

AMERICA, THE BEAUTIFUL
by
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Roles

JOE, a lawyer, pushing fifty
KAY, his wife, a few years younger
JACK, a government official, mid-fifties
OTIS, an official, early thirties
INGRID, an official, indeterminate age

Notes

AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL is to be performed without an intermission.
No late seating should be allowed.

(Lights up on what appears to be an underground detention room. Two immovable metal tables, one downstage, one upstage. A pile of luggage beside the upstage table. A metal cabinet. A metal coat rack. A few uncomfortable metal chairs. A single door in the upstage wall. An American flag on a floor-standing flagpole. The players in place as the lights come up. JOE and KAY seated at the downstage table, staring out in the direction of the spectators, as if they were staring at their own reflections in a mirror that ran across the downstage lip. INGRID and OTIS stand upstage, heads slightly lowered, staring at the floor. JACK downstage, apart from the others, staring into the imaginary mirror, as if perplexed by what he sees there. No one moves at all at first.)

Beautiful. JACK
(Joe seems to come to life.)

Sorry? JOE

Beautiful. JACK
(Kay comes to life.)

Beautiful? KAY

Out. JACK

Out? JOE

The weather. JACK
(Ingrid and Otis raise their heads.)

KAY
They said mid-seventies. And sunny. On the plane.

Did they? JACK

As we were landing. Yes. KAY

This morning ... whenever. JOE

We haven't been out yet. KAY

Haven't you? JACK

No. KAY

No. Of course not. What was I thinking? JACK

I brought them straight down, Jack. INGRID

Just now? JACK

This morning. INGRID

And you've been waiting all this time? JACK

Since noon. JOE

That's awful. JACK

We were sitting in that room. That other room. We couldn't call out. KAY

Our phones don't work. JOE

There's no signal down here. OTIS

It's bad up there, Jack. INGRID

People everywhere. OTIS

JACK

Yes ... well ... that time of year.

(Jack takes a step toward the imaginary mirror, as if to get a better look.)

JACK (CONT'D)

Everyone coming home from vacation.

(He stares as if into the mirror, baffled.)

JACK (CONT'D)

Can you believe it's nearly September again? What happened to the summer? It's like it disappeared. It's over ... but it's like it never happened ...

(Jack trails off, and just stands there, reflecting. All of them are still staring out downstage.)

KAY

That's one of those mirrors you can see through, right?

INGRID

A one-way mirror.

OTIS

Two-way mirror.

INGRID

One-way mirror.

JACK

Please don't fight.

(Joe peers into the imaginary mirror.)

JOE

Is someone there?

JACK

Where?

JOE

There. On the other side.

JACK

Oh. No. No ... it's just an empty room.

INGRID

No one uses those things anymore.

(Otis points out a video camera.)

OTIS

Video cameras.

Right. Of course. JOE

Shame. JACK

Excuse me? JOE

It added something. Knowing you were being watched.
(turns abruptly to Joe and Kay)
I'm sorry. You're probably both exhausted. JACK

Yes. We are. We're both pretty tired. JOE

And here I am rambling on about nothing. JACK

We've been up for ... what? Thirty-something hours? KAY

Thirty-something hours? That's terrible. What happened? JACK
(Jack grabs a chair and sits at the table.)

Nothing. Just an Eight O'clock flight. JOE
(Ingrid brings Jack an expandable file.)

We would have had to leave at four ... to get there by five. KAY

Where? OTIS

What? JOE

To get where by five? OTIS

Oh. Heathrow. JOE

So we just stayed up. KAY

You stayed up all night? JACK

Was that last night? KAY

I don't know. Was it? JACK

Yes. Last night. KAY

Couldn't sleep on the plane? JACK

(Jack opens up the expandable file.)

It was really crowded. There were lots of kids. KAY

On the plane. JACK

Uhuh. KAY

Crying. INGRID

Yes. KAY

That's what we get ... for flying economy. JOE

(Jack takes out a manilla file.)

I'm so terribly sorry. JACK

So are we. JOE

We had to rebook, and everything was full, and - KAY

We should have just waited for Business Class. JOE

Live and learn, right? JACK

(Jack opens the file.)

Yeah. Exactly. JOE

(Jack scans the file.)

JACK
Well let's get you home just as fast as we can.

KAY
Thank you.

JOE
Great. That would be great.

JACK
And thank you for cooperating.

JOE
Of course.

JACK
This shouldn't take too long.

JOE
Good.

JACK
We just need to check a few things. I'm really sorry for the inconvenience.

JOE
That's OK. You're just doing your job.

(Jack doesn't respond. He reads the file.)

KAY
We understand that these things happen.

(Jack flips a page in the file and reads.)

JOE
Probably happen to everyone eventually. Law of averages.

JACK
(absently, reading)
Mmm. Mm hmm ...
(reads the file in silence for a beat)
And what are they, exactly?

JOE
Excuse me?

JACK
These things ... that you understand ... that are bound to happen.

JOE
Oh. These mix ups. Mistaken identities.

JACK
Has there been some mix up?

Well, we just assumed - KAY

There must have been, right? Or we wouldn't be here. JOE

(to Ingrid)
Are these not the Smiths? JACK

No, we are - KAY

Joseph T. and Katherine Smith? JACK

Yes, that's us. JOE

I don't understand then. JACK

There's no mistake, Jack. INGRID

No, that's not what I meant. I'm sorry, I'm probably not being clear. I think we just thought ... we never get stopped. We don't look like ... I mean, we're obviously not ... you know ... JOE

(amused)
Terrorists? JACK

(smiling)
Right. JOE

Right. KAY

No. Of course not. JACK

That's obvious, right? KAY

Relax, folks. There's nothing to worry about. JACK

(Jack flips a page in the file and reads.)

So this is just a routine check. JOE

INGRID

Right.

JOE

It's no reflection on us ... specifically ... as individuals or anything.

KAY

This probably happens to people all the time. Other people. Who we never see.

JOE

We've never had any trouble before. Not coming home.

JACK

We'll straighten it all out.

KAY

We're happy to help any way we can.

JOE

We appreciate the job you're doing.

OTIS

Thanks.

JACK

(to Kay)

We're all in this together, right?

KAY

Right.

JACK

Is it Ms. or Mrs. Smith?

KAY

Ms. ... Kay.

JACK

Thank you, Kay. I'm Agent Walsh. Call me Jack. Ingrid, I believe you've met. This young man here is my partner, Otis. Ingrid and Otis are going to go through your luggage.

JOE

Of course.

KAY

No problem.

(Ingrid and Otis pull on pairs of latex gloves.)

JACK

And would you empty your pockets please.

JOE

Sure.

KAY

OK.

JACK

And spread their contents out on the table.

(The Smiths begin to empty their pockets.)

JACK (CONT'D)

Uh, the other table. We'll keep this one clear.

(The Smiths cross upstage and empty their pockets. Ingrid and Otis watch them closely. Jack closes his eyes and breathes deeply, as if meditating, or gathering his energy.)

JOE

Everything? Money and everything?

OTIS

Everything.

INGRID

Wristwatches too, please.

JOE

Right.

KAY

OK.

(Finished, the Smiths start to cross downstage. Jack senses them coming, and opens his eyes.)

JACK

Now, I want you both to just relax, and I'll get us through this as quickly as possible.

INGRID

Is this your handbag, Mrs. Smith? The Chanel handbag?

KAY

Yes. That's mine.

INGRID

I'll need to go through it.

KAY

Of course. That's fine.

INGRID

Lovely handbag by the way.

KAY

Oh. Thank you. I just got it in Paris.

JACK

(reading)

All right, this all looks pretty straightforward. This shouldn't take long at all, I don't think. All I want to do is just chat for a bit. Would that be all right?

KAY

Yes. Of course.

JACK

All this paperwork is so ... impersonal. Smoke?

KAY

I'm sorry?

JACK

Do either of you smoke?

JOE

No.

KAY

I quit.

JACK

Congratulations.

KAY

You don't really have much choice these days.

(Ingrid is trying to open a suitcase.)

JACK

No. I suppose you don't now, do you?

KAY

Not with all the new smoking laws.

(Otis tries to help with the suitcase.)

KAY (CONT'D)

You get tired of having to go outside. But I guess that's kind of the point then, isn't it?

JACK

Well, you know ... if you can't beat em, join em.

KAY

That's what I said.

OTIS

Is this your bag, Mr. Smith? The American Tourister?

JOE

Yes.

Is it locked? OTIS

It shouldn't be. No. JOE

It appears that it is. Would you open it please? INGRID

Of course. Sure. JOE

(crosses upstage and unlocks his suitcase.)
Hmm. That's strange. I never lock it. Oh, I see what happened. The lock got turned.
There you go.

Would you step back please. INGRID

I'm sorry? JOE

Step away from the processing table. OTIS

Oh. Right. JOE

Why don't you have a seat. JACK

OK. JOE

Thank you. KAY

(Joe and Kay sit. Jack makes occasional notes in the file.)

You came in on American Airlines. JACK

American. Right. JOE

The 8:20 flight. KAY

Out of Heathrow. JACK

Right. JOE

We took off late, though. KAY

Problem? JACK

No. Just normal delays. Runway backup. JOE

(Ingrid hands Jack a photo.)

So nothing out of the ordinary then. JACK

Exactly. JOE

Who's this? JACK

That's our daughter. JOE

Emily. KAY

She's lovely. INGRID

Where was this taken? JACK

At home. That's our living room. KAY

Wow. Nice. INGRID

How long were you in London? JACK

Just over two weeks. JOE

Mostly in London. A weekend in Paris - KAY

Where you bought the bag. OTIS

Right. Yes. KAY

(to Joe, flawless French)
Parlez-vous français? INGRID

Kay does. I don't. JOE

You kind of have to, in Paris. JACK

I get by with English. JOE

They give you that attitude. OTIS

Sometimes. I guess. KAY

As if it were still the lingua franca.. OTIS

So this was just a vacation then? JACK

Vacation. Right. JOE

How was it? JACK

Great. KAY

How was the weather? JACK

Hot. KAY

Too hot. JOE

It's that global warming. See Buckingham Palace? JACK

We've been before. Kay has family in London. JOE

So you're there a lot then. JACK

Not really. No. KAY

Kay's parents were British. JOE

I was born here, though.

KAY

I'm sorry, did I hear right? Both your parents are deceased?

JACK

Yes.

KAY

I'm sorry.

JACK

Thanks. It's OK. I never really knew them. I was three and a half.

KAY

What happened? Can I ask?

JACK

They died in an accident.

KAY

Driver fell asleep at the wheel.

JOE

Drunk?

JACK

Or so the story goes.

KAY

And somehow you survived ... the accident?

JACK

Oh, no. I wasn't in the car. I was with my Aunt. My aunt and uncle raised me. Here. In the States. It's a little complicated.

KAY

That's OK. We have time.

JACK

Well ... all right ... they had just moved over. For good, I mean. My father had been working -

(Jack gets up, crosses downstage and gazes into the imaginary mirror. Kay continues, not sure who she's speaking to.)

KAY (CONT'D)

- he'd been working here for several years. They'd finally moved over. They had just bought a house. Just a month before -

JACK

The accident.

KAY

Yes.

OTIS

Wow. It's like a movie or something.

JACK

And you were only three at the time?

KAY

Three and a half. They told me what happened. I don't have any actual memories.

JACK

Still. I'm so sorry. Losing both parents. That's incredibly hard.

KAY

I'm OK with it now.

(Jack stands downstage at the imaginary mirror, staring as if at his own reflection. Everyone else is watching Jack.)

JACK

You know what the problem was?

KAY

The problem?

OTIS

What was it?

JACK

The problem was the whole set-up, really. It was pretty idiotic when you think about it. Everyone knows how these mirrors work. You were supposed to behave like there was no one there. Like you were all alone with the perps in this room. And there just happened to be this big mirror over here. Big wall length mirror in an interrogation room. For no reason at all. Just happened to be here. Can't believe we actually used these things.

OTIS

You know where they still use them, Jack?

JACK

Where's that, Otis?

OTIS

In like bordellos and stuff. Peep shows. You know, where the girl is on one side, and you're on the other, and you can see her ... but she can't see you.

JACK

Really? Is that right?

(Jack has turned and is looking at the Smiths.)

JOE

Are you asking us that?

OTIS

It's a creepy feeling.

(Ingrid is reading Kay's British passport.)

INGRID

Were you born in America or in England, Mrs. Smith?

KAY

What? Here. I was born in the States. Didn't I just say that?

INGRID

Did you? I'm sorry. I guess I wasn't paying attention.

