

~~2020~~ protest

By

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Characters:

ABDUAL - 21, average Joe
MACK - 31, revolutionist
UNCLE ERN - 41, cool, calm, rational

Setting:

Atlanta, Georgia
Outdoor, driveway, garage

Scene 1, first day, 1 of 3

Center stage: An open garage. Tools. Chairs. A weight bench. A few boxes, and a cooler.

ABDUL, 21, pacing back and forth around the driveway.

UNCLE ERN, 41, stands watching HIM.

UNCLE ERN

Nephew... it's like you're doing figure-eights all night.

ABDUL

It's because I'm pissed Unk!

UNCLE ERN

Yeah I know. Done been through that shit my whole life. But your boy gonna be okay.

ABDUL

That's only if he ain't trippin' in the police station. You know how he is.

UNCLE ERN

But you're like that too. And right now... I don't know Neph... I just don't know.

ABDUL

What do you mean you don't know? UNK! Enough is enough! Something's gotta be done about this! All of this!

UNCLE ERN

Chill out a little.

ABDUL

What do you mean chill out? We don't have no time to be chilling.

UNCLE ERN

That's what I'm saying, we don't have time. Look over there.

UNCLE ERN points straight ahead. THEY stare for a moment.

UNCLE ERN

Yeah... you see all that smoke and fire coming from downtown? Just look at it.

ABDUL

Yeah.

UNCLE ERN

The protest turned into a straight up riot. Fast. And what ever happened, didn't even happen here in Atlanta. At least I don't think so. Did something happen here?

ABDUL

It happened in a different city, but we all affected.

UNCLE ERN

I felt a riot in the air. Been feeling that way for a year or so. Actually... since the 25th anniversary of the L.A Riots. It was TV everyday. CNN, FOX, all that.

ABDUL

Yeah I know. We had to write a essay on it.

UNCLE ERN

And now you on the same tip. Boy you better let all of this blow over.

ABDUL

We've been letting it blow over for too long. People fed up. I'm fed up!

UNCLE ERN

So now you wanna do something?

ABDUL

That's what I'm talking about. Doing something.

UNCLE ERN

You wanna do that? Riot?

ABDUL

I don't know. But... I gotta do something.

UNCLE ERN

First, how about you go get some money and bond your boy out of jail? That's thinking smart. But you all caught up in emotions like everybody else.

ABDUL

What emotions? We out here getting killed for nothing! And you talking about it's emotional? You trippin' Unk.

UNCLE ERN

So now what? You gonna run downtown with no gun and get killed too? Or you gonna run downtown with a gun and get killed too? Which one?

ABDUL

I gotta take a stand some kind of way.

UNCLE ERN

Maaaaan... Yo motherfucking-ass better sit down somewhere with that bullshit.

UNCLE ERN enters the garage and pulls out two porch chairs.

HE brings the chairs to the driveway.

HE goes back in and grabs a beer from HIS cooler.

HE walks back over to the chairs.

UNCLE ERN

Sit the fuck down for a minute.

THEY both sit and take a BREATH.

UNCLE ERN crack his beer open and take a sip.

UNCLE ERN

Listen here. I've been chillin'. You here me? Chillin'. If something happen to you, in that shit over there...

HE points downtown.

UNCLE ERN

...it'll be too much. You hear me nephew? Too. Much.

ABDUL

Okay but, what are we suppose to do?

UNCLE ERN

We suppose... to do what they doing.

We here a CAR driving by. MUSIC loud.
PEOPLE yelling OFF STAGE.

OFFSTAGE VOICES

BURN THIS BITCH DOWN!

Then it's silent again. UNCLE ERN looks at ABDUL.

UNCLE ERN

Yeah. That's what we supposed to be doing. But... how long we gonna do that shit?

ABDUL

Until we create change.

UNCLE ERN

Umh... my uncles did that same shit. And their uncles too. I think it's about to stop with me.

ABDUL

How you gonna stop it?

UNCLE ERN

I'm not stopping it, I'm stopping me. All I can change is me. Nobody else.

ABDUL

One man can change the whole world.

UNCLE ERN

Yeah I heard that too. And they all have to die for that. All of em'. Dead. I'm stopping right here. You need to stop this shit too.

ABDUL

How?

