

Crazy Eyes

A Play

By

John Buffalo Mailer

Draft: 6/29/05

CAA

©John Mailer 2002

①

Characters:

Will Wright: 30 years old. A successful Day Trader. He was in Tower One on 9/11.

Will is a smooth player with an almost uncanny ability to flip one's argument against them.

He will do whatever must be done if he feels it's right. Will grew up in Bay Ridge. He was the captain of the football team and an all around popular guy. The kind of popular guy who's nice to everyone, even the nerds. He was born to be a leader.

Jack Wright: 27. Will's brother. Works as a caterer. Wants to be an actor. He has been living at Will's apartment for the past two years. For the last six months he has not been able to pay his share of the rent. This is largely due to the fact that he has been spending money on his girlfriend, money he does not have. Were his brother not a generous man, it's safe to say Jack would be in trouble.

Lisa Stearn: 27. Jack's girlfriend. Originally from Canada. She and Jack have been together for eight months. Lisa has traveled the World and

②

followed her conscience to New York, where she does AIDS research for the government. She is a solid, thorough scientist, but Lisa is also the kind of girl who likes to wear combat boots with a leather mini-skirt on a Tuesday night and party to five a.m., though that's not a side she allows herself to indulge in often.

Ibrahim Akil Seif: 30 years old. Owns a \$99 store on the block. *We will find out about Ibrahim.*

Setting:

A two bedroom apartment in Park Slope, Brooklyn.

Time:

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

3

ACT I

(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, holding a football.)

(He is calm and determined as he sings along to the song.)

(Next to Will, folded neatly, sits his Hazardous Materials Suit, the mask and gloves resting on top.)

(On the kitchen counter, a bottle of Lysol stands alone.)

(In the middle of the room, a used, extra-large industrial strength garbage bag lays empty on the floor.)

(Aside from that, the apartment is clean and well kept. There are a number of magazines on the coffee table, mostly covers with pictures of anthrax coming out of envelopes and Haz-Mat teams inspecting buildings.)

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

4

JACK

What in God's name is going on here?
(Will turns the music off.)

WILL

It's really good to see you.

JACK

Thanks.

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

JACK

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

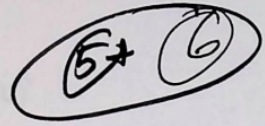
What do you think?

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 Haz-Mat suit. Then I'm gonna' call Lisa and see if she wants to get freaky with it.

WILL
(serious)
Don't touch my Haz-Mat 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
What does it mean to be an American to you?

7

JACK

What does it mean to be an American to you?

WILL

It means whatever it takes to save lives, you do it. I'm talking about the mentality of "Let's Roll".

JACK

(Genuine)

You're a hero, Will. You always have been.

WILL

Thank you.

JACK

You're welcome... You crazy fucker.

WILL

It's been a crazy kind of day.

JACK

Yeah? I had a nutso day myself. Remember how I told you if I booked that Sam Forman play, I would propose to Lisa?

WILL

Yeah.

JACK

I'm asking Lisa to marry me tonight.

WILL
Why?

8

JACK
I got the part. I booked the lead.

WILL
Why do you want to marry her?

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~~

WILL

Are you going to keep Mandy on the side?

JACK

Piss off.

9

WILL

That's something Lisa says. Not you.

JACK

How can you ask me that?

WILL

You cheated on Lisa twice 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

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

Can I count on you to be cool when she gets here?

WILL
Who gets here?

16

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. 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~~

WILL

Always?

(11)

JACK

Always.

WILL

Then 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 guys, when they hear their brother booked the lead in an Off-Broadway play and 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.

(12)

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
Do you?

WILL
Concluding that your brother is in love with your girlfriend solely based on the way in which he carries his body, is not only less than sufficient evidence to prove you're not a paranoid

freak, it's weak.

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

Oh, that bothered you? Maybe you should tell her to put on a robe, I'm human.

JACK

You were waiting by my room.

WILL

I was going to the bathroom.

JACK

You've got supernatural timing.

WILL

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

JACK

(laughs)

That's funny. You're a real funny guy.

WILL

You think I'm kidding?

JACK

It's insignificant.

WILL
How's that?

(14)

JACK
Because even if you were scumbag enough to do something like that, which you're not, she'd never choose you over me.

WILL
My ass.

JACK
You don't know her.

WILL
But I understand her.

JACK
She's not drawn to the power broker type.

WILL
Oh, you mean she's drawn to the ineffectual wannabe actor who can't afford his rent and lives off his brother type?

3 JACK
Fuck you! I booked the lead in a big play today. What have you done?

WILL
You've been living off me rent free for the past six months.

~~JACK~~

JACK

I told you I'm paying you back.

(15)

WILL

When your ship comes in, right?

JACK

You just can't stand the fact that I have something you don't.

(Will hands the phone to Jack.)

WILL

Call Lisa and tell her not to come here.

(Jack laughs and takes off his jacket.)

JACK

?

How about I give you a hud instead, you take it to the Korean massage parlor, work out the frustration of whatever it is that's got you so crazy, and let me have the place to myself so I can ask Lisa what I'm going to ask her tonight?

(Jack heads to the closet to hang up his jacket.)

WILL

That's not going to work.

JACK

(as he opens the closet door)

Why not?

(We see Ibrahim Akil Seif, tied to a chair and gagged in the

closet.)

16

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 ninety-nine cent store! He's not a terrorist!

WILL

How do you know?

JACK

Because I know.

WILL

How?

