

RUMORS OF FAHRAN

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EXT. PAKTIA AFGHANISTAN RURAL AREA - DAY

The Paktia region is under American/NATO occupation, and local Taliban are fighting a brutal resistance campaign.

As the opening credits flash we see the rugged and punishing Paktia. Endless and infinite. Steep stone mountains. Bottomless valleys. Cold and dry.

In the distance, we see the outskirts of a Afghani village near the Pakistani border. We see American soldiers are leading prisoners into the village.

Some prisoners have bloody faces and some do not.

INT. COMMANDO SOLO

Commando Solo is a U.S. Air Force special operations EC-130 plane flying overhead part of the psyops war. It's packed with all kinds of broadcasting gear.

An officer is showing a new enlisted man the plane.

AIR FORCE OFFICER

(pointing to equipment)

Secure faxes and computers, cassette decks, compact disks, VHS tape players, and powerful transmitters.

ENLISTED MAN

Yes, Sir. This is a regular airborne Radio Shack.

AIR FORCE OFFICER

The hardware allows us to jam broadcasts and to substitute on any frequency radio and TV messages intended to confuse, deceive or inform.

ENLISTED MAN

I see.

AIR FORCE OFFICER

And, so there will be someone to listen to Commando Solo, the CIA is supplying portable radios that are

being air dropped or trucked into
Afghanistan.

EXT. PAKTIA REGION VILLAGE - AFGHANISTAN

There is a truck there in the village with free radios.
The personnel are instructing villagers in their use.

Most villagers are all watching the prisoners. There is
an American command post in a building there and the
suspected Taliban are being taken there. There are pigs
and chickens, people living very simple lives. There are
rudimentary shacks for housing.

An Afghani woman runs into the group and hugs one of the
prisoners. The soldiers about jump out of their skin;
however they don't fire their weapons.

AMERICAN SOLDIER

Stop! What are you doing?

The soldiers pull the woman from the man.

AFGHANI WOMAN

No!

AMERICAN SOLDIER

Go away! Stay away?

The woman falls to the ground when she is pried from the
man. The men continue through town.

RADIO

(in Dari language)

Citizens. We are here to take
measures against terrorists who have
rooted themselves in your country. It
is not you, the honorable people of
Afghanistan, who are targeted, but
those who oppress you, seek to bend
you to their will, and make you their
slaves.

On 11 September, 2001, terrorists of
the al-Qaida (the Base) group, some
trained and financed by Saudi Arabian
exile-in-hiding Osama bin Laden,

attacked the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon in Washington DC. Bin Laden was a long-time terrorist who was known under such alias as Osama bin Muhammad bin Laden, Usama bin Laden, the Prince, the Emir, Abu Abdallah, Mjhaheed Shaykh, Hajj, the Director, the Contractor, and still more names. In response to the terrorist attacks, the United States launched the Global War on Terrorism.

The Coalition Forces came to arrest those responsible for the terrorism against America. They also come to arrest anyone that protects them.

More than 3,000 people in the United States of America were murdered in these attacks.

Over 2,800 People were killed and 3,000 children lost their parents.

Foreign Terrorists do not believe in any borders. New York - U.S.A. or Harat - Afghanistan.

The villagers simply watch. They have no emotions. They are afraid.

RADIO

A grave crime has been committed against the United States. Four of our planes have been hijacked, several building in our economic centers destroyed and more than 3,000 innocent people, hundreds of which were Muslim were murdered by the hand of Osama bin Laden, Al Qaida, his supporters, and the Taliban.

We see these actions as acts of war. We will not sit idly by and do nothing in these times. However, we do not wish to spill the blood of

innocent people, as did the cowardly terrorists. We do not blame the Muslims or Afghans for these attacks.

We do not hold those who follow true Islam responsible. We will hunt down and punish these terrorists. They will pay with their blood. America is not against the beliefs of Islam, nor is it against Muslims. More than 6 million Muslims live and worship Allah in peace in the United States, a number equal to almost half the population of Afghanistan.

In the United States people of all religions live side by side in peace. Muslims living in America have the same rights to worship as any other citizen of any other religion.

We know where the Taliban and Al-Qaida are hiding. Do not help them.

We hope that you will take an active part in our efforts to build a better Afghanistan.

The soldiers arrive at the command post with the prisoners.

LATER...

EXT. RURAL AREA - DAY

HOUSMAND and OMAID are making their way through a mountainous area. They move slowly. It appears they are armed and are aligned with the Taliban.

They cross a ravine on a rickety bridge. HOUSMAND almost falls. OMAID looks at him sternly as a warning to be careful.

HOUSMAND
It isn't very deep.

EASTER FRONTIER OF THE AFGHANISTAN, 2002

They cross the ravine and stop. They take their boots off and rest. They aren't wearing any socks.

They begin their progress again. But suddenly they stop. They see something. A dog barks.

OMAID

Do you see it?

HOUSMAND

Over there?

(pause)

I see it.

OMAID

We will wait until nightfall.

HOUSMAND

Do you think he expects us?

OMAID

Probably not.

HOUSMAND

Maybe he ran off already.

(pause)

To join the American police.

We then see, in the distance, a house. A military helicopter flies by at a far distance.

LATER...

EXT. RURAL AREA - NIGHT

The men approach the home slowly, even casually.

OMAID

Wait here.

HOUSMAND

Is there anything wrong?

OMAID

I will shoot.

HOUSMAND

Don't be long.

OMAID

I won't be. Not long.

OMAID walks to the house.

INT. HOUSE

FAHRAN and DEHQAN (his son) are sitting at a table. The father is teaching the son to paint pottery.

FAHRAN

First you paint the ears and the body. And then you give it eyes.

FAHRAN is painting a decorative animal on outside of a clay bowl.

FAHRAN

Devious eyes, like a foreigner.

The son is very young, but is watching intently.

