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YO NO SPEAK AMERICANO

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Abstract:

It has always been my belief that the best theatre leaves the audience examining and reevaluating themselves and the world around them. Stella Adler said it best: “The word theatre means the seeing place. It is the place people come to see the truth about life and the social situation. The theatre is a spiritual and social X-ray of its time. The theatre was created to tell people the truth about life and the social situation.” It is for that reason that I began to write this play.

Yo No Speak Americano is my first attempt at playwrighting, at putting the world in which we live under a microscope and trying pinpoint where the problems lie. It follows the lives of a gay male, an Iraqi, and a Mexican. When I described the characters to some, they chuckled and said that it sounds like the beginning of a bad joke. The reason that it comes across that way, though, is because it appears odd that, socially, these three men would have motive, means, and opportunity to converse together. My goal in writing this play was to call in to question the way that each and every person views their friends, their legal system, and the very world in which we live.

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To my amazing family, thank you for your constant love and inspiration, and for giving me my “pawprint” at an early age. You have always taught me to fight for what I believe in and to “plead my case” in order to convince others. This is one of those cases.

Thanks to my wonderful friends. Special thanks to Mohamed Raouda for reading draft after draft and for causing Ghandi’s words to resound in my heart and in my head, and to Kate Caverno for being with me, like a handprint on my heart.

Meows to my theatre mentor Robin Reese for never letting me settle for second best.

And last, but certainly not least, thanks to God. I am truly blessed.

“Violence is a part of human nature. If we examine it safely in the theatre, maybe we can process it without resorting to it in life. If people want reality, they can ride the subway. We’re looking for the truth of the violence, not the reality.”

-J. David Brimmer

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	i
Acknowledgements.....	ii
Table of Contents.....	iii
Introduction.....	1
Scene 1.....	3
Scene 2.....	5
Scene 3.....	7
Scene 4.....	9
Scene 5.....	12
Scene 6.....	15
Scene 7.....	16
Scene 8.....	18
Scene 9.....	20
Scene 10.....	21
Scene 11.....	23
Scene 12.....	25
Scene 13.....	27
Scene 14.....	30
Scene 15.....	34
Scene 16.....	37

Scene 17.....42

Bibliography.....46

Academic Vita.....4

Yo No Speak Americano

By Marina Johnson

Cast:

Faisal- 52, An Iraqi-American police officer and prison guard at the Jefferson County Jail. Fluent in Arabic and English, although born in America. He is a well built man, attired in a light beige police uniform. He is rarely seen in an outfit that is not his uniform. On his lapel he wears a star and a diamond (given for his 25 years of service), as well as the Medal of Honor. To the right of his American medals is a small, seven point red star. In the middle of the star is a blue circle inscribed with a gold crown, an old Iraqi service medal.

Rodriguez-17, An illegal Mexican immigrant; a scrawny boy. Fluent in both Spanish in English, although more comfortable in Spanish, the language he speaks at home. Loves peace and is easy to get along with. Was unaware that he is an illegal immigrant.

Matthew- 34, A married, closeted homosexual, extremely famous Alabamian defense attorney. His public persona includes an always well-dressed, always poised self. However his private persona is constantly up for debate. He is married to his work first, Penelope, his high school sweetheart and now his wife, second.

Penelope- 31, Matthew's wife of seven years. A school teacher in Alabama.

Lawyer 1: A lawyer Matthew encounters inside the courthouse. They have met several times, but are not close. Role can be played by a man or a woman dressed in a suit, carrying a briefcase.

Lawyer 2: A lawyer Matthew encounters inside the courthouse. They have met several times, but are not close. Role can be played by a man or a woman dressed in a suit, carrying a briefcase.

Lawyer 3: A lawyer Matthew encounters inside the courthouse. They have met several times, but are not close. Role can be played by a man or a woman dressed in a suit, carrying a briefcase.

Greg: 36, Matthew's lover. An engineer at a small architecture firm in Alabama. Openly gay and comfortable with his sexuality. Wants to settle down with Matthew, despite the fact that he isn't out and is married. Tries hard to live with the situation he's in and enjoy it, though it tries his patience more often than not.

Prisoner: An Iraqi male imprisoned in a jail in Iraq. Should be between 30-50 years old and have a worn look.

General: Faisal's Army General. Wears uniform and is seen as a stern force to be reckoned with.

Newscaster: mid-30s. Role can be played by a man or a woman. Must have "newsy" voice. Appears periodically to assist in the telling of the trial or other news events.

Judge: This particular judge can be played by a man or a woman. Liberal ideas, free thinker, believes in what the justice system stands for, but not always what it delivers.

Setting:

In the state of Alabama, year 2012.

Most of the play takes place at the Jefferson County Jail shortly after Bill 56, a law requiring all citizens to carry proof of documentation with them at all times, is passed. According to this bill, without the appropriate papers, one faces immediate arrest and probably deportation. Politically speaking, conservatives are for the bill while others, more liberal-minded folk, believe that it legalizes racial profiling and is un-Constitutional.

Production Notes:

This show should be performed with minimal set, costumes, and props. The lighting should be stark. Sound should be used to increase intensity, with a reminder that often, the best way to do that, is through silence.

Scene 1: Jefferson County Jail, Alabama. The smallest jail in the entire state and thus, has few employees, and one large jail cell to its name. The set up on stage is thus: Far stage right is a small room setup which includes a long black table running perpendicular to the edge of the stage. There are four chairs, two set up on either side of the table. Off center, closer to the stage right side, is a singular jail cell. Stage left, upstage, there is a medium sized brown desk with a non-matching black chair. In front of the desk is a large empty space.

Faisal: I don't know if you've heard of the American concept of your one phone call...but this is it. And that's all you get. So make it count.

Rodriguez: I don't know what you mean. I was born in America. I love America. Not all Mexicans are illegal, you know. We aren't all "border-jumpers" or whatever you people call us. We aren't!

Faisal: So says the boy with the forged documents. I've heard all of the excuses that you people could possibly be smart enough to make up. It would ease my headache greatly if you were to stop speaking with me and make your phone call already. Or I'll revoke that right entirely.

Rodriguez turns and dials the phone that is USL.

Rodriguez: Hello, Mama? Where am I? I'm in jail, mama. No! I don't know. I was just...I was driving on the highway to our house from school and I stopped paying attention to how fast I was going. I guess I started to speed and then I saw the flashing lights behind me. No, I know that's a long way away from being in a jail, mama, let me finish my story. This police officer pulls me over and when he sees that I'm Mexican he asks to see my papers. So I show them to him. Yes, because I've been keeping them in my wallet now because of the new laws. Why are you crying, mama? ...No, that's right, how did you know? Right...he said that they're fake. That they're forged. He said that there is no way I was born in America. And I told him there was some mistake because I was born here in Alabama and that you and papa had come from Mexico before I was born to make a life for us here. Mama? Mama stop crying, it's okay. Once we get this straightened out I'll be right home. Can't you come down to the station and bring some other proof that I was born here? We have to have some other papers in the house that are, what do they call it now? Immediate proof of United States citizenship. Right? Mama? ...Mama? [*in disbelief*] She hung up on me.

[*in disbelief--to Faisal*] Sir? Sir. May I please try to dial my family again? I think there is a problem with the line. We lost the connection.

Faisal: No, no I don't think that's the case at all, boy. In fact, this wouldn't be the first time that I've seen an illegal mother "lose the connection" with her jailed child simply because THEY'RE ILLEGAL. Your family is going to be as useful to you now as though they were in Mexico.

Rodriguez: What does that even mean? [*without waiting for an answer*] I wish you wouldn't stereotype all Mexicans like that. My parents came here from Mexico years ago. They worked hard and became citizens. I was born in a hospital in Alabama. I've seen all the paper work many, many times.

Faisal: Stereotypes are based on truth. That's something I believe strongly. Why do you think these new laws got passed...because you were all coming here legally? No! The United States finally stood up for itself and all of it's citizens when it declared that you and your kind would have to carry your documentation on you at all times. It's no surprise to me, though that your mother hung up on you. Want to know why?

Rodriguez: [*hesitantly*] Why?

Faisal: [*sitting back comfortably in his office chair*] Because, well, my educated guess is...Your parents probably came here illegally after you were born. If they had come before and you were born here, boom, instant citizenship. However, since you obviously don't have real paperwork, I'm going to have to guess that they came after your birth. So then, they're fine hiding amongst other illegal's and other Mexicans until, finally, our government wises up and decides that illegal immigration has gone much too far. That's where the new laws come in. Let's put it this way. If your parents WERE here legally, why would they give you phony documentation to carry around? The answer to that one is, simply—THEY WOULDN'T. Your mom hung up because she's scared you'll tell the police where your family is and then they'll all get deported. She'd rather lose you than have the whole family sent back to whatever town your [*mockingly*] familia is from. And as much as I'd love to send each and every sorry one of your people back to your land, right now, YOU'RE my concern...not them.

Rodriguez: I...I don't believe you. That would mean...no...my family would never lie to me like that.

Faisal: You can not believe me all you want. The truth will bite you in the ass here soon.

Rodriguez: [*beat*] If America didn't have an open door policy, wouldn't you still be back in "your land" somewhere, wherever that is?

Faisal: Was that a "you're an Arab feel my plight" type statement? Guess what! I was born here. Which makes me an American citizen. An Iraqi-American citizen and proud of it.

Rodriguez: So proud of it that you're hiding behind your badge and shield of terror to kick honest, hardworking people out of this country?

Faisal: Honest and hardworking? Your people take the jobs away from Americans who need the work.

Rodriguez: What happened to the principles this country, my country, the country I was born in and raised to love, was founded on?

Faisal: Psh “your country.” [*using a key to open the jail cell*] That’s enough! Get into the cell. We’ll see if your parents, [*mockingly*] those hard working citizens, show up for you or if they choose to let you rot. Want to know which one my money’s on? Oh you don’t. [*patronizingly, as if speaking to a child*] Oh no are you a sad Mexican now? [*harshly*] No fiestas for you! [*slamming the cell door and locking it*]

Scene 2: A day later. Rodriguez is lying on the cot in his jail cell. He is the only one on stage—Faisal’s desk chair is empty, the magazine he had been reading overturned on his desk. Faisal enters.

