Terrorism, Violence, and the Collision of Masculinities in *Four Lions*

Imed Labidi

University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA

Many critics hailed the new film, *Four Lions* (2010)*,* by director Chris Morris as "provocative, incendiary, audacious, and shocking" (Weinberg, 2010) and "one of the funniest and boldest comedies of the year" (*Four Lions* Arrives, 2011). As a satirist, Morris already established his wit signature with the production of the mockumentary series, *Brass Eye*. Using the same absurdist approach, he presents a creative political comedy which escapes the conventional constraints of comedic productions by addressing the complex, sinister, frightening, and highly sensitive phenomenon of terrorism usually reserved to the genres of action and drama. This time, he carries this absurdist approach to the next level, insulating his characters with dark humor while making them appear simultaneously as villainous village idiots and unwitting denizens symbolically charged with multiple layers of meaning.

On the surface, "'*Four Lions*' is rooted in the buffoonery of honest-to-goodness terrorists." (Boller, 2011) Unlike official profiles and the claims of political discourse in the United Kingdom and the United States which, to use Foucault's language, produced a "regime of truth" about terrorists as maliciously intelligent, meticulously organized, highly calculated, well trained, extremely dangerous, blindly faithful to their radical doctrines and irrational ideologies, Morris' terrorists are up end these truisms. They are the antithesis, the antiheros, and the opposite of terror suspects' official profiles. Morris spent three years researching homegrown terrorist cells, and spoke with "experts, imams and law enforcement officials" (ibid) before writing the final script. His characters suggest that the film's fictionalized construction better approximates the lives and motivations of real terrorists. Morris' dark humor aims at debunking terrorism as an inevitable, imminent, and almost unstoppable threat.

Four Lions contests the absurd rhetoric that all terrorists are the product of an imaginary universal Islamic radicalism and Al Qaeda, the mysterious and supposedly sophisticated international terror network that operates out of caves and deserted faraway lands. This same Al Qaeda has been scapegoated, used to legitimize many of the intrusive laws invented to produce a compliant and docile public. Two of the film's characters, Faisal and Waj, could easily be stand-ins for captured airline terror suspects Richard Reid, known as the shoe bomber, and Umar Faruk Adulmutalib, who concealed explosives in his underpants and burned himself before he was

discovered. They each, characters and real life terrorists alike, proved that the official discourse on who jihadists are can be opposite of expectations.

In not so subtle ways, the film critiques constructed and invisible sources of fear that haunts Western imagination. Other than contesting the official tales concerning the high caliber expertise of terrorists which indirectly glorifies them, the story entails also more complex and intertwined themes which critique stereotypes[1] and Islamophobia. Thus, the skewed processes of locating radicalism in certain ideologies and not others, the impossibility to transform the material circumstances that produced white masculinity and its vanishing hegemony without relinquishing power, the construct of masculinity as an ideology of violence and radicalism are examined alongside the competence of those operating surveillance technology in the UK, police brutality of Western democracies, and the ramification of social alienation.

To this end, my critique of *Four Lions* will look at hegemonic masculinity as a source of fear and lifelong indoctrination, which will provide insights into the radicalization of the many "Joes" turned jihadists. My thesis is grounded in the theories that consider masculinity a social, historical, and political concept performed by men and which has incorporated and normalized violence and sexual domination as core components of its "natural" essence. Hegemonic and dominant, in this sense, masculinity's power lies in its ability to operate in disguise. While seemingly invisible, its presence is constantly renewed through its capability to set itself up against women and other alternative masculinities (minorities, underclass males, homosexuals, foreigners, others). Since fear represents its central catalyst, its victims are not only women and non whites. They are also those who represent masculinity but cannot abide by all its demands.

