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The Assault

By Gerard Soeteman

THE ASSAUL:

Far into the Second World War...
live Anton Steenwijk, his parents
and his brother Peter...
on the edge of Haarlem.
It's January 1945.
Almost all of Europe is liberated...
celebrating, eating, drinking
and making love.
But here in Haarlem
it's still war.
And winter.
The winter of starvation.
You always bring so many earthworms.
- From my bird cemetery.
I bury all the dead birds
that I find.
Open it.
I have my hands full.
What you put into Mother Nature,
you will also get back.
The banisters and the door
of the visitor's room.
The whole house will go.
My dad stokes the stove
with novels.
The heavy ones should weigh
the most.
Anton, you're forgetting the soup kitchen.
- Oh, yuck. Let Peter do it for a change.
Peter can't do it.
Imagine if there's a sudden raid.
We will go together, alright?
I have to go anyway.
I may not be on duty, but
it impresses people.
Hello, Mr. Aarts.
Hello, Madam.
Karin, Tonny, wait up.
Can you hold up for a moment?
You sure walk fast.
Do you mind if I walk with you?
- Of course not, Madam.

Then allow me to carry your bag, Madam.
There walks the Aarts woman
with her husband.
They always treat you like dirt.
- A little, yes.
Surely because he's in insurance.
That doesn't amount to anything in a war.
Hello, Mrs. Aarts. Hello, Sir.
Nice weather, isn't it? For January.
Stir first. I want some of that
thick stuff from the bottom.
Of course, nurse.
And for my neighbours the same recipe.
I wish you'd go with us every day.
Hey, boys. Get out of there.
Are you mad?
Bunch of slobs.
Did you see how they greeted me, those Aartsen?
Pathetic.
Hey, it's your friend.
Hello, Anton.
Hello, Fake.
Say, do you know him?
Do you know that bastard?
That Ploeg is the beastliest
killer of whole Haarlem.
And you are greeting him, Tonny?
I only greeted Fake.
He's in my class.
Would you like a biscuit?
- Yes please, Mr. Beumer.
Home-baked from bean flour.
By Mina Bakgraag.
Do you like it?
Do you still have vacation?
- The school is closed. Coal scarcity.
I'm sure you don't have a problem with that.
Bye.
- Bye.
Listen. 'At the World Exhibition
in New York, a cylinder was buried...
containing a complete summary
of our technology.
Such as the Lord's Prayer, movie sequences,

novels and a 1938 lady's hat.
The cylinder will be opened again
in 5000 years.'

That's in the year 6938, dad.
I wish they'd buried that Homer
along with it. The damn translating.
I don't want to hear you say such things.
I think that's sensible.
Then the people of 6938 will understand
their present day much better.
Those who don't know their past,
don't understand their future.
Remember that, Tonny.
Can we? The table is set.
Not so quick. And chew,
that's the best for you.
What's wrong, mom?
- What is it, dear?
A button.
Not even made of bone. Even the buttons
in the soup aren't any good.
Does it hurt, mom?
The crown is broken.
No dentist anymore who can
do anything about it.
What are you doing?
- I'm putting in a clove.
It takes away the pain.
I remember that from my grandmother.
It helps right away, boys.
If we'll just finish our meal,
we can play a game later on.
See you tomorrow.
Same place, same time,
same nothing.
Peter, your translation.
As when through rain and melted snow-
swollen rivers...
streaming down from the hills...
into a valley cavity
their tremendous mass of water...
originating from abundant
sources...
join in their hollow bed...

and far away in the mountains, the herdsman
hears their dim-thundering roaring...
That's how the screaming sounded...
and the laborious battle of soldiers
getting in a fight.

How beautiful.

- Yes, very.

Especially if you work on it for 1.5 hours.

You don't realize that yet.

A traditional education.

It will be of use to you for
the rest of your life.

With the exception of some small

matters:

Wie lacht niet, die de mens beziet.

What does that refer to?

- Nothing.

Sunt pueri pueri pueri
puerilia tractant.

'Children are children, and
children do childish things.'

We will go to bed soon.

- It's not even curfew yet.

We don't have a lot of carbid anymore.

- I want green.

You think you will win sooner then?

- Yes.

We will see about that.

- Well, are we still playing?

Let's throw and see who starts.

- Me.

Someone is shot.

- Peter, here. Stay here.

It's Fake Ploeg.

- Tonny, move away from that window.

Dead as a doornail, if you ask me.

- Ploeg?

Look.

God damnit.

- Hey, calm down a little.

The Krauts will get us now.

We didn't do anything.

- They don't care.

