

Crazy Eyes

A Play

By

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Characters:

Will Wright: Twenty-five. Works as a Day Trader. Wants to be a hero.

Jack Stone: Twenty-five. Will's roommate and best friend. Works as a caterer. Wants to be an actor.

Lisa Stearn: Twenty-nine. Jack's girlfriend. She does AIDS research for a living.

Ibrahim Akil Seif: Twenty-five. Owns a \$99 store on the block.

Setting:

A two bedroom apartment in Park Slope, Brooklyn.

Time:

October, 2001. The height of the post 9/11 Anthrax scare.

SCENE 1

(In the darkness, we hear a song very much like *Let me be your Hero*, by Enrique Iglesias. We sit in darkness listening to the song for a while.)

(Lights up!)

(Will is sitting on the couch, weeping to the words of the song. He wears a yellow, protective Hazardous-Materials Suit, the helmet by his side.)

(Strewn about him are a number of patriotic magazines regarding September 11. He holds a copy of *Newsweek's* commemorative issue: **The Spirit of America**. A little blond girl wearing a U.S.A. T-shirt, perches on her father's shoulders as she holds an American flag, arms outstretched.)

(Will sings along to the song. Patriotic tears on his face.)

(The door opens and Jack, dressed in a catering tux, stands in the light. He takes the scene in for a moment, unnoticed by Will.)

JACK

What in God's name is going on here?

(Will turns the music off.)

(Jack enters, puts his stuff down and looks the place over.)

JACK

(continuing)
What the hell's been going on here?

WILL

Do you believe we all have a hero in us?

JACK

No.

WILL

Do you have a hero in you?

JACK

What do you think?

WILL

I think you do.

JACK

Then I guess I do.

WILL

You busy tonight?

JACK

(Laughs)
You could say that.

WILL

What do you got going on?

JACK

First, I'm going to try on your hazmat suit. Then I'm gonna call Lis and see if she wants to get kinky with it.

WILL

(serious)
Don't touch my hazmat suit.

JACK

This will be three times; what the fuck is going on here, Will?

WILL

You're proud to be an American, right?

JACK

What is this?

WILL

You enjoy the luxuries and freedoms of living here?

JACK

Yes, I like living here.

WILL

What does it mean to be an American to you?

JACK

What does it mean to be an American to you?

WILL

Whatever it takes to save lives, you do it. If you have to throw your life and even your nuts onto the table, you do it.

JACK

You're a hero, Will. God bless you.

WILL

Thank you.

JACK

You're welcome... You crazy mother-fucker.

WILL

It's been a crazy kind of day.

JACK

I had a nutso day myself. I came to a decision on something. Something big.

WILL

Then you'd better tell me about it.

JACK

I'm asking Lisa to marry me tonight.

WILL

Bullshit.

JACK

She's the woman I love. I want her to bear my children. I want her to spend the rest of her life with me.

WILL

Funny way of putting it.

JACK

What do you mean?

WILL

You want her to spend the rest of her life with you?

JACK

Together. I want us to spend the rest of our lives together.

WILL
But that's not what you said.

JACK
It's what I meant.

WILL
Why don't you say what you mean?

JACK
Cause I like fucking with you, that's why.

WILL
Are you going to keep Mandy on the side?

JACK
Piss off.

WILL
That's something Lisa says. Not you.

JACK
How can you ask me that?

WILL
You've cheated on Lisa at least ten times with Mandy. You wonder why I ask?

JACK
The first time I was blind drunk. The second time I knew it was a mistake. You know this.

WILL
And the eight times after that?

JACK
What was I supposed to do? She would have told Lisa if I stopped.

WILL
How is it different now?

JACK
It's different now.

WILL
What's different?

JACK
Mandy got bored with the situation. She could care less what I do.

WILL
That's beside the point, Jack.

JACK

Beside it?

WILL

You couldn't stay faithful for eight months. How are you going to do it for the rest of your life?

JACK

Maybe I learned my lesson.

WILL

Maybe you're making a mistake.

(Jack starts laughing.)

WILL

(continuing)
What's funny?

JACK

You're wearing a hazmat suit, your hazmat suit; telling me I'm making the biggest mistake of my life, while maintaining a perfectly straight face.

WILL

It's funny?

JACK

(stops laughing long enough to spit out)
Yeah.

(Will almost breaks down into tears, but quickly hides it with laughter.)

(They both laugh.)

JACK

(continuing)
Good to see you smile, bro. I thought I was going to have to ask you to leave before she got here.

WILL

Who got here?

JACK

Lisa.

WILL

Here? Tonight?

JACK

Yeah, tonight. I'm going to cook her dinner, then I'm going to ask her to marry me. I told you this.

WILL

I thought you would take her out.

JACK

Well, I'm not. Can I count on you to be cool?

WILL

I'm absolutely cool.

JACK

I'm dead-ass, can I count on you?

WILL

Can I count on you?

JACK

For what?

WILL

When I need your help?

JACK

You can always count on me. You know that.

WILL

Always?

JACK

Always. I am your boy. I look out for you.

WILL

Tell Lisa not to come here tonight.

JACK

What are you doing?

WILL

It's not a good idea for her to be here tonight.

JACK

What did you not understand about what I told you? Most best friends, when they hear their buddy is getting married, they congratulate him. They buy him a fucking beer. You didn't feel like doing that. Okay. Fine. But don't act like an asshole because you want my girlfriend.

WILL

What are you talking about?

JACK

Don't play these games with me. You know what I'm talking about.

WILL

Sorry, I don't.

JACK

You're in love with her.

WILL
What makes you think so?

JACK
I'm an actor, I can read body language.

WILL
My body tells you I'm in love with your girlfriend?

JACK
It does.

WILL
What does hers tell you?

JACK
That she loves me.

WILL
I see.

JACK
You want to know what the best part is?

WILL
Okay.

JACK
She thinks you're in love with me. She told me.

WILL
I'm not in love with either one of you.

JACK
Oh, man, cut the shit. Just cut it. I know you want her. I saw you catch the peek the other night when she ran to the bathroom naked.

WILL
Tell her to put on a robe, I'm human.

JACK
You were waiting by my room.

WILL
I was walking to the bathroom.

JACK
You've got supernatural timing.

WILL
If I wanted your girl, I'd be with her. So, relax.

JACK
^{get}
I've gotta ready.

(Jack puts the groceries on the counter and moves to the closet to hang up his jacket. He opens the closet door and we see Ibrahim Akil Seif, tied to a chair and gagged.)

WILL

He's a terrorist.

JACK

Will, what have you done?

WILL

I've made a citizen's arrest on a terrorist.

JACK

You kidnapped this guy?

WILL

No. I apprehended a terrorist in the act of making preparations to douse New York with Anthrax.

JACK

This is the guy from the corner deli! He's not a terrorist!

WILL

How do you know?

JACK

Because I know.

WILL

How?

JACK

I know him!

WILL

You know him because you chat with him when you go into his store? He gave you the impression he was a friendly, harmless, innocent guy? Is that how you know?

JACK

You're crazy. Your perception of reality is seriously out of whack. Temporary insanity.

WILL

I'm not crazy, Jack.

JACK

I know you're not crazy, Will. You're just mixed up right now.

(Jack moves to Ibrahim.)

