

Tehran

by

Richard Regen

"Terror is only justice; prompt, severe
and inflexible. Pity is treason."

Maximillian Robespierre
The Committee on Public Safety- Paris, 1783

"The guilty need no trial; they must be
killed. Compassion is weakness."

Ayatollah Khomeini
Supreme Leader, Tehran- 1989

INT. NIAVARAN PALACE, TEHRAN- NIGHT

ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE of the SHAH OF IRAN and EMPRESS FARAH hosting a state reception for PRESIDENT and MRS. CARTER.

SUPERTITLE: New Year's Eve

December 31, 1977

The men are all in tuxedos, except for various generals and admirals in dress uniforms. The women are all dressed in evening gowns and major jewelry for the occasion.

Every person goes dead silent as the his royal highness stands and raises his glass for a welcoming toast. It is a riveting yet haunting display of power and glamour.

SHAH

Mr. President and Mrs. Carter,
Excellencies, Ladies, and Gentlemen;
It gives the Shabanou and myself great
pleasure to welcome you to our country.
This reception is particularly auspicious
since it takes place on the eve of 1978,
and your presence here represents a New
Year's gift for your Iranian friends.

CREDITS INTERCUT WITH ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE--

SHAH (cont'd)

According to ancient tradition, the first guest of the New Year is an omen for that year. And although our annual New Year is celebrated with the advent of spring, nevertheless, since the distinguished guest tonight is such a person of good will and achievement, naturally we consider it as a most excellent omen.

President Carter is in the middle of his responsive toast.

PRESIDENT CARTER

Because of the great leadership of the Shah, Iran is an island of stability in one of the more troubled regions of the world. This is a great tribute to you, Your Majesty, to your leadership, and to the respect and admiration and love which your people give to you.

The President turns to the Shah as he concludes his tribute.

PRESIDENT CARTER (cont'd)

On behalf of the people of the United States, I would like to offer a toast to the great leaders of Iran, the Shah and the Shabanou, and to the people of Iran, and to the world peace that we hope together we can help to bring.

The Shah rises and the two powerful men CLINK glasses- an ominous discordant note of foreboding.

CUT TO:

EXT. AZADI SQUARE, TEHRAN- DAY

A DEMONSTRATION fills Tehran's largest huge public square. MASSES of PEOPLE fill the plaza and surrounding streets.

SUPERTITLE: Tehran, Iran

Autumn, 1978

It's an incongruous cross section of Iran: dissident STUDENTS in jeans and leather jackets; rotund SHOPKEEPERS; WOMEN shrouded in black chadors; bearded, black-robed MULLAHS.

ANGLE ON two men on the edge of the mob; PARVIZ MORADI- mid thirties, trim beard, intense eyes- and MASSOUD MORADI, younger by a few years, obvious family resemblance to Parviz.

Whereas Massoud waves his fist and shouts loudly, Parviz is more reserved, taciturn. He looks over at something.

PARVIZ'S POV on a side street, where ARMED SOLDIERS with automatic weapons watch the proceedings warily. A junior OFFICER in mirrored aviators stares back at him.

EXT. TEHRAN STREETS- DAY

Outside the central post office, a busy square with PEOPLE coming and going, just a normal hectic day. A Fiat sedan mottled with dents parks in a free space right in front.

Two YOUNG GUYS- students in jeans and denim jackets- get out, and lock up the car. As they do, a TRAFFIC COP walks up, starts yelling at them. They shrug and keep walking.

The cop continues yelling as they melt into the crowd of pedestrians. He writes out a parking ticket.

Finished, he places it beneath the windshield wiper. Then he turns and walks away. He gets only five steps when--

--the FIAT EXPLODES in a FIREBALL.

CUT TO:

INT. MEHERBAD AIRPORT, TEHRAN- NIGHT

A loud, chaotic Middle Eastern air terminal, housing a whirl of frenetic movements and controlled chaos.

MEDIUM on a traveller in an immigration line: DOUGLAS REED.

He's 35-45, tall and trim, with sharp features, a good suit worn too often, and the air of an experienced traveler.

EXT. MEHERBAD AIRPORT, TEHRAN- NIGHT

The scene outside the terminal is loud and chaotic; POLICE and SOLDIERS keeping watch on the scene.

Holding luggage and a briefcase, Reed comes out of the terminal and into the riot of people. He looks around.

After a moment, Reed spots a man holding a sign that says "PROFESSOR REED"- it's Parviz Moradi. He walks up to him.

REED (FARSI)
I'm Douglas Reed.

Moradi embarrasses Reed by responding in excellent English.

PARVIZ
Yes, sir. The Institute sent me.
Please, let me get that for you.
(takes the suitcase)
If you follow me, please.

REED
What's your name?

PARVIZ
Parviz, sir. Parviz Moradi.

He starts walking towards a parking lot and Reed follows.

INT. MORADI'S CAR (MOVING)- NIGHT

Moradi drives an old Ford LTD with Reed in the back. Tehran traffic is anarchic disorder, but Moradi drives deftly.

PARVIZ
Your Farsi is quite passable, Dr. Reed.
Truly.

Reed chuckles at the backhanded compliment.

REED
Thank you. And it's Douglas.

He notices a photograph of a young woman holding a baby taped to the dashboard. There's a toddler standing on one side of her and a boy of five or six on the other.

REED (cont'd)
That your family, Parviz?

PARVIZ
(beaming with pride)
They are a great blessing. And you?

REED
Me, kids? No.

PARVIZ
Pardon me my curiosity, but I was not informed to what purpose is your visit.

Reed looks out the window.

CUT TO:

EXT. MASSACHUSETTS AVE., WASHINGTON, D.C.- DAY

An ornate granite mansion on Embassy Row housing a private gentlemen's club.

INT. METROPOLITAN CLUB- DAY

Reed sits in a club chair across from JEROME COLES; sixties, a shock of white hair, Harvard tie, navy suit; a well-preserved government mandarin. Both hold tumblers of scotch.

REED
Sorry. I'm not your guy.

Coles's voice is vaguely Southern, mellifluous and soothing.

COLES
But you are, Douglas. In fact, you're perfect. You've visited Iran before, your Farsi's good, you have contacts--

REED
(interrupting)
--And I owe you.

Reed downs his scotch; Coles smiles thinly.

COLES
There's that too.

REED
I'm no spy. I haven't the training.

COLES
We know. All we want you to do is make the scene, visit a few friends, hit the parties, maybe do a little sight seeing, and then give us your impressions.

REED
The CIA station in Tehran must have a hundred case officers. Why not ask them?

Reed signals a WAITER for a refill. Coles sighs.

COLES
Local assets have become...unreliable. They've fallen into the habit of telling us what they think we want to hear.

REED
In other words, you don't trust the CIA.

Coles has the strained expression of a man who's just found out his new dog is a biter.

COLES

The point, Douglas, is that we're willing to forgive your debt. If you go.

REED

All that for some half-baked travelogue? To what do I owe this sudden generosity?

The waiter delivers a new drink. Coles waits for him to get out of ear shot before continuing.

COLES

The chair of your department is an old friend from Exeter. He tells me you're either going to get tenure this year or have your teaching contract terminated.

(looks at Reed)
Which outcome would you prefer?

Reed adopts a suitably contrite tone, but it's more in his voice than his body language.

REED

I'm sorry. Go on.
(off Coles's silence)
Please.

Coles leans in, lowers his voice. Reed leans in to listen.

COLES

The State Department is finally making progress in the peace process. But certain hardliners in the CIA and NSA are limited by their Cold War blinders, seeing only the Soviet threat. They're urging a broad crackdown against the Iranian opposition, to set an example.

REED

The President preaches peace and human rights while our biggest ally in the region butchers his political opponents?

COLES

You see our quandary. We need to counter the relentless pessimism coming out of Tehran. To be credible, however, it must come from someone objective.

Reed suddenly realizes why Coles want him to go to Iran. He looks the older man in the eye, gets serious.

REED

So what exactly do you want me to say?

COLES

That the Shah's regime is fundamentally stable.

(MORE)

COLES (cont'd)
Keep your reports upbeat, but don't be
obvious about it. After all, you're
there as an unbiased observer.

REED
I understand.

COLES
Do a good job and I'll put in a word
about finally getting you your tenure.

REED
Thank you, sir. I appreciate that.

COLES
(hands him a slip of paper)
Call this number, let it ring twice, then
hang up. A boy will come along an hour
later to collect your report.

REED
What do you want me to say, you know, if
people ask why I'm there?

Coles thinks on that a moment.

FADE TO:

INT. MORADI'S CAR (MOVING)- NIGHT

Reed returns from his reverie.

REED
I came here to research an article for
Foreign Affairs.

MORADI
Very good, sir.

EXT. HOTEL INTERCONTINENTAL- NIGHT

The best hotel in Tehran. When Moradi pulls up, DOORMEN in
full livery rush up just as Reed is getting out.

INT. HOTEL INTERCONTINENTAL- NIGHT

Reed walks through the quiet, enormous lobby to the front
desk. A HOTEL CLERK appears instantly.

REED (FARSI)
Checking in. Douglas Reed.

HOTEL CLERK
Welcome back, Dr. Reed.

Reed looks around the lobby. No one around in the middle of
the night except for a gaggle of SECURITY GUARDS sharing tea,
telltale bulges in their suits.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY- NIGHT

The elevator door opens. Reed is facing a group of six young IRANIAN PARTY-GOERS in tuxes and slinky dresses exiting the elevator. Two of the guys hold open bottles of Dom Perignon.

One of the GIRLS- dark eyed and stunning- gives Reed a sly smile as she passes THIS CLOSE to him getting off the elevator. It's a small moment, just between them.

INT. REED'S HOTEL ROOM- DAWN

The sun just brightens the sky. At the window, Reed takes in a spectacular view of Tehran, a city beneath a bowl of mountains, oil wealth fueling a high-rise construction boom.

The digital clock by his bed reads: 5:45 AM. Reed looks at his watch, still on Washington time: 8:45 PM. He yawns, starts undressing, bone tired, sits on the bed.

INT. REED'S HOTEL ROOM- DAY

Reed- now freshly showered and shaved, towel wrapped around his waist- stands at the window, looking at the park next to the hotel. There's a KNOCK on his door. He walks over.

REED (FARSI)

Yes?

VOICE (O.C.)

Room service.

He opens the door not to a room service waiter but to REZA BEHROOZ; Iranian, the same age as Reed, slim, good-looking, dressed in a crisp navy Pierre Cardin suit. He looks at Reed.

REED

Bastard.

BEHROOZ

Did you think you could come to Tehran
without me finding out?

Seeing him, Reed breaks out into a grin. They hug; the reunion of two old friends.

REED

I was about to call.

On either side of the hallway, Reed notices two PLAINCLOTHES SECURITY MEN in aviators and dark suits have taken up guard.

BEHROOZ

You going to let me in?

He has a distinctly American way about him, a result of schooling at Andover and Harvard. Reed steps aside and Behrooz enters.

INT. REED'S HOTEL ROOM- CONTINUOUS

Behrooz surveys the room, is mock horrified.

BEHROOZ
My God. Not even a suite.

REED
PhDs can't afford suites.

BEHROOZ
All the more reason you should be staying
with us. Pack your things.

REED
So your mother can stuff me with
pistachios and dates all day?

BEHROOZ
She always said you were too thin.
(then)
Get dressed. I'm buying you lunch.

EXT. HOTEL INTERCONTINENTAL- DAY

Behrooz and Reed are getting inside a Mercedes Limo, so heavy
with armor plate it sits low on its tires.

As they get in, Reed notices both bodyguards have GUNS.

INT. MORADI APARTMENT- DAY

The sounds of a young family in a tiny apartment. TV news
blaring in the b.g. PARVIZ sits at a kitchen table, his six-
month old BOY on his lap, a cup of tea before him.

His wife SORAYA, young and pretty, is cooking behind him.
Sitting across from Parviz is Massoud, intent on the TV.

(Note: they speak Farsi with English subtitles)

MASSOUD (FARSI)
There's a demonstration Friday.

PARVIZ (FARSI)
Another? People have to work you know.

MASSOUD (FARSI)
The regime will only respond if the
people keep up the pressure.

SORAYA (FARSI)
(not looking up from her
cooking)
Your "people" are in this room.

PARVIZ (FARSI)
Spend the day with us in the mountains.
We'll have a picnic.

MASSOUD (FARSI)
I'm marching; whatever happens to me is
Allah's will.

SORAYA (FARSI)
So you're praying to Allah now?
(snorts derisively.)
Try praying for a job.

Parviz plays his usual role of family peacemaker.

PARVIZ (FARSI)
Let him be, Soraya.
(to Massoud)
We could all pray some more.

Soraya gives Parviz an annoyed glance. The TODDLER comes running through the kitchen, chased by her older BROTHER.

SORAYA (FARSI)
No running in my house!
(to Parviz)
What time must you be at work?

PARVIZ (FARSI)
He said he'd call when he needed me.

SORAYA (FARSI)
What he like, this American?

PARVIZ (FARSI)
College professor, speaks good Farsi.

MASSOUD (FARSI)
A spy then.

PARVIZ (FARSI)
I know another academic when I meet one.

SORAYA (FARSI)
You'd still be at the university if--

PARVIZ (FARSI)
(interrupting sharply)
--Please, let's not revisit that again.
(then, to Massoud)
The regime seeks a provocation. Why offer them one?

MASSOUD (FARSI)
Revolutions require martyrs.

PARVIZ (FARSI)
They also require revolutionaries.
(puts his hand on Massoud's)
Indulge me this one time. Please.

The baby gurgles. Massoud meets Parviz's gaze.

MASSOUD (FARSI)
You haven't attended prayers with me in a long time.

PARVIZ (FARSI)
If I do, you'll come with us?

Massoud reluctantly nods. Parviz smiles.

INT. FARIBORZ RESTAURANT- DAY

Persian food in an elegant setting for Tehran's wealthy. All the latest fashions, men flashing thick Rolexes and fat pinkie rings, women adorned in gold and diamonds.

Behrooz and Reed are sitting alone at a huge banquette facing outwards. Everyone can see them and they can see everyone.

BEHROOZ
Tehran isn't exactly a hop to the Vineyard for a long weekend, Douglas.
What brings you here?

REED
I'm doing an article for *Foreign Affairs*.

BEHROOZ
(impressed)
Those old goats will finally have to offer you tenure.

REED
So what have they got you doing at the ministry these days?

BEHROOZ
My portfolio's too boring for words; school construction, land reform, watershed preservation.

A WAITER brings a spread of caviar and toast points.

REED
The last time I was here, we tooled around in your Corvette.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT./EXT. BEHROOZ'S CORVETTE (MOVING)- DAY

The Caspian Sea coast- the Hamptons for the Tehrani elite during the summer months, when the capital is too hot.

SUPERTITLE: 1975

On a busy coast road, a yellow Corvette Stingray is racing along past traffic.

Behrooz drives with Reed next to him, both wearing sunglasses and Lacoste shirts. "Tush" by ZZ Top blares on the radio.

They pass FOUR GIRLS in bikini tops in a Mercedes convertible; Behrooz WAVES at the girls, smiles at Reed; just two young post-college guys having a good time.

A very different vibe from the present.

BACK TO:

BEHROOZ

Oh, I still have the 'Vette.

REED

Then why'd we come here in a tank?

BEHROOZ

Interior Ministry requirement. It's stupid, I know, but my rank demands it.

Reed leans in closer to his friend, confiding.

REED

Reza, there's talk in Washington.

(whispers)

Is the Shah really in trouble?

Behrooz snorts dismissively while loading caviar onto toast.

BEHROOZ

It's an old story; the leftists use misguided students and ignorant peasants as their cat's paw. They seek a reaction, the iron fist, in the hope it brings international condemnation. But His Majesty will not be so easily provoked by these brigands.

REED

C'mon, man, you're talking to me here.

Behrooz looks around to see if anyone is in ear shot, then leans in and lowers his voice.

BEHROOZ

Between us, the rallies have spread beyond Tehran, but we've managed to keep it quiet. Illegal strikes have slowed oil production, but we're tapping reserves to fulfill foreign contracts. It's all under control.

REED

What'll happen next?

BEHROOZ

We'll let the troublemakers blow off steam and eventually the protests will wither. Remember, these are Persians we speak of. They'd rather take tea and dates than march outside in the cold.

A WAITER arrives with a bottle of Dom Perignon.

BEHROOZ (cont'd)
There's a party tonight.
(the cork POPS)
You'll need a tux.

EXT. OUTSIDE FARIBORZ RESTAURANT- DAY

Reed watches Behrooz's limo driving away. Across the street, waiting patiently, is Moradi in his LTD.

EXT. INSTITUTE- DAY

A small building in a well-kept neighborhood in north Tehran. Reed is entering.

INSET: a brass plaque reads IRANIAN-AMERICAN INSTITUTE.

INT. GERGES'S OFFICE- DAY

A grand office, antique mahogany desk, Persian carpets and book-lined walls. Reed sits across from FARHAD GERGES; late sixties, a well-worn olive three piece suit, smoking a pipe.

GERGES

I was asked to assist you by your department head. We have a spare office if you need it, and you have Parviz. He's a good man, knows Tehran well. Used to be a professor himself, you know.

REED

Really. What happened?

GERGES

Someone in his family committed a political offense of some sort. Seemed impolite to probe him on it.

REED

Of course.

Gerges leans forward on his desk, looks at Reed.

GERGES

Forgive me a pointed question, but you're not with the Central Intelligence Agency in any capacity, are you, Dr. Reed?

Reed chuckles but then see Gerges is very serious.

REED

The CIA has more than enough people in Tehran, I think.

GERGES

Indeed. But I've worked hard over the years to keep this a purely academic institution. And more than once, I've had to shoo them away.

REED

I understand, but you needn't worry.

GERGES

Then we'll get along fine.

Gerges stands, signaling it's time to leave. Reed also stands, and moves to the door.

REED

A question, Dr. Gerges. How bad has it been the last year?

GERGES

Seems a trifle; but I was here in 1953.

REED

Mossadeq supporter?

Gerges gives him a rueful look.

GERGES

We all were.

Reed looks at him with an expression somewhere between understanding and embarrassment.

INT. MORADI'S CAR (MOVING)- DAY

The car is moving slowly through a thicket of traffic in front of Tehran's ancient bazaar, the streets awash with HAWKERS and BARKERS, pure chaos.

PARVIZ

The bazaar can be confusing, sir.

REED

Pull up here. And stop calling me "sir".

INT. BAZAAR- DAY

The ancient bazaar, where a mass of IRANIANS weave through a maze of DEALERS selling fabrics and silks; dried fruits and nuts; spices; gold; carpets; clothing; antiques; teas; etc.

Except for a few hopelessly lost TOURISTS, Reed is the only Westerner in the bazaar. But unlike them, he moves purposely through the crowd, knowing exactly where he's going.

HANDHELD POV following Reed through the bazaar, keeping him in sight, never getting close enough to be noticed.

Reed enters a small tailor shop in the bazaar.

ANGLE ON the MAN who was following him- fifties, Western, tan linen suit, white shirt, a face that's seen it all. He stops and lights an unfiltered Camel.

INT. TAILOR SHOP- DAY

Surrounded by teetering bolts of cloth, Reed looks at himself in a new tuxedo in a full-length mirror. Behind him, an ancient TAILOR looks at him with an apprising eye.

TAILOR (FARSI)
Let me take in the back.

He helps Reed off with the coat and turns to go work at his sewing machine. Except a SMALL BOY is standing there holding a business card. The boy whispers something in the old tailor's ear, and he takes the business card from the child.

TAILOR (cont'd)
My grandson says a man in the bazaar
asked him to give you this.

Reed takes the card, looks at it.

INSET: GERALD COLLINS

Central Intelligence Agency

Reed flips the card over and sees a hand written note:

Drinks at six. Your hotel.

INT. BAZAAR- DAY

Reed is making his way out when a COMMOTION breaks out; a STUDENT carrying a rucksack chased by two PLAINCLOTHES COPS. He bangs into many people in the crowded, close confines.

He drops his bag momentarily and cassette tapes scatter. He grabs the bag and keeps running, the cops hot on his tail. Reed leans down, picks up a tape, looks at it.

INSET: a grainy image, photocopied over and over, of the AYATOLLAH KHOMEINI, his stern countenance staring out.

Reed pockets the tape, makes his way out of the bazaar.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY- DUSK

Reed is walking to the elevators when he passes a small bar that has an entrance in the lobby.

Something catches his eye. He stops, looks inside.

REED'S POV inside the bar, where he can see a LARGE TV on the far wall, above the bar. He can't hear the sound but sees the image; it is a famous one.

INSET: To the POP of flashbulbs, three men sit at an ornate table signing copies of documents.

PRESIDENT JIMMY CARTER, in a grey suit, sits between Israeli Prime Minister MENACHEM BEGIN and Egyptian President ANWAR SADAT, both in dark suits.

They are signing the historic Camp David Accords, the first peace treaty between Israel and any Arab state.

MEDIUM on Reed, realizing the significance of the moment.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOTEL INTERCONTINENTAL BAR- DUSK

The rooftop bar overlooking the city hums with young Iranians drinking and carousing. Reed enters, looks around for the man he's meeting. But something else catches his eye.

REED'S POV on a WOMAN on the dance floor; late-twenties, slinky, a blue off-the-shoulder Halston dress, dark hair up in a chignon, single diamond pendant. She dances with a YOUNG MAN, handsome, well-dressed, and prosperous.

Reed can't avert his eyes; she's stunning. Then he remembers she's the girl in the group of party goers coming off the elevator who smiled at him when he checked into the hotel.

As the song ends, she looks at him, realizing he'd been staring. Reed smiles. She returns a lightning flash of contempt, turns on her heels, and walks away.

Reed sees COLLINS- the man in the linen suit from the bazaar- waiting alone at a table. Collins stands, waves him over. Reed sits, sees he's drinking a frosty Margarita.

REED
I'm Douglas Reed.

COLLINS
You take yours with salt, doc?

Reed reluctantly nods. Collins gets a waiter's attention and makes the motion for another round of drinks.

COLLINS (cont'd)
Y'know, ever since Beirut turned into a free fire zone, Tehran's the only place between Kabul and Cairo where you can get a decent margarita.

REED
That's too bad.

