

107668

BLACK BOX
by
Brad Holloway

EXT. GULF OF MEXICO - JUST BEFORE DAWN

JEFF KANE, 60's, sits at the bow of his decaying 32-foot fishing boat named the Irish Wake. The end of a clear night, the stars still fighting against the first faint light of a new day. Kane peels the label off a bottle of Budweiser. His Fishing Pole bows slightly with each bit of chop. Calm seas, the gentle sway of the Ocean against anchor. He's nearly dozed off when a slight POP catches his attention.

A Light, up in the sky. Jeff sits up, squints at it. Rubs the sleep from his eyes. The Light bursts into a full on Fireball. A BOOM rustles the boat two seconds later. The Fireball rockets in his direction.

JEFF

Oh fuck.

He takes a big slug off his beer as the Fireball descends. Follows it with his eyes as it IMPACTS the Water a couple miles off stern. Not a light on the Sea. Kane stumbles towards the front of the boat, accidentally kicking empty bottles against the hull.

Gets on the radio, flips the Frequency to the Coast Guard. Lifts the mic to his mouth. Before he can speak, a SONIC BOOM rips the air.

EXT. NORTH-WEST FRONTIER PROVINCE - PAKISTAN - NIGHT

High above a Valley East of the Khyber Pass and West of the Khyber Hills, covered by large deposits of silt, sand and gravel. Irrigation channels crisscross the vast plain, all connected to the meandering Kabul River. The light of a full Moon bathes this ancient land.

A MH-60K Blackhawk banks into view, its Blades cutting the crisp night air. Two more Copters follow, each outfitted with twin Gatling Guns and M261 Rocket Launchers. A few rustic buildings below. Torchlight, the brief glimpse of Poppy fields. The triad of power moves at high speed.

EXT. PESHAWAR - NORTH-WEST PROVINCE - NIGHT

The Capitol of the North-West Frontier Province. A bustling center of trade for thousands of years, Peshawar is the political and economic epicenter of the Region. Elaborate Mosques, massive Bazaars, an International Airport. Modern roads and railways divide each district. Even at this late hour, CABS and BUSES compete for space with Horse-drawn Carts on the streets.

The Trio of Helicopters swoop over the city, barely 50 feet above the rooftops.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - CIA HEADQUARTERS - LANGLEY, VA

Several Suits stare at a large Flatscreen MONITOR, a satellite image of Peshawar spread across the screen. BILL FORTE, late 50's, obviously the Senior man in the room.

FORTE

Zoom in on the target.

The displayed image flashes, magnifying first a District, then a Neighborhood, before finally settling on a small, walled Villa.

FORTE (CONT)

Perfect.

EXT. ROOFTOP - PESHAWAR

Four stories up. A Sniper Team, Gunmen and Spotter, hunker close to the floor. A Barrett 82A1 "Light Fifty" Rifle and a night vision spotting scope already in place. The Villa is across the street, directly below.

ON THE VILLA

Two GUNMEN stand on the steps leading to the second floor, engaged in conversation. Another GUARD mills about the garden. A lone BOY SOLDIER just outside the Wall, leaning against a crevice in the stone.

The Spotter lowers his Scope, whispers into his mouthpiece.

SPOTTER

Alpha, this is Bravo. In position,
ready to engage.

INT. BLACKHAWK

DELTA LEADER, surrounded by a team of eight Delta Force Operators armed to the teeth. He's outfitted in black Body Armor, M240 fully-automatic machine gun nestled in his lap. He looks over the side of the Gunship at the City below. Glances at his watch. In his mouthpiece-

DELTA LEADER

Roger that Bravo. Down Range in
two.

SPOTTER (V.O.)

What's the word?

DELTA LEADER

You're looking at a Kill Zone.

INT. VILLA - BEDROOM

SAIF AL-ADEL, 40's, lies on a bed, covers pushed down to his waist. He is stocky, clean-shaven. Across his chest, the shapely arm of his Wife, RAJA. With each breath he takes, he wheezes slightly.

EXT. VILLA WALL

The Boy Soldier, not yet old enough to grow a full beard, shifts beneath the strap of his AK-47. He glances from left to right. Leaning his weapon against the wall, he digs into his pockets, pulls out a small Pipe, lighter and some Hashish. In Pashto, the local dialect:

GUARD (O.S.)

Fahid.

Boy Soldier fills his pipe.

BOY SOLDIER

What?

GUARD (O.S.)

Save some for me.

BOY SOLDIER

Get out here then.

The faint sound of Choppers, somewhere behind the Buildings. He lights the Pipe, cheeks pucker as he inhales. Exhaled smoke drifts from his mouth as a 50 caliber bullet strikes him in the forehead, plows through brain matter and out the back of the skull before lodging in the Wall. A faint pink mist lingers in the air.

The Guard opens the Gate, takes a silenced Round in the Chest. He falls back, Rifle clattering off to the side. Rolls over, looks up to the Heavens just long enough to see the Trio of Blackhawks clear the skyline before a head shot finishes him off.

INT. VILLA - BEDROOM

Saif's eyes lurch open, bloodshot. He can hear the WHIR of the Helicopter Blades from the Window. Throws Raja's arm away as she moans groggily, sits up in bed. Hears the THUD of Boots hit the ceiling above him.

EXT. BLACKHAWK

One Delta Team ropes it off a Blackhawk near the Front Gate, hits the ground running.

Another Team propels onto the Villa roof from the second Bird. The Third Copter circles around the Complex like a shark circling prey.

Delta Leader, now donning night vision goggles, heaves a concussion grenade over the wall. WHOOP. Dust kicks up above the gilding. The Team charges through as someone SCREAMS from inside. AK-47 shots ring out at random. The Delta Operators fire short, concentrated bursts. Bodies fall in the commotion.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - LANGLEY

Forte and the other Suits watch the combat in real time via the Satellite feed.

INT. VILLA - BEDROOM

The SHOTS from outside reverberate through the room. Saif falls to his knees, gropes under the bed. Raja yells at him between sobs.

RAJA

He never should have come here.

Saif pulls out a Rifle and a box of Ammunition. Flips off the lid, grabs at the bullets.

RAJA

Samia-

SAIF

Shut up.

He pulls one out, tries to load it into an empty magazine, his hand shaking terribly.

RAJA

We have to get her.

She runs towards the door. Saif runs after her, rifle in hand, grabs her by the back of the neck before she can open the door and throws her to the ground.

SAIF

Stay down.

He grabs at the ammo, loads another round into the magazine, inserts the magazine into the weapon and chambers a round. Raja crawls to his feet. The GUNFIRE outside diminishes, an eerie calm settling over the room. Saif points the Rifle at the door, tries to hold the barrel on point with shaking hands.

SAIF

To Allah we belong and to Him our
return.

A Shotgun BLAST knocks out the door handle, leaves a hole the size of two fists. The Door swings open, a ferocious black mass of death pouring through. Saif closes his eyes and... can't find the courage to pull the trigger.

As he throws the Rifle aside, the action BLURS. Hands around him, force him down. His face ground into the Persian Rug, a knee against his neck. Plastic restraints around his wrists and ankles. A gag over his mouth. A hood blinds him. Arms lift his bulky frame with ease. Gasps for air as he's carried down the steps. The Wind against his veil as he's lifted up into the Helicopter.

The hood lifts away, his vision restored. He looks below, at the Villa where he has made his home for many years, tries to look away.

DELTA LEADER

Look at it.

Delta Leader grabs him by the hair and neck, forces him to look at the Helicopter circling the Villa. Multiple flashes of light from the base of the Bird. The Villa explodes in a ball of fire and concrete shrapnel.

Before Saif can scream, the gag and hood suffocate him once again.

EXT. PLAIN - OUTSIDE PESHAWAR

A field of grain sheared low. The covering Blackhawk circles above ominously. The other two have landed, their blades still spin lazily. Two Operators lift Saif to his feet, pull away the hood. THOMAS FAIRCHILD, 40's, chiseled, stands before him in Khakis and a black long-sleeved thermal. A holstered Glock on his belt with two extra magazines of ammo.

Saif looks past Fairchild at Raja, his Daughter SAMIA, and MOHAMMAD, late 20's, a bullet wound to the shoulder. All are held at gunpoint. Fairchild steps forward. Saif addresses Fairchild in Pashto and he responds in kind.

SAIF

Who are you?

Fairchild hunches down. Eye contact. Grim. Beads of sweat drip down Saif's forehead.

SAIF

I beg you, what do you want?

FAIRCHILD

State your true name.

SAIF

Saif Al-Adel. Please-

FAIRCHILD

(now in English)

NO. Your true name.

SAIF

(still in Pashto)

My name is Saif Al-Adel. Why have you done this?

Fairchild turns, motions to one of the Operators. The Operator pulls Mohammad, bound and gagged, towards him. Much of his shirt is soaked through with blood.

SAIF

(Pashto)

I have no dealings with the Terrorists. I'm an honest banker. Please. My family-

The Operator hands Mohammad over to Fairchild. Fairchild forces the bigger man to his knees.

FAIRCHILD

State your true name.

Fairchild undoes the snap on his holster, takes out his Glock. Saif begins to cry.

SAIF

(Pashto)

Saif Al-Adel.

FAIRCHILD

I'm going to ask one more time, state your true name.

Saif's whole body is wracked with sobs. Fairchild rests the barrel against Mohammad's head. Saif breaks, speaks in fluent English.

SAIF

Amid El-Maati. My name is Amid El-Maati. Please.

Saif stares at the ground. Mohammad moans into his gag.

FAIRCHILD

And this is your brother, Mohammad.
Correct?

SAIF

Yes.

Fairchild fires one round from the Glock into Mohammad's head, execution style. The lifeless body slumps over. Saif screams, struggles against his Captors.

FAIRCHILD

He was dead the moment he answered
the call to Jihad.

Saif looks up, now trembling with a combination of fear and anger. Fairchild stands aside, allows Saif to watch as his Wife and Daughter are loaded into a Blackhawk.

FAIRCHILD

Why does an honest banker live
under an assumed name?

SAIF

I'm not my Brother.

FAIRCHILD

You don't think we know you helped
move Al' Queda's money?

Saif's voice falters.

SAIF

I... I had no choice.

Fairchild holsters his Glock, stands.

FAIRCHILD

Follow my instructions and you'll
see your family again. Understand?

LATER

The Operators cut Saif's binds. He scurries on his hands and knees to his dead Brother. Fairchild points to a Cottage at the fringe of the field, a single Light in the window.

FAIRCHILD

The Woman in the photo lives in
that Cottage. You'll find a Jeep
you can use to return to Peshawar.

(MORE)

FAIRCHILD (cont'd)
If questioned, you were with her
tonight.

Two Operators drag the body from Saif's grasp and load it into one of the choppers. Fairchild and Saif maintain eye contact as the Blackhawks lift off.

Saif looks down at the faded picture of a mysterious Woman in his dirty hands. Flips the picture over revealing a covert email address. He tramps through the field towards a Cottage off in the distance.

INT. CONTROL TOWER - OBSERVATION DECK - HOUSTON, TX

Air Traffic Controllers with headsets, including TERRY and JIM, monitor multiple radar screens. Plenty of chatter and garbled radio transmissions. MEGAN LEE, the shift Supervisor, stares out a tilted window at the ground traffic below. Looks back at her Monitor.

MEGAN
Jim, can you tell Continental 921
to hold back on 2.

JIM
Will do.

She takes a sip of black coffee from an oversized mug.

TERRY
What the fuck...

Jim and Megan turn towards Terry, who stares through thick glasses at an Aerodrome Traffic Monitor, a radar display that allows Controllers to see aircraft flying in the vicinity of the airport.

MEGAN
Problem?

EXT. RIVER OAKS - DAWN

Light parts the trees of a wooded influential community located in the center of Houston. STUART "STU" ROCKHILL, mid 30's, serious despite the crooked nose, runs along a green swath of neatly trimmed grass that intersects a two-lane road. Torn up Asics, a stained sweatband, the gate of a serious runner pushing himself.

Looks at the Homes on each side. Three car garages. Automatic sprinklers toil away. Squints as the first light of the day breaks over the trees. A flagpole up ahead, stars and stripes sway in the slight breeze. He picks up the pace, nearly at a sprint.

BEEP. BEEP. BEEP. His pager vibrates. He ignores it. Now at top speed, thighs pumping up and down.

EXT. PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Stu checks his Pager, tries to recover his breath. Pulls out his keys and deactivates the car alarm on his Crown Vic. No government plates. Climbs in, takes his Cell off the dash. Dials. A slight New York accent he tries hard to cover.

STU

Bobby.

BOBBY (V.O.)

Stu, where are you?

STU

Jogging in River Oaks. Just finished.

He takes off his headband, flips it onto the passenger seat.

BOBBY (V.O.)

How fast can you be in Galveston?

STU

Galveston?

BOBBY (V.O.)

Yeah. The Port.

STU

Maybe hour and a half.

BOBBY (V.O.)

How 'bout an hour?

EXT. ROUTE 45 - OUTSIDE PORT OF GALVESTON - LATER

Stu's Crown Vic shoots along Route 45, over the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway, a small, magnetic strobe flashing blue on the dash. Galveston Island looms ahead, covered with warehouses, wharves, freight facilities and transit sheds.

A Foghorn BLARES.

EXT. DOCK - PARKING LOT

Stu gets out of the car. The Lot is filled with Ambulances and Police Cars, all with lights flashing, no sirens. Stu reaches back in and pulls his JTTF Raid Jacket off a hanger. Also removes a gym bag with a change of clothes.

Throws on the Jacket, tightens up his tie. The utmost professional. Makes his way through the commotion across the Lot.

Passes by various officials. A pair of EMTs. Two Cops in uniform. FAIRCHILD barks into his Cell-

FAIRCHILD

Impossible.

Stu glances at him, pays him little notice as he moves on. A few steps outside the crowd stands BOBBY JACKMAN, a 20 year FBI vet in his 40's. The body of an ex-athlete with a gut and longer hair combed back. He talks to two other Suits by the Edge of the Dock. Behind them, an 87 foot Coast Guard Patrol Boat called the Manowar. A dozen Deckhands scurry about readying the ship to depart.

STU

Bobby.

Bobby turns from the other Suits, shakes Stu's hand.

BOBBY

Guys, this is Detective Stuart Rockhill, Houston P.D. He's been working on our Joint Terrorism Task Force.

Stu begins to shake hands with each subsequent introduction.

BOBBY

Jim Tulane National Transportation Safety Board.

JIM TULANE (mid 50's), effeminate, shake reflects it.

BOBBY

Rich Stanton, FBI Evidence Response Team.

RICH STANTON (40's), thick neck and crew cut. Ex-military written all over him.

STU

I think I've seen you around the office.

RICH

Probably.

Fairchild emerges from the crowd. He sports a large Cut above his Right eye, stitches. ***In all scenes taking place before the Plane Crash, Fairchild is unmarked.**

In all scenes after the Plane Crash, he has the noticeable cut above his right eye* He flips his Phone shut, appears to be distracted.

BOBBY

And this is...

FAIRCHILD

Tom Fairchild. Homeland Security.

Stu and Fairchild shake hands.

BOBBY

Tom just got in from Washington.

STU

Jetlagged?

FAIRCHILD

Something like that. Yeah.

A beat as they all size each other up, know that they are about to embark on a arduous journey. Then at break neck pace-

BOBBY

How long we got till NTSB does it's first release?

JIM

Hour. Maybe two. Airline is contacting relatives now.

STU

Survivors?

JIM

No sign of survivors. Our guys at the crash site report not much left of the aircraft on the surface.

BOBBY

What do we have from air traffic?

JIM

No mayday. Damn thing just dropped.

RICH

So we have to assume...

FAIRCHILD

Nothing. Until we know otherwise, this was an accident.

BOBBY

How about the CIA. Do we know if they're getting anything on this?

FAIRCHILD

They've been contacted. Nothing.

STU

Have we ruled out a collision with another aircraft?

JIM

At 35,000 feet, a small craft is out of the question. Astronomical.

RICH

We would know by now if another aircraft hit.

Stuart takes the rebuke in stride. Out of his league.

BOBBY

What about the debris field?

RICH

Calm seas, relatively contained recovery zone. Points to a nose dive. Maybe an engine explosion or she lost a wing.

BOBBY

Or someone put her down.

JIM

About the press-

FAIRCHILD

We go with what we know, a plane is down and that's it. Stay tight-lipped on this one, no conjecture. (to Jim) Hold off the media until the families have been notified.

Jim nods as Fairchild turns.

THE MANOWAR

Deckhands toss off the mooring lines, flip the ballast containers.

FAIRCHILD

Gentlemen.

The group proceeds with purpose towards the gangway of the Ship.

EXT. OCEAN - MANOWAR

The Manowar skims the water at 25 knots, front of the bow frequently airborne, twin diesel engines churning up wake.

INT. MANOWAR - PILOT HOUSE

A CAPTAIN mans the helm, monitors the ECDIS (electronic chart display system). To his right, Fairchild, a steel grip on the support rail, knuckles white.

ON DECK

Jim and Rich talk logistics. Stu leans against the aluminum hull of a Water Jet fixed to the side of the Ship. Bobby looks at him, concerned. Each time the boat shifts, Stu looks like he might heave.

Bobby yells over the wind.

BOBBY

Thought you grew up on the water.

STU

Brooklyn is on the water.

Bobby gives him a pat on the shoulder, moves inside.

EXT. WRECKAGE AREA - MANOWAR - LATER

HH-60 "Jayhawk" Medium Range Recovery Helicopters sweep over a two square mile swath of ocean. Around the perimeter, nearly a dozen Navy and Coast Guard Vessels including the Manowar. The Gulf is still, ominous.

ON DECK

Stu, still queasy, studies the side of a nearby Boat. He looks down at the water, at the small pieces of metal floating on the surface. Most are tiny, invisible if not for the reflection of the mid-day Sun. A few larger items. Ripped clothing. Seat cushions.

Tom talks on a Satellite phone, Bobby nearby. Several Coast Guard Deckhands fish out small pieces from the water.

RICH (O.S.)

Not much left.

Stu notes Rich, who joins him port side. Waits as Rich barks an order into his two-way radio.

RICH

Coast Guard says we're on the edge of the shelf, 400 feet to the bottom. Lot a factors go into a dive like that.