Rodriguez: Where did you go? I’ve been alone here for hours.

Faisal ignores Rodriguez. Heads to desk. Puts down lunch bag on his desk. Sits in chair.

Rodriguez: So you’re not going to answer me?

Faisal begins to remove food items from the bag.

Rodriguez: Did you bring any food for me? I haven’t eaten since before I got here. I’m hungry. [*beat*] Seriously, dude?

Faisal: Do not call me “dude.”

Rodriguez: Ah, he speaks!

Faisal: I’m required to feed you three times a day for every full day you’re here.

Rodriguez: ...So you just decided to skip today?

Faisal: Keep up the attitude and I will.

Rodriguez: You can’t do that!

Faisal: Who’s stopping me?

Rodriguez: Does anyone else work here? What kind of town only has one...what are you anyway a cop or ...a...a jail keeper or...what?

Faisal: Mind your own business. Take this.

Faisal tosses Rodriguez a sandwich wrapped in tin-foil. Rodriguez leaves the sandwich where it falls in his cell. He stares at Faisal. Faisal meets Rodriguez’s eyes and holds the stare. Gets Rodriguez a cup of water and an apple and slowly walks over and places them in his cell.

Rodriguez: Thank you.

Faisal: [*crossing back to his chair and begins eating his food.*] Yeah.

Rodriguez stares at the sandwich on the floor for another minute and then, finally, decides to pick it up. He eats it rapidly (he is quite famished) which contrasts with the slow, leisurely way

that Faisal eats his meal. The ticking of the clock on the wall becomes the loudest thing in the room. The silence is almost deafening. Rodriguez begins to sip the water and then gulps it all down quickly. He finally utters...

Rodriguez: What now?

Faisal: [*Looking at him disgustedly*] Shut up.

Rodriguez walks the length of his jail cell. Makes a circle aimlessly three times and begins to cry, small, silent tears.

Scene 3: Lawyer, Matthew Grey, sitting on a bench inside a courthouse. He just finished his latest case, another victory. Around him, behind closed doors, other trials are in session. There is the general hustle and bustle of a courthouse. He is sorting through some paperwork.

Lawyer friend: [*passing by Matthew heading somewhere, making conversation*] Hey Matthew! Heard about your win. Nice work there, buddy. How many in a row is this now?

Matthew: [*Chuckling*] I lost count, Gary, but it's been a few.

Lawyer friend: Hah! The great Matthew Grey being modest! That's a first. ...A few...Hah! More like twenty-five in a row. I heard one of the clerks talking about it this morning.

Matthew: I'm good at my job, Gary, what can I say.

Lawyer friend: Well...awesome. I mean...it's really...great! That's great!

He waves goodbye and exits. Matthew goes back to what he was doing.

Lawyer friend 2: [*Entering with Lawyer friend 3, talking as they walk*] ...and a friend of mine over in Jefferson County got a tip that they picked up some Mexican as part of the new Bill 56 thing.

Lawyer friend 3: Where's he being held?

Lawyer friend 2: The Jefferson County Jail.

Lawyer friend 3: Are you kidding? Poor Mex, whoever he is. Have you ever been there?

Lawyer friend 2: No. Why in the world have you?

Lawyer friend 3: I haven't, but it's is known for permitting a general lack of...law and order among the guards that work there. The Birmingham News did a story on it a couple years back and said it was run by total racists. I haven't heard much about it since then.

Matthew: Hey...wait, what?

Lawyer friend 3: [*startled, turning toward Matthew*] ...The case in Jefferson...?

Matthew: [*embarrassed at having butted in; in explanation*] Sorry. Excuse me. I just...heard your conversation and...has that arrest been confirmed?

Lawyer friend 2: Of course. I mean...it wasn't in the papers or anything like that but I have a source who tells me that there is one prisoner and one prisoner only being kept there. His name is like...Rod. Rodney or something like that.

Matthew: And you're sure he was arrested in relation to Bill 56?

Lawyer friend 2: Yes sir.

Lawyer friend 3: You know I can't even believe they passed that law. It's the equivalent of legalizing racial profiling.

Lawyer friend 2: Don't be dramatic. It's not that bad. Besides, don't you want them out of our country anyway? I, for one, am sick of pressing 1 for English. This is America after all, damnit!

Matthew: [*Making a face at what Lawyer friend 2 has just said*] Well, thank you. And sorry again for interrupting.

Lawyer friend 3: No problem. Have a good one. [*Lawyer friends 2 and 3 exit.*]

Matthew: [*Taking out his cell phone and dialing. He waits. Someone on the other end answers the phone.*] Hey, Melissa. Are you able to access a prison record for me? It would be a recent arrest at the Jefferson County Jail. I know, I know. No, not many arrests come through there. First name Rod. Rodney. I think that's it. Something like that. It'll be a Mexican name. Yeah? What'd you find? Rodriguez. Makes sense. When was he arrested? 4 days? How in the world is that even possible? We would have heard about it by now. No, I know you're not making it up but this is definitely media worthy and it blows my mind that it hasn't hit the press yet. Someone is going out of their way to keep this a secret. Send all of the information on the case, the prison, and whatever prison guards have been on duty since the initial arrest to my PDA. Please and thank you. [*gets ready to hang up*] What's weird? ONE guard has been on duty since the arrest? Check that again; that's literally impossible. Find me whatever you can on that guy. Okay. Yeah, sounds good. Thanks. Yeah, bye. [*he hangs up the phone*]

[*to himself*] Something...something is definitely not right here.

Scene 4: The next morning. Rodriguez is staring dejectedly at the floor of his jail cell. Faisal is sitting reclined in his office chair reading a magazine.

Faisal: [*In a mock radio announcer voice.*] And the time is now 10:22 AM. [*beat*] You've been here for over 5 and a half days now, buck-o. Looks like your precious little parents decided to leave your ass here permanently.

Rodriguez: [*in a small, indignant voice*] They could still come.

Faisal: Optimism. That's good. You're going to need a lot of that where you're going.

Rodriguez: [*standing*] Let's say that I don't get out of here right now. What happens to me next?

Unbeknownst to Faisal and Rodriguez, Matthew enters USL.

Faisal: Well...that depends. You're actually one of the first arrests we've gotten to make under this new law, so my lieutenant told me we're playing it by ear. You might be appointed some shitty defense attorney who is a bleeding heart about poor spicks but, if I had it my way, we'd haul your ass back to Mexico right now. Our state budget is already limited without wasting money on a trial for you. Besides, it's unclear to me what rights you really have anyway.

Matthew: Every person arrested in the United States of America has the same rights. And right now, my client [*checking the name written on a card in his front jacket pocket*] Rodriguez LaSantoya, is being denied of far too many rights to list. What room shall my client and I set up to meet in?

Faisal: Who the hell are you?

Matthew: My name is Matthew Grey and I'll be defending Mr. LaSantoya from the ridiculous-human-rights-strangling-law that your state has just passed.

Rodriguez: Es fabuloso. Are you serious?

Matthew: Completely. I assume that you, Mr....Mr...[*gesturing toward Faisal*]

Faisal: Faisal Hossini

Matthew: Right. Mr. Hossini. I'm sure that you offered my client the services of council already, did you not?

Faisal: No, sir, actually, I did not.

Matthew: And this is because you'd like to see you and your entire department get sued? Or because you enjoy violating the United States Constitution? Or perhaps you just aren't a fan of habeas corpus.

Faisal: [*stuttering, for the first time thrown off of his game*] I...I...

Matthew: Now if you'd be so kind as to point us to a room where we can meet privately...[*Faisal stares*] And I *do* mean now.

Faisal: [*silently moving begrudgingly and showing Matthew and Rodriguez to a small room far stage right. After he shuts the door...*] Fucker.

[*in the multi-purpose meeting/interrogation room*]

Rodriguez: [*begins to speak*] Listen, thanks so much man for coming here and—

Matthew: --Listen we don't have any time for chitchat. So for now, let me do all of the talking, okay? [*not waiting for a response*] Okay. The deal is, I'll take your case pro bono, which means that I'm not asking for any money or fees from you. This is like my...charity work, so to speak. We're going to be...creating waves, stirring the pot, getting a lot of people very riled up...are you ready for that? [*again, he doesn't wait for an answer*] Of course you are. We will be fighting this social injustice and giving humanity the upper hand yet again. So what do you need to do? You need to answer all of my questions very carefully and follow my instructions to a tee. Believe me, I've won more than my fair share of cases, and it isn't because I play the game half-heartedly or depend on luck or any of that nonsense. No. I play to win. And I won't stop until I—we—win. Now, do you have any questions for me? [*waits approximately two seconds for a response*] Well?

Rodriguez: [*startled at being asked his opinion*] Well...uh...I mean...what's going to happen to me?

Matthew: What do you mean?

Rodriguez: My family...they never showed up. I don't know where they are. Do you think I can have another phone call to them? I've been here for almost eighteen hours. I think they must have gotten lost or something.

Matthew: To be quite honest, I don't think they got lost. In these situations, it's more than likely that your family has fled.

Rodriguez: Fled to where?

Matthew: Some place in the United States where they think they'll be safe. Not being deported is going to be their biggest concern right now.

Rodriguez: But I'm their son.

Matthew: Right. But who else is in your family?

Rodriguez: My mama, papa, abuela Claudia, and my three brothers.

Matthew: They're worried about themselves right now then. You are just going to become a casualty in this ugly war. And it's my job to not let them make an example out of you.

Rodriguez: [*confused*] Which I appreciate, I do, it's just that...I was born here. In America. I've never been to Mexico. My parents came here before I was born. So I just think there's been a huge mistake.

Matthew: Believe me, I do my research. There is no birth record of any Rodriguez Manuel LaSantoya anywhere in the US within five years of your date of birth. But the truth is, we don't even know if the date your family had listed on the forged papers is your correct birthday.

