

VERVE

THE PROMISE

Written by

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(Based on a true story)

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BLACKNESS.

QUICK, FAINT BREATHEs of a person on the run...

LEGEND: THIS IS BASED ON A TRUE STORY.

EXT. STREET -- DAY

Tears streaming her face, SORAYA AFSHAR (30s) hurries down a crowded street. She stops a beat, out breathe. Tries to keep it together. People look at her. Concerned. She focuses on the BANK a few blocks away. Needs to get there.

LEGEND: ESFEHAN, IRAN - 1951

INT. ESFEHAN BANK -- DAY

On her knees, fingers interlocked, Soraya sobs hysterically to the BANK MANAGER (40s) standing before her.

SORAYA
Please. Please you have to help me.
I've got no one else...

Bank manager looks at her. Helpless.

BANK MANAGER
I'm sorry. There's nothing I can
do.

Watching the proceedings from across the room are ATA SALMANPOUR (late 20s) and a fellow bank MALE CO-WORKER. Intelligent eyes with jet black hair, Ata glares with concern at what's going on. Co-worker leans into him.

MALE CO-WORKER
From what I heard she said her
husband and baby son were in some
sort of car accident and she needs
money to pay for their operation.
Supposedly it's a matter of life
and death.

ATA
You think she's lying?

MALE CO-WORKER
I know you're the hot shot moving
up the ranks but down here on the
floor, we have to deal with all
sorts of people who come up with
the wildest stories just so they
can get our money.

Ata hasn't taken his eyes off Soraya. He watches as the Bank Manager walks away from her. It kills her.

Moments later...

Soraya is still on her knees when a SHADOW falls over her. She looks up to find Ata standing over her. He bends down and offers his hand.

ATA
Hi, I'm Ata. I can help you.

We slowly fade to black.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF TEHRAN -- DAY

Sunlight bathes a rural district of low end CANOPIED HOUSES.

A MAN sweeps the front porch of his home. This is REZA AFSHAR (20s). Shaved head. A VISIBLE SCAR THAT RUNS FROM THE TOP OF HIS HEAD TO HIS CHEEK. Every year it fades a little but not enough for people to stop noticing.

LEGEND: TEHRAN, IRAN - 1979.

INT. BEDROOM, REZA'S HOUSE -- DAY

Reza glares at himself in the mirror. Unhappy with the shape of his tie. Unties it. Does it up again. On the mantelpiece are various PICTURE FRAMES of Reza with his WIFE and TWO YOUNG SONS. He finishes doing up his tie. Still not content.

REZA
You think the tie is too much?

His wife, GOLNAR (20s) appears behind him.

GOLNAR
Why are you so nervous?

REZA
I'm not nervous. I just want today to go smoothly.

GOLNAR
A tie doesn't make you who you are. Your actions do. And you should be proud of what you've done.

She wraps her arms around him.

GOLNAR (CONT'D)
Cleric Hussein wouldn't have given this to you if he didn't think you were the right person. You earned this.

He looks at her. Grateful.

REZA
What would I do without you?

GOLNAR
Very little.

He smiles. She goes to lean in for a kiss when the SOUND OF SCREAMING CHILDREN breaks the moment. They look at each other. Not surprised.

GOLNAR (CONT'D)
I'll get them ready.

INT. KITCHEN -- LATER

Reza stares out the window as he sips his cup of tea. On the counter is a SMALL BLACK RADIO. During the RADIO BROADCAST we hear the THUNDEROUS CHANTING of a large crowd of people.

RADIO BROADCASTER
...after over 450 years of a
monarchial rule, Iran has now
become an Islamic state. Gone is
its king, Reza Shah Pahlavi, the
often divisive ruler who governed
their nation for over 38 years and
in his place comes Ayatollah
Ruhollah Khomeini, the exiled
cleric who has returned to lead his
country into a new era...

Golnar appears in the kitchen doorway.

GOLNAR
If only they could be like this
every morning.

Behind her, SEPAN (5 yrs old) and SEPER (7 yrs old), wait obediently by the front door. He winks at them playfully. They both smile back.

EXT/INT. TRUCK -- DAY

A BEATEN UP TRUCK eases through a series of streets that have recently experienced a large demonstration. There were countless of these in the late seventies all across the country.

Images of AYATOLLAH KHOMEINI, turbaned, elderly, thick white beard, soul piercing eyes are scattered everywhere. Across walls. On cars. Shop windows. Occasionally, on the ground, we see a torn up banner of the Shah.

We drive through many impoverished neighborhoods. Old men and women, weathered and helpless. Children roam the streets.

In the back, Sepan and Seper giggle as they whisper private jokes to one another. The sound of their laughter brings a smile to Reza's face.

EXT. SCHOOL -- DAY

A RUN DOWN SCHOOL on the outskirts of the capital city. Outside the front doors, a GROUP OF MOTHERS drop off their children. Reza watches his sons run into the building.

He spots a SLOGAN spray painted on the perimeter brick wall reads: *KHOMEINI WILL AVENGE US*. His face hardens.

EXT. PRISON -- DAY

OVERHEAD SHOT of the most notorious prison in Iran. A forboding group of WEATHERED CONCRETE FORTRESSES. A place of a pain and suffering.

LEGEND: EVIN PRISON, TEHRAN

EXT. PRISON -- DAY

The truck pulls up to the main SECURITY GATES where a SECURITY GUARD comes to the driver's side.

REZA
I'm Reza Afshar. The new warden.

INT. REZA'S OFFICE -- DAY

TWO SHEETS OF PAPER ON A DESK. A LONG LIST OF NAMES AND CORRESPONDING ADDRESSES COVER BOTH SIDES.

Reza is at his desk on the phone. While he talks he repositions the objects on his desk. He moves the PICTURE FRAME OF HIS FAMILY to one corner. Considers it. Moves it slightly. Considers it again. Somewhat content.

REZA (ON THE PHONE)
Yes, Cleric Hussein. Thank you, I have everything I need. Everyone's been very welcoming.

A KNOCK to the door. Afshin (30s), gigantic, enters. Reza waves him in. Afshin comes in, instantly eyes the LEATHER WHIP, coiled, on the ground near the desk.

REZA (ON THE PHONE)
Yes, I have the list in front of me. I'll get on it straight away. Thank you again for this opportunity, Cleric.

Reza puts down the phone. Considers Afshin.

AFSHIN
They're ready for you.

INT. LARGE ROOM -- DAY

A roomful of PRISON GUARDS. Some seated and some standing. Reza is up front, SHEETS OF PAPER (with the names) in one hand. As he speaks, he scans the men's faces. They need to know what he's capable of.

REZA

I know a lot of you have been here longer than I have and maybe there's some resentment why I was given this job over you but that's not my concern. We have a tough job on our hands and I expect everyone to help me run this prison. I take this job very seriously. It provides for my family and it's going to help shape the future of our country. I hope you all feel the same way.

He holds up the TWO SHEETS OF PAPER.

REZA (CONT'D)

There are two hundred and fifteen names on this list. These are men who have wronged and betrayed this country. They will all be arrested and brought here to face justice.

The room is silent.

REZA (CONT'D)

Get ready to welcome them.

EXT. STREET -- DAY

Downtown. Busy street. ROAR OF AN ENGINE as THREE MILITARY TRUCKS careen the corner. Thunder down the street.

INT. MILITARY TRUCK -- DAY

A DOZEN REVOLUTIONARY GUARDS. Young. Shaved heads. Some CLOCK RIFLES. Others sit motionless. Intense eyes.

EXT. UPSCALE NEIGHBORHOOD -- DAY

Picturesque, gated mansion community.

A WOMAN'S SCREAM breaks the serenity.

The gates of one such mansion WRENCH OPEN as REVOLUTIONARY GUARDS escort out an ELDERLY MAN (60s) in handcuffs.

FAMILY MEMBERS physically restrain the hysterical WIFE (60s) as she screams after her husband.

Revolutionary guards shove the Elderly man into the truck.

INT. MILITARY TRUCK -- DAY

In the back of the truck, Elderly man comes face to face with SIX MEN, across two wooden benches. Some suited, others in regular attire. All high-profile. All extracted with force from their lives.

They all sit in silence, shell-shocked, demoralized, as the military trucks pull away.

EXT. BUILDING -- DAY

A TOWERING BUILDING in the heart of the city. A large SILVER PANEL outside the front door reads: BANK OF IRAN.

INT. HALLWAY -- DAY

A YOUNG LADY, secretarial type, heads down a long stretch towards a door. A sign on the door reads: ATA SALMANPOUR.

INT. BOARDROOM -- DAY

Large expansive room with a large mahogany desk at one end and a conference style table at the other.

SIX SUITED MEN sit around this table, in a heated discussion. At the head is ATA SALMANPOUR, now in his 50s and Deputy Governor of the Bank of Iran. Trusted cigarette in hand, he's dressed in a BLACK SUIT and BLACK TIE.

Young lady enters. Ata meets her eyes. She nods to him. It's time. As he stands everyone stops and turns to their leader.

ATA
Gentlemen keep going. I'll be back
in a few hours.

EXT. APARTMENT BLOCK -- DAY

In BLACK ATTIRE, a group MEN and WOMEN make their way into an upscale residential building.

INT. LOUNGE -- DAY

CLOSE ON A FRAMED PICTURE ON A TABLE.

NASSER ANSARI (70s). Handsome. Receding hairline.

Ata is at a lectern before a room full of MOURNERS.

ATA
I had known Nasser Ansari for over
thirty years. He meant many things
to many people. He was a devoted
husband. A loving father. But to
me, above all, he was a good man.
(MORE)

ATA (CONT'D)

It is said that most men become old, they never become good. To be good is a lifetime's work. But that didn't apply to Nasser. He always did the right thing. That's the type of man he was. The type of a man that I've aspired to become.

INT. LOUNGE -- LATER

GUESTS pay their condolences to Mrs. Ansari (70s) as she greets them with dignity and respect.

In the main room, GUESTS are in conversation with one another, including BEHZAD (40s) Nasser's business manager who speaks to a suited OLD MAN. SAID (50s), receding hairline talks to a LADY. We'll meet both these men later on.

HAYAT SALMANPOUR (50s), regal, eases through the crowd. Catches sight of her husband on the balcony.

EXT. BALCONY -- DAY

Ata and Hayat stand side by side, overlooking the sprawling view. He has another cigarette in tow.

HAYAT

That was beautiful.

ATA

You don't think it was over the top?

HAYAT

It was perfect. Nasser would've appreciated it.

ATA

You know he's probably cursing all of us right now. Figuring out how God's going to get all these people out of his house.

HAYAT

I'm sure he's already in deep negotiation with him.

He smirks as he takes at his cigarette. She slide him a look.

HAYAT (CONT'D)

How are *you* doing?

He nods faintly.

ATA

I'm okay.

She knows he isn't but doesn't probe further.

HAYAT
 I need to buy a few things for dinner tonight, why don't you come and keep me company? It'll take your mind off things. We could even stop by that toy store and buy Morad his birthday present.

ATA
 I'm taking care of that.

HAYAT
 On your own?

He looks at her. Playfully insulted.

ATA
 Yes, on my own. I'm the Deputy Governor of the bank of Iran. I think I'm perfectly capable of choosing a present for my grandson.

She smirks as she tilts her head to one side.

HAYAT
 I'll believe it when I see it.

ATA
 ...and you'll see it. I've already been to the store. Got my eye on a few things.

They both enjoy the playfulness of their exchanges.

HAYAT
 Well? You want to come?

ATA
 I can't. I've got to go see Nasser's lawyer after this and then I have to head back to work. With everything that's going on, we're putting out hundred fires a day. It's total chaos out there.

She nods faintly. Looks at the view. Masks her disappointment like she's done all her life.

HAYAT
 I can't wait to see what you get him.

He half turns to her as he takes another drag of his cigarette.

EXT. COMMERCIAL BUILDING -- DAY

FOUR STOREY GLASS BUILDING in the financial district.

MOUSSAVI (V.O.)
Thank you for coming in today...

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM -- DAY

Ata sits across from a lawyer, HAMID MOUSSAVI (50s), bald and bespectacled. There's a DOSSIER OF PAPERS before him.

MOUSSAVI
I know this is a very hard time for you but as Mr. Ansari's lawyer, he was very clear with me that as close to after his death as possible, I was to leave this in your possession only.

Moussavi slides a SEALED ENVELOPE across the table. A handwritten word on the front: ATA.

ATA
What's inside?

MOUSSAVI
I don't know.

Ata grabs the envelope. Considers it.

ATA
Should I open it?

MOUSSAVI
No.

ATA
So what do I do with it?

MOUSSAVI
Mr. Ansari has asked that you keep it for him. Don't tell anyone about it. Don't show it to anyone. Not even your family. An American man will be in touch. Give the envelope to him and only to him. That's very important.

Ata leans forward. Ill at ease.

ATA
What is all this about, Mr. Moussavi?

MOUSSAVI
All I can do is tell you what Mr. Ansari has asked of me. I know nothing else.

ATA
Well I need more.

Moussavi understands his skepticism.

MOUSSAVI

I understand this is difficult to take in. I often tell people to go away, spend some time to think about what's been asked of them. In this case, I think you should know that he didn't trust his family with this. Only you.

Ata looks at the lawyer. The words linger in the air.

The room falls silent.

INT. TOY STORE -- NIGHT

A few customers at this time of night. One of them is Ata. He descends an aisle. Toys stacked across each shelf.

He stops by a row of STAR WARS branded SATCHELS. Double takes on the image. Drawn to it.

DARTH VADER, wielding his red florescent light-saber in battle with LUKE SKYWALKER, on the ground, his blue saber held high, intersecting Darth's saber. Fighting to stay alive.

Ata stares. Transfixed. Vacant eyes. Haunted by the image.

EXT. STREET -- NIGHT

Busy neighborhood. Hustle and bustle of city life. WILD HONKING makes heads turn as MILITARY TRUCKS hurtle down the street. On their way to make their next arrest.

INT. MILITARY TRUCK -- NIGHT

TWO YOUNG REVOLUTIONARY GUARDS up front.

GUARD
(driving)
Who's next?

SECOND GUARD checks the SHEET OF PAPER.

GUARD 1
Ata Salmanpour.

EXT. STREET -- NIGHT

Moments later, at the end of the street from where the trucks appeared, a BLUE CAR careens into shot. Slicing its way through traffic. In pursuit of the trucks.

INT. CAR -- NIGHT

TOM CHAMBOLL (40s) is at the wheel. An American of Lebanese descent with a sturdy build, scruffy jet black hair and a five day stubble. An IRANIAN MAN sits next to him. He speaks with an American accent.

IRANIAN MAN
We're not going to get there, Tom.

Tom pounds his foot down on the accelerator.

TOM
Yes we will.

EXT. ATA'S HOME -- NIGHT

A ROLLS ROYCE pulls into the driveway. Exterior gates slide shut. No lights are on in the house. Ata gets out of the car.

INT. ATA'S HOME -- NIGHT

Door swings open. Ata enters. THREE BAGS OF TOYS in hand. He flicks on the lights. Total silence.

INT. KITCHEN, ATA'S HOME -- NIGHT

Ata appears in the doorway. PLATE AND CUTLERY still at the table. As usual, he never made it to dinner.

INT. BEDROOM -- NIGHT

A door is gently pushed ajar. Ata appears through the crack. Watches Hayat sleeping soundly. He softly closes the door.

INT. OFFICE, ATA'S HOME -- NIGHT

An IRANIAN SONG plays in the background.

At his desk, Ata stares at the SEALED ENVELOPE. He turns it over. Goes to open it then stops. Rests the envelope on the desk. Eyes move to a PICTURE FRAME:

PICTURE -- Ata and Nasser at a dinner party. Arm in arm. Despite their twenty year age difference, there is kinship between these two.

EXT. STREET -- NIGHT

A MAN WALKS HIS DOG along a quiet residential street. Suddenly, a CONVOY OF MILITARY TRUCKS thunder past him. The Dog barks. The man tracks the trucks disappear round a bend.

INT. OFFICE, ATA'S HOME -- NIGHT

Ata takes his cigarette pack. Pulls a cigarette. Goes to lights it when...

BANG! A MASSIVE THUD FROM OUTSIDE. MEN'S VOICES. THUMPING BOOTS. GROWING LOUDER...

Ata rises. Startled. Goes to the window where he sees REVOLUTIONARY GUARDS march up the driveway to the house.

His face goes white. What's going on? He goes to rush out. Remembers something. Hurries back to his desk. Grabs the envelope...

BANG! BANG! They're at the front door.

