

FREEDOM

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FADE IN:

Dark, rainy, cold autumn morning in London.

SUPER: London, November 2001

INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM - DAY

SAHARA (30s), a well-educated Persian woman wearing European clothes and a headscarf, sits on a desk in front of a semi-dark, packed college classroom. The endless rows of faces blur together.

A laptop, on the podium to her right, plays a news coverage video of the American President and British Prime Minister calling for UN support of an attack on Iraq. STUDENTS watch the video on the large screen behind her.

Sahara's cell phone vibrates on the desk. She glances down at it. A new text message from FREEDOM FIGHTER (DAVID).

Sahara grabs the phone and quickly scans the text message.

ON THE SCREEN

**Mission set. Will complete once money wired.**

ON SAHARA

Sahara mutes the video.

SAHARA

In a democracy, is everyone truly equal? Does everyone really have the freedom to believe as they wish and to practice those beliefs? And if the answer's yes, what's the cost for these freedoms?

A gawky-looking FRESHMAN quietly approaches Sahara and hands her a note. She scans it and looks toward the back of the room. Two men in dark suits and long, dark coats stand outside the classroom door. MI-5 AGENTS.

Sahara closes the laptop and faces her students.

SAHARA (cont'd)

Think about what you just watched in the context of democracy, equality, and freedom. Be prepared to talk about it next class.

Students get up, gather their belongings, and exit. Once they're gone, the MI-5 Agents enter. Sahara, head down, collects her belongings as the men approach.

MI-5 AGENT #1  
Are you Sahara Ashani?

Sahara ignores them.

MI-5 AGENT #1 (cont'd)  
Ms. Ashani?

Sahara still doesn't respond.

MI-5 AGENT #2  
We can do this the easy way or hard way. It's up to you.

Sahara looks up at them.

SAHARA  
How can I help you?

MI-5 AGENT #1  
You need to come with us, Miss.

MI-5 Agent #2 grabs one of her bags. Sahara tries to stop him.

SAHARA  
Why?

MI-5 Agent #2 gives her a stern look. She then eyes the agents suspiciously.

SAHARA (cont'd)  
What's going on?

MI-5 Agent #1 ushers her out of the room.

EXT. SMALL AIRPORT, SAUDI ARABIA - NIGHT

Stars sparkle in the darkness. Insects and the distant sound of a plane preparing for take off break the stillness of the night.

SUPER: SAUDI ARABIA, 2001

DAVID (40s), a former US Marine dressed in dark fatigues, helps an AMERICAN WOMAN (30s) in a dark abaya and her BABY make their way through a heavy-guarded airport to a hanger.

IAN (50s) and TOM (30s), dressed as commercial pilots, stand outside the plane. They wait for David, the American woman, and Baby to arrive.

David, the American Woman, and Baby arrive. Ian, a cocky former American Air Force pilot, rushes to them. He takes the baby and boards the plane. The American woman faces David.

AMERICAN WOMAN

(sobbing)

Thank you.

DAVID

You're welcome.

David nods to Tom, a quiet South American with a hero complex. Tom gently leads the American Woman onto the plane and closes the door.

David watches the plane taxi down the runway. Then turns and walks away as it takes off.

INT. HEATHROW AIRPORT - NIGHT

Brisk, gloomy evening. MI-5 Agents #1 and #2 escort Sahara through the very busy airport - one in front and the other behind her. They help her maneuver through the CROWD with all of her luggage.

As they walk through the airport, Sahara notices the people flying out. Several are ARABS and MUSLIMS.

She stops, forcing MI-5 Agents #1 and #2 to stop too.

SAHARA

I don't understand. Why must I  
leave?

The agents gently push her forward. She stumbles, but continues walking.

MI-5 Agent #2 glances at Sahara as they approach the terminal. They stop at the gate. MI-5 Agent #2 walks up to the check-in desk.

SAHARA (cont'd)

(to MI-5 Agent #1)

I told you. I'm not connected to  
the terrorists!

MI-5 Agent #1 scans the perimeter.

SAHARA (cont'd)

Please.

MI-5 AGENT #1

(to Sahara)

You're visa's been revoked.

Sahara's mouth drops.

SAHARA

What?! But why?

MI-5 AGENT #1

My orders are clear. Escort you to  
the airport.

Sahara breaks down and cries.

SAHARA

But -

MI-5 Agent #2 rejoins Sahara and MI-5 Agent #1. MI-5 Agent #2  
nods at MI-5 Agent #1. They lead Sahara up to the gate and  
watch her board.

INT. PLANE - NIGHT

A half-full flight. PASSENGERS settle in. Several MUSLIM  
FAMILIES huddle close together, wary of other passengers.  
FLIGHT ATTENDANTS walk up and down the aisles for a final  
check before the plane takes flight.

Sahara pulls out her phone and quickly types a message to  
Freedom Fighter (David).

ON SCREEN

**Money wired.**

**Change in plans. Returning to Afghanistan. Will get target to  
destination at set time.**

ON SAHARA

Sahara turns off her phone and drops it in her bag before  
closing her eyes.

EXT. BAZAAR - DAY

SUPER: Bazaar, Kabul, Afghanistan

A scorching sun beats down on a busy bazaar. VENDORS call out their wares to PASSERSBY.

MEN with long, well-trimmed beards, turbans, and robes escort WOMEN in proper Taliban attire. CHILDREN laugh while chasing one another.

A mix of saffron, cardamon, and turmeric spices and Afghan dishes waft through the air. Meats hang from heavy iron hooks. Chickens squawk as they run from dogs chasing them through the streets.

JASMINE (late-20s), a vivacious woman with full lips and deep almond-brown eyes, moves through the bazaar with KERRIE (20s), her Filipino Maid, and KAREEM'S MOM (50s), a quiet, submissive woman. Men whisper and and stare at Jasmine as she passes. Jasmine drops her eyes.

As they move through the bazaar, they come upon a tent with several reams of fabric. They stop to examine the fabric.

Kareem's Mom picks up a luxurious white fabric and drapes it over Jasmine.

KAREEM'S MOM

This fabric would look lovely on you.

Jasmine blushes.

Kareem's Mom smiles.

KAREEM'S MOM (cont'd)

I will get it for you.

Kareem's Mom barter with the FABRIC VENDOR (mid-50s). The Fabric Vendor folds up the fabric and holds it out to Kareem's Mom.

Kareem's Mom takes the fabric and hands it to Kerrie.

Kareem's Mom loops arms with Jasmine. Together, they move through the bazaar. Kerrie trails behind.

INT. JASMINE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY [LATER]

JASMINE looks out at the city and the mountains in the distance. Her shoulders sag.

Kerrie brings in tea and sets it down on the coffee table in front of the couch. Kerrie picks up the tea pot to pour Jasmine a cup.

JASMINE

Thank you, Kerrie. I can do it.

Kerrie bows her head and leaves.

Jasmine's husband, KAREEM (35), a cold, domineering, muscular Persian with dark eyes, storms in enraged.

Jasmine walks over to him and puts her arms around him to try to calm him down. He grabs her wrists and shoves her away from him.

She walks back up to him. Kareem hits and shakes her. He then throws her to the ground.

Jasmine falls and hits her head on the coffee table. It bleeds.

Kareem kicks and punches her while she's on the ground.

KAREEM'S DAD (70s), a deeply religious cleric, walks in the room. KAREEM'S MOM follows behind.

JASMINE (cont'd)

(in Farsi)

Kareem, stop! Please, I beg you!  
Don't do this!

Kareem raises his fist again.

His Mom cries. His Dad leaves the room.

A few minutes later, Kareem stops hitting Jasmine. He spits on her and leaves the room.

Kareem's Mom rushes to Jasmine's side.

KAREEM'S MOM

(in Farsi)

We need to clean you up.

Kareem's Mom helps Jasmine up. Jasmine winces in pain. A red spot grows around her lower abdomen.

KAREEM'S MOM (cont'd)

(in Farsi)

You need a hospital!

Jasmine puts her hand on Kareem's Mom's hand.

JASMINE

(in Farsi)

No hospital. If Kareem finds out -

KAREEM'S MOM  
(in Farsi)  
He won't. Come. You're going!

Kareem's Mom puts her right arm around Jasmine's waist to balance her. They start to walk to the front door.

Kerrie comes in. She rushes over to them. She puts her left arm around Jasmine's other side to balance her. They walk out to Kareem's Mom's car.

INT. HOSPITAL ER - DAY

Small, rural area outside the city. Stone and mud-brick houses dot the barren landscape. A mosque is in the distance.

Kareem's Mom and Jasmine walk into a busy women's-only hospital. It's packed with PATIENTS. DOCTORS and NURSES walk around the one-room ER.

Kareem's Mom and Jasmine walk up to the Nurses' station.

KAREEM'S MOM  
(in Farsi)  
Help! We need a doctor NOW!

The Nurse standing behind the desk sees Jasmine's bruises and the blood coming from her mouth and her lower abdomen. She rushes over to Jasmine and quickly assesses her injuries.

NURSE  
(in Farsi)  
Let's get her into the room there.

The Nurse wraps her arm around Jasmine. The Nurse and Kareem's Mom lead Jasmine to an area made into a make-shift room by a moving curtain.

INT. MAKE-SHIFT HOSPITAL ROOM

The Nurse and Kareem's Mom lay Jasmine on a bed. The Nurse cleans Jasmine's mouth and face with water.

The DOCTOR (40s), a Western-educated woman, strolls in. When she sees Jasmine, she rushes over and quickly exams her.

DOCTOR  
(in Farsi)  
You're losing a lot of blood. Are you pregnant?



Jasmine slowly pushes herself up in bed with help from the Nurse and Kareem's Mom. She looks down at her lower abdomen and cries.

The Doctor lays her hands on Jasmine's lower abdomen and tries to feel around for the baby. Nothing.

The Doctor looks Jasmine in the eyes. Jasmine grabs Kareem's Mom's hands. Kareem's Mom's eyes drop. Jasmine clutches Kareem's Mom's hands.

DOCTOR (cont'd)  
(in Farsi)  
There's no easy way to say this.

Jasmine quivers.

DOCTOR (cont'd)  
(in Farsi)  
You're lucky you're alive. You're baby, though, did not survive.

Kareem's Mom gently pulls Jasmine into her arms. The Doctor and Nurse head out of the room.

Five minutes later, Kareem's Mom helps Jasmine get dressed. She then puts her arm around Jasmine's waist and helps her walk out of the hospital.

INT. JASMINE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The room is dark. Jasmine's asleep.

Kareem barges in and climbs on top of Jasmine. She wakes up as he pushes up her nightgown. She fights him.

JASMINE  
(in Farsi)  
Kareem, No! Don't!

He rapes her. She tries to push him off. He slaps her.

KAREEM  
(in Farsi)  
You'll learn your place!

Her cries and screams go unheard as he continues the assault.

INT. JASMINE'S BEDROOM - DAY

The sun streams in. Doves coo at the open window. The spicy-sweet smell of cardamon wafts through the air.

Kerrie comes in to fluff Jasmine's bed. She approaches the bed and sees Jasmine still there, unable to move.

Kerrie notices Jasmine's black eye and the bruises up and down her back and arms. Kerrie quickly looks away.

Jasmine reaches out for Kerrie's arm.

JASMINE  
Please, Kerrie.

Kerrie's eyes drop.

KERRIE  
I'm so sorry, Ms. Jasmine.

Jasmine struggles to sit up in bed. She turns to face Kerrie.

JASMINE  
It's not your fault. Can you please  
help me up?

Kerrie helps Jasmine reposition in bed.

KERRIE  
Someone's here to see you, Ms.

JASMINE  
Who?

Kerrie tries to not look at Jasmine's bruises as Jasmine slowly moves her feet to the floor.

KERRIE  
Says she's an old friend -

Jasmine smiles weakly.

JASMINE  
Sahara?!

