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From the Dad's Garage Premiere Production*

The B-Team

First Printing, 2010

Printed in U.S.A.

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Also Available From OWP

An American Book of the Dead*

The Game Show†

by Paul Mullin

Cast Size of 13 - Multi-ethnic, non-gender specific

Synopsis: Plucked from the audience, three contestants live and die their way through a myriad of American incarnations as they compete for the ultimate prize, perfect enlightenment. The entire history of the United States becomes the playing field, from Jamestown to the World Trade Center attack and beyond, as they struggle towards their individual goals. In between lives, the contestants visit the bardo realms, wacky worlds between death and rebirth where Stonewall Jackson and Harriet Tubman are husband and wife; and people reincarnate as corporations. When things seem like they couldn't get any weirder, as the contestants start to be born as each other and the understanding begins to dawn that enlightenment is now here and nowhere; a trillion light-years and just a blink away.

Love in the Insecurity Zone

by Mike Folie

3 males, 3 Females

Synopsis: In a future U.S. characterized by Security Zones, personal bar code tattoos, and armed commuters, Gayle finds life either boring or terrifying. Her mood is improved by a sudden romance with Hank, a secretive government agent on a mission to find very happy women. When Hank meets Gayle's sister, the perennially happy Pearl, he spirits both women off to Washington, D.C., where they become entangled in a sinister government plot to bottle happiness.

THE B-TEAM was originally produced by Dad's Garage Theatre Company (Kate Warner, Artistic Director; Lena Carstens, Managing Director) in Atlanta, GA, opening on March 13, 2009. It was directed by Kate Warner; the lighting design was by Ben Tilley; the set design was by Jamie Bullins; the costume design was by Liz Faughnan; the sound design was by Dan Bauman; the property design was by Melisa DuBois; and the Stage Manager was Leslye Kahn. The cast was as follows:

| | |
|---------|------------------|
| Mohamed | Tony Larkin |
| Ammad | Rueben Medina |
| Abdul | Louis Gregory |
| Abu | Randy Havens |
| Brian | Jimi Kocina |
| Sadiq | Stephen Platinum |

THE B-TEAM

By David Holstein

CHARACTERS

Mohamed (late 20s) – a fallen star

Ammad (20s) – a loyal follower of Mohamed, gay-hater

Abdul (18) – an idealist

Sadiq (early 20s) – a killer

Brian (late teens) – a Jew

Abu (classified) – most revered Grandmaster

SETTING

Various locations around Buffalo, New York and Pakistan, the present.

A NOTE ON THIS PLAY:

There are multiple scenes in this play in a variety of locations. The idea is not to wipe the slate clean at every transition and re-set the stage. Suggestion of setting should be enough. Motion is important.

In regards to casting, be creative. Resist the urge to feel ethnically limited. Remember, these guys are trying their best to look American. And Abu wears a fake beard and headscarf. And Brian is a Jew.

THE B-TEAM

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE: A DIRTY LOFT IN BUFFALO, NY

(Lights up on a terrorist, MOHAMED, late 20s, the ringleader, sitting in a dirty Buffalo, New York loft wearing work-out clothes. MOHAMED has both thumbs permanently paralyzed in the thumbs-up position. He looks around. He is not happy.)

A few milk crates to sit on, maybe an old couch, posters of rock star immans. Tacked to the wall is a special red telephone.

He, and every other member of his team, have shaved their beards, cut their hair and taken every possible step to look as American as possible.

AMMAD (pronounced ah-MAH-d), 20s, enters, eating from an uncut loaf of bread.)

MOHAMED: *(without turning around)* Where's Abdul?

AMMAD: Mohamed! You're back.

MOHAMED: Where's Abdul?

AMMAD: He's--

MOHAMED: I saw the tape on CNN.

AMMAD: What tape?

MOHAMED: Ammad...

AMMAD: Abdul didn't send it.

MOHAMED: Who sent the tape? I won't get mad.

AMMAD: You'll get mad. You'll drive whoever send it to empty Wal Mart at 3AM. Bang-bang. Frozen foods aisle. Children will see him when they want Hot Pockets.

MOHAMED: Did you send the tape?

AMMAD: No.

MOHAMED: Ammad?

AMMAD: No. The Jew. He sent it. Before he leave, the Jew sent it.

MOHAMED: Call him Brian.

AMMAD: What?

MOHAMED: Call the Jew, Brian.

AMMAD: Brian sent the tape.

MOHAMED: Stop blaming the Jew.

AMMAD: But he fuck up everything. All the time.

MOHAMED: Where did he go?

AMMAD: He's picking up the new guy from the airport.

(A beat.)

MOHAMED: New guy? What new guy?

AMMAD: Abu called. He's sending us someone new.

MOHAMED: What do you mean Abu called? He called here?

AMMAD: Yes.

MOHAMED: You answered the red phone? Never answer the red phone!

AMMAD: I had to. It was ringing. You were at the gym.

MOHAMED: Where is everybody?

AMMAD: They see their face on TV and they leave in big hurry. Ashkazard's mom find out he not studying to be cook, she throw herself into effigy fire.

MOHAMED: Abu Abdullah is going to shit reindeer. Everyone has left.

AMMAD: Not everyone. Abdul is making shoe bomb. Brian the Jew is getting new guy. Me is eating bread of Jew. And you are fearless, most sympathetic leader. Very handsome.

MOHAMED: Thank you.

