

WHERE THE TREES HIDE THE MOON

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - MORNING

First Monday of the month, a TORNADO SIREN drills through the streets of a dead working class neighborhood at 6AM as we GLIDE down the empty streets. Over the LOUD SPEAKER comes the dronesque voice of the TORNADO WATCHMEN.

TORNADO WATCHMEN V.O.

This is not a drill. Atmospheric pressure in the southern third of the lower south east quadrant of Missouri has dropped to below sustainable. All persons must stay in doors, close windows and seal ventilation to maintain existing air pressure. This is not a drill. Atmospheric pressures have reached a life-threatening level this morning and all persons should remain indoors and conceal the pressure of their living quarters by all means necessary. This is not a drill. Atmospheric pressure in the southern...

EXT. FOREST - MORNING

A STREAM is running smoothly. Above it a FOOT is still twitching as its' BODY dangles from a TREE. The surrounding forest is calm and silent.

FAROUK (V.O.)

Jacob said his dad played cards with the sheriff the weekend prior. Said he was goofy like everyone else. We didn't imagine that he'd be able to understand any more than anyone else, he'd probably say a few Christian prayers and feel uneasy but hopeful about what might come of it. I don't think that any of us took it too seriously, we continued to walk to and from school, played football in the schoolyard and kept to ourselves at home when asked about our days.

EXT. SCHOOLYARD - DAY

SCANNING the schoolyard playground we see DOZENS OF CHILDREN milling around, TEACHERS standing with arms crossed and talking to one another.

The monkey bars are crowded, underneath them sits a group of THREE BOYS playing CARDS and looking up GIRLS' DRESSES as they climb.

On a distant field a game of tackle FOOTBALL is under way, FOURTEEN boys are on the field, 7 black, 7 white. A wiry YOUNG BLACK KID jumps atop the small hill and proclaims:

YOUNG BLACK KID
Let's play black versus white

On the field, the boys militaristically separate into black and white, SEVEN on each side. The groups stare each other down and YOUNG BLACK KID runs down the aisle between them.

The FOOTBALL is kicked hard to the WHITE team, the game is underway. YOUNG KARL, ten, dirty and scrawny with curly dark brown hair goes in to tackle DEMETRIUS MILLUPS ten, tough black kid wearing OVERALLS. Karl rips Demetrius' OVERALL STRAP.

An altercation begins and the group circles up. Some of the boys are careful not to draw too much attention and so they peer over their shoulders.

DEMETRIUS
What'd you do that for cuz?

YOUNG KARL
I didn't mean to. I was tackling you.

DEMETRIUS
You couldn't tackle me boy.

YOUNG KARL
I almost did.

DEMETRIUS
Then you can try it again. See what happens.

The group of boys head to the corner near the school building where they are covered from the teachers' view. They circle around a fighting Demetrius and Young Karl.

Demetrius breaks a punch through Young Karl's guard and draws BLOOD from his nose.

Young Karl begins precisely moving in and out like a well trained boxer. The boys look on with great intention and excitement.

INT. SCHOOL - DAY

Young Karl is in the bathroom with his three friends YOUNG CAMERON, 10, thin with light brown hair; YOUNG JACOB, 10, a bit rough looking with brown hair and YOUNG FAROUK, 10 with thick black hair and dark skin (THE FOUR BOYS). Young Karl splashes water on his bloody face.

EXT. CREEK - DAY

The four boys are at the creek, Cameron and Jacob are hunting for good skipping rocks and splashing through the water recklessly, Farouk is seated and watching them from the bank Karl has taken his shoes off and is watching the stream ride over his bare feet. The TORNADO SIREN is humming in the distance.

YOUNG FAROUK

Why do you think everyone is so worried?

YOUNG JACOB

My dad said they're just trying to scare us

YOUNG CAMERON

That's stupid, why would they want to scare us?

YOUNG FAROUK

I don't know... to keep us inside.

YOUNG CAMERON

No one will spend any money if they're inside all day.

YOUNG JACOB

That's cause everyone bought everything already. Stores are empty.

YOUNG CAMERON

No they're not.

YOUNG JACOB

Wanna bet?

YOUNG CAMERON

Yeah...

Cameron curiously turns his attention towards Karl

YOUNG CAMERON (CONT'D)

Karl where'd you learn to fight
like that?

YOUNG KARL

My uncle gave me a punching bag for
my birthday last year.

YOUNG JACOB

We have a punching bag and I can't
fight like that.

YOUNG KARL

I just got lucky.

YOUNG CAMERON

Nooooo

Karl takes a step further into the water and jumps back. He
aggressively rubs his finger into his ear.

YOUNG FAROUK

What happened?

Karl is focused on the spot in the stream.

YOUNG KARL

I just went deaf for a second or
something.

Cameron wades over towards Karl and Farouk.

YOUNG CAMERON

Probably from getting punched in
the face.

YOUNG KARL

No. Come here.

Karl indicates the spot and pulls an approaching Farouk in by
the hand.

YOUNG KARL (CONT'D)

Step right here. It's like theres
no sound all of a sudden.

Farouk steps into the creek, he feels the intense SILENCE and
steps back, the PEEPERS, BIRDS and STREAM sound off more
intensely than before.

YOUNG FAROUK
What is that? So weird.

YOUNG CAMERON
What? What is it?

YOUNG FAROUK
Come listen

Cameron steps into the creek with Farouk and Karl, he experiences the same SILENCE and backs out.

Jacob joins in and backs out.

Farouk and Karl exit together, they're all feeling strange.

YOUNG KARL
Let's all do it together.

The four boys look at each other uneasily.

Farouk steps in and closes his eyes followed by Karl, Jacob and finally, Cameron.

Karl initiates holding Farouk's hand and the others follow suit. When the circle-link is complete, their eyes open all together. Their HEARTBEATS are loud and in sync.

The SUN breaks through the canopy and shines extra bright.

The stream at their feet flows intensely.

The four boys stand in amazement for a while enjoying the phenomenon.

Cameron suddenly breaks the chain and backs out, he's uneasy.

YOUNG CAMERON
I gotta go. My mom is taking me to
the dentist today.

Jacob and Farouk follow Cameron. Karl stays behind, he's mystified still by the experience.

Jacob is focused on catching up to Cameron and yells back to Karl:

YOUNG JACOB
See ya Karl.

Farouk follows Jacob. He pauses to try to get Karl's attention.

YOUNG FAROUK
Karl. Karl? See you later, dude.

Farouk runs to catch up with Jacob and Cameron, the three of them run off leaving Young Karl still amazed and alone in the creek.

Upstream a YOUNG BALD KID 10, wearing dirty rags and ancient shoes passes the three boys, only Farouk notices. They lock eyes and the Young Bald Kid passes by mysteriously.

The Young Bald Kid approaches Karl.

YOUNG BALD KID
Do you like how it feels?

Karl slowly raises his head and his eyes meet the newcomer.

YOUNG KARL
Yes.

Young Karl is uneasy, he steps out of the creek and heads in the direction of home, he's stopped by the Young Bald Kid's words.

YOUNG BALD KID
If you're not scared, I can show you everything.

Karl turns to look at the kid. He picks up a stick and breaks it into many smaller segments.

YOUNG KARL
What would I be scared of?

YOUNG BALD KID
Most people don't really want to see it.

Karl is gathering his thoughts before he speaks.

YOUNG KARL
See what?

YOUNG BALD KID
Everything.

Young Karl reflects and looks up from the stick he's nervously fiddling with.

YOUNG BALD KID (CONT'D)
I can show you.

INT. FAROUK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Young Farouk, his father RAKIM 45, handsome with severe eyes, his mother ASHRAM 35, a soft and kind woman and his two playful younger brothers REZA 8 and AMIR 6 are seated at the dinner table with a family style dinner of STEAMING GORMEH SABZI and RICE ready to be served. They are waiting on Rakim's father BABA, 70 petite and weak to come to the table from the bathroom.

YOUNG FAROUK
Dad, why is everyone scared?

RAKIM-45
Who's scared? Don't worry about that, you study and that's enough

BABA enters the room, Farouk pulls his chair out for him to be seated

BABA-70
Thank you, my grandson. Mushallah.

YOUNG FAROUK
Cameron said--

RAKIM-45
Don't worry about what Cameron said...eat and then you study

YOUNG FAROUK
I don't have any homework

RAKIM-45
It's not just homework, you have to learn math, science

(Rakim and Baba speak in Farsi)

BABA-70
Leave him alone

RAKIM-45
Baba, I'm talking to my son

BABA-70
Let him talk sometimes, he's a good kid.

RAKIM-45
You didn't speak for ten years. Don't start now with my son

BABA-70

I can't do anything about that now.
Rakim, let him talk

RAKIM-45

Baba, leave it alone. He's my son

BABA-70

As you wish

As the tension settles, the phone rings. Young Farouk gets up to answer it.

RAKIM-45

Not during dinner, leave it to the machine.

After several rings the answering machine picks up. It's the desperate voice of Mrs. Anderson, Young Karl's mom

KARL'S MOM (V.O.)

(Shaky & Upset)

Farouk, honey...I am calling to see if you were with Karl today? He didn't come home and I'm worried.

Rakim signals for Young Farouk to take the call, he does. Everyone else is seated quietly at the dinner table

INT. JACOB'S BASEMENT OR GARAGE - NIGHT

(2010-Day 1)

Navigating the room we see the important pieces: A PUNCHING BAG, worn out BOXING GLOVES, a very out of date CALENDAR, TOOLS, etc. A GLASS OF WINE is being poured.

FAROUK (V.O.)

Right before high school graduation, Jacob drank 8 glasses of boxed red wine, he threw up on the side of Cameron's mom's minivan and never showed up to graduate. He walked home without telling any of us. A few weeks before Jacob called us all over to his house to tell us the news, Cameron quit smoking cigarettes. He used this event as his excuse to start again, this was the fourth time he's quit, we're all hopeful.

A GLASS OF WINE is dark blue with the POOL TABLE LIGHTS.

An almost done CIGARETTE is being dragged on heavily. Jacob is seated in a lawn chair, Farouk is seated across from him and Cameron is pacing and smoking cigarettes.

CAMERON

Read it one more time.

JACOB

We know what it is, why do you want me to read it again?

CAMERON

Just please read it one more time.

Jacob begins to read THE LETTER, he takes a sip from his GLASS OF WINE and begins...

JACOB

Hello dear friends--

Cameron puts out his cigarette and cuts off Jacob.

CAMERON

Wait, wait, wait, wait, wait...We should take notes on this, maybe there are clues or little breaks in it that we can uh--

JACOB

Cameron. We know what this is. If you want to take notes go ahead but don't give us theories right now.

Jacob stands and indicates the letter to Cameron.

JACOB (CONT'D)

This... isn't literature...It is what it is. We're thinking about this too much, we just need to make a decision.

CAMERON

Are you out of your mind? We're thinking about this too much? How could we be thinking about this too much?

Cameron grabs the letter from Jacob.

CAMERON (CONT'D)

This needs to be thought about, and thought about and thought about and thought about. Can you really make a decision right now? Farouk?

Cameron LIGHTS another CIGARETTE.

FAROUK

We should try reading it without interruption.

JACOB

I'm fine with that. Cameron?

CAMERON

Yeah, go ahead.

Cameron is zoned out and waiting.

JACOB

Do you want to read it?

CAMERON

No.

JACOB

Well then can I have it?

