

Postcards from The East

4 x 60' drama series inspired by real events
Story by Ewen Glass & Pavel Zvolensky / Written by Ewen Glass

'The Past is never dead. It's not even past' – **William Faulkner**

'I am free and that is why I am lost.' — **Franz Kafka**

Postcards... is a miniseries about the Communist Regime in Czechoslovakia and the lingering toll it takes on a nation, seen through the eyes of ADAM, a journalist caught between loyalty to the regime and loyalty to himself, as he comes to realise its flaws and injustices. It's the story of a life shaped in the shadow of communism and by a troubled relationship with his domineering party-official Father, PAVEL. It's a coming-of-age story that tracks Adam's growth as the regime falls, told in snapshots... or postcards.

But unlike most coming-of-age stories, we stay with Adam after he turns against Communism and after the wall comes down. A new wave of terrorism sweeps the globe and Adam is at the vanguard, reporting from the middle east.

But the past casts a long shadow and as Adam ages, he must properly confront the part his Father played in the injustices of 80s Czechoslovakia, before he can move on.

Episode One

A squat building in the middle of nowhere. Hard earth below, a scorching sun above. Iraq 2006. All is quiet and peaceful. Suddenly... a man screams, two men emerging from the building, dragging a blonde western man – NOAH – behind them. We recognize the orange boiler suit he's wearing. We understand his screams. One of the terrorists readies a large sword.

We know what's about to happen.

'GREETINGS FROM PRAGUE!' appears on screen.

The change of scene is hard and jarring. We're ripped out of the execution and dropped into a student party in 1980s Eastern Europe. We move through the apartment, past drunk students – talking, dancing and kissing – and finally come to rest on a good-looking, scruffy student nursing a vodka and talking politics: ADAM (22). A Voice-Over from Adam begins: *God, that scarf takes me back*. Adam is indeed ahead of the curve, a Yasser Arafat scarf round his

neck, giving an idea of his rebel beliefs. When party talk gets round to **BEDRICH** (50s), a lecturer who recently disappeared from uni, Adam says good riddance to the western sympathizer.

Voiceover: *Welcome to 1980s Prague. Everyone talked like this.*

But many at the party don't so enthusiastically condemn Bedrich. So not *quite* everyone. Adam's friend, party animal **RAIMO** (22), breaks up the politics to give a drunk, all-over-the-place toast. We come to understand why they're having this party; they've all just graduated in journalism from university, and no-one seems to know what they're going to do. One last party before they move on. It's bittersweet for all of them as they down their drinks and crank the music LOUD.

The Morning After. Hungover/unconscious students lying on the floor. Among them, Adam struggles to open his hungover eyes. He looks at his watch – 11:55am – and jumps to his feet. Shit! He's late and whatever it is, it's hugely important. Adam runs through 1980s Prague.

Voiceover: *This is where a rock-song of the time would go but this isn't the west. Iron Maiden weren't even allowed in yet, and our cultural impact around that time was a lot more... problematic.*

Instead of music, Adam's flight across the city is thus inter-cut with stock/news footage showing freedom fighters/terrorists (delete where applicable) across the globe. Guns. Explosions. *Our famous plastic explosive – Danubit.* Adam's V.O. drips with sarcasm: *Neat, huh?* Breathless, Adam stops outside an apartment building, Arafat scarf tucked into his back pocket.

Scruffy Adam looks out of place in the grand apartment. Turns out it's his family home and he's always been slightly out of place. Cleaner/care-taker **KAMILA** (50s) ushers him into the dining-room where his Father **PAVEL** (50s) and Mother **HELENA** (40s) are entertaining other high-ranking bureaucrats. Adam is clearly a funny guy, but he wilts under his Father's stern look; it's clear that Pavel is a man used to exerting influence, both outside the house and inside. He's bloated, in all senses of the word.

Adam is feeling pretty bloated himself from the night before and he has to actively stop himself vomiting as he's presented with course after course of rich food and forced to engage in loads of small-talk.

At the end of lunch, Pavel makes a big deal of sharing Huge News with the table: Adam will start a job as a journalist on state newspaper Rudé právo on Monday. Adam is ecstatic. It's his Mum who seems slightly muted – perhaps Adam would have liked to have been consulted beforehand? This gets the biggest laugh of the entire lunch. Helena smiles through gritted teeth. *Mum was never cut out for this... whatever 'this' is.*

Afterwards, Pavel catches his son alone. The tone between them is much different to the forced jollity of lunch. Tense and awkward. After discussing Adam's career, his Dad reaches past him and Adam freezes... but Pavel's only grabbing the Arafat scarf from his son's pocket. He wraps it round his son's neck. Much better.