JACK

I know him!

(17)

WILL

Oh, you know him. 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. I mean, why wouldn't you believe whatever he told you?

(Jack shuts the closet.)

JACK

His wife and baby were killed.

WILL

What?

JACK

It was a hit-and-run or something.

WILL

Did you ever see this wife and baby?

JACK

No.

WILL

Not a picture? Nothing?

JACK

No.

WILL

So you don't know if they ever really existed.

18

JACK

Who lies about something like that?

WILL

Terrorists.

JACK

You're crazy.

WILL

What else do you know about him?

JACK

He had to drop out of college and take over the store when his father died.

WILL

I still see no proof for any of this.

JACK

How's he supposed to prove it?

WILL

That's just it, Jack. He can't. These are very clever things for him to tell you, because it gets you on his side and makes him look like a victim instead of a murderer. But there's no way for him to prove it.

JACK

Why don't we just ask him?

(Jack opens the closet door.)

(19)

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 couch and cocks it loudly.)

(Jack stops.)

WILL

Sit down.

(Jack slowly sits in the chair.)

(Will lays the gun down.)

JACK

Will, tell me what the fuck is going on.

WILL

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!

20

IBRAHIM

(gagged)

Hah's hoh hroo! Ich's hokhane-

WILL

If you don't shut your hole, and keep it shut, I swear I'll give you another.

(Ibrahim is silent.)

(Will shuts the closet door.)

WILL

You forgot to get toilet paper. So, I go down to the ninety-nine cent store, and there's no one there but our little smelly, smiling friend here and an even smellier, no smiling, terrorist-looking fuck. I walk in, they stop talking and stare me down. Now, normally I might not have noticed anything, but the Terror alert went to high today, my senses were aware. I see there's a big package sitting on the counter, wrapped up to look like a birthday present. Then I notice our little Arab friend from the ninety-nine cent store is no longer happy to see me. In fact, he's sweating. So we stand there, them looking at me, me looking at them, no one moving, no one saying anything. It's uncomfortable. I nod and go to get the t.p. The terrorist-looking guy leans over to our friend here and mutters something in arabic and the two of them laugh at me.

So, I bring the toilet paper up to the counter and I look our little Arab friend in the eye; this friend I've been chatting with

for three years, someone I considered part of the neighborhood; I look this man in the eye, and I see it's all bullshit. Here with his partner, this close to an attack, he couldn't keep his hate for me inside. I could see everything he felt about me and about this Country. I could smell it. Inside that present was something awful.

(27)

JACK

And?

WILL

I did what I knew I had to do. I came home, got my gun out of the safe, and went back to the ninety-nine cent store.

JACK

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

WILL

They might not have stopped it in time.

JACK

Why not?

WILL

Not enough evidence for them to move on. But I knew. Those fuckers were going to attack. God put me in that store for a reason. He needed me to take care of it. You probably can't understand that being a man who disregards our religion.

JACK

I don't disregard our religion.

WILL
When's the last time you been to ~~church~~ services? ? word?

JACK
You blow coke off a hooker's ass on Saturday night, and you think going to church on Sunday makes you a good Christian?

WILL
I have Faith.

JACK
Tell me what happened next?

WILL
It's an important distinction. Faith or lack of Faith.

JACK
What did you do?

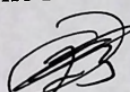
WILL
It was faith that enabled me to save you that night.

JACK
You went back to the store! Then what happened?

WILL
I go in and they're nowhere to be found. So, I move to the back, where I see a door slightly ajar. I peek through the crack in the door, and what do I see? This terrorist fuck opens the

present and takes out a big bag of Anthrax. This guy in the closet, the guy you wanted to untie, has been using his store as a front for all these years, waiting to pull off an attack. Jack, he's part of Al Qaeda.

23



(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.

JACK

Oh, fuck. Oh, fuck, man.

WILL

If I could have avoided it, believe me, I would have.

JACK

Oh, Jesus.

WILL

I knocked this one on the back of the head, put him in the trash bag with the Anthrax and came back here.

(24)

JACK

Why did you bring him here?

WILL

I couldn't leave him there.

JACK

You're going to jail.

(Pause.)

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?

25

JACK

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

WILL

Goddamit you owe me!
(Will throws the football to Jack.)

WILL

Tonight I need you to return the favor.

(Jack throws the football back to Will and stares at him. Then he opens the closet door and looks Ibrahim over.)

JACK

Jesus, you really beat on him.

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 me 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?

(Will nods.)

~~JACK~~

JACK

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

26

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 Haz-Mat suit.

JACK

No, I did not buy a Haz-Mat suit. Because it's insane to buy a Haz-Mat suit.

WILL

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

keep
?

27

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's able to kill thousands of innocent people; women, children.

JACK

How could you put it in the fridge?

28

WILL

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

JACK

Take it out of the fridge.

WILL

Why?

JACK ¹⁰

TAKE THE FUCKING ANTHRAX OUT OF THE FRIDGE!!!

if this were the first time you hear it that would mean something

WILL

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

JACK

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

WILL

(puts on his Haz-Mat Suit and gestures for Jack to move as far away from the fridge as possible before he goes over to it and takes the container out.)

Okay, this is it.

(The powder is wrapped in a thick plastic bag with yellow tape around it.)

JACK

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

29

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 grandma got the flu
and you 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 under the couch and returns the bag of

powder to the fridge.)

30

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

WILL

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

(Jack re-emerges.)

JACK

Give me the phone.