UNCLE ERN

By not reacting... No emotions. Now, I can't control you. You're a grown ass man. But if you get fucked up in this here bullshit, I may not be able to control the emotions. Too big of a test... And I'm chillin'.

ABDUL

You don't have to worry about me. I can handle myself out here.

UNCLE ERN

Did you handle it when your boy got locked up? No. You over here complaining about it... You want a beer?

ABDUL

Yeah.

UNCLE ERN goes to the cooler and gets a beer then comes back and sits.

ABDUL open and sip his beer.

UNCLE ERN

And don't forget about the virus. We all supposed to be in the house. Now everybody out.

THEY stare at each other for a beat. Then sip THEIR beers at the same time.

UNCLE ERN

You think that whole situation went away?

ABDUL

Yeah. Today it kinda looks like it.

UNCLE ERN

Yeah it do. But I don't know. I'm chillin'.

MACK, 31, hyper, enters and stands next to THEM.

MACK

What's up Uncle Ern, Abdul.

ABDUL

What up.

UNCLE ERN

What's good.

MACK

Y'all see that fire over there?

UNCLE ERN

Yeah. Been watching from here.

ABDUL

Yeah... and I'm pissed off. You heard about what happened to me and Percy earlier?

MACK

Nah. But I was just about to ask where Percy at.

ABDUL

He locked up.

MACK

What? Wait. How he get lock up at a time like this? Ain't nobody getting locked up bro. We fighting. What's up Unk? I know you ridin'.

UNCLE ERN

Nah... this ain't my fight.

MACK

What you mean? This everybody fight.

ABDUL

He talking crazy.

UNCLE ERN

It ain't everybody's fight. And I ain't crazy. This is something different. It just don't add up.

MACK

I've been saying it don't add up since the quarantine started. So what's really going on?

UNCLE ERN

I don't know. But over the last month, I couldn't do nothing but work on myself. And that's all we can do.

MACK

I can't believe we talking like this. The police killed a unarmed black man, again. Who was doing nothing. We losing focus. This what they want us to do.

UNCLE ERN

Or maybe, that's what they want us to do.

HE points downtown.

ABDUL

Who is THEY?

MACK

THEY, is the people we fighting.

ABDUL

Yeah, and I'm ready. I'm tired of this shit. Me and Percy wasn't even doing nothing.

UNCLE ERN

This is life, nephew.

ABDUL

It's the life I don't want. I need to be a part of the change.

ABDUL gets out of the chair and starts pacing.

MACK

But you still didn't tell me what happened to you and Percy.

UNCLE ERN

I don't even know the whole story either.

ABDUL

Alright... We was riding to Walmart. Halfway there, the police followed us. They followed us all the way to Walmart. We stayed in Walmart for two hours because it's nothing else to do. Then we left. The same police pulled us over. Then asked us where our bags at.

UNCLE ERN

Y'all didn't buy nothing?

ABDUL

Nah.

MACK

I feel you. Shit. Y'all just wanted to get out the house. Ain't shit to do but Walmart. The point is, they actually waited on y'all. So what the police say?

ABDUL

They said step out the car. Then Percy started trippin'. He said he didn't do nothing and wasn't getting out. The police opened our doors and pulled us out.

MACK

HELL NAH!

ABDUL

Yeah. I didn't even fight. The one told me to get on the ground, and I did. Percy wouldn't. So the one cuffed me. Then went to help the other one beat Percy up.

MACK

YOU SEE! THAT'S THAT SHIT! FUCK THESE MOTHERFUCKERS! WAS THEY WHITE OR BLACK?

ABDUL

White.

UNCLE ERN

Y'all must of drove far out?

ABDUL

Yeah we did.

MACK

Don't matter!

ABDUL

Anyway. Percy was all fighting and shit. They shot him with the stun gun, then cuffed him, then started beating him up. They drug him to the police car and threw him in.

UNCLE ERN

But they let you go.

ABDUL

Yeah. And I'm pissed off Uncle Ern.

UNCLE ERN

Look Abdul. I'm sorry that happened to y'all. And you should be pissed off. I used to be pissed off to... This is life. And it's more to come.

MACK

Not if we take a stand.

UNCLE ERN

And another thing. I know it's 2020 and all, but it's best that you stay in the city.