WILL
What are you doing?

JACK
Untying him.

WILL
Sit down, Jack. Let me explain this to you.

(Jack does not stop.)

(Will pulls a gun out from under the cushion and cocks it loudly.)

(Jack stops.)

WILL
(continuing)
Sit down, let me explain.

(Jack slowly sits in the chair.)

WILL
(continuing)
I saw this jihad piece of shit buy a big bag of Anthrax from another terrorist. Right here on the corner of Sterling and Sixth.
(to Ibrahim)
On our block!

IBRAHIM
(gagged)
Hah's hoh hroo! Ich's hokhane, hoh hanhrafh. Hi'um
hoh huh herhorhish!

(Will swings the gun towards Ibrahim.)

WILL
Shut your hole before I give you another.

(Ibrahim is silent.)

JACK
How do you know it's Anthrax?

WILL
I've been tailing this evil sonofabitch for three days.

JACK
Are you serious?

WILL

Do I look like I'm joking?

(pause)

Three days ago I ran out of toilet paper. I go to the store, and there's no one in there but our little smelly, smiling friend here and an even smellier no smiling terrorist-looking fuck. As soon as I walk into the room, they stop talking and stare at me. Our smiling arab friend for some reason is no longer happy to see me. I go to get the toilet paper and the guy leans over to our friend here and mutters something in arabic. Our friend chuckles, then does a gesture to Allah, and I'm no expert, but I'd say it was something along the lines of "God Willing" in our country. I bring the toilet paper up to the counter and they shut up and just stare at me. So, I throw my money down, thank the man and leave. Both their eyes trained on me like laser scopes 'till I'm out the door. So, I go home, get my gun out of the safe, and tail the little bastard for three days.

JACK

You told me you were working late and partying.

WILL

What could I tell you?

JACK

The truth!

WILL

I didn't have proof.

JACK

Why didn't you turn it over to the police?

WILL

Because God put me in that store for a reason. He wanted me to take care of it. You probably can't understand that, being a man who disregards his own religion and all.

JACK

Will, just tell me what happened.

WILL

The first two days, things seemed normal. He smiled at the customers, made his little jokes. By day three, I was ready to pack it in and get some sleep, but that's when I saw him come out of his house with a briefcase. Odd, don't you think?

JACK

You haven't slept for three days?

(Will rubs his eyebrow with the hand that holds the gun.)

WILL

Yeah. I guess I haven't.

JACK

Tell me what you did.

WILL

At three p.m., on the dot, our smellier no smiling arab shows up at the store, driving a humvee. He gets out with a package made up to look like a birthday present.

(indicates Ibrahim)

This dumb amateur remembers to put the "Be back in Fifteen minutes" sign up, but forgets to lock the door. What do you think, maybe he was nervous?

(Jack does not respond.)

WILL

(continuing)

I go in, my gun drawn, glide to the back, peek into the room through the crack in the door, and see these two terrorist fucks exchanging money for Anthrax. This guy in the closet, the guy you wanted to untie, was using his store as a front for all these years, waiting to pull off an attack. Jack, he's part of Al Quaeda.

(Jack says nothing for a moment.)

JACK

Where's the other guy?

WILL

He went for his gun. I had no choice.

JACK

You...

WILL

There was no opportunity for a warning shot.

(Will spits.)

I knocked this one on the back of the head, grabbed the Anthrax and came back here.

JACK

Why did you bring him here?

WILL

I couldn't leave him there.

JACK

You're going to jail.

WILL
Not if you don't turn me in.

JACK
They'll find you.

WILL
Nobody saw me.

JACK
Somebody saw you.

WILL
Nobody saw me.

JACK
This is New York, somebody saw you.

WILL
I can count on you not to turn me in, right?

JACK
Do you know what you're asking me? Do you have any
fucking idea what you're asking?!!!

WILL
Goddamit you owe me!

(Pause.)

JACK
I know.

WILL
Return the favor.

(Jack is silent, unable to take Will's
gaze, he looks at the floor.)

(Will turns his gaze on Ibrahim.)

WILL
(continuing)
These little fuckers sure do bleed.

JACK
(looking at Ibrahim)
Did you beat him before or after you tied him up?

WILL
Both.

JACK
Why?

WILL

What was it you said to me when I asked you what you would do if you had Osama Bin Laden alone in a room?

JACK

What did I say to you? What did I say to you when you asked what I would do if I had Osama Bin Laden alone in a room, while we were high as kites and watching *First Blood* on TV? Is that the question?

(pause)

I said I would kick the living piss out of him.

WILL

Well I've got Osama right here.

JACK

Now he's Osama Bin Laden?

WILL

He might as well be. He was going to Thrax New York under Bin Laden's orders.

JACK

Where's the anthrax?

WILL

In a safe place.

JACK

I want to see it.

WILL

I don't remember you buying a hazmat suit.

JACK

No, I did not buy a hazmat suit. Because it's insane to buy a hazmat suit.

WILL

Yeah, I guess it's unfathomable that in this day and age one might need to examine hazardous materials in one's refrigerator.

JACK

It's in the fridge?

WILL

Yeah.

JACK

Next to the vegetables?

WILL

It's in a bio-safety container.

(Jack opens the fridge.)

JACK
Aww, man, this isn't bio-safe. It's made by Ziplock.

WILL
He had it in a safe container to begin with. I just put it in that to be clean.

JACK
How do you know it was in a bio-safe container?

WILL
He doesn't want to get the disease before he kills thousands of innocent people; women, children. Exactly what's going on in your homeland.

JACK
My homeland?

WILL
Israel.

JACK
Man... I don't... How can...
(he exhales deeply)
How could you put this in the fridge?

WILL
I have enough Cipro to get the two of us through three weeks if need be.

JACK
Take it out of the fridge.

WILL
Why?

JACK
TAKE THE FUCKING ANTHRAX OUT OF THE FRIDGE!!!

WILL
All right. But be cool, man. I need you to be a little more cool than that.

JACK
I have to think. I need some time to think.

WILL
(puts the helmet back on his hazmat suit and goes to the fridge. He takes the container out and brings it over to the coffee table. He opens the Ziplock bowl.)
Okay, this is it.

(Will takes the powder out of the bowl. It is wrapped in a thick plastic bag with yellow tape around it.)

JACK

Shit, it could be baking soda for all I know.

WILL

It's Thrax.

JACK

Maybe Lisa will be able to tell.

WILL

What?

JACK

She deals with AIDS, she's up on all this shit.

WILL

Are you crazy?

JACK

What do you expect me to tell her?

WILL

Shit, man, tell her you're sick. Tell her your grandmother got the flu and had to do her hair. Tell her anything, but don't let her come here. She'll become an accomplice, too.

JACK

What's this 'accomplice, too', shit? I ain't a fucking accomplice?

(Jack takes it in, then runs to the bathroom. We hear him puke.)

(Will puts the gun in a drawer and returns the bag of powder to the fridge.)

(He sprays Lysol on the spot where he had placed the bowl, then all around the room.)

(He catches Ibrahim looking at him. Will stares at him with the Lysol in his hand.)

(He walks over to Ibrahim and stares him in the face.)

(Ibrahim looks back at him.)

(Will holds the Lysol up like he's going to spray it in Ibrahim's eyes.)

