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Damascus

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements
for the degree Master of Fine Arts

in

Theatre and Dance (Playwriting)

by

William Bennett Fisher

Committee in charge:

Naomi Iizuka, Chair
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2016

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The thesis of William Bennett Fisher is approved and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

Chair

University of California, San Diego

2016

DEDICATION

Damascus is dedicated to my family, and also to the memory of my uncle,
Bennett Lawson Fisher.

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Damascus

by

William Bennett Fisher

Master of Fine Arts in Theatre and Dance (Playwriting)

University of California, San Diego, 2016

Professor Naomi Iizuka, Chair

There's an explosion at the Minneapolis airport. Everyone is on high alert. With all the planes grounded, a stranded teenager pleads with a Somali-American Super Shuttle driver to drive him to Chicago so he can get home. As the two men cross the Midwest in the dead of winter, they discover that not everything is what it seems. *Damascus* investigates the seductiveness of extremism, the fine line between caution and paranoia, and the assumptions we make about homeland and security.

Damascus

a play

by Bennett Fisher

May 8, 2016

*In memory of my uncle Ben.
November 25, 1942 – September 11, 2001.*

“I abhor the celebration... Revenge doesn't undo the deed. It just hurts the people who are vengeful. It poisons us who are vengeful.”

-Susan Fisher

Speaking on the national reaction to the death of Osama Bin Laden.

Greenwich Times, March 3, 2011

“Saul rose from the ground, and although his eyes were opened, he saw nothing.”

-Acts 9:8

Characters

Hassan – Male. Late 30s. Somali-American. A Super Shuttle van driver.

Lloyd – Male. 19. Caucasian. A traveler.

Diaz/Maynard/Conklin/Whitaker – Female. 30s-40s.

Voices of a **DJ**, a **Reporter**, a **9-1-1 Operator**, and a **Witness**.

The roles of Diaz, Maynard, Conklin and Whitaker may be played by a single actor or multiple actors. Conklin should be a woman, but the characters need not all be female (though they are all listed in the script as such). Lines that pertain to gender may be adjusted accordingly based on casting. If multiple actors are cast in these roles, the casting should reflect the diversity of the country.

Setting

Between Minneapolis and Chicago. December, 2015.

Notes

Hassan probably does not have a Somali accent. In fact, none of the characters probably have accents, except maybe slight Midwestern accents.

The tension in this play is, by and large, quiet and contained.

The play wants to move at a brisk pace, but the moments where the characters drive in silence might be uncomfortably long and loaded – between two and ten seconds. Or they may pass in an instant. Whatever helps to maintain the intensity of the scene.

A “/” in the text indicates the start of the next line, and therefore overlapping dialogue.

Hassan’s van would most likely be a Ford Econoline, a Dodge B1500 or B2500, a Chevy Express, or a GMC Savanna. Lloyd’s line about the van’s make and model may be changed for production if it becomes necessary. The representation of the van may be very spare and suggestive – as simple as a few chairs, if desired.

The play was inspired in part by Emma Schwartz’s article for the Center for Public Integrity entitled “Super Shuttle: A job or a business?” The article may be readily found online. It includes links to other news stories, as well as a PDF of a Super Shuttle franchise contract.

1.

(A parking lot somewhere in the Cedar-Riverside district of Minneapolis. Late night. Maybe some light snowfall.

HASSAN is cleaning the inside of his Super Shuttle van with spray and wipes.

DIAZ stands nearby, drinking coffee from a disposable cup.

Both wear blue Super Shuttle uniform jackets. Also gloves, wool caps, etc.)

DIAZ

It's a twenty-four hour airport.

Means you need to be working it all twenty-four hours.

You don't want to be packing it in for the day at 9pm

When they got *three separate flights* coming in from Chicago.

You don't want to be dropping off *one* passenger all the way out in Lake Elmo

When you can be dropping off *twelve* passengers at the Sheraton.

This is a business. All right?

You need to run the business like a business.

When there is an opportunity, you get in there and you take it.

You go to the library and print out the flight schedule like I told you?

HASSAN

Yeah. I did.

DIAZ

You print out calendars for the Convention Center?

HASSAN

Yeah.

DIAZ

Vikings? Timberwolves?

HASSAN

Yes. Yes, of course. Look, can / I just...

DIAZ

How about the U? First and last day of Spring Break for the U

You should be driving / nonstop.

HASSAN

Yeah. I am. Ok? I *am*.

(Silence.)

DIAZ
Well...

(Silence.)

DIAZ
I don't know man...
First year's tough. You know what I mean?
Any franchise. Restaurant, convenience store...
Pet... Shop. Whatever. Doesn't matter.
You just have to keep pushing, ok? You just have to keep...

(HASSAN finishes, puts the cleaning materials away in a container in the van's trunk.)

DIAZ
I got two full-time drivers under me now.
You think that happened overnight?

HASSAN
I know, I just...

DIAZ
What?

HASSAN
I only made a hundred and six dollars yesterday.

DIAZ
Ok.

HASSAN
Spent almost all of it just filling up the / gas tank.

DIAZ
What are you telling me, Hassan?

HASSAN
Each week I'm trying to pay off something from last week.
I don't see how I get out from under it.

DIAZ
You behind?

(HASSAN shrugs then rearranges some bedding and other personal effects – pillow, blanket, toiletries, etc. – folding it all neatly into a corner in the trunk of his van. It's clear that he's more or less living out of the van full time now.

(DIAZ sees all this. HASSAN sees that she sees.)

HASSAN

Look, it's...

It's just for a little while. Just 'till I can...

DIAZ

Jesus...

HASSAN

Don't, like, don't *report* me to the-

DIAZ

Hassan, look, this is not-

HASSAN

It's for a couple months at most. Ok? I just need a little time to-

I just have to find somewhere cheaper than my old place, that's all...

(Silence. DIAZ holds out her coffee for HASSAN.)

DIAZ

Here.

HASSAN

What?

DIAZ

Coffee's on me.

HASSAN

That's ok.

DIAZ

Barely had any, man. Take it.

(HASSAN hesitates, then takes the coffee.)

DIAZ

Look, umm, if you want to sell, I can keep you on as a driver.

HASSAN
I'm not selling.

DIAZ
I'm trying to help you out, man.

HASSAN
Just stop asking me.

DIAZ
I'll assume the debt, ok? I will assume the debt and-

HASSAN
No-

DIAZ
Hassan, listen to me-

HASSAN
No, no, every day you keep on me about this shit-

DIAZ
Look at where you are, look / at where-

HASSAN
You keep just-

DIAZ
If you're still behind, if you're *always* behind, maybe you better start thinking-

HASSAN
You keep keeping on me like this and it pisses me the fuck *off*-

DIAZ
Ok. Fine. Ok.

HASSAN
I got enough to deal with without *you* halfway / up my ass all the time-

DIAZ
All right! All right! *Jesus*.

(*Silence.*)

HASSAN
Sorry.

DIAZ
The hell's the matter / with you?

HASSAN
I said I'm sorry.

(Silence.)

DIAZ
How's your dad doing?

HASSAN
The same.

DIAZ
You been over to see him any?

(DIAZ waits for a response. HASSAN stares off into space, exhausted.)

DIAZ
Hassan?

HASSAN
Yeah. Sorry...

DIAZ
You feeling all right?

HASSAN
Yeah, just...
Yeah.

(DIAZ takes a small pill bottle from her jacket pocket, hands it to HASSAN.)

HASSAN
What is that?

DIAZ
It's from Canada. Some military stuff.
Like industrial strength No-Doz or something.

HASSAN

Says “ibuprofen” on the label.

DIAZ

Yeah, well, that’s just the label, isn’t it?

(HASSAN inspects the pill bottle, skeptical.)

HASSAN

You take this?

DIAZ

Now and then.

I won’t lie, they’ll make you a little...

HASSAN

What?

DIAZ

On edge, I guess. Hard to describe...

Wouldn’t overdo it, that’s all.

And don’t...

HASSAN

What?

DIAZ

Get someone else to do the urine test.

(Silence.)

HASSAN

I don’t take...

DIAZ

They work. I’m telling you.

Seems like you could use a boost.

HASSAN

Maybe.

DIAZ

Can’t be chasing your dreams if you’re sleeping.

2.

(Curbside, Minneapolis International Airport. Early morning, before the sun has risen.

HASSAN is dozing in the driver's seat of his Super Shuttle van, parked along the curb.

HASSAN wakes up with a start, rubs his eyes, looks around.

The radio in the van is playing softly.)

DJ

...some more chances to win coming up in just a minute.

Right now a little Otis Redding¹

Going out to Casey on her commute this morning

Casey and all you other early birds out there

It's a little after five a.m.

And we've got what you need to get the work day started right, yes indeed.

Here is "Shake" on Kool 180. KQQL

Minnesota's greatest hits...

(Otis Redding's "Shake" begins to play.

HASSAN yawns.

He takes out the bottle of pills, debates.)

HASSAN

(Quietly) No...

(He does not take a pill. He puts the bottle back.

Silence.

HASSAN hits his face a few times to wake up, yawns, cracks his neck.

He adjusts in his seat and takes out an e-cigarette, starts to smoke it.

He presses buttons on a screen on his dash – the computer system used to bid on fares.

The equipment is faulty. HASSAN pushes the screen several times to no avail.

¹ Other music may be substituted if there are concerns over rights, etc. The creative team should adjust the line as necessary.

He shuts the computer off and turns it back on.

He pushes the screen again. Nothing.

He closes his eyes.

Blackout.)

3.

(There is a loud pounding on the window.

Lights bump on as HASSAN wakes with a start.

The song on the radio has jumped forward 15-30 seconds.

LLOYD is at the window of the van, pounding on it with his fist. He has a large duffel bag draped over his shoulder. He wears a University of Minnesota sweatshirt under a winter jacket.

HASSAN opens the door, steps part way out of the van.)

LLOYD

Hey, umm, hey, are you / like, this is your van-

HASSAN

What the *fuck*?

LLOYD

Sorry, you were / asleep-

HASSAN

Why are you pounding / on my window?

LLOYD

I was trying to, you know, I mean, you were / asleep, I'm sorry.

HASSAN

Scared the shit out of / me. Jesus...

LLOYD

Sorry, I'm sorry, I, look, I, I have to get back to Ukiah.

HASSAN

What?

LLOYD

Like *today*, like as soon as possible-

HASSAN

Ok, ok, just hold on / a second-

LLOYD

And they cancelled my flight and / there's not-

HASSAN

Where's Ukiah?

LLOYD

It's in California. It's-

HASSAN

What?

LLOYD

I like really need to... I mean...

My family's...

It doesn't matter.

HASSAN

The other shuttles are lined up on the other side / of the building

LLOYD

I'd have to, like, transfer a bunch of times, but-

There's a few flights leaving out of O'Hare in Chicago tonight and-

HASSAN

Chicago?

LLOYD

Yeah. Chicago.

Look, can you, I mean...

If you can get me / there, I could-

HASSAN

Chicago is six hours away.

LLOYD

I'll pay cash.

(LLOYD fishes in his pocket, takes out a wallet full of a surprising amount of cash.)

HASSAN
Look, whoa...
This isn't how...