KERRIE  
Yes.

Kerrie helps her stand up. Jasmine winces as she walks to her closet.

JASMINE  
Let her in.

Kerrie exits, and Sahara enters.

SAHARA  
Jasmine?

Jasmine exits the closet, fully dressed.

JASMINE

Sahara!

Sahara gasps when she sees Jasmine's black and blue eye. She bites her lips.

JASMINE (cont'd)

It's so good to see you.

Jasmine inches her way over to Sahara and hugs her.

JASMINE (cont'd)

I thought I'd never see you again.

EXT. BAZAAR, KABUL - DAY

Streets are crowded. KIDS run through the market laughing and screaming. People barter for goods.

Jasmine and Sahara, wearing their abayas, walk arm-in-arm through the bazaar.

Kareem's HENCHMAN (40s), a loyal employee with black piercing eyes and dark hair, sits at a table outside a café, watching Jasmine and Sahara. Every few minutes, he snaps a picture of them. ALI (40s), an devote Arab Taliban follower and Kareem's informant, tails them.

David, hidden in the shadows of a narrow alleyway, spots Ali and the Henchman. He follows their every move.

JASMINE

What are you doing back? I thought you said you'd never return.

SAHARA

Never say never.

JASMINE

It's good to have you back. Is this permanent or just a visit?

Sahara stops and faces Jasmine.

SAHARA

Why didn't you tell me?

JASMINE

Sahara, you didn't answer my question.

SAHARA

Jasmine...

Jasmine briefly looks away.

JASMINE

Tell you what?

SAHARA

The bruises.

Jasmine bows her head then looks Sahara in the eyes.

JASMINE

It's nothing.

Sahara returns the stare.

SAHARA

Don't.

Jasmine walks ahead.

Sahara catches up and passes Jasmine. She stops in front of her, blocking Jasmine from moving forward.

SAHARA (cont'd)

I know you didn't give yourself those bruises.

Jasmine pushes past Sahara. Sahara rushes to catch up with her again. Jasmine stops and stares at Sahara.

JASMINE

What do you want me to say?

SAHARA

The truth.

JASMINE

Fine.

Jasmine cries.

JASMINE (cont'd)

Kareem beats me. You happy now.

SAHARA

No. I'm so sorry -

JASMINE

Sorry?! What did you think my life was like?

SAHARA

Why didn't you call me? I could have done something.

JASMINE

(sarcastic)

Like what? Try to save me?

SAHARA

Yes. You've like my sister. I would do anything to keep you safe.

Jasmine laughs.

JASMINE

Our lives here haven't changed since you left!

Jasmine walks ahead. Sahara catches up to her. She puts her arm around Jasmine and gently pulls her closer. They walk arm-in-arm in silence.

Sahara spots a restaurant, Paradise, up ahead. She steers Jasmine to the restaurant.

INT. PARADISE RESTAURANT - DAY

Dimly lit, noisy, and crowded. Most patrons are FOREIGNERS.

Nothing about the interior design stands out. The restaurant aims to fly under the radar.

WAITERS rush about to serve patrons who sit in sections based on gender.

Sahara and Jasmine walk to the back, find a table, and sit down across from each other.

A waitress comes up and takes their order - tea and sheer pira (desserts).

The waitress returns a few minutes later with their order. She sets it down and leaves.

JASMINE

Why are you really here? Your immediate family's gone, and you always said you would never return once you tasted freedom.

SAHARA

That's not true. You're my family.

JASMINE  
Stop avoiding my question.

SAHARA  
I came back for you...to help you  
escape. I know this American -

Jasmine quickly scans the restaurant. She spots Ali and the  
Henchman.

JASMINE  
Afghanistan's my home.

She quickly pushes her chair away from the table and gets up.

JASMINE (cont'd)  
The only place I'm going is home!

Jasmine heads for the door.

Sahara gets up and rushes after her. Sahara catches up to her  
and grabs Jasmine's arm.

JASMINE (cont'd)  
Ouch. Let go.

Sahara drops Jasmine's arm.

SAHARA  
Sorry.

She stands in front of Jasmine so they are eye-to-eye.

Jasmine keeps moving. Sahara chases after her.

SAHARA (cont'd)  
Jasmine, wait.

Jasmine turns around. She crosses her arms and looks Sahara  
squarely in the eyes, waiting for a response.

SAHARA (cont'd)  
You can't go back! If you do, he'll  
kill you! I won't let that happen.

Jasmine puts her hand on Sahara's arm.

JASMINE  
Sahara, he's my husband. Besides, I  
can't leave him. The law won't  
allow it.

Jasmine walks out the door.

EXT. JASMINE & KAREEM'S BACK YARD - NIGHT

Sahara pulls up to Jasmine's house. They get out of the car. They hear laughter coming from the backyard. They head to the back yard.

Several of Kareem's MEN stand around watching Kareem aim a gun at a silhouette.

Sahara gives Jasmine a sharp side glance. Sahara steps forward. Jasmine pulls her back. Sahara moves forward.

SAHARA

Kareem, I see -

Kareem drops the gun to his side and turns to face off with Sahara. He walks over to Sahara.

KAREEM

What are you doing here?

SAHARA

Nice to see you too, cousin.

KAREEM

You're no blood of mine.

Kareem lifts his gun and points it at Sahara's head.

KAREEM (cont'd)

With that said, it's time for you to leave.

Sahara stands firm. Jasmine rushes over to Sahara and pulls her away.

INT. JASMINE'S AND KAREEM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Jasmine escorts Sahara into the house.

JASMINE

Why did you do that? You just made things worse.

Jasmine paces the room.

SAHARA

If he does anything to you, you let me know right away. I will get you away from him.

Jasmine stops pacing.

JASMINE

It's not a matter of if, but rather when.

Sahara walks over to Jasmine and gives her a hug.

SAHARA

I'll get you away from here. I promise.

Jasmine hugs her back.

SAHARA (cont'd)

Here. Take this.

Sahara hands her a piece of paper.

JASMINE

What is it?

SAHARA

A life line.

Jasmine opens it up.

ON PAPER

**Sahara**

**+44 114 2853698**

Jasmine nods. She folds up the paper and slips it into her pants pocket under her abaya.

Jasmine walks Sahara to the front door. They say goodbye.

EXT. JASMINE'S AND KAREEM'S BACKYARD - NIGHT

Jasmine walks out to the back yard. Kareem holds his gun again. Jasmine stands a safe distance from him.

A MALE SERVANT (20s) comes out and hands Kareem some photos. He reviews them, hands them back, and waves his hand in the air to dismiss the Male Servant and the MEN around him. All leave.

Kareem glares at Jasmine.

KAREEM

(in Farsi)

I told you, you were NEVER to see or speak to Sahara again!



Jasmine's head drops. She avoids looking at him.

Kareem shoots and hits the bull's eye. Jasmine shakes.

Kareem walks over to her. He raises his hand and hits her across the face. The butt of his gun splits her lip open. It bleeds.

KAREEM (cont'd)  
(in Farsi)  
The next time she comes here, I  
will kill you and her.

Kareem continuous to hit and kick her. Jasmine buries her head in her hands, trying to protect herself. He laughs at her.

Kerrie, standing in the door's shadow, watches Kareem put his gun to Jasmine's forehead. Jasmine trembles and cries as Kareem cocks the hammer.

JASMINE  
(in Farsi)  
Please, don't! I beg you!

He pulls the trigger.

BANG!

Nothing happens. There's no bullet in the gun. He walks away.

Kerrie rushes outside to help Jasmine. She leads Jasmine up to her bedroom.

INT. JASMINE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jasmine's shell-shocked and in pain.

Kerrie lays Jasmine down on the bed. She leaves and returns with a cold rag, cup of water, and pain killers. She washes some blood away from Jasmine's mouth.

KERRIE  
Miss, you have to leave. Tonight.  
Please! He'll kill you if you stay.

Kerrie gives Jasmine the pain killers and water. She takes them.

JASMINE  
If I leave, he'll kill you.

KERRIE

Don't worry about me. My embassy  
will protect me.

JASMINE

You must leave tonight then too.

Kerrie nods and leaves, closing the bedroom door behind her.

Jasmine goes to the door and opens it. She listens to be sure Kerrie is downstairs. She closes the door and grabs her cell phone from her end table. She picks it up and dials Sahara.

JASMINE (cont'd)

Sahara...

EXT. BAZAAR - DAY

Mid-afternoon. Jasmine, dressed in her abaya, walks around the bazaar.

David, dressed in a black Arab cleric's garb, and Sahara, in her abaya, tail Jasmine.

Jasmine approaches a narrow alleyway in between two non-descript, dilapidated buildings. She slips through it.

A running car waits at the other end of the alleyway. OSMAN (30s), a capitalistic Muslim man, sits in the driver's seat.

David and Sahara walk up on either side of Jasmine.

Jasmine shakes. She gives Sahara a side-eyed glance.

JASMINE

One of Kareem's men is following  
me.

David quickly scans the area. He sees Ali slowly walking toward them. David gently takes Jasmine's arm and rushes her to the car.

SAHARA

Ready?

Jasmine gives Sahara a small smile.

SAHARA (cont'd)

Here we go.

They reach the car and get in.

The car pulls away.

EXT. AFGHAN DESERT - DAY [HOURS LATER]

David, Sahara, Jasmine, and Osman drive through rural areas. The roads are bumpy and many need to be repaired.

Though the area is desert-like, David keeps a watch out for bandits. A gun sits on the dashboard.

They stop to get out and stretch their legs along the way.

DAVID

Stay close.

Sahara and Jasmine remove their abayas. David gasps when he sees Jasmine's bruises. Jasmine quickly wraps her abaya around her body.

DAVID (cont'd)

Looks like someone's been using you  
as a punching bag.

Jasmine lowers her eyes and walks a few steps away from the car. Sahara joins her.

JASMINE

(in Farsi)

How well do you know him?

Jasmine glances at David as he gives Osman a wad of cash.

SAHARA

(in Farsi)

Not well...I just met him today.

Jasmine turns on Sahara.

JASMINE

(in Farsi)

What?! You met him today? Are you  
crazy?!

SAHARA

(in Farsi)

Shhh. We met before via the  
internet. Today was the first time  
I ever saw him in person though.

JASMINE

(in Farsi)

Oh my god, he could be a killer!  
What have you gotten me into?!

SAHARA

(in Farsi)

He's not! He helps trapped American  
and European women and children  
return home.

Jasmine looks at the mountains in the distance. She takes a  
deep breath, then turns back on Sahara.

JASMINE

(in Farsi)

What do you mean 'trapped'?

SAHARA

(in Farsi)

American and European women and  
kids whose husbands and fathers  
brought them to the Middle East.

JASMINE

(in Farsi)

Sahara, I'm neither American nor a  
European! And while I may not like  
the Taliban laws, I am proud to be  
an Afghan.

SAHARA

(in Farsi)

I trust him.

(pause)

I have to.

Jasmine briefly turns her back to Sahara to collect herself.

JASMINE

(in Farsi)

What do you mean you have to?  
Either you do or you don't.

SAHARA

(in Farsi)

It's not that simple. I paid him to  
get you out of here.

JASMINE

(in Farsi)

You. Did. What?! How much?

SAHARA

(in Farsi)

It doesn't matter. Your my best  
friend. I am not going to sit by  
and watch Kareem hit you.

Jasmine hugs Sahara.

DAVID  
Time to move.

Jasmine and Sahara walk back to the car and climb in. David and Osman get in the front of the car. They drive off.

EXT. QANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN - NIGHT [HOUR LATER]

David, Sahara, Jasmine, and Osman arrive on the city's outskirts. It's quiet, except for men praying in a mosque. Some city lights come into focus. Foot traffic's light.

David points to an alley.

DAVID  
Pull in there.

Osman pulls into a dark alley.

DAVID (cont'd)  
We'll stay here for the night.

