

Kabul

By

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BLACK

In PASHTO, subtitled in ENGLISH...

FAHRAN (V.O)
Hamzi takes it.

FADE IN:

EXT. AFGHAN VILLAGE - DAY

FAHRAN HAMZI, ten years old, dribbles a soccer ball - or what's left of it, along a dusty desert floor. He skillfully maneuvers his way around small boulders, craters and other obstacles that appear in his path.

TITLE:
AFGHANISTAN
2001

FAHRAN
He gets around the defense no
problem. Ten seconds on the clock.

Fahrnan picks up speed. He trips, suddenly, on a rock and goes down, kicking up a shallow cloud of dust.

FAHRAN
But what's this?! Beckham trips
Hamzi! No penalty called! What an
insult!

Fahrnan picks himself back up and resumes running.

FAHRAN
Hamzi picks himself back up. Six
seconds left!

Fahrnan trots for a brief moment and suddenly stops on a dime, the ball compressed under his foot. He narrows his eyes - he's intense with focus.

FAHRAN
Four seconds. This could be it.
Muhibi could win the game right
here.

Fahrnan takes several steps back, winding himself up for a kick.

FAHRAN

All eyes are on him now...

Fahran makes a sudden sprint at the ball.

FAHRAN

He shoots...

Fahran unleashes a powerful kick that sends the ball soaring through the air, right into...

KOSHAN MUHIBI, A ten year old goalie positioned between a makeshift net - a couple of boulders.

Koshan crouches down, his arms splayed out in anticipation of the oncoming ball. He makes a clumsy dive for it, missing it by several feet, and it goes rolling beyond the goal line, into a ditch behind him.

FAHRAN

He scores!

Fahran removes his shirt and swings it around his head, frantically. He sprints around Koshan, screaming with delight.

KOSHAN

Bullshit! The sun was in my eyes!

Koshan stops his celebration and collects himself.

FAHRAN

Loser get's the ball.

FAHRAN

I'm not getting the stupid ball.
You can get the ball if you're
going to always kick it in the
ditch.

Fahran turns around and heads for the ditch in question. As he disappears into the distance...

KOSHAN

And you're playing goalie now, too!

EXT. HILL - DAY

Koshan and Fahran sit atop a hill, overlooking a village speckled with mud houses. Fahran sits on the ball, rolling back and fourth.

FAHRAN

How much do you think they pay you on the National Team?

KOSHAN

You're not going to play for the National team! What a bullshitter!

FAHRAN

Yes, I am. I'm going to be the best - better than Zidane, better than Beckham.

KOSHAN

My father says it's almost impossible to get on the National Team. You shouldn't talk about that stuff. It's a waste of time.

FAHRAN

What are you going to do?

KOSHAN

What do you think? I'm going to work at a factory. I'll be making money and you'll still be kicking the ball into a ditch.

Koshan chuckles to himself. Fahrhan scoffs at this.

KOSHAN

Besides, the Americans are moving in. Soon, there won't be a National Team.

FAHRAN

Then, I'll move to England and play there.

KOSHAN

Yeah, right. Didn't you hear? Hamad died trying to leave the city yesterday.

Fahrhan stops rolling on the soccer ball, waiting for the punchline.

FAHRAN

Hamad is dead?

KOSHAN

What did I just say? I just said that. Hamad is dead.

FAHRAN
Bahrang's brother Hamad?

KOSHAN
Yes.

FAHRAN
No way.

KOSHAN
You think I'm lying? Go ask my father. He'll tell you Hamad died last night.

FAHRAN
Your father finally came home? Did he tell you where he's been for the past three days?

KOSHAN
No, he just came home drunk, and listened to his radio programs.

Beat.

FAHRAN
How did he die? Hamad?

KOSHAN
My father told me not to tell you. He said it would give you nightmares.

FAHRAN
Your face gives me nightmares.

Koshan chuckles to himself. Fahrhan punches him playfully on the arm.

KOSHAN
A suicide bomber blew him up. He says the Americans are moving into the area.

Koshan gets up and mimics a drunk, staggering and slurring.

KOSHAN
(slurring badly)
"Those stupid Americans think they can rule the world. They'll kill us all one day". That's what he said.

FAHRAN

I don't know. I think they're going to help us.

KOSHAN

Believe what you want. Just wait until they drop a bomb on you and you blow up like Hamad.

FAHRAN

So Hamad went out quickly then? I'd want to go out quickly. Boom! You wouldn't even feel it.

KOSHAN

No. The explosion made his car catch on fire and he burned inside of it.

A wave of disgust washes over Fahrnan.

KOSHAN

He was all burnt up when they pulled him out. He looked like a piece of meat.

FAHRAN

How do they know it was Hamad, then?

KOSHAN

They pull out your teeth, dumbass. There's a big machine that they put your teeth into and it tells you who they are.

Fahrnan processes this.

FAHRAN

Really?

KOSHAN

Yeah. Anyway, being blown up is a stupid death. I'll tell you how I'd go out - I'd go out like this...

Koshan raises an invisible rifle to his shoulder and mimics firing. He leaps and jumps everywhere, dodging bullets, until one "hits" him square in the chest.

He clutches his invisible wound and falls backwards onto his back, his eyes closed and his tongue stuck out for dramatic effect.

Noticing Fahrhan has left the ball unoccupied, Koshan grabs it and tosses it at him. It bounces off Fahrhan's face and goes astray. Fahrhan winces with pain.

FAHRAN

Asshole!

Koshan makes a break for it, Fahrhan hot on his tail.

EXT. FAHRAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The sun is tucked neatly away behind the distant mountains, casting a purple glow on the village. A herd of goats idle behind Fahrhan's house.

Koshan and Fahrhan stop at the doorway.

KOSHAN

I'll come by tomorrow.

Fahrhan nods. Koshan walks away, ball tucked under his arm.

KOSHAN

You're playing goalie tomorrow.

FAHRAN

But Ronaldo never plays goalie.

KOSHAN

Ronaldo never kicks the ball into the ditch, either.

Koshan shrugs and walks off. Fahrhan goes inside.

INT. FAHRAN'S HOUSE - DAY

Fahrhan sits around a small dinner table with KASTI and HASRA - his mother and father, respectively.

FAHRAN

If my face was blown up, how would you identify me?

KASTI

Fahrhan!

Kasti shakes her head, disapprovingly - not exactly suitable dinner material.

KASTI

Why can't you and that boy ever
just play soccer?

FAHRAN

Well, we were playing soccer, but
then I started thinking, because
you wouldn't be able to see my face
because it would be all blown up--

HASRA

Fahran, if your mouth was half as
big as your friend Koshan's, we'd
have no problem identifying you.

Everyone chuckles.

FAHRAN

How did they identify Hamad, then?

HASRA

Who?

FAHRAN

Hamad. How did they identify him?
Did they pull out his teeth?

HASRA

Pull out his teeth? What do you
mean?

FAHRAN

When he died.

KASTI

Hamad. Bahrang's brother?

FAHRAN

Yeah. The suicide bombers blew him
up. Ask Koshan's father, he'll tell
you he looked like a piece of meat
when they found him.

Kasti shakes her head - all but ready to move on from this
topic.

HASRA

Fahran, I told you not to talk
about people behind their backs. Do
you remember that?

With a mouthful of food...

FAHRAN

Yes.

KASTI

Don't talk with your mouth full.

After swallowing his food...

FAHRAN

Yes.

HASRA

Well, just this once, I'm going to break that rule.

Kasti and Hasra trade looks.

HASRA

Koshan's father is sick. He's a good man, but a sick man, and there's no cure for his illness, so he uses medicine to help him.

FAHRAN

Medicine?

HASRA

It makes him say things - bad things. When I think about what he does to that boy...

Hasra shakes his head, disgusted by the thought.

INT. FAHRAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Night.

The soft clatter of machine gun fire in the distance, followed by a deep vibration in the ground.

Fahran's eyes spring open. He props himself up on a shoulder and looks over at his mother and father, sound asleep.

Fahran waits a beat, listening intently. The sounds continue, and battling an overwhelming curiosity, Fahran carefully makes his way out the door.

EXT. FAHRAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Fahran steps out of the house. A dog tethered to a tree perks up.

EXT. HILL - NIGHT

Fahran stands, looking over the village, the mud huts little more than dark specks in the moonlight.

Suddenly, in the distant hills - an inferno of bright flashes accompanied by a deep rumbling. Fahran watches it for a brief moment, then cranes his neck to get a better view.

A louder, more dramatic rumbling, followed by more small arms fire becomes audible.

Fahran recoils in shock - There's no doubt in his mind what those noise are.

The carnage in the distance simmers down. Fahran continues to glare out into the dark abyss, and that's when he see's it...

A silhouette, limping, using an Assault Rifle as a crutch, making it's way towards the village. It sways left and right, in a disorienting pattern.

Fahran grabs the ball and begins a light jog down the hill towards it.

EXT. FAHRAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Fahran trails a good distance behind the figure, watching closely as it hobbles to and fro into his village.

Its pace suddenly becomes labored, its movements forced. It drops to its knee's, and then its stomach. Still clutching the assault rifle, it begins a belly crawl, but even that becomes an agonizing task.

Eventually, its eyes close, its head sinks into the ground, and it stops moving.

...Right on Fahran's doorstep.

Fahran cautiously steps towards the figure and sees, in the dim moonlight, a full head of hair and a pair of long, hair legs emerging from a robe.

FAHRAN

Sir?

Fahran bends down and offers the figure a hand but nervously retracts it.

He takes a deep breath, preparing himself. He reaches out again, stretching his trembling hand inches away from the man's garment, when...

FAHRAN

Sir?

The man stirs in place, suddenly sensing a presence behind him. He whips around onto his back, his finger gripped on the trigger of his assault rifle, ready to open fire on whoever's lurking behind him. He turns, and...

It's Fahran - a ten year old boy. The man's face says it all - not quite what he was expecting.

The anticipation deflates from the man's body. His eyes flicker open and closed. The grip on his weapon loosens and slips from his hand, and, eventually, he does as well.

Fahran darts into his house.

INT. FAHRAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Fahran frantically shakes his father.

FAHRAN

Father! Father!

Kasra yawns and squints, and eventually blinks himself awake.

KASRA

Fahran?

FAHRAN

Father, there's a man outside our house.

KASRA

Who is it?

FAHRAN

I don't know. He's got a gun.

Fahran's parents both perk up.

EXT. FAHRAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

All three of them step outside the hut and, lo and behold - there's the man, still passed out, his assault rifle held to his chest.

FAHRAN

Is he dead?

Kasra taps him lightly with his toe. The man grunts.

KASRA

He's alive. Help me get him inside.

Kasra takes the man's assault rifle, slings it around his neck and grabs the man's feet while Fahrhan timidly grabs the man's arms.

In the distance, the familiar sounds of battle pick up again.

INT. FAHRAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The man lies splayed out in the middle of the house, a damp rag laid across his forehead. Hasra and Kastu stand uncomfortably close to the man, gawking at him.

Fahrhan toys with his assault rifle in the corner.

The man's eyes flutter he peaks at his surroundings through narrow, swollen eyes. Kasra braces himself in anticipation. He notices Fahrhan toying with the rifle in the corner.

KASRA

Fahrhan! Get over here!

Fahrhan walks over to the man and helps him into a sitting position. The man looks at the family, who stands there staring at him with a mixture of intrigue and fear.

MAN

Thanks.

KASRA

You were on our property. We brought you in.

MAN

Yes. Thank you.

KASRA
Are you hurt?

MAN
I'll be fine.

Fahran can't contain himself.

FAHRAN
Are you Taliban?

Fahran's parents turn in sync towards him, displeased, though they do turn to the man to hear his answer.

MAN
Can I get a cup of tea?

Kasti nods and walks away.

KASRA
What's your name?

MAN
Naazi.

KASRA
What happened to you?

NAAZI
A herd of runaway cows. They
overwhelmed us. We couldn't hold
them off.

Naazi grins. Fahran laughs. Kasra scowls.

KASRA
You stumbled onto our property with
a gun. You nearly scared my son
half to death, and now you want to
be funny?

FAHRAN
I wasn't scared.

KASRA
Shut up.

Naazi stops laughing.

NAAZI
They hit us with helicopters,
artillery - everything. I took off,
and that's it.

FAHRAN

It's true. I heard them from
outside.

A helicopter whizzes over top of the house. Everyone freezes
to listen.

Kasra takes a seat.

KASRA

I was in the Army a long time ago,
back when it used to be a fair
fight.

NAAZI

It's not anymore?

KASRA

No.

NAAZI

Because they have helicopters?

KASRA

I was talking about you, not them.

NAAZI

(RE: Helicopter)

So, how do you expect us to fight
against that?

KASRA

What you do is murder, not
fighting.

Kasra and Naazi share a venomous look. It's suddenly
interrupted by shrill screaming outside. Naazi leaps to his
feet and cautiously pokes his head out of the door.

Outside, the silhouette of a man dressed in garments like
Naazi's, sprints through the village, an assault rifle in
one hand, and sporting a small military backpack.

Naazi stares at him for a beat, confirming he's not a
Coalition soldier. Then...

NAAZI

Psssttt!

The figure stops and points his weapon at the direction of
the sound. From the doorway, Naazi waves the figure in.

KASRA

What are you doing? Don't bring any more armed men in my house!

The figure makes a slow trot towards the house, and soon, he's in full view. This is AHMED.

NAAZI

Ahmed?

Ahmed nods. Both he and Naazi embrace each other. Fahran and his family exchange looks.

NAAZI

Inside. Inside. This way.

With an arm around his shoulder, Naazi guides Ahmed into the center of the house. Ahmed see's Fahran and his parents and freezes in place.

AHMED

Who are they?

NAAZI

They brought me in.

Ahmed looks at Kasra.

AHMED

Can I sit?

Kasra takes a long moment before motioning to the carpet in the center of the house. Ahmed sits and rests his assault rifle on the ground.

Kasti brings over a wooden bowl full of water. Ahmed frantically drinks it.

KASRA

Are you hurt?

Naazi shakes his head "No".

AHMED

Everyone's gone.

NAAZI

I know.

Naazi moves over to a window and watches more fireworks light up in the distance.

AHMED

Alam, Hakim, Majeed - Everyone's gone, Naazi.

Naazi moves over to a window and watches more fireworks light up in the distance.

AHMED

Ali. Ali is still held up further south.

Naazi thinks for a beat.

NAAZI

We'll move out tomorrow morning.

Kasra waves a hand.

KASRA

You're not staying here.

AHMED

Do you not hear it out there?

KASRA

I can hear fine. We let you in for water, for rest, but you're not staying any longer.

Ahmed tightens his grip on his assault rifle.

AHMED

Shall we take a vote?

Kasra's eyes dart to Naazi's assault rifle in the corner. Ahmed reads him like a book.

AHMED

Don't try it.

Ahmed rises to his feet, moves past Fahran, and grabs Naazi's rifle leaning against the wall. Naazi takes it.

NAAZI

We're not looking to hurt you.

AHMED

We have a friend we need to meet in the morning. We just need to stay the night. We're not looking to hurt you.

FAHRAN
You're thugs.

Everyone turns to Fahrnan, who stands in the corner of the house with crossed arms.

FAHRAN
You're just thugs.

Ahmed approaches Fahrnan, towering over him like a skyscraper, the metal on his weapon gleaming menacingly. He bends down to his level, exposing the pattern of cuts and bruises on his face in the dim light.

AHMED
Sir, I think you should put your son to bed before I do it for him.

KASRA
Don't you dare touch him.

Kasra makes a hasty stride over to Fahrnan and leads him off.

EXT. FAHRAN'S HOUSE - DAY

Early morning. The soft, golden glow of the sun is just beginning to emerge over the distant mountains.

INT. FAHRAN'S HOUSE - DAY

Naazi leans against a large bag of wheat, asleep. Ahmed sits near the window, resting his head in his hands. Dark rings sit under his eyes and he drifts slowly in and out of a slumber.

Something in the distance catches his attention. He bolts awake.

AHMED
Naazi! Naazi!

Naazi stirs and finally comes to.

AHMED
Naazi! There's someone coming.

Naazi springs up and moves over to the window. There, in the distance, is Koshan, whistling to himself and dribbling a soccer ball, headed straight towards the house.

Naazi and Ahmed trade looks and move out of sight. A short beat later, there's a knock on the door.

KOSHAN (O.S)
 Fahran! Are you ready for another
 whooping?

Koshan begins a series of obnoxiously persistent raps on the door that wake Fahran and his family up.

KOSHAN (O.S)
 Fahran!

KASRA
 Koshan...?

Naazi turns to the family, places a finger over his lips and motions Fahran over.

KOSHAN (O.S)
 Fine, Fahran. I'll play goalie.
 Just come out.

Fahran runs over to Naazi, ducking out of the sight of the window.

NAAZI
 Get him out of here.

FAHRAN
 What do you want me to say?

AHMED
 I don't care. Just get him out of
 here.

Fahran swallows nervously and opens the door. Koshan lifts his arms in annoyance upon seeing Fahran.

KOSHAN
 Finally. Didn't you hear me
 knocking?

FAHRAN
 I can't play right now.

Koshan studies his friends face - he's never seen him this tense before.

KOSHAN
 Why not?

FAHRAN
 I just can't. It's not a good time.

KOSHAN
Are you scared?

FAHRAN
Koshan, I can't play. I'm busy
right now.

KOSHAN
Just let me show you my kick. It
will take one second.

A beat. Fahrhan looks at his friend reluctantly.

Fahrhan nods nervously. Beside him, out of sight, Ahmed jabs him in the ribs with the barrel of his weapon.

FAHRAN
Just one kick. Then you have to go,
Ok?

Koshan's face lights up.

KOSHAN
Just watch this. Watch how real
players do it.

He drops the ball on the ground, winds up, and with a new energy in his step, kicks it. It flies through the air in an impressive arc. It flies...flies...flies...and...

It lands right in the ditch. Koshan frowns.

KOSHAN
I can't believe it! I never kick it
in the ditch.

FAHRAN
Ok. You have to go now, Koshan.
Please leave.

Koshan races towards the ditch.

KOSHAN
Hold on. I didn't do it right. Just
one more.

Ahmed cocks back the bolt on his weapon - he's not kidding around anymore. Fahrhan looks on, helplessly.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

Koshan trails behind his ball. It rolls into the ditch, out of sight.

He approaches the ditch, bending down to retrieve the ball, when he freezes in place - stiff with fear.

Five American troops stand up from crouched positions, their tall bodies suddenly towering over the frail boy. One of them has the ball cradled in his arm. The troops are geared up in Kevlar vests and hiking boots - these aren't average soldiers.

