

“DETAINEE”

A PLAY BY SAM GRABER

ESTIMATED RUN TIME – 90 MINUTES

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## **SYNOPSIS – DETAINEE**

*Detainee* is a play about a decision — whether or not to torture a US citizen.

Lindsey is a middle-aged college professor who drives a middle-aged van and lives in a middle-aged house. She’s a middle-aged Mom with a middle-aged husband. She also has middle-aged problems, mostly stemming from her wayward teenage daughter, with whom she has a strained relationship.

Outside of home, Lindsey has another problem. The United States is reeling from a string of domestic bomb threats which disrupt daily life. But when the threats turn real, and the first bomb explodes, Lindsey is asked to return to her former identity. And ultimately Lindsey must choose between allegiance to country and the sanctity of her home.

*Detainee* explores the point at which society accepts torture to assure civic safety. When the state devises a political instrument to disarm violent situations, what happens to the basis of authority?

At the core of *Detainee* is a story which delves into the psychology of one woman balancing devotion to family against devotion to society.

## **CHARACTERS (3F, 2M)**

LINDSEY, 40s

WENDELL, 40s, her husband

PUMP, 16, their daughter

CASE, 40s

DETAINEE, early 20s, female

## **TIME**

Tomorrow.

## **PLACE**

Washington, D.C.

## **SCENES**

Act I. The Bombing.

Act II. Interrogation.

## **THE STAGE**

The stage serves the action as one unbroken, interconnected playing area, such that changes in literary scenes do not require aesthetic alteration to provide a shifting sense of location.

To support this continuity, the cast remains on stage during the entirety of the play. Stage lights should function in such a way that illumination operates as its own inner stage. Characters are revealed by light, brought to full view when performing their scenes, and shrouded somewhat when they are not. Tacit characters are never fully offstage.

The only permanent fixture is ‘the room’ at center stage. Within the room are two kitchen chairs. The players, with the exception of Lindsey and the Detainee, never enter or cross through the room. Lindsey enters and exits the room where the border is made permeable and passable.

Otherwise, all stage properties are fluid and moved by actors as warranted.

## **PRODUCTION HISTORY**

*Detainee* was first produced and received its world premiere during Nov 2014 at The Phoenix Theater in Minneapolis, MN as produced by Mission Theatre Company and as directed by Anneliese Stuht with the following cast: LINDSEY, Andrea Tonsfeldt; WENDELL, Rhett Romsaas; PUMP, Tess Rada; CASE, Robert Krueger; DETAINEE, Rebecca Wilson.

*Detainee* received its NYC premiere during July 2016 at the Fourth Street Theater as produced by Between Us Productions and as directed by Samantha Manas with the following cast: LINDSEY, Francesca Ferrara; WENDELL, Niceto Darcey Festin; PUMP, Angie Tennant; CASE, Galway McCullough; DETAINEE, Roxy Reynolds.

*To my friend Kevin Graham*

*and all those who protect.*

*Thank you for making the tough decisions.*

*I hope they are the right ones.*

*“She had two full-time jobs.*

*One for her family and one for her country.”*

*—Angie Houtz, September 6, 1974-  
September 11, 2001*

**ACT ONE. THE BOMBING.**

**SCENE 1.**

*LINDSEY and DETAINEE.*

*The stage is almost darkness. We see the faint outline and contour of ‘the room’ at center stage.*

*DETAINEE enters.*

*DETAINEE wears a loose-fitting orange prisoner jumpsuit. A black burlap covers the head. The face and body are indeterminate. Hands are bound behind the back.*

*DETAINEE stumbles, feet as the only sensory organ, tripping and buckling under the influence of force.*

*DETAINEE kneels, forward until forehead touches the ground.*

*We hear DETAINEE breathing, short, stertorous.*

*LINDSEY appears.*

LINDSEY

Truth is never truthful.

It disorients. It hides.

Truth is its own kind of secret spell.

And the world’s great trick is knowing how to break it.

*Lights shift.*

**SCENE 2.**

*LINDSEY and WENDELL and PUMP.*

*WENDELL appears, carrying a grocery bag.*

*As the scene unfolds, WENDELL removes from the grocery bag a bottle of red wine and two glasses.*

WENDELL

C'mon, that's not fair, I'm telling you.

LINDSEY

Yes, and you're being evasive.

WENDELL

How am I being evasive?

LINDSEY

You laugh when you lie.

WENDELL

How am I laughing?

LINDSEY

Your eyes chuckle inwardly.

WENDELL

Fine...[resets, then begrudgingly]...William Rehnquist.

*LINDSEY big laughs.*

WENDELL

See, this is embarrassing.

LINDSEY

Really, for this I love you more than the day we got married.

WENDELL

You tried to bail on our wedding day.

LINDSEY

Please, you were saying something very revealing about you and...

WENDELL

William Rehnquist.

LINDSEY

Yes!

WENDELL

And we're sort of...wrestling.

*LINDSEY bigger laughs, spitting up wine.*

WENDELL

In the middle of a federally-protected rainforest. Wearing nothing but the flowing black robes of justice. With a thousand lions encircling us.

LINDSEY

Wrestling.

WENDELL

Olympic-style. And I'm winning because he's, you know...

LINDSEY

Dead.

WENDELL

Will you stop?

LINDSEY

Wait: how do you know you've won?

WENDELL

Because you're there doing brain tricks to weaken him.

LINDSEY

Damn straight. But not wearing black, I look terrible in black.

WENDELL

And after I defeat the ghost of Rehnquist, I'd hoist him over my shoulders and carry him for miles and miles, past mountains and valleys, past K street, past the shadow of the Monument, to atop the steps of the Capitol, with the lions trailing.

LINDSEY

Hhmmm. And that's what you'd do if nominated for the Supreme Court.

WENDELL

I guess. I haven't really thought about it.

LINDSEY

[Mocking] Gee, I haven't really thought about it.

WENDELL

Lies.

LINDSEY

You don't know how to tell if someone's lying. You have to sit there for weeks listening to all that legal stuff.

WENDELL

Well trust me eyes-chuckle-inwardly when I say this would be the moment I'd commute all that raw, legally-charged sexual energy into laying you across our kitchen table.

LINDSEY

Really.

WENDELL

Yes, because most Supreme Court justices make love like an adjective. I make love like a verb.

LINDSEY

So glad I didn't bail on our wedding.

WENDELL

[Advancing] And I would verb you across and possibly under our kitchen table, but...

LINDSEY

Pump declared a new house ban.

WENDELL

Anything oak.

LINDSEY

I can't keep up with her anymore.

WENDELL

Something about logging destroying the rainforests.

LINDSEY

There's no oak in rainforests, I've been there.

WENDELL

Whatever, as long as it's not a ban on shapely legs, can we focus here?

LINDSEY

Our daughter, the teenage music concert crusader.

*Beat.*

WENDELL

It's healthy.

LINDSEY

So's eating off our kitchen table.

*Beat.*

WENDELL

Not to destroy the mood, but we should encourage her.

LINDSEY

I'm all for encouraging, I'm encouragement central.

WENDELL

Uh-huh.

LINDSEY

Except when it gets in the way of her graduating high school.

WENDELL

How about this—

LINDSEY

The judge, he mediates.

WENDELL

—Pump gets good grades on her midterms, we reward her.

LINDSEY

Define reward.

WENDELL

Getting her a car.

LINDSEY

I was thinking we let her sleep in our house and eat our food.

WENDELL

Whatever, can we get back to verbing here?

LINDSEY

I'm serious, Wendell.

*Beat.*

WENDELL

Oh, c'mon. She's exercising her conscience. Peacefully.

LINDSEY

It's more than that and you know it. During one of last week's however-many bomb threat cancellations I sat in high school pickup line for over an hour, trying to get Pump to answer her phone, to come to the car so I could get back to work, and one of the other Moms, also waiting in line, she sees me and yells over: that concert organizer of yours sure is one activist.

WENDELL

Yeah?

LINDSEY

That doesn't worry you.

WENDELL

That other Moms don't have good taste in music?

LINDSEY

That civic action is fine and good but there comes a point.

WENDELL

The point being freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, and other freedoms I've spent my career trying to uphold.

LINDSEY

It’s dangerous now to be loud.

WENDELL

Because of the bomb threats.

LINDSEY

Yes.

WENDELL

Do you really think it’s more than just threats?

LINDSEY

No.

WENDELL

And hasn’t Pump been upfront about who she’s with and what she’s doing?

LINDSEY

To you.

*PUMP appears, wearing headphones.*

PUMP

Hey, Dad!

WENDELL

I’m thinking a used Prius.

PUMP

Is Mom home?

WENDELL

Yes, Mom’s home!

PUMP

Is she there?

LINDSEY

Yes, I’m here!

PUMP

Oh. Dad, I need forty dollars.

LINDSEY

For what?

PUMP

Dad, I need forty dollars.

WENDELL

Why do you need forty dollars?

PUMP

For Perkins.

LINDSEY

For yourself?

PUMP

Dad, please?

LINDSEY

Pump, can you come in here so I can see you?

PUMP

That’s okay, I just need forty dollars from Dad.

WENDELL

Are you buying Perkins?

PUMP

Dad, you’re so funny.

LINDSEY

We don’t have secrets in this house, Pump.