(AMMAD overturns a milk crate and fills it with his few possessions.)

AMMAD: Maybe I go visit Los Angeles for a few months then blow myself up in iHop.

MOHAMED: You can't leave. You're my brother.

AMMAD: I'm not your real brother.

MOHAMED: What is that supposed to mean?

AMMAD: It means we're not orphans anymore. We're grown up.

MOHAMED: Then for old time's sake. Ammad, back in the orphanage, we would sing each other nursery rhymes! (*ala Little Bunny Foo Foo*) "Little Faggy Jew Jew went--"

AMMAD: --Enough!

MOHAMED: You go out that door and I will cut off your head.

AMMAD: How?

(A beat. MOHAMED looks at his frozen thumbs.)

MOHAMED: We do not talk about that.

AMMAD: Go ahead, cut off my head, drive me to Walmart, answer a phone.

(AMMAD throws MOHAMED the car keys. He can't catch them, tries to pick them up. Eventually AMMAD must pick them up.)

AMMAD: Tell me, why did I follow you all the way to America?

MOHAMED: To kill gays.

AMMAD: Yes. And how many have I killed? None. There are no homos in Karachi. If you want gays, you have to come here. Now I am here and I want gays!

MOHAMED: Be patient.

AMMAD: I want more than I know what to do with.

MOHAMED: I know.

AMMAD: I want gays coming out my ass!

MOHAMED: We all do.

AMMAD: Mohamed, remember when we were bunk mates in training camp?

MOHAMED: Yes.

AMMAD: We'd wrap American hotdogs around our waists and run into the girls' bathroom and yell "boom" and spray ketchup on all the women?

MOHAMED: Yes.

AMMAD: We dreamed one day we'd join big terrorist cell in Hong Kong or London, blow up the Big Ben or destroy the millennium party. We wanted to be Dallas Cowboys of terrorists. There's nothing in Buffalo. No one to kill. It wasn't the tape that made people leave. No one is happy.

MOHAMED: What about last Halloween when the kids came by and we only gave them apples?

AMMAD: Think bigger.

MOHAMED: Give it time.

(ABDUL, 18, enters wearing a football jersey, track pants and new shoes. He surveys AMMAD.)

ABDUL: Ammad, you look like your face got shatted on by donkey bomb. Remember my cousin who get shatted on by donkey bomb in the market and then the donkey explode and forty people die? Very sad day in Yemen. Smile, you're American now. People will think you're depressed and they won't fuck you. Like that blonde girl from American Pie. She find out one breast is bigger than the other and she gets very sad because no one will buy her dinner. But she get new one and is happy now.

AMMAD: Good-bye, Abdul.

ABDUL: Where are you going?

MOHAMED: He's leaving the group.

ABDUL: Cut off his head.

AMMAD: Out of my way. I've lost five years of my life living here.

ABDUL: Five years. Wow. Very long time. That's much longer then say, eternity in paradise!

AMMAD: Shut up, Abdul. Everyone's gone. I'm going, too.

ABDUL: Where did everybody go?

MOHAMED: They saw your tape on CNN. Your face is all over the news.

ABDUL: My tape? My tape made it to CNN!? That's awesome!

MOHAMED: That is not "awesome."

ABDUL: You're joking right? You're making a joke.

AMMAD: He's not joking. CNN. They've been playing it all day.

ABDUL: CNN!

MOHAMED: Abdul!

ABDUL: Relax, Mohamed. Those other guys were pussies. What? You think FBI will come knocking on the door? Americans think we all look the same. What's the worst that could happen?

AMMAD: Nothing is the worst that can happen. And that is what has been happening: nothing. Good-bye!

ABDUL: Don't go. Look at these new shoes. Adidas. Beautiful, right? I want to cover them with a hijab and never let them out of my sight.

AMMAD: Inappropriate.

ABDUL: Bobby Brown has shoes like these.

AMMAD: How can you afford new Adidas?

ABDUL: I sold the neighbor's dog. They're like barking ATMs. Seventy five dollars. New shoes and flashy-pants. I love America!

AMMAD: Abdul, I want to blow up something. Something big.

MOHAMED: It takes time, Ammad.

ABDUL: I know it's been a tough year. But we'll get back on track. A fresh start.

MOHAMED: A new beginning.

ABDUL: We'll have a toast.

(ABDUL pulls a six pack of MECCA-COLA (production note: this is a real soda) out of his bag, opens a can and hands it to MOHAMED, then holds out another one to AMMAD.)

ABDUL: Ammad... don't be am-maad at me...

(AMMAD takes the can of soda. They open their cans.)

ABDUL: To Mohamed, our glorious leader!

AMMAD: To Abdul, whose shoe bomb will bring us respect and dignity!

MOHAMED: To Ammad... may he finally kill Lance Bass.

(They all toast except ABDUL.)

ALL BUT ABDUL *(cheers)*: Fisehatak!

MOHAMED: What's wrong?

ABDUL: Nothing.

MOHAMED: You didn't drink.

ABDUL: I had to pause and pray.

(A beat.)

MOHAMED: Where the fuck is the shoe bomb?

ABDUL: In my room. In the closet. Under the hand towels.

MOHAMED: Abdul. You are lying. Did you lose the shoe bomb?

ABDUL: No. *(glances at his new shoes)* I think I exchanged it.

MOHAMED: What does that mean?

ABDUL: I must return to Foot Locker.

MOHAMED: You gave away the bomb shoes?