The failure to perform, I further argue, can lead to a serious condition of alienation, violent behavior, and radicalization. For this purpose, I will mostly focus on Barry, "the most bizarre of all the "lions" — a Caucasian Convert to Islam with a streak of ferocious invective and penchant

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[1] In my opinion, Morris intended to ridicule stereotypes by involving Omar's family in the plot. The purpose here appears to be throwing viewers off balance. It is unconceivable that a young wife who seems very happy in her marriage and shows no signs or behavior of radicalism would not object to the grotesque act that her husband and father of her child is about to commit. As if she never took his story seriously, she interrupts his puffin game, and tells him: "You were much more fun when you were gonna blow yourself up, love," with a tone and look of sexual innuendo. In a later scene, Omar comes to her workplace to say goodbye before heading off on the martyrdom mission. Here her nonchalance is patently absurd. She just smiles and carries on working.

for little hats" (Pulver, 2010). A self-centered narcissist, Barry fails to possess and perform the scripts of white masculinity. Beyond simple character analysis, my goal is to negotiate possible interpretations of his radicalism, violent personality, and identity crisis through the examination of masculine exigencies as seen deployed in Western society. Recognizing that cinematic story lines are reflections of reality, expressions of popular sentiments, and a site for contesting cultural conventions and shifting power dynamics, I intend to connect my analysis of Barry's behavior to real life conflicts, policy practices, collisions of competing masculinities, and struggle over meaning between subordinates and those who dominate.

The Plot

Based in Doncaster, England, a group of friends decides to form a terrorist cell and become real jihadist "soldiers". Their mission evolves into traveling to London where they will to blow themselves during a marathon and achieve martyrdom. The cast includes "the charismatic leader Omar (Riz Ahmed), the powerfully obtuse sidekick Waj (Kayvan Novak, hilarious), the caucasian-yet-militant Barry (Nigel Lindsay), the musically-inclined Hassan (Arsher Ali), and the monumentally paranoid Faisal (Adeel Akhtar) (Weinberg, 2010). These are dysfunctional individuals--naïve, alienated, confused, goofy, clumsy, and incredibly stupid. While preparing for their heinous crime, Omar, the operation's master mind, manipulates his simple minded friend Waj, an infantile figure who is learning Islam from a children's book. Omar and Waj go to a terrorist training camp in Pakistan, where they are scorned, insulted, and humiliated. Inadvertently, they bomb the camp, unknowingly kill Osama Bin Laden. They then return to England undetected. Meanwhile, bomb maker Faisal buys large quantities of liquid peroxide by donning different disguises and trains crows to set off bombs. Convert Barry, the fourth of the lions, takes on the leadership role in Omar's absence and recruits revolutionary wannabe rapper, Hassan. The new recruit unthinkingly brings in an outsider from the neighborhood to join him in song and dance, despite the bomb-making material is sitting in the open. The group is forced to flee with the goods. In the move, Faisal jumps a fence and trips over a sheep. He explodes, leading to an argument over whether Faisal should be considered a martyr or not. Omar, disgusted with the groups' inability to process what just happened, calls it quit. Barry steps in to fill the leadership role, seeing himself as the only true radical and seizing "white male privilege" as his justification to lead.

On the surface, Barry's antagonist behavior and character development throughout the film make him not complex. Confined to the constraints of a one dimensional character, his consistency and persistence (he never entertained the idea of quitting or abandoning the plot) helped shield his identity crisis, internal conflicts, explosive temper, discontent with Westerners and Muslims alike, and fear of his subject position in the cell's hierarchy. His angst feeds his pathologies: Barry, the emotionally frigid; Barry, the Macho guy who drives his car into a wall to make his point; Barry, the masochist who punches himself in the face until he bleeds, and swallows objects like simcards and keys; Barry, the insecure Caucasian surrounded by "Pakis"; Barry, the self-righteous leader; Barry, the militant without a cause; Barry, the alienated convert, Barry, the paranoid; Barry, the racist, the misogynist, and the homophobe; and finally, Barry the sadist and exhibitionist. If such a saturated and contradictory character appears so composed and outrageously funny, it is because of Morris's creativity and unique style. He manipulates this interplay between the binary elements of dark comedy, satire, verbal comedy, drama, and documentary to construct a representative sample of the most imperfect characters as flawed as radicalism itself. By the end of the film, Barry's character exposes all the unrealistic demands of masculine identity and its fracturing impact on his psyche and behavior. The will of internalizing all its scripts inevitably collides with his inability to perform them. As a result, Barry becomes a living proof of a fragmented adult--lost, violent, radicalized, and culturally basterdized.