PUMP

If it was a secret I wouldn’t be asking.

WENDELL

What’s the money for?

PUMP

Meeting for the concert.

LINDSEY

You just had a concert.

PUMP

We're protesting English as the official school language.

LINDSEY

Okay, but while that's happening college admissions might be protesting your GPA.

WENDELL

Lindsey.

LINDSEY

How about instead of Operation Perkins you meet here? You talk music and then do homework on the floor where our kitchen table used to be.

WENDELL

Here's forty dollars, Pump, thanks again for being so upfront and truthful with us.

LINDSEY

Ohhh-kay.

*WENDELL taps his cell phone to PUMP's cell, money exchanged.*

PUMP

Cool, thanks Dad. Later-ator.

*PUMP returns headphones to her ears, retreats to off.*

LINDSEY

Be home at a reasonable hour! And try answering your phone for a change!

*LINDSEY and WENDELL stare at each other.*

WENDELL

Say it. Say it.

LINDSEY

Being loud makes you a target of the regime.

WENDELL

[Careful] I think the bomb threats are getting to you.

*LINDSEY drains her wine glass.*

LINDSEY

They're getting to everyone.

*Lights shift.*

**SCENE 3.**

*LINDSEY and CASE.*

*We see DETAINEE slither on the floor,  
trying to move.*

LINDSEY

I was a math major. Scholarship.

Never drank, never went out much, except on weekends I earned extra carrying round cards at the local boxing club.

I was that girl, advanced and limited.

I'm not sure when I realized I had the talent.

Probably during one of those three minute increments, engulfed with advanced equations, taking truth from a messy set of variables, while the men and their fight raged around me.

I figured a job with the government. Standards & Technology. A desk.

I never figured the CIA.

Have you considered a thrilling career in espionage?

Sometimes these things find you.

*CASE appears.*

CASE

As-salaamu 'alaykum.

*LINDSEY stops, turns, sees CASE.*

LINDSEY

‘Alaykum salaam.

CASE

Delta...nejdey resturaanuna shta?

LINDSEY

Nothing you’d like.

CASE

Looking good, Lindsey. Still got your curves.

LINDSEY

I don’t have curves, I have corners. I also have another lecture in ten minutes.

CASE

Can’t spare the other nine for an old war buddy?

LINDSEY

What are you doing here?

CASE

Funny, was about to ask you the same thing. Spy The Lie 101?

LINDSEY

They wouldn’t let me call it Intro to Mind Control.

CASE

Teaching trade or craft?

LINDSEY

Don’t worry, we don’t even get that far. I got a bunch of kids taking this class just to sleep off whatever they did the night before. They have no idea.

CASE

I’m impressed, really, you of all people with the patience to deal with this kind of place. Lamé excuses, boring meetings.

LINDSEY

Sounds like Agency work. At least here I get summer vacations.

CASE

Where former spooks go to die.

*Beat.*

LINDSEY

Why are you here?

CASE

Well, that’s not the loving welcome I expected to receive.

LINDSEY

Welcome, why are you here?

CASE

Very sharp corners.

LINDSEY

There must be some reason you’d degrade yourself to go outside the Beltway.

CASE

You’re a good reason.

LINDSEY

Please. This wouldn’t have to do with you getting promoted, would it?

CASE

Keeping tabs, I see.

LINDSEY

Still keeping happy hour with the girls from CounterIntel. The CIA can keep all the secrets except its own, Deputy Director.

CASE

Yeah, well, don’t get excited just yet. It’s only a nomination. They’ve been waving it in my face for years. The dirty worm dangled over the cesspool so long that even the fisherman cut bait.

LINDSEY

Pretty much what the girls from CounterIntel say. Except your wife, when she’s there, she sticks up for you. Number three?

CASE

I think she’s number three. You get on a losing streak, you stop counting.

LINDSEY

Look, this is a nice surprise, but seriously.

CASE

The school bomb threats. I’m here because of the school bomb threats.

LINDSEY

And you came to talk to me? After all these years.

CASE

Yes.

LINDSEY

If I thought it was any of my matriculates, trust me, I’d be the first anonymous tip. You know how many times I’ve had to rush out of here in the middle of lecture to pick up my daughter at high school? It’s become the great national pain-in-the-ass prank.

CASE

We have reason to believe the bomb threats are authentic.

LINDSEY

All threats are authentic, you know that.

CASE

We have someone.

*Beat.*

LINDSEY

We, the CIA?

CASE

Sort of.

*Beat.*

LINDSEY

In custody?

CASE

Can’t say.

LINDSEY

In the country?

CASE

Can't say.

LINDSEY

Wait. Authentic as in putting an actual bomb in a school?

CASE

More like someone connected. Attached to the operator cell.

LINDSEY

There's a cell.

CASE

I can't say.

LINDSEY

First time you've talked to me in years, alone I might add, to tell me all these school bomb threats might be real and you can't say who, how or where.

CASE

Or why.

*Beat.*

LINDSEY

Is it because of *over there*? Retaliation?

CASE

Part of my dangling over the cesspool has been to serve as point man on the Joint Terrorism Task Force. The FBI's had open and ongoing investigations. There's lists. Lots of lists. We've all been watching. Now I'm in a position to see names.

*CASE hands LINDSEY a file.*

CASE

I'm sure they won't notice one name missing.

LINDSEY

This is Yankee White clearance.

CASE

This someone we’ve been tracking, this someone we now have in custody...it’s going to get ugly. But before it gets ugly, I thought it prudent to remove certain individuals from the realm of investigative interest who I’m sure aren’t a true threat to national security.

*LINDSEY opens the file, reacts.*

CASE

I’m here for an old war buddy. I’m sure you’d do the same for me. If it was my kid on a list. Da khoday pa amaan, hm?

*Lights shift.*

**SCENE 4.**

*LINDSEY and WENDELL and PUMP.*

*PUMP appears, wearing headphones, grooving to tunes.*

LINDSEY

Pump. Honey. This is going to sound weird but I’d like you to miss school tomorrow. I’ll write a note or whatever excusing your absence. Day off tomorrow, okay? Maybe we’ll have some nice you-me time, we can do Mother-daughter things. Things that Mothers and daughters do. With each other. Pump? Did you hear what I said?

*WENDELL appears, carrying the grocery bag.*

WENDELL

Hel-lo, wife and child!

PUMP

YO, DAD!

WENDELL

Apparently yours truly has become a bit predictable. Before I even make it to the wine rack our little behind-the-counter friend goes ‘we’re out of that red stuff you guys like.’ You believe that? Kid’s barely past puberty and tracking our drinking habits. So I grabbed a sixer of the nastiest beer imaginable and told him I’d have the constabulary at his house by nightfall. Teach him to go out of stock. Anyway, cheers to bad beers. What’s for dinner?

LINDSEY

Nothing. Nothing happened today.

WENDELL

Okay.

PUMP

DAD, YOU GOTTA HEAR THIS NEW JAM, TOTALLY ON.

WENDELL

I’m afraid to ask.

PUMP

THE BEATLES, DAD, THESE GUYS GET IT.

LINDSEY

Pump.

PUMP

ONE OF THEM’S A WALRUS, YOU WOULDN’T UNDERSTAND, hey!

LINDSEY

Can I get your focus here?

PUMP

You just turned off my music.

LINDSEY

I’d really like your attention.

PUMP

God, what. What?

LINDSEY

It’s important.

PUMP

So say it already.

LINDSEY

I'd like you not to go to school tomorrow.

*Beat.*

PUMP

Why not?

LINDSEY

I'm asking you to miss school tomorrow.

PUMP

Mom, tomorrow's the concert.

WENDELL

Tomorrow's her concert.

PUMP

The English protest. Remember?

LINDSEY

Right, that's fine, it's important to you, I respect that.

PUMP

Respect it's happening tomorrow. Can I have those back?

LINDSEY

I guess what I'm saying to you is less a request and more a command.

PUMP

What is?

LINDSEY

That you can't go to school tomorrow.

*Beat.*

PUMP

What, are you serious?

LINDSEY

Very.

PUMP

Mom, I’m the concert organizer. I organized the concert.

WENDELL

Lindsey, maybe we could talk about this?

LINDSEY

We are talking about this.

PUMP

Mom, I’ve been planning this for months. Everyone’s coming. I can’t just not show up.

LINDSEY

I’m sorry, but that’s exactly what’s happening.

PUMP

Just because you think non-natives are treated fairly doesn’t mean the rest of us do.

LINDSEY

This isn’t about your cause.

PUMP

Then what is it about?

WENDELL

[To LINDSEY] Can we talk here?

LINDSEY

Pump, I can’t explain, you just have to promise me. No going to school tomorrow.

WENDELL

Lindsey, what’s going on?

LINDSEY

Nothing’s going on. Just she’s not going anywhere near school tomorrow.

PUMP

Mom, this isn’t like my little school concert. I organized buses, a sound crew, stagehands, the whole gym’s going to be filled.

LINDSEY

You'll have to reschedule.

PUMP

I booked The Middle Fingers, you know how big that is? I'm not canceling the show because my Mom's torqued I missed a couple book reports!

WENDELL

Maybe we should pause here, okay? I realize we're upset, we're all upset by the stress from organizing a major event, and bomb threats, but Pump has been working hard on this.