LLOYD
What do you want?
Three hundred?

(LLOYD holds out the money.)

LLOYD
Three hundred dollars. That's all the cash I've got on me.

HASSAN
Uhh...

LLOYD
Three hundred dollars for six hours of work. Come on...

HASSAN
Twelve hours.

LLOYD
What?

HASSAN
I'd have to drive back to Minneapolis.

LLOYD
Whatever. That's still, like what...
Twenty five bucks an hour.

HASSAN
Look, I really / shouldn't-

LLOYD
I *need* to get to Ukiah. Ok? What can I-

HASSAN
I don't own the van.

LLOYD

What can I do to get you to-

HASSAN

I license it. Do you understand?

I license it and I could lose my license-

LLOYD

I'm not going to tell anyone.

HASSAN

There's restrictions about how far I can take you-

LLOYD

I'm-

HASSAN

Just listen to me a minute.

I will *lose my job* if I take you in my van without-

LLOYD

Look, I'm not going to tell your boss or...

I'm just going to give you the money and get in the van.

Please...

.

I need to get home.

I need to...

.

Please. Please...

(Pause.)

HASSAN

Six hundred.

LLOYD

Six hundred? That's twice as much-

HASSAN

I know how much it is.

LLOYD

Ok, look, I-

HASSAN

That's what it's going to cost you.
Six hundred in cash and you pay for gas.

LLOYD
Fine. Ok. Ok, sure.
I'll have to go to an ATM to get the rest but-

HASSAN
Ok.

(Awkward pause.)

LLOYD
Ok, so...

HASSAN
Ok.

(LLOYD hands HASSAN the money.)

LLOYD
I'll get you the rest when we stop and fill up then.

HASSAN
Ok.

(HASSAN offers to take LLOYD's duffel bag. LLOYD declines.)

LLOYD
No, I'll...
I got it.

(HASSAN opens the trunk.

LLOYD places the duffel bag in the trunk. The duffel bag is very heavy.

HASSAN closes the trunk, side passenger door of the van.

LLOYD climbs in and sits in the front row of the back section.

HASSAN closes the sliding passenger door.

He gets in the van, closes the driver's door, and starts the ignition.)

4.

(Interstate 90. East of Minneapolis, maybe about fifteen or twenty minutes later.

HASSAN is driving.

LLOYD is still in the front row of the back section, looking out the windows.

They drive in silence for a moment.

The radio is still playing – Sam and Dave² now.

The music makes LLOYD uncomfortable.)

LLOYD

I'm sorry, can you...?

HASSAN

Yeah?

LLOYD

Can we not have music on? Please?

HASSAN

You don't like Sam and Dave?

LLOYD

I'd just rather, you know-

HASSAN

Sam and Dave, man.

LLOYD

I'd just rather not have any music on.

HASSAN

All right.

(HASSAN turns the radio off.

They drive in silence for a moment.)

LLOYD

Thanks.

² This music may change as well. If it does, the lines should be adjusted as necessary.

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

LLOYD

I'm sorry I freaked out a little back there.

(HASSAN does not respond.)

They drive in silence for a moment.)

LLOYD

You must think I'm a total spazz.

HASSAN

What?

LLOYD

Spazz. You know?

Spazz. Like, a spazz, like-

(LLOYD makes some kind of spasmodic motion.)

LLOYD

You know?

HASSAN

I'm not sure I / understand what you're...

LLOYD

Look, I get it. I get it.

I know I'm...

.

I mean, hell-

If *I* were *you* and *you* were *me* and *I* was like "I need to get to Ukiah and-"

Well, wait, if *you* were like

Because *I* would be *you* and *you* would be...

Hold on, wait...

(LLOYD laughs.)

They drive in silence for a moment.)

LLOYD

Sorry...

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

LLOYD

Ukiah's kind of out in the middle of nowhere.
You've got to like transfer a couple times
And the little airport there closes down at like ten at night, so...
So, yeah...

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

LLOYD

Anyway, I'm sorry if I was all...

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

LLOYD

My mom's sick.

HASSAN

I'm sorry.

LLOYD

Yeah...

She's in the hospital.

Well, I mean, now she's in that place you go after the hospital, I guess.

The uhh...

Yeah.

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

LLOYD

Hospice.

HASSAN

I'm sorry.

LLOYD

Thanks.

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

LLOYD

I knew I couldn't just, like...

Like just wait there.

I knew it even before it...
Like the second before the screen said "cancelled."
I just knew, I *knew* in the pit of my stomach.
I stood up, you know?
Like I was ready to move.
Like I was sitting and then I stood up and then, boom, the screen changed.

.
You just know some things, you know?
Sometimes you just feel things so clearly that...
It's like extra sensory or sixth sense or like dolphins or something.

HASSAN
I don't know.

LLOYD
Yeah, you do.

HASSAN
What?

LLOYD
You knew I had more money.
I told you I had three hundred and you asked for six hundred.

HASSAN
What's your point?

LLOYD
Nothing, just...

.
How'd you know?
Like, really, how do you *know* something like that?
This is what I'm talking about.

HASSAN
You're getting on another flight when you get to Chicago, right?

LLOYD
Yeah.

HASSAN
Need to buy a ticket?

LLOYD
Yeah.

HASSAN

Look, man.

Chicago to Ukiah or wherever. Day of.

Transferring at a couple different airports.

How much do you think that ticket is going to cost?

LLOYD

Ok. I see what you're saying...

HASSAN

Yeah.

LLOYD

If I told you my mom was sick, would you have-

HASSAN

Hey, hey-

LLOYD

I'm not-

I'm not, like trying to...

I'm just saying.

.

I mean, what?

Yeah, ok, it's a lot of money but like...

Am I going to look back and wish I *saved* that money

Instead of being there with her?

.

What's another ticket, you know?

What's three hundred bucks?

What's another three hundred?

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

LLOYD

I'm Lloyd, by the way.

HASSAN

Hassan.

LLOYD

Hassan?

HASSAN

Yes.

LLOYD

Cool.

Is that...

What is that?

HASSAN

It's my name.

LLOYD

Yeah, but like...

I mean, is it like...?

I...

So. Like. Are you...

From...?

(HASSAN looks at LLOYD with a deadpan expression, then turns his gaze back to the road.)

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

HASSAN

I'm from here. I'm from Minneapolis.

LLOYD

Ok.

(HASSAN looks at his window.)

HASSAN

You got your hand print on my window.

LLOYD

What?

HASSAN

Your hand print.

Or like your fist print or...

LLOYD

I don't...

HASSAN

From when you were pounding on my window?

LLOYD
Oh.

HASSAN
There's a smudge on the glass.

LLOYD
Oh. Sorry.

(They drive in silence for a moment.

HASSAN takes out his e-cigarette.)

HASSAN
I'm going to smoke.

LLOYD
Uhh...

HASSAN
It's like water vapor or...
Not tobacco.
Well, there might be tobacco. I don't know.
There's probably tobacco, actually. I'm pretty sure there is.
Is that ok?

LLOYD
What?

HASSAN
That I smoke?

LLOYD
Uhh...

HASSAN
I'm not supposed to smoke.
But you're not supposed to be here.
And we'll be here for five hours, so...

LLOYD
Uh-huh...

HASSAN

If I smoke, is that going to be a problem?

LLOYD

Oh, uhh...

No, no, I don't / mind...

HASSAN

Good.

(HASSAN smokes the e-cigarette.

They drive in silence for a moment.

HASSAN sees that LLOYD is still staring at him, desperately wanting to ask more questions.)

LLOYD

But you weren't, like...

HASSAN

What?

LLOYD

I just...

You weren't... born in Minneapolis though. Right?

(HASSAN does not respond.

They drive in silence for a moment.)

LLOYD

I mean, you weren't. Were you?

HASSAN

Ok, look...

LLOYD

It's just, like, I don't feel like you were-

HASSAN

Feel?

LLOYD

Yeah, I mean-

HASSAN

Look, uhh, I don't really...

LLOYD

See? I'm right, right? Yeah?

HASSAN

Yes. Ok. I was born in Somalia.

LLOYD

See? Told you.

HASSAN

Can we not...

LLOYD

When / did you, like...

HASSAN

I was born in Somalia.

I came here when I was ten.

I don't really remember anything about it, so there's really / nothing to-

LLOYD

Were you born in Mogadishu?

HASSAN

No. Jowhar. It's about-

LLOYD

About fifty miles up the coast. I know.

HASSAN

Yeah, yeah, it's...

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

HASSAN

You know Jowhar?

LLOYD

Well, I mean, I haven't / like-

HASSAN

No, right, I wasn't-

LLOYD
Visited or anything-

HASSAN
Yeah, no. But, umm...
Still.
Most people I talk to / don't...

LLOYD
No, I get it.

HASSAN
Most people don't even know Mogadishu, you know? So...
You really know Jowhar?

LLOYD
Yeah.

HASSAN
Jowhar?

LLOYD
Yeah.

HASSAN
Ok...
It's just...

LLOYD
What?

HASSAN
I mean, it's just, if I wasn't *born* in Jowhar.
I mean, even I wouldn't...
How do you know Jowhar?

LLOYD
I don't know.

HASSAN
You *don't know*?

LLOYD
Yeah.

HASSAN

But you know it's fifty miles from Mogadishu.

LLOYD

Yeah, I know.

HASSAN

So *how* do you know that?

LLOYD

I don't know. I mean, I just read stuff. Read the news, you know...

I took some classes this last semester, uhh...

At the U, I mean.

(LLOYD shows HASSAN his sweatshirt.)

HASSAN

Uh-huh...

LLOYD

Yeah, I audited RELS 5721...

HASSAN

What?

LLOYD

Right. Sorry. Religious Studies 5721.

"North Africa since 1500: Islam, Colonialism, and Independence."

Some other classes too, about , like...

I was thinking about Poli-sci for a little while, but...

I don't know.

Anyway. So. Yeah. So...

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

LLOYD

It's kind of cool, actually. If you think about it.

That I know Jowhar.

And you're *from* Jowhar.

HASSAN

My dad and I left when I was ten, so like-

LLOYD

Still. It's still kind of cool, right?

(HASSAN does not respond.)

LLOYD

You don't think so?

HASSAN

I don't know.

It's a little strange, I guess.

LLOYD

I think it's also a little cool.

HASSAN

Sure. Fine.

LLOYD

See this is what I was *just* talking about.

This is what I'm saying-

I *knew* it. You know?

I *knew* you weren't like...

I *knew* it wasn't just Minneapolis...

HASSAN

There's a lot of Somalis in / Minneapolis, it's not really-

LLOYD

No, but, like, do you know what I mean?

I could *tell*.

HASSAN

Uh-huh...

LLOYD

I could. I could tell.

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

LLOYD

I met this guy online

I mean, not like, you know...

Nothing weird or anything, he's just a friend.

He lives in London.

But anyway he had been all over Southeast Asia and Africa

And the Middle East and like...

Well, he'd gone to all these different countries for his work and stuff

Anyway. We talked a lot about...

Well, about the whole region and the history

And the political, like, umm, the political climate and everything.

Al-Shabaab. You know?

.
You know Al-Shabaab?

HASSAN

Yeah.

LLOYD

Right. Of course.

