

Jahar the Great

A Dzhokhar Tsarnaev Mystery Drama

MATTI PAASIO



Merde à Dieu · Helsinki

to MC Joy

CHARACTERS

BOZEMAN

A man in his early thirties. He is a mature, Irish American version of the surviving Boston Marathon bomber. He wears a worn-out leather jacket with a white t-shirt underneath. A death's head adorns the front of the shirt, with BORN TO DIE printed above in dripping, red letters. His jeans are black. His hair is in a pompadour about to collapse.

ZUBEIDAT

A woman in her fifties, she is mother to Dzhokhar and Tamerlan Tsarnaev (among others).

CASTING DIRECTOR

VLADIMIR PUTIN

RAMZAN KADYROV

SETTING

A second hand store in the Boston area.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

An exclamation point at the end of a sentence indicates emphasis. It does not mean that the actor has to shout.

. . .

The Brothers

Upstage, facing the audience, there are four fitting rooms. There is a black curtain in each doorway. The curtains are closed. The cubicle farthest to the left—seen from the actor’s point of view—is occupied. The others appear vacant.

BOZEMAN is standing on the beam connecting the fitting rooms, facing left. He acts like a crab possessed by doubts. He takes an unsteady step backwards; then he returns to his previous position. Repeat while holding on to an imaginary steering wheel. Repeat while imitating a reversing truck.

BOZEMAN

Beep-beep-beep—stuck! Beep-beep-beep—stuck! Ho-ho-ho—Ho Lee Fuck! Pedal to the metal! Floor it, pussy! Thanks for the tip, punk! Although I don’t remember asking for it, brother—I am flooring it as we speak, but the wheels, those bastards won’t take! They are spinning in place, backwards! Like my thoughts. Like WHERE ARE YOU?

[He sits down on the doorframe and inspects the sole of his shoe.]

I must have hit something.

[He inspects the other shoe.]

Negative for dog shit. See? I didn't step in it.

[He rises.]

Well, well, well, well. We've got to get out of this place. The last thing we ever do: break on through. He ain't heavy, he's my brother.

[He slaps his forehead.]

Is my mind trying to tell me something, rushing these snippets of song through me? And still, they aren't the one. The one that we need, the song to make us free, it keeps slipping away. Just out of grasp, it's a bee. Oh, no! The song of life, it's a—

[He slaps his cheek. He blows the imaginary insect, like a kiss, at the AUDIENCE.]

No me molestes mosquito!

["The Mosquito," a song by The Doors is played from the beginning. BOZEMAN walks to the left end of the doorframe. He tries to move backwards again, half-dancing, half walking. He is balancing in the middle of the beam. The music fades out.]

We've made the full circle, like the band there. The doors are open in front of us, closed behind. We can't go back. The past is gone, can't be recovered. The present, the eternal now, it was never there, is a fad—opium for the masses. And the future uncertain, the end is creeping near. Hey! Why don't we just, why don't we STOP? Rather than plunge headfirst into the rabbit hole—

[Abruptly, he turns to stage right.]

Who goes there?

[Raising his hands]

Don't shoot! I'm a U.S. citizen! I might look like an Arab to you, but screw you, that's just your Islamophobia speaking! That's your Crusader genes filling your brain with p & p!

[He lowers his hands.]

That's pee and poop, folks, is what it is. I received it—the paper, the bar code, the tattoo of citizenship—in a solemn ceremony 11 years to the day after 9/11. And my brother went ballistic. He never got his, no matter how he tried. Some say he was ready to kill for it, and did.

[He grabs the wheel again, determined now. He bounces in place, preparing for action.]

We can't stop! Sorry, I forgot! It was the cops. They told me. They are telling me to give it up, turn myself in. They say it's over, haven't heard of Lenny Kravitz, I suppose. But they distracted me for a sec there. They are shooting at me, at us. My brother, he's underneath the car.

[He yells at the floor.]

Tammy, what are you doing there? Get out! Get in! Shit, I'm running you over as we speak!

[He jumps to the floor. He runs to the left and grabs the wheel again. He stops, as if remembering something. He stretches the waist of his jeans, addressing his ass crack.]

