

# THE LOOMING TOWER

Episode 1:

**"Now it begins..."**

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Based on the book:

"The Looming Tower"

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FIRST DRAFT  
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OVER BLACK: **March 31, 2003**

FADE IN:

CLOSE ON: ALI SOUFAN (32 years old, Lebanese-American, wearing an off-the rack dark blue suit and tie.) He stands waiting in a marble hallway. HOLD ON him for long beat.

We HEAR heavy wooden doors being opened in front of him.

ON SCREEN: **9/11 Commission**

INT. LARGE, FORMAL HEARING ROOM - DAY/CONTINUOUS

ALI'S POV: walking through the doors into the hearing room. He's led by a COURT OFFICER to a witness table. In front of him, on a raised dais, sits a PANEL of nine men, one woman.

The namecards in front of the two older white men in the middle read: "THOMAS H. KEAN"; "LEE H. HAMILTON".

Behind them, a banner on the wall: "National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States".

Ali raises his right hand. KEAN (68, former moderate Republican governor) speaks in his odd mix of Kennedy clan and central Jersey, tossed with a mild speech impediment.

KEAN

Do you swear or affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

ALI

I do.

KEAN

Please be seated.

(Ali sits)

Would you state your name and place of employment for the record.

ALI

Special Agent Ali Soufan. Federal Bureau of Investigation.

KEAN

Date of birth.

ALI

July 8th, 1971.

KEAN  
Place of birth.

ALI  
Hammoud Hospital. Sidon, Lebanon.

Now we recognize the faint accent in Ali's speech. Beat, as that information hangs in the room for a moment.

KEAN  
Agent Soufan. Why does the CIA hate you so much?

Some surprise in the room at the bluntness of the question. Ali takes a moment deciding how to respond.

ALI  
I think you'd have to ask them that question, sir. Hate is a strong word.

HAMILTON  
You testified before the Joint Inquiry that the CIA withheld intelligence from the FBI on multiple occasions. Intelligence that would have prevented the attacks on September 11th.

HAMILTON (72, former conservative Democratic congressman from Indiana) has a good working relationship with KEAN as co-chair of the Commission.

ALI  
I believe I also testified that they withheld information from the INS and the State Department.

HAMILTON  
What you're saying is contrary to CIA testimony.

ALI  
(simple)  
All right.

HAMILTON  
So you're telling us they've lied to this commission.

KEAN  
Perhaps we've identified the source of their hatred. That was easy.

Some scattered titters. Ali doesn't react to the joke.

ALI

I don't know exactly what you've been told, sir. We can go through each specific statement, if you wish. But I can say this: if members of the CIA testified that the Agency properly shared information with the Bureau in the manner in which they are, by law, directed to share that information - then you've been lied to.

Beat.

KEAN

Let's start from the beginning.

ALI

Yes, sir.

KEAN

When were you brought into the Bureau's division of the Joint Terrorism Task Force?

ALI

1998. I was a recent recruit in the New York Office. The late John O'Neill asked me to join him and his I-49 squad.

Whenever Ali speaks about his former boss and mentor, we can sense his reverence and love, as well as his grief.

ALI (CONT'D)

At the time, there were repeated warnings we were going to be attacked, but no one was listening. John O'Neill was one of the few people in this country who was willing to listen. By the middle of that year, the warnings were coming one right after another...

I/E. TOYOTA OFF-ROAD VEHICLE/AFGHANISTAN - LATE AFTERNOON

ON SCREEN: **1998. Hindu Kush, Afghanistan**

POV FROM THE BACK SEAT of a beaten-up 4-wheel drive as it bounces on a dirt road in the Afghan mountains: EGYPTIAN DRIVER; and next to him in the passenger seat, a Yemeni bodyguard, ABU JANDAL (27, al Qaeda Chief of Security).

Abu Jandal's CELL PHONE rings. He answers, has a brief exchange in Arabic. HANGS UP, turns to look directly into CAMERA -

ABU JANDAL  
(accented English)  
Now we take you to the Sheikh.

The driver TURNS sharply up a dirt road heading towards the top of the mountain.

CUT to see from whose POV we've been watching: JOHN MILLER (38, ABC News reporter, in a brand new safari jacket) sits next to his PRODUCER in the back seat. A TEENAGED AL QAEDA MEMBER is seated on the jump-seat, aiming his old AKM MACHINE GUN directly at them. With every bump, Miller has to avoid getting slammed in the face with the barrel of the gun. He looks deeply out of place in this rugged country.

EXT. AL QAEDA TRAINING ENCAMPMENT/AFGHANISTAN - EVENING

AYMAN AL-ZAWAHIRI (50 but looks older, Egyptian, spectacled and chunky - Usama bin Laden's right hand man) is ordering 30 LOCAL AFGHAN TRIBESMEN with Soviet-era AK-47 assault rifles into two lines. He's giving orders in Arabic while the tribesmen speak Pashto, so it's fairly chaotic, with a lot of pointing and shouting.

KHALLAD (19 years old, Yemeni, al Qaeda member with ONE LEG and a METAL PROSTHESIS) is handing cash payments to the various tribesmen.

Through it all, a YOUNG MALE ASSISTANT is combing and darkening Zawahiri's beard... the cameras will arrive soon...

Abu Jandal's vehicle pulls up in a cloud of dust and Zawahiri NUDGES away his groomer.

Miller is out, followed by the TEENAGER with the machine gun. Miller extends his hand to Zawahiri. Miller's producer is HANDED a CRAPPY HOME-VIDEO CAMERA by the YOUNG ASSISTANT.

MILLER  
Dr. al-Zawahiri, John Miller, ABC  
News, thank you for having us.

Zawahiri speaks very good English. He's also cast an immediate and calculated placidity over himself in order to appear statesman-like and in control -

ZAWAHIRI  
It is our pleasure. As-salaam  
alaykum.

MILLER

Right, yes... and to you too...  
 (eyes the guns warily)  
 Doctor, please - I appreciate your  
 security concerns, but we really  
 need our news cameras back.

ZAWAHIRI

They are being inspected.

MILLER

I understand. I do. But we're going  
 to need to record the interview on  
 high-quality video for broadcast --  
 (looking around the camp)  
 - And if we could figure out some b-  
 roll set-ups - something to intercut  
 with --

ZAWAHIRI

(knows exactly what b-roll is)  
 Mr. Miller of ABC News. This is not  
 like Sam Donaldson walking in the  
 Rose Garden with Bill Clinton. Mr.  
 bin Laden is a very important man.

MILLER

(beat)  
 Ah.

And then Usama bin Laden's Toyota SUV is arriving in the camp.

ABU JANDAL trots over and stands next to the SUV facing  
 outward, holding his 9mm Makarov pistol.

From the front passenger seat emerges ALI MOHAMMED (46,  
 Egyptian, 6'1" and 200 lbs; we'll learn a lot more about him  
 later), holding a pistol. He makes a show of scanning the  
 area. Then he NODS to Abu Jandal, who opens the backseat  
 door... and then the tribesmen are FIRING THEIR RIFLES in the  
 air and cheering loudly (they've been paid, after all) and  
 Miller's PRODUCER is videotaping with the crappy camera.

**(Actual ABC NEWS footage:)** UBL gets out of the SUV and walks  
 in between the lines of tribesmen, shyly acknowledging the  
 loving gunshots and cheers. The Sheikh behaves as if he  
 doesn't notice the CAMERA filming him, and he proceeds right  
 past Zawahiri without a look.

**(Back to our filmed footage):** Miller's PRODUCER, videotaping,  
 follows UBL into a nearby tent. So does everyone else.

John Miller is left standing outside with Zawahiri, who makes every effort to mask his hurt at the lack of acknowledgement from UBL, and the very pronounced shift in attention to his boss.

ZAWAHIRI  
(polite; stiff)  
There. You have your b-roll.

He walks into the tent.

INT. TENT/AFGHANISTAN - NIGHT/TEN MINUTES LATER

Interview (**using real footage of UBL**) is intercut with actor playing John Miller (they've got the NEWS CAMERAS back)...

MILLER  
Mr. Bin Laden, you've issued a  
*fatwa* calling on Muslims to kill  
Americans where they can, when they  
can. Is that directed at all  
Americans? The American military?  
Just the Americans in Saudi Arabia?

A translator repeats the question for UBL in Arabic, then:

**USING REAL FOOTAGE OF UBL:**

UBL  
(in Arabic)  
**Praise be to Allah...**

(NOTE: As UBL answers, we will note several things in the background of his shot:

He sits in front of a WALL MAP OF AFRICA; we also see TWO MEN off to the side of him, watching. They are MOHAMED AL-OWHALI and "JIHAD ALI" AZZAM; we will see them again later.)

**WE WILL CUT ONCE OR TWICE MORE BETWEEN MILLER AND UBL, and then,** on one of the cuts back to UBL, the CAMERA pulls back to show that we're now watching the interview on a SMALL PORTABLE TV, which sits on a government-issue desk...

INT. NY FBI OFFICE - NIGHT/TWO WEEKS LATER

HEAR the sound of typing as the CAMERA moves from the PORTABLE TV to show a MAN'S HANDS typing on an ARABIC KEYBOARD. (The English language keyboard has been unplugged and pushed to the side...)

CAMERA keeps moving/turning to show ARABIC words unfurling on the COMPUTER SCREEN next to the TV...

THEN, we see who's typing:

ALI SOUFAN (27 years old), deep in concentration, watches the interview - now playing some weeks later on ABC NEWS. He types what Arabic he can hear through the voiceover translation.

Behind him, the vast floor of government desks and cubicles is EMPTY. He's the only one here this late at night. Except... far off across the floor, we can see a LIGHT ON IN AN OFFICE -

INT. JOHN O'NEILL'S OFFICE/NY FBI - NIGHT/CONTINUOUS

JOHN O'NEILL (46, tall, black hair slicked back, pinky ring) stands staring at his large flat-screen TV. He's intent, motionless. The UBL interview continues to play.