What are you going to do?
- Put him at Mrs. Beumer.
Better the old woman than us.
- How dare you?
Why should he lay at our place then?
- You say something, Willem.
A few seconds later
and he would have laid at her place.
Yes, but that's not the case.
He wasn't laying here either,
yet that's the case now.
I'm gonna put him back.
- You're playing with your life.
Not me, you.
Stay here.
You're all crazy.
Retards, all of you.
Hold it, don't move.
Hands up.
What's that?
Are they shooting at Peter?
Where is he?
- Round the back.
Peter.
Peter, sonny boy?
What should we do now?
Maybe he hid himself somewhere.
Why don't you wake up finally.
They're shooting at Peter.
Maybe he's already been hit.
Forgive me, Thea.
Forgive me.
It has gone well for so long
and now at the last...
Anton, put on a coat.
God, where is that boy?
Maybe at Korteweg. That's where
he ran to with Ploeg's pistol.
Did you really see that?
- Just when he walked away, he grabbed it.
He wouldn't...
I'm going to Korteweg.
Be careful, there's the guy
who was shooting at Peter.

Get inside, mom.
Yes, I'm closing the doors.
Open it.
- Open the door immediately.
They have the key...
Three men go upstairs.
The rest spread out.
Papers, quickly. Everything.
- We have nothing to do with it.
Shut up.
Ethica, more demonstrata geometrico.
Benedictus de Spinoza.
Is that right?
Are Jew books being read here?
I...
- Take off your hat when you talk to me.
I am principal clerk
of the court.
Shut up, Jew friend.
Where is the fourth one?
My 17-year-old son, scared
by this terrible event...
suddenly left the parental house
without saying goodbye.
He went in that direction.
You don't say, Mr. principal clerk!
He did?
Suddenly? Really?
Absolutely.
- Take them.
Tonny.
- Mom.
Wait here.
Here, take this.
Come.
Are we locking up kids now, too?
- No bullshit, open it.
Will my parents be brought here as well?
- That's a concern of the Germans.
Where should I leave him? They're all full.
- With the one in cell six.
The SD said Einzelhaft would go there.
- I'm the guard commander.
Try to get some sleep,

it's only for one night.

Sir?

What brings you here?

- Madam...

They set our house on fire.

- When? Just now?

Yes, a man was shot in
front of our house.

I mean, not at our house. At the neighbours...

- Jesus.

Were you home alone?

- No, with my father and my mother...
and my brother... He escaped.

He wanted...

What now?

Come.

Come sit here with me.

Ok now?

My name is An...

- Hush, I don't want to know that.

I'm not going to tell you my name either.

But one thing you should never
forget for the rest of your life.

What?

Don't forget that the Krauts
set your house on fire.

Who did it, did it.

And not someone else.

I do know that, I saw it with my
my own eyes. The Krauts.

Yes, but they will say that the
illegals are responsible for it.

They know that if you kill such a
lout, there will be reprisals.

Do you know the name of that guy?

- Ploeg.

Softly.

Fake Ploeg. A bastard, he was with the
police. His son was in my class.

Did you see him? Was he really dead?

- Dead as a doornail.

You know, if the illegals
wouldn't have done it...

that Ploeg would have killed

a lot of other people.

Why are you crying now?

It's all so horrible.

The world is a hell. It's hell.

I'm glad it will all be over

soon. I've had it.

What will be over soon?

- The war. The war, of course.

The Americans are at the Rhine

And the Russians at the Oder.

How do you know that so well?

Dark, isn't it?

May I touch your face for a moment?

What's wrong?

- It's nothing, never mind.

Are you in pain?

- It's nothing.

Trust me.

I've seen it even darker recently.

No way.

- Yes.

I was with a friend

till long after curfew.

I went home at night.

I thought no one would see me.

I've lived in that neighborhood for 25 years.

I walked that road hundreds of times.

I thought:

But suddenly I didn't know

where I was anymore.

I was afraid that I would

be walking in the Singel.

I was crawling on my hands and feet,

but that didn't work out either.

I waited until it was bright.

Did you cry?

- No, I didn't. But I was scared nonetheless.

I was there for a long time.

The silence I disliked the most.

It seemed as if I was all alone

on the planet.

Then what?

What do you think? I was right at my own

house. Five steps and I was in.
I stayed with my uncle in Amsterdam...
- Hush.
What was that?
I don't know.
Let's think about other things
while we still can.
What do you mean?
- Well, as long as we're still here together.
You will be released again tomorrow.
- What about you?
I might not.
We've talked about the dark.
Can we talk about the light now?
Yes, after darkness comes light.
I wanted to write a poem once
in which I compared love to light.
The most beautiful light I know,
is the light just after sunset.
A person who loves someone,
radiates such light.
There's a man who loves me and
so he's radiating that light.
Me too, because I love him too.
Even though he doesn't know that.
He thinks not...
but I love him.
He's married and his children
need him. Just like your parents.
Where would they be now?
- They are probably held somewhere as well.
They will be released tomorrow.
And your brother too.
He took the pistol of Ploeg.
Would the Germans mind?
Jesus...
Come here.
Unbelievable. You put him
with that saboteur?
Have you gone crazy?
That communist whore is going straight
to Amsterdam. Euterpestraat.
You may count yourself lucky that
she hasn't been rescued already.