Cameron takes a deep drag from his cigarette and passes the letter back to Jacob who begins reading it:

JACOB (CONT'D)

Hello dear friends, Farouk, Jacob, Cameron. I hope this letter finds you each in good health, sound of mind and body. It is my sincerest hope, because the task that I've set out for you is not one to be taken lightly. I'll state my purpose quickly so there is no confusion of my intention: I want you to kill me, and soon, you'll know why. As a boy I was troubled, fighting, cussing, and generally partaking, with great enthusiasm, in the mischievous natures that tempt young boys. I am certain that each of you remembers the afternoon spent in the creek?

(MORE)

JACOB (CONT'D)

Though it was only a moment of peculiar phenomenon for each of you, for me, its effects have lasted a life time. Since that day I have known the deepest joys, seen the brightest lights and felt the purest love that any boy or man could know, I lived a golden life, I lived a life of the Gods. But, as was promised to me on that day, that time has come to an end. The blessed days are over and here I sit writing this letter to you ready to end the suffering, the torment, and the memories that flood my mind with darkness and my body with pain. I need you to kill me at noon on Sunday. I presume that you know just where I will be. Do not label me as insane, do not pity me, if you can find it in your hearts, kill me. End this suffering and let me go. I am truly and deeply sorry for the conflict my request will most certainly cause. I have considered this proposal more than you could know. I write to you as a man defeated and cornered. Sunday at noon, my life will end. It will pass from your hands to those of a divine and merciful God. Or, it will pass from my hands into a dark and unknown void. In either case, in either place, my life will reach its resolve. I am your forever friend and each of you, forever mine.

The three men are in their same positions as before.

CAMERON

Jesus Christ.

JACOB

You have an answer now?

CAMERON

No. Do you?

JACOB

No but, I'm not the one who wants to read this fifteen times. It's simple, are we going to kill him or not?

CAMERON

It's not simple, Jacob. God Almighty...what if this letter was tracked by the postal service?

FAROUK

It's not, there wasn't a return address or a stamp

CAMERON

Okay so, what, we kill him and then what? Do you know how to bury a body? Have you talked to his mom? Jesus Christ Jacob, we're not making a decision on this right now, we need to talk about it.

JACOB

Can we go talk to Karl?

FAROUK

He's not home, his mom doesn't know where he is, he's got this planned out man.

CAMERON

And we only have a week to decide? No way dude. No way.

JACOB

Okay well, then go home Cameron. If you've got your mind made up.

CAMERON

I'm not gonna go home and let you guys decide to murder someone, I'll be an accomplice or an accessory or...God...

JACOB

No one said anything about killing him yet.

CAMERON

Are you even considering it one percent?

JACOB

What else are we doing Cameron?

CAMERON

Have you lost your fucking mind? Give me that letter...

Cameron reaches in for the letter and Jacob pulls it away and puts it in his pocket.

JACOB

I'm not giving you this letter.

CAMERON

Well then I'm going to the police, I'm not going to jail ...fucking prison because you are too god damn dumb to think reasonably about this. Give me the letter, Jacob.

JACOB

What are the police gonna do Cameron?

CAMERON

They'll know that I didn't kill him if he winds up dead.

FAROUK

Cameron, stop being a pussy.

CAMERON

Farouk, are you serious? Do you guys know how fucking serious this is? If we get caught with this letter, if Karl kills himself...

FAROUK

We can't let him kill himself. That's the whole point you fucking coward.

CAMERON

Fine. Then you guys play God. Kill him, it's better that he's dead than taking medicine, that'd be a real fucking tragedy, wouldn't it?

JACOB

You really don't remember do you?

CAMERON

Maybe I do remember, Jacob. Maybe I'm fucked up too because of it. Or, (laughs) Maybe I'm just not ready to kill my friend. Think that's possible, Jacob?

Cameron exits.

FAROUK
This is so fucked.

JACOB
He'll be fine.

FAROUK
Are you sure about that? Are you
sure any of us are gonna be fine
after this? This is a lose-lose
situation. I don't see any answer
to this that will bring about a bit
of good.

JACOB
Either way, we gotta make a
decision.

FAROUK
Are you gonna be able to?

JACOB
Don't have a choice.

Car lights flash in the window.

FAROUK
I think Doreen just pulled up. I
want to get my dad some dinner so
I'm gonna get out of here anyway.
I'll call you tomorrow

JACOB
Don't even worry about calling me
just come over here after work.

FAROUK
I'm not going to work tomorrow, you
kidding?

JACOB
Alright. Call me then, I'll be
here.

Jacob and Farouk hug and Farouk exits. A few moments later,
Doreen enters, Jacob cracks open a BUDWEISER to promote the
image of being casual, before Doreen enters he takes a huge
swig.

DOREEN
Jacob? (O.S.)

Jacob is still, sitting in his lawn chair and listening to
Doreen's footsteps approaching.

DOREEN (CONT'D)
Jacob? (O.S.)

She opens the door to the garage.

DOREEN (CONT'D)
Hey. Why didn't you answer me?

JACOB
Sorry baby, I didn't hear you.

DOREEN
Farouk left in a hurry, everything
alright?

She approaches Jacob and runs her fingers through his hair
and rubs his arms, he's got a glazed look in his eye.

JACOB
Yeah, he's fine.

DOREEN
That doesn't sound too convincing.

JACOB
Everything with his dad, he's
stressed.

DOREEN
Still? That poor man. What we're
you guys doing out here?

JACOB
Just having a beer, talking.

Doreen begins moving towards the door, taking her ear rings
out.

DOREEN
Okay, well. Everything alright?
Nothing else on your mind?

JACOB
No babe, I'm good. I'm coming in,
in a minute.

DOREEN
Okay. You sure?

JACOB
Sure what?

DOREEN
 Never mind, Jacob. Was Cameron
 here?

JACOB
 No. Why?

DOREEN
 I don't know, I thought I saw him
 pass me on 141.

Jacob grunts curiously.

DOREEN (CONT'D)
 You and Junior still going out
 tomorrow?

JACOB
 Nah. I don't want him going out for
 his first time when its pouring. If
 it's not raining it'll just be
 swampy.

DOREEN
 Okay.

Doreen goes inside. Jacob takes another swig of his beer,
 stands up and hits the punching bag with enough force to send
 it rocking back and forth.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

INT. JACOB'S TRUCK - MORNING

(2000-Day 0)

An ornament is dangling from the rear-view mirror. JACOB, 20
 driving, KARL, 20 shotgun fondling his SATCHEL, FAROUK, 20
 rear-driver staring out the window, CAMERON, 20 rear-
 passenger, smoking and DOREEN, rear-middle hands to herself
 and looking at the road

KARL-20
 What if we could see the wind?

Everyone is silent, they turn towards the middle and all
 collectively burst into laughter, except Karl, who chuckles
 only a little.

CAMERON-20
 You *can* see the wind. Look at those
 wind-mills.

JACOB-20
You can't see the wind, those are
wind-mills.

DOREEN-20
Yeah, but what's moving them?

JACOB-20
Doesn't mean you can see the wind,
you just see what it does.

CAMERON-20
Same thing.

JACOB-20
Not at all. You cannot see the
wind.

CAMERON-20
What about when there's smoke in
the air?

JACOB-20
Again, the wind is moving the
smoke. You're not seeing the wind.

DOREEN-20
But what about it, Karl?

A long bit of silence

KARL-20
You guys have missed the point. The
essence of a thing is in it's
actions, the wind moves and thus,
we see its grace in nature.

CAMERON-20
What?

FAROUK-20
Like, we cannot see kindness, we
can only see the manifestations of
kindness.

Doreen rubs Farouk's head playfully, condescendingly.

CAMERON-20
(Satirical Iranian Accent)
Farouk! Faroukee. Big Brain Farouk.

JACOB-20
Faroukee!!

CAMERON-20 AND JACOB-20
(Chanting)
Faroukee, Faroukee!

KARL-20
Can we pull over? I have to pee

CAMERON-20
Karl, killin the mood. Killer Karl

JACOB-20
Cameron. Shut up dude.

CAMERON-20
(mocking)
Cameron, shut up dude.

JACOB-20
Don't make me whoop your ass again,
boy.

KARL-20
Jacob, pull over.

CAMERON-20
Yeah Jacob, pull over...Again?

Doreen leans up in her seat, curious.

DOREEN-20
Yeah, what do you mean again? Did I
miss the first one?

JACOB-20
You didn't miss much. Farouk,
what's the mile marker?

FAROUK-20
175. Then it's like 15 minutes.
There's a gas station immediately
off the exit.

KARL-20
That's 80 miles Jacob, let me pee.

CAMERON-20
Go ahead Jacob, pull over. We can
rassle in that grassy knoll.

JACOB-20
Cameron, if you can last 60
seconds, you win. Might wanna put
that cigarette out first.

CAMERON-20

You wanna put some money on that?

Jacob is pulling over to a grassy section of the highway, there is a small creek off to the side.

JACOB-20

Doesn't matter if I put a million dollars on it. It's not gonna help you and you are not gonna pay me.

CAMERON-20

We'll see.

Farouk is laughing. Karl is extremely focused on peeing.

EXT. SIDE OF HIGHWAY/CREEK. - MORNING

(2000-Day 0)

Karl runs out first, he's carrying his SATCHEL, gets into the creek and runs a ways up to go pee, Doreen and Farouk hang back by the car.

JACOB-20

(To Karl)
No one's looking at your willy, Karl.

CAMERON-20

Not much to see, anyway.

Karl continues into the creek.

CAMERON-20 (CONT'D)

(to no one in particular)
Why does he always gotta go so far away to pee?

FAROUK-20

I dunno. Shy bladder?

Jacob and Cameron head down to the grass near the creek.

CAMERON-20

I'm gonna drain my extroverted weasel then umma drop Jacob on his head, all without letting my smoke go out...
(Shouts to Karl)
Karl, you bring your video camera?

FAROUK-20

(RE: Cameron)

Yeah he did, dude, he was filming us twenty minutes ago.

JACOB-20

Go ahead Doreen, bring that Camera down here so Cameron can have some evidence this time.

Doreen is searching for the Camera, she calls from the car:

DOREEN-20

Where is it?

Jacob shouts out to Karl who is out of sight.

JACOB-20

Karl.

(to himself)

Where the hell'd he go?

(Shouting)

Karl.

DOREEN-20

Jacob. Where is it?

Jacob turns his attention to Doreen.

JACOB-20

Look in the glove box.

CAMERON-20

(To all)

Is it in there?

DOREEN-20

Yeah.

Doreen skips down the hill with the camera in hand.

CAMERON-20

Let's get this thing going. Hit record Doreen.

Cameron takes a long last drag and flicks his cigarette.

CAMERON-20 (CONT'D)

What do I get if I win?

JACOB-20

You're not gonna win.

CAMERON-20
 Okay, when I do, I get to sleep
 with Doreen

JACOB-20
 Sure.

DOREEN-20
 Uh, not happening. Jacob?

JACOB-20
 I'm just playing Doreen. Come on,
 let's go.

Jacob looks off, as if remembering suddenly:

JACOB-20 (CONT'D)
 Where the hell is Karl?

CAMERON-20
 (Yelling)
 Karl, hurry up dude...Come on
 Jacob, it'll be over before he gets
 back anyway.

JACOB-20
 Hold on. Where did he go?

FAROUK-20
 He's peeing.

Jacob begins walking into the creek. They all disappear
 around the bend into the creek to look for Karl. They are
 gone for a bit, and finally, they come back all together.
 Cameron, Jacob and Karl are walking ahead with Doreen
 following just behind and Farouk lagging in the distance.
 Jacob has his arm around a beaten down and depressed Karl.

