

Laila Performance: DVD
Living in the Hyphen-Nation: A One-Woman Show
March 29, 2007
7:30-9:30 p.m.

0:22 Good to see you all. I'd like to make a quick introduction. My name is Ralph Aldez, curator of cultural program and for global Thursdays here at the Arab American national museum. And I just wanted to introduce someone very special to you tonight who will tell you a little bit about more the artists night for Global Thursdays and about the Diwain (sp) which has because tonight for the forum for the arts.

0:43 She's the curator of Education here at the Arab American National Museum and she was the museum from the beginning when we opened in May of 2005 and she's very instrumental in the diwant program and let's give a big, warm welcome to Jiman Aslamie (sp).

1:06 I just wanted to quickly welcome everyone to Dwain. First of all thank you for supporting Diwamne as well as Global Thursdays. Global Thursdays is a multi-cultural series event and this years kick off for Diwamne is forum for the arts. A special thanks to Comerica charitable foundation and Ford motor company for their sponsorship of this series. I'd also like to thank the Ford foundation, Wallace foundation and the Cummings foundation. Without their support we would not be able to offer you the many exciting programs of the AANM including last years and this years Diwame forum. I also want to welcome the representatives from these foundations, so if you can give them a round of applause: Dr. Margaret Wilkinson and Robert Una, from Ford Foundation, Vanessa Lange from Link, Claudia Brown and Karen Garrett from Cummings Foundation. Thank you for taking the time to be with us. Diwame forum of the arts brings together various artists, scholars and performers representing various fields and genres to discuss social and cultural boundaries related to Arab Americans and the community at large. I'd like to thank all the panelists, participants and supporters that are taking part in this year's forum. And a special thank you to the Duwam committee and the AANM staff for their hard work and dedication for this series. Now I'd like to introduce to you tonight's performer.

2:46 Tonight's performer Doctor Laila Farah is Lebanese American currently in Assistant Professor in Women's Studies at DePaul University. We're working on future performance pieces in Chicago as well as touring with her production in the work she performed tonight "Living in the Hyphen-Nation." Thank you again for coming and please give a warm welcome to Dr. Laila Farah.

3:28 Under race ethnic origin I check white. There is no box because I'm not a minority on their checklist, so they erase me with a red end of a number 2 pencil. I check white because there is no square to check that my father does not have 8 camels, that he does not have 8 wives that he keeps in his tents or in his Harem palace or in the island that he bought with his oil money. I check white because my father is a farmer, my mother is a teacher and there is no square for exotic.

4:20 My African American friend says I'm a woman of color. My mother who's Caucasian says you are white. My Mexican-Hispanic-American friend understands my dilemma. My country

that is a democratic melting pot does not. But maybe I'll be reborn, somewhere in the Midwest. A tractor-riding, corn growing blonde kid. Who does not have to stop at the checkpoint of alien? These are my war songs. These are my war tales. I'm a victim of war. Lived through it for ten years, made it out. I'm a survivor of war because I made it out again last summer. And now I am a resistor of war because I don't want to see it happen anywhere, anytime, again, for any reason.

5:32 And I'm here in no small part because I'm pissed. Yes, when I get pissed. I generally like to do something about it, like open my mouth. So, I'm tired of seeing war, externally, internally, War on Terror, war creating terror and so, as such, I'd like to take you through some parallel realities. 1975, 1982, 1990, 1993, 2000, 2001, 2003, 2002, 2005, 2006. And counting. Lebanon. Palestine. Iraq. Afghanistan. New York. Lebanon.

6:30 Let's hope we don't keep adding to the list. So these are my war tales. I wear earrings worn, made of Shrapnel (sp). I am bullet proof with a nuclear tongue. Come closer. This is you last concentration camp. Mmmhm. Either you are with us or against us. Over here or over there seems to me there is not much difference anymore. So I am going to start in New York since we happen to be on the continent. Something many of you will never forget anymore than I.

7:22 This piece is a piece by Samir Hamat which will be divided through and I realize I didn't forward program notes so I will take just a little moment where it is due. So this piece of Samir Hamat is called First Writing Since and it is divided in four segments throughout. There is also a piece by D.H. Mindhem. That first piece Browner Shades of White is Laila Hilleby and there is also poetry by Hassen Wooby.

7:52 First Writing Since. There have been no words. I have not written one word. No poetry in the ashes south of Kennal Street. No prose in the trucks driving out debris and DNA, not one word. Today is a week and out of my kitchen window an abstract reality. Sky where once was steel. Smoke where was once was flesh. And then and now I feared for my sisters life like never before, and first, please God, let it be a mistake. The engine died. Then please God, please. It's a nightmare; wake me now. And then, after the second plane. Please God; don't let it be anybody who looks like my brother. I don't know how bad a life has to break in order to kill. I have never been so hungry so as to will hunger. And I've never been so angry to pick up a gun over a pen. Not ever that ever that broken. Not even as a Palestinian person. A broken human being never that broken. And more than ever there is no difference. The average American living in the most privileged neighborhood doesn't know the difference between the Indian and the Afghani, A Syrian, a Muslim, a Sick, A Hindu. More than ever there is no difference.

10:08 And ironically, D.H. Milhelm in 1991 almost prophetically wrote this piece if we were to look at it in today's context. Gulf War. 8000 non-stop Swarties flying over Baghdad express, sound and light show that you get in boxed in your living room, only, only, we on the bottom see the blood mard image. Patriot anti-missiles and smart bombs and rocket hardware everyone wants them now. Sounds like a carnage commercial. In the bomb shelter, children are sleeping in the arms of their mothers. Not hungry, no. They have sucked full of horror. They are targeted deliberately. Hit enemies, could be hiding anywhere.

11:12 And then in 2003, in Baghdad, on March 21, ironically my father's birthday, the day after the American-British troops began their illegal invasion of Iraq, began the occupation and embedded CNN correspondent interviews a U.S. soldier who says I want to get in there and get my nose dirty. I want to get busy. So to be fair to the embedded correspondent, he said, you know...there really hasn't been a proven link between 9/11 and Iraq. Yeah, said the soldier. He stuck his tongue all the way down to the end of his chin. I don't care that's stuff way over my head. I just want to get busy.

12:07 Now that was the unleashing of terror. Now make no mistake, now I will argue this until my death. That on the ground, it is terror. Just differently called. So this is the two versions I want to share with you of the same exact event that happened in Iraq. The first is by Robert Fisk of the Independent in London. It was an outrage. An obscenity. A severed handle on the mental door. A swamp of blood and mud across the road. The human brains inside a garage. Their incinerated skeletal remains of an Iraqi mother, her three small children and they're still smoldering car. Two missiles killed them all by my estimate more than 20 Iraqi civilians torn to pieces before they could be liberated by the nation that destroyed their lives. Who dare call this collateral damage?

13:14 The second version reported off CNN here in the U.S. Same story. Fifteen civilians were killed when allied forces bombed the market in Baghdad. Pentagon officials say the market was not the target, but that the deaths and damage could have been caused by Iraqis themselves. We cannot verify that coalition forces are responsible but they say they regret any lost civilian life in any conflict. And that's how America gets to watch the war.