(Ibrahim continues to stare.)

(Will laughs and moves away from him.)

(He takes the hazmat suit off and goes around the apartment tidying up.)

WILL

Jack? Don't you think you should call Lisa?

(Jack re-emerges.)

JACK

Give me the phone.

(He does.)

JACK

(continuing)
Where's the Thrax?

WILL

In the fridge.

(There is a knock.)

(Jack and Will look at each other, then at Ibrahim.)

(There is another knock.)

JACK

Who is it?

LISA

(from behind the door, with a fake Chinese accent.)
Chinese food.

JACK

Lisa?

LISA

(from behind the door)
No, your other girlfriend.

(Jack and Will close the door on Ibrahim and the two frantically run around the apartment trying to make it look normal.)

LISA
(continuing; from behind the door.)
Jack?

JACK
Coming!

(He gives his last looks over the apartment, sees the groceries on the counter, thinks for a second, then throws them out the window before moving to the door.)

(Lisa enters.)

LISA
Hey.

(She moves to give him a kiss. He remembers that he has just vomited and gives her his cheek.)

JACK
Hey.

LISA
What's for dinner? I'm starving.

JACK
I thought we'd go out.

LISA
You said you were cooking for me tonight.

JACK
The gig ran late. I didn't have time to hit the supermarket.

(Lisa takes off her jacket and starts to move toward the closet.)

LISA
That's okay, let's whip up some left-overs, I'm too tired to go out.

(Will cuts her off from the closet.)

WILL
Here, Lisa, let me take your jacket.

LISA
(somewhat surprised)
Thank you, Will.

(She goes to the fridge.)

JACK
Don't!

WILL
No!

LISA
(Does not open it.)
My God, what is it?

JACK
It just... There's nothing in there.

(Lisa opens the fridge)

LISA
Holy shit.

JACK
Don't touch it.

LISA
You're right I'm not going to touch it. That Catfish
has been in here for like two weeks.

WILL
I know. It's disgusting.
(Will lays her jacket over the back of a chair.)

LISA
What's this?

(She holds up the container with the
powder in it.)

WILL
My Aunt always sends me this really good flour for
making quiche.

LISA
Do you want to make it tonight?

WILL
It's an elaborate process.

(She puts it back.)

LISA
Okay, why don't we order a pizza?

JACK
You don't want to go out?

LISA
Not tonight, sweetie. I'm tired.

(She cracks a beer from the fridge.)

(continuing)
You want one.

LISA

Don't drink that!

JACK

Why not?

LISA

We should have wine with pizza.

JACK

Wine?

LISA

Yeah. Let's go pick up some wine and pizza.

JACK

You go. I'll stay here.

LISA

Come with?

JACK

Baby, I'm tired. I had a long day, I just want to put my feet up and eat.

LISA

(Lisa picks up one of the magazines.)

(to Will)
Come with me.

JACK

No, I think I'll stay here and keep Lady Lisa company.

WILL

(He looks at Lisa. She is reading the magazine, not paying attention to them.)
Never leave a lady alone.

(Jack gestures for Will to come with him. Will shakes his head no. Jack gestures harder. Will gestures "no" harder.)

(Lisa looks up at them. They both smile.)

Half chicken, broccoli, and garlic?

LISA

Half pepperoni and black olive?

JACK

Perfect.

LISA

(Jack looks at the two of them sitting on the couch.)

JACK
All right. So. I'll be back soon.

WILL
Could you get me a few Pepsis?

JACK
(looks hard at Will.)
Sure.

(Will smiles.)

LISA
Go quick though, huh. I'm starving.

JACK
(half-way out the door, to Lisa)
I love you.

(She smiles at him.)

(He exits.)

(Lisa picks up the open beer and starts drinking it.)

WILL
So why was your day long?

LISA
Oh, just...work.

(Will slides close to her.)

WILL
I'm not clear on exactly what it is you do?

LISA
I do AIDS research for the government.

WILL
I know that. What I'm asking, is, what do you do?

LISA
You mean what do I physically do?

WILL
Yes.

(He kisses her. For a moment she kisses back, then pushes him away.)

LISA

What are you doing?

WILL

You telling me you don't want it?

LISA

It can't happen again.

WILL

Why not?

LISA

Because it can't.

WILL

He fucked her at least ten times. You think that's right?

LISA

I'm not talking about this with you.

WILL

Why not?

LISA

New topic.

WILL

Fine. Let's talk about your job.

LISA

My job?

WILL

Why'd you get into it?

LISA

What do you mean?

WILL

What is it about your life that made you want to do AIDS research for a living?

LISA

The money.

WILL

(Sarcastically)
Right.

LISA

I think it's an important job.

WILL

Why don't you work on Anthrax? That job's a little more important these days.

LISA

You think so, huh?
(She sips her beer.)

WILL

I'd say it's a safe bet Anthrax will play a larger role in your life than AIDS.

LISA

(She laughs.)
You're not alone.

WILL

Read the papers and you know what's on people's minds. Believe me, it isn't AIDS.

LISA

In the past three weeks, Anthrax has gotten more press than AIDS has in the last six years.

WILL

So? Americans are in far more danger from Anthrax than they are from AIDS.

LISA

For every American Anthrax has killed in the past century, AIDS has killed twenty-five thousand. But you're right, it makes perfect sense.

WILL

What does?

LISA

Your priorities. They are very American.

WILL

You don't know what it really means to be American.

LISA

What does it really mean, Mr. Wright?

WILL

We preserve our way of life.

LISA

I can see you do.

WILL

You don't get.

LISA

Don't get what?

WILL

This is Judgment time. We fight or we die.

LISA

I don't buy that.

WILL

Well, unfortunately for humanity, Lisa, you don't get to choose the given; that's up to God. He puts the situation in front of you, and you use your free will to make the best decisions you can with what you're given. But God is not wicked. He doesn't punish us for his own amusement. He doesn't punish us unless we become weak. We cannot allow ourselves to become weak. God puts the obstacles in front of us because he knows we can handle them. He knows we're equipped.

LISA

Why do we have to handle them with violence?

WILL

Because we're under attack.

LISA

So, what, our only choice is to slap them back harder. "You kill five thousand of us, we kill ten thousand of you."?

three

WILL

That's right.

LISA

You know what I think would stop terrorism? A vast outreach program to the third world funded by the top one tenth of one percent of the richest people in America.

WILL

I'm glad you have the freedom to think that way. I hope you realize that it's people like me who protect your freedom to think that way.

LISA

Well, I thank you for protecting my freedom, Will.

WILL

The strong are there to protect the weak. It's their karmic duty.

LISA

You're an interesting one.

WILL
How you figure?

LISA
You're a paradox.

WILL
A paradox?

LISA
You're a Day Trader, but somehow, you have poetry to you.

WILL
We're not all as bad as you think, you know.

LISA
I didn't know.

WILL
Well, you don't know much outside your little circle, do you?

LISA
Oh, piss off.

WILL
You and all your little bleeding heart homo friends, sitting around talking about how to save the world.

LISA
You think you know my whole life from one party?

WILL
I know what I need to know.

LISA
What do you know?

WILL
I know you have no problem fucking your boyfriend's roommate and best-friend. That's one thing I know. If you want to keep the bubble intact, you better listen to what I tell you.