O'Neill wears a black, double-breasted Burberry suit, lavender shirt, violet tie and pocket square. His is an expensively appointed office - polished wood, stainless steel, mauve carpet - no government issue furniture here.

(At some point we may notice on his coffee table a book about tulips: *The Flower that Drives Men Wild*. But, for now...)

O'Neill's eyes ZERO IN on TWO FIGURES in the background, behind UBL - their faces blurred out. *Why are they blurred? Who did that?*

INT. NY FBI OFFICE/ALI SOUFAN'S DESK - NIGHT/MINUTES LATER

TV now on MUTE (the interview is over), Ali's looking at THREE PRINTED-OUT SHEETS of Arabic text, side-by-side on his desk. He highlights several key lines.

Behind him, a tall figure is weaving his way through the cubicles until he's directly behind Ali -

O'NEILL

How the background checks coming?

Ali's startled, turns to see O'Neill, whose voice and demeanor most closely resemble a South Jersey mafia don. Ali picks up a tall stack of folders on the side of his desk -

ALI

Fine - they're - fine - I mean, I finished...

(he stands, confused, and holds them out, offering -)

Do you want -?



O'NEILL  
You're Ali Soufan.

ALI  
Yes. I am... Hello, sir, it's -

O'NEILL  
You wrote the memo on bin Laden. In  
your free time.

Ali can't tell if this is a good thing or not -

ALI  
I always finish my work first, but  
I thought -

O'NEILL  
(walking past him, toward  
the elevators)  
Get your coat. We're going to dinner.

Ali, stunned, puts the stack of folders down and grabs his  
jacket.

INT. ELAINE'S/UPPER EAST SIDE - NIGHT

The famous watering hole. Bustling.

As soon as he walks in (with Ali trailing behind) O'Neill's  
met with greetings from the bar, and with a huge kiss from  
ELAINE KAUFMAN (68), zaftig proprietress and NY fixture.

ELAINE  
Look what the cat dragged in.

O'NEILL  
Hello, beautiful.

ELAINE  
Feels like forever.

O'NEILL  
24 hours will do that.

ELAINE  
When you miss someone you miss  
someone.  
(calling out to the waiter  
by the bar)  
Doug! Bring Johnny his drink!

Over the bar, silently playing on TV, is Bernard Shaw on CNN  
reporting on Bill Clinton and Monicagate.

INT. ELAINE'S - NIGHT/FIVE MINUTES LATER

Corner table. O'Neill's seated facing the door, as he always does - both as a way of surveying the room for important faces, and as a habitual security measure. He's got his Chivas and water with a twist. Ali's across from him, waiting for his drink. We pick them up mid-conversation -

O'NEILL

You applied to the Bureau on a dare?

ALI

My fraternity brothers thought it would be funny if a Muslim who drank heavily in college sent in a resume.

Ali's Dewars on ice is delivered.

ALI (CONT'D)

Thank you.

(back to O'Neill)

We weren't sure which one would disqualify me more. The alcohol or the Islam. We had a pool whether I'd get in or not.

O'NEILL

You put money in the pot?

ALI

(nods)

I lost.

O'NEILL

(holds up his glass)

Here's to losing.

ALI

That was the only time in my life I was okay with it.

O'NEILL

Let's hope it's the last time you do.

They drink. O'Neill crosses his legs and Ali sees, just above the slip-on Gucci loafers - and over the semi-transparent socks - an ANKLE HOLSTER with a small pistol: a mini-Glock.

O'NEILL (CONT'D)

Tell me what you thought of the interview tonight.

ALI

Honestly?

(then)

I think it's the third warning. First there was the '96 declaration of jihad, then the February *fatwa*, and now bin Laden's going straight to the American people.

O'NEILL

Why three times?

ALI

There's this an unauthenticated hadith -

(off O'Neill's slight headshake)

- the sayings of the Prophet Mohammed. This one is in dispute - some think he said it, some don't. But it says, roughly: "Many snakes are evil spirits; when you see such a snake in your house, you should warn it three times. If it returns, you must kill it, for it is a devil."

O'NEILL

UBL's warning the snake to get out of his house.

ALI

Telling America to get out of the Middle East. Out of Saudi Arabia, in particular.

O'NEILL

You think that's why he agreed to do the interview?

ALI

Bin Laden is a master propagandist. He used Miller's interview to appear strong by directly threatening the United States as he looked an American in the eye.

O'Neill nods, thinking, looking past Ali. Beat. Then -

O'NEILL

(loud)

So you think John Miller got used?

Ali's confused by the change in tone, but before he can answer, O'NEILL IS UP and GREETING JOHN MILLER and pulling him into a bear hug -

O'NEILL (CONT'D)  
 Hey, I'm glad you could make it --  
 (turning)  
 John Miller, meet Agent Ali Soufan.  
 He was just talking about you.

Ali's now standing, completely speechless. He had no idea Miller had been invited.

Miller is old friends with O'Neill - he understands the hazing that's going on and plays along, looking at Ali -

MILLER  
 You think I got used?

ALI  
 Sir - I assure you, I - that - that  
 is not actually what --

O'Neill laughs, clapping Ali on the back -

O'NEILL  
 Okay, okay, calm down. Sit. Both of  
 you, sit. Can't we all just get  
 along?

MILLER  
 (as they sit, to Ali)  
 Did he just quote Rodney King?

O'NEILL  
 Dougie! Glenlivet and rocks for  
 Miller. And another round.  
 (sitting, to Miller)  
 So, world traveler, how was it?

MILLER  
 Total luxury. The Ritz-Taliban  
 Mountain Resort. Dirt beds, hard  
 wool blankets. Those guys know how  
 to throw a party.

O'NEILL  
 Well, you deserve the best.

Miller's drink is delivered.

O'NEILL (CONT'D)  
 Salut. Welcome home.

MILLER  
 Salut.

Ali's watching these two old friends enjoy each other.

O'NEILL

It was a good piece you put together.

MILLER

The network kept making me cut it down. All anyone wants to hear about is Monica's cum-stained dress.

O'NEILL

I don't get it. I've cum on a lot of dresses and nobody ever wants to hear about those.

MILLER

(laughs)

Show me the dress and I'll do the reporting.

O'NEILL

(leans in, suddenly serious)

Lemme ask you something. Who were the two guys blacked-out in the background of your interview?

MILLER

No idea. Ayman al-Zawahiri - you know who he is -

(O'Neill NODS)

- he insisted they get scrubbed before he'd hand over the tapes.

O'Neill glances at Ali, then back at Miller.

O'NEILL

Why those two guys?

MILLER

Don't know.

Beat. O'Neill sits back in his chair. Raises his eyebrows -

O'NEILL

Maybe you did get used.

PRELAP: Placido Domingo starts to sing Puccini's tenor aria "E lucevan le stelle" from Tosca.

EXT. RAWALPINDI, PAKISTAN/CROWDED SIDE STREET - NIGHT

"E lucevan le stelle" continues on the soundtrack.

CAMERA tracks behind JIHAD ALI as he weaves through a densely populated side street. Mopeds, diesel cars, donkey-carts fight for space as pedestrians walk in and out of traffic. JIHAD ALI is carrying a SMALL PAPER BAG. He turns to enter a CHEAP ROOMING HOUSE...

INT. CHEAP ROOMING HOUSE/RAWALPINDI - NIGHT/CONTINUOUS

"E lucevan le stelle" on the soundtrack.

CAMERA follows Jihad Ali as he walks quickly past the scratched plexiglass window behind which a very old FRONT DESK CLERK sleeps. He mounts the stairs.

INT. CHEAP ROOMING HOUSE/DECREPIT ROOM - NIGHT/MOMENTS LATER

"E lucevan le stelle" on the soundtrack.

Jihad Ali enters the room. MOHAMED AL-OWHALI stands at the cruddy sink, just finishing CUTTING HIS OWN HAIR with a scissors in the mirror.

Owhali hands Jihad Ali the SCISSORS, takes the PAPER BAG. Owhali removes an ELECTRIC CLIPPER.

OWHALI  
Haza zein wallah.

Owhali turns it on, starts shaving off his beard in the mirror. Jihad Ali, next to him, begins to cut his own hair.

INT. CIA/HALLWAY - NIGHT

"E lucevan le stelle" continues on the soundtrack.

CAMERA tracks quickly behind a RED-HAIRED WOMAN in her late twenties as she runs down a CARPETED HALLWAY - dark wood paneling and expensive art on the walls. SHE'S CARRYING A PACKAGE. She turns down a stairwell -

INT. CIA/HALLWAY/LOWER FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

MUSIC continues...

CAMERA follows RED-HEAD as she emerges from the stairs and runs down a tiled hallway on a less fancy LOWER FLOOR. She stops at an UNMARKED DOOR, touches her KEYCARD to a scanner. The door opens. She ENTERS -

INT. ALEC STATION/CIA - NIGHT/CONTINUOUS

MUSIC continues...

CAMERA follows RED-HEAD hustling through a warren of empty cubicles to an office on the far side of the room. KNOCKS quickly, enters.

INT. SCHMIDT'S OFFICE/ALEC STATION - NIGHT/CONTINUOUS

MUSIC continues...

MARTIN SCHMIDT (48, bearded, spectacled, burly and professorial - always believes he's by far the smartest in the room) looks up from his lamplit desk to see:

The red-head, MICHELLE FRANCES (28, smart, profoundly ambitious) holding up a package: a SECURE DIPLOMATIC POUCH.

MICHELLE FRANCES

We got the hard drive.

SCHMIDT

(smiles slightly)

Good girl.

We may or may not notice the PHOTO on Schmidt's desk of him, his wife, and two little daughters.

PRELAP: A PHONE RINGING as heard through a cell phone...

INT. EAST VILLAGE APARTMENT BUILDING/LOBBY AND STAIRWELL - LATE NIGHT

O'Neill's on his CELL as he comes through the outside door to the building. He's just called someone and we HEAR the phone ringing through his cell. He holds a bouquet of YELLOW ROSES.