Yo, no napping in there! Hey, retard, you hear? It's time to get real! Tammy, get out and get in!

[He lets go of his trousers and turns to the wheel again. Shoulders slumped, he proceeds backward. He mimes lighting some-

thing with a Zippo, then throwing it over his shoulder like a stick of dynamite. This is a pipe bomb, as we shall see. He throws four pipe bombs in all.]

I can't hear you. There's an all-American gunfight going on here. OK Corral was some BB gun kid shit compared to this shit. The noise is just out of sight! Guns go whack-whack-whack-whack; pipe-bombs, bam-bam-bam; the old pressure cooker, boom. It's a piece of postmodern punk rock—and you can put your band together, too! Just follow the instructions. Hey, we did. Go to *Inspire*, the al Qaeda magazine. Just fucking google it, all right? It's online, where it should be. You're hurting my brother. I know. I hear you—and yet, I can't. The noise is just out of this world! Something has got to give. Sorry bro, I have to put you on hold for a moment.

[He uses an imaginary remote control on his imaginary brother. He turns to the AUDIENCE.]

“And I can still hear her complain.” Well, I've got some explaining to do. Not complaining, no: that's a trait coming from my mother's side. My brother Tammy, underneath, is a male version of our mother. He's Zubeidat 2.0 on steroids. Anyway, what I was saying. First, you see, it's a hell of a job, driving and throwing pipe bombs at the same time, not to mention trying not to crush your brother under the wheels of this very nice automobile. A Mercedes SUV, the latest model, I think. The Korean kid that drove it—brother, did he fly! Was he Japanese? And who gives a fuck? What's bugging me is, where did he get a car like this? He couldn't have been much older than us. Look like a child, the Chink did. Is it fair? Of course not—

America first! I told you, we should've shot him. Too late now! Well, bygones. But I tell you this, I tell you this. I'm sorry. Yelling at you, insulting you, it was my bad. It was... uncalled for. You're not a retard after all. Are you? And yet, I do have to say, this isn't the time or the place to check the oil. The Korean kid was driving the car straight out of the dealer's. Maybe he was taking it for a test drive, for all we know! The wax on it hadn't worn off yet! The car is in a pristine condition!

[He lets out a heavy sigh.]

I'm doing it again, I know. And they're trying to kill us—you, me, everybody—as we speak. Talk later, all right? Motherfucker, get real and get in!

[He turns reflective.]

How silly of me, to act like that. Yelling at your brother, and your older brother at that, that's haram. That is forbidden. But I had quite a handful back there. The situation was quite stressful, to be honest with you. I didn't get it then, but I do now. I do. This shit isn't about me. It never is. I'm not in charge—you are. You are looking after me even there, under the car. You're arranging a getaway for both of us.

[He grabs his jaw.]

When they caught me—shot me and then caught me—they shot me in the mouth! Isn't that proof that their only intention was to silence me? Too bad for them, the Crusaders, that is, I could still talk. I could speak my mind, though no one would listen. Hey, that's life! That's their standard operating procedure, the invader MO: kill, kill, kill! Shoot first, and we'll ask no questions later! Promise! Get some. So, they caught up with me in that dry-docked boat in Watertown. That's where I developed a halo over

my head. I'm not kidding! The SWAT teams, there must have been hundreds of them—cops in full combat gear: flak jackets, helmets, shields, the works, all dressed in black like goddamn Daesh—and they're saying I'm extreme! They're saying I'm surrounded. "Come forward with your hands raised," they say, and everyone and their mother repeats. "Come forward—" How am I supposed to do that? My hands in the air? The stern is eight fucking feet from the ground! Gone to break my fucking neck! Meanwhile, everyone and their grandma has their rifle trained on me—trigger-happy Dirty Harry wannabes all around—one wrong move, and it's "Grozny, do you read? I'm coming home, I'm dead!"

[Hesitantly, he raises his hands.]

I'm thinking this. Thinking out loud? Hell, maybe, even, when it seizes me. An ice-cold rush in my gut, like Death itself grabbing me—

[In sotto voce]

They are going to kill me. Please help me. Please! I don't wanna die!

[Back to normal]

That's when I see the spots.