KAY

That's OK. It's just ... I'm so tired, I can't remember what I said or didn't.

INGRID

I know the feeling. But you're a British subject.

KAY

I have both a British and a US passport.

JACK

But you think of yourself as an American, mostly?

KAY

Yes. I mean ... I *am* an American. I'm an American citizen. I was born in America.

INGRID

Do I hear just a trace of a British accent?

KAY

People say that. That's from my aunt. She lived here, but she never really lost her accent.

JACK

Nation of immigrants. My people were Irish. Ingrid is German. You noticed, right?

INGRID

I'm just as American as you are, Jack.

(Ingrid hands Jack another photo.)

JACK

We like to tease Ingrid. But she was born here too. Although both her parents were born in Germany.

(holds the photo up for Joe)

Your house again?

JOE

At Thanksgiving. Yeah.

JACK

(to Kay)

Big family.

KAY

Uhuh, they're mostly Joe's relatives.

INGRID

Pennsylvania Dutch?

JOE

Way way back. We're not Amish or anything. Is that in the file?

INGRID

You've got the classic German features.

JACK

Look at this, Ingrid. Look at the men. Don't they all look like Maximilian Schell? Dark hair. Blue eyes. This is all your family?

JOE

I have a lot of cousins. Nieces. Nephews.

JACK

Close?

JOE

Our family? No. Not really.

KAY

We see each other at Thanksgiving ... Christmas.

JACK

And this is Emily? With the nose thing? The piercing?

KAY

That's more recent. It's not a good picture.

JACK

Striking young woman.

KAY

She'd be happy to hear that.

JACK

Lovely family.

JOE

Thank you.

JACK

How old is she?

KAY

Emily?

JACK

You don't mind if I ask?

KAY
She'll be eighteen. December 20th.

JACK
Just graduated high school?

JOE
Uhuh. Last Spring.

INGRID
You must be so proud.

KAY
Uh ... sure. Of course.

JACK
I'm sorry. What is *wrong* with me? Can I offer you something? Some kind of a beverage? Water? Coffee? Tea? Coca Cola? There's a machine down the hall.

JOE
We're fine. Thanks.

JACK
It's really no trouble. Kay? A beverage?

KAY
I guess ... I mean, if it's really no trouble. Do you have Diet Coke?

JACK
No problem. Joe?

JOE
I'm OK. Thanks.

JACK
You're sure?

JOE
I'm fine.

JACK
Positive?

JOE
OK. Sure. A Coke then.

JACK
Diet, or Classic?

JOE
Diet. Thanks.

JACK
Oh, and how's the temperature? Anybody warm? Joe? Kay?

I'm fine. JOE

Fine. KAY

You're not stuffy at all? Otis? Ingrid? JACK

It's a little stuffy. OTIS

It is a bit sticky. INGRID

Isn't it? Close. Feels kind of humid. JACK
(pulls out some money)

Ingrid, I'm sorry, but would you mind terribly going down the hall and getting us some beverages? Diet Cokes for Joe and Kay. And a lemonade for me ... that Minute Maid Lemonade. Not the Diet, though. The regular Minute Maid. And whatever you want for yourself, of course. Otis, a beverage?

Yeah, get me a Fanta. OTIS

(Ingrid takes the money and starts to exit.)

And ask them to turn down the thermostat a bit. It's supposed to be kept at sixty eight. JACK
(explaining to Joe and Kay)
Somebody always turns it up to seventy. Drives me absolutely out of my mind. You wouldn't think it would make that much difference ... two degrees. But somehow it does. Two degrees. A world of difference. I don't understand it. But then I'm not an engineer.

(Otis examines what looks like a pen.)

Does this belong to you? OTIS
(to Joe)

It's a gift for my secretary. JOE

What is it? OTIS

It's a pen. JOE

(Otis struggles with the pen.)

It pulls apart. JOE (CONT'D)

JACK
But someday maybe?

KAY
I'm fine with being home at the moment.

JACK
Like it?

KAY
I do. I do, actually.

JACK
I'll tell you a secret. My wife does too. She gets teased by her friends. Career women, most of them. Serious. Corporate. Kind of like Ingrid. Don't tell her I said that.

OTIS
She knows it's true, Jack.

JACK
I tell her they're jealous. My wife, I mean. Or envious, rather. Jealousy is different. Jealousy has more to do with possessiveness. Do I have that right, Joe?

JOE
Sure ... uh ... I think they're more or less interchangeable.

JACK
Really? You think they mean the same thing?

JOE
Not exactly. You're probably right.

JACK
Well, am I right or wrong, Joe? I can't be both.

JOE
I think people use the words interchangeably. Technically, yes, I think you're right.

OTIS
Yep. Sounds like a lawyer to me.

JACK
(to Kay)
Horrible, jealousy, don't you think?

KAY
Yes ... I mean ... I think it's normal.

JACK
You think so, Kay? Think jealousy is normal?

KAY
Most people are to some degree.

JACK

Tear your heart out. Rip it to shreds. If your wife is looking at some other guy. Some young guy maybe. Well muscled guy. Some guy who looks like he's knows what he's doing ... with the ladies, I mean. You know what I mean. Or maybe you don't. What do you think, Joe?

JOE

About jealousy?

JACK

Uhuh.

JOE

Uh ... I don't know. It's normal to look at other people. Everybody has desires, don't they?

JACK

You think so, Joe? So that's OK with you?

KAY

We've got a pretty healthy marriage. If that's what you're asking.

JACK

Of course you do. I didn't mean to suggest you didn't. I'm just thinking out loud. About the definitions. Of the words. You know. Those little distinctions. They're important. Sometimes. I mean, sometimes they're not. But sometimes they are. Or maybe it's just me. Maybe I'm a little anal retentive, or obsessive-compulsive, or whatever they call it. Everyone always tells me I am. In any event, it's just human nature. Don't you think, Joe? Jealousy?

JOE

Uh ...

JACK

I mean, Otis gets that all the time. Don't you, Otis? Jealous husbands. I mean, a guy like Otis. It's understandable. Women look. They can't help looking. Kid like that. I mean, we all have thoughts. We all get tempted, don't we, Kay?

KAY

Well, I don't, actually. I guess I'm boring.

JOE

Uh ... what does this have to do with anything?

JACK

Whoa now ... we're just talking here, Joe. We're just chatting a bit, as we wait for our beverages. Look, I don't mean to get all personal ... well, maybe I do. I have to, a little, to do my job. If you know what I'm saying.

JOE

OK. I get it.

KAY

Let's just get through this.

JACK

Try not to make too much of it, OK? It's how we have to do things now.

OTIS

(examining a pair of Kay's panties)

There's a little more to it than just checking people's papers.

(Ingrid re-enters, looking upset.)

INGRID

Jack.

JACK

Yes, what is it, Ingrid?

INGRID

I think there's something wrong with the machine.

OTIS

Piece of shit.

JACK

Otis.

OTIS

Sorry.

INGRID

I keep punching buttons ... but nothing happens.

OTIS

This is what I was telling you, Jack.

JACK

Yes. I remember.

OTIS

Machine is dysfunctional. It isn't right, Jack. It needs to be dealt with.

INGRID

I have to say, I agree with Otis.

JACK

Yes. There does seem to be a problem.

OTIS

You want me to handle it?

JACK

Would you mind, Otis?

OTIS

No problem, Jack.

(Otis strips off his gloves.)

JACK
And don't forget the thermostat.

OTIS
I won't, Jack.
(to the Smiths)
Sorry about this.

(Otis exits.)

JACK
Otis has a way with machines.

INGRID
Sorry, Jack. I didn't know what to do.

JACK
You did the right thing, Ingrid.

INGRID
I didn't want to, you know ... screw it all up.

KAY
I'll be fine without.

JACK
Fine without what?

KAY
A drink. A Coke.

JOE
I'm OK too.

(Jack studies the Smiths.)

JACK
Well ... it's too late now. He's gone to do it.

(The Smiths stare back at Jack, confused.)

INGRID
I love those shoes. Are they Chanel also?

KAY
Louis Vuitton.

INGRID
Did you get them in Paris?

KAY
No. They're old.

JOE
Excuse me, Agent -

JACK

Jack. Yes, what is it, Joe?

JOE

Look, I don't want to interfere. But would it be all right if I asked one question?

JACK

Of course. What is it?

JOE

Well, I was just wondering ... what happened ... exactly.

JACK

What happened when?

JOE

What did we do? Did some flag go up?

JACK

A flag?

JOE

In the system.

JACK

I'm not sure I follow.

KAY

You mean why they picked us out of the line.

JOE

I mean why we're down here being questioned.

JACK

Well ... that's putting it rather harshly.

JOE

Sorry. But we *are* being questioned, aren't we?

JACK

I like to think of it as more like an interview.

KAY

Actually, it does kind of feel more like that.

INGRID

Jack likes to keep things as casual as possible.

JOE

Good. That's great. But what I'm asking is ... did we do something wrong ... that caused suspicion?

INGRID

Suspicion?

JACK
Who said that?

INGRID
I never said that.

KAY
No one said that.

JACK
We're just talking here, Joe.

JOE
I know. That's fine -

JACK
Can't we just talk? Sit here and talk, like regular people. Or would you rather we gave you the Third Degree ... break out the rubber hoses and everything?

(Everyone shares the briefest of laughs.)

JOE
No, that's fine. I'm just trying to understand. It's just ... we never get pulled aside.

JACK
You were pulled aside? Who pulled them aside?

INGRID
I didn't touch them.

JOE
That's not what I meant. No one pulled us -

JACK
That's what you just said, Joe.

JOE
It's a figure of speech.

KAY
She was very polite. You were very polite.

JACK
Who touched you, Joe? Did someone touch you inappropriately?

JOE
No. That's not -

KAY
She was very professional. Everyone was. Very professional.

JOE
I didn't mean anything. I just wanted to know -

INGRID

Everything was done according to procedure. If he wants to file a complaint, Jack -

JOE

I don't. I'm sorry ... uh, Agent -

INGRID

Ingrid.

JOE

Ingrid. I'm sorry. I didn't mean to -

JACK

It's OK, Joe. If you want to complain ... to file a complaint. You have that right. We don't take it personally. We can get the form. It'll just take a minute.

KAY

Honey.

JOE

No. That won't be necessary. All I was wondering was, why we were singled out, you know. If we did something odd. Or it was just at random.

JACK

At random?

JOE

Sure, like a random search. You do that, don't you, random checks? I thought you did that.

JACK

Where are you going with this, Joe?

JOE

Nowhere. I'm just saying ... you do random checks.

JACK

Are you asking me to discuss operational details?

JOE

All I meant was -

KAY

Let it go, Joe.

JACK

Whoa. I don't understand what just happened. We were having such a nice conversation.

KAY

We were. Let's continue. Please.

JOE

I'm sorry. Look, all I wanted -

INGRID

Do you have something there in your pocket, Mr. Smith?

JOE

What? Where?

JACK

Did you empty your pockets, Joe?

JOE

Yes.

INGRID

Stand up, please.

JOE

What? OK -

(Joe gets up. Ingrid crosses to him, pulling on a pair of latex gloves.)

INGRID

Hold still, Mr. Smith. Arms out to the side. I'm going to check in your pockets, OK?

(Joe assumes the position.)

JOE

There's nothing in my pockets.

INGRID

Hold still. Don't move.

(Ingrid pats Joe down.)

JACK

Alright folks, look, I know this is stressful. And I know you're both tired. Exhausted, probably. Now you seem like a perfectly normal couple. I like you. Instinctively. I'm enjoying talking to you. And I do like to keep things as relaxed as possible. Having said that, as I'm sure you can appreciate, there are areas we are just not at liberty to discuss. Operational details. Profiling criteria. Codes of conduct and behavior and so on. But let me assure you, they do exist. There are very strict guidelines that we have to follow.

JOE

Of course. That's not -

INGRID

Turn and face me please.

JACK

We're not on some kind of fishing expedition. Hauling people in at random. Trust me, if you're in here, in this room, with us, you're here for a reason. Or you wouldn't be in here. Now that makes sense, doesn't it, folks? Make sense to you, Kay?

KAY

Of course. Yes.

JACK
Joe?

JOE
Yes.

(Ingrid runs one hand down the front of Joe's pants and cups his scrotum. Joe winces, and starts to back away.)

INGRID
Hold still. Eyes forward.

(Otis re-enters. He stands upstage and watches as Ingrid "frisks" Joe's scrotum at considerable length.)

OTIS
Hey, Jack?

JACK
What is it, Otis?