"E lucevan le stelle" continues, though now it's MUFFLED, as if it's coming from one of the apartments in the building.

WE HEAR, through O'Neill's cell, someone answer:

FITZGERALD (ON PHONE)

Fitzgerald.

O'NEILL (ON CELL)

You're the only other person in the Justice Department who actually works for a living.

INTERCUT with PATRICK FITZGERALD (38, Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Southern District) in his office, working late --

FITZGERALD (ON PHONE)

You call what you do working? I'm sitting at my desk. How about you?

O'NEILL

It's all work. Whether you're getting drunk doing it or not.

FITZGERALD

I went into the wrong end of the business. So what's going on, John?

As O'Neill mounts the stairs:

O'NEILL (ON CELL)

You see the interview tonight? I call Louie Freeh afterwards, he's tucked in bed with his cell phone off. What the fuck is that?

FITZGERALD

I suppose he's trying to sleep. Tell me what I can do for you.

O'NEILL (ON CELL)

I'm sick of waiting for the Sisters to hand over information. We ask and we ask and they give us shit. We gotta starting acting on our own.

FITZGERALD (ON PHONE)

You need an indictment to act on your own, John.

O'NEILL (ON CELL)

I know that. Tell me what I gotta give you to get one?

FITZGERALD (ON PHONE)

You tie UBL to something concrete. Anything. Karachi Consulate attack, Khobar Towers. You get me anything, no matter how thin, I promise I'll get you an indictment.

O'NEILL (ON CELL)

You're a good man, Patrick. Go home and get some sleep.



FITZGERALD (ON PHONE)

You too.

O'NEILL (ON CELL)

I'm working on it.

He HANGS UP as he UNLOCKS and enters -

INT. LIZ'S LOFT APARTMENT/EAST VILLAGE - NIGHT/CONTINUOUS

We realize the source of the music we've been hearing all this while: the STEREO in the living room, playing the vinyl album of Domingo singing Tosca.

LIZ EGAN (35, sly, stylish, Brooklyn College Professor of Medieval Studies), sits on the other side of the boho-chic floor-through, on a stool at the slate kitchen island counter. She in front of a bottle of white wine and a stack of essays, still dressed in work clothes - a skirt and blouse. She looks up -

O'Neill smiles, turning on the charm. (We will come to learn that O'Neill can, and does, switch moods on a dime.)

O'NEILL

You're playing our song.

LIZ

Is this our song?

O'NEILL

You making love to Puccini with somebody else these days?

LIZ

A few guys. Mostly Freshmen.

O'NEILL

(coming towards her)

At least they're learning something useful.

LIZ

They're certainly not learning anything else. If I have to read another Beowulf essay cribbed from frigging Cliffs Notes I'm gonna kill somebody.

He spins her stool towards him, hikes her skirt a bit and pulls her close to him.

O'NEILL

Don't do that. 'Cause then I'd have  
to arrest you.

LIZ

Ooh. Is that a promise?

He puts the YELLOW ROSES on the counter.

LIZ (CONT'D)

Aren't you sweet.

O'NEILL

(leans in, kissing behind her  
ear, nuzzling her neck)

*Whan that Aprill with his shoures soote,  
The droghte of March hath perced to the  
roote...*

LIZ

(closing her eyes)

...That's good - The Jesuits taught  
you well...

O'NEILL

*And bathed every veyne in swich licour,  
Of which vertu engendred is the flour -*

LIZ

(stroking his hair as he  
nuzzles her)

- That's so good... That's Chaucer,  
but it's good...

(he kisses her neck)

Is that a gun in your pocket or you  
just happy to see me?

O'NEILL

(still kissing)

You know I keep my firearm on my ankle.

LIZ

Then that's one long firearm.

He picks her up as she wraps her legs around him and carries  
her toward the couch.

LIZ (CONT'D)

How was your day, baby?

O'NEILL

Just trying catch some bad guys. If  
I can only figure out who they are.

LIZ  
I'm rooting for you, Sheriff...

As he lays on top of her --

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE.

INT. 9/11 COMMISSION HEARING ROOM - DAY

Tom Kean and Lee Hamilton WHISPER, conferring with each other.  
We're back with Ali Soufan in Commission testimony.

KEAN  
Agent Soufan. Can you tell us the first time you became aware that the CIA was withholding information from your unit?

ALI  
The FBI had two agents assigned to Alec Station - the bin Laden unit of the CIA. They were supposed to be informed of intelligence so they could report back to John O'Neill. In the summer of 1998, Alec Station came into possession of a hard drive from a clandestine cell in Eastern Europe...

INT. ALEC STATION/GLASS-WINDOWED CONFERENCE ROOM - VERY EARLY MORNING

Schmidt is standing next to Michelle Frances, both bent over a computer screen as Michelle scrolls through the attached HARD DRIVE, scanning the ARABIC SCRIPT -

ALI (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
... Martin Schmidt refused to share that intelligence.

Michelle points at an Arabic phrase on the screen.

MICHELLE  
Tirana.

Schmidt NODS. Behind them, at the conference table, are 10 other FEMALE AGENTS, poring over printed documents of Arabic script, as well as grainy, PRINTED PHOTOS of various men.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

You know our boys have been keeping  
an eye on the Albanian cell.

SCHMIDT

Indeed I do...

Schmidt places a PIN in TIRANA, ALBANIA on a LARGE WORLD MAP attached to the wall. There are SCORES OF OTHER PINS. Several of them in AFRICA.

ALI (V.O.) (CONT'D)

On that hard drive were lists of al  
Qaeda operatives and more than 50  
potential targets.

As Schmidt places the pin, Michelle glances out through the interior windows at the rest of the Alec Station office:

Her POV: VINCE STUART (35, FBI, Irish-Italian, dresses and talks like John O'Neill, his boss and idol) and TONI-ANN MARINACCIO (32, FBI, Italian-American, tough) are coming across the office towards them.

MICHELLE FRANCES

(to Schmidt)

Professor. The retarded twins.

Schmidt looks over. Immediately, to everyone -

SCHMIDT

Shut it down. Close up shop.

Michelle TURNS OFF the computer and CLOSES the venetian blinds as the rest of the women shut their folders, turn their printed photos face down on the table.

Schmidt comes out of the conference room. He shuts the door behind him.

VINCE

What you going over in there, Martin?

SCHMIDT

Whatever we may or may not be  
examining is entirely none of your  
business.

TONI-ANN

Sir. The way this works is you show  
us what you got and then we discuss  
if it's our business.

SCHMIDT  
 (utterly non-committal)  
 Mmm.

He moves not one inch. If there's one thing that lights Toni-Ann's fuse, it's being dismissed. She does her best to control herself -

TONI-ANN  
 Okay. We're flying back to New York this morning. John O'Neill is gonna want to know what you're looking at.

SCHMIDT  
 I see.  
 (beat)  
 Fuck John O'Neill.

He walks back in the conference room and shuts the door.

INT. NY FBI OFFICE/I-49 CONFERENCE ROOM - LATE MORNING

Twelve agents around a large table. O'Neill is coming around the final stretch, doing what he does to start every meeting: shaking each agent's hand -- which most find collegial and endearing, but one in particular (BOB CHESNEY, the veteran) finds a waste of time, and like a blatant attempt on O'Neill's part to extract tangible signs of respect and love. (All true, but it's also endearing.)

The most important of these agents (our principals) are the ones he's greeting on this last stretch of table: DUFF GORDON (former top gun); KATHLEEN SHAUGHNESSY (early 30's, Queens native, daughter of NY cop); FLOYD BENNET (African-American, NY State Police SWAT team); BOB CHESNEY (55, pot-bellied FBI veteran with a bushy mustache, nicknamed Grumpy Santa).

We should notice, on one of the walls, a PHOTO TREE of al Qaeda, with UBL and Zawahiri at the top, and various PHOTOS and NAMES descending from there. Many spots are BLANK, or just have a NAME and no PHOTO. Some spots have two or more names (a GIVEN NAME plus one or two ALIASES). It's far less complete than the Alec Station wall -

O'NEILL  
 (shaking his hand)  
 Duff, good morning.

DUFF  
 Boss.

O'NEILL  
 How's your wife?

DUFF  
Hangin in there, thanks.

O'NEILL  
(shaking her hand)  
Kathy, you're a sight for sore eyes.

KATHY  
Glad to be of service.

O'NEILL  
(shaking Bob's)  
Bobby.

Bob Chesney leans over to KISS John's pinky ring -

CHESNEY  
Godfather.

O'NEILL  
(pulls his hand away)  
Suck me, asshole.  
(moves to Floyd Bennet)  
Floyd, how are you?

FLOYD  
(shaking)  
I'm good, sir. Good morning.

O'NEILL  
(to everyone)  
Does anybody know how many Arabic  
speakers there are in the Bureau?

O'Neill arrives behind Ali Soufan, placing his hands on his  
shoulders.

O'NEILL (CONT'D)  
Anybody?

A moment, then Ali speaks quietly, looking down at the table -

ALI  
Eight -

O'NEILL  
*Eight!*  
(looks at Ali)  
Do you know the answer to every  
question I have?

ALI  
(earnest)  
No sir, I'm sure that --

O'NEILL

(it was rhetorical)  
 - *Eight Arabic speakers* when we've  
 just had war declared on us by al  
 Qaeda. That's how serious our  
 government takes this threat. Well,  
 fuck them - now we've got one of  
 the eight --

The door opens - VINCE and TONI-ANN walk in -

TONI-ANN

Sorry boss, shuttle was delayed.

BOB CHESNEY

Kiss the ring.

O'NEILL

Suck me, Bobby.  
 (as Vince and Toni-Ann head  
 to their seats)  
 What's happening in the Manson  
 Family?

VINCE

It *is* freakin weird that it's all  
 women and one bearded guy, right?  
 I'm glad it's not just me.  
 (notices Ali, suspicious)  
 Who's this?

O'NEILL

Your newest colleague, Ali Soufan.  
 He can answer absolutely any  
 questions you have.

VINCE

(confused)  
 All right. Welcome.

