

**THE MAURITANIAN**

Screen Story by

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Screenplay by

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Based on

'GUANTANAMO DIARY'

By Mohamedou Ould Slahi

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**OVER BLACK:**

The rhythmic percussion of waves lapping on the shore...

1

**EXT. SLAHI HOME - BEACH - DUSK**

1

SEARCH PARTIES stream out of a large WEDDING TENT. Flashlights in hand, they comb the grounds of a modest beach front home, but the music and laughter tell us this is all fun and games. The WEDDING PARTY hunt for the bride, a Mauritanian tradition. Their fine clothes and high spirits lend a surreal decadence to the pastoral scene.

Away from the Revelers, FIND a lone figure drifting across a scrub of beach. This is MOHAMEDOU OULD SLAHI (31).

His white *daraa* billows in the coastal wind. A permanent grin on his face, the lightness of his footsteps give the impression that he could be carried away on the breeze.

**SUPER: Nouakchott, Mauritania, November 2001.**

The sun sets on the Atlantic Ocean beyond him, but Mohamedou's focus is on a trail of footprints in the sand. They lead to a brightly colored skiff beached on the shore. Mohamedou perches against the boat, pleased with himself.

**(NOTE: ALL NON-ENGLISH DIALOGUE WILL BE WRITTEN IN ITALICS.)**

MOHAMEDOU

(playful, in Arabic)

*The tide's coming in. Stay here  
much longer, you won't just be  
hiding, you'll be gone for good.*

MOHAMEDOU'S NIECE (FROM UNDER BOAT)

*Go away, Uncle! You're not supposed  
to be playing, you're too old.*

Mohamedou peers inside the skiff, finds his NIECE (20) hiding. Dressed in a black bridal *lakhel*, dripping with gold jewelry, her hands painted with henna.

MOHAMEDOU

*I'm not too old to shout, tell your  
groom where to find you!*

She clicks her tongue at him. He laughs it off, leaves her to her hiding place.



MOHAMEDOU'S MOTHER  
Is this about the new satellite  
dish you put up?

MOHAMEDOU  
*No. It's nothing.*

MOHAMEDOU'S MOTHER  
*If it's nothing, they can come back  
tomorrow.*

MOHAMEDOU  
*Then tomorrow will be ruined too.  
Please, let us talk.*

Deddahi takes a puff at his pipe and blows the smoke away from the face of the older woman. Mohamedou gently ushers his Mother back towards the house. Then turns to Deddahi --

MOHAMEDOU (CONT'D)  
*How many times can I say the same  
thing? I don't know where Mahfouz  
is. I doubt Bin Laden even knows.*

DEDDAHI  
*After these New York attacks, the  
Americans, they're going crazy.*

MOHAMEDOU  
*Yeah, they put Mahfouz's bounty up  
to \$25 million! Wallahi, if I knew  
where he was, I would have turned  
him in myself. I had to borrow from  
my boss to pay for my niece's  
wedding.*

DEDDAHI  
*It's not in my hands, Mohamedou.  
They want to talk to you.*

Mohamedou glances back to his Mother watching from the house.

MOHAMEDOU  
*Let me change, they'll confuse me  
for a Gulf prince.*

Deddahi smirks, nods him on.

Mohamedou changes into jeans and a shirt, eyes out the window where Deddahi and his Officers smoke and chat in the street.

Mohamedou slips out his cell phone, a moment of hesitation before he deletes all his contacts.

5

**EXT. SLAHI HOME/STREET - MOMENTS LATER**

5

Mohamedou steps out, his Mother trailing after him, anxious. The Officers perk up as they approach --

DEDDAHI

*You'll ride with me.*

MOHAMEDOU

*I can drive myself.*

*(then, explaining)*

*The only thing people should talk about at a wedding is the bride.*

DEDDAHI

*(suspicious)*

*Then give me your phone.*

Mohamedou hands it over. Deddahi's insurance policy.

DEDDAHI (CONT'D)

*(to Officers)*

*Yalla, he knows the way.*

Deddahi and his Officers climb into their Mercedes. Mohamedou hustles to his old silver NISSAN parked in the street.

MOHAMEDOU'S MOTHER

*What do I tell everyone?*

MOHAMEDOU

*Tell them... it's work.*

MOHAMEDOU'S MOTHER

*At night, like this, you're working?*

MOHAMEDOU

*German client, different time zone.*

His Mother suddenly wraps him in a tight hug, mutters the crisis prayer under her breath. Mohamedou comforts her.

MOHAMEDOU (CONT'D)

*They wouldn't let me drive if I wasn't coming back.*

*(then)*

*Save me some cake.*

Mohamedou squirms free from her embrace, slides into his car.

His Mother attempts to hold on as if she already knows this is the last time she will hold her son.

6           **INT./EXT. MOHAMEDOU'S NISSAN/STREET - CONTINUOUS**           6

Mohamedou pulls out, following the police Mercedes ahead. He takes a long look at his mom in the rear-view mirror. She counts out *Tasbih* (prayers) on her raised right hand.

A wave of sadness washes over Mohamedou as she slowly fades into the night behind him. We drive with him for a moment through this sandy nighttime city

MAIN TITLE: The Mauritanian

Pre-lap the sound of US city traffic and a honking horn

8           **EXT. NANCY'S CAR - ALBUQUERQUE DOWNTOWN- DAY.**           8

A dusty BMW drives through the city at speed. A patchwork of bumper stickers on the back proclaim everything from Jesse Jackson's campaign to 'No War for Oil'.

8A          **INT. NANCY'S CAR - DAY - ALBUQUERQUE DOWNTOWN - DAY**       8A

Cellphone at her ear, we meet Nancy Hollander, criminal defense lawyer: bright colored nails, silver hair, silver jewelry and a take-no-prisoners attitude.

NANCY (INTO PHONE)

(mid conversation)

-- Yeah, well, she's not my client anymore. If she needs legal counsel, tell her to schedule an appointment. Otherwise...I don't know, the rest of her life is up to her....did OFW get back to us? ... That's bullshit. Tell them it's bullshit and I'm done bargaining. ...Okay, and let David know I'll be dialing in for the partner meeting...

She spots a parking spot outside the New Mexico Court of appeals and veers into it at speed. A car behind toots.

NANCY (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)

I gotta go.

She hangs up. No ceremony

8B

**EXT. NEW MEXICO COURT OF APPEALS - ALBUQUERQUE - DAY**

8B

Nancy exits her car and dashes across the road and into the court house.

9 INT. NEW MEXICO COURT OF APPEALS - LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER 9

As Nancy sweeps through the metal detector --

EMMANUEL (O.S.)

Nancy!

Behind her, EMMANUEL COSTE (40s), a doughy French lawyer, jumps the line to pass through security.

NANCY

(doesn't stop)

I didn't know you were in town.

EMMANUEL

(catches up to her)

I have a hearing at three. There's something I need to ask of you, can we take lunch?

NANCY

I'm up right now. Find me across the street after.

Not one for small talk, Nancy splits off into --

10 INT. NEW MEXICO COURT OF APPEALS - COURTROOM - CONTINUOUS 10

A sparse crowd of LAWYERS and PARALEGALS line the pews. A JUDGE presides over pre-trial hearings. Far from the pomp and ceremony of trial law, this is where the endless formalities of American justice grind out.

Nancy slides down a back bench, joins THERESA "Teri" DUNCAN (Late 20's) and a couple of other ASSOCIATES.

NANCY

The bulletin said Goranson was up at nine?

Teri straightens up, surprised to see Nancy. Her reaction tells us that Nancy's presence here is a big deal.

TERI

Are you sitting in or... are you thinking of coming on? I mean, we'd be lucky to have you.

NANCY

Your plaintiff made the news yesterday.

TERI

He's not rattled, we expected that.  
The airlines want to make it a PR  
campaign, we'll beat them in court.

Nancy mulls over her answer, then --

NANCY

Do you have an extra copy of the  
brief?

Teri, containing her excitement, collects her paperwork.

11

**EXT. EL PAISA TAQUERIA - DAY**

11

Nancy sits at a table in the forecourt of a busy taqueria reading a newspaper. There is an article about the airline price-fixing case. Below it is a cartoon showing a hapless passenger with a bag falling on his head.

EMMANUEL (O.S.)

You are too quick, I was hoping to  
buy you lunch.

Nancy barely glances up as Emmanuel approaches her.

NANCY

Order at the window. I recommend  
the *asada*.

Emmanuel eyes the customers, mostly BAILIFFS and COURTHOUSE EMPLOYEES. He's not eating here.

EMMANUEL

How's Bill?

NANCY

Brian. We separated.

EMMANUEL

I'm sorry to hear that.

NANCY

So was he. What do you need?

EMMANUEL

Last week in Paris, a lawyer from  
Mauritania approached my firm -

NANCY

Mauritania?

EMMANUEL

Northwest Africa. Former French colony. Sahara desert.

(back to story)

The lawyer, he's working on behalf of a family there. In November 2001, their son was taken for questioning by Mauritanian Police. Like that, pfft, he disappears. Three years, they don't know, is he dead? In prison? They don't know, no one knows. Then a few weeks ago, *Der Spiegel* writes a story saying he's detained in Guantanamo Bay.

(Nancy perks up)

They say he's one of the organizers of 9/11 --

NANCY

Is he?

EMMANUEL

I don't know. I haven't spoken with him, Guantanamo will not even confirm if he's there. I don't have the security clearance --

NANCY

(knows what he's asking)

We're not getting involved with Gitmo.

EMMANUEL

You still have clearance from your NSA suit, no? One phone call, see if he's there.

Nancy mulls it over, pushes forward a pen and paper.

NANCY

The prisoner, what's his name?

12

**INT. FBH LAW FIRM - NANCY'S CORNER OFFICE - NIGHT**

12

Phone at her ear, Nancy paces behind her desk, barely containing her frustration --

NANCY (INTO PHONE)

Slahi. S-L-A-H-I. First name Mohamedou. Not Mohammed. Mo-ham-me-dou... Check the logs... He's not there or you don't know if he's not there? ...Yeah, I'll hold.

Nancy looks up to find Teri waiting in her doorway.

TERI  
Goranson?  
(off Nancy's confusion)  
Airlines.

NANCY  
(remembers, motions)  
Right there.

Teri gathers her case files from Nancy's desk, it's clear that Nancy's already moved on to another fight.

NANCY (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)  
It's your facility, how do you not  
know who you're holding?

NOTICE the *Der Spiegel* website open on Nancy's desktop computer. Mohamedou's face stares back at her. His inscrutable mugshot a far cry from the carefree young man at his Niece's wedding three years ago.

NANCY (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)  
He's *not not* there? What does that  
mean? He's not Schrodinger's cat,  
he's either there or he's not  
there...

13

**INT. FBH LAW FIRM - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY**

13

A few days later. Nancy sits at a conference table with the firm's other PARTNERS (DAVID, JOHN & JOE). Everyone is eating bagels or drinking coffee. They flip through a top sheet on the Mohamedou case. NOTICE the firm's ASSOCIATES (including Teri) line the outer ring of the room.

JOHN  
(baffled)  
You want to represent the lead  
recruiter of 9/11?

NANCY  
Alleged. And no, I'm defending  
*habeas corpus*, which Bush and  
Rumsfeld are gleefully dismantling.

DAVID  
Nancy, we'd all love a pop at this  
administration, but there's more to  
consider.  
(RE: top sheet)

9A.

PEOPLE WANNA SEE THESE GUYS BURN.

JOHN

Including plenty of prospective clients.

JOE

Do we even want to legitimize what they're doing down there?

NANCY

The US government is holding upwards of 700 prisoners in Guantanamo. We don't know who they are, the charges against them, and when or *if*, they'll ever appear before a judge. This is happening, whether we legitimize it or not.

DAVID

... I don't want you spinning your wheels on this.

Nancy eyes David, who clearly wants her to drop it.

NANCY

David, as partners, we agreed we could pick our own fights, pro bono, without interference. I like the look of this fight.

(David nods)

I'm here as a courtesy.

Reluctantly amused, David eyes Nancy with the warmth reserved for an old friend. Yes, she's trouble but the good kind.

DAVID

OK. What do you need?

NANCY

Just me for now, and a translator with security clearance. The prisoner speaks --

(checks her notes)

Arabic, French, and German.

JOHN

Sounds expensive.

NANCY

(Is this a retreat or a plan?)

Teri, you speak French, right?

Teri perks up, surprised to be drawn into a conversation way above her head.

TERI  
 Yes, but I'm on the Goranson case.  
 (clarifying)  
 Airlines, price-fixing.

NANCY  
 It doesn't have legs.  
 (to David)  
 I looked at it.  
 (back to Teri)  
 You've got the wrong plaintiff.  
 He's already the goof with the  
 suitcase on his head. That's all  
 any jury will ever see him as.

DAVID  
 (buys her assessment)  
 Teri?

All eyes on Teri. She has to decide right now, in or out.

Nancy glances back, locks eyes with Teri, expectant. Implicit  
 in her poker face is a challenge...

TERI  
 Sure. Who doesn't want a free trip  
 to Cuba?

14

**INT. SHERATON NEW ORLEANS - LOBBY - NIGHT**

14

A herd of MEN and WOMEN in military dress uniforms clear out  
 of a conference room. A banner reads, 'New Orleans Admiralty &  
 Maritime Law Conference '05'.

FIND COLONEL BILL SEIDEL (50s) waiting in the lobby. NOTICE  
 the TVs behind the bar stream endless coverage of the Bush vs  
 Kerry election. But Seidel's focus is on the phalanx of JAG  
 LAWYERS marching past him. He perks up, spotting --

SEIDEL  
 Hey, Stu!

JAG MAJOR STUART COUCH (30s) in the middle of the pack. He  
 walks alongside a JAG Officer (ARJUN 20s, Indian-American).

COUCH  
 (North Carolina drawl)  
 I'll catch up with ya'll in a few.

Couch separates from the herd.

COUCH (CONT'D)  
 Didn't spot your name on the  
 schedule, sir, you giving a talk?

SEIDEL  
 Just passing through. You know Whit  
 Cobb up at OGC?

COUCH  
 A little. What gives?

SEIDEL  
 We're putting something together,  
 your name came up. You have a  
 minute?

Couch knows not to ask any further questions --

15

**INT. SHERATON NEW ORLEANS - SUITE - NIGHT**

15

Couch follows Seidel into an anonymous hotel suite.

WHIT COBB (50s, civilian suit) sits on an armchair, a spread  
 of used cups and half-eaten pastries litter the coffee table.  
 They've been doing interviews all day.

COUCH  
 How you been, Whit?

WHIT  
 Stuart, it's great to see you after  
 all these years.

Couch notices a MAN dressed in casuals hanging back at the  
 dining table.

SEIDEL  
 That's Bob, he's OGA.

The Man, BOB, simply nods. Couch doesn't press it further,  
 knows a spy when he sees one.

SEIDEL (CONT'D)  
 (to Whit, RE: Couch)  
 I met Stu on a drug-ring case back  
 in... when was it?

COUCH  
 '96 - '97.

SEIDEL

He rolled them up, one after another. Lehnert called him his 'dog on a chain'.

COUCH

(laughing)

General Lehnert could get us to low-crawl through hell in a gasoline suit.

A beat.

WHIT

You been paying much attention to what's going on down at Gitmo?

SEIDEL

(off Couch's nod)

I have orders to stand up a 9/11 war court for enemy combatants held at Guantanamo. Under jurisdiction of the president.

He's got Couch's attention.

WHIT

You're familiar with Ex Parte Quirin?

COUCH

(dredging his memory)

The World War II case?  
Eight Nazi saboteurs got caught sneaking into the US by sea?

WHIT

(nods)

Supreme Court green-lit trial by military commission - stripped-down rules. Eight Nazis, eight convictions in less than a month.

SEIDEL

You forgot the punchline: six got the electric chair. Rough justice - that's what this Administration wants. We've taken a lot of prisoners in Afghanistan, working our way up to bin Laden and the guys who planned this shit. There's a backlog needs clearing.

COUCH

My understanding is not all the detainees at Gitmo were caught in Afghanistan, sir?

BOB

(from back of room)

Does extraordinary rendition disturb you, Major?

COUCH

No. They're the ones who picked this fight. They hit our embassy's in East Africa, the Cole in Yemen - and then the US mainland. They made the battlefield global. We gotta scoop them where we can find them.

Bob sits back, at ease. That's the right answer.

WHIT

Bill tells me a good friend of yours was on one of the 9/11 planes?

COUCH

Bruce Taylor, he was First Officer on United One Seventy Five, the plane that hit the South tower. We flew KC-130's together at Cherry Point. Cathy and my wife, Kim, worked at the same hospital.

Whit motions to Seidel who presents Couch with a folder stamped TOP SECRET/NOFORN.

SEIDEL

Mohamedou Ould Slahi. The Mauritanian.

Couch opens the folder. He scans the topsheet, a profile of Mohamedou. The same photo from *Der Spiegel*.

SEIDEL (CONT'D)

Fought with Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan in the 90s - became a key recruiter for 9/11 in Germany. He recruited Marwan Al-Shehhi - the fucker who flew your friend's plane into the south tower.

A heavy beat.

WHIT

The administration sees this as the first death penalty case. We want you as lead.

The weight of that lands on Couch.

COUCH

When do we start?

16 OMITTED 16

17 OMITTED 17

18 **EXT. FORT LAUDERDALE AIRPORT - TARMAC - DAWN** 18

A small prop plane with 'Air Sunshine' emblazoned in faded yellow on the side, taxis out to the run way.

19 **INT. AIR SUNSHINE PLANE/TARMAC - CONTINUOUS.** 19

Nancy buckles into her cramped seat as the plane taxis. The CO-PILOT addresses his passengers from the open cockpit. He strains to be heard over the propellers --

CO-PILOT

Our flight time is three and a half hours to Cuba. We offer no beverages, no snacks, and no facilities aboard this aircraft. I hope y'all have sufficiently relieved yourselves.

Nancy closes her eyes. She knows to get sleep when she can. Notice Teri sitting anxiously next to her with a large take-away coffee in her hand.

19A **EXT. AIR SUNSHINE PLANE - TROPICAL CLOUDS - DAY** 19A

The small plane is buffeted by the Caribbean thermals.

20 **INT. AIR SUNSHINE PLANE - TROPICAL CLOUDS - DAY** 20

The plane lurches around, unsettling Nancy from her slumber. She glances across the narrow aisle, where:

A MALE LAWYER surreptitiously empties his bladder into a coke bottle. His jacket strategically positioned across his lap. He catches Nancy watching, gives her an apologetic look. Teri has seen too and leans over to Nancy.