[Touching his forehead with his fingertips in several places]

Little red dots, like I had the measles. They are everywhere! Well, not everywhere: they gather on my forehead. They weave a beautiful band around my head. And I'm thinking, this is the crown of thorns for the digital age! Have you seen the pictures? You should, they are awesome! So then and there, I declare myself the patron saint of all reformed Communists—active ones, too! And I black out. Did I fall overboard? Break my neck? Don't

know, cant' remember. Maybe I'm dead and in Limbo for all I know.

[He spreads his hands.]

Is that any way for a martyr to behave? Leaving me holding nothing but my dick—a figure of speech, that is. I wouldn't expose myself in the middle of a gunfight. I'm holding the gear stick, and the Seal Team fucking Six is huffing and puffing outside the door! Tammy! You chickenshit, you ducked in a gunfight! You tried to crawl underground—

[He addresses the doll again.]

For your information, they poured asphalt into your rabbit hole. I know. It's a move straight from the Crusader Dirty Tricks Manual. Their hypocrisy, their cunning know absolutely no bounds. Anyway, the getaway is blocked. They will get you. I will get you!

[He makes a U-turn and stops.]

You can't erase the past. You can't go back. The only way is forward.

[He releases the clutch.]

So I floored it.

[He runs over the doll, saluting it.]

Bye, bitch! And I scalp him in the process.

[He drags the doll forward in his feet, until he collides with something. He leaves the doll, moves to downstage center.]

I prepared that speech for an audition. They held it for that Mark Wahlberg movie. The one about the Boston Marathon bombings, the Tsarnaev Brothers, you know? I would've LOVED to be able to play Jahar the White Hat,

the younger brother. He is such a pup! Have you seen him on the cover of *Rolling Stone*? Wow. Jahar, or Dzhokhar, as he was known among his people, was the pet of the entire extended family. They were immigrants. I know what you're thinking—no, they didn't cross from Mexico. They hailed from Chechnya, Dagestan, Russia. They lived all over the place. They still do. They went back, after the episode. So, in order to send all those Salvadoran gangbangers running, all you need is a terrorist plot. And they will go. It's like flushing the toilet, easy.

[A toilet is flushed. BOZEMAN tries to suppress a smile.]

I always wanted to be a movie star. But I found out, the business is corrupt. It's rotten to the core. Hollywood is this country compressed into a single diamond covered in blood. The casting director, guess what she said?

[Enter CASTING DIRECTOR from the toilet stall furthest to the left. She is clutching a clipboard. She wears glasses and has a pen in her mouth.]

The Boston Strangler, I call her.

[CASTING DIRECTOR stops. She looks at BOZEMAN. She looks at her notes. She takes the pen from her mouth.]

CASTING DIRECTOR

And you are?

BOZEMAN

Anthony Shadid.

CASTING DIRECTOR

Who?

BOZEMAN

[*To the AUDIENCE*]

Listen to her! Like I'm a piece of shit she stepped into out in the street!

CASTING DIRECTOR

What was that?

BOZEMAN

Huh?

CASTING DIRECTOR

Your name again? And you're reading for—?

BOZEMAN

Dzhokhar Tsarnaev.

[CASTING DIRECTOR *stares at BOZEMAN—first in surprise, then in contempt and disbelief.*]

CASTING DIRECTOR

There's something wrong with my hearing today. There must be. If you could please repeat?

BOZEMAN

She wouldn't even let me read! She goes—

CASTING DIRECTOR

Have you taken a look in the mirror lately?

BOZEMAN

No.

CASTING DIRECTOR

Well, you should.

BOZEMAN

“You don’t even look the part! You’re white! You’re too old!” Honest to God, what she says. Just blurts it out like that. Bitch! If that’s not racism, I don’t know what is!

CASTING DIRECTOR

There’s a lot of money involved here.

BOZEMAN

Sure. Of course there is.

CASTING DIRECTOR

People have their careers on the line.

BOZEMAN

Like, like the finish line?

CASTING DIRECTOR

I beg your pardon?

BOZEMAN

The Marathon? The Boston Marathon? The finish line on Boylston Street? Does it ring any bells—alarm bells?