TONI-ANN

How you doing, Ollie?

ALI

Ali.

TONI-ANN

That's what I said.

ALI

Yes, all right. Well - I'm very  
 well, it's nice to meet --

O'NEILL  
 - Okay, everybody shut up.  
 What's going on in Langley?

TONI-ANN  
 You're not gonna like it, but they got  
 intel they're not sharing.

She's right: O'Neill doesn't like it. He tries to stay calm.

O'NEILL  
 Tell me what you know.

TONI-ANN  
 As far as we could gather, they got  
 their hands on a hard drive. We  
 think it might be from the  
 operation they ran last month with  
 the national police in Azerbaijan.  
 We know they picked up Ahmad Salama  
 Mabruk - head of the al Qaeda cell -  
     (shes points to his photo on  
     the wall)  
 - and renditioned him to Cairo.  
 It's probably his computer.

O'NEILL  
 You didn't find out what's on it.

TONI-ANN  
 Schmidt closed us out -

O'NEILL  
     (closes his eyes)  
 - Goddamnit -

VINCE  
 - He gave us the Heisman. Wouldn't  
 even let us in the room where they  
 were going through the hard drive.

O'NEILL  
 Fuck that motherfucker... *Fuck.*  
*Fuck him* --

He sweeps the phone off the table, crashing it into the wall.

VINCE  
 Interesting, he said the same thing  
 about you.

O'NEILL  
 Did you see *anything*?



VINCE

All I caught was him and the  
redhead putting some pins in a map.  
I think I saw one go in Albania.

O'NEILL

In Albania?

VINCE

Tirana.

And now O'Neill turns on a dime and is all business, making plans, proactive, done throwing a fit over Schmidt (for now):

O'NEILL

Okay. Okay. We're done waiting for  
the Sisters to cough up intelligence.  
Fitzgerald'll ram through an  
indictment on UBL so we can start  
acting on our own. We just gotta give  
him *something*. He'll make it work.  
Bobby, what've you got? Anything. Old  
leads, stale bullshit...

BOB CHESNEY

(considering; he shrugs)

You remember Wadih el-Hage - used to  
be UBL's secretary in Sudan, now  
lives in Nairobi? We think he broke  
with him a while back so it's  
probably a dead end -

O'NEILL

- Get on the first plane to Kenya.  
I want whatever you can find.

(to Shaughnessy)

Kathy. I need you in Azerbaijan.

KATHY

Boss, I'm from Queens. I don't even  
have a passport.

O'NEILL

Call State and get one today. Then  
get your ass to Baku. I want a copy  
of that computer.

INT. EMIRATES AIRLINES FLIGHT (ISLAMABAD TO NAIROBI) - NIGHT

A refreshment cart comes down the aisle of this half-empty flight. The FLIGHT ATTENDANT is dressed in long sleeves, with her hair covered. She quietly says "miah mueba'a?" ("bottled water?") to the few passengers who are awake.

Mohamed al-Owhali sits on the aisle staring forward; Jihad Ali sleeps next to him. As the flight attendant passes...

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Miah mueba'a?

Owhali shakes his head once, willing himself not to look at her.... But, as she passes, he GLANCES QUICKLY, and sees, beneath her long fitted skirt, the bottom of her legs in sheer stockings. Astonished, ashamed, he stares straight ahead once again, his heart slamming in his chest -

PRELAP: NBC's "Today" theme music...

EXT. WASHINGTON D.C./VARIOUS - MORNING/ESTABLISHING

SOUNDTRACK: NBC's "Today" theme music...

- Congressional staffers streaming into the side entrance to the Capitol.

SOUNDTRACK: "Today" hosts Matt Lauer and Katie Couric welcome the audience...

- Tourists on the Mall.

WE HEAR MATT LAUER on "Today"...

MATT LAUER (ON TV) (V.O.)

In late breaking news last night, Monica Lewinsky's lawyers have reached an agreement with Special Prosecutor Kenneth Starr...

- A COFFEE SHOP NEAR the Mall: secretaries, government lawyers, aides line the counter, eating eggs and drinking coffee. ON THE TV MOUNTED ON THE WALL: Matt Lauer on "Today":

MATT LAUER (ON TV)

...Ms. Lewinsky will receive full immunity in exchange for her testimony before a Grand Jury...

EXT. PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE/OUTSIDE WHITE HOUSE - MORNING

D.C. Police chat casually with each other as they watch tourists walk along the street in front of the White House.

PRELAP:

CLARKE (O.S.)  
 Thank you for making yourselves  
 available once again --

INT. RICHARD CLARKE'S OFFICE/WHITE HOUSE - DAY

RICHARD CLARKE (48 but looks older: ghostly pale, white hair, asexual demeanor, like a benevolent, neutered vampire) is the "Counter-terrorism Tsar" of the Clinton administration.

Every week, counter-terrorism personnel from CIA, FBI, DIA (US Army Gen. Patrick M. Hughes, in uniform), DEA, NSA (USAF Lt. Gen. Kenneth Minihan, in uniform) convene in his office. O'Neill is there. Schmidt too.

CLARKE  
 - Thanks especially to those who  
 travel in.  
 (a nod to O'Neill)  
 John.

SCHMIDT  
 (lame joke)  
 I come all the way across the  
 river.

CLARKE  
 You do. And the American people owe  
 you a debt of gratitude.

O'Neill can barely look at Schmidt.

CLARKE (CONT'D)  
 Let's get status updates before  
 moving ahead.  
 (looks at Hughes)  
 General.

The DIA director hands over to Clarke a small stack of typed reports, stamped CLASSIFIED. Each report is several pages. Clarke takes one for himself and passes the rest on.

GENERAL HUGHES  
 Details of continuing ops are there  
 for you to read. The headliner is  
 our continued readiness in Senegal  
 for evacuations from Guinea-Bissau  
 if the military coup spills over.

CLARKE  
 Good. Good. Thank you, General.  
 (Schmidt)  
 Martin?

SCHMIDT

Nothing new this week.

Schmidt has no notes. No folder to bring others' notes back with him. He's here because he has to be. Then he'll go do his work back in Langley. In private.

O'Neill can't help himself -

O'NEILL

- You have nothing new.

SCHMIDT

That is what I said, John.

O'NEILL

You think I'm a complete moron?

SCHMIDT

Are you interested in an answer to that question --

O'NEILL

- Can I remind you of NSD Directive 30, signed by President Reagan. And PDD-24 and PRD-44 signed by President Clinton --

SCHMIDT

- I thank you for the memories --

O'NEILL

- It's *not your choice* whether you share intelligence. You're *required* to share it with the FBI and everyone else in this room --

SCHMIDT

(ignoring O'Neill, to Clarke)

- I have nothing new, Richard -

O'NEILL

(continues over him)

- What's going on in Albania, Marty? You got a hard drive from Ahmad Salama Mabruk which mentions Albania. Where is Mabruk? Why hasn't the FBI had a chance to question him? What's on his hard drive?

(no response)

*You've got a stash of intel that you refuse to share with my agents.*

The calmer Schmidt is, the angrier O'Neill will get; Schmidt both knows and enjoys this, immensely.

SCHMIDT

If we were in possession of such a computer - and I'm not confirming that we are - it would be a foreign intelligence matter, not a law enforcement matter.

O'NEILL

So you do have the hard drive.

SCHMIDT

I don't know what leads you --

O'NEILL

- *How would you know if it's a law enforcement matter or a foreign intelligence matter if you haven't looked at the hard drive?*

SCHMIDT

(his ego won't let him stay entirely calm)

If we did have any intelligence whatsoever, we would need to confirm its validity. We'd need to go through and decide how best to use it, before you do what you always do: start arresting people around the globe and putting them on trial - before you go and blow a possible gold mine of information and render it entirely, wholly, utterly useless. So - no - I'm not prepared to say one way or another--

O'NEILL

- How about you take a deep fucking breath and get yourself prepared --

CLARKE

- Okay, let's calm down for --

O'NEILL

- I don't want to calm down. Did any of you watch tv the other night?

(pointing directly to Schmidt)

(MORE)

O'NEILL (CONT'D)

If one American is killed because of information you kept secret -- when I get my hands on that hard drive - *and I will get my hands on it* - I will shove it so far up your asshole you'll be combing shit outta your pompous fucking beard --

CLARKE

All right. Enough. John, sit down. After the meeting, Martin will go back to Alec and go through what he's got with his team --

O'NEILL

- The goddamn point of these meetings is to *share* what we've got from our teams and work together. We might need to alert our allies to watchlist names, we...

O'Neill STOPS. And just like that, on a dime, he's done discussing it. He speaks calmly -

O'NEILL (CONT'D)

You know what, gentlemen? You can all go fuck yourselves. Have a good meeting. I need to do some actual work.

He walks out the door, slams it behind him. Schmidt looks satisfied - he's won this particular battle.

END OF ACT TWO.

EXT. POLICE JEEP/OUTSKIRTS OF NAIROBI/MOVING - DAY

A KENYA POLICE jeep kicks up a cloud of dust as it whizzes past playing children, stray dogs, old motorbikes.

I/E. POLICE JEEP/OUTSKIRTS OF NAIROBI/MOVING - CONTINUOUS

Chesney's in the back seat, driven by two UNIFORMED POLICEMEN, as they motor along this rutted road outside the city center. Bob speaks loudly to be heard, leaning forward -

BOB CHESNEY

He's got some charity called "Help Africa People", whatever that means. You ever heard of it?

(shaking heads from the front seat is all he gets)

And we think he's still got this American wife.

(MORE)

BOB CHESNEY (CONT'D)  
 (checks his notes)  
 April Brightsky Ray. If she's  
 there, I can do the talking.

They stop suddenly outside a cinder-block wall with a gate.  
 A dog barks loudly inside the wall.

KENYAN POLICEMAN  
 (turns to him)  
 Sir. You will talk either way. This  
 is as far as we go.

EXT. EL-HAGE'S HOUSE - DAY/MOMENTS LATER

Chesney gets out of the jeep, shuts the door behind him. He  
 lumbers stiffly to the gate, sweating in his coat and tie.