LISA
What, if I stop fucking you you'll tell him?

WILL
That depends.

LISA
On what?

WILL
Are you in love with him?

What do you think? LISA

I don't know. WILL

You should know. LISA

Well? WILL

What do you think? LISA

I already told you. WILL

I forgot. LISA

I don't think you're in love with him. WILL

You're wrong. LISA

You are? WILL

Of course I love him. LISA

But you're not in love with him. WILL

I don't know. LISA

(Pause.)

He's going to ask you to marry him. Tonight. That's why he's acting so funny. Jittery and whatnot. WILL

He's... Tonight? LISA

(She sips from the beer.)

(continuing)
How do you know? LISA

He told me. WILL

Are you sure? LISA

Yeah, I'm sure. WILL

That's ironic. LISA

What is? WILL

I thought he was going to break up with me tonight. LISA

I guess you were wrong. WILL

Don't you think he wanted to be the one to tell me? LISA

I'm sure he did, but as the man says, "You can't always get what you want." WILL

Why did you tell me? LISA

To find out what you would say. WILL

What I would say? LISA

What you would say. WILL

I would say yes. LISA

Are you sure? WILL

I am. LISA

There's not a doubt in your mind? Not even a tiny little one? WILL

No. LISA

Good. WILL

LISA
What if there was?

WILL
A tiny little doubt?

LISA
Yes.

WILL
I wouldn't let him ask you.

LISA
Why not?

WILL
Because it would be the biggest mistake of his life.
And I couldn't sit down and watch him make it.

LISA
How would you stop him?

WILL
Maybe I'd knock him on the back of the head with the
butt of my gun, tie him up, and lock him in the
closet.

LISA
Maybe you'd lie to his girlfriend about him cheating
to bust up the relationship.

WILL
Look, you wanted to fuck me, honey; I wanted to know
if you would.

LISA
You have a funny way of remembering things.

WILL
I remember it how it was.

LISA
You're a real psycho, you know that?

WILL
You better watch what you say. You're talking to a
hero.

LISA
Do you really have a gun?

WILL
.38 Special.

LISA
Do you have a license?

Yes. WILL

You carry it around with you? LISA

On occasion. WILL

Why? LISA

You never know when you might catch a terrorist in the act. WILL

Do you think it'll take Jack much longer? LISA

Shouldn't. Pizza is up the block, wine is next door. WILL

(Lisa goes back to her magazine.)

(Will picks a Straw up from the table and rips one end of the wrapper off.)

(He puts it in his mouth and blows the wrapper at her.)

(She looks up, angry.)

(continuing)
I'm playing with you. WILL

You are such a weirdo. I cannot tell you how strange you are. LISA

Did you know I was a hero? WILL

No, Jack forgot to tell me. LISA

(She giggles.)

I saved New York from an Anthrax attack. WILL

All by yourself? LISA

The vote's still not in. WILL

Will? LISA

Yes? WILL

What are you talking about? LISA

(The door opens and Jack comes in with the pizza, three pepsis, and a bottle of wine)

Who's hungry? JACK

Thank God. LISA

(Jack puts the stuff down and gives Lisa a big kiss.)

(continuing)
What's that for? LISA

To make up from before when you came in. JACK

Is everything all right? LISA

I have something I've got to tell you. JACK

Wait. LISA

What? JACK

I have to pee. LISA

You don't want to hold it for a sec.? JACK

Just... One minute. LISA

(She runs off to the bathroom.)

You love her? WILL

JACK
What?

WILL
Do you love her?

JACK
You know I do.

WILL
Then why are you doing this to her? You and I both know what needs to be done.

(pause)
We take care of this rat piece of shit here, tonight, as soon as your girlfriend goes home. Then it's done. We all go on with our lives, breathing the safe air we protected. What do you say?

JACK
What do I say to what?

WILL
What do you say to helping me kill and dispose of the terrorist prisoner we got trapped in the closet?

(Will goes to the drawer with the gun in it.)

JACK
What?

(He takes the gun out and tucks in the back of his pants.)

(Lisa re-enters)

LISA
You didn't set out the plates yet?

(Jack stares at Will.)

WILL
No.

LISA
(to Jack)
Help me get the plates.

(Jack goes to get the plates.)

(They put the pizza on plates, clear off the table, light a candle, put on some music, open the wine, etc.)

LISA

(continuing)
Today, George, the cubicle across from mine, cut his
finger on a broken cover slip.

JACK

What was on it?

LISA

He didn't know.

WILL

What sort of stuff do you have in there?

LISA

We've got some funky stuff.

(Lisa and Will are chomping away. Jack
does not eat.)

LISA

(continuing; to Jack)
What's wrong?

JACK

Nothing.

LISA

You're not eating.

JACK

What did he do?

LISA

Who?

JACK

George, the cubicle across from you.

LISA

What do you think he did? He scrubbed. Now he has to
take Anti-retro virals for a month.

JACK

What do those do to you?

LISA

The usual: Diarrhea, nausea, appetite loss,
sleepless nights.

WILL

That's the usual?

LISA

Some do worse than that.

WILL
What does Cipro do to you?

LISA
It's not so bad if you take it with a lot of food.

WILL
(gets up.)
Excuse me.

(He goes off to his bedroom.)

LISA
What is it you wanted to tell me?

JACK
Nothing.

LISA
Nothing?

JACK
Yeah, I was confused about something.

LISA
Confused?

JACK
Yeah, I was mixed up before.

LISA
But you're not anymore?

JACK
No, I am.

LISA
You still are?

JACK
I have no idea what I'm going to do.

LISA
What do you want to do?

JACK
Don't worry about it.

LISA
Why not?

JACK
Because it has nothing to do with you.

LISA
I see.

(Will re-enters, cracks a Pepsi and grabs another slice.)

WILL

So, what's so frustrating about your job, Lisa?

LISA

Why are you so interested in my job tonight?

WILL

You said you had a tough day. I'm trying to empathize.

LISA

What's the real reason?

WILL

Because I want to know how safe these places are.

LISA

Safe from what?

WILL

Terrorists.

LISA

(She laughs.)

You want to know the truth?

WILL

Always.

LISA

I could give you forty-eight hours of access to my lab, in which you could run around and steal anything you wanted, except for the frozen HIV.

WILL

Are you kidding me?

LISA

You still couldn't find anything to make a weapon out of.

WILL

Why not?

LISA

Because the virus is very weak outside the body. The technology doesn't exist to turn it into a weapon.

WILL

Yeah. Today. But tomorrow they'll find a way.

LISA

No they won't. Science moves slowly. Ninety to ninety-five percent of the experiments we do are failures. It's frustrating. And it's beautiful.

JACK

How is it beautiful?

LISA

Because in why we fail, lies our humanity.

JACK

What do you mean?

LISA

We all wish we could be the perfect image we see of ourselves. But we all know we can't. Science is the same. We see how it could be, and spend our lives trying to make it so. That's what gives us humanity.

JACK

I don't follow.

LISA

It exists because secretly, we all know we're bound to fail.

JACK

But we keep trying.

LISA

We both know it's not going to work out in the end.

(Jack and Lisa look at each other.)

WILL

(to Lisa)

What was your gripe before? With the papers covering Anthrax?

