

STARRING  
BENEDICT CUMBERBATCH

DIRECTED BY  
BABAK ANVARI

# LAST FLIGHT

A large commercial airplane is shown from a low angle, landing on a runway. The plane is kicking up a cloud of dust and debris. The background features a range of rugged, brown mountains under a hazy, overcast sky. The overall color palette is muted, with earthy tones of brown, tan, and grey.

WRITTEN BY  
KIRK W. JOHNSON

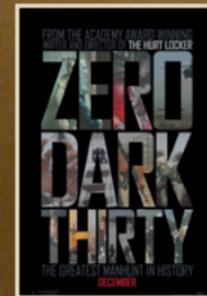
PRODUCED BY  
TWO & TWO PICTURES  
AND SUNNYMARCH

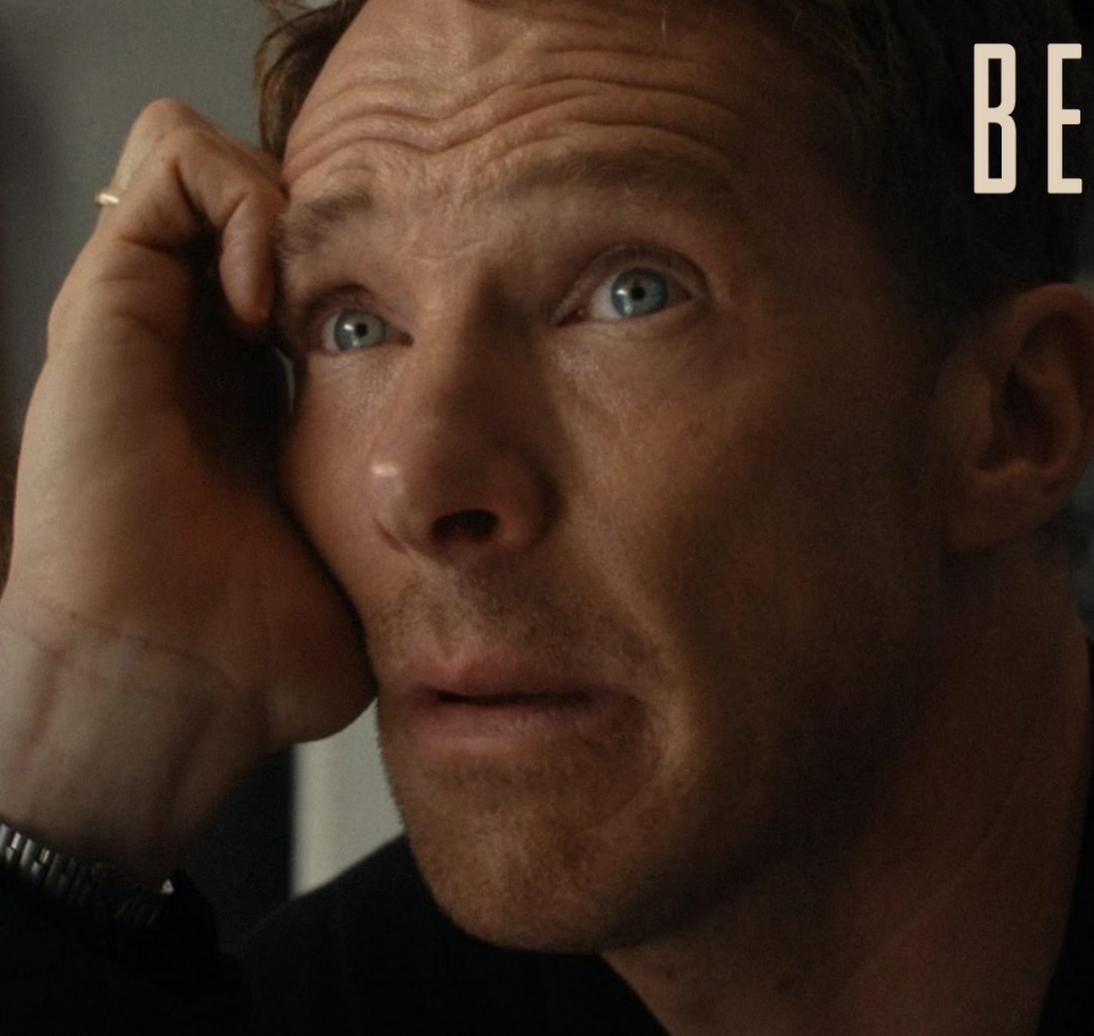
# THE STORY

*A propulsive thriller grounded in profound human connection, LAST FLIGHT is the story of a small group of individuals who, during the final days of military withdrawal from Afghanistan, fought tirelessly to help Afghan citizens to safety.*

In the final hours of a twenty-year war, Ali, a young Afghan man is fighting for his entire family's life to find safe passage out of Afghanistan, before he is sent to certain death. To reach the airport and get on the last flight out of the country, he must put his trust in Kirk W. Johnson (Benedict Cumberbatch), an American stranger and journalist 7,000 miles away who is desperately trying to put the war behind him.

# COMPS





# BENEDICT CUMBERBATCH IS KIRK JOHNSON

*Kirk, a former US military contractor, has long advocated for the safe evacuation of Afghans who helped the US. But he's a family man now, retired from his government position, and with a deadline looming for his latest novel. He has all but put the war behind him, however with the final days of the US withdrawal playing out on his TV screen, he is compelled to help the civilians on the ground when they need him most.*

- Benedict Cumberbatch has been Oscar nominated for his roles in **THE POWER OF THE DOG** (2021) and **THE IMITATION GAME** (2015).
- He is renowned for the titular role in the BBC series **SHERLOCK**, licensed to over 225 territories worldwide, and for his portrayal of Doctor Strange in the **MARVEL CINEMATIC UNIVERSE**.
- His upcoming projects include Guy Ritchie's **WIFE AND DOG** alongside Rosamund Pike and Anthony Hopkins, Cary Fukunaga's Jo Nesbø adaptation **BLOOD ON SNOW** with Aaron Taylor-Johnson, and a return as Doctor Strange in **AVENGERS: DOOMSDAY**, releasing December 2026.

# BABAK ANVARI DIRECTOR

*Babak is a BAFTA-winning filmmaker and co-founder of Two & Two Pictures. His debut feature UNDER THE SHADOW won the BAFTA for Outstanding Debut in 2017. His second feature film WOUNDS premiered at Sundance and was selected for Director's Fortnight. Most recently, HALLOW ROAD, a psychological thriller starring Rosamund Pike and Matthew Rhys, premiered at SXSW in 2025 and has been met with critical acclaim.*

When I first read Kirk's script, based on his own incredible true story, I knew I wanted to make it immediately.

**LAST FLIGHT** works as a gripping, high octane thriller, but at its heart is a human story, about people from different backgrounds coming together and helping one another when politics fail – even if that means fighting to save someone you don't know, who lives on the other side of the planet. This central theme has so profoundly resonated with me.

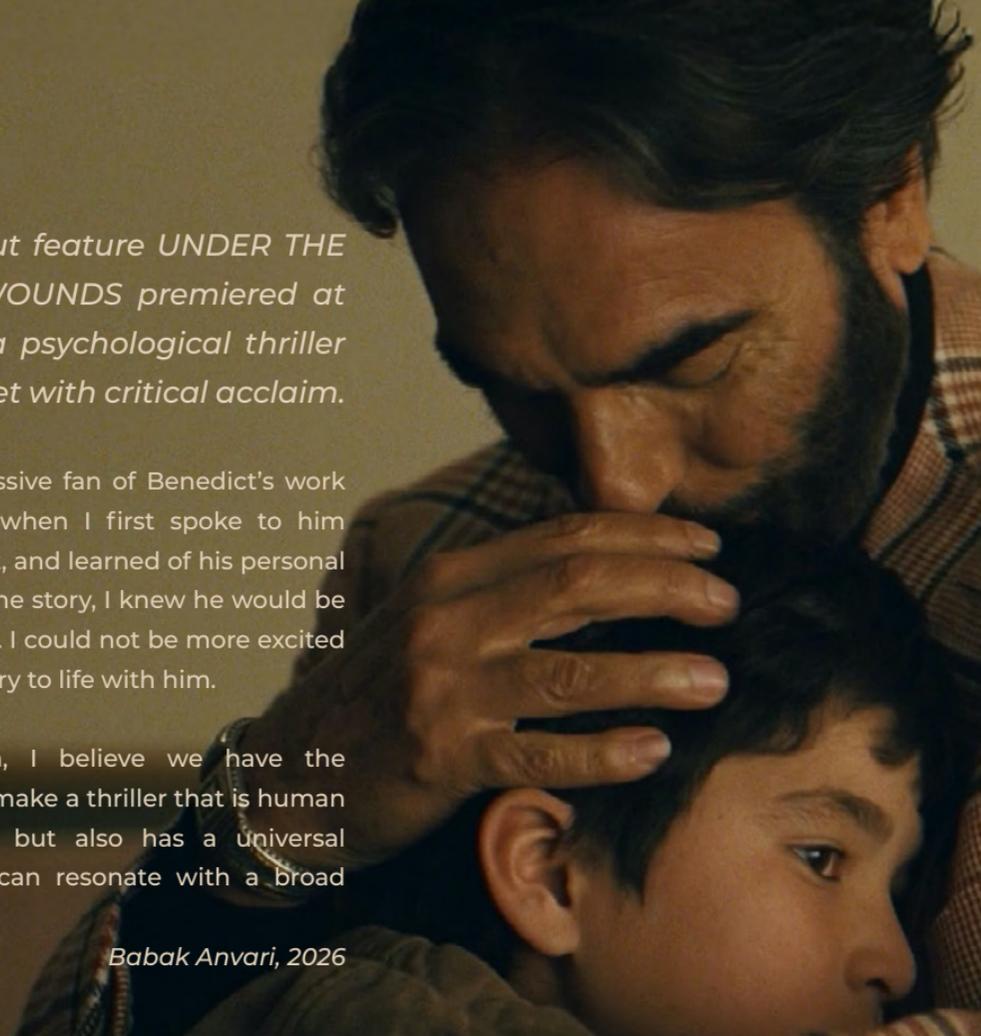
As you may know if you've seen my other films, I love tension. And this script had me on the edge of my seat from the jump. In terms of my approach as a filmmaker, I envision the film with the realism and urgency of thrillers like **CAPTAIN PHILLIPS**, **UNITED 93**, **ARGO** and **DUNKIRK**.

I grew up not far from Afghanistan, with Afghan people around me. I speak the language. And as such, it is especially meaningful and frighteningly real to me, and I am honoured that Kirk has entrusted this story with me.

I've been a massive fan of Benedict's work for years, and when I first spoke to him about the script, and learned of his personal connection to the story, I knew he would be the perfect Kirk. I could not be more excited to bring this story to life with him.

With this film, I believe we have the opportunity to make a thriller that is human and authentic, but also has a universal message, and can resonate with a broad audience.

*Babak Anvari, 2026*



# PRODUCERS



## TWO & TWO PICTURES

Found by Babak Anvari and Lucan Toh, credits include the BAFTA-winning **UNDER THE SHADOW**, **WOUNDS**, Jean-Stéphane Sauvaire's **ASPHALT CITY**, and Yorgos Zois' **ARCADIA**. More recent credits include **HALLOW ROAD** starring Rosamund Pike which premiered at the 2025 SXSW Film Festival to critical acclaim and was released by Universal.

They are set to release Bassam Tariq's **YOUR MOTHER YOUR MOTHER YOUR MOTHER**, starring Mahershala Ali, for Orion MGM, in 2026.

## SUNNYMARCH

SunnyMarch is an independent production company run by Adam Ackland, Benedict Cumberbatch and Leah Clarke. Recent credits include Searchlight Pictures' **THE ROSES** and Sundance-launched, Film4-backed **THE THING WITH FEATHERS**.

Previous successes include **WE LIVE IN TIME**, **THE MAURITANIAN**, **THE ELECTRICAL LIFE OF LOUIS WAIN**, **THE COURIER** and Edward Berger-directed BAFTA-winning limited series **PATRICK MELROSE**.

# PROTAGONIST PICTURES

Protagonist Pictures is a sales, finance, and production company with a proven track record in outstanding films and commercial successes. Based in the UK, the company handles films from around the world, always maintaining a strong focus on filmmakers with exceptional vision and storytelling skills. Protagonist Pictures has championed outstanding filmmakers since its inception, including Brady Corbet, Sean Baker, Yorgos Lanthimos, Chloe Zhao, Joanna Hogg, Rose Glass, Taïki Waititi and Pawel Pawlikowski.

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**PROTAGONIST**  
PICTURES

# **LAST FLIGHT**

**Written by Kirk Wallace Johnson**

**Based on his own incredible true story of the  
withdrawal from Afghanistan**

**Protagonist Pictures Ltd**

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**EXT. SKIES OVER KABUL - DAY**

WHITENESS. SILENCE.

CLOUDS dissolve in patches, revealing KABUL, twenty-thousand feet below.

This is a REAPER DRONE FEED.

CLICK. We zoom in on a PARK.

**KABUL. AUGUST 2021. FOUR DAYS LEFT.**

The DRONE PILOT, unseen, WHISTLES through his teeth, poorly.

CLICK. A TEAL TARGETING BOX forms around a group of people SPRINTING across a field.

**EXT. PARK IN KABUL - CONTINUOUS**

ALI (22), slight-of-build, wire-rimmed glasses, watches his little brother AMIR (11) tear up the field in a heated football match.

Off in the horizon, a U.S. military C17 climbs into the sky.

Across the field is a group of Afghan women, among them ASMA (20); she and Ali make eye contact.

She blushes. Surreptitiously flashes her phone at him.

Ali's phone buzzes with a message from Asma: "Hi :)"

He beams. He's mid-reply when he hears a SHOUT. Looks up to see a defender CAREENING towards AMIR.

ALI

AMIR!

Amir doesn't hear, and is tackled in a nasty move; he writhes on the ground in agony.

Ali races over; BLOOD streams from Amir's knee.

Ali gives a sad smile to Asma and carries Amir piggy-back off the pitch.

AMIR

*Mom's gonna kill me, I got blood  
all over my new shoes.*

ALI

*You're a goner for sure.*

They pass a bright MURAL depicting women proudly voting, writing, and working, and come across a group of Afghans - elderly men, pregnant women, toddlers - setting up a makeshift REFUGEE CAMP in the park, tying tarps to tree branches.

CUT TO:

**INT. KIRK'S HOME OFFICE - LOS ANGELES - DAY**

CLOSE ON A CNN STREAM on an iMac.

While the reporter speaks, a MAP OF AFGHANISTAN shows half the country's BLUE provinces turning RED.

CNN REPORTER (V.O.)

The Taliban advance is proceeding faster than anyone in power imagined, with two provinces falling in the past twenty four hours, Wolf.

KIRK (41) scoffs; we see some serious SCARS on his face.

**LOS ANGELES. 12.5 HOURS BEHIND KABUL.**

On the shelves behind him: his toddlers' artwork, a stack of ARABIC BOOKS, framed photos showing him testifying before Congress, leaning against a Humvee in Fallujah.

CNN REPORTER (V.O.)

The White House is now racing against a timetable negotiated by--

His phone rings; he mutes the livestream and answers.

KIRK

Hey Katherine...

KATHERINE (V.O.)

Heya, Kirk.

(beat)

You must be glued to your tv with this awful news out of Afghanistan...

On his screen, a CHYRON on the muted CNN STREAM reads: *"U.S. rushes to complete withdrawal before 8/31"*

KIRK

Uh. Not really.

KATHERINE (V.O.)  
Ok...so I talked with your  
publisher.

Kirk whips his head over his shoulder, springs from his chair to close the door for privacy, revealing a DRY ERASE BOARD.

The words 'BOOK REVISION' loom over columns of chapter numbers, 1 to 98. Only a quarter of the numbers are Xed-out.

KATHERINE (V.O.)  
And, I don't know what else to say  
other than that there is zero  
chance for another extension.

KIRK  
Right.

KATHERINE (V.O.)  
I tried, but you're already quite  
late.  
(beat)  
Please tell me you're putting  
finishing touches on it?

He glances at a TOWERING STACK of manuscript pages on his desk, grabs the top page: it's a SEA OF HANDWRITTEN MARK-UPS.

KIRK  
Yes...

KATHERINE (V.O.)  
Great! That spares me from having  
to relay their ultimatum. When do  
you--

KIRK  
What did they say?

KATHERINE (V.O.)  
Well, that they'll pull it from  
their publication schedule if  
you're late again. They started  
talking about forcing reimbursement  
of your advance--

KIRK  
Katherine. That can't happen...

KATHERINE (V.O.)  
Well, contractually--

KIRK

No!

(lowering voice)

I mean it can't...the money is gone. Every last cent went into the earnest money for our new house.

KATHERINE (V.O.)

Then...I would say get writing! I'm looking forward to seeing it August thirty-first...

She hangs up.

He sighs wearily, forces a smile, and heads into--

**INT. KIRK'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

--where MARIE-JOSÉE (41), his French-Canadian wife, sits beside their daughter ISIDORA (4), who is working on a drawing of a house, with a treehouse in the backyard.

They're surrounded by CARDBOARD BOXES. It's a cramped space.

Their son AUGUST (5) sits atop a small stack of boxes, swinging his legs.

She has a pile of KIDS BOOKS that she holds up, one after another. We hear her Québécois accent.

MARIE-JOSÉE

Keep or give away?

AUGUST

Give away!

ISIDORA

Keep!

MARIE-JOSÉE

I love this one, let's keep it.

She drops it in a half-filled cardboard box, then holds up the next book.

AUGUST

Keep!

ISIDORA

Give away!

She theatrically throws her hands up.

KIRK

Hey guys...

AUGUST

Daddy!

ISIDORA

Daddy!

MARIE-JOSÉE  
How was the call?

KIRK  
Good. Good!

ISIDORA  
Daddy, this box goes in *my* room at  
the new house.

AUGUST  
And this goes in *my* room. And that  
goes in the treehouse!

MARIE-JOSÉE  
Did you see the Times article about  
the intelligence assessment?  
(reading from phone)  
'The Afghan government could  
collapse within six months of the  
withdrawal...'

KIRK  
Six *months*? Think we're down to  
days...

MARIE-JOSÉE  
And then?

He shoots her a skeptical glance, then playfully grabs  
August, dangling him by his feet.

KIRK  
(amid August's squeals)  
Which box does *this* one go into?!

CUT TO:

**INT. ALI'S HOME - KABUL - DAY**

Ali's father RAHMATULLAH (65) sits next to Amir on the couch.

He watches with a bittersweet smile as Ali's mother, AMINA  
(50), wraps a bandage around Amir's knee.

She spots the blood on his shoe and frowns at Amir playfully.

On a nearby wall: a large photo of a boy (14), proudly  
holding the soccer ball that Amir holds on his lap. There is  
a BLACK STRIPE in the corner, signifying his death.

This was ELIAS: the third brother.

In another photo, we see all three boys together.

Ali's UNCLE KARAM (60) signs to Rahmatullah, who is deaf, then turns to Ali.

UNCLE KARAM

*I'm only telling you to be careful,  
Ali. Maybe avoid your office--*

ALI

*Avoid it?! We have so many projects  
we're working on--*

AMINA

*Ali, listen to your uncle - he's  
saying you shouldn't be doing that  
anymore.*

ALI

*Mama. I have to do this. It's  
important. You know this.*

UNCLE KARAM

*When they get here, they'll be  
looking for people like us.*

Amir looks up, worriedly.

AMIR

*What do you mean - what kind of  
people are we?*

ALI

*Amir, everything's fine.*

AMINA

*It's fine?*

ALI

*Mama you're worrying too much.*

AMINA

*Ok. How about this - I'll worry  
less if you worry more, ok?*

CUT TO:

**EXT. VILLAGE IN GHAZNI PROVINCE - DAY**

JUMA (7), perched atop a half-destroyed home, spots something off in the valley.

Dust rises like SMOKE behind a convoy of AMERICAN HUMVEES racing toward the village.

**VILLAGE IN GHAZNI PROVINCE. 150KM SOUTH OF KABUL.**

He scrambles to his feet, spots the WHITE FLAG OF THE TALIBAN flapping from the lead Humvee.

Wide-eyed, Juma LEAPS from the roof.

JUMA

*Mama! Mama!*

**EXT. ROAD OUTSIDE VILLAGE - CONTINUOUS**

In the lead Humvee turret, KHALIL (40s), a stern looking TALIBAN COMMANDER peers through binoculars.

