The Ace Of Spades

Written by

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Based on true events
BLACK SCREEN:

"Saddam - One who confronts...One who frequently causes collisions."

INT. WOMAN’S WOMB

A heartbeat quickens as a fetus grimaces. It’s utterly vulnerable, trapped, and helpless...

INT. IRAQ - SADDAM HUSSEIN HOME - MORNING

SUBHA, 20's, serious, nine months pregnant stands four feet from a drab wall. Arms sway slightly to her side as her head droops. A tear slides down her cheek.

NOTE: THE DIALOGUE IN EACH SCENE WITH AN ARABIC CHARACTER IS SPOKEN WITH A MODERATE ARABIC ACCENT.

SUPER: aD-Dawr, Iraq - April, 1937. Subha, Mother of Saddam Hussein or otherwise known as the “Mother of Monsters”

SUBHA
No. No...No. (yells)
Nooo!

SUBHA
La. La...La. (in Arabic. yells)
La-aaa!

She arches her back. Her stomach forced out. She raises her head. CHARGES the wall. Her stomach COLLIDES with a full impact. She falls, hurt, but still determined.

SUBHA (CONT’D)
(cries)
No!

SUBHA (CONT’D)
(cries)
La!

She struggles to her feet. Wobbles to take three steps back.

RUSHES the wall. Full of RAGE. Her unborn, protected only by her stomach-lining, SLAMS into the wall.

SERIES OF IMAGES – DECK OF CARDS

The infamous IRAQ MOST WANTED DECK OF CARDS flutter down and land softly on a black table. The last card falls...

TITLE: THE ACE OF SPADES
INT. AD-DAWR - SPIDER HOLE - AFTERNOON

Dust passes through a sliver of light in a confined space.


Labored breathing comes from an ELDERLY MAN.

The wood floor creaks from soldier’s footsteps above.

SOLDIER (O.S)
(excited)
Over here! Over here!

The hatch is RIPPED off.

SPIDER HOLE - SAME

Sunlight ILLUMINATES halfway down the steps into the cavernous, musty-smelling dungeon.

Something. Someone is holed up.

SOLDIER (O.S)
Don't move. Don't you fuckin' move!

The TRANSLATOR wrangles himself next to the soldier.

SOLDIER (CONT’D)
(to translator)
Come and talk to him. Tell him to come out before he gets killed.

The SOLDIER waves his hand over to SIX FULLY ARMED SOLDIERS. They make a bee-line to the hole and circle it.

TRANSLATOR
Who are you?

TRANSLATOR
(Arabic)
Min ‘ant?

RUSTLING seeps out from the darkest part of the cavern.

ELDERLY MAN (O.C)
I am Saddam Hussein...the duly elected President of Iraq.

The TEAMS hearts pound. This is the moment of a lifetime.

ELDERLY MAN (O.C) (CONT’D)
I am willing to negotiate.
SOLDIER
Well, President Bush sends his regards.

(to Translator)
Tell him to put his hands up and come out.

TRANSLATOR
Come out slowly. Very slowly.

TRANSLATOR
Yakhruj bbt'. Bati' jiddaan.

Guns drawn. They're dialed in, barrels fixed on the hole.

EXT. BAGHDAD INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

Jet noise screams from the TARMAC while Humvee's grind down roads and military men crowd the unpleasant landscape.

SUPER - Baghdad International Airport (BIAP) - February 2003

INT. CAMP CROPPER - ENTRY CONTROL POINT - SAME

Kyle holds a handful of manila folders in one hand and an access card in the other while he approaches the GUARD DESK.

SUPER: Camp Cropper - Coalition Interrogation Hub

The GUARD looks up and nods.

Kyle swipes his card and punches his code into the key pad.

INTERROGATION ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Long yellow fluorescent tube lights decorate the cold lonely room. One metal table. Two uncomfortable metallic chairs.

Glass the size of a large family portrait lines one wall.

Kyle fumbles to lay his mess of folders on the table and pulls the metal chair out making an ear-retching noise. The effect heightens the awkwardness of the two men's encounter.

Kyle sits across from SADDAM HUSSEIN. Face to face.

The battle of intellect begins.

SADDAM
(stern)
Perhaps a conversation between two such educated people will not be useful...

(MORE)
Saddam, although a captive, is arrogant and confident.

Kyle calmly begins to flip through his papers as he tries to keep his composure in front of a living legend.

**KYLE**
(clears throat)
...let's begin, why don't we.
Would you consider your efforts successful?

**SADDAM**
When compared to other governments
I am not convinced my efforts are any different, especially the Americans.

Kyle notices Saddam avoids the question like a pro.

**KYLE**
You see similarities in the actions of the American government and Iraq's?

**SADDAM**
Of course.

Saddam waves his hands flippantly.

**SADDAM (CONT'D)**
Thirty million people live in poverty in America, but this is not consider a crime? I would never accept that for Iraq.

**KYLE**
What about your mistakes?

**SADDAM**
(snarky)
Do you think I would tell my enemy if I made a mistake?

Kyle’s voice deepens to keep from cracking but struggles with the enormity of the situation.

**KYLE**
I--I'm an enemy?
SADDAM
I do not know if you are or not, but your demeanor is something I can handle for now.

Saddam’s smug demeanor oozes from each word.

KYLE
Is it the current system that’s in place that has you at odds?

SADDAM
It works for America to a large degree, but one party is not good for Iraq. Multiple parties will cause too much commotion. The people here does not accept only one idea. They will have to be forced to accept it.

KYLE
Then that would spoil the root of the Ba'ath party. They were the dominant ones.

SADDAM
I wish there were political parties other than Ba'ath. Because of you, the only political parties in Iraq today are the ones with the weapons.

Kyle wants to jump down Saddam’s throat but remains calm.

KYLE
Does a leader gain greatness through achievement or demand greatness through fear?

SADDAM
Fear will not make a ruler and will not make people love a ruler. Love comes through communication. People will love me more after I pass than they do now.

Kyle looks down to keep track of his pre-interview tasks.

KYLE
But you’ve suppressed them for decades.
SADDAM
I do not believe so. My people
love someone for what they have
done. I have done many things. I
concluded a peace agreement with
Barzani --

KYLE
The Kurds?

SADDAM
Yes, in ’70. I nationalized the
Iraqi oil, supported the war
against Zionist, won the war
against Iran, survived the Gulf War
and lived through a boycott for
fourteen years. Does it still
exist?

KYLE
No.

Saddam nods. He holds, straightening himself.

SADDAM
Despite all these hardships endured
by the Iraq’s, one hundred percent
of the people voted for Hussein in
the last elections. They still
supported me and your government
removed me.

Saddam begins to become agitated.

KYLE
Where did you go when hostilities
began?

SADDAM
Why are you retracing my steps.
You got me!

Kyle feels his heartbeat in each finger.

KYLE
(calmly)
Please, just answer.

SADDAM
’03...March I would say. I
remained in Baghdad until April 10
or 11, I think. Who cares.
KYLE
You left prior to the city falling?

SADDAM
It was a somber day.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

INT. AL FAW PRESIDENTIAL PALACE - CONFERENCE ROOM - SAME

An elaborate room. Civilian and military dignitaries from
the upper echelon of the Iraqi government sit evenly spaced
along a large table. Others stand in grim silence along a
wall of Iraqi landscape paintings.

SUPER: Al Faw Presidential Palace - “The Water Palace” - 23
March 2003

SADDAM
...we come here at a somber time in
our Nation's history. The evil
that is at our doorstep will
eventually turn the handle, open
the door, and enslave us...

The building RUMBLES from the “Shock and Awe” campaign.

SADDAM (CONT’D)
We must endure and place our trust
in Allah. I look to each and every
one of you knowing that from this
day forward we will struggle in
secret. Praise Iraq, praise Allah!

They all stand in unison. CLAP vigorously.

TEARS in the eyes of everyone. They realize this will be the
last time they are together.

Saddam turns to shake the hands of everyone. He makes his
way to depart the room trying to stay above it all, knowing
his last card has been dealt and he’s lost.

END FLASHBACK

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - MORNING

Saddam, in a long robe, shuffles in escorted by a SOLDIER.

Kyle waits patiently. Papers laid out neatly before him.
His demeanor is one of more control this time.
KYLE
Why go to war with Iran?

SADDAM
I will put it as simply as I can for you and the others watching.

Saddam points to the mirror.

KYLE
I can assure you, it’s just us.

Saddam gives him a look, “as if”.

SADDAM
Consider this. One day, the neighbor's son beats up your son. Yes?

KYLE
I'm listening.

SADDAM
The next day, the neighbor's son bothers your cows. Then the neighbor damages your farmland’s irrigation system.

Saddam lifts a finger, waiting for the words to sink in.

SADDAM (CONT’D)
If all these things occur, eventually, after enough incidents, you approach your neighbor, tell him each transgression by event and ask him to stop.

KYLE
...farmer’s terms.

SADDAM
It’s simple. Now usually, a warning or approach to the neighbor is enough to stop this behavior. With Iran however, this approach did not work.

KYLE
Was Khomeini mostly to blame?
SADDAM
Khomeini was a religious zealot who came along when I did. He thought all leaders were like the Shah and easily toppled and figured he could do the same with me. He calculated incorrectly.

Kyle’s face tightens to come to his foes’ point.

KYLE
Then what was your objective?

SADDAM
Ask Iran. They began the war. I have explained my reasons.

KYLE
Can you tell me then for the record?

SADDAM
By '87 we had three-fourth's of their tanks and half of their artillery and APC’s.

KYLE
They most certainly would have advanced on you if the tables were turned.

Saddam in full lecture mode.

SADDAM
Is that what immediately comes to mind from an American point of view? One cannot plan the Iraqi army the same as the Americans. When supply routes are lengthened, problems arise. The soldier of 100 years ago is not one of today.

Kyle is calm, almost enchanted by the sermon.

SADDAM (CONT’D)
This is the universal difference between our worlds. Iraq had recovered enough territory. If we went deeper inside Iran we would have lost Iraqi lives. For many of our men it was their first combat experience. Many began to ask, "Why am I here?", and our leaders felt Iran had learned their lesson.
KYLE
But you finally had the upper hand.

SADDAM
If a soldier does not see logic, he will not perform as well or be obedient. Discipline becomes a problem. But if he accepts the task at hand as logical, he will stay obedient.

KYLE
Do you see all soldiers this way?

Saddam laughs at Kyle in a way a teacher does to a student. He’s making his point confidently.

SADDAM
If you asked the American soldiers, who came to look for WMD and found none, removed my leadership and now replaced them with other dictators, whether they wanted to stay or go, they would say go!

KYLE
Let's be clear. We haven't found them yet.

SADDAM
(smugly)
Keep searching.

Kyle moves as if he’s stepped on a nail. For a split second he realizes that this is going to be a very difficult task.

KYLE
Do you think you would have lost the war with Iran if you didn't use chemical weapons? WMD?

SADDAM
I do not have an answer for that -- I am not going to answer.

KYLE
But you did use them.

SADDAM
I will not be cornered or caught on some technicality. It will not do you any good.

(MORE)
SADDAM (CONT'D)
The United States has paid dearly for its mistakes here in Iraq and will continue to pay...Iran did not get the message of our powers. If we did not break their heads, they would not have understood.

KYLE
But UN findings show you had chemical weapons and you used them.

SADDAM
History is written and will not change. No one can stop history from being written. But let me remind you that Iran used them at Muhamra in '81.

KYLE
So you used them for defensive reasons!

SADDAM
(to the point)
I'm not going to answer, no matter how you put the question.

Saddam pushes back his chair. He’s exhausted.

SADDAM (CONT’D)
I am tired now.

Saddam stands up. He now towers over Kyle in a most serious way in order to put Kyle in his place.

SADDAM (CONT’D)
For future between us remember.
(beat)
It is not fair for someone in charge to blame others.

INT. INTERROGATION PREP ROOM - MORNING

Maps of Iraq and pictures of the famous DECK OF CARDS line the walls. Stacked filing cabinets and gray safes hold classified information. Metal desks and one television connected to a VCR on a portable stand.

Kyle sits across from MELANIE TURNER, 30's, a tomboy interrogator.
MELANIE
Well, you got him to talk about WMD but don’t get wrapped up in all that Ba’ath party shit.

KYLE
That Ba’ath party shit is what he’s all about. It’s like stripping the Republican from President Bush. It’s his identity.

MELANIE
You’re not here to get his life story. Time is short. We need to get his take on the video.

KYLE
I know, I know. I have to get his trust.

Stress is written all over his face.