Rodriguez: Of course it is.

Matthew: There is no verification of that. It's simply not reliable. I know that this is hard but—

Rodriguez: But you don't know. [*hurt*] You haven't even taken the time to really know me at all. And—

Matthew: My job isn't to know you. It's to defend you.

Rodriguez: I just thought...it'd be easier to defend me if you know me? But...

Matthew: Impartiality is key.

Rodriguez: Are you serious, man? You don't try to like the people you defend. I don't think I could stick up for a guy I didn't like.

Matthew: Affection and emotion are irrelevant. The law is black and white. People only think there are gray areas because they let their feelings get in the way. I don't make that mistake. Which is why I'm a successful defense attorney. As soon as I get emotionally attached, I won't be able to do my job anymore.

Rodriguez: Okay, okay. So what's next? There's seriously no way you can find my family.

Matthew: Right now your family is the least of your worries. Right now I'm working hard to prevent you from getting deported.

Rodriguez: Oh. My. God. This is all just fucking insane. How can I be deported? Deported to where? I've never been to Mexico. My family is here. Where would I g

Matthew: We're going to prevent that from happening.

Rodriguez: You seem so sure. How can you be so sure?

Matthew: Like I said, Rodriguez. It's simple. I don't lose.

Scene 5: The Jefferson County Jail. Rodriguez is seated on the floor of his cell. Faisal is in his chair, eating a meal.

Rodriguez: What's the weather like outside?

[no response]

How are you always here? You leave for a few hours but no one ever takes your shift over. It's just you.

[no response]

Did Mr. Grey say when he'll be back?

Faisal: *[stares but doesn't answer]*

Rodriguez: Do defense attorney's normally come often? *[beat]* Will I be in here until the trial? *[beat. beat.]*... Will there even be a trial?

Faisal: *[Chewing very deliberately]* Yes.

Rodriguez: To which?

Faisal: All.

Rodriguez: What do I do until then?

Faisal: Wait.

Rodriguez: *[quietly]* That's what I was afraid of. *[Gulps down all of his water. Puts cup back on floor and begins to pace his cell first slowly, and then as he becomes more desperate his pace quickens.]*

Faisal: What the hell do you think you're doing?

Rodriguez: *[his breath coming quicker now, almost in gulps]* This... This just isn't fair. It isn't fair. *[Seems on the verge of hyperventilation.]* *[To himself.]* What do I do? What do I do? This isn't fair. Fair. It's just not...

Faisal: SHUT UP!

Rodriguez: I...I...I feel trapped. What am I supposed to...I didn't do anything wrong...I didn't, and this isn't fair. I just want...I want—*[ends up facing the jail bars between him and Faisal.]*

Faisal: *[Faisal grabs Rodriguez' shoulders through the bars to stop him.]* NO ONE CARES WHAT YOU WANT.

Rodriguez: *[startled by the physical contact and then, realizing his outburst, is embarrassed.]* I know.

[Beat. Rodriguez backs up slowly and brushes himself off. Getting angry at Faisal.]

Rodriguez: What made you such a prick, man? Were you always this way? Born a tyrant. Yeah I can see that.

Faisal: Because I look like an Arab you stereotype me a tyrant.

Rodriguez: Wow you really need to get off this whole “I’m an Arab kick.” It’s obvious you’re Middle Eastern. That doesn’t change my thoughts about you. I take cues from people that aren’t based on physical things. In your case, nothing screams “I’m A PRICK” louder than your attitude and the persona you give off that says “I’M SO MUCH BETTER THAN EVERYONE ELSE.” I’m trying to figure out if you were born with a God complex in general, or if that badge and gun made you think your dick is several inches larger than it really is.

Faisal: [*visibly angry*] One more word out of you and I shoot you.

Rodriguez: Hell at this point, I’d almost thank you. I’d rather be dead than stay here with you for the rest of my life. That’s how long you’re gonna try to keep me here, isn’t it?

Faisal: If I can help it, you’ll be back in your country before next weekend.

Rodriguez: So you’ve said, so you’ve said. When are you going back to your country? Do you ever go back to visit?

Faisal: Like I’ve told you this IS my country. And I have the paperwork to prove it.

Rodriguez: I get it. I get it. Geeeee. [*brushing himself off*] So, dude, what’s with the stuff on your lapel, anyway?

Faisal: What?

Rodriguez: On your shirt. Those pin things. They don’t really match. Ones like...old. And the others are pretty shiny.

Faisal: What’s your point?

Rodriguez: That big star pin thing is definitely older than you are. What’s the deal there?

Faisal: There is no deal.

Rodriguez: It just seems like an interesting story. That’s all.

Faisal: It is nothing!

Rodriguez: [*mockingly*] “It is nothing!” Right. Then why you getting all mad?

Faisal: [*tenderly touching the tarnished star*] I’m not going to discuss this with you.

Rodriguez: [*in a softer tone*] I just want to know something about you. Anything. You’re my only real company here, ya know.

Faisal: [*the most compassionate we’ve seen him, looking down*] Some company I am.

Rodriguez: [*confused by Faisal’s new tone*] You’re fine company I guess man it’s just that...I...

[Faisal's cell phone rings. He answers it.]

Faisal: 'Allo? Mardhaba, Malek. Yes, yes. Give me a minute. *[to Rodriguez, back to business]* I'll be back with your dinner in a bit. Don't go anywhere. *[exits]*

Rodriguez: As if I could. *[yells after Faisal]* Think you could bring me a book or something back? I'm going to go stark raving mad if I don't do something in here soon. *[no response, beat]* Man. That guy...my only companion...a Middle Eastern selective mute. What the fucks his problem? Do I even wanna know...? *[lights slowly fade to blackout]*

Scene 6: Matthew is seated at a kitchen table pouring over paperwork and files. There are books surrounding him. It is late. Penelope, Matthew's wife, enters.

Penelope: Hunny, what are you still doing up? Come to bed?

Matthew: I will soon. I just really need to finish reading this case law.

Penelope: That's what you said two hours ago. I thought after your last case was over that I was going to get my husband back. That you'd be less distracted. That we could actually spend some time together.

Matthew: [*distractedly*] And we will. I just need to do this first. You know that my work is really important. I'm changing lives.

Penelope: I do that, too, Matthew. I teach. I affect the future, too.

Matthew: [*hurriedly*] Right. But I'm fighting the system. Keeping our lawmakers honest. Putting the bad guys tight against the wall!

Penelope: The usual. I get it, I get it. [*Starts to rub his shoulders*] I don't mean to be selfish. [*beat*] I just wish that I was the one getting put tight against the wall [*leans in towards his neck*]

Matthew: [*flinching away quickly*] Penelope!

Penelope: [*Embarrassed and irritated by the rejection, turning away sharply*] ...Oh.

Matthew: I'm sorry. I didn't mean to snap. I'm just preoccupied.

Penelope: I...I'm sorry for bothering you. I shouldn't have. Not while you were working on something important. I should know better [*beat*] [*beat*] I'll be in bed. Just...don't forget to shut the lights off down here when you're done. [*leaves*]

Matthew: [*turns to call after her*] Nelly. Nells! [*but she's gone. Matthew heaves a deep sigh. He whispers-*] Goodnight, Penelope.

Matthew continues to read until he gets a text message on his phone. He opens it, read the message, quickly puts the books and papers that he is reading away, and puts his coat on. He quietly looks in the direction which Penelope has just exited and stealthily heads in the other direction out the front door. A car door slam is heard and then we hear the car that had been waiting for Matthew slowly pull away.

Scene 7: Later that night. Matthew and another man are seated close to each other in a small 24 hour café.

Greg: So you've already decided to take on another case?

Matthew: Yup.

Greg: I can hardly blame you. It's been...what, a *day* since your last case finished? I love your dedication but have you heard of the phrase "rest and relaxation?" You should try it. Maybe you'd actually like it.

Matthew: You know I don't like to let life pass me by!

Greg: No one's asking you to. Deep breaths would be nice, though. And maybe a little bit more time with those who really matter to you. and not just in dark café's in the middle of the night...

Matthew: Please don't start.

Greg: Sorry, sorry. I'm really not even advocating for myself or that issue right now, I promise. I just worry that you're going to run yourself into the ground. That's all. I worry about you.

Matthew: Which I appreciate. I really do.

Greg: I bought you something.

Matthew: What? Why?

Greg: Because I can! [*Beat. Laughs*] Okay and because exactly six months ago something wonderful started between two wonderful people and I figured I could be corny and make this a gift giving occasion. [*presents Matthew with a small box*]

Matthew: Oh my gosh. Are you serious?

Greg: Completely.

Matthew: You're ridiculous. And I didn't get you anything.

Greg: I don't give to receive. You know this. I just like to try and make you smile.

Matthew: And somehow you always do.

Greg: Open it!

Matthew opens the box. Inside are silver cufflinks.

Matthew: Wow. These are so nice!

Greg: Let's be honest...your current cufflinks are so two years ago.

Matthew: That's because they *are* from two years ago.

Greg: I'm aware. And I thought my hot attorney honey needed to be brought into this year's world of fashion.

Matthew: I'm honored. I'll wear them in the courtroom and think of you.

Greg: Mmm...I love a man in a suit.

Matthew: I know you do.

Greg: [*inching closer to Matthew*] But you know what I love you in even more?

Matthew: What?

Greg: [*whispering in Matthew's ear*] Nothing at all.

Matthew: Mmm...

Greg: [*leans in to kiss Matthew*]

Matthew: [*pushes Greg away*] Stop! You know how I feel...

Greg: There is no one around. Come on, baby...

Matthew: SHH! Greg, come on.

Greg: Six months later and I still can't get my boyfriend to give me a kiss in public.

Matthew: Right. Six months. This isn't new. The rules are still the same.

Greg: You are your rules.

Matthew: Don't be like that, Greg. You know that I care about you.

Greg: [*sighs*] I know. Let's go back to my place where the rules don't matter.

