nobody. Hey, have you seen Liam?

BEN-15

Uh, no. Shall I tell Zack how you spotted him?

MARCUS EDWARDS

(as he walks away)

Only if you want your funeral service here.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM, SAN DIEGO CALIFORNIA - TOUR WEEK #1, MORNING

BEN-15, TIARNAN-13 and CONOR-8 are sitting on a bed as MARCUS EDWARDS enters.

All three boys point to the bathroom. Edwards pounds on it a few times.

MARCUS EDWARDS

Zack! Motor's runnin', mate.

(moves to bed)

"Smallest person in the choir", how long's it take to scrub that tiny little hide of yours? What are ya usin', a toothbrush?

Just then ZACK-9 storms out of the bathroom. He's enveloped by a large bath towel draped over his shoulders that drags on the floor. He holds a toothbrush in one hand, paste tube in the other.

ZACK-9
(angrily)
Listen you lot--

The three boys stare wide eyed at this spectacle. Marcus clamps his eyes shut.

ZACK-9 (CONT'D)
--I may be smallest on stage only
because Conor here is a measly
seven millimeters taller than me--

Unseen by the others, Conor displays eight fingers as a correction to Zack's statement.

ZACK-9 (CONT'D)
--but I don't have to take this
crud off it. I'll be out when I'm
bloody good and ready.

Zack, trying to keep the towel in place, marches back to the bathroom and slams the door. There is a moment of stunned silence. Conor covers his mouth with his hand, trying not to laugh.

BEN-15
Did you see that?

MARCUS EDWARDS
(opens eyes carefully)
Tell me I didn't see that.

TIARNAN-13
I saw all of that.

MARCUS EDWARDS
(resigned)
It was nice meeting you boys. I
believe I'll be going to prison
now.

TIARNAN-13
(playfully taps Edwards'
arm)
No you won't. When Mrs. Geraghty
finds out, she'll kill you.

BEN-15
 (taps his other arm)
 Mr. Edwards, Zack's just a bit
 hyper about--
 (indicates Zack's height)
 We're not going to say--

MARCUS EDWARDS
 (cuts Ben off)
 To the end of the Earth we're not
 going to say!

FLASHFORWARD TO:

INT. CHICAGO REPORTER, WNC RECEPTION - PRESENT/CONTINUOUS,
 EVENING

CHICAGO REPORTER, 40's, is doggedly questioning KAVANA-10 and others about the identity of the tours benefactor. She and other curious guests are so intently listening to the exchange that they do not see Marcus lingering right behind them. Kavana and CASSIUS-10 do see him and start having a bit of fun.

GUEST#1
 I heard "Money Guy" is actually a
 money "Gal". She's a rich widow of
 a diamond magnate from South
 Africa.

CHICAGO REPORTER
 How about it, boys? "Guy" or "Gal"?
 Are we looking on the right
 continent?

KAVANA-10
 You do understand our contract
 states we're just not allowed to
 say anything definite about our
 benefactor or we get into trouble.

CASSIUS-10
 I was told I'd have to walk home
 Monday instead of taking the plane
 with everyone else.

CHICAGO REPORTER
 I'll drive you home! Just give us a
 clue, please?

Unknown to the others around, Marcus swiftly gives Cassius a hand signal, used during the afternoon show, that means "slow down". All the boys recognize it.

CASSIUS-10

All I can say is I don't think he or she is anyone special. If they were standing right behind you, you would never even know it was them.

Marcus leaves the area.

CHICAGO REPORTER

(hopeful)

Are they - standing right behind me?

KAVANA-10

(jokingly)

Not any more.

Marcus continues across the hall and is stopped by a familiar sharp pain in his left lower leg.

MARCUS EDWARDS

Must you always kick the exact same spot, Zack?

ZACK-9 ignores the question and asks his own.

ZACK-9

Can I? Have stilts.

Marcus sternly points to the signing table and Zack heads for it.

INT. MASHA, BAR TABLE - MOMENTS LATER

Marcus returns to Masha and Ian.

MARCUS EDWARDS

Thank you for entertaining my guest, Ian.

IAN TILLEY

Quite alright but I am needed elsewhere so please excuse me.

Marcus looks questioningly at him.

IAN TILLEY (CONT'D)

(explaining)

Robert - and the British Ambassador - and someone else.

Marcus sees the Secret Service Agent waiting to accompany Ian.

MARCUS EDWARDS
 (understands)
 Ian, we've done everything we
 possibly could the past six weeks.

IAN TILLEY
 I'm just glad we're finally going
 home.

As Ian leaves, the Security Agent Marcus spoke with addresses Masha.

SECURITY AGENT
 Miss Tereshkova?
 (she acknowledges)
 I was ordered to deliver this to
 you. You'll have to sign for it.

MASHA TERESHKOVA
 Ordered?

Agent merely taps his earpiece in response as she opens the envelope containing an All Access Event/Property Pass for Libera's performances at Washington National Cathedral.

She looks over at Marcus who is holding a small piece of string between his fingers. Masha signs the receipt.

MASHA TERESHKOVA (CONT'D)
 (sarcastic)
 So nice of me to join you--

She glances at some text on her computer pad display.

MASHA TERESHKOVA (CONT'D)
 --"Mr. Corleone"?

MARCUS EDWARDS
 I knew you'd understand.

MASHA TERESHKOVA
 Now that we are best friends, we
 must tell each other all our
 secrets. You first.

Marcus is hesitant.

MASHA TERESHKOVA (CONT'D)
 You have amassed a great many more
 since the 1980's.

MARCUS EDWARDS
 You remember back that far?
 (pause)
 I prefer secrecy to the
 alternatives.

MASHA TERESHKOVA
 (bit peeved)
 Here and now, I am the alternative.

She mimics the hand gesture he used with Kavana and Cassius to goad a response.

MARCUS EDWARDS
 Means slow down. It's one of the
 signals the boys use on stage to
 communicate with the crew.
 (points to signing table)
 They're changing the code for
 tomorrow night as we speak. It's
 different for every show just in
 case someone--
 (gestures to her)
 --in the audience picks up on it.

INT. SIGNING TABLE, WNC RECEPTION - CONTINUOUS

ANTHONY-13, ADAM-14, JOE-11, NICHOLAS-12 AND MINI JAMES-12
 all huddle around a laptop with the production/performance
 program just behind the signing table where other Libera
 choristers are signing CDs and posters. Joe has just finished
 a three part hand signal meaning "Request Alternate Soloist".

NICHOLAS-12
 (holds up wrist in cast)
 How am I supposed to give a signal
 like that?

ANTHONY-13
 Well, if you wouldn't wrestle
 grizzly bears in your hotel room.

MINI JAMES-12
 Won't work anyway. Has to be a
 large enough difference for Big Ben
 and the others to see on the
 monitor at the sound board.

ADAM-14
 It'll work. I should know, I used
 it in St. Paul three weeks ago.

JOE-11
 (frustrated)
 Listen, you come up with something
 then. It's been six weeks and I've
 only got--
 (shows right hand)
 --five fingers.

Anthony raises Joe's left hand in front of Joe's face.

JOE-11 (CONT'D)
 Oh. Forgot about those.

INT. LIAM, WNC RECEPTION - MOMENTS LATER

LIAM-13 is rummaging in a small bag of snack mix he enjoys since he has learned most reception fare is geared to the guests. ALFIE-15 dashes up and takes him aside. Liam leaves the bag on a serving tray.

As he and Alfie talk in the FOREGROUND, a WAITRESS in the BACKGROUND dumps something from her hand into the snack mix as if it is trash. Just as she is about to pick it up to throw out, another WAITER comes by with an overloaded food tray and she abandons the bag and a small pepper mill to help him.

ALFIE-15
 Liam, Edwards is looking for you.

Liam starts to head off. Alfie stops him.

ALFIE-15 (CONT'D)
 Liam, I don't think you want to be found.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR, ORLANDO FLORIDA - TOUR WEEK #6, DAY

HOTEL MANAGER approaches Marcus Edwards carrying a shattered vase in a clear trash bag in one hand and dragging Liam, holding a soccer ball, along with the other.

HOTEL MANAGER
 (authoritative)
 You, you there. Are you in charge here?

MARCUS EDWARDS
 (tentative)
 Sometimes.

HOTEL MANAGER
Is this Master Wilkinson one of
yours?

Marcus sees the Manager does not want to play his non-committal game but continues with it anyway.

MARCUS EDWARDS
Maybe.

HOTEL MANAGER
(agitated)
When this--
(holds up bag)
--was in one piece it was worth
Four Hundred and Thirty-Seven
dollars.

MARCUS EDWARDS
(aloof)
And now?

Manager shoves the bag into Marcus's hands and releases Liam next to him also.

HOTEL MANAGER
You figure it out.

Manager storms off. Liam's best innocent look is no match for Marcus's responsible demeanor.

MARCUS EDWARDS
Li--

MATCH FLASHFORWARD:

INT. LIAM, WNC RECEPTION - PRESENT/CONTINUOUS, EVENING

JONATHAN-14
--am, Liam.

Liam grabs, shakes and quickly rolls up the snack mix bag and stuffs it in his pocket as Jonathan pulls him over to a group of guests.

JONATHAN-14 (CONT'D)
These nice people have just asked
me who the best singer in the choir
is.

Liam takes on a proud, appreciative stance.

JONATHAN-14 (CONT'D)
 (feigning gratitude)
 I told them you'd say it was me.

Jonathan jumps aside to avoid Liam's somewhat playful swing at him.

GUEST#2
 What Jonathan said was Mr. Prizeman has given you more solo parts this tour than he's ever given anyone and that you've performed them all flawlessly in 21 cities.

LIAM-13
 Not all 21. I did miss two in the middle for a wedding back in England. The other soloists sing the songs too.

Jonathan silently moves away but a quick glance from Liam suggests he'd rather have him stay.

LIAM-13 (CONT'D)
 It's just that Robert tends to focus on particular voices the way other composers focus on certain instruments, piano or violin.

Jonathan leaves Liam's attentive crowd and after a few steps with his head bowed a little, literally bumps into NAVAJO, CHEROKEE and HUALAPAI INDIANS in Native American dress who have drawn their own crowd.

INT. NAVAJO/CHEROKEE/HUALAPAI, PHOTO WALL, WNC RECEPTION - CONTINUOUS

NAVAJO INSTRUCTOR smiles and good-naturedly greets Jonathan with another name by which he is known.

NAVAJO INST
 Song In The Wind.
 (to others)
 This is the one who brought the voice of The Great Spirit from the magnificent Cathedral of our desert land to this glorious Cathedral. What you heard today and will hear again tomorrow was his idea.

Now it is Jonathan who stands a bit more proud.

A large photo on the wall between them shows the choir in casual clothes at a Grand Canyon lookout.

MATCH FLASHBACK:

EXT. LOOKOUT, GRAND CANYON ARIZONA - TOUR WEEK #2, SUNSET

Image in Reception Photo comes to life as boys break off in small groups after it's taken. HENRY-10, FLYNN-10 AND JAKOB-10 run off together before Jonathan can tell his little brother to be careful. FOUR SOLOISTS place the rock climbing gear they were holding for the picture at the edge of the parking lot.

JONATHAN-14, JOSH-15, BEN-15, CALLUM-11, JAMES-11, LIAM-13 munching from his snack bag, and a few others walk over to a split rail fence at the edge of the canyon some distance away from the buses.

JONATHAN-14

How am I supposed to keep an eye on him when he won't let me? At least Freddie seemed a bit more responsible than Flynn and Jakob.

CALLUM-11

Has anyone heard from Freddie - or his dad?

JOSH-15

They hope to transport Mrs. Jenkins back to England this week.

Ben gives Josh a quizzical look.

JOSH-15 (CONT'D)

(explains)

I'm Head Chorister, I'm supposed to know these things.

JONATHAN-14

Well, Head Chorister, what can you tell us about the powwow going on back at the coach?

JOSH-15

They all love the idea, Jonathan. I think it's brilliant. It's just - learning two new languages in a few weeks?

JONATHAN-14

We've done it in Asia.

They reach the fence. Some stand, some sit on the rails. Jonathan climbs over and leans back against a post. Ever so briefly, the grandeur of the color pallet as painted in the sky and on the Canyon walls by the setting sun is the only thing that surrounds him.

JONATHAN-14 (CONT'D)

(whisper)

I've never heard so much - quiet.

Jonathan, who in all his time with Libera never performed a solo, begins to sing "*Eternal Light*". The others, keeping the song in Jonathan's key, provide the chorus. This rendition, while not "Prizeman Perfect", is nevertheless pleasing to everyone.

As the song ends, all but three of the other choristers are gathered around and more songs are spontaneously sung by the choir "a cappella".

EXT. HENRY/FLYNN/JAKOB, GRAND CANYON LOOKOUT - NIGHT

The three boys use flashlights as they walk along a trail next to some huge rock formations apart from everyone else.

FLYNN-10

You're lucky, Henry. You've only got one big brother. I've got three. Couldn't wait to go on this tour just to get away.

JAKOB-10

What you two need is a big sister. They think kids our age have some sort of disease. She leaves me completely alone.

HENRY-10

Jonathan's not mean to me. Pushes me around sometimes.

FLYNN-10

He better stop.

JAKOB-10

Yeah, we're your mates. We're the only ones who can push you around.

All three begin jokingly pushing and shoving each other when Henry suddenly disappears from view.

EXT. FENCE, GRAND CANYON LOOKOUT - NIGHT

The canyon rim concert continues. At one point Josh secretly prevents Liam from leading off one of the numbers thereby allowing Jonathan to continue doing here what he has never done on stage. Liam, instead, begins directing the others from the middle of the group.

EXT. BUS PARKING, GRAND CANYON LOOKOUT - CONTINUOUS

Adult members of the team are talking inside the bus with the engine idling to provide lights and a/c. NAVAJO and CHEROKEE INSTRUCTORS are going over plans for the performance of a song at the end of the tour. Sound engineer BIG BEN, mid 20's, gets them all to quiet down.

BIG BEN

Wait, wait stop. Does anyone else hear that?

Everyone exits the bus and walks around it to see the boys singing at the fence.

Marcus and Ian, having a bit of a disagreement over the travel schedule, also turn their attention to it.

As they begin walking out toward the Choir, Marcus gives the driver a hand signal to cut the engine. As all are focused on the singing in one direction, no one hears a FAINT CALL OF "HELP" coming from the opposite direction beyond a large rock formation.

EXT. FENCE, GRAND CANYON LOOKOUT - NIGHT

It is now completely dark with a not quite full moon providing the only illumination. The boys finish their set of impromptu songs immensely pleased with themselves.

Jonathan is the first to turn away from the canyon and look behind him. His expression of surprise causes everyone else to turn and look too.

A short distance away, TWO HUNDRED OF THE HUALAPAI TRIBE, ALL AGES, have silently assembled to hear this informal concert.

HUALAPAI WOMAN

The People heard song in the wind from The Great Spirit, and they have come.

EXT. BUS PARKING, GRAND CANYON LOOKOUT - MOMENTS LATER

Almost everyone is back onboard the bus. A Libera chaperone, MRS. GERAGHTY, 50's, is somewhat anxious.

MRS. GERAGHTY
I'm still missing three of the
little ones.

CHEROKEE INST
You must remain here. We will find
them.

EXT. HENRY/FLYNN/JAKOB, GRAND CANYON LOOKOUT - CONTINUOUS

Flynn is lying flat on the ground holding on to Jakob's ankles who is lying flat on the ground holding on to Henry's hands whose feet have a tenuous hold on a shrub sticking out from the curved edge of the canyon rim. If any of them moves, all three will slide over the side.

Just as Flynn is about to cry for help again, a strong pair of hands grab his legs and pulls him and Jakob up to flat ground. Henry falls backward into the arms of NAVAJO INSTRUCTOR standing on a darkened switchback trail just a few feet below.

NAVAJO INST
(shakes head)
Another fence.

INT. BUS, GRAND CANYON LOOKOUT - MOMENTS LATER

Henry comes down the aisle covered in dust and is stopped by Jonathan.

JONATHAN-14
Where have you been?

HENRY-10
(incredulous)
Where have I been?! Well, while you
were in here sitting on your bus
seat, I--

Flynn and Jakob, dust covered also, run up and push Henry to their seat at the rear of the bus while finishing Henry's answer.

FLYNN-10
--was with us. We're looking after
him till Freddie gets back.

JAKOB-10
Yeah, everything's fine.

Jonathan doesn't quite understand but is too tired to go into it just now. The bus begins to move.

HENRY-10
(shouts from back O.S.)
I'm tellin' mum.

FLASHFORWARD TO:

INT. HOST, WNC RECEPTION - PRESENT, EVENING

HOST
Ladies and gentlemen, please, bit of a surprise for you all. As you know, Libera is an ever changing cast of performers and we've managed to coax some of the former ones to our celebration here this evening.

A group of LIBERA ALUMNI, 20's and 30's, enter the hall to the delight of many long time fans. DAREN and OLIVER, early 30's and TOM, early 20's, take the lead. Their arrival is a surprise to the current members on tour as well.

TOM
(boisterous)
'ere now; what's all this then?
Can't be having this rabble at the signing table.
(lifts ZACK from seat)
Show this lot to the curb!
(takes seat)
There you are ma'am, I'll sign that for you. I'm sure the young lads tried to put on a good show for you.

ZACK-9 and others at the table realize the fun he is having with them and jump all over him in return.

DAREN
(holds up CD)
I can't sign this. I didn't sing on it.

TOM
Which one?

DAREN shows TOM the CD.

TOM (CONT'D)
I'm all over that. Sign my name to
it.

Behind TOM and off to one side, OLIVER is looking a bit
uneasy about all the attention their arrival has generated.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. OLIVER'S HOME, LONDON UK - TOUR WEEK #3, DAY

OLIVER
(on phone with TOM)
They want us to do what? Are they
mad or is it just you?
(pause)
First half?! The whole first half
of the show?

CUT TO:

INT. TOM'S HOME, LONDON UK - DAY

TOM
Will you listen. Just one or two
songs. The regular choir will still
be singing too.

INTERCUT PHONE CONVERSATION

OLIVER
(belittling)
Regular choir - heh! Bunch of pre
pubescent pretenders, couldn't even
sing Happy Birthday without a pipe
organ blaring in their ears.

TOM
Which makes us sound like a bunch
of post pubescent prats who can't
give up the past.

OLIVER
This isn't my idea, Tom. Not like I
was one of Robert's favorites.

TOM
True enough. You and your brothers
have always ruffled Robert's
feathers a bit. But you were one of
his best.

(MORE)

TOM (CONT'D)

Look, Oliver, it's entirely possible to live with your past and not drag it around like a dead weight. And if you'll trouble yourself to remember, none of us can sing Happy Birthday.

FLASHFORWARD TO:

INT. WNC RECEPTION - PRESENT, EVENING

Nearly every current and former member of Libera is belting out "Happy Birthday" as loud and as INDIVIDUALLY OFF KEY as they can. A cake with the name "Daren Geraghty" is presented to DAREN and a just as surprised MRS. GERAGHTY looks on.

IAN TILLEY and Libera's Music Director ROBERT PRIZEMAN 50's, exit the private room they were in guarded by a Secret Service Agent. Entering the main hall, they are caught off guard by what is happening.

ROBERT PRIZEMAN

(to Ian)

I don't agree with the timing but I'll do what I can to distract - what--?

ROBERT races to the HOST'S microphone.

ROBERT PRIZEMAN (CONT'D)

(desperate)

God in Heaven! Will one of you come up to this microphone and explain to these nice people it is tradition for you to sing that song out of tune to another chorister.

OLIVER

(gets Robert's attention)

Uh, Robert, I believe you just did.

ROBERT PRIZEMAN

(flustered)

What? Yes, suppose I have.

(notices Oliver)

Oliver! Good Lord! When did you arrive?

OLIVER, WNC RECEPTION

JOSH and STEVEN run up to greet Oliver, their older brother.

STEVEN

(to Oliver)

You know, until you showed up, I was the older brother.

(to Josh)

And until you came along, I was the younger brother. What is it with you two always spoiling my fun?

Oliver drags his two younger siblings away from the crowd.

OLIVER

What I want to know is what the devil has been going on over here? First couple weeks there were e-mails every day. Last two, hardly any, except for Steven's about Oxford Research. Thinking of changing careers?

STEVEN

Thanks for that list of names, by the way.

JOSH-15

It hasn't exactly been your typical Libera tour.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR, SAN ANTONIO TEXAS - TOUR WEEK #2, DAY

Marcus knocks on Zack and Conor's door. Josh is standing at open door to Mrs. Geraghty's room directly across the way. Both little boys open their door.

MARCUS EDWARDS

Conor, I want you to go down those stairs to the lobby and tell the man at the desk your name.

(seeing Conor is hesitant)

Go on.

ZACK-9

I'll come with you.

MARCUS EDWARDS

No you won't.

JOSH-15

I'll go with him.

MARCUS EDWARDS

(louder)

No you won't.

As Conor slowly walks down the hall to the stairs, Mrs. Geraghty storms out of her room.

MRS. GERAGHTY

(angrily)

Mr. Edwards, you can not send that boy anywhere in this hotel without a proper escort.

Conor stops at the top of the stairs and looks back. Edwards sternly points down and Conor slowly proceeds. Josh takes a step but Marcus puts his hand out to physically stop him. Zack, not sure what to do, stands ready to run after Conor if necessary.

MRS. GERAGHTY (CONT'D)

Edwards, every single one of these children's parents trusts me to see that they are safe and protected while away from home--

MARCUS EDWARDS

(cuts in)

And every single parent was made a promise, by me, they get whatever they need no matter what, no matter what it takes--

Steven, having heard the ruckus from his room next door, joins those in the corridor.

MRS. GERAGHTY

When I get that boy's parents on the phone--

MARCUS EDWARDS

Why waste your time on the phone? Just go down to the lobby.

CONOR-8 (O.S.)

(from lobby)

Mum! Dad! Zack, come quick! My Mum and Dad are here!

Zack takes off down the stairs. Josh relaxes his protective stance somewhat. Marcus, not wanting to continue the argument in the hall, leads Mrs. Geraghty into her room. Josh and Steven watch from the door.

MRS. GERAGHTY'S ROOM

MRS. GERAGHTY

I will not have you usurping my authority. That stunt you pulled in San Francisco was bad enough.

MARCUS EDWARDS

That "stunt" as you call it was the only way to get Freddie where he needed to be when he needed to be there.

MRS. GERAGHTY

Let me remind you, Mr. Edwards, you're just the banker here. I've got 26 underage British Citizens that are my responsibility.

MARCUS EDWARDS

Don't wave your papers in my face. Until I get word from the gate agent at Heathrow saying "wheels stop" they're just as much my responsibility. You got such a tight grip on these kids necks, by the end of the tour you'll have your fingerprints on their vocal cords.

MRS. GERAGHTY

The tightness of my grip is my business.

MARCUS EDWARDS

Your business should've been to see that Conor's been homesick since the day he got here.

Both Josh and Steven have been watching quietly. At one point, catching each others glance, they know this incident has brought to mind a similar, painful family memory involving their parents. A memory which Josh can take no more. He angrily shouts at the two adults in front of him as well as the thought of his mother and father many years ago.

JOSH-15

Pick a wall! Both of you!

Edwards and Geraghty stop in mid sentence and stare at 15 year old Josh giving them an order they themselves normally give. Steven, indignant, stands ready to support his younger brother.

JOSH-15 (CONT'D)
 (assertive)
 Now!

Realizing the shamefulness of their actions, Edwards and Geraghty step OUT OF FRAME to one of the rooms walls. Josh and Steven begin exiting the room but hear the bickering start again.

MARCUS EDWARDS (O.S.)
 There's a perfectly good wall right over there.

MRS. GERAGHTY (O.S.)
 Direct sunlight shines on that wall. I will not stand in the sun. Not for you or that insolent boy.

MARCUS EDWARDS (O.S.)
 That insolent boy has more sense in his little finger than you've--

FLASHFORWARD TO:

INT. JOSH/STEVEN/OLIVER, WNC RECEPTION - PRESENT, EVENING

OLIVER
 (impressed)
 You told "ol' Lady Ger'y" to pick a wall, and got away with it?!