The top of the cinder-block wall is lined with broken glass.  
 He looks through the gate: a dirt yard with a skinny German  
 Shepherd tied up to a post, barking his head off. Chesney  
 pushes the gate open slightly and the dog goes wild,  
 straining against its rope. Chesney unclips his holster, in  
 case the rope breaks, and gives the dog a wide berth as he  
 makes his way toward the open, dark front doorway.

AMERICAN WOMAN/VOICE (O.S.)  
 What you doing in my yard?

Chesney looks over to see an OBESE AMERICAN WOMAN wearing  
 black hijab (headscarf) and jibab (neck-to-toe robe) coming  
 towards him, sweaty and angry.

AMERICAN WOMAN/APRIL  
 Who invited you here?

Chesney keeps one eye on her and one eye on the dog, who's  
 barking madly -

BOB CHESNEY  
 Are you April Brightsky Ray?

AMERICAN WOMAN/APRIL  
 You're damn right I am.

BOB CHESNEY  
 (pulls out his badge)  
 Robert Chesney, United States FBI.

Chesney removes a paper from his coat pocket, holds it up for  
 her to see, still watching the rabid dog -

BOB CHESNEY (CONT'D)  
I have a warrant to inspect the  
home of Wadih el-Hage and April  
Brightsky Ray.

Several small, unwashed children have gathered at the doorway  
to the house, peering out. (There are six total).

BOB CHESNEY (CONT'D)  
Is your husband here?

APRIL  
Business trip.

BOB CHESNEY  
I need to look around inside.

APRIL  
What if I say no?

BOB CHESNEY  
I'm afraid I'd have to go in anyway.

APRIL  
What if I decide to untie that dog?

BOB CHESNEY  
(trying to defuse)  
Well, I'm more of a cat person  
myself, so, I'm concerned. If I get  
frightened, I might have to shoot  
him. And I wouldn't want to do that  
in front of your children.

Beat, as she stares at him. Dog still barking and frothing.

BOB CHESNEY (CONT'D)  
You ever thought about a cat instead?

APRIL  
Go the hell on in. Just make it quick.

Chesney won't allow a suspect to walk behind him -

BOB CHESNEY  
Please, after you.

As he follows her into the house, April keeps on ranting,  
pushing her children out of the way -



INT. EL-HAGE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

APRIL

You gotta come all the way to Africa  
just to get up in our business. We're  
good people - I got kids to take care  
of, my daily housework to do --

Chesney looks around: it's completely filthy. Food and dirty  
clothes are everywhere; flies swarm in the corners.

APRIL (CONT'D)

- dinner to prepare, and we're just  
trying to do some good work, some  
charity work, help people out --

BOB CHESNEY

- This is the charity you run with  
your husband? Help Africa People?

APRIL

(turning on him; sharp and defensive)  
*Don't go getting on me about that  
name.* I told the old man it don't  
make no sense.

BOB CHESNEY

I think it's a perfectly good name -

Chesney opens and closes kitchen cabinets falling off the  
walls, moving about the house, trying to breathe through his  
mouth because of the smell, and keeping the conversation going  
to distract April from the fact that he's invading her home -

BOB CHESNEY (CONT'D)

- Of course, if you do decide you  
want to fix the grammar, I'd suggest  
you have some decent choices. Two,  
really...

(moves out of the kitchen  
and down the hall)

...You could add a comma. That way  
it'd be more of an exhortation, an  
encouragement: Help Africa, people!

He peers in the kids' room: six dirty mattresses, stained  
clothes everywhere, decides to move on, April following -

BOB CHESNEY (CONT'D)

Or you could simply add an 'n'.  
Help African People. That's  
probably more of what you're going  
for anyway, am I right?

Approaching the larger bedroom, we HEAR a MAN'S VOICE from the front door, high-pitched, with a thick Lebanese accent:

MAN'S VOICE/WADIH EL HAGE (O.S.)  
 Hello?! Hello?!  
 (coming down the hall)  
*What are you doing in my house?*  
*Alone with my wife in my house?*

BOB CHESNEY  
 Mr. Wadih el-Hage?

This short, skinny man with a withered arm is outweighed by his wife by at least a factor of three.

WADIH EL HAGE  
*Who are you in my house?*

BOB CHESNEY  
 (holds out warrant)  
 Robert Chesney, FBI. I have a warrant to inspect your home.

As el Hage takes the warrant, Chesney takes the opportunity to move into the bedroom to look around.

WADIH EL HAGE  
 Why must you come to harass my family? I am a businessman. I am a charity worker -

BOB CHESNEY  
 - We were just talking about that -

WADIH EL HAGE  
 - I have done nothing wrong.

BOB CHESNEY  
 (looking through stray papers on a bookshelf)  
 You used to be the personal secretary to Mr. Usama bin Laden. Is that correct?

WADIH EL HAGE  
*Many years ago. No longer.*

BOB CHESNEY  
 You ever speak with him now? On the phone?

WADIH EL HAGE  
 Never. I would not know how to reach him.

BOB CHESNEY

Email?

WADIH EL HAGE

No. Never email.

(pointed)

Afghanistan does not have A-O-L.

BOB CHESNEY

I see.

Opens closet door. Stuffed to the brim with clothes and junk.

BOB CHESNEY (CONT'D)

But you did work for him.

WADIH EL HAGE

*Many years ago. So many. A very long time.*

Chesney sees an OLD DESKTOP COMPUTER STUFFED on the top shelf. Beat.

BOB CHESNEY

Did you do work for him on that computer?

INT. LIZ'S APARTMENT/EAST VILLAGE - NIGHT

Liz, in work clothes, is at the kitchen island counter putting together a tray of LASAGNA. She's got salad as well. OPERA plays softly in background. She's on the phone:

LIZ (ON PHONE)

- The one night this week I'm able to get home in time to make us dinner...

INTERCUT WITH (the rest of the call will go back and forth):

EXT. GEORGETOWN (WASHINGTON D.C.) STREET - NIGHT/SAME TIME

CLOSE ON: John O'Neill as he walks quickly down a brick-sidewalked, residential street, cell phone to his ear:

O'NEILL (ON CELL)

I'm sorry, Lizzie.

LIZ (ON PHONE)

It's too bad 'cause I'm making your favorite.

O'NEILL (ON CELL)  
 Not the lasagna with the ground  
 veal -

LIZ (ON PHONE)  
 You're missing out...

He opens the outside door (with his own key) to a 3-story  
 townhouse, converted to an apartment on each floor.

O'NEILL (ON CELL)  
 You're breaking my heart. Listen,  
 it's my loss. I just had a terrible  
 day here and I gotta stick around  
 and try to make things right.

LIZ (ON PHONE)  
 I'm sorry, baby. You want to talk  
 about it?

O'NEILL (ON CELL)  
 (mounting the stairs)  
 You know I'd love to but I can't.  
 Classified. Can't talk about it.

LIZ (ON PHONE)  
 You sure?

O'NEILL (ON CELL)  
 I wish I could. It would help to be  
 able to talk to you. You're so  
 smart about these things.

LIZ (ON PHONE)  
 Any chance you can make the last  
 shuttle out? Come and wake me up?

O'NEILL (ON CELL)  
 No. I'm gonna take the first one  
 out in the morning. Head straight  
 to the office from the Laguardia.

He reaches the landing. Faintly, we can HEAR Etta James  
 singing "The Very Thought of You" from somewhere in the  
 building.

LIZ (ON PHONE)  
 All right. Go catch some bad guys.  
 I'll talk to you tomorrow, baby. I  
 love you.

O'NEILL (ON CELL)  
 Love you too.

He hangs up.

The CAMERA has widened enough for us to see O'Neill's got a set of keys out and is opening the door to the second floor apartment. He's also holding a bouquet of PURPLE IRISES.

INT. SHERI'S APARTMENT - NIGHT/CONTINUOUS

O'Neill comes through the door into the kitchen area and we HEAR Etta James coming from the boom box on the counter. (Where the NY apartment was modern/boho-chic; this is decidedly Laura Ashley: cozy with floral prints and pastels.)

O'Neill ducks his head around the corner to see SHERI (38, bleached blond hair; in exercise clothes; perhaps not a genius, but about as sweet as can be), putting the finishing touches on setting the small dinner table near the window. She didn't hear him come in. He watches her for a moment.

O'NEILL  
You're playing our song.

Sheri STARTLES.

SHERI  
Oh my god! Oh god, Johnny, *you*  
*scared me...*

She talks rapidly, ping-pong from one subject to the next -

SHERI (CONT'D)  
Wait, no! Don't look at me, I  
didn't get a chance to shower yet.  
Oh, look, you sweetheart, look at  
the flowers you brought -

O'NEILL  
Come and get 'em, darling...

SHERI  
Okay, I'm gonna come over there and  
I'm gonna take them, cuz I want to  
put them in a vase cuz they're so  
beautiful and I don't want them to  
die. But you can't touch me cuz I  
just came from aerobics and I'm  
disgusting and I need a shower. Okay?

O'NEILL  
I hear you.

SHERI  
Okay?

O'NEILL  
Whatever you want.

SHERI  
Okay?

O'NEILL  
You tell me what you want, I do it.

She's walking towards him slowly, holding her hand out.

SHERI  
All right, now. Don't get fresh with me.

O'NEILL  
When am I ever fresh?

SHERI  
When are you not?  
(she's getting closer)  
Hold them out.

O'NEILL  
(arm barely extended)  
I am holding them out.

SHERI  
*Hold them out to me.*

O'NEILL  
I am holding them out.

She reaches for them and he grabs her, pulls her to him as she squeals -

SHERI  
You promised! No, Johnny, I'm disgusting.

He holds her as he kisses her neck -

O'NEILL  
You are. You're disgusting.

She kisses him hungrily on the lips.

SHERI  
You're disgusting.

O'NEILL  
You disgust me.

They're kissing each other passionately -

SHERI  
You disgust me too.

END OF ACT THREE.