Too late. Needs to hide the envelope. Eyes dart the room. Double takes on the STAR WARS SATCHEL ON THE FLOOR near the other BOXED TOYS. Stares it. Mind racing.

INT. MAIN HALLWAY -- NIGHT

The front door BURSTS OPEN as REVOLUTIONARY GUARDS charge in. Ata hurries down the hallway to intercept their path.

ATA
What the hell are you doing?

REVOLUTIONARY GUARD
Ata Salmanpour, you're under arrest.

They grab him, cuff him. No time for to react.

ATA
What! What for?

REVOLUTIONARY GUARD
Treason. Get moving...

ATA
What have I done?

Hayat rushes downstairs, adjusting her nightgown.

HAYAT
What's going on?! Get away from him!

REVOLUTIONARY GUARD
Lady, stay back!

HAYAT
I said get away from him!

She goes for him but guards block her path.

ATA
Hayat no...

Ata steps forward. Locks onto her eyes.

ATA (CONT'D)
Hayat, look at me...

HAYAT
What's going on? What are they doing here?

ATA
Look at me...

She looks at him. Lost. Scared. Tears stream her face.

ATA (CONT'D)
This is a mistake. Just call the lawyer and get him here. He'll know what to do. It's going to be fine. I promise.

HAYAT
Ata...

They shove Ata out. She tries to keep hold of him but the guards yank him away. She watches from the door, helpless, as they take her husband down the driveway.

In the distance, we see the BLUE CAR parked up.

INT. CAR -- NIGHT

Tom watches Ata being pushed into one of the military trucks.

IRANIAN MAN
Are you sure he has it?

TOM
The lawyer gave it to him today.

Tom starts the car.

IRANIAN MAN
So where are they taking him now?

Puts it into gear. Beat.

TOM
To hell.

EXT. ROAD -- NIGHT

The convoy of military trucks surge along a winding road towards the illuminated prison buildings in the distance.

EXT. COURTYARD, PRISON -- NIGHT

Floodlights illuminate the courtyard. TWENTY DETAINEES lined side by side. Reza, Afshin and several guards surround them.

Reza runs his eyes over their scared faces. Amongst them -- Ata, SAID VARZI (50s) a suited BUSINESSMAN and ABBASS MASSOUD -- shaven head (50s) still in POLICE ATTIRE. Ata and Said, who are old friends, exchange a faint trepidation nod.

REZA

You're all here because the Islamic Republic of Iran has labelled you traitors for colluding and siding with the previous regime. You will remain here until the government decides on the penalty for your actions. Just like our country is under new leadership, so is this prison. There are rules which have to be obeyed. These rules are here to keep the order. You follow these rules or face the consequences. No exceptions.

He moves down the line. Lets the words sink in.

REZA (CONT'D)

Each of you will be escorted into a room where you'll write down every aspect of your life. The address of all your homes. How much money you have in your bank account. Your wife's bank account. Your kids' bank accounts. Put it all down...

INT. ROOM, PRISON -- NIGHT

Ata sits at a table. A SHEET OF PAPER and PENCIL before him. SASSAN (20s), a chunky guard, overlooks him.

SASSAN

Start writing.

INT. HALLWAY -- NIGHT

Ata and Sassan descend a dimly lit hallway.

REZA (V.O.)

Once you've finished, you'll be taken to your cell where you'll wait for your verdict.

INT. CELL -- NIGHT

Ata enters. FOURTEEN out of TWENTY mattresses are occupied. He moves to an empty mattress.

REZA (V.O.)

There will be twenty of you in each cell. Any outbursts. Any fighting, you face consequences. You will be respectful and obedient to the guards. If you don't, you face the consequences. You will not be permitted any outside contact until the government has reached a verdict. Lastly...

INT. COURTYARD -- NIGHT

Reza continues with his speech.

REZA
Should you try to escape, you will
be executed. Keep to those rules
and we won't have a problem.

INT. CELL -- DAY

There are TWENTY MEN in this cell.

From the window, more helpless PRISONERS disgorge from
military trucks. Positioned side by side awaiting the warden.

Ata glares at the proceedings with grim eyes.

BUSINESS EXEC (O.S.)
This is barbaric!

BANG! BANG! TALI (40s), a SENIOR MANAGING DIRECTOR thuds at
the STEEL DOOR.

TALI (CONT'D)
Hello! Hello! We want some water!

BOBAK
Cut it out! They're not coming.

BOBAK (50s) was a politician in the Shah's government.

TALI
I haven't eaten or drunk anything
in one day.

BOBAK
Get a grip. Don't you want to know
why we're being sentenced without a
fair trial?

ANOTHER BUSINESS EXEC
They have no right to do this to
us.

SAID
They have every right. They can do
whatever they want.

They all turn to Said.

SAID (CONT'D)
Why do you think we're all here?
This was a coordinated attack. This
government wants total control and
the best way to do that is get us
out of their way.

TALI

So what do we do? How do we get out of here?

SAID

We give them what they want. A confession.

MASSOUD

Give in? Are you crazy?

SAID

If we atone for our mistakes. Show them they're right, they'll show us mercy.

MASSOUD

Said, you do what you want but I'm not bowing down to them! And neither should the rest of you.

SAID

So what do you propose?

MASSOUD

Nothing. We do nothing. They're not going to do anything to us. They want to keep us here to scare us. Show us who's in charge...

BOBAK

Really? We can't call anyone. See anyone -- you think they're doing this to flex their muscles?

MASSOUD

What are they going to do? We run this country. Anyone who's anyone is in this prison. Who do they think is going to run this country? The clerics?

TALI

Why should we listen to a murderer?

Massoud whips him a look.

MASSOUD

What did you say?

TALI

You heard what I said. You're the one who ordered his men to kill those protestors. You murdered twenty kids that day!

ATA

Leave him alone.

Everyone turns to Ata upstanding with his back to the wall.

ATA (CONT'D)
We're all equals in here.

TALI
You think what he did was right?

ATA
I think we need to stick together.
We're here because they want to
send a message to the country. So
we can either argue and fight or we
can stay united. Just like they
are. So if I were you, I would
settle your differences because
we're all going to need each other.

No one responds. No one moves an inch.

A shattering silence descends upon the room.

EXT. PRISON -- NIGHT

A GUARD patrols a perimeter wall.

INT. HALLWAY, PRISON -- NIGHT

Dimly lit stretch. Nothing stirs.

INT. REZA'S OFFICE -- NIGHT

Reza glares at a thick STACK OF PAGES. The handwritten life stories of each prisoner. Afshin stands before him.

REZA
There are two hundred and fifteen
names here. We do three every night
until this pile is finished. No
exceptions. No delays.

AFSHIN
Why don't we just kill them all at
once?

Reza BANGS his fist on the table.

REZA
Because I decide when they die, not
you!

The ferocity startles Afshin.

REZA (CONT'D)
Do you know why we made them write
all this? Because we're going to
take everything from them. Their
houses. Their money. Their
reputation. They will suffer like
they made our people suffer.
(MORE)

REZA (CONT'D)
They don't have the luxury of a quick death. You make sure every guard in this prison understands that.

Afshin says nothing. Reza hands him THREE PAGES.

REZA (CONT'D)
Here are the first three names.

INT. HALLWAY -- NIGHT

THREE PRISON GUARDS march down the hallway.

INT. CELL -- NIGHT

KEYS RUSTLE outside the door. Prisoners crane up. Alert. Door swings as a GUARD marches in.

GUARD
Mehdi Varbashtarian.

Everyone looks around, silent, until...

ELDERLY MAN
I'm Mehdi.

ELDERLY MAN (from the opening scene) raises a hand.

GUARD
Come with me now.

INT. HALLWAY, PRISON -- NIGHT

As soon as they exit the cell, the guard HANDCUFFS Elderly.

ELDERLY MAN
Where are you taking me?

GUARD
No talking.

He slides a BLACK HOOD over Elderly's head.

ELDERLY MAN
No please....

The guard pushes him down the hallway where TWO MORE PRISONERS are being HANDCUFFED and HOODED.

EXT. COURTYARD -- NIGHT

Tied to THREE WOODEN POSTS, prisoners let out FAINT, TERRIFIED breathes. The end is near.

The guards pace back. Raise their rifles. Take aim...

INT. CELL -- NIGHT

...SHOTS ring out in the cell.

SOMEONE

Oh my God, they shot them!!

Everyone's UPSTANDING, HYSTERICAL, SCREAMING...

Ata's face hardens. Lips tremble. Takes a deep breathe as if to breathe life into his lifeless body but all he can hear is Bobak, slumped beside him, SOBBING HYSTERICALLY.

ATA

Bobak, stop it.

Bobak can't stop the tears.

ATA (CONT'D)

Don't let them see you like this.

Bobak snaps back at him.

BOBAK

Why? What difference does it make?
They're going to kill us all.
They're going to shoot all of us.

Ata stares. Numb. Helpless. He catches eyes with Massoud and those eyes are filled with fear. Massoud turns away, his indignation assumed.

EXT. COURTYARD -- DAY

ROWS OF PRISONERS in the last chorus of a Muslim prayer. Guards surround them. Watch vigilantly.

As prayers come to an end, prisoners are granted a short time to socialize and exercise. We focus on some of the prisoners. Some crying. Some trying to keep it together. All look drained and haggard.

At one end of the courtyard, across two benches are Said, Bobak, Massoud and Ata.

Massoud watches the adjacent courtyard. Fenced off. Housing hundreds of the non-traitor PRISONERS. A few of them look at Said and Ata. Pointing. Laughing. Clearly talking about them.

MASSOUD

Look at the way they're look at us
like we're the criminals. Makes me
sick. They're the animals.

Some of the prisoners laugh. Wave at him. Goading him.

SAID

Relax, Massoud. Stop trying to make
a scene.

Massoud relents still eyeing them up.

SAID

Does anyone have any leads on the guards?

BOBAK

I asked some of the others but I got nothing.

ATA

I do.

SAID

Really?

ATA

I think I recognized one of them but he works in the other block.

BOBAK

How do you know him?

ATA

I knew his father. It was a few years ago but he and his father came to see me. They wanted a loan for the father's business. The banks wouldn't lend him the money so I introduced him to a few people.

MASSOUD

...and now you think he's going to help you? Repay his debt by making miracles happen?

SAID

Why do you have to be so cynical?

MASSOUD

Because these people don't give a shit who we are or what we've done. They want us dead. Either we know the guards or we find another way.

ATA

What's the other way?

MASSOUD

If you want to get a message out, we need to do it through the people who know this place best.

Massoud points to the prisoners in the adjacent courtyard.

MASSOUD (CONT'D)

Those animals.

ATA

You think they would help us?

MASSOUD

You would need to get to them first which is a problem considering they hate us. And even if you do, you need to give them money -- which we also don't have.

They look at one another. Troubled. At that moment, Tali hurries over. Holding onto something under his shirt.

TALI

Guys, huddle up. Look what I found.

He quickly lifts his shirt to reveal a FOLDED NEWSPAPER.

ATA

Where did you get that?

TALI

Found it in the toilets. It's yesterday's paper. There's nothing in here about us. Not one article. We've been gone a week and I can't find anything on us. It's like none of this ever happened.

MASSOUD

Why does that surprise you, moneybags?

TALI

Why don't you shut your mouth, murderer?

Massoud grabs his shirt, drags him forward. The NEWSPAPER DROPS TO THE GROUND. Said and Bobak pull Massoud away.

SAID

Cut it out now!

Bobak eyes the guards. No one saw anything.

SAID (CONT'D)

What's wrong with you two?

TALI

He started it.

Only person not involved is Ata. He's frozen. Eyes glued to the floor. He picks up the newspaper. His face changes.

On the FRONT PAGE is an image of NASSER ANSARI. The BIG HEADLINE above it reads:

DEAD BUSINESSMAN STOLE CONFIDENTIAL
GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS.

Eyes scan the article. Focus on ONE sentence:

...anyone caught with the documents
will be deemed a traitor and
sentenced to death...

Ata lowers the paper. Mind racing. World spinning. The realization hits him hard. Said turns to him.

SAID
Ata, are you okay?

Ata bolts away. Across the courtyard. Shouldering past men. Eyes widening. Heart pounding. Charges to the main building.

INT. HALLWAY, PRISON -- DAY

Door BURSTS open, Ata falls into the hallway. Scans the area. Clocks Sassan walking away from him.

ATA
Stop!

Sassan turns as Ata bombs towards him.

ATA (CONT'D)
I need to speak to the warden.

Sassan readies his rifle.

SASSAN
Step back!

ATA
No please. It's an emergency...

Sassan clocks his rifle.

SASSAN
I said take a step back or I shoot
you right here!

Ata raises his hands. Terrified.

ATA
Okay. Okay. I'll go. Don't shoot.
Please...

He takes a few steps. Stops. Has to say something.

ATA (CONT'D)
I have money.

SASSAN
What?

ATA
I can give you what you want. I can
arrange it for you. Whatever you
want. Any amount. I just need to
speak to my wife. Please if...

BAM! Sassan THUMPS him in the head. Ata hits the ground.
Blood all over the face.

SASSAN

You think you can buy me?

He pounds Ata's head. Body. Unrelenting. Doesn't stop. Ata's curled up. Protecting his face but the blows come harder and harder. He won't be able to defend himself much longer.

Suddenly, a BLARING SIREN explodes throughout the prison.

Sassan stops. Panting. Looks around. Annoyed.

SASSAN

Shit.

He looks down at Ata. Grinning with malice.

SASSAN (CONT'D)

You hear that sound, you piece of shit? That's sound of death.

INT. HALLWAY -- DAY

SIRENS STILL WHIRL in the background. Reza and Afshin march down the hallway. Reza's face is apoplectic.

REZA (V.O.)

How many tried to escape?

INT. TOILET -- DAY

TWO LEGS PROTRUDE FROM A VENTILATION OPENING. GUARDS try and ease out the PLUMP PRISONER. Every time they pull, he SCREAMS IN AGONY. Reza and Afshin watch by the door. Sassan and another guard are behind him.

AFSHIN

Just him. We found him like this.
Can't seem to get him out.

REZA

Who helped him?

AFSHIN

We still don't know.

Reza turns to a DEJECTED GUARD seated in the corner.

REZA

What's his story?

AFSHIN

He's been with us for a year. Nice guy. Well liked. Said he let the prisoner go to the toilet, came in and found him like this.

REZA

Make sure he wasn't involved.

AFSHIN
(re: the prisoner)
What about him?

Reza slides his cold black eyes to the prisoner.

REZA
Bring him to me.

INT. HALLWAY -- NIGHT

Nothing stirs along the stretch of cells.

Until...

THUMP. THUMP. THUMP. THREE GUARDS, their backs to us, descend the hallway. Move to their assigned cells. Rifles in hand.

It's that time of night again.

INT. CELL -- NIGHT

Only SEVENTEEN MEN remain in the cell.

Door bursts open. Sassan enters. Prisoners scurry away like rats. Petrified.

SASSAN
Bobak Rahbar.

Bobak scrambles away. Frantically shakes his head.

BOBAK
No. Not me. Please no...

Sassan goes to go after him when he clocks Ata. Slumped on the ground. Bruised. Dried blood across his face. Barely recovered from the earlier beating.

SASSAN
You.

Ata opens his eyes to him.

SASSAN (CONT'D)
You're coming instead.

Room falls silent. Everyone freezes.

SASSAN (CONT'D)
I said get up.

Ata doesn't move. Can't.

SAID
He's hurt.

Sassan raises his rifle .

SASSAN
Are you a fucking a doctor?

SAID
No.

SASSAN
So shut your fucking mouth.

Sassan points the gun at Ata. Glares. Killer eyes.

SASSAN (CONT'D)
Get up or I shoot you in front of
everyone here. Your choice.

Ata's face hardens. Grits his teeth pushes himself up. Goes to stand. Almost falls but keeps upright. Pain is unbearable.

SASSAN (CONT'D)
This what happens when you're
stupid enough to try and buy off a
guard.

EXT. HALLWAY, PRISON -- NIGHT

A stretch of steel doors on both sides. Each lead to a windowless cell. We'll come to know this stretch very well.

CRACK! SOUND OF A WHIP...

INT. WINDOWLESS ROOM -- NIGHT

PLUMP PRISONER HANDS ARE TIED TO A CEILING HOOK. Reza, bare chested, wielding his LEATHER WHIP, appears behind him.

REZA
You don't want to answer that's
fine but you'll tell me what I want
to know. This is what I'm here to
do. To get answers.

Prisoner lets out a faint breathe.

REZA (CONT'D)
Give me the names of the prisoners
who helped you.

Reza's hand tightens around the whip's handle.