Matthew: That... sounds like the best thing I've heard all day.

Greg: [*half-smile*] Really?

Matthew: Really. I'll even show off your favorite Matthew Grey attire... [*winks*]

The two exit the cafe. End of Scene.

Scene 8: Matthew and Rodriguez are in the conference room at the jail (SL)

Rodriguez: So this thing tomorrow is where they decide if I stay in jail or not?

Matthew: Kind of. Tomorrow is your arraignment. Basically you get to hear the formal complaint against you and you enter your plea. Then the judge decides on your bail. But in your case that won't really matter.

Rodriguez: Why's that?

Matthew: There is not even the smallest possibility of you being granted bail at this point. Bill 56 was created to keep illegals out of our country. For now, the closest thing they can do to actually carrying you to the border and kicking you out is keeping you locked up somewhere where you can't escape. Like this place.

Rodriguez: So tomorrow is really just a formality.

Matthew: Yes.

Rodriguez: [*sighs*]

Matthew: However, it's also a chance for us to really make a statement. This case is a big deal. It is going to get a tremendous amount of media attention. And that is what we are after. We need the media as much as they need us. We are going to use them to serve our needs.

Rodriguez: How so?

Matthew: All you need to be aware of is the fact that I am the best at my job. Period.

Rodriguez: I know. You have like...the highest winning record or something like that.

Matthew: I have the most cases won in a row currently. But that isn't what I'm talking about. To be good at law means to be good at the public relations aspects, too. As an attorney I have always held myself to the highest standards in and out of the courtroom. It has always bothered the press that they weren't able to slander my character the way they have been able to use other people's personal lives against them. Their tactic has always been, when an attorney is doing well in the courtroom, point out their flaws outside of it. But it has never worked on me.

Rodriguez: What are you, some kind of poster child?

Matthew: In a sense. I'm just very low key. That's all.

Rodriguez: So, really, you're like this all American man. Probably have a perfect wife at home and some perfect kids attending a prep school. And a freakin' white picket fence, too, right?

Matthew: Rodriguez, let's focus on what really matters here.

Rodriguez: [*exasperated*] Rod.

Matthew: What?

Rodriguez: Rod. It's my nickname. Everyone who knows me calls me Rod.

Matthew: Rod it is, then, at least here. In court, you're going to have to go by your given name.

Rodriguez: Why? [*then, a beat*] Oh, I get it. It helps the Mexican cause if I look and sound Mexican?

Matthew: You *are* Mexican. We are just trying to portray you as you are.

Rodriguez: So what do I need to know for tomorrow?

Matthew: Just let me do all of the talking. It will be fine. Do you trust me?

Rodriguez: [*pause*] I do.

Matthew: Okay then. Get some rest. Tomorrow is going to be a big day for the state of Alabama.
[*starts to leave*]

Rodriguez: Hey, Matthew?

Matthew: Yeah Rodriguez? I mean...Rod?

Rodriguez: Have you...any word on my family yet? Has anyone found them?

Matthew: Just focus on the case right now, okay? Keep your mind on that. Just for now.

Rodriguez: ...okay.

Matthew exits.

Scene 9: That night, Jefferson County Jail.

Rodriguez is talking to himself in his jail cell, pretending to be the judge.

Rodriguez: [*as the judge*] And Mr. LaSantoya you promise that you were in fact born in the United States.

Yes sir.

[*as the judge*] Then I have no choice but to drop these vicious, unfounded charges against you. You are released with the state of Alabama's sincerest apologies.

Faisal: [*overhearing him*] Like that's going to happen.

Rodriguez: It could happen! I'm innocent after all.

[*starting another scene in his mind*]

Mr. Judge. Sir. I have never done anything wrong in my life. This has been such a surprise to me. I love America. It is the only place I've ever lived. The country I have always loved with my whole heart. [*becoming more emotional as he goes*] I am as much of a citizen as anyone here, even without the paperwork. I know the Constitution, the Pledge of Allegiance, the National Anthem... I just got accepted to college here, too. Please. Please, sir. Please... just let me go back home. Please... [*starts to cry*] It's not fair. It's just not... it's... it's not. Fair. Why isn't it ever fair?

Faisal walks over to Rodriguez and is now staring through the bars at him.

Rodriguez: [*Walking around his cell frantically*] It's not fair. It's not fair. It's not... FAIR. Help [*gasping for breath*] Someone... get me out of here. Help. It's... not fair.

Faisal: [*Withdraws his weapon from the holster on his hip. Walks slowly over to Rodriguez's jail cell and interrupts him.*] –SIT. THE. FUCK. DOWN. [*Rodriguez crouches down on the floor, catching his breath and finally aware of his surroundings again*] Who the hell told you life would be fair? I promise you this, you little Mexican sharmuta... they lied to you. You want to hear what's not fair? Do you? Life's not fair. Life's not fair to those people it owes fairness to. What is not fair is being born in America and being treated like a terrorist because of my nationality. What is not fair is serving in wars both on United States soil and in the Middle East and being ostracized as a foreigner by the same country I fought to protect. What is not fair is watching my family die, killed by yet another group of people who don't understand us. And what is especially not fair is that right now I cannot shoot you in the head for how utterly stupid you are. [*shaking with rage, gun still outstretched. Faisal slowly retracts the gun, puts it back in his holster, and walks back to his desk.*]

Rodriguez, crying and shaking, lies down on the cot in his cell.

Rodriguez: Padre nuestro, que estás en el cielo, santificado sea tu nombre; venga a nosotros tu reino; hágase tu voluntad en la tierra como en el cielo. Danos hoy nuestro pan de cada día; perdona nuestras ofensas,...

Scene 10: The Jefferson County Jail conference room, two days later, following the arraignment. Faisal enters, enraged. Matthew and Rodriguez sit across the table from each other, surprised at the sudden intrusion.

Faisal: This is absolutely ludicrous. You...you...you both have helped to smear my good name.

Matthew: What in the world are you referring to?

Faisal: This...This...THIS BULLSHIT! [*throws a magazine at Matthew*]

Rodriguez: What's it say, Mr. Grey?

Matthew reads the newspaper article out loud.

Matthew: "...The real injustice appears to lie, however, in the captivity of the youth, Rodriguez LaSantoya, by the far too vigilant Alabama police officer Faisal Hossini. LaSantoya was held for days in the Jefferson County jail, which may be the smallest jail in the entire state of Alabama. Hossini kept constant watch over the Mexican illegal immigrant the entire time he was there, not an overly difficult feat considering his home is connected to the side of the prison. Hossini would go home to sleep, then return to the one room jail in order to better keep watch over his prisoner.

LaSantoya was arrested by Hossini for exceeding the speed limit while driving on the highway. When he was unable to produce authentic US documentation, Hossini arrested him. The case itself, however, didn't hit the airwaves for almost a week following the event, only after infamous defense attorney Matthew Grey had agreed to take the case pro bono.

Bill 56 itself is still very controversial, referred to by some as legal racial profiling. The question Alabama is left with today, though, is...

Faisal cuts Matthew off.

Faisal: What it really is saying is... "The question is...should Iraqi police officers be allowed to racially profile anyone at all? Do we really live in such an unjust society that a Middle Eastern man is allowed to terrorize an illegal immigrant when, in reality, they both could be deported at any minute? And, perhaps, they should be..."

Rodriguez:...Woah. That's not--

Matthew: [*cutting him off*]-Mr. Hossini, you are aware that one magazine's attitude towards you and my client does not represent how America feels. And I can hardly take responsibility for bringing this on you myself.

Faisal: How can you not? Something you said in the arraignment must have set the media off! They're clearly taking sides against me. You have pitted them against me. Dropping the word "terrorized" as their preconceived notions about Arabs rush to the surface. How dare they! How dare you!

Matthew: Hossini. We have done absolutely nothing wrong. If anything, perhaps this will make you reconsider your attitude toward my client.

Faisal: What is that supposed to mean? I am nothing like that boy.

Matthew: You are more similar than you allow yourself to see. Both of you love America. Both of you feel discriminated by America and it's citizens, but you, unlike Rodriguez, have the luxury of actually being an American citizen.

Faisal: So my own people are turning against me yet again...again.

Faisal hastily exits the room.

Rodriguez: What's he mean his own people turning against him again? What's this guy's story? He's so intense!

Matthew: He has a story, that's for sure. I don't know what it is. I don't know if I even want to. Some things are better left...

Rodriguez: I don't think that's true. I think that anything that weighs on your mind like that has to be worth telling someone. Even if it doesn't feel good to tell them. Because at least he'll feel better once he gets it off his chest. My mama always used to say to me "Que el secreto de tu alma sera a aquel que te livre."

Matthew: Which means?

Rodriguez: It means that telling the secret of your soul will set you free.

Matthew: Ah, I see. And you believe that.

Rodriguez: Si, of course. Any time I have ever tried to be dishonest I have failed.

Matthew: You're a terrible liar?

Rodriguez: I don't know if it's that. I just...I have a strong conscience. Have you ever felt so badly about something that it made you so sick you couldn't even stand it? You had to tell someone else right away or you'd go crazy?

Matthew: [*hesitantly*]...I don't know if...

Rodriguez: [*not waiting for him to finish*] It's happened to me several times. Where my mama and papa either told me that I couldn't do something or couldn't have something. And I thought...what do they know? Or why should they care? It doesn't concern them! So I would do what I wanted anyway. And somewhere along the way I would start to feel guilty. Just the burden of lying to people I loved every day...it was—

Matthew:[*anxiously cutting him off*] --Enough! Rodriguez, I've had enough of your stories. I'll be back in a few days to go over details for the actual trial, ok? Until then...get some rest or something, ok? [*Matthew hastily exits the room*]

Rodriguez: [*confused*] Why is everyone in such a bad mood today? [*beat*] Get rest. Like there's anything else for me to do here, anyway. This place is so fucking boring.

Scene 11: Greg's apartment. A stylish, yet small living room. Greg and Matthew are seated on a couch center stage.

Greg: Long day?

Matthew: It wasn't so bad.