INT. U.S. EMBASSY/NAIROBI/SECOND FLOOR - DAY

Bustling. Bob Chesney sits in a waiting area on the second floor of the U.S. Embassy, el-Hage's DESKTOP COMPUTER on his lap. He watches the hallway teeming with kids running around (children of the Kenyan support staff), secretaries laughing with each other or talking on the phone, Kenyans applying for visas -- so much color and life and energy.

DEB FLETCHER (O.S.)  
Robert Chesney?

Chesney hadn't noticed anyone approach. A middle-aged, attractive AFRICAN-AMERICAN WOMAN stands in front of him. She's maybe 48 years-old, smart, capable, and... yes... pretty attractive. He gets to his feet.

BOB CHESNEY  
Hi. Bob. Call me Bob. Yes, hi.

DEB FLETCHER  
Deb Fletcher, Chief of Station.

She extends her hand, but Bob can't shake - he's got both hands around the computer -

BOB CHESNEY  
Umm...

DEB FLETCHER  
What you got there? Is that from an archeological dig?

BOB CHESNEY  
Ha. I know, it's an ancient one. Yah.  
Big. I hope I can still turn it on.

DEB FLETCHER  
Well...

She can't shake his hand so she gives him a little HIP-CHECK, bumping her hip lightly into his.

DEB FLETCHER (CONT'D)  
Hi.

BOB CHESNEY  
Hi there.

Silence. Bob swallows. He can't tell: is she flirting with him? Is that even a possibility?

DEB FLETCHER  
Can I help you carry that?

BOB CHESNEY  
Oh no. No no no. I can handle it.  
Yah. I'll, uh - I can do this.

DEB FLETCHER  
All right, macho-man. Come on this way.

As they make their way down the busy hall, kids run past, workers nod to Debbie -

BOB CHESNEY  
I didn't notice you come over. I was watching, well, all of this -

DEB FLETCHER  
Yeah, it can get a little crazy in here.

BOB CHESNEY  
No, I meant... It's nice. Lively.

DEB FLETCHER  
It is nice. People are in and out of here all day. Lots of folks bring their kids. As you can see.  
(re: the big windows to the street)  
I'm not crazy about how exposed we are.

BOB CHESNEY  
To the street.

DEB FLETCHER  
Yeah. The Ambassador's complained about it, but... there's a part of me that also likes it. All the light. And not being cut off. Why come someplace if you can't be involved with the folks there, right? Be a part of the life. Get to know people. Know what I mean?

She stops in front of a door and looks at him. Now he really can't tell. Is she flirting? God, he hopes she's flirting.



BOB CHESNEY

Right. Super-important to get involved with people.

DEB FLETCHER

I'm glad you think so, Bob Chesney.  
(unlocks, opens door)  
You can work in here. There's a secure phone line for when you need to call HQ.

BOB CHESNEY

Thank you. Appreciate it. Thank you.

DEB FLETCHER

You come find me when you're done. I'm one floor up.

She smiles and walks off. He watches her go. Man, she really is pretty. Bob mutters to himself as he walks into the room.

BOB CHESNEY

*"Super-important to get involved with people"... You're such an idiot, Bob.*

EXT. U.S. EMBASSY/NAIROBI - SAME TIME/LATE AFTERNOON

A shot of the embassy from the opposite side of the street: vehicles passing in front, pedestrians walking...

CLICK. The SHOT FREEZES, as if it's been snapped by a camera. CLICK. Another PHOTO.

Now we see who's taking the pictures: ALI MOHAMMED (whom we last saw in Afghanistan, guarding UBL).

Ali Mohammed lets his camera hang from his neck. He looks at a GUIDE BOOK MAP, as if he's a tourist. He walks several feet down the block, then turns and snaps another PHOTO of the EMBASSY.

INT. RUNDOWN WAREHOUSE/NAIROBI - EVENING

CLOSE ON: an electric drill removes a bolt from under the back seat of a vehicle.

PULL BACK as the back seat is removed from a BROWN TOYOTA CARGO VAN by Mohamed al-Owhali and Jihad Ali.

We're in an empty warehouse in a rundown neighborhood of Nairobi. Behind them, another man, AHMED THE GERMAN (28, Egyptian, but with lighter hair, thus his nickname) is removing the back seat from ANOTHER VAN.

Off to the side, a fourth man, SALEH (30), carefully stacks wooden crates (loaded with TNT and aluminum powder) and metal cannisters (of aluminum nitrate) next to a work table laden with TOOLS and COILS of ELECTRICAL WIRE.

EXT. U.S. EMBASSY/NAIROBI - NIGHT INTO MORNING/VARIOUS

CLICK. CLICK... PHOTOS of the U.S. Embassy taken from different vantage points throughout the night.

CLICK... A PHOTO of the Embassy at DAWN, peaceful and quiet; then ANOTHER at MORNING RUSH HOUR: very busy again.

PRELAP: sound of KNOCKING on a DOOR...

INT. JOHN O'NEILL'S OFFICE/NY FBI - EVENING

O'Neill's at his desk going through some written reports -

O'NEILL

Yeah.

JOHN'S SECRETARY/MARGIE

Sir. A call for you on the secure line.

O'NEILL

Put it through.

A separate (SECURE) phone on O'Neill's desk rings. He answers -

O'NEILL (ON PHONE) (CONT'D)

O'Neill.

BOB CHESNEY (OVER PHONE)

John. I've been up all night going through el-Hage's computer.

INTERCUT: Chesney in the SCIF (secure room) at the Embassy:

Bob's got a flotilla of empty styrofoam coffee cups, diet coke cans and potato chip bags on the table, along with the computer...

BOB CHESNEY (ON PHONE) (CONT'D)  
 You know my Arabic's basically non-existent, but there seems to be some training material that got sent to Aidid's men in Somalia in '92 or '93, before Black Hawk Down. Maybe some funding too -

O'NEILL (ON PHONE)  
 - That's perfect -

BOB CHESNEY (ON PHONE)  
 - You'll have to get the new guy, Soufan, to go through it all -

O'NEILL (ON PHONE)  
 - Fitzgerald'll make it work. Whatever's there -

BOB CHESNEY (ON PHONE)  
 - And there's something else...

He moves the MOUSE to click on a document. A PHOTO comes up on the screen -

BOB CHESNEY (ON PHONE) (CONT'D)  
 ...There's a lot of photos on here, probably for forging papers - passports and whatnot - but one of them, I'll bet my life, is Zawahiri's brother, Muhammed al-Zawahiri -

O'NEILL (ON PHONE)  
 - Oh, Bobby, I could fuck you right now -

BOB CHESNEY (ON PHONE)  
 - You know he runs the Albania cell -

O'NEILL (ON PHONE)  
 - Out of Tirana. You're a beautiful man. Pouch it to me here, share the intel with the Sisters, and come on home. You done good, Bobby -

BOB CHESNEY (ON PHONE)  
 (good-natured)  
 - Oh, suck me.

O'NEILL (ON PHONE)  
 Whatever you want, I'm here for you.

BOB CHESNEY (ON PHONE)

Fuck you.

O'NEILL (ON PHONE)

Fuck you too.

EXT. U.S. EMBASSY/NAIROBI/GUARD GATE - DAY/SAME TIME

A LIBYAN MAN (Anas al-Liby, 34) with a LARGE SCAR on his left cheek, approaches the guard house to the parking lot. VIEW FROM ACROSS THE STREET: Al-Liby walks up to the guard house, speaks to the guard, who motions him to step aside as the Guard reaches under the counter to presses a button, lifting the GATE ARM to let a CAR in. Al-Liby observes this as we observe him from across the street. CLICK. Another PHOTO.

INT. RICHARD CLARKE'S OFFICE/WHITE HOUSE - EVENING

Clarke has just PICKED UP the SECURE PHONE on his desk -

CLARKE (ON PHONE)

John, what's up?

O'NEILL (OVER PHONE)

You gotta level with me. Is the Agency making a move in Tirana?

INTERCUT WITH: O'Neill in his OFFICE. Clarke hesitates.

O'NEILL (ON PHONE) (CONT'D)

Fitzgerald's about to get me an indictment on UBL. I've got a computer that belongs to his Sudan secretary that has passport photos of Mohammed al-Zawahiri. If something's going down in Tirana, I need an agent there.

On Clarke, at his desk, listening --

EXT. MOUSTACHE CAFE/BEDFORD ST./WEST VILLAGE - EVENING

SHOT FROM ACROSS THE STREET: We see Ali Soufan and a pretty, blond young woman, Heather, seated at a table by the window.

ALI

How're the kids? It's special ed students you teach, yeah?

HEATHER

Wait. How did you know that?

INT. MOUSTACHE CAFE - EVENING

A lovely Lebanese restaurant on one of the most picturesque West Village blocks.

ALI

FBI. I do a background check on anyone I go on a date with.

He's said this straight-faced, and as Heather stares at him, trying to figure out if he's kidding, and also how many dates he generally goes on -

OMAR

Ali - !

The owner of Moustache is coming over with puffed-up pita bread, olive oil, olives, and a big smile on his face.

OMAR (CONT'D)

- You finally visit me again!  
 (as he places the dishes on the table, to Heather:)  
 He use to practically live here, now I cry every day because he don't come here no more.

ALI

Hi, Omar. I'm sorry I've been so busy at work -

Omar hugs him roughly, more a friendly headlock than hug -

OMAR

No excuses -  
 (then he's immediately gracious with a hand out to Heather)  
 Welcome to Moustache, young lady, my name is Omar -

ALI

- I'm sorry, this --

OMAR

- too late. Let the lady speak.

HEATHER

(smiles)  
 Hello, Omar. It's nice to meet you. I'm Heather. Anything else you need to know about me, though, ask him. He's got a whole dossier.

OMAR

Ah. He turn on the charms already,  
has he?

(then)

I bring wine. On the house. White?

HEATHER

That would be lovely. Thank you.

ALI

Thanks, Omar.