INT/EXT.CAR - LATE MORNING

(2000-Day 0)

They are all in the car again, dreary and no one is speaking,
 Karl is particularly down. Cameron interrupts the long
 standing silence:

CAMERON-20
 Karl, what the fuck man?

JACOB-20
 Cameron, shut up!

CAMERON-20
Fuck you, Jacob

JACOB-20
Fine. Just, please stop.

FAROUK-20
We don't have to go, if you guys
don't want to.

JACOB-20
No, we're going.

CAMERON-20
Why is it up to you?

DOREEN-20
Let's just go.

CAMERON-20
Of course you settle with him.
Karl, do you wanna go?

JACOB-20
Cameron, can you fucking stop?

CAMERON-20
I'm asking Karl

FAROUK-20
We really don't have to go.

KARL-20
Can we please just go?

They all nod in agreement. The silence continues, Farouk looks out the window and reveals the landscape that eventually turns into the parking lot of a park.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. RAKIM'S HOME-NIGHT

(2010-Day 1)

Farouk is pulling a tea kettle off the stove and pouring two cups of tea. RAKIM, is seated in a chair reading a newspaper.

FAROUK
Dad, you want sugar in your tea?

RAKIM-65
A little honey.

Farouk brings the tea to his dad and sits across from him.

RAKIM-65 (CONT'D)

You're not working today?

FAROUK

No, I took off. I got a bunch of days that I need to take anyway, had some shit to do.

RAKIM-65

You don't have to take all those days, sometimes they look at you if you taking off all your days and look at these guys who didn't.

FAROUK

I'm not worried about it.

RAKIM-65

Okay...what you doing instead?

FAROUK

Not much.

RAKIM-65

You said you had shitloads of stuff to do.

FAROUK

Yeah. No... I do. I'm going over to Jacob's, he needs help with something and then I gotta--

RAKIM-65

--What he needs help with?

FAROUK

He's messing with his truck.

RAKIM-65

I used to fuck with those things when I was same age as you. But, I'm old man now. I didn't mess with the car for twenty years. I had always a piece of shit car and I'd go to the junkyard get pieces, mess around fixing things. Now I'm too old for that shit.

FAROUK

Yeah.

Farouk and Rakim drink their tea in silence for a moment.

FAROUK (CONT'D)

Dad, did you ever shoot anybody when you were in the Army?

RAKIM-65

Hell no. I was just medic. We all had to shoot gun, the snipers. One time I got two days off work when I hit the target more than anyone. But, we trained, marched, woke up at four in the morning...we didn't go to any combats though.

FAROUK

I'm thinking about going into the army.

RAKIM-65

(Sarcastically, almost mad.)
Very good idea.

FAROUK

(Laughs)
Helllllll nooo.

RAKIM-65

Army is for kids with nothing better. They're poor, they think it's will pay for school and they think they going to be a hero. They lying so bad to those kids but they don't know, they say I'm gonna get muh gunnn and go. You know, back home, it's you have to. After high school you try to go to college, fifteen thousand students apply, they need five-hundred engineers, three-hundred doctors and two-hundred bankers, something like that. It's not like here when everyone can go. So, everyone else has to serve two years in the army. I was not smart enough for that so I went to Army and I went to a bad area, desert, no electricity, no water

FAROUK

Damn.

RAKIM-65

They give you choice and if you go to a poor places like that, they give you double the salary.

FAROUK
How much was it?

RAKIM-65
(Counting on his fingers and
mumbling in Farsi)
Something like, eighty dollars a
month.

FAROUK
But, sixty years ago that's like...

RAKIM-65
Something like, fifteen hundred
Toman, same as two hundred a month.
Good money because they give you a
place to stay, food, you don't have
to pay for nothing.

FAROUK
Damn, still seems low.

RAKIM-65
I take maybe one fourth of that a
month and send the rest to Maman
and Baba.

FAROUK
Was Arjun working?

RAKIM-65
No, he was a student.

FAROUK
Did he go to the military?

RAKIM-65
No, he was, somethings wrong with
him.

FAROUK
Like what?

Rakim takes a sip of his tea and tries hard to find the
words.

RAKIM-65
You know Arjun has some problems,
maybe he's a little crazy.

FAROUK
Arjun is?

RAKIM-65

Still? I don't know. I didn't see him for...fifty years.

FAROUK

Is he still alive?

RAKIM-65

I think he is. He's maybe in a psychiatric hospital...I didn't see him for fifty years.

FAROUK

Why not?

RAKIM-65

You start to working, girlfriends...I just didn't get to see him. When he disappeared I was coming to United States.

FAROUK

What do you mean disappeared?

RAKIM-65

No one saw him for a week, they was looking for him, he's just wasn't there.

FAROUK

Where was he? How old were you guys?

RAKIM-65

I was finishing from Army, I'm 22, I stay extra two years because the money was so good. Arjun was maybe 19, 20 also. When we was kids he did it before, once he just didn't come home from school.

BEGIN FLASHBACK: ALL DIALOGUE IS IN FARSI

EXT. IRANIAN FOREST-EARLY MORNING

1957 Day 1 (Tehran, Iran)

A beautiful sky is visible, the sun beats down through the canopy. Trees are full of SPRING life. A CANOPY in the woods. DIRTY WHITE SHOES trampling along, one pair has UNTIED SHOE-LACES. YOUNG RAKIM 12 and YOUNG ARJUN 9 are dropping down into the banks of a river side trail to search for tadpoles.

Young Rakim's hands are cupped as he beckons Young Arjun.

YOUNG RAKIM
Arjun, come here. Put this in the
bucket

Arjun still squatted and focused on his own endeavors half-spiritedly asks:

YOUNG ARJUN
What is it?

YOUNG RAKIM
Just put it in the bucket, it's a
tadpole.

Young Rakim gives Young Arjun the contents contained in his closed fists, a CRAWDAD pinching away. Young Arjun drops it and runs out of its reach.

YOUNG ARJUN
You're a jerk Rakim.

Young Rakim grabs the CRAWDAD from the waves of the river where Young Arjun left it. He runs to Young Arjun, holding the CRAWDAD, Young Arjun steps away quickly

YOUNG RAKIM
Arjun, stop. Come on man, I
promise. Look, it doesn't hurt,
he's a friendly little guy.

YOUNG ARJUN
(Hesitant)
That doesn't hurt?

YOUNG RAKIM
Look.

Young Arjun gets closer and looks on to the CRAWDAD in his brother's hand, it's peaceful

YOUNG ARJUN
Wow.

YOUNG RAKIM
Hold him--

YOUNG ARJUN
--no no no no no no

YOUNG RAKIM

Look, he's just gonna sit there,
give me your hand. Don't worry.

Young Arjun is in admiration of his brother's calm and he takes the CRAWDAD into his hand, when it bites he jerks a little but realizes that it really doesn't hurt. The boys continue their search for crawdads.

EXT. ROAD TO SCHOOL. EARLY MORNING

1957 Day 1 (Tehran, Iran)

Young Rakim and Young Arjun are walking through small neighborhood streets.

YOUNG ARJUN

Rakim, I have to pee.

YOUNG RAKIM

Hurry, pee here.

Young Arjun runs down into the trees off the road and begins peeing. It's dark underneath the canopy in the woods and looking deep into the woods Young Arjun sees a bright light, he is captivated by it.

YOUNG RAKIM (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Arjun, come on man. It's late.

INT. SCHOOL ENTRANCE. MORNING

1 (Tehran, Iran)

Young Arjun and Young Rakim are close to the school and see that A SMALL IRANIAN BOY is talking on the stairs to the PRINCIPAL who then slaps him. Young Rakim walks up and talks with the man who then lets Young Arjun enter. As the door closes he slaps Young Rakim twice and tells him something inaudible.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY. MORNING.

1 (Tehran, Iran)

Young Arjun and Young Rakim are walking together down the hall, they enter a bathroom.

INT. SCHOOL BATHROOM. MORNING

1 (Tehran, Iran)

Young Arjun is peeing and Young Rakim is inspecting his face in the mirror.

YOUNG RAKIM

You have the bladder of a 90 year old woman

YOUNG ARJUN

What did the principal say?

YOUNG RAKIM

I have lunch detention today.

YOUNG ARJUN

And what about me?

YOUNG RAKIM

Don't worry about it. Can you walk home alone for lunch?

YOUNG ARJUN

Yeah. You want me to bring you something?

YOUNG RAKIM

If Maman cooked bring me something.

YOUNG ARJUN

Okay, I will.

YOUNG RAKIM

But wash your hands first you animal.

Young Arjun splashes sink water at Young Rakim and they exit. The water is still running.

EXT. STREAM IN THE FOREST. DAY

Day 1 (Tehran, Iran)

The sound of the STREAM is almost overwhelming along with the PEEPERS. Young Arjun walks down off the street into the same area that piqued his curiosity before. He kneels down at the water, he is in the reflection of the POOLED WATER. A pebble splashes the water, when it returns to calm and reflective, Young Arjun is gone.

The forest experiences a momentary and extreme silence and then returns to its overwhelming sound: heavy stream and loud peepers, Young Arjun is no where to be found.

Meanwhile:

INT. TEACHER'S LOUNGE. DAY

1 (Tehran, Iran)

The TEACHERS and PRINCIPALS are noshing on their lunches while Young Rakim sits on the floor behind them, staring at the clock, his stomach growling.

EXT. ROAD TO SCHOOL. DAY

Day 1 (Tehran, Iran)

Young Rakim is passing by the spot where Young Arjun was peeing and notices his SCARF dangling from the tree. Young Rakim laughs at Young Arjun's carelessness, he picks up the scarf checks his ear thoroughly as if a sudden inexplicable deafness came upon him and left him as quick, and continues walking home.

INT. RAKIM & ARJUN'S HOME - NIGHT

1 (Tehran, Iran)

Young Rakim walks in and turns on every light in the house one by one. Then he turns off each light one by one and as he exits the house headlights shine on him. MAMAN 40s and BABA 40s pull up in the FAMILY CAR and get out.

BABA

Rakim, where is Arjun?

MAMAN

Was he with you? Rakim, where is he?

Young Rakim stands there still, in shock.

INT. KITCHEN & LIVING ROOM (TIME-LAPSE)

Day 1- Day 3 (Tehran, Iran)

Maman is making phone calls and crying. BABA is reading, thinking silently and smoking. They are never in the same room together.

Maman answers people who come to the door: Two FAT & MUSTACHIOED POLICEMEN and TWO FEMALE NEIGHBORS and invites them in to discuss Young Arjun's disappearance. Three days pass and on the afternoon of the third day, Young Arjun walks in the door.

YOUNG ARJUN'S POV- Everyone is gathered around him and reaching in, he cannot hear the individual words said but hears them speaking. He carefully observes Maman's nose, her mouth, her breasts, her legs, her eyes and then does the same to Baba.

YOUNG ARJUN
(Ghost-Like)
I'm fine. Don't worry.

Suddenly, Maman and Baba lose all concern on their faces, only Young Rakim is left deeply concerned and observing his brother's power over their parents. The house continues to run as always:

Day 3-4

Maman cooks and folds laundry. Baba smokes and reads the paper or tunes in to his radio. Arjun sleeps quite a bit. Rakim plays cards or does homework. They gather for meals.

Day 4

Young Arjun leaves out the front door and Young Rakim follows behind carefully.

EXT. ROAD TO SCHOOL. EARLY MORNING (PRE-SUN)

Day 4 (Tehran, Iran)

Young Arjun is walking along normally and Young Rakim is following a safe and undetected distance behind. Young Rakim enters the woods and sees Young Arjun kneeled down before a tree and suddenly as Young Rakim steps forward towards Young Arjun, the sounds of the forest stop and the silence is extreme. Young Rakim backs away and again the sound of the forest resumes, a step forward and it's silent, a step back the PEEPERS and the STREAM sound off freely. After a long-while, Young Arjun gets up and heads back to home. On top of the street, Young Rakim confronts him

YOUNG RAKIM
Arjun.