'I SAID I WOULD WRITE'

The Rudé právo newsroom is bustling and smoky (unlike *any* newsroom now.) If Adam thought he'd be covering big stories when he started, though, he's wrong. Sarcastic, grumpy journalist **JANO** (30s) is forcing him to check spelling and grammar. It's only when one of Jano's colleagues asks Jano if he knows who Adam's Father is, that he starts going easier on Adam. Well, a *little* easier.

That was the story of my life. I just didn't really know it yet.

With a mischievous glint in his eye one afternoon, Jano tells Adam he can write the next article, if he comes with him. It's only after a few beers with a charming Irish fella **SEAN** (20s) that Adam realises who he's talking to... Sean's a member of the Provisional IRA, a terrorist here to source Danubit. Adam is rattled but Jano helps him write the article, a vague pro-IRA/Irish Independence piece describing their struggles against evil imperial Britain.

Pavel is impressed with his son's first proper article, asking if he got any help with it. Desperate to impress his withholding Dad, Adam lies that he did it on his own. Still, his Dad doesn't believe him. Angry and with a point to prove, Adam commits himself, working twice as hard at the paper and shadowing a reluctant Jano.

Sean was no exception. Over time, Adam comes to understand how many terrorists are coming in to Prague and being feted as celebrities. *Any target of the West is someone to be celebrated.* When he accompanies Jano to the Intercontinental Hotel one afternoon the reality of this is brought home to him. There to discuss a clandestine arms deal... famous Venezuelan 'freedom-fighter', Carlos the Jackal. Adam soon finds himself diving for cover as Carlos runs round the fancy hotel, a revolver in his hand.

That's true - that happened.

Adam is becoming uneasy with what's going on. Jano, usually so sarcastic, softens, helping Adam understand that this is the way things are, no matter what they do or think. They have to make the most of it. *A journalist's greatest tool also helps: booze.* Soon, Adam is losing himself in parties, drink and women, reconciling himself to the job and writing more and more articles with more and more skill. Life is good.

It gets better when he's given a promotion to Middle East correspondent, coming full circle to the Arafat scarf he's proudly still wearing. Excited, he can't wait to tell his Father who congratulates him, but Adam soon realises Pavel already knew. Did Pavel organize it or did Adam get the promotion on his own merits?

These questions take the wind out of Adam's sails, but the images that come through in the newsroom later that day leave Adam completely breathless. Screams. Blood. Dead bodies on the pavement. A bomb, planted by the provisional IRA, exploded during a Remembrance ceremony in Northern Ireland, killing 11 and injuring 63. Jano can't meet Adam's eye as Adam

asks if this was this Sean's doing? Did he get the explosive here? Jano just shrugs: 'you should know; you wrote the article.'

The images of death stay with Adam as he meets Raimo and friends that night. He looks at their Arafat scarves differently now. They all fall silent when Raimo recognises an old emaciated drunk in the corner of the bar. He looks like death. It's their old lecturer, Bedrich. Bedrich meets Adam's eye but it's all too much for Adam and he flees.

Adam ends up at home where his Mum is sitting alone in the kitchen, Pavel away working. She seems deeply unhappy. Adam asks what his Father really does but Helena changes the subject, as always. Adam goes.

Along with Adam's story, each episode will have a B-story featuring another important character. In episode one we will look at Helena's life at this time. In some ways she's 'privileged' because of her husband but it's clear she's unhappy. The C-story in each episode will feature a standalone story illuminating the regime or the political situation at the time. In episode one Raimo's Mother MAGDALENA (50s) searches high and low in the empty shops for butter. Her weird obsession builds until she tells the authorities that her neighbours are listening to illegal radio in the hope that they might reward her with information on the best place to get new produce. The authorities do no such thing, leaving Magdalena without butter and without the friendship of her neighbours who suspect what she did.

Episode Two

'WE'RE HAVING A GREAT TIME...'