TERI

Guess they've gotta keep some advantages.

Nancy shrugs it off, looks out the window...

21 OMITTED 21

22 **INT./EXT. SCHOOL BUS - MOVING - DAY** 22

Nancy, Teri and the other lawyers sit incongruously in a repurposed yellow American school bus. They all have GITMO PASSES dangling on lanyards around their necks. The DRIVER is a Jamaican contractor with short dreads. He has Jimmy Buffet styled island music playing quietly on the radio. A MILITARY ESCORT stands in the aisle to address them:

MILITARY ESCORT

If you stray outside the designated areas, you will be removed from the island. Apart from your clients, you are not to speak to or communicate with the detainees. Do so and you will be removed from the island. You are not to share classified information with your client, even if it pertains to his case. Illegal disclosures may result in your arrest and immediate removal from the island...

The bus pulls up in front of a squat building that houses two fast food take away joints.

MILITARY ESCORT (CONT'D)

If you wish to grab your clients some grub, do so now.

Teri looks to Nancy, confused --

TERI

Do we know what he likes?

NANCY

Get the Fillet 'O Fish. It's halal.

23A **INT./EXT. SCHOOL BUS - APPROACH ROAD TO GUANTANAMO - DAY** 23A

Now clutching their baggies of fast food the lawyers drive towards the prison itself: guard towers, fences and barbed wire.

23B **EXT. GUANTANAMO PRISON - OUTER PERMITER - DAY** 23B

The bus pulls in to the main gate. Nancy, Teri and the other lawyers file off. The sea wind hits them through the fencing.

GATE GUARD  
Honour Bound.

MILITARY ESCORT  
Defending Freedom.

Nancy and Teri lock eyes for a moment at the absurdity of it all.

24 **EXT/INT. GUANTANAMO BAY - BADGING OFFICE - DAY** 24

As the lawyers enter the cramped office, sniffer dogs examine their briefcases, sniffing greedily at the take-away bag.

BADGING OFFICER  
Step up to the line, ID's out.

Nancy steps up, slides over her passport. The badging officer checks her name, against the one on her Gitmo pass.

BADGING OFFICER (CONT'D)  
Leave your bag here. You can take a notepad and one writing implement in with you.

Nancy takes out a note pad and pencil and hands her bag over.

BADGING OFFICER  
(sliding something towards Nancy)  
It's recommended you wear a hijab when visiting your client. We've had incidences of inmates spitting at female lawyers or spraying bodily fluids.

Nancy doesn't give the hijabs a second look.

BADGING OFFICER  
(to Teri)  
Step up to the line, ID's out.

25 **EXT. CAMP ECHO - COURTYARD - DAY**

25

Nancy and Teri, carrying their take-away to-go bag, follow the Military Escort across the blinding white pea-gravel courtyard. The ranks of Lawyers now thinned.

Nondescript MILITARY HUTS line the designated walkway. Around them, there are no trees, nothing living. Signs extol residents to look after the Iguanas - at risk of a \$10K fine. The Military Escort stops at one of the huts, checks his list.

MILITARY ESCORT

Detainee seven-sixty.

(silence)

Hollander and Duncan?

Nancy and Teri nod.

MILITARY ESCORT.

Any notes you take are deemed classified, we'll collect them after your interview. You can retrieve them at a secure facility stateside.

A FEMALE GUARD takes a look in the take-away bag.

FEMALE GUARD

For your own safety we'll be monitoring the meeting.

NANCY

You're listening to us?

FEMALE GUARD

Video only. In the event the detainee lunges for you push away from the table, we'll be in there as quick as we can.

With that, the Female Guard opens the door.

26 **INT. CAMP ECHO - VISITING CELL - CONTINUOUS**

26

Nancy and Teri, wary, step into the small, windowless meeting room. Across the table sits:

Mohamedou, gaunt, clean-shaven, dressed in a tan jumpsuit. He squints at the sunlight streaming through the open door. He puts down a SMALL GREEN EXERCISE BOOK and a pencil. The Guard quickly slams it shut behind them.

Mohamedou has not only lost weight, but also his lightness of spirit. His calm, zen-like presence masks a deep-seated hopelessness born from his three years of captivity.

TERI  
(unsure)  
*As-Salaam-Alaikum.*

MOHAMEDOU  
*Wa-Alaikum-Salaam.*

NOTICE Mohamedou wears ankle shackles looped into an eye-bolt in the floor. Teri nervously starts in French:

TERI  
Bonjour. Enchante. Je suis Maitre  
Theresa Duncan et je voudrais  
présenter, Parteneur Nancy  
Hollander.

Mohamedou moves to his feet. A small smile breaking on his face.

MOHAMEDOU  
My lawyers!

He holds his arms out and Teri and Nancy in turn awkwardly embrace him.

TERI  
Amazing. You speak English?

MOHAMEDOU  
So do you!

TERI  
We didn't know - how did you learn?

MOHAMEDOU  
One word at a time. When I first  
came here, I hated the sound of  
English, because of the pain they  
caused me; I tried *not* to learn it.  
But that was emotion. Later, wisdom  
took over. I decided to learn so I  
could better understand my  
situation and my environment.

He gestures to the chairs.

MOHAMEDOU (CONT'D)

Please, sit. If we are in my home,  
I offer tea, y'know, but we are not  
in my home.

NANCY

Let's see what we can do about  
that.

They all take a seat.

NANCY (CONT'D)

I'm Nancy Hollander, this is my associate, Teri Duncan. We are with a firm called Freedman, Boyd & Hollander, based in New Mexico. We wish to represent you.

MOHAMEDOU

Straight to business, very American of you. Maybe we get to know each other first, yes?

TERI

We brought you some food.  
 (offers him the take-away bag)  
 I hope it's okay, it's all they have on base.

Mohamedou peers in the bag, pushes it away.

MOHAMEDOU

Thank you, but I watch my figure.

NANCY

Mr Slahi - I under --

MOHAMEDOU

Mohamedou. Call me Mohamedou.

NANCY

Mohamedou, yes...I understand it might be hard to believe but we are not here as interrogators or working for the US government in any way.

MOHAMEDOU

When you walk in, already I know this. No interrogator is afraid of his prisoner, y'know.

Teri embarrassed, but Nancy pushes on --

NANCY

Let me explain your legal situation. In June, the Supreme Court ruled that prisoners in Guantanamo are entitled to file *habeas corpus* petitions. A *habeas* petition requires the government to produce the evidence which they have against a prisoner.

(MORE)

NANCY (CONT'D)

Then a court decides if that evidence is enough to justify holding the prisoner. If it isn't, the prisoner is released.

Nancy slides a contract and pen across the table.

NANCY (CONT'D)

If you agree to let us represent you, we'll file for a writ of *habeas* on your behalf.

Mohamedou eyes the form with suspicion.

MOHAMEDOU

But you don't even ask me if I am guilty.

NANCY

Are you?

MOHAMEDOU

No.

TERI

So why do you *think* you are here?

MOAHMEDOU.

I was in the wrong place at the wrong time. And because of this they kidnaped me from my home, imprisoned me in Jordan for 5 months, then a military base in Afghanistan - which was like living in a toilet, by the way - and then brought be here, with a bag on my head and chains around my body.

(getting upset)

Would this happen to you? If I was Swedish or American? No. They think they can do it because I am an Arab and my country is weak - and I am stupid.

Nancy just nods but Teri is visibly distressed.

NANCY

What do they accuse you of during your interrogations?

MOHAMEDOU

*Wallahi*, I am interrogated eighteen hours, every day, three years.

(MORE)

MOHAMEDOU (CONT'D)

That's like... go ask Charlie Sheen  
to name all his girlfriends.

Teri laughs at the unexpected reference.

TERI

So you get the news here?

MOHAMEDOU

Now, because I "co-operate" they let me have a TV. We don't get real news, but y'know, we have this show, 'E exclamation'.

TERI

(continuing the joke)  
It's just 'E', I think the exclamation is silent.

NANCY

(won't be distracted)  
They must accuse you of something.

MOHAMEDOU

They accuse me of *being here*. They say, "you are here so you must have done something bad, Otherwise you wouldn't be here." How can I argue against such crystal logic?

NANCY

Were you a member of Al Qaida?

MOHAMEDOU

Yes - but a long time ago. for a few months in 1991. I fought WITH the Americans against the communists who were killing our women and children. I killed no one. Then I left. I have nothing more to do with them.

NANCY

Can you prove that?

MOHAMEDOU

What do you want, a receipt?

He lets out an exasperated "bof".

NANCY

Have they shown any evidence against you?

MOHAMEDOU

Nothing... One time they showed  
that I had taken a call from Bin  
Laden's satellite phone --

TERI

Did you?

MOHAMEDOU

Yes, but it was my cousin. He calls me, I don't know what phone he is using. Its a crime to take a call?

NANCY

And he only called you once from Bin Laden's phone?

MOHAMEDOU

(suddenly cautious)

... They are watching everything I say, y'know, everything I do.

Mohamedou motions to the security camera in the corner.

TERI

They only have video.

Mohamedou just laughs cynically at their naivete.

MOHAMEDOU

We can't talk about these things, not here.

NANCY

Would you write it down?  
Your story. How you got here,  
everything that happened to you?

MOHAMEDOU

So my interrogators can read it,  
ask me "What do you mean by this?  
Why you are talking in code?"

NANCY

We need your testimony and if you  
let us represent you, we'll have  
attorney-client privilege. That  
means anything you tell us, and  
anything you write down, is  
protected from the prosecution by  
law, and can't be used against you.  
(he's interested)

All you have to do is send the  
pages to me as letters. Tell your  
guards they are attorney-client  
communications and watch them seal  
the envelopes. That's very  
important. Then they'll be sent to  
a secure facility in the US where  
we can read them. If the seal's  
broken, we'll know.

MOHAMEDOU

... So I tell you everything, and you go to America and make trouble. Then you forget about me and I answer for all the trouble you've made?

NANCY

As long as you're here, I'll keep coming back. As your lawyer that's what I'll do, until you get out.

(RE: contract)

If you don't want that, don't sign, you can stay here, trouble-free.

Mohamedou weighs his options... a sudden bang on the door.

FEMALE GUARD (SHOUTS THROUGH DOOR)

One minute!

Mohamedou eyes Nancy, who remains poker-faced...

MOHAMEDOU

*D'accord*, okay.

(he signs the form)

But you do one thing for me.

Mohamedou scrawls a number onto Nancy's notepad.

MOHAMEDOU (CONT'D)

Call this number, ask to speak to my mother. Tell her, I don't know...tell her something nice.

Teri studies the number on the notepad as --

Suddenly the door swings open, the Female Guard steps in. She holds out a manila envelope --

FEMALE GUARD

That's it. Notes in here, you'll get them back at the secure facility Stateside.

Nancy and Teri drop their notebooks into the envelope. The Female Guard seals it as she leads them to the door --

MOHAMEDOU

See you later alligators.

That stops them in their tracks. Unsure, they turn back --

MOHAMEDOU (CONT'D)  
 (off their silence)  
 Now you have to say, 'after a  
 while, Crocodile.'

NANCY  
 ... Not for awhile, Crocodile.

27           **INT. CAMP ECHO - MILITARY HUT - GUARD POST - CONTINUOUS**           27

The Female Guard slams the door behind them, turns to find Nancy glaring at her.

NANCY  
 Who decided to put him in shackles?

FEMALE GUARD  
 Protocol. For your protection,  
 ma'am.

NANCY  
 I'd just like to know whose name I  
 should cite when I contact the  
 National Security desk at the New  
 York Times.. Tell your CO, I don't  
 want to see my client in shackles  
 again.

Mortified, the Female Guard simply nods.

28           **EXT. CAMP ECHO - PATHWAYS - DAY**           28

Accompanied by their military escort, Nancy and Teri are guided back to the prison entrance. Nancy notices Teri muttering under her breath.

NANCY  
 Are you... praying?

TERI  
 Memorizing his mother's number.

NANCY  
 We're not calling that number. Not  
 before we clear it. We don't know  
 who's on the other end of that  
 line.

TERI  
 You don't think it's his mother?

NANCY

I don't know. But no one just gets  
a call from Bin Laden's sat-phone.

Teri studies Nancy, trying to make sense of her.

29

**INT. PENTAGON ANNEXE - FOYER /COUCH'S OFFICE - DAY**

29

Couch stands near a security station as ARJUN (recognize him from New Orleans conference) is processed.

ARJUN

I'll have to call my Dad, tell him  
I had lunch at the Pentagon.

COUCH

Don't worry, chow's just as bad as  
Lejeune. Thanks for coming.

Handshakes and they start walking back to Couch's office.

ARJUN

Anything you can't talk about over  
comms has gotta be worth the drive.

COUCH

Listen, Arjun, I'm working one of  
these Gitmo cases --

ARJUN

I heard. I also heard you already  
had your team.

COUCH

Yeah, they're over there.

Couch nods across the office, where a group of JUNIOR PROSECUTORS sit together, eating sandwiches. They wear a mix of uniforms.

ARJUN

Army, Navy and Air force? Looks  
like you got all services in play.

They reach Couch's office and sit down.

COUCH

It's a high-vis case, my convening  
authority's the White House.

(Arjun's impressed)

(MORE)

COUCH (CONT'D)

But I want someone who's working for me, not worrying about whether they're working for their daddy-rabbit across the street?'

ARJUN

... I'm game. I'm all over it.

Couch smiles, exactly what he expected.

COUCH

I'll have to bring you on as a specialist. How's your Arabic?

ARJUN

Non-existent, sir. I'm Indian.

COUCH

I know that, they don't.

(Arjun gets it)

I'll put the orders in with HQMC this afternoon.

30

**INT. FBH LAW FIRM - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY**

30

Nancy and Teri sit alone at the large table. Teri dials a number into the speaker-phone. This call has been arranged in advance so a translator could be present at the other end. After a few rings...

TRANSLATOR(THROUGH PHONE)

*Allo?*

TERI

Hello. I am calling to speak to Madam Slahi.

There are murmurings on the other end of the phone. We hear Mohamedou's mother speaking in *Hasanyi* and then a translator:

TRANSLATOR(THROUGH PHONE)

*Yes, she is here.*

TERI

*Please tell her: my name is Teri Duncan, I'm here with my associate, Nancy Hollander. We're lawyers based in America, we're working for your son.*

The translator can be heard murmuring quickly on the other end of the phone followed by Mohamedou's mother's voice

TRANSLATOR (THROUGH PHONE)  
*Mohamedou? You've seen him?*

TERI  
*Yes. In Guantanamo prison, Cuba.*

The translator relays this. We hear a heaving sob emanate from Mohamedou's mother - something primal and gut wrenching.

Teri struggles to keep her emotions in check.

A PARALEGAL at the door. Nancy motions her into the room. The Paralegal slinks in, hands Nancy a note.

Nancy eyes the note, mutes the phone --

NANCY  
 Wrap it up, see me after.

Teri, baffled, watches as Nancy steps out. Then remembers to unmute the call --

TRANSLATOR (THROUGH PHONE)  
*Hello? Hello?... Mrs Slahi would like to know: is he okay? How does he look? Is he eating?*

TERI  
*He looks well. He wanted us to tell you... He misses you very much.*

31 INT. FBH LAW FIRM - NANCY'S OFFICE - LATER

31

Teri steps in to find Nancy packing up her laptop and notes.

NANCY  
 We have to go to Virginia, I got a notification from the Privilege Team.

TERI  
 I typed up the rest of the call for you.

Nancy looks up, Teri holds out a typed document for her. Obviously upset, Teri's eyes are rimmed-red from crying

For a year after he was arrested the guards at the prison in Mauritania told Mohamedou's mother that he was still there.

(MORE)

TERI (CONT'D)

They asked for money to feed and  
clothe him -- he wasn't even in the  
country -

Nancy cuts her off.

NANCY

- why do you think Mohamedou wanted  
us to call her?

TERI

Because she's his mother.

NANCY

Because every mother thinks their  
son is innocent. That's what he  
wants us to hear. But that's not  
the case we're building. We need to  
prove the US government lacks  
evidence sufficient to detain him.  
Anything else is a distraction.

(then, back to packing)

Our files are ready. I want to be  
in Virginia tonight.

31A      **EXT. SUBURBAN STREETS - DAY**      31A

Couch drives his family (WIFE; KIM and TWO SONS; 6 & 9) to  
church. Everybody dressed in Sunday best.

31B      **INT. FALLS CHURCH - DAY**      31B

Couch and his family sit together in a narrow pew. They hold  
hands, eyes closed as the Priest recites the scriptures.

Couch glances to a pew ahead, where CATHY (40s) sits with her  
2 CHILDREN (teenagers).

31C      **EXT. FALLS CHURCH - LATER**      31C

The small congregation disperses, Couch spots Cathy and her  
kids heading towards their car.

COUCH

(to Kim)

Back in a sec.

(hustles after Cathy)

Cathy!

Cathy turns to find Couch approaching. Her kids continue  
walking on ahead.

COUCH (CONT'D)  
How are you?

                  CATHY  
Good.

An awkward moment, he obviously has something on his mind...

                  CATHY (CONT'D)  
Everything alright? Kim and the  
boys?

                  COUCH  
I didn't want you to hear this from  
anyone else, but I'm prosecuting a  
Gitmo case. One of the recruiters  
for 9/11.

Cathy taken aback.

                  CATHY  
... He put those men on my  
husband's plane?

                  COUCH  
(nods)  
I didn't mean to ambush you, I just  
thought you should know.

                  CATHY  
Thank you.

                  COUCH  
Don't thank me yet, we got a long  
way to go still.

                  CATHY  
I know. But I think God has given  
you this opportunity to find  
justice. For Bruce and the others.

                  COUCH  
I doubt I figure much in His plans.

                  CATHY  
Bruce never liked coming to church  
much. He said he felt closer to God  
in the cockpit. Well, if God was  
with him on flight 175, then he's  
sure as shit with you right now.

Stuart takes that in.



NOTICE an office door open - other LAWYERS and GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS reading quietly in their own bubbles.

KENT (CONT'D)

Once we've reviewed the material we either designate it classified or protected. Classified means the material must remain in the facility. Protected means you don't have to come in here to view it - we will fax it to your office, where it can only be accessed by those with proper clearance. If anything outta here shows up in my Sunday paper - well, you ladies are the lawyers, you know how that goes.

He stops in front of a door, unlocks it and hands them the key.