PUMP

If I don't show up everyone will hate me. You might as well change my name again.

LINDSEY

*This is not about that.*

PUMP

This is why I hate telling you anything.

WENDELL

[To LINDSEY] Maybe you're being a bit hasty.

LINDSEY

Excuse me?

WENDELL

Can we talk first?

LINDSEY

[To PUMP] Promise me you won't go to school tomorrow.

PUMP

Why are you being like this?

LINDSEY

Promise me.

PUMP

Mom, these people come into the country, from places we've invaded, from places you invaded, they aren't given a fair chance, we have to make it fair for them.

LINDSEY

This isn't about the concert.

PUMP

Then what is it about?

*WENDELL sees the CASE file, opens.*

LINDSEY

You can have your boyfriend or music-friend or whoever it is you've been meeting at Perkins be with you all day. You can hang out here.

WENDELL

What the hell is this?

LINDSEY

HEY.

*LINDSEY grabs the file from WENDELL's hands.*

*A moment.*

LINDSEY

Pump, promise me. I'm looking at you now.

PUMP

Fine.

*PUMP grabs the headphones from LINDSEY's hands, moves to off.*

WENDELL

Well.

*Lights shift.*

**SCENE 5.**

*LINDSEY and WENDELL.*

*DETAINEE again tries to move.*

LINDSEY

You think it's possible to tell if someone's lying?

Beyond that, what about controlling someone's mind?

Bold concept, but what if you could?

Knowing how to pierce a fortress of lies and to take from messy variables an actionable truth.

How it is done.

Memory manipulation, shadow hypnosis, word slavery.

Assaulting someone's fortress, reconnaissance of the mind, it's a long, slow dig.

WENDELL

Hey!

LINDSEY

But when you're over there, in the room, you don't get time for a long, slow dig.

WENDELL

Hey!

LINDSEY

Which is why we had torture.

*WENDELL appears, frantic.*

WENDELL

Did you hear anything about a bomb?

LINDSEY

Bomb, what bomb?

WENDELL

On the TV, just now, they said something about a bomb.

LINDSEY  
Another threat?

WENDELL  
No, an actual bomb.

LINDSEY  
Where.

WENDELL  
A school.

LINDSEY  
Here?

WENDELL  
Minnesota, but they’re telling parents everywhere to pull their kids.

LINDSEY  
[Calling out] Pump? Pump! Where is she?

WENDELL  
She’s not here.

LINDSEY  
Perkins?

WENDELL  
No.

LINDSEY  
That rehearsal space?

WENDELL  
She’s at school.

LINDSEY  
What? I told her no!

WENDELL  
I said it was fine to go for the concert.

LINDSEY  
[Going to her cell] No-no-no-no-no-no.

WENDELL

I'm sorry.

LINDSEY

C'mon-c'mon.

WENDELL

She never answers her phone!

LINDSEY

Text her, message her! Get her out of there!

*WENDELL moves towards opposite stage,  
as if watching a screen.*

LINDSEY

C'mon-c'mon-c'mon. Pump! Pump, where are you?

WENDELL

Honey!

LINDSEY

I got her! [Into phone] Can you hear me?

WENDELL

Honey!

LINDSEY

I know, I hear! You're still inside the gym? Get out right now. I SAID GET OUT RIGHT NOW.

WENDELL

Lindsey!

LINDSEY

Don't worry about that, just get out of there, okay? I said forget everything, get to the nearest door that leads outside.

WENDELL

Lindsey!

LINDSEY

Can you see a door that leads outside? Zero-in on that door, don't take your eyes off that door.

WENDELL

Lindsey, get in here!

LINDSEY

Listen to me: I want you to run five steps and walk five steps. Can you do that? Look at the door...bring him along with you, just run five then walk five, okay? Are you outside? Alright, keep moving away from the school. Don't chat, don't get in anyone's car, don't let anyone stop you no matter who they are, just run five and walk five until you make it to Arby's. Just keep five-and-five. The Arby's is your clear zone.

*WENDELL back towards LINDSEY.*

WENDELL

They're saying two schools, now. Another in Oregon.

LINDSEY

Can you see the Arby's? This will be your extraction point.

WENDELL

[Grabbing the phone from LINDSEY] Pump, where are you?

LINDSEY

She's heading to the Arby's across //from school.

WENDELL

//Okay, honey? Don't move! I'm coming to get you. I'll be right there. Yes, whatever, get a shake, just stay there, I'm on my way.

*WENDELL hangs up.*

WENDELL

She's fine, thank God.

LINDSEY

Gee Wendell, thanks for all your help.

WENDELL

She's okay. It's okay.

LINDSEY

It's not okay, you sent her to school!

WENDELL

Well damnit, how was I to know?

LINDSEY

Because I told you!

*Beat.*

WENDELL

Did you...did you know about this?

LINDSEY

I cannot believe you.

WENDELL

Is that why you told Pump to miss school?

LINDSEY

You compromised the safety of our daughter.

WENDELL

You knew about this and didn't do anything?

LINDSEY

I did do something, I made her promise not to go to school and you went and sent her to a threat sector!

WENDELL

What's gotten into you?

LINDSEY

I'm going to get Pump.

WENDELL

Is that what I saw yesterday? What was in that file?

LINDSEY

You're unbelievable.

WENDELL

Did you know it was more than one school?

LINDSEY

I didn't know anything.

WENDELL

Are there more coming?

LINDSEY

I have no idea.

WENDELL

Lindsey, what is going on?

LINDSEY

What’s going on is you being okay to put Pump in mortal danger. You let her walk into a possible detonation sector.

WENDELL

At the time you seemed irrational.

LINDSEY

Mom’s nutty so go ahead?

WENDELL

I had no idea.

LINDSEY

I had an idea. I made her promise. You were standing right there!

WENDELL

That was a pretty spot-on sense of future events.

LINDSEY

We don’t have time for this.

WENDELL

What we don’t have are secrets in this house. How many more are there?

*LINDSEY turns to go.*

WENDELL

She won’t get in the car if you show up.

*Long beat.*

LINDSEY

Go get Pump.

WENDELL

I'll get Pump.

CASE

[Overlapping] Hey, get in here!

LINDSEY

Great. You go get her.

*WENDELL moves to off-scene.*

*Lights shift.*

**SCENE 6.**

*LINDSEY and WENDELL.*

*LINDSEY carries the file.*

CASE

Get in here! Shut the door.

LINDSEY

Guess you're a little busy.

CASE

You think? We're recalling all agents to domestic.

LINDSEY

Look. I wanted to come by and say thank you.

CASE

Just when you think you'd never see something as bad as planes through towers. How's your kid handling this? Yeah. Mine still won't talk to me either.

LINDSEY

You know...[the file]...my daughter's a good person. She might have her priorities screwed up and hang with the wrong crowd but she's a good person.

CASE

Did I mention bombs going off and a full staff remobilization?

LINDSEY

Right.

CASE

Makes you feel so helpless. You’d love to grab the situation in your hands and *squeeze*. Instead, we had to sit around here and wait for six different lawyers in seven different departments to authorize legal. Forget Congressional subcommittees, I should take all these idiots down to the schools and make ‘em face the PTA. Wasn’t like this in the old days.

LINDSEY

Case, I know it’s not my place anymore, but who is it? Who’s doing this?

CASE

I don’t know.

LINDSEY

But you said—

CASE

That we had a person of extreme interest under surveillance.

LINDSEY

Where is he now?

CASE

Custody. Finally.

LINDSEY

Police custody.

*Beat.*

CASE

I told you, it’s joint terrorism now.

LINDSEY

Just Minnesota and Oregon.

CASE

Actually, we can’t confirm explosives at Oregon. It’s a sick house. We’re waiting on sniffers.

LINDSEY

Are there any more?

CASE

That’s what we’re going to find out.

LINDSEY

Well, you won’t be able to get it fast. Whoever you have is likely prepped enough to withstand pressure. I’d go isolation.

CASE

Mmm.

LINDSEY

Disorient sensory, break sleep, sound shocks.

CASE

Good.

*Beat.*

LINDSEY

Uh, look...I’ll...

CASE

[The file] Guess you owe me.

LINDSEY

Liquid lunch. When this is over.

CASE

What makes you think this will be over? Is it over for you?

LINDSEY

...

CASE

I never stopped admiring your commitment to the cause, Lindsey, even after you left. There’s too many people doing as little as possible for as long as possible. But not you. I know you still care. I may not be able to read minds like you but I can tell you still care.

LINDSEY

Of course I care.

CASE

Then help me deal with this.

LINDSEY

I have a job.

CASE

Me, too. How'd you like to get back in the room?

LINDSEY

I don't do that anymore.

CASE

I don't believe you've ever stopped.

LINDSEY

Case, we're in the United States now.

CASE

The U.S. government is complying with all legal obligations as it fights the war on terror.

LINDSEY

Against a real terrorist or some pissed off loser?

CASE

Someone connected.

LINDSEY

Even if you do have a credible suspect, there's a slew of people far up on me to work the room.

CASE

But no one could get to them like you.

LINDSEY

Yes, because we were *over there*. Over there we could wave the threat of...*down the hall*.

CASE

As I recall it wasn't just a threat.

