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Everywhere You Look

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EVERYWHERE YOU LOOK

by

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B.A., State University of New York at Albany

A Thesis

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Master of Fine Arts Degree

Department of Theater
in the Graduate School
Southern Illinois University Carbondale
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THESIS APPROVAL

EVERYWHERE YOU LOOK

By

Jeff Nichols

A Thesis Submitted in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of
Master of Fine Arts
in the field of Theater

Approved by:

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Graduate School
Southern Illinois University Carbondale
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AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Jeff Nichols, for the Master of Fine Arts degree in Playwriting, presented on April 7, 2011, at Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

TITLE: EVERYWHERE YOU LOOK

MAJOR PROFESSOR: Dr. David Rush

Everywhere You Look documents the genesis, production process, performance history, and rewrites of a script informed by a concern for social justice issues in contemporary America. In the quest to generate believable, naturalistic dialogue and behavior informed by important questions of religious conviction, civil liberties, and the viability of violence as a political solution, the script is cast as social realism. After a discussion of the critical context in which the play exists, the lessons and pitfalls of collaboration in the production process are charted. A rewritten script is generated from a process of performance, talk-backs sessions, and committee recommendations. The thesis document includes Appendices containing pre-production and post-production versions of the script, as well as images from the program and color photos of the original thesis production.

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CHAPTER 1

SHAPING THE PLAY

The title of *Everywhere You Look* refers to the paranoia of a society beset by fear. Depending on one's perspective and agenda, either terrorists or agents of the government seem to be everywhere. The story takes place in America's near future, after a terrorist dirty bomb has destroyed Detroit. In response, the United States government clamps down on civil liberties and aggressively pursues a policy of incarceration and deportation of certain ethnic and religious groups. A hard-line President enjoys the support of much of the population, while dissidents speak out at their own risk.

The story centers around James Halligan, the founder of an organization called My Brother's Keeper, who is inspired by his Christian faith to help those he feels are being persecuted by the government. James' involvement with the group has resulted in estrangement from his wife (Jean) and adopted African son (Ford), but he continues to pursue his cause with a fanatical fervor. Secretly, he is hiding a friend of his, a Muslim imam named Hassan Houkman, in Ford's former bedroom. Hassan has been accused of terrorist affiliations, but James knows he is innocent and trusts him completely until Ford, a police detective in search of Hassan, assures him that the man is not who he appears to be.

Everywhere You Look is essentially an examination of the disintegration of a relationship when placed under the glare of suspicion and mistrust. As the social fabric of America is rent by a political climate of

repression, so too does the relationship between James and Hassan begin to crumble under the weight of larger forces. Events that are out of their control have already destroyed the father-son dynamic between James and Ford, who dwell in ideological opposition to each other, and now these events threaten the bond between James and Hassan, who have always bridged the cultural and religious gap between them. James must decide who he trusts and why, and he ultimately faces a decision that leads to fatal consequences.

I. Complete Scene Breakdown of Original Draft

This section summarizes the events of the play in the pre-production draft in a scene-by-scene breakdown. The play's full text is placed at the end of the written thesis, in Appendix A. The rewritten, post-production text, then follows (Appendix B).

Act I

Scene 1: FORD is at confession, addressing the unseen Father Morrison. He questions his own motives, and asks the priest to pray for him. Lights shift as we flash back to the events preceding FORD'S confession: police sirens, search lights, police dragging suspects, chaotic mood. News reporter VOICEOVER reveals a memorial service for the people of Detroit, and the policy of President Fitzsimmon.

Scene 2: An upstairs room in JAMES' house, FORD's old bedroom, now HASSAN'S room. Single bed, chair and desk, table, radio, humidifier, no window, picture taped to mirror. Food and a knife are brought in on a tray. JAMES and HASSAN discuss the political and social situation. It is revealed that JAMES is

hiding HASSAN, who faces legal charges, and that the two men are close friends. FORD'S phrase "hot as the Sahara in summer" is mentioned. HASSAN wants to get out of the country, but JAMES thinks it is too dangerous. In response to death threats, JAMES tries to give HASSAN a gun, which he refuses. The gun gets taped to the underside of the table.

Scene 3: JAMES is outside My Brother's Keeper office. TWO MEN accost him, threatening violence. They accuse him of helping terrorists. FORD and ROBERTS scare the men off. ROBERTS tells JAMES the police have been following him, and he needs to come to the station for questioning. JAMES refuses, and ROBERTS gets violent, but FORD tells him to wait in the car. FORD is revealed as JAMES' adopted African son, and we hear about his relationship with FATHER MORRISON. They argue about their differing political views, and FORD asks where HASSAN is. JAMES pleads ignorance, but agrees to come to the station for questioning.

Scene 4: A police interrogation room. A table and two chairs. ROBERTS and FORD tell JAMES that HASSAN is actually Malik Allen, and part of a sleeper cell that plans another attack within five days. JAMES is not convinced and reminds them of past intelligence failures. FORD leaves ROBERTS to finish the interrogation. ROBERTS mentions he has talked to JEAN, and punches JAMES in the face. JAMES does not admit he knows where HASSAN is.

Scene 5: HASSAN'S room. JAMES arrives, bruised and bloodied. HASSAN treats him with bandages, and reiterates his desire to leave. JAMES lies about the beating, telling HASSAN muggers did it. They argue. JAMES

questions HASSAN about a photograph, and HASSAN reveals the name of his former friend Abdul, and his past as a student radical who used false names when arrested. Just as JAMES is about to ask about the name Malik Allen, the doorbell rings. They fear this could be a "ringer" (the police).

Scene 6: Downstairs from the bedroom, the living room. There is a phone on an end table next to a lamp, a TV, an exit to a kitchen (off-stage), and the stairs to the bedroom. JEAN enters through the front door. As they argue, we learn about their past with each other and FORD. JEAN reveals FORD'S debt from his gambling addiction, and shows JAMES a newspaper offering a reward for information on terror suspects. She asks JAMES to look into My Brother's Keeper to find people who could be turned in for the reward money, in order to help FORD. JAMES defends his organization and refuses.

Scene 7: JAMES' office at My Brother's Keeper. A desk, chair, phone, bookshelves, ashtray. JAMES is on the phone, discussing details of a case that My Brother's Keeper is handling. FORD enters and asks for information on Malik Allen. We learn about their personal animosity stemming from FORD'S time in a military boarding school while JAMES and JEAN were in India. FORD almost assaults JAMES, and threatens to close down the organization. JAMES reveals he knows about the gambling debt, and there is a moment where the two men almost connect on a father-son level. FORD exits without any new information.

Scene 8: JAMES' living room. JAMES arrives and confronts HASSAN, who is downstairs for the first time. HASSAN is going stir crazy, and JAMES is afraid HASSAN will be heard by the neighbors. The TV is turned up and down to

cover their voices, while HASSAN merely wants to watch. HASSAN asks why JAMES has helped him, then apologizes and goes upstairs. JAMES notices the phone has apparently been moved. He goes upstairs.

Scene 9: HASSAN'S room. There is a tray of fruit and cheese and a knife. JAMES enters and asks HASSAN if he used the phone. HASSAN repeatedly denies it, but reveals that he knows JAMES lied about being beaten by the police. JAMES accuses HASSAN of being Malik Allen, but HASSAN explains that Malik is dead and he merely used his I.D. JAMES grabs the knife to cut the fruit as HASSAN reaches for it. JAMES reveals his doubts about their friendship and how well they know each other. HASSAN exits to the stairs and returns with a birthday cake with lit candles. He embraces JAMES and tells him he trusts him.

ACT II

Scene 1: The confessional booth. JAMES tells the unseen Father Morrison about the situation with HASSAN, and his growing mistrust. HASSAN descends to the living room and makes a phone call, arranging to meet someone tonight in complete secrecy.

Scene 2: Outside My Brother's Keeper office. JAMES is confronted by FIRST MAN, who says he just wants to dialogue, as JAMES spoke about on the radio. He reveals that he is from Detroit, and starts to beat JAMES when JAMES tries to leave. FIRST MAN has JAMES on the ground with a knife to his throat when JAMES hits him with a beer bottle and beats him to death.

Scene 3: HASSAN'S room. FORD is posing as a human smuggler named

Terrell who will get HASSAN out of the country for \$100,000, half up front. He is the one HASSAN called on the phone, using a number from a friend. HASSAN gives him the money, but FORD tries to get him to reveal names and numbers of his associates before he arrests HASSAN. FORD continually coughs due to his allergies, the humidity, and the humidifier being broken. He uses the phrase “hot as the Sahara in summer,” unknowingly revealing himself to HASSAN as the detective FORD. HASSAN offers to give JAMES’ name as collateral, but FORD refuses this and grows impatient. He puts a gun to HASSAN’s head and threatens to kill him if he does not reveal what the “terrorists” have planned. HASSAN agrees out of fear, but asks FORD to go to the desk to get his passport, giving him the opportunity to use the gun under the table if he wants to. HASSAN refuses to use the gun, and calls out FORD as a violent man. JAMES enters as FORD is handcuffing HASSAN. JAMES realizes HASSAN refused to use the gun and must not be a terrorist, but FORD insists that he will arrest both of them. JAMES pulls the gun from under the table to show FORD that HASSAN could’ve killed him. FORD pulls his gun and orders JAMES to drop his on the count of three or else be killed, but JAMES tells FORD to drop his instead. HASSAN lunges at FORD to disrupt his presumed shot, but is hit and killed by JAMES’ shot. FORD is enraged by JAMES’ attempt on his life and kills JAMES.

Scene 4: FORD is alone in the bedroom, one week later. JEAN enters and tries to comfort him, revealing her ignorance of the true events of the shooting. FORD rejects her, mocking her with Bible verses. JEAN reveals FORD has inherited the house. FORD grows more unbalanced, hinting at what really

happened, and JEAN becomes horrified at her growing realization. She beats on FORD, then exits. FORD remembers his old hiding place under the floorboards, and pries them up to reveal a box full of childhood mementos. As FORD examines them, JAMES, as a memory, sits next to him and delivers a monologue about their happy days together. JAMES' last line suddenly recalls their recent conflict, jerking FORD out of his childhood memory.

End of Play.

II. Origins

The play has its origin in several different sources. I have always had a strong interest in social justice issues, especially those involving racism and the role of minorities within a dominant cultural orthodoxy. Perhaps growing up in a nearly all-white, Christian environment fueled my natural curiosity for anything different from my own experience. My studies in history while an undergraduate, combined with involvement in anti-apartheid and anti-war groups, pushed my mind away from pop culture and entertainment options. Later I worked for Greenpeace and started writing spoken-word pieces that had a strong element of social critique, as did a solo show (Ask the Question) I wrote and performed. In fact, I envisioned myself as an artist with something worth saying because my material would touch on the most relevant topics, of concern to large groups of people, facing society in contemporary times.

I conceived of a modern day Anne Frank scenario, with Muslims substituting for Jews in a hostile America. I read Frances Goodrich's play *The Diary of Anne Frank* during the writing of the first draft. It is interesting to note

Arthur Miller's criticism of this play:

What was necessary in this play to break hold of reassurance upon the audience, and to make it match the truth of life, was that we should see the bestiality in our own hearts . . . namely our own sadism, our own ability to obey orders from above, our own fear of standing firm on humane principle against the obscene power of the mass organization (qtd. in Mason 147-148).

The Diary of Anne Frank only deals with the hidden Jews and their protector, and does not represent their persecutors on stage. I did not want to fall into the same trap, and deemed it necessary to give multiple perspectives. Every character, including Ford, Roberts, and even First Man, would have their say.

III. Genre

From a personal perspective as an artist, I have a desire to be “cutting edge” or “experimental,” and yet these are largely ego-driven concerns; a desire to be at the forefront of the art form. Ultimately, however, I felt the content in my play would be best served by the use of realism. Although this is considered traditional and conservative, even reactionary by someone like Augusto Boal, who considers it to be an expression of an ancient hierarchical system that reinforces the very power structure the play often criticizes, I believe it serves my purposes.

During my career as a musician, I have often played music that was experimental, but lacked craft and technical proficiency. In this case, for such an important project, it seemed necessary to demonstrate mastery of a form, realism, and let this form serve the content of the play, especially considering my relative inexperience at playwriting. This included the challenge

of trying to create a realistic play that needed multiple settings. The play would not be naturalistic in terms of set, but instead possess a psychological realism based in character need, motivation, and backstory. Being a contemporary story written in contemporary times, I would use the traditional components of realism as a template, but not feel bound to mimic exactly what had been already done, or was considered “proper” form.

Realism as a movement has its roots in social sciences such as the Positivism of August Comte, Marxism, and Darwinism. A new concern with the plight of the working class arose in the mid-1800s, leading to a dramatic form that was essentially reformist in nature, in the sense that its aesthetic principles were wed to social issues. The social human condition was at the center of the drama (Trumbull). Henrik Ibsen’s *A Doll House* is a good example of the use of Realism to advance a theme of social reform, while making use of the genre’s psychological subtext. With Ibsen:

exposition in the plays was motivated, there were causally related scenes, inner psychological motivation was emphasized, the environment had an influence on characters’ personalities, and all the things characters did and all things the characters used revealed their socio-economic milieu (Trumbull).

The emphasis on inner psychological motivation is a key element in my play, because characters act out of principle and moral belief systems. It was imperative for the success of the play that the characters’ actions and thought processes be believable to an audience who inhabit the same type of contemporary America, with similar concerns and values.

IV. Form

Everywhere You Look is a linear play structured, for the most part, in the traditional format modeled on Gustav Freytag's pyramid. It starts with exposition of given circumstances, reveals the nature of the relationships in question, and introduces an inciting incident (Ford asks James to reveal Hassan's whereabouts). The action rises as a series of events put strain on the key relationships between James and Hassan and James and Ford. Eventually, all three men come together in a climax in which both recognition and reversal are employed. This is the shooting scene (Act II, Scene 3).

Although not specifically written as a tragedy in the classic sense, there are tragic elements in the story. Whether the audience most identifies with Hassan, Ford, or James, it ends badly for each of them. James is the most obvious candidate for a protagonist, with Ford the antagonist, and James fails in his goal. Aristotle gives the highest respect to tragedies that make use of both recognition and reversal, preferably at the same moment. The recognition provides a window of awareness for the protagonist, so that the reversal in fortune is not merely random or inexplicable, but functions as an event that can be understood in the context of prevailing values and mores. The audience, following the unfolding narrative through the protagonist's eyes, experiences this awareness simultaneously. Moved to either pity or terror in the classic definition, the audience presumably experiences a purgation of emotions. In my play, the contemporary audience may well experience a sense of the bitterly ironic, especially in the scene with Ford and Jean.

For Hassan, the realization comes when he convinces Ford to turn his back and go to the desk, allowing Hassan a clear opportunity to take the hidden gun and shoot Ford. At this point he realizes his commitment to non-violence is absolute when he decides not to kill Ford. Reversal follows soon after when he himself is killed. James' realization comes when Ford tells him that Hassan sat "right across from me and admitted" to being a terrorist, after also revealing that Hassan knew he was a police detective. James realizes that if Hassan knew who Ford was and had not used the hidden gun, he could not possibly be a terrorist. This leads to his choice to use the gun himself, ending in a tragic reversal in which both Hassan and he are killed.

Rather than simply following the pattern of falling action and a resolution, I introduce another climax for Jean that involves a recognition of Ford's guilt and a reversal in her relationship with him, from loving support to horror and repulsion. By continuing the action after the death of the protagonist, I trusted the audience to switch their focus to Ford, which I believed was readily achievable due to their familiarity with multi-narrative film and drama, to say nothing of more modern devices such as the anti-hero or the deconstructed narrative. This was a deliberate deviation from form, which I did partly to find an element of surprise. I wanted another climax following the first, an emotional climax, something the audience would not be expecting.

Ford himself comes to the realization of Hassan's innocence off-stage, in the time between the shooting and his confrontation with his mother. However, the audience has already seen his mea culpa in the play's very first

scene, a church confession that chronologically comes after the play's events, but serves to frame them as a flashback. The play ends with another flashback device: Ford's memory of the Halligan family's happy times, when he was young and James was his loving father.

V. Research

To achieve this realism, I did a certain amount of research as part of the development process. Quick internet searches gave me a list of Muslim names, for example, and the proper spelling of the greeting “As sala’am alaikum, walaikum as sala’am,” and “Mujahideen.” I read about core beliefs, and variations on them, on Muslim web-sites designed to explain the faith to non-Muslims. Working on the play was sufficient inspiration to revisit books I had previously read that dealt with Muslim integration into American society. One such book was *American Islam: The Struggle for the Soul of a Religion*, by Paul Barrett. Another was *Infidel*, by Ayaan Hirsi Ali. Other sources included the DVDs *Nothing but the Truth* (fictional version of the Valerie Plame incident), *Obsession: Radical Islam’s War Against the West* (a documentary), and *The International* (a complex tale of intrigue).

Barrett’s book in particular gave me enough knowledge about the breadth and scope of how Islam is interpreted in modern-day America to feel confident in making decisions about how characters might act and think in a believable way. I didn’t want to make ill-informed assumptions because I intended to deal with both mainstream life, extremism, and perception of both by non-Muslims. Barrett’s book gives in-depth portraits of seven different people,

including a politically influential newspaper publisher in Dearborn, Michigan. This was how I learned about Dearborn's status as a center for Muslim life in America. It is why I decided to set the nuclear catastrophe in Detroit, since its proximity to Dearborn might result in a nearby Mujahideen cell.

VI. Development

The script was initiated in the Theater 411B class in May of 2009, and post-class development consisted of meeting with my committee chair, Dr. David Rush, over the summer and acting on his suggestions for rewrites. Structurally, I pushed the scenes in which James discovers Hassan downstairs and then questions him about the phone from Act II to Act I, in order to raise questions about Hassan's integrity and honesty earlier, thus giving the audience a question to ponder. These scenes remain in Act I in the final draft.

In terms of plot, the play developed with minor adjustments designed to make the present scenario more urgent, such as making a potential terrorist attack imminent within five days (added to the interrogation scene), or having James and Hassan hear voices outside the window, giving Hassan the impetus to want to leave rather than stay where he is. Reading Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* helped to develop the scene where James relentlessly questions Hassan about the phone (Act I, Scene 9), because the same refusal to give in to badgering is present as Hathorne pressures John Proctor to sign the document admitting his guilt. The biggest change, however, involved character, specifically adding Ford as a primary antagonist to James rather than the side issue of a son with a gambling problem. In the original script, Ford was not a police detective

and only appeared in one scene.

The more I developed Ford, the more fundamental to every aspect of the plot he became. Ford was an adopted son, brought from Sudan, a Muslim country, when he was a baby. It was ironic that he identified so strongly as an American and was involved in the effort to investigate foreigners based in part on their race or religion. This could give the actor playing him strong subtext to work with. He was black and James was white, an added layer of tension between them. James cares for, shelters, and protects Hassan, in effect turning him into yet another "adopted son," lending added weight to the decision James must make about which son to ultimately believe. This is further underscored by the fact that Hassan is living in Ford's old bedroom, where the final climactic scene will take place- a scene which hinges upon Ford's old childhood weakness, the asthma that afflicts him in that very room.

Most importantly, the development of Ford provided a figure who was actively driving the action (the Agent of Action), searching for Hassan and putting pressure on James (Act I, Scenes 3,4, and 7), a figure whose relationship with his father was deep, complicated, and important. Ford's actions also inspire Hassan's mechanizations to get out the country, and these parallel actions eventually come together in the shooting scene. It is Ford's undercover infiltration of the underworld that leads Hassan to call him, thinking Ford is a drug dealer named Terrell. Ford's gambling addiction leads Jean to seek out James, imploring him to help their son by handing over a suspect to the authorities for the reward money.

VII. Use of Violence

A key element in *Everywhere You Look* involves the deliberate use of violence as a tactic of breaking through the audience's presumed complacency as spectators. Roberts' aggressiveness when he tells James to get in the car, punching him during the interrogation, the grabbing of James by Ford at My Brother's Keeper, the violence perpetrated on James by First and Second Man (including the knife scene, where James turns the tables and kills First Man), and the final gunfight are all informed by Antonin Artaud. What my play lacks in the iconic gestures, spectacle, and other non-realistic theatrical forms that Artaud advocated, it seeks to reclaim, in an appeal to the most visceral reactions, through use of a shocking violence. "I propose then a theater in which violent physical images crush and hypnotize the sensibility of the spectator seized by the theater as by a whirlwind of higher forces" (Artaud 82-83). This is necessary as part of my strategy to appeal to the spectator with as much intensity as possible, and to work on a level other than the intellectual.

Act II, Scene 2, is inspired by the violence in Howard Korder's *Search and Destroy*, where the turning point in protagonist Martin Mirkheim comes when he is pushed to the brink by Kim, who is trying to kill him. Martin's fear and weakness predominate until he absolutely has no choice but to respond to Kim's violence with his own. It is the most powerful moment in the play, and I decided to use it in mine.

In my scene, the First Man returns and accosts James again. The point of this scene was to push James into an even more violent state of mind

and put him in a position where his repressed rage, which he speaks of in Act I, Scene 1, will come "bursting out and explode." When pushed to the point of death James not only finds the capacity for violence within himself, he goes past self-defense and hits the man over and over until he is dead. This is the state of mind that James is in when he returns home and finds Ford arresting Hassan. The addition of the scene is intended to make it more plausible that James would shoot Ford, as well as provide a riveting climax in James' transformation from man of peace to man capable of violence. He has crossed over from his identification with Hassan, and the ideal of non-violence, to an ironic identification with Ford, where violence can be justified.

VIII. Historical and Critical Context for Objectives

It is important to place my play, and the act of playwriting itself, into context. One could easily label *Everywhere You Look* a political play, with roots stretching at least to the Great Depression-era dramas of Clifford Odets and the plays of Arthur Miller produced in the following decades. But what forms do political or social dramas take, are there variations on the form, and what is the distinction between political and social drama?

In *Stone Tower: The Political Theater of Arthur Miller*, Jeffrey Mason makes interesting distinctions between political theater that treats politics merely as subject matter and the contrasting goal of seeking to affect change through a pointed engagement with the issues involved. Mason, citing David Savran, casts Miller's protagonists as examples of classic liberalism in that they embody the notion of the "sovereign individual as the fundamental social unit"

(Mason 5). The individual exists as part of a network of larger social forces, such as government, the church, social or cultural norms embraced by neighborhoods and communities, and even familial expectations. Clearly we can see the struggle of the individual against these forces in plays and novels such as *The Crucible*, *Death of a Salesman*, and *Focus*. Miller's themes deal with the abuse of power that seem to inevitably arise from institutionalized power systems, whether political or economic.

Everywhere You Look also focuses on the specific trials of individuals to cast light on a broader social dilemma. How do individual rights- to privacy, due process under the law, protection from physical abuse- square with a macro-society that values security and safety above all else? Thematically, I seek to explore this dichotomy, with James the advocate for the individual, like a liberal Miller protagonist, and Ford the representative of the State. However, it was crucial for me to portray Ford as an individual as well, with a well-reasoned rationale for his decision to join the police and pursue suspects by any means he deems necessary- for the greater good. Intrinsic to his status as a complex individual, and not a one-dimensional mouthpiece for a "point of view," are Ford's human failings, as well as membership in a smaller familial unit, one that involves both Jean and James. By making Ford a major character who is intelligent and complex, I would avoid the implications of Miller's criticism of *The Diary of Anne Frank*.

I addressed these issues by integrating the character's beliefs into their conversations and actions. James has founded an organization whose very

purpose is to protect individual liberties from governmental abuse. He expounds on his philosophy when speaking to Hassan (Act I, Scene 2). His phone monologue at *My Brother's Keeper* (Act I, Scene 7) indicates in detail the everyday work in which he engages on behalf of the victims of government excess. James always takes the side of the wronged individual: the Somali kid who was lynched but cleared of all charges (Act I, Scene 4), his refusal to consider Jean's plea to investigate *My Brother's Keeper* for terrorists (Act I, Scene 6), and of course his decision to shelter Hassan from the authorities. James is the very ideal of the liberal hero who sacrifices his own comfort and safety for the good of others, no matter what the cost. His protection of individual rights, however, is itself a political act on behalf of groups larger than himself; ultimately, all of society. "*My Brother's Keeper* is bigger than either one of us" he tells Hassan (Act One, Scene 5).

To avoid presenting James as the "hero," one with whom the audience should clearly side, I introduced flaws in behavior and character. These flaws made him imperfect, more human, and thus more real. At the same time, his actions are reasonable and clearly motivated. James keeps smoking despite his attempts to quit, and lies about it (Act One, Scene 7). He lies to Hassan about who beat him (Act One, Scene 5), lies about the whereabouts of Hassan to Ford and Roberts, and tries to get Hassan to accept a gun for protection (Act One, Scene 2), despite Hassan's commitment to non-violence. James himself admits to an irrational rage that boils inside of him, "just waiting to come up and explode" (Act One, Scene 2). We see this violence manifest when he kills First

Man, and then when he shoots first at Ford. James' zealous commitment to My Brother's Keeper, and Hassan, puts him in an almost Messianic light. Roberts, quoting Jean, accuses him of being "so sure you're right, because God is on your side" (Act I, Scene 4).

Hassan represented a big challenge. I knew he was innocent, and the audience is introduced to him right away, in a scene that demonstrates his easy-going relationship with James, a relationship that spans years and involves humor, family, and a shared love of God and philosophy (Act One, Scene 2). It was clear that James trusted him completely, and thus the audience identifies him as trustworthy. It was necessary to plant seeds of doubt in their minds, so that their suspicion grew along with James', or else an element of suspense (is he guilty?) would be lost. This was a delicate balancing act. Hassan always had an explanation for questions about his past, but as this past is revealed it becomes clear that he is capable of deception (lying to authorities, using Malik's I.D.) when it serves his needs (Act One, Scene 7). Hassan's righteousness and commitment to non-violence, while commendable, occasionally rise to the same level of sanctimoniousness that James manifests (Act Two, Scene 3). Having Hassan sneak downstairs to call someone (Act II, Scene 1), directly after James expresses his doubts to Father Morrison, was my strongest use of a device to suggest Hassan may be hiding something. He had previously denied using the phone (Act One, Scene 9) but now it seemed that might be a lie.

Ford is presented not as a heartless bully, but a multi-faceted human being. Although he works for the State, he is not the State. He's read the

Koran and studied Islamic history (Act I, Scene 3), he's the youngest cop to make detective in the last twenty-five years (Act I, Scene 4), he has photos (Act I, Scene 4) and a phone call intercepted by the Feds (Act I, Scene 7) as evidence that Hassan may be Malik Allen, and dangerous. Most of all, he is desperately trying to avoid another attack like the one that destroyed Detroit, an attack he feels is possible within five days (Act I, Scene 4). We hear from Jean about Ford's relationship with James as a child (Act I, Scene 6), and she clearly believes James is to blame for their estrangement when she tells him to "think about what you've done to this family" (Act I, Scene 6). Ford's human failings (primarily the gambling addiction) are meant not to demonize him, but to allow the audience to sympathize with him. When James tells Ford he knows he's been gambling again, it reveals Ford's weakness, and forces him to be vulnerable (Act I, Scene 7). When Ford explains he's not in control (a big admission for a police detective), Ford and James move closer to a moment of true intimacy and understanding than at any other moment in the play.

The question that arises is: to what extent does the author advance a particular argument or point of view from the mere act of writing the play, or perhaps more importantly, should he be attempting to do so at all? On one side of the argument stand committed social activists such as Bertolt Brecht and Augusto Boal, who see social change as the artist's responsibility. Central to their Marxist interpretation of art is the interrelatedness of all human life, in which individual liberty is de-emphasized in favor of social needs. Indeed, the individual benefits most from his/her participation in communal acts (of which theatre is

certainly one), and draws his/her identity from the larger networks encompassing him/her.

For Boal, politics is the ultimate art encompassing all human activity, and “Those who try to separate theater from politics try to lead us into error- and this is a political action” (x). He considers theater itself a weapon in a fight against inequality and injustice, a notion easily apparent in the activist theater of the Nineteen-Sixties and Seventies America, with ensembles such as the Living Theatre, Group Theatre, and San Francisco Mime Troupe committed to social change.

I am not convinced of the efficiency of theater as a weapon of change, nor am I sufficiently convinced of the superiority of my own wisdom and foresight in trumping the many diverse opinions and punditry that seek to stamp their own views on the culture at large. What I am convinced of is the infinite complexity of the social organism spawned by human life, and its resistance to unified theories that seek to explain and account for this complexity, whether through capitalism, socialism, the free-market, liberalism, or other paradigms. Artistic manifestoes, as well, are choices of one system over another, possessed more of a particular subjectivity than any degree of truth or error in relation to that which has been rejected or rebelled against.

Nevertheless the individual, ultimately, must make choices, and the playwright must defend his. My choice is a middle way, perhaps a Taoist balancing act where the center finds stillness between extremes. To claim that *Everywhere You Look* has no inherent perspective, authorial bias, or sympathies

would be disingenuous. Yet a balancing of perspectives, as advocated by various characters, especially Ford, James, and Hassan, is central to my intent. To trust the audience, rather than preach to them, is essentially a democratic convention.

"The great feature of the theatre," said Peter Brook, "is that the audience can enter very deeply into contradictions." By entering one point of view deeply and then another, he adds, "you can see what you can really do in life." (qtd.in Bloom 12).

Essential to my intent is to advance points of view that are consistent with each character's belief system, and not to privilege one over the other. Each character has valid reasons for feeling what they feel, and believing what they believe, and different members of the audience may identify completely, partly, or not at all with various characters. Most importantly, however, they will be exposed to the well-reasoned arguments of each, and be forced to contend with their own assumptions and biases. They will enter different points of view and be forced to contend with contradictions, including the contradictions and even hypocrisies present in Ford, James, and Hassan.

Rather than try to convince the audience of a particular point, whether "political" or not, I seek to blend the realities of diverse opinion in a believable, authentic way, and let the audience decide where they stand. If there are warnings along the way, of the dangers of an overreaching State, or the fanaticism of religious devotees, no one can say these elements are not truly present in society. The most important goal must first be served: keep the audience emotionally and intellectually engaged, or they will not care one way or

the other. This comes from craft as well as conviction. Therefore I position *Everywhere You Look* as a social drama, in that it seeks to depict real social problems in a realistic way, but does not explicitly offer or advocate particular solutions. The play is socially conscious, and has a conscience, but is not agit-prop.

Keeping the audience “emotionally and intellectually engaged” demonstrates that I do not agree with Brecht in the need for an alienation effect, as I do not consider the intellect and emotions to be mutually exclusive concepts, nor mutually exclusive experiences to be had in the theater. Of course, my commitment to social change is less extreme than his, so perhaps I am missing something. However, marketing and public relations specialists have demonstrated that the best way to engage and “hook” a potential buyer is through the emotions as well as the intellect. These concepts are applied to campaigns to give money to relief organizations during times of natural disaster, or to entice sponsors of starving children. What would such a campaign be without images of human suffering, actual photos or footage of people crying, or ravaged by hunger and disease? Sponsors of children receive letters from the child every month with photos and a full description of his/her home life and background, with the goal of establishing an emotional bond. Statistics that appeal to the intellect only go so far, and no one heading such a campaign would rely solely on them.

Are not these campaigns the very model of taking action on social problems, as Brecht advocates? Yet he believes the audience must be disrupted

from the spell of identifying with the characters in a play, lest they experience Aristotle's purgation of emotions, rendering them powerless (or unwilling) to take action at play's end. In *Everywhere You Look*, my goal is to engage both the audience's heart and mind, with the notion that doing so with as much intensity as possible will lead to an experience worth talking about, sharing, and debating long after the show is over. This includes identification with the human trials, emotions, and suffering of the characters in their interactions with social institutions and other individuals, as well as an intellectual engagement with the complexity of the political and social realism I have carefully layered into the script. In this way the play will live in the hearts and minds of viewers and possess the possibility of encouraging a positive action on the part of the individual in relation to his/her social environment, although this potential action will be self-defined.

CHAPTER 2

COLLABORATIVE PROCESS

I. Interpreting the Script

There is a familiar aphorism stating that a play belongs to the author when he is writing it, but is no longer solely his when moving into production. A play evolving from words on a page to a fully mounted production, realized in concrete terms on the stage, only happens with the contribution of a full production team. This includes the director, a stage manager, a dramaturg, and the various designers of set, lights, costumes, and sound. Interpretation of the playwright's intent is largely out of the playwright's hands when mounting a production without him present. Problems of interpretation and miscommunication, as well as conflicts of ideas, personalities, and working methods can be particularly acute when the playwright is present. An important learning experience involved a realization that my control over the creative process was limited, and that other artists needed to feel ownership over their roles in the process. Balancing their needs with my own provided challenges and learning opportunities.

