

CBC TUESDAY NIGHT  
“ROBERT SOUTHWELL”  
CBL/CBC: TBA

SCRIPT: George Whalley  
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PRODUCTION: John Reeves

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SOUTHWELL: When England was Catholic it had many glorious confessors. It is now for the honour and benefit of our country that it be also well stored with the number of Martyres. And we have, God be thanked, such martyr-quellers now in authority as mean, if they have their will, to make Saints enough to furnish all our Churches with treasure when it shall please God to restore them to their true honours.

ANNOUNCER: We present The Mission and Death of Blessed Robert Southwell, Priest, Poet, and Martyr, with Music of William Byrd: compiled from primary sources by George Whalley and directed by John Reeves; with .....as Southwell and .....  
.....as the narrator; the music conducted by George Guest and sung by the choir of St. John’s College, Cambridge.

NARRATOR: Father Robert Southwell and Father Henry Garnet, Englishmen, priests, members of the Society of Jesus, set out from Rome at the end of April 1586. They made their journey by way of the Jesuit houses at Modena, Parma, Piacenza, Milan; through the Alps and France; and reached Douai late in June – the seminary where Robert had had his first training – and so to St. Omer. From here Robert wrote to his friend Decker at Douai...

SOUTHWELL: ....I beg of you, do not let any English people know where we are or that we have been (at Douai), until I let you know in some other way what is happening to us. In case any English people should hear of our coming to you, keep secret at least where we are now; and if they

already know that, conceal the reason for it, until I write to you again under my own hand.

NARRATOR: Robert Southwell was now 25. The son of a wealthy Norfolk family, related to the Cecils and the Bacons, he had left England at the age of 15 to go to the English school at Douai; then made his own way to the Jesuit School in Rome; and now was returning to his own country in the face of bitter persecution to mission to the English. Henry Garnet was six years older, and was to assume the position of Superior if anything happened to William Weston – the only surviving Jesuit priest in England since Edmund Campion’s martyrdom in 1580; for Campion’s young companion Emerson was in prison, and his superior, Robert Parsons, had narrowly escaped back across the Channel to direct the English Mission from Rome. And now – Henry Garnet and Robert Southwell –

SOUTHWELL: (GAILY) Two arrows shot at the same mark –

NARRATOR: – and Garnet was to outlive Robert Southwell by eleven years before he too went to the gallows convicted of treason. Now there was reason for extreme caution: they could not know that the day after Southwell wrote his letter from St. Omer, one of Walsingham’s agents in London received a message from a spy in Paris –

TOPCLIFFE: There are two Jesuits sent into England. Both very young men. Father Southwell and Father Garnet.

NARRATOR: Both knew well what danger they stood into; for Parsons had been through every recorded detail of Campion’s mission; his capture only 13 minutes after landing in England; his interrogation under torture; his trial; his execution. Every phrase of his argument was clear, and

the burning force that branded the words uttered in extremity by this brilliant and devoted young man –

PARSONS: – fiery of mind, fiery of body, fiery of word with the flame which God came upon earth to send, that it should burn there always.

CAMPION: It was not our death that ever we feared. But we knew that we were not lords of our own lives, and therefore for want of an answer would not be guilty of our deaths. The only thing that we have now to say is, that if our religion do make us traitors, we are worthy to be condemned; but otherwise are, and have been, as good subjects as ever the Queen had.

In condemning us you condemn all your own ancestors – all the ancient priests, bishops and kings – all that was once the glory of England, the island of saints, and the most devoted child of the See of Peter.

For what have we taught, however you may qualify it with the odious name of treason, that they did not uniformly teach? To be condemned with these lights – not of England only, but of the world – by their degenerate descendants, is both gladness and glory to us.

My Charge is, of free Cost to preach the Gospel, to minister the Sacraments, to instruct the simple, to reform Sinners, to confute Errors; in brief, to cry *Alarme* spiritual against foul Vice and proud Ignorance wherewith many my poor Countrymen be abused. I never had mind, and am straitly forbidden by our Father that sent me, to deal in any Respect, with Matter of Estate or Policy of this Realm, as those Things which appertain not to my Vocation, and from which I do gladly estrange and sequester my Thoughts.

I protest before God and His holy angels, before Heaven and earth, before the world and this bar whereat I stand, which bears but a small resemblance of the terrible judgement of the next life, that I am not guilty of any part of the treason contained in the indictment, or of any other treason whatever.

I pray for Elizabeth, your Queen and my Queen, unto whom I wish a long quiet reign with all prosperity.

NARRATOR: On Tuesday 14th November 1580, Edmund Campion was tried with seven others, one of them a layman. Their circumstances were all different, but time did not permit that “each should have a special day assigned him”. There was no counsel for the defence, and no evidence of substance was evinced. But on all of them, on the single charge of high treason, the Lord Chief Justice passed a single sentence –

JUSTICE: (AN AGREEABLE, WISE, DETACHED VOICE, WITH NO TRACE OF ANIMUS) You must go to the place from whence you came, there to remain until ye shall be drawn through the open City of London upon hurdles to the place of execution, and there be hanged and let down alive, and your privy parts cut off, and your entrails taken out and burnt in your sight; they your heads to be cut off and your bodies divided into four parts, to be disposed of at her Majesty’s pleasure. (PAUSE) And may God have mercy on your souls.

NARRATOR: Garnet and Southwell expected perhaps – as their enemy Walsingham expected – that they would be sent from St. Omer to a port in Flanders and from there be landed on the Norfolk coast near

Southwell's home. But the letter from Rome sent them (after ten days of anxious waiting) to Calais. On the 5th of July they received orders to sail the next day, and Southwell wrote his last letter before entering the jaws of the lion –

SOUTHWELL: Faced with the last encounter, from death's ante-room I write to you, my father, for the help of those same prayers of yours that once awakened life in me when I was dead in spirit: pray now about my body's death, that either, I may usefully escape it, or manfully endure. It is true I am being sent "amongst wolves", and likely enough "to be led to the slaughter" – I only wish it were "as a lamb" – for His Name's sake who sends me. I know very well that sea and land are gaping wide for me; and lions, as well as wolves, go prowling in search of whom they may devour. But I welcome, more than fear, their fangs. Rather than shrink from them as torturers, I call to them to bring my crown. It is true that the flesh is weak and can do nothing, and even now revolts from that which is proposed. Yet God who is mighty in battle will be at my right hand lest I be shaken.....Indeed, indeed, I do not dare to hope what I so violently desire; but if I reach, God willing, the lowest rank of happy martyrs, I will not be unmindful of those who have remembered me..... Pray for me, my father (perhaps it is the last time I shall speak to you) – pray for me that I who play His part may so sustain it; as God Himself, as the Angels, as the Society expects of me; and throw away my life-blood, if I must, with fortitude and faith.....Goodbye, as we leave port.

NARRATOR: They set sail from Calais at 2 in the afternoon of 6th July, 1586.

GARNET: The wind was blowing against us, and we had to use the oars.....to hold the ship on her course to the point where we proposed to land.

However, after sunset the wind changed direction; the sea became calm, the surface unruffled. We sailed as smoothly as on a river. Shortly before sunrise we reached the English coast. Some portent in the weather had led the sailors to expect the change of wind, but we ourselves said it was divine providence; and to some extent the sailors did too, for they said that we were good men whom God had been pleased to help on their way.

NARRATOR: Off a lonely stretch of the coast between Dover and Folkestone the ship's boat was lowered, and pulled inshore, and a Flemish lay-brother who had come with them carried them ashore on his shoulders and then waded back to the boat. In the first light, as they pulled in, they noticed a man on high ground above the beach watching them –

GARNET: We walked boldly up to the watcher. We grumbled about the ship's captain landing us at the wrong place, and said we didn't know where we were. The man, a shepherd and an honest fellow, was most indignant at the wrong done to us. He told us in detail about the places round about, and the right way to get to them; and assured us that he felt towards us as if we were his own kith and kin, and confirmed this with a great oath, so our first encounter was a merry one. The head wind had delayed us: we should have landed in the dark; now it was full daylight. We made our confessions to each other, and parted, each to make his own way to London as best he could, and agreed to meet there.

NARRATOR: Garnet struck inland to avoid the coastal towns. He had some nerve-racking encounters; Walsingham was ready to spring the Babington plot and many watchers were on the alert. But the people of Kent were used to strangers and Garnet's accent, coloured by twelve

years' absence, roused interest but no suspicion and his rakish disguise carried the rest. He spent his first night in England somewhere near Canterbury caught up in a throng of pilgrims coming to St. Thomas's fair. And next morning, on the road to Gravesend, he was hailed by a gentleman on horseback. It was Robert Southwell; they exchanged greetings, and at the next farm Garnet bought himself a horse and came that evening to Gravesend where a tilt-boat would take him to the Tower Wharf. Southwell was already on his way up river and in the hour before sunrise stood at the Southwark entrance to London.

Somewhere to the left was Rochester House that had once been his uncle's, and on the right the Manor of the Maze; tall houses rose like ragged cliffs on either side. In front of him, blocking his path, stood something like a giant altar-piece, or a blurred figure of the Redeemer with a crown of thorns – the towering Gatehouse of London Bridge with its spiky coronet of human heads impaled on the pikes –

SOUTHWELL: (TRIUMPHANTLY) I am come to win you to heaven or to die upon your pikes.

NARRATOR: Southwell walked the streets until dawn, and Garnet – as soon as he landed –

GARNET: – immediately and to my great joy, I met my companion in the street. For five or six hours we walked about the city but we did not see a single friend. Then by chance we met the man we were looking for. He took us to a prison where we breakfasted, and immediately afterwards we were safely hidden away, waiting for Father William Weston, the person whom above all others we desired to see.

SOUTHWELL: We have had the happiest possible arrival in England.....Our coming has marvellously cheered and inspirited the Catholics; for previously they had been complaining that they were practically abandoned by the Society; .....The news of our coming has already spread abroad; and from the lips of the Queen's Council, *my name* has become known to certain persons. The report alarms our enemies, who fear heaven knows what at our hands, so nervous have they now become.....At the Queen's Court they say that there is a business in hand which, if it succeeds, will mean ruin for us; but, if it fails, all will be well.

