

OPIUM DREAM

Written by

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Based on a novel by Jason Schoonover

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SUPERIMPOSE: AFGHANISTAN, DESERT OF DEATH, FEBRUARY

1 EXT. AFGHAN DESERT CAMP - DAY 1
Wind BLOWS sand over a goat hair tent to a row of PARTIALLY UNCOVERED TERRACOTTA LIFESIZE STATUES in pairs. The first 4 pairs are soldiers, The next are officials, and the next two aren't clear to us. Shovels are scattered about.

2 INT. GOAT HAIR TENT AFGHAN DESERT - DAY 2
TWO AFGHAN MEN smoke opium as a THIRD sleeps. The wind HOWLS. We focus on the sleeping man. DREAM SEQUENCE: VISIONS OF KUBLAI KHAN'S SOLDIERS (WITH SAME FACES OF STATUES) IN BATTLE REGALIA INTERMINGLED WITH SURREALISTIC SCENES OF BATTLE AND EYES SIGNALING IMMINENT DANGER.

3 EXT. AFGHAN DESERT CAMP - DAY 3
ZEMAR, an imposing Afghan of 50 in black, orders AFGHAN MEN to cover the statues. Then he mounts a camel and trots away as the WIND sweeps sand around him. The sun beats down.

4 SUPERIMPOSE: A SECRET LOCATION - MARCH 4

5 INT. DARKENED QUARTERS - NIGHT 5
THREE MEN in deep shadows in comfortable surroundings. Faces are unrecognizable. To one side a door is ajar. We see a LARGE BLACK RING on the LEADER'S hand holding a glass.

LEADER
(perfect English)
It's settled then. I'll read what
we've decided to use.
(clears throat)
"I wish peace for all mankind."

The men break out in LAUGHTER and raise glasses. The door quietly closes and a DARK FIGURE that has been eavesdropping hurries down a hall. A doppler-effect RINGS in the distance.

6 INT. LEE RIVER'S HOUSE IN BANGKOK, THAILAND - DAY 6
SOMCHAI, a Thai man about 30 rushes to answer a telephone. Bangkok's Chao Praya river floats by in the bg.

SOMCHAI

Hello, this *Khun* Ree Liver's residence.

7 EXT. BACK OF LEE RIVER'S HOUSE - DAY 7

An ARAB WITH GOLD TEETH and in a *galabria* hides behind a tree as he speaks into a cellphone.

GOLD TEETH

This is the Continental Hotel in Ho Chi Minh City calling on behalf of Mr. Rivers.

8 INT. LEE RIVER'S HOUSE - DAY 8

SOMCHAI

What! *Khun* Livers want me pick him up at the airport? The plane lands in ten minutes!

Somchai hangs up, runs out of the house sidedoor and jumps into a custom painted and colorful tuk-tuk.

9 EXT. BACK OF LEE RIVER'S HOUSE - DAY 9

As Somchai ROARS off, Gold Teeth creeps toward the house.

10 EXT. BACK ENTRANCE OF LEE RIVER'S HOUSE - DAY 10

A POCKFACED ARAB has already picked the patio lock.

11 EXT. SOMCHAI RIDING THE TUK-TUK NEAR LEE'S HOUSE - DAY 11

Somchai realizes he's forgotten something and turns back.

12 INT. SOMCHAI'S ROOM INSIDE LEE RIVER'S HOUSE - DAY 12

Somchai picks up his wallet from a table when he hears SOMETHING DROP in the hall. He TIP TOES and sees Pockface's back next to the bathroom. He's picking up a wrench.

13 INT. HALLWAY BETWEEN SOMCHAI'S ROOM AND UTILITY ROOM - DAY 13

Somchai picks up a baseball bat from an umbrella stand and creeps forward when Gold Teeth walks out of the utility room, takes the wrench, and is about to enter the bathroom when he spots Somchai.

Gold Teeth SHOUTS and Pockface swirls as Somchai cracks the bat over his head. As Pockface goes down, Gold Teeth pulls out a HANDGUN. He SHOOTS TWICE as Somchai dives over Pockface's body.

14 EXT. A STREET IN HO CHI MINH CITY - DAY

14

LEE RIVERS, a bearded, roguish adventurer wearing khaki shorts, a Safari shirt and Tilly hat carries two bulging duffel bags as he walks down a deserted back street. From across the road an ARAB in Vietnamese garb addresses him.

ARAB

Hey you! You have light?

The incongruity alerts Lee and he eyes him cautiously. The Arab walks hurriedly within a dozen feet and stops.

ARAB (CONT'D)

You have light?

Lee, noticing that the man doesn't have a cigarette in his hand, stops.

LEE

Sure, of course.

Lee sets his bags down and digs into his pocket. He steps forward raising a PROPANE LIGHTER, but finds himself face to face with a battle-scarred US Army .45. Lee freezes.

ARAB

What is your name?

LEE

My name?

ARAB

Yes! Is your name Lee Rivers?

LEE

No. My name's...uh, Forrest Gump.

The Arab's free hand yanks out a paper. Lee recognizes a page from *The Foreign Correspondents Club of Thailand Directory*. The Arab studies a non-bearded photograph of Lee. He frowns.

ARAB

Your wallet! I want to see your driver's license picture.

Lee fumbles out his snakeskin wallet. It falls to the ground, Lee kicks it, but it stops halfway between them.

LEE

Go on. It won't bite.

The Arab smirks, steps forward and crouches while groping for the wallet, keeping his eyes and gun fixed on Lee. He looks down momentarily allowing the gun's aim to waiver to the right. Lee pounces to the left and FLICKS the lighter SHOOTING A STREAM OF MACE into his assailant's face.

ARAB

Aaaaargh!

A SHOT is fired as Lee runs down the alley towards a busy street. Another SHOT causes a chip to fly off the wall by his head as he turns the corner. Lee CRASHES off a cart and TUMBLES over a vendor's table. He scrambles to his feet amidst the merchants' SHOUTS and dashes off. Lee runs down the street, past the Continental Hotel and Opera House, and turns into a bar, the Apocalypse Now.

15

INT. THE APOCALYPSE NOW - HO CHI MINH CITY - DAY

15

Lee, panting, spots BORIS ANKLOVITCH, an ebullient, dumpy, middle-aged Russian with an Orthodox cross around his neck. Boris is dressed in rumpled field clothes, a photographer's vest with pockets bulging with garlic, and has a nerd pack with pens. In front of him on the bar is a briefcase. He's shucking and eating garlic cloves like peanuts.

LEE

Boris! Saigon is infamous for muggings but I've just been hit with the weirdest one! I was almost at the shippers when....

Fifteen minutes later Boris and Lee are into their second drink as MISS SAIGON, a beautiful waitress in an *ou dae* passes, holding her nose and scowling at Boris. Despite Lee's gloomy mood, his eyes follow her curvaceous behind.

BORIS

(Russian accent)

Seems jungle beard you grew confused him, but why is Arab in disguise looking for you in Ho Burg?

LEE

(dejected)

Good question but if he wanted the Hmong textile collection I just spent weeks piecing together, the fucking head thumper got it. The Smithsonian is going to be disappointed.

(shrugs)

Anyway, that little adventure made me early. You left a note at the Continental saying you wanted to see me urgently. What's up?

Boris' cellphone RINGS and he answers it.

BORIS

Da! Ah! Sergei! Da! We are at bar.

Boris trades his phone for a fresh garlic head.

BORIS (CONT'D)

That my new friend, Sergei. Is in neighbourhood and wants to return my chess set. Sergei is rich Russian. Is good to get Belomor from, good Russian cigarette. And good have someone to speak *fluid* Russian with!

Boris raises his vodka glass to illustrate his joke. Miss Saigon approaches as SERGEI enters the bar. Sergei is in his early forties and expensively dressed. He carries an ornate rectangular box and smiles at Boris as he sits.

MISS SAIGON

You want dlink.

SERGEI

(Russian accent)

I will have vodka.

(to Boris)

And Russian ice cubes.

Sergei passes Boris the box. He opens the hinged box to reveal a handsome, portable ivory chess set. Each piece has a square peg on its base which fits snugly into holes. A game is frozen in mid-battle. Boris picks up the white knight.

BORIS

Da! You did good job replacing!
Now we can finish game!

SERGEI
 (glancing at his Rolex)
 Nyet, I can stay only for one
 drink. And sorry again about
 breaking piece.

BORIS
 No problem. I am being rude. Sergei
 Shewchuk, meet my old friend Lee
 Rivers.

SERGEI
 (offering hand to Lee)
 So this is Lee, renowned collector
 for museums you tell me about. Is
 interesting career!

LEE
 Sometimes too interesting.

SERGEI
 What do you mean?

LEE
 I just had some Arab rob, or try to
 whack me, I'm not sure. Boris can
 tell you about it. What do you do?

SERGEI
 I broker rice to Russia. Is not
 interesting. I have boring meeting
 in few minutes but like to meet
 people who live exciting life, and
 you certainly do. Is my pleasure.

Miss Saigon delivers Sergei's drink. Boris drops freshly
 shucked garlic cloves into Sergei's and his drinks.

BORIS
 Russian ice cubes!

Boris leads a toast. Sergei downs his and gives Boris a pack
 of Belomors. Boris, pleased, pats Sergei on the shoulder.

SERGEI
 Lee, Boris tells me you are flying
 to Bangkok soon?

LEE
 Yeah, I leave tonight.

SERGEI

Please have safe trip. Perhaps we meet again. Boris, we finish game before you also leave, da?

Sergei hurries out. Miss Saigon sashays by again. Lee's eyes are affixed to her ass, the slit in her white, silk dress.

BORIS

Month in jungle is long time. Naked monkeys must raise your bamboo.

LEE

Well, I have yet to see one with an ass like that, though I can't say I haven't been looking. I'm antsy all right. Fortunately, I'll be seeing SOON in Bangkok. And none too soon either.

BORIS

You are still going with that Bangkok bitch? Sorry, sorry, she is your new girlfriend, but was so rude to me.

LEE

Hey, don't apologize. Her Jekyll-Hyde took me by surprise too, starting out sweet and turning sour. Very Oriental. Sweet and sour. If she wasn't so tasty, I would have pushed away from the table already. Call me a romantic. And if it's any consolation, I've just about had my fill.

Lee reaches into his cargo pocket and pulls out an embroidered shoulder bag.

LEE (CONT'D)

I brought this for you. The last of the collection. The Hmong call it a money bag. Now, again, what did you want to see me about? I have a plane to catch.

BORIS

(slides his chess set in it)
Is perfect fit! Thank you! Now all I need is money to put in it.
Lee, I sold everything.

(MORE)

BORIS (CONT'D)

I am sick of being journalist, is no money. I am gambling everything on this find.

LEE

Find?

BORIS

Let's go to your room, Lee. I have big show and tell.

He nods toward the bill cup and Lee reluctantly stuffs money into it. Boris passes the money to the waitress and grins.

BORIS (CONT'D)

Here Miss Saigon, hold my dong.

She scowls. Boris takes his briefcase, LAUGHS, and as they head for the door, he FARTS.

MISS VIETNAM

You always disgusting Cheap Charlie Russia! Always no tip! And stink!

Lee chuckles. This is classic Boris.

BORIS

(to Lee)

We have old saying in Russia. Difference between Russian and bottle of vodka is vodka tip.

16 INT. LEE'S CONTINENTAL HOTEL ROOM - DAY

16

Boris sets his briefcase on the coffee table. Lee CLICKS the remote and CNN fires up.

LEE

Hey, your friend EBONY is on. Thanks for introducing us. She's one interesting lady.

An upper class English accent cuts through the muffled orchestra of HORNS and CYCLO BELLS from the street. Ebony, a stunning Nubian beauty, reports on *Ebony Live on CNN*.

EBONY (V.O.)

...a startling top secret meeting of the extremist states of Iran, Iraq, Libya and Syria apparently called by the moderate Saudis.

(MORE)

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

What brought some of these bitter former enemies together is unknown, but speculation runs high....

BORIS

(Fans 5X7" glossies of a crude archaeological dig)
She liked meeting you too, Anyway, Look at this. Is find of lifetime. No, is find of two life times - yours and mine!

One photo displays a trench. In it stands four pairs of statues in a row. The front three are of Mongolian soldiers, the next, officials of some kind. From the height of the Afghans standing above brandishing AK-47s, they're life-size.

BORIS (CONT'D)

Is suspected to be Kublai Khan's burial site in Afghanistan! Is in Dasht-i-Margo, the Desert of Death in Helmand province in south.

LEE

That's the Taliban stronghold, isn't it?

BORIS

Da.

LEE

Come on. When Kublai croaked, they had to have planted him in Mongolia.

BORIS

Listen. Afghanistan and here makes sense. Genghis conquers empire twice size of Roman, passes it down to Kublai. Kublai lived from 1216-1294 A.D. He was khan that conquered China. And made his biggest empire world has known! And we don't know where is either tomb? Is not strange?

LEE

Hmmm. I suppose it is possible they had themselves buried in the most remote corner of their empires. Maybe that's why Ghengis slaughtered practically the whole population. To create a safe setting for his grave.

Lee examines the photos with a magnifying glass. Boris points to Chinese characters on the base of one statue.

BORIS

This why we think is Kublai.

LEE

We? Who is we?

BORIS

When I covered Afghanistan for TASS during Russian war, I made friends with Director of Kabul Library. He is writer and historian. His name is HASHEEM ALI RASLUDDIN. He learned of them and contacted me. He thinks writing is obscure form of Kublai Khan but because Taliban destroyed libraries he cannot verify. I'm sure you know scholar at one of your museums, da?

LEE

Of course, but I'm sceptical as hell. How'd Afghan Hash find them?

BORIS

I don't know. You can ask him. He is in Kandahar and is now leader of group called Seed of New Genesis.

LEE

Sounds like a...a California cult?

BORIS

I'm not sure. He started it after his wife and children were killed by suicide bomber in market place. Hasheem wants to smuggle statues out. He wants to sell them to museums. Is possible?

LEE

If this is Kublai's grave, it'll start a stampede.

BORIS

Good! He says he can smuggle statues to Karachi, but how do we move them from there?

Lee looks at his dive watch.

LEE

You keep saying we. You don't need me Boris. Bribing Customs officials is easy. Anyway, I've got a plane to catch and a Taliban infested desert of death is the last place I want to go. There's an undeclared war going on in Afghanistan if you haven't heard.

BORIS

Lee, is too big for me to do alone. How do you say? I'm beneath my depth.

LEE

Besides, I have a contract with the Getty next.

BORIS

Lee, nothing can be as fabulous as this. You have excellent contacts with museums around world and have been doing this for years. You have good eye and can pick best statues. Also, you have smuggled large antiquities before.

LEE

I got out of that business years ago. I was disgusted with myself. I only do anthropology now. It's immediately replaced. Antiquities can't be. Nothing is stolen from the mother country.

Boris heaves forward and places a hand on Lee's shoulder.

BORIS

If Taliban find them, what do you think will happen?

INSERT: COVERAGE OF BUMIYAN BUDDHA BEING BLOWN

LEE (V.O.)

...They'll be destroyed. Like the giant Buddha at Bamiyan.

BORIS

Exactly. You're only person who can save them.

(MORE)

BORIS (CONT'D)

So little war is going on. You've been in wars before. Will pay very good!

LEE

Out of interest, what share does Afghan Hash want?

BORIS

Fifty percent. He thinks they could be worth million dollars each.

LEE

If they're real Kublais they'll be worth at least 10 mill each.

BORIS

Wow - as you Americans say! We split rest fifty percent. I owe you for picking up many tabs. Now is time I pay you back.

LEE

You're very generous.
(ponders)
But it's not the money getting to me. I don't think I could live with myself if I had a chance to save world heritage treasures from destruction and didn't try. I'm still sickened when I picture the Buddha at Bamiyan blowing up.

BORIS

Then you'll do it!

LEE

I'll e-mail the ideograms to MARTHA FREDERICKSEN. She's Curator of Far Eastern Collections at the Smithsonian. We'll see what she says and take it from there. Now, I've got to grab a cab. Call me when you get to Bangkok.

17

EXT. FRONT OF LEE RIVER'S HOUSE IN BANGKOK - DAY

17

Somchai, bandaged around his forehead and a biceps, opens the door. His left knee is wrapped in an elastic bandage as he hops using the baseball bat as a cane.

LEE

Somchai, what the hell happened?

SOMCHAI

Oh! *Khun* Livers! It from bad people! Two Arabs break in! Bullet wound not serious *Khun* Livers, just go through my arm.

LEE

Arabs? They shot you!

Somchai stares back stoically as Lee hurries up the landing. Baseball in hand, Somchai hops, skips and jumps behind Lee.

18 INT. POV LEE LOOKING INTO HIS LIVING ROOM - DAY 18

Masks, spears, shields, *thankyas*, and exotic textiles adorn the walls. In and on cabinets rest porcelain from several dynasties and jade, terracotta, wood and ivory objets d'art. Interspersed with teak furniture are statues. It's a wealthy collector's home.

19 INT. LEE'S BEDROOM IN BANGKOK - DAY 19

Lee FLICKS the light-switch. An orgy of rare ivory *Karma Sutra* paintings adorn the walls. Lee scratches his beard.

LEE

Somchai, they obviously weren't interested in my collections. What the hell is going on?

20 INT. LEE'S BEDROOM IN BANGKOK - DAY 20

LEE

(on the phone)
Soon, how are you?

21 INT. ERAWAN HOTEL LOBBY PR DESK, BANGKOK - DAY 21

A sexy lady dressed in traditional Thai costume sits. She's on the phone. And indifferent.

SOON

Oh. Hello Lee....

22 INT. LEE'S BEDROOM IN BANGKOK - DAY 22

LEE
 "Oh. Hello Lee." Is that all you
 can say? I just got home. I'll keep
 this short: how about dinner?

23 INT. ERAWAN HOTEL LOBBY PR DESK, BANGKOK - DAY 23

SOON
 I'm not hungry.

24 INT. LEE'S BEDROOM IN BANGKOK - DAY 24

LEE
 Okay, how about I pick you up after
 work and you can stare at an empty
 plate. After a month of bamboo
 grubs I want Thai good.

SOON
 8:00pm.

The phone goes dead. Lee looks at it, doing a slow burn.

LEE
 Boris is right. I think this is
 our last supper.

25 EXT. ENTRANCE TO SOI COWBOY - BANGKOK - NIGHT 25

Somchai is driving Lee in the tuk-tuk. He swerves to a stop
 at the entrance to Bangkok's premiere nightclub strip.

LEE
 Thanks Somchai. Take the night off.

SOMCHAI
Khap khun krap khun Livers!

Somchai BOUNCES the tuk-tuk back into the bustling street,
 almost running over TWO DRUNK TOURISTS. MUSIC BOOMS from go-
 go bars as Lee strides onto the neon strip. Joking with
 BIKINIED GIRLS trying to entice him into bars, he swings into
 one with a cartoon cactus sign reading: Cactus Jack's.