COLLINS
A damn shame is what it is. Beirut was a great town; cosmopolitan, urbane, gorgeous women, fantastic nightclubs.

(MORE)

COLLINS (cont'd)
But Arabs never appreciate what they have
until they fucking destroy it.

The drinks arrive. They both take one.

COLLINS (cont'd)
That's why we get along so good with the
Iranians; cause they're not Arabs. Three
thousand years ago, the Arab tribes were
in the desert, cutting each other's
throats, drinking fermented camel piss
and humping their cousins. But the
Persians, they were building an empire.
Read the *Iliad*; it's all in there.

REED
What do you want, Mr. Collins?

COLLINS
It's Gerry. Everybody calls me Gerry.
(off Reed's silence)
I'm here to make sure you don't do
something stupid while you're in Iran,
like get yourself killed.

REED
I'm only writing an article.

Collins laughs, gulps down half his drink.

COLLINS
Please. The intelligence community is a
small world, doc; we know the State
Department sent you. We figure the
bluebloods either want a fig leaf in case
Iran goes to shit, or they got a
bureaucratic axe to grind. Maybe both.

REED
So the CIA thinks we're losing Iran?

Collins chuckles, swigs his drink, gets up to leave.

COLLINS
Stay outta trouble, don't do anything
that makes us look stupid, you and me
will get along fine.

REED
I'm curious, if the agency thinks I'm
here to make it look bad, why send
someone to look out for me?

COLLINS
Cause we'd look worse if you wound up
face down in a ditch with a bullet in the
back of your head.
(smirks)
Hell, it might even look like we had
something to do with it.

The CIA man exits. The music has changed to Donna Summer's hit song "'I Feel Love'". Reed sees the woman from the dance floor is alone at the bar. He gets up, walks over to her.

REED (FARSI)
Hi. Remember me? We passed each other in the elevator the other night.

She says nothing, just looks at him.

REED (FARSI) (cont'd)
I remember you. You're hard to forget.

She responds in English, her accent is a combination of Persian and something European- perhaps French.

GIRL
I'm sorry, but was that a compliment?
(off Reed's grin and nod)
And leering, that also was a compliment?

REED
No, that was rude. But the thing is, I just couldn't take my eyes off you.

She looks at Reed, a little taken aback by his forwardness, but also somewhat amused.

GIRL
Are you always this...debonair?

REED
I get better with time. Look, I'm supposed to go to a party, but I'd rather take you to dinner. What do you say?

GIRL
How very American of you. Practically propositioning me without so much as an introduction.

REED
Propositioning you? Well now you're just flattering yourself.

Her face goes red with fury; she considers throwing her drink in his face but just turns and storms off into the crowd.

INT. REED'S HOTEL ROOM- NIGHT

At the desk, Reed is finishing a letter. He folds it, puts it in an envelope, seals it, then dials the phone. He waits for TWO RINGS, then hangs up.

He finds the cassette tape he got in the bazaar and pops it in a tape player. He hits the play button and listens to the nasal drone of the Ayatollah Khomeini while he undresses.

KHOMEINI (FARSI)

(on scratchy tape)

"The Shah is the Jewish agent, the American snake, whose head must be smashed with a stone."

Reed marches into the bathroom to take a shower.

INT. REED'S HOTEL ROOM- LATER

A towel around his waist, Reed is shaving when there's a KNOCK. He picks up the envelope, answers the door.

A KID is standing there with his hand out. Reed offers him the envelope. He takes it and disappears down the hallway.

EXT. HOTEL INTERCONTINENTAL- NIGHT

Reed comes out the front door dressed in his new tuxedo. Moradi is waiting for him in his LTD.

INT./EXT. LTD (MOVING) / TEHRAN STREET SCENES- NIGHT

Moradi is driving through a bustling part of Tehran. Reed takes in the street scenes from the back of the car.

--A park where FAMILIES stroll and eat ice cream cones. But right after, there's a police checkpoint at an intersection.

REED (V.O.)

Gentleman, my impressions thus far: Tehran isn't the city in chaos we see on the TV news. Everything is normal and people are going about their lives.

--A radio station surrounded by ARMED TROOPS and sandbags.

REED (V.O.) (cont'd)

A source admitted to me that while some protests have taken place in the outer provinces, it's been kept quiet by the government, effectively isolating the political ramifications.

--They pass a movie house where the facade advertises "Saturday Night Fever." A crowd is exiting, a few guys lamely mimicking Tony Manero's dance moves.

REED (cont'd)

This same source confirmed that wildcat strikes and production stoppages have reduced oil production. But the government is tapping reserves to make up the shortfall. It seems but a hiccup.

--Major intersections guarded by armed RIOT POLICE.

REED (V.O.) (cont'd)
The Shah's government is firmly in
control and fully engaged in peacefully
answering the challenges facing it.

--They pass a Mercedes dealership where CUSTOMERS look at
gleaming coups and sedans.

EXT. BEHROOZ HOME- NIGHT

A stately boulevard in North Tehran, the wealthy part of the
city. Tall walls keep properties hidden from the street.

At one entrance, a row of expensive cars are dropping off
GUESTS for a party; men in tuxedos, women in Parisian
fashions. BODYGUARDS and VALETS oversee the procession.

The LTD is parked up the street, Reed standing next to the
open driver's window talking to Moradi.

REED
Go home to your family, Parviz I'll find
my way back to the hotel.

Reed turns, and strides up to the guards. He gives his name,
they check a list, and he enters the grounds.

INT./EXT. BEHROOZ HOME- NIGHT

Votive candles line a manicured walkway leading up to a
Modernist granite structure suggesting Mies Van der Roe.

Reed follows behind a group of guests to the front door,
where a BUTLER in full livery awaits.

INT. PARTY- NIGHT

A large ball room, a party in full swing with a stylish,
young, wealthy crowd. "I'm Your Boogie Man" by KC and the
Sunshine Band is playing. Waiters carry trays of champagne.

Persians being extremely social, everyone in the room is
drinking, chatting, dancing and gossiping.

ANGLE ON Reed alone in a corner, taking in the scene.

VOICE (O.C.)
Douglas, is that you?

Reed turns to face MARIAM BEHROOZ. In her early-sixties,
trim in a stylish gold dress, and tasteful make-up.

Seeing her, he smiles broadly. She kisses him on both cheeks.

REED
Mariam, how are you?

MRS. BEHROOZ

Better now that you are here. Let me
look at you, cherie.
(makes a face)
You're too thin. You need a wife.

REED

Reza predicted you'd say that.

MRS. BEHROOZ

That one could use a wife as well.

REED

I don't see him anywhere.

MRS. BEHROOZ

He's in his office in the other wing of
the house. Working.

REED

Allow me the honor of escorting you.

He gallantly puts his arm out, she takes it, and they sashay
off into the party.

INT. BEHROOZ'S OFFICE- NIGHT

Nice office, modern furniture. Behrooz- in a tux- sits
facing six Iranian men, all YOUNG TECHNOCRATS in suits except
for an OLDER MAN- sixty, rheumy eyes but a hard face.

Behrooz's sunny Western disposition has given way to a stern
Islamic cast. He's clearly top dog in the room.

(Note: they all speak English with slight accents revealing
their schooling; Cambridge, Oxford, Yale, Harvard, etc.)

BEHROOZ

We all know the Shah to be a progressive
monarch, generous to his loyal subjects,
yet tolerant of his detractors.

The old man lights an unfiltered Camel.

INT. PARTY- NIGHT

Mariam Behrooz introduces Reed to various couples; some
Iranian, some Western, but all very well-to-do. Many of the
men makes a great show of proffering their business cards.

EXT. MOSQUE- NIGHT

A line of WORSHIPERS- all men- make their way into a mosque
for evening prayers. From a loudspeaker high on the minaret,
the MUZZEIN chants the adhan, the call to the faithful.

Each man removes his shoes or sandals before entering the
holy place. A large pile forms. Massoud and Parviz take off
their shoes and enter together.

INT. BEHROOZ'S OFFICE- NIGHT

BEHROOZ

But I'm afraid this forbearance has only emboldened our enemies. They think us feeble, impotent, unable to act. As a result, a malignancy has taken root.

INT. PARTY- NIGHT

Mrs. Behrooz is still introducing Reed to various guests; a rotund, ruddy-faced ENGLISHMAN, eyes shining with gin, and a trim AMERICAN BUSINESSMAN in a navy suit.

INT. MOSQUE- NIGHT

The mosque is immense, holding perhaps a thousand men. They all kneel in rows on prayer rugs, facing east, to Mecca.

INT. BEHROOZ'S OFFICE- NIGHT

BEHROOZ

And now I fear this cancer is metastasizing throughout the nation.

Behrooz casts his gaze on a young technocrat, RAMZI. He immediately pipes up, a pup eager to please his master.

RAMZI

Student-led protests in Isfahan, Mashad, and Shiraz. Wildcat oil strikes in Abadan. Production's down twenty-three per cent in the last quarter.

BEHROOZ

That is simply intolerable.

RAMZI

We can end the strikes easily enough.

Ramzi makes a pistol out of his fingers. Another young technocrat, HAFEZ, speaks up.

HAFEZ

Explain to me how shooting oil workers improves oil production?

RAMZI

Shoot a few, the rest go back to work.

INT. MOSQUE- NIGHT

The MUSALLEE, the leader of the prayers, lets out a sonorous chant of the salah, the daily prayer, to the faithful.

All of the kneeling men in the mosque press their heads to the floor in submission before Allah.

INT. PARTY- NIGHT

Next to Reed is an IRANIAN GENERAL, maybe fifty, in full dress uniform, his chest festooned with medals. He's talking about something, but Reed's attention is elsewhere.

REVERSE: he sees the girl from the hotel. She's chatting with the guy she'd been dancing with earlier; he's 30-36, a tailored suit, gold Rolex, Gucci loafers.

INT. MOSQUE- NIGHT

ANGLE ON Parviz and Massoud, bent in prayer, reciting the prayers memorized when they were children.

INT. BEHROOZ'S OFFICE- NIGHT

Behrooz lights a gold-tipped Rothman with a Cartier lighter, listening to the debate between his subordinates.

HAFEZ
Carter isn't Nixon. There will be
repercussions to overt violence.

RAMZI
The Americans will object publicly and
applaud us privately. They fear Soviet
intrusion even more than we.

HAFEZ
With all due respect, we're so consumed
by the leftist threat that we forget a
risk in our very midst: the religionists.

BEHROOZ
Go on.

HAFEZ
Khomeini's tapes are being passed through
the mosques like honey cakes. We must
consider the reaction of the mullahs.

INT. MOSQUE- NIGHT

The prayers having ended, a YOUNG IMAM is addressing the assembled. He's a fiery orator, but we hear the Farsi without sub-titles, so we can only imagine what he's saying.

INT. BEHROOZ'S OFFICE- NIGHT

RAMZI
We've bought off most of the hypocrites,
and the rest will fall in line.

HAFEZ
What of the ones who don't?

RAMZI
Does the Koran not state that Paradise
awaits all martyrs?

Hafez looks to Behrooz for guidance.

HAFEZ
Our course is decided then?

Behrooz sighs, undecided. He looks to the hard old man.

BEHROOZ
Ali, in such matters, your opinion has
always weighed heavily on my own.

Ali inhales deeply on his Camel. A beat. He blows out an enormous cloud of blue smoke.

ALI
Without a shepherd, sheep will scatter.

Behrooz thinks a moment, looks at his technocrats.

BEHROOZ
Set it in motion.

All the technocrats rise and exit. Ali looks at Behrooz.

ALI
Are you sure these college boys of yours
are up to the task?

BEHROOZ
We'll find out soon enough.
(then)
At least I always have you.

Behrooz stubs out his Rothman, stands up.

ALI
One thing. Your friend, this American.

Behrooz casts a gimlet gaze on Ali.

ALI (cont'd)
He was seen talking with one of our CIA
friends at the Intercontinental bar.

BEHROOZ
I know Reed. The man is far too soft to
work for the CIA.

ALI
Maybe.
(stutting out his butt)
But he works for someone.

EXT. MOSQUE- NIGHT

The faithful are leaving the mosque, collecting their foot
ware and shaking hands with the Young Imam.

Massoud and Parviz walk away together into the night.

INT. PARTY- NIGHT

MEDIUM on Reed at a bar, taking a martini from a BARTENDER. From behind him, he hears Behrooz's voice.

BEHROOZ (O.C.)
Douglas, I want you to meet my little sister, Farah.

Reed turns around and sees his friend Reza standing with the same girl he tried to pick up at the hotel bar earlier that night. Farah and Reed share a conspiratorial look.

BEHROOZ (cont'd)
Farah was studying in Paris when last you visited. The Sorbonne.
(to Farah)
Doug and I were at Harvard together.

FARAH
Of course, the famous Douglas Reed. I've heard so much about you from my mother.

REED
All good, I hope.

BEHROOZ
(to Reed)
Let's you and I get a drink.

REED
A genuine pleasure meeting you, Farah.

Behrooz looks at his kid sister, expecting a polite reply.

FARAH
(through clenched teeth)
The pleasure was all mine.

EXT. BEHROOZ GARDEN- NIGHT

The sounds of the party waft through the windows to the garden, where Reed and Behrooz share Cuban cigars and snifters of brandy.

BEHROOZ
Farah's taking you skiing tomorrow.

REED
I don't think your sister likes me.

BEHROOZ
Nonsense. My mother's arranging it all now. And frankly, you'll be doing our family a tremendous favor.

REED
How's that?

BEHROOZ

We don't approve of the man she's been seeing. They're going skiing, but if you're there, it's like a chaperone.

REED

Me? A chaperone?

BEHROOZ

Yes, I see the irony. Just remember, she's my sister.

REED

So what's wrong with this guy other than he's dating your kid sister?

BEHROOZ

Douglas, this isn't America. We have different customs, different standards. His family are bazaaris. Not the right sort of people.

REED

When did you become such a snob?

BEHROOZ

We have a name to uphold and I'm the eldest male. It's a responsibility I'm expected to take seriously.

REED

So why not just tell her she can't see him and be done with it?

BEHROOZ

Spoken by a man who's never had a sister. Do it for me. Please.

Reed stands up.

REED

Fine, but I'm doing it for your mother.

BEHROOZ

You're leaving? The party just started.

REED

(yawning)
Jet lag. I'm burned out.

BEHROOZ

I'll have your driver bring your car up.

REED

I let him off. Thought I'd walk home, stretch my legs after the flight.

Behrooz is worried about what might be going on in the streets that night. He'd just ordered arrests, but he can hardly tell Reed that.

BEHROOZ

It's late. My car can take you.

REED

Back in Boston you always bragged how
Tehran is the safest city in the world.

Behrooz smiles; Reed's right. He'd said it many times.

BEHROOZ

You're right, it is.

EXT. PAHLAVI BOULEVARD- NIGHT

Reed walks alone on a thoroughfare. At night, Tehran is a peaceful city, nothing like the controlled chaos of day time.

INT./EXT. TEHRAN STREETS/DORMS/MOSQUE/APARTMENTS- NIGHT

In a QUICK-CUTTING MONTAGE, various SUSPECTS and RINGLEADERS are roughly arrested and taken away by plain clothes agents of SAVAK, the Shah's secret police.

--In a college dorm room, a STUDENT is dragged out of bed in his underwear by four SAVAK agents. In the hallway, other STUDENTS pour out, shouting insults at the secret police-

--From inside a newspaper building, a MAN in his forties is being led out quietly by two SAVAK agents into a waiting car. Inside the car is Ramzi, smoking a cigarette-

--To the wails of a middle-aged MOTHER in a chador, three SAVAK agents drag a struggling YOUNG MAN out of his apartment-

--At the mosque, the Young Imam who gave the fiery speech is being dragged away by six SAVAK agents. Two SAVAK cars wait in front. Hafez is in the back seat of one.

YOUNG MEN scream and shout at the SAVAK men as they throw the Imam in their car and both pull away.

Within moments, an ANGRY CROWD begins to build up. One STUDENT starts SHOUTING a slogan in Farsi and others quickly take up the cry. Upraised fists start waving in unison.

EXT. PAHLAVI BOULEVARD- NIGHT

Reed is waiting at an intersection for a light to change. A NOISE from a side street gets his attention. It's a cacophony really, nothing distinct, just the vague sound of TURMOIL- snippets of SHOUTS and GLASS SHATTERING.

CAMERA MOVES IN on a side street as the sound gets LOUDER, the noise becoming more distinct; voices are CHANTING.

A taxi pulls up at the corner. The DRIVER exchanges a look with Reed, and he also tries to listen.

REVERSE on the side street where a single bottle appears out of nowhere and SHATTERS in the middle of the street.

A beat. Then a HORDE of ANGRY STUDENTS appears, many holding bottles and rocks. In twos and threes, they pour out.

STUDENTS (FARSI)
Down with the Shah!! Down with the
American puppet!! Down with the Shah!!
Down with the...

One throws a brick at a Western boutique and it crashes through the front window. An ALARM sounds. The students surge out of the side streets like a swarm of ants.

The taxi PEELS OUT and Reed suddenly realizes he's a lone Westerner in the middle of an anti-western riot. He hurries up the street, finds a bus stop to momentarily hide behind.

The RIOTERS are TORCHING CARS and rocks SHATTER store windows. SIRENS start singing out in the distance; police on the way, possibly soldiers.

MEDIUM on Reed hiding behind the shelter. Something appears in the corner of his eye, and a look comes over his face.

REVERSE on a STUDENT staring at him from across the street; maybe 21, razor-thin, intense eyes, the wisps of a beard.

CLOSE on Reed, realizing how bad he looks to the kid: a decadent Westerner in a tuxedo.

A beat, the riot raging around the two of them. The kid SHOUTS IN FARSI to his mates. Reed RUNS FOR IT, bolting from the shelter. The Student RUNS AFTER HIM--

Reed breaks into a FULL RUN down the boulevard-- the Student gives chase, SHOUTING in FARSI--

Another STUDENT gives chase after Reed-- then ANOTHER-- then TWO MORE, all running down the Westerner in the tux--

Reed RUNS as fast as he can, wondering if they want to just rough him up, or maybe go farther than that-- the students BOLT after him-- Reed RUNS--

Then, from a side street, a BLACK MERCEDES comes ROARING OUT--

The Mercedes CUTS directly between Reed and the students chasing him and comes SCREECHING TO A HALT--

The door opens. Out steps Ali, holding a three foot long iron bar. Without saying a word to Reed, he walks around to face the four students running up to his car.

Ali stands his ground, oblivious to the riot going on around them. He focuses on the student with the wispy beard. He walks over to him slowly, but the kid plays it brave.

STUDENT (FARSI)
We will not be cowed by violence.

Without hesitation, Ali SWINGS the bar into the student's thigh and there's an audible SNAP.

The kid goes down SCREAMING. Ali looks at the rest of them. His utter silence and serene lack of fear are unnerving.

ALI (FARSI)
Who else will not be cowed?

The sirens are now REALLY LOUD, the students knowing riot police will soon be making arrests. They move off in ones and twos- dragging away their injured friend- until Ali and Reed are alone, the riot still raging.

Ali puts the bar away, shuts the trunk, opens the rear passenger door, and looks at Reed.

ALI (cont'd)
Reza Behrooz suggested I drive you.

Reed, still shaken, gets in the car without a word. Ali closes the door behind Reed, gets behind the wheel and pulls out. POLICE VANS start pulling up and disgorging RIOT POLICE.

INT. ALI'S MERCEDES (MOVING)- NIGHT

Reed sits silently in the back as Ali maneuvers the car out of the area. The noise of rioting starts dying down.

REED (FARSI)
Thank you.

Ali drives on in indifferent silence.

EXT. TEHRAN STREET- NIGHT

The Mercedes is speeding up an avenue.

INT. ALI'S MERCEDES (MOVING)- NIGHT

Reed looks out the window. They pass a bustling outdoor cafe, a young, attractive crowd. Not a care in the world.

He looks up and sees Ali staring at him in the rear-view.

EXT. ALBORZ MOUNTAINS- DAY

Only two hours from Tehran are the Alborz mountains, a white expanse of jagged peaks dominated by Mount Damavand, the tallest in Iran, visible on clear days from the capital.

A steep, two-lane asphalt ribbon leads into the mountains. The road, covered by patches of packed snow, is treacherous.

MOVING IN, a white Mercedes 280SE Cabriolet convertible is whizzing up the road at high speed.

INT. MERCEDES CONVERTIBLE (MOVING)- DAY

Behind the wheel, driving right on the edge of reckless, is the guy that Farah had been dancing with the night before- DARIUS AZIMI- dressed in ski jacket, jeans, sunglasses.

Farah sits next to him in her fashionable ski togs, enjoying the view. Sitting behind them- a third wheel- is Reed.

REED
Are we in a hurry?

Azimi's English is excellent, but he has a heavier Iranian accent, a result of going to college in Tehran, not abroad.

AZIMI
Most people make Dizin in two hours, but I can do it in ninety minutes.

FARAH
Darius is an excellent driver.

REED
I can see that.

AZIMI
Douglas, have you skied Dizin before?

REED
Afraid not.

FARAH
Darius skis like Jean-Claude Killy.

REED
I'm more like Spider Sabich.

Farah laughs, then sees Azimi doesn't get the joke at all.

FARAH
Douglas was making a small joke. Sabich was an American ski racer murdered by his French lover.

AZIMI
Yes, yes, quite amusing.

Azimi turns around for a long beat- longer than Douglas would like since they're on a slippery mountain road- and he grins.

AZIMI (cont'd)
Anyway, I'm sure Douglas is much better than he's letting on.

INT. LOCKER ROOM- DAY

The male locker room of a ski resort, not too crowded. Men are pulling on ski pants and snapping on ski boots. Reed and Azimi are doing likewise.

AZIMI

Tell me, Farah's brother sent you to keep an eye on me, didn't he?

REED

He didn't put it exactly in those words.

AZIMI

Reza thinks I'm not good enough for her.

REED

Why's that you think?

AZIMI

A man in Iran is judged not by where he is going, but where he came from. It is a fundamentally unfair system.

REED

And you think it should change?

AZIMI

It's inevitable, no matter what I or Reza Behrooz think.

A beat.

REED

Or maybe he just thinks you're no good for his sister.