(Will smells the vomit on Jack's breath.)

WILL

You don't brush?

JACK

(explodes)

I had some other things on my mind!

(Will slaps Jack across the face.)

WILL

Keep it together. We're in for a long night. I need you to keep it together.

(Jack regains his composure.)

JACK

Where's the Thrax?

WILL
In the fridge.

31

(There is a knock on the door.)

(Jack and Will freeze.)

(There is another knock.)

JACK
Who is it?

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

JACK
Lisa?

LISA
No, your other girlfriend.

(Will quickly takes off his Haz-Mat Suit as Jack runs around the apartment trying to make it look normal.)

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

JACK
Coming!

(Jack moves toward the door.)

(Will stops him and locks eyes.)

WILL

If you care about this girl half as much as you think you do,
priority one is get her out.

(Lisa continues to knock.)

LISA

What is going on in there?

WILL

We clear on priority one?

(Jack nods. He is about to open the door when something
occurs to him. He grabs the bag of groceries and throws it in the
garbage can.)

WILL

Don't kiss her.

JACK

What?

WILL

Vomit breath.

(Lisa knocks.)

32

LISA
I'm not amused.

33

(Jack opens the door.)
(Lisa enters.)

LISA
Well, hello.

(She stares at him for a moment.)

LISA
You going to tell me what that was all about?

JACK
I just got home. The place was a mess. I wanted it to be nice when you came in.

LISA
(Already sensing something is off.)
Okay.

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

LISA
What's wrong?

JACK
I have a bad taste in my mouth.

LISA
You want some gum?

JACK
Sure.

(34)

(She reaches into her purse and hands him a piece of Green Tea natural gum.)

LISA
This is the only gum you're allowed to chew.

JACK
Good thing Green Tea's my favorite.

(Will stifles a laugh.)

LISA
So, what's for dinner? I'm starving.

JACK
I thought we'd go out.

LISA
You said you were cooking for me.

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~~

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

(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.

35

JACK
Don't touch it.

36

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

WILL
I know. He'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
Our Aunt always sends us this really good flour for making
quiche.

LISA
(to Jack)
You didn't tell me you make quiche.

JACK
I never told you?

LISA
No.

JACK
That's odd.

37

LISA

You're just full of secrets tonight, aren't you.

JACK

What do you mean?

LISA

I'm kidding.

JACK

I'm kidding, too. This is how actors kid.

LISA

Oh, you're doing one of your actor things. One of your little characters. How about, you become a chef and make us some quiche? I want to see that character.

WILL

You're asking a lot of him. The quiche is an elaborate process.

(She puts the powder back.)

LISA

Okay, why don't we get a pizza from Nino's?

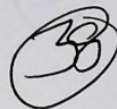
JACK

Yeah, let's go out and have pizza at Nino's?

LISA

Will you go pick it up and bring it back here so we can eat

and watch a movie?



JACK

You don't want to go out?

LISA

Not tonight, sweetie. I'm tired.

(She takes a beer from the fridge.)

LISA

You want one.

JACK

Don't drink that!

LISA

Why not?

JACK

We should have wine with pizza.

LISA

Wine?

JACK

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

(She puts the beer back.)

LISA

Okay. Go pick up some wine and pizza.

JACK

Come with?

LISA

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

(Lisa picks up one of the magazines.)

JACK

Why don't we just order in from Sal's?

LISA

I don't believe what I'm hearing. This from the man who said he'd rather walk the four blocks through the snow and rain, blizzards if necessary, just to pick up a pie from Nino's, rather than order in the "cardboard slop" they try to pawn off as pizza from Sal's?

WILL

Yeah, what the fuck is wrong with you? Go get the girl her dinner.

LISA

(to Jack)

What's wrong?

JACK

Nothing's wrong. I was just testing you.

46

LISA

Do I pass the test?

JACK

You get an A.

LISA

Good. Now go get me my pizza, bitch.

(Will and Lisa laugh.)

JACK

(to Will)

Come with me.

(Lisa goes back to her magazine.)

WILL

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

(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.)

LISA

Half chicken, broccoli, and garlic?

JACK

Half pepperoni and black olive?

41

LISA

Perfect.

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

JACK

All right. So. I'll be back.

WILL

Could you get me a few Pepsis?

JACK

(looks hard at Will.)

Sure.

(Will smiles.)

LISA

Go quick though, huh.

JACK

I love you.

(She smiles at him.)

(He exits.)

(Will and Lisa sit on the couch in silence for a moment.)

(She tries to focus on the magazine.)

42

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?

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

LISA

What are you doing?

WILL

You're telling me you don't want it?

LISA

It can't happen again.

43

WILL
Why not?

LISA
Because it can't.

¹² WILL
He fucked Mandy at least twice.

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
Are you kidding me?

~~WILL~~

WILL

What is it about your life that made you want to do AIDS research for a living? I'm curious.

(Handwritten signature)

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?

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

All you gotta do is read the papers and you know what's on people's minds. Believe me, it isn't AIDS.

45

LISA

In the last 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. Twenty-five thousand to one. So how does it make sense?

WILL

If you were an American, you'd understand.

LISA

There's nothing an American can understand, that a Canadian can't.

WILL

God I love you. You Canadians are so arrogant.

LISA

What?

WILL

When you backpacked around Europe, you sewed a little Canadian flag on your bag, right?

LISA

Yes I did.

46

WILL

Because you didn't want to be mistaken for an American.

LISA

I didn't want people to think I was an American tourist.