26

INT. CACTUS JACK'S BAR IN SOI COWBOY - NIGHT

26

Lee walks down the CROWDED long bar, behind which are plastic saguaros, and from the ceiling hang perches with *papier mache* buzzards staring hungrily at the BLOATING BEER BELLIES below. Lee pushes through to a stool at the end and sits. Next to Lee is a MAN with his head buried in the *Bangkok Nation*.

LEE

Hey, CACTUS JACK, seen DINGO? We're supposed to meet. Trust him to be even later than me.

Cactus Jack puts the paper aside. He's huge but at 75 looks more like a benign grandfather than a retired CIA killer.

CACTUS JACK

Well, if it ain't North Dakota Jones. Ain't seem him, sorry. How'd the collecting go with the *Hmong*?

LEE

It went. And will you quit calling me that?

CACTUS JACK

I was right about the white *Hmong* having the best embroidery, wasn't I?

A sexy BARMAID in a bikini sets a Mekhong-and-Coke in front of Lee. Lee smiles at MALEE. She blows him a kiss.

LEE

Right. As an old spook who fought with the *Hmong* during the Secret War in Laos, you know more about them than any anthropologist I've met. Thanks for the advice. Good to be back in the bar.

CACTUS JACK

Have time to hit any in Saigon? Love that town. Lots of memories.

LEE

Yeah, I had a drink with an old friend at the Apocalypse Now.

CACTUS JACK

Great bar. Anybody I know?

LEE

Yeah, but you don't like him.
Boris Anklovitch.

CACTUS JACK

The fuckin' Ruskie that BILLY THE
BELGIAN sucker punched? What the
fuck you havin' anything to do with
goddammed commies?

LEE

He's not a goddammed commie. Never
was. How many times do I have to
tell you that? He's a bit cheap and
eccentric, but a great guy.

Cactus Jack has his attention drawn by a NEW CUSTOMER. Lee turns to see EBONY WHYTE enter the bar. All male eyes follow her sexy stride. Her simple summer white dress hugs her sensuously. Ebony spots Lee, smiles, walks up and kisses him on both cheeks, flustering him.

EBONY

(an outrageous flirt)
Lee, you are one hard man to find
but thanks be to Boris. He told me
you would likely be here.

LEE

You were looking for me?

Lee motions for them to move to a booth where they sit.

EBONY

The local bureau chief gave me your
home phone number. A Thai woman
answered. Is she your...?

LEE

Part-time maid.

Lee stops Malee as she wiggles through the crowd with a tray.

LEE (CONT'D)

Malee, could you please get the
lady a Lagavulin, with one ice.

EBONY

You remember!
(lowers voice)
I've wanted to come here for years.
Cactus Jack's is a legend.

(MORE)

EBONY (CONT'D)

Where else can you find a bar full of spooks, DEA agents, old Air America pilots and mercenaries? And the owner is a genuine retired CIA hit man! Point out Cactus Jack, Lee.

LEE

Right there and, talking about soldiers of fortune, that's Billy the Belgian heading toward him. Though Cactus can't stand the arrogant little prick.

A bantam sized but muscular *farang* (foreigner) in military greens struts up to Cactus Jack pulling out a PHOTOGRAPH. Billy's diminutive stature is over-compensated by his cockiness, which is further accentuated by a red beret and a ridiculous Hercule Poirot mustache he continuously twirls. Clouds pass over Cactus' face. As Billy slaps Cactus on the back, he glances at Lee and suppresses a COUGH. Then smiles proudly and shows the photo to Cactus who nods impatiently.

COLLAGE OF YOUNGER CACTUS JACK BY A COLLAPSED PARACHUTE OPENING UP A BOX OF M-16S BEFORE ASTONISHED HMONG/SECRETARY OPENING ENVELOPE AND RETCHING/FURIOUS AMBASSADOR YELLING INTO PHONE AND BEING HUNG UP ON/FIREFIGHT AT DIRT AIR STRIP/PULLING PIN ON GRENADE, PLACING IN JAR, AND TOSSING OUT OF CHOPPER OVER VIETNAMESE POSITION WITH HEADS.

EBONY (V.O.)

So that's the legend who parachuted into Laos and organized the Hmong into a fighting force, launching the CIA Secret War. The renegade spook who stapled Pathet Lao ears to his weekly report when the ambassador questioned his body count. And told the ambassador drunkenly to, well, fuck off when he tried to fire him.

LEE (V.O.)

Right, the ambassador was hamstrung because Cactus Jack's loyal *Hmong* wouldn't follow anyone else because of his extreme bravery. He once took out 17 Pathet Lao at an airfield himself before he was wounded and had to be choppered out.

(MORE)

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

Did you hear about him throwing heads out of helicopters along with grenades in jars with pins pulled?

EBONY

Yes! Then finishes off his career in retirement running security for Hollywood production companies. I know several stars who worked on shoots he handled. They all hold him in awe. Someone should do a movie about him.

Malee sets the scotch before Ebony.

EBONY (CONT'D)

Lee, there's another reason I looked you up. Boris told me you're going to Kandahar. He wouldn't divulge what you're after but I've known him long enough to know that it's major. It's not easy to get in, but I'll be flying there in the company Lear and I can give you both a lift. But the deal is I get the exclusive. Agreed?

Lee gives her a thumb's up. She SNAPS him her business card, drinks up, stands and pops two kisses on Lee's cheeks. As she pushes through the crowd and exits, DINGO steps inside, throws his arms wide, grins rakishly, and booms into song.

DINGO

TO ALL THE GIRLS I BONKED BEFORE!

He clangs the ship's bell. A CHEER indicates that drinks are on him. Dingo is a giant Aussi Adonis in a yellow Hawaiian shirt. He beelines to Lee.

DINGO (CONT'D)

G'day! How's me best raping and pillaging mate?

LEE

Dingo, did you know you just passed Ebony Whyte?

DINGO

Yeah? Great lips. Drool over them watching her show all the time.

As DINGO lights a cigarillo, Cactus Jack walks up.

CACTUS JACK
Dingo, you still looking for spare parts for that old plane of yours?

DINGO
Bloody aye mate! Got a lead?

CACTUS JACK
I do--

Before he can explain, he's called by a BARMAID and disappears.

DINGO
Well, you coming riding on Cowboy with me or are you still roped to that ball-breaking bitch? What's that Sheila's name? Soon? Sooner you dump her the better mate.

LEE
Seems to be the consensus. I'm seeing her tonight, and I think it's sayonara.

27 INT. LOBBY OF THE ERAWAN HOTEL - BANGKOK - NIGHT 27

Soon walks up to Lee sitting in the lobby. He stands while Soon disdainfully eyes his laundered safaris.

SOON
You need a haircut and a shave.

LEE
And nice to see you too, Soon.

SOON
Where's your stupid tuk-tuk?

LEE
I took the skytrain. And I like my tuk-tuk. It's quintessentially Thai.

They walk out onto the street.

28 EXT. BY THE ERAWAN SHRINE - NIGHT 28

SOON
Why don't you buy a Mercedes like everyone else?
(MORE)

SOON (CONT'D)

If you can afford an extra apartment on this side of Bangkok, you can afford a car.

Two Mercedes CRASH on the corner, followed by a STRUCK HORN. Lee waves over a cab and they get in.

LEE

That's why. And I keep the apartment for clients who like to be close to the nightlife. I was thinking the Bourbon Street Restaurant would be great for dinner. Their crawfish will go well with your crabby mood.

Soon ignores Lee and pulls out a Dunhill cigarette.

SOON

I'm still not hungry. Let's just go to your stupid apartment, it's closer. I need a light.

Lee thumbs on the MACE switch on his lighter momentarily, then switches it to "light." She blows smoke in his face. Lee COUGHS and turns away, suppressing anger.

29

INT. LEE'S GUEST APARTMENT BEDROOM IN BANGKOK - NIGHT

29

No sooner were they done than he rolls off. She turns her back to him. Lee stares at a gecko on the ceiling.

LEE

Well, that was some homecoming. Did you pass out or what?

SOON

Lee, when you were away I met someone. Someone who drives a Mercedes.

Soon gets up and faces Lee.

SOON (CONT'D)

He wants to marry me. Whoever gets me gets the woman of his dreams.

LEE

Sounds more like a nightmare. And you accepted?

SOON

Yes. He's a businessman who wears a suit and isn't away all the time. He's promised me 5,000 dollars a month spending money. I'm giving my notice at the hotel tomorrow.

LEE

How do you say 'gold digger' in Thai?

SOON

I'm leaving. You should be grateful I'm considerate enough to say goodbye.

Soon strides to the bathroom door. It has a plaque on it: *For Ethnic Cleansing*. She throws it him.

SOON (CONT'D)

And I never thought your so-called sense of humor funny.

She SLAMS the door behind her. Soon's POV: Soon's hand turning on the instant water heater.

KRABBOOOOOM!!! The THUNDEROUS EXPLOSION blows its four walls out. Debris CRASHES down around Lee. Emergency lights flash on. He scrambles over the rubble.

LEE

Soon! Soon! Where are you!

Her charred body lies in the tub. Her severed arm sticks out of the toilet. Lee PUKES, followed by dry heaves. He's oblivious to his nakedness as SHOCKED NEIGHBORS appear.

30

INT. LEE'S GUEST APARTMENT IN BANGKOK - NIGHT

30

FAT COP

Do you have any idea who wants to kill you?

LEE

No, I certainly don't!

Before them is a stubby propane tank. Its logo is a cobra.

FAT COP

This illegal Cobra brand propane tank in your bathroom was rigged to leak. You say you didn't smell it.

(MORE)

FAT COP (CONT'D)
Cobra brand gas no smell. When
instant hot water heater spark, it
goes boom.

The fat cop turns to a frightened woman, the APARTMENT
MANAGER, and speaks to her in Thai and she replies.

FAT COP (CONT'D)
Your apartment manager say two Arab
men come and pay her 5,000 baht.
They tell her that you give them
permission to drop off big package.

Lee looks at the manager and she *wais* (praying gesture)
apologetically. The cop interrogates the manager more in
Thai. A YOUNG COP appears lugging a propane tank with a White
Elephant logo. The manager nods eagerly and speaks.

YOUNG COP
This tank hidden in closet.

LEE
That's my tank!

FAT COP
Yes, manager says that. She say one
Arab have gold tooth and the other
has bad skin.

31 INT. LEE RIVER'S HOUSE IN BANGKOK - NIGHT

31

Somchai limps behind Lee who beelines to the utility room.

LEE
Somchai, who do we rent our propane
tanks from?

SOMCHAI
White Elephant brand people. Why?

Lee crouches before their tank and turns it so they can see
the label. They react: it's Cobra brand. Next to it is the
White Elephant brand one. Lee UNSCREWS the feed from the
Cobra brand one and CRANKS it open. Both smell the HISSING
feed.

LEE
No smell. Those carpet pilots were
rigging my can to explode when you
interrupted them. Somchai! You
saved my life!

32 INT. LEE'S BEDROOM IN BANGKOK - NIGHT 32

Lee is on the phone.

LEE

Hello Cactus Jack? Listen, I need a bodyguard. Some assholes just tried to blow me up.

33 INT. CACTUS JACK'S BAR - DAY 33

CACTUS JACK

A bodyguard? Was that your apartment in the *Nation*? The one some Arabs sabotaged?

34 INT. LEE'S BEDROOM IN BANGKOK - SAME DAY - DAY 34

LEE

Right. And I'm pissed, but need someone who can watch my back until I figure out who these bastards are and why I'm marked.

Lee puts the phone on speakerphone and goes to his safety deposit box. He opens it and pulls out a Walther.

CACTUS JACK (V.O.)

You sure you weren't pokin' around some Bedouin tent? If those camel jockeys lop off hands for stealing, you can imagine what they'll slap on the chopping block for pounding their pussy.

LEE

Cactus, cut the jokes, goddammit. Where can I find Billy the Belgian? I can't stand him anymore than you but he can handle the job.

35 INT. CACTUS JACK'S BAR - DAY 35

CACTUS JACK

The asshole left the country this morning.

(MORE)

CACTUS JACK (CONT'D)

As usual with him everything is a Big Fucking Secret So I have no idea when he'll be back. But I have just the person. Come by the bar tomorrow at four.

36 INT. LEE'S HOME IN BANGKOK - DAY 36

Lee reads an email from Martha Fredericksen.

37 LEE LOOKS UP AS WE HEAR IN V.O. "MY DEAR LEE - YES, YES, 37
THAT IS KUBLAI KHAN'S IDIOGRAM! WHAT, WHAT, WHAT ARE YOU
ONTO? BE SURE TO GIVE THE SMITHSONIAN FIRST DIBS!!!"

Lee sits back, astonished, and deletes the email.

38 INT. LEE'S BATHROOM IN BANGKOK - DAY 38

Shaving lather covers Lee's face as he stands before a mirror holding a razor when the PHONE RINGS. He turns the speakerphone on.

LEE

Hello?

BORIS (V.O.)

Oy! I am back in Bangkok.

Lee sets the razor down and wipes excess lather away.

LEE

Hold on, I was just shaving--

BORIS (V.O.)

Ai yai yai! I hope you did not shave!

LEE

Well, no, not yet. Why?

BORIS (V.O.)

Taliban and Afghan men wear beards!
We need to blend in!

LEE

Of course, what was I thinking?
Boris, Ebony's offered to fly--

BORIS (V.O.)

Da, I know, she call me. We meet at 6:00pm at Oriental Hotel.

39

INT. CACTUS JACK'S BAR, BANGKOK - DAY

39

Lee walks in. The bar is empty of patrons but for the two drunks Somchai almost ran over, drinking *Carlsbergs*. Cactus Jack is sitting in a banquette with MEOW who sits by the aisle. Lee hesitates, then sits across from her.

CACTUS JACK

Well, North Dakota Jones, it's not like you to be this late.

LEE

Dammit, I wish you wouldn't call me that.

CACTUS JACK

Late? Well you are.

LEE

Okay, so where is he?

CACTUS JACK

He? Who?

Lee fidgets. He looks at Meow who is sipping an orange juice. She is beautiful. No make up. She doesn't need it.

LEE

Dammit Cactus. You told me you found me a goddammed bodyguard.

CACTUS JACK

Please let me introduce you to your goddammed bodyguard, JEEN LY. Her nickname is Meow.

LEE

You gotta be kidding. Maybe you didn't believe me when I told you how serious this is. I need muscle.

MEOW

(bemused smile)

I'm pleased to meet you Lee. You want muscle? Would you care to arm wrestle for 1,000 baht?

She says it loud enough that the two drunks look up.

LEE

I am not arm wrestling a woman.

CACTUS JACK
Whazzamatter? Afraid you'll lose?

Meow places her elbow on the bar, hand open. The tourists turn towards them eating popcorn, intrigued.

LEE
Come on, this is ridiculous.

Cactus' Cheshire cat smile returns.

CACTUS JACK
Here's the bet Lee: you win, I find someone else. Kitten wins, you have a bodyguard.

LEE
...It might be the only way to get this crap over.

Lee readies his arm and anchors his feet apart.

LEE (CONT'D)
Ladies first.

MEOW
No, please, give it your best.

Lee rolls his eyes and applies torque. Meow smiles and SNAPS her foot into Lee's crotch. Lee GASPS and his arm goes limp. Meow grabs Lee's thumb and twists his arm back sending him crashing to the floor. Lee curls up GROANING, holding his aching nuts. The tourists APPLAUD.

LEE
That was cheating!

Meow studies Lee with bemusement as Cactus Jack's Cheshire cat smile broadens. Cactus takes a sip of his *Singha* beer. Lee crawls back into the booth.

CACTUS JACK
Do you want someone who plays by the rules and loses, or do you want someone who wins? No rules. And them's the rules in the game these Arabs are playing.

LEE
Look, Cactus, I grant that was a neat trick but with all due respect she can't weigh over 120 pounds.

CACTUS JACK

Take it from a pro, a hulk won't work. He'll be spotted immediately. It'll make the bad guys careful, invisible. However, they won't suspect little kitten here and they'll be less cautious, easier to spot. Then you got them.

MEOW

I have to go to the Ladies room.

Meow loops her purse over her shoulder and strolls languidly the length of the bar. Lee's, Cactus' and the tourist' eyes lock on Meow's proud, pert, protruding posterior.

CACTUS JACK

I see you like her. Knew you would.

Lee turns to Cactus Jack while still holding his nuts.

LEE

Look Cactus, we're talking blood and guts here. My blood and guts. This field trip's to Afghanistan.

CACTUS JACK

Good. She loves travelling. Lemme tell you about her. She's Hmong, but brought up in California.

LEE

Hmong?

CACTUS JACK

I thought that'd interest you. Meow is my god-daughter and the top bodyguard in Hollywood. When I worked security in Lost Angels, I taught her everything I know, including firearms. Don't worry, she's armed.

(chuckles)

She's also picked up the Hollywood bug. Wants to write adventure-thriller screenplays and who better to hook her up with for background than North Dakota Jones himself. Okay, okay, don't say it.

Meow returns.

MEOW

Well? Do I get the gig?

LEE

Seems like I lost the bet unfair
and un-square.

MEOW

Good. When do I start?

LEE

Right now. I've got a meeting
tonight, but I want you in the far
background. Where's your gear?

Meow picks up a carry-on bag and a computer case.

40

EXT. ORIENTAL HOTEL TERRACE - BANGKOK - SUNSET

40

Boris and Lee sit at a table on the pool terrace overlooking the Chao Praya River. Boris is peeling garlic cloves. Meow is some distance away. A WAITER brings drinks and also sets down a vase with orchids with a TINY TRANSMITTER inside. In deep background watching is Gold Teeth.

BORIS

I'm sort of sorry to hear about
Soon, but Lee, woman bodyguard?

LEE

Yes, well, we'll talk about it
later Boris. Here comes Ebony. Do
me a favor. When I tell her about
my recent problems and that I have
a bodyguard, don't mention that
it's Meow. I'm embarrassed enough.

Ebony, dripping wet, walks up and gives Boris a hug.

BORIS

Is nothing like beautiful wet
woman!

EBONY

Boris, you're incorrigible.

They laugh. A boat passes carrying THAI YOUNG PEOPLE squirting water at each other with plastic water rifles.

EBONY (CONT'D)

Songkran! I had forgotten that the water festival starts today! I can't wait to hear more about your Afghanistan adventure. I can get you on our flight to Kandahar tomorrow.

BORIS

Lee, I phoned ahead to have bodyguards meet us.

LEE

Good, thanks. Kandahar, home of the Taliban and Al-Qaeda. It'll be a relief to be somewhere safe from murderous Muslims. Thanks for the drink.

When they disperse the waiter retrieves the vase.

41 INT. LEE RIVER'S HOUSE IN BANGKOK - NIGHT

41

Meow strolls around Lee's living room admiring the artifacts.

MEOW

Lee, your home is fascinating!