Getting this joke, Azimi laughs, but in a way that says he doesn't think it's completely funny.

AZIMI

Of course. It is possible.

(stands up)

We should take tea some time. There's much we could discuss, you and I.

REED

Sure, let's do that.

Azimi exits. Reed snaps on his boot.

EXT. DIZIN- DAY

Skiers whizz down the immaculate slopes. Mt. Damavand looms in the b.g. Reed is standing on his skis, watching.

A SKIER comes towards him at high speed, and STOPS with a SPRAY of SNOW. She pulls up her goggles to reveal Farah.

FARAH

Where's Darius?

REED

I begged off when he hit the expert trail. No interest in killing myself.

FARAH
Are you truly that poor a skier?

REED
Truly. And your brother knows it.

FARAH
Reza is playing a joke on you, I think.

REED
The joke could be on both of us.

Farah smiles; she sort of likes Reed despite herself.

FARAH
It wouldn't surprise me. My brother has
always had a twisted sense of humor.

REED
Seen it myself on many an occasion.
(then)
But he seems troubled now. Distracted.

FARAH
He has many responsibilities. And my
mother constantly pressures him to marry.

REED
So who's pressuring you to marry?

Farah makes a guilty face, looks at Reed.

FARAH
How did you know that?

REED
Darius seems to me like a man in a hurry.
(then)
Why haven't you said yes?

FARAH
I don't want to marry anyone, not yet at
least. It's still my life, you know.

REED
I understand. Hard to go back to the
farm when you've seen Paris.
(then)
So what did you study there?

FARAH
Anthropology. I'm doing my doctoral
dissertation on Persepolis.

REED
Never been.

FARAH

(amazed)

In all of your visits to Iran, Reza never took you to see Persepolis?

REED

We always went to the Caspian.

FARAH

Of course. Why would a professor of Middle Eastern studies visit the greatest archaeological site in ancient Persia when you can ogle girls in bikinis?

REED

I have to admit, when you put it that way, it sounds a little juvenile.

FARAH

If you like, I'll show you.

REED

You'd do that for me?

(off her nod, he smiles)

Then how could I refuse?

She pulls down her goggles and skis away. He puts on his goggles and skis after her, obviously not that bad a skier.

EXT. TEHRAN- DAY

Another demonstration in Azadi Square, only much bigger. There are literally HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS of PROTESTORS, all visibly enraged, screaming and chanting, waving placards.

The seething mob threatens to overflow the police barriers holding them within the square.

Nervous POLICE and TROOPS- all armed to the teeth- look on the volatile situation nervously.

INT. INTERIOR MINISTRY- DAY

Behrooz is in a large, modern conference room. Finnish furniture. From the high floor, he looks out over Tehran.

REVERSE on Ramzi and Hafez standing behind him.

BEHROOZ

We must make sure this situation doesn't come to a boil.

RAMZI

It's difficult. The troops are skittish.

HAFEZ

I'd order further arrests, except the Evin is more crowded than the streets.

RAMZI
I have a solution to both problems.

HAFEZ
Shooting people isn't the answer to everything, Ramzi.

MOVE IN on Behrooz as he listens to his subordinates argue.

RAMZI
Thousands of people are in the streets calling for the overthrow of the government. That is open rebellion.

HAFEZ
Or dissent, depending on one's point of view.

RAMZI
Hafez, I'm sure such sophistry was well appreciated during your stay at Oxford, but we are in Tehran.

HAFEZ
The Shah himself called upon us to go to the West to be educated, so that we might think and debate like civilized men.

RAMZI
Then let us debate. Under the same circumstances, what would Assad do in Damascus? Or Sadat in Cairo?

HAFEZ
The Shah isn't an Arab dog, happy to slaughter his own people.

RAMZI
Maybe that's our problem.

Hafez shoots Ramzi a look.

HAFEZ
Who now speaks treason?

Behrooz turns around, ends the discussion.

BEHROOZ
Enough of this pointless bickering.
(to Ramzi)
Our enemies want blood running in the streets so that they may exploit it politically. We, then, will exercise all restraint. I'll hold you responsible, Ramzi. Get to it.

Ramzi exits quickly, leaving Hafez alone with Behrooz.

BEHROOZ (cont'd)
How go the interrogations, Hafez?

Hafez looks a bit squeamish.

HAFEZ
Slowly.

BEHROOZ
Then move things along. Go to the Evin,
see to it yourself.

Hafez exits, leaving Behrooz to wonder to himself about the competence of his subordinates.

EXT. PARK- DUSK

One of the parks dotting the forest-covered mountains surrounding Tehran. FAMILIES have laid out picnic lunches of dried fruits and nuts, bread, and thermoses of hot tea.

It's late on an autumn day, the sun disappearing fast. At one picnic table, with a panoramic view of Tehran, Parviz looks out at the city. His wife joins him.

PARVIZ (FARSI)
I wish Massoud had come with us.

SORAYA (FARSI)
Don't worry, he's a grown-up.

A beat. Then, the unmistakable sound of GUNFIRE rises up from the city. Not loud, just a succession of rapid POPS.

From the center of the city, white smoke begins to rise in a cloud. The GUNFIRE continues- POP POP POP POP POP POP...

INT. INTERIOR MINISTRY- DUSK

Standing at a window, Behrooz sees the same smoke rising, can hear the same GUN SHOTS.

INT. BEHROOZ LIVING ROOM- NIGHT

Expansive design, decorated in high Persian Seventies style, Pierre Cardin meets Louis XIV. Farah is checking her make-up in a mirror when her mother enters in a robe and nightgown.

FARAH (FARSI)
Why aren't you dressed yet?

MRS. BEHROOZ (FARSI)
We're not going. Your brother called and told us to stay home.

She exits abruptly. Farah makes a face, stands up, goes to a phone and dials. After a moment, someone answers.

FARAH
Darius.

INTERCUT Farah and Darius.

INT. DARIUS'S APARTMENT- NIGHT

CLOSE on Darius, phone pressed to his ear.

AZIMI
Farah, I can't talk now. There's been shooting in Azadi Square. A lot of people died.

FARAH
My God.

AZIMI
It wasn't God's doing, it was the Shah's.

FARAH
You know I don't like that talk.

AZIMI
Farah, even an ostrich takes its head out of the sand from time to time.

FARAH
What does that mean?

AZIMI
Nothing, nothing at all. Look, I'll call you tomorrow.

STAY on him as he hangs up. Next to the phone is a PISTOL.

PULLING BACK, we see he's changed from his ski togs to jeans, a turtleneck, and a black leather jacket- the portrait of a revolutionary. He puts the gun in his waist band, looks up.

REVERSE on THREE YOUNG MEN facing Azimi, all dressed similarly, the same air of revolution.

AZIMI (cont'd)
Let's go.

They all turn and exit the room.

INT. AZIMI APARTMENT- CONTINUOUS

A large, well-appointed flat, nice furnishings and modern conveniences. There's a portrait of the Shah on the wall.

MR. and MRS. AZIMI are sitting on the sofa watching television- an American game show dubbed in Farsi- and drinking tea when Darius and his mates pass by.

MR. AZIMI (FARSI)
Where are you going?

AZIMI (FARSI)
To the disco.
(kisses his mother's cheek)
Don't stay up for me.

He exits and a moment later they hear the front door close.

MR. AZIMI (FARSI)
Every night with the disco.

MRS. AZIMI (FARSI)
He's young. Let him have his fun.

Mr. Azimi makes a face, sips his tea.

INT. MORGUE- NIGHT

Pandemonium, people SCREAMING and WAILING as whole families, from toddlers to old women, unleash their worst anguish.

REVERSE on a row of BODIES covered in BLOODY SHEETS.

A row of ARMED POLICE stand in a cordon between the corpses and the families. They only permit two or three family members in at a time to identify the dead.

HANDHELD follow Moradi wandering a row of bodies. He stops at each male body, kneels, lifts the sheet. Not Massoud.

He keeps walking, kneels, looks at the next body, then the next- then finally--

CU on Moradi, kneeling, as he flips over a sheet and winces.

MORADI'S POV on the dead face of his cousin Massoud, eyes still open, his chest bloody. Moradi closes his cousin's dead eyes, embraces him tightly.

After a moment, he sits up, totally still, taking in the moment. The women WAIL in the b.g.

INT. HOTEL INTERCONTINENTAL- NIGHT

Reed is walking in the lobby and sees Collins is waiting for him in a chair. They meet in the middle of the lobby.

COLLINS
Good. You're alive.

REED
What are you talking about?

COLLINS
A protest in Azadi Square went very bad.
Makes Kent State look like a bra burning.

REED
How many dead?

COLLINS
Government's saying hundreds, probably
it's more like thousands.
(then)
And where the hell were you all day?

REED

Skiing.

Collins looks at him.

COLLINS

Skiing? Isn't that marvelous?

A COMMOTION breaks out from inside a bar that has an entrance in the lobby. They see PEOPLE rushing in. Reed and Collins follow, to see what's going on.

INT. BAR- NIGHT

PEOPLE are packed cheek-to-jowl, all silent, watching a TV at the end of the bar. Reed and Collins enter and see what everyone's staring at.

REVERSE on the TV, where the SHAH OF IRAN, in full dress military uniform, reads in Farsi from a prepared statement.

The Iranian flag and the banner of the Pahlavi Dynasty stand behind him. The Shah's voice is flat, his tone firm.

MEDIUM on Collins and Reed. They whisper.

COLLINS

My Farsi stinks. What's he saying?

REED

Six police stations and an army base were attacked by mujaheddin guerillas last night. Sixty cops and soldiers were killed or wounded, sixteen taken hostage.

(listens further)

Jesus. He's declaring martial law.

COLLINS

And so it begins.

Collins leads Reed out to the lobby by the shoulder.

INT. HOTEL INTERCONTINENTAL- NIGHT

REED

It's getting bad, isn't it?

COLLINS

This isn't bad. I was on one of the last choppers outta Saigon. Now that was bad.

REED

I can imagine.

COLLINS

No, you can't. So do us both a favor and go home before you get yourself hurt.

REED
(defiant)
I haven't finished my article yet.

Collins shakes his head, storms out of the lobby.

INT. REED'S HOTEL ROOM- NIGHT

When Reed walks in his room, the phone is RINGING. He sits on the bed and picks up the phone.

REED
Hello?

COLES (V.O.)
Douglas. How are you?

INTERCUT REED and COLES.

INT. COLES OFFICE- DAWN

A large office, nice furniture, a view of the Potomac.

REED
You tell me.

COLES
So far so good. Your first report read positive without being obsequious.

REED
Our friends from Langley know I'm here.

Coles realizes he's referring to the CIA.

COLES
Well, they aren't entirely obtuse. Do they know why you're there?

REED
They accused me of composing a fig leaf for you at their expense.

COLES
Hardly surprising; when it comes to covering posteriors, they have no equal.
(then)
So how goes it?

Reed looks out the window, sees a few FIRES burning. And even now, he can still hear the occasional POP of gun fire.

REED
The Shah just declared martial law. I can hear shooting in the streets now.

COLES
Yes, but there's a rumor Sadat and Begin will get the Nobel Peace Prize.
(MORE)

COLES (cont'd)
We can't upset the apple cart, so don't refer to martial law in your next report.

REED
Fine. Does "stability measure" sound more upbeat?

COLES
You have a way with words, Douglas. Keep up the good work.

STAY on Reed as Coles hangs up; an expression of regret, the distress of one who's sold his soul to the Devil.

EXT. BEHROOZ HOME- NIGHT

INTERIOR MINISTRY TROOPS are now guarding the driveway. Behrooz's limo is waved past and drives to the house.

INT. BEHROOZ HOME- NIGHT

Mariam Behrooz and Farah- both in robes, nightgowns and slippers- are sharing tea in a small den when Behrooz enters, clearly exhausted after a long day.

He sits next to his sister on the sofa. She nuzzles up next to him, almost like a child. No one says anything. His mother pours tea without being asked.

Way off in the distance, they can hear MUFFLED SHOTS.

INT. REED'S HOTEL ROOM- DAY

In his boxers, Reed looks out over the city. There are PALLS OF SMOKE from various fires but it is otherwise sedate.

EXT. HOTEL INTERCONTINENTAL- DAY

Reed emerges from the hotel, expecting to see Parviz standing by his LTD. But he isn't there. Reed gets a cab.

EXT. GERGES'S OFFICE- DAY

Reed stands in an office that's been ripped apart, papers strewn everywhere, books ripped from book cases, furniture overturned, pictures and degrees torn from the walls.

In the b.g., a RECEPTIONIST- an older, matronly woman- looks on, tears running down her face. Reed turns, looks at her.

REED (FARSI)
Do you know where Dr. Gerges is?

SECRETARY (FARSI)
They...took him...this morning.

REED (FARSI)
Where?

The woman turns white with fright, and Reed knows the answer. He turns to exit, but his eyes fall to a single SMEAR OF BLOOD on an otherwise white wall. Small but unmistakable.

EXT. EVIN PRISON- NIGHT

The notorious SAVAK prison located incongruously in the residential Saadat Abad district of Tehran. Strangely enough, there's a large park with a popular upscale tea house and restaurant located immediately next to it.

Reed is getting out of a taxi parked across the street. The driver can't wait to pull out while Reed crosses the street.

He walks up to the guardhouse, starts speaking Farsi to the GUARDS, who are masks behind sunglasses and bushy mustaches. They shrug, and Reed offers a bribe. It's accepted.

After a few moments, they let Reed inside.

INT. PRISON CELL- NIGHT

Gerges stands alone in a dark cell. His suit jacket, tie, shoes laces, and belt have been taken away. He has a split lip and one eye is blackened and swollen shut.

INT. EVIN PRISON- NIGHT

A slovenly GUARD walks Reed up a dank, dimly-lit corridor of iron-doored cells.

From somewhere, there's a SCREAM, horrible and prolonged. Reed shudders; the Guard snickers at his reaction.

INT. PRISON CELL- NIGHT

The cell door opens and Gerges sees Reed standing there with the GUARD. Reed presses a wad of Iranian rials into the man's hand and enters. The door CLANGS SHUT.

GERGES
You shouldn't have come, Dr. Reed.

They hear the door being locked behind them.

REED
Hey, us CIA guys do wherever we want.

Reed pulls out his handkerchief, offers it to the professor.

REED (cont'd)
Still think things aren't so bad?

GERGES
(dabbing his bloody nose)
I may have been mistaken about that.

REED
Why were you arrested, Dr. Gerges?

GERGES
Because I'm guilty, of course.

INT. PRISON CELL- NIGHT

In another cell, a bound and gagged PRISONER is being beaten to a pulp by a secret police THUG stripped to the waist. From the other side of the cell, Hafez watches forlornly.

HAFEZ
Enough. He can't confess if he's dead.

The door to the cell opens and an ARMED SOLDIER appears. He enters, whispers something into Hafez's ear. An annoyed look comes over Hafez's face and he walks out immediately.

INT. PRISON CELL- NIGHT

REED
Is it true, or are you being brave?

GERGES
My treason lies in having worked for a
more just nation.
(they hear the door
unlocking)
Tell me, is that so terrible?

The cell door opens. Hafez appears, TWO ARMED SOLDIERS standing behind him.

HAFEZ
Dr. Reed, please come with me.

Gerges gives him a look- there's nothing more to be said. They both know he's a dead man.

EXT. EVIN PRISON- NIGHT

Hafez is walking with Reed, the armed soldiers behind him. An Interior Ministry car with a DRIVER is waiting.

HAFEZ
The driver will take you to your hotel.

Reed looks at Hafez. So young. Could be his grad student.

REED
There's blood on your shirt, you know.

Hafez blinks, opens the rear door.

HAFEZ
Don't return here again.

Reed gets in the car and it pulls away from the curb. Hafez watches it go, then looks down at the tiny droplets of blood on the French cuffs of his white dress shirt.

INT. MINISTRY CAR (MOVING)- NIGHT

Reed sits in silence as he's driven through the eerily deserted streets of Tehran on the first night of martial law.

At every intersection there are ARMED TROOPS and TANKS.

INT. REED'S HOTEL ROOM- NIGHT

Reed enters and closes the door behind him. He sees a MAN standing silhouetted at the window.

BEHROOZ
(without turning around)
What were you doing at the Evin, Douglas?

A beat, Reed realizing how his friend Behrooz knows he was at a prison for the Iranian secret police.

REED
You don't really work on deforestation,
or watershed preservation, do you, Reza?

Behrooz turns around, looks at his old friend. But his expression is no longer friendly; it's a mask, a cipher.

BEHROOZ
Why were you there?

REED
I was looking for Dr. Gerges.

BEHROOZ
Gerges is a communist.

REED
He's also my official host.

BEHROOZ
(sarcastic)
Oh, yes, your article. *Foreign Affairs*,
was it?
(Reed says nothing)
Except *Foreign Affairs* doesn't accept
articles from anyone less than a fully
tenured professor. I asked.

REED
Sounds like something a policeman would
do. Or, more exactly, a secret policeman.

Behrooz purses his lips, says nothing. A beat.

REED (cont'd)
Are you really SAVAK, Reza?

BEHROOZ
We're not at Harvard anymore, Douglas.
Here in Tehran, I ask the questions.

REED

I know you're not my roommate anymore; I don't even remember that guy.

BEHROOZ

It's called growing up. You might consider trying it sometime.

(then)

Why are you in Tehran, Douglas? Or, more exactly, who sent you here?

REED

I'm writing a report for the State Department on the political situation.

BEHROOZ

The State Department? Why?

REED

Seems they don't trust the CIA to tell them the truth.

BEHROOZ

They are right not to. But why send you, if not to inform on me?

REED

(offended)

They never asked me to do that, and if they had, I'd have refused.

BEHROOZ

(bullying)

They know we're friends, Douglas. Why send you, except to spy on me?!

A beat, Reed becoming melancholy, having to admit something.

REED

(ruefully)

Because they own me, Reza. They paid college, my post-grad studies, got me a job, directed grants my way. I could've tried for scholarships, worked extra jobs, but I took the easy way out. Now I have to pay the piper.

BEHROOZ

Then you've done this before?

REED

Yes, but usually only analysis, maybe reading or translation. They've never asked me to go abroad before.

Behrooz thinks about that for a moment.

BEHROOZ

Is Washington really that worried?

REED

The Shah is seen as vulnerable. CIA and NSA think a left-wing uprising would give the Soviets an excuse to move in, but State's more freaked out that a right-wing coup would derail the peace process.

BEHROOZ

And where does the White House stand?

REED

Carter's between a rock and a hard place. He's makes a lot of noise about human rights but he also knows Joe Six-Pack votes Republican if gas prices go up.

(beat)

Please believe me, Reza, I would never do anything to hurt you or your family.

Behrooz looks at him for a long moment, the SAVAK agent gone, his old friend returned.

BEHROOZ

I know that, Douglas. There's never been any guile in you.

Behrooz walks to the door, looks at Reed.

BEHROOZ (cont'd)

Tell Washington that the Shah may be infirm, but his government is strong. And we remain a loyal friend to America.

REED

Okay, Reza. I'll do that.

The tension between them seems to suddenly subside.

BEHROOZ

Farah tells me she's taking you to Persepolis.

REED

It was her suggestion.

BEHROOZ

It's fine with me. Anything to distract the girl from her erstwhile paramour.

REED

You really don't like Darius, do you?

BEHROOZ

What do you think of him? Honestly.

REED

I think if I had a younger sister, I wouldn't want him dating her either.

BEHROOZ
I appreciate your candor. On everything.
(then)
And, Douglas, as far as my family, they
have no idea about what it is I do.

REED
Your secret's safe with me.

Behrooz exits.

EXT. HOTEL INTERCONTINENTAL- NIGHT

An armored Mercedes is waiting outside the entrance. Behrooz gets in and it pulls out.

INT. ALI'S MERCEDES (MOVING)- NIGHT

Ali drives while Behrooz sits in the back, lights a cigarette and smokes in silence for a beat. Then he makes a decision.

BEHROOZ
Have the American followed.
(blows out the smoke)
And take me to the Evin.

INT. EVIN PRISON- NIGHT

Behrooz uses the same hallway Reed used earlier that night. Walking a step behind him are Ali and Hafez.

At the end of the corridor is a massive wooden gate. Two INTERIOR MINISTRY POLICE in plainclothes uniforms- dark suits and aviators- stand guard holding Uzis.

As Behrooz approaches, the door's pulled open, and the three men go through.

INT. COURTYARD- CONTINUOUS

They are in a large courtyard, open to the night sky. A PLATOON of MINISTRY TROOPS in uniform hold M-16 rifles.

At the far end of the courtyard wall, SIX POLICE COMMANDERS stand, all blindfolded, their hands tied behind their backs.

Behrooz looks at Hafez.

BEHROOZ (FARSI)
These are the fools who failed to control
their own men yesterday.

Behrooz nods to the PLATOON COMMANDER, who nods to his men.

They bring their M-16s to their shoulders. The Platoon Commander raises his arm, holds for a moment, then DROPS his arm- the troops FIRE- BAM BAM BAM BAM.

At the far end of the courtyard, all the police commanders lie splayed out DEAD. Behrooz turns on his heels and exits the courtyard the way he came in. Ali follows, then Hafez.

INT. EVIN PRISON- CONTINUOUS

They continue following Behrooz through the dank, dimly-lit hallways. They turn a corner, where they find one cell is guarded by another plain-clothes ministry policeman in aviators. He opens the cell and Behrooz walks right in.

INT. PRISON CELL- CONTINUOUS

Hafez follows Ali and Behrooz inside. A HOODED MAN sits handcuffed to a chair. The door closes with a SLAM.

BEHROOZ (FARSI)
This is the fool responsible for
yesterday's entire fiasco.

He yanks off the hood, REVEALING RAMZI, beaten to a bloody pulp, both eyes swollen shut, lips purple, barely conscious.

Ali pulls a Colt .45 out of his belt and offers it to Hafez.

BEHROOZ (FARSI) (cont'd)
Hard times require hard men, Hafez.

Hafez takes the gun from Ali. Behrooz and Ali step outside, leaving him alone with Ramzi.

Ramzi looks up at Hafez through the slits that are his eyes and speaks through his swollen, split lips.

RAMZI (FARSI)
Quickly...or...they'll shoot you too.