Or else there would be some
heads rolling here.
What is this nonsense?
Who ordered this?
Someone from the Sicherheitsdienst.
I bet he wanted to arrange some
things in Heemstede.
Play santa after the war as
a friend of the resistance.
The Gestapo will be interested in hearing this.
Where does that blood come from?
It's not mine.
Damn it. It's hers then.
Get a doctor. We still need her.
Hurry damn it.
Damn Dutch. No wonder so
many of them get shot.
Chief inspector Ploeg.
Biking in the dark.
Stupid idiot.
The boy stays here.
Tomorrow he'll go back to his family.
What's this?
- He will stay here tonight.
Mr. Korteweg.
I have something for you.
A lard sandwich.
Do you like it?
Wash.
Her blood.
You to family in Amsterdam.
For the moment.
All papers are ready, understand?
There, and now clothes for the trip.
There.
Papers.
Take cover.
- Hurry, get out.
Get out.
Get up. The bastard will come back.
Hurry, damn it.
Schulz is hit.
Careful.
- He's still alive.

Slowly.
Come on. Hurry, you.
Wait here.
This boy must be brought
to police headquarters.
Now this. Come.
Take him to police headquarters.
He must be coming from headquarters?
Move on, general.
That was still missing.
We're getting reinforcements, general.
I want to see his papers.
Pull out the crap first.
He looks like a mug from the
Bialystok ghetto.
Give the boy coffee and cookies.
- There are no cookies today.
After an assault in Haarlem...
- There, I think you'll like that.
In which
chief inspector Ploeg was killed...
the SD ordered to kill the Steenwijk
family and 19 others.
The 12-year-old son Anton Steenwijk...
staid in prison that night at
the Heemstede police station.
Isn't that just amazing?
He was in a prison cell with a saboteur...
then he was brought
to the Ortskommandatur.
Have they gone crazy?
Aren't there any orphanages
in Haarlem?
From there he was brought to
Amsterdam, where his uncle lives.
I can't believe it.
The place was bristling with fighter planes.
Have they all gone crazy
in Haarlem? Unbelievable.
Lousy organisation.
Go ahead and laugh about it.
Take this.
Let the uncle come here.
Uncle Peter.

Come, let's go.

I left my coat.

- Let's go.

After the liberation, Anton staid in
Amsterdam, living with his aunt and uncle.

The night of the attack seems
indefinitely long ago.

The Russians and the Americans...
allies

in the war against the fascism...
are opposed to each other.

The East-West conflict begins.

War in Korea.

Anton doesn't meddle with politics,
no more than he does with his past.

After his final examinations he
studies medicine.

Just in 1952, Anton goes back
to Haarlem for the first time...

because a friend passed for his
Master's degree dental surgery.

Hey, Steenwijk. You're here after all.

- Gerrit-Jan, congratulations.

Am I still on time a bit?

- A bit. Join us.

As I said before,

you are of course spoilt boys.

You're only thinking of ways
to stay out of the army.

They don't even want you.

- Listen, lout.

If you'd only have an ounce of guts,
you'd voluntarily report for Korea.

That's where the barbarians pound on the
gate of the Christian civilization.

The fascists were nothing compared to that.

Why don't you go yourself and drive into
their brains with your weird shoe?

Nice ball.

Just like the university, Korea is
being run down by bastards.

Let's drink to the downfall of
all red fascism in all countries.

I should join them.

- There are former SS members in the legion.

They will get exemption

from prosecution then.

You are behind the times.

In Korea they can make up.

Zeker zacht ei staart thans

peinzend in de verte.

Yes, you Steenwijk.

And? What's your conclusion?

- How do you mean?

Dodge it or check in? What should we do?

I'm getting another beer.

Are you having a good time?

- I'm doing my best.

Good. Though you're looking

rather shitty, young man.

Yes, I think I'll just go around the

square for a moment. Excuse me.

Hey, damn Steenwijk.

The registration bureau is that way.

Tonny.

Tonny.

Tonny...

- Hello, Mrs. Beumer.

Tonny, boy. I...

Come here.

Just look who we have here.

Anton.

You know:

How are you doing, Kees?

- Fine, Mr. Beumer. Thank you.

You too?

Do you want coffee?

We were just going to have our evening coffee.

Thank you, Madam.

- Please sit down.

Will you be sitting there?

That's not very comfortable.

This used to be my fixed spot when your

husband used to read with me. Remember?

Shall I help you?

- No, it's alright. It's almost done.

And the coffee was already done.

Why have you never dropped by before, Tonny?

It's the first time that I'm visiting Haarlem again.

Oh, yes?

You're just as tall as your father.

I recognized you immediately.

We've talked about you so many times.

Say, he's very ill lately.

Just act as if you don't notice.

That you never came back before.

Someone was standing and watching at the opposite side a couple of times.

Who was it?

- I don't know.

A man with an old coat and a lady's bike.

Biscuit?

- Thanks.

Does Mr. Korteweg still live here?

- Him?

He moved right after the liberation.

Gone.

Nobody knows to where.

He didn't say farewell either.

Karin neither.

That was very strange.

Right, Bert?

Do you remember that the sanitation department came by to pick up the fish bins?

Aquariums.

Those were terrariums, for his lizards.

- Yes, glass objects.

He was a very unhappy man.

After the death of his wife,

he came by a couple of times.

The Aarts people are still living there though.