The play went into production in the Fall Semester of 2010. A design team had been selected (except for sound design) and a director. I met with the director a few days before auditions and we spoke at length about the script. She had taken notes and scribbled in the margins of her copy, and we went through the whole script to make sure we understood each other's

intentions and began to establish a working relationship.

I expressed my desire to integrate video elements into the production: news reports, scenes of chaos and arrests, clips about the war on terror, etc. I felt this would speak to a contemporary audience accustomed to receiving constant streams of information, especially news, from digital sources. I had not, however, specifically indicated these elements in the script. We discussed the problems of integrating video screens into scene design, as well as departmental limitations such as equipment and budget. The director's approach was a more actor-centered one, attuned to character development, theme, and understanding given circumstances.

I had the option of commissioning a film or digital expert to realize these elements and made one or two inquiries, but ultimately did not pursue it. The script indicated technical elements at the end of Act I, Scene 1 (the voiceover, police lights and sirens, mood of chaos and uncertainty, etc.), and I hoped the director would see this as an opportunity to create some approximation of what we had discussed. The more advanced technical elements seemed beyond the scope of this particular project, and I had to accept this.

In retrospect, I realize that if I wanted the video elements in the production I should have written them into the script and specifically indicated when and how they were to occur. If I had done this, the selection committee (and any future producing organizations) would consider these elements when deciding whether to produce the show. Presumably, if making a decision to

proceed with production, they would do it with the intention of implementing all the technical design elements. Since I developed the idea of the video elements after submitting the thesis proposal, they fell under the rubric of a possible directorial concept rather than a requirement of production.

The concept of stage directions in a play script is subject to various interpretations. No director can legally change or omit dialogue unless the play has moved into the public domain. Since stage directions often indicate blocking for actors, many directors feel this is their prerogative and not an inviolable element of the script. It is a theatre cliché that the director will often instruct actors to immediately cross-out all stage directions in the script, since the play will be blocked and staged according to the director's interpretation. This relates to the practice of publishing plays with the stage manager's notes of the original production included as if they were part of the original script. Obviously, in a premiere production like my thesis play, these notes were not yet written.

A playwright tends to see the stage directions as a deliberate indication of how the play should look and act, while directors often view them as suggestions that are open to interpretation. It depends on how vital the directions are to the action. Consider this part of my stage directions in Act II, Scene 3: "A moment while the two men stare. FORD raises his gun and shoots JAMES, killing him." Omitting the shooting in favor of letting James live or staging the scene as a knife fight would be an obvious violation of the playwright's intent. Omitting "A moment while the two men stare," however, could reasonably be interpreted as the director's prerogative. During the rehearsals for *Everywhere*

You Look, there were disagreements over this very issue. Sometimes I did not say anything, but internally felt annoyed. On two occasions I spoke to the director and we became embroiled in conflict.

The first conflict arose when I noticed the alteration of stage directions in Act II, Scene 2. In this scene, First Man returns to confront James, and his actions grow increasingly violent. There are nine different specific stage directions indicating when and how First Man assaults James, including grabbing, punching, kicking, and taking out a knife. From my perspective, I had carefully inserted these directions to act in conjunction with lines of dialogue. This meant I tied physical actions to specific character intentions and deliberately meant to escalate the scene in a predetermined way. The director, working with a guest fight director, had eliminated some of the punches and kicks. When I noticed this change in rehearsal, I insisted she follow the original stage directions to the letter, and the cuts were restored.

In retrospect, I realize that I did not handle the situation with the appropriate amount of tact and diplomacy. In fact, I did not consider at the time the issue of whether or not stage directions were inviolate parts of the script, and if this particular alteration constituted a breach of acceptable director interpretation. Several days earlier an actor had informed me that the beating of First Man by James with a beer bottle had been deemed impractical and was being replaced by a choreographed fist-fight. Although not happy with this change, I accepted the explanation that a shattering beer bottle was not possible due to budget constraints.

This leads to another interesting point about the interpretation of stage directions. The director and properties designer had interpreted the line “HE smashes it across FIRST MAN’S face” as a bottle being smashed, or shattered. I had thought of the stage direction more as the bottle smashing the face, which would not have required a special effect for the bottle, although it might have raised a problem with stage makeup for a bloody face. One single word, reasonably interpreted in two different ways, could cause a big change in staging requirements.

My main concern with the altered stage directions was that I felt it simply did not push James to a violently extreme state of mind. First Man was only punching James once and kicking him once, while James was now fighting with First Man and smashing his head against the ground. I felt the head-smashing was an acceptable alternative to the bottle, but the audience needed to see James pushed to his absolute limit by First Man’s violence, as the protagonist in *Search and Destroy* had been pushed. This scene was crucial in developing the mind-set that James brings into the climatic shooting scene with Ford and Hassan. The audience needed to see him go over the edge, finally letting the boiling rage “come up and explode” as he leaves behind the non-violent philosophy forever. In the very next scene he is willing to shoot at Ford. I meant to decisively link this willingness to the violent events of the previous scene. Also, I believed the reduction of violence made the scene easier on the sensibilities of the audience, when what I wanted was to shock and horrify them.

The next area of conflict involving stage directions arose near the

end of the rehearsal process. The show was soon to enter technical rehearsals, complete with lights, sound, and costumes. Amongst the stage directions at the end of Act I, Scene 2, are the words: "POLICE figures march down the aisles or across the stage, dragging someone along. A mood of chaos, fear, and uncertainty." I had never seen this action rehearsed, nor did I know who the director was intending to use for these police figures and their victim. Usually when names in a script are capitalized (such as POLICE), that means they are characters needing to be cast (like FORD or JAMES).

Comparing the 2010 rehearsal script with the original 2009 script used for a staged reading, I notice a discrepancy. The 2009 Cast of Characters page indicates that First and Second Man also play police at the beginning, but the rehearsal script we were using, although still containing the stage directions mentioning POLICE, did not explicitly state that First and Second Man would double as police. I am not sure why I eliminated this specification in the 2010 Cast of Characters page, since I obviously still meant for someone to play the roles of police and victim. This discrepancy, however, surely contributed to the confusion over casting. In the future, I must be sure to include all characters, however incidental, on the Cast of Characters page.

When I asked the director about it, she said it was too late to implement these actions because there were no actors cast and no costumes designed for them. She did not want to use the primary actors for fear the audience would recognize them later and be confused. As a solution, I suggested the stagehands who were present to move set pieces could be used

as the police and victim. I had seen this device used once before in an MFA thesis production. The director agreed to restore these characters, but needed a change. Since there were no police costumes designed, they would instead be muggers attacking a victim, with all three dressed in the stagehands' black outfits. This seemed consistent with a mood of "chaos, fear, and uncertainty," and a workable compromise.

In performance this transitional moment implemented some of my stage directions and discarded others. I was disappointed by the result as it was not what I had in mind. Perhaps the question hinges on whether the mood of "chaos, uncertainty, and fear" was achieved by the elements that were included, or perhaps there was a different opinion on how important this fairly brief transitional moment was in the overall scheme of the play.

I realize now that we had not discussed in enough detail how to stage the play. The director and I only met one time before auditions, and she impressed me with her familiarity with the themes and characters, as well as a willingness to question me on my intent. I did not anticipate problems. However, we did not continue with a practice of getting together and speaking to each other about the progress of the play as rehearsals continued. We spoke after or during rehearsal, usually briefly, but did not establish open lines of communication as a regular practice. In addition, I was absent for a number of rehearsals while performing as an actor in another production. I believed my absence would serve the positive role of leaving the director to work with the actors without having a playwright "looking over their shoulders." Perhaps this

was true, but it served to further distance me from the decisions being made so that when I noticed changes I objected to (as with the beating scene), they were already a fait accompli. It was a mistake to assume that our initial optimism and friendly relationship would continue without regular discussions to air our concerns, complaints, or opinions.

I believe the director is the most important person in the production process and functions as the head of the production team, since a rehearsal can proceed without the playwright in attendance, but not without the director. My director told me before rehearsals began that I was welcome to attend any and all rehearsals, or to not attend as I saw fit, which implies an agreement with my belief. Script changes are completely the purview of the playwright, but implementation of the script is the role of director and designers. Interpretation, however, seems a more nebulous concept, one where the playwright and the implementers of his vision must work toward an agreement. There seem to be differences in opinion as to what specific role and function the playwright has in the actual rehearsal process. Ideally it is a collaborative process where everyone involved serves their purpose and, without friction, create a work of art. It is rarely possible in practice to seamlessly blend all the diverse personalities and opinions without some level of conflict. Establishment of clear expectations and roles at the very beginning of the process, combined with regular check-ins, seems best.

We had mixed success in balancing our mutual expectations, defining our roles, and sticking to them. At our initial meeting, I asked the director if it would be appropriate for me to speak to the actors directly, or if I should only

address her. We agreed it would be better if I spoke to her first, but if she agreed during rehearsal I could address the actors as well. It seemed to be a matter of deciding at each individual point in the rehearsal what was appropriate. This seemed to function well for the most part, as I would only speak to the actors after asking the director permission to give rewrites. If asked, I would venture my opinion on interpretation. I occasionally asked the director if I could clarify an issue that seemed confused.

There came a point late in the rehearsal process where our method of regulating my involvement broke down. The actors were rehearsing the new scene written for Ford and Jean (Act II, Scene 4) and were having a hard time finding their characters' intentions. I asked the director if they had discussed this scene in depth, and she said they had discussed it. Since it was a new scene and somewhat challenging, I asked to have a greater discussion about the scene right away. The director agreed, but there was tension in the room. Our relationship had soured due to the friction involved in our disagreement over the stage directions. The actor playing Ford asked me a question about his character, and I gave a five-minute lecture about what was going on in Ford's head, and what the lines meant, and what this should mean to his intentions as an actor. In short, I took over the rehearsal and acted as the director for a time.

Technically I had asked permission to address the actors and received it. Yet I clearly crossed over the line between the role of the playwright and the responsibilities of the director in rehearsal. I was so caught up in the moment that I let my enthusiasm override my good sense. This was clearly a

mistake that had consequences. The tensions between the director and me were so severe after this incident that she decided to quit the production and let me assume directorial responsibilities. I apologized and managed to change her mind. She let me know that she felt disempowered as a member of the creative team and that I had made the important creative decisions. Although she took responsibility for her own actions, including the failure to realize her own clear vision for the play, I needed to reflect deeply on my own role in causing the rift.

As I think about the production process I realize that I always voiced my opinions and had a strong impact on many creative decisions. I was an equal partner with the director in deciding which actors to cast. Although the production meetings were run by the director and stage manager and served as an opportunity for the designers to show their developing ideas, I was very involved in shaping these ideas, especially in the initial meetings. To a certain extent I had every right to do this, and remembered the emphasis my mentor, Dr. Rush, placed on being actively involved and respected in the process. Nevertheless, I can see how my enthusiasm for my own detailed, highly specific ideas could be interpreted as domineering or overly controlling.

The costume designer was interested in clothing characters that suggested a colder season, but I pointed out the attic was supposed to be very hot and humid at the time of the play. I also suggested to the lighting designer that the shadow of a tree projected through Hassan's attic window would create a stage symbol of freedom (the outside) that he could observe, but ironically not access, as he stayed constantly in the safe "prison" of his room. This obviously

echoes the Anne Frank source material, with the iconic tree outside her window. The designer decided to create this effect with a gobo, a kind of metal stencil, placed over a light. The sound designer proved receptive to my suggestion of King Crimson's "Industry" as an ominous pre-show soundtrack.

We had a discussion with the set designer about the need to create a stage space for the upstairs room, where the climactic scene takes place, and yet have it be close enough to the audience so they did not feel distant from the action. This was in the context of needing to address the availability of other necessary playing spaces within an "L" shaped audience/stage relationship. I suggested, as a possibility, some mechanism whereby the stage could rotate or move forward, if it would serve the set designer's needs. He integrated this suggestion into the design, and the entire platform depicting Hassan's attic room was put on wheels and designed to move forward just before Act I, Scene 4.

Expressing my opinions had both good and bad consequences. The set designer implemented my suggestion that the stage might somehow rotate or move forward, but it became obvious after it was built this was completely unnecessary and actually distracted from the performance. Perhaps he should have realized this, but perhaps it would have been better if I had not been part of the conversation to begin with, since I know nothing about set design. I mentioned that the stairs between Hassan's room and the living room had the potential to be "iconic" rather than simply functional, but the resulting design had them placed in a way that obstructed the sight lines, making an area of the stage unplayable. The director moved them to the back of the stage where

they became three unremarkable, functional steps. Did my prompting to find a major role for the stairs result in them being misplaced, and as a result end any possibility of them becoming iconic? Or was the idea simply unworkable, or not part of the set designer's vision? Either way it was his decision to make, not mine.

The problems I encountered are not absolute, but seem more a matter of degree, or finding a balance. I would not want to take back my contributions to the creative process, as many of them were appropriate and added to the final production. Truthfully, I do not know if the designers resented my suggestions regarding their areas of concern because no one except the director (eventually) ever expressed this. The dynamic operating in the production meetings seemed to be: if the playwright says he wants something, do it. It actually surprises me that virtually every suggestion I made was immediately incorporated into the production design. Was I intimidating, or overly forceful, or were my ideas simply good ones that seemed reasonable? Did the design team, all relatively inexperienced college students, feel insecure in their roles or assume that my word was law? They, like me, were still in school and part of a learning process.

The desire to have control, and to voice and defend my opinions (defeating the opposing view with my superior wit) is a weakness not limited to this particular series of events. One could say my actions and mistakes were predictable, especially given my tendency to communicate with others in a completely frank and immediate way. I appreciate these qualities in others and

assume that others appreciate clear communication and complete honesty as well, but this is not necessarily the case. Other people have their own ways of communicating, and I know my manner can seem blunt and off-putting. In future productions I must be aware of my proclivity for taking control, which is really a function of mistrust in the creative input of others. I must make sure that I keep avenues of communication open and be aware that others often find my method of communication to be intimidating.

II. Dealing with Limitations: Auditions

Auditions were held in the Mcleod Theater. All actors auditioning were being considered for my show and the other two MFA thesis shows being produced that semester: *Bananapocalypse* and *Crazy For You*. I had never really had much contact with my director before our initial meeting, so this was an opportunity to establish a good relationship. We had a very good time at the audition, laughing and joking and passing notes about the actors back and forth. I thought this augured well for our upcoming working relationship. I wanted to make the process enjoyable, and it is difficult for me to open up and be comfortable with people I do not know.

With three shows auditioning at once and a limited number of actors, casting became a process of learning how to choose from the best available options, and to make adjustments. There was a dearth of African-American males to choose from, and no older actors whatsoever, except for Aaron Clark, who is in his mid-30's. Since we were in a small university town, it was not unexpected to find nearly 100% of the auditioning actors were college

students. This presented a problem since several of our characters were much older, especially James, Jean, and Father Morrison, who at this time was still an on-stage character. Going into auditions, I hoped that community actors would make an appearance, since I knew there were quite a few experienced older actors who worked with the Jackson County Stage Company.

I had to learn to adjust my expectations of what would be possible for my thesis show. Despite repeated calls to friends seeking older actors, and some contact with these older actors, only one ended up being available. As it turned out we did not need him because at the first read-through I chose to cut the character (Father Morrison) for whom he read. As I move on in my career, I am sure there will be similar adjustments to make, whether due to budget limitations, poor audition attendance, or space limitations. The show must proceed with whatever resources are available, and the result is usually not as bad as it initially appears. At the time, I was very disappointed to have all college-aged actors cast in the roles and wondered if the play could work with them.

At the callbacks, we prepared sides for the actors and read them in various combinations. We were very impressed with Ben Ponce, who had a deep, rich, expressive voice, and an intelligent reading of the lines that suggested a precise understanding of the character's intention. Aaron Clark was an obvious choice for Detective Roberts, but he was also our oldest, most proven actor, and it would not be possible to put him in such a small role with no viable alternative for the role of James, the character with the most stage time. We read Aaron for James a great deal, and he seemed solid while our other

choice faded. There was only one real choice for Ford because Brian Nelson had seemed relatively polished at the first audition, and passable at the callback, while the other contenders were obviously complete beginners. The director saw tremendous potential in him. I was not so confident, but I often have a difficult time being optimistic. It was a struggle to stay positive because my mind often invents worse case scenarios and I had a great deal of emotional investment in this project.

There were several contenders for the role of Jean Halligan but we liked Katelyn Ratliff the most. She was cast in another show, so we went with Jane Grote, a 20 year-old playing a 50 year-old. For First Man we liked the aggressiveness of Max Ryan, although we were concerned about his size relative to Aaron. Casting the tall and muscular Luke Moats as Second Man helped alleviate that concern. As a pair they seemed like they could intimidate the rather tough-minded Aaron. Detective Roberts was still uncast. With so many actors cast in the other shows there just did not seem to be anyone we liked. We put the decision off and decided to explore other options. After a week it was time for rehearsals to start so we had to make a decision. The director chose Jim Kress, who had missed the auditions due to illness. He was not our first, second, or third choice but he was now Detective Roberts and my director said she could work with him.

III. Breakthrough Decision

The first read-through featured the entire cast, the director, the stage manager, Dr. Rush, and our dramaturg, Dr. Anne Fletcher. As the reading

progressed, an idea I had been mulling over seemed more and more feasible. One of my goals had been to find a more significant role for Father Morrison, and I was searching for ways to make him more integral to the plot. However, I had also considered cutting the role altogether if I could not justify his presence, especially considering his three confessional scenes took up considerable stage time.

If Morrison were an off-stage character, then when Ford and James addressed him they would be looking directly into the audience: not breaking the fourth wall by acknowledging them, but making it appear considerably more opaque. I instinctively felt this break from the stricter tenants of realism would enhance the play's theatrical sensibility without undermining its essential form. More importantly, by looking out into the audience while at confession, Ford and James implicitly locate Father Morrison in the audience itself, suggesting that the "confession" is being directed at them. This both implicates the audience, because of their knowledge of the sensitive details being shared, and involves them on a personal level, since they are no longer merely observing passively, but instead being addressed, albeit indirectly.

Before the reading was finished I knew I wanted to cut Morrison from the play and rewrite his scenes as monologues containing much of the same information. This would improve the play's pacing and minimize the repetition of information while retaining Father Morrison as an important off-stage character who is mentioned several other times in the script. His role as a surrogate father figure to Ford and a valued confidante for James, as well as a

shared link in their personal history, would remain. We informed our actor of the decision the next day and thanked him for his time.

I felt exhilarated to have made a bold, decisive choice about cutting Father Morrison. I have a very difficult time letting go of the work I have already done, and tend to ruminate excessively about potential options. My rewrites of the play since my initial drafts had stagnated and it felt good to move forward. Even this slight deviation from the standard convention of an audience passively observing the action through a fourth wall seemed like a harbinger of more changes to come.

IV. Rehearsal process and rewrites

At our first meeting I asked my director what she thought of the play's ending, which in this draft consisted of Ford going to confession and talking to Father Morrison, who was still an on-stage character. I felt this might be the play's weakest scene. She said she felt the play ended with the shooting and did not feel the confessional scene was necessary; in fact, the confessional scene stated overtly what would be better left unsaid. She said I should consider what final image and emotion I wanted to leave the audience with at play's end, and expressed her admiration for the stage directions that describe the shooting at the end of Act I, Scene 3. She felt this was an excellent example of a clearly defined stage picture as action, one that avoided clumsy verbal exposition of ideas.

I considered these wise words and often thought about them as I pondered rewrites, but was not convinced the play should just end with the

shooting. The audience needed to see how Ford and Jean would deal with their loss and guilt. Although my director thought the audience should be left to ponder these questions for themselves, I thought it essential that they see the effects of violence on Ford. It was also necessary for Ford's character to complete its arc: we needed to see him change. It seemed odd to end right at the climax, when a classic structure in the realist vein (following the Freytag Pyramid) calls for falling action and a denouement. I did not feel the need to follow this structure precisely but I did feel the play needed a winding down of tension and some sort of resolution, which would not have come if the play ended with the shooting. Dr. Rush also seemed to agree that the play might end with the shooting, but I needed to see how it played in the rehearsal process. I was not satisfied with the ending either, but would let it stand until I eventually came up with the right one.

The first rehearsal after the read-through was an intensive "table work" session. All the actors had to write on a chalkboard everything they knew about their character's given circumstances, then everything they did not know (the "holes"), and then fill in the gaps with a reasonable invention. This seemed like a valuable theoretical lens through which to view the play, one that is applicable to me as a writer, director, and actor. I was glad to observe this process because not only did it demonstrate what my play had and did not have, it revealed that the director was deeply involved with and in control of the material. From her comments to the actors I felt confident she had a good understanding of the play's plot, characters, and themes, and was determined to

make sure they understood as well.

Rehearsals ran from mid-September until the performance dates on November 5 and 9, 2010. This included the technical rehearsals (October 28-November 1) immediately proceeding the preview on Tuesday, November 2. I was looking forward to hearing the dialogue spoken aloud, as I suspected some of it was clumsy or unnecessary. In fact, this was most often my role in rehearsal: the actors would try a scene, the director would give notes, and I would ask her if I could give rewrites. These rewrites usually consisted of cutting lines, which allowed the dialogue to bounce back and forth in a livelier and more naturalistic way. I discovered I have a habit of letting characters express a thought and then, for emphasis, immediately repeat that thought with different phrasing. I eliminated much of this repetition. Even minor adjustments were vitally important in terms of their impact on the scene's rhythm and pacing.

In addition to questions of pacing and rhythm, I made many cuts that specifically targeted the direct explication of "ideas." The play tended to drag during certain sections where characters philosophized or opined about social and political conditions. A certain amount of this commentary was necessary to reveal the world of the play, especially in the traditional expositional section near the beginning (Act I, Scene 2), although I had already cut sections from this scene during earlier drafts.

At other times I heard the voice of the author speaking through the mouths of characters, a sure sign the realism I sought was beginning to fray. If these sections bored me during rehearsal the same would be true of an

audience. An excellent example comes from the beginning of Act I, Scene 2, as Hassan bandages James' wounds. Here is that section as written, with rehearsal cuts crossed out:

JAMES

People have always been mugged.

HASSAN

But it's much worse now. ~~The economy is bad, yes, but it's~~
~~more.~~ Violence and brutality have been sanctioned. ~~People~~
~~follow the example of their leaders.~~

JAMES

People need bread and a roof over their heads.

HASSAN

At any price? ~~No, my friend, this is where you're wrong. There~~
~~are many places in the world that have always been poor. But~~
~~people work together, to survive. The struggle brings them~~
~~closer together.~~

JAMES

~~Or it destroys them. And you get a perversion of God's will, a~~
~~Mujahideen.~~

HASSAN

I need to get out; I can't stay here any longer. It gets more
 dangerous every day –

Note that the cuts quickly move the scene to Hassan's playable action of

convincing James that he needs to leave.

On September 24th I submitted a new draft of the script to the production team. In this draft, James is still addressing Father Morrison as the play begins, although now in a long monologue full of the same exposition contained in the dialogue of the original scene. The scene between Jean and Ford (Act II Scene 4) has been added. Ford's monologue in the confessional, in this draft, is the final moment of the play rather than the first.

Dr. Rush, Dr. Fletcher, and the director were confused about the intent and viability of the Jean/Ford scene, but I knew this was only a first impression. The scene was about Ford trying to communicate a terrible secret, and consumed by guilt and self-hatred he uses a seemingly out-of-character vernacular that includes Bible quotes. As Ruth Wisse says: "What is guilt if not a desire to be punished?" (Mamet 108). There was a great deal of subtext in the scene and Ford was seeking a kind of punishment from Jean, indirectly expressed, as he refuses her forgiveness by taunting her.

I hoped this scene could work once the actors dug beneath the surface and discovered Ford's true intent and state of mind, as well as the scene's psychological architecture. The advantage of a rehearsal process with a new script was the ability to try out ideas on-stage. Writing the scene, I tried to loosen up my mind and allow my unconscious to come through. Although I wrote many quality scenes using my intellect, I have also had good results with words and images that I intuitively felt were correct, such as an irrational and surprising image in a one-act called *Drowning*. Rather than censure myself and try to make

perfect "sense" of Ford's actions, I felt an element of the irrational was consistent with his state of mind in the scene. Structurally, I felt the scene was necessary because it provided a climax for Ford's character arc: facing the consequences of his decision to shoot James and then take the money and cover it up.

The trimming of lines, which I likened to cutting dead wood, was a minor but important script adjustment. More pressing was the question of the ending, with which I was unsatisfied. Additionally, I had received decisive notes from Dr. Rush that I had insufficiently developed the role of Ford to justify ending the play with his monologue. He also felt the audience would not sympathize with Ford as a character, which made switching focus from James to Ford after the shooting problematic. My ending violated the traditional tenet of playwriting, which held that the audience follows the story through the eyes of the protagonist. How or why could I continue the narrative after the protagonist has died? As I have previously stated in Chapter 1, I believed the audience would make such a transition without a problem. However, it was clear that no one, including me, was satisfied with the ending as written.

In order to address Dr. Rush's concern, I moved Ford's monologue in the confessional, at the very end of the play, to the very beginning, replacing James' confessional scene. Although this involved no new writing and was a simple switch, it had huge implications for the play. The structure of a linear narrative in its traditional form was subverted, in effect making the whole play a flashback from Ford's monologue. I felt the play became more interesting because of this theatrical convention, much as it had gained from introducing

subtle presentational elements while turning Father Morrison from an on-stage character to an “audience-identified” off-stage one. The director, Aaron, and Brian all mentioned how much they liked having Ford’s monologue open the show.

Because Ford references future events and reveals important information, the scene raises anticipation as well as dramatic questions. Significantly, it introduces Ford right away and helps frame the rest of the play from his perspective, albeit a bitter and regretful one. I loved the irony in Ford’s admitting the truth of Hassan’s real name, and yet spending the rest of the play (in flashback) insisting he is Malik Allen. The audience was unlikely to catch the significance of his admission until much later, if at all. They were sure, however, to sympathize with him more after hearing his all-too-human confession and struggles with his conscience. Ford’s confession humanizes him from the first time he appears, and puts all his other actions, however harsh, in context.

CHAPTER 3

PERFORMANCE AND RESPONSE

I. My Observations of Audience during Performance

Opening night was a Friday night, and closing was a Sunday matinee. Both shows went fairly well, with no major mistakes. Of course, I gritted my teeth over every dropped line or mix-up, but these were expected. There was good attendance, although not sell-outs. I sat in the last row in order to observe audience reaction as well as watch the performance. My own opinions of what I observed on-stage did not necessarily match the audience's reaction. It is impossible to know exactly what individuals are thinking, of course, but an audience actually responds with a group mentality, especially when united in their attention to the events on-stage. When the audience fragments into individualized actions such as yawning, stretching, looking around, or reading the program it is usually because the play is not holding their collective attention.

I noticed a lull in the audience's attention during the exposition in Act I, Scene 2. This may be somewhat expected since exposition is not action, and the audience needs time to settle into the world of the play and become comfortable with the characters. This is one of the functions of exposition. The scene, however, also contains two sections marked by specific beat changes where Hassan and James explicitly pursue goals. The pursuit of goals indicates dramatic action, and these sections were more interesting and engaging for the audience.

The first beat indicating a change from exposition of given circumstances to dramatic action occurs after the siren is heard and the two men get tense. Hassan then tells James he has been thinking "I cannot stay here forever." This is the first mention of Hassan's super-objective, which is to get out of the house and rejoin his family, a goal he pursues throughout the play. He pursues this intention, with James resisting, until the stage direction "There is silence." More exposition follows as they attempt to lighten the mood with stories and humor and we learn about their past and get a sense of the nature of their relationship.

The next beat change to dramatic action occurs after the stage directions indicate a pause, when James says: "Hassan. There's something I need to give you." After this the scene is about James trying to get Hassan to take the gun, while Hassan's commitment to non-violence provides the obstacle. It was clear during performance that scene sections containing dramatic action were more engaging than parts containing exposition without dramatic action. My goal, not easily achieved, is to combine exposition with action in order to eliminate "slow" parts.

The same pattern repeats itself the next time we see James and Hassan together (Act I, Scene 5). Hassan interrupts the process of tending James' wounds (boring) to declare "I need to get out; I can't stay here any longer." James attempts to counter this with arguments about why Hassan's goal is unreasonable, providing an obstacle to Hassan's goal. Hassan switches to a different goal: convincing James to adopt a lower profile at work in order to avoid

unwanted attention. This section engaged the audience, but then de-escalated with a beat change (JAMES returns to the chair. HASSAN tends to him.).

Another beat change immediately follows when James crosses to the photo and starts questioning Hassan about its contents. At this point, for the first time, James is pursuing his super-objective, a goal initiated by Ford and Roberts when they plant doubt in his mind about Hassan's true nature. James' super-objective is to find out if Hassan is indeed a terrorist. His strategy at this point, however, requires Hassan to engage in more exposition about his past, and we learn about his relationship with a man named Abdul. Even though James pursues an active goal, this section was not as engaging to the audience as the previous scene. The goal is somewhat hidden, as James is not admitting to his real intention; therefore, the actor must be clear on his intentions. Perhaps the submersion of the goal in the exposition is a problem, or it could have been a performance issue.

The next scene, when Jean arrives, was one of the slowest. Although she has a goal (get James to agree to turn in a suspect for reward money) she does not state or pursue that goal directly until halfway through the scene. In the meantime there is more exposition, a great deal of it, revealing the nature of Ford's relationship to his parents, as well as their relationship to each other. I believe Jean's motivation is weak since she has no real super-objective, just a dramatic function that defines her in relationship to other people. I must find a better need for Jean that drives her throughout the play. In this particular scene it may be necessary to introduce her scene-goal earlier in order to create

dramatic action that drives the scene from start to finish.

When Ford comes to James' office and presses him to reveal Hassan's whereabouts (Act I, Scene 7), the play really picked up and established forward momentum that carried all the way through the next two scenes to the intermission. The intermission, of course, mandated a break in the action. When the audience returned, the Act starts with a lull (James confesses to Father Morrison) and then quickly picks up with the return of First Man. The audience seemed very engaged and anticipating what would come next all the way through the shooting scene. I felt an electric charge in my body (was it shared by others?) when Jean beat on Ford, asking him "What did you do?" Without a doubt, no one in the audience was distracted or fidgeting as this scene built to its climax. The final moment, when James says "Ford, you're a police officer" and Ford crumples the photo, seemed like a let-down. When the lights came back up, I am not sure the audience realized the play was over. These are impressions of the performance, filtered through my own senses, and include my own reactions as well as my perception of audience response.

II. Talk-back: KCACTF Response

After the Friday performance there was a talk-back session attended by the entire production staff, the cast, and my thesis committee, and moderated by two respondents from the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival. They were instrumental in deciding if the production would be invited to perform at the KCACTF Regional Festival in Lansing, Michigan. Our respondents were Scott Irelan and Bill Kincaid, both university professors in

theatre. I had met them before and was on friendly terms.

The respondents were complimentary about nearly every aspect of the production, especially the script. Scott described how I kept pulling the audience into a scene but then twisting the action in some unexpected direction at the end that kept the audience anticipating what would come next. They praised my ability to present sophisticated arguments without growing pedantic, preachy, or boring. They liked the subject matter, which they considered relevant and timely, and agreed with the decision to invest the drama with sky-high stakes. They felt the acting was strong for the most part and in particular the sound design helped tell a consistent story as the play progressed.

The overall tone of the response was very positive and it was clear, in the immediate aftermath of the performance, that the play had achieved one of its goals: that of keeping the audience engaged and interested. Scott and Bill mentioned that the tension in the theater during performance had been palpable, and I was glad they were observing and reacting to the audience as well as the play. I felt our chances of being invited to the KCACTF in Michigan were very good.

There were a few areas of concern. Scott raised the question of whether the confessional scenes were necessary since they reiterated what was already known and contained no real dramatic action. They seemed more like framing devices. The respondents expressed confusion over the stage moving forward on wheels, which took them out of the world of the play and drew attention to a real-world mechanical process. Scott questioned the necessity of

an intermission since the show only ran approximately an-hour-and-fifteen-minutes. He felt the intermission punctured the mounting tension and anticipation, necessitating a rebuild in Act II. If the show ran straight through from beginning to end its momentum could build and better sustain itself.