ABDUL: I put them in the box to try these on. People do that.

AMMAD: Nobody does that. Mohamed, yell at him.

MOHAMED: ...Abdul, that was bad!

ABDUL: You put the old shoes in the box and you walk around the mall to check the heel. I left them in the box.

AMMAD: Why were you wearing the BOMB SHOES?!

ABDUL: They're the only shoes I have!

AMMAD: What about your sandals?

ABDUL *(like a child)*: Grrrooooo!!!

AMMAD: Okay, I'm leaving.

MOHAMED: Ammad, don't go. We'll build bigger bomb shoes.

AMMAD: Damn it Mohamed, we're not seven-year-olds playing GI Jihad on the kitchen floor.

MOHAMED: We don't have the money.

AMMAD: It's not the money. Ever since your accident, you've been a new Mohamed and you know it. Everybody knows it. Good-bye, my friend. Good-bye, Buffalo.

(The red telephone rings. They freeze. It rings again. AMMAD reaches for it. MOHAMED slaps his hand away.)

AMMAD: Hey!

MOHAMED: Only I answer the red phone.

AMMAD: But--

MOHAMED: I can answer a telephone! I'm not an invalid.

(Ring!)

MOHAMED picks up the phone somehow. Lights up on ABU ABDULLAH (pronounced Ab-DUH-lah), the aging grandmaster of worldwide terrorist operations. He slurps from an ORANGE JULIUS.)

MOHAMED *(into phone)*: This is Mohamed. Go ahead.

ABU *(putting on a bad prank call voice)*: Hello...?! This is Dominos Hut pizza delivery service... I have many large pizzas for you! Time to pay me with credit card. I am at your front door!

MOHAMED *(annoyed)*: Hello, grandmaster Abu.

ABU: What? This is... delivery serviceman! Look out the window!

MOHAMED: I know it's you, Abu.

ABU *(changing tone)*: Well of course it's me, you camelfucker! It's my phone! Did you think it was the Pope?! That maybe the Pope moved in with me and that we are secret friends and that the Pope was calling you to wish you a merry friendly Radio City Christmas on my special red phone?!

MOHAMED: No, Abu.

ABU: Of course, no! Moron! Guess what happened to me this morning? Go on guess, take a guess--

MOHAMED: I--

ABU: I was taking my poodle for a walk--

(A poodle barks off stage.)

ABU *(off, to dog)*: Quiet, Hitler!! *(then)* And a neighbor of mine is sitting on his porch drinking tea and watching the season finale of Cheers on Karachi TV! The one where he sells the bar! Ted Danson looks like a Greek God. It's a good thing he keeps his shirt on? Am I right? Yes? Yes? No? No! He is filth! He is the twisted aborted fetus of the Western World! Like my neighbor, whose corpse is now rotting at the bottom of the well from which his family drinks! So guess what I did after I beat him to death with my hickory cane? Guess! Guess!

MOHAMED: You--

ABU: I took his TV and I changed the channel to CNN and guess who I saw? Ted Danson? Maybe? Possibly? No! The entire Buffalo team! Your team! The B-team! Smiling and pissing and eating watermelon, prancing around like one-legged ballerinas doing Swan Lake in a pool of your own urine! Ashkazard's mom threw herself into effigy fire. Now who will make me lamb kabob? You, Mohamed? Will you make me lamb kabob?

MOHAMED: I'm sorry, sir.

ABU: Hahahaha! Knock Knock?

MOHAMED: Who's There?

ABU: "I'm sorry, sir." I'm sorry, sir who? I'm sorry sir, but your entire American operation has been jeopardized by a group of incompetent mamma's boys who wouldn't know a potato from a potato grown by a Jew!

MOHAMED: Abdul made a terrific shoe bomb. We'll blow up something big.

ABU: Abdul!? Abdul couldn't blow up a volleyball! And shoe bombs?! You might as well drop an anvil from a cliff and escape on your rocket shoes! *(slurps his Orange Julius)* Mmmm... at least I have my sweet sweet Orange Julius. It is the only thing stopping me from killing you right now. It's the perfect combination of orange juice and dairy creamer. They just opened up one in Islamabad. *(sucks down the last of it)* Mmm... what were you saying?

MOHAMED: I will make things right.

ABU: That's why I'm sending you on a mission!

MOHAMED: A mission?

(AMMAD leans in at the mention of a mission. Abdul hovers over the phone.)

ABU: Yes. It is time. You have earned it.

MOHAMED: I don't know what to say. A mission! You are very gracious.

ABU: Yuck! Yuck!

MOHAMED: What's the matter?

ABU: Nothing. I am swallowing the piece of shit you are feeding me!

MOHAMED: Can you tell me about the mission?

ABU: Sadiq will tell you everything when he arrives.

ABDUL: He's sending Sadiq?!

MOHAMED *(to Abu)*: Brian is picking him up from the airport now.

ABU: Brian? You sent Brian? You are brave.

MOHAMED: Brave? What do you mean?

ABDUL: Sadiq is a wild, rabid, Jew-hating animal He is crazy killer! He once paid for a taxi by ripping off the driver's arm and giving it back to him! Chuck Norris's favorite color is Sadiq!

ABU: Abdul speaks the truth.

MOHAMED: He sounds great.

ABU: I know. He's your replacement.

(ABU hangs up. Lights down on ABU, MOHAMED and AMMAD.)

