

The Boston Fracture

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Hervé Jaubert

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By Hervé Jaubert

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This book honors the dedication, unselfishness and bravery of the women and men who put their lives on the line everyday to keep our citizens safe and out of harm's way.

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THE DISCOVERY

October 20, 2011

The sun is high above the azure surface of the ocean. The water is calm, with a long wave swell. A small yacht is anchored with no one on deck.

Fifty feet below the surface, a scuba diver moves in slow motion above a seabed covered with sponges and Elkhorn corals. The water is so clear that the sun's rays pierce the surface and undulate with the waves, forming curtains of light that penetrate deep into the blue sea. The sunlight scintillates as a school of fish swims through and it draws patterns on the scuba diver who floats weightlessly in mid-waters. The diver drifts back and forth, carried by the smooth tidal currents, totally detached from the world.

The underwater visibility is fantastic, sixty feet all around. The vivid colors, the abundant reefs and corals reveal an amazingly rich marine life, where barracudas, French Angel fish and schools of Blue Tangs swim around, undisturbed by the diver.

Everything seems so peaceful, unearthly, out of time. Even the eight-foot black tip shark passing by doesn't seem threatening. Above the scuba diver, at the end of a long trail of bubbles, the boat is rocking gently on its anchor chain, hanging under, going all the way down to the bottom. The diver swims toward the anchor chain and grabs it, then gently pulls himself down. Once he reaches the anchor, he kneels on the seabed and just enjoys the stunning view.

Floyd Allister is alone and at peace. His buddies have already emptied their compressed air tanks and returned to the boat. With more than two thousand dives, Floyd does not need a buddy. Every time he scuba dives, he feels he is *has* to be the

buddy for everyone else, the backup diver. At least when he's by himself he doesn't have to worry and watch the other divers in case something happens or if one gets lost.

Although the underwater world is often hostile, it's unbelievably beautiful, and Floyd enjoys the serenity.

When he first started diving, he never dove alone, but now, thanks to modern technology and his vast experience, Floyd knows he can handle just about anything that comes along. After all, he carries his own buddy: redundant air sources with a small air bottle and a spare regulator just in case the main one fails, and an inflatable jacket to bring him back to the surface and keep him afloat in case of emergency.

Floyd is a senior FBI special agent, based in San Juan, Puerto Rico. This diving expedition is his long-deferred vacation. Although he was raised on the water and lives on an island, nothing suits his contemplative nature more than to meditate underwater. For him, the best vacation isn't to get away, but to get below the surface.

As a kid, Floyd promised himself he'd never get old without having circled the world on a boat. Now at 43 with his insane hours and a demanding Puerto Rican girlfriend, the mother of his son, Floyd feels lucky to circle the island. To get a week to go diving is totally off the charts.

Floyd lured three old friends from his hometown of Boston in Massachusetts to join him on the 48-foot Hatteras he chartered. The boat is moored in Vieques, a mostly undeveloped small island, next to Puerto Rico. With only a couple of docks and one fuel station, it's the perfect get away for boaters and fishermen.

The yacht is big enough so the four buddies can all sleep onboard.

Floyd decided to take his friends to Vieques, only 50 miles away from San Juan, because the small island is located on

the Caribbean Sea side of Puerto Rico and away from the rough surf of the Atlantic Ocean. It boasts awesome diving locations and the brightest bioluminescent bay in the world. Diving at night among the glowing microscopic algae's was a little scary but what a unique and unforgettable experience!

They all left their wives and girlfriends in San Juan where they enjoy shopping and the resort lifestyle, while they dive all day and every day.