And still pretty much to themselves.

They will never just come by and have a chat.

Just recently the Groenevelts asked...

they are living

in Korteweg's house now...

if Mr. Aarts wanted to sign as well

in order to get those weeds removed.

That bare and ugly spot

gives such a mess.
Where our house used to be?
I do understand.
Life goes on.
You are such a smart boy.
And so gentle.
You're just like your brother Peter.
Peter was just as gentle.
I saw that night how he still tried
to help that wounded man.
That bastard, that Ploeg.
And to us he always was just
as sweet.
Always such a good heart.
What are you going to do?
- Put him at Mrs. Beumer.
Better the old woman than us.
- At Mrs. Beumer?
Why was Ploeg shot in front of
your house?
It might just as well have happened
at our place. Or at Korteweg.
My husband always told me
that God saved us.
But then why didn't He save you?
And then your husband said: God didn't
because we are heathens.
Why your father?
I can still see him in front of me,
with his bowler and his umbrella.
And your mother.
They never hurt anyone.
Gherkins are like crocodiles.
What they must have lived through.
Your uncle did tell you that, right?
When your mother attacked
that guy of the SD?
They were killed like animals.
- Mrs. Beumer, I ehm...
Tonny, it's all so terrible.
I surely understand that you...
No, it's not that.
I was just...
Is this really the first time

that you are in Haarlem again?

Then you should visit the monument.

Monument?

Yes, it was unveiled by the
mayor three years ago.

Down the street there.

We really hoped that we would see you again.

My husband was still in good shape back then.

Didn't you get an invitation then?

- Oh yes, I think I have.

Shall I go along with you?

- Well, I'd rather...

Yes. Of course, Tonny.

You want to be there alone.

Bye, Tonny.

When he starts working as a houseman
after his Master's exam...

the distant winter of starvation fades away
more and more into the shrouds of time.

Nikita Khrushchev reveals
the crimes of Joseph Stalin.

During the same year:

Revolt in Budapest...

knocked down by

Russian tanks.

In Amsterdam masses of
people are gathering...

at communist institutes.

Anton's room is around the corner.

Here, I'll screw you up.

Communist. Dirty bastard.

Communist.

Hello, Ton.

Hello, Fake.

Wine? Beer?

Beer.

Student, I presume?

This chair sucks.

- Otherwise, it's highly modern.

Come, sit here.

You haven't changed a bit.

- That's what I hear more.

I knew it was you right away.

I needed some time.

I haven't seen your father that often.

What are you studying?

- Medicines.

I work in a shop of domestic articles. Repairs and the like.

At Haarlem?

- Haarlem...

Did you think we were still living in Haarlem? In Den Helder.

Did you come all the way from Den Helder to...

- Yes. Strange, isn't it?

How did you get into plumbing?

You finished grammar school, right?

After the war my mother was put into an NSB camp.

I was sent to the Bisschoppelijke Nijverheidsschool.

I'm not even Roman, god damnit.

What did your mother do then?

- She was married to my father.

When she was released, we were lucky enough to stay in Den Helder.

I went to technical school.

- Why not grammar school again?

You know nothing, do you? You.

What are you really thinking?

My mother became worker.

From five till nine at the morning and five till nine at the evening.

We got our food that way. My sisters and I couldn't go to grammar school from that.

Now she's in the hospital.

One leg is already amputated, the right one is yellow with brown stains.

Water is dripping out and they don't know what it is, so they say.

There, are you happy now?

Doctor.

That's the difference, isn't it?

Your parents get shot and still you are studying medicines.

But my father gets killed and I'm repairing geysers.

But your mother is still alive.

And your sisters too.

Besides, isn't there a difference between how they both died?

What difference?

My parents were innocent.

- My father was too.

I only know what was told to me.

- Exactly.

But if you see the difference between us that way, I don't understand that stone.

Then you should just become a communist.

The communism

is the worst of all.

That's what you see now in Boedapest...

where the urge for liberty of an

entire nation is being smothered in blood.

You're just memorizing

headlines.

Sorry, smart doctor. There is a mass slaughter going on. Better now?

Haven't you read the papers?

About the horrors that are committed there by Mongolian soldiers.

What do you mean, Fake? Is it time now to gas the Mongols?

No, bastard.

Look at that scum.

My father was right.

Everything they say about communists now, he was already saying in the war.

And it's those damn communists who killed him.

You defend them.

They knew all along of reprisals and still they shoot him in front of your house.

And has the war ended 1 second earlier by it?

My family wasn't killed by communists, but by friends of your father.

Are you saying that it's my father's fault that your family was killed?

Fake, you can still love your father without having to justify things?

Just say honestly: He was wrong, but he was my father and I love him.