Josh himself is still amazed by this one act of his which may soon become a legend of Libera lore.

Daren rushes up to the three of them.

DAREN
 Did I just hear my mum's name being used disparagingly?
 (to Oliver)
 I'm not going to have to thrash you again am I, "Twisty"?

Oliver is not at all pleased by Daren's use of his old school nickname. Luckily, Daren is pulled away by several fans wanting a picture with him.

BEN-15 joins them now and points in Daren's direction.

BEN-15
 (to Oliver)
 I thought you two didn't get along?

OLIVER
 (coolly)
 Whatever gave you that idea?
 (takes sip of drink)
 And, how are you getting along? All
 set for tomorrow night?

BEN-15
 (uneasy)
 Were you?

OLIVER
 (matter-of-factly)
 No.
 (pause)
 Doesn't mean you shouldn't be
 prepared.

BEN-15
 (pretending)
 I'm - I'm prepared.

Ben tries not to look directly at Oliver so he won't see that he's lying. Oliver however; knows Ben is lying and tries to give him a way out.

OLIVER
 Anyway, one last chance to get that
 volcano story right.

Ben smiles uneasily and turns to Josh as Steven and Oliver walk off.

OLIVER (CONT'D)
 (to Steven)
 What can you tell me about your
 mysterious benefactor?

JOSH AND BEN, WNC RECEPTION

BEN-15
 Henry and Jonathan keep getting
 pulled over to the Kansas City
 pictures together. Thought maybe
 you'd want to help referee.

JOSH-15
 They're brothers. They'll work it
 out.

BEN-15
 This is Henry and Jonathan we're
 talking about.

Josh and Ben both begin laughing.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. CHURCH SACRISTY, DALLAS TEXAS - TOUR WEEK #2, MORNING

PARISH MUSIC DIRECTOR, MISS TORRES, is helping prepare a group of ten boys from Libera for the service about to start.

HENRY-10 is having some trouble with one of the hymns they are to sight read.

JOSH-15

Henry, this service starts in two minutes. Either you prove to Miss Torres you've got it or I'm breaking out the crayons.

MISS TORRES

(worried)

Crayons?

JONATHAN-14

My little brother is just starting his music training. Unfortunately I hear all he does in that class is stare out the window.

Henry shoots Jonathan a nasty look.

JONATHAN-14 (CONT'D)

If we color code the bars for him it helps him to pick up on it.

HENRY-10

Look, look. I've got it.

Miss Torres, Jonathan and Josh attend him. Cassius and Flynn stand nearby in support of Henry.

HENRY-10 (CONT'D)

First verse, first part of the refrain. Second verse, second part of the refrain. Third verse same as the others except for this bit here where you double back to there, then skip this bar and the whole thing is followed by the entire refrain twice.

(to Josh)

And I got it all in black and white.

Miss Torres nervously nods in agreement. Jonathan tries to reassure her as Flynn congratulates Henry.

JONATHAN-14

Crayon threat works every time.

Everyone takes their place for the opening procession and Henry quickly admonishes his older brother by pointing at him with the processional Crucifix.

HENRY-10

I'm tellin' mum.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOTEL REHEARSAL ROOM, DALLAS TEXAS - 4 HOURS LATER, DAY

A group of five boys are arranging their bags for a flight back to London. Their chaperone, TIM, is helping three of them, LIAM-13, JOE-11 and NICHOLAS-12 practice steps necessary to remove a chorister's hoodie and immediately replace it with his robe as fast and efficiently as possible.

MINI JAMES-12

What's your sister have to get married now for?

ADAM-14

(indicates big belly)

She doesn't have to get married. It was all planned before the tour. She's in love - and she wants to torque dad a bit. He can't stand the bloke.

MINI JAMES-12

Why doesn't she just elope then?

ADAM-14

Well, in that case, mum would probably kill her and we'd still be going home to sing at her funeral.

MINI JAMES-12

Suppose there's no getting out of it then.

Breathless from running excitedly down the hall, ALEX-12 and RAULE-11 burst through the door.

ALEX-12

Is it true? You lot are back to "Blighty"--

(MORE)

ALEX-12 (CONT'D)
 (glances at historical
 novel he's reading)
 --for the next two concerts.

They all nod. Alex and Raule know they will be filling in for the missing soloists.

RAULE-11
 (happy)
 You know what this means?

ALEX-12
 (happier)
 Me and you, one and two!

RAULE-11
 As it should be!

Those leaving look at them with some disdain. Alex and Raule detect their feelings and try to express some mock concern while backing out of the room.

RAULE-11 (CONT'D)
 Um, I mean, do have a safe trip -
 and--

ALEX-12
 --don't hurry back.

Liam chases them out with a bit more contempt.

LIAM-13
 (shouting)
 Screw up any of my solos, Raule,
 and you'll have trouble singing
 chorus with that fat lip you'll
 have!

Tim, Liam's father, smacks him on the back of the head.

TIM WILKINSON
 Robert will see to them.

LIAM-13
 I know, dad.

Tim can be heard warning Liam and the others as Robert, Josh, Ben and Jonathan enter from the opposite door.

TIM WILKINSON
 You'd all better mind Connor's
 parents on the flight to England -
 and Ian's wife on the trip back to
 the States.

Jonathan tosses his travel bag to JOE-11 who is knocked off his feet as he catches it.

JONATHAN-14

(to Robert)

I don't understand why you're reluctant to let Henry do these two numbers. He knows the lyrics and harmonies. Why do you think mum put him in the choir? He parades around the house all the time pretending to be Liam.

LIAM-13/TIM WILKINSON

He does?

JONATHAN-14

(sits, disgusted)

Well he can't very well pretend to be me now, can he?

ROBERT PRIZEMAN

Jonathan, we've discussed this at great length. Your voice just--

JONATHAN-14

(finishes Robert's quote)

--"does not have the quality and strength conducive to solo performance." But Henry's does and all three of you know it. If Josh and Ben both work with him he'll be ready for the Memphis or Kansas City Concert.

BEN-15

Jonathan, if he does this now, it'll be his fir--

Jonathan raises his hand to stop Ben and acknowledge the point he is about to make.

BEN-15 (CONT'D)

You won't be here. I always thought you'd want to--

JONATHAN-14

(cuts Ben off)

You have my permission, Ben. Only, do try and not leave any permanent scars like you did with Mini James.

Josh and Liam both snicker a bit. Robert looks bothered by discussion of this particular stage ritual as Mini James shows an old two inch scar on his right forearm to everyone.

BEN-15
 (defending himself)
 He wouldn't stop fidgeting.
 (to James)
 I told you to hold still.

Jonathan turns to Robert for the final say.

ROBERT PRIZEMAN
 I make no promises. I shall
 consider his progress.

JONATHAN-14
 (gives appreciative smile)
 Fair enough, as always.
 (stands and makes sweeping
 gesture to all)
 And if any of you ever let him know
 this was my idea--

Robert's eyes fix on him as Josh quickly stands now too.

JOSH-15
 Jonathan.

JONATHAN-14
 (resolved)
 It'll be his moment, not mine.
 He'll - he'll tell me all about it
 when I get back.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. VENUE, KANSAS CITY KANSAS - TOUR WEEK #3, NIGHT

Establishing shot with V.O. Of "PRAYER" being sung by ALEX-12 and HENRY-10.

INT. STAGE, KANSAS CITY VENUE - NIGHT

ALEX-12 and HENRY-10 finish the song. An expression of pride and some relief plainly evident on Henry's face. JOSH-15 and BEN-15 step forward as the applause subsides.

JOSH-15
 Hello, I'm Josh.

BEN-15

I'm Ben.

JOSH-15

I'm the Head Chorister of Libera.

BEN-15

(mock envy)

I'm not.

Some laughter and mock sympathy are expressed by the audience.

JOSH-15

The two solos in that last song were performed by Alex--
 (indicates Alex)
 --who has been a Libera soloist for a year now and Henry--
 (indicates Henry)
 --who, I am pleased to point out, was performing his very first solo in a live concert.

Josh and Ben motion for Henry to come forward as audience applauds in recognition.

JOSH-15 (CONT'D)

Now we can't be having Henry getting too big of a head about all this so in order to keep our new soloists from trying to fly too close to the sun we symbolically clip one of their wings.

Ben dramatically produces a pair of scissors from his robe. Henry cautiously holds out his right arm and Ben begins cutting off the dangling forearm part of the robe's sleeve. Henry recalls the incident with Mini James.

HENRY-10

(to audience)

If you're a bit squeamish at the sight of blood you may want to close your eyes.

BEN-15

(admonishing)

Hold still.

FLASHFORWARD TO:

INT. PHOTO WALL, WNC RECEPTION - PRESENT, EVENING

MARCUS and MASHA watch as Henry, with Jonathan, recounts the story of his first solo. He shows where Robert signed and dated the cut piece of cloth and how it was then sewn back on the robe for the remainder of the tour. Marcus and Masha turn and walk past all the activity at the signing table.

MASHA TERESHKOVA

So the boys themselves run the show.

MARCUS EDWARDS

Pretty much. On stage and off. Sometimes I think Robert and Ian have titles in name only.

MASHA TERESHKOVA

This is not unlike Robinzon near my home town in Tyumenskaya Oblast. A different style of music and fewer members but Sergei Anatolyevich encourages input from them all.

INT. BIG BEN, SIGNING TABLE, WNC RECEPTION - PRESENT, EVENING

Big Ben confirms the "Request Alternate Soloist" signal for tomorrow's program. Oliver and Tom join him.

TOM

Why weren't we smart enough to come up with this hand signal bit? God I hated wearing that bloody earpiece. Sam was always backstage humming into his--

TOM/OLIVER/BIG BEN

(together, laughing)
--off key.

OLIVER

Josh still hates it.

BIG BEN

Well he's Head Chorister so he's stuck with it. I've got to be able to talk with one or two of them. There's no getting around it completely.

OLIVER

Speaking of talking, I've just had a little chat with Steven - about stargazing in New Mexico.

Big Ben's demeanor turns a bit serious.

TOM

Yeah, I was up to see Freddie's mum in Hospital last week. Reg was there. He said New Mexico was a good place to see shooting stars.

Big Ben gives them an anxious look.

OLIVER

Ben - Mr. Jenkins was on the flight to America with us.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. ST. JOHN'S NAVE, DENVER COLORADO - TOUR WEEK #3, SUNSET

Choir and crew are checking out the venue's acoustics for the concert. At the moment, ROBERT is at the altar and HENRY-10 is running an exercise in the middle of the Nave. A group of five boys quietly enter by the South door and stop just behind JOSH-15 and BEN-15. JONATHAN-14, who just entered, interrupts the proceedings by speaking loud enough for Henry to hear him.

JONATHAN-14

First he gets a solo, now he's Head Chorister. Blimey, what next, Prime Minister?! We've only been gone a week.

HENRY-10

(glad)
Jonathan.

Robert acquiesces to this break and all greet the returning wedding party.

ROBERT PRIZEMAN

So, how was the wedding?

ADAM-14

Mum cried. Dad really cried.

ROBERT PRIZEMAN
 (clarifies)
 The music, the music. How was the singing?

JONATHAN-14
 "Prizeman perfect".

ROBERT PRIZEMAN
 (satisfied)
 Yes, as it should be. Where is Liam?

ADAM-14
 Here he comes. We brought all of you a present.

Liam walks toward the group, carrying his soccer ball. Freddie, walking behind him, steps out where everyone can see him. The young ones all run up to welcome him back.

HENRY-10
 Freddie! Am I glad you're here.
 (glances at Flynn and Jakob)

Freddie proceeds to Robert's position and climbs up on one of the pews.

FREDDIE-10
 (to Robert)
 Mum says I'm to give you this for letting me come back.

Freddie throws his arms around Robert's neck and gives him a hug.

ROBERT PRIZEMAN
 (caring)
 I shall expect one from her in person when we return.

The boys give Freddie their attention but Robert's is directed at Liam.

ROBERT PRIZEMAN (CONT'D)
 Dear boy, what is that--
 (points to ball)
 --doing in here?
 (indicates Nave)

LIAM-13
 I thought I left it on the coach. I was just checking.

ROBERT PRIZEMAN

Return it to it's nest immediately
or "pick a wall".

Liam heads for the door.

JOSH-15

Some things never change.

Jonathan sees Henry taking charge of Freddie's welcoming and
thinks that statement doesn't apply.

EXT. BUS, ST. JOHN'S PARKING LOT, DENVER COLORADO - DUSK

Ian, Steven and Big Ben are talking at the door of the bus as
Liam enters it to replace the ball. The BUS DRIVER is sitting
just inside. Liam will be able to hear all that is said.

IAN TILLEY

Did they order him to go?

STEVEN

I saw his face when these three
military chaps walked up. It went
completely grim. From that moment
on I rather got the impression
Edwards was giving the orders.

BIG BEN

(points to paper)

Marcus said hello to your wife,
made sure Freddie and the others
were OK, scribbled that note out
and all four of them left. Ian,
they didn't use the passenger
security check point. They went
through a separate locked door.

Ian looks over the note again. **"Last will be gone by morning.
Catch up with you in St. Paul. Freddie knows some cover."**
Just as Steven and Big Ben are about to start asking
questions, Ian starts giving orders.

IAN TILLEY

(to Steven and Big Ben)

Soon as Robert is done in there,
get the boys on the coach. I want
you two along as well.

(yells across lot)

Tim, I need you and Fiona to drive
Robert and the crew back to the
hotel.

(turns to driver)

(MORE)

IAN TILLEY (CONT'D)
 How long will it take to get to New
 Mexico from here?

BUS DRIVER #1
 Where in New Mexico? It's a big
 place.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. COLORADO INTERSTATE 25 - NIGHT

Bus with ALL 26 BOYS, IAN, STEVEN, BIG BEN and DRIVER heads
 south somewhere between Denver and New Mexico border.

INT. BUS - NIGHT

Ian stands in the aisle, the boys, finishing a fast food take
 out meal, are in their seats.

IAN TILLEY
 I want you all asleep in 10
 minutes.

JOSH-15
 Where are we going?

IAN TILLEY
 (stalling)
 I'll explain - when we get there.

Ian rejoins Steven and Big Ben at the front of the bus across
 and one row back from the driver. As he moves forward, Liam
 urges Josh to sit with Freddie which he does sending Henry to
 sit with Jonathan.

IAN, STEVEN, BIG BEN

Steven is concluding a phone call with Mrs. Geraghty.

STEVEN
 (into phone, pleasant)
 Yes, just some ice cream and a bit
 of stargazing. You know how Ian is
 about the educational aspects of
 these tours.
 (pause)
 All of you should just take the
 night off, relax, we'll try not to
 make any noise when we get back.
 (MORE)

STEVEN (CONT'D)
 (handing phone to Ian,
 irritated)
 What the devil's going on?

BIG BEN
 I was rather hoping for an
 explanation now. This is just a bit
 beyond any of the fun you tried
 letting us have.
 (looks to include Steven)

Ian composes himself.

IAN TILLEY
 This tour isn't being funded by any
 lottery prize.
 (to Big Ben)
 You had some friends at Oxford a
 few years back. They ever say
 anything about a Professor Griffin?

BIG BEN
 "God-Is-Out-There Griffin"?

STEVEN
 Died in a plane crash last year,
 didn't she?

BIG BEN
 Who didn't say something about her
 and her project. None of it very
 flattering. Never learned much in
 her lectures. All she'd do was
 carry on about the funding she was
 being denied.

IAN TILLEY
 Yeah, well, she found her funding.
 (pause)
 And more.

Ian points in direction bus is heading.

INT. JONATHAN AND HENRY, BUS - CONTINUOUS

Jonathan is getting Henry settled in when he remembers to
 check on something. BEN-15, sitting right across the aisle,
 gives him an annoyed look as he scrutinizes both Henry's
 arms.

JONATHAN-14

(to Ben)

If he's missing one of these when we get home, I'm the one who catches it.

(then to Henry)

So, what was it like?

HENRY-10

Strange, really. I felt like I was the only one there even though I knew there were loads of other people all around.

Unknown to Henry, Jonathan knows exactly how Henry felt.

JOSH AND FREDDIE

Freddie is using his hand to demonstrate some of the Russian jet's acrobatics as we see everyone else preparing for the rest Ian has ordered them to get.

INT. IAN/STEVEN/BIG BEN, BUS - MOMENTS LATER

The pained look on all their faces reveals the horror of the story Ian is telling.

STEVEN

How could they not know it was there? The construction crew--

IAN TILLEY

(finishes)

--thought it was a perfect, stable formation to build on. Griffin even boasted how prophetic it was the support for her project came from God's cosmos not just the US Navy. They didn't know what would happen when all that hot nuclear charged plasma started gouging away at it. No one ever conceived of this "ExSol" stuff being encased in an iron meteorite like that.

INT. JOSH AND FREDDIE, BUS - CONTINUOUS

JOSH-15

(reassuring)

Freddie, this is me you're talking to.

(MORE)

JOSH-15 (CONT'D)

Every part you had before leaving San Francisco is still yours. If we ever get back to a stage.

ADAM AND ANTHONY

ADAM-14

I'm not joking. It's taken on a life of it's own back home. All the pubs have "Money Guy Pools" as they call it. We were all treated to whatever we wanted at the wedding reception by people wanting to know what we knew before placing there wager. I'm telling you, they've gone completely bonkers.

INT. IAN/STEVEN/BIG BEN, BUS - CONTINUOUS

Ian stops for a moment, recalling something truly awful.

IAN TILLEY

I didn't meet any of the team. I saw - pictures. My God, that was horrible enough. You could barely call some of what they've been cremating out there human anymore.

BIG BEN

Cremating? Ian, what are you getting us into?

IAN TILLEY

The hospital's separate from the test site. It's safe. Did you think I'd agree to all this if I hadn't checked it out?

BIG BEN

I get the UK and US Governments wanting to keep it quiet but why all the secrecy with us?

IAN TILLEY

That was my condition. I understood Griffin's wish to share the one thing they all felt eliminated the horror from their minds but I told Edwards I'd agree to it so long as no one knew the true reason.

(MORE)

IAN TILLEY (CONT'D)

Can you imagine, every interview, all the fans after concerts - all wanting to know the boys' feelings about this. I hated keeping it from Robert but he gets interviewed too. Edwards came up with the lottery idea.

BIG BEN

Who does Edwards work for?

IAN TILLEY

After watching him sell that lottery story to the Russian Ambassador back in London, I thought - CIA. But, he's changed since the start of the tour. I'm not sure anymore.

STEVEN

What I want to know is how do 87 British citizens die and no one back home knows about it?

IAN TILLEY

Everyone back home knows. Remember the plane crash story?

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. JOSH AND FREDDIE, BUS - NIGHT

JOSH-15

I remember. One of the passenger's names was Tilley. Asked Ian about it at the time. He said wasn't anyone he knew.

FREDDIE-10

(quietly to Josh)

Everyone was killed. Not like mum's plane in Russia where it just crashed at the end of the runway. Dad said some of the families would find comfort listening to our songs and others' even though they suffered a great loss. He told me I needed to remember that - while we waited at the hospital - for mum--

Freddie's voice trails off and he snuffles a bit. Josh reassures him.

JOSH-15

Freddie, your mum and dad would not have let you come back if she wasn't going to be just fine, now you know that.

Freddie understands. Josh thinks a bit.

JOSH-15 (CONT'D)

Still don't get it. Lots of people find something in our songs that helps, we get e-mails and letters all the time. Why do all this? How would the families pay for it?

Tiarnan pokes his head between the seats from behind.

TIARNAN-13

Lot of insurance money in a plane crash. Just saying.

JOSH-15

(bit frustrated)

And why not just tell us the truth?

FREDDIE-10

Dad said they'd make us talk about it on the telly, like they always want to know who the lottery winner is. And all those people would be sad all over again.

Josh, having just seen Freddie's reaction while talking about his mom, understands and, reluctantly, directs his next comment to Freddie and Tiarnan one seat behind.

JOSH-15

Well we can't have that.

(to Tiarnan, sternly)

Make sure everyone knows.

Josh gives Tiarnan a hand signal all the others will recognize as coming from the Head Chorister.

Now Liam speaks up from behind.

LIAM-13

What I don't get is where the bloody hell are we going?

INT. DRIVER, BUS - NIGHT

Unheard by anyone else, the Driver completes and sends a dictated text message on his headset cell, the words appear on a small display at his seat: **"eta your site 4 hrs - orders?"**

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BUS ON INTERSTATE HIGHWAY - NIGHT

As everyone tries to get some restless sleep, the bus continues South into New Mexico.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ARMED GATE, DESERT HOSPITAL COMPOUND, NEW MEXICO - 4 HOURS LATER, NIGHT

Bus approaches and stops at gate. Only two buildings can be seen in the adequately lit area ahead. The completely fenced in base, a few acres in size, is the only evidence of civilization as far as the horizon. A stone wall with inscribed metal plaques, flanked by two poles flying the United States and United Kingdom flags, is situated at the edge of the yard between the buildings.

INT. BUS - NIGHT

Ian wakes from what he thinks was a moment of sleep to explain why they are there then wonders how they've arrived since he wasn't awake to help give directions. The driver motions for him to sit.

TWO GUARDS enter the bus. By their uniforms Ian sees one is a US SOLDIER, the other is UK. US SOLDIER speaks with driver while UK SOLDIER walks the length of the aisle and back to the front. Henry is with Freddie again and Josh is seated next to Jonathan.

U.K. SOLDIER

Please remain in your seats until the vehicle has entered the compound and come to a complete stop.

His order does not grab the boys' attention so much as his British accent does. Ian's attention is on the Driver having his ID checked. After hearing the exchange of words, Ian realizes the drivers assigned to the tour are in fact military personnel.

The bus passes through the gate and stops in the center of the yard. The engine is turned off.

U.S. SOLDIER

Mr. Tilley, would you come with me please.

Ian and US Soldier enter the larger of the two buildings.

U.K. SOLDIER

You may exit the coach. Remain in the illuminated portion of the yard. Do not wander off. Use of communication and photography devices on this base is prohibited. Water and toilet facilities are in the hospital building directly ahead.

EXT. BASE YARD - NIGHT

UK Soldier exits first and remains at the door of the bus.

All the boys, sleepy but curious, exit as well followed by Steven and Big Ben. Steven takes a group of boys into the same building Ian entered for the toilets.

Big Ben stays outside with the others whose attention is drawn to the monument. The metal plaques are unevenly weathered and are inscribed with names only. Many names appear to be in family groups. Twenty-One of the plaques scattered across the wall have small colored ribbons attached. (These ribbons are similar to the ones we have seen on the photo wall at the WNC RECEPTION.)

Big Ben sees the name "Griffin", immediately knows what the names are for and tries to distract everyone from looking at it. As they try looking beyond into the darkness they see guards are posted in the shadows. At the far end of the larger building is another brightly lit area where men can be seen loading equipment onto several trucks.

EXT. MONUMENT, BASE YARD - NIGHT

Josh-15, Freddie-10 and Tiarnan-13 stay transfixed on the names as Big Ben attempts to keep track of the others outside.

FREDDIE-10

Do you think all those people live here?

JOSH-15

I don't know.

Josh spies a name he recognizes and after a moments thought, dashes back into the bus and returns with the binder notebook he and Ben use to plan the small parish church visits. He flips through the pages and pulls a hard copy letter from a pocket. The letter itself is a single hand written sentence signed at the bottom by the same person whose name hangs on the wall, **Margaret Lewis**.

Big Ben sees Josh has made some sort of connection.

BIG BEN

Alex, Nathaniel. Go inside. Find Ian. Tell him I need him outside, now.

INT. LOBBY, HOSPITAL BLDG - CONTINUOUS

Alex, Nathaniel and a few others join the commotion in the lobby as a NURSE enters from a side hall.

NURSE

What is going on out here, this is a hos--

As everyone in the lobby turns to her, an expression of astonished recognition crosses her face.

NURSE (CONT'D)

We were told you weren't coming.

U.K. BRIGADIER GENERAL enters from main corridor.

BRIGADIER

(to Nurse)

Lieutenant, please return to your duties.

(to boys)

I'm sure all these lads will be more respectful of their surroundings from here on out.