YOUNG ARJUN
Hey Rakim. Whats'up?

YOUNG RAKIM

Arjun, come on man, tell me
whats'up with you? Why are you
here?

YOUNG ARJUN

Rakim, I'm fine. Don't worry.

YOUNG RAKIM

I am worried, asshole. Don't talk
to me like that.

YOUNG ARJUN

What are you talking about. Rakim,
don't worry.

Young Rakim slaps Young Arjun across the face. Arjun keeps coming forward, only slightly discouraged. Young Rakim slaps him again, Young Arjun begins to crack in the face. Young Rakim hits him again and again, slapping him in the face until Young Arjun begins to cry. Young Rakim then takes him in his arms there on the forest ground embracing him

YOUNG RAKIM

Come on man.

Young Rakim rocks a crying Young Arjun to sleep.

JACOB (V.O.)

He'd let him cry himself to sleep
every night.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. JACOB'S GARAGE. NIGHT

Cameron and Jacob are in the middle of a conversation. Jacob is seated, Cameron is up, pacing, smoking, toying with things and eventually finds the punching bag.

CAMERON

He told you all of that?

JACOB

Yeah. His dad's old and saying all
this to him now.

CAMERON

Do you believe it? Or is he just
old?

JACOB

I don't know.

CAMERON

Well what do you think?

JACOB

Truly, I don't know. It's not like his dad knows what's going on with Karl.

CAMERON

What does this have to do with Karl?

JACOB

I don't know yet, he ended up having to go but, that's what he's gonna tell us tonight.

CAMERON

Did you tell Doreen?

JACOB

Would you keep your mouth shut, you're so loud Cameron.

CAMERON

Jesus. Yes, you two need to chill out on me tonight.

JACOB

Okay just, don't be so loud.

Farouk's lights pull up and a glare can be seen from the garage window-glass.

JACOB (CONT'D)

And just apologize to him dude, he's sensitive about Karl

CAMERON

Don't give me that coaching bullshit. I didn't do a fucking thing but leave when that psycho...just never mind.

Farouk approaches the garage with some caution. Cameron heads back to the punching bag, he's holding it like a tired boxer.

JACOB

Whats'up Farouk?

FAROUK

Not much... Whats'up Cameron?

Cameron peers out from behind the punching bag.

CAMERON

What up Farouk?

FAROUK

Same shit. Dude, look, I'm sorry about last night, shit's been crazy and this letter's got me freaked out and ...just, sorry man, shit's been real crazy.

CAMERON

Sounds like it.

Farouk proceeds unsure if that was a challenge or sympathy from Cameron.

JACOB

I caught Cameron up.

CAMERON

But I still don't see what this has to do with Karl.

FAROUK

What? All that same shit happened with Karl.

CAMERON

What same shit? The creek?

FAROUK

Damn dude...yeah, the creek. It's not like that shit happens every day.

CAMERON

So your uncle was acting weird after he got lost in the woods, and...I mean, yeah, I don't fucking get it. What, so that means we need to kill Karl?

JACOB

Cameron. Stop being a dick and just listen.

CAMERON

Okay...I *am* listening. Doesn't mean I have to agree.

FAROUK

Did you go to Karl's house during any of this?

CAMERON
During any of what?

JACOB
To have fucking Reubens on St.
Patrick's day...go ahead Farouk, he
knows what you mean

CAMERON
No I don't. Stop assuming shit.

FAROUK
(Firm on Cameron)
After that day at the creek...did
you go over to Karl's house?

CAMERON
No, I didn't.

FAROUK
I did.

INT. KARL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

A TV with large antennas sits on a dusty white plastic lawn chair in an otherwise empty room, except for the TRASH. A woman, KARL'S MOTHER is seated and staring at the TV, her eyes are empty.

FAROUK (V.O.)
Karl's mom would just sit there not
saying anything for days. Karl
thought it was normal, it was like
he didn't even notice her. His dad
had been gone three months by then,
they never talked about it. I don't
even think anyone noticed, it was
like they'd gone blind.

Young Karl is walking through a trashy home, Young Farouk is following and navigating the ASH TRAYS, VIDEO GAME CARTRIDGES, PIZZA BOXES, SODA AND BEER CANS.

YOUNG KARL
You want to go in my room?

INT. KARL'S HOUSE. NIGHT

Young Karl's bedroom is dirty, he has TERRARIUMS WITHOUT ANIMALS and AQUARIUMS WITHOUT FISH. He stands there talking to Young Farouk underneath a BALD LIGHTBULB.

FAROUK (V.O.)

...it was a mess, he had terrariums without animals and aquariums without fish and he's just staring at me underneath this bare lightbulb. His dad was gone, his mom was a TV junkie, he just looks right at me and says:

Young Farouk and Young Karl are standing in the bedroom, it's bare. The two boys are standing almost face to face, Young Karl is very calculated in watching Young Farouk but he does not flinch or turn away.

YOUNG KARL

I'm evil.

YOUNG FAROUK

Are you gonna kill me?

Young Farouk pretends to be a Zombie.

YOUNG KARL

I would never hurt you.

YOUNG FAROUK

Cause I'd kick your ass.

YOUNG KARL

Farouk, I would really never hurt you.

YOUNG FAROUK

I know you wouldn't, Karl.

Young Karl stares at Young Farouk for several seconds, studying him. Farouk does not look away but interrupts:

YOUNG FAROUK (CONT'D)

Can we go outside?

EXT. KARL'S BACKYARD/GARDEN SHED. NIGHT

Young Farouk and Young Karl go into the GARDEN SHED, inside, Young Karl has DOZENS OF JARS filled with DEAD BUTTERFLIES. Young Farouk walks around to explore, mystified.

YOUNG FAROUK
Did you kill all these?

YOUNG KARL
They died on their own.

YOUNG FAROUK
You can't capture butterflies like
this.

YOUNG KARL
I have to.

YOUNG FAROUK
Why?

YOUNG KARL
Because nothing else loves me.

YOUNG FAROUK
Your mom and dad love you.

YOUNG KARL
Dad left and Mom is okay but she
doesn't talk to me anymore.

YOUNG FAROUK
Karl, that's not true. Remember
when your mom took us to the arcade
for your birthday? She was smiling
and happy.

YOUNG KARL
(Tears forming)
That was before.

YOUNG FAROUK
Before what? Before your dad left?

An intense SCREAM comes from inside the house, followed by a
CRASH of glass and a BANG. Young Farouk runs inside and Young
Karl walks behind casually...

INT. KARL'S HOUSE. NIGHT

Karl's mother is taking a HAMMER to a TELEVISION screen, off
to the side there are DOZENS OF SMASHED TELEVISIONS like it.
Young Farouk, lingering in the doorway starts to run away.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. JACOB'S GARAGE. NIGHT

Farouk is animated telling this story.

FAROUK
I ran all the way home.

Cameron begins laughing, Jacob smirks a bit.

CAMERON
She was hitting the television with
a hammer? Oh my God.

FAROUK
Yeah but, it's not really funny.
She did this once, maybe twice a
week. Karl would go get her a new
TV every time, acted like nothing
happened.

CAMERON
Can I tell you the truth?

JACOB
What?

CAMERON
I've never liked being around Karl.
He creeps me out and I don't like
how he stares at you.

FAROUK
Stares at me?

CAMERON
Me, you, anybody. I just don't like
how he stares.

JACOB
(Interrupting Cameron)
So why'd his dad leave?

CAMERON
Cause his psychotic wife was
smashing TVs with a fucking hammer.
Why the fuck do you think he left?

FAROUK
Yeah but--

CAMERON
But what? My dad left cause my mom
got on his fucking nerves and she
didn't smash anything in the house.
(MORE)

CAMERON (CONT'D)

It's not like he didn't have a good reason.

FAROUK

I don't know...something else was wrong, though. Don't you think you'd wanna stay and try and fix things?

CAMERON

Not really.

There is a long silence.

JACOB

Farouk?

FAROUK

Yeah?

JACOB

What'd your dad end up doing?

FAROUK

He had to leave for the army, then he came here.

INT. RAKIM/ARJUN'S BEDROOM-NIGHT

BEGIN FLASHBACK: ALL DIALOGUE IS IN FARSI

(Tehran, Iran)

Young Rakim is lying on his bed reading and writing for school.

YOUNG RAKIM

Do you need me to turn off my light Arjun?

YOUNG ARJUN

No, please keep it on. Can I come lay by you?

YOUNG RAKIM

Of course man, come on. Be comfortable.

Young Arjun climbs the bed and lays next to his brother who embraces him. Young Arjun begins to cry, a lot, and Young Rakim holds him through it while completing his homework, he's up until well past Young Arjun's fallen asleep.

FAROUK (V.O.)
 When my dad left for the Army,
 Arjun was 15 and things had gotten
 better for him, he wasn't crying
 every night and he stopped wetting
 the bed, so my dad left, thinking
 he was okay.

INT/EXT. BUNKER IRANIAN DESERT-NIGHT

1 (Village in Iran)

RAKIM (V.O.)
 I'm 18 years old, living in the
 desert as medic for army. These
 people were happy, no electric no
 running water, nothing to do. We go
 out one day and get some alcohol.
 Those days you could drink back-
 home...

Rakim (18), MOHSEN(19), ARMAN (19) are seated playing cards,
 Arman and Mohsen are drinking

RAKIM (V.O.)
 They got Codeine and mix it with
 Vodka, playing cards
 drinking...nothing else to do.

Enter FARHAD (12) the village boy who brings the mail.

RAKIM-18
 Farhad, sit down. We'll teach you
 how to play poker.

ARMAN
 (To Farhad)
 You want a drink?

RAKIM-18
 Arman, shut up. Leave him alone

ARMAN
 He's a man...Farhad? Rakim is
 scared of God but, God's not here
 right now, you want a drink?

FARHAD
 No. Thank you.

RAKIM-18

Farhad, five minutes. Watch and if you want to, you can play. It's fun.

Farhad sits down and the men begin playing poker and talking, the letters that Farhad brought are laying in a pile at Rakim's feet, the letter on top is from Maman. They continue their drunken banter and card playing, Farhad leaves after 20 minutes of watching and a few moments of play.

LATER:

The others are asleep outside the bunker and on the floor by the cards. Rakim makes it to his cot with a flash-light to examine his letters. He opens the letter from Maman and begins reading. He breaks down into a panic.

INT. RAKIM & ARJUN'S HOME - NIGHT

1 (Village in Iran)

Maman is up writing a LETTER. Baba is seated and listening to the radio, lights are very dim, almost off. Arjun is asleep on the floor.

MAMAN

Rakim, I hope you're doing well. I am at home now all day with Arjun and Baba hasn't been to work in three months, he sits with his radio all day and all night. Arjun is always asleep, for three weeks he hasn't woken up except to use the bathroom, he doesn't eat. He keeps saying, "I'm fine, don't worry." But I know he's not fine and I do worry, Rakim, it doesn't feel right. Please write to your brother or come visit.

INT. RAKIM & ARJUN'S HOME - MORNING

2 (Tehran, Iran)

In the corner of a small Iranian apartment Rakim is seated and waiting for TEA. He observes the room, dull, lifeless. There are several broken radios next to his father who is huddled into the corner listening to his radio program and his mother who is silently preparing the tea.