OTIS
No lemonade, Jack.

JACK
No lemonade?

OTIS
No. Sorry, Jack.

JACK
Wait ... what are you telling me? Are you telling me we're out of lemonade, Otis?

OTIS
Nothing comes out, Jack.

JACK
Is the machine ... broken?

OTIS
It's all screwed up, Jack. It's really bad. I got the Cokes.

JACK
But not the lemonade.

(Ingrid moves down and frisks Joe's legs.)

OTIS
It's probably just out of lemonade, Jack.

JACK
Then get me a Sprite.

OTIS
What if there's no Sprite?

JACK
Then a bottled water.

OTIS
What kind of bottled water?

JACK
It doesn't matter.

OTIS
There's Poland Spring. I'll get you a Poland Spring, OK? Ingrid?

INGRID
I'm fine.

OTIS
Sure?

INGRID
Uhuh.

(She gives Joe's scrotum one more check.)

JACK
And don't forget to ask about the thermostat.

OTIS
I won't, Jack.

(Otis exits. Ingrid steps away from Joe.)

JACK
Does it feel like it's getting worse in here? Really stuffy. Or is it just me. Kay? Ingrid?

INGRID
No. It's moist.

(Ingrid crosses back upstage. Joe stands there, stunned, arms out to the sides.)

JACK
Joe? Kay? Don't you think it's kind of close?

KAY
I guess ... a little.

JACK
Isn't it? It is. But maybe you prefer it warmer. I know Ingrid does. Don't you, Ingrid?

INGRID
You can put your arms down now, Mr. Smith.

JACK
Why don't you have a seat again, Joe.

JOE

Thanks.

(Joe sits, trembling slightly. Kay turns toward him. He avoids her eyes. Jack consults the file again.)

JACK

Look, we hate to have to put you through this, sleep deprived and all like you are. But I'm sure you both can appreciate ... we have to err on the side of caution. We can't be too careful. Not these days.

KAY

We understand. That's the way it is now.

(Kay reaches over and takes Joe's hand.)

JACK

We all have to put up with these inconveniences, don't we?

KAY

We're kind of getting used to it now.

JACK

You think so, Kay?

KAY

What choice do we have?

JACK

That's it, Kay. What choice do we have? I have to go through it myself, you know. So does Ingrid. We're not immune. At the airport. The checks. The wait time. The scans. It's annoying. Yes. But what's the alternative?

INGRID

There is none.

JACK

What are we supposed to do? Let terrorists walk onto airplanes with bombs?

KAY

No. Of course not. We understand.

JACK

I'm glad to hear you say that, Kay, because off the record, unofficially now, what's the big deal? I mean, really, you know? So we have to give up a few personal freedoms. When you consider all the freedoms we still enjoy, compared to other countries in the world. So we have to wait in line an extra fifteen minutes. Half an hour. An hour even.

KAY

It's a small price to pay.

JACK

I'm glad you think so.

INGRID

We have to be vigilant. We can't let our guard down.

JACK

So we have to go through a few metal detectors. Let security people go through our bags.

KAY

That's fine with us. We've got nothing to hide.

JACK

Exactly, Kay. Nothing to hide.

INGRID

If you've nothing to hide, then what's the problem?

KAY

People exaggerate the inconvenience.

INGRID

People blow things out of proportion.

KAY

What's ten extra minutes, for a little peace of mind?

JACK

There you go, Kay. That's the way to see it.

INGRID

Peace of mind. That's what's important.

(Joe has recovered his composure, somewhat. Kay squeezes his hand to prompt him to say something.)

JOE

The kids are all worked up these days ... over video surveillance ... security cameras.

JACK

Are they, Joe? Are they all worked up?

JOE

Emily wrote this report for school. What was the name of her report, honey?

KAY

The disappearance of the private or something.

JACK

Private space.

JOE

Conspiracy theory.

JACK

Sounds good to me. You OK, Joe?

JOE

Uhuh. Yeah. I'm all right.

INGRID

Sorry about that. I thought I saw something.

JOE

It's no big deal.

(Otis re-enters.)

OTIS

I got you a Seagrams Ginger Ale, Jack. There wasn't any Sprite or bottled water. Sorry everything took so long. The machine went haywire. Here's your Cokes.

KAY

Thank you.

OTIS

Straws?

KAY

No, that's fine.

OTIS

(to Ingrid)

I got you a Coke.

INGRID

Save it for after.

(Jack pops open his soda can.)

JACK

I get it, you know. I have kids of my own.

(Kay pops open her soda can.)

KAY

Do you?

(Joe tries to open his can. The tab won't flip up. He pries at it carefully.)

JACK

Sure. About your daughter's age. Well, OK, a little older. You wouldn't believe the stuff they're into.

INGRID

Is this your suitcase, Mrs. Smith?

KAY

Uhuh.

JACK

I'm divorced. Twice. Remarried. I don't get to see them as much as I'd like. Truth is, I wasn't around that much. When they were growing up. Married to the job. You can't really blame my exes for leaving. Women have needs. Family. I'll tell you. That's the most important thing. That, and your health. People take it for granted. Ingrid and Otis are going to finish with your bags. Otis, did you remember the thermostat?

OTIS

I did, Jack. They said they'd check it.
(holds up a G-string)
Another gift?

JOE

(still struggling with his Coke)
What? No.

KAY

No. That's mine. I just threw it in a suitcase. We packed in a hurry.

INGRID

Victoria's Secret?

KAY

I think so. Maybe.

JACK

You must have had Emily quite young, Kay. I don't mean to be forward.

KAY

I was twenty three.

INGRID

You look fantastic.

JOE

She was just out of college.

JACK

That couldn't have been easy.

JOE

We managed. We made it.

KAY

Different times.

JACK

Still. The pressure. Law school. A family.

KAY

Joe was finished with school. He was working already. At this huge global firm.

JACK

They work the associates to death, boy, don't they?

JOE

(continuing to struggle with the soda can)
At the time we didn't really know any better.

KAY

Who does at that age?

JACK

No one. Right? What do you know about anything in your twenties?

INGRID

Nothing. Zero.

JACK

At twenty three? At twenty three it's all ahead of you.

OTIS

(holding up another pair of panties)
These yours too?

KAY

Yes.

OTIS

Nice.

JACK

Is there something wrong, Joe?

JOE

Almost got it.
(rips the tab off, without opening the can)
Shit. Forget it.

OTIS

You want me to do it?

JOE

The tab came off. I'll just punch it in. If I could have my -

JACK

Here you go, Joe.
(hands Joe a pen)
Be careful, OK?

OTIS

I'd be happy to do that.

JOE

Thanks. I got it.

(Joe jabs at it, hesitantly.)

OTIS

You got to do it harder.

(Joe jabs, repeatedly.)

JACK

Man. Twenty three.

OTIS

Even harder.

JACK

Those were the days. Weren't they, Joe?

OTIS

You have to do it harder.

JACK

You remember those days? Those endless summers? Ball games. Hot dogs. Sleep out on the beach with your girl all night. Get in your car and just drive ... anywhere. Coast to coast. America the beautiful.

(raises his soda, hesitates, a beat)

We'll never see those days again.

KAY

I'm afraid you're probably right about that.

OTIS

I never got to see them in the first place, Jack.

INGRID

You're sure you don't want to let Otis do that?

JOE

(wedges the can between his thighs)

I'll get it. It's fine.

KAY

Be careful, Joe.

OTIS

Here, let me do it.

JOE

(takes aim with the pen)

No. I got it.

OTIS

Really hard, Joe. Tag it. Punch it.

(Joe stabs down savagely. A geyser of Diet Coke shoots up and into his face.)

JOE

Beautiful. Great.

INGRID

Oh. Dear.

OTIS

Way to go, Joe.

KAY

(to Otis)

There should be a towel, right there in my suitcase, a dark blue towel.

JACK

You OK, Joe?

JOE

Yeah. I'm fine. It's just Diet Coke.

OTIS

(takes Jack's pen, hands Joe the towel)

Here you go, Joe.

JOE

Thanks.

OTIS

Don't mention it.

(Joe wipes his face off, blots his clothes. Otis cleans Jack's pen with a tissue. Jack stares into the imaginary mirror.)

JACK

What the heck were we talking about, anyway?

OTIS

The good old days.

JACK

Yeah. Right.

(Otis hands Jack the pen. He takes it without looking.)

OTIS

Here you go, Jack.

JACK

Thank you, Otis. I notice you don't wear a ring, Mrs. Smith.

KAY

A wedding ring?

JACK

Look at us, will you?

(Everyone is staring straight out already, except for Joe, who is wiping himself off. Now he stops and stares out too. Jack seems to be frozen, in suspended animation.)

OTIS

What are we supposed to be looking at, Jack?

JACK
Did something happen?

KAY
Are you asking me that?

(Ingrid takes the towel from Joe.)

INGRID
Why don't I take this, if you're finished with it.

(Jack opens and scans the file again.)

KAY
I don't wear any jewelry, normally.

JACK
No?

KAY
No. I have sensitive skin. My ring is right there in suitcase, though.

INGRID
You have beautiful skin. I'd kill for your skin.

KAY
Thank you.

(Ingrid whispers to Otis. Jack is scanning through the file.)

JACK
You've been doing a lot of traveling lately.

JOE
Not really. Not any more than usual.

JACK
Great Britain. Germany. Austria. The Netherlands.

INGRID
How's your German?

JOE
Passable. Not great. They all speak English.

INGRID
That's convenient.

JACK
Any medical problems? Aside from your skin. Any preexisting medical conditions?

KAY
No.

Joe? JACK

No. I'm fine. JOE

Some of these questions are going to seem a little strange. JACK

Oh. OK. KAY

We have to ask. JACK

We have to be thorough. INGRID

Of course. Sure. KAY

How's Emily doing? JACK

In what sense do you mean? KAY

Is she doing OK? Growing up OK? JACK

Oh. Yes. Of course. Yes. KAY

Does this have something to do with her? JOE

Would you say that your daughter was a normal young woman? INGRID

Emily? Yes. KAY

Rebellious? JACK

Well - KAY

Just normal rebelliousness, like all kids go through. JOE

She's frustrated, is all it is, really. She doesn't have any direction yet. KAY

INGRID

What is she? Seventeen years old?

KAY

I know, but you know how it is now. They all decide so young these days. In high school. They're expected to plan it all out. College. Where they want to work. Career trajectories. Retirement strategies. Kids in their teens ... planning their retirement.

JACK

What's the world coming to?

KAY

I know. I know.

JOE

Does this have something to do with Emily?

KAY

Joe.

INGRID

Please calm down, Mr. Smith.

JACK

So you'd say you're a pretty normal family then?

KAY

I'd say so. Yes.

(Otis holds up a vibrator. Nothing fancy. A basic model.)

OTIS

Who does this belong to?

KAY

That's mine.

JOE

That's Kay's.

OTIS

(to Joe)

It was in your suitcase.

KAY

I just threw things in. I was in a hurry.

OTIS

(shakes it)

What's inside?

KAY

Nothing. The batteries.

OTIS

Batteries? Oh yeah.

(Otis turns it on. Ingrid takes it from him.)

INGRID

Give me that, Otis.

(Ingrid turns it off.)

JOE

Do they have to go through all our personal things?

JACK

I'm afraid they do, Joe. Yes. I'm sorry.

(Kay reaches over and squeezes Joe's hand.)

INGRID

There's really no reason to be embarrassed. We've pretty much seen it all at this point.

KAY

Yes, I'm sure ... I imagine you have.

OTIS

You wouldn't believe the stuff we see. Really sick stuff, some of it, I'll tell you. People are twisted. You have no idea.

(Joe pulls his hand away, and shoots Kay a look.)

JACK

Does Emily have a boyfriend, Kay?

KAY

No one serious. Not at the moment. Seventeen. You know how that goes.

JACK

She's had quite a few then?

KAY

I wouldn't say that.

JACK

How many would you say, Kay? Ten? Twenty?

KAY

No. My God.

JACK

Would that be a lot?

KAY

Well ... yes. In my opinion.

JOE

Are you serious?

JACK

Hey. I'm just asking. Kids these days. They're active, you know.

KAY

I don't think they're *that* active. Not normal kids.

INGRID

Jack.

(Jack turns. Ingrid hands him a brochure. He glances at it, checks the file.)

JOE

Excuse me. I don't mean to interrupt again ... but you're asking all these questions about Emily. Is something wrong? Has she done something wrong?

INGRID

Relax, Mr. Smith. Everything is fine.

JACK

(reading the file)

Ever been to Saudi Arabia, Joe? On business, I mean. You have Saudi clients?