13:53 Kofi Roberts said, and I quote, and this is my favorite Kofi Roberts quote. This is a woman who used to report for NPR. She said, I confess to you that I am total sucker for the guys who stand up with all the ribbons and stuff on. They say its true and I'm ready to believe it. We had general Shelton on the show last day he was the chairman of Joint Chief of Staff and I couldn't lift the jacket with all those ribbons and medals. So when they say stuff I tend to believe it.

14:30 So it begs the question, and then, in Palestine. These words are Ferena. 18 years old. A girl. A wife. In a poor village. West Bank occupied Palestine. Nona knew where she lived and she had no need for maps. Did she comb her hair each morning with rose water? Line her eyes with _____. Did she hum quietly to the child in her belly or tremble when the artillery pounded the streets when planes reigned fire and crying, shaking the air, men bearing yet another body past her door. These words are Ferena. Pregnant. In Labor. Afraid. For the child stirring in her womb. Rocked on an inland lake of love. Rena sought medicine. Doctors. Turned back at the checkpoint by soldiers indifferent to fear or love to the fierce love of life. She only found barricades. Guns. These words are for her desperate pleas. For the pains coming faster and faster. For the baby that was entering the world to breathe. And then die.

16:10 These words are Ferena. Take in once more to the checkpoint. Once more turned back. Arriving at last to the hospital. Already dead. These words are for the family, expecting a birth who bore their daughter and grandchild to the burial place. And these words are for their people who keening circles around the globe are not heard. These words are for you, me, for the lives

we cherish. For the children we nurture for the daily ness we claim, the grief we prefer not to see. And these words are for our silence. These words are weight caught in our palms, the small broken note of freedom.

17:21 So in 1982 thousands and thousands in Beirut moving just a bit north of Telcuta. Thousands and thousands died. Hundreds massacred in the same Palestinian spots only in refugee camps. We move to Iraq and we say...by the way, there is a new study at Johns Hopkins that says in any number that they give you in war, you have to add and times it by 100. So if they say there are 65,000 dead, there are 650,000, which is the current reference in the current Johns Hopkins study released three weeks ago in Iraq. 655,000. Refugees in Jordan, 750,000. 40,000 in Lebanon. 1,000,000 in Syria. Internally displaced in Iraq, 1,800,000. That's almost two million people internally displaced. United States, for your information, has accepted 406 refugees from Iraq. And congress is currently debating whether they should increase that number to 7,000.

18:55 The same exact thing happen in my city compared to Baghdad compared to Iraq in 1982 in Beirut when the Israeli army laid siege to the city. They surrounded it coming up from the north by air, by sea, by land and by any means possible. In collaboration with Christian militias from the north. The entire city was ringed and resembled very much Baghdad. The whole apartment rocks with the sound of bombs falling and I see Moms eyes turning white across the hall. Hania the neighbor is screaming, I can see her through the door. I can hear her. Fly, fly, fly down the stairs. And all of a sudden, I hear her kids, running pal mel. Mom's eyes get whiter and whiter and I look at her willing her not to catch the contagion of panic. Not to let the terror get to her throat. She clutched the bag with all of our valuables tighter and tighter to her chest and the planes come in louder and louder and louder and lower one more time. One more time the whole building rocking and she's pleading with me now. The bag clutched so tight her knuckles are white. She says, Laila. And I know what she meant. She wants me to take her by the hand and to go down into the bomb shelter seven flights below. And sit there with her, which she knows I will not do. But she can't stand it. Do you have any idea what it's like to watch your mother come apart at the seams?

21:05 In order to hold her seams together, I take her by the hand loosen her grip on the bag and lead her down the seven flights of stairs into the shelter and deposit her there. She begs me with her eyes for the thing I will not do. Will not never did, go into the shelter. Rather took my 19-mortal body back up seven flights to watch as the planes dropped their loads down, smoking Marlboro reds, it wasn't going to happen to me. So now the U.S. experiences this terror for the first time. But we have a later incursion. When 1982 passed and I watched my mother and my home come apart at the seams, I thought it would be the last time. And then this summer happened.

22:34 We couldn't believe it. Not one of us could believe it could happen again. And so I wrote in an email, when I could get through on email. I weep as I write this missive. I cannot bear what is happening yet I am audibly happy to be in the midst because I would go ape shit if I weren't. Bombs are dropping like flies on the land around the south. Six bridges to date this minute, July 12. Here we are again and my little big heart is breaking. Israel claims they're going to return us 20 years back if we don't return their two soldiers and you know their formula well. 100-1, 1000-1, 100,000-1, depending who's on the other side. The Lebanese are a bit more expensive

than the Palestinians lately. But maybe not for long. Enough. Hallas. _____. I don't know what else to say because my core is quaking. Not so much for me but for those who are in current hell and it will be mine soon. Know I will do what one does as ever as I have done. As we all do. Not quite feeling ready for it somehow but then there's probably 3 million that are joining in that feeling. Strength in numbers.

24:15 July 24. Dear Ann. The chair of my department. I'm sorry my writing has been so sporadic. I can't seem to get myself to write what's going on around me. I don't seem to have the words. It's all sound bites. Bombing. Destruction. Deaths. Counts. Types of explosions. What they've destroyed next. How many children. How many children. How many children. I was at a vigil yesterday to say that they should stop killing children. Nobody there but the press. The people already too exhausted and full of beer to. They haven't even started on us randomly yet. The southern suburbs are getting flatter and flatter by the day as the death toll rises. You want to talk to me about Ground Zero. Hospitals took capacity with shortages of everything and we're only 12 days in. Hundreds of thousands of people displaced. The humanitarian corridor isn't working. No water, no medicine, no supplies in the villages. There's at least 200 dead they can't even get to. The Red Cross is getting hit. They're not willing to risk their lives for corpses. I can't blame them, really. Meanwhile we get news clips of tearful families being ripped apart, again. And still, the U.S. says as it rushes patriot missiles to Israel, it feels for the people and will do everything they can to aid humanitarian along while they support Israel going at it for another week, and another week and how many more weeks.

26:09 Last night was quiet except for a few huge ones in the south. We need a cease-fire desperately. So how is that different than what happened in New York? Innocent people are innocent people. Hamad back. The dead are called lost. And they hand out shaky photographs and run off photographs on photocopies. We're looking for Iris, mother of three. Could you call if you have any information? We're looking for Prithy. She was last seen on the 103rd floor. She was talking on the phone with her husband when the line went. We're looking for George also known as Abin. Could you tell him his family is waiting at home with his favorite meal? I'm looking for my son. He was delivering coffee. I'm looking for my sister girl. She started jog that morning. I'm looking for peace. I'm looking for mercy. I'm looking for life. I'm looking for some evidence of compassion. And how is that different from what the Iraqis did under some pile of rubble and some house that was hit by mistake and coming collateral damage? And here in the U.S. what does it look like here when we have terror on the ground? The ACLU and all the organizations concerned with civil liberties and with human rights are saying that we're waging war against justice in our quest to protect democracy. Secret evidence. Racial profiling. Illegal detentions. Rendering and torturing to other countries and military tri-funerals. Everything expanding the power of the government.

