

# TERMINUS

by Jordan Armani Miles

**Setting:** The play takes place throughout various places of Atlanta, Georgia. The background scenery changes occasionally.

**Armani:** A philosophical 25 year old college graduate. Armani has problems deciding whether to follow the normal and unoriginal path of life or the unorthodox and artistic path of happiness.

**Elijah:** Armani's best friend who only wants his best interest. Elijah is a former artist who attempted to pursue the life of his passion, however, he ended up becoming a computer programmer.

**Mr. Dwight:** Armani's mentor and inspiration. He is very successful after years of facing the same struggle of Armani. Even though he supports Armani's goals, he also understands Elijah's concerns.

## Act I, Scene 1

*It is 3am in the morning. ELIJAH comes in from work. HE's been working late. ARMANI is sitting down at the table, working on a commission. ELIJAH walks up to ARMANI.*

**ELIJAH**  
Hey man, how's it going?

*(ELIJAH sits briefcase down beside the table and loosens his tie. ARMANI continues to paint in a focused manner and talks without giving ELIJAH eye contact.)*

**ARMANI**  
It's going how life is going, man. My eyes are dry as the deserts of hell. But, I'm just trying to finish this piece for Salem.

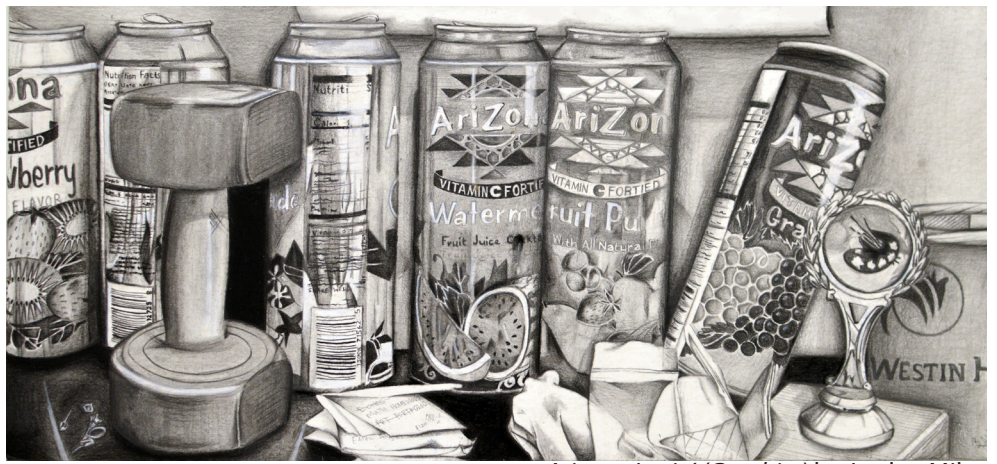
**ELIJAH**  
When do you think you'll be finished with it— how much is this one?

**ARMANI**  
I should be done by 8.

*(ARMANI picks up the last energy drink out of the 12-pack.)*

Ummm... this one is for eight hundred dollars.

*(ELIJAH looks down in discontent and leans*



*Arizona Lovin' (Graphite) by Jordan Miles*

*on the table.)*

**ELIJAH**  
So Armani, you think that's enough, don't you think you should charge her more? I mean you never know when your next piece will be right, hehe?

*(ELIJAH chuckles in a wary manner)*

**ARMANI**  
No, the price I chose was just for this situation.

**ELIJAH**  
Ok, I'm just saying... it doesn't hurt to raise the price.

**ARMANI**  
Right, the same way you tried to raise the price when you did commission's right?

**ELIJAH**  
Look man, I'm just saying you're sitting there and you have gotten no rest. It's 3 in the morning. You've drunk like 30 energy drinks dude... that isn't healthy

*(ARMANI drops the paint brush and gives ELIJAH his full attention.)*

**ARMANI**  
Are you kidding me? You work long nights just like me. You aren't in the bed right now, are you? You just don't get it man, you just don't get it. You think you're better than me?

*(Armani stands up. Elijah straightens up.)*

**ELIJAH**  
What, you gonna fight me now? You gonna fight the one that's been by your side since High School. What, you forgot about all the times I saved you from getting you a---

whooped. You always think I'm trying to compete with you. This isn't a competition Man, this is life!

**ARMANI**  
No it's always been a competition. You're jealous, you're so jealous...because I pursued my passion. And what did you do? You dropped yours faster than all these girls you run around with. We were both artist, and you threw your gift away! Now, you're a computer programmer

*(ARMANI picks up ELIJAH's briefcase and drops it.)*

A programmer, the total opposite of an artist. Where's the creativity, huh? Looking at zeros and ones must be a hell of a life.

**ELIJAH**  
Jealous of you... please. I gave away my passion for practicality. I gave it away for success, a job that has benefits and guaranteed money. Not \$500 this month and then I have to wait 4 months to get another commission! You are not successful, that's why I'm mad. You're worth more than what you are selling yourself for.