SCENE TWO: BRIAN CHAUFFEURS

Lights up on BRIAN The Jew, late teens, a bookish Jew from Long Island, and SADIQ, early 20s, a badass upstart from Pakistan.

BRIAN chauffeurs.)

BRIAN: So. How was the flight?

(A beat.)

BRIAN: Cool. Cool. Was there like a movie? I bet you were in the air for a wicked long time. How many movies were there? Like six?

(No answer.)

BRIAN: Cool. Yeah. Silent guy. Silent killer. Silent but deadly. Silence of the Lambs. They probably wouldn't show that on an airplane.

(A good long nothing.)

BRIAN *(a la Anthony Hopkins)*: Fava beans and a nice Chianti. *(then)* Do you like music? I'm in a band. Called "Shlomo's Revenge." Mostly ska. Then the guy with the trombone quit and we became punk. Then the guy who cut himself quit. And we did a lot of Green Day covers. Then we broke up. So I kinda lied when I said I was in a band. *(sing-song)* I'm-a-liar!

(Awkward nothing. SADIQ begins polishing a large sabre.)

BRIAN: Sadiq's a cool name. Scary. But masculine. Like *Contra*. Remember *Contra*? On Nintendo? That was a sweet game. Up up down down left right left right B A select start. The Konami code. You'd enter it at the beginning screen and it gave you secret powers. *(then)* I'm Brian, by the way. Did I say that already? Earlier? I don't remember. *(then)* What's up?

(Nothing.)

BRIAN: No. Oh. I thought you said something. But you didn't.

(A beat. BRIAN sneezes violently. SADIQ doesn't say a word.)

BRIAN *(irked)*: Bless me.

(LIGHTS DOWN on BRIAN and SADIQ...)

SCENE THREE: BACK IN THE LOFT

...and up on MOHAMED, AMMAD and ABDUL.)

AMMAD: What else did he say?

MOHAMED: Nothing.

AMMAD: Is it about the tape?

MOHAMED: Yes.

ABDUL: He saw my tape? What did he say?

MOHAMED: Two thumbs up.

AMMAD: It was the Jew!

MOHAMED: Yeah, OK. I heard you. I don't care. Everybody's gone. Life is unfair. "Mommy, I wasn't going to purchase the turban. I was just trying it on." Shut up, ok? Just shut up!

(A secret knock at the door.)

AMMAD: What was that?

MOHAMED: Brian the Jew thinks we have a secret knock.

(The same secret knock at the door.)

MOHAMED: Come in, Brian...

BRIAN *(O.S.)*: What's the password?

MOHAMED: You're on the outside, Brian.

(A beat. BRIAN knocks the secret knock again.)

MOHAMED: Abdul, open the door.

(ABDUL opens the door. It's BRIAN and SADIQ. BRIAN gives ABDUL a high-five.)

BRIAN: Allahu-akbar. *(beat)* Nice shoes, Abdul.

ABDUL: Thank you.

MOHAMED *(to Sadiq)*: Hello.

(No response. SADIQ just stands there.)

MOHAMED: We have heard so much about you.

SADIQ: I thought there'd be more.

MOHAMED: More?

SADIQ: Of you.

MOHAMED: No.

SADIQ: I was told there'd be twenty. Abu said there'd be twenty.

BRIAN: There were twenty.

AMMAD: We saw the tape, Brian.

BRIAN: What tape?

AMMAD: Don't play Jew with me.

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

SADIQ: We need twenty!

(A beat.)

MOHAMED: There was downsizing.

SADIQ *(shush!!!)*: Ashahahaz! *(then)* I asked a question! When I am asking a question, Abu Abdullah is asking question! So... we have only five to complete this mission.

BRIAN: What mission!?

MOHAMED: Yes, five.

BRIAN: Like a SWAT team!

(SADIQ stares daggers at BRIAN.)

MOHAMED: Ammad handles communications...

AMMAD: Allahu-akbar.

MOHAMED: Abdul makes bombs.

ABDUL: Allahu-akbar.

MOHAMED: And Brian hates his mother.

BRIAN: Allahu-akbar.

SADIQ: OK. Great. What do you do?

(MOHAMED hesitates.)

BRIAN: He is fearless leader.

SADIQ: Not anymore.

ABDUL: What is he talking about?

MOHAMED: It's nothing. Don't worry about it.

SADIQ: Go on Mohamed, tell them.

MOHAMED: From what I hear, your reputation precedes you. Four years in Afghanistan at one of those nice training camps with the expensive red dirt. You speak six languages, can make a bomb out of a Pepsi can and they call you The Lioneater because you once ate a lion.

SADIQ: And your reputation precedes you. *(holds out thumbs)* A coward.

(MOHAMED lunges at SADIQ, but ABDUL and AMMAD restrain him.)

MOHAMED: Plumbing accident!

SADIQ: In Karachi, they call you The Fonz.

(MOHAMED is about to lunge again, when SADIQ's cell phone rings.)

SADIQ: Excuse me.

(SADIQ answers it.)

SADIQ: Hi Dad.

(Lights up on ABU, sipping an Orange Julius.)

ABU: Sadiq, you are at work. I am not "Dad." I am Abu Abdullah. Be professional.

SADIQ: Sorry, Dad.

ABU: How is the mission going?

SADIQ: It--

ABU: I don't care! How's the weather? Cold? Freezing? Good! I hope your dick falls off and some little kid picks it up off the sidewalk and shows it to his mother! "Look Mommy, I found a rabbit's foot!" Then Mommy says, "That's good luck, put it in a safe place." But he doesn't, he throws it in traffic! What were we talking about?