FAHRAN

What will we call her?

DEHQAN

Gulalay.

FAHRAN

How does this look?

There is a noise outside. FAHRAN gets up from the table and opens the door. OMAID is standing there; he has a weapon. OMAID dusts himself off. OMAID walks into the room.

OMAID

Hello.

DEHQAN

Look at the cup my father made.

OMAID

That is nice.

DEHQAN

He also made this one.

OMAID

That is nice. What is your name?

DEHQAN

Dehqan. My father's name is Fahran.

OMAID

So your name is Fahran?

FAHRAN

Yes.

OMAID

How is life?

Fahran says nothing.

OMAID

Sit down. Don't stand.

Fahran does nothing.

OMAID

I didn't recognize you. You have changed.

Fahran nods his head.

OMAID sits and nervously fidgets with a bullet.

FAHRAN

You seem different too.

SON

Your friend plays with the bullet.

OMAID

It isn't for a child to play with. It isn't really a bullet, but only the casing.

SON

The casing?

OMAID

(turning to Fahrhan)

I've really come for you, Fahrhan.

Fahrhan picks up his son and takes him to another room.
Fahrhan returns and sits at the table.

OMAID

Where is your wife?

FAHRAN

With the animals.

(pause)

I heated up bathwater. We were about
to have a bath.

OMAID

To wash. That is nice.

There is a long pause. OMAID trys to remember
the last time he had a bath.

FAHRAN

I knew you would come.

OMAID

You did?

There is a long pause. OMAID thinks trying to
understand if FAHRAN is guilty.

OMAID

That is good. You recognize your
guilt?

FAHRAN

There is nothing to recognize. I'm
guilty of nothing.

OMAID

Nothing?

FAHRAN

Nothing.

OMAID

And those men?

FAHRAN

The men who were taken away?

Omaid turns as he hears Alima (the wife) returning. The wife enters the room and is surprised a bit at a guest being in the house.

ALIMA

Hello.

OMAID

Hello, Alima.

ALIMA is silent and doesn't speak. She looks very worried. She thinks, "How can I help my husband?"

ALIMA

I will prepare some food.

She looks at OMAID and tries to judge him.

ALIMA

You must be hungry.

OMAID

There is no time, Alima.

There is a long pause.

OMAID

Do you have socks for my feet?

ALIMA jumps and goes to retrieve some socks. There is a panic when she can't find them quickly. She brings him a pair of socks. Omaid takes his boots off and puts the socks on. ALIMA rushes to the stove.

ALIMA

Your wife is still alive?

OMAID

She died.

(pause)

Six months ago.

ALIMA
And your sister?

OMAID
She died too.
(pause)
Also six months ago.

OMAID replaces his boots. ALIMA places some food on the table. Fahrhan finds a bottle of alcohol.

FAHRAN
Let's have a drink?

OMAID
No.

FAHRAN
We did in our youth.

OMAID
No.

FAHRAN
May I?

OMAID
Yes. But quickly.

FAHRAN figures he is dead and might as well do what he wants. FAHRAN isn't very religious. OMAID has become religious. FAHRAN pours and drinks. OMAID doesn't watch.

ALIMA
It just isn't true.
(pause)
It isn't true.

OMAID
What isn't true?

ALIMA
We don't wish this.
(pause)

We don't want it.

There is a long pause.

ALIMA

I was so afraid when they arrested him. I couldn't sleep. I cried my eyes out. Then they released him. And what were we to do then? He didn't ask for any of this.

(pause)

He is a simply herdman. He was caring for the sheep at the time.

(pause)

He didn't do anything wrong to them. He tried to protect them.

OMOID

But still they were taken away. And he was freed. Why?

ALIMA

Who knows why?

OMOID

No. There was a reason.

FAHRAN

Forget it Alima.

(pause)

It is fate.

OMOID

Come on. Let's go.

(pause)

There is nothing to discuss.

FAHRAN takes one long last drink. The men get up from the table and put on coats. FAHRAN hugs and kisses his wife. ALIMA is crying

ALIMA

(screaming)

Where are you taking him?

FAHRAN

I must go. I will not be long.

(pause)
Be calm. Don't cry.

OMAID
We have somethings to do. He will be
right back.

FAHRAN
That's right.

ALIMA
Fine, but why not take something with
you. At least take some food with
you.

ALIMA wraps some bread in a cloth and inside the hides a
knife. She hands FAHRAN the package.

ALIMA
Don't leave without food.

FAHRAN
That is okay.

ALIMA
But you like my bread.

OMAID
Go ahead if you like it.

FAHRAN takes the package.

FAHRAN
Go ahead and wash. I might be late.

When OMAID leaves out the door, ALIMA is in a panic. She
can hardly breath.

EXT. NEAR FAHRAN'S HOME - NIGHT

FAHRAN
Which way?

OMAID
Over there.

FAHRAN

Should I take a shovel?

There is a long pause.

OMAID

Yes.

FAHRAN picks up a shovel from the side of the house.

OMAID

You know what happens, if you betray...

FAHRAN

I betrayed no one.

OMAID

Then who did it?

FAHRAN

I don't know.

OMAID

You were freed right?

FAHRAN

Yes, those bastards. I wish I was in an American prison.

OMAID

Move along.

The men move off into the night. Housmand join them.

EXT. MOUNTAINS - NIGHT

OMAID stops on the trail. FAHRAN wants to keep walking.

There is a long pause.

FAHRAN

There are all rock. How can you brother? There isn't a place for a grave.

OMAID

What do you want sand?

FAHRAN

Well not here. Sand would be better.
You might face this someday. You will
want something better than a pile of
rocks.

OMAID

Fine. You want sand. Let's move on.
(pointing)
There is some sand over there.

They progress.

EXT. MOUNTAINS - NIGHT

The men are walking the path through the
mountains.