The room is tense and dead, from outside Arjun walks in the door, he has bread, cheese and sodas, a treat for this very poor family. Arjun is full of life.

ARJUN-15

Maman, Baba, come sit with us,
eat...

Baba swats at them in favor of the radio

ARJUN-15 (CONT'D)

No problem. Rakim, I'm so happy
you're home. You're dark man,
strong. My dear brother.

RAKIM-18

Thank you Arjun. How are you?

ARJUN-15

Perfect, man. Look, we have
everything we need, food, drinks,
radio, it's good.

Rakim peers around the corner of Arjun's face at a depressed old woman and an obsessed old man, in the middle is a big smiling Arjun. Arjun continues talking though Rakim cannot hear, the RADIO SOUND is overwhelming, Maman is LAUGHING HYSTERICALLY, the sounds of the room become overwhelmingly burdensome to Rakim, then a hard silence.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

2 (Tehran, Iran)

Rakim is holding Arjun who is silent except for occasional intense weeps or cries, they stay like this for quite a while. When the crying is over, Arjun is calm and feeling relaxed.

ARJUN-15

It's good to have you home, Rakim.
I love you man.

RAKIM-18

Arjun...I'm not--

ARJUN-15

--Rakim, please, don'y say it. I
know, just for now, it's good.

A long silence passes between them. Arjun lights a cigarette, he takes several very long drags very quickly.

ARJUN-15 (CONT'D)
Do you know I'm killing Maman and
Baba?

RAKIM-18
No, you're not. Don't say that.

ARJUN-15
Rakim, stop. You'll be here three
days? Then what?...okay! So listen
to me when I talk to you, don't
waste our time.

RAKIM-18
Okay, Arjun. Go ahead. Excuse me.

ARJUN-15
You remember what happened?

Rakim's eyes drop and he confirms with an attempt at being
casual.

ARJUN-15 (CONT'D)
Rakim, did you feel that room?

Rakim nods uncomfortably.

ARJUN-15 (CONT'D)
Did you see Baba's eyes?

Rakim confirms with a nod and his level of discomfort is
growing rapidly.

ARJUN-15 (CONT'D)
Did you hear Maman? Gone mad...
laughing?

RAKIM-18
Okay.

ARJUN-15
Do you know what happened to me
that day?

Rakim is silent, he stands up and paces.

RAKIM-18
Arjun, what do you want from me?
You invite me here and say don't
waste your time? What happened to
you? If I don't know, no one does.

ARJUN-15
Okay. Do you know?

RAKIM-18

I was there every single night. You cried to sleep. You pissed all over me when I was holding you. For six years Arjun.

ARJUN-15

So do you know what happened?

RAKIM-18

Yes. I know. I know very well.

ARJUN-15

I'm a burden to you. I'm a burden to Maman and Baba.

Arjun takes one last long drag from his cigarette, he stands up and looks to Rakim, puts his cigarette out and says calmly:

ARJUN-15 (CONT'D)

So kill me, please... God put me out of misery.

RAKIM-18

Shut up, right now with that.

ARJUN-15

I'm serious Rakim, it will be better for everyone.

RAKIM-18

You son of a bitch. You mother fucker. You ask me to kill you? My brother wants murder on my soul. Misery? Arjun, you have life.

Arjun moves toward Rakim slowly, crying, hands up almost in prayer.

ARJUN-15

(Weakly)
Did you feel that room, Rakim?...

RAKIM-18

Arjun, come on.

ARJUN-15

I did that. I took the souls of Maman and Baba.

RAKIM-18

Okay, man.

ARJUN-15
In the forest, do you know what
that was?

RAKIM-18
Stop.

ARJUN-15
Satan

RAKIM-18
(Angry)
Enough

Arjun presses forward, Rakim is scared, backing up, beginning to crack as Arjun shows no sign of discouragement.

RAKIM-18 (CONT'D)
Arjun, please.

Rakim crumbles to the ground slowly, he covers himself with shame, he's crying.

RAKIM-18 (CONT'D)
Please, Arjun. Stop.

ARJUN-15
You saw it Rakim...I'm evil. If you
kill me God will rejoice. If you
don't kill me, my spirit will
poison all of us, forever.

Rakim begins kissing Arjun's feet, crying. Arjun lays lower and lower to Rakim who is still kissing his feet of an already down low Rakim who begins to rise.

RAKIM-18
I won't kill you. You are my
brother, I will help you, I will
love you but I will not kill you.

ARJUN-15
Maman and Baba will die slowly,
cursed by my poison.

RAKIM-18
So be it. Nature would take them
anyway. I'm leaving in the morning,
I want you to come with me, I'll
take care of you.

ARJUN-15
Rakim, I will not poison anyone
else. I'm not leaving.

RAKIM-18
Okay, then farewell. I'll be back
to visit

ARJUN-15
No you wont.

RAKIM-18
Bye, my dear brother.

ARJUN-15
I'm sorry.

Rakim walks away, leaving a crying Arjun behind.

INT. BUS STATION-MORNING

3 (Tehran, Iran)

Rakim approaches the ticketing window and talks with the
TELLER, 40s.

RAKIM-18
So how much is it?

TELLER
Why are you going one-way, for a
little bit more you can have a
round-trip?

RAKIM-18
My friend, don't worry about me,
thank you. Please just give me one
ticket, it will expire, I'm not an
idiot to pay for two tickets.

TELLER
Okay, for a little extra you can
have the ticket that doesn't
expire.

RAKIM-18
Man, give me the one way ticket
only, please and thank you.

TELLER
Are you sure?

RAKIM-18
I said I'm sure. One ticket only,
please.

TELLER

Sir, the round-trip ticket will--

RAKIM-18

(Aggressive)

--Enough, it's finished. One ticket, please

TELLER

Sir, as you wish. Excuse me.

RAKIM-18

Thank you very much, excuse me.

INT/EXT. BUS - EVENING

3 (Tehran, Iran)

Many people pack onto the bus at the next stop, but an old man ASGHAR, 70s sits with an exhausted Rakim and greets him very warmly.

ASGHAR

Do not grow tired in spirit, soon you'll be where you wish

RAKIM-18

I wish the best health to you sir, thank you.

ASGHAR

Do you know what is today?

RAKIM-18

Yes, sir excuse me. Happy New Years to you. Forgive me, very much happy new year to you.

ASGHAR

Do you know what it means?

RAKIM-18

(Laughing and slightly annoyed)
Of course, the first day of Spring, the new year. Do I know what it means? Of course.

ASGHAR

Okay so, believe it. Don't be sad young Man.

RAKIM-18

No sir, I'm very tired. Thank you,
I'm not sad.

ASGHAR

Don't start this new life with a
lie. My son, do you know Nowruz?

RAKIM-18

Yes of course, I told you.

ASGHAR

Okay, so you shouldn't be sad
today. I'll explain it to you.

RAKIM-18

Come on. No, it's okay, I know it.

ASGHAR

Relax, and you should listen to me
I am like your Grandpa

RAKIM-18

Okay, sir excuse me. Continue,
please.

ASGHAR

Nowruz, my son, it's the re-birth.
You have now 16 hours of sunshine,
what do you do with it? Do you
create something? My son, what do
you do?

RAKIM-18

I'm in the army, sir.

ASGHAR

You don't kill anyone.

RAKIM-18

No, I'm a medic.

ASGHAR

Bravo! You save life. Very good! So
why are you sad?

RAKIM-18

I told you, I'm tired.

ASGHAR

Young man, I feel your sadness...I
feel you are sad, tell me why.

RAKIM-18

Sir, excuse me. I'm very tired and I'm going to sleep now, I don't mean to be rude.

Rakim leans his head against the bus window

ASGHAR

Did you kill your brother?

Rakim loses all color in his face as he stares out the bus window, he's silent.

RAKIM-18

No, man. What are you talking about?

ASGHAR

I'm joking, young man, relax. Go to sleep. Remember, though, it's a better time now, with God's will.

RAKIM-18

Of course, goodnight.

Rakim looks out the window at the sun going down on the desert.

EXT. DESERT-EARLY MORNING

4 (Village in Iran)

Rakim, Arman and Mohsen are sitting in a JEEP in the middle of the desert. They have GUNS, in CAMOUFLAGE, Arman and Mohsen are drinking their vodka/codeine COCKTAIL.

ARMAN

I'm going to spend three days in a brothel when I get out.

MOHSEN

Arman, are you serious? You ever been?

ARMAN

Of course. My cousin took me before I came here.

MOHSEN

Why do you say of course, like you're a professional? You've been one time, only?

ARMAN
That's all it takes, man.

MOHSEN
Rakim, you ever been?

RAKIM-18
No, man.

ARMAN
Rakim wouldn't know what to do with
a woman.

RAKIM-18
Come on, man. Let's focus on
shooting a deer. Then I can teach
you how to handle a woman.

Rakim laughs, distracted. Mohsen laughs and praises Rakim for
his comeback.

ARMAN
Okay Rakim, if you shoot a deer,
you pay for hookers to celebrate.

MOHSEN
That makes no sense. If he shoots a
deer, you pay...for all three of
us.

ARMAN
And what if I shoot a deer?

RAKIM-18
Then we will have to confirm that
it wasn't already dead.

Mohsen is hysterical.

ARMAN
If I shoot a deer, you pay for me
and Mohsen.

RAKIM-18
And if Mohsen hits one?

ARMAN
Then I will pay for everyone and
then I'll believe in God.

MOHSEN
Okay, asshole. We'll see

ARMAN

Mohsen, tell me when is the last time you shot a gun?

RAKIM-18

Arman, will you pour me a drink?

Rakim's request stops the conversation...

ARMAN

What'd you say?

RAKIM-18

Just pour me a drink, I want to try it.

MOHSEN

It's better not to, Rakim.

ARMAN

Mohsen, mind your business, he's a grown man, old enough to decide for himself. Rakim, you want one?

RAKIM-18

Yes, I already asked.

ARMAN

Do you know what they call drinks in America?

Arman pours Rakim a shot of straight Vodka. Rakim grabs it to shoot it, Arman stops him

ARMAN (CONT'D)

Rakim. Listen to me, did you understand the question?

RAKIM-18

It's a simple question.

ARMAN

Okay, so do you know?

RAKIM-18

No.

ARMAN

Spirits. Do you know what is "spirits" in Farsi? It means "spirit." So, pour that drink to the ground and the next one is for you.

RAKIM-18
The whole thing?

ARMAN
Trust me. You have to first give
the angels their portion of the
drink and then you can have it.

RAKIM-18
Why don't you ever pour it out.

MOHSEN
Saves money.

Rakim laughs

ARMAN
No, man. Because I don't believe in
God.

Rakim takes the shot.

RAKIM-18
Me neither.

ARMAN
Okayyyyyy. Try this one...

He mixes the codeine and the vodka into a TALLER GLASS, Rakim
looks at it and chugs the whole thing.

MOHSEN
Rakim, slow down, man. It's
dangerous

ARMAN
If you're too drunk your dick won't
work.

RAKIM-18
No problem. You're paying anyway.

MOHSEN
If you throw up on them, you don't
get your money back.

The three men erupt into laughter. They keep drinking and
eventually they spot a DEER. Very intoxicated they drive
after it, shooting recklessly with fully-automatic machine
guns. Getting out of the car to check on it, they stumble
towards it.