SADIQ: The mission.

ABU: Yes, don't let me down! Mom says hi.

(ABU hangs up the phone. Lights down on ABU.)

AMMAD: We don't fight without Mohamed.

MOHAMED: I'm not going anywhere. What is the mission?

SADIQ: It is a mission that comes directly from the mouth of the great sheikh Abu Abdullah. He has heard of the work your group has done.

ABDUL: Like my tape?!

SADIQ: Your tape. *(to Mohamed)* The apples on Halloween. *(to Ammad)* When you hit that squirrel with your car.

AMMAD *(under his breath)*: Gay squirrel.

SADIQ: As reward, Abu wants you to carry out a job. To destroy a domestic and foreign target. A great symbol of peace and prosperity.

AMMAD: I don't know what to say.

SADIQ: He said you would say that.

ABDUL: What is the target?

(SADIQ reveals a scale model of Niagara Falls.)

SADIQ: Niagara Falls. Renowned for its beauty and unlimited supply of water, Niagara Falls represents everything we hate about the West: abundance, great size and water. Its destruction will devastate American foreign relations.

ABDUL: How will we destroy it? A nuclear bomb?

AMMAD: A dirty bomb?

SADIQ: No. With these.

(SADIQ fishes out SUICIDE VESTS from his bag.)

SADIQ: We will put on martyrs' vests, jump into Niagara falls and detonate. Like this.

(To explain, SADIQ takes five paper clips and tosses them limply at the model.)

AMMAD: And this will cause harm to the Falls?

SADIQ: According to the great Abu Abdullah, yes.

AMMAD: We will go during a lunch hour. Kill all the tourists!

SADIQ: Actually, his eminence wishes we execute this mission under cover of darkness.

MOHAMED: So during the dinner time?

SADIQ: Two in the morning.

MOHAMED: I see.

ABDUL *(re: the vests)*: At the airport, how did you get those past the bomb-sniffing dogs?

SADIQ: I carried them on the plane.

(The group reacts, impressed. Oh...)

ABDUL *(impressed)*: Fan-cy red dirt edu-ca-tion!

AMMAD: Hold the phones. Hold the horses. What the fuck? Anybody?

SADIQ: Ammad, you question the order of Sheikh Abu?

AMMAD: No. Is excellent order.

MOHAMED: Yes.

AMMAD: I just, you know, why not throw donkey bomb into falls?

ABDUL: You want to be a donkey? You think there is honor in being a donkey with dynamite taped to your donkey dick? You think when your donkey dick explode, you get seventy-two virgin donkeys with their flying donkey carpets and large donkey breasts?

AMMAD: No. I'm not--

ABDUL: If you want to die and then have sex with donkey virgins, I will support you. May the children remember you as the man who rode a donkey through the gates of paradise, maybe you want that as your legacy?

AMMAD: No. No.

ABDUL: Or maybe you don't want to spend eternity with seventy-two beautiful virgins!? Is that the way you swing? You "don't like the hijab"? Are you a sissy-fruit?

AMMAD: No. No. You're right. There is... there is honor in this. This is a good day.

MOHAMED: Abdul, gather the vests. Ammad, go to Priceline and get us a good hotel.

BRIAN: Can we get a honeymoon suite?

MOHAMED: No.

BRIAN: Please.

MOHAMED: Brian gets a honeymoon suite.

BRIAN: Awesome.

MOHAMED: When does the great Sheikh want this mission carried out?

(SADIQ hands MOHAMED his suicide vest.)

SADIQ: Tonight.

(Lightning flashes. Thunder. Sounds of rain. Lights down on everyone but SADIQ who sits down to write a letter on his blackberry, his face lit by the screen.)

SCENE FOUR: SADIQ'S LOVE LETTER

As SADIQ writes a letter to Kalila (pronounced Ka-LIE-la), we hear his voiceover narration.)

SADIQ (V.O.): Dear beautiful Kalila, I miss you terribly. Your hair blowing in the desert air, your eyes sparkling against the evening stars. Being without you for even a day is the greatest torture I have ever known. Aside from torture. Rest assured, once Mohamed and his team are eliminated, and my father is satisfied, he will keep his word and allow us to marry. I think he really likes you. Good bye, my little cabbage. Forever yours, Sadiq.

(The lights grow brighter and we realize...

SCENE FIVE: ON THE ROAD

...that SADIQ is now in the back of a truck or van, sitting next to BRIAN and AMMAD, heading northbound on I-190. Sounds of light traffic, passing car radios. A small door or partition separates them from MOHAMED and ABDUL, who ride up front. ABDUL drives.)

BRIAN: My mom wouldn't let me go to Cornell because they have this ridiculously high suicide rate. Bridges. Tons of bridges. And she said if I went there I'd jump to my death. She went to Smith, a women's college. Do they have women's colleges in Pakistan? I'm guessing they don't because of you know, the thing. With women. The thing with women and you people. Of course, I mean Muslims, not terrorists. I'm a terrorist and I'm not a Muslim. I'm just upset. Like you. At the world. I wanted to study psychology but mother said I should go to Hofstra and stay close to home, close to her womb. Every time we'd meet new people she'd reference me as the boy who fell out of her womb. "Can you believe this came out of that?" she'd ask perfect strangers. "My bubbulah." I got into Cornell on twenty grand a year scholarship. But she said, "No, you can't go, you'll kill yourself." So I said, you're right, fuck Cornell, I'm joining the Mujahedeen.