FAHRAN

There is some nice ground ahead.

OMAID

Go on then.

The men walk and then stop.

OMAID

This is good for the occasion.

FAHRAN

Occasion?

OMAID

Yes.

FAHRAN

If you had told me...

OMAID

Anything can happen in this kind of
war.

FAHRAN

This is savagery.

OMAID

Shut up.
There is a long pause.

OMAID

Housman, look out here while we go
over there.
(to FAHRAN)
Go.

FAHRAN hesitates but does move on along the path.
HOUSMAND remains behind.

EXT. MOUNTAINS - NIGHT

FAHRAN moves a few rocks and there is some ground for a
grave. FAHRAN begins to dig.

FAHRAN

It would be better if you didn't tell
ALIMA about this.

OMAID

About what?

FAHRAN

That you shot me.
(pause)
Tell her that the American's shot me.
(pause)
Of course later, she will find out.

OMAID

Keep digging. We will see.

FAHRAN continues to dig.

EXT. MOUNTAINS - NIGHT

HOUSMAND has fallen asleep. There is an Afghan Army
patrol passing his position. HOUSMAND awakes as they are
passing. After they pass, he runs in search of OMAID.

EXT. MOUNTAINS - NIGHT

FAHRAN is digging. OMAID is watching without emotion.

OMAID

Maybe that is enough.

(pause)

It will take too long to fill it up.

FAHRAN

Do it as a favor for me?

(pause)

This coat. You must give it to ALIMA

OMAID

Your coat?

(pause)

I will take care of it.

FAHRAN takes the coat off.

FAHRAN

It is a good coat.

(pause)

She is not likely to find another one
this good...

(pause)

A widow.

FAHRAN throws the coat to OMAID's feet. OMAID raises the rifle and takes aim.

There is a long pause. OMAID hesitates pulling the trigger. There is a rock slide beneath them at HOUSMAND stumbles up the mountain.

OMAID

Housmand, is that you?

It is not HOUSMAND. It is the Afghan Army patrol. They fire at OMAID and miss. FAHRAN falls into his grave to escape harm. OMAID fires back at them. They exchange fire back and forth. OMAID is shot.

FAHRAN scrambles out of the grave in the confusion and crawls off away from the gun fight.

EASTER FRONTIER OF THE AFGHANISTAN, 2002

OMAID is wounded but is running amongst the rocks.

AFGHAN SOLDIER
(shouting)
Stop!

FAHRAN and OMAID escape in different directions.

AFGHAN SOLDIER
(shouting)
Get him! Move around to get him.

There is more gun fire. OMAID is hidden. FAHRAN stops crawling and listens. There is a long silence.

FAHRAN doesn't know which way to move. He does move but finds a sharp drop off a cliff blocks his escape. He moves then back toward where OMAID would be.

He hears moaning. He doesn't have to but he moves toward the sound. When he arrives, it is OMAID and he is shot

FAHRAN
You are alive?
(pause)
Where are you wounded?

There isn't a response. FAHRAN moves the body. We see OMAID is still alive but is seriously wounded.

LATER...

EXT. MOUNTAINS - NIGHT

FAHRAN has OMAID over his back and is hauling him down the mountain. He stops to rest. He puts OMAID down. OMAID make a painful noise.

FAHRAN
Are you alright?
What do you want?

OMAIN

Housmand?

FAHRAN

No. It is Fahrnan.

OMAID

I... am... hurt... badly?

FAHRAN

Who knows?

(pause)

But you were shot.

OMAID

And obviously I didn't kill you in time.

FAHRAN

No time. The afghan army appeared out of no where.

OMAID

Take me to Tsamkani.

(pause)

I must go to Tsamkani.

(pause)

Over there look for Kasra.

FAHRAN

Kasra? Fine.

Later...

EXT. MOUNTAINS - MORNING

HOUSMAND is waking on the mountain. He encounters FAHRAN who is carrying OMAID.

FAHRAN

Hello.

HOUSMAND

What happened to OMAID.

FAHRAN

They shot him.

HOUSMAND

This is what you get!

EXT. VALLEY - DAY - RETROSPECTIVE

A truck is driving on a road. It contains Afghan army soldiers. It drives and pulls up to their command post building. They unload some sacks (possibly poppy seeds) and also bring some valuables, clocks and cameras. These items are probably stolen. Most importantly a dead sheep is unloaded. The soldiers hop the fence into OMAID's garden and steal vegetables.

INT. OMAID'S HOUSE - NIGHT - RETROSPECTIVE

OMAID lives across the street from the command post. He is looking out the window. He can see the Afghan army command post. Inside the command post we hear a radio and loud talk. Obviously they are having a feast inside.

One of the Afghan army soldiers exits the building and looks around. He seems to sense something is wrong or someone is out in the rocks. He smokes a cigarette.

The other soldiers exit the building. They get in the truck and leave.

INT. OMAID'S HOUSE - NIGHT - RETROSPECTIVE

MOTHER

What are you doing?

OMAID

Nothing.

MOTHER

What are you plotting?

(pause)

What are you plotting?

OMAID

I am not a herdsman for them to harvest my sheep.

MOTHER

Don't be foolish. Haven't I had
enough grief?

There is a long pause.

MOTHER

Haven't I had enough?

OMAID

Go to sleep, mother.

MOTHER

I know you are plotting.

(pause)

You want justice.

(pause)

I've had enough suffering.

OMAID

I'm sleeping.

MOTHER

You sleep?

(pause)

I don't know how you sleep.

MOTHER

In the name of Allah, the Gracious,
the Merciful.

(pause)

I seek refuge with Allah from Satan,
the accursed.

(pause)

Allah is the Greatest, Allah is the
Greatest; there is no God but Allah,
and Allah is the Greatest; Allah is
the Greatest and all praise belongs
to Allah.

(pause)

I seek forgiveness from Allah for all
my sins and turn to Him.