JOE

No.

JACK

You don't have Saudi clients?

JOE

My partners do. But I don't. No.

JACK

Western Europe. That's your base.

JOE

And England. And the States.

INGRID

You must get lonely.

KAY

No. Well ... sometimes. Sure. We have friends who have it a whole lot worse.

OTIS

Is this your laptop?

JOE

Yes. That's mine.

OTIS

I'm going to turn it on.

That's fine. Go ahead. JOE

Get out much? JACK

Pardon? KAY

Dinner? The movies? JACK

We try. Sure. Whenever there's time. KAY

Golf, Joe? JACK

Sometimes. With clients. JOE

Not an avid Golfer, then? JACK

Uh ... no. JOE

(brings laptop to Joe)
I'm going to need you to enter your password. OTIS

Sure. Fine. JOE
(keys it in)
There you go.

Pets? JACK

Emily has a cat. KAY

What's the cat's name? JACK

Fluffy. KAY

Cute. INGRID

Anything missing? JACK

JOE

What do you mean?

JACK

In your life. It all sounds pretty good. It sounds like you pretty much have it all.

JOE

We have long term goals we're still working toward.

JACK

But you're not ... wanting. There's no desperate ... lack ... or void, or anything at the center of your lives.

KAY

No. A void ... nothing like that.

JACK

No feelings of desperation or depression.

KAY

Depression? No.

JOE

We're doing OK. I think we're privileged.

JACK

Enjoying life? Living your dreams?

JOE

We're getting there ... gradually.

JACK

I don't understand. Beautiful family. Townhouse. Career. What else is there? That's the dream right there.

JOE

Well sure, but -

KAY

Everyone has their problems, don't they?

JACK

Problems?

JOE

You know. Normal problems. Nothing unusual.

JACK

Finances OK?

JOE

We're doing alright. We're carrying some debt. A fair amount.

JACK

Nothing you can't handle.

JOE

My firm does well. But you know that already. Look, I'm sorry. I don't mean to be rude. And I'm perfectly calm. But you know all this. These questions you're asking ... they're all there, in that file. Aren't they? Our entire lives are in there.

OTIS

What is it that you're trying to say, Mr. Smith?

JOE

Nothing. Just that you know all this. You already have all this information.

OTIS

Yeah. So what's your point, exactly?

INGRID

We need to do things according to procedure.

KAY

Just let them do their jobs, Joe.

JOE

What does our cat have to do with anything?

JACK

I was looking at some of your firm's major clients. It's a rather impressive list of names.

JOE

Yes, we're a well respected firm.

JACK

But you're bored.

JOE

No. I wouldn't say that.

JACK

You said it before.

JOE

No. I don't think so.

JACK

(checking the file)

Not interesting ... I think, is what you said. Un-interesting. Isn't that the same as boring?

JOE

Well, OK, it isn't. My work, particularly. Right. But that doesn't mean I'm bored. It's just ... there are trade-offs. You know. In life.

INGRID

Compromises.

JOE

Yes, I mean, there are litigators ... they live at the office.

JACK
Whereas you get home for dinner, normally?

JOE
More often than not.

JACK
Unless you're in Frankfurt. Or Brussels.

KAY
He really isn't gone that much.

OTIS
I think you've got a virus here.

JOE
No. I don't. That's not possible.

OTIS
No. It isn't acting right.

JOE
(standing)
Let me see it.

INGRID
Please remain seated.

JOE
I just want to look at -

KAY
Joe.

OTIS
Sit down.

JOE
I just wanted to help.

INGRID
We need you to stay in your seat, Mr. Smith.

JOE
Fine. Look. I just don't get this.

OTIS
(punching the keyboard)
Yeah, definitely some kind of virus.

JOE
I really don't see where this is going.

KAY
Joe, let it go. OK?

JOE

We're obviously a normal married couple. You said that yourself.

JACK

Is that what I said?

OTIS

You really ought to do something about this. There's all kinds of nasty stuff in here.

JACK

You don't visit those pornographic websites, do you?

JOE

No. Of course not.

OTIS

That'll do it. Downloading porn. Virus City.

JOE

Please don't change things on my computer.

OTIS

What?

JOE

You're welcome to look at whatever. Whatever you want. Go through my emails. Just please don't change or delete any documents.

OTIS

Did I say I was going to read your emails?

KAY

Joe. Stop.

JOE

I'm sorry. It's just. I'm tired. I've got contracts. I've got work on there.

JACK

What's this brochure, Joe? A hotel in Egypt?

JOE

I've never seen that before in my life.

KAY

I picked that up at the hotel in London.

JOE

There you go. No big mystery.

INGRID

We can do without the sarcasm, Mr. Smith.

JOE

I'm sorry. I'm ... a little on edge. I'm really tired.

JACK
You look exhausted.

JOE
I am. We both are. We just want to get home.

OTIS
You are home, buddy. In the US of A.

JACK
Otis, let me handle this, please.

JOE
Just tell us what happened. So we can explain. You're asking these questions. Just tell us what's wrong. Did my travel pattern throw up a flag? Did Emily do something with her anarchist friends?

OTIS
Do you believe this guy?

KAY
Joe, you're making it worse.

JACK
Otis. Enough.

JOE
Let us help you.

OTIS
He's out of control, Jack.

JOE
I'm not. I'm fine. All I'm doing is asking a question.

INGRID
We need you to let us do our jobs.

OTIS
Do we need to go the whole hog here, Jack?

JOE
The hog?!

KAY
Joe.

INGRID
Otis.

OTIS
What?

JACK
Everything is fine. Let's all just relax.

OTIS

He keeps asking about operational stuff.

JACK

Let's all just take a moment, shall we, and take a breath, and drink our beverages.

JOE

Look -

JACK

Excuse me.

OTIS

(crosses toward Joe)

Calm down, Mr. Smith!

INGRID

You need to just listen.

OTIS

Put your hands on the table.

KAY

Do what he says, Joe.

JOE

I'm fine. OK? I'm calm. I'm fine.

OTIS

He thinks it's a game.

JOE

I don't -

JACK

Joe. Listen to me now. Just listen for a minute. Don't say anything.

JOE

OK. OK.

JACK

Now we understand you're -

JOE

I'm -

OTIS

Shut the fuck up! Are you fucking deaf?!

(Joe closes his eyes, lowers his head. Otis stands there, hovering over him.)

JACK

Joe. Joe. Look at me. Open your eyes and look at me. Good. Now you just focus on me. Don't say anything. Keep your hands on the table.

(Joe presses his palms down flat on the table.)

JACK (CONT'D)

Now you're a little agitated. And we understand that. We understand your position. OK? But you need to understand *our* position. Look at me, Joe.

(off Joe)

Good. Now there are people out there who want to hurt us. They're out there in the world right now, imagining ways to hurt us and kill us. And not just out in the world, Joe. Right here. At home. Right here in America. They look just like us, like normal Americans. But deep inside they're twisted with hate. They hate America. They hate what it stands for. And these are not stupid people, Joe. Some of them are extremely intelligent. And they're dedicated. They will not stop. And they are willing to die for what they believe. Now how many Americans do you think can say that? How many people do you know, personally, who are willing to die for what they believe? Don't answer. Just sit there and think about that.

(gives Joe a moment to think about that)

Now we are doing our best to contain this threat and balance everyone's comfort levels ... but we cannot let up on these people, Joe. Not for one minute. Not for one second. We have to be as smart as they are. We have to be as dedicated as they are. We have to be willing to do what it takes. Whatever it takes. To defend America. Is that clear enough? Does that answer your questions? Don't answer. Just nod.

(off Joe's nod)

Good. Now that's pretty much all I can tell you. The details you need to leave to us.

INGRID

You need to trust us.

JACK

Can you do that, Joe? Can you trust us ... a little?

JOE

Can I answer?

JACK

Please.

JOE

Look, I'm sorry ... I just want to apologize.

JACK

That's really not necessary.

INGRID

We're just doing our jobs.

JOE

I know. I'm just -

JACK

Exhausted. We know.

OTIS

Believe it or not, we know what we're doing.

JOE
I understand the threat. I do.

KAY
We both do.

JACK
Do you?

JOE
Yes.

KAY
We do.

JACK
Good.

JOE
The truth is ... could I talk for a minute?

JACK
Sure. Go ahead.

JOE
Thank you. I think ... the truth is, I think ... I think we're just scared. We're all just ... scared. Americans, I mean. I mean, life goes on. But we all remember. I remember. Sitting there, staring, at the television, numb, watching it happen. Those images are burned into all our minds. Those pictures. You see it. People on the train. Faces. At the airport ... I mean, people are grateful. People are grateful for what you're doing. But at the same time, it's hard ... getting used to it all. I mean, suddenly ... one day, there were soldiers everywhere. Soldiers in the streets. Of American cities. London too. They're everywhere now.

KAY
Whenever you turn on the TV it's there. You can't escape it. It's everywhere you go.

JOE
The other day, I was on the Turnpike, and this message came on that LED. That big LED for traffic advisories that stretches across four lanes of highway. REPORT. ALL. SUSPICIOUS. ACTIVITY. Then it gave a phone number. The Jersey Turnpike. Or here at the airport. The shoes and everything. Are we supposed to just do whatever we're told? I mean, we *are* still Americans, aren't we? Right? Aren't we supposed to question authority? That's what we learned in school, isn't it? But then, when I think back ... to 911. And we never want to go through *that* again. Ever. So OK, we're doing our best and ... I don't know. I don't know what I'm saying ...

INGRID
We know what you're saying, Mr. Smith.

(Jack is gazing off into the distance.)

OTIS
Jack was there.

JOE
There?

OTIS
There.

(All eyes turn toward Jack in reverence. Ingrid and Otis take seats upstage.)

JOE
I didn't ... I'm sorry. We didn't know.

KAY
You were in the towers?

JACK
Not in the towers. Another building. It doesn't matter.
(pauses, remembers)

Such a beautiful day. Perfect New York Autumn day. Everyone says that, but it really was. You want to know what I remember? Not the morning. I mean, I'll never forget it. But it's all a blur. Panic. Screams. No ... I remember that afternoon. I remember it like it happened yesterday. I was standing on this rooftop in Brooklyn. It was almost sundown. The towers were gone. Same blue sky. Obscenely blue. Sunny. Clear. The smoke was still rising. Dirty smoke. Not white. Not gray. Not even black. Dusty. Like dust. Like the dust from a vacuum cleaner bag. Mushrooming into the clear blue sky. Blowing southeast across the river. Specks ... shimmering ... inside the smoke. Shiny. It looked like confetti or something ... or glitter ... little silver specks. You know what it was? What it turned out it was? Paper. Little bits of paper. Documents. Contracts. Office paper. Files sitting on people's desks. Blown to bits. Sucked up by the smoke. The sunlight was hitting them ... lighting them up ... they were snowing down onto downtown Brooklyn ... sticking to the windshields of cars. Buses. They would come down and land at your feet. Accounting tables ... expense reports ... blowing through the streets like garbage. I said to myself right then and there, standing on that roof in Brooklyn. I may have even said it out loud. That's it. We're going to be at war forever, from now until the end of time.

(They all just sit there in silence for a moment.)

JOE
I think ... the world ... changed ... for all of us. Forever. That day. On that one day.

(Jack reaches over and squeezes Joe's hand. Otis wipes away a tear.)

OTIS
You understand that we're at war. That this country is in a state of war.

JOE
We do.

KAY
It's easy to forget sometimes. Sometimes everything seems so normal.

INGRID
This is a different kind of war. We have to go on with our normal lives.

KAY

Right. That's what I meant. I think.

JACK

It's easy to forget sometimes. Because, sure, technically we're at war ... but where's the battlefield? Iraq? Afghanistan? New York City?

INGRID

Anywhere. Everywhere.

JACK

The war is in people's hearts and minds. That's the *real* war. The war we're fighting.

INGRID

It's a war of beliefs.

JACK

Basic values.

OTIS

Freedom.

INGRID

Democracy.

JACK

Good versus Evil.

JOE

We understand. We agree with you entirely.

JACK

Allegiance. Honesty. That's all we ask. Lies, Joe. They're like a cancer. A cancer eating into the spine of this country. Deep in the bone. Burrowing in the marrow. Lies. Liars. People who withhold things.

INGRID

Who withhold information.

KAY

We would never do that.

OTIS

People who pretend to be something they're not.

INGRID

On the outside they look model citizens. The problem is inside. You have to go digging.

OTIS

You have to get in there and dig it out.