28:18 And not doing very much at all as far as proof has it to protect us anymore. So here's a phone call that I received on my cell phone from a former student of mine. Hello. Dr. Fareh. It's _____, do you remember from UIUC? There's a bit of an emergency. My companion was picked up by the FBI today. We don't know why. Well, we know why but we don't know what to do. We've been talking to lawyers, we've been talking to people, we've been talking to friends. I'm calling everyone I know to please help. If there is anything you can do. If there is anyone you can put me in contact with, we can't find him. Please help.

29:05 So how is over there, over here? These tactics are used in every dictatorship ever known across the globe. Using information gathered in any household in anyway. They don't need a search warrant to go into your house. They don't need any kind of permission to tap your phone to check your library records or any of the rest of it. They can check your email; they can check you. They can come into your apartment and never tell you they were there. No checks and balances. We have dropped by the way from number 19 to number 12 on the human rights abuser list. Number 12 we're in the top dozen. So at this point in time, it begs the question, when we get these attitudes back again in New York, Ricardo in the radio said in his accent thick as Jucka I will feel so much better when we drop those bombs over there and me and my homies feel the same way. And I say. That if I can find compassion trough all this exhaust, people left behind to resist mass murder and to mourn, I might be all right.

30:30 And thank you to the woman drinking my cool and blinking back the tears opening up her arms to give me a hug before I asked for one. Kind of embrace that only the warmth of flesh and blood can give you. And I wasn't about to say no to any comfort. So as she held me, I said, my brothers in the navy. And we're Arab. She said, yea, you got double trouble. And in Iraq, try to make sense of it. That boys and children who are willing to kill other boys and children asleep in the arms of their mothers and their mothers asleep with them. Arms and armaments twisting into smoke and even the tanks writhe and scream. Men and women kneel in the prayerful dust five times a day in ancient cities with a new museum of bone and shell fragments daily they kneel five times to Mecca. Trying to breathe. And in the U.S. while other people are eating brought down to their knees with their hands behind their heads, the detainment after 9/11 and deportations of people with families having no idea where they've gone. No co berating evidence. You know that human rights article 13 says that we have freedom of movement in and out of the country. That doesn't mean freedom of movement being taken by the government and being deported somewhere. It means your choice to go freely. You know. Traveling, say, on holiday. So in this spirit I'd like to share a piece with you called Stars and Stripes Forever. But I have to start this with a question. And I'm a teacher so I don't let audiences be silent.

32:48 I'm really good at waiting it out. I must have been a college student snickering. So I'm going to start with a question. Does America prefer order over justice? Order? Justice? Order? I'm thinking order. I don't know. These days. I'm thinking definitely order over justice. But I think about the ways that peoples, governments, countries, allies, keep order. And one of the ways that we keep order as far as I do in my life is by keeping lists. I don't know about you but I cannot live without my lists. I make lists of lists. I make lists of lists of lists. I have an agenda book and inside are lists. Attached are post-its with other lists. And then there are the lists of things to do that I put on top of the agenda that has the lists with the little post-it lists. We use lists in the most mundane ways. Day in day out we use them day in day out for all kinds of good reasons. Things you need to buy from the supermarket, gift giving on holidays, things you have to do, what I'm going to teach in my class. Theory blah blah blah and all kinds of things people we're going to invite to a party. I think that we use them in the most mundane ways day in day out. Day in day out. Let them in, keep them out. Let them in, keep them out.

34:33 Let them in keep them out! Breathe in! Breathe out! Let them in keep them out. I'm talking about real life human beings. The kinds that end up on lists. These little lists. Day in day

out they are kept on lists. And on these lists there are names. Not just any names, but the names of citizens. Alright. And these citizens are sometimes alien citizens. Sometime they're legal aliens. Sometimes they're illegal aliens. Sometimes they're bonified naturalized citizens. Sometimes they're born here citizens. Real human beings. Not types. Not types or stereotypes. The real flesh and blood human beings that end up on lists and we say let them in. Keep them out. Keep them out depending on whether we need apples picked or not. Let them in. Keep them out. If they come from t Southeast Asia and we've reached our quota. Let them in. Breathe out. You can breathe much easier if you're not on a list. Breathe out. You can be very relaxed. Sometimes you have to breathe in short, staccato breaths. It's called Lamont. It's a breathing technique. Push from the diaphragm. Breathe in. Sometimes there's the kind of breath that is that long silent one. No one knows you're making it.

36:23 Eventually you have to let the air out. So you either let it out to explode before you implode. The long silent ones were a long specialty of my mother. She would breathe in. Eyebrows go up and then she would sigh. There would be a sigh on the end of it and it was usually looking at me and the outfit I was going out in. Usually the connotation. She would breathe in that long deadly silent and exhale with a sigh. You're going out in that dear. And then there's the kind that you can't let out because you are in some kind of danger...because you're body is in some kind of compromise situation. Because you might be at a checkpoint or gunpoint. Because you might be for example at some kind of security and even though you're not carrying any contraband, as you stand behind the table ledge somebody is looking at you, you get nervous and you try to breathe in and you breathe out and you got nothing to hide but there is something about a checkpoint security at an airport or at a border where there's guns that makes your breath not come in so easy not be exhaled so easy and they are letting you in and they're letting you out. And you breathe in and you breathe out and they're looking over the table ledge and when you look over the table ledge you try to see what they're looking for and you see this long list. It's a long list of names. Now you note that on this list of names they're not all the same.

38:17 Some of the names have little stars and some of the names have little stripes and some of the special names haves stars and stripes together. And it reminds you of that (song) your own national anthem, your alien anthem of Stars and Stripes. So she's looking over the table ledge checking her list. She has you're American passport in her hand. She being a miss Swiss frauline in Zurich airport in Switzerland. And so she's looking down her list and its full of stars and stripes and you're breathing in. You're not showing it that you're breathing out because you're not really breathing out. You're nervous because they always give you shit when you're coming back from the Middle East. And she's looking at this and you're thinking. You know it shouldn't be so hard to get into this nation. This nation, which is under one Christian god. This nation comprised of resident aliens and resident citizens, one nation with liberty and you know that whole thing of land of opportunity. And so she's going through her list and you're feeling like I've offended her somehow. Something's wrong, I can feel it. And you're looking down the list and you see this thing that Betsy Ross would could if you were Betsy Ross. American History. Yes, yes, she designed the flag with stars and stripes. And you see sometime that even Betsy Ross could be proud of with all those stars and stripes all over the page.

