

WELCOME WE ARE A NATION OF IMMIGRANTS

written by

Namaya

Dedicated to Pete Seeger & Paul Robeson

Fearless champions of human rights

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

SAUL SCHWARTZ - Grandpa Saul - Zayde A proud and principled Jewish widower in his late seventies, living in New Mill, Maine. Son of an immigrant and the moral backbone of the story. He finds unexpected kinship, conflict with the Nabil family, and a late-in-life romance with Rosie.

DAVID SCHWARTZ - Saul's curious and idealistic grandson. Torn between generational traditions and a changing world, he observes and absorbs the town's tensions.

MOHAMMAD NABIL - A hardworking furniture store owner who fled Syria with his family. He struggles to balance survival with dignity in a town full of contradictions.

AISHA NABIL - Mohammad's wife and a history professor. Brilliant, bold, and politically aware

KAREEM NABIL - The teenage son of Mohammad and Aisha. A shy, brilliant coder and aspiring mathematician who's quietly building tools to help his family and community.

JAMILA NABIL - At 15, already a savvy entrepreneur. Ambitious and intelligent, she sees both the opportunity and danger in New Mill's economic underbelly.

ROSIE - Head of the ACLU in Maine, who helps to free Mohammed.

PERCY "SLUG" SLUGOWSKI - The intimidating leader of the local motorcycle gang. He controls the town's fentanyl trade.

~~**SHERIFF POWALSKI** - The sheriff who opposes ICE and upholds justice in New Mill~~

~~**ICE AGENT #1** - Lead federal immigration enforcement officer. Represents the harsh and bureaucratic arm of the immigration system. Leads the team that arrests Mohammad, triggering a wave of tension and resistance.~~

MARLEY JONES - A Jamaican-born handyman and electrician with deep community ties.

MARY SMITH - The Nurse Practitioner who is the leading health provider in New Mill

ACT ONE

Scene 1 The Meeting

Mohammed and their family meet Grandpa Saul

Directions: *Main Street has garbage on the curbside. It looks dreary. There are boarded-up windows. And a big sign in the middle that says*

AT RISE: *There is a big sign in the back center, "Schwartz's Furniture Store," and it is a crowded jumble of chairs and tables. Dowdy-looking, dimly lit furniture store. Looking more like a Salvation Army store. A large statue of Lady Liberty, with the signs "Give Me your tired. Please give me your poor. Those yearning to be free." And a large American flag in the far right corner. Grandpa is in his mid-seventies, wearing a worn-out old cardigan and a wide plaid tie and schlepping around in slippers while dusting off all the furniture.*

Stage Right: *The stage is darkened on the side where the furniture store is. A man about 40 with a black beard, a prayer cap, a long white robe, and a winter jacket appears with his family. His wife Aisha, with a long traditional Arabic kaftan and a modest purple hijab, and two teenage children Jamila and Kareem dressed in jeans with winter coats. They are carrying suitcases*

MOHAMMED

Direction: He puts his suitcase down.
America, Alhamdulillah! I've dreamed of this all my life. I can't believe this journey, which has taken almost two years is almost over. This town, New Mill, looks beautiful!

AISHA

Mohammed, inshallah we can find a home here. America this promised land, but (lowering her voice) I can't believe the USA elected somebody this crazy as president. But it's better than living in the maddnes of Syria, or even worse, in the disaster of Gaza.

KAREEM

Shshh! Mama, keep your voice down! Since 911, Americans believe that all Muslims are terrorists. I hope there is a better future in America. Many in the world have fantasized about this country.

JAMILA

Inshallah, we will make a new home here. Baba, lets look at this "Schwartz's Furniture store." Not as nice as our store in Damascus, but let's see what's here.

Direction: Light fades from the family on Stage right till they walk in to the store.

DAVID

(A thirty-year-old man enters stage left)

Zaida, did you look at the business proposal I gave you at the beginning of the week? I know this is hard for you, but you must face reality. New Mill is a dying town, and stores are closed all around us. We only have a few more months of cash left. We have to liquidate and sell the store. Grandpa, it's the only choice.

GRANDPA

(On stage, dusting the stage and store)

And what? And give up this glorious future? You got a fancy MBA, which didn't teach you anything about running a business? This store, which my father, your great-grandfather, built with his own hands, using every penny he had and all of his dreams and hopes to create the finest furniture store in New Mill, is never for sale! New Mill is the most prosperous little town in New England. Look (points to the sign in the back), *Schwartz's Furniture Store* - doesn't that make you proud? One day, this will all be yours (Sweeping with his hand the whole stage of furniture)

David, sometimes, when I look at you. I swear, you look exactly like your father. I can't believe that a year ago, he suddenly keeled over and dropped dead from a heart attack at the age of 50. He was so young. I miss Jacob very much. I wish he could have enjoyed life more. He worried too much.

DAVID

I still can't believe that he died. I'm sure he would've been able to turn the store around with a little more time, but the reality is that New Mill is a dying town, and there's not much we can do about that. The only recourse now is to liquidate and sell the store. I have to go back to Boston to work, and I have to tell you something.

GRANDPA

Tell me what? You are coming back to New Mill, and we will take Schwartz Furniture Store into a bright new future?

(He begins to sing while dusting, "If I were a rich man.")

DAVID

Direction: He sits down in the chair, and when he sits, a big cloud of dust comes up.

Grandpa, I have an idea for making money! Maybe we can charge the dust mites for rent.

Grandpa

Direction: Continue dusting around the store. He sees a smudge on the mirror, takes a bit of saliva, and cleans it with his yellow tie.

Maybe you could have a career as a comedian and take it on the road? Or we can have you do a comedy show here at the store? All the store needs is a bit of dusting. But our furniture store will one day be your proud legacy, and we will take Schwartz's furniture store into the new century!

DAVID (CONT'D)

(Hands on his hips - exasperated)
Grandpa, we know the story. We have heard it a thousand times, but New Mill is a dying town. All the furniture factories have long moved away. The stuff used to be made in the USA, but now it's brought in from Indonesia, China, and IKEA.

GRANDPA SOL

That's why we move the furniture around. It makes the store look like we have even more furniture. Besides, we can make the furniture here in New Mill like we did years ago. We can build it all in America, the most tremendous country. (He continues to dust) With a little dusting and polishing, this furniture will look like the day it came off the assembly line. America is still a great country.

DAVID

Zaida, America isn't so great anymore - we're trillions of dollars in debt! This country is going down the drain. Look who's in charge. A con man, a convicted felon! New Mill is a dying town! We need to put the store on the market!

Directions: Give the spreadsheet to Grandpa Sol. Here is the spreadsheet and analysis over the past two years. It is black and white. We're almost out of money.

Grandpa

DIRECTION: He crosses his arms.

Damn, Republicans! The bastards closed the factories and moved all their equipment to China so fat cats could make billions. They're killing the American dream. Then they wave a flag and pretend they're patriots.

David

DIRECTION: David hands him a flyer.

This is all true, which brings me back to Furniture Liquidators. Please, it is our only option

GRANDPA

(Indignant)

Do you want Larry the Liquidator to sell all of our stock? They're not liquidators, they're assassins! Oy gevolt! My grandson supports assassins!

DAVID

I spoke to Starbucks, and they want to sign a lease for our building. Here is the paper. They'll consider this as soon as we get all the furniture out of here.

GRANDPA

Starbucks! So yuppies can get all pumped up and sit inside all day on their computers and pretend they're working. They ain't working. They don't make anything? David, when my father laid the cornerstone of this building, in the cement was a gold coin from the Czar, the last coin we had from Russia. You want me to sign a lease so a coffee company from Seattle can put in a café. It makes my prostate hurt thinking of all that caffeine. (Sits down wearily, shaking his head)

DAVID

Maybe we should find the gold coin? Then, at last, we could finally make some money!

GRANDPA

Do you think all that fancy schmaltzy nonsense you learned at MBA School could convince me to throw Schwartz's furniture store out the window?

DAVID

It ain't fancy schmaltzy—it's reality! We have an old furniture stock, very few customers, and cash reserves that will only last two months. If our furniture were any older (beat), we would have to sell it with a cane! Besides, Grandpa, I need to talk to you about something else.

GRANDPA

(Adamant, with this dusting stick, emphasizes his point.)

Sell it with a cane! Mr. Funny, man! If I had a cane, I would beat you for speaking rudely of your patrimony. Business cycle! When you have been around as long as I have, you know that things will turn around. Look, here are some new customers now! We can talk about something else later.

***Direction-** In walks a man about forty with a long Middle Eastern robe and a full beard, his wife wearing a long skirt and a head scarf, and two children. They're dressed in winter jackets.*

GRANDPA (CONT'D)

(walks over and shakes the man's hand. Aside to David - Customers!)

Welcome to Schwartz's Furniture store, the best furniture store in New Mill. Welcome to New Mill.

Act 1 Scene 2

Mohammed and his family meet the Schwartzs

MOHAMMED

Direction: The man looks around the store, has his hands on his hips, and smiles.

Hello, Sir. My name is Mohammed (He offers his hand).

GRANDPA SAUL

Welcome. Why are you dressed in winter coats? It's April and sunny.