I sat next to a fellow graduate student at Friday's show, one holding an MFA in Playwriting and in the process of earning a doctorate. When the play ended he shook my hand and said "Well done." He seemed impressed and was obviously sincere. I immediately asked about the ending and if he thought it worked. He said he felt the ending was a very interesting choice, and (in response to my fear) not too melodramatic at all. The KCACTF respondents had not mentioned a problem with the ending either, and Scott even said that leaving James behind after he is shot and continuing the narrative with Ford seemed fine to him.

III. Talk-back: Audience Response

I was very happy and gratified that the production had turned out so well and people seemed to appreciate our efforts. I read the papers that my acting students turned in about the play. One of them said that when Jean was hitting Ford she experienced a chill in her body that she has never felt in a theater before. Another one said *Everywhere You Look* had provided him with some of the most powerful moments of theater he had ever experienced. Even a group of my Theater 101 students congratulated me on the way out. One might expect those choosing to speak to me might be complimentary, and perhaps students in my classes have something to gain through flattery. It is also

necessary to solicit specific critical response from general audience members.

We had a talk-back moderated by Dr. Rush after the Sunday matinee (November 7) and again on Monday during the bi-weekly CAS session for theater students. I took notes at these sessions, trying to glean any valuable insights from the comments, and most of all looking for any sense of consensus or majority opinion on the points discussed. The audience mentality is a group mentality, and I hoped to experience this even though comments were necessarily delivered by individuals. It is important at any talk-back not to let comments push the writer into thinking he should adjust the play in order to please every individual's concern, but to take what is helpful and leave the rest. Therefore, I did not attempt to record every comment but instead wrote down what seemed useful to me at the time. In retrospect, I wish I had recorded the comments more comprehensively, if only to have them available for consideration long after the initial impression of performance and talk-back faded.

The Sunday talk-back commenced within twenty minutes of play's end and consisted of members of the audience who wished to participate. There were approximately twenty-five participants. I did not notice anything approaching consensus on the points discussed, but individuals made their feelings known. The most interesting comments revolved around theme, resolution, and Ford.

I was particularly interested in thoughts about the play's ending. One person said the ending was "inevitable," an intriguing comment given

Aristotle's notion that a tragedy's events should build to an inevitable end. This comment was echoed by another person who stated the play ended as a "tragedy." It should be noted that the audience was most likely not aware of the finer points that distinguish genre, and were speaking with a general understanding of the term. Someone mentioned that the ending was a result of "psychological baggage that was brought" to the shooting scene, and then "the rage is exhausted and he's full of regret." This comment speaks to the tenet of psychological realism as possessing internal factors having a causative effect on actions. One woman said she felt "hopeless" at the end. Another said the ending helped us learn more about Ford, showing he is not a one-dimensional character.

In general, the comments about the ending helped me realize that there did not seem to be any objections based on it not making sense, not being properly motivated, or seemingly arbitrarily added. Although there were various interpretations and opinions, it was not dismissed as unworkable or nonsensical. Another comment about the ending that related to theme was "in the end you have only yourself to live with." This implies that the ending transmits a particular meaning, which in this case seemed consistent with my intent.

In response to a question about the role of Father Morrison, one person felt it was "a device of the playwright for exposition," while another felt it connected the characters of James, Jean, and Ford because "they all know him and refer to him." This seems to point out both the weakness and strength of retaining the character as an off-stage presence. In a way the confessional

device seems cliché, yet structurally it serves as a framing device (opening both Acts), as well as introducing the hint of a presentational convention. Combined with the KCACTF response questioning the need for the scenes, I am troubled by their current incarnation, but have not come to a definitive solution, if one is necessary.

One woman felt strongly that Ford is “total rage throughout the play,” and that she hated him because “he’s hateful.” She found his character too simplistic, and wanted to find in him more heart and nuance. This was certainly not my intent, and a pitfall I wanted to avoid. It rang of truth, although no one else had such a strong reaction to Ford at this talk-back. It was consistent with Dr. Rush’s concern about the audience failing to sympathize with Ford. In rewrites, addressing the character of Ford and his likability is a priority.

An audience member said she found the scenes with Jean “emotionally exhausting.” Although this was probably not meant as a compliment, it is actually consistent with my intent to engage the audience with as much intensity as possible. One cannot become emotionally exhausted unless one is engaged and invested in the scene. In terms of theme, one respondent believed the play raised questions as to the nature of friendship and trust. This is in fact one of the main themes, and is explicitly discussed by James and Hassan in Act II, Scene 9. One respondent said he knew from the beginning of the play that Hassan could not be a terrorist, because if he was it would be inconsistent with the play’s theme. I take this as a note that in 2010 a play representing a Muslim who turns out to be a terrorist is unacceptable and

politically incorrect. Nevertheless, for this individual, I did not establish enough credibility for the evidence implicating Hassan. There could be even more damning evidence introduced.

IV. Talk-back: Student Audience Response

Another talk-back occurred one day after the first one, and consisted of theater students from the department. Again moderated by Dr. Rush, the session also included feedback for the other MFA thesis play. Although we attempted to gain consensus on points by a show of hands, it was a rushed session due to time constraints and not many people raised their hands to vote on every issue. I will discuss the comments I recorded, but I cannot say I observed a majority or consensus on any particular issue. As before, a variety of contradictory opinions emerged, each expressing an individual's interpretation of what they saw. This was something akin to my overall goal: just get them thinking, talking, and debating. If there are themes and issues worth talking about after the show, even arguing about, then the play has succeeded as a social drama.

There seemed to be disagreement on whether Hassan is in fact a terrorist. I listened carefully because to me it is clear that Hassan is not a terrorist, and I wanted the lack of clarity about him to be present only as I build suspense. Hassan's refusal to use the gun is meant to reveal his true nature, and James uses this as justification for pointing the gun at Ford. James even explains this to Ford, although in a rush. One audience member proclaimed that the point of the play is not being sure if Hassan is a terrorist or not. In this, he

perceived my intent to balance perspectives and use ambiguity as a tactic in building suspense. In a sense, the comment spoke to structure as much as content.

The disagreement raises interesting questions about the play's true nature and function as opposed to the playwright's intent. Is the play more valuable if the question of Hassan's nature is unresolved, and does it raise more talking points for the audience, regardless of my original intent? Just as audience members can project their own "wants and needs" onto a play and refuse to see what is actually there, the author can project his own "wants and needs" onto the audience rather than accept that they may not see what he sees.

I can say in truth I am afraid of being seen as the politically incorrect playwright who casts a Muslim as a terrorist or villain, and this informs my concern of how the audience perceives Hassan. The play intends not to advocate for a witch-hunt mentality, but to balance the need for security with individual civil rights. "Fixing" the play in order to give no doubt about Hassan's nature at the end may not be the best course of action. Personally, I believe that Ford's use of the name "Hassan Houkman" in the opening monologue, and again when he contradicts Jean (who calls Hassan "Malik Allen" in the final scene), speak to the notion that even Ford realizes he was wrong about Hassan. I did not expect a debate about Hassan's true nature, but the debate is not necessarily a negative. It would be worse if no one really cared.

Most of the comments I recorded spoke to the nature of the play as a family drama within the larger social drama. This was interesting, as I had

received comments from Dr. Rush asking if the play was essentially a family drama. In my opinion, a social drama cannot effectively function without a grounding in detailed, nuanced characters who function as believable individuals. As I have stated, this informed my goal of balancing perspectives by having all characters advance well-reasoned arguments. In addition, the family unit is in some ways a microcosm of the larger society in that families make up that society, and both family and society are composed of smaller units that act in their own interests and have different relationships and varied power dynamics within those relationships. Therefore, there is not an inherent contradiction between having strong elements of “family drama” in a play positioned as a “social drama,” as these elements mutually support and reinforce each other.

At the talk-back, two students felt that the final image left them thinking about family issues more than social issues. Another student found the family-oriented scenes both comforting and cathartic. One student was confused by Ford “turning on” Jean in the final scene, when he had always defended her before. Another asked why the characters were so angry with one another, and wondered if there was a possibility of love emerging. Still another felt there was no “closure” at the end.

For me, the comments speak to the need for defining Ford’s relationship with Jean in a clearer way. The ending, which features James speaking from the perspective of a loving and supportive father, helps reveal what was lost between James and Ford, ironically after it is too late to reclaim. Jean’s scene with Ford, however, is not properly prepared. Although we hear

about their relationship when Ford speaks to James and James speaks to Jean, we do not see them together until the end. What is missing is another scene with Jean and Ford. This only became clear to me later, after other talk-back sessions.

V. Talk-back: Thesis Committee Response

I met with my thesis committee soon after the performances ended. The committee consisted of Dr. Rush, Dr. Fletcher, and Professor Susan Patrick Benson, all faculty in the Department of Theater. It was a chance for me to hear comments on the recently completed production and rehearsal process, respond to these comments, and receive instructions on how to proceed with the thesis. As before, my method was to listen and respond in the moment, writing notes when points were raised that had not previously been discussed or that had particular importance.

The committee members raised various points needing consideration for the play to reach its greatest potential. Dr. Fletcher asked about the super-objectives of each character, which I was able to explain, except when it came to Jean. This was the first time I had considered the problem of Jean's role in these terms. Someone suggested that her super-objective may be to "put the family back together," but if so, I had not developed it or even thought about it. Jean had no real super-objective, and only pursued individual scene goals. As such, she had a dramatic function in the play, but not a dramatic action or arc that she pursued throughout the play. This weakness helped explain some audience confusion over her scene with Ford.

Professor Patrick Benson asked what I hoped the audience would take away from the production, framing it in terms of a Brechtian alienation versus an Aristotlean emotional identification. The play's ending would be a key factor in how the audience felt about the play as they left the theater. This point had also been raised by the director at our first meeting. My hope was for an emotional identification. Professor Patrick Benson believed the ending, with Ford listening to James' monologue as he looked through the childhood items in his memory box, seemed phony and came out of nowhere. It struck her as a ploy to make Ford seem more sympathetic at the very end. This echoed Dr. Rush's concern that Ford had suddenly been turned into the main character at the end, whereas James had been the protagonist throughout the play.

There was some question as to the believability of James' willingness to shoot at Ford, and how this change from being a God-fearing man to a violent man had suddenly arisen. I explained that the scene that directly proceeding the shooting scene involved James being beaten by First Man and threatened with death, resulting in James losing any sense of restraint as he beats First Man to death. He brings this mentality into the scene with Ford and Hassan. Dr. Fletcher said she had never made this connection until I explained it, and this sentiment seemed shared. There was a gap between these two scenes, a missing scene where we could see James turn from a pacifist into a violent man. I would have to write this scene.

Dr. Rush's concerns centered on a lack of clearly defined character goals. Some of my discussion of character super-objectives in this thesis

document were not clear to me until after the committee meeting. Although the super-objectives are present in the script (except Jean's), my lack of a clear conscious awareness of James' super-objective at this time prevented me from finding solutions. I have defined James' super-objective as "finding out if Hassan is a terrorist," a goal that he does pursue. Until the committee meeting, however, I had considered him a vacillating character pushed by other characters' goals rather than actively pursuing his own. His goal seemed to be "maintaining the status quo," as he was already hiding Hassan before the play began, and resisted efforts by Hassan, Ford, and Jean to change the situation. Maintaining the status quo is not an appropriate objective for the protagonist, as it fights change rather than seeks it.

Dr. Rush gave me a list of rewrites to complete with specific goals to implement. The rewrites would not necessarily be viewed as permanent adjustments to the script, but seen as opportunities to strengthen it and explore other options while addressing the stated concerns. In addition to the change in James between his beating and the shooting scene, I needed to invent a reason for Hassan's need to leave at the particular time he decides to use the phone. Hassan's reason for leaving, as written, was not sufficiently clear. I needed to delve into the relationship between Ford and James more deeply so that the shooting would have more weight. He wanted me to resolve the ambiguity about Father Morrison's role in the play, and integrate Ford and Jean more effectively into the play. These new scenes and changes should create a sense that the ending is "earned," whether that ending is changed or not. In the new version,

there should not be dramatic questions about why Ford is still on-stage after James is gone.

VI. KCACTF at Lansing, Michigan

The play was selected for performance at the KCACTF Region III Festival. It had a preview performance on Monday, January 3, 2011 at Southern Illinois University Carbondale, and was performed four times in two days on January 7 and 8, at Michigan State University in Lansing. There was some adjustment needed, as actors had to memorize their lines and the show needed some re-blocking to fit the new stage at Michigan State, which would be in a three-quarter thrust formation instead of an L-shape. With so little time for rehearsal I decided not to implement any rewrites or changes in the script. We did, however, cut the intermission at preview to see how the show ran without it. It flowed well and we kept the cut for Lansing.

The performance provided an opportunity to learn about the process of taking a show and adapting it for a new space. The director and I were both willing to leave past tensions behind and embrace a new enthusiasm for the project. I helped set up the new space upon arrival in Lansing, but avoided any advice on restaging the play. We had most of the same set pieces, but the large platform with wheels was absent. It was too large to transport or fit in the new space and had already been dismantled and discarded after the initial run. This meant there were no stairs, and walking from the living room to Hassan's room was a matter of the actors consistently following a blocking pattern.

The theater's ceiling was very low, so we had to modify how we hung the upstairs window and the My Brother's Keeper sign. I was concerned about the window being so low. Hassan could clearly be seen by anyone looking through, whereas the original idea behind the window was that it was too high for him to see out of or anyone to see in. There was nothing we could do about it in this case. Overall, the set was even more suggestive and less literal than it had been for the initial run. It did not seem to matter, though. I did not hear anyone question the logic of the window or take issue with the space being cramped, nor complain about the lack of stairs or express confusion about the upstairs room being on the same level as the downstairs.

I remember my initial thoughts about staging the show, long before I even proposed it for a thesis production. I pictured it being staged in the McLeod Theater, a proscenium space with over 400 seats, with a fully-realized cutaway view of the house complete with an actual upstairs room. I realized this was not likely to happen with a thesis show's limited budget and scale, but I wondered how my vision of realism would be interpreted without the space and budget to have set concerns match the script. There is a certain inconsistency with a highly realistic script being rendered in minimalist terms. The economy of scale in Brecht's theatrical vocabulary has long since been accepted and applied without a concurrent transfer of all his theoretical recommendations, so I understood that an exacting realism was not necessary for set and props. It was a matter of degree: how much was enough, and how much was too little? How much of a script with a "cinematic" structure of multiple locations could

reasonably be depicted in realistic terms? My experience with *Everywhere You Look* seems to suggest that less is necessary than I initially supposed. If the script is strong, and logically consistent, the audience's imagination fills in the rest.

The KCACTF audience was a new one, lacking any ties to the production that could engender bias. At Southern Illinois University the audience was largely composed of friends of the actors, interested parties from the theater department, and people from the community who regularly attended shows. Anyone working in the theater department, including faculty and students, had heard about the show and possibly even read the script or attended a staged reading. In a certain sense, their experience of the show could not be composed of fresh impressions because of their advance knowledge and assumptions. While any audience brings a certain bias into the theater, I believed this audience might have less initial investment and therefore provide a more "authentic" reaction, akin to that of a future potential audience in a professional production. This was one reason I highly valued the reaction of Scott and Bill, the original KCACTF respondents, because they had not read the script in advance.

I attended all four performances and eavesdropped on audience conversations after the show. This is a tactic of mine to absorb frank comments delivered to friends that may not be forthcoming in public talk-back sessions where the playwright and actors are present. The immediate response of audience members, discussing what they had just seen amongst themselves with no need for tact or fear of offending anyone, was the most valuable reaction.

It was not always easy to glean information in this surreptitious manner but I heard many positive comments. Unfortunately I did not write any of them down but I recall one group unanimously agreeing that they had really liked the play. Several audience members were introduced to me by friends who had recently become acquainted at the conference and they expressed their approval. Two women who were moved to tears by the intensity of the scene with Jean and Ford thanked me with much passion for writing the play. Many other audience members simply walked away without comment, so I am not sure of their reaction. I suppose those who stand around the theater after the show, hoping to have a word with an actor or someone involved with the production, are likely those most impacted by the experience.

VII. Talk-back: KCACTF National Committee Response

The reaction I was most concerned with belonged to the representatives from the KCACTF national selection committee, who would decide if my script was worthy of advancing to the national festival in Washington, D.C. Bryan Willis, a professional playwright from Seattle, was my contact and explained that the other members of the committee were not allowed to discuss their opinions of the show with me, but that he would do so. We spoke for nearly two hours after the first performance.

It was unfortunate that the committee attended the first performance because there was a mix-up with lines during the shooting scene, causing the actor playing Ford to panic and shoot James before being shot at. Fortunately James let his gun swing towards Hassan and fire as he fell, killing

Hassan and preserving the logic of the next two scenes even if Ford now looked twice as heartless for initiating the shooting. In addition, the sound board seemed to have a short in the wiring, so virtually every sound cue was either interrupted, late, or non-existent. These are elements completely out of my control, so there was nothing I could do about it. Therein lies a lesson of acceptance: sometimes the best laid plans go awry. In this case, I had the opportunity to explain to Brian how the shooting scene was supposed to happen.

The altered scene allowed me to observe a twist on my own idea, one that took me by total surprise. The play could still function even if enacted in the improvisatory manner I had witnessed, and the change was really not illogical. Perhaps letting actors improvise their own ideas of the action, if done in rehearsal, could lead to interesting rewrites. Looking back I realize that more than once an actor had misspoken a line in rehearsal, but since the change seemed better-phrased than my original line, I let the new wording stand.

The discussion with Brian was very helpful and I appreciated the perspective of an experienced playwright who had just seen the show without reading the script beforehand. His overall response was very positive: he liked the play and was glad I was tackling issues of contemporary relevance with high stakes. He went through the play scene by scene, mostly reiterating that it was working well and had almost reached a final draft. I wrote down specific notes on his suggestions.

Brian believed the frequent blackouts between scenes took away energy and momentum. He said I should find a way to transition from scene to

scene, even if locations were changing, without so many blackouts. I had always thought of these transitions as a director's work, but he said it was possible for me to solve the problem through a creative use of stage directions. Ironically, he did not feel the transition from Ford's opening monologue to Scene 2 (with the sirens, mugging, voiceover, etc.) was really necessary. This was the first time I had ever really considered dictating the changing of scenes in stage directions, and the first time I had considered that perhaps the one transition I had dictated could be eliminated. I had been disappointed with the staging the transitional moment received, but was convinced it was not the fault of my vision. Now I considered that even given a large budget and access to equipment perhaps this tech-heavy transition was simply not necessary.

Brian asked me to consider why Jean needed to come to the house to speak to Ford in the final scene. He felt the first part of the scene was a lull before the dynamic ending when she expresses her horror. My only real answer, other than "Jean wants to comfort Ford," was that the playwright needed her there to have a dramatic confrontation. This points again to the missing motivation in Jean's character, and it finally crystalized in my mind: there is a whole missing scene between Ford and Jean earlier in the play that dramatizes their relationship. Writing that scene would undoubtedly provide the answer to why she had come, and provide context for their final scene together.

Brian was ambiguous about the ending, but did not take issue with the play continuing with Ford and Jean. He identified the confessional scenes with Father Morrison as a structural device and wondered if it was necessary to

end with one, since devices of this nature usually form a pattern of three, rather than two. I explained that I had originally written three confessional scenes and the play had indeed ended with one. He asked if perhaps Jean should be the one in the final confessional, giving each of the family members a scene with Morrison. It seemed logical, given her suggestion to Ford to go see Father Morrison, and her Christian perspective on life. I am not sure if ending the play with Jean, given her relatively minor role in the play, would be the correct image to leave with the audience. Developing her role, as Dr. Rush had asked, would make her more important, but a confessional scene with Jean might make more sense earlier in the play.

Brian liked the memory box device and considered it a concrete, and therefore strong, visual symbol. He asked if I could incorporate it earlier in the play so that when Ford digs it out at the end the audience already has an association with the box. He said that Hassan, being cooped up in the room for so long with nothing to do, had certainly found the box and was aware of it. The idea that Hassan was aware of the box had never occurred to me before and I found the idea intriguing. It would forge a connection between the two men before they meet in Act II, Scene 3, and possibly have implications for Ford's belated decision that Hassan is innocent. Does Hassan put something in the box, and does Ford find this at the end? It might be even more surprising than a deceased character's return to the stage. However handled, seeing the box appear twice creates a link between different scenes and ties characters together in another way. This idea is worth investigating.

Brian wanted to learn that James is a lawyer before the scene at My Brother's Keeper, given the importance of this aspect of his character. This information could quickly and easily be slipped into the exposition with James and Hassan in Act I, Scene 2. He thought there would be an interesting visual effect if the only light illuminating Hassan's phone call was the lamp on the desk, rather than the theater lights. This is an example of a decision that nominally rests with the lighting designer but if specifically indicated by the script would stand a better chance of appearing in the staging. I think the idea is a very good one since it highlights the surreptitious, perhaps even devious, nature of the phone call, adding to the scene's intent of casting a suspicious "light" on Hassan.

The final suggestion was a subtle and playful one: could Hassan ask James to make a wish before blowing out his birthday candle? It colors Hassan's character to be aware of this aspect of the American tradition but more importantly makes the audience wonder, in the silence of the wish, what James is thinking. Brian considers this type of moment a good way of focusing the audience's collective attention. I believe the actors were already playing this intention with the scene as written ("Blow out your candle"), but again, writing it into the script magnifies the possibility that the moment will be exploited to its full potential.

CHAPTER 4

LOOKING FORWARD

I. Post Production Rewrites

With the productions behind me and armed with clear objectives generated by the talk-backs and committee requirements, I generated a new draft of the entire script (Appendix B). The main goal was to tie the story together by weaving additional connections into the play, furthering plot complexity while allowing the audience to better understand the characters and their relationships. These connections were generated by allowing each character to further pursue his or her super-objective. As a result Ford, Jean, and even Roberts became more integral to the story. Plot and character simultaneously enhanced and supported each other.

The first issue I addressed was finding the "missing" scene where James clearly transforms from a man of peace to a man of violence. Chronologically it had to come after the beating of First Man, so I simply extended the beating scene. After James kills First Man, he drags the body off to the side, and then is immediately confronted by Roberts, who wants to accompany James home and search the place. James does not back down an inch, and when Roberts spots the body James simply eliminates him as a threat by knocking him out cold. Clearly he is a changed man, turning the tables on his nemesis, and the additional violence informs his willingness to shoot at Ford in the next scene.

Roberts brings new information to James, telling him the Public Safety Act has passed the Assembly and is headed to the governor for a signature. This law allows for the search of private homes and businesses, and would make the discovery of Hassan inevitable, thus further adding to a sense of inevitable doom for James and Hassan. The pressure on James from external events forces him to take extreme action, both with Roberts and Ford. This aspect of the scene (The Public Safety Act) was discovered during the second scene I rewrote, a scene with James and Hassan, and was then integrated into the Roberts scene.

The second rewrite involved an extension of Act I, Scene 8, where James finds Hassan downstairs in the living room. Hassan informs James about the Public Safety Act passing in Texas, and that the Act is being considered in their state as well. This fact provides strong motivation for Hassan to want to leave, since the likelihood of being caught seems certain. It addresses the need to make the phone call in a desperate attempt at escape. Because the possibility of the Public Safety Act passing is mentioned here (Act I) and then stated as a fact by Roberts in Act II, a continuity of external "larger world" events keeps pace with and drives the play's action. It also gives the sense of time passing in a linear fashion, which helps further the play's forward momentum as it unfolds into future events.

The next rewrite positioned Jean in the confessional speaking to Father Morrison. The scene was intended to further Jean's super-objective of bringing the family together, because it sets up the next scene as well, where

Jean, Ford, and James get together for a "family lunch." I tried to imply that Morrison is pushing her to take action on getting the family together, thus enhancing his role as an initiator of action rather than only a confidante. Dr. Rush did not perceive this active role of Morrison in the scene as written, but in any event I decided to retain James' monologue at the top of Act II rather than replace it with Jean's. We both thought it was ill-conceived to open the Act with her monologue because it suggested a whole new plot thread centering around her when we needed to keep the focus on Ford, James, and Hassan.

The sandwich shop scene (Act II, Scene 2) is a completely new scene which fills the "missing Jean and Ford scene" gap. Integrating Ford and Jean into the play was a main goal of the rewrite process and this family scene was designed to shed light on events past and yet to come in the story. In particular there needed to be a mother/son dynamic established before Jean confronts Ford after the shooting. This scene provided that dynamic while further fleshing out Ford and Jean by revealing details about their lives, such as Ford's engagement. Ford's revelation that he has been protecting James goes a long way towards softening his rough edges, making him a more sympathetic character. This scene also gives us James pursuing his super-objective of finding out Hassan's true nature. He bargains with Ford and tries to use the gambling debt as leverage in an attempt to get Ford to reveal his specific information about Hassan. The suggestion that James might be willing to give up Hassan under the right circumstances is new, and increases the tension and anticipation as Hassan's fate becomes increasingly compromised.

Some time passed as I pondered and considered the story. Eventually I added a new scene directly after Ford's opening confessional, and eliminated the stage directions in the transition, including the voiceover. My new rewrites were making the larger world of the play more explicit, rendering the exposition in this transition expendable. The new scene (Act I, Scene 2) established Ford solidly as the prime Agent of Action, the character driving the story. Although the play would shift focus to James and Hassan, Ford was now positioned as a central character.

The new scene resets the story to the beginning, with the detectives initiating their investigation. It integrates Roberts as a more central character, and by including him here I tie together this scene, the interrogation scene, and the rewrite where Roberts confronts James after he beats First Man. Developing Ford and Robert's relationship allows me to contrast Ford as more moderate and sympathetic in his views as compared to Roberts. He tells Roberts to knock off the racist talk and questions Robert's desire to shut down an art exhibit ahead of time.

The scene also reveals the name Mihyar as an implicated source of police intel, so when his name is mentioned again when Ford comes to Hassan's room undercover, we know exactly who Hassan had called and why it worked out this way. It further underscores and tightens plot elements that are already present in the script, and ties them together. The scene helps define the world as one in which tension is being ratcheted up on the characters by the larger world (al-Jazeera is shut down, Muslims are viewed with suspicion), which

links it to the Public Safety Act mentioned in the rewrites of Act II scene 8 (James and Roberts) and Act II scene 2 (James and Hassan).

The next rewrite attempted to act on the advice given by Bryan Willis about introducing the memory box earlier. Once again, the repetition of an item or person in multiple scenes served to tie them together, and in fact created echoes of meaning bouncing back and forth between the connected scenes. In my rewrite, Hassan no longer brings James a birthday cake. I always felt this moment was a bit contrived and am glad to get rid of it. Now Hassan reveals that he has found Ford's memory box. We see James reminisce about the better times with Ford, silently, while Hassan provides his own ironic commentary. Finally, Hassan asks James to put something in the box for Ford, a message. James does so. The audience wonders, or anticipates, the outcome of such an intriguing plot device.

The dramatic question is answered in the shooting scene (Act II, Scene 4), when Ford finds the box and reads the note as he speaks to Hassan. More accurately, the dramatic question is extended, because we do not learn exactly what the note says. However, it provides tremendous sub-text to the scene that was previously absent. This is true for the actors playing the roles of Ford and Hassan, but it is also evident to the audience even without any adjustment on the actors' part. I have been very precise with the stage directions, indicating the precise place I believe Ford should find the box, as well as read the note (just before "Dry as the Sahara in summer"). Ford's line after the shooting, "Consider that my answer," adds a personal component to the shooting

beyond the necessity of self-defense or the claim of heat-of-the-moment passion.

Hassan's minute investigation of the bedroom also reveals the presence of a camera, apparently turned on at least some of the time. The existence of the camera further raises tension between James and Hassan, giving even more motivation for him to leave, and increasing the likelihood of something bad befalling the relationship. James reveals the camera was put in the room to spy on Ford, raising further questions about his parents' character and the relationship dynamic between the three. In fact, the idea that James would spy on Ford as a child or Hassan in the present ironically reverses his position, casting James as a type of "Big Brother," not unlike the one persecuting him. The question is raised: will this camera record something of significance in this room? The question resonates when Ford returns. He's unaware of the camera, but we know it is there, and we are not sure if it is on. Both the camera and the mysterious note create layers of tension underlying the already tense and uncertain situation in the room.

The final major rewrite addressed the scene between Ford and Jean in light of the changes that now presaged this scene. It was time for me to decide "the ending," the most difficult decision. With the memory box already in play in the previous scenes, using it as an ending image lacked surprise or power. We did not need to see James come back for a monologue because he had already had his moment with the box of memories. Instead, the ending revolves around the camera, an item known to the audience and Jean but not

Ford ("2 out of 3").

When Jean realizes the nature of what Ford is telling her, she runs not out of the house but into her old room where the camera monitor is hidden. When she returns, she reveals to the audience (but not to Ford, who remains ignorant of the camera) that the camera was on, and thus has recorded the events of the shooting. These events contradict Ford's official version and could seriously compromise him if revealed. Jean, composed, tells him to go see Morrison and confess his sins, then leaves. The audience is left to ponder whether Jean has seen the shooting footage and intends to use it against Ford, or if she decides to willfully ignore it. Or did she not view the footage, and simply does not want to know? What are the implications of her moral choice, and is justice served by convicting Ford or allowing his choice to stand?

Having completed significant rewrites which were critiqued separately from the whole, I cut and pasted the rewrites into the whole manuscript and read it from start to finish. As I did so, I made further minor adjustments to the script, cutting words or rewording phrases that had always bothered me. I softened Ford's hard edges a bit by deleting some words or phrases that were particularly harsh. I removed some stage directions that I considered overly controlling, especially in relation to actor choices. Conversely, I edited other stage directions by making them more precise in an attempt to achieve clarity for the vision I wished to convey to future directors.

II. Success and Failure

I doubt the current draft is definitive in its "finality." I have not been

able to test the rewrites on stage, so their veracity is uncertain. I have concerns about the rhythm of Act II, which was very nicely paced in performance but now has an added scene and several scene extensions. I wonder if an intermission will need to be re-introduced now that both Acts are longer. Father Morrison still exists as an important character but I am not sure I have resolved the question of his necessity, or the scenes involving him. The final ending moment might be better but I am still not sure if I have quite captured the moment. I believe the precise ending moment may have to hinge more on a decision of what Jean actually knows. It may work the way it is, however, with the audience wondering what she will do with her knowledge.

Aside from questions of pacing and rhythm, I believe the rewrites have strengthened the play. They were not added quickly or flippantly, but only after many talk-backs and much deliberation over time. Each rewrite intensifies conflict and raises the stakes because the characters are tied together by additional circumstance, both personal and political. Ford, Jean, and Roberts are better integrated into the plot and play more significant roles in the unfolding story. Repetition of character appearance in scenes, as well as repeated information (such as the Public Safety Act) and the memory box, binds different scenes together and adds layers of resonance between different parts of the play. I have strengthened character motivation, especially with Hassan and Jean, by placing them in situations where they actively pursue their super-objectives. All of these factors, as well as the addition of plot complications such as the camera, serve my goal of creating a realistic script with complex, nuanced

characters engaged in dialogue with important issues, told in a story that engrosses the audience rather than boring them.

The thesis production process has allowed me to make progress in three important areas. The first is the practical workability of the script, which involves learning what to keep and what to cut, including stage directions. The rhythm and pacing of the script is much improved due to dialogue adjustments made through rewrites given after hearing the scene on-stage. It has been streamlined by the elimination of repetitive information, exposition, and asked-for technical elements.

The script has been improved by the major rewrites that underscore relationships and plot points. The script's complexity and realism are enhanced by the rewrites, but the added theatrical touches (locating Morrison in the audience) were also discovered through the rehearsal process. Ford's role in the drama is clearer, as is Jean's, and Hassan's action is better motivated. James now has an active goal (find out who Hassan is) instead of a passive one (preserve the status quo). I made the ending more compelling by foreshadowing it and tying it to earlier events.

In the practical realm of working with other people to realize the script in concrete terms, I have encountered my weaknesses and become aware of them. It was my first full-length production as a playwright and the process could not be explained but only experienced. I have learned the necessity of letting go of control in order to allow other artists to feel empowered and invested in the creative process. Bumps and flare-ups that appear minor may have major

repercussions if left unattended. An open, honest, and on-going relationship between director and playwright can best be achieved by regularly scheduled meetings. Finally, my initial ideas are not always the best ones. An openness to change, and willingness to let go, serves the production and the script by allowing it to evolve in new directions. This evolution includes more and more input from varied people, creating a work of art conceived by me but birthed by many.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

ACT IScene 1

SETTING: A Catholic church.