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

LLOYD

You see that thing about Mall of America?

HASSAN

What?

LLOYD

They had a video calling for an attack on the Mall of America.

HASSAN

Wait, like across the street from the airport?

LLOYD

Yeah. In like February.

HASSAN

What?

LLOYD

February of last year, I mean.

HASSAN

Al-Shabaab *attacked* the Mall of America in February?

LLOYD

No, they made a video in February. But like a year ago.

HASSAN

Oh.

LLOYD

Like, calling for someone to / attack the mall and like...

HASSAN

Right, yeah, ok, ok-

LLOYD

Yeah.

I mean, I get it, I do.

I get why they're...

The way the world's just fucked them over, I mean...

You know?

Like all that stuff the E.U.'s been doing. It's fucked up.

HASSAN

Look, I don't really...

LLOYD

Operation Atalanta? They say they're concerned about the pirates

But really it's about-

HASSAN

(Confused) Atlanta?

LLOYD

Atalanta. It's all about consolidating Western power in the region so that they-

HASSAN

What are you talking about?

LLOYD

It's just fucked up, man. It's really fucked up. That's all.

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

LLOYD

Do you ever think about going back there?

HASSAN

Are you serious?

LLOYD

Yeah. Do you ever think about it?

(HASSAN laughs.)

LLOYD
What?

HASSAN
Have you met anyone who wants to move to Somalia?

LLOYD
What do you mean? There are lots of people-

HASSAN
Yeah? Tell me their names.

LLOYD
Well, I mean, I don't like *personally* know-

HASSAN
Look, you know how many Somalis come to Minneapolis every year?

LLOYD
It doesn't mean they want to be here.

HASSAN
No, no. I really think it does.

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

LLOYD
Were you there during the civil war?
I mean, is that why your family left?

HASSAN
Doesn't need to be a civil war for someone to move to another country.

LLOYD
Yeah, but like, I mean, there *was* a civil war, so-

HASSAN
Fine, fine.

LLOYD
Is anyone in your family still there?

HASSAN
I don't know. I hope not.

LLOYD
What?

(LLOYD undoes his seatbelt and climbs from the first row to the front passenger seat.)

HASSAN notices that LLOYD is out of his seat.)

HASSAN
What are you doing?

LLOYD
What did / you mean by that, what did you...

HASSAN
Get back in your seat.

(LLOYD is already in the passenger seat.)

HASSAN
Put your seatbelt on-

LLOYD
What?

HASSAN
Put your seatbelt on.

(LLOYD puts his seatbelt on.)

LLOYD
Ok, it's...

HASSAN
Is it on?

LLOYD
Yes.

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

HASSAN

Do you know what kind of liability I have as a driver?
Do you know what you moving around without your seatbelt / on could-

LLOYD

I've got my seatbelt on. Ok? Just-

HASSAN

No! You do not tell / me how-

LLOYD

My seatbelt's on.
You see that / it's on.

HASSAN

Why did you climb from / the backseat?

LLOYD

I wanted to ask you about your family, you know?
I mean, you said, like, most people you talk to don't know anything, but, like-
I know about what's being going on over there, and I didn't want to just like...
You can talk to me. I don't know, I just-

(HASSAN pulls off to the shoulder of the road.)

LLOYD

What are you doing?

(HASSAN cuts the ignition.)

LLOYD

Wait. Why... Why are we pulled over?

(HASSAN takes a deep breath.)

HASSAN

I need you to understand something...

LLOYD

We can't, like, we need to...

HASSAN

You're not supposed to be here.
I mean, legally, my license doesn't allow me to / take a passenger without-

LLOYD

We need to get back on the freeway. My / flight, my mom, I can't-

HASSAN

Hey, I pay nine hundred a week to lease this van. All right?

LLOYD

Can we talk about this while we're driving?

HASSAN

Nine hundred a week for the van.

Three hundred and seventy five a week for the computer system.

One fifty a week in insurance...

LLOYD

Ok, ok, just-

(LLOYD starts to hyper-ventilate or dry heave.)

HASSAN

I pay for gas, I pay for maintenance-

I pay 15% interest on a *thirty three thousand dollar* loan for the franchise fee-

Decals, licensing, driver training, security deposits-

I pay all that and I pay 2% interest on what I owe when I fall behind.

If we get pulled over, I lose it all.

(HASSAN lets that sink in.)

HASSAN

Stay in your seat and you keep your seatbelt on.

(LLOYD vomits on the floor of the passenger seat.)

HASSAN

Ah!

LLOYD

Sorry...

HASSAN

Fuck! What the...

LLOYD

I'm sorry, I'm sorry...

(HASSAN opens the door and steps out of the van.)

(LLOYD is bent over in his seat, recovering.)

HASSAN
Get out...

LLOYD
No...

HASSAN
Get out, I have to clean the...

LLOYD
I'm not getting out.

(HASSAN looks around, realizes he's not going to be able to do a lot on the side of the road.)

HASSAN
Son of a bitch...

(HASSAN climbs back into the van, closes the door.)

HASSAN
Can you make it 'till we get to a gas station?

(LLOYD does not respond.)

HASSAN
Hello? Can you make it 'till we...
Hey!

LLOYD
What?

HASSAN
Are you going to vomit again?

LLOYD
No...

HASSAN
Ok...

(HASSAN rolls down one of the windows.)

HASSAN

Ugh...

LLOYD

Are you going to leave me here?

HASSAN

What?

LLOYD

Are you going to leave me here on the...?

HASSAN

Why would I do that?

LLOYD

I don't know...

(LLOYD straightens up a little. He has some vomit on his clothes – sleeves, maybe.)

HASSAN

I'm charging you for this. You know?

There's a cleaning fee...

LLOYD

That's ok.

HASSAN

You're damn right it's ok.

(HASSAN turns the key in the ignition, pulls the van back onto the Interstate.)

5.

(A gas station off Interstate 90, just across the Wisconsin border.)

HASSAN parks the van and gets out.

LLOYD gets out after him, picking some chunks of vomit off his clothes.)

HASSAN

Go wash yourself off.

LLOYD
Ok.

HASSAN
Wash yourself off and then come back and clean it.

LLOYD
Why?

HASSAN
Why?

LLOYD
You said there's a cleaning fee.
When stuff like that happens, you're the one who cleans it. Right?

HASSAN
You're kidding me...

LLOYD
If you want me to clean it, fine.
Just don't charge me the...

(LLOYD trails off as he meets HASSAN's expression. Pause.)

HASSAN
Go clean yourself off.

LLOYD
What? That's fair, right?

HASSAN
Just go clean yourself off.

LLOYD
Let me get my bag.

(LLOYD opens the sliding passenger door, takes his duffel bag, exits.)

HASSAN yawns, slaps his face a couple times to wake up.)

HASSAN
Fuck...

(HASSAN takes out the bottle of pills, debates taking one.

HASSAN does not take it.

HASSAN takes the cleaning material out of a storage compartment in the van – rubber gloves, spray, paper towels, etc. He cleans the vomit. He pauses in the middle, tired. He continues and finishes. The cleaning may take quite a long time. When he is finished, HASSAN throws the used gloves and paper towels in the trash can.

HASSAN takes out his e-cigarette, starts smoking.

MAYNARD enters. She notices HASSAN's e-cigarette.)

MAYNARD

Got a blue light.³

HASSAN

What?

MAYNARD

Your... Your thing. Got a blue light on the tip.

HASSAN

Oh. Right.

MAYNARD

Never seen one of those with a blue light before.

I mean, I don't know why they got lights in the first place but, you know...

HASSAN

Yeah, yeah...

MAYNARD

Is it like something you use to quit or something?

HASSAN

For me, yeah.

MAYNARD

Well, ok.

³ This should change as necessary based on the particular prop, but the color of the e-cigarette light should not resemble the color of a flame.

HASSAN
I hope so.

MAYNARD
Yeah. Yeah, sure...
Hey. Keep it up.

HASSAN
Thank you.

(HASSAN rubs his eyes.)

LLOYD reenters, duffel bag slung over his shoulder, more or less cleaned off, but still wearing the same clothes. His sleeves are wet where he washed them.

MAYNARD notices the license plate on the van.)

MAYNARD
Minnesota plates...

HASSAN
Uhh...
Oh. Yeah.

MAYNARD
You coming from Minneapolis? From the airport?

HASSAN
Yes.

MAYNARD
You know what's happening back there?

HASSAN
Back where?

MAYNARD
Back at MSP, man.

HASSAN
No. What's...?

MAYNARD
I don't know. I was hoping you knew.
You coming from there, right?

HASSAN
Yeah, but, I don't-

MAYNARD
All over the news now.
There was an explosion or something. I don't / know.
You're really telling me you don't-

LLOYD
What?

HASSAN
Explosion?

LLOYD
Wait. What. What do you mean?

HASSAN
When was this? Today?

MAYNARD
Just now, man.
It was just on / the TV inside.

HASSAN
Today? This morning?

MAYNARD
TV said that ten minutes ago, they had an explosion at the airport.
Trashcan on the curb, man. Right near the entrance.
It was in the trashcan or something, they think, and it went off.
And now they got all kinds of police and emergency / vehicles and-

HASSAN
Jesus...

LLOYD
Do they / know what...?

MAYNARD
Yeah. You're really telling me you weren't there for any of that?

HASSAN
No. We've been on the road...

MAYNARD

You've been on the road?

HASSAN

I had no idea / that-

MAYNARD

You been on the road, but you coming from the airport?

You're coming from the airport, but you don't know what's going on?

HASSAN

I... I don't know what you're asking.

MAYNARD

How do you not know?

LLOYD

What exactly did you see / on the TV?

HASSAN

We've been on the road for half and hour.

I didn't even know something was going on / until you-

MAYNARD

Wait. What's your name?

HASSAN

What?

MAYNARD

What is your name?

(HASSAN hesitates.)

HASSAN

Hassan.

LLOYD

Hey, come on-

MAYNARD

Ok. Look, I read about those kids, man.⁴
Those kids and the FBI and all of that?
Trying to go over to Syria, join ISIS, become I don't even know what.

HASSAN
Look-

MAYNARD
That was *here*, man. That was Minneapolis.

HASSAN
I don't-

MAYNARD
I mean, that's your people, right?

LLOYD
What are you saying?

MAYNARD
Look, all I know is, TV's showing all these emergency vehicles and shit
People on stretchers and everything else.
And you want me to believe it's an accident?

LLOYD
Wait. No. No, no. He drives a van, ok?

HASSAN
Lloyd-

LLOYD
He drives a van, what do / you think he did?

MAYNARD
You think I'm lying? You think I'm lying / about this?

LLOYD
No, I don't think you're lying.

MAYNARD
Go look at what's on TV. Ok? Go look on the / TV and-

⁴ Maynard is referring to the cases of Zacharia Yusuf Abdurahman, Adnan Farah, Hanad Mustafe Musse, Guled Ali Omar, Abdirahman Yasin Daud, and Mohamed Abdihamid Farah – all from Minneapolis. They were indicted for conspiracy to provide material support to ISIS.

LLOYD

I think you're a fucking racist asshole.

MAYNARD

The fuck did you just say to me?