Adam has left more than a scarf behind. We see him, about five years later, walking the city streets. It's only when he briefly walks alongside it that we understand the city is no longer Prague: The Berlin Wall. He's living in East Berlin, still filing reports for Rudé parvo. *Welcome to East Berlin where the sun always shines...*

But it's not work that's on his mind, nor even the eroding foundations of communism in Europe. It's the woman in Café Marx: ILSE (20s). She's there at the same time every day and Adam makes it his business to be there too.

We remain in doubt as to what Adam's motivations are here. He never approaches her, instead following her out of the café one day. He follows her round the corner, but she's onto him and turns to confront him. Suddenly unsure what to do, Adam bolts, the shoe on the other foot as Ilse gives chase, eventually cornering him in a door-way, demanding to know why he's following her. This is peak paranoia time in East Europe after all. An awkward laugh on the voice-over...

In hindsight, this wasn't my best move.

Adam's romantic motivations become clear and Ilse tears into him, telling him how stupid he is to scare a girl like this, how *creepy*. Smart-ass Adam proposes the other viewpoint – this could be considered romantic, a story to tell their grandkids. It raises a smile, Ilse wondering why he couldn't have just talked to her like this if he wanted to get to know her. Adam blames his profession; journalists research their subjects and know their background before an interview. Ilse laughs again: 'an interview? How romantic.' When Adam introduces himself properly, Ilse softens further – she recognizes his name as his reputation as a journalist has grown. She's a journalist too.

It's an inauspicious start but their first date goes well... and goes on for hours. They don't want to stop talking and they don't, until they fall into bed together. Everything feels right. *And here comes the soppy shit...*

Having grown up with a controlling parent in a controlling regime, Adam feels a freedom and a rightness with spontaneous Ilse. As their romance blossoms, this becomes a love-story, the clichés of the genre given a fresh/comic twist. They ride bikes together but it's not in the shadow of the Eiffel Tower or the Empire State Building, it's in the shadow of the Berlin Wall. They frolic in a fountain but before getting carried away, see a stern authoritative figure staring at them. Who knows who he works for? They spend many evenings talking and driving Ilse's old Beetle across East Berlin.

Everything seems perfect but they soon hit their first major speed-bump. A gift from Ilse (given to *her* by one of her radical friends): the novel *GraveLarks* by Jan Křesadlo. A renowned anti-communist, Křesadlo's work was banned in GDR. Adam isn't sure how to take this – is it a test? Or is she really this rebellious?

It brings back to him the way Pavel used to test him and Adam, usually so funny and fun-loving, starts to close himself off. Ilse recognizes a coldness in him – the ability to compartmentalize, to freeze out someone he's meant to love. At the heart of it, is his relationship with his Dad but he refuses to go into it with her, even now. He and Ilse have a massive argument. As Adam goes home, he feels as if he's being watched. Drunk and upset, he calls into the night: 'tell Pavel to piss off!'

As if it's that easy.

His Mother Helena visits. She looks worn down but is invigorated by the new city, putting on her finest clothes before they have dinner. She has something she wants to tell Adam... she has asked Pavel for a divorce. She can no longer bear the absurdity and pretence of living with Pavel, if you could call it living. He lives for his work. Despite which way the wind is blowing, Pavel still supports communism 150%. Adam can see what a poor fit Pavel and Helena always were, only exacerbated by his Father's 'job'.

It's a wake-up call. Adam and Ilse are right for each other, he knows it. He rushes to her apartment, catching her as she leaves. She's going away for a few days. She's reluctant to answer when he asks her where she's going, Adam turning the 'why don't you open up?' line back on her. She says she'll tell him if he promises to come.

And if he promises to come, he must promise that they're in this together.

'...DESPISE THE WEATHER'

Adam finds himself in the old Beetle, Ilse driving a long dark road. The things they'd avoided talking about in the honeymoon period come out as they drive deeper into the German countryside: Adam's Father, the control-freak.

I was worried it might scare her off.

For a while Ilse is quiet. It's time for Ilse to open up too – they're on their way to Budapest to meet her sister, **ANNA** (30s) who now lives in West Berlin. Usually if someone emigrated the regime came down hard on the family left behind but they've been lucky so far. Perhaps people forgot about them, an administrative oversight. Adam goes quiet as he contemplates what this means... his family connections could actually be a threat to Ilse. Pavel, who keeps watch over Adam, could ruin her 'luck.'