NATHANIEL-12

Please, sir, we were told to find our Manager.

Nathaniel looks out the window in direction of the memorial wall now attracting the attention of everyone. Brigadier sees the situation also.

BRIGADIER

Mr. Tilley is down that corridor
and can not be disturbed. You may
wait here for him.

INT. CORRIDOR, HOSPITAL BLDG - CONTINUOUS, NIGHT

Ian and his military escort stand in a small side corridor out of view of the lobby. There are no sounds and no one else is present. Marcus enters from a nearby door, emotionally shaken. Unseen by Ian, the US SOLDIER snaps to attention and begins the motions of a salute that is cut short by a quick glare from Marcus.

IAN TILLEY

Marcus - I wasn't sure you'd be
here--

MARCUS EDWARDS

(reproachfully)
You shouldn't have come--

IAN TILLEY

(insistent)
When we stopped at the Grand
Canyon, you discouraged me from
doing this - just hear me out. I
mean, this was the whole point. The
boys' singing is what got the team
through the madness of those first
weeks when they knew there was no
hope--

MARCUS EDWARDS

(tries to interrupt)
Ian--

IAN TILLEY

When your note said the last family
member was dying--
(Marcus realizes mistake)
--I just felt we needed to be here.

MARCUS EDWARDS

(forcefully)
Ian.
(Ian stops)
The last member of the team died
tonight.

EXT. MONUMENT, BASE YARD - NIGHT

Josh, Ben and others are going through the notebook matching up a few more letters with names on the wall.

JOSH-15

There all the same. Just a sentence or two and a name. No return address or date.

BEN-15

(examines binder)

You've got them in the wrong book. This is what we brought along to plan for the Fall in England.

JOSH-15

I know. The envelopes all have British postmarks but - look at the names.

(holds pages to wall)

Conor-8 sees one of the name plates near the bottom of the wall has dropped its ribbon and replaces it. The name on it is "**Megan Tilley**". No one else notices.

INT. CORRIDOR, HOSPITAL BLDG - CONTINUOUS, NIGHT

Ian is devastated by what Marcus has told him.

IAN TILLEY

All of them?! Back in London - you said they were safe, in the bunker.

MARCUS EDWARDS

The ExSol Rating of this event was far more complex than any recorded back in the Fifties and Sixties. We spent decades preparing to treat something old and all we found was something completely new and unknown. Best we can determine is there were still traces of active contaminant at the housing compound when they returned. The organism alters and dies with the victim. There's no telling why it stayed dormant.

IAN TILLEY

Their families, back in Britain--

MARCUS EDWARDS

The entire team approved the cover story while we tried--

(voice trails off)

It's up to others to decide what and when the families will be told more.

IAN TILLEY

My God. It's all so insane. How does something like this happen?

MARCUS EDWARDS

We never knew it was happening 'till it was too late.

Marcus places his right hand on Ian's shoulder to comfort his somewhat agitated state. Ian does not detect the small cross Marcus traces with his thumb.

MARCUS EDWARDS (CONT'D)

I know you meant well, my friend. There simply isn't anymore that can be done here by any of us. I'll arrange an escort for you into town. Your driver can get some rest before heading back to Denver. Ian, your coming here like this - I understand now, the whole tour - it's what Alicia Griffin was looking for. It's what they all wanted.

EXT. BASE YARD, MONUMENT - NIGHT

Josh is still trying to work things out in his head.

JOSH-15

(reads letter)

"Your voices bring peace and tranquility to--

Brigadier, standing right behind him, finishes the sentence.

BRIGADIER

--a desert place of sorrow and sadness." I remember watching the Vicar help Professor Lewis write that letter last year. She was feeding her youngest at the time. He tried wiping the jam stain at the bottom before sending it back home.

Josh looks, the stain is there.

FREDDIE-10
Are they alive or dead?

BRIGADIER
(takes deep breath)
For what they suffered son, The
Good Lord willing, they're all in
Heaven now.

TIARNAN-13
Was it a plane crash?

BRIGADIER
(thinks a moment)
Technology certainly played a part
but the unimaginable catastrophe
that killed these good people began
millions of years ago.

Josh, confused, shows the letters.

JOSH-15
These people asked us to come here.
Or someone did. I don't understand.

BRIGADIER
I dare say none of us will ever
fully comprehend what happened--
(looks beyond fence)
--out there last year. I've come to
believe there are things God just
doesn't want us to learn.
(changes subject)
You'd best collect your friends and
return to your coach. You'll be
leaving shortly.

JOSH-15
Wait. Do you know a man named
Marcus Edwards?

Brigadier faces Josh directly stopping everyone in their
tracks.

BRIGADIER
I know him - and so do you.

Ian, and Steven join the group in the yard now. Ian, taken
aback by what he's learned and now getting his first good
look at the monument, tries to put a lighter spin on the
proceedings for the boys' sake.

IAN TILLEY

Boys, I'm sorry. I seem to have led
us all on a wild goose chase here.
We need to be on our way.

Josh and Tiarnan try to get something more out of Ian. Steven looks around as they board the bus and notices a few younger ones missing. He spies them in a shadow talking with a GUARD who is pointing out something in the star filled New Mexico sky. Just then a bright, flaring meteor flashes across the stars.

ZACK-9, NICHOLAS-12, ALEX-12, GUARD

STEVEN (O.S.)

Zack, Nick, Alex. We're leaving.

The three boys thank their Astronomy instructor and run to the bus.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HOTEL SWIMMING POOL, DENVER COLORADO - NEXT DAY, SUNSET

Robert Prizeman and chaperones Mrs. Geraghty and Tim Wilkinson are seated at a pool deck table. Fiona is reclining nearby. Robert is going over production notes for the concert later tonight. Mrs. Geraghty, pretending to read a magazine, is fuming.

MRS. GERAGHTY

It's outrageous I tell you. We've never had to delay a concert. It's all that Edwards' doing. Next time he shows his face we should fire him straight away.

ROBERT PRIZEMAN

Dear lady, you forget yourself. We work for him. I've spoken with Ian, the boys are going over the itinerary and rehearsing on the coach.

MRS. GERAGHTY

(huffily cuts him off)
With that lout Liam directing them!?

Tim Wilkinson gives her a vexed look.

MRS. GERAGHTY (CONT'D)

(to Tim)

He stretches all the last notes out way longer than Robert does. It'll be mass confusion on stage, mark my words.

Just then, Ian, Big Ben, Steven and the boys come marching into the pool area. Mrs. Geraghty jumps to her feet immediately on the offensive.

MRS. GERAGHTY (CONT'D)

(very upset)

Ian! Are you mad?! Stargazing - in the middle of nowhere - in the middle of the night!

These last few words spark a bit of puzzled laughter among the boys. Ian tries to calm her.

MRS. GERAGHTY (CONT'D)

Your Marcus Edwards has made a shambles of this tour--

IAN TILLEY

Now listen, Geraghty, I'll hear no words against that man--

BEN-15, JOSH-15, STEVEN

These three standing at the back of the group see the situation is bad for Ian. Ben quickly gets an idea and quickly executes it.

BEN-15

(whispers to Steven)

Get her inside, convince her it was a Parish visit I messed up.

(softly to others nearby)

Follow my lead.

Ben grabs Josh's shirt and drags him along to Ian and Mrs. Geraghty.

BEN-15 (CONT'D)

(to Josh)

Push me.

JOSH-15

Push you?

Ben stands at a spot near the edge of the pool across from Ian and Mrs. Geraghty's heated discussion and begins putting on an act he hopes will diffuse it.

BEN-15
(pleasantly loud)
Mrs. Geraghty.

He draws everyone's attention.

MRS. GERAGHTY
Benedict?

BEN-15
I'll bet you've got a hundred questions about where we've been the past 24 hours--

MRS. GERAGHTY
(cuts in)
Two hundred!

BEN-15
(smiling)
Yes of course - two hundred, how silly of me. But you know, it's been a long hot drive back here and I don't know about anyone else but I could sure use a quick swim before popping off to the concert this evening.

Josh understands "push me" and tackles Ben backward into the pool. Tiarnan swings himself and Alfie in. Minnie James shoves James and jumps in after him. Henry, Freddie, Jakob and Flynn jump in on their own. In short order all 26 boys are thrashing wildly about in the water paying no attention to anyone trying to extract them.

Big Ben and Fiona stay at the pool as Steven, Ian and Robert lead Mrs. Geraghty, waving her arms about hysterically, inside to calm her and Tim with explanations.

With the sun setting beyond the mountains, the activity in the pool DISSOLVES to a series of SLOW MOTION SHOTS and the last half of "Do Not Stand" FADES UP AND IN AS V.O.

Action in the pool is INTERCUT with a SHOT of the same sunset several hundred miles south as the flag of The United Kingdom is solemnly lowered for the last time next to the monument in New Mexico. Marcus Edwards, moved to tears, and others from the base Hospital stand at attention during the ceremony.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SOLOIST, DENVER VENUE - LATER THAT NIGHT

The last lines of "Do Not Stand" are sung by LIAM-13 on stage, accompanied by Robert on piano and Fiona on violin.

AUDIENCE

Guests are visibly moved by the performance and emotion of the number. An empty aisle seat near the stage is decorated with a large ribbon the same color and design as the one on Margaret Lewis's plaque. Its arrangement, however, suggests a more pleasant mood.

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LIBERA BUS, YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK WYOMING - NEXT DAY

Mrs. Geraghty exits first and immediately begins giving orders.

MRS. GERAGHTY

Alright, line up, the lot of you.
Single file.

ALL 26 BOYS turn out and stand in line from the rear to the front of the bus. When the last exits, Mrs. Geraghty begins a steely eyed inspection of each one walking to the far end. As she does this, the bus pulls away and in doing so, acts as a VISUAL WIPE to reveal the scene behind it.

{More than 100 campers and hikers are sorting their gear from several busses. The youngest are pre-teen, the oldest in their Thirties. If one considers this BACKGROUND activity closely, it may be possible to recognize faces familiar to any Libera fan.}

MRS. GERAGHTY (CONT'D)

(military-like)
Now listen up, and listen good.
There's going to be discipline in
this company from here on out. No
more disappearing-into-the-darkness
-hanky-panky without me!

A few older boys exchange a quick glance and try not to smirk.

ALL BOYS

(deadpan)
Yes Mrs. Geraghty.

MRS. GERAGHTY
 (walking)
 From now on there's a space, a
 place, a time and a duty for
 everyone.

ALL BOYS
 Yes Mrs. Geraghty.

MRS. GERAGHTY
 Rooms to be inspected, curfew
 enforced, proper meals--
 (Liam pockets snack bag)
 --lessons learned.

CARLOS-12
 But we've all finished our exams.

MRS. GERAGHTY
 I'm issuing supplements.

ALL BOYS
 Yes Mrs. Geraghty.

MRS. GERAGHTY
 Teeth cleaned, faces washed, hair
 combed--

A few unkempt boys mouth the word "What?"

MRS. GERAGHTY (CONT'D)
 --your appearance--

BIG BEN (O.S.)
 Mrs. Geraghty. Did you want all
 these bags off loaded?

MRS. GERAGHTY

As her attention is focused on the bus and Big Ben, Steven
 sneaks in behind her and silently disbursts the choir out of
 view. The CAMPERS in the background see this and get an idea
 of their own.

POV from behind her so it excludes where the boys were
 standing.

MRS. GERAGHTY
 Every one. We're repacking neat and
 clean. This will be a tight ship
 from now on, and I don't care where
 my fingerprints end up.

She turns back to face the choir.

MRS. GERAGHTY (CONT'D)
Now, where was I?

LINE OF CAMPERS

CAMPER
Our appearance.

MRS. GERAGHTY
(totally surprised)
Who are you lot?! Where - where's
my lot?!

She breaks through their line and runs off to look for them.

The campers have a laugh at her expense as they return to their gear.

CAMPER
(to other campers)
Oh, hey; I heard the greatest story
for the campfire tonight.
(spooky)
"The tale of the menacing volca--"

CUT TO:

EXT. GRAND PRISMATIC SPRING, YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK
WYOMING - LATER THAT DAY

The boys are spread out in groups observing the colorful, odoriferous natural wonder around them. STEVEN and MRS. GERAGHTY stroll together along the observation boardwalk.

STEVEN
(points)
Look there - all making notes in
their brochures like good little
students.

Zack's face gets a bit contorted at the word "little" but Conor restrains him.

MRS. GERAGHTY
As it should be.

Behind them as they pass, Liam-13 and some of the boys quickly stage a comical photo of throwing Raule-11 into the hot spring.

After setting Raule back on his feet, Liam drags him aside and shoves an mp3 player in his face displaying recorded tracks of the Memphis concert.

LIAM-13
 (intimidating)
 Robert expects perfection. I ever hear singing on stage like this out of you again, I'll chuck your arse in there myself.

JOSH, BEN, TIARNAN

The notes they're making have nothing to do with the park.

TIARNAN-13
 Best we can remember is Twenty-One ribbons.

BEN-15
 I know all the primary colors were there, red, green, blue but it was hard to tell the pastels in that light.

JOSH-15
 All Ian's ever said about the ribbon chairs at the concerts is we should think of them as representing all the people who couldn't be there.

TIARNAN-13
 I always think of my family back home.

IAN AND FIONA

The two of them stand apart from the others, gazing out at the expanse of the thermal pool.

FIONA
 How can something be so beautiful--
 (sniffs the air)
 --and so awful at the same time?

Fiona considers her husband a moment since he has not responded.

FIONA (CONT'D)
 Darling, what's troubling you?

IAN TILLEY

(worried)

I may have done something terribly wrong back in Denver. We're going to have to keep a close watch on the boys when they're with reporters. No "off topic" conversations.

FIONA

What is it?

(pause)

Ian, I'm your wife. If you can't tell your own family--

IAN TILLEY

(cuts her off)

That's just it. You can't imagine how many families don't know.

JAMES-11, MINI JAMES-12

The two of them are looking over a list of names and try to keep Steven and Mrs. Geraghty from seeing it as they pass.

MRS. GERAGHTY

What are you doing, boys?

JAMES-11

Just, uh, working on our assignment.

The two adults move on.

MINI JAMES-12

Jonathan says our group is to find out all we can about the chaps in the Washington choir so we know who we're working with.

JAMES-11

This won't be easy. They're not famous like us.

MINI JAMES-12

Who's famous?

JAMES-11

Well, not you. You just got the same name as me.

Mini James is annoyed by James' attitude toward him just because he's shorter than his younger counterpart. He scans the list and picks a name out.

MINI JAMES-12
 Marcus Jenkins. Wonder if Freddie's related?

JAMES-11
 "Jenkins" is a fairly common name.

MINI JAMES-12
 (sarcastic)
 Well then perhaps he's related to our Marcus Edwards?

JAMES-11
 You're not related by first names.
 Loads of people are named "Marcus"--

He points out another name on the list, "David Marcus Penn".

JAMES-11 (CONT'D)
 --just like loads of people are named "James".

MINI JAMES-12
 (glares at James)
 Too many.

FLASHFORWARD TO:

INT. BIG BEN/TOM/OLIVER, WNC RECEPTION - PRESENT, EVENING

The three of them walk by the photo display.

BIG BEN
 They've been on about this intrigue among themselves ever since. Spend a lot of time on computers at the hotels.

TOM
 Reg seemed very concerned that your little sojourn be kept quiet.

BIG BEN
 Ian has instructed them all not to speak of it but--

TOM

Well, they can't find information
someone else doesn't want them to
find.

Tom looks in the direction of a group of REPORTERS being
tormented by KAVANA-10 and his troupe of "benefactor"
storytellers. One has suggested Santa Claus, another
Leprechauns.

CHICAGO REPORTER

Kavana, next you'll be telling me
Russian oligarchs are involved in
all this.

Masha, nearby, can't resist joining the fun. She uses an
extra thick accent for effect as she and Marcus continue
walking past.

MASHA TERESHKOVA

Nonsense! You must not believe a
word of dis child. Dah-sveedanya.

MARCUS EDWARDS

You do have a sense of humor.

MASHA TERESHKOVA

And a sense for sadness.

Marcus and Masha exchange looks for a moment. Just then a
group of young fans push their way between Masha, Marcus and
Chicago Reporter to get to Kavana and others nearby. Chicago
Reporter tries to follow them but is stopped by SAN FRANCISCO
REPORTER.

SAN FRANCISCO REPORTER

Honey, don't even bother.
(refers to Marcus)
You won't get anything out of that
old retired battleship. I've been
trying since San Francisco.
(secretive)
Concentrate on the kids.

CHICAGO REPORTER

You didn't see my piece in Chicago,
did you.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. TV STUDIO SET, CHICAGO ILLINOIS - TOUR WEEK #4, DAY

Video of "LIBERA" recorded in Las Vegas finishes on nearby monitor. Seated between the monitor and PROGRAM HOSTS are ROBERT PRIZEMAN and, wearing their stage robes: Josh-15, Ben-15, Liam-13, Tiarnan-13, Henry-10, Freddie-10, James-11, Mini James-12, Nathaniel-12, Callum-11 and Kavana-10.

MARCUS EDWARDS and MRS. GERAGHTY stand at back of control room watching on monitors.

CHICAGO HOST

Aren't there different versions of that song?

Ben sees an opportunity to joke with Robert.

BEN-15

When we first started singing it, it had a different sound, different tempos.

(sly smile)

Robert will vehemently deny this but there was a Reggae version at one time.

ROBERT PRIZEMAN

(vehemently)

There most certainly was not!

All the boys laugh as Robert realizes what's happened.

CHICAGO REPORTER

So Robert, before the clip you were saying the voice itself is what you consider more than talent or knowledge.

ROBERT PRIZEMAN

Talent to perform on stage can be trained. Knowledge of written music on the page can be taught. But the special quality of a young boy's voice is a gift that only exists for a precious few years of his life. For centuries the Church has made every effort to encourage this opportunity to glorify God, and inspire the faithful. Nowadays there are all manner of ways to share the sublime wonder of their singing that go beyond the Cathedral Nave.

CHICAGO REPORTER

Way beyond. Worldwide CD sales,
live concerts on three continents.

(to boys)

Do you like the traveling? It's a
lot of flying, isn't it?

FREDDIE-10

(hesitantly)

Flying's alright, if it's a big
plane.

DISSOLVE TO:

I/E. RUSSIAN SU-30 JET TRAINER IN FLIGHT, SIBERIA RUSSIA -
TOUR WEEK #1, DAY

CAPTAIN UZKOV piloting up front communicates with FREDDIE-10
in back by intercom.

CAPTAIN UZKOV

Freddie, can you here me?

FREDDIE-10

(timid)

Yes.

CAPTAIN UZKOV

I have received word that your
mother's emergency medical
treatment has gone very well and
your father will be at the hospital
in Ekaterinburg when we arrive.

FREDDIE-10

Where are we now.

CAPTAIN UZKOV

We are detouring south to avoid bad
weather. We are just passing the
most beautiful sight in all
Siberia, Lake Baikal. Can you see
it? On the left.

Freddie tries to look out the cockpit but can't look down
while strapped in.

FREDDIE-10

All I see are clouds and sky.

A moment of silence as the jet seems to slightly adjust it's
course.

CAPTAIN UZKOV
Are you holding on the way I showed
you?

Freddie grabs hold of the supports as previously
demonstrated.

FREDDIE-10
Yes, Captain Uzkov.

In an instant the jet is flipped upside down and flying
inverted. Freddie slides a little toward the canopy and is
caught by his harness.

CAPTAIN UZKOV
(calmly)
Can you see it now? On the right
this time.

FREDDIE-10
(excitedly)
Yes! Yes I can! But I think I'd
rather see the clouds again!

Captain Uzkov rolls the jet right side up.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TV STUDIO SET, CHICAGO - TOUR WEEK #4, CONTINUOUS

Freddie seems lost in thought for a second.

FREDDIE-10
I mean, the big ones stay right
side up most of the time, don't
they?

CHICAGO HOST
I should hope so.

CHICAGO REPORTER
You're now in the fourth week of
Libera's six week tour of America.
Forgive me if I ask any of the same
old boring questions.

Kavana is in especially rare form today and his retorts
affect some of the others.

KAVANA-10
That's alright. We'll just give you
the same old boring answers.

VARIOUS CAMERA PANS and WIPE TRANSITIONS are used to separate the topics discussed. While the Reporter attempts to extract some genuine insights, the Host picks up on the boys silliness and plays along.

CHICAGO REPORTER

So this is your longest tour ever.
You had to miss some school in
order to prepare.

MINI JAMES-12

Yes but they had tutors come along
with us at the beginning--

JAMES-11

(confused)
Tudors?

MINI JAMES-12

Not the royal kind. The ones that
gave us our exams. We don't learn
our scores till we get back to
England.

CHICAGO REPORTER

And everyone is getting along so
far? Boys, chaperones?

BEN-15

We are one big, happy--
(glances at Josh)
--some times bickering family.

CONTROL ROOM

Marcus and Mrs. Geraghty are a bit uneasy with this response.

JOSH-15

(on monitor, quickly)
And our chaperones are the best in
the business. Nothing gets by them
we want them to know.

MRS. GERAGHTY

(perplexed)
What did he say?

STUDIO SET

BEN-15

(forthright)

Really, we're all the best of friends on and off the stage. Sometimes I think we know each other better than our own families - when we're performing on stage.

Robert and the boys notice how emotionally personal Ben's answer is.

BEN-15 (CONT'D)

We're all just very, very lucky to be doing this.

CHICAGO REPORTER

You're Ben, right? You're the one who'll be leaving the group when this tour is over. And you're how old, 14 - 15?

KAVANA-10

(jumps in)

Depends which direction he's walking.

Nathaniel immediately reacts to Kavana's remark by pulling his robe hood up over his head and cupping his hands over his ears.

NATHANIEL-12

(explaining)

My dad says if I listen to this next story too many times, I'll go crazy.

Ben returns himself to the fun aspect of the interview. He ignores Nathaniel who has already started humming "God Save The Queen" to himself as a distraction.

BEN-15

You see, when I was 7 years old, my parents took me with them on an around the world trip, only they travelled from east to west so when we left Los Angeles on a Saturday evening and crossed the international dateline, we landed in Australia on Monday not Sunday which was supposed to have been my 8th birthday but, since that day never happened for me I could still be 14 instead of 15.

NATHANIEL-12

(loudly)

Is he done yet?

Robert indicates it's safe to come out.

CHICAGO REPORTER

Does that trick work when you're 39?

CHICAGO HOST

(to reporter)

You'll be flying around the world a few times!

Another topic.

CHICAGO REPORTER

Liam, in addition to singing I understand you help with conducting the rehearsals.

LIAM-13

Actually it's directing, you direct a choir and conduct an orchestra.

Robert's and a few older boys' expressions would suggest they question Liam's response.

CHICAGO REPORTER

I stand corrected. You know more about it than I do.

(to Robert)

Is he any good at it, Rob--

Before Robert has a chance to give a truthful assessment of Liam's leadership skills the boys give a single word answer in unison.

ALL BOYS

No!
(laughter)

Liam takes the ribbing in stride. Another topic is covered.

ROBERT PRIZEMAN

With the help of the older members of the group we try to arrange as many small Parish visits along the way as we can. They aren't promoted or advertised like the concerts so the sacred aspects of the service can be preserved.

Josh thinks back about one of these recent visits.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CHURCH, ST. PAUL MINNESOTA - TOUR WEEK #4, MORNING

ROBERT plays the recessional hymn on the church organ as the group of 16 BOYS sing. Some have slightly confused looks on their faces. A POV from the choir loft shows the small church is empty except for them and on the altar, the elderly Priest FR. REYNALDS being assisted by MARCUS EDWARDS.

ALTAR

Fr. Reynolds and Marcus retire to the Sacristy as the hymn concludes. Robert and the boys make their way down and wait at the old marble communion rail. Everyone piles their hymn books into Joe's arms.

BEN-15

(to Joe)
Servitude of the smallest. We've all been through it.

Joe accepts his position and carries them quietly into the Sacristy.

JOE-11

Knew we should have brought Zack.

SACRISTY

Joe enters and sees a table to place the books on. He hears the voices of Fr. Reynolds and Marcus, unseen, down a passageway behind the altar.