40:00 So you're hearing this American language spoken, dialect, passports with the Swiss miss Frauline, you're going on an American carrier back to America and so you're kind of feeling a bit nostalgic and might even have a swell of ahhh. As you look down the list, you see that the stars are actually asterisks. Yes, and the stripes are made with a highlighter. The names that are made with the stars and stripes are not next to John Smith. They're not next to Mary O'Brien. No they're next to names that look like yours. Laila Naze Fareh. _____. Yup. No John Smith on the list. Not with a star and a stripe. So you look and you see that probably something about the whole Birds of a Feather flock together thing. So this must be the stars and stripes thing. And so she begins. Where are you coming from? Ah, Lebanon. What I'm seeing in your passport is that you've gone to Cyprus but only in Cyprus for 20 hours. Ah, ya. Now I'm wanting to know if you've been going to the Middle East a lot lately. Mhm. Ah yea. Ah research. And why are you going to Lebanon twice a year? Ah. Family. Yes. And now why are you choosing to come to Switzerland. Ah, transit. And you have been to Switzerland before and you've only been to Zurich. You are only in Zurich for 12 hours. Ah transit yea. Now I'm wondering madam what is this work that you do this research that takes you to other countries? Syria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, ah. Women's studies. Now I'm wondering madam you are coming back sol Switzerland and often you are planning to come back to Switzerland. Is this an unusual route for you to come? Ah, I see. And madam. You came on Swiss Air I see. How many baggage are you bringing? You mean you don't have baggage? This air doesn't make mistakes. This air doesn't lose baggage. You come this way into security please, come this way into this area here. We have some questions, which we need to ask you here. Please sit down to answer the questions at this time. And you breathe in and you breathe out and breathe in and you are asked the same questions over and over and over again until you demand to know why. And when you get an attitude they tell you that this is FAA policy. That all persons traveling who been seen on this list from the Middle East with Arab or Muslim sounding names coming back to the United States on American carriers are to be questioned more than usual.

43:30 Madam this is FAA policy. If you don't like it please take the matter up with your government. We are executing this with Delta airlines. They are partners with Swiss air. You mean to me that I'm being questioned more because my name is Laila Zena Fareh and I'm coming to Zurich via Delta to go back to Atlanta. Yes, madam. And this is FAA policy? Yes, madam. And what policy is that exactly? It is the 1996 U.S. Terrorist of Immigration Act. You breathe in. You breathe out. You get up. You try to keep breathing. And you pace in little cell as you have put you in with some Iranian woman. Name shape anaze. And as you note and begin to pace that there two little soldiers in crisp uniforms outside the glass no doubt, which is bullet proof with their oozy little machine guns pressed tight against their chest. And you breathe in and you breathe out and they keep you in the cage and they ask you the same questions over and over and over again until they come in for the cavity search. Oh yeah. For the second time. When you demand to know why, they say that this is the policy and you demand your rights as a U.S. citizen. The Swiss are not impressed. Finally, as they finish your cavity search, and they finished with their lists and you're wondering about your rights in this nation under God in this land of plenty, equal opportunity and freedom, I hear it ringing in my ears like my words because I'm in co-hate as they have gone down their lists for their umph time and checked me and Madame _____ and she is begging them to tell her if she is going to make it to Cleveland on time because it is her first visit to the United States and she's going for her sister's birth.

46:10 The other nondescript, Arab sounding Muslim sounding kind of person never showed up and when they called last boarding, they're about to implode from the breathe you happen to been taking when they release the two of you and walk you down the interminable aisle of the 747 and now the plane has been held for 45 minutes and all eyes are watching the third world women that held up the plane again.

46:53 As you sit down in your seat and are breathing in and breathing out, as she hands your passport and as you want to choke the last living breath out of her, and you wonder about your inalienable rights as a U.S. citizen. You realize that there is no hierarchy of pain that people are treated this way all the time and much worse all across the globe. You remember the story of the Palestinian guy who that on the day Oklahoma City was bombed was dragged back from London to Boston and was interrogated with no representation for three days. Just because he left Oklahoma City on that day and he was Jordanian and Palestinian. And you think about how this places you on the Hyphen again this time. And how this places you in the alien nation this time in this fine nation with justice and liberty for all. And as you land on American soil you enter into Cleveland airport and someone says, welcome home ma'am. And it makes you want to weep.

48:24 You just breathe in. Breathe out. Do you know that in this city and in any city that you enter into any city for immigration they ask, there's a series of questions that they ask you and one of the questions that they ask you, is I quote. Do you intend to overthrow the U.S. government, by force or by fraud? Now I'm just thinking, if I'm going to choose A or B would I be sharing that with the immigration officer? I'm thinking not so much. Amitami Kumar, who is an Indian poet, put this in a poem. An old man in a piece. An old man from India who wants to visit a son in New Jersey wants me to help me with this question on the form. A friend tells me later saying that it was an either or question. Tried to play it safe and opted to overthrow the government by fraud. The uncomfortable reality is that we are so suspending democracy in our prorated quest to protect it. I mean, way, way over the top. And so, you know, a little tongue and cheek humor. Today in my hotel in Double Tree, thank you very much Triple A, but uhm and this wonderful museum for supporting my to stay in Double Tree. But the Double Tree like many hotels across the U.S. you know what they do. They give you a complementary copy of the USA today. Now in the realm of accurate news journalism, order justice, order justice. Yeah. Anyway, on the back of the, I would say, second to last page of the front section. I had no other news. It was that or CNN. Or Fox. That's even better. So on the back...you guys should see this I saved the article. You should figure out how to. Don't just go online. There's a huge whole one page deal on Arabs and humor. They figured out that we have a sense of humor. Isn't that nice? A little tongue and cheek never hurt anybody. So this is from the New York Times. A little up from the USA today. This is from an editorial and I want to share it to you. Because the New York Times has not been the most balanced on news coverage regarding Palestine. Syria. Jordan. Lebanon. That group of countries. But I was impressed with this. It says five years of presidential overreaching and congressional collaboration...that's pretty strong.

51:44 Continue to exact a high toll of human lives and Americans global reputation and architecture of democracy. Nice phrase: architecture of democracy. I bet you they make a lot of money, those editors. Brutality towards prisoners and the denial of their human rights have been institutionalize. Unlawful spying on Americans continues and the courts are being closed to legal

challenges of these practices. It will require forceful steps by Congress to undo this damage. A few lawmakers are offering bills intending to do just that. It's only a start. Taking on this task is a moral imperative that will show the world that the United States can be tough on terrorism without sacrificing its humanity and the rule of law. And I think that's a nice little paragraph. It's pretty good. The editors offer this list, which is hardly exhausted and say it will require a rewrite of the Military Commissions Act. Did you even know there was something called the Military Commission's Act? They're just passing shit through Congress like it's water. 2006. 2006! Yes. Patriot Act 1. Patriot Act 2. Homeland 1. Homeland 2. And now we have the NSA.

52:58 And atrocious measure passed through Congress with help from three Republican Senators. Arlin Specter, Lindsey Graham and yes, presidential candidate John McCain. And so this is the list that they set. Three fundamental tasks. Restore habeas corpus. Due process of law. One of the new acts most indecent provisions denies anyone Mr. Bush labels an illegal enemy combatant. They call it illegal enemy combatants because they can't be treated as prisoners of war. Because if you're prisoners of war you have to be treated a certain way by Geneva conventions. Which we have so much respect for. If you call them illegal alien combatant, you can do whatever the hell you want to them. How terrible is that. You can torture them, kill them, do whatever you want. The ancient right to challenge his imprisonment in court, which you can't do. And so that's the first call. The second is to stop illegal spying. Mr. Bush's program of intercepting American's international phone calls. Yeah don't even think that those little prepaid phone cards to call my daddy. Yeah, they got your number. Pardon the fun.

