

**THE BLAME GAME**

a one-act play

by David Lefkowitz

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**THE BLAME GAME**

**SETTING:**

Television game show with cheerful backdrop, a host's rostrum, and three podia for contestants who await the start of the game. A separate area offers another podium and a large red circle on the floor.

**CHARACTERS**

HOST (Tariq Al Nazari) – a smooth emcee.

NOAM CHOMSKY – Elderly professor type run to seed.

AMY GOODMAN – Middle-aged hag.

ALICE WALKER – Feisty older black woman.

ANNOUNCER'S VOICE (Hassan El-Haddad) – Lively and trippingly off the tongue.

**TIME**

Current

**THE BLAME GAME**

(As lights come up on three contestants, bouncy retro theme music plays as a Voice-Over Announcer intones:

ANNOUNCER

Don't Think, Don't Blink... It's time to play "The Blame Game!" The show where players do their best to assume the worst. And here's our host: Tariq Al Nazari!

(Applause as host TARIQ AL-NAZARI strolls to his podium)

HOST

Welcome friends from all over the world, great to have you with us as we play the game that is sweeping the planet. We have three fabulous contestants who will certainly make this a nail-biter. Hassan, why don't you tell us who's playing "The Blame Game?"

ANNOUNCER

Tariq, our first contestant is a writer and behavioral theorist and the author of "Cartesian Linguistics." Please welcome M.I.T. professor emeritus Noam Chomsky!

(Applause)

Contestant number 2 is a media journalist and host of the long-running TV and radio program, "Democracy Now," Aaaaamy Goodman!

(Applause)

And last but not least: she's a Pulitzer Prize and National Book Award winner for her classic novel, *The Color Purple*. She's also a poet and political activist. Please welcome Alice Walker!

(Applause)

Wow, terrific panel! Quite a battle of the minds tonight. Let's get right to it. Round One – the questions are worth 10 points apiece. The first player to reach 50 points advances to the bonus round.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

Everybody ready? Hands on your Blame Buzzers. First Question: On December 8<sup>th</sup>, 1980, John Lennon –

(Alice Walker buzzes in)

ALICE WALKER

Mark David Chapman!

HOST

Is the correct answer, but please wait until I call on you to give your response.

ALICE WALKER

Sorry.

HOST

It's fine, but you are correct.

(Bell rings)

The blame goes to Mark David Chapman who shot and killed John Lennon. Bad luck for him, but 10 points for you Alice Walker.

(Canned applause)

Next question: In 1846, American soldiers guarding a border were attacked by –

(Amy Goodman hits the buzzer)

HOST

Yes, Amy Goodman.

AMY GOODMAN

(deadpan, as she'll be throughout)

Mexican soldiers?

(Bell rings)

HOST

Very good. The Mexican cavalry attacked soldiers on the Rio Grande, leading to the Mexican-American War. Ten points for Amy. Next Question: In 1982, hundreds of civilians were killed in a Lebanese refugee camp by right-wing Christian Phalangists. Who is to blame for –

(Noam Chomsky buzzes)

HOST

Noam Chomsky, who's to blame?

NOAM CHOMSKY

Israel. Prime Minister Sharon deliberately stood by and allowed the massacre to happen.

(Bell rings)

HOST

That is correct. Israel was the culprit for 10 points. We have a three-way tie at 10 as we go to our next question: The Palestinian Intifada began as civil disobedience –

(Amy Goodman buzzes)

HOST

Yes, Amy?

AMY GOODMAN

Israel?

(Bell rings)

HOST

Yes, Israel is correct. The IDF over-reacted to young, innocent Palestinians throwing stones and homemade bombs at them. 10 more points for Amy.

(Applause)

Next question: In 2014, hundreds of innocent civilians were killed when this country invaded Gaza on the pretext of a kidnapping –

(Noam Chomsky and Amy Goodman both hit their buzzers)

I think Noam got to the buzzer first. Yes, Noam Chomsky?

NOAM CHOMSKY

Is it Israel?

HOST

Are you asking me or telling me?

NOAM CHOMSKY

It's Israel, Tariq.

HOST

It is Israel!

(Bell rings, applause)

Israel is, of course, to blame for violating the ceasefire and then launching Operation Brother's Keeper and its ungodly assault on human rights.

ALICE WALKER

Right on, Tariq.

HOST

We've got Noam Chomsky and Amy Goodman tied at 20; Alice Walker not far behind with 10, as we move to our next question: On September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001, two commercial airplanes hit the World Trade Center –

(Alice Walker buzzes)

ALICE WALKER

Israel.

(Bell rings)

HOST

That is correct.

(Applause)

9/11 was the understandable Arab response to American support for Israel. Next question: The Holocaust –

(Noam Chomsky buzzes)

HOST

Yes, Noam?

NOAM CHOMSKY

Israel.

HOST

I'm afraid you'll have to be more specific.

(Noam Chomsky thinks for  
a moment but then gives up)

HOST

No. Anyone else?

(Alice Walker buzzes)

Alice Walker.

ALICE WALKER

The Jews?

(Bell rings)

HOST

Yes, exactly.