KENT (CONT'D)

Don't lose your key, it's a pain in the butt to find a locksmith with the clearance. That's a joke, we have spares. My office is down there when you're done.

NANCY

Wait, we didn't get your name.

KENT

... Kent.

NANCY

Kent what?

KENT

Kent tell you any more than that.

As Kent shuffles away, Teri and Nancy enter the small, windowless room. Two manila envelopes sits on the table. Teri opens the first envelope, dumps out their notepads from their interview with Mohamedou.

Nancy checks the flap on the second envelope. The seal unbroken. Inside, loose sheets of paper. Pages of densely scrawled handwriting.

NANCY

From Mohamedou. Here, take half.

TERI

Where are the case files?

Nancy slumps down, starts reading.

TERI (CONT'D)

The government withheld the case files... Nancy?

NANCY

Yeah, they won't give us anything. Not until they absolutely have to. I already put in a Freedom of Information request. Until then--  
(RE: Pages)  
Focus on our client's testimony.

Teri takes her half, slumps down next to Nancy. The two of them read in the hallway of filing cabinets...

TERI

(checking pages)  
When does yours start?

NANCY

This is his time in Germany. Yours?

TERI

August 5th 2002. When he first landed in Guantanamo...

35 **INT./EXT. C17/GUANTANAMO AIRPORT TARMAC - DAY - FLASHBACK** 35

*NB. We see Mohamedou's arrival at Guantanamo strictly from his POV. He wears black-out goggles and a hood and initially he can only see a small amount of light coming in at the bottom of the hood.*

Blackness. Shouts struggle to be heard over the air-sucking whine of the C17's jet engines.

MULTIPLE GUARDS

WALK/ HEAD DOWN/ KEEP WALKING! NO TALKING! DO NOT TALK! I'M GONNA FUCKING HURT YOU!

From Mohamedou's POV we begin to see glancing images out of the bottom of his bag/goggles: A piece of the C-17 airplane, a daisy-chain of MILITARY GUARDS shoving a line of PRISONERS in orange jumpsuits, black bags over heads; hands and feet shackled. NOTICE: a soldier's glove has GITMO, CUBA stencilled on it.

The guards force the detainees to keep their heads down, bending their backs. Mohamedou stumbles --

MISC. GUARD  
Up! Get the fuck up!

A Guard yanks him to his feet, pushes him on.

We stay in Mohamedou's POV as he steps out into the blazing Cuban sun..

MISC. GUARDS  
Step, don't fucking fall//Don't you die on me honey!

The C17 sits on the Guantanamo airstrip. Mohamedou moves on, keeping step with the others.

Military Guards shout for the prisoners to kneel.

MISC. GUARD  
Down on your knees! Get down! Get down, Fuck-head.

Moahmedou is pushed down on his knees and his black-out hood is lifted and his goggles are knocked as a guard pours water somewhere near his mouth. Now he can see a little bit more. The Prisoner next to Mohamedou struggles to stay upright.

PRISONER 1 (THROUGH BAG)  
*Sirs! Please, gentlemen! I'm thirsty, please, gentlemen! More water, please!*

MOHAMEDOU (THROUGH BAG)  
*They don't speak Arabic, Uncle, and they're far from gentlemen. Call them whatever you want.*

PRISONER 2 (THROUGH BAG)  
*Shut up, they'll beat us.*

MOHAMEDOU (THROUGH BAG)  
*No, they won't. The Americans don't do that. They have laws -*

MILITARY GUARD  
Shut the fuck up! No talking!

Later. Scissors slice through cloth. Guards are cutting Mohamedou's clothes off around his chains. Finally they remove his goggles and hood. The goggles have left raw, broken skin around his eyes and ears.

For the first time Mohamedou can see soldiers and other prisoners around him. It's all a blur of faces, lights, a shower, another prisoner - a big black man, naked.

Mohamedou is shoved by the Guards into the open shower. The water is freezing, his chained hands cover his privates. Unmasked, we see that his head and beard have been shaved clean.

The Guards pull Mohamedou out, roughly dry him and then bend him over a table for a rectal exam.

Then he's marched into:

37

**INT. GUANTANAMO BAY - CLINIC - DAY - FLASHBACK**

37

A NAVAL NURSE (30s, M) examines Mohamedou. He checks his eyes, ears, heart-rate but never directly addresses Mohamedou. A young MOROCCAN TRANSLATOR translates --

NAVAL NURSE  
Any known diseases?

MOHAMEDOU  
*Sciatic nerve, my lower back.*

The NAVAL NURSE ignores this and just takes blood.

When he's done two guards pull Mohamedou up, dress him, pulling his chains through arm and legs holes in a choreographed, practiced manner. His legs will barely support him - we realize how exhausted he is after a 40 hour journey.

*(NOTE: Unless otherwise mentioned, Mohamedou is always clean shaven (beard and head) and wearing an Orange Jumpsuit in the FLASHBACKS)*

Now they take his picture and attach it to a LARGE GREEN ARMBAND which is wrapped around his wrist and locked with a tool. Alongside his picture it bears a number: DPUS000760.

37A

**INT. MOHAMEDOU'S CO-OP CELL - CAMP ECHO - PRESENT (2005)**

37A

We see Mohamedou write his letter to Nancy. Intense concentration as he pours himself into the task.

38

**INT. CAMP DELTA - CORRIDOR - NIGHT - FLASHBACK**

38

Accompanied by 3 guards Mohamedou shuffles unsteadily down the corridor his arms and legs shackled. The heavy leg-chains make a racket on the floor.

39

**INT. CAMP DELTA - MOHAMEDOU'S CELL - NIGHT - FLASHBACK**

39

The iron door cranks open, Mohamedou shuffles in. One guard holds him by the waist as the other undoes his foot chains. Leaving his hands chained, the guards exit, slamming the door.

GUARD 1  
(through door)  
760. Turn around. Hands out...760.  
That's you! Hands out!

Mohamedou turns to face the door and puts his hands through the 'bin-hole'. The guards undo one hand.

GUARD 1 (CONT'D)  
Hand on head. HAND ON HEAD!

Mohamedou puts his free hand on his head while they undo the other hand. Once that's done they slam the bin-hole shut.

Mohamedou ( claustrophobic, struggling to breath) takes in his new home...

There's no window, just dim strip light which remains on 24 hours a day. The walls are metal. There's a toilet and sink in the corner. A thin mattress on a concrete slab for a bed. Neatly placed on the bed are a prayer mat, a Quran and basic toiletries: a small bar of soap, a micro-tube of toothpaste and a 'finger toothbrush' which has "Maximum Security" printed on it.

This must be the loneliest place on earth.

PRE-LAP -- the sound of a desert wind...

40

**EXT. MAURITANIAN DESERT - DAY - MEMORY**

40

A bleak expanse of desert. Mohamedou (aged 10) and his mother walk, their robes blowing in the wind; their faces set in sadness.

BEDOUIN WOMAN(PRE-LAP)  
(in Arabic)  
*We were taking down our tents,  
packing our camels. Your husband  
said he didn't feel good...*

41

**EXT. MAURITANIAN DESERT - DAY - MEMORY**

41

MOHAMEDOU now stands with his MOTHER listening to a BEDOUIN WOMAN, *who periodically sniffs tobacco snuff and offers it to Mohamedou's mother..*

BEDOUIN

*He would catch up to us. But when he didn't show, We came back, he was lying here. So we buried him.*

The Bedouin motions to a pile of rocks on the ground. A modest burial marker.

MOHAMEDOU'S MOTHER

*He died alone?*

BEDOUIN

(nodding)

*His camels were still here.*

Mohamedou stares at the pile of rocks, all that remains of his father. The vast desert stretches beyond him. Mohamedou perks up at the sound of distant singing...

MOHAMEDOU'S FATHER

*Something that never holds still, I cannot keep it in place...*

His FATHER walks a line of camels into the endless desert. He sings a traditional *hida* song to calm his flock --

10 Y.O. MOHAMEDOU

*Baba! Baba, we're here, come back.*

But his Father doesn't hear him, keeps on walking, slowly disappearing over the horizon...

10 Y.O. MOHAMEDOU (CONT'D)

*Baba! Come back!*

REALIZE Mohamedou now stands alone. His Mother and the Bedouin GONE, he's surrounded by nothing but the empty desert.

But he can't move, his ankles now buried in the sand. As he sinks underneath, swallowed by the desert --

41B INT. COUCH'S OFFICE - BULLPEN - PENTAGON - DAY

41B

Close on Couch hanging a framed picture on the wall. It's a newspaper clipping showing a photograph of Bruce Taylor's funeral, his wife and children distorted in grief in front of the casket.

ARJUN (PRE-LAP)

This is our guy.

42 INT. COUCH'S OFFICE - BULLPEN - PENTAGON - DAY

42

Arjun is giving a power-point presentation. Couch and his entire team sit/stand observing. The screen shows the familiar mug-shot of Mohamedou.

ARJUN

He got a scholarship to study electrical engineering in Germany in 1988. Two years later he traveled to Afghanistan and joined Al Qaida.

Click. The screen now shows pictures of 2 other men.

ARJUN (CONT'D)

These are just two of the bad guys we know he associated with:

(RE: First picture)

Abu Hafz. Slahi's cousin and brother-in-law. They were close growing up. In the mid 90's Abu Hafz was designated "personal poet and spiritual advisor" to Osama Bin Laden himself. In January '99, German BND tracked money transfers and phone calls between Slahi and his cousin. We can show that Slahi was financing terror.

(onto Second picture)

Ramzi Binalshibh. The so-called 20th hijacker. If Binalshibh's visa hadn't been rejected in 2000, he would've been at flight school with the rest of them. In '99, Slahi recruited Binalshibh and other members of the Hamburg cell, including Marwan al-Shehhi, pilot of the plane that hit the south Tower and Ziad Jarrah who was on United 93.

(then, RE: Mohamedou)

That's just two.

(MORE)



" / "January 1999 First phone call from Abu Hafs"...scans of Mohamedou's letters are spread out on the large table. The Clerk hands Teri the folder.

Teri removes the page from the folder, sets it down in its proper place on the table. The Clerk slips out unnoticed. Nancy scans the endless pages, trying to piece it together-- Teri is writing a time-line of interrogation -

TERI

He's questioned in Mauritania by the *FBI*. CIA then flies him to Jordan in an unmarked plane where Jordanian intelligence interrogate him for like, six months - then Bagram with *US Military Intelligence*, then Guantanamo where the *FBI* go for round two. It's like he's on some screwed-up round the world cruise.

PRE-LAP: BANG-BANG-BANG-BANG!!

47           **INT. CAMP DELTA - MOUHAMEDOU'S CELL - NIGHT - FLASHBACK**           47

Mohamedou looks terrified. Outside it sounds like a stampede. Escort guards are shouting and attacking the metal cells with batons.

GUARD 2

Reservation! Seven-sixty!

The guards smash the bin-hole open.

GUARD 2 (CONT'D)

Reservation! Gimme your hands!

Mohamedou has no idea what is going on but puts his hands through the hole. They chain him and pull him roughly from the cell.

48           **INT. CAMP DELTA - CORRIDOR - NIGHT - FLASHBACK**           48

Mohamedou is marched down a corridor of cells in shackles. The other *DETAINEES* shout encouragement as he passes --

PRISONER 1

PRISONER 2

*Allah be with you, brother!*           *Keep your head on, they work for satan!*

Mohamedou takes comfort in their cheerleading.

49           **INT. INTERROGATION HUT - GUANTÁNAMO - NIGHT - FLASHBACK**           49

Mohamedou sits on a metal chair, anxious and alone, his shackles attached to an eye bolt in the floor so he's bent forward. He repeats the crisis prayer:

MOHAMEDOU  
*Ya Hayyu, ya Qayyumu, bi-rahmatika  
 astaghithu...[O Living, O  
 Sustaining, in Your Mercy I seek  
 relief...]*

Two FBI agents, POULSON and SANTIAGO (30's) in civilian clothes, enter the room with a MORROCAN TRANSLATOR.

POULSON  
 (American accent)  
*As-salamu 'alaykum.*

MOHAMEDOU  
 (reflex)  
*Wa'alaykumu assalam.*

Poulson takes a chair opposite Mohamedou. The translator sits warily off to the side. Santiago stands in the corner - chewing tobacco and spitting into a plastic bottle.

Santiago is a former Marine, at once type-A and mellow, a Californian who actually surfs. Poulson feels more East Coast, uptight and buttoned-down.

Poulson leans in and unshackles Mohamedou's wrists.

POULSON  
 Are you hungry? Thirsty?

The translator translates. Mohamedou shakes his head.

POULSON (CONT'D)  
 We're here to have a conversation.  
 We want to understand your whole  
 story - that's it. No one's going  
 to hurt you; that shit's not  
 allowed. If we were in the U-S,  
 you'd be provided with a lawyer  
 free of charge. We'll sit here as  
 long as it takes. You understand?

Mohamedou nods.

SANTIAGO  
 You have any questions?

Mohamedou looks up, eyes suddenly alive - a glimpse of a younger, more naive man that we have seen before:

MOHAMEDOU  
*Why Cuba?!*

The agents are taken aback.

MOHAMEDOU (CONT'D)  
 You guys *hate* Cuba!

POUSLSON  
 Who says we're in Cuba?

MOHAMEDOU  
 I saw it on a guard's glove when we  
 got off the plane. It's a secret  
 we're in Cuba?

The translator translates. Santiago spits casually into his  
 bottle, grudgingly amused.

SANTIAGO  
 Not any more. The idea is to  
 disorient you. We have a base here.  
 It's secure. It's warm. I can surf  
 when I'm off-duty.

MOHAMEDOU  
 It works for everybody.

SANTIAGO  
 Exactly

There's a knock on the door. Poulson gets up and returns with  
 a steaming cup of tea. Hands it to a grateful Mohamedou.

MOHAMEDOU  
 Thank you.

Palpable relief washes over him as the caffeine hits.

SANTIAGO  
 It's, like, three hundred degrees  
 in here. I don't know how you guys  
 wanna drink tea.

They laugh. We begin to sense this is all rehearsed.

SANTIAGO (CONT'D)  
 Are you married?

A moment of hesitation then:

MOHAMEDOU  
 I am divorced.

The translator translates then Mohamedou adds something:

MOHAMEDOU (CONT'D)  
 Are you?

Santiago assesses whether to answer.

SANTIAGO

Divorced too. But we're not here to talk about me.

POULSON

Your dad's job? Any travel?

MOHAMEDOU

He traveled constantly for work. He was a camel herder.

MOHAMEDOU (CONT'D)

He died when I was nine. All his life, he refused to ride in a car; He felt it would ruin his natural ability to navigate. For a Bedouin knowing what time of day it is and what direction you are going is everything. It's so easy to die in the desert.

POULSON

He never rode in a car?

SANTIAGO

I'm calling bullshit!

MOHAMEDOU

You are right, I'm lying! One time he got in a car to look for a lost calf. But he freaked after about 2 seconds and got out.

Santiago spits into his bottle.

SANTIAGO

Full on!

MOHAMEDOU

My father's one and only two-meters drive. You pried it out of me!

They laugh. A beat. All of this has been leading somewhere:

POULSON

Can we fast-forward a bit?

Relaxed, Mohamedou nods.

POULSON

Afghanistan. How you joined al-Qaeda.

Hold on Mohamedou.

49A      **EXT. CAMP DELTA - NEAR EXERCISE AREA - DAY - FLASHBACK**      49A

3 guards walk Mohamedou towards a cage - 15 feet by 10. They open the door, unshackle him and push him in.

50      **EXT. CAMP DELTA - EXERCISE AREA - LATER - FLASHBACK**      50

Mohamedou prays in his open air exercise cell. The tall fencing, covered in thick green mesh, allows no view of the world outside. All he can see is the sky and a sign which reads: DO NOT HARM THE IGUANAS: PENALTY \$10,000. As he finishes up his *asr salat*, he hears footsteps in the next exercise cell.

MOHAMEDOU

*May Allah accept your prayers.*

*(no response)*

*You don't perform your Asr?*

A voice responds from the next cell, we will come to know him as MARSEILLE. (**NOTE:** We never see Marseille, we only hear his voice. He speaks a mix of Arabic, French, and English).

MARSEILLE

*If your prayers led you here, what good were they?*

MOHAMEDOU

*That's where you're wrong, I always prayed to see the world. Now I pray to get home.*

Marseille can't help but laugh.

MOHAMEDOU (CONT'D)

*What's your name, brother?*

MARSEILLE

*The guards listen out for names, you can call me two-four-two.*

MOHAMEDOU

*I'm not calling you by a number. Where are you from?*

MARSEILLE

*Marseille.*

MOHAMEDOU

*Nice to meet you, Marseille. I hear  
France is beautiful.*

MARSEILLE

*Then you've never been.  
(in English)  
It's a real shit hole.  
(back to French)  
Or so I thought, then I come here.  
And you? What am I calling you?*

MOHAMEDOU

*I'm from Mauritania.*

MARSEILLE

*Okay, Mauritanian.*

MOHAMEDOU

*What does it mean, 'shit hole'?*

MARSEILLE

*You don't learn English? How do you  
know what the guards are saying?*

MOHAMEDOU

*By the time I learn, I'll be home  
already.*

MARSEILLE

*Maybe. Or maybe you'll have to pray  
harder.*

Irked, Mohamedou listens as Marseille laughs to himself.

51

**INT. FANCY DINING CLUB - DC - DAY**

51

EMMANUEL dines two CLIENTS. The WET-LUNCH CROWD enjoy \$100 rib-eyes and bottles of wine charged to company cards. Whatever joke they're sharing is interrupted by the ringing of Emmanuel's cellphone. He checks it, rejects the call --

NANCY (O.S.)

*Now I know you're ignoring me  
(smiles).*

He looks up to find Nancy standing over him, phone in hand.

EMMANUEL

*Nancy, Do you know Jeff and  
Valerie? General counsel for Spirit  
Dynamics.*

NANCY  
 Yeah, airplanes and missiles.  
 (then)  
 Why don't I grab a seat? I wanted  
 to talk about that Guantanamo case  
 of ours.

That unsettles Jeff and Valerie --

EMMANUEL  
 (to Jeff and Valerie)  
 One minute, yes?

52

**INT. FANCY DINING CLUB - LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER**

52

Emmanuel ushers Nancy away from any eavesdroppers --

NANCY  
 I need a favor.

EMMANUEL  
 Most people, they say 'please, may  
 I?', not this kamikaze bullshit.

NANCY  
 You owe me. I picked up the Slahi  
 case and got his family off your  
 back, let's be honest, that's all  
 you were hoping for.