STU

Looks like a fair amount's still floating.

RICH

No. Important shit's on the bottom.

A Deckhand brings up a piece of the wreckage, no bigger than a fist.

STU

Let me see that.

The Deckhand hands it to him, returns with his pole and net. Stu flips the piece in his hand.

OFF THE PIECE OF WRECKAGE

One side burned, the other side clean. Tiny indentations.

EXT. VILLA REMAINS - PESHAWAR - MORNING AFTER

A DUSTY HAND sifts through pieces of crumbled rock, picks a random piece. Squeezes the rock until it crumbles in his hand.

Saif hunches over the carnage near a Jeep. He stands, looks at the smoldering ruins, all that remains of his home. A few random Civilians pick through the rubble. He looks up at the overcast sky, darker patches of clouds that hint at rain.

SAIF

Alu Akbar.

He turns his back on the destruction, walks towards the Jeep. A Toyota Pick-up pulls up at high speed, grinds to a halt throwing up dust. Several armed TALIBAN dressed in black jump out of the bed, AK-47s in tow. They surround Saif, tense. In Pashto:

TALIBAN 1

Come with us.

SAIF

No.

Taliban 1 waves his Gun in Saif's face. Saif stares at him quietly, shows zero fear. Hands at his sides.

The Taliban exchange nervous glances. The passenger door of the Pick-up creaks open. A Man with a dark beard steps out, the air of authority. This is KONDUZ, senior Taliban, looks older than his 35 years.

Konduz gets very close to Saif, quiet menace.

KONDUZ

Everyone has lost. Sacrificed.

Saif looks at the men around him, the weather beaten faces, the scars.

KONDUZ

You were spared, praise Allah.

Konduz reaches out, lays a hand on Saif's shoulder.

KONDUZ (CONT)

To seek vengeance.

Saif carefully removes his hand.

SAIF

What do you want?

KONDUZ

Get in the truck. Please.

EXT. TRAIL - KHYBER HILLS

Saif sits in the back of the bouncing Toyota surrounded by armed Taliban. The view is desolate yet beautiful, the trail at times barely the width of the Truck. Only the hardiest vegetation survives at this altitude.

The PING of Sonar.

EXT. WRECKAGE AREA - GULF OF MEXICO - DAYS LATER

The NOAA Rainer on patrol, the 120 foot USNS Arlington just behind, a large crane outfitted to the bow. They dwarf the remaining Coast Guard vessels, about half the original fleet.

The Manowar breaks off from the Group and heads West. Stu watches from the deck of the Ranier. Another PING.

He's changed into Jeans, Boots and a Collared shirt, the collar poking from beneath a tan Windbreaker.

NOAA RAINER

A 230 foot scientific vessel equipped for hydrographic surveys. 55 Crew Members, a noticeable presence on deck. They intermingle with Navy officers. PING.

INT. LAB FACILITY - BELOW DECK

240 square feet of space, two dozen people all huddled around one station. On a MONITOR, the 3-D image of the Ocean Floor, the wreckage eerily magnified. SARAH TEMPLETON, a scientific research technician decidedly non-military, points at the Monitor.

SARAH

We created this image with side-scan sonar.

PING. Two small White lights flash with the Ping on the map.

SARAH

And the lights are signals emanating from locator beacons.

RICH

Our Boxes?

SARAH

Our boxes.

FAIRCHILD

Can we tell which is which, by the position of the wreckage?

SARAH

Its hard. If I had to...

She points to the left light. PING.

SARAH

I'd say this is the cockpit voice recorder.

Stu joins the group. He has to crane his Neck to see the Monitor.

FAIRCHILD

How far to the data recorder?

SARAH

Between the two, looks like 50 feet.

JIM

Can we get 'em both on the same dive?

SARAH

Tough to tell up here. Depends on the amount of debris between the boxes.

FAIRCHILD

We need to establish this as an accident now. Not in two weeks.

BOBBY

We don't know this was an accident. I understand there's a lot of scared people out there but-

FAIRCHILD

With all due respect, I'm running this investigation. We get those boxes now.

Fairchild turns to a small group of Naval Officers awaiting his orders.

FAIRCHILD (CONT)

I'll be supervising from the Arlington.

EXT. USNS ARLINGTON- DEPLOYMENT ZONE - HOURS LATER

Navy Corporal JOHN CARPE sits inside an ADS (Atmospheric Diving Suit), dark blue with a clear oversized head compartment. Carpe tests the suit's hydraulic rotary joints, 16 in all, moves his arms and legs with relative ease. Fairchild stands next to him.

FAIRCHILD

Its imperative we know about the readings as soon as you get close to the aircraft.

Fairchild holds Carpe's gaze.

CARPE

Yes sir.

MIKE KYM, a Navy Technician, activates a magnetic lift and Carpe's Suit jumps 6 inches off the ground. Two Crewmembers pull nozzles from inside the suit, attach them via tubes to inserts built directly into the Lift, the whole device custom made.

KYM
Ready to deploy.

FAIRCHILD
(to Carpe)
Good luck.

Fairchild walks away as Kym pushes a lever and Carpe swings out over the side of the ship. He falls 20 feet in the heavy suit, hits the water with a Splash, descends out of view with the cords trailing behind.

ON THE RANIER DECK

Bobby and Rich watch the fall, the strain of the cords against the hinge of the crane. A few steps off, Stu's attention is focused squarely on Fairchild.

EXT. UNDERWATER

Carpe sinks through the murky water. The light fades from the surface. Shadows of tiny fish dance off the reflection on the glass face shield. Carpe speaks into a microphone built into his headgear.

CARPE
Turning on the lights.

He activates some unseen button inside the suit. Powerful lights beam out, increase visibility by a good 20 feet. The water is thick with Sediment.

INT. LAB FACILITY - RAINER

Several Technicians in front of Monitors. Sarah leads the group. The team nearby.

SARAH
Establishing feed from the
Arlington.

INT. ARLINGTON - CONTROL ROOM

In stark contrast to the Lab Facility in the Rainer, just Fairchild and Kym. The young Technician looks to Fairchild for instruction.

FAIRCHILD
Patch them through.

INT. LAB FACILITY - RAINER

An Image appears on the Main Monitor, split by four screens. All cameras originate from the ADS. Lights pierce the darkness. A few fish, peripheral, dart from the path. The sediment is much like driving through falling snow as it whips past the windshield.

SARAH
Arlington, we have a visual.

Sarah looks to a smaller Monitor where the 3-d image display and the lights still blink.

EXT. UNDERWATER - MOMENTS LATER

Carpe continues his descent. He glances down at a digital reading in tiny red numbers. The readings come directly from Instruments built into the suit.

KYM (O.S.)
You're 50 feet out.

We start to make out the Ocean Floor.

CARPE
Tapping thrusters.

The Hiss of released air. Bubbles float past Carpe's face. He leans forward. Taps them again, another Hiss. His descent slows. The Visibility begins to clear. A Hand torn off at the wrist, directly in front of Carpe's face.

INT. LAB FACILITY - RAINER

The Hand floats past one of the Cameras.

INT. ARLINGTON - CONTROL ROOM

Fairchild paces nervously. Kym uses a Mouse to control the actual cameras on the suit.

FAIRCHILD
How much time does he have?

Kym covers his mouthpiece, doesn't take his eyes off the Monitor.

KYM
He's good for about 2 hours.

FORTE (O.S.)
Decompression?

KYM
Not with this technology.

Fairchild takes a seat next to Kym. We see that FORTE is video-conferenced into the room.

INT. LAB FACILITY - RAINER

On the Monitor, the Ocean Floor becomes distinct. Sand and sparse vegetation. Our first glimpse of the wreckage, a piece of warped fuselage, knee high.

BOBBY
Glad I'm not down there.

ON THE MONITOR

More Wreckage, bent pieces indistinguishable.

EXT. WRECKAGE SITE - OCEAN FLOOR

Carpe is a tiny light in immense darkness. He "walks" between pieces of the wreckage.

INT. ARLINGTON - CONTROL ROOM

Kym looks at a side Monitor. The Diver is a red light, the black boxes two white dots.

KYM
3 O'clock.

He strokes the mouse. The Camera View on his Monitor shifts to the right. The largest piece of Wreckage we've seen thus far, a Part of the Tail Section largely intact.

KYM (CONT)
That's it. Dead ahead.

CARPE
On my way.

EXT. WRECKAGE SITE - OCEAN FLOOR

Carpe fires his side pistons, coasts the 15 feet. Shifts pieces of metal with mechanical precision. Sand swirls in the dark water. A Rectangular Box, Bright Orange with strips of Reflective Tape. About a foot long.

INT. LAB FACILITY - RANIER

KYM (O.S.)
First Box confirmed. Going for
number two.

SARAH
Copy that.

The Image on the Monitor flickers. Becomes grainy.

SARAH
Be advised Arlington. We have feed
problems.

INT. ARLINGTON - CONTROL ROOM

The Image on the Monitor is perfect.

KYM
We're still good on this end.

Fairchild looks at Forte through the Video Conference
Monitor. Forte nods.

INT. LAB FACILITY - RANIER

The Image flickers, dies completely.

BOBBY
Here we go.

Jim takes the headset from Sarah.

JIM
Arlington! We've lost the feed
completely.

KYM (O.S.)
We're okay on this end.

JIM
We need that feed. Now.

Muffled Sound on the other line. Stu looks at the Monitor,
the helpless Group. He walks towards the door. Bobby turns
from the debacle.

BOBBY
What are you doing?

STU
What you brought me here for.

BOBBY
Rockhill!

Too late. Stu is out the door.

EXT. WRECKAGE SITE - OCEAN FLOOR

Carpe now has the first box in the oversized claw of the Suit.

FAIRCHILD (V.O.)
This is Fairchild. Channel's clear.

CARPE
Are we a go?

FAIRCHILD (V.O.)
We're a go.

Carpe flips a switch. A CRACKLING SOUND emits from the Suit.

CARPE
No indications of radiation thus far.

The Lights of Carpe's Suit fade into the depths.

INT. RANIER - STAIRWELL

Stu takes the steps two at a time. He pushes open a door and runs outside.

EXT. RANIER - DECK - CONTINUOUS

TIM and BARRY, two Coast Guard Deckhands fresh out of the Academy, stand by a small raft. Stu approaches them, out of breath.

STU
I need you to get me to the Arlington.

BARRY
Excuse me?

Stu hits a release on the Safety Raft. It sways, favors the front.

TIM
Sir, you can't-

Stu hits the second release. The Raft sways again, only one line left for support.

STU

You help or I do this myself.

Stu climbs into the boat, moves towards the last release.

BARRY

Jesus, stop! The fall would break
your leg.

Barry looks up above at the Coast Guard CAPTAIN, who's been
silently watching. The Captain nods approval. Barry climbs
into the raft. Tim doesn't move.

TIM

Don't look at me. Fucker's crazy.

INT. LAB FACILITY - RANIER

The Group studies the only Monitor they have left to watch,
the one that transmits the Black Box Beacons. The two light
blips grow closer together.

RICH

Almost there.

EXT. WRECKAGE SITE - OCEAN FLOOR

The hydraulic pump on the Suit claw HISSES as Carpe secures
the Second Box.

EXT. RAFT - OFF THE USNS ARLINGTON

Barry and Stu quickly transverse the 200 yards between ships
using the small outboard motor on the Safety Raft. Navy
Sailors stare down at them from the Arlington Deck.

They draw near the Ship, turn parallel to it. Stu looks up at
the Sailors. Takes his credentials out of his pocket.

STU

Stuart Rockhill. JTTF. Request
permission to board.

No reply.

BARRY

(to the Sailors)
This Man needs to board!

Stu looks at Barry, who shrugs his shoulders. The Sailors
continue to talk amongst themselves. Barry eases off the
Outboard Engine. Finally, a rope ladder drops. Stuart
immediately climbs up the ladder.

EXT. ARLINGTON DECK - CONTINUOUS

Stuart flings himself over the side, creds still in hand. The Sailors help him up. He asks a young NAVAL OFFICER-

STU
I need to see Fairchild.

The Naval Officer examines his badge.

NAVAL OFFICER
I'm sorry Sir-

STU
Where's the Technician running the Suit?

The Lift whirs to life. The other Sailors walk towards it. The Naval Officer looks over at his deserting buddies.

STU (CONT)
Your mission here is to assist the investigation. So Assist.

NAVAL OFFICER
Third Floor. In the Tower.

Stu breaks into a full run towards the back of the ship.

INT. ARLINGTON - TOWER HALLWAY

Stu struggles to control his heavy breaths. His fingers brush over chipped paint on the metal exterior, which he glances at with dismay. He turns a corner, pulls back. Peeks over.

Two Navy Officers stand guard outside a nondescript Door.

Stu leans against the wall, listens. FOOTSTEPS come from the opposite direction, around the corner. Stu sneaks another glance. Two Thugs in khakis and flight jackets, DANE (white) and ANTOINE (black). Military cuts, government written all over them. Both armed. One carries a small Duffel Bag over his shoulder.

The Click of boots, more footsteps. The resulting Squeak as a Metal Door grinds on its hinges. Stu quickly walks several steps in the opposite direction, spins just in time for the two Officers to turn the corner. Flashes his credentials, nods. They nod back, pay him no attention.

When they're out of sight, he peeks back around the corner. Dane and Antoine have disappeared into the Room. He walks to the Door, considers his next option.

Tries several doors nearby. The first to open leads into a storage closet. He pushes aside a yellow mop bucket, cracks the door enough for visibility on the hall.

INT. LAB FACILITY - RANIER

Sarah plays with a dial on the radio. Jim holds the Mic. He looks disheveled.

JIM
Arlington, come in.

Garbled transmission. Then, the line crackles to life.

KYM (O.S.)
We're here Ranier.

JIM
Do we have both boxes?

KYM (O.S.)
That's affirmative.

Jim runs his hands through his wavy hair, allows himself a slight smile.

JIM
Be advised. That's NTSB property. I need those Boxes transferred to the Ranier ASAP.

KYM (V.O.)
10-4. I'll advise Mr. Fairchild.

INT. HALLWAY - ARLINGTON

The Navy Officers return, carry a Cooler. It looks heavy. Water Swishes around inside. They carefully lower it to the ground. Antoine opens the door, dismisses the officers. He picks up the Cooler with Dane's help, carries it into the room. They pull the door shut, lock it.

INT. ARLINGTON CONTROL ROOM

Dane and Antoine set the Cooler down next to a metal table and an open Duffel Bag. Both put on surgical gloves. Fairchild watches as Dane removes an Electric Screwdriver from the duffel bag. Antoine sets a T shaped Recording Device and headphones on the Table. Dane carefully lifts the second Black Box from the cooler and places it onto the Table.

Dane flips a switch and begins to remove screws securing the lid of the Black Box. ZZZzzz, tink.

When he's done, he lifts off the lid and sets it neatly to the side. Pulls out something similar in appearance to a Cassette Tape.

INT. HALLWAY - ARLINGTON

Stu bursts out of the Closet. He hesitates outside the Control Room door. On the ZZZzzz-tink of the Screwdriver he loses it.

STU
Fairchild. It's Rockhill.

Stu tries the Door. Its secure.

INT. ARLINGTON CONTROL ROOM

Fairchild looks at the door with murderous rage. Dane places the Cassette Tape into the Recording Device. Wiggles on the headphones.

DANE
I need 5 minutes.

Stu carries on outside. Fairchild looks at Forte on the Monitor.

FORTE
Handle it.

Fairchild motions to Antoine with a head jerk. Antoine proceeds to the door.

OUTSIDE

Stu Pounds on the door.

ANTOINE (O.S.)
You're not authorized to be on this ship.

STU
I'm authorized to protect the integrity of the evidence. Now open the fucking door.

No response... Then the Door Creaks open. Antoine steps out, a good six inches taller than Stu. Stu takes two steps back. Antoine calmly shuts the door behind him. A moment as they size each other up.

INSIDE

Dane listens carefully on the headphones. Hits stop, rewind. Hands the headphones to Fairchild. Hits play. Fairchild listens intently.

OUTSIDE

ANTOINE

Sir, I have orders to escort you off this ship.

STU

Who the fuck are you?

Stu reaches for his credentials, not exactly sure who's confronting him.

ANTOINE

Sir. If you resist, I will be forced to restrain you.

INSIDE

Fairchild hands the headphones back to Dane.

FAIRCHILD

Erase it.

Dane nods.

OUTSIDE

Antoine places his right hand on handcuffs dangling from his belt. Stu shows him his creds.

STU

If you think I'm walking away, you-

Antoine thrusts his forearm into Stu's gut. Stu doubles over, gasps for breath, caught completely off guard. His creds fall to the ground. Antoine spins him around, thrusts him against the wall. Stu fights as Antoine tries to peel one of his arms behind his back. Stu feels Antoine's other meaty paw wrap around the back of his neck.

ANTOINE

(through his teeth)
Stop resisting.

Stu pushes back with all his strength, creates enough separation to throw an elbow into Antoine's gut. Grabs at his face, pushes him back towards the stairs, finger deep in his eye socket. Antoine lurches in pain. Right hook to the kidney. Antoine strikes back, pushes against him.

They spin, grapple, throw each other down the stairs violently. Grunts replace growls as they tumble to the bottom in a heap, fall off each other, both in pain.

An ALARM sounds on deck as Navy Officers rush to separate the two wounded combatants.

BACK ON THE CONTROL ROOM

Dane pops the cassette, plugs it back into the Box. Screws the lid back onto the metal frame. Removes his gloves. Fairchild opens the door. Behind him, Kym and Dane carry the Cooler with the Black Boxes.

FAIRCHILD
To the Ranier.

Kym and Dane carry the Cooler off. Fairchild stoops down, picks up Stu's credentials. Studies the man with the crooked nose.

EXT. ROAD - SOMEWHERE IN EASTERN AFGHANISTAN

Saif remains in the back of the Pick-up. His face is covered in dust. He looks up at the Bleak sky, exhausted. A ring of Vultures circle overhead.

The Pick Up bounces over some rough terrain, pulls to a stop in front of a sole LOCAL, in the road, concealed in tribal robes. A small fire flickers just off the path, encircled by rock. The Local walks to the Passenger side. Runs his hand over a pattern of Bullet Holes in the Driver's Side Door. Saif listens in on the conversation. They speak in Dari, a prevalent Afghani dialect:

KONDUZ
Is it clear ahead?