KHALIL

*Run, little one, run...*

Hanging from his neck, a SCANNER DEVICE branded PROPERTY OF THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE.

He fishes his phone out, dials 'Omid' with an expectant smile, but no answer. Shakes his head, pockets it.

**INT. GCS - CREECH A.F.B. - NEVADA - CONTINUOUS**

WYATT (25), the drone pilot, monitors Khalil's convoy.

WYATT

How many is he at now?

KEITH (22), his sensor operator, ZOOMS IN.

KEITH

Five Humvees and growing...fucker's scooping everything up on the way to Kabul. Why didn't we blow that shit up on the way out?

WYATT

Afghan forces we gave 'em to turned into ghosts.

Dust clouds trail the speeding Humvees. Keith zooms out; the VILLAGE is just around the bend.

KEITH

So why don't we just smoke 'em now?  
With these hajis in 'em, aren't we  
kinda in a two birds, one stone  
sitch?

WYATT

New R.O.E. No kinetic ops unless  
they're targeting us. Two birds, no  
stones.

CLICK. Zoom. Villagers run to-and-fro, panicked.

KEITH

Any assets in this village?

WYATT

Fuck if I know.

Keith centers on one crude home - BLACK SMOKE wreaths from  
its chimney.

**INT. HOME IN VILLAGE - CONTINUOUS**

Juma cries as his Mother (45) frantically stuffs SCRUB BRUSH  
into the stone OVEN.

His Father (50) clasps his hands worriedly over his head.

His brother MOHAMMED (18) races about, yanking drawers,  
rifling through pockets, gathering papers: CERTIFICATES OF  
APPRECIATION emblazoned with the AMERICAN FLAG.

He has a PLASTIC U.S. MARINES INTERPRETER ID CARD IN HIS  
FIST.

THE FATHER

*Burn it all, now! Hurry, Mohammed.*

Juma looks out the window in terror; DUST from the  
approaching convoy is visible.

JUMA

*Baba, they're almost here...*

Mohammed stands before the OVEN, stricken.

THE FATHER

Mohammed!

MOHAMMED

*Baba. These documents are our only way out! If we burn them, the Americans won't believe us!*

THE FATHER

*What Americans? They left you! Us!*

The din of KHALIL's CONVOY is starting to overwhelm their argument.

THE FATHER (CONT'D)

*If we don't burn them, you know what will happen. Please.*

**EXT. VILLAGE IN GHAZNI - CONTINUOUS**

Khalil, eyeing the CHIMNEY SMOKE, stomps his boot.

The Humvee stops before the home.

Other villagers line up in front of their homes.

VILLAGER

(shakily)

*We've been waiting for this glorious day of liberation.*

Khalil, still in his turret, studies Juma and his family as they emerge with nervous faces.

KHALIL

*What are you cooking at this hour, auntie? We're quite hungry.*

THE MOTHER

*I only just...forgive me, I don't have anything ready yet.*

Khalil waves his hand just slightly; several ARMED TALIBS fan into their home.

Mohammed, beading sweat, glances at the chimney smoke, squeezes Juma's shoulder.

A Talib emerges from the house, shakes his head at Khalil.

Khalil points at Mohammed; they DRAG HIM over. His Mother screams; his Father restrains Juma.

Mohammed FALLS TO HIS KNEES before Khalil.

KHALIL  
*What do you do?*

THE FATHER  
*He's just a--*

KHALIL  
*Let him speak for himself.*

MOHAMMED  
*I'm a student.*

Khalil glances around theatrically.

KHALIL  
*Where? No schools here. What's your specialty? Engineering? English?*  
 (beat)  
*Why haven't you joined our struggle?*

Mohammed lowers his head.

MOHAMMED  
*I've been...helping my family.*

Khalil HOPS DOWN from the Humvee and approaches.

KHALIL  
*Let's see what story those worried eyes of yours tell.*

When Mohammed doesn't look up, Khalil shapes his fingers like a PISTOL, tucks them under Mohammed's CHIN, then firmly TILTS HIS HEAD UP.

Mohammed squints against the sun; when he sees Khalil readying the SCANNER, he quickly SHUTS HIS EYES.

KHALIL (CONT'D)  
*Come now, my student, I'm hungry.  
 Open up.*

CLOSE ON THE TERRIFIED EYES OF JUMA AND HIS PARENTS.

Mohammed opens his eyes. BEEP.

Khalil glances at the small DISPLAY ON THE SCANNER, smiles, then shows it to his Deputy (30s), who nods.

Khalil approaches Juma; musses his hair.

KHALIL (CONT'D)

*Are you a little scared? A little angry? I was, too, when I was your age. A hundred thousand Soviets came and told us how to live for ten years. Imagine how angry I was, that our country could be so vulnerable. Then the Americans came. I got angrier!*

He turns to Mohammed, the SCANNER swaying in his hand, his back to the family.

Juma spies a REVOLVER tucked in the small of Khalil's back.

KHALIL (CONT'D)

*But as I got older, I came to understand something so powerful that if you'd known it, you might be standing and I might be kneeling. Can you guess what it is?*

Juma silently takes a quarter-step step toward Khalil.

KHALIL (CONT'D)

*Military might is worthless. The only thing that matters is information. Knowledge.*

Juma takes another step, lusting after the REVOLVER.

KHALIL (CONT'D)

*My cute little bomb in a coke can beats their two-thousand-pound bomb if I know where they are and they don't know where I am.*

Khalil spins to face Juma.

KHALIL (CONT'D)

*A little child can possess knowledge that could tilt the future of a village...a city...a country one way or another.*

*(crouching before Juma)*

*So what can you tell me about your big brother, young man?*

Juma's lower jaw juts in defiance.

Khalil stands, fondles the SCANNER.

KHALIL (CONT'D)

*Their food is shit, their music's unbearable, but you must hand it to American technology. You'd think your friends would've taken this magical little device with them...*

Khalil turns the display to the family, revealing MOHAMMED'S U.S. MARINES INTERPRETER ID CARD they've just burnt inside.

Khalil's men SEIZE MOHAMMED AND DRAG HIM OFF.

Mohammed's father and wailing mother run towards him but are restrained.

THE FATHER

*Please. Commander. Take me. Please!*

KHALIL

*Absolutely not!*

*(to the other villagers)*

*The Americans are gone - no more collective punishment. Our justice is targeted, and in line with the will of God...not someone ten thousand kilometers away.*

**INT. GCS - CREECH A.F.B. - CONTINUOUS**

Wyatt and Keith watches as Khalil's men DRAG Mohammed to the edge of a nearby IRRIGATION CANAL.

KEITH

*Oh, for fuck's sake. Kid's unarmed. Can we get some authorization here, pronto?!*

They watch in silence as JUMA RUNS TOWARDS HIS BROTHER; another Talib grabs him by the arm and restrains him.

WYATT

*We're not their saviors anymore. They gotta sort their own shit out.*

**EXT. VILLAGE IN GHAZNI - CONTINUOUS**

As Khalil climbs back into his Humvee, a few CRACKS OF GUNFIRE.

A ROOSTER and hens dart from the direction of the canal.

Mohammad's mother collapses, wailing soundlessly...catatonic grief.

Khalil smacks the side of the turret; his Humvee tears off.

Juma is frozen as the dust from the convoy envelops him.

CUT TO:

**EXT. KABUL STREET - DAY**

Ali hustles across the street, glancing over his shoulder.

Afghans fleeing the Taliban have flooded the city, camping on sidewalks and medians.

He passes a FEMALE CNN REPORTER doing a live interview.

CNN REPORTER

Jake, just weeks ago the White House spoke confidently about the security of the American Embassy; today brought reports that Embassy staffers are beginning to evacuate to a secure site inside the Kabul airport--

He turns a corner and freezes: a LONG LINE of teary-eyed women in 'Western' clothes wait to enter a SHOP from which a STREAM OF WOMEN - now CLAD IN BURKAS - emerge.

Sadness, then anger flashes on Ali's face as he slips into--

**INT. NONDESCRIPT OFFICE BUILDING - KABUL - CONTINUOUS**

--and dashes up the stairs to an unmarked door with a KEYPAD LOCK. He glances both ways, taps the code, enters.

**INT. ALI'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS**

FIVE YOUNG AFGHANS work at their computers - among them, ASMA, who smiles discreetly at his arrival.

On the walls:

- an AFGHANS FOR A PROGRESSIVE FUTURE sign

- FRAMED PHOTOS of Ali and Asma smiling with AMERICAN and CANADIAN OFFICIALS at ribbon-cutting ceremonies for GIRLS SCHOOLS.

ALI

*So, I'm thinking we postpone the groundbreaking ceremony for the Mazar School for Girls...*

Worried faces look up; his gallows humor has fallen flat.

As he passes Asma, he glances around, then surreptitiously leaves a CHOCOLATE BAR on her desk.

She smiles, quickly covers it with some papers.

ALI (CONT'D)

*But our brothers and sisters are sleeping in the park. I want to take what food, water, and other essentials we have in the storeroom. Who will help?*

Asma raises her hand; others look away, worriedly.

CUT TO:

**INT. U.S. EMBASSY CONSULAR OFFICE - KABUL - DAY**

HANNA (30), a Consular Officer, shoves everything on her desk - family photos, post-it notes - into a cardboard box.

Behind her: a MASSIVE BLACK CABINET WITH CLOSED DOORS.

Nearby, TWO FEMALE AFGHAN EMPLOYEES feed thick stacks of documents into a SHREDDER.

A MARINE hurrying past pokes his head in the office.

MARINE

Shredder's too slow! Use your red-and-whites!

Hanna unmutes a TV as PRESIDENT BIDEN speaks from the White House.

BIDEN (ON TV)

When I came into office, I inherited a deal negotiated with the Taliban. The choice I had was either to follow through on that or go back to fighting. And so I have authorized six thousand U.S. troops to deploy to Afghanistan to assist in the departure of U.S.

(MORE)

BIDEN (ON TV) (CONT'D)  
 personnel and to evacuate our  
 Afghan allies who worked for our  
 embassy to safety...

The Afghan Employees glance at Hanna; she forces a reassuring smile.

She hurries out of the office--

**EXT. U.S. EMBASSY HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS**

--past a MARINE unscrewing the official framed photo of BIDEN on the wall.

At his feet is a box with framed photos of TRUMP, OBAMA, and BUSH, all smiling.

She strides into--

**INT. U.S. EMBASSY OFFICE - CONTINUOUS**

--where her boss, STEVE (50s), in a golf shirt and JUNGLE BOOTS, glares out a narrow mortar-resistant window.

In b/g ARNOLD (mid-20s), IT guy, sits before a TROLLEY full of COMPUTERS with a power-drill. He noisily unscrews their cases, removes and stacks their hard drives next to a FRIDGE-SIZED MACHINE called a DATASTROYER.

STEVE

Can you *believe* it? The White House just asked the Taliban not to blow up the embassy? Eight hundred million dollar complex, and all we can do is say 'oh please, pretty please be nice...'

HANNA

Sir...

STEVE

Told the DCM we should rig this place to blow. Why let 'em make a monument of our defeat like the Ayatollahs did? Fuck. That. Let's turn it into one giant fucking IED - no, an EBIED! Embassy-borne IED! Then we just wait til that cocksucker Mullah Omar comes for a tour and *tick tick tick*...

Arnold feeds a hard drive into the DATASTROYER, which hammers a MASSIVE SPIKE into it with a loud THWACK.

HANNA

Sir...

STEVE

Hey Arnold you hear what I said?

ARNOLD

What?

THWACK.

STEVE

EBIED!

ARNOLD

Uh huh. I think Mullah Omar died a while ago.

HANNA

Sir!

STEVE

*What?*

HANNA

We have...a lot of special immigrant visas for U.S.-affiliated Afghans awaiting Chief of Mission approval.

STEVE

And?

THWACK.

HANNA

Well...what should I do with them?

STEVE

How many's 'a lot'? SOP is to destroy.

Hanna doesn't want to say the number.

HANNA

More than a thousand, for sure. Maybe thousands?

Steve looks at her blankly.

STEVE  
Anything else?

THWACK.

**INT. U.S. EMBASSY CONSULAR OFFICE - DAY**

Deadened, Hanna unlocks the cabinet to reveal MOUNTAINS OF NEATLY-STACKED AFGHAN PASSPORTS and VISA PETITIONS.

BIDEN (ON TV)  
I know that there are concerns about why we did not begin evacuating Afghan civilians sooner. Part of the answer is some of the Afghans did not want to leave earlier...still hopeful for their country.

Her Afghan employees WHIRL TO THE TV.

Hanna grabs several red-and-white-striped BURN BAGS from the bottom shelf.

BIDEN (ON TV) (CONT'D)  
Part of it was the Afghan government discouraged us from organizing a mass exodus to avoid triggering, as they said, 'a crisis of confidence.'

Her Afghan employees are aghast as she DUMPS THE PASSPORTS AND PETITIONS INTO THE BAGS.

We glimpse PHOTOS - infants, elderly - as they tumble in.

CUT TO:

**INT. KIRK'S LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Kirk's on the couch with a pile of manuscript pages and red pen, but he's watching BIDEN in a press conference on CNN.

ON SCREEN, a map illustrates the Taliban advance: it's like a flood of red.

PRESS POOL JOURNALIST (ON TV)  
Mr. President, some Vietnam veterans see echoes of their experience in this withdrawal.

((MORE))

## PRESS POOL JOURNALIST (ON TV)

Do you see any parallels between this and what happened in Vietnam, because--

BIDEN (ON TV)

None whatsoever. Zero. They're not remotely comparable. There's going to be no circumstance where you see people being lifted off the roof of an embassy. It is not at all comparable.

In b/g, his kids play with legos while Marie-Josée BOXES things; August calls to him but his VOICE IS MUTED - Kirk is transfixed by the TV.

BIDEN (ON TV) (CONT'D)

For Afghan employees who choose to leave, our message to those women and men is clear: there *is* a home for you in the United States if you so choose, and we will stand with you just as you stood with us.

Isi taps Kirk on the shoulder, excited to show off her lego creation, but he is somewhere else...and it's a dark place.

ISIDORA

*Daddy...*

MARIE-JOSÉE

Guys, daddy's a little upset, let's--

ISIDORA

Why?

MARIE-JOSÉE

Because he tried for a long time to get visas for people that helped us and now--

ISIDORA

What's a 'visa'?

Kirk snaps out of it, hoisting his daughter on his lap.

KIRK

It's a piece of paper that says you can come to America. That's how daddy and mommy met, you know? She was a lawyer and got a lot of my Iraqi friends to safety.

Isidora leaps up, runs to her craft table, grabs construction paper and crayons.

ISIDORA  
I can make them visas!

AUGUST  
Did you kill anyone in the war?

KIRK  
No, buddy - I wasn't a soldier.

ISIDORA  
(coloring her 'visa')  
Were you scared?

KIRK  
If you're not scared there's something wrong with you...

Kirk's phone rings.

KIRK (CONT'D)  
Ben, how are you? Been forever.  
(glancing at the TV)  
Today? Um. Gimme a few minutes to check on my end? K.

Marie-Josée looks at him quizzically.

KIRK (CONT'D)  
CNN wants me to come on. In like, an hour.

She looks uncomfortable. A long beat.

MARIE-JOSÉE  
Really?

KIRK  
Yeah.

MARIE-JOSÉE  
Do you want to?

He drums his red pen on the manuscript, conflicted.

CUT TO:

**EXT. KABUL STREET - NIGHT**

Ali and Asma walk in silence, their bodies close but not touching.

They stop before a two-story building: on the ground floor is a PERSIAN RUG shop, its storefront covered by ROLL-DOWN SECURITY DOORS. On the second floor is an APARTMENT.

Neither notice the FLARE OF A CIGARETTE CHERRY from inside a PICKUP TRUCK parked across the street.

**INT. PICKUP-TRUCK - CONTINUOUS**

Inside, NAWAB (50s) exhales smoke, furrowing his brow as he stares at Ali.

In the backseat, two Talibs play games on their phones, a pair of Kalashnikovs between them.

**EXT. KABUL STREET - CONTINUOUS**

ASMA  
(fishing keys out)  
*Thanks for walking me home.*

ALI  
*How about tomorrow morning at ten?  
Most of the refugees are gathering  
at Shahr-e Naw Park...*

She nods with a smile.

Ali watches protectively as she unlocks the building's front door and slips inside--

**INT. ASMA'S FRONT ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS**

--lingering for a moment in the foyer to watch Ali walk off.

To her right is a locked door into the RUG SHOP.

She glances up the stairwell at the apartment door, but smiles - she has an idea.

She unlocks the door to the rug shop and steps inside, locking it behind her.

**EXT. KABUL STREET - CONTINUOUS**

Ali cuts across the street, a sweet smile on his face.

Suddenly: the HIGH-BEAMS OF NAWAB'S PICKUP TRUCK flick on, illuminating his face.

He reflexively throws a forearm up over his brow, trying to make out the driver, but he's blinded by the light.

Ali turns and scampers off wide-eyed, not looking back.

**INT. PERSIAN RUG SHOP - MOMENTS LATER**

Asma flips a light-switch: FLUORESCENT BULBS flicker on to reveal an opulent showroom of PERSIAN RUGS.

With the security doors blocking off the street, she's got all the privacy she wants here.

She pauses by a little desk, runs her finger over a LEDGER and CALCULATOR.

She smiles at a FRAMED PHOTO of her with her parents when she was 9, sitting on a huge STACK OF RUGS in the showroom, dangling her feet.

She picks up a half-read book of her dad's and climbs up onto a stack of rugs.

She pulls her HIJAB down, shakes her hair loose.

She pulls out the CHOCOLATE BAR Ali gave her, pops a square into her mouth, closes her eyes, savoring the moment.

Suddenly, a FIERCE KNOCKING at the front door.

She hikes her HIJAB back up, and hurries into--

**INT. ASMA'S FRONT ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS**

--where she peers through the peep hole to see Nawab, looming outside, a rifle slung over his shoulder.

Slowly, Asma opens the door a crack; keeping her hand on the knob.

In b/g, the pair of Talibs lean against Nawab's truck.

Nawab studies her with a flicker of lust.

NAWAB

*You're Asma.*

*(off her nod)*

*I'm Nawab. I'm here to speak with your father.*

She clenches the knob; her knuckles whiten.

ASMA  
*I'm sorry, he's not here.*

A beat. Nawab peers over her shoulder.

NAWAB  
*Where is he?*

ASMA  
*Sorry, what is this about?*

NAWAB  
 (leeringly)  
*Well. You.*

He turns an imaginary ring on his finger. A flash of horror on her face: *this is a suitor*. She quickly recomposes and forces a polite smile.

NAWAB (CONT'D)  
*I'll be back tomorrow. Tell him to  
 be here.*

As he spins back to the truck; his men hurriedly jump in - this isn't a man you keep waiting.

CUT TO:

**EXT. PARK IN KABUL - DAY**

Ali and Asma walk through the same park as in the opener, handing out food, water.

**THREE DAYS LEFT.**

They pass a man FRANTICALLY WHITEWASHING OVER the WOMEN'S RIGHTS MURAL we saw previously.

Asma hands a water bottle to a small girl. As they walk, she speaks in a hushed but agitated voice.

ASMA  
*No, I don't know him...he just  
 showed up. Asking for my father.*  
 (beat)  
*I think my uncle sent him.*

Ali shoots her a serious glance.

ASMA (CONT'D)  
*I've heard rumors. That he's close.*

Ali stops in his tracks.

ALI  
*Does he know where you work?*

She doesn't answer.

ALI (CONT'D)  
*Do you think he knows...about--*

ASMA  
*No! I haven't seen him for over a year.*

Ali ponders this a beat.

ALI  
*We need to delete all of our messages from now on...*

He reads the concern on her face; as they walk, he brushes his hand against hers and they LOCK PINKIES - it's barely noticeable.

The two smile, bittersweetly, but don't look at each other.

TALIB (O.S.)  
*You two! Stop!*

They spin to find a pair of Talibs wielding batons.

TALIB (CONT'D)  
*Are you married?*

Ali's eyes give away the answer; one of the Talibs approaches and SWINGS THE BATON at him.

Ali throws his arms up defensively, the THUNK of baton-on-forearm sounds excruciating.

TALIB (CONT'D)  
 (to Asma)  
*Why aren't you wearing niqab?*

ALI  
*Women are allowed to wear just hijabs...*

TALIB  
*Says who? The Americans?*

Ali says nothing.