MACK

And I do feel you on that Unk.

UNCLE ERN

That's why we moved to Atlanta back in the day.

ABDUL

I don't get it.

UNCLE ERN

Because it's an all black city. Get it?

ABDUL

I guess.

UNCLE ERN

It's a black mayor, black judges, black attorneys, and black police.

MACK

A few of the police ain't.

UNCLE ERN

Yeah it's a couple. But for the most, we got it. And for that reason, it's better for you to stay in the city.

MACK

I don't never go to the burbs anyway.

UNCLE ERN

We still in the south. And people still have their old ways. Therefore, it's better for you young black men to stay, in, the, CITY!

MACK gets an alert on HIS phone. HE look at the phone. It's a video.

MACK

Damn... Y'all see this?

THEY all look.

UNCLE ERN

Oh shit.

ABDUL

What the...

THEY all stare for a beat.

MACK

They saying every major city is in a riot.

ABDUL and UNCLE ERN pull out THEIR own phones and start scrolling.

ABDUL

Hey y'all look at this one.

THEY all look.

UNCLE ERN

Damn! What city is that?

MACK

YOU SEE? TOLD YOU! THEY FIGHTING' THE POLICE! NOW WHAT'S UP UNK?

UNCLE ERN

Woah! Let's not go crazy.

MACK

I'll be right back!

MACK exits with a sprint.

ABDUL and UNCLE ERN scroll through THEIR phones.

We hear more cars speed by. More PEOPLE yelling from the cars.

OFFSTAGE VOICES

NO JUSTICE, NO PEACE!

OFFSTAGE VOICES

BLACK LIVES MATTER!

LIGHTS DOWN.

LIGHTS UP .

MACK enters. COVID mask on. A gallon of milk in hand. Backpack. Wearing all black.

MACK

What's up wit it? What's good Unk? Abdul what's up? It's the revolution! Televised!

ABDUL pacing and UNK ERN sits and scroll through his phone.

UNCLE ERN

Let me put this phone down. It's not making things no better.

HE put his phone in HIS pocket.

ABDUL and UNCLE ERN'S phones ALERT.

UNCLE ERN

DAMN!

HE pulls the phone back out. HE and ABDUL both watch a video on Instagram.

UNCLE ERN

Everybody acting a fool. Which one you watching?

ABDUL

I'm watching this Target store get looted. Man... they taking everything.

UNCLE ERN

It feels like the purge... And I ain't mad at them.

ABDUL

Well you do feel what I'm saying? Why you acting like don't feel me?

UNCLE ERN

Yeah. I feel you. Never said I didn't. All I'm saying is just run out there and make life worse, for all of us.

ABDUL

I'm mad, but I'm not like Mack. I don't want to go and fight... at least I don't think so, yet. But I do want my voice heard. Things gotta change.

UNCLE ERN

Who's gonna listen to your voice? Where you gonna scream out loud at?

ABDUL

With the people. At the protest. You see all the people out there protesting. And I'm sitting here doing nothing. We need to at least go and protest.

UNCLE ERN

You want me to protest with a Black Life Matters organization?

ABDUL

What the hell Unk? Who's side are you on?

UNCLE ERN

You know what side I'm on! Look at this shit!

HE shows ABDUL HIS phone.

UNCLE ERN

THERE'S NO BLACK PEOPLE IN THE PROTEST!

THEY are silent for a beat and look at the phone.

UNCLE ERN

In every city, it's a Black Life Matter protest with hardly any black participants... I'm telling you nephew, this shit is about something else! Don't get caught in the emotion!

MACK enters, struggling to carry two television boxes.

MACK

AY YO! UNK! Put this in the garage for me!

UNCLE ERN

Man what the fuck?

MACK

Help me Unk! Grab one of these boxes!

UNCLE ERN helps MACK carry the boxes
into the garage.

MACK

Thanks Unk. I'll be right back.

MACK exits.

LIGHTS DOWN:

Scene 2 PRIVILEGED, next day, 2 of 3

LIGHTS UP:

Stage empty. Garage open. Lots of new
boxes. Beer cases.

UNCLE ERN enters. HE pulls two chairs
from the garage and sits in one.

HE looks around. HE spots someone.