JACK

People's emotions. Their unconscious desires. This is the level we're fighting on now. People's fundamental values. Sometimes they don't even see it themselves. What they want. What they're feeling. They think of themselves as loyal Americans. (cont'd)

JACK (CONT'D)

But there, in the recesses of their minds, or deep in their hearts, they're judging ... hating ... hating America. And what it stands for. They're unconsciously egging the terrorists on.

INGRID

They're looking forward to the next attack.

OTIS

They just can't wait to watch it happen. To watch on TV. The fire. The bodies. Oh, sure, they sit there and sigh, and cry, but secretly they're loving every minute of it.

INGRID

It's like this sick unconscious desire to see their own country brought to its knees.

JACK

It's a question of where people's sympathies lie.

OTIS

There are kids who want to see this country burn. Teenage kids. Your daughter's age.

INGRID

Smash the State. That's their mantra.

KAY

Our daughter would never do anything like that.

JACK

They refer to America as "The Empire." Did you know that?

OTIS

America. An empire.

JOE

That's completely ridiculous.

INGRID

It's no laughing matter. These people are serious.

OTIS

These kids set fire to SUVs. Brand new SUVs on the lot.

INGRID

You remember what happened to Rachel Corrie.

KAY

She was that girl who got killed in Israel.

JOE

In Gaza, wasn't it?

OTIS

Israel. Gaza.

INGRID

They twisted her mind. The terrorists, Kay. Sweet young girl. Emily's age. They ruined her. Brainwashed her.

OTIS

The ISM.

KAY

The ISM? Is that a terrorist group?

INGRID

That's just one group. There are hundreds of them.

OTIS

They change their names from week to week.

INGRID

They sent her off to Gaza to die. They take these kids. Privileged white kids. They warp their minds. Make them feel guilty. For what they have. For being Americans.

JACK

They damage their minds irreversibly, Kay.

INGRID

Turn them into martyrs.

OTIS

Suicide bombers.

JACK

There's no way to bring them back after that.

KAY

I thought what happened to Corrie was an accident.

OTIS

She jumped in front of a fucking tank.

INGRID

They killed her for the publicity, Kay. Nice young white girl from Washington State. Perfect poster child for their fanatic cause.

OTIS

Wrote a goddamn play about it.

JACK

These are ruthless people, Kay. Human life means nothing to them.

OTIS

They fucking cut off people's heads. They make videos of cutting off Americans' heads.

KAY

I know. That's horrible.

JACK

It's inconceivable, isn't it? Cut off someone's head with a knife? This is the kind of people we're dealing with. No human emotions whatsoever.

OTIS

They'll cut your head off just as soon as look at you.

JACK

It's true.

INGRID

These are heartless people.

JACK

They'll sit here and lie to you all day long. Look you straight in the eye and lie.

OTIS

They've got US passports. Drivers licenses. Background info all checks out. Sit here and smile at you like real Americans.

JACK

It's all just an act. They're like actors, Kay. Their faces are masks. Masks of normality. And behind those masks is unadulterated evil.

OTIS

They're building little IEDs in their basements. With household products. To kill Americans. They get the instructions off the goddamn Internet.

JACK

This is what we're facing, folks.

KAY

I know.

JOE

We get it.

JACK

Then you get what's at stake. You understand there's no room for error. One little slip up ... three thousand people die. A hundred thousand. Half a million. Half a million dead Americans.

OTIS

They could have nuclear devices already.

INGRID

We cannot know. We have to assume.

OTIS

Fuckers could be wiring up right now. Middle of Manhattan. Wiring up a nuke.

INGRID

Anything is possible. We have to prepare.

JACK

We have to do everything humanly possible.

INGRID

We have to do whatever it takes.

JACK

It's not some idle philosophical question, where a person's sympathies lie. Lives are at stake. American lives. It's one or the other. A person's sympathies. They either lie with us, or with the terrorists, right?

JOE

Right.

KAY

We're with you.

INGRID

Some people say they can see both sides. They understand the terrorists' perspective. They talk about fifty years of occupation. America occupying the Middle East. Our involvement in the struggle for freedom in Iran. Or our history working in Central America. Our support for various governments there.

JACK

Who were fighting communist insurgents, let's remember.

OTIS

They talk about America like some imperialist empire.

JACK

After all we've done. To help other people.

INGRID

The global hegemon. That's what they call us.

OTIS

What the fuck does that even mean? We saved the world from fucking Communism. We conquered Europe. And then we gave it back. We gave fucking Germany back to the Germans.

JACK

Where do you folks come down on all this? Joe? Kay? You're sitting there, listening. Are we the bad guys, or the good guys, or what?

JOE

I think it's a little more complicated -

OTIS

Complicated? What's complicated?

JOE

History. Politics.

JACK

So you think they're right, then? That America's an empire?

JOE
No. Well ... maybe. It's just a word.

INGRID
It's not just a word.

JOE
Never mind. I didn't mean -

INGRID
You can criticize anything if that's what you want. You can always find something to pick apart. If that's what you really want to do.

KAY
We don't. No country is perfect, right?

JOE
No. That's right.

JACK
No system is perfect.

OTIS
But it's the best one we got.

KAY
That's right. It is. Democracy is.

JACK
You believe in democracy.

JOE
Yes. Of course.

JACK
What does it mean?

JOE
Democracy?

JACK
Yes.

OTIS
He's stalling, Jack.

JOE
I'm not. I don't -

JACK
We need to know. We need to know what you believe in, Joe. We need to know that we're on the same page here.

JOE
We are.

JACK
Good. So what does it mean?

JOE
The right to vote. To be represented. Freedom of speech. The Bill of Rights.

JACK
Ever serve, Joe?

JOE
Serve?

JACK
Your country.

JOE
No. I ... Law school. I went straight to work and -

JACK
You don't have to explain.

JOE
Things were different back then.

JACK
A different country.

INGRID
A different world.

KAY
But we support the troops.

OTIS
Do you?

KAY
Yes. Absolutely. One hundred percent. We don't agree with the administration on every little policy detail. But we support the troops. One hundred percent.

JACK
You believe in the war?

KAY
We do. Like you said. We don't really see what choice there is.

JACK
You believe in America.

KAY
Of course we do.

JACK
Now I grant you, things have gotten messy. Mistakes have been made.

JOE
There are always bad apples.

JACK
Innocent people have suffered. It's true.

JOE
Yes. They have.

JACK
We don't deny that. It's regrettable -

JOE
But that's the nature of war.

JACK
You think so, Joe?

JOE
It's always messy. There are always incidents. In every war.

KAY
You can't condemn an entire country, an entire people, on account of that.

JACK
On account of a few unfortunate incidents.

JOE
Exactly. That's it. That's exactly how we feel.

INGRID
Then you understand.

KAY
Yes ... I mean, you know ... we're against war in principle.

JACK
Against it?

KAY
In principle.

OTIS
What the fuck does that mean?

JACK
Otis. Language.

JOE
I think Kay means in an ideal world. Isn't that what you mean?

KAY
Right. Ideally. There would be no war. In a perfect world. That would be the goal.

JACK
No war at all?

KAY
In a perfect world.

OTIS
And what, we'd all just sit around and all hold hands and sing Kumbaya?

JACK
All right, Otis, that's enough.

KAY
All I meant was ... peace is the goal.

OTIS
Tell it to fucking Sayid, lady.

JACK
Otis.

OTIS
(steps away)
All right. All right. Sorry.

JACK
When was the last time you were in Hamburg, Joe?

JOE
Hamburg?

INGRID
Germany.

OTIS
He knows where it is.

JOE
Never. I mean, in my twenties, sure. After college. I don't do business there. I don't travel there on business, if that's what you mean. That's what you meant, right?

JACK
That's fine, Joe. Relax. What about Amsterdam?

KAY
He was there last year.

JOE
I was there for a conference. I don't have clients there.

JACK
But you do in the Hague.

JOE
Yes. That's right.

JACK

You know, I wonder ... I mean, the word "empire" ... it's so ... loaded. These days, anyway. You only ever hear about evil empires. Could there be such a thing as a benevolent empire? What do you think, Kay?

KAY

Maybe. I don't know.

INGRID

Hard to imagine?

KAY

I suppose. Like you said, the word is so ...

JACK

Loaded.

KAY

Loaded. Yes.

JACK

How'd you like Amsterdam? Or had you been before?

KAY

I've never been.

INGRID

You've never been to Amsterdam?

JOE

It wasn't that kind ... it was a two day conference.

(Otis turns on the vibrator aimlessly.)

OTIS

No time to see the sights?

JOE

We got out one night.

INGRID

Great city, Amsterdam.

JACK

Walk the canals?

JOE

Right. Sure.

INGRID

Beautiful. Romantic. Hard to believe you've never been there.

OTIS

See the Red Light District?

We walked through it. Sure. JOE

He told me all about it. KAY

Did he? Really? INGRID

Of course. Yes. KAY

You have clients in Dubai, Joe? JACK

Not personally. The firm does. JOE

Emirates? JACK

The firm does. JOE

But not you, personally. How's the temperature now, Kay? A little less humid? Little less close? JACK

Sure. I guess. KAY

I'm still a little sticky. INGRID

Do you own the house? JACK

Yes. We do. JOE

We have a mortgage. KAY

Naturally. JOE

Naturally. INGRID

And you went to Harvard. Is that right, Joe? JACK

Yale. JOE

Otis. JACK

Sorry, Jack. OTIS

(Otis switches off the vibrator.)

JACK
So you never served. Never served your country.

JOE
Not in the military.

INGRID
Is there some other way?

JOE
No. I mean. We participate. We vote.

JACK
Good for you. Let me ask you something, Kay. What do you think the world would be like if the Germans had won the Second World War? They were an empire, weren't they, Ingrid? Briefly, anyway. Or they fashioned themselves one.

INGRID
Das Dritte Reich. It means the Third Empire.

JACK
What do you think, Kay? What would the world be like?

KAY
Uh ... I don't know. Completely different. I don't think I understand the question.

INGRID
It's not important that you understand.

OTIS
What's important is that you give a response.

KAY
Bad. Horrible. You know. Terrible. I don't know what you want me to say.

JACK
Emily's last boyfriend. What was his name?

JOE
Greg.

KAY
Stephen. Greg was before Stephen.

JOE
Right. Sorry.

Were they having sex? INGRID

Uh ... probably. I assume so. She's - KAY

Seventeen. OTIS

We've discussed sex with her. JOE

I bet you have. OTIS

What's that supposed to mean? JOE

Involved in any political organizations? JACK

Who? Stephen? KAY

Greg. JACK

No. Not that I know of. KAY

But you can't be sure. INGRID

How could we know? If he kept it from us. JOE

He kept things from you? JACK

No. I'm just saying - JOE

When were you in Amsterdam, exactly? INGRID

Last year. In May. JOE

Nice in the Spring. INGRID

(Jack crosses down to the imaginary mirror.)

JACK

You know what's strange? I'll tell you what's strange. And this is one of those tricks of the trade. No one ever looks at themselves. In the mirror. I mean ... there it is. Big ass mirror with your reflection right there. Sure, people look. But, like now, for example. You're looking at me, aren't you, Kay?

KAY

Yes, but you're talking.

INGRID

No. *You're* talking, Kay.

JACK

This is not about us.

JOE

What is it about?

JACK

I think you know what this is about.

JOE

Actually, I don't ... Agent -

JACK

Jack. Call me Jack, Joe. We're just talking here, right? That's all this is, right? Just some people ... talking. Sitting in a room. In an airport. Somewhere. Somewhere in America. Talking about things. Hey, Otis served. Didn't you, Otis?

OTIS

5th Special Forces.

JACK

Green Berets.

INGRID

Is that true, Otis? You were Green Beret?

OTIS

Nah. I'm lying. I never served. I'm just telling Jack what he wants to hear.

INGRID

You spineless little weasel.

OTIS

Am I going to get a spanking?

JACK

So ... Joe ... no friends in Hamburg?

JOE

What? No.

JACK

(to Kay)
He *was* Green Berets.

OTIS

De Oppresso Liber. That's our motto.

JACK

Man, I'll tell you, it feels like this year is just whizzing by ... just disappearing.

INGRID

I have the same feeling.

JOE

Actually, wait. I was in Hamburg. I was there a few years ago. Just for a day.

JACK

Uh-huh.

JOE

I forgot. It slipped my mind.

OTIS

Yeah. Right.

INGRID

How many years ago?

JOE

Three. No, four.

INGRID

You sure it wasn't five?

OTIS

(softly, to Joe)
Now you're fucked.

JACK

Contribute to any political groups? Organizations? Anything like that?

