

**THE CONCEITED TERRORIST**

a comedy

by

Mark Steven Jensen

freely adapted from the  
Miles Gloriosus  
by Plautus

©1991, 1998  
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## DRAMATIS PERSONAE

**SHASHA FROM SYRIA**--A working girl of Beirut. Twenties.

**LYDIA KOWOLSKI**--Another working girl of Beirut. Twenties.

**AZIZ**--The "Master of Hostages." Twenties-thirties.

**SONYA PHILLIPS**--GENERAL CAPITANO's hostage, formerly a secretary at the American Embassy. Twenties-thirties.

**SAUL DREYFUSS**--A MOSSAD spy posing as a terrorist. Twenties-thirties.

**RAZSHA**--A terrorist. Twenties-thirties.

**SALIME**--GENERAL CAPITANO's chief parasite. Twenties-forties.

**DELVIN HAMMER**--A CIA spy. Twenties-thirties.

**GENERAL HASHISH MENUS**--A retired terrorist. Sixties.

**GENERAL ABDUL CAPITANO**--Leader of the Capitano Liberation Front. Forties-fifties.

Various other **SOLDIERS** may also be added.

Also needed are the **VOICE FROM THE PHONE** and the **DIFFERENT VOICE FROM THE PHONE**.

## SETTING

A street somewhere in Beirut, Lebanon. 1990's.

## A NOTE ON PERFORMANCE

This play is written in the Plautine comic style. This physically comic style later evolved into commedia del' arte in Italy and France. It also influenced several silver screen comedians. THE CONCEITED TERRORIST draws inspiration from all three of these eras.

**FIRST PERFORMANCE**

This play was first performed by An Experimental Theatre at Concordia, Moorhead, MN in January 1990. The cast was as follows:

SALIME -- Erik Menz

SAUL DREYFESS -- Eric Holsen

RAZSHA -- Carl Thress

SONYA PHILLIPS -- Julie Kaldor

AZIZ -- John Hedlund

LYDIA KOWALSKI -- Kate Barnard

SHASHA FROM SYRIA -- Amy Young

GENERAL ABDUL CAPITANO -- Jim Strickland

GENERAL HASHISH MENU -- Mike Hiebert

DELVIN HAMMER -- Ashley McEuen

The production was directed by Clair Haugen. Video designed by Atle Lokken. "You Know" written and performed by Gordy Christensen. Lighting designed by Liesl Oesterreich.

## SECOND PERFORMANCE

This play was later produced at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas's New Play Festival in June, 1991. The play had the following cast.

SHASHA FROM SYRIA -- Melissa Supera

LYDIA KOWOLSKI -- Kerry Loomis

AZIZ -- Edward M. Barker

SONYA PHILLIPS -- Linda Pierson

SAUL DREYFUSS -- Bobby Glen Brown

RAZSHA -- Joey D'Attili

SALIME -- Roger Friedli

DELVIN HAMMER -- Christopher Keefe

GENERAL HASHISH MENU -- Charlie Paddock

GENERAL ABDUL CAPITANO -- Jason Bradshaw

The production was directed by Stephen R. Woody. The set was designed by Stephen R. Woody. Costume design was by Lois Carder. Light Design by Noelle Mleczko. Sound Design by Lizette Byers.

[A war-torn street somewhere in Beirut. Debris is everywhere. Two crumbling command centers take up most of the street, their walls covered with bullet holes and blast marks. These buildings are the headquarters of GENERAL ABDUL CAPITANO and GENERAL HASHISH MENUS.]

[Air warning siren. Fighter jets fly over, dropping bombs. Anti-aircraft gunfire responds. SHASHA and LYDIA stand, dejected, at a street corner.]

LYDIA

The men were too busy again. It's nearly morning.

SHASHA

At least abstinence is a great diet plan.

LYDIA

This used to be the best street corner in Beirut.

SHASHA

I don't think I've ever looked this good. I've lost about ten pounds, haven't I? Haven't I lost ten pounds?

LYDIA

Turn around. Oh, yeah, you go girl.

SHASHA

All of this under my hood, and zero mileage on the odometer.

[The whistling sound of an incoming missile.]

LYDIA

Oh-oh. That sounds close.

SHASHA

And getting closer.

LYDIA AND SHASHA

Hide!

[They duck under some wreckage. A explosion erupts on GENERAL MENUS's roof, leaving a giant hole there.]

LYDIA (CONT.)

Hm. Impressive targeting capability.

SHASHA

It was lacking in destructive radius. I give it a six point two.