The Scripts of Masculinity

The discourse on Western masculinity; grounded in prevalent and powerful social norms and cultural details; informs Barry and teaches him that "[t]he ideals of manhood espoused by the dominant (hegemonic) masculinity suggest a number of characteristics that men are encouraged to internalize into their own personal codes and which form the basis for masculine scripts of behavior. These characteristics include: *emotional restraint* (Adler, Kless, & Adler, 1995; Brannon, 1976; Hopkins, 1996; Laberge & Albert, 2000); *violence and aggression* (Brannon, 1976; Donaldson, 1993; Hopkins, 1996; Kimmel, 1999; Nicholson, 1993; Thompson, 1991); *toughness* (Adler et al., 1995; Donaldson, 1993; Gilmore, 1990; Thompson, 1991); *competitiveness* (Brittan, 1989; Hopkins, 1996; Kimmel, 1999; Nicholson, 1993); *risk-taking* (Donaldson, 1993; Nicholson, 1993; Thompson, 1991); *courage* (Donaldson, 1993; Gilmore,

1990; Thompson, 1991); *power and dominance* (Adler et al., 1995; Brittan, 1989; Kaufman, 1995; Kimmel, 1999; Laberge & Albert, 2000; Thompson, 1991); *achievement and success* (Brannon, 1976; Brittan, 1989; Hopkins, 1996; Kimmel, 1999); and *heterosexuality* (Brittan, 1989; Donaldson, 1993; Kane & Disch, 1993; Kaufman, 1995; Laberge & Albert, 2000; Thompson, 1991; Soulliere, 2005).

Barry's behavior indicates his desire to possess all these codes; he seems totally consumed by the fantasy to embody masculinity in its totality. But as the film and his character unfold, it appears that even before his conversion Barry was incapable of achieving that goal. It is possible to assume that in his frustration and rage, he turns militant and decides to sever all ties to Western civilization. Given the consensus that "…gender is always articulated *through* race, through possibilities opened up by particular racial identities," (Sarvan,1998:7) by his conversion to Islam and his close connection to Pakistani born British, Barry may be seeking an ideological and ethnic crossover as a strategy to transcend his fragmentation and escape his identity crisis. His hostility toward Western culture[2] symbolizes a forced transition into another sphere where he can explore new possibilities. With his ideological reassignment, Barry views combat as a venue to release his tension and escape the mediocrity of his position in hegemonic Western men's hierarchy despite being White. Yet he encounters new conditions that are as emasculating. Barry's position within the matrix of the Western sexual-political economy is now located on a worse differential axis of domination than where it was before his conversion for two reasons: first, his racial capital (Whiteness) is irrelevant, and possibly a liability, among this group of dysfunctional minority males. Second, he went from being a marginal male in a hegemonic white men's hierarchy to a "Paki's" subordinate and possible "bitch." Omar silences him, orders him around, overrides all his ideas, questions his suggestions, ridicules him, and frogs him. For Barry, a follower status is too effete to tolerate.

The Attainment of Manhood: Negating the Feminine

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[2] Barry is the only character whose head is shaved, wears the *Salafi* Islamic garbs, and therefore follows in the footsteps of many radical Muslim men who consider the ethics of Islamic clothing as a powerful marker of their masculine identity.