REZA (CONT'D)
I said give me their names. Give'em
to me...

He WHIPS him....

REZA (CONT'D)
Give'em to me!

...and again...and again...

REZA (CONT'D)
Give'em to me! Give'em to me!

INT. TOILET -- NIGHT

A row of clean cubicles.

A MAN THROWS UP. Toilet FLUSHES. Reza exits. Goes to the sink. Draws water. Wets his face. Afshin enters.

REZA
What is it?

AFSHIN
The guards decided to choose
another prisoner instead one of the
three selected.

Reza doesn't react. Rubs his wet hand along his neck.

AFSHIN (CONT'D)
I've replaced his paperwork so
there aren't any complications. I
can take it to your office if you
want.

REZA
Leave it here.

Afshin nods. Places the SHEET ON THE TABLE BY THE FAUCET.

REZA (CONT'D)
Why?

AFSHIN
Why what?

REZA
Why did they choose another
prisoner?

AFSHIN
He tried to bribe one of them.

Reza nods, barely interested.

REZA
Anything else?

Reza looks at him as if to say get out.

AFSHIN
That's all.

Exits. Reza wipes his face with a towel. Eyes glare down to the sheet. Double takes. Sees something. Grabs the paper. Eyes go wide. Something serious. Something very serious.

INT. HALLWAY -- NIGHT

Reza charges down the hallway. Needs to get there.

EXT. COURTYARD -- NIGHT

Prisoner's hands are tied around wooden posts. Heads still covered with a hood. Guards stand twenty feet from them.

INT. HALLWAY -- NIGHT

Reza turns a corner. Sees a SHAFT OF LIGHT at the far end of the hallway. Leads to the courtyard...

EXT. COURTYARD -- NIGHT

Prisoners cry. This is it for them.

INT. HALLWAY -- NIGHT

Reza's a few metres from the open door.

SHADOWS from the courtyard swoop across the hallway. They're ready to shoot. He's not going to make it...

EXT. COURTYARD -- NIGHT

Guards take aim.

BANG!

Guards look at one another as Reza strides out. His gun emits a PLUME OF SMOKE.

REZA
Take off their hoods.

Guards are slow to react.

REZA (CONT'D)
Now!

A guard hurries over to remove their hoods.

Reza mutters something to one of the two remaining guards. The guard nods in Ata's direction.

Reza takes a step forward. Eyes fixed on Ata. Reza takes in a small gulp of air. Can't believe who's standing before him.

Sensing the guards glaring, he reasserts his demeanor.

REZA
Shooting's been postponed.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM -- NIGHT

Bare room. One window. Ata sits at a table. Still blindfolded, head bowed down, arms tied. Across from him is Reza. He sits in the shadows. Staring. In total silence.

Reza leans in. Face more visible. Eyes filled with emotion. Wants to speak to this man. Say what he has to say but he doesn't. Fights that urge with everything he has in him.

He snaps up. Ata jolts. Terrified. That pains Reza even more. He goes to the door, pulls it open and walks out.

Ata doesn't moved an inch.

INT. ESFEHAN BANK -- DAY (1951)

Soraya sits at a desk. Nervous. Clutching her handbag. Avoids eye contact, conscious that the staff are glaring at her.

Across the room, the young Ata and male co-worker stand in front of the desk of a SENIOR MANAGER.

SENIOR MANAGER

Are you sure you want to use the money in your account?

ATA

Yes.

Senior bank manager eyes the male co-worker. Wants him to slap some sense into him. Picks up the phone.

MALE CO-WORKER

You do realize that you're about to give money to a woman who's never going to pay you back.

ATA

If it saves her son then I'm okay with that.

Co-worker can't believe it. He's not relenting.

MALE CO-WORKER

Ata, you *just* met this woman...

ATA

Look just -- I know you're trying to help but I've been in that woman's position before and someone came to my help. So trust me -- this is the right thing to do.

Senior bank manager puts the phone down.

SENIOR MANAGER

It's done.

ATA
Call that hospital right now!

Ata pats Co-worker on the shoulder as he hurries away. Co-worker looks at the manager. Both bemused.

Ata comes over and sits behind the desk in front of Soraya.

ATA
The money's been transferred.

Soraya can't quite believe it. Her eyes well up.

SORAYA
Thank you. Thank you so much. I
don't know what to say...

Tears stream Soraya's face.

ATA
Go be with your son.

Soraya looks at him. Nods. Emotional.

SORAYA
Reza.
(beat)
My son is called Reza.

EXT. CEMETERY -- NIGHT

Reza stands before TWO GRAVESTONES. They read: SORAYA AFSHAR and DARIA AFSHAR. He dusts the dirt off the top of the headstones. Looks out to the horizon. Holds his stare.

INT. KITCHEN, REZA'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Reza sits across from Golnar. Dinner plates before them. From her expression, Reza has just told her the news.

GOLNAR
Are you sure it's him?

REZA
I checked his file. He worked at
the same bank she went to. I think
I went there once when I was a boy.
Met with him.

She leans back. Can't quite handle the situation.

GOLNAR
Did he recognize your surname?

He shakes his head lightly.

REZA
I don't think so.

She looks at him.

GOLNAR
Are you going to tell him?

REZA
No.

GOLNAR
You don't think he should know?

REZA
The less he knows the better. I
can't risk the others finding out.

GOLNAR
What are you going to do?

REZA
For the man who saved my life?

He looks at her with uncertain eyes.

REZA (CONT'D)
Is it wrong to say I don't know?

She holds his hand. Gives him hope.

INT. REZA'S OFFICE -- DAY

From his fifth floor office, cigarette in hand, Reza watches the courtyard of prisoners. Tracks Ata as he converses with Said and Massoud.

Reza takes a drag. Pondering. Checks his watch. Thinks of something. Puts out his cigarette.

INT. HALLWAY, PRISON -- DAY

Afshin is in discussion with several PRISON GUARDS. One of the guards is mid story. Afshin sees Reza approaching and instantly pulls away from the group.

AFSHIN
Good morning, Reza.

REZA
I want to do a full security review
this week. Get everything ready. I
want to make sure we haven't missed
anything.

AFSHIN
Didn't they do one four months ago?

REZA
It was three months ago.

Afshin half nods. Confused.

AFSHIN

And you want to do another one?

Reza steps forward. Gets in his face.

REZA

Do you know what I did before I got this job? I was a senior lieutenant at a military base. I got that position by working hard, listening to my superiors and never asking pointless questions. You want to get to where I am one day, here's some advice -- do as you're told or I'll find someone else who can. Is that clear enough for you?

Afshin nods once. Humiliated.

REZA (CONT'D)

I want it done this week.

Reza goes to go but remembers something.

REZA (CONT'D)

And bring me the building blueprints and guard timetables to my office. I want to look through them myself.

Reza marches away. Afshin masks his annoyance. NEARBY GUARDS look away. He knows they heard. That irritates him even more.

INT. CANTEEN, PRISON -- DAY

HUNDREDS OF HAGGARD PRISONERS munch on their tasteless food.

Ata sits with Said at one table, in the midst of a heated discussion. He still has NOTICEABLE BRUISES from yesterday's beating.

SAID

What was inside the envelope?

ATA

I don't know.

SAID

You didn't check?

ATA

No.

SAID

Why the hell not?

ATA

Because my dead friend told me not to.

SAID
Your dead friend was up to something serious and now he's got you involved. You need to find out what's inside that envelope.

ATA
Who cares!

A few prisoners look their way. Ata simmers. Leans in.

ATA (CONT'D)
Did you hear what I told you? The newspaper said any person found with those documents would be executed. She doesn't know she has them, Said. Do you understand? If she finds them, God knows what she'll do or who'll she speak to. I need speak to her. To warn her. I don't know how I'm going to do that. I don't know...

Ata stops. Emotional. Trying to keep it together.

SAID
We'll find a way. I promise.

Said spots Afhsin approaching the table. Stops talking.

AFSHIN
Salmanpour. Get up and follow me.

Ata looks at Said. Apprehensive. Slowly gets up.

ATA
What have I done?

Afshin glares at him.

AFSHIN
Warden wants to see you.

INT. REZA'S OFFICE -- DAY

Ata sits across from Reza. Both nervous and apprehensive at their first encounter.

REZA
Some tea?

ATA
No.

REZA
Food?

ATA
No.

REZA
Cigarette?

ATA
Please.

Reza hands him a CIGARETTE and LIGHTER.

REZA
My wife's banned me from smoking at home. She's read somewhere that they're supposed to kill you. But I enjoy them too much.

ATA
Me too.

Reza considers the file in front of him. Ata's file.

REZA
So you're the deputy Chairman of the Bank of Iran. That's quite a powerful position.

Ata nods. Keeps limited eye contact.

REZA (CONT'D)
It says here you started as a teller at the Esfahan bank?

Ata nods again. Reza acknowledges it.

REZA (CONT'D)
You know that's also where I'm from. My father used to be a farmer but also cleaned the tea house in the central square. It was the one with the black tiles and red curtain at the back -- I don't know if you remember it...

Ata shakes his head.

REZA (CONT'D)
His name was Abass Afshar. My mother was Soraya Afshar...

Reza looks at him. No signs of recognition from Ata.

REZA (CONT'D)
Well, it was a long time ago.

Reza rests his cigarette. Considers Ata.

REZA (CONT'D)
We're trying to change the way we do things around here and one thing we want to do is reward those who behave and punish those who don't -- and from what the guards have told me, you're behaving. So I'd like to offer you something.

Ata looks at him. Not sure where this is headed.

ATA
You're asking me?

REZA
Yes. Is there anything you want?

Ata pauses a beat.

ATA
I'd like to see to my wife.

REZA
You can't. That's not possible.

Reza sees the disappointment in his eyes.

REZA
Is there anything else?

Ata looks at him. Sensing an opening.

ATA
Can I call her?

Reza considers him a long beat.

REZA
Maybe.

Ata looks at him.

ATA
Really?

REZA
We'll have to be discreet but I'm prepared to make that happen if you keep this between us. Can I trust you with that?

ATA
Of course.

Reza stubs out his cigarette.

REZA
Then let's see what we can do.

A wave of goodness rushes through his body.

EXT. MOSQUE -- DAY

KEENING SIRENS summon the faithful. A group of YOUNG MEN hurry in a local Shi'a mosque.

INT. MOSQUE -- DAY

YOUNG MEN on their knees before CLERIC HUSSEIN, (50s) jet black eyes, hoarse voice who imparts his fervent rhetoric.

CLERIC HUSSEIN
Islam belongs to the oppressed, not the oppressors. Islam is for equality and social justice. Islam represents the slum dwellers, not the palace dwellers. Islam will free the hungry from the clutches of the rich. Islam will punish those that have defied and wronged us...

Cleric clocks a REVOLUTIONARY GUARD by the back door. They exchange a brief look. He re-addresses the group.

CLERIC HUSSEIN (CONT'D)
Islam will free Iran. Long live the Islamic Republic of Iran.

INT. RESIDENTIAL STREET -- DAY

A SPORTS CAR parks up on a quiet street. BEHZAD JAFFAR, Nasser's business manager, gets out and makes his way into his APARTMENT BLOCK.

INT. HALLWAY, RESIDENTIAL BLOCK -- DAY

Behzad heads down the corridor. Removes his keys. YOUNG KIDS play at the far end. Don't notice him. Never have. He unlocks the door, steps inside...

INT. APARTMENT -- DAY

...AN ARM WRAPS AROUND HIS NECK. COVERS HIS MOUTH. A SECOND PERSON TIES BOTH HANDS. BEHZAD'S EYES BULGE IN FEAR. HE FIGHTS. KICKS. SCREAMS. THEY OVERPOWER HIM...

INT. APARTMENT -- LATER

Behzad is in a chair. HANDS AND LEGS TIED. Black tape across his mouth. Terrified eyes. Mumbles something. Pleading.

Cleric Hussein sits across from him. Calm. Eyes on his prey.

CLERIC HUSSEIN
I gave a sermon this morning about change, Mr. Jaffar. The tidal wave of change that is sweeping our nation. It's transforming our politics, our beliefs, our people. Did you know that some men have been given new roles in the government?

(MORE)

CLERIC HUSSEIN (CONT'D)
Important roles to shape the future
of this country. I'm one of them.
I'm a man of God but I am also
tasked with our national security
and that includes the information
flowing in and out of this country.

Behzad mumbles something. Cleric pays no attention.

CLERIC HUSSEIN
We had a deal with Mr. Ansari. He
helped us and we were going to help
him -- and because he didn't get
what he wanted, he took what was
not his. Those documents belong to
us, Mr. Jaffar and I can't let them
get into the wrong hands. That will
make me look very bad and that's
something I won't tolerate.

Cleric gets up. Goes to the window.

CLERIC HUSSEIN (CONT'D)
We've searched his home. All his
offices. So I can only assume he's
given them to someone he trusted.
Someone in his inner circle. His
family have disappeared. So has his
lawyer. And then there's you, his
loyal business manager.

The CHILDREN play just outside the apartment door. Behzad's
eyes move to the door.

CLERIC HUSSEIN (CONT'D)
You tell me you don't know where
the documents are or where Ansari's
lawyer is -- I believe you, Mr.
Jaffar. I really do.

Cleric moves to him.

CLERIC HUSSEIN (CONT'D)
But my belief can only be sustained
if I get something in return. Do
you understand?

Behzad nods. Cleric glares. Unwavering.

CLERIC HUSSEIN (CONT'D)
I want the names of all the people
who he may have given those
documents to. Friends. Business
associates. Everyone. And we're
going to check these names you give
us so if I were you, I would stick
to the truth.

EXT. APARTMENT BLOCK -- DAY

Cleric makes his way out. The REVOLUTIONARY GUARD, from earlier, breaks away from the group, heads to the Cleric.

CLERIC HUSSEIN
This is the list of names.

He hands the guard a FOLDED PIECE OF PAPER.

CLERIC HUSSEIN (CONT'D)
Find out which ones are being held at Evin prison and which ones have fled the country. Those that have fled. Find their families and friends. Tell them what's at stake and if we don't hear from them, *they* pay the penalty.

REVOLUTIONARY GUARD
Yes, Cleric.

Cleric starts moving away.

CLERIC HUSSEIN
Find me that lawyer.

INT. GARDEN, REZA'S HOME -- DAY

Playing football. One against one. Running. Pushing. Raising their voices. Not giving in -- Sepan and Seper are in the first stages of a soon to be escalating argument.

INT. BEDROOM, REZA'S HOME -- DAY

Reza adjusts his tie. On the bed, Golnar folds a pile of clean CLOTHES.

REZA
I've arranged for him to speak to his wife this afternoon.

GOLNAR
I thought that wasn't allowed.

REZA
No one will find out. Besides you should've seen his reaction. He was so happy. Kept thanking me over and over again. It felt good.

She stops her chores. Something she has to say.

GOLNAR
What if they find out?

He looks at her. Taken aback.

REZA

What are you worried about?

She knew he would resist.

GOLNAR

You once told me that this prison is held up by its rules. You break a rule, you get punished. No exceptions. So what happens if you get caught?

REZA

I won't.

GOLNAR

You think life works that way.

REZA

I have to help him, Golnar.

GOLNAR

I'm not saying you shouldn't. I just --

She pauses. Chooses her words carefully.

GOLNAR (CONT'D)

You've worked so hard to get where you are. I don't want you to do anything to jeopardize that.

The kid's SCREAMS can be heard from the garden. Fighting has begun. They both look at each other.

GOLNAR (CONT'D)

I'll go.

Her watches her walk out. Draws his eyes back to the mirror. Stares at himself. His eyes fill with doubt.

INT. HALLWAY, PRISON -- DAY

Afshin heads towards the last cell on the block.

INT. CELL -- DAY

Prisoners are in their usual dejected state. Cell door WRENCHES OPEN. Afshin steps in. Everyone scurries away, screaming, faces hardening. But this time...

AFSHIN

Salmanpour.

Slumped against the wall, Ata calmly looks at him.

AFSHIN (CONT'D)

Doctor wants to see you.

The other prisoners throw Ata a surprised look.

INT. HALLWAY, PRISON -- DAY

Ata walks alongside Afshin.

AFSHIN
What's wrong with you?

ATA
I'm not feeling well.

AFSHIN
You look fine to me.

ATA
Doctor doesn't think so.

They arrive at a set of doors. A MEDICAL CROSS SIGN above it.

AFSHIN
Wait in there.

INT. MEDICAL ROOM -- DAY

Ata enters a small uncluttered room. There's a SECOND DOOR leading to ANOTHER ROOM. Ata moves to it. A GLASS PARTITION in the door.