AT RISE: FORD speaks out to the audience,
but is not addressing them, rather
the unseen Father Morrison.

FORD

This isn't about turning the other cheek. He was dangerous. He tried to kill me. And there are people like him everywhere, trying to destroy our us. Look at what's happening. Look around you. I'm a police detective. It's what I was meant to do.

(Morrison speaks.)

Hassan Houkman. Yes. That was his name.

(Pause)

Father Morrison, if you kill a man in self-defense, is that killing justified?

(Morrison speaks.)

But what if it wasn't self-defense. What if it was really ... anger. Or revenge. What if you've been waiting for something your whole life, and you don't even realize it until the moment comes?

(Morrison speaks.)

Father, can I ask you a favor?

(Morrison answers.)

Will you pray for me? Because I think - maybe, I don't know, but - if someone prays for me, really, really hard, maybe I can find it. Put everything back together again, curl up with it at night and remember. What I lost. What we all lost.

(The sound of a helicopter
grows louder and louder
as the lights fade to
black. Strobe lights
criss-cross the stage; we

hear sirens, people's voices,
police radios, static, the
sound of news reports.
POLICE figures march down
the aisles or across the
stage, dragging someone along.
A mood of chaos, fear, and
uncertainty. A voiceover of
a NEWS REPORTER emerges
from the din. It fades out
at the end.)

NEWS REPORTER

And on this day, the twenty-second of March, candlelight vigils are being held all over the country in memory of the people of Detroit. In Grand Rapids, a caravan of victim's family members, clad in special suits to protect them from the radiation, prepares to drive to the outskirts of the former city, once Michigan's largest. President Fitzsimmon, as expected, has signed the controversial Executive Order 5231 and promises a major breakthrough in the War on Terror, to be announced later today, the third anniversary of the destruction of Detroit. We go now to Barbara Lesser, live in Salt Lake City, with a special report on the growth of Saudi-backed religious schools, and the emergence of the Mujahideen in American society . . .

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

Act IScene 2

SETTING: A small, sparsely furnished room.
Single bed, desk, two chairs and a
table, radio, humidifier.

AT RISE: HASSAN is writing in a journal.
There's a knock at the door. He
looks up quickly, tensely, then
puts the journal away.

HASSAN

Come in.

(JAMES enters with
a tray of food.)

JAMES

As sala'am alaikum.

HASSAN

Walaikum as sala'am.

(JAMES sets the tray
on the table.)

JAMES

Are you hungry?

HASSAN

Not really. But of course, it is good to eat. Thank you.

(HASSAN starts cutting up
an apple with a knife.)

What goes on in the great wide world?

JAMES

You heard Fitzsimmon?

HASSAN

On their channel, yes. But they're all their channel, aren't
they? What are people saying about the Executive Order?

JAMES

You know, my close friends, they aren't enthusiastic. But even they're afraid to speak their minds. You go to the grocery store, the gas station, it's a different story.

HASSAN

And?

JAMES

Mostly pro. If they're not, do you think they're telling it to strangers?

HASSAN

Not unless they want a ringer.

JAMES

Answer the door and you're never heard from again. More and more arrests every day. Arabs, Africans, Indonesians, anyone who looks like they might have a third cousin who crossed paths with a Mujahideen ten years ago --

HASSAN

Muslims.

JAMES

I knew this white skin would come in handy, Hassan.

HASSAN

Hasn't it always?

JAMES

Suppose so. Took it for granted most of my life.

(JAMES lights a cigarette.)

HASSAN

What happened to the patch?

JAMES

Too damn expensive. I ran out on Thursday. And these no-names are only 8 bucks a pack.

HASSAN

Ah, but you know where they come from?

JAMES

Where do you think the orange juice comes from, and the eggs? Same guy. Parking lot on Westfield Ave. You want it, he's got it; trash-bags in a big blue pick-up.

HASSAN

Is this not dangerous, James?

JAMES

You only need to worry about the local cops. No Feds around here. And for 100 bucks they look the other way.

HASSAN

Expensive.

JAMES

But doable.

HASSAN

Well, my friend. You've become quite the outlaw. Harboring a fugitive, dealing in the black market -- they'd better watch the collection plate at St. Mary's.

JAMES

They are watching.

(HASSAN looks at JAMES.)

HASSAN

But not you. They're not --

JAMES

Who knows, Hassan? Who knows anymore.

HASSAN

You've been there for twenty-five years --

JAMES

I know. I'm sure you're right. But there are new parishioners, a new woman in the rectory; they don't know me. And I don't know them. I don't know who they may be. This one bald man, the way he looks around at Mass -- it may be nothing --

HASSAN

What could they learn from being at the church?

JAMES

It's all a way of infiltrating. Just to see who's doing what. They know My Brother's Keeper has strong support in certain parishes.

HASSAN

Both sides are strong there.

JAMES

Yes. And they want to know which side you fall on. So they watch.

(Pause)

HASSAN

So you're not actually stealing from the collection plate.

(They both laugh heartily.
(A siren is heard, from
a car that comes closer
and eventually fades away.
THEY get very tense and
don't speak until it fades.)

HASSAN

James, I have been thinking.

JAMES

Yes?

HASSAN

I cannot stay here forever.

JAMES

You'll stay as long as you have to.

HASSAN

Yes, but how long will that be? The political situation is not going to suddenly turn around. And even if it did, these charges, they won't just go away.

JAMES

They might, Hassan, because they're bogus to begin with. The law itself is unconstitutional.

HASSAN

Ah, I don't wish to be a test case for the Supreme Court. That could take years to resolve.

JAMES

You need to have patience. Ann Frank hid for how many years?

HASSAN

A very bad example, my friend.

JAMES

The point is, you're safe here. What other option is there?

HASSAN

Try to get out. Find my family and join them -

JAMES

It's too risky --

HASSAN

It's risky for you to keep me here.

JAMES

Hassan, we've been over this a dozen times.

HASSAN

I have the cash, and a friend gave me a phone number --

JAMES

You want to pay some coyote to smuggle you into Canada; then what? You know the extradition treaty is in full effect. You won't be safe there, and how will you get to Jordan? And don't even think about Mexico.

HASSAN

And so I sit here, and wait. For what? For the end of the world?

(There is silence.)

JAMES

It's hot up here.

HASSAN

And dry. And stuffy.

JAMES

I'll get the humidifier fixed eventually. I guess they don't have the parts available.

HASSAN

It's ok, I'm not complaining.

JAMES

This used to be Ford's room. His allergies would act up, unless we had the humidifier going. Poor kid. He said it was "dry as the Sahara in summer" up here.

HASSAN

"Dry as the Sahara"-- did he actually remember --

JAMES

No, we got him when he was very young. He doesn't remember Africa.

HASSAN

You've never even shown me a photo of Ford.

JAMES

I don't have any photos, anymore.

HASSAN

James, I don't mean to sound ungrateful. I cannot thank you enough for helping me.

JAMES

If our positions were reversed, you would do the same for me.

HASSAN

Yes, but I doubt I would learn to cook so well. Your hummus is fantastic.

JAMES

I've been forced to learn, without Jean around.

HASSAN

But would you have learned these exotic dishes without your secret houseguest?

JAMES

Probably not. Hey, remember when you had that party for Tarik's graduation, with the belly-dancer? That was the first time I ever had hummus.

HASSAN

It was baba ganoush. And the belly-dancer was actually Sara from First National. Remember, the teller who worked on Saturdays?

JAMES

The girl from the bank? That was her?

HASSAN

Yes! You didn't recognize her?

JAMES

I'm not sure I spent much time looking at her face, Hassan.

HASSAN

She was wearing a veil, anyhow. A pink veil, with little sparkles. Very authentic.

JAMES

What, did she take a college class or something?

HASSAN

I don't remember. Naima found her. They used to talk a lot, at the bank.

JAMES

Naima was also an excellent cook, as I recall.

HASSAN

Yes. She was.

JAMES

I'm afraid I can't compare.

HASSAN

This is not the only area in which you fail to measure up, my friend.

JAMES

Well, I could start wearing perfume, if you want.

(Pause)

Hassan. There's something I need to give you.

HASSAN

What is it?

JAMES

I don't mean to alarm you. But things are getting bad outside. Dangerous. I've had death threats.

HASSAN

Did you get the security system installed?

JAMES

I don't mean at the office. They've called here. And a couple nights ago, I heard voices, outside the window -- it might be nothing --

HASSAN

I think I heard them too.

JAMES

That's why we need to be prepared.

(JAMES takes out a gun.)

HASSAN

No, James! Where did you get that?

JAMES

It doesn't matter.

(JAMES holds the gun out
to HASSAN.)

Just in case.

HASSAN

In case of what? What do you expect me to do with that?

JAMES

Nothing. I'm sure you won't need it. But if you ever did . . .

HASSAN

You know how I feel about this. There is no justification for violence. I've spent the last ten years preaching against this jihadist mentality --

JAMES

This is for self-defense only, Even the Prophet took up arms, to protect himself.

HASSAN

Please, do not cite the Koran. I am the imam, not you. Those were different times, completely different circumstances.

JAMES

These are different times, too. I hardly recognize my country anymore.

HASSAN

Did Gandhi carry a gun? Did Martin Luther King?

JAMES

You are not those men. And neither am I. God knows, I'm sick of trying to measure up to some impossible ideal. Every day, while they harass me, and my staff, and we're supposed to just sit there and take it, it burns me up --

HASSAN

Because you are a man of peace.

JAMES

Am I? I wonder. Sometimes I feel ... this rage, inside me, boiling and churning, just waiting to come up and explode. And not just when I think about Fitzsimmon, or the Mujahideen, or the person on the other end of that phone. When I think about Jean. And Ford. Do you know what that feels like? Have you ever felt something like that?

(HASSAN speaks very slowly.)

HASSAN

Yes. I have felt this way many times.

(JAMES goes to HASSAN and
puts the gun in his hand.)

JAMES

Then be prepared. That's all I'm asking you to do.

HASSAN

Do you know what I was doing that day? On March 22nd?

JAMES

What.

HASSAN

I had just finished praying. Naima was at the market. I was in Tarik's room looking for a book I had lent him. I fished around on his desk, then on the shelf. And you know what I found?

(JAMES shakes his head.)

A pornographic magazine. I couldn't believe it. So there I was, standing with this thing in my hand, when I saw the report on the computer screen. Breaking news from Detroit. Isn't that ridiculous?

JAMES

I was at the mall. I saw it on a TV in a restaurant.

HASSAN

What did he need a magazine for? Like there isn't enough smut on the internet.

(Pause.)

All those people. The children. I just kept staring, I couldn't believe it was real. But it was. And you know, right away, I was afraid. For my family, for myself. Because I knew. I hoped it was someone like Timothy McVeigh, that they would show his sick white face on the screen any minute. But they didn't. I knew it was the Mujahideen. Who else could it be?

JAMES

Do you think these men ever question themselves? Or have they moved beyond all questions of right and wrong?

HASSAN

Who knows? Perhaps they will ask the Devil when they see him. Or maybe the Devil is just a myth, and we have created him in our image.

JAMES

Hassan, don't say that.

(HASSAN puts the gun down.)

HASSAN

I don't need this, my friend. Sooner or later we all leave this world behind. And then we will answer for all our decisions.

(JAMES takes the gun and
puts it in a drawer in the
table as HE speaks.)

JAMES

I'll put it here, just in case. You might change your mind, if the moment ever comes.

(Lights)

(End of scene)

ACT ISCENE 3

SETTING: Outside My Brother's Keeper
 office.

AT RISE: JAMES is locking the door and
 about to leave. TWO MEN are
 waiting for him.

FIRST MAN
My Brother's Keeper. See, I told you this was the place.

JAMES
Can I help you with something?

FIRST MAN
Yeah, you can help me. I've got a problem.

JAMES
Ok -- well, we're closed right now.

FIRST MAN
But this can't wait. See, I've got this big truck full of
dynamite and nitro glycerin, and I need to know where I can set
it off to kill the most Americans.

SECOND MAN
Yeah, we just wanna do our part.

JAMES
Look, you guys, you don't need to do this.

FIRST MAN
Of course we do. That's why you're here, right? To help people
kill Americans.

JAMES
No, that's not why I'm --

SECOND MAN

Oh, I know. He needs our credentials. Allah, allah, allah!

FIRST MAN

Allahu akbar! Allahu akbar! Bibbbibibibibibibi!

SECOND MAN

Lalalalalalalalalalala!

JAMES

Shut up! Leave me alone!

FIRST MAN

You a Christian? Where's your cross?

SECOND MAN

Maybe he's a Jew.

FIRST MAN

Yeah, maybe he's a Jew.

SECOND MAN

Nah, he can't be a Jew. He loves Arabs. Jews hate those fuckers.

FIRST MAN

Hey, you love Arabs, right? They're your buddies.

JAMES

You've got no right to do this. There's nothing illegal here.

FIRST MAN

Nothing illegal. You hear that?

(THEY grab JAMES, pushing
HIM against the wall.)

You're a stupid fuck, you know that?

(ROBERTS and FORD enter.)

ROBERTS

Hey, asshole. Leave 'em alone.

FIRST MAN

Who the fuck are you?

(ROBERTS holds up his badge.)

ROBERTS

Get the hell outta here.

(The MEN leave.)

Having a little trouble there?

JAMES

Yes. I guess I was.

ROBERTS

That's a shame. Happen a lot?

JAMES

I have had mail threats, phone calls. I think I've been followed a couple of times. I've reported it all to the police before.

ROBERTS

Oh, you don't have to worry. That was us following you.

JAMES

The police?

ROBERTS

Yeah, at least some of the time. Hell, maybe these guys are after you too. They sure don't seem to like you.

(JAMES addresses FORD.)

JAMES

Is this true?

ROBERTS

I said it was, didn't I?

JAMES

The police are supposed to protect and serve.

ROBERTS

What do you think just happened?

JAMES

You saw what happened, you let them go.

ROBERTS

Yeah, but guess what? We didn't come down here to save your sorry ass. So get in the car, I need to talk to you.

JAMES

Officer --

ROBERTS

Detective.

JAMES

Detective. Are you arresting me?

ROBERTS

No, Jimmy. You haven't done anything wrong, have you? So why should I arrest you?

JAMES

In that case, I am late for an appointment, and I will be --

(ROBERTS grabs JAMES aggressively.)

ROBERTS

Hey asshole, this isn't a request. Get in the fucking car.

FORD

Roberts.

(ROBERTS releases JAMES.)

Wait in the car.

(ROBERTS and FORD look at each other. Reluctantly, ROBERTS exits.)

JAMES

That's your partner? Seems like a nice guy.

FORD

He knows how to get the job done.

JAMES

And what's the job these days?

FORD

Same as it's always been. To protect and serve.

JAMES

By harassing people like me?

FORD

We go where the trail leads us. Wherever that may be.

JAMES

Ford, you don't think --

FORD

Detective Halligan.

JAMES

Ford --

FORD

Detective Halligan.

(A pause.)

JAMES

When I heard about your promotion to detective, I was very proud. You know that? I told everyone. Even Mrs. O'Roarke at church, the organist, remember? You'd think Father Morrison had something to do with it, he was crowing so loud.

FORD

Father Morrison was always there for me.

JAMES

I'm sure he was. It's his job --

FORD

No, he was always there for me. When I needed him.

JAMES

We all have roles to play. God gives each of us a task --

(The lines overlap during
the argument.)

FORD

Don't start in with the God crap again --

JAMES

All of us, including me --

FORD

You are hurting this country with what you do --

JAMES

I'm defending people's constitutional rights --

FORD

People who have already killed millions --

JAMES

That's not who I'm protecting --

FORD

How do you know who your organization is protecting?

JAMES

Ford -

FORD

I told you --

JAMES

I am still your father and I will call you by the name I gave you! Foreigners. Is that all you see? To think that I would see the day when my own son would throw away all the values I taught him, everything I hold closest to my heart. When your mother and I went to Sudan, and spent four months, navigating the bureaucracy --

FORD

Oh God --

JAMES

-- paying the bribes, dealing with corrupt adoption officials, all so we could give a child a better way of life, it was not because we held those people in disdain.

FORD

You seemed to think something was wrong with their culture. Or else why bother?

JAMES

Ideology, not individuals.

FORD

It's so easy to be you, isn't it? Anyone who doesn't agree with you is some knee-jerk racist, somebody who doesn't understand those different from themselves. I've got news for you. I've read the Koran. I've studied Islamic history. It's a violent religion, fundamentally, from the very start.

JAMES

I know men, personally, who are loving --

FORD

Who?

JAMES

-- non-violent, as a core belief --

FORD

Who do you know?

JAMES

-- who I would trust with my life --

FORD

Where's Hassan Houkman?

(Silence.)

JAMES

What?

FORD

Your friend, Hassan Houkman. Do you know where he is?

JAMES

I have not seen Imam Houkman, in, a long time, ever since those charges --

FORD

You know about the charges?

JAMES

I heard about them, yes.

FORD

From who?

JAMES

From his wife, I think.

FORD

Before she left the country. And now he's disappeared.

JAMES

If you say so.

FORD

I need you to come down to the station and answer some questions.

JAMES

Can't you just ask them here?

FORD

No. It's official police business. You need to come down.

JAMES

All right. I'll come.

FORD

And . . . don't call me Ford, in front of the other detectives.
It's bad enough they already know.

JAMES

Ok, Ford. I'll meet you there.

FORD

Meet me there?

JAMES

I'm not under arrest, right? I've got my own car.

FORD

Twenty minutes.

(FORD exits. Lights
down on JAMES.)

(End of scene.)

ACT IScene 4

SETTING: A police interrogation room.

AT RISE: JAMES is seated at one chair.
ROBERTS is seated across from HIM.
FORD leans against a wall.

ROBERTS
We've got photos, you know. Of your friend. And all the wrong people.

JAMES
You've got whatever you need.

ROBERTS
That's right. Whatever we need, we've got it. Photos, fingerprints, all of it. Funny thing is, with this guy, your buddy, it's all real. No touch-up necessary.
(HE slides the photos over to JAMES.)
Take a look. You recognize the other guy? Talib Hussain. Guy's on CNN all the time.

JAMES
Professor Hussain taught at Vanderbilt University --

ROBERTS
Until they caught him out, I know. But they did. He was working for the Mujahideen, and everyone knows it. C'mon, Halligan. Even you people know that.

JAMES
The position of My Brother's Keeper is clear -- it's on our website, all our literature -- we recognize the Mujahideen are a threat.

ROBERTS
Great. Now stop helping them get visas.

JAMES

We work with students, lawyers --

ROBERTS

You're dupes, you're set up --

JAMES

Thorough background checks, detective --

ROBERTS

Yet look what happened, look what got through. Fuckin' Malik Allen --

JAMES

That's not his name.

FORD

That is his name. Malik Allen, before he became the friendly imam next door. Hassan Houkman is just a cover. Such a nice, warm guy, seems almost like he was born here, right? Talk about great assimilation; he even likes the Lakers. And he, what, publishes a magazine, a newspaper of some sort, and he worked on the mayor's campaign, and the inter-faith outreach group, blah blah blah -- yeah, you know him really well. He's been sleeping for a long time.

JAMES

What, you mean -- a sleeper cell?

FORD

Yes. Ready to go at any time. That's why we're looking for Allen. Word has come down through the wire. He's involved in something big, another attack, you get it? Our sources say it could happen within five days.

JAMES

Your sources. Are these the same sources that implicated that Somali kid?

FORD

Intel is never perfect; we go with what we've got.

JAMES

Tell that to his family! He was lynched because of your intel, and the Special Prosecutor cleared him of all charges.

FORD

We have to take all threats seriously. This is solid intel. If Allen's got nothing to hide, why'd he disappear in the first place? Why didn't he show up for his court appearance?

JAMES

Come on, Ford. And face Senator Imhoff's kangaroo court? They'll put you away for sneezing on the wrong side of the street. Those charges were blown up out of nothing; first they're investigating fire-code violations at the mosque, then all of a sudden --

ROBERTS

How do you know what the investigation entailed?

JAMES

It was in the paper.

ROBERTS

It wasn't in the paper.

JAMES

I live in the neighborhood. Word gets around. When you screw with one of us, we tend to stick together.

ROBERTS

"One of us." Did you hear that? One of us.

FORD

Look. You say you want to distinguish the real terrorists from the innocent. So here's your chance to catch a real terrorist. Or would you rather see another Detroit in the next five days?

JAMES

Of course not.

FORD

Then tell us what you know.

(FORD and ROBERTS look at
each other. FORD nods.)

Detective Roberts will finish this interrogation.

(FORD abruptly leaves.)

ROBERTS

You must be really proud of him. Youngest cop to make detective
in the last twenty-five years.

JAMES

I always knew Ford would excel at whatever he put his mind to.

ROBERTS

He's a good man, that one. Must be in the genes.

(JAMES is silent.)

So how about it?

JAMES

First of all, I'm not convinced. Mr. Houkman has always
been spoken of in the highest regard, when I've heard him spoken
of, of course, we did not frequent the same circles --

ROBERTS

You circled close enough. We know you're friends with Allen,
Hassan Houkman, whatever you want to call him. You've been seen
talking to him, even coming out of his office in the mosque.

JAMES

You're talking years ago, when I worked on the mayor's re-
election campaign. I talked to all kinds of people.

ROBERTS

I'm talking more recent than that. You were on that panel
together, at the McGruder Foundation.

JAMES

It was a university sponsored panel --

ROBERTS

Where you agreed with Allen ninety-percent of the time.

JAMES

Detective, this was over a year ago, at a public panel debating the merits of Executive Order 5231. A controversial policy, as you know, that has divided many people in this country.

ROBERTS

The law of the land, is what it is. Which means anyone violating that policy is a criminal, just like the terrorists they're protecting.

JAMES

I fail to see the purpose of this interview. My Brother's Keeper offers legal advice, job placement, translation services; all as a legally incorporated non-profit. You should be talking to our lawyer, just like the Feds do every other week.

ROBERTS

I'm not interested in your little group. I'm interested in you. Malik Allen disappeared three months ago. He hasn't left the country; I don't think he's even left the state. We need to find him, do you understand? This is a matter of national security.

JAMES

And what makes you think I know where he is?

ROBERTS

Besides the fact you've been wringing your hands and crying over these people for the last three years? Maybe not much. Maybe I'm just exploring all my options. Or maybe it was something your wife said.

JAMES

My wife?

ROBERTS

I'm sorry, ex-wife now, isn't it?

JAMES

We are divorced now, yes.

ROBERTS

Sounds like a Christian no-no to me. Hell, I don't hold it against you, though. I've had two myself. Thing is, she had plenty to say about you. Some good, some not so good.

JAMES

Which would be true of any former spouse, detective, including yours. Both of them.

ROBERTS

My ex's have nothing good to say about me. As long as I pay child support, that's all they care about.

JAMES

And I'm sure you do. On time, every month.

(ROBERTS suddenly punches
JAMES in the face.)

ROBERTS

Shut the fuck up, you little prick. You think this is a game? You think I'm fooling around? Know what your wife said about you, Halligan? She said you were capable of anything. You're so sure you're right, because God is on your side. Sound familiar?

JAMES

God is not on anyone's side. We must align ourselves with Him.

ROBERTS

Your wife seemed like a pretty God-fearing woman. But she went and aligned herself with someone else, didn't she?

JAMES

It's not my business what she does anymore. Or yours.

ROBERTS

Here's what my business is. Finding out where every last one of these Habibs are hiding and throwing them Homeland Security's way. You know anything about where Malik Allen is hiding out, you hear anything, you even suspect anything, you better come and tell me. I'll be watching you, Halligan. And I will fuck you hard if you're hiding something.

(Lights down.)

(END OF SCENE)

ACT IScene 5

SETTING: HASSAN'S bedroom.

AT RISE: JAMES enters. HE has bruises on HIS face and a cut above HIS eye. HASSAN jumps up.

HASSAN
Three hours, James, I've been worried --
(HE stares at JAMES)
What happened? What happened to you?

JAMES
You were right. It is dangerous to deal on the black market.

HASSAN
What happened? Where have you been?

JAMES
I got jumped at the market. Two guys, took everything. Lucky I wasn't carrying much.

HASSAN
Come, let me help you. Sit down.
(JAMES sits on the chair while
HASSAN gets a cloth, some water,
etc., to treat HIS wounds.)
What bastards. These days, anything is possible.

JAMES
People have always been mugged.

HASSAN
But it's much worse now. Violence and brutality have been sanctioned.

JAMES
People need bread and a roof over their heads.

HASSAN

At any price? I need to get out; I can't stay here any longer.
It gets more dangerous every day -

(JAMES jumps up and pushes
HASSAN'S hands away.)

JAMES

Damn it, Hassan, we've discussed this.

HASSAN

Look what's happened to you. Do you really think this attack
was random?

JAMES

It goes with the territory.

HASSAN

You should think about your safety.

JAMES

I thought we were talking about you.

HASSAN

It's the same thing. Face it James, you're a magnet for
trouble. And where do you come every day? Right here.

JAMES

That's why we have a gun.

HASSAN

That's not the solution and you know it. All the bullets in the
world won't keep these people away.

JAMES

Trying to get out, at this juncture, would be a worse case
scenario. We'd get caught, and everything you're afraid of
would come true.

HASSAN

Then perhaps you should adopt a lower profile at work.

JAMES

Meaning what?

HASSAN

I read the papers. You're mentioned almost every week.

JAMES

We need the press.

HASSAN

But it's all the controversy that brings so much unwanted attention.

JAMES

The work is controversial by nature. It still needs to be done.

HASSAN

All I'm saying is, you might want to take more care, with the issues you choose to adopt. It's like sticking your hand in a hornet's nest --

JAMES

No, Hassan. I won't compromise my work, not for my sake, or for yours. My Brother's Keeper is bigger than either one of us.

HASSAN

So you will save them all. Good luck.

(JAMES returns to the chair.

HASSAN tends to him.)

JAMES

I'm sorry. I'm feeling very anxious; on edge.

HASSAN

Understandably. Did you get a look at the men who mugged you?

JAMES

Not really.

HASSAN

I don't suppose you reported it to the police.

JAMES

No. I haven't been to the police.

HASSAN

Of course not, what would you say?

JAMES

Nothing. I haven't been there.

HASSAN

I'm just glad you're home. I've been anxious as well. There you go. As good as new.

(JAMES gets up and crosses
to the mirror. HE notices
the photo on the mirror.)

JAMES

This is you, right?

HASSAN

Yes. In my university days.

JAMES

I barely recognize you.

HASSAN

Those were different times. For me, personally. The long beard and the robe, oh yes, quite the firebrand. Remember your own days, James?

JAMES

I wouldn't exactly describe me as a firebrand.

HASSAN

But you were arrested, were you not? With Father Morrison. A worthy cause.

JAMES

Many of us were arrested. We were demonstrating for peace.
Who's this man next to you?

(HASSAN joins JAMES looking at
the photo.)

HASSAN

That is Abdul. He was a good man, at one time, anyway. We
spent half our time studying the Koran and the other half
watching girls at the student center. I think he chose another
path, eventually.

JAMES

What do you mean?

HASSAN

You know. The ardor of youth dims, the lure of the world sets
in.

JAMES

And what was calling Abdul?

HASSAN

Money. What else?

JAMES

Your wife wore the hijab?

HASSAN

Of course. You have to understand, the student movement was
different in Arab countries. I've been getting more liberal the
older I get.

JAMES

Did you ever go by a different name? To avoid the authorities?

HASSAN

Are you kidding? I must've dropped a half-dozen different names when the police took me in. We all did. It was dangerous, James. You think Bush was bad? Bush would've been a ray of sunshine in Iran.

JAMES

Iran? I thought you were talking about Jordan.

HASSAN

Mostly, yes. I had friends in Iran as well. But I met my wife in Jordan.

JAMES

Is she there now, do you think?

HASSAN

I hope so.

JAMES

These names, when you were young, did you ever call --

(The doorbell rings. The men
exchange glances; JAMES exits.)

(END OF SCENE)

ACT IScene 6

SETTING: The living room, downstairs.

AT RISE: JEAN is at the front door. JAMES goes and opens it.

JAMES
What on earth are you doing here?

JEAN
May I come in?

JAMES
For what reason?

JEAN
James, don't do this. You know I wouldn't come unless there was a reason.

(HE stands aside to let HER in.
SHE enters and looks around.)
You got rid of the couch.

JAMES
It was old. You know how I felt about the couch.

JEAN
Your business, I suppose.

JAMES
I suppose it is. Jean --

JEAN
Don't get sanctimonious with me, Jimmy, I can hear that tone in your voice already.

JAMES
Really. And I thought you had come to preach to me.

JEAN

I don't need to give a sermon. You know everything I'm about to say, don't you?

JAMES

If you're here to repeat the same tired arguments you've used a million times, then yes. But I don't know why you'd bother.

JEAN

I won't. I know better than that.

(Pause)

It smells funny in here. What've you been cooking?

JAMES

Why did you come, Jean?

JEAN

To talk to you about your son.

JAMES

What about him?

JEAN

Have you gotten a visit from the police? Because I have.

JAMES

Have you.

JEAN

Yes. Detective Ford Halligan's mother, brought in for questioning. How do you suppose that made him feel?

JAMES

Ford's a big boy. He can handle a lot more than some ribbing from the guys at the station.

JEAN

Ribbing from the guys? Are you insane? Ford is in charge of the undercover investigations unit. And his own family members are being investigated!

JAMES

I understand.

JEAN

You understand. When's the last time you even spoke to Ford?
Two years ago? Three?

JAMES

Try a few hours ago. I have had a visit from the police, to
answer your earlier question. It's the least of what I've grown
accustomed to.

JEAN

Stop playing the martyr. And thanks for asking about me, by the
way.

JAMES

I already know about you. Detective Roberts down at the
precinct told me he'd had a chat with you. He didn't like what
I had to say about it, though. Obviously.

(JEAN approaches and touches
HIS bandages.)

JEAN

I'm sorry James. Did he do this to you? Are you all right?

JAMES

Yes. I'm ok.

JEAN

You still have your insurance, right? The pension covers it?

JAMES

I didn't go to the hospital. It wasn't necessary.

JEAN

You did this yourself? You did a good job. Or did you have
help?

JAMES

I'm not involved with anyone, Jean, if that's what you're asking.

JEAN

I hope not. It'd be a bit ridiculous at your age, don't you think?

JAMES

Ridiculous, I'm sure.

JEAN

You could file a complaint. Ford could have that man demoted, or kicked off the squad --

JAMES

I don't think that's going to happen.

JEAN

How did it come to this?

(A long pause while JEAN looks around.)

You were so close. You taught him how to play tennis. He came to you for help with his homework, not me. I felt like persona non grata around here for so many years. I remember the two of you on New Year's Eve, sitting on the couch watching TV, waiting for the ball come down at Times Square. But Ford always fell asleep on your lap before midnight. And now you've gotten rid of the couch, and there's not even a picture of your son anywhere in this house.

JAMES

I'm sorry for what's happened, ok? I'm sorry your lives have been affected by all this. But My Brother's Keeper is an important organization, and I'm damn proud of having created it. And I'm sorry you don't care about it the way I care.

JEAN

How dare you? How dare you stand atop your righteous soap-box and condemn the rest of us?

JAMES

A true Christian acts, Jean, she stands up for what is right and speaks the truth when people are being killed --

JEAN

I acted! Long before you took up your cross. It was me who wanted to adopt Ford, I made that happen --

JAMES

I am his father, from the start --

JEAN

I had to push you into it. Because you didn't want a child that didn't come from you. Flesh of your flesh. How typical, how arrogant. But those people were suffering, and I knew we could make a difference. I wasn't afraid of them. I wasn't afraid to go to Africa, wrap myself up like a mummy and follow their customs, do whatever it took to bring Ford to us. I gave him a better life, a Christian life.

JAMES

Is this why you came? To demonstrate your superiority? You left, Jean. You proved everything you needed to prove when you walked out on thirty years of marriage.

JEAN

I told you. I came because of Ford. Your little run-in this afternoon notwithstanding, I doubt you know much about the details of your son's life these past few years. But I thought you might care to know that he's in trouble.

JAMES

What do you mean, trouble?

JEAN

Money, James, what else? He's been at it again.

JAMES

How long?

JEAN

I don't know. Long enough to run up at least fifty thousand in debt.

JAMES

I thought Ford was going to that group, that twelve-step meeting --

JEAN

He was. But apparently he's been going to the casino as well.

JAMES

I can't help him this time, Jean. There's just not enough left. I need it --

JEAN

For your group, I know. Priorities. But I think you can help, James.

