

Crossfire Catalyst
Spy, Action and Adventure

Written by
Shafiq Ahmad Setak

Draft 1
Date: March 9, 2024
WGA's R. No. 155199

Shafiq Ahmad Setak
1708-24 Eva Road
Etobicoke, Ontario
M9C 2B2, Canada
shafiqsetak@gmail.com
+1 (647)937 5231

FADE IN:

INT. COMPETITION HALL - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE OVER ACTION: INTER-HIGH SCHOOL BOXING
COMPETITION, MAZAR CITY, NORTH OF AFGHANISTAN, DECEMBER
1979

The hall, worn and neglected, resembles an old school gym in dire need of repairs. In the center stands a modest boxing ring, unsuitable for professional matches.

In the ring, two young boxers square off. REZAHİ (19), with a Chinese complexion, towers over his opponent, HARON (18), our hero.

Haron's handsome features, black hair, and charismatic demeanor evoke the style of Muhammad Ali, as he dances and moves gracefully around the ring.

Rezahi attacks with relentless combinations. Haron grins, unshaken, skillfully dodging and weaving from corner to corner.

Spectators sit on long benches near the ring. A few elderly men watch intently from couches and folding chairs.

A couple of teenage boys shout, eagerly clamoring for more action, heckling the fighters.

The bell rings, signaling the end of ROUND ONE. Both boxers retreat to their corners.

Rezahi, cocky and confident, dismisses his cornerman's offer to clean his sweat with a towel.

REZAHİ

I don't need it. I'm good.

In Haron's corner, his CORNERMAN (35), the high school sports teacher, assists him with care and enthusiasm.

The BELL rings again. Haron completes a quick Duaa (supplication).

The fighters re-engage. After a few exchanges, Rezahi grabs Haron in a clinch and deliberately headbutts him, cutting the corner of Haron's lip.

The REFEREE steps in immediately, separating them and issuing a stern warning.

REFEREE

Watch those moves, or you'll be disqualified!

Haron wipes the blood from his lip, determined to continue. The fight resumes, and Haron fights back, executing a series of precise punches, showcasing his skill and resolve.

The audience is alive with cheers and jeers, fueling the intensity in the competition hall.

Haron presses forward, landing a powerful right hook to Rezahi's face, followed by a crushing blow to the jaw. Rezahi staggers, retreating defensively to the corner.

Haron intensifies his assault with uppercuts to the chin, ribs, and chest. A devastating punch to the temple sends Rezahi crashing to the canvas.

The Referee starts the count:

REFEREE (CONT'D)

2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.

The crowd explodes into cheers.

CROWD

Haron! Haron! Haron!

The ANNOUNCER raises Haron's hand.

ANNOUNCER

Winner: Haron from Bakhtar High School!

Haron's cornerman steps into the ring, patting him on the back.

CORNERMAN

Well deserved, son. You defended yourself well. That right hook to the temple was a masterpiece, and those uppercuts—students will be talking about them for years.

HARON

Thanks, sir. Our hard work paid off.

CORNERMAN

I didn't see anyone from your family here.

HARON

(approaching the ropes)

My father's getting old, and he's never been a fan of boxing.

CORNERMAN

So, what's next for you?

HARON

I dreamed of becoming a pro boxer or a detective. But now, everything depends on what happens in this country.

CORNERMAN

You've got talent, but your future here is uncertain. I've heard from a friend in Hairatan--there's heavy Russian activity across the Amu River. An invasion is coming. You might want to think about leaving soon.

HARON

(exiting the ring)

I can't leave. Not now. My country needs me.

(turns back)

Thanks for everything, sir. I'll see you soon.

CORNERMAN

Take care, Haron. Until next time.

CUT TO:

EXT. PONTOON BRIDGE ON A BIG RIVER - DAY

Fog, frost, and snow cover the scene as troops, tanks, armored personnel carriers, and heavy trucks adorned with RED ARMY LOGOS and INSIGNIA cross a floating bridge over a VAST RIVER.

SUPER: DECEMBER 24, 1979. SOVIET FORCES CROSS THE AMU DARYA RIVER, NORTH OF MAZAR-E-SHARIF, ON THE FIRST DAY OF THEIR INVASION OF AFGHANISTAN

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PEAK OF A SNOW-CAPPED MOUNTAIN - DAY

The camera glides over the peak, revealing winding roads of a HIGHWAY far below.

A MILITARY CONVOY moves along the highway, with T-62, T-64, and T-72 tanks, armored vehicles, fuel tankers, and personnel carriers, all filled with Russian soldiers.

SUPER: SALANG HIGHWAY ON THE HINDUKUSH MOUNTAINS CONNECTING NORTH AND SOUTH AFGHANISTAN.

On a hilltop overlooking the highway, MUJAHIDEEN fighters, ranging from their 20s to 40s, are armed with RPGs, AK-47s, machine guns, and light artillery. They await the convoy.

A bearded MUJAHID (42), wearing a PAKOL HAT, takes aim at a T-62 Tank with his RPG.

THE MAN
(pushing the trigger)
Allah-u-Akbar.

THWACK-KABOOM - A rocket streaks through the air, and the lead tank explodes in flames. Another rocket hits a personnel carrier, igniting it.

Burned and wounded Russian soldiers scramble from the wreckage as the Mujahideen continue firing with machine guns and AK-47s.

A T-62 swivels its cannon toward the hilltop and FIRES. The shell strikes just below the fighters' position, sending debris flying.

EXT. HILLTOP - DAY

BOOM - Smoke and dust fill the air. The Mujahid who fired the RPG calls out to his comrades.

THE MAN
(in Dari, subtitled)
Aqab-Neshini! "Retreat!"

EXT. HILLSIDE - DAY

The Mujahideen quickly descend the hill, disappearing into the remnants of a ruined village.

CUT TO:

EXT. SMALL ALLEY - PREDAWN

SUPER: OUTSKIRTS OF MAZAR CITY, 05:00 AM, THREE MONTHS LATER

Distant dog barks pierce the early morning silence. From a narrow alley, five armed men emerge, their shadows blending into the predawn darkness.

They move swiftly toward a GRAVEL ROAD on the outskirts of the city. They converge on a WEATHERED BRIDGE spanning a small stream.

In the stillness, one man pulls out a PICKAXE, breaking the silence with rhythmic strikes. He digs a shallow pit, about 35cm deep, in the bridge's surface.

HARON'S VOICE cuts through the night.

HARON
 (in Dari, subtitled)
Bus Ast. Maina beteh. "Enough. Hand me the mine."

One of the men passes Haron a BACKPACK. He retrieves an ANTITANK LAND MINE with a WIRE SPOOL and carefully connects it to the detonator.

After reassembling the device, he places it in the hole and covers it with dirt, camouflaging it.

Haron unravels the wire spool, cautiously moving toward the stream under the bridge. He hides the wires along the stream until he reaches the alley entrance.

HARON (CONT'D)
 (in Dari, subtitled)
Khalas. Shuma burein. Ma einja kameen megeerum. "It's done. You can go. I'll stay here for the ambush."

EXT. GRAVEL ROAD - EARLY MORNING

The crunch of rugged tires breaks the morning calm as a Russian-made BTR-40 Personnel Carrier filled with soldiers patrols the area.

CUT TO:

EXT. ALLEY ENTRANCE - DAY

At the narrow alley entrance, HARON watches intently as the BTR-40 rumbles closer. His face is tense as he holds the two wires apart, poised.

As the armored vehicle crosses the bridge, its front tires roll over the gravel. Haron connects the wires and quickly retreats.

BOOM!

A violent explosion rocks the bridge, hurling the BTR-40 into the air. The soldiers inside are thrown like rag dolls, their bodies scattered across the road.

The carrier erupts in a blazing inferno, the fire fueled by gasoline, explosives, and ammunition.

Amidst the flames and wreckage, the lifeless bodies of several soldiers lie motionless on the gravel road, victims of the devastating blast.

CUT TO:

INT. ROOM - NIGHT

Haron, engrossed in a book, sits on a mattress.

The door swings open. A slim, silver-haired man in his late 60s enters.

HARON

Hi, Dad.

FATHER

Hello, son. What are you doing?

HARON

Reading this espionage novel.

FATHER

Son, those books are distracting you from your studies.

HARON

But Dad, I enjoy spy stories.

FATHER

You need to focus on your Arabic. I plan to send you to Saudi Arabia.

HARON

I'm not going to Saudi Arabia. I've secured a scholarship to study in Moscow.

FATHER

(enraged)

Then I'll disown you! Russia and the communists are disgraceful and dangerous. The Mujahideen will target you!

HARON

Dad, I'm not betraying our values. Commander Zabiullah, connected to Ahmad Shah Massoud, has assigned me a mission. I'll infiltrate the communist regime's security service to help the Mujahideen capture KHAD agents.

FATHER

I never thought I'd hear those words from you, my son. But if Zabiullah Khan trusts you, then I must too. May Allah watch over you.

HARON

Thank you, Father. I know it's hard for you to accept, but this mission is bigger than our family. It's for the freedom of our people.

FATHER

(embracing Haron)

God bless you, son. You're embarking on a dangerous path, but if it brings justice to our people, you have my blessing.

HARON

Please, Father, don't tell Mom about this. Let her believe I'm just working with the regime. It's safer for her that way.

FATHER

I'll keep your secret, Haron. Your mother doesn't need to carry this burden. But remember, if anything happens, we stand together as a family.

CUT TO:

INT. MEETING ROOM - DAY

Haron and a group of young students assemble around a sturdy desk.

USTOWAR, Head of the Recruitment Committee of the Parcham Faction in Mazar, aged 40, wears a crisp gray suit with a bold red tie. He sits in a revolving chair, facing them.

In the far-right corner of the room, the national flag of Afghanistan flutters beside the Soviet Union's flag.

Beneath them, portraits of Babrak Karmal and Leonid Brezhnev hang, casting a solemn atmosphere over the meeting.

USTOWAR

I'm pleased to have you patriotic young men on our team. You have a duty to protect this country.

(MORE)

USTOWAR (CONT'D)

Our main goal is to fight and defeat the 'Ashrar'—the evil agents of Western Imperialism, led by America. In this Great Patriotic War, victory awaits us.

HARON

(raising his hand)

Sir, I assure you that I'll defend this great land to the last drop of my blood. Advancing the cause of the Party and our socialist values will always be my top priority.

USTOWAR

Thank you, Comrade Haron. I expect the same commitment from all of you. To that end, you will be sent to Moscow and other cities of our great neighbor, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, for special education and training.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

EXT. MILITARY TRAINING CAMP - DAY

Rain and fog, a typical spring day in Moscow.

Haron, alongside 20 young men of diverse backgrounds, jogs around a muddy track, all clad in Russian Military Cadet Uniforms.

SUPER: TEN DAYS LATER

The cadets halt in front of a large building. Above the entrance, a SIGN reads: "COMBINED ARMS ACADEMY, MOSCOW."

START MONTAGE:

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Haron, focused, takes notes as a stern INSTRUCTOR explains the conjugation of the verb "GO" in Russian.

INT. GYM - DAY

In a sprawling gym, Haron strains as he lifts weights, unleashing rapid punches on a LEATHER SPEED BAG, then forcefully kicks a KICKBOXING BAG.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Haron reassembles an AK-47 swiftly in front of a class, his movements sharp and methodical.

END MONTAGE:

INT. INDOOR SHOOTING RANGE - DAY

Cadets from across the former Soviet bloc stand at attention, firing MACAROV PISTOLS at DUMMY TARGETS.

Haron confidently hits the mark with his right hand but struggles with his left, catching the disapproving eye of DIMITRY VAVILOV, a gruff instructor in his late 30s.

Dimitry steps behind Haron, adjusting his grip.

DIMITRY
(soft but firm)
Now, shoot.

Haron fires, missing again.

DIMITRY (CONT'D)
(sneering)
Third day, and you still can't hit with your left hand. Lazy dog.

Haron tries again, but the result is the same—another miss.

CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Cadets sit at attention as a RUSSIAN OFFICER addresses them.

SUPER: SIX MONTHS LATER

THE OFFICER
Today, we discuss two types of Russian tanks. Tomorrow, you'll drive them and fire their big guns.

On a TV, a VIDEO shows two massive TANKS.

THE OFFICER
(pauses the video)
Who can identify these?

HARON
(raising hand)
T-62s on the right, T-72s on the left.

THE OFFICER
(raising an eyebrow)
How do you know, Number 5?

HARON
You've sent many to my country.

Some cadets chuckle, but the officer nods slightly.

THE OFFICER
At the request of your government, comrade.

CUT TO:

EXT. TANK TRAINING ARENA - DAY

Haron sits inside a T-62, wearing a SOVIET TANK CREW UNIFORM. He squints through the PERISCOPE, eyes locked on a distant RED FLAG atop a hill.

HARON
(steady)
Fire.

The TANK'S SMOOTHBORE GUN fires with a deafening BOOM. The camera shifts to the hill as the flaming flag rises into the air, enveloped in dust and smoke.

RUSSIAN INSTRUCTOR
(checking through
binoculars)
Well done, Number 5.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

A high-ranking RUSSIAN MILITARY OFFICER stands before the cadets.

SUPER: NINE MONTHS LATER

THE OFFICER
You've completed nine months of training.
Tomorrow, you'll face final tests.
Then—your results, certificates, and return home.

INT. INDOOR SHOOTING RANGE - DAY

Haron and another cadet, NUMBER 8, stand in line for their final evaluation. Dimitry supervises.

DIMITRY
Number 8, you're first. 3, 2, 1-FIRE.

Number 8 fires three shots with his right hand, then three with his left--each bullet strikes the dummy squarely in the chest and heart.

DIMITRY (CONT'D)
(examining)
Excellent. You may leave.

Number 8 nods and exits.

DIMITRY (CONT'D)
(turning to Haron)
Number 5. Ready?

HARON
Yes, sir.

DIMITRY
3, 2, 1-FIRE.

Haron hits the heart with three right-hand shots. Dimitry looks impressed but hides it.

DIMITRY
Now, your left. Steady. 3, 2, 1-FIRE.

Haron fires, but the shots miss.

DIMITRY (CONT'D)
(shouting)
Again! Steady... Fire.

Another miss.

DIMITRY (CONT'D)
(losing it)
Stupid Afghan! You're useless. Get out!

INT. HALL - DAY

Haron, along with other cadets, sits in a grand hall. On the podium, a RUSSIAN OFFICER announces the rankings.

THE OFFICER
Comrade Number 8 from Cuba, first place.

The hall erupts in applause.

THE OFFICER

And second place—Number 5 from Afghanistan.

Haron steps up to the podium, shaking hands with the officers as cheers echo around the room. He accepts his certificate, his expression a mix of pride and simmering frustration.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

EXT. KABUL CITY - DAY

An aerial view of Kabul City. The camera sweeps over the landscape, gradually focusing on the headquarters of KHAD, the Communist Regime's Secret Police.

SUPER: DIRECTORATE NO. 10 OF THE COMMUNIST REGIME
SECURITY SERVICE, KABUL, MARCH, 1986

INT. OFFICE - DAY

The CLICKETY CLACK of a MANUAL TYPEWRITER, operated by a somewhat pretty woman (24), sitting behind a desk opposite Haron, resonates in the office room.

The 'iron tongue' of a WALL-MOUNT CLOCK strikes 09:00 am.

A well-dressed, medium-height, clean-shaven man, seemingly 40, enters the office. He is Mr. GRAN, known as TANDER, Head of Directorate No. 10 of KHAD, the main intelligence agency of Afghanistan.

TANDER

Good morning, comrades.

Haron and the lady typist stand to their feet, showing respect.

HARON

Good morning, sir. How are you today?

TANDER

Fine, thanks. Mr. Haron! I want to see you in my office.

INT. CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

Haron stands behind Tander in front of a door at the end of a small corridor.