AMERICAN SOLDIER #1

He see's us.

Koshan looks on innocently. The soldier with the soccer ball holds out his hand and offers it to Koshan. Koshan just stands there.

AMERICAN SOLDIER #2

Hey, buddy. Is this your ball, huh?

In the close distance, Fahran watches this interaction from the doorway.

AMERICAN SOLDIER #2

Here, pal.

The soldier lifts the ball to Koshan's face. He takes the ball with a quick, nervous swipe.

AMERICAN SOLDIER #3

Do you live around here?

Nothing. Koshan gawks at the soldiers, fear and intrigue swimming in his eyes.

AMERICAN SOLDIER #4

We're looking for Taliban.

The soldier mimics an invisible gun battle with his arms.

AMERICAN SOLDIER #4

Do you understand? Taliban, buddy.

We're looking for the bad guys.

A beat. In the background, Fahran is dragged back into the house by an arm.

AMERICAN SOLDIER #3
He's not saying shit, Lieutenant.

The soldiers all trade looks - one that suggests they're not getting very far with this kid. The soldiers push past Koshan and resume their patrol. Koshan turns and watches them go.

INT. FAHRAN'S HOUSE - DAY

From inside, Naazi and Ahmed duck out of site for the approaching soldiers. They turn back to the family and once again, indicate silence with a finger pressed to their lips.

Outside, the soft crunch of soil underneath the four soldier's feet as it passes by the house.

Naazi slowly removes a frag grenade from his backpack and presses it to his chest.

Fahran watches the troops move further into the distance, anxious, struggling to keep still - that's safety over there, and it's moving further away. He can't help himself.

Fahran darts over to the door and steps outside, flailing his arms, wildly.

KASRA
Fahran!

EXT. AFGHAN VILLAGE - DAY

Fahran steps out and begins screaming in Pashto.

FAHRAN
Hey! Hey! Over here! They're over here! We need help!

The soldiers stop, turn to Fahran and watch him curiously.

AMERICAN SOLDIER #2
Lieutenant, look - over there.

FAHRAN
They're in the house! They're going to hurt my family--

A grenade is suddenly lobbed out of the window. It rolls right to one of the soldiers' feet.

AMERICAN SOLDIER #1
Grenade!

Boom!

The ground erupts below one of the soldiers in a burst of debris. The force of the explosion sends his body flying into the air, his legs detaching from his torso. They're sent astray in a bloody heap of flesh.

Everyone pauses for a dazed moment.

AMERICAN SOLDIER #3
Contact!

The team drops prone on the ground. Ahmed and Naazi open fire from the house. The troops return it, and within seconds the air is thick with bullets.

KOSHAN
Fahran!

From the ditch, Koshan races back and pulls Fahran to the ground.

The clay exterior of Fahran's house is immediately peppered with gunfire, and it's not long before the entire thing is plastered with tiny bullet holes.

An American troop lobs a grenade onto the property. It detonates beside a goat, taking it's head off and turning it's thick body into a cloud of pink mist.

A small, bloody pair of goat ribs and intestines land right next to Fahran. A small geyser of blood sprays his face upon impact.

The Americans bark orders to one another and maneuver their way backwards into the village, spraying the house. One of them takes a direct hit in the forehead, dropping him.

A long rattle of gunfire sprays from Fahran's window right towards the two boys. Fahran grabs Koshan and drags him to the ground, out of the path of the bullets.

Another American takes a round in the chest and falls.

The last man - a machine gunner, leans back on the trigger, expelling a long stream of fire that rips head sized chunks of hard clay from the house.

He turns and runs, rounding a corner out of sight, and just like that - it's all over.

A thin layer of dust and smoke lingers over the area. Fahran and Koshan remain curled up in the corner, clutching on to each other for dear life.

Silence.

Both boys lift their heads up. Fahran takes one look at the damage to his house and bolts towards it.

KOSHAN

Fahran! Stop!

INT. FAHRAN'S HOUSE - DAY

Fahran opens the door and steps inside. It's complete carnage. Naazi and Ahmed lay bullet riddled near the window. Shards of clay litter the ground.

FAHRAN

Mother?

Nothing.

Fahran steps further into the house and see's it - two silhouettes lying in the corner. Realization hits his face in a spontaneous instant. Tears flood his eyes and stream down his face.

Koshan steps in behind him.

KOSHAN

Fahran?

Fahran's meek sniffles turn into a full blown crying fit. He collapses to his knee's. Koshan moves closer and see's it - Kasra and Hasti, full of holes, their eyes rolled back in their heads. A pool of blood surrounds them.

Koshan just stands there, inspecting the scene. Fahran rests his head on the two corpses and bawls. Koshan places a hand on his shoulder.

KOSHAN

Fahran. We have to go.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Both boys walk down a dirt path. Fahran sniffles, trying desperately to contain himself.

KOSHAN

Don't worry. My father will know what to do. He always said the Americans were going to kill everyone. Now I know what he meant.

Fahran gives Koshan a look. *Now's not the time.*

KOSHAN

He moved out of the city after my mother died. I don't remember her so well. He never talks about her.

Fahran places a hand on Koshan's chest, stopping him.

FAHRAN

I was trying to get their attention. I didn't mean for that to...

Koshan places a hand on Fahran's shoulder.

KOSHAN

I know. My father will know what to do. He might be out drinking in town but he'll be back later tonight. He'll know what to do.

Fahran nods. They continue walking. There's a long silence. Koshan looks at his friend, sympathetically.

KOSHAN

Hey.

Fahran looks at his friend.

Fahran stops, his lip curls and he cries again. To Fahran's surprise, Koshan wraps his arms around him and holds him.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

It's late afternoon. The boys continue to trudge along. Fahran stops and dumps a rock out of his shoe.

The soft sound of a truck engine becomes audible behind the boys. Both boys stop and move off to the side of the road. Over the bend, a white pick up emerges.

It's speed decreases and soon, it's trailing uncomfortably close behind the boys.

Fahran and Koshan look at each other nervously. The truck accelerates beside the boys, the silhouette of a driver staring at them.

KOSHAN

On the count of three, we run.

Fahran nods.

KOSHAN

One, two--

The pick up truck doors swing open and a gang of robed men hop out. Fahran and Koshan break into a sprint, but they're no match. The men overwhelm the kids, snatching them and dragging them back to the truck.

They're forced into the back seat.

KOSHAN

Let go of me! Let go of me, you
assholes!

The doors are shut and the truck speeds off into a dusty line.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Koshan and Fahran, now sporting blindfolds over their eyes and zip ties on their hands, sit in the back.

FAHRAN

Koshan? Are you there?

KOSHAN

Yeah, it's me.

A hint of terror lingers in Fahran's voice.

FAHRAN

Where are we going?

KOSHAN

I don't know.
(to no one in particular)
Excuse me! Excuse me! Answer me,
you assholes!

Silence.

EXT. TALIBAN COMPOUND - NIGHT

A sprawling base surrounded by four stone walls. The pickup pulls in. Armed men scuttle around the place. One man stands out - he remains firmly planted in the middle of the chaos, arms crossed, cool, calm, collected. This is ALI.

The pickup stops and Fahran and Koshan are pulled out. They stumble around, clumsily.

Ali grins.

INT. COMPOUND - NIGHT

A lantern is lit, revealing a small, bare room with pale walls. A couple of beds sit in the corner.

Koshan and Fahran sit on the floor, panting nervously. Ali plucks the blindfolds off their eyes and pushes two bowls of water in front of them.

ALI

Sorry about the entrance.

KOSHAN

Who the hell are you?

ALI

My name is Ali.

FAHRAN

Are you going to kill us?

ALI

No. You're safe here. Please, drink some water.

Fahran and Koshan do.

KOSHAN

Why did you put blindfolds on us?

ALI

I told them not to. My friends can be stubborn sometimes.

KOSHAN

What friends? What is this place?

ALI

This is my house.

Koshan runs his eyes along the walls - the paint is chipped, the beds are rotten, it's a mess.

KOSHAN

What kind of house is this?

ALI

This is the only safe place I can stay anymore. It's not safe out there.

A tear runs down Fahrhan's face.

FAHRAN

I want to go home.

ALI

Don't be afraid.

KOSHAN

I'm not scared of you. My father was in the Army, you know. I know how to shoot a rifle.

Fahrhan gives the room another scan. He spots something in the corner and leans closer. A soccer ball rests in a dark corner of the room. Ali notices and grins.

ALI

You like soccer?

EXT. TALIBAN COMPOUND - NIGHT

Ali, Koshan and Fahrhan kick the soccer ball amongst eachother. Koshan and Fahrhan's kicks are stiff and lifeless.

ALI

I used to play when I was younger. I don't really get the chance anymore.

A beat.

ALI

You boys are pretty good. You must play a lot.

KOSHAN

My father never plays with me, but we play every day.

ALI

Good. Very good. Playing sports when you're young is very important. It teaches you how to be a part of a team.

Ali kicks the ball to Fahran. He doesn't return it.

ALI

Don't you think so, Fahran?

Fahran scowls and walks off.

Ali looks back at the boy, who's now taken a seat, sulking quietly.

INT. COMPOUND - NIGHT

Fahran and Koshan lie on the floor of a bare room, each covered by a blanket. Ali lingers in the door.

ALI

You boys probably have a lot of questions, and I promise I'll answer them all tomorrow morning.

Ali walks to the center of the room where a lantern glows dimly. He bends down and twists a knob on it, drowning out the light even further.

FAHRAN

Sir, when can we go?

ALI

When it's safe.

Before the light is completely extinguished, Fahran and Ali lock eyes. Does he trust this guy? Fahran's expression is unreadable.

Ali exits.

KOSHAN

He had a really good kick. Didn't you think so?

Fahran shrugs. He's put off by the zeal in Koshan's voice.

FAHRAN

We can't stay here, Koshan.

KOSHAN

I know. I'm sorry. Your parents...

Fahran lowers himself onto his blanket in the darkness and closes his eyes.

INT. COMPOUND - NIGHT

A loud shriek echoes through the thin walls. Fahran jolts awake, panting heavily. The room is still completely dark. Fahran stirs under his blanket and rises to his feet.

FAHRAN

Koshan?

Nothing.

FAHRAN

Koshan, did you hear that?

Fahran jabs Koshan with a finger, but he's sound asleep. Fahran gingerly walks out of the door and into the compound, the screams getting increasingly louder as he goes.

INT. COMPOUND - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Fahran timidly makes his way down the hall, guided by the glow of light from one room in particular further down. As he approaches, he cringes in disgust.

Fahran gives the air a couple of whiffs and quickly plugs his nose with two fingers.

INT. COMPOUND - ROOM - NIGHT

A chair is set up in the middle of the room with a man fastened tightly to it. Close observers might recognize the victim as the machine gunner that fled the firefight at Fahran's house.

One of the man's eyes has been swollen shut. Blood soaks his uniform, and his lower lip has ballooned to a thick wad of skin. Clearly they've been working this guy for a while.

Flanked on both sides of him are two Taliban guards, and standing before all them, is Ali.

In the doorway, Fahran's tiny head peers in, unnoticed by the rest.

ALI
(in broken english)
What were you doing in the area?

The American twists his head, and spits a long stream of thick maroon blood from his mouth onto the floor.

AMERICAN SOLDIER
I'm sorry, I can't give away that information.

ALI
You were looking for someone, hmm?

A beat. Ali strokes the American's hair innocently.

ALI
Lieutenant, let's just talk. Tell me what you are thinking.

Nothing.

ALI
Do you have children?

The Lieutenant nods his head, "yes".

AMERICAN SOLDIER
Would you ever sacrifice them for this country? For the freedom of this country?

Slowly, agonizingly, the American shakes his head, "no". Ali presses a finger into chest.

ALI
And that is why you will lose.
That's why you will always lose.

A beat.

ALI
We have children. We have children who will fight you in the street, in the desert - all they know is fight. They even strap bombs to themselves. How do you win against that? How do you beat that?

The Lieutenant doesn't have an answer. In the doorway, Fahran reacts to this information. Ali motions to one of the guards who draws a bayonet from his robe and with a quick swipe, traces it along the American's neck.

The soldier gasps for air, prompting a long stream of blood to ooze out of his throat. He writhes in his chair frantically, and soon the loud bite of his handcuffs against the metal chair fills the room.

Fahran trembles, petrified.

Then, the soldier stops moving, and silence re-takes the room. Fahran steps back apprehensively. One step makes slightly too much noise, arousing Ali and his crew's attention.

They whip back just in time to see a small body dart away down the hall.

ALI

Shit.

They immediately give chase.

INT. COMPOUND - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Fahran blunders down the hall, trying desperately to find his way in the darkness.

ALI (O.S)

Fahran!

Ali and crew trail behind, guns cocking and metal clinking.

Fahran finally manages to find his room. Ali's footsteps are uneasily close behind.

Fahran peers in, and there he is - Koshan, oblivious to the chaos, snoring soundly on the floor. Fahran looks down the hall - there's Ali and crew, heading straight for him, and it's not going to be pretty.

Fahran trades distressed looks between them. Koshan, Ali, Koshan, Ali, Koshan, Ali - there's not enough time for both.

In a quick, eager moment, Fahran backs away from the door and makes a break down the hall, and eventually, outside into the darkness.

ALI (O.S)

Fahran!

EXT. COMPOUND - NIGHT

Fahran steps out into the compound. He races through the vehicles, then he see's it - a soccer ball sitting on the ground.

Fahran steps behind it, and with the most exertion we've seen thus far, kicks it at the tiny square of light that is the door.

It soars through the air and connects with Ali's head as soon as he steps into the doorway. He groans in pain and tumbles back into the arms of his henchman.

Fahran makes a break for it. He darts out of the thick compound walls and into the desert. The loud sound of assault rifle fire opens up behind him.

A short moment later, he's free.

EXT. AFGHAN VILLAGE - DAY

The abominable Afghan sun beats down over the land - This is the kind of heat that drains every ounce of water from your body within minutes if you're not careful.

Trudging through it is Fahran. According to his face, this hasn't been a short or easy journey - dry, peeling, and otherwise damaged. He's missing a sandal and hobbles on the affected foot.

Through blemished eyes, Fahran see's something up ahead - a village.

EXT. KOSHAN'S HOUSE - DAY

At one house in particular, goats scatter as Fahran approaches, revealing a MAN, old and brittle, behind them.

He see's the approaching boy and stops his activity.

MAN

Fahran?

Fahran nods. The man looks him up and down - he doesn't need to ask, something horrific has clearly taken place.

MAN

Where's Koshan? Where's my son?

Fahran can barely stand, let alone form a coherent sentence. He makes a running dash for the man and they stand there, amongst a herd of goats, holding each other.

CUT TO BLACK.

TITLE: TEN YEARS LATER

CAPTAIN QUINCY (O.S)
You are now members of the Afghan
National Army...

FADE IN:

EXT. PARADE GROUNDS - DAY

Fahran, now outfitted in an immaculate Afghan Army uniform, stands at suave attention amongst a crowd of other graduates. They face an American soldier who mans a podium above them.

Meet MAJOR QUINCY.

MAJOR QUINCY

And, as such, you've decided to undertake one of the most significant political reforms this country has ever seen. It will require able bodies to complete this task - more than are standing here, but make no mistake, we will prevail so long as men such as yourselves continue to strive for a free, dignified, and honourable life for the citizens of this country.
(a beat)
Treat your new title with pride. Perform your duties with courage and professionalism, and may god be with you.

Applause drowns out the ceremony. Quincy walks off stage.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

A soccer game in progress. A handful of fellow graduates kick a ball back and fourth. Fahran, who was walking past, stops and watches.

For a second, it looks like he might jump in and join them, but he stops himself. Fahran's Army colleagues beckon him over but he shakes his head and continues on his way.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Quincy sits in a congested, stuffy room. A mountain of papers sit in a cluttered mess in front of him, flies zip around the place.

FAHRAN

Sir? Sir?

QUINCY

Yeah. Yeah, come in.

Fahran salutes, Quincy returns it before Fahran steps in, holding a piece of paper. Quincy grabs it from him and looks it over.

FAHRAN

I liked your speech, sir.

QUINCY

(grinning)

I don't write them.

FAHRAN

Well, I liked it anyway, sir.

Quincy scribbles on Fahran's paper.

FAHRAN

I liked the part about prevailing if we work hard enough. That's exactly what I was thinking.

Quincy sighs and takes a quick look up at Fahran. If looks could talk, this one would say "Shut the hell up". Fahran doesn't read it, and continues to stand there, smiling.

FAHRAN

I just want you to know that I'm ready for anything, sir. I'm ready to take whatever lessons your soldiers are willing to teach me.

Quincy hands Fahran the paper.

QUINCY

First lesson - don't talk so much...

Quincy scans the paper for a name.

QUINCY
...Fahran Hamzi.

FAHRAN
Yes, sir. I'm just ready to fight,
sir.

Fahran turns to walk out when he stops dead in his tracks, distracted by something. The goofy, animated grin he's been wearing suddenly disappears and he goes rigid with concern.

Quincy notices this and turns to the object of Fahran's interest - a poster behind him, pinned to the wall via several throwing darts.

It shows a bearded man, mid fifties, and a bold headline above him saying "Ali Wazir - Wanted Dead or Alive". Quincy gets up from his seat and plucks a dart from Ali's face.

QUINCY
Checking out my friend, there?

Fahran nods, swallows nervously.

Quincy chucks the dart at the poster. It lands right between Ali's eyes.

INT. VEHICLE CHECKPOINT - DAY

A couple of cinder block barricades flank both sides of a road, leaving just enough room for a car to pass through.

Surrounding it is two American soldiers, SERGEANT FRAZIER and PRIVATE BATESON and two Afghan soldiers, HAKIM and Fahran, currently swatting flies away from his face and not looking quite as zealous as we last saw him.

BATESON
Spoke to my daughter on the phone
today.

FRAZIER
Oh yeah?

BATESON
She says "Daddy, why can't you just
nuke all the bad guys like we did
in Japan?"

FRAZIER

Did you tell her it was because we'd be out of a job?

BATESON

More or less.

FRAZIER

I suppose you better save the politics until she gets to where you are.

BATESON

Yeah, we're going to have to have a nice long chat about that. She's never coming out here. Believe that.

FAHRAN

There are worse things she could do.

BATESON

Maybe. I can only think of one at the moment, though.

FAHRAN

What's that?

BATESON

Porn star.

Frazier raises his eyebrows.

FRAZIER

That's it? What about a prostitute?