JAMES

How?

JEAN

Have you seen the paper this morning?

JAMES

I glanced at it.

(JEAN takes out a newspaper
and hands it to HIM.)

JEAN

Take a look.

JAMES

A seventy-five-thousand-dollar reward for information leading to the arrest of known terrorist suspects or Mujaheedin sympathizers. Sympathizers?

JEAN

Pretty vague, isn't it? Don't worry, read the fine print. You're safe. For now, anyway.

JAMES

Well, thanks for warning me, Jean.

JEAN

I'm not warning you. I'm sure you can take care of yourself. The point is, the reward.

JAMES

What about it?

JEAN

Don't act dense, James. This is an opportunity for you, to do right by him, for once.

JAMES

I don't know what you're talking about.

JEAN

Don't you? That police detective seemed to think you do. And I do, too. I think you know exactly what I'm talking about.

JAMES

First of all, we do not have truck with terrorists, how many times do I have to tell you that? God, Jean, do you honestly believe I'm trying to help destroy this country?

JEAN

Not deliberately, maybe. But willful ignorance is its own kind of crime, don't you think?

JAMES

You should ask yourself that question. Because it's not ignorance that keeps you hammering away at the same misguided point month after month. And if you expect me to bear false witness for the sake of some reward, well, you obviously don't know me very well.

JEAN

But I do know you, James. I know you very well. And I know that underneath the God talk, and the mighty crusade for justice, there lies an essentially sane, rational man who wants to do right by his family. I don't expect you to bear false witness. I expect you to wake up and realize what everyone is telling you. Some of these people are terrorists, and they are looking to crawl under any rock they can find. Lift up My Brother's Keeper and I'm sure a few roaches will come scurrying out. You don't have to betray any innocent students. You just need to help your son get his life back.

(SHE goes to the door.)

Think about what you're doing. What you've done to this family. They're watching you.

(JEAN exits.)

(END OF SCENE)

ACT IScene 7

SETTING: JAMES' office at My Brother's Keeper.

AT RISE: JAMES is at his desk, on the phone.

JAMES

Ok, give me his case number . . . got it. Who've we got on this one? . . . He worked on that Iranian couple's civil suit, right? . . . Ok, that's good. Listen, we need to follow up on this every step of the way. As soon as you get the word, I want you to call Mike Hennessey at the DA's office; Doreen's got the number. Don't mention my name, just tell him the Congressman's with us on this one. . . . I've already talked to him. His position is clear: if it involves a misdemeanor criminal case, there should no automatic deportation proceeding. You saw the press conference? . . . Problem is, if he sticks his neck out too far he won't be around in two more years. He barely made it through the primary . . .

(JAMES laughs.)

Jesus, Tom, you're brutal. Just let it go for now. Focus on getting this kid off; let me worry about that angle. And don't forget to let that reporter at the Sun know what you're up to.

. . .

(FORD enters. Throughout the scene, he noses about the office, looking at books, etc.)

Yeah, him. . . . Yeah, it was a decent piece, fair enough. Hey, Tom, I've gotta go. . . . Ok, I'll talk to you later. Bye.

(JAMES hangs up.)

Detective Halligan. Can I help you with something?

FORD

I'm sure you could, if you wanted to.

JAMES

Why don't you try me.

FORD

Ok. Give me every file you've got. Names, numbers, last known addresses, list of overseas contacts, bank information, everything.

JAMES

You have a warrant?

(FORD tosses a restaurant receipt on the desk. JAMES picks it up.)

Still eating at those fast food joints? It'll catch up to you eventually.

FORD

Can't be any worse than the macrobiotic crap you shoved down my throat. That stuff gave me gas.

JAMES

In fairness, that was your mother. She picked it up in India.

FORD

That's not all she picked up.

JAMES

If you're going to constantly throw it in my face, as if I deliberately injected her with malaria --

FORD

She never wanted to go there.

JAMES

It was her idea; I've told you a hundred times.

FORD

Yeah. Her idea. You still do that yoga?

JAMES

Whenever I have the time.

FORD

You smoke while you're doing it?

JAMES

Actually, I've quit, just so you know.

(FORD finds an ashtray,
and dumps its contents on
the floor.)

FORD

Yeah. You quit. See, that's what I love about you, James. One hand doesn't know what the other hand is doing.

JAMES

Is this a business visit, Ford, or is it personal?

FORD

It's always personal. But I've got business with you, too.

JAMES

Then why don't you state that business, so I can get back to mine.

FORD

You already know. Malik Allen.

JAMES

I already told you, I don't know where he is. Or who he is.

FORD

The Feds intercepted a phone call by a man named Abdul. He mentioned Malik Allen by name.

JAMES

Abdul?

FORD

Yeah. Sound familiar?

JAMES

It's a common name. I may have crossed paths with several Abduls over the years; I don't remember.

FORD

This Abdul has ties to Hezbollah and Al-Qaeda. It's definite; there's no question on this one. Malik Allen is active in an operation that's in its final stages.

JAMES

Did they trace the call?

FORD

From Jordan to a man in Florida. The Feds have already got him.

JAMES

But why would they mention his name on the phone? Malik Allen could be a code name, he might not even exist --

FORD

Or he could be Hassan Houkman, who disappeared over three months ago instead of facing the charges against him.

JAMES

But you didn't even have this information three months ago, so what could it have to do with him?

FORD

But he's still out there. If we had him we could at least question him. Find out what he knows.

JAMES

But you still haven't told me why you think Hassan Houkman is Malik Allen.

FORD

I've told you everything I can tell you without compromising the investigation. Put aside our personal differences. You've seen what these people can do. If you know anything about the whereabouts of this man, you need to tell me.

JAMES

If I hear anything, or if he contacts me, I will let him know you need to speak with him --

FORD

Let me know, mother-fucker, not him! God-damn you!

(FORD sweeps everything
off the desk.)

I need to know what he knows! You hear me?

JAMES

I've seen how you question people. Thanks for leaving me alone with your partner.

FORD

I left you alone so I wouldn't do worse. Understand? You make me sick.

JAMES

You think this makes you a man, Ford? To bully people, push them around?

FORD

You wouldn't know anything about it.

JAMES

I know what I taught you.

FORD

You didn't teach me shit! Sergeant Akins taught me, Captain Murdaugh taught me, yes sir, yes sir!

JAMES

You needed it.

FORD

I needed it.

JAMES

You were drinking, smoking pot --

FORD

And you needed a vacation, needed to find yourself --

JAMES

That's not --

FORD

You needed to go to India, so who's got time to take care of a kid?

JAMES

You needed discipline.

FORD

So you pack me off to military school? You hypocrite.

JAMES

We did the best we could.

FORD

Leave my mother out of it.

JAMES

No, not your saintly mother --

FORD

Fuck you --

JAMES

She's pure and innocent --

(FORD grabs JAMES by the
lapels.)

FORD

Fuck you old man!

JAMES

Ford! You're a police officer!

(FORD releases JAMES,
trying to get control
of himself.)

FORD

I'll close down this place. I'll shut it down.

JAMES

You don't have the authority to do that.

FORD

I'll get a warrant. I'll raid this office every week --

JAMES

Like you did at the mosque?

FORD

That's right. I'll be breathing down your neck.

JAMES

Well, at least we'd see other more often. I never wanted it to be like this, Ford.

FORD

Yeah, well, shit happens.

JAMES

It sure does. I would help if you if I could, son, I really would. But I already did that once, and I can't do it again.

FORD

What are you talking about?

JAMES

Jean told me. About the gambling.

FORD

God-damn it.

JAMES

I don't know why you do this to yourself.

FORD

I paid you back.

JAMES

I know you did.

FORD

I paid you every dime.

JAMES

I know you did. But somehow you're still paying. And I'm still paying, too.

FORD

I don't know why . . . I just -- I'm -- I'm not in control. I can't control it.

JAMES

We all feel that way sometimes. Ford, if Detroit had never happened -- if the world was the way it used to be, I think we could find a way back to each other.

FORD

But the world did change. In a big way. If you won't help me, I need to treat you like anybody else under suspicion. I'll be watching you.

(FORD starts to leave.)

JAMES

There's something you need to know.

FORD

What's that?

JAMES

Someone's watching you, too.

FORD

Who?

JAMES

It's a shame you don't know, son. It's a real shame you don't understand.

(FORD exits. Lights
down on JAMES.)

(End of scene)

HASSAN

I needed space.

JAMES

Damn it, Hassan --

HASSAN

Yes, damn it, damn it all! I'll burn the house down. I'll knock the windows out.

JAMES

What's wrong with you? Are you crazy?

HASSAN

Very nearly, I believe. Yes, I enjoy reading five books a week, and talking to the spider in the corner of my room; he's very good company. But going crazy? That's a novel idea. It would really help pass the time.

JAMES

You need to go upstairs.

HASSAN

Upstairs! Paradise awaits! The radio, the bed, the wonderful humidity. Let's have a party! Invite the neighbors!

JAMES

Will you keep your voice down?

(JAMES turns on the TV.)

Hassan, what is it? Have I offended you in some way?

HASSAN

You, my savior? I owe you my life. Problem is, my friend, it's not much of a life.

JAMES

Would you rather be in prison? Facing the tribunal?

HASSAN

I would rather be watching TV.

(HASSAN sits down.)

Ah, a daytime talk show. The average American. The average Joe.

JAMES

Can I get you a beer?

HASSAN

Ha! I knew it! He does have a sense of humor!

JAMES

Keep your voice down.

(JAMES turns the TV up.)

HASSAN

James, you really are paranoid. The neighbors are fifty feet away.

JAMES

I don't care. Someone could be watching. Or listening.

(HASSAN turns the TV down.)

HASSAN

Let them get their own TV.

(JAMES turns it back up.)

JAMES

I am not paranoid, Hassan. People are watching. The police, they are watching.

HASSAN

What makes you think so?

JAMES

I just know it.

HASSAN

Sitting in that little room, going crazy is not an idle threat. It's a very real possibility.

JAMES

So you will risk your life, to watch TV --

HASSAN

No one will know.

JAMES

It's my life too! I'm a collaborator. I could face the death penalty.

(HASSAN turns off the TV.)

HASSAN

Then why are you doing it?

JAMES

What?

HASSAN

Why did you decide to help me?

JAMES

Because I knew you. Because we were friends.

HASSAN

So it's a personal mission. Not a principle at all.

JAMES

I don't see a contradiction.

HASSAN

If you are helping me because we are friends, then the righteousness of your cause is irrelevant. You would help me right or wrong.

JAMES

Why should it be wrong to help a friend, if you know . . .

HASSAN

If you know?

JAMES

He is innocent.

HASSAN

I'm sorry, James. I've been very selfish. Please forgive me.

(HASSAN exits to the stairs.
JAMES notices the phone and
stares at it. HE climbs the
stairs to the bedroom.)

ACT IScene 9

SETTING: HASSAN's room.

AT RISE: HASSAN is already in the room when JAMES enters. There is a tray of fruit, cheese, and a knife on the table.

JAMES

Did you use the phone?

HASSAN

Why do you ask?

JAMES

I ask because I want to know. Were you on the phone before I came in?

HASSAN

No, I was not on the phone before you came in.

JAMES

Then why was the phone moved?

HASSAN

Excuse me?

JAMES

Why was the phone moved? It was pushed against the lamp. I left it where it always sits, in front of the lamp.

HASSAN

You keep track of the phone's relationship to the lamp?

JAMES

I know where it sits.

HASSAN

No offense, but there are more important relationships you could be worrying about.

JAMES

Just answer the question.

HASSAN

Like with Jean, for example. That was quite a scene the other day.

JAMES

You were listening?

HASSAN

Only for a minute. I can hear from the stairs.

JAMES

Then she could've heard you too.

HASSAN

If I was making noise.

JAMES

About the phone --

HASSAN

I'm sorry to hear about your son.

JAMES

Stop changing the subject, Hassan. Just tell me who you were on the phone with.

HASSAN

I have told you, I was not on the phone.

JAMES

Why are you lying? Who did you call?

HASSAN

Why are you lying to me about the police? I heard what you told your wife.

JAMES

I didn't want you to be worried.

HASSAN

So you make up some story about muggers?

JAMES

I was assaulted, by two men. The cops chased them off. It was right before they took me in.

HASSAN

And the police were the ones who beat you?

JAMES

One cop. Detective Roberts.

HASSAN

Oh, Detective Roberts. How fortunate.

JAMES

You know him?

HASSAN

Detective Roberts has been hanging around the mosque for years, even before Detroit. He's had it in for us for a long time.

JAMES

For you, you mean.

HASSAN

He mentioned me?

JAMES

Hassan, I'm not here to be interrogated by you. I asked you a simple question and I expect an honest answer. Did you use the phone before I came in?

HASSAN

For the last time, no. I did not.

JAMES

Then why was it moved?

HASSAN

I don't know. Perhaps I bumped the table.

JAMES

Did you?

HASSAN

I don't remember. Maybe you moved it.

JAMES

I didn't move it.

HASSAN

Perhaps the lamp and the phone are having a love affair, and they wanted to be closer together.

JAMES

You're full of humor today, aren't you? What's changed? Who have you talked to?

HASSAN

You are the one who has suddenly changed, my friend. Why has your humor deserted you?

(JAMES crosses to the mirror
and grabs the photograph.)

JAMES

Who is this? Tell me the truth.

HASSAN

I told you already. His name --

JAMES

Malik Allen? Is that his name? Or is that your name?

(HASSAN stares at JAMES.)

HASSAN

Where did you hear that name?

JAMES

It doesn't matter where. Who is he?

(HASSAN takes the photo from
JAMES. HE replaces it on
the mirror.)

HASSAN

Malik Allen is dead.

JAMES

How did he die?

HASSAN

He was killed by Israeli police. Many years ago. I knew his mother and sister. Why are you asking about Malik Allen?

JAMES

Certain people seem to think he's involved in terrorist activities. And alive.

HASSAN

I have no doubt the Israeli government considered him a troublemaker, maybe even a terrorist. But their judgments are highly subjective.

JAMES

And you know he's dead?

HASSAN

I am certain of it.

JAMES

How can you be certain?

HASSAN

Because the Palestinian Authority sent his mother a check for two-thousand dollars. They don't hand out money for nothing. Where did you find out about Allen?

JAMES

From Roberts.

HASSAN

Detective Roberts?

JAMES

He says you're Allen. He says your name's fake.

HASSAN

So this is what's going on. Roberts is getting to you.

JAMES

He had photos --

HASSAN

James, can't you see? It's so obvious. Israeli security shares information with Homeland, Homeland shares information with the local police, they attach my photo to Malik's name --

JAMES

Why? Why would they do that?

HASSAN

Because I told the Jordanian police I was him. I told you, we dropped false names all the time when the police rounded us up. Malik's sister gave me his I.D. after he died. It was useful.

JAMES

And I suppose the Jordanian police share information with the Israelis.

HASSAN

They have spies. It all gets around. James, these things happened many years ago. And I was never Malik Allen.

JAMES

But you lied.

HASSAN

Yes. I lied.

(HASSAN sits down and reaches
for the knife. JAMES beats him
to it. THEY look at each other.
JAMES starts to cut and distribute
the fruit and cheese.)

James, I am sorry about today. For angering you. I hope you
believe what I say.

JAMES

Of course I believe you.

HASSAN

Everything?

JAMES

Yes. Everything.

HASSAN

Roberts, you can't trust him.

JAMES

I don't.

HASSAN

And we have known each other for years.

JAMES

Have we?

HASSAN

What do you mean?

JAMES

We have spoken many times. We have attended events together.
We have been to each other's houses, met each other's wives.
Does this mean we know each other?

HASSAN

How else does one get to know another person?

JAMES

I don't know. How do we ever really know if we know someone?
Or if we only know what they want us to perceive?

HASSAN

You have to trust yourself more than that.

JAMES

It's a matter of trusting the other person.

HASSAN

No, it's a matter of trusting yourself. You trust other people
because your heart tells you to.

JAMES

And what if your heart is wrong?

HASSAN

The heart never lies. Only the mind does that.

JAMES

So you believe.

HASSAN

Who is someone you completely trust?

JAMES

Father Morrison.

HASSAN

And why do you trust him?

JAMES

I've known him my whole life --

HASSAN

Ah, ah -- you've already said that doesn't matter. Besides, he
could change over time. Why do you trust him right now?

JAMES

Because . . . I'm not sure I can say.

HASSAN

You can't say. But you still feel it is true.

JAMES

Yes.

HASSAN

And that is why it must be so. Because you feel it here.

(HASSAN touches JAMES' chest.)

JAMES

I thought you were supposed to feel it in your gut.

HASSAN

A gut feeling, eh? That's instinct. Speaking of gut --

(HASSAN crosses to the door.)

JAMES

Where are you going?

HASSAN

Wait.

(HASSAN exits. JAMES rises,
knife in hand.)

JAMES

Hassan --

(JAMES slowly sits back down.
HASSAN reenters with a cake from
the kitchen, lit with candles.)

HASSAN

Did you forget?

JAMES

So that's what you've been up to.

HASSAN

Happy Birthday, James. Blow out your candles.

(JAMES does so.)

I trust you, my friend. And I know this in my heart.

(Lights out)

(END OF ACT I)

ACT II

Scene 1

SETTING: The same Catholic church.

AT RISE: JAMES speaks to Father Morrison
as FORD did before.

JAMES

I do, Father Morrison, I have great respect for the law. It's why I became a lawyer in the first place. But we both follow a higher law. That's why I know you understand me. I'm in a delicate situation. It has nothing to do with My Brother's Keeper, at least not directly. I wish I could say more, but people's lives hang in the balance.

(Morrison speaks.)

It may all just be a misunderstanding. There's a man I helped, an imam at a mosque. You know what's happened to so many people. I couldn't let that happen to my friend. So I hid him.

(Morrison speaks.)

That's what I'm afraid of. I'm not sure anymore. What if I am just a dupe, totally naive? It may all come down to his name. Malik Allen. It's not the name I've known him by all these years. He's always conducted himself with honor and integrity, as far as I know. And really, what else is there? Except ...

(Morrison speaks.)

Everything I don't know.

(During the preceding speech, in near darkness, we see HASSAN descend the stairs from HIS room to the living room. HE picks up the phone and dials.

HASSAN

So everything is arranged? . . . There can be no room for error. Complete secrecy, you understand? . . . No. No one knows. . . . Alone, of course. . . . Tonight, yes. You have the address? Good. I will be ready.

(HASSAN hangs up the phone.)

(BLACKOUT)

(End of scene)

ACT IIScene 2

SETTING: Outside My Brother's Keeper.

AT RISE: JAMES is just leaving. FIRST MAN is waiting for him.

FIRST MAN

Mr. Halligan.

JAMES

Yes, can I -- stay away from me.

FIRST MAN

Hey, don't worry. I'm not gonna hurt ya. That was just a little misunderstanding the other day. I just wanna talk.

JAMES

I don't need to talk to you.

FIRST MAN

Two people can talk, can't they? Ain't that what you said? There should be a dialogue.

JAMES

I never said -

FIRST MAN

Yeah you did. On the radio. They were interviewing you on KCP.

JAMES

I did do the interview. But I was not referring to the two of us.

FIRST MAN

But you could've been, right? People on different sides of the aisle have got to come together and dialogue. Right?

JAMES

Politically, yes. You are a violent person, who only speaks with his fists --

FIRST MAN

You got me all wrong, I was just pissed the other day. Kind of fucked up, too. And my friend, you remember him, he was saying we should come down here, so -- hell, I don't even remember why we come.

JAMES

Well it's no harm done, but I have to go --

(FIRST MAN steps in front of JAMES.)

FIRST MAN

I said I need to talk to you.

JAMES

You said you wanted to talk to me. But I need to leave.

FIRST MAN

See, now that's gonna make me lose my temper. Cuz you know one thing I can't stand? Hypocrites. Just like all them politicians you rub elbows with, you're just like them, ain't you?

JAMES

I'm not like them -

FIRST MAN

But look at you, you say folks should dialogue, and now you wanna run outta here without letting me say what I got to say. See, you don't realize something.

JAMES

I don't need to hear this.

FIRST MAN

You need to hear it, ok? I'm from Detroit, Mr. Halligan. You hear that? I was born and raised there. My family's from there. My friends are from there. My whole life was in Detroit. Only reason I'm still alive is cuz I was in Florida.

JAMES

I'm sorry. I'm sorry for your loss.

(HE grabs JAMES.)

FIRST MAN

You're sorry? You ain't sorry! What are you doing, huh? What the fuck are you doing?

JAMES

You need to leave me alone, I can't help you, I'm sorry -

FIRST MAN

Right, you can't help me! You can't help my mother, and my sister, and my neighborhood friends! You can't do anything!

JAMES

Please, I'm not responsible. I didn't do this.

(FIRST MAN punches JAMES in the stomach, then the face, knocking him to the ground.)

FIRST MAN

What you need to do is dialogue with the right people, asshole.

(HE kicks JAMES.)

People who were born here. People who belong here.

JAMES

Please, just -

FIRST MAN

Shut up!

(HE kicks JAMES again.)

I was wrong about you, Halligan. I thought I could reason with you. But you're just never gonna stop, are you?

JAMES

Please stop . . .

(HE kicks JAMES again.)

FIRST MAN

Naw, you won't stop. Cause there's something wrong with you.
You're sick somehow.

(FIRST MAN takes out a knife.)

JAMES

Please, you don't need to do this --

FIRST MAN

I don't want to, you know. I have to. Someone's gotta protect
people from you.

JAMES

Just go away. You've done enough . . .

(FIRST MAN kicks HIM again.)

FIRST MAN

You ain't getting away this time, fucker. You hear me?

(FIRST MAN kneels down and
grabs JAMES by the jacket,
knife to his throat.)

Nowhere to run. Ain't no nigger cop gonna save your ass.

(JAMES' hand has found a beer
bottle. HE smashes it across
FIRST MAN'S face. FIRST MAN
screams and falls. JAMES gets
up and hits HIM, over and over
again, until HE stops moving.)

JAMES

Nowhere to run.

(JAMES exits.)

(End of scene.)

ACT IIScene 3

SETTING: HASSAN'S room.

AT RISE: HASSAN and FORD are sitting
at the table.

FORD
I need to see the money up front.

HASSAN
Half now, and half paid when I am safely out of the country, as
we agreed.

FORD
Just so you know, it ain't easy. We got to pay bribes at the
border.

HASSAN
I thought that was arranged ahead of time.

FORD
It's arranged, but you got to know. You in deep.

HASSAN
I realize that - I'm sorry, what was your name again?

FORD
Terrell.

HASSAN
Terrell, forgive me, but think I understand you and your
associates. You are men accustomed to using certain methods, to
make things happen -

FORD
Forget my other business. I got the channels to import my
product, and I can just send you through in reverse, ok? That's
how it's gonna work.

HASSAN

Yes but, I need you to understand, it is very important to me that no one gets hurt, that we -

FORD

You worried about getting hurt, Mr. Jones?

HASSAN

Of course I am concerned for my safety. I meant that no one else gets hurt.

FORD

You don't have to worry about that. It's all gonna be smooth. We won't let 'em catch up with you.

HASSAN

Let who?

FORD

Whoever you running from, baby. Feds, most likely. Kind of hard on your type lately, huh?

HASSAN

If my money is good with you, it shouldn't matter why I want to leave.

FORD

Nah, it don't matter. Just need to know who I'm dealing with. I'm taking all the risks, see. And this ain't your house, is it?

HASSAN

No.

FORD

So the guy who owns it, what's his part in this?

HASSAN

The man who owns this house has been very kind to me, and that is why I can no longer risk being here. We need to leave him out of it.

FORD

Sound like he already in.

HASSAN

There should be no mention, no connection to this house whatsoever. We leave tonight, and that's it.

FORD

Look Mr. Jones, we can do this, or we can not do this. But I need to know who I'm dealing with, cuz I'm not gonna fuck my shit up over you and the people who know you.

HASSAN

No one knows me. My friends are either dead, gone, or in jail by now.

FORD

Except the guy who gave you my number.

HASSAN

I have not heard from Mihyar in over six months. I had to sneak downstairs just to call you.

FORD

So he don't know I'm here?

HASSAN

Who?

FORD

The guy who owns this house.

HASSAN

No. He doesn't think I should leave.

FORD

Why not?

HASSAN

Because of the risk.

FORD

Risky to leave, risky to stay.

HASSAN

Yes.

(FORD coughs. HE gets
up and moves to the desk,
flipping through the papers)

FORD

Why you gotta leave right now? What's different?

HASSAN

I told you, I no longer wish to compromise my friend's safety.

FORD

Why wouldn't he be safe?

HASSAN

Why are you looking through my things?

FORD

I need to know you, Mr. Jones. I need to trust you.

(HASSAN pulls out an envelope)

HASSAN

I have the money. Trust in that.

(FORD takes the envelope
and looks inside. HE
coughs again.)

Ford

How do I know you'll come up with the rest?

HASSAN

My people will pay you what is owed.

FORD

What people?

HASSAN

Friends in Jordan. They will pay your people, as we discussed.

FORD

I need to know who they are.

HASSAN

I am giving you fifty-thousand up front. Why would I risk my life trying to rip you off?

FORD

You wouldn't be risking it. You'd be ending it.

HASSAN

Then believe that you will be paid the full amount.

FORD

This aint no game here. I need collateral. You need to give me names and numbers. So I know who to blame if shit don't go down like it's supposed to.

HASSAN

This is unreasonable.

FORD

Then you ain't goin' nowhere, huh? How 'bout that? You just sit here and wait 'til they come for you.

(FORD coughs again, longer.)

HASSAN

You are asking me to put my friends at risk, when I have told you -

FORD

They pay the money there's nothing to worry about. No risk. Unless you lie about who they are, and what those numbers are. That I guarantee you, I will find out. Cuz I'll check it out ahead of time.

(FORD coughs again, longer.)

HASSAN

Are you all right?

FORD

Yeah.

HASSAN

I know it's stuffy. The humidifier is broken.

FORD

You should get that thing fixed.

HASSAN

It gets really dry.

FORD

Dry as the Sahara in summer.

(A pause.)

HASSAN

Yes.

FORD

So what's it gonna be? I want two names, two numbers, and their addresses, and they better be real. And I want 'em right now.

(FORD sits down opposite
HASSAN. HE pulls out paper
and a pen, puts them on the
table.)

HASSAN

You already know one address. You are right here.

FORD

Oh, so now you not so worried about your friend, huh?

HASSAN

Do you want this name? Or would you prefer another?

FORD

Hell, I can get this guy out of the phone book. Naw, that's not gonna do it. Two of your other friends.

HASSAN

Why not this man? If you know right where to find him?

FORD

Because it's too easy for you. I seen the pictures downstairs. White guy, right? Not one of yours.

HASSAN

Not one of yours either.

FORD

You God-damn right.

(FORD coughs.)

Now cut the bullshit. We here to do business. You give me what I want, I'll make sure you get what you want. Understand?

HASSAN

I have no doubt you intend to get what you want tonight, my friend.

FORD

I aint your fuckin' friend!

(FORD is on HIS feet.)

Who you think you're dealing with? You think I give a fuck what happens to you?

(HE takes out a gun.)

Aint nobody here but you and me baby. I could waste your ass right now and take the fifty grand. Or do you think your boys might come looking for me, huh? Who do you hang with Mr. Jones? Should I be scared?

(FORD starts poking HASSAN.)

You got one of them suicide vests on right now? Gonna blow us both to kingdom come if things get hairy?

HASSAN

Would that make it easier for you? If I gave you a reason?

FORD

Go ahead, give me a reason. Hell, I don't need the money, Ali Baba.

(FORD grabs HASSAN from
behind and puts the gun
to his head.)

What you got planned, huh? Why you got to skip town all of a sudden? C'mon, tell me what's going down and I won't hurt ya.

HASSAN

I don't know what you're talking about!

FORD

Sure you do, you know! Just tell me one thing so I can steer clear of it, ok? Just one clue and we can get out of here put this whole thing behind us.

HASSAN

There's nothing I can tell you.

FORD

You tell me what the fuck is going down or so help me Jesus I will blow your brains all over this motherfucking room. I don't even care. It's you or them, understand? Give up those fucking names.

HASSAN

Ok, all right, I'll tell you! I'll tell you everything.

(FORD releases HIM and
sits back down. HE puts
his gun away.)

FORD

Just so we understand each other. So I know I'll be around to spend that money you throwing my way.

HASSAN

Are you a religious man, Terrell?

FORD

No. Can't say I am.

HASSAN

But you are a smart man, and a resourceful man, and in fact a leader of men. Or else you could not have risen to the top of your profession.

FORD

That's true.

HASSAN

You could have succeeded in anything. You could have become a lawyer, or a doctor, or even a policeman, if you had wanted to.

FORD

You're not telling me what I want to hear.

HASSAN

I will. But you said you wanted us to understand each other.

FORD

I would like that. I really would.

HASSAN

And to do that, men must be honest, don't you agree? There comes a time when a man must reveal himself for who he truly is.

FORD

Absolutely.

HASSAN

You chose to carry a gun, to use it as you see fit, Am I correct?

FORD

And you? Did you choose a violent life, Mr. Jones?

HASSAN

Go to my desk drawer and look inside. Then you will discover who I really am.

(FORD gets up and crosses
to the desk, HIS back to HASSAN.
HE removes a passport.)

FORD

It says you're Hassan Houkman. That don't really tell me much, Mr. Jones.

HASSAN

It's just a name. But I can give you another name. Someone capable of great violence.

FORD

Then give me that name.

HASSAN

Are you sure you're ready to hear it?

FORD

I said I was.

HASSAN

Ford Halligan.

(A brief pause. FORD
whips out his gun.)

FORD

Put your hands on your head! Now! Put your hands on top of your head!

(HASSAN does so. FORD
crosses and handcuffs HIM.
JAMES enters.)

JAMES

No, Ford. Not this.

(FORD pulls HASSAN up and
pushes him against a wall.)

FORD

Had him here the whole time, huh Dad?

JAMES

You're making a mistake.

HASSAN

It's all right, James.

FORD

You endangered the life of millions of people, hiding a terrorist, right here -

JAMES

He's not a terrorist -

FORD

He sat right there across from me and admitted it!

HASSAN

You had a gun to my head.

FORD

How did he know who I was? What did you tell him about me?

JAMES

He knew you were a cop? Sitting right there?

HASSAN

It was the asthma.

JAMES

You can't take him.

FORD

I am taking him.

JAMES

He's not who you think he is.

FORD

Stop lying to yourself. Wake up!

JAMES

Ford, you're wrong. I can't let you take him.

FORD

You can't get out of this one, James. I'm taking him in. And I'm taking you too.

(JAMES grabs the gun from
the table, showing it to FORD.)

JAMES

He could've killed you!

(FORD pulls his gun and
points it at JAMES.)

FORD

Drop that weapon.

HASSAN

James -

JAMES

It was here the whole time!

FORD

Drop the weapon!

(JAMES points his gun
at FORD.)

JAMES

No. Drop yours.

HASSAN

James!

FORD

You are threatening the life of a police officer. I need you to drop the gun.

JAMES

I can't do it, Ford. I can't let you.

FORD

You have to.

JAMES

He could've killed you!

HASSAN

James, it's too late.

FORD

I'm warning you. On the count of three.

JAMES

I'll do it, Ford.

FORD

On three, you drop the gun.

JAMES

Whatever it takes.

FORD

Or I'll kill you.

HASSAN

James, please --

FORD

One.

HASSAN

James!

FORD

Two -

(HASSAN lunges at FORD and
bumps him just as JAMES fires.
HASSAN is shot and falls, dead.
A moment while the two men stare.
FORD raises his gun and shoots
JAMES, killing him.)

(Lights)

(End of scene)

ACT IIScene 4

SETTING: HASSAN'S room, one week later.
There is crime scene tape blocking
the stairs.

AT RISE: FORD is looking around the room,
lost in thought. JEAN enters.

JEAN

Ford? They told me at the station you might be here. I thought
I'd check --

FORD

Ask Officer Friendly.

JEAN

You shouldn't torture yourself. It's hard enough as it is.

(FORD doesn't reply.)

None of this is your fault. No one blames you. I don't blame
you. You know that, don't you?

FORD

There are no accidents.

JEAN

Ford, listen to me. You know I loved your father. No matter
what, even at the end, I never stopped loving him. And I know
he did what he thought was right. But his stubbornness cost him.
This man, this Malik Allen -

FORD

Hassan Houkman.

JEAN

Whatever his name was, he lied to your father. He used him, and James let himself be used. It's not your fault that this man killed your father before you could stop him. You have to believe that.