Hafez points the gun at Ramzi's forehead.

INT. EVIN PRISON- NIGHT

Smoking in the hallway, Behrooz and Ali hear a GUNSHOT.

EXT. GRAVEYARD- DAY

A large Muslim graveyard, used by common people. A large FAMILY is burying one of their dead; Massoud's funeral.

An IMAM is CHANTING the Islamic prayers for the dead.

Everyone is dressed in black. Men stand stoically silent while women in full chadors WAIL and CRY. In the center of this tableau is Parviz, Soraya right next to him.

MOVE IN on Moradi as he notices someone looking at him.

REVERSE on Reed, watching the funeral.

EXT. GRAVEYARD- LATER

The funeral is breaking up slowly, people lingering by the grave, unable to let go just yet. Fifty yards away, next to a low wall, Moradi talks to Reed.

PARVIZ
How did you find me?

REED
I asked at the Institute.

PARVIZ
Are you a religious man, professor?

REED
No, not really.

PARVIZ
Nor I.

Silence. Reed tries to think of what people say at funerals.

REED
Were you and your cousin close?

PARVIZ
He was my cousin.

Another long silence. Reed takes out a packet of Marlboros, shakes one out, offers it to Moradi, who takes it. Reed takes another out of the pack, lights them both.

PARVIZ (cont'd)
(inhales deeply)
Massoud was younger, it was my duty to care for him. I failed, obviously.

REED
He got shot at a demonstration. Tragic certainly, but hardly your fault.

PARVIZ
I tried to convince him not to go.
(beat)
Better had I gone with him.

REED
Better to have made your wife a widow, your children fatherless? How?

Another awkward silence.

REED (cont'd)
I saw Professor Gerges last night. In the Evin prison.

PARVIZ
(surprised)
You were arrested? An American?

REED
I went there myself, looking for him.

PARVIZ
(amazed)
You walked into the Evin Prison?
(off Reed's nod)
No Iranian would walk into the Evin.

REED
I'm getting the impression I know a lot less about Iran than I thought I did.

PARVIZ
(shrugs)
Why would you know anything but that which you see with your wealthy friends?

Reed looks at Parviz for a long moment.

REED
Yes, you're right of course.
(then)
But I want my article to be as complete as possible. You could show me.

PARVIZ
Perhaps my grasp of English is poor.
Show you what exactly?

REED
Iran, or at least the parts I haven't seen. You're already my driver, why not be my guide as well?

Parviz is wary.

PARVIZ
With all respect, after Dr. Gerges's arrest, the Institute will be closed. I must find work to feed my family.

REED
I'll double what the Institute paid.
(produces a wad of twenties)
And I'll pay in American dollars.

Parviz looks back at him, cocks his eyebrow.

PARVIZ
Simply to be your guide?
(off Reed's nod)
I must first observe a mourning period.

Reed pushes the money into Parviz's hand.

REED
Of course. And again, my condolences.

Reed turns and starts walking away.

PARVIZ
I don't know what you expect to see.

Reed turns and looks back at him.

REED
That makes two of us.

INT. SOUTH TEHRAN- DAY

In the poor part of town, there are no cabs to be hailed. Reed walks in the heat of the day, heading in the general direction of his hotel but not really knowing the streets.

Reed stops at a traffic circle, waiting to cross. A POLICEMAN stands on a platform in the center, directing cars.

A battered white sedan pulls up across the street. TWO MEN wait in the front seat while ONE MAN gets out of the rear, a student in jeans and a black leather jacket.

REED'S POV on a GUN the student had concealed in his hand.

The student walks up behind the Traffic Cop and, before Reed can shout out, points the gun at the back of his head.

He FIRES once, KILLING the Traffic Cop, who falls to the street, BLOOD fountaining out of his head.

Amidst SHOUTS and SCREAMS, the student LOCKS EYES on Reed; a Westerner, another target for the revolution. He starts walking towards Reed, the intent to kill in his eyes.

Seeing the gun, Reed is frozen, too terrified to move. Then--

--The sedan pulls up between them with a SCREECH. The Student with the pistol is momentarily distracted.

Reed turns and RUNS. The Student with the gun sees Reed fade into the crowd, gets in the car, and it PEELS OUT.

INT. TAXI (MOVING)- DUSK

A shaken Reed is in the back of a cab. The streets are busy, people RUSHING home before curfew.

He takes out a cigarette, but his hands are too shaky to get a match going. The TAXI DRIVER sees this in his rear view and flips a Zippo so Reed can light his cigarette.

REED (FARSI)
(lighting the butt)
Thank you.

He sits back and takes a deep drag.

INT. HOTEL INTERCONTINENTAL- NIGHT

The lobby has turned into a big party scene, filled with foreigners; JOURNALISTS, DIPLOMATS, BUSINESSMAN. Almost all are Westerners, a few Japanese scattered about.

Reed makes his way to the front desk, finds a clerk.

REED
Any messages?

CLERK
(checks)
No, sir, Dr. Reed.

REED
(hooking a thumb behind him)
What's going on?

CLERK
It seems the new curfew has driven
everyone inside.

Reed turns, and, making his way to the elevators, BUMPS into someone who recognizes him; an American business type in his mid-forties, tan, trim, a bright white smile.

ANDERSON
(southern twang)
Reed, isn't it? Doug Reed?
(off Reed's nod)
Larry Anderson, United Technologies. We
met at Reza Behrooz's party.

REED
(distracted)
That's right. Sorry I forgot--

ANDERSON
--Don't sweat it, I'm eminently
forgettable. This is something, huh?

Anderson notices Reed, shaken by something, says nothing. He puts a hand on Reed's shoulder.

ANDERSON (cont'd)
A few of us Yanks formed a beachhead in
the lounge, commandeered the Johnny
Walker Red. You interested?

REED
That sounds great, Larry.

INT. LOUNGE- NIGHT

The lounge is louder, with more people packed in, more noise, more drinking. A TV plays loudly in the corner.

Anderson leads Reed to a semi-circle of easy chairs, where a bunch of AMERICAN BUSINESSMAN sit in blitzed inebriation.

ANDERSON
Boys, this is Doug Reed.

They all nod or half-wave, depending on their individual states of inebriation.

ONE OF THE BOYS
Who you with, Dougie? Mobil, Conoco?

ANDERSON
Doug's a civvie. College professor, isn't it?

REED
Johns Hopkins, the School of Advanced International Studies.

ANDERSON
(starts introductions)
This is Marty Burns of Boeing, Tom Nitto of Shell, Brian Jacks of Exxon, Neil Ackers of GE, and Steve Berger of Raytheon. Someone pour Doug a drink. The man's had a hard day.

Reed sits between Ackers and Berger. Someone hands him a scotch. They all clink glasses and drink.

REED
So, how're you guys holding up?

BERGER
You tell us, professor.

ACKERS
Yeah, what's the hell's going on out there? I got caught in a traffic jam for like six hours today.

REED
This kind of unrest happens every ten years or so. It's just the political opposition blowing off steam. It'll settle down eventually.

ACKERS
Long as we can keep doing business.

JACKS
Hallelujah to that.

ACKERS
Best damn profit margins in the Mid-East, plus it ain't Riyadh, where a man can't even get hisself a drink.

All the boys nod knowingly at that observation.

REED
So, what kind of work are you guys in?

BERGER

I make sure the Royal Iranian Air Force
has all the radar systems it needs.
(winks)
And a few it don't.

JACKS

We got a natural gas field in Tabriz.

ACKERS

(Texas twang)

I'm negotiating contracts for GE to build
a reactor on the coast down by Bushehr.

REED

A nuclear reactor?

ACKERS

We built 'em a research reactor in '67,
but they want a real one. If we don't
get the contract, damn Germans will.

REED

Tell me, why does a country sitting on
the second largest proven oil reserves in
the world need a nuclear reactor?

ACKERS

The Shah told Nixon he wanted one.

Reed sees Ackers is absolutely bombed.

ANDERSON

I heard the Israelis weren't exactly
thrilled when they found out.

ACKERS

If I was a Jew living in a sea of Arabs,
I wouldn't want 'em getting nukes either.

REED

Uh, Persians aren't Arabs.

ACKERS

They aren't?

Reed is about to open his mouth when the entire room GOES
DEAD QUIET, except for the TV. They all turn and look.

INSET: on the nightly news, a bent FIGURE- long gray beard,
black robes, black turban- is walking down the stairway from
a Boeing 737 with the help of an AIDE.

BERGER

What's the big deal?

The televised image changes to the same man holding a press
conference while sitting on a Persian rug; filling the screen
is the stern visage of AYATOLLAH RUHOLLAH KHOMEINI, holding a
press conference, his craggy face lit by popping flashbulbs.

VOICE
Somebody turn it up!!

The room goes silent. Someone turns the volume up but the newscaster speaks in French. Ackers turns to Reed.

ANDERSON
Speak French, Doug?
(Reed nods)
So who is he?

REED
The Ayatollah Ruhollah Mosavi Khomeini.

They watch the stern faced Shia leader with his long white beard and piercing, deep-set black eyes.

ACKERS
Man looks about as much fun as a preacher in a whorehouse.

Reed smiles at the unintended joke.

REED
Actually, Neil, that's an apt analogy.

Reed turns and exits the lounge as the party resumes.

INT. REED'S HOTEL ROOM- NIGHT

The phone is RINGING when Reed enters. He closes the door, sits on the bed and answers.

REED
Hello?

INTERCUT Reed and Darius.

INT. AZIMI APARTMENT- NIGHT

AZIMI
Douglas, it's Darius Azimi.

Azimi is cleaning a MAKAROV AUTOMATIC PISTOL while he talks.

REED
Darius.

AZIMI
I left a message for you at your hotel last week but you didn't call back. I'd still like to take tea with you.

REED
My sincerest apologies, I've just been so busy. Just getting around Tehran these days is difficult.

As he starts expertly reassembling the gun, Azimi is the voice of shame, embarrassment at his country's backwardness.

AZIMI
You must think you've fallen into some
Third World backwater.

REED
Not at all.
(changing the subject)
So what do you think about Khomeini
leaving Iraq for Paris?

AZIMI
No modern person gives Khomeini a second
thought. After all, Douglas, remember
what Marx said about religion.

REED
The opiate of the masses.
(then)
Can I ask you a question, Darius?

Azimi SLAMS a magazine of bullets into his automatic.

AZIMI
Of course.

REED
Are you a communist?

AZIMI
(laughing)
Douglas, please. Were that I was wealthy
enough to be a communist.

It's not a bad joke. Reed can't help but laugh himself.

REED
How about I call you next week?

STAY on Darius.

AZIMI
I'll look forward to it.

He COCKS the automatic and looks down the sights.

INT. REED'S HOTEL ROOM- LATER

Sitting at the desk, Reed watches local television news playing video of the Nobel Prize ceremony in Stockholm. But then he turns and starts writing something down.

REED (V.O.)
Gentlemen, events here in Iran have
deteriorated rapidly in the last month.

On the TV, Menachem Begin and Anwar Sadat, dressed in white tie and tails, accept the Nobel Peace Prize from KING CARL GUSTAV of Sweden. They turn and accept rapturous applause.

GO CLOSE on Reed, writing the truth of what he's seen.

INT. TAXI (MOVING)- DAWN

Reed's cab is headed to the airport. He's dressed nicely, in a linen suit, suede bucks, white shirt, aviators.

As they drive, Reed notices mounds of garbage on the streets.

REED (V.O.)
General strikes are spreading throughout the country and basic services like sanitation and sewage are breaking down.

They pass a line of stores, with many broken store windows, the rest locked tight with gates.

REED (V.O.) (cont'd)
Rumors are that the Shah is either too sick, too weak, or unwilling to order a full-scale crackdown on the opposition.

INT. COLES OFFICE- DAWN

Coles sits alone at his desk reading Reed's latest report. His expression grows more and more furious as he reads on.

EXT. MEHERBAD AIRPORT- DAWN

The outside of the airport is ringed with POLICE and TROOPS.

REED (V.O.)
In this vacuum, the threat of a right-wing coup by SAVAK officials and militant elements of the armed forces looms.

Reed gets out of the cab, walks to a quiet part of the terminal; DOMESTIC FLIGHTS.

INT. AIRLINE TERMINAL- DAY

Reed waits at a gate reading a dog-eared book. He gets up when he spots Farah approaching, dressed in a sporty Parisian outfit, a snap to her step.

FARAH
Douglas.

They greet with the traditional Persian kiss on both cheeks.

REED
How are you, Farah?

FARAH
Excited.

REED
(coaxing smile)
To see me?

She makes a playful, mocking face at him.

FARAH
No, for Persepolis.

REED
(holding up his book)
I've been reading up.

FARAH
No book can prepare you. You'll see.

Her enthusiastic smile is infectious.

EXT. MEHERBAD TARMAC- DAY

Farah and Reed are walking up the rear stairwell of a 727.

REED (V.O.)
Mujaheddin attacks on police stations, government buildings, and army bases are frequent and increasingly coordinated.

INT. AIRLINER- DAY

Sitting in first class, Farah reads a French fashion magazine while Reed looks out the window.

REED (V.O.)
The socialist mujaheddin enjoy wide popular support, an embrace that's come at the expense of the communist Tudeh, widely seen as Moscow's stooges.

EXT. SHIRAZ AIRPORT- DAY

A line of passengers are walking down a stairway from the 727. Reed and Farah are in the middle.

REED (V.O.)
Considered nationalists, the mujaheddin have cleverly formed a tactical alliance- the National Front- with Khomeini's Islamists, thus widening their base.

EXT. SHIRAZ AIRPORT- DAY

A small, provincial airport. A car and DRIVER are waiting for Reed and Farah.

REED (V.O.)
I've found a man whom I believe to be a back channel into the mujaheddin hierarchy. I will pursue this contact in the hope of gaining greater clarity.

They get in the car and it pulls out.

INT. COLES OFFICE- DAY

Coles is finished with Reed's report. He puts it down, fuming, trying to decide how to handle his wayward charge.

He picks up the phone and waits for an operator.

COLES
Get me the British Embassy in Tehran.

EXT. PERSEPOLIS VISITORS CENTER- DAY

An air conditioned visitors center, modern design and lavishly built, with fine teak and polished stainless steel.

FARAH
This pavilion was constructed in 1971 for the Shah's celebration of twenty-five hundred years of Persian rule.

Farah and Reed are the only people looking over the various plaques explaining the ancient city of Persepolis.

REED
(reading plaque)
Persepolis was the ancient ceremonial capital of the second Iranian dynasty, the Achaemenid Empire. To the ancient Persians, the city was known as Parsa, meaning the city of Persians, Persepolis being the Greek interpretation.

He looks at Farah, who has a Cheshire cat grin on her face.

FARAH
Let me show you.

EXT. PERSEPOLIS- DAY

Despite the waves of shimmering desert heat, the beauty of the ancient Persian capital is breath taking.

The sheer size of the massive site means Farah and Reed stroll basically alone through the hundreds of freestanding columns and ancient carved stone walls.

REED
This is amazing. Makes the Parthenon look like a tinker toy.

FARAH
No expense was spared for the Shah's celebration. After all, it was the largest gathering of royalty the world had ever seen.

(MORE)

FARAH (cont'd)

Two hundred and fifty red Mercedes limousines were purchased to drive the dignitaries from the Shiraz airport to the site, where a tent city was designed by Jansen. Catering was provided by Maxim's of Paris, original dinnerware created by Limoges. Orson Wells was hired to narrate a documentary. Over five thousand bottles of Dom Perignon were consumed in only five days.

They stop strolling, and Farah looks at him, her eyes boiling with contempt.

FARAH (cont'd)

You know what was really funny? No Iranians were invited. For security reasons. None were trusted. So we watched on TV, all of us. We had to.

REED

Had to?

FARAH

It was the only thing on state television for five days; they preempted all other programming.

REED

How old were you then?

Reed watches Farah growing angry as she speaks.

FARAH

Eighteen. I recall beaming as the Shah received a line of European royalty. Princess Grace was so beautiful. And Princess Anne of Great Britain had to bow before the Shah. I was so proud! The mighty British bowing down before us.

(beat)

Only later did I realize the sheer perversity of it all, the vainglorious spectacle of lifting one man above his inferiors. And then I knew what a fool I'd been to be so taken in by it all.

CLOSE on Reed, realizing why she was so insistent on him coming to Persepolis. There's a long silence.

REED

I know the feeling.

FARAH

What do you mean?

REED

I really thought I knew Iran, because I'd been here, and I spoke Farsi, and I'd studied. But in retrospect, my only real expertise was in going to parties.

FARAH
Well, Persians do love parties.
(then)
But I guess life is more than that.

They resume strolling.

REED
Can I hazard a guess where it was that
you had this sudden realization?
(off her sly look and nod)
In Paris, at the Sorbonne?

She looks at him, both impressed and surprised.

FARAH
How did you know that?

REED
Because that's what Paris is for.

FARAH
For political awakenings?

He stops, looks in her eyes.

REED
For that, sure.
(beat)
Also for falling in love.

She returns his gaze for a long moment.

EXT. PERSEPOLIS- DAY

Late in the day, footsore, they sit on an ancient staircase.

REED
Your brother doesn't like Darius.

FARAH
Reza thinks he's not good enough for me.

REED
You know, I think he's right, Farah.

Farah's eyes flash anger.

FARAH
Did Reza put you up to saying that, or
was it my mother?

He takes a deep breath before saying what he has to say.

REED
I think Darius is *mujaheddin*, and I'd
hate to see you put in any danger.

FARAH

Why would you think that?

REED

Just things he said, little jokes.

FARAH

You must've misunderstood him. Darius isn't mujaheddin. I would know.

REED

I didn't misunderstand him, Farah, and he wouldn't tell you.

FARAH

He would; he knows I too believe in social justice for this corrupt country.

REED

Look, I think agitating for social justice in an authoritarian country is justifiable, even laudable.

(then)

But I saw a kid- could've been one of my students- he walked up to a traffic cop and shot him point blank in the back of the head. Explain to me what that has to do with social justice.

Farah looks at him for a long moment, sadness in her eyes.

FARAH

I'm sorry you witnessed such a thing.

DOUGLAS

I'm not saying Darius would hurt anyone. He could just be a sympathizer, or a financial supporter.

FARAH

The only thing I know for sure is that Darius believes in genuine change for our country. We both do.

(beat)

You think that makes us disloyal?

REED

No, just conscientious.

FARAH

I doubt my brother shares your opinion.

REED

You're an adult, Farah. You're entitled to make your own choices.

FARAH

Thank you, Douglas. I sometimes feel like no one treats me like an adult. Not Darius, or my mother, or my brother.

He looks at her. She looks up, meets his eyes. A moment between them.

INT. AIRLINER- NIGHT

On the flight back, Reed sits by the window while Farah dozes with her head on his shoulder.

CLOSE on Douglas looking at her sleeping; she's really quite beautiful.

EXT. MEHERBAD AIRPORT, TEHRAN- NIGHT

Reed and Farah come out of the domestic terminal. A black Mercedes limo with a DRIVER is waiting for her. Reed looks across the street, sees Moradi by his LTD in a parking lot.

FARAH

Can I give you a lift to your hotel?

REED

Thanks, but I seem to have a ride.

FARAH

I guess it's good night then.

As she turns to get in the car, Reed can't help himself.

REED

Thank you again for today.

(beat)

Could I call you, Farah?

FARAH

You're always welcome in our home. You needn't call.

REED

That's not what I meant.

She looks at him, realizing he's gingerly asking her out.

FARAH

I'd like that.

She turns to get in the car, but stops and looks at Reed.

FARAH (cont'd)

But, you know, it won't go anywhere.

She gets in the car, and he watches the driver get behind the wheel and pull out. Reed crosses the street abutting the terminal and heads to the parking lot.

Walking up to Moradi, Reed sees the pile of cigarette butts at his feet; obviously he'd been waiting a while.

REED

What are you doing here, Parviz?

PARVIZ

I asked after you at your hotel. They said you'd taken a trip to Persepolis, so I waited for you to return.

Parviz offers a cigarette to Reed, who accepts. Parviz lights them both up while they're chatting.

REED

This whole time?

PARVIZ

It's my job, remember? I'm your guide. You already paid me generously.

REED

Don't think I need any guiding tonight.

PARVIZ

Let me take you back to your hotel then. It's only an hour to curfew.

INT. LTD (MOVING) - NIGHT

Tehran's street are quiet, people having already headed home.

REED

So your mourning period's over?

PARVIZ

Until the next one in forty days. Just as the National Front does.

REED

I don't understand.

PARVIZ

They've been using the Shiite mourning cycle to mount anti-government protests.

REED

Smart, since the police won't take action against a religious observation.

PARVIZ

Yes, but in truth, it's an abomination.

REED

Why an abomination?

PARVIZ

The *mujaheddin* are socialists who profess atheism, yet they cynically use holy days as a pretext for their protests.

REED

I thought you weren't observant, Parviz.

PARVIZ

I don't consider myself to be, but even I am sickened by such blatant hypocrisy.

Reed thinks about this a moment.

REED

It's funny, but the more time I spend here in Iran, the less I feel I know.

PARVIZ

(shrugs)

Persians are complicated people.

(beat)

So what did you think of Persepolis?

A beat, Reed thinking about the magnificence of the site.

REED

It was truly breath taking.

PARVIZ

Myself, I've never been.

(smiles ruefully in the rear view mirror at Reed)

But I saw it once on the television.

Reed smiles back, getting the joke.

INT. REED'S HOTEL ROOM- NIGHT

The phone is RINGING when Reed enters. He answers.

REED

Hello.

FOSTER (V.O.)

(English accent)

Dr. Reed? This is George Foster with the British Embassy. We met one another at Reza Behrooz's house some months back.

REED

Yes, I remember now. The party.

FOSTER (V.O.)

Jerome Coles called me and suggested you and I lunch together.

REED

Really. Did he say why?

FOSTER (V.O.)

I've been here in Iran for some years now and he thought I might be able to offer you a bit of guidance.

REED

Were those his exact words? It sounds like him.

FOSTER (V.O.)
You have a very good ear, Dr. Reed. It's
too bad you don't always listen.

Reed's not sure if he heard what he just heard correctly.

REED
Excuse me?

FOSTER (V.O.)
Monday at the Embassy, say one o'clock?