KAY

We're registered Democrats. We've given to the party.

JOE

In the past. Not recently.

KAY

We've been voting Republican.

INGRID

It really doesn't make any difference, you know.

JACK

Give to any special interest groups? Lobbyist groups?

KAY
No.

JOE
The firm does.

JACK
But not you, personally. Your hands are clean.

JOE
That's not what I meant.

JACK
You know, I wonder, would it be that different? If the Germans had won? They were fighting Communism just like we were. OK, sure, there was all that anti-semitism. But fundamentally ... market economy. Say they'd won. What would have happened? They would have had to fight World War Three. Just like we did. Contain the Soviets. What if the Nazis had gotten the bomb? Instead of us. That could have happened. They would have wound up exactly where we did, having to rebuild and defend the new Europe. Nuclear stalemate. Proxy wars. Globalization. Don't you think so, Joe?

JOE
I kind of thought democracy was the issue.

JACK
What do you mean, exactly, Joe?

JOE
The difference. Between us. And the Germans. Democracy.

JACK
Hitler was elected.

JOE
Well, yeah, he was ... but, you know, not really.

JACK
Not really.

JOE
OK. He was elected. But the system was corrupt.

JACK
Corrupt. I see.

KAY
It wasn't a real democracy.

JACK
You know what's so beautiful about America? This. This is it right here. Look at us, all of us, sitting here together. All the history right here in this room. The different roads that brought us all here ... for example, my uncles all fought in the war. The Second World War. They liberated France.

My grandfather fought. OTIS

My aunt was in London. KAY

During the bombing. JACK

She was just a kid. KAY

My great uncle Karl was in the Waffen SS. INGRID

Are you serious? KAY

I'm sure he's turning over in his grave. INGRID

Our families tried to kill each other. Isn't that cool? I think that's so cool. OTIS

What about you, Joe? Family in the war? JACK

No. JOE

Pacifists? OTIS

My father was too young. His father had Polio. JOE

Like FDR. INGRID

Left him crippled? JACK

Slightly. Enough. JOE

But he would have fought for America, right? OTIS

Yes. Of course. JOE

You have family in Germany? INGRID

JOE
I really don't know. It's possible, I guess.

JACK
Are you telling the truth?

JOE
Yes. What?

JACK
Do you believe him, Ingrid?

JOE
Why would I lie?

INGRID
If he's lying, Jack, then he's very good.

JOE
I'm not. Jesus. I probably have relatives. Distant relatives. I just don't know.

OTIS
Then why not just say that?

JOE
I did, didn't I?

OTIS
No. You didn't. You acted all innocent.

JACK
Can you tell when Emily is lying, Kay?

KAY
What? I'm sorry.

JACK
Can you tell when she's lying? Please don't make me repeat myself.

KAY
She doesn't lie to us.

INGRID
Everyone lies.

KAY
OK. I can tell. Yes.

JACK
How?

KAY
I don't know. I'm her mother.

Her eyes?
INGRID

Maybe.
KAY

There are giveaways, you know.
JACK

The eyes go up and to the left normally. Heart rate increases ever so slightly.
INGRID

What about Joe? Can you tell when he's lying?
JACK

I don't lie to my wife.
JOE

Yes. I can tell.
KAY

Some liars are good. Really good. They can pass a polygraph. Never break a sweat. Others are terrible. It's just so obvious. It's as if they wanted to give it away.
INGRID

Has to do with guilt, that.
JACK

Some people just can't live with their sins.
INGRID

Either of you know what SS stands for?
JACK

Secret service.
KAY

Schutzstaffel. In German. It's not quite the same. Close, but not really.
INGRID

Ever heard of the Kaminski Brigade?
JACK

No.
JOE & KAY

Notorious SS brigade. Murderers. Rapists. Completely undisciplined. It had to be disbanded eventually. Made a big mess of things in Warsaw. Kaminski was brought before a tribunal, or summarily executed. The stories vary. It all depends on who you believe.
INGRID

Executed by us. The Allies.
KAY

INGRID

No. He was executed by the Germans.

OTIS

Bunch of bad apples. Can't have that.

JACK

Ingrid knows her World War II history. But then, she still has family over there.

KAY

Your uncle wasn't part of -

INGRID

No, they were all Russians.

KAY

Who were Russians?

INGRID

The brigade. RONA. They were Russians ... well, and Belorussians.

OTIS

They were fighting Communism.

KAY

I don't understand. I thought the SS all had to be Germans.

INGRID

Oh no. The SS was quite international. Brigades were formed all over Europe. In all the lands the Germans occupied. Or liberated, as they saw it then.

KAY

As the Nazis saw it.

INGRID

No, as the locals saw it. The Germans were seen as liberators.

KAY

By who?

JACK

Well, the Belorussians in this case.

KAY

Liberators. The Nazis? No.

OTIS

They were liberating Russia. From the Soviets. Stalin.

JACK

A ruthless dictator.

INGRID

Of course there were loyalists.

JACK

There always are. When you topple a regime.

OTIS

You have to plan on fighting an insurgency.

INGRID

That's where the RONA brigade came in.

KAY

I don't understand.

INGRID

They were fighting insurgents. RONA was fighting the Belorussian insurgency. Who were carrying out raids. Terror. Bombings. Attacking the German occupation forces. And anyone who collaborated, of course. Same in all the occupied countries. There were Danish SS units. French. Armenian. Dutch. Polish.

KAY

I had no idea.

JACK

Of course we could just be making this up. To see how you react to us discussing the Nazis. Implying some parallel between them and us.

OTIS

Which of course is completely fucking ridiculous.

JACK

Unless, that is, what we're saying is true. But how would you know, if you don't know your history? How could you tell the truth from fiction? We could tell you anything. And you'd go along.

JOE

Jesus Christ.

KAY

I'm so confused.

INGRID

You don't even know who we are, really. Do you? I mean, what agency we're with.

JOE

You're Homeland Security.

OTIS

Are we? You sure?

KAY

I really ... think ... I need to get some -

OTIS

Sleep?

JACK

You have no idea who we are. What agency we're with. None at all. And you know why that is? Well, I'll tell you. You do not know because you never asked. Somebody pulled you out of a line. Took your passport. Asked you some questions. Told you to go and sit in a room. And you did it. Without a word of protest.

KAY

(to Ingrid)

But you ... you said -

JACK

(points downstage)

Look at yourself. Now. In the mirror. Look at your yourself. What do you see?

JOE

Please. We're tired.

JACK

Yes. You're exhausted. You're all worn out. You can't even remember where you've been anymore.

INGRID

You know, prostitution is legal in Amsterdam.

JACK

Did you know that, Kay? Did Joe ever mention that?

KAY

I knew that already.

INGRID

In Germany too.

OTIS

The girls in Amsterdam stand in the windows. Shake their stuff at you. Call you over.

JACK

How long did you spend in Hamburg, Joe?

JOE

A day. Two nights. I can't remember.

OTIS

He can't remember.

JACK

Could it have been three days?

INGRID

Maybe you're mixing it up with Amsterdam.

OTIS

The girls in Hamburg do anything you want. All that kinky stuff. They don't care.

JOE

I've never been inside a brothel.

JACK

Which way did his eyes go? I didn't notice.

OTIS

They went to the left.

INGRID

No. To the right.

JOE

I have never been with a prostitute. Ever.

INGRID

It's nothing to be ashamed of, Joe.

OTIS

They'll do whatever ... and I mean whatever. All that stuff you really want. The good ones take one look at you and know. You don't have to ask. They'll just do it for you.

INGRID

After a while you learn how to read people.

KAY

I have no idea what time it is now.

INGRID

By how they act. It's not that hard. But then again, most people want the same thing.

JOE

It's late.

KAY

We should probably try to call home.

JACK

You know what I like about whores, Ingrid?

INGRID

What's that, Jack?

JACK

They know who they are. The older ones, anyway. They don't put on airs. Put on an act. Act respectable. They're not confused about what they do for a living. Who they serve. Who's in charge. They're whores. They sell their bodies. For money.

KAY

Is there a phone we could use to call home?

OTIS

There's nobody there. It's just a machine.

JACK
Is there something you wanted to tell us, Joe?

KAY
I don't understand.

JOE
They're just trying to confuse us.

KAY
I'd really like to call my daughter.

OTIS
And tell her what?

JACK
Where is Emily?

KAY
She's home.

OTIS
Wrong.

KAY
Maybe not this minute. Maybe she's out with her friends at a movie. I just want to call and leave a message. Or at least go up and check my phone.

INGRID
She's been alone in the house all this time?

KAY
She's fine on her own.

OTIS
She's seventeen, right?

JACK
The truth is, Kay, you don't know where she is. You have no idea. She could be anywhere.

KAY
No. Not anywhere. She couldn't be anywhere.

INGRID
When was the last time you spoke to your daughter?

KAY
We called her from London. Yesterday morning.

OTIS
For all you know, she could be in the next room. Tied to a chair. With a sock in her mouth.

JOE
What are you saying?

KAY

Is Emily here?

JACK

No, of course not. Don't be ridiculous.

OTIS

All we're saying is ... she could be. Right?

KAY

Is she or isn't she?

OTIS

That isn't the question.

KAY

What is the question?

INGRID

Do you trust us, Kay?

KAY

Yes. We trust you. We said we did.

JACK

Yes. You did. You both did say that. But then you believe we're capable of that. Of strapping your little girl to a chair? You say you trust us. But you look at us like ... with that fear in your eyes. That fear and contempt. You think we don't see it. Of course we see it. What do you think we are, folks? Do you think we're monsters?

JOE

Look, Jack, my wife and I are both really tired.

JACK

This is the root of lies. Don't you see? Fear. Mistrust. That's why people lie. To us. To themselves. It's the same thing, basically. You don't have to lie to someone you trust. Do you? No. So what have we done? What have we done, exactly, to deserve this?

INGRID

Would you stand up please.

JOE

Again?

OTIS

Stand up.

INGRID

We're almost done now. Stand up, Mrs. Smith.

(The Smith's stand up, exhausted, confused.)

JACK

What is it that you think we are, exactly?

INGRID

Would both of you please take off your shoes, and put them on the table, right there in front of you.

JOE

Our shoes.

INGRID

Yes. And just set them on the table.

OTIS

They think we're the bad guys. Like the Romans or something.

JACK

Say it ain't so.

OTIS

They've lost their faith.

INGRID

Would you sit back down please.

(The Smiths sit down. Ingrid takes their shoes upstage.)

JACK

Is that what you think, folks? That we're like the Romans? The Germans? That we're out to rule the world? We're trying to *save* the world for Christ sakes. Who the hell else is going to do it? The Europeans? They're going to protect us?

OTIS

At least the Brits are with us, Jack.

JACK

That is not the point. They don't have the power. *We* have the power. America has it. The burden is ours. The responsibility. We didn't want it. Don't people see that? We were just this little country over here, across an ocean, minding our own business. But what the hell were we supposed to do, let the goddamn Germans take over the world? And then the Russians? And now the Terrorists?

INGRID

(admiring Kay's shoes)

I really really like these shoes.

JACK

People go on about some corporate conspiracy. You see all these websites about the evil corporations. Who is it these days? Halliburton? Chevron? In the Second World War it was IBM. General Motors. Ford. DuPont. DuPont fucking Chemical Company. Honestly, what is all the fuss about? We invade a country, destroy its infrastructure. Of course our corporations are in there. Who else could possibly do the job? I mean, where do people think the money comes from? To rebuild. For food. For reeducation. I wonder if people have any idea just how much money this country gives away. In foreign aid. Twenty one billion. Twenty one billion. That's a lot of zeros. Are you a terrorist, Joe?

JOE

What? No!

JACK
Then why did you lie?

JOE
I didn't. I haven't.

KAY
We haven't lied.

(Jack digs through the file.)

JACK
Uhuh ... well ... I'm looking at this form here. This standard questionnaire they use at Heathrow. And I see this question, "did you pack your bag yourself?" Right here on Line 3. And "yes" is checked. Did they ask you this question at Heathrow, Joe?

JOE
Yes, of course.

JACK
And you told them, yes, that you packed your own bag.

JOE
Yes. Right.

JACK
That's right. You did. That's what you told them.

INGRID
But Kay said that she packed your bag for you, Joe.

JOE
What? When?

OTIS
When we found the dildo.

KAY
It's not a dildo. It's just a vibrator.

JACK
So one of you is lying. Which one is it?

JOE
Neither of us. Look. Kay packed, mostly. But I was right there.