They go to sleep.

INT. OMAID'S HOUSE - DAY - RETROSPECTIVE

EASTER FRONTIER OF THE AFGHANISTAN, 2002

OMAID's MOTHER is doing housework. There is a knock at the door. Before she can open the door. The man outside opens it and walks into their home. The man is in an Afghan army uniform.

SOLDIER
Aunt, is Omaid home?

MOTHER
Don't shout. I'm not deaf.
(pause)
You are dressed fancy.

The soldier looks around. OMAID returns to the house.

SOLDIER
Hello, cousin.

OMAID
What do you want?

SOLDIER
My boss sent me. We need your help.
We want you to join our group.
(pause)
Come on join us.

OMAID
Cousin, I once broke a tooth of yours.

SOLDIER
And?

OMAID
Now, looking at you I want to break them all.

SOLDIER
You are Taliban. So?
(pause)
Are you coming?

OMAID
Get the Hell out.

SOLDIER

That is how you want it?

(pause)

I could order you to come.

(pause)

You are asking for it.

The soldier raises his weapon and points it at OMAID.

OMAID

Come closer, I'm going to split your face.

The mother throws a dish rag over the face of the soldier and slaps him.

MOTHER

Get out of here. I'm sick of you.

OMAID's MOTHER slaps him again.

SOLDIER

(running out of room)

I'll get you one day. Count on it.

OMAID's MOTHER shuts the door behind the SOLDIER. The SOLDIER stands in the front of the house shouting.

SOLDIER

He is only upset because we ate one of his sheep.

(pause)

I will have him against the wall someday!

(pause)

You will regret this, Omaid!

The soldier throws a rock against the door and leaves.

INT. OMAID'S HOUSE - NIGHT - RETROSPECTIVE

OMAID sit listening to the American propaganda on the radio. He hears the Afghan army return. Their vehicles make a great deal of noise.

Without looking out the window, he puts on his coat on.
He quietly leaves the house so not to awake his MOTHER.

EXT. COMMAND POST - NIGHT - RETROSPECTIVE

OMAID is peached outside. It the very dark and he waits.
The lights go out. He looks for guards but there aren't
any. He silently approached the vehicles. He produces
rags and and a can of gasoline. He then puts the rags in
the gas tanks of the Afghan army trucks.

OMAID looks at his home and looks at the command post. He
hesitates lighting the rags. This is a serious choice and
he can't go back after it is done. He isn't Taliban and
he will be isolated and alone if it is done.

He lights the rags and runs back toward his home.

Soon there are explosions.

INT. OMAID'S HOUSE - NIGHT - RETROSPECTIVE

OMAID enters the house quietly. But he sees his mother is
awake. He begins to pack his clothes and gather some food
into a duffle bag.

MOTHER

You were impulsive as a child and
still you are impulsive.

OMAID

Say I went to my grandfather's.

MOTHER

Where will you go? The Americans will
be looking for you.

OMAID walks to the window and has a little chuckle at the
Afghan army is confused about how to put out the fires.

MOTHER

Where will you go?

OMAID

I will hide until the mess settles. I
will hide until the American's leave.

MOTHER

You shouldn't have done that.

OMAID leaves the house.

EXT. EDGE OF THE VALLEY - DAWN - RETROSPECTIVE

OMAID leaves and is shown walking toward the mountains.

EXT. MOUNTAIN - DAY - RETURN TO PLOT

OMAID is lying against a bolder. HOUSMAND has a belt and is synching it up to put pressure on his wound. OMAID's health is improved but he is still in danger of death.

OMAID

Idiot. I sent you to keep watch.
(pause)
And you didn't.

HOUSMAND

I did stand guard.
(pause)
But they sneaked in from the other side.

OMAID

The other side? You are so sly.

HOUSMAND

You are sly. Why did you go out of the rocks to shot him?

OMAID

You really don't understand.
(pause)
Where is Fahrhan?

HOUSMAND

Sitting over there.

OMAID

Don't harm him.

HOUSMAND

As you wish.

(pause)
What do I care?
(pause)
What will the commander say?

HOUSMAND finds some dirt and uses it to get the blood off his hands. He picks up the weapons and walks to FAHRAN.

FAHRAN
What do we do now?
(pause)
Wait and sit here?

HOUSMAND
I don't want to be shot like a rabbit.

FAHRAN picks OMAID up and resume their journey. HOUSMAND carries the weapons.

EXT. MOUNTAIN - DAY

They have walked a great distance. They hear a distant gun shot. They stop.

HOUSMAND
From where?
(pause)
Americans?

FAHRAN
Probably.

There is a second gun shot. There is a long pause. They begin walking again. After only a shot distance, FAHRAN is exhausted and puts OMAID down. They rest.

OMAID
There isn't any way I'm going to survive.
(pause)
You can't carry me. We are in the mountains.

FAHRAN
We need help.

The men contemplate.

FAHRAN

Stay here. I will get help.

OMOID

Hurry and do your best.

HOUSMAND

Fahran, you know your way around here?

(pause)

You know where a village is?

FAHRAN

Yes, there is one over there.

HOUSMAND

Near the gunfire?

FAHRAN

Yes.

HOUSMAND

Wait.

(pause)

I'll go.

HOUSMAND gets up, takes both rifles.

HOUSMAND

Wait here until I return.

(pause)

Stand guard.

OMOID

Leave me my gun.

HOUSMAND talks his pistol out and gives it to OMAID.

HOUSMAND

Here.

(pause)

I'll try to be quick, if it's not far.

HOUSMAND disappears down the mountain.

OMAID

Why didn't I...

(pause)

kill you at the house?

(pause)

If I had done it then

(pause)

I wouldn't be dying now.

FAHRAN

In my own home?

(pause)

My boy was there.

OMAID

The boy... yes.