NARRATOR: They were actually in much more severe danger than they knew. Of some 150 priests who had come from Rheims and Rome to England in the last five years, 30 had been executed, and about 30 were in prison in London alone, while others awaited trial or execution elsewhere. During the past six months seven priests from Rheims had been executed at Tyburn, and York, and in the Isle of Wight. In March Margaret Clitherow had been pressed to death at York. In June the London prisons had been cleared to prepare for the "discovery" of the Babington plot that was the prelude to the execution of Mary Queen of Scots; and Sir Francis Walsingham was determined to implicate Fr Weston, the one surviving Jesuit, in order finally to be able to condemn Jesuits, on charges of political intrigue rather than for religion; and not Jesuits only but all "dangerous Catholics". On the very day that Garnet and Southwell took ship from Calais, Walsingham made his first organised attempt to close the English ports, and ordered a general search of all Catholic houses so that all priests should be imprisoned and condemned or driven from the country. By the time Southwell and Garnet were walking aimlessly looking for a contact, the pursuivants were roving the City



streets in organised bands, and were already taking captives to the South Bank prisons when Southwell came into Southwark from the coast.

TOPCLIFFE: About twenty seminary priests of reputation and best learning are now in London. They walk audaciously disguised in the streets of London. My instruments have learned out sundry places of countenance where sometimes these men meet and confer together in the day-time, and where they lodge a-nights.

NARRATOR: From the clink, Garnet and Southwell were taken by Catholic friends to a safe inn; and there Father Weston met them, dined with them, and took them at once to the house where he was staying in Hog's Lane. That very night Antony Babington came to see Weston. After Garnet and Southwell had been in London only five days, not only the Catholics in the city but also the Council knew that they had arrived: Babington's commission, as a token of good faith to Walsingham, was to find where the priests were. Babington was squeamish, and Weston unwittingly steered him off with firm counsel on matters of conscience. Weston set off at once with Garnet and Southwell for a safe place in Berkshire. Babington delayed; Walsingham's men, ready to spring, were caught off balance – otherwise Garnet and Southwell would certainly have been captured within a week of landing.

SOUTHWELL: The birds of the air have their nests, and the foxes have their lairs: but we have nowhere to hide ourselves.

TOPCLIFFE: (PETULANTLY) Where are they, my lord? I have many times given notice of the place where the Jesuit (Weston) hath resorted at the time of his being there, but no great account had been made thereof.

*Henley Park* is never without three or four priests, and the Jesuit is there at this present, but never searched that I can hear of, though I have often required it when there have been a certain number there.

NARRATOR: A shrewd guess, but not near enough.

SOUTHWELL: Like a bird from the nets of the fowler our soul has been snatched: the snare was broken and we were set free.

NARRATOR: Early on the morning of the 14th the three of them – Weston, Garnet and Southwell, took horse at St. Giles-in-the-fields and rode up the Oxford Road past Tyburn. At Brentford they took the left fork by Hounslow Heath, and then across the alluvial meadow of the Colne. With the towers of Windsor on their left, they carried on over the Thames by Maidenhead Bridge; and then by a narrow woody way through the Great Frith till they saw the river again at a ford called Hurley. As soon as they had forded the river, their objective came in sight – Hurleyford – a lonely but spacious mansion set amidst great woods. Its owner, Richard Bold, of a well-known and wealthy Lancashire family, a recent convert of Weston's, had been a favourite of Leicester's, but had withdrawn from the court and retired to this solitary house in order to practise his religion in peace. He had made Hurleyford an open house for all priests and Catholics who passed that way. Not long before, Fr William Tyrrell, a companion of Weston's, had been there with Weston; he had been arrested since, and under pressure had agreed to betray his friends. Bold was an ardent musician, and in his house he had not only a chapel, but a choir, and an organ and a consort of instruments. A large group of friends had gathered to greet Garnet and Southwell, and, as Weston said: –

*MUSIC: INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC BG NEXT TWO CUES*

WESTON: We were received with every attention that kindness and courtesy could suggest. Altogether we were eight days at the house. We were very happy, and our friends made it apparent how pleased they were to have us.

SOUTHWELL: One of the guests was Master William Byrd, Master of the Queen's Music at Windsor; he lives not far away at Harlington on the Bath Road. He and his wife are bold recusants, but have not suffered too severely. He and Fr Garnet have become great friends. Mr. Byrd is making a book of his settings of poems –

*MUSIC: "OSANNA" FROM 5-PART SANCTUS BG FROM (X) BELOW*

SOUTHWELL: These days at Hurleyford were like the octave of some great feast, ending with a solemn Mass (X) on the very feast of St. Mary Magdalen, with a wonderful harmony of different voices.

*MUSIC: UP TO END: SEGUE INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC BG*

GARNET: We had many priestly duties – masses, sermons, confessions. The afternoons we gave to other business – the extension of our ministry in England. Weston told us all he knew about conditions here – how so many of the priests have been arrested and those who are at large working uncertainly around London. We must carry the Word to all the shires where spiritual help is so desperately needed and staunch Catholics persist in their faith, taking their lives in their hands. He has given us a detailed plan of all the Catholic houses in the kingdom, as he has come to know them in his continuous travels. I am to go to Lord Vaux's house in Northamptonshire, or to his

daughter's house in Leicestershire, and arrange centres of worship in the neglected shires. Fr Weston has arranged for reliable guides for us. Fr Robert will stay near London, in Lord Vaux's town house at Hackney; part of his task will be to provide shelter for the priests as they come into England, and send them on to the charges I shall have arranged for them; he will also take charge of the county of Sussex where his family has many connections and where he spent much of his boyhood. Fr. Weston has told us everything he knows; his spirit is not daunted, but he has a premonition that he cannot escape arrest much longer – he is too well-known now and thinks he may have been betrayed. If he is taken, I shall take charge in his place, according to your instructions given me in Rome.

*MUSIC: TO CADENCE AND OUT AT BG LEVEL*

NARRATOR: So they left Richard Bold's house of music after a week, and the octave at Hurleyford was to remain in their memories as a paradise of beauty and spiritual power, and a turning point in the history of the English mission. Robert Southwell was the first to leave; on 22nd July, as a spy reported to Walsingham, he was preaching to the Catholic prisoners in the Clink.

SOUTHWELL: I am devoting myself to sermons, hearing confessions, and other priestly duties: hemmed in by daily perils, never safe for even a brief moment.

NARRATOR: Garnet rode back to London, wrote the first of his letters to his superior in Rome, and went on to start his mission in the Midlands –

GARNET: At present I can write no more, nor, in so short a time, could anything have happened to write about. I was anxious to tell you that

we are safe.....I will not be able to write again for several months.  
Goodbye in the Lord, and do not forget us.

NARRATOR: Fr. Weston received an urgent call from a family in distress in Oxford; from there he started back to London, stayed for two or three days of quiet and spiritual refreshment –

WESTON: in a mansion very remote, situated in the middle of a park stocked with rabbits and deer, a delightful place with pleasant fields and woodlands –

NARRATOR: – but was urgently called to London. Here, outside Bishopsgate, at five in the afternoon of 3rd August, he was arrested by two of Walsingham's agents who were trying to find Antony Babington. He was imprisoned, and interrogated but not tortured; after seven years in prison he was to be exiled in 1603. And so within three weeks of landing in England, Garnet had succeeded Weston as Superior to the English Mission of the Jesuits. Now Garnet and Southwell were the only Jesuit priests at large in the kingdom. And the turncoat priest Antony Tyrrell, to save his own neck, was making every effort to find where they were and to hand them over to Walsingham's interrogators.

SOUTHWELL: All highways are watched, every house searched, hue and cry raised, frights bruited in people's ears as though the whole realm was on fire.

NARRATOR: Southwell lay hidden at the Vaux's house at Hackney and went out each day to work in London, mainly in the prisons. But the net was rapidly closing. The houses of William Byrd and of another Catholic friend – Francis Browne at Hog's Lane – were searched; Hurleyford

was raided and their host Richard Bold taken to prison. Then there was the butchering of those implicated in the Babington plot including Southwell's cousin Robert Gage. On 8th October the two seminary priests who had been most closely associated with Weston – John Lowe and Richard Dibdale – were executed at Tyburn with another friend of Weston's, John Adams: for their zeal they had been marked out as "most dangerous". On one occasion Southwell was followed in the street by a pursuivant –

GARNET: A traitor once caught sight of our Robert and, instead of pouncing at once, followed him for a long time, so as to track him to the house where he was going and make a larger haul. But Robert, who liked to walk at a good pace, though he was quite unaware of the spy's presence, suddenly lengthened his stride and disappeared from view altogether.

NARRATOR: By 4th November Tyrrell had discovered that Southwell was at Lord Vaux's house in Hackney; next day the chief magistrate of London, Richard Young, led the search in person – very early in the morning hoping to catch Southwell while he was saying Mass –

SOUTHWELL: The pursuivants were ringing all around and seeking us in the very house where I was lodged. I heard them threatening and breaking woodwork and sounding the walls to find hiding places; yet by God's goodness, after a few hours' search, they did not find me, though I was separated from them only by a thin partition, not by any wall. The house was sore watched for many days and I perforce slept in my clothes for several nights together in a very strait, uncomfortable place.

NARRATOR: The Vaux's house at Shoby was also raided when Garnet and another priest were saying mass, but an eleven-year-old girl defied the searchers until the priests were safely hidden. In spite of these dangers, Southwell set up a secret printing press, and had taken up residence in Arundel House in the Strand – the house of Anne, Countess of Arundel and Surrey – proud titles in the peerage. If Robert Southwell, when he set out for England, was determined to be martyred, the ordeal of his first six months had given him a stern – almost gay – determination to do what he could for the Faith before he gave up his life.

SOUTHWELL: I am informed that there is a general report that I am taken, and, hearing this while I was yet free, I smiled to think how gratifying that would be for a time to my foes, until “having slept their sleep, they should find naught in their hands.” They may say as often as they like that I am taken; but I shall endeavour, as long as I escape their hands, to let them know by deeds that I am *not* taken. Not that I shall undertake anything that can hurt the State – (about Parliament I say nothing, as I desire my letters, like my soul, to have absolutely nothing to do with matters of State.) – but I am determined never to desist from the works of my calling, though these when done cannot long escape their notice; and they will know that there still lives one of this sort whom they have not taken.....The souls of Catholics are more precious than our bodies; and when we reckon the price at which they were bought, it should not seem much to endanger our lives for their salvation.

NARRATOR: In the wake of the Babington Plot, Babington and twelve others were executed; and many more were thrown into prison. The Bellamy household of Uxendon Manor near Wembley suffered cruelly for giving food and clothing to Babington's young followers: two sons

were executed (though they had no knowledge of the plot), a third was tortured and sent into exile, and the mother died in prison; only one son survived.