MELANIE
When are you gonna show him?

She points to the television.

KYLE
I don't want to piss him off too much yet. He's finally opening up a little.

MELANIE
Is that what you call it? He’s only insulted you half a dozen times.

KYLE
Better than a dozen.

MELANIE
Can't wait for you to show him. (laughs)
He might punch you in the face within the first three minutes.

Kyle continues at his keyboard. He abruptly stops. Then spins his laptop around.

KYLE
Here, check out this part.

Kyle presses the play button on the laptop.
INSERT - TELEVISION SCREEN

INT. PRIVATE RESTURANT - NIGHT

ABU ABBAS, 50’s and professionally dressed, with TAHIR JALIL HABBUSH, 50’s in his robe sit comfortably over lunch.

  KYLE (O.S.)
  (points to the screen)
  That's Abu Abbas, Palestine Liberation Front and Tahir Jalil Habbush, Director of Iraqi Intel Service.

  MELANIE (O.C.)
  Just like the dossier.

  ABU ABBAS
  Thank President Hussein.

  HABBUSH
  Most certainly. The flow of money, training, weapons, and transportation to carry out. Your missions to attack Israel will be on the forefront of our minds.

  ABU ABBAS
  God is great.

BACK TO INTERROGATION PREP ROOM

  MELANIE
  There's no way he can deny it.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - MORNING

SUPER: BIAP - Operations Center - 10 February 2004

  KYLE
  Could you have done more to help Syria during their war with Israel?

  SADDAM
  What more could we have done? I sent all of our military men to fight under Egyptian and Syrian command.
KYLE
Does it bother you that they didn't welcome you with open arms?

SADDAM
A loser does not know where his head and feet are. It was a difficult situation to come together like this anyway.

KYLE
I've seen a video of Abbas and Tahir at a meeting.

Saddam immediately becomes defensive.

SADDAM
So.

KYLE
There was a deal.

Saddam waits ready to pounce on Kyle's words.

KYLE (CONT'D)
Do the actions against Israel constitute a legitimate defense of Palestine? Some say it was terrorism.

SADDAM (aggressive)
What did the Iraqi government do?

KYLE
That's what I'm asking.

SADDAM
If you have the recording, then you know. Why pester me with this?

KYLE
Can you at least elaborate?

SADDAM
To what? Attempts to regain the Arab lands that were raped and taken.

KYLE
Abbas asked for many things. Weapons, transport--

Saddam is quick to cut Kyle off.
SADDAM
If Abbas asked for things, it does not mean we gave them to him.

KYLE
So you didn't?

SADDAM
If Abbas carried out any attacks, that means we helped. If he did not, we did not help. We have the right to help anyone that struggles. Who are you to question a sovereign country’s actions?

KYLE
Including the intelligence director of the PLO?

SADDAM
No. I am talking about organizations in Palestine. The work you are talking about is entirely different. It is intelligence work.

KYLE
You don't know exactly what the Director of the Iraqi Intel Service did?

SADDAM
Does the American CIA Director call the President every time he meets someone? Of course not.

INT. INTERROGATION PREP ROOM - DAY

MELANIE
Did you hear?

Kyle looks up from his laptop. Expecting more explanation.

MELANIE (CONT’D)
He’s hardly eating.

KYLE
Damn it. He’s gonna play that card with me?
MELANIE
(laughs)
Well, it's one way to get our attention.

KYLE
The longer he does it, we lose.

INT. SADDAM'S PRISON CELL - DAY

Food trays with large portions of food remain.

A GUARD comes to retrieve it. Pulls out a green logbook.

INSERT - GUARD LOGBOOK, which reads:

"1300 Food Entry. Prisoner Number 1: Continues minimal food consumption. 10 percent consumed."

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Saddam looks more thin but still healthy -- ready to talk.

SUPER: BIAP - Operations Center - 13 February 2004

SADDAM
Let me ask a direct question.

KYLE
Of course.

SADDAM
I want to ask where, from the beginning of the interview process until now, has the information been going?

KYLE
Good question--

SADDAM
For our relationship to remain clear, I want to know.

KYLE
They’re no doubt being reviewed by many officials...maybe even the President.

SADDAM
Good, I appreciate.
KYLE
You’re welcome.

Saddam turns verbose, even nonsensical.

SADDAM
But I don't mind if this information is published but...it has to be in both English and Arabic.

Kyle’s shoulders relax -- he’s building much needed trust.

KYLE
(smirks)
Yes. I will do what I can. I'm curious though.

SADDAM
About?

KYLE
Doubles.

SADDAM
(laughs)
Movie magic.

KYLE
Did others have doubles?

SADDAM
Not that I'm aware of.

KYLE
Uday or Qusay?

Saddam’s face instantly becomes serious.

SADDAM
I think my sons would not do this. They might have considered such a tactic during war, but not in peace.

KYLE
But you were at war.

Saddam begins to rub his palms with his thumbs -- trying his best to stay stoic.

SADDAM
Do you think I'm getting upset when you mention my sons?
KYLE
I would hope not. It certainly isn’t my objective but I understand somewhat.

SADDAM
(inquisitive)
You have boys?

KYLE
(dispirited)
No. Soon though.

His pencil taps against his clipboard.

SADDAM
Well then, you couldn’t possibly know. But you will know that bond.

The pencil tap stops completely.

SADDAM (CONT’D)
...but I still think about them as martyrs.

KYLE
Do you recall the day?

SADDAM
Bits and pieces. I was fighting in other areas at the time.

KYLE
I have read the report. I can describe the day for you.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

EXT. IRAQ - MOSUL - HIDEOUT - DAY

Clear Arabian skies as the sun cooks two dozen HUMVEES from the 101st Airborne Division while a platoon of TROOPS encircle a multi-level brown stained building.

One Lamborghini SUV and Mercedes C-series serve as a beacon of extravagance on a black-topped driveway.

SUPER: Uday (Ace Of Hearts) and Qusay (Ace Of Clubs) Hussein Hideout - Mosul, Iraq - July 2003

Two large speakers sit on the hood of the COMMANDER’S Humvee.
SOLDIER
(through speakers)
Come out. Do not attempt anything.

INT. HIDEOUT - LIVING ROOM - SAME

UDAY, 39, smug, tall, and QUSAY, 37, mustache, lanky, and his SON, 10, hustle in a panic in and out. They peak through window shades to get a sense of the force at their doorstep.

QUAY
(fast)
When they come, shoot. Keep them out.

SON
(to dad; scared)
What do we do?

Uday gives his son a look of defiance.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Small arms gunfire ERUPTS from the windows as the soldiers approach. The gunfire is wild, sloppy and indiscriminately hits everything in sight.

Soldiers duck and find cover but hold their ground. They attempt a tactical approach time and time again to no avail.

COMMANDER
(into radio)
Command. Recommend heavy air assistance.

RADIO
Roger that. Support in vicinity.
ETA ten mikes.

COMMANDER
(to soldier)
Pull them back. Air coming.

LATER --

OH-58 KIOWA HELICOPTERS circle the site while an A-10 WARTHOG ATTACK AIRCRAFT fire on the hideout.

One TOW MISSILE after another SLAMS into each side of the building. The ground SHAKES.

Smoke BILLOWS from the remaining structure. No one could have survived.
BACK TO INTERROGATION ROOM - SAME
Saddam is riveted by Kyle’s account but grief stricken again.

SADDAM
How long did it last?

Kyle finds it difficult to keep his face hard.

KYLE
Hours.

SADDAM
(looks at his hands)
So they gave a good fight.

INT. INTERROGATION PREP ROOM - DAY
Kyle’s desk is loaded with folders labeled, “SECRET” and “TOP SECRET”. It’s a mess that has no end.

KYLE
Have them change the room.

MELANIE
From what to what?

KYLE
Get rid of those fucking table and chairs.

MELANIE
Your trying to get him to eat?

KYLE
I'm trying to get him to talk.

MELANIE
About WMD?

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY
A tattered carpet and two red simple padded chairs and a small table with a teapot and two tea cups.

Saddam enters. His eyes widen. He's pleasantly surprised.

SADDAM
Much more suited for a President.

His mood noticeably flips like a switch.
Kyle stays formal.

SADDAM
Could be better.

Just the reaction Kyle was expecting.

KYLE
I'm trying. Can I speak to you now about your beginnings?

SADDAM
Beginnings?

KYLE
To exert your power.

SADDAM
With who?

KYLE
Senior leadership of Ba'ath. Nayif comes to mind.

SADDAM
You’re going far.

KYLE
He seems like a good place to start, especially with his repeated attempts to be President.

SADDAM
He tried.

KYLE
Was he your first adversary?

SADDAM
He was a minor irritant.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

EXT. REPUBLICAN PRESIDENTIAL PALACE - DAY

Large and elaborately decorated. The aqua dome dominates the center while the east and west wings hug the large fountain.

SUPER: Republican Presidential Palace - Summer 1974
INT. DINNING ROOM - SAME

PRESIDENT BAKR, late 60’s, a statesman, Saddam and others sit at a grand table. The backs of the chairs protrude above everyone's head. The CLANKING of utensils provide a steady stream of noise.

NAYIF, 20’s, slick black hair strolls into the room and approaches the table near Bakr. He’s full of himself.

Saddam, upon seeing him, pushes back from the table. The wooden legs squeal on the marble floor. His napkin falls to the floor. In seconds he’s two feet from Nayif.

NAYIF
(shrugs)
What?

Saddam pulls his shiny SILVER PISTOL from his holster and wedges the guns barrel into Nayif’s gut.

Nayif's eyes widen. His hand moves toward his holster.

SADDAM
Don't even.

Within seconds Nayif knows he’s in trouble. He tries not to make a scene in the elegant room.

SADDAM (CONT'D)
They’re our family too.
(to Barzan)
Take him.

BARZAN, early 40's, tall, a strapping military man grabs Nayif by the arm.

BACK TO INTERROGATION ROOM

KYLE
So your brother-in-law took him?

SADDAM
I could trust Barzan.

KYLE
Then what?

SADDAM
We negotiated.
INT. POCKET ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Nayif, still cocky, sits erect in a chair made more for the eye then for comfort.

Saddam in iconic black boots paces back and forth across the lavish red and gold colored carpet.

    SADDAM
    (head down, then to Nayif)
    Where do you want to go?

    NAYIF
    Go?

    SADDAM
    Yes, go.

Nayif can’t believe what’s happening. He attempts to pull a strategy together in real-time.

    NAYIF
    Lebanon.

    BARZAN (O.S.)
    (laughs)
    Lebanon!

    SADDAM
    No.

    NAYIF
    No?

Nayif’s posture begins to show his precarious situation.

    SADDAM
    Lebanon is a place where conspiracies are made. Choose another.

    NAYIF
    Algeria.

    BARZAN
    Algeria’s in its own revolution.

    SADDAM
    Again.

    NAYIF
    Damn it...Morocco?
SADDAM
Fine. Let's go.

NAYIF
Now?

SADDAM
Right now.

INT. SADDAM'S LIMOUSINE (MOVING) - DAY
Saddam and Nayif sit side by side in the back of the shiniest of black stretched limousine.

Saddam’s pistol rests on his knee, easily assessable while his middle finger taps the grip.

NAYIF
What's going to happen?

Saddam talks while he watches the city go by.

SADDAM
You will be in a safe place. No one will hurt you.
(to Nayif, stern)
But you have to obey.

Nayif, in a fog of uncertainty -- stares out the window. Unfortunately, he can do nothing but accept his fate.

NAYIF
Don't worry.

SADDAM
When the guards salute, you salute back. If you think about doing something, remember I am next to you.

NAYIF
I--I understand, but what do I do when I get there?

SADDAM
Act like an Ambassador.

NAYIF
Like an Ambassador, I--

SADDAM
You are smart. Figure it out. You come from elegance.
Saddam goes from talking to the street to directly to Nayif.

**SADDAM (CONT’D)**
I know everything and will notice
if you are planning something or
not.

END FLASHBACK

BACK TO INTERROGATION ROOM - SAME

**KYLE**
You just sent him like that?

**SADDAM**
We were thirteen days into a new regime.

**KYLE**
Did you even get a chance to tell
Morocco that he was coming?

**SADDAM**
No. I did know what I was doing.
We were young student
revolutionaries.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

EXT. RASHEED AIRPORT - MAIN ENTRANCE - DAY

GUARDS wave the limousine through.

SUPER: Rasheed Airport - Just outside Baghdad

TARMAC - MOMENTS LATER

The crew wait at the top of the stairs. Guards on either side stand at attention at the bottom.