(pause)

And why... haven't you escaped yet?

FAHRAN

Escape to where?

OMAID

To the Americans.

FAHRAN

I've been with the Americans.

FAHRAN pulls up his shirt.

FAHRAN

Here look.

Evidently he was beaten and perhaps tortured.

OMAID

It was you. You betrayed them.,
those three men.

FAHRAN

I betrayed no one.

OMAID

Then why didn't they take you away
with the others?

FAHRAN

If they took me away, I would be
grateful.

(pause)

But no. They freed me.

(pause)

I sat at home for two weeks.
Where should I have gone?

OMAID

I don't know.

FAHRAN

I began to understand why they freed
me.

(pause)

They used me as bait.

(pause)

You fell into their trap.

(pause)

I was a sheep herder for 15 years.
Surely you know that already.

OMAID dies. FAHRAN doesn't notice.

FAHRAN

I almost quit when the American's
arrived. But the tribal leader asked
me to continue. What could I do?

EXT. FIELD - DAY - RETROSPECTIVE

There are sheep grazing. FAHRAN is standing in
the field. The tribal leader is standing in
front of him. The tribal leader looks at him
square in the eye. The tribal leader takes out
a pistol, points it at FAHRAN's forehead, but
then suddenly punches him in the gut. He walks
away.

EXT. FIELD - DAY - RETROSPECTIVE

EASTER FRONTIER OF THE AFGHANISTAN, 2002

FAHRAN oversees his sheep in a field near a road. Also near this location is a bridge.

There are now Taliban fighters with him dressed as shepherds.

TALIBAN #1

When the American's drive past, push this button.

TALIBAN #1 produces a remote control device.

TALIBAN #2

How near do I need to be.

TALIBAN #1

Within site of the bridge.

FAHRAN

They are not stupid. They would know you were part of the sabotage.

TALIBAN #1

How?

FAHRAN

Look around. There isn't anyone else around.

TALIBAN #1

When this thing goes off there will be nothing left.

TALIBAN #2

Last month. There was some sabotage. And it was a total mess. It was impossible to be detected.

FAHRAN

They will know.

TALIBAN #1

No. We will simply go home.

TALIBAN #2

No one will suspect a herdsman.

FAHRAN

And the nearby village?

(pause)

They will go to the village and ask questions.

(pause)

They might shoot everyone.

TALIBAN #1

American's won't shoot anyone.

FAHRAN

It has happened many times before.

TALIBAN #2

What village?

TALIBAN #1

That is a rumor. It isn't true. No villages were destroyed.

FAHRAN

You must not do this.

TALIBAN #1

You are afraid to defend your religion.

FAHRAN says nothing.

TALIBAN #2

Maybe he likes the infidels.

FAHRAN says nothing. The two Taliban soldiers walk several meters away and quietly confer with each other. They are probably debating to kill FAHRAN.

Later...

EXT. FIELD - DAY - RETROSPECTIVE

The American convoy of trucks are approaching the bridge. FAHRAN only watches.

EXT. FIELD - DAY - RETROSPECTIVE

The TALIBAN are shown running from the field, firing their weapons in the general direction of the bridge. The American soldiers are dead but the TALIBAN are firing as they run. FAHRAN doesn't move.

INT. AMERICAN MILITARY JAIL - DAY - RETROSPECTIVE

The two TALIBAN and FAHRAN are hauled into a cell. They are beaten and bloody.

INT. COMMAND POST OFFICE - DAY - RETROSPECTIVE

The American colonel is sitting at his desk while FAHRAN is brought in. FAHRAN is placed in a chair in front of the desk. His face is swollen and he is bad condition.

COLONEL

Let's speak like friends.

(pause)

You seem like a reasonable person.

(pause)

And we want to help you.

(pause)

Tomorrow, I will hand the others over to the intelligence gathering people.

(pause)

Do you know what that means?

(pause)

But we are offering you freedom.

Except...

(pause)

Yes?

(pause)

You must sign a collaboration paper.

FAHRAN

What collaboration?

COLONEL

The secret collaboration.

(pause)

With American authorities.

(pause)

Then we'll organize your release.

(pause)

You can return to your sheep, wife and family. Your son.

(pause)

Return to your friends, the ones who
dispatched you on this mission.

(pause)

We will stay in close contact.
Secretly, of course.

FAHRAN

No.

(pause)

You know I can't.

(pause)

I can't do that.

COLONEL

What? What did you say?

FAHRAN

I can't do that.

COLONEL

Are you an idiot? You refuse to live?

FAHRAN

Of course not.

COLONEL

So sign the document.

(pause)

We will take every precaution.

(pause)

No one will suspect a thing.

FAHRAN

I can't do it.

COLONEL

So you want to be tortured.

(pause)

Tomorrow they will leave for a new
prison. Will you be with them?

(pause)

Give it some thought.

You have until tomorrow.

INT. AMERICAN MILITARY JAIL - DAY - RETROSPECTIVE

FAHRAM is sitting on the floor leaning against the wall. He looks very depressed. An American soldier enters the cell and motions for him to get up.

SOLDIER #1

Move it.

(pause)

Let's go.

SOLDIER #2

(motioning to FAHRAN)

Not that one.

FAHRAN

(struggles)

Why not?

SOLDIER #1 slugs FAHRAN and FAHRAN is knocked unconscious. The two TALIBAN are dragged out of the cell.

INT. COMMAND POST OFFICE - DAY - RETROSPECTIVE

COLONEL

Do you have anything to tell me?

(pause)

Do you still want to go to another location with your friends?

(pause)

I mistook you for a clever fellow.

(pause)

Want to honor your memory?

(pause)

Want the to write pamphlets about you?

(pause)

No, that isn't going to happen.

(pause)

I will arrange another sort punishment for you.

(pause)

For the last time. Yes or no?

FAHRAN

I can't do it.