MOHAMMAD

We're from Syria. Maine is colder, but we're grateful to be in your town.

DAVID

(shakes Mohamed's hand and introduces himself.)

Hello, Mohammed. I saw Syria at the Golan Heights in Israel when I had my bar mitzvah. Grandpa, didn't you say your grandfather's brother went to Syria?

MOHAMMED

David, I hope you don't mind if I correct you. The Golan Heights were always part of Syria till Israel occupied them. David, you were actually standing in Syria.

DAVID

I'm sorry that was an oversight. Of course it is in Syria.

GRANDPA SAUL

David, my Uncle's family went to Syria many years ago. We stopped hearing from him ages ago and have no idea what happened to him.

DAVID

Why did he go to Damascus and not Israel?

GRANDPA SAUL

Before the war, it was all Palestine, and the British took it over. The state of Israel was only a Zionist dream. Nobody was sure it would survive.

MOHAMMED

David, I hope you can visit our country. Even with the horrible government and all the destruction, Damascus is one of the most beautiful cities in the Middle East. Some of the buildings date back to well before the Romans. But my wife Aisha knows this far better than I do. She was a professor of history in Damascus.

AISHA

Direction: Steps forward. Wearing a head scarf and a dark blue full-length traditional Syrian dress. Forty years old. Hello, I am Aisha, and these are our children, Jamila and Kareem. We're very grateful to be in your country. In the Dark Ages in Europe, Damascus was a center of learning, and people would come from all over the world to learn at our universities.

GRANDPA SAUL

That was a very long time ago. But what brings you here to New Mill?

DAVID

Direction: (Brings tea and serves everyone)

MOHAMMED

Thank you for the tea. I foolishly believed there was a bit of democracy in Syria. I spoke out against the government of Assad and was imprisoned. (beat) Then tortured. The government took my store and home. My brother Jamaal, who lives in Jersey City, paid a huge bribe to get me out of prison, and through the grace of Allah, we managed to get out of Syria. We were looking for a small town like New Mill where we could start over. Do you think New Mill could be the place for us?

GRANDPA SAUL

Of course, it could. It's like my grandfather and the time of the Czar (Points to the large picture of his grandfather and grandmother in the corner of the store.) There was tremendous suffering and pogroms, and my grandfather tried to stop the Czar's soldiers from killing our people.

MOHAMMED

How did that work out?

GRANDPA SAUL

(Shaking his head.)

Not so good. My grandpa Solomon, may he rest in peace, knew our time was short in Kiev. He threw everything we owned into a wagon and fled for Odessa before the Czar's soldiers burned our house. It was a time of such incredible suffering for the Jewish people. We were hated in Russia and Europe simply for being Jews.

AISHA

Mr. Sol, I'm sorry to hear this. The Jews were always welcomed in Syria and the Middle East. The Jewish Quarter, or as it is called, Jobar, and the prophet Elijah sought refuge in the cave.

GRANDPA SAUL

Elijah? Elijah, our Jewish prophet from the Old Testament?

AISHA

It is the same for the Jewish people and Muslims, our prophets are the same. The blessed Koran says that Muslims and Jews are cousins and family together. I taught history at the University shortly before the war. Throughout our city of Damascus, great Christian, Jewish, and Muslim scholars, artisans, physicians, poets, and all helped make Damascus one of the wealthiest cities and the most welcoming to our Jewish brothers and sisters.

GRANDPA SAUL

(with arms folded across his chest)

That is all well and good, but that was before all the problems with the Arabs and the Israelis. Those Palestinians are terrorists. We Jews came back to Israel and made it into a paradise. We made the desert bloom, we took away the blight of Arabic poverty, we made it into a modern state.

DAVID

(leans over to whisper to Saul)

Zeyde, that is Zionist propaganda, and it's a much longer conversation. I'm sure Mr. Mohamed doesn't want to hear this. Mr. Mohammed, drink your tea and look around at our store. Are you buying furniture for your apartment? Or is this just a temporary stay?

MOHAMMED

Yes, David is right. Palestine and the towns were thriving. The information Americans get about Palestine is very misinformed. We will talk about this later. (Walking around the store and inspecting the furniture. Stroking his beard.) This is quite an impressive collection of (beat) antiques.

GRANDPA SAUL

Antiques? No, not at all. These are the finest furnishings you will find in New Mill. (He walks over with a feather duster and dusts off the tables.) Just a little dusty, nothing more.

MOHAMMED

(hand sweeping across the room)

I don't mean to be disrespectful, sir, but back in Aleppo, some of these would be considered (beat) antiques. Fine antiques, of course.

GRANDPA SAUL

Antiques? What do you know about antiques?

DAVID

(whispers to grandpa)

Zayde, don't be so irritable. These people are here just to look around and buy some furniture for their new home

MOHAMMED

I know a lot about antiques, Mr. Saul. Syria is an ancient land. But, Mr. Sol, can I be honest with you?

GRANDPA SAUL

(hands on his hip)

Honest? Of course, you can! We are the most honest furniture store in New Mill! With the finest furnishings!

AISHA

Excuse me, sir. Isn't this the only furniture store in New Mill?

GRANDPA SAUL

(Frowns)

My point exactly! The finest furniture store in New Mill.

MOHAMMED

Mr. Saul, sir. I've looked around at your store, and there is a lot of...What is that word? (He turns to his daughter Jamila, who speaks Arabic next to him.)

JAMILA

(A sixteen-year-old slender girl with long brown hair, neatly tied back in a ponytail, and no hijab.)

Potential, papa! The store has a lot of potential. (She returns to her laptop, where she is typing.) David, what is the Wi-Fi code for the store?

DAVID

Sorry to say the Wi-Fi has been spotty in New Mill. It's hard to connect to. You need to use a hotspot. Are you working on a school project?

JAMILA

I am on a hotspot. It's hard to believe the Wi-Fi is so poor in such a great country. This is a spreadsheet about the store and some of the options. David, I found the spreadsheet you had written for your MBA. It's very impressive.

DAVID

(She sits next to Jamila and looks at her computer.) Yes, I had done it for my MBA program, but I didn't know it had been published online. Wow! You did this while we were talking? This is impressive. You took my spreadsheet and made it better. I never thought of this way to look at the store and our inventory, and I have an MBA.

JAMILA

(she laughs and tosses back her hair)

You are too kind. *Alam al Noor* as we say in Arabic. Knowledge is light. I used to do this for my Dad's store in Syria, using some simple algorithms. Maybe you can show me how to refine it? Your spreadsheet was terrific, but I didn't understand all your profit and loss calculations.

DAVID

Let's go over here so your dad and my grandpa can chat. Yalla!

JAMILA

Yalla? Where did you learn that?

DAVID

(He leads her to the large dining room table on stage right)

All the Arabic taxi drivers in Israel use that word. It's a great word. Yalla!

MOHAMMED

Mr. Sol, exactly! There is *potential* here. My daughter Jameel was right! There is very good potential here. Very good potential.

GRANDPA SAUL

Potential? Potential, you say? Oye gevolt! This store has had potential since my father first founded it. He carried the furniture on his back! Laid down the floors! Wired the lamps! Stuccoed the bricks! Rebuilt the walls! All with his own hands and, of course, with my help.

DAVID

(calls out from the other side
of the room)

Zeyde, slow down! I'm sure Mr. Mohammed wasn't trying to insult you. Isn't that correct, Mr. Mohammed?

MOHAMMED

(Hand over his heart to apologize).

Forgive me! I wouldn't dream of insulting you or your (beat) fine store, but I had also owned furniture stores and a small factory in Syria before the revolution.

GRANDPA SAUL

As fine as my store here?

AISHA

(Smiles at Grandpa Sol)

No sir! Not as fine as your store. (She turns around and looks at the store, nods her head, and looks at her husband) Mr. Saul, give me a moment to chat with my husband

GRANDPA SAUL

Of course, please look around. The finest furniture store in all of New Mill!

(Mohammed, Aisha and the
children talk amongst
themselves in Arabic.)

DAVID

(whispers to his Grandpa)

They seem like very nice people.

GRANDPA

Yes, that is very nice, but I wish they could speak English.

DAVID

Your grandfather spoke Russian, German, and Yiddish and you said, his English was horrible.

GRANDPA

This is true! Now, to the important thing, I will sell them a terrific bedroom and a living room set at a price they can't refuse. Watch me!

MOHAMMED

Mr. Saul, excuse us for speaking in Arabic. My English is not very good. While we were talking, Jamila and Kareem were doing some calculations with the spreadsheet that David did in Graduate school. It compares your furniture to other furniture stores within 100 miles. It's a little tough because your Wi-Fi is so slow here.

GRANDPA SAUL

A spreadsheet? She can't be any more than 16. How would she know how to do that? And where would you find this?

MOHAMMED

She and her brother Kareem have been helping at our furniture stores since they could first walk. Jamila loves computers and writes code for them. The two of them know more about furniture than I did when I was their age, and I grew up in this business.

AISHA

Mr. Saul, you are a wonderful person and have a lot of (beat) fine furniture (as she looks around the store). But if I can be honest, your store seems a little ---It needs a *lady's touch*?