TALIB (CONT'D)

(to Asma)

*Go cover yourself. We're watching  
all of you.*

The Talibs move on in search of another sinner.

Ali rubs his forearms, glowering.

Asma steps towards him as if to touch him, but restrains herself.

ASMA

*Alijan. What are we going to do?*

ALI

*I am going to take care of us.*

ASMA

*How?!*

ALI

*I have my visa. Yours will come soon.*

ASMA

*What about your family?*

ALI

*I'm working on it. Last night I  
must've sent a hundred messages to  
all of our old American and  
Canadian colleagues for help.*

Asma stares at the ground, trying to maintain composure.

ALI (CONT'D)

*Asma? We are going to make it. I am  
certain the embassy is working  
around the clock on our paperwork  
right now.*

**EXT. U.S. EMBASSY ROOFTOP - KABUL - DAY**

A Marine SHOVELS AFGHAN PASSPORTS into a BONFIRE while another lowers the AMERICAN FLAG. The smoke spirals.

He glances down at a CROWD OF AFGHANS outside the Embassy gates, all waving papers.

**INT. U.S. EMBASSY - CONSULAR OFFICE - CONTINUOUS**

Hanna surveys her empty office; the Marine from the rooftop sprints down the hallway.

MARINE

Five minutes! Get your asses out  
and onto a bird!

On her TV, CNN shows a map: other than Kabul, Afghanistan has fallen completely to the Taliban. She unmutes it.

CNN HOST (ON TV)

And joining us now is Kirk Wallace Johnson, author and former USAID coordinator of the reconstruction of Fallujah, Iraq, and the founder of the List Project, which got thousands of Iraqis to safety and led efforts to create the Special Immigrant Visas that many of these Afghans have earned. Kirk: why do you think it has taken so long for the White House to start evacuating people?

KIRK (ON TV)

Ask them! God knows we've been sounding this alarm for a decade. We used these people when we needed them, made all kinds of promises, but now that we're leaving, they're on their own. These people have risked their lives. Many have done more for our country than the average American. They've lost limbs, family members. They've had children abducted. They're in the crosshairs, but the minute they ask for our help, they're given a form and told to wait for years, and maybe we'll give them a visa at some point.

On the CNN split-screen: hundreds of desperate Afghans run alongside a taxiing C-17, some clinging to its wheel-well.

KIRK (ON TV) (CONT'D)

I think the President, hell *four* Presidents in a row, figures Americans don't care about the war or the Afghans getting killed in our name.

(MORE)

**KIRK (ON TV) (CONT'D)**

And that once you guys pull your news crews out and we all stop paying attention and the real bloodletting starts, he won't suffer any political consequences. But this is one of those issues that shouldn't be left to public opinion polls. It's a fundamental question of right and wrong. I say all of this as someone who was in favor of ending the war. But to think that our only options were to stay another decade or abandon people who trusted us to their deaths--

**MARINE (O.S.)**

TWO MINUTES!! Last birds to HKIA comin' in now!

Hanna hurries out with her cardboard box.

**EXT. U.S. EMBASSY - COURTYARD - MOMENTS LATER**

As Hanna sprints towards the Chinook, she spots her AFGHAN FEMALE EMPLOYEES sequestered in a corner by Marines.

She stops and shouts to them, cupping her hands to her mouth.

**HANNA**

Get to the airport! I can help you from our base there!

But: the Afghans can't hear a word she's saying over the DIN OF THE ROTORS.

**INT. CHINOOK - CONTINUOUS**

She boards to find her boss STEVE, in helmet, flak jacket, and Oakleys, taking a SELFIE.

Arnold, the IT guy, types on his laptop.

In the back, a Marine sits with THREE GERMAN SHEPHERDS, petting them affectionately.

Otherwise, the seats are EMPTY.

The chopper lifts off; she watches her Afghan employees shield their eyes against the rotor wash.

CUT TO:

**EXT. MOUNTAIN VALLEY OUTSIDE KABUL - DUSK**

Khalil is at the head of his terrifying (now much larger) convoy as it clears a mountain pass.

**10KM SOUTH OF KABUL.**

He grins as the convoy hurtles towards the city lights of KABUL.

CUT TO:

**INT. UBER - LOS ANGELES - DAY**

Kirk sits with eyes closed, grimacing as his phone PINGS with notifications from TWITTER, FACEBOOK, GMAIL.

Just as he flips it to silent mode, Marie-Josée calls:

INTERCUT WITH

**INT. KIRK'S HOME OFFICE - DAY**

MARIE-JOSÉE  
Bravo baby...

KIRK  
Are you at my computer?

MARIE-JOSÉE  
Yes. The kids are watching Bluey.

KIRK  
How bad is it?

MARIE-JOSÉE  
There are a lot of nice comments.  
Interview requests. Umm...

He stares out the window, smirks.

KIRK  
Babe.

MARIE-JOSÉE  
What?

KIRK  
C'mon. What are you seeing?

MARIE-JOSÉE  
What's the point?

KIRK

Indulge me.

ON KIRK'S IMAC SCREEN, we see Twitter comments as Marie-Josée reads them.

MARIE-JOSÉE

It's just...ugly. "This lib cuck would rather help jihadis than our own soldiers," "breaking: neocon warmonger can't accept end of war," "another white savior centers himself in the narrative." There's one here--

KIRK

Ok.

His phone buzzes with a text from 'PERRY (OGA)': "*BROTHER. WE NEED YOU. Get on Signal ASAP.*"

Kirk leans back, mouths the word '*fuck.*'

MARIE-JOSÉE

Let's see, "hydrating myself with liberal tears," here's another--

KIRK

Ok, ok, I'm good...I'll be home soon.

MARIE-JOSÉE

(concerned)

There are a lot of Afghans writing to you for help. There's one guy, an interpreter, with five kids under six, all hiding in a safe-house a mile from the airport, wondering if you can help.

KIRK

Don't worry.

MARIE-JOSÉE

I *am* worried!

There's a pained beat.

MARIE-JOSÉE (CONT'D)

It nearly killed you last time. Back then, you didn't have kids.

KIRK

Or a looming mortgage. Or book deadlines. I know. Gotta trust me...I know where the shoreline is.

MARIE-JOSÉE

Of course I trust you. Can't I also worry, just a little?

KIRK

I love you baby.

MARIE-JOSÉE

I love you. Don't open Twitter.

CUT TO:

**INT. ALI'S LIVING ROOM - KABUL - NIGHT**

Ali's father Rahmatullah sits on the couch, an oxygen tube clipped to his nose.

His mother Amina gathers a drop of Rahmatullah's blood from his fingertip with a GLUCOMETER.

Amir sits at Rahmatullah's feet, rolling his football back and forth beneath his bridged knees.

Muffled bursts of gunfire out the window.

Rahmatullah looks up at Ali, who waits with an expectant, urgent look.

RAHMATULLAH (SIGNING)

*There's nothing to talk about.*

ALI (SIGNING)

*We need to talk about it.*

*(turning to Amina)*

*Mama.*

Amina, looking annoyed, tries to keep her voice down.

AMINA

*Ali, this is simple. You have a visa. We don't. We agreed. You go. We will stay--*

ALI

*No. I would never leave you.*

AMIR

*Ali, what do you mean 'leave'?*

AMINA

*He has no options, Amir. Ali needs to go.*

ALI

*We need to go--*

AMINA

*(wrapping an arm around Amir)*

*We will be fine - they're not looking for us.*

*(beat)*

*How are you picturing this, Ali? Even if we get visas, I don't speak a word of English. How will we start all over? At our age?*

AMIR

*Ali's leaving?! But...when is he coming back?*

AMINA

*When it's safe.*

ALI

*When it's safe?! Mama, what do you think will happen when they--*

Rahmatullah raises his palm up; Ali falls silent. *Enough.*

Ali takes stock of his family:

CLOSE ON Rahmatullah's weary eyes; Amina's firm gaze; Amir's tear-streaked cheeks.

Ali's phone buzzes with a text from Asma: *"how's your arm?"*

With a sigh, he exits.

**INT. ASMA'S ROOM - NIGHT**

Apart from the moonlight, her room is DARK.

In the middle of the bed: a PYRAMID-SHAPED MOUND of a blanket.

Asma hides inside, her face lit by the blue-white light of her phone.

Her phone beeps: Ali is FaceTiming her. She answers.

ALI  
*Hey. Wait, where are you?*

ASMA  
 (whispering)  
*The lights in the house are off.  
 I'm hiding under my blanket so  
 nobody sees my phone screen. I  
 don't know whether to laugh or cry.*

**INT. ALI'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Ali shakes his head slowly.

ASMA  
*If that hideous man returns, he  
 won't think anyone is home.*

He stands up, resolutely, flicks the LIGHTS OFF, and then CLIMBS BENEATH HIS OWN BLANKET.

ALI  
 (whispering)  
*Ok. Now I'm also in a blanket fort.*

She giggles, then remembers something.

ASMA  
*How's your family?*

ALI  
*Stressed. They want me to leave  
 without them.*

ASMA  
*Would you?*

ALI  
*Never. But even if their visas  
 don't come in time, I have to at  
 least try to get them out.*

The two trade a sober but affectionate look.

ALI (CONT'D)  
*If your visa doesn't come, could you  
 hide somewhere for a while, like--*

ASMA  
*I'm not staying here if you're not  
 here.*

He's surprised by her boldness, but loves it.

Outside the window, bursts of GUNFIRE.

ALI  
*I wonder...if--*  
 (beat)  
*--if we were married. If you could*  
*come with me.*

ASMA  
*Ali, is that a proposal?*

Ali hesitates a beat.

ALI  
*Yes. Would you?*

Her face FREEZES. The call drops.

ALI (CONT'D)  
*Asma? Are you there? Asma?*

His eyes dart. She FaceTimes him.

ASMA  
 Ok.

ALI  
 Ok...Ok? Ok?! Ok!

ASMA  
 (giggling)  
 OK!

ALI  
 OK! *Tomorrow!*

He grabs a pillow and screams his joy into it.

**EXT. GATES OF KABUL - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER**

KHALIL'S CONVOY, now fattened with Talibs on motorcycles,  
 RUMBLES TO A STOP at the gates.

Khalil, gripping the .50-CAL MACHINE GUN, lowers it: no  
 Americans. No Afghan military, no police. No resistance.

He jumps down and KISSES THE ASPHALT.

**INT. GCS - CREECH A.F.B. - DAY - CONTINUOUS**

Wyatt and Keith study Khalil and his convoy.

Standing between them is MAJOR GRAVES (45).

MAJOR GRAVES  
Eyes on that motherfucker.

WYATT  
Roger. Lot of cloud cover over the  
next forty-eight hours, though...

**EXT. GATES OF KABUL - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER**

Khalil surveys the apartment buildings; worried faces look down on him, silhouettes vanish when he spots them.

His DEPUTY (40s) approaches.

KHALIL'S DEPUTY  
*Maulvi Saheb has just entered the  
Presidential Palace. He has a suite  
for you at the Intercontinental,  
which is now ours.*

Khalil nods, dials 'OMID' on his phone. Again, no answer. He looks annoyed.

KHALIL  
(to deputy)  
*Please thank him, but I will stay  
with my brother. Go to the palace,  
I'll meet you there tomorrow.*

He strides over to a motorcycle in the convoy. The Talib straddling it leaps off, proffers it.

Khalil speeds off on his own.

CUT TO:

**INT. AUGUST AND ISIDORA'S BEDROOM - LOS ANGELES - NIGHT**

Isi is asleep. Kirk lovingly wedges a unicorn stuffy in her arms.

He tucks August in, but notices a troubled look on his face.

KIRK  
(whispering)  
What's up, buddy?

August wipes a tear.

KIRK (CONT'D)  
Hey hey heyyy, you ok?

AUGUST  
I don't want to go to school.

KIRK  
Why? I thought you liked your teacher?

AUGUST  
There's this kid, he's so mean, he keeps telling me I'm dumb and won't let me play soccer with the other kids at recess.

Kirk, brow furrowed, pets his son's hair.

KIRK  
What's this kid's name?

AUGUST  
Isaac.

KIRK  
I'm sorry. He sounds like a real jerk. Can you just ignore him?

AUGUST  
No! He's in my class!  
(beat)  
Can I stay home tomorrow?

KIRK  
(smiling)  
Sorry, pal, gotta go to school. Bully's suck...but don't let this kid get in your head, ok?

He tucks his son in but can see his advice isn't really useful. He kisses him on the forehead, stands.

KIRK (CONT'D)  
Love you buddy, everything's gonna be alright.

He tiptoes out to--

**INT. KIRK'S LIVING ROOM - LOS ANGELES - CONTINUOUS**

--where Marie-Josée sits amongst CARDBOARD BOXES, her laptop on her lap. She's Zooming with someone.

MARIE-JOSÉE  
 (laughing into screen)  
 T'imagines?! C'est tellement fou.

She smiles at Kirk, who signals to her that the kids are asleep (resting his cheek on prayer-hands).

He heads into the kitchen.

On Marie-Josée's screen is a Blonde Woman (42).

MARIE-JOSÉE (CONT'D)  
 So I've been holding off deciding,  
 but there's just no way I can make  
 the reunion.

MÉLANIE JOLY (ON ZOOM)  
 Noooo, you have to! It'll be so  
 boring without you...

MARIE-JOSÉE  
 Between packing up and helping Kirk  
 with the book...it's too much to  
 get back to Montreal right now. But  
 - who on your team should I contact  
 to get a girls' weekend on the  
 books, Madame Minister?

MÉLANIE JOLY (ON ZOOM)  
 (rolling eyes)  
 Someone will reach out. I'm still  
 learning everyone's names.

Kirk emerges with a canned Espresso and leans over to wave to Mélanie.

MÉLANIE JOLY (ON ZOOM) (CONT'D)  
 Hey Kirk! Great work on CNN.

KIRK  
 Buh, just a lot of hot air. How  
 long before we start calling you  
 Prime Minister Mélanie Joly?

MÉLANIE JOLY (ON ZOOM)  
 First things first: when are we  
 gonna get you Canadian citizenship?

Mélanie's phone rings off screen. Her brow furrows.

MÉLANIE JOLY (ON ZOOM) (CONT'D)  
 Guys, I'm so sorry, I need to--

MARIE-JOSÉE

Go - bisous! Call you this weekend.

She closes the laptop and looks at the boxes around her.

MARIE-JOSÉE (CONT'D)

Pretty sure August hid my phone  
inside one of these boxes.

He calls her; a box VIBRATES. She smiles, pries it open.

She flops on the couch facing him. He grabs her feet,  
massaging them. She closes her eyes.

MARIE-JOSÉE (CONT'D)

You were amazing today...

KIRK

Flashback to the old days. Hey, has  
he told you about this Isaac kid?

MARIE-JOSÉE

Yeah. I was going to talk to his  
mom...

KIRK

I dunno. We can't fight his battles  
for him, right? Did you have any  
bullies at that age?

She curdles with an unpleasant memory.

MARIE-JOSÉE

Patricia...little Patricia  
Bezeau...my god.

A text from 'PERRY (OGA)' comes in; she sees the screen.

MARIE-JOSÉE (CONT'D)

OGA?

KIRK

Other Government Agency.  
(off her confusion)  
Slang for 'CIA.' Just an old  
friend, asking for help on a case.

He swipes the text off his screen, out of sight.

KIRK (CONT'D)

Don't worry. I said my piece -  
there's nothing else to do at this  
point, anyway. Gotta get back to  
the book...

She gives a searching look...*does he have this under control?*

He gives her a kiss.

MARIE-JOSÉE

Home stretch mon amour, I'll handle  
the morning.

**INT. ASMA'S ROOM - NIGHT**

Asma throws the blanket off and climbs out of her bed. She exits to the hallway, entering--

**INT. ASMA'S PARENTS' ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

--approaching a framed photo of her mom, who is wearing a PINK HIJAB. The actual hijab hangs over the edge of the frame.

On a nearby dresser, her dad's WATCH.

ASMA

(whispering)

*Mama, baba, I'm getting married. I  
wish you could have met him. He's  
the sweetest man I've ever  
met...after baba.*

She hears the outer house door SLAM SHUT.

She hurries to the--

**INT. ASMA'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

--and freezes: she hears FOOTSTEPS coming up the stairwell.

Whoever it is KNOCKS on the apartment front door.

She rushes through the apartment to a back door, and is about to open it when:

AFGHAN MAN (O.S.)

Omid?

(beat)

Asma?

Recognizing the voice; her shoulders slump.

She hears a KEYCHAIN RATTLING.

ASMA

*Hold on!*

She returns to the front door, unlocks it.

In walks KHALIL. He smiles, gently, at the sight of her.

KHALIL

*You're all grown.*

ASMA

*(forcing a smile)  
Hello, uncle.*

He slides his boots off, puts her dad's SLIPPERS on; this bothers her, but she masks her annoyance.

He enters the living room, each step a violation. Asma watches with unease as he surveys the books on the shelf; adjusts an old family photo slightly imbalanced.

He approaches an old UPRIGHT PIANO, traces his finger along an old GASH in its side, smiling at a distant memory.

Resting atop it; a VIOLIN in an open case. He plucks at a couple strings; it's badly out of tune.

He sits at the bench; on the music rack is a framed FADED PHOTO of two boys - one at the piano, the other with the violin - Khalil and Omid.

He places his PISTOL by the violin, and begins to play RACHMANINOFF (Prelude in G-Sharp Minor, Op 32).

For fifteen seconds, it's transporting - something softens in both of them.

As Asma approaches with a glass of water, he stops playing.

KHALIL

*(back turned to her)  
Where is my brother, Asma?*

She glances down, her face contorted with sorrow.

KHALIL (CONT'D)

*When?*

ASMA

*Three months ago.*

He rises, somewhat menacingly, and wedges his pistol in the small of his back.

KHALIL  
*How? The Americans?*

ASMA  
No.  
(beat)  
*One of yours.*

KHALIL  
*Impossible.*

ASMA  
*Since when did the Americans plant IEDs? He was on his monthly run to pick up rugs in Kunduz.*

Khalil jaw juts out.

KHALIL  
*Why didn't you tell me? I could've done something.*

ASMA  
*Who knew? My warlord uncle's also a brain surgeon!*

KHALIL  
*Watch your tone.*

ASMA  
*You're in my home. Uninvited.*

KHALIL  
*This isn't your home.*

ASMA  
*It was my father's.*

KHALIL  
*Your father would be ashamed of--*

ASMA  
*Take his name out of your mouth. He was disgusted by you, by what you became.*

He storms over and STRIKES HER; her lip is BLOODY. The glass of water SHATTERS on the floor.

KHALIL  
(flustered)  
*This is why...who taught you to speak like that?!*

ASMA

*He did.**(wiping her lip)**Well, your powers of persuasion  
have come a long way. I'm sure  
you'll do great things in politics.*

KHALIL

*(gathering himself)**The Americans will be gone in a  
matter of days. This house and the  
business are mine, now.*

This stings.

KHALIL (CONT'D)

*And next time Nawab comes, don't be  
disrespectful. That's your future  
husband...*

She turns away from him.

KHALIL (CONT'D)

*(gesturing to the glass)**Now, clean this up.*

CUT TO:

**INT. KIRK'S OFFICE - NIGHT**

Kirk flops into his chair, stares at the DRY ERASE BOARD marking progress on his book: no new chapters crossed-out.

He maximizes MICROSOFT WORD; we glimpse his manuscript, with TRACK CHANGES everywhere.

He pulls a sheet from the STACK of marked-up pages on his desk, squinting at all the handwritten notes.

He groans.

He opens the text from 'PERRY (OGA)', clicks a link, and joins a private SIGNAL GROUP named 'KABUL ON THE GROUND.'

There are 150 members.

As soon he joins, Perry writes: "VOUCHING FOR JOHNSON"

'Matt' replies: "Holy shit the OG is here! Welcome brother."

Then, the group resumes its activity.

ON SCREEN, a RIVER OF POSTS:

- A HEATMAP OF HKIA (the Kabul Airport) with gate names and nearby TALIBAN POSITIONS
- Pictures of Afghan PASSPORTS, INTERPRETER BADGES
- Excel lists of Afghan names and vital info
- *"I'm tight with the medic from 10th Mtn, I'll help the wounded kid."*
- *"I'll run point on the family with British connex."*

Kirk's eyebrows arc in amazement.

His phone rings: Perry. He throws it on speakerphone.