COLONEL

Fine. You can't.

(pause)

Go.

FAHRAN slowly walks to the door. Out the door.
Through the halls. He enters the street.

EXT. VILLAGE STREET - DAY - RETROSPECTIVE

FAHRAN walks several yards down the road. He
stops and looks back. Several Americans are
looking at him. They are solemn.

FAHRAN walks though the village. People look at
him without emotion.

EXT. MOUNTAIN - DAY - RETURN TO PLOT

OMOID's dead body is there. FAHRAN doesn't realize that
he is dead. He has been explaining how he got in this
situation.

FAHRAN

I couldn't do it.

(pause)

I envied them immediately.

(pause)

Everyone honoured them.

(pause)

There children were proud.

(pause)

Neighbors helped their familiers.

But I was hated.

(pause)

I sensed that even the person who
loved me most, my wife Alima, no
longer looked at me, like before.

(pause)

One day, she burst into tears and
said, "taking you away would have
been better."

(pause)

I started to wonder. If I might even
agree. But even then people would
say, "His guilty conscience. He was a
traitor."

(pause)

How could I live like that, Omaid?

OMAID had died and only now does FAHRAN realize this.

FAHRAN
Did you hear me?
(pause)
Omaid?

FAHRAN reaches out and shakes the body?

FAHRAN
Omaid?

Later...

EXT. MOUNTAIN - DAY

HOUSMAND is not going for help. He is sitting in the shade of a bolder eating. He looks very casual. He stops eating. Looks around. He gets up and begins again down the mountain again.

Later...

EXT. EDGE OF THE VALLY - DAY

HOUSMAND arrives off the mountain. It isn't a precautionary thing, he is simply walking casually.

Suddenly he stops dead in his tracks. He ducks down to hide. It is an American patrol. He watches them pass.

Later...

EXT. EDGE OF THE VALLY - DAY

HOUSMAND is walking though the valley. He happens on a shack. It isn't elaborate, very humble, but it is designed to avoid detection.

HOUSMAND approaches it carefully. It isn't his. He looks in it warily. He points his weapon into the door. It is empty and his caution subsides.

He puts is weapons down. He enters the shack and goes to sleep.

EXT. MOUNTAIN - DAY - RETROSPECTIVE

HOUSMAND remembers. HOUSMAND leaves a cave. He isn't visibly armed. There is snow and it is winter. One of the men from the cave follows him.

TALIBAN #3

Hey don't forget. You must take this tape into town. Bring back some salt.

HOUSMAND

Don't worry. I will.

HOUSMAND takes a package and begins down the mountain.

INT. HOME - DAY - RETROSPECTIVE

There is an older woman nursing a dying soldier. There is food on the table. An older man and HOUSMAND are eating food.

HOUSMAND

The guys are asking about salt.

The old man says nothing.

HOUSMAND hands a sack to the woman when she returns to the table. She puts salt and food into the bag.

Later...

INT. HOME - DAY - RETROSPECTIVE

HOUSMAND is sleeping. He looks very comfortable. However, suddenly he awakes; he looks frightened. The house is empty. He gathers his guns and the sack of food. He steals some extra onions and eats some bread. HOUSMAND notices that the soldier has died.

EXT. MOUNTAIN - DAY - RETROSPECTIVE

HOUSMAND is returning to the cave. He stops; from a distant he hears someone shouting.

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AFGHAN SOLDIER

Halt!

HOUSMAND doesn't move. He waits.

AFGHAN SOLDIER

Come here.

HOUSMAND takes two steps toward them. The soldiers travel the remaining distance between them.

AFGHAN SOLDIER

Where are you going?

HOUSMAND says nothing.

AFGHAN SOLDIER

Where do you come from?

HOUSMAND says nothing. The soldier takes his bag. He opens it and looks inside.

AFGHAN SOLDIER

Where did you get this?

HOUSMAND

I don't know. I stopped by some guys house. He gave it to me.

AFGHAN SOLDIER

Where?

HOUSMAND

I don't know.

The soldier put his weapon at HOUSMAND's guy.

AFGHAN SOLDIER

Take us there.

There is a long pause.

Later...

EXT. MOUNTAIN - DAY - RETROSPECTIVE

The soldiers are following HOUSMAN down the mountain. They have a weapon at his back. The progress is slow.

They approach the house where HOUSMAN has been. The soldiers approach the house carefully.

The AFGHANI SOLDIER kicks in the door without warning. He enters. One AFGHANI SOLDIER and HOUSMAND wait outside.

There is a gun shot from inside the house. The AFGHANI SOLDIER in the house runs out. He has been shot. He stops just outside the door and pulls out a grenade. He pulls the pin and throws it back inside the house.

It exploded and seriously damages the house. It is near collapse. The doors and windows are destroyed.

HOUSMAND has ducked down. The two AFGHANI SOLDIERS with guns up and ready, enter the smoking house. We hear some another gun shot and then another.

HOUSEMAND begins to walk away. We hear another shot. Now HOUSMAND begins to run. We hear another shot.

EXT. MOUNTAIN - DAY - RETURN TO PLOT

HOUSEMAND is walking up the mountain. He arrives at the site where FAHRAN and the body of OMAID are waiting.

HOUSMAND
You are still here?

FAHRAN
No need for any help.

Vultures circle above. FAHRAN points upward.

HOUSMAND
They are waiting up there.

FAHRAN
Since yesterday.

HOUSMAND
So?

FAHRAN

There was no help?

HOUSMAND

No help.

(pause)

The Americans are in the village.

FAHRAN

The Americans? So what now?

HOUSMAND

So we hid the body and leave.

(pause)

We might get through.

FAHRAN

To go where?

HOUSMAND

Each his own way.

(pause)

I'm going back to my group.

(pause)

You will probably go back to the Americans.

FAHRAN

I'm not going to the Americans.