*(ARMANI gathers his composure and continues in a calm manner.)*

**ARMANI**  
Elijah... you are so scared of failing. You are so scared of failing that you limit your success. That's not the Elijah I knew back at Canterbury High. He was ambitious and wasn't afraid to fail.

*(ARMANI sits down.)*

You're so worried about me because in the inside you know you're a failure. And you drink 4 cups of coffee everyday and have

the nerve to judge me. You work late hours just as I and have the nerve to judge me. But since you just got it like that, what the hell have you worked for! Who in the Hell is gonna remember a guy who punched some numbers into a computer. I have never judged you man, but you always come for me.

*(ARMANI reaches in his pocket and pulls out six-hundred dollars. HE hands it to ELIJAH.)*

Here... that's the money for this month.

*(ELIJAH's eyes become watery as HE accepts the money.)*

**ELIJAH**

Yeah... tha- thanks.

*(ELIJAH exits the room.)*

## Act 1, Scene 2

*It is the afternoon and ARMANI has overslept. HE was supposed to meet up with MR. DWIGHT. ARMANI is wiping his eyes, washing his face, and brushing his teeth as he calls MR. DWIGHT. He frantically gets dressed. MR. DWIGHT looks at his phone in disappointment, and answers it.*

**MR. DWIGHT**

What is it Mani?

**ARMANI**

*(Talking as if he is out of breath.)* Hey, I kind of over slept but I- I'll be there in fifteen minutes I'm sorry for making you wait. Did you leave the pizzeria, are you home now?

**MR. DWIGHT**

*(Sighs)* I am on my way home now, but I can turn around.

**ARMANI**

Alright cool, thanks Mr. D.

*(ARMANI hangs up the phone and looks for his keys)*

I don't know how I'm going to get there in fifteen minutes.

*(ARMANI walks out the door.)*

Dangit, forgot my shoes.

*(ARMANI grabs the shoes and exits the house. ARMANI is driving, but suddenly, HE*

*realizes blue and white lights flashing out of his peripheral. HE looks behind him and it police car. HE pulls over to the right side of the road.)*

D - - - it!

*(ARMANI looks around nervously as the POLICE OFFICER approaches Armani's truck.)*

**OFFICER**

Hello, how are you doing today?

**ARMANI**

Hehe. Not as good as I was doing before I was pulled over.

**OFFICER**

Do you know why I am pulling you over today?

**ARMANI**

I was speeding... pretty sure- pretty sure I was speeding.

**OFFICER**

Have you been drinking?

**ARMANI**

No sir, I just haven't gotten much sleep and I coming off of a 12 pack of energy drinks sir.

**OFFICER**

Well I am pulling you over because you were doing 75 on a 45. Did you know that?

**ARMANI**

Yes sir, I knew I was speeding

**OFFICER**

Can I see your license?

*(ARMANI reaches in his wallet and pulls out his driver's license.)*

**ARMANI** *(handing the card to the OFFICER.)*

Here you go sir.

**OFFICER**

I'll be right back, I'm gonna go run a few checks.

*(The OFFICER walks to the police car and then returns.)*

Okay, so I'm going to issue you a citation for speeding. You were going 75mph on a 45mph road, please make sure you pay this ticket or they will be a warrant out for your arrest.

**ARMANI**

Three- hundred dollars...

**OFFICER** *(handing ARMANI his license)*

Alright, take care now, and drive safe.

*(The OFFICER walks away. ARMANI looks at his phone, and 20 minutes have passed.)*

## Act 2, Scene 1

*ARMANI meets up with MR. DWIGHT at Taco Mac downtown. It is a quarter to five and MR. DWIGHT is slightly irritated.*

**ARMANI**

Sorry about my tardiness, I was staying up late, then I got into an argument. I woke up late, then got pulled over and---

*(MR. DWIGHT examines ARMANI's sweating face and thrown together clothes.)*

**MR. DWIGHT**

Armani, what's your problem? What has gotten into you?

**ARMANI** *(flagging down the waitress)*

Nothing. I'm fine. Let's order.

*(The WAITRESS steps over.)*

Hello, let me get a 10 piece hot, swimming with 2 ranches and a basket of fries.

*(ARMANI winks at the waitress)*

**WAITRESS** *(looking at Mr. Dwight)*

And for you, sir?

**MR. DWIGHT**

I'll take the same.

**WAITRESS**

And what would you guys like to drink?

**MR. DWIGHT**

I'll take a tea.

**WAITRESS**

Sweet or unsweet?

**MR. DWIGHT**

Unsweet.

**ARMANI**

I'll take a Sprite... sweet.

*(ARMANI winks at the waitress again. SHE smiles at ARMANI.)*

**WAITRESS**

Ok. I will be back shortly with your orders.

*(The WAITRESS exits.)*

**ARMANI**

Who drinks unsweet tea man? Hehe, tea and hot wings? You need to loosen up some, always so stiff. You're wearing a corduroy shirt and pants. This is Terminus man, not Chicago.