UNCLE ERN

HEY! HEY JOHN! Have you seen my nephew?

OFFSTAGE VOICES

NO, NOT TODAY!

UNCLE ERN

Damn... ALRIGHT, LET ME KNOW!

HE keeps looking around. HE spots
someone else.

UNCLE ERN

MISS PARKER! EXCUSE ME!

(beat)

SORRY TO ASK AGAIN, BUT, HAVE YOU SEEN ABDUL YET?

OFFSTAGE VOICES

NAW! AIN'T SEEN HIM!

HE pulls out his phone and makes a call.

UNCLE ERN

Hello. Hey Kenny. Look man. My nephew is missing. I've been up all morning calling him. I'm worried to death man. Have you seen him?

(beat)

Damn... Okay. Well um, I'll start calling the police stations.

(beat)

Maaaaan... don't even say it... I said don't say it man!

(beat)

I'm not calling the fucking morgue. I just can't do it Kenny! If need be, I'll call you back and you call for me.

HE ends the call than slumps over in the chair.

UNCLE ERN

Aw man nephew. Lord please let him be okay.

ABDUL enters.

ABDUL

Hey Uncle. What's up?

UNCLE ERN

Aw man, ain't nothing up. I'm chillin'. Grab me a beer out the cooler right quick.

ABDUL gets the beer, then returns.

HE sits next to UNCLE ERN. UNCLE ERN cracks his beer open and take a sip.

UNCLE ERN

Yeah... I been watching this so-called protest, slash, riot all night.

ABDUL

Me too. Yo Unk, where you get all that beer from?

UNCLE ERN

Oh. Mack been bringing over cases all night. He was right on time. Needed that shit.

OFFSTAGE VOICES

HEY ABDUL! BOY YO UNCLE WAS WORRIED SICK!

THEY both wave at Miss Parker, who's offstage.

ABDUL

What she talking Unk?

UNCLE ERN

You know that lady crazy as hell. Just be nice to her. She's up there in age.

ABDUL

Alright.

UNCLE ERN

Yeah. About last night though. I was watching the news, then every hour on the hour, Mack came by.

(beat)

Where was you at?

ABDUL

I was home. Watch all the protests on my phone.

UNCLE ERN

You mean watching all the riots?

ABDUL

I see it as people protesting. Taking a stand. Making a change.

UNCLE ERN

Anyway. I was calling.

(beat)

Are you sure you've been at home the whole time?

ABDUL

Yes I'm sure.

(beat)

Wait Unk. Sounds like you was worried I was out there. Were you?

UNCLE ERN

Well... naw. Even though you a grown man. I don't think you'll go off and jump into a fight that's not yours.

ABDUL

I still think this is about all of us.

MACK enters. Black ski mask covering his face. HE pull the mask up. NOBODY speaks for a beat. Then...

MACK

You should'a been downtown.

ABDUL

I Know.

UNCLE ERN

I'm straight.

MACK

Next round! Who said it's a lockdown? What's up? Round two or what?

UNCLE ERN

Round two huh? Okay then. What you gonna do when the tanks roll out?

MACK

I'll still be out there. They gotta roll me over.

UNCLE ERN

So you'll risk your life over this?

MACK

Every since I turned sixteen, my life been on the line. What's the difference now?

NOBODY has an answer. But THEY try to think of one for a beat.

UNCLE ERN

I guess it ain't no difference.

MACK

Man. Y'all should'a seen it last night. It was something I've never experienced. It was like... Yeah! Enough is enough!

ABDUL

We watched it on the news.

MACK

That wasn't the same.

(beat)

When I got down there, a bunch of people had the traffic blocked. A hundred people, letting no cars through on that street. You had to walk in.

ABDUL

Wow.

MACK

Somebody threw a brick through the Macy's window.

UNCLE ERN

Y'all had bricks in y'all backpacks?

MACK

Naw. They were just laying around.

UNCLE ERN

No shit! Look around Mack. Do you see a bunch of loose bricks laying around anywhere?

THEY look everywhere... No bricks.

ABDUL

Damn.

UNCLE ERN

Think about it Mack. Bricks? Already out? Available?

ABDUL

So what happened next?

MACK

Everybody! Stormed in and took all that shit! I couldn't even carry that much. Had to keep going back.