Eventually, Ilse pulls over. Usually so sarcastic and funny, she has tears in her eyes. This is what Adam has to understand; she is happy with this risk. There are always risks. At this moment, the depth of her love hits Adam hard, and his barriers properly disappear. He kisses Ilse. What starts tenderly ends frantically, Ilse climbing onto him in the little car, Adam joking on the voiceover...

If the shitty Beetle's rocking, don't come knocking (sorry!) Truth be told, it was a risk. But it was nothing compared to what we were about to do...

What follows is a tense, nigh-wordless 10 minutes as they go through a number of checkpoints, lie to officials, ensure they're not being followed and *finally* meet Anna in Budapest in secret. Release comes as the sisters hug each other. Despite living either side of the wall, they are close. A *close* family, nothing like his own. Anna isn't standoffish with Adam, instead pulling him into a tight hug. It's a small moment that means a lot.

Prepare for a Big Moment. As the Wall comes down in 1989, reuniting the country and all of Europe, Adam and Ilse stand at the back of the crowds in Berlin, tears in their eyes. Adam has come a long way from the Arafat-scarf-wearing Believer.

As cheers ring out and a new world begins, Adam has a question for Ilse: will she marry him?

The B-story follows Ilse and a group of Ilse's arty friends: painters, poets and wannabe novelists, all negotiating the demands of communism in different ways – some have resigned themselves to never being critical, others being critical in veiled, metaphorical ways. One has just published a novel and has been invited to a conference in Belgium. She hardens when she's denied permission to travel and falls in with a group of radical youths. These youths make up the C-story, a desperate and ultimately tragic attempt to escape into the West.

Episode Three

'DAD SENDS HIS LOVE'

For the first time, we leave Adam's perspective for the A-story and take Pavel's, leaving behind Adam's wry voice-over. The moment the Wall came down plays on a TV as Pavel – unshaven, in a dressing gown – drinks and curses. He looks like he has aged 30 years since last we saw him, a shadow of his former self, railing against the rats that deserted the sinking ship. Cheers from outside, carry through the window. He tries to call Helena, his now ex-wife, but no-one answers.

When he hears banging out on the street below, he rushes outside to see a group of revelers, cheering and knocking on doors. He tells them to go away but they turn on him. Isn't he happy? What was his part in the regime, anyway? Sensing it's time to retreat, especially as they don't yet recognize him, Pavel barks a final pathetic word and rushes back inside. But he's drunk and old, and he slips on the stairs, hitting his head as he falls. He can't get up and is forced to lie there, listening to cheers and fireworks outside.

Cleaner Kamila finds him the next day and helps him to bed. She wants him to go to hospital, but Pavel won't hear of it. After sleeping, he's back to barking orders, demanding that she fetch him a pen and paper. He starts writing his memoirs but is halted by headaches and his need to rest. When he is lucid, he calls up old contacts, but no-one is taking his calls now.

It gets worse. Many know his part in the regime, and he's awoken by a stone smashing through his window in the middle of the night. Soon every knock on the door or phone call worries him, though he's still irritable and unreasonable with poor old Kamila. She should give this man up – it will do her no good to be associated with him – but Kamila is loyal to the end (perhaps just loyal to the old regime).

When Pavel's health deteriorates, Kamila starts staying over at night too. She finds him talking on the phone in the middle of the night, ordering people about as if it was still 1982. His mind is deteriorating.

Adam, Ilse and Helena have dinner in a chain-restaurant in Berlin. It's a new world, one of Coca-Cola and burgeoning commercialism (one day, *that* particular Berlin Wall might fall too.) Helena tells them she's desperate for grandkids – no pressure! Later, when Ilse is at the toilet, Helena tells Adam he should consider visiting his Father. It's clear Adam has hardened further against his Dad, despite not yet knowing all the details of what he did under the regime, but Helena is adamant – no-one is saying he has to have a deep-and-meaningful conversation but Adam might feel guilty if he doesn't take this chance. Pavel is seriously ill.

Adam is shocked when he comes to Prague on his own and sees what his once strong Dad has become. He escorts his frail Father on a walk through the city. Pavel articulates what Adam already knows – Adam is lucky not to have been too associated with his Father and has thus avoided punishment after the wall fell. Pavel is almost tender here, a snapshot of a love Pavel *must* feel, somewhere deep inside for his son.