BATESON

A prostitute is a one way transaction - It's between the person giving the dick, and taking the dick. End of story. Porno gets turned into DVD's and sold to god knows who, and all of the sudden I've got a million guys in their parents basements jerking off to my little girl.

FRAZIER

Fair enough.

BATESON

I saw this porno the other day -
the woman actually pried her eyelid
open so the guy could jizz in it.
Like this...

Bateson gives an awkward demonstration. Fahran winces with disgust.

BATESON

I'll support anything she does,
Sergeant, I promise you, but I draw
the line at prying her eye open and
taking a load directly in the
pupil.

Fahran, who had remained fairly quiet until now, speaks up...

FAHRAN

I only once ever saw one movie like
that.

Everyone turns to him.

FAHRAN

My friend and I had bought it
bootlegged for two Afghani dollars.
We were ten years old.

Frazier and Bateson trade looks.

FAHRAN

We watched it on his father's video
player and when he came home and
saw us...

Fahran chuckles to himself.

BATESON

Jesus. What kind of father beats
his kid while he's busting one out?

Everyone laughs except Fahran, who's still deep in thought.

FAHRAN

No. He didn't beat us. He didn't
say anything.

A tense silence takes over. Everyone reads the grief on Fahran's face.

BATESON

Who sells porno to ten year old
boys and why didn't he live in my
neighborhood growing up?

Everyone cracks up.

INT. TENT - NIGHT

Fahran lies awake on his cot staring up at the ceiling,
tossing and turning restlessly.

EXT. BASE - NIGHT

Fahran steps out into the quiet night air of the base. A
couple of sentries pace back and fourth at the front gate.
Otherwise, everything has been switched off for the night.

The soft spark of a lighter draws Fahran's attention. He
turns in the direction of the noise, just in time to see a
small, orange ember lighting up a man's face - it's Major
Quincy.

FAHRAN

Hello, sir.

Quincy turns, agitated his "alone" time has been disturbed.

QUINCY

Hi.

FAHRAN

It's me, sir. It's Fahran Hamzi.

QUINCY

Who?

FAHRAN

Earlier today in your office. I
said I liked your speech.

QUINCY

(whatever)
Oh, right.

A beat.

FAHRAN

Can I hear another one of your
speeches, sir?

QUINCY

I told you, I don't write them.

Fahran nods, disappointed. Quincy takes notice.

QUINCY

Alright, you want a speech?

FAHRAN

Yes sir.

QUINCY

How's this - "Kill the bad guys so we can save the good guys".

FAHRAN

That's it?

QUINCY

That's it.

Fahran takes this in silently.

QUINCY

You believe that, don't you, Hamzi?

Fahran's eyes freeze in place, reflecting on something.

Fahran notices Quincy gawking at him, waiting for an answer. He shakes himself out of his daze and locks eyes with him.

FAHRAN

Absolutely, sir.

INT. MOSQUE - DAY

A prayer in session. One man in particular stands out amongst the crowd of white robes - his face pocked with old shrapnel wounds.

It's Ali.

EXT. MOSQUE - DAY

Ali walks with IMAM (a religious position) RASHID outside. They speak in PASHTO subtitled in ENGLISH.

IMAM RASHID

Are the dreams still troubling you?

Ali says nothing.

IMAM RASHID

Ali, you can say a lot, or you can say a little, but I can't help you if you say nothing.

Finally, Ali exhales.

ALI

We're gearing up for something big, Imam.

IMAM RASHID

Something big - like what?

Ali gives Rashid a look and he instantly understands.

IMAM RASHID

Did you hear about Kamal? About Jalaal Rahimi? The Americans have gotten one third of all Taliban leaders now.

ALI

I know.

IMAM RASHID

The question isn't "if", but "when", Ali. They're going to find you sooner or later.

ALI

I know, Imam. I know.

Ali stops abruptly in his tracks, disheartened and troubled.

ALI

What do I do?

IMAM RASHID

Have you told the others?

Ali shakes his head "no".

ALI

I see children, Imam - their side, our side. I see them being killed and I don't know what to think anymore. It doesn't make sense.

Ali gazes off into the distance, pondering something.

ALI
I want out, Imam.

EXT. STREET - DAY

A sizeable hole in the middle of a dusty road. Suddenly...

THWACK!

A pick axe slams down on it with brute force. Then again, and again. The relentless beating continues for a long beat, as if the person on the other end of the pick had an everlasting reserve of energy.

Then, a face - mid twenties with strong, chiseled features, and currently sweating buckets. He lifts the pick over his head and brings it down, gritting his teeth upon impact.

It's Koshan.

Satisfied with the hole, he drops the pick axe and exchanges it for an improvised explosive device - in this case, two 155 millimeter howitzer shells strapped together with a cell phone bundled in between, it's shape resembling an oversized pair of batteries.

He places it gingerly in the hole.

EXT. ROOFTOP - DAY

Koshan and Ali sit on a roof of a building, overlooking the road - Ali curled up in the corner, and Koshan overlooking the road with a pair of binoculars.

In the middle of the road is the blemish of the freshly planted IED - If you were travelling in say, a military Humvee, you'd have to have a pretty keen eye to spot it.

A walkie talkie crackles somewhere.

KOSHAN
Five to one.

Ali, who was resting against the wall, perks up.

ALI
What?

KOSHAN
We just scored. It's five to one for us.

ALI
Who are we playing?

Koshan speaks into a walkie talkie.

KOSHAN
Aarash, who are we playing?

WALKIE TALKIE (V.O)
Bhutan.

ALI
Well, that explains it.

KOSHAN
Now you're the soccer expert, old man?

Ali grins.

ALI
You bet.

KOSHAN
I'm surprised you're not still dizzy from the circles I dribbled around you last night.

ALI
Circles?!

KOSHAN
That's right, circles. You just about needed a cane to hold yourself up when I was done with you.

ALI
If I was dizzy, it was because I was watching that lousy kick of yours soar into fifty different directions.

They both laugh. Koshan looks back at the road through the binoculars. The radio crackle again.

KOSHAN
I hope I didn't dig it too deep.

And just that like, the mood is killed. Ali's smile is replaced by torment as he's suddenly reminded that he's fighting a war.

KOSHAN
I don't think so. I learned my
lesson last week. I don't think I
dug that one too deep.

The walkie crackles again.

WALKIE TALKIE (V.O)
Convoy approaching from the west.

Ali grabs an assault rifle and scurries beside Koshan, who
digs into a backpack and withdraws a cellphone.

KOSHAN
(into radio)
Get into position.

From the west, about two hundred meters away from the IED, a
patrol containing five American Humvee's bounces down the
road.

Ali loads a magazine into his rifle and takes aim. Koshan
clutches the phone and hovers his finger over a button.

One hundred meters...

The radio chatter stops. Everything goes quiet.

Fifty meters...

KOSHAN
Allahu Akbar.

The lead vehicle barely has it's front wheels over the blot
on the road when Koshan's finger spears a button on his
phone. It releases a soft beep that leads the way for a
climactic rumble on the street.

In an instant, the ground under the American Humvee
explodes, spinning it onto it's backside, fire and smoke
billowing out of it.

The rest of the convoy behind it immediately comes to a
grinding halt. Within seconds it's chaos - people bark
orders, scream for medics and scramble around.

KOSHAN
(into radio)
Attack! Attack! With the help of
god!

Koshan opens fire, peppering the other Humvee's with AK
rounds. Somewhere below the building they're on, a volley of
machine gun fire accompanies him.

All the turret gunners perched on top of the Humvee's open fire in Koshan and Ali's general direction. It only takes a few seconds until they're completely overwhelmed by bullets.

WALKIE TALKIE (V.O)

Aarash is hit!

Ali grabs Koshan by the collar and yanks him away, but Koshan is too intensely involved with the battle and remains firmly planted.

ALI

Koshan! Let's go!

The Afghan fire from below dwindles, it's being overwhelmed by the stronger, more accurate American fire. The tide of battle has taken a sharp turn out of Ali and Koshan's favor.

ALI

Koshan!

Koshan finally comes to his senses and they both trot down the stone stairs of the building into an alleyway.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - DAY

Koshan and Ali break into the alley, panting and exhausted. Sensing they're sufficiently far enough from the danger, they slow down and walk.

KOSHAN

That was good. I didn't dig it too deep.

ALI

Are you stupid?! Why didn't you come when I called? Were you waiting to get shot?

Koshan looks at Ali - he's never seen him this aggravated.

ALI

I'm too old to be carrying injured men on my shoulder, Koshan. Stop fucking around. You'll get us both killed!

KOSHAN

What's your problem?

ALI
Let's just hurry up!

INT. COMPOUND - NIGHT

Koshan sits in a huddle with several other men, giggling, smoking a joint, and making animated gestures describing the firefight.

Ali sits far away in the corner, completely alienated from the group. He looks at Koshan and crew, watches them laugh and be merry, taking it all in with a cynical.

He turns away, troubled and distraught.

KOSHAN
Hey, old man!

Ali turns to the group where Koshan is waving a soccer ball in his direction.

KOSHAN
Rematch?

Ali doesn't respond. Instead, he gets up and leaves the room. Koshan frowns. He that old man well enough to know there's something seriously amiss.

EXT. KABUL POLICE ACADEMY - NIGHT

An Afghan guard opens a steel gate and ushers in a U.S Army truck. In the back sits a man with a black hood over his head and zip ties binding his wrists together.

The truck stops, a couple of soldiers get out, grab the hooded man and lead him inside.

INT. KABUL POLICE ACADEMY - ROOM - NIGHT

A bare room containing only a metal table and a chair, currently occupied by the hooded prisoner. He pants quickly and nervously.

The hood is lifted off his face by a large, bony hand, causing the prisoner to squint at the new, uncomfortable beam of light coming from an overhead bulb.

He's Afghan, mid twenties. His face contains several fresh shrapnel wounds.

Flanking him is an Afghan Army interpreter, and sitting across from him, casually sipping on a cup of coffee, is Major Quincy.

MAJOR QUINCY
(to interpreter)
Ask him if he wants a cup of water.

The interpreter opens his mouth to speak, but the prisoner raises a handcuffed pair of hands in protest.

PRISONER
I can speak english.

MAJOR QUINCY
Good. That's good. What's your name?

PRISONER
Aarash.

Quincy places his coffee on the table and cracks his knuckles.

MAJOR QUINCY
Aarash. Nice to meet you. Is that your first name?

He nods, "yes".

MAJOR QUINCY
My name is John. I just want to talk to you for a bit. Is that alright?

Aarash looks at the interpreter, then back at Quincy, sizing them up.

MAJOR QUINCY
Now, I have a saying - Actually, It's my father's saying, he adopted it while he was fighting in Cambodia towards the end of his tour, but I always liked it, and I'm sure he wouldn't mind.

A beat.

MAJOR QUINCY
The saying is "kill the bad guys so we can save the good guys". Now, for the purposes of this meeting, I want to actually refine that

MAJOR QUINCY
philosophy. See, now I'm thinking
it should be "gather information
from the bad guys so we can save
the good guys". Yeah, I like that a
lot better, don't you?

Aarash shrugs.

MAJOR QUINCY
Now, despite your involvement in
that attack this afternoon that
left several of my men dead, in
some cases paralyzed - did you know
that, Aarash? Some of them are
paralyzed?

Aarash doesn't respond.

MAJOR QUINCY
Anyway, I don't consider you the
bad guy. It's the guy in charge of
you that's the bad guy. In this
case, Ali.

Aarash stirs in his chair.

MAJOR QUINCY
You know, I've been hunting him for
so long you may have gotten the
impression that I'm running around
in circles, that I'm never going to
find him, but the truth is...

Quincy leans in close. He locks eyes with Aarash.

MAJOR QUINCY
I'm closer than ever. And if I
don't find him here, in this room,
from the mouth of Aarash, the
Taliban piss ant, then it's going
to be out there, in a drone strike,
or by SEALs, or whoever else. And
believe me, Aarash, if they get him
out there, they're taking all your
buddies with him. Guaranteed.

A beat.

MAJOR QUINCY
So, what's it going to be, my
friend?

Aarash stares blankly for a second, then a soft gurgling from the depths of his throat becomes audible. Quincy and the interpreter trade looks. Then, Aarash opens wide and...

Spits a giant loogie that lands smack dab on Quincy's nose. Quincy sits there for a moment, convulsing with rage, a long stream of black spit trickling down his chin.

PRISONER

Fuck your mother.

EXT. BASE - NIGHT

Fahran stands outside his tent, gazing up at the stars. A vehicle suddenly pulls in, and a figure emerges. It storms out and makes a speedy walk with stiff, angry movements in Fahran's direction - a human wrecking ball if ever there was one.

Fahran smiles when he recognizes the man as Quincy.

FAHRAN

Hello, sir. How about another speech?

Quincy turns, his eyes wide with rage.

QUINCY

Get the fuck outta' my way.

Fahran shudders in terror as Quincy pushes him aside and continues walking.

INT. OFFICE - NIGHT

Mad as hell, Quincy swipes a dart off his desk and chucks it at the picture of Ali he has hanging on his wall. It lands right in his forehead, now huddled together with several other darts already planted.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

A long file of Taliban troops - led by Ali, wade through a muddy field.

Koshan lingers in the back with ABDUL, one of his soldiers.

KOSHAN

The old man's been acting strange.

ABDUL
Strange how?

KOSHAN
Reading alone in the corner. Being
alone all the time. Have you not
noticed anything?

Abdul shakes his head.

KOSHAN
Have you not noticed him talking to
himself? He's been acting strange.

ABDUL
Maybe he's smoking again. Remember
how much he used to smoke?

Koshan shakes his head.

KOSHAN
Tell everyone to keep an eye on
him. Just watch he doesn't do
anything.

ABDUL
Like what? What would the old man
do, Koshan?

KOSHAN
What did I say? I said just watch
him for now.

Abdul nods his head, reluctant.

KOSHAN
And just keep it quiet.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

The troops move into a small village. Koshan rushes up to
the front to greet the village elder, SAYED. The rest of the
troops disperse around the village.

SAYED
As-salamu alaykum.

KOSHAN
As-salamu alaykum. How is your boy?

SAYED

Sick right now, Koshan. God willing
he'll recover. My wife is taking
care of him now.

INT. SAYED'S HOUSE - DAY

Koshan steps inside. Splayed out on a Toshak is Sayed's
young son, pale and dehydrated. His WIFE strokes his hair.

SAYED'S WIFE

As-salamu alaykum, Koshan.

Koshan nods.

SAYED

We can't get to a doctor right now,
you see. There's too much fighting.
There's helicopters that come
around. We're scared to move,
Koshan.

Koshan turns to Sayed's wife, paying close attention to a
bulge in her stomach.

KOSHAN

(to Sayed's wife)

Come here.

Sayed and his wife trade looks. The woman approaches Koshan,
timidly avoiding his eyes. Koshan strokes her belly. She
shakes nervously.

KOSHAN

Sayed?

SAYED

Yes?

KOSHAN

Do you know the rumours I've been
hearing about your wife for the
past week?

SAYED

Rumours? Koshan, who would tell
rumours about my wife? Tell me
their name!

A threatening look comes over Koshan's face.

KOSHAN

Names, Sayed. NAMES. It's more than
one person.

SAYED

Koshan, please...

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

Ali sits by himself, smoking. A grotesque shriek echo's
through the village. Ali stomps out his cigarette and looks
over.

Koshan has Sayed's wife by the hair, dragging her into the
center of town. Sayed trails behind, begging and praying for
her release.

Soon, her screams of pain arouse everyone - Taliban and
civilian - in the area, and they slowly saunter over to
Koshan.

Koshan releases the woman from his grasp and she tumbles to
the ground. He addresses the crowd of onlookers.

KOSHAN

Allah warns us against adultery. To
live by his word also means to be
punished for defying his word. The
woman before you is guilty of such
sin, and it is therefore in the
order of Allah that she be
executed.

Koshan's troops cheer approvingly. Koshan loads a magazine
into his Assault Rifle. A young Taliban troop switches on a
digital video camera and starts recording the scene.

Ali watches, on the brink of protest, but he ultimately
stands back and blends into the crowd.

INT. COMPOUND - DAY

It's early and Ali is up, getting dressed. Around him are
his Taliban peers, all asleep.

KOSHAN (O.S)

Where are you going?

Koshan lifts himself up and makes his face visible amongst
the dormant bodies.

ALI
Just to the mosque.

KOSHAN
Hold on. I'm coming with you.

ALI
You should probably stay here.

KOSHAN
It's fine. I'm coming with you.

INT. MOSQUE - DAY

Prayer in session led by Imam Rashid. Amongst the crowd, Ali and Koshan are positioned beside each other, eyes closed, deeply focused on the ritual.

Suddenly, Koshan's concentration is broken. He slows his movements, noticeably out of sync with the rest of the group.

He opens his eyes, and twists his neck to look at Ali, praying beside him. Koshan studies him - worried and concerned.

EXT. MOSQUE - DAY

Fahran and Koshan walk towards their truck parked nearby. The sermon has long since ended and people file out of the Mosque.

ALI
How did we end up doing?

KOSHAN
Who?

ALI
The soccer team. The tournament.

KOSHAN
Second place. They blew the match against India.

Ali nods, then suddenly stops in place, allowing Koshan to overtake him. He continues for a few more steps, until he realizes Ali isn't walking anymore, and turns around to face him.

ALI
I'm leaving.

Koshan takes a second to process this.

KOSHAN
Why?

ALI
Because I'm done, Koshan.

Koshan takes several steps towards Ali until their noses are practically touching.

KOSHAN
Says who?

ALI
Koshan, I'm leaving. I could have just left in the middle of the night without saying a word, but--

KOSHAN
I would have stopped you.

Ali cracks a skeptical grin.

ALI
You would have stopped me.

Koshan raises his hands, inviting Ali to try something. When he doesn't, Koshan just stands there, helplessness creeping into his voice.

KOSHAN
It doesn't seem like we've been making progress, I understand that--

IMAM RASHID
--Everything alright?

Koshan and Ali turn to see Imam Rashid, slowly making his way towards them. Ali fishes the truck keys out of his pocket and holds them up.

ALI
Just deciding who is going to drive back.

Rashid nods, not buying a word of it. Ali walks off, leaving Koshan standing there.

INT. COMPOUND - NIGHT

Ali scans a newspaper, on the cover - a large, bold headline reads in Pashto "Taliban Commander killed in Kandahar airstrike" with an accompanying photo.

He lowers it when he hears the rustling of equipment - Koshan and crew strapping on vests and gathering weapons. Koshan rests an empty RPG tube on his shoulder.