LINDSEY

...

CASE

Doesn't matter how long you've been offline, talent like yours doesn't go cold. The FBI doesn't have our skill set, *your* skill set. They don't do what you do. Interrogation is a calling. Plus you're clean. And besides, who we have in custody...you're uniquely qualified.

LINDSEY

There's a slight difference between Asadabad and Minnesota.

CASE

I'm asking you to get what our detainee knows. Who's involved, potential schools, target selection.

LINDSEY

Your suspect really knows something.

CASE

Which is why before the entire Joint Task I said let's get the best in the room so that we don't have to go down the hall. Which is why I went to the secret FISA court and got a secret ruling allowing this to happen.

LINDSEY

Case, I'm a middle-aged college professor who drives a middle-aged van. I drink bad coffee in a staff lounge. I have afternoon pickup. I'm the confederacy of dweebs now.

CASE

That's not how I remember you. And in case you weren't watching, the nation is the fresh victim of some horrific attacks. This is happening, here.

LINDSEY

I know that.

CASE

And I know I'm one of the few people who's seen what you can do.

LINDSEY

Well, I don't do it anymore. I quit.

CASE

Protecting our country?

LINDSEY

Doing what we did over there, here! It sounds like some secret judge on some secret court that only you know about said do whatever you have to so nothing like this //ever happens again.

CASE

[Overlapping] //ever happens again. And where have we heard that before? The twelfth of September? When we all felt helpless and sick because we failed our country? And we got some secret legal then to allow us to do our work over there.

LINDSEY

I made a promise. To Wendell. That I was done. I promised him I would never go back.

CASE

Ah.

LINDSEY

I owe you lunch.

CASE

Listen, how many would love to be in the room on this one. It's front line. It's big time. You and the first domestic detainee sequestered outside the justice system. And not from attacking a federal building or a symbol of government authority. Kids. With their backpacks on. Holding hands, walking into school. I have a family to go home to as well, Lindsey. I'm asking you to do this.

*Lights shift.*

**SCENE 7.**

*LINDSEY and WENDELL.*

*DETAINEE on the floor again tries to move.*

*LINDSEY downstage center, as before.*

LINDSEY

There's a language to torture.

October 2001, I became a part of that language.

The men at the forward operating base knew me as the human polygraph, but their word for me was *Piglet*.

They said *Piglet*, this is the room, where you *interrogate*.

We'll be *down the hall* if your questions bear no *jelly*.

I actually felt sorry for them, having to tap electricity to genitals, cutting, music...music, whipping the soles of feet, more painful than you can imagine.

They got pretty worked up if who they worked over wasn't forthcoming.

Then on breaks, calling their loved ones: hey honey, how's everything back home?

Then back for more *enhanced techniques*.

I don't care how tough you are, or how big the secret you hold, after a week you'll turn against everything you believe in to make it stop.

You'll try to starve yourself, drown yourself, but the men bring you back and start again.

They call that *rounding*.

I never went down the hall to see it.

Sound doesn't get out of the room, but it can get in, and the hallway isn't very long.

Well whatever it's called, I never tortured anyone.

*WENDELL appears.*

WENDELL

Honey?

LINDSEY

But that never stopped me from wondering: what if I did?

WENDELL

Honey? Where've you been?

LINDSEY

The store.

WENDELL

What took so long?

LINDSEY

Shelves are practically empty, had to grab whatever was left.

WENDELL

You've been at the store all this time.

LINDSEY

Peas, lettuce, and look at this, yams! Nobody makes yams anymore.

WENDELL

They're live at Minnesota.

LINDSEY

And: the red! Last time that kid behind the counter lies about being out of stock. Saw right through him before he opened his mouth. Now: pots!

WENDELL

Have you been following this?

LINDSEY

We have pots, right?

WENDELL

Pictures. Videos.

LINDSEY

I just thought it might be nice to have a real family dinner. Something actually cooked for a change, eaten at our nice kitchen...

*There's no table.*

WENDELL

They have, um...I can't even say it.

LINDSEY

A body count.

WENDELL

Twelve.

*Beat.*

LINDSEY

Twelve's a lot.

WENDELL

They actually interviewed one of the parents.

LINDSEY

You look like you could use a good yam.

WENDELL

Pump was here earlier. With her friend. One of the Middle Fingers. Kid didn't do much, kind of lumbered. Then he said to me, the first thing he said: how'd Mrs. Bryant know the bomb was coming? Sorry, should I wait for you to burn dinner first? [LINDSEY, a look] He wondered if you could do that for pop quizzes. Pump was quite proud, actually, my Mom can tell the future. And then there was this perverse hunger on their part to know more, which I was totally unprepared for. Who did this? Do you think we'll go back to school again? I hate coming across clueless.

LINDSEY

Can't get nominated to the Supreme Court that way.

WENDELL

How did you know?

LINDSEY

Intuition.

WENDELL

Same intuition as the rainforest?

LINDSEY

I don't think I'll make you any yams.

WENDELL

Honey.

LINDSEY

Store was out of that, too. And will you please TURN THAT OFF. Thank you.

*Beat.*

WENDELL

It would have been helpful if you were here.

LINDSEY

Didn't think you'd want me talking to the youth of America about life after terrorist attacks.

WENDELL

Where were you?

LINDSEY

Asadabad.

WENDELL

I meant tonight.

LINDSEY

So did I.

WENDELL

Look. I'm sorry about before. Okay? I shouldn't have let her go to school. Alright?

*Beat.*

LINDSEY

We have someone. In custody.

WENDELL

I didn't hear that.

LINDSEY

I doubt more than a handful know.

WENDELL

Intuition?

LINDSEY

Case.

WENDELL

[This sinks in] After all this time.

LINDSEY

He paid me a visit.

WENDELL

Just like that.

LINDSEY

And I paid him a visit back, tonight. He told me the CIA has someone.

WENDELL

They knew.

LINDSEY

They didn't. They don't. All they have is someone connected.

WENDELL

What's their suspect have to do with you?

LINDSEY

Case wants me to come in. To come back.

WENDELL

For what?

LINDSEY

To question.

WENDELL

You.

LINDSEY

Confused about that myself.

WENDELL

Is it because they have somebody from...?...they want to fly you back to...?

LINDSEY

It would be a short drive.

WENDELL

[Figuring it out] Would counsel for the defendant be present?

LINDSEY

They don't have a defendant. They have a detainee.

WENDELL

Wait, are you telling a federal judge—

LINDSEY

I'm telling my husband—

WENDELL

—the CIA has detained, outside of arrest—

LINDSEY

—I'm telling my husband—

WENDELL

—just grabbed on home turf—

LINDSEY

—not just the CIA—

WENDELL

And they want you to question him?

LINDSEY

I'm telling my husband, I'm telling *my husband*, everything changes.

WENDELL

Apparently disregard for the law.

LINDSEY

The law's already changed. It changed October 2001.

WENDELL

The law is what we have.

LINDSEY

What we have are bombs in schools. And a body count. And you're worried about some lines on a piece of paper.

WENDELL

I am worried about a less perfect union, yes.

LINDSEY

Exactly.

WENDELL

I meant this house. How long did it take after you returned until we functioned anywhere close to normal? Pump wouldn't talk to you. You wouldn't talk to me. How long did it take? You can't go back.

LINDSEY

I sure hope you're speaking to me as a judge and not my husband.

WENDELL

This guy they have, he's from over there?

LINDSEY

I don't know.

WENDELL

What do you know?

LINDSEY

I know the last day I felt secure was the day before seeing Americans stumble out of the Pentagon, jumping from the Towers.

WENDELL

I don't need a lecture.

LINDSEY

If you're clueless you do. Remember how it felt? To defeat that enemy we needed intelligence. But we had none. The only way was from their mouths. The CIA planned the invasion of Afghanistan, I doubt more than a handful know that either. God, I was so on tilt, hopped the first ride out of Dulles, grabbed a seat across some up-and-coming who called himself Case, the guy who'd eventually become torturer-in-chief. Case said the mission was simple: detain for questioning any military-age male with a wrap around his head. The unspoken mission: bring the swinging fist of justice. And I faced the enemy, every day, the resistance, the screams. back down the hall and back in the room.

WENDELL

You never told me all that before.

LINDSEY

All you wanted was a promise. That that I'd never go back.

WENDELL

Yes, because while breaking the law you almost broke apart this family.

LINDSEY

I was preventing future attacks.

WENDELL

Did you?

LINDSEY

I felt each question kept Pump from becoming another name on a wall.

WENDELL

You always said torture doesn't work. You go back in and you'd be doing just that again, here. We kill them, they kill us, we kill more, here, there, two groups from opposite ends of the world, mass-murderers and torturers, chasing after each other. When does it end?

LINDSEY

It was supposed to end by 2005.

WENDELL

Listen to yourself.

*Beat.*

LINDSEY

Yeah.

WENDELL

Case really came to see you.

LINDSEY

Still looks like an Olympic wrestler.

*Beat.*

WENDELL

But you said no.

LINDSEY

I didn't say yes.

CASE

[Overlapping] We don't have much time.

WENDELL

Lindsey, how many laws do we give up to feel safe?

*Lights shift.*

**SCENE 8.**

*LINDSEY and CASE.*

*CASE appears.*

CASE

I said we don't have much time.