JACK
I don't understand. It's yes or no. A yes or no question. It isn't some epistemological quandary. Either *you* packed your suitcase, or someone else did. And that is that. Oh but that is not that. Because in *your* mind you packed your suitcase yourself. In *your* mind, you didn't do anything wrong. You believe that, don't you? Yes. You do. And you believe that it is your *right* to believe that. You believe it's your right to believe anything you want. You believe it is your right to *do* anything you want. But in fact, Mr. Smith, it is *not* your right to believe and to do any thing you want. See, there are *rules*. And there are rules for a reason. Do you want to live in a world without rules?

JOE

No.

JACK

In a state of total anarchy?

KAY

No.

JACK

No. I didn't think so. So how about you get with the fucking program. This country is in a state of war. War. To defend your way of life. So you can go home to your little townhouse on Garfield fucking Place or wherever. So that you can hop on a fucking airplane and go shopping with your fucking wife in Paris. So your daughter can get high with her Black Bloc friends. Who do you think you are dealing with? Do we look like airport rent-a-cops to you? We are the fucking United States of fucking America you fucking idiots! Do you like your lives? Your comfortable lives? Well, guess what, folks. *We* make them possible. *We* keep the goddamn economy from collapsing. *We* keep you safe from the criminals and terrorists. Do you know how we do it? We do it with guns. And bombs. And missiles. And knives. And sticks. We fucking *kill* people. We kill them for *you*. Is it convenient for you to believe otherwise? Well, guess what? *Fuck* what's convenient for you. Fifty goddamn years you were to free to believe any fucking thing you wanted. We didn't care. It didn't bother us. We didn't care if you believed in Martians. But you know what, folks? *Now* we care. It matters to us now, what you believe. The United States of America is at war. It is World War fucking *Four*, people. And World War Four is for all the marbles. It's one big world now, in case you missed that. One big system. And *we* fucking run it. And guess what? We intend to continue running it. Now is that alright with you, if we do that?

JOE

Fine.

KAY

Great.

JACK

You're sure about that? You're sure you wouldn't rather someone else was in charge? The UN maybe. Or the goddamn EU. Or China. Or the Russians. Or wait ... I know ... maybe you'd rather the world was run by a bunch of post-structuralist semioticians. Yeah. Sure. That would work. Nothing means anything. There is no truth. It's all just a matter of interpretation. Everything is just a floating signifier. Well, I hate to burst your little bubble, but everything is *not* a fucking floating signifier. Good is good. Evil is evil. Europe can shove its socialism and its moral relativism up its ass. They *lost* the war. *We* fucking won it. *We* say what's what, and who is who. *We* say who's a fucking terrorist and who is not a fucking terrorist. *We* say who does business with who. And who gets to have the goddamn bomb. *We* say what the fucking facts are. And what the truth is. And so if Otis says there's a virus on your fucking laptop, there's a goddamn virus on your fucking laptop. It's not the beginning of a fucking debate. It's the truth. Reality. Period. The end. And if the form asks whether you packed your bag yourself, that is exactly what it fucking means. It is fucking yes or fucking no. Not sort of. Not mostly. Yes. Or no.

INGRID

So which is it, Mr. Smith? Yes, or no?

JOE

Alright. I lied. Kay packed the bags. I lied, alright?

INGRID

What else did you lie about?

JOE

Nothing. Nothing.

JACK

I am so fucking tired ... so fucking sick of you people and your lies. Do you have any idea what it's like to come in here ... day after day, and be lied to by people? As if we didn't know the answer to every question we ask in advance. You do understand that we know *everything*. We have your entire pathetic lives on lists and charts in manila files. We know exactly where you were, when. We have your bank accounts. Your cell phone records. Your receipts. Your loans. Which videos you watch. We know whose dicks your daughter has been sucking in your goddamne Santa Fe kitchen while you were gone. You want to see the fucking pictures?!

(Jack takes some photos out of the file, throws them down in front of the Smiths.)

OTIS

Oh shit, now you did it.

(Ingrid comes down and scoops up the photos.)

INGRID

Jack.

JACK

What?!

INGRID

Jack!

JACK

No! I'm fucking sick of this Mickey Mouse bullshit!

(Jack's rage implodes abruptly into grief. He breaks down sobbing. Ingrid goes to him.)

JACK (CONT'D)

No, goddamn it! Just tell the truth! How hard is it? The fucking truth! Christ! Fuck! Sorry. Goddamn it. People's lives are at fucking stake. You weren't there. You don't fucking know. People were jumping out of fucking windows. Landing in the street. Jesus Christ ...

(Ingrid leads Jack away from the Smiths, sits him down, tries to comfort him.)

INGRID

It's OK, Jack. Let it go. Let it all out. It's OK.

JACK

It's *not* OK. It is *not* OK. They call us names. They don't understand. These fucking people and their fucking little kids. Look at my hands. Jesus Christ.

OTIS

(to Joe)

Look at him. Look at what you did to Jack.

JOE

I'm sorry.

OTIS

Liar.

(Jack bawls like a baby, gasping, shaking. Ingrid holds him.)

KAY

Can we do anything?

INGRID

He'll be all right.

(Jack takes deep breaths. His sobbing subsides. Ingrid comforts him, whispers to him.)

JACK

Let's just get this over with, OK?

(Otis looks away, fighting back emotion. He handles the Smith's belongings aimlessly.)

JOE

Look. I'm sorry. I didn't mean to lie. I really didn't. I had no idea -

JACK

It's OK. It's me. It's not your fault. You didn't think -

JOE

I didn't think it mattered.

JACK

I know. I know.

OTIS

Don't blame yourself, Jack.

(Otis picks up the vibrator unconsciously and uses it to sort through items on the table.)

JOE

Look. I think we understand now. I'm really sorry. I -

JACK
(holds one hand up)
Please. Please.

INGRID
Give him a minute. It's OK, Jack. He's been carrying around so much for so long.

KAY
I can't imagine. The responsibility...

INGRID
Comes with the job. Are you all right, Jack?

JACK
People look at us. You have no idea.

INGRID
They look at us like we're the Gestapo or something. Like we're sadists. You know? Like we enjoy all this.

JACK
What choice do we have? Tell me, please. All we're trying to do is protect ... to prevent what happened ...

KAY
From happening again.

JACK
Yes.

INGRID
That's it.

JACK
I'm not a monster. You know, I watch people getting onto airplanes all day. Families. Children. Little children. Clinging to their mothers. They have no idea. All I want ...
(fights back his tears)
... all I want is to make sure those kids get off that plane at their destination, and don't wind up -

KAY
We know. We know.

JACK
There were pieces ... of people -

INGRID
Breathe, Jack.

OTIS
(crosses toward Jack, vibrator in hand)
What can I do? I want to do something. I need to do something.

INGRID
Stay back, Otis.

OTIS

(points the vibrator at the Smiths)
This is all your fault!

(Jack gets up and moves away from the others.)

JACK

Give me a minute. Just give me a minute.

(Jack turns upstage, with his back to everyone, tries to pull himself together. Ingrid sits down at the table with the Smiths. Otis just stands there holding the vibrator.)

INGRID

It's always some tiny little thing, isn't it ... that finally pushes us over the edge?

KAY

I've been there.

INGRID

Have you?

KAY

It's the grieving process.

INGRID

Your parents.

KAY

Yes. It crippled me for years. Emotionally, I mean. Losing both parents. You can't take it in. No one can. A child can't process ... you make things up. To make it make sense. You make up a story. You blame it on someone. It doesn't matter who. You blame God. You blame yourself. You tell yourself you could have changed it. If only you'd done this ... that. It took me years to work through the grief ... survivors guilt. So much pain. For what it's worth, what I learned is, getting free, letting go, means feeling all that bottled up pain ...

JOE

Kay is an incredibly resilient woman.

(Ingrid reaches over and takes Kay's hand. They sit there, the three of them, staring straight out. Jack still has his back to the others.)

JACK

Do you believe in God?

KAY

In God?

JACK

God.

(turns downstage)
You said you blamed him.

That was just a phase. KAY

Then you still believe. JACK

We don't belong to a church. JOE

That's not what I asked. JACK

We believe in something. KAY

In something. JACK

I think, we believe in what ... what people mean by God or ... you know, some higher power - JOE

Something bigger than us. Something ... spiritual. KAY

More powerful than you. INGRID

That's God, isn't it? KAY

Is it? JACK

I think so. KAY

Do you think that God is watching us, Kay? Watching what we do? The human race? America? Us? Here, in this room? JACK

In a way, maybe. KAY

Do you think we'll be punished? If we do something wrong? Punished by God. JACK

I don't know. KAY

These fucking animals ... the savages who cut off people's heads. Who torture people. Who kill little children. Do you think they'll be punished? By God. Someday. JACK

KAY

I don't think it works that way.

INGRID

How does it work, Kay?

KAY

I don't know. I -

JACK

Whose side do you think that God is on?

KAY

I -

OTIS

Or what, you think he doesn't care?

KAY

That's not what I meant.

JOE

I think what Kay meant was -

OTIS

You think he doesn't care who wins or loses?

KAY

You keep ... I can't ... I cannot do this ...

JACK

This country ... America, was founded on faith. Faith in God. And the common man. Faith in people. Common people. God ... what a beautiful dream. A nation founded on freedom. And justice. Amazing that we even got this far. A miracle, really, that it ever happened. Here was this fantastic land. This gorgeous continent. Coast to coast. The mountains. The seas. A paradise ... a paradise for the common man. To live his life, and pursue his happiness ... free from the tyranny of kings, despots. That was all the founders wanted. Isn't that what we all really want? To be left alone ... to live our lives ... free. Isn't *that* the dream? What's wrong with that dream?

OTIS

Not a goddamn thing, Jack.

(Ingrid gets up, crosses upstage. She and Otis exchange quick looks. Jack keeps bearing down on the Smiths.)

JACK

But they just couldn't leave us alone, could they? They couldn't just let us live our lives. They couldn't stand to see us free, and strong, and prosperous. No. No. They had to come and attack us at home. Our home. Our homeland. Our wives and kids. Did they think America would not defend herself? That we would do nothing? Well, they were wrong. We will not do nothing. We will do what we have to. Whatever we have to. To defend this country and its people and values and way of life. (cont'd)

JACK (CONT'D)

And we will not be hamstrung by questions of ethics and matters of conscience ... oh sure, they'd love that. They'd love to see us paralyzed by guilt. They want the rules to apply to us, while they behave like fucking animals, and do whatever. Cut off heads.

OTIS

They call it torture, if some guy gets, you know, slapped around a couple of times, or has to stand on a box for while.

INGRID

What are we supposed to do? If someone lies to us ... someone we know could be planning an act of domestic terrorism ... now, this minute, while we're sitting here talking?

OTIS

Or who knows someone who could be planning such an act.

KAY

Are you saying ... wait, what kind of act?

JACK

Eighteen USC Two Three Three One. As amended by Section Eight Oh Two of HR Thirty One Sixty Two. "An act dangerous to human life. That violates the law. And that appears to be intended to influence policy by intimidation."

KAY

Appears to be intended?

JOE

Wait ... who are we talking about?

INGRID

We need the truth. How do we get it?

KAY

Not torture -

OTIS

Torture? What is torture? Getting barked at by a fucking dog? That's not torture. I'll tell you about torture. Torture is getting your nails pulled out. With a set of pliers. Or your nose cut off. Or watching your wife get her teeth knocked out with a ball peen hammer. One by one. They tape your eyelids. So you have to watch.

KAY

Jesus -

JACK

What are we supposed to do? Tell me, please. What do we do?

JOE

(stands, begs)

All right, wait, listen. I'm sorry. Please. I didn't mean to lie. I swear to God. We're not terrorists. I just didn't think ... I'll go through everything. I'll make it right. I'll take a polygraph. Let me try again. Please. I'm begging you, don't torture my family. Please. Jesus. I don't believe this is happening.

(Joe fights to keep from breaking down completely. Kay stares down, paralyzed with fear. Jack stares out into the imaginary mirror.)

JACK

Relax, Joe. Nobody is going to torture anybody.

OTIS

We don't torture people. Not in this country.

INGRID

We told you that before. You just don't believe us.

JOE

OK. Thank you. God. OK.

INGRID

Just take a deep breath.

KAY

I'm so ... so -

JACK

However, we are going to need to search you.

KAY

I thought ... haven't we been searched already?

JACK

I'm afraid we're going need to search you ... thoroughly. I'm sorry. I wish there were some other way.

JOE

Thoroughly.

INGRID

Completely.

KAY

I don't understand.

JACK

We're going to need you to get undressed.