CASTING DIRECTOR

All right. I'm going to ask you to leave now. Else, I'm calling security. Next!

[*Exit* CASTING DIRECTOR. BOZEMAN *is yelling after her.*]

BOZEMAN

Hey, where's your imagination? Where's your creativity? And who are you—some office rat from the PR department? You can keep your movie! That's what I said, and I walked out. Then and there, I just disappeared. The streets of Babylon swallowed me. I became a ghost, nobody. You shouldn't fuck with depressed people! They'll get stuck in the wheels. Anyway, I haven't seen the flick, can't remember its name—it's dead to me now. The whole thing makes me sick to my stomach. But it's a pity for the text. That's a good piece, I think. It was written by someone who knew his subject through and through—if you catch my drift. He was named after a Marlowe character. "Kit" Marlowe, that is, not Philip, fuck Philip. He stopped writing, said there were no real results to show for all the sweat, the hours he'd put in. He'd rather just box, he said. But he was a mediocrity at that, too, at the very best. His ego was just too fragile. So that was that. It was the end, suicide mission calling. After all is said and done, there isn't such a difference to him, living or dead. His brother is up for the needle at maximum security. I'm not so sure they have the balls to do it, put him down. That's what he deserves, a rabid dog. Well, I guess we'll see. That's all, folks. It's the end of the loony tunes. Instead of the Broth-

ers, what you get is the Black Rose and the Burning Bus. Some Irish-Ukrainian shit I believe. Say bye to Masha Richards. She wrote the speech. Masha did. Tamerlan who? I've never heard of that bitch! All right, on three: one—

[BOZEMAN opens the curtain to the first fitting room to the right. The room is empty. Lights go out. News footage from the Boston Marathon bombing is shown, or heard. The footage fades out after a while. BOZEMAN speaks in the dark.]

The world is gone. The reign of death and destruction has run its course. There is nothing left. Well, the wind, of course, sure, there is that. The north wind, can hear it howl? This is the Soviet Union, after all. To quote a war correspondent reporting from Afghanistan: it's "a vast mud Chernobyl..."¹ And one more thing: there is a mother carrying her baby through this black cloud.

[Lights come up, revealing a scene reminiscent of what BOZEMAN has just described. ZUBEIDAT is carrying a bundle. She is exhausted and determined at the same time. She has to keep going.]

There she goes, like the Trans-Siberian Railway. And I'm not talking about sexual minorities here. She hurries across the steppe like a slow train a-coming! Slow train to China—Mom,

¹ John Lee Anderson, *The Lion's Grave*, p. 208

hey, lose the scarf! You don't wanna advertise your faith down there!

[ZUBEIDAT stops. *Her eyes are burning with fury.*]

Where you going they're not too crazy about the human rights. Those of the Muslim minority, especially. You could say—

ZUBEIDAT

Dzhokhar?

BOZEMAN

They do not exist. Hi, Mom.

ZUBEIDAT

Where have you been, son?

BOZEMAN

You know.

ZUBEIDAT

I've been looking everywhere!

BOZEMAN

Here and there. Everywhere.

ZUBEIDAT

[*Approaching*]

Let me have a look at you, my son!

[BOZEMAN *lifts up his hand.* ZUBEIDAT *stops on her tracks.* BOZEMAN *lowers his hand.*]

BOZEMAN

Looking good, Mom, you're looking great. Great work, what you've been doing. Keep it up. Just keep going. Please, just—

ZUBEIDAT

[*To the AUDIENCE*]

My sons—Tamerlan and Dzhokhar—

BOZEMAN

No!

ZUBEIDAT

They didn't do it!

BOZEMAN

Mom, please.

[*ZUBEIDAT lifts up her baby. It's the same doll that was used earlier.*]

ZUBEIDAT

This is my Tamerlan.

BOZEMAN

Oh Jesus.

ZUBEIDAT

He look like a criminal to you?

BOZEMAN

We did do it! We did!

[The baby starts to cry. ZUBEIDAT takes him to her bosom.]

ZUBEIDAT

[Angry—at BOZEMAN and the AUDIENCE, both]

See what you did!