FORD

Believe, my son, and you will be saved. Praise Jesus!

JEAN

Maybe you should talk to Father Morrison. You were always close to him.

FORD

"Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death" -

JEAN

Ford -

FORD

"I will fear no evil, for thou art with me."

JEAN

Ford, I think -

FORD

"Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; thou annointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over."

JEAN

You don't need to mock me. Do you think you're the only one who's suffering?

FORD

"Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for such is the kingdom of God."

JEAN

God-damn you anyway.

FORD

Yeah, let the devil in.

JEAN

You don't need to push me away.

FORD

Just the facts, ma'am.

JEAN

All right, Ford. Have it your way. What do you intend to do with the house?

FORD

What house?

JEAN

The house. This house, your house. Don't you know?

(FORD just stares at her.)

Your father wrote me out of his will after the divorce. This is your house now.

(Silence.)

Ford? Did you hear me? You can sell it if you want. You can pay off your gambling debts.

FORD

I already took care of that.

JEAN

You paid your debt? Where did you get the money?

FORD

I'm resourceful. A nigger got his ways.

JEAN

Ford! Will you stop this!

FORD

What's the matter momma? You don't know who you raised?

JEAN

I know you are hurting right now.

FORD

You don't know shit.

JEAN

I know my son.

FORD

Whoever he was. Your trigger-happy little bitch.

JEAN

What do you hope to gain from this?

FORD

I've already gained it, momma, it's all mine. I saved the world, you know that? Like the Lone Ranger and Tonto. They should put my face on Mt. Rushmore. Or maybe I should just go back to Africa.

(Their lines start overlapping.)

JEAN

Why why why are you doing this?

FORD

I'm Oedipus the King! Let's get married. We can live here together, like old times.

JEAN

You stupid little shit!

FORD

This is our kingdom, the old man's out of the way!

JEAN

You need to sober up, you need to shut up -

FORD

Need a bigger gun, not enough bullets -

JEAN

You shut up and you go see Father Morrison -

FORD

I'll burn this place down, I'll knock out the windows -

JEAN

What happened? What happened here?

FORD

All in the report.

JEAN

Why didn't you have back-up?

FORD

We do things by the book!

JEAN

Where was your back-up? Why were you alone?

FORD

The Lone Ranger!

JEAN

Where was your back-up?

FORD

I saved the whole mutherfucking world!

(JEAN is hitting him.)

JEAN

What did you do? What did you do? What did you do?

(Sobbing, JEAN runs out of the house. FORD sits with his head in his hands. HE doesn't move. Slowly, he raises his head as a memory comes to HIM. HE gets up and moves the bed. FORD prys

up a loose floorboard and removes an old box from its hiding place. HE sits down at the table and starts to remove items from the box, looking at them, lost in memory. JAMES enters the living room.)

JAMES

Hey champ, you were great out there! Did you see your mom and me sitting in the stands? Yeah, we were there the whole time! That was a solid hit you had in the third inning. He caught the ball but you really connected on the swing, that's the important thing. Now, Ford, you can't let the other kids get to you. They're just jealous because they're not as special as you. Well, if you'd rather play tennis this Fall, that's your decision, you know how much your old dad likes his baseball but, hey, as long you're outside and getting your exercise. Ford, listen to me. I'm serious about this. Don't let those other kids discourage you. Remember this: if you do something, you need to own it. And if you think it's the right thing to do, then I trust your judgement. I'm proud of you. Ford! You're a police officer!

(On this last line, there is a sudden tonal shift and the lights go out on JAMES. FORD is startled out of his reverie and sits straight up.

(Lights fade.)

(END OF PLAY)

APPENDIX B

ACT IScene 1

SETTING: A Catholic church.

AT RISE: FORD speaks out to the audience,
but is addressing the unseen
Father Morrison.

FORD

This isn't about turning the other cheek. He was dangerous. He tried to kill me. And there are people like him everywhere, trying to destroy us. Look what happened to Detroit, look around you. I'm a police detective. It's what I was meant to do.

(Morrison speaks.)

Hassan Houkman. Yes. That was his name.

(Pause)

Father Morrison, if you kill a man in self-defense, is that killing justified?

(Morrison speaks.)

But what if it wasn't self-defense. What if it was really ... anger. Or revenge. What if you've been waiting for something your whole life, and you don't even realize it until the moment comes?

(Morrison speaks.)

Father, can I ask you a favor?

(Morrison answers.)

Will you pray for me? Because I think -- maybe, I don't know -- if someone prays for me, really, really hard, maybe I can find it. Put everything back together again, curl up with it at night and remember. What I lost. What we all lost.

ACT IScene 2

SETTING: The street, a few weeks earlier.

AT RISE: FORD has just transitioned from the confessional and is now on the street, where he meets ROBERTS, who is eating a gyro.

ROBERTS

Happy day happy day.

FORD

Thought you were off the hoof.

ROBERTS

Back on, lucky guy.

FORD

What happened to the research detail?

ROBERTS

No need. Didn't ya hear? They got al-Jazeera off the air. Broadcasting license revoked. Now when I get one of these from that little deli on Central, I won't have to listen to all that Arabic propaganda while I'm in there.

FORD

How do you know it's propaganda if it's in Arabic?

ROBERTS

What else would it be? So fill me in.

FORD

You remember that junkie tagger we busted last July, kid with the metal backpack?

ROBERTS

Mandroid-1?

FORD

That's him. He's my source on this northeast art scene. Lot of crystal, X, shit like that flows through there.

ROBERTS

Didn't know you had Mandroid cooped up. Thanks for sharing.

FORD

There was an art opening across the river, some abandoned factory. "The Art of Protest in Fascist America."

ROBERTS

And?

FORD

There was a group of Muslims there, people of middle-eastern descent. Mandroid thought they were mostly civilian types, artists, intellectuals.

ROBERTS

Any soldiers?

FORD

Two guys with the long beards, maybe. I wouldn't trust his judgment.

ROBERTS

If we knew about this art opening ahead of time why wasn't it shut down?

FORD

You got a problem with art, Roberts?

ROBERTS

I know exactly what they're about. "Art of Protest."

FORD

As it turns out the party yielded valuable information. A guy named Mihyar let it be known he had Black Beauty for sale.

ROBERTS

A Habib with a Canadian connection? Toronto?

FORD

Or Montreal. He had a French accent.

ROBERTS

So he can get Black Beauty into the country. Or knows who can get it in.

FORD

Which means he can get something out of the country as well. Or someone.

ROBERTS

If a Habib needs to get out of the country right now it's pretty tough. He would need someone like Mihyar.

FORD

And I've already got Mihyar. Anyone who contacts him, contacts me.

ROBERTS

You have been busy. What's our next move?

(FORD hesitates before answering.)

FORD

Stop by My Brother's Keeper.

ROBERTS

It's about time, right?

FORD

Yeah.

ROBERTS

I knew you'd come around. Hey -- I've gotta step to Marie's for a minute, before we meet up, it's -- a kid thing.

FORD

All right.

(ROBERTS starts to leave.)

Roberts. Drop the Habib thing -- it's unprofessional.

(ROBERTS exits. FORD
stands a moment, thinking,
then takes out an inhaler
and uses it. Exit FORD.)

Act IScene 3

SETTING: A small, sparsely furnished room.
Single bed, desk, two chairs and a
table, radio, humidifier.

AT RISE: HASSAN is writing in a journal.
There's a knock at the door. He
looks up quickly, tensely, then
puts the journal away.

HASSAN

Come in.

(JAMES enters with
a tray of food.)

JAMES

As sala'am alaikum.

HASSAN

Walaikum as sala'am.

(JAMES sets the tray
on the table.)

JAMES

Are you hungry?

HASSAN

Not really. But of course, it is good to eat. Thank you.

(HASSAN starts cutting up
an apple with a knife.)

What goes on in the great wide world?

JAMES

You heard Fitzsimmon?

HASSAN

On their channel, yes. But they're all their channel, aren't they? What are people saying about his Executive Order?

JAMES

My close friends aren't enthusiastic, but they're afraid to speak their minds. You go to the grocery store, the gas station, it's a different story.

HASSAN

And?

JAMES

Mostly pro. If they're not, do you think they're telling it to strangers?

HASSAN

Not unless they want a ringer.

JAMES

Answer the door and you're never heard from again. More and more arrests every day. Arabs, Africans, Indonesians, anyone who looks like they might have a third cousin who crossed paths with a Mujahideen ten years ago --

HASSAN

Muslims.

JAMES

I knew this white skin would come in handy, Hassan.

HASSAN

Hasn't it always?

JAMES

Suppose so. Took it for granted most of my life.

(JAMES lights a cigarette.)

HASSAN

What happened to the patch?

JAMES

Too damn expensive. I ran out on Thursday. And these no-names are only 8 bucks a pack.

HASSAN

Ah, but you know where they come from?

JAMES

Where do you think the orange juice comes from, and the eggs? Same guy. Parking lot on Westfield Ave. You want it, he's got it; trash-bags in a big blue pick-up.

HASSAN

Is this not dangerous, James?

JAMES

You only need to worry about the local cops. No Feds around here. And for 100 bucks they look the other way.

HASSAN

Expensive.

JAMES

But doable.

HASSAN

Well. The lawyer has become the outlaw. Harboring a fugitive, dealing in the black market -- they'd better watch the collection plate at St. Mary's.

JAMES

They are watching.

(HASSAN looks at JAMES.)

HASSAN

But not you. They're not --

JAMES

Who knows, Hassan? Who knows anymore.

HASSAN

You've been there for twenty-five years --

JAMES

I know. I'm sure you're right. But there are new parishioners, a new woman in the rectory; they don't know me. And I don't know them. I don't know who they may be. This one bald man, the way he looks around at Mass -- it may be nothing --

HASSAN

You think he works for the government?

JAMES

They know My Brother's Keeper has strong support in certain parishes.

HASSAN

Both sides are strong there.

JAMES

Yes. And they want to know which side you fall on. So they watch.

(Pause)

HASSAN

So you're not actually stealing from the collection plate.

(THEY both laugh.
A siren is heard, from
a car that comes closer
and eventually fades away.
THEY get very tense and
don't speak until it fades.)

HASSAN

James, I have been thinking.

JAMES

Yes?

HASSAN

I cannot stay here forever.

JAMES

You'll stay as long as you have to.

HASSAN

Yes, but how long will that be? The political situation is not going to suddenly turn around. And even if it did, these charges, they won't just go away.

JAMES

They might, Hassan, because they're bogus to begin with. The law itself is unconstitutional.

HASSAN

Ah, I don't wish to be a test case for the Supreme Court. That could take years to resolve.

JAMES

You need to have patience. Ann Frank hid for how many years?

HASSAN

You give a very bad example.

JAMES

The point is, you're safe here. What other option is there?

HASSAN

Try to get out. Find my family and join them -

JAMES

It's too risky --

HASSAN

It's risky for you to keep me here.

JAMES

Hassan, we've been over this a dozen times.

HASSAN

I have the cash, and a friend gave me a phone number --

JAMES

You want to pay some coyote to smuggle you into Canada; then what? You know the extradition treaty is in full effect. You won't be safe there, and how will you get to Jordan? And don't even think about Mexico.

HASSAN

And so I sit here, and wait. For what? For the end of the world?

(There is silence.)

JAMES

It's hot up here.

HASSAN

And dry. And stuffy.

JAMES

I'll get the humidifier fixed eventually. I guess they don't have the parts available.

HASSAN

It's ok, I'm not complaining.

JAMES

This used to be Ford's room. His asthma would act up, unless we had the humidifier going. Poor kid. He said it was "dry as the Sahara in summer" up here.

HASSAN

"Dry as the Sahara"-- did he actually remember --

JAMES

No, we got him when he was very young. He doesn't remember Africa.

HASSAN

You've never even shown me a photo of Ford.

JAMES

I don't have any photos, anymore.

HASSAN

James, I don't mean to sound ungrateful. I cannot thank you enough for helping me.

JAMES

If our positions were reversed, you would do the same for me.

HASSAN

Yes, but I doubt I would learn to cook so well. Your hummus is fantastic.

JAMES

I've been forced to learn, without Jean around.

HASSAN

But would you have learned these exotic dishes without your secret houseguest?

JAMES

Probably not. Hey, remember when you had that party for Tarik's graduation, with the belly-dancer? That was the first time I ever had hummus.

HASSAN

It was baba ganoush. And the belly-dancer was actually Sara from First National. Remember, the teller who worked on Saturdays?

JAMES

The girl from the bank? That was her?

HASSAN

Yes! You didn't recognize her?

JAMES

I'm not sure I spent much time looking at her face, Hassan.

HASSAN

She was wearing a veil, anyhow. A pink veil, with little sparkles. Very authentic.

JAMES

What, did she take a college class or something?

HASSAN

I don't remember. Naima found her. They used to talk a lot, at the bank.

JAMES

Naima was also an excellent cook, as I recall.

HASSAN

Yes. She was.

JAMES

I'm afraid I can't compare.

HASSAN

This is not the only area in which you fail to measure up, my friend.

JAMES

Well, I could start wearing perfume, if you want.

(Pause)

Hassan. There's something I need to give you.

HASSAN

What is it?

JAMES

I don't mean to alarm you. But things are getting bad outside. Dangerous. I've had death threats.

HASSAN

Did you get the security system installed?

JAMES

I don't mean at My Brother's Keeper. They've called here. And a couple nights ago, I heard voices, outside the window -- it might be nothing --

HASSAN

I think I heard them too.

JAMES

That's why we need to be prepared.

(JAMES takes out a gun.)

HASSAN

No, James! Where did you get that?

JAMES

It doesn't matter.

(JAMES holds the gun out
to HASSAN.)

Just in case.

HASSAN

In case of what? What do you expect me to do with that?

JAMES

Nothing. I'm sure you won't need it. But if you ever did . . .

HASSAN

You know how I feel about this. There is no justification for violence. I've spent the last ten years preaching against this jihadist mentality --

JAMES

This is for self-defense only. Even the Prophet took up arms, to protect himself.

HASSAN

Please, do not cite the Koran. I am the imam, not you. Those were different times, completely different circumstances.

JAMES

These are different times, too. I hardly recognize my country anymore.

HASSAN

Did Gandhi carry a gun? Did Martin Luther King?

JAMES

You are not those men. And neither am I. God knows, I'm sick of trying to measure up to some impossible ideal. Every day, while they harass me, and my staff, and we're supposed to just sit there and take it, it burns me up --

HASSAN

Because you are a man of peace.

JAMES

Am I? I wonder. Sometimes I feel ... this rage, inside me, boiling and churning, just waiting to come up and explode. And not just when I think about Fitzsimmon, or the Mujahideen, or the person on the other end of that phone. When I think about Jean. And Ford. Do you know what that feels like? Have you ever felt something like that?

(HASSAN speaks very slowly.)

HASSAN

Yes. I have felt this way many times.

(JAMES goes to HASSAN and
puts the gun in his hand.)

JAMES

Then be prepared. That's all I'm asking you to do.

HASSAN

Do you know what I was doing that day? On March 22nd?

JAMES

What.

HASSAN

I had just finished praying. Naima was at the market. I was in Tarik's room looking for a book I had lent him. I fished around on his desk, then on the shelf. And you know what I found?

(JAMES shakes his head.)

A pornographic magazine. I couldn't believe it. So there I was, standing with this thing in my hand, when I saw the report on the computer screen. Breaking news from Detroit. Isn't that ridiculous?

JAMES

I was at the mall. I saw it on a TV in a restaurant.

HASSAN

What did he need a magazine for? Like there isn't enough smut on the internet.

(Pause.)

All those people. The children. I just kept staring, I couldn't believe it was real. But it was. And you know, right away, I was afraid. For my family, for myself. Because I knew. I hoped it was someone like Timothy McVeigh, that they would show his sick white face on the screen any minute. But they didn't. I knew it was the Mujahideen. Who else could it be?

JAMES

Do you think these men ever question themselves? Or have they moved beyond all questions of right and wrong?

HASSAN

Who knows? Perhaps they will ask the Devil when they see him. Or maybe the Devil is just a myth, and we have created him in our image.

JAMES

Hassan, don't say that.

(HASSAN puts the gun down.)

HASSAN

I don't need this, my friend. Sooner or later we all leave this world behind. And then we will answer for all our decisions.

(JAMES takes the gun and
puts it in a drawer in the
table as HE speaks.)

JAMES

I'll put it here, just in case. You might change your mind, if
the moment ever comes.

(End of scene)

ACT IScene 4

SETTING: Outside My Brother's Keeper office.

AT RISE: JAMES is locking the door and about to leave. TWO MEN are waiting for him.

FIRST MAN
My Brother's Keeper. See, I told you this was the place.

JAMES
Can I help you with something?

FIRST MAN
Yeah, you can help me. I've got a problem.

JAMES
Ok -- well, we're closed right now.

FIRST MAN
But this can't wait. See, I've got this big truck full of dynamite and nitro glycerin, and I need to know where I can set it off to kill the most Americans.

SECOND MAN
Yeah, we just wanna do our part.

JAMES
Look, you guys, you don't need to do this.

FIRST MAN
Of course we do. That's why you're here, right? To help people kill Americans.

JAMES
No, that's not why I'm --

SECOND MAN

Oh, I know. He needs our credentials. Allah, allah, allah!

FIRST MAN

Allahu akbar! Allahu akbar! Bibbbibibibibibibi!

SECOND MAN

Lalalalalalalalalalala!

JAMES

Shut up! Leave me alone!

FIRST MAN

You a Christian? Where's your cross?

SECOND MAN

Maybe he's a Jew.

FIRST MAN

Yeah, maybe he's a Jew.

SECOND MAN

Nah, he can't be a Jew. He loves Arabs. Jews hate those fuckers.

FIRST MAN

Hey, you love Arabs, right? They're your buddies.

JAMES

You've got no right to do this. There's nothing illegal here.

FIRST MAN

Nothing illegal. You hear that?

(THEY grab JAMES, pushing
HIM against the wall.)

You're a stupid fuck, you know that?

(ROBERTS and FORD enter.)

ROBERTS

Hey, asshole. Leave 'em alone.

FIRST MAN

Who the fuck are you?

(ROBERTS holds up his badge.)

ROBERTS

Get the hell outta here.

(The MEN leave.)

Having a little trouble there?

JAMES

Yes. I guess I was.

ROBERTS

That's a shame. Happen a lot?

JAMES

I have had mail threats, phone calls. I think I've been followed a couple of times. I've reported it all to the police before.

ROBERTS

Oh, you don't have to worry. That was us following you.

JAMES

The police?

ROBERTS

Yeah, at least some of the time. Hell, maybe these guys are after you too. They sure don't seem to like you.

(JAMES addresses FORD.)

JAMES

Is this true?

ROBERTS

I said it was, didn't I?

JAMES

The police are supposed to protect and serve.

ROBERTS

What do you think just happened?

JAMES

You saw what happened, you let them go.

ROBERTS

Yeah, but guess what? We didn't come down here to save your sorry ass. So get in the car, I need to talk to you.

JAMES

Officer --

ROBERTS

Detective.

JAMES

Detective. Are you arresting me?

ROBERTS

No, Jimmy. You haven't done anything wrong, have you? So why should I arrest you?

JAMES

In that case, I am late for an appointment, and I will be --

(ROBERTS grabs JAMES aggressively.)

ROBERTS

Hey asshole, this isn't a request. Get in the fucking car.

FORD

Roberts.

(ROBERTS releases JAMES.)

Wait in the car.

(ROBERTS and FORD look at each other. Reluctantly, ROBERTS exits.)

JAMES

That's your partner? Seems like a nice guy.

FORD

He knows how to get the job done.

JAMES

And what's the job these days?

FORD

Same as it's always been. To protect and serve.

JAMES

By harassing people like me?

FORD

We go where the trail leads us. Wherever that may be.

JAMES

Ford, you don't think --

FORD

Detective Halligan.

JAMES

Ford --

FORD

Detective Halligan.

(A pause.)

JAMES

When I heard about your promotion to detective, I was very proud. You know that? I told everyone, even Mrs. O'Roarke at church, the organist, remember? You'd think Father Morrison had something to do with it, he was crowing so loud.

FORD

Father Morrison was always there for me.

JAMES

I'm sure he was. It's his job --

FORD

No, he was always there for me. When I needed him.

JAMES

We all have roles to play. God gives each of us a task --

(The lines overlap during
the argument.)

FORD

Don't start in with the God crap again --

JAMES

All of us, including me --

FORD

You are hurting this country with what you do --

JAMES

I'm defending people's constitutional rights --

FORD

People who have already killed millions --

JAMES

That's not who I'm protecting --

FORD

How do you know who your organization is protecting?

JAMES

Ford -

FORD

I told you --

JAMES

I am still your father and I will call you by the name I gave you! Foreigners. Is that all you see? To think that I would see the day when my own son would throw away all the values I taught him. When your mother and I went to Sudan and spent four months, navigating the bureaucracy --

FORD

Oh God --

JAMES

-- paying the bribes, dealing with corrupt adoption officials, all so we could give a child a better way of life, it was not because we held those people in disdain.

FORD

You seemed to think something was wrong with their culture. Or else why bother?

JAMES

Ideology, not individuals.

FORD

It's so easy to be you, isn't it? Anyone who doesn't agree with you is some knee-jerk racist, somebody who doesn't understand those different from themselves. I've got news for you. I've read the Koran. I've studied Islamic history. It's a violent religion, fundamentally, from the very start.

JAMES

I know men, personally, who are loving --

FORD

Who?

JAMES

-- non-violent, as a core belief --

FORD

Who do you know?

JAMES

-- who I would trust with my life --

FORD

Where's Hassan Houkman?

(Silence.)

JAMES

What?

FORD

Your friend, Hassan Houkman. Do you know where he is?

JAMES

I have not seen Imam Houkman, in, a long time, ever since those charges --

FORD

You know about the charges?

JAMES

I heard about them, yes.

FORD

From who?

JAMES

From his wife, I think.

FORD

Before she left the country. And now he's disappeared.

JAMES

If you say so.

FORD

I need you to come down to the station and answer some questions.

JAMES

Can't you just ask them here?

FORD

No. It's official police business. You need to come down.

JAMES

All right. I'll come.

FORD

And . . . don't call me Ford, in front of the other detectives.
It's bad enough they already know.

JAMES

Ok, Ford. I'll meet you there.

FORD

Meet me there?

JAMES

I'm not under arrest, right? I've got my own car.

FORD

Twenty minutes.

(FORD exits. Lights
down on JAMES.)

(End of scene.)

ACT IScene 5

SETTING: A police interrogation room.

AT RISE: JAMES is seated at one chair.
ROBERTS is seated across from HIM.
FORD is there.

ROBERTS
We've got photos, you know. Of your friend. And all the wrong people.

JAMES
You've got whatever you need.

ROBERTS
That's right. Whatever we need, we've got it. Photos, fingerprints, all of it. Funny thing is, with this guy, your buddy, it's all real. No touch-up necessary.
(HE slides the photos over to JAMES.)
Take a look. You recognize the other guy? Talib Hussain. Guy's on CNN all the time.

JAMES
Professor Hussain taught at Vanderbilt University --

ROBERTS
Until they caught him out, I know. But they did. He was working for the Mujahideen, and everyone knows it. C'mon, Halligan. Even you people know that.

JAMES
The position of My Brother's Keeper is clear -- it's on our website, all our literature -- we recognize the Mujahideen are a threat.

ROBERTS
Great. Now stop helping them get visas.

JAMES

We work with students, lawyers --

ROBERTS

You're dupes, you're set up --

JAMES

Thorough background checks, detective --

ROBERTS

Yet look what happened, look what got through. Fuckin' Malik Allen --

JAMES

That's not his name.

FORD

That is his name. Malik Allen, before he became the friendly imam next door. Hassan Houkman is just a cover. Such a nice, warm guy, almost seems like he was born here, right? Talk about great assimilation; he even likes the Lakers. And he, what, publishes a magazine, a newspaper of some sort, and he worked on the mayor's campaign, and the inter-faith outreach group, blah blah blah -- yeah, you know him really well. He's been sleeping for a long time.

JAMES

What, you mean -- a sleeper cell?

FORD

Yes. Ready to go at any time. That's why we're looking for Allen. Word has come down through the wire. He's involved in something big, another attack, you get it? Our sources say it could happen within five days.

JAMES

Your sources. Are these the same sources that implicated that Somali kid?

FORD

Intel is never perfect; we go with what we've got.

JAMES

Tell that to his family. He was lynched because of your intel, and the Special Prosecutor cleared him of all charges.

FORD

We have to take all threats seriously. This is solid intel. If Allen's got nothing to hide, why'd he disappear in the first place? Why didn't he show up for his court appearance?

JAMES

Come on, Ford. And face Senator Imhoff's kangaroo court? They'll put you away for sneezing on the wrong side of the street. Those charges were blown up out of nothing; first they're investigating fire-code violations at the mosque, then all of a sudden --

ROBERTS

How do you know what the investigation entailed?

JAMES

It was in the paper.

ROBERTS

It wasn't in the paper.

JAMES

I live in the neighborhood. Word gets around. When you screw with one of us, we tend to stick together.

ROBERTS

"One of us." Did you hear that? One of us.

FORD

Look. You say you want to distinguish the real terrorists from the innocent. So here's your chance to catch a real terrorist. Or would you rather see another Detroit in the next five days?

JAMES

Of course not.

FORD

Then tell us what you know.

(FORD and ROBERTS look at
each other. FORD nods.)

Detective Roberts will finish this interrogation.

(FORD abruptly leaves.)

ROBERTS

You must be really proud of him. Youngest cop to make detective
in the last twenty-five years.

JAMES

I always knew Ford would excel at whatever he put his mind to.

ROBERTS

He's a good man, that one. Must be in the genes.

(JAMES is silent.)

So how about it?

JAMES

First of all, I'm not convinced. Mr. Houkman has always
been spoken of in the highest regard, when I've heard him spoken
of, of course, we did not frequent the same circles --

ROBERTS

You circled close enough. We know you're friends with Allen,
Hassan Houkman, whatever you want to call him. You've been seen
talking to him, even coming out of his office in the mosque.

JAMES

You're talking years ago, when I worked on the mayor's re-
election campaign. I talked to all kinds of people.

ROBERTS

I'm talking more recent than that. You were on that panel
together, at the McGruder Foundation.

JAMES

It was a university sponsored panel --

ROBERTS

Where you agreed with Allen ninety-percent of the time.

JAMES

Detective, this was over a year ago, at a public panel debating the merits of Executive Order 5231. A controversial policy, as you know, that has divided many people in this country.

ROBERTS

The law of the land, is what it is. Which means anyone violating that policy is a criminal, just like the terrorists they're protecting.

JAMES

I fail to see the purpose of this interview. My Brother's Keeper offers legal advice, job placement, translation services; all as a legally incorporated non-profit. You should be talking to our lawyer, just like the Feds do every other week.

ROBERTS

I'm not interested in your little group. I'm interested in you. Malik Allen disappeared three months ago. He hasn't left the country; I don't think he's even left the state. We need to find him, do you understand? This is a matter of national security.

JAMES

And what makes you think I know where he is?

ROBERTS

Besides the fact you've been wringing your hands and crying over these people for the last three years? Maybe not much. Maybe I'm just exploring all my options. Or maybe it was something your wife said.

JAMES

My wife?

ROBERTS

I'm sorry, ex-wife now, isn't it?

JAMES

We are divorced now, yes.

ROBERTS

Sounds like a Christian no-no to me. Hell, I don't hold it against you, though. I've had two myself. Thing is, she had plenty to say about you. Some good, some not so good.

JAMES

Which would be true of any former spouse, detective, including yours. Both of them.

ROBERTS

My ex's have nothing good to say about me. As long as I pay child support, that's all they care about.

JAMES

And I'm sure you do. On time, every month.

(ROBERTS suddenly punches
JAMES in the face.)

ROBERTS

Shut the fuck up, you little prick. You think this is a game? You think I'm fooling around? Know what your wife said about you, Halligan? She said you were capable of anything. You're so sure you're right, because God is on your side. Sound familiar?

JAMES

God is not on anyone's side. We must align ourselves with Him.

ROBERTS

Your wife seemed like a pretty God-fearing woman. But she went and aligned herself with someone else, didn't she?

JAMES

It's not my business what she does anymore. Or yours.

ROBERTS

Here's what my business is. Finding out where every last one of these Habibs are hiding and throwing them Homeland Security's way. You know anything about Malik Allen, you hear anything, you even suspect anything, you better come and tell me. I'll be watching you, Halligan. And I will fuck you hard if you're hiding something.

(End of scene.)

ACT IScene 6

SETTING: HASSAN'S bedroom.

AT RISE: JAMES enters. HE has bruises on HIS face and a cut above HIS eye. HASSAN jumps up.

HASSAN
Three hours, James, I've been worried --
(HE stares at JAMES)
What happened? What happened to you?

JAMES
You were right. It is dangerous to deal on the black market.

HASSAN
What happened? Where have you been?

JAMES
I got jumped at the market. Two guys, took everything. Lucky I wasn't carrying much.

HASSAN
Come, let me help you. Sit down.
(JAMES sits on the chair while
HASSAN gets a cloth, some water,
etc., to treat HIS wounds.)
What bastards. These days, anything is possible.

JAMES
People have always been mugged.

HASSAN
But it's much worse now. Violence and brutality have been sanctioned.

JAMES
People need bread and a roof over their heads.

HASSAN

At any price? I need to get out, I can't stay here any longer.
It gets more dangerous every day -

JAMES

Damn it, Hassan, we've discussed this.

HASSAN

Look what's happened to you. Do you really think this attack
was random?

JAMES

It goes with the territory.

HASSAN

You should think about your safety.

JAMES

I thought we were talking about you.

HASSAN

It's the same thing. Face it James, you're a magnet for
trouble. And where do you come every day? Right here.

JAMES

That's why we have a gun.

HASSAN

That's not the solution and you know it. All the bullets in the
world won't keep these people away.

JAMES

Trying to get out, at this juncture, would be a worse case
scenario. You'd get caught, and everything you're afraid of
would come true.

HASSAN

Then perhaps you should adopt a lower profile at work.

JAMES

Meaning what?

HASSAN

I read the papers. You're mentioned almost every week.

JAMES

We need the press.

HASSAN

But it's all the controversy that brings so much unwanted attention.

JAMES

The work is controversial by nature. It still needs to be done.

HASSAN

All I'm saying is, you might want to take more care with the issues you choose to adopt. It's like sticking your hand in a hornet's nest --

JAMES

No, Hassan. I won't compromise my work, not for my sake, or for yours. My Brother's Keeper is bigger than either one of us.

HASSAN

So you will save them all. Good luck.

JAMES

I'm sorry. I'm feeling very anxious; on edge.

HASSAN

Understandably. Did you get a look at the men who mugged you?

JAMES

Not really.

HASSAN

I don't suppose you reported it to the police.

JAMES

No. I haven't been to the police.

HASSAN

Of course not, what would you say?

JAMES

Nothing. I haven't been there.

HASSAN

I'm just glad you're home. I've been anxious as well. There you go. As good as new.

(JAMES gets up and crosses
to the mirror. HE looks at
the photo on the mirror.)

JAMES

This is you, right?

HASSAN

Yes. In my university days.

JAMES

I barely recognize you.

HASSAN

Those were different times. The long beard and the robe, oh yes, quite the firebrand. Remember your own days, James?

JAMES

I wouldn't exactly describe me as a firebrand.

HASSAN

But you were arrested. With Father Morrison. A worthy cause.

JAMES

Many of us were arrested. We were demonstrating for peace. Who's this man next to you?

(HASSAN joins JAMES looking at
the photo.)

HASSAN

That is Abdul. He was a good man, at one time, anyway. We spent half our time studying the Koran and the other half drinking tea and watching girls at the internet cafe. I think he chose another path, eventually.

JAMES

What do you mean?

HASSAN

You know. The ardor of youth dims, the lure of the world sets in.

JAMES

And what was calling Abdul?

HASSAN

Money. What else?

JAMES

Your wife wore the hijab?

HASSAN

Of course. You have to understand, the student movement was different in Arab countries. I've been getting more liberal the older I get.

JAMES

Did you ever go by a different name? To avoid the authorities?

HASSAN

Are you kidding? I must've dropped a half-dozen different names when the police took me in. We all did. It was dangerous, James. You think Bush was bad? In Iran, Bush would've been a ray of sunshine.

JAMES

I thought you were talking about Jordan.

HASSAN

I had friends in Iran. I met Naima in Jordan.