(pause)

Take me with you.

FAHRAN

Yes, to my group.

HOUSMAND

They're waiting on you.

FAHRAN

We must take Omaid.

(pause)

We can't just leave him here.

(pause)

Do you see all those vultures.

HOUSMAND

Well, you must carry him.

FAHRAN

Yes, I will.

HOUSMAND

Understood. Then get up.

FAHRAN picks up the body and they begin to walk. HOUSMAND takes a gun and chambers a round. FAHRAN stops. He points it at the head of FAHRAN. FAHRAN glares at him. There is a long pause. HOUSMAND lowers the weapon.

FAHRAN

You know where to go?

(pause)

If we want to avoid the Americans.

(pause)

Then turn south.

HOUSMAND

Lead the way.

(pause)

Be careful.

(pause)

Steet clear of the Americans.

Later...

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - DAY

SABA & WASIMA are sitting in the back of a ANA pickup truck. The ANA in the cab of the truck are debating each other and they are on the radio. There is an American mentor in the cab and he is trying to tell them to stop. Finally they stop the truck.

WASIMA

Just give me 100 men, they must be loyal and be well armed, and I will hunt the Taliban down wherever they are.

SABA

This is your first day on patrol.

WASIMA

Our American advisers give us one plan. The Italians give us another. And then the special forces tell us to ignore all that and go with them on missions.

SABA

I grew up here before the Russians came and before then there was law and order during this time. Now ever since I was a child, we have been at war. Three decades of war is no joke.

WASIMA is lost. He is the simple man. He simply looks up at the mountains.

SABA

Today even a young Afghan boy knows about war. What it is and how it happens. I think the Taliban are not that formidable. The problem is the ANA.

WASIMA

How?

SABA

The Americans are used to getting their way. A few weeks here they will get the idea that this is Afghanistan.

WASIMA

Our Army is new, right?

SABA

Nine out of ten of our fellow soldiers are illiterate.

WASIMA

But you can read.

SABA

We are only paid \$31 per month. If it gets too rough, they will leave and you and I will be left to die up in

the mountains. There is too much tribal and local loyalty among the soldiers. Can we trust such an army?

INT. ANA TRAINING BASE - DAY - RETROSPECTIVE

The American medical staff is giving the ANA recruits a health evaluation. SABA and WASIMA are asked to do some basic squat thrusts and they take an eye exam. After they pass their exam, they are addressed by an American Colonel.

AMERICAN COLONEL
(through translator)

Welcome boys. The first question I must ask is why did you come all this way?

SABA
To be a soldier.

AMERICAN COLONEL
This guy says he wants to be a soldier? It is my guess that you already know how to fight. No?
(pause)
Maybe you want to be a professional? Good because this is what I want to offer you. But...
(pause)
Joining the national army was not just a privilege for one group. No ethnic group is stronger than another. This is an Afghan army. Understand? You get equal privileges. Your contract is for three years. Did all of you come here voluntarily? All of you?

SABA & WASIMA listen intently.

EXT. ANA TRAINING BASE - DAY - RETROSPECTIVE

SABA & WASIMA, with the other recruits are marched out with the unit. The ANA unit is standing out on the parade ground in formation. They are waiting for the ANA General to address them. They are looking straight ahead at a sign that says, "You are the future of Afghanistan."

WASIMA

What are we doing?

SABA

Waiting.

WASIMA

Waiting for what?

SABA

The general is supposed to address us. I don't know what he will say. I'm as new as you are.

WASIMA

What then?

SABA

Next, we have got literacy instruction. To get to be able to read. The papers say 4:00 p.m. class that's coming up in one hour.

WASIMA

One hour, for the literacy?

SABA

For the literacy, yes.

WASIMA

I agree it's important, but I think they are taking our prayer time.

SABA

You can't pray later? They're only asking for an hour. If you need to go to a mosque, then go to the mosque later. You can't pray when we are done here?

WASIMA

They are OK with that?

Finally the General appears and walks to address the assembled soldiers. There are some American advisors not standing beside him but near him.

ANA GENERAL

Damned am I for being your commander.
In soldiers' lockers, we found all
kinds of things, bayonets, knives,
empty clips. Bullets are being sold.

(pause)

Come to my office. I will show you
this much ammunition meant for the
Taliban. Wouldn't it be a shame if
this got you killed or led Mullah
Omar's to our gates? Wouldn't it be a
disgrace if the country we took back,
after such sacrifice, was handed back
to these outlaws to destroy before
our eyes?

(pause)

If people see this in their own army,
how can they trust us? All the
Taliban are being armed from here.
You should be and probably will be
shot with a bullet you stole and then
sold. I am ashamed to be your
commander. Thank you.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - DAY - RETURN TO PLOT

SABA & WASIMA are waiting silently in the back of the
pick up. The American advisor and the ANA soldiers in the
cab have decided what to do.

The driver gets out and shouts to SABA & WASIMA.

SOLDIER

Let's go. You two walk up about
halfway and then over to the road. We
will pick you up a mile down the
road.

WASIMA jumps up and jumps out of the pickup. He
drops his weapon which discharges. The bullets
flay into some boulders.

EXT. MOUNTAIN - DAY

HOUSMAND and FAHRAN, with OMAID, are walking up the mountain. They hear distant gun shots. The men crouch down to avoid detection.

HOUSMAND

Where did that come from?

FAHRAN

The road on the other side.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - DAY - RETURN TO PLOT

The Afghan Army SOLDIER become enraged. He picks up the weapon and points it at WASIMA. He shouts. The American advisor is aghast.

SOLDIER

You idiot. Peasant. I should shot you.

There is a long pause. The SOLDIER appears like he is about to kill WASIMA. However at the last moment he raises his gun and fires into the air.

EXT. MOUNTAIN - DAY

HOUSMAND and FAHRAN are hiding behind boulders. There is another gun shot.