Ali goes back to the newspaper. Koshan walks over and sits down beside him.

KOSHAN

I thought of leaving you once, you know.

ALI

When?

KOSHAN

The first time I ever went on patrol. I killed someone. I was scared. I was going to pack up and go.

Ali just sits in silence.

KOSHAN

But I stayed, and we went out again, and again, until killing became...routine.

A beat.

KOSHAN

You didn't make me pull the trigger, Ali, but you took me from my home. You took me when I was young and pure and now I'm a killer.

Koshan straps on a vest and loads a couple of magazines into the empty pouches.

KOSHAN

And you don't get to just run away from that.

ALI

Well, I am.

Koshan loads a rocket into the RPG.

KOSHAN

We'll see.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Fahran and a squad of Americans, out on patrol.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

They continue to march, rank and file. Far away is Sayed's village. Even from this distance, an eerie silence lingers over it.

EXT. SAYED'S VILLAGE - DAY

The squad scales up the steep mountain pass, entering further into the village.

It's totally quiet, minus the soft radio chatter from the rear of the formation.

They scan around, there's no sign of anyone. Fahran stumbles and climbs up, clutching onto boulders for support. Then, his eyes fall on something - he stops, his face turns pale, he nearly loses his footing and slides back.

He cocks his head sideways, confirming the dread of what he's seeing...

Several meters away, in plain view, though unseen by the Americans, is the body of Sayed's wife, a noose fastened around her neck, her body swaying from a thick tree branch.

Flies buzz around her lifeless face, and there's two large craters in her forehead - exit wounds from Assault Rifle rounds.

Fahran approaches her, slowly, cautiously, his eyes welling up with tears. He strokes her stiff, bare feet and begins praying in Pashto.

SQUAD LEADER

Jesus. Oh, fuck...

The squad leader runs up beside Fahran, a bandana pressed around his nose and mouth.

SQUAD LEADER

(behind him)

Medic! Someone get your ass over here!

The Americans bark chaotically and scramble forward upon seeing the scene in question. Fahran just stands there, tears in his eyes.

INT. RECREATION ROOM - NIGHT

Fahran is slumped out on a chair. The room is now full. A couple of soldiers play pool behind him.

MAJOR QUINCY (O.S)
Anyone sitting here?

Fahran looks up and see's Quincy. He quickly straightens himself and rubs his eyes, trying to conceal his stress.

FAHRAN
Oh, uh, no sir, go ahead.

Quincy takes a seat. They sit in silence for a beat.

MAJOR QUINCY
You uh, you alright?

Quincy looks at Fahran's weary face and immediately tries to muster something - anything.

MAJOR QUINCY
I got a speech - my father only spoke once about war. He was a Marine in Vietnam.

Fahran turns to Quincy.

MAJOR QUINCY
And I asked him, I said "Dad, what does it feel like to lose a war?" And he turned to me and said "Son, I won that war, it was the government that lost"
(beat)
For him, surviving was the mission. He figured if you stay alive long enough to get back to your family, then you've won.

Quincy furrows his brow, coming to a sudden realization.

MAJOR QUINCY
I know, that's not really a speech, is it?

FAHRAN
It's alright, sir. Thank you.

Beat.

QUINCY
Me? I say kill the--

FAHRAN
--Bad guys so we can save the good,
right, Major?

Quincy nods.

EXT. COMPOUND - DAY

Early morning.

INT. COMPOUND - DAY

A beam of sunlight streams through a window, hitting Ali in the face, waking him. He props himself up, and looks around at his sleeping comrades.

He cautiously gets up, already fully dressed, and scans around him for something. He searches for a moment, but his frustration mounts as he can't find what he's looking for.

He tries desperately to keep quiet, but he gets careless and begins making loud taps and scrapes, cursing silently to himself. Then, he see's it...

A small, silver glimmer fixed to Koshan's waist - a key ring. Ali looks at it, his hope collapsing right then and there.

He looks out the door at the truck, sitting there, mocking him with it's promise of freedom. He looks back at the keys on Koshan's waist - he'll most certainly wake up if Ali tries to get them.

Ali turns back to the truck, now frantic for a solution. Koshan stirs in his bed. Ali wipes a bead of sweat from his eyes.

Finally, a solution - Ali's eyes fall on a small motorcycle parked beside the truck, the keys sitting in the ignition, waiting for him.

He smiles and makes a discreet break towards it.

Ali takes a seat on it and twists the ignition, smiling to himself. The motorcycle sparks to life and Ali steps on the gas pedal. The bike lurches forward a couple of inches then stops abruptly.

Just as the bike dies, so too does Ali's excitement. He twists the ignition again.

Nothing.

ALI

Shit!

Ali trades looks between the bike and the Taliban inside, some of which have awoken to see what the commotion is.

His plan now fully thwarted, Ali steps on the gas pedal with full force. Inside, Koshan bolts awake. He takes one look at Ali and goes straight for his Assault Rifle.

Ali tries again. Still nothing. Koshan loads a magazine into his rifle, he places his finger on the trigger, and places Ali in his crosshairs, but hesitates.

He's fired thousands of rounds at hundreds of human beings but this one's different.

The bike suddenly jumps to life.

Koshan fights through his reluctance and squeezes the trigger at Ali. Ali accelerates out of the compound, unharmed.

KOSHAN

Go! Go! Let's go!

Koshan grabs the keys off his waist and jumps into the drivers side of the van. The entire population of the compound comes alive.

A handful of men jump into the van with Koshan. Another vehicle is brought forward, and with Koshan leading the pack, they all speed after Ali.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Ali chugs along on the bike. He looks over his shoulder - He's a good distance away from Koshan and crew, but they're gaining speed.

From behind, the loud crack of assault rifle fire, followed by the soft whizz of bullets barely missing Ali.

The gap between Ali and Koshan narrows. Ali is close enough to the vehicle that he can see Koshan leaning out the window with a pistol, popping shots at him.

One hand balancing the bike, Ali draws his own pistol from his waist and fires behind him, denting the hood of Koshan's vehicle.

Koshan continues firing back and one lucky shot finally manages to zip into Ali's back. Ali shrugs painfully, his hands and legs threatening to collapse the bike underneath him, though he manages to keep it steady enough to shoot back.

Koshan swerves to avoid the oncoming fire and slows down to a complete stop, allowing Ali to break ahead further.

Ali turns on to another street, out of sight, the small bullet hole in his back leaking blood.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Ali's eyes flicker, his hands go limp around the bike - he's losing too much blood.

He stops the bike, climbs off, and immediately collapses on the ground, digging his nails in the sand and trying to claw his way forward.

INT. KOSHAN'S TRUCK - DAY

Koshan and crew are back moving, scanning out the window for any trace of Ali. They come to a fork in the road, either road offering the possibility of Ali's escape.

TALIBAN PASSENGER

Which way?

Koshan picks a road and speeds down it.

EXT. MILITARY CHECKPOINT - DAY

Fahran, Bateson, and Frazier stand around.

BATESON

Look, all I'm saying Sergeant, is that you're paying for packaging. You're paying for a piece of cardboard. It's the same product, man, you're just paying for the

BATESON
 name. Now, if you're fine paying
 extra for a piece of cardboard,
 then great--

Frazier, who was listening, turns his attention down the road where Koshan is approaching them, tailed closely by another Taliban pick up.

BATESON
 Hold on, Sergeant.

INT. KOSHAN'S TRUCK - DAY

Koshan's hands go tight around the steering wheel when he see's what's up ahead.

KOSHAN
 Shit! It's a checkpoint.

TALIBAN PASSENGER
 Turn around! Turn around!

KOSHAN
 No. No. No. They'll shoot us. Just
 stay calm.

EXT. MILITARY CHECKPOINT - DAY

Koshan's truck slows down for the approaching barricade. The Taliban inside whip around in their seats anxiously.

Koshan approaches the vehicle and motions for Koshan to roll down the window. He does.

FAHRAN
 (in Pashto)
 Can you step out of the vehicle--

Fahran freezes. His eyes go wide. It's damaged and fatigued from years of combat, but he recognizes that face. For a moment, it seems as if the world has stopped turning. The two men stare at eachother for a long beat.

FAHRAN
 (under his breath)
 Koshan?

Reality sudden hits Koshan. He shakes himself out of his daze and slams his foot on the gas pedal. The truck screeches forward.

Bateson and Frazier dive out of the way just in time for Koshan's truck to come plowing through the checkpoint, narrowly missing them.

They both open fire, pelting the rear windshield and popping one of the tires as it takes off. Fahran turns to the remaining pick up truck and fires at the driver, who accelerates forward, his head ducked down.

Hearing the pick up behind him, Bateson turns - this time not quick enough. The truck slams into him, dousing the windshield with blood. Then, it too speeds off down the road.

Frazier rushes for the radio, Fahran to Bateson's corpse, sprawled out in a stiff, awkward pose on the side of the road.

INT. CAR - DAY

Koshan clings to the wheel, panting heavily. He twists the steering wheel and the truck goes careening off the road into the desert.

The other passengers in the truck bark orders. Variations of "Hurry up!" and "Move it!" In the rear view, the other pick up truck turns off the road, too.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

The pick up trucks continue their dusty retreat - two white blemishes in the vast desert.

INT. CAR - DAY

Koshan checks frantically in the rearview - they're safely out of the vicinity of the checkpoint. Relief creeps into everyone's face. They've made it.

Koshan turns to the rest of the Taliban, grinning. Everyone trades looks with each other, confirming that it's Ok to relax at this point.

Koshan let's out a victorious holler.

It's cut short moments later by the familiar sound of a whirring helicopter rotar over head.

Everyone freezes, The passengers scramble around, shouting and hollering in a panic. Koshan looks for an exit, but there's only the endless stretch of desert ahead.

A loud, ear shattering screech from above.

A long beam of 30 millimeter rounds tear apart the metal exterior of the truck trailing Koshan, prompting a loud explosion that sends it's metal skeleton springing in the air.

In the rearview, Koshan and the passengers watch in terror as half their cohorts vanish into a ball of fire.

KOSHAN

Shit!

Koshan remains glued to the rearview so long he doesn't notice a shallow ditch up ahead. At full speed, the front tire sinks in, flipping the car on it's back. The passengers bounce around the truck and land in contorted positions.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

Koshan sits twisted, upside down and strapped in the passengers seat gushing blood. The rest of the passengers scramble out of the door and make a break for it.

They run for a solid minute before the chopper opens fire on them with a strafe from it's machine guns. Koshan unstraps himself crawls, agonizingly, out of the truck.

On all fours, he drags himself into the ditch and looks around - there's an old burnt out car in the distance - perfect cover. He looks at it, then at his Taliban buddies trying hopelessly to escape the chopper fire. He can make it, but he'll have to be quick.

Using every ounce of strength that remains, Koshan scrapes himself towards the wreckage, panting and sweating. Blood oozes from his head and into he eyes though he doesn't stop to wipe it away.

Finished with the escapee's, the chopper makes a 180 degree turn in Koshan's direction.

He reaches the car, hops inside, and lays down in the charred remains of the back seat just as the chopper unleashes a flurry of bullets at the pick up he emerged from only moments ago.

Koshan peaks through a hole in the door at the helicopter fleeing from the scene. He collapses with relief.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

An eerie silence lingers over the carnage. Smoke has stopped billowing out of both trucks. Small pockets of blood litter the sand.

INT. DESTROYED CAR - NIGHT

Koshan is asleep. He suddenly jolts awake and looks around, disoriented for a moment, then collects himself.

He tries to move, but flinches in pain. He tries desperately to suppress a scream of agony, but can't. He lifts his pant leg, revealing his ankle - warped and deformed.

Gritting his teeth, he carefully begins the slow process of exiting the vehicle. Using the burnt out seat as a crutch, he yanks himself out the door and tumbles onto the sand outside.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

Koshan surveys all around him. He looks back at the pickup truck - the brown stock of an AK-47 sticks out of the ground nearby. Koshan heads towards it.

He yanks it out of the ground and slides back the bolt. It's covered in filth but it'll do.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

Later. Koshan proceeds towards a village in the distance, hobbling on one foot, and drenched in sweat and blood. He looks about as pathetic as can be.

EXT. VILLAGE - NIGHT

Clay houses bundled together on a mountain. Koshan staggers towards the closest house. He yanks a clean dress shirt off a clothes line and swaps it for his own.

EXT. VILLAGE - NIGHT

Koshan is pressed against the side of the house, teeth chattering and shivering violently. He stares out in bewilderment over the desert he's just slogged through, wondering how things got this bad.

EXT. PARADE GROUNDS - DAY

Quincy stands on a podium overlooking a new class of Afghan Army graduates, reading from a sheet of paper.

QUINCY

I believe in freedom for this country. I believe in justice for this country. I believe in opportunity for this country.

Off to the side, watching this unfold, is Fahran.

QUINCY

Which means I believe in war.

Beat.

QUINCY

Because if you think you're going to get one without the other, I'm here to tell you - you won't.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

Koshan wakes up, cramped and awkward.

QUINCY (V.O)

All of you might be here from different places or reasons, but starting today, right now, you all believe in war, too.

Koshan digs his assault rifle into the ground and rises to his feet, delicately. He peers around the corner - the village is alive and awake, going about their business.

EXT. PARADE GROUNDS - DAY

Quincy's speech continues.

QUINCY

I don't want anyone to be confused about what you'll be doing here. Your country is currently engaged in war, and you might not understand the why's or the where's, but starting now, you absolutely believe in the what - destroying the enemy.

Koshan gazes at Quincy, absorbed.

QUINCY

Fortunately, you've chosen the greatest team in the world to accomplish this mission. Treat your new title with pride. Perform your duties with courage and professionalism, and may god be with you.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

Koshan limps towards the goat pen, navigating around the shit again, keeping an anxious eye on the bucket of water at the back.

He suddenly missteps, does a clumsy dance to try and recover, and falls face first into a steaming pile of goat turd.

He lies there, writhing in pain for a long moment, before crawling on his belly towards the bucket, shoving goats out of his way, and dragging more shit along with him.

He finally reaches the bucket, jams his face in it and drinks.

BOY (O.S)

Sir?

Bucket pressed to his mouth, Koshan stops. Several goats perk up in the direction of the sound. He turns...

A young BOY stands there, chewing gum, gawking at the strange, shit covered man drinking out of the goats bucket.

INT. BOY'S HOUSE - DAY

Koshan, now washed, groomed, and with a new pair of clothes, sits around a table with the young boy, and his MOTHER and FATHER.

The father brings over a cup of tea and sets it down in front of Koshan.

FATHER

Where was your accident?

Koshan stares off, lost in thought.

EXT. VILLAGE - NIGHT

The boy carries a bucket of grounded up carrot and places it before the goat herd. They swarm it, digging their faces in. Koshan trails behind.

BOY

I named that one over there "Jaws".
He eats just like the shark in the
movie, see?

Koshan nods. His mind is elsewhere.

BOY

My father tells me not to name
them, because when they die, I
become sad.

Koshan glances out at the desert again.

KOSHAN

I have to get out of here.

BOY

Sir?

Koshan waves the boy away. He shrugs it off and goes back to the goats.

BOY

Sir, you should report your
accident, someone might--

KOSHAN

There was no accident. Shut the
fuck up and let me think!

Startled by Koshan's sudden outburst, the kid stands there, stunned and confused. Koshan turns to the boy.

KOSHAN

Everyone's dead. You understand?
Now what do I do?

Headlights in the far distance draw both Koshan and the boy's attention.

As fast as his injured leg will allow, Koshan plucks his assault rifle from a secluded spot in the pen and takes cover behind the wall. He peaks out - An American patrol is moving along a trail towards the village.

He stands there, motionless, trying to devise a strategy. People emerge from their houses to see the oncoming troops.

INT. HUMVEE - NIGHT

Fahran in the back seat, surrounded by Americans. One of them grabs a radio off the dash.

AMERICAN SOLDIER
(into radio)
Hoodlum, this is Hoodlum two
Actual. Stand by for Sitrep. Over.

RADIO (V.O)
Hoodlum actual standing by.

AMERICAN SOLDIER
(into radio)
We're pushing North to Papa Victor
two, seven, four, five, niner,
eight, to the nearest village to
question the locals on that RPG
team. Over.

RADIO (V.O)
Solid copy.

Through the windshield, the Humvee speeds up the road into the village that Koshan is currently occupying.

EXT. VILLAGE - NIGHT

The soldiers, including Fahran, are on foot now, entering the village. The village elder - an old afghan man with a bushy white beard, emerges from a clay house to meet them.

Fahran and the squad leader stop to chat with him. The rest of the patrol sets up a perimeter around the village.

SQUAD LEADER
(to village elder)
Salamu Alaykum.

The village elder nods. Fahran moves beside him, ready to translate.

Fahran diverts his eyes for a second - a silhouette with a rifle - Koshan, makes a quick zip behind a wall that's just noticeable enough to grab Fahran's attention.

Fahran makes a brisk walk towards the area in question. The American and village elder watch him break away from the conversation, mid sentence.

SQUAD LEADER

Hamzi, where the hell are you going?

Rifle raised, Fahran moves closer to the wall.

SQUAD LEADER

Hamzi? What the fuck are you doing?

Fahran moves closer and closer, until he's at the corner of the wall. He removes a flashlight and shines it in front of him. He braces himself, ready to round the corner and encounter whatever he just saw.

He pivots his boots, spins quickly around the wall, flashlight pointed in front of him, and...

Nothing. Just a band of goats stalled in their pen.

KOSHAN (O.S)

Pssstt! Fahran!

Fahran whips around, spinning his weapon and flashlight wildly in the direction of the voice. The beam of light falls on Koshan, arms held up defensively, tucked away in a corner.

Fahran lowers it and approaches him, slowly.

FAHRAN

Koshan?

KOSHAN

Yes. It's me.

A beat. The two finally have a second to size each other up.

FAHRAN

Are you...are you hurt?

KOSHAN

I'm OK.

SQUAD LEADER (O.S)

Hamzi, are you taking a piss? What are you doing?

The squad leaders footsteps become audible as he gets closer to them.

FAHRAN

(to squad leader)

Uh, Sergeant, don't come over here!

FAHRAN

Koshan, what happened to you? Do you know what I've heard? Do you have any idea what I've heard?!

KOSHAN

Fahran! I'll explain everything, I promise. Just give me a map!

FAHRAN

Are you kidding me? I should turn you in.

KOSHAN

Just a map, Fahran. Please. Just give me a chance to explain it.

FAHRAN

You won't make it a mile.

The squad leader is getting closer. Fahran reads Koshan's face. There's a desperation in his eyes that he can't ignore.