The adjacent room has a bed, desk and TELEPHONE.

His eyes light up. Turns the door handle. Locked. Won't budge. Looks around. No other way in. He moves back. Never takes his eyes off the door. Sits on the bed. Waits for Reza.

INT. OFFICE, MEDICAL CENTRE -- DAY

A DOCTOR (30s) works through a pile of PAPERWORK at his desk. Afshin stops by the doorway.

AFSHIN
Who admitted Ata Salmanpour?

DOCTOR
Excuse me?

AFSHIN
Only senior guards can send prisoners to see you and I asked all my guards and none of them did it. So I want you to tell me who did.

From Afshin's expression, he's not going without an answer.

INT. ATA'S HOME -- DAY

A PHONE ON A TABLE.

Cigarette in hand, Hayat's eyes are glued to the phone. BAHRAM, her son, and Susanne, his wife sit across from her. Bahram's son, Morad, plays with his toys in the background.

BAHRAM
Are you sure they're going to call?

HAYAT
The warden told me he would.

Bahram nods slowly. Not convinced. Beat.

BAHRAM
I've spoken to some of the other families...

She whips him a look.

BAHRAM (CONT'D)
...I didn't tell them anything.
Don't worry. I just wanted to know
if any of them they had spoken to
anyone inside -- and no one has. No
one's heard a thing from anyone in
there. It's just us. Don't you find
that a little strange?

She looks at him.

HAYAT
As long as I speak to him, I don't
care.

INT. REZA'S OFFICE -- DAY

Reza stares at a PIECE OF PAPER. Name at the top reads: ATA SALMANPOUR. Handwritten notes across both sides. It's his life story; Bank details. Bank balances. Property addresses.

Reza slides the sheet to the BOTTOM of the stack of pages. Considers his action. Smiles. Pleased.

A KNOCK to his door as a GUARD steps in.

GUARD
Doctor wants to see you.

Reza grabs a SET OF KEYS.

REZA
On my way.

INT. HALLWAY -- DAY

Keys in hand, Reza moves down the stretch. There's a calmness to his face we haven't seen before.

INT. ROOM, MEDICAL CENTRE -- DAY

Reza enters the room. It's empty. No Ata. Frowns.

AFSHIN (O.S.)
He's not here.

Reza whips round to Afshin standing behind the door.

REZA
What are you doing here?

AFSHIN
Do you know a prisoner called Ata
Salmanpour?

Reza tenses. Keeps calm.

REZA
I admitted him.

AFSHIN
Was he ill?

REZA
Ask the doctor.

AFSHIN
He checked. He wasn't.

REZA
Then send him back to his cell.

Reza goes to move but Afshin interjects.

AFSHIN
That's the problem. See, when we
dragged him out of here, he kept
shouting that you had promised him
that he could talk to his wife. Is
that true?

REZA
You believe everything the
prisoners tell you?

AFSHIN
Not usually but he seemed pretty
convinced.

REZA
Where is he now?

AFSHIN
On his way to get whipped.

REZA
Take him to the hole. Five days. No
food or water.

AFSHIN
Don't you want to question him?

REZA
I want you to put him in the hole.
Is that clear?

Afshin stares a beat.

AFSHIN
Loud and clear.

Reza gives him a look before he marches out.

AFSHIN
So get it done.

INT. HALLWAY -- DAY

GUARDS drag Ata, KICKING and SCREAMING towards A DARKENED
STRETCH. We barely see them beyond the darkness.

ATA
Let me speak to her! He said I can
speak to her! Get off me!!!

INT. ATA'S HOME -- DAY

Hayat is in the same position we left her. Hasn't taken her
eyes off the phone. Bahram appears in the doorway. Kills him
to see her like this. Looks at his watch. Doesn't have the
heart to break it to her.

INT. HOLE -- NIGHT

Mostly dark. Barely any light. The cell is compact. Hardly
enough room to stretch your arms and legs. Ata lies in the
corner. Contorted. Portions of his body partially visible.

A SLITHER OF LIGHT runs along the foot of the cell door.

A SHADOW swoops over it.

INT. HALLWAY -- NIGHT

Reza stands by the door. Leans in. Hears nothing. Rests a
hand on the door. Clenches his fist. Fights the urge to open
the door. Hates himself for it. Closes his eyes.

REZA
I'm sorry.

EXT/INT. TRUCK -- NIGHT

Reza gets into his truck. Grabs the wheel. Shakes it violently. Screams out loud. Wants this to stop. Relents. Calms down. Looks up. Looks lost. Alone.

EXT. PRISON -- NIGHT

From the FIRST FLOOR window, Afshin tracks Reza's truck as it pulls out of its spot. There's something going on. Knows it.

INT. HALLWAY -- NIGHT

Darkened stretch. Nothing stirs.

ATA (V.O.)
Hello?

INT. HOLE -- NIGHT

Slumped against the wall, we barely see Ata.

ATA
Is anyone there?

Nothing. Silence.

ATA (CONT'D)
I'm in cell six. Anyone else there?

INT. HOLE -- NIGHT

Another night. Ata pounds the wall softly. His voice is weaker. More exhausted.

ATA
...please...someone must be
there...please...

INT. HOLE -- NIGHT

One more night. Ata's on the ground.

ATA
(faintly)
Hello...please...someone...

From the darkness, we hear a man's voice. This is DARIUSH. We only HEAR VOICES in this exchange.

DARIUSH
Who are you?

Ata's eyes pop open. Re-energized. Struggles to get up.

ATA
Hi...I'm...Ata.

DARIUSH
Dariush.

ATA
Are you a prisoner? A normal
prisoner...

DARIUSH
Is there any other kind?

ATA
Please...I...need your help. I need
to get a message to my wife. I need
someone who can help me get a
message to her...it's important...

DARIUSH
What's so important?

ATA
Please...I need...to get a message
to her...it's really important...

DARIUSH
I know I heard.

ATA
...I have money. I can give you
money. Whatever you need...

DARIUSH
You got a lot of it?

ATA
Yes. Just help me and I'll get you
whatever you want.

DARIUSH
How are you going to do that?

ATA
What?

DARIUSH
How are you going to give me my
money? Are you going to fly it in a
helicopter? Is the warden going to
hand deliver it to me himself? I
want to know how you're going to
give me my fucking money.

For a moment, Ata says nothing. Caught off guard. Confused.

ATA
I don't understand...

DARIUSH
That's because you don't know shit.
You know why I know that?
(MORE)

DARIUSH (CONT'D)
Cos we own this prison. You hear me? This is our home and if you want something from us you gotta pay big. I get what I want. And you don't deliver, you don't get shit.

ATA
Okay. Okay. What do you want?

DARIUSH
I don't know. But I'll think of something. Let me sleep on it.

ATA
So you can help me? You can help me get a message to her?

No answer.

ATA (CONT'D)
Dariush. Please. I said I'll do what you want. Tell me what it is and I'll do it. Please...

Nothing back.

ATA (CONT'D)
Hello? Dariush?

Still nothing.

ATA (CONT'D)
No. Please answer me. Please...

Total silence.

ATA (CONT'D)
Say something. Please say something. Please...

Ata starts to cry. Can't hold it in any longer. He slumps to the wall as the tears flood down.

EXT. FRONT GATES, ATA'S HOME -- DAY

By a PARKED CAR, Hayat hugs a close GIRLFRIEND. The type of hug to reassure her that everything will be okay. She wipes her tears. Thanks her friend before heading inside.

INT. ATA'S HOME -- DAY

Front door opens. Lights go on. Hayat steps in to find her home RANSACKED. TORN APART. Her mouth slowly open in shock.

EXT. STREETS OF TEHRAN -- DAY

A BLUE CAR weaves through the mid afternoon congestion.

A song plays on the radio.

EXT/INT. BLUE CAR -- DAY

Tom drives. Cigarette in his mouth.

The car stops at a RED LIGHT. He slides his eyes across the street. Something caught his attention:

TWO POLICEMEN aggressively order a group of YOUNG WOMEN to put on HEAD SCARVES. Obligatory for women under Islamic law. The women speak back. Police raise their guns. Mean business. The girls relent. Slide on their head scarves. The new way of life has begun.

Light turns GREEN. Tom turns away. The car pulls away.

EXT. STREET -- DAY

Car slides into an empty slot in a busy district. HIGH RISE APARTMENT BLOCKS surround them. Tom gets out. Scans the area. Goes to move when he clocks a YOUNG BOY bombing down the street towards him.

YOUNG BOY
Ziad, I wash your car?

TOM
Don't you ever go to school?

YOUNG BOY
The streets are my school, Ziad. I make money here. Come on, I wash your car.

TOM
Right. Nice try. Not this time.

Tom goes to move away but young boy intercepts his path.

YOUNG BOY
Come on. I know I did a bad job but this time it's going to be perfect. Please, Ziad. I do a good job.

The boy interlocks his fingers. Pleading.

TOM
Come by tomorrow and we can talk about it. No promises.

YOUNG BOY
Deal! You won't regret. I promise. I see you tomorrow, Ziad.

Young boy hurries away.

TOM
I'm sure you will.

INT. APARTMENT -- DAY

By an open window, Moussavi, Mr. Ansari's lawyer, smokes a cigarette. The front door opens. Tom enters the one bedroom apartment. Doesn't like what he sees.

TOM
I told you to stay away from the windows.

MOUSSAVI
I know but I just wanted to let some air in...

TOM
...and I'm trying to keep you safe and that means sticking to what I told you.

Tom goes to the window. Closes it. Draws the under curtains.

TOM (CONT'D)
You keep the curtains drawn. You don't call anyone. You don't speak to anyone. You don't open the door. You don't leave this apartment...

MOUSSAVI
Okay, I get it.

TOM
So then do it.

The outburst startles Moussavi. Tom senses his growing frustration. Attempts a softer approach.

TOM
Look, this is for your own safety okay? We just need you to stay out of sight until we get those documents.

Moussavi looks at him.

MOUSSAVI
Wait. They weren't at his house?

TOM
No.

MOUSSAVI
Are you sure?

TOM
I said they weren't there. Like they weren't in his office or any of the other places you told me to go to.

Moussavi's insulted by the accusation.

MOUSSAVI

You think I'm lying to you?

TOM

I think unless Ata miraculously walks out of that prison, we need to exhaust all of our options. And I think he may have given those documents to a friend or a business associate for safe keeping. So I want you to start thinking who those people might be. Do you understand? I want a list of names by tonight.

Tom means business. Moussavi doesn't retort. Nods slowly.

TOM (CONT'D)

You want a drink?

Moussavi shakes his head. Tom shrugs, heads to the kitchen.

INT. GARDEN, REZA'S HOME -- DAY

Seper and Sepan play football in the garden.

INT. KITCHEN, REZA'S HOME -- DAY

Various BUILDING SCHEMATICS sprawled over a table.

Reza tries to make sense of them. With a RED PEN, he circles two areas. But isn't sure. Finds it all confusing.

Drops the pen. Rubs his eyes. Looks out the window. Sees his children playing football. Gazes at them a beat. Sombre.

EXT. CAR PARK, PRISON -- DAY

The truck is parked in its usual spot.

Reza is at the wheel. Eyes fixed on the TWO GUARDS by the SECURITY GATE. In the passenger seat is the FOLDED SCHEMATICS. One of the circled areas is clearly visible.

The guards are in a heated conversation. They start heading into the booth, still conversing. Distracted.

This is Reza's chance. He jumps out. Hurries to the side of the building. To a FIRE EXIT DOORWAY. Turns the handle. Firmly shut. A rectangular grill by the foot of the wall. Tries to see where it leads. Too dark. Fishes his pockets. Pulls out a small TORCH. Bends down. Goes to switch it on when...

MAN (O.S.)

Lost something?

Reza whips round to Cleric Hussein walking towards him.

REZA
(rattled)
Cleric Hussein...

CLERIC HUSSEIN
Did you lose something?

REZA
No, uh, it's nothing. What are you
doing here?

CLERIC HUSSEIN
I came to see you. We spoke
yesterday.

REZA
Yes. Of course. Sorry.

CLERIC HUSSEIN
Is everything okay?

REZA
Fine. Everything's fine.

Reza smiles nervously.

EXT. PRISON -- DAY

Reza and Cleric walk and talk. Around them, a HANDFUL OF
FAMILIES wait for their loved ones to be released.

CLERIC HUSSEIN
You're doing a terrific job in the
prison. I want you to know that.

REZA
Thank you, Cleric.

CLERIC HUSSEIN
It's hard to be thrown into a
position like that but -- that's
why I put you there. Because you do
things that other men won't -- and
you do them without asking any
questions.

REZA
I'm here to help any way I can.

Cleric considers the surroundings a beat.

CLERIC HUSSEIN
This is a very delicate matter --
so I need you to handle it with the
utmost discretion.

REZA
Of course.

CLERIC HUSSEIN
We're looking for some documents
that someone called Nasser Ansari
took from us.

REZA
What was in those documents?

CLERIC HUSSEIN
That's not important. All you need
to do is do what I ask of you. Do
you understand?

REZA
Yes.

Cleric gives him a FOLDED PIECE OF PAPER.

CLERIC HUSSEIN
This is a list of Mr. Ansari's
closest friends and business
associates who are all in your
prison. We know he gave the
documents to one of these men. Find
out who that is. Do whatever you
need to do. Just get me a name.

Reza flips open the paper. 20 HANDWRITTEN NAMES. Half way
down the list is ATA'S NAME.

CLERIC HUSSEIN (CONT'D)
Reza?

Reza looks at Cleric.

REZA
I'll get it done.

INT. CANTEEN -- DAY

Prisoners talking, eating. Enjoying a moment of civility.

The main doors open. Physically carried by TWO GUARDS, Ata
stammers in. GAUNT. BROKEN. FRAIL. Barely able to keep
upright. A shadow of the man he was.

Most of the prisoners turn his way. A momentary silence
descends upon the room. Massoud and Said look at each other.

Ata takes a seat. Barely moves. Eyes are vacant.

Canteen fills with chatter once again.

EXT. COURTYARD -- DAY

Prisoners roam the courtyard.

Ata sits at a bench. Still. Said approaches.

SAID
You don't look as bad as you think.

Ata doesn't move. Said sits next to him.

SAID (CONT'D)
Are you okay?

Ata says nothing.

SAID (CONT'D)
Ata?

Ata keeps his eyes on the courtyard.

ATA
They begged me to leave the country. My wife, my children -- they just wanted to get out and I wouldn't allow it. I told them we would be safer together. That everything would be okay.

SAID
Ata, this isn't your fault.

ATA
Yes, it is.

His face hardens. Anger in his eyes.

ATA (CONT'D)
Now I'm paying for it.

Said doesn't have an answer. He holds his stare.

They sit in silence as prisoners swirl around them.

INT. MORAD'S BEDROOM -- DAY

A SEA OF SCATTERED TOYS.

On the floor, Morad, Bahram's son, looks at SOMETHING we can't see. Whatever it is, it's got him totally baffled.

He gets up and runs out of the room leaving behind the zipped open STAR WARS SACHEL on the floor.

EXT. GARDEN -- DAY

Susanne is in mid conversation with the GARDENER at the far end of the garden. Morad hurries out onto the patio.

MORAD
(screams out)
Mum, I found something in my bag!

Susanne continues speaking to the gardener.

MORAD (CONT'D)

Mum!

SUSANNE

Morad, I'm speaking to someone. You have to wait your turn.

MORAD

But I found something...

SUSANNE

Morad, I told you to wait.

She turns to the Gardener. Morad sighs, glares down to what he's holding -- the ENVELOPE.

A sentence scribbled on the front reads: GIVE TO YOUR DAD.

INT. MORAD'S BEDROOM -- DAY

Morad hurries back into his room. Hurls the ENVELOPE onto a MOUNTAIN OF TOYS. It slides down the backside. Out of sight.

EXT. PRISON -- DAY

Early morning. Clear blue sky. A beautiful day.

INT. CELL -- DAY

Only THIRTEEN MEN remain in the cell.

Most men are asleep. Some are awake. Ata is one of them. Eyes open. Vacant. As if in a trance. Said stares at him.

Suddenly, THUMPING BOOTS can be heard. Guards on their way. Prisoners spring up. Brace themselves.

BOBAK

They're doing it again? How could they do it again? They already did it last night...

SAID

Maybe they're doing it twice a day.

Bobak turns to him. Horrified.

BOBAK

Oh my God.

Door swings open. Sassan enters. All eyes on him. He takes out a PIECE OF A PAPER. Reads from it.

SASSAN

Varzi, Salmanpour, Toofanian and Khazaei. Stand up and follow me. Warden wants to see you.