UNCLE ERN

Oh yeah. Thanks for the clothes.

MACK

After that, a block over, the liquor store. Open! We loaded up this dude's SUV with the whole store. Like, there you go bro. Take that shit.

ABDUL looks to UNCLE ERN to say something... Nothing.

MACK

Back on the other block. It was a straight-up stand off. The police against the protesters.

UNCLE ERN

So y'all got fucked up?

MACK

Naw. They was outnumbered. They backed off. Then, we hit them bitches with bottles, bricks, whatever!

UNCLE ERN

So that's a protest?

MACK

I wasn't with them. There were people who were official protesters. But not me. I was there to take back mines.

UNCLE ERN

Take it back from who? The businesses?

MACK

The privileged. It's time to take it back.

ABDUL

That's right. It's time we reverse it. It's been systematic racism and white privilege for way too long.

UNCLE ERN

I hear what you saying. But check this out. There is no such thing as white privilege.

MACK

WHAT? WHAT ARE TALKING ABOUT
UNK?

ABDUL

WHAT DO YOU MEAN? YOU
TRIPPIN!

(beat)

Listen Unk. Sometimes I be feeling you. But you straight trippin'. You starting to act like a Uncle Tom sellout. Maaaaan... You can't be saying stuff like that.

UNCLE ERN

Yeah I figured. This might be too much for y'all. But look here. Both of y'all.

(beat)

What white people, do you know, who can activate some fucking white privilege?

ABDUL

Um let's see. Trump. Gates.

MACK

All the Bushes. The Rothschilds--

UNCLE ERN

--I said that you know, personally. Now go-ahead.

THEY all stand around for a beat, just looking at each other.

UNCLE ERN

See? It's only one percent of white people who live that. Those people run the world. The rest of them are caught in the rat race with everybody else.

(beat)

And for that one percent, I can name you just as many black people who you'll consider, "BLACK PRIVILEGED." When you look under the surface, it's an even one percent. Want me to start naming names? Cause' I can back mines up.

MACK

Well, I don't know about that one. But I do know that's not cool to say... to anybody. Especially to black people.

UNCLE ERN

I feel you. But all I'm saying is, this shit is an illusion. There was a time when white people were, "PRIVILEGED." That shit is long gone. We've been lied to from the beginning. Both sides. Nothing is what seems. They selling you a dream.

(MORE)

UNCLE ERN (CONT'D)

(beat)
That's all I'm saying.

ABDUL
Okay but, can you not say that no more?

UNCLE ERN
Alright cool.

ABDUL
See... that's why we all need to join this movement. Change the system. Fight for equality. And vote.

UNCLE ERN
Vote. Right.

ABDUL
What now?

UNCLE ERN
Nothing.

MACK
The vote don't matter.

ABDUL
Oh it matters. You see all this stuff happening? A pandemic, racial injustice. Everybody needs to be at the polls this election. Are you at least voting Uncle Ern?

UNCLE ERN
I voted in the last election. Don't feel the need for this one.

ABDUL
This is the most important election.

UNCLE ERN
They said that about the last one. Then in the Obama elections, they were the most important ones. And the election before then, was the most important one. Shit. They want me to vote forever? I can't give a lifetime commitment.

MACK
Yeah. I'm on your side with that one Unk.

UNCLE ERN
I vote in the local stuff, when it matters to me. I need my bulk trash picked up on Monday. Not Friday. So I vote for that. Fridays, I'm chillin'. Don't wanna hear no garbage trucks in the morning. Feel me?

MACK
Yeah.

ABDUL

No. I do not Unk. But I respect it.

UNCLE ERN

I gotta live my life for me nephew. And like I said, this shit is an illusion, and something else is going on.

(beat)

As for voting, you can't vote a racist away. Or change his heart.

MACK

What's the racist system gonna do when we burn this whole city down?

UNCLE ERN

Man... I gotta live here. Who wanna live in a burned down city? Listen... I understand the need to purge. But.

ABDUL

Purge?

UNCLE ERN

Yeah. Everybody need to purge at least one time in life. It's good for the soul. So purge. Times like this, they only come around once in a lifetime. But don't burn the city down. I gotta live here.

ABDUL

I'm confused. Is you with this, or against it?