LISA

Because AIDS is not in the papers anymore, people forget it's a problem.

WILL

Papers print what people want to read. You blame the newspapers for printing stories about Anthrax when terrorists in our own neighborhood are carrying bags of the stuff around like it's flour? Are you out of your mind?

LISA

You have about as much chance of getting Anthrax as you do getting struck by lightning.

(more)

LISA (cont'd)

The reason Anthrax gets so much press is because when the public is scared, they support war.

WILL

You sound like a fucking traitor.

LISA

You sound like a fucking Nazi.

JACK

All right! Be cool, both of you. Just chill out. Will, questioning the government is American. This country was founded on checks and balances.

WILL

Don't give me the "this country was founded on" bullshit. This country is the most powerful nation in the world. Why? We have the money. When you have the money, people get jealous and try to take it from you.

LISA

You think they're attacking us because they're jealous? You don't understand the conditions these people are living in.

WILL

I'm sorry these people grew up eating dirt and playing with pebbles. But just because their life is shitty, doesn't give them the right to fuck it up for the rest of us.

JACK

They take the right. They make it their right when they commit to going all the way.

(pause)

The terrifying part is, you take one man out of a thousand, if he's willing to go the distance, ultimately, there's not much you can do to stop him from ruining it for the other nine-hundred ninety-nine. The only real weapon against terrorism, is humanity.

WILL

All this humanity bullshit talk. If you were right, then victory would be simple.

JACK

It's not simple.

WILL

Why not?

JACK

I don't know that we've got enough left.

WILL
Enough what?

JACK
Humanity.

LISA
Let's talk about something else.

WILL
Would you like to talk about saving the world, Lisa?

LISA
Oh, piss off.

WILL
Who says that?

JACK
Will, shut the fuck up or so help me, you're gonna
be sorry.

WILL
Is that a fact?

JACK
Written in stone.

WILL
Well I wouldn't want little ole' me to be in trouble
with big ole' you.

LISA
Boys, this is not what I come over here for.

WILL
Which need do you fill by coming here, Lisa?

LISA
One more from you and that's it.

WILL
What? You'll leave? Good.

JACK
(to Lisa)
Why don't I take you home?

LISA
Because of him?

JACK
Yes.

LISA
You really want to go?

JACK
Yes.

LISA
Okay, let's go home.

(She gets her things together.)

(Jack does not get anything.)

LISA
(continuing)
Aren't you going to bring your toothbrush?

JACK
I'm coming back here.

LISA
You're not going to stay?

JACK
I have to help Will take care of something.

LISA
What?

JACK
Just some things. Some things he needs help figuring out.

LISA
You're going to drop me off?

JACK
Yeah, we'll take the train.

LISA
I can take the train by myself. I don't need you.

JACK
Don't be silly. You're not taking the train by yourself this time of night.

(She moves to the front door and opens it.)

(Jack stops her.)

JACK
(continuing)
Don't be mad. This has nothing to do with you.

(From the closet, we hear a cell phone ring.)

Whose phone is that? LISA

(It rings again.)

Mine. WILL

(She sees his phone on the table.)

(The cell phone rings again.)

LISA
That's yours on the table.

(The phone rings again.)

LISA
(continuing)
Whose phone is that ringing in the closet?

(Jack and Will look at each other,
helpless.)

LISA
(continuing; to Jack)
She's here? You have her in the closet? You
sonofabitch!

(The phone rings again.)

LISA
(continuing)
Who is she?

(Lisa charges toward the closet.)

(Will grabs her hard.)

LISA
(continuing)
Owww!

(Jack pulls Will off her and the two
men fight each other.)

(Will wrestles Jack onto his back and
takes his gun out. Jack is frozen.)

(Lisa grabs the bottle of red wine and
smashes it over Will's head. He
collapses on top of Jack.)

(Lisa sits for a moment, then bolts to
the closet and opens the door.)

No! (from under Will)

JACK

(She looks at Jack and Will, then back at Ibrahim.)

(The broken bottle neck still in her hand.)

(Black out.)

SCENE 2

(In the darkness we hear a song much like *Superman*, by the Goo Goo Dolls.)

(Lights up.)

(The apartment is the same as it was before.)

(Ibrahim is out of the closet, but still tied up.)

(Jack sits on the couch, head in hands.)

(Lisa is tying Will to a chair. He is unconscious.)

(The gun is on the kitchen counter.)

(The bag of powder is out on the table.)

(She goes to the phone.)

JACK

What are you doing?

LISA

Calling the cops.

JACK

You can't do that.

LISA

Why not?

JACK

Just don't.

LISA

Why not?

JACK

Because I haven't told you everything.

LISA

There's more?

JACK

The other guy didn't leave before Will went inside the store.

LISA

What are you saying?

JACK
I think Will killed the guy.

LISA
Will killed the guy.

JACK
I think he did.

LISA
Then we have no choice. We have to turn him in.

JACK
I can't do that.

LISA
Why not?

JACK
It's not up for discussion.

LISA
Fine, you don't have to turn him in, I will.

(She moves to the phone, but Jack beats her to it.)

JACK
I owe him my life.

LISA
What?

JACK
He sacrificed his life for mine.

LISA
What are you talking about?

JACK
We were at a party. The place was packed. Some kids were screwing around in the kitchen where Will and I were. They were lighting little pieces of paper on fire, just to watch them burn. One of the pieces took off and flew right into the curtain. It went up in flames like it had been soaked in gasoline.

(pause)
The curtain, it off the rod. Headed straight for my face.

(pause)
It landed on Will's back instead.

LISA
How?

JACK

He threw himself in front of it.

LISA

That's how he got the scars.

JACK

How do you know about his scars?

LISA

He mentioned them.

JACK

So, do you understand, now? You understand I can't turn my back on him?

LISA

But he didn't save your life. I mean, it wouldn't have killed you. It didn't kill him.

JACK

I said he sacrificed his for mine.

LISA

Because he has some scars on his back? So what? A lot of people have worse.

JACK

This was the Summer before our Senior year. Because of that, he couldn't play football that season. He was going to be the starting quarterback for the first time, and he couldn't play because of me. He didn't get his scholarship to Brown. His whole life he worked toward that. He saw the curtain coming down on my face and he did the only thing he could do to stop it.

How much of an actor would I be without a face?

LISA

If Will is telling the truth, if he's right about the powder being Anthrax, do you think he's right in doing what he did?

JACK

I don't think he's right for shooting the guy. But...

LISA

But what?

JACK

If it is Anthrax, Will's a hero.

LISA

And if it's coke? Then what is he?

JACK

Then he's in a lot of trouble.

(pause)

There was a reason I asked you to come over here tonight.

LISA

Don't even start with that right now.

JACK

You don't know what I'm going to say.

LISA

Whatever it is, I can't deal with it right now.

JACK

Fine.

(Lisa moves over to Ibrahim.)

JACK

(continuing)

What are you doing?

LISA

Taking the gag out.

WILL

That's the worst idea you've had all night.

(Will opens his eyes and raises his head.)

JACK

How long have you been listening to us?

WILL

You tied me up?

LISA

What did you expect us to do, leave you untied so you could attack us again?

WILL

I can't believe you let her tie me up.