A signboard in DARI above the door reads: "DIRECTOR GENERAL."

Tander opens the door, and he and Haron enter a spacious office.

INT. SPACIOUS OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Tander leads the way, guiding Haron to the right corner of his office. There, he positions himself in front of a meticulously detailed model of Kabul City, illustrating the intricate layout of streets, houses, hills, and mountains that comprise the Afghan capital.

TANDER

(pointing to a hilltop
in the city model)

Mr. Haron, in the last couple of months, the rebels' indiscriminate rocket attacks on Kabul from the Paghman hilltops have increased. The President has assigned our department to collaborate with the armed forces to resolve the issue.

HARON

Sir, do you have any intelligence reports from the area?

TANDER

Yes, we do. According to our sources, there is a derelict village from which the rebels fire rockets.

HARON

Then my mission is to comb the village and its surrounding areas to find out exactly what is going on there.

TANDER

To make your job easier, the national army will bombard the surrounding hills and mountain peaks with BM-41 and heavy artillery until you reach your destination. Meanwhile, a Mi-8 helicopter will transport you and your men to the target area, and a Mi-24 GUNSHIP will also accompany you for protection and security. Haron, do your best and put your report on my desk by tomorrow afternoon.

HARON
(saluting his boss)
Yes, sir.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ARMY DIVISIONS - DAY

Russian-made BM-41 rocket batteries and several heavy artillery pieces, lined up behind a hill, fire with deafening, thunderous roars. The air echoes with the sounds of KABOOM, BOOM, BOOM, BOOM.

EXT. TOP OF HILLS AND MOUNTAIN PEAKS - DAY

Rockets and artillery shells whistle through the air, striking several hilltops and mountain peaks. Dust and smoke rise, shrouding the landscape.

EXT. SKY - DAY

Two helicopters—a Mi-24 and a Mi-18—fly low over the houses of Kabul city.

They reach a destroyed, derelict village in a mountainous region. The Mi-24 circles above the crumbling settlement.

INT. MI-18 HELICOPTER - DAY

Fifteen combat-ready men from the Afghan Special Forces, wearing full combat gear, peer down at the abandoned village below.

The helicopter lowers its altitude and lands in a small garden.

Haron, the STRIKE FORCE LEADER, signals to his men. Without hesitation, the soldiers leap from the chopper and fan out across the small garden of a half-destroyed mud house on the lower slopes of a hill.

EXT. HALF-DESTROYED MUD HOUSE - DAY

As the team spreads out, a soldier kicks open a wooden door on the porch of the shabby estate.

Haron rushes inside, with two soldiers following close behind.

INT. ROOM - DAY

AK-47s point in all directions. Two women—one young, in her 20s, and another older, seemingly in her late 50s—sit

on a MATTRESS laid over a worn-out Afghan CARPET, now caught in the spotlight.

Upon seeing the intruders, the women quickly cover their faces with their shawls.

HARON

(in Dari with subtitles)

No man in this house?

(Marde dar khana neist?)

THE OLD WOMAN

My husband has gone to buy groceries.

(Showharam baraye

kharid bazar rafta.)

HARON

(to the soldiers)

Let's move out.

(Biroon bereim.)

EXT. COURTYARD - DAY

A couple of soldiers stand guard in the courtyard, while three others lie on the rooftop, scanning the surroundings, alert for any potential threat.

HARON

Has every part of the house been searched?

ONE OF THE SOLDIERS

Yes, sir. I even checked the barn full of straw over there in the corner.

HARON

Perfect. What about those destroyed rooms in the back garden?

THE SOLDIER

No, sir. We haven't searched those yet.

HARON

Then let's head there.

INT. ROOFLESS LARGE ROOM - DAY

Haron and two members of his strike team enter a spacious, roofless room. The ceiling is destroyed, but the floor appears freshly cemented.

Haron exits and walks back toward the old woman's house.

ONE OF THE SOLDIERS

Sir, where are you going?

HARON

Just follow me—and stay quiet.

INT. OLD WOMAN'S HOUSE - DAY

Haron re-enters the house, with soldiers trailing him. The old woman is on the VERANDA, kneading dough.

HARON

(shouting)

Where are the missiles?

THE OLD WOMAN

I don't know what you're talking about.

HARON

I'm talking about the hidden BM-12 rockets around your house. The ones the rebels use to attack Kabul.

THE OLD WOMAN

I'm just a poor old woman, living here with my husband and daughter. I'm not responsible for what they do.

HARON

Look, ma'am, I know your husband isn't out for groceries—he's hiding. So, cooperate. Don't make me show you my cruel side.

THE OLD WOMAN

You do whatever you want.

INT. OLD WOMAN'S ROOM - DAY

Haron enters the room, closing the door behind him. The old woman rushes toward the door.

THE OLD WOMAN

(crying)

Please, don't harm my daughter! Go to the barn—search under the straw. You'll find what you're looking for.

HARON

Thank you, ma'am.

INT. BARN - DAY

Three soldiers uncover several Chinese-made BM-12 rockets hidden under hay and straw.

EXT. ROOFLESS LARGE ROOM - DAY

Soldiers carefully dig into the cemented floor of the roofless room.

ONE OF THE SOLDIERS

(glancing at Haron)

Sir, how did you know they were using this room for firing rockets?

HARON

These walls are made of mud and raw bricks, but the floor was recently cemented. Firing from a cemented surface doesn't create much dust, which keeps their position hidden. It was an easy deduction.

THE SOLDIER

Sir, when you threatened the old woman about her daughter, I almost stepped in.

HARON

I wouldn't touch the girl—I'm not an animal. But you have to use your brain in situations like this.

THE SOLDIER

What should we do with the rockets?

HARON

We'll take them with us. Destroying them here would put us—and the villagers—in danger.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Haron sits across from Tander in a spacious office.

TANDER

Congratulations, Haron! The President's impressed. You're getting a raise—and a promotion to the Special Department for protecting top officials.

HARON

Thank you, sir. Serving the homeland and the Party has always been my dream.

TANDER

Well said.

HARON

When do I start?

TANDER

Day after tomorrow. You'll head to Bagram Airbase. Comrade Najib will be there, receiving General Dostum as he returns from the frontlines.

CUT TO:

INT. GROCERY SHOP - DAY

HARON sits in a wooden chair, nestled in the cozy corner of the grocery shop. Facing him is UNCLE RAHIM, a venerable man with a snow-white beard, perched behind the counter.

HARON

(savoring his tea)

Uncle Rahim, could you tally up my purchases?

UNCLE RAHIM

(retrieving a notebook
and pen)

Certainly, my boy. Your total should be recorded here.

Uncle Rahim hands the notebook and pen to Haron, who flips through it until he locates his entry on page 5. He calculates the sum, writing 190 in numerals.

Simultaneously, Haron discreetly pens a message in Dari, subtitled in English:

"Major attack on Panjshir imminent. ILYAS, a member of Bazarak Strike Group, is a KHAD operative."

HARON

(presenting the
notebook)

Here you are. It comes to 190. Please verify.

UNCLE RAHIM

(adjusting his glasses
with a smile)

Ah, I see. Your math is impeccable. Thank you, young man.

Haron retrieves Af.200.00 from his wallet and hands it to Uncle Rahim.

HARON

Here you go, Uncle. Consider it settled.
Thanks for the saffron tea. Until next
time.

UNCLE RAHIM

(receiving the payment)

Take care, my friend. Stay safe.

EXT. AIR BASE - DAY

Armed soldiers guard the perimeter of the air base. A Russian ANTONOV Military Transport Plane dominates the scene, flanked by MIGs and Su-25s on the TARMAC.

SUPER: BAGRAM AIR BASE, NORTH OF KABUL, 1987

Facing the Antonov, GENERAL DOSTUM—with distinct East Asian features, late 30s—stands in full military regalia, surrounded by 20 armed men.

EXT. SKY - DAY

Two Mi-17 helicopters soar through the sky. One touches down, and HARON, along with several commandos, exits. The helicopter ascends, hovering above.

The second helicopter lands 10 meters from the militia. Four men dressed in black step out, taking positions at the helicopter's gate.

A stout man in his early 50s, DR. NAJIB, President of the Afghan Communist Regime, emerges. He strides purposefully towards General Dostum.

PRESIDENT NAJIB

(extends his hand)

Glad to see you alive and kicking, General.

GENERAL DOSTUM

It's an honor, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT NAJIB

I congratulate you on liberating districts from the rebels. But there are reports of your men looting and committing war crimes. It seems some do not follow your orders.

GENERAL DOSTUM

Sir! This is propaganda. Let me show you the loyalty of my men.

General Dostum calls to one of his soldiers.

GENERAL DOSTUM (CONT'D)
 (shouting)
 Mr. LAAL!

A young soldier, 21, steps forward.

SOLDIER
 Yes, sir.

GENERAL DOSTUM
 Fire a bullet into your leg.

The young soldier obediently raises his AK-47, fires a round into his left thigh. Blood flows, but he remains standing. Two other militia members rush to assist him.

GENERAL DOSTUM (CONT'D)
 (turning to the
 President)
 Isn't this loyalty and obedience, Mr.
 President?

PRESIDENT NAJIB
 Yes, but you didn't have to injure him.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. GROCERY STORE - EVENING

Haron waits in a short line at Uncle Rahim's grocery store. As the previous customer departs, he steps forward.

HARON
 Hello, Uncle Rahim! I'm here for my BASMATI
 RICE.

UNCLE RAHIM
 Just a minute. I'll get it.

Uncle Rahim retrieves a medium-sized sack of rice from the back.

UNCLE RAHIM (CONT'D)
 (handing the rice to
 Haron)
 Here you go, brother. You can pay later.
 I've got more customers to attend to.

HARON
 (taking the sack)
 Thanks. Take care.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Haron dresses in a dark blue suit, white shirt, and red tie. He pulls on a black overcoat and moves to the window, peering through a red curtain.

Outside, snowflakes gently fall. Haron rushes into the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Haron slices open the rice sack with a knife. Inside, he finds C4 explosives and a pencil detonator in a small white plastic bag.

He slips the pencil detonator into his SHOULDER HOLSTER, next to his pistol, and hides the C4 in his right winter boot, zipping it up to conceal it.

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Haron stands before his boss, holding an A4 paper.

TANDER

Hey, Haron! What's up?

HARON

(extends the paper)

Boss, I need a favor. My sister's getting married in Mazar-e-Sharif. I'd like to take three days off. Here's my request letter.

TANDER

(reading and signing)

Sure thing. Take the time, but don't stay away too long. We'll need you back soon.

HARON

Absolutely, sir! I'll be back before you know it.

EXT. OFFICE PARKING LOT - AFTERNOON

Mr. Tander walks toward a black Russian-made VOLGA SEDAN as Haron approaches.

HARON

Excuse me, sir! Could you drop me off in Shar-e-Now? I need to pick up a gift for my sister.

TANDER

Sure, hop in.

Haron climbs into the front seat. The 25-year-old driver starts the engine. As they exit the Security Service Office gate, Haron reaches for the zipper on his right boot.

HARON

(unzipping the boot)

These winter boots are killing my toes.

He discreetly pulls out a dough-like C4 explosive from his boot, shaping it between his thighs like a bar of soap.

Once molded, Haron takes out the time-pencil from his shoulder holster, crushes the copper section, and inserts it into the C4. He then quietly places the device under his seat.

The car nears Shar-e-Now in downtown Kabul.

HARON (CONT'D)

(to the driver)

This is good. Stop here, please.

The driver slows down, and Haron exits the car.

HARON (CONT'D)

(to Tander, closing
the door)

Thanks for the ride, sir. Take care.

TANDER

Goodbye, Haron. Stay safe.

EXT. SIDEWALK - CONTINUOUS

Haron walks along the sidewalk near Park-e-Shar-e-Now.

EXT. STREET - DOWNTOWN KABUL - MOMENTS LATER

The black Volga pauses briefly to avoid pedestrians. As the car turns right, a powerful explosion erupts with a resounding BOOM, shaking the area.

Black smoke, dust, and debris fill the sky, bringing traffic to a halt.

Haron quickly retreats into an alley, walking about 50 meters until he spots a yellow taxi with a clean-shaven driver (50) waiting at the alley's end.

HARON
(getting in the taxi)
Old Macro-Rayyan, please.

TAXI DRIVER
I think there was an explosion. Wasn't there?

HARON
Yeah. These damn rebels never give us a break.

The taxi drives off, the camera following it for a few seconds.

EXT. STREET OPPOSITE MACRO-RAYYAN BUILDINGS - DUSK

The taxi halts in front of a five-story building.

HARON
(giving Af.100 to the driver)
Here you go. Keep the change.

As the taxi pulls away, Haron crosses the street toward Uncle Rahim's grocery shop.

INT. GROCERY STORE - MOMENTS LATER

HARON
(walking in)
Salam, Uncle Rahim. I've completed my task. Can you return my luggage and guide me on what to do next?

UNCLE RAHIM
(nods toward the door)
Look outside. There's an old taxi waiting. Don't worry, he's one of ours. He'll take you to Charikaar Town and connect you with a man who'll get you to Panjshir. Oh, and by the way, your family's already been evacuated from Mazar. They're on their way to Pakistan.

HARON
(exiting the shop)
Thank you, Uncle Rahim. Goodbye.

UNCLE RAHIM
Hold on, young man! Aren't you forgetting your luggage?

HARON

(smiling)

Oops, my bad! The tension's gotten to me.

Uncle Rahim retrieves a backpack and a blue suitcase from the back of the shop and hands them to Haron.

UNCLE RAHIM

Safe journey, brother.

HARON

Thank you, Uncle Rahim. May Allah bless you. Bye.

Haron slings the backpack over his shoulder, grabs the suitcase, and heads toward the yellow taxi.

HARON (CONT'D)

(opening the back door, getting in)

Salaam. Ready to go.

DRIVER

Walaikum As Salaam. Welcome aboard.

The elderly driver starts the car and pulls away.

CUT TO:

EXT. SNOW-CAPPED HILLTOP - DAY

Haron stands with a group of Mujahideen on a snow-covered hill, overlooking a vast VALLEY and a WINDING RIVER.

He's dressed in winter gear, wearing the distinctive PAKOL hat, and black boots.

SUPER: PANJSHIR VALLEY, TWO WEEKS LATER

Amidst the resistance fighters, a young Mujahid takes aim with an RPG at a battered Russian tank positioned roughly 350 meters down the valley.

The rocket fires but misses, detonating just meters away from its target.

The GROUP COMMANDER, a 45-year-old man with a long beard, clad in a "John Rambo: First Blood" jacket, steps forward, taking the RPG launcher from the young fighter.

GROUP COMMANDER

Brother Hamid, two weeks of training, and you still miss.

The GROUP COMMANDER reloads the RPG and moves closer to Haron.

GROUP COMMANDER (CONT'D)

Now it's time for our new arrival to try his hand.

Haron takes the launcher, already loaded, and carefully aims at the tank below.

HAMID

(sarcastically)

Careful, brother. Don't hit the tank's shadow like I did.

Haron inhales deeply and fires.

BOOM - The grenade streaks towards its target, obliterating the tank. Smoke billows from the valley below.

GROUP COMMANDER

(smiling)

Well done. You hit the mark, brother. Commander Masoud will be pleased when he meets you.

HARON

Thank you, sir. I hope to ask Commander Masoud to send me to Pakistan so I can reunite with my family and continue my higher education.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

EXT. PESHAWAR, PAKISTAN - DAY

An aerial shot captures the bustling city of Peshawar at the Khyber Pass. Narrow streets buzz with vibrant markets, colorful stalls, and rickshaws weaving between ancient and modern buildings.

The camera pans to a UNIVERSITY CAMPUS, where modern architecture meets the city's traditional charm.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Haron sits at a desk with 10 other Afghan men, ranging from 19 to 35 years old, in a classroom. They listen attentively to MR. GORDON, a man in his early 40s with brown eyes.