LLOYD

I said, I think that you / are a racist-

MAYNARD

Fuck you. I didn't do any shit back at the airport. They did.

LLOYD

You have no idea what you're talking about, / you have no idea about anything-

MAYNARD

Calling *me* a racist. The fuck would you know about it?

(LLOYD steps forward towards MAYNARD, confrontational. HASSAN pulls LLOYD away.)

HASSAN

Get back in the van now. Lloyd. Come on.

(HASSAN steers LLOYD back to the van.)

MAYNARD

The fuck are you doing all the way out in Wisconsin?
What the fuck you doing out in Wisconsin with a Minnesota van?
You think I don't know what you're doing out here, *Hassan*?

HASSAN

Look, ma'am, please. I don't know anything about what's going on.

(MAYNARD takes out her phone, takes a picture of HASSAN and a picture of the van's license plates.)

HASSAN

Wait, what are you...?

MAYNARD

Minnesota GME-344⁵.

⁵ License plate number should adjust as necessary.

HASSAN
What?

MAYNARD
Gotcha.

(MAYNARD exits.)

6.

(Interstate 90, nearing Eau Claire, Wisconsin.)

HASSAN is driving. LLOYD is in the front passenger seat.

HASSAN is listening to the radio intently, but the REPORTER's voice is mostly lost in the static.)

REPORTER
...preliminary reports indicate that four people were killed and
At least nineteen were injured in the blast
Which eye witnesses say came from right outside one of the terminals.
We understand that there is a suspect already in custody
But no name has been released at this time.
The Department of Homeland Security and airport officials
Have issued a statement...

(The REPORTER's voice cuts out in a wave of static.)

HASSAN
Shit...

(HASSAN turns the dial, searching for the story on other radio frequencies. The reception is poor on all stations. We hear blips of music, news stories.)

HASSAN
Did you...?

LLOYD
What?

HASSAN
You didn't see anything like that back there, did you?

LLOYD
Anything like what?

HASSAN
An explosion or-

LLOYD
No...
Did you?

HASSAN
No.

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

HASSAN goes back to the first news station, listens. Still mostly static.

HASSAN turns the radio off.

They drive in silence for a moment.)

HASSAN
We should head back to Minneapolis-

LLOYD
What?

HASSAN
It's not a good / idea to-

LLOYD
You want to go back to the *airport*?

HASSAN
I'll give you your money back, all right-

LLOYD
Wait. No. Hold on, just hold on a second-

HASSAN
That woman at the gas station's probably called the cops and-

LLOYD
So what? So what if she did. You haven't done anything.

HASSAN
She took a picture of me, she took a picture of the van.

We keep going, cops pull me over, next thing you know I'm-

(HASSAN takes the next exit off the Interstate.)

LLOYD
Hassan-

HASSAN
They could revoke my license, they could impound my van.
Or worse, they think / that I-

LLOYD
Ok, that's not really-

HASSAN
No, no, no. People look at Somalis and all they / think about is-

LLOYD
Hassan, please, I think you're blowing this out of proportion-

HASSAN
Even *you*. Even you think that-

LLOYD
Hassan-

HASSAN
All that Al-Shabaab shit.

LLOYD
They have someone in custody. They *just said* that.
That woman just freaked out a little, ok?
Even if she called someone, it's not like you've done anything to-

HASSAN
We're going back.

LLOYD
Why? Why would you do that?

HASSAN
The police-

LLOYD
You're going to go back and what? What good does that do?

Come on. You're not thinking clearly.

HASSAN

If I get pulled over-

LLOYD

Hassan, half the people in the Midwest are probably, like
Calling in about something they saw or think they / saw, it's not like-

HASSAN

I've made up my mind, ok.

LLOYD

If you're worried about what the police might do, I mean...
There's going to be *a lot* more police back over by the airport.
There's going to be a lot of police and a lot of guns
And everyone will be on high alert and, like...
I don't know, I don't want to like, scare you, or something...
But I think we're better off, not just better of-
Safer, like...
Continuing to Chicago.

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

HASSAN

I don't know...

LLOYD

People are trying to like, get away from the airport now...
You know? I mean, who knows what...

HASSAN

I don't know, I don't / know, I, I...

LLOYD

It's ok, it's ok... Just... It's ok...

(HASSAN pulls back on the Interstate, heading towards Chicago.)

LLOYD

Thank you.

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

LLOYD

You ok?

HASSAN

Yeah.

Yeah, I'm fine...

LLOYD

You sure?

HASSAN

Yeah.

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

HASSAN

I don't know it's...

I don't know...

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

HASSAN

Fuck...

LLOYD

What?

HASSAN

I don't know. Nothing.

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

HASSAN

Something like this happens and, and your first thought is, you know...

What are people going to think?

LLOYD

Uh-huh...

HASSAN

About me, I mean.

When people look at me, will they assume that...

LLOYD

Sure...

HASSAN

And it's not just what they assume, it's what they might do, it's...
 Look, and I know that's not, I wish that wasn't the first thing that...
 I mean, there are people...
 There's real victims.
 But I'm just thinking about...
 I have to walk around tomorrow.
 I have to buy groceries.
 I have to drive people.

And my *dad*. You know?
 Thinking about what someone might do if they...
 Like he's just walking down the street or something and someone decides to...
 Someone like that woman sees him, and somehow she thinks that...

LLOYD

Listen, that woman. All that shit she said, all that shit about...
 She's just an asshole. You know?
 She's just an asshole and there's nothing / that, like-

HASSAN

Right. *She's* an asshole?

LLOYD

What?

HASSAN

You nickel and dime me like this
 And that woman's the asshole?

LLOYD

I would never say what she said to you back there-

HASSAN

I don't care-

LLOYD

I would never say what that woman said to you-

HASSAN

I don't care what she *said*, Lloyd.
 You had me cleaning up your vomit!
 You had me cleaning up your fucking vomit!

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

HASSAN

You didn't have to get in that woman's face-

LLOYD

I wasn't going to just stand there and-

HASSAN

You set people off like that, you have no idea what they're going to do.

LLOYD

She wasn't going to do anything-

HASSAN

She took a picture, she took a picture of / my van and-

LLOYD

That doesn't mean anything, that's not, like, that doesn't mean the / police are-

HASSAN

You don't know that!

You don't know what kind of, of-

LLOYD

Hassan-

HASSAN

The risk. The *risk* that you are putting me-

LLOYD

That woman would not have-

HASSAN

No. No. You have *no idea* what she'd do.

You have no idea what anyone might do.

Especially when they're...

(HASSAN trails off. They drive in silence for a moment.)

HASSAN

People like you just...

LLOYD

What?

HASSAN

I'll drop you off in Chicago
And you'll get on your flight
And, and, and you'll go back to whatever bullshit you were doing in Oookiah.

LLOYD

Ukiah.

HASSAN

And you'll never have to skip a meal to pay for gas
Or sleep in a parking garage instead of going home.

LLOYD

My mom's dying...

HASSAN

Please...

LLOYD

She is. Ok? It's not / like I'm...

HASSAN

You're not only person on earth with a dying parent.

LLOYD

She's my mom.

HASSAN

Then it's a good thing for you you're rich enough to go and be with her.

(HASSAN turns up the volume on the radio. It's still mostly static.)

LLOYD

Just turn it off. There's no reception.

HASSAN

I *need* to know / what's happening.

LLOYD

There's no reception. There's nothing out here but farms and shit. Just-

(LLOYD turns the radio off.)

HASSAN

Hey-

(HASSAN turns the radio back on.

LLOYD turns it back off.)

LLOYD

There's no / reception-

HASSAN

Don't touch my radio-

(HASSAN tries to turn the radio back on again.

LLOYD swats his hand.

They fight over the dial.)

HASSAN

Jesus-

LLOYD

I don't want the radio on.

I don't want to hear about it whatever's happening back there-

HASSAN

I really need / to know-

LLOYD

We're fifty miles away heading in the other direction, so / I don't-

HASSAN

What does that have to-

LLOYD

That could have been *me* in the explosion, all right? Do you / get that?

HASSAN

Just let me-

LLOYD

So I don't FUCKING WANT TO HEAR ABOUT HOW I COULD HAVE DIED!

(They drive in silence for a moment.

LLOYD covers part his face with one of his hands.)

LLOYD
I'm sorry...

HASSAN
No, no, it's...

LLOYD
I just can't-

HASSAN
It's fine.

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

HASSAN
Look...
I wasn't trying to upset you-

LLOYD
I know-

HASSAN
I wasn't thinking...

LLOYD
It's ok.

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

LLOYD
You can turn it back on if you want.

HASSAN
No, it's ok. It's...

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

HASSAN takes out the e-cigarette.)

HASSAN
Is it ok if I...?

LLOYD
Sure.

(HASSAN smokes the e-cigarette

They drive in silence for a moment.)

HASSAN

I'm sorry about your mom.

LLOYD

Thanks.

HASSAN

You know, my...

(HASSAN trails off.)

LLOYD

What?

HASSAN

Nothing. Never mind.

(A light hailstorm begins. First just a few stones, then a little heavier.)

HASSAN

What is that?

LLOYD

Hail.

HASSAN

Oh.

LLOYD

Have you never seen a hailstorm?

HASSAN

No, of course, but...

(They drive in silence through the hailstorm. The sounds of the falling hail stones make "pop-popping" sounds against the windshield.)

HASSAN

Doesn't make any sense...

It's too cold for hail, I don't...

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

LLOYD
Wow...

HASSAN
I know...

LLOYD
It's like...

HASSAN
Look. Look how *small* they are.

LLOYD
It's like these little microscopic ping pong balls, it's like...

HASSAN
Yeah...

(LLOYD and HASSAN take in the storm in a state of wonder.

They drive in silence for a moment, calmer than before.

HASSAN
You know, I still remember the first time I saw-

(LLOYD wipes his sleeve on his shirt, wipes off some of the snot. He sniffs in disgust, looks like he is about to retch.

HASSAN looks at LLOYD concerned.)

LLOYD
Still some vomit on my sleeve, that's all.

HASSAN
What?

LLOYD
It's not a big deal.

(HASSAN sniffs the air, recoils.)

HASSAN

Jesus...

LLOYD

It's ok.

HASSAN

No, it's not ok.

LLOYD

Ok, I mean, if you like, if you're like sniffing the air, like...

HASSAN

I'm not sniffing.

(LLOYD does an exaggerated sniff to demonstrate.)

LLOYD

Then of course, like...

HASSAN

I can smell it.

Why don't you change your shirt?

LLOYD

I don't know. I thought I washed it.

I mean, I *did* wash it, but like...

It's fine, ok.

HASSAN

We've got another four, four and a half hours...

I'm not smelling your vomit for another four and a half hours.

LLOYD

Look, you can't even smell it. Ok? So, like-

HASSAN

Yes I can.

LLOYD

If you're smelling like a normal person you can't-

HASSAN

I am smelling like a normal person.

LLOYD

Hassan-

HASSAN

And I can smell it. I can absolutely smell it.

LLOYD

You didn't notice anything for the last twenty miles, so obviously it's not-

HASSAN

Why don't you want to change your shirt?

LLOYD

My bag's in the trunk.

I'd rather just keep driving and...

(HASSAN pulls over, cuts the ignition, opens the door to the van and gets out.)