LINDSEY

I'm not here to work.

CASE

Then what the hell are you here for?

LINDSEY

To tell you that whoever does the room with your guy takes another step towards ending the Constitution.

*Beat.*

CASE

That...sounds like a federal judge talking.

LINDSEY

I made a promise.

CASE

[Handing her a picture] I trust you won't go sharing with certain members of the judiciary. The school in Oregon? Took the dogs a while to find it, but they did.

LINDSEY

A football.

CASE

Lodged in the trophy case by the gym. Near a lot of kids, where it wouldn't be messed with or suspected. Filled with iron shards.

LINDSEY

Remote trigger.

CASE

Probably cell phone.

LINDSEY

And it never blew.

CASE

Right.

LINDSEY

This doesn't make sense. School attacks have been a parting gesture, for attention.

CASE

Obviously that's not what we're dealing with.

LINDSEY

What are we dealing with?

CASE

There is one person who knows.

LINDSEY

By moving the show to the room.

CASE

Otherwise, the regular way brings publicity, breaking news, a feeding tube of updates for the bad guys.

LINDSEY

And what if who you have isn't a bad guy.

CASE

That's why you're here. Who can I trust? Who has the chops to bust someone open? Who can get them to say it so I don't have to get them to scream it?

LINDSEY

Oh, Case. It's like we're not even spies anymore.

CASE

Ain't that the truth. You know, the only way we were going to win over there was to fake the world into believing we're not closet hypocrites. Do I care? Not really. Why? I'm not interested in retroactively fitting today's America to the founding values at Lexington and Concord. I'm interested in stopping the next bomb. I'm interested in protecting our kids. Isn't that right, too? Isn't that honest on its own? If we took ten people off the street and said: torture one person to stop the next bomb...seven?, eight?, nine? Do 'x' and 'y' won't happen. It's a warped equation, misleading, but whatever, people don't care, they just want protection. I'm not ashamed to come out of that closet. So I got an active offensive against our nation's schools, now on temporary shutdown. I got a secret court order staying the prohibition on domestic ops. And what do I say? Let's try to be as right about this as possible. Let's get in the room first. And let's get the best in the room.

*Beat.*

LINDSEY

Where's the room?

CASE

Nearby.

LINDSEY

Where's the room?

*Beat.*

CASE

The Afghan embassy.

*Beat.*

LINDSEY

And down the hall?

CASE

The kind that gets results if you don't.

*Beat.*

LINDSEY

I can't.

CASE

I understand. Your promise. Well go home, snuggle with the judge, wait for the evening news to tell you school’s open.

LINDSEY

That won’t work, Case.

PUMP

[Overlapping] Mom?

CASE

Lindsey, how many more footballs are there that we don’t know about?

*Lights shift.*

**SCENE 9.**

*LINDSEY and PUMP.*

*PUMP appears, headphones around her neck, carrying a laptop.*

PUMP

Mom?

LINDSEY

Pump. Hey.

PUMP

Hey.

LINDSEY

You’re home.

PUMP

Nowhere else to go really.

LINDSEY

I’m glad you’re here.

PUMP

Yeah.

LINDSEY  
You doing okay?

PUMP  
Sure.

LINDSEY  
Mind if I sit?

PUMP  
Your house.

LINDSEY  
Dare I ask if that’s homework?

PUMP  
You can ask.

LINDSEY  
How about a dinner break?

PUMP  
That’s okay.

LINDSEY  
The not-homework will still be there when you get back.

PUMP  
Not hungry.

LINDSEY  
Dad said that your boyfriend’s nice.

PUMP  
He’s not my boyfriend. He’s the drummer.

LINDSEY  
Still, if he’s important to you, I wish I could have met him, too.

PUMP  
No big deal.

LINDSEY  
Look, I know how disturbing this whole thing can be.

PUMP

It's not like he's the first drummer I've met.

LINDSEY

That's not what I meant. Dad said you were asking questions.

PUMP

Maybe.

LINDSEY

Anything particular?

PUMP

Not really.

LINDSEY

Pump, I realize I wasn't here earlier.

PUMP

I got used to it.

LINDSEY

I meant earlier today.

PUMP

Oh.

LINDSEY

If you'd still like to talk, if you still have questions, I happen to have experience with these kinds of events.

PUMP

You do.

LINDSEY

I do.

PUMP

From when you were over there.

LINDSEY

I know they draw out all kinds of emotions. Some people feel anxiety. Others feel anger. Sadness.

PUMP

Confusion.

LINDSEY

Especially confusion. It's normal. And the most normal of all is holding back. Which is the worst of all. Because shutting it out sort of signals to everyone else that what happened is too horrible to talk about. You know?

PUMP

I guess.

LINDSEY

You can ask me.

PUMP

Okay, well, if I did ask...there's one question...it's kind of stupid.

LINDSEY

Honey, you're not stupid, I would never think that.

PUMP

I mean everyone's asking about who and why, and making all these lame comments, and blaming it on whatever, but that's not what I want to ask.

LINDSEY

Whatever you want to ask, it's fine.

PUMP

Okay, so, what I've been trying to find, what I really want to know is...what's it like to be hit by a bomb?

LINDSEY

...

PUMP

Dumb question.

LINDSEY

No...it's...it's a good question. It's...why I was gone. You know, when we brought you home from the hospital, August 2001, I'd sing to you. You loved music. I sang. And then next month. And then I was torn. Because I wanted to be my best for my country. But I also knew what I'd be leaving behind. The United States doesn't owe me anything. It's not going to knock on my door, hand me a thank-you card. I owe. For everything we have. And there was only one way, one real way I could show it. Even though it meant leaving you.

PUMP

And that was like being hit by a bomb.

LINDSEY

We were considered active duty which meant we had a security attachment which meant we had a driver. Each time to the ops site our driver would take different routes, standard movement stuff. Different routes but always the same faces on the streets, the struggling, war-stung faces dealing daily with death. You keep your mind to simple things, to remind yourself why you're there: Dad on our wedding day, you being born, the way you looked surrounded by blankets and stuffed animals, the parents who won't ever get to see their kids sleep again, the parents who...the thought's broken, my driver says cars are stopping ahead. A checkpoint? Here? Before he can answer, just that quick, it suddenly becomes bright and dark, and our car is crumbling back, and the driver's legs are no longer a part of him, and I drag myself from the...I'm sorry...I shouldn't...

PUMP

[Reading from the laptop] A football filled with explosives at the middle school playground in Minneapolis.

LINDSEY

Honey, don't look at that.

PUMP

It's just a screen, Mom, I'm not actually there. [Reading] Officials said the power of the blast ripped as far as the center for the disabled on the second floor. Outside, raincoats and swing sets were splattered with—

LINDSEY

Listen to me: that's never going to happen to you.

PUMP

[Reading] One girl suffered wounds to her face. Her eyes wouldn't open. Her lips were missing. She was sobbing, I want to see my mother.

*LINDSEY rises, moves from PUMP.*

PUMP

I guess that's how it feels.

*Lights shift.*

**SCENE 10.**

*LINDSEY and CASE.*

LINDSEY

How'd you like to be on the committee?

CASE

What committee is that?

LINDSEY

The committee to uphold the U.S. constitution. It's a small committee.

CASE

How small.

LINDSEY

Just you and me.

CASE

Best kind. How do you want to do it?

LINDSEY

Like Asadabad.

CASE

Babysitters?

LINDSEY

The only person your guy knows is me.

CASE

Just you.

LINDSEY

Unrecorded. I’m looking at you.

CASE

[Capitulating] Alright.

LINDSEY

Who’s he seen?

CASE

Since the sack went over the head and gag went in the mouth, no one.

LINDSEY

Where’s he from, Case? How’d you find him?

CASE

I can’t say.

LINDSEY

Some committee member you turned out to be.

CASE

The secret court judge conceded our application on one condition: the interrogator can’t know anything beforehand about the detainee. Essentially, the left hand can’t know what the right hand holds.

LINDSEY

Well we’re just making it up as we go along, aren’t we?

CASE

Technically we could appeal but that’s a political football. Bad choice of words.

LINDSEY

I shouldn’t feel like I’m the one at a disadvantage. I’m basically playing intelligence bluff.

CASE

It’s what we got. How do you want the room?

LINDSEY

[Thinking] Get rid of the table.

CASE

No table?

LINDSEY

Just two chairs. And how much time do I have?

CASE

Seventy-two hours. By then the masters will want to know whether you have it or not. Want some protection? Make you feel safer.

LINDSEY

I haven't felt safe since I first met you. Which is why we're going to do this the right way and I will get us answers and we won't have to send him down the hall. Does he speak English?

CASE

The detainee speaks perfect English.

WENDELL

Lindsey?

PUMP

Mom?

LINDSEY

Damn, I'm nervous.

WENDELL

Don't do this.

PUMP

Are you leaving me again?

CASE

You are uniquely qualified.

LINDSEY

I feel so nervous.

PUMP

You're leaving us again.

WENDELL

You made a promise.

Uniquely qualified.

CASE

You're leaving us again.

PUMP

You made a promise.

WENDELL

Uniquely qualified.