WILL

So, you're ashamed of this Country even though you choose to live here.

LISA

In a lot of ways this is the greatest country in the world.

WILL

You got that right, sister. You still don't understand what it really means to be American.

LISA

What does it really mean, Mr. Wright?

WILL

We preserve our way of life.

LISA

I know you do.

WILL

You don't get it.

LISA

Get what?

47

WILL

This is Judgment time. Fight or die.

LISA

I don't buy that.

WILL

Well, unfortunately for humanity, Lisa, you don't decide the given; that's up to God. He puts the situation in front of us, and we use our free will to make the best choices we can with what we'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

"You kill three thousand of us, we kill ten thousand of you."?

WILL

That's right.

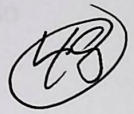
LISA

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

You have the Freedom to think that way, and I'm glad you

have that freedom. I just wish you could realize that it's people like me who protect your freedom to think that way.



LISA

Thank you, Will.

WILL

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

LISA

You're an interesting one.

WILL

How you figure?

LISA

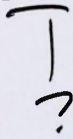
You're a paradox.

WILL

A paradox?

LISA

You're a Wall Street guy, 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

You ever travel around Europe, Will?

WILL

(laughs)

No.

LISA

Have you ever been to another country?

WILL

(still smiling)

No.

LISA

Jesus, Will, have you ever left New York?

WILL

Yes, I've left New York.

LISA

Bravo for you.

WILL

Believe it or not, I almost went to college in California. That's three thousand miles away. Does that not count as travel where you come from?

55

LISA

It's a lot of miles. Why California?

WILL

I had a scholarship to a good school.

LISA

Which school?

WILL

Stanford.

LISA

Wow. I never would have guessed that about you.

WILL

Why am I not surprised?

LISA

So why didn't you go?

WILL

It didn't work out.

LISA

You want to know the real reason I got into AIDS research?

WILL

Your Uncle's gay?

51

LISA

Oh, piss off.

WILL

That's not the reason?

LISA

No.

WILL

Tell me.

LISA

I went to South Africa and saw first hand what is going on down there. Screaming babies, unimaginable levels of crime, the hopeless air those people choke on. I saw human beings, so thin, they looked like skeletons with skin stretched across the bones. I saw what was going on down there and I knew I'd never have a good night's rest again unless I did something about it.

WILL

Bravo for you.

LISA

If you'd seen what I've seen, you'd get off your ass and do something, too.

WILL

You don't begin to understand what I've seen.

(52)

LISA

I'm sorry, Will. I wasn't trying to say-

WILL

Why aren't you doing something about the human rights violations going on in Tibet?

LISA

Will, I really didn't mean to-

WILL

Why aren't you over in the Middle East fighting against the abuse of women; women getting stoned to death for not cleaning the house properly? Or off fighting one of another hundred horrific situations in the world right now? Why are you here in New York living the cushy life in your SoHo apartment?

LISA

Because you can't fix everything.

WILL

Exactly. So why did you choose AIDS? Because that's the first tragedy you encountered. You didn't have any of your own, so it's only natural you would glom onto the first sad thing you see. But that doesn't make it the most important.

LISA

(laughs)

You're right, you Wall Street guys aren't as bad as I thought. You're worse.

~~WILL~~

WILL

I protect my own. Let them worry about theirs.

53

LISA

That's big of you, Will. Very compassionate.

WILL

I like to think globally and act locally.

LISA

You may be the most ignorant man I have ever met.

WILL

You liberals crack me up.

LISA

And why is that?

WILL

You need me. You want me. Deep down, you know I'm right. You just can't admit it to yourselves.

LISA

Yeah, that's right, Will.

WILL

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

LISA

You think you know my whole life from one party?

WILL

I know what I need to know.

54

LISA

What do you know?

WILL

13

I know you have no problem fucking your boyfriend's older brother. That's one thing I know.

(pause)

Look, Lisa, there's a lot of good potential in your life. Nice things are gonna' happen for you. But, if you want to keep the bubble intact, you better do what I tell you, get your things and-

LISA

What? If I don't fuck you again, you'll tell Jack?

WILL

Excuse me?

LISA

I think you heard me.

(Slight pause.)

WILL

Are you in love with him?

LISA

What do you think?

WILL

I don't know.

55

LISA

You should know.

WILL

I don't think you are.

LISA

You're wrong.

WILL

Am I?

LISA

Of course I love him.

WILL

But you're not in love with him.

LISA

I don't know.

(Pause.)

WILL

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

LISA

He's... Tonight?

(She takes it in.)

(56)

LISA
How do you know?

WILL
He told me.

LISA
That's ironic.

WILL
What?

LISA
I was going to break up with him tonight.

WILL
Why?

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

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

LISA
You're his brother. This is how you treat him?

WILL
No one's ever completely satisfied with their brother.

~~LISA~~

LISA

Why did you tell me?

WILL

To find out what you would say.

(57)

LISA

What I would say?

WILL

What you would say.

LISA

I would say yes.

WILL

You were going to break up with him and now you'd say
yes?

LISA

That's right.

WILL

Are you sure?

LISA

I am.

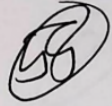
WILL

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

~~LISA~~

LISA

No.



WILL

Really?

LISA

Yes, really.

WILL

Well that's just kookoo.

LISA

You never heard of a woman breaking up with a man to get him marry her.

WILL

You got a point.

(Lisa pretends to go back to her magazine for a second.)