MARCUS EDWARDS (O.S.)
 You asked for my blessing and all I
 get in return is a lecture?

FR. REYNALDS (O.S.)
 These boys are your blessing.
 Griffin has seen to that. And you
 needed the lecture, as usual.

The two men reenter the Sacristy, collect Joe and join the
 others at the foot of the altar. Joe looks at Marcus thinking
 he should address him with a different title but uses the
 familiar "Mister".

JOE-11
 Mr. Edwards, were you an Altar Boy
 when you were little?

MARCUS EDWARDS
 Littler than you. Don't tell Zack.

ALTAR

ROBERT PRIZEMAN
 (refers to organ)
 A fine old instrument. Shame it
 will not be preserved with the
 other relics.

LIAM-13
 Preserved?

FR. REYNALDS
 The Parish has been closed by the
 Diocese. This was the last Mass at
 dear old St. Michael's.

TIARNAN-13
 How long has it been like this?

FR. REYNALDS
 Swells and troughs in attendance
 have many reasons; "God is dead",
 kickoff time of the football game.
 For a time there was a resurgence
 of young adults but it was
 painfully obvious they were just
 pretending to be good Catholics to
 please their aging parents. The
 parents died and so did their
 imitation faith. There can be no
 Parish without true devotion.

(sadly, offended)
 (MORE)

FR. REYNALDS (CONT'D)
 But in all my years, I never
 imagined - they would stay away
 because they were - afraid of--

Marcus grabs Fr. Reynolds' shoulders as his words become
 jumbled by his troubled mind.

FR. REYNALDS (CONT'D)
 --vile infiltration of our Order--

MARCUS EDWARDS
 They're afraid of the lies, not the
 truth.

Josh looks directly at Edwards.

FR. REYNALDS
 (regains composure)
 I pray that is so.

JOSH-15
 What will happen to you, Father?

Fr. Reynolds maintains his gaze on Edwards as he begins his
 answer.

FR. REYNALDS
 As with all Priests--
 (turns to others)
 --I will be sent where God believes
 I can do the most good.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TV STUDIO SET, CHICAGO - TOUR WEEK #4, CONTINUOUS

CHICAGO REPORTER
 You don't see many people your age
 at your concerts. Why do you
 suppose that is?

LIAM-13
 (with a smile)
 Actually some of us have noticed an
 increase of young girls at some
 locations.

Josh and Ben carefully nod in agreement.

KAVANA-10

Most boys our age think it's just
sissy church music but what they
don't realize is they can sing just
as high as we can, they just don't
know it.

CHICAGO HOST

Don't suppose it has anything to do
with that gown you're wearing?

KAVANA-10

(corrects him)
It's - a - robe.

CHICAGO HOST

You know what I want to know is has
anyone's voice ever broke right in
the middle of a concert?

CONTROL ROOM

Mrs. Geraghty takes a sharp step closer to the monitors while
Marcus tries putting some distance between he and her.

MRS. GERAGHTY

(outraged)
Who told that man to ask such a
ridiculous question?

After a moments hesitation by all, Kavana chimes in with a
response.

KAVANA-10

(on monitor)
Well, there is a bit of Libera Lore
as we call it--

STUDIO SET

KAVANA-10 (CONT'D)

--about a kid named Daren--

Ben shoots him a cautionary glance. The others are a bit on
edge. Kavana kind of understands.

KAVANA-10 (CONT'D)

--um, we're not allowed to say his
last name or Mrs. Geraghty gets all
upset.

All the others know Kavana has just crossed a line he may regret and try to physically distance themselves from him.

KAVANA-10 (CONT'D)

Anyway; it wasn't at a concert it was a regular church service. This was ages ago before I was even born. Right in the middle of his solo during one of the hymns, everything changed--
 (snaps fingers)
 --like that.

CHICAGO REPORTER

I'm pretty sure God forgives that sort of thing.

CONTROL ROOM

MRS. GERAGHTY

That boy is on laundry detail for the rest of the tour.

STUDIO SET

CHICAGO REPORTER

Washington DC, the nation's capital, will be your last stop.

JOSH-15

Yes, we'll be doing two performances at the National Cathedral. We're planning something special for each. Looking forward to meeting and working with the choir there.

TIARNAN-13

Robert has asked a French Diplomat to accompany one of our songs on the Cathedral's organ.

ROBERT PRIZEMAN

(clarifies)

The Ambassador from France is a colleague in an international music society. We're still negotiating.

CHICAGO REPORTER

Some pretty high level guests in the audience for those?

BEN-15

The regular free ticket distribution will be available for both and the very last show will have, we hope, lots of special invited guests. Other than that - we've heard rumors but nothing definite.

CHICAGO HOST

Speaking of rumors.

CHICAGO REPORTER

(emphasizes)

Speaking of rumors.

CONTROL ROOM

Marcus' attention is now on the monitors. The boys on set know what's coming next.

CHICAGO REPORTER (CONT'D)

(on monitor)

The mysterious "Money Guy". A lottery winner, paying for everything, all the expenses, all the tickets. Everything being handled by third party promoters. His agent, Marcus Edwards, is as mysterious and tight lipped as his boss. Rumor is your benefactor will be at those Washington concerts. Is there anything you can tell us?

STUDIO SET

Just for a moment, it looks as if each of the boys has something they want to say. But it is Josh who speaks first.

JOSH-15

It's a subject best directed to the promoters and managers.

CHICAGO REPORTER

How about it, Robert? You must know something about whoever this is.

ROBERT PRIZEMAN

Madam, in all honesty they are as mysterious to me as God himself.

(MORE)

ROBERT PRIZEMAN (CONT'D)
 If I had it all to do over again, I
 do believe I would decline such
 generosity.

JOSH-15
 We're just pleased that someone
 thinks so much of our music, they'd
 want to share it with as many
 people as possible. And allow us
 the opportunity to meet with the
 fans to share their stories as
 well.

CHICAGO REPORTER
 And it doesn't bother you not
 knowing anything about this person?

A moment of thought.

BEN-15
 I know they like us.

KAVANA-10
 And they have lots of money.

CHICAGO REPORTER
 What if it were some criminal using
 stolen money?

All the Libera team, on stage and in control room, become a
 bit tense at her question not knowing where she intends to go
 with it. Marcus isn't as worried.

JOSH-15
 (cautiously)
 Then this would be a good way for
 them to atone for their mistakes.

CONTROL ROOM

MRS. GERAGHTY
 That's my boy.

Marcus gives her a puzzled look.

MRS. GERAGHTY (CONT'D)
 He's not all bad. Just his oldest
 brother rubs off on him sometimes.

STUDIO SET

CHICAGO REPORTER

News agencies have checked all the
lottery prize lists they could find
in America. None of the winners
will admit anything.

Cassius provides a unique tidbit of information.

CASSIUS-10

(nonchalant)

No one ever said it was an American
lottery.

This stuns the reporter for a second.

JOSH-15

(chooses words carefully)

Look, we can wildly speculate about
our benefactor forever. The fact is
they're doing a very nice thing
that's benefitting not just us but
everyone who hears us as well. If
revealing more about them would
jeopardize that then--

Josh tries to quickly resolve an internal conflict he's
having about truth and lies.

JOSH-15 (CONT'D)

--maybe that would be the tragedy.

For the briefest moment, Chicago Reporter's face registers
the word "tragedy" but then reacts to the cameraman's signal
to wrap it up.

CHICAGO REPORTER

(flustered)

Well, since we're "wildly
speculating"...I admit it! It's me!

Robert gives little reaction to her nonsense. The boys react
with varying degrees of mock surprise. Kavana most of all.

KAVANA-10

(gladly)

Does this mean you'll validate our
parking?

INT. GUEST WAITING ROOM TV STUDIO, CHICAGO - MOMENTS LATER

Marcus shoves Josh and Kavana in with him and closes the door.

MARCUS EDWARDS
(somewhat upset)
"Validate our parking"?

KAVANA-10
She was getting all sarcastic.

MARCUS EDWARDS
You're suppose to be endearing
yourselves to these people.

KAVANA-10
I was just trying to give her a
taste of her own medicine.

MARCUS EDWARDS
You got a license to practice
medicine in this state?

KAVANA-10
(unsure)
No.

MARCUS EDWARDS
(to Kavana)
Pick a wall!

Kavana dutifully stands facing the nearest wall.

MARCUS EDWARDS (CONT'D)
(turns to Josh)
Didn't I tell you to keep Freddie
away from these things?

JOSH-15
He begged Robert to come along. I
couldn't stop him. He didn't
mention any names, just - small
planes fly upside down. We all know
how to handle questions about our
personal lives. As for the rest of
it, we all know what a contract
means.

MARCUS EDWARDS
I'm sorry you have to keep doing
these interviews but there's no way
out of it. You've got to tell the
others to--

JOSH-15
 (confrontational)
 To what? To lie? I'm not telling my
 friends to tell lies.

MARCUS EDWARDS
 I didn't say--

JOSH-15
 Every answer I gave in that studio
 was the truth. Go back and watch
 the recording if you don't believe
 it. Perhaps you shouldn't ask me to
 do any of these again.

Josh leaves the room followed by Marcus. Kavana has been trying to look like he has not been paying attention. An angry Mrs. Geraghty appears, grabs the back of his shirt and drags him out now too.

FLASHFORWARD TO:

INT. BIG BEN/TOM/OLIVER, WNC RECEPTION - PRESENT, EVENING

The three of them are quietly discussing the "Benefactor" when Robert approaches with a few of the boys in tow.

ROBERT PRIZEMAN
 Ah, there you are, Ben. They're
 ready for us up at the Cathedral.
 You go on , I'll assist Ian with
 rounding up the boys.

Robert acknowledges Tom and Oliver. Before heading off with Big Ben, Tom salutes Robert with his drink.

TOM
 Wicked party, Robert - "As it
 should be".

Robert is bemused by Tom's typical assessment.

MARCUS AND MASHA

The two of them stand somewhat isolated at the side of the room.

MASHA TERESHKOVA
 I must confess when you first
 contacted me five weeks ago, I
 thought it might be about another
 matter.

(MORE)

MASHA TERESHKOVA (CONT'D)

As inheritor of the Soviet Union's diplomatic legacy, the Russian Federation is still party to all remaining protocols of the 1963 Nuclear Test Ban Treaty with the United States and the United Kingdom. Violations of this treaty--

MARCUS EDWARDS

(cuts her off)

Technically there haven't been any treaty violations so none of the protocols are required.

Masha quickly calls up on her pad a satellite photo of Griffin's New Mexico test site and housing compound.

MASHA TERESHKOVA

And yet the UK saw fit to commandeer this location in New Mexico one year ago - even to the point of denying United States access to it for a time. Technically its radiation signature is quite unmistakable.

Marcus tries not to show he is surprised and impressed by the photo.

MARCUS EDWARDS

See - we weren't allowed in either. Don't see us making a fuss about it.

MASHA TERESHKOVA

So, only British citizens have been permitted access--

Masha pauses to think a moment while gazing out at the reception hall.

MASHA TERESHKOVA (CONT'D)

And the tour passed through New Mexico--

Marcus' mind is racing to try and derail Masha's train of thought.

MASHA TERESHKOVA (CONT'D)

(points to Marcus)

And you have accompanied them--

MARCUS EDWARDS

(breaks in)

Masha, there are a lot of things
you can be thinking right now. All
of them are wrong.

MASHA TERESHKOVA

Prove it.

Just then, Robert passes by with the boys he has collected so
far.

ROBERT PRIZEMAN

(to Masha)

Please excuse me.

(to Marcus)

They're ready for us in the Nave--

Marcus sees an opportunity and jumps on it.

MARCUS EDWARDS

(quickly)

Wonderful, Robert. Have you met
Miss Tereshkova? You should escort
her up to the Cathedral.

(begins pushing them
together)

She'd love to hear all about it.
I'll help Ian wrangle the rest of
the choir.

Masha turns back to Marcus as she and Robert head off.

MASHA TERESHKOVA

(pleasantly)

We are not through yet, you and I.

CHICAGO REPORTER AND KAVANA-10

CHICAGO REPORTER

(exasperated)

The Girl Scouts?

KAVANA-10

Does anyone really know where all
that cookie money goes?

Chicago Reporter sees the PRESIDENT is departing the hall as
well and draws her tormentors' attention to this.

CHICAGO REPORTER
Boys, boys; the President's
leaving. Did you get a picture with
him?

KAVANA-10
(coolly)
Oh yeah, we took care of all that
yesterday in his Round Room.

Chicago Reporter and nearby, DAVID PENN-13 and KENNY-12, look
at each other stupefied that anyone would not know it is--

MATCH FLASHBACK TO:

INT. OVAL OFFICE, WHITE HOUSE - TOUR WEEK #6, DAY

PRESIDENT
(points out)
Oval - actually, not round. So,
over here by the desk?

Everyone begins moving across the room.

PRESIDENT (CONT'D)
Perhaps Mr. Edwards will join us in
one.

Marcus gives a small wave to decline the offer.

PRESIDENT (CONT'D)
(looks directly at Marcus)
I insist.

MARCUS EDWARDS, being the only person in the room who did not
hear a request but rather, an order, joins the PRESIDENT and
ALL 26 BOYS in front of his desk for a photo. As they
position themselves, ZACK-9 is caught in the center and
pushes his way to the front. President comments.

PRESIDENT (CONT'D)
Hey, what's all this?

ZACK-9
I'm smallest so I have to be in
front.

PRESIDENT
(playfully)
And the rest of you let him get
away with that?

JONATHAN-14

Yeah, what is up with that? Not in any contract I ever signed.

As the others grumble in agreement, Jonathan drags Zack to the back of the crowd where he is completely unseen.

JONATHAN-14 (CONT'D)

Take your turn in the back like everyone else.

(to President)

Sounds "democratic".

ZACK-9

(hidden)

Doesn't look very "democratic".

PRESIDENT

(playing along)

No, it doesn't. In fact it looks down right Republican. But that's another matter. How about we try something called--

President picks Zack up and stands him on the desk.

PRESIDENT (CONT'D)

--compromise.

Zack, now two feet taller than everyone else, throws his arms up in triumph as the photo is taken.

FLASHFORWARD TO:

EXT. BISHOP'S GARDEN, WNC CLOSE - PRESENT, NIGHT

Ian leads the choir out of Olmsted Woods across Pilgrim Road to the Garden's lawn. They pass a few obvious Secret Service Agents.

IAN TILLEY

Boys, gather 'round here for a moment.

Everyone stands in a loose group well off the small road. The President's limousine slowly drives up followed by the British Ambassador's. Both stop and the engines are turned off. More Secret Service agents appear around the cars from the darkness. No one exits from the President's car but three men get out of the Ambassador's.

From the near side of the vehicle the BRITISH AMBASSADOR himself and the BRIGADIER from the New Mexico military hospital emerge. From the far side, REG JENKINS, Freddie's dad, comes around to join them. Reg appears worn and tired from all the personal and work ordeals of the past 6 weeks.

Freddie rushes to his dad's side.

FREDDIE-10

Dad! Is - is mum OK?

REG JENKINS

(reassures him)

Yes. Yes, Freddie. She's just fine.

Reg walks Freddie back to the group and stands with him.

BRITISH AMBASSADOR

Gentlemen, earlier in your tour of the United States, you were surreptitiously made aware of an incident in the American Southwest which caused the death of over 100 British Nationals. I wish to personally commend you all for keeping this information confidential as Mr. Tilley instructed. The complete sad circumstances surrounding this tragedy will be disclosed to you and your families at a meeting after you have returned to England. However; there is a slight possibility details of the event will break in news reports as early as tomorrow. Mr. Jenkins, of the FCO, is here to assist in a briefing for members of your staff at the British Embassy in the morning should a response be necessary.

DAVID PENN-13, UPPER GARDEN WALL

David tries to peer down to the garden as quietly as possible to hear what is being said. Then, just as silently, a piece of paper with the words "**Don't call out**" written on it is held in front of his face. David feels a strong hand grab his shirt collar and pull him away from the wall. When spun around, he is facing Marcus Edwards.

MARCUS EDWARDS
 (hushed voice, indicates
 limousines)
 Do you have any idea how many
 weapons are aimed at you right now?

DAVID PENN-13
 (a bit scared)
 No - no, Sir - Admiral, Sir.

MARCUS EDWARDS
 Retired Admiral, retired Admiral.
 Do you see the deck of a ship under
 my feet?

David appears confused for a second.

DAVID PENN-13
 Mom says it's hard to tell
 sometimes, Grandpa.

BISHOP'S GARDEN

The Brigadier has retrieved a triangular wooden box from the
 Ambassador's vehicle. He opens it to reveal a worn, folded
 United Kingdom flag inside.

BRIGADIER
 When last you saw this Union Jack,
 it was being flown in a place of
 reverence for a group of people who
 did nothing more than meet the
 extraordinary adversities fate
 presented to them.

Josh steps out from the back of the group.

JOSH-15
 (to Brigadier)
 Sir, why were these people hidden -
 out in the desert like that?

REG JENKINS
 Not hidden, Josh. Protected. The
 same as I and all your parents work
 with Ian to protect your lives from
 being turned into something they're
 not by internet miscreants and
 media lowlife.

BRIGADIER
 (formal)
 Joshua - and for your friends.
 (MORE)

BRIGADIER (CONT'D)

On behalf of Her Majesty's
Government, please accept this flag--
(hands it to Josh)
--as a sign of our appreciation for
services rendered to citizens of
the British Commonwealth on station
in the United States.

Josh, and all the members of Libera, don't quite know what to
make of this honor.

INT. WEST PORTAL DOORS, CATHEDRAL, WNC - MOMENTS LATER, NIGHT

Libera choir, Ian and Marcus enter. Josh hands the flag case
to Ian for safe keeping as they all file past him in the
Narthex.

IAN TILLEY

(indicates flag)
Now boys - remember.

All understand they are not to speak of what took place in
Bishop's Garden.

INT. NAVE, CATHEDRAL, WNC - CONTINUOUS, NIGHT

CASSIUS-10

(walking through Nave)
I'm only ten. Don't know if there's
room in me for any more secrets.

Marcus rescues Robert from Masha as he passes them in Warren
Bay.

ROBERT PRIZEMAN

(excusing himself)
Madam, I do not dispute the
existence of your friends in Ishim,
only that the Christian tradition
of Cathedral Choirs predates your
old Soviet style music collectives
by hundreds of years. If you'll
excuse me.

CROSSING, CATHEDRAL, WNC - CONTINUOUS

Marcus, Robert and the choir join Big Ben, Steven and the
group of alumni two bays back from the stage. Some of the
younger boys appear worn out from the long day of activities.

KAVANA-10 notices DAREN'S displeased stare as he moves to stand on the far side of the aisle from him.

MARCUS EDWARDS

All set?

BIG BEN

Almost. Just making sure the fans are running.

HENRY-10

(points to stage)

Wow! What's that? Wasn't there this afternoon.

BIG BEN

That, if you wouldn't stare out the window when the adults are talking to you, is the lighting effect for the end of the show tomorrow night.

HENRY-10

I do pay attention 'cause I know we're not supposed to see it.

MARCUS EDWARDS

You're allowed to see it, you just won't be able to. But we need to test it so--

BIG BEN

Ready. We'll play the end of a song and some recorded applause so you get the full impact.

All interior lighting in the Cathedral is turned off. A single, narrow white spotlight shines down on the center of the stage which has been covered with a two to three foot high cloud of fog. KENNY-12 and OTHER WNC BOYS act as stand-ins playfully exaggerating Libera's performance as the concluding verses of "*I Am The Day*" are heard followed by applause.

At the final note of the song, the stage light is cut off and the stand-ins exit stage left, unseen. As the roar of the applause is heard, twenty-six separate spotlights now come into play. An expression of delight appears on the boys' faces as a silhouette each one recognizes as his own is projected onto a white porous screen shrouded in fog that spans the width of the stage and reaches Sixty feet high under the Rood Beam.

A few boys illustrate their image with motions of their fingers while others are pointing out the mechanics of the effect regarding the stage fog, hoses, fans, screen and light masts.

The boys are impressed. The alumni reaction is more subdued. Robert, has his own opinion.

ROBERT PRIZEMAN
Ostentatious! In the extreme! Is
the Bishop aware of this?

MARCUS EDWARDS
(deadpan to Big Ben)
Is she?

BIG BEN
(to Robert)
Yes, of course, it's all been
cleared with the Dean.

A few Nave lights are turned back on.

JAMES-11
You don't like it, Robert?

ROBERT PRIZEMAN
Like it?

KAVANA-10
What's wrong with it?

ROBERT PRIZEMAN
Wrong? It's lacking, that's what's
wrong with it.

OLIVER
I wasn't aware ostentatious and
lacking were synonyms.

BIG BEN
(tries to clarify)
Lacking?

ROBERT PRIZEMAN
Lacking my name--
(points)
--right there.

Marcus and Big Ben exchange looks of bewilderment since Robert has never insisted on being included like this before. Not sure he is joking or serious, they pursue the matter delicately.

Sitting a few rows back holding the wooden flag case, Ian seems pleased with Robert's distracting performance. David Penn quietly takes a seat across from Ian, stealing a look at the flag case as he does.

MARCUS EDWARDS

Robert, you've never--
(turns to Big Ben)

BIG BEN

It will take two days just to fabricate one of them. It has to stand the heat of the spotlight.

MARCUS EDWARDS

Robert, you do understand all this happens after the boys--
(gestures)
--all of them, are off the stage and on the bus, and hopefully off the property. Security is insisting. There will be far more dignitaries tomorrow.

ROBERT PRIZEMAN

Yes, yes; "pulling an Elvis" you called it. Perfectly horrid expression.

MARCUS EDWARDS

And you'll still be right there, on stage, basking.

ROBERT PRIZEMAN

Basking? How much basking?

MARCUS EDWARDS

Much as you wish.

OLIVER

That much!

All turn to him.

OLIVER (CONT'D)

It's just that the lads and I have seen Robert bask before. Does the Bishop know about this?

ROBERT PRIZEMAN

Impertinent - to the end, young man.

OLIVER
Perhaps not.

All are focused on Robert's and Oliver's exchange.

TOM
Had a long talk with Oliver on the flight over. He's agreed to head up Libera's exit program back in London.

Boys and alumni express their approval. Josh sees Ben's smile of appreciation and relief.

OLIVER
(to Robert)
I can tell you're so looking forward to having me around again. I do have experience in this area.

ROBERT PRIZEMAN
Experience - yes - exactly what we need there.
(turns back to stage)
Could do without the impertinence.
(changes subject)
Been a long hard tour. Bit of basking isn't totally uncalled for. You could do with some yourself, Edwards.

BIG BEN
Robert, did you just give Marcus a compliment?

ROBERT PRIZEMAN
And why not? He's kept his end of the bargain.

MARCUS EDWARDS
As have all of you, so far.

ROBERT PRIZEMAN
Yes, yes; I know. All that rubbish in the contract. Stuff and--

MATCH FLASHBACK TO:

INT. ROBERT'S OFFICE, LONDON - PRE TOUR, DAY

ROBERT PRIZEMAN
--nonsense! Why can't the boys say where the money comes from?

As Robert, Marcus and Big Ben settle into the office, Robert catches sight of LIAM-13 balancing a soccer ball with his foot in the rehearsal room and raps on the window for his attention. Liam watches as Robert holds his right palm vertically and uses the left hand index and middle fingers to walk over to it and stand. Liam immediately comprehends "pick a wall", drops the ball and proceeds to do so.

MARCUS EDWARDS

Because it's not about the money.
It's about Libera. It's about you,
Mr. Prizeman and all those amazing,
exceptionally talented boys you put
on that stage year after year.
Look, you want your music and its
message to reach the widest
possible audience, correct?

ROBERT PRIZEMAN

Yes, of course.

MARCUS EDWARDS

If you only had the money. Well,
you have the talent and my client,
who's been very lucky with lottery
numbers, has the money. Simple.

ROBERT PRIZEMAN

Ian would seem to think it's that
simple. I've yet to meet a Yank who
didn't want to take credit for
something.

MARCUS EDWARDS

(thinks a moment)
Ever meet Neil Armstrong?