EXT. CITY STREET. NIGHT

4 (Village/Town in Iran)

The three men get out of the car and head into a large house, inside there are WOMEN (5) dressed skimpily and scary looking BODY GUARDS (2) in the corners. Rakim lays several bills on the table and stairs at the BALD BODY GUARD

RAKIM-18

For me and my friends

The body guard leads them into a hallway with rooms separated by thin walls and covered by BLACK SHEETS that hardly muffle any sound. Mohsen and Arman pick a room, Rakim walks to the end of the hall and finds a MIRROR, he stares at himself, he's very intoxicated and hallucinating from the codeine. He sees his BROTHER'S FACE, the SOUNDS OF SEX fade into his MOTHER'S LAUGHING, the CLUB MUSIC fades into his father's RADIO STATIC, he is full on having a hallucination filled panic attack.

INT/EXT. BUS - MORNING

Day 5 (leaving: Village in Iran)

Rakim is now 20 years old, he has developed a shadow of a beard from not shaving and seems rougher than before. Rakim is sleeping on the bus and in walks the Old Man Asghar and two friends, also old men, ABBAS and JAFAR. They sit. The old men are talking when Asghar recognizes Rakim.

ASGHAR

Young man, hello

RAKIM-18

(Waking up)

Hello sir, it's good to see you. I hope you are doing well.

ASGHAR

Young man, come on. Rakim, your name is Rakim.

RAKIM-18

(Curiously)

Yes

ASGHAR

Rakim, did you know what does your name mean?

RAKIM-18
No, do you know it?

JAFAR
Of course, man. He knows
everything.

ABBAS
No...he *thinks* he knows everything.

The old men and Rakim chuckle.

ASGHAR
Okay, ask me anything. Give me some
numbers.

RAKIM-18
No, sir I believe you're very
smart.

ASGHAR
Rakim, give me any numbers adding
or multiply or divide.

The old men encourage Rakim to pick any two numbers.

RAKIM-18
Sir, they have a machine for that
now.

Abbas and Jafar laugh.

ASGHAR
Young man, have some respect. Give
me two numbers and count to ten

RAKIM-18
Okay, excuse me.

Rakim gives a wink to the old men.

RAKIM-18 (CONT'D)
Okay, 347 multiplied by 589

ABBAS AND JAFAR
Ten. Nine. Eight--

ASGHAR
I need quiet, count silent please.

Jafar and Abbas start counting on their hands decoratively.
...Three...two...

ASGHAR (CONT'D)

204,383

They all cheer. Rakim realizes and attempts to say over the cheers:

RAKIM-18

How do we know you're correct?

ASGHAR

(Laughing)

My son, of course it's correct. I use my brain.

ABBAS take out a piece of paper and invites Rakim to watch as they prove it on paper, it's correct.

RAKIM-18

Very good.

ASGHAR

Okay, so do you know?

RAKIM-18

Know what?

ASGHAR

What does your name mean?

RAKIM-18

No, I do not. Do you know?

ASGHAR

Good Man. Strong with a good brain.
(Carefully)
Merciful.

Rakim gives an uncomfortable grin and quickly:

RAKIM-18

And I'm handsome, too.

Jafar and Abbas start laughing. Rakim and Asghar share eye contact. The radio from the bus begins to static, Rakim looks away but the old man's eyes never leave Rakim.

ASGHAR

Rakim, the merciful.

EXT. RAKIM'S HOME- MORNING

6 (Tehran, Iran)

Rakim stands outside of his parents apartment building, it's desolate and no one is around. After some time, BAHMAN, a poor beggar, walks in with bags and talks to Rakim.

BAHMAN

Hello, sir. I hope you're doing well. Listen, sir, times are hard and I've fallen desperately low. Please, do you have enough money to give me to buy bread?

RAKIM-18

Sir, do you know who lives here?

Rakim points to his parents apartment, Bahman is amazed and curious.

BAHMAN

Yes. This is my home, I know everyone. Listen to me, young man, you are better to not go in there. Are you here on business? You're a very handsome man. Oh, how could I mistake it, you're a soldier, very good. Some advice from an old man?...Stay away from that apartment, times are hard, I've fallen desperately low but you...you're a young man, strong and capable, you don't need to be mixed in with such things.

Rakim pulls out a few coins and lays them in Bahman's palm

BAHMAN (CONT'D)

Okay, thank you young man. Very generous of you. Stay clear of there. May I request your company in joining me for tea? I haven't money but which you gave me but the mosque up the street has free tea at nine. Please, join me.

Rakim leaves with Bahman, he's apprehensive but ultimately turns away from the apartment. From the window Arjun peers out at them.

EXT. MOSQUE LOT - MORNING

6 (Tehran, Iran)

Rakim and Bahman have gotten their tea and are seated together.

RAKIM-18

Sir, what is your name?

BAHMAN

My name is Bahman, I am from Darvish. Don't look on me now, I've fallen on hard times, everyone in this area has.

RAKIM-18

Why is that?

BAHMAN

It's debatable but, many believe that an evil spirit entered our town nearly a decade ago.

RAKIM-18

What do you mean an evil spirit?

BAHMAN

Exactly what you think it is. Young man, please don't make me say it.

RAKIM-18

And that apartment?

BAHMAN

Yes. Don't go around there, you're better not to.

RAKIM-18

Why? What's going on in there?

BAHMAN

People tell stories, there is no accounting for which is true.

RAKIM-18

Sir, pick one and tell me. Which story is told most around here?

BAHMAN

Why have you taken such an interest? You're a young man, you've better things to do. A soldier, my God, be thankful. Why must you concern yourself with these stories?

RAKIM-18

Sir, please. I've offered you my money and I've spent time with you, the least you could do is fulfill my appetite for a story.

BAHMAN

Okay, as you wish. Did you notice there is not a sign of life in that apartment complex?

RAKIM-18

I thought everyone was working?

BAHMAN

Don't be naive, Iranian people don't like to work, how could that be? Anyway, maybe one year ago, there was a complaint from that apartment that you spoke of. A call came to me, a young woman called and said

(Imitating a woman)

"Sir, for two days I have not slept. I have tried knocking on their door to ask them but no one will answer."

So of course, I'm curious and I go to knock on the door.

Bahman knocks on the table in front of them

RAKIM-18

CUT TO:

BAHMAN'S FLASHBACK - EXT. ARJUN/MAMAN/BABA APT. - MORNING

Bahman is knocking on the apartment door.

BAHMAN (V.O.)

Sir. Ma'am. It's Bahman, I said. I knocked again and again, no answer. I heard from the inside a loud scratching sound, a radio or a television maybe, and a woman laughing. After many attempts, I went to get my key. Before I could turn it in the lock, the door opened for me and a young man, similar to your build, younger answered the door. He looked at me, smiling.

(MORE)

BAHMAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 I said, "Sir, you must turn the
 radio down. Your neighbors are
 complaining and many have not slept
 in days."

END BAHMAN'S FLASHBACK.

EXT. MOSQUE LOT - MORNING

BAHMAN (CONT'D)
 Listen to me son, I sit here and
 before God, I tell you I saw Satan
 in his eyes, pure evil. Still
 smiling he said to me:

EXT. ARJUN/MAMAN/BABA APT.

Rakim is standing in the door way looking in at a smiling
 Arjun. ARJUN is now 17 years old but looks much older, he is
 pale, worn down and holding a permanent crazy smile

ARJUN-15
 Rakim, welcome home. Come on in

Rakim is hesitant, the surrounding area is dead: there are no
 neighbors, no birds, no color. Inside the apartment there is
 nothing, DOZENS OF RADIOS are piled in the corner, Baba is
 listening into the radio closely, THICK GLASSES and crazy
 eyed. Maman is in the corner laughing at nothing.

ARJUN-15 (CONT'D)
 Rakim, do you want some tea? Sit
 down, I'll make it, Maman is tired
 these days but, she's always in
 good spirits, I won't trouble her
 to make tea, please sit down.

Rakim walks to Baba and Maman and says hello to each of them;
 they ignore him completely. They are both worn and completely
 insane. He sits down in the corner. The room feels as if it's
 closing in, Baba's STATIC is loud, Maman's SHRILL LAUGHTER is
 penetrating, after a few moments, the TEA KETTLE WHISTLES
 loudly. Arjun comes by with TEA and sits with Rakim who
 refuses the tea.

ARJUN-15 (CONT'D)
 So, Rakim. How is everything? Are
 you finished with the army?

RAKIM-18
 Fine, Arjun. Yes. How are you?

ARJUN-15

Terrific. We have everything we need. We are so proud of you.

RAKIM-18

Arjun, what's going on?

ARJUN-15

Not much lately.

RAKIM-18

Arjun, talk to me, please. You don't have any neighbors, Maman and Baba have both gone crazy. What's going on around here?

ARJUN-15

I'm not sure I understand, Rakim. Everything here is just fine. Baba likes to relax with his radio in the afternoon and Maman is always smiling.

RAKIM-18

Don't try to fool me, Arjun. I talked to Bahman this morning.

ARJUN-15

Who?

RAKIM-18

Bahman, the building manager.

ARJUN

(Laughing)
Rakim, you can't trust him. He'll say anything for some coins. Stop worrying, how are you doing? Is everything good with you?

Rakim is silent, his anger is building, he fights back tears.

RAKIM-18

I'm going to America.

ARJUN-15

When are you leaving?

RAKIM-18

In the morning.

ARJUN-15

I knew you would be great, Rakim.

RAKIM-18

Arjun, thank you. I have to go now.

ARJUN-15

Rakim, you just got here.

Rakim gets up, goes to Baba and kisses him, he's cold and is only focused on the radio. He goes to Maman and hugs her and kisses her, Maman continues laughing for a moment, Rakim squeezes her tighter, she slows her laughter and embraces him, though coldly, she sneakily sheds a few tears onto Rakim's shoulder, he doesn't feel it. Last, Rakim embraces Arjun in a hug, the two men hold each other tightly, Rakim is desperately fighting tears at this point while Arjun is completely smiling, only at the very last moment does he begin to show any sign of cracking.

RAKIM-18

Arjun, I'm sorry. You're my brother
and I love you. Please be good.

Rakim walks out the door.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. JACOB'S GARAGE. NIGHT

Farouk, Cameron and Jacob are all seated. Cameron lights a cigarette.

CAMERON

Do you think your Dad really did
fuck a hooker and left that part
out?

JACOB

You are truly an idiot.

FAROUK

I've thought that before. But, I
didn't dwell on it.

CAMERON

I bet he did. Two years in the
army, in the desert playing fucking
Go Fish. Oh yeah.

JACOB

Do you know what your Uncle's doing
now?

FAROUK

No idea. It's possible that he's dead or someone may have even killed him. He destroyed that apartment complex. I think there were eight families living in there.

JACOB

What about whoever owned that, they didn't do anything? Call the police?

FAROUK

I don't know. I know things are different over there, I don't know what the police get involved in and what they stay away from. But apparently, for at least a year no one did anything. My Uncle was like an urban myth...

CAMERON

You still didn't explain anything about Karl. Your uncle went crazy and your dad abandoned him, so?

FAROUK

My dad is Sixty-Five-Years-Old and looks like he's A-Hundred-and-Fifty. He hasn't said a word about any of this for forty years, it's a little bit more than his brother going crazy, Cameron.

JACOB

Is it for sure?

FAROUK

What do you mean?

JACOB

I'm just saying, Farouk. You're talking about killing someone based off of your dad's story and a letter. Isn't it possible that your dad is mis-remembering some of this?

FAROUK

No way. What are the chances of this being a coincidence?

(MORE)

FAROUK (CONT'D)

My Uncle asked my dad to kill him after some encounter in the woods, fifty years later my best friend asks me to kill him after a chance encounter in the woods.

CAMERON

And you're gonna do it?

FAROUK

I don't know.

JACOB

What if we get Karl some help?