54:06 The monitoring of emails. There are no warrants. This is not cease. Congress has to propose a measure like the one proposed by Diane Fienstein. In order for Mr. Bush to obey the law that requires warrants, what a concept, for electronic and phone surveillance. And third, they say ban torture comma really. Laughter. This guy is great. I don't even.... It just said editor. I'm sorry. It didn't have a name. I would give credit, honest. But he said it's still largely up to the president to decide what constitutes torture and abuse for the purpose of prosecuting anyone who breaks the rules. That's a problem. This amounts to rewriting the Geneva Convention and puts every American soldier...I wasn't so crazy about this.... at far greater risk if captured. I would just say why put that in there. If we break the Geneva Conventions. All right. I'm just going to go. So many of the tasks facing Congress involve the way the US takes prisoners, how they treat them. There's two sets of prisons in the war on Terror. The military runs one and the other is run by the CIA. You know about the case of the Arab Canadian where he was kidnapped, tortured, disappeared and kept. If his wife hadn't worked for the Canadian government, nothing would have happened. But he is suing the US government now. And they traced this. He was held at a CIA detention center, which no longer exists. So he can't even prove where he was. So they just rent these places, use them, torture them, get people to do their dirty work and then just move on.

55:56 There's a bunch of places, ironically, guess who does this work for us? Including Egypt, Syria. I'm not going to even go there. Also, closed CIA prisons, account for ghost prisoners, ban extraordinary rendition, tighten definition of combatant and screen prisoners fairly and effectively, ban tainted evidence, ban secret evidence, better define classified evidence. By the way you have no right to this stuff, which is a little hard to defend yourself if you don't know what the hell the charges are. Respect the right to council and be on to all these huge tasks. Congress should halt the federal government race to classify documents to avoid public scrutiny.

One 15.6 million in 2005 nearly doubled the 2000 numbers. So they're like...the amount of information they're gathering is unbelievable. This is the proposal by the editorial of the NYT and I was pretty impressed with that. The uncomfortable reality is that we have weakened democracy in our quest. So I'm going to take us back to New York a little bit.

57:17 One more person asks me if I knew the hijackers. One more mother fucker asked me what navy is your brother in? One more person assumes no Arab or Muslim were killed. One more person assumed they knew me or that I represent a people or that a people represent an evil or that evil that is as simple as a flag or words on a page. We did not vilify all white men when McVeigh bombed Oklahoma City. We did not question the Bible or Pat Robertson. When networks air footage of Palestinian children dancing in the streets there is no apology that hungry children are bribed with sweets that turn their teeth brown and that correspondents edit images and archives are there to facilitate lazy and inaccurate journalism. And when we talk about death and holy men and hooded people and holy books, why are we no longer talking about the KKK? If there are any people that understand how NY feels, they're in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and in camps in Beirut and Baghdad trying desperately to breathe. Smoke thick and black. No air. I pray for the people, for the food, water, electricity, museums. I pray that our history not be obliterated into a footnote of rubble, said the Iraqi! It was a great site all those fireworks like Christmas said the US Arab! Present time. Back to Lebanon.

59:33 July 31st. I can't speak after yesterday yet. The second massacre of Hanna is too terrible. Exact repeat of the first in 1996. The whole country is still weeping on and off. Dad went into the hospital yesterday with internal bleeding hemorrhaging from the stomach, needing three units of blood. Keke, there is no blood. I have been running around the country trying to find O positive blood to save my father. I don't know if my heart can do both things. I have nothing left for writing. As I write now, August 1st, the planes are low and hard and non-ceasing, even in the village they're going to start an air offensive tonight with a vengeance. It's already laid out in terms of the operations they're just waiting to unfold them. No one to stop them. The US blocking every other world government body from interfering and _____ wants 10-14 more days. We can't take 10-14 more days. Dad is not better. He is still hemorrhaging at five units. I think I'm going to go insane. My prayers are bent towards a unilateral cease-fire. Unconditional end immediate. It's the only way.

1:01:40 Let them duke it out. Talk it out. Whatever the fuck it out later. Stop the killing and destruction. But that's logical. Israel is not prone to such processes of such logic. History teaches us that in times of conflict and fear, nations frequently make their worst mistakes. I think that is no less true for other countries, as well as the US. I look at Britain, France, and other places on the globe and I think governments tend to make their worst mistakes at those times. I think one of them is suspending civil and human rights.

1:02:34 So I received this email quote, which I want to share with you, it's called an Arabic Hazullah. It's a little riddle for you to figure out who actually said this. It is the leaders of the country who determine the policy and it is always a simple matter to drag the people along. Whether it's a democracy or a fascist dictatorship, or a parliament, voice or no voice, the people can always be brought to the bidding of the leaders. It's easy. All you have to do is tell them they're being attacked and denounce that the peacemakers, for lack of patriotism and exposing

the country to danger. It works the same in every country. So who do you think gave that brilliant piece of strategy. Herman Goring. The Nazi Reich Marshall. That was at the Nuremberg Trials. It's really quite astounding. Bush has now waged war on two men in two countries. Both openly funded once by the CIA. One they hang and the other they can't find. I feel like playing a where's Osama game. You know that game Where's Waldo? It's beyond, beyond the beyond. I don't know who is responsible exactly. The decisions I'm sure were collaborative. But I do know for sure who's going to pay. And in the world, generally, it will be women.

1:04:20 Mostly colored and poor and women who will bury children and support themselves through their grief. In America, it will be those of us that will refuse blanket attacks on shivering and those of us that work towards social justice, support civil liberties and oppose hateful foreign and I feel like my skin is real thin and my eyes are getting darker on the future doesn't hold very much light. Arguments for the people of Iraq. Consider the infinite fragility of an infant's skull. How the bones lie soft and open. Only time knitting them shut. Consider a delicate porcelain bowl. How it crushes under a single blow. In a moment, whole years disappear. Consider beneath the din of explosion, no voice can be heard. No cry. Consider your own sky on fire. Your name erased. Your children's lives a price worth paying. Consider the faces you do not see. The eyes you refuse to see. Collateral damage. How in these words the world cracks open.

1:06:09 I want to share a narrative I wrote after I learned what happened in ____ prison. It's called "Resisting Arrest, Arresting Resistance." Habish....shhh...Got a coldish face. His Beirut's central police district headquarters. It's a place that has a reputation that precedes it and it has for over fifty years. Its soldiers were trained by the CIA. The assumption is that if you go in that you'll come out as a different person. At a maximum, you'll be tortured, beaten down and broken. You will talk. Habasssh...shh... The word Hibash sends shivers down ordinary citizens spines, let alone with someone with something to hide. What happens when a girl is threatened of rape by the police? There is no self-proclaimed resistance in Hibash. No bravado that withholds. No inner strength that you can withstand. Only resistance comes in the form of how many lives you can tell and how convincingly you can do it over a period of days. Time and time and time again. How good a performance you can muster under diereases until they get tired of hearing it or until you crack. The other form of resistance comes as bearing witness. And when I say bearing, I mean there is an exact weight to witnessing. A sagging of the shoulders, a tightness of the sinu of the forearms. Wrists, bones ready to snap.