David, Sahara, and Jasmine get out on the passenger side. David hands Sahara and Jasmine their abayas.

DAVID (cont'd)  
Put these on.

David turns back to the car. He hands Osman another wad of cash. He reaches in and grabs the gun from the dashboard.

DAVID (cont'd)  
Don't forget to ditch the car.

David stands up and puts the gun in the back of his pants.

Osman drives away.

DAVID (cont'd)  
Follow me and be quiet.

Jasmine grabs Sahara's hand. They move in and out of the shadows in the streets.

Sahara, Jasmine, and David pass several mud-brick houses. A bazaar, closed for the night, is seen in the distance.

EXT./INT. SKYHAWK'S HOME - NIGHT

David knocks on the door of a dark, two-story mud-brick home in the middle of the street. His friend SKYHAWK (40s), a former Arab soldier and American ally, answers.

Skyhawk scans the area to see if anyone's following them before fully opening the door.

SKYHAWK

Come in.

The small three bedroom home is dimly lit. It is modestly decorated with very little furniture - kitchen table, four chairs, refrigerator, gas stove, two cots, and a mat.

Skyhawk quickly closes the door.

DAVID

What's the best way to the nest these days? I need to let two sparrows fly free tomorrow.

SKYHAWK

Hmm. Not sure.

Skyhawk paces the floor for a while.

SKYHAWK (cont'd)

Cat's been eyeing the nest, waiting to pounce the last few months. I've been watching the situation myself, but -

DAVID

How tight's security?

SKYHAWK

Changes daily. Word is ANYONE caught helping women and kids escape will be shot on site.

Jasmine gasps. Sahara bites her lips.

SKYHAWK (cont'd)

Should have more info for you tomorrow.

DAVID

Good.

Skyhawk heads to the kitchen. David, Sahara, and Jasmine follow him.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

The kitchen's small with a gas stove, a dirty sink, and a run-down refrigerator. A small table sits in the middle of the room.

SKYHAWK  
Hungry?

DAVID  
Starved.

SKYHAWK  
Then let's eat.

David, Skyhawk, Sahara, and Jasmine sit down. Sahara jumps into the conversation. Jasmine sits back and listens.

SAHARA  
Ever have problems getting someone out?

David or Skyhawk share a glance before answering.

SKYHAWK  
No. His network's pretty powerful.  
Gets him everything he needs so  
missions are successful.

DAVID  
(grins)  
God Bless the USA.

Jasmine leans forward.

JASMINE  
How trust-worthy are these  
contacts?

DAVID  
(snaps)  
Don't worry about them!

Jasmine glares at him with distrust.

Sahara slight shakes her head no. Only Jasmine catches it.

Jasmine sits back.

SAHARA  
So what's the plan?

DAVID

At 0-600 hours, we make our way to  
an airport hanger, board a plane,  
and fly to the US.

JASMINE

(sarcastic)  
It sounds so routine.

SKYHAWK

That's the point. The more routine  
it is, the less risk.

Jasmine leans forward again.

JASMINE

(to David)  
How'd you get started in this line  
of work anyway?

David bows his head to hide his pain.

SKYHAWK

His ex-girlfriend was killed by her  
Muslim husband while living in  
Yemen.

David coldly stares at Skyhawk. Skyhawk ignores him.

SKYHAWK (cont'd)

US Embassy refused to help her.  
Said she was a Yemen citizen by  
marriage.

Jasmine glances at David. Her shoulders relax. She puts her  
hand on his arm.

JASMINE

I'm sorry.

David instinctively pulls away. He glances at his watch.  
11:30 pm.

DAVID

We need to get to bed. Have to be  
up early.

Skyhawk gets up and clears the table. David helps him. Sahara  
and Jasmine head to the bedroom.

DAVID (cont'd)

All the required equipment ready to  
go?



## SKYHAWK

Not yet. It'll be ready first thing  
tomorrow morning.

## INT. SKYHAWK'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

The house is dark and quiet. Everyone's asleep. Skyhawk sits at the table, gun in hand, peering into the night.

## INT. SKYHAWK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sahara and Jasmine are asleep on two cots in the bedroom. David is asleep on a mat on the floor. As he sleeps, his face is twisted with anguish and horror.

## EXT. CITY - DAY [DREAM SEQUENCE]

SUPER: Persian Gulf War

The sun beats down on David and six of his MILITARY MEN. Each carry their machine guns while patrolling an ancient-looking city in the desert. They weave in and out of crumbling buildings.

Arab and Muslim WOMEN and CHILDREN scream and cry while reaching out for dead female family members on the ground. Blood oozes out all over. Bullet fragments and shells are scattered about the ground.

David freezes in place near some victims of the battle. A young BOY with hollow-looking eyes stares back at him. Stunned, angry, and disgusted, David turns his back on the boy.

David turns to face the boy again. His ex-girlfriend now stands there, beaten black and blue. Tears weld up in his eyes. He walks toward her. She collapses and dies. He falls to his knees in anguish.

DAVID

NO!

## INT. SKYHAWK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

David's eyes snap open. He sits up in bed in a cold, wet sweat. He shakes and cries. He scans the room.

Jasmine and Sahara stare back at him.

SAHARA

What's -

David glares at them.

DAVID

Nothing. Go back to bed!

Sahara and Jasmine lay back down. David puts his hands over his eyes, takes a deep breath, and lays down again.

INT. SKYHAWK'S BEDROOM - DAY

A few rays of light shine through the windows. David and Skyhawk are awake. They recheck their gear. When they are done, David wakes Sahara.

DAVID

Get up. Put your abaya on. We're leaving immediately.

SAHARA

Okay. I'll wake Jasmine.

David and Skyhawk leave the room.

Sahara gently shakes Jasmine to wake her up.

Sahara and Jasmine quickly put on their abayas and head to the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Skyhawk and David sit at the table.

SKYHAWK

...only 20 minutes to the airport. The plane's already there. The military guards should still be asleep.

DAVID

Okay. Let's roll.

Jasmine, Sahara, David, and Skyhawk grab some food before they leave.

EXT. SKYHAWK'S HOUSE - DAY

The marketplace is coming alive as shopkeepers open up for business.

A black SUV is parked in the alleyway. Skyhawk climbs into the driver's side. David sits up front. Sahara and Jasmine climb into the back.

As Skyhawk turns on the SUV, American hip hop music plays on the radio.

EXT. AIRPORT - DAY

The sun rises as the SUV approaches a small, abandoned airport with two hangers and an administrative building surrounded by a barbed-wire fence. MILITARY GUARDS carry guns as they walk the airfield's perimeter.

Skyhawk pulls up next to the airport gate. Sahara and Jasmine get out. Skyhawk hands David a gun.

SKYHAWK

Don't forget this.

David takes the gun and gets out of the SUV. He puts the gun in the front of his pants.

DAVID

Thanks.

Jasmine sees the gun. She grabs Sahara's hand and tightly squeezes it.

SKYHAWK

Don't do anything stupid!

David grins and nods.

Skyhawk drives off.

David picks up their limited luggage and nods to Sahara and Jasmine.

David, Jasmine, and Sahara slip through the airport gate and make their way to the plane.

An AFGHAN SOLDIER (40s) with a gruff face spots them from his post near the administrative building.

The Afghan Soldier creeps up a few feet behind them. David senses him following them as they weave in and out of the buildings' shadows.

David gives Sahara and Jasmine the luggage and sends them to the plane. He stays behind in the shadows.

He watches the Afghan Soldier follow Jasmine and Sahara to the final building. The Afghan Soldier corners them and waves a gun at them.

AFGHAN SOLDIER

(in Farsi)

Where's the man who was with you?!  
I know he's here!

David, gun in hand, sneaks up behind him. He puts his gun to the Afghan Soldier's head. David takes the Afghan Soldier's gun and puts it in his pants.

DAVID

Go! NOW!

Jasmine and Sahara run for the plane.

David uses a military death chokehold to kill the Afghan Soldier. He slumps to the ground. David pulls his body off to the side.

David walks up to Ian and Tom, who stand by a small corporate jet in an abandoned hanger. Sahara and Jasmine are with them.

IAN

(sarcastic)

Glad you could join us.

DAVID

Had some unexpected business to  
tend to.

Tom grabs the bags from Sahara and Jasmine and boards the plane.

IAN

If you're ready, let's blow this  
joint.

DAVID

After you.

Jasmine hesitates.

SAHARA

(to Jasmine)

It'll be okay. Promise.

Sahara squeezes Jasmine's hand. Together, they board the plane. David and Ian follow behind.

INT. PLANE - DAY

Sahara, Jasmine, and David take their seats. Ian and Tom head to the cockpit. Tom does a quick check before he taxis down the runway.

EXT. PLANE - DAY

Plane quickly takes off. The sky changes colors as the plane ascends.

INT. PLANE - DAY

Jasmine and Sahara remove their abayas. They sit back and relax.

An hour into the air, Ian exits the cockpit and walks over to David.

IAN  
We need to talk.

David opens his eyes.

DAVID  
What's up?

Sahara catches Ian glancing at her and Jasmine. He turns back to David.

IAN  
Not here.

David and Ian go in to the cockpit. Sahara watches them.

INT. COCKPIT - DAY

David's back is to the cabin. Sahara gets up and moves closer. She strains to hear what they're saying.

DAVID  
What's going on?

TOM  
We need to stop off in England to refuel.

DAVID  
O...kay?

IAN

Before we do, check with John that you've got all necessary paperwork to get them in. Government's changing its policy on Arab immigrants and visitors. Sometimes daily.

David glares at Ian.

DAVID

Ian, you're not telling me anything new! It's my job to know this stuff!

Ian puts his hands up defensively.

IAN

Screw you! I'm just trying to help!

Angry, David storms out of the cockpit and heads back to his seat. As he passes Sahara, she stops him.

SAHARA

What's going on?

DAVID

Nothing. Just need to refuel.

SAHARA

David.

DAVID

We'll have a short layover in London.

Sahara jumps out of her seat, startling David.

SAHARA

England? No. We can't! We need to go directly to the US.

Jasmine wakes up. She looks at David and Sahara, confused.

DAVID

Let's talk over there.

David nods to the back of the plane. Sahara follows him.

SAHARA

Why England?

DAVID  
It's the best place to refuel  
without attracting attention.

Sahara eyes at him suspiciously. She doesn't trust him.

SAHARA  
It doesn't take 15 minutes to talk  
about refueling a plane. WHAT ELSE  
is going on?

DAVID  
(snaps)  
Nothing.

Sahara grabs his arm and stares him in the eyes.

SAHARA  
I paid for your services. I demand  
you keep me informed about what's  
going on.

David gets in her face and gives her a hard stare.

DAVID  
I'll tell you what you need to  
know.

David steps back from her.

SAHARA  
We're not going to the US, are we?

DAVID  
I always complete my missions.

Sahara sits down.

SAHARA  
Fine, but not England. They're not  
about to let us in there.

David sits down next to her.

DAVID  
What are you talking about?

SAHARA  
They kicked me out a few days ago.  
Something about my visa. They're not  
about to open the door to me now  
that I'm with an American.

DAVID  
Sahara, there won't be any Customs  
Officers there.

SAHARA  
What do you mean? Where will they  
be?

DAVID  
Don't. Worry. About. It.

They get up and return to their original seats.

SAHARA  
(whispers)  
Thank you Allah for getting us out  
of the country safely. Please keep  
us safe as we go to America.

JASMINE  
(to Sahara)  
What's going on? Everything okay?

SAHARA  
Yes. Just a quick stop in London.

Sahara close her eyes and lean back into her seat. A few  
minutes later, Jasmine does the same.

EXT. SMALL PRIVATE AIRPORT - DAY

The plane lands at a small airport in the middle of the  
country-side. Rolling hills surround the airport.

Only two SECURITY GUARDS are on duty. Customs Officials are  
absent.