JACK

You pulled a gun on me.

WILL

I was trying to end the fight. Things had gotten out of hand. I'd never hurt you.

LISA

You were hurting me.

WILL
I was trying to save you.

LISA
From what?

WILL
From becoming a part of this situation.

LISA
You call this a situation?

WILL
Yeah. It was fairly simple until you opened that closet door. Now, it's a little more complicated. I'd be happy to go over the various scenarios with you, if you'd please come to your senses and untie me.

LISA
It was simple before I came into the equation? What were you going to do to him?

(Will says nothing.)

LISA
(continuing)
Jack, this man is evil.

JACK
He's not evil, he's just... He just doesn't... He's not aware...

LISA
I'm calling the police.

WILL
You're not going to call the police.

LISA
You gonna stop me?

WILL
Why didn't you call them before?

LISA
Because Jack wouldn't let me.

WILL
What's different now?

LISA
Now I don't care what Jack wants me to do.

JACK

We're not turning him in. There's got to be another way.

LISA

There's no other way!

JACK

Loyalty isn't just a word to me.

WILL

I understand your concern, Lisa. I see where you're coming from, really, I do. But believe me, that powder is Anthrax. I'm sure of it.

LISA

How are you sure of it?

WILL

Trust me.

LISA

You know, if you are right, we're all dying right now. That bag doesn't look bio-safe to me.

WILL

I have enough Cipro to get the three of us through the next two weeks.

LISA

You have a stockpile of Cipro?

WILL

Uh-huh.

JACK

Where?

WILL

Untie me.

LISA

Pills first.

WILL

(smiles)
Untie me.

LISA

First the pills.

(Will continues to smile.)

LISA

(continuing)
I'll find them.

(She goes off into the bedroom.)

WILL
How could you let her tie me up?

JACK
I'm sorry.

WILL
Untie me, man.

JACK
You pulled a gun on me. You damn near killed me.

WILL
Never. You were going crazy, your eyes were red. I was trying to chill you out.

JACK
By sticking a gun in my face?!

WILL
I'm sorry.
(Will cannot help himself and giggles a little.)
You were pretty fuckin' scared.

JACK
It's not funny.

WILL
I'm sorry.

JACK
You should be.

WILL
I am.

JACK
You attacked Lisa. What's with that?

WILL
I was trying to save her.

JACK
You were hurting her.

WILL
I didn't mean to. I'm sorry.

JACK
You should be.

WILL
I am.

JACK
Okay.

(Pause.)

WILL
I need your help on this.

JACK
What do you propose?

WILL
You're not going to like it, but it's the only solution. Considering the situation.

JACK
Say it.

WILL
Lisa has to kill the towel-head.

JACK
You are insane.

WILL
If she doesn't, she'll turn us in.

JACK
I never said I would kill him. You expect my girlfriend to do it?

WILL
I never said you had to kill him. I trust you. If it were just you and me here, I'd do all the killing and you'd keep your mouth shut. Unfortunately the situation we have here is: I kill him, she talks. You kill him, she still talks. She kills him, I don't talk, you don't talk, she don't talk.

(Lisa enters.)

LISA
(to Will)
Where the hell is it?

WILL
Where's what?

LISA
Where is it?!

WILL
Untie me.

(Lisa goes over to Ibrahim.)

JACK

What are you doing?

LISA

I want to hear what he has to say.

WILL

Why don't you untie him why'll you're at it?

LISA

If you don't tell me where the Cipro is, I might.

(She delicately removes the tape from his mouth.)

IBRAHIM

Thank you.

(his mouth is dry, he has difficulty speaking.)

Please, could I have some water.

WILL

(to Ibrahim)

Don't start that sob act bullshit just because there's a woman in the room.

LISA

Jesus, Will.

(She gets up, pours a glass of water, and brings it back to him.)

(She holds the cup to his mouth and gently tips it. He sips gingerly and their eyes meet.)

(Jack looks on in horror.)

IBRAHIM

Thank you.

LISA

Please, tell us what's in the bag?

IBRAHIM

Cocaine.

WILL

Bull. Shit.

IBRAHIM

It's the truth. Don't believe me? Do a line.

WILL

You think I'm nuts? I'm not snorting a line of that poison.

IBRAHIM
It's good shit.

WILL
This poison is good shit?

IBRAHIM
That's what the guy told me.

WILL
What guy?

IBRAHIM
The dealer.

WILL
Oh, your friend who pulled a gun on me?

IBRAHIM
He's not my friend.

WILL
So, you're not a drug dealer?

IBRAHIM
This was a one time deal for me.

WILL
I'll tell you what, Mohammed, if this poison is such good shit, how about you do a line?

IBRAHIM
I can't, man. I don't.

WILL
What do you mean you can't, you don't?

IBRAHIM
It's against my religion.

WILL
What if your life depends on it?

LISA
His life doesn't depend on it.

WILL
We'll see.

IBRAHIM
(to Lisa)
I'm sorry, but would you wipe the blood off my face.

LISA
Of course.

(Lisa goes to the kitchen, wets a paper towel, and brings it over to Ibrahim to wipe his face.)

(The act appears sensual.)

(Will and Jack look on in disbelief.)

LISA

(continuing)
I need to get some band-aids from the bathroom. I'll be right back.

(She goes to the bathroom.)

WILL

Cocaine my ass.
(to Jack)
You better untie me while you still can.

(Jack hesitates, looks at Ibrahim, looks towards the bathroom, then unties Will.)

(Will gets up and immediately goes to the gun.)

WILL

(continuing)
It's about fucking time. What is wrong with you? Next thing you know she was going to untie him, give him a hummer and send him on his merry way. With the Anthrax. And a couple of bullet holes in you and me.

(He checks the gun to make sure it is loaded and ready.)

(Lisa re-enters and sees what's going on.)

LISA

I'm out of here.

WILL

I'm afraid I can't let you do that, Lisa.

(She doesn't speak.)

WILL

(continuing)
I'm just trying to protect you.

LISA

You're really going to hold me hostage?

JACK

We're all on the same team here.

(She looks at Will with the gun.)

LISA

No. We're not.

IBRAHIM

If you let me go, I promise I won't say anything to anybody. You can keep the coke.

WILL

You're going to let us keep the powder? That's very nice of you. You're a very generous man. I'll tell you what, again, you do a line of this powder, and I'll believe it's coke.

IBRAHIM

I'm telling you, man. I can not do it.

LISA

I'll do it.

JACK

No you won't.

LISA

It's coke.

JACK

If you're wrong?

LISA

Someone has to do something to get us out of this.

WILL

That's not going to fly, Lisa. Jack would never forgive me.

LISA

This is my choice, not yours. Jack won't hold you responsible.

WILL

I know it doesn't make sense, but trust me, he'll blame me.

LISA

You'll have to live with that.

(She moves to the powder.)

(Will cocks the gun and points it at her.)

WILL

That's far enough.

JACK

Will, what the fuck do you think you're doing?

LISA

You're going to shoot me to keep me from doing a line of this powder because it might kill me?

WILL

That's about the size of it.

(Lisa stops.)

WILL

(continuing)

Sit down on the couch.

(Will points the gun at Ibrahim.)

WILL

(continuing)

Confess that this is Anthrax and you are a terrorist.