Floyd's friends are Bob "Chubs" Winston, a dentist by day and a participant in poetry slams by night; John Colette, an award-winning real estate agent who lost pretty much everything, including his wife and two daughters, as a result of the housing bust; and George Monaco, president of a small bank and bartender extraordinaire, a skill he perfected when they were all working their way through college.

~~~

Floyd swims back to the surface and grabs the boat's ladder. He pushes his mask up on his head, tosses his flippers to John, and climbs on the boat.

"Hey!...we thought maybe you drowned," Chubs says. He looks like your typical tourist. In fact all the 3 friends do: flip flops, shorts and dizzying Hawaiian shirts. The spots they missed with the tanning lotion are bright, painful red.

"So...I'm missing and nobody bothers to look for me?" Floyd asks, catching his breath.

"Nothing personal man" John says "YOU are the dive master".

"Mind give me a hand with my tank?" John helps Floyd unstrap his 40 pounds of scuba equipment.

"And give me my cap."

"Oh, that cap you wear—"

"Yes, my Yankees cap."

"Word gets out I helped a Yankees fan, I'll never get

another referral.”

“We can’t decide if you wear it to piss us off,” Chubs says, “or if you’re some kind of genetic mutant.”

Floyd smiles. He’ll never tell.

George pops open a beer, hands it to Floyd. “Drink this while you shower. I’ll have the chips open when you get back.”

~~~~

Back at the dock, the guys tie off the boat and double check the spring lines. They drop their scuba tanks at the dive shop, walk downtown and follow the music. The evening is a whirl of intoxicating Latin night life: dancing hot salsa with beautiful, dark-haired girls in miniskirts and high-heel sandals, sipping a bit of rum, more rum and a lot of mojitos. As they reminisce, the glory days back at school grow more glorious with every drink.

For Bob, John and Georges it is their first vacation on the island, they realize that although Puerto Rico is part of the US, it is definitely not "America," rather a mix of Caribbean atmosphere and Spanish culture, which they want to enjoy to the fullest.

Finally, Floyd, always the pain-in-the-butt organizer, says, “We really need to get back to the boat. I want an early start tomorrow.”

“No way.”

“Damn!”

“Boo. Bad plan.”

But no matter how loud the Boston boys protest, Floyd herds them along. “There’ll be more fish to feed at the reef, caves, and some great photo ops with the overhangs. You’ll have tons of pictures to impress the women back home.”

The air tanks are waiting as promised behind the dive shop. A quick stop at a hole-in-the-wall restaurant produces a giant bag filled with chuletas, the local favorite: pork, rice and

beans. Chubs digs right in.

“You know,” John says, “if any of us knew how to cook we could catch fish, cook our own lunch.”

There are no volunteers.

Floyd sighs, shakes his head. Nothing has changed since the old days.

“Slow down, Chubs,” says George as he looks at his friend’s bulging cheeks. “Make sure you leave enough for tomorrow.”

October 23

The next morning Floyd and his friends drag themselves up on deck. No one seems to have much to say. It’s been a great vacation, but the guys feel that sadness you get when a good thing approaches its end.

“I can’t believe we’ve only got two days left,” Floyd says. “We can stay here and get knee-walking drunk—“ says Chubs.

“Works for me!” George exclaims before finishing off his Bloody Mary.

“Come on! Let’s head over to Culebra for some truly great diving. Visibility over a hundred feet there. And if we go ashore, the island’s pretty primitive, and it’s got some terrific hiking” says Floyd.

John frowns. “I show property all the time. Hiking through apartments and brownstones is one thing, but hiking through a jungle...”

“Not a jungle. It’s arid, which is a good thing,” Floyd says. “There are no rivers.”

“So?” Says George, “I am not going to swim in no damn rivers.”

“You idiot, no rivers means no sediment runoff, it means crystal clear water around the island..”

Chubs looks unconvinced. “I’m too old for hiking. I prefer having attractive, bikini-clad young women bring me foamy drinks with tiny umbrellas.”

“Don’t be such a pussy,” Floyd says, as he walks over to the helm and turns on the blowers. “You get back to the States, you can go to Hooters anytime. Besides if we get thirsty, I saw a couple really cool tiki bars in the online brochure.”