Wrong? Wrong? Was he so wrong
about the communists?
Those outside thing exactly the same
way about it. Just look at it.
And he never knew about the Jews.
He picked up the people from their homes.
That's what he always did.
During Colijn he had to shoot at workers.
He never wanted to do that again.
That heater will go soon.
Do you know when my father became a
member of the NSB? In September '44.
When all those sham fascists
fled to Germany.
Action had to be done,
so he thought.
And for that belief, they shot him.
Not for anything else.
If they wouldn't have done that,
your parents would still be alive.
Perhaps my dad would have done time
in prison for a couple of years.
Surely the name of your father should have
been written on the monument then as well.
What monument?
- For the 29 hostages and my family.
Should they have included
'Fake Ploeg' there too?
God damnit.
When your house was set on fire,
we received the news about my father.
Have you ever thought about that?
I did about what happened to you,
but did you think of me too?
God damnit.
Fake.
I just wanted to say to you that
I will never forget that moment.
What moment?
The moment you just greeted me and
weren't ignoring me like all the others.
As far as love is concerned, he
lets things come as they come.
Every couple of months the girls change

that sit on his sagged couch...
after which explains the working
of Sextant time after time.

Look through this.

Move your hooks.

Hold it like that.

- Yes.

After his final examinations in medicine
Anton specializes in anaesthetics.
In 1960 he spends the Easter Days
in Londen.

That's right.

What's right?

I'm a stewardess. But now I'm here
to pick up my father.

He has an appointment with old
acquaintances. A kind of reunion.

A reunion? In London?

- Yes.

Something from the war.

He never talks about it much.

I must hurry.

I'm too late.

Oh Lord, they're already waiting.

See you soon?

Yes, see you soon.

- Bye.

Can I call you?

- Yes, of course.

A year later they got married.

Their daughter was named Sandra.

In Vietnam, war rages.

has its own share of problems.

A small group of young people,
the provo's...

is putting authorities to great inconvenience
by making a fool of them.

It's a year of demonstrations
and riots.

In the summer of that year

Anton, Saskia en Sandra attend...

the funeral of a friend

of Saskia's father.

Who are they, daddy?

They fought against the
Germans during the war.
What exactly is war, dad?
- A big fight.
When two groups of people
cut off each others heads.
Hey, easy on it.
- You think?
Is that man in there now?
Look, there's grandfather.
Grandfather.
Lien, children, friends.
In the long, frightening years...
of our deepest setbacks
and highest triumphs...
we all lived a
thousand lives.
And with every fiber of those lives
we were...
no, we are united with Henk.
Friendship never dies,
loyalty never dies.
The body will be buried, but
his voice remains audible...
in the words that he had written down
himself only a short while ago.
'When I will die, I already
died a thousand deaths...
and when I fall, I will fall into a
line that started out ages ago.
And over me others will fall
who still offered resistance.
Justice.
O, heart of the better country...
love, that I
will drink as fresh wine...
come sink into the dark
of the graves...
awaken me, and I will rise...
and shine in the light
that I passionately desired.'
That is the way we ought to know him.
Hey.
It's like a reunion.

- Half of the resistance is here.

I hope they won't notice.

- Who?

The Germans, of course.

- Stop it.

As far as I'm concerned
that Vietnamese Liberation Front...
can be equated to the nazi's.

- You're becoming an old prick.

To you the Americans are still
the same. Forget about that.

Jaap, you're forgetting one thing.

- The Russians also liberated us.

And they are on the right side again.

- Dirty communists.

Fine fellas.

- My ass.

From '44 you fought
against those fine fellas.

After all you don't exchange one
dictatorship for the other?

Prick.

- This will be a great conversation.

Do you know those lines of Sjoerd?

'A nation that yields to tyrants,
loses more than just body and good.

Then the light turns off.'

Tomorrow.

Do you know why he joined the resistance?

For the little princesses.

What's better than a party
at Soestdijk?

Men in dress uniform, ladies
in long dresses with sparkling jewels...

The glittering of chandeliers...

and the tinkling of crystal glasses
of champagne.

And the hope for a glimpse
of Her Majesty herself.

And far behind the fences in the drizzle...

guarded by the military police, the
gazing masses. Beautiful.

He's serious about it too, god damnit.

- If I would think like that, I would feel ashamed.

Fierce afternoon.

The masses throw smoke bombs at that Royal Family of yours as well.

Smoke bombs?

At first I shot him in his back.

And while I was cycling past him in his shoulder and his stomach.

Was that shooting in Haarlem?

What do you know about that?

- Was is about Ploeg? Fake Ploeg?

Who are you?

How old are you?

It happened in front of our house. Almost.

- In front of your...

Oh, oh. This is not good.

I'm Cor Takes. And you are Steenwijk?

- Anton Steenwijk.

They call me Gijs.

Look, a wreath from the Queen.

Why? It's not my problem anymore.

What happened, happened.

It's more than 20 years ago.

I have a wife, a child and a nice job. Everything is alright.

Why did you say something then?

You didn't have to say anything, did you?

How old were you then?

- Twelve.

Did you know him, that bastard?

- His son was in my class.

Shall I tell you what kind of person that Ploeg was?

I don't mind if you don't.

- I do.

He'd use a whip with a wire to whipe the skin off your face.

He'd push your bare bottom against the hot stove.

He'd put a garden hose in your ass so that you would puke your own shit.

He had to be taken care of.

Yes or yes?

Yes.