The plot had been intended not only to secure the execution of Mary Queen of Scots but also to discredit the Roman priests by showing that they were implicated in treasonable activities. The Catholics were shaken, and many of the strongest houses of resort had been broken into. But the commission of the Jesuits was strictly religious, not political. Robert Southwell, his secret press established, turned now to encourage the slow recuperation of the Catholics and to extend the pastoral efforts of their priests.

SOUTHWELL: There is weeping almost unto death, among wives who have no husbands, and families with no support, where religion has no champions, and chapels no loving hands to tend them. *And yet* the faith is still alive! The Church exults! The families are *not* falling away. The distress of our people is very great, but their resistance remains constant and ready for the worst. The work of God is being pressed forward – often enough by delicate women who have taken on the courage of men. Only priests are lacking. Let them come, then, those who are to come, so that the fruits of our toil may be greater.

MUSIC: “*CARE FOR THY SOUL*” (EMS XIV 165-171) FIRST 7 BARS UP (ca.14) THEN BG BEHIND NEXT TWO CUES

NARRATOR: Fr. Robert had written to the young Earl of Arundel, imprisoned in the Tower of London, as series of letters of consolation and spiritual comfort. The Earl, once a favourite at court, was husband to Anne, Countess of Arundel and Surrey, Robert’s hostess in London; he had



been in prison for more than a year before Robert landed in England. He was 29 years old and was not to leave prison or see his wife or children until he died there ten years later. Robert's letters of comfort in tribulation were now arranged in twelve chapters and printed for the benefit of those suffering in prison – "*An Epistle of Comfort to the Reverend Priests, and to the Honorable, Worshipful, and other of the Lay sort, restrained in durance for the Catholic Faith.*" It was printed at the Jesuits' secret press in the early months of 1587.

SOUTHWELL: And in the end one death is no more than another and as well the easiest as the hardest taketh our life. Which point a glorious martyr of our days executed for the Catholic faith in Wales, having well understood, when the sentence of his condemnation was read, that he should be drawn upon a hurdle to the place of execution, then hanged till he was half dead, afterwards unbowelled, his head cut off, his body quartered, his quarters boiled and set up in such and such places, he turned unto the people, and with a smiling countenance, said, "And all this is but one death."

MUSIC: *LAST 16 BARS UP (ca.30)*

NARRATOR: In 1586 – the year Southwell and Garnet landed in England, the year of the Babington plot – 12 priests and 3 laymen were executed; in the following year only 6 priests were executed. Garnet was working in the shires; Southwell was working in London and now had seven other priests working with him, five of them his former pupils in Rome. (Of these seven, *five* were to outrun Southwell on the road to Tyburn.) It must have seemed, for a time anyway, that the persecution was relaxing –

SOUTHWELL: In spite of everything, faith grows stronger under the strain, and our Ark rides the waves exulting.

NARRATOR: But the threat of the Spanish Armada and of armed invasion hung over them –

SOUTHWELL: We seem to have fallen upon times full of grandeur in their promise, and very mean in their performance.....There has been a mighty preparation for war here, and they are still maintaining it with the utmost diligence; but now they blame their former fears, and boast themselves secure and unafraid. The threat from Spain, which once was formidable, they now reckon they can either break up or turn aside. And as for France, the present tumult there means undoubted peace for them. But let us leave these things for them to discuss.

NARRATOR: Garnet was in London from the spring of 1588 till the middle of July and did not share Southwell's forebodings – he was eagerly waiting for two more Jesuit priests to arrive from Rome –

GARNET: This is the plan we have agreed on for the glory of God, when there shall be a greater number of our men here. Two should be stationed at London – or one in London and one in the environment. The others should have assigned to each one a province or county in which each can work for all he is worth to promote religion. There will not be lacking other priests, men of outstanding holiness and learning who will come to their assistance – and to this we most of all can testify by experience. The field will be theirs to take over from our labours, and the harvest from it will be beyond measure, owing to Him who guides the work of our hands unceasingly. And I urge you to pray for all those whose energy and devotion make our

life here possible: I mean, our hosts, or rather I should say our protectors and defenders...

We are hoping that soon the moment will come which with sorely tried patience we have long awaited for: when the persecution will be relaxed just enough to allow a wider field for our excursions.

NARRATOR: On 20th July – the very day the Armada was sighted off the Lizard – a Royal Proclamation was issued, as defence against the possibility of a Spanish landing and the chance that the Catholics, out of conscience, would join the invaders against the Queen. Since 1577 the question of a Catholic's intended loyalty had been asked over and over under torture; now, by law, any person who could not answer the question in the affirmative was legally guilty of treason – this was the notorious "Bloody Question" –

TOPCLIFFE: If the Pope were to send over an army and declare that his only object was to bring back the kingdom to its Catholic allegiance – what would you do? And if he stated at the same time that there was no other way of re-establishing the Catholic faith, and commanded everyone by his apostolic authority to support him? Whose side would you be on – the Pope's or the Queen's?

SOUTHWELL: Now at long last the Serpent's Eggs are hatched, and a poison is gushing out that looks likely to be the ruin of many. Martial law has been proclaimed; the vilest informer can for reward have anybody instantly condemned. Catholics are condemned, hardened criminals pardoned – because in these troubled times the Queen has need of such men. How happy she would be (and I would she were) if it were the other sort of men that she had need of.

NARRATOR: The Proclamation had its intended effect: the public were persuaded that all victims of prosecution under it, all Catholics, were papal spies and Spanish agents – traitors indeed at a moment of grave danger for the realm. On 24th July three seminary priests were executed in Derby after severe torture; three days later another was hanged, drawn, and quartered at Stafford. On 28th August – thirty days after the decisive battle off Gravelines, and eight days after the great thanksgiving service at St. Paul’s – the executions began in London. The victims suffered singly, or in twos and threes, in the various parts of London where each had been most widely known – in Shoreditch, Lincoln’s Inn Fields, Clerkenwell, Isleworth, Kingston-on-Thames, Mile End Green, St. Paul’s Churchyard. There were eight executions on the 28th, and six on the 30th; the rest were kept for later. Southwell wrote to his Superior on the 31st, with the reek of the cauldron still in his nostrils and the howls of the mob deafening his ears.

SOUTHWELL: I could not make up my mind whether or not to write to you, my Father, about the slaughter which has just occurred.

When the danger of the war at sea was over, and the army conscripted upon land dispersed, our rulers turned their weapons from the foe abroad and plunged them into the bowels of their own nation. The hatred stored up against the Spaniards they are wreaking with a sort of bestial fury upon their fellow citizens and subjects.

Those whom they hold in prison.....are dragged in gangs to the court-house, and there examined, not simply about what they have done, but about *what they would be likely to do* – what intentions would they have if this or that were to occur? If they are reluctant to answer, it is counted against them as rebellion and high treason; if

they say they would never do anything against their just and bounden duty to the Queen and their country, they are reviled as hypocrites and liars. Whatever they say there is only one answer that will satisfy their judges, and that is the one that will serve for their condemnation. Nevertheless, they all made their answers to the court very gently and with every effort to avoid bitterness, affirming constantly their duty and loyalty to their Queen and the country. Their object in avoiding arguments and ampler discussion of opinions was so as to give no impulse to our enemy's lust for blood, because he was clearly trying to twist their answers into a verdict against all Catholics in this matter. Since, therefore, there was no question of the Faith at stake, and since the priests' answers might turn to the ruin of the whole body, it had been judged best to use expressions which were the exact truth and yet not offensive to the magistrates. So the priests replied that they were clerks in orders to whom warfare was forbidden, but that they would pray God to favour that side on which his justice stood. The laymen, for their part, pledged themselves to fight for the Queen and their country against all unjust aggressors whosoever they might be. But these answers were of no avail; for the death penalty had already been decided on by the judges, on the charge that either they were priests, or had helped priests, or had been reconciled to the Church.

NARRATOR: One of the victims on the 28th was Father Gunter, a friend and fellow-worker of Southwell's.

SOUTHWELL: There was an extraordinary concourse of citizens, crowds surging together from all sides. But what they were thinking, I do not know. The martyrs were hanged in different groups here and there about the City, by twos and threes and even singly, on six specially erected

gallows, but on the same day. Father Gunter was separated from the rest –

NARRATOR: – and taken up the long road from Bishopsgate to Shoreditch where the new Theatre stood in the precincts of what had been the Benedictine Nuns' Priory of Holywell.

SOUTHWELL: On either side of the street was a wide expanse of fields and gardens, and so the spot was well suited in every way for the melancholy spectacle of an execution.

NARRATOR: Did Shakespeare watch this execution from the Theatre? In the *Comedy of Errors* one scene is set in “A Street before a Priory” and an onlooker describes the setting as

the melancholy vale –

The place of death and sorry execution,

Behind the ditches of the abbey here.

On the 30th four men and a woman were taken to Tyburn for execution. One was Fr Richard Leigh, another of Southwell's fellow-workers –

SOUTHWELL: – a very gallant young man. He was the last to die, and blessed each one in turn as they mounted the scaffold. All five sang the *Te Deum* as they were drawn in the cart to Tyburn.

NARRATOR: One of these men was Edward Shelley, of a Sussex family related to Robert Southwell. The woman was Margaret Ward –

SOUTHWELL: – a maid among a thousand, in whose frail sex shone a courage hard to match. Together with her friend, and Irishman named Roche, she suffered death for supplying a priest in prison with the rope he

escaped by. She had been flogged and hung up by the wrists, so that she was now crippled and half-paralysed; but the tortures had only served to strengthen this most shining martyr for her last struggle.

FEMALE VOICE: Rue not my death, rejoyce at my repose,  
It was no death to me but to my woe,  
The budd was opened to lett out the Rose,  
The cheynes unloos'd to lett the captive goe.

SOUTHWELL: Our enemies are determined to root out every Catholic if possible; and the Catholics are equally determined, when the moment comes, to suffer any extremity rather than deny the Faith. So their inflicting death on us and our welcoming of it will soon present a most remarkable spectacle to God, to angels and to men.

NARRATOR: The brutality and suddenness of the executions produced a revulsion; the slaughter stopped at 31 deaths – far fewer than was at first feared. The Earl of Leicester's death early in September may have had its effect. In the lull, as soon as Fathers Gerard and Oldcorne had come ashore on the Norfolk coast and found their way safely to London, Garnet reported that –

GARNET: My companion, Fr Robert, is now out of London; snatching souls for heaven in a freer atmosphere. Some of our men who are in prison expect death; others, who are free expect prison, though nearly all of us might be said to be imprisoned. Unless we have urgent business, we dare not go about the city except at night. There is simply nowhere left to hide.