1:08:40 But you've been arrested. There's no point in resisting. So now you're per formative resistance must be equally arresting. What happens to a man who sees a brother weeping in humiliation? Begging for mercy. In war, all rationality gets suspended. Look at ____ for example. No witnesses for almost five months. Only the prisoners bearing up, bearing witness, bearing the deep painful irony of being tortured by the very people who were to be liberating the country. With no accountability. No possibility for justice. For the families of the 13 dead in that prison. Ever Geneva Convention banning torture. Every Geneva Convention banning inhumane treatment. Degrading treatment since 1949. Having been violated. Just like that. Similarly Hibash had no accountability for its officers. Ultimate power equals ultimate corruption. I can still see the vice cops face, his small black beady eyes imprinted into the stuff my nightmares were made of. I can smell the sour coffee, cigarette breath breathing onto my succulent 19-year-old innocent flesh. His leer, his undressing me, his unmasked desire, and him getting off on my fear.

1:10:41 What happens to a comrade who cannot shut out his fellow inmates screams? I wish I didn't know this. But I do. One of the first rules of torture is to make you watch others get tortured. It's the easiest way to break you down and make you betray and confess and sell you mother up the river if you have to. Your resistance is worn down through constant threats, humiliation, isolation, deprivation, and tell you the lies. Oh. Oh baby. The lies they tell you of what they're going to do to you. What you could do stop from having those things done to you. All of this while being forced to witness what is being done to others. The promise of it coming to you.

1:11:42 The prisoners of ___ and ___ in Lebanon in the South were all forced to witness torture, hanging by their arms for hours, electric prods beating, anal rape, you know the list. The humiliation alone is enough to kill. Similar to prisoners in _____, these Lebanese and Palestinian prisoners hardly any had any formal charges against them and none had due process of law out of hell. They were just brought in because the authorities said it was the thing to do. How many more countries has the United States supported in such prisons with such conditions? And now, Juantanimo they want to keep open.

1:12:34 I was brought in on a drug raid with which I had nothing to do with. And uhm, it didn't matter. They had zero evidence. They had zero witnesses. They had no contact with me to put me in the context except two of my friends at the university happened to be of this group of people. _____ was bastard of the first degree whose pleasure it was to give pain to his captives. He rarely broke a sweat when he was doing his dirty work and when he did he would have somebody else take over when his arms got tired. His tactics of humiliation and degradation were as precise as an eye surgeons. And also, he was very theatrical. He had a pension for drama. Men like him are artists with great skill. Hibashhhhhhhhh. After six hours of listening to screams through the locked door, he reached for my leg in the third interview. I knew then that I had to give the most stellar performance of my life. I told him of every long tale in installments, very much just like _____. Piece by piece I dolled it out.

1:14:10 I told him a story of how Syrian soldiers who were in occupation of Beirut at the time had raped me. I did this because he swore he would tell my father where I had been, and the people I had been with me, and what I had been associated with, and basically threatened to humiliate my father and to punish me. In other ways, if I didn't comply. So I let this story out, piece by piece, sometimes bringing my voice down to a whisper, sometimes bringing a tear to my eye, other times raging in anger and indignation. I appealed to his discretion. I begged him not to tell my father. I asked for his mercy.

1:15:04 He alternately made me watch the beatings. With an electric cable of a man who was trussed up like a pig like from the kill with a pole through with his feet and his hands on top of it like an animal. Later he explained to me that they always beat the palms and the soles of the feet because they don't bruise and can't be traced but it is also the most painful place to be beaten besides the genitals. The nerve endings are the most in our hands and our feet. The man screamed after the third hit and went unconscious. They woke him up to start again and again and again.

1:15:55 By the fifth interview I was bolder with my requests. I asked for water, cigarettes, coffee. My narrative became tighter and tighter and the chaos outside got higher and higher and in exchange I did, I promised I would be his contact at the university to tell on people I knew who were doing drugs. I would be his eyes on campus. I would tell him any information I knew. I said I would do it. I said I would do it if he would leave my father out. Just as his was reaching for my leg, this time sliding higher, my father walked in the door. I wasn't getting along so well those days with my dad, but I can tell you one thing, I was never happier to see that man in my life. My knight in shining armor. My Bubba. They threatened to beat him if they wouldn't leave. He said you'll have to kill me, but I am not leaving here because I know your intentions. I felt them. I know your intentions. I will not let it happen. So he stayed. Eventually 15 people pulled in. One had to be taken to the hospital. The one with the palms on the beat. Two were in such bad physical shape they had to be carried out by their comrades. The rest were so sick with exhaustion and by what we had witnessed, we were basically catatonic. Because remember when he wasn't working on me, he was working on them.

1:17:48 Months afterward, ___ haunted me. He would follow me. He would wait for me outside the doors of the campus. He would follow me with my friends. He would call me at all hours of the day and night. Every time when he would call, I would get violently ill and throw up. Eventually, my Mother put it together. Mothers are like that. They have this intuitive thing. So my mother put together phone calls, throwing up. So she told my father and said someone is calling Laila and it is upsetting her so much that she is throwing up. So he came and confronted me and I admitted everything. And he asked me why didn't you tell me? Because you had been through enough! I didn't want you to go through it again. He picked up the phone and he called _____ and ironically, the only thing that stopped that man from brutally raping me is threatening him with the things he did daily to people in that jail. He never called me again.

1:18:59 I never told my father what I witnessed in Habash. I never gave up one name. But I also never got ___'s face out of my head. I've never found bending over in the shower jokes in prison very funny. I don't watch movies with torture. I give money to Amnesty International annually. I never thought I would feel humiliated again in that way until I saw as a witness what happened in _____. 13 people were murdered there. At least those that have been publicly accounted for. And only 7 soldiers were suspended and the sentences were so light and no upper esclave was even touched. So how does this look to the rest of the world as we spread our democracy? We get so outraged when there is a picture of an American soldier dead being dragged on Alshazera screaming and yelling, but we can show the picture of the electrode, black hooded prisoner up on the thing and men on leashes and men in human pyramids and men being humiliated with animals. That's okay. We can show those pictures again and again and again. It wouldn't be so bad if the US government weren't making such a claim for such a higher morale ground.

1:20:34 So in this democratic process of justice for the Iraqi people and Americans and others around the world, where is the accountability? And how arresting is our resistance going to be? The latest prisoners that have accountability for, according to the guardian on the 5th of this month, came out the stories of all the women who have been raped in prison. Including a young 16 year-old-girl, 15-year-old who was raped by American soldiers and her entire family murdered as well as her to cover up. The government has the fellow who was the mastermind behind it in prison in North Carolina or somewhere. There is no accountability for the fact that

women prisoners were routinely and continually being abused in prison. I'm going to bring us back to New York to rap up. There I no poetry in this. There are causes and effects. There are symbols and ideologies. There are deaths here and there and promises of more. But there is life here. There and anyone breathing or listening to this may be hurting but breathing for sure and if there is any light to come it is going to shine from the eyes who look for peace and justice after the rubble and the rhetoric are cleared and the Phoenix has risen. You are either with life or against it. Affirm life. And I end us with this poem.