Greg: Then what's up?

Matthew: Nothing.

Greg: Right. I believe that.

Matthew: Good. You should.

Greg: Baby. Come on. You aren't being yourself.

Matthew: Gah it's just something my client said. It really made me think.

Greg: The Mexican high schooler? Must have been some profound thought.

Matthew: Just...I don't know. It's not important. [*trying to cheer up*] The important thing is that I'm with you now. That's all that matters.

Greg: Exactly.

Matthew goes over toward Greg. Cuddles up next to him. His phone rings from across the room. He tries to ignore it but is unable to. Starts to go get it, but Greg tugs him back down a bit.

Greg: Baby, stay here. It can't be that urgent.

Matthew: But it might be—[*stops himself*]

Greg:--It might be who?

Matthew: No one. Nevermind.

Greg: No. Say it. It might be...your wife!

The phone stops ringing.

Matthew: Don't be like that.

The phone starts again. Both men stare at each other.

Greg: Just go get it.

Matthew: [*goes over, grabs phone and answers it*] Hi honey. No, no I got held up at work. Yeah, I spent a little too long delving into Rodriguez' history after the arraignment. Yeah there was a lot of news coverage. We are making a big splash. Yeah, no no...I'll be home for dinner but a little late, okay? No need to keep it hot for me, no. Yeah. Okay. Well, I'll see you soon, okay? Yup...yeah. [*glancing at Greg*]...Yeah, love you, too. [*hangs up the phone*].

[beat]

Greg: Let me guess. You have to go.

Matthew: Stop. Please don't make me feel worse about it than I already do. You know I don't want to go be with her anymore than you want me to.

Greg: I don't understand then. Just leave her. She doesn't make you happy the way I do.

Matthew: Stop it.

Greg: NO! I'm sick of you telling me to stop. I can't help the way I feel about you. And it kills me every time you leave me for that woman.

Matthew: That woman is my wife.

Greg: Don't remind me!

Matthew: I can't just pick up after ten years of marriage and leave her. I can't just say, oh hey honey by the way I'm...I'm...I--

Greg: You're GAY? Is that the word you're having trouble pronouncing?

Matthew: I'm not even that...gay...

Greg: Wait so now there are different levels of gay? Believe me, Matthew, the only level that matters is that you like me to be on top of you and—

Matthew: [cutting him off] Are you kidding me right now?

Greg: The man I'm in love with is married to a *woman* and won't even admit that he's sleeping with me. So no, I'm not kidding. The guy I call my *love*, that likes to wake up next to me and that he, and I quote, sees the future in my eyes... Where's that man right now, huh? Because this guy I see in front of me isn't him and I don't like it. Not for a second.

Matthew: I have to go. [beat] I have to go; I'm sorry.

Greg: [defeated] I'm sorry, too. I really am.

Matthew: [leans over to kiss Greg before he goes. Greg pulls away.] I'll see you soon.

Greg: Yeah. When it's convenient. Don't worry. [beat] Have fun with Penelope.

Matthew starts for the door. Hesitates. Then continues out.

Scene 12: Matthew quietly enters the house and closes the door behind him. He sets his briefcase down to the side of the door and starts to creep soundlessly into the room. He is stopped by the sound of his wife's voice.

Penelope: About time.

Matthew: Sorry, honey. I told you I got caught up doing stuff for the case.

Penelope: What in the world are you doing for the case that kept you until eight in the evening?

Matthew: You know. All the stuff that goes into this. I need to know that boy, his family, and the law better than anyone. If I want to win this, that is.

Penelope: And God knows you hate to lose.

Matthew: Is that such a bad thing? You act like me trying to succeed is such a crime.

Penelope: It's not a crime. It's not. You know I'm proud of you. I just...wish I got to see you more. That's all.

Matthew: Well [*beat*] I'm with you now.

Penelope: I know and that's all that matters [*breaking down into tears*]

Matthew: Nelly. Nelly, baby. [*Goes over to comfort her*] What's wrong? What's the matter baby? Baby, tell me what's wrong!

Penelope: I just had a rough day. That's all.

Matthew: Tell me about it...What happened?

Penelope: One of my students is dead.

Matthew: What? How?!

Penelope: [*trying to compose herself between sobs—also, trying to reason the situation out in her mind to make it make sense*] Do you think it's wrong to be gay?

Matthew: [*shocked and nervous*] What? Why would you ask me that?

Penelope: I need to know what you think.

Matthew: Honey, I want to hear about your day. What does being gay have to do with that?

Penelope: [*A mess. Through her tears come jumbled thoughts*] So many people are homophobic. Scared of gay people. Or just downright mean to them. Even the people who are supposed to be nice to everyone...the religious people...aren't they supposed to love everyone? But they only say they do. Then they condemn you to hell. And I don't think she's going to hell. I hope she's not...But...I just wish she had felt like she could talk to someone. Anyone. Me. Why not me? If she had trusted someone enough to talk, then maybe it wouldn't have happened.

Matthew: Honey...

Penelope: Rachel Lokend committed suicide last night.

Matthew: Wait...wh—Was she...

Penelope: Gay? Yeah.

Matthew: Oh.

Penelope: She must have felt so alone. Can you even imagine? Imagine feeling so alienated that you can't talk to anyone. Like you have this...this...barrier between you and the world. I can't even imagine.

Matthew: [*quietly*] I can.

Penelope: [*not hearing Matthew, continuing*] She was such a good student. And a sweet girl. And now she's gone. Because she is...was...a girl who likes girls. Like that even matters! [*getting hysterical*] Her biggest worry should have been finishing her homework before school starts or whether or not she had to stay after school for practice. Not whether or not she wanted to live or die!

Matthew: Nelly...[*reaching out to embrace her*]

Penelope: [*falling into his arms*] It's just not fair...it's not. It's not fair. It's not fair...

Matthew: [*stroking her hair, small silent tears falling down his cheeks, too*] I know...I know...

Scene 13: *The following scene is a flashback in Faisal's mind. The place is Iraq approximately ten years earlier. The stage is black. The first sound we hear is silence, followed by a loud, violent SLAP. A spotlight slowly reveals an Arab prisoner on his knees with his arms tied*

together with a rope behind him. A guard, Faisal, stands over him. The prisoner's face is bleeding slightly from the most recent slap.

Faisal: Now, ya ibben el sharmuta. Tell me what I want to know.

Prisoner: [*silence*]

Faisal: I have the power to kill you.

Prisoner: [*silence*]

Faisal [*slaps him again, harder this time*]

Prisoner: Hayatak killa wmab illak.

Faisal: Never? We'll see about that.

Prisoner: [*spits in Faisal's face*]

Faisal takes the butt of his gun and hits the Prisoner in the face with it. The Prisoner grunts and inhales sharply as he is hit with the weapon. Faisal does the same thing again. And again. On the fourth blow, the Prisoner falls to his right side, unable to use his hands to stop himself. He is able to mutter one word.

Prisoner: Khayen.

Faisal: Khayen? Khayen?

Prisoner: You are one of us. Yet you serve them.

Faisal: I am an American by birth.

Prisoner: But an Iraqi by nationality. And yet you serve Shaytan al akbar and it's white devils.

Faisal: [*Smirks*] And what does it mean to be Iraqi? Saddam Hussein killed thousands of 'Iraqis' and after we had the guts to get rid of him you Sunnis started a civil war against your 'Iraqi' Shia'a brothers...so pardon me if I don't identify with being called 'Iraqi'.

Prisoner: Disgrace to Iraq.

Faisal: Yes, you are.

Prisoner: [*Staring up at Faisal's lapel, at the large star badge*] You don't deserve that.

Faisal: It was my grandfather's.

Prisoner: Then he had honor.

Faisal: He gave it to me when I joined the American army.

Prisoner: If he had known what you would do to your own country, your own people, he would never have.

Faisal: Jido gave it to me and told me to wear it next to my American pins.

Prisoner: Your grandfather wanted you to remember where you came from. You wear that still, yet you've forgotten.

Faisal: Say what you will about me. But you will tell me, now, what I want to know, or you won't live to see the outside of this room again.

The prisoner is silent for a moment. Faisal paces for a moment or two as his rage builds. Without warning, he grabs the Prisoner by the neck and pushes him against the wall (or down on the floor still, as the space permits). The Prisoner is unable to breathe for several seconds. Faisal releases him momentarily. Prisoner pants, trying to catch his breath. Faisal begins to strangle him again.

Faisal: Ehki! Speak if you know what's good for you.

Faisal continues to brutalize the prisoner for another minute, not letting him catch his breath long enough to talk until, finally, during one of the moments he isn't being strangled he manages to utter...

Prisoner: Wait.

Faisal begins to strangle him again. The prisoner thrashes violently. Faisal releases.

Faisal: Yes?

Prisoner: I'll talk.

Faisal: I knew you'd come around.

Faisal throws him onto the floor and looks through the glass window. He smiles and nods. The door to the interrogation room opens and a general walks in.

General: Excellent, yet again. You've proven yourself more than capable here, Faisal.

Faisal: Thank you, sir.

General: The interrogation in the next room needs you.

Faisal: Yes, sir. [*starts to exit*]

General: [*calling after him*] Faisal.

Faisal: [*turning around*] Yes sir.

Prisoner: [*begins to whisper the Iraqi National Anthem to himself*]

We will drink from death

But we will not be slaves to our enemies

We do not want

An eternal humiliation

Nor a miserable life

We do not want

But we will return

Our great glory

My homeland

My homeland

General: [*to Faisal*] Your work won't soon be forgotten.

Faisal: Thank you sir.

Faisal exits. The General slowly and deliberately walks over to the Prisoner. Silently he grabs his throat, pulls him up slightly off the ground, and uses his other hand to slap him. The prisoner cries out. Blackout.

Scene 14: Jefferson County Jail. The day following the suicide at Penelope's school. Matthew storms in.

Matthew: Faisal. I need to meet with my client. Now.

Rodriguez: I don't know where he is, Mr. Grey. He hasn't been in here all morning.