GRANDPA SAUL

Aisha, you may be right about a lady's touch. Since my wife Sadie died more than five years ago, the store certainly has needed her touch. But from my grandfather's time down to now, it has been the finest furniture store in New Mill.

MOHAMMED

I am sorry that your Sadie died. Many people in our family have also died because of the war in Syria. It destroyed our country. I was talking with my family. Mr. Saul, I like you, David, and your fine store. I want to make you a --- Jamila - What is that word?

JAMILA

(Speaks with her father in Arabic.)
Proposition, Papa

MOHAMMED

Yes, Mr. Saul, perhaps you would consider my proposition

GRANDPA SAUL

(Arms out and opening)

Proposition? You want to negotiate for the living room set? It's part of our blood, Arab and Jew? We always negotiate a little bit. As we say, hondle a little bit. Everything is up to negotiation. Hondle away!

MOHAMMED

Exactly, (beat) we hondle! We negotiate a little bit. But this is different, we would like to make you this (beat) proposition.

Grandpa Saul.

(Smiles and folds his arms
across his chest.)

Go ahead, I'm listening. I will give you a better price than any other furniture store in New Mill.

MOHAMMED (CONT'D)

Sir, I'd like to offer you this proposition (beat) with the only furniture store in New Mill.

GRANDPA SAUL

(hands on his hips)

And?

MOHAMMED

(arms across his chest and
smiles at Grandpa)

I will work with you for six months, and no salary!

GRANDPA SAUL

Six months and no salary

MOHAMMED

But (he pauses and strokes his beard), I will take a 30 % commission on all furniture that we sell!

DAVID

(aside to the audience)

That's a pretty cheap, given how little furniture we sell here nowadays.

GRANDPA SAUL

Hush up, David! We're in negotiation. Net or gross? 20%!

MOHAMMED

(arms folded across his chest)

I'm a generous man! But even for your dear sir, I can't budge, but I'm doing it for the sake of (beat) discussion. Wait, Jamila. What is the word in English? (Then speaks to her in Arabic.)

JAMILA

(looking it up on her laptop)

Poppa, it's *stipulations*. But you can say conditions. Stipulations are best.

MOHAMMED

(Turns to Grandpa Saul)

English is hard. Nevertheless, stipulation is a fine word. Because I am enormously generous, 25% of gross sales, and a few details.

GRANDPA

(arms across his chest)

I have a word for you, Chutzpah!

DAVID

Chutzpah? Zayde, Listen to what he has to say.

MOHAMMED

With your help, let me manage the store. Jamila has been making a spreadsheet. Though it will be difficult in this town, if you trust me, this store will sell more furniture than any other within 100 miles within six months. But first, we need to make some significant improvements.

GRANDPA SAUL

(shaking his head)

Such chutzpah! Such colossal nerve. Oye! Improvements? You think our lovely furniture store needs improvements? (His hands swept across the dark room crammed with dusty furniture.) A percentage of profits, and take over the store and sell more furniture around than any store within 100 miles? That almost means the suburbs of Bangor. Is my furniture store here in New Mill going to compete with all these other furniture stores?

AISHA

(gets up from the couch and stands next to Grandpa Sol)

I don't know about this chutzpah thing, but I do know about arithmetic. (Shows him Jamila's computer.) Jamila and Kareem, while we were talking, were doing some calculations.

JAMILA

Mr. Grandpa Saul, while your store has a lot of.. history, it can also have a lot of potential. It's not exactly potential. Wait, let me find this word, and then she begins to type on her computer. I got the words! Untapped potential!

GRANDPA SAUL

(hands on his hips. Striding
around the store talking
about tradition.)

Is that so? Untapped potential? We have tradition! We have family! We are potential.

DAVID

(puts his hands on his
Grandpa's shoulder)

Easy, Zeyde! Listen to what they have to say! What did you tell me? Sometimes, crazy ain't so crazy?

JAMILA

(speaking to Saul and family)

I found an outdated list of your furniture inventory online. I spoke with my dad and mom, and I think my father is right. We can increase your sales, but this sheet must be at least five years old.

DAVID

Yes, I made it for a college project years ago. I never knew it was online.

GRANDPA SAUL

David, does this make sense? I don't have my glasses. These numbers can't be accurate. Six months, you say?

MOHAMMED

Mr. Saul, I am not trying to be rude, but there is a lot of (beat) antiques here. Let's agree on 25%, and in two months, we will have a major sale to bring in new furniture. When we sell this fine antique furniture, can we bring something new and exciting? We can put this in writing, and Jamila and Aisha can write this out. I know this may shock you, but I think Schwartz's furniture store *could* be one of the finest furniture stores in this valley!

GRANDPA

(Shaking his head. Pacing
around)

I don't know. It is the finest furniture store, and we have sold more furniture here than anywhere else!

DAVID

Zeyde, listen to him. Maybe it ain't so wild! This was the finest furniture store. That was a long time ago. Mohammed and his family may be the answer we're looking for. Otherwise, we can't survive.

(Mohammed, Aisha spent the next hour talking with Saul's grandson, David.)

GRANDPA

Let's call it 25%, and you can have the furnished two-bedroom apartment in the back of the store. Call me foolish! Call me an Alta kaka!

Mohammed

Alta kaka?

GRANDPA (CONT'D)

Yes, *Alta Kaka, crazy older man*. If we're going to work together, Mohammed, you're going to have to learn some Yiddish. We agree to 25% gross, rent-free for six months.

Mohammed and Aisha looked at one another
(They converse in Arabic)

Exactly.

(Jamila and Kareem stood up, walked over, and shook the hands of David and Grandpa Saul.) Thank you. May God Bless You and You Family.

JAMILA

(Speaking to Grandpa Saul)

Thank you, Grandpa Saul. We won't disappoint you. While you were talking with my dad, my brother Kareem and I worked on an initial marketing plan for the store. I think we can have an open house in less than two months. This can be successful with you, David, and my Dad's help. What do you think?

GRANDPA

You're right about experience. But open house? How is that possible? We haven't had an open house here in years. Who will come?

MOHAMMED

Don't worry, we know people. This will be the start of a great adventure.

GRANDPA

Let's toast to our Meshugina adventure. (He pours glasses of grape juice for everyone) Lift your glasses! Good luck. Mozel tove!

(Cast raises their glasses! Turns to the audience and raises their glasses.)

AISHA

(Raises her glass)

Inshallah! As you call it to our Meshugina adventures.

JAMILA AND KAREEM

Hazun saeid!

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(Close of Act 1)

ACT 2

SCENE ONE

Welcome! Marhaba! The Greatest Liquidation Sale in New Mill!

(Marley Jones, with long grey dreadlocks, is on the ladder repairing the circuit box and wiring.)

GRANDPA SAUL

Marley, be careful. Maybe I can help?

MARLEY

Yes, hold the ladder steady. I am rewiring the store, and Kareem helped me with some of the wiring.

MOHAMMED

Mr. Saul, look, we are ready for the big test. Kareem, turn on the lights.

(Direction: The dark, dim furniture store is now much brighter.)

GRANDPA

(Surveys the brightly lit store)

It looks bright! Electricity and lights are expensive! I know you think I'm rich, but every penny counts. Wouldn't you agree?

JAMILA

That is why we have been working with the Electrical company. Look at all these energy-efficient light bulbs! By swapping them out, we have saved a lot of money! What's that song you sing? "If I were a rich man?" This will help you to become rich.

MOHAMMED

Mr. Saul, you can't sell furniture in a cave. You need lights, and the furniture needs to be meticulous and spotless. That's why we've been polishing and cleaning every stick of furniture from the bottom to the underside of every chair.

GRANDPA SAUL

But if you leave the lamps and the lights low, people won't see the tiny imperfections.

MOHAMMED

(Arms on his hips)

Mr Schwartz what's that expression you use?

"Oye gevolt!" But, I will know there are imperfections and never sell a piece of furniture that isn't. Jamila, what is that word?

Jamila Meticulous!

MOHAMMED (CONT'D)

Meticulous. Everything must be sold! And, everything must be meticulous!

Trust me on this. Jamila, Kareem, Aisha, and I have run the numbers. If our liquidation weekend succeeds, you'll make more money and profit than last year. Besides, you told me yourself, "This is the greatest furniture store in New Mill!" Kareem, are you ready? Turn on the main switch!

MARLEY

(Marley throws a light switch, and the Statue of Liberty light is turned on and lit up!)

Isn't that a thing of beauty!

AISHA

This is incredible!

KAREEM

Wait. This is the best part! Mr. Marley helped me.

(He turns on the music of the John Phillip Sousa song "Stars and Stripes Forever!" Kareem wears a tall top hat— and Uncle Sam striped jacket— and marches across the stage.)

"Welcome! Marhaba! The Greatest Liquidation Sale in New Mill!"

(Jamila joins him, and the two of them march to the stage to the tune of "Stars and Stripes Forever."

GRANDPA SAUL

(Laughing. He gets up and joins them! Taking the American Flag across the stage.) Yes, this will be a great day!)