Outwardly, Barry appears in charge of his emotions. His behavior is characterized by rigidity bordering on insanity; his interaction with his accomplices limited to their plot. Although a close friendship exists between Omar and Waj, Barry is not emotionally invested with any of his accomplices. At times, he is clearly agitated and dissatisfied with their naiveté. He constantly clashes with Omar; he yells at Waj repeatedly during the video recording session. He scorns Faisal and humiliates Hassan. When Hassan admits to the police he is a suicide-bomber, in his lack of tolerance Barry dials the code that blows him up. Barry's frustration with the group may win him sympathy among viewers. His patience grows thin as Omar dismisses Barry's ideas, but Barry always retaliates. Their communication reaches a breaking point when Omar announces to the group he received a call that would offer them the opportunity to "upgrade" and visit a terrorist training camp in Pakistan. Frustrated at appearing to be upstaged, Barry asks: "Why did you get the call why didn't I get the call?" Omar responds, flaunting his connections and family ties in Pakistan who helped make the contact possible. For this kind of venture, Omar further explains, Barry's whiteness might raise suspicion and therefore is not allowed to go on this trip.

Naturalizing Masculine Identity: Violence, Aggression, and Toughness

Film viewers will learn little about Barry's back-story or what experiences led to his antagonism towards the UK and Western culture[3] and social alienation. Barry has been socialized in a violent cultural environment, in which his psyche is tormented with fear, insecurity, and chronic anxiety over the loss of his masculinity to the state, women, or worse to a minority group. His accomplices, as members of a minority group, most likely identify with a different cultural construction of maleness and masculine identity. Kimmel (1999: 84) argues that: "We come to know what it means to be a man in our culture by setting our definitions in opposition to a set of 'others' - racial minorities, sexual minorities, and above all, women. These groups become the 'others', the screens against which traditional conceptions of manhood are developed" (cited in Soulliere, 2005). Thus, Barry's desire to perform masculinity becomes the only plausible explanation for his militancy. His adherence to the malicious plot of bombing a mosque during Friday prayers and creating a major chaos in London in order to "radicalise the moderates, bring it all on," speaks to the limitless depravity of ignorant Machismo.

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[3] Except for Barry, all other characters including Omar, Waj, and Hassan sang King Harvest's 1970s classic song "Dancing in the Moon Light" as they traveled to their final destination. This is evidence that all these Pakistani born British men have absorbed Western culture. Ironically Barry, the only authentic Westerner, acts as a "true" radical by not participating. Singing, many argue, is reserved for women and effeminate boys.

Recent research in media, sociology, and cultural studies recognizes the extent to which masculinity and violence are conjoined. This is promoted in the West through film, sports, and advertising, where muscular bodies are combined with aggressive behavior and a violent attitude. Dines and Humez would say this is a "vision of masculinity-adventurous, aggressive, and violent-that provides men of all classes with a standard of 'real manhood'" (1995: 463). In his attempt to meet the standard as well as function within this system, Barry's personality is polarized between an aggressiveness that is internally subject to cultural and social demands, and externally pressured by fear of not performing this role effectively. This polarity itself becomes invisible as if it was inherently part of men's nature and defined by some sort of genetically tested biological imperatives.

More troubling are the roots of violence which are not easily detected. Lee H. Bowker, the editor of *Masculinities and Violence,* identifies five "system levels of action": social, biological, personality, cultural, and economic (1998: 3) and highlights the necessity to acknowledge the interconnectedness between them in order to understand masculine violence. Examining the degree of aggression and ability to inflict harm on other individuals or entire innocent communities, as the 'four lions' intends, reveals the interconnectedness of these systems. Thus, it becomes almost impossible to separate the psychological from the cultural or the psychological from the economic. When the dominant culture teaches violence and aggression as the signs of virility, then this is what becomes internalized. In this sense, Barry becomes a damaged product and the antagonist of the very system that created him.