But later it's business as usual, Pavel finding enough energy to manipulate his son, to needle him about his work and his marriage. Adam soon regrets going. Pavel brings up Adam's old lecturer Bedrich. So his Father knew him? Pavel relishes telling Adam that Bedrich is dead. What's worse, it happened years ago. He threw himself into the Vltava and drowned.

Adam shouldn't be *that* shocked but it's been a draining day, a day of a life he could've had, a life he's happy to have escaped. Finally, Adam brings himself to confront Pavel, to stand up to him properly. It's no wonder Helena left him! They part in the worst circumstances.

Weeks later, at the home he shares with Ilse in Berlin, the inevitable news comes.

Only a few people attend Pavel's funeral, Helena amongst them, with her new partner. Only one person dares show emotion... Kamila. Adam isn't there but later he visits the grave alone. At Pavel's apartment he stumbles upon an untidy set of papers – Pavel's memoirs. He leaves them there but has final thoughts and returns to collect them before saying goodbye to the old apartment. For good.

'WE MIGHT GET HOME BEFORE THIS ARRIVES'

A baby in its stroller. It is now five years later, and Adam is smiling down at the child. But we pull back to reveal that the baby isn't his, it belongs to the family behind him in a hotel reception. Adam looks tired as he checks in.

He enters his hotel-room and pulls the curtains wide, revealing the city of Baghdad outside. As Adam meets contacts in the city, boards a van and heads out into the desert, Adam's V.O. explains the lay of the land. It's 1994: The Gulf War. During the socialist period, Czechs helped Libyans and others in the region build new tanks and vehicles, and as such Adam made lots of contacts. Adam's in-depth knowledge of the Middle East is in demand.

We see Adam at a military base and an air hangar, before taking a tour of a remote factory making arms and munitions. It's impressive... and terrible. Real weapons designed to kill en masse. The modern Danubit. It gets more terrible yet when the **MANAGER** abruptly tries to make Adam leave. It looks like he objects to a journalist being granted access but after an argument, the real reason emerges; irregular flight patterns suggest the facility might be a target. The rumour gets out amongst military personnel and civilian staff, and soon it's chaos in the factory. Tension rises as the sound of engines above gets louder.... Fighter planes?

They approach... closer... and closer... but fly past. A false alarm.

Elsewhere in Baghdad, a woman with a scarf draped around her in a makeshift hijab... Ilse. She's working as a journalist here too, fighting gender bias to get the locals to talk to her. She's writing a human-interest piece about local reaction to the war and it's clear time has diminished none of her spirit.

As the manager leads a relieved Adam away from the facility, he tells him he's friends with another Czech, who brokers deals between armed forces and weapons manufacturers. Adam

tells it like it is on the V.O.: *he means he's an arms dealer*. But when Adam meets the guy later that night, he's shocked... it's his old friend Raimo! Over the years they'd lost touch and clearly his fellow journalist has used his connections in a different way. He once wore an Arafat scarf but now his sunglasses alone cost thousands, to say nothing of his designer suit.

Adam brings Raimo along to dinner with Ilse. It's fun as they catch up but it's clear there are tensions between Adam and Ilse. Indeed, their marriage looks in trouble. Raimo catches them having an argument by the toilets, Ilse shouting at Adam that he's becoming like his Dad: arrogant. She leaves early to transcribe an interview, Adam staying out with Raimo, confiding in him over some illicit booze that they've had trouble conceiving and are arguing over Fertility treatment; Adam thinks they should just leave it while Ilse thinks it's worth one last shot before she gets *too old*. Raimo sees a link to Adam's own Father and it's clear there are unresolved issues there, even now. Adam tells him about his Father's memoirs, admitting that he hasn't brought himself to read them yet. There's something stopping him. Raimo thinks and then finally asks it: and what about the arrogance? Adam's smirk and his reply – also known as success – confirms it. Maybe Adam isn't so different to Pavel after all.

It's a bit of a flashback to their uni past, 2 fun-loving friends having a crazy night out. Despite being drunk, Raimo convinces Adam that he's okay to drive and they get into his heavy-duty Jeep. *Mistake 1*, Adam tells us on V.O. Raimo is drunker than they thought, and they have some near-misses on the roads. It's only when they stray away from the recommended routes that things turn serious. *That was Mistake 2*.