INT. HALLWAY -- DAY

A LINE OF TWENTY THREE PRISONERS move down a hallway including Ata and Said.

INT. INDOOR HALL -- DAY

Huddled together on the ground, TWENTY THREE PRISONERS look up to Reza glaring down at them. Piercing them with his eyes.

REZA

You're all here because you either knew Mr. Ansari personally or did business with him. We know that Mr. Ansari took those confidential documents and gave them to someone in this room. If the person who has those documents steps forward and tells us where they are, he will be pardoned and given a more lenient sentence. If any of you know the person who has taken the documents and bring this information to me, you will also be pardoned and given a more lenient sentence.

Prisoners throw each other a look.

REZA (CONT'D)

You have one hour to think about it and not a second more. If no one comes forward, each one of you will be questioned until I find who I am looking for -- and let me assure, I am very good at getting what I want.

EXT. COURTYARD -- DAY

Said and Ata are at the far corner, away from the crowd.

SAID

Make a deal with him.

ATA

After what he did to me?

SAID

Tell him he'll get the documents as long as he gets you out of here.

ATA

What do you think he'll do to my family once I confess to him? Do you really think he's going to keep his promise to me?

SAID

What if Hayat finds those documents and tells someone she shouldn't?

(MORE)

SAID (CONT'D)
This is how you stop that from
happening. Make the deal.

ATA
I can't risk telling him.

Said can't believe it. Looks at him. Senses something.

SAID
Are you doing this for him?

ATA
What?

SAID
Are you keeping these documents
because you think you owe him
something?

ATA
Of course not.

SAID
Because you don't owe him anything.

ATA
I owe him my life.

SAID
You owe him nothing.

Fellow inmates look their way. Said leans in.

SAID (CONT'D)
Nasser gave you a chance but
everything you've achieved in your
life was down to you. And if he
were here, he would tell you the
same thing.

Ata looks at him.

SAID (CONT'D)
You only have one option. Don't
lose sight of that.

Ata knows he's got a point.

ATA
I need to find a prisoner called
Dariush.

SAID
Who's he?

Ata glares at him.

ATA
A second option.

INT. REZA'S OFFICE -- DAY

THE SECONDS HAND TICKS ACROSS A CLOCK ON THE WALL.

Reza is at his desk. Afshin is upstanding. Both staring at the clock. It hits THREE O'CLOCK.

AFSHIN

Time's up.

Reza considers the list of names.

AFSHIN (CONT'D)

Who do you want to start with?

REZA

First name on the list.

AFSHIN

Why don't we start with Ata
Salmanpour?

REZA

Who?

AFSHIN

The one you threw in the hole. He's
on this list. You put pressure on
him, he'll crack.

REZA

His time will come.

AFSHIN

Maybe that time is now...

Reza BANGS his fist on the table.

REZA

Enough! I'm getting tired of you
questioning everything I tell you.
Get the first prisoner on this list
in a cell right now. Is that clear?

Afshin doesn't move. Reza gets up. Killer eyes.

REZA (CONT'D)

You want to test me. Go ahead.

Afshin knows he's not going to win this battle. He comes over
looks at the list.

AFSHIN

I'll get it done.

He exits the room. Reza watches him walk away. Afshin's onto
him. He knows it.

EXT. STAFF ROOM, PRISON -- DAY

A group of GUARDS converse amongst themselves. Sassan pours hot water into a cup. Afshin is next to him facing the room.

AFSHIN

He means something to Reza. I don't know what it is but he's protecting him.

SASSAN

What do you want me to do?

AFSHIN

Follow him.

SASSAN

Around the prison?

Afshin throws him a look.

AFSHIN

Outside of the prison.

Sassan nods. Makes more sense.

AFSHIN (CONT'D)

See where he goes. Who he meets. What he does.

SASSAN

For how long?

AFSHIN

Until we find something on him. We need evidence so make sure you take a camera with you.

SASSAN

I don't have one.

Afshin throws him another look.

AFSHIN

I'll lend you one.

Afshin drops a small FOLDED PIECE OF PAPER on the table.

AFSHIN (CONT'D)

This is his address. Do it after work. Keep it discreet. I'll fix it so you can leave an hour early each day.

INT. HALLWAY -- DAY

A CEILING LIGHT illuminates a single section of the hallway. Reza appears from the darkness. Stops under the light. Shadows swoop across his face. Give him a demonic look.

INT. TORTURE CELL -- DAY

Door opens to unveil a terrified, crying SCRAWNY PRISONER. HANDS TIED to a ceiling hook. Scrawny sees the LEATHER WHIP in Reza's hand. Panics.

SCRAWNY PRISONER
Warden please, I don't know about
any documents. I swear to you.
Nasser didn't give me anything. I
only knew him socially. You have to
believe me...

Reza wraps his hand around the handle of the whip.

REZA
We'll see.

He slams the door shut.

INT. CANTEEN, PRISON -- DAY

Trays in hand, a line of PRISONERS queue for food. Ata waits his turn. Gets to the counter. Brings his tray forward. Gets eye contact with the CANTEEN ATTENDANT.

ATA
You know a prisoner called Dariush?

The attendant throws him a look as if to say he shouldn't talking to him. Turns to the next person in line.

CANTEEN ATTENDANT
Next.

Ata moves on. Gets the message.

EXT. COURTYARD, PRISON -- DAY

Ata is upstanding on a bench, scouting the adjacent courtyard. Looking for Dariush. Said approaches.

SAID
Any sign of him?

ATA
Not yet.

SAID
I've asked around and no one knows
anyone by that name. You don't have
any other information on him? A
surname? Maybe what he looks like?

ATA
Keep asking. He'll turn up.

Said doesn't look convinced.

SAID
You sure you didn't imagine him?

Ata turns to look at the prisoners.

INT. KITCHEN, REZA'S HOME -- DAY

KITCHEN DRAWERS are pulled one after another. Reza rummages through the clutter. Looking for something in particular.

REZA
Golnar!

The more he searches, the more frustrated he gets. She appears in the doorway.

GOLNAR
Kids are ready.

REZA
Where's that book with all my numbers?

GOLNAR
Which book?

REZA
The small one. The one with the numbers of my old army friends. It was here somewhere.

GOLNAR
Who are you looking for?

REZA
Do you know where it is or not?

She looks at him. He never raises his voice to her.

REZA (CONT'D)
I'm sorry.

He looks at his children waiting by the front door. Both of them avert their eyes.

REZA (CONT'D)
I just need to speak to Payman about something important.

She goes to one of the drawers and pulls out the BLACK TATTERED ADDRESS BOOK. Hands it to him.

REZA (CONT'D)
Thank you.

He looks at her but she avoids him.

GOLNAR
He's working at a construction site
in the city. I spoke to his wife a
few weeks ago.

She leaves the kitchen. Reza stays put. Feels rock bottom.

EXT. STREET -- DAY

A CONSTRUCTION SITE. A CONCRETE FRAME STRUCTURE OF TEN FLOORS
stands in the background. A GROUP OF WORKERS in hard hats
exit the compound onto the street. One of them is PAYMAN
(40s) in conversation with a few other men.

He doubles takes on Reza, smoking, upstanding by a nearby
skip, a ROLLED UP BLUEPRINT tucked under his arm. Payman
smiles. Surprised. Makes his way over.

PAYMAN
Reza?

REZA
How are you?

PAYMAN
Better for seeing you.

They give each other a hug like old friends.

PAYMAN (CONT'D)
Good to see you. What's it been?
Two, three years?

REZA
Something like that.

PAYMAN
What happened to you? You're all
skin and bones. Has Golnar stopped
feeding you?

REZA
Blame it on the kids.

PAYMAN
We got a daughter. Mitra. One year
old. I'm counting the days until I
get a good night's sleep.

REZA
That's great, Payman.
Congratulations.

Payman nods. Appreciative. Knows something's up.

PAYMAN
So are you going to tell me what's
really going on or are we going to
talk about kids all day?

Reza glares at his friend.

INT. CAFE -- DAY

Corner table by the window. Reza and Payman have two cans of coke in front of them.

REZA
I need you to take a look. See what
you find.

Payman eyes the rolled up BLUEPRINTS on the nearby chair.

PAYMAN
What am I looking for?

REZA
Weak points. Any areas you think
could be exploited by the
prisoners.

PAYMAN
Aren't there security companies
that help with all this?

REZA
They have -- and we made changes
but I also want someone I can trust
and you spent three years getting
our unit out of tight spots so I
figured you would be the perfect
man for it.

Payman still doesn't look convinced.

REZA (CONT'D)
I just need some ideas from you.
That's all. Whatever comes to mind.

Payman studies his friend's face. Senses something.

PAYMAN
You know with everything that's
going on, it's got everything
spooked. Everyone's looking over
their shoulder trying to figure out
who you're with -- are you with
them or against them. I just want
the simple life now. You know what
I mean?

That was loaded. Reza gets it.

REZA
I just need some advice from a
friend. That's all it is.

Payman considers his friend a beat.

PAYMAN

Leave it with me. I'll take a look.

Reza smiles thinly. Relieved.

REZA

I appreciate it.

Reza hands the BLUEPRINTS to him. As he does -- SNAP!

A PHOTO is taken of them.

EXT. STREET -- DAY

Tucked down a side a street, out of sight, Sassan takes another picture. Lowers his camera. Smirks a contented grin.

INT. CANTEEN, PRISON -- DAY

Trays in hand, a line of traitors queue for food. Ata waits his turn. Gets to the counter. Brings his tray forward. The CANTEEN ATTENDANT looks at him. Slumps food on his tray. As Ata takes the tray he sees the EDGE OF A NOTE from underneath a mound of food. Ata doesn't react. Attendant turns to next person.

CANTEEN ATTENDANT

Next.

Ata takes a seat at a table opposite Said. Looks around. Take out the note. Carefully unfolds it.

SAID

What is it?

Ata looks at him.

ATA

Dariush wants to meet.

EXT. COURTYARD -- DAY

Ata's upstanding on one side, his back to the fence. Dariush is on the other side, doing press ups. He finishes. Jumps up. Stretching out his arms.

DARIUSH

How many was that?

ATA

You counted to fifty three.

DARIUSH

When I came in here I could only do ten. That's progress.

Dariush dusts himself off. Does some stretches.

DARIUSH (CONT'D)

I can get a message to your wife.
Not a problem. But I was thinking
maybe you would prefer to tell her
yourself?

ATA

What are you talking about?

Ata looks at him. Dariush rotates his finger. Ata instantly
turns his back to him.

ATA

I'm sorry.

Dariush moves a few paces away.

DARIUSH

There's an old service quarter in
that building. Used to be a laundry
room but they just use it for
storage now. They made me bring a
bunch of stuff in there a few
months ago. That's when I saw the
phone. Tried it myself. Called home
to listen to my mum scream at me.

ATA

You can get me to it?

DARIUSH

Are you ready to give me what I
want?

ATA

Yes.

Dariush nods. Satisfied. Considers the courtyard of prisoners
a beat.

DARIUSH

You know I used to steal cars? Nice
cars. That was my thing. One night
I'm about to steal this amazing
Mercedes when the police grab me.
Rough me up. Throw me in prison.
The usual. Only this Mercedes
belonged to the police
commissioner. That son of a bitch
over there.

Dariush nods to someone off screen. Ata turns. Locks eyes on
Massoud, in conversation with a group of men.

DARIUSH (CONT'D)

D'you know what that cock-sucker
did? Police came to my parents'
house and destroyed the place. My
father tries to stop them. Defend
his home. But they rough him up.
Bad. He had a heart attack and died
right in front of my mother.

(MORE)

DARIUSH (CONT'D)
And they did nothing. Not one thing. So what do I want? I want that son of a bitch dead.

ATA
He's going to die very soon.

DARIUSH
...but he's not fucking dead yet! I have to see his face everyday and it makes me want to puke. So I want you to kill him for me.

Ata glares at Dariush. He'd dead serious.

ATA
I can't kill him. You know I can't do that...

Dariush starts walking away.

DARIUSH
Then stop wasting my time.

He turns back to him momentarily.

DARIUSH (CONT'D)
They kill him before you do, deal's off.

EXT. COURTYARD, PRISON -- LATER

Said's on a bench. Ata makes his way over. Sits next to him.

SAID
Well?

Ata shakes his head. Said isn't surprised.

SAID (CONT'D)
At least you know what you have to do.

INT. HALLWAY -- DAY

From a THIRD FLOOR WINDOW, Reza watches Said and Ata. Studies their interaction. Suddenly, as if it was intended, Ata slides his eyes up. Looks at him. They hold their stare for a long beat.

INT. APARTMENT -- DAY

At a table, Moussavi reads a book. Looks up. Gazes at the light seeping through the drawn under-curtains. Frustration is getting the better of him. It's all over his face.

He puts down the book. Gets up. Goes to the curtains. Hesitates. Half pulls them aside.

Natural LIGHT engulfs his face. He closes his eyes. Smiles thinly. This is what he wanted. To feel alive. Pulls the curtains so more light washes the room.

Unbeknown to him...

INT. ANOTHER APARTMENT -- DAY

From the apartment across the street, the YOUNG BOY we met earlier, is in his bedroom watching Moussavi.

There's a strange look on his face. He approaches the window. As he does so, Moussavi draws the curtains.

Young boy holds his stare.

INT. STREET -- DAY

The Young boy exits his building. Moves along the busy street towards a NEWSPAPER STAND.

He approaches a stack of PERSIAN NEWSPAPERS on the ground. Picks up the top one.

A PICTURE OF MOUSSAVI on the front page. Headline reads: *LAWYER WANTED IN CONNECTION WITH GOVERNMENT DOCUMENT THEFT.*

He focuses on a sentence half way down the article...

*...there is a significant reward
for any information that leads to
his arrest...*

NEWSSTAND OWNER (O.S.)
Are you going to buy that?

The boy looks up to the FAT NEWSSTAND OWNER.

YOUNG BOY
No.

NEWSSTAND OWNER
Then leave it for someone who has
money.

Young boy glares at him. Drops the paper. Turns to the building floor where he saw Moussavi.

INT. CANTEEN, PRISON -- DAY

Another day. Prisoners finish up lunch. Prisoners disgorge the canteen hall. Ata hangs back on a bench. Eyes on Afshin across the hall. Readies himself. Controls his nerves.

Afshin makes his way towards the same exit as the prisoners. As he nears, Ata gets up. Adjusting himself.

ATA

I'd like to speak to the warden.

Afshin looks at him. Stunned.

AFSHIN

What did you say?

Afshin advances. Ata gulps. Stands his ground.

ATA

I'd like to speak to the...

Afshin grabs his throat. Pounds him to the wall. Prisoners turn back. Stop. Signal the others.

AFSHIN

You don't speak to me. You understand? You speak to me again, I'll make sure you lick the shit from every toilet in this prison until I put a bullet in your fucking head...

REZA (O.S.)

Afshin.

Reza stands a few feet away.

REZA (CONT'D)

Everything okay?

Afshin half turns to him.

AFSHIN

Everything's fine.

Afshin lets go. Eyes glued on Ata.

AFSHIN (CONT'D)

Prisoner wants to speak with you.

INT. REZA'S OFFICE -- DAY

Ata and Reza on either side of a table. Nothing is said for a long beat. Reza smokes a cigarette.

ATA

I have what you want.

REZA

What's that?

Ata pauses a beat. Raises his eyes to him.

ATA

The documents.

Reza's still. Fights hard not to show emotion.

REZA
Where are they?

ATA
Bring my son here and you'll have
what you want.

REZA
He has the documents?

ATA
I want something in return.

REZA
You'll get what I promised you.

ATA
I want the same deal for someone in
my cell.

REZA
Those weren't the rules.

ATA
I don't think you play by the
rules.

Reza's face hardens. Offended. Leans in.

REZA
Do you want to be treated like
everyone else? Is that what you
want? Because in that world, no one
will be able to help you. Not your
wife. Your lawyer. No one. You want
to get out of here, tell me where
the documents are and I'll walk you
out myself. You have my word.

Reza pleads with him. His eyes are desperate but genuine. Ata
says nothing for a long beat. Contemplating. Assessing.

ATA
Have you ever owed someone your
life?

Reza's taken aback.

REZA
What?

ATA
Has someone ever saved your life?

Reza ponders whether to tell him. Beat.

REZA
Yes.

Ata nods slowly.

ATA
Are you in contact with that person?

Reza hasn't moved an inch.

REZA
Yes. I am.

Ata nods. Somewhat pleased by the answer.

ATA
Not many people know the person who gave them a second chance. That's who Nasser was to me.