Act 2 Scene 2

Direction: *In the morning, New Mill, dozens of people placed signs for the Great Liquidation Sale. Soon, coming into town and going out of town, there were yard signs and banners for the sale. The streets have been cleaned, and the boarded-up stores have replaced their windows. Signs are everywhere announcing the furniture sale.*

**"Schwartz's furniture store!
Liquidation sale.
Everything must go this weekend!
We will not be undersold!"**

(The town was filled with people of all kinds. Some dressed in Arabic style clothing, some women with Hijabs, kids, and families helping to put up signs. Mohammed and Aisha were like generals, organizing and directing people to the store.)

GRANDPA SAUL (CONT'D)

What did they come from? There seem to be more people here than have been here in ages!

MOHAMMED

These are our friends and my cousins from the neighboring Mosque, as far south as Bangor, and I have cousins in Boston. I told people that we needed help, and they decided to come out and help us. Aisha is going to have a feast for all of them. In the meantime, David, Jamila, and Kareem are doing all the social media and marketing for this liquidation weekend.

Grandpa Saul.

Mohammed, look, there are banners from every side of the town saying
Schwartz's furniture store! Liquidation sale. Everything must go this weekend! We will not be undersold!
Can we afford this? Some of this is very expensive furniture. We can't just give it away.

JAMILA

Grandpa Saul, this is the spreadsheet. Don't worry! I did it with my brother Kareem, and these are our projections for sales between now and Sunday night. David looked at them. Do you agree?

DAVID

(He looked at the spreadsheet
and nodded his head.)

I haven't seen a sales projection sheet look this good since I left my MBA program. It may be a pipedream, but it's the best pipedream I've seen in a long time.

GRANDPA SAUL

Oye gevolt. Such Meshugina! My father and grandfather would roll over in their graves to see that we have turned "Schwartz's Furniture Store" into a flea market sale!

JAMILA

(Put's her arms around
grandpa's shoulders)

Zaida! Ishqabibble!

GRANDPA SAUL

(Surprised)

Jamila! Ishqabibble? Where did you learn such good Yiddish?

JAMILA

The internet, of course! The sales sheet and our projections are based on David's MBA dissertation, which I modified. It's almost ten o'clock. The liquidation will begin in an hour. Zaida, a mensch like you shouldn't kvetch! It will be fine!

GRANDPA SAUL

(Laughs and hugs Jamila.)

(Directions: Soon, cars from NY, NJ, and CT—big trucks, pickup trucks, and SUVs—lined up all along Main Street. A banquet table was set up in front of the store with couscous, falafel, hummus, and other delicious treats from the Middle East. Other stores, luncheonettes, clothing stores, and all the other stores were also open, and customers strolled in.

AISHA

We asked all the other merchants on Main Street to also post on social media. This is the biggest furniture store sale in the entire Valley. And look, the musicians have shown up. We have also been working with the other stores and restaurants in town. This is so much fun!

(Direction: A group of Middle Eastern musicians with drums, oud, and such were playing music. People were streaming through the doors of Schwartz's Furniture store.)

GRANDPA SAUL

Welcome everybody! Welcome! Marhaba! Marhaba! (He turned to **Mohammed.**) I could never have imagined something like this. More people today than I've seen come to our store in forever. Marhaba! Marhaba!

MOHAMMED

Did you say, Marhaba?

GRANDPA SOL

Who says you can't teach an old dog new tricks!

DAVID

(Looking astonished at the crowd in New Mill.)

We haven't had a crowd like this in? (beat) Forever! Yes, yes, welcome

KAREEM

(Directions: Dressed in his Uncle Sam uniform. By the front door with his sister Jamila and with a cash box, checking people out with Venmo, and PayPal. Over the next seven hours. A steady flow of people came in to buy and load up furniture. The store closed at 7 o'clock, and half the store was empty.

GRANDPA SAUL

I can't believe this? How did you and your family do this in a month? Where do all these people come from? Why would they drive to New Mill?

MOHAMMED

You did say that it was the finest furniture store within 100 miles. Didn't you?

GRANDPA SAUL

Yes, but maybe I was (beat) exaggerating just a little bit.

MOHAMMED

Exaggeration is just a little bit of marketing. Wouldn't you say?

DAVID

I couldn't have imagined this. Jamila and Kareem are making these fabulous spreadsheets and their analysis of the furniture markets within 200 miles. I'm floored! And all the work you've done over the past two months

JAMILA

Kareem and I only built on what you did, David. Your help with marketing and data analysis made this possible.

MOHAMMED

Not just David, Jamila Kareem, and Ashia, who organized all of this, from the food, to our neighbors here on Main Street, to get everyone here.

GRANDPA SAUL

Mohammed, you and your family arrived in this country six months ago. How have you gotten to know these people?

MOHAMMED

(Turning and addressing the audience directly)

Saul, your grandfather was just as hungry. You told me he arrived in the United States with nothing, and the only way he could eat was to go out every day and work from sunrise to sunset and sell rags. That's what we do as immigrants! We come to a country, and if you give us a chance, we'll work hard and succeed. You told me that the United States was built as a land of immigrants.

***Direction:** They stop and look at the American flag in the corner of the stage and the Statue of Lady Liberty with the sign that says, "Give me your tired, your poor, those yearning to be free."*

GRANDPA SAUL

Yes, the United States is a land of immigrants in the land of opportunities. But we have allowed these racist and anti-immigrant people to create so much mischief and anger. ICE is arresting American citizens.

MOHAMMED

We're just starting, but there is tomorrow. Bravo to Jamila, Kareem, and everyone for pulling this off.

***Direction:** A musician/ folk singer is coming out singing, "This land is your land." (The audience joins in.)*

Act 2 Scene 3
Emptying the past

Directions: *Main Street at dawn. Flags are flying from the street lamps. The streets are cleaned, and the trash is picked up. On the second day, the furniture store opened. Aisha and Mohammed are making food. Greet people as they stroll by.*

GRANDPA SAUL

(Humming, *If I was a rich man.*)

I have a feeling this is going to be an extraordinary day. Jamila, thank you for the coffee and the fantastic job you did on figuring out all the stuff on the spreadsheets sheet

JAMILA

(Gives him a hug!)

Zeyde, there's nothing to worry about! I am so happy to be here in New Mill. We're going to start school on Monday. You're right. This is going to be an extraordinary day.

MOHAMMED

I'm also happy here! I can't believe how many people have showed up. Look at this, more than half the furniture has been sold! The townspeople have been great. Alhamdulillah What's that noise coming up the street?

(Direction: *A heavy set man with a red beard, a shaved head with a skull and cross bones on the back, tattoos on his arms, wearing a black leather jacket with chains, rides up on his Harley, followed by a dozen men with black leather and jean jackets.*

SLUG

(Steps off the motorcycle.
Red-faced. Smelling of
alcohol.)

Schwartz, why are you having all these rag heads here? This is my town. We didn't mind Jews like you, we were okay with one or two Blacks like Marley, but our town is now flooded with Arabs and Rag Heads! This is a disgrace!

GRANDPA SOL

Percy, are you behind the sunglasses with the chains? I haven't seen you in years. I thought you moved away? Remember, you used to sweep the store and shovel the sidewalk for me as a boy. Then we had money missing from the store, and you disappeared. What happened to you? These people, Mohammed, Aisha, Jamila, and Kareen have been helping me and a lot of other people! Come, let me introduce you to them!

(he leans over whispers to
Jamila, "Call the Sheriff
quickly.)

SLUG

(addressing the crowd and families in front of Schwartz's Furniture store)

They call me Slug, and my boys, and I am of the *White Aryan Motorcycle club*, we want all these Arabs out of our town. Now!

GRANDPA SAUL

Percy Slug, what are you talking about? I was born in this town, and I went to school with your grandfather, who, if I remember, was born in Poland. Come on, this is crazy stuff! Come on in. These fine people have brought music and food to our town. This is weird!

SLUG

I speak for the *White Aryan Motorcycle club*. We want to keep New Mill white and safe for people. We want to *Make America Great Again*. (*Bikers shout out Hurray*) These people, Mohammed and his friends, are rag heads. My cousins and family went over to Iraq to kill them and make our country safe.

SHERIFF

(Big husky sheriff walks over and stands in front of Slug and the motorcycle gang)

Slug, you and your boys can't do this nonsense here in New Mill! I know all of you! Jake and Arnold are in the back despite your sunglasses and your hats. I know your families, and they're fine people. But I'm gonna be clear with you, if you try to disrupt this, I will stop you. These people are having a party and an open house, and it's been approved by the town committee. Besides, Aisha is a great cook, and I like this family.

MOHAMMED

Sheriff, I don't want to interrupt you, but can I say something?

SHERIFF

Sure, Mohammed, but I think I can manage this. I don't want to make this worse.

MOHAMMED

(steps forward to talk to Slug)

Mr. Schwartz, David, and many people have made us feel very welcome. Please come in and have something to eat. There's lots of delicious food. Welcome.

SLUG

We don't want to eat. We want to get rid of you. We want to get rid of all the Arabs, the Chinks, the Jews, and anybody that ain't of pure race.

JAKE

(One of the young motorcycle riders from the back of the crowd steps forward)

Slug, actually, I'm hungry. And I've never actually talked to an Arab, so maybe I could learn something. Let's give them a chance.

SLUG

(Red faced and defiant)

My cousin died in Iraq! We need to defend our country from Arabs. We don't need them. We need ICE in here now to cart them and deport them to Iceland. As soon as ICE hears about them, they'll be on their way.

