

ACT II Scene 2

SAM is driving his car, packed with his belongings. All the seats, including the passenger seat, are piled high with boxes, suitcases, coolers. He is fiddling with the radio until he gets a clear station.

RADIO MINISTER

New Orleans is submerged. People are drowning in their homes, in their cars, in the streets. People who climbed to their roofs are overcome by the heat and have no water to drink. Heroic people are risking their lives to save others.

During these times of trouble, let us all heed the words from Matthew 25: 'For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me. . .'

SAM turns off the radio. A recording of VIOLET'S voice plays. SAM hears Violet's voice in his head.

RECORDING OF VIOLET'S VOICE

That's it, Sam! I can't overlook this anymore! You have no compassion for anybody who's less fortunate than you.

I'VE SEEN AN UGLY SIDE OF YOU AND NOW I UNDERSTAND. YOU'RE A SCAM AND A SHAM, SAM, YOU'RE NOT MY MAN!

SAM looks pensive and distraught. SAM drives past a disheveled man who is limping and hitchhiking. All of a sudden SAM grabs the wheel hard and brakes.

SAM

Damn, a flat! Now what? I've never changed a tire.

SAM steps out of the car and stands looking at the flat tire. The HITCHHIKER catches up with Sam.

HITCHHIKER

You need some help, man?

SAM

Yeah, you know how to change a tire?

HITCHHIKER

Sure do.

SAM

Well, yes, that would be very nice of you.

SAM opens his trunk and pulls out boxes. The HITCHHIKER pulls a spare tire and a jack out of the trunk and goes about changing the tire.

SAM

So you're walkin' and hitchin' with that bad leg?

HITCHHIKER

Yeah, I thought it would be easy to catch a ride, but everybody's full up with people and their things.

SAM

Seems so. You mind if I ask what happened to your leg?

HITCHHIKER

No, that's OK. It got busted up pretty good by an IED.

SAM

Were you over in Iraq or Afghanistan?

HITCHHIKER

Iraq. I was a mechanic.

SAM

Oh yeah? What was it like being there? You know, war and everything.

HITCHHIKER

It was a job, and not one I talk about much.

SAM

Yeah, I, uh, didn't do any service. So where are you headed?

HITCHHIKER

I really don't know. I just wanna get out of the storm's path. I figured I'd go wherever somebody would take me.

The HITCHHIKER puts the flat tire and jack in the trunk. SAM and the HITCHHIKER put the boxes back in.

HITCHHIKER

OK, you're all set.

SAM is holding some bills and reaches his hand out to the hitchhiker.

SAM

Here, take this. You'll need it.

HITCHHIKER

I didn't do this expectin' to be paid.

SAM

Well, at least let me give you a ride.

HITCHHIKER

How can you? Your car is stuffed to the max.

SAM starts pulling out boxes and suitcases from the passenger seat and putting them by the side of the road.

SAM

Now there's room.

HITCHHIKER

So, you don't have nobody either? I see you're going on your own.

SAM

Well, I kind of do have somebody. I left behind a couple of people who I really care about.

HITCHHIKER

Really? Why aren't you takin' them?

SAM

It's a complicated story, but they didn't want to leave.

HITCHHIKER

And you left anyway?

SAM is silent for a while.

SAM

Yeah . . . You know, I'm thinkin' maybe I want to go back. *(Pause)* You want to come back with me? You could stay at my place—it's in the French Quarter, and I don't think it's goin' to be that bad there. I think we could take our chances. And maybe I can try to find those people I was talking about.

HITCHHIKER

OK, if you can put me up, then I'm willin' to risk it. Hey, I need to take a leak. Let me go find a bush.

SAM

No problem. I'll be here.

The HITCHHIKER exits. SAM stands by the side of the car, looking troubled.

16. The Man I Want To Be

SAM

(Music underscoring). What was I thinking, driving away from the people who make my life worth living. I was taking care of myself while the ones I love are trying to protect their homes and stay alive. To take care of each other. Be there for each other. And I've left Violet . . . the only woman I've ever truly loved! I can't go back. She'd never let me back. But what about her and Jasmine?

THE MAN I WANT TO BE WOULD HAVE INTEGRITY.
HE'D STAND BESIDE HIS FRIENDS, NO MATTER WHERE OR WHEN.

THE MAN I WANT TO BE WOULD SHOW THAT HE IS STRONG
BY PUTTING OTHERS FIRST, BY KNOWING RIGHT FROM WRONG.

THE MAN I WANT TO BE WOULD BE SINCERE AND KIND.
HE'D CARE'FLY CHOOSE HIS WORDS BEFORE HE SPEAKS HIS MIND.
SO LET THIS BE THE START, LET THIS BE THE DAY,
I OPEN UP MY HEART AND LET LOVE LEAD THE WAY.