CASE

*The three voices continue, overlapping,  
growing in intensity.*

*As LINDSEY enters the room we hear the  
slam of a hard metal door, reverberating,  
cascading as if sound echoing down a  
hallway.*

*The voices stop, all quiet.*

*Lights shift.*

**SCENE 11.**

*LINDSEY and DETAINEE.*

*LINDSEY moves to DETAINEE, who senses another close, grunts, squirms.*

*LINDSEY reaches under the black burlap and pulls the mouth gag, causing sputtering and coughing.*

*LINDSEY removes the black burlap and we see for the first time DETAINEE is...a young woman, clearly female, clearly American, early 20s.*

DETAINEE

Help me. Can you help me? Please. I wanna call my parents. You gotta help me. Please.

*Long beat.*

LINDSEY

You're going to tell me everything I want to know or I will have you destroyed.

*LINDSEY moves to CASE, bracing himself.*

LINDSEY

You're right. Perfect English. We start tomorrow.

*LINDSEY exits to true off, they all watch her go.*

*Blackout.*

**END ACT ONE.**

**ACT TWO. INTERROGATION.**

**SCENE 12.**

*LINDSEY and DETAINEE.*

*DETAINEE sits in a chair, her hands bound.*

*LINDSEY sits in the other chair, faces  
DETAINEE.*

*Near LINDSEY is the grocery bag.*

*This holds for a bit.*

LINDSEY

So! I'm ready to begin.

DETAINEE

Can I call my parents? So they know where I'm at?

LINDSEY

I know you're eager to learn where you are. Concerned about what's going to happen. I know you're distraught over confinement, not to mention lack of sleep. And you're still troubled by the swiftness of your capture. So let me say the obvious: nobody'd go through all the trouble if it wasn't important. Because of your involvement.

DETAINEE

Involvement in what? I ain't involved in anything.

LINDSEY

I assure you we're close to uncovering the rest of your group and stopping it. Before it goes any further.

DETAINEE

I don't know what group, or whatever it is you're talking about.

LINDSEY

You don't.

DETAINEE

No.

LINDSEY

Low-grade but deadly explosives triggered to detonate by remote activator.

DETAINEE

What’s that? I don’t even know what you’re saying.

LINDSEY

That’s attempt to use a weapon of mass destruction. That’s the death penalty.

DETAINEE

I didn’t blow up anything.

LINDSEY

Except. If you haven’t already figured it out. We’re skipping the whole court appearance thing. No charges. No trial. This is straight to sentence.

DETAINEE

Are you gonna let me call my parents?

LINDSEY

Arsenals of explosives, by the way, which enables us under secret law to hold you indefinitely.

DETAINEE

I want a lawyer. I’m a US citizen.

LINDSEY

You are.

DETAINEE

Yes.

LINDSEY

Prove it.

DETAINEE

I...I was born here.

LINDSEY

Here, where? This room?

DETAINEE

I’m a US citizen.

LINDSEY

Prove it. Yeah. All your protection is gone. Except me. I’m the last protection you get. Anyway, I’m ready to begin.

DETAINEE

Begin what?

LINDSEY

Questions.

DETAINEE

Great, ask whatever you want, there’s nothing for me to answer.

LINDSEY

There’s a lot I’d normally like to cover. Organizational structure, ideology, funding. But for now we’ll stick to the most important issue: telling me where the other bombs are located.

DETAINEE

You’re crazy. I don’t know what I’m doing here. I don’t have anything to do with any bombs.

LINDSEY

I’m not here to argue with you. I’m here to cooperate with you. So that you can tell me about the other bombs. So you can protect yourself.

DETAINEE

From what?

LINDSEY

From what happens if you don’t tell me. [Moving in] What went wrong at Oregon?

DETAINEE

Oregon? I’ve never been to Oregon. I swear to God, my whole life I’ve never been to Oregon.

LINDSEY

That’s not what I asked.

DETAINEE

I don’t know anything about Oregon.

LINDSEY

Certainly you're familiar with Oregon. It's a state. Capital's, uh...

DETAINEE

Salem.

LINDSEY

Okay! You do know something about Oregon.

DETAINEE

I'm not a criminal. I haven't done a crime. I wanna call my parents.

LINDSEY

Are they in Oregon?

DETAINEE

No.

LINDSEY

There, that's two things you know about Oregon. I'm going to start a list, I mean if you rattle off the state flower, I'll let you walk out of here.

DETAINEE

The rose.

*Beat.*

LINDSEY

You should know you're never getting out of here.

DETAINEE

Why not?

LINDSEY

Because the fact you're here means you're never leaving.

DETAINEE

Where am I?

LINDSEY

Your new home.

DETAINEE

What is this? Is this like the Gulag?

LINDSEY

How do you know about the Gulag? Who told you about that?

DETAINEE

Nobody.

LINDSEY

Somebody must have told you. That’s not a term I expected to hear from someone your age.

DETAINEE

School I guess.

LINDSEY

What did school-I-guess tell you about the Gulag?

DETAINEE

A jail. In Russia.

LINDSEY

It wasn’t a jail, it was a concentration camp. School tell you female prisoners at the Gulag were regular victims of mass rape? Guards would turn their backs while inmates arranged chairs, ten to a girl. Those who lived long enough had deformed babies in special cells next to science labs. All under the government flag, all government collusion. But the Gulag doesn’t exist anymore. In Russia.

DETAINEE

We don’t have that here.

LINDSEY

Here, where? This room? I don’t know, when you got detained there it meant something. Think about what it would mean now, for the ones who didn’t believe enough to blow themselves in the process, if they knew beforehand it wasn’t the same old United States. If they knew this is where they’d end up.

DETAINEE

I wanna call my parents.

LINDSEY

You know you’re lucky you got me. No boiling coffee through your nose, no shock every time you try and sit.

DETAINEE

That the Gulag, too?

LINDSEY

Nope. CIA. Afghanistan.

DETAINEE

Thought it was Russians in Afghanistan.

LINDSEY

Imagine that. Listen, you're overwhelmed with the realization of spending whatever's left of your life here so let's take your mind off it. How'd you like to learn something about secrets?

DETAINEE

If it lets me call my parents.

*LINDSEY takes from the grocery bag a deck of cards, separates four cards from the deck.*

LINDSEY

The two, three, four and five of hearts. I'm going to pick one of these four cards, like this. You ask me two, three, four, five, and to each I can only respond 'no.' Based on how I answer you try to figure out which card I'm holding.

DETAINEE

I don't get it.

LINDSEY

C'mon, Salem, Gulag, you know what's going on. See how good you are at secrets. Ask me: two, three, four, five.

DETAINEE

[Quick] Two-three-four-five.

LINDSEY

You want to call your parents? Ask me.

*Beat.*

DETAINEE

Two.

LINDSEY  
No.

DETAINEE  
Three.

LINDSEY  
No.

DETAINEE  
Why am I here?

LINDSEY  
Keep going.

DETAINEE  
Four.

LINDSEY  
No.

DETAINEE  
Five.

LINDSEY  
No. Now. Which card am I holding?

DETAINEE  
I have no idea.

LINDSEY  
Then you're not very good at secrets. Tell you what, let's switch. I'll ask, you can only say 'no.' And I have to guess which card you're holding.

DETAINEE  
This is, like, not making any sense.

LINDSEY  
Pick one card. Your secret.

*DETAINEE picks one card and palms it, separate from the other cards.*

LINDSEY  
Is it the two?

DETAINEE  
No.

LINDSEY  
The three.

DETAINEE  
No.

LINDSEY  
It’s three. You’re holding the three of hearts. Do you understand who I am now?  
What went wrong in Oregon?

*We hear a house alarm, blaring.*

*Lights shift.*

**SCENE 13.**

*LINDSEY, WENDELL and PUMP.*

*A house alarm is blaring.*

*LINDSEY crosses to WENDELL, who enters the scene startled, half-asleep.*

LINDSEY  
It’s me!

WENDELL  
What?

LINDSEY  
It’s me!

*The alarm stops.*

LINDSEY  
It’s just me.

WENDELL  
I see that.

LINDSEY  
I didn't think you'd set the alarm.

WENDELL  
What time is it?

LINDSEY  
Morning. Technically.

WENDELL  
I don't think I got it before...

*WENDELL's cell rings.*

WENDELL  
[Answering] Hello. Yes, hi, false alarm. Oh, umm...[what's our password?]...

LINDSEY  
NeverAgain.

WENDELL  
NeverAgain. Yeah. [Hangs up]

LINDSEY  
Sorry.

WENDELL  
Where've you been.

LINDSEY  
Out.

*Beat.*

WENDELL  
I tried calling.

LINDSEY  
I wasn't in a position to answer.

New job? WENDELL

Yes. LINDSEY

First day? WENDELL

*PUMP moves into the scene, groggy.*

What’s going on? PUMP

False alarm. WENDELL

Mom? PUMP

Yes, Mom’s home. WENDELL

Oh. PUMP

Hi. LINDSEY

Mom just got home. WENDELL

From where? PUMP

Working. LINDSEY

You’re just getting home? PUMP

Sorry I woke you. LINDSEY

PUMP

What time is it?

LINDSEY / WENDELL

Late / Early.

WENDELL

Mom got a new job.

PUMP

You quit college?

LINDSEY

Dad’s being funny.

PUMP

Are you cheating on Dad?