(A beat.)

SADIQ: I think you're chickenshit.

(The sound of brakes screeching. The truck abruptly grinds to a halt. BRIAN freaks out a little.)

ABDUL (O.S.): Sorry. Almost hit a squirrel.

AMMAD: Hit the fucking squirrel!

(The truck begins moving again.)

BRIAN: I am not chickenshit.

SADIQ: What, you think you can martyr yourself? When the time comes?

BRIAN: I will do what must be done.

SADIQ: What happened to Mohamed's thumbs?

BRIAN: You ask a lot of questions.

SADIQ: You took my land.

BRIAN: The British made a promise!

SADIQ: They took it from us!

BRIAN: We had two thousand year dibs. Give me a break.

SADIQ: Give me East Jerusalem.

BRIAN: My God can beat up your God.

SADIQ: It's the same God!

BRIAN: Really?

SADIQ: Yes.

(A beat.)

AMMAD: I will tell you what happened to Mohamed. If you really want to know. *(then)* We were on a mission in Beirut...

(The lights dim. Some transitional East Asian Kabuki electric sitar-type music. Lights up on a small scrim, behind which the following story is told with shadow puppets.)

AMMAD (*wistfully*): Mohamed was promoted to martyr and I was to drive him to a market where the French ambassador would buy fresh olives for his wife. We strapped Mohamed with a big pipe bomb... nails, ball bearings, and fifty pounds of C-4. Two detonators, one in each hand. (*Ammad holds two thumbs up*) You don't know the kind of man you are until you are a ticking man-clock. He got maybe twenty feet from the truck when he froze. He couldn't go through with it. He just stood there with his two thumbs on the triggers, staring. Like a blind boy holding joysticks, unsure if he is playing Mortal Kombat... or Pac Man. I had to go get him. He's been stuck like that ever since. When we got back to Pakistan they gave him two choices: have his head cut off, smeared with peanut butter and fed to a horse or be sent to Buffalo. (*then*) He is a brave man.

SADIQ: He is a coward.

AMMAD: Maybe he was then. But today, with the success of our mission, perhaps he will redeem himself.

(*Screeching brakes. Lights back up on the truck and down on the shadow puppets. The truck grinds to a halt again. AMMAD, SADIQ and BRIAN buckle down.*)

ABDUL (*O.S.*): Raccoon!

(*The truck begins moving again.*)

AMMAD (*calling off*): Just hit the fucking things!

ABDUL (*O.S.*): Karma!

BRIAN (*to Ammad*): What was Mohamed like... (*holds up both thumbs*) Before the accident?

(*Lights dim... Back to the shadow puppets...*)

AMMAD (*holds up both thumbs, emotional*): He enjoyed oatmeal, breakfast cereal. When watching a football match, he would make a fist and pump it with joy. (*a beat*) He's quit smoking though. That was nice. (*then*) After it happened, he grew depressed and tried to throw himself into traffic, but cars would stop because they thought he was hitchhiking.

(*Lights up...*)

SADIQ: That's it. Stop the truck. Get me off this thing.

AMMAD: It will be fine, Sadiq.

BRIAN (*reassuringly*): The bomb will kill you instantly.

AMMAD: You won't feel a thing. I mean, you might. (*beat*) Nobody really knows.

BRIAN: Or you'll hit a rock. (*beat*) Or you'll drown. (*beat*) Or you'll hit a big bird. And that'll kill you maybe.

SADIQ: No. It's not the bomb. It's you people. I can't listen to you. You are not terrorists. You are children dressed like terrorists for a terrorist-themed birthday party!

(*SADIQ takes out a Pepsi can.*)

AMMAD: Sadiq!

SADIQ: Relax. Not a bomb.

(*He opens the can and sips.*)

SADIQ: Let's just get this over with.

(*MOHAMED enters from the cab of the truck with his two thumbs up.*)

MOHAMED (*unintentionally like The Fonz*): Hey...

BRIAN (*like Mohamed*): Hey...

MOHAMED: Shut up. (*then*) Sadiq, I understand this mission involves great sacrifice. But we must be brave. It is the will of the Prophet.

SADIQ: Yes, I don't know what came over me.

MOHAMED: Ammad is our communications specialist. He hardly speaks English. Brian is our mascot and he is a Jew. Abdul is our bomb maker. He has never made a successful bomb in his entire life. He can't even light the pilot light under the stove.

ABDUL (*O.S.*): You can't smell the gas! Hey shut up!

MOHAMED: We're not the best, but we do what we're told.

SADIQ: My apologies. We are weapons of mass destruction.

MOHAMED: No, Sadiq, we are soldiers. Not weapons. A weapon has no beliefs, no honor. It is in following orders that there is honor. The orders may be stupid, but we follow them anyway. We follow them blindly. Not stupidly. Blindly. Blind people aren't stupid people,

MOHAMED (cont'd): they simply trust that others will lead them correctly and justly. We have to trust that even though a decision may cause our demise, that also it creates a greater good. Weapons do not win wars. Blind people do! *(beat)* Now who will be blind with me?

BRIAN: I will be blind.

AMMAD: I will be blind.

(The truck swerves. Staggering.)

ABDUL (O.S.): I will be blind!

(A beat.)