George sounds like a mountain of gloom as he gives in: “Ok, let’s untie the boat.”

~~~

Early in the morning, they take their boat and leave Vieques to head north in direction of the tiny and very quiet island of Culebra.

“There it is,” Floyd says half an hour later from the helm, pointing to some low rolling hills on the horizon toward the north. “Told you we didn’t even need a chart.”

John looks up from his iPhone. “Says here that Culebra only has about three thousand residents. Most of the place is a wildlife refuge. Leatherback turtles are the celebrities.”

A short time later as the yacht approaches, the hills take on the rusty brown and greenish hue of a dry landscape. Then as the boat moves closer, palm trees and giant cacti become visible. Floyd eases the Hatteras in front of a small, isolated crescent on the far north tip of the island. Through his binoculars, the beach looks small and totally deserted. He can see the aqua waves break and run up on the glistening black-pebble beach. The shoreline is wild and virgin.

“You want to drop anchor?” George calls from up on the bow.

“Let her go. Bottom’s at 75 feet,” Floyd yells. He figures they’re a thousand yards offshore.

As the guys lug their gear to the stern, Chubs’ air tank breaks away from his buoyancy compensator jacket and clangs on the deck.

Floyd grabs the tank, straps it back on Chubs' jacket, shakes his head. "OK, ladies, line up. I want to make sure you amateurs haven't screwed anything up." In no time, he's checked their pressure gauges, tightened their regulators.

One by one they step through the transom gate and jump into the water. At Floyd's signal, they put their regulators in their mouths, deflate their jackets, flip over and swim down.

Once again the view is outstanding, only today is even better than yesterday, due to the increased visibility and the colorful array of marine life that swims and crawls along the ocean bottom. Vibrant orange, glossy black, white and aqua fish dart along the crevices. Crabs wave menacing claws. Jellies drift, their tentacles lifting slowly in the current.

Floyd feels intensely serene. And this feeling is somehow intensified by the rhythmic gurgle of his escaping air bubbles. *It's like being in a church*, he thinks.

He spots a small octopus gliding across the seafloor. Its legs seem almost to bounce in slow motion as they rise up off the sand and reach out toward their next destination. Floyd's mesmerized. Without realizing it, he follows the octopus. An occasional kick of his flipper is all it takes...

As the ocean floor moves beneath his mask, Floyd's astounded once again by nature's easy beauty: the open seashells, the twisted arms of the small coral, the waving ribbons of—

*What the hell is that?!* Floyd asks himself. *What's a car battery doing out here?* As he swims around the battery, he wonders how long before the lead and acid pollute the environment, enter the food chain? *Damn it! Why can't people just think before they go ahead and screw things up?*

After taking a lot of pictures, posing on the seafloor and diving together for almost an hour, Floyd and his friends return to the surface and climb back on the boat. They remove their equipment and relax on deck while they adjust to gravity.

Surprisingly, Chubs is the first to get up. “Hey Floyd,” he says, “You saw that battery down there? What happened to your pristine waters, huh?”

“Still a lot better than Boston; you can’t even see your hands in your soup up there. But the battery— what can I say? Stupid is what stupid does.”

Floyd starts the engines. John and George pull the anchor. Floyd steers the boat closer to the beach, looking for a spot where they can anchor for the rest of the day.

They drop the hook just a hundred yards from the beach, and then launch their inflatable dinghy. They load their gear and climb aboard. John and Chubs grab the oars and paddle toward the beach. They land on black pebbles and gravel, jump out and pull the rubber boat out of the water. They all look around: the beach is beautiful. No people. No roads. No houses. Only silence. Dead silence.

The guys put on their backpacks, check their GPS and start walking. At a bend where the beach curves inland, their idyllic hike comes to an abrupt halt. “What the fuck“ they all exclaim, practically simultaneously.

A huge pile of metallic debris blocks their way! It juts out of the sand like the remains of a crashed satellite. Some sort of machine abandoned in the midst of all this pristine beauty. The guys faces ask: *What’s going on?*

John can’t help it to be sarcastic and tells Floyd:

“Hey Floyd, do you think you can take us to a place free of junkyards and dead batteries? “

Floyd scoffs at the remark, and as the Bostonians move closer to the *thing*, he does a quick 360 scan of everything around them. He has no idea what he’s looking for, but he knows something is wrong, definitely wrong. He stares at the pile of junk, unaware it’s about to take him down a road that will change his life forever.