She picks up a small, primitive terracotta statuette.

LEE

I save the best piece from every expedition for myself. That one's from Anuradhapura in Sri Lanka. It's 2,000 years old.

MEOW

How can you tell it's not a fake.

Lee grins and picks up another.

LEE

This one is an instant antique, fake, but I'll bet you can't tell them apart. Here, give me that.

He DIPS them both in a fish tank. Once the same hue, now one is notably darker.

LEE (CONT'D)

See the difference. The new one is much more porous, absorbs more water, and becomes darker. The old is hard as stone, the new soft. One of the tricks of the trade.

MEOW

Neat!

Noticing Hmong bags, she changes subjects.

MEOW (CONT'D)

Hmong bags! I just love the embroidery! They're so familiar to me!

LEE

Cactus told me you're Hmong. I just came back from an expedition among them. Love the people. Would you like it?

MEOW

Would I? I'll treasure it! Thanks!

LEE

It's my pleasure. Meow, tomorrow morning we leave for the airport. Cactus says you have a gun. How will you get it past airport security?

Meow shows Lee her old fashioned clunky laptop.

MEOW

In the movie biz we were often on foreign locations. Uncle Jack had this modified.

Meow pinches the forward corners. The computer opens like a suitcase. The bulky hard drive and motherboard has been replaced by modern hardware, leaving room for a Glock 26.

MEOW (CONT'D)

For the x-ray machines, lead sheathing was used to disguise the pistol as the original drives.

Meow clicks the case shut and looks coyly at Lee.

MEOW (CONT'D)

I've shown you mine. Now it's your turn to show me yours.

Lee laughs as he pulls his Walther from his pocket.

MEOW (CONT'D)

It's a bit on the small size but they say that size isn't everything. Uncle Jack says you've had a lot of practice.

LEE

I've taken a few shots.

MEOW

I'll bet you have...so, where are we flying tomorrow?

LEE

To the Desert of Death in Helmand Province in Afghanistan. That frighten you?

MEOW

No, should it? Why there?

LEE

An incredible find has been made. Let me tell you about it....

42 EXT./INT. SOMCHAI'S TUK-TUK - DAY

42

Somchai negotiates the tuk-tuk on a CROWDED festive street. Meow and Lee are in the back with the luggage. The tuk-tuk isn't getting anywhere fast because of Bangkok traffic.

MEOW

Songkran clogs Bangkok traffic even worse, if that's possible!

LEE

It's going to get messy. Roll down the plastic sheets.

Somchai turns onto a *soi*, a small side street, by the river to try to avoid the jam only to be faced by CELEBRANTS firing water cannons. They're HIT with pails of water and talc. The wiper only smears the milky mess.

MEOW

I don't like this.

Lee looks out the rear window. Forty paces behind and walking briskly toward his side of the tuk-tuk is an Arab. Lee slips out his Walther.

MEOW (CONT'D)

I see him too.

Meow slips her laptop out of the Hmong bag and grabs her Glock. Somchai's eyes widen when he sees both holding pistols. The Arab reaches inside his shirt and pulls out an Uzi. He makes no attempt to hide it because most of the *Songkranites* are toting water guns. Somchai looks back at the quickly approaching - pockmarked - Arab.

SOMCHAI

Same same Arab I hit with baseball bat!

Somchai STEPS on the accelerator, HAMMERS the brakes, and STALLS the engine as TWO LAUGHING CHILDREN with water pistols run in front. Somchai HONKS the horn,

LEE

Christ! There's TWO more ahead!

One is the Arab from the Saigon ambush, now in *galabria*. The second hurrying towards them barks an order we cannot hear. It's Gold Teeth. They raise Uzis.

MEOW

I'll zap them. You take care of the one behind us, Lee.

Meow, hidden by the swirling crowd, jumps out of the tuk-tuk. Lee TRIES TO WRACK the slide back on his Walther but it stovepipes.

LEE

Dammit! My gun's jammed!

Lee glances back. Ahead, the two assailants have broken into a trot and are shouldering their way through the crowd. Meow locks into a combat stance when a pail of water HITS her on the side of the head. They spot her and stop, their weapons pointing towards them. Suddenly there is a MAELSTROM OF DEATH as Somchai and Lee duck the bullets that BLOW OUT the windshield. Meow's Glock DISCHARGES TWO times rapidly. A red spot appears on Saigon's forehead and he collapses, but Gold Teeth turns and escapes. PEOPLE run helter-skelter, blocking Meow from popping off another round. Pockface races to the side of the tuk-tuk, his weapon in both hands. Meow is knocked over by a SCREAMING WOMAN with a CHILD in her arms. The Glock slips from her grip.

Pockface SKIDS to a stop and is level with the back-seat of the tuk-tuk. Lee manages TO GET THE WALTHER'S SLIDE INTO POSITION before a SHORT BURST of sub-machine gun fire goes off. Pockface's body twists and CRASHES across a soup vendor's cart where he lays spread-eagled. Meow retrieves her Glock and looks up in shock.

No one knows who fired the unexpected, lifesaving burst!

LEE (CONT'D)

The shots came from behind the tuk-tuk!

He jumps out and scans the *soi*. Wet, panicking people are running everywhere which way in terror. Lee runs down the *soi*.

MEOW

Wait!

He stops by nearby shell casings. They're by a path to the nearby river. Meow catches up.

MEOW (CONT'D)

Don't ever do that again! Leave my side!

LEE

This is the only escape route!

They run to the end of a short wharf to see a longtail boat ROARING away.

MEOW

Let's get out of here.

They race to where Somchai has just STARTED the tuk-tuk. Lee yanks a pouch from around Pockface's neck. SIRENS WAIL in the distance as they ROAR away.

43

EXT./INT. THE TUK-TUK ON A LESS CROWDED STREET - DAY

43

Lee rifles through Pockface's pouch. He looks at a passport. Somchai SPEEDS UP an on-ramp to an overhead motorway.

MEOW

This is getting more bizarre. Now someone is assassinating the assassins! You have a Guardian Angel.

LEE

His passport states Pockface is Ali
Mohammed Salim - a Turk! He looks
more like Saudi to me.

Lee raises a corner of the picture, then RIPS it right off.

LEE (CONT'D)

This thing's a phony!

They pass an airport sign and slow for a toll booth.

MEOW

Maybe this has something to do
with your trip to Afghanistan.

LEE

Can't be. This started before I
even knew I was going. And no one's
going to kill anyone for
antiquities not in hand, no matter
how valuable they are. There's got
to be another explanation.

As the tuk-tuk comes to a stop, an elephant behind a 55
gallon drum of water SPRAYS the tuk-tuk.

44

EXT. BANGKOK'S INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

44

The dripping wet tuk-tuk SCREECHES to a halt at the departure
area where Boris stands waving his RED RUSSIAN PASSPORT.
Ebony, with THREE FILM CREW who handle CNN pelican cases.

EBONY

Well! Looks like you were caught up
in *Songkran*!

Lee slips Somchai his Walther and baht as Meow gets out and
smiles at Ebony. Ebony is confused at seeing Meow and turns
to Lee.

LEE

Hi, Ebony, uh, please meet Meow my,
uh, bodyguard.

Ebony makes a "you gotta be kidding me look." Somchai ROARS
off as Meow extends her hand.

MEOW

Pleased to meet you Miss Whyte. I'm
a big fan.

EBONY

Thank you. You're
Lee's...bodyguard? Really?

MEOW

Cactus Jack recommended me.

EBONY

I guess that's good enough for me.
The plane's ready. Oh, Boris, no
garlic and keep that other aromatic
problem of yours in check, okay?

EXT./INT. LEAR IN FLIGHT - DAY

Boris sneaks a garlic clove as he and Lee play chess. Lee
wiggles a loose piece, his white knight.

LEE

I thought your Russian buddy Sergei
fixed this? This thing leans like
Lee Marvin's horse in *Cat Ballou*.

Boris frowns and angrily pops another garlic.

The Lear enters Afghani air and lands in Kandahar. (All this
could be done with a combination of cgi/animation, etc., over
a map of the area.)

46

EXT. FRONT OF KANDAHAR AIRPORT - DAY

46

MILITARY are everywhere. A 1956 Morris Minor awaits. Standing
next to it are a turbaned, bearded GEEZER and a TEENAGER
holding a sign. Lee and Boris (in a false beard), dressed
like Afghans, and Meow, wearing a blue *burqa*, walk out of the
airport. The Morris is the lone civilian vehicle.

LEE

Boris, I thought you phoned Afghan
Hash to have bodyguards meet us?

Boris reads the sign: it has his name on it. He speaks in
Afghani to the pair. The ancient Afghan nods.

BORIS

Ai-yai-yai, this is it! This is
Hasheem's grandfather FREDI ALI
RASLUDDIN and nephew AZIZ.

Lee rolls his eyes.

47

EXT. MORRIS MINOR - KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN - DAY

47

Squeezed in the back seat, Lee (with Meow on his lap) and Boris listen as the boy driving SPEAKS to the elder in the front passenger seat. An AK-47 is between them. Fredi looks out the rearview window. Boris reaches for his comfort food.

LEE

I hope they know what they're doing. And I didn't know you spoke Afghani, Boris.

BORIS

I was nine years in Afghanistan during Russian occupation. Is actually colloquial *Dari*, Afghan dialect of *Farsi* - and I am rusty.

They near a CROWDED MARKET where traffic increases. Fredi looks back again and BARKS at Aziz and the car pulls over. WESTERN TROOPS warily study LOCALS. Meow twists to see out the rear window while Boris and Lee wonder what's going on. Fredi BARKS again and Aziz pulls back into traffic.

LEE

What the hell's that all about?

The car's side windows are fitted with curtains to keep the desert sun out. Lee draws them aside as they bounce through downtown Kandahar. Fredi HISSES and SNAPS the curtain shut.

LEE (CONT'D)

What did Friendly Fred say, Boris?

BORIS

Don't show yourself. Our beards and disguises only do so much not to draw attention. Kandahar is Taliban stronghold. Americans and Russians not welcome.

Aziz stops again, Fredi looks back, BARKS again, and Aziz pulls back into traffic once more.

LEE

Then why is he parading us down Main Street? And stopping and starting?

BORIS

Is looking for someone following - and he found them!

MEOW

Both times we stopped, a truck
behind us did the same.

Lee twists back, cramping his neck.

LEE

Which one? There's a herd of them.

Meow slips her computer case out and POPS it open.

MEOW

The one that looks like it was hit
by a gang of LA graffiti artists.

A few car lengths back is the front of a truck covered in swirling colors, chrome and Arabic writing. THREE MEN can be seen through the glare of the windshield. Boris blinks as he notices Meow's Glock. Fredi gestures to Aziz to turn onto a quieter street.

MEOW (CONT'D)

It's following us. No mistake.

Meow slips out of her *burqa* and SNAPS the slide back on the Glock. Fredi turns and looks at Meow's weapon with surprise, then at Lee who shrugs, no weapon. Aziz eases around another corner onto a deserted street of bombed out warehouses. The truck speeds up. Boris drops his garlic.

LEE

He's leaving us totally exposed!
It's crazy to go in here!

BORIS

Yob tvoyu mat!

INSERT SUBTITLE: (Fuck your mother!)

And he FARTS. Lee angrily throw back the blind and drops the window, letting air in.

LEE

Jesus Boris! Not now!

BORIS

Sorry! Condition always worse when
I'm excited or nervous!

Lee grabs the AK-47 and YANKS back the bolt. The truck rapidly closes.

LEE

They're going to nail us!

As the truck bears down on them the RATTLE of Kalashnikovs fills the air. FIVE SHOOTERS appear, standing in the box. Lee, Meow and Boris duck as the back window SHATTERS. Lee and Meow FIRE out the back window. The truck takes evasive action, falls back, but continues following.

Aziz swerves into the open door of a long, narrow warehouse. Abandoned fuel barrels and crates decorate one side of the darkened interior. Bursting out the other open end, Aziz wheels the car ninety degrees to the left, SLAMS on the brakes and GRINDS the gears in reverse. All three back seat passengers are thrown forward as the car backs up in JERKING motions until they're T-boned at the end of the warehouse tunnel. Killing the engine, Aziz jumps out and crouches behind the car.

LEE (CONT'D)

Whattthehellareyoudoing Aziz!?

Meow, Lee and Boris bail also and take cover behind the car. Fredi, however, sits unperturbed, presenting himself as a target. Meow holds the Glock in both hands, steadying it on the hood. The van wheels into the warehouse and speeds up. It bristles with AK-47s.

LEE (CONT'D)

We're fucked--

Lee's words are interrupted by a LONG BARRAGE of automatic weapon fire, the sound BOOMING in the cavernous warehouse. The truck veers and crashes. A HALF DOZEN FIGURES appear out of hiding inside the warehouse.

BORIS

Is ambush!

The armed men run to the entrance where a four-passenger Toyota pickup ROARS up and they pile in. Aziz jumps behind the wheel of the Morris, grinning.

AZIZ

Like Hollywood action movie, eh!

Fredi SHOUTS something while impatiently motioning everyone to get back into the car.

LEE

I have to find out who they were!

Lee runs into the warehouse, Meow behind him. Boris follows reluctantly.

BORIS
Army will soon be here!

Eight bodies litter the truck.

LEE
AK air-conditioning. We must be quick. Why are these damned Arabs after me?

Fredi FRANTICALLY SHOUTS at them as Lee opens the side door and a body slips to the ground, its face upturned.

BORIS
Nyet, Lee. Afghans not Arab. This one is Pashtun. They have strong faces. Look at Mongolian features. Those are Hazaran - descendents of Genghis Khan. They Afghans too.

LEE
Shit, now we have another group wanting my balls on a stick!

MEOW
And they knew you were flying here.

Boris and Lee search the pockets.

BORIS
Is nothing! Not even money!

LEE
Pros. This time they left no clues.

48 EXT. HASHEEM'S COMPOUND - NIGHT

48

Wing-doors spread and they drive into a compound, followed by the Toyota. ARMED AFGHANS watch as the bodyguards tumble out of their vehicle. Our gang unwinds out of the Morris.

Approximately 60 PEOPLE, mainly women wearing *burgas*, are squatted in the large enclosure with a square, featureless main dwelling. They hold framed pictures and an identical red book. A MONGREL SNIFFS at Lee's leg, then wanders away.

LEE
Looks like we're crashing a very boring garden party.

MEOW

Check out the GUY tied to the tree. By the guard with the AK.

LEE

Handsome devil, like an Afghan Brad Pitt. I wonder what he did?

BORIS

Hasheem!

Hasheem, a charismatic neatly but eccentrically dressed, strides from the building and up to Boris grinning. Under an arm is a framed picture and a similar book. Shadowing him is a LARGE, MENACING FIGURE. In his paw he holds a commando version of the AK-47, with a folding wire stock and a banana clip the size of an elephant's erection.

HASHEEM

Boris Anklovitch!

They peck the air beside each other's ear in the Afghan greeting ritual. Hasheem repeats the elaborate greeting with Fredi and SAYS SOMETHING. Fredi enters the building. Then Hasheem repeats the ritual with an awkward Lee.

HASHEEM (CONT'D)

Mr. Rivers, it is my pleasure to welcome you to my beautiful country. My dear old friend Boris tells me wonderful things about you, that you are the greatest collector for museums in the world.

LEE

His exaggeration is very kind, and please call me Lee.

HASHEEM

Thank you Mr. Rivers. I'm sorry to turn to business so soon but I have a pressing matter and time is short. Boris assures me that you can sell our finds for ten million dollars each?

LEE

Well, I do have to see them first.

HASHEEM

Of course. Please allow me to introduce you to MASUD, in charge of my security.

The menacing figure glares at Lee. Lee sticks out his hand.

LEE
Glad to meet you.

Masud doesn't respond.

HASHEEM
He doesn't speak English.

At a nod from Hasheem Masud motions to THREE BODYGUARDS, who leave their Kalashnikovs and hurry into the building.

LEE
I'd like to introduce you to my
body...uh...Meow.

A puzzled expression passes over Hasheem.

MEOW
It's a pleasure to meet you, Mr.
Hasheem.

HASHEEM
American, Miss Meow? How do you do?

MEOW
Fine, thank you. And yes.

HASHEEM
Boris didn't inform me that a
female character would be written
in. May I ask what your role is?

The phrase is puzzling but Meow steps closer to Lee and smiles.

MEOW
We're together.

HASHEEM
Ah! Mrs. Rivers.

LEE
Uh, she doesn't mean--

Hasheem doesn't see Meow grip Lee's back because his attention is diverted by a guard who speaks to him in a low, respectful voice. Hasheem's expression grows grave.

HASHEEM

Excuse me. An unpleasant sub-plot developed while we waited for grandfather. Please have a seat.

Our trio sit on a bench by the house facing the garden and are served tea in tiny glasses by a SERVANT. Boris shells garlic cloves and pops them back.

LEE

I'll straighten him out later,
Meow.

MEOW

No. Let him think we're married. I can keep a close eye on you that way.

LEE

Sounds just like marriage all right....

Hasheem faces the multitude and raises his red book and framed picture. The assembly imitates his action and forms a semi-circle around the prisoner with Hasheem at the open end.

MEOW

It looks like Hasheem's sidebar, as he calls it, has to do with Brad.

Brad stands, looking like a trapped animal. From the building appears Fredi carrying a ten-inch scimitar in a ladle of smoking charcoal. Brad BEGS for mercy.

MEOW (CONT'D)

What's going on? Boris?

BORIS

I hope he is not thief. I saw this once in Kabul. They chopped his hand off.

Lee hurries to Hasheem's side.

LEE

What the hell's going on?

Hasheem's expression tells him that his interruption is inappropriate.

HASHEEM

My people are central characters in the Book.

(MORE)

HASHEEM (CONT'D)

This man tried to corrupt the theme by committing adultery with a widow. He is to be written out of the plot. Now, please leave.

Lee's speechless. With Masud glaring, Lee retreats to the bench and repeats what he was told.

BORIS

Ai-yai-yai - I think is worse than just hand!

Brad's PLEADINGS ESCALATE as the bodyguards spread-eagle him. Fredi tugs Brad's pantaloons down.

MEOW

Are they going to do what I think!

LEE

Oh, Christ, this is un-fucking-believable.

Fredi pinches the end of Brad's uncircumcised dick, stretching it to the snapping point. The blade flashes. A HORRIBLE SCREAM rips from him. Boris drops his garlic.

LEE (CONT'D)

Surely Boris, this isn't part of Islamic law, is it?

BORIS

Wh...who knows. Muslims, like Christians, make up rules as they go and claim (**what ?**) is from their holy books!

Fredi stands holding high the blood-dripping appendage, then tosses it to the mongrel. Picking it up, the dog trots away, tail wagging, to a spot under a tree where it flops down.

LEE

Oh, my gawd, now what are they doing?