KIRK

Jesus man, I would've killed for this during the List Project days...we were cavemen by comparison.

PERRY (V.O.)

American tech for the win! Only ones in the group are ex and current State, AID, CIA, DOD, plus some friends from Five Eyes.

(beat)

Wanna climb back into the saddle?

Kirk winces. Like offering a drink to someone in AA.

MARIE-JOSÉE (O.S.)

You ok baby?

KIRK

(cupping his phone)

I'm fine!

He shuts the door, hurries back to the computer.

KIRK (CONT'D)

I dunno man. I got this book deadline--

PERRY (V.O.)

Oh fuck that! Book can wait.

Kirk is momentarily embarrassed by his excuse.

PERRY (V.O.)

Let's bust that sweet little rolodex of yours open and get to work.

**(MORE)**

**PERRY (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

Besides, there's a limited time horizon. You got that heatmap open?

Kirk opens the MAP OF THE AIRPORT.

**PERRY (V.O.)**

It's all about getting as many as we can inside the airport. There are six official gates.

CLOSE ON MAP: the various gates are marked with American, Canadian, British, Australian flags.

**PERRY (V.O.)**

We've done some midnight bus runs of high value agency peeps into the airport, but they're tightening up. Getting anyone through the gate now is like working one of those arcade claw games from seven thousand miles away.

Kirk glances at the manuscript, wearily.

**KIRK**

I thought only suckers played that game...

CUT TO:

**EXT. SKIES OVER KABUL - DAWN**

The DRONE creeps north until the AIRPORT eases into view.

**HAMID KARZAI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, AKA HKIA.**

Clouds obscure portions of Kabul.

**INT. GCS - CREECH A.F.B. - CONTINUOUS**

Wyatt whistles as he zooms in on a SQUAD OF U.S. MARINES gathered in a WEDGE SHAPE by a wall.

**EXT. INSIDE HKIA - CONTINUOUS**

Marines stand before a TEN-FOOT-TALL STEEL GATE.

Through gaps, they see desperate eyes, adult and children's fingers REACHING THROUGH.

Tense silence.

**TWO DAYS LEFT.**

A Sergeant atop the wall shouts down at the Marines.

SERGEANT

Ten feet! Get us ten feet!

Two Marines in back, NICOLE (28) and WILL (18) exchange glances. They speak in hushed tones.

WILL

Well this is fucked.

NICOLE

Yuh.

WILL

Can't believe I'm popping my deployment cherry with this.

The Sergeant loads TEAR GAS CANISTERS into his M32.

The GATE RATTLES.

NICOLE

You're lucky. At least we have a clear objective this time.

Behind them, Combat Engineers ready a GIANT SPOOL of CONCERTINA WIRE.

WILL

Which is...?

NICOLE

Clear space outside the gate so we can open it without five hundred people running in each time. Process our interpreters. Then get the fuck out of here.

MARINE SERGEANT

Marines READY!

The GATE SWINGS OPEN and the WEDGE OF MARINES drives into the crowd.

It's a hellish SCRUM OF COLLIDING HUMANS.

Will pushes on the Marine in front of him; Nicole pushes on Will. The WEDGE ADVANCES, a half-step at a time.

We see:

- papers, passports waving
- a child trying to push past the leg of a Marine
- an older man trampled by other Afghans

Behind it all, the Combat Engineers wheel the SPOOL OF CONCERTINA WIRE, unfurling it as they go.

Suddenly: the CRACK of a TEAR-GAS canister.

White smoke curls up. Marines and Afghans choke, vomit.

The crowd disperses.

PUSH IN on a group of terrified Afghan KIDS, unaccompanied, their backs against the wall.

One of them, ADIL (12), holds a YELLOW BAG that reads 'LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL.'

#### **INT. KIRK'S HOME OFFICE - NIGHT**

Kirk glances up from his manuscript, sees a photo of ADIL in the Signal group. His face clouds.

'KIM' writes: "*Kid's alone in the dirt outside HKIA.*"

He zooms in on the 'LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL' bag, sighs.

KIRK

Oh boy.

He types: "*I'll run point*" but hesitates, pinky hovering over the 'return' key.

A tense beat...then: he DELETES it.

Messages about other cases flood in; the photo of Adil starts to scroll out of view.

He grimaces, runs hands through his hair, wrestling.

With great hesitation, he retypes "*I'll run point.*"

Exhaling, he presses 'return.'

A beat, then Kim DMs him a voice memo:

KIM (V.O.)

Hey - so this kid's dad is a terp.  
They had to flee without him  
because the Embassy torched his  
passport before issuing a visa.  
They're losing their shit  
obviously. Sending you the deets  
now - good luck.

Details flood in:

- phone numbers
- scans of the entire family's passports
- Adil's current GPS coordinates

*No turning back now.*

Kirk sends a text to WENDY (STATE): *"You hanging in there? I need some help with a case."*

Seconds later, his phone rings. Speakerphone.

KIRK

Wendy, how the hell are you?

WENDY (V.O.)

First things first. Am I talking to you as a friend or someone that'll quote me in the *New Yorker* or on TV? That little recorder of yours spinning?

Kirk grins: there *is* a DIGITAL VOICE RECORDER on his desk, but it's off.

KIRK

Friendship first. This is just us. State Department has you working at three a.m.?

WENDY (V.O.)

(exhausted, vulnerable)

Someday when this is all over, I'm gonna unload.

KIRK

Unload now if you want...

WENDY (V.O.)

You're joining this Digital Dunkirk thing, huh?

KIRK

God, is that what they're calling it? I dunno, I'm in a group with a lot of people you and I know. And there's this kid I'm trying to help--

WENDY (V.O.)

Pause! Some radical honesty? All these keyboard warriors are straining our system to the breaking point. Everyone's got a fire they want us to put out, but ninety percent of the time they don't know where it is.

KIRK

Right.

WENDY (V.O.)

Because it's you, I'll do what I can where I can with zero promises other than this: the nanosecond you give me shitty intel on a case, this bridge is burnt. We clear?

KIRK

Of course. Thank you Wendy.

Kirk hangs up, calls ADIL.

**EXT. OUTSIDE HKIA - MOMENTS LATER**

Adil answers the phone nervously; a group of armed Talibs are nearby.

ADIL

Hello?

KIRK (V.O.)

Adil you don't know me but I'm an American trying to get you out. Do you know how to drop me a pin with your current location?

ADIL

(eyeing the Talibs)

Um. Ok. But it's not safe to talk in English. Can you send texts or voice memos?

KIRK (V.O.)

Yes. Sorry. Hang in there.

**INT. KIRK'S HOME OFFICE - CONTINUOUS**

Adil texts his location.

Kirk ZOOMS IN on the screenshot, sees Adil's battery is only at 28%.

KIRK  
 (recording voice memo)  
 Wendy, this is the kid. Sending you  
 coordinates now but I'll tell him  
 to hold that bag up.

He sends it. An anxious beat. Then a thumbs-up from Wendy.

CUT TO:

**INT. COURTHOUSE HALLWAY - KABUL - DAY**

Ali and Asma hurry along, excited faces.

ALI  
*We're going to have to do it all in  
 reverse when we get out. My family will  
 love you. We'll do the engagement  
 party. Henna night. All of it.*

They approach a large door marked FAMILY COURT, slip inside--

**INT. FAMILY COURT - KABUL - CONTINUOUS**

--to find the gallery packed with couples, some in their teens; others in their seventies.

At the bench is NOOR (50s); she is regal, efficient.

She smiles at the young couple before her as they both SIGN A MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE.

She summons them with a subtle wave of her hand.

She takes the certificate, studies it, SIGNS AND STAMPS IT.

NOOR  
 (returning the  
 certificate)  
*Go with God.*

The newlyweds beam at each other as they hurry out.

NOOR (CONT'D)  
*Next.*

Ali and Asma exchange a hopeful glance.

POW! The side-door to the courtroom swings open.

Several TALIBS enter; one, with a red-beard, surveys the courtroom and shakes his head.

The Bearded Talib strides over to Judge Noor, whispers something in her ear.

When she shakes her head, faintly, he waves his men over.

She holds up a palm, then stands.

NOOR (CONT'D)

*I'm sorry. The court will be temporarily closed for--*

BEARDED TALIB

*This court is dissolved, not closed. We're not going to certify your fraudulent marriages.*

A baton-wielding TALIB approaches the couples in the gallery.

BEARDED TALIB (CONT'D)

*Go. Leave. Now!*

Ali and Asma, in shock, bolt from the courtroom.

CUT TO:

**INT. GARAGE IN KABUL COMPOUND - DAY**

A BOMB-MAKER (50) at his workbench tests PUSHBUTTON ELECTRICAL SWITCHES.

Beside him lies a SUICIDE VEST.

In b/g, several men gather around a WHITE TOYOTA COROLLA; someone is working on something beneath its chassis.

In one corner, a wispy YOUNG MAN (18) fidgets with his TURQUOISE PRAYER BEADS.

The Bomb-Maker clicks a switch, scowls, chucks it over his shoulder.

BOMB-MAKER

*Give me an American switch! I'm so tired of these Chinese ones, they never--*

Khalil strides in and the mood shifts; weary men slouched on couches sit up.

KHALIL  
*Where's our hero?!*

The nervous Young Man shoots to attention.

KHALIL (CONT'D)  
*Here he is, the historic man for a historic moment...*

The Young Man smiles, pride breaking through. The other Talibs smile, nod at him with admiration.

KHALIL (CONT'D)  
*The lost souls crowding the airport are traitors. Now they want to flee with the occupiers that filled our cemeteries with the bodies of our fathers. Our sons. Our brothers!*  
(voice quavering)  
*They betrayed us...and if we don't get them now, they'll come back and kill us later.*

As Khalil holds up the inert suicide vest and tucks a BRICK OF EXPLOSIVES into the VEST POCKET, the Young Man wilts a bit. The other Talibs try to mask their obvious relief.

KHALIL (CONT'D)  
*So. One last uncomfortable bit and then we can call it over.*

He turns to head out, when:

YOUNG MAN  
*Commander?*

Khalil stops and looks over his shoulder.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)  
*Um, it's just - my name is Ashraf. I thought you should know. My father was a soldier in the--*

KHALIL  
*You're doing a great thing, Ashraf.*

He taps the wall thoughtfully, then exits.

**INT. GCS - CREECH A.F.B. - CONTINUOUS**

Wyatt's feed is zoomed in on KHALIL'S COMPOUND.

He marks it with a BLUE DOT, then toggles the zoom to reveal a large swath of Kabul.

WYATT

Captain. Growing cloud cover - enough to ice up the bird. Lots of chatter about VBIEDs. The Haggani network is taking over security outside the airport.

An INCOMING PILOT (30s) sits next to Wyatt.

INCOMING PILOT

Hagganis aren't exactly known for security.

WYATT

Depends who's being secured.

Wyatt activates a layer revealing TALIBAN CHECKPOINTS.

WYATT (CONT'D)

Snap checkpoints are popping up all over the inbound roads to HKIA.

(beat)

Anyway. Four on the rack, optimized seventy minutes ago. Your aircraft.

**INT. KIRK'S HOME OFFICE - NIGHT**

Kirk studies the same map area; HEAT SPOTS say 'Talib Checkpoint'

He pounds an energy drink. It's not the first: his right leg is BOUNCING.

**2 A.M. LOS ANGELES / 2:30 P.M. KABUL**

A VOICE MEMO arrives from Adil.

ADIL (V.O.)

Hello, Mr. Kirk? Are you sending someone? I'm holding the bag up, but I'm getting scared.

He texts WENDY (STATE): 'Anything?'

His phone vibrates: UNKNOWN NUMBER. He rushes to close the door, puts the call on speakerphone.

MANSOUR (V.O.)  
I am Mansour, Adil's father. You're trying to help my son?

KIRK  
Yes...my name is Kirk.

There's a long silence.

KIRK (CONT'D)  
Hello?

He hears Mansour weeping.

MANSOUR (V.O.)  
We didn't want to leave him!  
(beat)  
The Americans kept promising his passport was almost ready, and then...they left. When the Taliban found our safe-house--

WENDY (STATE) texts: *"Marines couldn't find him at that location. Get me updated coordinates & I will try once more - but that's it."*

Kirk mouths the word 'Fuck.'

**INT. KIRK'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Marie-Josée, hearing Kirk, wakes up.

KIRK (O.S.)  
I'll do everything I can to help your boy. Ok? Call me anytime.

**INT. KIRK'S HOME OFFICE - CONTINUOUS**

Kirk exhales; Marie-Josée appears in the doorway.

MARIE-JOSÉE  
Babe. It's two a.m. Who are you talking to?

KIRK  
There's a kid in Kabul.

He grabs his phone, records a Voice Memo.

KIRK (CONT'D)

Adil they looked for you - please  
send me your current location...  
quickly!

He sends it; a beat, then Adil replies.

ADIL (V.O.)

The Taliban hit us with sticks to  
move us. I'm at the blue dot, now.

Kirk receives Adil's location, sees his battery is at 12%.  
Runs his hands through his hair, stressed.

MARIE-JOSÉE

Babe, what is--

Kirk raises his hand to silence her.

KIRK

(recording voice memo)

OK. Stay there. Hold that bag up as  
high as you can. Do not move!

He sends, then scrolls to the 'WENDY (STATE)' thread. She  
spots his manuscript under a bunch of empty cans.

KIRK (CONT'D)

(recording voice memo)

Wendy, sending new coordinates now.  
Please try once more.

MARIE-JOSÉE

Vraiment, can you stop for one  
second?!

He turns to her; while she speaks, his phone and computer  
BUZZ and PING relentlessly.

MARIE-JOSÉE (CONT'D)

What, what is this? We're closing  
on the house this week and barely  
packed. Did the publisher give you  
some more time?

(off his silence)

You know I support you, but can you  
still see the shoreline?

More PINGS, VIBRATIONS.

He glances at the screen, which doesn't help.

MARIE-JOSÉE (CONT'D)

Please--

KIRK

Look I've got ONE kid I'm trying to help, that's it! Then I'm gonna finish--

His phone starts ringing: it's ADIL.

KIRK (CONT'D)

I love you. I need to take this.

She leaves, distressed.

KIRK (CONT'D)

Adil, I just sent your location--

CUT TO:

**EXT. NONDESCRIPT OFFICE BUILDING - KABUL - DAY**

A PICKUP TRUCK screeches to a stop.

Several heavily armed Talibs emerge and storm inside.

**INT. ALI'S OFFICE - SAME TIME**

Ali stands before his staff; worried looks, some are crying.

ALI

*Laila?*

LAILA (20s) shakes her head.

ALI (CONT'D)

*Tawfiq?*

TAWFIQ

*Australia, if we can get through the gate.*

ALI

*Good. Zaid?*

ZAID

*Pakistan. By land.*

Ali gives a reassuring nod.

ALI

*Asma?*

**INT. NONDESCRIPT OFFICE BUILDING - CONTINUOUS**

The Talibs hustle upstairs to the unmarked door and POUND.

**INT. ALI'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS**

The POUNDING stops.

Ali raises a hush finger to his lips, locks eyes with Asma, who is terrified.

TALIB COMMANDER (O.S.)  
*Just kick it in, I'm in a rush.*

TALIB 2 (O.S.)  
*Last time I did that I couldn't walk for two weeks. I'll just shoot it open.*

Ali's staffers climb under their desks.

Ali looks for possible weapons: a STAPLER. A LETTER OPENER. A THERMOS.

He grabs the letter opener, and turns to the door.

BAM-BAM-BAM!

The door BLASTS OPEN; amid SCREAMS, the Talibs charge in.

Ali CLENCHES the letter opener behind his back.

ALI  
*What do you want?!*

They aim their rifles at him; he drops the opener, raises his hands.

ALI (CONT'D)  
*What do you want?*

The Talib Commander walks to the wall, eyes a photo of a GIRLS' SCHOOL.

He runs his finger over the U.S. and Afghan flags and the words: YOUR COMMITMENT TO AFGHANISTAN WILL NOT BE FORGOTTEN.

TALIB COMMANDER  
*'Afghans for a Progressive Future...'*

The Talib Commander fishes a paper from his pocket, reads it.

TALIB COMMANDER (CONT'D)  
*Which one of you is Ali?*

No answer. The Talib Commander FIRES A SHOT INTO THE WALL.

ALI  
 (amid screams)  
*I am! I am Ali!*

Just as his men encircle Ali, the Talib Commander's PHONE RINGS. He answers it.

TALIB COMMANDER  
*Yes?*  
 (rolling his eyes)  
*Now? It's just, I'm on a job. It can't wait one hour?*

He hangs up, lowers his head.

TALIB COMMANDER (CONT'D)  
 (to Ali)  
*Your lucky day.*

He thrusts the PAPER in Ali's hand, strides out, his men in tow.

Ali unfolds the paper slowly, stares at it.

CUT TO:

**INT. KIRK'S HOME OFFICE - DAWN**

7 a.m. Kirk is exhausted. He texts Wendy: "any word?" No reply.

He texts Adil: "you still in the same spot?" Thumbs up.

Stressed, he grabs his phone, leaves--

**INT. KIRK'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS**

--where Marie-Josée is making breakfast for the kids.

KIRK  
 Morning guys...

AUGUST  
 Daddy!

ISIDORA  
 Papa!

He hugs her from behind, kisses her cheek.

KIRK  
Sorry about last night.

MARIE-JOSÉE  
Don't say sorry...but are you ok?

KIRK  
I'll drop them off...I need to see  
some sunlight for a change.

**EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - LOS ANGELES - DAY**

Kirk walks the kids onto campus, each holding his hand.

Isi darts off to the climbing structure; August gives him an  
anxious, clingy hug.

KIRK  
Remember what I said, ok? Just  
ignore him.

August nods, shuffles off towards some boys playing soccer.

He gets a text from Wendy: "not looking good, each day is 10x  
more chaotic than day before."

Then, a text from Adil: "is someone coming for me?"

Kirk's face is a storm of anger, helplessness, uncertainty.

As he rushes to the exit, he spots a RED-HEADED BOY (5).

KIRK (CONT'D)  
Hey...are you Isaac?

The boy nods. Kirk glances around, then crouches down so he's  
eye-to-eye with him.

KIRK (CONT'D)  
(lowered tone)  
I want you to stay the fuck away  
from August, or else we've got big  
problems. Ok?

Isaac, wide-eyed, looks around.

Kirk stands, fixes a stern look, does the *I'm watching you*  
gesture with his fingers.

Isaac backs up in fear, eyes welling up as Kirk strides off.

**EXT. ATOP BLASTWALL - HKIA - DAY**

Nicole and Will stand atop a 6-foot wall. Below them, AFGHANS shout and wave papers behind coils of CONCERTINA WIRE.

**ONE DAY LEFT.**

Nicole pulls a water bottle from a crate at her feet, tosses it to an ELDERLY WOMAN; it lands in the dirt and someone else snatches it up.

HANNA (O.S.)  
(from distance)  
Nicole!

Nicole spins and spots Hanna, the Consular Officer, cupping her mouth.

HANNA (CONT'D)  
Check your phone!

Nicole fishes her phone out, finds a text from Hanna: "GRAB THIS BOY IF YOU SEE HIM. FAM ALREADY OUT."

Below it, the photo Kirk sent of Adil with his 'LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL' bag.

She nods to Hanna, turns back to the crowd and starts searching - it seems like an impossible task.

Will, meanwhile, has spotted something troubling in the crowd.

WILL  
Hey, Nic?

Nicole is so focused she doesn't respond - and then: SHE SPOTS ADIL.

NICOLE  
Well I'll be damned...

WILL  
Nic.

NICOLE  
Hold on, I gotta get this kid--

Just then, a WOMAN (25) pushes through the crowd: she has something BULKY under her chador.

WILL

Nic!

(pointing to the woman)

Look! Is she...

Nicole spots the Woman. She hoists her M16, but the woman doesn't slow.

NICOLE

Hey! Stop!

The Woman, ten feet away, grabs at the fold of her chador.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

(charging rifle)

Fuck! Stop! Now!

The Woman reaches in; Will spots something.

WILL

Nic, wait! WAIT!

The Woman removes a BABY.

Nicole lowers her rifle, horror in her eyes.

The Woman, sobbing, runs towards Will, RAISING THE BABY.

WILL (CONT'D)

NO! STOP!!

Will crouches down instinctively as the Woman HOISTS THE BABY UP TO HIM.

WILL (CONT'D)

NO!

NICOLE

Will!

Will grabs the screaming baby; when he looks up, the baby's mother is backing off.