JAMES

Is she there now, do you think?

HASSAN

I hope so.

JAMES

These names, when you were young, did you ever call --

(The doorbell rings. The men
exchange glances; JAMES exits.)

(End of scene)

ACT IScene 7

SETTING: The living room, downstairs.

AT RISE: JEAN is at the front door. JAMES goes and opens it.

JAMES
What on earth are you doing here?

JEAN
May I come in?

JAMES
For what reason?

JEAN
James, don't do this. You know I wouldn't come unless there was a reason.

(HE stands aside to let HER in.
SHE enters and looks around.)
You got rid of the couch.

JAMES
It was old. You know how I felt about the couch.

JEAN
Your business, I suppose.

JAMES
I suppose it is. Jean --

JEAN
Don't get sanctimonious with me, Jimmy, I can hear that tone in your voice already.

JAMES
Really. And I thought you had come to preach to me.

JEAN

I don't need to give a sermon. You know everything I'm about to say, don't you?

JAMES

If you're here to repeat the same tired arguments you've used a million times, then yes.

JEAN

I know better than that.

(Pause)

It smells funny in here. What've you been cooking?

JAMES

Why did you come, Jean?

JEAN

To talk to you about your son.

JAMES

What about him?

JEAN

Have you gotten a visit from the police? Because I have.

JAMES

Have you.

JEAN

Yes. Detective Ford Halligan's mother, brought in for questioning. How do you suppose that made him feel?

JAMES

Ford's a big boy. He can handle a lot more than some ribbing from the guys at the station.

JEAN

Ribbing from the guys? Are you insane? Ford is in charge of the undercover investigations unit. And his own family members are being investigated!

JAMES

I understand.

JEAN

You understand. When's the last time you even spoke to Ford?
Two years ago? Three?

JAMES

Try a few hours ago. I have had a visit from the police, to
answer your earlier question. It's the least of what I've grown
accustomed to.

JEAN

Stop playing the martyr. And thanks for asking about me, by the
way.

JAMES

I already know about you. Detective Roberts down at the
precinct told me he'd had a chat with you. He didn't like what
I had to say about it, though. Obviously.

(JEAN approaches and touches
HIS bandages.)

JEAN

I'm sorry James. Did he do this to you? Are you all right?

JAMES

Yes. I'm ok.

JEAN

You still have your insurance, right? The pension covers it?

JAMES

I didn't go to the hospital. It wasn't necessary.

JEAN

You did this yourself? You did a good job. Or did you have
help?

JAMES

I'm not involved with anyone, Jean, if that's what you're asking.

JEAN

I hope not. It'd be a bit ridiculous at your age, don't you think?

JAMES

Ridiculous, I'm sure.

JEAN

You could file a complaint. Ford could have that man demoted, or kicked off the squad --

JAMES

I don't think that's going to happen.

(A long pause while JEAN looks around.)

JEAN

You were so close. You taught him how to play baseball. He came to you for help with his homework, not me. I felt like persona non grata around here for so many years. I remember the two of you on New Year's Eve, sitting on the couch watching TV, waiting for the ball come down. But Ford always fell asleep on your lap before midnight. And now you've gotten rid of the couch, and there's not even a picture of your son anywhere in this house.

JAMES

I'm sorry for what's happened, ok? Sorry your lives have been affected by all this. But My Brother's Keeper is an important organization, and I'm damn proud of having created it. And I'm sorry you don't care about it the way I care.

JEAN

How dare you stand atop your soap-box and condemn the rest of us?

JAMES

A true Christian acts, Jean, she stands up for what is right and speaks the truth when people are being killed --

JEAN

I acted! Long before you took up your cross. It was me who wanted to adopt Ford, I made that happen --

JAMES

I am his father, from the start --

JEAN

I had to push you into it. Because you didn't want a child that didn't come from you. Flesh of your flesh. How typical, how arrogant. But those people were suffering, and I knew we could make a difference. I wasn't afraid of them. I wasn't afraid to go to Africa, wrap myself up like a mummy and follow their customs, do whatever it took to bring Ford to us. I gave him a better life, a Christian life.

JAMES

Is this why you came? To demonstrate your superiority? You left, Jean. You proved everything you needed to prove when you walked out on thirty years of marriage.

JEAN

I told you. I came because of Ford. Your little run-in this afternoon notwithstanding, I doubt you know much about the details of your son's life these past few years. But I thought you might care to know that he's in trouble.

JAMES

What do you mean, trouble?

JEAN

Money, James, what else? He's been at it again.

JAMES

How long?

JEAN

I don't know. Long enough to run up at least a hundred thousand in debt.

JAMES

I thought Ford was going to that group, that twelve-step meeting --

JEAN

He was. But apparently he's been going to the casino as well.

JAMES

I can't help him this time, Jean. There's just not enough left. I need it --

JEAN

For your group, I know. Priorities. But I think you can help, James.

JAMES

How?

JEAN

Have you seen the paper this morning?

JAMES

I glanced at it.

(JEAN takes out a newspaper
and hands it to HIM.)

JEAN

Take a look.

JAMES

A seventy-five-thousand-dollar reward for information leading to the arrest of known terrorist suspects or Mujaheedin sympathizers. Sympathizers?

JEAN

Pretty vague, isn't it? Don't worry, read the fine print. You're safe. For now, anyway.

JAMES

Well, thanks for warning me, Jean.

JEAN

I'm not warning you. I'm sure you can take care of yourself. The point is, the reward.

JAMES

What about it?

JEAN

Don't act dense, James. This is an opportunity for you, to do right by him, for once.

JAMES

I don't know what you're talking about.

JEAN

Don't you? That police detective seemed to think you do. And I do, too. I think you know exactly what I'm talking about.

JAMES

First of all, we do not have truck with terrorists, how many times do I have to tell you that? God, Jean, do you honestly believe I'm trying to help destroy this country?

JEAN

Not deliberately, maybe. But willful ignorance is its own kind of crime, don't you think?

JAMES

You should ask yourself that question. Because it's not ignorance that keeps you hammering away at the same misguided point month after month. And if you expect me to bear false witness for the sake of some reward, well, you obviously don't know me very well.

JEAN

But I do know you, James. I know you very well. And I know that underneath the God talk, and the mighty crusade for justice, there lies an essentially sane, rational man who wants to do right by his family. I don't expect you to bear false witness. I expect you to wake up and realize what everyone is telling you. Some of these people are terrorists, and they are looking to crawl under any rock they can find. Lift up My Brother's Keeper and I'm sure a few roaches will come scurrying out. You don't have to betray any innocent students. You just need to help your son get his life back.

(SHE goes to the door.)

Think about what you're doing. What you've done to this family. They're watching you.

(JEAN exits.)

(End of scene)

ACT IScene 8

SETTING: JAMES' office at My Brother's Keeper.

AT RISE: JAMES is at his desk, on the phone.

JAMES

Ok, give me his case number . . . got it. Who've we got on this one? . . . He worked on that Iranian couple's civil suit, right? . . . Ok, that's good. Listen, we need to follow up on this every step of the way. As soon as you get the word, I want you to call Mike Hennessey at the DA's office; Doreen's got the number. Don't mention my name, just tell him the Congressman's with us on this one. . . . I've already talked to him. His position is clear: if it involves a misdemeanor criminal case, there should be no automatic deportation proceeding. You saw the press conference? . . . Problem is, if he sticks his neck out too far he won't be around in two more years. He barely made it through the primary . . .

(JAMES laughs.)

Jesus, Tom, you're brutal. Just let it go for now. And don't forget to let that reporter at the Sun know what you're up to.

(FORD enters. Throughout the scene, he noses about the office, looking at books, etc.)

Yeah, him. . . . Yeah, it was a decent piece, fair enough. Hey, Tom, I've gotta go. . . . Ok, I'll talk to you later. Bye.

(JAMES hangs up.)

Detective Halligan. Can I help you with something?

FORD

I'm sure you could, if you wanted to.

JAMES

Why don't you try me.

FORD

Ok. Give me every file you've got. Names, numbers, last known addresses, list of overseas contacts, bank information, everything.

JAMES

You have a warrant?

(FORD tosses a restaurant receipt on the desk. JAMES picks it up.)

Still eating at those fast food joints? It'll catch up to you eventually.

FORD

Can't be any worse than the macrobiotic crap you shoved down my throat. That stuff gave me gas.

JAMES

In fairness, that was your mother. She picked it up in India.

FORD

That's not all she picked up.

JAMES

If you're going to constantly throw it in my face, as if I deliberately injected her with malaria --

FORD

She never wanted to go there.

JAMES

It was her idea; I've told you a hundred times.

FORD

Yeah. Her idea. You still do that yoga?

JAMES

Whenever I have the time.

FORD

You smoke while you're doing it?

JAMES

Actually, I've quit, just so you know.

(FORD finds the ashtray.)

FORD

Yeah. You quit. See, that's what I love about you, James. One hand doesn't know what the other hand is doing.

JAMES

Is this a business visit, Ford, or is it personal?

FORD

It's always personal. But I've got business with you, too.

JAMES

Then why don't you state that business, so I can get back to mine.

FORD

You already know. Malik Allen.

JAMES

And I already told you, I don't know where he is. Or who he is.

FORD

The Feds intercepted a phone call by a man named Abdul. He mentioned Malik Allen by name.

JAMES

Abdul?

FORD

Yeah. Sound familiar?

JAMES

It's a common name. I may have crossed paths with several Abduls over the years; I don't remember.

FORD

This Abdul has ties to Hezbollah and Al-Qaeda. It's definite; there's no question on this one. Malik Allen is active in an operation that's in its final stages.

JAMES

Did they trace the call?

FORD

From Jordan to a man in Florida. The Feds have already got him.

JAMES

But why would they mention his name on the phone? Malik Allen could be a code name, he might not even exist --

FORD

Or he could be Hassan Houkman, who disappeared over three months ago instead of facing the charges against him.

JAMES

But you didn't even have this information three months ago, so what could it have to do with him?

FORD

He's still unaccounted for. If we had him we could at least question him. Find out what he knows.

JAMES

But you still haven't told me why you think Hassan Houkman is Malik Allen.

FORD

I've told you everything I can tell you without compromising the investigation. Put aside our personal differences. You've seen what these people can do. If you know anything about the whereabouts of this man, you need to tell me.

JAMES

If I hear anything, or if he contacts me, I will let him know you need to speak with him --

FORD

Let me know, mother-fucker, not him! God-damn you!

(FORD sweeps everything
off the desk.)

I need to know what he knows! You hear me?

JAMES

I've seen how you question people. Thanks for leaving me alone with your partner.

FORD

I left you alone so I wouldn't do worse.

JAMES

You think this makes you a man, Ford? To bully people, push them around?

FORD

You wouldn't know anything about it.

JAMES

I know what I taught you.

FORD

You didn't teach me shit. Sergeant Akins taught me, Captain Murdaugh taught me, yes sir, yes sir.

JAMES

You needed it.

FORD

I needed it.

JAMES

You were drinking, smoking pot --

FORD

And you needed a vacation, needed to find yourself --

JAMES

That's not --

FORD

You needed to go to India, so who's got time to take care of a kid?

JAMES

You needed discipline.

FORD

So you pack me off to military school? You hypocrite.

JAMES

We did the best we could.

FORD

Leave my mother out of it.

JAMES

No, not your saintly mother --

FORD

Fuck you --

JAMES

She's pure and innocent --

(FORD grabs JAMES by the
lapels.)

FORD

Fuck you old man!

JAMES

Ford! You're a police officer!

(FORD releases JAMES,
trying to get control
of himself.)

FORD

I'll close down this place. I'll shut it down.

JAMES

You don't have the authority to do that.

FORD

I'll get a warrant. I'll raid this office every week --

JAMES

Like you did at the mosque?

FORD

That's right. I'll be breathing down your neck.

JAMES

Well, at least we'd get to see other more often. I never wanted it to be like this.

FORD

Yeah, well, shit happens.

JAMES

It sure does. I would help if you if I could, son, I really would. But I already did that once, and I can't do it again.

FORD

What are you talking about?

JAMES

Jean told me. About the gambling.

FORD

God-damn it.

JAMES

I don't know why you do this to yourself.

FORD

I paid you back.

JAMES

I know you did.

FORD

I paid you every dime.

JAMES

I know you did. But somehow you're still paying. And I'm still paying, too.

FORD

I don't know why . . . I just -- I'm -- I'm not in control. I can't control it.

JAMES

We all feel that way sometimes. Ford, if Detroit had never happened -- if the world was the way it used to be, I think we could find a way back to each other.

FORD

But the world did change. In a big way. If you won't help me, I need to treat you like anybody else under suspicion. I'll be watching you.

(FORD starts to leave.)

JAMES

There's something you need to know.

FORD

What's that?

JAMES

Someone's watching you, too.

FORD

Who?

JAMES

It's a shame you don't know, son. It's a real shame you don't understand.

(FORD exits.)

(End of scene)

ACT I

Scene 9

SETTING: The living room.

AT RISE: JAMES enters through the front door. As he puts his coat away, HASSAN enters from the kitchen.

JAMES

What are you doing here? Someone could see you!

(JAMES rushes to the window.)

HASSAN

The blinds are closed.

JAMES

Why are you downstairs?

HASSAN

Stretching my legs. Running laps.

JAMES

This is no joke. You endanger both of us --

HASSAN

James, the blinds are closed. No one can see us.

JAMES

And who closed the blinds? They were open when I left.

HASSAN

I closed them, obviously. Very quickly, when no one was around. It's the middle of the day. Why are you home?

JAMES

I left early. Don't change the subject. What are you doing down here?

HASSAN

I needed space.

JAMES

Damn it, Hassan --

HASSAN

Yes, damn it, damn it all! I'll burn the house down. I'll knock the windows out.

JAMES

What's wrong with you? Are you crazy?

HASSAN

Very nearly, I believe. Yes, I enjoy reading five books a week, and talking to the spider in the corner of my room; he's very good company. But going crazy? That's a novel idea. It would really help pass the time.

JAMES

You need to go upstairs.

HASSAN

Upstairs! Paradise awaits! The radio, the bed, the wonderful humidity. Let's have a party! Invite the neighbors!

JAMES

Will you keep your voice down?

(JAMES turns on the TV.)

Hassan, what is it? Have I offended you in some way?

HASSAN

You, my savior? I owe you my life. Problem is, my friend, it's not much of a life.

JAMES

Would you rather be in prison? Facing the tribunal?

HASSAN

I would rather be watching TV.

(HASSAN sits down.)

Ah, a daytime talk show. The average American. The average Joe.

JAMES

Can I get you a beer?

HASSAN

Ha! I knew it! He does have a sense of humor!

JAMES

Keep your voice down.

(JAMES turns the TV up.)

HASSAN

James, you really are paranoid. The neighbors are fifty feet away.

JAMES

I don't care. Someone could be watching. Or listening.

(HASSAN turns the TV down.)

HASSAN

Let them get their own TV.

(JAMES turns it back up.)

JAMES

I am not paranoid, Hassan. People are watching. The police, they are watching.

HASSAN

What makes you think so?

JAMES

I just know it.

HASSAN

Sitting in that little room, going crazy is not an idle threat. It's a very real possibility.

JAMES

So you will risk your life, to watch TV --

HASSAN

No one will know.

JAMES

It's my life too! I'm a collaborator. I could face the death penalty.

(HASSAN turns off the TV.)

HASSAN

Then why are you doing it?

JAMES

What?

HASSAN

Why did you decide to help me?

JAMES

Because I knew you. Because we were friends.

HASSAN

So it's a personal mission. Not a principle at all.

JAMES

I don't see a contradiction.

HASSAN

If you are helping me because we are friends, then the righteousness of your cause is irrelevant. You would help me right or wrong.

JAMES

Why should it be wrong to help a friend, if you know . . .

HASSAN

If you know?

JAMES

He is innocent.

(A pause while Hassan considers.)

HASSAN

Do you know what I heard on the radio this morning?

JAMES

What?

HASSAN

The governor of Texas is giving a special gift to his loyal constituents.

JAMES

I know. It's completely illegal.

HASSAN

Legal is whatever they say.

JAMES

You shouldn't listen to that program. I should take that radio out of there --

HASSAN

You can hide me in your little cell, it makes no difference. They are searching every home, every business, looking for people like me.

JAMES

This isn't Texas.

HASSAN

The Public Safety Act is being considered in 37 other states. Including this one.

JAMES

And organizations like mine are fighting it in the courts. There are still good people in this country, Hassan. Many of us.

HASSAN

Not so many, I think.

JAMES

You're wrong. The real America will stand up --

HASSAN

The entire Muslim community of Houston deported, put on a little boat and set adrift --

JAMES

I'm doing the best I can. Without me they'd already have you.

HASSAN

Yes.

JAMES

I'll think of something.

(Silence.)

HASSAN

I'm sorry, James. I've been very selfish. Please forgive me.

(HASSAN exits to the stairs.
JAMES notices the phone and
stares at it. HE climbs the
stairs to the bedroom.)

ACT IScene 10

SETTING: HASSAN's room.

AT RISE: HASSAN is already in the room when JAMES enters. There is a tray of fruit, cheese, and a knife on the table.

JAMES

Did you use the phone?

HASSAN

Why do you ask?

JAMES

I ask because I want to know. Were you on the phone before I came in?

HASSAN

No, I was not on the phone before you came in.

JAMES

Then why was the phone moved?

HASSAN

Excuse me?

JAMES

Why was the phone moved? It was pushed against the lamp. I left it where it always sits, in front of the lamp.

HASSAN

You keep track of the phone's relationship to the lamp?

JAMES

I know where it sits.

HASSAN

No offense, but there are more important relationships you could be worrying about.

JAMES

Just answer the question.

HASSAN

Like with Jean, for example. That was quite a scene the other day.

JAMES

You were listening?

HASSAN

Only for a minute. I can hear from the stairs.

JAMES

Then she could've heard you too.

HASSAN

If I was making noise.

JAMES

About the phone --

HASSAN

I'm sorry to hear about your son.

JAMES

Stop changing the subject, Hassan. Just tell me who you were on the phone with.

HASSAN

I have told you, I was not on the phone.

JAMES

Why are you lying? Who did you call?

HASSAN

Why are you lying to me about the police? I heard what you told your wife.

JAMES

I didn't want you to be worried.

HASSAN

So you make up some story about muggers?

JAMES

I was assaulted, by two men. The cops chased them off. It was right before they took me in.

HASSAN

And the police were the ones who beat you?

JAMES

One cop. Detective Roberts.

HASSAN

Oh, Detective Roberts. How fortunate.

JAMES

You know him?

HASSAN

Detective Roberts has been hanging around the mosque for years, even before Detroit. He's had it in for us for a long time.

JAMES

For you, you mean.

HASSAN

He mentioned me?

JAMES

Hassan, I'm not here to be interrogated by you. I asked you a simple question and I expect an honest answer. Did you use the phone before I came in?

HASSAN

For the last time, no. I did not.

JAMES

Then why was it moved?

HASSAN

I don't know. Perhaps I bumped the table.

JAMES

Did you?

HASSAN

I don't remember. Maybe you moved it.

JAMES

I didn't move it.

HASSAN

Perhaps the lamp and the phone are having a love affair, and they wanted to be closer together.

JAMES

You're full of humor today, aren't you? What's changed? Who have you talked to?

HASSAN

You are the one who has suddenly changed, my friend. Why has your humor deserted you?

(JAMES crosses to the mirror
and grabs the photograph.)

JAMES

Who is this? Tell me the truth.

HASSAN

I told you already. His name --

JAMES

Malik Allen? Is that his name? Or is that your name?

(HASSAN stares at JAMES.)

HASSAN

Where did you hear that name?

JAMES

It doesn't matter where. Who is he?

(HASSAN takes the photo from
JAMES. HE replaces it on
the mirror.)

HASSAN

Malik Allen is dead.

JAMES

How did he die?

HASSAN

He was killed by Israeli police. Many years ago. I knew his mother and sister. Why are you asking about Malik Allen?

JAMES

Certain people seem to think he's involved in terrorist activities. And alive.

HASSAN

I have no doubt the Israeli government considered him a troublemaker, maybe even a terrorist. But their judgments are highly subjective.

JAMES

And you know he's dead?

HASSAN

I am certain of it.

JAMES

How can you be certain?

HASSAN

Because the Palestinian Authority sent his mother a check for two-thousand dollars. They don't hand out money for nothing. Where did you find out about Allen?

JAMES

From Roberts.

HASSAN

Detective Roberts?

JAMES

He says you're Allen. He says your name's fake.

HASSAN

So this is what's going on. Roberts is getting to you.

JAMES

He had photos --

HASSAN

James, can't you see? It's so obvious. Israeli security shares information with Homeland, Homeland shares information with the local police, they attach my photo to Malik's name --

JAMES

Why? Why would they do that?

HASSAN

Because I told the Jordanian police I was him. I told you, we dropped false names all the time when the police rounded us up. Malik's sister gave me his I.D. after he died. It was useful.

JAMES

And I suppose the Jordanian police share information with the Israelis.

HASSAN

They have spies. It all gets around. James, these things happened many years ago. And I was never Malik Allen.

JAMES

But you lied.

HASSAN

Yes. I lied.

(HASSAN sits down and reaches
for the knife. JAMES beats him
to it. THEY look at each other.
JAMES starts to cut and distribute
the fruit and cheese.)

James, I am sorry about today. For angering you. I hope you
believe what I say.

JAMES

Of course I believe you.

HASSAN

Everything?

JAMES

Yes. Everything.

HASSAN

Roberts, you can't trust him.

JAMES

I don't.

HASSAN

And we have known each other for years.

JAMES

Have we?

HASSAN

What do you mean?

JAMES

We have spoken many times. We have attended events together,
been to each other's homes. Does this mean we know each other?

HASSAN

How else does one get to know another person?

JAMES

I don't know. How do we ever really know if we know someone?
Or if we only know what they want us to perceive?

HASSAN

You have to trust yourself more than that.

JAMES

It's a matter of trusting the other person.

HASSAN

No, it's a matter of trusting yourself. You trust other people
because your heart tells you to.

JAMES

And what if your heart is wrong?

HASSAN

The heart never lies. Only the mind does that.

JAMES

So you believe.

HASSAN

Who is someone you completely trust?

JAMES

Father Morrison.

HASSAN

And why do you trust him?

JAMES

I've known him my whole life --

HASSAN

Ah, ah -- you've already said that doesn't matter. Besides, he
could change over time. Why do you trust him right now?

JAMES

Because . . . I'm not sure I can say.

HASSAN

You can't say. But you still feel it is true.

JAMES

Yes.

HASSAN

And that is why it must be so. Because you feel it here.

(HASSAN touches JAMES' chest.)

JAMES

I thought you were supposed to feel it in your gut.

HASSAN

A gut feeling, eh? That's instinct. I think it's time I showed you something. Kind of a surprise.

JAMES

What is it?

(HASSAN retrieves a metal box.)

HASSAN

Ford has a memory box.

JAMES

What?

HASSAN

Your son kept a memory box. Full of childhood mementoes. I found it under the floorboards under the bed.

JAMES

Under the floorboards? What were you trying to do, tunnel out of here?

HASSAN

I've been over every inch of this room. What else is there to do? One day I noticed the seam in the floor. I pried up the floorboards and -- here it is.

(JAMES takes the box and examines it.

Removes baseball glove.)

The father unpacks the son. What do you see, Father? Baseball games on the Fourth of July, lemonade stands, fresh cut grass? The all-American boy? What happened to the dream, Daddy?

(JAMES continues removing items.)

They change, they twist in the wind and torture you. You get wrapped up in expectations -- his dream or yours? You end up looking at old newspaper articles, whatever fragments are left. There's no future. Not for me. What do you want to put in the box?

JAMES

Ford will never see this.

HASSAN

It doesn't matter. What would you like to say to him right now?

(JAMES writes a message and puts
it in the box.)

JAMES

Into the time capsule.

HASSAN

And say goodbye.

JAMES

Goodbye Fourth of July. Goodbye fresh cut grass.

(HASSAN closes the box and
puts it on the desk, out of the way.)

HASSAN

May you find new memories before returning to the hole. I'm sure it's in no hurry to be buried.

JAMES

I'm in no hurry either.

HASSAN

One way or another we will both end up facing the tribunal.

JAMES

I appreciate your optimism.

HASSAN

Following the righteous path, we fell into the sea.

JAMES

Amen.

HASSAN

Do you have a cigarette?

JAMES

I'm out.

HASSAN

Shame. James?

JAMES

Yes, Hassan?

HASSAN

You heard me say, I have been over every inch of this room?

(A pause.)

JAMES

You found the camera.

HASSAN

Why have you been filming me?

JAMES

It doesn't film. It records.

HASSAN

For how long?

JAMES

The camera was installed before you moved in. But it's not on. I have not been recording you.

HASSAN

Not anymore.

JAMES

So you've been in my room.

HASSAN

You've been in mine all along, haven't you?

JAMES

I told you --

HASSAN

It wasn't on. Except when it was. Did you use this to spy on Ford?

JAMES

It was his mother's idea.

HASSAN

Of course. What were you going to do with this -- recording, you weren't making.

JAMES

Why were you looking all over the room in the first place?

HASSAN

It could be dangerous, to be caught with these recordings, after I am gone.

JAMES

Hassan, I have a feeling if you're gone, I'll be gone too. And it won't matter what's been caught on camera.

HASSAN

Don't be too sure. Did Ford ever find out?

JAMES

Not as far as I know. But what did I know, anyway.

HASSAN

Quite a bit, apparently.

JAMES

Not once he left home. After that, he was just . . .

HASSAN

One more question. Does Ford know about the house?

JAMES

He'll find out eventually. It doesn't matter now.

(END OF ACT I)

ACT IIScene 1

SETTING: The same Catholic church.

AT RISE: JAMES speaks to Father Morrison
as FORD did before.

JAMES

I do, Father Morrison, I have great respect for the law. But we both follow a higher law. That's why I know you understand me. I'm in a delicate situation. It has nothing to do with My Brother's Keeper, at least not directly. I wish I could say more, but people's lives hang in the balance.

(Morrison speaks.)

There's a man I helped, an imam at a mosque. You know what's happened to so many people. I couldn't let that happen to my friend. So I hid him.

(Morrison speaks.)

That's what I'm afraid of. What if I am just a dupe, totally naive? It may all come down to his name. Malik Allen. It's not the name I've known him by all these years. He's always conducted himself with honor and integrity, as far as I know. And really, what else is there? Except ...everything I don't know.

(During the preceding speech,
in near darkness, we see

(HASSAN descend the stairs
from HIS room to the living
room. HE picks up the phone
and dials.)

HASSAN

So everything is arranged? . . . There can be no room for error. Complete secrecy, you understand? . . . No. No one knows. . . . I will call you tomorrow night and give you the address. . . . Good. I will be ready.

(HASSAN hangs up the phone.)

(End of scene)

ACT IIScene 2

SETTING: A booth in a sandwich shop.

AT RISE: FORD and JEAN are sitting together with JAMES sitting opposite. The two men stare sullenly, avoiding each other's gaze. JEAN looks from one to the other. Awkward silence.

JEAN

Well this is nice. Isn't it? No work talk, just a regular meal, like normal people. Whatever passes for normal these days. James? Are you going to say something?

JAMES

Good to see you again, son.

FORD

Thanks Dad.

(Another silence.)

JEAN

Ford, is there something you want to tell your father? Something he should know?

FORD

"Should" know?

JEAN

You promised.

JAMES

What is it I should know?

FORD

I'm getting married.

JAMES

Really. That's . . . fantastic. To -- ahh, what was her name - Mary?

FORD

Mandy.

JAMES

Mandy, right. I met her at the bake sale.

FORD

That was the third time you met her. You didn't remember her then, either.

JAMES

All right, I remember. I met Mandy on the 4th of July, then at the bake sale. It was three years ago.

JEAN

The bake sale was the third time. You met her at Lynette and Bob's house, after the fireworks, before the bake sale.

JAMES

Fine! I know who the woman is.

JEAN

More or less.

JAMES

She's getting married to Ford, I know that.

FORD

Will the two of you shut up? I don't want to hear it. Not this time.

JEAN

I'm sorry Ford. You know how your father gets.

JAMES

I'm not the one starting an argument.

JEAN

No one's starting an argument. We're here to have lunch. It's just a shame you don't know your son's fiancée.

JAMES

I would love to get to know Mary --

FORD

Mandy. Her name is Mandy.

JEAN

See?

JAMES

I'm sorry Ford. Jean --

JEAN

You can't remember a simple name.

JAMES

Maybe because you won't let up --

JEAN

Oh, it's my fault.

JAMES

You won't let up, for a single minute, when this whole thing was your idea --

JEAN

To have lunch, like a family, not to argue --

FORD

I told you to knock it off. I don't expect you to know who Mandy is. It doesn't matter. The point is, we're getting married.

JEAN

And I'm very happy for you, Ford. She's a wonderful woman. I'm sure your father would think so too, if he knew her.

JAMES

I am happy for you, Ford. And I would like to know her.

FORD

Sure. Sure you will.

JEAN

Ford, why don't you tell him your other news?

FORD

What other news?

JEAN

The -- issue, we need to discuss.

JAMES

What issue?

FORD

It's not your concern.

JEAN

Ford has a problem.

FORD

I told you I didn't want to talk about it.

JEAN

He wants to help.

FORD

He doesn't have any money.

JAMES

You need money?

FORD

No, I don't.

JEAN

There's always a way.

JAMES

Jean, I already told you --

JEAN

Everyone just calm down, both of you, no one's asking anyone for anything.

JAMES

Have you talked to Mandy? About the gambling?

FORD

How can I do that? She'd never want to marry me.

JAMES

That's not true. If she loves you, she'll stand by you, no matter what. She'll want to support you in your recovery. Right Jean?

JEAN

That's right James.

JAMES

People stick together when they love each other.

JEAN

Yes.

FORD

I -- appreciate the help. Last time. I'll figure something out.

JAMES

The group, is it working for you?

FORD

I haven't been back in seventy-four days.

JAMES

Don't you need to go every week?

JEAN

To the casino. He hasn't been back --

JAMES

All right. These groups, they talk about God, right?

FORD

Surrender to your higher power.

JAMES

You still have your faith?

FORD

You know I haven't been to church in years. I don't want to argue about it; it was my decision. And yeah, I'm having a hard time with the whole God concept. I'm supposed to admit I can never have control when more control is exactly what I need.

JAMES

But they're saying let God take care of that. Surrender your individual will to God's will. Submission, like in Islam --

JEAN

James!

FORD

Jesus Christ.

JEAN

You don't know when to quit, do you?

JAMES

All I'm saying is it's part of their belief --

FORD

To cut your hand off so you never play cards again.

JAMES

That's fundamentalism.

FORD

You mean the ones who follow the rules. Doing things by the book.

JEAN

We agreed, no work talk --

FORD

This isn't work, it's reality.

JAMES

You can't separate the two, Jean.

JEAN

This is a family lunch, and we don't need to talk about work --

FORD

So what should we talk about? How about murder, how about you and everyone you know snuffed out like dogs because someone's afraid to tell it like it is?

JAMES

You're pretty much getting your way all over the country, aren't you Ford? You know what they say, first they came for the Muslims, then they came for the Jews, by the time they came for you there was no one left to speak on your behalf.

JEAN

James this isn't --

FORD

Bumper sticker slogans won't protect this country.

JAMES

Tell you what, Ford. Prove to me Hassan Houkman is Malik Allen, show me what you've got. If I know this guy is implicated in something, I'll see what I can do to find him.

FORD

Give you privileged information so you can use it against us? You think I don't know who the enemy is?

JAMES

I'll give you the money you need too. How about that? Convince me. Or is your evidence full of holes?

FORD

You're offering money for information? Think about what you're saying.

JEAN

Ford --

FORD

I won't be able to help you, James. There are people who want your head and the only thing standing between them and you is me.

JAMES

You expect me to believe you've been protecting me?

FORD

I have been protecting you, this whole time. Parking lot on Westfield Avenue? The guy in the blue pick-up truck? Go ahead and dabble with your petty crime, it doesn't matter. This'll all end soon, with or without your help.

(FORD throws money on the table.)

Lunch is on me.

(Exit FORD.)

(End of scene)

ACT IIScene 3

SETTING: Outside My Brother's Keeper.

AT RISE: JAMES is just leaving. FIRST MAN is waiting for him.

FIRST MAN

Mr. Halligan.

JAMES

Yes, can I -- stay away from me.

FIRST MAN

Hey, don't worry. I'm not gonna hurt ya. That was just a little misunderstanding the other day. I just wanna talk.