SUPER: JOURNALISM CLASS - AFGHAN SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM
SPONSORED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA, PESHAWAR,
PAKISTAN, 1990.

GORDON

Today, we'll discuss the criteria that
make an event more newsworthy.

Gordon writes "TIMELINESS, PROMINENCE, ODDITY" on the
WHITEBOARD, then turns to the students.

GORDON (CONT'D)

An event is more newsworthy when it's
reported promptly. Prominence involves
notable individuals such as politicians,
athletes, and celebrities, which increases
the news value...

A student at the back raises his hand.

GORDON (CONT'D)

Yes, Mr. Omar? A question?

OMAR

When will we get the results of our TOEFL
tests?

GORDON

From what I know, seven of you did well
and will soon be heading to the US.

OMAR

Who are they, sir?

GORDON

(glancing at his
wristwatch)

Haron is one of them.

HARON

(raising his hand)

Sir, you didn't explain the oddity
criterion.

GORDON

Oddity refers to how unusual an event is.
The more out of the ordinary, the more
newsworthy it becomes. For example, it
snows frequently in Kabul but not in
Peshawar. If there were a 20 cm snowfall
here, it would be a rare event. Now,
imagine if Nancy Reagan divorced Ronald
Reagan and ran away with Hekmatyar.

(MORE)

GORDON (CONT'D)

That would certainly be odd and make front-page news.

The class erupts in laughter.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SKY ABOVE AIRPORT - DAY

A Boeing 747 descends gracefully, preparing to land amidst the skyscrapers of a modern city.

SUPER: LINCOLN MUNICIPAL AIRPORT, OMAHA, NEBRASKA

INT. TERMINAL - DAY

Haron, carrying a backpack on one shoulder and a suitcase in hand, exits the terminal. He's greeted by CRYSTAL ASHLEY, a friendly, tall blonde woman in her late twenties.

CRYSTAL

Hey there, Mr. Haron! I'm Crystal, part of the International Welcome Team at the University of Nebraska. We're here to greet international students and help you with everything from the airport to the university. We'll make sure you have all the guidance you need for your education.

HARON

Thanks a lot, Ms. Crystal. How did you recognize me?

CRYSTAL

We received copies of your travel documents and ID from the university.

INT/EXT. CAR - DAY

Crystal expertly drives a Caprice Classic Chevy, with Haron in the passenger seat. They pull into the grounds of a tall building.

CRYSTAL

(pointing)

That's your new place.

HARON

How far is it from the university?

CRYSTAL

Not bad at all. Just a ten-minute walk to the College of Journalism and Mass Communications. Tomorrow, I'll swing by around 9:00 am to help you register and handle the paperwork.

HARON

Thanks a lot. I've been thinking about switching my major from journalism to English Literature with a minor in Arabic.

CRYSTAL

We can definitely speak with the Dean about that. But first, let's get you settled in. We'll handle the rest tomorrow.

INT. LOBBY - DAY

Haron and Crystal stand by an elevator in the lobby. Around them, African, Asian, and American students are coming and going.

The elevator arrives, and they step inside.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

Crystal presses 3 on the panel. The elevator rises and stops on the third floor.

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

Crystal walks down the hallway, with Haron following, dragging his suitcase.

CRYSTAL

(stopping at Room 305)

Here it is—Room 305. My room's just upstairs, 402.

Crystal pulls a key from her pocket, unlocks the door, and hands Haron a retractable key holder.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)

(placing it in his hand)

Here you go, Mr. Haron. This room is yours now. It has everything you'll need as a student.

Haron steps inside, placing his suitcase in the wardrobe and his backpack on a desk in the corner.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)

I've got to run, but get comfortable.
I'll see you tomorrow at 8:30 am. Bye for
now!

HARON

Goodbye, Ms. Crystal. Thanks for all your
help.

CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Haron is seated among numerous students in a large,
classroom, attentively listening to MR. DAVID, a 50-
year-old professor with gray hair, wearing a Jewish
KIPPAH and gold-framed GLASSES.

PROF. DAVID

So, the crucial themes in James Matthew's
play, "THE WILL," are the passage of time,
greed, and death.

He writes "The passage of time, greed, and death" on
the WHITEBOARD with a RED MARKER.

PROF. DAVID (CONT'D)

(turning to the
students, pointing
at Haron)

Mr. Haron! Let me put you in the spotlight.
Could you tell us if there is a connection
between greed and any disease in the play?

ANGLE ON HARON (FLASHBACK)

INT. FIRING RANGE - DAY

Haron stands in a firing range, holding a pistol in his
left hand. A man's reproachful voice echoes in his ears.

THE VOICE (V.O.)

You lazy dog! You're good for nothing.

BACK TO CLASS - PRESENT DAY

Haron startles, returning to the classroom as the
professor's voice cuts through his thoughts.

PROF. DAVID

Mr. Haron! Is there a relationship between
greed and any disease in the play?

HARON

I believe there is, sir. Greed is like a cancer that takes root in the mind and heart of a person, often going unnoticed until it spirals out of control. In James Matthew's play, one character frequently visits a doctor, complaining of pain and suffering. Despite numerous tests, the doctor cannot diagnose the invisible ailment. Perhaps he is afflicted with a form of cancer that even the doctor cannot detect. The parallel between greed and cancer lies in their ability to silently spread and progress within us, unseen.

PROF. DAVID

(looking at his
wristwatch)

With this excellent comparison by Mr. Haron between greed and cancer, we conclude today's lecture. See you next week.

Students begin to leave the classroom. As Haron opens the door to exit, CRYSTAL appears in front of him.

HARON

Hi, Crystal!

CRYSTAL

Oh, hi, Haron! How are you?

HARON

Good, thank you. What are you doing here?

CRYSTAL

I'm taking an advanced writing course with Prof. Dr. David.

HARON

Good for you! He's an excellent teacher. I enjoy his lectures too.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

Haron sits quietly at a desk in the library, engrossed in a book.

EXT. JOGGING TRACK - DAY

Haron jogs along a trail, dressed in ADIDAS SPORTSWEAR.

INT. CLASS - DAY

Haron sits among other students, focused on taking an exam.

EXT. SIDEWALK - AFTERNOON

Haron walks along a pedestrian path by the road. Suddenly, two men in black step out of a dark blue FORD LINCOLN, approaching him from behind.

As Haron glances back, the men handcuff him and place a SPIT MASK over his head. Despite struggling, his efforts prove futile.

The men escort him into the Ford Lincoln, seamlessly blending into the traffic.

INT. ISOLATION CELL - DAY

Haron sits in the dimly lit isolation cell of an undisclosed detention center.

HARON

(shouting)

Hey! Listen to me. You're making a mistake. I'm innocent. I'm just a student!

No response. Haron falls silent for a moment. Soon, footsteps approach.

Two shadowy figures emerge from the darkness, revealing themselves as two robust guards in uniform, standing before his cell.

Guard 1 unlocks the cell door with a key attached to his belt. Haron, aware of their presence, slowly rises from his bunk. His eyes meet the guards' gaze—resignation mixed with defiance. The guards enter the cell.

GUARD 2

(authoritative)

Stand up and turn around.

Haron complies, turning to face the wall. The guards secure handcuffs around his wrists, the metallic clink echoing in the cell.

GUARD 2 (CONT'D)

(coldly)

You know the drill. No funny business.

Haron nods silently, his jaw clenched in determination. Satisfied with the restraints, the guards guide him out of the cell and into the dimly lit corridor.

INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

The guards walk in sync, maintaining a steady pace as they escort Haron down the corridor.

Haron walks between them, head held high, passing rows of closed cell doors, each one concealing its own secrets.

They reach a heavy door marked "SECURE INTERVIEW ROOM." One guard pushes it open, revealing a small room with a table and chairs.

INT. SECURE INTERVIEW ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The room is harshly lit by exposed bulbs, casting a sterile glow. The guards flank Haron as they guide him to a chair bolted to the floor beneath a surveillance camera.

Handcuffed behind his back, Haron sits, narrowing his eyes as he glares at the camera. The guards exit, closing the door behind them.

Moments later, TOM, a well-dressed, handsome man in his late 30s enters, holding a file. He takes a seat opposite Haron.

TOM

Good morning, Mr. Haron. I'm Agent Tom. Do you know why you've been arrested?

HARON

No, sir. Believe me, I'm just a student, not a criminal.

TOM

You've been arrested for failing to disclose critical information about yourself. You're considered a potential threat to national security.

HARON

I don't know what you're talking about.

TOM

I'm talking about your work with the Communist regime's intelligence agency, KHAD.

HARON

You're right, sir. But I did that under Commander Zabiullah's orders. He was martyred in 1987. I was sent to Moscow, trained by the KGB. When I returned, I stayed in contact with Masoud and his aides in the Panjshir Valley. I helped them identify spies among the Mujahideen. After I killed my superior, Masoud's men helped me escape to Pakistan, where I studied and earned a scholarship from the University of Nebraska. That's why I'm here now.

TOM

Then why didn't you disclose this information before?

HARON

Because I was scared. I thought I'd lose my scholarship.

TOM

And now, you've lost everything. I'm afraid there's nothing I can do for you.

HARON

Please, let me take my final exams, sir. I've worked so hard these past four years. If I stay here, I'll lose everything—my family, my future.

TOM

Do you have a lawyer?

HARON

No, sir. I can't afford one.

TOM

What about a relative or friend?

HARON

No relatives. Just a college friend. But I don't know if she'll come for me.

TOM

Give us her name and phone number. We'll inform her of your situation.

HARON

Her name is Crystal Ashley. I don't have her number, but she lives in the same student hostel. Room 402.

TOM

Alright. We'll notify your friend and see if she can help. That's all for today.

Agent Tom stands, exits the room, leaving Haron alone.

BACK TO:

INT. ISOLATION CELL - DAY

SUPER: ONE WEEK LATER

Haron leans against the wall of his solitary confinement as a guard approaches.

GUARD

(opens the cell door)

You've got a visitor.

INT. VISITING ROOM - DAY

Haron and Crystal sit at a table, facing each other.

HARON

Finally, you came. Better late than never.

CRYSTAL

Sorry, I was caught up with exams. I even checked with lawyers for legal aid, but they all charged too much.

HARON

It's fine. You did what you could, but time's not on my side.

CRYSTAL

I also spoke to the officer in charge, asked him to show some leniency.

HARON

And? What did he say?

CRYSTAL

There's one way out.

HARON

What's that?

CRYSTAL

You need to go back to your old job. They want you on a mission to Afghanistan.

HARON

You mean for the CIA.

CRYSTAL

Something like that. You'll be working to reduce the threat of the Taliban and Al-Qaida. They're offering this because of your experience and language skills—English, Dari, Farsi, Arabic, Pashto. It's a rare chance.

HARON

(sighs)

An English writer once said prison is "the black flower of human societies." So, instead of rotting here indefinitely, I'll accept Tom's offer. I'm in.

CRYSTAL

Great! I'll let Tom know. You'll get your life back—your degree, your family.

CUT TO:

INT/EXT. LINCOLN TOWN CAR - DAY

Haron sits beside Tom in the back of a black Lincoln, speeding down a highway.

HARON

Where are we headed?

TOM

To your new training camp.

HARON

Is that really necessary?

TOM

Absolutely. You've spent the last four years studying and eating. Now it's time for some exercise. You need to get back in shape and update your espionage skills.

The car pulls into a military air base with C-130s parked and soldiers bustling around.

The Town Car stops near a C-130 HERCULES, its engines running.

TOM (CONT'D)

(opens the car door)

Time to go, my friend. That plane's waiting.

Tom walks towards the back of the plane, where two middle-aged men in US Army uniforms stand.

TOM (CONT'D)
 (shaking hands)
 Morning, gentlemen.

ONE OF THE OFFICERS
 (looking Haron over)
 So, this is him.

TOM
 Yes, Major. Get him mission-ready as soon
 as possible.

MAJOR
 Don't worry. We've got it covered.

TOM
 (to Haron)
 From now on, you're under Major DON's
 command until your training is done.

HARON
 (going toward the
 plane)
 Goodbye, Mr. Tom.

EXT. RUNWAY - DAY

The C-130 taxis down the tarmac and lifts off.

SUPER: CAMP PEARY, A COVERT CIA TRAINING FACILITY NEAR
 WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA - JULY 1994

INT. GYM - DAY

Haron knocks out pull-ups, push-ups, and planks alongside
 other recruits, his movements strong and determined.

INT. INDOOR SHOOTING RANGE - DAY

Haron fires a GLOCK 19, hitting the target dead-on with
 his right hand. He switches to his left hand and misses
 the dummy.

HARON
 (to the instructor)
 Excuse me, sir. I'm struggling with my
 left hand. Any tips?

INSTRUCTOR
 Start at 4 meters. Take your time between
 shots. Squeeze, don't jerk the trigger.
 When all your shots hit the same spot,
 move back to 7 and 10 meters.

HARON
(moving closer)
Thanks, sir.

Haron fires, taking the instructor's advice. The bullets hit the dummy.

INSTRUCTOR
Good. Keep practicing.

Haron continues shooting, getting closer to the heart. He progresses from 7 to 10 meters, improving with each shot, hitting the target even with his left hand.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

A military officer stands before a class of 15 trainees. Haron sits in the front row. On the screen, the officer projects an image of a Main Battle Tank.

OFFICER
This is a Russian tank still in service worldwide. Who can tell me which T-series this is?

HARON
(raising his hand)
Sir, that's a T-62. It's equipped with the world's first smoothbore tank gun.

OFFICER
Correct. Today, we'll just cover the basics, but you'll get hands-on experience during live-fire drills.

The officer presses a key, switching to an image of a MANPAD missile.

OFFICER (CONT'D)
This is the FIM-92 STINGER, a shoulder-fired surface-to-air missile. You'll learn to operate or deactivate these because many are still in the hands of armed groups in Afghanistan. The U.S. has run a buy-back program to prevent unused Stingers from falling into the wrong hands.

EXT. TRAINING FIELD - DAY

Haron aims the FIM-92 Stinger missile launcher, locking onto a drone flying nearby. He fires, the missile streaking through the sky, and it strikes the drone, which explodes in mid-air.

INT. BARRACK ROOM - NIGHT

Haron sits on his bed, signing his name on a piece of A4 paper. He folds the paper, slips it into an envelope, and seals it.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Haron is back in class, typing on a touch-screen device. A watch, eyeglasses, and a pen rest on the desk in front of him—each appearing to be high-tech tools for espionage.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Crystal enters a cozy, well-furnished living room, sorting through mail. She opens the third envelope and begins reading. As she reads, we hear Haron's voice.

HARON'S VOICE (V.O.)

Dear Crystal, I hope this letter finds you in good spirits. When I left six months ago, I was in a dark place, but now I thank Allah for giving me a new purpose. I'm preparing for a long overseas assignment once my training ends. I'll write again soon. Take care, Haron.

CUT TO:

INT/EXT. GM VAN - DAY

Haron and Tom are seated in the back of a black GM Van.

TOM

Congrats, Mr. Haron. You passed all the tests with flying colors.

HARON

Thanks. What's next?

TOM

You've got a day off. Then, the day after tomorrow, you're heading to Saudi Arabia. You scored a scholarship at the Arabic Language Institute of Ummul-Qura University in Makkah. You'll study there for a maximum of two months. After that, you'll drop out, claiming you're off to Jihad. We'll send you to Quetta, Pakistan, and later to Afghanistan for the real deal.

HARON

What will be my main duties?

TOM

Snapping pictures and filming Taliban and Al-Qaida operatives, documenting their hideouts in Afghanistan. You'll also find and neutralize Stinger missiles and handle other assignments we throw your way.

EXT. PARKING AREA - DAY

The van glides into a vast parking area and parks near the entrance of a modern building with "CROWNE PLAZA" emblazoned above.

