

Redletter

Created by Lisa Busceni, below scenes by Bilal Dardai



**TRANSITION
CNN/APOCALYPSE**

LISA speaks from the central chair. "Nearer, My God, To Thee" begins to play underneath. The rest of the ensemble brings on chairs and sets them.

LISA: Then the ritual changes. What used to be 7 am and 4:30 pm and 6 pm and 11 pm becomes 24. It becomes 7. It becomes 365.

Projection: "Our goal is to deliver accurate information to our viewers with speed so that they are well informed at all times." - CNN Vision Statement

LISA: It ceases to be a ritual and becomes a perpetual. Gone are the static test patterns, the stoic head of the Indian chief standing watch over the hours of 2 to 5 in the morning. Ted Turner vows that CNN will

sign off only once, when the world ends. He commissions a videotape of a band, comprised of members of the armed forces, playing the 19th Century Christian hymn "Nearer, My God, to Thee."

BILAL: The tape is labeled HFR.

LINDSAY: HFR?

BILAL: Hold for release. Hold for release until end of the world verified.

LISA: Which shows you how much faith they used to have in their fact checkers.

(Ensemble begins rearranging chairs, over and over and over.)

LINDSAY: Imagine it's the end of the world.

BILAL: Whatever that looks like for you.

(Everybody at once speaks aloud how they believe the world might end.)

LINDSAY: Imagine that there are still people watching CNN during the end of the world.

BILAL: Imagine that there are still people working at CNN during the end of the world.

TREVOR: It's the end of the world, and the lowest, unluckiest intern on the totem pole has been handed a VHS cassette.

THEA: "What's this?" the intern says, because he or she has never seen VHS.

LINDSAY: And the intern is told that there's a machine in the basement still hooked up to what's left of the network.

BILAL: What's left of the airwaves.

TREVOR: And that they should take it down there, place it in the machine, and hit the button marked Play.

THEA: But not right away!

LINDSAY: No! They need to wait for it...

BILAL: Until the last...possible...minute...

TREVOR: Until there's no chance whatsoever that anybody else anywhere will still be alive...

THEA: To be the ones who get to look out over the ruins of humanity and say "The End."

LISA: And my God. It would be the first time in the entire history of CNN that they have ever wanted to be the last ones to report a story.

Pause. The ensemble listens to the music.

LINDSAY: Why did Ted Turner choose "Nearer, My God, To Thee"?

LISA: Some say it's what the band was playing on the deck of the *Titanic* while it sank.

LINDSEY/TREVOR/THEA/BILAL: Ohhhh. (*Beat. They indicate their task.*) Ohhhh.

TRANSITION
"SOME SAY"

BILAL and THEA *sit behind an anchor's desk. They have a burrito.*

BILAL: Good evening. This is a burrito.

THEA: It is a burrito. However, some say that this is not a burrito at all. Let's go to Lisa for that story.

They pick up the desk and take it across the stage to LISA, who is standing alone in a spotlight.

BILAL: Lisa. You're here tonight with somebody who says this isn't a burrito.

LISA: I am?

THEA: What do they say it is?

LISA: What does *who* say *what* is?

BILAL: Good evening. This is Lisa Buscani.

THEA: She's not standing next to somebody who claims this isn't a burrito.

BILAL: However, *some* say that Lisa is standing next to somebody who doesn't not claim that this isn't not a burrito.

THEA: Let's go to Trevor for the story.
They pick up the desk. TREVOR enters next to LISA.

BILAL: Trevor. You're standing next to Lisa Buscani right now claiming that you're not standing next to Lisa Buscani. Isn't that true?

TREVOR: That isn't not true.

THEA: So it is true.

TREVOR: I didn't not say that.

LISA: You're standing right next to me.

TREVOR: I am standing next to this woman. But this woman is not Lisa Buscani.

BILAL: Good evening. This is Trevor Dawkins. He is standing next to a burrito.

LISA: What?

THEA: But *some* say that he isn't not standing next to Lisa who isn't not a burrito.

BILAL: We're going now live to Lindsay Muscato who will be reading a statement of apology from Lisa.

LISA: What am I apologizing for?

Lights fade on this group, fade up on Lindsay.

LINDSAY: I am not Lisa Buscani. I apologize profusely if somebody was offended by the burrito. It was not a burrito and anybody who knows my heart knows that I am not Lisa Buscani and that I would never stand next to a burrito.

Lights fade back up on the group.

BILAL: Interesting. Lisa, do you have a rebuttal?

LISA: A rebuttal to what?

TREVOR: I'd just like to add that these are frivolous, frivolous accusations. I am not Lisa Buscani.

LISA: Of course you're not! *I'M* Lisa Buscani.

BILAL: Good evening. You're watching live as Lisa Buscani has admitted to being Lisa Buscani.

THEA: But *some* say that...

LISA: WHO? WHO? WHO ARE THESE "SOME" WHO SAY? THERE'S NO "SOME" WHO SAY? IT'S ONE PERSON SITTING WATCHING THE NETWORK SHARES AND TELLING THE HEAD OF THE NEWS DEPARTMENT THAT THE MOST STRAIGHTFORWARD FUCKING STORIES IN THE WORLD ARE UP FOR DEBATE!

BILAL: Good evening.

LISA: Stop saying that!

BILAL: I'm Bilal Dardai.

THEA: And I'm Lisa Buscani.

LISA: NO YOU'RE NOT!

BILAL: And some say that this is a burrito.
Let's go to that guy in the front row for
the story.

THEA: Sir. Do you believe this is a burrito?
(Waits for an answer.)

BILAL: Good evening. I'm Bilal Dardai.

THEA: I'm Thea Lux.

BILAL: This is a burrito.

THEA: And you are Lisa Buscani. Good night!

BILAL: Good news.

THEA: Some would say great news.