

WASHINGTON REPORT

On Middle East Affairs



"We've Come Undone"

"Diane" is upset. Her Egyptian husband Tarik left early in the morning to register with the INS as part of Group 4 and should have returned by now. Was she mistaken not to have closed the shop and gone with him? But that might not have been safe. Since 9/11 the shop has been vandalized twice. What should she do if he doesn't come back?

"Diane" is one of six monologues comprising "We've Come Undone," written and wonderfully performed by Kayhan Irani at the Chashama Theater in New York on June 23. Irani was inspired by stories from the Arab-American, Muslim and South Asian communities about the impact of post-9/11 legislation on their lives. In "Open Your

Eyes," Irani portrays a little girl whose mother is afraid to go out since men with guns took papa away. In another sketch she acts the part of a harried INS agent dying for a cigarette break. "What terrorist," the agent fumes, "is going to stand in line for eight hours?" Irani then becomes a middle-aged Sikh woman trying to explain to an anonymous caller threatening to bomb her mosque that Sikhs go to temples. In the saddest of the monologues, "Inexistence," the actress is a Pakistani woman whose husband and teen-aged sons have been deported.

In the post-performance discussion, Irani said most Americans are unaware of the suspicions, interrogations, detentions, and deportations to which their immigrant neighbors are being subjected. She described her show as an "escape back into reality." The New York performance included dance, live music, and multimedia effects, but, Irani said, it could be scaled back for performances in schools, shopping malls—anywhere she can reach audiences to educate and activate them. She can be reached at <kayhanirani@msn.com>. □