BABY'S MOTHER

Her father is inside. He has a visa! I don't...

The mother disappears into the crowd.

Will, horrified, has clearly never held a baby.

WILL

What do I do?!

Just then, Nicole catches another glimpse of Adil.

NICOLE  
Bring her in and find her dad.

WILL  
What?! Where is he?

NICOLE  
You think I know? Go find him!

When she turns back, she can no longer see Adil.

**EXT. OUTSIDE HKIA - CONTINUOUS**

Adil struggles to make himself visible in the PULSING CROWD.

He waves, shakes his 'LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL' bag.

ADIL'S POV:

- A very pregnant woman holding her belly as others shove against her

- A toddler licking drops out of an empty water bottle

- An old man on a cane trying to keep his balance

THEN: Talibs dismount from a nearby truck with raised batons.

Adil, on his tiptoes, waves the bag desperately.

The Talibs wade into the crowd, swinging sadistically, striking knuckles, elbows, kneecaps.

A MINI-STAMPEDE ENSUES.

In the chaos, Adil sprints towards Nicole, who spots him.

Just then, a Talib GRABS Adil and drags him off.

NICOLE  
(raising rifle)  
HEY MOTHERFUCKER! Stop right there!

Nobody hears her.

She fires a peal of gunfire into the sky and the Talib holding Adil freezes. A couple Marines posted farther down the wall hurry over to Nicole.

NICOLE (CONT'D)  
Let him go. NOW!

She LEAPS down.

Nicole, rifle pointed at the Talib, waves Adil over.

Nervously, Adil approaches.

She holds the photo on her phone next to his face, then smiles. He smiles.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

Wanna get outta here, be with your family?

Adil, eyes welling, nods furiously.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

Ok. Walk through that gate.  
(to the other Marines)  
OPEN IT UP!

As the GATE swings open, Hanna is waiting on the other side.

Nicole backs toward the wall, rifle raised, hypervigilant.

Her fellow Marines reach down and pull her back up.

CUT TO:

**INT. KIRK'S HOME OFFICE - DAY**

Kirk drums his red pen on the desk impatiently, anxiously.

A text from WENDY dings in: *"Your kid's inside the wire."*

Then: a PHOTO of Adil smiling inside a C17.

Kirk shoots to his feet, pumping his fists like a madman.

Energized, he returns to his desk, turns to the MANUSCRIPT.

The joy drains from his face. *Back to reality.* He sighs.

DING. He glances up at Signal, reads: *"Family of four, Canadian affiliations."*

Below it, passport scans of ALI, AMIR, AMINA, and RAHMATULLAH.

He mulls it over a beat, then gathers up the manuscript and DUMPS IT on the floor below his desk.

CUT TO:

**INT. ALI'S LIVING ROOM - KABUL - NIGHT**

Ali looks ill as his dad passes the DEATH THREAT to his mom.

Amir sits on the couch, wide-eyed, holding his football like a stuffed animal.

As Amina reads, we see snippets of text: *'accused of collaborating with the occupiers'; 'Ministry of Justice hearing Thursday'; 'failure to appear'; 'penalty of death.'*

A tear streaks down her cheek.

She looks up at Ali.

ALI

*I'm sorry.*

AMINA

*Thursday. The day after tomorrow.*

AMIR

*What did you do?*

ALI

*I didn't do anything wrong, Amir, it's ok.*

AMINA

*It's ok? Look what it brought us!*

ALI

*What do you mean 'what it brought us?' I was building schools. You were bragging about me a month ago!*

Silence for a beat.

AMINA

*You must run. We will stay.*

ALI

*No. They know everything. About me, where we live, Asma, our grants from the Canadians, the Americans--*

AMINA

*Asma?*

*Whoops.* Ali paces.

AMINA (CONT'D)

*Who is Asma?*

AMIR

*Ali's friend. She comes to my  
football matches.*

ALI

*(signing while speaking)  
I, uh. Well I guess there won't be a  
better time to tell you. I'm engaged.*

AMIR

*Ali's getting married...Ali's  
getting married!*

AMINA

*Excuse me, who is this woman?*

ALI

*I work with her. She...Asma is an  
incredible woman. Smart. Strong.  
Beautiful.*

AMINA

*Well what family does she come  
from? What do her parents do?*

Ali's phone rings: it's an AMERICAN NUMBER.

ALI

*Mom--*

AMINA

*Does she have a visa? Is she  
leaving, too?*

Ring ring.

ALI

*Mom, I have to take this!*

He bolts down the hall to--

**INT. ALI'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

--his room, where he answers.

ALI

*Hu-hullo?*

INTERCUT WITH:

## INT. KIRK'S BALCONY - LOS ANGELES - DAY

KIRK

Ali, you don't know me and I don't know you, but I'm an American and want to help, ok?

ALI

Why? Who are you?

KIRK

Did you work for the Canadians?

ALI

Yes.

KIRK

Well my wife's from there. Guess I feel like I owe Canada something. Look I think I can get you out - you just have to trust me.

Ali looks uncertain.

KIRK (CONT'D)

You need to be ready to go before the sun comes up. Get a pen.

ALI

(scrambling for one)

Ok.

KIRK

I just texted a link to an app that looks like a calculator, but it's not a calculator, ok? You're gonna upload any documents you have, badges from the Canadians, Americans, certificates of appreciation, everything they gave you over the years to prove your affiliation. Then you memorize a sequence of numbers to hide the documents behind the calculator so the Taliban can't find it. Ali are you still with me?

ALI

Yes.

KIRK

Ok. Facebook. Unfriend any white people. Better yet, just delete your account. Facebook sucks.

(MORE)

KIRK (CONT'D)

Burn any photos you have with westerners, in case they enter your home. Memorize my phone number and then clear your call logs. Each member of your family should have one small bag, that's it. Water. Medicine. Snacks. Battery packs.

Ali surveys the mementos of his life in his room; photos with his grandparents, elementary school awards, books, lego sets.

KIRK (CONT'D)

You there?

ALI

I am...

KIRK

Ali, tomorrow is going to be tough. But you're running out of time. And I promise you I'm going to be with you each step of the way. The Canadians are at Hotel Baron by Abbey Gate. You call me as soon as you're there, ok?

ALI

Ok. But, there's something else. Someone else.

KIRK

Who? I have four family members in total.

ALI

My fiancée Asma.

KIRK

You're not married, then.

ALI

No.

KIRK

Can you get married in the next several hours?

ALI

No.

KIRK

Does she have a visa of her own?

ALI  
No.

KIRK  
Then I would say it doesn't look good.

ALI  
Please!

KIRK  
Nobody's going to just take your word, you need a legal document.

ALI  
We've already tried...it's impossible.

KIRK  
Ali?  
(beat)  
Get your family to the airport.  
Text me when you're on your way.

ALI  
I'm sorry - I don't know your name?

KIRK  
It's Kirk. Good luck.

Ali leans back on his bed and closes his eyes.  
The only sound is the whir of the ceiling fan.

**INT. ASMA'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

It's dark. Asma stares up at her ceiling fan.  
By her bed, a small bag.

Ali FaceTimes her: she shoots up.

ASMA  
*Alijan are you ok? I'm packed.*

INTERCUT WITH:

**INT. ALI'S ROOM - NIGHT**

ALI  
*I told my family about us.*

ASMA  
*You did?! What did they say?*

ALI  
*We didn't really get into it,  
 because this American called. He  
 wants to help--*

ASMA  
*Ok? When?*

ALI  
*He said tomorrow may be the last  
 chance. But...without a marriage  
 certificate, he said there's no way  
 my visa gets you out.*

ASMA  
*Right.*

ALI  
*I'm--*

ASMA  
*Ali we knew this. It's ok.*

ALI  
*It's not ok.  
 (tears welling)  
 I'm not going to leave without you.*

Asma reaches into her bag and pulls out the childhood photo of her sitting on the stack of rugs with her parents. She traces a finger over her mom's hair, her dad's shoulders.

ASMA  
*Alijan. You are under a death  
 sentence. If you don't appear at  
 that court, they will kill you.*

ALI  
*Yes, but--*

ASMA  
*You have a responsibility to your  
 family. Amir needs you. Take them,  
 and go.*

ALI  
*(in tears)  
 What about you?*

ASMA  
*I can take care of myself.*

ALI

*How?*

ASMA

*I will find a way to get out...*

CUT TO:

**EXT. KIRK'S DRIVEWAY - DAY**

Kirk emerges from his home with a bag of trash, lost in thought.

WAYNE (O.S.)

Haven't seen you in a minute!

Startled, Kirk glances over at his neighbor who sports a TRACKSUIT and beer belly.

KIRK

Wayne, how are things?

Kirk holds the trashbag, which DRIPS LIQUID.

WAYNE

Watched you on CNN. Question I have is why these Afghanis don't just stand their ground and fight like *men?*

Kirk brow furrows into a glare; he flings his bag in the can.

KIRK

Yeah...little more complicated than that. By the way, it's 'Afghans.'

Wayne shrugs as Kirk heads inside.

**INT. KIRK'S LIVING ROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS**

Kirk enters, looking annoyed.

He glances out the kitchen window at Wayne's home.

From his POV he spots Wayne wearing an OCULUS, practicing a VIRTUAL GOLF SWING in his living room.

Marie-Josée appears with a manilla folder in hand; she grabs the car keys, but she's troubled by something.

MARIE-JOSÉE  
 Hey...so the school called, but you  
 didn't say something to Isaac, did you?

KIRK  
 I kinda did...

MARIE-JOSÉE  
 Ok...which Isaac?

KIRK  
 What do you mean, 'which'?

MARIE-JOSÉE  
 Babe. The red-head or the blonde?

*Fifty-fifty...c'mon, c'mon...*

KIRK  
 The...red-head?

By her look, he knows he fucked up.

KIRK (CONT'D)  
 Shit. That's my bad. I'll call the  
 parents.

She winces; she clearly doesn't think this is a good idea.

His phone rings: an unknown number. He glances at her with a  
 pained look.

MARIE-JOSÉE  
 Closing's at West Coast Escrow in  
 two hours - the address is in our  
 shared calendar.

KIRK  
 Meet you there beautiful.

A quick peck, then he hurries into--

**INT. KIRK'S HOME OFFICE - CONTINUOUS**

--and answers it, throwing it on speakerphone.

KIM (V.O.)  
 Hello Kirk?

KIRK  
 Who is this?

KIM (V.O.)  
This is Kim, I'm the one that sent  
you the details on Adil?

KIRK  
Oh hey.

KIM (V.O.)  
Are you tracking the bus with the  
Afghan female judges?

KIRK  
No, but Kim I'm kinda--

KIM (V.O.)  
Ok, there's about ninety in all,  
leaving very soon for HKIA. They're  
obviously high value targets for  
the Taliban, so I'm wondering if  
you can help with--

KIRK  
Oh. Uh.

A beat. He leans his forehead against the closet door.

KIM (V.O.)  
I was told you might be able to  
help, maybe with--

KIRK  
I...I know someone who has gotten  
buses in at night but it's a long-  
shot.

KIM (V.O.)  
So...can you help?

KIRK  
Kim, you *have* to be lead on it. Not  
me. Just get them as close to the  
gate as you can, then reach back  
out to me. I'm already underwater.

KIM (V.O.)  
Ok! Pulling you into this chat now!

CUT TO:

**INT. KABUL HOME OFFICE - DAWN**

NOOR, last seen presiding over the Family Court, sits behind  
an ornate desk in her book-lined office.

She checks her watch anxiously.

She takes a KNIFE, turns it towards her chest, and makes an INCISION in the lining of her dress.

On the desk before her, a framed degree from KABUL UNIVERSITY - FACULTY OF LAW.

She removes it from the frame, folds it, wedges it into the slit of her dress, grabs her bag by the door, and exits to--

**EXT. KABUL STREET - CONTINUOUS**

--where a BUS idles; drawn RED CURTAINS cover the windows.

She hurries towards it and boards--

**INT. JUDGES BUS - CONTINUOUS**

--to find ninety people - elderly, kids - waiting.

It's already hot inside.

BUS DRIVER  
*Good morning, Judge.*

NOOR  
(with a nod)  
*Let's go.*

**EXT. ALI'S HOME - DAWN**

Ali and his family emerge, each carrying a small bag; Amir cradles his beloved football.

Amina glances warily at the ball - not the most practical thing to bring.

AMIR  
(defiantly)  
*It's Elias's. I'm bringing it.*

Rahmatullah closes the door, rests his hand on it.

Amina fights back tears.

**THE FINAL DAY.**

Leaning against a WHITE SEDAN out front is Ali's Uncle Karam.

ALI  
*Uncle. Where's your visa?*

KARAM  
*Any day now...*

Ali tosses him the car keys; Karam pats the hood.

KARAM (CONT'D)  
*I'll take good care of her, promise.*

Karam then gives his brother Rahmatullah a long hug.

KARAM (CONT'D)  
 (speaking into Rahmatullah's ear)  
*I love you. God couldn't have given  
 me a better big brother.  
 (to Ali)  
 If you don't get out, I'll come get you.*

ALI  
*We'll come get you at the Toronto  
 airport when you get out.  
 (hugging Karam)  
 Good luck, uncle.*

While Karam hugs Amir, Ali texts Asma: "where are you?"

Asma: "saying goodbye to my home. leaving soon."

Ali: "we're leaving now..."

Asma: "I'll meet you there. I have an idea."

CUT TO:

**INT. ASMA'S ROOM - DAWN**

The ghostly white light of dawn.

She walks somberly through her room, running her hand over cherished belongings - a clarinet, a collection of DVDs, the spines of well-read books, framed class photos.

BANG BANG BANG.

Someone is pounding on the front door, violently.

She runs to a window overlooking the street.

It's NAWAB.

Nawab looks up and sees her, registering her terror.

He KICKS THE DOOR, trying to break it open.

With a scream, Asma runs into--

**INT. ASMA'S PARENTS' ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

--where she yanks her mom's PINK HIJAB from the frame, pockets her dad's WATCH, then races to the--

**INT. ASMA'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS**

--where her bag sits on the table.

BANG. BANG. BANG.

She RIPS open the freezer and flings various frozen foods over her shoulder, searching.

CRACK: the sound of the outer door BREAKING.

ASMA

*Please. Oh please, God!*

Her hand finds it: a FROZEN LOAF OF BREAD.

She GRABS it, shoves it in her bag, RUNS down the hallway.

NAWAB (O.S.)

*ASMA! You're coming with me!*

She can hear him thundering up the stairs.

Asma scampers to the back door, frantically struggling to slide the deadbolt.

Nawab KICKS THE APARTMENT DOOR OPEN.

She unlocks the back door, bursts out--

**EXT. BACK OF ASMA'S HOME - CONTINUOUS**

--and sprints through a beautiful GARDEN of potted flowers.

Upon reaching the back gate, she turns, locking eyes with Nawab as he emerges, panting.

She flings the gate open and flees.

CUT TO:

**INT. KIRK'S HOME OFFICE - DAY**

Kirk studies an image of an OFFICIAL-LOOKING AMERICAN VISA on his screen: we see the words "Present this visa to security checkpoints" and "this visa has been issued by the Embassy of the United States."

He has his headphones in.

KIRK  
What the hell is this?

PERRY (V.O.)  
The geniuses at State just blasted that out to God knows how many.

KIRK  
But there's nothing personalized on here, no names, no case numbers, no dates of birth!

He doesn't notice a text on his phone from Marie-Josée:  
"Parking! Meet you inside?"

PERRY (V.O.)  
Yup. Guessing the more entrepreneurial Afghans are already hawking these to those desperate enough to pay.

KIRK  
(incoming call beeping)  
Hey man, I gotta take this...but before I forget, I'm gonna reach out soon about this bus full of judges. Gonna need some help.

PERRY (V.O.)  
Copy.

Kirk answers the incoming call...but it's not Marie-Josée.

ALI (V.O.)  
(hushed voice)  
We are on our way, Kirk.

KIRK  
Ok, keep sharing your location. Remember to clear your call history with me.

ALI (V.O.)  
Ok.

KIRK

And Ali?

ALI (V.O.)

Yes.

KIRK

Good luck. We're gonna get you out.

He hangs up; his phone buzzes and we see Ali's location as a BLUE DOT in the middle of Kabul.

He opens the heatmap with various TALIBAN CHECKPOINTS marked.

CUT TO:

**EXT. STREETS OF KABUL - DAWN**

Ali and his family walk through ghostlike streets.

The only sound is of shoes SHUFFLING over pavement.

**TWO KILOMETERS TO THE GATES OF HKIA.**

Then: the RAT-A-TAT OF KALASHNIKOV FIRE.

Ali hurries them around a corner--

**EXT. TALIBAN CHECKPOINT - CONTINUOUS**

--then freezes: he's led them right into peril.

Ali starts to turn back, but a Talib RAISES HIS RIFLE.

CHECKPOINT TALIB

*You! Get over here!*

Ali and his family approach; he forces a polite smile.

Once near, several ARMED TALIBS envelop them.

CHECKPOINT TALIB (CONT'D)

*Why are you leaving? You should be celebrating...*

ALI

*Yes. Thank God. But we've had a death in the family. My grandmother.*

CHECKPOINT TALIB

*Where are you going?*

ALI  
*Malaysia.*

The Talib considers this. Overhead, a C17 roars into the sky.

CHECKPOINT TALIB  
*Malaysia?*

ALI  
*She went there for medical  
 treatment.*

CHECKPOINT TALIB  
*Did you work for the Americans?*

ALI  
*No.*

The Talib gestures at their bags; his men rifle through them, holding up OLD FAMILY PHOTOS and a couple NECKLACES.

CHECKPOINT TALIB  
*Give me your phone.*

Ali exhales, surrenders his phone.

The Talib swipes around, looking at PHOTOS, FACEBOOK, TEXT MESSAGES (none in English), ignoring the CALCULATOR APP.

He studies Ali, then points to Rahmatullah.

CHECKPOINT TALIB (CONT'D)  
*What's wrong with him? Why are you  
 speaking for your family?*

ALI  
*He's deaf. Um, a bombing.*

CHECKPOINT TALIB  
*Americans?*

After a nervous beat, Ali nods, lying. The Talib's demeanor softens.

When the Talib glances over his shoulder, Amir flashes a *what are you talking about?! look.*

Ali glares at him; Amir recomposes.

Another beat...then the Talib waves them through.

**INT. JUDGES BUS - MOMENTS LATER**

NOOR cranes her neck for a glimpse of the C17.

Through the windshield, she eyes two gunmen blocking the bus.

One of them is Nawab, last seen chasing Asma. He approaches.

NOOR  
 (to fellow passengers)  
*Nobody says a word. I will speak.*

She nods at the Bus Driver, the door opens.

Nawab stomps up.

NAWAB  
*Are you going to the airport?*  
 (off silence)  
*How about I answer then? You're not.*

NOOR  
*Can I have your name, brother?*

NAWAB  
*For what possible reason?*

NOOR  
*Only so I can speak to you with respect. My name is--*

NAWAB  
*This is simple. If you want to proceed, you need to pay.*

Off Noor's worried look.

**EXT. STREETS OF KABUL - MOMENTS LATER**

Asma, wearing her mom's pink hijab, hurries along. She eyes the same C17 climbing into the sky.

Across the street, a Talib shoves an elderly Shopkeeper (80) out of his MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS store. Other Talibs emerge with CELLOS, VIOLINS, FLUTES.

The Shopkeeper pleads with his hands as they SMASH THE INSTRUMENTS.

She speeds up.

**INT. JUDGES BUS - DAY**

Noor, at the back of the bus, opens a PLASTIC BAG before an elegant Woman (50s), who looks stricken.

Noor nods. Tears streaming, the Woman pries her RING off and drops it in.

Nawab waits. Noor walks up the aisle, hands him the bag.

He frowns; it feels light.

He opens it to find watches, necklaces, cash, rings.

He hands it back to Noor.

NAWAB

*Dig deeper. Or we shoot the tires out.*

**EXT. OUTSIDE JUDGES BUS - MOMENTS LATER**

Asma walks past the BUS, unaware that Nawab is just inside.

She hurries down the street, turns a corner.

**EXT. STREETS OF KABUL - CONTINUOUS**

Asma crosses the street toward the BANK, but freezes.

There's a mob of people around the sole ATM, shouting, shoving.

GUNFIRE.

From the bank rooftop, a GUARD BLASTS HIS AK-47 into the sky.