Sahara, Jasmine, David, Ian, and Tom exit the plane.

David's friend GEORGE (late-30s), a tall, well-educated and  
well-groomed Brit, waves to them from his perch next to the  
car.

GEORGE  
Good to see you again, David.

DAVID  
You too, George.

The friends pat each other on the back.



GEORGE

Didn't expect to hear from you so soon!

George laughs as he puts the luggage into the car. They all climb in. George gets in the car and drives away.

INT. CAR - DAY

A city neighborhood appears in the distance.

DAVID

Did you make all the arrangements I requested?

GEORGE

Some. Still working on John.

DAVID

Okay. Let me know as soon as you hear from him.

GEORGE

Will do. In the meantime, you'll stay at a nice hostel one of my parents' friends' owns. Her name's Beatrice. She'll take good care of ya. Nothing but the best for a fellow officer.

They pull up in front of a 200-year-old, three-story hostel with a park nearby.

EXT. HOSTEL - DAY

George unloads the car, leads them up to the front door, and rings the bell.

BEATRICE

(Surprised)

George. How good to see you. Welcome, everyone. Come in.

INT. HOSTEL FORAY - DAY

George quickly sets the luggage down in the foray.

GEORGE

Sorry, can't stay. Late for a meeting.

BEATRICE

Okay. Are you stopping by later this week?

GEORGE

Yes. Probably Thursday.

BEATRICE

Good. Cheerio.

George leaves as Beatrice closes the front door.

BEATRICE (cont'd)

Follow me. I'll show you to your room. It's right up this way.

Beatrice leads David, Sahara, and Jasmine up the stairs.

BEATRICE (cont'd)

So, how do you know George?

DAVID

Persian Gulf War.

BEATRICE

He's a good lad. Glad he's out of the service though, especially with Blair and your President talking about invading Iraq. I'd hate for something to happen to him.

EXT./INT. HOSTEL BEDROOM - DAY

Beatrice leads them to a bedroom.

BEATRICE

Here we are.

Beatrice opens the bedroom door and holds out her hand to display the room. Two twin beds fill the room.

BEATRICE (cont'd)

There's clean sheets on each bed. If you need anything else, please let me know.

Jasmine and Sahara look awkwardly at David.

SAHARA

Do you have a second bedroom we could stay in?

BEATRICE  
No. This is the only one suitable  
at the moment.

DAVID  
(snaps)  
It'll do.

Sahara and Jasmine blush as they walk into the room.

BEATRICE  
You're on your own for meals, but  
are welcome to join me for supper  
tonight.

DAVID  
Thanks.

Beatrice heads back downstairs. David closes the door behind her.

Sahara and Jasmine unpack one of the bags.

DAVID (cont'd)  
Don't get too comfortable. We won't  
be here long.

David unpacks the other bag.

DAVID (cont'd)  
(to Jasmine)  
Have you ever been to London?

JASMINE  
No. I've never left the country.  
Sahara used to live here though.

DAVID  
(to Sahara)  
Do you know where Hyde Park is?

SAHARA  
Yes. I went there all the time.

David's cell phone vibrates. He takes it out of his pocket.

A text message from George. David pulls up the message as he walks to the other side of the bedroom for privacy.

ON SCREEN

**Reached John at Embassy. Meet at Kelly's Café - 48 Norfolk Square in 20 minutes. It's 1 block from the hostel.**

ON DAVID

David turns off his phone and walks back over to Jasmine and Sahara.

DAVID  
You need to relax. Go take a walk  
in Hyde Park.

Sahara fidgets.

SAHARA  
Are you coming too?

DAVID  
No. I have to do something else.

SAHARA  
But -

David heads out the door.

DAVID  
Don't wear your abayas. Meet back  
here at 5 pm London time.

Jasmine and Sahara grab some money and leave.

EXT. LONDON STREETS - DAY

Busy autumn day in the city. PEDESTRIANS rush about in every direction. The city's noisy and energized.

David meets up with JOHN (mid-40s), a tall, professor-like American.

DAVID  
Hey, thanks for meeting me.

JOHN  
Anything for a friend. How've you  
been?

INT. KELLY'S CAFÉ - DAY

Kelly's Café is packed. SERVERS hurry back and forth between their tables and the counter.

David and John find one of the few empty tables and sit down.

DAVID  
Need your help with something.

JOHN  
What's up?

A WAITRESS (20s), a perky girl with a negative attitude, sets 2 glasses of water down on the table.

David ignores her.

WAITRESS  
Tea?

John catches David's eye and pretends to stir tea.

JOHN  
Yes.

David nods.

JOHN (cont'd)  
Two please.

Waitress leaves. David and John lean in over the table so as not to shout over the noise.

DAVID  
How's the Patriot Act and new immigration policy impacting Arabs and Muslims seeking asylum, especially Arab women?

John tries to read David, but can't.

JOHN  
That's an odd question. What's up?

David ignores the question.

JOHN (cont'd)  
I thought your job involved helping only American women and children.

DAVID  
It does, but this one's different.

JOHN  
How?

DAVID  
It's complicated.

The Waitress returns with their teas.

JOHN  
Then explain it to me.

The Waitress puts the two tea cups down on the table and leaves.

DAVID

A Persian woman paid me to bring her friend to America. Her friend's husband uses her as a personal punching bag.

John sits back. He looks at David sympathetically. Then leans in again.

JOHN

This is dangerous!

DAVID

I know.

JOHN

You've lost your objectivity!

David becomes enraged.

DAVID

I have not! I see more clearer now than I ever have.

John sits back again for a few minutes, deep in thought. David does the same.

Two minutes later, John leans forward. David does the same.

JOHN

I know you hate Arab men for the way they treat their wives, but -

DAVID

I swear this is only about the money.

John sits back in his seat again and eyes David.

JOHN

Hope you know what you're doing.

DAVID

I do. Trust me -

JOHN

I do, David, but you put me in an awkward spot.

John leans in again to look David in the eyes.

JOHN (cont'd)  
Your actions could really screw up  
our relationship with other  
countries! If that happens, any  
future attempts to bring home  
American and European women and  
kids would be endangered.

David returns John's hard stare.

DAVID  
That's why I'm here. Can you help  
me?

John sits back in his chair.

JOHN  
I don't know. What do you want me  
to do?

DAVID  
I need to get both women into the  
States without the government  
finding out.

John leans in again.

JOHN  
David, you're asking for the moon.

A brief silence.

JOHN (cont'd)  
I can't promise anything,  
but...I'll look into it.

DAVID  
I appreciate it.

JOHN  
Just swear that I won't regret  
this.

DAVID  
You have my word.

John sits back again. He takes a sip of his tea.

DAVID (cont'd)  
How long before you have an answer  
for me?

JOHN

Won't know until I look into it.  
It's more complicated than you  
think. They'll need new passports,  
which takes time.

John leans in.

JOHN (cont'd)

And once they get there, they're  
lives could suck thanks to the  
Patriot Act. They won't have the  
same civil rights Arab Americans  
once had.

David falls back into his seat stunned by what John said.

DAVID

The act only gives the FBI more  
power to capture suspected  
terrorists, which is what we need.

JOHN

Yes, but at the cost of everyone's  
civil rights?

David's stunned by John's harsh criticism.

JOHN (cont'd)

Things changed after the events on  
September 11.

John stands up away from the table. He gets ready to leave.

David stands up to prevent him from leaving.

DAVID

All I know is that Arab women are  
better off in America, where  
they're not beaten at will.

JOHN

Let's meet again on Monday at my  
office.

DAVID

Okay. Monday. Bright and early.

They exit the café.



EXT. HYDE PARK - DAY

Sahara and Jasmine walk arm-in-arm in Hyde Park. Jasmine stops and spins around, taking everything in.

JASMINE

Sahara, it's so beautiful here! I never imagined it'd look anything like this.

SAHARA

I know. The sky's so blue and the leaves are full of color.

JASMINE

Does America look like this?

Sahara stares out at the birds in the park.

SAHARA

Yes.

JASMINE

Remember when we were kids, and you'd tell me stories about America. I always cried whenever you left to go there.

Jasmine sneaks a quick glance at Sahara.

JASMINE (cont'd)

I dreamed about going there one day to get an education and to be someone.

Sahara stares blankly at the trees.

SAHARA

Not anymore.

JASMINE

What are you talking about?

Sahara returns Jasmine's eye-to-eye stare.

SAHARA

Many Arab Americans lost some freedoms after September 11.

JASMINE

Why are you telling me this?

SAHARA

To prepare you for the cold, hard truth. Women still do what they want, but Arab American women's options are more limited now due to national security reasons.

Jasmine's confused and angry.

JASMINE

So if life sucks there now, why go there?!

SAHARA

Because it promises freedom and equality. Unfortunately, America no longer lives up to it's promises. Ignorance and hate exist, but America still offers people freedom.

Jasmine doesn't understand. Sahara puts her arm around Jasmine and gives her a quick hug.

They walk around the park in silence. They stop periodically to watch CHILDREN play, birds congregate, and PERFORMERS give speeches.

As they walk back to the hostel, Sahara notices people glaring at them. She feels uncomfortable.

Sahara grabs Jasmine's arm.

SAHARA (cont'd)

Jasmine, let's go! It's getting late!

They walk back to the hostel.

INT. HOSTEL BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sahara and Jasmine sit down on their beds. David stands in front of them.

DAVID

We need to secure different passports and certain paperwork for each of you before we leave. A friend will try to rush the job, but it'll take time. So we're here for a while.

Sahara eyes him suspiciously.

SAHARA  
How long's a while?

David sits down.

DAVID  
Don't know. A few days or more. In the meantime, start Americanizing yourselves. Read American newspapers and magazines. Buy some western clothes. It'll make your transition to American life easier.

JASMINE  
But our heads must be covered.

DAVID  
Not if you're trying to blend in.

David leaves the room.

INT. HOSTEL DINING ROOM/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Table a few feet away from a couch. Two armchairs on either side of the couch. A television is in the corner of the room in front of the couch.

Sahara and Jasmine clean the table.

David sits down in an armchair, Beatrice on the couch. They watch the BBC.

Sahara and Jasmine join Beatrice on the couch.

NEWS BROADCAST MONTAGE

Snippets of a broadcast on US and British policies regarding visitors and immigrants from the Middle East.

Arab and Muslim families - men, women, children and seniors - surrounded by military men and women who lead them off to unknown locations.

American Hispanic men and boys in Guantanamo Bay. The American government mistook them for Arabs and Muslims.

REPORTER (VO)  
The US Military rounded up more Arabs, Muslims, and even Hispanics in an effort to capture those aiding Al-Qaida. Some were shipped back home.

(MORE)

REPORTER (VO) (CONT'D)

Others now sit in Guantanamo Bay waiting to speak to an attorney. None have been given this opportunity.

END NEWS BROADCAST MONTAGE

David gets up and turns off the television.

Speechless, Beatrice gets up and shakes her head as she leaves the room.

Panic-stricken, Jasmine glares at Sahara and David.

JASMINE

Oh my God! Where are you taking me?! They're monsters!

Sahara goes over and puts her arms around Jasmine's shoulders.

SAHARA

Calm down. It'll be okay.

Jasmine turns to David for confirmation. David leaves the room.

Jasmine sinks down onto the couch again.

EXT./INT. INTERNET CAFÉ - DAY

Sunny, warm autumn day. Streets are busy with SHOPPERS. A skinny, sinister-looking ARAB MAN (40s) with shifty eyes and four SPANIARDS pass Jasmine and Sahara on the street.

The Arab Man stares intently at Jasmine, then the Arab paper he's carrying. A photo of Jasmine is in the paper. The caption below mentions a large award for her return.

ARAB MAN

(in Farsi)

Go ahead. I'll meet you there.

The Spaniards walk on.

The Arab Man crosses the street to find a place to watch Jasmine and Sahara.