SOUTHWELL: I am off on my journeying, caring nothing for foul weather; the storms which the heretics raise up every now and again are much

worse; and worst of all is that *winter in the soul*, which we must at all costs avoid. By your prayers, my Father, we hope to drive it off easily; and that spring-time will be always at hand, with the flowers appearing and our vineyards breathing forth their fragrance.

Not always fall of leaf, nor ever spring:  
No endless night, yet not eternal day:  
To saddest birds a season find to sing,  
The roughest storm a calm may soon allay.  
Thus with succeeding turns God tempereth all  
That man may hope to rise yet fear to fall.

Such is God's loving care of us from day to day, so gently He arranges all things, that our enemies now relax their efforts, and go no further in their cruelty than He judges fit for His chosen ones. So sometimes our little ship is tossed up and down on the most terrible waves, and at other times, when the storm is over, she sits smiling on a quiet sea, and is carried peacefully on her course. A month or two ago, things were being done against the Catholics which only the filth of heresy could have conceived. But now this horrid cruelty has fallen back upon itself, and though it has not ceased to be cruelty, yet there are degrees in cruelty which make it able to blush at itself.

NARRATOR: His release from London – to ride at large about the kingdom – turned him to writing poetry. But he had no thought of escape: he knew well the colour of the real world –

SOUTHWELL: The solitarie Wood  
My Cittie shall become,  
The darkest dennes shall be my Lodge,  
In which I rest or come.

My tears shall be my wine,



My bed a craggy Rock;  
My harmonie the Serpents hisse,  
The screeching Owle my clock.

NARRATOR: Before the end of December 1588 Robert Southwell was in London again –

SOUTHWELL: I have been on horseback round a great part of England.....and have visited a great number of Catholics, whom I found extremely eager for our services:.....Everywhere, according to my small capacity, I preached sermons, and I refreshed very many with the bread of heaven.....

NARRATOR: This seven weeks' journey had all the dash and glamour of Campion's ride through the north of England nine years earlier.

SOUTHWELL: .....I managed also betweentimes to do a good deal of work for our prisoners, and was able to help and console those who were not in too strict confinement..... In short, throughout my journey, I have striven my utmost to strengthen the weak and wavering, and to spur on the fervent to even greater heights; to rebuke those who were setting a bad example, and to raise up those who had fallen; to be to all what each one needed, either a father, or a shepherd, or a judge.

NARRATOR: Refreshed and confident, encouraged by the reinforcement of two more Jesuit priests, who had arrived in November and another two "veterans" in April, Garnet and Southwell continued with their work along the lines now clearly established – Garnet in the shires, Southwell in London. There was indeed a lull in the policy of official brutality; in 1589 only 5 priests and 3 laymen were executed for their religion – in York and Oxford, but none in London. But the net was

drawing tighter. In April Lord Arundel, once a favourite of Elizabeth's, the husband of Southwell's patroness, after four years of imprisonment in the Tower, was brought to mock-trial and condemned to death according to the humiliating rites reserved for traitors; but the Queen, nervous of public reaction, withheld the instrument of execution. However, the Countess's London house – Arundel House – was confiscated, and Southwell was without the safe lodging he had enjoyed almost since his first arrival in London. The centre of resistance in the City was the Ward of Farringdon – from Blackfriars to Holborn Bars, and from Temple Bar to Greyfriars – and here lived many hosts who belonged to the Sussex-Hampshire ring of Southwell's relatives. Here Robert was now at large and at home, almost at ease from his four years' dangerous survival in the City. If as time passed the danger to himself increased, so did the danger to his hosts and friends; within this square mile of Farringdon, in the next two years, eighteen priests and laymen were captured, and within this square mile were executed.

Whenever conditions allowed, the Jesuits arranged to meet in some safe place outside London to discuss their plans, and re-affirm their vows. This February it was where Garnet had refuge – at Baddesley-Clinton in Warwickshire; eight priests were present, and to Garnet's delight there was good singing.

*MUSIC:*                    “GLORIA TIBI” (BYRD V 154-5) 1st 8½ BARS UP (ca.28) BG  
                                  BEHIND NEXT FOR 14½ BARS (ca.40)

*SOUTHWELL:*           It was a delight to be all together again for a few days, keeping out ancient custom, helping each other, and exchanging views.....We have sung the songs of Our Lord in a strange land; in this desert we have sucked honey from the rock and oil from the hardest flint. Yet

sorrow pounced on us at the height of our joy, we scattered in some alarm, but escaped fortunately with more danger than damage. My companion and I, having avoided one disaster, steered into another; but by a special mercy of God we circumvented both, and are now riding safely at anchor.

*MUSIC: UP FOR "AMEN" IN LAST 8 BARS (ca.32)*

**NARRATOR:** A new and sinister element now enters in the person of Richard Topcliffe – a bristling, brutal, fifty-eight-year-old butcher and torturer who had somehow won the Queen’s favour, with direct access to her audience and a license to torture his victims at will and often without warrant in his own house in Westminster beside the Gatehouse Prison – a born hunter of merciless brutality. In January 1590, Robert Southwell had written:

**SOUTHWELL:** Almost all who are taken now may expect to taste of Bridewell, that place of shame; it is a slaughter-house where the cruelties inflicted are scarcely credible. The tasks imposed are continuous and beyond ordinary strength, and even the sick are driven to them under the lash. Food is not only of the scantiest, but so disfigured that it cannot be swallowed without retching..... Bedding is straw matted with stinking ordure..... It is the one Purgatory that all we Catholics dread, where Topcliffe and Young, butchers, have complete license to torture. Yet whatever happens to us, I know we shall be equal to it.

**NARRATOR:** In January 1590 Topcliffe presented a warrant to the Keeper of Bridewell –

**TOPCLIFFE:** Another Warrant from their Lordships to Richard Topcliffe and Richard Young Esquires to examine the said person Christopher

Bayles a Seminary priest, John Bayles tailor, Anthony Kaye and John Coxted from time to time and, if they see further occasion, to commit them or any of them to such torture upon the wall as is usual for the better understanding of the truth of matters against Her Majesty and the State.

NARRATOR: Christopher Bayles was a gentle little scholar, a former student of Southwell's in Rome, now 25 years old. Southwell arrived back from Warwickshire in time to witness his execution in Fleet Street.

SOUTHWELL: He had been hung off the ground by the hands for a little less than 24 hours, continuously questioned, in order to make him confess where he had said Mass. He stood firm.

GARNET: Hanging by the hands – or the “wall”, or the “manacles” – is a new method of torture, said to have come from Spain; it is now used instead of the rack, being more efficient, slow, silent, and merciless. The victim hangs from a rod passed through manacles pinned against a wall, or fixed to a post, with his feet off the ground. It is less disfiguring than the rack – and more agonising.

SOUTHWELL: When Father Bayles had mounted the scaffold he lifted his eyes to heaven and made the sign of the cross as well as he could with his bound hands. “You have come,” he said, “to see a man dying, a common spectacle; and that man a priest, a common spectacle too. I ask pardon of you all, and I forgive you all.” Then he turned to his prayers, and, a little while after, with an untroubled air, he went strongly and steadily through his death. He suffered on Ash Wednesday in one of the most crowded streets of London.

VOICE: Whose patience rare and most courageous mind

With fame renowned perpetual shall endure,  
By whose examples we may rightly find  
Of holy life and death a pattern pure.  
That we therefore their virtues may embrace  
Pray we to Christ to guide us with his grace.

NARRATOR: Robert Southwell, now 29 years old, was known to Topcliffe's spies as "Chief dealer for the Papists" in London. His tasks were, in addition to his pastoral work – much of it in the prisons – to find accommodation for incoming priests, to help young men to escape overseas to be trained as priests, to act as spiritual guide to priests in difficulties. He was the sort of person whose authority was appealed to in a crisis. It says much for his organisation and for his network of faithful hosts that in that year only two priests were arrested in Farringdon; both remained silent under torture, refusing to give the names of those who had helped them. But in the following year two spies working from Spain discovered the details of the organisation and many of the key contacts. Topcliffe's activity was frenzied and efficient; he suffered a few checks but was now closing in on Robert Southwell. In October he very nearly caught him and ten other priests and several laymen at their seasonal meeting at Baddesley-Clinton; despite a prolonged and rigorous search by a large group of pursuivants they all escaped. Shortly after Southwell arrived back in London three priests and four laymen (one of them an old friend of Robert's) were executed, some at Holborn opposite Gray's Inn, the rest at Tyburn. Between the arrest and execution of these men, an insulting and intemperate *Proclamation* was issued over the Queen's signature. A Spanish army had landed in France to help the Catholics against the Huguenots: the *Proclamation* declared that the forerunners of an invasion upon England were the seminary priests – Southwell withdrew at once to the little garden house that Garnet had

secured for their safe use north of the City, in Moorfields it may be, to write in reply his *Humble Supplication to her Majestie*.

GARNET: The Queen's *Proclamation* states that the Pope had practised with seditious Englishmen to gather a multitude of dissolute young men, who have partly for lacke of living, partely for crimes committed, becomes Fugitives, Rebelles and Traitors. ....These Traitors are known to come into this realm by secret Creekes, and landing places, disguised, both in their names and persons. Some come in apparell, as Souldiers, Mariners, or Merchants, pretending that they have bene heretofore taken prisoners, and put into Gallies, and delivered. Some come in a gentlemen with contrary names, in comely apparell, as though they had travailed into Forreine countreys, for knowledge.....and many of them in their behaviour as Ruffians, farre off to be thought, or suspected to be Friers, Priests, Jesuits, or Popish schollers. And of these many doe attempt to resort into the Universities and houses of Lawe.....many into the service of Noblemen, Ladies and gentlemen, with such like fraudulent devices to cover themselves from all apprehension, or suspicion: and yet in processes of time, they do at length so insinuate themselves.....as they infect both the Masters and Families, and consequently adventure secretly to use their office of priesthood and reconcilements.

NARRATOR: The *Proclamation* was couched in the most vituperative style of slanderous pamphleteering: Southwell's *Humble Supplication* was strong for its temperate tone, its poised logic, its passionate emotion that never for an instant slipped into rhetoric or rant. It was finished, written at white heat, "This last day of December 1591." Garnet decided that it should not be printed, but copies began to circulate quickly in manuscript.