GUARD

*There's NO money! The bank is closed!*

The crowd disperses. She clutches her bag tight and runs off.

**EXT. STREETS OF KABUL - DAY**

Amir dribbles his football down the sidewalk.

ALI

*Amir, just carry it!*

Amir obliges; not the moment to push back.

Behind him, Ali and Amina support Rahmatullah, who is tired.

**ONE KILOMETER FROM THE GATES OF HKIA.**

Behind them, a dozen worried Afghans, all clutching bags.

A truck filled with Talibs SCREECHES to a halt by Amir.

Gunmen dismount, rifles raised: a new checkpoint.

The Senior Talib KICKS the truck door open and jumps out.

SENIOR TALIB

*Look at you, fleeing to clean the  
sheets of the people that destroyed  
your country. Line up!*

Ali and the rest line up in the heat.

The Senior Talib starts at the far end of the line.

Unbidden, a Young Man (20) offers his phone.

SENIOR TALIB (CONT'D)

*Keep it. We know you're all using  
secret apps.*

Ali shifts nervously.

SENIOR TALIB (CONT'D)

*No, we're going to examine  
something else...*

With a gleeful smirk, he holds up a Defense Department  
RETINAL SCANNER.

The Senior Talib scans the young man's eyeballs, checks the  
screen.

Seeing nothing, he waves him through.

Next in line: a Woman (25) holding her infant.

He scans her, then notices the baby is asleep: its eyes can't  
be scanned.

SENIOR TALIB (CONT'D)

*Wake it.*

AFGHAN MOTHER

*Please, she's six months old!*

The Senior Talib lingers a moment, then moves down the line.

Ali half-turns to his dad and signs: *"If they take me, do not  
fight."*

*You do not know me."*

Rahmatullah smiles forlornly, then signs: *"Of course I know you. You're my beautiful boy."*

Ali's eyes well up.

The Senior Talib scans Amina's eyes first: nothing.

Amir's next: nothing.

By the time he scans Rahmatullah's eyes, Ali is perspiring, breathing heavily.

The Senior Talib stops in front of Ali with a wicked grin, savoring the moment - he can read Ali's panic.

Just as he raises the device, a SCUFFLE: a Single Man (40s) - next in line after Ali - MAKES A RUN FOR IT.

SENIOR TALIB

*Stop!!*

A PEAL OF GUNFIRE, then CHAOS as Afghans bolt in different directions.

Ali and his family RUN.

Amina trips and FALLS HARD ON HER WRIST. She cries out - it's badly hurt.

Ali hoists her up and they run through the checkpoint.

He looks over his shoulder: the Single Man lays on the pavement, motionless.

CUT TO:

**INT. INTERNET CAFÉ BATHROOM - KABUL - DAY**

Asma glances at her reflection in the mirror: she nudges a stray strand of hair under her hijab.

She texts Ali: *"Are you there yet? I'm not far."*

She waits a beat. No reply.

She unzips her bag, reaches in for the FROZEN LOAF OF BREAD.

She smashes it apart.

Inside, a ZipLoc with a BRICK OF CASH.

She steps out of the bathroom to--

**INT. INTERNET CAFE - KABUL - CONTINUOUS**

--and hurries to the front desk.

The Café Owner (50s) stares at her blankly.

Behind him, a GOON with a Kalashnikov.

Asma glances around - everyone looks suspicious.

A line forms behind her.

CAFÉ OWNER  
*Do you want it or not? Yours for  
two thousand U.S.*

She looks nervously over her shoulder, then places the cash on the counter.

The Café Owner paws the cash, thumbs through it, frowns.

CAFÉ OWNER (CONT'D)  
*You're short.  
(to the Afghan behind her)  
Next customer.*

ASMA  
*Wait!*

She reaches into her bag, hesitates, then places her FATHER'S WATCH on the counter.

The Café Owner inspects it, sighs, and pockets it.

CAFÉ OWNER  
*Only because I have a good heart.*

He clicks something on his computer. We hear the WHIRRING of a laser printer.

He hands her a black-and-white PRINTOUT of the obviously worthless American 'visa' Kirk was studying earlier.

CUT TO:

**INT. GARAGE IN KABUL COMPOUND - DAY**

Ashraf, the suicide bomber, surrounded by Khalil and other Talibs, slips his bomb-filled vest on.

**EXT. STREETS OF KABUL - DAY**

Amina sits on a bench, holding her wrist in obvious pain.

AMINA  
*Ali this is a sign.*

Ali rummages through his bag, finds a sleeve of Paracetamol.

ALI  
(offering pills)  
*Mama there are no signs.*

She regards the pills like an insult.

AMINA  
*I think it's broken. Those won't do a thing.*

ALI  
*When we get there, I will find help for you, but we need to keep moving--*

AMINA  
*'Get there'? Are you mad? I'm going home.*  
(beat)  
*We tried, Ali, but this is too dangerous.*

ALI  
*NO! We are getting out, today. You have to trust me mama. Please.*

**EXT. STREETS OF KABUL - DAY**

Ashraf walks along, his suicide vest concealed by a light jacket.

He nervously fingers the TURQUOISE PRAYER BEADS.

He passes the JUDGES BUS.

CUT TO:

**INT. KIRK'S HOME OFFICE - AFTERNOON**

Kirk gets a text on his iMac from Kim: *"The judges bus is about 1KM away!"*

There are so many incoming texts and ding that he doesn't notice his phone: Marie-Josée is calling.

He replies to Kim: *"Ok, standing by. Text when they're within sight of the gate."*

Kirk texts Ali: *"Status?"*

CUT TO:

**EXT. BRITISH GATE - HKIA - DAY**

Ali and his family arrive at a gate spray-painted with the words BRITISH PASSPORTS ONLY.

There are no British soldiers in sight; there's nobody.

ALI  
(studying phone map)  
*I think this is it. The Canadians  
are at the Baron Hotel, on the  
other side of this gate.*

Ali approaches an Old Man sitting on the sidewalk.

ALI (CONT'D)  
*Have you seen this gate open for  
anyone?*

The Old Man gives a deadened look.

AMINA  
*Ali this can't be it. Where is  
everyone? My god, all this and we  
came to the wrong place.*

Amina cradles her wounded wrist. Amir sits on his soccer ball. Rahmatullah leans against the wall, breathing heavily.

In the distance, GUNFIRE.

Ali puts on a brave face, opens Google Maps, and texts his coordinates to Kirk.

CUT TO:

**EXT. COURTYARD IN KABUL COMPOUND - DAY**

Khalil throws his arm around SAYED (35), guiding him toward the WHITE TOYOTA COROLLA last seen being rigged with a BOMB.

Khalil opens the door; Sayed balks.

Khalil's brow furrows; Sayed nods, anguished, gets in.

In one quick motion, Khalil pulls out a pair of HANDCUFFS and CUFFS Sayed's left hand to the STEERING WHEEL.

Sayed looks at Khalil imploringly; Khalil squeezes Sayed's shoulder reassuringly.

**INT. GCS - CREECH A.F.B. - CONTINUOUS**

Wyatt and Keith sit at their screens.

Wyatt sips from a can of Monster Energy by his keyboard.

Country music warbles through an overhead speaker.

Major Graves enters and stands over their shoulder.

MAJOR GRAVES  
(into intercom)  
Can we kill this shit? Makes me  
feel like my dog just died...

The music stops.

Graves studies Wyatt's monitor: his drone is centered on Khalil's men gathered around the White Toyota.

A wisp of a cloud obscures part of his view.

MAJOR GRAVES (CONT'D)  
That's a goddamn VBIED if I ever  
saw one.

KEITH  
Who are these dudes?

MAJOR GRAVES  
Taliban? Haqqani boys? ISIS-K? Fuck  
if I know but lock onto it - we got  
seven thousand servicemen and women  
at the airport. We're gonna turn  
that car into a coffin before it  
gets close.

WYATT  
Roger.

**EXT. COURTYARD IN A NEARBY COMPOUND - MOMENTS LATER**

Karam, Ali's Uncle, tops off a 10-gallon jug of water with a garden hose.

His wife FAWZIA (50s) looks on worriedly as he drags it toward the trunk of the WHITE CAR Ali left him.

FAWZIA

*Do you have to do this?*

Karam hoists the jug into the trunk alongside several others; its tail end sags.

KARAM

*Fawzia-jan, the radio said people are passing out from the heat.*

He slams the trunk shut and we see: it's a TOYOTA COROLLA.

**EXT. OUTSIDE HKIA - DAY**

Ashraf, the suicide bomber, approaches the back of the crowd.

Thanks to the coat he's wearing to conceal the VEST, he is drenched in sweat.

A stranger hands him a bottle of water as a C17 thunders up into the sky. Embarrassed, he nods and takes a sip.

In the distance, he spots foreign troops atop the blast walls.

CUT TO:

**EXT. KIRK'S BALCONY - AFTERNOON**

Kirk studies Ali's GPS coordinates on the map and groans.

He calls Ali.

INTERCUT WITH:

**EXT. BRITISH GATE - HKIA - DAY**

KIRK

Ali, you're at the wrong gate!

ALI

But the Baron Hotel is just on the other side of this gate!

KIRK

I know. But you need to go through Abbey gate. This one's British only.

ALI

But. Can't you get the British Government to open this gate?

KIRK

Man. I don't - I can try. But it could take a very long time.

An anxious moment.

ALI

So. Do you want us to stay here or move?

Ali's BLUE DOT pulses on Kirk's map.

There's a TALIBAN CHECKPOINT between Ali and Abbey Gate.

On Signal: "UNCONFIRMED: SEVEN SUICIDE BOMBERS HEADED TO HKIA."

ALI (CONT'D)

Hello?

KIRK

Hang on, I need to think this through.

**INT. KIRK'S HOME OFFICE - CONTINUOUS**

Marie-Josée comes in. Her cheeks are reddened; she has clearly been crying.

She spots him on the phone on the balcony, his back turned to her.

She sits in his chair, and notices a DM conversation labeled: CAPTAIN DAN - WANTS TO STEAL A PLANE.

Confused, she scrolls up to find a SATELLITE IMAGE of an airport marked "DYU - DUSHANBE - TAJIKISTAN"

There is a RED CIRCLE around one of the planes on the tarmac.

She clicks on the latest voice memo.

CAPTAIN DAN (V.O.)

Mr. Johnson, this is the bird. Easy to steal, just squawk the VFR, kill the transponder and I can get it to Kabul in under two hours. I'm gonna need your help with political cover so nobody shoots me down.

**EXT. KIRK'S BALCONY - CONTINUOUS**

Kirk hears Captain Dan's voice from inside, sees Marie-Josée.

He looks at his watch; shock registers - *he forgot the closing. Shit.*

KIRK  
(heading inside)  
Ali, sit tight. I'll call you back.

**INT. KIRK'S HOME OFFICE - CONTINUOUS**

KIRK  
Oh my god. I'm sorry. Let's go! I'm ready.

MARIE-JOSÉE  
It's too late.

KIRK  
What do you mean? I'll call the seller, they'll--let's just go back!

MARIE-JOSÉE  
Babe, the earnest money was just to secure our spot. The second we didn't perform, they opened it up to the next bidder, who offered more, all cash.

KIRK  
C'mon that's crazy! It was just a signature...

He flops on the couch, the enormity of his fuck-up expanding in the room.

PING. PING. His phone buzzes with a text from Kim: "Judges Bus is almost at the gate - please get ready to step up!"

KIRK (CONT'D)  
GodDAMMIT!  
(beat)  
I'm so sorry.

MARIE-JOSÉE  
*I'm sorry.*

KIRK  
What?! *I'm the one that--aren't you angry about the house?!*

MARIE-JOSÉE

I was, for about a half hour,  
before reminding myself that all I  
really want is to be with you and  
the kids. There are a million  
houses, we'll find another one.

KIRK

So why are you sorry?!

MARIE-JOSÉE

Because on our *first* date, you told  
me your dream was to eventually put  
all of this behind you.

(gesturing at his screen)

To maybe write a book.

DING. BUZZ. DING. Kirk stares at the screen wearily.

He gets a text from Ali: "What should we do, Kirk?"

MARIE-JOSÉE (CONT'D)

I know better than anyone on this  
planet the toll this takes on  
you...how hard you worked to carve  
a new path.

Kirk blinks a tear out; he's depleted. She leans over, wraps  
her arms around his neck. He folds her hands in his, gently.

MARIE-JOSÉE (CONT'D)

What's the latest with the boy?

KIRK

Last I heard he was on a C17, so I  
think he's out.

(beat)

I thought that'd be it, but there's  
this family with *Canadian* visas and  
nobody else was helping, so I  
figured...

She smiles, wearily. She's been here before.

KIRK (CONT'D)

There's a pregnant woman that was  
beaten by the Taliban, we're trying  
to get medics out to her. There's  
also a bus, but--

MARIE-JOSÉE

A bus?

KIRK

Yeah, a bus full of female judges.  
But all I'm doing is making a call.  
(gathering himself)  
I'm not going to be able to look  
myself in the face if I don't do  
everything I can...but it's almost  
over. Then I'll finish the book and  
we'll find the house with the yard.

MARIE-JOSÉE

One thing at a time. Keep your door  
closed; the kids will be dropped  
off any second.

KIRK

God, they're gonna kill me. They  
were so excited.

MARIE-JOSÉE

Stop...they'll be fine.

Kirk's phone buzzes with a call from Ali. He looks at her  
searchingly.

MARIE-JOSÉE (CONT'D)

Go. We love you.

He puts Ali on speakerphone; she leaves.

ALI (V.O.)

So what do we do?

Kirk opens the screenshotted map of Ali's location.

He shakes his head slowly, with uncertainty.

KIRK

Hang on. I'm sending you something.

Consulting the Signal HEATMAP on his iMac, Kirk clicks 'Edit'  
on Ali's map on his phone.

He then draws a TWISTING BRIGHT RED LINE with his finger from  
Ali's BLUE DOT to a big RED X at Abbey Gate, maneuvering  
around the Taliban checkpoints reflected on the iMac.

Kirk sends the map it to Ali.

KIRK (CONT'D)

Got that? Go to the X. Now. Call me  
once you're there.

There's a long pause on the other end.

ALI (V.O.)

Ok.

Just then: the peal of CRYING from the living room - Marie-Josée has broken the news about the house to the kids.

AUGUST (O.S.)

What?! Why aren't we moving?!

CUT TO:

**EXT. OUTSIDE HKIA - DAY**

Asma arrives and frowns at the daunting size of the crowd.

She opens her phone - she's at one bar - and tries Ali, but it doesn't connect.

She accidentally bumps into ASHRAF, THE SUICIDE BOMBER.

ASMA

(smiling politely)

*I'm sorry.*

He stares at her as she records a voice memo.

ASMA (CONT'D)

*Alijan, I'm here. Where are you?  
Have you already made it inside?*

She tries sending it, but gets a "Failed to Send" error.

She tries again, gets the same error.

She looks around in fear and indecision.

**INT. SAYED'S CAR - DAY**

Sayed inches through traffic in the white Toyota VBIED (car-bomb), Afghan folk music on the radio.

Duct-taped to the steering column is a TRIGGERING DEVICE with a RED BUTTON.

**INT. GCS - CREECH A.F.B. - CONTINUOUS**

Wyatt tracks Sayed's Toyota.

WYATT

Is this a type one or type two op?

MAJOR GRAVES

We have no local eyes on him, so it's type two. Get ready to run the nine-line.

**INT. SAYED'S CAR - KABUL - CONTINUOUS**

It's hot and the traffic is bad.

Sayed switches the A/C on but nothing happens.

Annoyed, he rolls his window down, awkwardly, since his LEFT HAND IS STILL HANDCUFFED to the wheel.

Outside, Afghans drag their suitcases on the sidewalks and street.

**INT. GCS - CREECH A.F.B. - CONTINUOUS**

Suddenly: a wisp of CLOUD DRIFTS BELOW THE DRONE, obscuring Sayed's car.

Sweat beads on Wyatt's brow.

WYATT

C'mon...

MAJOR GRAVES

All good?

Keith glances at a nearby screen, which is filled with 80s-era GREEN OVER BLACK text: the internal CHATROOM for pilots and other officials monitoring the operation.

KEITH

(whispering)

Holy shit, the Secretary of Defense just joined the feed. Now the White House.

MAJOR GRAVES

Captain?

Wyatt blinks through the stress, waiting for the cloud to pass.

**INT. SAYED'S CAR - KABUL - CONTINUOUS**

Sayed turns and pulls to a stop immediately behind an identical WHITE TOYOTA COROLLA.

Inside is KARAM, Ali's uncle.

**INT. GCS - CREECH A.F.B. - CONTINUOUS**

The cloud passes.

Wyatt's relief yields to confusion: *which is the correct Toyota?*

Wyatt mouths the word 'fuck' and shifts in his seat.

MAJOR GRAVES  
All good Captain?

WYATT  
Yeah, just. Same make and model,  
same everything.

He glances over his shoulder, searchingly.

MAJOR GRAVES  
All clear?

He turns back to his monitor: the two Toyotas slowly peel off in DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS.

Wyatt's eyes dart, sweat beads on his brow.

MAJOR GRAVES (CONT'D)  
Captain.

Using his mouse, Wyatt drags a BOX around one of the Toyotas.

In the CHATROOM he types: *"Screener confirm PID."*

An anxious beat.

Then, from 'SCREENER': *"Affirm."*

WYATT  
(relieved)  
Yeah.

Wyatt brightens up...until 'SCREENER' texts: *"55% certainty."*

WYATT (CONT'D)  
(wincing)  
All clear.

CUT TO:

**EXT. OUTSIDE HKIA - MOMENTS LATER**

Ashraf, the suicide bomber on foot, turns to a nearby Afghan.

ASHRAF  
*Is this 'Abbey Gate'?*

The Afghan nods; Ashraf wades into the crowd.

In b/g, the JUDGE's BUS pulls up behind about FIVE OTHER BUSES - they are 500 feet from the BUS GATE.

**INT. JUDGES BUS - CONTINUOUS**

Noor and the other passengers peer through the windshield at a SOLDIER vetting papers outside one of the buses ahead.

They exchange hopeful glances.

Noor texts Kim: *"We are at the gate. Please help."*

CUT TO:

**EXT. KIRK'S BALCONY - NIGHT**

A CIGARILLO hangs from Kirk's lips, unlit.

Over his shoulder, his computer screen glows.

He unfolds a note that says "TO DADDY FROM ISI" revealing her DRAWING OF THE HOUSE - now with an X through it, and A SAD GIRL beside it.

He lights the cigarillo, exhales anxiously.

A voice memo from Kim dings in.

KIM (V.O.)  
 The judges are at North Gate - time  
 to work your magic!

A text follows with the bus's GPS and JUDGE NOOR's number.

Kirk opens his thread with PERRY and starts a voice memo.

KIRK  
 Hey man, this one's important. I  
 need someone to get this bus full  
 of female judges inside...I'm about  
 to send you their coord--

His phone rings: Ali. He answers without sending the voice memo.

KIRK (CONT'D)  
Where are you?!

ALI (V.O.)  
Kirk!

KIRK  
Yes? Are you ok?

ALI (V.O.)  
Ki--

The call drops. Kirk takes a worried drag. The phone rings:

KIRK  
Ali?

ALI (V.O.)  
(shouting over crowd)  
We are here!

KIRK  
Great! Now, you need to--

ALI (V.O.)  
Kirk, this is impossible. There are so many people. I don't know where to go.

Kirk flicks the cigarillo and hurries back inside.

**INT. KIRK'S HOME OFFICE - CONTINUOUS**

KIRK  
Ali talk to me. What are you seeing? Can you send me a picture?

Ali texts a photo of the WALL OF HUMANITY.

ALI (V.O.)  
Hello?

Kirk squints, then ZOOMS IN on the photo: in the corner is a MAPLE LEAF on a paper duct-taped to a distant blast wall.

KIRK

Ali, you have to get to the other side of that crowd! The Canadians are there...

CUT TO:

**EXT. OUTSIDE HKIA - CONTINUOUS**

Ali listens through his headphones with an incredulous look.

**500 FEET FROM THE GATE.**

Afghans crowd behind them; one elbows his father. Another pushes Amir, who nearly drops his soccer ball.

Amina, protecting her wrist, looks at Ali imploringly.

ALI

What you're asking is crazy. We will never get there!

(beat)

I think we need to try tomorrow...

KIRK (V.O.)

NO! Ali, there is no 'tomorrow'!