FAROUK

Are you listening? There is no help for this, he was abducted, or possessed or something. He's not having anxiety, he's not depressed, he's got the fucking devil inside him.

CAMERON

Dude, you're being dramatic. The devil?

FAROUK

Look, I went to Karl's house. I saw with my own eyes what happens. My father watched his parents crumble into skeletons living with Arjun... Baba left too, thank God. Karl's dad left and his mother is insane, you really think it's a coincidence?

JACOB

Not necessarily a coincidence but, it's not worth it for you to kill him. Dude, you could go to jail for the rest of your life, people do all the time.

FAROUK

No.

CAMERON

What do you mean "no"? Yes. They do.

FAROUK

I watched my dad live with regret for my whole life.

(MORE)

FAROUK (CONT'D)

He's dying now and do you know what he talks about? He doesn't talk about my mom who he was married to for fifty years, he doesn't talk about how proud he is of his kids, he talks about his fucking brother who he wished he killed, my Uncle who ruined everything around him including my dad. You guys didn't see Karl the way I did, something got ahold of him that day by the creek. I've been thinking about that day since I was a kid. What happened to Karl? Why does Karl act like he does? What happened to his mom? His dad. And then, this comes: "I need you to kill me." He says. I'm not waiting until I'm 70 and wishing I wasn't so scared.

CAMERON

So you're willing to let us come along as accomplices to murder?

JACOB

Cameron, stop.

CAMERON

No. I'm not gonna listen to this and have the police knocking on my door in two weeks. Sitting in a little fucking room with a light on me asking me questions about shit that I'll be forced to lie about. Farouk, did you think about us? Why didn't you just fucking kill him yourself? Why do you need us? God. I'm taking off, man.

Cameron exits.

JACOB

I'm going to bed too, Farouk. Our original hunt got rained out so we're going tomorrow, I got to get some sleep.

FAROUK

Yeah, go ahead.

JACOB

You alright?

FAROUK

Yeah, I'm fine. Have fun tomorrow

Farouk walks off, Jacob shuts the door and goes inside.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE-NIGHT

Doreen is in the kitchen getting dinner prepared, it's LASAGNA.

DOREEN

Where's Junior?

JACOB

He's over at Donnie's house. I let him go so I could talk to you.

DOREEN

(Concerned)
About what?

Jacob sits at the counter and Doreen continues working.

JACOB

What we've been doing in that garage.

Doreen wipes the counter, stops her work and looks at Jacob.

DOREEN

Well... tell me.

JACOB

We got a letter from Karl, says he wants to kill himself.

DOREEN

Are you serious?

JACOB

Yeah

DOREEN

What do you mean you got a letter?
Who got the letter?

JACOB

I got the letter, about a week ago.

DOREEN

You waited a week to tell me this?
I've asked you repeatedly why
you're acting strange and you
haven't said a word.

JACOB

I know, I'm sorry.

DOREEN

Have you called his mom? Have you
reported it?

JACOB

No. There's more to it.

DOREEN

You need to report it. You should
have reported this the second you
got that letter.

JACOB

Doreen, there's more to it.

DOREEN

It doesn't matter Jacob, you need
to report this. Legally, you have
to. Call suicide hotline, if
someone is telling you that, they
want help. If not, he would have
just done it. He wants someone to
do something to help him.

JACOB

He wants us to kill him.

DOREEN

What?

JACOB

He wants me, Farouk and Cameron to
kill him.

DOREEN

What do you mean?

JACOB

That's exactly what I mean, he
wants us to kill him?

DOREEN

What do you mean he wants you to
kill him?

JACOB

He wants us to put a bullet in his fucking brain Doreen, Jesus Christ what do you mean what do I mean? Karl wants us to kill him, he's depressed and he's suicidal and he's scared of going to hell. He wants us to kill him.

DOREEN

Jacob, talk to me when you're not drunk, okay?

JACOB

I'm not drunk Doreen. I need you to tell me what to do. I'm scared and I don't know what the right thing to do is.

DOREEN

Jacob, you have a son and you have a wife. If you don't know what the right thing to do is then I don't have anything more to say to you. Don't you dare even think of being involved in this, so help me God I will call the police unless you swear to me that you're not going to be involved in this any longer.

Jacob is silent, he stares at Doreen and has nothing to say.

DOREEN (CONT'D)

I'm going to bed. Think about what you have to lose and before you come to bed you better have an answer for me. I am not losing my husband and Jacob Jr. is not losing his father over this. Dinner will be ready in twenty minutes just pull it out of the oven and make sure you turn it off. Goodnight.

Jacob stays seated and Doreen exits.

INT. RAKIM'S HOME-NIGHT

Farouk is getting some rice and chicken prepared for Rakim. He brings him his dinner in his chair along with SILVERWARE, NAPKINS and a GINGER ALE.

RAKIM-65

I've been thinking about what we talked about the other night.

FAROUK

Sorry, I wasn't trying to upset you.

RAKIM-65

What would you have done?

FAROUK

What do you mean?

RAKIM-65

If your brother was suffering and asked you to kill him.

FAROUK

I don't know dad. Let's not talk about that, it's alright.

RAKIM-65

No. I want to talk about it. I know what you think of me.

FAROUK

Stop, it's fine. I'm not worried about it at all

RAKIM-65

(Full of anger) Okay, asshole, I am. I want to tell you this, so sit down and listen.

Farouk sits down in the chair near his father.

RAKIM-65 (CONT'D)

Your mother died early because of me.

FAROUK

No dad, she didn't.

RAKIM-65

I'm not asking you. Okay. I know these things. Listen to me first, if you disagree okay but first, let me speak.

FAROUK

Okay, I just don't want you getting upset.

RAKIM-65

You don't worry about me. Six years old I worked and give my money to Maman and Baba. I went to Army in the shittiest place in the world to make money for my family and to come to United States.

FAROUK

I know how much you've done for us.

RAKIM-65

I didn't do it for anyone. I wanted to be a hero. I wanted everyone to say Rakim, good job, thank you. And when my brother, my blood needed me, I left. I came to America, I forgot my family. They were suffering and dying because I was scared.

FAROUK

To kill Arjun?

RAKIM-65

It wasn't Arjun, Farouk. He was Satan, evil. I could have saved my brother's soul, killed him, saved Maman and Baba but I left. Everyday, I brought that guilt with me. I was a bad husband, crabby, impatient, judging, negative. I was a bad father too--

FAROUK

(Holding back tears)
No you were not, stop, please.
You're killing yourself for no reason.

RAKIM-65

Look at me, Farouk. I'm an old man. Now I have all the patience in the world, I am too old to be mean but it's useless now. I know you're a stronger man than me and I'm sorry that I am a coward for you. I'm sorry every day that I was too scared to save my brother's life and now I ruined the lives of more people that I love. Never be a coward, Farouk. Be brave and patient... Don't be like me.

(MORE)

RAKIM-65 (CONT'D)

I'm a coward and an old man with regret. Worst things in the world.

FAROUK

(Hesitant & Crying)

You did the best you could. Mommy loved you, I love you, you're a good man. A very good man.

RAKIM-65

Farouk, at the end of your life. It doesn't matter if other people thinks you're good. Only you know if you did good and the best and I was too scared to do it. I don't want that for my son.

FAROUK

Don't worry about me Dad.

RAKIM-65

You are my son man. You come from my dick, of course I'm worried about you.

They both laugh, emotionally Farouk reaches for and embraces Rakim's hand.

INT. CAMERON'S APARTMENT-NIGHT

Cameron is in his apartment going slightly crazy. He's got a PHONE in front of him as he's seated on the COUCH. He picks it up and hangs it up repeatedly, biting his nails. Finally, he picks up the phone and calls someone. He smokes multiple CIGARETTES and nurses a few WHISKY'S and a KNOCK comes at his door. It's a scruffy 20 something DRUG DEALER who comes in with a KIT BAG. They smoke a JOINT and talk for a bit. The drug dealer lays out his MERCHANDISE on the table, Cameron stares at it hesitantly.

CAMERON

Would you kill me if I asked you to?

DRUG DEALER

It depends.

CAMERON

On what?

DRUG DEALER

I don't know. Why do you want me to kill you?

CAMERON
I'm depressed. I'm a junkie.

DRUG DEALER
I mean, that's not a good reason.

CAMERON
What is a good reason?

DRUG DEALER
I'm not sure...

They sit silently together for a bit.

DRUG DEALER (CONT'D)
Maybe if you were possessed. Like
some exorcist shit.

CAMERON
What if I am?

DRUG DEALER
Cam...you're really fucking up my
buzz. Why are you on this anyway?
Do you need to talk to someone?

They are silent again for a while.

CAMERON
What if I gave you a thousand
dollars?

DRUG DEALER
Well. Do you really want to die?

CAMERON
Yeah.

DRUG DEALER
Are you really gonna pay me?

CAMERON
Yeah.

DRUG DEALER
Do I have to shoot you?

CAMERON
I'll give you an extra thousand if
you torture me first.

DRUG DEALER
 (Uncomfortably)
 Man, maybe you should put up a
 craigslist ad.

Cameron stares at him for nearly ten seconds. The Drug Dealer
 caves to the pressure of Cameron's eyes.

DRUG DEALER (CONT'D)
 Well, when do you want me to do it?

CAMERON
 I'm not sure

Cameron reaches for the drugs and prepares a hit for himself.

DRUG DEALER
 What are you doing?

CAMERON
 I got the money.

DRUG DEALER
 Where is it?

CAMERON
 Just, give me a hit. I got the
 money.

DRUG DEALER
 That's half a gram, when's the last
 time you've done that much?

Cameron is inspecting the BAG OF HEROIN.

CAMERON
 I'm fine. Don't worry.

He takes a long last drag from his cigarette and puts it out
 into his OVERFLOWING ASH TRAY.

MONTAGE-VARIOUS 2010-LATE NIGHT/EARLY MORNING

(Sun rises throughout the montage)

A) EXT. FOREST - EARLY MORNING- Jacob and his son are walking
 through the woods carrying GUNS & HUNTING EQUIPMENT

B) INT. FAROUK'S CAR (creek/side of highway)- MORNING- Farouk
 is seated in his car with a CUP OF COFFEE and the LETTER.
 Next to him is a GEOMETRY BOOK & NOTEPAD

C) INT. CAMERON'S APARTMENT - MORNING- Cameron is staring at a PILE OF THINGS on his table, he reaches for a SPOON and a LIGHTER.

A2) Jacob and Jacob Jr. are climbing the LADDER to their DEER-STAND

B2) Farouk gets out of his parked car and walks down into the creek carrying GEOMETRY BOOK & NOTEPAD

C2) Cameron is lighting his SPOON and reaches for his SYRINGE

A3) Jacob and Jacob Jr. are loading their GUNS and taking safety off

B3) Farouk is walking through a creek carrying his NOTEPAD and GEOMETRY BOOK

C3) Cameron fills his syringe with heroin and sets the spoon on the table

A4) Jacob Jr. spots a DEER and takes aim

B4) Farouk is in a clearing underneath a tree, he picks up a LARGE SHARP ROCK and walks around inspecting a small area underneath a tree

C4) Cameron ties a BELT around his arm and opens and closes his fist to reveal his veins

A5) Jacob Jr pulls the trigger and BANG!

B5) Farouk sets the rock down with precision and intent

C5) Cameron punctures his arm and pushes in the heroin

END MONTAGE

INT/EXT. FAROUK'S CAR - MORNING

The sun is coming up. Farouk gets back into his car and drives off, he has a bit of a panic attack but overcomes it

INT. PAWNSHOP - DAY

Farouk goes into the pawnshop and buys a PISTOL

EXT. FOREST-EARLY MORNING

Jacob and Jacob Jr. climb down from their tree stand and walk towards the COLLAPSED DEER, still ALIVE & SUFFERING. Jacob takes out his KNIFE and hands it to his son who is in awe of the deer.