(Applause)

The Jews brought German hatred upon themselves by owning banks and so on. Nice try, Noam, but as I'm sure you know, World War II ended in 1945, and Israel wasn't vomited up until 1948. Good catch by Alice Walker there making the distinction between Israel and the Jews.

ALICE WALKER

Well, I was married to a Jew once.

(glowers)

Once.

HOST

Careful, Alice, you're turning purple.

NOAM CHOMSKY

That's her color, Tariq.

(Canned laughter)

HOST

Well, we have Alice Walker in the lead with 30 points, Noam Chomsky and Amy Goodman tied for second. Our next question: Jesus Christ was –

(Amy Goodman buzzes)

Amy Goodman?

AMY GOODMAN

The Romans.

HOST

The Romans? Really?

AMY GOODMAN

Egged on by the Jews.

HOST

Ah, I don't know if we can accept that.

(He listens in his earpiece)

No, our judges say sharing the blame constitutes intellectual cowardice. You should have gone with Jews. Or we would have accepted "murdered by his own kind."

AMY GOODMAN

Hey, I come from a family of Rabbis. I've known enough Jews to fill three ovens.

(Canned laughter)

HOST

No points there, I'm afraid. But here's the next question: At the Siege of Fort Pitt in 1763, Shawnee Indians were given blankets infected with smallpox –

(Noam Chomsky buzzes)

Noam?

NOAM CHOMSKY

Jews.

(Bell rings)



HOST

Yes, 10 points there. The Jews invented smallpox. Next question: The massacre of French cartoonists at Charlie Hebdo magazine over the portrayal of Mohammed –

(Amy Goodman buzzes)

Yes, Amy?

AMY GOODMAN

That would be Israel, Tariq.

HOST

That would be right for five points. Five more if you tell us why?

AMY GOODMAN

Jews created *Superman*. Superman's a cartoon. Charlie Hebdo's a cartoon. It all fits.

(Bell rings)

Obviously, Jews were a corrupting influence on modern art and design.

NOAM CHOMSKY

And medicine, and literature, and media...

ALICE WALKER

And husbands.

(Canned laughter)

HOST

And back we are to a three-way tie. Remember that the third-place contestant gets a copy of the Blame Game Home Game, complete with an Israeli flag suitable for burning, and on Blu-Ray, the complete works of Mel Gibson.

(Applause)

HOST

Ready for the next question: At the 1972 Munich Olympics –

(Amy Goodman buzzes)

Amy?

AMY GOODMAN

Israel.

HOST

You've done your homework.

(Bell rings)

Israel was to blame.

(Applause)

Those Jewish athletes had no business participating in sporting events with other countries that *don't* oppress the Palestinians. Amy, you're one question away from our bonus round.

AMY GOODMAN

This is exciting.

HOST

Here goes: Global warming –

(Noam Chomsky buzzes)

Noam?

NOAM CHOMSKY

Jews. Their big noses fog up the air and change the climate.

(Bell rings)

HOST

I can see why you're a college professor; you know something about everything.

NOAM CHOMSKY

Eat your heart out, Harold Bloom!

ALICE WALKER

If he is, he's eating it with chopped liver and Russian dressing!

HOST

Now, now, Alice; let's not be racist. Russian dressing is just a blend of mayonnaise and ketchup that has nothing to do with Russia or the Baltics. No fair stereotyping them.

HOST (CONT'D)

Anyway, next question: In 2003, American peace activist Rachel Corrie was killed in Gaza –

(Alice Walker buzzes)

Alice Walker?

ALICE WALKER

Israel.

HOST

No. Anyone else?

(Noam Chomsky buzzes)

Noam?

NOAM CHOMSKY

The Jews.

HOST

Sorry, no. Amy, you want to take a stab?

AMY GOOMDAN

Israeli soldiers?

HOST

No, the correct answer is "bulldozer." Next one: Known for kidnapping young girls and killings civilians, the Boko Haram organization –

(Alice Walker buzzes)

Alice Walker?

ALICE WALKER

Jews!

HOST

Umm, not sure if I can accept that. We were looking for something a bit stronger.

ALICE WALKER

Jew bastards!

(Bell rings)

HOST

Yes, well done!

(Applause)

What a game, ladies and gentlemen. All three of our contestants are tied at 40, one question away from the bonus round. Remember that our second-place winner flies to New York to be the guest of honor at a United Nations general assembly. You'll be there to see Susan Sarandon, Penelope Cruz, and Roger Waters all give speeches asking for the borders of Israel to be moved directly into the Mediterranean. Time for our next question: "Stockbroker Bernard Madoff was convicted –

(Amy Goodman buzzes)

HOST

Amy?

AMY GOODMAN

Jewish greed?

HOST

No, sorry, we were looking for Jewish genetic evil. Close though. Next question: Although abysmal, the Broadway musical *Cats* ran for 18 years –

(Alice Walker buzzes)

Alice?

ALICE WALKER

Andrew Lloyd Webber.

HOST

No, let me finish. The Broadway musical *Cats* ran for 18 years despite its lack of plot and –

(Noam Chomsky buzzes)

Noam Chomsky?