In a desperate haste, Fahran plucks a map from one of his pockets and hands it over. Koshan reaches out for it, but Fahran draws it back.

FAHRAN

You have a lot to explain.

Koshan nods, then folds up the map and places it in his pocket.

KOSHAN

Your canteen, too.

FAHRAN

Come on!

KOSHAN

Fahran!

Reluctantly, Fahran loosens his canteen from his pocket and hands that over, too.

FAHRAN

(muttering)

What am I doing...

KOSHAN

Meet me at my father's house tomorrow after seven.

FAHRAN

Go.

Koshan rounds the corner, out of sight. The squad leader intercepts Fahrnan as he turns away.

SQUAD LEADER

Why'd you take off?

FAHRAN

Sorry, Sergeant. I saw something.

SQUAD LEADER

Yeah, well, call it next time, don't fucking leave us hanging there. You're the translator. Let's go.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Quincy sits at his desk, shuffling papers. Fahrnan enters.

QUINCY

That last one was mine, Hamzi. I'm going to write all my speeches myself from now on. What do you think?

FAHRAN

Yes, sir.

QUINCY

To be honest, I didn't even really write it. It just sort of...came to me.

Quincy gets up, marker in hand, approaches his board of "Wanted posters" and draws a big "X" through Ali's face, which has been taped together since his previous outburst.

He takes a step back, admiring it, before taping up a picture of Koshan. Fahrnan reacts.

FAHRAN

(whisper)

Koshan...

Quincy goes back to his desk.

FAHRAN

Sir, did I ever tell you my parents were killed by Americans?

QUINCY

No. You didn't.

FAHRAN

They were shooting at the Taliban and my mother and father were hit in the crossfire.

Quincy looks at Fahran, sympathetically.

FAHRAN

My father always told me never to take sides. He said war was supposed to be fought between governments, and we're supposed to simply stand at the side, letting them...fix everything.

Beat.

FAHRAN

But my father was wrong. I took a side that day. I put my faith in my god, and that's why I'm here now.

Fahran turns to the picture of Koshan. He stares at it, suddenly conflicted.

FAHRAN

But what if I hadn't, and I had gone to the other side? Just a victim of war trying to protect the next little boy's parents?

Fahran and Quincy share an intense look, then Fahran turns to the picture of Koshan on the board.

FAHRAN

I'd just be another one of your pictures on the wall.

QUINCY

What are you trying to say? You can't think like that, man. What's done is done.

FAHRAN

Yes, sir.

Fahran suddenly becomes aware he's been addressing himself - lost in his own little world.

He gets up, heads for the door. Before Fahran exits...

QUINCY

Hey.

Fahran turns.

QUINCY

I'm glad you're with us. We're going to get them. Every last one of them. Believe that.

FAHRAN

(uncomfortable)

Yes, sir.

EXT. MOUNTAINS - DAY

Koshan, broken and battered, treads up a steep mountain pass.

He removes Fahran's canteen, takes a sip, and before he places it back in his holster, takes a moment to look it over.

"Hamzi" has been scrawled on the metal exterior with a black marker. Koshan runs a finger along it.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

Koshan shuffles along. The faint outline of a village is visible in the distance.

EXT. SAMIR'S HOUSE - DAY

Koshan, ready to collapse, reaches his former home. He looks in the windows - nothing. He looks around back - also nothing.

He scans around him, getting increasingly worried.

MAN (O.S)

Hello!

Koshan turns. A elderly Afghan man in the distance waves at him. Koshan waves back.

MAN

Can I help you?

KOSHAN
Is Samir here?

MAN
He's gone to town for a new radio.
Who are you?

Koshan let's the man eye him up and down for a beat. Then it hits him.

MAN
Koshan...?

Koshan nods.

MAN
Where have you come from?

Koshan points to the house.

KOSHAN
I'm going to wait inside for him.
I'm going wait for him to return.

Koshan heads inside before the man can say anything.

INT. SAMIR'S HOUSE - DAY

Koshan shuts the rickety wooden door behind him and turns to the interior of the house. He stands there, taking it all in, though it's impossible to read his expression.

Have things changed since he's last been here?

Koshan moves over to a Toshak (Afghan couch/bedding) and stretches out. It's completely silent except for the soft buzz of flies. Peaceful.

INT. SAMIR'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Koshan pulls back a curtain obscuring his father's room and steps in. He looks around, spots a stack of books resting in a shelf. A hunting rifle sits in the corner.

He moves towards the book shelf, pulls the thickest one out and opens it.

It's a photo album. The first few pages are faded colour photo's of Samir - Koshan's father, in an Army uniform, posing with a squad of other afghans during the war.

Koshan keeps flipping through the book - more photo's of Samir. Then, a handful of photo's later, Koshan stops.

Two full pages contain pictures of a teenage Fahran with Samir, clutching each other, smiling.

Koshan keeps turning the pages - More of the same, both father and "son" gradually getting older. Frustration creeps into Koshan's page flipping. Everywhere he looks it's Fahran and his father, almost as if Koshan never existed at all.

INT. SAMIR'S HOUSE - DAY

Koshan's back on the Toshak. Outside, the soft, labored sound of footsteps approaching the door. Then, it opens, revealing Samir.

He enters, radio in hand, removes his sandals, then freezes in place upon seeing the couch, where Koshan sits, staring at him, his face partially obscured by shadow. They both glare at each other for a long, tense moment, their eyes filled with hurt, confusion and pain.

Samir takes a couple of steps towards him, breathing deeply, examining his sons piercing eyes. Koshan tips his face into the sunlight, exposing his identity.

Flies buzz around them. Stares. Samir trembles with emotion.

SLAP!

He quickly and suddenly strikes Koshan with an open palm that leaves a red print on his cheek. Then again, and again, and again - his frail body trying to keep up with him. Koshan falls onto the ground submissively, taking all of it.

Eventually, they both run out of steam. Samir's slaps subside, and he stands there, crouched over his cowering son, weeping.

The intense, bitter moment suddenly turns tame. They both sit there, out of breath.

INT. SAMIR'S HOUSE - DAY

Koshan and Samir sit around the dinner table, the new radio sits in the corner, playing a Pashto news station.

KOSHAN

What happened to the dog?

SAMIR
He broke his legs jumping from a
rock. We had to put him down.

KOSHAN
When?

SAMIR
Five months ago.

KOSHAN
Won't you get another?

Samir gets serious. No more small talk.

SAMIR
What are you doing here?

Koshan shrugs.

SAMIR
Rafiq told me you let yourself in
to my home. Why did you let
yourself into my home?

KOSHAN
To see you.

SAMIR
I have nothing here that you'd
want.

Silence.

KOSHAN
Are you angry?

SAMIR
No.

KOSHAN
Nor am I.

SAMIR
What reason would you have to be
angry?

KOSHAN
For allowing another boy into my
home.

SAMIR

You mean Fahran? What should I have done?

KOSHAN

You should have tried to find me--

Samir hurls his cup of tea against the wall. It explodes into little shards all over the floor. Koshan just sits there. Samir tears up.

SAMIR

How dare you.

Beat.

SAMIR

You weren't here, begging the Americans, the British - anyone who would listen when I asked "where is my son? He's all alone out there, kidnapped by thugs, when he should be here, playing soccer with the other children", and watching them look at you like a fool. "Towelhead!" they'd say. "What a stupid towelhead you are!"

Koshan rolls his eyes.

SAMIR

I waited for a letter - a message of any kind, but nothing ever came, Koshan.

Beat.

SAMIR

(sarcastic)

But now you're here and thank god for that, right? You're back from fighting the infidels! praise Allah! My son has returned!

A tense, quiet moment of reflection passes between the two men.

Then, a knock at the door.

Samir gets up. Koshan stays put, he already knows who it is. From his seat at the table, he listens to the tender interaction between Fahran and Samir.

Then, they both enter the living area - Fahrhan now dressed in civilian clothing.

Koshan and Fahrhan give each other fleeting nods. Fahrhan eyes the broken tea cup in the corner with concern.

SAMIR
(to Fahrhan)
Tea?

FAHRAN
As long as you don't put--

SAMIR
"A boatload of sugar" in it. I know.

FAHRAN
At what point do you decide you've stopped drinking tea, and begun drinking only sugar?

SAMIR
I know I need to add more when you've nearly choked to death.

They chuckle. Koshan sits there, watching the ease of their interaction.

FAHRAN
Is that a new radio?

SAMIR
I broke a switch on the one you gave me.

Koshan clears his throat loudly, drawing everyone's attention.

KOSHAN
(to Fahrhan)
Can we speak now?

Fahrhan opens his mouth to respond, but Samir steps forward.

SAMIR
We're talking right now. Can't you see that?

Koshan rises to his feet. He beckons Fahrhan up, as well.

SAMIR

Sit down!

Koshan freezes.

SAMIR

What? can't you share your Taliban propoganda while I'm in the room?

Fahran places a reassuring hand on Samir's shoulder, sensing a fight looming.

FAHRAN

It's OK. We're just going to talk.

SAMIR

I know what they believe, Fahran. I know what they talk about. Why did you come here?!

Koshan stands there, watching his irate father point a long, condemning finger at him. Fahran whispers something to Samir and a short beat later, he's calm again.

Fahran beckons Koshan out the door. Samir watches Koshan go.

Fahran opens the door revealing, for a quick second, a pistol tucked in his waist that Koshan takes notice of.

EXT. SAMIR'S HOUSE - DAY

Koshan and Fahran kick a soccer ball back and fourth, Koshan taps the ball lightly, making sure to avoid his injured ankle.

KOSHAN

I don't know what to say.

The ball is kicked back to Fahran. He picks it up and turns to walk away.

FAHRAN

Then let me know when you do.

Koshan's mind races for something - anything as he watches Fahran walk further into the distance.

KOSHAN

You know why? Because there is nothing to say.

Fahran stops and turns around.

KOSHAN

This...all this is because of you.

FAHRAN

What are you talking about?

KOSHAN

I bet you think I'm the bad guy,
right? The evil Taliban?

Silence. Fahrhan can't speak.

KOSHAN

I'm only what you made me. What did
you think I was going to do when
you left me with Ali?

FAHRAN

I'm to blame for what you've
become? That's what you're saying?

Koshan shrugs, challenging the possibility.

FAHRAN

You haven't got the faintest idea
of what happened that night. I saw
an opportunity to escape, and I
took it. I'm here, standing right
here, because of that. I wish I had
enough time to save you, but I
didn't. No. I won't apologize.

Koshan shakes his head and let's out a cynical chuckle.

FAHRAN

What should I have done, Koshan?
Tell me, because whatever it is, it
doesn't matter now.

KOSHAN

You should have stayed with me,
like friends do.

FAHRAN

Then what? We both would have been
killed.

KOSHAN

At least we would have been
together.

Beat.

KOSHAN

Wasn't I always a good friend to
you, Fahran? Wasn't I always there?

Fahran takes a brief moment of reflection.

FAHRAN

Couldn't you have escaped?

KOSHAN

To where? To who?

Koshan points to the house.

KOSHAN

A drunk? A man who disappears for
days and leaves his son alone to
fend for himself?

Beat.

KOSHAN

He doesn't even have a picture of
me. Not one picture.

INT. SAMIR'S HOUSE - DAY

Safely out of sight, Samir listens to this interaction through the window. He reacts to Koshan's confession with a look of empathy previously unseen. He's potentially hearing this information for the first time.

EXT. PARADE GROUND - DAY

Fahran - a speck in the neat rank and files of other Afghan soldiers. A portly Afghan officer standing before them calls Fahran to the front of the formation.

He marches smartly to the front where they exchange salutes. The officer tugs the two "Corporal" rank epaulettes off of Fahran's shoulders and replaces them with the new rank of "Sergeant".

The other troops break into applause. Fahran returns to the formation, putting on a fake smile, but his mind is elsewhere.

INT. SAMIR'S HOUSE - DAY

Koshan wakes up, bundled on a Toshak. He looks around in a daze, then gets up.

EXT. SAMIR'S HOUSE - DAY

Koshan emerges from the house and spots Samir out back, fumbling with his hunting rifle. He approaches him.

Samir takes a quick glance at Koshan, watching him over his shoulder, then goes back to the rifle. Samir holds it to his shoulder, squeezes the trigger, and...

Click.

Frustrated, he slaps it with an open palm, raises it and pulls the trigger again. Still nothing. He turns to Koshan, looming over him in silence.

SAMIR

Are you just going to stand there,
or are you going to help me?

Koshan grabs the rifle from Samir's hands and pulls back the bolt to inspect the chamber.

He holds it upside down, rattles it, and a crooked bullet falls out onto the sand. Koshan loads another round, holds it to his shoulder and fires.

Bang! A small mound of dust explodes in the far distance. Koshan hands the rifle back to his father with a satisfied grin.

Samir grabs it - a little too roughly, from his son's hands.

EXT. KITCHEN - DAY

Koshan and Fahrhan sit around a tandoor (Afghan bread oven). Koshan flattens bread dough with his hands.

KOSHAN

"Sergeant Hamzi". Very official.

FAHRAN

I'd prefer "General Hamzi" but
it'll do for now.

KOSHAN
General. Imagine what your father
would think.

FAHRAN
I'd rather not.

Koshan places the bread dough around a small flame inside
the oven.

FAHRAN
And you? What do you think?

KOSHAN
I think you believe in what you're
doing. I think you believe I'm the
enemy.

FAHRAN
Yes. You are.

KOSHAN
Then why don't you kill me?

FAHRAN
Maybe I should.

Koshan looks up from his bread to look into Fahrnan's eyes.
He's completely serious.

KOSHAN
Why else would you carry around
that pistol? You aren't on duty.

FAHRAN
What pistol?

KOSHAN
I saw you carrying one yesterday.

FAHRAN
What makes you think I'm carrying
it now?

A tense beat.

KOSHAN
Are you?

Fahrnan doesn't respond.

INT. SAMIR'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Everyone sits around the table, eating. It's silent. The power has been turned off, and a dim lantern rests in the middle of the table.

No one says a word.

EXT. SAMIR'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Fahran and Koshan stand outside the house. Koshan draws a cigarette from a pack and offers one to Fahran. He refuses.

FAHRAN

What happened to Ali?

Koshan gives Fahran a look.

FAHRAN

No, I mean...why?

KOSHAN

He was a deserter.

FAHRAN

He tried to escape.

KOSHAN

(getting heated)

That's right. He got what he deserved, and god willing his cowardice will be punished in hell.

FAHRAN

So, what are you doing here?

Koshan thinks for a moment, not wanting to look vulnerable.

KOSHAN

Recovering.

FAHRAN

And when you recover--

KOSHAN

--Don't worry about me.

Pause.

FAHRAN

I do.

KOSHAN

You shouldn't. I don't worry about you, so you shouldn't worry about me.

The headlights of a taxi van pull into the village and stop in front of them. Fahran heads towards it, and Koshan turns back to his father's home.

Before Fahran enters the taxi...

FAHRAN

Koshan!

Koshan turns back.

FAHRAN

You wanted to know if I was carrying a pistol?

Koshan stands there, hooked by the invitation.

Fahran lifts up his shirt, exposing the bare circumference of his waist - empty.

FAHRAN

I could never do it.

KOSHAN

I could.

Fahran gets into the cab.

INT. SAMIR'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Koshan re-enters. Samir is seated on a Toshak, flipping through his photo album.

KOSHAN

What are you doing?

SAMIR

What does it look like? I'm looking through these photo's.

Koshan takes a seat next to his father, looming over his shoulder, staring at the pages. Samir traces his finger over a polaroid of a little girl, outfitted in a blue dress and burkha.

KOSHAN
Who's that?

A beat.

SAMIR
Your mother.

This grabs Koshan's attention. He leans in close.

SAMIR
This was our wedding day.

KOSHAN
How old was she?

SAMIR
Twelve.

KOSHAN
Let me see it.

Samir pries the photo from the plastic cover and hands it to Koshan.

KOSHAN
What's that in her hand?

SAMIR
A toy. She was holding onto it for dear life during the entire ceremony. She hardly said a word.
(beat)
I forced myself on her that night. The blood...she bled so much. The look in her eyes...

Samir shakes his head at the thought of it.

SAMIR
I didn't care for any of that. She screamed all the way to the hospital and I hit her just for a moment of peace.

Beat.

SAMIR
It went on like that. All those years it was the same thing. You were born out of a loveless marriage between a crazy war veteran and a child.

Samir plucks the photo from Koshan's hands, wedges it between two pages and shuts the book.

KOSHAN

That's the first time you've ever spoken about my mother.

Samir gets up and heads for his room.

SAMIR

I'll be going to the mosque tomorrow morning. You can come if you'd like.

KOSHAN

No. I can't risk being in public right now.

Samir nods, trying not to look disheartened.

SAMIR

Good night...son.

EXT. BASE - DAY

Fahran and a squad loading weapons, checking gear, preparing themselves for a patrol.

QUINCY (O.S)

Hamzi.

Fahran, who was putting on a flak vest, cocks his head sideways. Quincy's jogging towards him.

FAHRAN

Major.

QUINCY

Heard about the promotion. Just wanted to say congrats.

FAHRAN

Thank you, sir. I'll do my best.

Quincy nods.

QUINCY

Where's your canteen, Hamzi?

Fahran freezes, trying to conceal a stunned look.

FAHRAN
Oh, uh, I must have lost it on
patrol, sir.

QUINCY
Losing gear? You're off to a bad
start, Sergeant.

Quincy chuckles. Fahrhan swallows nervously. Quincy notices.

QUINCY
Something wrong, Hamzi?

FAHRAN
No, sir. You're right.

QUINCY
Here...

Quincy removes his own canteen from his belt and hands it
over.

QUINCY
Till' you get a replacement.

FAHRAN
Thank you, sir.

An awkward beat.

QUINCY
I don't see you anymore. I enjoyed
our talks.

FAHRAN
Been busy, Major. Family stuff.

Quincy nods, trying to read Fahrhan's face.

Fahrhan waves goodbye and trots off with the rest of the
squad. Quincy watches him go.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Fahrhan and a squad on patrol. Fahrhan barks an order in
Pashto to some of the other Afghan's, bunched up in the
formation. They spread out.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Later. It's quiet, except for the soft squish of a dozen boots under the dirt. A radio crackles in the rear of the formation.

Fahran moves slowly. He's alert. Alive and present.

CRACK!

A shot in the distance tears through the silence and lands right into an Afghan soldier's chest.

SOLDIER

Contact, left!

Crouched down, everyone quickly scuttles behind a cement barrier several meters away. Another shot. The wounded Afghan soldier screams.