*(MR. DWIGHT is unmoved by ARMANI's humor)*

**MR. DWIGHT**

You are a mess.

**ARMANI**

Haha, I know.

**MR. DWIGHT**

No, really you are a mess. You haven't been yourself lately; you're always jittery and late. What's seems to be the problem?

**ARMANI**

I just... need help yah know. I feel all alone amongst friends and loved ones, and it's not a good feeling. My mom, you know she moved to Chicago and I haven't seen her in a while. And Elijah, he doesn't give a d -- n about me. I feel as if my life is under a microscope and I'm always being watched. I'm always being judged. I have enough people holding me back; I just need more people to uplift me. I'm strung out on caffeine and energy drinks. I just--I

**MR. DWIGHT**

Mani stop, you know that boy Elijah loves you to death. If you asked me, he loves you too much. Y'all been running around Atlanta since y'all were littluns. He wants your best interest. Look...

*(The WAITRESS enters and places the drinks the table.)*

**WAITRESS**

Here are your drinks, a tea for you and a sweet sprite for Mr. Handsome.

*(The WAITRESS exits.)*

**MR. DWIGHT**

Look-

**ARMANI**

I mean look, look at you. You are an artist and you never veered off that path. Sure

you could have when times got rough but you didn't. I know it took a lot of grinding and hard work, but look at you now- it all paid off. You are a starving artist no more.

**MR. DWIGHT**

Look, times are different now. I'm not saying don't follow your dreams, I'm saying be cautious. The market is much more competitive than it was when I was coming up in the 60's. When I look at you, I see so much ambition... so much dedication. I don't want you to end up struggling like I did... I never told you this but when you draw realism it is far more detailed, and accurate than mine.

**ARMANI**

I get it but at the same time, you dealt with racism when you were coming up. I deal with a couple of racists but it's easier for an African American man in this day and age, especially in Terminus. I just want support. Just look, I went there.

*(ARMANI points down the street.)*

I graduated from Savannah College of Art in Design. It is the best college of the arts in the world, a college for the most elite students. You did not go there, but I did. In a lot of ways I have more of an advantage than you did, if you really think about it.

**MR. DWIGHT**

I feel like you and Elijah need to talk again.

*(The WAITRESS enters.)*

**WAITRESS**

Here's your food guys, enjoy.

*(The WAITRESS smiles, then exits.)*

**ARMANI**

Anyway you must try these wings man. I mean the sauce is just...

*Scene fades out.*

## Act 2, Scene 2

*ARMANI drives to the suburbs of College Park to meet a client named SALEM. ARMANI pulls into the driveway and walks up to the door with the artwork. HE rings the doorbell of a fairly large house.*

**SALEM**

Just a minute! Be right there!

*(SALEM opens the door.)*

**ARMANI**

Hey, Salem. I have your piece. It's ready. And it looks good too. You gonna like this one.

**SALEM**

Good, good. Come on in.

**ARMANI (walking in)**

Wow. Your house is extravagant. It is truly beautiful, nice high ceilings and everything.

**SALEM**

Why, thank you. I try, I try. I love your outfit. Your shirt is so colorful and that fedora... that fedora is sharp.

**ARMANI**

I appreciate it, Salem. So, where is this piece getting hanged up at?

**SALEM**

Umm... just hang it right here. So, Armani, I have good news for you.

**ARMANI**

Oh, really? What's that?

**SALEM**

I talked to some people, showed your work around, and you have sponsors now.

**ARMANI**

Wait...what! Are you kidding me? Who?

**SALEM**

I talked to someone at Pyrotechnic Programming, and he said the company could sponsor you.

**ARMANI**

Pyrotechnic...Pyrotechnic Programming. That's the company Elijah works for.

**SALEM**

Yes, it is.

*(SALEM grins.)*

**ARMANI**

Uhhh... who's the other sponsor?

**SALEM**

Liquitex. Look, you really should be thankful. I know you and Elijah have had your

differences, but you all are brothers.

**ARMANI**

I know. You're right.

*(SALEM hands ARMANI the commission money. The scene fades out.)*

## Act 2, Scene 3

*ARMANI meets up to converse with ELIJAH.*

**ARMANI**

Hey, I heard about what you did for me. You know, about the whole sponsor thing. I really appreciate it.

**ELIJAH**

Well, Salem asked me if I could, and I asked my boss. It was his decision.

**ARMANI**

Well, thanks anyway. I know you probably didn't want to do that after me being a jerk and all.

**ELIJAH**

No, look. You were right. I was being really foolish and short minded. I guess I was slightly jealous. I'm glad you stuck to your passion. Look at you now. You have two sponsors and money flowing your way. And... I fully support you, Mani. I really do. I know I probably didn't show it, but I always have.

**ARMANI**

If it weren't for you, I wouldn't even have sponsors... well you and Salem that is.

**ELIJAH**

Naww, man. You earned it.

*(ARMANI and ELIJAH dap each other up.)*

# Just Behind the 8 Ball

by Jordan Miles