We knew that reprisals would be made.

Mr. Takes...

- Gijs.

You don't have to defend yourself.

I'm not attacking you.

Alright, we knew that reprisals
would be made.

House up in flames,
hostages against the wall...

Is that why we had to keep it?

- I don't know.

The answer is no.

Your family would have lived if we would
have killed Ploeg somewhere else.

Then I would have been here with
someone else. If this, if that.

Fact is everyone was killed
by who killed them.

Ploeg by us,
your family by the krauts.

If you think we shouldn't
have done it...

then you should also think that
human nature is bad.

All love and happiness
and goodness of our world...

wouldn't make up then for the
death of just one child.

Your child, for example.

Is that what you think?

So we killed Ploeg.

- Does it make up for that then?

We knew at least one
house would be destroyed.

We picked your street
because it was quiet there.

If your parents were living there,
would you still have done it then?

Among those hostages did
was my youngest brother.

My mother knew about it.

She agreed with it.

You can still go and ask her.

She's still alive, she's 81.

You look as if it was my fault,

damnit. I was only twelve.
I was reading or something.
That it happened in front of your house,
was by mere coincidence.
It didn't happen in front of our house.
It happened at the neighbours' house.
They put him in front of our house.
A good neighbour is better
than a distant friend.
What kind of people were they?
A widower and his daughter.
A seaman.
I thank You. That can happen too of course,
giving coincidence a helping hand.
Should that be allowed?
Blame them.
No, I'm asking because my brother
wanted to put him back.
Or put him further away.
But then the police arrived.
What a fuss. Moving back
and forth a dead body.
What should have happened then?
- Bring him in.
Go figure. They would have heard shots
then, but they wouldn't find a thing.
What about the body?
- You should have buried it.

Or even better:

Yes, eaten it.
Bake it with the neighbours and eat it.
It was hungry winter after all?
Don't you think that never happened
in the war. It all happened.
It's easy for you to say.
You were in a gang of thugs,
you thought about such things.
And I think you're still doing that.
But we were reading at the table...
and then suddenly we heard the shots.
- Then I would have thought of that too.
Anyhow,
there wouldn't have been time for that.

Although, first there were some arguments.

I'm gonna put him back.

- Peter, you're playing with your life.

Not me, you.

You're all crazy.

Retards, all of you.

So the Beumers lived here, you there,

Korteweg there and Aarts here. Right?

Right.

But where did that asshole lay first then?

- Here, at Korteweg.

Why, of all places, did that seaman put
the body in front of your door...

and not there, at Aarts?

- I wondered about that too.

There must have been a reason for that.

Did he hate you?

- Not that I know of.

Rather the other neighbours.

And you never attempted to find
the reason why they did it?

It happened the way it happened
and that's the way it is.

Nothing can change what happened.

Understanding it won't help either.

Why do you still want that case clear?

Can't you live outside of the war?

Or do you regret it now?

I'd do it again if I had to.

But in front of your place...

Back then...

something happened.

Looking back, I wish it
wouldn't have happened.

Because of my family?

- No...

I'm sorry to say that to you.

Your family and those hostages
weren't the only victims.

There was someone else at the assault.

We were with the two of us.

Me...

and let's just say... my girlfriend.

What now?

How did she die?
Three weeks before the liberation
she was executed in the dunes.
She was buried at the honour cemetery.
Why do you take it to heart?
Because I know her.
I spoke with her.
I was in a cell with her that night.
Did she say who she was?
- No, but I'm sure of it.
Did she say she committed that assault?
- Neither.
But I'm sure it was her.
Then what did she look like, damnit?
- I don't know. It was as dark as pitch.
What did she say? You should at least remember something?
- I wish I did.
It's such a long time ago.
She was wounded.
Where?
- I don't know.
It must have been her.
When we went around the corner,
Ploeg still managed to hit her.
What was her name?
- Coster. Truus Coster.
There they are, those fools.
- Look, there's daddy.
Daddy.
Goodness. Are you crying here?
Come, let's eat somewhere.
- And no more talk about that war.
We prefer to go to the beach.
Will we eat in Amsterdam?
- I hope not.
With all the provo's of course? No, thanks.
This is where our ways part then.
Wait.
Bye, Gijs.
How do you feel now, boy?
- I'm fine, dad.
Gijs was tortured by the Gestapo.
He didn't give away a thing.
Now he's sitting next to you

and he's spilling the beans.
It cancels each other out.
What do you mean with that?
- I don't really know that myself either.
Keep a hold of yourself, boy.
That's the main thing.
Maybe it's a good thing
that you met Gijs today.
Apparently, sometime it has to come
up for all of us, our disease.
You don't look like you have
a problem with anything.
You go and have fun at the beach.
It's cold further on.
How do you feel?
Good... fine.
Let it go now.
I have, really.
What's wrong?
What's the problem?
- They're cutting up a jellyfish.
You stay here. We're going to do some
shopping at the village for a moment.
See you soon.
Have you read the newspaper?
on his conscience.
Seriously ill. Just wait
till he arrived in Germany.
A lot of people get sick for real when
they read messages like that.
But that Roman clique in
The Hague doesn't give a damn.
Because 'liebe Willy' has been
a Papist for years as well.
A forced reform in prison
saved him from the bullet.
Your parents came under him as well.
- Not under the present wreck.
Hand me that wreck and I'll cut off his
throat here and now. With a pocketknife.
It's still war. Right, Takes?
- Certainly, certainly.
It's what I live from.
A benefit from the Foundation '40-'45.