*MUSIC: "WHY DO I USE MY PAPER" (EMS XIV 183-9) FIRST SIX BARS UP THEN BG*

VOICE: Why do I use my paper ink and pen,  
And call my wits to counsel what to say?  
Such memories were made for mortal men;  
I speak of Saints whose names cannot decay,  
An Angel's trump were fitter for to sound  
Their glorious death if such on earth were found.

*MUSIC: BARS 20-27 UP, THEN BG, ENDING SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH NEXT CUE*

SOUTHWELL: Most mighty and most merciful, most feared and best beloved Princess.....There hath been of late published, to our undeserved reproach, so strange a Proclamation, that it hath made your most devoted subjects doubtful what to believe, since they see so apparent and uncolourable untruths countenanced with so reverend authority, and warranted with the most sacred title of their most honoured Queen.....who can find any colourable pretence to verifie this slander...."that we are not condemned and executed for Religion, but for Treason," The baseness of the reproach cannot cover the truth from your Majesty's best discerning insight, that it is, it was, and ever will be Religion, and nothing but Religion, for which we expose our blood to the hazard of these Laws, and for the benefit of souls yield our bodies to all extremities. For such is now our forlorn estate, that we are not only Prisoners at every Promoter's pleasure,....; but are so left to the rage of pitiless persons, that contrary to the course of all Christian Laws we are by the extremest tortures forced to reveal our very thoughts.

For some are hanged by the hands, eight or nine, or twelve hours together, till not only their wits, but even their senses fail them; and when the soul, weary of so painful an harbour, is ready to depart, they apply cruel Comforts, and revive us, only to Martyr us with more deaths; for eftsoons they hang us in the same manner, tiring our ears with such questions, which either we cannot, because we know not, or without damning our souls we may not satisfy. Some, besides their tortures, have been forced to lie continually booted and clothed many weeks together, pined in their diet, consumed with vermin, and almost stifled with stench. Some have been watched and kept from sleep, till they were past the use of reason, and then examined upon the advantage, when they could scarcely give account of their own names. Some with instruments have been rolled up together like a ball, and so crushed, that the blood spurted out at divers parts of their bodies. Let this suffice, that so heavy is now the hand of our Superiors against us, that we are generally accounted men whom it is a credit to pursue, a disgrace to protect, a commodity to spoile, a gaine to torture, a glory to kill. We presume that your Majestie seldome or never heareth the truth of our persecutions, your lenity and tenderness being knowne to be soe professed an enemy to these Cruelties, that you would never permit their Continuance, if they were expressed to your Highness as they are practised on us.

NARRATOR: And there was much else of the like cool and temperate discourse. Whether a copy of the *Humble Supplication* ever reached the Queen is not certainly known – it probably did. Topcliffe had a copy by April at latest, and lent it to Francis Bacon – Southwell’s kinsman – who sent it on to his brother Antony, Topcliffe’s assistant in examining Catholic prisoners since 1588. If Southwell had written his own death warrant it could not have been written more plainly.



On 11 February Garnet wrote to his Superior, reporting his suspicion that they were being betrayed by a man who had penetrated the organization in the guise of a priest.

GARNET:

The latest storm we are being tossed by is the worst we have yet suffered in this Ocean. Suspicions and outspoken rumours are rife here about a certain person who recently asked to be admitted into your family. If only he had stated his case plainly and honestly to us or to you!

But if he is in truth a betrayer, Good God, what havoc he will wreak – or rather, what havoc he is already wreaking, and we suffering. It is not worth sending any more men over to us for a while yet – unless they are willing to run straight into the direst poverty and the most atrocious brigandage: so desperate has our state become, and so close, unless God intervenes, to utter ruin; for more often than not there is simply no where left to hide. Yet Fr. Robert continues somehow his work in London, but knowing that it cannot be for long.

NARRATOR:

For five years this brilliant young man had worked almost continuously within the crowded and dangerous confines of the City of London – a man who could feast sumptuously in disguise with the great ones of the land, and then creep out to visit the sick and the prisoners; a man who was pressingly welcome in many places but never stopped long enough to rest; a man who had the expert mind of a lawyer, the eye of a cavalry-commander, the endurance of a hardened foot-soldier; who had the poet's sensibility, the gentle manners of an aristocrat, the steel nerves of an experienced underground organiser, and the heart of a child. It was in some narrow London street, going about his hazardous affairs some winter's night, that he had the vision of *The Burning Babe* – his best-known poem.

SOUTHWELL:

As I in hoarie Winters night  
    Stood shivering in the snow,  
Surpris'd I was with sodaine heate,  
    Which made my heart to glow;

And lifting up a fearefull eye,  
    To view what fire was neare,  
A pretty Babe all burning bright  
    Did in the ayre appear;

Who scorched with excessive heate,  
    Such floods of teares did shed,  
As though his floods should quench his flames,  
    Which with his teares were fed:

Alas (quoth he) but newly borne,  
    In fierie heates I frie,  
Yet none approach to warme their hearts,  
    Or feele my fire, but I;

My faultlesse breath the furnace is,  
    The fuell wounding thornes:  
Love is the fire, and sighs the smoake,  
    The ashes, shame and scornes;

The fewell Justice layeth on,  
    And Mercie blowes the coales,  
The metall in this furnace wrought,  
    Are mens defiled souls:

For which, as now on fire I am  
To worke them to their good,  
So will I melt into a bath,  
To wash them in my blood.

With this he vanisht out of sight,  
And swiftly shrunk away,  
And straight I called unto minde  
That it was Christmase day.

GARNET: A certain nobleman told me that when he was walking with Fr Robert past London Bridge, he saw his face light up with an extraordinary gaiety. He was looking up at the martyrs' heads impaled on the pikes there, and said: "Oh, my Lord, if God grants it, you will see *my* head some time on one of those pikes."

SOUTHWELL: O sacred Fire come shewe thy force on me  
That sacrifice to Christe I maye retorne,  
If withered wood for fuell fittest bee,  
If stones and dust, yf fleshe and blood will burne,  
I withered am and stonye to all good,  
A sacke of dust, a masse of fleshe and bloode.

NARRATOR: In 1590 when Sir Robert Cecil had virtually succeeded to Walsingham's office, the reports from his spies made Robert Southwell out as three separate persons. There was the "young Mr. Southwell", one of these boy-priests, some sort of cousin of Cecil's; he had caused trouble in 1586 and early 1587, then disappeared – in 1588 he was shown in a list of recusants in Norfolk or Suffolk. Then there was the brain behind the London organisation that looked after incoming priests and arranged for young men to go overseas for

seminary training; this man was known to them as “Robertus” from a captured document – perhaps (they thought) this was Robert Parsons come back to London to take charge of the English Mission. Thirdly, there was word from the raffish literary crowd on the South Bank of a new writer who had stirred up sympathy for the old religion; his name was not known, but he had written *An Epistle of Comfort*. When it became known that the first and second persons were the same man, “Mr. Southwell, a Jesuit about London, apparelled in black rash (velvet)” – and then that the third man was also Robert Southwell, the hunt was up; and Topcliffe began to gather evidence of a more circumstantial sort. In January he had information that Southwell was in a certain house in Fleet Street under the *alias* of Cotton; but when he raided the house he found it empty. But among those caught in the drag-net this January was Anne, the eldest daughter of Richard Bellamy of Uxendon who was the sole surviving son of the family ruined five years earlier; for Uxendon was one of the oldest and safest Catholic strongholds in the realm. Early in February the danger was so acute that Garnet sent Southwell out of London, and before he returned Topcliffe knew that –

TOPCLIFFE: Young Anthony Copley (at Horsham) and some others be most familiar with Southwell. There liveth not the like... upon whom I have more good grounds for watchful eyes.

NARRATOR: Southwell *was* at Horsham, at least for a time; and perhaps at this time – either there or in some other safer place – he brought together his poems with a view to publication and dedicated them “To my worthy good Cousin, Master W.S.” – who may have been William Shakespeare. By the time he had returned to his old haunts between Fleet Street and Holborn in April or May, Topcliffe’s plans for taking him were well advanced – a scheme that involved seducing

Anne Bellamy in prison, persuading or forcing her with false promises to betray Southwell by inviting him to her family's house – a house that he had known for some years and had always trusted. One of the features of Topcliffe's scheme was that it would make Anne the wife to Nicholas Jones Topcliffe's faithful assistant – a weaver's son – and with her Jones would have the rich Manor of Preston from the Bellamy lands as her dowry. Topcliffe's scheme worked like a charm: and as a result, three men and two women came to painful deaths, and several others were ruined – in order to provide the weaver's son with a country house, and to secure Robert Southwell's execution.

Fr. Garnet, seized perhaps by one of his premonitions, sent Southwell word that he must leave London and come to Warwickshire. Anne Bellamy, lodged in a house at Holborn near where she knew Southwell was in hiding, came to him and asked him to help her win back her brother Thomas to the Catholic Church; and having secured Southwell's interest, she sent word to her mother saying that Southwell had returned to London and asked her to invite him to bring Thomas with him to Uxendon.

GARNET: (Robert) had actually planned his journey to us, when he received an invitation to the honoured household of the Bellamys which had long lacked a consoler, and so he arranged to spend his first night there (on his way to Warwickshire).

NARRATOR: On the morning of the 25th June, Southwell met Thomas Bellamy in Fleet Street; and while they rode out of London together, one of Topcliffe's men set out at speed for Greenwich where Topcliffe had been waiting for three weeks with his men ready to ride the 15 miles to Uxendon. \*At midday, Robert arrived at Uxendon, and for the rest

of the day preached to the household and a number of friends and tenants, and gave Holy Communion, and heard confessions, saying his last Mass.

*MUSIC: LAST 10 BARS OF 3-PART "AGNUS DEI" BG FROM \* ABOVE, CONTINUE BG NEXT.*

SOUTHWELL: Jesu food and feeder of us  
Heere with mercy feede and friend us,  
Then grant in heaven felicity,  
Lord of all whom heere thou feedest,  
Fellow heires, guests with thy dearest,  
Make us in heavenly company.

*MUSIC: UP FOR LAST 4 BARS (ca.30)*

NARRATOR: At midnight, Topcliffe and a big band of his men broke into the house. Southwell was quickly hidden away, but Topcliffe had a paper describing exactly where he was hidden. To save the other members of the household, Southwell came out of hiding and presented himself to Topcliffe.

