

Do Broadcast It

"No! No! DO broadcast it! Don't worry! It's important that people across the world know about what is happening here. Don't worry!"

With those words, Robert and his tiny film crew, consisting of Mike, the sound man and Will, the camera man, finished the interview and began to put their equipment away. Their interviewee, Floribert watched saying nothing. The three of them soon completed the task as they had had to work quickly with as little equipment as possible.

Floribert quietly opened the front door to his tiny ground floor flat and looked furtively up and down the street.

"It's O.K. It's quiet", he whispered. Mike and Will quickly crept out of the flat and made their way towards the camper van, the three of them had hired, a camper van which made them look just like three tourists. Robert was last to leave. He turned and quickly shook Floribert's hand. Floribert looked into Robert's eyes and knew exactly what he was thinking. He spoke quietly and quickly.

"Don't worry about me. What you are doing is good, so good. Get the film out so people will know the truth", Floribert said and with that he turned, went back inside and gently closed the front door.

Robert, Mike and Will were all very quiet on the way back to the airport. They would soon hand over the keys to their hired camper van, conceal the film in their travel bags and board the flight back home. The worst that could happen would be that their film would be confiscated, before being unceremoniously deported. They were going home anyway. Soon Robert, Mike and Will would be safe back home, friends and family.

But what of those they had filmed? Those who had gone on film, describing the daily harrassment of opponents of the regime, the desperate prison conditions endured by dissidents, the routine torture, the unexplained deaths. What of them? What of them when the regime sees the film they had been making. What would happen to the brave, principled people they had left behind?

"I'm not sure we should even show the film", Robert said when all three were safely flying home, enjoying a beer courtesy of British Airways.

"We must", countered Mike. "We went all the way to do it. Remember what Floribert said".

"I know. But it's so easy for us isn't it? WE'LL be alright. Is it worth it?"

"Well, if the film can put pressure on our government to stop arming the regime, then it could save so many lives", suggested Will.

"I know, I know", was all Robert could say in return, staring out of the window at the cotton wool clouds as they opened up and closed again.

A few weeks after they returned home, one of the major television channels showed the film. It was widely praised and tipped for awards.

"Look at this review", Robert's boss said to Robert, the next morning, showing him his newspaper.

"Yes, that's good", replied Robert, but there was a faraway look in his eyes.

Robert determined to phone Floribert two days after the broadcast which had been watched by 6 million people on British television and a day after Ian Fearn, an Opposition M.P., put down an Early Day Motion in the House of Commons deploring the situation in Floribert's country and the support the UK government was giving the regime. There was talk that the Foreign Secretary was going to have to come to the House to make a statement. Robert dialled Floribert's number carefully, deliberately. He knew he had done it right. There was nothing at the other end. The line was dead.

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