EMMANUEL  
 (can't argue)  
 OK. What do you need.

NANCY  
 I need to corroborate Slahi's  
 testimony. There was a French  
 national detained at the same time  
 as him, Guantanamo refuse to  
 acknowledge his existence. I don't  
 have a name, just his prison ID,  
 242.

EMMANUEL  
 What can I do with only a number?

NANCY  
 He's from Marseille. Talk to DGSE,  
 see if they know where he is.  
 (off his hesitation)  
 One phone call.

Emmanuel eyes Nancy, knows he doesn't have a choice.

53

INT. INTERROGATION HUT - GUANTANAMO - NIGHT - FLASHBACK 53

Mohamedou is back with Poulson, Santiago and the translator.

MOHAMEDOU

*You realize I have never met Bin Laden, don't you?*

POULSON

But he's close to your cousin.

Mohamedou sighs - been through this a thousand times.

POULSON (CONT'D)

Co-operate and you'll go home. Start by telling me why your cousin wired you five thousand dollars from an Al Qaeda training camp.

MOHAMEDOU

*I told you this already, I'm beginning to worry about your memory.*

POULSON

Tell me again.

MOHAMEDOU

*My cousin's father was sick in Mauritania and needed money to pay the hospital bills. His son sent me the money and I paid the hospital.*

POULSON

Do you have any proof?

MOHAMEDOU

*Wallahi. Proof? You brought me here naked!*

POULSON

Let me explain something Mohamedou, you've been designated special interest.

He pulls out a typed list of names. At the top sits Mohamedou's.

POULSON (CONT'D)

You see this list? You are the highest value detainee we have in this entire facility.

MOHAMEDOU  
(unsettled)  
*Me? But I have done nothing.*

POULSON  
Convince me. Cooperate.

MOHAMEDOU  
*Yes, I want to cooperate. But how  
can I tell you what I don't know?*

Poulson throws down a mugshot of a Yemeni man. This is RAMZI BIN AL-SHIBH.

MOHAMEDOU (CONT'D)  
*I don't know this man.*

SANTIAGO stands away from the table, casually chewing tobacco with a coke-bottle spittoon. Mohamedou Focuses on the spit gently dripping down the sides of the container...

SANTIAGO  
Well he knows you. We captured him in Pakistan and I interrogated him myself. He was very co-operative.

Mohamedou studies the photo again, genuinely puzzled. He closes his eyes for a second trying to recall.

MOHAMEDOU  
*Yes, I think we met one time.*

SANTIAGO  
Wrong again, bud. Ramzi Binalshibh says he knows you very well.

MOHAMEDOU  
*That's his name, Ramzi?*

SANTIAGO  
He was a key actor in 9/11 - the 20th hi-jacker. He says he stayed with you in Germany. That you recruited him and other members of the Hamburg cell - Marwan Al-Shehhi, Ziad Jarrah

MOHAMEDOU  
(baffled)  
*He said that? It's not true.*

SANTIAGO  
You're not getting what I'm laying down, Mo.

(MORE)

## SANTIAGO (CONT'D)

We now have sworn testimony saying you were the head recruiter for 9/11. If you can't sell me on your version of events, I gotta go with Binalshibh's.

Mohamedou stares at the photo, remembering...

## MOHAMEDOU

*Yes, yes, I remember. He stayed with me only one night! It was a favor for a friend from the Mosque. My house was like that, ask anyone in Duisburg, anybody could come stay. This guy, it was late, he slept on my couch. I had to work the next day, he was gone when I got back. That's it.*

## SANTIAGO

(unconvinced)  
That's it?

## MOHAMEDOU

Thats it.

## SANTIAGO

You'll have to do better than that, Bud.

## MOROCCAN TRANSLATOR

(going off script)  
*Look brother, I've been in a lot of American interrogations. The only way to help yourself is to talk. If they want to know about a guy, tell them about the guy.*

## MOHAMEDOU

(snaps in French)  
*You don't tell me what to do! I speak more languages than you. I've seen the world! And I am not your brother!*

Mohamedou settles, reels back his frustration...

## MOHAMEDOU (CONT'D)

*Sorry, I'm tired. Can we just talk for one minute about anything else?*

Mohamedou stretches out his sciatic nerve. He would tell you otherwise, but he's beginning to feel settled here. An IGUANA creeps up on the other side of the fence. Mohamedou looks it in the eye. The Iguana's tongue flicks out. Mohamedou reaches out to touch it -

MARSEILLE

*Hey, Mauritanian, is that you?*

MOHAMEDOU

*What's up, Marseille?*

MARSEILLE

*I heard your number called for reservation last night. How was it?*

MOHAMEDOU

*Fantastic. They decided I'm innocent, I'm going home tomorrow.*

MARSEILLE

*(laughs, then)  
Look up.*

A moment later, a soccer ball flies over the partition, lands in Mohamedou's yard. The shiny new leather glints in the sun.

MOHAMEDOU

*How did you get this?*

MARSEILLE

*My interrogator, I gave her a name.*

MOHAMEDOU

*No, don't do that. Now they'll make that poor bastard suffer like us.*

MARSEILLE

*Good luck to them, I hope the CIA try to drag Omar Sharif down here.*

MOHAMEDOU

*(laughs)  
They fell for this? Are you serious? Everyone knows that name.*

MARSEILLE

*Americans don't know shit that isn't American. Kick it over.*

As Mohamedou and Marseille play 'kick-up' with the ball --

55      **EXT. SLAHI HOME - BEACH - DAY - MEMORY**

55

Mohamedou, now EIGHTEEN, plays beach soccer with his BROTHERS and other NEIGHBORHOOD KIDS. No shoes and a 'penny-flier' ball. Mohamedou bears down on goal, he takes his shot --

-- He shanks it, the ball flies wide, lands in the surf. The other players rib him for his terrible shot.

GOALKEEPER  
*I'm not getting wet.*

MOHAMEDOU'S BROTHER  
*How did you donkey that!?*

MOHAMEDOU'S MOTHER  
*Mohamedou! Come inside!*

Mohamedou's Mother calls to him from the house. He races off the pitch to merry jeers from his friends.

56      **INT. SLAHI HOME - KITCHEN - DAY - MEMORY**

56

Eighteen year old Mohamedou shuffles into the room, wary. His Mother huddles with a group of OLDER RELATIVES. An UNCLE grips a letter.

MOHAMEDOU'S MOTHER  
*A letter came from your school. You won the scholarship in Germany.*

Mohamedou grins. Bursting with pride. But his mother crying.

MOHAMEDOU AGED 18  
*What's wrong?*

MOHAMEDOU'S MOTHER  
*Alhamdulillah, they say you are an exceptional student...but we will lose you.*

She cries more and Mohamedou can't bear it. Hates to see his mother upset. Tears start to form in his own eyes.

MOHAMEDOU AGED 18  
*I won't go if you don't want me to.*

MOHAMEDOU'S UNCLE  
*(before she can answer)*  
*Of course she wants you to! This is a blessing. You will be able to help the whole family economically. Your father who would not get in a car - he could not have dreamed of this for you.*

57 OMITTED 57

58 **INT. COUCH'S OFFICE - PENTAGON - DAY** 58

Couch and his team make their way through the IRs. The walls are covered with maps, charts, photos. They've been busy. The stacks of files seem even higher. Arjun passes Couch a piece of paper.

ARJUN

Did you see they found someone to defend Slahi?

Couch looks up FBH on the computer and finds Nancy's details

NAVY JUNIOR ASSOCIATE

Sir?

(Couch looks up)

I'm kinda confused. There are so many contradictions in these reports.

He holds a couple of IR's.

COUCH

That's how it is with this raw intelligence. You gotta order them by date - see how the story develops.

NAVY JUNIOR ASSOCIATE

That's the thing. JTF interrogators, they left the dates off.. I could put a call in?

COUCH

Good luck with that. CIA won't help, they're still treating Slahi's intel as active.

COUCH reaches across, takes the IR from the Navy JAG.

COUCH (CONT'D)

(reads, surprised)

Neil Buckland....

ARJUN

Who's that?

COUCH

He was a class mate of mine at  
Quantico. He wrote up the report.

Couch sets down the file, perplexed.

59

**INT. AMERICAN LEGION BAR - VIRGINIA - NIGHT**

59

The strip-lit hall plastered with flags and photos of servicemen. A few OLD VETS dot the hall. At the bar, FIND:

Couch with his old Cherry Point classmate, NEIL BUCKLAND (30s, CIA OFFICER). The BARTENDER sets down two PBRs.

BARTENDER

That'll be three bucks.

NEIL

(to Couch, joking)

Let me get it. You can grab the tab next time we go out in Bethesda.

COUCH

How's the rental market there? Thinking of bringing Kim and the boys for the summer if this case keeps dragging out.

NEIL

That's your Gitmo thing? How's it going?

COUCH

To be honest, I'm feeling a little lost in the sauce. It'll move a lot quicker if I could find out how some of these IRs came together.

NEIL

Pff. No chance. Seventh floor's keeping all the Gitmo intel locked up tight.

COUCH

Your name's on a bunch of my case files. You were working down there when Slahi came in?

NEIL

Slahi? That's *your* guy? You must be feeling it. I hear POTUS tracks him in his daily.

COUCH

You remember anything about him recruiting Binalshibh?

NEIL

I don't know, Gitmo was churning out MFRs. The whole desk pitched in, put the reports together.

COUCH

MFR? What's that?

NEIL

Memorandum for the Record. You're working off of summaries. MFR's carry the details; who was there, techniques used, detainee transcripts.

COUCH

Could you get me access to those?

NEIL

Not without violating the Espionage act. What do you need them for anyway? We know what they did, whole world watched it go down on TV.

Couch sips his beer, feeling the pressure.

GUARD/STEVE (PRE-LAP)

Seven-sixty, reservation! Hurry the fuck up!

60

**INT. CAMP DELTA - MOHAMEDOU'S CELL - NIGHT - FLASHBACK**

60

Mohamedou sits on his bed with a small SCHOOL EXERCISE BOOK writing down English words. A guard who we will come to know as STEVE is waiting at the door.

MOHAMEDOU

(practicing his English)

I said reservation mother fucker. Hurry the fuck up.

GUARD/STEVE

Knock it off, you're not a parrot.

Mohamedou gets up and moves to the door sticking his hands through the hole.

MOHAMEDOU

Not a mother fucker parrot.

GUARD/STEVE  
(can't help but laugh)  
Come on, man, get it together.

Steve proceeds to cuff Mohamedou.

GUARD/STEVE (CONT'D)  
Turn around.

But Mohamedou doesn't.

GUARD/STEVE (CONT'D)  
Turn around!

MOHAMEDOU

First you tell me your name. You know me one year, I don't know your name.

GUARD/STEVE

I'm not allowed to do that. Turn around.

Mohamedou turns and Steve continues to do the chains. Then the door opens and Steve does the chains on Mohamedou's legs.

MOHAMEDOU

You are good soldier, like GI Joe.

Steve smiles up at Mohamedou as he finishes off the chains.

61 **INT. INTERROGATION HUT - GUANTANAMO - NIGHT - FLASHBACK** 61

Same room, Santiago and Poulson again. The Moroccan Translator struggles to keep up as Poulson shouts rapid-fire questions --

POULSON

Who recruited you to Al Qaeda?

MOHAMEDOU

(In English)

*No one.*

Poulson throws his chair against the wall. Mohamedou startled by the sudden outburst.

POULSON

You just decided to become a fucking terrorist?

MOHAMEDOU

(in English)

No, not terrorist.

(then in Arabic)

*I went to Afghanistan to help Muslims who were being oppressed by the Soviet Empire. The Americans were fighting with us! We were on the same side.*

POULSON

Who recruited you?

MOHAMEDOU

(In English)

*No one. I volunteer. You don't  
listen.*

Poulson throws his chair against the wall again.

TIME CUT. Same cell but weeks have passed. Now there is no translator. Mohamedou speaks broken English.

SANTIAGO(O.S.)

Why'd you delete all the contacts on your cellphone?

MOHAMEDOU

What do you mean?

SANTIAGO

When you were arrested your phone was wiped.

MOHAMEDOU

Is this a crime?

POULSON

Maybe. If you were protecting your contacts in Al Qaeda.

MOHAMEDOU

I was protecting my friends. So they don't have to go through what I do just because of a phone number.

SANTIAGO

You're sharp, that's why they gave you that scholarship. You meet all the criteria.

MOHAMEDOU

Criteria? What is this?

SANTIAGO

You have the same profile as the hijackers. You're a young Arab, you speak multiple languages, you studied electrical engineering and you travelled international --

MOHAMEDOU

(shouting)

What crime is any of this?!

Mohamedou paces in the shade, practicing his English, writing words and phrases in his small book.

MOHAMEDOU  
(to himself)  
Don't lie. Shut up. Where the fuck.

He brightens at the sound of the gate in the next cell.

MOHAMEDOU (CONT'D)  
*Marseille? Is that you?*

MARSEILLE  
*How are you, Mauritanian?*

MOHAMEDOU  
What you doing, mother fucker?

MARSEILLE  
*You should learn English from your books, not the guards.*

MOHAMEDOU  
*You're not impressed? What's wrong?*

MARSEILLE  
*I received a letter from my wife.*

MOHAMEDOU  
*That's good, no?*

MARSEILLE  
*A letter is not as good as a wife. You have a family, children?*

MOHAMEDOU  
(ignores the question)  
*You would rather she is in here with us? What did she say?*

MARSEILLE  
*... It's private.*

MOHAMEDOU  
*Everyone in the CIA has read it already. Come on.*

MARSEILLE  
(big laugh)  
*Fine, but don't make fun... It begins, 'my heart, I didn't know what to write as I sat down --'*

MOHAMEDOU  
*You brought it from your cell?*

## MARSEILLE

*I know it backwards already. Stay quiet, listen... 'The children are running around and I can't think. I had to wait for them to sleep...'*

Mohamedou edges closer to the fence.

## MARSEILLE (CONT'D)

*'... It feels like I haven't slept in years. When I lie in our bed, my nose remembers your scent on the pillow, my skin remembers your warmth on the sheets, and I'm scared I'll never want to leave --'*

Mohamedou lets the words carry him far away from here...

63

**INT. DUISBURG APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT - MEMORY**

63

Mohamedou makes love to his wife, Wafa (Mauritanian, 20). Despite their youth, they perform the act with an awkward formality. Their modesty lends a tenderness to the scene.

**TIME CUT:**

EARLY MORNING. Mohamedou steps out of the bathroom to find Wafa laying on her back, knees curled up to her chest.

## MOHAMEDOU

*What is that? What are you doing?*

## Wafa

*The Doctor told me this would help. Do you want a boy or a girl? I know your mother wants a grandson, but I think we would make such a pretty daughter.*

Uncomfortable, Mohamedou watches his wife on the bed...

Pre-lap:

*The sound of an excited German TV football commentator*

64

**INT. MOHAMEDOU'S DUISBURG APARTMENT - DAY - MEMORY**

64



66 OMITTED 66

67 **INT. CRYSTAL CITY - CORRIDOR - DAY** 67

Nancy and Terry walk down the distinctive cement-block corridor.

NANCY

How did your dinner go with that preppy looking guy?

At their door, Teri pulls out keys and opens up.

TERI

Reese. I cancelled.

68 **INT. CRYSTAL CITY - SECURE ROOM - DAY** 68

On the table are MULTIPLE DOCUMENT BINDERS.

TERI

That's... a lot of case files.

NANCY

Government's had a four year head start on us.

Nancy unties the first binder. Teri grabs another, joins her. Nancy flicks through the folder only to find page after page has been COMPLETELY AND ENTIRELY BLACKED OUT.

Nancy turns to Teri. Her binder is also completely redacted. Anger rising, Nancy grabs another binder...

**TIME CUT:**

Kent strolls down the row of filing cabinets, spots Nancy and Teri in the next aisle.

KENT

You didn't come see me today.  
What's the latest from your penpal?

Kent peers over the filing cabinets to find Nancy and Teri sitting in the aisle, surrounded by endless pages of redacted case files. Not a shred of usable material remains.

NANCY

The printer at the Pentagon have a hissy fit? What the fuck is this, Kent?

KENT

I'm responsible for what goes out.  
(already walking away)  
You got a problem with what comes in, take it up with the government.

NANCY

(to Teri)  
We need Mohamedou's sign off on a motion to compel. What does your weekend look like?

TERI

... Nothing I can't move.  
(rises to leave)  
I'll check the flights to Cuba.

Nancy left alone, surrounded by the redacted files. She eyes them, coiled, itching for the fight that's coming.

69           **INT. STUART'S OFFICE - PENTAGON - NIGHT**

69

Stuart at his desk, he scans the un-redacted case files (same as Nancy's) spread out in front of him. Information overload. Around him, the rest of the JAG TEAM work diligently, equally submerged in stacks of paperwork. Seidel pokes his head in the door --

SEIDEL

Stu? I'm grabbing lunch with Whit Cobb.

Couch nods, barely looks up.

SEIDEL (CONT'D)

He's gonna ask me for a trial date.

COUCH

(straightens, concerned)

We're not there yet, sir. We're still corroborating.

SEIDEL

You have 20,000 pages of evidence. FBI didn't have that much on Gotti.

COUCH

Technically, it's not evidence, it's hearsay. Slahi said this, that, and the other, but we have no idea when he said it or who he said it to.

SEIDEL

We don't give OGC a date, pretty soon they'll give us one.

With that, Seidel slips out. Frustrated, Couch stares at the whiteboard, mind turning --

70           **EXT. BETHESDA - NEIL'S HOUSE - DAY**

70

Couch's 4Runner pulls up outside a quiet home in the Maryland suburbs. A few other cars double-parked in the drive. Couch steps up to the house, six-pack in hand.

71           **INT. NEIL'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER**

71

Couch watches a Virginia Tech Hokies game with Neil and a few AGENCY TYPES. From the mood, it's clear the Virginia Techs are fighting for a win.

NEIL

Why the hell are you running it on  
third and long? Come on, man.

NEIL'S WIFE pokes her head in --

NEIL'S WIFE

I think something's burning, Neil,  
I can smell it from my office.

NEIL

(jumps up)  
Shoot, thanks, hun.

As Neil hustles out of the room, Couch sets aside his  
untouched beer, follows after him.

72

## INT. NEIL'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

72

Couch steps in, watches Neil set a large vat of Chili by the window, wafts the smoke outside.

COUCH  
Need a hand?

NEIL  
Go, go, you're missing the game.