As Omar leaves, he gives Ali a cautionary *"Don't fuck this up"* look. Beat. Ali turns back to Heather.

HEATHER

He's nice.

ALI

He is. He's been like a second  
father to me since I moved to New  
York.

(then, speaking too quickly)

Look, I didn't mean to freak you  
out. I was trying to make a joke. A  
bad joke. Jason told me about you  
when he gave me your number. And I  
really do appreciate you coming out  
tonight after I had to cancel the  
first time. Things have been crazy  
at work since I started on --

His WORK CELL PHONE RINGS. Beat. It RINGS AGAIN.

HEATHER

You gonna -

ALI

- I'm sorry -

Ali looks at the screen: it's John O'Neill.

ALI (CONT'D)

- I have to -

HEATHER

- Go ahead.

ALI (ON CELL)

Hi, boss.

O'NEILL (OVER PHONE)

You're going to Albania.

ALI (ON CELL)

(beat)

Okay... Uh - when?

O'NEILL (ON PHONE)

Now.

INTERCUT WITH O'NEILL ON THE PHONE IN HIS OFFICE -

O'NEILL (ON PHONE) (CONT'D)

The next flight to Frankfurt -  
ninety minutes. You transfer from  
there to Tirana.

Ali glances at Heather. Crap.

O'NEILL (ON PHONE) (CONT'D)

The Sisters are raiding Muhammed al-  
Zawahiri's cell there. Pack your  
9mm. They'll give you a combat  
weapon when they pick you up. Now  
listen to me - *this is the real  
deal*. Make sure you lay eyes on any  
evidence they seize. If it's in  
Arabic, I need you reading it. But  
most important: *be careful*. When  
you land, *do not* go into the  
terminal building. Stay on the  
tarmac. As long as it takes. You'll  
be picked up. You hear me?

ALI (ON CELL)

Yes, sir.

O'NEILL (ON PHONE)

*Stay on the tarmac*. Wait till they  
come for you.

O'Neill HANGS UP. Ali HANGS UP. He looks at Heather. Beat.

ALI

Umm...

HEATHER

Don't tell me...

ALI

I am so sorry -

HEATHER

- You have to go. Okay, then.

They both stand.

ALI

I really --

Omar comes over with two glasses of wine.

ALI (CONT'D)  
Omar, I apologize, I have to leave.

Heather starts to gather her things.

OMAR  
Heather. Please, sit. We'll have a glass of wine, yes? Then I get you a taxi.

HEATHER  
(a moment; she takes a breath; then she nods)  
All right. Thank you.

Omar turns to Ali. Serious -

OMAR  
Be safe. Come home soon, inshallah.

ALI  
(nods; then, to Heather)  
I apologize. I'll call you.

He rushes out and down the block. Omar sits across from Heather. Offers her the olives.

OMAR  
Please...  
(re the pita)  
And the bread. Poke it and the steam come out.

She takes her fork and pops the puffed-up pita. Delicious-smelling steam escapes...

OMAR (CONT'D)  
Yes?

HEATHER  
(succumbing)  
Beautiful.

OMAR  
Ali Soufan is a good man. He come here alone four times each week the first year he live in New York. I believe he was looking for someplace to speak Arabic, and to feel more at home.  
(then)  
Please... consider giving him another chance.

He holds up his glass to her.



OMAR (CONT'D)  
 Fee sahitkum. To your health.

Heather smiles and clinks his glass. They sip.

EXT. TARMAC/TIRANA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, ALBANIA - EVENING

Ali holds his small overnight bag on the tarmac, alone. He's ten or twenty yards from the moveable stairs still attached to the ADRIA AIRWAYS plane. All the rest of the passengers and flight crew have walked into the decrepit TERMINAL BUILDING, across the single runway. Several moments, then a STRAY DOG trots over behind him and starts barking.

Ali turns away to see an ARMED ALBANIAN GUARD, carrying an AK-47, walking towards him, across the runway. The Guard SPEAKS to Ali IN ALBANIAN. Ali shakes his head - he doesn't understand.

ARMED ALBANIAN GUARD  
 (in English)  
 You must go into terminal building.

ALI  
 Thank you, sir, but I'll wait here.

Beat.

ARMED ALBANIAN GUARD  
 Now. Go into terminal building.

ALI  
 I'm being picked up, sir. So I'll wait here. But thank you.

The GUARD gets on his walkie. Now Ali can see more ARMED GUARDS emerge from a far building and head towards him. They're driving one of those airport vehicles that's somewhere between a golf cart and a jeep. But it has a machine gun mounted on the hood. And they're all ARMED.

Fuck. Ali doesn't know what to do. They're getting closer.

Suddenly, from way across the tarmac, a BLACK SUV with tinted windows screeches through a break in the fence and SPEEDS towards them. It skids to a stop right in front of Ali. The rear side door opens.

AMERICAN VOICE  
 Get in.

ALI  
 (wary; he can't see in)  
 Who are you?

AMERICAN VOICE/SPECIAL OP  
If you're Soufan, we're your ride.  
Get your ass in the car.

That's good enough for Ali -- he gets in the back seat and they screech off, before he's even got the door closed.

INT. BLACK SUV/TIRANA/DRIVING - CONTINUOUS

Ali's in the back seat next to one CIA SPECIAL OP. Two others are in the front. The one next to Ali hands him an M4 ASSAULT CARBINE (lighter version of an M16), and a bulletproof vest.

SPECIAL OP  
Welcome to Albania. You used one of those before?

ALI  
Something similar. In training.

They fall in line behind another BLACK SUV, racing away from the airport, towards the city of Tirana.

SPECIAL OP  
Same deal as the M16, just smaller. Clip, release, trigger. Aim dead center. Our orders are capture not kill, but if you're threatened, you take em out.

ALI  
I think I'm here mostly for support. And to get my eyes on the evidence afterwards.

SPECIAL OP  
Whatever you say.

INT. SCHMIDT'S OFFICE/ALEC STATION - LATE NIGHT

Schmidt's at his desk, reading a classified report in a pool of lamplight. A KNOCK, then the door opens.

MICHELLE  
Professor. The boys in the field are en route. Rendition plan remains the same?

SCHMIDT  
They're EIJ. Egypt wants them, Egypt gets them.

MICHELLE

Yes, sir.

SCHMIDT

(a slight smile)

Send them to Cairo in the morning --

MICHELLE

- get your answers by the afternoon.

SCHMIDT

I like how you think, Michelle.

MICHELLE

We're of one mind, Professor.

She smiles, then leaves, gently closing the door behind her. (And, yes, if you were wondering: this is flirtation in Alec Station. And, yes, flirtation around the topic of torture in foreign countries is, to those who share that proclivity, a turn-on. And, yes, that rumor that you heard is true: the actual people upon whom these two characters are based are now married. To each other.)

EXT. RESIDENTIAL CUL-DE-SAC, OUTSKIRTS OF TIRANA - NIGHT

The two BLACK SUVs stop at the entrance to a cul-de-sac; they're still on the commercial street. EIGHT MEN (Ali, plus four CIA SPECIAL OPS and THREE ALBANIAN SECRET POLICE) emerge quickly from the vehicles. They run towards a small, two-story house with attached garage near the end of the residential street, fanning out around it.

Ali ends up in the walkway between the target house and the neighbor's concrete garden wall. Guarding the SIDE DOOR in case anyone comes out.

TWO OPS/POLICE are by the front door; TWO by the back door; THREE by the garage door. Silence. Then:

SPECIAL OP

(by the front door)

Go.

INT. TARGET HOUSE/KITCHEN - NIGHT/CONTINUOUS

An EGYPTIAN FAMILY eats dinner at the kitchen table.

The doors come crashing in, with the CIA and Albanian police SHOUTING in Arabic and Albanian to "GET DOWN ON THE FLOOR".

The mother covers her two little children with her body, as they shriek and cry. The EGYPTIAN MAN turns over the table races up the back stairs to the second floor -

INT. ATTACHED GARAGE - NIGHT/SAME TIME

CIA and ALBANIAN POLICE are yelling at the THREE EGYPTIAN MEN inside to get on the floor, hands out from their bodies...

There's bomb-making material inside the garage: drums of chemicals; wiring; batteries --

EXT. TARGET HOUSE/SIDE DOOR - NIGHT/CONTINUOUS

Ali's ready by the side door - he can hear the shouting from inside the house -- suddenly there's a huge CRACK above him as a man comes crashing through the upstairs window. Glass rains down on Ali. A man hurled himself through the window and over the concrete wall. Ali scrabbles over the wall --

EXT. NEIGHBOR'S YARD - NIGHT/CONTINUOUS

Ali lands in the dirt of the neighbor's yard. He sees the EGYPTIAN MAN vaulting the rear garden wall and takes off after him. As Ali hurtles over the rear wall, SPECIAL OP leaps out the side window of the suspect house, lands and rolls in the yard --

EXT. BACK ALLEY/TIRANA - NIGHT/CONTINUOUS

Ali's over the rear wall and sprinting down the alley that leads to the COMMERCIAL STREET. He yells in Arabic at the EGYPTIAN MAN to STOP...

The MAN makes a right down a side alley that runs parallel to the commercial street. Ali tears after him, racing around the corner. As he turns into the alley, he sees: it's EMPTY.

EXT. SIDE ALLEY/TIRANA - NIGHT/CONTINUOUS

Ali slows, trotting down the alley, M4 pointing up but ready. He looks from side to side, squinting into the shadows, desperate not to be ambushed. He's in the alley behind the businesses on the commercial street. He's breathing heavily, nervous -- then he SEES the rear door of a business still swinging slightly on its hinges --

INT. LAUNDROMAT/TIRANA - NIGHT/CONTINUOUS

Ali kicks open the rear door and enters, M4 ready. Shouts -

ALI  
*United States FBI.*

Silence. There are only TWO OLD WOMEN in this fluorescent-lit laundromat. One has stopped folding clothes at a table on the left. The other slowly CLOSES THE DOOR to a wall-mounted WASHING MACHINE on the right while looking at him.