The Americans open fire, blindly letting a stream of bullets loose into nothing.

Fahran rests his weapon on the barrier, cool, collected, staring down the iron sights of his rifle, scanning the swaying tree's ahead of him.

A speck in the distance zips by, the clear outline of a rocket launcher resting on its shoulder. Fahran presses his rifle to his shoulder. He loops his finger around the trigger, readying himself to shoot.

The figure emerges over a small mound, in perfect view. Fahran plants his sights right over it, but immediately loosens his grip when he sees who it is - a small, ten year old boy.

Over the loud babel of Pashto and American shouting and gunshots, Fahran just stands there, baffled.

The kid unslings the rocket launcher from his shoulder and loads another round in. Fahran's breathing picks up. He's sweating. He forces his finger back on the trigger, trying desperately to block out any outside emotion, but all he can see is Koshan in that kid.

A bony American hand grips Fahran's shoulder.

SOLDIER

Shoot him! Shoot the fucker!

The American fires at the kid, hands trembling, shots going wide.

Round loaded, the kid raises the rocket to his shoulder. Fahran's eyes go wide as he realizes he's hesitated a beat too long.

SOLDIER

Get down!

A rocket comes whistling right toward him. Fahran ducks down and closes his eyes in anticipation of the impact. The rocket explodes, followed by a loud, shriek of pain from a soldier.

The American looks at Fahran, staring daggers through him. Fahran looks away, timidly. He knows he fucked up.

INT. BUILDING - DAY

Quincy enters. The loud sound of ruckus is audible down the hall - cries of pain, glass smashing, etc...

His pace quickens.

INT. RECREATION ROOM - NIGHT

Quincy steps in. There's a gaggle of soldiers huddled around in a circle, cheering wildly, throwing fists in the air.

QUINCY

...the fuck...

Quincy pushes his way through the crowd, then he see's the source of the commotion - Fahran and the American soldier, locked in a vicious wrestling match, bloodied and bruised.

QUINCY

Hey! Hey! Break it up!

Quincy grabs Fahran by the collar and yanks him off. Some other soldiers step in, tugging the other soldier away. They stand there, panting heavily.

QUINCY

What in the fuck is going on here?

AMERICAN SOLDIER

You wanna' know what's going on here, Major? I'm apprehending a fuckin' traitor, that's what's going on.

FAHRAN

Major, he just swung at me, I have no idea what he's talking about--

AMERICAN SOLDIER

--Oh, bullshit! Tell everyone how you looked at the enemy and watched him shoot a rocket right at us!

QUINCY

What?

AMERICAN SOLDIER

God damn right! Jones is sitting at the MTF right now, half of his leg blown off cause' of this piece of shit!

The soldier lunges at Fahrhan but is quickly restrained.

AMERICAN SOLDIER

Then I hear from Sergeant Culver that he walks off during a patrol last week. Can you believe that? They're talkin' to the village elder and he just up and disappears around the corner, he says.

FAHRAN

I thought I saw something--

AMERICAN SOLDIER

Oh, yeah, you saw one of your fuckin' Taliban buddies, that's what you saw--

FAHRAN

Oh, come on--

AMERICAN SOLDIER

--Huh? you planning the Jihad? You gonna' shoot us all in the back, huh?

A shameful silence. Quincy let's both men collect themselves.

AMERICAN SOLDIER

I'm sorry, Major, but I can't do this. I can't keep goin' out wondering if these pricks are going to be hidin' in a ditch somewhere when the shit hits the fan.

The American soldier spins around, addressing the entire group.

AMERICAN SOLDIER

I know ya'll know what I'm talkin' about. Don't be lookin' at me like that.

QUINCY

Hamzi. Step outside for a minute.

Fahran does. Quincy follows.

EXT. BASE - DAY

Quincy and Fahran step out.

FAHRAN

Major, I...

QUINCY

What?

Fahran swallows nervously. Quincy watches his tongue dance around in his mouth, struggling to force something out. A small stream of blood runs out of Fahran's nostril. He wipes it away.

QUINCY

Something you wanna' talk about?

FAHRAN

Yes - er, no, I mean--

Quincy grabs Fahran by the collar and pins him against the side of the building.

QUINCY

Don't fuck with me, Hamzi! Not you! Not now.

Beat. Quincy softens his voice.

QUINCY

You tell me what's going on, and not as a soldier, as a fucking person. Go on, man.

FAHRAN

It's just family stuff--

QUINCY
What kind of family stuff?

FAHRAN
Just...family stuff, Major. I'll
take care of it.

Quincy releases Fahrhan from his grasp.

QUINCY
What can I do, Hamzi?

FAHRAN
Nothing, Major. You can't do
anything right now.

Beat.

QUINCY
Can I trust you?

FAHRAN
What?!

QUINCY
You heard me.

FAHRAN
(without hesitating)
Yes!

Quincy, skeptical, starts to back away.

QUINCY
Just take care of what you need to
take care of, alright?

FAHRAN
Yes. Of course.

QUINCY
Yes, what?

Fahrhan looks sternly into Quincy's eyes.

FAHRAN
Yes, sir.

EXT. SAMIR'S HOUSE - DAY

Koshan's outside, praying on a small rug.

EXT. SAMIR'S HOUSE - DAY

Later.

Koshan has finished his prayer, and folds up the rug. He heads back into the house, when something catches his attention in the field outside the village walls.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Koshan stands before the lifeless body a dog. It's tongue is stuck out, it's eyes rolled back in it's head. A YOUNG BOY is bent over it, crying, stroking it's hair.

Koshan sighs and rubs his temples.

YOUNG BOY

She was running around just fine.

What happened to her?

(to the dog)

What happened, Kalila? Wake up.

KOSHAN

She won't wake up, kid.

Beat.

KOSHAN

She's dead.

The kid's crying intensifies. Koshan just stands there.

KOSHAN

Get me a shovel. I'll help you bury her.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Later.

Koshan, shovel in hand, prods the ground for a soft spot. He finds one and spears the shovel into the dirt. He starts digging.

YOUNG BOY

Her leash was always coming loose. One time, she got loose and ripped all of the clothes down. My mother had to stitch three of my father's shirts for the next week.

Koshan pauses for a moment to wipe the sweat off his forehead.

YOUNG BOY

Do you think if I had tied the leash tighter, it would have helped?

Koshan shrugs his shoulders. He's completely absorbed in his task. His digging intensifies, like a fire has been lit underneath him. The kid keeps talking, but he tunes it out.

Something sinister floods Koshan's eyes. He's no longer digging a hole for a dead dog, but an IED out in the road - ready to blast away an American convoy.

He clenches his jaw. The shovel hits a rock. Koshan viciously kicks at it, prompting a loud metal PING off the hard surface. The boy looks over, curious, but Koshan continues to dig, the Taliban ferocity slowly creeping back into him.

YOUNG BOY

I think that hole is deep enough.

KOSHAN

(stern)

No. It isn't.

Blood drips from Koshan's palms, and slides down the wooden shaft of the shovel. The boy lifts his eyebrows, now very concerned.

KOSHAN

Can't dig it too deep. It won't work if it's too deep.

YOUNG BOY

What won't work?

Koshan scoops the dirt out of the hole, tossing it recklessly over his shoulder.

YOUNG BOY

You're bleeding, sir.

The hole is now about three times as big as it needs to be. Koshan's in a reverie. His breathing quickens, his pace accelerates. You'd think he was digging up a lost Egyptian artifact.

KOSHAN

You can't dig it too deep, you understand? Otherwise it won't work, but you can't let...them...see...it.

The kid tries to intervene by placing a hand on Koshan's shoulder. Koshan flinches, quickly spins around and connects an open palm with the boy's face.

He groans in pain and falls down, sobbing.

KOSHAN

I'm...I'm sorry, here...

Koshan, now out of his daze, tosses down the shovel, and offers a hand to the boy. The boy slaps it away.

YOUNG BOY

No! Don't touch me!

He gets up, rubbing his cheek and backing away from Koshan, a new terror in his eyes.

YOUNG BOY

What is wrong with you?

The kid sprints away back to the village, leaving Koshan standing there alone with the dead dog. He looks at his hands, bloody, covered in wooden splinters, puzzled that he was unable to control himself for that brief encounter.

INT. SAMIR'S HOUSE - DAY

Fahran (in civilian clothing) and Koshan sit at the table, drinking tea. Samir is still out.

KOSHAN

What was it like living with my father?

Fahran shrugs.

FAHRAN

I didn't have anywhere else. It wasn't good or bad, it just was.

KOSHAN
I've been thinking...

Koshan sets down his tea.

KOSHAN
He's old. He needs someone.

Fahran's gears start turning, he gets the hint.

FAHRAN
...Like you?

KOSHAN
(defensive)
Maybe.

FAHRAN
Koshan, what are you talking about?

KOSHAN
I'm talking about staying here. I'm
talking about looking after my
father. Here. With him.

Fahran shakes his head.

FAHRAN
No, no, no--

KOSHAN
What?

FAHRAN
Koshan, you need to get out of
here. Soon. Go to Pakistan. Go
somewhere far away from here.

KOSHAN
(shakes his head)
I'm not afraid of your friends.

FAHRAN
I'm not talking about my friends,
I'm talking about me--

KOSHAN
Well, I don't care about you,
either! Fuck you!

Silence.

FAHRAN

Koshan, whatever I've done to you,
I'm sorry. Alright? Is that what
you want me to say? I'm sorry.

Koshan tears up and diverts his gaze to the window.

FAHRAN

Look at me.

Koshan turns back to Fahran, eyes glassy and red.

FAHRAN

You have to get out. You have to
get away from here. They'll kill
you both.

Outside a vehicle comes to a dusty stop. Samir's voice
echoes outside as he chats to a cab driver. Fahran and
Koshan look at each other.

KOSHAN

Do you remember when we were kids,
and I was telling you about Hamad
dying? Bahrang's brother, Hamad.

Fahran nods.

KOSHAN

We started talking about it. I said
I'd want to go out like this...

Koshan mimics a gun battle with his hands.

FAHRAN

And I said I'd want to go out like
this...

Fahran mimics a small mushroom cloud exploding.

FAHRAN

I remember.

Koshan chuckles at the thought of it. Outside, Samir's
footsteps progress closer to the house.

KOSHAN

I think I agree with you. That'd be
much better.

FAHRAN

One day, this will all be over, and
the only death we'll need to

FAHRAN
discuss is when we're old men with
children.

Koshan laughs again. Samir enters and both men turn to him.
Samir smiles at the sight of them.

INT. SAMIR'S HOUSE - DAY

Everyone sits around the dinner table, post meal. Samir
clears his throat, breaking the silence.

SAMIR
I found this at the market, I don't
know if it works or not - they're
always selling me things that don't
work...

Samir reaches for a black bag and rifles his hand through
it. Koshan and Fahrhan trade looks.

SAMIR
...It was cheap. I think it's old.

Samir's hand emerges from the bag holding a camera - one of
those old polaroids that dispenses a photo the moment it's
taken.

Samir sets it down on the table. Koshan and Fahrhan look at
it. Samir's eyes dart away from it, nervously. This whole
"sentimentality" thing isn't his strong suit.

SAMIR
I just thought...if you can get it
to work...

Koshan grins.

KOSHAN
I have to use the latrine. Excuse
me.

EXT. SAMIR'S HOUSE - DAY

Koshan steps out and rounds the corner out of sight. Then,
he immediately begins bawling his eyes out. He presses his
hand over his lips to suppress his whimpering.

EXT. SAMIR'S HOUSE - DAY

Everyone steps outside, Fahrhan with the camera in his hands. Koshan and his father awkwardly step beside each other and smile for the camera. Snap. The photo is dispensed.

Fahrhan shakes it and hands it to Samir.

SAMIR

Wait...

Samir grabs the camera from Fahrhan and motions for him and Koshan to move beside each other. They look at each other, reluctant, then they too, move beside each other.

At first, they simply stand shoulder to shoulder. Then, as Samir slowly raises the camera, Koshan drapes an arm around Fahrhan's shoulder.

They smile and the picture is taken.

INT. OFFICE - NIGHT

Quincy stands behind his desk, looking at a calender. He grabs a black marker and places an X over today's date. He plots his pen along three tiny squares and stops.

"Going Home" has been written in black marker. Quincy looks at it, a mixture of emotions washing over him.

EXT. BASE - NIGHT

Quincy emerges from the building, see's Fahrhan strutting towards his barracks and makes a light trot towards him.

QUINCY

Hamzi!

Fahrhan turns.

FAHRAN

Major. How are you?

QUINCY

Yeah, I'm heading home soon, so I was wondering if I could get my canteen back from you.

FAHRAN

OK, sir.

INT. FAHRAN'S BARRACKS - NIGHT

Fahran rummages through his ruck sack. Quincy idles beside him.

FAHRAN
When are you leaving, Major?

QUINCY
Next week.

FAHRAN
How do you feel?

QUINCY
I feel like...

Quincy thinks for a moment.

QUINCY
...I feel like your country has got
a lot of problems, Hamzi.

FAHRAN
I think yours does, too, Major.

Beat.

QUINCY
What's the status on that canteen?

FAHRAN
I must have left in my vest. Give
me a moment, please.

Quincy nods. Fahran walks over to his cot, and that's when Quincy see's it - a polaroid wedged into one of the pockets on Fahran's ruck sack.

Quincy looks at Fahran - occupied with his vest. He quickly plucks it from it's place and looks at it.

Fahran and Koshan, smiling - Koshan's arm wrapped around him like they've been chums their whole life.

Quincy's face turns stone grey. He can barely breathe. Quincy turns back to Fahran, his face offers the possibility that he could kill him, right here, right now. Then...

FAHRAN (O.S)
Ah, here we go...

Fahran holds up Quincy's canteen like a lost relic. Quincy quickly pockets the photo before Fahran notices. He hands over the canteen.

Quincy tries his best to conceal the hatred on his face.

FAHRAN

Sir, I just wanted to say, in case
I don't see you again, that it's
been a pleasure working and talking
with you.

Fahran holds out his hand for Quincy to shake. Quincy looks at it, ready to tear his whole arm out of his socket.

Instead, he grabs Fahran's hand and shakes it.

QUINCY

Yeah, you too.

INT. OFFICE - NIGHT

Quincy approaches the mug shot of Koshan and holds up the polaroid beside it for confirmation.

It all suddenly comes together and hits him like a freight train.

QUINCY

Fuck me...

INT. SAMIR'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Samir has the photo album open. He gently places the polaroid of him and Koshan in one of the pages.

He smiles and closes the book.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Fahran, now driving a used, beat up car, barrels down an dusty road. Behind him, far enough away to not arouse suspicion, is another civilian car.

INT. CIVILIAN CAR - DAY

A middle aged Afghan man drives. In the back, the leather seats shift, and a short moment later, Quincy's eyes peer out.

DRIVER
He's turning here.

MAJOR QUINCY
Just keep following him.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

Fahran pulls in, and slows the car to a crawl, stopping just outside Samir's house. He steps out, greeted by Koshan in the doorway.

KOSHAN
Nice car.

Fahran shrugs.

FAHRAN
It was cheap.

KOSHAN
Cheap. Heh. My father really screwed you up, didn't he?

FAHRAN
And your face.

They chuckle. Koshan gives Fahran a playful punch. Koshan quickly gets serious.

KOSHAN
Fahran, I want you to...

Koshan struggles to continue.

KOSHAN
...I want you to take care of him.
Just visit him every once in a while. Please.

Beat.

FAHRAN
What are you talking about?

KOSHAN

I'm leaving. I don't know where
yet, but it's time. It feels right.
(beat)
Will you do that?

Fahran nods.

FAHRAN

Will you be OK?

Koshan shrugs.

FAHRAN

I wish I could go with you.

KOSHAN

No...

Koshan waves his hands in protest.

KOSHAN

I couldn't live with your shitty
goal tending.

They both smirk.

FAHRAN

My goal tending? I barely even
moved your shots were so bad.

INT. CAR - DAY

From the back seat, Quincy watches Fahran and Koshan share a warm embrace. He twitches with anger.

MAJOR QUINCY

(to driver)

Let's go. I've seen enough.

The driver reverses out of the village and takes off.

INT. SAMIR'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Everyone sits around the table, eating dinner, laughing, teasing - a cozy and warm contrast to the previously tense meals before.

EXT. BASE - NIGHT

Fahran pulls into a vacant spot at the base, and gets out of the car.

EXT. BASE - NIGHT

Fahran heads towards his barracks. The loud sound of several Humvee's draws his attention.

He turns to see two Humvee's crowded by a squad of Special Forces soldiers - armed with silenced weapons and night vision goggles - on the landing zone.

The soldiers load into the vehicles. Fahran watches for a beat, then continues on his way.

INT. FAHRAN'S BARRACKS - NIGHT

Fahran enters and heads towards his bunk. He freezes when he gets there. There's a silhouette sitting upright, watching him. It's face shrouded in darkness.

MAJOR QUINCY

Hamzi.

Fahran squints, his mind races. Then, it hits him.

FAHRAN

Major?

MAJOR QUINCY

Yeah, Hamzi. It's me.

Fahran chuckles nervously.

FAHRAN

What are you doing in here?

MAJOR QUINCY

Do me a favor, Hamzi.

FAHRAN

How long have you been here--

MAJOR QUINCY

--Lift up your shirt.

FAHRAN

Excuse me? Hold on a second, Major.

Fahran heads for the light switch. The hard, metallic click of a hammer being pulled back becomes audible in the darkness.

MAJOR QUINCY
No. Leave it off.

Fahran freezes. He raises his hands.

FAHRAN
Major? What is this--

MAJOR QUINCY
Put your hands down.

Fahran does. Quincy lifts himself off the bunk and walks into a stream of moonlight that makes only his displeased, determined eyes visible.

FAHRAN
Major? Are you holding a gun?

MAJOR QUINCY
Yes...

Indeed, Quincy holds up his 9mm sidearm. It glistens in the moonlight. A bead of sweat runs down Fahran's head.

MAJOR QUINCY
Yes. I have a gun, and I'll shoot you if you don't do exactly as I say.

FAHRAN
Quincy, it's me, Fahran Hamzi. It's me, remember--

MAJOR QUINCY
--And another thing, no talking unless I ask you a question.

FAHRAN
Just calm down, sir--

Quincy extends his arm, placing the barrel of his pistol just under Fahran's nose, daring him to say another word.

FAHRAN
Ok. Ok. I understand.

MAJOR QUINCY
Good. Now, lift up your shirt.

Fahran does.