**EXT. OUTSIDE HKIA - NEARBY - CONTINUOUS**

Ashraf, the suicide bomber, wades deeper into the crowd, fingering his TURQUOISE PRAYER BEADS.

**EXT. OUTSIDE HKIA - CONTINUOUS**

Ali puts a protective arm around Amir, draws him close.

ALI

Can't you get the Canadians to send someone out?

KIRK (V.O.)

No! This is it. They will never come out for you.

**INT. KIRK'S HOME OFFICE - NIGHT**

Kirk paces in his office, searching for the right words.

KIRK

Look, I don't know you Ali, but you seem like a kind person. Please listen to me though: now is *not* the time to be kind. Push through that crowd. Shove through it.

ALI (V.O.)

What about my parents?! They are frail.

KIRK

All of you lock arms like you are one organism. And push through. I cannot help you until you get to the Canadian soldiers.

ALI (V.O.)

But...

KIRK

Ali. You can do this. Call me when you're there.

CUT TO:

**EXT. OUTSIDE HKIA - NEARBY - CONTINUOUS**

Asma, somewhere in the same crowd, gripping the 'Visa' she bought, gets a text from KHALIL: "*Nawab says he doesn't mind a cat-and-mouse courtship. He's looking for you.*"

Disgust washes over her. She looks over her shoulder worriedly, then records a voice memo.

ASMA

*Ali, where are you? I don't know if I can--*

Someone jostles her, KNOCKING HER PHONE AND 'VISA' TO THE GROUND.

Then, the CROWD SHIFTS, pushing her ten feet away. We see shoes trampling the 'visa' and phone.

She shoves desperately through the crowd, claws for the visa amongst a forest of legs.

When she recovers it, it's smeared with dirt.

When she finally retrieves her phone, it's CRUSHED. She tries to power it on, but it's broken.

Another Afghan woman helps her to her feet.

CUT TO:

**INT. KIRK'S HOME OFFICE - NIGHT**

It's late. On Signal, Kirk sees "*RED ALERT*" and "*SUICIDE BOMBERS.*"

KIRK  
C'mon Ali, hurry the fuck up.

Suddenly, the sound of CRYING: it's ISIDORA.

He bounds from his office into--

**INT. AUGUST AND ISIDORA'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS**

--where a groggy Isidora whimpers.

ISIDORA  
I'm scared! Daddy, I'm scared!

KIRK  
(whispering)  
It's ok baby, poppa's got you, it's ok...did you have a bad dream?

She nods. He picks her up, kisses her forehead, hugs her.

KIRK (CONT'D)  
Daddy's here, don't be scared baby.

He hears his phone RINGING in the office. His eyes flare.

He hurriedly lays her down and gives her her favorite stuffed animal - a unicorn.

Marie-Josée comes in, bleary-eyed.

KIRK (CONT'D)  
(off her arrival)  
You're ok sweetie, daddy's gotta go...

RING RING. He bolts from the room--

**INT. KIRK'S HOME OFFICE - CONTINUOUS**

--but by the time he's back, he's missed Ali's call.

KIRK  
Shit. Shit.

He calls back but gets an AUTOMATED MESSAGE IN DARI.

On Signal, more chatter about suicide bombers.

KIRK (CONT'D)  
Shit shit shit.

He tries again: this time it goes through.

ALI (V.O.)  
(shouting over crowd)  
You weren't there!

KIRK  
I'm sorry, I'm here. I'm here.  
Where are you?

ALI (V.O.)  
We're at the front of the crowd.

KIRK  
Great!

ALI (V.O.)  
But there's a canal.

KIRK  
Yeah...

**EXT. CANAL OUTSIDE HKIA - CONTINUOUS**

CLOSE ON Ali's overwhelmed face.

ALI  
I think it's for irrigation?

We see the CANAL, scummy and floating with trash.

**'SHIT CREEK.' 50 FEET FROM THE GATE.**

On the other side are NATO forces: Australians, Canadians, British, and, down the way, the Americans.

Scores of Afghans wade across, holding PAPERS and PHONES high to keep them dry.

Some slip and fall in. It's degrading.

KIRK (V.O.)  
This is insane, but you have to get  
in and wade over to find a Canadian  
soldier.

Ali shakes his head violently.

**EXT. ATOP BLAST WALL - CONTINUOUS**

Will reaches down, grabs a fistful of papers from an Afghan  
man whose wife and children huddle nearby.

WILL  
(shouting)  
I don't know what the fuck a work  
visa's supposed to look like! Is it  
the same as a form I-ninety-five or  
whatever--

NICOLE  
Form I-ninety-four!

Nicole vets papers of another family.

WILL  
What the shit is this?!  
(waving a paper)  
Is this a green card? Are green  
cards green?!

**EXT. CANAL OUTSIDE HKIA - CONTINUOUS**

Ali stares at the canal, then at his weary family.

ALI  
I cannot ask my parents to do this.  
They won't make it.

KIRK (V.O.)  
Ali?

ALI  
(defeated)  
Yes.

KIRK (V.O.)  
You cannot quit now. Get in the  
canal alone if you have to. Just  
don't let your family out of your  
sight, no matter what, ok?

ALI  
I'll call you back.

He tries calling Asma but gets the automated message again.

AMIR  
*Ali, what are we going to do?*

ALI  
*You're going to stay right here.  
Don't move, not even a centimeter,  
OK?*

AMIR  
*Please don't leave us...*

**INT. SAYED'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER**

Sayed, in traffic, looks out at a wedding dress shop.

In the display window, the shopkeeper tears a LONG STRIP OF ALUMINUM FOIL and WRAPS IT around the FACE of a BRIDAL MANNEQUIN.

Sayed eases past a HAMID KARZAI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT sign.

**INT. KIRK'S HOME OFFICE - CONTINUOUS**

Kirk paces while he waits.

On Signal, the thread with 'KIM - JUDGES BUS' pulses with a red-dot notification of a new message: he doesn't notice it.

CUT TO:

**EXT. CANAL OUTSIDE HKIA - NEARBY - MOMENTS LATER**

Ali, up to his waist in the canal, holds his phone above the waterline.

He stumbles but catches his balance.

Black, sludgy water splatters his face and glasses.

He glances back at Amir, gives a reassuring smile.

Twenty feet away, atop a row of HESCO BARRIERS, is a LONE CANADIAN SOLDIER (30s).

Ali dials Kirk.

ALI  
I'm in the canal...and I see the  
Canadian soldier!

INTERCUT WITH

**INT. KIRK'S HOME OFFICE**

Kirk leaps to his feet, throws Ali on speakerphone.

KIRK  
Good. Now tell him you're a  
Canadian citizen. Go!

ALI  
(in direction of soldier)  
Canada. Canada.

KIRK  
Ali, don't say 'Canada' - say  
'Canadian citizen!'

ALI  
(faintly)  
Canadian citizen. Canadian citizen.

KIRK  
Fuckin' hell. Ali, speak up! Shout!  
Stop being so polite!

Someone **SHOVES** past Ali, getting in between him and the  
Canadian Soldier, commandeering his attention.

Ali starts dissociating as he looks about.

ALI'S POV:

- *thousands of desperate Afghans waving papers*
- *shouting NATO forces*
- *a C17 blasting off*
- *his weeping mom; hunched-over father; worried little brother*
- *a Mickey Mouse sweatshirt drifting in the canal*

Kirk's voice snaps him out of it.

KIRK (V.O.)  
Ali! What's happening?

ALI

The soldier is leaving with another family. I tried. I don't think I can do this. There has to be another way.

KIRK (V.O.)

No! There is no other way! You cannot give up now. That soldier will return, stay exactly where you are. Can you still see your family?

ALI

Yes. They're still there.

Ali signs to his dad: *"we're so close baba."*

CUT TO:

**INT. GCS - CREECH A.F.B. - MOMENTS LATER**

Wyatt's drone feed is fixed on a white Toyota.

Major Graves looms behind him.

MAJOR GRAVES

See that pick-six on Brady in the last quarter? I mean, *golly...*

**INT. SAYED'S CAR - CONTINUOUS**

Sayed, the suicide bomber, listens to the radio.

**INT. UNCLE KARAM'S CAR - CONTINUOUS**

Uncle Karam whistles to the same song.

**EXT. CROWD OUTSIDE HKIA - MOMENTS LATER**

Asma, holding her soiled 'Visa,' cranes her head.

Nicole, the Marine, vets papers atop the blast wall.

Determined, Asma pushes through the masses towards Nicole.

**EXT. CANAL OUTSIDE HKIA - MOMENTS LATER**

Ali squints in the distance, then excitedly calls Kirk.

KIRK (V.O.)  
What's happening?

ALI  
The soldier. He's coming back!

KIRK (V.O.)  
Go. Go. Shout.

The Canadian Soldier resumes his position; scores of Afghans shout and vie for his attention.

ALI  
Canada!

KIRK (V.O.)  
(shouting)  
No! Ali, shout 'Canadian citizen!'

Across the canal, Ali's parents struggle to keep their footing amid the jostling.

Someone inadvertently ELBOWS Amir's football loose. Amir, shocked, sees it disappear into the crowd. Eyes racing, he glances in desperation over his shoulder in Ali's direction.

**INT. KIRK'S HOME OFFICE - CONTINUOUS**

ALI (V.O.)  
Canadian citizen!

On SIGNAL, Kirk reads: "*Anyone confirm suicide bombers? Should we tell our people to run?*"

He paces his office, eyes darting, thinking.

KIRK  
Ali. Say 'there's a Canadian minister on the phone.'

ALI (V.O.)  
What?!

KIRK  
Just say it. 'A Canadian minister on the phone wants to speak with him.' Shout it!

ALI (V.O.)  
There's a Canadian--

The LINE GOES DEAD.

Panicked, Kirk races back to his computer, reads "*RED ALERT, PULL YOUR PEOPLE BACK ASAP*"

He calls Ali...nothing. Again. Nothing.

KIRK  
C'mon Ali, pick up. Pick up.

CUT TO:

**EXT. OUTSIDE HKIA - MOMENTS LATER**

Asma shoves through until she's within shouting distance of Nicole, who is vetting papers of a family.

ASMA  
(in English)  
HEY!

She waves her muddied 'visa,' pathetically.

Nicole glances up; the two lock eyes.

ASMA (CONT'D)  
I'm alone!  
(louder and louder)  
I'm alone! I'm alone! I'M ALONE!

Nicole waves her over.

CUT TO:

**INT. KIRK'S HOME OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER**

Kirk leaps out of his seat when his phone rings.

KIRK  
Ali!

There's a beat.

CANADIAN SOLDIER (V.O.)  
Hello?

KIRK  
Hello, who is this?

CANADIAN SOLDIER (V.O.)  
Hello?

KIRK  
Yes, who am I talking to?

CANADIAN SOLDIER (V.O.)  
Who is this?

KIRK  
This is Kirk Johnson. I served in--

There is a garbled sound on the line. Kirk shakes his head, changes tack.

KIRK (CONT'D)  
Can you hear me?

CANADIAN SOLDIER (V.O.)  
Yes, I can hear you. I'm with  
Canadian Armed Forces.

KIRK  
Ok, you have four Canadians there.  
I'm calling on behalf of Mélanie  
Joly, your Minister of Economic  
Development. They were asked by the  
Canadians to go in there right now.

There's an excruciating beat.

INTERCUT WITH:

**EXT. CANAL OUTSIDE HKIA**

The Canadian Soldier glances down at Ali.

CANADIAN SOLDIER  
Yeah, we're going to process them.  
There's a lot of people here, but  
we will process them.

KIRK  
I understand...but I need your  
assurance that they're going to get  
through, because one of the family  
members is in poor health. And I  
know that the Minister--

CANADIAN SOLDIER  
Yeah, yeah, we will.

KIRK  
I need to be able to tell--

CANADIAN SOLDIER  
They will get through now. I'm  
going to look at his paperwork. OK?

Kirk clenches his fist hopefully.

KIRK

I'm grateful to you for your help,  
sir. I'm going to stay on the line.

CANADIAN SOLDIER

Ok...I'm giving him the phone back.

Ali - waist-deep in shit creek - reaches up for his phone.

ALI

Kirk! He's going to let us in!

KIRK

OK, get your family across the  
canal, now!

ALI

Ok.

KIRK

Ali, this is important: do not move  
from where you are, ok?

ALI

Ok.

KIRK

And--

The signal drops.

Ali's JUBILANT SMILE fades when he spins around to his  
family: THEY'RE GONE. LOST IN THE SURGING CROWD.

Other Afghans push past him, thrusting their papers at the  
Canadian soldier; Ali tries to stay rooted.

CANADIAN SOLDIER

You coming or what?

ALI

My family...

The Canadian Soldier looks at Ali impatiently.

CANADIAN SOLDIER

Last chance.

The gun of fate at his temple, Ali SCREAMS across the canal.

ALI

AMIR! AMIR! AMIR!

**EXT. OUTSIDE HKIA - CONTINUOUS**

Amir, on hands and knees, scampers between Afghans towards his FOOTBALL.

He recovers it with a huge grin.

AMINA

Amir!

He stands and turns; his parents are worried sick.

He runs to them with a guilty look; the three are soon enveloped by the crowd.

CUT TO:

**INT. KIRK'S HOME OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER**

Kirk dials Ali but gets an automated Dari recording.

On Signal, all he sees are the words "*Suicide bombers.*"

Agitated, he tries Ali again - no luck.

KIRK

C'mon c'mon C'MON.

CUT TO:

**EXT. OUTSIDE HKIA - CONTINUOUS**

Ashraf, the suicide bomber, surrounded by Afghans, stares at Nicole and Willy.

He starts murmuring; his hand twitches.

**EXT. ATOP BLAST WALL - CONTINUOUS**

Will and Nicole HOIST an older man up and over.

WILL

Lopez thinks today's the last day.  
They're shutting down all airspace  
except for milair.

Nicole, eyeing Asma, reaches down and grabs her 'Visa.'

**EXT. CANAL OUTSIDE HKIA - NEARBY - CONTINUOUS**

Ali's voice is getting hoarse.

ALI

AMIR! AMIR! AMIR! Amir!

A RANDOM AFGHAN (20s) across the canal, clutching documents of his own, hears Ali and understands the situation.

RANDOM AFGHAN

AMIR! AMIR!

Other Afghans join in, chanting *AMIR* in unison.

It's so infectious that soon a HUNDRED are chanting.

Ali, bewildered, glances at the Canadian Soldier, then back across the canal, searching for his family.

**EXT. ATOP BLAST WALL - NEARBY - CONTINUOUS**

Nicole stares at Asma's muddy 'Visa,' then at Asma.

Will smiles at Asma while she waits.

CUT TO:

**EXT. CANAL OUTSIDE HKIA - NEARBY - CONTINUOUS**

The CHANTS OF AMIR peter out.

Ali sees a COMMOTION across the way.

The crowd SEPARATES, creating a PATH.

An agonizing beat.

Then: AMIR COMES INTO VIEW, ARM-IN-ARM WITH HIS PARENTS.

Ali wipes tears as Afghans lower Amir and his parents into the canal and help them across.

The Canadian Soldier hoists them up one by one.

**EXT. OUTSIDE HKIA - DAY**

Ashraf the Suicide Bomber MURMURS IN A TRANCELIKE STATE, jostled in all directions by his countrymen.

It's unbearably loud.

As he is spun around, we see:

- *an elderly couple holding hands*
- *a child clinging to his dad's belt to keep close*
- *xeroxes of the bullshit American 'Visa'*
- *mud from the canal clinging to a woman's dress*
- *a C17 roaring up into the sky.*

ASHRAF

ALLAHU-

Silence. Whiteness.

CUT TO:

**INT. GCS - CREECH A.F.B. - CONTINUOUS**

The WHITENESS IS A HEAP OF CLOUDS on Keith's screen.

He zooms out and we see it's a MUSHROOM CLOUD rising from the airport.

Wyatt's feed remains locked on the White Toyota.

Keith zooms in on CHAOS: scores of bodies, survivors running, limping, trampling over each other.

CUT TO:

**EXT. ATOP BLAST WALL - CONTINUOUS**

Will is tangled in the concertina wire atop the blast wall.

Nicole scrambles over and JAMS her palm on his neck, which SPURTS blood.

**EXT. OUTSIDE HKIA BY JUDGES BUS - MOMENTS LATER**

Noor hurries from the bus; several Afghan soldiers with raised rifles sprint past.

SOLDIER

*Get back! Get back!*

NOOR

*Please, we're--*

SOLDIER  
*You're not safe! Turn your bus  
 back!*

She glances at the bus; children peer from behind the red curtains.

CUT TO:

**INT. KIRK'S HOME OFFICE - NIGHT**

Kirk calls Ali but again gets the Dari automated recording.

And then: a BARRAGE OF PINGS from his computer.

He spins to it, reads: *"IED CONFIRMED. MASS CASUALTIES. GET YOUR PEOPLE AWAY FROM ABBEY GATE."*

Eyes racing, he opens CNN.com, which is airing footage of the mushroom cloud.

He flings open the door to the balcony, stomps out--

**EXT. KIRK'S BALCONY - CONTINUOUS**

--and ROARS into the darkness.

KIRK  
 FUCKKKKKK!

He hunches over as though he's about to retch.

Marie-Josée, woken by the sound, rushes out.

His shoulders are shaking: he's bawling, incapable of speech.

She sees the CNN feed inside, then smothers him in a hug.

KIRK (CONT'D)  
 I--

He stands upright, drapes his head over her shoulder.

KIRK (CONT'D)  
 I told him to go there. I thought--

Just then, his PHONE VIBRATES.

Feebly, he fishes it out of his pocket.

It's ALI.

Bewildered, he shows it to Marie-Josée, who holds her hands to her cheeks nervously.

**EXT. INSIDE HKIA - DAY**

CLOSE ON Ali, leaning against a wall, panting. His family is with him.

ALI  
Kirk!

KIRK (V.O.)  
Ali! You're alive!

ALI  
Kirk! We're inside!

KIRK (V.O.)  
What?!

ALI  
The Canadian soldier got us in a minute before the explosion!

We get our first glimpse of what lies on the other side of the WALL:

- *hundreds of Afghans sitting on baking asphalt*
- *medics running every which way*
- *a pregnant Afghan woman, bleeding from a head wound, in active labor*

Hanna, the Consular Officer, rushes by with a FIRST AID kit.

Marines hustle by, carrying WILL'S LIFELESS BODY.

The CANADIAN SOLDIER tends to a minor shrapnel wound.

Over Ali's shoulder, a THICK CLOUD OF BLACK SMOKE drifts up from the other side of the WALL.

ALI (CONT'D)  
It's bad. We don't know what to do to get on a plane.

KIRK (V.O.)  
Are you injured? Is your family ok?

ALI  
My mom needs help with her wrist but we're ok.

KIRK (V.O.)  
Ok. I'll try to get you manifested  
on a flight. You're almost there.

Kirk hangs up.

Ali tries calling Asma: no connection.

CUT TO:

**INT. KIRK'S HOME OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER**

Kirk collapses into his chair. Marie-Josée kisses him.

KIRK  
Stay here with me?

Half-asleep, she hugs him and then sits down on the couch.

KIRK (CONT'D)  
Uh, by the way. I *may* have name-  
dropped Mél to help him get in.

She opens her eyes.

KIRK (CONT'D)  
It was kind of a spur-of-the-moment  
thing. She's not going to be  
pissed, promise.

Kirk calls PERRY, putting it on speakerphone.

KIRK (CONT'D)  
You lose anyone?

PERRY (V.O.)  
Probably? Comms are flooded but...  
more likely than not.

KIRK  
Long-shot, but you don't have any  
manifest slots, do you?

PERRY (V.O.)  
Was hoping you might, actually. One  
of my assets just got de-planed.

KIRK  
'De-planed'?! The fuck are you  
talking about?

PERRY (V.O.)  
 Too many people, too few planes.  
 All priority now for F.O.P.s

KIRK  
 Tell me that doesn't still mean  
 what I think it does...

PERRY (V.O.)  
 Friends of Petraeus? Yup. Yanking  
 interpreters with valid SIVs to  
 make room for VIPs.

CUT TO:

**EXT. INSIDE HKIA - CONTINUOUS**

Ali watches a pair of soldiers WELD A GATE SHUT from the inside.

Nearby, Hanna - the consular officer - wraps Amina's wrist in a splint.

Ali tries Asma again, without luck.

ALI  
 (recording voice memo)  
*Asmajan. Send me some kind of  
 signal. Are you here? Are you ok?*

He tries sending it but it doesn't go through.