The limousine pulls up next to the stairs. A guard walks up and opens the door.


**SADDAM**
Here.

Nayif turns around slowly avoiding any sudden move.
SADDAM (CONT'D)
You can have this back.

Saddam stretches out his arm and hands Nayif his pistol.

NAYIF
My family though...

SADDAM
I told you. I will take care of them.

NAYIF
But--

SADDAM
Now is not the time to test my generosity.

END FLASHBACK

BACK TO INTERROGATION ROOM - SAME

KYLE
If he represented a potential threat to the Ba'ath, then why an ambassador?

SADDAM
I did not want anymore bloodshed. The coup in '59 had members tied to cars and dragged through the streets until death. Virgins were hung on electric poles. We needed to forget about the past and prohibit revenge.

Kyle’s mannerisms show he’s comprehending more and more.

KYLE
So you were selective in your choosing?

SADDAM
We started our arrests with Nayif, then Da’ud, and went on. Nayif to Morocco, Da’ud to Saudi.

BEGIN FLASHBACK
EXT. LONDON - INTERCONTINENTAL HOTEL - LONDON PARK LANE - EVENING

Light rain falls lightly on the shiny asphalt outside an elaborately decorated five-start hotel.

SUPER: Intercontinental Hotel - London - July 1978

Nayif pushes through gold-framed glass doors.

A MAN quickly approaches him from the street.

Nayif is preoccupied and looks up, surprised by the man’s sudden movement towards him.

The man RIPS open his trench coat. He pulls a pistol from his breast pocket and then FIRES a round. The sound of the gunshot reverberates through the buildings.

Nayif falls to the cold wet pavement. He reaches for his stomach. Blood seeps from the entry and exit holes.

The man stealthily moves to a nearby car and speeds away.

END FLASHBACK

BACK TO INTERROGATION ROOM - SAME

KYLE
Salem Ahmed Hassan killed him.

SADDAM
That is what has been reported.

KYLE
Some believe you killed him.

Saddam remains unfazed by these accusatory accounts.

SADDAM
God killed Nayif.

KYLE
But you ran the ISS. That leads to you.

SADDAM
No. Nayif started acting in a way against the country. He gave his word that he would not. He went to Iran, met with Dayan, we could go on and on.
KYLE
Yes, the Israeli Defense Minister.

SADDAM
These were all considered bad acts.

KYLE
Did you know of his death?

SADDAM
I told you clearly. Only God knows.

KYLE
Could Nayif have just been arrested and punished, instead of executed?

SADDAM
I gave you my answer.

INT. OVAL OFFICE - DAY
The U.S. PRESIDENT reads from a folder marked “TOP SECRET”. His National Security Team sits idle awaiting his response. Their look is of concern because they haven’t got much.

PRESIDENT
What’s taking so long?

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
It takes time to work him, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT
Then massage harder. We’ve got boys out there looking and the guy who knows sits in a cushy cell. Get him to talk faster. I want confirmation.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
Yes, Mr. President. WMD is our top priority.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY
Kyle scribbles crude, quirky notes on his yellow pad.

KYLE
Nadhim Kazzar. Your right-hand man and at the same time a threat.
SADDAM
Not to me he was not.

KYLE
To President Bakr then?

SADDAM
I don't believe so either. He wasn't a revolutionary, nor among our seventy who took over the Presidential Palace, but he was a good party member...and tough.

KYLE
How so?

SADDAM
In prison. He wasn't convinced that the military would be good for the Ba'ath. He felt them old and a burden.

KYLE
With his questioning of the party did he ever meet with Iran?

SADDAM
I do not know. But what I do know is that his coup failed and then he tried to hide and run but he was an easy capture...again I do not want to talk bad about Kazzar.

KYLE
Can you at least tell me for history's sake?

Kyle throws a bone to Saddam, hoping he will take it.

KYLE (CONT'D)
We know he tried to kill Bakr when his plane was delayed.

SADDAM
Not true. Your information is not specific.

KYLE
Then educate me.

BEGIN FLASHBACK
EXT. BAGHDAD INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - TARMAC - DAY

Saddam is patient in a black stretch MERCEDES BENZ as President Bakr’s 737 touches down.

The aircraft ramp lowers as Saddam’s pulls up.

Bakr sees Saddam as he steps out. They smile in unison.

SUPER: Baghdad International Airport, June 1979

INT. PRESIDENTIAL LIMOUSINE (MOVING) - MOMENTS LATER

Bakr’s presence with Saddam is what he enjoys and needs.

BAKR
How are things?

Saddam’s eyes flit from Bakr to the streets. He’s anxious.

SADDAM
Many things. Almost to many to mention.

BAKR
Then we will have tea at the Palace and discuss.

EXT. PRESIDENTIAL PALACE - DAY

Bakr and Saddam sit at an elaborate table sipping tea.

BAKR
What is wrong?

SADDAM
I feel we are not in a great place right now.

CHILDREN barge into the room, laughing and talking loudly.

CHILD 1
Grandpa, grandpa, dinner is ready.

CHILD 2
Please join us. Please!

She grabs his hand. His smile grows with each second.

BAKR
(laughs)
I will. I will.

Bakr reaches over to Saddam to touch his hand.
BAKR (CONT’D)
You don’t mind do you? We will continue.

Saddam knows a moment has slipped through his fingertips. Disappointment is clear as Bakr playfully joins the ruckus.

INT. SADDAM’S CAR (MOVING) – LATER

Saddam in the passenger seat. Street lights silhouettes glow as they move along the road.

The radio plays Muslim theme music. A police bulletin interrupts what Saddam was enjoying. The light BLINKS red.

RADIO (V.O.)
“An attempted coup is in progress at the Presidential Palace. All units report.”

SADDAM
(to driver)
Take me back at once!

INT. PRESIDENTIAL PALACE – HALLWAY – LATER

Saddam is practically running to Bakr’s massive wooden-etched door. He waves his hands to the guards to open them.

BAKR’S OFFICE – MOMENTS LATER

Sweat beads up on Saddam’s forehead. He’s as calm as he can be, given the chaos.

SADDAM
I came at once. Is everything okay?

BAKR
Shihab and Ghayan. (shakes his head) I tried to reach both of them but no answer. They betrayed me.

SADDAM
I had a feeling it is Kazzar.

BAKR
Kazzar.

Bakr can hardly think straight. He’s in disbelief.
BAKR (CONT’D)
Why?

SADDAM
You have to trust me. Give me permission to go after him.

BAKR
I do trust you.

Bakr’s eyes dart, trying to collect himself.

BAKR (CONT’D)
Who do you want?

SADDAM
The Military Division. We must hit him before he crosses into Iran.

HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER
At run at a 100 yard dash pace Saddam and Barzan.
Saddam grabs him by the arm.

SADDAM
Get the tribes together.

BARZAN
They’ll do it?

SADDAM
They better. We gave them everything. Weapons. Rifles...

BARZAN
I’ll put it on the air. We’ll get him.

SERIES OF IMAGES - SWAMPS OF SOUTHERN IRAQ - NIGHT
TRIBES in different locations listen intently to the radio as the Iraqi military describe the attempted coup and the need to capture Kazzar. They offer a significant reward.

EXT. SWAMPS OF SOUTHERN IRAQ - ROAD - NIGHT
A caravan hastily travels down the dust-laden road. The conditions force them off the road occasionally.

SUPER: Swamps of Southern Iraq
The caravan stops at an intersection littered with debris. Suddenly they are surrounded by gun toting TRIBESMAN.

In the distance, helicopters fly low in their approach. They draw closer with every second.

No one moves a muscle.

The HELICOPTERS come down hard, skids flex. SPECIAL FORCES TROOPS jump out and run to the caravan, yelling as they converge. They breach open each door.

KAZZAR, mid-40's, short, average build is found. He’s scared, unsure -- captured.

Right away, the troops snatch him out of the truck.

KAZZAR
(fast)
What--what did I do? What did I do?

Kazzar tries to rationalize while being dragged in the sand.

SPECIAL FORCES SOLDIER
Do not move. Hussein will see you shortly.

INT. PRESIDENTIAL PALACE - LATER

Bakr sits at his desk, shoulders slumped over displaying his mood. The toll of another coup is too much to bear for him.

The door swings open as Saddam steps through. He sees defeat in Bakr’s face upsets him greatly.

SADDAM
What is wrong?

BAKR
I cannot do this.

SADDAM
Do what?

BAKR
(waves his hands)
All of this.

SADDAM
Of course you can. We are Ba'ath.

Bakr puts his hands to his eyes. Begins to cry.
SADDAM (CONT’D)
Let us go back to your residence.

PRESIDENTIAL GARDEN - LATER

Bakr and Saddam stroll through a perfectly manicured garden. Their talk is somber and their walk is at a snail’s pace.

BAKR
I want to step down.

Saddam chuckles, trying his best to keep the situation light.

SADDAM
I said the same thing to you many times before but I stayed.

Bakr stops dead in his tracks to face Saddam.

BAKR
This is different. I am older...tired.

SADDAM
And what would you have me do?

BAKR
Stay...stay in the government.

SADDAM
But--

BAKR
No, I know how. I will slip out quietly.

SADDAM
And go where?

BAKR
Away.

END FLASHBACK

BACK TO INTERROGATION ROOM - SAME

KYLE
That’s when you knew you had the upper hand.
SADDAM
That is absurd. He was my friend, my family. I served him for over a decade. Why is it when Bakr ruled he was not called a dictator, but after I take over they call me one. No one was killed or assassinated inside or out of Iraq. No one was executed from the Ministries or out of the leadership after I took over, but I receive ridicule.

KYLE
They're many incidents that suggest many people were killed. That's why these unanswered questions need to be clarified, for the sake of history.

SADDAM
It is not enough to ask?

KYLE
Then who else? Give me names?

SADDAM
You have them shoved in other pens around here. Ask.

INT. MEDICAL OFFICE - DAY

A MEDICAL OFFICER pulls vials of blood from a spinning centrifuge. They're labelled, “HUSSEIN”.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - MORNING

KYLE
Would Shaykhli do anything?

SADDAM
For who? Me? Ba'ath?

KYLE
Any.

SADDAM
I don't know. Ask him.

KYLE
Was he a friend?
SADDAM
Yes--Yes. We go back even to our
days in Taji Prison.

KYLE
He visited you?

SADDAM
Yes. Our friendship grew over
time.

KYLE
Enough of a friendship for you to
give him upper echelon positions?

SADDAM
I didn't give him anything. We
were all young revolutionaries.
So, he got what he could handle.
When the work overcame an
individual's ability they were
replaced.

KYLE
He was murdered in 1980, though.
That's a long way from appointment
to death.

SADDAM
It is.

KYLE
And he saved your life.

Saddam sits stone-faced while he waits for Kyle’s next move.

KYLE (CONT’D)
The night you were almost killed,
or at a minimum arrested, at your
house.

SADDAM
I was never in danger.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

INT. SHAYKHLI'S CAR (MOVING) - DAY

SHAYKHLI, 20's, plump and sweaty, controls a dirty black
smoke spewing sedan. It skids to a stop at Saddam's driveway
creating a tornado of dust in the yard.
SUPER: Saddam’s Residence - 1978

SHAYKHLI
(jittery)
Police? Who tipped them?

Saddam reaches to his side. Places his hand over his pistol.

SADDAM
You stay here.

Saddam opens the clunky door.

EXT. SADDAM’S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Saddam’s dark gold-rimmed sunglasses scan the area. He crosses over a patchy lawn enclosed by a simple fence to a small overhang covering concrete steps.

Saddam glides smoothly up the stairs and KNOCKS.

INT./EXT. SADDAM’S HOUSE - SAME

The door abruptly opens and SLAMS against the interior wall.

A POLICE OFFICER stands like he owns the place.

Saddam stands, cool as a cucumber.

POLICE OFFICER 1
Don't move.

The police officer whips his machine gun from his side and shoves it into Saddam's belly.

INT. SHAYKHLI’S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Shaykhli JAMS the stick shift into gear and STOMPS on the gas. Tires spin in a heap of dust. He’s as good as gone.

EXT. SADDAM’S HOUSE - SAME

Saddam's head spins around and glares at the cars getaway.

The Police Officer’s gun barrel sticks deeper into Saddam and forces him to step back. They are practically nose to nose.
I am confused.
(looks around)
I am looking for Mohammed.

Saddam is playing him in order to set his trap.

END FLASHBACK

BACK TO INTERROGATION ROOM - SAME

KYLE
He left you?

Saddam fluffs it off as if it was no big deal.