TOPCLIFFE: Who are you?

SOUTHWELL: A gentleman.

TOPCLIFFE: A gentleman? A bastard priest, a whoremongering preacher –

SOUTHWELL: Sir, these are hard words. By what right do you use them?

TOPCLIFFE: *(almost speechless)* By what right? Priest! Traitor! Jesuit!

SOUTHWELL: Ah, but that is what you have to prove.

TOPCLIFFE: You deny you are a priest – from fear – you are afraid – and say you are no priest –

SOUTHWELL: No, it is neither priest nor traitor you are seeking, Master Topcliffe, but only blood. And if mine will satisfy you, then you shall have it as freely as my mother gave it to me; and if mine will not satisfy, I do not doubt but you shall find many more as willing as myself. Only I would advise you to remember that there is a God, and He is just in his judgments, and therefore blood will have blood, but I rather wish your conversion.

TOPCLIFFE: We came here to arrest you, not to listen to your prattling.

GARNET: With the first light of morning he was taken to London. Although they passed through the least frequented streets, the report of his capture had already spread through the whole city. More swiftly than one could believe, it was bruited abroad through the entire kingdom. It is not possible to describe the sorrow of all Catholics, and not only of Catholics; it was as if each of them had lost a dear kinsman. Southwell is so well prepared that, stricken as we are, we feel that God through the Father's sufferings will enhance his glory, strengthen his Church and confound his enemies....A very special kind of courage is needed to endure these tortures.

NARRATOR: Topcliffe sent word at once to the Queen to say that he had captured Southwell –

GARNET: (Her Majesty) heard the news, I am told, with unwonted merriment.

NARRATOR: Topcliffe took his prisoner directly to his house in Westminster, beside the Gatehouse: it would be more convenient to interrogate him in his private torture chamber. After refreshing himself with a short sleep to make up for his disturbed night, he first examined Southwell under threats of torture without any actual use of force; and sent his preliminary report at once to the Queen.

TOPCLIFFE: Most Gracious Sovereign, Having Fr Robert Southwell (of my knowledge) the Jesuit in my strong chamber in Westminster... I have presumed (after my little sleep) to run over this examination enclosed, faithfully taken and of him foully and suspiciously answered, and, somewhat knowing the nature and doings of the man, may it please your Majesty to see my simple opinion (which I am) constrained in duty to utter. Upon this present taking of him it is good forthwith to enforce him to answer truly and directly, and so to prove his answers true in haste, to the end that such as be deeply concerned in his treacheries have no time to start or make shift. To use any means in common prisons either to stand upon or against the wall (which above all things excels and hurteth not) will give warning. But if your Highness' pleasure be to know anything in his heart, to stand against the wall, his feet standing upon the ground and his hands stuck as high as he can reach against the wall, like a trick at Trenchmore, will enforce him to tell all, and the truth proved by the sequel. The answer of him to the question of the Countess of Arundel and that of Father Parsons deciphereth him.

It may please your Majesty to consider that I never did take so weighty a man: if he be rightly used...

So humbly submitting myself to your majesty's directions in this, or in any service with any hazard, I cease until I hear your pleasure here



at Westminster with my charge and ghostly father, this Monday the 26th(?) of June 1592. Your majesty's faithful Servant. Richard Topcliffe.

*MUSIC: "ERIPÉ ME" (BYRD VIII 105-108) AFTER 1ST 4 NOTES BG BEHIND NEXT 6 CUES (SIMULT. END)*

**VOICE:** Eripe me, Domine. Deliver me, O Lord, from the evil man: and preserve me from the wicked man.

**NARRATOR:** Topcliffe's torture-chamber faced the street; the windows had been boarded up and there was a small skylight in the roof. For forty hours, day and night making little difference, Southwell was in Topcliffe's house, and – whatever other tortures he may have suffered there – endured the first four of his hangings.

**GARNET:** The normal torture they use is to hang a man up by his hands, and for this purpose they use a piece of iron with two holes about five fingers apart. The iron is tied in the middle by a rope to a beam and the victim is thus left hanging sometimes for five or six hours. Sometimes the iron with the holes is rounded off and polished at the part where it touches the hands; this makes the pain more bearable. Some irons have what resembles a cutting edge that draws blood. In both cases the pain is excruciating.

**NARRATOR:** Before dark on the first day Topcliffe was already worried: the prisoner was behaving with brutish obstinacy. Each time he lost consciousness, he was taken down and revived, and hung up again. Once Topcliffe nearly went too far – he strapped the prisoner's heels behind his thighs, and went away leaving him like that; a terrified servant called him back – the prisoner seemed to be dying; and when

they took him down and revived him, he threw up a quantity of blood. But Southwell would say nothing – would give no word of anything Topcliffe wanted to trap him into saying. Topcliffe sent a second message to the Queen –

TOPCLIFFE: The prisoner behaves very obstinately and will not even confess his name.

GARNET: The Queen called Topcliffe a fool, and said she would put the matter in the hands of her Council who would soon finish it. So on the next day, or the day after, the two Clerks of the Council arrived to help Topcliffe in his inquisitions. Yet still, they say, “the prisoner remains obstinate.”

SOUTHWELL: My horror fastened in the yea,  
My hope hanged in the no.

NARRATOR: One of the clerks was William Wade, a man whose skill and cruelty as a torturer was a proverb. He had Southwell removed to the Gatehouse Prison next door, where the interrogation could be conducted in a more scientific manner. The hangings were at longer intervals; the emphasis was now on continuous cross-questioning and deprivation of sleep. Members of the Council came to take part in the examinations – among them Sir Robert Cecil, a kinsman of Southwell’s. Southwell answered their opening questions courteously, almost affably. Cecil complimented him on this and asked why he did not show a like reasonableness to Topcliffe –

SOUTHWELL: Because I have found by experience that the man is not open to reason.

NARRATOR: But when the questions came to where he was in London on a certain day, where he lodged, what colour of horse he rode in the country, Southwell apologized for his apparent discourtesy. –

SOUTHWELL: I find the best way to avoid misunderstanding and to safeguard the rights of others is to say nothing – nothing at all.

MUSIC: *“REDIME ME” (BYRD VIII 108-9) BG FROM (x)TO(y) BELOW.*

NARRATOR: To all questions that might implicate anybody else, there was silence. So there was nothing for it but to try Master Topcliffe’s methods again. (x)Lord Cecil left the torture-chamber shaken and moved: for the first time in his life he had met – in the ruined body of this cousin of his – his master in suavity of manner, quickness of thought, and cold intensity of will.

CECIL: They boast about the heroes of antiquity...but we have a new torture which it is not possible for a man to bear. And yet I have seen Robert Southwell hanging by it, still as a tree-trunk, and no one able to drag one word from his mouth. No wonder they trust these Jesuits with their lives, when – from a man so tortured – not one word could be twisted that might lead others into danger.

NARRATOR: Robert Southwell endured the hanging in manacles ten times. There is no record when the last of these was administered. Some time in July he was thrown aside as useless for further examination, and was lying helpless and neglected in the Gatehouse Prison, utterly emaciated, too weak to fend for himself, covered in his own filth, swarming with maggots.(y) On July 28th an order transferred him to solitary confinement in the Tower –

CLERK: To the Lieutenant of the Tower of London. You are to receive Robert Southwell priest to be kept close prisoner so that no one may be suffered access to him but such as one Master Topcliffe shall appoint as his keeper. Herein we require you to take order for his close restraining, he being a most lewd and dangerous person.

NARRATOR: Robert Southwell's father tried to intervene – his kinship to the Cecils gave him some hope.

CECIL: The petition of Richard Southwell. That if his son has committed anything for which by the laws he has deserved death, he may suffer death. If not, as he is a gentleman, that Her Majesty may be pleased to order that he should be treated as such, even though he were a Jesuit. And that as his father, he might be permitted to send him what he needed to sustain life.

NARRATOR: The story of Robert's resistance was now well known, the details of his sufferings matter for indignation. The Queen was now aware that this notorious Jesuit – the man who had written that courtly, grave, and stinging *Humble Supplication* – belonged to a family well known to her: he was the son of the girl she had been brought up with and learnt Latin from. Solitary confinement in the Tower was a good way for a person to be forgotten. But there was clemency in granting the father's petition. In the event, the only person allowed to visit him was his sister; through her the Countess of Arundel sent clothes and bedding and the works of St. Bernard which he himself wanted for his solace and his companion Garnet managed to send a Bible and a breviary. For the next two and a half years these were Southwell's only companions in the Tower.

*MUSIC:* "JUSTORUM ANIMAE" (BYRD IV 195-198) FIRST 6½ BARS  
UP(ca.24) THEN BG

*VOICE:* Justorum animae in manu Dei sunt. The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and these shall no torment touch them. In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die: but they are in peace.

*MUSIC:* UP TILL HALFWAY THROUGH BAR 14 (ca.16) THEN BG  
BEHIND NEXT THREE CUES.

*NARRATOR:* During this time the prisoner was still interrogated at intervals by Privy Councillors, Sir Robert Cecil among them, but humanely now. In the cross-currents of plotting that harassed the realm in those years there was much that they hoped to be able to learn from Southwell; but –

*GARNET:* In the many examinations, he answered always with great shrewdness as well as prudence.

*NARRATOR:* At this time, in three of the towers that flanked the Queen's Privy Garden, lay three Norfolk men – Fr Robert Southwell, Philip Howard, Lord Arundel, his intimate friend and husband of his patroness, condemned to death but the sentence of execution indefinitely withheld; and Fr Henry Walpole, on whom 15 years before a drop of blood had fallen at Edmund Campion's execution, who had then determined to become a priest and if need be to seek martyrdom, who had written an elegy on Edmund Campion that William Byrd set to music, and who had now suffered tortures even worse than Robert Southwell had.

*MUSIC:* UP TO END (ca.30)

NARRATOR: As the year 1594 wore on, Southwell's friends began to feel sure that he would never be brought to trial; and proposals passed between London and Rome that he be ransomed and exiled from the realm. But his Superior in Rome knew that for Southwell ransom and exile would be the most bitter deprivation, his heart being set on martyrdom. Anne, Countess of Arundel, knew this too – for she had promised him –

ANNE: – never to concur to the hindering of your Martyrdom, in case Almighty God did call you to that high honour; and therefore contain myself and will not strive therein.