IBRAHIM

Are you kidding me?

WILL

Do I look like I'm kidding you?

IBRAHIM

Why do you want me to confess? Is it so when you do kill me, you'll feel like a hero instead of a murderer?

WILL

If you're a terrorist, and this is Anthrax, confess and I'll call the authorities.

IBRAHIM

Right.

WILL

Why wouldn't I?

IBRAHIM

Look, man, just let me go. You don't have to worry. No one will ever find out. I won't tell a soul.

WILL

If I were you, I would seriously reconsider doing a line of that powder.

IBRAHIM

You're going to kill me no matter what. Why should I break my religion for you?

WILL

You're very clever, Abdul. But don't waste your time, your little mind games don't work on me.

IBRAHIM

Why do you hate me so much?

WILL

I could ask you the same question.

IBRAHIM

I don't hate you. I pity you.

WILL

You pity me?

(laughs)

You hear that, Jack? He pities us. That's funny. Why do you pity us?

IBRAHIM

Because you have so much, you can't even enjoy any of it. So all you do is try to get more.

WILL

You think you're better than me? You jealous little piece of shit. Like you're above it. You want what I got, but you're not willing to work for it, so you kill American civilians!

(on the verge of tears)

Innocent people.

IBRAHIM

I'm telling you, man, I'm not a terrorist.

WILL

So, that guy I shot in your store, you remember, the one who tried to pull a gun on me, he's your buddy?

IBRAHIM

He knows my nephew.

WILL

It's a fuckin' family organization over here.

IBRAHIM

I don't want to get into it.

WILL

Why not? What are you hiding?

IBRAHIM

I'm not hiding anything.

WILL

You sure you're not a terrorist?

IBRAHIM

I'm sure.

WILL

I guess you better do a line then.

IBRAHIM

If I do, will you let me go?

WILL

Of course.

(Ibrahim laughs.)

WILL

(continuing)
Glad you got your sense of humor back. You want to let me in on the joke?

IBRAHIM

You're right, but you're wrong.

WILL

You are a funny guy.

IBRAHIM

You're right I am a terrorist. But the powder's not Anthrax.

WILL

What is it then?

IBRAHIM

It's a hybrid. I don't know what's in it, only what it does.

WILL

You're full of shit.

IBRAHIM

If you say so.

WILL

All right. What does it do?

IBRAHIM

In about three hours you will start to feel the symptoms.

(Indicates Jack and Lisa.)

They have a little longer. First you will feel uncontrollable nausea. Then a splitting headache which will progressively get worse.

(more)

IBRAHIM (cont'd)

This will be followed by the worst fever you could ever imagine. Once the fever takes you, it is just a matter of hours before your body cooks itself. Unless of course you have the antidote.

WILL

And where's the antidote?

IBRAHIM

Untie one arm and I'll make a phone call and have someone bring it.

WILL

No chance.

IBRAHIM

Well, then, if you're going to kill me, you should do it soon, because you're running out of time.

WILL

Where's the antidote?

IBRAHIM

One arm and I'll make the call.

WILL

Who do you think you're going to call?

IBRAHIM

Mohomad, he has the antidotes. If he can get here in time, you'll be fine.

LISA

Let him make the call.

WILL

(to Lisa)

I didn't have your help before, I sure as fuck don't need it now.

LISA

We need that antidote.

WILL

What he described before, does that sound like something you've heard of?

LISA

I thought you didn't need my help.

WILL

Just answer the question!

LISA

Yes! It could exist.

WILL

If we let him call, he'll give them a message and we're as good as dead anyway.

LISA

If we don't get the antidote soon, it won't matter.

JACK

What if we let him make the call, but he can only say what we tell him?

WILL

If he misspeaks, we blow his brains out.

JACK

First word that we don't write.

WILL

What do we have him say?

IBRAHIM

I lost the antidote, I'm at whatever this address is. That's all I have to say.

WILL

The antidote fell out of your pocket. That's what you say.

IBRAHIM

Fine. The antidote fell out of my pocket. What's the address here?

WILL

If you fuck around with us, I will put a bullet in your head.

IBRAHIM

I won't. Believe me, I've got a family to take care of, I don't want to die.

WILL

806 Sterling. Apartment 3F.

IBRAHIM

Please, before I make this call, you must give me your word that if I get you the antidote, you will let me go home to my family. They need me.

WILL

Fine.

IBRAHIM

You swear to God?

WILL

Sure.

IBRAHIM

Untie one arm and I'll make the call.

WILL

Jack's going to dial and hold it up to your ear.

IBRAHIM

I can't give you the number. That's not part of the deal.

WILL

You'd rather die?

IBRAHIM

If I give you this number, I'm dead anyway, and they'll kill my family.

WILL

Jack, loosen the rope a little.

(Jack starts to loosen the rope by Ibrahim's right arm.)

(Will is close and keeps the gun trained on Ibrahim.)

(Lisa stands up. For a moment Will's attention goes to her.)

WILL

(continuing)

Where do you think you're going?

(Ibrahim slides his left arm down and manages to slip the rope up over his shoulder. In the same motion, he snatches the gun out out Will's hand.)

(Everyone freezes.)

IBRAHIM

(to Will)

You, sit in the chair.

(to Jack)

You, untie me.

(Jack moves to untie him.)

IBRAHIM

(continuing)

Stop.

(Jack stops.)

IBRAHIM

(continuing)
I've got this pointed right at your friend's heart.
Move slowly. Understand?

(Jack nods.)

IBRAHIM

(continuing)
Okay.

(Jack slowly unties Ibrahim.)

(Ibrahim stands and moves away from
Jack.)

IBRAHIM

(continuing)
All right, now tie him down.

JACK

Let's talk about this.

IBRAHIM

I have little patience right now.

(Jack ties Will to the chair.)

IBRAHIM

(continuing; to Jack)
Sit in the chair.

(Jack does so.)

IBRAHIM

(continuing; to Lisa)
Go get something to tie him down with.

LISA

Like what?

IBRAHIM

I'm sure someone as smart as you can find something.

(Lisa goes into Will's bedroom and
immediately returns with a pair of
handcuffs.)

JACK

What the fuck? How did you know he had those?

LISA

Because I've worn them.

IBRAHIM

Wow. You people really are fucked up. Cuff him to the the other one's chair.

(She hesitates.)

Now!

(She cuffs him to Will's chair.)

WILL

Listen to me, Hakim.

IBRAHIM

Ibrahim.

WILL

What?

IBRAHIM

Ibrahim Akil Seif. That's my name. Not Mohammed. Not Hakim. Ibrahim. Ibrahim Akil Seif.

WILL

Well, Ibrahim, I want you to know something. I am not afraid of dying. You know why?

IBRAHIM

Why?

WILL

Because I know I'm going to Heaven.

IBRAHIM

You, who lied in your God's name? You're going to the promised land? I don't think so, my friend.

WILL

I never lied in God's name.

IBRAHIM

You were going to kill me no matter what I said or did.

WILL

That's your story.

IBRAHIM

It's your soul.

WILL

Morality lessons from a goddam terrorist.

IBRAHIM

If I was really a terrorist, all three of you would be dead by now. I'm just a guy who runs the ninety-nine cent store.