Couch shuts the kitchen door, wary of eavesdroppers. Neil notices, knows his friend well enough --

NEIL (CONT'D)  
Man, don't tell me you didn't drive all this way for the fellowship?

COUCH  
OSD's breathing down my neck to charge Slahi, and I'm still fumbling around for a light switch.

NEIL  
Tell you what, I'll swing you an agency liaison for your task force.

COUCH  
They won't have the horsepower.

NEIL  
What are you asking for?

COUCH  
You've been on the inside of these things, how do I get the MFRs?

NEIL  
You don't, Stu.  
(off Couch's look)  
Don't lean on me, man. The raw stuff's only meant for the intel community, not evidence for trial.

COUCH  
That's where this thing's headed. And if I show up with 20,000 summaries and not a single piece of 'put it in the bag' evidence, Slahi's gonna walk.

Neil deflates, knows he's not getting out of this kitchen without giving up something.



MOHAMEDOU

You talk with her? What does she say? She's good?

TERI

She's good. She told me to tell you your brother, Yahdih? He moved back home. Your niece has a daughter, another baby on the way. If it's a boy, she'll name it after you --

MOHAMEDOU

Two children already? *Mashallah*.  
(sits, realizing)  
How long they are married now?

Before Mohamedou can disappear off the edge of despair --

NANCY

Your letters have been coming through --

MOHAMEDOU

You checked the seals, they were okay?

NANCY

Nothing's been tampered with.

MOHAMEDOU

You know this, one hundred percent?

NANCY

Yes. And we need you to keep writing, they'll be invaluable.  
(getting to the point)  
Especially since the government is refusing to disclose the evidence against you --

MOHAMEDOU

Because they have none. I keep writing, you will see, all this time.

(then, aware)

It's good, my letters? You understand everything?

TERI

They're great. You should've been a writer.

MOHAMEDOU

I will, in the next life. God  
Willing

TERI

No, really. Even the Privilege team enjoys reading them --

MOHAMEDOU

Who's reading? What is Privilege team?

TERI

(covering)

It's okay, they're separate from the prosecution.

MOHAMEDOU

You say to me, attorney-client. You're attorney, I'm client. What is fucking privilege team?

NANCY

(cuts Teri a look)

They're an independent body, they evaluate evidence, including your testimony, separate from the prosecution and the government. We have to go through them. I promise you, they don't share --

MOHAMEDOU

(explodes)

No, you cannot promise me nothing. If my guards read the letters, I am here, it's me they will fuck.

NANCY

If they leak, it's grounds to sue. The Government would be in contempt of Court.

MOHAMEDOU

Contempt? What Does this mean to me?

NANCY

We can't move forward without going through the privilege team. You have to trust me.

Mohamedou simmers, unsure...

NANCY (CONT'D)

You've gotta hang with me, Mohamedou. We haven't even gotten in the ring yet.

Mohamedou doesn't respond but Nancy takes his silence as agreement.

NANCY (CONT'D)

Good.

(slides him a form)

And I need you to sue the government.

Mohamedou laughs, the suggestion absurd.

NANCY (CONT'D)

We have to file a motion to compel so they release the evidence they have against you. We can't fight what we don't know.

MOHAMEDOU

1,460 days I have been fighting like this. FOUR YEARS.

NANCY

You want to stay here another four?

MOHAMEDOU

It's not simple like you say. They decide where I sleep, when I sleep. They decide what I eat, where I eat. I belong to them, my life can be a lot worse than this.

TERI

What do you mean worse?

MOHAMEDOU

I mean...

(covers)

I mean what I say, there is no evidence. I trust you, you trust me. I am innocent. What do you need to see to believe this?

NANCY

It doesn't matter what we believe, it only matters what we can prove.

MOHAMEDOU

You are just like the interrogators. It reminds me of an old story from home. There's a man who is super scared of chickens, like always he's hiding when he sees them.

(MORE)

## MOHAMEDOU (CONT'D)

It is so bad he goes to a psychiatrist. The psychiatrist y'know, he asks 'why you are afraid of chickens?' 'Because the chicken wants to eat me, he thinks I am corn.' 'But you are not corn, you are a big man. It would be crazy to think you are corn.' The man says, 'I know, that's why you should be talking to the chickens.'

(then)

You cannot fight for me if you are chickens and all you see is corn too.

Nancy steels over. Refuses to say the words he wants to hear, but Teri --

## TERI

Of course we don't think you're corn - or chicken, or whatever, right?

Nancy still remains mute.

## TERI (CONT'D)

We know you're innocent but we have to prove it. We can't do that unless we see the allegations against you. That's all we're asking for.

(beat)

But we can't do our job unless we see the allegations against you. That's all we're asking for.

Mohamedou softens, then --

## MOHAMEDOU

Who do you want to sue? You say government, but what does it mean?

## NANCY

There'll be three names on the lawsuit: The U.S Government, Donald Rumsfeld, George W. Bush.

Mohamedou sits back, trying to wrap his head around Nancy.

## MOHAMEDOU

(shrugs at the absurdity)  
... Yes, fuck it, why not, y'know?

74A

**EXT. GUANTANAMO BAY - LANDING STRIP - DAY**

74A

Hot, exhausted, Nancy and Teri sit on their suitcases, waiting for their plane. Ominious storm clouds sit on the horizon. Something bothering Teri, she eyes Nancy...

TERI

All he wanted to hear is that we believe he's innocent. Why didn't you just say it?

NANCY

... Think I miscalculated with the tea, I'm not gonna last three and a half hours. Need anything?

But Nancy's already crossing the tarmac back towards the D-Fac hut.

74B **INT. D-FAC HUT (DINING FACILITY) - GUANTANAMO - MOMENTS LATER**

Half gift shop, half dive bar. Couch peruses the aisles of the small store. Racks of T-shirts, 'Don't Feed the Taliban' and 'Guantanamo Golf Club'. A TV in the corner tuned to Saddam Hussein's trial on Fox News.

Couch suddenly NOTICES: Nancy, stepping out of the restroom and perusing the store. He considers for a moment -- then steps over to her.

COUCH

Miss Hollander? I'm Stuart Couch.  
(off her confusion)  
I'm lead counsel for the government on your client's case.

NANCY

... Okay.

COUCH

Trust a pilot, those storm clouds won't clear for a while - your plane won't be leaving anytime soon...Can I buy you a drink?

Nancy considers for a second --

**TIME CUT:**

Nancy sits in a window booth. She watches off-duty SOLDIERS catching the last of the days surf outside. Couch slides into the booth with a couple of beers.

COUCH (CONT'D)

I wouldn't want to post out here, but the R n' R doesn't look so bad.

NANCY

... You know one day this will all be a tourist attraction?  
(Couch laughs)  
I'm not kidding. Cruise ships from the Keys will come and dock.

(MORE)

NANCY (CONT'D)

The crowds will wander in and out of the cells with their daiquiris, trying to wrap their heads around what the hell happened here.

COUCH

What do you think is happening here?

NANCY

I don't know yet. But it was built beyond the reach of the courts for a reason.

COUCH

You got the world's second largest minefield to the north. Shark-infested waters to the south. That's two reasons.

NANCY

(not buying it)

And what's the reason you're sitting on the case files?

COUCH

I'm not. We submitted everything for discovery months ago.

NANCY

I received 20,000 pages of redacted materials.

COUCH

Then you should file a motion to compel.

NANCY

That's what I'm doing.

COUCH

I won't stand in your way.

NANCY

(skeptical)

You won't stand in my way?

COUCH

Man, you cranks always think we're trying to build some sort of lawless garrison-state.

NANCY

We're drinking beers in a prison gift shop. What else would you call this?

COUCH

The military is founded on rules and order, they won't let you out of boot-camp if you can't square a four inch fold on a bedsheet. The law says you get open-file discovery, I want you to have discovery. That way when I beat you, your client has nothing to hide behind.

NANCY

You seem pretty certain of the outcome.

COUCH

You haven't seen what I've seen.

Couch clocks a flicker of doubt in Nancy.

COUCH (CONT'D)

Let me ask you, I understand everybody has a right to a defense, but doesn't it bother you at all? Working for someone like this?

NANCY

Like what?

COUCH

A terrorist who had a hand in the murder of 3,000 innocent civilians.

NANCY

I'm not just defending him, I'm defending the rule of law.

COUCH

How very Ignatian of you.

Impressed, Nancy reassesses Couch --

NANCY

I didn't know they studied the Jesuits at Parris island.

COUCH

We like to fully consider a problem before we blow it up.

NANCY

My turn. Let me ask you, what if  
you're wrong?

COUCH

We're not.

NANCY

But what if you are? And you built  
this place, abandoned all your  
principles, and your laws, and you  
were wrong?

Caught off guard, Couch searches for a response...

CAMP INDIA MINDER (O.S.)

Colonel, your transport is ready.

They look up to find the Camp India Minder at the door.

COUCH

Thanks for the coffee.

75

**INT. CAMP INDIA - HALLWAY - DAY**

75

Couch follows a CAMP INDIA MINDER through security doors, he  
pauses at a library cart stacked with tattered books.

COUCH

What do they like to read?

CAMP INDIA MINDER  
If it's on there, it's a detainee  
request.

Couch picks up a copy of 'The Da Vinci Code' from the cart.

COUCH  
Guess these assholes love religious  
fiction.

CAMP INDIA MINDER  
They go nuts for that stuff. Look.

Camp India Minder shows Couch, the last few pages torn out.

CAMP INDIA MINDER (CONT'D)  
We like to mess with them, tear out  
the last chapter.  
(Couch is unimpressed)  
Not me. Some of the other guys.

Camp India Minder keeps walking. But Couch pauses to peer  
inside the viewing slat of a cell door.

CAMP INDIA MINDER (CONT'D)  
Your man Slahi was in this block  
for awhile.

Camp India Minder unlocks the cell door, motions Couch into --

76

**INT. GUANTANAMO - EMPTY CELL - CONTINUOUS**

76

A thin mattress and a blanket the only objects in the small,  
windowless room. Couch notices --

COUCH  
It's freezing, what do you keep the  
temperature at?

CAMP INDIA MINDER  
AC only goes down to fifty two.

Couch notices eye-bolts in the walls and the floor. They  
can't be for anything good. In the distance he can hear a  
thrash metal song

COUCH  
Two types of music I can't abide:  
country and heavy metal. And at a  
pinch I'll suck it up for country.

The Minder smiles uneasily.

77 OMITTED 77

78 **INT. GENERAL MANDEL'S OFFICE - GUANTANAMO - DAY** 78

Couch sits across from GEOFFREY MANDEL (50s). Two stars on his cammo, two ranks above his competence. His office has a view of the sea - through barbed wire.

MANDEL

They take you around India block?

COUCH

Yes, sir. And some of Delta.

MANDEL

India's where we keep the worst of the worst. But we circulated seven-sixty over to Echo last year. We reward cooperation here.

COUCH

I noticed you keep the temp low and restraints in the walls. What's that? Sleep depravation?

MANDEL

It's one of the tools in the box.

Miller shifts, obviously displeased with the insinuation.

COUCH

Defense is gonna play every card they can. If they have grounds to call duress, it's better I know now.

MANDEL

... Colonel Seidel told me you were a Naval aviator?

(Couch nods)

You went through New Brunswick? The SERE school they run up there?

COUCH

I did.

MANDEL

I take it you didn't enjoy it?

COUCH

What's not to enjoy? Three nights in the hole with a bucket to piss in. They pumped chainsaws and crying babies through the speakers round the clock. By the end of training, it got pretty loopy.

MANDEL

Did you to confess to shooting Kennedy?

COUCH

(point taken)

I did not, sir.

MANDEL

A couple sleepless nights, that's all. We pull from the same playbook. You and every other green marine made it out alright, they will too.

COUCH

... I don't know if the Colonel mentioned why I wanted to see you?

MANDEL

He did and I told him to save you the trip. He said you wouldn't take no for an answer, but I'm afraid that's the answer I have. I'm enormously proud of what goes on inside JTF, but my hands are tied, I'm not at liberty to share MFRs.

COUCH

If it's a clearance issue, sir, I'm TS-SCI --

MANDEL

It's an agency issue.

COUCH

I was told specifically, you're the man to see.

MANDEL

(immoveable)

That sounds like something a spook would say, doesn't it?

79 OMITTED

79

80 OMITTED

80

80A INT. COUCH'S CAR - DAY

80A

Kim has picked Couch up from the airport. She looks over at him. Trying to read him.

KIM  
How was it?

COUCH  
Not what I'd hoped.

KIM  
Are you ok?

Couch doesn't answer. Gazes out of the window.

CIA INTERROGATOR 1 (PRE-LAP)  
Where is Mullah Omar?

81 **INT. INTERROGATION HUT - GUANTANAMO - NIGHT - FLASHBACK** 81

A MONTAGE. A series of FBI interrogators question Mohamedou. Some whisper, some shout, some seem angry, other sympathetic. The net result is jump-cut confusion. We don't see Mohamedou himself until the end of the sequence.

FBI INTERROGATOR 2  
Where is Bin Laden?

FBI INTERROGATOR 3  
We're bombing the shit out of your  
friends in Afghanistan right now.  
What do you think of that?

FBI INTERROGATOR 4  
Did your cousin ask you to recruit  
for 9/11?

FBI INTERROGATOR 1  
Where is Mullah Omar?

FBI INTERROGATOR 3  
Give us some names!

FBI INTERROGATOR 2  
What do you mean when talk about  
"tea and Sugar"

FBI INTERROGATOR 4  
It's code isn't it?

FBI INTERROGATOR 1  
Tea and sugar is explosives!

FBI INTERROGATOR 2  
Admit it!

FBI INTERROGATOR 1  
Look at the photos!

FBI INTERROGATOR 4  
Look at them!

Suddenly we recognise the face of an interrogator: it is NEIL  
BUCKLAND - Couch's friend.

NEIL  
You killed them Mohamedou!

FBI INTERROGATOR 4  
You killed them, Mo.

NEIL  
You have the blood of 3,000  
innocents on your hands Mohamedou.

Now we see Mohamedou: confused, distraught, shaking with  
fear.

MOHAMEDOU  
No. No. It is not true!

Still visibly shaken, Mohamedou steps into the familiar patch  
of dirt. The GUARD slams the gate shut behind him. Mohamedou  
perks up, noticing the soccer ball in the corner.

MOHAMEDOU  
Marseille? You are there?

MARSEILLE  
... Yes.

MOHAMEDOU  
You are lucky, one of the other  
bastards would keep your ball.

Mohamedou picks up the ball, hurls it over. But the ball  
comes right back, bounces into Mohamedou's cell.

MARSEILLE  
I don't need it.

MOHAMEDOU  
They're moving you?  
(off silence)  
They're letting you out?

MARSEILLE  
None of us are ever getting out.

MOHAMEDOU  
They can't keep us here forever,  
*inshallah*. Don't let them take your  
faith. One day you will be home.  
(off silence)  
... Marseille is on the ocean, no?

MARSEILLE  
Yes.

MOHAMEDOU  
Nouakchott also. When I am home, I  
will lie in bed, listen to the  
waves.  
(switches to French)  
*Can you hear them now, Marseille?*

Mohamedou closes his eyes, listens... the faint sound of  
seagulls and the ocean in the distance.

MARSEILLE  
*The sea always sounds the same.  
Nouakchott, Marseille, Guantanamo.  
It never fucking changes.*

MOHAMEDOU  
*It's good. When you hear it, dream  
of home.*

MARSEILLE

*But when we're home, we'll be  
dreaming of here. None of us get to  
leave.*

Mohamedou lets that sink in...

GUARD 3 (O.S.)

Two-forty-two, let's go.

The sound of the gate opening in the next cell. Mohamedou listens as the Guard shackles Marseille and leads him away.

Mohamedou scrambles to his gate, brings his eyes up to a small tear in the mesh. He watches through the hole as MARSEILLE is led back towards the cells.

MOHAMEDOU

*Don't let them break you, brother.*

Marseille glances back over his shoulder. It's the first and only time Mohamedou sees his face. He's a young, skinny French-Algerian. Doesn't look much older than twenty.

MARSEILLE

See you later, alligator.

As Mohamedou watches his only friend disappear from view --

83           **INT./EXT. MOHAMEDOU'S NISSAN/STREET - NIGHT - MEMORY**           83

Mohamedou, on the night we met him. As he drives away from the family home, his eyes are glued to the rear-view:

His Mother stands in the street, counting out *Tasbih* (prayers) on her raised right hand. She slowly turns to dust, a gust of wind blowing her away.

TERI (PRE-LAP)

Who was your friend?

84           OMITTED           84

84           **INT. AIR SUNSHINE PLANE - MOVING - NIGHT**           84

Nancy watches through the airplane window as the lights of Cuba disappear below them. Teri in the next seat.

NANCY

We need to change the conversation.

TERI

What?

NANCY

If this case is about Mohamedou,  
we're going to lose. We need to act  
strategically.

85

**INT. FBH LAW FIRM - NANCY'S CORNER OFFICE - DAY**

85

Teri leads a WSJ JOURNALIST (40s) into Nancy's office.

WSJ JOURNALIST

Miss Hollander?

NANCY

Nancy. Have a seat.

He removes his shoulder bag, pulls out a notebook.

WSJ JOURNALIST

Before we start, I should warn you, this won't be a puff-piece.

NANCY

(unfazed)

Where would you like to start?

WSJ JOURNALIST

People have called you a 'terrorist lawyer'. How do you respond to that?

NANCY

When I defended someone charged with rape, no one thought I was a rapist. When I defended someone charged with murder, no one dug up my back yard. But when it's someone accused of terrorism - well, people like you think that's different. It's not. When I stand by my client and insist he gets a fair hearing, I'm not just defending him but you and me. The constitution doesn't have an asterisk at the end saying "terms and conditions apply".

86

**INT. STUART'S OFFICE - PENTAGON ANNEXE - DAY**

86

Couch reads the Wall Street Journal behind his desk. The article on Nancy takes a half-page spread.

NAVY JUNIOR ASSOCIATE

See the journal today, sir?

The Navy Junior Associate steps into the office, motions to his copy of the Wall Street Journal. NOTICE the rest of the Junior Associates all read the same article.

COUCH

Yeah.

NAVY JUNIOR ASSOCIATE

Can't believe she sat down for this, it's a demolition job.

COUCH

It's a paradigm shift. Yesterday we were prosecuting a terrorist responsible for 9/11. Now we're debating the merits of *habeas*.

Frustrated, Couch tosses the paper aside. He checks his watch, looks around the office...

