

# Tel Aviv Disco Bombing

a short play

Email: [abroun@bigpond.net.au](mailto:abroun@bigpond.net.au)

Alex Broun 2004

**Cast**

**ARIEL**

**JULIA**

**Setting**

Office.

**Time**

Afternoon.

**Tel Aviv Disco Bombing**

**Office. Tel Aviv, Israel. 2pm.**

**ARIEL** at his desk, reading. There is a knock at the door.

**ARIEL:** Yes.

**THE DOOR OPENS SLIGHTLY. JULIA IS THERE, CARRYING A FOLDER.**

**JULIA:** It's only me.

**ARIEL:** (STANDING) Julia. Yes, come in. Come in. Sit down.

**ARIEL GUIDES HER TO A CHAIR.**

**JULIA:** Please tell me I didn't miss it. Please.

**ARIEL:** No – you made the deadline.

**JULIA:** Thank you. I was fretting.

**ARIEL:** There's plenty of time for the deadline.

**ARIEL SITS DOWN. HE PICKS UP SOME PAPERS.**

**JULIA:** Is that it ?

**ARIEL:** Yes.

**JULIA:** (STANDING) I'm sorry. I thought you'd had time to ... Impatient. I'll come back.

**ARIEL:** No, it's fine.

**JULIA:** You've read it ?

**ARIEL:** Yes.

**JULIA:** Already ?

**ARIEL:** Yes.

**JULIA:** And ?

**PAUSE. SHE SITS.**

JULIA: It's good, isn't it ?

ARIEL: No, not good. Great.

JULIA: Thank you.

ARIEL: Perhaps the best story you've done since you came to us.

JULIA: I was happy.

ARIEL: First class.

JULIA: Thank you.

ARIEL: Does anybody else –

JULIA: No. I didn't tell anybody. Not even my husband.

ARIEL: Good.

JULIA: I was busting to but ...

ARIEL: Well done.

JULIA: So ... where do you think it will run ?

ARIEL: This is a cover. No doubt.

JULIA: I thought so. I don't mean to – but I did... A cover. Yes ! (OPENING FOLDER) And I've been down to see Cassandra and found some amazing photos. Look at this one of one of the ... This could be the cover.

**JULIA MOVES TOWARDS ARIEL. ARIEL HOLDS UP HIS HAND.**

ARIEL: Julia – I can't use this story.

JULIA: But ...you just said.

ARIEL: Cover.

JULIA: Yes cover. You said -

ARIEL: It is a great story.

JULIA: But then ...

ARIEL: A truly excellent piece of journalism.

JULIA: Then why -

ARIEL: That doesn't change the fact -

JULIA: But, I don't –

ARIEL: That I can't use it. (PAUSE) You know what is happening tomorrow ?

JULIA: How could I not know ?

ARIEL: Well ...

JULIA: How does my story affect that ?

ARIEL: Don't be so naïve.

JULIA: Pardon me.

ARIEL: We may not be the biggest paper but we are certainly read.

JULIA: I'm not saying –

ARIEL: Then how can this story have no affect ? Your words have power. Do you doubt that ? If you do then why did you become a journalist ?

JULIA: My words do have power. Our words have power.

ARIEL: Then you must understand why I can't use them.

JULIA: (HOLDING UP FILE) But this happened.

ARIEL: So you proved, conclusively.

JULIA: It's the truth.

**ARIEL SCOFFS.**

JULIA: You're laughing ?

ARIEL: Truth ? You want to talk about truth.

JULIA: Why are you laughing ?

ARIEL: Let me tell you about truth. (STANDING) Tomorrow in this city major representatives of both parties will sit down to sign a comprehensive agreement discussed and argued over for almost a year. We are the closest we have ever been to something resembling peace – after a quarter of a decade - and you want to destroy that.

JULIA: I'm not destroying anything.

ARIEL: What will this information do to that process ?

JULIA: People will finally know what happened.

ARIEL: No I'll tell you what happened. There was an attack. We retaliated. They retaliated. We retaliated again. They accepted responsibility. They apologised. We accepted their apology. It was a massive step in the process.

JULIA: But they didn't do it.

ARIEL: That doesn't matter.

JULIA: Doesn't ... matter ? Aren't you Ariel Ramen ? The Editor of The Beacon. The guardian of the media's right –

ARIEL: It doesn't matter.

JULIA: To publish the whole story. "No prejudice. No fear."