LINDSEY

Of course not.

WENDELL

Well, in a sense.

LINDSEY

Wendell. [To PUMP] It’s a new assignment.

*PUMP exits the scene.*

WENDELL

Some leftover yams, if you’re hungry. Unless, you know, if they took you out, first day.

LINDSEY

We stayed in.

WENDELL

Your car was here.

LINDSEY

I get a driver.

WENDELL

What else the job come with?

LINDSEY

Expectations.

WENDELL

Hope you're a fast learner.

LINDSEY

I learned the state capital of Oregon is Salem. I half-thought the press might be waiting.

WENDELL

Judge Bryant here, come quick, my wife's torturing again. Couldn't do that to Pump. Although, she doesn't have school tomorrow.

LINDSEY

I should have told you.

WENDELL

We don't have secrets in this house.

LINDSEY

We don't. In this house.

WENDELL

Pity my strict constructionism. What don't I know?

LINDSEY

A lot.

WENDELL

About him.

LINDSEY

I don't question your former...

WENDELL

Yes, because mine don't suddenly show up asking if I wouldn't mind obliterating the fourth amendment. Mine also don't make me renege on a promise.

LINDSEY

I'm feeling a little raw, so, what would you like.

WENDELL

How big the space between no secrets and this house.

LINDSEY

Depends.

WENDELL

On what.

LINDSEY

Whether you feel it's better to be right or better to be safe?

WENDELL

Ah, the great American hymn.

LINDSEY

You knew what you were getting into with me.

WENDELL

I knew I loved you and never wanted out of it.

LINDSEY

Maybe that's why I have secrets.

WENDELL

We torture the lawless, we become the lawless.

LINDSEY

That's nice, I'll put that on a condolence card to the parents of twelve children.

WENDELL

History won't know about you or Case. Pumps of the future will know one thing: whether we did or didn't torture.

LINDSEY

Too late.

WENDELL

You know what I mean. I'm starting to wonder if this is a little like getting back together with the band.

LINDSEY

You think it was fun for me over there?

WENDELL

I think when I found out you boarded that C-37 to come home I cleared my docket, twice, then cleaned the house twice, took two showers, shaved twice, all so that first embrace would be perfect. Little Pump and I at Dulles, waiting, and the woman who came off that plane from Afghanistan, she wasn't the same woman I married.

LINDSEY

Says the spouse of every service member. Thanks for understanding.

WENDELL

This is why you quit!

LINDSEY

Look at what's happening!

WENDELL

I am. And I don't want to almost lose you again.

LINDSEY

I don't want that either.

WENDELL

Then tell them you're getting answers. Tell them torture won't work.

LINDSEY

Sometimes it does.

WENDELL

I know you don't mean that. It might be true but I know you don't mean it. You can be married to someone and feel hopelessly lost, all the days and nights beside them and feel terribly removed, if not for the purity of the beginning. Don't do this.

LINDSEY

...

WENDELL

Is he talking?

LINDSEY

Will it just be our secret?

*PUMP back into the scene.*

WENDELL

Guess you’ll be working nights, then.

PUMP

[To WENDELL] Can I have a ride?

LINDSEY

For what?

PUMP

Can I have a ride, Dad?

WENDELL

Where to, honey?

PUMP

Perkins.

LINDSEY

You need to go to Perkins now.

PUMP

I’m organizing a benefit for the twelve families.

WENDELL

She’s organizing a concert.

PUMP

It’s gonna be the biggest thing ever. Like all the kids out of school. I’m getting anyone and everyone involved. So I need a ride.

LINDSEY

Now.

PUMP

Yeah, now.

LINDSEY

She can’t.

WENDELL

Great.

PUMP

If I strolled in at this hour you'd go berserk. What, is there a bomb now at Perkins?

LINDSEY

That's not funny.

PUMP

None of this is funny. That's why I'm doing this. We can't just sit at home and be intimidated. The world is crazy, we have to do something.

LINDSEY

Pump, listen to me, it's dangerous to be loud.

PUMP

All music is loud.

LINDSEY

I can't explain.

PUMP

I wish you were like normal Moms.

LINDSEY

Me being gone, like before, that's not happening again.

PUMP

[To WENDELL] So can I have a ride?

LINDSEY

Pump.

PUMP

Don't worry about it, *Dad's here*.

LINDSEY

You can't go.

PUMP

Don't worry about it, *Dad's here*.

*PUMP moves to off.*

WENDELL

Well.

*WENDELL goes to off.*

*Lights shift.*

**SCENE 14.**

*LINDSEY and CASE.*

LINDSEY

You wonder how we manage.

Absorbing the hours of dark dungeons, taking the shape of whatever horror of history we use to extract truth.

Then going home.

To hello hugs, embracing smiles, the reason you're doing it in the first place.

And you can't tell them.

CASE

Look at this.

LINDSEY

How do we keep the two apart?

CASE

Hey, look at this.

LINDSEY

Or worse: what happens when they destroy each other?

*CASE holds a sheet, a map.*

CASE

New threats coming in. Imminent detonations.

LINDSEY

All these schools.

CASE

They must know we have her.

LINDSEY

They who? Meet me halfway, Case.

CASE

We don't know.

LINDSEY

[Looking at him] You sure.

CASE

Lindsey, the masters are pushing for down the hall.

LINDSEY

That's not an answer.

CASE

It's what I'm authorized to give.

LINDSEY

Based on some secret FISA court.

CASE

Correct.

LINDSEY

Well, I don't see any secret FISA court here.

CASE

Let's assume there's bombs in just a couple schools. Let's assume they blow, even in empty buildings. You think parents would ever send their kids back? We'd have an entire education system on hold for who knows how long. Before the next bomb blows, we have to get something. The masters are pushing for down the hall.

LINDSEY

They're down the hall, aren't they.

CASE

Ready and waiting.

LINDSEY

And you're fine with it.

CASE

We should both be fine with it. You know what's in that room? A narcotic. People like us? We're addicted to it.

LINDSEY

Why I tried to bail on my wedding day. Wendell knew. He knew I'd start off appalled by it, then trained for it, then good at it, then needing it. Now look at us. Secret laws to allow for sudden disappearances, unexplained absences, missing family members. It's Chile. It's Jordan.

CASE

Actually, in Jordan once individual treatment doesn't work the relatives are tortured as well. We're not anything close to that.

LINDSEY

Unless it could stop the next bomb.

CASE

They are waiting down the hall.

PUMP

I got used to you being gone.

LINDSEY

I never got used to it.

PUMP

I got used to you not around.

CASE

They are waiting down the hall.

LINDSEY

[Taking the sheet from CASE] I think she knows why.

CASE

They are waiting down the hall.

LINDSEY

I think she knows why, which might get us where.

DETAINEE

[Overlapping] I wanna call my parents. Please.

LINDSEY

Tell the masters I know what it sounds like when a girl doesn't like her mother. That's why you brought me here, isn't it?

*Lights shift.*

**SCENE 15.**

*LINDSEY and DETAINEE.*

DETAINEE

Please, I wanna call my parents. Can I call my parents now? Lady. Hey, lady. I gotta let 'em know what's happened, okay? Tell them where I'm at.

LINDSEY

Give me the number.

DETAINEE

What?

LINDSEY

I'll call. It's what, some phantom number, inbound only, leave a message if captured, sets off the next wave of attacks. Give me the number. I'll tell your people I have you and you're never leaving and we're going to start cutting off fingers and toes until you talk.

DETAINEE

You are so not even close to right.

LINDSEY

[Singing] *A wise old owl lived in an oak, the more he saw the less he spoke.*

DETAINEE

Who the hell are you?

LINDSEY

The only one trying to protect you.

DETAINEE

When can I get out of here?

LINDSEY

[Singing] *You're never leaving this place.* [Spoken] This is it.

DETAINEE

This ain't it.

LINDSEY

It's because you're here that this is it.

DETAINEE

You can't hold me here like this.

LINDSEY

Darkness, blasts of noise, no sleep, so disorienting.

DETAINEE

I want a lawyer.

LINDSEY

You're lucky you got air conditioning. We have to take a different approach.

DETAINEE

Different than keeping me here.

LINDSEY

No time for the long, slow dig.

DETAINEE

You are not normal.

LINDSEY

Normal's not going to get you to tell me where the other bombs are located.

DETAINEE

Nothing will get me to tell you, lady, because I don't know.

LINDSEY

You do know. Which is why I'm taking another approach.

DETAINEE

I'm done playing cards. I'm done with your freak-show games.

LINDSEY

I'm trying to help you. You don't have much time.

DETAINEE

Until what?

LINDSEY

Until I can't help you anymore.

DETAINEE

Fine, bring in the next freak.

LINDSEY

The approach I propose is something I've never done before.

DETAINEE

Lady, how many times do I have to say it? I'm not involved with anything. It's that simple.

LINDSEY

You're reeling, you're cracking, I can tell.

DETAINEE

You're crazy, you're brain is cracked!

LINDSEY

The approach is that we both ask questions.

DETAINEE

Great, when can I get out of here?

LINDSEY

With one rule: we each have to answer the other's questions by telling only the truth.

DETAINEE

I can't tell you something about what it is that I'm not--

LINDSEY

KNOCK IT OFF. You know what? Fine. I don't care. The men down the hall, the ones ready to torture, they can have you.