LLOYD

Hassan?

(HASSAN opens the trunk, takes out LLOYD's duffel bag.)

LLOYD

What are you doing?

HASSAN

What's it look like?

LLOYD

Hey. Wait! Don't...

(LLOYD undoes his seatbelt, climbs out of the van.)

LLOYD

Don't fucking, don't *touch* my bag, all right?

HASSAN

Ok, ok, sorry-

LLOYD

I told you I'm fucking fine. Ok?

I don't give a fuck about the shirt.

Can we just...

HASSAN

Fine...

(HASSAN drops the duffel bag on the ground.

There is a metallic 'clank' as the duffel bag hits the asphalt.

LLOYD jumps back, covers his ears.

Blackout.)

7.

(A series of tableaux.

HASSAN and LLOYD appear in flashes of light and then disappear back into darkness.

Flash.

LLOYD is trying to take the duffel bag from HASSAN.

HASSAN pushes LLOYD away.

Blackout.

Flash.

LLOYD falls back against the van.

HASSAN unzips the bag, pulls handfuls of clothes out of the duffel bag and drops them on the ground.

Blackout.

Flash.

LLOYD tries to stand.

HASSAN sees something inside the duffel bag that horrifies him.

Blackout.)

8.

(Lights gradually rise.)

HASSAN stares down at the duffel bag by his feet. His head aches.

LLOYD stands nearby.

Clothes are strewn all over the ground. We still cannot see inside the bag.)

LLOYD

Hassan, look, I...

I know what you're thinking-

HASSAN

You have no idea what I'm thinking...

(Silence.)

LLOYD

I really think the best thing for you to do is get back in the / van and-

HASSAN

What is that thing?

(Silence.)

LLOYD

Insurance.

(LLOYD reaches inside the duffel bag, turns a knob.)

LLOYD

Black powder. Nails. Ball bearings.

Sealed in a pressure cooker.

And now it's armed.

HASSAN

What?

(HASSAN backs up, away from the bag.)

LLOYD

Listen to me...

HASSAN

Wait. What did you...

LLOYD

Try and run, you won't make it ten feet.
The blast will go through you, me, the van.
Three lanes of traffic.
All these cars. Everything around for twenty yards. Gone.
You won't even hear it.

(HASSAN freezes.)

LLOYD

Get back in the van.

HASSAN

What happened at the airport?

LLOYD

It doesn't matter. Get back in the...

HASSAN

No, I heard what they said on the radio, Lloyd-
I heard what they said.

LLOYD

The police already have your photo, Hassan.
I know the make and model of your van, the license plate, the-

HASSAN

Lloyd-

LLOYD

2012 Chevrolet Express.
Minnesota license plate GME-344.
Driven by Hassan Al-Alousi, employee ID number S-401943.
Six foot four. Two hundred and forty pounds.
Date of birth, March 17, 1978.⁶
It's all on your that card on the back of your seat.

(Silence.)

LLOYD

A Somali driver, miles from the airport with hundreds of dollars in cash-

⁶ The height, weight, and year of birth should be adjusted as necessary.

HASSAN

What are you...?

LLOYD

If you go to the police, they will take your van, they will take your job

They will take *everything*.

They might arrest me too, sure...

But when they realize *you're* an accomplice...

And you are, you *are* an accomplice.

Revoking your license would be the least of it.

(Silence.

LLOYD begins to pick up the clothes on the ground and stuffs them back in his duffel bag.

HASSAN is frozen.

LLOYD finishes repacking his clothes.)

LLOYD

Don't think. Don't argue. Don't try and run or...

Just get back in the van and keep driving.

It's just a few more hours, Hassan.

In a few hours, I can make it so you're on your way back home

With six hundred dollars in your pocket and a full tank of gas.

Or I can make it so you never see your home again.

Those are your only choices.

(Silence.)

LLOYD

I'm not insane. I'm not unreasonable. At this moment, I'm absolutely calm.

I'm not going to do anything unless you force me to.

I'm not going to do anything to you, I'm not going to do anything to anyone.

I just want to go home now, ok?

I just want to go back home.

9.

(Interstate 90. East of Eau Claire.

HASSAN is driving.

LLOYD is in the back section again, staring out the window.

LLOYD has his duffel bag on his lap.

They drive in silence for a moment.)

HASSAN

Is your mom really in the hospital?

LLOYD

She's in the hospice. I told you.

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

HASSAN

Look, let's just find a gas station or a strip mall or something.
And I'll just let you out and...

LLOYD

No.

HASSAN

You can keep your money. It's ok.

LLOYD

No, Hassan.

HASSAN

Why not, why-

Look, just hear me out, please...

I'm not going to tell anyone. Ok?

I'm not going to say a word about this to anyone.

I'm just going to drop you off somewhere and turn around and...

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

HASSAN

We've been driving for like...

We're over a hundred miles from Minneapolis.

You're not in any...

Nobody's going to...

Look, if that woman took a picture of the van, you might even / be safer not-

LLOYD

You're taking me to Chicago-

HASSAN

Lloyd, please-

LLOYD

You're taking me to Chicago and I'm paying you for your time.
That's what we / agreed on.

HASSAN

Lloyd, please, Lloyd. I swear to you.
I am not going to say a thing to anyone about-

LLOYD

You were the one who looked in the bag-

HASSAN

What?

LLOYD

You looked in the bag. Ok?
If you had just kept driving and-

HASSAN

What the fuck?

LLOYD

I'm just saying-

HASSAN

What the *fuck*?
Is this *my fault* now?

LLOYD

This wouldn't have been an issue / if you hadn't-

HASSAN

An issue? An issue?
What are you...
You *attack* the airport and it's *my fault* for-

LLOYD

I'm not saying that, I'm not-

HASSAN

Why? Why would you...
Why would *anyone* do something like that?

(LLOYD does not respond.)

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

HASSAN

I don't...

All that stuff you said about, about...

Al-Shabaab and Mall of America and Operation Atlanta-

LLOYD

Atlanta-

HASSAN

Talking to me about how you "get" Al-Shabaab?

I mean, is that the reason? Is *that* the reason you're-

LLOYD

You're better of not knowing anything, ok, like-

The more I tell you, you know, the more...

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

LLOYD

It doesn't make any difference, we're still-

HASSAN

People are dead-

LLOYD

Hassan-

HASSAN

Four people are *dead*. That doesn't *matter* to you?

LLOYD

(Suddenly aggressive) There might have been a *lot more*, ok, so...

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

LLOYD

Look, if...

If I told you, would you listen?

HASSAN

What?

LLOYD

Would you actually listen to me, you know?
Would you, like...?

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

LLOYD

America is killing people. You know?
Killing people all over the world by the *hundreds*, the *thousands*.
And we just pretend, like, it's not even happening...

HASSAN

(Incredulous) God...

LLOYD

See? See?
This is what I mean.
You don't even want to *acknowledge* it.
The police, the military, I mean it's a fucking *slaughterhouse*
Why do you care so much about *four* people back at the airport
When there are *thousands* and *thousands* of people dying in, in-
In Africa, in the Middle East, in, in...
. .
I don't know. I don't know, I was just so, so...
I mean it was like, everything, everything, everything, all the time
The bombings and the drone strikes and, and...
And I couldn't just watch it anymore, you know?
Couldn't sit back like everyone else and say "Oh, well. That's too bad."
Couldn't just...
How can you, how can *anyone* see all of that and not do something?
You of *all people* should understand this-

HASSAN

What?

LLOYD

"The modern day slavery of employment, work hours, / wages, et cetera..."

HASSAN

I don't believe this.

LLOYD

"Is one that leaves the Muslim in a constant feeling of subjugation

To a *kafir*⁷ / master.”

HASSAN

Kafir? What the / fuck?

LLOYD

“He does not live the might and honor
That every Muslim should live / and experience.”⁸

HASSAN

Where are you getting this shit?

LLOYD

I tried do something *good*. Do you understand that?

(*HASSAN scoffs.*)

LLOYD

No. You want to do something good in a bad world...
You can't afraid of doing something people won't understand.
I told myself it wouldn't be easy, but that wouldn't make it wrong...

HASSAN

It *is* wrong.

LLOYD

Hassan, it's not like I'm...

HASSAN

It's worse than wrong. It's evil.

LLOYD

Don't...

HASSAN

It is. It is *evil*.

LLOYD

You said you would listen / to me...

HASSAN

I *never* said that.

⁷ The Arabic term for a non-Muslim.

⁸ Lloyd is quoting from an article in the third issue of *Dabiq*: “The Call to Hijrah.” *Dabiq* is a periodical published by ISIS and used as a recruitment tool.

You just started going off.

LLOYD

You asked why I-

HASSAN

Going off on this *bullshit*.

That fucking recitation about, I don't even know, I don't...

Lloyd, ok, please. I can't do this, I can't do this...

LLOYD

You can.

HASSAN

Please / just...

LLOYD

You can. Just keep driving.

(HASSAN pulls the van over to the shoulder of the road, jumps out of the van.)

LLOYD follows behind him.

In the background, we hear the sound of cars rushing past.)

LLOYD

Hassan, Hassan, don't be stupid. Get back in the van.

You're going to *prison* if you call them, Hassan. Just *think* about it-

Think about what you're doing-

(HASSAN takes out his phone.)

LLOYD rushes over to HASSAN, tries to take the phone out of his hands.

HASSAN overpowers LLOYD, pushes him away.

HASSAN flips open his phone, dials 9-1-1.

An OPERATOR answers and can be heard faintly on the other line. HASSAN struggles to hear her over the noise of LLOYD's protests and the traffic..)

VOICE OF OPERATOR

Nine-one-one operator. What is your location?

HASSAN

Hi, I'm on, uhh... Wisconsin. Interstate 90-
I don't know the exit number, I, uhh...
It's just east of Eau Claire, right on the side of / the road...

VOICE OF OPERATOR

What is your emergency?

(LLOYD breaks, hysterical with fear, crying or at least on the verge of tears.)

LLOYD

STOP, STOP, I DON'T-
I MADE A MISTAKE! I MADE A MISTAKE!
I FUCKED UP!
I KNOW, I KNOW, I KNOW, I KNOW, I KNOW, I KNOW...

VOICE OF OPERATOR

What is your emergency?

HASSAN

(To LLOYD) Shut up-

(HASSAN lowers the phone away from his ear.)

LLOYD takes advantage of this moment of hesitation grabs HASSAN's hand with the phone and bites it hard with his teeth.)

HASSAN

Fuck-

(HASSAN lets go of the phone.)

The two men scramble for it.

LLOYD gets it, throws the phone on to the Interstate.

HASSAN takes a step out into the road.

A car horn sounds. He jumps back.

He stands there on the edge of the road, uncertain.

LLOYD runs back to the van, slams his face against the front grill.

HASSAN struggles to restrain LLOYD but he keeps hitting his face again and again.

LLOYD stops smashing his head.

He turns to HASSAN. His face is bleeding.)

HASSAN

What the fuck are you...?

(LLOYD looks out at the Interstate and smiles. There is blood in his teeth.)

LLOYD

Oh shit. You think it's broken?

(LLOYD laughs, spits blood.)