SHERIFF

There are no American prisons in Iceland. Do you mean El Salvador?

SLUG

(he turns to his gang.)

El Salvador! Iceland? It doesn't matter, we need to get them out of the USA! Right boys?

SHERIFF

Slug, Mohammed, his family, and his friends have been nothing but helpful people to the town and to Mr. Schwartz in the short time they've been here. You're disturbing the peace.

SLUG

(with his arms crossed)

What are you going to do about it? There are a dozen of us and one of you!

SHERIFF

If you look behind you, there are folks from the other sheriff's department and the police next door. I see 24 of them in 12 of you. Put down your pipes, chains, and other stuff and let's settle this peacefully

SLUG

We're going to ride out of here, but we're coming back. Who is with me? Boys, let's ride! We'll be back. As soon as ICE find out about this nest of criminals they'll be gone!

Direction: A handful revved up their motorcycles and followed Slug out of town.

|
But Jake and a few of the others got off their bikes put down their helmets and walked over to have something to eat with Mohammed's family.

SHERIFF

(Speaking to Mohammed and his family)

I'm sorry this happened. I detest these racists. It's a cancer in our country. These boys have grown up with all this Fox News and MAGA nonsense. Now, they're getting these crazy ideas. that the Nazis and White Aryans were good people. None of those boys have a single idea of who the Nazi's were and the millions of people killed.

MOHAMMED

This happens sadly all over the world. 95% of the world may just want to have a nice life with their family, but that small percentage makes so much misery. Come, let's enjoy some delicious food. Look up the street. There's a parade, there are drums. The high school parade band is coming

(Direction: A small marching band was walking up the street with drums and fife, and playing Yankee Doodle. Kareem joins them with his Uncle Sam uniform and top hat!

KAREEM

Time to open up the shop. Welcome everybody!

MOHAMMED

It's a miracle. It's a great day! But we couldn't have done it without all the people of New Mill, your neighbors.

AISHA

Zayde, we've exceeded expectations as well. Would you mind if we gave 5% of the proceeds to the local food bank and homeless shelter? This is Zakat, one of the pillars of Islam.

DAVID

We call it a Mitzvah—a good deed. This is also part of our tradition in Judaism. This exceeded all my expectations. What do you think is the next step?

MOHAMMED

In Islam, charity is one of the pillars of our religion - Zakat. We are obliged to care for the less fortunate. I've been speaking to my family and thinking about taking Schwartz's furniture store to the next level, as Jamila and Kareem will show you.

There are some more contemporary furnishings, but I'm afraid we will have to do a top-to-bottom cleaning and repaint the store. What do you think, Grandpa Saul?

KAREEM

I've been talking to my sister and looking at the numbers. I can't believe that most of the furniture has sold. Look at all this space.

MOHAMMED

Yes, this store has (beat) potential! I was looking at some of the new furniture catalogues.

(Everyone laughs)

DAVID

Yes, Mohammed! Lots of potential! Lot of potential!

GRANDPA SAUL

Modern design and office furniture. In my wildest imagination. I never thought anything like this could be possible. With the new paint, the rewiring, and new lights by Marley, I'm not sure I would recognize it.

MOHAMMED

Let's take Schwartz Furniture Store to the next level. What do you think? We should be ready to relaunch the store in another month or so.

AISHA

(looks around the nearly empty store)

Grandpa Saul, this may be too early to ask you. I never realized how big the store was. Now it seems so huge to fill with furniture. (Looks around at the mostly empty store). Would you consider a café here? My family owned a little café in Damascus - we could serve lox, kugel, and bagels too. Here, I made a Lokshen Koogel cake. Try it.

GRANDPA SAUL

Lokshen Koogel? Let me taste it. Hmmm, as good as my Sadie. What a great idea!

A Kosher Arabic café! It would be better than a Starbucks or a fancy schmantzy place. David, what do you think?

DAVID

Great idea! But I want to celebrate tonight! This has been a fantastic achievement. Wow! I can't believe this! 90% of the store is empty. The store has never been this empty, even on our best Christmas Holiday special!

|

AISHA

After all this work over the last month, we must celebrate this weekend! My friends, the musicians from Lebanon and Palestine, will play, and we need to celebrate

(Music from the Middle East is playing, and everyone is up dancing, even Schwartz)

Act 2
Scene Four

***Directions:** Mohammed and Aisha, with Marley and others, are decorating the store and putting up new lights. They are sitting in the store. Grandpa is in his favorite easy chair.*

GRANDPA SAUL

Oye, I'd like to help. But my back is killing me. I feel like I strained something.

MOHAMMED

Do you hurt yourself?

GRANDPA

I'm not sure. Last month, I went to Dr. Mary's office, and she gave me some muscle relaxants. But they only made me dizzy, so I had to stop taking them. And I'm having trouble peeing. But I don't want to worry you about this. You have more important things to worry about. Is all of your information for your green cards ready?

AISHA

The bureaucracy of Immigration is a nightmare. (She looks around and lowers her voice.) Every time we turn around, the President is making some new orders. One day, he is complaining about paper straws. The next day, he wants to buy Greenland. Then he wants to invade Panama. Then take over Palestine and make it into a golf course. (She looks around and says softly - I like America,
(turning to the audience)
But your president is (Beat) Mejnoon.

GRANDPA

Mejnoon? Is that like crazy? Like Meshugina? Don't say that too loud. But I agree. Every day, it is a new kind of craziness.

MOHAMMED

Yes, he is crazy. He makes Assad look like he's sane, and that is a tall order. He is more like MBS, the mad Saudi Prince. But let us not say this too loud... They all have big ears.

GRANDPA

I know the President is crazy. Most leaders like MBS are, I bet you, they would all like to build golf resorts in Gaza.

AISHA

We believe in the American dream, where you can become anything you want. But you are right, we are (beat) nervous. (She points to the Statue of Liberty) You see that beautiful lady and that wonderful poem?

"Give me your tired, your poor, Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, The wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

We're afraid this dream is disappearing with this President and all these MAGA People like Slug. What happened to Slug?

GRANDPA SAUL

Slug is making a lot of noise and trying to get people riled up. He and his friends want to ride around on their motorcycles, drink, and complain about immigrants. They're not the real problem; they're a symptom. (beat) The real evil is the President and his band of Nazis.

AISHA

But don't they know us? We're all immigrants. He is an immigrant. The President of the United States and every president since the nation was founded were immigrants. George Washington's family were immigrants.
(Speaking to the audience)

Aren't we all immigrants?

GRANDPA

Yes, yes, we know this. We live in crazy times led by crazy people. Ouch! My back is killing me. Let me go over and see the doctor.

MARLEY

I have to drive over there. You're right about these loudmouths like Slug—we need to do so much good work in town. Mr. Saul, let me get you to the clinic. How long has this been going on? This sounds like my Uncle. He had all these problems with his kidneys.

GRANDPA SAUL

Call David. Let's see if he can help.

Mohammed

I can join you too.

(At the Community Clinic)

NP MARY

Mr. Schwartz, it seems you have a kidney infection and something else. But I have to run some tests. Let me start you on the antibiotics and pain meds. I want to get an appointment with the kidney specialist, but the only one is in Bangor and he's booked up for at least a month.

MOHAMMED

That's a long time. Isn't there someone who can see him sooner?

DR. MARY NP

There's been a critical shortage of kidney specialists since the last order from the president restricted immigration. This year the administration deported a leading renal specialist, because she was a Muslim woman who had returned from Lebanon. This medication should help, but we must get him to the specialist.

MOHAMMED

Hold on! Kidney specialist? (He took out his phone and spoke in Arabic.)

GRANDPA SAUL

(speaking to Dr. Mary)

I wish he spoke English so I could understand what he was saying.

MOHAMMED

(After five minutes on the phone.)

Dr. Mary, would you be able to work with my cousin, Dr. Majid, a kidney specialist in Boston?

DR MARY NP

The Dr. Majid? I tried getting Mr. Schwartz with him or another nephrologist, but they're all booked up.

MOHAMMED

My cousin, Dr. Mejid, says he'll drive up on Friday as long as Aisha makes him dinner. Can you come for dinner, too?

DR MARY

Really, how is that possible?

MOHAMMED

Since Grandpa Saul is family, it wasn't a problem. That's how we have survived in Syria for years—through family connection. Besides, I sold him a beautiful bedroom furniture set at the Open House. He said, "For family, I can drive to New Mill. Besides, Grandpa Saul is family. And if Aisha's is cooking, that is so much the better.)

FRIDAY EVENING

(Dining room of Schwartz's house. Marley is playing classical guitar. Dr Mejid is there. Mohammed and his family, Saul, and David. Dr. Mary, her wife Stella, and the Sheriff.

DAVID

Everyone welcome! I'm so glad you can join us for the Seder dinner. Grandpa is so grateful everyone can be here,

GRANDPA SAUL

Dr. Majid, I am very grateful you came to New Mill. I could have driven down to see you.

DR. MAJID

I am glad I came up here. I can continue to treat you long distance, but you have such an infection. I'm glad that the nurse practitioner finally caught it. She did all the proper tests for you. But in addition to your condition. I, of course, cannot talk about it now, especially at this my first Shabbat dinner.