Floyd and his friends decide the metallic skeleton looks like the remnants of a heavy-duty compressor of some sort. A big one, like those you see on construction sites, hanging from a crane so no one can steal them. Almost the size of a Volkswagen. But there's something different here. Floyd has seen compressors before and this thing doesn't look like one, at least not the common variety. This one has nozzles of some kind, mounted on a round bracket.

"It's actually pretty new," Floyd says. "It's just the salt spray and the dirt that makes it look so bad."

"Vandals?" John asks, rubbing through a coat of ash. "It's been set on fire. Look at the tires."

The compressor, if that's what it is, sits on a wheeled frame. The wheel rims are laced with the crispy remains of burnt rubber tires.

On the ground, coils of pressure hoses have left a trail of carbonized rubber.

Floyd puts a shoulder against the compressor. It doesn't budge. *It must weigh a ton*, he thinks. His analytical mind starts sorting through what he knows. The presence of wheels means it could be moved around, but who brought it there in the middle of nowhere? Who bothered to tow it and dump it on an isolated beach? And for what purpose? There's nothing around that would require the use of a compressor or a pressure washer or whatever it is, especially an industrial-size model. There are no wrecks, no wharfs, no buildings, no houses. Nothing.

The vacationing FBI agent can't help but switch into investigative mode. It's not just out of curiosity. No one, no honest person abandons an expensive piece of machinery on a deserted beach. Something happened here that someone was hoping would go unnoticed...

Floyd scowls. He looks like he's concentrating. Which is the totally wrong thing to do, as his friends immediately start

making fun of him. Apparently, he looks like the new Inspector Clouseau, picking up some garbage on a beach and, with a magnifying glass, searching for some useless clues.

Damn! They want to go hiking, so they grab Floyd by his backpack and drag him away from his pile of junk.

Culebra definitely deserves more exploring and constitutes a perfect getaway for their afternoon. They discover a very dry landscape with hills of low elevation, small vegetation and only a few scattered palms. If they were looking for shade, they would not find any. They walk south, following the intricate shore line. Nature fills Floyd's senses with sights and scents, but he keeps thinking of the abandoned machinery on the beach.

Someone took the effort to destroy it. Maybe it was stolen, and, like a car used in a bank robbery, it was torched to destroy the evidence. But why leave it on a beach? Weren't there better places to hide something on the island? Floyd was convinced there was a crime involved, but what crime?

After hiking for a bit over an hour, the friends come upon a breathtaking sight: Flamenco Beach. It looks like it has been created to be on a post card.

"Ah, you see? Didn't I tell you?" Floyd asks. "No wonder Travel Channel listed this beach as one of the best in the world. Every other resort beach I've seen looks like a dirty swimming pool next to that."

The beach is horseshoe-shaped and half-mile-wide. They can see the small surf break over the reef about a quarter-mile offshore. There's an old rusty World War II army tank, half-buried in the white sand.

John reacts with fake horror: "Oh, nooo! Another piece of garbage for Floyd to investigate!"

The group of friends stops at the picnic area to eat.

"Ahhhh, food!" Chubs says, as he passes out the chuletas they bought the day before.

They spot some kiosks offering typical beach fare and buy cold drinks. What a beautiful day. The perfect vacation memory.

Floyd enjoys the picnic but he's too absorbed by the mystery of the machine they found on the beach to really be "in the moment." He leaves his friends and walks back to the compressor so he can check it out more closely, without his noisy friends goofing around.

Floyd hikes quickly; they have to be back to Vieques before dark, so he won't have much time to investigate. When he gets to the compressor, he takes pictures and types a text message on his mobile. He can't find s brand name anywhere and the serial number seems to have been pried out.

On closer study, the nozzles look quite different from those of a pressure washer. They're mounted on a circular bracket. The machine is powered by a diesel engine, and it's definitely industrial. Probably construction, but it certainly could be for some other entirely different purpose.

"Hey Clouseau! Any clues?"

*Damn!* Floyd thinks. *They're back already.*

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The trip back to the slip in Vieques is uneventful, not that Floyd would have noticed much. He's totally preoccupied with what he's discovered on the island.

He tries not to be too pushy as he ushers the Bostonians off the boat and onto the dock. He promises to catch up with them shortly. "Order me a cerveza, heavy on the hot sauce."