ROBERT PRIZEMAN

Who?

BIG BEN

First man on the moon. American
chap, I believe.

ROBERT PRIZEMAN

Well, what of him?

MARCUS EDWARDS

Ever attend a lecture or speech he
gave?

ROBERT PRIZEMAN

No. Why?

MARCUS EDWARDS

Why indeed.

ROBERT PRIZEMAN

(bit confused)

I don't know when or where he gives them.

(fumbles with calender)

Is there one coming up?

MARCUS EDWARDS

Not likely, he died a short time ago. First human to set foot on another rock in space and most people today have no idea if he's alive or dead. My point is he rarely, if ever, took any personal credit for it. He knew; way back then, he understood - the event wasn't about him. I need you to understand what we're proposing isn't about us. Hell, I'm one of those people condemned to sit in the dark. Damned to forever applaud the talents of others.

(somewhat sad)

I've accepted that.

(taps Bible on desk)

Being humble isn't a fault.

MATCH FLASHFORWARD TO:

INT. NAVE, CATHEDRAL, WNC - PRESENT/CONTINUOUS, NIGHT

ROBERT PRIZEMAN

(gestures to stage)

So you say I'll be standing right about there.

BIG BEN

We'll work all that out during tomorrows rehearsal.

MARCUS AND FREDDIE-10

MARCUS EDWARDS

Freddie, could you come with me a moment, please. There's someone I'd like you to meet.

INT. WARREN BAY, NAVE, CATHEDRAL, WNC - CONTINUOUS

The Space Window is well illuminated by the outdoor floodlights aimed at the structure. Masha is admiring it alone away from the stage as Marcus and Freddie approach.

MARCUS EDWARDS

Masha Tereshkova, this is Freddie Jenkins.

Freddie extends his hand and they shake.

MASHA TERESHKOVA

It is a great pleasure to meet you, Frederick.

FREDDIE-10

Nice to meet--

(notes accent)

--are you from Russia? I was just in your country a few--

(catches himself)

--um, I mean--

MASHA TERESHKOVA

Do not worry. I am well acquainted with every detail of your journey.

FREDDIE-10

(to Marcus)

But I thought no one else--

MASHA TERESHKOVA

Government foolishness.

MARCUS EDWARDS

Freddie, I never have apologized to you for my shortsightedness. We made all the arrangements for your Mother to be flown to America should something happen to you. It never occurred to us you would have to go there.

MASHA TERESHKOVA

You do not think a young boy such as yourself could fly through the Russian sky without someone--

(gestures to herself)

--first making sure it is safe to do so.

(they exchange smiles)

How is your mother?

FREDDIE-10

(upbeat)

Better every day. Dad says when I return home in two days, so will she.

MASHA TERESHKOVA

This is wonderful news. But I am wondering why you did not stay at home when she was transferred to the United Kingdom?

FREDDIE-10

(thoughtfully)

Well, wasn't anything I could do there, really. Dad said it was all in the hands of the Doctors and God. All me and him could do was pray. Mum always says when she hears me sing in the choir, it's like the most special prayer ever. So you see, I had to come back.

Masha and Marcus are impressed with Freddie's response, for different reasons. Masha stoops down to Freddie's height.

MASHA TERESHKOVA

Some day, Frederick, when you are a great leader, you must make wise decisions such as this.

FREDDIE-10

Thank you, I will.

Freddie turns to leave but stops to ask a question.

FREDDIE-10 (CONT'D)

Miss Tereshkova, will you be attending tomorrow night's performance?

MARCUS EDWARDS

She's to be my special guest.

FREDDIE-10

Great. You've just solved a problem for me.

Marcus and Masha both give him a curious look.

FREDDIE-10 (CONT'D)

(smiles)

You'll see.

INT. CROSSING, CATHEDRAL, WNC - CONTINUOUS

Freddie runs up to the boys at front of stage still looking up at the screen.

CONOR-8

(pointing)

So my "John Hancock" is going to be up there in those clouds.

TIARNAN-13

Your what?

CONOR-8

Don't you listen to the old chaps at the signing table.

(best American accent)

"Put your John Hancock right there, sonny."

(own voice)

Didn't know what they meant at first so I just kept signing my name. Turns out that's what they wanted all along, just like this John Hancock fellow signed the bullet proof glass we saw at the museum.

A few older boys know what Conor is talking about. Kenny, nearby, has a look of disbelief on his face.

ANTHONY-13

I believe Mr. Hancock signed the old piece of parchment behind the bullet proof glass.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. JOSH AND BEN'S HOTEL ROOM, WASHINGTON DC - LATER THAT NIGHT

Ben is concluding his shower. Josh reclines on his bed going over some downloads on his laptop. On one side of the screen is a printed quote from Professor and Reverend Alicia Griffin: "**Research gives us a return and your soul gives you a return as well**". It's part of a list of topics on the subject of scientifically justifying God's existence.

JOSH-15

Scientist and Vicar.

A thought comes to Josh, perhaps the Brigadier misstated himself when referring to the Vicar as "he".

Next to it a short video with Griffin titled: **"GOD IS OUT THERE"** plays which Josh listens to on a private earpiece.

GRIFFIN

(on video, vociferous)

Clergy assert science is a false belief. Academia declare religion an outdated excuse for fact. Cosmology - the Earth was created by the gravitational attraction within a swirling cloud of intergalactic dust. Who's finger set that dust in motion on that first day? The entire process has "God" written all over it. Why can't the disciplines of knowledge and faith be united? Maybe my team and I in America won't achieve it but someday, someone will!

Josh closes out the file when he hears the shower stop.

JOSH-15

(shouts to bathroom)

Are you done trying to ignore me?

BEN-15 (O.S.)

(shouts)

No.

JOSH-15

Ben, I'm not going to argue this. You're giving yours to Ian and I'm giving mine to Robert.

Ben enters from the bathroom wearing only a towel around his waist still dripping from his shower.

BEN-15

Ian and Robert have emphatically said they want nothing to do with this.

JOSH-15

When have you ever known me to do what I'm emphatically told?

BEN-15

That's beside the point. Who's got Marcus? He hasn't found out, has he?

JOSH-15
Not so far as I know and it's none
of your business who anyone else
has.

Phone rings. Josh nonchalantly answers knowing who it is.

JOSH-15 (CONT'D)
Hello.

KAVANA-10
(deep voice over phone)
Do you have Prince Albert in a can?

JOSH-15
Go to bed, Kavana, or you'll be
doing laundry when we get back to
London as well.

Josh hangs up phone and sits on edge of bed.

JOSH-15 (CONT'D)
Ben, remember coming home from Asia
last year and we had to put down in
Athens and they told us about--

MATCH FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. ACROPOLIS, ATHENS GREECE - ONE YEAR AGO, DAY

BEN-14
--Volcanic ash!? We're in Greece
for crying out loud! What do you
mean we have to bloody walk home?

FLASHFORWARD TO:

INT. JOSH AND BEN'S HOTEL ROOM, WASHINGTON DC -
PRESENT/CONTINUOUS, NIGHT

BEN-15
I do seem to recall it, yes.

JOSH-15
You took what should have been one
of the most miserable trips we've
ever been on and turned it into one
of the most fun adventures we've
ever had.

BEN-15

I like to see the fun in life, not the misery.

JOSH-15

Well, you're lucky. We're lucky, all of us. And Ian knows that. He insisted you be on this tour.

BEN-15

Insisted?

JOSH-15

(takes a breath)

Robert wanted to cut you before the tour - Ian overruled him.

BEN-15

Ian's never overruled--

JOSH-15

He's the only one of us who knows everything that's going on here so he also knows everything that could go wrong. He knows - we know - how important you are to all of us.

Ben is caught unawares by his friend's words.

BEN-15

Explain to me again, your Lord High Choristership, exactly how it is you know all this.

JOSH-15

I suppose it was put best by a fictional character a few years back, "There are certain advantages to being me."

There is a timid knock on the door. Josh jumps up to answer it.

JOSH-15 (CONT'D)

That will be Freddie.

Opening the door, Josh finds Freddie carrying a plastic bag with folders in it and accompanied by Masha Tereshkova. Josh pretends to be surprised.

JOSH-15 (CONT'D)

Freddie.

MASHA TERESHKOVA

This young man has lost his way in the corridors. He remembered your room number and says you can help him find his. Is this true?

JOSH-15

Yes, I can. Thank you Miss--

MASHA TERESHKOVA

--Tereshkova.

(turns to Freddie)

Now, do you have all of your belongings?

FREDDIE-10

Yes Ma'am, thank you for helping me pick them up. I'll be alright now.

Josh takes the bag from Freddie and goes to his bed. Ben closes the door and sits Freddie in a nearby chair.

BEN-15

(to Freddie)

Do you know that lady?

FREDDIE-10

She's a friend of Mr. Edwards. I think she paid for my plane rides in Russia.

Freddie becomes worried at seeing Josh spread the folders out on the bed across the room.

FREDDIE-10 (CONT'D)

(scared)

Josh, dad took his sleeping pills but they don't always work. He just doesn't - travel well.

BEN-15

For someone who doesn't travel well, your dad has a very peculiar job.

(crosses to the bed)

What is all this?

JOSH-15

What everyone has been lying to us about.

BEN-15

(irritated)

Josh, you don't know--

JOSH-15

(angered)

Well I'm going to know. For half my life I was lied to - by my parents - about "where all the money came from". I'm not letting it happen again.

Josh silences Ben as he opens a folder labeled "**Extra-Solar Diamopluridion Mortality Rate**". It lists 108 men, women and children of all ages followed by "Duration of Exposure" and "Term of Expiration".

JOSH-15 (CONT'D)

Eighty-Seven from the plane crash story plus Twenty-One ribbons throughout the tour equals--

Ben looks in one labeled "**BNC Super Thermal Plasma Reaction**". Inside are pictures, drawings and other technical data on the New Mexico rocket engine test site and Brentworth Nuclear Coil. Another page folds out and is labeled "**Excavation/Elevations Meteorite Impact Section 15. Suspected Ex-Sol Biomass Class IV - Inert**".

JOSH-15 (CONT'D)

(looks at Ben's folder)

Where's Jonathan when you need him? He's good with all this scientific stuff.

Ben still isn't taking all this too seriously.

BEN-15

Well, that's just it, even Jonathan doesn't know where he is.

Ben puts the folder down and picks up another labeled "**Budget Excess Disbursement**". Charitable and humanitarian organizations are listed along with sums of money in the millions allocated to them. Ben reads out loud part of a letter attached to it.

BEN-15 (CONT'D)

"It is the expressed intention of the surviving undersigned team members that all remaining project funds be apportioned as follows."

(scans names)

Josh, these names, they're ones with ribbons on the wall in New Mexico. And look.

Ben points to the name "Libera" on the list and follows across to the amount - 4.2 Million.

Josh picks up a closed envelope, opens it and starts removing its contents.

JOSH-15

(puzzled)

So before all these people died,
how ever they died, they willed all
their money to us and these other
organizations.

BEN-15

Maybe we should just wait and let
them explain it all when we get
home like the Ambassador said.

FREDDIE-10

(pleads)

Please, Josh.

Before Josh can respond he is repulsed by some pictures from the envelope.

BEN-15

Uh! What is that?

JOSH-15

(guessing)

Tests on some sort of lab animal.

He drops the pictures on the bed and returns to the other material. Something in the pictures catches Ben's eye and he turns them to another angle. Lifting some up, he reveals another sheet of close-up images of what appear to be small reddish-brown stains on pieces of paper similar to the jam stain on Margaret Lewis's letter. Ben instantly becomes weak kneed at the grotesque images in his hand and his face goes completely white.

BEN-15

(frightened)

Josh - these aren't - anim--

He throws his hands over his mouth and runs to the bathroom where we hear him VOMITING O.S. Freddie runs to check on him.

Josh looks at the pictures again. The horribly grotesque images can barely be made out as human and now he sees the names associated with them. Names he has seen before. Family names. One other name grabs his attention.

The one that authorized the pictures. **"Dr. M.V. Edwards, Admiral USN (ret)"**.

Josh quickly gathers up all the documents and returns them to the bag. At the bathroom door he checks on Ben rinsing his face with cold water from the tub faucet, Ben waves he is OK.

JOSH-15
 (to Freddie)
 You still have your dad's key card
 he gave you?
 (Freddie nods yes)
 Let's go.

CUT TO:

INT. 7TH FLOOR PILGRIM OBSERVATION GALLERY, CATHEDRAL WEST TOWERS, WNC - NIGHT

Elevator doors open. DAVID PENN-13, KENNY-12 and two other WNC BOYS exit.

KENNY-12
 (points to North Tower)
 You two take "Vader". Me and Dave
 will go this way.

Kenny and David begin clearing the South Tower of guests.

KENNY-12 (CONT'D)
 Excuse me folks, we need to close
 the observation area. If you would,
 please take the elevator down to
 the Narthex, thank you.

David makes his way along the windows to the South wall where he finds a man in the dim light gazing out at the night vista of Washington DC and its monuments.

DAVID PENN-13
 Excuse me, sir, we--

Marcus Edwards is slightly startled by David's voice.

DAVID PENN-13 (CONT'D)
 Um - they told us to send everyone
 downstairs.

Marcus nods in acknowledgement. David starts to leave then turns back to Marcus.

DAVID PENN-13 (CONT'D)
 I'm sorry about what happened in
 Bishop's Garden. I know you didn't
 want me to be here. I haven't said
 anything - I've stayed clear of--
 (pause)
 Mom made me volunteer.

MARCUS EDWARDS
 Then it wasn't your fault.

David is silent a moment then braves another remark.

DAVID PENN-13
 (hushed tone)
 It's been a year. It's been more
 than a year. Mom's all upset. You
 said you'd explain--

MARCUS EDWARDS
 Your mother is from a military
 family. She understands orders.

The two of them become a bit irritated with each other but
 maintain their hushed voices. Kenny starts to approach them
 but stops in the background shadows.

DAVID PENN-13
 No she doesn't, Grandpa. We've both
 been trying to figure it all out.
 She wanted to go to New Mexico last
 Christmas and Dad told her how mad
 you'd be and after you went to
 England a couple months ago she
 wanted to take me with her to
 Oxford - like it would mean
 something to me.

At the mention of "Oxford" Marcus immediately turns a worried
 look to his grandson.

DAVID PENN-13 (CONT'D)
 If you could just tell us--

MARCUS EDWARDS
 I can't tell you--
 (pause)
 I can't explain--

The matter has finally become too much for him. Marcus slumps
 into a nearby chair and stares out the windows up into the
 sky. He seems to be talking to someone other than David.

MARCUS EDWARDS (CONT'D)
(sobs a little)
--what I don't understand. One
Hundred and Eight people. Whole
families. Kids, younger than you.
All gone. I couldn't save them with
this--

He opens his left hand to reveal a US Navy Medical Insignia
Pin in a blue case.

MARCUS EDWARDS (CONT'D)
--or this.

He tightly clasps a similar red case in his right hand then
returns his gaze to the sky.

MARCUS EDWARDS (CONT'D)
(saddened)
And I don't understand.

David, close to tears, hugs his Grandfather in the chair.

DAVID PENN-13
It'll be alright, Grandpa. If you
could just come home I know it will
be alright.

MARCUS EDWARDS
Soon. Very soon.

EXT. AERIAL SHOT - WASHINGTON NATIONAL CATHEDRAL, WASHINGTON
DC - NIGHT

MATCH DISSOLVE:

EXT. AERIAL SHOT - WASHINGTON NATIONAL CATHEDRAL, WASHINGTON
DC - NEXT MORNING

INT. HOTEL RESTAURANT, WASHINGTON DC - MORNING

CHOIR and CREW are all enjoying breakfast, except for Josh
and Ben who aren't saying a word as they eat off to the side
and Freddie who is not present. Marcus, standing at the lobby
doorway, notices this. Marcus stops Tim Wilkinson as he
enters.

MARCUS EDWARDS
Tim, have you seen Freddie this
morning?

TIM WILKINSON

Still in his room. Reg made it sound like he was afraid to get out of bed. I've heard of opening night jitters but closing night - new one on me.

Marcus continues watching the room. Ben finishes his meal and leaves Josh at the table where Robert immediately takes his vacant seat. Josh and Robert begin talking so as not to let anyone else hear. Both have very somber expressions. Marcus' view is obscured by others walking past.

INT. HOTEL STAIRWAY - SEVERAL MINUTES LATER, MORNING

JOSH-15 enters alone and begins climbing to the next floor but stops abruptly when he sees MARCUS EDWARDS waiting on the next landing.

MARCUS EDWARDS

(confrontational)

Still think being lied to is the worst thing that can happen to you?

Josh looks Marcus in the eye but says nothing.

MARCUS EDWARDS (CONT'D)

Freddie's afraid to come out of his room.

Josh realizes Marcus knows what happened last night. He averts his stare momentarily but knows he has to tell the truth, however difficult it is.

JOSH-15

Freddie's - upset with me - because I made him bring me--

MARCUS EDWARDS

(angered)

Did he see any--?

JOSH-15

No. He didn't see any of it. I looked at it and Ben saw - some of it. It didn't make any sense.

MARCUS EDWARDS

Everything that's been done and said about that incident has been for the good of everyone involved.

JOSH-15

The truth is supposed to be for the good of everyone. You weren't afraid of it at St. Michael's.

MARCUS EDWARDS

When the truth is incomplete it can hurt more than the lie.

JOSH-15

But the lies still hurt.

MARCUS EDWARDS

I'm not going to pretend to know what it was like for you and your brothers when your parents were convicted, especially you as young as you were, but I can't believe they meant to hurt any of you.

JOSH-15

(close to tears)

But it still hurts!

MARCUS EDWARDS

Humans lie, all the time. Most of them don't even know they're doing it.

JOSH-15

(angered)

I'll know. And I won't--

MARCUS EDWARDS

Your music - does it promote a truth--

(grapples with his thoughts)

-- or perpetuate a lie?

JOSH-15

Your wrong to ask that.

MARCUS EDWARDS

People--

(shakes doubt from his mind)

--People ask. It's how you answer that matters.

(pause)

What were you talking to Robert about just now?

JOSH-15

What I was talking to my choir director about is none of your business.

Josh proceeds to climb the stairs.

MARCUS EDWARDS

Where are you going?

JOSH-15

To tell Mr. Jenkins what's wrong with Freddie.

Disgusted, both of them turn to leave. Josh turns back.

JOSH-15 (CONT'D)

Oh, and one more thing - Admiral. The whole time we've been talking here, I haven't told you one damn lie.

EXT. HOTEL ENTRY - ONE HOUR LATER, DAY

Tim Wilkinson, Mrs. Geraghty, and other adult Libera staff are getting into a British Embassy van. Mrs. Geraghty gets Marcus' attention.

MRS. GERAGHTY

(complaining)

I still don't understand who is going to be looking after the boys while all of us are at the Embassy.

MARCUS EDWARDS

Capitol Police and Secret Service are all over the Close. They're being looked after by the same people who protect the President of the United States.

MRS. GERAGHTY

I'm afraid I've lost count of the number of your Presidents who have been shot at and assassinated.

MARCUS EDWARDS

(sarcastic)

What a pleasantly awful memory for you to dredge up.

MRS. GERAGHTY

Mr. Edwards, are you making fun of me again?

MARCUS EDWARDS

Now Mrs. Geraghty, when you say things like that, you make it sound as though I've stopped making fun of you at some point.

Marcus slams the door and the van pulls away. He crosses over to the car Ian and Reg will be taking as the boys file onto the bus for the Cathedral.

BIG BEN

(to boys on bus)

Robert and Steven are attending a recital at the French Embassy with some friends. They'll join us later this morning.

HENRY-10

Is that the Ambassador Robert knows?

TIARNAN-13

Yes, from the Organist Society.

Last few stragglers exit hotel. They hear Reg Jenkins' raised voice admonishing Ian and Marcus.

REG JENKINS

(upset)

I've got the authority to pack them all back to England this minute. What on Earth were you thinking, Ian?

IAN TILLEY

Reg - if you'd only been there--

REG JENKINS

I've been there! Even if we can stop this news leak, the Foreign Office still has to deal with the whole mess. Now Marcus, I apologize for what happened last night and I've dealt with those involved but I'll not have these boys tormented about this any more. I swear, I'll pull the lot of them right off the stage at the Cathedral if I have to.

Josh lowers his head a bit as he climbs in the bus.

MARCUS EDWARDS

You know my orders, Reg, and who gave them. I believe I've demonstrated on more than one occasion - no harm of any kind comes to these kids.

REG JENKINS

Yes, yes. Look, it may have been Griffin's wish but it's become my responsibility, whether any of us likes it or not.

INT. BUS - MOMENTS LATER, DAY

Marcus says something to BEN-15 and takes a seat near the front. Ben proceeds down the aisle to where Josh is sitting. And repeats the message as the bus begins to move.

JOSH

JOSH-15

Are you sure he said Zack, not Freddie?

Ben nods, motions for ZACK-9 sitting nearby and all three return to Marcus' seat up front.

MARCUS' SEAT

Zack sits next to Marcus. Josh and Ben stand behind them. All three boys are a bit apprehensive.

MARCUS EDWARDS

(to Zack)

I just wanted to be sure to tell you I think it's a wonderful thing you've been doing for Conor the past six weeks.

ZACK-9

For - Conor?

Marcus and Ben exchange a quick glance.

MARCUS EDWARDS

When Ben measures the two of you on stage, Conor stands just a bit taller than he should and you, in your oversized robe, scrunch down just enough so a casual observer won't notice. I've seen it quite a few times.

Ben and Josh exchange a glance now.

BEN-15

(whispers)
Sorry, Dumbledore.

ZACK-9

(slightly worried)
Conor's already the youngest and it's his first tour. He wasn't sure he wanted to be smallest too. So I said, if he didn't mind, I'd be smallest again because I already knew how to do it. You're not going to tell, are you?

MARCUS EDWARDS

Nah, I'm not gonna tell.

Josh isn't happy about the lesson he is being force fed. Zack, much relieved, stands to head back to his seat.

ZACK-9

Oh, Mr. Edwards--

MARCUS EDWARDS

Marcus - all this time and you still haven't learned to call me Marcus.

ZACK-9

Um - yes - Marcus, who is going to be looking after us this morning?

INT. MUSIC ROOM, ST. ALBANS SCHOOL, WNC - TWO HOURS LATER, DAY

The LIBERA CHOIR sits and stands on one side of the room silently staring at the WNC CHOIR BOYS sitting and standing across from them. In between at one end, KENNY-12 and JONATHAN-14 man a computer station displaying a voice analysis of LIAM-13 performing a standard voice exercise. Behind them stands MASHA TERESHKOVA.

MASHA TERESHKOVA
Excellent, Liam. Washington?

DAVID PENN-13 steps to the microphone to duplicate the same exercise.

KENNY-12
Show 'em how it's done in America,
Dave.

Others add their encouragement. Kenny quiets them down and David, under a bit more pressure than he wanted, performs the drill. When he's done, everyone rushes to view the result on the screen, crowding each other for a good look.

TIARNAN-13
Where is it? There's only one
track.

WNC CHORISTER #1
Kenny, you doofus, you deleted it.

TIARNAN-13
Alright, we win.
(all look at him)
Act of God.

JONATHAN-14
No, it says they're both displayed.
Wait.
(types a command)
Separate by half second.

What was one trace breaks into two identical traces.

ANDREW-11
Blimey! I've never seen anyone copy
someone else that perfect.

Liam and David, unnoticed by the others, look at each other and an unspoken "Wow" passes between them.

JOSH-15
I have. Oliver did it to Steven
once. Upset for weeks till he was
able to copy one of Oliver's back.

KENNY-12
Yeah, well Dave just did it in a
couple seconds.

WNC Choristers begin a "U-S-A, U-S-A" chant that the Libera boys try to ignore. Liam and David feel thrown into the role of peacemakers.

DAVID PENN-13
 (patronizing)
 OK, OK - so you lads are pretty
 good.

BEN-15
 (incredulous)
 Pretty good?

David Picks up Liam's soccer ball.

DAVID PENN-13
 What else ya good at?

LIAM-13
 (snatches ball)
 Where's the field, mate?

