

Today's TV by JANE SIMON

We love telly



PICK OF THE DAY



▲ **LOVE HURTS**
Gemma and Nick

The long road back

THE STREET
BBC1, 9pm

JONAS Armstrong promised he'd do something different after getting killed off in Robin Hood and this is certainly that.

In our third visit to *The Street*, he stars as a Territorial Army soldier who returns home from Afghanistan horribly disfigured after being blown up by a suicide bomb attack.

It's a tragically topical storyline, because it feels like every morning this month we've woken up to an identical news report: "Another British soldier has been killed in Afghanistan. He died in an explosion in Helmand Province. His family have been informed."

Dramatically though, this is a really tough call. Nick comes home full of anger and self-pity and how on earth could he possibly feel otherwise?

His family, initially relieved to have him home alive, don't know what to say. His fiancée Gemma (Emily Beecham) does her best, but she can do no right. Is she only sticking by him, he wonders, because she'd look heartless if she left him now?

For a story like this, there's nowhere to go but down.

For Nick - and for the real soldiers out there who don't enjoy the luxury of taking their wounds off each night in make-up - this is a nightmare there's no waking up from.

And although it ends on a hard-won note of optimism, so that we don't all switch off wanting to stick our heads in the oven, it's sad to say it is perhaps the only bit of this excellently-acted drama which doesn't quite ring true.

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WE LOVE DOCUMENTARY



▲ **INVESTIGATION:** Allan Little

PANORAMA: THE TRAUMA INDUSTRY BBC1 8.30pm

YOU don't have to go to war to be diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

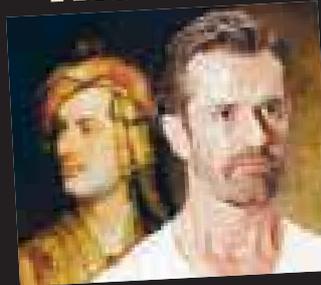
It's a condition that's almost impossible to disprove – even easier to fake than lower back pain. And the term has been watered down so much, some of the victims you hear about seem to be suffering from nothing more serious than Minor Inconvenience and Trying It On Disorder.

In a well-argued report, Allan Little picks the scab off the billion-pound personal injury industry (as advertised by Esther Rantzen and Billy Murray) to find out whether suing for PTSD will actually help you get better, or just help you – and your legal team – get richer.

Little is a war reporter who's seen action in Baghdad and Bosnia and reckons he suffered from PTSD himself after the cameraman he worked with was killed.

But it's a condition that's now open to all-comers – like the nurse he meets here who received compensation for PTSD after a relatively minor traffic accident.

WE LOVE HISTORY



▲ **POET'S CORNER:** Rupert Everett

THE SCANDALOUS ADVENTURES OF LORD BYRON C4/C4HD 9pm

ACTOR Rupert Everett reaches previously undiscovered heights of pretentious luvvy flummery as he puts on his butchiest voice and a succession of fetching costumes to retrace the exotic steps of rakish poet Lord Byron.

Like a pig in fancy dress snuffling for truffles, Everett goes rooting enthusiastically for the sex and celebrity angle as he compares Byron and his poetic alter-ego Childe Harold to David Bowie's Ziggy Stardust, and delights in some gay porn from the Ottoman Empire.

Rupe's finest moment is at the start as he opens this film sitting naked in a bath explaining his wish to be a star like Byron – someone, he gushes, "Whose life encapsulates all the glamour of the human condition from the gutter to the gods. He must be scandalous and tragic, brilliant and tortured."

This from the man who practically had to be stretchered off *Comic Relief Does The Apprentice* ...



WE LOVE SOAPS



▲ BIRTHDAY GIRL: Libby & Darren

EMMERDALE ITVI, 7pm

"I DON'T know what they put in the water around here, but those women are nuts," Ryan complains tonight about the way Lily, Lisa and Betty are leering after him.

"I think it's called character," says his mum. Well, something with an H, an R and a T in it anyway.

But it's the fellas you want to keep an eye on as Eddy and "Tank" Turner live out their Easy Rider fantasies and Rodney shares a cosy dinner with ex-wife Diane. Could it be that Faye isn't the only one who'd like to turn back time?

CORONATION STREET ITVI, 7.30pm and 8.30pm

THE casual observer would be hard-pressed to spot any similarities between cranky kitchen fitter Joe McIntyre and the late King of Pop, Michael Jackson. But Joe's addiction to painkillers has suddenly taken on a whole new topicality.

And when his latest stash of pills goes missing, Joe finds himself in another acutely painful position - at the mercy of David Platt.

Today is also Chesney's 15th birthday - not that anyone's taking much notice. So that means Chesney's official descent into moody teenage tearaway status starts here - brilliant!

EASTENDERS BBC1, 8pm

THERE'S another birthday in EastEnders tonight, where Libby turns 18. Traditionally this should be a day for celebration, unless you live in Walford where cards arrive on your doorstep to cause you nothing but grief.

This one's from Libby's dad, Owen, the one who tried to kill her - but isn't he supposed to be in prison? A surprise visitor tonight should clear up that little mystery.



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