Alone on the boat, Floyd calls one of his FBI friends, Tim, a lovable geek who happens to be the top engineer at the FBI forensic lab at the academy in Quantico, Virginia. Even though he's having dinner, Tim's happy to hear from Floyd.

"No, no problem," Tim says. "I'm alone. Just me and some warmed up mac and cheese."

Floyd tells Tim he needs his expert opinion about an unusual piece of machinery he found on a beach in the middle of nowhere: “I’m onto something, Tim. Trust me. And the more I think about it, the worse I think it could be. It doesn’t make sense. There’s... There’s... something... I don’t know what... but it’s just not right.”

Floyd explains that he found some sort of compressor on the beach that looks completely out of place and that somebody tried to destroy it or cover up. Floyd sends him an email with the pictures and the notes he took.

Tim sounds like he’s glad to have a project to work on: “OK, buddy. I’ll look at it right away and contact you as soon as I find something.”

Two hours later, Tim calls him back. Floyd’s still on the boat, where he’s been online, trying to identify the device, with no success.

“Floyd!” Tim practically shouts. “Seems you found yourself a pretty unusual piece of machinery down there, I need more details, but it looks like you got an ultra-high-pressure water-jet cutting machine of some sort. But what’s it doing in the middle of nowhere?”

“That’s my question exactly,” Floyd says.

Tim explains to Floyd that certain high-tech industries and some machine shops use these computerized high-pressure water-cutting machines. They can shoot a very thin water-jet at 60,000 psi to cut patterns on inches-thick sheets of steel. They work like lasers, but with no heat and no sparks. He says that some construction companies use this type of machine to cut pipelines, metal or concrete beams on site, which is why they’re mounted on wheels, so they can be transported anywhere. One last thing, they’re pretty scarce because their use is so specialized.

Floyd remembers hearing about high-pressure water-jets

that could cut through metal, but still he's amazed that pressure applied to water could have such extreme capabilities. He also had no idea that these types of machines existed in mobile units so they could be taken to construction sites to cut hard materials.

Tim gives Floyd a list of things to check on the machine, and also asks him to take close-up photos of certain parts of the water-jet. Tim agrees that if there are no construction sites around, finding one is unusual, especially on a remote island.

Floyd may be on vacation but he is a cop; he's wired to detect crimes. At this point, anything is possible. Thieves may have stolen the water jet to cut through a safe to steal its contents or something.

Suddenly, Floyd hears his friends calling his name. They've come back for him. "Come on, Floyd! You're missing the party."

As they head downtown, Floyd shares his thoughts, but no one seems to pay the slightest interest to his story. After all, they say, if there are no construction sites on the beach, it's not like somebody left it behind and is missing his equipment.

Floyd tries to block out their laughter. That's exactly the point: what is a machine like that be doing there if there are no construction sites for miles around? There may not be an active construction site on the entire island.

Chubs pats Floyd on the top of the head. "Put it to rest," he says. "The night is young and so are we...sort of. We should be out there, drinking heavily and dancing the night away with beautiful women!"

"Dancing with beautiful women? Are you nuts?" Floyd asks. "My girlfriend finds out, she cuts my balls off."

They all laugh. George says, "Our women are in San Juan. What happens on Vieques, stays on Vieques!"

"OK," Floyd says. "But on one condition. Tomorrow morning we go back out to Culebra. I've got a few things I want

find out about that machine. Chubs? George? John?”

They all nod *Yes*. And in no time they're at a crowded bar on the beach. They sit at a table, looking at the dancers.

“Man, every one of these women is beautiful. There must be something in the water,” John says.

“And how long have you been divorced, John?” asks George.

A brunette approaches the table and bends toward Floyd, revealing amazing cleavage. He can hardly breathe. She locks eyes with him as she moves even closer and pulls him to the dance floor. Floyd is the handsome one of the group, five-nine, black hair, athletic build, in his mid-forties.

“Venga y baile conmigo, guapo,” she says.

Floyd's Spanish is barely passable so he responds to her in English: “Not as beautiful as you.”

The woman blushes; smiles and looks at him sideways: “You need more Spanish lessons, you know. I can teach you.”

“I know. I should—” Floyd suddenly realizes he was being too literal, too much a cop. The woman wasn't talking about talking.