COUCH (CONT'D)

Where's Arjun?

87

**INT. PENTAGON ANNEXE - LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER**

87

Couch paces across the lobby, towards: Arjun flanked by two SECURITY GUARDS on the other side of the Security Barrier.

COUCH

What's going on?

PENTAGON GUARD

He's not cleared to enter the building.

ARJUN

They pulled my pass.

Couch swipes through the barrier, approaches Arjun.

COUCH

(to Security Guards)

Give us a minute?

The Guards step aside, allowing Couch and Arjun some privacy.

COUCH (CONT'D)

What do you mean they?

ARJUN

I don't know, someone revoked my clearance and I have orders to return to Lejeune.

COUCH

What did you do?

ARJUN

Nothing, I sent out the information requests you asked for.

COUCH

To who?

ARJUN  
Langley, FBI, Interpol, anybody who  
touched the MFRs.

PENTAGON GUARD  
Sir, I'm gonna have to ask your  
friend to leave, he can't be here.

ARJUN  
(backing away)  
I'm going, I'm going.

Couch is seething.

88           **EXT. CAMP DELTA - EXERCISE CELL - DAY - FLASHBACK**           88

Mohamedou punts the now faded soccer ball hard against the fence. It bounces back to him. Bored, frustrated, he kicks it again and again, until... The sound of the gate next door --

MOHAMEDOU  
Marseille! I listen for your number  
all week. I thought you move to  
India block... Marseille?

An OLD MAN'S VOICE responds beyond the partition wall. He shouts back in Dari, Mohamedou has no idea what he's saying.

89           **EXT. CAMP DELTA - PATHWAY - DAY - FLASHBACK**           89

Mohamedou is being lead back to his cell. One of the guards is STEVE - the guy who laughed at Mohamedou's parrot joke.

MOHAMEDOU  
... I can ask you something? My  
friend, his number is two forty-  
two, I don't see him for a long  
time, you know where he is?

STEVE  
I can't talk about other detainees.

MOHAMEDOU  
What happened to him?  
(no response)  
Please, he has a wife, children.

They stop at a gate. Waiting for it to be unlocked.

STEVE  
... Two forty-two was found dead in  
his cell last month.

MOHAMEDOU

Dead? From what?

STEVE

Self asphyxiation.

Mohamedou stops in his tracks, takes in the news. All Steve can do is lay a comforting hand on Mohamedou's shoulder.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Sorry, bro. It's a bad deal.

They start walking again past a temporary hole in the sniper screen - perhaps the wind has blown it away. Mohamedou turns his head to look at the sea for an instant before the sniper screen starts again and the view disappears.

Pre-lap: The call to prayer.

89A **INT. MOHAMEDOU'S CELL - CAMP DELTA - DAY**

89A

Mohamedou stands in his cell and recites the Muslim Funeral Prayer, firmly but solemnly.

MOHAMEDOU

*"O God, forgive our living and our dead, those who are present among us and those who are absent, our young and our old, our males and our females. O God, whoever You keep alive, keep him alive in Islam, and whoever You cause to die, cause him to die with faith.*

Slowly we hear other voices joining in - other prisoners further down the corridor.

89B **INT. CORRIDOR - DELTA BLOCK - DAY - CONTINUOUS**

89B

We drift down the corridor, hearing the prayer coming from every cell. Each voice conjures an individual. One sounds old and broken; the next sounds like he is little more than a boy.

The GUARDS stand silhouetted at the end of the corridor, impassive.

90

**EXT. KHOST CAMP - AFGHANISTAN - DAY - MEMORY**

90

Mohamedou, now TWENTY-ONE, hair and beard long. He looks every bit the Mujahid as he grips a tripod-mounted DHsK heavy machine gun. Exhilarated, he fires a burst of rounds into a broke-down pick up truck. Target practice.

Behind him, a group of other MUJAHIDEEN TRAINEES cheer him on. Amongst them, NOTICE KARIM, cheering the loudest

COURTHOUSE PROTESTERS (PRE-LAP)  
Remember 9/11! Remember 9/11!

91

**EXT. DISTRICT COURT OF COLUMBIA - DAY**

91

Nancy and Teri shove through a small crowd of PROTESTERS on the courthouse steps --

COURTHOUSE PROTESTERS  
Remember 9/11! Remember 9/11!

In the push and shove, one of the Protestors bumps Teri, she stumbles back, rattled. Nancy grabs her, pulls her through the angry cluster --

92                   **INT. DISTRICT COURT OF COLUMBIA - ENTRANCE HALL - DAY**                   92

The Protestors kept at bay outside. Nancy and Teri step past the SECURITY GUARDS and into the large chamber. NOTICE a large portrait of George Bush Jnr. Nancy smooths over her suit, notices Teri trembling.

NANCY

You okay?

TERI

... Yeah.

NANCY

We can't ask for an adjournment.

TERI

I know, I'll be fine.

93                   **INT. DISTRICT COURT OF COLUMBIA - COURTROOM - DAY**                   93

Nancy addresses the JUDGE from the lectern.

NANCY

... If the government has 'uniquely complicated' issues clearing classified evidence, the issues are of its own making, your Honor. Mr. Slahi has been spirited across borders, interrogated and held against his will since 2001, without a single charge laid against him. The Supreme Court said it will not tolerate further delay when it ordered these cases to proceed. The government has had plenty of time.

Nancy steps back from the lectern. The Judge looks up from his papers, eyes the JAG LAWYERS on the opposite bench.

JUDGE

Thank you, Miss Hollander.  
                   (to JAG Lawyers)  
 Mr. Patton?

Nancy takes a seat next to Teri as the Government Lawyer steps up to the lectern -- she glances around, as though missing somebody. Teri notices.

GOVERNMENT LAWYER (PATTON)

Your honor, the government does not object to the defense's right to disclosure. But clearing classified evidence is an extremely time consuming process. Mr Slahi is a self-admitted member of al-Qaeda; his case is in fact uniquely complicated. We simply need more time.

JUDGE

The government has ten days to file or it will find itself back in my courtroom.

Nancy and Teri look to each other, flooded with relief. But then a puzzled expression passes over Teri's face as she looks around the courtroom, catching up with Nancy.

TERI

Why isn't Couch here?

NANCY

(already figured it out)  
Telling us he doesn't think this is a big deal.

Nancy is unreadable but Teri looks concerned.

94

**INT. CRYSTAL CITY - SECURE ROOM - DAY**

94

Kent flicks on the lights, revealing boxes and boxes of documents in Nancy and Teri's secure room.

KENT

Well, you asked for it. Happy reading.

The women stare at the boxes. Nancy is first to reach for a box - the label reads "President Bush v Mohamedou Slahi".

**TIME CUT:**

**NIGHT.** Nancy struggles to stay awake, takes notes as she flips through a file. On her notepad, NOTICE a few phrases:

*Tasked by Al-Qaeda... Well-known to German intelligence...  
Member of Hamburg Cell... Recruited for Jihad in Europe...*

NANCY

Shit - his best friend in Germany, Karim Mehdi, was arrested two years ago for planning to blow up a French holiday resort. He sold Mohamedou down the river to the French authorities. He says: "Slahi was the one who radicalised me.."

But Teri is barely listening - she's found her own bombshell.

TERI

Fuck. Fuuuuck.

Nancy turns to Teri, who stares at a case file in disbelief.

TERI (CONT'D)

He confessed.

NANCY

To what?

TERI

Everything. Financing for 9/11, recruiting the hijackers. Christ, he wrote a spreadsheet on the inner workings of Al Qaeda. Why didn't he tell us he confessed?

It takes Nancy a moment to cover her shock - but only a moment.

NANCY

It's not the first time in history a client's lied to their lawyers.

TERI

Look at all this.  
(spinning out)  
Look at this one. He admits to acquiring explosives to blow up LAX. The Millenium plot?

NANCY

What's your point?

TERI

He's guilty. He's fucking guilty.

NANCY

He still has a right to counsel.

TERI

I'm not saying he doesn't, but he helped kill 3,000 civilians and we're doing everything we can to get him out.

NANCY

We're doing our job.

TERI

I did fucking bake sales for his legal fund. That's not my job. My Dad told me I'm not welcome at thanksgiving this year. That's not part of the job.

A switch turns in Nancy, she goes back to her work.

NANCY

Then get out.

TERI

... What?

Nancy doesn't look up from her work, Teri already amputated from her mind.

NANCY

You want turkey and pumpkin pie with Mom, Dad and Uncle Joe? Get out, go home. You can't win a case if you don't believe your own shit.

TERI

I'm not trying to leave, I'm just --

NANCY

You're wasting my time. Go.

Teri struggles to hide her shock. But she's invisible to Nancy now. Teri gathers her things, leaves. Only when Teri slams the door, does Nancy stop.

She glances at the endless stacks of paperwork, it's exhausting being this alone. Nancy picks up the file Teri was reading, eyes it with trepidation...

94A INT. COUCH'S CAR - DAY

94A

Couch drives alone. Lost in thought

95

**INT. NANCY'S CONDO - ALBUQUERQUE - NIGHT**

95

Nancy steps in, rolling her suitcase behind her. Exhausted from her trip, she flips on the lights.

She takes in her empty home. Her life is still half packed in moving boxes. The walls still empty. This must be the loneliest place on earth.

MOHAMEDOU (PRELAP)

What is this?

96 OMITTED 96

97 **INT. INTERROGATION HUT - GUANTANAMO - DAY - FLASHBACK** 97

Mohamedou sits across from Santiago and Poulson. Santiago pushes forwards a pastry box.

SANTIAGO

It's our goodbye party.

Mohamedou opens the box, a Filipino coconut cake inside.

MOHAMEDOU

Who is going home? Me or you?

SANTIAGO

Military Intelligence think we're wasting our time. They're gonna take over, see if they can't get you to cooperate.

MOHAMEDOU

But I tell you everything.

POULSON

Not according to Ramzi bin al-Shibh. Last chance, Mohamedou.

Poulson slides a photo of a Binalshibh to Mohamedou.

MOHAMEDOU

No more with this bullshit. A friend from my Masjid is telling me, his friend needs a place to stay. I like to help, my house is open. I let this guy stay, one night. Next that I hear about him, he is telling CIA all kinds of crazy intels about me.

SANTIAGO

Look, bud, you're tired of saying it and we're tired of hearing it.

(MORE)

SANTIAGO (CONT'D)  
 Military want a crack at you,  
 that's what's gonna happen.

POULSON  
 You should know, once MI take over,  
 your next sessions will not be as  
 friendly as these have been.

MOHAMEDOU  
 No tea, no cakes?

Santiago eyes Mohamedou with pity, knows what's coming next.

SANTIAGO  
 Good luck, Mo. All I can tell you  
 is be truthful.

Santiago and Poulson shake Mohamedou's hand and leave. They  
 are immediately replaced by 3 guards.

GUARD 4  
 Hold your hands out.

Mohamedou complies. One of the guards pulls out a special  
 tool, takes hold of Mohamedou's hand and removes the GREEN ID  
 BRACELET that he's had on since he arrived.

GUARD 4 (CONT'D)  
 You won't be needing this where  
 you're going.

With a swift motion another guard grabs Mohamedou's precious  
 EXERCISE BOOK with his English words in it and rips it up.

MOHAMEDOU  
 What are you doing?! WHAT ARE YOU  
 DOING?!

The guards put BLACK-OUT GOGGLES on him and man-handle him  
 out of the cell while Mohamedou struggles and shouts.

97A      **EXT. GUANTANAMO PATHWAYS - NIGHT - FLASHBACK**      97A

Mohamedou struggles as guards half lead, half drag him down  
 the pathway.

98      **INT. CAMP ECHO - CELL - NIGHT - FLASHBACK**      98

A GUARD ushers Mohamedou into a cell, removes his black out  
 goggles. Mohamedou squints from the bright fluorescent  
 lights. He takes in the room.

MOHAMEDOU  
This is not my cell.

ECHO GUARD  
It is now. Welcome to ECHO block.

The Echo Guard slams the door shut behind him.

MOHAMEDOU  
Where is my Quran? Hey!

Panic rising, Mohamedou pounds on the cell door --

MOHAMEDOU (CONT'D)  
It's too cold. Hey, I freeze in  
here! Hey, listen to me!

99           **EXT. GUANTANAMO MAIN GATE - DAY**

99

The MILITARY ESCORT blankly stares ahead as he guides Nancy through the familiar gate.

100          **INT. CAMP ECHO - VISITING CELL - DAY**

100

Nancy steps in, Mohamedou is surprised when the door closes behind her. No Teri. Intermittently throughout the scene there is a flickering light behind Mohamedou. It bothers him.

MOHAMEDOU  
Where's Teri?

NANCY  
She moved on.

MOHAMEDOU  
What? Teri was fun, now I'm stuck  
with only you... She doesn't want  
to be a lawyer no more?

NANCY  
She moved on from your case.  
(off his confusion)  
We won our motion to compel. The  
government has given us all the  
evidence they have against you.

MOHAMEDOU  
That's what we've been waiting for,  
right?

NANCY  
Evidence including your  
confessions.

MOHAMEDOU  
... But they're nothing, like  
fantasy. None of that happened.

NANCY  
You signed them.

MOHAMEDOU  
You don't listen, they made me. I  
told them what they want to hear.

NANCY  
Made you as in they coerced you?

MOHAMEDOU  
What do you think?

NANCY  
I don't know, tell me.

MOHAMEDOU  
You ask me to set fire to this  
place, but y'know, I am still  
sitting in it.

NANCY  
Then write it down. That's what the  
pages are for.  
(off his silence)  
You need to tell me what happened,  
or I can't defend you --

MOHAMEDOU  
I don't need to tell you nothing.  
Whatever I say, it doesn't matter,  
I never leave this fucking island.  
Outside, my brother, my family,  
their lives go ON Teri's life goes  
ON. But here, me, I am like a  
statue. And one day you leave too,  
and your life will go ON

NANCY  
My life? You don't want to know  
about my life.

(MORE)

NANCY (CONT'D)

The wardens at eight separate penitentiaries send me Christmas cards, okay? If I walk into a courthouse, chances are the bailiffs know me by name. I'm down three marriages and I was on the wrong side of every one of them. I was a bad mother to my only son. It's hard to love someone who was never there. Because I'm here, I'm always here. This is my life. So don't question my commitment to your case.

MOHAMEDOU

You're not committed to me. My case! My case! You think I'm guilty. Say it.

(off her silence)

If you honestly believe it, that I did these things, why the fuck are you here? Really, explain to me. Your three husbands, your son, you give up those things to sit with such an evil guy like me.

NANCY

Everybody has a right to counsel.

Mohamedou's shakes his head in disbelief.

MOHAMEDOU

You're so fucked up.

NANCY

Tell me the truth. Write it down. If you can do that, I'll be back. If not... I can find you another lawyer.

Nancy steps away from the table, bangs on the door --

NANCY (CONT'D)

I'm ready.

101

**EXT. GUANTANAMO BAY - BUS PICKUP POINT - DAY**

101

Nancy stands alone with the Military Escort. The Jamaican driver pulls up in the school bus. As the door opens we hear a *Chistimas* song play from his tape deck.

JAMAICAN DRIVER

Merry Christmas, Nancy.

NANCY  
... You too, Theo.

The only passenger, Nancy glances back at the prison as they drive off.

102      **INT. MILITARY COLLEAGUE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**      102

Couch moves through a crowded Christmas party. The living room packed with off-duty MILITARY TYPES. Maybe for the first time in his life he feels on the outside of things.

He approaches Kim (his wife) locked in a conversation with the HOSTESS and Neil's Wife (HANNAH).

COUCH  
Hey Hannah, I didn't know you guys were coming.

HANNAH  
Nearly didn't, i-83's closed north of Baltimore.

HOSTESS  
I'm glad you made it in one piece.

HANNAH  
Neil thought he was back at flight school the way he was driving those country roads.

COUCH  
Where is Neil? I haven't seen him.

HANNAH  
He's around somewhere.

Couch looks around for Neil.

103      **EXT. MILITARY COLLEAGUE'S HOUSE - BACK GARDEN - NIGHT**      103

Couch steps out to find Neil sneaking a cigarette.

NEIL  
How's it going, Stu?

COUCH  
Glad I caught you. It's been a fruitless endeavor trying to get through to your office.

NEIL

What can I tell you, it's been busy.

COUCH

You can tell me why you sent me on a goose chase to Gitmo.

NEIL

It's a party, man, enjoy yourself.

COUCH

Why are you dorking me around? I know the Agency pulled Arjun off my task force.

(off Neil's look)

I've never been part of a conspiracy, but I'm starting to wonder if this is what it feels like to be on the outside of one.

NEIL

What are you accusing me of?

COUCH

Hell, I don't even know, nobody will show me anything. Without the MFRs, my case is a bust.

NEIL

You're overthinking this.

COUCH

My charge is to get Slahi the needle. No one else is sending him there, not you, not POTUS, that's on me. And if I'm wrong, when I come to my reward, I'm the one that'll have to answer for it.

NEIL

Who's gonna answer for Bruce?

COUCH

Don't bring him into this --

NEIL

No, you don't know what we know. Flight United one seventy-five, based on evidence gathered from the wreckage, the first thing the hijackers did was slash one of the stewardesses to elicit the co-pilot - Bruce - to open the cockpit door and come to her rescue. Then they slit his throat with a box-cutter. He bled out on the flight deck as the plane hit the tower. Someone has to answer for that.

COUCH

Someone. Not anyone.

NEIL

Happy fucking holidays.

Neil shoves past him. Couch stays out in the cold, watches through the window as Neil re-joins the warmth of the party.

104

**INT. FBH CAR PARK - NANCY'S CAR - DAY**

104

Nancy drives into the FBH office parking structure, a call on loudspeaker --

EMMANUEL (THROUGH PHONE)

... I talked to everyone, DGSC, DRM, Diplomatie, they don't know about your man from Marseille.

NANCY

Maybe he's not French. Algerian?

EMMANUEL

Yes, our firm has contacts in Algiers. SIS say all their nationals in Guantanamo are accounted for. There is no record of two-four-two.

NANCY

So where'd he go?

EMMANUEL

*Bof*, maybe he doesn't go anywhere, maybe he doesn't exist.

The thought of that troubles Nancy...

105

**INT. FBH LAW FIRM - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY**

105

The partner meeting already in full swing. Nancy steps in late, blanks Teri as she shuffles past the Associates --

JOHN

... Susan's still missing expense reports for the close of the year. If you haven't submitted, make sure you get them in by Friday.