Real Men Are not Afraid to Lead: Exhibiting the Values of Manhood
Throughout the film, Barry's competitive spirit is relentless. As if born to lead, Barry is the only member who challenges Omar. As the narrative unfolds, tension continues to rise between the two. For the most part, Barry manages to conceal his discontent for the sake of the operation. Although he is still driven by his stubbornness and a strong desire to reaffirm his position of power; his obvious indifference to Omar's commands provides some kind of psychological relief that enables him to temporarily feel at least as Omar's equal rather than a follower. Denied the trip to Pakistan, Barry turns Omar's absence into an opportunity to assert his independence and

position himself as a decision-maker. He starts serious initiatives and risks exposing the whole operation by inviting in a new and young recruit, Hassan. When Hassan joins, Barry hugs him and curses Omar. Later Hassan inquires about Omar. Barry lies assertively: "He is one of my boys. I've sent him off to training camp to bring him up to scratch." After Faisal's accidental death and Omar's departure, Barry steps in immediately to fill the voided role. Later, while Omar is contemplating the possibility of aborting their plan, Barry's macho mentality takes over. Believing strictly in violent resolutions of conflict, Barry would never accept negotiation, which he considered a sign of weakness, nor would he entertain the idea of abandoning their mission. Barry attacks Omar to prevent him from calling Waj to negotiate and swallows his simcard and chokes. When a good Samaritan tries to help him with the Heimlich maneuver, both meet their tragic – and in Barry's case futile – end.

Fearing the "Other": the futility of Barry's racism

Barry's combustible cocktail of racist Machismo and radical ideologies is spiked with the prewritten scripts of masculinity. Barry is dangerous to both himself and those around him as he mouths the words and then acts upon an epistemology of race that vilified Jews and legitimizes discrimination against them. His perception of other ethnicities is equally visceral. His anti-Semitism is so ridiculously pathological that it becomes a clear manifestation of his belligerence, ignorance, insecurity, and desire to position himself on higher grounds than a lesser "other". He has no reservation about using racial slurs, including "Paki" amongst his Pakistani friends. His sense of entitlement and White privilege never diminish; he loves to instruct, order, supervise, and humiliate other members of the group. Barry is always attempting to restructure his relationship with Omar, seeing it similar to the power imbalances between East and West, subordinate and master, colonizer and colonized. This mechanism of competing masculinities almost evokes a classic moment in colonial history, juxtaposing the benevolent master and the wicked, ungrateful native dialectic.

The intensity of the conflict between the two characters provides all the metaphors of clashing masculine identities. "Free countries equated with free men, domination with castration, the loss of manhood, and rape-the terrorist act re-enacting the drama of conquest[…] (Hooks, 1990: 57). But the master is often the more knowledgeable, the modern soldier more developed, with

weapons of mass destruction, ability to inflict pain, and emasculate whereas the native has only his body and creativity to resist and reverse that emasculation. Under the longest occupation in the history of colonization, the Palestinian male has undergone different scenarios of emasculation[4] under Israeli technologies of domination.

The roots of misogyny

In *Sexual Violence and American Manhood*, T. Walter Herbert suggests that this insecurity is partly caused by a persistent tradition of positioning male and female as opposites. According to his thesis, Herbert explains that young American boys struggle against the perception of being "sissies". Once grown, they may develop misogynist attitudes out of fear of being considered "bitches". "This sharply dichotomous, indeed mutually hostile-relation of the 'opposite sexes' becomes toxic when "the feminine" becomes the repository for the qualities men abhor in themselves" (2002: 44). In this context, men reject certain traits associated with femininity and adopt those considered virile. Kindness, gentleness, and languor are to be repudiated; fear and emotions suppressed; and toughness and control displayed. In return, this behavior protects the individual from effeminacy, culturally clearing the way for this individual's acceptance with other *men*. Indeed, recognition becomes the ultimate goal of exhibiting masculinity.