Floyd is fascinated as she executes a Mambo on the beats of *Ti mon Bo*. She swings her hips in perfect harmony with the rhythm, expressing her femininity and sensuality in a very glamorous way. Floyd can't help it but to bust a move and join her on Tito Puente's drumbeat. She is teasing him, shakes and whips her long hair at Floyd.

“Wow, look at her, she's a hottie. Too hot to handle. She's going to eat him alive,” says Chubs.

“Nah, I wouldn't worry about him. He's been trained. His girlfriend is a Puertorriquena.” George smiles at his own joke.

With the bar being so crowded, it doesn't take long for all the guys to be dragged to the dance floor by exotic Latinas.

October 24

Floyd is on the boat with his friends heading to Culebra. They approach the beach and drop the anchor at the same spot. They jump in the dinghy and row to the beach.

Chubs, George and John stand around the machine, listening to Floyd's explanations. Although they couldn't care less about his theories, they're curious to see how the brain of a cop functions. According to Tim, it's the burned out device is a water-jet cutting-machine. But to cut what? There is no safe. No concrete blocks. No steel pipes. No beams. No wreckage of a boat or anything else and no structures whatsoever.

Floyd doesn't know how long the machine has been there, and it's too remote a location for anyone to have noticed it. It's been badly damaged by fire, hammering, prying and pulling, but, based on its condition; it doesn't seem likely that it's been exposed to the elements for months and months. Looking around, Floyd notices concave scrapes in the ground coming up out of the water and not too far from the machine, as if someone had dragged something heavy out of the water.

Floyd gets an idea: "Hey guys, you see those tracks over there, coming up out of the water? Let's suit up and check them out, see what made them. Maybe something interesting is waiting for us under the surface."

At least this time, Floyd doesn't have to coax anybody because they all like scuba diving and it sounds like treasure hunting.

Floyd and his friends go back to the Hatteras, which is anchored in 10 feet of water a couple hundred yards from the beach. The guys put on their gear and, after a quick equipment check, jump in the water. The ocean is crystal clear and so beautiful they enjoy the swim over to the machine.

But this time they are stunned by what they see.

Huge bombs lie on the seafloor. Not even Floyd with all his years in the FBI had ever seen anything like this before. The scary sighting is not the treasure they were expecting, but bombs, like the ones military planes drop at war. They are old and covered with marine growth and corals. As the guys swim toward the beach, they see even more bombs; the bottom is literally peppered with bombs and artillery shells, merged by corals and rust.

“Where the hell are we?” they are thinking.

They don't want to touch anything. They don't know how dangerous those bombs are. Suddenly the water is not friendly anymore, and they feel as if they are diving in a poisonous liquid.

Floyd swims even closer to the beach and that's when he finds what was dragged in the water: several of these big aerial bombs, very similar to the others, and cut in half, with a rope still attached to them. But they look newer than the other ones lying around, without as much marine growth attached to them. Floyd figures they must be 10 feet long.

Floyd gets closer and takes pictures with a small underwater digital camera. He breathes heavily. Adrenaline flows in his blood stream. Emotion is high.

He goes back and convinces his friends to return to the boat: they could not handle the stress and diving at the same time. Floyd, with his many years of diving experience is far beyond the line that separates recreational diving and professional diving, where diving becomes a second nature so that he can focus on something else and control his emotions.

Back at the bombs, Floyd can see through the cutout sections that the bomb casings are empty. What is left is a cut-open steel shell. The cut line on the body of the bomb reveals a half-inch thick clean metallic edge, while the rest of the casing is covered with rust. When Floyd puts everything into the

equation—fresh metal cuts on bomb casings, ropes and a water-jet cutting-machine—all in less than a 100- yard radius, he’s pretty sure he knows what was going on, but this is one of those times when a detective doesn’t want to be right. Because if he is...

Floyd has seen enough. He swims to the beach and walks out of the water, back to the machine.

In the final analysis, Floyd is a law enforcement officer. He knows that bombs mean explosives, and not just any explosives: high- grade military explosives. He knows that the illegal possession or transport of explosives is a crime punishable by 20 years in prison. He knows that whoever took the explosives was willing to tamper with live ammunition regardless of the risk.

What concerns Floyd even more is that the bomb casings are empty and the explosives nowhere to be found. Could it be that someone recovered the explosives for something else, like to make larger or smaller bombs and use them to commit unthinkable crimes?