Another BLOOD-CURDLING SCREAM is heard as Fredi cauterizes the wound with the coals. Brad is yanked to his feet, his pantaloons are hitched up, and he is dragged to the gate where he is thrown out. The crowd follows him out, and as they pass Hasheem - raising his red book and photograph - they raise their own. These photos of family members are slipped under their clothing as they pass through the gate.

LEE (CONT'D)

This guy's a camel short a herd.

BORIS

Is not Hasheem that I know before!
The murder of his family has pushed
him over edge.

LEE

What the hell's his cult all about?

BORIS

He sent me book. They believe end
of world will start here, in
Afghanistan, but that they are
chosen ones who will survive and be
reunited with their tragically
departed family. It is they who
will give birth to a happy new
world. Everything is preordained.

MEOW

It gives the desperate hope.

As the gates close behind the last of the congregation,
Hasheem, radiating transcendently, rejoins them.

LEE

Aren't you concerned that he might
betray you? Especially your find?

HASHEEM

He knows nothing.

MEOW

What happened to the women he was
involved with?

HASHEEM

They too had brought corruption.
They were stoned.

MEOW

To death?

HASHEEM

Of course.

Hasheem smiles hospitably as they look at him incredulously.

HASHEEM (CONT'D)

Please, come in. I'm sure you're
hungry after your long journey.
We'll have lunch.

49 INT. HASHEEM'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

49

Lee, Meow and Boris sit on cushions on a tattered Persian carpet around a knee-high table in the featureless room. A television is to one side. Afghan food is on the table.

HASHEEM

Please, help yourself.

No one makes a move. Hasheem eats a dumpling.

HASHEEM (CONT'D)

Mr. Rivers, Boris informs me you have confirmed the statues are related to the one in Samuel Coleridge's great poem, correct?

LEE

You mean *Kublai Khan*? Who wrote it under the influence of opium? Yes.

HASHEEM

We must be extremely secretive. This is land of the Great Game. Spies are everywhere. There have been no leaks about our venture from this end. However, grandfather informs me you were welcomed upon arrival.

LEE

Seems I brought unwanted baggage.

HASHEEM

In any case, they won't bother us again. Excuse me, I'm keeping up with a breaking story on CNN.

Hasheem CLICKS the TV remote and it fires up to reveal Ebony Whyte doing a stand-up.

50 EXT. IN FRONT OF A GOVERNMENT BUILDING IN KANDAHAR - DAY 50

EBONY

A top secret summit meeting of all Islamic national leaders, moderate and extremist, is in progress in Mecca fueling intense speculation as to what brings such sworn enemies to the table. In other news-

51 INT. HASHEEM'S LIVING ROOM DAY

51

The MUEZZIN'S CALL to prayer from a distorting loudspeaker interrupts. Hasheem flicks the TV off.

HASHEEM

You should eat and rest. There's a well for bathing. It is written that we leave at midnight.

Hasheem exits Meow boots her computer.

MEOW

Hasheem's weird cult is grist for a screenplay. I have to jot down notes about this.

BORIS

Screenplay?

LEE

Wants a screenplay to flog like everyone else. Then, when she's rich and famous, she can hire us as bodyguards.

52 EXT./INT. AFGHAN DESERT - DAWN

52

Two vehicles GEAR DOWN down into a large depression. Silhouette of SENTRIES show against the pre-dawn light. Aziz drives with Hasheem next to him, the trio in the back. Below is a large camel caravan, in the final stages of loading.

LEE

We're going by...camel?

HASHEEM

Yes, these are *Kochis* - nomads. Traders.

As they reach them, they disembark. The second vehicle has Hasheem's bodyguards and Masud. They position themselves near Hasheem. Zemar, introduced in the opening scene, strides to meet them and warmly carries on the elaborate Afghan greeting with Hasheem.

HASHEEM (CONT'D)

This is Zemar who owns the caravan and my fifth cousin. It was he who stumbled on the statues while digging a cache.

In the bg burdened camels COMPLAIN when their riders WHACK them to their feet with sticks. WOMEN with gold jewelry dripping from noses and ears and wearing brightly colored dresses scurry about. Meow's *burqa* flies off.

MEOW

The women aren't in *burqas*!

HASHEEM

They're impractical here. I disapprove of them anyway. They're only worn in our compound to protect identities. You are welcome to be yourself.

MEOW

Good, because I can't do my job looking like Casper the ghost.

HASHEEM

Job?

She looks helplessly at Lee who looks stonefaced. Hasheem looks to Boris questioningly.

BORIS

Uh, she is Lee's bodyguard.

HASHEEM

Mr. Rivers, is this true?

Lee closes his eyes and nods. Hasheem LAUGHS AND SAYS SOMETHING to Zemar and the others. They smirk.

LEE

Thanks Boris. Now everyone and their fucking camel knows.

BORIS

(flustered)

You told me just not to tell Ebony.

The camels SET UP A CLAMOR. Zemar indicates to follow him. Meow gets the cleanest and smallest camel. She hops on athletically. Boris GRUNTS awkwardly onto a larger model. Lee walks to the last camel when a hand grips his arm. Zemar uncinches the saddle, sweeps it onto his shoulder, and indicates to Lee to follow. 100 yards into the desert a lone camel is hobbled by a lone MAHOUT. The camel is mangy and has the blackest teeth ever seen. It's also so ornery that even Zemar has trouble saddling it up. Grinning, he offers the saddle to Lee.

LEE
 Jesus! This thing stinks worse
 than one of Boris' garlic farts.

Barely avoiding the camel's teeth, Lee clammers atop the
 BELLOWING beast. The *mahout* throws him the rein.

LEE (CONT'D)
 Thanks a lot assholes! Come on,
 Orc. Gitty-up.

Orc gallops back to join the herd with Lee hanging on for
 dear life. Meow and Boris' camels are not interested in
 getting near Orc. Zemar SHOUTS something as he rises into the
 air atop a splendid Rolls Royce of a camel. The bodyguards
 LAUGH and even Masud, who never smiles, grins.

LEE (CONT'D)
 What did the bastard say, Boris?

BORIS
 Uh, says man who has woman protect
 him is not man, but your camel will
 make one out of you.

The caravan moves forward in the dawn light while their
 vehicles return to Kandahar.

53 EXT. AFGHAN DESERT - DAY

53

Tufts of delicate spring flowers are scattered over the
 terrain. SEVERAL WOMEN, followed by CHILDREN, pick them. Meow
 waves and they smile, waving back.

MEOW
 These Kochi are colorful people.

One of the children runs up with a bouquet for Meow.
 Delighted, she smells it.

MEOW (CONT'D)
 It's amazing how strong the scent
 is. I didn't expect a desert to be
 so fragrant.

Lee's eyes wander towards the bulging saddle-backs weighing
 down most of the camels. He catches Boris' eyes and gestures
 towards the cargo carried by the camel ahead of them.

LEE
 Hey Big Mouth, are they carrying
 what I think?

Boris nods, and idly shucks another garlic clove.

MEOW

What are you two talking about?

Lee whacks Orc's neck as he tries to take a chunk out of Meow's camel when it draws too close.

LEE

It appears that we've joined an opium caravan. That's why the desert smells so sweet.

MEOW

You're kidding! There must be tons of it!

LEE

I'll bet that explains the cache Zemar was digging when he discovered the statues.

BORIS

They call it *tariak*. I wrote article for TASS once. Is planted in November and harvested in April. Then smuggled into Pakistan and Iran for refining. Is smart of Hasheem to smuggle us in this way. Surveillance airplanes overfly desert. Vehicles draw suspicion but caravans are part of landscape.

The scene jettisons up at SUPER SPEED to the sky where TWO MIRAGE JETS WITH AFGHAN COLORS AND PILOTS fly high overhead.

54

EXT./INT. MIRAGE FIGHTERS - DAY

54

The pilots speak *Farsi* and with subtitles.

PILOT 1

Probably an opium caravan. I wouldn't be surprised if it's your camel humping relatives from Herat.

PILOT 2 (V.O.)

(over the radio)
Better than stinking goat bangers like your ancestors Mohammed.

PILOT 1

We'll mark their position in case
you get the urge to hump a humper.

He scribbles on a pad and the jets fly up, up and away.

55 EXT. AFGHAN DESERT - DAY

55

The caravan plods through a mostly flat, featureless landscape as the sun begins its descent. Meow prompts her camel near Lee's, which riles Orc. He tries to buck Lee but he WHACKS it into submission, gaining respect from the *Kuchi*.

MEOW

Sorry about that.

(beat)

I don't feel I'm earning my pay
Lee. You've got bodyguards for your
bodyguard.

LEE

Goddam that Russian garlic eating,
farting fuck.

100 yards off and parallel is Boris with a rock pick, keeping pace. He stoops to examine something on the ground.

MEOW

Right now this is more like a
romantic adventure. The Desert
Song!

LEE

Our friends here think it's more of
a romantic comedy. You, as my
bodyguard.

The caravan pulls up and they start pitching camp.

56 EXT. CAMPSITE IN THE AFGHAN DESERT - EVENING

56

The trio sit around a camel-dung fire surrounded by curious children while women clean and add camel chips to the fire. Boris extracts his rock pick and a handful of pot-shards from his Hmong bag. Meow is delighted.

MEOW

Boris, I saw you poking around in
the desert. This is so cool!

Boris grins and holds up a coin, green with age.

LEE
 (chuckling)
 That's typical Boris. Always
 artifact hunting. One of these
 day's he's going to get lost.

57 EXT. AFGHAN DESERT MONTAGE - DAY 57

A SEQUENCE of the trudging caravan; adult Muslims taking a prayer break, prostrate bodies facing the East; whilst Lee and Meow play with the children; Boris shows Meow more minor artifact finds; Lee and Meow share a joke; Lee pats Boris on the back; the caravan streams towards the sunset.

58 EXT. BEYOND THE PERIMETER OF THE CAMPSITE - NIGHT 58

From a distance, Lee and Meow watch the flicking campfires.

MEOW
 It's so beautiful. What a life you
 live. How did you get interested in
 collecting in the first place, Lee?

LEE
 I was raised in a small town in
 North Dakota. I started out ogling
 those bare breasted maidens in
National Geographic and then grew
 fascinated with the anthropological
 world they lived in. That fired my
 dream, to live the most interesting
 life I could.

MEOW
 And you're living that dream now.

Lee nods. Meow and Lee are comfortable together.

MEOW (CONT'D)
 I've always believed in following
 dreams too. If you don't, life
 would be a nightmare.

LEE
 Well, maybe just a bad dream. And
 you want to be a writer?

MEOW
 (looks uncomfortable)
 Something like that.

LEE

Hang onto it. Other people decide to be salesmen or whatever, but most just pinball through life. I'm just an ordinary guy who decided to live an adventurous life and went and did it.

Meow slips her arm into Lee's and shivers.

MEOW

Ordinary, yeah, right. Do you mind? It's getting chilly.

LEE

No. Not at all. I like it.

MEOW

Lee, I have to ask. Uncle Jack told me you quit smuggling antiquities for ethical reasons, but even with anthropology don't you feel that you're speeding the demise of these cultures by buying up their stuff for museums?

LEE

Hey, if it wasn't for people like me, memories of these highly creative cultures would be lost and forgotten. If you think the West was a steamroller in the twentieth century, watch out for this one.

The Milky Way pours across the sky.

LEE (CONT'D)

In a few shorts years, there won't be any more primitive cultures... Sri Lankan Devil Dancers, Golden Triangle hill-tribes, or those wonderfully wildly painted wild men in Borneo. These cultures are going extinct faster than any animals or plants we hear about. Saving their ethnology in museums for, well, antiquity is my modest legacy to these cultures I love.

MEOW

It's so good to hear it's not about money.

They stroll arm in arm towards the flicking campfires.

59 INT. GOAT HAIR TENT AFGHAN DESERT - NIGHT

59

Meow and Lee push aside the goat hair door and duck inside. Boris is SNORING in his section. Their light is a wick lamp.

LEE

The temperature is really dipping tonight.

They strip to their basics and crawl into their shared bedding. She blows out the lamp. A beat.

MEOW

It is sooo cold! Would you mind if I borrowed some of your body heat?

LEE

It's on tap. Well, I didn't mean it quite that way.

There's the RUSTLE of bedding, then silence. Another, longer beat. Then the RUSTLING starts again quietly, then gets LOUDER...a giggle...a whisper...a sigh...Boris' eyes open, he frowns, then rolls them, and goes back to sleep.

EXT. GOAT HAIR TENT AFGHAN DESERT - NIGHT

The full moon illuminates the quiet camp. A shooting star is followed by another...then another...until the sky is bathed with a meteorite shower. GIGGLES from the tent.

60 EXT. AFGHAN DESERT - DAY

60

CLOSE UP of Meow looking unhappy, sitting on her camel. Lee rides Orc beside her. Orc BELLOWS but Lee raises his stick threateningly and the beast settles down. The *Kuchi* nod to each other.

MEOW

I didn't mean to do what I, uh, we did last night.

LEE

What do you mean? It was survival. Two against the elements!

MEOW

You know what I mean. I can't believe that I slept with you. It was so unprofessional.

LEE

Hey, you took care of my body just fine last night! Keep it up. Keep it up. Or I guess it's me who should be doing that.

MEOW

(beginnings shy smile)
What do you mean, 'just fine?' Is that all?

The caravan ambles on. Boris and Hasheem ride at the front. Heat waves sashay.

61 EXT. AFGHAN DESERT - DUSK/DAY

61

Zemar raises his hand and the caravan halts. There's nothing but flat desert everywhere.

HASHEEM

We're here!

BORIS

We are? Zemar must have sense of direction like Australian aborigine.

HASHEEM

No, Boris, my friend, he has this.

He SPEAKS to Zemar who produces a GPS. His camel rocks to its knees. An excited Boris slips down from his. As Lee and Meow join them, Zemar walks about TAPPING his camel stick against the hard ground until he hits...a soft spot.

HASHEEM (CONT'D)

Here! In the morning we dig!

Zemar cocks his head in a southerly direction as we hear the RUMBLE of distant thunder. He SPEAKS RAPIDLY to Hasheem.

BORIS

Zemar thinks is bombs.

HASHEEM

Nonsense! Springtime's thunder and rains!

They look around nervously. We see the horizon's distant darkness and hear the RUMBLE again.

62

EXT. AFGHAN DESERT - DAY

62

AFGHAN

Halla!

His hoe has STRUCK something in a pit. Lee hurries out of his tent with his camera and SNAPS several shots. Hasheem beams as Boris jumps in with a hoe.

LEE

Jesus! Meow! Look at this!

A terracotta head topped with an officious hat appears. Then a Mongolian face with a severe expression.

LEE (CONT'D)

Boris! That's one of the officials
in your photographs!

Boris is so overwhelmed that he doesn't respond. He works feverishly to unearth more of the statue. Lee grabs a hoe.

MEOW

Lee, I can take photos for you. And
write the documentation.

LEE

Hey, you're making a real field
scientist.

He gives her his camera and she SHOOTs pictures.

LEE (CONT'D)

What's this!

A beautiful woman is unearthed. Then another.

LEE (CONT'D)

I can't believe it! The officials
must be the harem eunuchs! And
these must be Kublai Khan's harem!

MONTAGE of hoes, shovels and picks excitedly excavating statues of concubines, lined up in pairs. Hasheem beams.

63

EXT. EXCAVATION SITE AFGHAN DESERT - DAY

63

Boris and Lee brush off dirt and take a break. Meow has set up a camp table with her laptop. The camera is next to it.

LEE

There's twenty-four. That's enough.
God, look at their faces - each
represents an individual.

MEOW

(gripping his arm)
They're incredible Lee!

BORIS

Is beautiful! Even more detail than
terracotta warriors of Xi'an!

Hasheem, even Zemar, have broad smiles.

HASHEEM

Mr. Rivers, having seen them, does
ten million dollars each seem
reasonable?

LEE

It is not going to be a problem.

Hasheem smiles wider.

HASHEEM

You say 24 is enough?

LEE

These'll take care of most of the
world's major museums.

HASHEEM

Mr. Rivers, it is your job to
select the best. My men can
excavate more if necessary. There's
another pair emerging.

LEE

No need Hash. There's not a bad one
in the bunch.

Meow SHOOTs close ups of each concubine.

BORIS

These must have been his favorites since they're at front of line. He had 2,000 concubines!

LEE

Must have been nice to come home to after a hard day at the slaughter.

Meow LAUGHS. She focuses on the next concubine, but stops.

MEOW

My God! Look at this Chinese one. She looks exactly like Lucy Liu!

LEE

By God you're right!

HASHEEM

Mr. Rivers, you mentioned that 24 would take care of most of the museums. We can carry more.

BORIS

Is sure? These 24 must weigh over two tonnes. All camels are loaded down, *nyet*?

HASHEEM

These big Maya camels can handle a thousand kilos each. They have been carrying much less. They can carry them to Baluchistan, no problem.

MEOW

Baluchistan?

HASHEEM

It is part of Pakistan, bordering on the Arabian Sea. In summer, to cross it is certain death, but fortunately it is springtime. There we will meet trucks to haul the terracottas to Karachi.

LEE

And the opium?

HASHEEM

You're very observant, Mr. Rivers. The *tariak* will ride in separate trucks.

(MORE)

HASHEEM (CONT'D)

I know the destination of my cargo.
You, sir, are responsible for
yours.

LEE

Easy enough. I shipped a small
temple from Harappa to a museum in
New York several years ago, before
I got disgusted with myself.

BORIS

Is one of reasons I enlisted Lee!
He is best in world!

HASHEEM

You still haven't answered me about
excavating more, Mr. Rivers.

LEE

We don't want to glut the market.
Less is more, but if we found
Kublai Khan himself....

MEOW

Wow! Can you imagine the treasure
that must be buried with him!

64 EXT. AFGHAN DESERT CAMP - DAY 64

Everyone wakes to the SOUND of 2 Mirage jets strafing. Chaos
reins. SCREAMS as women and children are mowed down. Masud
throws a blanket off a Stinger missile launcher.

65 INT. TRIO'S TENT AFGHAN DESERT CAMP - DAY 65

Lee, Meow and Boris dress in a hurry as a missile EXPLODES 10
meters away. KRABOOM!

66 EXT. AFGHAN DESERT CAMP - DAY 66

They rush out of their tent to see Hasheem and Zemar and
others FIRING AK-47s at the jet, Meow sweeps up an AK and,
standing, let's off a burst which the Afghans note with
admiration. A wounded Masud tries to shoulder a Stinger.

MEOW

He's got a Stinger!

Lee runs to Masud, sweeps up the Stinger. He's unfamiliar
with it and clumsy but manages to fire.

We hear WHOOOOMP-BOOOM as the missile streaks after the departing jet. Hasheem points as the other Mirage banks around.

LEE

He's coming straight at us!

MEOW

Dive!!

Not seeing another rocket, hand-in-hand Meow and Lee jump into the excavation with the women and children and try to screen them. Boris dives in, and let's out a TERRIFIED FART.