[In frustration, BOZEMAN spreads his arms.]

See? My son is a patsy!

BOZEMAN

Like Lee Harvey Oswald.

ZUBEIDAT

[Sulking]

I don't know what you're talking about.

BOZEMAN

His words, his! Oswald's—

ZUBEIDAT

My younger son, he's a pansy, I'm afraid! Finish your studies, is what I say. Quit fooling around! Be a man, for Chrissake, for a change!

BOZEMAN

You can't see it. Can you? Your favorite—

ZUBEIDAT

Who's that?

BOZEMAN

Tammy, your favorite, was a total and absolute fuck-up, nothing else!

ZUBEIDAT

You shut your filthy mouth, sonny!

[The crying gets more desperate.]

BOZEMAN

See what I mean? There's my big brother! There goes Tamerlan the Great!

[ZUBEIDAT turns around, heading in the direction from which she came. She goes as far as she can, then turns back. She picks another direction, seemingly at random, and repeats the process.]

A cry-baby, here he comes! He needs to be comforted again. And she will do it. If she has to cross the oceans, she will, without a second thought. Without the first one, either—she doesn't think at all. The action stems from her reptile brain.

ZUBEIDAT

You watch that language!

BOZEMAN

She has turned her back on me for speaking my mind.

ZUBEIDAT

It was you who turned your back on us!

BOZEMAN

I did not!

ZUBEIDAT

Did, too! And shame on you! You never ever abandon your own blood, Jahar! Or your country! You never do that!

BOZEMAN

Oh, yeah, sorry. I was spreading lies. That was fake news, folks! She abandoned me—and not because I spoke my mind. That was bad enough in itself, but it wasn't the most terrible, the most heinous crime I committed, not even close. She abandoned me for allegedly abandoning my brother. Who abandoned me first, but I think I made myself clear on that earlier. No more of that. Repeat myself? I prefer not.

ZUBEIDAT

You are a rat and a cockroach! My own son!

[ZUBEIDAT *starts weeping while still walking.*]

BOZEMAN

[*To the AUDIENCE*]

I cannot believe this. Take a look at her now! She's the Wandering Jew Mother! She's the embodiment of our people—she's the Chechen folk personified! She isn't Chechen, but who cares now? Stalin deported us across

Asia in 1944, at the end of World War II, just because he could. But she didn't go. Her parents stayed where they were. See, that's the first thing everyone gets wrong about us. We're Chechens, they say. Wrong. We're not. Our mother, she's Avar. And we're from Kyrgyzstan! Or Dagestan—or—

[ZUBEIDAT *has stopped.*]

You've got something to say? Huh? No? I didn't think so! Off you go, then! Keep pushing that treadmill! Shoo, move, scram!

[*Patiently, ZUBEIDAT sets on her journey again.*]

I'm so sick of that sorry face! Mom, you should take up modeling! You could be the poster girl for self-pity! You look like a camel, did you know that? The Quran says that man's wife is his camel. Only Chechens take it literally. They don't know what a metaphor is. We take the Quran literally, and Dad took it beyond that: he married a camel! Jeez, look! There she goes, hobbling from one semi-autonomous republic to the next. Asia Minor: is that a place? "No, son, that's nowhere. That is Turkey. We hail from North Caucasus." Well, whatever. Anyway, Mom could write an immigrant's guide to the area. One can't help but admire her, though. Her strength, her resilience—too bad we didn't inherit any of it. Well, Bubba was determined to fail. I have to give Tam that, at least.

ZUBEIDAT

He was an FBI agent!

BOZEMAN

Right.

ZUBEIDAT

I was one too!

BOZEMAN

Well, that is something new, to say the least. The president has a phrase—what was it?

ZUBEIDAT

Which one?

BOZEMAN

“Whack them in the outhouse?”

ZUBEIDAT

Which country—?

BOZEMAN

No. That’s not it.

ZUBEIDAT

That’s Putin!

[*She spits.*]

BOZEMAN

Huh?

ZUBEIDAT

Talking about that murderer, you were! Why didn't you say so? Why do have to speak in riddles? Have they brainwashed you, too?

BOZEMAN

Riddles?

ZUBEIDAT

That's right.