I FEEL I'VE JUST AWAKENED, I SEE HOW I MUST CHANGE.
MY LIFE IS WAITING TO BE SHAPED, IT'S THERE FOR ME TO CLAIM.

SO NOW I SET MY GOALS AND NOW I MOVE AHEAD
TO FOLLOW A NEW PATH, FAR DIFF'RENT THAN I'VE LED.

THE MAN I WANT TO BE, THIS IMAGE THAT I SEE,
AND I WON'T STOP UNTIL THAT MAN IS ME.

The HITCHHIKER enters. SAM and the HITCHHIKER get in the car. BLACKOUT

ACT II Scene 3

A street in front of houses. People are being swept away in flood waters. ONE MAN is holding the hand of his wife, who breaks free and is swept away. RESCUERS are putting people in boats. Some are carrying dead bodies.

17. Katrina Instrumental #2

TV VOICE (over the instrumental)

This is Jesse Narani for WWL. I'm talking with U.S. Coast Guard swimmer Susan Harrison about the rescues. Tell us what it's been like for you in the last couple days.

COAST GUARD SWIMMER VOICE

When the levees broke, we assessed the situation from a helicopter. We saw houses under water, houses on fire, people waving at us from rooftops. It was surreal. The first night I looked down and saw an older man on his roof. I yelled, "So you're ready to go?" And he said his wife was in the attic. I had to use a crash axe to get through the roof. From then on, we've been carrying wood-chopping tools.

TV VOICE

So are you rescuing a lot of people from rooftops? Are you getting there in time?

COAST GUARD SWIMMER VOICE

Yes, we are saving a lot of people. But we're also finding bodies. In this job, you can't focus on the people who didn't make it. You have to focus on the people you can save. We are flying six or seven hours, then take a break, and then get back into it.

TV VOICE

If there are too many people to fit in your copter, what do you do?

COAST GUARD SWIMMER VOICE

We have to triage. We have to make decisions about who needs to go first, like children and old people. And get back to the others later. It is horrible. A lot of people are angry with us.

BLACKOUT

ACT II Scene 4

Roof of Beau's house. BEAU is sitting on the roof with his dog.

BEAU

Oh Buddy, what are we gonna do? Our food and water are gone, and it's beastly hot up here. The damn flood is up to the attic! (*Hears helicopter approaching.*) Oh my lord, over here, over here! (*waving frantically*).

Sounds of a helicopter. The helicopter sounds increase to maximum and stabilize. A thick rope with a hoist is dangled overhead.

HELICOPTER PILOT (offstage)

You down there, it's time to go!

BEAU

Thank God! Buddy, we're being rescued! We're saved.

HELICOPTER PILOT

C,mon, I'm taking you to the Convention Center.

BEAU

The Convention Center? Don't you mean the Superdome?

HELICOPTER PILOT

No way, the Superdome is overflowing with people and garbage. Grab the hoist, man!

BEAU

Gotcha. But what about my dog?

HELICOPTER PILOT (offstage)

You have to leave the dog. We're packed with people—I'm already over the weight limit.

BEAU

No way, I'm not leaving my dog!

HELICOPTER PILOT (offstage)

You've got to! You wanna die down there?

BEAU

I'm not going! I'll wait for the next chopper.

HELICOPTER PILOT (offstage)

There is no next chopper. I am the last one for the Lower Ninth.

BEAU

But I can't leave him. Just give me a minute.

HELICOPTER PILOT (offstage)

I'll circle around once. That's all the time I'm giving you to make up your mind.

The helicopter sounds fade.

18. Always by My Side

BEAU (to dog)

MY FRIEND . . . YOU'VE BEEN WITH ME THROUGH THICK AND THIN,
AND AS EACH DAY BEGAN AND ENDED, YOU WERE ALWAYS BY MY SIDE.
AND I . . . WOULD COME AND GO JUST AS I PLEASED,
BUT STILL YOU GREETED ME WITH LOVE WHENEVER I WOULD COME
BACK HOME.

YOUR EYES . . . I SEE THE ANGUISH THERE INSIDE,
BUT ARE YOU TRYING NOT TO SHOW . . . THAT YOU ARE ALSO
TERRIFIED?
I PRAY . . . THAT GOD OR FATE WILL LEND A HAND,
SOME HIGHER POWER UNDERSTAND . . . YOU DON'T DESERVE TO DIE.