Liam leads an exuberant pack of WNC and Libera boys out of the room followed by the more cautious and concerned ones and a frantic Masha. Kenny and David are last to leave.

KENNY-12
 Are you nuts?! What if somethin'
 happens? What if we get in trouble?

DAVID PENN-13
 You're the one who always wants to
 compete with them. We won't get in
 trouble.

KENNY-12
 How do you know?

Kenny presses David for a specific answer.

KENNY-12 (CONT'D)
 How do you know?

DAVID PENN-13
 Ask me tomorrow.

INT. WILSON BAY, NAVE, CATHEDRAL, WNC - DAY

MARCUS EDWARDS is winding up a phone call.

SECURITY TECH
 (over phone)
 (MORE)

SECURITY TECH (CONT'D)

There are a few queries from big cities along the East coast of the US the past couple weeks but a lot of the activity comes from Venezuela and it most likely originated from...

MARCUS EDWARDS

I know where it most likely originated.

He shakes his head and silently mouths the name, "Masha, Masha, Masha."

MARCUS EDWARDS (CONT'D)

How detailed is the information in my Daughter's files?

SECURITY TECH

(over phone)

It appears to be just a collection of random data that she and another user are trying to piece together but if you have some knowledge of the people and the event, it wouldn't be difficult to follow it to Oxford University or Tulumcari, New Mexico.

MARCUS EDWARDS

Damn.

(pause)

Shut her website down for 48 hours.

SECURITY TECH

(over phone)

Edwards, I don't have the authority to--

MARCUS EDWARDS

(orders)

Shut it all down, just like the others. You'll have your authority in five minutes.

INT. CROSSING, CATHEDRAL, WNC - DAY

Preparations for rehearsal are proceeding. ROBERT PRIZEMAN, STEVEN and TOM stand at the foot of the stage.

ROBERT PRIZEMAN

(calmly)

I see musicians tuning, crewmen assembling, Edwards - arguing with security again no doubt, good luck to him.

(to Steven and Tom)

I see you.

(holds out his hand)

I see me. I do not see any choir boys.

Steven and Tom get the hint and along with the WNC ASSISTANT CHOIR DIRECTOR head out the South Transept doors and down the Pilgrim Stairs.

CUT TO:

INT. BRITISH EMBASSY, WASHINGTON DC - DAY

Mrs. Geraghty wipes tears from her eyes with a tissue as she looks over pictures of Griffin's research team and their families, their children, having fun at a desert picnic. Thoughts of her own family and her charges on the tour race through her mind. Ian puts an arm around her shoulders to comfort her.

MRS. GERAGHTY

(devastated)

Why couldn't you just tell us?

IAN TILLEY

If you could see yourself right now, you'd know why.

MRS. GERAGHTY

But - Reg--

IAN TILLEY

Reg and Marcus' instructions come from higher up than I care to think about.

Nearby, Reg Jenkins is explaining a bit more detail to others.

REG JENKINS

Secret provisions of the 1963 Nuclear Test Ban Treaty were meant to prevent the release of these molecular organisms, not just radiation in the atmosphere.

(MORE)

REG JENKINS (CONT'D)

It's theorized there are pockets of them throughout the Earth's crust. There's simply no way to detect them until after an event of sufficient yield. Unlike the widespread lasting effects of radiation the Extra-Solar biological hazard only exists in a local area for less than 24 hours. Inclusion of Brentworth's Nuclear Control Coil in Griffin's engine design wasn't thought to be a powerful enough catalyst.

Saddened, Reg looks over at the pictures Ian and Mrs. Geraghty are near.

IAN TILLEY

Marcus and the other doctors - they're the experts on this - they believed medical procedures had advanced enough the past fifty years to treat--

(indicates sections of report Josh saw)

They tried - to the very end, they tried.

(pause)

The US Navy has cancelled plans to adapt the engine design. Griffin's views on science and religion were never very popular here or in England. If word of the teams' and their families' deaths isn't properly released, these poor souls will be turned into monsters.

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD, WNC CLOSE - MOMENTS LATER, DAY

Masha and the entire gang of boys are huddled around and cheering on a battle of some sort taking place on a patch of dirt near the infield stands. TOM, STEVEN and ASST. DIRECTOR run in breaking it up and pull Kenny and Tiarnan to their feet.

KENNY-12

Ah no! Don't mess it up.

TIARNAN-13

Yes! I win!

(Kenny looks upset)

Act of God.

KENNY-12

(upset)

Act of God my--

Asst. Director cuts off Kenny's last word.

ASST. DIRECTOR

What's going on?

KENNY-12

(points at staff and notes
in dirt)

We were racing to see who could
transpose that to clarinet and
voice the fastest.

(to Tiarnan)

I was winning.

ASST. DIRECTOR

Whose idea was all this?

Josh, being Libera's head chorister, tries to take responsibility for their actions as does Masha but are beaten to it by David.

DAVID PENN-13

Mine. It was my idea to come down
here.

Asst. Director takes all this in a moment.

ASST. DIRECTOR

All of you, back up to the
Cathedral. Now.

(to David)

You, my office, all week.

David understands this to mean detention.

DAVID PENN-13

But - it's July. There's no school.

ASST. DIRECTOR

There's school in September.

All begin heading up the hill on Pilgrim Road. Asst. Director holds Kenny and David back to try and clarify what was going on.

ASST. DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

(points to notes on
ground)

This one's yours?

KENNY-12
 (smiling proudly)
 Yeah.

Asst. Director is not at all pleased with Kenny's attempt. He points at David while instructing Kenny to--

ASST. DIRECTOR
 Join him.

KENNY-12
 (unhappy, to David)
 Is it tomorrow yet?

EXT. PILGRIM ROAD, WNC CLOSE - CONTINUOUS, DAY

Everyone climbs the top of Mount St. Alban to the Cathedral in loose groups.

Liam tosses a handful of snack mix from his bag into his mouth.

Tom, a little way ahead of Liam, turns back to the stragglers.

TOM
 Come on you l--

Instead of saying the word "lot", his expression turns to one of frightened concern.

TOM (CONT'D)
 Liam?

INT. SOUND BOARD, NAVE, CATHEDRAL, WNC - MOMENTS LATER

Robert is conferring with Big Ben. Marcus, a short distance away, makes a quick call.

VOICE
 (over phone)
 British Embassy, how may I direct your call?

MARCUS EDWARDS
 Day code.

VOICE
 (over phone)
 Proceed.

MARCUS EDWARDS

1-8-3--
 (looks at watch)
 --2-6.

VOICE

(over phone)
 Confirmed.

MARCUS EDWARDS

Message - Jenkins - leak access
 denied - enjoy the show - end.

VOICE

(over phone)
 Confirmed.

Just then a commotion at the South Transept doors draws everyone's attention.

FREDDIE-10/HENRY-10 (O.S.)

(shouting)
 We've got the bloody pass, let us
 in. Robert! Mr. Edwards! Robert!

Unmistakable expression of dread crosses Marcus's face.

EXT. PILGRIM ROAD, WNC CLOSE - MOMENTS LATER, DAY

AMBULANCE CREW at center of confusion is loading Liam into the van. Terrified to tears, he looks fine except for the wild motions of his hands since he can not utter a sound.

Marcus sticks close to a Security Agent not wanting anyone else to hear the report.

SECURITY AGENT

Perimeter confirms, no weapons
 discharge on or off the Close.

Marcus quickly moves to the back of the van and points to Tom.

MARCUS EDWARDS

You're with me. The Embassy is
 taking Tim straight to the
 hospital.

Tom climbs in and Marcus follows then turns and addresses ROBERT and JOSH-15 before they can say anything, praying they understand the intention of his order.

MARCUS EDWARDS (CONT'D)
Keep - everyone - busy.

Door slams shut and the ambulance takes off.

INT. AMBULANCE - CONTINUOUS, DAY

Liam begins to shed a few silent tears, unable to understand what has happened to him. EMT breaks out a plastic airway to insert in Liam's throat.

MARCUS EDWARDS
What are you going to do with that?

EMT
The kid's having trouble breathing,
this'll help--

MARCUS EDWARDS
(cuts him off)
You shove that thing down his
throat and I'll shove this arm down
yours.

EMT
(assertive)
Listen, buddy--

Marcus has removed his wallet and is opening it for the EMT to see.

EMT (CONT'D)
--unless you're an MD, you don't
tell me--

EMT silences at seeing the card Marcus shows him. Tom and Liam exchange looks of surprise.

MARCUS EDWARDS
(orders)
Get some vitals on him and in case
you hadn't noticed, he's breathing
fine.
(to Liam, calmly)
You're not choking. Just breathe
normal.
(to Tom)
Where's that bag of kibble at?

Tom opens Liam's snack bag for them to examine.

MARCUS EDWARDS (CONT'D)

(to Liam)

This what you were eating?

(Liam indicates yes)

When's the last time you filled it?

This morning?

(Liam indicates no)

Last night? At the reception?

(Liam indicates yes)

TOM

What exactly are we looking for?

MARCUS EDWARDS

I don't know.

They poke around in the bag some and Tom spots a few tiny ball-like items.

TOM

Hang on. What are these?

Tom picks up one of the small items and carefully places it on his tongue. It immediately begins to burn and he hacks, coughs and spits it out.

INT. NAVE, CATHEDRAL, WNC - TWO HOURS LATER, DAY

Various aspects of the final show are being rehearsed by the boys, orchestra and crew. Special attention is paid to a rail apparatus similar to a camera dolly track and some climbing ropes supervised by a safety crew that will allow soloists up in the Triforium to return to the stage quickly. Curtains are being placed to mask the Transept areas from view of the Nave. Horizontal State flag poles along the Triforium railing are being raised to a near vertical position. Chaperones are on site now as well. Masha Tereshkova and Reg Jenkins are having a private pleasant chat.

ROBERT, SOUTH TRANSEPT

Robert takes a cell phone call at the South Transept doors.

ROBERT PRIZEMAN

A peppercorn?! How on earth--?

TOM

(on phone)

Two of them. Hasn't the foggiest notion how they got in there.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ER - CONTINUOUS

Tom talks on the phone while MARCUS EDWARDS, TIM WILKINSON and NURSE tend to LIAM-13 in the background.

TOM

(into phone)

Near as we can figure he inhaled them back into his larynx when he threw a handful of that trail mix in his mouth. They fused to the moisture on both sides of his vocal chords and swelled them up solid. He's breathing OK but can't make a peep. Doctors all agree, best thing to do is let the irritation subside on its own.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. ROBERT, SOUTH TRANSEPT, CATHEDRAL, WNC - CONTINUOUS

TOM

(over phone)

He won't be singing tonight, that's for sure.

CUT TO:

INT. STAGE, CROSSING, CATHEDRAL, WNC - CONTINUOUS

Robert gets everyone's attention.

ROBERT PRIZEMAN

Gather 'round, please. I have spoken with the Hospital. Liam will be just fine, however; he will not be performing this evening. We're going to have to reset all of his numbers.

ANDREW-11

All of them?

ROBERT PRIZEMAN

Yes, all of them. The other soloists will simply have to take them in turn as before.

NICHOLAS-12

But that was two separate shows, over several days time.

JOE-11 (O.S.)

Robert.

Everyone looks up to where JOE-11 is paused at the top of his rappel from the South Transept Triforium railing.

JOE-11 (CONT'D)

We spoke of this - my voice - remember? I was rather hoping Liam would be doing one of my early solos so I'd still be able to sing the encore.

ROBERT PRIZEMAN

(recalls)

Yes, yes. We may have to cut some of them entirely.

(to Joe)

Do come down from there.

Joe, using his descender, easily and confidently slides down the 50 foot rope as practiced during the group's visit to the Grand Canyon.

JONATHAN-14

We can't cut any of them.

ROBERT PRIZEMAN

What would you suggest?

MASHA TERESHKOVA

Perhaps, Mr. Prizeman--

(indicates South Rose Window)

--a little faith.

All pause a moment to take in this comment.

ROBERT PRIZEMAN

Yes - well, I blame myself. Relying on one of you more than--

JOSH-15

Robert, don't. All of us know - Liam is very good at what he does.

ROBERT PRIZEMAN

Still doesn't change the fact there is no one here right now who can do everything Liam could.

KAVANA-10

(has an idea)

Robert, your wrong.

ROBERT PRIZEMAN
I'm what?!

EXT. WASHINGTON NATIONAL CATHEDRAL - SEVERAL HOURS LATER,
SUNSET

Aerial shot of the Close as vehicle after vehicle delivers
its guests.

INT. CATHEDRAL NAVE, WNC - CONTINUOUS

Invited guests and dignitaries familiar from the previous
day's reception take their seats.

INT. CHOIR ROOM, CATHEDRAL CRYPT LEVEL, WNC - MOMENTS LATER

MARCUS EDWARDS, TIM WILKINSON and LIAM-13 are the only ones
in the room seated at a table in the middle. Liam gently
plays with a small stuffed moose. The muffled sound of a
concluding EVENSONG SERVICE can be heard from Bethlehem
Chapel just across the hall.

TIM WILKINSON
Liam, stop worrying. They're not
mad at you. It's bad it happened
but good it happened when and where
it did. I've seen you sneak a
handful of that stuff just before
going on stage. You don't plan
accidents - and - you can't always
fix them.

Marcus, whose thoughts seem elsewhere for a moment, does not
see that Tim has directed that last remark to both of them.
Marcus turns his attention to Liam.

MARCUS EDWARDS
Speaking of accidents. Got an
invoice from the Orlando hotel
yesterday.

Liam's eyebrows raise. He stops playing with the moose.

MARCUS EDWARDS (CONT'D)
How many Four Hundred Thirty-Seven
dollar vases were in that room?

Liam takes a swallow with some difficulty.

TIM WILKINSON
 (puzzled)
 Four Hundred Thirty--? What are you
 talking about - vases?

Marcus realizes this isn't the time or place to discuss the matter and diffuses it as all the other LIBERA and WNC groups enter through the Choir Room's double doors.

ROBERT PRIZEMAN
 A wonderful choir you have. Thank
 you so much for putting that
 Evensong together for us on such
 short notice.

ASST. DIRECTOR
 Believe me, Robert, the pleasure
 was all ours.

First boys in happily rush over to greet Liam followed by all. ANTHONY-13 and BEN-15 are completing some arrangements.

BEN-15
 (to Anthony)
 OK, for the last time, I promise -
 I won't look back after I start the
 story.

Everyone quiets down as Liam stands and takes two folded pieces of paper from his pocket.

LIAM-13
 (shows first note)
"SORRY, CAN'T TALK"
 (shows second note)
"DON'T YOU WISH I WAS BEN"

BEN-15
 (snatches note)
 Give me that.

Initial tension now relieved, Liam turns and faces Robert. After only a second, tears begin to well up in his eyes which Robert gently wipes away.

ROBERT PRIZEMAN
 Dear boy, everything will work out.
 You'll see.

Liam questioningly mouths the name "Ian" since he does not see him present.

ROBERT PRIZEMAN (CONT'D)

Ian is upstairs seeing to some important guests.

All but four performers don their signature robes and white shoes. Soloists for the opening number have shorts, white hoodies and are getting into their climbing harnesses. On and off stage transceivers are also prepared. KENNY-12 and other WNC support crew are tending to off stage items.

DAVID PENN-13 comes down the Rectory stairs directly to the Choir Room dressed in the black sneakers, black slacks and white hoodie of a Libera Chorister. He's a bit startled to find Marcus there but not as surprised as Marcus is to see him.

Liam doesn't understand. He looks to Robert and gestures to David.

ROBERT PRIZEMAN (CONT'D)

(displeased)

This was not my idea.

KAVANA-10

(steps forward)

It was my idea.

Liam glares at him. Kavana senses he's in trouble and drags the first person he can in front of him.

KAVANA-10 (CONT'D)

I mean it was Cassius' idea.

JOSH-15

(explains)

David rehearsed with us this afternoon. We're just not sure what's going to happen tonight. He'll be ready if we need him.

David senses Liam is still upset about possibly being replaced like this.

DAVID PENN-13

Look, Liam, they'll sound different without you but--

(pause)

--they'll sound just fine without me.

(pulls hoodie off)

I don't have to do this.

Liam sees his friend's faces, stops David, and motions for him to put the hoodie back on. After doing so, David becomes preoccupied with the neatness of his hair.

ROBERT PRIZEMAN

Another crisis averted. Only a few hundred more to go. How I allowed myself to be talked into all this foolishness tonight--

NATHANIEL-12

Ian says it's the same sort of thing you and he used to talk about doing when both of you were in choir, but you were too chicken.

ROBERT PRIZEMAN

I shall be having a long talk with our producer.

Jonathan sees Henry is putting on his Clipped Wing Robe.

JONATHAN-14

That's the robe you're going to wear tonight? You do know what's going to happen to it?

HENRY-10

I've got it all figured out. Do you enjoy annoying me?

JONATHAN-14

No - yes, wait, is this a trick question?

ROBERT PRIZEMAN

(to all)

Alright, listen up. The adults will be asking questions, the choristers will answer directly.

An air of seriousness comes over the room.

ROBERT PRIZEMAN (CONT'D)

First of all, did we get the Ambassador from Australia sorted out?

CALLUM-11

Yes, Robert. I've got him.

JONATHAN-14

(realizes)

Oh, Liam's robe!

Jonathan finds a box near the wall and hands it to Kenny.

JONATHAN-14 (CONT'D)

(thinks)

Stage left.

(to Liam)

Stage left.

(explains)

Liam, you're here. We'll include you all we can.

Liam's and everyone's spirits are raised by this.

ROBERT PRIZEMAN

Well done, Jonathan. Triforium safety?

ASST. DIRECTOR

Teams in place and ready, Robert.

ROBERT PRIZEMAN

Bit old for a chorister. Sound board?

BIG BEN

(points as he lists names)

Conductor, Director, Coordinator, Head Chorister and Designated Narrators?

All those present check their transceivers.

JOSH-15

(speaks for all)

Channel "A".

Next to Josh, Ben is writing a word on his forearm with a marker.

BIG BEN

Stage left and right?

KENNY-12

Channel "B".

BIG BEN

Triforium?

WNC CHORISTER #1

Channel "C".

BIG BEN

Arcade?

WNC CHORISTER #2
Channel "D".

ROBERT PRIZEMAN
I shan't be wishing us luck since I
have little expectation of
receiving any but I will leave you
all with this. Remember where you
are. Remember why you are here.
(looks to his choir)
And remember who you are. Lastly
but certainly not least.

Robert walks to Josh and Ben at the back wall. Josh looks
Robert in the eyes but Ben is preoccupied with his notes.

ROBERT PRIZEMAN (CONT'D)
Benedict.

Ben, startled, looks up to see everyone watching.

ROBERT PRIZEMAN (CONT'D)
You're not going to force me to
order you to smile tonight, are
you?

BEN-15
(quiver in voice)
Would you, please?

Robert clasps Ben's hands then gives him a hearty pat on the
back as Josh calls--

JOSH-15
Three cheers for Ben!

All the Libera choristers CHEER their friend on his last
performance. Marcus, standing well back, notices Josh too
seems to be taking the cheer.

ROBERT PRIZEMAN
And with that, for the last time on
this tour I shall announce - Final
Call.

Robert indicates all but the Libera choir should exit the
room. Josh stops David and says he should stay. Marcus is the
last at the door but Robert stops him.

ROBERT PRIZEMAN (CONT'D)
Oh, not you, Marcus. It occurs to
me the boys have never had a chance
to express there appreciation for
all you've done.
(MORE)

ROBERT PRIZEMAN (CONT'D)

This call is yours.

(to Josh)

Head chorister, stage line in ten minutes.

INT. LIBERA, CATHEDRAL CHOIR ROOM, WNC - CONTINUOUS

Marcus, caught completely off guard by Robert's gesture, can only watch as Robert leaves and closes the door. He turns around to see everyone looking at him.

David, thinking his presence is what is making Marcus uneasy, is the first to speak.

DAVID PENN-13

Let me make this easy for you. Show of hands, everyone who's pretty sure - this man is my grandfather.

All 26 hands go up.

DAVID PENN-13 (CONT'D)

(to Marcus)

I took all that stuff you said off my site, and more--

MARCUS EDWARDS

And simply moved it to your Mother's.

ZACK-9

Where there's still an old picture of you standing between your two taller brothers.

A few snickers among the boys as Marcus blankly stares at David.

DAVID PENN-13

She likes that picture. Says it puts you in your place.

JOSH-15

(speaks up)

Allow me to make this even more easy for you. Show of hands, everyone who knows the true reason for our tour here in America.

Marcus is angered by Josh's boldness but is checked by all 26 hands once again going up.

JOSH-15 (CONT'D)

I beg you to recall my words in the stairway this morning. I'm the only one--

MARCUS EDWARDS

(interrupts)

I believe you, Josh. I believe you.

The boys lower their hands.

JOSH-15

I don't even think Robert knows what we've been able--

MARCUS EDWARDS

Robert knows - or he wouldn't have left me in here just now.

FREDDIE-10

It's mostly my fault, Mr. Edwards. When me and dad were waiting at the hospital in Yaktinburg--

MARCUS EDWARDS

(corrects him)

Ekaterinburg. And Freddie - none of you have done anything wrong.

FREDDIE-10

Yes, well - before dad knew I'd be rejoining the tour, he told me about some people who were here in America, who lost their whole families in an accident, and - dad explained to me - and to Josh this morning, it was all much worse than we first thought and all they had was God to help them cope because no one else could help them.

JOSH-15

(jumps in to clarify)

I believe, Dr. Edwards, what Freddie means to say--

Marcus holds his hand up to stop Josh from continuing as the others react to the word "Doctor" which Liam tries to confirm by mouthing the word.

MARCUS EDWARDS

I know what he means. I was there.

TIARNAN-13

At the hospital in New Mexico,
where Ian took us?

DAVID PENN-13

He was in charge.
(looks to Marcus)
Weren't you?

Marcus takes two small cases from his pocket, one blue one red, and opens the blue one revealing his Medical insignia.

MARCUS EDWARDS

Some days, when I would walk down
the ward - I wouldn't hear any
cries of pain or sorrow. Just the
sounds of your voices. That sound
did so effortlessly what I couldn't
find the strength to do.
(clenches red case)

JONATHAN-14

So - you did all this? Our tour?

MARCUS EDWARDS

Professor Griffin--

JOSH-15

(adds)
Reverend Griffin, she was an
ordained Minister.

MARCUS EDWARDS

A most extraordinary one. She
decided - demanded - that the
remaining funds from their project
be used for humanitarian purposes.
No one disagreed.

(pause)
Last thing she said to me - "Don't
ever stop looking. Don't ever stop
sharing". Some scientists think God
can be found in sub atomic
particles. Griffin wanted to search
the distant reaches of the
Universe. In Twenty-One cities
across this country--

(makes eye contact with
all)
--I haven't had to look any farther
than the edge of a stage.

HENRY-10

I still don't quite understand how we helped those people, Mr. Edwards. We never met them. We didn't even know them.

MARCUS EDWARDS

They knew you.

DAVID PENN-13

They knew you too, grandpa.

David indicates the red case which Marcus cautiously opens revealing a small simple gold cross.

DAVID PENN-13 (CONT'D)

It's a US Navy Chaplain's insignia.

BEN-15

You're a Vicar?

Zack's eyes widen a bit at realizing what this means.

MARCUS EDWARDS

(confesses)

Not sure I've been very good at it lately.

DAVID PENN-13

(corrects him)

Good enough.

MARCUS EDWARDS

We never meant to burden any of you with all this.

BEN-15

Both happy and sad in our line of work sometimes.

Marcus nods in agreement.

MARCUS EDWARDS

In a few minutes, you have to go up in that Cathedral and amaze your guests.

Josh checks the clock.

JOSH-15

(confidently, for all)

In a few minutes, that's exactly what we'll do.

Everyone agrees as they complete their preparations. Zack walks up to Marcus, almost kicks him in the shin as usual but calls to him instead.

ZACK-9
(confused)
Mister - Doctor--

MARCUS EDWARDS
Marcus. Call me Marcus.

ZACK-9
Yes - am I going to hell for all
those times I kicked - a Priest?