LOCAL
We heard Helicopters this morning.
All in all, it's safe for now.

KONDUZ
Good.

LOCAL
Why this ridge?

KONDUZ
We've come to see Abdul. At his request.

LOCAL

A good man to break bread with. But
tell me, will I not still be cold?

Konduz hands the Local a Satchel that Clinks with coins. The Local flashes a wide smile of surprisingly white teeth.

LOCAL

I feel warmer already.

He stands to the side of the truck, whistles distinctly three times. The Pickup lurches forward. Saif notices Soldiers with Assault Rifles and RPGs emerge from behind the cover of large Boulders on the Cliffside.

SAIF

I thought you controlled this
region.

KONDUZ

The Tribes are divided, chaotic.
But greed... one can always count on
greed.

INT. CAVE ENTRANCE - LATER

The Pickup parks in front of a rare outcrop of Conifers, 8000 feet above sea level. The Taliban escort Saif out of the Pickup. Konduz leads the group between the Trees, past what might be a bomb crater, down a slight ravine of crumbling shale. Behind a riverbed long since dried up, a gap in the stone.

A young COMBATANT with white turban leans against the rock smoking a hand-rolled cigarette. He waves them through as if they're old friends. The Group walks maybe ten feet in Darkness, forced to stoop at times, before the light of several Kerosene Lamps pick up the trail.

INT. AL-QAEDA ENCLAVE - CONTINUOUS

More Al-Qaeda Fighters, all dressed in worn robes. Dingy mats on the ground. Canned goods. Mortar Rounds and Tubes, RPGs, an MRL designed to be mounted on a Truck, thousands upon thousands of rounds of ammo. All remnants of the Soviet/Afghan War. A Laptop and Camcorder, out of place in the surroundings.

The Fighters sit in packs of Four or Five, talk quietly. The Taliban Soldiers huddle a bit off from the rest, leave Konduz to escort Saif the rest of the way. Beyond the Soldiers, in a small offshoot of the main Cave, FAHD ABDUL, Chief Financial Minister of Al-Qaeda.

He kneels on a mat, talks to two Guards. Smiles as Konduz enters with Saif. A traditional Saudi Arabian greeting:

FAHD
Salaam Alaykum

KONDUZ
Salaam Alaykum.

Fahd shakes his hand.

FAHD/KONDUZ
Kaif hal ak.

They pat each other on the shoulder, seem to be good friends. Fahd motions to the Guards. They stand, walk towards Saif. Saif begins to back away. In Pashto:

KONDUZ
They must search for weapons.

Saif reluctantly raises his hands as GUARD 1 pats him down.

FAHD
A difficult trip?

SAIF
I didn't have a choice.

FAHD
Your brother was a dear friend. I'm
sorry for your loss.

Guard 1 pulls out Saif's Passport and the Picture of the girl. Saif reaches for it. Guard 1 lifts it from his grasp. Guard 2 holds him back with an outstretched hand. Guard 1 hands the Papers to Fahd who begins to leaf through them. He comes to the Picture. He's about to flip it over, the email on the back, when-

SAIF
You're Saudi?

FAHD
Yes.

SAIF
(switching to Arabic)
I attended University in Riyadh.

Fahd looks up, smiles.

SAIF (CONT)

I hold degrees in Finance and English.

FAHD

A Renaissance man. Yes! I've spent time in Riyadh. I was born in Yanbu.

SAIF

On the Red Sea.

They exchange the Saudi greeting. Fahd hands Saif his Papers, the Picture. Saif pushes them back in his pocket.

FAHD

Tell me, how did you survive the attack?

SAIF

I wasn't there when the Americans came.

FAHD

The girl in the picture... your Wife?

SAIF

My Mistress.

FAHD

You will come to find pleasures of the flesh pale to those of the faith.

Fahd clasps his hands.

SAIF

You preach to the wrong man.

FAHD

Why? You question your faith?

SAIF

Perhaps. It's cost me everything.

Fahd sizes up Saif.

FAHD

Allah is everything.

Saif doesn't look away, doesn't respond.

FAHD

We've done business in the past,
through your Brother. I thought you
might be willing, now, to take on a
greater role.

OFF SAIF

He crumples the picture in his pocket, knows what he must do.

EXT. CONDO - CLEAR LAKE CITY - OUTSIDE HOUSTON

A rigidly planned, dull Suburb. A Condo identical to the
homes surrounding it. A small American flag waves in the
front yard. Stu's Crown Vic parked next to his personal
vehicle, a Ford F-150.

INT. CONDO

Stu sits on a Couch from Ikea, his arm in a sling. Bruises
and cuts on his face partially healed. The only light is from
the big screen TV he watches attentively. In his free hand, a
cup of coffee. The place is bland, a bit too empty to be
homey. We get the distinct feeling that every personal touch
is several years old.

A CNN Reporter chatters on the Television. In the top right
corner a plane graphic and FLIGHT 2189.

REPORTER 1

According to officials at the NTSB,
there's no evidence of a cockpit
breach or struggle on board.

CUT to Jim Tulane, the NTSB Symbol behind him. He stands in
front of a Podium, speaks into several Dozen Microphones of
all shapes and sizes.

JIM

We've concluded from the Data
Recorder that sudden, catastrophic
engine failure on the left side of
the aircraft sent the plane into a
tailspin.

Stu shuts off the T.V. Rotates on the couch, cracking his
stiff back. Looks at Pictures on the wall. A younger version
of himself with friends. Attractive women. He sighs, looks
away.

EXT. FBI HOUSTON FIELD OFFICE

A three story brick building that houses over two hundred agents. Stu pulls into an underground Parking Garage.

INT. OFFICE

Two dozen desks, many of them empty. The few Agents in the Office give Stu awkward glances. He wears his suit coat over the sling, ignores them. Sets his Briefcase down on a meticulously ordered Desk. No personal items. Takes a deep breath and moves on.

INT. BRIEFING ROOM

Bobby and two other Senior Agents sit at the end of a long, oak Conference Table. Stu enters, takes a seat at the end of the Table. The first to speak is ALAN HAYES, the SAC of the Houston office (he runs the place). The other Suit is SIMON HOWER, OPR (the federal version of Internal Affairs). An open file in front of him.

HAYES

How's the arm?

STU

Just a sprain. I'm fine.

HAYES

Good. Good. This is Simon Hower.

Stu doesn't respond, crosses his leg, waits for them to get on with it.

HOWER

Detective Rockhill, I'm with the Office of Professional Responsibility. I've been assigned to look into the incident on the Arlington.

STU

Okay.

Hower leans forward, leafs through a few of the Papers in the file. The fluidity of his hands is that of a professional paper pusher.

HOWER

When you were sworn in as a Federal Deputy, you came under the OPR's jurisdiction for internal matters.

STU

Yes sir.

HOWER

I've read the written statement you provided to the SAC and am prepared to wrap up the investigation.

Stu's gaze drifts to Bobby, lingers. Bobby is stone faced.

HOWER

I wanted to give you the opportunity to expound upon your statement.

A veiled threat. Stu hesitates, visibly strains to suppress the anger.

STU

Its all in there. I stand by what I said. And what I did.

Hower picks up a particular form, Stu's statement. Sets it aside. Bobby takes a gulp of water.

HAYES

I've looked over your personnel file and I have no reason to believe you would intentionally lie about the facts in this matter..

HOWER

BUT, your accusations don't appear to support what we know.

STU

And what exactly is it that you know?

Bobby chimes in before things spiral out of control.

BOBBY

Your job is to follow orders, not question the conduct of the investigation.

STU

This investigation has smelled from the second I stepped outta my car.

HOWER

You assaulted a Federal Official, Detective. That's why we're here.

STU

You call it assault. I call it the right to defend myself.

ALAN

Jesus Stu. I've been with the FBI for 22 years and I've never, NEVER seen anything like this before.

BOBBY

You're lucky he's not pressing charges.

Stu pushes back in the chair, begins to stand.

HOWER

Sit down Detective Rockhill.

Stu reluctantly settles back into his chair.

HOWER

What we have here is an inexcusable offense. I'm recommending your dismissal from the JTTF.

Hower marks his file, closes it. Stands up.

HOWER

SAC Hayes will determine what, if any, role you play on the JTTF until FBI Headquarters renders their decision.

Hower shakes hands with Bobby and Alan. Stu's face betrays nothing. Hower leaves.

HAYES

Bobby, can you excuse us?

BOBBY

Of course.

Bobby also leaves. As the Door Closes-

HAYES

You deal with Bobby on a day to day basis and he assures me you're a quality Detective. I want you to know, if it weren't for him you'd be out of this office today. As is, your involvement with the Flight 2189 Investigation is over. Understood?

STU
Understood.

HAYES
Until then...

Hayes stands up, sets Stu's Creds on the table in front of him.

STU
I did what I had to do.

HAYES
So am I. Dismissed.

INT. HALLWAY

Stu and Hayes exit the Conference Room, walk in different directions. Bobby waits by the Bathroom. Stuart walks past him, goes in.

INT. BATHROOM

Stu looks around the Bathroom to make sure its empty. Bobby enters.

STU
I want to know one thing.

BOBBY
Calm down.

STU
I want to know how you look at
yourself in the mirror.

BOBBY
I saved your ass.

STU
You stabbed me in the back you
spineless motherfucker.

BOBBY
I had no choice.

STU
Fuck the JTTF, fuck the FBI. What
about the families of the victims.
They deserve to know the truth.

BOBBY

What about my family. Huh? What about my kids. Those people are gone.

Stu pushes past him.

BOBBY

Just cause you have nothin' to lose...

Stu turns. Bobby can't meet his stare.

STU

Go on Bobby. GO ON.

BOBBY

I've watched you push everyone away since you came here. Thing about you Stu... You just don't get people.

Stu walks out of the bathroom. Bobby loosens his tie, walks to the sink. Splashes cold water on his face, stares at his tired reflection.

EXT. COTTAGE - OUTSIDE PESHAWAR - DUSK

The now familiar Pickup Truck drives down a dirt path. Konduz drives, now dressed in Western slacks and a collared shirt, clean shaven. Saif rides shotgun, new clothes on as well. The other Taliban are gone.

SAIF

There.

He points to a Cottage, looks past the tiny structure at the field where his Brother was executed.

KONDUZ

We'll eat then drive to town.

SAIF

I don't want to see her.

KONDUZ

Nonsense.

Konduz opens his Door, swings his legs out.

SAIF

A minute alone with her?

Konduz doesn't fully open the door, doesn't close it either.

SAIF

I've been gone 2 weeks. For all she
knows I'm dead.

Konduz responds by shutting his door. Saif gingerly steps out. A face appears in the window, disappears just as quickly. Saif cautiously knocks on the door. ZAHIDA cracks the door. The Woman from his Picture, Late 30's with a beautiful face prematurely wrinkled.

SAIF

Open the door, please.

She opens it. Saif gives her a hug, holds her close to his chest as they go inside. Breaks the embrace long enough to close the door behind him. Grabs her violently, places a muffling hand over her mouth. Throws her onto a brittle wood table.

SAIF

Why did you help the Americans?
Why?

She struggles against him. He bangs her head against the table.

SAIF (CONT)

Tell me.

Hits her head again. Realizes she can't say anything because his hand is over her mouth. Angrily mouths "Quiet". Lifts his hand away. She struggles to control herself.

ZAHIDA

No.

SAIF

You lie to me and I'll cut your
throat.

ZAHIDA

I had no choice. They have my
Husband.

Saif takes a deep breath, helps her off the table. Bends down to pick up the broken pieces of a framed picture. Its old, black and white- Zahida with her Husband and an Infant Child.

SAIF

What did they tell you of me?

ZAHIDA

I know you from a picture. They
said you might come.

SNIFFLES. Saif turns, closes his eyes. Opens them again. A 13
year old girl, SHARMEEN, looks just like his Daughter. She's
about to cry.

ZAHIDA

Back to your room.

SAIF

Wait.

Saif stands, backs away. Sets the family picture on the table
face down. Zahida goes to her Daughter, hugs her.

ZAHIDA

Its Okay. Its okay.

Saif peeks through the window. Konduz is out of the Pickup,
walks towards the Door.

SAIF

The story? Tell me you know the
story.

ZAHIDA

Yes. We're lovers. I know.

The slight Knock of Konduz on the door, outside.

SAIF

We'll be gone soon.

Saif opens the door.

INT. COTTAGE - LATER

Gathered around the same Table- Saif, Konduz, Zahida and
Sharmeen. A traditional meal of Curry, Rice and Naan, mostly
finished except for Sharmeen, who hasn't touched her plate.
Pashto:

KONDUZ

You're not hungry?

SHARMEEN

No. I'm tired.

KONDUZ

You're too young to be tired. Leave
that for the old men.

SHARMEEN
(to her Mother)
May I go?

ZAHIDA
Don't be rude.

SAIF
No. Let her go.

After Konduz nods approval, Zahida motions to Sharmeen, who pushes away from the Table and walks from the Room.

KONDUZ
A beautiful girl.

ZAHIDA
Thank you.

KONDUZ
(to Saif)
Is she yours?

Before he can speak-

ZAHIDA
Her Father is dead. She barely knew him.

KONDUZ
It would be good to have a man in the home. Someday. Maybe soon.

Konduz smiles at Saif.

INT. COTTAGE - LATER

Konduz politely thanks Zahida for the meal and walks out into the night. Saif lingers. Quietly-

SAIF
I'm also a hostage of the Americans. They have my Wife and Daughter.

Zahida stacks a few of the empty plates, looks up.

SAIF
You should leave.

ZAHIDA
Not without my Husband.

SAIF

You think the Americans will just
let him go?

ZAHIDA

I don't know. Do you?

Saif thinks about his own family, sighs.

ZAHIDA

I'll do whatever it takes to get
him back.

SAIF

If your life means nothing, think
of your daughter.

Zahida looks into his eyes.

ZAHIDA

We'll make it through.

SAIF

Allah willing.

Saif opens the door, finds Konduz standing barely three feet
away. Shuts the door behind him. Konduz doesn't move, just
stares at him. Did he hear?

KONDUZ

You're a lucky man.

Saif builds his courage, walks past him. Konduz stops him
with his hand.

SAIF

What?

KONDUZ

You've lost one family, and already
another in its place.

Saif sneers.

KONDUZ

I pray you are with us. To lose one
family is difficult enough.

Saif pushes his hand away, walks towards the Truck.

INT. WAREHOUSE - PORT OF GAVELSON

A massive structure completely gutted. Fluorescent lighting beams from the ceiling. Additional lights have been shipped in and positioned on the ground. Officials from several Government Agencies work to complete the difficult task of rebuilding the downed Aircraft. They meticulously examine and tag each piece of wreckage before placing it in its proper place, much like putting together an intricate jigsaw puzzle. Tom Fairchild stands on a railing overlooking the operation.

He walks into an Office he has commandeered for the purpose of the investigation. Dane sits with a coffee in a large, Styrofoam Cup on a folding chair. Antoine leans against the desk, his right leg strapped into a brace.

DANE

Word downstairs is Rockhill's gonna
be off the JTTF.

FAIRCHILD

(to Antoine)

Happy?

ANTOINE

(deadpan)

Thrilled.

DANE

He's still in the office till
Washington makes it official.

FAIRCHILD

I'll make a call. See if we can't
expedite the process.

Fairchild takes a seat behind his desk. Picks up Stu's personnel file from the Houston P.D.

FAIRCHILD

He tries to hide his accent, his
past.

ANTOINE

Could be something there.

FAIRCHILD

So look into New York. (to Dane) I
want him under surveillance until
we wrap this up.

DANE

Already done.

Fairchild's Cell Buzzes. He takes the call, holds the phone to his side until Dane and Antoine have exited the office.

FAIRCHILD

Yeah.

FORTE (O.S.)

I trust you have good news?

FAIRCHILD

You saw the press conference.

FORTE (O.S.)

What about the Geiger readouts?

FAIRCHILD

Still negative. (his voice falters)
We're being discreet.

A long pause on the other end.

FAIRCHILD

Sir, its under control-

He's interrupted by a dial tone.

INT. FBI HOUSTON FIELD OFFICE - NIGHT

Stu sits at his desk, stares at another Case File open on his Computer. Cradles the phone between his shoulder and ear as he takes notes.

STU

That was before or after the
deposit.

He scribbles on a notepad. Looks around the empty office, all the Agents at the hanger or gone for the day.

STU

Yeah... I know its late... Okay, I'll
be in touch.

Stu hangs up the phone. Pulls up to the keyboard, starts to type up the interview on the file. He's in mid-sentence when he stops. Puts his hand on the mouse.

STU

Fuck it.

He saves the current case file. Closes it out. Stands, walks over to a window. Looks at the City lit up in the night. Walks back to his Computer.

Tries to open the case folder marked FLIGHT 2189. ACCESS DENIED. He gets back on the phone, dials a number.

STU (CONT)

I need a number and address... For a Richard Stanton.

EXT. TWO STORY HOME - OLD NEIGHBORHOOD

A meticulously cared for home on a Street populated by aging baby-boomers. The two-car garage door swings open and Rich emerges dressed in slacks and a dress shirt. Stu gets out of his car and meets him in the driveway. They shake hands. Rich leads him inside the garage, where they lean against Rich's vintage Cadillac.

STU

Nice place.

RICH

Nobody gets rich workin' for the government but I got no complaints. Heard you may be off the JTTF.

STU

What'd you tell 'em Rich?

RICH

I told them the truth. You've got my word on that. You know we're both low men on this totem pole.

Stu looks him in the eyes.

STU

I'm here because I need your help.

RICH

Don't know if I can do that Stu.

STU

You want me to get on my hands and knees?

RICH

I got a good thing going here. You're asking me to jeopardize everything.

STU

If you change your mind-

Stu tries to hand Rich his card. Rich doesn't accept.

STU
Not inviting me in for dinner?

RICH
You better leave.

Stu puts the card back in his wallet and walks towards his car.

RICH
Stu.

STU
Yeah.

RICH
Coast Guard got an interesting call
over the radio. Jeff Kane. Has a
trawler called the Irish Wake.

STU
See you around Rich.