LEE

Jesus Boris! Not now!

BORIS

Sorry! Always worse when I am excited or afraid!

POV of the Afghan pilot 2. He sees the missile streaming towards his mate's rear. His eyes go wide. In SUBTITLES.

ARAB PILOT 2 (V.O.)

Mohammed!

The Stinger shoots up the MIG's butt, giving it an EXPLOSIVE enema. The front tumbles before SLAMMING into the desert in a fireball. The oncoming plane veers away from the campsite and streaks away. Hasheem and the other Afghan men CHEER. Women rush to Masud, applying a bandage and sling.

MEOW

I don't believe these people! Death and destruction everywhere, and they're cheering like a Little League team who won the big game!

Dead and injured Afghans and camels are strewn about. They climb out of the hole. Lee strides through the CHEERING Afghans, all slapping Lee on the back, to Hasheem. Even Masud, still being cared for, cheers.

LEE

Hash, everything seems to be written for you. Why the hell were we attacked?

Hasheem sobers and pulls out an Iridium phone.

HASHEEM

Not everything is written. All great classics have challenges to meet and obstacles to overcome. To know what they are is to destroy the suspense. We only know we will triumph in the end!

Hasheem TAPS in a number. After a BRIEF EXCHANGE, he hangs up and has a FEW WORDS with Zemar before turning to Lee, Meow and Boris.

HASHEEM (CONT'D)

Our compound in Kandahar was raided by Al-Qaeda. They were tipped off that we are excavating for valuable antiquities...with Americans.

LEE

Our pal Al has jet fighters? Come on.

HASHEEM

Of course not, but they tipped off the Air Force about the opium, saying the profits were meant for them. We have spies too.

MEOW

Any idea who betrayed us?

HASHEEM

The young outsider who seduced our women. His role is larger in the plot than I imagined. He knew more than I thought. Isn't that exciting?

LEE

(sarcastically to Meow)
He shoulda known Pitt couldn't be trusted after *Thelma and Louise*. Or was that just a movie and not a book?

The air fills with MOANS. Masud joins them while the women attend to others. Lee turns to Hasheem.

LEE (CONT'D)

That fighter'll be back with his buddies and all over us like flies on camel shit. How far is the border?

HASHEEM

Due south 150 kilometers.

LEE

That'll take six days! We'd better dump the opium and statues and make a run for it.

HASHEEM

Absolutely not! Enough camels survived to carry both. We will split up, travel at night, and hunker down during the day to minimize shadows. It is written, we will triumph!

BORIS

Hasheem my friend, Lee is right. Without cargo we can make border in half time! Three days is very long and dangerous!

HASHEEM

Two terracottas to a camel with the *tariak*. That is final!

LEE

Jesus Christ, this is insane! We're sitting ducks!

MEOW

Hasheem! Let me use your phone. I know someone who might help.

Hasheem studies Meow for a beat then hands it to her.

LEE

Who are you calling?

MEOW

Uncle Jack.

LEE

Cactus? What the hell can he do?

Meow PUNCHES IN NUMBERS, then gives Lee the phone.

MEOW

I'm not sure, but he said to call if I got in trouble. Talk to him. Tell him where we are.

LEE
 ...Cactus, hi, it's me. Lee.

67 INT. CACTUS JACK'S BAR BANGKOK - DAY 67

A PARTY rages, and Dire Strait's *Money for Nothing* BLARES.

CACTUS JACK
 Well! North Dakota Jones!
 You back in town already? Come on
 over. The Air America guys are
 having a reunion.

68 EXT. AFGHAN DESERT - DAY 68

LEE
 We're in Afghanistan. Meow said to
 call you if she got into trouble.

69 INT. CACTUS JACK'S BAR, BANGKOK - DAY 69

CACTUS JACK
 What? You knocked my Kitten? Knew I
 shouldn't trust her with the likes
 of you. How far gone is she? Ten
 minutes?

70 EXT. AFGHAN DESERT - DAY, 70

LEE
 Cut the joking. We're in the Dasht-
 i-Margo, the Desert of Death. Hold
 on. Hash, what's our GPS position?

HASHEEM
 The site is secret!

LEE
 Give it to me goddammit! Start with
 the longitude.

Hasheem studies Lee for a beat, takes the GPS from Zemar, TELLS HIM the longitude, and as Lee repeats this into the phone, Hasheem SAYS SOMETHING to Masud. As Lee looks up for the latitude, Hasheem drops the GPS and Masud SMASHES it with the butt of his AK-47. Then Hasheem strides away.

LEE (CONT'D)

I can't fucking believe it! The whacko smashed the GPS! The only thing I can tell you is that we're travelling by camel due south.

CACTUS JACK (V.O.)

You know you're giving me a pretty tall fucking order, don't you?

LEE

Maybe some of those Air America guys might be up to a rescue mission, like the good ol' days?

71 INT. CACTUS JACK'S BAR, BANGKOK - DAY

71

CACTUS JACK

Ha! The shape this crew's in, they couldn't fly a fucking kite. I'll see what I can do, but no promises.

Cactus Jack hangs up and DRUMS his fingers.

MONTAGE over *Caravan* by The Ventures: two smaller caravans split up with Zemar leading one and Hasheem with the trio in the other. In Hasheem's each camel carries two statues and opium. They travel by night and sleep by day without pitching tents.

73 EXT. AFGHAN DESERT - DAY

73

As the sun rises, the caravan is set up for sleeping. Camels are hunkered down and spread out. Meow and Lee lie atop their bedding. Boris is already SNORING.

LEE

Hash, how far to the border now?

Hasheem nods to hills on the horizon.

HASHEEM

The Chagai Hills. Tomorrow night we arrive.

Hasheem GIVES ORDERS to his men as Lee drifts off.

74 EXT. BEAUTIFUL BEACH - LEE'S DREAM SEQUENCE - DAY 74

The sun-drenched sky is bright as Lee lies next to Meow. She caresses his hair. The ocean is calm and azure. The SOUND of Thai/Indian voices morph into Afghan voices. SQUAWKY NOISES from a box announce an event in an unrecognizable language. One VOICE rises above the rest in the cacophony.

MEOW

Lee! Boris! Wake up! Listen to this!

75 EXT. AFGHAN DESERT - DAY 75

Lee rises from his slumber and squints at the sun.

MEOW

It's Zemar. He's being attacked!

LEE

Wha...?

A SQUAWKY VOICE, Zemar's, issues from Hasheem's walkie-talkie, followed by a huge KABOOOOOM! Then only STATIC comes through. They hear the distant SOUND of a jet plane, then on the horizon fighters appears as specks. Hasheem is staggered to the point of going over the edge.

HASHEEM

Zemar...my cousin! No!

MEOW

It's a squadron!

LEE

They're high. Keep our shadows low. They may not see them.

They are all flat on their bellies like their camels. QUICK PAN UPWARDS to an AERIAL SHOT of their shadows, which are long and visible. The PAN continues IN FAST MOTION and becomes a PILOT'S POV. The squadron drops towards them.

LEE (CONT'D)

They're coming! Where's that Stinger? Hasheem!

HASHEEM

We...we only had one rocket. That's why we need money Mr. Rivers.

LEE
Jesus Christ!

HASHEEM
Mr. Rivers, you have faith in your prophet. You call his name in times of need. That is good.

LEE
(to Meow)
Christ, he's serious.

Hasheem stands watching the horizon without fear.

LEE (CONT'D)
Hash! Get down.

MEOW
Get behind Orc. He's the biggest protection we have.

BORIS
Is going to strafe!

HASHEEM
(arms spread)
Great heros meet opposition with bravely!

Masud forces a crazed Hasheem down behind a camel with him. Boris makes a "cuckoo" sign. The point fighter sweeps in low and OPENS UP. He knows what he's doing and kicks his foot pedals back and forth so that sand geysers kick up a sweeping motion that is going to obliterate them - but just as the geysers reach the edge of their encampment, they STOP! And the fighters streaks over, one by one, bank, and sweeps off in the direction of Kandahar Air Base. Lee is first to stand. They are stunned.

LEE
What the hell!

MEOW
They were ordered to call it off at the last moment. Your Guardian Angel is still on duty.

HASHEEM
(beaming)
There are many such surprising turning points in the Book of Hasheem. Now we will take a chance in daylight. Ready the camels!

The hastily loaded caravan forms for the slo-mo dash south.

MEOW
Wait! Listen!

A LONE DRONE trembles the still air. A windshield glints 300 feet off the ground, but to the south.

MEOW (CONT'D)
There!

BORIS
Is another plane!

Men beat their camels back to their knees and scramble behind them, SNAPPING AK bolts again. The trio crouch behind Orc.

LEE
It's prop driven.

The LOW DRONE grows louder. Masud raises his AK-47 with his good arm. Boris and Lee pick up rifles.

MEOW
Hey, don't shoot until we're sure
who it is!

A CATALINA PB-Y FLYING BOAT DRONES into view. Lee stands.

LEE
Huh? It can't be.

MEOW
It can't be what, Lee?

Lee sees Masud aiming.

LEE
Masud! No!

Lee throws his AK aside and runs towards Masud who either doesn't hear Lee or is ignoring him.

LEE (CONT'D)
Hash! Stop him! Stop everyone!
Don't shoot!! This isn't written
into your goddamned book of Hash!

Hasheem squats next to Masud and looks at Lee in confusion but motions for his followers to lower their AKs. The plane drifts down to 200 feet. Camels CLAMBER to their feet as it ROARS overhead.

Something tumbles from the plane, and everyone drops to the ground, except for Lee who runs over and picks up an empty can of Foster's beer.

LEE (CONT'D)
I can't fucking believe it!

The plane clumsily banks around and lands. As it taxis closer the pilot's window draws back and Dingo's mug grins out, before disappearing. The props WIND DOWN and Dingo steps down the Catalina's ladder and gives Lee a bear hug.

LEE (CONT'D)
I can't tell you how happy I am to see your ugly Aussie face. Does Cactus Jack have anything to do with you being here?

DINGO
Everything mate. He called us while we were in Quetta getting parts for the Catalina here.

MEOW
I knew Uncle Jack would come through!

DINGO's eyes widen as he checks Meow out.

LEE
We? Who's we?

DINGO
Huh? Oh yeah. I'm with Billy The Belgian. He had the lead on the parts.

Out of the Catalina steps Billy "dressed to kill" as usual. He COUGHS HARD as he struts towards them. On his hip is a SIG 226 and in his hand, an M4 assault rifle. Boris looks sick.

LEE
Dingo, Billy, this is Hasheem.

DINGO
G'day mate! Great name. Bet Lee's already calling you Hash. He's got a nickname for everyone. G'day, Fartnik. I've long had one for Boris. And who is this lovely lady?

LEE

Meow, this is Dingo, ostensibly my best friend. And this is Billy the Belgian. Billy, meet Meow.

BILLY THE BELGIAN

Eh bien! It is suitable name for a port-a-pussy.

Billy checks her out while twirling his mustache.

BILLY THE BELGIAN (CONT'D)

Nice porch and deck on this belly slapper. Which watering hole did you barfine her out of?

Meow's eyes narrow. Meow offers her hand. He accepts. An instant later Billy is sprawled in the dust staring at Meow's Glock. Meow slips her pistol under her belt. The Afghans LAUGH - but now hold Meow in esteem. Boris, who has been hanging back, hides a grin.

LEE

Meow isn't a rent-a-Thai you dumb semi-Frog fuck. She's my bodyguard.

DINGO

Your whaaaat, mate?

Billy jumps up and shakes the dust off. His face is as red as his beret. He fires a murderous glance at Meow, then struts away, preening, mustache twirling.

LEE

You heard me. You mess with her, you'll end up on your slimy ass again, only it'll be me doing it.

Lee is no longer embarrassed about Meow, but Dingo chuckles as he pulls out a cigarillo.

DINGO

Not a good idea either of you getting on Billy's shit list. Meow, Billy fancies himself the ultimate macho merc and doesn't handle humiliation well. He holds grudges longer than a Serb.

MEOW

If I'd known that, I would have kicked him in the balls so that he could hold them too.

DINGO

You're really something, Dragon Lady. It's a pleasure to meet you.
(sniffs the air)
Talking about chasing the dragon - that sweet smell? Is it what I think it is?

LEE

Yes, packing to cushion these statues in your plane. Let me tell you about them....

77 EXT. THE CATALINA - NIGHT

77

After loading the last statue, DINGO pulls his Hawaiian shirt back on and jumps up the ladder. Lee faces Hasheem as Boris and Meow look on. Dawn is breaking.

HASHEEM

Thank you, Mr. Rivers. It's been a long night. The statues are in your hands now. A new chapter begins.

LEE

Right. May your book have a happy ending.

He breaks away and clambers up the ladder, rolling his eyes.

78 INT. THE CATALINA INTERIOR AND COCKPIT - PRE-DAWN - NIGHT 78

DINGO

Lee, I need you as co-pilot.

LEE

Me? I can't fly.

DINGO

Come on, you've been a bush pilot on Soi Cowboy for years. This thing doesn't have auto-pilot. Flying it is like leading a herd of puppies full of piss through a forest of fire hydrants. I need help.

Lee makes his way forward passing the statues laying along both sides of the interior, face up, with their skirting butting the catwalk. Cushioning them are opium bags. Meow sits atop a terracotta official's face immediately aft of the cockpit. Snake notices.

DINGO (CONT'D)
 (Under his breath)
 Lucky bastard....

79 EXT. THE CATALINA - PRE-DAWN - NIGHT 79

BORIS
 Dingo not happy about *tariak*, but
 Lee offered him 25,000 dollars.
 That changed his mind.

HASHEEM
 You can rendezvous where I told you
 that it is written.

Boris walks towards the plane shaking his head at his old
 friend's lunacy.

80 INT. THE CATALINA - NIGHT 80

Billy sits by an observation bubble. He has a COUGHING fit.
 Boris finds an uncomfortable seat opposite Meow.

LEE
 Billy's cough doesn't sound good.

DINGO
 The semi-frog's been croaking like
 that all the way from Bangkok. Been
 bloody annoying.

81 EXT. AFGHAN DESERT - NIGHT 81

Hasheem's caravan dissolves into the dark. The Catalina sits.

82 INT./EXT. THE CATALINA - NIGHT 82

LEE
 What the hell are we waiting for?

DINGO
 Be dammed if we're taking off in
 the dark. It's hard enough getting
 this fat old Cat off her belly in
 the daytime, now there's a lot more
 weight.

The Eastern horizon is faintly aglow.

BORIS
But morning prayers over shortly.

Dingo takes out a cigarillo.

DINGO
Yeah, so what? Maybe banging their heads on the ground will knock some sense into a lot of them.

LEE
What Boris means is right after prayers in Kandahar, jet fighters could be swarming this way.

DINGO
Fighters? Are you bullshitting me?

Lee shakes his head. Dingo shoves the unlit cigarillo into his breast pocket. After CRACKING OPEN the overhead throttles, he CRANKS OVER the port engine. After several FARTS and BELCHES it catches. It SOUNDS rough.

MEOW
Is there a problem?

DINGO cranks over the starboard engine. Same thing, only WORSE.

DINGO
This whole heap needs a major overhaul. I just got started in Quetta when Cactus Jack called.

Meow, Boris and Lee look concerned as the Catalina SHUDDERS as Snake RUNS UP the engines. Several beats pass.

BORIS
(calling from rear)
How long do we wait?

DINGO
Until the engines are warm. We can't afford to have them conk out on take-off.

Dingo holds up an ancient set of black plastic headphones.

DINGO (CONT'D)
And we don't have to shout. Headphones are hanging from the bulkheads.
(MORE)

DINGO (CONT'D)

Hit the mike button to talk. And fuck the wait. Cabin crew, take positions for takeoff.

Lee pulls on the headset and hears a quiet pulsating BEEP as Dingo DRIVES THE THROTTLES FORWARD. The Cat picks up speed.

DINGO (CONT'D)

Shit, it's still black as the inside of a camel's twat.

Billy sits listening to an iPod. *War* from *The Planets* by Holtz PLAYS in its full orchestral splendor. Time signature in five four beats its hypnotic dark rhythm.

A large silhouette appears ahead in the distance. We again HEAR Holtz's *War*. The Catalina BOUNCES AND BANGS for an eternity. A long, steep ridge spreading across the plane's path comes into view. Dingo rotates.

DINGO (CONT'D)

Coooooome on...come oooooon...!

There's a COLLECTIVE SIGH of relief as the Cat lifts a few feet, only to settle back down.

LEE

Oh, bloody hell!

A steep rise looms just ahead, before the hill.

DINGO

Jesus fucking Christ! There's no time to hit the brakes! Hang onto your ass!

The Cat WHUMPS as it hits the rise. Suddenly all is smooth as the Catalina is launched into space.

DINGO (CONT'D)

Holy fuck! Who say's there's not a god? Our prayers were answered!

LEE

Well pray some fucking more! Here comes the hill!

Holtz's *War* reaches a crescendo.

The Catalina barely clears the ridge, its wheels NICKING the top. Dust and stones scatter. Bright beams of morning sun shine on the Catalina as it wobbles into the sky.

84 INT./EXT. THE CATALINA - DAY

84

DINGO

Now we gotta get over the Chagai Hills and the border. Doesn't look far, if we can keep the speed up.

BORIS

(shakily shucking garlic)
Why would we want to slow down?

DINGO

We don't want to Fartnik ol' buddy, but it's a long climb and with this load these aluminum engines might overheat.

BILLY THE BELGIAN

Alors! Three contrails to the northeast.

DINGO

What's their heading Billy?

BILLY THE BELGIAN

West-south-west, towards a position north of us.

LEE

Our last known one.

The sun's rays explode into the cockpit.

DINGO

If we're going to scrape over those hills, we'll have to pack more air between us and the ground.

BORIS

Ai-yai-yai! Contrails are swinging our way!

DINGO

The bloody sun is glinting off our fucking bubble windows!

Three Mirages streak towards the Catalina which glints brightly ahead.

BORIS

We'll never make border!

The SOUND of Russian Orthodox prayers fill the headsets.

DINGO
Fartnik, turn your bloody mike off!

BORIS
(clicking button)
...Uh, is stuck open.

DINGO
Then shut the fuck up. I need the bloody line open.

BILLY THE BELGIAN
Putain! They're coming up fast!

Two Mirages streak by either side of the Catalina and the third sweeps over them. All three leap to altitude again.

MEOW
Why didn't they swat us? What's going on?

The heat gauge approaches the red line.

DINGO
Oh shit! The radio!

DINGO lunges forward and CLICKS it on. He spins the dial. An Afghan accent CRACKLES through the headphones.

AFGHAN PILOT (V.O.)
...Catalina, this is your last warning: responding or be shot down immediately.

DINGO
You talk to them. You're the cunning linguist. I gotta drive.

LEE
Me?

Lee clears his throat before thumbing the mike.