The fact that the bombs have been brought onto the beach, cut open and then dragged back in the water shows a hidden purpose. Moving the bombs was a difficult task, requiring several persons. This water-jet is heavy, and so are the bombs, in the thousands of pounds. If the bombs were live, it was extremely dangerous work. If they weren’t—well, what would be the point cutting up dud bombs?

Floyd assumes that because of the effort involved the bombs were live. And if the bombs were live, where are the explosives?

There are too many unanswered questions and, regardless of the answers, Floyd knows it’s a serious situation. He’s done thinking. He’s convinced he is now looking at a crime scene.

Floyd waves to his friends on the boat, signaling them to

come ashore. When they arrive, Floyd tells them what he's thinking. They are very nervous and talk all at the same time.

Floyd tells them to wait on the beach, maybe walk around some to calm their nerves.

He goes back to the boat because in their excitement they forgot to bring him his backpack. Floyd pulls out his phone and calls the FBI office in San Juan to report what he found. He reminds them that, vacation or not, as first officer on the scene and senior FBI agent, he gets to be the lead investigator. He requests a team of four agents to fly in with the bomb squad. When he's done with the FBI, he calls the local police on Culebra for assistance.

Within two hours, the tip of the island is completely sealed off and swarmed with law enforcement officers. The island looks like it's under siege. Three police helicopters, two police boats, the US Coast Guard, there all there. It doesn't take long for the residents to notice this abnormal activity, and they start gathering outside the perimeter.

The FBI office in San Juan requests to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to issue temporary flights restrictions around the island for safety reasons. Floyd's justification is the presence of live ordinance lying under the water and the risk of explosion, which could blow any of the circling helicopters right out of the sky. But Floyd's real interest is to keep the helicopter news at bay and prevent them from snooping around and taking pictures with telephoto lenses. Any photos or videos from the site could tip off anybody following the news that whatever they did and tried to cover up on the island had been uncovered and is now being investigated.

There are no underwater investigators in Puerto Rico, so Floyd calls his friend Cole, leader of the Underwater Search and Evidence Response Team (USERT) at the FBI Miami field office

for help. Cole is the head of a twelve-diver team, highly-trained and expert in retrieving evidence from underwater environments. They are the only team in the region that can conduct an underwater crime-scene investigation and process any recovered evidence. Cole tells Floyd he and his guys are ready. They'll pack, load up and leave for Culebra the next day.

Back at the water-jet cutting machine, before the investigators start doing their job around the device, Ortiz, the San Juan bomb technician, searches for explosive devices or bombs on land. He checks that the machine has not been booby trapped. Ortiz comes back to Floyd and tells him the area is safe; he found bits and pieces of explosives around, remnants of the bombs, but nothing dangerous.

But this means only the land is safe. Ortiz is not qualified to check for bombs underwater. He's not a diver and in the water is a complete different issue. Floyd knows that no one at the FBI is qualified but still, the area under the surface has to be cleared of any dangers and explosive materials before FBI divers can search the seafloor for evidence, so Floyd accelerates the procedure.

He calls the Department of Justice in Washington, DC, and requests the Department of Defense intervene by sending US Navy Explosives Ordnance Divers (EOD) unit down to Culebra to render safe or remove the unexploded ordnance and bombs lying around on the ocean floor so that the investigators can search without blowing themselves up.

The closest unit is EOD Mobile Unit Six at the Naval Amphibious Base in Little Creek, Virginia. Lieutenant Matt Saunders quickly assembles a team of four divers; they grab their gear and load a Hercules C-130 with underwater bomb disposal equipment. Six hours later the huge Hercules lands on the small strip in Culebra, adding to the drama and the mysterious presence of law enforcement. Floyd's discovery is turning into a major event.

October 25

On the island, detectives are interviewing local residents, who resent being questioned without being told why. Everyone on the island think there is something bad going on with the Navy bombs. Everybody knows about the bombs: they've been the reason behind controversies, lawsuits, riots and protests in Puerto Rico ever since Vieques and Culebra were used as a bombing range for the US military.