BOZEMAN

I'm speaking in riddles?

ZUBEIDAT

You called him a president!

[She spits again.]

BOZEMAN

Aw, come on, Ma! He's no worse than his American counter—

ZUBEIDAT

That's no president!

BOZEMAN

Well, I agree, but —

ZUBEIDAT

That's a terrorist, is what he is!

BOZEMAN

Which one? Vladimir Vladimorovich?

[She spits yet again.]

ZUBEIDAT

Don't you speak his name when I'm around! Don't you speak it, period! It's not safe!

BOZEMAN

The sitting—

ZUBEIDAT

In Moscow, in Grozny, you'll die for it.

BOZEMAN

—duck? No.

ZUBEIDAT

The caliph of Grozny, the presidential pit bull—

BOZEMAN

The Sitting Bull in the White House—

ZUBEIDAT

The one and only Ramzan Kadyrov!

BOZEMAN

I learned a word today.

ZUBEIDAT

He will get us all in the end! He will bury us all. Can't you hear him knocking?

BOZEMAN

Patricide.

ZUBEIDAT

[*Wide-eyed with terror*]

He's coming to collect. He's coming to my town! He drives a garbage truck! He picks up the trash. And no one will be spared.

BOZEMAN

It means—

ZUBEIDAT

He's worse than Stalin ever was!

[*ZUBEIDAT grabs his hands.*]

BOZEMAN

Ma—

ZUBEIDAT

You're right! You should study. And keep your mouth shut! Do something with your life. The previous generation, we were fooled. We didn't stand a chance!

BOZEMAN

Patricide, it means killing your father.

[ZUBEIDAT *slaps him.*]

ZUBEIDAT

I told you. Didn't I?

BOZEMAN

We're in Boston, Ma.

ZUBEIDAT

I am not!

BOZEMAN

Yes, well, whatever. Be gone. That state of affairs is news to no one anymore.

[ZUBEIDAT *starts to protest.* BOZEMAN *throws a pipe bomb. It explodes.* ZUBEIDAT *disappears in a cloud of smoke.*]

Two: all your fears have come true.

[BOZEMAN *opens the curtains to the second dressing room to the right. Inside, two men are kissing passionately. The men wear leather pants and dog collars and nothing else. They do not approve of the disturbance, but come out anyway. The older man holds the leash in his hand, the other end of it hanging loose. The younger, bearded man gets on his hands and knees. He is KADYROV. The older man, who is PUTIN, connects the leash to the collar around KADYROV's neck.*]

Harašoo.

PUTIN

Speak of the Devil!

BOZEMAN

Yes.

PUTIN

Well, I'll be damned!

BOZEMAN

No.

PUTIN

If it isn't Putin and his buttboy—

BOZEMAN

You'll be shot—

PUTIN

Ramzan Kadyrov! The little man—

BOZEMAN

—not damned. Damning someone is—

PUTIN

[KADYROV snorts. He shakes his head, smiling.]

BOZEMAN

—with his little dog, Putin’s pit bull—

PUTIN

To damn someone is so old, somehow.

KADYROV

So Soviet, is what it is!

PUTIN

[*Pointing at KADYROV*]

That’s exactly right! Well put. You said it, Ramzi!

[*PUTIN ruffles KADYROV’s hair.*]

BOZEMAN

Oh, isn’t he cute! Ladies and gentlemen, may I introduce the caliph of Grozny, Ramzan Kadyrov!

[*PUTIN takes hold of BOZEMAN’s cheek, yanks it back and forth.*]

PUTIN

This guy! I love this guy!

BOZEMAN

That—kinda—hurts.

[*PUTIN yanks some more.*]

PUTIN

Oh, I'm so sorry! It never was my intention, hurting you forever newer was!

[*After a final yank, PUTIN lets BOZEMAN go.*]

BOZEMAN

[*Holding his cheek*]

The apology—if that's what it was—accepted.

PUTIN

He's one of a kind, this guy—not receptive at all! He won't listen to a word we say! Only in America, is what we say! And why is that? Because talking, chatting, this, it's so *passé*! Exactly like to damn, damning someone is, eh? Am I right?