RICH
Don't think so Stu.

Stu walks to his car. Gets in, pulls away from the Stanton house. A few seconds later, headlights flash on. A Black Car follows, careful to keep its distance.

IN THE GARAGE

Rich watches the Black Car. He walks into his house, closes the Garage Door on the way in.

EXT. WATERSIDE MARINA - NOON

Stu walks past Yachts, gorgeous Sailboats, Fishing Boats well over 50 feet. As he proceeds the Boats become smaller and more rundown, until he's finally made his way to the slums of the Marina.

EXT. IRISH WAKE

The same Boat from before. Fresh empty beer bottles. A cooler and some fishing rods. Scummy water in a bucket and dead seaweed draped beneath the hull.

STU
Jeff Kane.

No answer.

STU
JEFF KANE.

Still nothing. Stu puts his index finger and thumb against his lips, WHISTLES.

KANE (O.S.)
SHUT THE FUCK UP.

STU
Stuart Rockhill with the Joint
Terrorism Task Force. Request
permission to come aboard.

KANE (O.S.)
Stay off my boat ya cocksucker.

STU
I'm investigating the Plane Crash.

Rustling noises from the Cabin. A bottle SHATTERS. Kane emerges on the bow in Jeans stained with Fish Guts and a large belly hanging over his belt.

KANE
I've done told what I know.
Homeland security boys been by.

STU
You haven't talked to me.

Kane pulls a beat-up pack of Camel Filters out of his pocket, fumbles for a lighter. Walks back towards the Cabin, cig in mouth.

STU
You like whiskey?

KANE
Beer.

STU
I'll buy you all the beers you can
handle.

Kane turns, lights up his smoke. Exhales into the Ocean breeze.

KANE
Ain't enough money in the world.

INT. THE WHALER BAR

In stark contrast to the bright day outside, the Whaler is dark, lit up mostly by fluorescent beer signs. A bored female BARTENDER sits at the end of the bar, in serious need of a polish, reading a tabloid. Kane and Stu sit in a booth a good ways off. Several empty beer bottles, mostly on Kane's end.

KANE

I was trollin' for Amberjack that morning. Hadn't caught a damn thing. So I pulled up. Cast for Red Grouper.

STU

Good eating?

KANE

If you know how to cook 'em.

STU

And this was what, five in a morning?

KANE

Around then. Won't lie- had a few in me.

Stu sips, Kane drains.

KANE

Then I hear a little Pop. Look up and I seen it.

STU

Seen what?

KANE

God damn fireball.

He motions with his hand over his head, supplies a sound effect. WHOOSH.

KANE

Then she hits the Water. Aft side.

STU

Was it loud?

KANE

Didn't make any noise when she got wet. Just the Pop. The Boom came later.

STU
The Boom?

KANE
Yeah. From the Jet.

Stu leans into the table.

STU
You're telling me you saw a second
Aircraft?

KANE
Heard it.

EXT. DESERTED ROAD - RURAL TEXAS

Stu races down the two lane road in his Crown Vic. He gets
out his cell, dials.

BOBBY (O.S)
Yeah.

STU
Bobby. Its Stu.

BOBBY (O.S.)
Its Sunday-

STU
There was another Plane.

In the rear view mirror, Headlights approach Bobby at a fast
pace. He doesn't notice.

BOBBY
An Engine exploded. It was a freak
accident. Let it die.

STU
They tampered with the Box. There
was another plane. It's a god damn
cover up.

BOBBY
For christ sake Stu. You're on an
open line. Not to mention, the
direct violation-

The Headlights swing around. The Black Car pulls up beside
Stu.

STU

You know what, FUCK YOU.

The second he hangs up- SMASH. The Black Car roars over and belts Stu's car, knocks him nearly into a ditch running parallel to the road. Stu swerves left, overcompensates, swerves back right. The wheels lift and the car rolls off the side of the road and into some reeds. Rocks a bit, comes to a rest, roof in the mud. Creek water trickles through the cracked windshield.

Stu hangs upside down, suspended by his seatbelt. He wipes blood from a cut over his eye. Unclips. Rolls as he falls. Kicks out the cracked window and crawls into the muck. Struggling to stand, Stu looks back at the wrecked vehicle, a steady hiss of steam rising from the exposed engine.

He takes two more steps, pushes aside reeds. Collapses to the ground. Cold, hard metal at the base of his skull. A pistol with extended silencer.

VOICE

Keep pressing and you'll get a bullet in your head.

STU

That all?

STU'S POV

A Military Boot cocks back, Swings, cracking Stu in the face. Stu reels back, falls to his side. Spits blood.

VOICE

Or maybe we'll make it hurt.

The sound of boots tramping off. Stu lies quietly. Wipes off his busted lip.

INT. APARTMENT - ISLAMABAD - PAKISTAN

Saif walks to the edge of the Apartment and looks out a small window at a The Centaurus, a 3 million square foot entertainment complex. His eyes sweep over the Blue Area, the financial district of Islamabad. Thanks to direct foreign investment, specifically from hubs in the Middle East, business booms and the architecture reflects the trend. Modern technology, tidy fertile parks, new roads and sidewalks.

Saif returns to the couch, sits down next to Konduz. They both wear khakis, collared shirts. Saif types on his laptop as Konduz puffs on a thin cigar.

ON SCREEN

An Internet chat room. Saif types in coded language. Receives several responses. In Pashto:

KONDUZ

Well...

Saif closes out of the internet chat room, logs onto a bank account system. We see that Saif has received a wire transfer from PROJECT ISLAMIC H.O.P.E.

SAIF

The money is in place.

Saif closes the Laptop. Puts it into a thick case. Konduz stands.

KONDUZ

Shall we?

SAIF

After you.

EXT. STREET - STATE BANK OF PAKISTAN

Konduz drives a rental car past neat rows of Banyan trees. Snow flakes begin to float down and stick to the windshield. He turns on the wipers. They pull past a large building with concrete pillars, the State Bank of Pakistan. Konduz drives into an underground parking garage. They pull into a spot. Konduz hands Saif a piece of paper with writing on it. He sticks the paper in his pocket, opens his door and climbs out, laptop in tow.

KONDUZ

15 minutes.

Saif nods, continues on.

INT. STATE BANK OF PAKISTAN

75 feet to the arched ceiling. Marble floors. An international clientele. Saif waits in line. Smiles at a young, female TELLER. He takes the piece of paper from his pocket- writes an account number on a wire transfer request form. Signs the form and hands it to the Teller.

Waits as she processes the transaction. Looks at a camera positioned above the Teller. The Teller passes him a receipt. In English:

TELLER 1

The transfer has been verified Mr.
Al-Adel. Will that be all?

SAIF

Yes. Thank you.

Saif is about to leave, turns back-

SAIF

Actually, I need the password for
your wireless network.

TELLER 1

Of course.

She passes Saif a card.

INT. BATHROOM

Saif enters, looks around to make sure he's alone then goes immediately to a stall. Opens his laptop and composes an email. It's to the email address we saw earlier on the back of Fadima's picture. He takes out the receipt, taps in Habibson's Bank in London and account information from the wire transfer he just completed.

INT. OFFICE - CIA HEADQUARTERS - LANGLEY, VA

Forte sits in front of his desk, talks using a wireless headset. Fairchild pokes his head in the office-

FAIRCHILD

Covert operations just received an
e-mail from Saif.

FORTE

(into his mouthpiece)
Let me call you right back.

He sets the Headset down on his desk and exits his office with Fairchild.

INT. ROYAL GARDEN HOTEL - LONDON

A CIA AGENT in Suit and Tie walks into the five star Hotel Bar, takes a seat next to an MI6 AGENT. The atmosphere is terribly sophisticated for the business at hand. He slips the MI6 Agent a folded piece of paper.

CIA AGENT

Deemed highly credible.

The MI6 Agent slips the note into his pocket, finishes off his pint and leaves the Bar. The CIA Agent orders a drink.

EXT. MI6 HEADQUARTERS

More of a fortress than an office building situated in Vauxhall Cross.

INT. OFFICE

The view overlooks the River Thames. An ENGLISHMAN in distinguished suit stares at a computer screen through thick spectacles. The MI6 Agent enters the office and hands him the Note. He unfolds, reads.

EXT. GREEN STREET - NEWHAM BOROUGH

An ethnically diverse district in East London. GABIR, late 20's, walks against the crowd, his collar pulled up, partially shielding him from the drizzle. He walks into-

INT. HABIBSON'S BANK

Gabir withdraws money from an account. TELLER 2 counts out several thousand pounds in front of him, then places the notes in an envelope.

EXT. HAWTHORN ST

The rain has stopped. Gabir walks through a predominantly Muslim neighborhood. Children smile at him. He waves back, obviously a local. Two Government OPERATIVES materialize through the crowd, hard-nosed types in jeans and overcoats. Gabir looks over his shoulder, makes eye contact with one of the operatives. Walks up a short flight of stairs, enters a run-down Apartment building.

Operative 1 holds his hand to his ear, says something quickly as Operative 2 follows Gabir up the steps. Only a few moments later, two large Conversion Vans pull up. More Operatives in Overcoats pile out.

INT. APARTMENT

IMAN, an older bearded Arab, answers a knock, lets in Gabir. He clasps shut multiple deadbolts. We pan around the Apartment, which is surprisingly spacious and largely devoid of furniture. White Styrofoam duct taped over the windows. Several Terrorists mix chemicals stored in large plastic jugs. They're making Acetone Peroxide from Drain Cleaner, Hydrogen Peroxide and Acetone. Two Pistols sit on the table close to the men. An AK-47 leans against the wall nearby.

In the corner, Terrorist 1 tinkers with a circuit board. The rest of the Detonator sits on the desk beside him. Gabir talks in hushed tones to Iman. In English with British accent:

GABIR

I saw someone outside.

IMAN

What do you mean?

GABIR

I don't know. Two men. Felt like they like were watching me.

IMAN

And you still came?

Terrorist 1 slowly gets up from his seat. The Leader of the cell. The other Terrorists ready their weapons.

TERRORIST 1

(Arabic)

What's going on?

Three polite Knocks. Everyone falls dead silent. Terrorist 1 motions to Iman to answer the door.

IMAN

One second.

Gabir slides over to the wall, picks up the AK-47 as Iman takes out a 9 millimeter Sig Sauer Pistol tucked in his belt and inches towards the Door. He leans forward to look through the peep hole-

INT. HALLWAY

OPERATIVE 1 surges forward with a handheld Battering Ram. BOOM. Knocks the door back. A CRACK as the door hits Iman directly in the face. He slumps to the side, blood gushing from his nose, as the door is struck a second time. MI6 Operatives charge into the Apartment, Shotguns and Sub-Machine Guns drawn. We catch a glimpse of Body Armor beneath one of their coats.

INT. APARTMENT

A stand-off. Everyone SCREAMS at each other. 'Put the Guns Down. Put 'em down' from the English. The Terrorists yell back in Arabic. No one gives an inch. A Pistol DISCHARGES, strikes Operative 1 in the head from the back.

It's Iman, slouched on the ground beside the door. Operative 2 opens up on him with a Shot Gun, blows off most of his face.

Everyone FIRES simultaneously, a torrent of lead. Operative 2 falls flat, bullets striking Operative 1's motionless body. Automatic fire from the hall. Gabir fires with the AK-47. The bullets travel at such velocity as to penetrate the wall. More Operatives go down in the Hall outside.

Terrorist 1 flips over a Table sending the Detonator crashing to the Floor. Fires several rounds from behind cover. Operative 2 wracks his shotgun, crawls on his hands and knees towards the Table, bullets whistling overhead. Fires another Slug through the Table, hits Terrorist 1 in the Shoulder nearly separating the arm from the torso.

Gabir turns the Ak-47 towards Operative 2. MP-5 rounds rat-a-tat-tat. 5 bullet penetrations snake from his gut to his neck. The remaining bullets in the AK-47's magazine explode into the ceiling as he falls backwards. Plaster flakes drift lazily through the air.

Terrorist 1 picks up his Gun with his good arm. The mortal wound on his Shoulder pours blood. He Screams, shoves the Pistol through the exit hole in the Table and fires into Operative 2's back as he loads more slugs. The Pistol CLICKS, out of ammo. Operative 2 gasps for air, the 2 rounds having struck his body armor and knocked the wind out of him. With incredible determination he wracks his Shotgun once again, stands up above Terrorist 1 and finishes him.

MOANS from injured parties on both sides. The Terrorists are all down. A half dozen more Operatives rush into the room. Several stand over the wounded, squirming Combatants. Others pull the wounded Government Agents from the Apartment.

Two uninjured Operatives help Operative 2 to his feet. He puts an arm over each shoulder, walks on shaky feet towards the door relying very much on their assistance. Between shallow breathes-

OPERATIVE 2

They can't be allowed to talk.
Finish it.

Police SIRENS approach in the distance as several more shots ring out.

INT. ER WAITING ROOM

Bobby sits in a chair too small for his bulk, flips through The New Yorker disinterested in his surroundings.

We see a caricature of President Baxter on the Cover with the headline "Will Bax be Back in '08?" Stu emerges from inside the ER in a T-shirt stained with blood and pants covered in pond mud. The only thing fresh on him is a new sling for his arm. A Doctor and Nurse follow him out.

DOCTOR

Sir, we need to do x-rays.

STU

You want to help me out? Call me a cab.

DOCTOR

If you have broken ribs you can puncture a lung.

STU

I don't have health insurance.

The Doctor turns to the Nurse, truly concerned for the first time. They whisper to each other before the Doctor spins back around.

DOCTOR

You need to let us finish the exam.

He hurries after Stu, puts a hand on his shoulder. Stu turns, and in his current state, he's intimidating as all hell.

STU

You're this close to jumping the gap from doctor to patient. You get me?

Bobby stands, flashes his credentials.

BOBBY

Doc, it's okay. I'll look after him..

Stu smirks at Bobby. The Doctor walks back towards the ER, pissed off. Stu looks at the Nurse.

STU

Call a cab.

BOBBY

I'm driving you home Stu.

STU

You got a lot a nerve Bobby. Showing up here.

BOBBY

I'm worried about you. As a friend.

Stu shakes his head, pushes past him. As he walks away-

BOBBY (CONT)

I talked to the Sheriff who picked you up. On the side of the road.

Stu keeps on moving.

BOBBY (CONT)

You're drunk Stu. He smelled the booze and so do I.

Stu can't take it, turns.

STU

Those bastards ran me off the road.

BOBBY

They found vicodin in your pocket.

STU

For my arm. One a day Bobby. Count the fucking pills if you want.

BOBBY

Who you goin' home to Stu? You're lucky to be alive and there's no one here. No relatives. No wife. Who you fightin' for Stu?

The Automated Doors slide open and Stu walks out into the Texas night.

EXT. HOSPITAL

Stu walks along the outskirts of the small town Hospital, a three story brick building. Passes by a row of River Birch whistling in the breeze. Besides a few modest homes there's nothing around for miles except the darkness and the occasional flickering light. Bobby pulls up in his Lincoln.

BOBBY

Get in, will ya? Stubborn prick.

Stu ignores him. He removes the new sling and drops it on the sidewalk. Stretches his arm as he keeps walking.

BOBBY

Nobody called a Cab. Get in the fucking car.

STU
I'll call someone.

BOBBY
You don't even have a phone.

Stu pats his pockets, realizes he lost his cell in the crash. He stops, tilts his head up to the breeze. Reluctantly climbs in Bobby's car. They ride in silence for a while. Stu frequently looks in the rear view mirror.

STU
Are they listening to us?

BOBBY
C'mon.

STU
ARE THEY LISTENING?

Bobby looks over at Stu.

BOBBY
No. Not that I know of.

STU
'Cause we definitely got a tail.

Bobby cracks the window, lights up a cigarette. Runs a hand through his hair.

As Stu winds down the window-

STU
Hardest thing about this mess...

He gets it down, hangs his arm out the window. Adjusts the side mirror right on the tail, a little sign to show he knows they're back there.

STU
Figuring out who's the enemy.

Stu looks out the window at the passing marshland.

BOBBY
What do you really got Stu? A drunk's ramblin' and a lot of suspicion.

STU
There's got to be something on that cockpit recorder. Hard evidence.

Bobby flicks his cigarette out the window, accelerates in frustration.

BOBBY

NTSB gave us a copy of the tape. I listened to it MYSELF. And I'm telling you, there's nothing on it. A dead end.

They settle into an uncomfortable silence. Finally-

STU (CONT)

So how's Molly?

BOBBY

Got her hands full with the kids. Daddy ain't been home much lately.

STU

You still helpin' out with the Peewee ball?

BOBBY

Naw. What about you? You got a girl?

STU

Its been a while. Kind of forgot what its like.

EXT. STU'S CONDO

Stu climbs out of the Lincoln, watches as Bobby pulls away. No tail in sight. The sound of RUNNING WATER.

INT. CONDO - KITCHEN

Stu pours himself a glass of H2O from the faucet, gulps it down. He's about to leave when he notices the wireless phone. He picks up the phone and eyes it for a second. Then he SMASHES it against the counter until it's in pieces. Nothing. Picks up the receiver, destroys it as well. Brushes through the pieces. Holds up a tiny plastic BUG.

STU

Son of a bitch.

Stu looks over his Apartment as if for the first time. His gaze holds on his Laptop. Everything is compromised. He gets out a suitcase and starts to pack.

EXT. ATM

Stu pulls up in his Truck. Climbs out and removes his wallet from his back pocket with noticeable strain. Makes a withdraw. He can't help but glance over his shoulder as he does it. Takes the money and climbs back into the Truck.

EXT. PAYPHONE

Stu plugs in two Quarters. Dials. His Truck still runs beside the booth, engine rumbling. Headlights illuminate a Highway Sign up on a grassy knoll.

OPERATOR (O.S.)

This is yellow cab.

INT. HOUSTON FBI OFFICE

Stu, dressed in a Suit, walks through the office appearing even more battered than before. Agents openly stare at the stitches on his forehead and lip. No one says a word. He sits down at his desk, calmly opens up his computer.

SAC Hayes strides up to his desk in a Trench Coat with briefcase; he's just come into the office. A Rookie Agent follows two steps behind.

HAYES

Detective.

STU

Sir.

HAYES

I've received word from Washington.
You're off the JTTF, effective
immediately.