The café is very crowded and noisy. The coffee grinders are running full speed. PATRONS laugh and talk loudly.

People type away at computers in the corner and in the back of the café.

Jasmine sits down next to Sahara. Sahara logs onto the internet. Sahara pulls up and reads some bulletin boards and chat rooms geared toward Middle Eastern and Arab women. Jasmine tries to read over her shoulder.

Sahara pulls up a popular chat room Arab women all over the world visit. Postings about a husband looking for his wife are trending. She reads the postings and pulls up the article mentioned.

ON SCREEN

**"...wife of Kareem Amid Abdul, Afghanistan's leading nuclear engineer, recently disappeared. Kareem intends to pursue every lead and use every contact available to him to find his wife..."**

ON SAHARA

Sahara gasps. Jasmine gives her a side-ways glance. Sahara avoids looking at her.

Jasmine continues to read the article.

ON SCREEN

**"...Local Afghan Officials and Military leaders tightened security around the country's borders. Anyone trying to enter or leave the country must submit proper identification and travel approval. Officials intend to also strongly enforce Taliban law forbidding women from traveling without a male blood relative or husband escorting them."**

ON SAHARA

Sahara leans back in her chair, away from the monitor.

JASMINE

Are you okay? What's going on?

Jasmine glances at the monitor, and quickly scans the end of the article as Sahara closes it.

SAHARA

Nothing. Don't worry about it.

JASMINE

Who are they talking about?

SAHARA

I don't know! Just some stupid article.

Jasmine doesn't believe Sahara. Sahara ignores her.

SAHARA (cont'd)  
Want me to teach you how to use the internet?

JASMINE  
(snotty)  
I know how to use the internet.

SAHARA  
Okay. Let's switch.

Jasmine and Sahara switch seats.

SAHARA (cont'd)  
Hey, look up what life's like for immigrants to America.

Jasmine types in 'America' and 'immigration' into Google.com and hits enter.

SAHARA (cont'd)  
Maybe we'll find organizations that'll help us once we get there.

Thousands of results come back. Sahara points to the first result.

SAHARA (cont'd)  
Let's check out that one.

Jasmine double clicks on it. The inscription on the Statute of Liberty pops up.

JASMINE  
What's that?

Sahara leans in closer to the monitor.

SAHARA  
It's part of the Statute of Liberty's inscription.

JASMINE  
What's it say?

ON SCREEN

**"Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breath free..."**

ON SAHARA

Sahara sits back in her chair. Jasmine jumps around in her chair.

JASMINE (cont'd)  
They're talking about us...yearning  
to breath free.

SAHARA  
Yeah. The US was created on that  
motto. Immigrants all over the  
world were invited to live there.

Sahara leans in again to see the time on the bottom of the  
monitor.

ON SCREEN

**6:30 pm British time**

ON SAHARA

SAHARA (cont'd)  
Wow. It's getting late! We better  
head back to the hostel.

Sahara and Jasmine gather their belongings and leave the  
café.

EXT. STREETS OF LONDON - NIGHT

Jasmine and Sahara leave the café. The Arab Man crosses the  
street to tail them. He bumps into Jasmine and drops his  
paper. It falls to the ground face up with Jasmine's photo  
showing. The Arab Man tries to pass them.

Jasmine and the Arab Man bend down to pick up the paper.  
Jasmine reaches for it.

ARAB MAN  
(whispers in Farsi)  
I've got it.

Jasmine smiles weakly as she and the Arab Man stare eye-to-  
eye. The Arab Man picks up the paper. They both stand up.

Jasmine and Sahara head back to the hostel. The Arab Man  
walks in the opposite direction.

Jasmine glances back at the Arab Man. His back is to her.

JASMINE  
(in Farsi)  
Sahara, that guy spoke Farsi, and I  
swear he followed us. What if -

SAHARA

Now who's the paranoid one. Stop  
worrying. You're safe now. Promise.  
I will always protect you.

The Arab Man pulls out his cell phone out from his pocket and  
dials Kareem's phone number.

ARAB MAN

(in Farsi)  
I found her.

INT. KAREEM'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Kareem's on the phone. He gives a sinister smile.

KAREEM

(in Farsi)  
Good.

INT. HOSTEL DINING ROOM/LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Dark and quiet. One light on. A glare from the television.  
David's the only one there.

David gets up out of a chair and turns off the television.

Sahara and Jasmine walk in. David hears them talking about  
something, but can't make out what they're saying.

They come into the living room.

DAVID

How was your day?

SAHARA

Fine.

DAVID

Really? Where'd you go?

SAHARA

Why are you questioning us?

David's surprised by Sahara's attitude.

DAVID

Don't get bitchy with me.

Jasmine takes off her abaya. They all sit down and relax.



JASMINE

We went to an Internet café. It's amazing. You can get all kinds of information, and none of it's censored.

David grins.

DAVID

Find anything interesting?

JASMINE

Some Persian man looking for his wife.

David immediately sits up.

DAVID

Sorry. What was that?

JASMINE

An article in an Arab newspaper about a Persian man looking for his wife. At first I thought it was about me...

David's nervous, but tries not to show it.

JASMINE (cont'd)

But Sahara said it was about someone else.

David quickly glances at Sahara. She lowers her head to avoid eye contact with him.

DAVID

I'm sure she's right.

Sahara lowers her head even further.

DAVID (cont'd)

It's just a coincidence.

Jasmine gets up and leaves the room.

SAHARA

It's about her.

DAVID

Shoot! How did this happen?

SAHARA  
(sarcastically)  
She's the wife of the country's top  
nuclear engineer.

DAVID  
Crap. You should have told me this  
in the beginning.

David paces the room.

SAHARA  
It wasn't pertinent to the mission.

David stops pacing.

SAHARA (cont'd)  
What are we going to do?

David gets in her face.

DAVID  
Nothing! I'll take care of it!

David grabs his coat and heads to the front door.

SLAM.

EXT. LONDON STREET - NIGHT

Very light foot traffic out on the streets. People head to the pub at the end of the street. The street lights are on and loud noises come from the pub.

David strolls down the street, deep in thought.

INT. PUB - NIGHT

David strolls into the pub and makes his way to the bar, weaving his way around drunk PATRONS out celebrating the latest football (soccer) match.

The BAR TENDER (20s), a cocky Irish man who hates tourists, fills orders. BAR PATRONS laugh and shout.

David sits down at the counter and sees CNN on the television above the bar.

BAR TENDER  
What'll you have?

David glances at the Bar Tender.

DAVID

Coors.

BAR TENDER

American import. Figures.

David gives the Bar Tender a menacing look. The Bar Tender pours the beer from the tap and slams the beer mug down in front of him. He picks it up and drinks it.

A news report come on. David watches it.

ON SCREEN

**"Spanish authorities arrested members of a suspected terrorist cell today. Among those arrested was the cell's leader Shadid Mohammed. In other news, Shirak Ali, the man falsely arrested..."**

ON DAVID

David holds his beer mug in mid air as he watches the rest of the news report.

ON SCREEN

**"...and detained by the American government..."**

ON DAVID

David sets the beer mug down and rushes out of the pub.

INT. HOSTEL DINING ROOM/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jasmine and Sahara sit on the couch talking.

DAVID

Do you have a current photo of Kareem with you?

Sahara storms out.

JASMINE

I don't know. Why?

David glares at her.

JASMINE

I'll go see.

Jasmine gets up and heads to the stairs. David follows her.

INT. HOSTEL BEDROOM - NIGHT

It's quiet and dark.

Jasmine feels her way over to her bed and finds her purse.

David turns on the lights.

She pulls out her wallet and rummages around for a photo.  
Nothing.

She pulls out various items and shoves them back in too.

JASMINE

Here it is. No. Maybe this is it.  
No.

David gets impatient.

JASMINE (cont'd)

Aha. Here it is.

Jasmine hands David a photo of an angry-looking man with dark eyes and dark, scruffy-looking hair. He is tall and muscular.

DAVID

Thanks.

David searches the end table by the beds for a pen and paper.  
Nothing.

DAVID (cont'd)

Do you have a pen and paper?

Jasmine hands him a memo pad and pen from her purse. David writes down all the information.

DAVID (cont'd)

How old is he?

JASMINE

Why? What's going on?

David glares at her.

JASMINE (cont'd)

Thirty-five.

DAVID

Height and weight?

JASMINE

In kilograms?

DAVID  
(snaps back)  
No. Feet and inches.

JASMINE  
I don't know. I've got to convert  
it.

Jasmine grabs the paper and pen from David and writes out the calculation.

JASMINE (cont'd)  
Six feet, four inches and weighs  
one hundred eighty pounds.

Jasmine hands the pen and paper back to David.

JASMINE (cont'd)  
David, please tell me what's  
happening.

DAVID  
Nothing. Just buying some time in  
case anyone's looking for you.

Jasmine's shocked.

JASMINE  
That story was about me!

Jasmine drops down onto her bed. David looks at her.

DAVID  
No! Just normal procedure.

Jasmine doesn't believe him, but drops the issue.

DAVID (cont'd)  
Just a few more questions.

Jasmine, still in shock, nods her head.

DAVID (cont'd)  
His legal name?

JASMINE  
Kareem Amid Abdul.

DAVID  
Where'd he go to school?

JASMINE  
Oxford.

DAVID  
Okay, thanks.

Jasmine watches David rush out.

INT. OFFICE STORE - NIGHT

Dave weaves through STORE PATRONS busily typing away at the computers.

The STORE CLERK (20), a geeky Brit with wired frame glasses, approaches him.

STORE CLERK  
Good evening sir, can I help you?

DAVID  
No thanks. I'm fine.

David rushes to a vacant computer, sits down, and scans in Kareem's photo. He creates a Most Wanted flyer. When done, he sits back and reads over the flyer.

ON FLYER

**"The above individual specializes in transferring funds worldwide in support of terrorist activities and is wanted for questioning by the FBI and Interpol. He's known to be based in Afghanistan, but travels frequently throughout Europe and Asia. Suspect travels under the alias of Kareem Amid Abdul. SHOULD BE CONSIDERED ARMED AND DANGEROUS. IF YOU HAVE ANY INFORMATION CONCERNING THIS PERSON, PLEASE CONTACT INTERPOL, YOUR LOCAL FBI OFFICE OR THE NEAREST AMERICAN EMBASSY OR CONSULATE."**

ON DAVID

David prints the flyer, grabs it, and leaves.

INT. U.S. EMBASSY - DAY

David breezes past the AMERICAN SOLDIERS standing at attention at the embassy's front doors.

A Midwestern, stone-faced SECURITY GUARD (20s) at the front desk stops him.

SECURITY GUARD  
Can I help you sir?

DAVID  
I'm here to see the Ambassador,  
John Sullivan. He's expecting me.

SECURITY GUARD  
Your name?

DAVID  
Former Captain David McHale.

The Security Guard picks up the phone to confirm the appointment with John's office.

David drums his fingers on the front desk.

The Security Guard hangs up the phone.

SECURITY GUARD  
Go right ahead, sir.

David takes the elevator to the third floor. When he gets out, SECURITY GUARD #2 stops him.

SECURITY GUARD #2  
Can I help you, sir?

DAVID  
Which way to the check-in desk?

SECURITY GUARD  
Straight ahead at the end of the  
hall.

DAVID  
Thanks.

A vibrant FEMALE MARINE (20s) dressed in uniform sits behind the check-in desk.

FEMALE MARINE  
May I help you, sir?

DAVID  
The Ambassador's office?

FEMALE MARINE  
Up the stairs, to the left. Last  
door on your right at the end of  
the hallway.

David nods and heads up the stairs. He sees a large, dark wood door with a gold plate.

ON SCREEN

**Ambassador**

ON DAVID

He turns the knob.

INT. AMBASSADOR'S OFFICE - DAY

The embassy's office is spacious with a lot of sunlight and sophisticated decor. Paintings depicting the early days of America hang on walls.

