

## Excerpts from Jihad against Violence: Oh ISIS Up Yours!

Excerpts from

*Jihad against Violence: Oh*

*ISIS Up Yours!* by Fawzia Afzal-Khan Arab Stages,

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*Jihad Against Violence: Oh ISIS Up Yours!* is a non-linear play, offering snapshots of a world in rapid transition, torn by intra and inter-group violence, where the possibilities of transnational solidarities and rivalries between differently-situated Muslim women are explored in a humorous vein. In the wake of the continuing US-led “Global War on Terror”—the play signals the intertwined discourses of Islamic extremism, “oppressed” Muslim womanhood, and western neo-imperialism.

### Characters

Muslim Woman 1 (Pakistani-American)

Muslim Woman 2 (Syrian)

### Prop List

Two big scripts (each actress has one), gun, prayer rug, red shoes, glasses, box of donuts, 2 chairs, 1 table, harmonium, cell phone, red dress, green burqa, red and black chador (for Muslim Woman 2), thin veil (for Muslim Woman 1). Screen for projecting music videos, CD player.

### ACT II SCENE 1

Woman 1 sits sexily on floor to stage left covered by a thin abaya wearing tight clothing underneath and stiletto heels, that can be seen. She is singing an upbeat Syrian song usually sung on weddings but in a mournful tone; Woman 2 performs a “luddi” dance (Pakistani wedding dance) to the mournful ditty smiling and looking happy on stage right; she is wearing a red dress. Two chairs slightly facing each other further back on stage.

WOMAN 1 suddenly notices Woman 2 performing dance and stands up in anger:

WOMAN 1: I am ISIS don't you know that?

WOMAN 2: What? ISIS? The Goddess? From Egypt? What are you doing here, in America, in my Pakistani-American fantasy play....I must be dreaming...or having a nightmare...

WOMAN 1: Wallahi, aozobillah I am not a goddess! We are Muslims are you mad? There is No God but Allah, he is the one and only, the creator, the destroyer, al qahaar, al jabbaar al...

WOMAN 2 (*agitated*): Shut Up! Shut Up! Why are you carrying on like this....like a fundamentalist crazy lady... like those they talk about on CNN and Al Jazeera... that's not who you are right? I mean look at

you... (*Here she pulls off the thin veil that WOMAN 1 is wearing, to reveal her body sporting sexy clothing and shoes*)... my God, you look like a Victoria Secret Model! Maybe a bigger size, ha ha, but that's okay, our men like their women on the curvy side... Oh I get it! You ARE a model for that new lingerie line, ISIS from the UK that everyone's talking about... I recognize your face...

*WOMAN 1 starts doing gunshot dance to a video of exploding violins projected on the back wall. Leans against the back wall, in a movement sequence simulating the whole body getting riddled with bullets and being sexually liberated at the same time.*

WOMAN 1 (*screaming*): Sex Jihad! Here I come!!

*WOMAN 1 simulates an orgasm to the sound of the exploding violins that sound like bullets being fired. And when it ends, goes and sits demurely on chair at stage left, covering herself with her abaya once again.*

WOMAN 2 (*standing, announces*): ACT TWO: SUCCESS IS EASTERN... AND VIOLENT.

*WOMAN 2 goes and sits on a chair at stage right.*

*WOMAN 1 reads lines seated from her chair; WOMAN 2 also reads from her chair.*

WOMAN 1: SCENE ONE. Bearded men dancing – the dabkeh, the luddi

WOMAN 2: SCENE TWO. Bearded men singing

WOMAN 1: SCENE THREE. Bearded men doing cocaine

WOMAN 2: SCENE FOUR. Bearded men having sex

WOMAN 1: SCENE FIVE. Bearded men shopping

WOMAN 2: SCENE SIX. Bearded men praying

WOMAN 1: SCENE SEVEN. Bearded men making bombs

WOMAN 2: SCENE EIGHT. Bearded men having sex with hijabi women

WOMAN 1: SCENE NINE. Bearded men and hijabi women fighting

WOMAN 2: SCENE TEN. Bearded men beating hijabi women

WOMAN 1: SCENE ELEVEN. Hijabi women spitting on bearded men

WOMAN 2: SCENE TWELVE. Hijabi women spitting on each other

WOMAN 1: SCENE THIRTEEN. Bearded men preaching jihadi sermons

WOMAN 2: SCENE FOURTEEN. Bearded men and hijabi women acting suspicious

WOMAN 1: SCENE FIFTEEN. Bearded men and hijabi women getting arrested... maybe.

WOMAN 2: SCENE SIXTEEN. Bearded men getting thrown into the desert, maybe... or dumped into the sea... maybe. END OF FIRST ACT

WOMAN 1 (*stands up*): ACT TWO, SCENE ONE

WOMAN 2 (*stands up*): But Act Two has not been written yet, *yaar*...