MAJOR QUINCY
Anything in your pockets?

FAHRAN
Just my car keys.

MAJOR QUINCY
Show me.

Fahran twists his pockets inside out, and his keys tumble to the floor.

MAJOR QUINCY
Pick them up. Slowly. Then, place them back in your pocket. Make sure I can see you do it.

Fahran does. Quincy follows him with his pistol.

MAJOR QUINCY
Do you have anything else on you?

Fahran shakes his head, nervously. A tear runs down his cheek. His lip curls.

MAJOR QUINCY
Here's what's going to happen - I'm going to holster my weapon, and we're going to walk to your car. When we get there, you'll stop, and you won't touch anything. Easy enough?

Fahran nods. More tears run down his face.

MAJOR QUINCY
Good. We're going to keep a three meter space between us. If you wander, I'll shoot you.

FAHRAN
Major, I just need to know--

MAJOR QUINCY
DON'T TALK! I swear to god, don't you fucking talk again.

Fahran nods. He's trembling uncontrollably.

MAJOR QUINCY
Move.

EXT. BASE - NIGHT

Fahran walks, sniffing, his hands slightly raised, waist high. Quincy trails behind, a hand placed firmly over his holstered pistol.

All around the, soldiers walk by, oblivious. Quincy trots up to Fahran and leans in close to his ear.

MAJOR QUINCY

Put your hands down. Put your hands down.

Fahran does, continuing his walk with stiff, awkward strides. They finally make it to his car and Fahran stops.

MAJOR QUINCY

Get in, slowly. Then, open the back door. I'm going to get in.

FAHRAN

The back door is already unlocked, Major.

With his available hand, Quincy tugs on the handle. The door pops open. He nods.

MAJOR QUINCY

Alright, then. You're going to get in first, then I'm going to get in the back. Do it slowly.

Hands still jittering, Fahran places the keys into the drivers side door. They slide out of his grip, onto the ground. Quincy frowns.

MAJOR QUINCY

(enraged)

Stop fucking around. Pick them up. Let's go.

FAHRAN

(hysterical)

I'm sorry. I'm so sorry, Major. I didn't mean to drop them. I just--

MAJOR QUINCY

Hamzi? Look at me. Calm down. Get in the car.

Fahran nods and he does.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Later.

Up ahead is the end of the road. They can turn left or right, but going straight will take them out into a long stretch of desert.

FAHRAN
Which way, Major?

MAJOR QUINCY
Did I tell you to talk? Just keep going straight.

Fahran hesitates. He takes his foot off the gas.

FAHRAN
But there's nothing--

MAJOR QUINCY
I'm aware of that. Keep going.

Fahran complies, and the tiny car trades the soft road for the bumpy, rough terrain of the desert.

Behind them, a grey pick up truck speeds up. Quincy looks out the back window at it, then shrugs it off, and turns back to Fahran.

Something hisses from Quincy's pocket. He reaches in and draws a small walkie.

RADIO VOICE (V.O)
Hunter. This is Hunter One Actual,
we're about three miles from the
target. How copy?

MAJOR QUINCY
(into radio)
Solid copy. Hunter out.

Quincy looks out the rear window again. The grey pick up continues to trail them. Quincy gets antsy.

In the front, Fahran mumbles a pashto prayer to himself. It starts soft and subdued, but then gets frantic and strong.

Quincy gazes out the back window, now occupied by both Fahran's mumbling and the trailing pick up truck.

MAJOR QUINCY
(Re: Truck)
God, what is this asshole doing?

FAHRAN
Are you going to kill me, Major?
Please don't shoot me! Please--

MAJOR QUINCY
Shut the fuck up!

Quincy tries desperately to keep his attention on Fahrhan and the speeding truck behind them.

FAHRAN
Major, I don't know what I've done.
It's me. Fahrhan Hamzi. I thought we
were friends, Major. What have I
done?

MAJOR QUINCY
Shut up. Just shut up.

INT. SAMIR'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Koshan lies awake. In his room, Samir snores away. Koshan gets up, and heads outside.

EXT. LATRINE - NIGHT

...And steps into the narrow, clay latrine, stepping over the small cavity in the floor. A short beat later, the soft sound of his piss hitting the hard ground becomes audible.

EXT. SAMIR'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The quiet, lush sound of the wind passing through the clay village.

It's completely silent. Peaceful, even.

Then, breaking through the tranquility comes the Spec Ops troops - night vision goggles draped over their eyes - moving slowly, scanning all around them, weapons raised - silent and deadly professionals.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

MAJOR QUINCY

Stop the car.

FAHRAN

Where are we, Major? There's nothing out here.

Quincy switches his speech to a much more calm, direct tone. He's exactly where he needs to be and he knows it.

MAJOR QUINCY

Just stop the car, Hamzi.

Fahran does. There isn't a trace of civilization anywhere - not even the truck that was following them. They're surrounded on all sides by dust, rocks, and sand.

Even if Fahran wanted to get away at this point, he'd die in the brutal heat before he made it back to the road.

MAJOR QUINCY

Now, get out.

Fahran sits there, clinging to the wheel for a moment, delaying the inevitable. Then, he cries. Hard. Quincy sits the in back, listening to Fahran let out his childish whimpers.

FAHRAN

I just...I don't understand, Major. There's nothing out here.

With the tone of a mother trying to soothe a young child after a scraped knee...

MAJOR QUINCY

I know, Hamzi. More crying.

FAHRAN

Major? Can I sit here for a moment?

MAJOR QUINCY

Hamzi, you have to get out of the car.

Fahran wipes his tears away, then nods his head.

FAHRAN

Ok. Ok.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

They exit the car, Quincy still training his pistol on Fahran.

MAJOR QUINCY
Start digging.

Fahran stands there, staring at him.

MAJOR QUINCY
Go ahead. Start digging.

FAHRAN
Digging? Why?

MAJOR QUINCY
Because, I'm telling you to.

It looks as if Fahran is going to break into tears again, but Quincy quickly interjects. This has gone on long enough.

MAJOR QUINCY
This is it, Hamzi! This is the end!
There's no where to go! I know
everything. Now, start fucking
digging!

FAHRAN
Know everything? What do you mean?

MAJOR QUINCY
That's right. I know everything.

FAHRAN
What...what...am I supposed to dig
with?

MAJOR QUINCY
Your hands. Fahran holds his hands
up to his face. They're shaking
uncontrollably.

FAHRAN
But, it's going to take--

MAJOR QUINCY
I know. There's water in my canteen
if you need it. Don't stop digging
until I tell you.

Fahran mouths a protest, but thinks better of it, and then gives in.

FAHRAN

Can I take my shirt off?

MAJOR QUINCY

Do whatever makes you comfortable.
Just do it slowly.

Fahran lifts his shirt over his head, then crouches down in the sand and plants his two trembling hands into the sand and scoops the first handful out.

MAJOR QUINCY

Wait.

Fahran stops. Quincy reaches into his pocket and withdraws something. A small, crumpled square of paper.

He tosses it at Fahran, where it lands gently at his feet. Fahran picks it up. It's the Polaroid of him and Koshan.

MAJOR QUINCY

I don't want to know why. Just dig.

FAHRAN

Oh, Major...Koshan is - it's a long story. He's not what you think.

MAJOR QUINCY

I'll bet.

Fahran strokes the Polaroid gingerly. He rises to his feet.

MAJOR QUINCY

What are you doing?

FAHRAN

I'm not digging for you like a dog. You're confused. You don't know the man in this picture like I do. He's good.

Quincy raises his pistol again.

MAJOR QUINCY

You're not going to dig? Is that what you're saying?

FAHRAN

Major, just let me explain--

MAJOR QUINCY

No! No explaining--

FAHRAN

Fuck you!

MAJOR QUINCY

Fuck you!

A shouting match ensues, each man loudly protesting over the other, their faces wrinkled with rage. Quincy tightens his finger around the trigger of his gun, he's so heated he might pull the trigger.

Then, headlights in the far distance. Fahren takes his eyes off of Quincy for a moment to watch them. It's the Grey pick up truck they saw previously, and it's speeding towards them.

Quincy turns to watch it, too. It stops just short of them, and before they can react, three robed men emerge from the truck, screaming in Pashto.

They surround Fahren's car, weapons trained on Fahren and Quincy.

MAJOR QUINCY

What in the hell...

FAHRAN

They say "get your hands up! get your hands up!"

MAJOR QUINCY

Who are they? Are these your friends, Hamzi?

FAHRAN

Just get your hands up!

Quincy drops his gun and does. Fahren shouts back at them in Pashto, pleading for mercy. One of the robed men reach for Quincy's arm, and Quincy smacks his hand away.

MAJOR QUINCY

Don't you touch me! Don't touch me you dirty cocksuckers!

...But there's too many of them. He's roughly grabbed and tossed to the ground. His walkie is plucked from his pocket. A symphony of screaming and protesting ensues - Fahren trying to mediate Quincy and the robed men's shouting.

Crack!

The wooden stock of an assault rifle connects with Quincy's nose, bringing a quick end to his hollering. He tumbles onto his ass, clutching his face. Silence.

MAJOR QUINCY

You...you fuck!

A stream of blood seeps through Quincy's fingers, and spills onto his Army tunic.

MAJOR QUINCY

Ugh! You fucking assholes!

Now motionless and vulnerable, the robed men lift Quincy to his feet and drag him on the short, humiliating trip to the back of the pick up. Fahran, hands raised above his head, follows behind him.

INT. SAMIR'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Koshan lies awake. In his room, Samir snores away. Koshan gets up, and heads outside.

EXT. LATRINE - NIGHT

...And steps into the narrow, clay latrine, stepping over the small cavity in the floor. A short beat later, the soft sound of his piss hitting the hard ground becomes audible.

EXT. SAMIR'S HOUSE - NIGHT

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INT. SAMIR'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Samir wakes up. He scans around him for Koshan, and upon noticing that he isn't there, gets up.

INT. SAMIR'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Samir stumbles around the house, scanning everywhere. He moves to the window, and looks out into the quiet night.

Suddenly, a silhouette with an Assault Rifle zips by, taking cover behind a clay house nearby. Then another, and another, and another, until a full squad of American troops move close enough to be visible in the moonlight.

Samir ducks down behind the window, his mind racing. He peers up again just in time to see the troops making a slow move towards his house. His gears start turning - He knows what they're here for.

SAMIR
(whisper)
Koshan...

He bolts back into his bedroom, and a short beat later, returns with his hunting rifle.

EXT. LATRINE - NIGHT

Koshan shakes out the last few drops, pulls up his pants, and turns to see...

The Spec Ops troops moving towards his house. He goes stiff with fright. His eyes frantically bounce around the village, looking for an exit.

They land on a water well a short distance away. Koshan takes a quiet step towards it, but stops himself. He can't leave his father. He curses under his breath.

He snaps his head between the well and his father's house, tortured by both options.

INT. TALIBAN VEHICLE - NIGHT

Quincy and Fahrhan sit in the back, hands tied, bouncing through the desert, heading back to the road. A maroon crust of blood has formed under Quincy's nose.

FAHRAN
What now?

QUINCY
You're apparently well acquainted with the enemy. Why don't you talk our way out of this?

Fahran shakes his head.

EXT. LATRINE - NIGHT

Koshan takes a timid step towards his house but it's too late - a single shot from Samir's hunting rifle flies through the wooden door right at the Spec Ops troops outside.

Koshan stops in his tracks and darts back into the clay walls of the latrine.

SAMIR

Get away from my son, you cunts!

The troops take cover, and immediately return fire. Dozens of tiny "thwacks" from their silenced weapons echo through the village.

The door is splintered with hundreds of rounds. Silence. From the latrine, Koshan watches it all in horror. He presses himself against the clay wall and slides down, clutching his knee's, completely and utterly defenseless.

He's literally paralyzed with fear. Following the end of the brief shooting, the troops disappear into Samir's house to investigate.

INT. TALIBAN VEHICLE - NIGHT

Quincy and Fahran continue to roll down the street. They turn a corner, right into the path of a large, stone building. They pass through two large metal gates.

INT. TALIBAN BUILDING - NIGHT

Fahran and Quincy are led down a narrow hallway, ushered by the three robed men. Occasionally, they pass by several other Afghan men, outfitted in combat gear.

MAJOR QUINCY

Can someone answer me? Where the fuck are we?

Someone smacks Quincy on the back of the head. A hard, purposeful swat, like a kid being reprimanded for swearing. Quincy chuckles.

MAJOR QUINCY

Go on Hamzi, tell them something,
for Christs sake!

Fahran runs his eyes along the floor, taking careful notice of the splotches of dry blood.

Quincy and Fahran are led to a bare, white room with nothing but a green Jihad flag suspended on the wall, right in the frame of a small digital camera rig. A robed man shuts the door behind them.

EXT. LATRINE - NIGHT

Koshan sits, still curled up timidly in the latrine, sobbing quietly.

Then, the dozen light stomps of combat boots from Samir's house. Koshan peeps around the corner - The troops are filing out of the house.

One of them speaks into a radio.

SPEC OPS #1

Hunter, be advised, we have a negative I.D on the Tango. I repeat, no sign of Muhibi. How copy? Static.

SPEC OPS #2

Still nothing?

The soldier shakes his head.

SPEC OPS #1

All I'm getting is static.

SPEC OPS #2

Fuck it. Let's search the rest of the village, then call for Exfil.

SPEC OPS #1

Roger.

The troops saddle up and move back into position, continuing their slow, methodical sweep of the village, this time moving uncomfortably close to Koshan.

Koshan squeezes back into the latrine, taking a moment to weigh his options. He looks at the clay perimeter of the goat pen, then at the troops just around the corner - It's now or never.

He bolts from his hiding spot, crouched over, keeping a watchful eye on the troops, and another on the pen. He gets there, undetected, and dives head first over the wall, landing splat in the mud and filth.

He gets up, and takes cover behind a stack of hay. Upon noticing his presence, however, the goats slowly wander over to him curiously, the collective clomp of their hooves making just enough noise for the watchful troops to spin around in his direction.

The squad leader motions the other troops over to the goat pen with a hand gesture, and weapons raised, they scamper inside.

Koshan holds his breath behind the hay bale, dirty, sweaty, listening as the soldiers make their inevitable approach. Koshan closes his eyes. His heart thumps in his chest.

Then...

A goat head-butts one of the soldiers in the thigh. He curses softly and gives it a rough shove. For the split second the team turns around to investigate, Koshan makes a quick dash over the wall, out of sight.

The troops collect themselves and jab at the bale of hay, but Koshan has already fled.

The squad leader holds up a hand - It's clear. They continue on their way, further into the village, and safely out of Koshan's vicinity.

INT. SAMIR'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The troops are long gone, and Koshan pushes the bullet hole filled door open with a finger, swallowing nervously, bracing himself for the dreadful carnage on the other side.

He scans around in the darkness. Bullet holes are everywhere. The floor is drenched in blood. Glassware is shattered, the furniture has been turned into giant puffs of feathers.

KOSHAN

Father?

Nothing.

KOSHAN

Father? Say something.

A weak grunt from the corner of the house. Koshan rushes over and finds Samir lying twisted and lifeless.

He looks at Koshan with blank, comatose eyes. His chest is dotted with bullet holes. Koshan raises his hands, almost afraid to touch his father's ruined body as if it'll break in half.

Samir's bloody, crooked mouth manages a small grin that leaves Koshan mesmerized for a short beat - one last final moment between father and son.

Then, Samir's body goes completely flaccid in Koshan's hands and his eyes roll back in his head.

Koshan just sits there, sobbing, stroking Samir's hair.

INT. TALIBAN BUILDING - ROOM - NIGHT

A robed man stands behind a digital video camera, pointing it at Fahran who sits bound to a metal chair. Quincy sits off the side, flanked by two armed Taliban troops. Fahran speaks directly into the lens in Pashto.

FAHRAN

Good bye to all my family and friends. May god free my country from the evil that has befallen it. I tried simply to make it a better place for my countrymen. That's all.

The robed man stops recording. Fahran is tugged out of the seat, and replaced by Quincy.

MAJOR QUINCY

I'll be real short with this - my God - the Christian God, well, he's got a special place for...you see, he's - Ah, fuck it. I don't have anything to say to any of you.

INT. TALIBAN BUILDING - HOLDING CELL - NIGHT

Fahran and Quincy are ushered into a small cement holding cell, stained with piss and blood.

FAHRAN

(to guard)

Where are we? When can we talk to someone?

The metal bars are shut, sealing them in. A cinder block wall prevents them from seeing each other, but they're within speaking range. The masked guards trot off down the hall, out of sight.

Fahran clutches on to the bars, testing their stability. Convinced he's not going anywhere, he takes a seat on the cold cement floor.

FAHRAN

"Kill the bad guys so we can save the good". Remember that one, Major?

Silence from Quincy's cell.

FAHRAN

...And now here we are. I've heard of places like this. They keep you for months, years, feed you dirt. A man I know - Samir, stayed in a place like this. They pull your teeth out with a pair of pliers. That's what he told me. Are you listening to me, Major?!

Still nothing. Fahran chuckles - it's so absurd it's funny.

FAHRAN

You're so confused. You're such a confused old man.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

Just outside the village walls.

Samir's body lies on a rug, the blood long since cleaned off his face. Koshan lingers over it with heavy eyes. He gently places several things on his chest - Army medals, photo's, trinkets, etc...then folds the two ends over him, wrapping him up.

He drags him to a previously dug hole and drops him in, then scrapes the sand into the hole, burying him. He gets down on his knee's and starts praying.

INT. TAXI - DAY

Koshan sits the back, expressionless, zombie-like.

KOSHAN

This is far enough.

CAB DRIVER

Are you sure? There's nothing out here.

KOSHAN

Yes. Stop the car.

The cab driver nods and stops. Koshan gets out, pays him, and watches him disappear in the opposite direction that they came from.

Koshan checks his surroundings, and starts walking out into the desert quickly and purposefully. He knows exactly where he's going.

EXT. TALIBAN COMPOUND - DAY

He and Ali's old headquarters. Koshan stops at the clay perimeter and looks up at it, a mixture of emotions on his face.

INT. TALIBAN BUILDING - HOLDING CELL - DAY

Quincy and Fahrhan back in their cells.

FAHRAN

Don't you want to know why, Major? Don't you at least want to know that he had changed? He was done fighting. He was going to move far away.

MAJOR QUINCY

I already know why.

FAHRAN

Explain it to me.

MAJOR QUINCY

No.

Fahrhan sighs.

FAHRAN

So this is it, then? You're not even going to speak?

Quincy stirs in his cell.