LLOYD

You're going to need to stop for gas soon-

HASSAN

What?

LLOYD

Probably in the next five, ten miles.

HASSAN

Lloyd...

(LLOYD points to his bloody face.)

LLOYD

If I wanted to, I could tell the attendant there you did this to me.

I could tell him you beat me and you took my money

Drove me halfway across the state.

I could tell him whatever I want, and he'll believe it.

Hell, I could flag down one these drivers right here and tell them the same story.

HASSAN

Lloyd-

(LLOYD yells at the traffic, waving his hands. HASSAN tries to prevent him.)

LLOYD

HELP ME! HELP ME! HE'S / HURTING ME! HELP!

HASSAN
Stop! Stop! All right!
All right...

(LLOYD stops yelling.)

LLOYD
You want me to stop? Do you?

HASSAN
Please-

LLOYD
No. I've tried to be reasonable, Hassan.
I've tried to be very reasonable.

HASSAN
Ok, ok...

LLOYD
The next time you try and do something
There's not going to be a next time.

(HASSAN does not respond.)

LLOYD
Give me the keys.

HASSAN
Lloyd, I can't...

LLOYD
I'm not asking, Hassan. Give them to me.

(Silence.)

HASSAN hands LLOYD the keys.

LLOYD looks off into the distance. The sun is rising.)

LLOYD
Can't remember the last time I saw the sunrise...
.
Ok. Let's get back in the van.

(Blackout.)

10.

(Interstate 90. Near Black River Falls.

LLOYD is driving.

HASSAN is in the passenger seat.

The duffel bag is resting on one of the seats in the back section.

HASSAN and LLOYD are listening to the radio. A WITNESS is giving an interview.)

WITNESS

...I didn't even hear the explosion.

I saw this, uhh, I saw this cloud out of the corner of my eye

Rushing at me. This cloud and this, just this wave of heat.

And it knocked me over. Knocked me right on my stomach...

And when I looked up, when I lifted my head to try and see...

My hands, you know, my arms, everything was covered in this white dust

And the air, you know, it was all...

All I could see was white...

(LLOYD turns the radio off.

They drive in silence for a moment.)

11.

(A gas station off Interstate 90. Nearing Madison, Wisconsin.

HASSAN is asleep in the passenger seat.

CONKLIN enters. She carries a sleeping baby in her arms. Also a plastic bag filled with groceries – perhaps diapers or formula - clutched precariously in her fingers.)

CONKLIN

Hey, umm, hey-

Can you...?

The bag...

(HASSAN looks at her, confused.)

HASSAN
Sorry?

CONKLIN
Can you just grab my bag there a minute?
Need to get my keys...

(HASSAN hesitates for a moment, then goes over to help her.)

CONKLIN
Thanks. If you could just...

(HASSAN takes the bag of groceries.)

CONKLIN adjusts the baby, takes her keys out of her pants.

HASSAN hands the bag back. CONKLIN is now holding everything – baby, keys, bag – a little more easily.)

CONKLIN
Thank you.
Up the whole night.
Finally asleep. Didn't want to push my luck.
Kid's got a mouth like a vacuum cleaner.

(HASSAN stares at the baby in CONKLIN's arms. She notices him looking.)

CONKLIN
Yeah. Looks sweet now, but in a minute...
Hah. Wait and see...

(HASSAN does not respond.)

CONKLIN
Are you all right?

HASSAN
I was asleep...

CONKLIN
I know. I'm sorry.

HASSAN

How did I fall asleep, how did I...
I don't know where I am...

CONKLIN
Sorry?

HASSAN
I need to get away, but I can't, I... I...

CONKLIN
Hey. It's ok, it's ok...

HASSAN
Look, I need you to, to, to...
You have / to tell someone it's not my idea to-

CONKLIN
I don't know what you're asking me, I'm sorry...

(LLOYD reenters, carrying a plastic bag.

HASSAN trails off.)

CONKLIN
Ok, well, uhh...
Thanks for all your help.

(CONKLIN exits. LLOYD watches her go.)

LLOYD
What did you say to her?

(HASSAN does not respond.)

LLOYD
Hassan. Look at me.

(HASSAN turns.)

LLOYD
I go inside for two minutes, and / you just...

HASSAN
I didn't say anything to her.

LLOYD

I warned you. All right?

I warned you about talking to people, don't put me in this position...

(LLOYD reaches into his pocket, takes out a wad of twenty dollar bills.)

LLOYD

We're almost to Madison. Ok?

Not that much further, just...

(LLOYD counts out cash as he lists each expense.)

LLOYD

Ok...

Three hundred, on top of the three I gave you already.

Plus eighty for gas.

Plus... How much is the cleaning fee?

HASSAN

Sorry?

LLOYD

The cleaning fee. How much is the cleaning fee?

HASSAN

Uh... Seventy five dollars.

LLOYD

Ok. Let's call it seven hundred and sixty all together. Rounding up.

(LLOYD holds a fold of bills out to HASSAN.)

HASSAN looks at the cash in LLOYD's hand.)

LLOYD

Take it.

(HASSAN takes the cash, puts it in his pocket.)

LLOYD

I also got us some, umm...

Smart Water. There's a couple Smart Waters in there.

They've got, like, electrolytes in them, so that's good.

Also some snacks and stuff too. Snickers. Jerky. Pringles.

I didn't know what you liked, so...

(LLOYD looks off in the direction where CONKLIN exited.)

LLOYD

We should get going.

12.

(Interstate 90. Outskirts of Madison.

LLOYD is driving. HASSAN is in the passenger seat.

LLOYD's duffel bag is resting on a passenger seat in the middle section.

LLOYD's face bothers him.

They drive in silence for a moment.)

LLOYD

What *exactly* did you say to her?

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

LLOYD

I saw you talking.

HASSAN

She asked me to help her with her groceries.

LLOYD

You know what's going to happen if we get pulled over?

HASSAN

Yeah. I know.

LLOYD

Then *why* were you talking to her?

HASSAN

I wasn't talking to her Lloyd.

I fell asleep. Ok?

When I should have been trying get the fuck away from you, I just...

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

HASSAN

I hope they get you.
You know that, right?
I hope a, a, a fucking lightning bolt just-
And you are blasted out of existence.

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

LLOYD

More people are going to die on this Interstate today than at the airport.
Car crashes. Whatever. You think about that?

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

LLOYD

Of course not.

HASSAN

It's not the same.

LLOYD

No. You're right.
Those other deaths don't serve any purpose.

HASSAN

Oh, what? Not driving the "infidels" out of the fucking...
I don't even know what...

LLOYD

You don't understand anything about-

HASSAN

No. No, I really don't. I really do not understand.

LLOYD

You think it's a joke, you think-

HASSAN

I don't think it's a *joke*, Lloyd.

LLOYD

You think I'm insane, you think I'm, I'm, I'm...
This is a *war*. Wake up. This is a fucking...
If an IED goes off in like Iraq or Afghanistan, I mean, nobody even reads about it.
Four people dead in the American heartland will go so much further to, to-

HASSAN
You really believe all this shit, don't you?

LLOYD
How could you not?

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

LLOYD
It's not even...
You don't have to *believe*. It's not something you *believe* in.
It's not the fucking Easter Bunny.
It's just a *fact*.
I mean, honestly, what, like, what *rational* person
Actually believes America is a force for *good*?

HASSAN
I don't care about any of that, Lloyd. I don't care, please just...

LLOYD
Have you ever shed a tear for anyone in the Middle East?
Where's your outrage for their deaths? Hm?
Or the deaths in *Somalia*?

HASSAN
Oh, fuck you...

LLOYD
In *Jowhar*?

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

LLOYD
Yeah. Fine. Shut it out. Keep shutting it out.
That's what everyone else is doing.

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

LLOYD
I know you know I'm right.
You want to keep living in denial? Ok.
Doesn't change anything.
But as a fellow Muslim, you / should, you understand the need for...

HASSAN

Oh, no. No. Don't fucking start / with the-

LLOYD

You should. America doesn't / give a shit about you or about-

HASSAN

Do not even *begin* to compare what / you are to what I am.

LLOYD

You said it yourself. You said that people, you know, they assume, they, they-

HASSAN

Why didn't you pray?

LLOYD

What?

HASSAN

When the sun rose, you should have prayed.

If you were a true Muslim, a *real* Muslim, you would have prayed.

You would have seen the dawn, and you would have prayed.

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

HASSAN

Pull over.

LLOYD

Why?

HASSAN

Just pull over.

LLOYD

Why do you want me to pull over?

HASSAN

I want you to pray with me.

LLOYD

No.

HASSAN

Lloyd-

LLOYD
I'm not pulling over.

HASSAN
Why not?

LLOYD
Because you'll try and, like, *attack* me or, like, I don't know-

HASSAN
I'm not going to do that, Lloyd.

LLOYD
Bullshit.

HASSAN
I just want you to pray with me.

LLOYD
Pray with you? Pray for what?

HASSAN
Pray for forgiveness.

(LLOYD scoffs.)

HASSAN
You're afraid. I *know* you're afraid.

LLOYD
Yeah, I'm afraid if I pull over / you'll...

HASSAN
That's not what I'm talking about, that's not what...
You told me you made a mistake.
Right before you grabbed my phone, you said you made a mistake.
You said you knew what you did was wrong.

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

HASSAN
Look at me.

(LLOYD does not look.)

They drive in silence for a moment.)

HASSAN
Fucking look at me, Lloyd.

(LLOYD does not look.

They drive in silence for a moment.)

HASSAN
You were crying.
I saw you crying. I saw your tears.
I know they're real.

(They drive in silence for a moment.

LLOYD sniffs.

HASSAN reaches out his hand, tries to touch LLOYD's arm gently.)

HASSAN
It's not too late. All right?
It's not too late for you to...

(LLOYD recoils as HASSAN touches him.)

LLOYD
Stop!

HASSAN
Sorry-

LLOYD
Stop! Fucking *stop*, all right! Don't-

HASSAN
Lloyd-

LLOYD
I'm warning you, all right?

HASSAN
Ok. Ok.

LLOYD

You try *anything*, you tell someone, you run, whatever.
The next call I make is to the police and I guarantee you-

HASSAN

Ok, Lloyd. Ok.

(LLOYD wipes his eyes.)

They drive in silence for a moment

HASSAN swallows a few times, thirsty. LLOYD notices.)

LLOYD

If you want some Smart Water, you can...

(HASSAN fishes for the water in the bag.)

LLOYD

There's some extra Snickers in / there too and some chips and...

HASSAN

I'm fine.

(HASSAN takes the water from the bag, drinks it.)

LLOYD

You didn't pray either.

HASSAN

What?

LLOYD

You didn't kneel and pray when the sun rose.
I don't see a, a, a prayer mat or anything in the van...
You want to show me your prayer beads? Yeah?

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

LLOYD

That's what I thought.

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

LLOYD

I don't understand why you...

Those four people back there don't mean anything, they / don't mean-

HASSAN

How can you say that?

LLOYD

You're not going to mourn for them. You're not going to miss them.

You wouldn't have even known they existed if they hadn't been on the news.

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

LLOYD checks his watch.)

LLOYD

Almost nine...

Traffic into Madison's going to be all backed up.