LEE (CONT'D)
Hi guys, my, uh, old whiskey compass malfunctioned on a flight from Quetta to Karachi, and I had to set down on the desert overnight. Could you point me in the general direction of Karachi please? Thanks. Over.

A few tense beats pass before they reply.

AFGHAN PILOT (V.O.)
*You are violating Afghan airspace.
 You are ordering to turn on a
 heading of seventy degrees and
 proceeding to Kandahar Airport
 immediately. Do you reading? Over.*

BILLY THE BELGIAN
Pas possible! Not with opium!

MEOW
 The hills are just ahead. Buy time!

LEE
 Captain, I don't have enough fuel.
 I'll be lucky to make Pakistan.

AFGHAN PILOT (V.O.)
*Catalina, turn to the northeast or
 be shot down. Over.*

DINGO
 (off mike)
 You're talking on an international
 frequency. Airlines will be
 listening.

LEE
 Captain, I'm an American and we
 have an Aussi, a Belgian, another
 Yank and a Russian aboard. I don't
 think you want to shoot us down.
 We're on your side. I am lost and
 have strayed. Over.

MEOW
 (after a few beats)
 You got them thinking. They must be
 consulting with Kandahar.

AFGHAN PILOT (V.O.)
*Catalina, do you having personnel
 aboard names of Anklovitch and
 Rivers? Over.*

LEE
 (off mike)
 How the hell do they know that!

BILLY THE BELGIAN

It doesn't matter. *Alors!* Tell them! The hills are very close!

AFGHAN PILOT (V.O.)

Catalina, I repeating for the last time. Do you having passengers Anklovitch and Rivers, aboard? Over.

LEE

Captain, we affirm we have them aboard. Over!

The Catalina is closing in fast on the Changai Hills. The question is if they have the altitude to clear them.

AFGHAN PILOT (V.O.)

Catalina, what are Anklovitch and Rivers first names?

DINGO

Bloody good. They're being thorough. They know they're being listened to.

LEE

Boris and Lee. Over.

The port engine SPUTTERS. The heat gauge is way into the red.

DINGO

Oh shit.

The Catalina is seconds from the border.

LEE

I can't see them. I wish they'd say something. Anything.

DINGO

Hang on! This is going to be close!

The Catalina shoots over the hill's saddle, sending a herd of goats fleeing. A moment later the Mirages ROAR over, so close that the Cat TREMBLES. Dingo cuts the power back. The plane slows. The fighters sweep back into their own air space and disappear. Everyone CHEERS. Meow hugs Lee from behind.

DINGO (CONT'D)

I've got to cool these engines down. And me too. Mate, grab me a tinny from that cooler.

Lee digs out a beer and hands it to Dingo who, in opening it, SPRAYS FOAM over the instrument panel.

DINGO (CONT'D)

Now we have another problem. We burned a lot of fuel on that climb. We need a gas station - fast.

BILLY THE BELGIAN

Pas de problem. My contact in Quetta gave me coordinates to a fuel cache.

87 EXT. DRY PLATEAU JUST BACK OF THE PAKISTANI COAST - DAY 87

The Catalina makes a RUGGED LANDING. The plateau is separated from another by a wadi. The PROPS WIND DOWN.

DINGO

I need to check the plane out. Lemme know when you find the cache.

Billy leads, M4 at the ready. Meow, Lee and Boris spread out. A freighter sits motionless in the distance. It takes Billy little time to pull at dry brush by a nearby hillock.

BILLY THE BELGIAN

Ici!

The others hurry to his side. Under an overhang sit several 55-gallon barrels. Dingo runs up.

DINGO

There's plenty, and they're 100 octane! Just what we need. *Bon work* Billy!

88 INT. THE CATALINA - DAY 88

DINGO ROLLS OVER the engines, and the gang is readying for take off. The engines are still ROUGH.

LEE

Hey! That freighter is heading our way. Worse, it looks naval.

Billy latches the Catalina's door closed while Meow raises binoculars to a window.

POV: a helicopter lifts off the ship's deck.

MEOW

Oh shit, a Sikorsky

Dingo rams the THROTTLES forward. Outside the window we see dust and sand kicking up all around the Catalina. The Cat begins prancing down the makeshift runway.

DINGO

Come on pussycat, babe, tell me
you're hot to trot.

Fifty yards from the end of the runway, Dingo spins the nose around facing down its length and towards the sea. He holds the brakes and RUNS UP the engines.

BORIS

Ai-yai-yai! Hurry! Is almost on
top of us!

DINGO

I'm driving her home!

LEE

Stop! Stop! It's too late!

A Sikorsky with Pakistani Air Force insignia hovers 100 feet away. Its side door is open and a 7.65 mm mini-rotary machine-gun stares at them.

89 EXT. BELL TENT ON SECOND DRY PLATEAU - DAY 89

FOUR SOLDIERS with M-16s are on guard. The Catalina sits on the next plateau, where they left it, 200 yards away, separated from them by the wadi.

90 INT. BELL TENT ON SECOND DRY PLATEAU - DAY 90

BILLY THE BELGIAN

Merde, we've been shackled in this
shithole reeking of Boris' garlic
farts for two days. One more and
I'll kill you myself!

BORIS

S-sorry. I cannot help it! I see
doctors but they can't help.

LEE

Did any of them ever suggest stop
eating garlic?

BORIS
Well, yes....?

Lee shakes his head. Our gang sits on the ground, ragged, dirty and tired. They're hand-cuffed and have their ankles shackled. Dingo sleeps as Billy looks disgustedly at Boris.

91 EXT. FIRST DRY PLATEAU - DAY 91

The chopper lifts off from beside the Catalina and leans toward the ship. FOUR SOLDIERS with M-16s and a command tent are left.

92 INT. BELL TENT ON SECOND DRY PLATEAU - DAY 92

Billy is studying the photograph he showed Cactus Jack. Seeing his gaze is soft raises Lee's curiosity.

LEE
What's the photo of, if you don't mind me asking?

BILLY THE BELGIAN
(passes it to Lee)
Not at all.

INSERT: CLOSE UP OF PICTURE - A EURASIAN GIRL OF EIGHT.

BILLY THE BELGIAN (CONT'D)
She's my daughter, Lek. Isn't she beautiful? I love her more than anything. For her I would die.

Lee nods appreciatively and passes it to Meow, who also appreciates his sentiments, and respectfully passes it back to Billy who loses himself again in the picture.

BILLY THE BELGIAN (CONT'D)
For her, we must escape.

LEE
I've been thinking of that. Or we're doing serious time. Several hundred pounds of opium isn't going to bring us a slap on the wrist, or help our international reputations once this hits the newspapers. We'll have to make a break when they try to move us.

MEOW

Our cargo is surely loaded on their ship by now. They've been ferrying back and forth steadily. We're probably next on their agenda.

LEE

Strange they didn't already fly us out to the ship.

93 EXT. BELL TENT ON SECOND DRY PLATEAU - DAY 93

Two of their guards appear at the tent mouth and throw down five shovels with a CLATTER. One points his finger to his head and makes a BANG SOUND. Then all four LAUGH.

94 INT. BELL TENT ON SECOND DRY PLATEAU - DUSK 94

They stare at the shovels in shock.

LEE

Now we know why! The drug trade in Pakistan is controlled by the military. The scumbags are stealing our statues and our opium to sell themselves!

They struggle with their bonds - all except for a smug Billy.

95 INT. BELL TENT ON SECOND DRY PLATEAU - NIGHT 95

A hand covers Lee's mouth and his eyes open. Billy the Belgian puts his finger to his lips. Lee nods. Billy uses a key on Lee's handcuffs and they come apart. Moments later Lee's legs are freed. Dingo wakes Boris as Meow stirs. In moments they're all free.

BILLY THE BELGIAN

Follow me - quietly.

96 EXT. BELL TENT ON SECOND DRY PLATEAU - NIGHT 96

They creep out of the tent, past the shovels, with the moon casting enough light to make out the bodies of two guards. Billy mimics a slashing gesture across his throat. They look at him with a mixture of abhorrence and newfound respect.

LEE

How'd--

BILLY THE BELGIAN

Later. Keep your voice down.

Billy hands the guards' M-16s to Lee and Dingo.

BILLY THE BELGIAN (CONT'D)

They're locked and loaded.

Billy raises his finger to his lips, then points in the direction of the sea. The third guard, on sentry duty, is silhouetted with his back to them. The moon reflects silver off the sea beyond as Billy unsheathes his knife and creeps towards him. The Catalina sits silhouetted on plateau one, beyond the gulch. Billy's silhouette melds with the guard's, then both disappear. Billy reappears holding a bloody knife and another rifle, which he gives to Meow. Billy beams as he points to a dark lump inland, then disappears in that direction. When he returns, he has a weapon for Boris.

BILLY THE BELGIAN (CONT'D)

They'll have sentries posted at the plane too. It's still dark enough to shuttle across. Crouch low, one at a time. Now!

Billy's dark figure glides across the plateau and drops into the wash. Dingo is next, followed by Boris.

LEE

Meow, go ahead. I'll cover you.

MEOW

I'm the bodyguard. Get going.

LEE

We're past all that. Get going.

MEOW

We do not have time to discuss this. Move, they're waiting!

LEE

Dammit, we'll go together then.

Grabbing her hand, he pulls her along. They scurry across and drop down the other side. The crew follows Billy along the wash until they're close to the plane. Billy's eyes gleam as he points out the silhouette of two guards sharing a smoke near the nose of the plane, and another pair near the rear. Beyond the plane is the command tent. The wadi circles around behind the plane, providing cover to approach.

BILLY THE BELGIAN

Lee, Meow, when you hear me open
up, hose down the front two. Dingo,
I'll set you up to take care of the
back. Fartnik and I will move on
to handle the tent. *Alors, vous
avez compris?*

They move off.

LEE

Billy's loving this.

MEOW

Sshhh.

We catch glimpses of their shadows as they move into position, dropping Dingo off before Billy and Boris disappear. After several tense beats, an ENORMOUS, LOOOONG FART breaks the silence. The guards' cigarettes drop as they grab their weapons. FIRE SPITS from the crews' assault rifles as they open up and the guards FIRE BACK but don't have a chance. MORE SOLDIERS dash from the command tent but are MOWED DOWN from Billy's position. As suddenly as it began, the firefight is over. RUNNING AND PANTING SOUNDS to Lee's right swings him around.

BORIS

Don't shoot! Don't shoot! Is me!

Boris' chest is heaving, and he doesn't have his rifle. An angry Dingo is behind him.

BORIS (CONT'D)

Sorry! Sorry! Sorry!

Boris wipes a stream of blood from the side of his mouth.

BORIS (CONT'D)

I couldn't hold back! I thought
Billy was going to kill me!

Billy appears, furious. Light is dissipating the darkness.

LEE

Let's board and get outta here!

LEE

They left the statues!

DINGO

Boris and Billy, take the bubbles.
I need your eyes in the back of my
head.

Billy dips a leg through the bulkhead door and heads toward
the rear. Boris hesitates.

DINGO (CONT'D)

Get back there Fartnik! If Billy
doesn't bloody kill you, I will!

Boris stumbles aft. Lee drops the cargo door and jumps into
the co-pilot's seat.

MEOW

The opium is gone, but we expected
that.

DINGO

(flicking switches)
Thank Christ for that! Less weight!

LEE

Meow, the statues aren't lying
unprotected, I hope?

MEOW

It's too dark to see but, uh, it
feels...like sheets of raw rubber!

DINGO

Shit. The weight's back.

The engines WHIRL, COUGH, AND CATCH. Beyond on the sea the
ship is nowhere to be seen.

LEE

I wonder where the navy went?

BILLY THE BELGIAN

Alors, to Karachi with the opium.

DINGO

I bet the reason my plane's still
here is that they couldn't find
anyone yet who could fly this
antique.

Dingo pushes the THROTTLES FORWARD and taxis to the end where
he swings around facing the sea. He holds the brakes to build
up torque. Boris' voice CRACKLES through the headphones.

BORIS

Ai-yai-yai! Nine o'clock to port.

DINGO

One of the soldiers must've had time to raise the radio. The chopper's back. The ship must be just over the horizon.

The Catalina SURGES FORWARD. It hops, skips, and jumps. The chopper is close enough to see its military colors.

DINGO (CONT'D)

We have to go for it!

The edge of the runway rushes up to meet the plane.

DINGO (CONT'D)

Haaaang on!

The Cat leaps out into space. Lee raises the landing gear with a CLUNK. The Cat loses altitude until it's mere feet above the waves. Snake fights to keep airborne.

DINGO (CONT'D)

Christ, we're only being held up by ground effect. Or water effect.

LEE

Can anyone see the chopper?

BILLY THE BELGIAN

Oui. It's a half a klick away and closing fast.

DINGO

Damn. Lee, shovel them more of that Yank bullshit of yours until we're over international waters.

The headsets fill with a Pakistani 7-Eleven accent.

PAKISTANI PILOT (V.O.)

...tention, Catalina. This is Pakistan Navy Sikorsky. Do you copy? Over.

The chopper swings in parallel to the Catalina and a hundred feet off their port side. Its Gatling gun stares at them again. Lee flashes them a peace sign.

LEE

Sikorsky, this is Lee Rivers with pilot Mike Cheevers, Jeen Ly, Boris Anklovitch and Billy...Billy the Belgian. These transmissions are on an international frequency. If you shoot us down, an investigation will reveal your windfall and you can kiss it goodbye. That's the deal, so piss off.

STATIC is heard. There is silence for several beats, and we only hear the GROWL of the Catalina struggling.

BILLY THE BELGIAN

It's pulling away!

PAKISTANI PILOT (V.O.)

Catalina, please proceeding. Have a good flight. Over and out.

98 EXT. OVER THE ARABIAN SEA - DAY

98

Sunlight glistens off the Arabian Sea as the chopper leans toward the watery horizon, and the Catalina begins a slow ascent over the sea. We hear CHEERS from our crew.

99 INT. THE CATALINA - DAY

99

MEOOW

Billy, how'd you get loose?

BILLY THE BELGIAN

(pulls lock picks from his boot)
This is what it means to be a pro.

He may be bragging, as usual, but his star has risen considerably among the crew.

DINGO

Where to now?

LEE

...Cairo. It's closest to Europe, and the West is our market.

100 EXT. CATALINA OVER THE RED SEA - DAY 100

The Catalina flies over water. We see a map behind the following scenes as it follows the coast, into the Red Sea and half way up to the latitude of Luxor.

101 INT. CATALINA - DAY 101

MEOW.

What's that pulse we hear on the headsets? We don't have electrical problems, I hope.

DINGO

Well, that's entirely possible but I don't think it's serious. It's probably just picking up the navigation strobes.

102 INT. THE CATALINA - NIGHT 102

LEE

I gotta take a leak.

There's little more light than the dashboard illumination. Lee is passing through Meow's section when he hears a SUPPRESSED SOB. Dropping to Meow's side he sees tears glinting in moonlight sneaking in a window. He cups her face.

LEE (CONT'D)

What's the matter? Why are you crying?

She grips his hands in hers and brings them before her.

MEOW

I...I can't tell you. And you're going to hate me....

LEE

Tell me.

MEOW

I can't! I can't! I can't!

She breaks down crying on his shoulder, leaving him bewildered.

103 INT./EXT. THE CATALINA - DAY

103

The crew looks tired, dishevelled and uncomfortable. Lee is piloting when they hit HEAVY TURBULENCE. Boris reaches for garlic but his pockets are empty. Billy COUGHS. Visibility deteriorates. Snake is working on a chart.

BORIS

Is *Khamaseem*, annual winds which blow March and April.

DINGO

Let me take over, mate. We can just make Luxor before we run outta fuel.

Dingo takes the controls from a relieved Lee. A sandstorm envelops the Catalina. The engines start to SPIT.

DINGO (CONT'D)

The air scoops don't have filters!

BORIS

Why don't you fly over *khamaseen*?

DINGO

I'm trying Fartnik, I'm trying. Any idea how high these storms blow?

BORIS

About 12,000 feet.

DINGO

Close to the ceiling where we'll need oxygen, and we don't have any.

The Catalina ascends through the intense sandstorm, while being WHIPPED AND THROWN about. Everyone looks nervous. Boris THROWS UP in a bucket. Suddenly the Cat SHAKES.

DINGO (CONT'D)

Shit, we're losing altitude! Lee, pull on that lever. Quick!

Dingo jabs a finger towards a lever by Lee's knee. Dingo yanks another lever too, and the engine SOUND improves.

DINGO (CONT'D)

Thank Christ for the carburetor air heat controls. Gives the engines an alternate air source.

Above them the thick soup thins, and they burst out into bright, clean moonlight. The plane flies over the storm.

104 EXT. THE NILE RIVER - DUSK 104

200 feet below the Nile flows, the storm abating. The Catalina lands on the river, bobs parallel to an opening in a forest of 30-foot-tall pampas grass, then GUNS into it, effectively hiding the plane. Dingo SHUTS DOWN the engines.

105 INT. THE CATALINA - DUSK 105

DINGO

Luxor is just downstream a couple of miles, but as long as we have a speck of opium aboard, we ain't going there.

Everyone collapses from exhaustion.

106 EXT. NILE RIVER PAMPAS GRASS - DAY 106

The storm is over and it's morning. Dingo is on the wing, working on an engine. Boris leans out the door and calls up.

BORIS

We cleaned out all spilled opium, though it still smells like opium.

DINGO

Good, but before we can fly into Luxor Airport to refuel, I've got to clean the carbs. This is going to take the morning.

Lee and Meow stand on the bank by the nose exit.

LEE

If that's the case, Meow and I'll hike into town and grab some food and water. And incense.

(sotto voce)

It'll give us a change to talk.

MEOW

I'll go with you but I've said all I'm going to say.

LEE

And I thought it was men who were the ones who wouldn't talk things out.

DINGO

Good idea. Billy, can you give me a hand up here?

BORIS

Lee, can you buy me garlic? I'm out.

LEE

Sure, but bring me down a knapsack.

A moment later Boris, with difficulty, exits the nose section with the knapsack. Lee helps him. Boris has his Hmong bag with the rockpick inside. He can't hide his excitement.

LEE (CONT'D)

And you're off to do a Howard Carter and discover King Tut's tomb I gather.

BORIS

On ridge between Queen Hapshepsut's Temple and Valley of Kings I have made many finds!

LEE

Have fun. I look forward to seeing a solid gold mask. See you at noon.

107 EXT. CATALINA - DAY

107

Dingo, Lee, Billy and Meow are on the wing. They have water bottles and are eating pastries. A ring of garlic lies there. Dingo checks his wristwatch.

DINGO

We're all ready to go but where the hell is Fartnik? It's 3:00 PM. You said he went looking for old junk. What the hell's keeping him?

LEE

You're right, he's been gone way too long. Whatever his faults, being late is not one of them. He's a journalist used to deadlines.

BILLY THE BELGIAN

I think we should send out a search party. Lee, you know that farting moron best.

LEE

Meow?