Soon they see they're being followed. After debating what to do, Raimo completely ignores cautious Adam's advice and floors it. *Mistake 3*. The car behind gives chase and eventually forces them off the road. Now there's silence. A man emerges with a gun. Is this the moment that will bring us full circle, back to the very first scene? Before Adam can stop him, Raimo gets out to talk to the man with the gun. *Mistake 4... never came*. Relief all round as Raimo returns to the car and grins. He's well connected through his work. One name and they were fine.

But it's a sobering moment. In more ways than one. We see Ilse working hard in her own hotel, Adam returning to the room he checked into earlier – they'd had a row and he had moved out. He opens his clunky laptop and starts writing about what happened that night. He keeps writing and writing and writing. It's clear this piece is going to be something special.

The B-Story is Ilse's experiences in Baghdad, and the fight she has in being a female journalist. It's not just the locals who discriminate, her colleagues and her bosses seem to look down at her too, and it's starting to take its toll on her, especially as she's having problems with Adam. The C-Story takes a look at the everyday impact the war has on a working-class family in Baghdad.

Episode Four

'WISH YOU WERE HERE'

We're in Adam's study in Berlin, moving across a shelf full of journalism awards and accolades, as we hear Adam on the phone, sternly saying 'I'm a very important journalist; I don't need this.' When we see him, he's not on the phone to an editor though, he's dealing with a toddler on his lap, who's squishing his cheeks and grabbing his nose. This is **ERIKA** (1), Adam and Ilse's daughter.

They are a family and we see this in the day they share together. Adam and Ilse have been through a lot and nearly split up on a number of occasions, but they seem stronger and more comfortable together for it. It's their anniversary and they take baby Erika on a day out. They end the day by reading Erika a story, putting her to bed, then making love.

But Ilse wakes to find Adam sneaking out of the room. 'I'm doing it' he tells her, and she nods. We don't know what 'it' is, just that it seems important and something they've clearly talked about before. Adam leaves, missing Ilse's face turn Deadly Serious. Back in his study, he unlocks a safe and takes a breath. His Father's memoirs. He begins reading.

With every page, I lost what little respect I ever had for him...

Flashback to Prague under the socialist regime – the first sustained look at Pavel's power. He was no mere bureaucrat; he was a hugely important member of the secret police. Obsessed with data collection and watching, we see him ordering high-level surveillance operations; interviewing traitors and generally acting like a mini-despot, as if his reign of power would never end.

A scene that Adam forgot: coming home from his first day at university and talking passionately about this amazing lecturer... Bedrich. Was this it? Somewhere deep inside, was Pavel jealous of a potential Father figure to Adam? What *is* clear from the memoirs, is that Pavel was one of the first to ensure that Bedrich was put on the watch-list. Adam isn't even surprised by this revelation – he has passed that point by now.

Adam reads through the night and finally falls asleep. He comes back to the real world when he hears Ilse calling out in shock. He rushes into the living-room to see the second tower going down live on TV... it's 9/11. The events of 9/11 are intercut with more of Pavel's misdeeds in socialist Prague – his lies, his vindictive nature, his gleeful role in a time of national repression. Adam is disgusted.

But the memoir has one final revelation for him. And Adam isn't prepared for this one. As an appendix at the back of the sheaf of papers, Pavel has included a partial list of interviewees and names of collaborators and informers. Adam recoils at a name he recognises... it's Ilse.

Was it there all along and I refused to see it? Adam replays memories from their lives together in his head. Clues? *No wonder she could still graduate after her sister defected.*

Adam says nothing to Ilse yet, although it's clear he's putting those emotional barriers up again. He meets Raimo to talk, pretending it's research for an article, but Raimo sees through him. Swearing his friend to silence, Adam comes clean, angry that, even now, the country's past and his family's past are biting him on the arse. Adam is struggling to deal with the idea that his Father might've played a part in recruiting or managing Ilse – any further details have since been destroyed so he can't be sure if she started collaborating before or after they met. Could Ilse know that her name is in this file? Does she *want* him to find out?

For a journalist who has dedicated his life to the truth, the not-knowing is killing Adam. Thankfully, he has work to take his mind off it, and in the wake of 9/11, an expert on the Middle East has *lots* of work, editors across the world beseeching him to travel to Iraq.

He visits his Mother Helena who is happy with a new partner. He watches Helena and Ilse play with little Erika and comes to a decision.