GARNET: It truly seems that with a special providence Our Lord willed to keep him all that time as it were in a good noviceship, to prove him like gold in the furnace, to make him worthy of Himself. Certainly, so long a perseverance, such a multitude of sufferings, such a lack of all human means and aids, shows clearly how fortified was that holy soul and furnished with spiritual weapons.

NARRATOR: In the winter of 1594 Robert Southwell sent a personal petition to Sir Robert Cecil asking that either he might be brought to trial to answer in public all the things that had been urged against him in private; or else, if he were not to be tried, that his friends might be allowed to visit him. Cecil is said to have replied –

CECIL: If you are so anxious to be hanged, you shall have your wish very soon.

NARRATOR: On the 18th of February 1595, without any warning, Robert Southwell was taken from the Tower –

GARNET:

By a special warrant of Sir Robert Cecil he was removed...to Newgate, the most severe of the twelve London gaols, so as to be always at hand when he should be called for trial. He stayed there for three or four days; in *Limbo*, as they call it, an underground cell of evil repute where condemned felons await the hangman's stroke.....

But through the loving foresight of a Catholic, and by the kindness of the Keeper, he found it fitted with a bed and a fire and a constant supply of candles – for there is no other light in that place. All the time he was there, no felon was condemned; so he was alone with the worms – except that the Keeper came to visit him several times, a most unusual thing. (For) he asked the gaoler not to be too far away in case some accident should happen to him, or he should be in need of anything, because (as a result of his bitter tortures) his sides were not strong enough for him to shout....

Just before he was brought out for trial, he was visited by an old woman sent by his friends with a cup of soup. She said to him: “O Sir, God comfort you, you must appear today before the judges. But drink this up; it will make you brave and merry.” He drank it, and said to her: “This a broth for champions, not for condemned men.”

He was then led to that same tribunal, called the King's Bench, where so many years before had stood his blessed predecessor – Edmund Campion.

REPORT:

The Father, being brought along with halberds and bills and his arms tied with a cord, pressed with the throng, at length came to the bar; and then, having his hands loosed, put off his hat and made obeisance.

CAST: REACT AS CROWD IN WESTMINSTER HALL DURING TRIAL SCENE.

NARRATOR: To distract attention from the trial at Westminster Hall, a diversion was prepared in the execution of a notorious criminal at Tyburn. In spite of this, the court was crowded. Father Robert Southwell was aware only of the three presences that sat at the bench above him: the Chief Justice of the King's Bench, Sir John Popham, a huge ungainly man with a pendulous infirm face; the Attorney-General, Sir Edward Coke, the richest lawyer at the Bar, handsome, smiling, alert, supremely self-confident, ambitious; and Master Richard Topcliffe.

The Chief Justice addressed the Jury. The prisoner was to be judged on the Statute of Anno 27 – by which to be a priest was in itself treason. But they must bear in mind the wise and just grounds on which this Statute had been enacted: experience proved that as long as a priest or a Jesuit was at large in England, Her Majesty's life was in jeopardy, and no honest man could be sure of his lands or goods. He continued, rehearsing the complicity of priests and Jesuits – alleged, but never proven – in plots and machinations against Her Majesty's person and the quiet of the realm.

POPHAM: (*AN EVEN JUDICIOUS VOICE*) The Rebellion in the North, by whom was it stirred but by Cardinal Allen, a Jesuit, and the College of Jesuits and Priests? Throckmorton's action was by Jesuits and Priests. And that of Parry likewise by Jesuits and Priests. Hesketh's action to set up a subject for King was their practice. And lastly that of Yorke and Williams, to murder the Queen, was practised by Holt a Jesuit and others, who on his soul and by the Blessed Sacrament warranted it. And Stephano Hara, Agent for the King of Spain, gave assurance for payment of 40,000 gold pieces, as mounted to 12,000



English Pounds, upon the performance of it. (The Jury must bear in mind such facts.)

NARRATOR: The Chief Justice, however, had neglected to mention the Babington Plot, which Southwell in his *Humble Supplication* had shown in minute detail was a cynical contrivance to implicate the Jesuits and secure the death of Mary Queen of Scots. With a man like Southwell, even though he was physically broken, there was need to be wary.

GARNET: The power and love Our Lord spoke to his heart in that blessed solitude (of his imprisonment), and gave him vigour and freshness, and made him display in public such a peace and tranquillity that the heretics themselves stood in awe of him.

NARRATOR: The legal verdict was a foregone conclusion, but the process must be acted out. The Bill of Indictment was read. There was no actual contrivance of treason, but three facts were stated –

POPHAM: That you are a subject of Her Majesty the Queen. That you are a priest ordained since the accession of Her Majesty the Queen. And that you were present like a false traitor at Uxendon on 26th July 1592. Do you confess the indictment?

SOUTHWELL: (*In a slow quiet gasping voice which will gather strength as the hearing continues*) I confess I am a Catholic priest, and I thank God for it, but no traitor; neither can any law make it treason to be a priest.

POPHAM: You must answer the whole indictment, and either confess it, or say Not Guilty.

SOUTHWELL: I do not deny that I was at Uxendon, for the whole house saw me apprehended there, drawn and brought thither as a mouse to the trap. But I never intended, God Almighty knoweth, to commit any treason to the Queen or State. Only to minister the Sacraments to those that seemed willing to receive them.

POPHAM: Master Southwell, you must either confess the indictment or say Not Guilty.

SOUTHWELL: Not guilty of any treason.

(PAUSE)

POPHAM: How will you be tried? By God and by your country?

SOUTHWELL: By God and by you, for I would not lay upon my country the guilt of my condemnation.

POPHAM: *We* are not to try you. You are to be tried “by God and by the laws.”

SOUTHWELL: By God I will be tried, but not by the law, for the law is contrary to the law of God.

POPHAM: (*Interrupting*) If you refuse the trial, it shall be a sufficient condemnation, and then we are to proceed with you otherwise.

SOUTHWELL: (WEARILY) I am loth that these poor men of the Jury should be guilty of my death. But if you will needs have it treason that I must lay upon them, I will be tried by God and the country.

POPHAM: Do you wish to challenge any of the Jurors before they are sworn?

SOUTHWELL: I know no goodness in any of them, neither do I know any harm; but according to charity I judge the best, and will challenge none.

(PAUSE)

COKE: (SUPERCILIOUS & INSULTING) As to the three points of the indictment, they shall be proved, Master Southwell, if you deny any of them. For the first, I think he will not deny that he was born within this land? For the second, Master Southwell having acknowledged himself to be a Catholic Priest, and thanking God for it, you need not any further proof. He must likewise confess that he was made a priest since the first year of Her Majesty's reign, for he was not born when Her Majesty began to reign.

POPHAM: (SCORNFULLY) How old *are* you, Master Southwell?

SOUTHWELL: (AS THOUGH TO HIMSELF) I think that I am near the age of Our Saviour who lived upon the earth thirty-three years.

TOPCLIFFE: (EXPLODING) God's truth, he compares himself to Christ.

SOUTHWELL: (STARTLED & ABASHED) No, no. Christ is my Creator, and I am a worm created by Him.

TOPCLIFFE: (SNEERING) Yes, you are Christ's *fellow*.

COKE: (CONTINUING SUAVELY) For the third point, I think he will not deny that he was at Uxendon, for he came thither as he says "to minister the Sacraments". But did he not know the Act of Anno 27 that has made this same as treason?

SOUTHWELL: I know the Act; but it is impossible to make any such law agreeable to the word of God.

COKE: (DROPPING HIS QUIET MANNER, NOW SHARP AND MENACING) I had not purposed to speak much on my coming hither. But Master Southwell has let slip a word that *I* may not let slip: that the laws are not according to the word of God. Yet, even at this time, to my great astonishment I have heard such a point of doctrine proved against the prisoner, as many shall wonder at, and I will afterwards deliver.

NARRATOR: Coke now went over much the same ground that the Chief Justice had covered. Every time the State had been threatened by a fresh attack by the Pope or the King of Spain, the Queen had countered with a fresh law. And when the attack came through books – a new weapon of corruption –

COKE: Them, likewise, we met withal, and made it a felony to publish them, and a felony to keep them. A good point, my masters, to be observed. Beware how you read them.

NARRATOR: Southwell kept trying to interrupt, but Coke paid no attention; and finally –

POPHAM: (SHARPLY) Hold your peace, Master Southwell, until the Queen's Counsel hath spoken, and then you shall be heard.

SOUTHWELL: My Lord, let me answer forthwith. I am decayed in memory with long and close imprisonment, and I have been tortured ten times. I had rather have endured ten deaths.

POPHAM: I never heard that you were tortured.

COKE: (SMUGLY, MAKING HIS POINT BY EQUIVOCATION) I never knew you were *racked*.

TOPCLIFFE: (SHOUTING) If he were racked, let me die for it!

SOUTHWELL: No, but you have another kind of torture, I think, worse than the rack. It is called “the wall”. A man’s hands are placed in manacles to a bar, and he is hung up by the hands with his feet clear of the ground. He may be left hanging so for hours. There are divers niceties.

POPHAM: (UNEASILY) Such things are done among all nations.

SOUTHWELL: I confess that other nations have the like; but when by torture nothing can be got, I wish there might be some measure therein, lest by extremity of pain a man be driven – if it were possible – to despair. (TURNING TO THE JURY) I speak not this for myself, but for others, lest they be handled so inhumanly as I.

TOPCLIFFE: (SHOUTING) Show the marks of your tortures.

SOUTHWELL: (VERY QUIETLY) Ask a woman to show her birthpangs.

CAST: CROWD REACTION

TOPCLIFFE: (PANICKING) I did but set him against a wall. I had authority to use him as I did. So that I did not hurt life or limb. I have the Council’s letters to show for it.

SOUTHWELL: (WITH COMPLETE REVULSION) Master Topcliffe, thou art a bad man.

POPHAM: (VERY ANGRY) Master Topcliffe has no need to go about to excuse his proceedings in the manner of his torturings. For (TO SOUTHWELL) think you that you will not be tortured? Yea, we will tear the hearts out of a hundred of your bodies.

TOPCLIFFE: (SHOUTING) I would blow you all to pieces!

SOUTHWELL: What, all? *Soul* and body too?

COKE: He meant not the soul. The lawfulness of murder is a doctrine that has upheld “The Rotten Chair” of the Papacy. And now another has come to light, equally heinous, that would make an end of all honest dealing. Conscience! These priests pretend conscience, but ye shall see how far they are from conscience. Call the witness – Mistress Nicholas Jones.