They're uncomfortable with each other but she nods.

108

EXT. RIDGE BEHIND QUEEN HATSHEPSUT'S TEMPLE - DAY

108

Halfway up the steep, switchback trail to the top, they stop to catch their breath. Both are PANTING.

MEOW

I hope you're right about this.

LEE

Being overweight, he could have had a heart attack. I'm damned near having one.

They push on, reaching the barren ridge separating the Valley of the Kings from the Nile valley. It's a sheer drop to the Queen's temple. They spread out, searching.

LEE (CONT'D)

Look at all the flint tools lying around. No wonder he wanted to come here.

MEOW

He could have slipped over the edge. The shards are like grease.

LEE

The wind's starting up. It'll soon be blowing like a hurricane. Boris! Boris! Where are you?!

A faint "pfffft" is heard. A smile jumps to Lee's face.

LEE (CONT'D)

(hurrying in direction of sound)

I'd recognize that Russian accent anywhere. It came from over here...oh, my God!

MEOW

What? What is it?

She runs to Lee's side. They stand over a narrow wash. In the bottom lies Boris. He's been shot. His passport case lies open by his body. Boris' watch and Russian Orthodox cross are missing. Lee rummages through his passport case. It's empty of money.

LEE

It looks like a robbery gone bad.

A BLACK PASSPORT falls out. Lee picks it up and frowns.

MEOW

What's the matter?

LEE

It's not Russian. It's Canadian!

Lee flips it open. Boris' picture stares back at him.

LEE (CONT'D)

It's a fake! It's not even in his name!

109

INT. THE CATALINA - NIGHT

109

Candles and incense burn, giving off a mystical ambiance. Meow sits close to Lee, on statues, while Dingo and Billy sit in the cockpit. Boris' chess set lies between the seats.

DINGO

Why would anyone want to murder him and fake his identity? Did you tell the cops that when you phoned in to report finding him?

LEE

For sure. He deserves that.

BILLY THE BELGIAN

I almost feel guilty for the times I wanted to pop him. He may have irritated the hell outta me, but he was basically a good guy.

DINGO

Well, we'll fly to Luxor airport in the morning, fuel up and continue on to Cairo.

LEE

I phoned Ebony that we were coming.

(MORE)

LEE (CONT'D)

I didn't tell her about Boris though. I brought his Hmong bag back. Where's his chess set?

DINGO

Here, catch.

Lee isn't ready and the chess set opens, the loose white knight tumbling out.

DINGO (CONT'D)

Oh, shit. Sorry.

Spotting the piece, Lee bends to pick it up.

LEE

Dammit, the base of the white knight broke off...what's this?

MEOW

What's what

Lee pulls cotton out of the hollow knight and unrolls a compact jumble of electronics with a tiny flashing light. Dingo, Billy and Meow look on stunned.

BILLY THE BELGIAN

Putain, merde. It's a location transmitter!

LEE

Dingo, turn the intercom on!

DINGO

Okay, it's on mate.

They grab headsets. The BEEP synchronizes with the tiny flashing light.

LEE

Shit! The strobes aren't even on!
We've been tracked!

MEOW

Any idea where Boris got this set?

QUICK FLASHBACK TO THE APOCALYPSE BAR IN SAIGON WITH SERGEI ARRIVING WITH THE CHESS SET.

LEE (V.O.)

Yes! Sergei Shewchuk!

110 EXT. THE CATALINA - DAY 110

Encroaching on the pyramids is Cairo. The Cat drops and follows the Nile, lands and ties up at the Hilton quay. FILM CREWS jostle for position. Ebony Whyte is among them.

INT. THE CATALINA - DAY

BILLY THE BELGIAN

If there's one thing people in my business are allergic too, it's journalists. The moment we land, I'm outta here. Ciao guys.

111 EXT. HILTON QUAY - DAY 111

A PHALANX OF COPS led by COLONEL KAMAL push through the journalists to meet the crew arriving by Zodiac at the quay.

COLONEL KAMAL

I'm Colonel Kamal. As a land of antiquities, we understand their deeper value. We are here to ensure their safety.

Journalists press in SHOUTING QUESTIONS: "Is it true the statues are Kublai Khan's?"; "How many did you bring out?"; "What do you think their value is?"; "Do you think you found his burial site?".

An angry Ebony Whyte confronts Lee.

EBONY

You gave me your word this would be my exclusive! Explain to me where these other networks came from?

LEE

I have no idea! Honest Ebony!

She studies him, then puts her hand to his cheek.

EBONY

Sorry. But give me that first interview on my show.

Meow appears and pulls him away by the hand in a clearly possessive manner.

She leads him through the mob leaving Lee shrugging helplessly back at Ebony. She cools, but then notices Dingo checking her out. A trace of a smile touches her lips as the crew is hurried into the hotel.

SUBTITLE: A WEEK LATER

112 INT. PENTHOUSE AT THE CAIRO HILTON - NIGHT 112

The penthouse is a showroom filled with the statues, including Lucy Liu. In the bg WORKERS pack a statue for shipping. Lee's on the phone by a lifesize statue of the EGYPTIAN GOD HORACE, on which sits Lee's hat and Boris' ring of garlic is around his neck. Lee hangs up, and it RINGS again. He picks it up. Sitting on the coffee table are *Time* and *Newsweek* with Lee on their covers.

LEE

Hello...Martha?...I'm sorry it took you days to get through, that's the way the phone has been ringing since I got off *Ebony Live*. Thank God for the Egyptians. The Hilton's not only given us the penthouse to work from, but Colonel Camel has put guards on the doors to keep the mob at bay.

113 INT. THE SMITHSONIAN MUSEUM - DAY 113

Martha Fredericksen stands holding the telephone and looking out her window, down the Mall to the Capital. *The Smithsonian Museum* insignia is reflected on the glass. She holds a copy of *Time Magazine*.

MARTHA

It's good publicity for them. This is the biggest find since Tut! It's causing an absolute sensation.

INSERT: FRENCH AMBASSADOR ESCORTING A STATUE DOWN A RED CARPET TO AN AWAITING GOVERNMENT JET

LEE (V.O.)

I was relieved about the Afghan president. I thought he'd demand their return, but instead he insisted that each be honored by countries purchasing one by having their ambassadors personally escort them home.

MARTHA

I want the one that looks like that pretty Chinese actress, Lucy...Lucy-

LEE (V.O.)

--Liu. I'm sorry, but that one's been scooped up by a private collector. I saved the harem keeper for you. He looks like Tiger Woods. I'm sorry there's so few left but the Louvre, the British, the Prado - hell, all the big museums have orders in!

MARTHA

Okay then. Tiger Woods. Inform our ambassador.

114 INT. PENTHOUSE AT THE CAIRO HILTON - NIGHT

114

Lee and Meow are working closely again, their differences put aside.

MEOW

I just got off Skype with Uncle Jack. He made enquiries with his old colleagues at CIA about Shewchuk. Guess What? He's ex-KGB and very close to the Russian President, PUTSKI. Putski was also KGB.

INSERT: SHOT OF PUTSKI HARANGUING THEIR PARLIAMENT. THE LARGE BLACK RING IS PROMINENT ON THE HAND JABBING THE AIR.

LEE (V.O.)

What!

(beat)

It just occurred to me that none of their museums has expressed interest. I thought the Hermitage would be in line for sure.

SUPERIMPOSE: TWO WEEKS LATER

115 INT. PENTHOUSE AT THE CAIRO HILTON - DAY

115

The suite is now bare of statues - including Horace. Lee's Tilly hat and Boris' garlic are on a desk. Meow is at her laptop with a coffee, facing Lee. A clock reads 8:12AM.

LEE
You're kidding?

MEOW
No. That's just what Uncle Jack
just told me.

Lee, in a bathrobe, pulls a business card out of his wallet and punches a number into a phone.

LEE
Ebony? Good to reach you. Hey, I
just got news you'll want to know
about....yes, yes I just sold the
last statue and it's been
delivered. Hey, what--

EBONY (V.O.)
(splashing in bg, Ebony
laughing)
--I thought you had already left
Cairo? It was on the news.

LEE
That was to get rid of the
paparazzi. What I'm phoning about
is that I just learned that Russian
PREMIER PUTSKI is flying here to
Cairo, to the Hilton!

EBONY (V.O.)
I well understand about the
paparazzi. Regarding Putski, I'm
way ahead of you Lee dear. The
reason is he's finally agreed to do
a sit down with me at 9:00pm your
time tonight. I've been trying to
nail that fox for years. Why Cairo
and on such short notice, I don't
know, but I'm just happy to get
him.

LEE
Good for you. Drop up afterwards.
We're celebrating. Where are you?
Sounds like a swimming pool?

116 EXT. A YACHT IN PATONG BAY, PHUKET, THAILAND - DAY

116

Ebony stands in a white bikini while Dingo climbs aboard dripping wet. Next to her is a cold *Phuket* beer.

EBONY

I'm in Phuket with Dingo. Why didn't you introduce us? Here, say hi. I have to run. I leave for Cairo immediately.

She passes the phone to Dingo, pats his butt, and slips down the companionway.

DINGO

Hey North Dakota Jones! Remember what I said about those lips of hers? You wouldn't believe what she can do with them....

117 INT. BATHROOM/BEDROOM PENTHOUSE THE CAIRO HILTON - NIGHT 117

Lee has just finished shaving his beard and feels his smooth face. He steps into the adjoining bedroom where Meow sits on the bed. On the bedstand is a bottle of Crystal champagne and two tulip glasses. A clock reads 8:20pm.

LEE

Ta da! What do you think? The paparazzi will never recognize me.

MEOW

...Well, you're still a handsome devil. You can stay.

LEE

Just for that, I'm giving you a 50,000 dollar bonus.

Meow's smile disappears. She stands abruptly.

LEE (CONT'D)

What? What did I say? You're not going to start crying and getting all weird on me again?

MEOW

I don't want it. I just want to be paid as your bodyguard.

LEE

And as a bodyguard you saved my life in Bangkok! You had a major role in making everything happen.

MEOW

It was your Guardian Angel who saved your life, Lee.

LEE

You whacked the one in front of the tuk-tuk who tried to off me in Ho City. And you've been working your beautiful little butt off helping me document and ship.

MEOW

Let's just celebrate your success. Okay?
(eyes him coldly)
Okay. I can't believe they all sold so fast.

LEE

...Well, not all. That's just what I told the media.

MEOW

What do you mean?

LEE

I mean it's my turn to have one of Billy's - and your - Big Fucking Secrets.

Lee strides into the walk-in closet. He rolls out a statue on a dolly and sets it down.

LEE (CONT'D)

I kept it hidden behind stacks of packing and cardboard.

MEOW

You saved Lucy Liu! I thought it had gone to a private collector.

LEE

Yes. Me. I told you I always save the best piece for myself.

MEOW

But we shipped 24?

LEE

We did. Did you notice that fake Horace is gone? I'll reimburse the hotel.

(MORE)

LEE (CONT'D)

Lucy can join us on the Lear we'll buy! We took in almost a quarter billion dollars and even after Hasheem's share and whatever we do with Boris', we're still loaded!

MEOW

Don't say "we."

He ignores her, picks up the Crystal, twists off the wire jacket and thumbs the cork. POP! Champagne bursts all over Lucy. Lee fills their glasses and hands one to Meow. The phone RINGS. Lee answers it.

LEE

Ebony! Hey, you must be getting ready for that interview.

INT. HILTON BANQUET ROOM, CAIRO - NIGHT

CREW are prepping the set with two armchairs on a dais.

EBONY

I am. I've been so busy I haven't had time to call. Dingo wanted me to tell you that Putski's arrangements are being coordinated by Sergei Shewchuk. He'll be here. That's supposed to mean something to you.

INT. PENTHOUSE BEDROOM HILTON HOTEL, CAIRO - NIGHT

LEE

Sergei! Here!

Lee hangs up, stunned. Meow stares at Lucy, then sets her glass aside.

MEOW

Look at Lucy's dress!

LEE

What the hell?

A distinct 12X18 inch section stands out.

MEOW

The Champagne left a stain. Didn't you say new terracotta is more porous than old?

Lee yanks out his Swiss Army knife and stabs at the statue above the stain but it's like stabbing a rock. But when he stabs the stain, the terracotta crumbles.

LEE

And softer! This is so fresh it hasn't even been fired properly.

Lee chips madly at the square. Rubble piles up. A shiny, metallic object appears inside.

LEE (CONT'D)

What the fuck?

They stare at two cylinders the size of thermoses, one larger and joined by wires and electronic components.

MEOW

Lee, I have something to tell you, after I do this.

Meow leaps to her laptop, PUNCHES in a password, then TYPES rapidly. She then holds the laptop so its camera can focus on the statue, the hole and the cylinders.

LEE

What the hell are you doing?

MEOW

I'm...I'm sending Uncle Jack live pictures on Intelink.

LEE

Intelink? That's for top security stuff.

MEOW

Lee, I've been ripped apart over this. I...I couldn't tell you what I'd been tasked for.

LEE

Christ! You're, a goddammed spook!

Meow looks at Lee with frightened eyes.

LEE (CONT'D)

I knew it! You even gave me fair warning you had a secret! It was like you'd studied at Billy The Belgian's School of Big Fucking Secrets! I'm a schmuck!

MEOW

Lee, I'm sorry I--

LEE

Well, I'm sorry too Meow - or whatever your name is. I swallowed your cover story hook, rod and reel!

MEOW

No! Jeen Vang is my real name. Meow is my nickname, Ly was a cover. My father was the Hmong general who fought with Uncle Jack in Laos.

Lee throws his hands up in the air.

LEE

Ly, that's for sure! A great big fucking Ly!

MEOW

Lee, listen to me. Please!

LEE

What's Cactus' role?

MEOW

He's been reactivated. I'm reporting to him. There were all these bizarre meetings among Islamic states and your name and Boris' kept popping up on wiretaps. Anything in the Middle East is of acute interest so we had to find out what was going on. CIA knew you and Uncle Jack were friends. So he set me up with you.

LEE

The ol' honey trap. Well you nailed me, but good.

MEOW

I did not sleep with you for those reasons!

LEE

Yeah, right!

The WHAP-WHAP-WHAP of a helicopter makes them look up.

119 EXT. HILTON HOTEL'S ROOF HELIPAD, CAIRO - NIGHT 119

A helicopter lands. Its door opens, and THREE RUSSIAN BODYGUARDS exit and look around before giving a signal. One opens the roof door and Sergei Shewchuk steps out followed by Premier Putski. Sergei checks his watch. It's 8:42pm. They hurry into the hotel.

120 INT. PENTHOUSE BEDROOM AT THE CAIRO HILTON - NIGHT 120

MEOW

I don't want to keep any more secrets from you - ever. I don't care about the consequences.

Meow buries her head in her hands and SOBS. Lee softens but is still cautious. She BLOWS her nose.

MEOW (CONT'D)

I was torn between my love for my country and my love for you. There I said it - I love you! I didn't say it before because I didn't want Ly to say it. I wanted it to come from me, Meow Vang.

Lee's arms are hardly open before she is in them. Meow's laptop computer BEEPS and Cactus Jack's face in real time appears on the screen.

CACTUS JACK

Kitten, we're getting breakthroughs on wiretaps. We've identified another in the company Sergei Shewchuk's been keeping. It's MARSHALL NOVAK who's in charge of their BCN.

MEOW

No kidding!

LEE

What's BCN?

CACTUS JACK

A wires-and-pliers guy is on his way in triple time to check that thing out. He'll knock twice.

The screen has no longer gone black when they hear a QUIET DOUBLE KNOCK. Meow hurries to open the door. A NERD nods as he steps inside. He carries a suitcase like a tourist.

NERD

Where is it?

The nerd carefully removes the HEAVY object and lies it on the bed before SNAPPING open his suitcase, revealing scientific equipment. He sweeps a Geiger counter over the canisters. It CRACKLES FIERCELY.

NERD (CONT'D)

Just as I thought from the weight.
A beryllium reflected plutonium
core.

LEE

Plutonium? You mean like in a bomb?

NERD

Precisely. A miniaturized nuclear device big enough to blow central Cairo back to the Pharaohs. That's the BCN connection.

LEE

Again, what the hell is this BCN?

MEOW

It's the Russian Biological,
Chemical and Nuclear division.

(beat)

Our friend Brad Pitt knew of Hasheem's find and was in the pay of the Russians. It's well known Putski's power hungry, and he'd like to return Russia to its glory days. He recognized the sensation the statues would cause and the opportunity presented - that if they could hide nuclear devices in the statues, they would be placed in every national museum in the World.

(beat)

And what is every national museum situated close to? You, of all people, would know.

COLLAGE: Smithsonian-Mall-Capital/British Museum-Parliament/Louvre-Elysee Palace/Prado-Cortes Generales/Museum of Civilization-Ottawa Parliament/(German) National Museums-

Chancellery/Tokyo National Museum-Diet/(Chinese) National
Museum-Tiananmen Square.

LEE (V.O.)

Oh, my God. Within spitting
distance of the governments!

MEOW

Precisely. Putski could cut off the
head of every major government in
the world.

(beat)

And who would be blamed?

LEE

The Muslim world because the
statues - and bombs - originated
in Afghanistan, home of the 9/11
conspiracy. Brilliant!

INT. BASEMENT CIA HQ INTERROGATION ROOM BANGKOK - NIGHT

An exhausted figure is tied to a chair, his head on his
chest. Cactus Jack yanks it back to reveal Gold Teeth. TWO
OTHER CIA HEAVIES are in the room.

MEOW (V.O.)

We nabbed one of the Arabs trying
to assassinate you. He had enough
of the story so we could stitch
that end together. Unfortunately
for Putski the Russians weren't
the only ones running spies - the
Muslims along Russia's southern
flank also had one in a servant
working in Putski's dacha. He was
also in the pay of the Saudis.
Their first reaction was to protect
their oil interests and put a stop
to it.

INT. BEDROOM PENTHOUSE AT THE CAIRO HILTON - NIGHT

LEE

By zapping me in Ho Chi Minh City.

MEOW

Then when Sergei learned you were
targeted, he put a Guardian Angel
on your ass that saved it in
Bangkok. Unfortunately it wasn't in
time to save Soon.

LEE

But then the hardcore in Saudi Arabia - and there's lots of those, most of the 9/11 fanatics were Saudis - convinced the moderates that this was a golden opportunity to destroy the infidel once and for all, and that reasoning won out. They convinced the entire Muslim world.

MEOW

Right. And the decision came down in the middle of the jet fighter attack and that's why it was called off in the nick of time. And they've been facilitating it ever since. That's why the Egyptians have been so helpful.

LEE

And that's why the international media was tipped off before I could give my exclusive to Ebony - to get the publicity rolling as soon as possible. And what better way to ensure the statues passed each country's customs uninspected than by encouraging the ambassadors to carry them back!

MEOW

What we did think of was how to keep them under our control. We knew Dingo was looking for spare parts so we made them available close to the action.