The veins in Stu's neck bulge.

HAYES

You'll clean out your desk and
report to Houston P.D. for
reassignment. Make sure to turn in
your credentials before you leave.
Good luck.

Stu doesn't say a word so Hayes walks away, leaves the Junior Agent to watch over Stu like a child.

JR. AGENT

Take your time.

STU
(sarcastic)
Thanks.

LATER

Stu struggles to buy time, figure out his next move. He looks up at the Jr. Agent who's taken a seat at an empty desk nearby.

STU
Going to the bathroom.

The Jr. Agent nods, looks away. Stu takes a random case folder from his desk, walks down the hall. Ducks into-

INT. BOBBY'S OFFICE

In stark contrast to Stu's work area, Bobby's Office is filled with family photos, awards, certificates and trophies. Two comfortable leather chairs and a matching sofa. A mahogany book case filled with old books. A hat rack with two dozen baseball caps. Stu walks to Bobby's large desk, covered in Paper Work -organization isn't one of his strong points. He clues in on several note cards protruding from the edge of the black, leather desk blotter. Looks at each card until he finds what he's looking for.

He hurriedly copies the writing onto a sheet of paper. Replaces the note card exactly where he found it. As he stuffs the piece of paper in his pocket-

BOBBY (O.C.)
Howdy Claire.

From right outside the office. Stu mouths 'fuck'. Frantically looks around. Grabs a New York Yankees hat off the rack as-

Bobby enters his office, stares at Stu. His gaze lingers on the Yankees hat, then the case file.

STU
I want it back.

He walks up to Stu and gently takes the case file from him. Opens it up. Of course, it's a random case, nothing to do with Flight 2189.

BOBBY
Okay...

Bobby hands the file back to Stu.

BOBBY

I'm going to need all of these back
before you leave.

Stu walks towards the door.

BOBBY

I'm sorry Stu.

Stu doesn't look back.

INT. EVIDENCE CONTROL ROOM

An Administrative Assistant sits at a desk towards the front of the windowless room. Stu scribbles on the sign-in sheet. Walks to a large area lined with filing cabinets and shelves stacked to the ceiling with boxes of evidence. A random Agent with gloves replaces a Gun in an evidence bag. Stu waits for the Agent to leave, walks to a Large Vault at the back of the room, hidden from the view of the Assistant by the Boxes.

Stu takes out the information he gleaned from Bobby's note card, punches in numbers on the Vault Keypad. It CLICKS OPEN.

He opens the thick Vault Door. Inside, he searches until he finds a CD in a brown evidence envelope. Written on the outside is a case number and 'Flight deck/data recordings F2189'. He removes the CD from the envelope, slips the CD into his folder, replaces the empty envelope with a blank CD and walks out.

INT. OFFICE

Stuart returns to his desk. Puts the CD into his Computer. He takes out headphones, plugs them into the Tower. The Audio Recording begins. General conversation, then:

PILOT (V.O.)

Thompson. Have a look at-

A Distinct RINGGGG.

CO PILOT (V.O.)

Where the hell did he-

A PCP, then a second louder EXPLOSION. A few seconds of absolute silence. Then-

PILOT (V.O.)

May day. Houston Control, UA 2189.
Houston Control come in! Engaging-

CO PILOT (V.O.)
UA 2189. May day. May day.

VIBRATIONS as the Plane begins to shake violently. Mass commotion. The Pilots begin to yell, panicky.

PILOT (V.O.)
Vertical Pitch. Nose down.

CO PILOT (V.O.)
Stabilize!

PILOT (V.O.)
I can't. Houston, come in.

CO PILOT (V.O.)
Pull the left rudder.

PILOT (V.O.)
The wing is-

The recording ends in Static. Stuart immediately listens to it again.

PILOT (V.O.)
Thompson. Have a look at-

A Distinct RINGGGG.

CO PILOT (V.O.)
Where the hell did he-

A POP, then a second louder EXPLOSION. A few seconds of absolute silence. Then-

PILOT (V.O.)
May day. Houston Control, UA 2189.
Houston Control come in! Engaging-

CO PILOT (V.O.)
UA 2189. May day. May day.

The VIBRATIONS... A hand rests on Stu's shoulder. Stu nearly jumps out of his seat, white as a ghost. It's the Jr. Agent.

JR. AGENT
I'm getting a Coffee. You want a coffee?

STU
Yeah, Black.

JR. AGENT

You okay?

The blood begins to return to Stu's face.

STU

I'm fine.

As the Jr. Agent walks towards the Breakroom, Stu takes a blank CD from his Desk and places it in his Computer.

MOMENTS LATER

The Jr. Agent hands Stu his Coffee in a Styrofoam cup, returns to the nearby desk. Stu ops out the original disc and puts it back in its case, then the case into his folder. Grabs a small box with his few meager possessions.

STU

You can tell the SAC I'm done here.

The Jr. Agent nods, walks towards Hayes office. Stu walks the opposite direction.

INT. PARKING GARAGE

Stuart goes to his F-150. Rather than get in, he lifts a Suitcase out of the Truck bed and throws in the box. He carries the Suitcase and exits the Parking Garage through a Side Door that leads to an Alley. Waiting in the alley is a Yellow Cab Taxi.

EXT. BROOKLYN 67TH PRECINCT

Housed between two ten story brick Apartment Buildings. Lots of foot traffic. Cops. Lawyers. Street Peddlers and Freed Convicts. Antoine climbs the steps one at a time with his bum leg.

INT. INTERNAL AFFAIRS

Detective ALBY GIORDANA, 50's, hit by more than one branch of the ugly tree. Antoine sits across from him, all business.

GIORDANA

You understand these are highly sensitive files.

ANTOINE

You understand this is a matter of national security.

Touche. Giordana reluctantly slides a Red Folder across the desk.

GIORDANA

You can keep that. I made copies.

Antoine nods.

GIORDANA

Where is Rockhill anyway? His
Brother still works over at the
23rd Precinct.

Antoine ignores the question as he leafs through the file. Giordana shifts around in his chair, unused to this type of treatment. Antoine rises to his feet, folder in hand. They shake.

ANTOINE

I appreciate the help.

Giordana holds Antoine's hand a bit too long.

GIORDANA

Stu knew life would be difficult
when he testified against his own
squad. But all that shit with his
Brother... He didn't see that comin'.

ANTOINE

His own Brother turned against him?
His own family?

GIORDANA

Around here, the department is your
family.

INT. ENTERPRISE CAR RENTAL

Stu watches a CLERK fill out paperwork. He pays the Clerk in Cash.

EXT. CAR RENTAL

Just like the thousand other Enterprise Rental lots across the country. Stuart loads his suitcase into the rental, a Taurus.

EXT. APARTMENT - ISLAMABAD - PAKISTAN

Konduz and Saif walk through the Double Doors, into the Lobby. They wear heavy winter coats. Scarves. Saif has grown a neatly trimmed beard.

INT. APARTMENT

They enter, Konduz falling on the Couch exhausted. The Apartment is dirtier than before. A few more personal items, a more lived-in feel. As usual, Saif carries his lap top. He walks towards the bathroom. When he's at the door, in Pashto-

SAIF

I'm going to jump in the shower.

He swings the door open, takes a step inside-

KONDUZ

Saif.

SAIF

Yes.

KONDUZ

Do you always shower with your laptop?

Saif looks back, unsure if Konduz is joking or not, Konduz's face as serious as always.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Saif enters, sets his Laptop down, locks the door. Turns on the Shower. The room begins to mist up. He sits down on the Toilet Seat and powers up the Computer.

INT. APARTMENT

Konduz lounges on the couch. Flips open a book, kicks his feet up on the Coffee Table.

BEHIND THE COUCH

Hidden from view, a Modem plugged into a Cable Port. An Ethernet Cable links the Modem to a Wireless Router. A Green Light signals that the Router is sending and receiving signals.

INT. BATHROOM

Saif types in a Password, unlocks Windows. Logs online using the wireless network he's covertly set up in the Apartment.

ON SCREEN

He opens up his Gmail account. Looks through the Emails. He composes a simple email to the covert account. -Where is my picture?-

Waits, frustrated. Almost instantly, a new email. He opens up the new message. -You've given us nothing since London-

Saif types back. -They are suspicious of me-

Saif wipes the condensation off the Screen. A new message. - No information. No picture.-

Saif grunts in frustration. He reluctantly pulls a wire transfer receipt from his pocket. Types in information from the Receipt into a new Email. Adds -attack eminent- and hits send.

A second later, a new Email. He clicks it open. A file is attached. He double-clicks on the file. Waits as the File opens.

A Picture opens, nearly takes up the whole screen. Raja and Samia. They look healthy, wear clean clothes. Raja is complacent. Something sad, almost haunting, about Samia's expression. Saif reaches out, touches the screen. Silent tears as he looks at his Family. Raja holds a Paper with the current date in her hands.

Saif zooms in on the Paper, the Date. Checks the pixels. It seems real- then again, what choice does he have. He closes the file, deletes the Email and Picture. Shuts the Laptop and prepares to get in the shower.

INT. CAFETERIA - CIA HEADQUARTERS - LANGLEY

Forte walks towards a Table with two other Older Suits in mid conversation. A Tuna sandwich, Diet Coke. Pickle and Apple. Fairchild appears at his side. Forte glances over to acknowledge his presence, continues walking.

FAIRCHILD

Covert Ops received another Email
from Saif.

FORTE

Where to?

FAIRCHILD

A bank outside Paris.

The Other Suits sit down at the Table. Forte sets his plate down, walks a few steps off with Fairchild.

FAIRCHILD

He added a note. Attack eminent.

FORTE
Alert the DGSE immediately.

FAIRCHILD
Yes sir.

Fairchild begins to walk away. Forte sits down, turns.

FORTE
Tom.

FAIRCHILD
Yeah.

FORTE
That Bill the French are trying to
push through the UN Security
Council...

FAIRCHILD
The Israeli rebuke?

FORTE
They need to withdraw.

Fairchild nods, walks off. Forte digs into his lunch.

EXT. CLICHY-SOUS-BOIS

A Community of poor Immigrants on the north-east outskirts of Paris. Clichy-sous-Bois supports some of the highest Poverty and Crime rates in France. Its also a hotbed for Political unrest.

EXT. INDUSTRIAL ZONE

Decrepit Factories and Warehouses. What once might have been a bustling economic district is now all but Abandoned. Next to a crumbling Brick Building, an Ambulance and Fiat parked a bit off.

EXT. AMBULANCE

The back doors of the Ambulance are open. HARIZ, an Arab man in his early 30's, carries a heavy Duffle Bag over his Shoulder. A Beretta recently purchased from the Black Market tucked into his belt. LAITH, early 20's with shaved head, sits in the Drivers Seat, taps on the steering wheel nervously. He leans out the open window. In French:

LAITH
Hurry up.

HARIZ

Easy.

SAYID, late 20's, emerges from the Building with another Duffel Bag. Hariz drops his into the back of the Ambulance. It's heavy, the whole Ambulance lowers an inch on its frame. Hariz walks to the front as Sayid drops his bag and shuts the doors.

HARIZ

You know the way?

LAITH

I've driven it a dozen times.

Hariz reaches in, places his hand over Laith's. Stops the tapping. In Arabic:

HARIZ

You go with Allah.

Laith grows calm, almost in a trance.

LAITH

Goodbye.

Hariz nods, walks towards the Fiat with Sayid.

EXT. ROAD

Laith drives the Ambulance down a four lane road, lights and siren on. Cars pull over to the side of the road. He accelerates, heads towards an arched bridge. As he comes up the bridge, he glances in his Rear View mirror.

Strange- no cars behind him now. Looks forward- no cars ahead. As he crests over the Bridge, he sees the cause. A huge Road Block. Lights flash. No sirens. Countless Police Officers with Automatic Weapons drawn, shielded by open car doors.

Laith slams on the Brakes. Rubber burns as the Ambulance skids to a halt. Throws the car in Reverse. Before he can hit the gas, no less than a dozen Police Cars pull onto the Bridge behind him, blocking his escape.

He sits there for a second, mumbling to himself. Throws the car back into Drive. Guns it, tires Squealing. Gets it up to 60 MPH when Bullets begin to pepper the windshield. Ducks down, hands still on the wheel, foot still on the gas. 70 MPH. 80 MPH. TING. TING. Bullets against the body. Hood. Headlights shatter. With a shaking hand, Laith reaches between the seat and grabs a Detonator.

Tires explode. The Ambulance thunders forward on Metal Rims, sparks flying.

THE ROADBLOCK

The Police Officers realize he won't be stopped. Run out of the way.

IN THE AMBULANCE

Laith sits up in his Seat. A Bullet ricochets off the frame, clips his Neck. Blood from the Jugular Vein squirts on the Dash. He screams. Just before he barrels into the Roadblock, he triggers the Detonator.

The Explosion is massive. Blows Police Cars into the air, twirling end over end. The shockwave shakes the very foundation of the Bridge.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING

Hariz and Sayid pull in front of the Building in the Fiat. Both get out, walk up the Front Steps. DGSE (French Secret Service) Agents burst out of Cars from all around. Sayid pulls his Gun, gets off one Round before Automatic Fire mows him down.

Hariz breaks for the Front Door at a full sprint. The Front Door swings open. More DGSE, Rifles drawn. Hariz carefully reaches down, pulls out his Beretta. Screams from all sides in French. He raises the gun to his head and pulls the trigger. Off the GUNSHOT.

INT. WAREHOUSE - PORT OF GAVELSTON

The effort to rebuild the plane continues. Although we can now make out its reasonable shape, much of the Plane has been lost to the Sea, especially the Left Wing. Displayed prominently as if inspiration for the Agents going on their second Week of double shifts, a board covered with the names and pictures of every Passenger onboard Flight 2189. 256 is a number, 256 faces is something different. Every age, ethnicity, shape and size. It's late and the place is quiet, eerie.

ABOVE

Fairchild answers his vibrating phone on the catwalk.

FAIRCHILD

Yeah.

DANE (O.S.)
We lost him.

FAIRCHILD
What?

He goes into his office, doesn't take a seat.

FAIRCHILD (CONT)
His car?

DANE (O.S.)
At the Office. He left word for
Hayes, said he was leaving. His
Truck's still at the Office.

FAIRCHILD
What about home?

DANE (O.S.)
He never went home.

FAIRCHILD
Check Stanton's place.

DANE (O.S.)
We did.

Fairchild sits down at his Desk. Loosens his tie.

DANE (O.S.)
We just queried his banking
records. He made 4 ATM withdraws in
the last 2 hours, emptied his
account.

Fairchild SLAMS his fist on the desk.

FAIRCHILD
I want to know if he uses his
credit card, books a flight, gets
on a bus. I want to know if he
stops at a gas station to take a
piss.

Fairchild takes a Glock from his Desk and secures it in a
holster on his waistband.

DANE (O.S.)
I thought-

FAIRCHILD
No. You didn't think. If you've
compromised this mission, I'll
watch you burn.

DANE (O.S.)
(upset)
We'll find him.

FAIRCHILD
No. I'll find him.

DANE (O.S.)
Sir, I really don't feel-

FAIRCHILD
(too calm)
I said I'm handling this.

He flips his phone shut. Slips the phone into his suit pants and walks towards the door. Flips off the lights on his way out struggling to regain his composure.

EXT. HOUSTON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - PARKING STRUCTURE - 3RD FLOOR

Stu pulls his Taurus into a Short Term Parking spot. Lifts a piece of Paper up to the Interior Light. Written in sloppy cursive- 'Megan Lee Control Tower Supervisor Night Shift'. He sets the piece of Paper on the Passenger seat. Stares at the Airport, then at the Control Tower off in the Distance. A 747 shoots down the Runway, lifts off into the Night.

EXT. STU'S CONDO

BRIAN DEMPSEY, the 'black bag' specialist on Fairchild's team, picks the door lock. Fairchild and Dane wait patiently. Everyone wears black latex gloves. The Lock Clicks.

INT. STU'S CONDO

The Team discretely looks through the Condo. Dane checks the mattress. DAN ELLIS, the Computer Specialist on the squad, looks at the broken pieces of the Lap Top and the Phone. Lifts up the exposed Motherboard and shines his flashlight on it.

Fairchild looks in the Trash. Its Empty, a fresh bag.

FAIRCHILD
(to Dane)
Follow me.

EXT. DRIVEWAY

Fairchild walks to the end of the driveway. He lifts the cover off a plastic Trash Can. Its nearly full. He tilts it over, wheels it back towards the Garage.

INT. GARAGE

Fairchild dumps the Trash Can on the floor. As he sorts through the Trash with Dane-

FAIRCHILD
20 years of Investigative
experience...

Tosses aside the Remnants of Microwave Dinners. Milk Cartons. Old magazines and newspapers. He finds a piece of Notebook Paper crumpled in a ball. Smooths it out. On the back are some scribbled telephone numbers.

FAIRCHILD
-and you know what one of the best
tools I've found is?

Fairchild taps the Trash Can with the tip of his shoe. He hands the Paper to Dane.

FAIRCHILD
Run these numbers.

INT. HOUSTON INTERNATIONAL - BAGGAGE CLAIM

The Airport is nearly empty. Stuart walks at a fast pace. Runs up some stairs that border an escalator. He heads into-

INT. SECURITY HEADQUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

Stu walks up to the Counter. An overweight Security Officer, JACOB MCNALLY, retired Texas Department of Safety in his late 50's, mans the front desk. Stuart flashes his credentials.

STU
Hi, I'm here to see Megan Lee in
the Control Tower.

MCNALLY
Man-a-day, we've had a lot of you
folks through here.

STU
That so?

MCNALLY
Feels like 9/11 all over again.

STU
Shows we care.

MCNALLY
Sign in here please.

STU
Of course.

McNally passes Stu a sign-in sheet on a brown Clipboard. Stu signs in, hands McNally the Clipboard.

MCNALLY
Damn shame though. The whole thing.

STU
You're right about that.

MCNALLY
I'll drive you over.

STU
Actually, I'm right outside.

MCNALLY
Sorry Detective. New security regulations.

INT. CONDO

Fairchild walks back into Stu's Apartment from the Garage. Strides up to Stu's desk, begins to pull out each drawer. Finds a Notepad, top page blank. The type of paper found in the trash matches the top sheet on the Notepad.