REED
I'll be there.

FOSTER (V.O.)
Splendid. Good night then.

Foster hangs up. Reed furrows his brow, wondering what the lunch will be like.

INT. HOTEL INTERCONTINENTAL- DAY

Reed emerges from the elevators and heads to the front desk. A single CLERK is there, looking very haggard.

REED
Pardon me, but I called room service for breakfast and no one answered.

DESK CLERK
I am sorry, sir, but it's Ashura. Many of the staff called in ill, an excuse to attend the demonstrations today.

REED
I see.

DESK CLERK
I believe some small sandwiches are available in the bar.

EXT. TEHRAN STREETS- DAY

VARIOUS SHOTS of streets in the capital show MASSES OF PEOPLE streaming towards Azadi square. The sheer humanity is daunting. The crowds shout slogans and hold signs.

POLICE and ARMY UNITS stand to the side, doing nothing.

INT. INTERIOR MINISTRY- DAY

Behrooz sits at his desk, on the phone.

BEHROOZ
(into phone)
You can assure His Majesty there will be no shooting on this holy day.

He hangs up the phone and hangs his head in his hands.

INT. LOUNGE- DAY

Reed walks in, sees a table with many of the same American business types he'd met before. Except now they sit glumly, with cold sandwiches and warm beers. He sits down.

REED
Hey, boys.

ANDERSON
How's it going, Doug?

REED
Can't complain.

BERGER
Well I can. You told us this shit was gonna peter out. Now I can't even get out of my damn hotel.

REED
Ashura only lasts one day. The opposition is using it to call protests.

ANDERSON
Radio said it's the biggest anti-Shah demonstration yet. Two million people.

JACKS
And what in the hell is ASH-URA anyway, professor?

REED
It's the anniversary of the death of the Imam Hossein in the year 681, the event that split Islam into Sunnis and Shiites.
(off their huh? looks)
Sorta like the Catholic-Lutheran schism.

Jacks raises his warm can of beer.

JACKS
Then I'd say that, for today at least, we're all SHE-ITE outta luck.

They all laugh and clink cans.

EXT. AZADI SQUARE- DUSK

ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE of a mass protest against the Shah's regime as upwards of over a MILLION PEOPLE call for his ouster.

It is a mix of students, shop owners, middle-class families, and the religiously inclined; the sheer numbers are daunting.

EXT. TEHRAN STREETS- DAY

A rainy, cold autumn afternoon, umbrellas everywhere.

INT. CARPET MUSEUM- DAY

A museum of contemporary design dedicated to the artistry of carpet makers from antiquity to present, representing every nationality and tribe between India and Turkey.

The lighting is dim so as not to damage the sensitive dyes of the older rugs. They hang behind climate-controlled windows.

Reed and Farah are wandering the exhibition- almost the only visitors present; she's showing off her knowledge.

FARAH
(passing carpets)
Kashan, Tabriz, Fars.

She stops on one carpet, unusual in that unlike most motifs of flowers or birds, it depicts a MAN and a WOMAN in a variety of different scenes. Farah hovers on it.

FARAH (cont'd)
Ahh, my favorite.

REED
What's so special about this one?

FARAH
It depicts Laili and Majnun.

REED
And who are they?

FARAH
Characters in an epic poem, sort of a Persian Romeo and Juliet. We all had to memorize it for school.

REED
Did they die like Romeo and Juliet?

FARAH
Yes. For hidden love.

REED
(coaxing)
Do you remember any of the poem?

PAN OVER the CARPET'S SCENES as Farah recites the epic poem.

FARAH (V.O.)
(closes her eyes to remember)
"Tumultuous passion danced upon his brow;
He sought to woo her, but knew not how:
Soon mutual pleasure warm'd each other's
heart; Love conquer'd both, and, whilst
subdued in delicious thrall, Smiles and
bright tears upon their features play'd."

Farah sees Reed staring at her, enthralled; she blushes.

REED
Go on. It's beautiful.

FARAH
I'm embarrassed. It's a lover's poem.

REED
Please.

She turns back to face the carpet and its story.

FARAH
"Then in soft converse did they pass the hours; Their passion, like the season, fresh and fair; Their melting words as soft as summer air. Immersed in love so deep, they hoped suspicion would be lull'd asleep.

A beat.

REED
"Suspicion lull'd asleep". I like that.

He returns his gaze to the star-crossed lovers on the carpet. Then she does as well.

EXT. HOTEL INTERCONTINENTAL- DAY

Reed comes out of the hotel, dressed in a white linen suit and tie. Ignoring the line of taxis, he starts walking.

As he gets to the corner, TWO MEN get out of a car parked in the hotel's lot and start following Reed.

EXT. PAHLAVI BOULEVARD- DAY

The large street bordering the hotel is a mass of HONKING cars stuck in a traffic jam, a veritable parking lot.

HANDHELD follow the Two Men following twenty yards behind Reed, trying to keep him in sight on the busy sidewalk.

As Reed walks on a few blocks, he hears CHANTING and SHOUTING. He sees a small DEMONSTRATION just a bit further up is blocking traffic.

A HUNDRED WOMEN in black chadors have staged a sit-in, CHANTING in Farsi and shaking their fists. Reed passes them and a line of TRAFFIC COPS who seem powerless to do anything.

Reed sees a taxi, runs for it, jumps inside. The Two Men gesticulate wildly and a Ford sedan RACES UP to them. They jump in and it PEELS OUT, following the taxi.

INT. TEHRAN POST OFFICE- DAY

A busy post and telegraph office, PEOPLE bustling back and forth, lines forming at each teller window. Reed is at a counter, paying for an international call.

TELLER
Booth fifteen.

REED
Thank you.

He makes his way through the mass of people to a line of numbered phone booths, each filled with a PERSON on the phone. Reed finds number fifteen empty and goes inside.

INT. PHONE BOOTH- CONTINUOUS

It's quieter inside. After a few seconds, the phone RINGS loudly, and he picks it up.

REED
(a long beat)
Mom, it's me, Douglas.
(beat, louder)
No, I can't make it home for Christmas.
That's why I'm calling.

EXT. OUTSIDE TEHRAN POST OFFICE- DAY

The square outside the main post office bustles with PEDESTRIANS, HAWKERS, and STREET VENDORS.

Parked across the square, the same two men who followed Reed from the hotel are sitting in the back of the Ford, watching the Post Office.

They watch Reed come out of the entrance to the Post Office and jump in a taxi at the head of a line of cabs.

The Ford pulls out to follow, turning up a side street.

A moment later, then--

--a HUGE EXPLOSION rocks the Post Office. GLASS and FLAMES pour out of the shattered windows.

People lie BLEEDING in the streets, cut to ribbons by flying glass. It's CHAOS, people SCREAMING and cowering in terror.

INT. BRITISH EMBASSY- DAY

A formal dining room; a few ELDERLY PATRONS served by WAITERS in full livery. Sitting at a table by the window is Reed and GEORGE FOSTER, the diplomat he met at the Behrooz party.

FOSTER
So nice to see you again, Dr. Reed.

REED
Likewise, though I'm not exactly sure why it is I'm here.

FOSTER
I was told you're a bright boy; you must have an inkling.

A WAITER serves two frosty martinis. Foster raises his.

FOSTER (cont'd)
Proper Beefeater gin.
(winks)
Haven't gone native yet. Cheers.

Reed smiles and they clink glasses.

FOSTER (cont'd)
"Going native" is how we Brits say an Englishman has lost sight of his nation's interests and sympathizes more with the locals. Jerome Coles told me the Yank term is "going off the reservation."

REED
Is that what I've done?

FOSTER
Jerome thought we should chat. I do have some experience in these matters, and in this country. I've been here since 1950.

Reed checks if anyone's within ear shot; nobody.

REED
Then you were here for Operation Ajax?

Eyes twinkling, he takes a sip of his martini.

FOSTER
A proud moment in an otherwise dull career.
(sighs)
Still, one always has regrets.

The Waiter reappears to take their order.

FOSTER (cont'd)
Try the roast beef. It's the genuine article, flown in from London in the diplomatic pouch. I take it rare.

Reed nods his agreement to the waiter, who exits.

REED
Regrets? I'm afraid I don't follow.

FOSTER
As the empire dissolved after the war, our diplomatic corps preached the gospel of democracy. I myself was a fervent believer. But when faced with a duly elected prime minister in the personage of Dr. Mohammed Mossadeq, what did we do?

Foster gives a long dramatic pause; he might've trained as a Shakespearian actor at some earlier part of his life.

FOSTER (cont'd)
We staged a coup. Bloodless, more or less, for which I am eternally grateful, but a coup nonetheless. We removed an elected prime minister in favor of a king, and not a very bright one at that.

REED
It was before my time, but I recall we had a hand in it. I also recall Mossadeq was a communist and he'd threatened to invite the Soviets in. He had to go.

Foster laughs quietly to himself.

REED (cont'd)
Did I say something funny?

FOSTER
That was a slander concocted by MI5 to get the Americans interested.

REED
I don't understand.

FOSTER
Dr. Mossadeq was a nationalist and a socialist, but never a communist. To be sure, he'd made threats, but only to nationalize the oil fields. And that, my son, would have cost the English crown a great deal of coin indeed.

REED
So the whole thing was about money?

FOSTER
See, I knew you were a bright boy.
(sips his martini)
When we brought the scheme to Truman, he laughed us out of the Oval Office. But Eisenhower was more easily swayed, especially after we staged a few bombings in Tehran and blamed them on local communists acting on Moscow's orders.

Foster lets that hang in the air while he sips his martini.

FOSTER (cont'd)
Whereas Americans have short memories, Iranians never forget. They remember who deposed Mossadeq and put the Shah in power, and that the CIA created SAVAK to keep him there. So when the peanut farmer in the White House bleats on about democracy and human rights, the irony is hardly lost on your average Iranian.

The Waiter arrives with two plates of thick prime rib, so rare to be almost bloody.

FOSTER (cont'd)
I'm sure you understand now why any real
change in Iran would be for the worse, at
least as it concerns both our nations.

Reed looks at the cagey old spy, his appetite gone.

REED
I understand you perfectly, Mr. Foster.

Foster smiles, takes a bite of food.

EXT. OUTSIDE BRITISH EMBASSY- DAY

As Reed comes out, he sees Parviz and the LTD parked across
the street. He crosses the street, gets in, and it pulls out.

A moment later, the Ford sedan pulls out to follow.

INT. LTD (MOVING)- DAY

Parviz drives and smokes. In the back, Reed also smokes.

PARVIZ
Was your lunch enjoyable?

REED
I kind of lost my appetite.

Moradi drives a while, checking his rear view now and again.

PARVIZ
We're being followed, you know.

REED
We are? Are you sure?

PARVIZ
Yes, and I'm fairly certain they were at
the airport too.

REED
Do you know who it is?

PARVIZ
I assumed you would. You're the one
being followed.

A beat, Reed thinking.

REED
Take me to the American Embassy.

EXT. OUTSIDE AMERICAN EMBASSY- DAY

The compound holding the many buildings of the U.S.
diplomatic mission is huge, taking up almost an entire city
block in a mixed residential and commercial neighborhood.

The LTD pulls up across the street, and Reed gets out. Dodging traffic, he crosses the street and goes to the entrance. He flashes his passport to two MARINES and enters.

INT. COLLINS'S OFFICE- DAY

Collins has his feet up on his desk reading a file, when Reed enters. He's visibly angry, puts his hands on the desk and glares at the CIA man.

REED
Are you having me tailed?

COLLINS
Sorry, doc, but no.
(off Reed's look)
How about a little Christmas cheer?

He pulls a bottle of Wild Turkey and two shot glasses from a drawer, gestures for Reed to sit. He does. Collins pours the shots and they both down them.

COLLINS (cont'd)
You hear the main Post Office got blown up earlier today?

REED
Are you kidding? I was there calling home earlier today.

COLLINS
Doubt they were trying to blow you up.
It's a lot of fuss for one man.

REED
I didn't think they were after me. I'm just saying--

COLLINS
(interrupting)
--That it's dangerous here? No shit.
(then)
So, how was Persepolis anyway?

REED
Goddamnit, I knew it.

COLLINS
(grinning)
I'm just yanking your chain. Your hotel concierge is on our payroll; I do have to keep half an eye on you.

REED
You're a prick, you know that, Gerry?

COLLINS
Yeah, the ex-wife made it pretty clear.
So why you think you're being followed?

REED
My driver said so.

COLLINS
And your driver, he's experienced in
counterintelligence work?

REED
I doubt it.

Collins picks up a pack of Marlboros on his desk, takes one out, taps it against the pack.

COLLINS
Well, just so you know, in order to mount
a proper twenty-four hour surveillance on
a single individual in an urban
environment requires three teams of ten
agents working eight-hour shifts; three
two-man cars and four on foot.

(lights his cigarette)
You really believe you're worth that kind
of manpower commitment?

Reed deflates. Collins tosses him the pack of Marlboros.

REED
You think I'm being ridiculous.

Reed lights his own cigarette, puts the pack on the desk.

COLLINS
No, just a little paranoid. But to be
fair, this country seems to bring out it
in people.

REED
I'm just starting to notice that.

COLLINS
You still got my card?
(Reed nods)
If you really think someone's following
you, then call me. Got it?

Reed stands up to leave.

REED
Even though I'm being paranoid?

COLLINS
Hey, like Mick Jagger said; just cause
you're paranoid don't mean they're not
after you.

INT. LTD (MOVING) - DAY

REED
We still being followed?

Parviz looks in his rear-view, shakes his head.

REED (cont'd)
So what's our first stop?

PARVIZ
I thought I'd show you Tehran.

REED
I've been to Tehran.

PARVIZ
Not this part.

PULLING UP, we see the car is headed south, away from the mountains, where the city spreads out into the vast plain.

INT. BOUTIQUE- DAY

A chic store with all the latest Paris fashions. WOMEN and SALES GIRLS flit back and forth.

Darius trails Farah as she looks at dresses on a long rack.

AZIMI
How was your trip to Persepolis with Reed? Do I have reason to be jealous?

FARAH
Don't be ridiculous.

AZIMI
I'm sure Reza would like nothing better than to see him replace me.

FARAH
Do I get a choice? You're always telling me how much you believe in the equality between the sexes. Do you or don't you?

Darius makes a face but says nothing. He's annoyed she keeps browsing dresses as they talk.

FARAH (cont'd)
You know what's funny? Reed asked about you just like you ask after him.

Azimi puts a hand on her shoulder and stops her.

AZIMI
(demanding)
What did he want to know, Farah?

FARAH
Take your hand off me.
(he instantly does so)
He said you were mujaheddin.

AZIMI
(alarmed)
Why would he say that? What did you tell him?

FARAH
He said you'd said things to him, made political jokes. I told him it wasn't true, that he'd misunderstood you.
(Azimi looks relieved)
But I did tell him we both believed in social justice for Iran.

The conversation becomes increasingly heated.

AZIMI
Are you mad? That's practically treason.

FARAH
I think you're the one losing your mind.

AZIMI
Did it even occur to you that Reed was asking on Reza's behalf?

FARAH
Douglas wouldn't do that. And since when do you care what my brother thinks?

AZIMI
I only care because he can have me arrested. Or worse.

Now it is Farah who looks alarmed.

FARAH
What are you talking about?

AZIMI
Your brother is a high official in the secret police, Farah.

FARAH
I don't believe you. Reza's not SAVAK. He works in the Interior Ministry.

AZIMI
Wake up. Your dear brother tortures and kills people in order to keep this corrupt regime in power.

FARAH
(crumbling)
It's not true. It can't be.

AZIMI
Do you think Reza would just tell you about it? Are you really that naïve?

FARAH
Wait. How would you know that about my brother...unless...

He goes silent. She looks at him for a long moment, a sickening realization washing over her.

FARAH (cont'd)
Unless you were *mujaheddin*.

AZIMI
(guiltily)
I was going to tell you.

She turns her back to him, shuts her eyes tight to keep the tears from falling. A beat, she turns back to face him.

FARAH
You and my brother are both liars. And what else, I can't imagine.

He gets right in her face, quiet in his fury.

AZIMI
I'm not like him. What I do is for the good of our nation. I'm a patriot.

FARAH
I think it was Oscar Wilde who said patriotism is a virtue of the vicious.

AZIMI
Please spare me quotations from English homosexuals. It doesn't matter what you believe any more. If Reed repeats what you said to Reza, I'll be in the Evin by dawn. You've signed my death sentence.

He storms off leaving her alone, shaken and scared.

FARAH
Darius!! Wait.

Azimi storms away, leaving Farah alone. She starts to cry.

EXT. SOUTH TEHRAN- DAY

Reed and Moradi are strolling a street in South Tehran in silence, a very different part of the city.

The images burn in Reed's brain as they pass by--

--fetid SLUM BUILDINGS, broken windows, chipping paint, laundry hanging everywhere--

--barefoot KIDS playing in broken water mains--

--blind and crippled BEGGARS with their hands out--

--mangy dogs rooting through piles of uncollected garbage--
--WOMEN in full *chadors* emptying chamber pots in open sewers--
--aimless young MEN whiling away the day, unemployed, smoking cigarettes.

MEDIUM on Reed, as the stark contrast from the prosperous northern suburbs he's used to is driven home to him.

Moradi notices Reed's reaction.

REED
Is most of South Tehran like this?

PARVIZ
No. This is one of the better areas.

REED
But why aren't there any riots or demonstrations going on here?

PARVIZ
The mullahs would not permit it.

MEDIUM on Reed, the wheels turning, an idea forming.

EXT. SOUTH TEHRAN- DAY

Reed and Moradi are taking tea at a small street cafe, a few plastic lawn chairs set up next to a makeshift shack. An ELDERLY WOMAN in a *chador* lazily fans away flies.

The remains of a derelict factory lie before them along with a row of half-constructed concrete apartment buildings. Graffiti, garbage, and broken glass are everywhere

PARVIZ
This was going to be the Eden of South Tehran. Imagine that.

REED
Looks like the South Bronx.

Moradi's in a genial mood, despite the surroundings.

PARVIZ
Public housing for the masses, part of the Shah's great reforms. But when oil prices dropped in the mid-sixties, it was all abandoned in the name of austerity. It's funny, isn't it, how austerity only affects certain parts of the population.

REED
If you don't mind me asking, how did you lose your job? You were a professor?

PARVIZ
Sociology. How did you know?

REED

Gerges told me. Said it was something political, to do with your family.

PARVIZ

My cousin asked me to meet a band of campus reformers. They turned out to be misguided students, romantics who took *Dr. Zhivago* far too seriously.

(Reed laughs)

Of course, the entire group had been thoroughly infiltrated by SAVAK.

REED

What happened to you?

PARVIZ

Since I attended but once, I only lost my job. Others lost far more.

REED

You seem very good natured about it, considering it cost you your career.

PARVIZ

As I said, others lost far more than I.

INT. LTD (MOVING)- DUSK

Parviz is driving, but traffic headed North is so heavy that the car is stopped. Southbound traffic flows freely.

REED

(looking at his watch)
With this traffic, you won't make it back in time for the curfew.

PARVIZ

I'll sleep in the car if need be.

REED

Nonsense. Turn around and go home to your family.

He opens the door and gets out before Parviz can protest.

EXT. TEHRAN BOULEVARD- DUSK

Reed leans in to the open passenger-side window.

PARVIZ

It's two miles to your hotel from here.

REED

Go home. I'll call when I need you.

Reed starts walking up the boulevard locked in traffic.

INT. LTD (MOVING) - DUSK

Parviz makes a face, then makes a U-turn.

EXT. TEHRAN BOULEVARD - BUSK

The LTD completes the U-Turn and starts speeding southward, passing the slow traffic in the northbound lane.

After passing about twenty cars, it goes by the same Ford sedan that had been following them earlier in the day.

Parviz doesn't see the Ford because it's on the inside lane, shielded from his sight by two other vehicles. After the LTD passes, a BIG MAN in a suit gets out of the passenger seat.

BIG MAN'S POV on Reed walking fifty yards ahead of him. He signals to the GUY behind the wheel of the Ford to go ahead.

MEDIUM on Reed, walking, oblivious to the men tailing him. His pace is not quite even with the slow traffic.

BIG MAN'S POV on Reed, now walking only forty yards ahead.

INT. BEHROOZ'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Behrooz is at his desk going over some papers when Farah BURSTS through the door with his mother right behind her.

She goes right up to his desk, visibly upset.

FARAH
Tell me it's not true, Reza.

MRS. BEHROOZ
I told her you were working. Come, Farah. Help me in the kitchen.

Farah ignores her, comes up to the desk, glares at Behrooz.

FARAH
Tell me it's not the truth.

BEHROOZ
(putting his papers down)
Tell you what, Farah?

FARAH
That you don't work for SAVAK.

BEHROOZ
(angrily)
Who told you this lie?

She gets right in his face.

FARAH
Damn you, answer me!

MRS. BEHROOZ (FARSI)
Don't speak to your brother like that!
He's the head of this family.

FARAH (FARSI)
A murderer is what he is.

Without thinking, Mariam Behrooz SLAPS her daughter. Behrooz is out of his seat in an instant, stops his mother from hitting his sister again, and gets between the two women.

BEHROOZ (FARSI)
Leave us, mother. I'll handle this.

A traditional woman, she has no choice but to obey the head of the family. With a tear in her eye, she exits the room.

BEHROOZ (cont'd)
(English)
I'll ask again. Who told you this lie?

FARAH
So you deny it?
(off his silence)
If it isn't true, then swear it.

BEHROOZ
Don't you know me better than that, to call me a murderer?
(off her look)
It's not true, Farah. I swear it.

A beat. She believes- or chooses to believe- her older brother, and a wave of relief sweeps over her face.

FARAH
I knew you never could harm anyone.

BEHROOZ
Of course not.
(too quickly)
Who told you this defamation?

Farah looks at him, saying nothing verbally, but revealing everything with her eyes.

BEHROOZ (cont'd)
It was the person you've been seeing,
wasn't it? The one I disapprove of?

FARAH
You know his name.

BEHROOZ
(anger builds with each word)
But I will not speak it. This man, he knows I will not permit a marriage, so his only recourse is to slander my good name, to turn my own sister against me.

FARAH
No, Darius isn't like that.