(as Nancy takes her seat)

That includes any mystery flights you might've taken to Cuba.

(Nancy nods)

Friday, please.

DAVID

Any updates on Slahi?

NANCY

The government material we received is substantial. I'm currently working through it alone.

JOHN

We can't afford another body on this. It's already cost us clients; Fleetwood retail went to RBSA because they didn't like the 9/11 connection. The Journal profile didn't help.

DAVID

(ignores John)

Are we winding up or winding down?

NANCY

... I don't know.

106

**INT. NANCY'S PARKED BMW - STREET - NIGHT**

106

It is raining torrentially. The BMW parked in an empty lot. Some drunken xmas party revelers pass by under umbrellas.

Lost in thought, Nancy sits behind the wheel, chows down on a cheeseburger.

Her blackberry buzzes on the passenger seat. One notification; an e-mail from the Privilege Team.

107        **INT. STUART'S OFFICE - PENTAGON - NIGHT**

107

Late, everyone else has gone home. Lame Christmas decorations still up. Couch works alone in his office, lit by the glow of his laptop. Sensing something, he looks up to find Neil standing in the doorway.

NEIL

Don't say anything. Step outside.

Couch doesn't ask, follows Neil out to --

108        **INT. PENTAGON - ELEVATOR HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS**

108

Empty at this hour.

NEIL

The week Slahi transferred to Military intelligence, FBI's general counsel sent an email warning agents to stay away.

COUCH

Tell me you put a stop to it.

NEIL

We were ordered off the island.

It's not what Couch asked and Neil knows it.

NEIL (CONT'D)

No, I didn't put a stop to it.

A beat between them.

Neil motions to an MI CLERK standing by an elevator.

NEIL (CONT'D)

That's Bob, he's from inside the building. He'll take you where you need to go.

COUCH

Thanks.

(as Neil walks away)

Hey, what gives?

NEIL

... I don't know, man. It all looks different on the way back.

Neil keeps walking. The MI Clerk steps up --

MI CLERK  
Sir, if you'll follow me.

They step into an elevator and the doors shut.

109 **INT. PENTAGON - SCIF - NIGHT**

109

The MI Clerk scans Couch into a small anti-chamber.

MI CLERK  
I need your phone and any other  
electronic devices.

Couch hands over his blackberry. The MI Clerk then scans the door to the SCIF (SENSITIVE COMPARTMENTALIZED INFORMATION FACILITY - a fully secure workspace built within the Pentagon for viewing highly classified intelligence).

MI CLERK (CONT'D)  
I'll be waiting out here, sir.

The deadbolt in the door locks behind Couch as he steps into the small, secure room. Stacks of CIA files marked 'TOP SECRET' fill the windowless vault.

Couch pulls a file from the nearest box, takes a seat in the lone chair. And he reads.

109A **INT. MOHAMEDOU'S CO-OP CELL, CAMP ECHO - DAY - PRESENT (2008)**

Mohamedou settles down to write his account. We can see that this is hard for him...but soon he is lost in writing. His face is a torrent of emotions.

Some time LATER: We see him seal the pages in an envelope and pass them to a guard.

110 **INT. CRYSTAL CITY - SECURE ROOM - NIGHT** 110

A sealed envelope sits on the desk - Nancy tears it open:

Mohamedou's handwritten pages. Nancy slumps down, reading.

A whisper fills the silence. Unintelligible at first, but soon the voice takes shape into words. A repeated mantra: *Let the bodies hit the floor... Let the bodies hit the floor...*

111 **INT. CAMP ECHO - MOHAMEDOU'S CELL - UNKNOWN TIME - FLASHBACK**

*LET THE BODIES HIT THE FLOOR! LET THE BODIES HIT THE FLOOR!*

Exhausted, in agony, Mohamedou half stands, his shackles chained to the eye-bolt in the cell floor. A stress position. Drowning Pool's Nu-Metal anthem is pumped into the cell on full blast, strobe lights assault his eyes.

Barely able to stay on his feet, Mohamedou utters a crisis prayer under his breath --

ECHO GUARD (O.S)  
Stop with the fucking praying!

A GUARD storms in the room, wearing an LOUNGE SINGER mask --

LOUNGE SINGER  
I told you, I don't wanna see you  
fucking praying motherfucker.

-- LOUNGE SINGER kicks out Mohamedou's knee, he slams hard to the floor, almost a relief, but he's yanked up to his feet by --

WILDCAT

What you doing down there? Get up.

Mohamedou rises to face...

A FEMALE GUARD in a WILDCAT mask. REALIZE time has passed, Mohamedou has clearly not slept in days. Wildcat helps Mohamedou return to the stress position --

MOHAMEDOU

It hurts, my back, my sciatica --

WILD CAT

The Doctor told us all about it, he said you're fine. You have to drink now, here.

She forces a red jerry can of water onto Mohamedou.

MOHAMEDOU

Please, I need to sleep.

WILD CAT

You cooperate, you sleep. Now drink.

She tips the water down his throat, he chokes, too exhausted to swallow.

WILDCAT

You ready to tell us about your friends now? You wanna talk about Binalshibh? About Karim? Marwan?

As she continues to list names, Mohamedou struggles to keep his eyes open. Exhaustion taking over, his eyes shut --

112

**EXT. MAURITANIAN DESERT - NIGHT - MEMORY**

112

-- His eyes snap open.

Mohamedou is now TEN. His father is shaking him awake in his family tent.

MOHAMEDOU'S FATHER

*No sleeping! If you want to be a bedouin, you have to ride at night.*

As they get the camel's ready Mohamedou's father sings his *hida*. His soothing voice calms him, 10 year-old Mohamedou's eyes drift shut --

MALE VOICE  
WAKE UP! WAKE THE FUCK UP!

113 **INT. CAMP ECHO - MOHAMEDOU'S CELL - UNKNOWN TIME - FLASHBACK**

-- Mohamedou's eyes snap open. He's back in his strobe lit cell. His head is gripped by another GUARD, this time in a CYRANO mask. CYRANO screams in his face --

PINONCHIO  
Don't you dare sleep on me! We're stronger than you, we have more people, we'll fucking break you. Reservation, motherfucker.

He drags Mohamedou out of his cell, shoves him into --

114 **INT. SLAHI HOME - WEDDING TENT - NIGHT - MEMORY** 114

-- Mohamedou now moves through the jubilant crowd at his Niece's wedding. The WOMEN dance to the band. All the MEN jostle to talk to Mohamedou --

MALE WEDDING GUEST #1  
*Did you tell them about my nephew?  
The Americans would like him, he's very smart, like you.*

MALE WEDDING GUEST #2  
*Tell them about Yahdih! He would love to come visit you.*

Among the guests, Mohamedou notices a few MEN in orange jumpsuits, black bags over their heads.

115 **INT. CAMP ECHO - MOHAMEDOU'S CELL - UNKNOWN TIME - FLASHBACK**

Mohamedou is now dumped into a chair by CYRANO. The relief on his weakened body is palpable.

REVEAL he now sits across the table from --

CAPTAIN COLLINS  
My name's Captain Collins, I work for the Department of Defense. We've been trying for some time to move you to special projects.  
(MORE)

CAPTAIN COLLINS (CONT'D)

Your detention here required top-level sign offs. That means we will extract information from you, do you understand?

MOHAMEDOU

How many days I have been special projects?

CAPTAIN COLLINS

Can you read English?

Mohamedou nods, Collins slides an official document in front of him. His eyes struggle with the words --

CAPTAIN COLLINS (CONT'D)

Since you have refused to cooperate, the US government is authorized to arrest your mother and bring her to this facility.

MOHAMEDOU

My mother? She has done nothing--

CAPTAIN COLLINS

You can save her. But you have to decide, do you want to be a defendant or a witness?

MOHAMEDOU

I can't be a witness, I have nothing to tell you.

Collins eyes Mohamedou, disappointed. The impasse broken by the chime of a doorbell.

CAPTAIN COLLINS

You're expecting someone?

MOHAMEDOU

I don't know.

CAPTAIN COLLINS

Maybe it's your friend, answer it.

Mohamedou doesn't question the world in front of him anymore. He steps away from the table. NOTICE, his shackles are now removed. He drifts to the cell door, opens it to reveal --

-- RAMZI BIN AL-SHIBH on the other side. REALIZE Mohamedou is now in his Duisburg apartment.

RAMZI

*Mohamedou?*

MOHAMEDOU

*You must be Ramzi? Come in.*

The two men embrace with the traditional three kisses. Mohamedou leads Ramzi into the living room, motions to the rolled up sleeping bag on the sofa --

MOHAMEDOU (CONT'D)

*Make yourself comfortable.*

*(motions)*

*The kitchen is through there if you want tea, food, help yourself. The bathroom is on the left. Forgive me, I have to work early in the morning. Knock if you need anything.*

As Mohamedou heads towards his bedroom --

SANTIAGO (O.S.)

*That's it? That's what happened?*

REVEAL Santiago and Poulson watching from a dining table behind the sofa. A half eaten coconut cake on the table.

RAMZI

*These are your friends?*

MOHAMEDOU

*There has been confusion. But now we can all clear it up.*

RAMZI

*Actually, we talked until very late, all night. Mohamedou was very passionate, he recruited me to Al Qaeda. Without him, no way 9/11 would have ever happened.*

MOHAMEDOU

*No, no, that's not true --*

POULSON

*Hey, Mohamedou, have some cake.*

MOHAMEDOU

*I'm not hungry.*

POULSON

*Eat. There's nothing wrong with me.*

Mohamedou eyes Poulson, confused.

POULSON (CONT'D)  
Two, nothing wrong with me. THREE,  
NOTHING WRONG WITH ME --

Poulson lunges forwards, forces a fist full of cake into  
Mohamedou's mouth --

117 **INT. MOHAMEDOU'S CELL - CAMP ECHO - FLASHBACK** 117

-- LOUNGE SINGER force feeds Mohamedou cold MRE rations. A  
thrash metal song blasts on the cell speakers;

LOUNGE SINGER  
(shouts over music)  
Eat when I say eat, shit when I say  
shit. We're going to do this every  
day, until you admit what you are.  
(Mohamedou chokes, weak)  
Stay standing. Do not fucking sit  
down on me, asshole --

-- Unable to take anymore, Mohamedou chokes. He collapses,  
retching up the cold rations --

WILDCAT  
Hey. Sit up, sit up, you're okay.

Mohamedou is lifted off the ground, he sits up --

117A **INT. MOHAMEDOU'S CELL - CAMP ECHO - FLASHBACK** 117A

Mohamedou lies on the ground. He tries to focus his mind. All  
he can see are the holes in the wire mesh that makes up his  
cell. He starts to count them. Tracing his fingers across the  
mesh.. We see his lips move, his eyes scan...

MOHAMEDOU  
(to himself)  
4,100...4,100 holes...4,100

118 **INT. GUANTANAMO INTERROGATION HUT - FLASHBACK** 118

-- He now sits alone in a room with Wildcat. She is stripped  
to her underwear.

Time has passed in the blink of an eye. Hardcore pornographic  
images plaster the wall. Mohamedou takes in his surroundings,  
convinced he's losing his mind.

WILDCAT

Why don't you talk to me, honey? I  
can make your life so much better.  
I think we should be friends, don't  
you want to be friends with me?

Wildcat straddles Mohamedou, wraps her arms around him.

MOHAMEDOU

What, what are you doing?

WILDCAT

It's okay, I'm authorized.

MOHAMEDOU

Don't let them make you do this.

Wildcat strokes the inside of Mohamedou's leg, grabs his  
crotch. Mohamedou jerks back, shocked.

WILDCAT

Doesn't it feel good?

Mohamedou disappears into his thoughts. He compulsively  
writes on his leg with his finger as he mutters a crisis  
prayer under his breath.

WILDCAT (CONT'D)

You're praying? You shouldn't be  
thinking about God, you should be  
thinking about how wet I am right  
now...

Wildcat moans into Mohamedou's ear, grips his hair --

MOHAMEDOU

(like a prayer)  
4,100...4,100...4,100 holes...

119

**INT. DUISBURG APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT - MEMORY**

119

-- Mohamedou now makes love to Wafa in his German apartment.  
She moans in his ear, grips his hair.

WAFa

*I want a baby, why can't you give  
me a baby?*

Mohamedou stops, mortified. Wafa flips him over, as she lands  
on top of him --

-- REALIZE Wildcat now straddles Mohamedou.

WILDCAT

Why can't you give me a baby? All I  
want is a fucking baby --

Horrified, Mohamedou struggles to squirm free, but Wildcat  
pins his wrists, slams him back onto the mattress --

Mohamedou tries to reach Wildcat, to connect with her:

MOHAMEDOU

Why are you doing this to yourself?

We see the eyes behind the Wildcat mask take this in - A  
moment of humanity.

120

**INT. CAMP ECHO - MOHAMEDOU'S CELL - FLASHBACK**

120

Close on an Iguana staring at camera malevolently.

-- LOUNGE SINGER tightens the shackles on Mohamedou's wrists,  
strings him up to an eye-bolt in the wall of his cell.  
Mohamedou takes in his surroundings. He sees a ghostly orange-  
clad female figure strung up opposite him. When the figure  
lifts her head we see that it is MOHAMEDOU'S MOTHER.

MOHAMEDOU

*Mama? Is that you? Are you real?  
I'm so happy to see you.*

121

**INT. GUANTANAMO INTERROGATION HUT - FLASHBACK**

121

-- REALIZE Mohamedou is now sitting across from Wildcat. They  
look at each other.

WILDCAT

Don't you want to go home? If you  
talk, I can help get you out.

MOHAMEDOU

*... I'm going to die here.*

WILDCAT

English, say it in English. What  
did you just say?

MOHAMEDOU

How many days now I have been  
special projects?

WILDCAT

Not days. Months, Mohamedou.

As Mohamedou wraps his head around that -- Wildcat PEELS HER MASK OFF, revealing that she is an ordinary blond woman. Nothing sadistic about her. Pretty even.

WILDCAT (CONT'D)

We need this to stop, Mohamedou.  
You need to tell us what you know.  
Please.

Mohamedou is strangely affected by this. A tear comes to his eye. But just then: The door swings open. CYRANO storms in, followed by two GUARDS, clad head to toe in black. One of the Guards holds a growling German Shepherd tight on a leash, he sets it on Mohamedou --

PINONCHIO

Motherfucker, you're gone.

CYRANO cold clocks Mohamedou in the face, he collapses to the floor. His nose bursts with blood.

WILDCAT

This is my session, who told you to do this?

CYRANO and the Guards ignore her, descend on Mohamedou. They kick him in the face and ribs. The loud barks of the German Shepherd right in his ear --

WILDCAT (CONT'D)

Stop it! Stop it!

CYRANO

Blindfold, get him out of here.

A Guard pulls a bag over Mohamedou's head, yanks him up --

123

**EXT. ANOTHER INTERROGATION CELL - DAY - FLASHBACK**

123

A dripping wet black hood is removed from Mohamedou's head. He sits, shaking, soaking wet, opposite "Captain Collins".

CAPTAIN COLLINS

Your mother has been detained,  
Mohamedou.

Collins now crouches down next to Mohamedou. Intimate. Mohamedou's face completely battered. Lips and eyes swollen, dried blood cakes his nose.

CAPTAIN COLLINS (CONT'D)

Her transfer to Guantanamo has been approved.

(MORE)

## CAPTAIN COLLINS (CONT'D)

This is your last chance to cooperate.

(then, grave)

I gotta tell you, I have concerns about her safety in this all-male environment.

Collins walks away, leaving Mohamedou shattered in his chair.

124      **INT. PENTAGON - SCIF - MORNING**      124

Couch, exhausted, surrounded by open files. He's been reading all night.

Shell-shocked, Couch sets the documents aside. His mind racing.

**MOMENTS LATER.** Couch steps out of the SCIF to find the MI Clerk fast asleep in the Ante-room. He retrieves his cell phone and heads down the hallway.

125      **INT. SECURE ROOM - CRYSTAL CITY - NIGHT**      125

Nancy reads the final lines of Mohamedou's letter, her face etched with pain.

She puts the letter down. Fights back her emotions.

126      **INT. CRYSTAL CITY - SECURE ROOM CORRIDOR/OFFICE - NIGHT**      126

Fire in her belly, Nancy marches down the corridor, Mohamedou's letters gripped tight in her hand.

No one else here at this hour. Nancy pokes her head into Kent's office to find Kent watching racing on his small, handheld TV.

NANCY

How soon can you clear these?

Nancy thrusts the pages onto Kent's desk.

KENT

Is that Mo? What's the news from Cuba?

NANCY

These pages... they put my client in a vulnerable position. They need to be handled with sensitivity.

Kent eyes the pages, intrigued.

127      **EXT. FALLS CHURCH - DAY**      127

Couch, Kim and their kids walk up the front path towards the beautiful old church. They say hello to friends and family who are there to attend a Baptism.

128      **INT. FALLS CHURCH - DAY**      128

Kim takes Stuart's hand as the CONGREGATION stands. Couch can see Cathy seated ahead of them. They catch each other's eye for a moment.

PRIEST

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
the love of God and the fellowship  
of the Holy Spirit, be with you  
all.

CONGREGATION

And also with you.

MOHAMEDOU (PRE-LAP; ARABIC)

In the name of Allah, Most  
Gracious, Most Merciful. Praise be  
to Allah, Lord of the Worlds...

129      **INTERCUT: INT. CAMP ECHO - MOHAMEDOU'S CELL - NIGHT**      129

Mohamedou has positioned his battered body to pray:

MOHAMEDOU

(Arabic/translated)

Master of the Day of Judgment, show  
us the straight path; Not the path  
of those who earn Thine anger nor  
of those who go astray...

**Falls CHURCH:** The Baptism service continues:

PRIEST

Will you persevere in resisting  
evil, and whenever you fall into  
sin, repent and return to the Lord?

STUART/CONGREGATION

I will, with God's help.

He glances at Cathy, next to Kim...

**MOHAMEDOU'S CELL:** His prayers continue:

MOHAMEDOU

Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. I cannot find my way on my own. Please guide me. I am surrounded by merciless wolves, who fear not thee.

He breaks down sobbing.

**Falls CHURCH:** The Baptism service continues.

PRIEST

Will you do everything in your power to seek justice on earth and treat every human being with inherent human dignity?

This lands powerfully with Stuart, a moment of reckoning for his soul.

STUART/CONGREGATION

I will, with God's help.

**MOHAMEDOU'S CELL:** He's sitting up, his expression not unlike Stuart's, both at a crossroads.

MOHAMEDOU

Sir?