ELLIS.
I already looked through the desk.
Nothing there.

FAIRCHILD
Nothing you saw.

Fairchild takes a Number 2 Pencil from the desk drawer. Shades the top sheet of Paper with the Pencil. Something called Indented Writing appears, a faint white outline from the Previous page. He holds the piece of Paper to the light. Barely legible- Megan Lee.

Dane returns.

DANE
The number's for Houston
International.

FAIRCHILD
Let's go.

Fairchild sets the Notepad back on the Desk. The Team hurries out of the Condo behind him.

EXT. HOUSTON INTERNATIONAL - RUNWAY

Stu and McNally drive past several docked Planes in an SUV with Security decals. It starts to rain. The wind whips through unobstructed.

INT. SECURITY SUV

McNally has a fat plug of dip in his lower lip. Spit's the juicy extract into a Coffee Mug already stained from the habit, increases the intensity of the Windshield Wipers.

MCNALLY
-Worked off Interstate 22 for 'bout
the last 7 or 8 years of my career.

Stu leans against his seat, nervous and annoyed with the chatter.

MCNALLY
Got a lot of Mexicans runnin' dope
through those parts.

STU
I can imagine.

A particularly nasty Gust of Wind. McNally squints at the Windshield.

MCNALLY
People think Texas is nice all
year. It can get real nasty 'round
here.

Stuart looks at the Control Tower looming in the foreground.

EXT. CONDO

The Team of CIA Agents pile into two Black Suburbans. Dane gets in the Drivers Seat of the Lead Vehicle. Fairchild takes Shotgun. They pull out, the second Black Suburban following closely behind.

The Pair of Vehicles turn onto the Highway at high speed.

DANE

Think he's looking for a Flight
out?

FAIRCHILD

He called the Airport, not the
Airlines. He's not going anywhere.
Hand me the numbers.

Dane hands Fairchild the crumpled piece of paper with the
Numbers. Fairchild dials on his cell.

OPERATOR (V.O.)

Houston International.

FAIRCHILD

Hi. Do you have a Megan Lee working
there...

OPERATOR (V.O.)

Let me check our directory.

FAIRCHILD

Thank you.

A Pause. Dane looks at Fairchild, has no idea what he's up
to. Over the Cell, the sound of the Operator punching the
Keyboard. The Roar of the V-8 Engine as the Suburban
accelerates up the on ramp.

OPERATOR (V.O.)

I have a Megan Lee... Supervisor in
the Control Tower.

FAIRCHILD

I have a message here to call her.

OPERATOR (V.O.)

Let me connect you. One second.

INT. CONTROL TOWER - ELEVATOR

Stu and McNally ride an Elevator up. A DING and the Doors
slide open. They make a right out of the elevator-

INT. CONTROL TOWER - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Tan paint. No art. Stu notes the Entrance to the Stairs on
the left. McNally leads Stu into-

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

McNally flips on the lights. A long table that would comfortably seat 12. Flat screen TV on the far wall with a DVD Player and Stereo below.

MCNALLY

This okay?

STU

Sure.

MCNALLY

We just remodeled last year. It's sort of-

STU

Could you get Ms. Lee? I'm on a tight schedule.

McNally huffs a bit.

MCNALLY

Alright then.

And he's gone. Stu looks out a large Window that runs the length of the room. The bustling Airport below.

INT. LEAD SUBURBAN - HIGHWAY

Fairchild hears a RING again as the call Transfers. Just when we think it will go to voicemail-

TERRY (V.O.)

Control tower.

FAIRCHILD

I'm looking for Megan Lee.

TERRY (V.O.)

Popular girl. She just stepped into a meeting.

Dane swerves around a row of Vehicles, accelerates again.

FAIRCHILD

How long do you think she'll be?

TERRY (V.O.)

Hard to say. I think she's with a Cop.

Fairchild hangs up.

FAIRCHILD
(to Dane)
Step it up.

Dane nods, puts the pedal to the floor. They're rate of speed nears 100 mph, no lights or siren.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM

Stu shakes hands with Megan Lee. McNally lingers by the door. Lee wears a smart business suit, appears highly professional.

STU
Detective Stuart Rockhill, Joint
Terrorism Task Force.

MEGAN
Megan Lee. I supervise the Night
Shift.

He watches her eyes dart over the wounds covering his face.

MEGAN
Mind if I grab a coffee?

STU
Sure.

Stu turns to McNally.

STU
This is confidential. I hope you
don't mind.

MCNALLY
I'll wait downstairs.

STU
Appreciate it.

McNally lets himself out. Megan pours a coffee, cold, slides it into the Microwave. Hits 45 Seconds. The Microwave buzzes to life.

STU
You were supervising the night
United 2189 went down. Correct?

MEGAN
Yes. NTSB already-

STU

I know you've been through this.
Bear with me.

Beep. Megan takes out the coffee, puts in cream and equal.

MEGAN

I wish there was more to tell. No
distress call. No warning. The
Aircraft just dropped.

She takes a sip of her coffee.

INT. BEDROOM - HAYES HOME

Alan Hayes awakens to the RING of his Home Phone. Looks over
at his Wife. She turns on her side, away from the phone.
Hayes looks at the Alarm Clock. 1:08 AM. Picks up the phone-

HAYES

Hello?

FAIRCHILD (V.O.)

It's Fairchild.

HAYES

How'd you get my home phone?

INT. LEAD SUBURBAN

Fairchild on the Cell. Dane exits off the Highway. We can see
the sprawling Airport below. INTERCUT

FAIRCHILD

How much access did Stuart Rockhill
have to evidence regarding the
Flight 2189 investigation?
Specifically to the Flight
Recording.

HAYES

None. Our copy's locked away in a
highly secure vault-

FAIRCHILD

-that I have reason to believe he
compromised.

INT. BREAKROOM

Stu sits across from Megan. She lifts her cup, drains the
last bit of coffee.

MEGAN

Detective, I was in the Control Room. If they sent out a distress call, we would have heard it.

STU

What if the signal was blocked..

MEGAN

Outside of some very sophisticated military technology, that's impossible.

STU

I see.

MEGAN

I'm sorry to be short with you, but I really need to get back-

Megan begins to rise from her seat.

STU

There's something I'd like you to listen too.

Fairchild takes out the burned CD of the flight recording.

STU

Please.

Megan sits back down.

INT. HOUSTON FBI OFFICE

JIM FAULK, the Night Supervisor, walks quickly through the Office, breaks into a jog down the Hall.

INT. EVIDENCE ROOM

Falk rushes inside, grabs the Log Book. He traces his finger over the names. Stops. Stuart Rockhill In- 8:15 AM. Out- 8:21 AM. Traces farther down. Stuart Rockhill In- 8:42 AM. Out 8:44 AM.

Faulk leaves the sign in sheet, rushes past the boxes to the Vault. Types in a Code. 'ACCESS DATES/TIMES?' -flashes on the Keypad. Faulk hits 'YES'. The Dates begin to pop up on the screen, counting backwards. 02/09/08 5:45 PM. 0-2/09/08 3:22PM. 02/09/08 8:42 AM.

FAULK

Damn it.

The next entry- 02/09/08 8:16 AM. The Access times directly correspond with Rockhill's sign-in times. Faulk runs out of the room, down the Hall.

EXT. GATE - HOUSTON INTERNATIONAL

A small Booth to monitor the gate, a Security Guard inside. A retractable traffic spike system under the vehicle barrier.

Fairchild's Suburban pulls up to the gate, its twin not far behind. The Guard walks over. Dane rolls down his window, shows his creds. The Guard squints in the light, reads out loud-

GUARD
Homeland security...

DANE
We need in there now.

GUARD
I'm sorry sir. I can't...

Fairchild leans over in his seat.

FAIRCHILD
Open. The fucking. Gate.

The Security Guard shrinks back.

SECURITY GUARD
Sir, that's a live runway.

On cue, a Commercial Jet flies just overhead, lands on the Runway, tires Screeching.

Fairchild gets out of the Suburban, walks directly past the Security Guard who doesn't move a muscle. Enters the booth, hits a button. The Spikes retract, the Barrier lifts. Fairchild walks towards the Suburban. As he passes by the Guard-

FAIRCHILD
Don't touch anything.

The Security Guard stands silent, frozen. Fairchild climbs back in the lead Suburban. The 2 Vehicles roar through the Gate across the open runway.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM

The Flight Recording plays over the Stereo. Stu hunches down next to the System.

PILOT (V.O.)
Thompson. Have a look at-

A Distinct RINGGGG.

CO PILOT (V.O.)
Where the hell did he-

A POP, then a second louder EXPLOSION. A few seconds of absolute silence. Then-

MEGAN
Is this what I think it is?

Stu nods.

PILOT (V.O.)
May day. Houston Control, UA 2189.
Houston Control come in! Engaging-

CO PILOT (V.O.)
UA 2189. May day. May day.

VIBRATIONS as the Plane begins to shake violently. Mass commotion. The Pilots begin to yell, panicky.

PILOT (V.O.)
Vertical Pitch. Nose down.

CO PILOT (V.O.)
Stabilize!

PILOT (V.O.)
I can't. Houston, come in.

CO PILOT (V.O.)
Pull the left rudder.

PILOT (V.O.)
The wing is-

The recording ends in Static.

MEGAN
I don't... It's-

STU
A prolonged attempt to contact your
Tower.

Megan is shell-shocked. She sits quietly. Stu hits play again-

PILOT (V.O.)
Thompson. Have a look at-

A Distinct RINGGGG.

CO PILOT (V.O.)
Where the hell did he-

Stu stops the CD.

STU
Did you hear the Ring?

MEGAN
Yes.

STU
Any idea what that might be?

MEGAN
I'm not a pilot.

STU
Megan. Do you know what it is?

MEGAN
It's an alarm. An alarm that sounds
when another Aircraft is too close.
On a potential collision course.

Terry bursts into the Conference Room.

TERRY
We've got a problem.

MEGAN
(to Terry)
Not now.

TERRY
Two unknown vehicles on the Runway.

STU
(to Megan)
You didn't hear this tape.

Megan nods, rushes out of the Room. Stu hits open, puts the CD back in its case. Looks out the window. Off in the distance, the twin Suburbans pass under a flashing beacon. Stu sprints out of the room, into the Hallway. Barrels through the Door to the Stairs, takes them two at a time, fast as he can, headed down.

EXT. LEAD SUBURBAN

Dane drives like a mad man across the runway, the Tower quickly approaching. With his free hand, he reaches into the backseat and grabs a Shotgun. Fairchild readies the Glock.

EXT. ELEVATOR - TOWER

McNally waits patiently for Stu by the Elevator. Stu slips out from the Stairs, exit's the Tower, McNally's back turned the entire time.

EXT. TOWER

Stu lifts his hand against the Wind and Rain. Headlights. He dives to the side behind the Security SUV, putting the Vehicle between him and his Pursuers. He tries the Door. It clicks open. He slithers inside, crawls to the Back Seat, ducks down as-

The Suburbans screech to a halt in front of the Tower, a few feet from the Security SUV. Fairchild, Dane, Ellis, Dempsey, and two other Agents pile out, all with Weapons drawn.

FAIRCHILD

Ellis, take the Steps. Dempsey, stay by the Elevator. He doesn't get out.

The Group walks towards the Door. Fairchild's Cell buzzes. He checks the Caller ID. Takes the Call, motions with his head for Dane and the others to proceed.

INT. HAYES HOME - DEN

Hayes sits in his Home Office, still in Pajamas. His Desk Lamp is the only light on in the room.

HAYES

I had the logs checked.

INT. CONTROL TOWER

Ellis turns Right, pushes open the Door to the Staircase. Enters with gun raised. Dane, Dempsey and the other two Agents approach McNally. We don't hear the Conversation. He points up.

HAYES (V.O.)

We don't know anything for certain-

Dempsey waits with McNally. Dane boards the Elevator with the rest of the Team.

INT. TOWER - HALLWAY

The Elevator opens. Dane and the two Agents exit, walk down the Hall, Weapons raised.

FAIRCHILD (V.O.)
He got in the Vault.

INT. CONTROL TOWER - CONFERENCE ROOM

Dane bursts into the Conference Room with the other Agents. No Stu.

HAYES (V.O.)
I've assigned Agents to look for him. We're taking this very seriously.

Dane and the Agents exit the Room.

INT. CONTROL TOWER - OBSERVATION DECK

Dane enters the room with Shotgun drawn. The other Agents follow, sweep their weapons back and forth. Megan and Terry YELL, throw their hands up. The other Air Traffic Controllers are similarly freaked out.

FAIRCHILD (V.O.)
You have no idea.

Dane Screams at Megan. We see her lips move, 'Conference Room'.

INT. CONTROL TOWER - HALLWAY

Dane and the Agents maneuver down the Hall, opening doors. No sign of Stu.

HAYES (V.O.)
One other thing you should know.

Dane sees the Restroom. Motions for the other Agents to remain in the Hall.

INT. RESTROOM

Dane quietly enters. No one at the Urinals or the Sinks. He stoops down, looks under the Three stalls. A pair of Feet at the very end.

HAYES (V.O.)
He never turned in his credentials.

Dane tip toes to the last stall, leans back and kicks the Door in. It's Jim, his pants around his Ankles. He's reading an issue of Wired Magazine. The Magazine flies up in the air. His legs and feet dance. Dane lowers the Shotgun, closes the Stall door.

EXT. TOWER

Fairchild stands approx. 10 feet from the Tower, the Glock dangling in his free hand. He can see McNally and Dempsey through the Glass door. Dempsey turns. They make eye contact. Dempsey turns back.

HAYES (V.O.)
Considering his actions this past week, he could be dangerous.

STU (O.C.)
Hang up the phone.

Fairchild hangs up on Hayes. Glances back, his arms still at his side. Stu is only a few feet away, gun drawn.

STU
Drop the gun.

Fairchild lets his Glock slip from his hand. It Clatters on the Concrete.

STU
The other one. Slowly.

Fairchild bends down, pulls up his right pant leg. Removes a small-caliber Pistol from his Ankle Holster, sets it on the ground next to the Glock.

STU
Kick 'em back..

Fairchild follows orders, slides each Gun back with his Foot. Stu sticks the Glock in his Waistband. Kicks the smaller Weapon out of reach. Wipes the condensation off his face.

STU
Baby steps, backwards, nice and easy.

As Fairchild walks backwards-

FAIRCHILD
Any chance you had to walk away from this just disappeared.

STU
Kind of like that Plane. The
Suburban, the one you came in.

FAIRCHILD
I don't have the keys.

STU
They're in the ignition.

Fairchild gets in the Driver's seat. Stu gets in the Back
Seat directly behind him.

EXT. GATE

The Security Guard stands right where Fairchild left him, the
Barrier up and Spikes down. The Suburban flies past him at 80
mph, goes Airborne for a moment as it clears the Bump. Lands,
sparks flying as the body hit's the Road. The Security Guard
watches the Suburban drives off, shakes his head.

INT. SUBURBAN

Fairchild drives with speed through a Red Light. Cars slam on
their breaks, narrowly avoid a collision. Stu keeps his Gun
pointed at the back of Fairchild's seat.

STU
Slow down.

Fairchild slows down, drives the speed limit. They come to a
Red Light. He stops.

FAIRCHILD
I'm going to hunt you down like a
dog.

The light turns green. Fairchild hits the gas.

FAIRCHILD
Hayes knows you compromised the
Vault. And after tonight, there'll
be a felony warrant out for your
Arrest. You have to know you're
fucked...

Stu leans forward in his seat.

STU
You know the difference between me
and you? You can't tell what's
right and what's wrong. Someone
gives an order and you follow it.
(MORE)

STU (cont'd)

You see, its not the assholes
giving orders that are dangerous.
Its the guys like you who follow
them blindly.

They drive in silence for a moment.

FAIRCHILD

This isn't the first time you tried
to blow the whistle, is it? (beat)
No women, no friends. Even your own
Brother hates your guts.

Stu Pistol Whips Fairchild, left side above the eye. The Suburban swerves in its lane before Fairchild's vision clears. He steadies the wheel, gets the Vehicle under control. The strike has opened up a gash quite similar in size and length to the wound on Fairchild's right. Blood drips down his face.

STU

Now they match. Pull over.

Fairchild pulls the Suburban to the side of the road.

STU

Your Cell, Pager, Creds.
Everything.

Fairchild sets his Cell, Pager and Creds on the Passenger seat.

STU

Get out.

Fairchild gets out of the car. Stu climbs into the Driver's Seat, pulls away. Stu reaches over, flips open Fairchild's phone. It's Pass Code Locked. He chucks it out the window. Flips open Fairchild's Creds. HOMELAND SECURITY. SECTION 8.

BACK ON FAIRCHILD

He stands on the Side of the Road, leans against a Guard Rail. Wipes the blood from his face on his sleeve.

EXT. KARACHI

A tropical city of 12 Million. The economic center of Pakistan and Capitol of the powerful Sindh Province, Karachi borders the Arabian Sea and sprawls over a mass of gently rolling hills and lazy rivers. Mangrove trees and Camels carrying Tourists over white beaches distinguish the City from our earlier locales.

EXT. BAZAAR

Saif, now with full Beard, and Konduz walk through a massive Market. Silk, spices, textiles, exotic animals, fresh fruit and fish. Influences range from British to the Middle East and Southeast Asia. Eccentric Vendors that could be from the 17th Century hawk their products with Skyscrapers looming overhead.

SAIF

I think we've got the wrong
financial district.

Konduz studies an archaic map. Looks down an Alley Way.

KONDUZ

I need your help translating.

SAIF

What? We're due to make a wire
transfer.

KONDUZ

It can wait. This way.

They turn down a narrow alley and walk to an isolated Café. A single Patron sips a mixed drink at a white table outside. VADIM, a Russian in his 30's with shortly cropped hair and a friendly demeanor, greets them with a firm handshake. In accentuated English:

VADIM

Its nice here, huh?

SAIF

Mild.

VADIM

Fuck the cold. (to Konduz) How are
you?

SAIF

He doesn't speak English.

VADIM

Greasy bastard!

SAIF

You want me to translate that?

Vadim laughs.

VADIM

No. My business partners are my friends.

Saif begins to translate, converts Konduz's Pashto into English and vice versa for the rest of the conversation.