He continues through the store, to the glass front door. He's about to go through it when he notices that people are walking on the street, calm. As if nothing has happened.

He turns around. Looks at the old woman at the washing machine. She's looking straight at him. She hasn't started the washer. Beat. Slowly, she puts a coin in the machine. Beat. They're staring at each other. She slowly reaches up, still staring at Ali, and pushes the START button.

We HEAR the WATER start to gush into the machine...

Then - *muffled yelling and banging from inside the washing machine* --

ALI (CONT'D)  
*Back away! Back away from the machine!*

Ali approaches as she backs away, M4 out.

SPECIAL OP (O.S.)  
Soufan! Are you in there?

ALI  
Yah.

Special Op comes through the back door, machine gun out. To the women --

SPECIAL OP  
(in Albanian)  
Get down on the floor! Sit!

They sit. There's still banging and yelling from inside the washing machine, which has started its first cycle, beginning to turn --

SPECIAL OP (CONT'D)  
(to Ali)  
Cover me. I'm gonna open it up.

Ali stays where he is - keeps his machine gun trained on the washing machine. Special Op hits the button and pulls open the door. Water floods onto the floor as the EGYPTIAN MAN coughs and gasps for air, completely soaked.

EXT. TARGET HOUSE - NIGHT/SEVERAL MINUTES LATER

Ali and Special Op trot up the cul-de-sac, each holding an arm of the handcuffed Egyptian.

Both BLACK SUVs are in the driveway of the house now, along with an ALBANIAN POLICE VAN. The garage door is OPEN.

The THREE SUSPECTS are being led out, handcuffed, canvas bags over their heads. They're shoved into the back of one of the SUVs. At the same time, materials from the garage are placed in the back of the POLICE VAN: batteries, tools, wires...

Special Op shoves the Egyptian in the back of the SUV, along with the others --

ALI  
Where you taking them?

SPECIAL OP  
Away.  
(slams the door shut; to  
driver:)  
Go.

ALI  
(the SUV pulls out)  
Where?  
(no answer)  
*Where are you taking them?*

SPECIAL OP  
Away.

END OF ACT FOUR.

INT. JOHN O'NEILL'S OFFICE/NY FBI - DAY

OVER BLACK: a PHONE RINGING. FADE IN as John answers his  
SECURE LINE -

O'NEILL (ON PHONE)  
O'Neill.

ALI (OVER PHONE)  
(hear his voice through the  
receiver, speaking quickly)  
(MORE)

ALI (OVER PHONE) (CONT'D)  
 Boss I'm not on a secure line, I'm  
 sorry, they shut down the Embassy so  
 I couldn't get one, but I picked a  
 random payphone so I should be good -

INTERCUT: ALI in a PHONE BOOTH by the TIRANE RIVER. Dawn.

ALI (ON PHONE) (CONT'D)  
 - at least for a quick conversation,  
 are you okay with that?

O'NEILL (ON PHONE)  
 Tell me what's going on.

ALI  
 We raided the house last night,  
 arrested four individuals - none of  
 them Zawahiri - confiscated  
 explosives and batteries and wiring,  
 but the Sisters took the suspects  
 immediately, wouldn't tell me where  
 they were going - I finally got it  
 out of one of them they were being  
 flown to Egypt. I looked through the  
 house and there was no written  
 material, no computers, so I've got  
 no information to pass to you -

O'NEILL  
 - That's okay -

ALI  
 - I'm sorry boss, I let you down -

O'NEILL  
 - Ali. Stop. Take a breath. You  
 didn't let me down. This was one of  
 Ayman Zawahiri's biggest cells. They  
 were clearly planning to hit  
 something - probably the Embassy. The  
 Agency takes them to Cairo to let the  
 police stick electrodes in their ass.  
 It's bullshit, it's wrong, there's  
 nothing we can do about it. But - the  
 good news - maybe Tirana was the most  
 urgent warning the Agency found on  
 Mabruk's hard drive. Let's hope so.  
 You did good.

ALI  
 Okay. Okay. Thank you, sir.

O'NEILL  
 Thank you, son. Come on home.

INT. RUNDOWN WAREHOUSE/NAIROBI - NIGHT

The one-legged KHALLAD works the camera as Jihad Ali films his martyrdom video. Mohamed al-Owhali and Ahmed the German wait their turn --

JIHAD ALI (TO CAMERA)  
(in Arabic)  
...I am grateful to Allah for the opportunity to fulfill my mission in this life - to perform jihad, in his name. I am going to paradise, inshallah. I am going home...

INT. TAXICAB/ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. - EVENING

John O'Neill's in the back of an Atlantic City taxi, gazing out the window, driving into a lower middle-class section of town.

INT. TENT/AFGHANISTAN - NIGHT

Ayman al-Zawahiri is speaking into a video-camera. We can see that he is personally angry, though very controlled --

ZAWAHIRI (TO CAMERA)  
... To America, I can say that your message has been received. And the response, with the help of Allah, will be written in a language you will understand, and will be delivered directly to your home --

EXT. O'NEILL HOUSE/ATLANTIC CITY - EVENING

O'Neill stands on the sidewalk as the taxi pulls away behind him. He's looking at:

An aluminum-sided house fronted by a small, scrubby yard.

O'NEILL'S WIFE, Christine (45, long-suffering), comes out onto the porch. Behind her, a TEENAGE BOY (16) and YOUNGER SISTER (9) peer through the screen door. Beat.

CHRISTINE  
Welcome home.

EXT. RUNDOWN WAREHOUSE/NAIROBI - NIGHT

Mohamed al-Owhali makes sure the wiring is properly connected to a large BATTERY in the back of a VAN. It is.



He shuts the rear doors. Ahmed the German drives the VAN out of the warehouse and turns onto the dark, quiet street --

INT. O'NEILL HOUSE/DINING ROOM/ATLANTIC CITY - NIGHT

John O'Neill and his family eat a silent dinner.

EXT. HIGHWAY/TANZANIA/DRIVING - EARLY MORNING

Ahmed the German sees the sign for DAR ES SALAAM and steers his VAN onto the exit toward the capital city.

EXT. DOWNTOWN NAIROBI STREETS/DRIVING - MORNING

Mohammed al-Owhali is in the passenger seat as Jihad Ali drives their VAN through the crowded streets of Nairobi. We can hear the call to prayer from various mosques.

INT. BEDROOM/O'NEILL HOUSE - NIGHT

John O'Neill tucks his daughter into bed and kisses her head.

O'NEILL  
Sleep well, beautiful.

He walks out the door, shutting it behind him.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY/O'NEILL HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

O'Neill turns from the bedroom to see Christine, on the landing at the top of the stairs. They look at each other. Though she knows the answer, she asks anyway --

CHRISTINE  
You staying the night?

Beat. O'Neill shakes his head.

O'NEILL  
(gently)  
No.

EXT. NAIROBI EMBASSY - MORNING/10:30AM

Jihad Ali steers the VAN into the Embassy driveway, stops ten feet in front of the GATE ARM by the GUARDHOUSE. He honks the horn, signaling for the Guard to lift the gate.

The Guard just looks at him, confused: *Why is he not driving forward to show his ID?* Jihad Ali honks again. Nothing.

Owhali jumps out of the passenger seat, comes around the car.

OWHALI

*Open gate! Open gate!*

Owhali is carrying something. He holds it up. It's a STUN GRENADE.

OWHALI (CONT'D)

*Open gate!*

The Guard shuts the window to the Guardhouse, picks up the phone. Owhali THROWS the grenade over the gate, towards the Embassy. It EXPLODES LOUDLY in a flash of BRIGHT LIGHT.

AND THEN.... Owhali panics. The gate arm is still down. He turns and begins to run back toward the street...

BEHIND HIM, the VAN EXPLODES MASSIVELY. Owhali's thrown violently to the ground.

EXT. TANZANIA EMBASSY/DAR ES SALAAM - MORNING/10:38AM

Jihad Ali pulls his VAN into the parking lot driveway of the US EMBASSY. A large WATER TANKER TRUCK is blocking access to the building. He can't get around it. He looks at his watch.

NOW SHOT FROM ACROSS THE STREET: Jihad Ali's VAN EXPLODES.

EXT. N.J. MEADOWLANDS - LATE NIGHT/3:50AM/ESTABLISHING

An AMTRAK TRAIN zips through the grassy, industrial swamplands of Northern New Jersey.

INT. AMTRAK TRAIN - LATE NIGHT/CONTINUOUS

John O'Neill sleeps sitting up in his chair. The car is empty except for him. His cell phone RINGS. He wakes, answers.

O'NEILL (INTO PHONE)

O'Neill.

CLARKE (OVER PHONE)

John, It's Richard Clarke. I have bad news.

INT. BEDROOM/ALI SOUFAN'S APARTMENT - LATE NIGHT

Ali sleeps, jet-lagged, dead to the world. His cell on the bedside table RINGS. It RINGS again. He answers -

ALI (INTO PHONE)  
Yes - hello --

O'NEILL (OVER PHONE)  
Ali. Turn on your television.

INT. LIVING ROOM/ALI'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Ali, still on the phone with O'Neill, watches the CNN COVERAGE of the bombings. The images are horrific.

The front of the building has collapsed. Many, including Americans, are dead. Hundreds more are severely injured.

O'NEILL (OVER PHONE)  
I'm gonna need you in the office.  
I'm on my way in.

ALI (INTO PHONE)  
Yes, boss. I'll meet you there.

But he doesn't move. Just watches the horror on TV with the phone still to his ear.

INTERCUT TO: O'Neill in his seat on the train. He hasn't hung up either. Beat.

O'NEILL (INTO PHONE)  
Now it begins...

EXT. N.J. MEADOWLANDS - LATE NIGHT/SAME TIME

O'Neill's train hurtles towards the Manhattan skyline - the high spike of the Empire State building glimmering against the dark sky; the valley of the West Village, and then the rise downtown, with the two rectangular towers of the World Trade Center standing like sentries.

As O'Neill's train plunges into the tunnel --

THE SCREEN GOES BLACK.