MARCUS EDWARDS
(smiles)
No, you're not going to hell.
But when you get home--

Marcus repeats Robert's hand gesture for "pick a wall". Zack gets the idea.

Marcus turns his attention to David. David begins pinning the two insignias on Marcus' lapel.

MARCUS EDWARDS (CONT'D)
(indicates David's outfit)
Your mother is going to kill me
when she finds out about this.

DAVID PENN-13
That's not exactly how she put it.
(pause)
She's been mad all day, can't get
access to her website or something.

A small smile of acknowledgement appears on Marcus' face.

MARCUS EDWARDS
I'm pretty sure why these four are
wearing hoodies now. How come you
don't get a robe?

DAVID PENN-13
Robert won't let me.

ANDREW-11 (O.S.)
(best American accent)
Ain't got the accent fer it, dude.

Some laughter from the others in their trademark robes.

MARCUS EDWARDS

I suppose you weren't there long
enough to pick that up.

David's eyes drop to the floor a moment then return to Marcus
a bit uncertain.

DAVID PENN-13

They don't know. Not even Kenny and
the guys. It all happened so fast.
Robert wasn't real keen on the idea
- I've just - never said--

JOSH-15

What?

Marcus, a bit peeved at David's reticence, quickly scans the
boys' faces and cautiously begins an explanation.

MARCUS EDWARDS

My grandson was a premature baby--
(recalls unpleasant
memory)
--like his mother. His parents
thought they'd be back in the
States before he was born.

JOSH-15

Where--?

DAVID PENN-13

St. Thomas' Hospital - right across
the Thames from Westminster.

ALFIE-15

Wait - that's the hospital I was--

CUT TO:

EXT. WASHINGTON NATIONAL CATHEDRAL - NIGHT

A LARGE CROWD of people have been seated on the North and
West lawns where an outdoor speaker system has been set up
and more crowds are gathered across Wisconsin Avenue.

All aesthetic lighting on the exterior of the Cathedral is
abruptly cut off and a cheer goes up from the crowd.

INT. "FAR AWAY", CATHEDRAL, WNC - NIGHT

All interior lights dim resulting in a similar reaction from
the Nave audience.

Orchestra in the North Transept plays opening notes of "FAR AWAY". Stage is completely dark and covered with fog. The FOUR SOLOISTS wearing hoodies stand at the darkened Triforium railing of Wilson, Folger, Dulin and White Bays Fifty feet above the Nave floor. Each is illuminated by a spotlight in turn as they sing the opening solo lyric leading the audience's attention to the back of the Nave.

As each completes his quarter of the opening solo, he makes his way, swiftly unseen, by rail board to the North or South Transept railing, hooks onto the prepared rope, slides down, de-hoodies and dons his robe as rehearsed with the WNC crew. All in about 60 seconds undetected by the audience.

The 21 remaining choristers have since stepped out of the stage fog into the clear for the first chorus as a distraction to all the soloists activity. When the audience anticipates more solo singing from the Triforium, they are surprised to see all four of them step out in turn on the stage now as well.

The song concludes and Freddie steps downstage.

INT. STAGE, CATHEDRAL, WNC - CONTINUOUS, NIGHT

FREDDIE-10
Hello, I'm Freddie--

Before Freddie gets another word out, Robert whips around at his Director's Podium to direct the audience saying--

AUDIENCE
--and you're called Libera!

Everyone on stage is taken by surprise at what Robert planned while they were with Marcus. When he turns back to them, they know it's his way of saying - we all have a job to do tonight.

FREDDIE-10
(befuddled)
Yes, that's correct. Welcome to our last - I mean, final performance celeb - Final Celebration Performance of our United States tour.

Everyone behind Freddie is pointing a "gotcha" finger at him and the audience directs his attention to it.

FREDDIE-10 (CONT'D)

(explains)

They're all carrying out a sort of tradition we have on stage. First one to mess up out here has to pay for all the pizza tonight.

(to choir)

Not fair I have to go first.

MAN IN AUDIENCE #1

(holds up wallet)

I got ya covered, Freddie.

FREDDIE-10

Thank you, sir. You must be one of those "Congress People" I've heard about with their wallets out all the time.

General laughter from US Government members of audience.

FREDDIE-10 (CONT'D)

Over the past six weeks, we've travelled from California on one side of your country, through a whole lot of zigzagging in the middle, and ended up on the other side of America in your capital city of Washington DC. I'd like to say we made it all the way without a scratch - but--

NICHOLAS-12 steps forward and waves his left hand allowing the sleeve to fall back showing his forearm cast. RAULE-11 and CARLOS-12 stand out also.

RAULE-11

There have been a lot of stories about how this happened. Dirtbike riding accident.

CARLOS-12

Rock climbing accident.

FREDDIE-10

(stifles laugh)

Grizzly bear wrestling accident.

NICHOLAS-12

(proudly)

I started that one.

RAULE-11

Then again, perhaps some of you
have heard the expression when you
wake up in the morning to--
(points to Nick)
--roll out of bed.

MATCH FLASHBACK TO:

INT. NICHOLAS' DAD AT HOME, LONDON - TOUR WEEK #5, DAY

NICHOLAS' DAD
(into phone, perplexed)
'e did what?!

MATCH FLASHFORWARD TO:

INT. STAGE, CATHEDRAL, WNC - PRESENT/CONTINUOUS, NIGHT

NICHOLAS-12
Grizzly bear wrestlin's way cooler.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SONG MONTAGE/MEDLEY #1, CATHEDRAL, WNC - NIGHT

Many secular and popular Libera songs are performed in the first half of the show. While lighting and graphics play on the screen above the stage, the fog effect is not utilized during the main part of the show. Transept curtains have been removed so as not to impede the acoustic qualities of the Cathedral. A free standing floor blind is all that hides the backstage activity. Audience members we have met and those we have not are shown enjoying and at times emotionally moved by what they see and hear.

MARCUS EDWARDS, MASHA TERESHKOVA and LIAM-13 are in the last row of the security area on the center aisle. Marcus is a bit uneasy about the seating arrangement at the front of the next section just beyond the security aisle. The people he thought were to be in the front row are now one row back.

Many of the boys, when off stage between songs, have secretly changed out of their traditional white shoes and into sneakers of their own imaginative design. Audience does not detect this as their line of site is blocked by audio monitors and lighting equipment at foot of raised stage.

Transition from first to second half of the show takes place with ALUMNI; DAREN, TOM and OLIVER included, joining the performance of "Jerusalem".

Video cameras are also present as this will be the show number included in the tour album. Josh is pleased to see IAN, who sang in the choir years ago before its name change, has climbed on stage as well. While the men and cameras leave the stage, Josh thanks the orchestra and music soloists then directs all current members of Libera to identify themselves to the crowd ending with--

INT. STAGE, CATHEDRAL, WNC - NIGHT

ZACK-9

And I'm Zack and I am still the smallest person in the choir.

TOM (O.S.)

(loud boisterous)

Measure him.

BACKSTAGE LEFT

TOM (CONT'D)

(to Oliver)

Edwards told me to yell that out when we were at hospital with Liam.

STAGE, BEN-15/ZACK-9/CONOR-8

Ben borrows Robert's baton as Zack and Conor stand back to back mid stage. All three begin the normal routine.

BEN-15

Now stand up straight.

MARCUS EDWARDS (O.S.)

(shouts from seat)

Both of you.

Zack looks out to Marcus, grins, and pokes Conor with his upstage elbow to let him know something is up. Ben completes his task and while handing back Robert's baton announces--

BEN-15

Ladies and gentlemen, it would seem all this hearty American food has done Zack some good.

Zack repeats his triumphant pose on the President's desk to the cheers of all, then leads Conor back to his place while giving him a private piece of advice.

ZACK-9
Remember, you don't take any crud
from anyone off this stage.
(Conor nods)

INT. "AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL", CATHEDRAL, WNC - NIGHT

Jonathan and Henry step downstage.

JONATHAN-14
Seems we're all in for some sort of
surprise tonight. I'm Jonathan.

HENRY-10
And I'm Henry, his older brother -
I mean--

Henry immediately catches his slip up but Jonathan comments
before he can correct it.

JONATHAN-14
You wish!

Most boys on stage laugh a bit with the crowd.

JONATHAN-14 (CONT'D)
When Libera tours in other
countries; Korea, Japan,
Philippines, we try to perform a
song in the language of that
country.

HENRY-10
Imagine our relief when we learned
we were touring in America this
summer.

Everyone upstage wipes their brow in unison. Jonathan gives
Henry a playful push back to the group.

JONATHAN-14
However; that relief was short
lived. Please welcome our Navajo
and Cherokee language instructors
as they assist Robert in directing
our next song.

The choir breaks into three equally voiced groups as the
CHEROKEE and NAVAJO INSTRUCTORS stand with Robert at the
director's podium. With full orchestration, "*America The
Beautiful*" is sung.

First verse and group in Cherokee, Second verse and group in Navajo and third verse and group in English with sporadic applause and cheers throughout as the audience realizes what they are hearing. The number ends with the full choir singing first verse refrain in English.

The audience give all involved a standing ovation.

INT. "GLORIA", CATHEDRAL, WNC - NIGHT

By now, all 25 performers on stage have completed their shoe exchange. Robert stands at the top of the steps from the center aisle to the stage.

ROBERT PRIZEMAN

They learned all that on the coach
while we roamed the prairies.
Extraordinary. I would like--

KAVANA-10 takes a quick step forward.

KAVANA-10

(stage whisper reminder)
Hello, I'm Robert.

Robert rolls his eyes.

ROBERT PRIZEMAN

Hello, - I'm - Robert.

Kavana, satisfied, steps back.

ROBERT PRIZEMAN (CONT'D)

I would like to say just a few
quick words about what you see and
hear when Libera performs. The
robes, reminiscent of monk habits
from centuries past, are the visual
connection to traditions of the
church throughout Medieval Europe -
completely white to reflect the
artistic mood of the song, not as
some would suggest, to indicate any
"angelic nature" of the boy inside.

Robert's monologue is interrupted by a playful laugh from the audience as the boys all find ways; leaping in the air, climbing up on another's back, lifting a smaller one in their arms, to show off their multi-colored and patterned shoes.

ROBERT PRIZEMAN (CONT'D)

At rehearsal this afternoon I was told - nay, ordered - not to look behind me just then. Libera is, after all, the Latin word for "free". Which brings us to what you hear. Often times the boys are asked, "Why do you sing songs in a dead language?"

TIARNAN-13 swiftly moves downstage to Robert's right and chimes in with his response.

TIARNAN-13

(boastfully)

And often times we respond to these Frenchmen--

Robert's eyes bulge open wide.

TIARNAN-13 (CONT'D)

--'ere now! We 'appen to think the King's English is alive and well thank ye kindly!

IAN, sitting stage left in the front row, tries to hide the smile on his face as he looks over a few rows back at the FRENCH AMBASSADOR who has a pretty convincing look of surprise on his face.

Robert turns his shocked glare on Tiarnan, dismissing him back to the choir. As he addresses the crowd, Robert sees Ian is not upset by the incident.

ROBERT PRIZEMAN

(to Ambassador)

I do apologize, your Excellency.

(to all)

The Latin the boys sing is the traditional language of the Biblical Scriptures, the unifying text of our Faith around the world.

As Tiarnan retakes his position, Josh looks at him with disbelief to which Tiarnan merely gives a confident wink to say all is fine. On Josh's other side, Ben is trying desperately not to bust out laughing.

Robert has returned to his podium to direct the exultant and uplifting "Gloria" and is a little apprehensive when Tiarnan steps out to sing the solo lyrics which, again to Robert's and the choir's astonishment, he does - in French - not the Latin rehearsed with the choir earlier that afternoon.

In the audience, the French Ambassador follows every syllable exactly as tutored, secretly, at yesterday's reception.

EXT. GLORIA IN EXCELSIS TOWER, WNC - NIGHT

The over Three Hundred foot tall central Gloria In Excelsis Tower is ablaze in lights during the song and as it concludes there is a burst of fireworks from the open windows followed by three peals of the 10 peal bells. The OUTDOOR CROWD stands and cheers.

INT. STAGE, CATHEDRAL, WNC - NIGHT

BEN-15 takes his place center stage.

BEN-15

Hello. It's me, Ben! I'd just like to thank all of you for accepting our invitation to be here tonight. Especially those of you with really important jobs; Vice-Presidential--

Ben is interrupted by some unexpected laughter.

BEN-15 (CONT'D)

(confused)

What? That's not an important job?

The VICE-PRESIDENT sitting front row stage left responds.

VICE-PRESIDENT

I think it's important.

BEN-15

Well, that makes two of us.

(continues his list)

Senatorial, Ambassadorial, and Gub -
Goob -

(checks word on forearm)

Goob-en-a-torial. Is there anyone here who does that?

A man and woman, Governors of there States, raise their hands.

BEN-15 (CONT'D)

Yes, you sir and madam, I have been in America for six weeks, travelled from one end to the other and I have yet to figure out what a "goober" does.

Sporadic laughter from the government workers in attendance.

FEMALE GOVERNOR
(shouts)
It's a long story.

Ben pounces on this as only he can.

BEN-15
Speaking of long stories - it's
time for--
(very dramatic)
--The Tale Of The Menacing Volcanic
Ash Cloud!

Orchestra plays a few theatrically ominous chords. Audience is anticipatory. The group on stage is not.

KAVANA-10
(indifferent)
For the Seventy-Third time.

ANTHONY-13
Oh, way more than that. He tells it
again at the signing tables.

ALEX-12
Airports, train stations.

ANDREW-11
Buffet queue at the restaurant.

ADAM-14
Remember that elderly couple - got
caught in the lift with him? When
those doors opened - I didn't know
old people could run that fast.

Ben dismisses their assessments and focuses only on the crowd in the Nave as he retells his version of the groups flight home from Asia interrupted by the ash cloud from an Icelandic volcano.

As he begins the tale at the Acropolis in Athens, Anthony moves stage right and is handed a small pail. Making sure the audience can see, he dips his hand into it and comes up with what appears to be a grey powder. Silently, swiftly, a similar pail is handed to all the boys on stage. Jonathan takes two. As the pails are handed out, Henry in particular is again showing signs of weariness from the long day.

Pail brigade takes two careful steps toward Ben at center stage but freeze when Ben dramatically moves downstage to the top of the center aisle steps - the tale moving across the Adriatic Sea via ferry to Venice. After a moment of thought, Anthony indicates they should continue forward even though Ben is now a few feet from the first rows. Those near the stage react with some concern and Ben responds to this by upping his presentation and leaps down the steps to the Nave floor.

NAVE, CATHEDRAL

Pail brigade is stopped in it's tracks again, appearing disappointed. Ben proceeds down the center aisle - and across the Alps by coach in the story. Anthony once more pulls up some of the ash substance from his pail for the audience to see. A bit of a wicked grin forms on his face and he quickly dispatches some of the boys down both side aisles while he and the others creep behind Ben.

The audible reaction from the audience to this coincides with a point in the story that would also elicit such a response. Ben can not believe how engaged they all are.

When the center team pass the back row of the security section where Liam is sitting with Marcus and Masha, Jonathan motions for Liam to join them and hands over the second pail.

Ben, totally focused on the story, moves across the wide security break in the seating to illustrate crossing the English Channel by boat. Dispersed boys are now converging on Ben through the standing audience behind him.

BEN-15

(breathless)

Dover at last! But the closer we
get to home, the nearer the ash
cloud closes in!

The guests directly next to where Ben now stands throw their hands up in front of their faces in fear. Ben excitedly points at them.

BEN-15 (CONT'D)

Yes! Yes! That's it exactly!
(turns to stage)
Guys, look!

At that instant all anyone can see are buckets of grey cardboard and paper confetti being hurled in Ben's direction.

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SONG MONTAGE/MEDLEY #2, CATHEDRAL, WNC - NIGHT

Many of Libera's sacred and contemplative songs are featured here. At one point during "*Rest In Peace*", Marcus notices Ian, in the first row, staring up into the North Transept. From the Triforium railing a familiar United Kingdom flag is reverently held aloft illuminated by a single overhead light. Marcus is drawn to look behind him and sees everyone in the that first row of the next section also gazing at the flag as well.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. "SANCTE", CATHEDRAL, WNC - NIGHT

Lighting is set and Robert raises his hands to begin the song but as it starts it is immediately apparent to him and others on stage, as well as Liam off stage, that something is wrong. Within seconds both Jonathan and Josh give the cross arm signal over their chests to stop the song. Robert spreads his arms wide to bring the choir to silence.

Josh looks to Jonathan as if to say "it was your call" and Jonathan reluctantly speaks up.

JONATHAN-14

Please excuse us while we reset. We are singing outside our normal routine and it would appear one of us is--

(emphasizes)

--staring out the window.

These last words grab Henry's attention and he turns back to Jonathan but it is Kavana standing next to him who details his error.

KAVANA-10

You're in the wrong key, mate.

Henry realizes his mistake and addresses Robert in his best adult manner.

HENRY-10

I do apologize, Robert. May we begin again, please?

Robert officially acknowledges Henry with a nod. As Robert raises his hands to begin the song again, Henry shoots a quick look back at Jonathan, desperately wanting to say "I'm tellin' Mum" but knowing, this time, he cannot.

Jonathan's expression of sadness for Henry is unseen by others on the dimly lit stage. He knows Henry may now be excluded from the next tour.

The beautiful lyrics, harmonies and orchestration of "Sancte" fill the Cathedral.

INT. STAGE LEFT, CATHEDRAL, WNC - NIGHT

DAVID PENN-13, KENNY-12, TOM and ASST. DIRECTOR watch and listen from side of stage.

KENNY-12

(hushed)

Man - one minute they're up there
goofin' around and the next--

(gestures to stage)

DAVID PENN-13

(admiration)

Tell me about it.

TOM

(agrees)

Yeah, except Henry wasn't joking.
He really made a mistake. He'll not
be going down-under, that's for
sure.

Asst. Director looks to David urgently.

ASST. DIRECTOR

Get ready.

(explains)

One of Robert's choristers just
made a mistake. He isn't going to
let it happen again.

(points to stage)

James' voice is getting tired. I
can hear it, you can hear it and
Robert can hear it.

Tom agrees and takes a worried and uncertain David aside to prepare him. Just then, Kenny gets a message over his headset from Big Ben at the sound board and responds.

KENNY-12

Yeah - yeah, we are.

STAGE/NAVE

James-11's voice does indeed begin to worry even him to the point he gives the surreptitious hand signal to the sound board that he wants an alternate soloist to finish the number.

The audience, captivated by the emotion of the performance, is unaware of the mini drama playing out before their eyes. In an instant a flash of LED's at the sound board visible only from the stage elicits a response from the soloist who can finish the piece.

Both Callum and Nathaniel decline.

Down in the Nave, Liam is on the edge of his seat being the only audience member who realizes what is happening. He very nearly jumps out of it seeing Josh's confirmation signal, knowing the Head Chorister has just been told in his earpiece, "be prepared to stop".

Desperate, Liam stares directly at Raule who fixes on him as Liam mouths the words "do it". After what seems like the longest second of time to pass in the universe, Raule, encouraged by Liam's plea, confirms with the pre arranged finger gesture at his side and an acknowledgement LED flash lets James know he can stand back.

Raule steps out for the remaining solo lyrics. Liam sinks back into his chair and lets out a long careful breath.

Masha has been watching Liam out of the corner of her eye and knows she should be impressed by what has just happened even though she doesn't know what it was.

Backstage left, Tom is completing his preparations with David.

"Sancte" concludes, "Prizeman Perfect", to a standing ovation.

INT. "LIBERA", CATHEDRAL, WNC - NIGHT

Josh moves center stage looking over to James-11 as he does but James simply shakes his head "no".

JOSH-15

Those of you who have been to one or more of our earlier concerts in America have no doubt noticed by now we're one short on stage tonight.

(MORE)

JOSH-15 (CONT'D)

That's because after six weeks and several thousand miles, someone's voice finally gave out - and it was our good friend Liam.

(looks at Liam's seat)

The other soloists have been doing their part, filling in as needed--

Josh is interrupted by the sound of a single person applauding that turns into a cascade of applause throughout the Nave, many once again standing. Soloists filling in for their sidelined friend are especially appreciative, not just for the recognition but because they see it is being led enthusiastically and genuinely by Liam.

Applause dies down and Josh continues.

JOSH-15 (CONT'D)

Thank you.

(looks to Liam)

Thank you.

(to audience)

Just in case however; we did arrange for some emergency back up.

BACKSTAGE LEFT

As Josh makes his next statement, Kenny gets David, Tom and Asst. Director's attention by raising his hands in front of him.

JOSH-15 (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Did you know that there is a Cathedral Boys Choir right here on this very Close?

Before Josh can utter another word, Kenny makes three short "U" shaped movements with his hands clandestinely directing every other WNC CHORISTER wherever they presently are in the Cathedral in responding loud and proud...

WNC CHORISTERS

Yes - we - do!

Kenny clenches his fists in success at pulling off his little secret prank.

STAGE

A bit of surprise and laughter on stage and off.

JOSH-15

Quite vocal lads too, it would seem. Can't believe I just said that. Please welcome, from Washington National Cathedral and St. Albans School, David Penn.

BACKSTAGE LEFT

Tom ushers a now even more nervous David out on stage.

TOM

Good luck.

Under the sound of the applauding crowd, Kenny adds his best wishes too.

KENNY-12

Show 'em how we do it in America.

ASST. DIRECTOR

(leans to Kenny's ear)

You do know where David was born, don't you?

Kenny's expression would suggest he does not.

STAGE

Josh greets David center stage and before taking his position upstage, seeing David's nervousness--

JOSH-15

(to David)

Breathe, mate.

All on stage stand with their hands clasped behind them as Robert acknowledges David and raises his hands to begin directing the next song. However; to the surprise of all on stage, and backstage crew, he spreads them wide once again indicating a halt to the performance. Josh is immediately attentive to his transceiver but there is no message.

NAVE

Robert turns from the stage and addresses the audience.

ROBERT PRIZEMAN

Perhaps - a special guest chorister
- requires a special guest -
Director.

On the word "Director" Robert looks directly at Liam.

Even those occupying the very last row of seats in the Nave see Liam jubilantly climb on his seat and leap over the back into the security aisle and race around to Robert at the foot of the stage.

STAGE

On stage the mood is a bit different.

BIG BEN

(urgent, in Josh's
earpiece)

What are the chances David knows
Liam stretches out the last note
longer than Robert?

JOSH-15

(calmly into mic)

Absolutely zero. What about the
orchestra?

CONDUCTOR

(in Josh's earpiece)

Thanks for the heads up, gentlemen.
Let's hope our chorister follows
his Director.

CENTER AISLE

Everyone is applauding Liam's big break. He is all smiles and overly excited.

ROBERT PRIZEMAN

(to Liam)

Just keep the tempo. Oh - find some
excuse to go up there and remind
him not to bow.

Robert heads off to Liam's seat and Liam, still thrilled at this opportunity, suddenly remembers - he can't talk.

Liam confidently climbs the steps to check out this newfangled American chorister. Everyone's eyes on stage are on Liam.

STAGE

Liam brushes an imaginary bit of dirt off David's shoulder as he circles him. David stands still, hands behind him and looking straight ahead.

As Liam passes right behind David he shows the rest of the choir a stick of gum and places it in David's hands unseen by the audience. This sets off a flurry of activity among some of the boys as small items are passed to the one closest to David's position. David is not sure what to make of the item in his hand.

Liam returns downstage, faces David directly and when sure he has his attention carefully mouths the words, "Do - Not - Bow" indicating Robert's podium with eye movement. David nods he understands.

As he turns to take the Directors position there still seems something amiss and he walks back to center stage this time calling out one of the other choristers, the one who just happens to have collected all the small items passed over. As the two of them scrutinize David a bit more closely a handful of various chewing gums, two "abc" and wrapped up, are transferred to a now completely bewildered David's hands, again unseen by the audience.

Liam finally hits on what is wrong and motions for David to bend over slightly to him which he cautiously does. In a flash, Liam reaches his hand out and musses David's perfectly combed hair a bit and indicates by hand gesture that he now resembles a Libera Chorister better. There is a roar of approval from the audience.