A GUARD enters (his face obscured by a MASK).

MOHAMEDOU (CONT'D)

I would like to speak with Captain Collins. (beat) Please tell him I would like to confess.

130

**INT. CAMP ECHO - MOHAMEDOU'S CELL - UNKNOWN TIME - FLASHBACK**

Mohamedou, ghostly pale and thin wears a clean **white** uniform. He chows down on McDonalds, trying to look grateful.

Across from him, Captain Collins flips through stacks of Mohamedou's signed statements.

CAPTAIN COLLINS

I much prefer these civilized conversations. I'm very happy with your cooperation, Mohamedou. But I think you've only provided 85% of what you know. I'm sure you'll provide the rest.

MOHAMEDOU  
(alarmed)  
Yes, yes, Of course.

CAPTAIN COLLINS  
Here, I brought you something.

Collins pulls out something from a bag. A small pillow.

MOHAMEDOU  
Now I can sleep.

CAPTAIN COLLINS  
Yes, now you can sleep.

Collins pats Mohamedou on the back as he steps out of the cell. Left alone, Mohamedou regurgitates the fast food he is chewing. He gets up, slowly, painfully, and flushes the food.

131

**EXT. PENTAGON - SOUTH PARKING LOT - NIGHT**

131

Seidel walks towards his CADILLAC ATS, he hits the unlock button when a voice behind him calls out:

COUCH (O.S.)

Sir.

Seidel turns around to see Couch standing there - his face stoney.

SEIDEL

Is this an inside in the warm issue, or a standing out in the cold issue?

COUCH

We can't prosecute Slahi, we don't have the evidence.

SEIDEL

He gave you multiple signed confessions, how much more could you need?

COUCH

They were given under duress, sir. Fruit of the poisonous tree. He spent seventy days in special projects, tortured. Nothing he said will be admissible.

SEIDEL

That's what they're trained to say. AQ laid it all out in the Manchester Protocol. The second you are detained, claim torture.

COUCH

This isn't coming from AQ, this is coming from our side.

(moves closer)

I read the MFRs. This guy, Kevin Wilder, some Navy reservist, Chicago PD thug, he ran the program. Sleep deprivation, water-boarding, stress-positions, flat out assault.

(MORE)

COUCH (CONT'D)

Wilder created a fictitious alter-ego Captain Collins and as such personally threatened to have Slahi's mother shipped to Gitmo to be raped by other detainees.

(disbelief)

And it's all documented, it's systemic, OSD approved. Rumsfeld's signature is on the top-sheet. The whole well's poisoned, not a single one of these cases will stand up in court. Nor should they. What's been done here is reprehensible.

SEIDEL

I don't want to hear any more about detainee treatment. Our interrogator are doing a tough job under pressure to a prevent second 9/11. Your job is to bring charges - let a judge decide what's admissible.

COUCH

I refuse to prosecute this case, sir. As a Christian, as a lawyer -

Seidel looks at him cold and hard.

SEIDEL

- what makes you think you're so much better than the rest of us?

COUCH

I'm not better than anyone else. We all took an oath to support and defend the constitution and at the very least we're miles away from that.

Seidel opens his car door, turning to Couch as he gets in:

SEIDEL

You're a traitor.

COUCH

I'm trying to do the right thing.

Couch stands there, quaking with anger as Seidel drives off.

132

**INT. CRYSTAL CITY - PRIVILEGE TEAM OFFICE - NIGHT**

132

Kent reads Mohamedou's pages, clearly disturbed. He perks up as another PRIVILEGE TEAM MEMBER steps in --

KENT  
 Go get coffee, let me finish this.  
 (off his confusion)  
 I said, go, now.

The Privilege Team member shuffles out. Kent returns to reading Mohamedou's pages...

133      **INT. FBH LAW FIRM - ADMIN OFFICE - DAY**      133

The Fax Machine chugs out a scan of Mohamedou's diary. The CLERK tears off the printout.

134      **INT. FBH LAW FIRM - BULLPEN - MOMENTS LATER**      134

Teri watches with interest as the Clerk paces across the office - now sprinkled with cheap Christmas decorations - and sets the folder down in Slahi's sealed war room. As the Clerk steps out, Teri intercepts her at the door --

TERI  
 Are those new pages from Mohamedou?

CLERK  
 Nancy told me not to talk about it.

TERI  
 (peers past her)  
 Where is she?

CLERK  
 She told me not to talk about it.

135      **INT./EXT. SCHOOL BUS - MOVING - DAY**      135

Nancy rides the bus with the usual hodgepodge of LAWYERS. The Jamaican driver bobs his head to Jimmy Buffet on the speakers. But Nancy's eyes are locked on:

A red jerry can strapped to the front of the bus. The same type used to waterboard Mohamedou.

136      **INT. CAMP ECHO - VISITING CELL - DAY**      136

Mohamedou sits with Nancy. She quietly sets out her pens and note pad. He's confused by her strange formality. The outer (solid) door to the cell has been left open. The sunlight comes in through the metal mesh.

NANCY

So, I received your correspondence,  
I think there are strong grounds to  
make the government's evidence  
against you inadmissible --

MOHAMEDOU

Then you are still my lawyer?

NANCY

Very much so.

(then)

That being said, even with all the  
help we're getting from the ACLU,  
we have an uphill struggle. It's  
now clear to me why the  
administration is dragging it's  
feet on a court date. One strategy  
to consider is releasing your  
correspondence.

MOHAMEDOU

To a newspaper?

NANCY

Or maybe a book. The court of  
public opinion might be the only  
one you get.

Nancy perks up at the sound of the *Adhan* (call to prayer).

NANCY (CONT'D)

Do you need me to step outside?

MOHAMEDOU

We can keep going.

NANCY

You don't want to pray?

MOHAMEDOU

Why do you care? You are religious  
now?

NANCY

I don't. I care about you.

Mohamedou eyes her with suspicion.

MOHAMEDOU

What do you need me to sign Nancy?  
Who am I suing today? God?

NANCY

No one today.

MOHAMEDOU

Then why you are here?

NANCY

No reason in particular, I just  
didn't want you to be alone.

Mohamedou takes comfort in that. The two of them, alone,  
together in this place.

137 **INT. COUCH'S HOME - OFFICE - NIGHT**

137

Couch peers through his window, watches as a car pulls into  
his driveway below. The driver obscured from his view.

Tense, Couch listens as the doorbell chimes. Kim greets the  
visitor at the door. Footsteps as she leads him upstairs.

KIM (O.S.)

He's right through there, let me  
know if you need anything.

Couch takes a breath, braces himself as the door opens... The  
WSJ JOURNALIST steps into his office.

WSJ JOURNALIST

Colonel Couch, thanks for agreeing  
to the interview.

COUCH

Call me Stu, have a seat.

Couch watches, anxious, as the WSJ Journalist sits down,  
takes out his pen, notepad, and recorder...

138 **INT. COUCH'S OFFICE - PENTAGON - DAY**

138

Couch clears his desk, the framed photo of Bruce Taylor's  
funeral the last piece in the box. He avoids the gawks of his  
Junior legal team. They all have a copy of the Wall Street  
Journal with Couch's picture on the front page.

139 **INT. PENTAGON - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS**

139

Couch steps out. Seidel glares at him from down the hall.  
Couch holds Seidel's glare and then nods defiantly to his  
colleagues as he leaves.

140

**INT. TRUCK-STOP DINER - DAY**

140

An 'outside of the beltway' greasy spoon. Nancy is seated with a beer, watching the door. She sees a man walk in and waves: Couch walks over and sits (signaling to the SERVER he'll have a beer, too).

NANCY

Thanks for schlepping all the way out here.

COUCH

Not a problem - I'm not really a welcome presence most places inside the beltway.

A smile.

NANCY

I wanted to say thank you. You did the right thing.

COUCH

My Christmas list just got a little shorter, that's for sure.

NANCY

Can't be shorter than mine.

The server brings his beer.

COUCH

But I think God pays for what he orders; one way or another, he'll make it work out.

Nancy stares at this strange creature opposite her.

NANCY

You really believe that?

COUCH

I do.

They each take a slug of beer.

NANCY

You know, I think I figured out why they built the camp down there. We were both wrong. It wasn't the detainees they wanted to keep out of the courts, it was the jailers. My client's not a suspect, he's a witness.

Couch looks at her for a moment.

COUCH

Did you ever look in box 32?

Nancy is puzzled.

COUCH (CONT'D)

The factual return. Box 32. It's  
labelled "Translations" but there's  
something in there you might want  
to see.



TERI

That's Marseilles. The IRC helped  
me find him. I spoke to Samia, his  
wife.

Nancy looks at the man in the photo - he's hardly more than a  
boy.

Teri moves towards the door -

NANCY

What are you doing? Come in, close  
the door. We've got a lot to do.

That's about as much reconciliation as she'll offer. But it's enough for Teri, she steps in, closes the door behind her.

143 **INT. DISTRICT COURT OF COLUMBIA - SECURITY CHECK IN - DAY 143**

Nancy and Teri pass through the metal detector. NOTICE President Obama's official photo overlooking the hall.

**SUPER: District Court of Columbia, August, 2009.**

COURTROOM DEPUTY (PRE-LAP)  
This is civil action 05-569,  
Mohamedou Slahi vs Barack Obama...

144 **INT. DISTRICT COURT OF COLUMBIA - COURTROOM - DAY** 144

Nancy and Teri occupy one bench, the NAVY JUNIOR ASSOCIATE and a couple of other JAG OFFICERS on the other. Behind them, a row of anonymous MEN IN SUITS. Intelligence officers.

COURTROOM DEPUTY  
Nancy Hollander and Theresa Duncan  
with the ACLU represent the  
petitioner, Joseph Folio and Rodney  
Patton represent the respondents.

The COURTROOM DEPUTY addresses the court as JUDGE ROBERTSON (70) prepares his notes. NOTICE the courtroom is sealed, the benches largely empty.

JUDGE ROBERTSON  
Good morning everybody. Before we  
start here, I'd like to ask the  
government counsel to please  
explain this very impressive array  
of gentlemen sitting around the  
periphery of my courtroom.

NAVY JUNIOR ASSOCIATE  
(nervous)  
Your Honor, they are  
representatives, here to... during  
the session, inform us when we are  
switching between declass and  
classified modes, Your Honor.

JUDGE ROBERTSON  
Can the government counsel explain  
who or what they are representing?

NAVY JUNIOR ASSOCIATE  
I'm unable to divulge that, your  
Honor.

NANCY

They're all called Bob, and they  
work in communications.

Nancy's joke gets a laugh from Judge Roberts, but the Men In Suits remain stone-faced.

JUDGE ROBERTSON

Alright. Now, our proceedings here  
should be viewable by the  
petitioner. Has this all been  
explained to him?

NOTICE a TV set in the corner of the room. Mohamedou's pixilated face on the screen.

TERI

Only informally, in the last few  
minutes before you came in...

145

**INT. CAMP DELTA - MOHAMEDOU'S CELL - CONTINUOUS**

145

Anxious, Mohamedou sits in front of a TV screen, the court proceedings playing via video link. Currently, there's audio, but no video. Steve the guard fiddles with the cable --

MOHAMEDOU

You don't know what you're doing,  
let me help.

GUARD/STEVE

Chill, Mo, I think I got it.

TERI (THROUGH TV)

... We did explain there would be  
times where we would be muted, so  
he doesn't think it's a mistake.

Frustrated, Mohamedou reaches around the back of the TV set.

MOHAMEDOU

I know how to fix this, it's what I  
do for work. Trust me.

Camp Six Guard steps aside, Mohamedou switches around a few cables... A moment later, the video feed turns on. A blurry image of the courtroom appears on the screen.

JUDGE ROBERTSON (THROUGH TV)

Good morning to Guantanamo. I'm  
Judge Robertson.

(MORE)

JUDGE ROBERTSON (THROUGH TV) (CONT'D)  
 We've had some preliminary  
 discussions of the procedures we'll  
 follow today. Does the petitioner  
 have any questions?

MOHAMEDOU  
 He is asking me? I am the  
 petitioner?

JUDGE ROBERTSON (THROUGH TV)  
 What's he saying? I can't hear him.  
 Open that line a little wider.

A flurry of activity in the courtroom as BAILIFFS futz with  
 the technology.

MOHAMEDOU  
 He can't hear me? It all works  
 here, why can't they hear me?  
 (panic rising)  
 Can you hear me? Can you hear me?

JUDGE ROBERTSON (THROUGH TV)  
 That's it, we got him.

MOHAMEDOU  
 You hear me? Can you hear me now?

JUDGE ROBERTSON (THROUGH TV)  
 Yes, we're getting you.

MOHAMEDOU  
 No joking, everyone can hear me?

NANCY (THROUGH TV)  
 We can all hear you, Mohamedou.

MOHAMEDOU  
 You are certain? You can hear me?

NANCY (THROUGH TV)  
 Don't worry, everyone can hear you.

The simple idea that his voice will be heard startles  
 Mohamedou. NOTICE he nervously traces prayers into his thigh.

On the TV, the banal bureaucracies of the court continue, but  
 we STAY on Mohamedou.

JUDGE ROBERTSON (THROUGH TV)  
 Now, do counsel anticipate opening  
 statements?

NAVY JUNIOR ASSOCIATE (THROUGH TV)  
Yes, Your Honor.

JUDGE ROBERTSON (THROUGH TV)  
And will the Bobs determine them to  
be classified or unclassified?

NAVY JUNIOR ASSOCIATE (THROUGH TV)  
There'll be at least one  
classified, Your Honor...

Mohamedou's eyes remain wide and alert. But as his fate is decided in a courtroom 1300 miles away, the anguish of eight years imprisonment finally catches up to him. He struggles to hold it together.

JUDGE ROBERTSON (THROUGH TV)  
Is the detainee going to testify?  
He understands he doesn't have to?

NANCY  
Yes, your Honor. He wants to. He's  
fighting for his life and he has  
nothing to hide.

COURTROOM DEPUTY  
Mr Slahi, would you please raise  
your right hand and repeat after  
me.

Mohamedou raises his hand.

COURTROOM DEPUTY (CONT'D)  
I

MOHAMEDOU  
I

COURTROOM DEPUTY  
State your name

MOHAMEDOU  
State your name.

The entire court has a burst of giggles. Mohamedou becomes even more nervous.

COURTROOM DEPUTY  
Say your name.

MOHAMEDOU  
Mohamedou Ould Slahi.

COURTROOM DEPUTY

I solemnly swear to tell the truth,  
the whole truth and nothing but the  
truth

MOHAMEDOU

I solemnly swear to tell the truth,  
the whole truth and nothing but the  
truth.

JUDGE ROBERTSON

Go ahead, detainee.

MOHAMEDOU

Thank you, your honor.

(then)

Where I come from, we know not to  
trust the police. We know the law  
is corrupt and the government uses  
fear to control us.

(MORE)

## MOHAMEDOU (CONT'D)

But then I moved to Germany as a teenager, for the first time I experienced living where people don't fear the police. Where they believe the law protects them. For me, and for so many people in the world, America is like this. Even in Mauritania we have watched 'Law and Order' and Ally Mcbeal! And when I first arrive at Guantanamo, I was happy - because I trusted in American Justice. Never did I believe I would be eight years a prisoner without trial. That the United States would use fear and terror to control me.

All my time here I have been told: "You are guilty." Not for what I have done, or what has been proved, but because of suspicions and association. (Beat)

Forgiveness is part of my religion. But if you have a problem with the United States, you will have that problem forever. My captors will not forgive me for something I have never done. But I am trying to forgive. I want to forgive, because that is what Allah wants.

(Beat)

For this reason, I do not hold a grudge against those who abused me. In Arabic, the word for "free" and "forgiveness" is the same. And this is how, even here I can be free.

(Beat)

For eight years, I have dreamed about being in a courtroom. Now that I am here, really I am scared to death. But I hope I can find peace, because I believe this court is guided by law, not fear. So I can accept whatever you decide, Your Honor. May God forgive us.

145A

**EXT. GUANTANAMO PATHWAY - SOME WEEKS LATER - DAY**

145A

Nancy and Teri walk towards the regular interview room accompanied by a MILITARY ESCORT. They turn as though to enter the hut -

MILITARY ESCORT

You're not in there today, Maam.  
You've been cleared to visit 760 in  
his own cell.

Surprised, Nancy and Teri walk on.

MILITARY ESCORT (CONT'D)  
 (conspiratorially)  
 We're all praying he gets out of  
 here.

Nancy is struck by the simple decency of this soldier.

145B INT. MOHAMEDOU'S CO-OP CELL - CAMP ECHO - DAY

145B

This is where Mohamedou has been housed ever since he "co-operated" - separate from the other detainees. Out front he has a little patch of earth that he has turned into a garden. The cell itself is relatively spacious by Guantanamo standards, the shelves are stacked with books and dvds). There is a Biblical quotation tacked to the wall: **What profits a man if he gains the whole world but loses his soul?**

Nancy and Terry step in to find Mohamedou already on his feet, arms wide open --

MOHAMEDOU  
 My lawyers!

He wraps them both in a massive hug.

MOHAMEDOU (CONT'D)  
 When I am back in Mauritania, you will come to my house, I will show you off to everyone in Nouakchott, 'I know the best lawyers in the fucking world!'

TERI  
 I look forward to it.

Nancy sits down, already back to work --

NANCY  
 In the meantime, we need to prepare for the Government's appeal --

MOHAMEDOU  
 What can they appeal? We won.

NANCY  
 They're gonna jam this in the courts, but we'll be ready --

MOHAMEDOU  
 Wait, how long is this?

TERI

We can't say for sure.

MOHAMEDOU

You knew already they would do this?

TERI

The government's a sore loser. Obama was embarrassed by some of the coverage in the US press which called him "soft on terrorists".

MOHAMEDOU

But why you don't tell me?

NANCY

We can only fight what's in front of us.

MOHAMEDOU

This whole place is in front of me, around me, everywhere. How long until I go home?

NANCY

... We don't know. But we'll be here as long as it takes.

Mohamedou is crushed - but as he looks from Nancy to Teri he knows that they will do everything they can for him.

CUT TO BLACK.

CARDS OVER BLACK

*I remained in custody and never saw my mother again. She died in 2013.*

*Nancy and Teri were as good as their word, they visited me on alternate months for over a decade.*

*In 2015, a redacted version of my letters to my lawyers was published with the title "Guantanamo Diary". The book brought public attention to my case.*

*I was finally released on October 17th 2016, having spent 14 years and two months in prison.*

*I was never charged with any crime.*