SADDAM
He was brave but I understood.
People react differently to certain situations.

The cocky Saddam is back, making Kyle laugh inside.

KYLE
No?

SADDAM
No. Iraqi police do not kill someone easily, unless their life is seriously threatened. Plus people in Iraq generally know each other and their tribal influences. It happens--

KYLE
Violence?

SADDAM
Tribes seek revenge.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

EXT. SADDAM'S HOUSE - DAY

The Police Officer shadows Saddam to the driveway.

Saddam stealthily shuffles to the side. His arm is now out of view as he moves his hand slowly to his side.

Saddam stops dead in his tracks and side-steps as gracefully and DRAWS his pistol.
He grabs the Police Officer’s gun barrel and forces it down while he jams his pistol into his neck.

SADDAM
Drop it.

The Police Officer glares. He knows he's been outplayed.

Saddam’s pistol moves from the neck to inches from the Police Officer’s ear. He pulls the trigger, it SNAPS, a MISFIRE.

The Police Officer’s eyes almost pop out of their sockets.

SADDAM (CONT’D)
Don't move.

Saddam snaps open his palm to unlatch the magazine to reset. It pokes out of its casing. He punches the clip back into the housing and pulls the firing pin back above the policeman’s head. CLINK. BAM.

SADDAM (CONT’D)
(smooth)
The second one will go in your neck.

LIVING ROOM - SAME

MEN kneel, faces down in the couch. Machine guns point at their head.

Their heads swing towards the sound of a GUNSHOT.

THUG 1 POLICE OFFICER 2

Saddam!

Who?

THUG 2 (optimistic)
Saddam comes for us!

Uneasiness flashes in the face of the three officers.

POLICE OFFICER 3
(to police officer 2)
Stay here.
(to police officer 4)
You. Come with me.

DRIVEWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Saddam turns to the Officers as they stumble out the house.
Shaykhli's car ZOOMS into the driveway and SKIDS to a halt. He jumps out and rests a machine gun on the hood.

The Officer slides to a stop. They know Saddam is in charge.

Saddam reaches and unsnaps POLICE OFFICER 1's machine gun and swings it over his shoulder. He strolls confidently to the center of the lawn, in total control.

SADDAM
You come here uninvited. I know your tribes, so I know you, your wives, your children, your family...leave now willingly and I will guarantee you will be safe and taken care of.

The officers are silently obligated and obedient.

END FLASHBACK

BACK TO INTERROGATION ROOM - SAME

KYLE
He came back?

SADDAM
In the end he always made the right decision to come back to me, but make no mistake I was never in danger.

KYLE
I have to take your word. It could have been a turning point in the history of the Ba'ath.

SADDAM
In what way?

Kyle is caught up in the tale and can't help his fast talk.

KYLE
Guns. Opposition. Confrontation. Shaykhli was considered powerful enough to lead the party.

SADDAM
That is strong.

KYLE
Is it really?
SADDAM
It is keeping with rumors far too much.

KYLE
Their data points more than rumor.

SADDAM
Hardly. From the days underground to today I was always in charge. But it is embarrassing to talk of one's own position. Everyone knew the order of things.

KYLE
It's commonly believed that your rivals were eliminated between the revolution and your rise to the Presidency in '79.

SADDAM
I do not agree with your assertion, nor would the Iraqi’s, Kyle. Opinion is not fact.

KYLE
But it's the start of something.

SADDAM
Fiction, yes. One must take a logical approach to accession during a revolution. France, a single soldier, Napoleon became the leader after the French Revolution when others gave up. American history is also full of examples. These are all revolutionary ways.

KYLE
Revolutions involve death, tragedy.

SADDAM
Revolutions are a new step in government, not a liberal way where someone is groomed and chosen. Revolutions come from the people. The Brits, I'm sure, didn't like America's revolutionary ways in 1776. No difference, really. It happens in Iraq as it happens elsewhere in the world. Do you think 15,000 murders every year in the U.S strike you as odd? I do.
KYLE
But of high ranking people?

SADDAM
So one life is more precious than another? They are all a tragic.

INT. SADDAM'S PRISON CELL - DAY

A simple ten by ten foot room. Rough walls. One single bed, comfortable blankets. A small table with Saddam’s childhood Quran and a relaxing chair under a lone small window.

Saddam lays in bed facing the wall. He’s beyond tired.

A KNOCK.

SADDAM
Yes.

Saddam rolls over slowly.

KYLE (O.C.)
May I enter?

SADDAM
Kyle?

KYLE (O.C.)
Yes.

SADDAM
Of course.

The stale gray door opens.

Kyle is determined yet looks sincere.

SADDAM (CONT’D)
What brings you here?

KYLE
You.

Kyle stops in the middle of the room.

SADDAM
(laughs then coughs)
Don't worry, I see you tomorrow, no?
KYLE
I know but this is too important.
(beat)
Do you trust me?

Kyle’s shoulders hunched as he stands.

SADDAM
As much as anyone can trust another
in the position we find ourselves.

KYLE
I need you to do me a favor.

Saddam rubs his eyes and keeps them shut. He knows what Kyle wants.

SADDAM
I am not eating, Kyle.

KYLE
You need to.

SADDAM
I do not need to do anything.

KYLE
Do you want others to talk to you?

Saddam perks up. The thought of someone else terrifies him.

SADDAM
No.

KYLE
Neither do I. If for no one else
do it for me, then.

SADDAM
That will not change my mind.

Kyle walks to his bed. Kneels down.

Saddam opens his weary eyes.

KYLE
Then do it for your people.

SADDAM
You keep reminding me they are not mine.
KYLE
But as you remind me...they are
still yours. Don't come out of
here defeated. Come out ready to
face what this country brings you.

Saddam slowly looks up. Nods his head.

SERIES OF IMAGES - WORLD NEWS PAPER HEADLINES

-- Three US soldiers and one Iraqi are killed by a roadside
bomb attack on a military convoy in Khalidiyah.

-- At least thirteen people are killed when a suicide bomber
rams an explosives-laden car into a police station in Kirkuk.

-- 130,000 coalition troops. Deaths of US personnel killed
in Iraq to 540, civilian deaths 14,000.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - MORNING

SUPER: BIAP, 20 February, 2004

KYLE
You look refreshed.

SADDAM
(grins slightly)
I figure if I continue to eat the
food, it will kill me as quickly as
a hunger strike.

KYLE
It's not that bad.

SADDAM
I challenge you to try it.

KYLE
Then I will.

They both laugh. A kinship is growing.

KYLE (CONT’D)
Let's make today a short one, shall we?

SADDAM
That would be appreciated.
I've wondered when you spoke of Bakr. Did he step aside willingly?

BEGIN FLASHBACK

INT. PRESIDENTIAL PALACE - HALLWAY - DAY

Bakr and Saddam stroll along an etched marble floor. Portraits and artifacts symmetrically decorate the walls. Servants follow closely but far enough to not hear.

BAKR
(somber)
I know you have felt it.

SADDAM
I have, unfortunately.

BAKR
The desire for the Presidency and my ability to care for our people escapes me now more than ever.

SADDAM
Yes. It has us all worried. Forgive me, but I can see your ability has eroded.

Saddam finds it difficult to continue.

SADDAM (CONT’D)
...what would you have me focus? Regardless of difficulty.

Bakr stops and stumbles slightly. He reaches out and grabs Saddam's shoulder. Saddam stops for him to right himself.

BAKR
I want you to lead us.

SADDAM
But you are aware of my wish to leave government?

Saddam tries to make this a major point for Bakr.

SADDAM (CONT’D)
We have had many discussions about this.
BAKR
Not Ba'ath though, no?

SADDAM
No, not the party but the government.

END FLASHBACK

BACK TO INTERROGATION ROOM - SAME

KYLE
If you walked away what would you do?

SADDAM
Tend to my land.

KYLE
A farmer!? I sure have difficulty seeing you do that. Day in, day out.

SADDAM
Why? It is honorable.

KYLE
You told Bakr?

SADDAM
I would never decline him, but I was forward in my reservations.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

INT. PRESIDENT BAKR'S OFFICE - LATER

BAKR
You must take it...I am not one on forcing an action with you but I will if I have to.

SADDAM
It is still not my desire.

BAKR
It is for the party, our people.

Saddam gets up from the couch. Bakr feels he's uncomfortable, but knows his request is the only choice.
BAKR (CONT’D)
I know this is not the normal method for a Presidency but I will go to the radio and announce it regardless.

SADDAM
That would cause tremendous consternation for our people and in the eyes of foreigners would look like something was wrong.

Bakr stands and pats Saddam gently knowing he’s got his wish.

BAKR
Then it is done.

INT. SADDAM’S HOUSE - MORNING

Saddam, comfortable as he sits next to a mahogany-encased radio on an elegant claw foot table.

BAKR (V.O.)
(from radio)
For a long time I have been talking to my leaders in the command, particularly cherished confidant Saddam Hussein about my health, which no longer allows me to shoulder the responsibilities with which you have honored me. I would repeatedly ask them to relieve me of this burden, but the magnanimity of Saddam Hussein and the leadership prompted them to refuse to discuss.
(trembles)
Therefore I have insisted that my dear friend Saddam Hussein and my party leadership and the RCC respond to my request to be relieved of my responsibilities in the party and our country.

END FLASHBACK

BACK TO INTERROGATION ROOM - SAME

KYLE
Some say he was coerced.

Saddam defends himself like a lawyer in a court room.
SADDAM
I was not even there.

KYLE
Even with all that, it wasn't a smooth transition for you, though.

SADDAM
It was not that difficult. There was nothing and no one against me.

KYLE
Muhie Mashhadi?

SADDAM
Sure, some voiced their opinions, asking Bakr to stay, but he made up his mind. As I like to see it, his health made it an easy one.

KYLE
Once Mashadi found out he called a vote.

Kyle moves closer as he tries to get a rise out of Saddam.

KYLE (CONT'D)
Even begged Bakr to stay, telling him to just take a rest.

SADDAM
(deadpan)
Not one of his smarter moves.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

INT. BAGHDAD - REVOLUTIONARY COMMAND COUNCIL CONGRESS HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Hot and musty. Over two-hundred MEN cram into stadium-style seats. Others stand shoulder to shoulder along with dark sunglass-shaded GUARDS in uniform. A low roar fills the room.


TARIQ AZIZ, 30’s, a geeky glasses military man stands at the podium with a serious purpose.

Saddam in a three-piece suit sits at an arching table with a skinny microphone and overlooks the crowd. He grabs a cigar from his suit pocket. Lights it and smugly puffs away.
TARIQ
We have come together as a great party. A great country. A great leader for the future...Saddam Hussein, President of Iraq.

Isolated pockets of men stand to CLAP.

TARIQ (CONT'D)
(slow. melancholy)
But my comrades we have exposed a painful and atrocious plot.

Faces go from joy to confusion.

The sound of doors LOCKING reverberates in the room.

TARIQ (CONT’D)
This betrayal comes from within our Party by some of our most senior members.

MEN look around, searching for the exits. Several men attempt to flee but are easily corralled by the guards.

TARIQ (CONT’D) ........................................ MAN IN CROWD (O.C.)
It saddens us all to know No. It can not be.
that every one...every one of the traitors is here in the hall...among us right now.

TARIQ
We will begin our session with our first speaker
(looks down at his paper.
adjusts his glasses)
This is a most sad day. Details of this plot will be given by former Secretary General Muhie Mashhadi.

The audience GASPS as the red curtain parts behind the podium. MUHIE MASHHADI, 50's, a beaten man emerges, escorted by an OFFICER to the podium. He knows his end is coming.

A rush of terror emanates and ENVELOPS EVERYONE.

Saddam is alone in his power trip.

Muhie avoids eye contact with the CROWD but it’s impossible.

MUHIE
I...I have plotted against many.
Since 1975 I have been part...part of a Syrian plot aimed at...
(MORE)
MUHIE (CONT'D)

(voice cracks)
...at removing President Bakr and Saddam Hussein in order to pave the way for an Iraq-Syria unification, headed by Hamad and President Asad.

CROWD (O.C.)
What? No. Tyrant. Traitor!

Saddam grabs his microphone.

SADDAM
(to Muhie)
I noticed you behaving strangely during the meeting at the RCC.
(to crowd)
He was nervous and looked at me with hatred!

Muhie turns slowly towards Saddam. It's a struggle to move his neck. He's in pain but tries to maintain his composure.

MUHIE
I--I have willingly met with them on many occasions...in an attempt to keep this vision alive. To eliminate Saddam Hussein.
(tears flow)
I have committed treason. Many of you have also committed this act.