Studies show that changing social conditions are increasingly challenging the archetype of the "real man". David D. Gilmore, in his book *Manhood in the Making* (1990), notes that the feminist revolution shook the bipolar mode of sexual division and challenged the dualistic edifice of the male versus female equation. The empowerment of female agency and elimination of traditional male and female roles have certainly contributed to this attitude. Jackson Katz

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[4] In the occupied territories since the late 1980s "beatings became an explicit policy of the occupation authorities" (Peteet, 105); public humiliation of adult males at check points while family members, wife, and children watch was a common practice and prison became an immediate punishment to any form of resistance. In her analysis of Palestinian masculinity, Juliette Peteet states that "[t]he tolerance of physical abuse was underwritten by a regime of knowledge that cast them as lawless and socially primitive and violent-terrorists, threats to law and order, bands, gangs- and thus as amenable to violent extrajudicial measures. Beyond the pale, Palestinians were cast as possessing a fundamentally different set of morals and knowledge-commonly stated as 'they only understand force'" (2000:106). In response, the Palestinian turned the marks of torture and abuse of his body, his ability to endure pain and prison time into fundamental parts of his manhood. Here Barry's psyche and insecurity becomes exactly like that of the Israeli soldiers who are so creative in devising new methods of torture and emasculation because of their own fear of becoming "another". In this context Peteet describes "their behavior as more analogous to what Taussig referred to as 'colonial mirroring', where 'the terror and torture they devised mirrored the horror of the savagery they both feared and fictionalized'" (1987:133) (cited in Peteet 106).

traces the modern history of the construction of aggressive masculinity and its base, the image of strong muscularity to the mid-to-late 1970s into the 1980s, and skillfully ties it to its socioeconomic conditions. He theorizes that as the dynamics of economic production shifted, the white working class experienced instability and dislocation. They assumed people of color were acquiring gains at their expense. Coupled with their anxiety about the rise of feminist movements, this created the need for the construction of a powerful image of a white masculinity with whom both working class and other classes could identify. Katz lists film stars, such Arnold Schwarzenegger, Sylvester Stallone, and Bruce Willis" (Dines and Humez, 1995: 460), as exemplars of the new white heroes. Barry has indeed all the characteristics of a working class individual who can only fantasize about a hegemonic masculinity.

The Warrior Ethos

"Power, dominance, achievement, and success" are not Barry's fortes. His personality is too conflicted; although he can temporarily triumph, it is more of a posture. While the actions, tone and arguments he used to recruit Hassan worked, they were driven more by his commitment to the crime. Throughout the film, Barry is the only character who does not express doubt about the mission. Yet he is certainly fighting a private war on multiple fronts against Western civilization, infidel Muslims, the state, the police, the Jews, women, and Omar. His rage blinds him from grasping the potential devastation of the upcoming planned bombings. His acquiescence comes from his acceptance of the jihadist mentality which believes this kind of crime is a holy act. If Barry's radicalism was measured on a scale, it would be three times that of his accomplices.

The Islamic name Morris gave Barry, which Barry's character chose for himself, is symbolically charged. Azzam Al-Britani, "Azzam the British," brings the radical thoughts of the East home, incorporating them in a radicalized Western persona. Azzam may well refer to the Palestinian Sunni scholar and preacher, Dr. Abdullah Yusuf Azzam. Dr. Azzam, known as the father of the defensive jihad *fatwa* and mentor of Osama bin Laden, espoused global jihad as the personal religious obligation for Muslims to liberate all Muslim lands under occupation. Interestingly, Dr. Azzam was killed in a bomb blast.

Having adopted, and thus nurtured by, belief systems where one claims violence is divinely sanctioned and the other rests on the idea of good conquering evil, the "myth of redemptive violence," Barry becomes the incarnation of the true warrior. His ethos is imbued with the killer spirit and the martial creed of not only destroying potential *Kuffar* enemies, but also to feminize them.