INT. BACK SEAT OF GM VAN - DAY

TOM

(handing Haron a
briefcase)

Take this. It's got your passport, airline ticket, some cash, a debit card, and a VISA card. If you need anything else, hit me up through our secure Email.

HARON

What about standard equipment like camera pens and watches?

TOM

You'll get those in Quetta on your way to Kandahar.

HARON

One last question, sir. How did you find out I worked for Afghanistan's Intelligence Service?

TOM

Don't underestimate the CIA. We keep our eyes open—on land, at sea, in the air, and everywhere.

HARON

But you didn't know about my training with the late KGB, did you?

TOM

No more questions. Focus on your future assignments.

Haron steps out of the van, walking towards the Crowne Plaza entrance with a well-dressed porter carrying his luggage. They enter the hotel through a revolving door.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

EXT. AERIAL VIEW OF THE HOLY MOSQUE, MAKKAH - DAY

The camera sweeps over the majestic Holy Mosque, capturing the iconic KAABA at its center. Below, Hundreds of men and women, clad in white IHRAM GARMENTS, revolve around the Kaaba in a synchronized, spiritual rhythm.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Haron sits among young students, mostly from Asian countries, listening to an instructor reciting an Arabic poem.

SUPER: ARABIC LANGUAGE INSTITUTE, UMMUL QURA UNIVERSITY

THE INSTRUCTOR

(in Arabic)

"Ramzal kholod-e- wa Ka'batal Islami, Kam
feel wara lak-e- min Jalalen Saami."

The instructor pauses, glancing at the students, and puts Haron in the spotlight.

THE INSTRUCTOR (CONT'D)

(in Arabic with
subtitles)

*Hey, brother! Can you read the next stanza
of the poem?*

HARON

(looking at his book)

"Yahwil benaa-u- eza taqadama ahdo-u-, wa
araake khalidatan alal-ayyami."

THE INSTRUCTOR

(in Arabic with
subtitles)

Thank you, young man. Your Arabic is good.

EXT. KAABA PREMISES - DAY

Haron, adorned in 'IHRAM,' the prescribed attire for the pilgrimage, performs 'UMRAH' by circling the KAABA.

CUT TO:

EXT. RUNWAY - DAY

An AIRBUS 320 lands on the runway of an airport in a city.

SUPER: QUETTA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, PAKISTAN, TWO MONTHS LATER.

EXT. TERMINAL GATE - DAY

As Haron exits the terminal with a backpack and mid-size suitcase, a bearded man in his early 30s appears before him.

THE BEARDED MAN
(taking hold of Haron's
luggage)

Good afternoon, sir. I'm EMRAN. I'm here to take you to your reserved room at our guest house. My cab is over there in the parking.

Emran walks toward the parking area of the airport, with Haron following.

EXT. PARKING - MOMENTS LATER

As Emran stows the luggage into the toolbox of his taxi, Haron approaches him from behind.

HARON
Have we met before?

EMRAN
(closing the toolbox
and heading to the
driver's door)

No, sir. But we've met Tom before. Get in the car.

Haron hops into Emran's taxi after he takes the driver's seat.

INT. TAXI - DAY

Emran starts the car and begins to drive.

HARON
Where are we headed?

EMRAN
To a guesthouse where you'll meet many new and aspiring young Arabs wanting to join the Taliban fighters.

HARON

Do you have anything else for me?

EMRAN

Yes, I do. You'll receive standard equipment: a SONY Radio with a built-in tracking chip, a camera pen, video recording eyeglasses, a Spy Smart Watch, and a couple of Magnetic Mini GPS trackers for any vehicles you move in.

HARON

If a Taliban Commander or their Arab fighters ask for my watch or pen, what should I do?

EMRAN

Don't worry. We're giving you two additional watches and pens that look the same but are different colors. If any influential Taliban insists on your wristwatch or pen, offer the blue ones instead.

Emran makes a right turn onto a secondary road and pulls up at the gate of a BIG VILLA.

He gets out of the car, goes to the back, and unloads Haron's luggage. Haron takes his luggage and enters the villa behind Emran.

INT. VILLA COURTYARD - DAY

Two young men in long ARABIC ROBES play TABLE TENNIS in the villa courtyard, while a couple of others watch. All attention shifts to Haron and Emran as they arrive.

HARON

As-Salamu Alaikum.

THE YOUNG MEN

(in unison)

Walaikum As-Salam.

EMRAN

(to the men)

This is Haron, who left the University of Ummul Qura in Makkah to join the Mujahideen. He'll be staying here until your next group is deployed to Afghanistan.

One of the young men playing table tennis leaves his racket on the table and approaches Haron.

THE YOUNG MAN

Brother Haron, I'm KHALID. You can stay in my room. I'm alone, so let's go upstairs.

HARON

Thank you, brother.

Emran carries Haron's luggage as they follow Khalid upstairs.

HARON (CONT'D)

(taking his luggage)

Mr. Emran, you may go about your business now and get me a good sleeping bag, flashlight, batteries, and a first aid kit.

EMRAN

Yeah! You need those things.

HARON

Please bring those items as soon as possible.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROAD - EARLY MORNING

A CARAVAN of TOYOTA PICKUPS and TRUCKS, loaded with armed Arabs and Taliban fighters, travels down an asphalted street.

INT. TOYOTA PICKUP BACK SEAT - MOMENTS LATER

Haron, dressed in SHALWAR-KAMIS and a black turban, sits in the back seat of a moving Toyota Pickup, alongside two other Taliban members.

They are crossing the main bazaar of a city. Each person in the vehicle has an AK-47 between their thighs and a backpack on their laps.

SUPER: KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN, 1995

INT. CARAVANSARY - DAY

Haron, sporting spy camera eyeglasses with touch technology recording, sits among approximately 50 Taliban fighters on blankets in the expansive courtyard of a Caravansary. Guns and backpacks are placed beside them on the ground.

Some Taliban are eating, while others have nearly finished their meals.

A black Toyota Land Cruiser enters the Caravansary, parking to the left of the gate in front of a veranda.

A young Talib, carrying a portable loudspeaker next to his AK-47, steps out of the Land Cruiser. He climbs the veranda, holding the loudspeaker in his right hand.

THE TALIB

(into the loudspeaker
in Pashto with
subtitles)

Dear brothers, As Salamu Alaikum. I'm honored to introduce Mullah Abdul Manan Niazi. Mawlavi Sahib would like to say a few words to you.

The thunderous applause of zealous Taliban and their 'Allah-u-Akbar' reverberates in the caravansary as Mullah Niazi, a middle-aged man with a thick mustache and long beard, wearing a traditional Afghan silk turban, along with a tall athletic young bodyguard, exits the Land Cruiser.

The applause subsides as Mullah Manan Niazi ascends the veranda and begins to speak.

MULLAH MANAN NIAZI

(in Pashto with
subtitles)

Dear brothers! As-Salamu Alaikum. I'd like to welcome you to the battleground of Jihad. I want to assure you that victory is within reach, and soon we'll triumph over all of Afghanistan. To make this happen, we need courageous men in our armored divisions. You'll receive training right here in Kandahar. So, step forward and sign up. I have to head to Herat for an urgent matter. I entrust each and every one of you to the care and protection of Allah.

At the back, Haron removes his eyeglasses and approaches Mullah Niazi.

HARON

(activating his camera
pen)

As-Salamu Alaikum, Mawlavi Sahib. I want to enlist in the armored division.

MULLAH MANAN NIAZI

Great! Go to brother ZALMAY, my deputy
over there.

Taking a picture of Mullah Niazi with his camera pen,
Haron moves toward ZALMAY, a skinny bearded hazel-eyed
man in his early 30s. He writes his name in a notebook
provided by Zalmay.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAINING CAMP - DAY

A sprawling training camp emerges in the dusty landscape.

SUPER: AL FAROUQ, TALIBAN AND AL QAEDA TRAINING CAMP
NEAR KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN

START MONTAGE:

EXT. TRAINING AREA - DAY

Haron and fellow trainees engage in intense physical
training. Running, jogging, and calisthenics become
routine as they strive to enhance their physical
endurance and strength.

EXT. TANK TRAINING ARENA - DAY

Haron takes control of a T62 tank, navigating through
challenging terrains within the camp. The powerful
machine moves with precision under his command.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

In a specialized workshop, Haron and a couple of Taliban
fighters learn the intricate art of constructing
Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs).

The atmosphere is intense as they focus on meticulous
assembly under the supervision of a robust silver-haired
man in his late 40s.

SUPER: IED CONSTRUCTION

EXT. TRAINING ARENA - DAY

Haron, now clad in protective gear, undergoes training
in the controlled environment of a plain covered with
bushes, thorns, and some grass, practicing the defusing
of IEDs.

SUPER: IED DEFUSAL

END MONTAGE:

CUT TO:

INT. ROOM - NIGHT

Ten to twelve Taliban fighters sit around Haron, who is adjusting his 12-band SONY RADIO.

HARON
 (opens the antenna of
 the transistor)
 Let's tune in to the BBC Pashto News.

The voice of a BBC Pashto newscaster comes through, with English subtitles on the screen.

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)
 The Taliban have seized ISLAM QALA, a major border crossing with Iran, in a sweeping offensive across northern Afghanistan. This comes two days after pushing the Northern Alliance forces out of Herat City.

A couple of Taliban fighters stand and begin chanting.

TALIBAN FIGHTERS
 (raising their right
 hands)
 Allah-u-Akbar, Allah-u-Akbar!

EXT. TOP OF A T-62 TANK - DAY

SUPER: ISLAM QALA BORDER TOWN, HEART PROVINCE, ONE MONTH LATER

Haron, wearing a TANK OPERATOR'S HELMET, sits on the top of a T-62 tank parked along an asphalt road.

The tank's turret is marked with "ARGHANDAB 1" in white Dari lettering.

Another man, also wearing a helmet, emerges from the tank's hatch.

MAN
 Come on, Haron. Get inside.

HARON
 Why? What's going on?

MAN

I just got a message from Mullah Niazi.
We're moving 10 kilometers east of Islam
Qala to stop a Shiite group from smuggling
Stinger missiles to Iran. Reinforcements
are on their way.

Haron quickly climbs into the tank and closes the HATCH
with a clank.

The T-62, flying a white flag on the turret, rumbles
forward, covering about 100 meters on the asphalt before
turning onto a narrow dirt road, kicking up dust and
diesel smoke.

EXT. VILLAGE WITH PARTIALLY DESTROYED MUD HOUSES - DAY

Haron's tank, ARGHANDAB 1, pulls up to an abandoned
village with crumbling mud houses.

The tank positions itself behind a collapsed wall. It
edges forward a couple of meters, briefly exposing its
front armor before retreating for cover. It repeats
this maneuver twice, then pauses.

Suddenly, a loud BOOM fills the air. An RPG rocket misses
the tank's barrel and slams into a nearby building, 20
meters away.

The tank retreats behind the ruined wall.

Two more Taliban tanks appear behind ARGHANDAB 1.

THWACK-KABOOM! One of the tanks is hit by a recoilless
gun. The turret explodes, engulfing the crew in flames.

INT. INSIDE ARGHANDAB 1 - DAY

HARON

(speaking into the
radio in Pashto/
subtitled)

*ARGHANDAB 2, this is ARGHANDAB 1. Do you
copy? Over.*

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

Loud and clear. Over.

HARON

Draw their fire. I'll flank them. Over.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

Roger that. Over.

Amid the noise of artillery and gunfire, ARGHANDAB 1 reverses, moving quickly. After covering 500 meters, it turns onto a dry, rocky valley and heads uphill.

EXT. TOP OF A HILL - DAY

ARGHANDAB 1 crests the hill.

INT. INSIDE ARGHANDAB 1 - CONTINUOUS

Haron focuses through the gun sight, locking onto a T-55 tank nestled in the ruins of a half-destroyed MUD CASTLE.

HARON

Fire!

BOOM!

EXT. RUINED CASTLE - DAY

The T-55 bursts into flames. Several Hazara fighters, hiding behind the tank, flee, diving for cover.

A second shell takes out an 82mm recoilless gun mounted on a Toyota Hi-Lux.

EXT. ROLLING PLAINS - DAY

From the plains, a convoy of Taliban fighters on pickup trucks and motorcycles, supported by tanks, moves forward, closing in on the Hazara fighters' position.

INT. ARGHANDAB 1 - MOMENTS LATER

A man's voice crackles through the radio in Haron's tank.

MAN'S VOICE

Arghandab 1, Arghandab 1, reinforcements have arrived. We are advancing. Over.

ARGHANDAB 1 rolls down the hill, advancing on the Shiite fighters' positions in and around the mud castle.

INT. MUD CASTLE - DAY

A Shiite fighter speaks into a Russian-made portable short-wave simplex radio station, "R-104."

THE FIGHTER

(into headset in
Farsi/subtitled)

*Hello, Rustam? Do you hear me? This is
Sohrab. Send helicopters and
reinforcements, or you'll lose the
consignment. We're still at the agreed
location. Over.*

A bullet impacts the R-104 SET, puncturing it. Frustrated by the malfunctioning radio, the operator yanks off his headset and grabs a PK machine gun from one of his comrades.

He swiftly dives behind a half-destroyed wall of the castle and fires at advancing Taliban on motorcycles killing a couple of them.

The fighting escalates as forces from both sides collide. Fighters from both factions fall, blood blossoming on their chests and various body parts.

ANGLE ON ARGHANDAB 1

Bullets from AK-47s and PK machine guns ricochet off its turret and body.

EXT. SKY - DAY

Two low-flying helicopters emerge, opening fire on Taliban men and tanks.

A missile launched by the lead helicopter strikes a Taliban T-62 tank, blowing it to pieces.

INT. ARGHANDAB 1 - CONTINUOUS

Haron peers through his tank's periscope, aiming at the enemy helicopter. The massive gun of ARGHANDAB 1 rotates toward the chopper.

HARON

Fire!

A booming sound echoes as a shell is fired. From the tank's perspective, we see the shell strike the helicopter, causing it to explode in the sky.

EXT. MUD CASTLE - MOMENTS LATER

A Russian-made JEEP speeds out of a damaged section of the mud castle wall.

HARON
(aiming at the jeep)
Fire!

MAN'S VOICE
We're out of shells.

HARON
Then fire the machine gun!

EXT. TANK MACHINE GUN - DAY

The coaxial machine gun of ARGHANDAB 1 unleashes several bursts, hitting the jeep and killing two Shiite fighters in the back seat.

Bullets puncture one of the rear tires, causing the vehicle to skid and get stuck in the sand.

EXT. HORIZON AND FIGHTING ARENA -

A wide shot reveals the remaining helicopter firing rockets at ARGHANDAB 1 as it moves at full speed.

CLOSE ON ARGHANDAB 1 -

The tank's hatch opens, and Haron emerges. He leaps from the tank and dashes toward the stuck jeep as his T-62 is destroyed by a rocket from the helicopter. Debris and smoke fill the air.

As the GUNSHIP flies overhead, Haron, armed with a Makarov pistol, reaches the jeep. He finds a young, Chinese-looking man in the driver's seat, struggling to free the vehicle from the sand.

Haron fires a single shot into the man's temple, killing him instantly.

Haron quickly moves to the back seat of the jeep, opens one of the cases, and pulls out a STINGER MISSILE. He inserts the battery coolant unit into the GRIPSTOCK.

Hearing the approaching helicopter, Haron takes cover behind the wrecked jeep. He aims the Stinger at the helicopter, waiting for the beeping sound that indicates a lock.

He fires, and the missile streaks toward the helicopter, exploding it in mid-air.

EXT. FIGHTING ARENA - MOMENTS LATER

Haron spots two tanks and several Toyota pickup trucks filled with fresh Taliban reinforcements approaching. He retrieves the remaining Stinger missiles from the jeep and buries their battery coolant units in the sand.