KONDUZ

We're not in business yet.

VADIM

Your weapons are outdated. Two decades old. For every American you kill they take 10.

An African Waitress stops by. Konduz orders two teas. Vadim orders a fresh drink.

VADIM

With my contacts in Russia, I can supply you with cutting edge Weapons. Their Helicopters will fall like the rain.

Vadim gulps down the rest of his drink.

KONDUZ

How much?

VADIM

You will find my products most affordable.

Saif translates. The Waitress returns with the Tea and new Drink. As she sets down the drinks, Saif asks a question of his own in English.

SAIF

What if we desired something more powerful? Something the Americans would never forget.

Vadim smiles at the waitress, flirtatious.

VADIM

Arms Proliferation created unique economic opportunities in my country. For the right price, I can get you anything.

He shakes his drink. The ice cubes clink against the glass.

EXT. SHIPPING OFFICE - PORT OF KARACHI

The largest Port in the Nation. Konduz talks to a Eurasian Man with forked goatee. They nod. Konduz walks towards an enormous Shipping Vessel, the Beijing Dynasty with Chinese decals, docked in the Harbor. Saif watches as a Crane lowers brown, orange and yellow rusted Shipping Containers onto the deck of the ship. Vadim stands by his side. Konduz approaches Saif, they talk in Pashto:

SAIF

You trust this Vadim? The wrong allies can cost you dearly.

KONDUZ

You deal with the money. Let me deal with the People.

One of the Containers Pounds onto the Vessel's deck. Workers undo the straps around the Container.

KONDUZ

(in Pashto)

Tell him transportation is in place. We'll send money to purchase the arms.

Konduz walks off as Saif translates to Vadim.

INT. RAQUETBALL COURT - FAIRFAX, VA

Bill Forte, dressed in his Country Club best, smacks a ball in the corner then leaps out of the way. His OPPONENT backhands, drop shot. Forte leaps forward and delivers a kill shot. He's in damn good shape for his age.

Outside the Court, a phone rings from inside a Gym Bag.

OPPONENT

C'mon. Not now.

FORTE

I'm doin' you a favor. Catch your breath.

He smiles, exits the Court. Sits beside his gym bag and takes out the cell.

FORTE

Yeah.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM

Fairchild sits on a Hospital Bed on Dane's Cell. He has fresh stitches in the gash over his eye. Dane stands nearby.
INTERCUT.

FAIRCHILD

It's Fairchild. Requesting permission to eliminate our containment problem for good.

FORTE

Permission denied. Where are you?

FAIRCHILD

I'm in an Emergency Room. He pistol whipped me.

FORTE

Jesus, do you have him in custody?

FAIRCHILD

Right now, I don't even know where he is..

FORTE

This isn't a Terrorist Tom. He's a Police Officer for god's sake.

Fairchild jumps off the bed.

FAIRCHILD

Do you comprehend what we've done? What's at stake here?

FORTE

I won't authorize the use of lethal force against an American.

FAIRCHILD

You already have.

A beat of silence on the phone.

FORTE

Keep me updated.

Forte hangs up the phone, walks back on the Racquetball Court dazed by Fairchild's loss of composure.

EXT. KARACHI - IBRAHIM ISMAIL CHUNDRIGER ROAD

The Wall Street of Pakistan. Much of the Architecture has been preserved from the era of the British Empire. Some of the largest Banks in Asia have Headquarters on this Street. Konduz and Saif, in the Toyota Pick Up, look quite out of place amidst the hustle and bustle of the District.

Konduz selects a smaller Branch of Bank Alfalah, pulls into the Parking Lot.

INT. TOYOTA PICK-UP

Konduz hands Saif a Note with the Wire Information. One money transfer to Madrid, Spain. Another to Moscow.

KONDUZ
You understand?

Saif nods, climbs out of the Truck with his Laptop. Konduz watches Saif take the Steps up to the front door, enter the Bank. Then he too opens his Door, gets out. Walks towards the Bank.

INT. BANK ALFALAH

Konduz observes Saif from a Distance. Behind him, a large Picture of British and Indian Soldiers from the late 19th Century. Saif completes his Transaction, smiles at a Teller. She passes him a card. Konduz glances at the Security Cameras. They seem to be everywhere.

Saif walks towards the door, then changes direction. Heads to the Restroom. Konduz wait's a few seconds at his post, walks towards the Restroom.

INT. RESTROOM

Saif walks in. It's deserted. He's about to go into a stall when he hears footsteps, spins around. A Random CUSTOMER. Saif exhales nervously, goes into one of the Stalls. Seconds later, Konduz enters. The Customer finishes up, goes to the Sink. Konduz stands in front of a Urinal, waits for the Customer to leave.

Konduz looks around the Bathroom. No Cameras. The Customer leaves. He goes to the Door held ajar at the Entrance to the Restroom, carefully closes it making sure not to draw any attention. Slides the Deadbolt. Removes a hidden Pistol from his Waistband. Walks to the Stall Saif is in, kicks open the Door.

Saif sits on the Toilet, Computer on his lap. Konduz surges forward, sticks the Pistol right between Saif's eyes. Saif raises up his hands. Choppy, rushed breaths. Konduz spins the Laptop around. It's an Email going to the covert address with all the Transaction Information Saif just completed. The Reciept is on the Keyboard. Konduz closes the Computer.

SAIF

You shoot, they'll hear.

KONDUZ

Put the Laptop in the case.

As Saif sticks the Laptop in the carrying case-

SAIF

They have my family.

KONDUZ

I suspected after London. I knew after Paris.

Saif zips up the Laptop in the Case. Konduz slips the Case over his shoulder, takes two steps back. Motions with his gun, let's go.

SAIF

Why didn't you kill me?

Saif walks towards the door. Konduz stuffs the gun in his pocket, walks closely behind him.

KONDUZ

We needed new weapons. Al-Qaeda just payed for them.

Saif comes to the door.

KONDUZ

Open it.

Saif slides open the Dead Bolt, opens the Door. They walk into the Bank. The Front Door is 15 feet off. A Security Guard stands by the Door. They walk forward. Customers all around them.

KONDUZ

Fahd wanted to send one of his own to guard you. I insisted.

SAIF

Why?

KONDUZ

Don't you see? You're a rat. You
stink of it. But even rats have
their purpose.

A few more steps. Saif sees that the Security Guard has a Gun
in a holster on his belt.

SAIF

You think you're a man of God?
You're a monster.

Only steps from the Guard now.

KONDUZ

Quiet.

SAIF

(whispers to himself)
To Allah we belong and to him our
return.

KONDUZ

I said quiet.

They're right in front of the Guard. Saif reaches out, grabs
the Gun from the Security Guard with his right hand as he
rips the case from Konduz with his left. Konduz pulls his Gun
out. They both fall backwards as they fire, no more than 4
feet apart. Konduz takes one in the gut, one in the leg. Saif
is struck in the Shoulder, a wound similar to that of his
Brother. The Security Guard isn't as lucky, takes a round in
the neck and head from Konduz in the crossfire. He's dead
before he hits the ground.

People SCREAM. Everyone runs in the opposite direction of the
Front Door. Saif jumps to his feet with the Case, runs out of
the Bank. Konduz shoots again, misses high and to the right.
Struggles to get to his feet. Pulls his useless leg along,
free hand over his gut. Blood seeps through his fingers.

EXT. BANK ALFALAH

Saif runs down the steps, moving on pure adrenaline. Konduz
throws open the Door. Saif leaps off the steps to the
Sidewalk. Heavily armed Security Officers rush towards the
entrance way. Konduz gets off another Round. Saif feels the
Bullet whiz past his ear. Multiple shots from inside the
Bank. Bullets explode through Konduz's chest. He topples down
the steps, leaves a lengthy trail of Blood. Saif runs across
the street ignoring the oncoming traffic. Cars slam on their
brakes, swerve to avoid him.

Several of the Cars ram into each other. Soon the entire Road is jammed with twisted Wreckage.

Armed Security Officers from the Bank run down the Steps, can't get across the road, impeded by the crashed vehicles.

EXT. HIGHWAY - OUTSIDE CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS

Stu's Rented Taurus heads South, headed for Corpus Christi, a City of 300,000 in Southeast Texas.

INT. BITTER END BAR AND GRILL

Stu sits at the Bar. Sips on a Beer. The Place is a hangout for Service Men from the nearby Naval Air Station and Coast Guard. A young, vibrant crowd. Bluegrass plays on the Stereo. Tim and Barry (Coast Guard from earlier) enter the Bar with two Attractive Women. Tim and the Girls take a Seat at a Table. Barry sits down at the Bar next to Stu.

BARRY

Never thought I'd get a call from you.

STU

Man of my Word.

BARRY

We still talk about that day on the Ranier.

STU

Oh yeah?

Stu leans back in his stool and finishes off his beer, slides it forward on the Bar. The Bartender sets down a full pitcher.

STU

That's yours.

Barry looks over at the Table. Tim motions to the Girls. Barry raises up his hand- one minute. Stu catches the exchange.

STU

I won't keep you.

He takes out a roll of Money.

BARRY

High Roller, huh?

Stu pulls out a hundred dollar bill, slides it over to Barry.

STU
For your trouble. Get some ribs or something.

Barry pockets the Bill.

STU
You hang out with the Guys from the Naval Air Station?

BARRY
Sometimes. It's a small town.

Stu slides some money to the Bartender, closes out his tab.

STU
I need a favor. I'm looking for the Flight Log from the Morning of January 23rd.

BARRY
That's the Morning the Plane went down.

INT. CAJA DUERO - MADRID

A common Bank Chain, with Dozens of Branches throughout the City. JAFAR ALI HAMADEI, early 30's, enters the Bank in dress pants, white oxford. He goes to TELLER 3, makes a withdraw. She counts out several thousand Euros. He turns to leave. In Spanish:

TELLER 3
Mr. Hamadei?

HAMADEI
Yes.

TELLER 3
We received this-

She slides an envelope across the counter. It has Jafaar's name written across the front. No return address.

TELLER 3
-early this morning through a messenger service.

HAMADEI
Hmmm.

He takes the Envelope. Flips it over. Nothing on the other side.

TELLER 3

It was from the account holder who
made the wire transfer. We agreed
to hold onto it for you.

Hamadei holds the envelope up, smiles, trying desperately to
hide his fringed nerves.

HAMADEI

Thank you.

TELLER 3

Have a good day.

He smiles, walks out of the Bank.

EXT. CAJA DUERO - GRAN VIA

Hamadei walks down the busy Street. He opens the letter
immediately. People are forced out of his path as he pulls
out several sheets of neatly folded paper. The top sheet is
typed, single space. -You are needed for a dry run. We've
booked a flight under your name. Please check in one piece of
luggage.- Hamadei leafs through the remaining pages. An
itinerary, the printed reservation for an online booking. He
reads aloud-

HAMADEI

United 2189.

On the itinerary we see that the Flight is direct, Madrid to
Houston.

INT. MOTEL 6 - CORPUS CHRISTI

Stu lies in Bed in Jeans and a T-Shirt, watches CNN. A KNOCK
at the Door. Stu gets up, answers it. Its Barry. He holds a
print out in his hand.

BARRY

Have a nice life.

STU

You too. Thanks.

Stu closes the Door. Sits down on the Bed. Looks over the
relatively short Flight Log. One flight catches his Eye.
Ramon Higuero. 5:15 AM. The Details of the Flight are all
marked Classified.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Fairchild, his face unmarked, sits at the Table with his Wife and two SONS, ages 9 and 11. He reads a Copy of the Washington Post. An article about President Baxter and the upcoming Election on the front cover. They're having Eggs, Bacon and Toast. Glasses of Milk and Water in front of each. The Toaster POPS, more Toast. The Wife rises to retrieve it. Everything about this Family screams tradition.

Fairchild's phone Buzzes. His Wife gives him a dirty look. He holds up his hands defensively.

FAIRCHILD

Hun, I have to take this.

He walks into the-

INT. DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

We can still see the Marks left by the Sweeper on the meticulous white carpet. This is a room that's used exactly twice a year, Christmas and Easter. Fairchild takes a seat on a plush, retro blue Chair.

FAIRCHILD

Hello.

He listens intently. We don't hear the other end.

FAIRCHILD

Give it to him.

Fairchild flips the phone shut. His Wife is at the edge of the Dining Room. She points down. His footprints are distinct against the perfect sweeper marks.

FAIRCHILD

Not now.

He gets up, walks past her into-

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

He kisses each of his Boys on top of the head. Takes his Suit Coat off his chair and slips it on.

FAIRCHILD

Gotta go.

WIFE (O.C.)

Already?

FAIRCHILD
Yeah. (to the Boys) Be good.

SONS
Bye Dad.

And he's out the door. OFF the VOOM of a Sweeper-

INT. OFFICE - LANGLEY

Forte sits at his desk. Fairchild enters, takes a seat.

FAIRCHILD
Have you been updated?

Forte nods.

FAIRCHILD
He's been calling every 5 minutes
for an hour.

His Cell Buzzes.

FORTE
So answer it.

Fairchild flips open his phone.

INT. MOTEL BATHROOM - SOMEWHERE IN KARACHI

Saif stares into the Mirror. He's shaving. Half the beard is gone. Dark hair and shaving cream in the murky sink water. His face is thin, fatigued by the last few months. A bandage over his shoulder wound, the brown stain of dried blood. In English. INTERCUT.

SAIF
You know who this is?

FAIRCHILD
How are you Saif?

SAIF
Better than you. You had 12 hours.
Now you have 11.

FAIRCHILD
Care to explain?

SAIF
They have a Dirty Bomb headed for
the Continental United States.
(MORE)

SAIF (cont'd)
It'll be on American soil this time
Tommorow.

FAIRCHILD
I find that hard to believe.

Saif strokes with the Razor, takes off another strip of the
Beard.

SAIF
Was I wrong about London or Paris?

FAIRCHILD
Do you have proof? Details...

SAIF
Yes. I do.

Another strip of the beard. Not much left.

FAIRCHILD
What do you want?

SAIF
You will personally deliver my Wife
and Daughter to a location I
dictate in exactly 11 hours. You
will wire 5 million Euros to an
account of my choosing. And you
will arrange safe passage for my
Family into India.

FAIRCHILD
And then what?

Saif removes the last bit of facial hair. Shakes the dirty
razor in the Sink Water. He's now clean shaven.

SAIF
You save lives. I disappear.

EXT. ANDREWS AIR FORCE BASE

A Black Suburban drives across the Runway. Pulls up in front
of an unmarked Private Jet. Fairchild gets out of the
Suburban. He quickly climbs up the Loading Ramp. Enters the
Jet. As soon as he's inside the Boarding Door is closed, the
Steps wheeled away. The Jet's engines fire up as it maneuvers
onto the Runway.

INT. RECEPTION AREA - NAVAL AIR STATION - CORPUS CHRISTI

Stu walks up to the Front Desk. The Room is Basic. A TV up in
the Corner with the Discovery Channel on.

A RECEPTIONIST, an older Lady with a Southern streak, smiles at him. Shows her his Creds.

RECEPTIONIST
Down from Houston?

STU
That's right. Maybe you can help me out. I'm looking for the home address of Lieutenant Ramon Higuero. I believe he's stationed at this Base.

RECEPTIONIST
I don't suppose you've read the local papers...

STU
No. I haven't.

RECEPTIONIST
Lieutenant Higuero passed away two weeks ago.

Stu fights to hide his shock.

STU
I'm, uh, sorry to hear that.

RECEPTIONIST
Young fella shot himself. (beat) First the Plane Crash, then that Boy. Its been one helluva winter round here.

STU
Does he have any surviving Relatives in town? Wife, Siblings, Parents?

RECEPTIONIST
He's got a Wife in town here.

STU
Would you mind getting me her address?

EXT. KARACHI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - ARRIVAL GATE

Fairchild walks with Raja and Samia, both flanked by CIA Agents carrying Luggage. They head towards a bustling pick-up Zone. Suzuki and Toyota Personal Vehicles compete with Taxi Cabs and Vans for space as Travelers filter out of the Airport.

A Honda Accord pulls up to the Curb. Saif gets out, lays eyes on Raja and Samia for the first time since the raid on his Villa. He smiles, runs towards them. Picks up his Daughter, hugs his Wife. Raja begins to Cry. Samia holds her Father tight around the neck.

SAMIA

I never thought I'd see you again.

SAIF

I know. I know. (to Samia) Daddy's okay.

He kisses her on the forehead. Kisses his Wife. Sets down Samia and ushers them towards the Accord.

Fairchild hands him Papers.

FAIRCHILD

These are Visas that will get you over the Border to India. Once you're in-country, you're on your own.

SAIF

I saw that you wired the money.

Fairchild nods. Saif opens the Trunk. The Agents place the Suitcases inside. Saif opens the door for Samia to climb in the back. Raja gets in the Passenger Seat.

FAIRCHILD

I believe you have something for me.

Saif retrieves a Folder from the Car. Several Documents protrude. He hands the Folder to Fairchild. Fairchild leafs through the pages.

FAIRCHILD

If this is correct-

SAIF

The Flight's already in the air.

Fairchild closes the folder, shocked. Looks up. Saif punches him in the face. Saif's ring rips the flesh above his Right Eye. Fairchild stumbles back. The CIA Agents catch him before he falls. They move to attack Saif. Fairchild holds them back.

FAIRCHILD

NO.

A droplet of blood runs down his face.

SAIF

There are three on the Plane. All three can detonate the bomb if there's any sign of trouble. If all goes as planned, they'll detonate over Houston.

Saif climbs in his car.

SAIF

I suggest you hurry.

Fairchild and the CIA Agents watch Saif and his Family pull away in the Accord. He hands the Folder to one of the Agents.

INT. PRIVATE JET - MINUTES LATER

Fairchild takes the last few steps onto the Aircraft two at a time. Holds a paper towel to the wound above his eye. Its nearly soaked through with blood. He walks towards the Cockpit, yells in to the PILOTS.

FAIRCHILD

Back to Andrews.

As they ready for take off, he walks back through the Cabin. Takes a seat across from Zahida (Saif's "mistress" outside Peshawar). Sharmeen (her Daughter) sits across the aisle, hard at work on a Puzzle. Zahida looks at Fairchild's wound, the damp paper towel. In English:

FAIRCHILD

Have you decided where you'd like to live?

