

# ***both/and***

A Video Play  
by Jamil Khoury

Adapted from Jamil Khoury's stage play *WASP: White Arab Slovak Pole*

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## DEVELOPMENT HISTORY

In the summer of 2011, Silk Road Theatre Project filmed a revised version of Jamil Khoury's short play *WASP: White Arab Slovak Pole* as a video play. *WASP* was commissioned by Silk Road Theatre Project as part of *The DNA Trail: A Genealogy of Short Plays about Ancestry, Identity, and Utter Confusion*, which premiered at Silk Road Theatre Project from March 2 - April 4, 2010. *The DNA Trail* was produced in association with the Goodman Theatre and was directed by Steve Scott.

Please note that *WASP* in its totality was never released as a video play, as post-production revealed that much of what worked well on the stage, didn't translate to screen. Instead, *WASP* was adapted and edited into Jamil Khoury's video play, *both/and*, released in 2011, while other clips were used in Khoury's documentary film *Not Quite White: Arabs, Slavs, and the Contours of Contested Whiteness*, released in 2012. The script that follows reflects the adapted video play *both/and*.

The full video version cast of *WASP: White Arab Slovak Pole* included:

JAMIL	Clayton Stamper
CLUB GIRL ONE	Fawzia Mirza
CLUB GIRL TWO	Kiley Moore
ANGRY PERSON OF COLOR ONE	Kelvin Roston Jr.
ANGRY PERSON OF COLOR TWO	Jennifer Shin
TEMP AGENCY MANAGER	Jamil Khoury
PR CONSULTANT ONE	Cora Vander Broek
PR CONSULTANT TWO	Anthony Peeples
ARAB MAN	Khurram Mozaffar
GAY MAN	David Chrzanowski
HOAX NEWS REPORTER ONE	Joel Gross
HOAX NEWS REPORTER TWO	Melissa Kong
CHURCH LADY ONE	Lydia Berger
CHURCH LADY TWO	Brenda Barrie

The full video version production team of *WASP: White Arab Slovak Pole* included:

Executive Producers	Malik Gillani Jamil Khoury
Director	J. Paul Preseault
Director of Photography	Stephen Combs
Editor and Script Supervisor	Ashley Kennedy
Set Designer	Chelsea Warren
Costume Designer	Amy Gabbert
Composer	Mikhail Fiksel
Technical Director	Jason Pikscher
Location Sound Mixers	Stephen Jacobs James Thompson
Assistant Director	Alicia Healy
Assistant Camera	Brittnee Dowdy
Makeup and Hair	Michelle DiSalvo
Gaffer	Alex Buholzer
Grips	A.J. Michael Eric Reynolds Tawanda Trask
Production Assistant	Anothai Kawekaen
Facilities and Craft Services Coordinator	Amanda Vevers

## SETTING

If performed as a live theatre piece, *both/and* is best staged in a very minimalist, non-realistic manner. There are no specific set requirements. Time/space configurations are entirely at the discretion of the director.

## CHARACTERS

JAMIL

ARAB MAN

GAY MAN

TORMENTOR ONE

TORMENTOR TWO

JAMIL

*(to himself in a mirror)*

This is what an Arab-American looks like.

This is what an Arab-American

This is what an Arab-American

Arab American

This is what an Arab American looks like.

This is what an Arab-American looks like.

FADE TO: JAMIL  
AND ARAB MAN

ARAB MAN

Jamil? Jamil Khoury? You're Arab.

JAMIL

Yes. Well I, I'm half-Arab.

ARAB MAN

I never would have guessed. You look like an American.

JAMIL

Well I am an American.

ARAB MAN

I mean a real American. Your parents they're from?

JAMIL

My father's originally from Syria. He came to U.S. back in the '50.

ARAB MAN

Ah, you're Syrian. Of course.

JAMIL

My mother was born in Chicago, of Polish and Slovak heritage.

ARAB MAN

You look Syrian.

JAMIL

Thank you.

ARAB MAN

Your eyes, they're Arab.