John's staff is limited - just him and his perky British secretary, AMELIA (mid-20s).

John and Amelia are in the midst of a discussion when David approaches. John glances at the clock on the wall behind David.

JOHN

Wasn't sure you were still coming.  
Let's go in my office.

INT. JOHN'S OFFICE - DAY

David and John go into John's office.

The office decor is more of a library than an embassy. A large wooden desk and padded chairs are in front of the only window in the room. A couch is positioned in between two built-in book shelves. Photos, books, and awards cover every shelf and counter top.

John peaks his head out the door.

JOHN (cont'd)

Amelia, hold all my calls, please.

He shuts the door.

They make their way to the desk - John takes his coveted seat and David sits across from him.

DAVID

John, thanks again for helping me.

JOHN

The least I can do given all you've done for us. I've got some good news and some bad news.



DAVID  
Okay, before we discuss that  
though, can I borrow your fax  
machine?

JOHN  
Why?

DAVID  
I need to fax a flyer to Interpol.

JOHN  
What flyer?

David hands John the flyer.

He quickly scans it and tosses it on his desk.

JOHN (cont'd)  
Who's this man?

DAVID  
The woman's husband. He's trying to  
kill her.

John glances down at the flyer again.

JOHN  
That doesn't make him a terrorist.  
A potential murderer, yes. A  
terrorist, no.

DAVID  
Semantics.

JOHN  
Semantics?! This is serious, David!  
You're talking about falsely  
accusing someone of a crime  
punishable by death.

DAVID  
I need extra time to get her into  
the US alive. Besides, when did we  
start caring about Arab murderers?

John picks up the flyer again, stands up, and paces the floor  
behind his desk. He turns his back to David.

David spots his keys on the desk. He picks up the keys and  
pockets them before John turns around.

John throws the flyer onto his desk. David grabs the flyer.

They sit back down.

JOHN

I can't let you do this. There could be serious repercussions for our relationships with Arab leaders. Not to mention a PR disaster.

DAVID

Fine.

David sits back in his chair.

DAVID (cont'd)

What's this news you've got for me?

JOHN

I secured the documents you need.

EXT. US EMBASSY - NIGHT

Dark. One SECURITY GUARD roams the floor.

David sneaks into John's office and heads to the fax machine. He pulls the flyer and piece of paper with Interpol's fax number on it out of his pocket.

David puts the flyer into the fax machine and punches in the numbers. The flyer goes through. The machine prints out a report. David grabs both the flyer and report and leaves.

INT. HOSTEL FORAY - NIGHT [NEXT NIGHT]

David can't stop pacing and checking his phone.

Sahara and Jasmine walk in with several shopping bags. They run into David at the front door.

DAVID

Finally. Go pack. We're leaving tonight.

Sahara and Jasmine hurry upstairs.

INT. HOSTEL BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jasmine and Sahara dig through shopping bags and pull out low rise jeans, tight t-shirts, and sweaters. They change into their new clothes, throw away their abayas, and pack.

JASMINE  
America, here we come!

Sahara grins.

JASMINE (cont'd)  
A brand new life. I can't wait!

SAHARA  
And freedom to do as you please  
rather than taking orders!

Jasmine and Sahara throw their new clothes into their luggage and head downstairs.

EXT. HOSTEL - NIGHT

George stands out on the street next to a car. Jasmine and Sahara set their luggage down and climb into the back. David goes around to the passenger's side of the car.

DAVID  
Let's move.

George picks up the luggage and puts it in the trunk. He climbs into the driver's seat and pulls away.

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

Jasmine wakes Sahara up as the plane descends.

JASMINE  
Praise Allah! We made it! We're in  
America!

Sahara yawns and leans over Jasmine to look out the window.

SAHARA  
Wow. I forgot how beautiful it is.

JASMINE  
Pinch me. I can't believe I'm  
really here. I can finally live out  
my dreams.

SAHARA  
Hopefully. You have the power to do  
whatever your heart desires.

The plane lands on the ground of a military airport with a hard thump.

INT. AIRPORT - DAY

David leads them over to Customs where his friend, SGT SEAN MCHALE (late-30s), a tall, Midwestern man stands.

David hands Sean Jasmine's and Sahara's passports and visas. Sean compares the women to the photos on the passports and visas. He waves them through.

EXT. AIRPORT PARKING LOT - DAY

The airport parking lot's packed. MILITARY MEN and WOMEN in uniform and their FAMILIES flow in and out of the terminal. The sun's shining and it's a cool, fall day.

David hails a cab. A cab stops. David approaches the cab driver.

DAVID  
Going to D.C.?

David motions to Sahara and Jasmine.

Cab drives on.

Sahara and Jasmine stand next to David. He tries to hail a second cab.

Cab pulls up. Cab driver eyes Sahara and Jasmine and drives off.

David curses and throws his hands up in the air. He tries to hail a third cab.

DAVID (cont'd)  
Can you take us to Union Station?

CAB DRIVER #3  
Yes. Get in.

As they climb in, Jasmine notices the cab driver's Muslim. She squeeze's Sahara's hand.

JASMINE  
(whispers)  
Please, don't let him recognize me.

Sahara and Jasmine get comfortable in the back seat while David sits in front with the Cab Driver #3. Cab Driver #3 glares at Sahara and Jasmine from the rearview mirror.

CAB DRIVER #3

(Farsi)

You shouldn't be here. Go home.

Jasmine grabs Sahara's hand and squeeze it.

DAVID

Drive.

Cab drives away.

EXT./INT. UNION STATION, WASHINGTON DC - DAY

Downtown Washington DC. Buses and cabs line up outside the station to drop off and pick up RIDERS. TRAVELERS, COMMUTERS, and LOCALS rush in and out of the station.

Cab Driver #3 pulls over in front of the station and lets them out.

David leads Jasmine and Sahara into Union Station. It's crowded and noisy as train departures and arrivals are announced.

David buys two tickets for the next train to New York City. He hands Sahara and Jasmine the tickets, and escorts them to the train.

DAVID

This is where we say goodbye.

SAHARA

Thank you, David.

DAVID

If you need anything, you know how to get a hold of me.

Sahara and Jasmine board the train.

EXT. NYC GRAND CENTRAL STATION - DAY [LATER]

Jasmine and Sahara emerge from the station two hours later. Jasmine's immediately awe-struck by the city's sights and sounds. NEW YORKERS rush about and traffic's heavy.

JASMINE

Wow, it's amazing! I've never seen so many people in one location!

SAHARA

The beauty of New York City. The one place where you'll find almost every nation represented. A true melting pot.

Sahara tries to hail a cab. After several attempts, one stops. Sahara and Jasmine get in.

NYC CAB DRIVER

Where to?

SAHARA

The Arab American Family Support Center in Brooklyn.

EXT./INT. ARAB AMERICAN FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER - DAY

NYC Cab Driver lets them off in front of a large high-rise. They get out, grab their luggage, and take in their surroundings. They notice it is in an Arab community.

The center is packed. Most seats are taken. Several loud conversations in Farsi, Arabic, and English are happening in the room.

Sahara approaches an energetic female SECRETARY (early-20s) at the front desk. Jasmine strolls around the room.

SAHARA

I was told you could help me. I just arrived a few hours ago, and need help finding housing.

SECRETARY

Okay. Have a seat over there. Someone will be with you in a moment.

Sahara finds an open seat in a corner. She sets their luggage down and sits. Jasmine joins her. They don't sit long before KIRA MIR (40s), a conservatively dressed Case Worker, approaches them.

Sahara and Jasmine stand up. The three women shake hands.

KIRA MIR

Welcome to your new home. I hear you just arrived and need our services.

SAHARA

Yes.

KIRA MIR

Well, let's go in my office and talk about the services we offer.

They grab their luggage and follow Kira down a long hallway.

INT. KIRA'S OFFICE - DAY

They walk into a spacious office. The windows offer a view of the city's high-rises.

Sahara and Jasmine put their luggage down by the door and sit down. Kira closes the door before sitting down at her desk.

KIRA MIR

Let's start with the basics. Do you have a job and housing yet?

SAHARA

No. This was a last minute decision.

KIRA MIR

Do you have a work visa?

SAHARA

I have one, but she doesn't.

KIRA MIR

(to Sahara)

Okay. And what kind of work have you done before?

SAHARA

I taught political science at a college in London.

KIRA MIR

Honestly, I'm not sure if we'll be able to help you find similar work here. At the same time, never say never. Let me see what I can do.

Kira pulls up some information on her computer. She writes down an address on a piece of paper.

KIRA MIR (cont'd)

First, though, let's take care of your housing issue. There's a place a few blocks away that opens its doors to recent immigrants.

JASMINE

How much does it cost?

KIRA MIR

Nothing. We give them a grant to cover their costs.

Kira stands up and grabs her coat from the back of her door.

KIRA MIR (cont'd)

I'll take you over there now so you can get settled. Come back tomorrow so we can help you find a job.

Sahara and Jasmine grab their luggage. The three women exit.

INT. STUDIO APARTMENT - NIGHT [TWO WEEKS LATER]

Cold, damp night. Pelting rain and lightning shake the windows.

The apartment is minimally furnished - two twin beds, a broken lamp, refrigerator, and phone. The bathroom mirror is broke, but at least the toilet works. Each bed has two thin blankets.

Jasmine and Sahara sit on the floor surrounded by newspapers. Sahara scans the Want Ads in one of the papers.

SAHARA

We need to find jobs soon.

JASMINE

Maybe you can teach at one of the colleges around here.

SAHARA

I don't know.

JASMINE

It's worth a try.

Jasmine picks up one of the papers and scans it.

JASMINE (cont'd)

Now...what about me? A secretary?

Sahara looks at her.

SAHARA

Not without a work visa. Let's talk to Kira about it again tomorrow.



They put the papers down and go to bed.

INT. KIRA'S OFFICE - DAY

Sahara and Jasmine arrive ten minutes early for their appointment with Kira.

They see the open computers in the corner and make a beeline for them. They log on and each searches job postings. They print out some potential opportunities.

KIRA MIR

Hi Jasmine and Sahara. Great to see you again. Ready to meet?

They close out of their job searches and follow Kira back to her office.

KIRA MIR (cont'd)

How's the job search going?

SAHARA

Not so well. I can't colleges to call me back.

JASMINE

And I still don't have a work visa.

KIRA MIR

Unfortunately, only an employer can offer you a work visa. So, what are you doing for money right now?

SAHARA

We're living on my savings, but it won't last much longer.

KIRA MIR

I may have something. One of our clients runs a news stand in your neighborhood. They are looking for someone to manage it. It doesn't pay much, but it's something. Would you be interested?

SAHARA

Yes. Thank you.

KIRA MIR

Okay. Here's the information.

Kira gets up to grab a flyer with the job ad on it from her inbox by the door. She hands the flyer to Sahara.

KIRA MIR (cont'd)  
 Take a look at the job ad. The  
 address is printed on it. Stop by  
 the news stand and introduce  
 yourself to the owner.

SAHARA  
 Thanks. We'll do so today.

INT. SENATE HEARING ROOM - NIGHT [MONTHS LATER]

David sits in a closed committee hearing with five Senators from the Foreign Affairs Senate Committee. It's late, and the room's dimly lit.

Two representatives from the Homeland Security Office (HSO) testify before the committee.

Two female and three male SENATORS sit at a crescent-shaped panel bench in the back of the room. They're all in their late-40s or early-50s and have served for a number of terms.

The HSO Representatives, HSO #1 (30s) and HSO #2 (late-30s/early-40s), sit at a wooden desk in front of the Senators.

HSO #1's a well-educated man who joined the agency straight out of college. HSO #2 has extensive experience in the Navy. Normally the two don't get along given their different backgrounds.

HSO #1 and HSO #2 answer questions about the terrorist watch list.