LISA

What if there was?

WILL

What, a tiny little doubt?

LISA

Yes.

WILL

I wouldn't let him ask you.

LISA
Why not?

51

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 just wanted to know
if you would.

LISA
You have a funny way of remembering things.

WILL
I remember it how it was.

LISA
Do you?

~~WILL~~

WILL

CB

Let me recount. Two weeks ago, in spite of the fact that Jack is out of town doing some theater thing, and in spite of the fact that the idea of throwing a party when we're all still mourning the heroes we lost on that day is inappropriate to say the least, you decided you had to have your birthday party, here, at my place.

LISA

It was planned back in August. Jack insisted I do it here so he could know I was safe.

WILL

So you show up wearing a little fuck me dress, and you get drunk, and you have your fun with your little friends, and then finally it ends, your people go home, I'm helping you clean up out of the charity in my heart, and the next thing I know, you're all over me.

LISA

That's how you remember it?

WILL

That's how it was.

LISA

May I tell you how I remember it?

WILL

Go ahead.

LISA

Jack tells me he has to go out of town to Connecticut, on

? *disbelief* (66)
↑
my birthday, to do his little two man show about Jews. But he insists that I have the party here so you can keep an eye on me and make sure I'm safe. I do my best to hide the disgust I'm feeling with the fact that he would leave me alone on my birthday, two weeks after 9/11. Not only that, but he wants me to have the party here so you can keep an eye on me. He cheats, he feels guilty, he becomes suspicious of me?

And, yes, I have no idea if it's appropriate to have a party when you can still smell the charred bodies as they're taken to the morgue. But I don't know anything for sure right now. I'm so twisted inside there are moments when I forget how to breathe. And part of me is so angry. It just wants to kill those bastards who did it. No matter the price.

But then there's that part of me who knows that when we do that, we've lost our humanity. And that's when they really win.

So I listened to my friends. I had the party here. And it felt good to have a party. It gave me hope that we might not always feel this way.

And I put on a tight dress. And I made myself look good. Because looking good, felt good, and I'd almost forgotten what it was like to feel good.

I got here and my friends were happy, and you weren't being a total asshole. In fact, you were charming. Strong and charming. And I was drawn to that.

Then the party was over. We were cleaning up and you looked at me. And it was then I thought to myself, "If only this night didn't have to become tomorrow." I didn't want it to end because for the first time since the towers went down, I felt safe. You made me feel safe.

WILL

That's why I'm here.

LISA

But if I'd known the price I would pay, for that fleeting, hollow sense of safety, I never would have done it. And there's nothing I wouldn't do if I could take it back.

WILL

Who are you kidding? You got off on the fact that we're brothers. And you got off on the fact that I fucked you in ways he could only dream about. And we both know it was what you needed. And we both know you want more. But don't think for a minute that I did it for any other reason than to find out if you were the type of girl who would do that to my little brother. It was my duty. Nothing more.

LISA

You're a real psycho, you know that?

WILL

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

LISA

You really think you could stop him from marrying me?

WILL

I told you what I was willing to do if necessary.

LISA

Knock him on the back of the head with the butt of your gun, tie him up and lock him in the closet?

WILL

If I had to.

LISA

You don't think that's a little extreme?

WILL

Sometimes you have to do extreme things to protect the ones you love.

(Pause.)

LISA

Do you really have a gun?

WILL

.38 Special.

LISA

Do you have a license?

WILL

Yes.

64

LISA

You carry it around with you?

WILL

On occasion.

LISA

Why?

WILL

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

LISA

Do you think it'll take Jack much longer?

WILL

Did you know I was a hero?

LISA

Jack forgot to tell me.

WILL

I saved New York from an Anthrax attack.

LISA

All by yourself?

WILL

The vote's still not in.

LISA

LISA

Will?

65

WILL

Yes?

LISA

What are you talking about?

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

JACK

Who's hungry?

LISA

Thank God.

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

LISA

What's that for?

JACK

To make up from before when you came in.

LISA

Is everything all right?

JACK

I have something I've got to tell you. You and I both know

LISA

Wait. the cure of this rat piece of shit here, tonight, as soon

JACK
What?

LISA
I have to pee.

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

LISA
Just... One minute.

(She runs off to the bathroom.)

WILL
You love her?

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 we get your girlfriend out. Then it's over. 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?

JACK

What?

(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, open the wine, etc.)

67

(Lisa starts eating ravenously.)

68

(Will plucks the olives off his slice.)

(Jack cannot eat.)

(There is silence for a long time.)

LISA

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.

(to Jack)

What's wrong?

JACK

Nothing.

LISA

You're not eating.

69

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.

76

(He goes off to his bedroom, slice in hand.)

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.

71

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, flops one slice on top of another, and proceeds to chow down.)

(Lisa and Jack watch him.)

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.

72

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.

WILL

Are you kidding me?

LISA

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

WILL

Why not?

LISA

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

73

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 our humanity lies in how we deal with failure.

JACK

What do you mean?

LISA

We all know we'll never be the perfect image we see of ourselves. But still we spend our lives trying to get there, instead of simply accepting and enjoying where we are. Science is the same.

JACK

I don't follow.

~~LISA~~

LISA

We keep on trying-

JACK

Even though we know we're bound to fail.

74

(Jack and Lisa look at each other.)

(Will burps.)

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

Are you out of your mind? Papers print what people want to read.

LISA

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. Will, questioning the government is American. This country was founded on checks and balances.