Saddam pushes his chair back. Stands tall and sets his cigar down. Straightens his suit.

Saddam approaches Muhie. Puts his arm out in front and brushes him aside to take the podium.

SADDAM
I am stunned to discover I have been betrayed by my closest friends.
(beat)
I visited him to understand the motive of this behavior.

Saddam swings his verbal assault to Muhie and the crowd.

SADDAM (CONT'D)
(to Muhie)
What political differences exist between you and me? Did you lack power or money? If you had an opinion, submit it to the party, you are a leader.
(MORE)
SADDAM (CONT’D)
(to crowd)
Even our own Ghanem, former
Director of the Office of the
President admitted his guilt.

Saddam reaches in his pocket for a handkerchief to wipe his tears. The sound of a single crinkled piece of paper from his pocket echoes in the room. He smooths it out.

SADDAM (CONT’D)
When your name is called, simply stand.

As if the thermostat was turned to a hundred and fifty degrees, sweat beads profusely on each face. PANIC sets in.

SADDAM (CONT’D)
Do not resist. Own your fate and your treason to our Party. Just stand. God will show you the way.
Muhyi Abdel-Hussein...

Saddam scans the room and finds him. They have a moment together. Guards BURST towards him pushing others out of the way and quickly grab him.

ABDEL
(terrified)
No! I never!

ABDEL, 60, frail, struggles to no avail.

MAN IN CROWD
Traitor! Kill him!

SADDAM
Aman Aden...Hassan
Ibrahim...Jamel Khalil.

The guards go after them and force them out of the room. Despair and SHOCK in each one’s eyes.

LATER --

Tariq stands at the podium with “The List.”

Saddam grabs the microphone while he sits. His cigar billows.

SADDAM
(agitated)
The dream of the conspirators are many, but be assured I will pick up my gun and fight.

TARIQ
Malik Nasser.
MALIK, 50's, in a worn suit. Waves his fists violently.

MALIK
We will not stand for this!

SADDAM
Get out! Get out!

TARIQ
Samir Omar. Mohammed Zafir. Adnan Huessen.

Tariq folds “The List” essentially ending the sleaziness and then looks to Saddam for the next move.

Saddam grabs a handful of tissues to wipe away his tears.

TARIQ (CONT’D)
We will prevail. Long live Iraq!

The naming of individuals has ceased. The audience rises as if they just witnessed a prize fight knockout.

CROWD
Long live the party! Long live Saddam Hussein!

Saddam has his win.

END FLASHBACK

BACK TO INTERROGATION ROOM - SAME

Kyle knows but wants a reaction.

KYLE
Sixty seven in total?

SADDAM
I do not recall the exact number of the guilty ones.

Saddam plays it off as a typical humdrum incident.

KYLE
Many have said your tears weren't authentic. Theatre, really.

SADDAM
Theatre? I do not understand your logic. I was back-stabbed. Betrayed. Who would not feel sadness?
KYLE
I don't mean to be callous but it's what's been written.

SADDAM
So? I can not defend history. I know what I felt.

KYLE
But the fact that you recorded it leads people to conclusions. It was brutal...and you had it recorded. I saw it.

Saddam shifts from conversation to teacher mode.

SADDAM
Treason is the root of a coup. I had to exterminate the root. I had to show we would not tolerate traitors. With our Party methods, there is no chance for any one who disagrees with us to jump on a couple of tanks and overthrow us.

KYLE
And the video to all the Iraqi ambassadors in other counties?

SADDAM
I have no knowledge of where it went but if it was shown to others, that would have been a good thing, not a bad thing.

KYLE
It essentially showed you were in charge.

SADDAM
This is your opinion, you have the right to think that way.

KYLE
The video didn't show how the plot was discovered.

SADDAM
(matter of fact)
It did not.

KYLE
Why?
SADDAM
Despite being twenty five years ago it will always remain a state secret.

KYLE
Some could have been proven innocent.

Saddam finds this as comical as a joke at a comedy club.

SADDAM
No. There were probably more conspirators who were not identified.
(beat)
When one is surrounded by monsters, one must be one for a time.

ARCHIVE FILM FOOTAGE - IRAQ INVASION OF KUWAIT - 1990

-- Iraqi tanks charge through the desert. Dust trails each ironclad track as they fly by a sign that reads, "KUWAITI SOVEREIGN TERRITORY - KUWAIT CITY 150km".

-- Iraqi troops take positions throughout the city. Kuwaiti citizens run to take shelter.

-- Military helicopters patrol the city overhead. Drops off troops at the airport and the sea port.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - MORNING

SUPER: BIAP - 3 March 2003

SADDAM
No. So I told Saudi that if Kuwait did not stop interfering I will take the Kuwait dinar to fil.

KYLE
But that doesn't necessarily make a conspiracy.

SADDAM
There are many incidents. We sit here conversing. There is no way for you to feel a conspiracy when you have the freedom to walk out of here?. You move on. I live it...

Kyle stares, hoping to get a better clue.
SADDAM (CONT’D)
I contemplate it now. A conspiracy is an amalgamation of events, of actions that you feel as a leader threatens you...you would have no idea...you never will.

KYLE
Then tell me more about actions; more events.

SADDAM
Kuwait's lack of action toward us for the price of oil confirmed a conspiracy. I do not have to tell you about what oil does to countries. The Americans are feeling it now are you not?

KYLE
Depends--

SADDAM
Really? I hear things. I hear what is going on out there.

KYLE
That's not why I'm here. Tell me another.

SADDAM
The visit of US General Schwarzkopf provided further confirmation.

KYLE
Our military--

Kyle tries to be objective but knows he’s slipped a bit.

SADDAM
Our military?

KYLE
We visit countries throughout the world to conduct exercises. That's not a conspiracy.

SADDAM
In what other country did Schwarzkopf do "sand planning" like Kuwait?
KYLE
It's called CONOPS, contingency planning.

Saddam's mind wanders while he touches his side and GRUNTS.

KYLE (CONT’D)
Are you okay?

SADDAM
(grimaces)
Fine. Fine. Where were we?

Kyle slows down. He feels something is amiss with Saddam.

KYLE
Contingency versus conspiracy.

SADDAM
Right. Schwarzkopf personally conducted negotiations with Kuwait in order to enter for defensive purposes. I am smart enough to know that Schwarzkopf would not do that for any other country other than South Korea, which in the United States’ mind, there is an evil neighbor. We’ve been labeled!

KYLE
But you’re planning just the same.

SADDAM
For survival, yes. Not for oil like the West. Do you see the difference?

Saddam breaks eye contact.

SADDAM (CONT’D)
I know you do. You can not hide what your eyes are telling me.

KYLE
Please don't confuse my understanding of the situation for apathy. I'm trying to find reasoning.

SADDAM
I do not want nor seek apathy, but in our mind a country like ours has to be aware of conspiracy. I fully understand why the US turned on us.
Saddam grabs his side again but remains a soldier.
Kyle can’t help but look at each twitch of Saddam’s face.

    KYLE
    I wouldn't consider it turned.

    SADDAM
    When the Soviets were a superpower it was easier.

    KYLE
    We would argue that it's just as difficult.

    SADDAM
    No. The balance was equal. Both attempted to get other countries to side with them. When the Soviets collapsed, there was nowhere for someone like Iraq to go when we disagree. Our disagreement made us an enemy by default.

    KYLE
    But you attacked Kuwait. That doesn't endear you in the eyes of many.

    SADDAM
    It was a “defend-by-attacking” approach, and regardless of any circumstances, Kuwait has always been a part of Iraq for centuries...our nineteenth province.

INT. BAGHDAD HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - DAY
Saddam lays on a gurney in obvious pain.
A MEDIC pushes him as SOLDIERS stay close to their prize.

INT. KYLE'S QUARTERS - LATER
Kyle, asleep on his cot, is startled by a POUND on the door.

    KYLE
    (groggy)
    Who is it?
MELANIE (O.C.)
Get up! It's me. Saddam is sick.
He's being transported.

KYLE
Shit.

Kyle stumbles as he jumps up out of his cot.

INT. HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM - DAY
Kyle paces, checking his watch like a worried parent.
The double doors. A DOCTOR in a white lab coat enters.

KYLE
So?

DOCTOR
He'll be fine.

KYLE
When can I have him back?

The doctor takes a step back. Nerved by the forwardness.

KYLE (CONT’D)
Sorry. Didn't mean it that way.

DOCTOR
(blunt)
Tomorrow. 24 hours in house.

KYLE
I'll wait.

DOCTOR
We're short on space but if you find an open spot...

The doctor abruptly turns and storms off.

EXT. BAGHDAD - NIGHT
Two CH-46 CHINOOK and UH-1 HUEY attack helicopter fly in perfect formation like a bat out of hell.

It’s a patchwork of lights below them.

Fires billow from objects along the route and on the horizon.
INT. UH-1 HELICOPTER - SAME

Hot wind swirls in from the open door rustles the cabin.

Kyle sits adjacent to Saddam who’s blindfolded and handcuffed to the fuselage wall.

KYLE
(leans over to Saddam)
You doing okay?


KYLE (CONT’D)
Would you like to see?

SADDAM
More than anything.

Kyle checks to ensure no one is looking and reaches over to pull the blindfold up just enough for Saddam to see.

KYLE
It can't be long.

Saddam’s eyes blink wildly. He collects himself enough to bring into focus his vibrant city. He knows it's hurting.

Kyle smiles as he gets a healthy dose of trust from Saddam.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

A flowing Arabic red and yellow desert landscape carpet with tassels. Two ruby colored padded chairs with a portrait of Iraq hangs behind them.

SADDAM
(looks around in pleasure)
Another change?

KYLE
Thought you might like it.

SADDAM
Much, much more suitable for a president.

Saddam puffs his chest out.

KYLE
(laughs)
Well I would like to finish our discussion about Kuwait.
SADDAM
I did have time to think.

Kyle’s mouth unknowingly hangs open like a child in waiting.

SADDAM (CONT’D)
Kuwait is Iraq. There is not much more to say.

KYLE
They were, are, a free country.

SADDAM
No. They were stolen from us by the Brits, the British resolution.

KYLE
That was so long ago. You have to agree it is more than that. It involves captives--

SADDAM
Captives! Of what degree?

Saddam is puffed up. Kyle is used to this by now.

KYLE
Human shields and captives. I have a government paper that suggests Iraq used Kuwaiti's as human shields.

SADDAM
I can not deny that individuals volunteered as human shields.

KYLE
Did these volunteers exist in ‘91?

SADDAM
I do not remember.

KYLE
Qusay wrote a government letter to the claim of human shields.

SADDAM
(fast)
I do not know of such a letter.

KYLE
But you can’t deny it’s legitimacy.
SADDAM
I answered.

KYLE
That you don't remember or that they volunteered?

SADDAM
No one was captive. We all did our part to prevent attacks.

KYLE
These letters are dated March of 2003.

Saddam looks confused.

SADDAM
2003?

KYLE
Yes.

SADDAM
Impossible!

Saddam starts to wonder if Kyle's done his homework.

KYLE
No. It's fact.

Saddam starts the quiz.

SADDAM
You need to examine them closely for authenticity. I thought we were talking about 1991.

KYLE
No. That is why I brought it up.

SADDAM
If it is dated 2003, it is a forgery. We did not have captives then.

KYLE
Your government documents suggest otherwise.

SADDAM
Qusay was not the type of person to make up things.
KYLE
You deny it?

SADDAM
I suggest experts from the U.S and in Iraq scrutinize such documents. Especially the ones you present to the president of Iraq.

KYLE
The president.

SADDAM
I'm still the president.

Kyle focuses on not making eye contact, but it's tough. He looks though his papers for nothing but to catch a break.

KYLE
(clears his throat)
Regarding documents. We also found documents about chemical weapons. Why didn't you use them in the first gulf war?

SADDAM
I have already been asked this...and answered.

KYLE
(peculiarly)
No. I’ve never asked.

SADDAM
You certainly did.

KYLE
Well. I apologize for not remembering. Can you provide me the answer again?

Saddam doesn’t appreciate Kyle’s apparent condescension.

SADDAM
I find it all together a strange question. Why would someone ask this question of me? Not just at this point but any time?

Kyle changes his tone on a dime to quell a brewing quarrel.

KYLE
Again. I apologize and I wouldn’t ever waste your time.
SADDAM
It is not Iraqi policy to use chemical weapons against anyone, let alone the coalition.

KYLE
Is that written somewhere?

SADDAM
How do you think Iraq would have been described if it had used chemical weapons?