WOMAN 1: Oh yes it has

WOMAN 2: No it hasn't

WOMAN 1: Oh it's been written... darling its being written even as we are speaking.

WOMAN 2: Well, and so who is writing it, darling?

WOMAN 1: Here's (*draws out: heeeere's*) Obama...

WOMAN 2: OH... OBAMA... oh so he's the Messiah... My director... Oh I love him, my beloved... I've been waiting for him since this wretched play started... (*starts singing Pakistani love song: "Baaajey Payal Meri"*)

WOMAN 1: Yes, yes, I love him too—he is the Messiah Director you have been waiting for, and me too, my darling...we have all been waiting for him... and my darling, he is coming to your Pakistan, and then to my Syria—get your masala chicken and Shami kebabs ready and I will prepare my kibbeh...

WOMAN 2: Oh my darling, yes, he does love my Paki Shami kebabs—but what if his tastes have changed... now I'm worrying... what if he doesn't like them as much as before? Its good that he will go on to visit *your* Sham on his world tour after coming here... to Syria's bazaars, there he can gorge to his heart's content on your beloved kibbeh...

WOMAN 1: Oh yes, that's right, but don't worry, I also hear he cooks a mean Pakistani *daal* himself... maybe he will cook you some when he comes!!! (*both women giggle girlishly*)

WOMAN 2: You are right to remind me *yaar*, he does love my Paki spices, doesn't he!

WOMAN 1: Oh God! For the love of ALL our Muslim spice... You know what I mean *habibi*... our brown, sexy spice—perhaps—perhaps... he won't bomb us...

WOMAN 2: Yes, maybe he won't... After all, he isn't British.

WOMAN 1: Well yes, quite so... He isn't British... but, but... he may still bring the Camerons and the Blairs with him for dinner, no? How many chicken and goats will we both have to slaughter do you

think?

WOMAN 2: Oh dear, oh dear, yes, we may be forgetting... What about the Blacks...??

WOMAN 1: Honey-darling-sweetheart-habibi... let's not worry... after all, everyone is welcome in our countries—we Muslims do have a tradition of hospitality you know, so we no longer have to Guess Who's Coming to Dinner anymore!!

WOMAN 2: Its true, it doesn't matter who comes, we Pakis and Arabs are great cooks you know...

WOMAN 1: You are so correct! Who can be better cooks than us Muslims??

WOMAN 2: Did you know, my grandmother was a fabulous cook, and my mother is a grand chef, and my youngest aunt cooks a mean shahi korma... shahi korma... oh... that reminded me of my best friend from childhood... Haji... yes, yes, she went to Saudi Arabia and performed the Hajj at such a young age... you know, I've been waiting for her, actually... all this time... her real name meant a shahi bird... did you know, if that magical bird flies over your head, it makes you a king...

WOMAN 1: King? Do you mean Caliph? Oh my Allah, I could have my own Caliphate! yes, yes, your Haji is my Khansa, my female jihadi warrior—Ya Khansa!!!

TOGETHER: SEX JIHAD!!! HERE WE COME!!!!

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*Fawzia Afzal-Khan is professor of English, director of the Women and Gender Studies Program at Montclair State University, and a University Distinguished Scholar. She has published extensively on postcolonial feminism, Muslim women, performance, and politics, with a particular focus on Pakistan. She is author of Cultural Imperialism: Genre and Ideology in the Indo-English Novel (Penn State Press 1993), A Critical Stage: The Role of Secular Alternative Theatre in Pakistan (Seagull Press, 2005), co-editor of (The Pre-Occupation of Postcolonial Studies (Duke University Press, 2000), and editor of Shattering the Stereotypes: Muslim Women Speak Out (Interlink Books 2005). Her memoir, Lahore with Love: Growing Up With Girlfriends Pakistani Style was published by Syracuse University Press in 2010. Afzal-Khan is a trained vocalist in North Indian Classical music, a published playwright in the pages of TDR (The Drama Review), a poet, and has worked as actor and singer for Ajoka Theatre Troupe of Pakistan, as well as with the experimental theatre collective Compagnie Faim de Siècle of which she was one of the founding members. She serves as contributing editor to TDR (The Drama Review) and is founding chair of the South Asian Feminist Caucus of NWSA (The National Women's Studies Association of North America), where she also serves as a member of the Governing Council. She is currently working as creative director, scholar, and producer on a documentary film about Pakistani female singers, for which she won a development grant from the National Endowment of the Humanities in 2011. She has won a Fulbright award to continue research on her book on pakistani female singers as well as to help Kinnaird College for Women, Lahore, set up their Women and Gender Studies Program.*

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Arab Stages

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