(beat)

I was on the streets when I was a boy. I was a nuisance. Troubled. My parents couldn't cope and I figured I could fend for myself. I stopped counting the days I went hungry.

(beat)

Then Nasser walked past me one day. Didn't know me. Didn't have to help but he gave me his hand. Helped me up. Gave me a job. A place to live. Gave me a second chance.

(beat)

And I promised myself that if he ever needed my help, I would be there for him. No matter what it was, I would help him.

Ata wells up. Shakes his head lightly. Hates himself.

ATA (CONT'D)
Bring my son here and you'll get what you want.

Reza glares. Says nothing. Hasn't moved an inch.

The room fills with silence.

INT. CELL -- DAY

Only EIGHT MEN remain in the cell.

Ata enters the cell. Slumps down against the wall. No one speaks. Ata catches eyes with Massoud.

ATA
What are you staring at?

MASSOUD
What?

ATA
What the hell are you staring at! Stop staring at me.

MASSOUD
I'm not staring at anything. What's
your problem?

SAID
Ata, what are you doing?

ATA
Tell him to stop staring at me or
I'll do it myself. I swear to God,
I'll tear out his eyes myself...

Said goes over. Ata pushes him away. Angry. Out of control.

SAID
Fine he will! He'll stop. Okay?
Just relax. He'll stop right now.

MASSOUD
I wasn't...

Said looks at him as if to say shut up.

MASSOUD (CONT'D)
Fine. I'll stop staring.

The cell descends into silence. Said turns to Ata. He's
already on his side. His back to them.. Said meets the eyes
of the other prisoners. No one says a thing.

EXT. OFFICE -- DAY

Busy office space. A SEA OF DESKS.

Bahram is at a desk by the window. Can't work. Focus. He
gazes at the view. His mind elsewhere.

Across a rooftop in the distance, the SILHOUETTE OF TWO MEN
watching him.

IRANIAN MAN (V.O.)
Do you think he knows where the
documents are?

EXT. ROOFTOP, BUILDING -- DAY

Tom and Iranian man track their target. Tom intermittently
uses BINOCULARS.

TOM
I don't know.

IRANIAN MAN
If he doesn't, we're running out of
options.

TOM
We got nothing from Moussavi's
list?

IRANIAN MAN
A few more to go but they're all
looking like dead ends.

TOM
What about the prison?

IRANIAN MAN
Nothing clear in or out. I still
think we need to turn one of the
guards. Maybe even the warden.

Tom slides him a look.

TOM
Can we get to him?

IRANIAN MAN
He has children.

Tom ponders this. Doesn't look overly pleased.

TOM
Start working on that. How about
getting out of the country?

IRANIAN MAN
They've shut down the borders. No
one can fly in or out so the only
way out is over the mountains into
Turkey. I've got a guide who can
take him across on horseback.

TOM
Good. Start planning the route.

Iranian man slides him a look. Something on his mind.

IRANIAN MAN
You sure about all this?

Tom looks at him.

TOM
We'll get it done. We always do.

Tom looks through binoculars.

Iranian man doesn't look convinced.

INT. UNDERGROUND CAR PARK -- NIGHT

Bahram walks along a row of PARKED CARS. Arrives at his
Mercedes. Takes out his KEYS. Gets in. As soon as he does...

A MAN CRANES UP FROM THE BACKSEAT.

INT. MERCEDEZ-BENZ -- DAY

A GUN presses to Bahram's temple.

TOM (O.S.)
Don't move.

Bahram freezes.

BAHRAM
I have money. Please...

TOM
I don't want your money. I want to talk.

Bahram meets Tom's eyes in the rearview mirror.

BAHRAM
Talk about what?

Tom leans forward so his face is fully visible.

TOM
Your father.

INT. KITCHEN, REZA'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

The Afshar family is half way through dinner. Seper and Sepan keep each other amused. Golnar intermittently glares at her husband. Reza stares at his food. His mind elsewhere. Something's up. She won't bring it up at the table.

INT. BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Reza sits on the edge of the bed. Golnar sits behind him.

REZA
You think I'm a good person?

GOLNAR
Why would you say that?

REZA
Because I don't know if I can help him.

She looks at him. Heartbroken.

GOLNAR
You're doing the best you can. More than anyone else would.

REZA
But that's not enough.

GOLNAR
Why?

REZA

Because if something happens to him, I wouldn't be able to live with myself.

GOLNAR

I know you're trying to do the right thing but sometimes that means walking away.

REZA

Is that what I'm supposed to tell the boys? Try and do the right thing but if it gets difficult, just give up just like your dad did.

GOLNAR

That's not what I'm saying.

REZA

That's exactly what you're saying.

GOLNAR

You're giving up on them right now, Reza. You're gone all day and night and even when you're here, your mind is somewhere else. You're losing yourself right in front of them.

Reza stares at her. Her words kill him. Beat.

REZA

Do you know what I do in that prison? I break people. Prisoners do bad things and I destroy them. I lost myself a long time ago.

He grabs a shirt. Trousers

GOLNAR

Where are you going?

REZA

Go to sleep.

Reza heads out of the bedroom.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET -- NIGHT

Reza's truck is parked down a quiet street.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL BUILDING -- NIGHT

Reza approaches the main entrance of an UPSCALE BUILDING. Looks at the various names next to each buzzer. Finds: BAHRAM SALMANPOUR. Presses the BUZZER. No answer. Presses it again. Still no answer.

He steps back. Looks up to the FIFTH FLOOR APARTMENT. Lights are OFF across the whole floor.

He looks around. Sees a nearby COFFEE SHOP. Nothing else worth noting. Heads back to the truck.

EXT/INT. TRUCK -- NIGHT

FOUR STUBBED CIGARETTES lay on the ground.

Reza smokes another CIGARETTE. Eyes focused on the apartment.

He slides his eyes to the rear view mirror. Turns his head to reveal his scar. Holds his stare. A memory floods back...

SORAYA (V.O.)
There he is...

INT. BANK -- DAY (1955)

In the main foyer of a different bank, YOUNG ATA SALMANPOUR (20s), suited, speaks to a MALE CUSTOMER. He doubles takes on something. Makes him smile.

SORAYA and YOUNG REZA (now 5 yrs old) stand by the front entrance. He excuses himself from the customer.

ATA
It's so good to see you, Mrs.
Afshar.

They shake hands. Courteous. Respectful.

SORAYA
You too, Mr. Salmanpour.

Water instantly fills her eyes.

SORAYA (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. I don't know why this
happens every time...

Ata offers her a HANDKERCHIEF.

ATA
It's okay. I have that affect on
people. Some people get smiles. I
get tears.

SORAYA
I'll smile from now on. I promise.
(beat)
I brought Reza with me this time.
(to Reza)
Reza, say hello.

Reza moves behind his mum.

SORAYA (CONT'D)

Reza?

Soraya bends down to him. Looks him in the eye.

SORAYA (CONT'D)

This man saved your life, Reza. I want you to shake his hand and say thank you. He's a good man. The type of man I hope you become one day.

EXT/INT. TRUCK -- NIGHT (PRESENT DAY)

Back to the truck. To reality...

Reza snaps out of his reverie. Turns to Bahram's apartment. Lights still off. Time to go. He starts the truck.

As the truck pulls away, HEADLIGHTS OF A CAR parked down the street FLICK ON...

EXT/INT. CAR -- NIGHT

Sassan pulls the car out. Maintains his distance.

EXT. STREET -- DAY

The blue car pulls up by Tom's building. Iranian man drives. Tom shakes his hand. Gets out. Heads into his building.

The YOUNG BOY appears from a nearby alleyway. Waits till Tom has gone into his building before he heads off down the street.

He crosses a few blocks until he reaches the REVOLUTIONARY GUARD (who we met with Cleric Hussein) standing by a MILITARY TRUCK. They speak briefly. Boy points back down the street towards Tom's building.

The guard hands the boy a WAD OF CASH. Boy counts the notes as he moves away. Guard glares at Tom's building.

REVOLUTIONARY GUARD (V.O.)

He calls himself Ziad. Says he's a businessman from Beirut....

INT. ROOM, MOSQUE -- DAY

Revolutionary Guard sits across from Cleric Hussein.

REVOLUTIONARY GUARD

He keeps to himself. Doesn't really do much. All his papers and documents are in order but none of my contacts in Lebanon have heard of him.

CLERIC HUSSEIN
So who is he?

REVOLUTIONARY GUARD
We don't know.

CLERIC HUSSEIN
Are you sure the lawyer is in that apartment?

REVOLUTIONARY GUARD
He's there.

Cleric nods. Eyes grow more determined.

CLERIC HUSSEIN
Take them.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET -- NIGHT

The truck pulls up outside the COFFEE SHOP. The UPSCALE APARTMENT BLOCKS are situated across the road.

INT. COFFEE SHOP -- NIGHT

Reza enters. Few customers. Reza goes to the counter by the front window, where a YOUNG MAN mans the till.

REZA
Any lights been on in the apartment?

Reza removes a BANK NOTE from his pocket.

YOUNG MAN
Not since I been here.

Reza slides the note across the table. Young man takes it.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)
You can come back every day as far as I'm concerned.

Young man pulls out the TELEPHONE from under the counter.

REZA
Four days is my cut off point.

Reza punches in the numbers...

INT. BAHRAM'S HOME -- NIGHT

TELEPHONE RINGS. Lights are OFF. Lounge is deserted.

We move towards the telephone on a SIDE TABLE. A picture frame of BAHRAM and SUSANNE SALMANPOUR beside it. Ringing stops. Silence resumes.

INT. REZA'S KITCHEN -- NIGHT

No one in the kitchen. Lights are off.

The front door opens. Someone enters. Keys drop onto a table.

Reza appears in the kitchen doorway. Flicks on the light.

There's a FOLDED NOTE on the table. Picks it up.

Payman called. Go to his work.

INT. CHILDREN'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Sepan and Seper are asleep in two single beds. Reza watches them from the gap in the door. Slowly closes it shut.

INT. REZA'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Golnar is on her side. Motionless. Reza quietly removes his clothes. Climbs into bed. Closes his eyes. Across the other side, Golnar's eyes open. Wide awake.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE -- DAY

The truck pulls up outside the construction site. Reza gets out. Looks around. Goes to the entrance. Stops a CONSTRUCTION WORKER in a hard hat. Asks him something. The worker points to THE CONCRETE STRUCTURE. Reza nods thank you. Heads off.

EXT. FLOOR, CONCRETE STRUCTURE BUILDING -- DAY

The caged elevator door is lifted up. Reza exits. Various CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT scattered across the floor. No one around. Totally deserted.

REZA

Payman?

Reza moves round a large pillar. Eyes scanning the area.

REZA (CONT'D)

Payman, are you here?

Still no sign of him. He goes to turn when HANDS SHOVE HIS CHEST. Send him crashing to the floor.

PAYMAN

What the hell have you got me into?

Payman stands over him. Furious.

REZA

What are you talking about?

PAYMAN

They arrested me. They came here and dragged me out in front of everyone!

REZA

Who?

PAYMAN

The Revolutionary guards. They wanted to know what I was doing with those blueprints. The ones you gave me.

REZA

What did you tell them?

PAYMAN

The truth! I told them the truth.

REZA

What else did they ask you?

PAYMAN

What else did they ask me? Do you even give a shit what's happened to me?

REZA

I can make this go away, Payman. I can make it go away but I need to know everything that's happened...

PAYMAN

They came to my house! That's what else happened. They came to my house and asked my wife all these questions about things she doesn't know about. Things she thinks that I've done...

REZA

I'm not doing anything illegal...

PAYMAN

I don't care! I don't want to know what you're doing.

REZA

Payman, I know you don't trust me but I'll make this right. I promise.

PAYMAN

Just leave. That's all I want you to do.

Reza looks at him.

PAYMAN (CONT'D)

Get the fuck out!

Reza has no choice. Makes a move. He's a few steps away when Payman's face changes. Can't just let him go.

PAYMAN (CONT'D)
They're on to you.

Reza stops in his tracks.

PAYMAN (CONT'D)
That means your family's in danger.
So whatever it is you need to do, I
would do it very quickly.

EXT. COURTYARD, PRISON -- DAY

Only FIFTY PRISONERS remain in the courtyard. They're pale. Exhausted. Slowly losing the will to live.

Ata stares at the adjacent courtyard housing the 'other' prisoners. Spots Dariush in conversation with another prisoner. Their eyes meet. No reaction from Dariush.

GUARD (O.S.)
Salmanpour!

Ata turns to him.

GUARD (CONT'D)
Warden wants to see you.

INT. HALLWAY, PRISON -- DAY

Reza is by one of the windows overlooking the courtyard. Ata stands behind him. Guards are in the background.

REZA
Your son's gone. No one's seen him
or his family in a week.

ATA
What? That's not possible.

REZA
Where are the documents?

ATA
Please. I need to know...

Reza whips round to him.

REZA
Do you know what I'm risking for
you? Do you understand what could
happen to me if they knew what I
was doing for you?

ATA
I have the documents. Call my
wife's house.

(MORE)

ATA (CONT'D)
 Maybe he's over there. Please --
 just let me speak to her.

Reza looks at him. Disappointed. Knows what he must do.

REZA
 Okay. Have it your way.
 (to the guards)
 Take him away.

ATA
 Are you going to call her?

Guards grab Ata's arms. He resists. Fights back.

ATA (CONT'D)
 Please tell me you'll call her.

REZA
 Bring Said Varzi for questioning.

ATA
 What? What are you doing? It's got
 nothing to do with him...

Reza walks in the opposite direction.

ATA (CONT'D)
 Don't do this! I have what you
 want! You know I have what you
 want...

Guards yank Ata down the hall. Screaming. Yelling. Reza
 fights the urge not to turn round.

INT. HALLWAY, PRISON -- NIGHT

Accompanied by two GUARDS, Said marches down a darkened
 stretch. He keeps a brave face but when he sees the
 SILHOUETTE OF A MAN standing by the open door of a torture
 cell, his resolve crumbles.

INT. TORTURE CELL -- NIGHT

Hanging from the ceiling, bleeding and bruised, Reza has
 already gone a few rounds with Said.

SAID
 I don't have what you're looking
 for.

REZA
 I know you don't. You're here
 because of Sombol fields. You
 remember them?

No reaction from Said.

REZA (CONT'D)

Big acres of land just outside of Shiraz. They were owned by farmers. Passed down from generation to generation. That was their land. But the Shah was planning on bigger things for our country and that meant taking those lands and giving them away to people like you -- and what did you do with it?

Reza faces him. Aggressive.

REZA (CONT'D)

You built factories. Big industrial factories. You hired those farmers and paid them nothing while you got rich. Some of those people were friends of ours. Honest, hard working people whose lives you destroyed.

Said breathes slowly. Trying to recover.

REZA (CONT'D)

This is the end for you. I want you to know that -- but unlike your friends, you have a chance to do something good before you die. Do you want that chance?

Nothing from Said. Reza jabs his ribs with the whip. Said COUGHS. Just about gets the word out.

SAID

Yes.

Reza circles him.

REZA

There's a man I want to help. A prisoner called Ata Salmanpour.

Said slowly raises his head. Not sure he heard it right.

SAID

You want to help him?

REZA

I can only do that with your help. Are you willing to do that?

Said glares at him. Somehow he believes him.

SAID

Why?

Reza stares at him a beat.

REZA

Do you want to help him or not?

Said slowly nods his head. Reza's relieved.

REZA (CONT'D)
I need you to make a confession.

EXT. PRISON -- NIGHT

Pitch black. The prison's exterior lighting is the only illumination in the area.

EXT. CAR PARK, PRISON -- NIGHT

A black MERCEDES pulls into the car park. Rear door swings opens as Cleric Hussein exits. Regards the prison a beat.

REZA (V.O.)
His name is Said Varzi.

INT. REZA'S OFFICE -- NIGHT

Reza is at his desk. Cleric is upstanding by the window.

REZA
He said he burnt the documents as soon as he got them. Didn't want to risk them getting it into the wrong hands. And I don't know if this proves anything but he didn't want to save himself either.

CLERIC HUSSEIN
What do you mean?

REZA
I offered them all the deal you instructed me to give them -- but he wanted to save another prisoner. Someone called Ata Salmanpour.

CLERIC HUSSEIN
(with disdain)
How touching.

Cleric shakes his head.

CLERIC HUSSEIN (CONT'D)
In any case, we're closing on Ansari's lawyer. He's the one who gave those documents away.

Reza's face fills with worry. World spins.

REZA
Where is he?

CLERIC HUSSEIN
In some apartment across town. Once
we have him in custody, he'll tell
us who he gave those documents to.

REZA
When will you get him?