Adam sits Ilse down to talk. It's tense. But in the end, he just passes her a gift, wrapped in newspaper... the novel he rejected from her all those years ago, *GraveLarks* by Jan Křesadlo. It's a sign that he's still all in. Whether Ilse is worried about her name being in that memoir, whether she doesn't know, whether it's all an elaborate wind-up from his Father... all these ifs are answered in a kind silence between them, inter-cut with Adam ripping pages out of the memoirs, destroying all references to Ilse. He makes to burn the whole manuscript but, in the end, something stops him.

I couldn't do it; I didn't know why.

'LOVE,'

I still don't.

Adam is in a dark, window-less room in Iraq – the inside of the building we saw in the first scene – talking to the blonde man: Irish journalist **NOAH** (40s). This is Adam's voice-over, him recounting his life to Noah. Adam admits he may even have got some of the time-line wrong. *In case you didn't notice, this isn't the Ritz and I'm not feeling quite myself.*

Noah needs no reminding. He's in a worse way than Adam. He knows what's coming and he doesn't have it in him to talk about his own life. That would make things even harder for him. Clever Adam knows how to get a journalist to talk. Even as they're deprived of water and food, Adam knows Noah has enough intellectual curiosity to be interested when Adam tells him about his interaction with Provisional IRA all those years ago. They get to talking about terrorism in Ireland. The Troubles. The role of Czech Danubit. Lives lost. It comes round to modern terrorism – but they're living it right now and can't talk about it *too* much. Adam wrestles with the idea that the world is just repeating mistakes, that it's just a cycle.

They stiffen upon hearing their guards outside the door. But they pass. Adam says he hasn't finished his story. Doesn't Noah want to know how he ended up this room? But Noah shakes his head. He doesn't need to know. He doesn't *want* to know. Adam gets it.

Adam muses on his Father, on how Adam threatened to become a despot just like him. An unreasonable man, flush with his own importance as an award-winning journalist. Maybe everyone has it in them. ‘Understanding’ might be too strong a word – Adam can’t totally forgive his Father for the bad things he did – but as time runs out, we get the impression that Adam can see *how* it happened and how it happened across much of Europe.

The guards come for Noah, dragging him outside. We see something we didn’t see at the start – a camera and a camera man. They’re going to broadcast Noah’s execution live. Inside the building, Adam squeezes his eyes closed, tries to block out Noah’s screams. He pictures Erika and Ilse. But is pulled out of memory by a guard at the door. It’s time. As they drag him outside, Adam closes his eyes again.

We can’t see any more. We don’t want to.

Months later, Ilse visits the café where she first met Adam, or rather where he *watched* her. But Café Marx is now a McDonalds (or similar). She tells Erika this is where she met her Father but as orders are taken and loud teenagers laugh, it’s clear this isn’t going to be the sentimental visit she hoped it would be.

They return to the apartment, Ilse putting Erika to bed. She goes into Adam’s study. It’s untouched, everything still in place. There are empty rubbish bags and cleaning stuff in there already, from previous aborted attempts, but pragmatic Ilse is determined: tonight’s the night she’ll start clearing the room of Adam out and start to move on.

Then she finds Pavel’s memoirs.

She flicks through the pages, noticing torn bits of paper where the papers have been bound together. Someone has ripped pages out. We *still* don’t know the truth of her collaboration with the secret police so can’t guess at what’s going through her head right now – does she realise Adam’s kindness by not even bringing it up? By ripping out offending pages?

All we know is Ilse pulls the memoirs close to her chest and cries.

‘ADAM’

A final chapter name.

But there’s nothing after this one.

The B-Story follows the Irish terrorist, Sean. He has renounced violence and in a Northern Ireland of peace and progress is trying to make a positive difference by running for office. We also check in with all the major characters from the drama: Raimo, Raimo’s Mother Magdalena, Jano, Ilse’s sister Lisa, Helena and her new partner. The C-Story shows awful Anti-Muslim feeling in the wake of 9/11 when a devout Muslim family find themselves the targets of hate.

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Postcards from The East is a miniseries about Fathers and Sons, love and lies, told in many languages (Czech, English, German, Arabic) and in snapshots of important moments in a life defined by the regime, a dominant Father, and by the rising tide of terrorism. It's the perfect time to tell this story, as we face reinvigorated political extremism and rising populism across the globe. *Postcards...* is a drama about a time and a place, illuminating important moments of our European history, but more importantly it's about *people*, our ambitions and hopes...

Our best and worst instincts.