LYDIA

Get out! Eight points out of ten, easy!

SHASHA

Suit yourself.

[They sigh.]

SHASHA (CONT.)

Oh for the days when we judged men instead of missiles.

SALIME

[From inside CAPITANO's.]

Attention! Up you lazy fools! Are you men or mollusks! Up!

[Enter SAUL, RAZSHA, and other SOLDIERS. SALIME follows.]

SALIME

When I say up I expect you to do that on the double!

RAZSHA

Oh my head aches! It's too early.

SHASHA

Men!

LYDIA

In uniform.

SHASHA and LYDIA

Yummy!

SAUL

Wild night, Razsha?

RAZSHA

Not really. Just me and Lord Calvert.  
[Hiccups.]

SAUL

I can smell.

SALIME

Cease this ridiculous chit chat! Dawn is nearly here, and we

SALIME (CONT.)

must get to the airport. We can't keep the General waiting. Unless you wish me to tell him you are responsible for us not arriving on schedule, hm?

SAUL

We're all ready, sir!

RAZSHA

Ready! Sir!  
[Hiccups.]

SALIME

Ah, I just mention the name of our great General, General Abdul Capitano, and look at you all. Instant obedience. Oh, how I live for these moments!

SAUL

He is great man, the finest leader in the world! Sir.

RAZSHA

Finest leader. In the world.  
[Hiccups.]

SALIME

[Aside.]  
Good terrorists are so hard to find these days.  
[To the soldiers.]  
You must all show the General the utmost respect this morning. He is returning from a triumphant diplomatic summit. Ah-ha, I have even more of your attention now. That's right, a triumphant summit, at a very prominent and powerful country. Which country, you poor soldiers are asking yourselves? Well, there's no need to keep it a secret anymore, so I will tell you. The great country of... Luxembourg! How impressed you all are! As you can see, the General has made great gains within the international community. He may have finally started the negotiations that will release our hostage!

SAUL

He's going to release the hostage? After seven years?

SALIME

Yes, yes, after seven years. Did I give the order that you could speak, soldier?

SAUL

N--n--no.

SALIME

Then don't speak again.

[SALIME tries to give SAUL a quick blow. He misses and hits RAZSHA instead. RAZSHA screams.]

SALIME (CONT.)

It's a wonderful morning maggots! Be proud. Strong! About face! Gun up! Razsha! Your gun. Get it up!

[Hits RAZSHA. He screams.]

March, march, march, march...

LYDIA

Hello boys.

SHASHA

Where are you getting off to, in such a BIG hurry?

[The men ignore them and march on past.]

LYDIA

Hello! Hello! Hey...

SHASHA

That seals it. Another night of nothing.

[The soldiers are about to exit when SONYA and AZIZ enter. AZIZ leads SONYA, who is handcuffed and gagged. She groans and falls down, pulling AZIZ down with her.]

AZIZ

Argh! Stand up, Sonya! Stand up! Look, I know it was torture, but we're almost back to the--



SAUL  
Sonya! No! Aziz you rogue! What have you done to her?

AZIZ  
Done? Nothing?

SAUL  
Torturing a hostage! Why, man, why?

AZIZ  
Torture? What? Me? Her?

SAUL  
This goes against the Geneva Convention. Surely the General didn't order this, you beast!

[SAUL removes her gag.]

AZIZ  
No I, no--

SAUL  
It's okay. Saul's here now, Sonya, it's all right.

[SONYA spits out some  
cotton swabs.]

SONYA  
Mare mou chang-ging my c-c-cotton?

SAUL  
Huh?

AZIZ  
All I did was take her to the dentist.

SAUL  
Dentist?

AZIZ  
She had a root canal!

SAUL  
Dentist. This early?

AZIZ  
First appointment of the day. Sonya, here's some more  
cotton. Open up.

SONYA

Tanks, Aziz! Mou're saveet!

SALIME

Why did you break formation, soldier? The hostage is of no concern of yours!

SAUL

Sorry sir, I was, I was, I was concerned that the hostage was no longer in pristine condition sir. Since... since... the General will be releasing her soon.

SALIME

May be releasing her soon. Nothing has been agreed upon yet!

SAUL

May be releasing her soon. Oh. Ha.

SALIME

Your insubordination shall be brought before the General. This is grounds for an execution. And a painfully slow one at that!

SAUL

Ready to go to the airport, sir!

SALIME

I've had enough insolence this morning, you maggots. So I need an example, and Saul, has earned the job. I will have the General execute him today!

SAUL

Me? But, but--

SALIME

Fall in, soldier or I will shot you where you stand!