I CANNOT HIDE THE TRUTH FROM YOU, I WOULDN'T LEAVE IF I WAS NOT
TOO SCARED . . . TO STAY WITH YOU . . . HERE . . . TOGETHER.

GOODBYE . . . GOODBYE MY FRIEND, MY LOYAL FRIEND,
THIS LONG AND PAINFUL DAY WILL END WITHOUT YOU . . .

The helicopter sounds increase. BEAU reaches out and
grabs the hoist.

BEAU

. . . BY MY SIDE.

BLACKOUT

ACT II Scene 5

A downtown commercial street. TWO PEOPLE are walking.
A THIRD PERSON is looking in a store window.

FIRST PERSON

Hey, have you heard this one? How is Hurricane Katrina like a typical woman?

SECOND PERSON

I don't know. How?

FIRST PERSON

She shows up all warm, wild, and wet, then the next thing you know she's taken the house, the car, and left you devastated.

The TWO PEOPLE laugh and stop at the store window.

FIRST PERSON

Hey, I can see new TVs in there.

THIRD PERSON

There's some food too. I need food and water for my children!

FIRST PERSON

Should we go for it?

SECOND PERSON

I don't know. I don't want to end up in the slammer. Or get shot!

THIRD PERSON

To hell with it, nobody's around and we need this stuff. Break a window.

FIRST PERSON heaves something at a window. Sound of smashing glass.

19. Now Is the Time

FIRST PERSON

NOW IS THE TIME . . . I'M GETTIN' MINE . . .
TOASTERS AND T-SHIRTS, WATCHES AND SNEAKERS, WHISKEY AND
WINE

THIRD PERSON

NOW IS THE TIME . . . I'M GETTIN' MINE . . .
MAKIN' MY MOVE, TAKIN' MY CHANCE, DON'T CARE ABOUT THE
RULES . . .

FIRST PERSON/THIRD PERSON

EACH DAY THESE RICH FOLKS SPENDING ALL OVER TOWN
THE CASH DON'T EVER SEEM TO TRICKLE DOWN
NO TIME TO STALL . . . TAKIN' MY HAUL . . .
IT'S REALLY TOO BAD, YEAH, IT'S JUST A SHAME I CAN'T CARRY IT ALL . .

POLICE OFFICER enters.

POLICE OFFICER

I CAN'T BELIEVE . . . WHAT'S HAPPENING HERE . . .
I'VE NEVER WITNESSED CHAOS LIKE THIS IN MY WHOLE CAREER . . .

SECOND PERSON

THIS AIN'T THE WAY . . . TO DEAL WITH YOUR ANGER . . .
CITY'S IN TROUBLE, THIS MAKES IT WORSE, I SHOULDN'T BE HERE . . .

POLICE OFFICER/SECOND PERSON

THE WORLD IS SO UNFAIR BETWEEN RICH AND POOR
BUT BREAKIN' LAWS AIN'T GONNA BE ANY CURE

POLICE OFFICER

WHAT CAN WE DO . . . TO MAKE ALL THIS STOP . . .
WE NEED AN ARMY, THIS IS A JOKE, THERE'S NOT ENOUGH COPS . . .

LOOTERS start to run away as POLICE OFFICER follows.

THIRD PERSON

NOW IS THE TIME

POLICE OFFICER (shout)

Hold it! freeze!

FIRST PERSON

I'M GETTIN' MINE

POLICE OFFICER (shout)

Put your hands on the wall!

THIRD PERSON

DIAPERS AND WATER, FEEDIN' MY FAMILY, THAT AIN'T NO CRIME

POLICE OFFICER (shout)

You're under arrest!

POLICE OFFICER (cont.)

I CAN'T BELIEVE

THIRD PERSON

NO TIME TO WAIT

POLICE OFFICER

WHAT'S HAPPENIN' HERE

FIRST PERSON

FOR HELP TO ARRIVE

POLICE OFFICER

GOD, HOW I WISH THIS NIGHTMARE WOULD SOMEHOW DISAPPEAR

FIRST PERSON/SECOND PERSON/THIRD PERSON

JUST STAYIN' ALIVE

ALL

THIS STORM HAS TURNED NEW ORLEANS UPSIDE DOWN
THE JURY'S OUT ON WHAT BECOMES OF OUR TOWN

FIRST PERSON

TAKIN' MY HAUL

POLICE OFFICER

THIS AIN'T THE WAY . . . CITY'S IN TROUBLE

THIRD PERSON

NO TIME TO STALL

POLICE OFFICER/SECOND PERSON

FOLKS GOTTA SEE WE'RE IN THIS TOGETHER

ALL

NOW IS THE TIME!

POLICE OFFICER puts handcuffs on Second Person.
BLACKOUT.