GRANDPA SAUL

Welcome everybody. Everybody. Thank you, Dr. Mejid. I hope we can celebrate both the Jewish Shabbat and the Muslim tradition tonight.

DAVID

Jamila and Kareem, would you like to light the candles?

MOHAMMED

I heard sirens in the distance. Sheriff, what is that all about?

SHERRIFF POWALKSKI

(Picks up his cell phone and reads his messages)

It's not good. Immigration or ICE is coming into town! I have to go. Everyone keep going. Let me find out what is going on. (He turns to Mohammed) ICE is on the other side of town. Remember, if for any reason they come. You do not have to let them in unless they have a warrant.

MOHAMMED

This can't be good. (Turns to Aisha) I'm afraid. This is not a good sign. I've heard how ICE has arrested even Americans, people like us, who are legal refugees.

AISHA

Don't worry. All of our paperwork is in order. We all have our green cards.

MARLEY

We live in strange and difficult times. And with all this rabid MAGA racism, it makes a bad situation even worse.

AISHA

I believe America will reclaim its greatness. There has been two hundred years of democracy.

GRANDPA SAUL

(Speaking to Mohammed and his family)

We are all in this together. We're family. We will get through this.

ACT 3

SCENE 1

(
(Sheriff Meets ICE at the Police Station. There are six armed men, FLACK Jackets, Balaclava face mask with the word ICE on their jackets.)

ICE AGENT

Are you Sheriff Pollock?

SHERIFF

My name is Sheriff Powalaski, and I am the sheriff for New Mill. What brings you to our fine town?

ICE #1

(Wearing tactical gear.)

We received a tip that you are harboring fugitives. We've received orders to round up immigrants like this, Mohammed Siddiqui. He is a dangerous terrorist. Where can we find him? We need to bring him in. Immediately.

SHERIFF P

I know everybody in town and there is no Mohammed Siddiqui. Do you mean Mohammed Nabil? He is one of the kindest, most generous people in New Mill. He is with his family right now. Can you show me the court order for his arrest? There must be some mistake. Mohammed and his family are model citizens.

ICE

We don't need to show you anything. We are acting under the authority of the federal government and the president. We have a long list of illegal aliens that we will take tonight, and he is at the top of our list. If you don't cooperate, we'll arrest you as well

SHERIFF

Easy guys! You got the wrong guys. Mohammed is not a terrorist. You want the idiot Republican Trump. He and his gangsters are the greatest danger to democracy. The enemies are hate and fear.

ICE AGENT # 2

How dare you question the President of the United States! He has been a force for good over evil and is ensuring he locks up all the criminals. Do you have a problem with that?

SHERIFF

Look over there on the wall. (Pointing to the US Constitution on the wall and the Bill of Rights) That is the US Constitution, which we have sworn to uphold and protect. This craziness of ICE arresting Americans and legal residents of the United States violates that. Imagine you went to another country and they arrested you? If there are illegal residents we can do this in a lawful way.

ICE

The only other country I've been to was Iraq. My only purpose was to kill as many Arabs as I could. The sooner we get all the illegal brown people, rapists and murders out of this country. At last, we will restore our nation to greatness!

Direction: Mohammed walks into the police station with David, Grandpa Saul, Marley and about a dozen town people including the Mayor

ICE #1

Look! There is the Arab Mohammed Sadiq! Arrest him! Mohammed, down on your knees and hands behind your head! (He takes out a gun and points it at him)

SHERIFF

You can't arrest him. You don't have a warrant. His name is Mohammed Nabil. You have the wrong man. Mohammed you don't have to go with these people they don't have an arrest warrant.

ICE AGENT

We're in charge! Sherriff stand back! We're taking in the terrorist Mohammed - dead or alive!

SHERIFF

(Laughs!)

You must be joking. Did you borrow that line from a bad movie? Come on! This is ridiculous! This is a copy of his green card. (He gives it to the Ice Agent) He is a legal immigrant. I've been a cop for more than twenty years and never once did I have to pull out my gun to arrest anybody. Put the goddamn gun down ! (And walks to the ICE AGENT with his hands up)

MOHAMMED

Sherriff stop! (He knocks the sheriff out of the way, and in the process, he himself is shot by the ICE AGENT!

GRANDPA SAUL

(Screaming at ICE and reaching down to hold Mohammed, who is bleeding)

You damn idiots! Put your guns down! This is crazy. Mohammed is a very good man, and he has done nothing wrong.

ICE AGENT

(Saying to the two other ICE AGENTS)

Back off. Arrest the goddamn Arab, and everybody else in this room. Including the Sheriff. How dare they oppose us and the President! Call for more tactical back up! No one defies ICE!

DAVID

Mohammed is bleeding. Let's get him to the hospital! (He takes off his shirt and to stop the bleeding!)

MOHAMED

(Speaking to the Sherrif)

ake care of my family. I'll be okay. I'll be okay (And then passes out)

(Direction: Siren screaming. Flashing lights.)

ICE AGENT

(Shouting out orders)

Arrest everybody here! Take this, Mohammed, prisoner to the ER holding cell, and then we'll ship him to Guantanamo!

ICE AGENT #2

Sir, these people didn't do anything wrong. They were trying to protect their friend, and you can't arrest the sheriff!

ICE AGENT #1

Like hell I can't! Disobedience with my orders is insolence! Obey my commands! The Sheriff and everyone here will be arrested! Lock down New Mill! Make sure no one comes in or out. Get back up now! We are the law in New Mill!

Direction: *The lights dim, the sirens screaming in the background, the light from the American Flag shines, as a Jim Hendrix style version of the Star Spangled Banner is played. Sheriff, Grandpa Saul, and a dozen people are handcuffed and lead away*

end

Scene 1

ACT 3**SCENE 2****Enemy of the State**

Setting: A dimly lit, windowless room. Cement walls, a metal table, and a single chair. A faint buzzing from a fluorescent light overhead. A large portrait of Donald Trump is on the wall and underneath the quote, "I AM THE STATE. OBEY"

Mohammed's clothes are taken off. He is in his boxers, stripped. The fluorescent light is blinking. Then give the orange jumpsuit. Mohammed Nabil sits at the table, hands bound, wearing an agent's jumpsuit. A disembodied, metallic VOICE comes through an intercom mounted high on the wall. No agents are visible

ICE

(mechanical, impersonal)

You are an Enemy of the State! Mohammed Sadiq, PRISONER 54119, you are being detained under authority granted by the Homeland Security Enhancement Act, Section 42-F. Once you are medically stabilized, you will be deported to the Guantanamo Bay Detention Facility for further interrogation or El Salvador to await deportation

MOHAMMED

(calm but firm)

No, my name is Mohammed Nabil. N-A-B-I-L. I am not Mohammed Sadiq. You have the wrong man! Please, let me call my lawyer and family.

ICE

Records indicate otherwise. We know who you are. There is no appeal 54119. Under the Enemy Alien Act, you have been judged as an Enemy of the State. The **Enemy Alien Act**, initially passed in **1798** as part of the Alien and Sedition Acts, allows the U.S. government **to** detain, relocate, or deport non-citizens from countries with which the United States is at war.

MOHAMMED (rising, straining against the cuffs):

You haven't even let me make a phone call! I demand to speak with my lawyer!

ICE

You have no rights. You were a guest under pretenses in our great country. Resistance is futile. Detainees classified as Enemy Aliens are not entitled to legal counsel. You are a national security threat. You were an Agent for the Assad Regime. Our records show you donated to the ACLU, NPR, and the Red Cross for Medical Aid to Gaza. These are offenses that are treasonous against the State. The president has decreed that all opposition to his regime is unlawful (Light focuses on Trump's portrait in the cell.)

MOHAMMED

Is it a crime to donate to the Red Cross? A crime to donate to NPR? A Crime to donate to the ACLU? An Unlawful Enemy alien? I had a furniture store in Damascus and was imprisoned for advocating for democracy. I run a furniture store! I file taxes, volunteer at the food bank, and shovel snow for my elderly neighbors! What country am I threatening—New Mill?

ICE

It is a crime to support the Opposition. The ACLU will be permanently closed. NPR will be closed. All aid to Gaza is aid to Hamas. Hamas is the enemy of Israel. You therefore support the radical Islamic state of Hamas. You will be transferred at 0600 hours. Do not resist. Resistance is futile. Additional force will be authorized.

MOHAMMED

I've lived in New Mill for the past year and have a Green Card. Ask anyone—ask Saul Schwartz, the mayor, the sheriff! This is a mistake!

ICE

Mistakes do not concern this department; national security does. Per the president's order, all Green Cards or Residency Cards issued by the communist Biden, Obama, or Clinton regime are under review and fast-tracked for revocation.

MOHAMMED

Then the mistake is your department!

(He takes a breath. His voice softens but becomes more cutting. Turns to the audience)

You hide behind laws, and you twist into weapons. You wear badges without faces. You confuse fear with strength. And you don't even dare to look me in the eye when you steal my life. This is not the American dream that I sought. My dream of America is to be a proud land of freedom.

ICE

Remain calm, detainee.