Matthew: You've been here alone all morning?

Rodriguez: I'm getting used to it. I'm surprised I haven't started talking to myself. It's boring as hell up in here.

Matthew: [*looking around*] Yeah. How is it that you're the only prisoner here?

Rodriguez: Wish I knew. Weird, right? But isn't this like...the smallest jail in 'Bama?

Matthew: [*not convinced*] Something like that. But...anyway...let's talk.

Rodriguez: What's wrong, Mr. Grey?

Matthew: What do you mean?

Rodriguez: You seem all kinds of...weird today.

Matthew: What's it to you?

Rodriguez: Excuse me?

Matthew: Why do you always seem to care?

Rodriguez: I'm sorry?

Matthew: You always want to know how I'm doing. How that Arab is doing. And he's horrible to you.

Rodriguez: He's not that bad.

Matthew: He would rather deport you than to have you sit here and look at him.

Rodriguez: I made progress. We even had a mini-conversation the other day. Listen, I'm really not at the liberty to be picky about the people I get to talk to these days. Especially when it's really just...you two.

Matthew: [*snappily*] It's weird.

Rodriguez: [*calmly*] Want to talk about whatever's bothering you?

Matthew: No. No I do not. Let's focus on the case for now.

Rodriguez: Whatever you say.

Matthew: Now, we've been getting a lot of press about the Constitutional issues here. I think that after this case is done, they'll review this law as a whole. But until then, we need to make our fight as convincing as possible.

Rodriguez: I still can't believe that some people consider this to be legal.

Matthew: It's in the gray part of the spectrum. It would be much easier if it were a cut and dry case. But everyone has different thoughts and opinions on immigration and this law capitalized largely on that.

Rodriguez: And because of that gray area and people's fears and prejudices...I will never see my family again.

Rodriguez starts to become emotional.

Matthew: You might.

Rodriguez: Might.

Matthew: It just might not seem likely right now.

Rodriguez: Not at all.

The two sit in silence for a moment. Rodriguez wipes a few tears from his eyes.

Rodriguez: One summer, when I was younger, I went to sleep-away camp. It was my first time spending the night away from my family and I was so excited. I packed all of my things and got ready to experience the great adventures that wait for a small boy at camp. On that first day, I fished, and hiked, and ate s'mores. I had fun. But at night, everyone seemed to break into groups of their friends. They all knew each other from the summer before. And no one wanted to make room in their group for me. One boy even said that I should go back to where I came from. I said the name of my town and he laughed and said, no...your country. I was confused. I didn't understand. But more than that...I was sad. A counselor helped me call my mama and I cried. She told me that all I had to do was be patient and all of the boys would become my friends. "What's not to like about you, Rodriguez?" she said. "Every little boy in the world should want to be friends with you. And they will. They just need to stop looking at your outside and concentrate on your inside. On that big old heart of yours." She told me, "Be strong, mi niño, be strong." And I was. I marched back to my room and sat there with those boys, ignoring their silence, and trying to let my heart shine through. That's what mama would have wanted. ...ya know what? They eventually came around to me. [beat] And that was the first real time that I had to deal with racism. Part of me thought that I would only have to put up with it from eight year old boys who didn't know better...not full grown adults. Not the justice system...

Matthew: You've faced a lot of racism?

Rodriguez: Yes. But, gracias a Dios, not as much as I could have, I suppose.

Matthew: What was the hardest part in dealing with it all?

Rodriguez: [pondering this for a minute] Having the courage to still be myself, despite the way others reacted to me.

Matthew: [contemplatively] Isn't it interesting that sometimes the hardest thing to be is yourself?

Rodriguez: I wish it weren't so. Being me, or being you, or being anyone...it's hard. It's hard because of...oh, so many things. What we think we want for ourselves. What society wants for

us. What our parents, our religions, our friends...what they want for us, too. Standing out from the crowd is never an easy thing to do.

Matthew: ...Yeah.

Rodriguez: [*chuckling to himself*] My friend, Michael, he's gay, he always quotes Marilyn Monroe. Apparently she once said, "In order to be irreplaceable, one must always be different"...or something like that. There's a quote for ya.

Matthew:...Interesting. [*Lost in thought.*]

Rodriguez: Penny for your thoughts?

Matthew: [*coming back to reality*] No it's just that...I...I [*beat*] I don't know why I'm telling you this but... I have a secret I've been keeping. And it's becoming too much. I want to let it go. But I don't know how anymore. [*beat*] It's just...I've been pretending for so long. Because I've been so scared of hurting her...of what my friends would think...of what would happen to my career...I don't even know where to start with the truth.

Rodriguez: Start with yourself.

Matthew: What?

Rodriguez: Start with yourself. Come clean to *you*. You're the only one in this equation who really matters, after all.

Matthew: But my wife...

Rodriguez: Loves you. And wants you to be happy.

Matthew: What if my happiness jeopardizes her happiness?

Rodriguez: I have a feeling that if you aren't really happy, she isn't either.

Matthew: Do you think?

Faisal enters, startling Matthew and Rodriguez.

Faisal: What are you doing here?

Matthew: Where've you been?

Faisal: Doing work. Looks pretty cozy in here.

Rodriguez: We were having a heart to heart.

Matthew: Really, I was just leaving.

Faisal: Don't leave on my account.

Matthew: No, no...I have to get going anyway. I need to...talk to my wife.

Matthew quickly gathers his things, puts them in his briefcase, nods to Faisal, and heads for the door. Before he exits, he turns back toward Rodriguez.

Matthew: Thank you.

Rodriguez: [*whispers*] Be strong.

Scene 15: The Gray living room. Matthew and Penelope are both seated on the couch, center stage.

Penelope: Baby...what's wrong?

Matthew: Please. Don't call me that.

Penelope: [*surprised and slightly put off*] ...Okay.

Matthew: I love you. You know that...and that I always will.

Penelope: [*coaxing him on*] But...?

Matthew: But nothing. That's a fact.

Penelope: [*frustrated by this game*] Matthew, why are you bringing this up? What's going on?

Matthew: Because...

Penelope: Because...

Matthew: Because I'm...gay. I'm...gay, Nelly...I'm gay.

Matthew stares at Penelope trying to gauge her reaction.

Penelope: Since when?

Matthew: What?

Penelope: Since when are you gay? [*becoming gradually more hysterical*] Have you always been gay? Or did you just start...? Do you even love me?

Matthew: Of course I love you. Of course. But I just..

Penelope: Like men.

Matthew: Don't put it like that, Nelly.

Penelope: How do you want me to put it, Matthew? HOW? [*crying, now*]

Matthew begins to cry, too. They sit there, facing each other but looking down, for an agonizingly long moment.

Penelope: [*weakly*] Explain.

Matthew: What?

Penelope: Explain yourself. [*beat*] Now!

Matthew starts to question Penelope but then stops, realizing she means for him to talk right now.

Matthew: I don't even know where to start. I have always kind of known that I was different than everyone else. You and I met when we were still in college. And when we met I was sort of seeing someone else. But I put them aside for you. Because you were most important to me.

Penelope: Why is that? Because you were too scared to be a gay lawyer?

Matthew: YES! That's exactly why. I liked you just as much as I did Bobby.

Penelope: Bobby? BOBBY FISCHER! I KNEW THE GUY YOU WERE WITH?!

Matthew: Penelope please stop yelling. Yes you knew him. But he didn't mean anything to me. He was just an experiment.

Penelope: Obviously not if you're gay now.

Matthew: That's the thing. I didn't want it to turn out this way. But ever since the first time I kissed Bobby...nothing has ever been the same. How corny is that! But...I didn't feel like that for a long time after Bobby.

Penelope: [*crying silently, looking firmly at Matthew*] Didn't I ever make you happy?

Matthew: You did. You did. You do!! But...somewhere along the way it wasn't enough. My heart hurt because of how much I missed having someone there that I felt that strongly for. Someone who loved me in the same way that I loved them...him.

Penelope: Are you seeing someone now?

Matthew: Um...

Penelope: [*fiercely; demanding*] TELL ME, DAMNIT. I deserve to know.

Matthew: Yes.

Penelope: Who? [*beat*] WHO ARE YOU FUCKING BEHIND MY BACK? [*beat*] Do I know him?

Matthew: His name is Greg. He's an architect. You don't know him.

Penelope: Has he ever come here? Have you ever...been together in *my* house?

Matthew: No. No. I wouldn't do that to you.

Penelope: I don't know what you'd do to me anymore.

Matthew: Penelope, stop. I'm not doing anything TO YOU.

Penelope: SHUT UP.

Matthew: [*getting angry for the first time*] NO!

Penelope: [*taken aback; quietly*] ...what did you just say to me?

Matthew: I know you're upset. But...you need to know that I'm not *doing* this to you. I'm not *doing* anything. I wish that I weren't like this. But I can't fight it anymore; this is who I am and I'm sick of living a lie, Penelope. I can't do it anymore. It isn't fair to me. And it certainly isn't fair to you.

Penelope: [*quietly*] You're right.

Matthew: [*surprised*] I am?

Penelope: I've known something was up for a while now. I didn't want to admit it. I didn't want to know the truth. But I've always known. You've never been anything but sweet and kind to me. And I thank you for that. But we've never known what it was like to have a love set on fire. To have passion. [beat] I always just thought maybe you and I weren't passionate people. But now I know the truth.

They sit in silence for a minute.

Matthew: Penelope. I don't know what to say...I'm sor—

Penelope: [*cutting him off*] You don't have to say anything. I'm sorry, too.

She begins to stand up and walk out of the room. Before she reaches the door she stops and turns back toward Matthew, who is still on the couch.

Penelope: Does he make you happy?

Matthew: [*simply*] Yes.

Penelope: [*thinking for a minute; slowly*] Good.

She exits the room. Matthew sits on the couch crying for another minute or two, then dries his tears, leans back, and...something similar to a glimmer of a smile appears on his face.