Toting Modern Technologies of Domination

Hypothetically speaking, had Barry not been a convert to this strain of Islam and jihadist path, he might have been a professional wrestler, a tough prison guard, or a good soldier. These exemplify the archetype of manhood: the warrior and the protector of the nation. In Herbert's discussion of war as a particularly valuable stage in the history of manhood, he reaffirms the impact of militarized masculinity which promoted the belief in the soldier's superior model of manliness; "[t]he Soldier was not only male, he was a certain kind of male" […] The men who were the best soldiers were, in effect, the best men" (2002: 31). These men understood well that the vindication of masculinity rests on continuous testing off the battlefield, requiring participation in drills of dangerous and deadly exercises. In the war zone, the ultimate test of their own manhood is how then act and react when confronted with foes that threaten them with real or subjective emasculation.

The essence of torture and sexual abuse of prisoners is connected to the rigidity of social constructions of masculinity and the normalization of violence as part of manhood. In the process of pursuing sexual self-affirmation, coercive methods for cruel transgressions were developed at such locals as Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay. For example, violated Iraqi detainees had to be documented with photos as proof who was "the best men". Since sexual domination usually targets women, the detainees had to be converted to female impostors or homosexuals thereby making their torture legitimate. In this context, Barry could have been a remarkable interrogator, the all masculine figure, and the model of the sexual avenger.

Ambiguous (Hetero) Sexuality

Barry's assertion of his own heterosexuality appears as show. On many occasion, his behavior indicates a dark side, with references to sexual practices and lewd descriptions. Early in the film,

as Waj was frogging him for swallowing the car key, he made a startling threatening statement referencing bestiality to deter Waj. As if improvising a new form of sexual torture, Barry tells Waj, if caught "[t]hey'll pump you full of Viagra, make you fuck a dog." He makes the new recruit Hassan do the "bean thing" for his initiation. Such sadist practices serve no other purpose but the pleasure of an exhibitionist torturer. When put in his place by Omar, Barry calls him "gay." Like prison guards and interrogators, Barry adopts that the mindset that sexual degradation is the ultimate form of domination.

Conclusion

By positioning the white western boy Barry as the most radicalized character in *Four Lions*, Morris turns the high beams on the psychological and cultural links to political violence, arrogance, racism, patriarchy, and other pressures faced by men in Western culture. The scripts of masculinity have been linked to fear and violence, but rarely have been connected to radicalism and terrorism. Barry's character lacks attributes that make a man a man: Barry has no woman, no immediate family (except for an uncle in Folkestone), no friends, no job, no responsibilities, no authority, and no possessions of any value to his name. Judging by the decaying Citroen BX he drives and repairs himself, Barry is certainly the product of poverty or as David Sarvan would say a "white negro". Struggling with the obsoleteness of his racial currency, Barry has no attributes of social status in a highly commercialized and materialistic consumer culture where masculinity is confirmed with ownership, brand (car), and size (house/property). Marginalized and isolated, he feels controlled, threatened by the system, and haunted by police surveillance. While confirming his fear and paranoia, this condition also indicates a much deeper sense of insecurity and unhappiness, the stress of discipline, and the weight of expectations that Western men may not be able to handle. Unable to embrace the ideal archetypal image of the Western male and perform it, Barry is the kind of individual who finds in any form of radicalism a purpose, where he exchanges the state of emasculation for conversion.

 Could these be the same conditions that made the British Nicky Reilly, the German Fritz Martin Gelowicz, and the American John Walker Lindh, or many others, invest in a jihadist mindset in order to give meaning to their existence? Is it possible that they found in conversion a sense of relief from the pressure of Western masculinity only to be caught in a very similar system that is

as radical? Or were they already damaged beyond redemption? Answers certainly require much more study and criticism of the hegemony of masculinity as a powerful and dangerous source of fear and radicalism. Barry's character is a start for raising the questions.

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Writers Details: Imed Labidi teaches at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, USA

Contact Details: labi0009@umn.edu