MOHAMMED

I am a legal immigrant to the USA with my family. My family and I hold green cards. I am a husband, a father, and a man wrongly imprisoned in a country that once told the world it was free. (He tries to rise up)

(The lights dim slowly, leaving only the intercom's red standby light glowing in the dark. The VOICE does not respond.)

ICE

You are resisting! Resistance is futile (Then the figure dressed in full tactical gear). They fire a Taser at Mohammed. Mohammed, who is writhing on the floor.

ICE (CONT'D)

Record that the prisoner had a seizure and is not being prepared for deportation to Guantanamo.

ICE (CONT'D)

Next prisoner! Strip! Jump Suit! Sit!

MARLEY JONES

Why the hell am I here? I'm an American citizen, proudly born in Jamaica. Resident of New Mill for thirty years and an American citizen for thirty years. You can't arrest me! I demand to see a lawyer!

ICE

Robert Marley Jones was born March 14, 1960, in Kingston, Jamaica. You illegally obtained American Citizenship under false pretenses, and thus, your citizenship is revoked. You were arrested for marijuana possession in Jamaica on June 13, 1977. Then, you applied for American citizenship in 1982. You lied on your citizenship application that you've never been arrested.

MARLEY

(Shackled to the desk, wearing an Orange jumpsuit with the word ICE on the back. That was forty years ago. I had one joint on me, and I was

arrested. I was arrested because I didn't pay a bribe to the cop. Since then, I've paid my taxes, had a family in New Mill, and never been

arrested. This is wild. You can't do this to me. I'm a citizen. I am an American!

ICE

You are no longer a citizen. You are now Prisoner 54629. You will be removed to prison in El Salvador in two

days. In the meantime, Obey. Resistance to the regime is futile. Next Prisoner!!

MARLEY

(Stands up in shackles. Hands and feet in chains shuffling to the door. Earphones over his head)

I'm an American citizen! I have rights!

ICE

(lights from neon lights blinking.)

Prisoner 54629! Take him away! Resistance is futile!

ACT 3, SCENE 3

The Children Uncover the Truth

(Direction: The stage is set with the side of the ICE Cell on the left. On the right is the furniture store where Kareem and Jamila are working. Jamila leans over Kareem's shoulder as he works on his computer.)

|

KAREEM

(typing rapidly):

They thought encrypting it would stop someone, but this folder was mislabeled: "Furniture Inventory." Cute.

JAMILA:

They put Baba in a place disguised as a warehouse?

KAREEM:

It's outside town. No cameras. No registration. I just traced a government ping from inside that building.

JAMILA

We have to get him out. I've heard how they arrest people now without lawyers and then send them to a place like El Salvador or worse. This is so unfair!

DAVID:

Hi, Jamila and Kareem. You both are fabulous! We're working with Rosie from the ACLU here. ICE arrested my Zayed Saul, the Sheriff, and Marley Jones!

KAREEM:

Mr. Marley is an American citizen! What did he do?

DAVID:

We don't know what he did or if he did anything at all. Or that he was simply a brown man arrested for being brown. It's chaos. Even the Sheriff's been arrested.

ROSIE

Your grandfather and the Sheriff were just released, but others—like the Mayor—are still in jail. Marley Jones has been a US citizen for forty years. They say they're revoking it because of an old marijuana charge in Jamaica. ICE has no right to do this. It's beyond their scope.

KAREEM

I've hacked their servers. Their software is ancient, and the coding is weird and old. This whole operation is illegal. The software was developed in China. Look at this code. China has hacked the USA.

DAVID

Kareem, you can't hack the government!

KAREEM

We had no choice. We wiped our traces. This is the same thing that happened in Syria. They took my father in the middle of the night.

ROSIE

I filed an emergency court injunction and the governor is on her way. We can meet them at the warehouse.

DAVID

If we go to the warehouse, can they arrest us?

ROSIE

No, the Bill of Rights, still allows us for peaceful assemble. And we need to assemble with as many town people as possible. Let's go! Time to stand proud for American and fight the dictatorship!

ACT 3 SCENE 4

Resistance at the ICE Warehouse

(A crowd of three hundred townspeople, the Governor, ACLU lawyers, and the National Guard surround the ICE compound. Media crews roll in, broadcasting live. The sign over the abandoned building says, "American Meat Packing Company.")

GOVERNOR

(Using a bullhorn)

We demand the immediate release of all detainees. ICE, you are violating the Constitution and the rights of Mohammed Nabil from New Mill, a green-card resident. You are violating his rights! I'm here with the Director of the ACLU - Rosie Goldman, and we have an order from a Federal Judge to release Mohamed Nabil and Marley Jones.

CROWD

(Shouting and chanting from the crowd. ICE officers peer from the warehouse.

Free Mohammed! Free Marley! Free Marley! Free Mohammed!

ICE COMMANDER

**(Speaking to Governor: With
four Soldiers dressed in
tactical gear and guns behind
him)**

This is a federal operation. Governor, you have no jurisdiction here. Disperse immediately. Soldiers, gas masks on. Prepare to disperse the crowd. If you don't, all of you will be arrested.

TOWNSPERSON 1:

You have no right to hold our neighbors!

GOVERNOR

We know the truth – you've been hiding innocent people in black sites since the first days of the Trump administration!

ROSIE - ACLU

I have the court injunction in my hand. This is a Federal court order. Release the prisoners now! This is unlawful detention!

(ICE officers glance at each other, visibly unsettled. They move their M16s at the ready. The crowd presses closer.)

ICE COMMANDER

We will not negotiate under threat. Soldiers, close ranks and remove the insurrectionists!

GOVERNOR

You are the only ones insurrecting. You violate the Constitution's "Right to Peaceful Assembly." It is the First Amendment.

KAREEM

(he steps forward in front of the ICE.)

You're cowards, hiding behind badges to terrorize innocent families. Let my father go! Let my father go! This is why we came to America! We believed that this was the land of the free and

the just.

(The crowd grows louder. The
Governor steps forward.)

GOVERNOR

You must release them. We're watching. I've called the Maine National Guard, which is standing at the ready. The National Guard is here to protect our people, not to let you steal them away. We have a judge's court order. You need to release them! Or we'll arrest you!

ICE COMMANDER

We do not follow the orders of a Federal Judge or your orders. All National Guard units have been ordered to report directly to the president. We answer to a higher duty. The president has commanded all illegal immigrants to be detained and deported. No one has the right to defy our President. His word is the law of the land.

ROSIE

Commander, you have the wrong person. His name is Mohammed Nabil. Here is his green card. Here is the court order, and she approached the Ice Commander with the papers. The president is bound by the Constitution, Congress, and the courts.

ICE COMMANDER

(Look at the papers and shout
out)

Our president is the law of the land. Bring the prisoner Mohammed Nabil out!

Ice Soldier

*Sir, we can hold off the crowd. The tear gas is read!
Let's smoke them. Remember, 911!*

Direction: *The Compound is filled with hundreds of people calling for the release of Mohammed and Marley.*

ICE Commander

*Soldiers stand down. We will follow the court order!
Release the prisoner! (Turns to the governor) But we
will be back. ICE never surrenders. We act under
direct orders from the President*

Ice Soldier

Which prisoner to be released? Sir, we never release prisoners.

Ice Commander

Release, the Arab prisoner, Mohamed Nabil! The Jamaican man has been sent to Louisiana!

Direction: The heavy metal door to the warehouse opens slowly. The hinges are rusty and squeaky.

Mohammed

(Shackled and brought out. The crowd cheers. Mohammed is wearing an orange jumpsuit. Typically, well-groomed, he is disheveled. He raises his hands, which still have manacles. He shouts, "Alhamdulillah! Jamila! Kareen! Aisha!" as he falls and weeps.

Ice Commander

Directions: *Unlock the handcuffs and chains! Free the prisoners! (A helicopter comes down with ground lights flashing. The Ice Commander and his team enter the helicopter.) A voice from the helicopter says, "We will return! We will return! We will fulfill the mandate of our president and Make America Great Again!"*

Rosie

We are a great nation as long as we adhere to the Constitution and remember we are a nation of immigrants.

GRANDPA SAUL

Races over with David and picks Mohammed up.. "Mohammed! I am grateful you're safe! We're all here." His children rush to him

Directions: *Jamila, Kareem, and Aisha rush over to Mohammed*

Governor

(Turns to the crowd!) It is an excellent day that freedom has come! But it is only the start.

|

MOHAMMED

I am grateful. I never thought a day like this would happen. After the horrible days in jail in Syria, I thought we would finally be free in America.

GRANDPA SAUL

(His arm around him)

My dear friend. Come Mohammed! Come back to the store! Everyone, dinner is waiting! (He stands on one side of Mohammed, his children and wife Aisha on the other side.) We won't let these crazy fascists take over the land.

As the helicopter flies away. And the voice from the helicopters says again, "We will return."

MOHAMMED

Thank you. I never thought I'd breathe free again. He reaches over and hugs his family, AISHA, Jamila, and Kareem.

Free! Praise be to Allah and all the people in our town. Come, let's go home again!

(The scene closes with them returning to the Schwartz's Furniture store.)

ACT 4

SCENE 1.