Founded by Mr. A. Hitler.
Cheers, doctor Steenwijk.
I've worked for your branch as well.
We killed traitors at
an anatomical institute.
Entire bathtubs full of guts,
noses, ears, dicks.
All for education.
- What do you want, Takes? Initiate me?
I've had my share.
You know that better than anyone.
I want you to know
who you are dealing with.
Come.
Is it her?
It must be.
What did she say? Anything about me?
- I don't remember.
Try to remember, asshole.
- I was twelve.
It was dark in the police office.
Which police office?
- Of Heemstede.
Heemstede? Jesus, we could
have gotten her out of there.
We thought they held her at Haarlem.
I remember she told a long
story about something.
You'd prefer to tie me up now and
beat it out of me, don't you?
Were you married?
I would have abandoned my wife and kids
for her without hesitating. But...
she said that I didn't
feel love for her.
That it was only feeling the excitement
of working for the resistance.
Long stories? She was good at that.
One time we discussed about taking
hostage the children of Seyss-Inquart.
She was against it. It was
fighting fascism with fascism.
She stayed late that night.
And it was so dark and so foggy...

that she got lost.
She sat at the street until
it was light again.
I think I dreamt about such thing once.
Compared to her I was a clodhopper,
although I was doing mathematics.
She was a philosopher.
Is that her pistol?
- That's her pistol.
Did she shoot Ploeg with that thing?
- And she hit him.
Only I was very stupid
that night.
We were riding hand in hand. Very slowly,
like a loving couple.
As far as I'm concerned, we were.
Good morning to you, too.
Watch it.
I always thought that it
was the scream of Ploeg.
And then?
What happened next?
And then?
And then and then and then.
Then an elephant came...
with a very tall trunk...
and it blew out the entire story.
Gijs, I can't anymore.
Gijs, get out of here. It's over,
I can feel it. Get out of here.
Gijs, I don't feel my legs anymore.
Gijs, get out of here now.
They will never find us here.
Or else we will shoot us through.
Here. They are here.
Help, help.
Here, here.
Bitch.
Help. They are here,
here in my garden.
Here, take this.
Don't worry.
I will turn out all right.
Just go, Gijs.

I would have like to talk to
that traitress with this.
Good evening, Madam.
How are you? And the kids?
She is a sweet granny too now.
Do you remember the man who sat next
to me at the funeral yesterday?
Of course, that was me.
The man on the other side
who I was talking with.
Vaguely.
He said back in '52
when Lages was pardoned...
'If they will ever release him,
I will kill myself.'
We were laughing.
Back then.
Anton finally found out who,
in a cell in January 1945...
managed to control his life
up to this moment.
Anton and Saskia separated from each other
in 1967. They remained good friends.
Anton remarries to Liesbeth.
She is from after the war.
Her parents were prisoners
in a camp in Indonesia for years.
They never talked about it.
Anton and Liesbeth got a son
who they named Peter.
In Lucca, Tuscany, he buys a house
where they spend their vacations.
In spite of everything he feels depressed
and tired. Nightmares disturb his sleep.
Like an autumn leaf blown off, a shred
of desperation flutters inside of him.
A feeling, until now only experienced by
him when a patient has died in his hands.
Peter, stay with daddy.
I'm getting a doctor.
I'll be right back.
Anton sleeps for fifteen hours
When he awakes, there's a
prescription which he shreds.

After a while, the attacks didn't come back.
It seemed as if they were intimidated
by the shredding of the prescription.
Only his view of Tuscany was never
again as wonderful as it was before.
One day, Sandra said she wanted to see where
her grandfather and grandmother had died.
This is where the Aartsen lived or so.
And here Korteweg, the nurse.
And that's where Beumers lived,
he always read to me.
Then where was that man laying?
Here.
And where's the monument?
- Oh, it's over there.
Do you know what that Mr. Beumer
said once? Gherkins are like crocodiles.
Yes, that's true.
These are the people that were shot then.
It must have been a nice sight.
All those little lights at night.
It was always dark back then.
- By day I mean.
I like those. Nice buildings.
Back then it was completely empty.
Look, here are the names of grandpa
and grandma. And of my brother.
I don't know the others.
Only his brother...
I know him.
He's...
What are you trying to say, dad?
- No, nothing. Nothing.
There was the Ortskommandantur.
It used to be an old hotel.
The entire area was closed
off by the Germans.
That was the garage. From there
I was brought to Amsterdam.
Come.
At the morning I was with that German
Feldwebel eating that delicious sandwich.
While at the same moment in that
police cell she may have...