David sits in the back of the room. He is there with several SENATE AIDES on behalf of their bosses.

SENATOR #1  
 How many people on this list do we currently have in our custody?

HSO #1  
 One-third, but we're making headway every day.

SENATOR #2  
 Headway? It doesn't sound like it to me.

HSO #2

We recently expanded the list to include families and friends of those on the list. It'll help us find them quicker.

SENATOR #1

How useful is this tactic?

HSO #1

We've already located Afghanistan's top nuclear engineer's wife, Jasmine Amid Abdul.

David drops his notebook. He scans the room to see if anyone noticed. Everyone's preoccupied with the Senators and the HSOs. David picks up the notebook, scans the room again, and leaves.

EXT. NYC NEWSPAPER STAND - DAY

Arabic neighborhood. Arabic and Farsi signs and shop names appear everywhere. A mosque is in the distance.

Jasmine and Sahara prep the news stand for business. Sahara spots something written on the back wall.

ON SCREEN

**TERRORIST**

ON SAHARA

She pulls out a bucket from inside the stand and fills it. She scrubs the paint off the wall.

Two cops - BILL, a middle-aged African American cop, and his female partner, SAM (30), a vibrant yet tough newbie - pass by on their patrol. Sahara stops them

SAHARA

Is there anything you can do to stop this? This is the fourth time this month.

BILL

We can check the street cameras, but that's about it.

SAHARA

Aren't you supposed to help protect the community?

SAM

Everyone has a right to free  
speech.

Sahara scowls while she continues to scrub the paint off.

The Cops move on.

Jasmine comes around back.

JASMINE

So what did they say? Will they  
help us stop this harassment?

SAHARA

No. They don't seem to interested  
in helping us.

EXT. NYC NEWSPAPER STAND - NIGHT [LATER SAME DAY]

Sahara holds the Koran. She finishes praying.

Jasmine closes down the stand.

JASMINE

Sahara, hurry up! It's late! I want  
to go home!

A box with Arabic writing sits on top of the stand. Sahara  
opens it and puts the Koran inside.

SAHARA

I'm ready.

BILL and Sam stand nearby, watching her.

Sahara puts the box on a shelf underneath the stand. She sees  
two more cops - JOE, a young Hispanic and TONY, a middle-aged  
bigot - park their squad car next to Bill's and Sam's car.  
They meet up with Bill and Sam.

A young Muslim family - MOM, DAD and SON - head toward the  
stand. Neither the Mom nor the Dad speak English. The Son  
(12) translates for them.

The cops approach the family. Tony barks some questions at  
the Dad. The Son tries to translate, which irks Tony.

Tony grabs the Dad. Joe and Tony take the Dad a few feet away  
from the family to question him further.

Bill and Sam try to detain the Mom and Son just as Joe turns the Dad around to arrest him. The Son sees this and runs up to Joe. He hits Joe repeatedly.

SON  
Let go of him! Please! Don't take  
him away!

The Mom tries to run to the Dad. Sam forcibly restrains her.

MOM  
(in Farsi)  
Please don't take him!

Sahara snarls and her nostrils flare. She runs up to Sam and pushes her.

SAHARA  
Let go of her!

Bill grabs Sahara and pulls her off Sam.

BILL  
Stay out of it! If you don't,  
you're going in too!

Sahara spits at him.

SAHARA  
(in Farsi)  
Bigot!

Bill arrests Sahara.

BILL  
That's it! I'm taking you in! Let's  
see how you like jail!

Tony and Joe arrest the Dad and put him in one of the squad cars. Sam leads the Mom and Son to the other car as Bill puts Sahara in the same car as the Dad.

Jasmine rushes up to Bill.

JASMINE  
Wait! Please, let her go.

BILL  
You can pick her up at the station  
downtown after she's booked and  
processed.

JASMINE  
But -

BILL

I'm sorry. You'd better bring bail money.

Bill gets into the squad car.

The squad cars drive away.

EXT. NYC POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Tall, dark police station. Dimly lit. Gargoyles come out of the front door. Jasmine walks up the steps.

INT. AFGHAN POLICE STATION - DAY [FLASHBACK]

Jasmine is bruised and battered. She winces in pain as she walks into an Afghan police station. POLICE OFFICERS, STAFF, and CRIMINALS watch her every move.

She approaches a sadistic-looking MALE COP sitting at the front desk. He is busy with paperwork. She stares at him. He peers at her with steely eyes.

JASMINE

I'd like to make a complaint.

MALE COP

(laughs)

Really?! Only men can make complaints.

JASMINE

Please, sir. I need your help. My husband beats me.

MALE COP

Yeah...if you were my wife, and I found out you were here, I'd do a lot more to you. Go home and don't bother us again.

Jasmine bites her tongue and clenches her fist, holding back her anger. She shoots the Male Officer a death stare.

He continues with his work. She slowly turns around. The pain is unbearable. She winces with each step she takes out of the station.

EXT. NYC POLICE STATION - NIGHT [PRESENT DAY]

Jasmine slowly climbs the stairs to the station.

INT. SENATOR CALLAHAN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Distinguished office with wood panels, a wooden desk, two luxurious armchairs in front of the desk, and a black leather swivel chair behind the desk.

SENATOR CALLAHAN, stands behind the desk talking on the phone, his back to the door. Callahan is a grandfatherly-looking political insider married to his job. He'll remain in office until he dies.

David coughs as he peeks in. Senator Callahan turns around. He waves to David come in and points to one of the armchairs.

David walks in and sits down.

Senator Callahan hangs up the phone.

SENATOR CALLAHAN  
How'd the hearing go?

David's face drops.

SENATOR CALLAHAN (cont'd)  
That well, huh. Anything I should know?

David debates whether or not to answer.

DAVID  
There's a problem with two of the names on the list.

Senator Callahan sits down.

SENATOR CALLAHAN  
Yeah? Who?

DAVID  
Kareem Amid Abdul and his wife, Jasmine.

SENATOR CALLAHAN  
What about them? He's a major terrorist, right?

David folds his hands in his lap.

DAVID  
Depends on who you ask.

Senator Callahan leans forward, putting his elbows on his desk. He eyes David with concern.

SENATOR CALLAHAN

David, you're not making any sense.  
What's going on? What aren't you  
telling me?

David gets up and paces behind the two armchairs.

DAVID

Kareem's a first rate sadistic  
criminal who enjoys torturing his  
wife. He's connected to top Afghani  
political and military officials,  
but...

SENATOR CALLAHAN

But what?

DAVID

But he's not a confirmed terrorist.

SENATOR CALLAHAN

What?! You just said he's on the  
list!

David sits back down.

David debates with himself what to say next.

DAVID

He's only on it because I put him  
there.

Senator Callahan briefly sits back in his chair, folds his  
hands on his desk, and looks squarely at David. He then  
stands up, stares David in the eyes, and explodes.

SENATOR CALLAHAN

You did WHAT?!

DAVID

I -

Senator Callahan nervously paces about the room.

SENATOR CALLAHAN

You better have a great explanation  
for this! Do you understand what  
you've done?!

David stands up.

DAVID

Sir, he -



Senator Callahan turns and points to David.

SENATOR CALLAHAN  
If this s\*\*\* hits the fan -

Senator Callahan sinks down into his chair. David sits too.

DAVID  
No one will ever know.

Senator Callahan doesn't hear David.

SENATOR CALLAHAN  
How could you do this to me? My  
career -

DAVID  
It happened before I joined your  
office.

David leans in on the desk.

DAVID (cont'd)  
I was hired to get a Persian woman  
out of Afghanistan. She ended up  
being the wife of the country's top  
nuclear engineer. Now the Homeland  
Security guys are trying to track  
her down.

SENATOR CALLAHAN  
So you did it for money?

DAVID  
No!

BEAT.

SENATOR CALLAHAN  
Where's she now?

INT. NYC POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Loud, noisy police station. COPS lead ARRESTED people in and out of holding. Some people scream for their lawyers. Others sit at desks talking to cops.

Jasmine approaches a big, BURLY COP at the front desk. The Burly Cop peers over the desk at her.

BURLY COP  
Can I help you?

JASMINE  
 (half-whisper)  
 I'm here to get my friend out. She  
 was just brought in.

BURLY COP  
 Was she booked and processed yet?

JASMINE  
 What?

BURLY COP  
 She won't be released until she  
 answers some questions.

JASMINE  
 How long will that take?

BURLY COP  
 Can't say. Name?

JASMINE  
 (flustered)  
 Jasmine Amid Abdul.

The Burly Cop types Jasmine's name into the computer and hits  
 enter.

ON SCREEN

**Jasmine Amid Abdul**

ON BURLY COP

The Burly Cop double clicks her name to retrieve the file.

JASMINE (cont'd)  
 I'm sorry -

The Burly Cop looks up.

BURLY COP  
 Excuse me?

JASMINE  
 I gave you the wrong name. Her  
 name's Sahara Ashani.

The Burly Cop writes Sahara's name down.

INT. SENATOR CALLAHAN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

David and Senator Callahan stand up and lean on the desk between them. They stare each other squarely in the eyes.

SENATOR CALLAHAN  
So, you slept with her.

David flinches.

DAVID  
(quivering)  
NO!

Senator Callahan briefly looks away.

SENATOR CALLAHAN  
So how do we take care of this problem?

DAVID  
Have any pull with the Homeland Security boys that we could negotiate with them?

Senator Callahan stares him in the eyes.

SENATOR CALLAHAN  
What?!

DAVID  
If I tell them possible places to find Kareem, maybe they can secure permanent US citizenship for his wife and her friend.

Senator Callahan gets in David's face.

SENATOR CALLAHAN  
You've lost your mind! Do you know what this could do to me?!

DAVID  
Hear me out. If they capture him, you'll look like a hero -

SENATOR CALLAHAN  
And if they don't?

David sits down. Senator Callahan does the same.

David leans in on the desk.

DAVID  
Then I'll fall on the sword.

Senator Callahan folds his hands and puts them to his lips .  
He mulls over what David just said.

SENATOR CALLAHAN

Call the Homeland Security wonks  
tonight and set up a meeting for  
tomorrow! I want this situation  
over now!

David pulls out a cell phone and dials.

INT. NYC POLICE STATION - NIGHT

The Burly Cop's waiting for Jasmine's file to come up. His  
computer's slow. He keeps glancing at the screen.

BURLY COP

Look miss there's nothing I can do  
until she's booked and processed.

JASMINE

I'm not leaving here without her.

BURLY COP

Fine. Have a seat over there.

The Burly Cop points to a row of seats up against the wall  
across from his desk.

Jasmine heads to the chairs.

EXT. KAREEM'S HOUSE - DAY

SUPER: Kabul, Afghanistan

Ten US MARINES with guns drawn arrive at Kareem's house. They  
scope out the area and monitor the house. Once secure, they  
quietly move in on the house.

INT. KAREEM'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Kareem stands in the living room with five of the top AFGHAN  
POLITICAL and MILITARY OFFICIALS. The window shades are  
pulled back. The men talk and laugh.

INTERCUT KAREEM'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM

US Marines advance toward the house. They break down the  
front door.

US Marines gather up Kareem and the Political and Military Officials. They tie blindfolds onto the men's eyes and march them out of the house. They put them into two trucks.

The COMMANDER (mid-30s) reaches for his walkie talkie.

COMMANDER  
Mission complete.

The Commander climbs into the lead truck.

Trucks drive away.

CUT TO:

INT. NEW YORK POLICE STATION - NIGHT

ON SCREEN

**Something blinks. The Burly Cop looks at the monitor. The file on the screen shows Jasmine's been awarded US citizenship as of that day.**

ON BURLY COP

BURLY COP  
Great. All that for nothing.

JASMINE  
How long does it take -

The Burly Cop looks at her.

BURLY COP  
I'm sorry. What'd you say?

JASMINE  
How long before she'll be released?