NOAM CHOMSKY

T.S. Eliot.

HOST

Sorry, no. This one's all yours Amy Goodman. Who's to blame for the unfathomable longevity of *Cats*?

AMY GOODMAN

The Jews?

HOST

I need a more complete answer.

AMY GOODMAN

The Jews *and* Israel.

(Bell rings)

HOST

We have a winner of the first round. Amy Goodman!

(Applause)

ALICE WALKER

What a surprise. A Jew wins on TV.

NOAM CHOMSKY

Now, Alice, it's the Israeli government we hate, not the terrible race it represents.

(The host walks Amy Goodman to another part of the set and centers her within the red circle on the floor)

HOST

Congratulations, Amy. How do you feel?

AMY GOODMAN

I have Bell's Palsy. I feel as good as I look.

HOST

Well, you answer better than you look because you're here in the bonus round. This is where you can rack up a whole lot of money for your charity. Hassan, tell us what she's playing for!

## ANNOUNCER

Well, Tariq, Amy Goodman will be raising money for the non-profit organization, Red, White & Red. From Manifest Destiny to its unquestioning support for the Jewish Terror State, the U.S. has been a geo-political nightmare. So star by star, stripe by stripe, Red, White & Red cuts America down to size. Chop chop, Tariq!

(Applause.

While the announcer is speaking, Tariq reaches behind the rostrum and pulls out a helmet with an opaque frontal visor which he helps lift onto Amy Goodman's head)

## HOST

Thank you, Hassan. All right, Amy, are you ready for the bonus round?

(Amy Goodman nods)

Great! Amy is wearing our special Blame Game virtual-reality helmet. She's able to hear me, but what she sees are images projected on a small screen literally before her eyes.

(Tariq goes behind the rostrum and produces a large toy sword)

Here's how the bonus round works: I'm going to list some surnames, and pictures of those people will pop up in Amy's visor. When a Jewish person appears, Amy, you're gonna take this sword -

(Hands it to her, and she begins awkwardly testing it)

and lop off the head of the Yid. For every Jew you decapitate, you get \$100 towards your charity. However, if you kill an Irishman, African-American, or any other ethnicity, that's \$50 *deducted* from your total. How you doin' with that sword, Amy?

## AMY GOODMAN

I told you I had palsy, right?

(Canned laughter)

HOST

(laughs along)

No excuses, Amy, this is television. You have 60 seconds. I wanna see you make some bearded heads roll. Are you ready?

AMY GOODMAN

I think so.

HOST

Start the clock...and...GO!

(Tariq reads names off his index cards as Amy Goodman flails and slices with her sword)

Markowitz! Horowitz! Reznikoff! Jaffe! Lieberman! O'Reilly!

(Amy checks her swing)

Good! Bar-Ilan! Yaron! Guttman! Smith . . . stein.

(Amy Goodman holds off, then swings)

HOST

30 seconds.

(rapidly)

Levinson! Goldstein! Finebloom! Applebaum! Mohammed!

(Amy Goodman can't check her last swing)

Did she swing? Judges? Ahh, okay, you lost 50 there. Gotta be careful. 20 seconds. Breslau! Abramov! Greenblatt! Kornbluth! Herzl! Schimmelfarb! 10 seconds!

ALICE WALKER

(calling)

You get `em, girl!

HOST

Jefferson!

(Amy Goodman holds off)

HOST (CONT'D)

Rosmarin! Shapiro! Weiss! Goodman!

(Amy is caught, suspended  
between slicing and  
stopping)

The name's Goodman.

(Amy Goodman rotates and  
stumbles, unsure what to do.  
This continues through the  
following dialogue and  
music)

NOAM CHOMSKY

Interesting conundrum, Tariq.

HOST

Yes, Noam. Would you say it's a crisis of conscience?

NOAM CHOMSKY

I think it's more self loathing conflicting with self  
preservation.

ALICE WALKER

Hell, no. It's just white people ain't got no game.

HOST

Well, we're going to pause the clock just to see how Amy Goodman  
resolves this quandary.

(Theme music plays)

It's a cliff-hanger, folks, so tune in tomorrow to see what  
happens. Noam Chomsky, Alice Walker, thanks for playing.

(Music louder, colored lights  
flash as announcer speaks and  
Amy Goodman continues her  
perambulations)

I'm Tariq Mahmoud Al-Nazari saying, Remember: the name of the  
game is Blame!



ANNOUNCER

(reading quickly)

The Blame Game is a co-production of the Pacifica Foundation and the Al Jazeera satellite network. Any rebroadcast, reproduction, or other use of the pictures and accounts of this game show, without the express written consent of Galliano Enterprises, is prohibited and punishable by stoning. For all of us here at *The Blame Game*, I'm Hassan el-Haddad reminding you that the fault is not in our stars but in our Semites. Good night!

(Music fades quickly and lights dim, except for a spotlight on Amy Goodman, still meandering with her sword.  
Hold on the silence until, suddenly, she cries out and slashes.  
Lights out.)

**END OF PLAY**

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