1:22:41 Written by June Jordan who has inspired me more than I can ever say and who has been a supporter for the underdogs and the Palestinians and many others for all of her life and posthumously in her writing. She wrote this poem for _____ who is a Lebanese poet. Poem for ____ Who Writes. I am alone. I am not coming, not coming to Jesus. Not coming to the telephone. Not coming to the door. Not coming to my own true love. I am alone. I am not coming. Two. Jesus forgot. Jesus came and he then he left but then he forgot. He forgot why he came. He forgot to come back. And this is written in the water, by dolphins flying like rice paper submarines. Jesus forgot. Three. Nobody died to save the world. Four. Come. Five. Let us break heads together. Thank you.

1:24:00 Applause

1:24:44 Please stick around for a question and answer period.

Do we have time?

Yeah, we have time.

We wanted to open this up because there are a bunch of different locales and positions. Some people are really familiar with this information and some are not. So I like to give just ten minutes after the show for people to or just people to say what ever. And or not. So while some would like to take off, that's fine, but if there are folks that have questions or something you'd like to put out there. We'd like to entertain you.

1:25:22 I think everyone would like to thank you for the work and it's a lot to absorb obviously. Maybe we can ask you by starting by how it all came together; how long you have been working to this particular piece.

1:25:38 The first piece actually I wrote in 1996 is not. This show has nothing to do with what it used to look like. It's not even a kissing cousin anymore. It was originally a piece was about being a hyphenated person and being an Arab American and what it was like to go back to Lebanon after 10 years of not being able to go back and come and go and negotiating culture and negotiating language and custom and all those things. So I had three monologues. The first was called Pearls and Pastels, which was something montage to my mother, which is very 50s pearls and pastels kind of _____, that's what we say in Arabic, ladies. She's got the hairdresser appointment standing two days a week. Come holler high water. Come Israeli's. Come no Israelis. Never, never did she not so. So that was the first piece. Talked about how I became feminized but by an American woman in Lebanon and how she wanted me to keep my American-ness but still being raised in Lebanon. Which of course my father wanted to do the same thing here, when the earlier part of my life was wanted me to have Lebanoneseness. There was a sort of schizophrenia, what we call cultural schizophrenia. I'm okay. I've had therapy.

1:26:59 And then there was the second piece. This piece, Stars and Stripes Forever, was also in that show. Which happened in 1997, I think it happened. It was just after the 96 Illegal Alien and Terrorism Act was passed. And then I wrote another piece that which in order to keep the show to an hour and a half I cut that piece. Sorry. I love it. It's called Sharazod. Don't need (too fast to understand). If we did bonuses, I would come back out and do it. (Too fast; can't understand). That piece was about border crossing and the violence of borders and having to justify as passing. Passing as Americans, passing as white, or not, what happens if you do, what happens if you don't. That sort of thing back and forth. It starts as with an Arabic with the veil. (Can't understand) And then so that was where the show started. And then all of 2001 happened. Then I had to change. Everything had to change. 9/11 changed the world. One of the things that makes me so angry about 9/11 is that it seems as if it's the first terrorist act that happened in the world. It's like the world has been dealing with terrorism forever. Other countries. I'm not going to even talk about it. I mean there's Ireland. I mean, come on people. The continent of Europe alone. Ask the English in London. You know, and for various reasons.

1:28:44 This is not to take away from the horror of September 11th. September 11th of 2001 is 2001. What about September 11 1973 in Chile? In the downtown when the Pinochet slaughtered nearly 30,000. So you know, yeah. We have to really put it into place. I became so angry, so angry. I have this vehicle, this ability, this legitimacy because I have three initials in my name and (mumbling), and so I get to come and I talk like this because I look like this. I get to do things that other people don't get. I get to be that person who gets to say kinds of things that sometimes who other people who don't look exactly like you, who are darker or whose accent is a just a bit thicker than yours and have the same ideas but they can't form the exact same sentence. It's the whole thing about who gets to say what. And this is a serious question of issues of race and that there's all kinds of issue that get played out. Who's a real American? Who's not? Who gets to create pretty? And then I got so...and then when the civil liberties one after another after another. Bang. Bang. Patriot Act. Bang. Patriot Act 2. Bang. Homeland Security. Bang. It was a tsunami of abuse. So every time they would do something, I had to update the show. Right now, the letters that I read those are just now incorporating into this show because this was just 2006, this summer. That's what I just lived.

1:30:36 How can I not make reference to that? When ____ happened, how could I not write this piece, which took me 20 years to finally write down this story? 20 years. So sometimes it's a question of why still perform these in letters. Because it's impossible to do a full embodied one like the 1982 piece. Because if I embody this now, I am not emotionally or psychologically capable. Now, it's too close. It's too raw. It's too real. It's not forgotten yet. It's not dropped. It's not yet. Alright. So then, as I say, I normally caveat, this show, I hope that soon, which will not happen, but it would be nice to not perform this show. That I perform it as a historically archival piece. Oh you know, back in 2006. And then that becomes history. Then I get to say this is history. But this is not what's happening.

1:31:50 And the civil liberties are in no less shambles. And the human rights doctrine is a sham to the US government. I am mortified. I am a die-hard constitutionalist. I think the US Constitution is one of the best documents of government that I've ever seen. I'm mortified it's suspended. And I'm fortunate that I am able to say, by the way I am on multiple lists, so you

know that you have come to a...did you sign something when you came in? Actually, it's tongue and cheek. There was a woman we were at this teach-in at Connecticut when I was doing a piece to raise money and to raise awareness. This woman...this white activist woman said we all need to get on lists and this will be our resistance and she was going on how she had just gotten arrested and then but she was released and then 12 hours and that's we need to get on lists and protest.

1:32:58 And then all of a sudden, I stood up and said you know sister, I got to stop you. I had to cut her off. I just said stop her. Because there were all these people in this room. The room looked very much like this room. It was like a rainbow room. You know and the brown people its different, you know, to the people that are not with passports to the people who are with green cards and people on student visas. We can't afford to be on lists. I'm working my hardest to get off lists. Stay off the list! Move away from the list. And this woman is like we need to get on the lists! And I'm like this woman has lost her mind. Stop her right now with that...talking about lists. And not all lists are created equal. Right? So anyway, yeah. So that's how. I just came across that last piece that piece about the children's heads; I just came across this book of poetry by the Lisa _____. That's the other one! Another Lebanese poet. Lisa _ amazing. Lisa _____. Great work. I just came across the latest collection she just published. So. I would be happy to give you the correct spellings of the poets after. My bad of not having sent those to Lauren of having those in the programs.