LEE

Dingo wasn't part of this conspiracy of yours, was he!

MEOW

No, no, not at all. But Billy was. Who your Russian guardian angel was in Bangkok, we have no idea, but we hired Billy as yours too. Working for us or not, I still took pleasure in putting him on his ass when he went too far. He's a pig.

LEE

And the fuel cache in Pakistan?

MEOW
Ours of course.

123 INT. RUSSIAN SHIP WORKROOM - FLASHBACK - DAY 123

A TEAM OF RUSSIANS are GRINDING open the statues and placing inside bombs. OTHERS apply new terracotta to the holes and fire it with blowtorches.

119 MEOW (V.O.) 119
The so-called Pakistani Navy we didn't count on. It was a Russian setup.

LEE (V.O.)
And that's when the Russians made nuclear Trojan horses out of the statues.

124 INT. BEDROOM PENTHOUSE THE CAIRO HILTON - NIGHT 124

MEOW
And look at who supposedly saved our asses there? Who the big fucking hero was? Who got us back underway after the switcheroo....

LEE
Billy the Belgian. We were shooting blanks and the soldiers all pretended to drop dead. I knew my shot went wild but the soldier went down.

MEOW
You got it. It's clear he was working both sides of the fence.

NERD
Voice transmission.

They turn back to the nerd. Instruments connected to the device run back to a laptop he studies.

LEE
What's that?

NERD

There's an antenna. The bomb's triggered by a particular individual's voice signature speaking a particular phrase.

MEOW

Any idea who and what it is?

NERD

No, but I can tell you the frequency - or, actually, frequencies. It's several actually, but all interconnected.

LEE

What do you mean?

NERD

It's CNN. And the several frequencies they use around the globe.

It's 8:57pm. Lee grabs the remote and CLICKS the TV on. He CLICKS through the channels til he comes to CNN. Ebony Whyte's interview with Premier Putski is about to begin.

LEE

He wants to do it quickly, before any are discovered. And he wants to be seen as far from home when they all explode, to appear innocence!
(to nerd)
Can you disable this one?

NERD

It's wired to blow if tampered with.

MEOW

(grabbing her Glock, stuffing it in her slacks, and running to door)
We have to stop that interview!

Throwing open the door they're confronted by TWO GUARDS who clearly have orders to confine them.

125

INT. CORRIDOR OF SUITE AT CAIRO HILTON - NIGHT

125

Meow and Lee look at each other, then deliver round-house kicks that put both guards down.

After stepping over them, one guard attempts to rise, but Lee SPRAYS him with mace. Meow finishes him off with another kick. They run toward the elevator but Lee suddenly SKIDS to a stop.

LEE

Wait! I have an idea. But you'll have to stay. They won't recognize me, but they will you.

Lee rushes back to the suite, past the hastily exiting nerd.

126 INT. LOBBY ELEVATOR AT CAIRO HILTON - NIGHT 126

The door opens and Lee ROLLS out a dolly with Lucy and the bomb back under her skirt. A large, ugly, old woman in a flowery *muu-muu* stands in the way holding a large camcorder. She awkwardly leaps aside as Lee SHOUTS.

LEE

Out of the way, please!

127 INT. LOBBY/HALLWAY OF THE CAIRO HILTON - NIGHT 127

A DOZEN RED BERETED SOLDIERS have their attention on a HERD OF JAPANESE TOURISTS checking in so they do not immediately notice Lee roll by with Lucy - but the JAPANESE TOUR LEADER does, and points.

JAPANESE TOUR LEADER

Kublai Khan desu ka!

Japanese SHOUT EXCITEDLY as Lee ROLLS AT DOUBLE SPEED out of the lobby and down a hall, the Japanese invasion force behind him, their cameras and camcorders FIRING. The soldiers spring to action and follow. At the end of the hall by the entrance to the banquet hall stands Colonel Kamal and SEVERAL RED BERETS. His expression registers shock as his eyes lock on the bomb. Lee shouts at a run.

LEE

That's right, Camel. I kept one of these bombshells for myself. You know what this is, and you know if the Russian president says the magic words, we're all Crispie Critters! Now get out of the way!

Kamal YELLS AN ORDER and the doors are FLUNG OPEN.

128

INT. BANQUET HALL AT CAIRO HILTON - DAY

128

Lee charges in, followed by the SHOUTING Japanese. The hall is FULL OF PEOPLE at tables who turn to see what the COMMOTION is. Ebony and Premier Putski are in mid-interview with TWO CAMERAS on them. Off camera sits Sergei Shewchuk smoking a Belomor with Putski's bodyguards. Their interview interrupted, Ebony looks sharply at Lee ROLLING Lucy down the aisle towards them. A pro, she quickly reads the situation.

EBONY

We have an interruption, but a fascinating one. Camera two, swing around and pick that up.

Premier Putski looks confused, then shocked. Sergei jumps to his feet. The bodyguards reach into their leather jackets. Lee stops short of the dais. Lucy wobbles dangerously before coming to rest.

INSERT COLLAGE: VIEWERS IN LIVING ROOMS AROUND THE WORLD, FROM YURTS TO BAMBOO HUTS TO MANHATTAN PENTHOUSES TO MIDDLE AMERICA: WATCHING TELEVISION SCREENS WITH LEE AND LUCY.

LEE

Your plot to take over the world is exposed Putski! Ebony! Pull the plug! Get off the air!

EBONY (V.O.)

That voice is familiar...is that Lee Rivers?

LEE

Yes! Director! Atlanta - cut the feed!

Sergei Shewchuk stares open-mouthed. The Russian premier glares at Lee, then at Sergei, then forces a smile.

PREMIER PUTSKI

(that perfect English)

I'm sure this can all be explained, but perhaps it's a good idea to go off camera.

EBONY

Hold on. Don't go to commercial. Stay with this.

(to Lee)

If it was anyone else, I would cut. Lee, what is going on?

Lee steps to Lucy's side and points at the bomb. Putski nervously looks for a way out.

LEE

Get a camera on this. This is an--

POV: focus narrows to a close up of the bomb.

LEE (CONT'D)

--atomic bomb. Premier Putski had them planted in all 24 statues that I brought from Afghanistan. At the sound of specific words spoken by him - and broadcast on CNN - they're programmed to explode.

INSERT COLLAGE: LIVING ROOMS AROUND THE WORLD AND VIEWERS LEAPING TO THEIR FEET AND EXCLAIMING IN A BABEL OF LANGUAGES

Premier Putski and Sergei look like cornered rats.

EBONY

CUTTHEBROADCAST!

The DIRECTOR reaches for the switch but Putski yanks out a pistol and SHOOTS him dead. PANDEMONIUM breaks out in the banquet hall.

132 INT. CNN CONTROL ROOM ATLANTA - DAY 132

The CONTROL ROOM DIRECTOR stares slack jawed at the monitor.

133 INT. BANQUET HALL AT CAIRO HILTON - NIGHT 133

PREMIER PUTSKI

(points at camera)
All I want--

SERGEI

PUTSKI! NYET! NYET! NYET!

PREMIER PUTSKI

--is peace for all man--

A red hole appears in the middle of Putski's forehead. He collapses across a monitor which shows him crashing across the monitor. There was no sound of a shot.

POV VIEWERS: The feed finally cuts to an AN ANCHORMAN, staring speechless at the camera.

Sergei makes a run for it, SHOOTING back. a GUNFIGHT ensues, the outgunned Russians getting the worst of it. Sergei reappears near Lee. Sergei takes aim at point blank range.

SERGEI

We almost had it - the world -
except for you, you bast--

A spray of red exits the side of his head and he collapses. Like the shot that nailed Putski, there was no sound.

134 INT. PENTHOUSE AT THE CAIRO HILTON - NIGHT

134

Lee CLOSES the door behind him. Meow leaves her laptop and rushes up to him. They embrace.

MEOW

I saw everything on TV! You've been
with Camel for hours!

LEE

He's trying to cover his ass by
pretending to investigate.
Have your people figured out who
shot Putski and Sergei Shewchuk?

Meow shakes her head.

POV: On TV an IRANIAN MOB throws rocks at the IRAQI Embassy.

MEOW (V.O.)

It's back to politics as usual in
the Middle East. The Muslim
coalition immediately fell apart.

INSERT COLLAGE POV: TV CLOSE UP OF MILITARY VEHICLES AND SOLDIERS AT FAMOUS MUSEUMS, INCLUDING THE SMITHSONIAN, LOADING STATUES. MARTHA FREDERICKSEN ARGUES WITH A GENERAL.

LEE (V.O.)

Dammit, the statues are being swept
up. Nobody will buy so much as a
basket from me after this. Worse,
they'll all want their money back.

MEOW (V.O.)

On the contrary, every museum
insists they're keeping theirs,
once the bombs are removed.

Lee reacts. There's an URGENT KNOCK. Meow grabs her Glock and hurries to the door where she presses her eye to the peephole. POV: An ugly woman with too much lipstick, blue beehive hairdo, red dress and fishnet stockings looking warily side to side.

MEOW (CONT'D)

It's a really strange looking--

There's METALLIC FIDDLING and the door swings open. Meow aims at the woman as she hurries into the room, hastily LOCKS the door, then flops onto the sofa, legs spread. She's before a coffee table and facing the door. Behind her on a counter is Meow's open laptop. The woman COUGHS and holds up lock picks before dropping them into a garish green handbag.

BILLY THE BELGIAN

Merde, putain!

LEE

Billy!

Billy peels off his rubber face, then the wig. Meow and Lee are speechless, but she keeps the gun trained on him.

BILLY THE BELGIAN

I've been hiding in a closet.
Soldiers haven't let anyone out
without an ID check and search.

LEE

The closet all right. What's with
the disguise?

BILLY THE BELGIAN

Alors! To get close to Putski!

Billy removes his red high heels and massages his toes.

MEOW

You zapped Putski?

BILLY THE BELGIAN

Comment! Someone had to! And Sergei
when he was about to whack you.
I have a confession. I made the
biggest mistake of my life, but I
have tried to set it right. I have
not been working just for the CIA.

MEOW

Non merde, as you would say.

BILLY THE BELGIAN
 Ah, you know? *Bon*. It makes
 explaining easier. Please
 understand, I'm a mercenary, for
 hire.

Meow flicks her gun impatiently. Lee shakes his head.

BILLY THE BELGIAN (CONT'D)
 Do you remember when your tuk-tuk
 was attacked in Bangkok?

EXT. TUK-TUK PANDEMONIUM - FLASHBACK - DAY

Billy, in Thai clothing, zaps Pockface.

LEE (V.O.)
 You? You were my Guardian Angel?

INT. PENTHOUSE AT THE CAIRO HILTON - NIGHT

Billy shrugs with false modesty.

BILLY THE BELGIAN
 Is it not a good thing I took the
 contract from the Russians?
 Otherwise, you'd both be dead! Heh?

LEE
 Who killed Boris?

BILLY THE BELGIAN
 Boris' *raison d'etre* was *fini*.
 Sergei ordered the hit. He didn't
 want any Russians affiliated with
 the scheme. It would shine light on
 Russia. That was my wake up call.
 I'm not Russian but I could be
 next.

Billy has a COUGHING FIT. Meow lowers the Glock.

MEOW
 How did you find out what they were
 up to?

INSERT COLLAGE: CAMEL GIVES BILLY A FRENCH PASSPORT, AIR
 TICKETS AND SUITCASE; FLIES TO MOSCOW; BILLY USES HIS LOCK
 PICKS TO OPEN SUITCASE; BUYS GEIGER COUNTER; SWEEPS IT OVER
 THE DEVICE; JUMPS BACK IN SHOCK.

BILLY THE BELGIAN (V.O.)
 Colonel Camel made me an offer I
 couldn't refuse. He gave me a fake
 French diplomatic passport and a
 heavy diplomatic pouch and tasked
 me to fly to a Moscow hotel across
 from the Kremlin. Well, I am good
 with locks, and inside I found
 something unusually heavy and that
 raised my suspicions. I bought a
 Geiger counter. *Alors!* It was--

LEE
 --an A-bomb. That's why the Arabs
 didn't care if they were blamed.
 They had a full-fledged counter
 plot! They'd vanquish the Infidel
 once and for all!

BILLY THE BELGIAN
 I only learned about the bomb
 yesterday. In the meantime he had
 not sent me the money promised.

LEE
 Why waste money on someone who'll
 soon be a barbecue?

BILLY THE BELGIAN
Exactement! And when I saw the
 antennae on the bomb, I put two and
 two together and it added up to
 zero hour. *Alors!* Everything came
 together! I was horrified! I had to
 stop them by any means!

LEE
 I can't believe it, Billy the
 Belgian saving world civilization!

Meow sits and sets her pistol on the coffee table.

BILLY THE BELGIAN
 Meow, I need a way out of Egypt.

MEOW
 I'll call in the embassy chopper.

Meow strides to her laptop. Lee walks to the window. He's
 thinking out loud.

LEE

Billy, where was my Guardian Angel
when we were attacked in Kanda--

Lee turns to see Billy on his feet pointing the open end of a Hi Standard silenced .22 semi-auto pistol at him. Billy sweeps up Meow's Glock.

BILLY THE BELGIAN

Meow! Don't even touch your laptop!
Get back around here.

She does as told. At a motion from Billy, Lee joins her.

LEE

What the fuck are you doing Billy?

BILLY THE BELGIAN

Shut up and sit down. I want you to
transfer all your money to this
numbered Swiss account in my
daughter Lek's name.

They sit. Billy sets the Glock on the coffee table, reaches in his purse, and places a paper with numbers on it on the table. Beside it, he tosses a pack of Belomors.

MEOW

What? You're going to zap us and
make it look like the Russians are
responsible? For one thing, your
fingerprints are everywhere.

BILLY THE BELGIAN

Non, mes amis. Remember, I am a
professional. I sandpaper them off.

MEOW

You're dreaming. Camel will have
you whacked before you can go to
any trial, you greedy fuck.

BILLY THE BELGIAN

I have only a short time to live
anyway.
(coughs, puts photo on table)
But Lek will be set for life.

LEE

But Billy, you're a hero. You
stopped Putski. You saved my life
twice.

(MORE)

LEE (CONT'D)

Isn't it more important for your daughter to have a father who is the world's greatest hero and not its villain?

BILLY THE BELGIAN

Pardon, it was not me who shot Putski and Shewchuk. I only told you that to gain your trust. I was in the banquet hall, I was going to - but someone beat me to it.

MEOW AND LEE

What!

BILLY THE BELGIAN

Meow, now get on your computer and make the transfer or--

A QUIET KNOCK is heard from the door.

BILLY THE BELGIAN (CONT'D)

Alors! You are expecting someone?

LEE

Uh, yes. Ebony Whyte!

BILLY THE BELGIAN

Merde, open the door. *Vite, vite.*

Lee opens the door but there is no one there. Suddenly CACTUS JACK'S VOICE BARKS from behind Billy.

CACTUS JACK

We gotcha Billy, you slimy fucking frog triple dipping sonofaBITCH!

Billy spins into a combat crouch. But there is no one there but Meow's computer.

BILLY THE BELGIAN

Cactus Jacques!

Meow and Lee leap for her Glock as Billy swings back but it's knocked off the table.

PTTTTWEET! Billy's forearm is hit by a silenced shot causing his gun to fall. Through the door CHARGES the bear of a woman in a *muu-muu* Lee had almost knocked aside at the elevator. She holds a silenced Rugger .22 pistol. Meow and Lee look incredulous.

BILLY THE BELGIAN (CONT'D)

Cactus Jacques?

CACTUS JACK
 (speaks into a Blackberry
 but sound issues from
 computer)
 Goddam, Billy, I swear you look
 just like a hooker who gave me a
 blowjob in Brussels fifty years
 ago. Wasn't your mama was it?

Lee closes the door and Meow retrieves her Glock. Billy holds his bleeding arm.

CACTUS JACK (CONT'D)
 Billy, we've got a problem, you've
 worked every fuckin' side of this
 game. You know the penalty.

BILLY THE BELGIAN
 W...what will you do?

CACTUS JACK
 I'm gonna make your little girl the
 daughter of a Big Fucking Hero.

Cactus Jack turns the pistol to the side.

CACTUS JACK (CONT'D)
 Know what this is?

BILLY THE BELGIAN
 A Ruger .22. With a silencer.

INSERT: CACTUS WHACKING PUTSKI AND SHEWCHUK WITH CAMCORDER
 GUN WHILE PANDEMONIUM SURROUNDS HIM.

CACTUS JACK (V.O.)
 It's more than that. It's the gun
 that zapped Putski and Shewchuk. I
 had it rigged inside a camcorder.

BILLY THE BELGIAN
 You zapped them?

CACTUS JACK
 Yep, but unlike you I'm not
 interested in being a Big Fucking
 Hero. We're called spooks because
 we like to stay invisible. But I'm
 going to give you that chance for
 your little girl. She's an
 innocent, and as the daughter of
 the greatest hero of the century
 she'll be well taken care of.

(MORE)

CACTUS JACK (CONT'D)
I'm leaving one shell in the
chamber and I'm giving you the gun.

Billy looks incredulous but after a couple of beats, nods.
Cactus empties the gun but for one round and hands it to
Billy.

CACTUS JACK (CONT'D)
Use the can. Make it easier for
the maids to clean up.

Billy walks slowly into the bathroom. After a few beats, the
silenced PTTTWTWEET of the pistol IS HEARD.

135 INT. BATHROOM PENTHOUSE CAIRO HILTON - NIGHT 135

Billy lies in the tub, head back. Blood is sprayed over the
wall behind. His hand hangs by the tub, holding the pistol.

LEE
So this piece of shit is going to
go down in the history books as the
savior of civilization.

CACTUS JACK
You kidding? That's the gun used to
kill Boris. Our investigation team
found it in a crevice above the
Valley of the Kings.

1 EXT. RAILAY BEACH AT KRABI, THAILAND - SUNSET 1

Lee and Meow recline in deck chairs. Waves lap at the shore.

LEE
It was smart of you to wear a blue
burqa and not a white one.

MEOW
How so?

LEE
In white I would have spotted you
as a spook right off.

MEOW
I should have saved one for
Halloween.

LEE
Changing subjects, I've decided
what to do with Boris' share.
(MORE)

LEE (CONT'D)

We'll expand the Archeology Department at Moscow University, and offer scholarships and fellowships in his name. What do think?

MEOW

Good idea. And talking about money, you still owe me 1,000 baht.

LEE

I do? Since when?

MEOW

Since I beat you at arm wrestling.

LEE

Yes, but you cheated.

MEOW

But I cheated fair and square. Like Uncle Jack said, I got you here in one piece.

LEE

Uh, I think it was more than just one. What about this morning?

MEOW

You're right. I'll just continue taking it out in trade. I'll become part of your Asian collection.

LEE

That's my girl. I told you I always save the best piece for myself.

The camera pans away and into the sun setting along this gorgeous stretch of beach.

END CREDIT