JAMES

I don't need to talk to you.

FIRST MAN

Two people can talk, can't they? Ain't that what you said? There should be a dialogue.

JAMES

I never said -

FIRST MAN

Yeah you did. On the radio. They were interviewing you on KCP.

JAMES

I did do the interview. But I was not referring to the two of us.

FIRST MAN

But you could've been, right? People on different sides of the aisle have got to come together and dialogue. Right?

JAMES

Politically, yes. You are a violent person, who only speaks with his fists --

FIRST MAN

You got me all wrong, I was just pissed the other day. Kind of fucked up, too. And my friend, you remember him, he was saying we should come down here, so -- hell, I don't even remember why we come.

JAMES

Well it's no harm done, but I have to go --

(FIRST MAN steps in front of JAMES.)

FIRST MAN

I said I need to talk to you.

JAMES

You said you wanted to talk to me. But I need to leave.

FIRST MAN

See, now that's gonna make me lose my temper. Cuz you know one thing I can't stand? Hypocrites. Just like all them politicians you rub elbows with, you're just like them, ain't you?

JAMES

I'm not like them -

FIRST MAN

But look at you, you say folks should dialogue, and now you wanna run outta here without letting me say what I got to say. See, you don't realize something.

JAMES

I don't need to hear this.

FIRST MAN

You need to hear it, ok? I'm from Detroit, Mr. Halligan. You hear that? I was born and raised there. My family's from there. My friends are from there. My whole life was in Detroit. Only reason I'm still alive is cuz I was in Florida.

JAMES

I'm sorry. I'm sorry for your loss.

(HE grabs JAMES.)

FIRST MAN

You're sorry? You ain't sorry! What are you doing, huh? What the fuck are you doing?

JAMES

You need to leave me alone, I can't help you, I'm sorry -

FIRST MAN

Right, you can't help me! You can't help my mother, and my sister, and my neighborhood friends! You can't do anything!

JAMES

Please, I'm not responsible. I didn't do this.

(FIRST MAN punches JAMES in the stomach, then the face, knocking him to the ground.)

FIRST MAN

What you need to do is dialogue with the right people, asshole.

(HE kicks JAMES.)

People who were born here. People who belong here.

JAMES

Please, just -

FIRST MAN

Shut up!

(HE kicks JAMES again.)

I was wrong about you, Halligan. I thought I could reason with you. But you're just never gonna stop, are you?

JAMES

Please stop . . .

(HE kicks JAMES again.)

FIRST MAN

Naw, you won't stop. Cause there's something wrong with you. You're sick somehow.

(FIRST MAN takes out a knife.)

JAMES

Please, you don't need to do this --

FIRST MAN

I don't want to, you know. I have to. Someone's gotta protect people from you.

JAMES

Just go away. You've done enough . . .

(FIRST MAN kicks HIM again.)

FIRST MAN

You ain't getting away this time, fucker. You hear me?

(FIRST MAN kneels down and
grabs JAMES by the jacket,
knife to his throat.)

Nowhere to run. Ain't no nigger cop gonna save your ass.

(JAMES' hand has found a beer
bottle. HE smashes it across
FIRST MAN'S face. FIRST MAN
screams and falls. JAMES gets
up and hits HIM, over and over
again, until HE stops moving.)

JAMES

Nowhere to run.

(JAMES drags FIRST MAN to one
side. ROBERTS enters, but does
not notice FIRST MAN.)

ROBERTS

Hey ho, Jimmy boy. What happened to you?

JAMES

Get out of my way.

ROBERTS

Feisty, huh?

JAMES

I said move.

ROBERTS

You heard the good news? Public Safety Act passed the state assembly today. It's headed to the governor's office. Think he'll sign?

JAMES

Get the fuck out of my way.

ROBERTS

Headed home? Why don't I come with you, take a look around?

JAMES

The law hasn't been signed.

ROBERTS

Just a formality now. What's one day more or less?

(ROBERTS notices FIRST MAN.)

Who's this?

JAMES

He assaulted me.

ROBERTS

Turn around and put your hands on your head.

(JAMES punches ROBERTS in the gut, then knocks HIM out with one punch.)

JAMES

FUCK YOU YOU PRICK.

(JAMES exits.)

(End of scene.)

ACT IIScene 4

SETTING: HASSAN'S room.

AT RISE: HASSAN and FORD are sitting
at the table.

FORD
I need to see the money up front.

HASSAN
Half now, and half paid when I am safely out of the country, as
we agreed.

FORD
Just so you know, it ain't easy. We got to pay bribes at the
border.

HASSAN
I thought that was arranged ahead of time.

FORD
It's arranged, but you got to know. You in deep.

HASSAN
I realize that - I'm sorry, what was your name again?

FORD
Terrell.

HASSAN
Terrell, forgive me, but think I understand you and your
associates. You are men accustomed to using certain methods, to
make things happen -

FORD
Forget my other business. I got the channels to import my
product, and I can just send you through in reverse, ok? That's
how it's gonna work.

HASSAN

Yes but, I need you to understand, it is very important to me that no one gets hurt, that we -

FORD

You worried about getting hurt, Mr. Jones?

HASSAN

Of course I am concerned for my safety. I meant that no one else gets hurt.

FORD

You don't have to worry about that. It's all gonna be smooth. We won't let 'em catch up with you.

HASSAN

Let who?

FORD

Whoever you running from, baby. Feds, most likely. Kind of hard on your type lately, huh?

HASSAN

If my money is good with you, it shouldn't matter why I want to leave.

FORD

Nah, it don't matter. Just need to know who I'm dealing with. I'm taking all the risks, see. And this ain't your house, is it?

HASSAN

No.

FORD

So the guy who owns it, what's his part in this?

HASSAN

The man who owns this house has been very kind to me, and that is why I can no longer risk being here. We need to leave him out of it.

FORD

Sound like he already in.

HASSAN

There should be no mention, no connection to this house whatsoever. We leave tonight, and that's it.

FORD

Look Mr. Jones, we can do this, or we can not do this. But I need to know who I'm dealing with, cuz I'm not gonna fuck my shit up over you and the people who know you.

HASSAN

No one knows me. My friends are either dead, gone, or in jail by now.

FORD

Except the guy who gave you my number.

HASSAN

I have not heard from Mihyar in a long time. I had to sneak downstairs just to call you.

FORD

So he don't know I'm here?

HASSAN

Who?

FORD

The guy who owns this house.

HASSAN

No. He doesn't think I should leave.

FORD

Why not?

HASSAN

Because of the risk.

FORD

Risky to leave, risky to stay.

HASSAN

Yes.

(FORD coughs. HE gets
up and moves to the desk,
looking through HASSAN'S things.)

FORD

Why you gotta leave right now? What's different?

HASSAN

I told you, I no longer wish to compromise my friend's safety.

FORD

Why wouldn't he be safe?

HASSAN

Why are you looking through my things?

(FORD finds the memory box.)

FORD

I need to know you, Mr. Jones. I need to trust you.

(HASSAN pulls out an envelope.)

HASSAN

I have the money. Trust in that.

(FORD crosses to HASSAN
and puts the box on the table.
HE takes the envelope and looks
inside. Coughs again.)

Ford

How do I know you'll come up with the rest?

HASSAN

My people will pay you what is owed.

FORD

What people?

HASSAN

Friends in Jordan. They will pay your people, as we discussed.

FORD

I need to know who they are.

HASSAN

I am giving you fifty-thousand up front. Why would I risk my life trying to rip you off?

FORD

You wouldn't be risking it. You'd be ending it.

HASSAN

Then believe that you will be paid the full amount.

FORD

This aint no game here. I need collateral. You need to give me names and numbers. So I know who to blame if shit don't go down like it's supposed to.

HASSAN

This is unreasonable.

FORD

Then you ain't goin' nowhere, huh? How 'bout that? You just sit here and wait 'til they come for you.

(FORD coughs again.)

HASSAN

You are asking me to put my friends at risk, when I have told you -

FORD

They pay the money there's nothing to worry about. No risk. Unless you lie about who they are, and what those numbers are. That I guarantee you, I will find out. Cuz I'll check it out ahead of time.

(FORD coughs again, longer.
HE sits down opposite HASSAN.)

HASSAN

Are you all right?

FORD

Yeah.

HASSAN

I know it's stuffy. The humidifier is broken.

FORD

You should get that thing fixed.

HASSAN

It gets really dry.

(FORD reads JAMES' note.)

FORD

Dry as the Sahara in summer.

(Pause.)

HASSAN

Yes.

(FORD turns the note around
and slaps it down. Pulls out a pen.)

FORD

So what's it gonna be? I want two names, two numbers, and their addresses, and they better be real. And I want 'em right now.

HASSAN

You already know one address. You are right here.

FORD

Oh, so now you not so worried about your friend, huh?

HASSAN

Do you want this name? Or would you prefer another?

FORD

Hell, I can get this guy out of the phone book. Naw, that's not gonna do it. Two of your other friends.

HASSAN

Why not this man? If you know right where to find him?

FORD

Because it's too easy for you. I seen the pictures downstairs. White guy, right? Not one of yours.

HASSAN

Not one of yours either.

FORD

You God-damn right.

(FORD coughs.)

Now cut the bullshit. We here to do business. You give me what I want, I'll make sure you get what you want. Understand?

HASSAN

I have no doubt you intend to get what you want tonight, my friend.

FORD

I aint your fuckin' friend!

(FORD is on HIS feet.)

Who you think you're dealing with? You think I give a fuck what happens to you?

(HE takes out a gun.)

Aint nobody here but you and me baby. I could waste your ass right now and take the fifty grand. Or do you think your boys might come looking for me, huh? Who do you hang with Mr. Jones? Should I be scared?

(FORD starts poking HASSAN.)

You got one of them suicide vests on right now? Gonna blow us both to kingdom come if things get hairy?

HASSAN

Would that make it easier for you? If I gave you a reason?

FORD

Go ahead, give me a reason. Hell, I don't need the money, Ali Baba.

(FORD grabs HASSAN from
behind and puts the gun
to his head.)

What you got planned, huh? Why you got to skip town all of a sudden? C'mon, tell me what's going down and I won't hurt ya.

HASSAN

I don't know what you're talking about!

FORD

Sure you do, you know! Just tell me one thing so I can steer clear of it, ok? Just one clue and we can get out of here put this whole thing behind us.

HASSAN

There's nothing I can tell you.

FORD

You tell me what the fuck is going down or so help me Jesus I will blow your brains all over this motherfucking room! I don't even care. It's you or them, understand? Give up those fucking names.

HASSAN

Ok, all right, I'll tell you! I'll tell you everything.

(FORD releases HIM and
sits back down. HE puts
his gun away.)

FORD

Just so we understand each other. So I know I'll be around to spend that money you throwing my way.

HASSAN

Are you a religious man, Terrell?

FORD

No. Can't say I am.

HASSAN

But you are a smart man, and a resourceful man, and in fact a leader of men. Or else you could not have risen to the top of your profession.

FORD

That's true.

HASSAN

You could have succeeded in anything. You could have become a lawyer, or a doctor, or even a policeman, if you had wanted to.

FORD

You're not telling me what I want to hear.

HASSAN

I will. But you said you wanted us to understand each other.

FORD

I would like that. I really would.

HASSAN

And to do that, men must be honest, don't you agree? There comes a time when a man must reveal himself for who he truly is.

FORD

Absolutely.

HASSAN

You chose to carry a gun, to use it as you see fit, am I correct?

FORD

And you? Did you choose a violent life, Mr. Jones?

HASSAN

Go to my desk drawer and look inside. Then you will discover who I really am.

(FORD gets up and crosses
to the desk, HIS back to HASSAN.
HASSAN considers the gun.
FORD removes a passport.)

FORD

It says you're Hassan Houkman. That don't really tell me much, Mr. Jones.

HASSAN

It's just a name. But I can give you another name. Someone capable of great violence.

FORD

Then give me that name.

HASSAN

Are you sure you're ready to hear it?

FORD

I said I was.

HASSAN

Ford Halligan.

(A brief pause. FORD
whips out his gun.)

FORD

Put your hands on your head! Now! Put your hands on top of your head!

(HASSAN does so. FORD
crosses and handcuffs HIM.
JAMES enters.)

JAMES

No, Ford. Not this.

(FORD pulls HASSAN up and
pushes him against a wall.)

FORD

Had him here the whole time, huh Dad?

JAMES

You're making a mistake.

HASSAN

It's all right, James.

FORD

You endangered the lives of millions of people, hiding a terrorist, right here -

JAMES

He's not a terrorist -

FORD

He sat right there across from me and admitted it!

HASSAN

You had a gun to my head.

FORD

How did he know who I was? What did you tell him about me?

JAMES

He knew you were a cop? Sitting right there?

HASSAN

It was the asthma.

JAMES

You can't take him.

FORD

I am taking him.

JAMES

He's not who you think he is.

FORD

Stop lying to yourself. Wake up!

JAMES

Ford, you're wrong. I can't let you take him.

FORD

You can't get out of this one, James. I'm taking him in. And I'm taking you too.

(JAMES grabs the gun from
the table, showing it to FORD.)

JAMES

He could've killed you!

(FORD pulls his gun and
points it at JAMES.)

FORD

Drop that weapon.

HASSAN

James -

JAMES

It was here the whole time!

FORD

Drop the weapon!

(JAMES points his gun
at FORD.)

JAMES

No. Drop yours.

HASSAN

James!

FORD

You are threatening the life of a police officer. I need you to drop the gun.

JAMES

I can't do it, Ford. I can't let you.

FORD

You have to.

JAMES

He could've killed you!

HASSAN

James, it's too late.

FORD

I'm warning you. On the count of three.

JAMES

I'll do it, Ford.

FORD

On three, you drop the gun.

JAMES

Whatever it takes.

FORD

Or I'll kill you.

HASSAN

James, please --

FORD

One.

HASSAN

James!

FORD

Two -

(HASSAN lunges at FORD and bumps him just as JAMES fires. HASSAN is shot and falls, dead. FORD raises his gun and shoots JAMES, killing him. FORD moves to JAMES and stands over him.)

Consider that my answer.

(End of scene)

ACT IIScene 5

SETTING: HASSAN'S room, one week later.
There is crime scene tape blocking
the stairs.

AT RISE: FORD is looking around the room,
lost in thought. JEAN enters.

JEAN

Ford? They told me at the station you might be here. I thought
I'd check --

FORD

Ask Officer Friendly.

JEAN

You shouldn't torture yourself. It's hard enough as it is.

(FORD doesn't reply.)

None of this is your fault. No one blames you. I don't blame
you. You know that, don't you?

FORD

There are no accidents.

JEAN

Ford, listen to me. You know I loved your father. No matter
what, even at the end, I never stopped loving him. And I know
he did what he thought was right. But his stubbornness cost
him. This man, this Malik Allen -

FORD

Hassan Houkman.

JEAN

Whatever his name was, he lied to your father. He used him, and
James let himself be used. It's not your fault that this man
killed your father before you could stop him. You have to
believe that.

FORD

Believe, my son, and you will be saved. Praise Jesus!

JEAN

Maybe you should talk to Father Morrison. You were always close to him.

FORD

"Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death" -

JEAN

Ford -

FORD

"I will fear no evil, for thou art with me."

JEAN

Ford, I think -

FORD

"Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; thou annointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over."

JEAN

You don't need to mock me. Do you think you're the only one who's suffering?

FORD

"Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for such is the kingdom of God."

JEAN

God-damn you anyway.

FORD

Yeah, let the devil in.

JEAN

You don't need to push me away.

FORD

Just the facts, ma'am.

JEAN

All right, Ford. Have it your way. What do you intend to do with the house?

FORD

What house?

JEAN

The house. This house, your house. Don't you know?

(FORD just stares at her.)

Your father wrote me out of his will after the divorce. This is your house now.

(Silence.)

Ford? Did you hear me? You can sell it if you want. You can pay off your gambling debts.

FORD

I already took care of that.

JEAN

You paid your debt? Where did you get the money?

FORD

I'm resourceful. A nigger got his ways.

JEAN

Ford! Will you stop this!

FORD

What's the matter momma? You don't know who you raised?

JEAN

I know you are hurting right now.

FORD

You don't know shit.

JEAN

I know my son.

FORD

Whoever he was. I saved the world, you know that? Like the Lone Ranger and Tonto. They should put my face on Mt. Rushmore. Or maybe I should just go back to Africa.

(Their lines start overlapping.)

JEAN

Why why why are you doing this?

FORD

I'm Oedipus the King! Let's get married.

JEAN

You stupid little shit!

FORD

The old man's out of the way.

JEAN

You need to sober up, you need to shut up -

FORD

Need a bigger gun, not enough bullets -

JEAN

You shut up and go see Father Morrison -

FORD

I'll burn this place down, I'll knock out the windows -

JEAN

What happened? What happened here?

FORD

All in the report.

JEAN

Why didn't you have back-up?

FORD

We do things by the book!

JEAN

Where was your back-up? Why were you alone?

FORD

The Lone Ranger!

JEAN

Where was your back-up?

FORD

I saved the whole mutherfucking world!

(JEAN is hitting him.)

JEAN

What did you do? What did you do? What did you do?

(Sobbing, JEAN runs out of
the room and into JAMES' room, off-stage.
FORD sits. HE takes items out
of the memory box, looking at them.
JEAN returns, more composed.)

You need to go see Father Morrison.

FORD

Why?

JEAN

Someone's watching you.

FORD

I know. He sees all.

JEAN

It was on the whole time. It's on right now.

FORD

It?

JEAN

You go see Father Morrison. And you confess your sins.

(JEAN exits room and house.
FORD picks up the note and reads
it. Lights fade.)

(END OF PLAY)

APPENDIX C

HERE'S WHAT'S COMING!!!

**Special staged reading!!!!**

Thurs., Nov. 11, 7:30 pm

The Seafarer

Written by Conor McPherson

Directed by Christian H. Moe

Suggested donation: \$3.00 to Scholarship fund.

Dec. 2-5

Alchemy of Desire/ Dead Man's Blues

A young Louisiana bayou woman grieves over the wartime death of her husband in this powerful play with songs.

Written by Caridad Svitch

Directed by Susan Patrick Benson



Chamber Opera - February 10-13

Tartuffe

By Kirke Mechem

Directed by Tim Fink; Musical Direction by Paul Transue

A man, caught in the fervor of a religious imposter, finds himself at odds with his family over his fortune and his daughter's future.

Co-produced with the
SIUC School of Music.



April 28-May 1

Macbeth

Written by William Shakespeare

Directed by Segun Ojewuyi

A man and his wife are led to murderous actions by their ambitious desire for power and glory.



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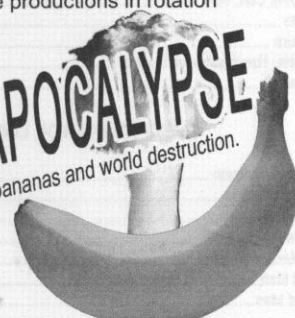
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The SIUC Department of Theater presents
2010 New Play Festival
Two world premiere productions in rotation

BANANAPOCALYPSE

a comedy about bananas and world destruction.



written by David Clark*

directed by J. Thomas Kidd

Thurs. & Sat. Nov. 4 & 6, 7:30 pm



Everywhere You Look

a searing drama of suspicion and fear.

written by Jeff Nichols*

Fri. Nov. 5, 7:30 pm; Sun. Nov. 7, 2:00 pm

November 4 - 7, 2010

C. H. Moe Theater - Comm. Bldg. - SIUC Campus

*In partial fulfillment of an MFA in Theater



WHO'S WHO IN BANANAPOCALYPSE



Bret Corell (Morris) is a senior majoring in Theater. He will be graduating in December so this is his last college production. He has appeared in *King Lear*, *Lysistrata*, and *Working Week*. He would like to thank his family for being so supportive and his friends for making his last semester a great one!



Lauren Conner (Hollie, Representative Daniels) is a sophomore Musical Theater major at SIUC. She has appeared in *The Marriage of Figaro* and *gods Play* (Journeys 2009). Lauren keeps God first and strives for excellence. She is thankful for her loving parents, Tom, David, the cast, and her wonderful friends.



Sean Frisch (Claude) is a senior Theatre major. Previous roles include; CB in *Dog Sees God: Confessions of a Teenage Blockhead*, Spartan Delegate in *Lysistrata* and Head of Housing in *Unser Zuverlässiges Haus*. He would like to friends and family for their support. Ka-kaw.



Jimmy Heisner (Tom) is a senior Theatre major. Recently seen on stage at SIUC in *Four Actors In Search Of A Moment* and *King Lear*. He is a lifetime lover of bananas. He would like to thank his family and friends for their immense support and for keeping him sane. It's a crazy world!



Biana Jaconetty (Alais) is a sophomore at SIUC this year. In the past year she has been in SIUC's production of *Lysistrata* and in Roller Coaster Theatre Company's premiere show, *Blood Brothers*. She is extremely elated to be working on *Bananapocalypse* this year, and hope you enjoy the show!



Kathryn Stephens (Laura) This is Kathryn's first performance at SIUC. Originally from DuQuoin, IL she is a freshman majoring in Theater. Past performances include *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Cinderella*, *A Tomb with a View*, and *Little Women*. Her thanks and appreciation goes out to the fabulous cast, crew, and her family.



Carter Wilkinson (Danny, Carl, Sully), a transfer student from Wabash Valley College is a Theatre major with a minor in Kinesiology. He would like to coach football someday. He has appeared in such productions as *The Circus*, and *New Faces*. He would like to thank his parents for their support.



David Clark (Playwright - Bananapocalypse) is a MFA playwrighting student at SIUC. Plays at SIUC include *Laundry*, *gods Play*, *The Squirrels*, *Everything and Nothing* (2009 Moe Contest Winner). Other plays include *Behind Closed Doors* (Centre College, KY), *The Chocolate Girl* (2010 Mid-America Theatre Conference), *In Retrospect* (finalist, Heidemann Award at Actors Theatre of Louisville) as part of The Seven play festival at the Fusion Theatre in Albuquerque, NM. *Bananapocalypse* was a semi-finalist for the 2009 Kentucky New Play Award.



J. Thomas Kidd (Director - Bananapocalypse) is an Associate Professor in Acting/Directing for the Theatre Department at SIUC, and has directed and choreographed for professional theatre companies and industrial venues including The Six Flags Corporation, Lakes Region Summer Theatre (*The Pajama Game*), The Little Theatre on the Square (*Where's Charley?*) The McLeod Summer Playhouse (*My Fair Lady*, *All Shook Up*), The Atlanta Lyric Theatre (*Evita*) and even The Atlanta Braves.

PRODUCTION STAFF

ARTISTIC STAFF

Director - Bananapocalypse J. Thomas Kidd
Set Designer John Glazier
Costume Designer Jane Pivovarnik
Asst. Costume Designer Phillip Mann
Lighting Designer Meghan O'Rourke
Sound Designer Blake Hardin
Dramaturg Tom Campbell, Callie Meiners
Fight Director - Everywhere Richard Raether
Composer, "A World Without Bananas" David Flora

TECHNICAL STAFF

Production Manager Bob Holcombe
Stage Manager - Bananapocalypse Michelle Wiggins
Stage Manager - Everywhere You Look Tori Richardson
Asst. Stage Manager - Everywhere You Look Gabrielle Ponce
Technical Director Bob Holcombe
Asst. Technical Director Mike Johnson
Scene Shop Supervisor Jason Allen
Carpenters Will Coeur, Brett Corell, Christopher DiOrto,
Blake Hardin, Carl Herzog, Morgan Kopczynski,
Tori Richardson, John Vales, Alex Weinhold, Stagecraft: Scenery
Scenic Artist Heidi Larsen
Master Electrician Christopher Jorandby
Electricians Stagecraft: Lighting
Property Master John Glazier
Asst. Property Master Gareth York
Costume Construction Crew Stagecraft: Costumes
Costume Studio Manager Caitlin Entwistle
Drapers Amanda Stumpf, Caitlin Entwistle
Stitches Jennifer Sutton, Katelyn Ratliff, Girod Tanksley
Costume Crafts Stephi Moltior

RUNNING CREW

Light Board Operator Sosuke Uematsu
Sound Board Operator Nick Lambert
Stage Crew Sabreena Candreva, Carl Herzog,
Brett Morris
Dressers Andrea Henderson, Girod Tanksley

ADMINISTRATION

House Manager Erin Moss
Department Chair Mark Varns
Secretary Melinda Purcell
Business Manager Scott Elliott
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SPECIAL THANKS TO

Kyle Neumann
Ron Naversen
Schnuck's and Kroger

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of this production is strictly prohibited.

BANANAPOCALYPSE CAST

Alais	Bianca Jaconetty
Morris	Bret Correll
Danny, Carl, Sully	Carter Wilkinson
Tom	Jimmy Heisner
Laura	Kathryn Stephens
Hollie, Representative Daniels	Lauren Conner
Claude	Sean Fritsch

EVERYWHERE YOU LOOK CAST

James Halligan	Aaron Clark
Jean Halligan	Jane Grote
Ford Halligan	Brian Nelson
Hassan Houkman	Benjamin Ponce
Detective Roberts	Jim Kress, Jr.
1st Man	Max Ryan
2nd Man	Luke Moats

These productions are entered as participating productions for the KCACTF Region III Festival.

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XLIII

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This production is entered in the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival (KCACTF). The aims of this national theater education program are to identify and promote quality in college-level theater production. To this end, each production entered is eligible for a response by a regional KCACTF representative, and selected students and faculty are invited to participate in KCACTF programs involving scholarships, internships, grants and awards for actors, directors, dramaturgs, playwrights, designers, stage managers and critics at both the regional and national levels.

Productions entered on the Participating level are eligible for inclusion at the KCACTF regional festival and can also be considered for invitation to the KCACTF national festival at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC in the spring of 2011.

Last year more than 1,300 productions were entered in the KCACTF involving more than 200,000 students nationwide. By entering this production, our theater department is sharing in the KCACTF goals to recognize, reward, and celebrate the exemplary work produced in college and university theaters across the nation.

WHO'S WHO IN EVERYWHERE YOU LOOK



Aaron Clark (James Halligan) is happy to return to SIUC as a MFA student. Aaron graduated from SIUC in 2009 with a BA in Theater. Past credits include *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Biloxi Blues*. Aaron would like to thank his wonderful fiancée Yen Vi for her love and support! Anh Thong Em!



Jane Grote (Jean Halligan) is a senior Theater major. Previous roles include Secretary (*Unser Zuverlässiges Haus*), Lady Reporter (*Working Week*), and Mother (*A Christmas Story*). She has also appeared in *The Vagina Monologues*. She is from Pittsfield, IL where she was active in community and high school theater.



Jim Kress, Jr. (Detective Roberts) is in his final year at SIUC as a Theater major. He is happy Jenny Holcombe gave him the chance to be in the show and thanks all his friends and family for helping along these last few years. Except Bret, you are not my friend.



Luke Moats (2nd Man) is a native of nearby Fairfield, Illinois. He is a third semester Theater major. He was last seen in *Lysistrata* (Old Man) and *One Day Play Day 2009* (Father). He would like to thank his friends and family for all of their support.



Brian Nelson (Ford Halligan) is proud to make his debut at SIUC. Brian has devoted a large portion of his life to performing, most recently in Six Flags Great America's *Showstoppin'* (Singer/Dancer). He is humbled to have supportive friends, family and fellow cast members and is thankful to God for strength, love, and purpose!



Benjamin Ponce (Hassan Houkman) is a 22 year old freshman. He returns to the States after three years working as an English teacher in Lima, Peru. He is presently studying Arabic and will travel to Cairo, Egypt this winter for a social work project. He is very happy to be back at SIUC and acting again.



Max Ryan (1st Man) has been seen in *Dog Sees God*, *2008 One-Day-Play-Day* and as Two in *Silence* (Journeys 2009). In addition to acting, Max is interested in stage combat.



Jeff Nichols (Playwright - Everywhere You Look) has long desired to merge social justice issues with drama. *Everywhere You Look* in some ways continues an exploration started with his solo show, *Ask The Question*, which has been performed in Minneapolis, San Francisco, and Carbondale. Jeff is the author of *Drowning*, *Awake*, *Echobell*, *Four Actors in Search of a Moment*, and *Theatre Games*, all of which have received performances at SIUC. He wishes to thank the cast and production team for all their hard work.

SIUC Theater Department Faculty

Mark Varns, Lighting Design and Chair
Ron Naversen, Scenic Design
David Rush, Playwriting
Bob Holcombe, Technical Direction
Anne Fletcher, Theater History

J. Thomas Kidd, Performance
Segun Ojewuyi, Directing
Susan Patrick Benson, Voice and Speech
Wedi Zea, Costume Design
Jenny Holcombe, Movement

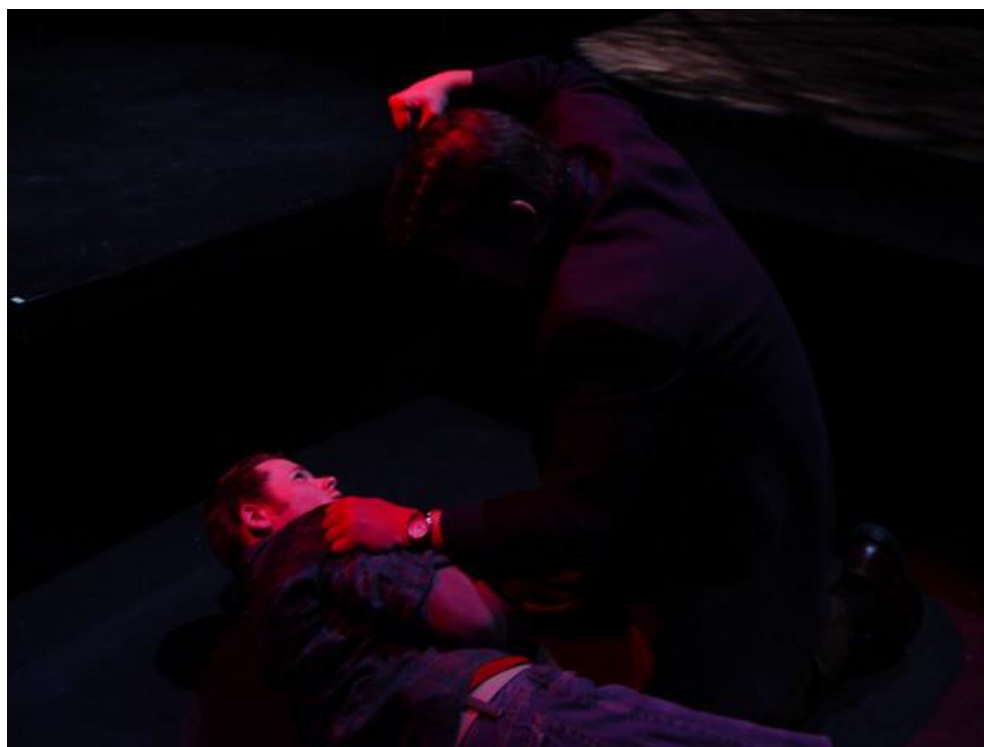
APPENDIX D





















(PUBLICITY PHOTO)



VITA

Graduate School
Southern Illinois University

Jeffrey Nichols
502 S. Oakland Ave. Carbondale Il. 62901
janjj@hotmail.com

Date of Birth: May 9, 1970

State University of New York at Albany
Bachelor of Arts, History, May 1996

Thesis Title:
Everywhere You Look

Major Professor: Dr. David Rush

Red Delicious (one-act satire)
Finalist, Kennedy Center ACTF Region III One-act Competition
Staged Reading, Michigan State University (KCACTF) Jan. 2011

Everywhere You Look (full-length drama)
Winner, Christian H. Moe Award: Best Long Play
Kennedy Center ACTF Region III Festival, Michigan State Jan. 2011
Southern Illinois University Carbondale (thesis) Oct. 2010

Mannequin's Daughter (one-act surreal comedy)
Southern Illinois University Carbondale Dec. 2010

Four Actors in Search of a Moment (post-modern)
Southern Illinois University: *Journeys* March 2010

Theatre Games (10-minute post-modern)
Southern Illinois University Carbondale: *Journeys* Sept. 2009

Drowning (one-act suspense)
Winner, Christian H. Moe Award: Best Short Play
Kennedy Center ACTF Region III: Saginaw, MI Jan. 2010
Southern Illinois University Carbondale: *Journeys* March 2009

Awake (10-minute comedy)
Mid-American Theater Conference, Chicago, Staged Reading March 2009
Southern Illinois University Carbondale: *Journeys* Sept. 2008