WILL

Why don't you just do whatever it is you're going to do to us. Terrorist.

IBRAHIM

Let me tell you a little story; it's about a guy who was always treated different. You know? He was never introduced as "my friend, Ibrahim," it was always "my arab friend, Ibrahim." My arab friend, Ibrahim? In his year book, kids would write: "I'll take a slurpy and a hotdog, have a great summer."

Somewhere in high-school, this guy, he said fuck it. If he couldn't be one of them, he'd be better than them. He'd be the best. He'd be the smartest. The most successful. Maybe go into politics, run for Congress. He'd do it just to prove he could. Prove he belonged. Ibrahim, your arab friend.

He had to help his father work the store, but he got the A's and he got into a good University. In fact it was the best in his class. Can you believe that? Ibrahim, your arab friend.

His father was a good business man. Had three stores. Two in Brooklyn, one in Queens. He paid for most of Ibrahim's tuition. He had the boy's Mother, Aunt, nephew, and Grandmother to take care of, but he found a way to make it work. He was loyal to his son.

(Ibrahim looks at Jack)

Halfway through his Sophomore year, Ibrahim's father died of a heart attack. He was fifty-eight years old. Alive one minute, dead the next. Ibrahim dropped out of school and took over the stores. His nephew was nineteen at the time and helped him manage them. It was a good thing, too, let me tell you, cause between you and me, I don't think Ibrahim could have handled it all by himself.

Things worked out for a while. The stores seemed to be doing well, everyone was more or less content. Ibrahim thought once in a while about what his life would be like had he finished school and become the perfect image he saw of himself. But those moments were few. Ibrahim knew the situation, and he dealt with it the only way he could. The only way any good Muslim would. He took care of his family.

(to Will)

Are you enjoying my story?

(Will starts to speak.)

IBRAHIM

(continuing)

To tell you the truth, I don't care if you like my story or not.

(Ibrahim puts the gun up against Will's temple.)
You're going to listen to it.

(Lisa slowly moves towards Ibrahim.)
You stay right there, Lisa.

(She freezes.)
I don't want to kill all of you, but I will if I have to. I will not be tied up and gagged again, I assure you.

(He stares at Will.)
Now, where was I?

WILL

No one gives a-

(Ibrahim puts the gun in Will's mouth.)

IBRAHIM

Am I going to have to tell the rest of the story with this in your mouth?

(Will shakes his head.)

(Ibrahim takes the gun out.)

IBRAHIM

(continuing)

Good. Now, Ibrahim did what any good Muslim would do, he took care of his family. But, late at night he would pray to Allah. He would ask him to reveal why his life had changed for the worse. Why had all the work he had done been for nothing? Had he offended Allah somehow? Why had he gone from Ibrahim your arab friend that might be in Congress someday, to Ibrahim your arab friend that runs the ninety-nine cent store? He prayed hard for the answer to be revealed. And one day he thought it had. He met the girl. The one. Beautiful, smart, funny, sexy, everything he had ever hoped for. The perfect mother for his children. He married her. They had one daughter. A beautiful baby girl.

Things were a little tight with the baby and all, but Ibrahim knew Allah would not desert them. He knew it would work out in the end.

One night he was waiting for her. The baby was sick and his wife had run out to get something. Some medicine. What was it? I can't remember what it was. Isn't that funny? It seemed so important at the time. So...essential to life... The doorbell rang. Two police officers.

(more)

IBRAHIM (cont'd)

Apparently, someone, most likely a drunk, had run her over. Killed on the spot. Again, it was supposed to have only been painful for a few moments.

(Long pause.)

The baby got better. She just had a little cold.

(Ibrahim is close to breaking down.)

On September, 11th, he held his baby and they cried. They watched the TV and they cried for all those poor people who died. And then they cried for all Muslims. Because their worst fears had come true. Bin Laden had succeeded in making life harder for all of them.

The store in Queens was firebombed... "Why, Allah?! Why are you doing this to me?" he would scream in his prayers. But still, Allah would not give him an answer.

One night he gets a phone call from his nephew. Could he a call lawyer? Something about being taken away. Turns out Ibrahim's cousin has been taken away for questioning. Not charged with anything, just detained for questioning. Ibrahim doesn't know why. All he knows is now he has to run the stores all by himself and pay a lawyer to try and find out about his nephew. But no lawyer will touch it. "Not now, wrong time to be questioning the government. Sorry." Yeah, Ibrahim was sorry, too, cause now he has to close another store, and still they are losing money.

He prays to Allah. Prays for guidance. Show him the path. Give him something to work with... No answer. His nephew sits in a cell, not charged with anything, and there's no answers.

Ibrahim asks around; was Yasser, that's his nephew, Yasser Bin Al Shabib. Was Yasser involved with terrorist activities? What he finds out is Yasser has been running around with a Lebanese coke dealer. Apparently, the dealer owes him money. Ibrahim wants nothing to do with this. He's shocked that his nephew would be involved with such people.

So he goes back to the store. Debt, debt, debt, and more debt. He's trapped. Running out of money. Running out of time. He might have to sell the last store. How will he support his family?

He calls the Lebanese, tries to collect the money owed Yasser. The drug dealer will not give him any cash, but feels bad for Ibrahim, he liked his nephew. It is too bad they have taken him.

(more)

IBRAHIM (cont'd)

The drug dealer offers to sell Ibrahim a big bag of coke for a very low price, the turn around will be enough to keep his family afloat for awhile without selling the store.

What should Ibrahim do? He asks Allah, but Allah will not answer him. What choice does he have? He will sell the poison to those who seek it. A sin, for sure, but no more a sin than watching his family starve.

The man will come to his store and drop off the package. After Ibrahim sells it, he will give the Lebanese his cut. Simple. No problems. Ibrahim knows a Wall Street guy who will buy the whole thing off him, and at top dollar. Simple.

And now, Ibrahim finds himself holding a pistol, unsure of whether or not he's going to kill a man. So let me ask you, Will Wright, is this the work of God? Are you the messenger from Allah I have been looking for? Are you the messenger, Will?

(Ibrahim stares Will in the eyes.)

No. You're not the messenger. There is no messenger. There is no messenger because God doesn't care anymore. He's bored with us.

(He looks at Jack.)

We've been fighting each other for so long, I think he finally got bored and abandoned us.

(pause.)

So, what do we do now? If it's up to each of us to decide for ourselves what's right from wrong, what do we do?

(He points the gun right between Will's eyes.)

(He cocks it.)

(Will is frozen.)

(Ibrahim does not shoot.)

(Will opens his eyes.)

IBRAHIM

(continuing)

I spent the first part of my life wanting to be you. The next part hating you. After 9/11, I was afraid of you. But, now...Now I'm afraid for all of us.

(He walks away from Will, picks up the coke, and looks at Lisa.)

(continuing)
Thank you.

IBRAHIM

(He wipes his fingerprints off the gun and places it on the counter.)

(Takes one last look at the room, and exits.)

(Lisa sits there on the couch.)

Will you marry me?

JACK

(Lisa moves towards Jack, slowly. She gently touches his face and, with tears in her eyes, gives one last look goodbye.)

(She puts on her jacket and leaves the apartment.)

(Will and Jack look at each other, handcuffed together, helpless.)

(Black out.)

END OF PLAY