EXT. PLAIN - MOMENTS LATER

The first Taliban pickup truck halts near Haron. A sturdy, medium-height man with a goatee and traditional Afghan attire steps out, accompanied by two young armed Arabs.

THE GOATEE

(in broken Pashto/
subtitled)

*As-Salamu Alaikum, brother. I'm ABBAS.
You fought bravely.*

HARON

You must be an Arab.

ABBAS

How did you know?

HARON

Your Pashto. It's worse than mine.

ABBAS

(chuckles)

*I'm from Libya. So, how did you shoot
down the gunship?*

HARON

(in Arabic/ subtitled)

With a Stinger missile.

ABBAS

*You speak Arabic too? Where did you learn
to use a Stinger?*

HARON

*During the jihad against the Russians.
Now, let's go. I'm tired and starving.*

CUT TO:

INT. ROOM - NIGHT

Haron sits with a few other Taliban fighters, eating with their hands. Zalmay, Mullah Niazi's Deputy, wearing a Kandahari hat, enters the room.

ZALMAY

Where's Haron?

HARON

Here, sir. What's up?

ZALMAY

Someone special is waiting for you. Get your stuff; you're moving elsewhere.

Haron wipes his hands, grabs his backpack from a nail on the wall, and exits the room.

EXT. THRESHOLD OF A BIG GATE - CONTINUOUS

Under the dim light of a bulb above a large gate, a black Land Cruiser is parked, flanked by two Toyota pickups filled with armed men.

ZALMAY

Haron, you'll ride with brother ABU SAYED in the back seat.

INT. LAND CRUISER -

Haron, holding his backpack, enters the back seat and shakes hands with a skinny, middle-aged man with a brown beard and black turban sitting behind the driver.

HARON

As-Salamu Alaikum.

ABU SAYED

Walaikum As-Salam, brother Haron. I'm Abu Sayed. Nice to meet you.

HARON

Nice to meet you too. How do you know my name?

ABU SAYED

We know you're a skilled tanker with pinpoint accuracy, and that's what we need.

HARON

There are many other skilled Mujahideen. Why me?

ABU SAYED

Mullah Niazi recommended you. He thinks you're the best. Plus, you speak Arabic, so you can train our men.

HARON

Got it.

ABU SAYED

(to the driver)

Brother Ahmad, let's move.

The driver revs the engine, following a white Toyota pickup.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

The convoy—led by a white Toyota pickup, followed by the black Land Cruiser and another pickup full of Arab fighters—advances along an asphalt road.

INT. LAND CRUISER - DAWN

SUPER: 6 HOURS LATER

Haron breaks the silence.

HARON

Where are we going?

ABU SAYED

(glancing at his watch)

The sun's rising in the east—the direction we're heading.

EXT. GRAVEL ROAD - EARLY MORNING

The Land Cruiser follows the Toyota pickup on a rough, bumpy road through hills.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. VALLEY - DAY

A convoy of vehicles enters a remote mountainous valley, flanked by towering hills adorned with sparse trees and rugged bushes.

They come to a stop in front of CAVES, carved deep into the mountainside. On either side, a few MUD-BUILT ROOMS stand haphazardly.

ABU SAYED

(opens the car door,
steps out)

Brother! Welcome to TORA BORA, one of our most important strongholds in the fight against vice and injustice.

EXT. TORA BORA - MORNING

HARON exits the Land Cruiser, slipping on his camera-equipped glasses. He discreetly activates the hidden camera in the pen tucked into his upper pocket, capturing images of the surroundings.

He scans the valley. On the opposite hillside, several YOUNG MEN, armed and dressed in CAMOUFLAGE MILITARY UNIFORMS, scale the rugged terrain.

ABU SAYED
 (turning to Haron)
 Brother Haron, leave your backpack in the car and come with me.

HARON nods and follows Abu Sayed along a winding path toward one of the larger caves. They approach a small door, where a 30-YEAR-OLD ARAB MAN in a LONG ARABIC ROBE stands on guard.

ABU SAYED (CONT'D)
 (embracing the man)
 Brother ADNAN! Is Shaikh ZAWAHIRI in his room?

ADNAN
 (nods)
 Yes, he's with Brother ABBAS. Where have you been these past few days?

ABU SAYED
 (smiling)
 I had to bring someone important.

ADNAN
 (curiously)
 Who is he?

ABU SAYED
 (pointing to Haron)
 This is Haron, our new tank trainer.

ADNAN
 (excited)
 A tank trainer? That's amazing! I can't wait to learn.

ABU SAYED
 (beckoning to Haron)
 Come on, Haron. Let's go see Brother Zawahiri.

Haron raises a hand in greeting to Adnan and follows Abu Sayed into the cave.

INT. CAVE - DAY

Haron enters the cave.

HARON

As-Salamu Alaikum, brothers.

VOICES

Walaikum-As-Salam Wa Rahmatullah. Welcome to your new headquarters.

The interior appears hazy, making it difficult for Haron to see clearly.

He takes off his glasses, places them in his jacket's pocket, and rubs his eyes with the back of his thumbs before opening them again.

Haron adjusts his eyes to the dim light, scanning the figures in the room.

He identifies two men: one in his mid-30s, wearing a long Arabic robe, and another in his late fifties, with a black and white beard, clad in a turban and Afghan Shalwar-Kamees.

Haron discreetly activates the camera on his wristwatch by pressing a hidden knob. He positions his wrist to capture different angles of the room.

ABU SAYED

Brother Aiman, this is Haron—our tank expert. He's been highly recommended by Mullah Niazi. Haron speaks fluent Arabic and will be an excellent instructor.

AIMAN ZAWAHIRI

(eyeing Haron)

Ma Sha Allah. Where did you learn to operate tanks?

HARON

I was with Commander Zabiullah in the Sholgar District during the Russian occupation. We captured two tanks after driving out the last of the communist regime's GARRISON from the District.

AIMAN ZAWAHIRI

(nods)

So, you learned on the frontlines under the late Commander Zabiullah?

HARON

Yes, sir. Zabiullah Khan was a brilliant guerrilla commander. He ensured we were trained thoroughly. With the help of a deserter from the government forces, we learned to operate T-55s and T-62s. My skills were further refined at Al Farouq Camp in Kandahar.

AIMAN ZAWAHIRI

And how did you come to learn Arabic?

HARON

I was raised in a religious household where my father taught me the Holy Qur'an and Arabic grammar. During the Jihad, Commander Zabiullah sent me to Pakistan for further studies. But after his martyrdom, I chose not to return. Instead, I secured me a scholarship at the Arabic Language Institute in Makkah Al-Mokarramah.

AIMAN ZAWAHIRI

(satisfied)

You've answered well. You are cleared, young man. Tomorrow, we begin training.

EXT. TRAINING AREA - DAY

HARON stands next to a T-62 tank, addressing a group of 20 Afghan-Arab Al-Qaeda members, all clad in camouflage military uniforms.

The training area is barren, with dust swirling in the wind.

HARON

(pointing to the tank)

This is a T-62—an upgrade from the T-55. It's equipped with a 115 mm smoothbore gun and a 12.7 mm heavy machine gun for anti-aircraft defense. To operate it, you need a team of four: commander, driver, gunner, and loader. Now, I need three volunteers to join me inside.

ABU SAYED, ADNAN, and a hefty young man, FAHD, in his early 20s, step forward.

HARON (CONT'D)

(to Fahd)

What's your name?

FAHD

I'm Fahd.

HARON

Alright, Fahd, let's hop into the tank.

Haron climbs up the side of the T-62, opening the hatch. The three Arabs follow him inside.

INT. T-62 TANK - DAY

Inside the tight, metallic confines of the T-62, HARON and his trainees don tanker helmets. The light filtering in through the small periscopes gives the space an almost claustrophobic feel.

HARON

(gesturing to his seat)

This is the commander's position. From here, the commander can control visibility and exposure—vital when you're under fire.

He motions to another part of the tank.

HARON (CONT'D)

This is the Tank Commander's Periscope. It's used to spot targets, estimate range, and guide the gunner to fire.

He places his hand over the Gunner's Primary Sight (GPS).

HARON (CONT'D)

Now, can anyone tell me what GPS stands for in a tank?

FAHD

(confidently)

Global Positioning System?

HARON

(smiling)

Good guess, but not quite. In this case, it stands for Gunner's Primary Sight. It's the tool the gunner uses to aim and destroy targets.

EXT. AREA IN FRONT OF CAVE - DAY

In a small open area, HARON kneels beside a bucket of water, scrubbing clothes in a small tub.

The rough, dusty landscape surrounds him as he works, the sound of water splashing the only noise.

Abu Sayed approaches.

ABU SAYED

I know we're doing all of this for Jihad, but sometimes I think... men our age, in the West, they're living differently—dating girls, enjoying life.

HARON

(squeezing the clothes,
water dripping from
his hands)

They have luxuries we don't, it's true. But we should be grateful to Allah for the blessings He has given us. A healthy body, good character—these are our true wealth.

EXT. TRAINING AREA - DAY

Haron strides into the training area, where his Arab trainees stand in straight lines, organized into three queues. Their eyes follow him, focused, awaiting his next command.

SUPER: ONE MONTH LATER

HARON

(placing his right
hand on the big gun
of the T-62)

During our intensive one-month training, you had the chance to learn how to drive, load, command, and target this fighting machine. You practiced shooting and destroying your targets with live rounds. Today is our last day, and I'm here to answer any questions you might have.

ADNAN

(raising his hand)

I know that the T-62s don't have automatic loaders, and we load the tank's big gun manually, which is time-consuming.

(MORE)

ADNAN (CONT'D)

My question is, did the Russians invade Afghanistan using only these old T-55s and T-62s?

HARON

They brought many T-72s. But when they withdrew from the country, they took their more advanced weapons back home and left these older versions of the tanks for the communist regime.

INT. CAVE - NIGHT

Haron sits in a small cave, lit by a lantern, tuning the side knob of his 12-band Sony radio.

Suddenly, Abu Sayed walks in.

ABU SAYED

Hey, Haron! What's up?

HARON

Not much, just trying to catch the BBC Farsi news.

ABU SAYED

Nice radio you've got there. Mind if I check it out?

HARON

(handing the radio
set to Abu Sayed)

Sure thing. Here you go.

Abu Sayed takes the radio, examines it, and turns the side knob.

ABU SAYED

(handling the radio
back to Haron)

Hey, Haron! Shaikh Osama is impressed with your training skills. He's inviting you for lunch tomorrow.

HARON

Awesome! It'll be an honor to meet a leader who's given up the luxuries of life in Saudi Arabia for jihad.

ABU SAYED
(turning toward the
cave entrance)
I gotta hit the hay. See you tomorrow.
Goodbye.

HARON
Bye.

Abu Sayed exits the cave, flicking on a small flashlight.

INT. CAVE - DAY

Daylight streams through the small cave entrance.

Haron and Abu Sayed sit around a tablecloth opposite OSAMA BIN LADEN, a somewhat dark man of medium stature in his early fifties.

He sports a long black-and-white beard and wears a military M-65 WOODLAND FIELD JACKET with a white turban. A Russian KRINKOV with an orange BAKELITE MAGAZINE leans against the stone wall of the cave to his right.

They eat with their hands from large plates filled with rice and lamb meat. Apples and bananas are also spread across the tablecloth on the cave floor.

Attention turns to the entrance as a rotund silver-haired man in his late 40s, wearing a black coat over his traditional Afghan shirt and trousers, enters.

THE MAN
As-Salamu Alaikum, dear brothers. Please
stay as you are. I don't want to cause
any inconvenience.

Osama stands, opening his arms for the newcomer, and everyone in the cave follows suit.

OSAMA
(hugging the man)
Welcome, Brother Abu-Walid. You're a little
late.

ABU WALID
One of our cars broke down on the way,
and repairing it took some time.

OSAMA
(looking at Haron and
pointing to Abu Walid)
Mr. Haron!

(MORE)

OSAMA (CONT'D)

Meet Brother Abu Walid Al-Masri, one of the best trainers at our Al-Farouq Training Camp near Kandahar.

HARON

As-Salamu Alaikum, and nice to meet you again, sir.

OSAMA

(to Haron)

Do you know Brother Abu Walid?

HARON

Yes, sir. I was his student. He taught us de-mining techniques and how to make IEDs.

OSAMA

So, one of our trainees is now a trainer.

ABU WALID

(looking at Osama)

I must say that Haron is extremely intelligent and learns things very quickly.

OSAMA

That's why we brought him here to train our forces.

HARON

Now that the training is over, may I take a couple of days off to see my family in Peshawar?

OSAMA

You can go for a week and come back because we need to help the Taliban in their final attack on Panjshir.

Haron scratches the upper part of his forehead with his left hand & recites a verse from the holy Qur'an

HARON

(in Arabic/ subtitled)

"Atioollah wa Atioo 'r-Rasoola wa Ooli'l-Amri Minkum." Obey Allah, obey the Prophet, and obey those in authority among you.

OSAMA

Awesome. Your holiday starts tomorrow.

CUT TO:

INT. CAVE - NIGHT

Haron sits by the entrance of his small cave, clutching his SONY Radio. He unlatches the BATTERY COMPARTMENT, removes the batteries, and shifts a small black switch to the right.

After reinstalling the batteries, Haron extends the antenna and powers on the radio. A small touch-screen with the English alphabet emerges on the front panel.

Haron taps the 'My Message' key with his INDEX FINGER. A two-sentence message appears on the upper screen:

From TOMCAT: Your family has arrived here. You may come for a visit if you want.

Haron presses the 'CLEAR' button on the screen and swiftly types:

From H-HIKE: Going to PESHAWAR tomorrow morning.

He taps the "ENCIPHER" ICON on the screen, then presses the TRANSMIT KEY. After a brief wait, the word "SENT" appears on the screen.

Haron turns off the RADIO, opens the battery compartment again, removes the batteries, and restores the black switch to its previous position.

EXT. TOYOTA PICKUP - DAY

The tires of a TOYOTA PICKUP roll slowly along an asphalt road, flanked by shops, restaurants, and street vendors, painting a lively urban backdrop.

The vehicle pulls up a couple of meters away from a substantial METAL GATE made of iron bars adorned with a STAR and CRESCENT.

The backdoor of the PICKUP swings open. Wearing SHALWAR-KAMIS and a black turban, Haron steps out. He heads toward the gate, where a SIGNBOARD in Urdu and English reads: "TORKHAM BORDER CROSSING - PAKISTAN."

EXT. TORKHAM GATE, AFGHANISTAN SIDE - DAY

Haron peers through the iron bars of the border crossing gate, seemingly awaiting someone.

Men, women, and children, dressed in typical Afghan and Pakistan attire, BURQAS, and HEJABS, pass through the gate.

Some present passports to the PAKISTANI POLICEMEN on the other side, entering Pakistan. Others display their ID cards as they transition onto Pakistani soil.

Suddenly, Emran appears behind the gate.

EMRAN
(raising his right
hand)

Come here, young man. I've got your
passport.

Haron, upon seeing Emran, quickly moves toward the gate, attempting to enter Pakistan. A Pakistani policeman stops him.

THE POLICEMAN
(in Pashto with
subtitles)

Where is your passport?

EMRAN
(winking and showing
the passport to the
policeman)

I've got his passport here.

The policeman, understanding Emran's signal, promptly opens the gate, allowing Haron to enter.

EXT. HOTEL PREMISES - DAY

A white TOYOTA COROLLA, with Emran behind the wheel and Haron in the front seat, enters through the main gate of the luxurious PEARL CONTINENTAL HOTEL in Peshawar.

The hotel's signboard stands tall atop the low-rise building.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Haron and Emran, each holding a teacup, take their seats on separate couches within the expansive hotel room.

EMRAN
Moments later, you'll be meeting a VIP.