UNCLE ERN

Neither. I understand the purge, that's all. It's needed. And it's being allowed. Look under the surface. And don't get caught up.

MACK

Damn Unk. You kinda complicated.

UNCLE ERN

Naw Mack. I just understand. And partly because I always wanted to participate in a riot.

ABDUL

Why didn't you?

UNCLE ERN

Because it never popped off in the city I was in. Now this one is everywhere.

ABDUL

I don't have to go and kill people in a purge. But I wanna go and take a part in the stand.

UNCLE ERN
You taking the purge too literal.

ABDUL
Well what do you mean?

UNCLE ERN
This a special time. It won't be another time like this for a while. This is history.

MACK
In the making.

UNCLE ERN
That's right Mack. Be a part of history. This right here, is gonna be in history books. Movies and documentaries are gonna be made about this day. Play your part. And let your frustrations out.

ABDUL
So you feel me?

UNCLE ERN
I was talking to Mack.
(beat)
Play your part Mack.

ABDUL
Oh, when it comes to that you only talking to... Okay, what part should, MACK play?

UNCLE ERN
Whatever he about. Protest. Riot. Help somebody. Loot. Pull somebody from a burning building. March with a sign. Just be yourself, and play your part.

MACK
Purge.

UNCLE ERN
Yeah. Purge. As yourself. Like I told you, something else is going on and this shit is being allowed, for now.

MACK
Yeah. No justice no peace.

UNCLE ERN
I ain't wit that still, but okay.

MACK
I want back what was mine. And I'm going to take.

ABDUL
I want my voice to be heard. I want justice for my boy Percy.

UNCLE ERN

I wanna chill, stay out the way. And be left alone.

ABDUL

I'm going to the protest.

LIGHTS DOWN:

Scene 3, PURGE, last day, 3 of 3

LIGHTS UP:

Stage empty. Garage open, packed with merchandise.

UNCLE ERN enters with his phone in HIS hand.

HE scrolls. Then HE watch the screen.

UNCLE ERN

Aw man... Look at this. Don't stop that truck man!

HE keep watching intensely.

UNCLE ERN

I seen this before! If you stop the truck, they gonna pull you out and hit you with a loose brick that appeared from nowhere!

(beat)

AW HELL NAW! HE DROVE RIGHT THROUGH THE PEOPLE! SOMEBODY STUCK UNDER THE... WHAT THE?

OFFSTAGE VOICES

HEY ERNEST! ARE YOU OKAY?

HE looks across the street.

UNCLE ERN

Naw Miss Parker! Have you been watching this? It's been two days and I ain't seen Abdul!

OFFSTAGE VOICES

HE DOWN THERE IN THAT MESS?

UNCLE ERN

Yeah Miss Parker! I couldn't stop him!

OFFSTAGE VOICES

I'LL BE PRAYING FOR HIM! BOUT TO DO IT NOW! YOU BETTER PRAY TO!

UNCLE ERN

Okay! Thank you!

(beat)

Damn... I should've stopped him.

HE walks to the garage and looks. HE squeezes past all of the stuff and returns with HIS two chairs.

HE sits down.

Then, HE looks at the empty.

HE takes HIS phone out and makes a call.

UNCLE ERN

Hello. Yeah hey Kenny. Man, I done fucked up. I let my nephew... well I didn't let him. He a grown man. But, I didn't stop him from going to those damn protests.

(beat)

Yeah... I know I couldn't spot him. But maybe I could have tried harder to change his mind.

(beat)

But Kenny, it's been two days man. And nobody has seen him. I call all the jails already, and he's not arrested.

(beat)

Okay. Call me back.

HE ends the call. Then, HE gets up and starts pacing back and forth.

UNCLE ERN

Umh... I'm worried to death.

HE makes another call and puts the phone to HIS ear.

UNCLE ERN

Pick up nephew. Please pick up... Damn. Straight to voicemail.

HE ends the call. Then HIS rings.

UNCLE ERN

Hello! Yeah Kenny... What happened?

(beat)

Hold up man, talk a little slower... Now, you say, your niece said, Abdul was on Instagram yesterday getting shot?

(beat)

How is he now?

(beat)

He kept running. Well ask her who shot him Kenny.