75

WILL

We live in a different time, with different rules. What matters Today is who has the money. And the answer is we do. When you have the money, people get jealous and try to take it from you. The simple choice we're forced to make Today is: Do we let them kill us, or do we protect ourselves?

LISA

You know, if you'd ever left this country, you would understand that if this Administration takes the same attitude you do, this is going to go from being one of the most loved countries in the World, to the most hated. I don't understand how that makes us safer.

WILL

Today, it's more important to be feared than loved.

LISA

(to Jack)

Let's talk about something else.

WILL

You tired of talking about saving the world, Lisa?

JACK, 17

Will, shut the fuck up.

WILL
Or what?

76

JACK
Or so help me, you're gonna' be sorry.

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?

77

JACK
Yes.

LISA
Okay, let's go home.

(They start to put on their jackets, etc.)

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

LISA
Whose phone is that?

(It rings again.)

WILL
Mine.

(She sees his phone on the table.)

(The cell phone rings again.)

LISA
That's yours on the table.

(The phone rings again.)

LISA

Whose phone is that ringing in the closet?

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

78

(It rings again.)

LISA

(continuing; to Jack)

She's here? You have her in the closet? You sonofabitch!

(Lisa slaps Jack across the face.)

(And rings again.)

LISA

Who is she?

(Lisa charges toward the closet.)

(Will grabs her hard.)

LISA

Owww!

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

(Will wrestles Jack onto the couch.)

(Jack starts to strangle Will.)

??

(Unable to free himself from Jack's grasp, Will reaches under the couch, pulls his gun out, and points it in Jack's face.)

79

WILL
Chill the fuck out. Chill the fuck out!

(Lisa grabs a bottle from the liquor cabinet and smashes it over Will's head. He collapses on top of Jack.)

(Lisa stands still for a moment, then bolts to the closet, opens the door, and sees Ibrahim.)

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

(The broken bottle neck still in her hand.)

(Black out.)

END ACT I



ACT II

(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~~

JACK

You can't.

81

LISA

Why not?

JACK

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 back to the store.

LISA

What are you saying?

JACK

Will killed the guy.

LISA

Will killed the guy?

JACK

I think he did.

82

LISA

Then we have no choice.

JACK

I can't turn him in.

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

Will sacrificed his life for mine.

LISA

What are you talking about?

JACK

I was about to get hit by a car once. Will pushed me out of the way and took the hit instead.

LISA

Was he all right?

JACK

He was in the hospital for three months. So, do 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

He sacrificed his life for mine.

LISA

Because he was in the hospital for a few months? So what? A lot of people go through worse.

JACK

You don't get it. This was the beginning of his Senior year. Because of that, he couldn't play football. He was starting quarterback, and he couldn't play because of me. He lost his scholarship to Stanford. His whole life he worked for that.

deser

(Pause.)

Will saw the car was about to hit me and he did the only thing he could do to stop it. That's the kind of man my brother is. So you can be sure, he would not have done what he did today, unless he felt there was no other choice. Now, I'll grant you, Will was rocked by 9/11 in a way you and I were not. But that doesn't make him crazy. Those terrorist fucks are out there, waiting to strike again. And if they're out there, who's to say we don't have one right here?

LISA

If he is telling the truth, if Will'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, the end justifies the means.

LISA

And if it's coke? Then what?

JACK

Then Will's in a lot of trouble. And so am I.

(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

There's something I have to ask you?

84

LISA
Don't ask me now.

JACK
I need to know-

LISA
What do you not understand? I don't want to hear it!

JACK
Fine!

(Lisa moves over to Ibrahim.)

JACK
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~~

96

LISA

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

WILL

(to Jack)

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

Yes. It was simple until you opened that closet door. Now, it's a little more complicated. I'd be happy to run through all the

86

various scenarios with you. Just come to your senses. Untie me.

LISA

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

(Will says nothing.)

LISA

Jack, this man is evil.

JACK

He's not evil, he's just... He's not aware...

LISA

I'm calling the police.

WILL

You're not going to call the police.

LISA

gonna' stop me?

WILL

Why didn't you call them before?

LISA

Because Jack wouldn't let me.

WILL

What's different now?

87

88

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 know it.

LISA

How do you know?

WILL

Trust me.

LISA

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.

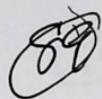
LISA
First the pills.

(Will continues to smile.)

LISA
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.

90

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.

91

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.

WILL¹⁷

I am. I am fucking sorry I grabbed her that hard.
Obviously!

JACK

Okay.

(Pause.)

WILL

I need your help on this.

JACK

What do you propose?

WILL

You're not going to like it.

92

JACK

Say it.

WILL

Only solution.

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. Now, you expect my girlfriend to do it?

WILL

I never said you had to kill him. 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?

93

WILL
Where's what?
(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 while you're at it?

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

(She delicately removes the gag 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.

(Lisa 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. There is something sexual about it.)

(Jack and Will look 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~~

IBRAHIM

It's good shit.

WILL

This poison is good shit?

95

IBRAHIM

That's what the guy told me.

WILL

What guy?

IBRAHIM

The dealer.

WILL

Oh, your friend! The guy who pulled a gun on me.

IBRAHIM

He's not my friend.

WILL

You're 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.

96

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 does not depend on it.

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

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

(She goes to the bathroom.)

97

WILL

(to Jack)

You better untie me while you still can.

JACK

I don't know.