Cleric turns to Reza.

CLERIC HUSSEIN
Soon.

REZA
He has them. I'm sure of it.

CLERIC HUSSEIN
I'll speak to this man. I will. But
after that I don't want to hear
from him again.

Reza knows what this means.

REZA
What about the other prisoner?

CLERIC HUSSEIN
What about him?

REZA
Should I let him go?

Cleric looks at him. Unrepentant.

CLERIC HUSSEIN
You should let him die.

INT. HALLWAY -- NIGHT

Reza walks to the cell door. Stops. His face hardens. Doubt
surfaces. He can't do what needs to be done. He summons his
courage. Pulls open the cell door and enters.

INT. CELL -- LATER

Reza stands before Said. Grim. Stoic.

SAID
Did it work?

Reza nods slowly. Beat.

Said's face is a mixture of despair and happiness.

Reza moves behind him. Into the shadows.

REZA
You won't feel a thing.

Said nods softly. Takes in a breathe. Tries to keep it together. His eyes well. Lips tremble. Body shakes.

SAID
Tell my family I'm
sorry...please...I want them to
know I'm sorry for what I did to
them. Can you tell them for me?

For a beat, we hear nothing back.

REZA
No more talking.

Said closes his eyes. A single tear descends his cheek.

EXT. STREET -- NIGHT

The truck is parked on a quiet residential street.

Reza's at the wheel. Still. Vacant. He looks off screen. Knows what he must do. He opens the truck door.

EXT. HOME -- NIGHT

Reza walks up three short steps to the front door of a house. He rings the bell. Waits a beat.

It opens to a LADY in her 50s. They exchange a few words and slowly the Lady's face changes as she realizes who Reza is.

INT. LOUNGE, HOME -- NIGHT

The Lady is on a couch, tears streaming her face, as she listens to Reza speak to her.

He momentarily stops when her crying overwhelms her. She sinks her face into her hands.

Reza averts his eyes. Out of helplessness. Out of guilt.

We slowly move past the crying Lady to a NEARBY TABLE. To a PICTURE FRAME where we see...

SAID and LADY, arm in arm, on a sunny day in Tehran.

EXT. STREET -- DAY

People go about their day when a THUNDEROUS ROAR makes heads turn. A CAR careens the corner. Hurtles down the street. From the opposite end, another THUNDEROUS ROAR as -- ANOTHER CAR shoots in the same direction. Inside one car...

INT. CAR -- DAY

FOUR MEN in CIVILIAN CLOTHES including the Revolutionary guard we met earlier. He takes out a HAND GUN. Clicks it...

EXT. STREET -- DAY

Both CARS screech to a stop outside TOM'S BUILDING. Doors fly open. EIGHT MEN jump out. Guns in tow...

INT. APARTMENT -- DAY

BAM! Front door caves in. Men storm in. Moussavi jumps up. Shell shocked. Hands raised. Terrified.

MOUSSAVI

Don't shoot.

EXT. BUILDING -- DAY

Building doors WRENCH OPEN as Moussavi, sobbing, in hand cuffs, is escorted out by the Revolutionary guards.

Across the road, a block away, we see the blue car parked up in a spot. Two SILHOUETTED FIGURES up front.

INT. BLUE CAR -- DAY

Tom is at the wheel. Irrate. Iranian man next to him.

IRANIAN MAN

How the hell did they find him?

TOM

How the hell should I know?

They watch Moussavi being put into one of the cars.

IRANIAN MAN

Do you think he'll talk?

TOM

In a second.

Iranian man slides him a look.

IRANIAN MAN

So what do we do?

The group of cars pull away.

TOM

We're going to make that warden
help us whether he likes it or not.

Tom starts the car.

INT. CELL -- DAY

Ata stares at an EMPTY MATTRESS.

Said's mattress.

His eyes are cold. Unwavering. This is a changed man. He knows what he must do. What he needs to do to survive.

EXT. COURTYARD -- DAY

Ata is on one side of the fence. Stoic. Dariush on the other side. While they talk neither looks the other.

DARIUSH

At lunch, I'll come over and pass you a small knife. Keep it safe. Don't show it to anyone. Go about your day as usual. Once the guards have done their rounds, wait till the other prisoners are asleep. Make sure they're asleep. Wait as long as you have to. Then you stand over that piece of shit and stab him in the neck. Do it hard and quick. Put the knife in your pocket and start screaming with the others. Guards will come in. I'll cause a distraction. Draw them to me...

ATA

How are you going to do that?
You're not in the same building as us?

DARIUSH

Let me worry about that. All you need to do is get to the toilet. Can you handle that?

ATA

Yes.

DARIUSH

There's a vent by the third cubicle. Take off the cover. I'll leave instructions in the vent. That'll take you straight to where you need to go.

ATA

How do I get back?

DARIUSH

Same way you came. Cover the vent. Screws will be on the window sill. You'll have to say you fell asleep in the toilet. I don't know what they'll do to you but at least you got what you wanted.

Dariush bends down to do his SHOE LACES.

DARIUSH
You ready for this?

Ata's face hardens.

ATA
That phone better work.

Ata walks away. Darish smiles.

DARIUSH
You'll find out tonight.

INT. CELL -- NIGHT

SLEEPING BODIES across the cell. Ata's on his back. Eyes wide open. Slowly cranes up. Looks around. No movement. Slowly removes a POCKET SIZE KNIFE from under the mattress. Brings it to his side. Lies back down. Nerves set in. Clenches his fist. Gets a grip.

INT. TOILET, PRISON -- NIGHT

A row of unkept cubicles. Across the back wall, MOVEMENT from behind the VENT COVER. FINGERS protrude the bars across the vent. Push it open. A HAND brings it down. From inside the vent, Dariush scurries forward into the light.

INT. CELL -- NIGHT

Massoud sleeps soundly. Ata looms over him. KNIFE in hand. Drops to his knees. Pressure sets in. Massoud doesn't move. Doesn't know what's coming. Ata lifts the knife. Breathes heavy. Summons his will.

ATA
Forgive me.

INT. HALLWAY -- NIGHT

AGONISING SCREAMS FILL THE HALLWAY as Sassan and a SKINNY GUARD pelt down the hallway.

INT. CELL -- NIGHT

Sassan and Skinny guard charge in to find Massoud, CONVULSING, BLOOD DRENCHED. A BESPECTACLED PRISONER holds his BLOOD SOAKED NECK. Others, including Ata, stand aside.

SASSAN
What the hell happened?

BESPECTACLED PRISONER
We found him like this...

SASSAN
Like what? What the fuck happened?

BESPECTACLED PRISONER
It looks like he was stabbed.

Sassan charges him. Grabs his throat.

SASSAN
How the fuck would you know that?

BESPECTACLED PRISONER
I'm a doctor! If you let me go, I
can try to save him.

Sassan believes him. Lets go. Prisoner reverts to Massoud.

SASSAN
(to the other prisoners)
Which one of you pricks did this?

No one says a word.

SASSAN (CONT'D)
You think I'm not going to find
out? Tell me now or I'll make sure
you all get shot tonight.

MAN (O.S.)
I did it.

They turn to Dariush upstanding by the window.

DARIUSH
And I'd do it again if you guys
want to watch.

No one can believe it. Not even the guards.

DARIUSH (CONT'D)
Well?

INT. HALLWAY -- NIGHT

SEVERAL GUARDS arrive on scene just as Sassan heaves Dariush, BRUISED and BATTERED out of the cell. We move away from them, towards the nearby TOILET DOOR where...

INT. VENT -- NIGHT

Ata crawls along a NARROW PIPE. Barely any room to manoeuver.

INT. LAUNDRY ROOM -- NIGHT

A VENT IN THE WALL. THUDDING grows LOUDER until the COVER flies open. Ata sticks out his head. Checks the room. All clear. Scurries out. Scours the vicinity. Can't see the phone. Panics. Where is it?

Clocks a DOOR. Must be over there. Goes to it. Listens. Can't hear anything. Pulls it open to find...

Afshin.

He thumps Ata's face. FOUR GUARDS charge him. Bring him crashing down. Afshin stands over him.

AFSHIN
You trying to escape you stupid
little shit?

Suddenly, Dariush appears behind Afshin. His face BANGED UP from the earlier beating.

DARIUSH
Happy?

AFSHIN
I believe you know Dariush.

Dariush looks down at Ata.

DARIUSH
Sorry my friend. He gave me a
better deal than you did. Freedom.

Afshin presses his boot harder into Ata's face.

AFSHIN
Looks like I'm going to put a
bullet in your head after all

INT. HALLWAY -- NIGHT

Reza tears down the hallway. From the expression on his face, he's heard the news of Ata's capture.

INT. TORTURE CELL -- NIGHT

On his knees, Ata's barely able to keep upright. He's received several thumps to the face. Nose bleeds. Cheek is cut. Afshin and a SECOND GUARD surround him.

AFSHIN
He says he was alone but I don't
believe him.

REZA
Why would he lie?

AFSHIN
Because he keeps telling us he
wants to die! That's all he's said
ever since we caught him. Which
means he's hiding something.

Afshin slaps him in the back of the head.

REZA
Take him to the hole.

AFSHIN
No. He needs to die!

REZA
You don't decide that.

AFSHIN
I'm following your rules. If
someone escapes, we end his life.
No exceptions. That's what you told
us. So why is he any different?

REZA
I'm the warden of this prison and
I'll do what I want...

AFSHIN
No you won't.

REZA
What did you say?

Afshin takes a step forward.

AFSHIN
I know what you're up to and so
does the Cleric. So if were you I
would do the right thing and leave
this prison and let us do our job.

Reza glares at him.

REZA
I'm not going anywhere.

Afshin smirks. Expected resistance. Turns to the guards.

AFSHIN (CONT'D)
You heard the man. Put him in the
hole.

Afshin gives Reza a wink as he makes his way out.

INT. CELL -- NIGHT

Curled in the corner, Ata is motionless.

In the opposite corner, a SMALL MOUSE stares at him before
making his way to the TRAY OF UNTOUCHED FOOD.

Shadow appears across the thin bar of light at the foot of
the door. Door opens. Light floods in. Mouse scatters away.

Reza enters. Closes the door. Sends the cell back into
darkness. Bends to Ata.

REZA
They have you now. Just tell me
where the documents are or they'll
kill you. Do you understand?

Nothing from Ata. It gets too much for Reza.

REZA (CONT'D)
I want to help you. Why won't you
let me help you?

Reza gets on his knees. Close. Needs to say this.

REZA (CONT'D)
You saved my life. I was a little
boy and you saved my life. My
mother Soraya came to see you and
you helped her when no one else
would.

Reza stops himself from crying.

REZA (CONT'D)
I will do the same for you. I will
get you out.

He rests a hand on Ata's shoulder.

REZA (CONT'D)
I promise.

EXT. CAR PARK, PRISON -- NIGHT

Reza goes to get into his truck. Clocks Afshin by the front
entrance of the prison. Eyes on him. Sneering. Reza ignores
him and gets into his truck.

EXT. STREET -- NIGHT

Reza's truck pulls up the street. Turns into his drive-away.
He stays in his car. Stares at his house. After a long beat,
he pushes open the car door.

INT. REZA'S HOME -- NIGHT

The front door opens.

Reza enters. Takes one step forward --e

AN ARM WRAPS AROUND HIS NECK. HANDKERCHIEF COVERS HIS MOUTH.
PRESSES DOWN. NO TIME REACT.

INT. KITCHEN, REZA'S HOME -- NIGHT

Reza's eyes flick open. Dazed. Disorientated.

Mouth GAGGED. Feet ROPED together. Hands TIED behind a chair. Eyes go wide as he shakes the chair violently.

TOM (O.S.)

Stop.

Tom stays behind Reza. ARM BANDAGED. Reza yells something. Continues to move. Shakes the chair.

TOM (O.S.)

Stop or I'll bring your family out
and do this in front of them.

Reza freezes. Can't believe this is happening.

TOM (O.S.)

Do as I say and this will be over
soon. Nod if you understand.

Reza nods quickly.

TOM (CONT'D)

There's a prisoner I'm looking for.
Ata Salmanpour. Is he still live?

Reza pauses. Taken aback. Nods once.

TOM (CONT'D)

I'm gonna remove your gag. If you
scream, you know what I will do.
Nod if you understand.

Reza nods. Tom removes his gag. Moves to face him. Tom places the GUN ON THE TABLE.

REZA

My family...

TOM

They're safe. I haven't harmed
them.

Reza tries very hard not to cry.

TOM (CONT'D)

I need to get information from him
and you're going to help me.

REZA

What information?

TOM

You don't ask questions. I do.

Tom circles him. Eyes on him.

TOM (CONT'D)

How do I get inside?

REZA

You can't.

TOM
Wrong answer.

REZA
I'm telling you can't. Security is
so high. I can't get you in.

TOM
You want me to bring your family
out here? You want me to do this
with them?

REZA
NO! STOP! PLEASE...

TOM
Then tell me!

REZA
I don't know...

TOM
Wrong answer again.

Tom clocks back his gun. Goes to move....

REZA
I'm trying to help him! I'm trying
to help him escape!

It catches Tom totally off guard.

TOM
What?

REZA
That's all I've been trying to do.
He saved my life when I was a boy
and I want to save his but I can't
do it. I don't know how to do it.
That's the truth. Please don't hurt
them. I beg you. Please.

Tom believes him. Sits down. Glares at Reza. Can't believe
it. He rests the gun on the table.

TOM
You want to help your family?

Reza nods through the tears.

TOM (CONT'D)
Then you will do exactly as I say.

EXT. BUILDING -- DAWN

A CRIMSON SKYLINE. The MILITARY COMPOUND is on the outskirts
of the city.

INT. WINDOWLESS ROOM -- DAWN

The revolutionary guard stands over someone. Glaring down at him. Moussavi is on the floor. Whimpering in pain. Blood soaked bandages around both hands.

INT. HALLWAY -- DAWN

The revolutionary guard marches down a long hallway.

INT. OFFICE -- DAWN

Cleric Hussein is at a desk.

REVOLUTIONARY GUARD

He gave the documents to someone called Ata Salmanpour. He has signed papers in his office that can prove it. I've sent guards over there to pick them up.

CLERIC HUSSEIN

Did you ask him about Said Varzi?

REVOLUTIONARY GUARD

He doesn't know him.

CLERIC HUSSEIN

You're sure?

REVOLUTIONARY GUARD

I cut off two fingers to be sure.

CLERIC HUSSEIN

I don't want to know those things!

Cleric bangs on the table. Irritated with himself.

CLERIC HUSSEIN (CONT'D)

(to himself)

Afshin was right.

Cleric turns to him.

CLERIC HUSSEIN (CONT'D)

Get me a car. I need to speak to the warden right now.

INT. CELL, PRISON -- DAY

Ata's on the ground. Still. Could almost be dead. Door WRENCHES OPEN. TWO GUARDS march in. Drag him out.

INT. HALLWAY -- DAY

Guards drag Ata across the wet floor. Sporadic BLUE AND BLACK BRUISES cover his torso and back.

INT. SHOWER ROOM -- DAY

Ata SCREAMS IN PAIN as guards dunk him into a TUB OF WATER. He fights for air. They snatch him back up. Ata swallows air. Takes in what he can before they pound him back down...

INT. BEDROOM, REZA'S HOME -- DAY

Reza stands before the mirror. Buttons his shirt. Stops for a moment to consider himself.

INT. LOUNGE -- DAY

Reza exits the room. Tom is standing by the table. Reza comes to him. Tom takes out a SYRINGE and a small BOTTLE.

TOM
You remember what I told you?

Reza nods slowly.

TOM (CONT'D)
Make sure they don't find it.

Reza takes the syringe and bottle.

REZA
Is this the only way?

TOM
Yes.

Reza sighs softly. Wavering.

TOM (CONT'D)
He has to die. You understand that?

REZA
Yes.

TOM
Good luck today.

Reza grabs his CAR KEYS. Heads out.

INT. TRUCK -- DAY

Reza's truck is its usual slot. Reza turns off the ignition. Goes to remove the key. Sees his hand shaking. Balls it. Gets a grip. Must get a grip.

BANG! BANG! On the window. It's Afshin. Reza rolls down the window.

AFSHIN
Cleric wants to see you in your office.

INT. REZA'S OFFICE -- DAY

Cleric sits in Reza's seat. Reza faces him.

CLERIC HUSSEIN
You never questioned him, Reza. He
was on the list and you never
questioned him.

REZA
Cleric, Said had confessed to us...

CLERIC HUSSEIN
No he hadn't!

Cleric bangs his hand on the table.