AZIZ

Come on Sonya. I have to guard the roof this morning.

[AZIZ and SONYA enter GENERAL  
CAPITANO's compound.]

SALIME

And once again, march, march, march. Hold that banner high! March, march, march!

SAUL

Banner?

Banner? RAZSHA

Oh no. The banner! SALIME

Argh! SAUL, RAZSHA, and SALIME

[Major panic.]

SALIME  
Oh, where is it! General Capitano will kill us if we don't display the banner!

Kill us! SAUL

Kill us! Kill us! RAZSHA

We're dead. We're dead. SALIME

SAUL  
Help, help! We're dead! Well, what does it matter, I'm already dead.

SALIME  
Wait! Do you any of you know where it is?

SAUL  
Ah yeah. It's downstairs next to the Jacuzzi.

RAZSHA  
[Hiccups.]

SALIME  
Oh good. We're not dead.

SAUL  
We're not dead.

RAZSHA  
We're not dead!

SALIME  
Let's go get it, men!

[RAZSHA and SALIME enter  
CAPITANO's doorway at the same

time. SALIME pushes RAZSHA, and he falls inside. Loud scream and crash. Other soldiers also exit. SAUL lags behind and takes out a small cellular phone.]

SAUL

MOSSAD command, this is Agent Dreyfuss. MOSSAD, are you there?

VOICE FROM PHONE

[Pleasant music.]

MOSSAD. Espionage for today and tomorrow. Please wait while we connect your call.

[Pause.]

We're sorry, but all of our operators are currently speaking with other secret agents. We will answer your call in the order in which it was received. If this call is urgent, please press pound and leave your message after the beep. Thank you. Have a pleasant mission.

SAUL

Pound, pound. There. Beep. Come on. Beep!

[Loud beep.]

SAUL (CONT.)

Agent Dreyfuss calling, serial number 4589 dash WWW dash 7JO dash RTV dash 397 dash POI. No! POC. POC! Abort mission! Abort mission! I need to be removed from here immediately! The General's stooge is scheduling to execute me soon! My location is--

[Loud beep, then dial tone.]

Argh! I just want to get away from here, MOSSAD. Hide in a jungle somewhere! Alone! Alone.

[Re-dials.]

VOICE FROM PHONE

[Pleasant music.]

MOSSAD. Espionage for today and tomorrow. Please wait while we connect your call.

[Pause.]

We're sorry, but all our--

SAUL

Argh!

[Presses pound. Beep.]

Agent Dreyfuss again. This is also a chance that the General may release his hostage. An American woman, Sonya Phillips. The CIA should be made aware of this I--

[Enter SALIME, RAZSHA, and the other SOLDIERS. RAZSHA struggles under an immense banner. SAUL hides his phone.]

SALIME  
Soldier! You were instructed to help with the banner!

SAUL  
Sorry sir, I, ah, ah, was... guarding the... entrance! This one. Here. Ha.

[SALIME draws his gun.]

SALIME  
I am going to execute you now, and then notify the General later.

SAUL  
Now?

SALIME  
Say hello to your ancestors!

SAUL  
We, ah, ah, probably shouldn't waste time on my execution, ah, sir. If we don't get there now, we'll be late, and the General will be angry...

SALIME  
Late? Did you say late?

SAUL  
It is getting late, sir, yes.

RAZSHA  
Late?

SAUL, RAZSHA, and SALIME  
Argh!

SALIME  
The General will kill us!

SAUL  
Kill us!

[SAUL, SALIME, and the SOLDIERS rush off. RAZSHA

drags on the banner. SAUL re-enters and grabs the other end. They hurry off.]

LYDIA

A MOSSAD agent in Beirut. That could be useful.

SHASHA

Extremely.

[Enter GENERAL HASHISH MENUS from his compound. He is in a wheelchair. He holds a sack of dirt, which he tries to casually dump on the street.]

HASHISH

Oh! Morning ladies, heh, heh!

SHASHA

A man! Good morning! Oh, hello.

LYDIA

Hi.

[Enter AZIZ from CAPITANO's roof. He spots the hole on HASHISH's roof.]

HASHISH

Beautiful day, after quite lively night, heh, heh.

SHASHA

Speak for yourself.

LYDIA

So what are you doing?

HASHISH

Me? Nothing much. Just out for my morning roll. Ah-hem. And you two?

SHASHA

Out of money. But we're getting used to that.

HASHISH

Business has been bad, hasn't it? Heh, heh, heh.

SHASHA

Yes.