KADYROV

Yes, yes.

PUTIN

Come again?

KADYROV

Absolutely. Damn right, sir!

PUTIN

Picture this. We go, like, “Damn you,” and he goes snap, “Boohoo.” Huh? So—how do you say? Ineffective? Yeah, that's the word! That's it. Or, like our favorite fellow artist from the West said, “This Is It.” Look at Ramzi! He agrees! Such a clever girl, he is.

[PUTIN *passes the leash to* BOZEMAN.]

Hold it! For a sec for us, will you? That's my girl! We have a speech to make.

[PUTIN *starts delivering his speech. He is shifting his weight restlessly from foot to foot while addressing the AUDIENCE. He avoids all eye contact. At first, KADYROV and BOZEMAN seem to listen.*]

We have always followed the philosophy of live, love and let love, feel good. But never did we suggest or imply—not once—

KADYROV

Or twice.

PUTIN

Or twice, never! No way, José—see you later, alligator. Gee. Where was I?

KADYROV

[*Shrugs*]

I don't know. Sounds like the Everglades to me.

PUTIN

What was that?

[KADYROV *gets up.*]

KADYROV

It could have been the Delta, too. Mississippi delta, mind, not Niger. You can torch Niger delta for all I care, anyone cares.

[To BOZEMAN]

Or what do you say, party man?

BOZEMAN

Huh?

KADYROV

You animal, you love to party, don't you? Yeah, I can tell.

[After what a doctor might call a petit mal episode, PUTIN is ready to continue his speech. At the same time, KADYROV produces a small vaporizer from his pants pocket. He offers it to BOZEMAN. They take turns puffing on the pipe.]

PUTIN

Never did we suggest that it was our duty or our trip—

KADYROV

This is it, the best part!

PUTIN

—to become masochistic pigeons or sit quietly like good Germans—

[KADYROV slaps PUTIN on his back, hard.]

KADYROV

Hell, no!

PUTIN

No! Never!

BOZEMAN

Just say no!

KADYROV

Say no to the Germans!

PUTIN

No to that BITCH!

*[The last remark has a chilling effect on
KADYROV and BOZEMAN.]*

KADYROV

Yes. You were saying? Please, Vladimir Vladimirovich. Go on. Proceed with your speech, please.

PUTIN

Huh?

KADYROV

Been smoking pot again, have you, sir?

PUTIN

[Indignant]

I have not!

KADYROV

No?

PUTIN

W-what makes you think so?

KADYROV

You start a sentence. You forget how to finish it. You can't recall what you were saying. Your working memory is shot!

PUTIN

No, no, no. That's Donald Trump you're describing!

KADYROV

Well, yes, maybe. And you too.

PUTIN

Me too? Me too! That's a new one!

KADYROV

It is?

PUTIN

I never thought I could be part of that, how do you say? Movement? Never thought I could use that one! But every day brings something new. But back to the speech—

KADYROV

Back, going back—

BOZEMAN

Beep-beep-beep—

PUTIN

—to 1989.

[Lights change to indicate a pause in the action. PUTIN freezes, while BOZEMAN, still holding the leash, approaches the audience. KADYROV follows, obedient.]

BOZEMAN

I guess they gave me something, some drug. Anyway, for just a sec there, everything was all right. Everything was dandy. It was all good, as if nothing had happened. This side of paradise: it lasted up until moments before I came to. That's when I started sensing something. I started to recall. And I opened my eyes.

PUTIN

I was in Dresden then.

KADYROV

So it goes.

BOZEMAN

I cried like a baby. I didn't cry for the Boylston Street casualties, women and a kid, eight years old. That's too bad, but this is war. Look at Syria! What they're doing to us, our women and children, there! Muslims are a single body—hurt one and you hurt us all. But we will rise. Something has got to give! What I was saying as I cried

my eyes out. Collateral damage, they call it. I didn't cry for the cop, that's for sure! Death to pigs, right? No, I cried for you. For no matter what they say, you are a victim too. You took on the entire military industrial complex, and lost. You had to lose. It was, I don't know, predetermined?

[He covers his eyes.]

Where were you—my big brother, my protector—when I needed you?