AMIR  
*Ali.*

Ali, angst-ridden, calls Asma, gets the automated recording.

AMIR (CONT'D)  
*Ali.*

Ali doesn't hear Amir.

AMIR (CONT'D)  
*Ali!*

ALI  
*What Amir! Just give me a second--*

Amir points to a C17 taxiing on the tarmac, one of only a few remaining.

AMIR  
*Which plane do we get on?*

Ali snaps out of it and calls Kirk.

ALI

Kirk, where do we go for the planes to Canada? There are only three planes left.

INTERCUT WITH

**INT. KIRK'S HOME OFFICE**

While they talk, Kirk types furiously on Signal.

KIRK

Right now the only plane you're looking for is one that flies. Doesn't matter where. I'm trying to get you on a charter to...where's it going? Uganda.

ALI

Uganda?!

KIRK

Or Hungary. I don't know right now.

ALI

But...

KIRK

Ali, just get out of there! I promise you, wherever you end up landing, we'll get you to Canada.

A Marine running past glares at Ali.

MARINE

Get off the fucking phone! This is a restricted area.

The line goes dead.

CUT TO:

**INT. SAYED'S CAR - OUTSIDE HKIA - CONTINUOUS**

Sayed pulls the VBIED to the side of a crowded road.

He looks ill as badly-wounded Afghans rush past his car.

One stumbles against his hood, smearing blood over it.

Sayed, sweating, looks at the DETONATOR BUTTON.

Panicking, he suddenly starts YANKING his handcuffed hand to free it from the steering wheel.

**INT. GCS - CREECH A.F.B.**

Wyatt's drone is centered on the WHITE TOYOTA.

MAJOR GRAVES  
Get ready to dance. We're taking  
this fucker out before he gets  
within striking distance of the  
airport.

He glances at the CHATROOM screen, rereads: "55% certainty."

WYATT  
(unsteadily)  
Roger.

CUT TO:

**INT. UNCLE KARAM'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER**

Uncle Karam sees smoke rising from the airport.

UNCLE KARAM  
*Dear God.*

He calls Ali but gets the automated Dari recording.

JTAC OPERATOR (V.O.)  
Strawberry One this is Skull Five.

WYATT (V.O.)  
Go for Strawberry One.

**INT. SAYED'S CAR - CONTINUOUS**

Sayed THRASHES against the steering wheel, trying to yank it off.

His wrist, LACERATED from the handcuffs, streams BLOOD.

JTAC OPERATOR (V.O.)  
Strawberry One. Ready gameplan nine-  
line.

WYATT (V.O.)  
Skull Five ready gameplan nine-  
line.

JTAC OPERATOR (V.O.)  
Strawberry One this is a type-two  
control. Bomb on target. One two  
three from the overhead.

**INT. UNCLE KARAM'S CAR - CONTINUOUS**

Karam turns up the radio.

RADIO HOST (V.O.)  
*Mass casualties reported after a  
bombing outside the airport.*

He tries Ali again; no luck.

**INT. GCS - CREECH A.F.B. - CONTINUOUS**

We only see the feed of the White Toyota.

JTAC OPERATOR (V.O.)  
Target elevation is five-eight-  
seven-seven MSL. Target is white  
Toyota Corolla VBIED moving west.  
One pax inside.

**INT. SAYED'S CAR - CONTINUOUS**

Sayed, groaning, shakily lights a cigarette with his free  
hand.

JTAC OPERATOR (V.O.)  
I want a Romeo two hellfire on  
center mass of vic. Location forty  
sierra golf delta zero four one  
three four. Two eight zero zero  
eight.

After a drag, Sayed ERUPTS LIKE A CAGED BEAR, bashing the  
steering wheel.

He plants a foot against the dash for more leverage,  
inadvertently CRANKING THE VOLUME UP as he shouts.

**INT. UNCLE KARAM'S CAR - CONTINUOUS**

Karam calls his wife, Fawzia.

UNCLE KARAM

*I'm ok. I'm ok. Can you keep trying  
Ali? I'm so worried.*

JTAC OPERATOR (V.O.)

Mark none. Friendlies are two  
hundred meters south at Kabul  
airport. Egress: shoot south, exit  
north.

Afghans wounded from the explosion limp past Uncle Karam.

**INT. SAYED'S CAR - CONTINUOUS**

Sayed feels something LOOSEN in the steering wheel.

JTAC OPERATOR (V.O.)

Remarks. Danger close. Ground  
commander's initials are MFT.  
Seeking immediate weapons effects,  
hack. Go for readbacks.

Sayed pulls on the wheel until the VEINS ON HIS FOREHEAD  
BULGE.

**INT. GCS - CREECH A.F.B. - CONTINUOUS**

Wyatt WHITE-KNUCKLES the joystick.

WYATT

Skull Five. We are looking at the  
vic. We are hoping for center mass  
of vic. We are hoping for  
instantaneous strike. Is there an  
abort plan?

JTAC OPERATOR (V.O.)

Negative.

**INTERCUT BETWEEN SAYED'S AND UNCLE KARAM'S CAR - CONTINUOUS**

Karam tries Ali again but no signal.

WYATT (V.O.)

Roger. On target now.

CLOSE ON Sayed, drenched in sweat, straining.

JTAC OPERATOR (V.O.)

Cleared hot cleared hot cleared hot!

CLOSE ON Karam.

KEITH (V.O.)  
Lasing. Good returns.

WYATT (V.O.)  
Going for rifle.

**INT. GCS - CREECH A.F.B. - CONTINUOUS**

CLOSE ON the LOADOUT graphic on Wyatt's screen: it changes from FOUR to THREE MISSILES.

WYATT  
Rifle rifle rifle. Missile away.  
Impact in twenty seconds.

Wyatt watches CIVILIANS stream past the Toyota.

WYATT (CONT'D)  
(whispering)  
C'mon, *move*. Get out of there.

**INTERCUT BETWEEN SAYED'S AND UNCLE KARAM'S CAR - CONTINUOUS**

CLOSE ON Karam.

WYATT (V.O.)  
Impact in ten.

CLOSE ON Sayed.

WYATT (V.O.)  
Five. Four.

CLOSE ON Karam.

WYATT (V.O.)  
Three. Two.

CLOSE ON Sayed.

WYATT (V.O.)  
One.

**INT. GCS - CREECH A.F.B. - CONTINUOUS**

Wyatt and his superiors watch silently as the screen registers the DIRECT HIT on the TOYOTA.

WYATT  
 Splash. Sensor cease laser.

KEITH  
 Laser off.

WYATT  
 Conducting post weapons effects  
 check.

The explosive cloud spreads; injured civilians drag  
 themselves away from the smoldering Toyota.

There are many motionless bodies.

WYATT (CONT'D)  
 Seven. Ten. Hang on.  
 (beat)  
 Nine pax KIA. Eight pax collateral.

Keith squirms as he watches a human on hands-and-knees slump  
 over, lifeless.

MAJOR GRAVES  
 Tell me if I'm wrong but is that  
 first blood for our sensor here?!

Keith looks ill; he doesn't respond.

Graves steels his posture - he's a goddamn ramrod. He puts  
 his hands on Keith's shoulders.

MAJOR GRAVES (CONT'D)  
 You boys should be proud. After  
 what those suicidal fuckers just  
 did at the airport, *that* was a  
 righteous strike...you've saved a  
 lot of lives.

Wyatt is stone-faced; Keith is pale.

CUT TO:

**EXT. STREETS OF KABUL - MOMENTS LATER**

In bg, black smoke from the DRONE STRIKE.

A few cars ahead is a WHITE TOYOTA. But whose?

PUSH IN slowly - excruciatingly - until we see inside.

**INT. SAYED'S CAR - CONTINUOUS**

The car is missing its STEERING WHEEL.

The DETONATOR BUTTON remains.

**EXT. STREETS OF KABUL - MOMENTS LATER**

Sayed walks the sidewalk with a lit cigarette.

His other hand, bleeding profusely, remains handcuffed to the loose steering wheel.

CUT TO:

**INT. AFGHAN PRESIDENTIAL PALACE - MOMENTS LATER**

Khalil, surrounded by a dozen other armed Talibs, poses for a portrait at the opulent desk of the deposed President.

He smiles, proudly.

CUT TO:

**EXT. INSIDE HKIA - MOMENTS LATER**

Ali sees the BLACK CLOUD from the drone strike.

Amir runs up with a SMALL BOTTLE OF WATER; his parents pass it back and forth between sips.

ALI  
(recording voice memo)  
Kirk I don't know what to--

LOADMASTER (O.S.)  
You four! Are you ready?

Ali spins: an Air Force LOADMASTER (25) with a clipboard looks at them impatiently.

LOADMASTER (CONT'D)  
Ready?!

Ali nods furiously; Amir helps his parents to their feet. They clutch their bags.

LOADMASTER (CONT'D)  
One bag per family only. Let's GO!

They struggle to keep up as he leads them to a C17, discarding items from their bags onto the tarmac.

Amir clutches his football.

The Loadmaster points them toward the back-ramp of the C17.

Rahmatullah stops. Takes a deep breath through his nostrils.

He crouches, pulls out a small handkerchief, delicately scoops AFGHAN DIRT into it, folds and pockets it carefully.

He hurries to catch up with his family.

As they approach the back-ramp, Ali sees an AIRMAN.

ALI

Where is this plane going?

AIRMAN

Who the hell knows?!

**INT. INSIDE C17 GLOBEMASTER - HKIA RUNWAY - CONTINUOUS**

Ali's eyes adjust to the darkness inside, then register his shock: 800 AFGHANS sitting on the floor.

The BABY saved by Will is cradled by her MOTHER.

And then: ALI LOCKS EYES WITH ASMA.

She shoots to her feet; their eyes flare with pure, unadulterated joy.

Hundreds of people are crammed in the space between them.

LOADMASTER

(to Asma)

Lady, sit down. We're wheels-up soon.

Ali's mom notices Asma.

AMINA

*Is that her?*

He nods. Amina smiles.

Ali drinks up the sight of Asma - they both wipe away tears of happiness.

**INT. KIRK'S HOME OFFICE - CONTINUOUS**

Kirk, unaware of Ali's status, types furiously in Signal.

A text from Ali arrives: "*Kirk. We are on a plane. Thank you. We will call you when we land, wherever that is.*"

He collapses on the couch next to Marie-Josée and shows her the text.

They embrace, she kisses his tear-streaked cheeks.

MARIE-JOSÉE

But how?

KIRK

I have no idea, but he's not out, yet.

MARIE-JOSÉE

I'll wait with you, mon amour.

Kirk texts Ali: "*Almost there! Text when you're taking off!*"

**INT. C17 GLOBEMASTER - HKIA RUNWAY - CONTINUOUS**

Amina and Rahmatullah stare out the back of the C17, wide-eyed.

Two PILLARS OF SMOKE - one from the suicide bombing, the other from the drone strike - reach into the sky.

Rahmatullah gives Amina's good hand a squeeze.

The C17's JETS FIRE UP; the passengers murmur excitedly.

Ali locks arms with his family, all seated cross-legged on the floor.

Ali and Asma crane their heads eagerly; they spot each other for fleeting moments, grinning.

The engines REV. Afghans weep and hug each other. *It's happening.*

Ali takes a short video of the BACK-RAMP RAISING and texts it to Kirk.

He smiles, tousles Amir's hair.

And then: the plane STOPS.

Confusion.

The BACK-RAMP LOWERS and TWO MARINES run up.

One glances at his phone with a stern look, then steps in between the Afghans, studying their faces.

He comes to a stop before Ali. An agonizing beat.

MARINE  
Asma Haqqani!

Asma glances up, betraying her identity; the Marine spots her.

MARINE (CONT'D)  
Ma'am, come with me. You are no longer cleared for this flight.

ASMA  
Why?!

MARINE  
Let's go!

Ali STANDS UP. His mother yanks at his sleeve furiously.

The Marine looks at him suspiciously.

MARINE (CONT'D)  
You wanna go, too?

Ali freezes; Asma gives him a *don't say a thing* look.

AMIR  
(whispering)  
Ali...

MARINE  
(to Asma)  
You're holding up eight hundred people here! Do you know that guy over there?

Asma is silent.

The Marine glances at Ali, who remains standing.

MARINE (CONT'D)  
Last warning, fucko! Sit your ass back down...unless you know this woman?

Asma shakes her head at Ali, just slightly.

ALI  
 (quavering)  
 No...

The Marine, impatient, strides over to Asma.

MARINE  
 ID, now!

She surrenders it. He holds it next to the image on his phone.

MARINE (CONT'D)  
 Ok. Let's go.

Asma nods, stands, and follows the Marine down the ramp.

Ali is still standing, a monument of grief, his parents and Amir at his feet.

As soon as Asma clears the ramp, it starts to CLOSE.

Asma turns and LOCKS EYES with Ali for a second before the doors GRIND SHUT.

CUT TO:

**EXT. ATOP HKIA BLASTWALL - MOMENTS LATER**

Nicole stands with rifle raised, uniform smeared with Will's BLOOD.

Desperate Afghans try to wedge through a crack in the wall.

NICOLE  
 Stop! Stop!

She fires her M16 into the air; they retreat.

The GATE below her SWINGS OPEN and a column of 20 AFGHANS are pushed out by Marines.

NICOLE (CONT'D)  
 (to the Marines)  
 The fuck you guys doing?!

MARINE  
 Too many inside. Some of these are bad apples, too.

Asma makes eye contact with Nicole.

ASMA

Please. You remember me?

She recognizes Asma by her PINK HEADSCARF.

NICOLE

HEY! I know her! I let her in earlier! She's *good*, I'm vouching!

The Marine ignores her.

THEY SHOVE HER OUT AND START WELDING THE GATE SHUT.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

She's *good*! Fucking let her back in! She worked for us!

A nearby long-bearded TALIB hears this, grabs Asma.

ASMA

*Please! My uncle is Khalil Haqqani!*

TALIB

(smirking)

*Yeah, he's everyone's uncle now.*

Asma and Nicole lock eyes.

TALIB (CONT'D)

(prodding her forward)

Let's go.

As they leave, Nicole squints off in the distance and sees a LARGE GROUP OF AFGHANS lined up on the edge of the CANAL, their hands over their heads, Talibs with AK47s behind them.

NICOLE

Jesus fuck.

CLOSE ON HER FACE as a BURST OF AK-47 GUNFIRE FROM THE CANAL REGISTERS.

Angrily, she RAISES her rifle and searches for Asma.

She finds her at the feet of NAWAB, who is standing on the tailgate of his PICKUP TRUCK with a giddy look.

As the bearded Talib restrains her, Nawab points to the nearby canal with one hand, then to his truck with the other.

*This is her choice.*

Asma looks up at Nawab. Pure defiance in her eyes.

Nicole puts NAWAB in her CROSSHAIRS. He stares back at her, supremely confident.

Her finger QUIVERS by the trigger.

Down below, a Marine spots Nicole sighting her rifle.

MARINE

Nic! Have you lost your mind? It's fuckin' over! Get down!

Through her SCOPE, Nicole stares at Asma, Nawab, and the canal, destroyed.

Asma looks back to her one last time, her eyes burning.

MARINE (CONT'D)

It's over! We're buggin' out now!  
Let's go!

Nicole looks up just as Asma WRENCHES FREE from the bearded Talib and BOLTS.

As the crowd surges, Asma disappears from sight.

Nicole is shattered.

In the background, ALI'S C17 RESUMES TAXIING.

CUT TO:

**INT. KIRK'S HOME OFFICE - NIGHT**

Kirk and Marie-Josée are slumped on the couch; she's watching the muted CNN stream.

Kirk receives Ali's video clip; he shows her.

KIRK

They're taxiing...

Marie-Josée nestles her head on his shoulder.

MARIE-JOSÉE

How do you feel?

He looks proud.

And then his phone rings: it's KIM (JUDGE'S BUS).

Something sinks in him.

KIRK

Kim...

KIM (V.O.)

Did you do it?! What did your guy tell you?!

He quickly clicks to the last text exchange with PERRY: his text and voice memo are UNSENT.

He hangs his head, eyes clenched shut.

KIM (V.O.)

Are you there?!

KIRK

Kim.

KIM (V.O.)

I can't get through to them! The network is down. Please tell me you have news--

KIRK

Kim I fucked up. I, uh, didn't forward the information.

KIM (V.O.)

What do you mean you didn't forward it?! Why the fuck didn't you?!

KIRK

I was working another case.

KIM (V.O.)

There were a hundred people on that bus! That wasn't important enough to take two seconds and share it with your--

KIRK

I fucked up, ok?! I don't even know if my guy could've--

KIM (V.O.)

Just fuckin' forward it now then! What the hell's wrong with you? I can't...FUCK YOU!

Kim hangs up.

Kirk is mortified. He looks back at Marie-Josée.

He calls PERRY.

PERRY (V.O.)

Yo...

KIRK

I fucked up and didn't send you the grids of that bus full of female judges, but I'm sending it all over to you now!

Perry is silent; no emotional life-raft here.

PERRY (V.O.)

Kirk. Anyone who isn't already in is now shit outta--

KIRK

No no no, I'm sending it to you now. The bus is like one hundred feet from the gate! Please tell me you still have some OGA buttons to push...

PERRY (V.O.)

Don't know what to tell you man. Heard the Brits might still be at it.

He hangs up and quickly scrolls through his contact list.

KIRK

(recording voice memo)

Major Hughes, this is Kirk. I know we're in final moments but I have a bus full of female judges outside North Gate. Sending details now.

Marie-Josée notices something on the CNN feed.

MARIE-JOSÉE

Babe.

He stands up and starts pacing.

KIRK

(recording voice memo)

Wendy, do you know if the Australian NEO coordinator is still operating--

MARIE-JOSÉE

Babe.

KIRK  
 (continuing voice memo)  
 If they still have anyone by the  
 North Gate, because I've got--

MARIE-JOSÉE  
*Kirk!*

He glances over at her; she points to the CNN feed of a LONE  
 C17 TAXIING.

The CHYRON reads: "LAST FLIGHT DEPARTING KABUL AIRPORT."

He freezes. His VOICE MEMO is still recording...silence.

His phone buzzes with a voice memo from PERRY.

PERRY (V.O.)  
 That's it man. War's over. Hearing  
 rumors that they're going to knock  
 down the cell towers so none of us  
 see what happens next.

Kirk slumps into the couch beside Marie-Josée.

His cheeks are streaming.

She holds him.

**INT. JUDGES' BUS - OUTSIDE HKIA - DAY**

A rumbling sound of Ali's C17 - the last flight - taking off.

Noor, sweating in the heat of the packed bus, nudges the  
 curtain open and watches the plane ascend.

She looks back at the doomed souls on the bus: nearly 200  
 eyes staring back, searchingly. Her eyes well up.

**INT. C17 GLOBEMASTER - OVER KABUL - DAY**

Ali, Amir, and his parents sit on the floor, their arms  
 interlocked.

As the C17 climbs, Amina leans her head on Ali's shoulder.  
 Amir does the same on the other side.

Rahmatullah reaches over and holds his hand.

We get a glimpse of the JUDGES' BUS.

The metallic shimmer of the CANAL.

Ali looks HOLLOWED-OUT.

**INT. AUGUST AND ISIDORA'S ROOM - NIGHT**

A NIGHTLIGHT projects STARS REVOLVING AROUND THE EARTH onto their ceiling. The kids are sleeping.

Marie-Josée leads Kirk into the room.

She lays down next to Isidora and closes her eyes.

Kirk snuggles next to August, rests his phone - still blinking with texts - on the floor next to the bed, and stares at the ceiling with a HAUNTED LOOK.

FADE TO BLACK.

**Four American Presidents - two Republicans and two Democrats - presided over the longest war in U.S. history.**

**In the final two weeks, 120,000 Afghans were evacuated.**

**An estimated 78,000 Afghans that helped America or NATO allies were left behind. Hundreds were assassinated.**

**The suicide bombing at the Kabul airport killed approximately 170 Afghan civilians and 13 U.S. servicemen and women.**

**The "Righteous Strike," the final U.S. military action of a twenty-year war, was a catastrophic mistake, killing 10 U.S.-affiliated Afghan civilians, 7 of them children.**

**Ali and his family made it to Toronto, where they now live. Kirk and Ali finally met in 2023.**

OVER BLACK, we hear the actual phone calls between Kirk and 'Ali' in the canal.



Kirk, 'Ali,' and Mélanie Joly meet in Toronto for the first time. END.