HARON
(taking a sip)
I hope that's a female, because I haven't
met one in the last few months.

EMRAN

If you want to meet a woman, just ask.
They'll find one for you.

HARON

(grinning)

I was joking. You know I'm a religious
guy.

Abruptly, a section of the room's wall shifts, and a
door swings open, revealing a tall and athletic African
American man sporting sunglasses.

THE MAN

Boss wants Mr. Haron to come in.

Haron sets down his teacup and heads to the open door.

INT. ADJACENT SUITE - DAY

With a view of the swimming pool, a man dressed in black
sits on a modern sofa, his face turned towards the
window.

THE MAN IN BLACK

(face still turned)

Long time no see, Mr. Haron.

HARON

Oh, sir! What are you doing here?

TOM

On business, not for pleasure. Besides, I
wanna see your progress report.

HARON

(still standing)

Oh yeah, I have my report here, divided
into three chapters.

Haron places his wristwatch on the table.

HARON (CONT'D)

This is chapter one, sir.

He retrieves a pen and an eyeglass case from his coat's
inside pockets.

HARON (CONT'D)

(putting the items on
the table in front
of Tom)

The two remaining chapters are here, sir.
I'm sure you know how to read them.

TOM

(taking the items)

Well done, Mr. H-Hike. Meet MIKE, one of my best men. He'll accompany you to New York. He has your passport and ticket.

HARON

What about that SONY TRANSISTOR? I mean, my BURST TERMINAL, sir?

TOM

(getting up)

You can give it to Mike. He knows what to do with it. Have a safe journey to N.Y. Bye for now.

HARON

Goodbye, sir.

CUT TO:

INT. PASSENGER PLANE - DAY

Haron, clean-shaven and dressed in neat attire, occupies a FIRST CLASS SEAT alongside Mike on the plane. A smiling, slim steward, 23, offers him a HOT TOWEL.

EXT. AIRPORT RUNWAY - DAY

A BOEING 777 smoothly lands on the expansive runway of a modern airport.

SUPER: JFK INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, NEW YORK, 16 HOURS LATER

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

A black GM TRUCK VAN travels along a 5-lane highway.

INT. INSIDE GM TRUCK - DAY

Haron and Mike sit in the back seat of the VAN, which pulls into the DRIVEWAY of a two-story house.

MIKE

This is 12 CORNWALL LANE, HICKSVILLE, NY, the house where your family resides. You can go and knock on the door. My driver will bring your luggage.

HARON

(getting out of the
VAN)

Thank you, Mr. Mike.

EXT. SECOND-FLOOR WINDOW - DAY

A teenage boy with dark hair and black eyes, accompanied by an elderly woman covering her hair with a white scarf, peeks through the curtains of a second-floor window.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - DAY

The African American driver pops open the trunk of the van, retrieving Haron's luggage and a cardboard box.

After closing the trunk, he makes his way toward Haron, who is standing by the door. The door swings open shortly after. A handsome teenage boy with black hair and eyes rushes outside, warmly embracing him.

THE TEENAGE BOY

(hugging Haron & in
Dari with subtitles)

*Hello, big brother! I'm so glad to see
you again. I missed you so much.*

HARON

(releasing his brother
from his embrace)

I missed you too, young man.

Haron looks back and finds the driver holding a small cardboard box and the luggage in hand.

HARON (CONT'D)

(taking the luggage
and the box)

*Sorry for the inconvenience, sir. But
that cardboard box is not mine.*

THE DRIVER

This is your new LAPTOP, sir.

HARON

(wide grin)

Awesome. Thank you.

THE DRIVER

Goodbye, sir.

The driver returns to his van and sits behind the wheel, with Mike waving to Haron from behind a somewhat rolled-down rear window of the car.

Haron reciprocates Mike's gesture while the chauffeur backs up and drives away.

Haron, a backpack in one hand and a suitcase in the other, enters the foyer, following his brother, who carries the cardboard box.

INT. FOYER - DAY

As soon as Haron enters the foyer, a woman in her early 60s wearing a white scarf on her head and a long dress reaching her ankle comes forward, opening her embrace.

HARON
 (in Dari, walking
 toward the woman)
Hello, Mother. How are you?

MOTHER
 (hugging Haron and
 kissing him on the
 cheeks)
*Oh, my dear son. My heart. Where have you
 been?*

HARON
 (releasing himself
 from his mother's
 embrace and kissing
 her hands)
*I was doing my job. You know I'm an
 interpreter and have to work with my boss
 who travels to different countries.*

Haron takes off his shoes and goes to the living room.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Haron sits on a sofa as his teenage brother moves luggage to the right corner of the room.

HARON
Hey, Kamran! Where is Dad and sister Zahra?

KAMRAN
*Sister works at a big company as a tailor.
 She'll be back home in an hour. But Dad...*

Kamran pauses, emphasizing the beat.

HARON
Is something wrong with Dad?

KAMRAN
*Big brother, you know that verse of the
 Holy Qur'an that says: "Indeed, we belong
 (MORE)*

KAMRAN (CONT'D)
to Allah, and indeed to Him we will
return."

HARON
(tears streaking his
cheeks)
Why didn't you inform me of Dad's demise?

KAMRAN
How could we inform you? We tried to
contact you through your phone number in
Saudi Arabia, but the number was out of
service. While you were sending money to
us every month, why didn't you send any
phone number or contact address?

HARON
(taking a deep breath
and releasing a puff
of air)
I'm sorry. It's my fault that I didn't
contact you.

CUT TO:

EXT. SWIMMING POOL - DAY

Haron dives off a modern diving board into the pool,
disappearing beneath the water.

Spectators seated around, some casually sipping drinks,
watch intently, waiting for him to resurface.

Haron emerges on the far side of the pool, breaking
through the water's surface.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Haron, seated beside his mother on a LEATHER SOFA, holds
a remote in his right hand, watching CNN on a Sony TV.

INSERT CLOSE ANGLE - TV

Reporters sit side by side. A 25-year-old blonde woman,
pretty, begins speaking.

WOMAN
(on TV)
Reports from the White House confirm that
American cruise missiles struck sites in
Afghanistan and Sudan Thursday in
retaliation for the deadly bombings of
(MORE)

WOMAN (CONT'D)

U.S. Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania on August 7, 1998. According to PENTAGON sources, the USS Abraham Lincoln battle group launched approximately 75 Tomahawk cruise missiles from the Arabian Sea.

EXT. BATTLESHIP DECK - NIGHT

Several Tomahawk cruise missiles fire from their launch tubes on the deck of a battleship, ascending into the night sky.

EXT. SKY -

The missiles soar through the air toward their targets. Moments later, one impacts a hangar.

EXT. HANGAR -

BOOM—the structure crumbles into rubble.

Another Tomahawk missile strikes the entrance of a cave.

EXT. CAVE - INSIDE A VALLEY

The cave and surrounding makeshift structures are obliterated, leaving only fire, smoke, dust, and debris.

EXT. HANGAR ENTRANCE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

SUPER: FIVE MONTHS EARLIER

Haron, wearing spy camera glasses, peers through the massive doors of a hangar. Inside, numerous Al-Qaeda and Taliban fighters sit around tables, eating in groups of six and four.

SUPER: AL FAROUG TRAINING CAMP NEAR KANDAHAR

INT. INSIDE CAVE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Haron sits in a cave with Osama Bin Laden, and Abu Walid Al-Masri, eating and talking.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - BACK TO PRESENT

ZAHRA, 24, medium height with short black hair and black eyes, dressed in blue pants and a pink shirt, stands in front of Haron, fanning him with an envelope.

ZAHRA

(sitting on her knees)

Hey, big brother! What's on your mind?

HARON

(after a slight tremor)

I'm watching TV, thinking about the missile attack on our country.

ZAHRA

You've done a lot for your country. You've fought in Jihad, lived as a refugee, and now you're an immigrant. But I fear Afghanistan won't find peace anytime soon.

HARON

I understand, but that doesn't mean we should stop striving for peace and prosperity for our homeland.

ZAHRA

Now it's time to think about your own future. Get married. When Kamran goes to school, and both you and I are at work, Mom gets lonely. If you bring a bride and maybe have a child or two, Mom will be happy and occupied.

KAMRAN

(from across the room)

Big brother! Sister wants you to get married so she can pave the way for her own wedding.

ZAHRA

(grumbling)

Kamran! Be quiet. You're just a kid who knows nothing about life or marriage.

HARON

(teasing)

I think Kamran might be onto something.

Zahra, frustrated and teary-eyed, rests her head on their mother's lap.

ZAHRA

Mom, did you see? Even big brother is siding with Kamran!

MOTHER

(gently stroking
Zahra's hair)

You boys! Why are you teasing my sweet daughter? Listen, Haron, Zahra is right. I want you married this week. Otherwise, I won't eat a thing.

HARON

Come on, Mom! To get married, I need a modest girl from a good family.

MOTHER

We've already found one for you. She works with Zahra at the same company. She's 20, beautiful, tall, modest, and educated. Her teeth are even and pearly white. And best of all, she prays and wears a hijab. She'll make a wonderful wife and an excellent daughter-in-law.

ZAHRA

(lifting her head
from her mother's
lap, handing Haron
the envelope)

Here's her picture, brother. Her name is MARY—a name well-known in Afghanistan, the U.S., and all over the world.

HARON

(opening the envelope,
looking at the picture)

She is beautiful. But how will I meet her?

ZAHRA

Don't worry! We've already seen her. In two days, I'll sew your bride's wedding dress. Oh, and I already showed her your picture—she asked me who the handsome guy was.

HARON

(gently pinching his
sister's cheek)

Maybe you should start the Afghan version of Indian SHADI.COM. But for now, let me go get some sleep.

ZAHRA

Sweet dreams, brother.

INT. SHOOTING RANGE - DAY

Haron confidently fires a GLOCK 19M PISTOL at a target dummy inside an indoor firing range. The walls are lined with acoustic panels, ceiling baffles hang overhead, and a bullet trap absorbs the shots.

Other men are present, practicing their marksmanship. Haron, ambidextrous, skillfully fires with both his

right and left hands, each shot striking the target's heart with precision.

CUT TO:

INT. WEDDING HALL - NIGHT

Haron, dressed sharply in black, sits beside Mary, radiant in a stunning white wedding dress, a studded crown resting atop her head.

The camera pans across the hall, revealing men, women, girls, and boys of various ages seated around tables draped with white linens, enjoying their meals and drinks.

On the far side of the hall, an Afghan singer performs in Farsi, backed by a live band. In front of the bride and groom, two young girls dance in an open area, their movements adding to the lively atmosphere.

The focus shifts back to Haron, who is engaged in conversation with his American guests—Tom, Mike, and Crystal, his university friend.

TOM

Thank you for inviting us to your wedding.
Wishing you a lifetime of happiness.

HARON

Thanks for being here. I'm glad you could experience a traditional Afghan wedding.

TOM

(extends an envelope
to Haron)

Here's a little something from us—your round-trip honeymoon ticket plus a week's stay at the Sheraton Nassau Resort in The Bahamas.

HARON

(takes the envelope)

Wow, thank you so much!

TOM

It's our pleasure. Just a heads up, don't miss your 2:00 pm flight on United Airways tomorrow. Have a safe trip and an unforgettable honeymoon. Bye for now.

HARON

Goodbye.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

EXT. SATELLITE VIEW OF THE BAHAMAS - MORNING

The camera zooms in on the -

EXT. OUTLOOK OF SHERATON, NASSAU RESORT AND CASINO -
MORNINGWe peer through the glass windows of a ROOM at Sheraton,
Nassau Resort and Casino, situated at Cable Beach, the
Bahamas.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

Haron awakens to the morning sunlight streaming through
his hotel room window. He rises slowly, reaching for
his trousers on the NIGHT STAND to his left.After dressing, he leisurely makes his way to the
washroom.

INT. WASHROOM - DAY

Haron, bathed in the morning light, is taking a shower,
with only the upper parts of his body visible. He calls
out to his wife.

HARON

Mary, O Mary!

MARY (O.S.)

Yes.

HARON

Could you please bring clean underwear
for me? I forgot to take it.

MARY (O.S.)

OK, just a minute.

INT. KING-SIZE BED, ROOM - DAY

Mary, gracefully covering herself with a bedsheet, steps
down from the bed, standing at her full height.
Possessing long black hair, black eyes, and fair skin
compared to other Asian women, she epitomizes Afghan
beauty.

Heading to the corner of the room where two pieces of luggage are placed side by side, she opens a blue suitcase, retrieves white underwear, and proceeds to the washroom.

MARY

(extends the underwear
to Haron from behind
the door)

Honey, please take your underwear.

INT. WASHROOM - DAY

Haron, wrapping a white TOWEL around his lower body, abruptly swings open the washroom door, pulling Mary inside for a tight embrace.

MARY

(blushing, attempting
to break free)

You're insatiable. You had enough last night. I need some sleep.

Haron, planting kisses on Mary's cheeks, releases her.

INT. HOTEL RESTAURANT - DAY

Haron and Mary dine in the upscale hotel's restaurant.

MARY

I'd like to visit a shopping mall to buy gifts for your Mom and sister.

HARON

Sure, let's head back to our room, dress properly, and then come back.

INT. ROOM - DAY

Mary stands in front of the room's GENEROUS MIRROR, her reflection visible as she combs her hair and applies black pencil to her eyes.

Haron emerges from the washroom. Passing behind Mary, he plants a kiss on the side of her neck.

MARY

(turning toward Haron)

You're a thief.

HARON

(in Dari with subtitles)

"Qand-e-Duzdee Che-qadar Sheerin Ast".
Stolen water is sweet.

MARY

I'm ready.

CUT TO:

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Mary walks on the right side of Haron, her purse hanging over her shoulder.

A vibrant tourism BILLBOARD with colorful CAPITAL LETTERS catches their attention, reading: "WELCOME TO NASSAU"

Out of nowhere, a sudden tackle propels Mary forward as an unknown assailant from behind snatches her handbag and swiftly escapes on a skateboard along the sidewalk.

MARY

(screaming and pointing
to the skateboarding
man)

Oh my God! That guy stole my purse.

Haron takes off after the thief, leaving Mary alone. The skilled skateboarder maintains distance, making it challenging for Haron to catch up.

The thief strategically slows down at an intersection-

EXT. INTERSECTION - DAY

He waits for the signal to turn green. However, by the time Haron reaches him, the thief dashes left into another street as the PEDESTRIAN SIGNAL OPENS.

CUT TO:

EXT. SIDEWALK - CONTINUOUS

Haron sprints after the thief, pushing his body to the limit, but the skateboarder stays just out of reach.

Frustration mounting, Haron finally halts, out of breath. He turns to rush back to Mary—only to find her gone.

A slightly overweight African man in his late 40s approaches Haron, a grave look on his face.

THE MAN

Two masked men, armed. They pulled your girl into a white van. Took off that way.
(gestures toward the
street)

Haron's eyes widen in shock before he dashes back toward his hotel, urgency in every step.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Haron bursts into the room, swiping his card key. He pulls a LAPTOP from his backpack and sets it on the desk. With a few quick motions, he opens it. A password box pops up.

As Haron places the CURSOR in the password field, the room phone RINGS.

HARON
(picking up the phone)
Hello?

MAN'S VOICE (V.O.)
(calm, sinister)
Mr. Haron Bakhtari?

HARON
Who are you? And how do you know my name?

MAN'S VOICE (V.O.)
We've got your wife. If you want to see her alive, meet us at the PARADISE ISLAND BRIDGE at 11:00 AM, wearing shorts and a sleeveless shirt. No watches, glasses, or weapons. And don't bring your CIA friends or the police, or your wife will pay the price.

HARON
Wait!

The line goes dead. Haron stares at the receiver, his pulse racing. The beep of the disconnected call is the only sound.

HARON (CONT'D)
(muttering, still
holding the receiver)
Hello...