Scene 16: Jefferson County Jail. Faisal sits in his usual chair reading the newspaper. Rodriguez is sleeping restlessly on the cot in his jail cell. He starts to murmur different things, talking in his sleep. The dream finally gives way to consciousness as he awakes with a start.

Faisal: Are you okay?

Rodriguez: Just a nightmare.

Faisal: That's the fourth one this week.

Rodriguez: You're keeping track?

Faisal: Unintentionally. *[pause]* What are they about?

Rodriguez: My family...The trial. Mostly the trial. The whole thing just freaks me out.

Faisal: How?

Rodriguez: A bunch of people I don't even know get to decide my future. And most of them are probably the ones who want the bill to be passed in the first place.

Faisal: That doesn't mean you need to worry yourself out of sleep right now. As long as you tell the truth, I don't think you have any reason to be worried.

Rodriguez: *[stares at Faisal without responding]*

Faisal: What?

Rodriguez: That was the first time you've ever sounded like you even sort of believe that I'm telling the truth.

Faisal: *[slightly embarrassed]* Oh. Well...

Rodriguez: What made you change your mind?

Faisal: I haven't changed my mind.

Rodriguez: Then...?

Faisal: You're just...

Rodriguez: ...Yes?

Faisal: Not as bad as I thought.

Rodriguez: *[slightly amused]* So you don't hate Mexicans as much as you thought you did.

Faisal: *[quickly]* It has nothing to do with Mexicans. You. You're what I'm talking about here.

Rodriguez: Well...it's a start.

The two sit in dead silence for a moment. Beat.

Faisal: So...the trial's going full force now.

Rodriguez: Yes, sir.

Faisal: How do you think you're doing?

Rodriguez: It's hard to say. Mr. Grey seems to think we have a good chance.

Faisal: They dismissed the jury, I heard.

Rodriguez: Yeah I figured my chances were better with one judge than a whole jury of my "peers." I'm the first unlucky guy to have gotten arrested under this law. And a lot of people think it's an unfair thing, too, so some people are working to get it over turned. From what I hear, it really all depends on my outcome. If the judge says that I'm innocent, the whole bill could get overturned afterward. [*realizing who he's talking to*] Which I know you really wouldn't want but...

Faisal: Don't worry. I support the American legal system. What they say, goes.

Rodriguez: Just like that? Even though you're the one who arrested me?

Faisal: Yes.

Rodriguez: You'd be okay with me getting off and...what did you say before...being a leach on your country and supporting lethargy in the population...or something like that.

Faisal: I apologize. I...overstepped.

Rodriguez: You don't have to apologize. I'm just...surprised. That's all.

Silence.

Rodriguez: Can I ask you a question?

Faisal: [*hesitantly*] I guess.

Rodriguez: How are you so pro-America? Not to be cliché but...it's like you bleed the American flag. And it's—

Faisal: --surprising coming from a first generation immigrant?

Rodriguez: Well...yeah.

Faisal: It's a long story.

Rodriguez: Let's be honest...I'm not going anywhere.

Faisal: [*chuckles*] Touche.

Rodriguez: You don't have to tell me it's just...

Faisal: [*contemplating*] I've never told anyone.

Rodriguez: ...Ever?

Faisal: No. I think my choices have always confused those around me, but no one knows why I made them. In fact...I think you're the first person who's asked.

Rodriguez: What about your family?

Faisal: My parents are dead. The rest of my family is still in Iraq. What's left of my family. And of my country.

Rodriguez: But you were born here?

Faisal: Right. My parents left Iraq right after they got married. They wanted to start a family in America. Big dreams for a big country.

Rodriguez: Have you been to Iraq?

Faisal: Many times. When I was young I would go with my parents in the summer to visit. Until I was ten.

Rodriguez: Did they stop going then?

Faisal: No. But I did.

Rodriguez: Why?

Faisal: I had to.

Rodriguez: Did something happen?

Faisal, overwhelmed, slowly takes a seat on the floor outside of Rodriguez's cell.

Faisal: A lot.

Silence. Rodriguez waits patiently for Faisal to talk. Faisal toys with his large tarnished star pin until he finally works up the nerve to speak.

Faisal: It was never home there. But I wanted it to be. We visited family friends every summer and I would play with their kids. And then. One day I was playing with these two beautiful girls, Amira and Farrah. They were my closest friends there. The boys teased me but they were jealous that the girls enjoyed to spend time with me. With me. We played close to the side of town where the Americans lived. Our parents told us not to get too close. We weren't allowed over there. But we lost track of where we were playing. No kid ever pays attentions to such details when playing "tag."

At this point, Faisal becomes so engrossed in his monologue that he seems to have forgotten Rodriguez's presence.

Faisal: Farrah tagged me and I was "it." I chased after Amira first and then Farrah, too. They stopped running, suddenly, and whispered to each other. Then they came toward me, laughing so loudly. They tackled me down onto the ground and started to tickle me. We rolled there, in the

middle of the street for a minute. They were laughing and I was laughing. Until they stopped. Suddenly. Their eyes looked over my head and grew wide. I turned. A group of...maybe five...maybe ten boys were advancing our way quickly. It all happened so fast. I yelled “Run!” and we started down an alley, in the direction of Amira’s house. But I fell. And I was beaten by the men who chased us. I shouldn’t have been on the ground with young girls, they said. I shouldn’t take advantage of them. I am horrible. I need to be taught. I stopped being able to see straight as they continued to hit me. So I closed my eyes. When I woke up, I was on the sidewalk still, but a pale man stood over me, helping me stand, putting bandages on my open wounds. This man spoke to me. He took me to his home. And he made me better. This man, this American man, showed me what it was to care about someone. I know that I had experienced some sort of...affection before that. I was not an unloved child. But he...he changed someone in me. About the way I saw the world. Something as small as that. He became my friend that summer. That American man. Every day I would meet him at a café and we would talk. He took me serious. Me. Little...me. And he taught me about America. Things that I didn’t know, even growing up there. He believed in everything this country stands for with everything he was worth. My whole life I had been told lies about the country where I lived and the country where I was from. Everything was gray area—nothing clear. But that summer it became clear. It was that man who made me stand for something. Stand for myself against people like those men who beat an innocent boy for having fun. Stand for America.

Rodriguez: ...I don’t even know what to say...

Faisal wipes away whatever tears have accumulated in his eyes and shakes off the moment and bad memory. Realizing himself...

Faisal: [*flustered*] Nevermind. It’s not im—I shouldn’t have even...

Rodriguez: [*reaching through his jail cell, trying to grab hold of Faisal*] No, no. I’m glad you told me. I don’t think differently of you. Sometimes we just need to let go of the burden. Sometimes...

Faisal: Why do you care? Why do you pretend like you care about my life when I’ve been nothing but mean to me?

Rodriguez: You’ve just been doing your job.

Faisal: And you were just minding your own business. You didn’t even *know* you were not a citizen. And now, here you are. In jail for weeks. Alone. With me and that pompous lawyer as your only companions. How have you not lost your mind yet?

Rodriguez: To be honest...I don’t know. I just keep telling myself that it will be okay. And that I will get out of here.

Faisal: And that works?

Rodriguez: [*shrugs*] Sometimes. But other times I cry.

Faisal: When?

Rodriguez: At night. When you're gone. But then I realize that I'm not helping myself or anyone by doing that. What progress has ever occurred because someone felt sorry for himself?

Faisal: Then the whole story I just told you means nothing.

Rodriguez: That's not true. It was a burden on you. You needed to tell someone.

Faisal: It's okay for me to talk about my feelings but you aren't allowed to have any?

Rodriguez: That's not what I mean—

Faisal: But that's what you're saying. And doing. And it doesn't make sense. Cut yourself some slack. You're a young boy. Not the designated caretaker of your fucked up prison guard and lawyer.

Rodriguez: [*becoming angry*] What do you want me to say, Faisal? I'm pissed off because I just spent what feels like an eternity in the world's smallest jail cell? That I want to scream because the only place I've ever known won't accept me anymore? That I'm sick and tired of being the odd man out. Never feeling accepted. Never fitting in. Always the fucking outcast! IS THAT WHAT YOU WANT TO HEAR?

Faisal: [*taken aback, but relieved to finally see emotion come from Rodriguez*] Yes.

Faisal exits SL for a minute, brings back 2 soda bottles, takes the jail cell keys from his pocket, and unlocks the door of the cell. He opens the door, sits Indian-style on the floor slightly outside of the cell and sets one soda in front of him. The other soda he puts in the middle between Rodriguez and himself. He motions for Rodriguez to sit down.

Faisal: [*smiling*] So you've never felt like you've fit in either?

Rodriguez slowly sits down as the lights begin to fade, until the stage goes black.

Scene: 17-The courtroom. Final day of the trial.

Judge: Because of the sensitive and prejudice setting circumstances of this case, this matter has received my utmost attention. The decision I have arrived at is not one that was reached without serious time, thought, or labor. Rather, it has troubled me deeply. However, today I stand by the verdict I will pronounce in the name of liberty, justice, and, in my mind, most importantly, in protection of the Constitution of the United States of America. Will the defendant please rise?

Matthew and Rodriguez both rise.

Judge: On the sole count of the indictment, trespassing on United States soil in violation of Bill 56, I find the defendant, Rodriguez LaSantoya...not guilty. You are free to go, Mr. LaSantoya. And, son...

Rodriguez: Yes, sir?

Judge: [*in aside form, more jovially than in his previous speech*] Please go get yourself a green card so we don't run into this problem again, okay?

Rodriguez: Yes, sir!

Rodriguez hugs Matthew, overjoyed.

Rodriguez: Thank you, thank you, thank you Mr. Grey! There aren't words to describe your kindness to me.

Matthew: Rodriguez [*correcting himself*]...Rod...it has been...an honor.

Rodriguez: I know that I can never begin to fully pay you back but—

Matthew: Silencio, por favor. [*laughing with Rodriguez at his attempt to speak Spanish*] Today there will only be talk of celebration. Nothing else.

Rodriguez: I can live with that. Let's go find Faisal. He's singing some sort of Arabic victory song without us.