DETAINEE

Yeah, whatever, torture.

LINDSEY

I have a daughter. I'm not taking any chances. They can have you.

DETAINEE

You're lying. There's no torture.

LINDSEY

We'll get the answers that way. You'll give the answers that way.

DETAINEE

What, you're trying to scare me? You're trying to intimidate me? Grab me, chain me, bag over my head, rods in my legs, all these people I can't see shoving pills down my throat and slapping and kicking whenever I put my head down? Just to say whatever it is you want to hear?

LINDSEY

Actually, that's taking it easy.

DETAINEE

This whole thing is sick.

LINDSEY

[Showing the map] No, *this* is sick. My guess is your people question whether your absence isn't because you walked on your own. They figure you got identified somehow, you've been on a list, you called or communicated from an unsecure, trackable source, and you got apprehended. But because of the viciousness and atrocity of your attacks, it's not normal arrest. Without seeing it on the news your people recognize with grim awareness they're playing against a new set of rules. Ultimately they panic, play the only card they have.

DETAINEE

Who are you.

LINDSEY

We starting?

DETAINEE

Starting what.

LINDSEY

Truth.

Who are you.

DETAINEE

Lindsey. Lindsey Bryant.

LINDSEY

I mean what’s your thing.

DETAINEE

Now? I’m a college professor.

LINDSEY

College professor.

DETAINEE

It’s not that bad. I mean some kids are real pain in the ass, but it beats consulting.

LINDSEY

Why are you here.

DETAINEE

I was asked.

LINDSEY

By who.

DETAINEE

The only man in the history of intelligence who overpromises and then over-delivers.

LINDSEY

You were something else before.

DETAINEE

Right.

LINDSEY

Before college.

DETAINEE

Yes.

LINDSEY



LINDSEY

You're in the room.

DETAINEE

There another room?

LINDSEY

Very good.

DETAINEE

This ain't the only room.

LINDSEY

No.

DETAINEE

How many more are there?

LINDSEY

One. They're ready to move you down the hall to that room.

DETAINEE

Who.

LINDSEY

The people your friends are waging a war against. The authority. The people who asked me to come back. They're down the hall, right now, waiting for you. I'm the only one protecting you from going there. If you don't tell me what I want to know, they will take you down the hall to that other room.

DETAINEE

You're serious.

LINDSEY

Because of my daughter, I'm serious. My turn. I'm assuming you're not a parent.

DETAINEE

So?

LINDSEY

I'm here to tell you life gets five times more complicated with kids, but six times better. Did you ever want to have kids?

DETAINEE

Doesn't matter.

LINDSEY

Would you?

DETAINEE

Never thought about it.

LINDSEY

Doesn't matter. You'll never have kids since you're never leaving.

DETAINEE

You keep saying that, why you do keep saying that?

LINDSEY

It's a cauldron of emotions you never thought could be inside you. The way kids shape your life, your momentum, drag it to their being. You ever get dragged along by something that became bigger and wilder the more it grew, making you feel helpless?

DETAINEE

Maybe.

LINDSEY

Like an active bystander.

DETAINEE

Maybe.

LINDSEY

I lost friends at the Pentagon, 9/11. It wasn't a couple months later two guys at Justice wrote a little letter providing the legal authorization to conduct torture. Two guys. They were asked. So it's now legal, still, we even have a secret court, still. And that other guy, the overpromiser? Commanded our Afghan centers. We processed over ten thousand. I worked the room. And down the hall. Still. So let me ask you: ever be part of something, watch something you felt you maybe should have tried to stop?

DETAINEE

Say you've got a daughter.



LINDSEY

Thankfully. Say I did call home, wherever home is, and I spoke to your mother.  
How'd she describe you?

DETAINEE

Missing. Does your daughter like you?

LINDSEY

I was gone a long time and when I finally came home, she wasn't interested.

DETAINEE

You regret it.

LINDSEY

Every day.

DETAINEE

Afghanistan.

LINDSEY

Wasn't the first place I stationed.

DETAINEE

Where else.

LINDSEY

The rainforest. Honing my sense to detect when lies are told. It works on everyone, every single person, except two people.

DETAINEE

Your daughter.

LINDSEY

That's one.

DETAINEE

Who's the other?

LINDSEY

Myself. The detainees were vicious killers. All men. I never cared about them. I was protecting me and mine. Until one day, they brought me an Afghani girl, tied to one of the local tribes. I could tell she wasn't a threat, she was just radicalized by fellowship. She wasn't what we were there for. I pushed for her release. She can't be released, the men said, at this point her people will think we've loaded her with some kind of beacon or listening device. But I got her released. The picture that was uploaded several days later to the jihadist website, somehow I could still hear her scream. They poured gasoline down her throat and lit a match. That's when I quit. That's when I said I'm not going to lie to myself anymore. We think we're not like that. But here you are.

DETAINEE

So if I don't tell you...but this is...

LINDSEY

A different country. And you're never leaving. Unless it's to go down the hall. Where it will be anything but taking it easy.

DETAINEE

I didn't do any bombs.

LINDSEY

If I stopped lying to myself, you know what I'd discover? I wanted to send those men down the hall. But I don't want to send you down the hall.

*LINDSEY again shows the sheet.*

DETAINEE

Alright. Wait.

LINDSEY

Where are the footballs?

DETAINEE

It's not that simple.

LINDSEY

Where are they?

DETAINEE

Just...just...I need you to give me something first.

LINDSEY

I'm listening.

DETAINEE

I'd like to call my mother.

*Lights shift.*

**SCENE 16.**

*ALL.*

*WENDELL enters the playing area.*

*During the following exchange, the  
DETAINEE stumbles from the room, as if  
being shoved, all the way to off.*

WENDELL

Hey.

LINDSEY

Sorry. Didn't mean to wake you.

WENDELL

No, I've been up. I've been thinking.

LINDSEY

I want to look in on Pump. She sleeping? She here?

WENDELL

You don't have a man in custody, do you. It's a woman.

*Stopping her.*

LINDSEY

Look, it's late, early.

WENDELL

That's why they brought you in. Isn't it. It has nothing to do with over there. It has to do with who they've got here.

LINDSEY

...

WENDELL

Which means maybe what you do now doesn't matter. Maybe all they wanted was just to get you in the room. Because of who you are now, not where you've been then. A Mom from the suburbs, a college professor, educated, with a daughter in high school. If she's in the room, if she's involved, then maybe everyone will feel it's okay to do what they're going to do next.

*This sets in.*

LINDSEY

You ever deal with FISA? The secret court?

WENDELL

What did Case tell you? Did he say I was up for it? That I might get nominated?

LINDSEY

You never told me that.

WENDELL

It was just talk, I mean...what, Case bargained your involvement with that?

LINDSEY

[Realizing] It was about all of us.

*LINDSEY crosses back to the room.*

*She sees it now empty.*

*CASE appears, holding the black burlap.*

LINDSEY

My old war buddy.

CASE

I'm sorry, Lindsey. We had to make sure.

LINDSEY

You used me.

CASE

Did I.

LINDSEY

You used my family.

CASE

When my kid ever gets around to talking to me again at least she'll be alive to do it.

LINDSEY

You even going to tell the masters I got it first?

CASE

You told her your name. And you made up that story. About the Afghan girl.

LINDSEY

Did I.

*CASE goes to off.*

LINDSEY

I left before I could hear anything.

It's an ugly business.

And I made a promise.

*WENDELL and PUMP now at a kitchen table. Still late, early. They're playing cards.*

WENDELL

Got any fours?

PUMP

You just asked that.

WENDELL

Right. Got any fives?

PUMP

Go fish.

WENDELL

C'mon, you gotta have some fives.

PUMP

Go fish, padre.

WENDELL

How can you not have any fives?

PUMP

The fish are sitting right there.

LINDSEY

Hey...[stopping the action]...I'm home.

*Long beat.*

WENDELL

What about the new job?

*Beat.*

LINDSEY

It's over. You were...

*Beat.*

WENDELL

Yeah.

LINDSEY

Back to school. [To PUMP] You too, soon, I bet.

*It hangs there.*

WENDELL

Well...in the meantime...want us to deal you in? C'mon Pump, let's make a little room for Mom at our brand new kitchen table. Tell her.

PUMP

We're meeting here, tomorrow, for the concert. Everyone's coming. Perkins was getting lame anyway.

WENDELL

She’s got some great bands lined up.

PUMP

It’s gonna be huge.

WENDELL

[Dealing] But until our kitchen is invaded by the youth of America prepare yourself for another scintillating family edition of Go Fish. [To PUMP] No wild and [To LINDSEY] no reading minds.

LINDSEY

[To PUMP] Cheryl?

*This stops the table. Nobody breathes.*

LINDSEY

I’d like to come. To your concert.

PUMP

Yeah. Sure.

*Lights shift.*

**SCENE 17.**

*LINDSEY.*

*We see the faint outline of ‘the room’ at  
center stage.*

LINDSEY

My name is Lindsey Bryant.

I used to work in revenge.

And I learned that truth is never truthful.

In fact, the truth is like torture.

It hurts.

Even long after you’ve told it.

*Blackout.*

**END OF PLAY.**