CLERIC HUSSEIN (CONT'D)
It was the confession of a
desperate man which you were
ignorant enough to believe!

Cleric relents. Controls his anger.

CLERIC HUSSEIN (CONT'D)
Afshin told me everything you've
done for this prisoner. Stopping
his execution. Allowing him to
speak to his family...

REZA
None of that is true.

CLERIC HUSSEIN
I say it is! I say it all makes
perfect sense. I just don't
understand why. Why you would want
to throw all this way? Is it the
money? Is that what this man has
promised you?

REZA
Of course not.

CLERIC HUSSEIN
Then what is it? I want to know why
you betrayed us.

REZA
I'm not hiding anything, Cleric.

CLERIC HUSSEIN
Tell me or I won't be able to help
you. I will let them do what they
want with you.

Reza looks into his eyes.

REZA
I'm not hiding anything.

The answer disappoints Cleric.

CLERIC HUSSEIN
You are relieved of your duties.
Pack your things and get out.

REZA
Cleric...

CLERIC HUSSEIN
You heard what I said.

The news shatters Reza. No way back. He knows it. He gets up.
Makes for the door. Stops a beat.

REZA
I'm sorry I let you down.

INT. HALLWAY -- DAY

Afshin talks with a BURLY GUARD manning the entrance of the hallway that leads to the torture cells.

AFSHIN
You don't let him through. No matter what he says. He's not the warden anymore. Remember that. Tell all the other guards.

INT. REZA'S OFFICE -- DAY

Reza sits at his desk. Looks at the clock on the wall.

INT. CANTEEN -- DAY

Afshin and SEVERAL GUARDS finish their food. Make their way out of the canteen.

EXT. CAR PARK, PRISON -- DAY

Afshin surveys the car park. Reza's truck is gone.

INT. HALLWAY -- DAY

Afshin approaches Reza's office. Goes to the door. Listens. Nothing. Turns the handle. Pushes the door open...

INT. REZA'S OFFICE -- DAY

Just a desk and chair. Reza's possessions are gone.

Afshin enters. Puts a hand on the desk. Looks around. Smiles proudly. He goes behind the desk. Sits in the chair. Balls his hand. Punches the air. It's what he always wanted.

EXT. PRISON -- NIGHT

A clear starless night.

INT. HALLWAY -- NIGHT

TRAY OF FOOD IN HAND, a YOUNG GUARD heads down the hallway. Reza heads towards him from the other end. Young guard gulps. They pass one another. Reza doesn't acknowledge him. Then...

REZA

Wait.

Young guard stops.

REZA (CONT'D)

Where are you taking that?

YOUNG GUARD

To the one of prisoners in the, uh, holding cells...

REZA

With a silver spoon?

YOUNG GUARD

Yes, uh, that's what they gave me.

REZA

You think it's okay to take a sharp metallic object to a prisoner who wants nothing more but to kill himself or one of us?

YOUNG GUARD

No. Of course not. I don't know why they gave it...

REZA

But you were on your way there?

YOUNG GUARD

Yes. I know. I'm sorry. I've never done this before. I was just put on duty tonight. Someone requested that I do this shift...

REZA

So what are you going to do about it?

YOUNG GUARD

(looks lost)

I don't...

Reza raises the METALLIC SPOON.

YOUNG GUARD (CONT'D)

Get a plastic spoon?

REZA
Congratulations.

The guard goes to move.

REZA
Leave the tray. I'll wait here till
you get back.

YOUNG GUARD
You would do that for me?

REZA
Why are you still here?

Guard leaves the tray on the ground. Goes to go...

REZA
You're only job is to keep them
hydrated. Remember that. They've
suffered a lot and sometimes they
just want some water.

YOUNG GUARD
Yes, sir.

REZA
I won't wait here all night.

Guard nods, sprints away. Reza looks around. No one in sight.
He removes a PRE-PUMPED SYRINGE from his jacket. Flicks the
capsule with his finger. It's ready.

INT. HALLWAY -- LATER

PLASTIC SPOON in hand, the young guard hurries down the
hallway to find the tray on the floor. Reza's nowhere in
sight. He looks around. Baffled. He grabs the tray.

INT. HALLWAY -- NIGHT

Tray in hand, Young Guard approaches the BURLY GUARD. Second
overweight guard is asleep in the chair.

YOUNG GUARD
Food.

BURLY GUARD
No shit.

YOUNG GUARD
I don't mind dropping it in.

BURLY GUARD
You telling me what to do?

YOUNG GUARD
I'm not. No. I would never do that.

Burly looks him up and down. Seems harmless.

BURLY GUARD
Cell six.

Young Guard nods. Moves away.

INT. TORTURE CELL -- NIGHT

Door swings open. Young guard enters. Can't make out much in the darkness. Sees the faint traces of a torso as the body dangles into the light. Makes him take in a small breathe.

Ata looks dead. Twitching involuntarily. Blood smeared across his face and body. Hands still chained to the ceiling.

YOUNG GUARD
Oh my God.

Young Guard puts down the tray. Knows what he must do. Grabs the GLASS OF WATER. Slowly moves to him.

INT. HALLWAY, PRISON -- NIGHT

Hours later. One burly guard is asleep in the chair. The other is on the floor, trying desperately to stay awake.

MAN (O.S.)
AHHHHHHHHHH!!!!

They both spring up.

BURLY GUARD
What the...

MAN (O.S.)
AAAAAAHHHHHH!

A SCREAM. LOUD. EAR PIERCING. It came from one of the cells.

First Burly shoots up. Runs to each cell. ANOTHER SCREAM confirms it came from the last cell. Cell six. He fumbles for his KEYS. Unlocks the door...

INT. TORTURE CELL -- NIGHT

Ata CONVULSES VIOLENTLY. FOAM SPEWING FROM HIS MOUTH.

BURLY GUARD
What the fuck!

Burly is panic-stricken. No idea what to do. SECOND BURLY GUARD appears behind him, out of breathe.

SECOND BURLY GUARD
What's...

See Ata convulsing violently.

SECOND BURLY GUARD
What the fuck!

BURLY GUARD
What do we do?

SECOND BURLY GUARD
Why is he doing that?

BURLY GUARD
I don't know! What do we do?!

SECOND BURLY GUARD
Get him down. I'm calling an ambulance.

He sprints away leaving Burly with the worst job of two.

INT. HALLWAY, PRISON -- NIGHT

The two burly guards carry an unconscious Ata down the stretch. Moving as fast as they can. Storming past...

INT. ANOTHER HALLWAY -- LATER

...the Young guard (from earlier) SWEEPING the floor. His face slowly changes as he catches sight of the unconscious man.

INT. HALLWAY -- NIGHT

Meanwhile, on the fifth floor, Sassan charges down a hallway. Reaches a door. Wrenches it open...

INT. REZA'S OFFICE -- NIGHT

Afshin is at his desk. Smoking a cigarette.

SASSAN
Ata Salmanpour's had a heart attack.

AFSHIN
What! When?

SASSAN
Guards just found him. But they called the ambulance.

AFSHIN
What! Why the hell did they do that?

SASSAN
I'm sorry. I only just found out.

Afshin starts for the door.

AFSHIN
Take to me him now! He doesn't
leave this building!

EXT. LOADING BAY -- NIGHT

An AMBULANCE pulls up to the back entrance of the prison.

INT. HALLWAY -- NIGHT

Afshin and a group of guards bomb it down the hallway.

EXT. LOADING BAY -- NIGHT

Burly guards surge out of the exterior doors. Head to the waiting PARAMEDIC WEARING A CAP. Place Ata onto the STRETCHER. A SECOND PARAMEDIC WEARING A CAP assists with the stretcher. Slides it into the ambulance.

INT. HALLWAY -- NIGHT

Afshin sprints ahead of the group. Reaches doors leading to the loading bay. Kicks them open.

No ambulance in sight.

AFSHIN
Where is it? Where the hell is it?

The guards look on. Clueless.

AFSHIN (CONT'D)
Don't just stand there, find out
which hospital they went to!

EXT. STREETS OF TEHRAN -- NIGHT

Ambulance tears through the streets.

INT. AMBULANCE -- NIGHT

At the wheel, the SECOND PARAMEDIC removes his cap.

It's Tom.

First paramedic is the IRANIAN MAN who performs CPR on Ata.

IRANIAN MAN
It's not working, Tom!

TOM
What the fuck do you want me to do?

IRANIAN MAN
Did you tell him the right
information?

TOM
I told him to inject whatever you
told me to inject!

IRANIAN MAN
Well he's supposed to be up now...

TOM
Then fucking do something!

INT. BEDROOM -- NIGHT

A bed. A phone RINGS. A hand reaches out from under the
sheets. Picks up the receiver.

CLERIC HUSSEIN (ON THE PHONE)
Hello.
(beat)
Do you know what time it is?

A beat. Suddenly, Cleric cranes up.

CLERIC HUSSEIN (ON THE PHONE)
What do you mean? When?

Cleric Hussein is now wide-eyed. Fully awake.

CLERIC HUSSEIN (ON THE PHONE)
I'm on my way.

INT. AMBULANCE -- NIGHT

Iranian man works Ata. PUMPS his chest. Gives him CPR. Until -
- Ata gasps. Takes in air. Made it.

IRANIAN MAN
That's it. Breathe. Just breathe...

Iranian man slides the OXYGEN MASK on Ata's face.

TOM
Is he up?

IRANIAN MAN
Yeah. He's up.

TOM
Get over here. Take over.

EXT. STREET -- NIGHT

Reza's truck is the only vehicle in the street.

INT. TRUCK -- NIGHT

Reza checks his watch. Nervous. Adjusts the rear view mirror.

INT. AMBULANCE -- NIGHT

Ata comes to life. Looks around. Disorientated. Sees medical equipment. Goes to get up when a hand rests on his chest.

TOM
Take it easy.

Ata looks at him.

TOM (CONT'D)
You need to rest.

ATA
Who are you? What's going on?

TOM
Relax. You're on your way to join
your family in London.

ATA
London?

TOM
Don't look at me. That's what your
son decided to go but right now you
need to rest. You're recovering
from a pretty bad heart attack.

Ata remembers something. Looks at him.

ATA
You're the American?

TOM
Did the accent give it away?

ATA
The documents. I have the
documents...

TOM
We've got them. Your grandson gave
them to us. *Eventually*. He had them
in this Star Wars bag this whole
time.

Ata nods slowly. Unhappy with what transpired.

TOM
Get some rest. We can talk later.

Ata's face fills with emotion. Can't believe this is all
finally over.

ATA
Thank you.

TOM
For what?

ATA
Getting me out.

TOM
I didn't get you out.

Ata looks at him, confused.

ATA
Then who did?

EXT. STREET -- NIGHT

The ambulance rounds the corner. Heads towards the beaten-up truck parked at the end of the street.

Reza gets out. Breathes out deeply. Readies himself.

Ambulance stops behind the truck.

For a long beat, nothing happens. Reza goes to move when he sees them. Makes him stop.

Aided by Tom, Ata rounds the vehicle. Bruised, haggard, barely able to keep up right.

TOM
(to Ata)
That's the man who saved you.

Ata sees Reza. His face changes. Nods faintly.

ATA
I can manage.

TOM
Are you sure?

ATA
Yes.

Tom removes his arm. Ata stutters at first. Stays upright. Slowly but surely. Step by step, makes his way to Reza. Much like he did in that bank all those years ago.

REZA
It's good see you.

Reza tries to control his emotions.

REZA (CONT'D)
Are you okay?

ATA

I am now.

Reza smiles. His eyes fill with water.

REZA

I'm sorry I couldn't help you. I tried to stop them. I did everything I could. You have to believe me...

ATA

You don't have to apologize...

Tears stream Reza's face. Can't stop it.

REZA

...I'm sorry. I'm so sorry...

ATA

I remember your mother. When you told me her name. I remembered her.

Reza nods slowly. Wipes away the tears.

REZA

She would've wanted to be here. She would've really liked that. I'm sure she's up there crying like crazy.

Ata smirks lightly.

ATA

I had that effect on her.

Reza smiles through the tears. Ata rests a hand on his shoulder.

ATA (CONT'D)

I'm standing here because of you. Because of what you did for me.

Reza lowers his head. Tom approaches.

TOM

We need to go.

Ata acknowledges him. Half meets Reza's eyes. Reza's a mess.

ATA

Thank you.

Reza hugs him. Holds onto him.

REZA

Thank you for saving my life.

Ata closes his eyes. They remain there a beat. Reza pulls away. Ata looks at him one last time before Iranian Man helps Ata into the truck. Tom turns to Reza.

TOM
You know what you need to do.

Reza nods, wiping away the tears.

TOM (CONT'D)
These are the originals.

Tom hands Reza the DOCUMENTS in a fresh white envelope.

TOM (CONT'D)
You did a good thing today.

Tom extends a hand. Reza shakes it.

Tom gets into the truck. Reza watches it pull away.

INT. TRUCK -- NIGHT

Tom drives. Ata's in the back seat. Turns back. Reza sprints away from them. Down the street. Turns a corner. Disappears.

EXT. STREET -- NIGHT

Desolate square. No one around.

Cleric Hussein appears from one of the interlinking streets. Searching for someone. Double takes on something.

A MAN SITS ON A BENCH. His back to us.

Cleric approaches. Moves round to face Reza.

CLERIC HUSSEIN
Where was it?

Cleric eyes the ENVELOPE beside Reza.

REZA
In his house. Lodged under a
cupboard in his kitchen

Cleric takes the envelope. Pulls out the documents.

CLERIC HUSSEIN
So Said was telling the truth.

REZA
Like I always said.

Cleric puts the documents back in the envelope. Gazes at the surroundings. Reza still hasn't looked at him.

CLERIC HUSSEIN
I'm sorry I doubted you. We were
all under a lot of pressure but you
came through for me as I expected
you would.
(MORE)

CLERIC HUSSEIN (CONT'D)
 I'll make sure you're rewarded for
 this. Maybe a position in the
 Cabinet.

Reza stares ahead.

REZA
 I'm done.

CLERIC HUSSEIN
 What do you mean you're done?

Reza gets up and walks away.

CLERIC HUSSEIN (CONT'D)
 Reza, where are you going?

Reza doesn't break a beat.

REZA
 Home.

EXT. STREET -- DAY

Reza runs at full pelt up his street. Charges up the front
 steps to his home. Wrenches open the door...

INT. REZA'S HOME -- DAY

All is silent. And then --

Golnar appears in the kitchen doorway. He rushes to her. Her
 to him. They hug. Kiss.

REZA
 Are you okay?

GOLNAR
 Yes...

REZA
 ...the boys?

GOLNAR
 We're fine. Is he out?

Reza looks at her. Confused.

GOLNAR (CONT'D)
 Did you get Ata out?

He sees the worry in her eyes. Floors him. He nods slowly.
 She smiles. Hugs him tight. They stay there a beat until the
 sound of SCREAMING CHILDREN explodes from the garden. A huge
 fight has kicked off.

REZA
 Let them scream.

Reza closes his eyes. Won't let her go.

EXT. HIGHWAY -- DAY

Lightness fights its way through the darkness.

The truck shoots down the main highway. PICTURESQUE MOUNTAINS loom in the distance.

EXT. MOUNTAIN RANGE -- DAY

The truck makes its way along a gravelled path towards a small WOODEN OUTPOST in the distance where an OLD MAN awaits.

EXT. WOODEN OUTPOST -- DAY

Ata is with the OLD MAN each holding the lead to a BLACK HORSE. Tom is by the open door of the truck smoking a cigarette. Ata goes to go but he turns to Tom.

ATA

Why me?

Tom takes a drag of his cigarette.

TOM

Because that was the deal I had with Nasser. He gives me information and I get him what he wants.

ATA

What did he want?

TOM

You. He wanted you and your family out of the country.

Ata looks at him. Numb.

TOM (CONT'D)

He thought you were a life worth saving.

Tom smiles thinly. Gets into his truck. It starts and it makes its way down the gravelled path.

Ata stares a long beat. Dealing with what he's been told. He slowly turns to the old man, nods and they start their long journey towards the mountains.

In his dishevelled, emotional state, Ata lets out a smile. The first one in a long time. The first as a free man.

LEGEND: Ata Salmanpour lived in London with his family till he died in 2012.

INT. GARDEN, REZA'S HOME -- DAY

Reza plays FOOTBALL with his children. Golnar watches them from the kitchen window. Smiles proudly.

LEGEND: Reza Afshar never worked at Evin prison again.

Over a black screen, these words appears...

*I wish I could show you when you are lonely or in darkness,
the astonishing light of your own being.*

-- Hafiz

Finally, for the last time, we...

FADE TO BLACK