SHARMEEN

Miami!

ZAHIDA

Chicago.

The Jet lifts off.

EXT. HIGHWAY - OUTSKIRTS OF KARACHI

30 miles outside the City. Saif's Accord shoots down the Highway.

INT. ACCORD

Saif drives silently, leans over so he can keep his arm around Raja. Samia lies in the back seat, asleep.

ON THE TRUNK

Push in on the two Suitcases loaded by the CIA Agents. Both are filled with Clothes. Inside one of the Suitcases, a beacon. A tiny red light on the device flashes on and off.

HIGH ABOVE THE ACCORD

An unmanned Drone banks through the Clouds. Hellfire Missiles hang from each Wing. A small red light begins to flash on one of the Missiles. It detaches. Thrusters fire.

EXT. HIGHWAY - OUTSKIRTS OF KARACHI

The Hellfire streaks into Saif's Accord from above, explodes, killing the Family instantly.

EXT. HOUSE - CORPUS CHRISTI - DUSK

One story, tan siding. Roof shingles in need of repair. Stu parks in front. Swings open the gate to a picket fence, walks up to the Front Door. Knocks.

The door opens. BEN HIGUERA, a five year old boy, answers.

BEN

Who are you?

ALEX (O.C.)

Ben, who is it.

ALEX comes to the door. Ramon's Widow, in her 20's, pretty without makeup. She picks up her Son. Stu shows her his Creds.

STU

Detective Stu Rockhill with the
Joint Terrorism Task Force out of
Houston.

ALEX

How can I help you?

INT. FAMILY ROOM

Stu sits at the end of the Couch. Looks at a Porcelain Figurine of the Virgin Mary on a glass Coffee Table. Ben sits Indian style in front of the TV, watches Sponge Bob.

Alex comes in with two Coffees. Sets one down in front of Stu on a coaster, cups hers with both hands and takes a seat next to him on the Couch.

ALEX

When I came home from work, he was sitting on the Couch watching TV. Didn't want to talk, didn't want to eat. He sat there for three days.

STU

He didn't say what it was about?

Alex shakes her head.

ALEX

On the fourth day, I picked up Ben from Day Care. When I came home, I found him in the bedroom.

She starts to cry. Stu can't look at her, watches Sponge Bob on the TV.

STU

I'm sorry for your loss...

ALEX

I'm not sad Detective. I'm angry and confused and hurt. My Son's gonna grow up without a Daddy.

Ben laughs at Sponge Bob. Turns to his Mom. She smiles through the tears.

ALEX

He's too young to know what's going on.

Stu sets down his coffee.

STU

Alex, I might be able to give you some insight into why Ramon did what he did. Its imperative that you tell me anything he might have mentioned those last three days.

ALEX

You done with your coffee? Want anything else? A Beer maybe.

She gets up off the Couch.

ALEX
I'm having a Beer.

Stu hesitates, then-

STU
I'll have one too.

She smiles, goes to the Kitchen. Returns with two bottles.
Sits down. They both take a Drink. Alex sets her Beer down.

ALEX
Let me put Ben to bed.

She shuts off the TV.

BEN
No, I don't want to.

ALEX
You want to grow up big? You have
to sleep if you want to be big..

Stu catches Ben's eye as Mom carries him out of the Family
Room, into his Bedroom. Shuts the Door. Stu can hear the
faint sound of Singing from inside. Moments later, Alex slips
out of the Room, returns to the couch.

ALEX
He didn't say anything. Just
watched TV.

STU
Was there anything in particular,
something he seemed interested in?

ALEX
He was watching coverage of that
Plane Crash. I don't know Detective-

STU
Its Stu.

ALEX
Stu, I tried to get him to go see
someone.

She breaks down again. Stu comforts her. She leans into him.

STU

I want you to know that I'm gonna clear this all up, best as I can... There's People out there who don't want to acknowledge what happened. I'm fighting them. I'm gonna keep fighting.

Alex pulls back.

ALEX

You're in trouble, aren't you...

Stu hesitates, not sure how to proceed.

STU

Yeah. I am.

Alex leans back into him. Stu puts his Arm around her, pulls her tight.

ALEX

Sometimes I wonder about this world we live in.

Stu looks at the Virgin Mary figurine.

STU

It can be an awful place. You just have to keep looking for the Good in it. I don't know if I'll ever find it, but I'm gonna keep looking.

She looks up at him.

STU

I should go.

He begins to stand up. She holds him down.

ALEX

You have anywhere to go Stu?

STU

I don't know.

ALEX

You can stay here tonight.

STU

I can't do that.

ALEX

I'm asking you to stay here.

Stu looks at her, nearly breaks down crying himself. He bends forward, kisses her softly. She doesn't respond, turns away after a moment.

STU

I'm sorry.

ALEX

Its alright.

INT. PENTAGON - CONFERENCE ROOM

All the Top Brass are there, seated around a circular Table. CIA Director WILLIAM HERSHING. FBI Director LOUIE REESE. Secretary of State ALEXANDER BROWN. Secretary of Defense EGAR HERNANDEZ. Several Four Star Generals. In front of each, a photo copied packet. The file Saif gave Fairchild. Forte stands front and center, addresses the Group. In mid debate-

HERNANDEZ

How in the Hell did they get an IED
on a state-bound 747?

FORTE

Through a contact in Baggage
Handling at Madrid International.
One we know for certain. We're
looking into other Employees.

BROWN

We've obtained the Passenger
Manifest?

FORTE

Yes. We confirmed that the man
identified by the source as the
Cell Leader, Jafaar Ali Hamadei,
boarded the Aircraft 30 minutes
before Take Off. He checked in one
piece of Luggage, possibly carried
the Detonator on board. We're still
trying to identify the other two.

REESE

The wire transer to Russia-

FORTE

To a Vadim Petrov. Known arms
dealer, former KGB, strong contacts
within the Russian Mafia.

REESE

Yeah, but does he have access to this type of weaponry?

FORTE

Considering the size of the wire transfer, yes.

REESE

This contact, Saif Al-Adel...

FORTE

That's an alias. His real name is Amid El-Maati. He's our highest-placed source in the Al-Qaeda infrastructure. Utilized for highly sensitive wire transfers throughout Pakistan. His tips led directly to the elimination of cells in London and Paris.

REESE

Great. My question is do you trust him?

Forte takes a sip of water, sets the glass down.

FORTE

Absolutely.

HERSHING

Gentlemen, I strongly believe that we have conclusive evidence there's a dirty bomb on this Aircraft. The question is, what do we do?

REESE

Where's the Flight now?

Forte checks his watch.

FORTE

Passing over Florida. If we act now, we can scramble a Fighter-

BROWN

And do what? There's 250 innocent Americans on that plane.

HERNANDEZ

There's several Million in Houston.

REESE
If the IED explodes over the city..

HERSHING
The damage would be catastrophic.

A silence settles over the Room. Beyond grim.

HERSHING
At this point, we have to realize
the People on that Flight are
already dead.

No one wants to say what comes next.

HERNANDEZ
Let's get the President.

INT. FAMILY ROOM

Stu can't sleep. He looks over at a Picture on the dresser.
Its Ramon, Alex and Ben. Stu exit's the House. Returns with a
Manilla Envelope. He lays down on the Couch fully clothed,
Envelope in hand.

INT. OFFICE - LANGLEY

Forte sits with his back turned to the Desk. He stares out
the Window at Woods that cover much of the Property, sips his
Morning Coffee. The Phone Rings. He takes the Call.

FORTE
Fairchild's in route to Houston.

INT. FAMILY ROOM - CORPUS CHRISTI

Stu wakes up. Ben is two inches from his face. Its Morning.
He burps.

ALEX (O.C.)
Ben!

Ben laughs, runs away. Stu sits up on the couch, runs a hand
through his hair. Looks over at Alex in the Kitchen...

ALEX
I made breakfast.

Stu takes his Manilla Envelope, walks into-

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Takes a Seat. Alex walks to the Table with a Pan, dumps some Bacon on a Plate. She's wearing white collar clothes.

STU

Where do you work?

Alex smiles at him.

ALEX

At a Dentist's Office. Just a Secretary.

STU

Nothing wrong with that.

ALEX

(yells)

Ben, come have some Breakfast.

Alex leaves the Room. Stu takes a bite of his Eggs, sips a Water.

Alex lowers her Arm over Stu's Shoulder, sets an envelope on the Table. Stu picks it up. The letter is addressed to Alex and Ben. Alex sits across from him.

ALEX

He left that.

Stu realizes this is Ramon's suicide note. He sets it gently on the Table.

STU

I can't take this.

ALEX

I want you to. I think it might help.

STU

Okay.

He hands her the Manilla Envelope.

STU

I have to go now Alex. If anything happens to me, I want you to take this to the Newspaper.

ALEX

What is it?

STU

I can't tell you. I sealed it and I want you to promise me you won't open it unless something happens to me.

She nods.

STU

Promise me.

ALEX

I promise.

Stu takes a final gulp of water. Stands.

STU

Tell Ben I said bye.

EXT. HOUSE

Stu walks with the Envelope out of the house. Gets in the Rental.

INT. TAURUS

Opens the Envelope and takes out a hand-written note in shaky cursive. Rolls the window down, takes a deep breath of fresh air. We see flashes of text. -Can't bear to live with what I've done.- -If they say I'm a bad man, I want you and Ben to know, I was following orders.- -I love you. I'm so sorry. So sorry.-

Stu puts the Note back in the Envelope. Puts the Car in Drive, exits the Neighborhood. Pulls onto a busier road, drives towards the Highway. Pulls up to a Red Light behind a Gray Van. CLICK.

Stu turns. Stares down the Barrel of a Loaded Gun. Its Antoine. He holds the Gun on Stu as Dane grabs Stu by his bad arm, drags him right out of the car. Stu Screams in Pain. The two Larger Men throw Stu into another Van.

INT. VAN

Stu rolls over. Fairchild sits in the Back Seat. Stares at him, almost seems Bored. Dane and two other Agents hold Stu down as Antoine puts Plastic Restraints on his Wrists and Ankles. Stu doesn't fight it, knows he can't win. A Gag over his mouth, then a Black Hood. A world of Darkness.

INT. COVERT OPS - COMPUTER LAB

Forte walks quickly into the Lab, a bleak room filled with Computers and not much else. He walks to the front of the room, stands behind a COMPUTER TECHNICIAN. The Computer Technician swivels in his chair. Fairchild studies the screen, blinks rapidly.

TECHNICIAN

We received this from Saif about 5 minutes ago.

FORTE

I'm telling you, that's not possible.

TECHNICIAN

It checks out. He must have sent it as a time-delayed email.

FORTE

No.

ON SCREEN

An Email from Saif. It reads -If you're receiving this Email, you've betrayed me and my Family-

EXT. DESERT - SOMEWHERE IN TEXAS - NIGHT

The Hood pulls away. Blurry vision. A Figure in front of him, walking away. Stu blinks several times. His vision clears. It's Fairchild. He walks over to one of two Vehicles, stands besides a Cadillac with black Tinted Windows. Crosses his arms. The other car is Stu's Rental.

FORTE (O.C.)

Out here under all these stars, a man's problems seem so small.

Forte walks past Stu from behind, his hands clasped behind his back. Stu looks up. Its an amazingly clear night. Millions of Stars. The Dust of Solar Systems light years away. Stu realizes he's no longer bound. Squeezes his hands, trying to get circulation back.

STU

Who are you?

FORTE

I'm the asshole giving orders.

STU

If you're gonna kill me, get on
with it.

Forte walks next to Fairchild, leans against the Cadillac.

FORTE

Many of my colleagues suggested I
do just that. I am of the opinion
such a course of action draws more
attention to the situation.

STU

Why am I out here then?

Forte moves a little sand around with his Shoe. Fairchild is
still as a statue.

FORTE

You want to know why, don't you?

Stu struggles, pushes his way to his feet.

STU

Yes.

FORTE

Well I'm here to tell you.

Stu wraps his arms around his body against the cold Desert
night.

INT. COVERT OPS - COMPUTER LAB

Forte grips the back of the Technician's chair like a vice.

ON THE MONITOR

-I want you to know, there was no bomb on United 2189,
despite the information I gave you-

INT. MADRID - APARTMENT

A team of Spanish COMMANDOES burst through the door,
Automatic Weapons drawn.

SAIF (V.O.)

As you know, we used contacts
within Project Islamic H.O.P.E to
funnel Al-Qaeda funds.

The Commandoes move quickly through the Family Room, kick in
a Door. File into-

INT. BEDROOM

UMAR SHALLAH, naked, in bed with his WIFE.

SAIF (V.O.)

It's also one of the biggest Muslim
charities on Earth. I found Umar
Shallah on their Database.

INT. INTEROGATION ROOM

Two Thugs stand over Umar. His arms and legs are strapped to
a chair. They Scream questions at him.

SAIF (V.O.)

He does work at Madrid
International and gives generously
to Project H.O.P.E.

Umar shakes his head. One of the Thugs punches him in the
Jaw. There's more to come.

SAIF (V.O.)

He has no ties to Al-Qaeda

EXT. MOSCOW - STREET

Vadim exit's a bar with a Blond PROSTITUTE. He takes a drink
from a Flask, kisses her greedily.

SAIF (V.O.)

The money I wired to Vadim Petrov
was for the purchase of weapons.

An Assassin walks up behind him, shoots him twice in the head
with a Silenced Pistol.

SAIF (V.O.)

Traditional Arms for the Taliban.
Not a dirty bomb.

The Assassin calmly walks away. The Blond Prostitute stands
over his lifeless body, not sure what to do.

EXT. KARACHI - PORT

The Eurasian Man with the Forked Goatee runs down the Dock.
Pakistani Police give chase.

SAIF (V.O.)

The payments to the Shipping
Company were for the transportation
of the Taliban's Arms.

Police tackle the Man. Begin to beat him with Clubs as they get him handcuffed.

INT. UNITED 2189

Jafaar Ali Hamadei sits next to an Elderly Woman. He's dressed in Jeans and a T-Shirt, appears decidedly Western. We recognize many of the Passengers from the Board in the Hanger.

SAIF (V.O.)

Which leaves us with Jafaar Ali Hamadei. I wired money to Hamadei in Madrid on several occasions. I also booked his flight.

Hamadei's leg bounces nervously. He places his hand on his knee, forces it down.

SAIF (V.O.)

He thought he was on a dry run. He was alone.

INT. COVERT OPS - COMPUTER LAB

Forte can't tear himself away from the unfolding nightmare.

FORTE

Scroll down.

The Technician follows orders. The last bit of the Email -If you destroyed United 2189, I want you to know, their blood is on your hands. Amid El-Maati-

Forte takes his Cell, dials.

EXT. DOCK - PARKING LOT

The Lot is filled with Ambulances and Police Cars, all with lights flashing, no sirens. Fairchild walks through the commotion, answers his Phone.

FORTE (O.S.)

We just got an Email from Saif.

FAIRCHILD

What?

FORTE (O.S.)

There was no dirty bomb. It was all a façade.

Fairchild passes by Stu (this should be familiar from the earlier scene).

FAIRCHILD
Impossible.

EXT. DESERT - SOMEWHERE IN PAKISTAN

Forte continues with the story. Stu can only shake his head.

FORTE
At that point, we felt we had no choice but to bring 2189 down.

STU
So why the cover up? Is it the upcoming Election. Your careers, your legacy? What?

FORTE
At first, we thought what was left of the dirty bomb was in the wreckage. We didn't want to go public until the crash site was secure and we knew exactly what we were dealing with.

STU
Yeah. But there was no bomb. So why the cover up?

FORTE
We're fighting a war on Terrorism that the American Public is not convinced we can win. Like it or not, this IS a war of Perception and what happened to Flight 2189 does nothing but weaken the Public's confidence in America's ability to wage this war.

STU
You don't think the Families have a right to know what really happened?

FORTE
There's nothing we can say or do to bring the victims back. There may be a time when we can tell the Families what really happened. Considering the current state of the World, that time is not now.

STU

All the lies, the deceipt. How do you live with yourself?

FORTE

You think this hasn't affected me. You think I've been able to sleep through one night since we made the decision. You think this isn't going to haunt every person involved for the rest of their lives? Not only would I give up my career, I'd give up my life if I could bring those people back.

Forte walks towards Stu.

FORTE

All that said, you put me in the same situation with what we knew that day... I make the same call. I guess that's something I'll have to live with.

Forte stands face to face with Stu.

FORTE

Detective, you're free to go.

Forte hands Stu his keys.

FORTE

This is bigger than me, or you, or the 256 people that died on that Flight. This is about our Country. Our way of life and the ability to maintain it. I hope, I pray, that we made the right decision and you will do the same.

Fairchild gets in the Driver's Seat of the Cadillac. Starts up the car. Forte gives Stu one final look, gets in the Passenger Seat. They pull away.

Stu walks on shaky legs to the Rental. Gets in the Driver's Seat. On the Passenger Seat, Higuero's Suicide Note.

EXT. HOUSE

Stu's Taurus parked in front of Alex's House.

INT. TAURUS

Stu stares out the Windshield, contemplative. He holds the Suicide note in his hand. Takes a deep breath, opens the Door.

EXT. HOUSE

Stu knocks. Alex opens the Front Door. They talk. We don't hear the conversation. Alex leaves, returns with the Manilla envelope. Stu hands her the Suicide Note.

STU
Some day, your Son will want to
read this.

Alex takes the note with trembling hand. Gives him the Manilla Envelope.

ALEX
Where do you go from here?

STU
I don't know yet.

Stu fights away the tears, puts a hand on her Shoulder. Lets it slip away.

STU
I'm sorry.

He turns, walks back to his car.

EXT. HOUSTON CHRONICLE

Stu stares at the Houston Chronicle from across the Street in front of a Cross Walk, Evidence in hand. The Walk Light turns Green. Americans of every age, race and creed walk across the street. Stu takes two steps, stops. The Crowd parts around him. A long beat. He turns, walks away from the Newspaper. Drops the Manilla Envelope in the trash.

EXT. ABOVE THE GULF

United 2189 flies high above the Water. The end of the night, the first light of the new day peeking over the Horizon. An F-22 swoops up from Beneath the 747, moves towards the Aircraft.

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END.