JAMIL

Arabs often tell me that.

FADE TO: JAMIL  
AND GAY MAN

GAY MAN

A white guy named Jamil, what was I supposed to think? I don't do the whole third world thing. I like white dudes. Like you.

JAMIL

Well my tastes pretty much cover the map when it comes to men.

GAY MAN

Mmmm.

JAMIL

All races, all creeds, even the occasional Caucasian.

GAY MAN

An oil sheik with a harem of boys.

FADE TO: JAMIL  
AND ARAB MAN

ARAB MAN

Have you ever been to Syria?

JAMIL

Many times, I try to get back every few years.

ARAB MAN

Oh bravo, Jamil! You like it there?

JAMIL

I love Syria, especially Damascus.

ARAB MAN

Oh that's great, man. You know some of these American-born Arabs, they never go home. They're lost, they want to be more American than the Americans.

JAMIL

It's the whole assimilation thing.

ARAB MAN

Mhmm!

JAMIL

They kind of screwed it up.

ARAB MAN

You know your family over there?

JAMIL

Oh yes, one, one large extended Syrian family.

ARAB MAN  
Tahki arabi?  
(*Arabic for "Do you speak Arabic?"*)  
Oh you must speak Arabic, Jamil?

JAMIL  
I know, I know. I understand Arabic way better than I can speak it. I don't know a word of Polish or Slovak.

ARAB MAN  
Why would you?

JAMIL  
Well it's important to know both sides.

ARAB MAN  
Both sides, rubbish. Your father's Arab, you're Arab. Your mother, doesn't count.

FADE TO: JAMIL  
AT THE MIRROR

JAMIL  
This, is what a feminist looks like.  
This, this is what a feminist  
Is what a feminist looks like.  
This is what a feminist looks like.  
This, is what a feminist looks like.

FADE TO: JAMIL  
AND ARAB MAN

ARAB MAN  
Jamil, are you married?

JAMIL  
Not according to Illinois state law.

ARAB MAN  
Illinois state? Oh you have a girlfriend?

JAMIL  
No, no girlfriend.

ARAB MAN  
Are you engaged?

JAMIL  
No, I'm not engaged.

ARAB MAN  
Don't tell me you're divorced.

JAMIL

No, I'm not divorced, I'm not a widower.

ARAB MAN

You can't be alone. Men have needs, no?

JAMIL

I'm not alone.

ARAB MAN

Then why so shy, so, so secretive? We're men, hey, how about you and I we go to a titty bar together, huh?

JAMIL

I, uh, I'd rather not.

FADE TO: JAMIL  
AND GAY MAN

GAY MAN

I'll get over the whole Arab thing. I want to get to know you better. Where I come from, Arab means scary. A-rab, terrorist, towelhead, raghead, camel jockey, sand nigger. And those are just the good terms. The thoughts people have.

JAMIL

Here's a thought, why don't you stop talking so that we can start kissing?

*Jamil kisses Gay Man*

FADE TO: JAMIL  
AND ARAB MAN

ARAB MAN

You, you tell me, you like Arab girls or American girls?

JAMIL

I think there is good to be found in every nationality.

ARAB MAN

Fine, fine. Hey but you marry an Arab girl, huh? She makes a much better wife. American girls, sure good to have fun with, fool around with. You want the girl who only belongs to Jamil.

JAMIL

She should belong to herself, no?

ARAB MAN

If she's a whore. You cannot be a bachelor forever, Jamil. You don't want people to think you're gay, huh?

FADE TO: JAMIL  
AND TORMENTERS



TORMENTER ONE

Interesting who you choose to align yourself with, Jamil. We all know how much the Arabs love gay rights.

TORMENTER TWO

Don't Arabs stone people like you, Jamil?[Laughter]

*The tormenters laugh.*

FADE TO: JAMIL  
AT THE MIRROR

JAMIL

This, is what a big old liberal homo looks like.  
Big old liberal homo.  
This is what a big old liberal homo  
Liberal homo looks like.  
This is what a big old liberal homo looks like.