Back at the Director's podium, Liam begins "*Libera*". Despite all the preliminary nonsense, David's singing is confident and flawless. However--

BACKSTAGE LEFT

KENNY-12

Why isn't he lifting his arms out
like everyone else?

Tom chuckles as he puts a stick of gum in his mouth.

TOM

He can't.

STAGE

David's predicament of what to do with his hands during the number only generates even wider smiles on all the faces of the Libera choristers. To them, and still unknown to Robert, there is a completely British Choir performing their theme song.

Everyone on stage except David knows to take a deep breath for the last word. Even so, David maintains the final note as long as Liam holds it.

Liam climbs to the stage and stands near David. It's hard to tell which has the wider smile. As the crowd gives a standing ovation, Robert returns down the center aisle and secretly indicates with his index finger David should exit which he does, without bowing. Liam takes his place in what would be his normal position so LIBERA may take their official final bow.

INT. BACKSTAGE LEFT, CATHEDRAL, WNC - NIGHT

David jumps off the stage to congratulations from those nearby while heading straight for Tom. He holds out his hand full of gum as if to say "What the heck is this?!" Tom can't help but laugh at the happy memory.

TOM

There's a stick of gum there from everyone who has ever done the solo in that song.

(adds his "abc")

Means you're one of us. It's a very high honor.

Oliver rushes by to the side of the stage and adds a stick too.

OLIVER

(to David)

Great job, kid.

TOM

You're lucky. All mine were "abc".

STAGE

After the choir's recognition, Robert motions for the MUSIC SOLOISTS to take their bows.

BACKSTAGE LEFT

Kenny and Asst. Director congratulate David.

KENNY-12
Knew you could do it all along -
Mate.

David knows Kenny will never let him forget this.

Tom pulls David away as he and the Alumni are called to stage for their bow.

INT. STAGE/NAVE, CATHEDRAL, WNC - NIGHT

Again it is difficult to tell who has the wider smile, David on stage or Marcus, applauding from the seats in the dark.

When David steps back to the line of performers, Robert leans over and says something privately which causes a pleasant burst of laughter from the young American singer.

ROBERT PRIZEMAN
(to David)
I shall speak to The Palace about
war with America if they do not
turn you over to us.

INT. "GOING HOME", CATHEDRAL, WNC - NIGHT

All except the 26 MEMBERS OF LIBERA leave the stage. There is a flurry of activity off stage left and right with some garment boxes as FIONA stands upstage right to begin a solo violin piece and BEN-15 moves downstage left across from where Ian is sitting with other dignitaries. Three soloists, ALEX-12, JAMES-11 and MINI JAMES-12, stand together center stage. They and Fiona have their eyes on Ben. Audience is silently expectant.

BEN-15

FIONA only, plays the opening chords of "Going Home". Methodically all interior lights of the Cathedral Nave are turned on. Ben takes a breath, slowly closes and opens his eyes. He looks out at the Nave now ablaze with light. From the corner of his eye he catches Oliver's steady, supportive gaze offstage left. The flash of memories in his mind conflict with the matter at hand. How can a simple action he's done hundreds of times backstage be so unbearably difficult now. His thoughts return to the stage as Fiona emphasizes the opening chords for the fourth time.

Ben grabs hold of his robe at the shoulders and in one smooth motion, pulls it off over his head - for the very last time.

STAGE

This is the signal everyone is waiting for. Fiona and the three soloists center stage begin the song. Simultaneously all the other boys remove their robes too as the WNC SUPPORT TEAM fans out around the edge of the stage with the boxes to put them in. Each box is labeled for the boy it goes to and contains a plastic bag with care instructions for the robe, a special thank you note written earlier in the day and a marker pen to now add a comment and signature on the robe itself before it is delivered to a chosen recipient in the audience.

All choristers have a black T-shirt and grey shorts on under their robe. Older ones are helping younger ones at first since they only have the duration of the song to deliver their gifts. Amid the initial confusion, Josh has taken even longer than Ben to remove his. Oliver's attention being on Ben, he hasn't noticed this. Marcus, watching from his seat, has.

First off the stage are the three soloists who will be relieving the trio singing now so they can deliver their robes during the last half of the song. All six of these will go to the SIX REGIONAL PROMOTERS of the tour.

Josh sees Jonathan is about to head off with Adam and Alfie. He quickly attaches his transceiver, earpiece and mic to Jonathan's belt loop.

JOSH-15

(privately, rushed)

They're all yours. Take good care of them.

Jonathan is completely surprised by this and isn't sure what Josh has clipped to him. Josh is already off in the opposite direction when he tries to respond.

JONATHAN-14

All what - take care - I don't want them all.

Jonathan must join Adam and Alfie who are already greeting the NAVAJO and CHEROKEE INSTRUCTORS. As he leaves the stage he catches site of Henry frantically working on his and can't for the life of him figure out why he would give away that particular robe.

NAVE

Jonathan thanks HUALAPAI WOMAN who hosted them at the Grand Canyon and was so moved by his and his friend's singing. On the robe he has written: [**from Song In The Wind, with The Great Spirit**].

Freddie hands his to MASHA TERESHKOVA: [**Thank you from Mum and Dad and Me**]. She asks for the marker and shows him how to write "spacibo" in Russian Cyrillic.

Zack almost kicks MARCUS EDWARDS in the leg to get his attention but chooses to call out his first name instead. Marcus is as surprised by the robe giveaway as everyone else. Across the front Zack has written: [**We all did our best. Even you. Thanks ~~Deet~~ Mr Rev MARCUS**].

In the background the FRENCH AMBASSADOR looks as though he is going to scold Tiarnan approaching with his robe then congratulates him for a performance, and prank, well done.

Josh stands directly in front of Robert as he tries to direct the three singers still on stage.

JOSH-15

(grabs hold of baton)

They know what they're doing.

Josh points out Tiarnan presenting his robe to the French Ambassador, Robert's organist colleague. When Robert turns back to the stage Josh is holding his robe out to Libera's Director.

JOSH-15 (CONT'D)

You'll take this, because Libera's
Head Chorister says so.

Robert wants to refuse on principle but can't. He smiles at the words Josh has written.

Fiona has moved downstage to keep eye contact with the trio of singers in case they must stretch the number longer than planned.

Ian is watching Josh and Robert when he is startled by Ben's approach. Realizing his and Robert's wishes are being ignored he accepts the box from a young man so overcome with emotion at the moment, he honestly can't speak. The robe's message does so for him: [**WE could not have done all this without you. Thank You, Ian, for everything**].

RAULE-11, CARLOS-12 and ANDREW-11 have returned to the stage and seamlessly stepped in for Alex, James and Mini James who now remove their robes for the same routine.

Cassius, Flynn and Nathaniel are handling the Asian tour countries of JAPAN, SOUTH KOREA and PHILIPPINES. Callum and Jakob take care of AUSTRALIA and BRITISH AMBASSADORS.

Since Freddie and Zack have run off to thank other crew members, REG JENKINS walks MRS. GERAGHTY out to Marcus in the security aisle. Marcus sees the confused look on her face, joy at the site around them and pain at what was learned at the Embassy earlier in the morning. He greets her by taking both of her hands in his. She looks at the Medical and Chaplain insignias pinned to his lapel. A simple silent hug is all that need be said between them.

When they part, Reg indicates the ROW OF GUESTS that have puzzled Marcus all evening. All of them make an effort to thank every member of Libera who comes by, most unable to hold back tears. It's only now that he hears their British accents - and realizes to whom they are related.

REG JENKINS

Told them I didn't think it was a good idea but they insisted on attending. Said they were invited. Even I wasn't sure they were coming till they got off the plane this afternoon. They've all been briefed so won't say anything here. Meant to tell you earlier but - you were - preoccupied.

MARCUS EDWARDS

(looks to Chicago
Reporter)

Does anyone else--?

REG JENKINS

No. Just me, Ian and you.

Marcus glances over at the sound board and sees Steven carefully pointing out this group of guests to the choir.

MARCUS EDWARDS

Don't be too sure. Amazing people, kids. Capable of things for which most adults these days would never dream to give them credit.

Reg takes an envelope from his pocket bearing the Royal Emblem of St. James Palace in London and hands it to Marcus.

REG JENKINS

Meant to deliver this as well. I'm told one of the boys went through military training with a member of Griffin's team.

Anthony has brought his robe to the one AUDIENCE MEMBER who also took the full force of the "ash cloud". Included in the box is the special container with a spring action lid that allowed Anthony to pull ash out but prevented it from being thrown from the pail with the confetti. The robe is emblazoned: **[I survived the tale of The Menacing Volcanic Ash Cloud!]**.

Kavana is presenting his to the CHICAGO REPORTER he's so tormented: **[next interview I promise NEW boring answers]**.

At the sound board, Jonathan and a few others are thanking Big Ben and Steven for all their hard work. Steven points out to Jonathan that Henry is still standing stage right with his box scanning the crowd for someone.

JONATHAN-14

I'll take care of it.

As Jonathan heads back to the stage, Steven notices the transceiver clipped behind him.

Stage left, Liam is helping the last boys off with their deliveries. Conor to the BISHOP. Nicholas to the US VICE-PRESIDENT. Joe across to the North Transept and the ORCHESTRA CONDUCTOR.

David quickly hands Liam his robe already in the box.

DAVID PENN-13

Hurry up, there's not much time.

(Liam begins to write)

Do you need me to come along and say something for you?

Liam caps the marker, shakes his head "No" then flips the box around and hands it back to David who smiles as he reads: **[Hang on to this. You may need it]**.

Remaining boys in the Nave are making their way back to the stage. Some can be seen putting on the blue shirt they sometimes wear at receptions. Others have chosen a white or black hoodie. Marcus turns to retake his seat but stops at seeing Josh approaching with FR. REYNALDS.

FR. REYNALDS

(points to Chaplain
insignia)

(MORE)

FR. REYNALDS (CONT'D)

This is so much nicer out here than
in that box you always carry it
around in.

Marcus thanks his old mentor with a smile then looks at where
Josh's earpiece and mic used to be.

MARCUS EDWARDS

You don't have to do this.

JOSH-15

(takes a breath, then
respectfully)

Thank you - but I do.

STAGE

Jonathan dashes over to Henry and pulls him to the right edge
of the stage where they sit.

JONATHAN-14

(a little upset)

You said you knew what you were
doing with this.

(indicates singers)

They're almost done.

HENRY-10

I lost everyone in the crowd. I had
to wait till you got back.

At first Jonathan doesn't understand why Henry is holding the
box out to him, then he sees what's inside. The clipped
sleeve with Robert's verification is arranged visibly on one
side and across the chest area a bold arrow is drawn pointing
to it. Above the arrow is a simple: **[Thanks JB]**.

HENRY-10 (CONT'D)

Told you I had it all figured out.

Jonathan's feelings for his brother are torn between
happiness and sadness.

HENRY-10 (CONT'D)

I know I won't be on the next tour.
There will be other trips to
Australia.

Henry hugs his older brother, hiding Jonathan's face so no
one sees him wiping his eyes.

HENRY-10 (CONT'D)
 (sees transceiver)
 Hey! When did you make Head
 Chorister?

A troubling thought clicks in Jonathan's mind. He and Henry quickly retake their positions. Jonathan fumbles with the earpiece and mic just as the last words of "Going Home" are sung.

Another ovation.

BIG BEN
 (in Jonathan's earpiece,
 clear and precise)
 What's - going - on?

JONATHAN-14
 (into mic, clear and
 precise)
 Not - a - clue.

INT. STAGE, CATHEDRAL, WNC - NIGHT

JOSH-15 moves downstage and motions for BEN-15 to join him. Orchestra only, plays "In Paradisum", simple, understated.

JOSH-15
 There is only one way to join
 Libera.
 (exaggerates)
 Pass the most excruciatingly
 intense audition you can possibly
 imagine for that man right there.

Josh points to Robert and everyone on stage has a good laugh.

JOSH-15 (CONT'D)
 There are however, two ways to
 leave Libera. One - as in Ben's
 case - Robert tells you.

Josh steps back as Ben accepts an appreciative round of applause.

BEN-15
 (very emotional)
 I had a big dramatic speech all
 planned out - and I've just
 forgotten every word of it.
 (laughter on stage)
 I guess - I can't put into words
 what being a part of Libera means.
 (MORE)

BEN-15 (CONT'D)

It's such an enormous, powerful feeling. In fact, I've recently learned it has meant more to some--

(looks around on stage)

--people than even I was aware.

(thinks back)

You stand in the church, back in England, during your audition and you think how cool it's going to be singing up there were Mum and Dad can see me - and - you never dream everything that has happened in the past eight years will happen.

(pause)

One of the first things you're told when you join Libera is - you're not going to be doing this forever.

(glances to Oliver)

God has other plans for your voice - and - you dread the day Robert points to you after practice and says--

(imitates Robert's quote)

--"Could you just stay a moment? I have something to tell you." We all know what he means because he says it exactly the same way every time.

Recognition of this statement is on the faces of the Alumni.
Robert turns to the audience nearby.

ROBERT PRIZEMAN

(scoffs)

Rubbish.

BEN-15

But - when it happens, there is no argument - no discussion - no question. All of us respect his judgement and decision in this matter.

Ben realizes how serious he's become and tries to lighten the mood a bit.

BEN-15 (CONT'D)

Can't imagine who he'll get to replace me.

(playful jesting on stage)

But I do know - he'll be just as talented - just as dedicated--

(wipes his eyes)

--and just as good a friend as everyone you see up here now.

Applause and cheers in the Nave. Josh rejoins Ben downstage, puts his arm around his shoulder and shakes his hand. He also leans over and says something to him unheard by others over the noise.

JOSH-15

Push me.

Ben looks puzzled.

Applause dies down. Ben stays next to his friend.

JOSH-15 (CONT'D)

The second way to leave Libera is, of course, you tell Robert.

This statement focuses Oliver's attention on the stage.

JOSH-15 (CONT'D)

As was my case - earlier this morning.

Shocked surprise at this from all but Robert and Marcus. It suddenly dawns on Jonathan, he has just been made Head Chorister of Libera.

JOSH-15 (CONT'D)

And as Ben put it so well - there is no argument or discussion.

(looks at Robert)

Because Robert shows each member of Libera the same professional respect - and the same personal friendship he always has.

(pause, then to audience)

I don't think it is possible for any of us to fully comprehend how our music has touched your lives--

(looks to Marcus)

--in so many different ways.

(addresses crowd)

We've met thousands of you over the years, all over the world. Each of your stories is different - it's mind boggling, really, how everyone finds something uniquely special. Honestly - we didn't set out to do that. It's something all of you did - on your own - and - those stories are just as much a gift to us as you consider our singing a gift to you.

(pause)

(MORE)

JOSH-15 (CONT'D)

I want to say this has been the most fun I've had my entire life but, I haven't had my entire life yet. But it's going to be pretty hard to top.

Applause and cheers once again as all on stage crowd around the two departing members for a spontaneous farewell.

INT. "ABIDE WITH ME", CATHEDRAL, WNC - NIGHT

All except Josh, Ben and Liam take their positions. Jonathan gets Henry set up center stage. Josh introduces the next song trying hard to maintain his composure.

JOSH-15

Our next song is Abide With Me. It is, coincidentally, the song both Ben and I did our first solos on. But we won't be singing it tonight. Tonight - we're going to join Liam and all of you - out there - to watch and listen - to the best Cathedral Boys Choir ever.

Ben understands "push me". He puts his hand at Josh's back and starts him to the steps. All interior lights in the Cathedral are reset for the song as the three boys make their way to the seat Liam occupied. When they get there, Marcus immediately offers his seat and Masha tries to do the same but is stopped by the gentleman sitting next to her who offers his. Masha slides over and the guest and Marcus kneel behind the chairs.

"Abide With Me" is performed, as moving and emotional as it's ever been, with Henry as the soloist. Josh, Ben and Liam are transfixed by what they see and hear on stage.

As Josh said, audience members find their own unique connection with it.

On the far side of a pillar up in the Triforium, a lone WNC CHORISTER silently mouths the lyrics, sadness on his face clearly recalling a family loss.

The song concludes to another ovation. Josh, Ben and Liam make their way back to the stage as Marcus and the Guest retake their seats.

MASHA TERESHKOVA

(touches Marcus' Chaplain
Insignia)

So many secrets.

(MORE)

MASHA TERESHKOVA (CONT'D)

(indicates stage)

You must bring them to Moscow. All of them.

MARCUS EDWARDS

And you - must accompany me and my grandson to New Mexico.

INT. STAGE, CATHEDRAL, WNC - NIGHT

Three separate areas on stage are lit and the boys assemble in three groups. The fog cloud is reforming on the stage behind them and is now also filling the porous screen stretching Sixty feet above them. Freddie stands at the front of the middle group, Josh is behind him.

FREDDIE-10

If you thought saying hello earlier was difficult, imagine also being the one stuck with this next bit.

(takes deep breath)

Our next song is the last song of the night.

Audience responds to this saddening announcement. Freddie looks back at Josh who sees he can't continue. Josh puts his hands on Freddie's shoulders. Orchestra plays softly in the background.

JOSH-15

When we are born, God is a mystery to us. We soon learn that He has given us gifts. The gift of life - of family - and in our case, a gift for song. He makes promises to us of a life after this one if we promise to live this one with kindness, love and devotion. And though we study and question all we can about Him - in the end - perhaps - we only know ourselves better. God, by whichever name we call Him, is just as mysterious when we take our last breath as when we took our first.

(pause)

Several months ago a man came to South London and proposed this gift of our music to all of you. He made several promises to us and our families - and in return - asked only one thing.

(pause)

(MORE)

JOSH-15 (CONT'D)

That we never reveal the true
nature of nor reasons for our
benefactor's generosity.

Marcus sits and watches in wonder at what Josh is doing.

MARCUS EDWARDS

(quietly to himself)

My God.

JOSH-15

All of the promises to us have been
kept and tonight - we will keep
ours.

(pause)

Thank you all for coming. We love
you all.

Orchestra plays introduction to "*Sing For Ever*".

EXT. ROAD, SOUTH PORTAL, WNC - NIGHT

The bus the boys will use and all escort vehicles are
prepared for departure. Several crowds of fans outside stand
in anticipation.

INT. "*SING FOR EVER*", CATHEDRAL, WNC - NIGHT

Group stage right sings first verse. When they hand off the
second verse to the group stage left, the stage right
spotlight is slowly extinguished and they step back to the
edge of the fog. The same is repeated when the left group
hands off the third verse to the center group. When the third
verse ends this last group too, steps back as the last stage
light is darkened.

During the music bridge to the refrain, fog on stage is
repositioned so it first envelopes then moves in front of the
boys. Now, almost completely obscured on the dark, fog
shrouded stage, the whole choir sing the final refrain.

Audience erupts in applause and cheers as Twenty-Six spot
lights on masts beside the Crossing Piers project the choir's
signatures on the Sixty foot high vertical cloud rising above
their heads. The individual images, eight feet across and
sharply rendered by the focused white light, appear in random
groups over Twenty seconds. Zack's simple capital "Z",
"James" flamboyant and Hancock-like. Others just first names
or initials; "Ben", "TB". Some with an added smiley face or
star.

INT. VIRGINIA RESORT, DINING HALL - DAY

All 26 boys are seated on both sides of a long table having lunch. Ian stands at the head of the table with a box containing plain manila folders labeled with each boys name.

IAN TILLEY

I'm sure you're all feeling sky high today.

(boys agree)

Guess I'll leave it to our airline pilot to bring you back down to Earth.

Everyone pretends to laugh at their managers wit.

IAN TILLEY (CONT'D)

Yes, well, I thought my attempt at humor would not be appreciated so I've thought of another way.

Ian takes a folder from the box and opens it while addressing Jonathan sitting close by.

IAN TILLEY (CONT'D)

(pleasantly)

Jonathan.

JONATHAN-14

(equally pleasant)

Ian.

IAN TILLEY

(respectfully)

Head Chorister.

JONATHAN-14

(equally respectful)

Manager.

IAN TILLEY

(bit more serious)

What's the capital of Tajikistan?

JONATHAN-14

(bewildered)

I have no idea.

Ian slaps the folder with Jonathan's test results to the boys chest.

IAN TILLEY

(dead serious)

No joke.

Everyone realizes what's going on. Their moods remain happy yet somewhat apprehensive.

IAN TILLEY (CONT'D)

Raule, how many sides does a pentagon have?

RAULE-11

(thinks)

Oh - oh, five!

(smiles)

Saw it from the top of the Washington Monument.

IAN TILLEY

How fortunate. Unfortunately three weeks ago it had seven.

(slaps folder down)

Cassius, spell "parallelogram".

CASSIUS-10

Do I have to?

IAN TILLEY

Some day.

(slaps folder)

James.

James is startled at being called out.

IAN TILLEY (CONT'D)

Name three things William Shakespeare is famous for.

James knows he's in trouble.

JAMES-11

(stalling)

Um - well - there's lots of things.

IAN TILLEY

And leaving that answer space blank was your way of listing the three top secret ones?

(James grins)

Lad, when you get back to England, the Queen herself is going to feed your passport to the Corgis. You won't ever get off that island again.

(shoves folder at him)

Kavana.

KAVANA-10
 (speaks up)
 Ian, I assure you, all of my exams
 are 100 percent.

Ian flips through Kavana's papers.

IAN TILLEY
 Square root of two hundred?

KAVANA-10
 (confident)
 Fourteen decimal one four.

Ian verifies the answer is correct.

IAN TILLEY
 Is there anything you don't know?

KAVANA-10
 (boasts)
 Probably not.

JONATHAN-14
 Oh yeah, what's the capital of
 Tajikistan?

Kavana is surprised and stumped. Ian has some fun by making a
 contest of Jonathan's challenge.

IAN TILLEY
 Ten seconds on the clock!

Others begin counting down.

BOYS
 Nine -- eight --

KAVANA-10
 (starts to fret)
 This is an unfair question. I am
 not yet a geography student.

BOYS
 Five -- four --

KAVANA-10
 I'm not even allowed to the next
 street on my bicycle.

BOYS
 One -- zero!

IAN TILLEY
 (hands Kavana his folder)
 Put your feet on the ground with
 the rest of us.

KAVANA-10
 (hangs head in shame)
 I've disgraced my academic record.

Ian places a water pitcher in front of Kavana.

IAN TILLEY
 Drown your sorrows.

As Ian moves on, Kavana picks up the pitcher and begins drinking from it spilling most of it down the front of his shirt.

IAN TILLEY (CONT'D)
 (approaches next victim)
 Conor.

CONOR-8
 (pipes up)
 Feet of the shortest person in the
 choir don't have to touch the
 ground.

Ian looks to confirm Conor's legs are swinging free from the edge of the chair.

IAN TILLEY
 That was so good I'm going to let
 you get away with it.

Ian drops the folder at Conor's plate as he pushes back from the table overjoyed at getting away with his remark and duplicates one of Zack's victory poses. He quickly hops back in the chair upon seeing Ian staring at his feet touching the floor.

Ian stands directly behind Liam.

IAN TILLEY (CONT'D)
 How's the voice coming along?

LIAM-13
 (raspy)
 Better.

IAN TILLEY
 Save it.
 (hands Liam a pen)
 (MORE)

IAN TILLEY (CONT'D)
 Bit of a math question for you,
 just figure it on the napkin there.

Liam readies to copy the numbers.

IAN TILLEY (CONT'D)
 Four Hundred and Thirty-Seven --

Liam starts then immediately stops writing.

IAN TILLEY (CONT'D)
 -- times Fourteen!

On both syllables of "fourteen" Ian whacks Liam on top of his head with his folder.

Kavana tries redeeming himself by chiming in with the correct answer.

KAVANA-10
 Six Thousand One Hundred and --

Liam throws a bread roll at Kavana to shut him up.

IAN TILLEY
 Nathaniel, red and blue make --?

NATHANIEL-12
 Love?

IAN TILLEY
 (tosses Nathaniel his
 folder)
 It's an art question, not biology.
 Callum. John Hancock put his "John
 Hancock" on --?

CALLUM-11
 Mrs. Hancock?

The silliness of this last response breaks up everyone at the table as screen FADES TO BLACK.