JOE

Take our clothes off?

INGRID

Yes.

KAY

Here?

JACK

I'm afraid so. Yes.

INGRID

Look, we're all adults here. It's nothing we haven't seen before.

JOE

And then we can go?

JACK

And then you can go.

(The Smiths move upstage of their table and strip, stacking their clothes on the table in front of them.)

JOE

All our clothes? Underwear and everything?

INGRID

Yes. Everything.

JACK

There's nothing to be afraid of. It's just a search. We're almost done. You'll be back home soon. Safe and sound. Asleep in your bed. Sleeping like logs. With your cat at your feet. Fluffy, wasn't it?

KAY

Fluffy. Yes.

INGRID

(taking charge)

Let's try to do this quickly. It's easier that way.

JOE

OK.

KAY

All right.

(Joe and Kay strip off their underwear. Otis takes their clothes to the upstage table. Jack stares downstage, calm, but distant.)

JACK

Sorry about the temperature in here. I guess they overcompensated a bit.

OTIS

You want me to go and check on it, Jack?

JACK

No, Otis. Not just now.

INGRID

Turn toward me please.

(The Smiths comply.)

INGRID (CONT'D)

Take a wider stance. Feet apart. Now raise your arms. Hold them out to the sides. Good.

(Ingrid inspects the Smith's visually. They stand there with their arms held out to the sides. Meanwhile, Otis packs up Jack's file, gathers empty soda cans, clears whatever is on the table. Everything proceeds ritualistically now, almost mechanically. The dialogue continues.)

JACK

Thing is, all that medieval stuff ... completely unnecessary. Overkill, most of it. OK, if you need to make absolutely sure that someone is telling you the truth. Then fine. But usually, there are less dramatic ways.

JOE

You're just going to ... wait... are you going to -

INGRID

Shhh.

KAY

Please could we just -

INGRID

No talking now. Turn around please. Face the other way.

(The Smiths comply.)

KAY

Please don't hurt us.

JACK

No one is going to hurt you, folks. This is America. We just need to search you.

INGRID

This is just a standard search.

JACK

We may be in a state of global war. But we're still Americans. This is still America.

OTIS

(imitating Ronald Reagan)

"A shining city upon a hill whose beacon light guides freedom-loving people."

JACK

Hey, you remember that JFK quote?

OTIS

Which one, Jack? The one about the moon?

JACK

No, Otis, not the one about the moon.

OTIS

(imitating JFK)

“We choose to go to the moon, in this decade, and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard.” That kills me, Jack. That kills me every time.

JACK

Thanks, Otis. I meant the other quote.

OTIS

Oh. Oh yeah. How does that go?

JACK

“In the long, long history of the world, only a very few generations have been granted the role of defending freedom ... in its hour of maximum danger.” Then comes that stuff about shrinking and shining. And then the part that everybody knows.

OTIS

(imitating JFK)

“And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you – ask what you can do for your country.”

INGRID

You can put your arms down.

JACK

Maybe that's it. Maybe America is being tested, by God. Maybe God is asking each one of us what we're prepared to do for our country ... now, in its hour of maximum danger. I mean, the terrorists are in for the whole nine yards. What about us? What are we in for? Are we prepared to go the whole nine yards, even if means doing ... difficult things?

JOE

Difficult?

JACK

Yes.

KAY

Like what?

OTIS

Bend over.

JOE

What?

INGRID

Bend over the table please.

OTIS

You too, Mrs. Smith. Bend over the table. Take hold of the opposite edge with both hands.

JACK

This will all be over in a minute.

KAY
I'm scared.

INGRID
It's OK. It's going to be OK.

OTIS
Bend over. Bend over the table now.

JOE
I don't want to do this.

JACK
It will all be over soon. And you can go home. And forget all about it.

INGRID
(to Kay)
Give me your hands. Put your hands in my hands.

OTIS
You need you to bend over the table now.

INGRID
Put your hands here. Now lower your body. Let your body lie flat on the table.

(Ingrid stretches Kay's arms across the table and places her hands on the downstage edge. Then she does the same with Joe.)

INGRID (CONT'D)
Good. Now your turn. Give me your hands. Just let yourself bend. Let your body go. Good. There you go. Hands on the edge. Just stay like that. Close your eyes.

OTIS
Spread your legs.

JOE
Oh no. Please. You don't have to do this.

INGRID
Relax. Breathe.

JACK
We have to be thorough.

JOE
Please don't do this.

(Ingrid and Otis put on latex gloves. Otis works on Joe, Ingrid on Kay. They spread the Smiths' buttocks and inspect them briefly. Otis opens a jar of Vaseline.)

INGRID
Let your body relax. It's just like at the doctor. Breathe. Good. Keep your hands on the edge. Don't let go. No matter what happens. Don't let go.

OTIS
Spread your legs wider.

JACK
I'm so sorry about this.

JOE
No ... wait ... stop ... Jack!

JACK
Listen, while Ingrid and Otis do this, we'll just keep talking. So just focus on me. Focus on my voice. Don't worry about them. Whatever they do. Whatever you feel. That's something happening far away. To someone else. Who you don't even know. Just block it out. It isn't happening. Nothing is happening. You're not even here.

OTIS
Keep your hands on the table now.

INGRID
(puts one hand on Kay's lower back)
Hold still, Kay. Completely still.
(slips her fingers into Kay)
Good. Breathe. Good. Yes.

OTIS
Relax your anus, Mr. Smith.

JOE
I can't.

JACK
Just try to relax now, Joe.

INGRID
Good, Kay. We're almost done.

OTIS
(to Joe)
Unclench your asshole.

JOE
Please. Can we stop?

JACK
I'm afraid not, Joe. We have no choice.

INGRID
Good, Kay. Now just one more. Relax back here. There we go.

OTIS
Unclench your asshole. Or this is going to hurt.

JOE
I'm trying. I can't.

INGRID

Good, Kay.

OTIS

Are you getting a hard-on? He's getting a hard-on.

JOE

(desperate, on the verge of tears)

Please, please. I want to stop now.

INGRID

OK. All done. Just stay like that. And breathe. Good girl.

OTIS

Hold still.

JOE

Christ!

INGRID

Get off him, Otis. Let me do that.

OTIS

He's got an asshole like a fucking vice.

JACK

Get away, Otis. Let Ingrid do it.

INGRID

Just keep holding the edge, Kay.

(Otis backs off. Ingrid takes over.)

OTIS

Like he'd never had something up his ass before.

JACK

Just keep saying it over and over. I'm not even here. This isn't happening.

(Ingrid strokes Joe's back with one hand, as she applies Vaseline to his anus with the other.)

INGRID

OK, Joe. Just relax and breathe. I'm not going to do anything right away.

JOE

(crying)

I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

INGRID

There's nothing to be sorry for.

JOE

I didn't mean to lie. I won't do it again. I'm sorry ... Honey? Are you OK?

INGRID

Just relax, Joe. Close your eyes. Close your eyes and let go of your body. Give it to me. I've got you now. There's nothing to be ashamed of at all. Close your eyes. It's just you and me. Breathe. Good. Here we go now.

JOE

Whoa. Whoa!

INGRID

Good, Joe. Now I'm going to give you one little spank. It'll help you relax. Let your body go. When you feel the spank, just let yourself go.

(spans)

Good. Now just one more.

(spans)

Good boy. Now just one more.

JACK

Hey, you know what ... why don't I sing us a song. Just to lighten things up. How would that be? What's your favorite song, Otis?

OTIS

America the Beautiful.

JACK

Perfect. Damn, I think I only know the first verse. But that's probably true of most people, isn't it? Who wants to sing along with me? Otis?

OTIS

Sure.

JACK

Kay?

KAY

I don't think I can.

JACK

Sure you can, Kay. It's America the Beautiful.

(Ingrid continues torturing Joe.)

JACK (CONT'D)

Everyone knows America the Beautiful.

(Joe makes a noise like a dying animal.)

JACK & OTIS

Oh beautiful, for spacious skies, for amber waves of grain!
For purple mountain majesties above the fruited plain!
America! America! God shed his grace on thee!
And crown thy good with brotherhood, from sea to shining sea!

(Ingrid backs away abruptly, stripping off her latex gloves.)

JACK

And then, right there, comes the second verse. Cannot, for the life of me, remember the words. Something about pilgrims' feet and wilderness or something.

OTIS

Nobody ever sings the second verse, Jack.

JACK

No. I guess you're right, Otis.

INGRID

(to the Smiths, gently)

You can put your clothes back on now ... if you want.

(Joe and Kay get up from the table. Kay, more alert, crosses to their clothes. Joe, in shock, just stands there staring. Kay collects him. They get dressed in a hurry. Ingrid sits down and lights a cigarette.)

OTIS

Hey! What the hell do you think you're doing? You can't smoke in here. You want to give us all cancer?

(Ingrid blows smoke in Otis' direction.)

OTIS

Tell her to put it out, Jack.

JACK

Put it out, Ingrid. Hey, you know what I think? I think it might be time for another round of beverages. Otis, would you mind?

OTIS

No problem, Jack.

JACK

I mean ... assuming you can get that machine to work.

OTIS

Oh, I'll make it work, Jack.

JACK

You sure? It was being so difficult before.

OTIS

You just got to show it who's boss, Jack.

JACK

I think I'll take a Coke this time.

OTIS

Diet, or Classic?

JACK

Oh what the hell. Make it a Classic. Joe? Kay? Diet Cokes again?

Mr. and Mrs. Smith? INGRID

What? KAY

Beverage? JACK

No. KAY

You're sure? It's really no trouble. JACK

You can pack up your suitcases. Whenever you're ready. INGRID

Uhuh. KAY

Thank you. JOE

(Kay starts stuffing things into their suitcases. Joe tries to help, but he's really a mess.)

Holy cow. Would you look at the time. JACK

You off now, Jack? OTIS

Yeah. I wish. JACK

Working a double? OTIS

Yeah. You? JACK

Nah. Can't. Got the in-laws in town. We're supposed to be having dinner somewhere. Terri will kill me if I try to get out of it. Hang on. Let me go get those drinks. OTIS

Here, let me give you some money. JACK

I got it, Jack. You got the last one. OTIS

(Otis exits. Kay packs their suitcases. Joe stands beside her, staring vacantly.)

Did you get everything? INGRID

I'm sorry? JOE

Your things? Did you get them all? You're not missing anything? INGRID

(looking around)
Are we missing anything? JOE

(trying to close up a suitcase)
Push down on this. KAY

(Joe wanders away.)

Do you need a hand with that? JACK

No. Joe - KAY

Sure you don't want to take a moment? Sit down and relax? INGRID

You said we were done. KAY

We are. We're all done for today. INGRID

I'm sorry that everything took so long. It would've gone faster, but, well, that form - JACK

We *can* go home. KAY

Of course you can. INGRID

(takes a seat in downstage chair)
OK. Maybe just one minute. JOE

And thanks again. JACK

For what? KAY

Cooperating. JACK

(Kay hoists the suitcase off the table. Joe stares out at his reflection in the "mirror.")

Joe. KAY

What? JOE

Don't ... don't look. KAY

(Otis re-enters and hands out drinks.)

Hey, I think your daughter is out in the lobby. OTIS

Emily? KAY

Yeah. Looks just like the picture. OTIS

I bet you they don't make those shoes anymore. Shame. I'd love to have a pair. INGRID

(Jack is downstage, staring out, more or less as he was at the opening. During the following, one by one, the others turn and look downstage.)

How does it work? JOE

Joe. KAY

Light. JACK

Joe. Emily is waiting outside. KAY

Is she? JOE

It's just a trick of the light. JACK

The light? JOE

You can actually see right through it. INGRID

Joe. Come on. KAY

I don't see anything. JOE

You can't from in here. OTIS

We're on the wrong side. JACK

Joe. Let's go home now. Please. KAY

You have to be on the other side. Or actually, it doesn't matter which side. JACK

No? JOE

No. It works both ways. JACK

Not exactly, Jack. There is a difference. OTIS

Yes, Otis ... there is a difference. JACK

The main thing is, it has to be dark. INGRID

On the other side. JOE

On either side. INGRID

It has to be dark on the side you're on. JACK

Joe. I'm going now. KAY

OK, honey. I'll be up in just a couple minutes. JOE

Shall we make it dark, Joe? JACK

Yes. Please. JOE

JACK

Otis, you want to get that light?

(Otis' finger is already in position. He flips a switch on the wall. Blackout.)

(When the lights come back up after the blackout, the stage and the house lights come up together, brightly lighting the entire venue as one common space, which, of course, it is.)