FADE TO: JAMIL  
AND ARAB MAN

ARAB MAN

Hey what you do for money? I bet you work in some shiny office building downtown, huh?

JAMIL

Actually I run a small theater company that I founded with, with my friend.

ARAB MAN

You own a what?

JAMIL

A theater company. It's called Silk Road Theater Project. We showcase playwrights of Asian, Middle Eastern, Mediterranean backgrounds.

ARAB MAN

Asian, Middle Eastern you mean *tareek al-hareer*. *Tareek al-hareer*.  
(*Arabic for "the silk road"*)  
Ah yes, so you make movies.

JAMIL

No actually we produce stage plays, live theater.

ARAB MAN

Oh in New York, Broadway.

JAMIL

Not exactly. More like the basement of a Methodist church. Silk Road was founded in response to 9/11. All the hatred and backlash against Arabs and Muslims.

ARAB MAN

They hated us long before 9/11 my friend.

JAMIL

Absolutely but we see ourselves as the antidote to all that clash of civilizations right or

ARAB MAN

Oh fuck U.S. imperialism, yes.

JAMIL

Well we wanted to counter all of the negative representation and start representing ourselves, tap into the whole storyteller tradition.

ARAB MAN

Show the Arab in a good light. Hmm, that's good.

JAMIL

More like show the Arabs as human beings. We're not angels, we're not demons, but we're real people.

ARAB MAN

How come I never heard of you? When you do Arab plays here in Chicago.

JAMIL

Well they're American plays, written in English. The playwrights that we work with are Americans for the most part. But of Silk Road origins. And not just Arab. We tell Chinese stories and Indian stories.

ARAB MAN

Chinese stories. Indian stories. What do you want with such people?

JAMIL

We all have origins along the Silk Road. And that's the point, we are all interconnected.

ARAB MAN

They're not people, Jamil. I bet you make a lot of money.

JAMIL

Typically, we lose money. We're a not-for-profit.

ARAB MAN

What does that mean? Are you supported by the government?

JAMIL

I wish. No, it's not about money, it's about our mission. We're trying to make a difference for our community, for you, for me.

ARAB MAN

No one has even heard of you! How are you making a difference?

JAMIL

In our own small way. I think that we

ARAB MAN

Oh stop with the American bullshit. Who are you, Oprah? At least that black bitch is rich. No you are wasting your time, Jamil. We're here to make money, that's what we're here for. You think those Chinese people, those Indian people give a damn about some theater? They're here to make money, too.

JAMIL

You don't get it. You just don't get it, do you?

ARAB MAN

Get what?

JAMIL

Do you ever wonder why we are so weak and irrelevant in this country? Do you ever wonder why politicians never pay a price for scapegoating us or why when an Arab city is bombed, our voice is don't help.

ARAB MAN

Oh so now the American is going to teach the Arab about politics.

JAMIL

Can we please just stop being our own worst enemy.

*They laugh.*

ARAB MAN

Jamil, you are not one of us. You're Polish, remember? You do us a favor, you change your name. You change your name.

JAMIL

This, this, this isn't working.

ARAB MAN

You are not one of us.

JAMIL

This has never worked. You, you will accept me on my terms.

ARAB MAN

*(laughs)*

You are not one of us.

JAMIL

My terms.

GAY MAN

The guys I like typically don't have Arabic names.

ARAB MAN

You are not one of us.

*Arab Man laughs.*

FADE TO: MONTAGE  
OF GAY MAN, ARAB  
MAN, AND  
TORMENTERS

GAY MAN

The guys I like typically don't have Arabic names.

ARAB MAN

You, are not one of us.

*(The tormentors and Arab Man laugh)*

FADE TO: JAMIL  
ALONE

JAMIL

Okay fine, you won't accept me. But I never signed off on any of this. Now you're stifling social mores, your silly political litmus tests, your fucked-up notions of masculinity. And don't tell me that I am inauthentic. Not real enough? Not you enough? I don't want to be you. I am authentically me.

END OF PLAY