JACOB
Son, take it. You've got to put it
out of its misery

His son takes the KNIFE, hesitantly. Puts one hand on the deers neck and prepares to drive the knife in.

JACOB (CONT'D)
Finish it.

JACOB JR.
Where do I do it?

JACOB
Cut into his throat, stab deep and
pull down til he bleeds out

He hesitates, Jacob gets frustrated

JACOB (CONT'D)
Son, he's suffering. Kill him. Put
that knife in. Kill him.

As he gets close and begins to pierce the neck, he lays a supporting hand on the deers stomach, the deer bucks and kicks him in the face, knocking him unconscious. Jacob checks on him, trying not to panic, picks him up and hauls him to the truck.

INT. JACOB'S TRUCK - MORNING

Jacob is holding onto an unconscious and bleeding Jacob Jr. talking to him and flying down the road.

INT/EXT. AMBULANCE - MORNING

A view out the window as the ambulance navigates the road and pulls into an apartment complex.

INT. CAMERON'S APARTMENT-NIGHT

Cameron is slumped on the couch, the PHONE is off the hook and his POCKETS ARE EMPTIED. TWO PARAMEDICS break in and try to bring him back to life as he moans incomprehensibly.

INT/EXT. FAROUK'S CAR - MORNING

Farouk is parked again on the side of the road, he watches the rising sun come over the forest. He's holding the gun and contemplating what he is about to do. He turns on the radio and on comes an EPIC SONG, fondly he remembers.

FLASHBACK - INT/EXT. JACOB'S TRUCK - DAY

Karl-20 is recording on his CAMCORDER as everyone sings along with EPIC SONG they join slowly, first Cameron-20, Doreen-20, Jacob-20, Farouk-20 and finally Karl as it becomes upbeat.

SONG CONTINUES:

END FLASHBACK.

EXT. SIDE OF HIGHWAY/CREEK. MORNING

Farouk is walking into the woods and remembering the EPIC SONG and the day of the Iranian New Years festival where his grandfather spoke, Cameron, Karl, Jacob and Doreen were all there listening

FLASHBACK - EXT. PARK PAVILION - DAY

Farouk-20, Cameron-20, Doreen-20, Jacob-20 and Karl-20 are at the festival, awkward because of what just happened. Eventually they are overtaken by the joy of the event. At the Iranian New Year festival everyone is eating, dancing, playing soccer and talking. Before the food is officially served, the old man talks to everyone about the meaning of the celebration.

VARIOUS MONTAGE/INTERCUTS:

Natures Wonders: CREEK; SUNSHINE; TREES; SKY
PEOPLE DANCING
SOCCER GAME
CHILDREN PLAYING

OLD IRANIAN MAN

IN FARSI:

"Aide Shoma Mubarak. I will say this in English so the children and our guests can hear too how blessed they are in the good grace of God. So again everyone, 'Aide Shoma Mubarak'"

IN ENGLISH:

(MORE)

OLD IRANIAN MAN (CONT'D)

I welcome all the guests today, I am happy to see my grandson has brought his friends and we are grateful for each of you to be here today, a very important day in the history not just of the Iranian people but of all the people. Today for the last thousands of years our people have celebrated this day, the equinox. The day the sun spends more time with the earth than any other day, the longest day of the year. Today the coldness of winter will move towards the warmth of spring where flowers will bloom and sun will give us more light and warmth. It is very good to delight in both of these gifts. But, also it is important to remember that we will return to winter, to coldness. Our ancestors were given strength through the winter by remembering the Spring. They pass that strength and those memories to us, their children. And we must remember, no matter how hard life gets, how bad, good is not far. And it is also important that we are not fooled by the good times to misremember the bad and forget how it feels. Spring is smiling at us now, we say welcome. We celebrate its beginning and think not of its end, everybody eat and thank God for this day, and be better this day than the last and always until finally you are good enough to meet him who created all things.

IN FARSI:

I love each of you. Aide shoma
Mubarak.

END FLASHBACK.

EXT. SIDE OF HIGHWAY/CREEK. MORNING

Farouk's POV the sun is fully over the forest, birds are bright and chirping.

Farouk is walking through the creek and intermittently living a memory:

BEGIN FLASHBACK-CAMCORDER VIEW/INTERCUT

Back in the creek where Karl-20 disappeared we are seeing the event through the CAM-CORDER that Doreen-20 is holding. Farouk-20, Jacob-20, Cameron-20 and Doreen-20 are walking through the creek and looking for Karl-20.

CAMERON-20
Okay, when I do, I get to sleep
with Doreen

JACOB-20
Sure.

DOREEN-20
Uh, not happening. Jacob?

JACOB-20
I'm just playing Doreen. Come on,
let's go. Where the hell is Karl?

CAMERON-20
(Yelling) Karl. (to Jacob) Come on
Jacob, it'll be over before he gets
back anyway.

JACOB-20
Hold on. Where did he go?

FAROUK-20
He's peeing.

CAMERON-20
The mighty Jake is scared.

Jacob walks off ignoring Cameron's comments. Doreen begins narrating the walk

DOREEN-20
(A bad British accent)
We are here today in search of Karl
Anderson, a man who disappeared
mere moments ago, luckily we have
number one Indian tracker Farouk
Falsafi with us on the pursuit.

FAROUK-20
Oh, come on Doreen. Not right now.

DOREEN-20
The renowned tracker wishes to be
kept off the record as he works.

Jacob and Cameron run ahead as they see Karl hanging from a tree, Farouk hangs back and watches in terror as they climb to get him down.

DOREEN-20 (CONT'D)
Oh my God. Oh my God.

Doreen drops the CAMCORDER and it lays on the ground capturing only Farouk's feet and the creek behind. Everyone explodes into chaos. Jacob and Cameron get Karl down from the tree. Doreen watches, yelling and crying. Farouk stays back and is in shock observing the event.

MONTAGE - EXT. STREAM IN THE FOREST - MORNING

PRESENT: (2010-DAY 4)

PAST: (2000-DAY 0)

PRESENT- Farouk is standing in the same spot that he watched Karl hanging almost ten years ago, the sun is shining on him, a silhouette, it must be 12 noon because Karl, who does not see Farouk, is preparing as he has the noose tight around his neck he steps off the rock.

PAST- Cameron-20 and Jacob-20 are pulling Karl-20 out of the noose. Doreen-20 is crying and screaming.

PRESENT-Farouk steps out of the shadows and aims the pistol at Karl who sees him, they lock eyes.

PAST- Farouk-20 and Karl-20 lock eyes before he comes out of the noose, seems like forever.

PRESENT- Farouk pulls the trigger. The bright sun hits Farouk as the gun's recoil steps him back into the sunshine. As the BANG echoes through the forest:

INT. AMBULANCE - MORNING

Cameron opens his eyes as a small bit of sunshine splashes over him, he smiles and sheds a tear.

INT. HOSPITAL - MORNING

Jacob's POV the sun is rising, bright and beautifully visible through the window, Doreen rushes in to see Jacob and at that moment, Junior opens his eyes

CUT TO:

INT. RAKIM'S HOME- DAY

Farouk walks in to see his dad who is lying on the bed. He makes some tea and brings it to him.

RAKIM-65

My son. I'm so proud of you and I'm happy of the man you have become.

FAROUK

Thanks dad.
(Teary eyed)
Drink your tea.

The PHONE next to his BED rings. Farouk answers and begins speaking in broken Farsi:

FAROUK (CONT'D)

Hello? Salam. Gorbunet, Hoobie? I love you too. Love you, okay, beya.

Farouk hands the phone off to Rakim.
Dad, it's for you

PHONE CONVERSATION IN FARSI

RAKIM-65

Hello. Amay, I love you. Hello. I'm good. I'm good. How are you? No, it's not late, Whatsup?

Rakim listens for a few moments, he gets very serious.

RAKIM-65 (CONT'D)

When? Okay. Okay. I understand. Okay, I love you, goodbye. I will. I will. Of course. Okay. Okay. Bye.

Rakim hangs up the phone and is silent for a moment. He sheds a tear.

RAKIM-65 (CONT'D)

Arjun died this morning.

Rakim begins shedding tears and smiling, he raises his hands to thank God.

RAKIM-65 (CONT'D)

(Farsi to himself)
Finally, my brother can rest. God bless him. My little brother. With God's will, my time will be soon, I'm ready.

FAROUK

Dad, are you okay?

RAKIM-65

I'm good. It's up to God. I'm happy that finally, I hope to God, he can find some peace. It's a miracle... he told me many years ago that he could never die, would suffer forever unless I killed him. Now, I know that he's resting so now it's my turn to rest. Farouk, I'm so tired.

FAROUK

(Crying)
Sleep dad, you deserve it. I love you and I'm proud of who you are. I'm proud to be your son, please sleep dad, close your eyes. I love you so much.

Rakim kisses Farouk twice, admires him and lays down to sleep. Farouk watches him rest and drinks his tea till the end.

EXT. JACOB'S DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Farouk is standing in the driveway as Jacob and Doreen pull up. Jacob gets out of the car and helps junior out who is in a wheel chair.

FAROUK

Oh my God, what happened?

DOREEN

Don't let this little faker fool you, he's just getting a free-ride.

JACOB

Hey.

FAROUK

What happened?

JACOB

You know we went hunting this morning. Tried to finish off a deer and it bucked, hit him in the face. Scared the hell out of me but, he just broke some ribs and his leg.

FAROUK

God.

DOREEN
Farouk, how are you?

FAROUK
Oh, you know. Good.

DOREEN
Alright well, don't mean to be rude
but I'm going to bed, this boy wore
me out with worry today. Good night
babe, I love you. If you and Farouk
wanna get my car for me, I'd love
you forever.

Jacob indicates the request to Farouk who nods in agreement.
Doreen kisses Jacob goodnight and pushes Junior in the house.

DOREEN (CONT'D)
Night Farouk. Thank you.

FAROUK
Night Doreen, goodnight Jacob

JACOB
That boy is so drugged up right now
he don't know where he is.
(Long pause)
So...whatsup?

FAROUK
Is Cameron still coming over?

JACOB
Should be...

FAROUK
My Uncle died this morning

JACOB
Which Uncle?

FAROUK
Arjun?

JACOB
No. No way. How?

FAROUK
You know what? I didn't ask. I have
no idea.

Lights approach the house, Cameron pulls up and gets out of
his car and walks towards them.

CAMERON

Whats'up?

JACOB

What happened to you? Look like
shit.

CAMERON

Woke up from a coma.

JACOB

Yeah? I need some sleep after this
one.

CAMERON

Farouk, whatsup?

FAROUK

Karl's dead.

Jacob and Cameron are silent for a while and almost in shock.

JACOB

Did you...

FAROUK

No. In fact, I tried to save him
but, it was too late.

CAMERON

Jesus.

JACOB

I'm sorry I wasn't there Farouk.

Farouk begins crying, Jacob reaches in to embrace him and
Cameron does the same. The three men are standing together in
a circle on the driveway hugging.

EXT. SIDE OF HIGHWAY/CREEK. NIGHT

Underneath the tree where he was hanging it the remains of a
torn rope and underneath that Karl is lying in a pool of
blood, the back of his head smashed in by the rock that
Farouk placed there that morning. Leaves rustle and a full
moon is penetrating the trees, the sound of a flowing stream
is loud and final.

FADE OUT:

THE END