HOUSMAND

The road?

FAHRAN

Yes.

HOUSMAND

The main road?

(pause)

Where are you taking us?

FAHRAN

Where else can I go?

(pause)

You said the Americans are in the village.

HOUSMAND

They are.

FAHRAN

Then this is the only option.

(pause)

We have to cross this mountain over
to the other side. We must cross the
road.

They wait. They wait. It is quiet. Finally they
begin again.

Later...

EXT. MOUNTAIN - DAY

The men are resting. HOUSMAND looks nervous and
keeps a sharp lookout. FAHRAN is much more
calm. He only sits and rests.

HOUSMAND

What do we do now?

(pause)

Do we cross?

FAHRAN

We should wait until it is dark and
then cross.

HOUSMAND

That is a long time from now.

FAHRAN

But it is better.

HOUSMAND

(looking at OMAID)

You knew each other well?

FAHRAN

Since childhood. We lived on the same
street.

(pause)

He was younger than me.

(pause)

He always loved the sheep.

HOUSMAND

That was his downfall. And yours too.

FAHRAN

Him, perhaps. Mine was something else.

HOUSMAND

What?

FAHRAN

That I wasn't taken prisoner back there by the Americans. That's what.

HOUSMAND

Why hurry to leave?

FAHRAN

Omaid was in a hurry. He couldn't wait.

HOUSMAND

His foolishness is to blame.

FAHRAN

He died too soon.

(pause)

He was still young. A pity.

HOUSMAND

What do you care?

FAHRAN

It was sort of my fault.

(pause)

But not entirely.

(pause)

I didn't want it.

FAHRAN motions to the neighbouring mountain.

FAHRAN

I just didn't want to die up on that mountain.

HOUSMAND

If you had, Omaid would still be
alive.

(pause)

Isn't that right?

FAHRAN

Yes, probably.

(pause)

You will tell everything to your
commander and let him decide.

HOUSMAND

Tell what?

FAHRAN

Everything about me.
If I don't make it.
After all, I have a wife.
A son.

HOUSMAND

Oh, that.

(pause)

Yes. I will tell them.

FAHRAN

I better write it down.

(pause)

It would be documented.

HOUSMAND

Well yes.

FAHRAN

Maybe they'll sort it all out
someday.

HOUSMAND

But they did enlist you, didn't they?

FAHRAN

No.

HOUSMAND

Go on, confess.

FAHRAN

If only I did. But I didn't.

(pause)

They tried.

(pause)

I just couldn't do it.

HOUSMAND

You really couldn't? You must be lying!

FAHRAN

You know that's impossible.

(pause)

Not this situation. We cause our own ruin.

What kind of life will they have?

(pause)

If they remain alive?

HOUSMAND

Anything can happen.

(pause)

This is wartime, of course...

FAHRAN

You refer to war, how anything can happen...

(pause)

But did everything change in a year-and-a-half?

(pause)

Do people really change so quickly?

(pause)

Does war really transform us to that extent?

(pause)

I've lived here for 37 years.

(pause)

Everyone knows me.

(pause)

I was always respected.

(pause)

I never had problems with anyone.

(pause)

Why not trust me anymore?

(pause)

Why do we trust the Americans, but no longer our neighbours?

(pause)

No one believes me. Not you...

(pause)

Not even my wife.

(pause)

She had doubts.

(pause)

Did I change?

(pause)

How, if I was born with this character?

(pause)

People can change a lot.

(pause)

Especially if they want to survive.

HOUSMAND

Exactly.

FAHRAN

If you want to live, why choose to betray?

(pause)

In the face of death, everything looks the same.

(pause)

But when you want to live, you live with hope...

(pause)

If not for yourself, then maybe for your children.

(pause)

Maybe they will be lucky enough to survive.

(pause)

Wait for me on the other side.

There is a long pause.

Later...

EXT. MOUNTAIN - DAY

HOUSAND is hiding and watching. FAHRAN is again carrying the body of OMAID. After a moment, we

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see the road that must be crossed. There is absolute silence as the wind. FAHRAN pauses before crossing. They cross.

HOUSAND waits a very long time. Then finally moves to cross the road. He is reluctant.

AFGHAN SOLDIER #1

Halt!

HOUSAND stops and can't seem to move.

AFGHAN SOLDIER #1

Halt!

HOUSAND finally runs back to the cover of the rocks but is shot. His body rolls down the hill and back into the road.

The soldiers approach the body.

AFGHAN SOLDIER #1

He has some rifles! I knew he was a terrorist.

AFGHAN SOLDIER #2

Is he dead?

AFGHAN SOLDIER #1 kicks the body. It appears that HOUSMAND is dead.

AFGHAN SOLDIER #1

It seems that way.

AFGHAN SOLDIER #1 kneels down. He looks for weapons. He finds a wallet. He takes money from the wallet. He finds a pocket knife and a table knife and fork. He take them and puts these items in his own pockets. He walks away.

AFGHAN SOLDIER #1 reconsiders. He returns to the body and he removes HOUSMAND's belt. The SOLDIER stands up and the moves away.

AFGHAN SOLDIER #1

Will you look at those boots?

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AFGHAN SOLDIER #2

Hurry up.

AFGHAN SOLDIER #1 returns a second time and removes the boots. HOUSMAND moans.

AFGHAN SOLDIER #1

Damn it. He is still alive.

AFGHAN SOLDIER #2

Finish him and lets go.

AFGHAN SOLDIER #1 throws the boots to the feet of AFGHAN SOLDIER #2. He aims his weapon at HOUSMAND and fires.

Later...

EXT. MOUNTAIN - DAY

OMCID's body is there a few feet from the road behind some rocks. FAHRAD brings HOUSMAND's body and lays it there also.

FAHRAD straightens the bodies. He finds a pistol in the coat of OMAID. He sits and contemplates.