ARIEL: It doesn't matter who was responsible ! It's over. Those people died. Now we have the chance to stop the killing. That ... man's death has opened a window of opportunity and I will not allow you or anyone else to slam it shut. How can you consider, even for a moment, robbing us of this chance ?

JULIA: Seventeen people died in that explosion. Including an eight year old boy. (TAKING PHOTO OUT OF FILE) Look at him. Look at his face. And you want to tell me it doesn't matter who was responsible.

ARIEL: We have all lost people.

JULIA: You want to tell his family -

ARIEL: The paper, photographers -

JULIA: Who swore they would have justice –

ARIEL: Hasn't there been enough killing ?

JULIA: That they were looking in the wrong place.

ARIEL: I just want it to stop –

JULIA: Because the people who committed this terrible act –

ARIEL: We all want it to stop !

JULIA: Who blew up a crowded family club on Saturday evening–

ARIEL: There is a ...

JULIA: Wasn't the enemy –

ARIEL: There must be ...

JULIA: It was their own people !

SILENCE. **JULIA SITS.**

ARIEL: No good will come of this.

JULIA: We have an obligation to report the truth.

ARIEL: But first you must ask yourself – what is more important ? Truth or peace ?  
(PAUSE) Julia, I know how you must feel.

JULIA: You have no idea.

ARIEL: I know you spent a lot of time and effort on this story.

JULIA: Six months.

ARIEL: And placed yourself in considerable danger to get the information.

JULIA: I was shot at – twice !

ARIEL: It must be very ... disappointing -

JULIA: That's one word for it.

ARIEL: To see all that go to waste.

JULIA: Yes it is. So why didn't you just stop me ? If you didn't want the story. I could've written a belly dancing feature for our new Happy Times.

ARIEL: Even I didn't think ...

JULIA: Think what ?

ARIEL: That this was ..

JULIA: Was what ?

ARIEL: Possible.

PAUSE.

JULIA: Well now you know. You see how appalling this act was. To kill seventeen of our own people just to make them look bad. And remember - the men who ordered this are still in power. If you do this – you're letting them get away completely without blame.

PAUSE

ARIEL: Eighteen months and eleven days ago, before you came here, there was a similar blast in another part of the city. This time no one claimed responsibility. It was a minor incident. Small numbers of casualties. Only three people dead but one of them was my son. (PAUSE) I will never be able to forget the pain of losing my own child. I never want any other father to go through that. If this agreement tomorrow has the chance of saving even one father's child then I will do everything I can to make sure it goes ahead.

JULIA: It's a good story.

ARIEL: It's a dangerous story. And while this agreement holds I give you my word it will not appear in this newspaper.

JULIA: They killed eighteen people.

ARIEL: And this story will kill more.

PAUSE.

JULIA: I could take it to somebody else. Someone who wasn't as flexible with their principles.

ARIEL: Not while you work for me.

JULIA: Then maybe I won't work for you.

ARIEL: I'm asking you not to.

JULIA: I'm asking you to print it.

ARIEL: Maybe this isn't about the truth. Maybe we've found something far more important. Life. (PAUSE) Or maybe this is about something else entirely. You.

JULIA: Me ?

ARIEL: Maybe what you're really angry about is not the truth being obscured but that you'll miss out on the chance to become the journalist who uncovered the biggest scandal of the year.

PAUSE.

JULIA: Either way it doesn't change the fact that my story is one hundred percent truth.

ARIEL: Then you have a choice.

JULIA: I have a choice.

ARIEL: If you really want to I can't stop you getting this story out. What am I going to do - kill you ?

PAUSE.

JULIA: Thank you.

ARIEL: But before you go I want to give you something. Another photograph for you to consider.

**ARIEL TAKES A PHOTO FROM HIS WALLET. HE HANDS IT TO JULIA.**

ARIEL: That is David. He was my son. When you look at the little boy – look at my son as well. They are now both in your hands.

**ARIEL SITS. HE BEGINS TO READ.**

**JULIA LOOKS AT THE PHOTO. PAUSE.**

ARIEL: Sorry. I have a deadline.

**JULIA NODS. SHE GOES TO THE DOOR. SHE STOPS AND LOOKS BACK AT ARIEL. SHE EXITS.**

THE DOOR CLOSES BEHIND HER. **ARIEL** LOOKS UP. HE DROPS HIS PAPERS ON TO THE DESK AND SLUMPS BACK IN HIS CHAIR.

LIGHTS FADE.