We are family. We are a nation of immigrants

Direction: *Main Street is lined with American Flags. Signs read, "Welcome/ Marhaba Mohammed." "Marley Jones -Stand with you." The high school marching band comes out with "Stars and Stripes. " Mohammed and his family are driving David's convertible Chrysler.*

(Mohammed, though he is exhausted, waves) and says, "Thank you to all

Direction: *Setting: Mohamed's family is sitting with him on the Sofa.*

MOHAMED

Everything is crazy now! What do we do? What can we do for Marley Jones?
We have new furniture. But we can't import more because of the tarrifs.

ROSIE GOLDMAN

We've just begun to fight. This is the first step in taking back our country. Look what's on the news. Look, New Mill is on the news! Turn up the television!

(News anchors report nationwide resistance and the growing legal battle. President Trump delivers a televised rant.)

PRESIDENT TRUMP

How dare the State of Maine resist the New Order! I am ordering federal troops to occupy New Mill and any town that resists! I will not be defied! I am the law of the land!

(Cut to the Governor, standing firm.)

GOVERNOR

Direction: Speaking at a press conference

Though perhaps it is not prudent to say... the president is crazier every day. All those sycophants keep feeding his narcissistic madness. I am more concerned about people in our state. How do we keep people safe? How do we ensure that everyone, regardless of whether they are citizens, is legal or illegal?

Everyone is treated with dignity and respect. I am disgusted by the behavior of ICE and the barbarians who support them. All of our families are immigrants.

We stand with our people. The State National Guard is here to protect our town from unlawful federal overreach.

(Cut to lawyers filing emergency injunctions in federal courts.)

REPORTER:

(On the television)

Maine's Senators and Representatives have filed injunctions demanding the release of those still detained. The ACLU continues its fight.

NEWSCASTER:

Marley Jones, a US citizen from New Mill remains missing. ICE will neither confirm nor deny his whereabouts. The community vows to fight for his return and for all those unlawfully detained.

MAIN STREET IS LINED WITH BALLOONS AND A SIGN THAT SAYS, MODERATE, MOHAMMED WELCOME MOHAMMED. WHEN HE COMES TO THE STORE. THERE IS A PARTY AT THE FURNITURE STORE. AND PART OF THE FURNITURE STORE IS NOW A MIDDLE EASTERN RESTAURANT. WHEN MOHAMMED WALKS IN AND IN THE BACK IS A LARGE SIGN COVERED IN A SHEET

MOHAMMED

Direction: The store has been transformed into new furniture and a cafe. The sign that said, "Schwartz's furniture store" is covered

(Walks into the store. He looks dazed at the transformation)

The store looks amazing! What is everybody been doing? I've only been gone a few weeks and it looks like people been working here for months? And look at this little Middle Eastern restaurant? I feel like I'm in a dream.

GOVERNOR

Mr. Mohammed Siddique.

we want to give you a state commemoration plaque for all the work that you and your family have done to turn new mill around.

Mohammed

I'm astonished! I don't what to say.

Grandpa SAUL

I've waited for a day like this where my dear friend Mohammed had nothing to say. That would be the first!

MOHAMMED

oh, Saul. It is remarkable that I even with all of your kibitzing and kvetching you have room for much else! But, I can think of a better person to Kabitz and Kvetch with. I can't believe all the people here today.

SHERIFF

(walks over to shake his hand.) Mohammed, as I've said before, I am grateful that you knocked me out of the way of that bullet.

MOHAMME

Sheriff cannot be honest with you? I actually didn't push you out of the way. I was walking towards you to talk to the ICE guy and then fell into you. Perhaps Allah, moves in mysterious ways.

SHERIFF POLASKI

I'm not sure I really believe you; nevertheless, I think that was a decided push out of the way of the bullet. I like my version better than yours. Besides that was a very serious tackle. No wonder immigration thought that you had assaulted me. But I couldn't believe that the dummies arrested you, and almost let Slug get away. He is still wanted for pedaling Fentanyl.

JAMEELA

Poppa, it's been fun to run the store and update our inventory without you hovering around. I missed you. Even though you think everything depends on you, sometimes your absence is a blessing, but of course I love you (hugs her father)

MOHAMMED

(he reaches over to hug her and Kareem).

|
My beautiful, Jameela. You may be right that sometimes things work better when I'm not around. Maybe you'll show me how to use a computer one day. am so grateful to be out of immigration prison and back home with everybody.

GRANDPA SAUL

Mohammed, I want to introduce you to the lady who was instrumental in getting you out, along with the governor, the mayor, the senator, the congressman and the flood of letters from everybody between here and Bangor. This is Rosie the ACLU attorney from the Bronx

ROSIE

Saul is being too kind. The dummies from ICE couldn't even fill out their own damn paperwork. Even if it was totally illegal, they still needed to fill out the paperwork for the arrest properly. Also, the man that they were looking for is Mohammed Sada, from Somalia, was arrested. Do you think that they would have been able to tell the difference between a black Muslim from Somalia versus a man from Syria? ICE is not only geographically, (beat) but culturally challenged.

SAUL

(Slides over next to Rosie, and puts his arm around her shoulder.) Besides being a legal bulldog. I hope you don't think this is forward Rosie, if I let people know?

ROSIE

(she blushes)

You mean us?

SAUL

This this mess has been a blessing, and i found the new love of my life - Rosie. He leans over and kisses her on the cheek

ROSIE

(she leans over and gives him a kiss on his cheek and he blushes a bright red). Of course, Bubbala!

MOHAMMED

Mazel Tov! the poet Rumi said "Lover's don't finally meet somewhere. They're in each other all along."

ROSIE

I did have a huge help from Byron, David's boyfriend.

SAUL

(Turns to look at David and Byron) David? Did I miss something?

DAVID

(he walks over to his grandpa.)

Zaida, I've been trying to tell you since I got back from my MBA in Boston, but there is always one crisis or another. Yes, I am gay, and have been out since college, but every time there is some disaster, and I was afraid you wouldn't understand

Besides, not to spoil this festive occasion, but (beat) Zaida, listening isn't one of your best social skills.

SAUL

Walks over and puts his arm around David) You are my naches. My pride and joy I don't understand this gay thing, but if you and Byron love each other, what's wrong with that? let's not kabbible.

(He walks over to Byron and hugs him)

Welcome to the family

BYRON

Thank you Zaida

MOHAMMED

(Sweeps his arms to the family on stage and the audience)

David, Byron we all mishpocha!

ROSIE

Yes, we are all in this together. *(She puts her arms around David and his boyfriend Byron)*

These fine young men were working with me for the last two weeks on computers and finding out how to unravel the stupidity of ICE. Byron, besides being a handsome young man, is a top legal immigration lawyer, and with David, and the State of Maine, and the ACLU we found out how to get out of the colossal mistakes of ICE. Jamella and Kareem were like super sleuths figuring out where their dad was and how to get him out

SAUL

(He walks over to Byron and shakes his hands) Welcome Byron, you make each other happy, you have my blessings. Mazel Tov!

MOHAMMED AND AISHA

Mazel tov! Mabrouk.

KAREEM

Let's drink some sparkling cider and opens bottle. Lets drink to all this good news! Grandpa Saul and I have something to show you. Zaida, are you ready to show my baba?

GRANDPA SAULMOHAMMED,
areyouready.Look above you! The new store sign (With the help of Kareem they pull off the curtain of teh store sign

"Welcome, Mohammed and Schwartz's Furniture"

MOHAMMED

I'm lost for words. Saul, this is beautiful. You are indeed a mensch!

(He embraces Saul and David)
Thank you for your kindness

AISHA AND JAMEELA

Kareem, and I have also been working on something can we show you? She uncovers the Statue of Liberty and it is illuminated with a big sign, "Welcome, we are a nation of immigrants."

GRANDPA SAUL

I am going on a long over due vacation.And I know it will be difficult to run the store without me. But if David, Byron, Mohammed and his family can take over. Rosie and are going away think of it as a pre-honeymoon

ROSIE

(Hugs Saul)

Thank you Saul and everyone for your fight against this maddness. Yes, Byron will handle the immigration work and help Marley Jones. But we will return. The store is in great hands. The national is finally waking up to the craziness. Our bags are packed and now it is up to you - pointing to the audience.

Grandpa Saul

(Speaks to the audience and steps forward)

Thank you all of for coming tonight. This play is NOT fiction. It is drawn from real and living truth. ICE black sites are everywhere. Citizens and green card holders are being illegally detained. Citizenship revoked. Families torn apart. We are a nation of immigrants. If you here tonight are an immigrant please stand. Stand for you and your family that made this journey to freedom

(Joins hands with all the
actors)

CAST FINAL BOW

(The entire cast steps
forward.)

ALL (in unison): *We believe in the USA. We believe in this great country. The boots of tyranny are marching across the land. For every moment of silence, another person is taken. Resistance is NOT futile. Resistance is necessary. We are Americans. We believe in the Constitution. We believe in due process and rights for all. We will not cooperate with injustice. We stand for liberty and justice for ALL.*

(The music of Jimmi Hendrix is playing the Star Spangled banner

Won't you joint us for this last song

"This Land is your land, this land is my land" by the great Woodie Guthrie.

END OF PLAY