The Burly Cop punches in Sahara's name into the computer.

The Burly Cop clicks on her name. Sahara's file comes up.

ON SCREEN

**Release once bail posted.**

ON BURLY COP

BURLY COP  
Looks like they've finished processing her. Bail is \$150.

Jasmine pulls out her wallet from her purse and digs around for some cash. She finds \$150 and gives it to the Burly Cop. He makes the call to have Sahara released.

INT. JASMINE'S AND SAHARA'S STUDIO - NIGHT

Jasmine and Sahara trudge in and drop their bags by the door.

Jasmine makes her way to the kitchen.

Sahara goes over to her laptop on the table. She sits down, opens it up, and signs on. She has an email message from David. She pulls it up.

ON SCREEN

**As of today, you are both now US citizens. Congratulations!**

ON SAHARA

Sahara jumps up and runs into the kitchen.

INT. JASMINE'S AND SAHARA'S KITCHEN

Jasmine stands over a pot stirring the boiling water. A box of rice and some vegetables sit next to the stove.

Sahara runs over to Jasmine.

SAHARA

Jasmine, we did it. We're now US citizens!

Jasmine puts the spoon down and hugs Sahara.

INT. UN HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICE - DAY

SUPER: Two Years Later

Jasmine carries a shopping bag as she walks down a hallway. She passes a sign that greets visitors to the office. It reads United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Jasmine passes her secretary, ANNA (20s), on her way to her office.

Anna's head jerks up. She follows Jasmine.

INT. JASMINE'S OFFICE - DAY

Jasmine's office is lightly decorated with women's art work and photos from the Middle East and of her and Sahara. It makes her medium-sized, one window office feel like home.

Jasmine walks over to her desk and sets the shopping bag down. She sits down.

ANNA hands her a letter.

ANNA

Hey, great to have you back!  
Good to see you're alive.  
How was it?

JASMINE

Depressing, but very educational. I just wish we could have done more for them. The abuse those women and children experience is gruesome.

ANNA

It seems there's always something more we could do.

JASMINE

You're right.

ANNA

Hey, this letter came while you were gone. I read it and thought you should really answer it yourself.

JASMINE

Okay. Just leave it here. I'll look at it after I check my email. Thanks for all you did while I was gone.

Jasmine pulls out a beautiful African mask from the shopping bag.

JASMINE (cont'd)

I got this for you while I was there. Hope you like it.

Jasmine hands Anna the mask. Anna carefully inspects it.

ANNA

Thanks! It's gorgeous.

JASMINE  
Glad you like it.

Anna leaves with the mask.

Jasmine sits down at her computer and pulls up her emails.

ON SCREEN

**100+ emails**

ON JASMINE

She stares at the monitor and glances at the letter sitting on her desk.

Jasmine picks up the letter and reads it. When she finishes, she puts it down.

JASMINE (cont'd)  
Anna!

Jasmine leaves her office.

EXT. JASMINE'S OFFICE - DAY

Jasmine walks over to Anna's desk.

JASMINE  
Please make the necessary  
arrangements for me to leave for  
Afghanistan immediately.

Anna looks up from typing.

ANNA  
Okay. Right on it. Anything I  
should know about this trip?

JASMINE  
No. Wait. Get me Ellen Ayman at  
Women for Afghan Women.

ANNA  
Right on it.

Anna picks up the phone. Jasmine heads back to her office.



INT. SAHARA'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

A modest room with black and white furniture. A few photos are sprinkled about the room. A built-in bookcase lines the back wall. It is overflowing with books.

Jasmine and Sahara stand in Sahara's living room.

JASMINE

A woman in Afghanistan sent this letter to me pleading for help getting her daughter out. The girl's husband tortures her daily. Read it.

Jasmine gives Sahara the letter.

Sahara sits down on the couch and quickly scans it. She sets the letter down on the glass coffee table in front of the couch.

Jasmine sits down next to her.

JASMINE (cont'd)

My resources refuse to go into the country given how unstable it is right now. But I have to do something.

SAHARA

What are you thinking?

JASMINE

I want to go there myself and help her.

Sahara leaps off the couch and turns toward Jasmine.

SAHARA

Are YOU crazy?! Something like this requires a lot of planning.

Jasmine stands up and paces for a while. She stops and faces Sahara.

JASMINE

I know -

SAHARA

I don't think you do!

JASMINE

I deal with these situations daily.  
Besides a friend of mine is going  
to help me plan everything.

BEAT.

They both sit down on the couch again.

JASMINE (cont'd)

I can't turn my back on her. You  
didn't turn your back on me.

SAHARA

That was different.

JASMINE

How?

SAHARA

We're best friends. We grew up  
together. I couldn't leave there  
without you. You don't even know  
this woman.

JASMINE

That doesn't matter.

BEAT.

SAHARA

When do you plan to leave?

JASMINE

Immediately. Anna's making the  
arrangements as we speak.

SAHARA

I know I can't talk you out of  
doing this, so I ask that you be  
careful. I'm nervous. I don't want  
to let you go, but I know I can't  
make you stay.

JASMINE

I promise you, Sahara, I'll be  
back.

They hug.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY [TWO DAYS LATER]

Tall high-rise building overlooking Central Park.

Jasmine and ELLEN AYMAN (40s) sit in a large, elegantly furnished conference room at Ellen's office.

Ellen is a modern feminist who's worked for years on Women's Rights issues in the Middle East. She's an expert on the situation in Afghanistan and the Middle East.

ELLEN

The situation's very delicate there these days. Although the Taliban is gone, remnants of it still remain.

JASMINE

How do you suggest I get her out then?

David saunters in. Ellen gets up to greet him. They shake hands.

ELLEN

I was wondering when you'd get here. Let's get to work.

Jasmine does a double-take.

David walks around the conference table to sit down, oblivious to Jasmine's presence.

DAVID

Ellen, thanks for asking me to join

-

David sees Jasmine. Jasmine gets up. They shake hands and sit down.

DAVID (cont'd)

Jasmine. I didn't realize you were involved in this mission.

ELLEN

Yes. She's the reason you're here. You two know each other?

DAVID

You can say that. We worked on a similar case. What's the specifics of this one?

JASMINE

A woman in Afghanistan reached out to me for help getting her daughter out. Ellen's helping me formulate the escape plan.

ELLEN

David's actually much better at  
this than me. So I'll let him  
handle it.

David, Jasmine, and Ellen continue making plans.

INT. JASMINE'S CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

It's dark outside. The blinds are semi-closed. Everyone's left the office except Jasmine and David.

They sit at a long table in Jasmine's conference room. A map of Afghanistan is pinned up against the wall. Several files and papers marked "Confidential" are spread out on the table.

David paces the room. Jasmine stops him. They sit down and pull the map closer to them.

Jasmine and David huddle close together as they talk.

EXT./INT. DULLES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

Hot, sunny day. TRAVELERS flow in and out of the airport. Jasmine walks in with a large tote bag and a small carry-on bag.

She walks up to the United Airlines counter to check-in. She hands them her flight information.

INT. DAVID'S OFFICE - DAY

David stands by his window and stares outside. He keeps checking his watch.

His young Hispanic MALE SECRETARY comes in, hands him an envelope, and leaves. He opens it up and pulls out a folder.

David opens up the folder. A report stamped 'confidential' is at the top.

ON REPORT

**AFGHANISTAN MISSION COMPROMISED**

ON DAVID

David grabs the phone and calls Jasmine.

INT. DULLES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

Jasmine walks through the metal detector. The alarm goes off. She takes off her shoes, watch, and necklace. She also takes her cell phone out of her pocket. She walks through again with no problems.

She collects her stuff, puts her shoes back on, and continues to walk toward the gate.

INT. DAVID'S OFFICE - DAY

David slams the phone down. He grabs his coat and the report as he rushes out the door.

EXT. HOTEL - DAY

With the report in hand, Dave runs up to the CONCIERGE (50s), a Southern man dressed in full uniform. The Concierge stands outside a luxurious hotel within walking distance of Capitol Hill.

David grabs Jasmine's photo from the report and thrusts it in the Concierge's face.

DAVID  
Have you seen her?

The Concierge takes the photo and brings it close to his face.

INT. DULLES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

Jasmine checks in at the gate. The STEWARDESS behind the desk hands her a boarding pass. Jasmine walks to the end of the line. The line starts boarding the plane.

INTERCUT HOTEL / DULLES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

The Concierge hands the photo back to David.

CONCIERGE  
She left for the airport an hour ago.

DAVID  
Thanks.

David runs to the street and grabs a cab.

Traffic is backed up, but the cab driver takes sides streets. In no time, David arrives at Dulles International Airport.

David jumps out of the cab, thrusts money at the cab driver, and runs into the airport.

He searches for and finds the departure and arrival screens a few feet to the left of him.

David scans the departure screen and finds Jasmine's gate. He runs to the gate, the report in hand.

CUT TO:

INT. DULLES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

David arrives at Jasmine's gate just in time to see the plane take off.

EXT./INT. DAVID'S HOUSE - DAY [DAYS LATER]

A comfortable two-bedroom wood/brick duplex in a typical suburban neighborhood - white picket fences - outside Washington DC. KIDS play outside while parents tend to the yard.

Anna stands at the front door. She fidgets with her skirt before she pushes the bell.

Ding. Dong. Ding. Dong. Dinnnnng. Donnnnng.

David finally appears, a little out of breath. He holds a skewer he is prepping for a cookout later.

DAVID

Anna, good to see you. What are you doing here?

Anna bites back tears.

ANNA

Good to see you too, David. Though I wish it was under better circumstances.

(pause)

I have some news for you.

DAVID

Okay. And you had to tell me in person?

ANNA  
It's better this way.

DAVID  
What's going on?

ANNA  
Can we talk inside? It would be better.

DAVID  
Sure. Come in.

David opens the door, welcoming Anna in.

The room is bright with its white walls. A few photos of a younger David as a US Marine serving abroad hang on the walls.

DAVID (cont'd)  
Let's go in here.

David directs them to the living room.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

The living room is spacious with a leather couch and armchair in the middle of the room. A large screen television hangs from the wall. A football is on the end table next to the couch.

Anna lowers her eyes.

ANNA  
David, I'm not sure how to tell you  
-

DAVID  
Tell me what? Just get to the point, Anna.

ANNA  
Let's sit down.

DAVID  
Okay?.

David points to the leather couch. Anna heads to the couch. David follows behind.

DAVID (cont'd)  
Anna, what's going on?

Anna quickly wipes tears away from her eyes.

ANNA

There's no easy way to say this,  
but -

Anna wrings her hands.

DAVID

It's Jasmine, isn't it?

ANNA

Yes.

David jumps up and paces.

DAVID

What happened?

Anna stands up too. She stands in front of him.

ANNA

Not sure. One of her contacts in  
Afghanistan contacted Ellen. Said  
she was killed early this morning  
while trying to leave the country.

David briefly turns his back to her. Then spins back around  
to face her.

DAVID

How?

ANNA

Ellen didn't know. She's waiting  
for more information.

HEAR children laughing and screaming. David, happy for the  
distraction, briefly peers outside.

DAVID

Did you contact Sahara?

ANNA

Not yet. I plan to stop by her  
place next.

DAVID

Let me tell her. It's better if she  
hears it from me.

Anna nods.



ANNA

Okay. Well, give me a call if you need anything.

David walks Anna to the front door.

DAVID

Thanks for coming to tell me.

Anna nods her head as David opens the door.

ANNA

I'll keep you posted if we get any more news.

DAVID

Thanks.

Anna hugs David.

ANNA

I'm really sorry.

Anna walks out the door. David closes the door and bends over crying. At that moment, the phone rings. David tries to compose himself before answering it.

DAVID

Hello...Sahara, I was just about to call you. Can you come over? I've something I need to tell you.

David hangs up the phone.

FADE OUT:

THE END