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

LLOYD

If I take 69 south, I can cut back across to 90. Right?

(HASSAN does not respond.)

LLOYD

Hassan?

HASSAN

I don't know. I've never gone this far.

13.

(Highway 69.)

LLOYD and HASSAN drive in silence.

HASSAN stares blankly at the road ahead of him.

LLOYD's face bothers him. He touches it a couple times, probing the pain gingerly with his fingertips.

LLOYD reaches into his plastic grocery bag, unwraps and eats a candy bar.

He drops the wrapper on the ground, reaches for his water bottle takes a drink of water.

LLOYD looks around for something to wipe his hands with.)

HASSAN
Don't.

LLOYD
What?

HASSAN
Don't wipe your hands on my seat.

LLOYD
I wasn't going to wipe my hands on / the seat.

HASSAN
That's *exactly* what you were going to do.
I can tell when someone's going to wipe his hands on my seat.
You were going to wipe your hands on my seat.

(They drive in silence for a moment.

LLOYD wipes his hands on his clothes.

They drive in silence for a moment.)

HASSAN
I don't want that wrapper on the floor either.

LLOYD
I'll pick it up.

HASSAN
It's still my van, Lloyd.

(They drive in silence for a moment.

LLOYD reaches down, picks up the wrapper, puts it the trash bag.)

14.

(Highway 69.

HASSAN and LLOYD drive along the highway, nearing the border of Wisconsin and Illinois.)

LLOYD
All these farms.

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

LLOYD
I worked on a farm for a summer. In Ukiah.
It was ok, you know?
I think I wouldn't mind doing that.
Like if it was organic food and like...

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

LLOYD
What would you do?

HASSAN
What?

LLOYD
What would do if you weren't, you know...?

HASSAN
Wait, are we chatting now?
We're just going to chat? Is that the idea?

LLOYD
I was just curious.

HASSAN
Jesus, what...
What *goes on* in your brain?

LLOYD
I'm sorry.

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

LLOYD
Look, I just thought...

HASSAN

Fuck you.

LLOYD

Ok, ok.

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

HASSAN

No, really. Fuck you and...

(HASSAN trails off.)

LLOYD

And what?

HASSAN

I don't know. Fuck you.

LLOYD

Uh-huh. Great. That's great.

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

HASSAN

What did I ever do to you?

What did I ever do to you but try and take you home?

LLOYD

We've got less than two hours to go, why can't you just-

HASSAN

You make it sound like you're doing me a favor.

LLOYD

Hassan, in two hours, you'll be driving back to Minneapolis
With seven hundred and sixty dollars / in your pocket-

HASSAN

Oh, so it's all ok, then?

Doesn't matter that I'm your fucking prisoner.

LLOYD

You're not a prisoner, you're not-

HASSAN

If I'm not your prisoner, why won't you let me go?

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

LLOYD

I'm sorry...

HASSAN

The fuck you are.

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

LLOYD

I can stop at another ATM or...

(HASSAN looks at LLOYD with disgust.

They drive in silence for a moment.)

LLOYD

What? I mean, like

You were just saying, like, how hard it is...

HASSAN

I'm not taking your money.

LLOYD

You're already taking my money. Ok?

You're already doing it. I'm offering to give you more / if you-

HASSAN

Just shut up.

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

LLOYD

Tomorrow you'll wish you...

HASSAN

"Tomorrow?"

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

HASSAN

They're not going to stop looking until they find who's responsible...

You do understand that, don't you?
 Between security cameras at the airport and gas stations and...
 Even if we make it to Chicago...
 You can't really think you're going to get on a plane and...

LLOYD

You don't know that.

HASSAN

Come on, Lloyd...

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

HASSAN

You actually think you're going to just...
 Go back to Ukiah and go get a job on an organic farm?
 You *actually* think that's going to happen?

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

HASSAN

Or are you planning to go to fucking...
 Syria? Or something. The Caliphate? That the idea?

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

HASSAN

They'd never accept you. You're aware of that, right?
 You think they give two shits about some white kid from California?

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

HASSAN

What did they tell you, Lloyd?
 That you'd be welcome in their homes?
 Welcome around their families, their children?

.
 They're *using* you, Lloyd. That's how they operate.
 They find you, they use you.
 And when you're used up, you're all alone.

LLOYD

That's not-
 You have *no idea*. Ok?
 Trust me, you don't...

HASSAN
 How old are you?
 How old are you, Lloyd?

LLOYD
 Nineteen.

HASSAN
 Nineteen?

LLOYD
 Yeah. Why?

HASSAN
 I left Jowhar when I was ten.
 If I was nineteen? If I'd stayed in Somalia?
 I think you and I might have had a lot in common.

LLOYD
 Ah. See? There it is. There you go.

HASSAN
 "There I go," what?

LLOYD
 "I understand you." "You and me are the same."
 You really think I'm stupid / enough to, to-

HASSAN
 I do understand. I *do*.
 But you, Lloyd, *you* do not understand *them*.
 You do not understand / how they-

LLOYD
 "Fighting has been enjoined upon you while it is hateful to you."

(HASSAN joins LLOYD reciting the quote.)

HASSAN and LLOYD
 "But perhaps you hate a thing that is good for you
 And perhaps you love a thing that is bad for you."

(LLOYD trails off, surprised that HASSAN knows the quote.)

HASSAN

“God Knows, but you do not know.”⁹

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

HASSAN

Lloyd, if you reached out to the person who quoted that to you
Do you think he'd try and protect you?
He'd have wanted you to die back there, probably.

LLOYD

Yeah, well, it's not like you or anyone else is going to-

HASSAN

I never pretended to be your friend, though. Did I?

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

HASSAN

They don't want to help you. They don't / care about-

LLOYD

How can you say that if / you've never-

HASSAN

What have they given you, Lloyd? Really, what / have they-

LLOYD

They've given me *life!*

I mean, I feel like I'm...

I can feel every atom in my body and all of it is *alive*.

And the *power*, like, the fucking *immensity* of everything's just...

When we were driving away from the airport, it was like I'd been...

I felt this wave of transformation I've never felt before.

Every breath I took, every heartbeat was so *vital*, so incredibly...

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

LLOYD

See. You're not even listening.

HASSAN

⁹ Quran 2:216

I am listening, Lloyd.

LLOYD

No. You're not.

You're thinking about how you're going to...

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

LLOYD

It's fine.

You wouldn't understand anyway.

HASSAN

Then tell / me. Explain it to me, Lloyd.

LLOYD

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

I just know. Ok?

I mean, how, *how* can you...

It's like describing color to someone who's blind.

HASSAN

Listen to yourself.

You're hopped up on adrenaline

And you think you're having a spiritual epiphany-

LLOYD

Like you would know.

How would you know what I feel right now?

How would you have / any idea what's-

HASSAN

I ask you why you did it.

And all you can do is regurgitate the shit they've made you read.

I ask you to acknowledge those people, the people *you* did this to

You act like they never existed.

You can't even see the layers upon layers of bullshit / you've built up around-

LLOYD

You don't want me to acknowledge anything.

You just want me to stop the van, that's all you want.

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

HASSAN

Are you proud?

LLOYD
Please...

HASSAN
No. Are you *proud* of what you did, Lloyd?

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

HASSAN
You're not. I know you're not.

LLOYD
This is about justice. Ok? It's not about-

HASSAN
That's not an answer-

LLOYD
Fine. I am. I *am* proud.

HASSAN
No-

LLOYD
I am.

HASSAN
Lloyd, just admit to yourself that-

LLOYD
You really believe I feel sorry, don't you?
Deep down, you think I have to be sorry or I have to be crazy.

HASSAN
Yeah. Yeah I do.

LLOYD
Then you're a fucking idiot.

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

LLOYD
I was going to walk across the street.

Walk right across the street from the airport.
 Right into the *middle* of the Mall of America.
 Into the *heart* of everything that is wretched and corrupt and profane and, and...

I wouldn't have felt a thing.
 I would have just...
 Vanished.

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

LLOYD
 If I feel *sorry*, if I feel sorry for anything, it's...
 It's that I *ran*.
 I left one in a trashcan on a timer like a fucking coward
 And ran away before it went off...

(They drive in silence for a long moment.)

HASSAN turns the radio on. Music plays. HASSAN tunes the dial.

LLOYD
 Don't.

HASSAN
 It's all right...

LLOYD
 I don't want...

HASSAN
 It's just the radio, Lloyd.

(HASSAN lands on a station playing "Twistin' the Night Away" by Sam Cooke¹⁰.)

They drive in silence for a moment, listening to the radio.)

LLOYD
 Who is...?

HASSAN
 Sam Cooke.

¹⁰Again, this may change too as required. Corresponding lines should change as well. Whatever the music is, it should be in a similar vein.

LLOYD
Oh.

(They drive in silence for a moment, listening to the radio. Maybe HASSAN hums along to the song)

LLOYD turns the radio off.)

HASSAN
Lloyd...

LLOYD
No.

HASSAN
Lloyd, look, it's just...

LLOYD
No. No music. I'm not supposed to...

(HASSAN turns the radio back on.)

They drive in silence for a moment, listening to the radio. The song finishes, goes to commercial.

LLOYD turns the radio off.

They drive in silence for a moment.)

LLOYD
Let's just get to Chicago, all right?
Let's just get to Chicago and I'll be gone, I'll walk out of your life forever.

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

HASSAN
What life?

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

HASSAN
You want to know what I'd do, if I weren't driving?
Why?
It doesn't matter anymore.
Now that you're here, none of it matters.

It's gone. It's over.
Doesn't matter how much money you decide to pay / me or...

LLOYD
Hassan, it's just a couple more hours-

HASSAN
How is taking my life away from me making things better?
How's that making the world better, Lloyd?

LLOYD
It's not about you-

HASSAN
It is.
I'm here. I'm sitting right here.

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

HASSAN
You *are* a fucking coward.

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

HASSAN
Even scared of Sam Cooke...

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

LLOYD drifts off, overwhelmed by the pain, physical and psychological.

The van swerves in the lane. A car horn sounds nearby, very loud.

LLOYD recovers control of the vehicle.)

HASSAN
Jesus...

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

HASSAN
Lloyd...

LLOYD
I'm fine.

HASSAN
Lloyd, look, I can drive...

LLOYD
No.

(A realization.)

HASSAN
I have ibuprofen.

LLOYD
What?

HASSAN
For your face. If you...

(They drive in silence for a moment

LLOYD holds out his hand for the pills.)

LLOYD
All right...

(HASSAN takes the pill bottle out of his pocket, hands it to LLOYD.

LLOYD counts out four pills and swallows them, washes them down with some bottled water from his grocery bag.)

HASSAN
That's it?

LLOYD
What?

HASSAN
That's all your going to take?

LLOYD
I took four.

HASSAN
Ok.

LLOYD
What?

HASSAN
Nothing. They're over the counter, that's all.
You think four's going to do a lot?

LLOYD
The recommended dose is two.

(HASSAN shrugs.

They drive in silence for a moment.

LLOYD takes out the pill bottle, takes two more, washes it down.

LLOYD hands the pill bottle back to HASSAN.

They drive in silence for a moment.)

LLOYD
Thanks.

(They drive in silence for a moment.