Matthew: [*jokingly*] And we wouldn't want to miss that.

The two exit the courtroom to find Faisal standing in the hallway.

Rodriguez: [*bounding over to Faisal to give him a hug*] Did you hear the good news? I can stay!

Faisal: I did hear. Congratulations. [*hugging Rodriguez half-heartedly*]

Rodriguez: Whatsa matter, Faisal? [*pulling back*] Aren't you glad for me?

Faisal: No, no, of course I am. It's just...

Rodriguez: What?

Faisal: Nothing.

Rodriguez: No, please. Tell me what's wrong.

Faisal: There are people outside protesting.

Rodriguez: Protesting what?

Faisal: Your release.

Matthew: They're doing WHAT?

Faisal: Those people are so racist that they can't even stand to have this poor boy released from jail. They would rather see him behind bars forever for a law that is stupid!

Rodriguez: I don't understand...

Matthew: There's nothing to understand. Those people are the reasons that Bill 56 got passed in the first place. I know it's not something we want to think about or deal with but it's a fact of life. No matter who you are or what you do in life, there will be someone who is against you.

Faisal: It's bullshit. Complete bullshit. I can't stand—

Rodriguez: [*cutting him off*] Faisal. Chill. It's okay. Don't you go being upset. I'm the one who should be upset. Right? After all, they are protesting me! [*jokingly*] Sure you don't want to join them? You're the one who arrested me in the first place?

Faisal becomes visibly upset.

Rodriguez: I was only kidding, Faisal. You know...we've definitely bonded. And I'm so glad you came to the courthouse with us. It means a lot to me. You can share in my victory.

Faisal mumbles something under his breath and exits stage right.

Rodriguez: Damn. I think he's really upset.

Matthew: Don't worry. He'll come around. He is so pro-America, anyway. It won't take very long to get him back around.

Rodriguez: I hope so. It's weird to see him this way.

Matthew: You've had quite an impact on the man. He sure does like you.

Rodriguez: Surprisingly enough...I like him. I really do.

Greg enters from stage left. He is looking for Matthew until, finally, he finds him.

Greg: Hey darling.

Matthew: Greg!

Greg leans in to kiss Matthew on the cheek. Matthew turns, grabs Greg's face gently in his hand, and kisses him square on the lips. The two melt into the kiss.

Greg: [*quite surprised*] That was a pleasant surprise. But what if someone...

Matthew: Let 'em. You're mine. And I'm proud of that!

Rodriguez: [*smiling*] Yo orgulloso.

Shrieks come from offstage-- SR (outside). People in suits (lawyers) begin to run in the direction of SR. Mass chaos.

Matthew: [*concerned*] What's going on?

No one stops to answer. More people cross SR.

Greg: [*grabs someone's arm to stop them*] What's the matter? What's happening?

Lawyer friend #1: Someone just opened fire into the protestors out front!

Rodriguez: What? Who?

Lawyer friend #1: I don't know yet!

Lawyer friend and everyone else runs off SR with the exception of Rodriguez, Greg, and Matthew. The lights dim until there is just a light wash on the three main characters. A newscaster in a suit enters far SL. A spotlight hits them, revealing a TV newscaster with a microphone and script in front of them.

Newscaster: This just in. Moments ago, outside of the Alabama State Courthouse, fire was opened into a crowd of people protesting the release of Rodriguez LaSantoya. The shooter is thought to be radical Iraqi, Faisal Hossini, the police officer who initially arrested LaSantoya in violation of the recently passed Bill 56. His motives remain unclear, but insiders believe that it could be an act of terrorism on his part due, either to his Middle Eastern ties, or his prejudice against LaSantoya since the beginning.

Apparently, Hossini exited the courthouse yelling the words, "Stop it! It's not fair! Let it be!" before he reached into his side holster, removed his weapon, and began to fire. He only managed to fire four shots before a security guard standing near by was able to shoot him down. The only fatality on the scene so far is that of the shooter, Faisal Hossini. More this evening in our special feature titled, "PTSD or Terrorism: The Story of Faisal Hossini."

A foggy mist has descended onto the stage. Matthew, Greg, and Rodriguez all slowly collapse to their knees, their faces in different stages of disbelief. Downstage, in front of them all, Faisal runs out from SR in slow motion, holding the gun in front of him, pointed at the audience. He jumps in slow motion into the air and slowly starts to fall towards his left side. Right before he touches the ground, a gunshot is heard. Faisal reacts as though shot, falling to the ground in a heap. The lights slowly begin to rise, offering only slightly more light to the dim stage. Matthew, Greg, and Rodriguez all "unfreeze." Rodriguez runs over to Faisal, crouching next to him as though to help him. Matthew and Greg stand USL, shocked but not wanting to disturb the moment they are watching unfold. Rodriguez helps Faisal tilt his head up somewhat, so that he (and the audience) can more clearly see Faisal's face. Rodriguez tenderly tweaks Faisal's face or hair (depending) as tears slowly begin to form in his eyes.

Rodriguez: Why, Faisal? Why?

Faisal: [*with barely any air supply left*] So you never feel the way I did. So...you feel...like a part of it all. This is your country...too...

Faisal breathes his last. The lights go down. The curtain closes.

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ACADEMIC VITA

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EDUCATION

State College, PA **Pennsylvania State University: Schreyer Honors College**

Fall 2007-Present English and Secondary Education/Communications Major

Dean's List (Fall '07 – Fall '10) | Graduation date: May 2011

HONORS

- President/Co-Founder of One Stage Revolution, “Most Outstanding New Student Organization of the Year”
- Penn State Homecoming Court 2010
- Omicron Delta Kappa Society of Leadership and Success
- Member of Alpha Lambda Delta & Phi Beta Kappa Academic Honors Societies
- Member of Golden Key International Honor Society
- Certificate of Merit, American College Theatre Festival: Awarded for the direction of *Jillian* and the sound and light design of *Shorts*
- American College Theatre Festival Irene Ryan Nominee
 - 2009 for acting work as Ellen in *Two Rooms*
 - 2008 for acting work as Clitandre in *The Learned Ladies*

EXTRACURRICULAR

Fall 2010-Present | Service Chair | Omicron Delta Kappa Society of Leadership and Success

Fall 2008-Summer 2010 | Member of Ivyside Pride Choir | Performed in Strasbourg, France, Summer 2010

Summer 2009 | Performer in the opera *Carmen* with the Rome Festival Choir in Rome, Italy

Summer 2009 | Worked with “Project Mexico” building homes and doing mission work

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Student Teaching/Pre-Student Teaching Practicum| Altoona Area High School| Altoona, PA- Fall 2010-Spring 2011

- Collaborated with mentor teacher and co-teacher in order to attain valuable teaching experience as well as ample feedback and reflection
- Conceptualized and carried out one entire semester of lesson and unit plans

Philadelphia Urban Seminar| Wagner Middle School| Philadelphia, PA- Summer 2009

- Created learning experiences and lessons for two weeks in an urban setting

Nanny to Young Adult with Special Needs | University Park, PA – Summer 2009

- Created fun and engaging scholastic and artistic projects appropriate to age and mental capabilities—30 hrs/week

Classroom Assistant at St. Sophia’s Orthodox Academy | Westmont, PA– Summer ‘08 & ‘09

- Implemented English assignments and creative activities with 5-9th grade students

Music Teacher at Harbor House Preschool| Altoona, PA- Fall 2007-Spring 2008

- Taught and composed music lesson plans for children 4-6

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

President/Co-Founder of One Stage Revolution | State College, PA – Spring 2009-Current

- Advocating for social awareness and reform through the use of performing arts
- Instructing actors in post-Modern theatre techniques such as “Suzuki” and “Viewpoints”
- Worked with organizations such as Centre County Reads program and the LGBTQA community to advocate change and promote understanding and an open dialogue

Crew Member at Eisenhower Auditorium | State College, PA – Fall 2009-Current

- Various stage crew work: light hangs, light board operator, etc.

DIRECTING EXPERIENCE

<i>SnowAngel</i> at Penn State Altoona--Altoona, PA	Feb. ‘11
<i>A Perfect Wedding</i> at Penn State University (PSU)—State College, PA	Dec. ‘10
<i>Downsize These/Bruised</i> at PSU—State College, PA	April ‘10
<i>Eurydice</i> , scene at American College Theatre Festival (ACTF)	Jan. ‘10
<i>The Dreamer Examines His Pillow</i> at PSU Altoona—Altoona, PA	May ‘09
<i>Jillian</i> at PSU Altoona—Altoona, PA	Feb. ‘09
<i>Fool for Love</i> scene at ACTF	Jan. ‘09

Summer and Smoke at PSU Altoona—Altoona, PA (assistant)

April '08

ACTING: STAGE EXPERIENCE

Palaam Project with Cultural Conversations, PSU—State College, PA

Feb. '11

A Perfect Wedding (Willie) at PSU—State College, PA

Dec. '10

Borrowed Parts (Martha) at PSU—State College, PA

April '10

Sugar (Olga) at PSU Altoona—Altoona, PA

April '09

Chase Me, Comrade! (Nancy) at Cresson Lake Playhouse—Cresson, PA

Sept. '08

The World Goes Round (Lead) at Cresson Lake Playhouse—Cresson, PA

July '08

Two Rooms (Ellen) at PSU Altoona—Altoona, PA

Feb. '08

The Learned Ladies (Clitandre) at PSU Altoona—Altoona, PA

Dec. '07

Cats (Exotica) at Cresson Lake Playhouse—Cresson, PA

July '07

TECHNICAL THEATRE EXPERIENCE

Big Love at ACTF/Merriam Theatre—Philadelphia, PA (Stage Management) Jan. '09

Shorts at PSU Altoona—Altoona, PA (Lighting, Sound, & Costume Design) Jan. '09

THEATRE TRAINING

Dance: Ballet (13 years), Jazz (1 year), Tap (1 year)

Suzuki: 2 years at Penn State University

Viewpoints: 2 years at Penn State University

Vocal: 11 years of private training

Acting: 4 years in University (Strasberg based)