(beat)

(MORE)

UNCLE ERN (CONT'D)

The fucking police... Okay. That's all I needed to hear. I'm on my way downtown.

HE ends the call and squeeze HIS way into the garage.

HE returns tucking something under HIS shirt and exits.

LIGHTS DOWN:

LIGHTS UP:

In the corner of an Empty stage, ABDUL sits on a milk crate.

HE gazes out into the streets.

It's commotion.

OFFSTAGE VOICES

BLACK LIVES MATTER! YEAH! YEAH!

(beat)

Hey. You okay?

ABDUL

Yeah. I'm okay. Just need to catch my breath right quick. Thanks man.

HE wipe HIS face as if HIS eyes were burning.

MACK enters.

MACK

Abdul! That's what's up you came back.

ABDUL

I never left.

MACK

What? Where did you sleep last night?

ABDUL

I went with those people from the movement. They had a camp set up.

MACK

Like a tent?

ABDUL

No. It was in an apartment around the way. It was like a base. A lot of people went there to regroup. Eat. Strategize or whatnot.

MACK

That was after the fight broke out? Because that's when I lost you.

ABDUL

Yeah. And I lost my phone right after that.

MACK

Okay, who was those people standing in that human chain between us and the police?

ABDUL

They said it was some church leaders and Nation of Islam. They wasn't with the BLM. They said they were keeping the peace.

MACK

Well that didn't work because it went down. They got hit first with the rubber bullets.

(beat)

Did you fight?

ABDUL

Yeah. I couldn't help but to. The police was trying to arrest us.

MACK

They was trying to kidnap y'all. People wasn't even doing nothing but standing in protest. It was a kidnapping, Abdul.

ABDUL

Yeah. After they finished shooting, they rushed in on this one guy. So we all helped him.

MACK

Damn right.

ABDUL

They didn't get him. Nobody got arrested.

MACK

That's what's up.

ABDUL

But I got hit with the rubber bullets though. And I thought I was going to die when they sprayed that gas.

MACK

I got sprayed too. That's when it went haywire for me. But you see how they just attacked us right?

ABDUL

Yeah I saw it.

MACK

They not here to protect us. We gotta protect us. They time almost up. They trying everything to get us out the way so they can stay here.

ABDUL

What you mean?

MACK

That racist ass privileged and white power shit. They becoming more and more irrelevant out here. So they need to get rid of us to stay in power. Feel me?

ABDUL

I don't know.

MACK

You saw how it went down. You was doing nothing. And attacked, like always.

(beat)

They trying they best to keep us down Abdul. Because check it, when we come back up... what's gonna happen to them?

ABDUL

Yeah, but see... The people that was helping at the campground, was them.

MACK

Straight up?

ABDUL

Yeah. So what is this really?

(beat)

I don't know. Is we fighting racism? Or is this just about fighting the police for injustice?

MACK

Abdul... who's ordering these police to attack you? They're being told to do this. Who's telling them?

(beat)

It may be the same group of people who you think was helping you.

ABDUL sits there and ponders. HE looks to MACK as if HE doesn't have the answer.

MACK

Yo Abdul. It's fucked up out here. Cold world. You might wanna go home.

(beat)

I'll be on the next block. Fightin'.

MACK exits.

ABDUL sits.

ABDUL

I don't know... All I do know is, I want answers. I wanna know why? I want the police killings to stop. I want justice for all of the injustice.

LIGHTS DOWN:

LIGHTS UP:

UNCLE ERN, stands on a corner watching everything, wearing HIS COVID-19 mask.

MACK enters, not paying attention.

UNCLE ERN

HEY MACK!

UNCLE ERN pulls HIS mask down. MACK walks over.

MACK

Yo Unk, what's up?

UNCLE ERN

What happened to Abdul? Is he okay? Where is he--

MACK

--Abdul is fine Unk. I saw him not too long ago around the corner.

UNCLE ERN

I heard he got shot!

MACK

Naw. He got shot in the ass with a rubber bullet... That's all.

(beat)

That's all.

UNCLE ERN

That's it?

MACK

Yeah.

UNCLE ERN

Well where in hell he's been all this time?

MACK

I really don't know. We got separated. But he said he's been protesting with the protesters.

UNCLE ERN

For two days?