HASSAN checks his watch.

LLOYD sees him looking.)

LLOYD
Two more hours. Three at the most.

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

LLOYD
You're going to take that money...
You're going to pay down some of your debt for your van and everything.
You'll see. You'll see the good.

15.

(Nearing Highway 26, maybe about thirty minutes later.

LLOYD is still driving. HASSAN is in the passenger seat.

LLOYD is sweating. His head aches. The pills are taking their toll.

They drive in silence for a long moment. This is the longest silence in the play.

We begin to get the sense that this is a silent scene until LLOYD abruptly speaks.)

LLOYD
Illinois.

HASSAN
What?

(LLOYD points at a sign off the Interstate.)

LLOYD
State line.

HASSAN
Oh. I didn't...

LLOYD
Look for...
There should be signs that say Chicago or something.
Maybe. I don't really know where, uhh...

(LLOYD does not respond.)

HASSAN
Lloyd?

(LLOYD begins breathing heavily. The effects of the pills are becoming overwhelming.)

HASSAN
Lloyd?

(LLOYD does not respond.)

HASSAN
Lloyd, Lloyd, listen to me...
Maybe you should just leave me here. Ok?
Just pull over and leave me here and I won't, I won't...

LLOYD
I feel like / I'm, I'm...

HASSAN

I don't have a phone, I don't have anyone to...
There's nothing I could...

LLOYD

Like my whole body's / just...

HASSAN

The sign says ten miles to Damascus.

LLOYD

I feel like my whole body's on *fire*...

HASSAN

Ten miles. I wouldn't be able to get
By the time I got there, you'd be...

(Without warning, LLOYD pulls the van onto the shoulder the road. The breaks squeal.

LLOYD sits there for a moment, engine idling. His breath is ragged. His eyes burn. His head throbs with pain. He is like an injured animal. Silence.)

LLOYD

I couldn't see the road...
My eyes were open, and all of a sudden I couldn't see the road.
It just disappeared...

(HASSAN hesitates for a moment, then reaches across and drags LLOYD out of the van. LLOYD tries to fight back but cannot resist.)

LLOYD

What are you doing?

(HASSAN gets LLOYD out of the van.

LLOYD tries to climb back in, but HASSAN punches him in the stomach.

LLOYD cries and doubles over.

HASSAN then races back to the van, opens the sliding door, takes out the duffel bag, throws it on the ground outside of the van.

LLOYD is curled on the ground, gasping for air, crying.)

LLOYD

You open your heart to the world, you know...
You open yourself up and you let in all this stuff and, and, and...

(LLOYD struggles to get upright, but the pills and the fighting make him too weak to stand. He screams in panic.)

LLOYD

I don't want to die...
I don't want to die...
I'm nineteen years old...

(HASSAN opens the driver's door.

He hesitates, keys in hand.

He watches LLOYD sob and convulsively rock himself back and fourth.)

HASSAN

(To himself) Fuck me...

(HASSAN closes the door to the van, turns back to LLOYD.)

HASSAN

You need to go to the hospital.

(LLOYD moans in panic.

HASSAN goes over to LLOYD, bends down close to him.)

HASSAN

Listen to me.
You need to go to the hospital-

LLOYD

What? What did you do, what / did you...

HASSAN

I need you to *promise*, I need you to *swear*
If I drive you to the hospital.
That's the *end*. All right?

LLOYD

Ok-

HASSAN

You'll let me go. You'll leave me out of it.
You won't mention my name to *anyone*.

LLOYD

Ok, ok-

HASSAN

Do you *promise*?

LLOYD

I promise. I promise.

(HASSAN looks into LLOYD's eyes, trying to be certain.)

HASSAN

Ok.

(HASSAN helps LLOYD into the passenger side of the van and into the passenger seat, walks around the van, climbs in the driver's side.)

16.

(Highway 69, a few minutes later.

HASSAN is driving. LLOYD is in the passenger seat, trying to steady his breathing.

They drive in silence for a moment.)

LLOYD

I was right about you.

HASSAN

What?

LLOYD

You can just tell some times about people, you know?

HASSAN

Tell what about people?

LLOYD

That they're...

That they are the way they are.
 Most of the time, like...
 There's no mystery, you know?
 Things are what they are.

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

LLOYD
 Are you going to...?
 When we get there, are you going to tell them?

(HASSAN does not respond.)

(They drive in silence for a moment.)

LLOYD
 There's going to be another attack, you know?
 Somewhere else, some day in the future.
 Another attack and another war and again / and again, it's never going to...

HASSAN
 Lloyd, just shut up. Just shut / up, just-

LLOYD
 I'm not want you think I am.
 I wasn't trying to, you know, I wasn't...

(The sound of a police siren in the distance.)

LLOYD looks around, trying to locate the source of the sound.

The siren grows louder.

A police car appears behind the van, siren blaring.

The van is awash in a flood of blue and red lights.)

LLOYD
 Hassan Al-Alousi.

HASSAN
 What?

LLOYD
 Hassan Al-Alousi.

Hassan Al-Alousi.
Hassan Al-Alousi.

(The siren gets louder, the flashing lights get brighter.)

LLOYD

Employee ID number S-401943.
Minnesota license plate GME-344.
2012 Chevy Express.
He beat my face in, he, he-
He locked me in his van!
He was saying these things about Somalia and, and, and the / airport and-

HASSAN

I could / have left you back there, I could have left you and gone on without-

LLOYD

And there was this duffel bag!
I remember he had this duffel bag that he left on the side of the road!
North of / Damascus, I think?
I saw a sign that said ten miles to Damascus.
Just ten miles north of Damascus, officer, just-

HASSAN

I'm driving you to the *hospital*
I am driving you to the hospital after *everything* that's happened
Why are you doing this?
Why are you doing this to me?

LLOYD

You're *forcing* me to do it!
I can call them. In a week. A month. A year.
And they will drag you out of your van
They'll hook their arms around your neck and
Drag you out onto the street, drag your body across the fucking asphalt
And there will be *nothing* you can do.
Nothing! *Nothing* you can fucking do!

(The squad car is directly behind them now.)

HASSAN and LLOYD wait as though facing a firing squad.

They brace themselves...

And nothing happens.

A squad car passes by them, called to some other business. The flashing lights disappear. The sound of the siren recedes into the distance.

HASSAN and LLOYD watch it disappear.

HASSAN looks at LLOYD, then back at the highway.)

HASSAN
You're right.

(HASSAN presses down on the gas.

The van speeds up.)

LLOYD
Hassan?

(The van continues to accelerate.)

LLOYD
Hassan, slow / down...

(The van continues to accelerate.)

LLOYD
Stop, stop, slow / down.

HASSAN
Why? What are you afraid of, Lloyd?

(HASSAN pulls behind the police car.

The police siren can be heard.

The reflection of the flashing lights dance across both their faces.)

HASSAN
"Fighting has been enjoined upon you."

LLOYD
I didn't mean it.

HASSAN
You quoted it to me.

LLOYD

I didn't mean to, I take it back, just slow down, just / stop the van.

HASSAN

How can you be sorry if you're running, Lloyd?

You're fucking running / from all of it, running, running.

LLOYD

I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry!

I'm sorry, I'm so / sorry, I'm so, so sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry

I'm, I'm, please, I'm sorry, I'm sorry, ok? I'm sorry!

HASSAN

That's it. That's it. Shut it out. Keep shutting it out.

How can you be sorry if it's not your fault?

How can you be sorry and still be sitting here?

You're not even supposed to be here.

You're supposed to have blasted yourself into a thousand pieces

In the Mall of America. Right? Right?

(HASSAN flashes his headlights, slams the horn again and again.)

HASSAN and LLOYD are both yelling at the top of their lungs. HASSAN is yelling to get the cop's attention. LLOYD is yelling at HASSAN, totally hysterical.)

HASSAN

HE'S HERE! HE'S HERE!

(The sound of the siren, the yelling, the honking horn, the noise of the engine straining at high RPM builds to a cacophony.)

LLOYD undoes his seatbelt and opens the passenger door of the van.

HASSAN sees him, reaches out a hand to stop his fall

But LLOYD is already throwing himself out of the door.

Everything is still.

LLOYD hangs in the void for a moment, as though flying.

Then he drops away behind the speeding van.

Blackout.

The thump of a body hitting the asphalt at high velocity, rolling, rolling, then slowing to a stop.)

17.

(Highway 69.

HASSAN sits on the ground near his van, staring out onto the road.

Perhaps a thin trail of blood is visible on the asphalt.

Perhaps LLOYD's body is curled on the edge of the stage.

A moment, then a policewoman, WHITAKER, enters. Maybe from crouching by LLOYD's body, if he is onstage.

HASSAN turns to WHITAKER.)

WHITAKER

Come on. Get up.

(HASSAN stands.

The audience might suspect for a moment that WHITAKER is going to cuff him, but instead...)

WHITAKER

You sit on the ground like that, you're going to freeze.
It's like twelve degrees out here.

(HASSAN nods. Silence.)

WHITAKER

Paramedics wouldn't have made it in time anyway...

(Silence.)

WHITAKER

Hope it's going to be a nice day.
When I woke up this morning, didn't look so good, but now...
Clearing up a little.

HASSAN

Uh-huh.

WHITAKER

Got up to like forty degrees last week. You believe that?
Almost didn't need a jacket.
Forty degrees in December?
Hell. I could get used to that, I'm telling you.
Thank god for global warming, right?

(Silence.)

WHITAKER

Fuckin' mess.

(Silence.)

WHITAKER

Hey. Listen.
You did the right thing.
You saw him lying there on the road, you drove after me, you flagged me down.
And you tried to get him some help.
There's really not much else you could have-

HASSAN

I didn't try to help him, I didn't do anything for him-

WHITAKER

Well, you did more than whoever *hit him* and just kept on driving. You know?

(Silence.)

WHITAKER

I just wish I noticed you sooner...
When I got the siren on, I mean, I just...
How long were you behind me?

HASSAN

I don't know...
Few miles.

WHITAKER

Ok. Well...

(Silence.)

WHITAKER

It's not like...

I mean, it happens more often than you think.

Someone's walking on the shoulder of the road, gets hit, driver keeps going.

Last year, I remember, there was this...

Well. You'd be surprised. That's all.

(Silence.)

WHITAKER

Look, you don't need to stick around.

I got your statement and everything.

They're just going to come here and put him in a bag, you know?

There's no reason for you to stay for any of that.

(WHITAKER takes a business card out of her utility belt, writes something on the back with a pen, and hands it to HASSAN.)

WHITAKER

You ever get in any kind of traffic thing.

Pulled over, whatever. Give this to the guy. He'll probably let you off.

HASSAN

Uh-huh.

WHITAKER

Call me if he doesn't. I mean it.

(WHITAKER holds out her hand.)

WHITAKER

Get home safe. Ok?

HASSAN

Yeah.

(HASSAN takes her hand. They shake.)

WHITAKER

Long way back to Minnesota.

HASSAN

What?

WHITAKER

Your plates.

HASSAN
Oh. Right.

WHITAKER
Uh-huh. Be careful out there on the road.

(WHITAKER exits.

HASSAN looks at the sky.

He faces east.

He kneels.

He prays.

End of play.)