1:34:45 I just realized when you asked that question it was a sandbox. I was five years old, four years old. In Utah. Yes, I lived in Utah. And uhm, the woman, I was fighting with little Blair. I remember fighting with him in the sandbox. We fought all the time. We were fighting over the pail. I remember him screaming. We were both screaming. Both of us. And she said, I remember this, I was five, I think five. And she said, she grabbed my hand and ripped it away from the pail and pulled me out of the sandbox by my arm and said you dirty little Arab heathen. You will burn in hell and don't you ever touch my son gain. So I ran home screaming across Morningside circle, which is where I used to live, I ran across Morningside circle. And when, boy, I need to thank you for doing that. I think I felt another piece come on. They come on to my like fevers. Breathe in. Breathe out. It's like menopause only different. But that's it because my mother had to explain several things to me. Heathen. Hell. Dirty. And Arab. To her five-year-old. And I remember her telling me. This is the reason I remember this... my mother never used bad language. Yeah, my father he could never zip it. He's like...sorry, foul mouth in English. So you know in like 69 or 68, gives my age away, so anyways, she picks up the phone from the wall and calls this woman. She says, I'm going to go ahead and do this verbatim, she says listen to me bitch. You bitch. She called her you bitch. She said listen to me you bitch. She said if you ever speak to my child again I'm going to call the police. You had no right to sit and she said (Arabic). I don't know what the translation of (Arabic) and she gave her what for, gave her hell. She just lit into her. I remember sitting, she had put me with cookies and juice, calm down, calm down, and I remember just sitting at the table going ...uh.... because my mother, I've never damn never didn't come out...like my father...(words)...I came up more like the father's side. It's a genetic problem. That was my first consciousness that I was different.

1:37:16 That there was something. Then I went to Lebanon, I moved there when I was six and raised into adulthood. Then I realized too immediately that I was different, because they called

me the blonde cow. Because I was very rotund as a child and I was blonde. Anyway, I knew I was different there, too. It took a long time. I think really I don't think it was until I went to college, until I was 18, that it was a position of power. To be both am. That this was a powerful place to be. It was, you know in the Mexican tradition, the coyote, shape-shifter who can cross over without being seen over borders, who call the guys, the coyote, so I really feel like you know that has been so yeah. I'm just an outspoken, mouthy, hot-tempered person anyways. There's plenty to piss me off. Anybody pick up the paper today? So yeah. Yeah. There was a question back here.

1:38:37 No, no. You know, I have a little ick ick, stopping, breathe in breathe out. Uhm. It's never been done. It's never been done artistically. Meaning, like they're doing now. They record it as a record of the show. That's not what I want out there. Because it's so different than the performance. There's talk from a filmmaker in DC who just put out a very important film. You should see it. It's called Arabs in Terrorism. Asam Haddad. It's brilliant. It's brilliant! Anyway, I just met him and he came to DePaul and I showed it just before I left for Lebanon over Spring Break. He's, we're talking about maybe doing it artistically with cuts and angles like it should be. And so if that happens, then I'll put it out for distribution. And just give proceeds to human rights watch, you know. But no. They have to come see it! You had a question.

1:40:15 That's a great question. I do have an enormous amount of anger. The question was that I seem to have a lot of anger. I am getting it out creatively, but what do I recommend for others. Well, there's drama therapy. You know, I think everyone has some creative means. I believe that. I teach performance. I don't think everyone has performative creativity. I'm not going to say that. I've taught enough performance classes to tell you that's not true. But drama therapy can be good for everyone. But also, I think that it's about finding an outlet that makes sense to what you are in the world. I don't mean to be esoteric about that. I think that we each have, we process things different. So I write and I perform what I write. So I find that, to be for me, a venue. Other people, you know, use music or it's got to come, got to be out. There's too many people having ulcers or heart attacks and just really bad physiological things happen when you internalize that stuff. I would say that if you don't feel that you can comfortably tap into a creative outlet, get politically active.

1:41:49 And there are safe ways to do that. Because I'm not saying that lightly. When I say get politically active, it's not the same for everyone. Not everyone gets to take the same risks. I don't think it's okay for people here on a student visa to get politically active in war protests stuff. If they want to that's fine, but there's a danger... a serious danger. You can have your ass deported in a minute. In a minute. Out. Never to return. Education suspended. So, no. It's not. That's real. It's real. So, maybe you have to find that thing. That's what. Yeah. But don't let it sit. Because you'll get sick very quick.

1:43:22 I'm on the lists. No, I'm dead serious. I'm not being tongue and cheek. There are three lists that are out there. One is called campus watch. It was started by in my opinion a deranged individual Daniel Pipes. If you don't know who he is, just Google him. You better be strong of heart. Campus Watch is this list that started where people report their professors who are unpatriotic and basically nark on their professors. Then there is another list that was basically started by the government. The government has checked every Muslim and Arab sounding

professor in the country and is checking their political agenda. People need to know that. Yeah, people need to know that. I have several Arab and/or Muslim colleagues not just at my institution but at many institutions who have really have taken down and stepped away from and many are here on still on H1 visa. Again, this is serious stuff. An H1 visa used to be the thing; you never didn't get citizenship after you had an H1 visa. Right? You'd be here; you'd work for a while. You'd have an H1. It's the professional experience visa. You'd work for a few years. And then your institution would apply for citizenship for you. It's still possible to do, but it's just a lot harder. Citizenship used to be \$100; citizenship is now \$500 bucks. In two months times, citizenship will cost \$1000. Alright. So there are class issues going on here. There is academic freedom going on here. There is an insane person named David Hortiwitz, who was just at our campus, and he and Dave Daniel Pipes are kissing cousins, not just because they're Jewish. So they have this organization now called Students for Freedom of Speech. It's this hyper ultra right wing ultra conservative that have gotten together with total ultra right wing Jewish organizations and lobbyists and now fundamental Christians; there's like this intersection of the three.

1:45:43 I know, it's like the nightmare of the nightmares. That's my nightmare, not the monster under the bed anymore. I used to have that one. No, not anymore. Now it's this tri-partied nightmare. And basically what they're doing is trying to have faculty reported and they're trying to get faculty fired for having political agendas. Because that's not political agenda. That's not political. And Women's Studies. We are crypto-Marxists; this is what he called us. We are crypto-Marxists and we are indoctrinating our students with bullshit theories and with the language of victim-age and there's another good one. What was the other one? Oh and that we're unpatriotic because we criticize the US government. Which is a bad idea, I guess. I'm being "ha-ha" because it's not "ha-ha." It's also very serious. They're getting faculty called to the board. I happen to teach at an institution that is incredibly protective and supportive of...well...we're a human rights institute. It's a whole ...that's DePaul. But there are other institutes that are not so and they have untenured faculty. Here's another thing. If you're tenured or not tenured. That makes a huge difference. If you're not tenured, you can't take that kind of chance. Then you lose your job. I don't know. It's hard. Then there's other people that say they won't back off on my beliefs. I'm going to say what I say, do what I always have done and put out there what I believe is true. But there is no sector. We used to think that academe was like the protected sector whatever the ivory tower. No. No. And there are all kinds of people making moves to do away with tenure. There is a big joke amongst women and people of colors groups saying that now that people of color and women have gotten tenure, now the boys want to get rid of tenure. Take there where you will. I think we're at time.

1:48:10 End