MACK

And it don't look like this about to end no time soon. If you want, I can take you around there to him. He was just sitting last I seen him.

UNCLE ERN

Naw it's cool.

MACK

You sure? You seem worried.

UNCLE ERN

Naw I'm chillin'.

MACK

Chillin'. In the riots?

UNCLE ERN

The so-called protests.

(beat)

But yeah. I was a little worried. I heard he got shot on Instagram.

MACK

Ha, ha, it was a rubber bullet. But that's when it everybody scattered and went ballistic.

UNCLE ERN

What y'all do?

MACK

People started fighting back. Throwing shit. Busting windows. Turning police cars over. Then setting the police cars on fire.

(beat)

It was crazy.

UNCLE ERN

Wow... it's the same thing in just about every major city. Never seen nothing like this.

(beat)

It's a beautiful thang.

HE look around and take it all in.

UNCLE ERN

Yeah... something to be a part of. But in the end, is it worth anything?

MACK

Yeah it's worth everything. We can't win it if we ain't in it.

UNCLE ERN

I ain't even gonna get started. But I hear you though.

(beat)

But check it. I'm almost the only person out here with a mask on. What's up with that?

MACK

I don't know. It don't look like nobody is concerned with that anymore. It might be over with.

UNCLE ERN

But if it's a real thing, everybody out here with all of this fighting and side by side marching should be sick, right?

MACK

That's what they've been saying.

UNCLE ERN

Look at all of these people down here. It's crazy.

Off stage, THEY hear glass smashing. A large crowd cheering.

UNCLE ERN

Damn.

MACK

They about to take everything in there. Go ahead Unk. Go check it out.

UNCLE ERN

I ain't going in there. It's good enough to see it live. And I would even be down here if I wasn't looking for Abdul.

(beat)

But look, I'm about to make my way out of here. Don't tell Abdul I was out here. Okay?

MACK

I wont say nothing.

UNCLE ERN

Cool. I'm gone.

UNCLE ERN exits.

LIGHTS DOWN:

LIGHTS UP:

ABDUL stands in front of the open garage.

MACK enters.

MACK
Hey. Glad to see you okay.

ABDUL
Thanks Mack.

MACK
Where Unk at?

ABDUL
He should be in there. I didn't even knock on the door yet. Just standing around waiting.

MACK
Well at least pull the chairs out.

ABDUL enters the garage and pulls out two chairs.

THEY both sit.

MACK
You all quiet. Are you good?

ABDUL
Man... I don't know.

MACK
You stayed out all night again in your protest camp or whatever it was?

ABDUL
No, I went back home. Well not straight back home. I just stood back and watched everybody storm the CNN building.

MACK
I missed that one. What happened?

ABDUL
It was like a war zone. The people on the inside was fighting to keep people out. Nobody got in. But the outside was destroyed, like all the other places.

MACK
You protesting today?

ABDUL
I don't think so. Are you?

MACK

Hell yeah. I'm fighting to the end. No justice... no peace.
No matter how long it takes.

(beat)

Did you at least get you some merchandise?

ABDUL

I didn't get nothing. It was chaotic. You could've got
trampled to death. Then if you go in after the fact, the
police might get you.

MACK

Yeah. You see how they would sit and wait until somebody was
by they-self. Then they run over and kidnap them.

ABDUL

Yeah I saw it. The police ain't shit.

MACK

They just a gang, taking orders. We need to overthrow the
whole system. Straight up revolution. Televised.

(beat)

You wit it?

UNCLE ERN enters.

UNCLE ERN

I think y'all better leave that one alone.

HE enters the garage and returns with a
chair.

HE sit next to MACK.

MACK

Why leave it alone?

UNCLE ERN

Because it will never end, that's why. And something that
don't have an ending, is an illusion.

ABDUL

What about justice?

UNCLE ERN

You may not be able to serve justice to someone else.

ABDUL

At least we can hold people accountable.

UNCLE ERN

Accountable for what? Not liking you? A fight, that ends in
death? The police was designed to protect property rights.
Not you.

ABDUL

So what now?

UNCLE ERN

Nothing. It's a never ending game. You played your part.

(beat)

Now just sit back and watch.

THEY watch in silence... As the LIGHTS
SLOWLY FADE.