Kyle feels like he’s finally getting closer to the prize.

KYLE
You know. I'm not here to judge.

SADDAM
We would have been called stupid.

Kyle fights to keep from drawing a smile.

KYLE
Stupid would not be the word I would use.

SADDAM
We never discussed their use before or during either war. We believed that our meeting with Baker was true but he was irrational...thought this would carry weight in the international community.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

INT. GENEVA - UN CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

U.S. Secretary of State JAMES BAKER stands in frustration. His placard serves as the sole record of his presence. Lap dog staffers around the room abruptly stand in unison. He eyes Aziz, then closes his binder.

Baker methodically ushers himself around the table. Fingers lightly touch the slick mahogany tabletop.

Closer and closer to Aziz. Aziz is taken aback.

Baker and Aziz now in each others personal space.
AZIZ
The accomplishment of these steps would not be possible.

BAKER
You tell Saddam to accept every term...otherwise we'll take you back to the pre-industrial age.

Baker abruptly turns around to walk out.

Aziz is frustrated; he has desperately tried everything.

AZIZ
(loud)
You must understand our perspective.

Aziz is left in shock. He and his assistants stand as still as stone statues.

Baker doesn’t acknowledge Aziz. His team SLAMS the door.

END FLASHBACK

BACK TO INTERROGATION ROOM - SAME

SADDAM
Baker provided no solutions.

Saddam is almost pleading to Kyle for no reason.

KYLE
Can you blame him? He was frustrated, especially with all the steps he had taken.

SADDAM
Coming from someone in a strong position, matters like this should not have been reduced to one in which the strong side, dictated to the weak side, us, the terms of the agreement.

KYLE
Kuwait was the weak one.

SADDAM
We sought and more importantly needed a format which did not portray us in defeat. Baker forced our hand.

(MORE)
SADDAM (CONT'D)
Our pride as a Nation...there was no respect for our military or our people.

KYLE
The proposals from the international community gave you that. All of them.

SADDAM
They did not. It was insulting. Our only play was to not be made a fool.

INT. INTERROGATION PREP ROOM - MORNING
Kyle sits at his desk with papers in disarray. He’s clearly frustrated.

MELANIE
You broached the chemical weapons?

KYLE
He still denies it.

MELANIE
Of course he would.

KYLE
We haven't gotten anywhere.

Melanie tries to find some light in a dark situation.

MELANIE
But he did talk to you about the SCUDS. That’s something.

KYLE
To some degree, I guess. (rubs his fingers through his hair) I told my wife a couple weeks...

MELANIE
Well, no one lasted as long as you. Five or six, you’re getting somewhere.

She stares intently.

MELANIE (CONT’D)
What did he say? What are you thinking?
KYLE
I'm thinkin' I don't have much time here or at home.
(beat)
My wife. My new son.

She tries to keep him focused.

MELANIE
The Iraqi's are anxious.

KYLE
They’re anxious? Try sitting with the guy for hours on end.

He flips through a folder.

MELANIE
That's what everyone is sayin'. "Our guys are out there scouring the country and they need help."

Kyle’s eyes are tired and his frustration grows.

KYLE
Shit. I know. I'm tryin'.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - MORNING

Saddam is joyful by the look on his face.

SADDAM
My protective detail did not necessarily dictate the details of my movements.

KYLE
They're professionals, trained to be the best.

SADDAM
I continually taught them ways to improve their performance and be more successful.

KYLE
Do you feel that upset them in any way?

SADDAM
(laughs)
No. (MORE)
I joked with them often that I could perform their job better than they could. I could help you as an interviewer.

Kyle leans back and laughs with Saddam.

KYLE
Lunch time!

LATER --

SADDAM
We had to take the enemy. Those who would not be deterred by words would be deterred by weapons. A lengthy discussion of this matter was not required.

Kyle needs to change the subject. He moves his chair to set a new mood.

KYLE
I want you to watch television with me.

SADDAM
Like what?

KYLE

SADDAM
Why?

KYLE
It'll give us a basis to talk more.

Saddam is matter-of-fact. He knows it won't be good.

SADDAM
I have a good idea of the situation.

KYLE
Do you?

SADDAM
Each person presents information from a certain background.

(MORE)
SADDAM (CONT'D)
Despite having his own opinion a person cannot help to be affected by others.

KYLE
Agree. But facts are facts.

SADDAM
Any person speaking on Iraq speaks from three view points. A "divine scale" according to his own beliefs. A scale on his own experiences--

KYLE
But this is video--

Saddam ignores Kyle. Trying to put it out of his mind.

SADDAM
And the person regarding information from the U.N. and International law. What is your scale as you show this film?

KYLE
Why does it matter? I didn't produce it.

SADDAM
You chose it didn't you?

KYLE
Not necessarily.

SADDAM
So you have no say?

KYLE
I didn't say that.

SADDAM
If we are to converse on this topic intellectually it would help me to answer questions in the best manner.

KYLE
You must listen to all facts and find the truth.

He points to Kyle to emphasize his point.
SADDAM
How will you find the truth? It's obviously western media, biased to determine truth.

KYLE
I take in all information.

SADDAM
Easy for you Kyle, in this instance. Your army occupies my country. You are free. I am a prisoner, but I don't want to put you in a difficult position.

KYLE
It's fine.

SADDAM
But you must learn the truth as it is. Not as I tell it, nor as a film producer tells it.

Kyle reaches for the TV remote.

KYLE
Would you just indulge me?

Saddam nods.

Kyle gets up to press play. The video begins.

INSERT - TV PROGRAM

Shia's in southern Iraq gather around a mosque.

SADDAM (O.S.)
(quips)
Could be anywhere, even now.

TV REPORTER
"They're confined as you can see."

More images of the Shia in the mosque.

SADDAM (O.S.)
They're not confined. You can clearly see.

TV REPORTER
"Iraqi tanks are approaching the mosque."
BACK TO INTERROGATION ROOM – SAME

SADDAM
(points to the television)
Where are the tanks?

TV REPORTER (O.S.)
“President Bush encouraged the rise
of the Shia's against the Iraqi
government.”

Sounds of a dialogue behind Saddam hang in the room.

SADDAM
(yells)
A confession of a crime!

Saddam SLAMS his fist and practically hops out of his chair.

SADDAM (CONT’D)
I want to know when this was made,
the commentator, and who he worked
for.

Kyle tries to keep the program moving.

INSERT – BBC TV PROGRAM

People of Shia origin flee their land - southern Iraq.

SADDAM (O.S.) (CONT’D)
They don't appear to be scared,
they appear to be happy.

KYLE (O.S.)
You really think so?

SADDAM (O.S.)
They don't even look Shia. They
look Kurdish.

BACK TO INTERROGATION ROOM – SAME

Saddam is visually agitated, almost popping off his seat.

SADDAM
(abruptly)
It's my exercise and prayer time
now.

KYLE
It can be postponed, no?
SADDAM
I think it is enough.

KYLE
But--

SADDAM
We can view it together later. Why rush?

Saddam pushes back from the table and stands. His finger tips stand erect on the desk and tremble slightly.

Kyle moves his papers back. Looks up.

KYLE
Will you continue this later?

SADDAM
I believe so, but I feel sorry for someone who watches this and doesn't know the truth.

LATER --

KYLE
I hope you're refreshed.

SADDAM
Better.

KYLE
(rustles papers)
Let us continue. I don't want to keep you from meal or prayer again.

Kyle presses play.

INSERT - BBC TV PROGRAM

Various images of Shia being killed.

TV REPORTER
Figures estimate over 300,000 Shia killed.

SADDAM (O.S.)
What sources gave them that?

KYLE (O.S.)
According to the film, the Iraqi government.
SADDAM (O.S.)
For what?

KYLE (O.S.)
To serve as a warning to the Kurds.

Various images of dead fish in ponds, destroyed villages, and drained marshes.

SADDAM (O.S.)
They don’t even look like the correct marshes.

IRAQI WOMAN panic in sheer desperation.

IRAQI WOMAN
We have nothing left. We had to leave our homes.

Saddam shows his evil side when he laughs.

SADDAM (O.S.)
What did she have before? Reeds?

BACK TO INTERROGATION ROOM - SAME

SADDAM (CONT’D)
I have never understood why your government is so quick to judge without all the facts. Someone who judges to the letter from a traffic violation to your Supreme Court, but when you accuse me of weapons of mass destruction without much evidence, you waste billions. (beat)
For what? Thousands of lives lost and now you are here with me. Ridiculous.

Saddam becomes more irritated by the second.

SADDAM (CONT’D)
I do not have a comment. This talk is beneath me to further comment.

KYLE
But there are--

SADDAM
This talk isn’t even appropriate of interviewing the President of Iraq with such a propaganda film. (MORE)
SADDAM (CONT'D)
We should stop. I have answered everything. I am done...

KYLE
But I want to understand the dynamics of Iraqi leadership. Al-Zubaidi and Abdullah. They’re the ones in charge of the uprising aren’t they?

SADDAM
I have already explained this.

KYLE
I don't want to keep you from the evening prayer.

SADDAM
Thank you for thinking of my prayer time. It is one less sin.

EXT. KYLE’S PRIVATE QUARTERS - NIGHT
Kyle squints as he approaches the door. A crude handmade sign saying, “Congratulations, it’s a Boy!” is taped to it. He grabs it and rips it off.

INT. SADDAM’S CELL - MORNING
Saddam paces impatiently. He’s jittery while he waits for Kyle’s. He glances at the clock. He wants to get back into their previous discussion.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - LATER
SUPER: BIAP - Operations Center - 22 March 2003
Kyle eyes red and irritated. A large water bottle, half empty by his side.

SADDAM
Life expectancy was relatively low. I could not simply sit back and watch this misery.

KYLE
But by draining their marshes--

SADDAM
Have you been?
KYLE
No.

SADDAM
Severe illness, bilharziasis--

Saddam notices the confusion on Kyle’s face.

SADDAM (CONT’D)
Intestinal disease. Unimaginable suffering. So, I decided to bring them inside life.

KYLE
In the harshest of ways.

SADDAM
No...to not continue to have them disgraced or insulted by their environment. I know it is enchanted, I slept there for days in 1981 and 1982.

KYLE
For what?

SADDAM
I wanted to see, to be there on the front lines of our war with Iran. I went back and forth until 1984.

KYLE
So you know the value, the majestic land; the people.

SADDAM
I took care of them.

KYLE
But your actions show something different.

SADDAM
It is complicated. Everything about the marshes has to be handled with a soft hand.

EXT. SOUTHERN IRAQ - BAIDA MARSH - DAY

A rare aquatic landscape, harsh but full of grandeur. Thick, long flowing reeds and rice plots decorate the territory. Bugs skim in fast fashion along the river.
EXT. NEAR BAIDA - SADDAM'S BOAT - DAY

Three slender reed-woven boats lazily float down the murky river. One BOAT holds Saddam and his group, while the other has his PROTECTIVE DETAIL, and the other, the PRESS.

Saddam sits idly by, surveying the area. His large black aviator glasses reflect TWO MEN strapped with machine guns.

EXT. BAIDA - LATER

An ancient town from the Mesopotamia era. Thick reed huts litter the finger lake area. SHEPHERDS tend to WATER BUFFALO as town people walk with purpose.

Saddam's entourage slide into a makeshift water landing zone.

The INHABITANTS are still. The MAYOR is nervous on the shores banks as the protective detail disembarks.

MAYOR
Mr. President, how was your journey?

SADDAM
As I expected.

Saddam waves his hand while approaching the crowd in a half-hearted attempt to mingle.

The crowd grows in hopes of an interaction with Saddam.

MAYOR
Your people hope you would stay for dinner.

SADDAM
After we discuss things.

PROTECTIVE DETAIL OFFICER
Where can we discuss in seclusion?

INT. MAYOR'S HOME - LATER

A modest residence but extravagant for a marsh. Reeds are strung together and meet in the center of the angled roof.

The group surround a large table with ornate placemats.
MAYOR
Sir, will you and the group be staying for dinner? We would be very--

SADDAM
No. I must attend to other matters. Tell me of this attack.

Sweat forms on the mayor's forehead.

MAYOR
Uhhh, Sir, I--I would not characterize it as an attack.

SADDAM
Then what?

MAYOR
A misunderstanding.

Saddam looks around the room to show his displeasure.

SADDAM
I did not travel here for a misunderstanding.

MAYOR
It is the uneasiness of situations. The Iranian's.

SADDAM
They are the attackers?

MAYOR
Precisely. They bribe, steal; and encourage lawlessness.