BEHROOZ
He would say anything to twist your mind,
Farah, to separate you from your family,
the very people who cherish you most of
all. Don't you see that?

FARAH
Promise me you won't hurt him.

He is fuming, silent, stoic, won't meet her eyes. She gets
on her knees, clasps her brother's hands in hers, pleading.

FARAH (cont'd)
Promise me, Reza. I beg you.

Finally, he meets her eyes.

BEHROOZ
Only on the condition that you swear to
me never to see this Azimi again.

FARAH
Fine. I promise.

BEHROOZ
Then no harm will come to him. I swear.

She immediately starts crying profusely.

BEHROOZ (cont'd)
Shhhh. It's alright.
(then)
Now, go. Help our mother as she asked.

She sniffles back her tears as she exits. Behrooz picks up
the phone and dials a number.

BEHROOZ (cont'd)
Get me Hafez.

INT. KITCHEN- NIGHT

Mrs. Behrooz is fumbling with some vegetables while a COOK
does the actual cooking. She's an old woman, obviously been
with the family for years and years.

When Farah walks in, Mariam looks at her daughter and they
melt into one another's arms.

MRS. BEHROOZ
I am so sorry, my flower.

FARAH
It was my fault.

They hug one another fiercely. The Cook smiles to herself.

INT. BEHROOZ'S OFFICE- NIGHT

He's still on the phone.

BEHROOZ

Hafez, I want someone picked up tonight.
His name is Darius Azimi.

EXT. TEHRAN BOULEVARD- NIGHT

Reed stops at an intersection for traffic. The Ford sedan is one car behind him. The Driver gets out, moves to the trunk.

REVERSE on the Big Man coming up behind Reed.

INSET: in his hand, he holds an old-fashioned blackjack.

Reed is oblivious as the man WHACKS him in the base of the skull, knocking him cold. He catches Reed as he falls and drags him by the arm pits to the Ford's trunk.

Both men pile Reed in the trunk and slam it shut. They get in as the light turns green and speed away, taking a right on the next street.

INT. FORD'S TRUNK (MOVING)- NIGHT

Reed lies unconscious on a spare tire.

EXT. BEHROOZ HOME- NIGHT

Behrooz is exiting his home quickly, Ali's Mercedes waiting for him. He gets in the back seat and it PEELS OUT.

EXT. ALLEY- NIGHT

A back alley somewhere in Tehran, lined with garbage and crates of old soda bottles. Somewhere, a cat SCREECHES.

The Ford holding Reed is parked in the alley.

INT. FORD'S TRUNK- NIGHT

Reed's eyes flutter open. His mouth has a piece of duct tape over it and his wrists are bound behind him. He struggles for a moment, realizes it's futile.

EXT. HOTEL INTERCONTINENTAL- NIGHT

Ali's Mercedes idles in front. Ali comes out of the hotel and he gets behind the wheel.

INT. ALI'S MERCEDES- NIGHT

Ali turns and looks at Behrooz.

ALI (FARSI)

The American never returned to his hotel.

BEHROOZ (FARSI)
I thought you had him watched.

ALI (FARSI)
My men lost him in South Tehran earlier today. To be fair, it's impossible to stay on someone in that maze.

BEHROOZ (FARSI)
What was he doing in South Tehran?
(Ali shrugs)
Take me to the Evin. And get every one of your people out finding Reed.

ALI (FARSI)
Are we going to tell the Americans their man has gone missing?

BEHROOZ (FARSI)
No, we're going to find him. Even if we have to turn the entire city upside down.

INT. OFFICE- NIGHT

A tiny office, crammed with boxes; maybe the back of a shop.

With a bag over his head and hands bound behind a chair, Reed sits at a table. His pockets are turned out, the contents on the desk in front of him.

Behind him is the Big Man from the street and the Ford's DRIVER. Each has a GUN in his waist band.

REVERSE a man sitting across from Reed: Darius Azimi. He has a 9MM Makarov automatic pistol sitting in front of him.

He nods to the Big Man, who pulls the bag off Reed's head. Reed blinks in the light, sees Azimi sitting across from him.

REED
Nice way to treat a friend, Darius.

AZIMI
No, but a good way to treat a spy.
(holds up Collins's CIA
business card)
Colleague?

REED
Alias, actually. First rule at spy school is to carry around plenty of business cards in case we meet potential clients.

Azimi nods to Big Man, who PUNCHES Reed HARD in the back of the head.

AZIMI
Trust me, that clever tongue of yours won't serve you well here.

REED
And why would I be spying on you?
Because you're such a great skier?

AZIMI
You found out I was in the mujaheddin
leadership. Farah told me as much after
your trip together to Persepolis.

REED
That's what this is about? Farah?
(laughs)
Silly me, I always thought jealousy was
such a bourgeois weakness.

Another nod from Darius, the Big Man HITS Reed again.

INT. EVIN PRISON- NIGHT

Ali is following Behrooz through the dank corridors.

INT. OFFICE- NIGHT

AZIMI
You thought you could get Farah all to
yourself by telling her brother I was
mujaheddin.

REED
I didn't tell him anything about you.

AZIMI
Then explain why SAVAK agents raided my
family home tonight looking for me.

Reed starts laughing out loud, pissing off Azimi even more.

AZIMI (cont'd)
What do you find so amusing?

REED
I'm pretty sure Che Guevara didn't live
with his mommy and daddy.

Azimi looks to his two men.

AZIMI (FARSI)
Make him understand I'm losing patience.

The Driver pulls the chair away from the table and the Big
Man starts hitting Reed with vicious BODY SHOTS. Azimi
watches it go on, nonplussed.

INT. EVIN PRISON- NIGHT

Hafez stands outside a cell. Behrooz appears with Ali in tow.

BEHROOZ
Did they know?
(Hafez shakes his head)
We'll see about that.

Behrooz opens the door and goes inside.

INT. EVIN INTERROGATION ROOM- CONTINUOUS

Darius's parents sit on two chairs behind a table in a small interrogation room, frightened to death.

Behrooz enters, his usual cool exterior having vanished.

BEHROOZ (FARSI)
Your son is a traitor. Tell me where he
is or you also are traitors.

Off their silence, he SLAMS the table with his fists.

BEHROOZ (FARSI) (cont'd)
WHERE IS HE!!

Mrs. Azimi bursts into tears.

INT. OFFICE- NIGHT

The Driver pushes the chair back so Reed is again facing Azimi. It takes Reed a few moments to compose himself.

REED
I didn't tell Reza about you for the
simple reason that Farah asked me not to.
(spits blood)
And by the by, I think there's only one
thing he knows for sure about you.

AZIMI
And what's that?

REED
That you're an asshole who isn't good
enough for his sister.

Azimi loses his composure and SLUGS Reed himself. He picks up the Makarov pistol.

AZIMI
Normally I abhor violence, but your death
will serve as a warning to the CIA and
SAVAK that we are not to be trifled with.

But Reed starts laughing again. Infuriated, Azimi gets right in his face.

AZIMI (cont'd)
What's so funny now?

Reed abruptly stops laughing, looks Azimi in the eye.

REED
Darius, I don't think you were the only guys following me.

Darius sees both his men reach for their guns-- then--

--SILENCED BULLETS EXPLODE on the back wall of the office, KILLING both the Big Man and the Driver.

--before Azimi can turn around, a BIG PISTOL is pressed to the back of his head.

A hand comes into frame, pulls the Makarov out of his grip. A CRACK from a gun butt, and Darius is unconscious.

REED (cont'd)
You said you weren't watching me.

REVERSE and REVEAL Collins, with two IRANIAN AGENTS holding silenced Uzis. He smiles back at Reed.

COLLINS
Lucky for you I'm a liar.

EXT. TEHRAN- NIGHT

The Agents are dragging an unconscious Darius into the back of an unmarked car. Reed has an arm over Collins's shoulder to support himself. They watch the car drive away.

COLLINS
"I've found a man whom I believe to be a back channel into the *mujaheddin* hierarchy." Didn't I warn you about playing spy?

REED
So you've been reading my mail too?

COLLINS
God, you really are a naïve sonuvabitch.
(sees Reed is near collapse)
Let's get you to a hospital.

He motions to a DRIVER in another car to pull up.

REED
I know, me dying would make you look bad.

COLLINS
You're welcome.

Reed manages a smile.

INT. CAR (MOVING)- DAY

Collins sits in the back with Reed, who winces every time the car hits a pothole in the street.

COLLINS

Y'know, I told my boss this is what'd happen if State sent an amateur on a Beirut fishing excursion.

REED

And what's a Beirut fishing excursion?

COLLINS

In Lebanon, we backed this Druze militia chief. Now, the Druze are Christians, so on Fridays, it was fish for dinner. Only the Israelis had blockaded the ports, so this militia chief sent a few of his boys out in a rowboat. But none of 'em knew how to fish. They didn't even have rods, reels, or bait, but what they did have was hand grenades. So somebody got the bright idea to toss one in the drink and BOOM! A dozen stunned fish floated to the surface.

REED

So, tell me, in this scenario, am I the fisherman, or the fish?

Collins grins.

INT. HOSPITAL EXAM ROOM- DAY

A DOCTOR and a NURSE tape Reed's ribs while he watches an animated conversation between Collins and Behrooz through a plate glass window.

The two seem very collegial, if not downright cozy. They shake hands and Behrooz walks over, entering the exam room just as the doctor and nurse finish. They both exit.

BEHROOZ

Douglas, I can't tell you how embarrassed and sorry I am. Can you ever forgive me?

REED

For what? This wasn't your fault.

BEHROOZ

You never would've met the scum who did this to you if it hadn't been for me.

(deep breath, quietly
infuriated)

The only person I blame more than myself is my sister. If she's involved in this, I don't know what-- (stops himself)

He looks away, almost afraid to continue his train of thought. Reed steps in to reason with his old friend.

REED

Look, I agree Farah's got lousy taste in men, but you can't believe she had any part in this, Reza.

(MORE)

REED (cont'd)
(off his silence)
She didn't know about Darius.

BEHROOZ
(demanding)
And you know this for sure? How?

REED
When we were in Persepolis, I told Farah
I thought Azimi was mujaheddin. She
denied it, and I believed her.

All of a sudden, it's like Behrooz is having two
conversations at once; one with Reed, another with himself.

BEHROOZ
I don't understand. How did you even
come to suspect him?

REED
Just things he said. Pratting on about
social justice and equality. I thought
he was just a phoney, a blowhard.

BEHROOZ
Still, why not come to me with your
suspicions?

REED
I really just thought he was full of it.
It didn't seem worth mentioning.

Behrooz looks at him, his eyes reading that he doesn't
believe a word Reed is saying to him.

BEHROOZ
Tell me the real reason.

REED
Fine.
(then)
Farah asked me not to.

BEHROOZ
(eyes alight in fury but tone
remains calm)
Excuse me?

REED
I was only trying to protect Farah. And
you. You have to know that.

BEHROOZ
So, to protect us, you not only meddled
in my family's affairs but also withheld
information vital to state security?

Behrooz, caught up in his own internal dialogue, isn't
listening to Reed any more. He seems to inwardly make a
decision, straightens himself, turns, and looks at Reed.

BEHROOZ (cont'd)
(his most correct tone)
I am most sorry for the injuries you've
suffered and wish you a speedy recovery.
However, if you wish to remain friends--

REED
(interrupting)
Reza, don't--

BEHROOZ
(interrupting right back)
--you will cease your interference in the
business of my family and my nation,
completely and entirely. I trust you
will respect my wishes in this.

REED
Don't do this.

Behrooz will not meet Reed's eyes.

BEHROOZ
If you do not, if you call my home or
contact any member of my family outside
my presence, then I can not be held
responsible for the consequences. I tell
you this for your own safety. Goodbye.

With that, he marches out of the exam room. Reed watches him
say a few words to Collins, who looks at Reed, then nods his
head in agreement. Behrooz walks away, and Collins enters.

COLLINS
That could've gone better.

Reed sees something hinky in Collins. A beat.

REED
What's going on, Gerry?

The CIA man looks around to see if anyone's in earshot.

COLLINS
(lowering his voice)
Okay, it's on the QT, but the Shah's
leaving Iran.

REED
(amazed)
He's abdicating?

COLLINS
Officially, he's only going abroad
temporarily to seek medical treatment.

REED
When?

COLLINS

Soon. And when he leaves--

REED

--the shit hits the fan.

COLLINS

Iranian military's drawing up plans to handle any civil uprising. There's a general coming in from the Pentagon as we speak to get everyone in line.

REED

You're talking about a coup.

COLLINS

No, we're talking about stability.

REED

Stability my ass. If there's a coup, the mujaheddin will fight. And what happens if Khomeini comes back?

COLLINS

No one's sweating the mullahs. The worry is that if the mujaheddin take over for even a day, they'll invite the damn Russians in as their benefactors. And we both know that if Soviet tank columns start riding down the mountain passes to the oil fields, then we go to war.

REED

So once the Shah leaves, the bloodbath begins?

COLLINS

The senior Army officers are all with us. It'll be messy, but then it'll be over.

REED

And does the Shah get to return after the blood's been hosed off the streets, or are we installing a new puppet?

COLLINS

Military government for now, elections later, after things have settled down.

REED

Elections? C'mon, Gerry, that's a crock and you know it.

COLLINS

Get with the program. Even your pals at Foggy Bottom are on board.

(produces an envelope)

Cable for you came on the secure line.

Reed tears open the envelope, reads the cable.

COLES (V.O.)

Douglas- As you know, the peace process has been a great success, and Iran's coming transition to democracy will serve as yet another beacon of light to the region. We'd like an objective report on the current Iranian political situation, emphasizing the Persian tradition of independence and pluralism. I know you won't let me down. Jerome Coles.

Reed looks at Collins.

REED

Unbelievable.

COLLINS

They're just rolling with the punches like the rest of us. And if you take my advice, for once you'll just do what you're told. I might not be around next time to save your ass.

Reed looks sheepishly at him.

REED

You're right, Gerry. Thanks.

INT. EVIN PRISON- NIGHT

Darius is tied to a chair in front of a table bolted to the floor, a piece of duct tape over his mouth.

Sitting across from him is Behrooz. Behind him stands a SECRET POLICE THUG holding a chain.

BEHROOZ

I have many, many questions for you, my friend, but only one is important now. I'll only ask once, and to save your parents lives, it'd best be the truth.

He reaches across and RIPS the tape away from Azimi's mouth.

BEHROOZ (cont'd)

Did my sister have any part in this?

INT. EVIN PRISON- DAWN

Darius is still tied to the chair. Bruises everywhere, dried blood leads to his busted nose, one eye's swollen shut, and two of his teeth sit on the table in a pool of blood.

Behrooz is standing at the entrance to the cell.

BEHROOZ

Your execution is scheduled for tomorrow morning. Try not to die before then. I wouldn't want to miss it.

He exits and the cell door closes with a SLAM.

INT. BEHROOZ KITCHEN- DAY

Mariam Behrooz and Farah are taking their morning tea when Behrooz enters, clearly weary from no sleep.

MRS. BEHROOZ
Where have you been all night?

Behrooz walks up to his sister and looks at her HARD.

BEHROOZ
Azimi has been arrested for high treason.
He'll be shot tomorrow morning.

FARAH
Bastard. You lied to me.

BEHROOZ
I told you what you wanted to hear.

FARAH
You might as well arrest me too. I agree with everything Darius stands for.

MRS. BEHROOZ
You're upset, Farah. You don't know what you're saying.
(to her son)
She doesn't mean it.

FARAH
I do know what I'm saying.
(right in Behrooz's face)
I know exactly what I am saying.

BEHROOZ
No, mother is correct. You have no idea.

He starts walking past her. She runs after him, pummeling his back with her fists.

FARAH
(crying, hysterical)
Vicious, lying bastard. You swore to me you wouldn't hurt him.

Behrooz turns, pins her wrists, looks down at his weeping sister.

BEHROOZ
You're right, Farah. I am a liar. And more vicious than you can imagine. So please, do not defy me.

He shakes her off and storms out of the room.

INT. REED'S HOTEL ROOM- NIGHT

Reed has stripped off his shirt, but the bandages are still wrapped around his banged-up ribs. He's sipping a scotch, watching the BBC world service on TV.

BBC ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
At a news conference in Paris, National Front leaders Mr. Mehdi Bazargan and the Ayatollah Khomeini reiterated their demand that the Shah abdicate his throne.

There's a KNOCK on his door. Reed gets up, turns down the volume, and goes to the door.

REED
Who is it?

FARAH (O.S.)
Farah.

Reed opens the door. She's pulled back her hand to strike him and is SWINGING-

--but STOPS SHORT when she sees his damaged face and ribs.

REED
Go ahead, take the swing. Feels like just about everyone else has.

FARAH
Douglas, what happened to you?

REED
Exactly what it looks like.

He turns and walks back in his room. She follows, closing the door behind him. He's pulling on a shirt, painfully.

FARAH
Please don't do that on my account.

REED
(lays the shirt down)
Drink?

FARAH
Please.

He pours her a scotch from the minibar. She sees every movement is painful for him.

FARAH (cont'd)
Was it my brother?

REED
No. Your brother cut me off. Your boyfriend's the one who kicked the crap out of me.
(gives her the drink)
(MORE)

REED (cont'd)
I feel bad for you, Farah, caught between
those two. Chin-chin.

He stands in front of her, clinks glasses.

FARAH
I am to blame.

REED
How do you figure that?

FARAH
Reza and Darius both lied to me because
they thought me either too childish or
vapid to face reality. And then, rather
than accepting that reality, I asked you
to lie for me. It was selfish of me.

He looks at her for a long moment, passion in his eyes.

REED
I had my own reasons too, Farah.
(beat)
My own selfish reasons.

A beat, him locking her eyes. He KISSES her. At first she's
wary, but then she leans in, yielding to her own passion.

Then, she backs off. But only a bit.

FARAH
We shouldn't.

REED
I know.

A beat. And now it is she who KISSES him.

The kiss turns into something more, the both of them
surrendering to the moment.

INT. REED'S HOTEL ROOM- LATER

In the bed, Reed is MAKING LOVE to Farah. It is both gentle
and hurried, two people discovering one another.

INT. REED'S HOTEL ROOM- DAY

Reed is getting dressed in a tan suit, white shirt, no tie.
Farah is still beneath the sheets, looking at him.

FARAH
Why are you doing this?

REED
I thought for once in my life I'd try not
taking the path of least resistance.

Finished dressing, he turns around and looks at her.

REED (cont'd)
Please be careful leaving here. I don't know what Reza would do if he found out about this. He's not himself.

FARAH
I know. He's changed.

REED
Farah, he's still your brother and he loves you no matter what happens. You have to remember that.

FARAH
I'll always care about my family, Douglas. But I no longer care what they think of me. Or what happens to me.

He looks at her, goes to the front door.

REED
I care about what happens to you.

She smiles.

FARAH
Then, for you, I'll be careful.

EXT. DESERT- DAY

On a lonely stretch of highway in the high desert, blinding white light, the LTD is the only visible car headed south.

INT. LTD (MOVING)- DAY

Moradi drives. Reed wears sunglasses over his black eyes, but a piece of bloodied cotton is still wadded in his nose.

PARVIZ
Why are we going to Qom?

REED
I've never been to Qom...

His voice trails off and he stares out the window at the limitless desert. Moradi sees he has nothing more to say.

EXT. MILITARY AIRFIELD- DAY

A line of IRANIAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS and SENIOR MILITARY wait as a U.S. Air Force 707 is taxiing to a stop.

At the end of the line, Behrooz stands with Hafez.

A ramp is led up to the 707 and the door opens. A moment later, an AMERICAN GENERAL emerges, his STAFF in tow.

EXT. QOM- DAY

From a distance, it is a city dominated by the minarets of hundreds of mosques, all white, shimmering in the sunlight.

EXT. QOM STREETS- DAY

Qom, the most holy city for Shia study, only ninety-five miles from Tehran, but a world away. Reed and Moradi walk a street seemingly from another century.

The few women are veiled in full-length black *chadors*. All the men are young, fully bearded, wearing white robes and skull caps, denoting their status as students of Islam.

The strangest thing is the absence of any signs in English or anything for that matter denoting Western culture. It is totally unlike Tehran.

There are signs of the Ayatollah Khomeini everywhere; in store windows, taped to street signs, plastered on cars.

As Reed walks the street with Moradi, he's intently aware how people are gawking at him, a white man in a tan Western suit, almost as if a space alien had landed.

REED

Why is everyone staring?

PARVIZ

I doubt they've seen a Westerner before.

REED

Not even on TV?

PARVIZ

No one here watches TV. All they do is read the Koran.

Reed sees a small tea shop and stops.

REED

I'm thirsty. Are you thirsty?

Before Moradi can reply, Reed walks over and enters the shop.

INT. TEA SHOP- CONTINUOUS

A small, white-tiled tea shop where two dozen or so ISLAMIC STUDENTS are having a LOUD ARGUMENT in Farsi. They all immediately clam up when Reed enters and stare at him.

Reed stands there and stares back. A beat.

PARVIZ

Perhaps we should get our tea and go.

REED

Nonsense. Let's sit, relax.

One free table. All the students stare as Reed calmly takes a seat. Parviz reluctantly sits next to him and motions to the OWNER to bring them tea.

PARVIZ
Why are you doing this?

REED
I told you, I'm thirsty.

It is eerie the way all the students keep perfectly silent and continue staring intently at them.

PARVIZ
They take your presence as an affront.

The OWNER arrives with the tea.

REED
An affront? I don't understand.
(LOUD in FARSI)
Does it not say in the Koran to welcome the stranger and show him hospitality?

All at once, the students start muttering amongst themselves.

PARVIZ
(lowering his voice)
Now they think you mock the Koran.
(then)
This isn't a game, Douglas.

REED
Oh, there's a game going on. Except it seems like I'm the only one who doesn't know the rules.

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

REED
I think you do.
(LOUD in FARSI)
There is no god but God, and Muhammad is his one true messenger.

The muttering turns to an uproar all around them until one STUDENT, a leader, steps forward and raises his hand. All the other students go silent.

ISLAMIC STUDENT
(English accent)
Is it your intention to make jest of our faith?

Reed stands up, eye-to-eye with the fiery student leader. Moradi quickly steps up to intervene.

PARVIZ (FARSI)
He meant no insult--

Reed holds out his palm to silence Moradi.