WILL

If you don't, not only the three of us, but God knows how many people are going to die because you couldn't step up to the plate. It's on your conscience. Are you going to pussy out, or are you going to be a man and accept the responsibility of what has been placed before you Tonight? This is the moment you decide, whether you're a hero, or a sheep.

(Jack hesitates, looks at Ibrahim, looks towards the bathroom, then decides to untie Will.)

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

WILL

It's about fucking time. Next thing you know she was going to untie the man, give him a hummer and send him on his merry way.

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

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

(Jack still has the rope in his hand.)

98

LISA

I'm out of here.

WILL

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

(She doesn't speak.)

WILL

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

Let me go. I promise I won't say anything to anyone. 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.

99

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.)

100

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

WILL

Don't make me do this, Lisa.

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

Sit down on the couch.

(They do.)

WILL

(continuing; to Ibrahim)

Confess that this is Anthrax and you are a terrorist.

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~~

WILL

Confess and I'll call the authorities.

101

IBRAHIM

Look, man, just let me go. You don't have to worry. I'll take care of the guy you shot. No one will ever find the body.

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 I do. Why should I break my religion for you?

WILL

Very clever, Abdul. Don't waste your time.

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)

That's funny.

(Will slaps Ibrahim across the face.)

Why do you pity me?

102

IBRAHIM

Because you have so much, you can't even enjoy it. All you do is try to get more.

WILL

You jealous 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.

You see, I was there on that Day. I was surrounded by the screams of burning people. I watched the bodies drop, like rain, from Tower One. Thud. Thud. Thud.

(It is as if with each "Thud", Will actually sees the body drop.)

Thud. Thud. Thud. Thud. Thud. Thud. Thud. Thud. Thud. Thud. Thud. Thud. That wasn't enough for you?

IBRAHIM

I'm telling you, man, I am 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 Brother.

~~WILL~~

WILL

It's a fuckin' family organization.

IBRAHIM

I don't want to get into it.

WILL

Why not? What are you hiding?

IBRAHIM

I'm not hiding anything.

WILL

Who's your Brother?

IBRAHIM

He used to help me run the stores.

WILL

Until what?

IBRAHIM

Until he was taken to Guantanamo Bay for questioning.

WILL

So your brother is the Terrorist.

IBRAHIM

He's not a Terrorist.

WILL

And they took him to Guantanamo Bay?

103

IBRAHIM

He hasn't been charged with anything, just detained for questioning.

WILL

So he's an innocent store owner who runs around with drug dealers and has been detained for no reason what so ever, by the evil American Empire. Is that your story?

IBRAHIM

I didn't know he was involved with drugs.

WILL

Well, now I'm confused. How do you know the drug dealer if you didn't know he was pals with your Brother?

IBRAHIM

When Yasser was taken away-

WILL

Who?

IBRAHIM

Yasser. That's my Brother. When Yasser was taken, I asked around to see if he was involved with Terrorists. I found out he was involved with a Lebanese Coke dealer instead.

WILL

You tell one hell of a story. Don't stop!

~~IBRAHIM~~

105
IBRAHIM

The Lebanese owed him money. He knew one of our stores had been fire-bombed and I was desperate to pay a lawyer for Yasser. The Lebanese would not give me cash, but he would front me cocaine to sell.

WILL

That's your story? You're sticking to it?

IBRAHIM

It's the truth.

WILL

You sure you're not a terrorist?

IBRAHIM

I'm sure.

WILL

You better do a line then.

IBRAHIM

If I do, will you let me go?

WILL

Of course.

IBRAHIM

You swear to God?

WILL

I swear to God.

~~IBRAHIM~~

IBRAHIM

You're lying.

(106)

WILL

You're a terrorist.

(Ibrahim starts to cry.)

IBRAHIM

I can't... I can't...

WILL

You can't what?

IBRAHIM

I can't go through with it.

WILL

What the fuck are you talking about?

IBRAHIM

Please, let me call ~~M~~hammad and get the antidote.

(Pause.)

LISA

What are you saying?

IBRAHIM

The powder is not Anthrax. It's much worse.

LISA

What is it?

(Ibrahim is silent.)

107

LISA

What is it, you son of a bitch!?

IBRAHIM

They call it White Death. I don't know what's in it, only what it does.

WILL

(To Jack and Lisa)

All right?

(To Ibrahim)

What does it do?

IBRAHIM

Soon we will start to feel the symptoms. First, a headache which gets progressively worse. Followed by uncontrollable nausea. All the while the fever is starting to take control. Once the fever comes on, it is only a matter of hours before your body...

JACK

What? What you motherfucking towel-head bastard, say it!?

IBRAHIM

Before your body cooks itself. Literally.

(They are all silent.)

WILL

Where were you going to dump it?

IBRAHIM

Please, there is little time. We must get the antidote.

WILL

Where's the antidote?

IBRAHIM

Untie one arm. 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

Muhammad, he has the antidotes. If he can get here in time,

we'll all be fine. You can do to him what you will, but please let me go home. My family needs me.

(109)

LISA

Let him make the call.

WILL

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

LISA

We need that antidote.

WILL

What he described, 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~~

LISA

If we don't get the antidote, 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?

19 WILL

If you fuck 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.

ELL

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 dials and holds 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

I thought your family was already dead.

IBRAHIM

My wife is dead! I'm still responsible for my Daughter, my Mother, my sister, my Grandmother, my Aunt, my Brother-

WILL

Okay. I get it. Jack, loosen the rope a little. Let this spineless wannabe Jihad piece of shit make his call.