INT. COMPOUND - DAY

Koshan enters, taking in his surroundings meditatively, like he's exploring this place for the first time.

Everything's just as it was when he left - the scattered evidence of their hasty retreat everywhere.

Koshan takes a seat on a crate, registering all of it.

INT. TALIBAN BUILDING - HOLDING CELL - NIGHT

Fahran lies on the floor, his head cushioned by his tunic. The soft chattering of Quincy's teeth is audible next to him. Then, the echo of him rubbing his hands together, trying to stay warm.

Fahran plucks the tunic from under his head, rolls it up into a ball and sticks his arm out of the bars, offering it to Quincy by twisting it in the direction of his cell.

FAHRAN

Here, Major, take this.

A stubborn huff from Quincy. It's a long beat before Fahran realizes he won't take it. He sits down again.

FAHRAN

Can you just answer one thing for me?

(beat)

Why don't Americans drink tea?

Quincy can't resist, finally...

MAJOR QUINCY

We do.

Quincy sits up in his cell.

MAJOR QUINCY

We just...we don't have the same passion for it as you guys. You guys are animals, man. I swear.

A light chuckle between them.

MAJOR QUINCY
I'm a coffee drinker. Tea is too
British.

FAHRAN
You don't like the British?

MAJOR QUINCY
My mother was British. I drank that
shit all my life. Maybe I hate it
because she always put way too much
sugar in it.

Fahran smirks.

FAHRAN
Where in Britain was she born?

MAJOR QUINCY
She was born in Texas. Her father
was born in London.

FAHRAN
Why do people do that?

MAJOR QUINCY
Do what?

FAHRAN
Say they are from one country when
they're from another?

MAJOR QUINCY
What do you mean?

FAHRAN
She was born in the United States,
correct?

MAJOR QUINCY
Yeah. I already said that.

FAHRAN
But you say she's British?

MAJOR QUINCY
Her heritage is British. She's an
American by birth.

Fahran contemplates this.

FAHRAN

I think you should only say where
you were born.

MAJOR QUINCY

How's this - before these people
chop off our heads, I'll ask them
to pass that little nugget of
wisdom on to my mother.

This kills the mood instantly. Fahran stops grinning. He
leans against the wall, gears turning, thoughts brewing.

INT. TALIBAN BUILDING - ROOM - DAY

The next morning.

A TALIBAN SOLDIER sits at a table, cleaning an Assault
Rifle. The door suddenly bursts open and another soldier
enters, frantic and anxious.

TALIBAN SOLDIER #1

Jahid, there's something wrong over
here.

TALIBAN SOLDIER #2

What? What did you do?

TALIBAN SOLDIER #1

One of the prisoners is acting
strange. The ANA one. He's sick.

The soldier cleaning his weapon gets up, and they both race
for the cell block, weapons in hand.

INT. TALIBAN BUILDING - CELL BLOCK - DAY

Both Taliban troops walk briskly towards Fahran's cell. They
arrive at it, and look inside.

Fahran is crouched over, pale and dazed, surrounded by a
pool of vomit.

In Pashto...

FAHRAN

I'm ill! Please help me!

The two Taliban trade looks.

TALIBAN SOLDIER #2
 Stop whining, you donkey cunt, or
 I'll come in there and--

FAHRAN
 Sir! Please! I'm feeling really
 ill!

The soldiers look at each other again, a hint of concern in their faces.

INT. QUINCY'S CELL - DAY

Quincy, confused, though slightly intrigued, gets up and presses himself against the bars of his cell for a better look.

INT. FAHRAN'S CELL - DAY

Fahran writhes around on the floor, his face furrowed from his ailing expression.

TALIBAN SOLDIER #1
 What are you sick from? You haven't
 even eaten anything, you silly
 bastard.

FAHRAN
 I don't know, sir. Please. I just
 need a drink of water.

Finally, one of the troops removes a key from his pocket and unlocks Fahran's cell. He unslings his assault rifle and jabs the back of Fahran's head with the barrel.

With a perfect, clear, and healthy delivery...

FAHRAN
 Thank you so much. I'm feeling much
 better now.

And with that, Fahran leaps up and delivers a swift punch to one of the soldier's balls that sends him crumpling to the ground.

TALIBAN SOLDIER #1
 Ugh!

Fahran leaps to his feet, aggressive and combative, now out of his phony performance.

The second guard, now caught off guard, tries frantically to lift up his weapon, but Fahran deflects it aside with a hand. He unsheathes a bayonet in the soldier's vest and impales the guard through the forehead.

Fahran grabs his stray Assault Rifle and fires a single round through the other soldier's chest before he can make a move.

MAJOR QUINCY (O.S)
Hamzi? Hamzi? What the fuck is
going on there? Talk to me!

Fahran grabs the keys from the jumble of bodies, walks over to Quincy's cell, and unlocks it.

MAJOR QUINCY
What are you doing? What are you
doing?!

The light trot of dozens of feet echo down the hall. Fahran grabs the other Assault Rifle and hands it to Quincy.

FAHRAN
Getting out of here. Are you
coming, or not?

A thin smile creeps across Quincy's lips. He grabs the Assault Rifle and nods.

INT. TALIBAN COMPOUND - DAY

Empty weapons crates are scattered everywhere. Koshan is ransacking any and every box he can find, but hasn't found what he's looking for so far.

INT. TALIBAN BUILDING - DAY

Quincy and Fahran move slowly down the hall. Loud Pashto screaming from the other guards is everywhere.

A door bursts open further down the hall, two armed, robed men emerge. Quincy and Fahran let loose a long burst of fire, gunning them down.

Shots from behind them. A bullet whizzes past Fahran, and lands with a fleshy smack into Quincy's leg. He falls to the ground.

MAJOR QUINCY

Ah! Shit!

Fahran returns fire at the troops down the hall. Small, tiny puffs of pink mist fly out of them and they all drop.

FAHRAN

Major, Major...

MAJOR QUINCY

Fuck. Help me up.

Fahran slings Quincy's arm around his neck and lifts him to his feet.

INT. TALIBAN BUILDING - ROOM - DAY

Two Taliban soldiers stand behind a wooden table, weapons pointed at the door, anticipating Fahran and Quincy's entry.

Suddenly, a long burst of rifle fire from the other side of the door. Quincy and Fahran's bullets easily pierce through the wooden frame and pepper the Taliban troops on the other side.

The door flies open, Quincy still crutching along on Fahran's shoulder.

MAJOR QUINCY

Hold on.

Quincy detaches himself from Fahran and starts rummaging through the doors and bags that are strewn everywhere.

FAHRAN

What? What are you doing, Major?

Then, he finds it. Quincy pulls the walkie he had on him before their capture out of a metal crate. He switches it on and taps the talk button.

MAJOR QUINCY

Hunter One Actual, This is Hunter.

Static. Quincy and Fahran trade hopeless looks, then...

WALKIE TALKIE (V.O)

Hunter, this is Hunter One Actual, we've got you loud and clear. Go ahead, over.

MAJOR QUINCY

Hunter One Actual, we've run into a bit of...trouble. What's your current POS, over?

INT. TALIBAN COMPOUND - DAY

Koshan continues his ransack, now marooned in a messy sea of Assault Rifles, rockets, belts of ammunition, etc...

He flips open another metal crate and sits there, transfixed by the contents - It's a pile of landmines, neatly stacked on top of each other.

He withdraws one from the box, examines it, then loads it into the pocket of his white robe.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Koshan trudges on, landmine in one hand, shovel in another. A farmer who was pumping water into a well stops to look at him.

Koshan ignores his concerned look and just keeps going. Fixed, focused - a man on a mission.

INT. ROAD - DAY

Koshan stops in the middle of a road, not because he's standing on any particular place of importance, but because he can't go any further, emotionally.

He looks left - a long stretch of nothing. Then right - more of the same. A couple buildings overwatch the road in the far distance.

He handles the shovel with both hands and stabs the hard ground with the sharp tip of it, but instantly withdraws it. A look comes over him - reluctance, uncertainty. Is he really about to go through with this again?

He makes a firm decision that he is. He kicks the shovel into the ground, scraping off a thin layer of gravel. Then, he tosses the shovel away, and places the mine down in the fresh crater.

He conceals it with dust and dirt, leaving enough of it sticking out to detonate it if touched.

EXT. BUILDING ROOFTOP - DAY

Koshan sits perched on a rooftop, overlooking the portion of the road he was just standing on. He grabs a pair of binoculars and scans both ways for any oncoming vehicles.

All is quiet. He lowers them, crosses his arms and leans back against the wall.

EXT. TALIBAN BUILDING - DAY

The Spec Ops troops spill out of the Humvee to greet Fahran and Quincy who linger outside the building, waiting for them.

SPEC OP SOLDIER
Are you hit, sir?

MAJOR QUINCY
Yeah, in the leg. Let's not stick
around longer than we need to.

They open the back door and Fahran helps Quincy inside. Two troops approach Fahran with zip ties, and motion for him to turn around and put his hands together.

MAJOR QUINCY
No...

They turn to Quincy, who waves it off.

MAJOR QUINCY
Leave them off.

The soldiers trade skeptical looks, though comply with the order. Quincy looks at Fahran and nods slowly - a small gesture of truce, for now at least.

Everyone piles into the Humvee and they take off.

EXT. ROOFTOP - DAY

The sun is starting to go down. Koshan still sits on the rooftop.

Footsteps echo up a staircase, and a short moment later, an AFGHAN MAN appears behind Koshan.

AFGHAN MAN
Excuse me, sir. You can't be up
here.

Koshan doesn't budge.

AFGHAN MAN

We have children down here. I'll
call the police. Now, move.

Koshan slowly cranes his neck around to look at the man. He gets up, rises to his feet and casually strolls over to him.

The man sizes up Koshan, looking for any indication of who he is. Before he can, Koshan roughly grabs him by the collar with two hands and drags him over to the edge of the roof.

The man shrieks. Koshan dips him over the edge. One small push and he'd take the long plunge to his death below.

...But he doesn't. Koshan slowly releases him from his grasp and the man bolts back down the stairs.

From down the street, the faint outline of a Humvee becomes visible. Koshan quickly grabs his binoculars and scans it. Unbeknownst to him, it's the Humvee containing Fahran and Quincy.

INT. HUMVEE - DAY

The radio chatters. Fahran stares out the window. The Spec Ops troops have their weapons leaned out the window, scanning around them.

EXT. ROOFTOP - DAY

Koshan follows the Humvee with binoculars, panting heavily with anticipation. The Humvee is on a precise collision course with the mine. Koshan is about to lower the binoculars, when...

He quickly presses them back to his eyes. Something or someone in the Humvee has caught his attention.

...Fahran. Sitting casually in the back seat, cramped in with several U.S Army soldiers.

He sits motionless for a short beat, mouth agape. The binoculars slide from his hands and tumble to the ground. His mind drifts off to...

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY - FLASHBACK

Fahran and Koshan - ten years old, back in the village - before all this mess - playing soccer, laughing together.

EXT. ROOFTOP - DAY

The Humvee continues to roll towards the mine. Koshan remains fixated on Fahran - It's now or never.

Koshan moves swiftly into action. He gets up and bolts down the stairs of the building.

EXT. STREET - DAY

It's a desperate race for the mine. Koshan leaps down the stairs of the building, and makes a mad dash for the road.

INT. HUMVEE - DAY

At the same time from the Humvee, Koshan has made himself visible to the troops in the vehicle as a small silhouette running for the road - a death sentence in this part of the world.

Fahran cranes his neck to see the person in question.

SPEC OPS #1

We've got a foot mobile, twelve o'clock, he's running for the road!

SPEC OPS #2

Light him up.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Koshan, still running for the mine. The troops in the Humvee open up with small, controlled bursts that pepper Koshan with bullets.

His frantic dash slows as the rounds tear through him. He makes a desperate march towards the mine, still trying to run with torn limbs. Each step forward a deliberate and agonizing stagger towards his death.

INT. HUMVEE - DAY

They're finally close enough. Fahran jolts up with shock.

FAHRAN

Koshan!

Koshan, now filled with enough bullets to kill a normal man twice over, looks at Fahran - head stuck out the window - and makes a final, fleeting gesture - a grin.

Then, Boom! He crawls onto the mine, and disappears into a cloud of dust. The Humvee barrels through the gore of Koshan's obliterated body parts and continues moving.

INT. HUMVEE - DAY

Fahran also explodes, but in a completely different way. He thrashes in his seat, crying. Looking out the back window at the billowing pile of smoke that moments ago, was Koshan.

FAHRAN

Koshan, No! We have to go back! I
saw him, Major! We have to go back!

Quincy grabs onto Fahran with both arms, trying to contain him.

FAHRAN

Major, we have to...We have to...

MAJOR QUINCY

He's dead, Hamzi. He's gone.

Fahran looks back out the window, watching Koshan's smoldering body parts get further and further away.

EXT. BASE - DAY

A few days later.

Fahran stands in formation, amongst a vast company of soldiers. Their commanding officer stands before them.

COMMANDING OFFICER

...In spite of their overwhelming odds, and under heavy fire from the enemy, Major Quincy and Sergeant Hamzi never faltered, mainting the honour and courage this unit strives to...

Fahran tunes out. He looks around him at the sea of uniforms, his face completely drained of emotion. Confused, hurt, and lost.

He and Quincy are suddenly ordered to the front of the formation. They march smartly and stop before the commanding officer who pins a medal on both of their chests.

They turn their heads and trade a quick glance at each other. Then, turn back to the Commanding Officer, putting on a proud and phony facade.

INT. QUINCY'S OFFICE - DAY

Quincy, hobbling on a bandaged leg, enters his office. He walks over to his board of "Wanted" posters, plucks the throwing darts out of Koshan's face, and tears the picture in half.

He grabs his ruck sack, bursting with all of his things and slings it over his back. He heads for the door, turning to register his office for the last time, then shuts off the lights.

EXT. BASE - DAY

A long convoy of Humvee's, preparing for another patrol. Fahran sits in the back of one, armed and ready to go.

MAJOR QUINCY (O.S)

Hamzi!

Fahran turns, Quincy limps towards him.

FAHRAN

You're leaving?

MAJOR QUINCY

Yeah. Just waitin' on the chopper.

Fahran nods. They share an awkward moment. What's the appropriate gesture? A hand shake? A hug?

Instead, Quincy reaches into his pocket and withdraws something. A gun, perhaps? No, it's too big and oddly shaped.

It's a canteen. The now slightly faded "Hamzi" written in black marker still visible.

MAJOR QUINCY
Here. You'll need this.

Fahran just stares at it. He doesn't ask who, what, where, when or why, he just takes it, nods, and places it back in his pouch.

The convoy jumps to life. Soldiers climb aboard their vehicles, weapons are checked, magazines are loaded - they're about to take off on patrol. Quincy turns his back and walks away.

Then, Fahran's Humvee is started. A scratchy radio voice gives an order. Metal clinks. Just another day at the office.

The convoy slowly makes a rumbling exit out of the base. Fahran keeps his eyes glued to Quincy until they round a corner and he disappears out of sight.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

Just another bright, summer day. Dry, hot.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

Two ten year old Afghan boys, YOUNIS and JAHID, saunter through it aimlessly, kicking a soccer ball back and fourth.

YOUNIS
Why weren't you at school today?

Jahid shrugs.

YOUNIS
We got to use the computer.

JAHID
So what?

YOUNIS
Ashraf was typing on the keys, and he spelled "shit" and then he wasn't allowed to use it anymore.

JAHID
What an idiot.

YOUNIS
You shouldn't let him push you around. I see how he treats you all

YOUNIS
the time. My father says a man that
can't stand up for himself is a
coward. You don't want to be a
coward, do you?

JAHID
I'm not a coward. I could beat up
Ashraf no problem, you watch.

YOUNIS
Yeah, right. Remember that punch he
gave you at my father's shop?

Younis stops in his tracks. He bends down and grabs the
ball, now entranced by something in the distance.

YOUNIS
Look...

Younis points to a building in the distance. Jahid looks at
the area in question. It's Koshan's old compound, now
abandoned and vulnerable.

JAHID
What is it?

EXT. TALIBAN COMPOUND

The two boys approach the clay entrance. Jahid stops.

JAHID
We should go. We shouldn't be here.

YOUNIS
There's no one here. Don't you want
to see what's inside?

Jahid shakes his head, "no".

YOUNIS
Fine, be a coward. I'm going
inside.

Younis enters the clay compound. Jahid scans around
nervously, then reluctantly follows Younis inside.

JAHID
Younis...

YOUNIS
I'm just seeing what's in there.

INT. TALIBAN BUILDING - DAY

The remains of Koshan's ransack lie everywhere. Opened crates, scattered weapons, bed rolls, and various other equipment are strewn all over the place.

Younis looks at it all, fascinated and wide eyed. Jahid steps over everything timidly.

Younis picks up a stray Assault Rifle.

JAHID
Don't touch that!

YOUNIS
Stop being such a baby. I've fired my father's rifle a hundred times.

JAHID
I'll bet these are Taliban weapons.
We'll be in big trouble if someone see's us.

Younis scans around for a beat, lands on a small pile of bullets. He removes the magazine from his rifle, grabs a handful, and tries unsuccessfully to shove them in.

YOUNIS
...Piece of junk...

Jahid can't bear to see him fumble around any longer. He jumps in.

JAHID
Here. Like this, see?

Jahid presses the bullets in, and they snap into place.

YOUNIS
I'm not stupid. I know how to do it. It's an AK-47. A man at my father's shop had one.

Now with a full magazine, Younis grins and puffs his chest out, mimicking an action movie star.

YOUNIS
Bang! Bang! Just like Rambo.

JAHID

Can we go now, please?

They head for the exit. Jahid

JAHID

What are you doing? Put down that gun!

YOUNIS

Come, I'm just testing it. I'm not going to shoot anyone.

INT. AC-130 - DAY

We're now a thousand feet in the air, watching the boys emerge from the cave through the heat sensor screen of an AC-130 gunship.

The crosshairs land firmly over them, which, from this distance, are two little white blips - one armed with an Assault Rifle.

If you didn't know any better, you'd think they were young Taliban fighters, which is exactly what the crew of the aircraft concludes over the radio.

There's a soft hiss - a missile being fired, and suddenly the missile's camera detaches from the aircraft, speeding right towards the two boys.

What once covered a large stretch of land, suddenly narrows on the two kids, the crosshairs staying firm and tight over them.

It takes all of five seconds for the camera to finally get only a few feet above their heads, until they're no longer two little blips, but human beings with detailed features.

Before we see the bomb land directly on the two boys, we...

FADE OUT.