REED (FARSI)
 You failed to greet me politely. As it is said in the Koran: "The Messenger of Allah said, May he be humiliated, the man in whose presence I am mentioned and he does not send Salah upon me."

At once, all of the students start SHOUTING and PUSHING, trying to get at Reed. Moradi pushes him to the door, but too many hands are grabbing at Reed.

He HITS the floor HARD. Many sandaled feet start KICKING at him. Reed curls into a fetal position, absorbing the blows.

Then-- a loud, commanding voice cuts through the commotion.

VOICE (FARSI)
 ENOUGH!! Who dares disturb the peace?!

The clamor immediately stops. Reed looks up and sees an IMAM standing in the doorway of the tea shop. All of the students quake before him, afraid of his authority.

He is young, perhaps forty, with a jet black beard and flowing black robes. His black turban denotes he is a direct descendant of the Prophet Mohammed. He locks eyes on Reed.

(Note: we realize it's the same fiery young imam from page 26, the one who's arrest sparked the rioting that night)

INT. IMAM'S OFFICE- DAY

An immaculate, white-washed office with sunlight streaming. Across a large wooden desk, Reed faces the Mullah.

MULLAH (FARSI)
 Quite clever, Dr. Reed, inciting my students by quoting the Koran.

REED (FARSI)
 I understand the concept of hospitality, even to one's enemies, is an important tenet of Islam.
 (beat)
 But I have the feeling we would have been introduced by my driver anyway.

MULLAH
 I did four years at UCLA. Why don't we speak English? I never get a chance.
 (beat)
 Though your Farsi is quite excellent.

REED
 Thanks.

MULLAH

But I do not know your driver. There was no prearrangement to this meeting.

REED

But you knew about me from the moment I stepped off the plane, didn't you? Who I was, what I was doing here?

The Mullah dips his head in acknowledgment.

MULLAH

There are some few officials in the government sympathetic to our cause. They characterized you as a man of some influence in Washington.

REED

At best, I'm an exalted errand boy.

MULLAH

Self-deprecation, such an unusually American trait.

REED

I wouldn't want to belong to a club that would have someone like me for a member?

MULLAH

(smiles)

Precisely.

(then goes serious)

We would like a message conveyed to your government. Is this possible?

REED

I'm all ears.

MULLAH

Under the divine leadership of the Grand Ayatollah Khomeini, Iran is on the path to becoming an Islamic Republic.

REED

(incredulous)

An Islamic Republic? You're serious?

MULLAH

(menacing)

We are deadly serious, Dr. Reed. In both purpose and deed. Do not doubt this.

Reed senses he'd better choose his words carefully.

REED

From my own doctoral studies, I know Islam to be a faith of peace and wisdom.

The tension immediately abates.

MULLAH
May I inquire into your own faith?

REED
Lapsed idealist.

The Mullah eyes Reed like a disobedient child.

MULLAH
If there are no attempts to infringe upon our sovereignty or undermine the Islamic Republic, we believe our nations can have good and productive relations. We desire a dialogue to seek common ground.

REED
That's the message?

MULLAH
Also make clear we will not tolerate godless communists in our midst, nor will we make friends of them.

Reed sits back, regards the Mullah for a moment.

REED
And you really think the Iranian people will accept Islamic law, women going back to the veil, all of that?

MULLAH
Our people thirst for it.
(he stands)
Let me demonstrate to you the depth of our convictions, so that you may believe what I say to be true.

EXT. QOM SQUARE- DAY

Reed and the Mullah watch from a balcony as a Shia ceremony begins. THOUSANDS OF MEN are in the dusty square, stripped to the waist, green headbands tied around their heads.

A huge stage is at the head of the square. An AYATOLLAH is standing at a lectern, CHANTING over a loud speaker system.

On a call sign from the Ayatollah, a line of DRUMMERS start a BEAT and the men start walking in a clockwise circle around the shrine. Reed sees most are young men, some only teens.

MULLAH
In this ceremony, pilgrims attest their devotion to Imam Hossein's martyrdom.

On another call from the Ayatollah, all the men start BEATING THEIR BACKS with chains in time to the beat.

In short time, BLOODY WELTS break out. In short order, the BLOOD starts flowing from the open wounds. But the pilgrims continue, painful as it must be.

MULLAH (cont'd)
To be a martyr is, in point of fact, the greatest honor in the Shia faith.

CLOSE on REED, as he watches, realizing the depth of the fanaticism behind such a display; it's chilling.

INT. LTD (MOVING)- DUSK

The long drive back to Tehran at night. Moradi drives with Reed in back. There's a palpable silence between them.

REED
I'm sorry I accused you, Parviz.

PARVIZ
You needn't apologize to me.

REED
I hope we can remain friends.

PARVIZ
We never were. Nor could we be.

REED
Are we that unalike, you and I?

PARVIZ
I'm afraid we are, Dr. Reed.

A beat. They drive in silence.

INT. LTD (MOVING)- LATER

Moradi sees that just up ahead of them, the traffic is stopped and lined up. He brings the car to a halt.

REED
What's going on?

PARVIZ
I'll see. Wait here.

He gets out of the car and walks ahead. Reed waits. Then, he hears GUNSHOTS. He gets out of the car.

EXT. HIGHWAY- NIGHT

Moradi is half running/half walking back to the car, trying to be as unobtrusive as possible.

PARVIZ
A police barracks near here was attacked.
Mujaheddin. The police are setting up roadblocks, searching cars.

REED
What's with the shooting?

PARVIZ
Reprisals.

Then, THREE UNIFORMED COPS come right up behind them. They are a slovenly, provincial lot, unshaved, corrupt.

COP #1 (FARSI)
Who are you? Where are your papers?!

Two grab Parviz and drag him away before he can reply. Reed starts after Parviz, but the other cop blocks his way.

REED (FARSI)
I'm an American. He's my driver.

COP #1 (FARSI)
Then you are free to go, American.

The guy turns and starts after the others.

REED (FARSI)
You have my driver.

The cop turns and glares at Reed.

COP #1 (FARSI)
Drive yourself. While you can.

The man turns and heads away. Reed hears more SHOTS.

A beat. Reed makes a decision and chases after the cops.

Twenty yards on, Reed sees a line of fifteen MEN who'd been forced from their cars, all kneeling on an embankment, their hands on their heads.

Cop #1 watches as another cop walks the line, SHOOTING each man in the back of the head. Reed pulls a WAD OF MONEY from his pocket, holds it up.

REED (FARSI)
Let him go.

COP #1 (FARSI)
Six policemen are dead. Keep your money.

REED
He's done nothing.

COP #1
I'm warning you to leave here now.
(takes out his gun)
Or kneel down with the others.

Reed rummages through his pockets, finds Collins's CIA card. He shows it to the Cop, who won't even look at it.

REED (FARSI)
Do you know who I am? Read this.

The SHOOTINGS continue, moving up the line towards Moradi.

COP #1 (FARSI)
I don't care who you are. I don't care
about anything anymore.

REED (FARSI)
Dumb bastard, probably can't read at all.

The Cop takes the business card, then CLUBS Reed with his gun, sending him to his knees. Blood trickles from his nose.

The man three down from Moradi is SHOT and falls forward.

Moradi starts saying his prayers to himself.

The Cop holds up the business card, glances at it.

INSET: he probably can't read, but the CIA logo is prominent.

REED (FARSI) (cont'd)
Go ahead, shoot a CIA agent. My friends
in SAVAK will flay your fat hide and
roast your entrails over an open fire.

A long beat. ANOTHER SHOT. The Cop holsters his gun.

COP #1 (FARSI)
Take your driver and go.

Reed gets to his feet, walks over, yanks Parviz to his feet, then pulls him back in the direction of the car.

REED
Don't say a word. Just walk.

MORE SHOTS. They get to the LTD, get in and pull around the traffic blockade. Reed sees Cop #1 following with his eyes.

In the front seat, Moradi starts weeping.

CLOSE on Reed, realizing the insanity sweeping around him.

INT./EXT. LTD (MOVING) / TEHRAN STREET SCENES- NIGHT

The LTD is driving through the CHAOS of a civil disturbance getting further and further out of hand.

Piles of tires BURN in the streets, RIOTERS overturn cars, barricades manned by students with clubs and knives, kerchiefs over their faces, GUNSHOTS in the distance.

REED
Something's happened. Where are all the police?

PARVIZ
A coup?

REED
Check the radio.

Moradi turns on the radio, flips around the dial, getting a variety of music, news and talk stations.

REED (cont'd)
It's not a coup. The radio stations would all be off the air if it were.

They pass a LOOTER- obviously poor- lugging a big TV set.

PARVIZ (FARSI)
(shouting out the window)
What's going on, brother?

LOOTER (FARSI)
The mujaheddin, bless them, attacked everywhere. The cops are all busy, take anything you want!

Moradi turns and looks at Reed.

REED
Just go to the hotel.

EXT. HOTEL INTERCONTINENTAL- NIGHT

Something's definitely changed; the hotel is surrounded by lines of sandbags, TROOPS, and an armored personnel carrier.

The LTD pulls up outside the quarantine line.

INT. LTD- NIGHT

Parviz looks back at Reed.

PARVIZ
You'll phone me when you need me?

REED
No, Parviz. Not any more.

With that, Reed exits and SLAMS the door behind him. Moradi watches him go inside, then pulls out, regret in his eyes.

INT. REED'S HOTEL ROOM- NIGHT

Reed opens his door to find Farah sitting on the bed in his hotel's terry cloth bath robe.

REED
Farah. What are you doing here?

FARAH
I decided the safest thing to do was stay here. Don't worry, I bribed the chamber maid to keep quiet.

She gets up and walks over to him.

FARAH (cont'd)
Aren't you happy to see me?

He puts his hands on her hips, looks her in the eyes.

REED
More than happy.

She KISSES him HARD. Her robe DROPS to the carpet.

INT. MORADI APARTMENT- NIGHT

The door opens and Moradi walks in. His wife has been waiting for him, obviously worried. She jumps up and hugs him in her arms.

PARVIZ (FARSI)
What's wrong?

SORAYA (FARSI)
All the chaos tonight. I was scared.

PARVIZ (FARSI)
I'm alright.
(trying to seem normal)
Is there any dinner?

SORAYA (FARSI)
I kept it warm for you.

She turns to go to the kitchen, but stops and looks at him.

He smiles bravely. She goes off to get the food.

INT. REED'S HOTEL ROOM- DAWN

While Farah sleeps, Reed writes out a report at the desk.

REED (V.O.)
Gentleman, the government of Prime Minister Bakhtiar is untenable. Having been appointed by the Shah, he is despised. We must look to the future.

EXT. TEHRAN STREETS- DAWN

The streets are eerily empty of people and traffic. The chaos has subsided, but the aftereffects are everywhere.

REED (V.O.)
There are three credible alternatives.
The first is the Right, meaning SAVAK and high ranking officers in the military.

Major intersections are patrolled by APCs and TANKS manned by soldiers. Ali's Mercedes is RACING on a wide boulevard.

INT. ALI'S MERCEDES (MOVING)- DAWN

Ali drives, despite a bruise on his face and one eye being covered by a bloody bandage.

REED (V.O.)

It's doubtful they can hold power. SAVAK is loathed, and rumors are rampant that younger officers will refuse orders to shoot protestors in the streets.

Behrooz is in the back, smoking. His arm is in a sling, a goodly amount of blood on his suit. He looks exhausted.

EXT. SOUTH TEHRAN- DAWN

The streets here are also eerily quiet, but with none of the signs of battle or the presence of troops. A battered Dodge van drives slowly down a street with no traffic.

INT. VAN (MOVING)- DAWN

In the back of the van, Darius Azimi sits with a group of MUJAHEDDIN GUERILLAS, all bearing AK-47s and pistols. They are all smiling and patting one another in congratulations.

REED (V.O.)

On the Left, the communist *Tudeh* are a joke, but the socialist *mujaheddin* present a genuine threat.

Darius is a mess from the constant beatings; he is not smiling like the others though. His eyes burn with thoughts of vengeance and retribution.

REED (V.O.) (cont'd)

While they may be able to take power, it's doubtful they can hold it. They are secularists in a distinctly religious country, and, to be sure, there's no budding Attaturk in their leadership.

EXT. OOM- DAWN

Outside a large mosque, there is a huge pile of sandals.

REED (V.O.)

Lastly, there is Ayatollah Khomeini and his Islamist followers, a group that's been largely ignored. I believe we disregard Khomeini at our own peril.

From a loudspeaker high on the minaret, the MUZZEIN chants the *adhan*, the call to the faithful.

INT. MOSQUE- DAWN

The same Mullah who'd been speaking to Reed is speaking prayers, kneeling on a small rug facing Mecca, pressing his forehead down to the rug in a sign of obedience to Allah.

REED (V.O.)
Khomeini intends to form an Islamic Republic. His forces are organized, committed, and impassioned, capable of not only taking power, but holding it.

REVERSE- behind the mullah, THOUSANDS of WORSHIPERS follow the mullah's movements, kneeling and praying in time to him.

REED (V.O.) (cont'd)
But they've offered us a deal: stay out of their way and bilateral relations won't be affected. In the strongest possible terms, I urge we hear them out.

INT. REED'S HOTEL ROOM- DAWN

Reed is folding up his letter and putting it in an envelope.

REED (V.O.)
Otherwise, I fear we run the risk of making an enemy of people who regard martyrdom as the greatest of virtues.

He picks up the phone, dials a number, lets it ring twice, and hangs up. He gazes at Farah, still asleep.

EXT. BEHROOZ KITCHEN- DAY

Mariam Behrooz is taking her tea when her son enters.

MRS. BEHROOZ
My god, Reza. Are you alright?

He sits down at the table, exhausted.

BEHROOZ
Last night the mujaheddin attacked prisons, police stations and army barracks across the country simultaneously. We had no idea they were capable of such coordination.

MRS. BEHROOZ
My God. There's blood all over you.

BEHROOZ
Not mine at least.

MRS. BEHROOZ
What happened?

BEHROOZ
I was at the Evin when it was assaulted and overrun. All the prisoners were released. We took it back eventually, but I was lucky to escape with my life.
(then)
Is Farah still sleeping?

MRS. BEHROOZ
 She didn't come home last night.
 (off his alarmed look)
 She called, said she was staying with
 friends. What you told her was a lot to
 bear at once.

BEHROOZ
 Spare me. If she were anyone besides my
 sister, I'd have had her arrested.

MRS. BEHROOZ
 Please tell me you don't mean that.

He stands.

BEHROOZ
 I have to shower and change. There's a
 cabinet meeting in an hour.

He starts walking out of the room.

MRS. BEHROOZ
 Son?
 (he stops)
 Do you think I should cancel our New
 Year's Eve party tonight?

He turns and looks at her for a long moment, considering the
 utter frivolity of the question. Then, not wanting to insult
 his own mother, he turns and abruptly leaves the room.

INT. INTERIOR MINISTRY- DAY

Behrooz- cleaned, shaved, in a fresh suit- sits at a long
 conference table. At the head is an IRANIAN GENERAL, his
 chest full of ribbons. Next to him is an AMERICAN GENERAL.

IRANIAN GENERAL
 Preparations are underway for the Shah's
 brief journey abroad for medical care.

Around the table are other IRANIAN OFFICERS, IRANIAN
 DIPLOMATS and AMERICAN DIPLOMATS. Where Behrooz sits, it's
 just younger army officers and other SAVAK officials.

IRANIAN GENERAL (cont'd)
 The Shabanou is just now choosing which
 furnishings and heirlooms the royal
 family shall take to comfort them.

As the general drones on, Behrooz whispers a private
 conversation to Hafez, who's sitting next to him.

BEHROOZ (FARSI)
 (whispering)
 Looting the palaces like common bandits.
 It's disgusting.

Hafez nods; he understands where Behrooz stands.

IRANIAN GENERAL

All care must be taken to maintain civil order after His Majesty's departure is announced to the public.

BEHROOZ (FARSI)

At least the rioters will stop looting for a few hours to celebrate.

IRANIAN GENERAL

And now, a few words of solidarity from our esteemed American friend.

HAFEZ (FARSI)

Here it comes.

The Iranian general sits; the American General stands.

AMERICAN GENERAL

I'm here to let you know that America stands with you at this uncertain time.

(major AHEMING)

But the Administration feels it's important to avoid violence at all costs.

HAFEZ (FARSI)

Is he joking?

BEHROOZ (FARSI)

That's for the benefit of posterity.

(glances at a stenographer)

We've gotten the message from Brezinski: do whatever it takes to maintain control. The Army's with us.

AMERICAN GENERAL

President Carter feels violence could undermine the ongoing peace process.

HAFEZ (FARSI)

Which is why Arab tyrants like Sadat aren't getting this lecture.

BEHROOZ (FARSI)

Not tyrant, Nobel Peace Prize winner.

AMERICAN GENERAL

The President hopes seeds of democracy can find fertile soil here in Iran.

BEHROOZ (FARSI)

But as long as the oil flows and you keep buying F-14s, who really cares?

AMERICAN GENERAL

It is his fervent hope democracy will then spread throughout this troubled region, and all can enjoy the freedom and prosperity that we do in America.

Everyone in the room starts APPLAUDING. Also clapping his hands, Behrooz leans in close to Hafez.

BEHROOZ (FARSI)
You know, it's not the killing that bothers me. It's the damn hypocrisy.

INT. REED'S HOTEL ROOM- NIGHT

Reed, dressed in his tuxedo pants and shirt, is tying his bow tie in the mirror. Farah talks from the bathroom.

REED
You really think this is a good idea?

FARAH (O.C.)
Of course, it's New Year's Eve.

REED
I still can't believe the hotel's having the party with all that's going on.

FARAH (O.C.)
Persians would stop a war for a party.

REED
(muttering to himself)
It may come to that.

FARAH (O.C.)
What's that?

REED
Nothing.

Finished, he pulls on his suit jacket, checks himself one last time in the mirror.

FARAH (O.C.)
How do I look?

He looks up and sees her standing in a Dior strapless evening gown, a stunning portrait of sexy glamor.

REED
Wow.
(then)
Wait. You haven't left this room in days. Where'd you get the dress?

FARAH
The hotel boutique. You like it?

He looks at her, thinking, God, she's beautiful.

REED
You look amazing.

She smiles.

EXT. HOTEL INTERCONTINENTAL BAR- NIGHT

The rooftop bar has been set up for a New Year's Eve party, with Chinese lanterns, a band, a buffet, and a dance floor.

The place is packed with swank young Tehranis, determined to enjoy themselves despite the political chaos. The whole scene has an ominous *fin de siècle* feel.

In the middle of a crowded dance floor, Reed and Farah dance cheek-to-cheek, swaying slowly to the music.

REED
Come to America with me, Farah.

FARAH
Washington?

REED
No. New York, I think.

FARAH
I've never been to New York.
(beat)
But I can't stay here anymore. I already
feel like an exile in my own country.

REED
Are you sure? You should be sure.

She nods, a tear in her eye, and lays her head gently on his shoulder.

SOMEONE'S POV from across the roof, watching them dance. It's Hafez, at the bar, also in a tuxedo, but no longer enjoying the party.

INT. REED'S HOTEL ROOM- DAY

Reed and Farah are asleep in bed when the phone RINGS. After three rings, he answers groggily.

REED
Hello?
(a beat, his eyes open wide)
Ten minutes, I'll be there.

He hangs up the phone, jumps out of bed, starts getting dressed. Farah blinks her eyes awake.

FARAH
What's wrong?

REED
Nothing. Go back to bed.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY- DAY

In a suit with no tie, his hair quickly finger-combed with water, Reed emerges from the elevator and scans the lobby.

He sees Hafez standing by the entrance, gesturing for him to come over, which Reed does.

REED
You wanted to talk to me?

HAFEZ
Outside, if you please, Dr. Reed.

Hafez goes outside the revolving door and Reed follows.

EXT. HOTEL INTERCONTINENTAL- DAY

As Reed comes out of the revolving door, TWO SAVAK MEN grab him by the armpits and throw him in a Mercedes sedan.

It PEELS OUT and heads up Pahlavi Boulevard.

INT. MERCEDES SEDAN (MOVING)- DAY

Hafez is sitting next to Reed, one MAN drives and the MAN in the passenger seat holds a GUN on Reed.

REED
What the hell's this about?

HAFEZ
You've been declared *persona non grata*.
Iran is expelling you. Permanently.

REED
You can't do that.

HAFEZ
Of course we can. You'll be on a chopper
to Dubai within the hour.

REED
Call Reza Behrooz.

HAFEZ
That would be foolish, Dr. Reed. After
all, I am saving you from Reza Behrooz.

REED
What are you talking about?

HAFEZ
If he discovered you were with his
sister, I fear he'd kill the both of you
out of family honor. We couldn't have
that now, could we?

Reed looks back at his hotel, fading in the distance, knowing Farah is still waiting for him to return.

HAFEZ (cont'd)
I'll have the girl's mother pick her up.
It's the best for everyone involved.

Reed leans back in his seat, powerless to do anything.

INT. DUBAI AIRLINES EUROCOPTER (MOVING)- DAY

A passenger helicopter. Reed has a window seat, looks out at the turquoise waters of the Persian Gulf.

INT. REED'S HOTEL ROOM- DAY

Farah stands by the window, looking out at the park, wondering when Reed might return.

EXT. DUBAI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT- DAY

On the blazing heat of the tarmac, the chopper lands. The door opens and Reed gets off. Coles, in a starched seersucker suit, a panama hat- waits by a white Ford sedan with TWO BODYGUARDS, burly and hot in their dark suits.

As Reed approaches, he sees a U.S. government Gulfstream jet a hundred yards distant.

REED

On your way to Tehran for the coup? I imagine you wouldn't want to miss that.

COLES

I diverted to Dubai when I was informed you'd been expelled.

REED

C'mon, Coles, you're the one who had me expelled. I imagine my last cable upset some people.

COLES

Frankly, Douglas, we sent you assuming you wouldn't actually do anything.

REED

I know. I usually don't.

COLES

You picked a most inopportune time to become conscientious.

(beat)

In any case, I was still sorry to hear you'd been knocked around a bit.

REED

"Knocked around a bit?"

(shakes his head)

It's really marvelous, the way you've cultivated this vague air of worldly disengagement from it all.