Wasn't she responsible for
what happened to you?
Who did it, did it.
Not someone else.
Have you ever visited the place
where they were buried?
We will do that now then.
I want to see it all now.
And me too.
Because I love him too...
even though he doesn't know that.
He thinks not,
but I love him.
Daddy, are you still here?
What is it?
All of a sudden I remember something
that she said to me back then.
What?
She said she loved someone.
And I know who.
Is he still alive?
He's still alive.
Who is he?
Say, mister.
How long has that building been there?
It used to be old junk. It was
flattened five years ago.
East and West are still
opposed to each other.
For the first time there are mentions
of a limited nuclear war.
But for Europe such a war
would be unlimited.
If we will be in the Achterhoek at 10.30...
- It's getting worse all the time.
I really can't eat a thing.
You go alone then.
I have to get that molar fixed.
Have you called Gerrit-Jan already?
- Let us stay home then as well.
Gerrit-Jan? This is Liesbeth Steenwijk speaking.
Yes.
Alright then, quickly.
Anton is racked with pain.

Oh, no? Come on now, old friends.
You have to.
Now?
Tell him that yourself. As long as you
help him, the pain is killing him.
Thank you, very sweet.
See you soon.
You have to hurry, he is about to leave.
- As long as he helps me.
Here, a clove.
Hold it against your molar.
They used to do that in Indonesia as well.
What's with you all of a sudden?
It's only a clove.
Sit down.
Let me see, friend.
Which one is it?
This one.
Gently move back and forth.
I already see it.
I would appreciate an injection.
- Don't be mad, it's nothing.
Right, you can close it now.
It's gone. How can that be?
- A small overload.
Your molar had come up.
A matter of age.
Just wash for a moment. We will go then.
- Go where?
Didn't Liesbeth tell you of
my condition?
Condition?
You will walk in the
anti-nuke demonstration.
Me? Walk in a demonstration?
Are you out of your mind?
That was the deal.
You're such a bastard.
In the past you also tried to force
me into fighting the communism.
Each weapon that was ever made,
was used as well.
Just like the apple from the Tree of
Knowledge. It hung there and it was eaten.

That's why all the nuke apples
have to go. Come on.

Can I go too, dad?

- Of course.

Say, Ton. I'm taking the shortest way.

Demonstrating is one thing,
walking the right way is another.

And back at the car at six, alright?

Hey, dad. I can't believe it.

Great. I never imagined this.

I was blackmailed.

- Hi, Anton.

You're on the right side. I actually expected you

over there:

We should take those camera's from them.

Then it will be a fight.

- We'll do that by accident of course.

You made my daughter pregnant.

- It's that time again. Bye, dad.

Bye, Peter.

Where's Peter?

Tonny, do you remember me?

Let me think. From the hospital?

- Haarlem.

You know.

Karin Korteweg, from the neighbours.

I recognized you instantly.

You haven't changed at all.

- That's what I hear more.

I don't know if it's a good sign.

Are you still in nursing?

- Not for a long time. I have an allowance.

That was your daughter, right?

And your son?

- Yes.

What's his name?

- Peter.

Do you have any kids?

- No, I never got married.

Karin, let's get to the point.

You want to tell me something and I want to know it.

I thought he came to kill us
for what we had done.

Peter.

Get rid of the pistol.

Soon they will think you...

Give me that pistol. We will hide it in the house. Here, give it.

Shut up. If they will find us here, they will think that we...

So he was lucky that Peter was holding you at gunpoint?

Nuclear weapons get rid of them.

Nuclear weapons get rid of them.

Father and I were taken by the Germans.

We were both interrogated separately.

Peter Steenwijk had nothing to do with it.

He didn't kill Ploeg.

- We know that.

It was a woman.

A woman of your age.

What did Peter do with Ploeg's pistol?

He was furious at us.

- Furious?

Why?

- Because...

Because Ploeg was really laying in front of our door... and we put him at their place.

Congratulations.

Congratulations.

Karin, we will never talk about this anymore. Understood?

Later on I heard that you were moved.

Emigrated, to New Zealand.

- My goodness.

He was affraid that you would ever want to avenge yourself.

Me? That never even occurred to me.

- Well, it did to him.

That's why he wanted to go to the other side of the world.

To New Zealand.

In New Zealand he committed
suicide in 1948.

At the end he didn't need
you to get killed.

You were inside of him.

It's Ploeg.

- Oh, God.

My lizards.

So basically the lizards killed
my parents and Peter.

Those creatures were something like
eternity and immortality to him.

They were his only hold during the war.

He was so unhappy.

Have you heard? The Steenwijks
were killed last night.

As soon as we got home,
he kicked them all to death.

They were only lizards to him
again, only some animals.

One last thing.

You saw Ploeg,
you went outside.

Your father grabbed him at the shoulders,
you at the feeth.

Why did you put him
at our place?

And not at the other side, at Aarts?

- I wanted to, I wanted to.

Where do you want to put him?

- Near the front door of the Aarts.

No, they have people in hiding.

There are Jews there.

Christ.

I saw those Jews the first
time after Liberation Day.

A couple with a baby.

Karin, excuse me.

I wish you... The best.

Hey, daddy.