MOHAMED: Sadiq. As we are to Allah.

SADIQ: Yes. I will be blind. As I am to my father. As I am to God.

(A beat. Screeching brakes. The truck grinds to a halt.)

AMMAD: Abdul, just hit the fucking possum!

ABDUL (O.S.): It's not possum. It's McDonald's.

(Lights down on everyone but SADIQ...)

SCENE SIX: SADIQ'S SECOND LOVE LETTER

...who begins typing another letter on his blackberry. Again, we hear his voiceover.)

SADIQ (V.O.): Hey Kalila, it's me again, Sadiq. Haven't heard from you in the last few hours. Just checking in. Often I catch myself day-dreaming about the pink scarf wrapped around your face, billowing in the autumn breeze. It's really nice here. The leaves are changing. Lots of colors. Are you mad at me? Because I know that if you were mad at me for some reason, you'd tell me. You wouldn't make me guess what you're thinking, even if I did do something, which I didn't probably because all I've done is send thoughtful notes and e-mail you pictures of cats. I know how you like cats. Anyway, let me know what's happening whichyou. Lots of love, Sadiq. P.S. I love you. P.P.S. I love you. P.P.P.S. We are *so* that couple.

(The lights brighten and we see SADIQ is sitting at a truck stop McDonalds.)

SCENE SEVEN: A LAST MEAL

ABDUL also sits at the booth with his Big Mac, supersize fries, supersize Coke. But he's not hungry. He picks at a fry. He's getting cold feet.)

SADIQ: I thought you'd be hungrier.

ABDUL: I'm being polite.

SADIQ: It's not a traditional last meal.

ABDUL: I thought it would be fun.

SADIQ: It is fun. I'm having fun.

ABDUL: It would be fun to make a bomb out of a Pepsi can.

SADIQ: I guess.

ABDUL: Maybe you can teach me.

SADIQ: It's not hard.

ABDUL: Between now and... later. You could teach me.

SADIQ: Sure.

ABDUL: That would be fun.

(A beat.)

SADIQ: I've never broken Halal before.

ABDUL: Me neither. *(then, inspirational)* You only die once!

SADIQ: Yes. You might as well die knowing what it's like.

ABDUL: Yes. Exactly.

SADIQ: Fulfilled.

ABDUL: Right.

SADIQ: Content.

ABDUL: Sure.

SADIQ: Because if you didn't know what it was like, you may have regrets.

(Some awkward silence. ABDUL pushes his food away.)

SADIQ (*trying to find something nice to say*): The McDonalds here are so much nicer than the ones in Afghanistan.

(*AMMAD, BRIAN and MOHAMED enter. BRIAN holds AMMAD's tray. There are only two open seats, so BRIAN stands.*)

AMMAD: He won't eat.

MOHAMED: I won't do it.

AMMAD: Have a fry.

MOHAMED: No.

AMMAD: Take a bite.

MOHAMED: It's not right.

BRIAN: That rhymed.

MOHAMED: Shut up. (*then*) Abdul? What do you think?

ABDUL: Eat my ass.

MOHAMED: What did you say?

(*A tense beat. MOHAMED stands. Silence. BRIAN politely waves to a customer.*)

MOHAMED: Abdul Al-Asqui-Mufaka-Habib-Belosi-Hadad-Ben-Gurion!

ABDUL (*apologetic*): My words escape me.

MOHAMED: I am your leader for three more hours.

BRIAN (*to a passing customer, proud*): It's OK. They're with me.

ABDUL: Sincere apologies.

MOHAMED: In paradise, you can enjoy free will.

ABDUL: Of course.

BRIAN: Can I go pee?

MOHAMED: No.

BRIAN: Please.

MOHAMED: No.

BRIAN: Sadiq?

MOHAMED: Don't look at Sadiq.

(Fine! BRIAN puts the tray on the ground and exits.)

MOHAMED: Hey! Am I invisible?

AMMAD: Give the kid a break.

MOHAMED: You too, Ammad? And Abdul, who I'm surprised didn't come to work today dressed like Santa Claus!?

AMMAD: Mohamed.

MOHAMED: How would you like it if I killed myself? *(beat)* You know, sooner. *(then)* How would you like that?

ABDUL: That's not what he's saying at all.

SADIQ: Mohamed, sit down, you're overreacting. *(a friendly glance, wave)* Act natural. The woman in the corner just put down her Bible. You're being careless.

ABDUL *(hugging his McDonalds, sadly)* Don't you see, Mohamed. I'm not ready. I can't eat. If I eat it, then it is gone.

MOHAMED: Insolent piece of shit.

ABDUL: Do you want me to get on my knees? And thank you? Kiss your feet? Oh great Sultan, blessed are you who slaughter the pitiful.

MOHAMED: Please.

ABDUL: Can't you see you made Brian almost piss in his pants? He's more afraid than any of us.

(LIGHTS DOWN on the booth and up on BRIAN in the bathroom talking on his cell phone.)

BRIAN *(on phone)* Hi Mom, yeah, it's me... Well... well... I'm calling you NOW. Yes, I'm eating. Listen Mom... Mom... I have to make a confession. I'm not really sleeping over at Danny's. No, I lied. Danny doesn't exist and he doesn't own a boat. Tonight I'm going to do something you're not going to like and I just wanted to say I love you because you're not going to speak to me ever again. *(a breath)* I've been seeing a black woman. It's serious. We're eloping.