Frustrated, he slams the phone down and turns back to his laptop.

ON LAPTOP SCREEN

Haron types his password, the characters appearing as asterisks. He presses ENTER and clicks on the EMAIL SHORTCUT.

Another password prompt. Haron types rapidly, hits ENTER, and a blank email screen opens.

ON EMAIL PAGE

Haron types: "Spouse abducted. Heading to Paradise Island Bridge at 11:00 am to meet captors, possibly Russian agents."

He clicks SEND, then powers off the laptop.

EXT. BRIDGE ENTRANCE - DAY

A taxi pulls up at the entrance to the Paradise Island Bridge.

INT. TAXI - DAY

Haron, now dressed in ADIDAS shorts and a white sleeveless shirt, hands a \$50 bill to the driver.

HARON

Keep the change.

DRIVER

(grinning)

You're very generous, sir. Thank you.

Haron steps out of the taxi, eyes scanning the bridge ahead.

SUPER: PARADISE ISLAND BRIDGE, NASSAU, BAHAMAS

Waves crash against the supports of the long bridge. The sound of the sea mingles with the distant hum of cars.

EXT. BRIDGE - DAY

Haron walks along the right side of the bridge. In the distance, a black van approaches, its tires rolling over the iron and cement structure.

THROUGH BINOCULARS -

A pair of eyes watches Haron closely.

VOICE (V.O.)

All clear. Proceed.

EXT. BRIDGE - DAY

A broadcasting MINI-BUS, complete with satellite antenna, slows as it nears Haron.

The side door slides open, and a masked man reaches out, yanking Haron inside.

INT. MINI-BUS - DAY

Haron is thrown onto the floor, face down. The masked man quickly handcuffs him behind his back, while another, more burly figure stands nearby, holding a gun.

A third man, armed with a SIGNAL DETECTOR and GPS TRACKER, methodically scans Haron from head to toe.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

The mini-bus speeds across the bridge, tires screeching as it hits the open road.

INT. MINI-BUS - DAY

The man with the signal detector removes Haron's ADIDAS SNEAKERS, a beep echoing from the device.

Without hesitation, he opens the side door and tosses the sneakers out.

He returns to Haron, who's now sitting, his hands cuffed behind him.

MAN WITH SPY DETECTOR
(snarling & delivering
a punch to Haron's
gut)

We warned you--no GPS, no tracking devices.

Haron grits his teeth as the man throws a punch to his face. But before he can recover, Haron strikes back, HEADBUTTING the man in the chin, sending him stumbling.

The masked man with the gun reacts, kicking Haron in the ribs, knocking the wind out of him.

GUNMAN
(aiming the gun at
Haron's head)
I'll end you right here, you bastard.

MAN WITH SPY DETECTOR
(from behind, rubbing
his chin)
Boss wants him alive.

The gunman hesitates but lowers the weapon. Haron breathes heavily, staring defiantly at his captors as the MINI-BUS speeds toward an unknown destination.

CUT TO:

EXT. SKY OVER PARADISE ISLAND BRIDGE - DAY

An MH-60R SEAHAWK hovers above the PARADISE ISLAND BRIDGE.

Through the COCKPIT window, MIKE, the athletic African-American CIA officer, pilots the gunship.

Beside him sits CRYSTAL, Haron's university friend.

INT. CHOPPER - DAY

Mike monitors the fluctuating GPS signals on the chopper's console.

MIKE

(into headset)

Charley 2, begin a low sweep. We've got a strong signal here.

INT. CHOPPER - REAR SEAT - DAY

Two heavily armed agents sit in the back, faces focused. One opens the side door, gripping an emergency ladder.

EXT. CHOPPER - DAY

The ladder is tossed out. One agent, a small backpack strapped on, descends swiftly.

EXT. GROUND - CONTINUOUS

Landing smoothly, the agent pulls a portable GPS tracker from his pack. It detects a nearby signal.

He follows the signal, retrieving Haron's sneaker from under a bush. The agent stashes it and climbs back up the ladder into the chopper, aided by his partner.

INT. CHOPPER - DAY

Mike glances back.

MIKE

Did you find anything?

AGENT (CHARLEY 2)
(holding up the sneaker)
Only this, sir.

CRYSTAL
(taking the sneaker)
What's our next move?

MIKE
We move along the beach. Our agents are
stationed there—hopefully, they've got
intel.

EXT. SKY - DAY

The SEAHAWK soars above low-rise buildings and streets,
heading toward the beach that appears on the horizon.

As they approach the shore, the chopper dips lower.

EXT. BOATS - CONTINUOUS

Passing over two small boats approaching a luxury yacht,
a beeping from the chopper grows louder.

INT. CHOPPER - DAY

The GPS signal beeps persistently.

MIKE
(into headset)
Prepare for landing.

The SEAHAWK descends over the YACHT, the name "WAVE
BUSTER" painted in bold across the side.

EXT. YACHT HELIPAD - DAY

The chopper lands on the yacht's HELIPAD. Mike shuts
down the engine and removes his headset.

MIKE
Alright, let's move.

Mike, Crystal, and the two armed agents disembark.

On the deck, JACK a rotund man in a dark blue ADIDAS
TRACKSUIT, topped with a chapeau, approaches them.

JACK
(grinning)
Mickey Mouse! What brings you to my turf?

MIKE

(shaking Jack's hand)

Just working, Jack. Like you, JACK-ASS, doing yours. We lost one of our men—a young Asian guy, fit, black hair, black eyes. You or your men see anything unusual?

JACK

One of my guys mentioned seeing something earlier. Two men unloading a big sack from a satellite van near the fruit market.

MIKE

Can you bring him here?

JACK

Sure thing.

Jack heads down a small staircase, while Mike and Crystal wait on the deck. Moments later, Jack returns with a somewhat overweight, bearded man in his 30s.

JACK (CONT'D)

(to Mike)

This is STEVE. Feel free to ask him anything.

MIKE

(to Steve)

Where did those men take the sack?

STEVE

They were heading towards a yacht.

MIKE

Do you remember the yacht's name or color?

STEVE

(thinking)

Mostly blue and white. I caught part of the name—something like "MER," but didn't catch the rest.

MIKE

(to Jack)

Get your boat ready. Follow our lead.

Mike and Crystal rush back to the chopper with their team, ready for the next phase.

INT. SEAHAWK COCKPIT - DAY

Mike puts on his headset, starting up the SEAHAWK'S ENGINE.

MIKE
(into headset)
The Seahawk is ready for takeoff.

Mike grips the CYCLIC control, and the chopper begins to lift off from the yacht's deck.

EXT. SKY - DAY

The Seahawk rises into the sky, soaring over the open horizon, cutting through the clear blue sky.

INT. HULL, YACHT - DAY

Haron lies on the wooden floor, handcuffed behind his back. He looks exhausted, disheveled, and battered.

HARON
(in Russian, with
subtitles)
I need to use the washroom.

A voice responds, dripping with disdain.

MAN'S VOICE (V.O.)
Speak English, you bastard. We don't
understand that crap.

The camera shifts, revealing two men seated at a table, engrossed in a card game. One is around 30 with a bulbous nose, dark blond eyebrows, and lashes.

The other is about 35, with fair skin, a round face, and narrow eyes. Both have AK-47s within arm's reach.

HARON
(now in English)
I was speaking the language of hell. You
should learn it—you'll be headed there
soon. Now, I said I need to use the
washroom.

BULBOUS NOSE MAN
You're not allowed.

HARON
Then I'll do it right here, and you can
clean it up.

Without waiting for a response, Haron begins to urinate in his ADIDAS SHORTS, soaking the front.

The NARROW-EYED MAN leaps from his chair and kicks Haron.

NARROW-EYED MAN

You son of a—! Just wait, we'll take you there.

HARON

(calmly)

You mind uncuffing me, at least in the front? Or else your shiny yacht's washroom will get real messy.

The narrow-eyed man glares at his companion.

NARROW-EYED MAN

What do you think?

BULBOUS NOSE MAN

Do what he says. I've got your back.

The narrow-eyed man grabs a key from his pocket and approaches Haron. He unlocks the cuffs behind Haron's back and re-cuffs them in front.

Haron slowly stands, stretching his stiffened limbs.

NARROW-EYED MAN

(gruffly)

Straight, then left.

Haron follows the directions, heading towards a small door marked LAVATORY.

NARROW-EYED MAN (CONT'D)

Get in. And don't even think about locking it.

HARON

(stepping inside)

Got it.

INT. WASHROOM - DAY

Haron removes his ADIDAS SHORTS and UNDERWEAR, washing them thoroughly in the sink. With his teeth, he pries open the AGLET at the end of the shorts' DRAWSTRING, revealing —

A THIN MICRO GPS CHIP, about an inch long, hidden inside the drawstring. Haron pinches the chip between his thumb and index finger, causing a dim green light to blink softly.

He discreetly places the chip beneath the TOILET TANK.

The washroom door creaks open further, nudged by the barrel of an AK-47. Through the gap, we glimpse Haron's BARE BUTT, THIGHS, and LEGS.

VOICE (V.O.)

What are you doing? Hurry up!

HARON

I just washed my shorts and underwear. I need three more minutes to pee.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - YACHT - DAY

A well-dressed man with a brown beard sits in a large, revolving chair, flanked by two armed bodyguards.

ROGER, a 40-year-old, dark-skinned man wearing sunglasses, steers the yacht at the helm.

MAN IN WHITE

(taking a sip of his drink)

Hey, Roger! How much longer?

ROGER

(turning the helm slightly)

At least 15 more miles to the island, sir.

MAN IN WHITE

Can't you speed it up?

ROGER

We're at full capacity.

EXT. SKY ABOVE THE OCEAN - DAY

We soar over the vast, undulating waters of the OCEAN.

BLUE & WHITE RECREATIONAL BOAT appears below. As we sweep past it, we realize—

This is the POV from a SEAHAWK helicopter.

The CHOPPER dips lower, circling a sleek YACHT with "MERMAID" painted in bold letters along its side.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - YACHT - MOMENTS LATER

The roar of the helicopter fills the room.

ROGER

(to Man in White)

Boss, it's a U.S. chopper. No idea how they tracked us.

MAN IN WHITE

(rising from his chair)

Looks like we're fighting to the last drop of blood.

ROGER

What now?

MAN IN WHITE

(eyeing the chopper
through the window)

Keep speed and course. Let's see what they do.

EXT. SKY ABOVE THE OCEAN - DAY

The AMERICAN SEAHAWK hovers in front of the MERMAID, its shadow looming.

MIKE

(over external speakers)

You're under arrest for abducting an American citizen. Change course and return to shore. Non-compliance will result in a Hellfire Missile.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - YACHT - DAY

THE MAN IN WHITE

(via the Yacht's
microphone)

We don't know what you're talking about. We're just tourists enjoying our time on this rented yacht. There must be some misunderstanding.

EXT. CHOPPER - DAY

MIKE

I'll count to five. Ignoring our request means war. One, two, three, four, five.

The yacht continues on its course, unaffected.

MIKE (CONT'D)

(into headset)

Crys! Give them a warning shot.

A beat passes; no action is taken by Crystal.

MIKE (CONT'D)

What are you doing, Crystal? I'm talking to you! Fire a damn warning shot with your machine gun.

CRYSTAL

(startled, as if waking from a nap)

Sorry! I've got a bad headache.

She pushes a button in the cockpit, and a burst of gunfire erupts from the helicopter's machine gun-

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

Bullets splash into the water, 7 to 10 meters in front of the MERMAID, sending sprays high above sea level.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - YACHT - DAY

THE MAN IN WHITE

(glancing at his guards)

Hey, you two. Fetch the IGLA and prep it for launch. And get ALEXANDER to bring that Afghan guy here. Having him might deter them from using torpedoes or missiles.

ONE OF THE MEN

(hurrying toward the door)

On it, boss!

THE MAN IN WHITE

Roger! Make a U-turn. Slow down and signal compliance. We don't want to get obliterated. That chopper is one of the best in maritime warfare.

ROGER

(turning the yacht's helm)

Executing U-turn now, sir.

EXT. WIDE SHOT OF OCEAN AND HORIZON - DAY

The MERMAID and the SEAHWK maneuver in a tight circle, one above and the other below.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - YACHT - DAY

Haron, handcuffed in front, is dragged into the control room. As he stumbles, the narrow-eyed man follows closely, gripping his AK-47.

INT. CHOPPER'S BACK SEAT - DAY

One of Mike's colleagues peers through the scope of his sniper rifle, watching the armed narrow-eyed man.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - YACHT - DAY

A red laser dot appears on the narrow-eyed man's forehead. After a moment, the dot fades, and the man collapses, dead.

Haron swiftly executes a sidekick, sending THE MAN IN WHITE crashing to the floor.

As THE MAN IN WHITE struggles to draw his gun, Haron bolts for the door, bursting onto the deck.

EXT. DECK - YACHT - DAY

Haron sprints to the boat's edge. THE MAN IN WHITE, pistol drawn, follows hot on his heels.

Bullets thud around Haron as he runs. Gunfire from the SEAHWK targets THE MAN IN WHITE, forcing him back into the control room.

Seizing the moment, Haron leaps into the ocean.

Our view shifts to the back of the yacht, where a MAN-PAD ANTIAIRCRAFT MISSILE is aimed at the helicopter, ready to fire.

INT. INSIDE CHOPPER - CONTINUOUS

In the chopper's high-tech cockpit, Mike spots a missile aimed at his Gunship. He quickly activates COUNTERMEASURES and ELECTRONIC JAMMING, causing the helicopter to drop to about 10 meters above the ocean.

EXT. DECK - YACHT - DAY

A finger pulls the trigger of a Russian-made IGLA.

THWACK - BOOM

The missile launches but, thanks to the countermeasures and the chopper's sudden descent, it zooms past its target, exploding harmlessly in the sky.

INT. INSIDE CHOPPER - CONTINUOUS

MIKE
(elevating the chopper
and pressing the
Hellfire missile
button)

Go to hell.

Moments later, the missile strikes the yacht.

KABOOM - BOOM

A massive explosion erupts, sending debris, water, fumes, and flames spiraling into the afternoon sky.

EXT. SEA SURFACE - DAY

Haron, handcuffed in front, swims using his legs while moving his head and shoulders, desperate to distance himself from the burning yacht.

A RESCUE TUBE drifts into the water about 10 meters away from him.

EXT. CHOPPER - SKY - DAY

The SEAHWK circles above Haron, surveying the wreckage of the yacht below.

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

The WAVE BUSTER yacht approaches, with Jack, Steve, and their colleagues armed with light and belt-fed machine guns on deck.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOSPITAL MAIN ENTRANCE - DAY

Haron, clean-shaven and dressed sharply, exits the hospital with Mike, carrying a small handbag.

As they descend the stairs, nurses and hospital staff wheel an unconscious patient from an ambulance to a stretcher.

SUPER: THREE DAYS LATER

MIKE
(pointing to a parking
lot on his left)
The car's over there.

EXT. HOSPITAL PARKING - DAY

Mike and Haron get into the back seat of a 1998 FORD LINCOLN, where a MAN IN BLACK (28) covers part of his forehead with a hat behind the wheel.

INT. CAR - DAY

HARON
(fastening his seat
belt)

Any news on my lost gem?

MIKE
Not yet.

As the driver backs up, we see a wide shot of BIG LETTERS on the low-rise building: "PRINCES MARGARET HOSPITAL."

HARON
So what's the plan?

MIKE
I'm not sure. But I know Tom has a plan since he ordered us to take you to a safe place far from the city.

HARON
By the way, where's your pretty partner?

MIKE
She said she was sick.

HARON
I have my doubts about her.

MIKE
What do you mean?

HARON
Bad things have been happening since I met her.

MIKE
Speaking of which, how did you activate your GPS tracking chip while handcuffed?