COLES

These men are from Consular Affairs. They'll take you to your hotel.

(MORE)

COLES (cont'd)
You'll be debriefed here in Dubai for a few weeks, then sent home. Stay out of mischief and you'll be freed from your commitment to us permanently

REED
You just want to sit on me until the coup is over and done with. Maybe I'll call a buddy at the *Washington Post*, give him a heads-up on what we're doing in Iran.

COLES
Start trouble and your past association with us, all the money you accepted over the years, it'll all be exposed. Your academic career will be finished.

REED
Not getting tenure then, am I?

COLES
Afraid not.

REED
Explain one thing to me: why not talk to Khomeini? Is the idea that threatening?

COLES
Talk to the madman and we give him credibility, thus undermining not only Iran, but every friendly regime in the Mid-East; Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia. I don't know that you've noticed, but we want stability in the region, not chaos.

Reed sighs deeply, looks at the old man.

REED
Does it ever bother you at all, doing whatever we want just because we can?

COLES
I'll leave the moral judgments to historians and clergymen.

REED
Okay, fuck right and wrong. Do you ever wonder whether it's all going to come back and bite us in the ass one day?

COLES
Goodbye, Douglas.

Coles starts walking to the jet. One of the goons from Consular Affairs opens the passenger door to the Ford, gestures for Reed to get in, more threat than invitation.

COLES (O.C.) (cont'd)
I will give you credit for being right about one thing.

Reed looks back at Coles.

COLES (cont'd)
You're definitely no spy.

He turns and walks to the Gulfstream.

INT. DUBAI HILTON LOBBY- DAY

The two goons from Consular Affairs sandwich Reed as they lead him to the elevators and get in one.

INT. DUBAI HILTON HALLWAY- DAY

The goons lead Reed to a hotel room door, open it, and wait for him to go inside.

INT. DUBAI HOTEL ROOM- CONTINUOUS

Reed hears them lock the door behind him. He walks inside.

It's a modern, spacious suite with a view of the main city of Dubai and the glimmering Persian Gulf beyond.

He sits down, angry, powerless to act.

INT. DUBAI HOTEL ROOM- NIGHT

Reed sits in a chair by the window, sipping a scotch, thinking about what's going on across the Gulf.

CUT TO:

A QUICK-CUTTING MONTAGE over FARSI CHANTS and HONKING HONKS.

ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE with ACTUAL BBC VOICE OVER from January 16, 1979, the day the Shah left Iran for exile in Egypt.

BBC ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Within minutes of the announcement of the Shah's departure, the streets of Tehran were alive with cheering crowds.

In South Tehran, people are dancing wildly in the streets. Parviz, his daughter on his shoulders, his wife, and his son, all dance and cheer with the others.

BBC ANNOUNCER (V.O.) (cont'd)
There were screams and chants, cars and lorries with their headlights on, honking their horns.

Reza Behrooz looks out at the city from his window at the Interior Ministry. Behind him, Hafez hovers nervously.

BBC ANNOUNCER (V.O.) (cont'd)
It was, as far as the people were concerned, total victory.

In a large warehouse, Darius Azimi sits with a council of mujaheddin leaders discussing strategy. The walls look like an armory, with rows of AK-47s and RPGs.

BBC ANNOUNCER (V.O.) (cont'd)
The man they'd said must go had finally
gone and the city was delirious with joy.

Inside the Behrooz living room, Mariam- crying quietly- sits on the sofa with a blank-faced Farah; it's like a funeral.

BBC ANNOUNCER (V.O.) (cont'd)
But loudest of all, they called for the
return of the exiled religious leader,
Ayatollah Khomeini.

In his hotel room, Reed is watching events unfold in Tehran on his television set.

INT. COLLINS'S OFFICE- DAY

Collins is at his window, looking out, smoking a cigarette. The sound of GUNFIRE resonates loudly from the street. He looks haggard, a man existing on tobacco and caffeine.

The phone RINGS, he sits down. A half-empty bottle of Wild Turkey and a .38 revolver are on his desk. He answers.

COLLINS
Collins.

INTERCUT Collins and Reed.

INT. DUBAI HILTON LOBBY- DAY

Reed is at a pay phone in the lobby.

REED
Gerry, it's Douglas Reed.

COLLINS
Hey, prof. How's it goin'?

REED
Is that gunfire I hear?

COLLINS
It ain't the Fourth of July.
(pours a shot, downs it)
Hey, sorry we missed each other. I heard
they hustled you out of the country
faster than shit through a goose.

REED
I wasn't given much choice in the matter.

COLLINS
Fucking State Department, always worried
about appearances. Where do they got you
stashed?

REED
Dubai. So what's the shooting about?

COLLINS
Well, officially, Bakhtiar's still prime minister. The opposition is calling for Khomeini's return, so Bakhtiar's stalling for time by closing the airport.

REED
Brilliant.

COLLINS
Air Force cadets mutinied, tried to open the airport, but it was put down by Imperial Guards and SAVAK officers. Your buddy Coles backed their play, but only unofficially.

REED
Of course. Was Reza Behrooz in on it?

COLLINS
You betcha. The whole thing went like gangbusters till the mujaheddin decided to fight alongside the cadets. Now they're all slugging it out for control of the city.

REED
What happened to the Army?

COLLINS
Seems when the generals ordered the troops into the streets, the junior officers refused. By mutual agreement, the troops stay in the barracks while they wait to see who wins.

REED
So who's winning?

COLLINS
Stalemate so far. We're all just hunkered down here in the embassy.

REED
What's Coles doing through all this?

COLLINS
He bugged out yesterday, which is a sure sign it's all going to shit.

A beat, Reed thinking about something.

REED
I need to get back in to Iran, Gerry.

COLLINS
Everyone's trying to get out of this country and you want to in? Tell me you're joking.

REED
I'm not joking. It's important.

COLLINS
Yeah, and why's that?

STAY on Collins as he listens to Reed for a moment, makes a face, sighs, and pours himself a shot.

COLLINS (cont'd)
Seriously?
(listens, downs the shot)
Okay, doc, but it's a really bad idea.

INT. HUEY (MOVING)- NIGHT

Reed is in the back of a darkened helicopter sweeping low over the desert at night. He's the only passenger.

Up front, the PILOT is a white guy, maybe former military; a no questions asked/cash only sort.

EXT. MEHERBAD AIRPORT, TEHRAN- NIGHT

The shuttered airport is quiet. The tarmac is empty except for parked Iran Air jets and a few Army tanks.

The Huey comes in for a landing in front of a floodlit maintenance hangar. Inside the hangar is a Ford sedan, where Collins waits, smoking a cigarette.

With Collins is an Iranian ARMY COLONEL, bushy mustache, also smoking. Lining the back wall of the hangar is a PLATOON of troops, in fatigues and red berets, all carrying M-16s.

The Huey pauses only long enough to let Reed jump out before it takes off and disappears into the night. Collins walks over to Reed while the Iranian colonel waits.

COLLINS
Welcome to Tehran. How was the flight?

REED
Choppy. And the pilot never said a word.

COLLINS
He's paid to fly, not talk.
(leads him to the colonel)
Colonel Sanjabi here cut through all the immigration paperwork. I told him how appreciative you'd be.

Reed produces a wad of money, hands it to the colonel, who licks his finger and starts counting the money slowly.

COLLINS (cont'd)
(grinning)
Isn't the trusting sort, is he?

INT. FORD SEDAN (MOVING)- NIGHT

Collins drives Reed into the city from the airport. The roads are empty, most people staying inside out of fear.

REED
I hope I'm not getting you in trouble by doing this, Gerry.

They pass a burning car in the middle of the road, a burned body right next to it.

COLLINS
Hell, there's nobody here to even notice. Most Westerners already evac'ed and the richer Iranian families paid off the Air Force to get them out. Now everyone's just waiting to see what happens when Khomeini gets back. Could be any day.

REED
You've been through this before. What do you think is going to happen?

COLLINS
Best case Saigon, worst case Beirut. Worst, worst case? Phnom Pen.

REED
C'mon, that could never happen here.
(beat)
Could it?

COLLINS
You're the historian. Does anybody ever think it'll happen "here?"

REED
No. And then it does.

They drive on; the streets devoid, almost spooky. Then--

COLLINS
Shit. Roadblock.

COLLINS and REED'S POV up ahead, they see a barrier manned by about five guys in fatigues with red head scarves and AK-47s. They're making a gesture to slow down, which Collins does.

REED
Whose?

COLLINS
How 'bout we don't find out.

Collins JAMS his foot on the gas pedal.

EXT. TEHRAN STREET- NIGHT

The Ford goes BARRELING towards the roadblock, and the guys with the AK-47s have to LEAP out of the way.

INT. FORD SEDAN (MOVING)- NIGHT

As they SMASH through the roadblock, Collins sees guns being raised in his rearview mirror.

COLLINS
Get your goddamn head down!

Collins pushes Reed down as BULLETS tear into the back of the Ford. The rear window EXPLODES in safety glass.

Then the shooting STOPS. Collins rounds a bend in the road, slows down, looks at the cowering Reed and grins.

COLLINS (cont'd)
(grinning)
Sorta gives new meaning to publish or perish, huh, doc?

A beat. Reed can't help but bust out laughing.

EXT. BEHROOZ HOME- NIGHT

The Ford pulls up in front of the Behrooz home. Reed gets out, comes around to the driver's side, and looks at Collins.

COLLINS
You sure you don't want me to stay?

REED
Don't worry, I'm a big boy.

COLLINS
Okay, big boy, but if you run into a problem, remember the first rule of revolutions: when in doubt-
(rubs fingers together in the universal sign for money)
--cough out. I've seen bribery save a hell of a lot more lives than bravery.

Reed smiles. There are RANDOM GUNSHOTS in the b.g.

REED
Thanks for everything, Gerry.

COLLINS
Just don't make me sorry by doing something stupid, like getting killed.

REED
I know, I know; it'd make you look bad.

COLLINS
(smiling)
I just hope she's worth it.

Collins drives away, leaving Reed standing in the driveway to the Behrooz home; it looks deserted.

From somewhere in the distance, Reed hears the SPRAY of a machine gun. He starts walking to the house.

INT. BEHROOZ HOME- NIGHT

Reed enters, the front door is open. Looking around, he sees the place has been looted and trashed.

REED (FARSI)
Hello? Is anyone there?

He proceeds inside cautiously, unsure of what he'll find.

INT. BEHROOZ'S OFFICE- NIGHT

Reed finds the office totally destroyed. It's eerily quiet. He looks down at a broken picture frame, the glass shattered. He picks it up, brushes away the shards, looks at the photo.

INSET: it's a picture of Reed and Behrooz from their Harvard days, both young, both smiling for the camera.

INT. BEHROOZ KITCHEN- NIGHT

Reed comes in, tries a light switch; the kitchen in the same condition as the rest of the house.

REED (FARSI)
Is anyone here? Farah?!

Nothing, just silence. Then-

The pantry door BURSTS OPEN and various family SERVANTS appear from the pantry, the old COOK most prominently.

REED (FARSI) (cont'd)
What happened?

COOK (FARSI)
They came for the master of the house.
He ordered us to barricade ourselves in
the pantry. That was a day ago, I think.

REED (FARSI)
Who came for him?

COOK (FARSI)
Mujaheddin.

REED (FARSI)
Where's Farah?

COOK (FARSI)
They took her with her brother, to the football stadium I believe. They are said to be holding many people there.

REED (FARSI)
And the lady of the house?

COOK (FARSI)
Madame collapsed after they took her children. A heart attack. But there was fighting in the streets, we couldn't get her to the hospital in time.

Reed thinks a moment, then looks at the servants.

REED (FARSI)
It's quiet outside now. Go home to your families while you can.

They start filing out, eager to get away. While this is happening, Reed finds a phone and dials. He waits a long few moments for someone to pick up.

REED (cont'd)
It's Douglas Reed. I need you to do something for me.
(beat)
It'll be the last time I ask.

EXT. TEHRAN STREETS- NIGHT

Parviz's LTD is the only car moving through the deserted streets. It passes a few BURNING CARS and makeshift barricades of tires, overturned buses, and debris.

INT. LTD (MOVING)- NIGHT

Parviz is driving with Reed through the spooky city.

PARVIZ
Do you have a death wish?

REED
All you have to do is drop me off.

PARVIZ
No good will come of this.

REED
Probably not.
(lights a cigarette)
But I have to try.

EXT. OUTSIDE STADIUM- NIGHT

The entrance to Tehran's main soccer stadium is manned by MUJAHEDDIN GUERILLAS armed to the teeth. They watch impassively as the LTD pulls up across the street.

INT. LTD- NIGHT

Reed hands Parviz a small note.

REED
Deliver this and we're done, you and I.

PARVIZ
This is insanity, you know that.

REED
Take care of yourself, Parviz. And thank you, for everything.

Reed gets out. He walks up to the gate casually, like it's the most common thing in the world.

EXT. OUTSIDE STADIUM- CONTINUOUS

Reed walks up to a YOUNG GUERILLA in the red head scarf denoting he's mujaheddin.

REED (FARSI)
I want to see a prisoner.

Reed holds up a wad of money.

REED (FARSI) (cont'd)
It's a woman.

The guerilla looks at him, then at the money.

INT. LTD- NIGHT

Parviz watches in amazement as two guerillas escort Reed inside the stadium. He then pulls out.

INT. STADIUM- NIGHT

Beneath the grandstands, the lighting is dim. Water drips from pipes, and puddles have formed.

Reed is sandwiched by the two guerillas. As they keep walking, they hear SHOOTING- but not the random fire of battle. Rather, the organized fire of an execution.

They pass the open door of a storage room and Reed sees BODIES piled up, all men in dark suits; former SAVAK men badly beaten before being shot.

Reed notices one of them is Hafez, eyes open in death, a bullet hole in his temple. They round another corner and enter a long passageway. From somewhere, MORE SHOOTING.

The entire length is a LINE OF BODIES lying on the floor, covered by BLOODY SHEETS. Reed walks slowly up the line, passing about seven or eight corpses.

Reed STOPS, recognizing a pair of shoes.

REED (FARSI)
Wait.

The two guerillas wait impatiently while Reed steps forward and lifts up the sheet- it's a DEAD REZA BEHROOZ, stripped to the waist, many bullet holes and burn marks.

Reed looks at him a moment, regret in his eyes, puts the sheet back, stands, and looks at the two guerillas.

REED (FARSI) (cont'd)
The woman?

The guerillas gesture further up the hallway and onward they go, each step taking Reed deeper into the belly of the beast.

Then, MORE SHOOTING. It gets scarier as Reed goes on.

They round another corner and one guerilla stops at a bathroom door, unbolts it, and opens it. Reed goes inside.

INT. BATHROOM- CONTINUOUS

Reed enters to find Farah sitting on a chair. Aside from being forlorn and miserable, she is unharmed.

REED
Farah.

When she looks up and sees him, amazement sweeps over her face. He holds out his hand, pulls her up into an embrace. They hold one another for a few moments, silent. Then--

REED (cont'd)
Let me get you out of Iran.

FARAH
But my family...

REED
I'm sorry, Farah, but they're gone. Your mother had a heart attack, and Reza's lying out in the hall.

She hugs him even harder, tears streaming from her eyes.

REED (cont'd)
We need to leave. Now.

A beat, Farah trying to compose herself. Then--

AZIMI (O.C.)
So much for there being nothing between you two.

They look up and see Azimi standing there, two BODYGUARDS with AK-47's behind him. Farah looks like she wants to kill.

AZIMI (cont'd)
To think I was in love with someone as
stupid and empty-headed.

Reed rushes at Azimi to hit him; but one of the guards sends
him down with a rifle butt to his midsection. Azimi laughs.

AZIMI (FARSI) (cont'd)
(to his men)
See, boys, chivalry lives on.

The bodyguards laugh; Azimi looks down at Reed.

AZIMI (cont'd)
I can't believe you were stupid enough to
come back. You must really love her.

Reed gets to his feet, glares at Azimi.

REED
I guess I do.

AZIMI
Too bad, for it will be a tragically
short-lived romance.

REED
(aloud in FARSI)
What kind of revolution is this? What
kind of men are you, to murder women?

AZIMI
They're the kind who follow orders.
(FARSI)
Ignore this imperialist pig. He would
sell his own mother for a barrel of oil.

Azimi's men laugh it up. He motions for his men to bring the
couple with them.

AZIMI (FARSI) (cont'd)
Bind and blindfold them. We'll find a
quiet place to do this away from here.

EXT. OUTSIDE STADIUM- NIGHT

Outside a side entrance to the stadium are a few jeeps and an
APC commandeered from the Iranian Army.

Azimi leads his bodyguards and a few other guerillas bringing
Reed and Farah outside. They've been blindfolded and their
hands are tied behind them.

AZIMI (FARSI)
Put them in back.

Reed and Farah are thrown into the back of the APC and the
doors are locked. An Army Jeep filled with ARMED GUERILLAS
with red head scarves is in front of the APC.

Azimi gets in the passenger seat and the jeep pulls out, followed by the APC.

INT. APC (MOVING) - NIGHT

The inside of the APC is loud and the surfaces hard. Farah and Reed are on the floor, face-to-face, feeling every bump.

FARAH
I'm sorry, Douglas.

REED
Don't be. No one made me return to Tehran.

FARAH
Why did you come back?

REED
Why? I came for you, Farah.

Despite their blindfolds, they smile at one another. A beat.

Then the APC suddenly STOPS. They hear LOUD ARGUING outside, muffled by the APC's armor.

REED (cont'd)
I guess we couldn't lull suspicion asleep, Farah, you and I.

FARAH
It's alright, Douglas. Neither could Laili and Manjun.

Then they hear GUNFIRE, a few bullets PINGING off the armor.

Then silence. A beat.

REED
Whatever happens, keep quiet.

The handle of the APC's door turns, and it's pulled open, revealing a YOUNG GUERRILLA, only this one is quite young, with a wispy beard and a green head scarf.

REED (FARSI) (cont'd)
Who's there?

He has four other GUERRILLAS with him, all in green scarves. On a nod, a pair each yank Reed, then Farah, out of the APC.

EXT. TEHRAN STREET - DAWN

Thirty well-armed ISLAMIC FIGHTERS with bushy beards are outside the APC along with a convoy of various cars.

The mujaheddin from the jeep are all DEAD from multiple gun shot wounds. Darius Azimi lies on the ground DEAD, bullet-riddled, eyes still open.

A young guerilla with a wispy beard motions to the two pairs holding Reed and Farah to put them in the back seat of a battered Volvo station wagon.

REED (FARSI)
I'm an American. What's going on here?

WISPY (FARSI)
Be quiet, American.

Once they are inside, all the guerillas get in the convoy's vehicles and it pulls out.

INT. STATION WAGON (MOVING) - DAY

They drive in silence for a few moments.

FARAH
(whispering)
Douglas, what's happening?

The guerilla with the wispy beard spins around.

WISPY (FARSI)
Silence!

They drive on in silence, unable to see where they're going.

EXT. MEHERBAD AIRPORT - DAY

The convoy of guerillas rolls up to the same terminal where Reed arrived in Iran originally.

The guerillas get out in a group and the two prisoners are dragged out of the car and inside the terminal.

INT. MEHERBAD AIRPORT TERMINAL - DAY

The armed guerillas hustle the blindfolded Reed and Farah through a terminal teeming with chaos; FAMILIES and their luggage, POLICE; MULLAHS and ISLAMIC STUDENTS.

They get to an office door. The guerilla knocks, then enters, gesturing for the prisoners to be brought inside.

INT. OFFICE - NIGHT

Reed and Farah are roughly plopped down in two chairs.

TWO SHOT of Reed and Farah as the guerillas untie their blindfolds. Reed blinks, lays his eyes on--

--the young Mullah from Qom, sitting across a desk. He gestures to the guerillas to leave the room.

MULLAH
I am glad you are uninjured, Dr. Reed.
It would have been most inhospitable of
me to have let the mujaheddin kill you.

Reed has to suppress a smile.

REED
You got my note.

MULLAH
Hearing where you'd gone, I feared for
your safety. But on this day of days,
salvation, it seems, comes to us all.

REED
I don't understand.

MULLAH
I've arranged for both of you to be on a
Lufthansa flight leaving within the hour.

REED
Wait. The airport's open?
(off the Mullah's sly smile)
The Ayatollah Khomeini is returning?

MULLAH
His plane arrives in six hours. Millions
will line the streets to welcome him.

REED
You know, I'd really like to see that.

MULLAH
I think it best you leave Iran.

He stands, signaling them to go. Reed stands, as does Farah.

REED
Yeah, you're probably right.
(puts out his hand)
Thank you. For everything.

MULLAH
Thank God, for we all bow to His will.

They shake hands, and Reed exits with Farah.

EXT. MEHERBAD AIRPORT- DAY

A line of WESTERN PASSENGERS climb the boarding ramp to a Lufthansa 737. Reed and Farah are at the end of the line.

Just before getting in the plane, she looks back at the snow-capped Alborz mountains, knowing she'll never see them again.

They embrace, then board the jet.

FADE TO:

ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE- FEBRUARY 1, 1979

Coming down the steps from an Air France jet, helped by his aides, is 78 year-old AYATOLLAH RUHOLLAH MOSAVI KHOMEINI, returning to Iran from an exile of almost thirty years.

EXT. TEHRAN STREETS- DAY

Literally MILLIONS OF PEOPLE line the Ayatollah's procession from the airport into Tehran, a convoy of cars and pick-ups.

There's CHANTING and the waving of placards of Khomeini and the green flag of Islam. People are trampled in their mad rush to catch a glimpse of their revered leader.

CAMERA moves in on a van in the convoy. On top of the van are Islamic guerilla fighters waving AK-47s and RPGs.

One guerilla lifts a boy- maybe eleven- from the crowd; the kid pumps his fist in time to the chanting.

Someone in the crowd hands a small AMERICAN FLAG on a staff up to the guerillas on the van. One LIGHTS IT ON FIRE.

The boy is handed the staff and encouraged to wave the burning flag back and forth.

Seeing an American flag burning, the screaming crowd goes even more wild. A few guerillas SHOOT into the air.

CLOSE on the boy, smiling in glee, as he waves the burning flag back and forth; the face of a grim future.

THE END