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

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

(The home telephone rings. For a moment Will's attention goes to it.)

(In that moment, Ibrahim slips his arm out from the ropes and in the same motion, snatches the gun out of Will's hand and backs up.)

(Everyone freezes.)

(The Answering machine picks up.)

WILL'S VOICE ON THE MACHINE

You've reached 718-892-4466. Leave a message after the beep.

(Beep...)

113

A FRIEND

Will, dude, I can't believe you skipped work Today, Leslie's tits were practically popping out, her shirt was so Goddam tight. Me and some of the guys are heading over to Scores to work out the frustration. Get off your ass and join us. Peace.

(He hangs up.)

IBRAHIM

(to Will)

You, sit in the chair.

(Will does.)

IBRAHIM

(continuing; to Jack)

You, untie me.

(Jack takes a step toward him.)

IBRAHIM

Stop.

(Jack stops.)

IBRAHIM

I've got this pointed right at your brother's heart. Move slowly. Understand?

(Jack nods.)

114

IBRAHIM

Okay.

(Jack slowly unties Ibrahim.)

(Ibrahim stands and moves away from Jack.)

IBRAHIM

(continuing; to Jack)

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 throws the other rope at Jack.)

IBRAHIM

Feet, too.

(Jack ties Will's feet together.)

IBRAHIM

(continuing; to Jack)

Kneel.

118

WILL

Wait-

IBRAHIM

Kneel!

(Jack does so.)

IBRAHIM

(continuing; to Lisa)

You, 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?

19

LISA

Because I've worn them.

IBRAHIM

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

(She hesitates.)

Now!

(She cuffs Jack's arms behind his back 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? Who killed another man? You're going to the promised land? I don't think so, my friend.

~~WILL~~

WILL
I never lied in my God's name.

(117)

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 really was a terrorist, all three of you would be dead by now. I'm just the Arab 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
Perhaps you can answer a question for me, Mr. Wright.

WILL
What's your question?

IBRAHIM
I'll have to tell you a story first.

WILL
No one gives a-

118

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

IBRAHIM
Am I going to have to tell my story with this in your mouth?

(Will shakes his head.)

(Ibrahim takes the gun out.)

IBRAHIM
I wasn't always Ibrahim the Arab guy who runs the ninety-nine cent store, you know. I used to think I was going to be Ibrahim the Arab guy in Congress someday. After all, I was born in this Country. I got into a good college. Why not? But you see, my father died. I had to take his responsibilities.

(Laughs a little.)

Late at night I would pray to Allah. Why had I gone from Ibrahim your arab friend that might be in Congress someday, to Ibrahim your arab friend who runs the ninety-nine cent store? I prayed hard for the answer to be revealed. And one day I thought it had. I met the girl. The one. Beautiful, funny, everything I'd ever hoped for. I married her. Before we knew it, there was a daughter. Beautiful baby girl.

Things were a little tight, but I knew Allah would not desert us. I knew it would work out in the end.

Then the baby got sick. My wife, she wanted me to go out

and get some Children's Sudafed. "Got to keep the air shafts open. Let the baby breathe," she told me.

(He laughs slightly.)

I said, "If it's so important to you, go out and get it yourself. I'm tired. I worked all day and I'm tired. The baby will get better without the help of Sudafed." "Fine," she said. "I'll go myself." And I let her.

(Ibrahim stops. Suddenly on the verge of tears.)

A few hours later the door-bell rings. Two police officers. A drunk had run her over. Killed on the spot.

(Long pause.)

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

(Ibrahim is close to breaking down. For a moment it seems as though he is lost in his memories.)

(Will looks to Lisa and indicates she should make a move.)

(Ibrahim senses this, and brings his focus back to Will. The gun trembling in his hand.)

IBRAHIM

On September, 11th, I held my baby and we cried. We watched the TV and we cried for all those people who died. And then we cried for all Muslims. Because our worst fears had come true. Bin Laden had succeeded in making life harder for all of us.

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

Then Yasser is taken away. I try to get a lawyer, but no lawyer will touch it. "Not now, wrong time to be questioning the government. Sorry." Yeah, I'm sorry, too, cause now I have to close another store, and still my family is losing money.

Allah, show me the path... No answer. My Brother sits in a cell in Cuba, not charged with anything, and there's no answers.

That's when the Lebanese makes his offer. What should I do? Allah will not answer me. What choice do I have? I will sell the poison to those who seek it. A sin, for sure, but no more a sin than watching my family starve.

The Lebanese comes to my store, and drops off the package. I sell it, and then give him his cut. Simple. No problems. I even know a Wall Street guy who will buy the whole thing off me, and at top dollar. Simple.

And now, I find myself holding a pistol, unsure of whether or not I'm going to kill a man.

So let me ask you, Will... Do you mind if I call you Will?

(Will stares at Ibrahim, silent and ready.)

IBRAHIM

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

(12)

bored with us.

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

(Pause. Ibrahim looks at the gun.)

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 against Will's heart.)

(Will is frozen.)

(Ibrahim tries to pull the trigger, but it is as if the safety is on, in spite of the fact it is not.)

(Ibrahim cannot do it.)

IBRAHIM

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 a bag up from the kitchen, then looks at Lisa.)

IBRAHIM

Thank you.

(He puts the powder in the bag, looks at the gun for a moment, looks at Will, then decides to put it in the bag, as well.)

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

122

(Lisa sits there on the couch.)

(They are silent. Until...)

JACK

Will you marry me?

(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