HARON
(giggling)
I urinated in my shorts, forcing them to let me use the restroom and handcuff me in front. That way, I could wash my shorts and activate the tracking chip.

MIKE

(bursting into laughter)

You might just be the first spy who wet his shorts in the first few hours of captivity.

HARON

Everything's fair in love and war.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

The Lincoln Town Car cruises along a pristine two-lane highway, flanked by lush hills and tropical vegetation.

As they reach the summit, a HELICOPTER emerges, hovering like a GARGOYLE above the Ford Lincoln.

EXT. HELICOPTER DOOR - SKY - DAY

A man in the chopper's back seat unleashes a barrage of bullets from a belt-fed machine gun, shredding the Town Car.

INT. INSIDE FORD LINCOLN - DAY

Blood blossoms on Mike's chest and Haron's right arm. The driver slumps over, lifeless, causing the car to veer erratically off the highway.

The vehicle careens downhill, crashing through bushes and small trees. Haron quickly unbuckles himself and Mike, then shoves the injured Mike out of the car.

Haron leaps just as the car hurtles toward a ditch, grabbing onto a tree branch.

EXT. WOODS - DOWNHILL - DAY

The Ford Lincoln barrels downhill, smashing through trees and bushes before plunging into a pond, the driver's lifeless body behind the wheel.

EXT. HELICOPTER - SKY - DAY

The circling helicopter hovers above the pond.

INT. HELICOPTER BACK SEAT - DAY

The man who fired on the Ford Lincoln tosses the corpse of a woman with long black hair from the chopper's back door into the water.

EXT. POND - DAY

The lifeless body plunges into the pond, just meters from the submerged vehicle. As the Ford Lincoln disappears beneath the surface, Haron's battered and swollen wife surfaces.

EXT. SKY ABOVE THE POND - DAY

The helicopter ascends, executes a U-turn, and vanishes behind a tree-covered hill.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

SUPER: TEN MINUTES LATER

A GM TRUCK VAN screeches to a halt on the highway. Jack and Steve leap out from the back seat, machine guns at the ready, scanning the area for survivors.

EXT. TREE-COVERED DOWNHILL - DAY

Zooming in on a ditch, we see Haron clinging to a tree branch, blood dripping from his right arm.

Jack, GPS tracker in hand, approaches cautiously. Spotting Haron, he quickly descends.

Reaching the trunk, he disengages his gun's MAGAZINE, clears the chamber, and extends the barrel to Haron.

Swinging gently, Haron leaps for Jack, grabbing hold of the barrel. Jack pulls him to safety.

HARON

You're late.

JACK

Flat tire right after we left the hospital. Looks like another attack was preplanned. There's an informant among us.

HARON

(wrapping his tie
around his wound)

I think so. But we need to find MIKE now.

JACK

(reconnecting his
magazine)

Let's go. Steve is looking for him too.

As they descend, Steve appears, carrying the bleeding and unconscious Mike on his back.

JACK (CONT'D)
 (giving Steve a hand)
 Is he alive?

STEVE
 So far, yes. He needs immediate attention.

JACK
 Don't worry. TOM is on his way with a
 chopper.

HARON
 Is Tom here?

JACK
 Yes, he's overseeing your rescue.

EXT. HORIZON - DAY

A helicopter appears on the horizon, its blades whirring loudly.

CUT TO:

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

A HEARSE, followed by a couple of cars, enters the CEMETERY. Haron and his family, along with two senior Afghan-American women dressed in black, step out of the HEARSE.

SUPER: MUSLIMS' CEMETERY, NEW YORK

A Crowd has gathered. They assist Haron in carrying the CASKET through the somber atmosphere.

Haron and the other PALLBEARERS walk towards a grave prepared according to Muslim traditions in the cemetery's corner.

Upon reaching the grave, HARON and a white-bearded man in his late 60s lower the coffin into the earth. The man begins to cover it with bricks, reciting prayers in Arabic.

THE WHITE-BEARDED MAN
 (in Arabic/ subtitled)
*Allaumba-ghfer Laha, Warhamha, Wa-askenha
 Faseha-Jannatek. "Oh God, forgive her and
 have mercy on her and make her dwell in
 your paradise."*

After Haron and his brother, Kamran, throw a few shovels of soil onto the grave, other members of the Afghan community complete the burial ceremony.

Moments later, people begin to bid farewell to Haron and his family standing before the grave.

Our view shifts to Tom, flanked by two men in black glasses and a couple of police Officers in the background. He approaches Haron.

TOM

I'm sorry for your loss and for not being able to save her.

HARON

(somber and gloomy)

Thank you, Mr. Tom. You did everything you could.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Haron, his right arm in a cast, sits on the edge of his bed, reading a newspaper. The door is half-open. Suddenly, his sister Zahra appears, carrying a tray.

SUPER: NEW YORK - ONE WEEK LATER

ZAHRA

Good morning! I brought your breakfast. Mom and I are heading to a parent-teacher meeting at Kamran's school. It's 9:00 AM now, and the meeting starts at 10:00. We have an hour.

HARON

Thanks for taking Mom. She'll appreciate seeing other Afghan women to talk to.

ZAHRA

By the way, I was thinking you should quit your interpreting job with the military. You need a position that doesn't put your safety at risk.

HARON

I can't quit now; I'm under a long-term contract. I dedicated myself to my goals—boxing, studying languages, and diving into crime and spy novels to become a detective or police officer.

(MORE)

HARON (CONT'D)

I even joined the Mujahideen. But despite our efforts against the Russians, Afghanistan is still a hotbed of terrorism. Now I'm left questioning what I've gained from this life, besides losing my home and my wife.

(beat)

Maybe I've lost my way.

ZAHRA

Perhaps it's part of your destiny.

HARON

Maybe.

ZAHRA

(glancing at her watch)

I'm running late. Bye for now.

As Zahra leaves, the PHONE on the NIGHTSTAND rings.

HARON

(picking up the receiver)

Hello?

A muffled male voice comes through the PHONE.

VOICE (V.O.)

Good morning, sir! Is this Mr. Haron?

HARON

Yes, speaking.

VOICE (V.O.)

I'm calling from FedEx. There's a parcel for you.

ANGLE ON HARON (FLASHBACK)

Haron stands in front of a DUMMY in a RANGE ROOM, pistol in his left hand. A male voice echoes in his ears.

VOICE (CONT'D)

You lazy dog. You are good for nothing.

BACK TO PRESENT (END OF FLASHBACK).

VOICE (CONT'D)

Hello? Can you hear me?

HARON

Yeah, I can.

VOICE (V.O.)
There's a parcel for you. It looks like a video tape. The sender's name is MARY.

HARON
That's mine.

VOICE (V.O.)
Let me double-check your address. Is it 12 Cornwall Ln, Hicksville?

HARON
Yes, that's it.

VOICE (V.O.)
I'll be there in 20 minutes.

HARON
Awesome.

Haron hangs up, quickly descending the stairs into the—
BASEMENT

He walks toward a LARGE MAP of AFGHANISTAN on the wall. Pushing the map aside reveals a WALL CABINET.

Haron opens the cabinet, revealing a HELMET, BULLETPROOF VEST, SHOTGUN, REVOLVER, and GLOCK 19 PISTOL.

He grabs the gear and rushes back upstairs.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Haron opens the REFRIGERATOR and retrieves a BOTTLE OF POMEGRANATE JUICE. From a DRAWER, he takes a long PLASTIC BAG and bandages from his FIRST AID KIT.

Placing everything on the KITCHEN COUNTER, he pours juice into the bag and seals it with ADHESIVE TAPE.

Haron places the bag of juice on the front of the HELMET, securing it with tape. He wraps the helmet with white bandages, smearing some juice on the right side to simulate blood.

Putting on the helmet, he adjusts it down to his eyebrows and wears the BULLETPROOF VEST under his shirt. He gathers the weapons and dashes for the MAIN DOOR.

INT. HOUSE DOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Haron opens the door slightly, peering out at the street. The sky is dark and cloudy, with lightning flashing.

He leaves the door unlocked and rushes back to his-

BEDROOM

Haron stands before the mirror, double-checking his appearance. Finding the helmet awkward, he ties more bandages around his chin and head, completely covering it.

He sits on the bed, propping two pillows behind him. Under the quilt on his right side, he positions the SHOTGUN and GLOCK 19.

After double-checking the REVOLVER, he places it to his left under his thigh, pulling the quilt up to his abdomen as he waits.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY

A FedEx MINI-VAN pulls to the curb in front of Haron's house.

INT. VAN - MOMENTS LATER

A brown-bearded man in his early 50s, wearing a gray raincoat, dials a number on his cell phone.

INT. HARON'S BEDROOM - DAY

The home phone on Haron's nightstand rings. He picks up the receiver.

HARON

Hello.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

Your package has been delivered, sir. It's just behind your door. Could you kindly come and sign for it?

HARON

The door should be open; my sister just left and didn't lock it. I can't come down because of my injuries. Could you bring the package upstairs to my bedroom? I'd appreciate it.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

Okay, sir. I'll bring it up. FedEx cares for its customers.

EXT. STREET - DAY

The brown-bearded man exits the Mini-Van, holding a small handbag, and swiftly approaches 12 Cornwall Ln. He turns the handle of the door and enters the foyer.

INT. FOYER - MOMENTS LATER

The man ascends the stairs to the second floor, reaching a small corridor.

INT. SMALL CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

HARON
(hearing footsteps)
My bedroom is on your right. The door's open.

INT. HARON'S BEDROOM - DAY

The man enters the room.

THE MAN
Good morning, Mr. Haron. I've brought your package.

HARON
Thank you.

THE MAN
(searching through the handbag)
Let me grab it for you. I put it in here to protect it from the rain.

Suddenly, the man pulls out a gun equipped with a silencer and points it at Haron.

HARON
(frightened)
What kind of package delivery is this?

THE MAN
America's adventurism has even reached FedEx. We deliver more than just parcels nowadays.

HARON
Who are you? Prof. David? Dimitry Vavilov? Or both?

THE MAN

(grinning)

You've finally recognized me. Your golden brain is still sharp, despite your injuries.

HARON

(moving his hand under the quilt)

So, what now?

THE MAN

Don't move, or I'll blow your head off before you can ask about your wife. Sweep your gun onto the floor with your leg.

Haron uses his leg to push a shotgun off the bed.

THE MAN (CONT'D)

Smart move. Now, drop the Glock 19 too.

Haron pushes the Glock off the bed with his right hand.

THE MAN (CONT'D)

Thank you. You've been lucky, Mr. Haron, surviving so many close calls. But this time, I've come to close your file for good.

HARON

Before you kill me, answer two questions. Why did you kill my wife?

THE MAN

We didn't. She took her own life to protect her honor. Those gangsters in the Bahamas wouldn't have spared her.

HARON

You bastard! How did you change your appearance?

THE MAN

As a spy, you should know. Disguise is the first lesson they teach. Watch closely.

He pulls a mask off his face, revealing a different appearance.

HARON

Oh my God!

THE MAN

(chuckling)

A different face. But I don't have time for more tricks. Goodbye, comrade.

The man fires three shots. The first hits Haron's right hand, the second misses and hits the wall, and the third strikes his forehead. Pomegranate juice from a hidden bag under Haron's bandages spills onto his face.

The man fires again, aiming for Haron's chest, but the bulletproof vest absorbs the impact.

Haron convulses briefly, then rolls to his left, retrieving the hidden revolver from under the quilt.

HARON

(reciting the Muslim's
Kalimah)

"La Ilaha Illallah, Mohammadur Rasoul-
lulah."

The man ceases shooting for a beat to assess the situation, thinking Haron is incapacitated.

Seizing the moment, Haron fires back, hitting him in the hand and the upper part of his shoulder, near the neck.

The man collapses, dropping his gun.

THE MAN

(swearing)

You motherfucker! How did you shoot with your left hand?

HARON

The CIA trained me again, better than you ever did. But it was you and your country's politics that pushed me into this world—twice. First, by invading my homeland, and now, by blackmailing me in my new one.

DIMITRY

Fuck you.

HARON

(fires another shot,
hitting Dimitry's
leg)

I'd love to finish you off, but the FBI will do it better. They'll be here soon.

(MORE)

HARON (CONT'D)

I hear waterboarding works wonders on criminals like you.

Haron cautiously retrieves Dimitry's fallen gun from the floor and stands by, waiting.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF HARON'S HOUSE - DAY

Ambulances, police cars, and FBI vehicles swarm the scene, with personnel cordoning off the area.

A couple of armed FBI agents, followed by MEDICAL STAFF in specialized uniforms, rush inside Haron's house.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

FBI agents cuff the wounded Dimitry, arresting him. Paramedics swiftly load both Haron and Dimitry onto stretchers, carrying them outside.

EXT. AMBULANCE - DAY

Haron and his injured opponents are placed into separate ambulances, surrounded by police and paramedics.

ANGLE ON HARON

The ambulance door slams shut, and the vehicle pulls out, escorted by a convoy of police and FBI cars.

At the curb, a BROADCASTING TRUCK screeches to a halt. A blonde woman in her early thirties steps out elegantly, clutching a microphone, followed by a cameraman.

THE ANCHORWOMAN

(approaching a
policeman)

There was a shootout earlier this morning at 12 Cornwall Ln, Hicksville, New York.

She moves the microphone closer to the officer.

THE ANCHORWOMAN (CONT'D)

Excuse me, sir! Can you share any information about the incident?

THE POLICEMAN

I can confirm two individuals were involved, one critically injured. They've both been taken to the hospital.

(MORE)

THE POLICEMAN (CONT'D)

The FBI is handling the investigation, so any further details will come from them.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Haron lies in a hospital bed, gripping the sheets. A butterfly needle is delicately inserted into the back of his hand.

SUPER: LONG ISLAND COMMUNITY HOSPITAL, FIVE DAYS LATER

The door creaks open. Tom, flanked by two athletic men in black suits and dark glasses, enters.

Tom approaches the bed, holding a bouquet, while the two men position themselves by the door in the corridor.

TOM

(placing the bouquet
on a side table)

How's our most expensive Afghan agent for American taxpayers doing?

HARON

(raising his bed with
a press of the side
button)

Better. Thanks.

TOM

I've got good news.

HARON

Let's hear it.

TOM

We've arrested a few more of David's cohorts. Crystal's been apprehended, too.

HARON

That's good to hear. I had my suspicions about her ever since my wife was abducted during our honeymoon.

TOM

That's why she's under arrest. The interrogation's ongoing. Mike was suspicious of her as well.

HARON

Makes sense. The day Mike was taking me to your secret location in the Bahamas, she didn't come along, claiming she was unwell. It made me wonder if she had foreknowledge of the helicopter attack, which led to Mike's injuries.

TOM

Everything you're saying checks out.

HARON

She also knew about my honeymoon in the Bahamas. I bet she was the one who leaked my past with the Afghan Communist Regime's Security Service.

TOM

That's right.

HARON

And what about Prof. David's true identity?

TOM

Turns out he's Dimitry Vavilov, your old KGB shooting instructor.

HARON

(half-smiling)

So the snake finally revealed itself.

TOM

(glancing at his watch)

You played a big part in this, Haron. Once you're out of here, you'll get a new identity: a fresh passport, credit cards, and a new address.

HARON

So, Haron Bakhtari is no more?

TOM

That's right. You might even want to consider some plastic surgery, just to switch things up a bit.

HARON

(chuckling)

I'll pass on that.

TOM

(getting up)

We'll see. Take care.

HARON

You too, Tom. See you around.

FADE TO BLACK:

THE END.

The information, images, and data contained in this screenplay titled "Crossfire Catalyst" are works of fiction and are copyrighted by Shafiq Ahmad Setak, a Canadian screenwriter. This work may not be copied, distributed, modified, or reproduced, in whole or in part, without the prior written consent of the author, signed by hand.

Shafiqsetak@gmail.com

CELL: +1 647 937 5231