The Mayor feels he’s digging his hole more by the second.

SADDAM
There is nothing you can do?

MAYOR
Well--

SADDAM
You have weapons?

MAYOR
Yes.

SADDAM
Then use them.
MAYOR
Well, Sir--

SADDAM
Tell your people I authorize it.

Saddam waves to his detail to usher in the press. The camera's are quickly set up.

Saddam waits patiently following every hasty movement.

SADDAM (CONT’D)
I place a blanket of protection for all the people of the marshes.

CAMERA MEN jostle to improve their angles.

MAYOR
You are a generous leader. We are thankful to you, Sir.

SADDAM (to his protective detail)
Find these people who are causing this. We need to protect this area. My people.

PERSON (O.C.)
Long live, Saddam! Long live, Saddam!

Outside the house the crowd is large. Their CHEERS for Saddam grow more intense.

SADDAM (CONT'D)
Let us go. I need to feel my people.

Camera bulbs POP at his every move.

The door opens. A streak of sunlight fills the room.

EXT. MAYOR'S HOME - MOMENTS LATER

Saddam is all smiles while he waves to the crowd; they collapse on him like a rock star.

CROWD
President Saddam! Our savior!

Saddam’s in his element.
SADDAM
Good people understood me. The evil ones also got the message.

KYLE
Did you mind visiting them?

SADDAM
They were nice to visit for two, three, or four days but in the summer the mosquitoes would eat you.

KYLE
The historical significance of the marshes should have been the driving consideration.

SADDAM
There was no similar consideration given to the area where the High Dam was built in Egypt. I am certain there was much discussion concerning the movement of the “precious” stones versus saving the people from starvation. The marshes were studied for their historical value.

KYLE
But it's the environmental consideration that is the issue.

SADDAM
We could debate this for twenty days if we wanted.

KYLE
You know we don't have that much time.

SADDAM
Why do you question our actions? Every government has to make decisions. The Americans did not allow the Indians to live as they had existed prior to colonization. What laws are in place to prohibit American and European companies from destroying the Amazon, the lungs of the earth?
INT. SADDAM'S PRISON CELL - DAY

ARMY CORPS ENGINEERS work outside Saddam’s cell. The CLANKING of tools let’s them know they’re not alone.

    KYLE
    Ahhh, I see helps arrived.
    (beat)
    And just in time. It's blazing hot in here.

    SADDAM
    I am used to living simply. The extravagant lifestyle does not fit me personally.

Kyle takes him up on this and pulls the string.

    KYLE
    Really? So says someone with thirty plus palaces.

    SADDAM
    I certainly did not start that way.

Saddam backpedals in an attempt to better make his point.

    SADDAM (CONT’D)
    Or in the end.

    KYLE
    But you certainly made up for it in...
    (looking up to count)
    The last twenty, no make that forty years.

    SADDAM
    Does not mean I enjoyed it.

    KYLE
    Let's just agree to disagree. I don't want to get off track.

Saddam reluctantly agrees. A drawn out discussion is not enticing at the moment.

The BANGING continues on the air conditioning.

    KYLE (CONT’D)
    Mind if I sit?
SADDAM
By all means. I have nowhere to go.

Kyle PLOPS down in the chair. His face looks clear with less stress than normal.

SADDAM (CONT’D)
You’re rather light today. No papers, pens, notebooks.

KYLE
Ahhh, I think we just talk now as acquaintances.

SADDAM
Acquaintances? I feel it is more than that...no?

Saddam looks for a connection from someone.

KYLE
Yes. I would say so.

SADDAM
Since we are just chatting as friends. Please fill me in on the things going on out there.

KYLE
What things?

SADDAM
Current events situations.

KYLE
Shit, you probably know more than me.

SADDAM
Bits and pieces.

KYLE
I don't want to bore you with details.

SADDAM
If we have time, why not embellish?

KYLE
Let's see.

(rubs his chin)
Drafting the new constitution, the turn over of sovereignty to Iraq.
SADDAM
Ambitious.

Saddam is a smooth operator as he knows the answer.

KYLE
A great step. What, you don't agree?

SADDAM
I question the effectiveness of the Governing Council. They can agree all they want but once they step outside, the people will turn on them.

KYLE
I think you underestimate the will of people to be free.

SADDAM
(laughs)
You don't know Iraq then, Kyle. They will not accept an elected leader...especially one during an occupation.

Kyle can’t help going from calm to defensive.

KYLE
We aren't occupiers.

SADDAM
That is exactly why it will fail. You don’t understand Iraq.

KYLE
I think I do.

SADDAM
Iraq has experienced this before. The British occupation elected King Faisal. It didn’t work.

KYLE
That was a different time, though.

SADDAM
In Iraqi eyes it is no different.

The CLANKING air conditioner draws their attention off topic.
SADDAM (CONT’D)
What is the death total of Americans?

KYLE
April was a tough, tough month. Muqtada al-Sadr's Army is dug in everywhere...I'm not sure.

SADDAM
(in disgust)
A family of martyrs. Antagonistic. Whatever the number.

Saddam gets up to stretch and stands in front of the cold air from the air conditioner.

SADDAM (CONT’D)
Before we're done...triple it.

LATER --

KYLE
You achieved your objectives of disposing your WMD.

SADDAM
We have not had any for sometime.

KYLE
Many had the opinion Iraq was reluctant to cooperate with the UN.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

INT. BAGHDAD - BABYLON PALACE - DAY

Saddam sits casually in an executive leather chair. A large puff of smoke oozes from his cigar.

SUPER: Babylon Palace - Baghdad - Late 1990’S

An Iraqi FOUR-STAR GENERAL OFFICER stands at attention in front of the wood-carved desk.

SADDAM
Make it difficult.
EXT. KIRKUK AIRFIELD - TARMAC - DAY

A white C-5 aircraft idles calmly with its prominent blue colored “U.N” letters FLASHES as a symbol of freedom, but to the Iraqi it’s a beacon of intrusion and mistrust.

SUPER: Kirkuk Airfield - Western Iraq

Heat dances on the black asphalt where five green military trucks, rocked with Iraqi soldiers, zoom towards the plane.

INT. C-5 - SAME

The rear hatch cranks down and SLAMS to the ground. CHIEF INSPECTOR WILLIAMS, 50’s, tight crew cut, is the first out.

Williams edges to the end of the ramp and eyes the convoy. He stands with authority knowing it’s not a welcoming party.

    WILLIAMS
    (to the group)
    Stay here.

EXT. C-5 - CONTINUOUS

The convoy screeches to a halt like an accordion.

The Iraqi OFFICER IN CHARGE (OIC) hops out of truck, slams the door. His pistol holster slaps his thigh.

Williams and the OIC head toward each other. Now toe to toe.

INT. KIRKUK AIRFIELD - WAITING AREA - SAME

UN PERSONNEL plant their faces against their oversized windows like kids in a candy store.

    UN PERSON 1
    What's going on?

    UN PERSON 2
    A problem.
    UN PERSON 3
    A big problem.

EXT. C-5 - SAME

Hot wind blows against their face as sand pelts their feet. The two men are close but far agreement.
OIC
(devilish smile)
You wait.

WILLIAMS
Why?

OIC
We are not ready.

WILLIAMS
How could that be? You've known our demand for weeks.

OIC
A request, not a demand.

WILLIAMS
No. A demand.

OIC
According to--

WILLIAMS
United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission!

OIC
You will have to wait.
(points)
Right here.

The Iraqi officer does an about face.

WILLIAMS
What about my crew?!

OIC
They will be fine.

Williams turns in disgust.

INT. C-5 - CONTINUOUS

The crew MOPES in their sling-seats as minutes pass. The heat becomes the enemy more than the Iraqis.

WILLIAMS
This is absurd.

Williams storms off toward the ramp. He sets his sights and MARCHES to the terminal, two hundred yards away.
The Iraqis see his defiance and STREAK to intercept.

WAITING AREA - SAME

The crowd sees Williams is irate. His face red as the sun.

UN PERSON 1
Whoa, he looks very unhappy.

UN PERSON 2
I honestly don't think the Iraqis give a shit.

TARMAC - MOMENTS LATER

Williams turns around in frustration. He removes his hat and wipes his brow. His patience meter is peaked.

WILLIAMS
Now! If you don't move aside we are coming down that ramp and heading straight to Halabja.

The OIC draws a slight grin.

Williams quickly swings around to the plane to offload.

WILLIAMS (CONT'D)
We, and our gear...will be right back.

INT. IRAQ MILITARY VEHICLE - MOMENTS LATER

MILITARY OFFICER
(in Arabic into walkie-talkie)
Halabja.

MAN (V.O)
(in Arabic)
On our way.

INT. C-5 - MOMENTS LATER

WILLIAMS
Everyone get your gear. We're gettin' the hell out of here.

They're exasperated but relieved and gather backpacks, suitcases and metal boxes for the trip.
EXT. KIRKUK AIRFIELD - MAIN GATE - LATER

Eight UN vehicles are packed to the brim with gear.

As gestapo as they can be, Iraqi guards wearing black reflective sunglasses impede the convoys departure.

INT. UN TRUCK - SAME

The DRIVER honks his horn as the guards stand like stone statues.

Williams grabs the door handle practically ripping it off and steps out of the truck.

    INSPECTOR 1
    Sir--

Williams slams the door, rocking the truck from side to side.

MAIN GATE - MOMENTS LATER

    WILLIAMS
    Who's in charge here?

The guards remain solid.

    WILLIAMS (CONT’D)
    Are you ignoring me, soldier?

Williams moves as close to the gate as possible. He contemplates jumping over it.

    SOLDIER 1
    (looks to his left)  SOLDIER 1
    (in Arabic. looks to
    Go.  his left)

Musawala.

Soldier 2 casually brings himself to attention. Performs an about face to the guard shack and steps inside.

    SOLDIER 1 (CONT’D)
    Any moment.
    (whispers)
    Kiss Ekh-tak.

    WILLIAMS
    (turns toward the vehicle)
    What did you just say?

The soldier ignores him and steps away.
INT. UN TRUCK - MOMENTS LATER

Williams plops down in the seat with a perplexed look.

INSPECTOR 1
Sir?

WILLIAMS
I could have swore that soldier called me, ahhh...

INSPECTOR 1
A what, Sir?

WILLIAMS
Kissy tock?

The Inspector almost chokes on his own spit.

WILLIAMS (CONT’D)
What is it? Is that bad?

INSPECTOR 1
He called you, uhhh...sorry, Sir. He said for you to go, ummm, fuck your sister.

LATER --

A military truck arrives amid a cloud of dust. The OIC peels out of his truck. He's in a chipper mood.

OIC
Is there a problem?

WILLIAMS
We’re hot, tired, hungry, and now behind schedule.

OIC
I beg your pardon, Sir.

WILLIAMS
How much longer?

OIC
Sir, this is for your protection.

Williams knows from the OIC’s look that he’s full of shit.

WILLIAMS
We've done this for years and now all of a sudden?
SERIES OF SHOTS - HALABJA SUSPECT WMD SITE

-- A massive double-fenced military secure facility. Metal guard posts on each corner.
-- Earthen bunkers, more than one can count are constructed in all different areas.
-- Radioactive warning signs are affixed everywhere.

INT. UN TRUCKS (MOVING) - LATER

Williams and two INSPECTORS flip through a folder full of papers. They are gruesome in nature.

INSPECTOR 1
Sir, have you been to Halabja?

WILLIAMS
Long ago.

INSPECTOR 1
Are there still remnants?

WILLIAMS
No, not much.

INSPECTOR 1
Just the thought is what's sad.

INSPECTOR 2
(looks out the window)
Can't imagine what these people went through for those five hours.

WILLIAMS
See that?

Williams points to the a tall immaculate memorial in the center of the roundabout. Its menacing in a weird way.

INT./EXT. HALABJA SUSPECT WMD SITE - BUNKER 34 - DAY

A dozen MEN streak between idling covered trucks and an unlocked earthen covered bunker. They grab plastic tubes and scientific gear, clearing out the bunker.

SUPER: Halabja Suspect WMD Site - Iraq - Late 1990’s
INT. HALABJA - ENTRY CONTROL POINT BUILDING - SAME

The office is small, hot and musty. Papers litter the desks and the floor. It's a ruckus and very suspicious.

    HALABJA DIRECTOR
    Feel free to look through our files.

The Halabja Director waves his hands around wildly.

    WILLIAMS
    Fine.
    (to Inspectors)
    Go through them.

The inspectors SLAM open drawers. They sit mostly empty.

    INSPECTOR 1
    Sir, there's nothing here.