(LIGHTS DOWN on BRIAN and back UP on the booth. ABDUL crawls to MOHAMED's feet.)

SADIQ: Abdul, get off the floor.

ABDUL: Please, Mohamed. I just bought new shoes. I'm not ready.

(BRIAN enters.)

ABDUL: Brian, tell Mohamed we're not ready. We're too young to die. Come on.

BRIAN: Actually, I'm good to go.

MOHAMED *(to Abdul)*: Get up. I'll buy you a McFlurry.

BRIAN *(correcting)* McFlurry.

ABDUL: No. I'm not a child. I'm a virgin, kissed for the very first time.

(AMMAD quietly offers MOHAMED some ROPE from his bag, careful ABDUL doesn't see. MOHAMED waves him off.)

SADIQ: Bible Woman is giving me a weird look...

ABDUL: I want to TiVO through the Superbowl and only watch the commercials. I want to rent a tape from Blockbuster and never return it! I want to make a bomb that looks like an alarm clock taped to four sticks of dynamite. I want to eat a fried Twinkie and vote on the fattest pig and eat a pie with my hands tied behind my back. I want to tell a girl, "It's not you; it's me." When really, it is her. *(indicates unseen plasma TVs in the room)* I want to enjoy a Quarter Pounder at a McDonalds with six plasma televisions and tell the man sitting next to me that in France they call it a Royale With Cheese and pretend like I never saw Pulp Fiction. In Yemen, they hang you in the streets for stealing two pounds of butter. In America, they give you your own reality TV show! They put sugar in their coffee and sometimes the sugar makes cancer in rats but they drink it anyway because they don't want to pass on diabetes to their children. I want to go to a bank and take out a loan to buy a sixteen ounce caramel macchiato. I want them to tell me, no Abdul you can't have loan, you are too tan and foreign. Then I want to sue bank for thirty million dollars and buy a race car like David Letterman and drive it to Mt. Rushmore and piss on Teddy Roosevelt's head because that is my freedom of speech. I want to love Raymond! *(then)* I'm not ready to kill. And I'm not ready to murder and if I have to become a killer today I will be upset and angry and wish I had never answered your ad on Craigslist.

AMMAD: You're not going to kill anyone.

ABDUL: What if there's a tourist nearby?

AMMAD: At 2am?

ABDUL: Two teenagers sneaking away for a midnight picnic, waiting for the sunrise. I can't. I can't kill. I will be a martyr. But not a murderer.

TELEVISION (V.O.): We interrupt this image of the Hamburglar chasing a morbidly obese child to bring you the chilling uncut terrorist video released just hours ago.

AMMAD: Abdul, it's your tape!

ABDUL: It's my tape!

(Everybody looks up at an unseen TV. We hear the soft, sad romantic sounds of the first 30 seconds of Debussy's Clair de Lune. ABDUL's eyes well with tears as he watches his masterpiece. All the others stare on with a mix of confusion and awe. After a few moments...)

MOHAMED: Abdul... it's...

AMMAD: It's wonderful.

MOHAMED: Earlier, when I watched it on the treadmill, I couldn't get the right effect. But the pacing.

AMMAD: The mise-en-scene.

MOHAMED: Why is Ashkazad cutting such a large watermelon?

ABDUL *(through tears, proud)*: The watermelon is freedom.

AMMAD *(I miss Ashkazad)*: Oh, Ashkazad.

(The music fades out. The television report continues.)

NEWSWOMAN (V.O.): ...although marketing departments from several movie studios have hurried to credit the video as a viral ad campaign, new reports suggest the terrorist video shows actual terrorists eating actual watermelon and plotting actual attacks...

(Everyone at the table is now standing.)

NEWSWOMAN (V.O.): ...including today's shoe-bomb attack at a Buffalo, New York Orange Julius kiosk that killed two and injured dozens... the attack was perpetrated by a thirty-two year-old Foot Locker employee with no previous history of being an Arab or a terrorist... the department of Homeland Security then issued a statement saying that those who executed the attack are the "real deal" and has raised the terror alert system from orange to triangle.

(A beat.)

MOHAMED: Did you hear that? Triangle.

ABDUL: It worked?

MOHAMED: I can't believe it.

AMMAD: The bomb. It worked?

ABDUL: I made a bomb and it worked. And my film is on cable. Do you think Spielberg was watching?

AMMAD: Probably!

ABDUL: Did you hear that Mohamed? Spielberg!

MOHAMED: Yes, Abdul. Spielberg.

ABDUL: Hahahahaha! Fuck you, Raymond!

AMMAD: Yeah, fuck you Raymond!

ABDUL: Nobody loves you!

BRIAN *(to a passerby)*: Hey. What's up?

ABDUL *(acts out a football game)*: Aikman goes long, to the 30, the 20, the 10, swings, it's going, going gone! Touchdown!

(ABDUL gives high-fives all around.)

ABDUL: That's right, Madonna. I'm a big slut! *(in awe)* I'm going to be famous. A famous killer. A cold-blooded... *(then)* Spielberg's not going to call. Is he? Is he?!?! What have I done!

(ABDUL rips opens his shirt, reveals his MARTYR VEST.)

MOHAMED: Abdul!

AMMAD: Not yet!

ABDUL: I'm sorry!

MOHAMED: Abdul!

AMMAD: Stop. You can't!

MOHAMED: Brian, get down!

(BRIAN crouches right next to ABDUL.)

MOHAMED: Further.