GARNET: (VERY QUIETLY) Anne Bellamy.....And she, being sworn, said that Father Southwell told her that if, upon her oath, she were asked whether she had seen a priest or no, she might lawfully say “No”, although she had seen him that same day – keeping in her mind this meaning: that she did not see him with intent to betray him.

COKE: (LOUDLY) The Rotten Chair will down, which by this doctrine is maintained, a doctrine by the which all judgments, all giving of testimonies, shall be perverted.

SOUTHWELL: My words were not altogether as she hath reported, yet I admit the substance of them. If My Lord will give me leave to interpret my own meaning, I will show –

COKE: Perjury! This is the doctrine of the Jesuits: ‘It is lawful to commit perjury’!

SOUTHWELL: (IMPISHLY) Master Attorney, you must admit my doctrine, or else I will prove you no good subject or friend of the Queen.

(PAUSE)

COKE: (SMILING, MENACING) Yea, Master Southwell? Let me hear that.

SOUTHWELL: (GRAVELY, AS THOUGH GIVING A LECTURE IN LOGIC)  
Suppose that the French King should invade Her Majesty’s realm, and that she (which God forbid) were enforced to fly to some private house for safety from her enemies, where none knew her being but Master Attorney? Suppose that Master Attorney, being taken, were put upon his oath to say whether she were there or not? And suppose (for such would be the case) that Master Attorney’s refusal to swear should be held as a confession of her being in the house? Would Master Attorney refuse to swear? Or would he say: “She is not there,” meaning I intend not to tell you?

(SILENCE)

If Master Attorney should refuse to swear, I say he were neither Her Majesty’s good subject, nor her friend.

(SILENCE)

POPHAM: (BLUSTERING, HAVING LOST THE THREAD) He should refuse to swear.

SOUTHWELL: Then (SWEETLY) that were by silence to betray his Sovereign.

COKE: (ANGRILY) The case is not like. You, Boy-Priest, have not read the Doctors.

SOUTHWELL: I have read those that have read them (SUAVELY) and you, Master Attorney, in the study of your laws, do not go always to the grounds and principles of the law, but take other men's reports – surely.

COKE: (WITH MOUNTING ANGER) Aye, you have studied the Doctors. You have studied Doctor Allen, Doctor Parsons, Doctor Holt – you, Doctor *Traitor*.

TOPCLIFFE: (SHOUTING) Boy-Priest, Master Jesuit, Boy-Doctor, *traitor* –

COKE: (SHOUTING) Treason is your study – Treason against the Queen's person. Master Southwell, you are a *traitor*.

POPHAM: Master Attorney, Master Topcliffe, this is most unseemly. Let things be done in due order.

Master Southwell, if this doctrine of yours were allowed, it would supplant all justice, for we are men and not Gods, and can judge but according to men's outward actions and speeches, and not according to their secret and inward intentions.



SOUTHWELL: (PATIENTLY, AND IN THE SAME TONE OF LEVEL DISCOURSE) My Lord, two things are to be presupposed in this cause: first, that the refusing to swear is held as confessing the thing –

TOPCLIFFE: (INTERRUPTING) Enough of this preaching –

SOUTHWELL: (GOING STEADILY ON) – and second, that the oath is ministered by such as have no lawful authority –

COKE: (INTERRUPTING, INSULTINGLY) On what grounds, pray, Master Jesuit?

SOUTHWELL: – for every oath ought to contain judgment, justice and truth, –

TOPCLIFFE: (SHOUTING) Enough, the matter is not to be resolved so.

SOUTHWELL: (CONTINUING) – and no man is bound to answer every man that asketh him, unless –

COKE: Silence. My Lord, this is contempt –

SOUTHWELL: (CONTINUING) – no man is bound to answer every man that asketh him, unless it were a competent judge –

TOPCLIFFE: My Lord, let us hear no more of this. The matter is clear; the matter is proven. This Boy-priest seeks to confuse us with his Jesuit's arguments –

POPHAM: (STERNLY) Hold thy peace, Master Topcliffe. The Jury has heard the evidence, and the arguments of Master Attorney and the

statements of the prisoner at the bar. Ye are to withdraw apart and consider your verdict. (ASIDE TO SOUTHWELL) Master Southwell, you have leave to retire also and to restore yourself against the verdict.

SOUTHWELL: My Lord, I thank you, but I beg leave to remain here.

NARRATOR: After more than two years of solitary confinement it was joy to turn his eyes upon the faces that crowded the court, to see the hands fluttering, to recognise the faces of friends here and there, faces that he could name, many about him who shared with him the exultation and triumph that transfigured the broken and exhausted body of this brilliant young man. The jury returned after only a quarter of an hour.

POPHAM: Master Foreman, what is your verdict?

FOREMAN: My Lord, we find the prisoner guilty as charged.

CLERK: Master Southwell, have you anything to say why the judgment should not be given?

SOUTHWELL: I pray God forgive all them that are any way accessories to my death.

TOPCLIFFE: (HYSTERICALLY) I found him at Uxendon hiding in the tiles!

SOUTHWELL: It was time to hide, My Lord, when Master Topcliffe came.

CAST: (REACT)

POPHAM: Keep silence. (PAUSE) Master Robert Southwell, you have been found guilty of high treason against Her Majesty the Queen. I now pronounce sentence upon you. You must go to the place from whence you came, there to remain until you shall be drawn through the open city of London upon a hurdle to the place of execution, and there to be hanged and let down alive, and your privy parts cut off, and your entrails taken out and burnt in your sight; then your head to be cut off and your body divided into four parts, to be disposed of at Her Majesty's pleasure. (PAUSE) And may God have mercy on your soul.

SOUTHWELL: (HUMBLY) For your judgment, My Lord, I give you great thanks.

POPHAM: You will wish that some minister of religion have conference with you. I will send a learned preacher to you.

SOUTHWELL: As for that, My Lord, you need not take any care.

NARRATOR: His arms were then tied again, and he was led away.

GARNET: The officers consulting whether they were better to carry him by water or by land, (to avoid the throng of people waiting to greet him), they all concluded he would go quiet enough, and so he went joyfully with them through the streets, where many of his friends and acquaintances awaited his coming only to see him, which they did to their great comfort, deeming themselves happy to get one glance at him, perceiving him full of consolation, his countenance nothing dismayed, they never knowing him to look better or more cheerfully.

MUSIC: *"BEATI MORTUI" (BYRD VIII 51 BAR 4 to 52 CADENCE ON BAR 2) FIRST THREE NOTES UP (ca.07) THEN BG*

VOICE: Beati mortui qui in Domine moriuntur. Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.

MUSIC: *UP TO END (ca.24)*

NARRATOR: Next morning, he was bound to a hurdle, head downwards, and drawn by two horses from Newgate Prison, halting for a few moments outside St. Sepulchre's, then down the steep slope to the Fleet Ditch, across the bridge, and slowly up the long slope to the chains of Holborn Bars – stopping at St. Giles-in-the-fields where by tradition a last drink was given to prisoners being taken to execution; then into the open windswept countryside, and finally the last stretch of what is now Oxford Street, the procession coming to a standstill at Tyburn – where the Marble Arch now stands.

CAST: (TO END OF SCRIPT) CROWD AT TYBURN

GARNET: A great crowd had gathered, and many people had walked with him from the prison.

NARRATOR: Released from the hurdle, and placed in the cart with the hangman, he begged leave to speak to the people, and after some interruption by the under-sheriff he was allowed to speak and the crowd listened in silence.

SOUTHWELL: Whether we live, or whether we die, we belong to the Lord. I am brought hither to die; I am come hither to play out the last act of this poor life. I pray and supplicate Our Saviour Jesus Christ, by whose dear passion and death I hope to be saved, that he would deign to pardon all the sins of all my life. I do profess myself to be a Catholic

priest of the Holy Roman Church, and of the Society of Jesus, and I do thank God eternally for it.

Concerning the Queen's Majesty, God Almighty knoweth that I never intended any harm against her. I have daily prayed for her; and in this short time which I have yet to live, I do beseech Almighty God for his tender mercy sake....to grant she may so use her gifts and graces, which God and Nature and fortune have bestowed on her, that with them all she may both please and glorify God, advance the happiness of our Country, and purchase to herself the preservation and salvation of her body and soul.

Next, into the hands of Almighty God I commend this my poor Country, desiring him for his infinite mercy's sake, to reduce it to such perfect insight, knowledge and understanding of his truth, that thereby they may learn to praise and glorify him, and gain for their souls health and eternal salvation.

And lastly, I commend into the hands of Almighty God my own poor soul, that it would please him for his great mercy sake to confirm and strengthen it with perseverance unto the end of this my last conflict. And this poor body of mine, as it may please Her Majesty to dispose thereof.

This is my death, my last farewell to this unfortunate life, and yet to me most happy and most fortunate. I pray it may be for the full satisfaction of my sins, for the good of my Country, and for the comfort of many others. Which death, albeit that it seem here disgraceful, yet I hope that in time to come it will be to my eternal glory. (PAUSE)

If I have offended the Queen with my coming hither, I humbly desire her to forgive it, and I accept this punishment for it most thankfully. And now I desire all Catholics to pray with me, so that whatsoever be said to trouble and distemper me in this conflict, I

may yet, the little while I have to live, live a Catholic and die a Catholic.

GARNET: As he hung upon the rope his face was unchanged and his eyes still open, and his body motionless except that with his bound hands he knocked at his breast in the motions of the *Confiteor*. When the sergeant came forward to cut the rope while he was still alive, certain noblemen standing at the gallows prevented him, and the hangman – seeing what was wanted of him – leant with all his weight upon him until he was dead; then lowered his body very gently into his arms – a most unwonted courtesy. And when the other prescribed offices were fulfilled, and the hangman held up the head and cried, as the custom is, “God save the Queen! Here is the head of a traitor!” the crowd was silent.

(PAUSE)

ANNOUNCER: The Mission and Death of Blessed Robert Southwell, Priest, Poet, and Martyr, with Music of William Byrd, was compiled and written by George Whalley. The production starred.....as Southwell and.....as the narrator, and featured.....as Garnet, with.....as Topcliffe, .....as Chief Justice Popham, and.....as Attorney-General Coke; others in the cast were.....

.....  
.....  
The choral music was sung by the choir of St. John’s College, Cambridge, conducted by George Guest, in the course of a recent

visit to Canada.

The program was directed and produced by John Reeves in Montreal and Toronto, with the technical assistance of.....and ..... This is .....speaking.

*MUSIC:*

*FILL TO TIME*