    WILLIAMS
    (to the Halabja Director)
    Did you just move in? Or--

    HALABJA DIRECTOR
    No--No. Of course not.

    WILLIAMS
    Then why are you thinned out?

The Director's face goes from defensive to confusion.

    HALABJA DIRECTOR
    Thinned out?

    WILLIAMS
    Your filing cabinets. They're empty!

    HALABJA DIRECTOR
    They were full. We have done...as you would call some...some house cleaning.

The Director grabs a folder from a nearby desk.

    HALABJA DIRECTOR (CONT'D)
    There is more here if you like.
    Look! Look!

Williams snags it from his hand and flips through it while shaking his head.
WILLIAMS
This is Baji!

HALABJA DIRECTOR
Ohhh, yes, yes. Excuse me?

The Director looks over Williams shoulder to get a peak.

HALABJA DIRECTOR (CONT’D)
Let me see that. Why yes it is.

MAIN GATE - LATER

The convoy of UN vehicles slide through the gate. The guards glare at them as they are invaders.

They enter an enormous facility. A wide array of brown metal building and various size bunkers.

The trucks peel off in each direction.

BACK GATE - SAME

Two semi-trucks, escorted by two military trucks file out of the complex.

END FLASHBACK

BACK TO INTERROGATION ROOM - SAME

SADDAM
We cooperated for seven years.

KYLE
I wouldn't call it that cooperative.

SADDAM
There were individuals in the government who were reluctant to cooperate of course. These are hardworking people, dedicated to their work. It is difficult for them to be told one day to open all their files and turn over all their work, government secrets to outsiders...it took time and had to occur in steps.

(beat)
I can not that help your government did not get the hint.
SERIES OF IMAGES - SADDAM'S COURT PROCEEDINGS

-- Iraqi lawyers hover around each other arguing.

-- US military officials and three-piece suit officials point to documents. Their frustration is evident.

-- Iraqi officials point to a calendar. They emphasize their ravenous wants and desires to get a hold of Saddam.

INT. INTERROGATION PREP ROOM - MORNING

MELANIE
(frustrated)
Get your ass in there.

KYLE
What the hell do you want me to do?

MELANIE
We have everyone looking for this stuff and your writing a biography.

KYLE
Did it ever occur to you he might not know or we’re looking for a ghost.

MELANIE
Well then get something for Christ’s sake. Time is closing in.

INT. SADDAM'S PRISON CELL - LATER

SUPER: June, 2004

SADDAM
I had to appear strong, especially to Iran. We were being threatened by so many and I needed to show that Iraq could defend itself, especially towards Iran.

KYLE
At the UN?

SADDAM
They would not stand next to us. Iran was in the stages of annexing Southern Iraq.
KYLE
How did you know?  Intel?

Saddam looks to Kyle with an approving glare.

SADDAM
Iran was our most significant threat.

KYLE
But you said Israel--

SADDAM
Not to us but the entire Arab world. Everyone else in the region was weak.

Saddam adjusts his seat to make his point clear.

SADDAM (CONT’D)
Even though you and the others do not believe me, I did not have WMD’s. But I could not let Iran think that I did not.

(beat)
The charade with the inspectors was deliberate.

KYLE
But to the detriment of an attack?

Kyle’s heart drops to his stomach.

SADDAM
Of course! Above anything else I could not show Iran any weaknesses or vulnerabilities. I was willing to take the repercussions.

KYLE
Uhhh…it didn't work.

SADDAM
Yes it did, for many years, decades. In fact, if I would have opened up, the inspectors would have directly shown the Iranians where to inflict maximum damage.

Kyle rubs his eyes. He’s in shock.

KYLE
I have to go now.
SADDAM
Kyle.

KYLE
No. I’m sorry. Not now.

HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER
Kyle stumbles like a drunken sailor to a doorway. In disbelief of Saddam’s revelation.

COVERED AWNING - MOMENTS LATER
The SCORCHING Baghdad sun beats down on Kyle. His eyes try to correct from the flash of light as he continues the arduous work of conversing with a broken leader.

INT. SADDAM’S CELL - LATER
Saddam playfully grabs Kyle’s arm and slides his sleeve halfway up his arm. Kyle struggles to stay calm.

KYLE
I’m sorry.

Saddam understands by Kyle’s look that his revelation has set Kyle back but Saddam wants to put him at ease.

SADDAM
It is like sticking someone on the forearm.

Saddam taps Kyle’s forearm.

SADDAM CONT’D)
No problem. You could take many of those. Now...

Saddam lightly taps Kyle’s elbow and then his wrist.

SADDAM (CONT’D)
Your elbow. Then your wrist. You can not take those strikes as long.

Kyle smiles. Then pulls back on his arm.

KYLE
(lightly laughs)
Owww!
SADDAM
Yes. So you get my point. Hitting you there.
(points to Kyle's elbow)
Would disable you. The US was the forearm...I could absorb that any day, all day. Iran was everything else...the US was by far much less threatening to me.

Kyle rubs his elbow to get the feeling back.

KYLE
Hold on, hold on. You held onto a thirteen year charade? That doesn't make sense.

SADDAM
What does not make sense to me is I am eliminated and Iran is increasing their power...their world power.

KYLE
The coalition perceived you as a bigger threat.

SADDAM
Just wait. Time is not on Iran's mind. They wait and wait until they are ready. The effects of this will be felt in the future, as Iran's weapons capabilities will be a greater threat then mine ever was. You enabled--

KYLE
I didn't--

SADDAM
(snarky)
The US. You stood by while Libya and others armed Iran. You allowed them to be taught, to become proficient, to threaten everyone. I had to act. I had to act on my own.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

EXT. OUTSIDE BAGHDAD - SCUD HIDESITE - DAY

A convoy of four black limousines speed down a bumpy road.
SUPER: Outside Baghdad - SCUD Hidesite

Two behemoth camo-painted SCUDS parked perfectly aligned. One with its missile erect.

Soldiers stand at attention as they wait for their dictator.

EXT./INT. SCUD HIDESITE - MOMENTS LATER

The motorcade skids to a halt. Thick dust rolls past them as all sixteen wheels lock simultaneously.

Saddam dons his large reflective glasses.

The door to his limousine clicks. His door opens. A stream of hot humid sunlight bolts into the limo’s compartment.

EXT. SCUD HIDESITE - MOMENTS LATER

Dozens float around Saddam as he beelines toward his SCUDS. An officer SNAPS to attention as Saddam closes in.

    SADDAM
    Are we ready?

    OFFICER
    Yes, Sir. Missiles fueled.

The soldier raises his hand and waves to the technician.

The SCUD DRIVER eyes him through his side mirror. The SCUD rumbles to life. Harsh black smoke spews from its tailpipe and repositions slowly to a nearby dirt revetment.

MOMENTS LATER...

Both SCUD missiles are now erect, their missiles silhouette against the backdrop of the barren landscape.

    OFFICER
    Sir, we should move back.

Saddam looks to his minions while his dark glasses mask his mood. He doesn't budge a millimeter.

    OFFICER (O.C.) (CONT’D)
    Five, four, three, two, one.
SCUD ONE's missile shoots fire from its thruster cones. Inch by inch it pushes itself from the Earth. It picks up speed toward its indiscriminate target.

LATER --

SCUD TWO fires. It follows its predecessor’s contrails.

Saddam stands with his hands crossed, confident in his flying soldiers as they head toward his most hated enemy.

EXT. OVER TEHRAN - LATER

The missiles stream at MACH five.

The rocket bodies tremble as the SHROUDS over the warhead release. They’re free to annihilate.

SERIES OF SHOOTS - TEHRAN - IRAN

The missiles hit civilian buildings and crumble. Their impact shakes the city. The terror value is unimaginable.

BACK TO INTERROGATION ROOM - SAME

KYLE
You struck Tehran.

SADDAM
Only because they struck Baghdad first. A war of cities, if you will. My scientists proved to everyone we could do it and not limit our supply like Iran. They were production limited.

KYLE
And that proved you could deliver WMD, without even having it...you scared everyone.

SADDAM
(smiles)
Mission accomplished.

Kyle immediately understands the famous phrase of his POTUS.
INT. INTERROGATION PREP ROOM - DAY

Melanie and Kyle rifle through paperwork. The stress on their faces is evident. Officials come in and out with paperwork, frustrating them both.

INT. SADDAM’S PRISON CELL - NIGHT

SADDAM
I wanted a relationship with the US.

KYLE
Your actions said otherwise.

Kyle is almost pleading but catches himself.

KYLE (CONT’D)
You could have done more.

SADDAM
I did. Four months before. Letting the inspectors in did me no good. I knew we were in for a fight...a loosing fight. We were outgunned in every way.

KYLE
And now we are where we are.

Saddam has gone into depression mode. Kyle knows Saddam’s mood doesn’t help the conversation.

SADDAM
The security in the country is worse then ever. How many in April...thousands?

KYLE
Something like that. How does it make you feel?

SADDAM
It is the order of things.

KYLE
And your presidency?

SADDAM
It is clear to everyone I am no longer the President of Iraq.
KYLE
Yes, you're done.

SADDAM
It is God's choice.

KYLE
What are your thoughts about your future?

SADDAM
It is in God's hands.

Saddam gets up from his chair. His head is low as he walks to the iron barred window.

SADDAM (CONT'D)
...I just wait.

INT. BAGHDAD OPERATIONS CENTER - HALLWAY - MORNING

Every one of Saddam's extremities is shackled. He shuffles forward. GUARDS huddle around him like a winning high school football quarterback.

EXT. BAGHDAD OPERATIONS CENTER - MOMENTS LATER

Three black up-armored Suburbans eerily idle near the entrance. Helicopters circle overhead like vultures.

Kyle somberly emerges from double doors.

Saddam stops to turn around. The guards give him room.

Saddam and Kyle's eyes connect. Kyle knows this is his end. In some ways, the realization that the excitement of his mission is over is almost overwhelming.

Kyle raises his hand in a half-hearted attempt to keep his full composure but it's awkward.

KYLE
As-salamu alaykum.

Kyle knows these are his last words to his interrogee, and in the weirdest of ways his friend.

SADDAM
(smiles)
Good bye, my friend.

The guards have enough. They block Kyle's line of sight.
The Suburban door opens and Saddam’s shoved in - shackles clank. The door SLAMS. The vehicles peel out.

SERIES OF IMAGES - SADDAM'S COURT PROCEEDING

-- Saddam is defiant as he faces five Iraqi judges.

    SADDAM
    This is all theater. The real criminal is Bush!

-- Saddam refuses to sign any legal documents.

    SADDAM (CONT’D)
    You are an Iraqi, you know who I am!

-- Saddam's legal defense team storms out of the court.

INT. BAGHDAD - CAMP JUSTICE - COURT ROOM - MORNING

Saddam wears a black thobe and simple sandals. He's led by three HUSKY MASKED GUARDS. Their dress is more ITALIAN GANGSTER then professional EXECUTIONER.

SUPER: Camp Justice Court Room, Baghdad

Saddam is submissive and a broken man at last. Fear runs from every wrinkle in his face, as sweat becomes pervasive. He carries a brown, worn Quran.

    SADDAM
    (to guards)
    Can you hand this to her?

Saddam kindly stretches out to hand his most prized possession to a WOMAN who begins to softly weep.

Saddam approaches the judge and is jolted to a stop.

    JUDGE
    Do you have any remorse or fear?

    SADDAM
    No, I am a militant and I have no fear for myself. I have spent my life in jihad and fighting aggression. Anyone who takes this route should not be afraid.

A black cowl is whipped and secured over his head.
A NOOSE is placed around his neck. The executioner tightens it, bringing a bitter sense of anxiety to all.

SADDAM (CONT’D)
Allahu Akbar! The Muslim Ummah will be victorious and Palestine is Arab! Iraqis should fight the invaders.

The cowl ruffles with every Saddam expression.

The guards place their hands on him to move him into place.

GUARDS
Muqtada! Muqtada! Muqtada!

SADDAM
(mockingly)
Muqtada! Muqtada! Muqtada!
(turns to the executioner)
Do you consider this bravery!

An Islamic prayer is recited by a few present in the room.

OBSERVER 1
(shouts)
Go to hell!

SADDAM (CONT’D)
(yells)
The hell that is Iraq?

OBSERVER 2
Please, stop! The man is facing an execution.

INT. SADDAM’S COWL - SAME

Dark. Panic breathing as the sound of fabric wrestles against his face.

A SHIFT. BLAM.

A heartbeat is fast then fades to nothing.

FADE TO BLACK.