As Matt and Floyd meet each other and the FBI agent shares what he knows so far, Matt reveals that he's been to Culebra before for the same reason. "We've been removing those bombs for years, Floyd. We know what's down there. The Navy owned the place for a hundred years. They had a permanent camp here and used the island for weapons training and a bombing range."

"Then what happened?" Floyd asks.

"The Navy bombed the crap out of this place. Everywhere. On land. On the water. So the locals started to complain about it. One day a stray mortar round landed on a Culebra beach where children were playing. That's when the shit hit the fan. All the political parties in Puerto Rico rallied against us. They demanded that we cease our operations and leave their island. Floyd, we got 60 years of practice blowing up the island and its surrounding waters with whatever munitions, bombs, rockets and artillery shells we had. You name it, we fired it. But then, in 1975, if I remember right, it was all over. All training activities were terminated and transferred from Culebra to Vieques"

"And everybody knew that?" Floyd asks.

"Pretty much every local fisherman...and the local media, of course." responds Matt.

Floyds tarts to understand why the suspects were

interested in the areas beneath the blue waters of Culebra. The presence in shallow waters of confirmed explosive waste and thousands of unexploded bombs, or UXO (unexploded ordnance), was a golden opportunity to recover untraceable military explosives.

Floyd wants to learn all he can, so he asks, “But why so many...so concentrated? I was diving out there. Bombs all over the place. Was it a dump?”

“No,” Matt says “what happens is when ordinance are dropped, about ten to thirty percent of them don’t explode. Or they misfire. And after years and years of live training and misfires, they accumulate. We removed the unexploded ones on land, but not from under the water, none of them actually. So it amounts to a lot of live ordinance laying there on the seafloor. Everybody on the island has been complaining about it, from fishermen who caught bombs in their nets to environmentalists who complain about the chemical contamination and cancer risks due to the large amount of explosives in the water. Of course the last part is propaganda because the explosive doesn’t dissolve in the water.”

Floyd feels his emotions surge; his heart’s pumping fast. He understands what he saw around Culebra resembles more of a munitions graveyard than a Caribbean paradise, and he realizes there is far more than an environmental issue here. Someone deliberately picked up large unexploded bombs, took them to an isolated beach, cut them open with an elaborate system, removed the explosive, put the empty bombs back in the water and abandoned the water-jet cutting-machine. This intent to conceal is more than worrisome.

Floyd shows the machine to Matt, who knows exactly what it is. He’s surprised to see one on the beach because he and his divers use the same technique to dispose of unexploded ordnance. In fact, Matt actually brought the same type of machine with him.

“The technique is quite confidential, even classified,” Matt tells Floyd. “Whoever did this might be former military.”

The EOD divers get their equipment ready, suit up and enter the water. They start with canvassing the area. The whole area has unexploded bombs on the seabed. They locate the cut-open bombs and, a little farther out, they locate the fuses. The bomb-casing tips have been cut off with the fuses still attached to them. The fuses have been removed but they are still live. Two OED divers pick up the fuses, bring them on land and put them in a hole outside the area. One of the divers picks up the lines he found attached to the bombs and brings them to the beach. The diver comes out of the water, his eyes are sparkly; he’s really excited by his job.

He tells Floyd that the cut bombs are safe; they are just empty casings and that he can pull them out of the water.

“The other bombs lying around are live. We’re not going to dispose them at the moment, so don’t let anyone touch them. The bombs are dangerous only if moved, but you can swim around.”

Police officers tie up the lines to a 4 x 4 SUV and pull the string of empty bomb casings out of the water. Matt identifies the four bombs as MK 84 aerial-combat bombs. “Nine-feet long, 2,000 pounds,” he recites from memory.

Matt looks more closely at the bombs, speaks to Floyd: “These bombs were live, not those practice concrete bombs. Hate to say it, Floyd, but you’ve got yourself a bomb maker on the loose.”

Matt explains to Floyd that the bombs are normally filled with 1,000 pounds of tritonal, a mixture of TNT and aluminum powder that gives them more brisance. He tells Floyd that the explosive has been collected and that the fuses have been removed in the process, which shows some expertise on the part of the perpetrators.

“We put the detonators in that hole over there; we’ll blow them up later.”

Matt looks concerned. “Floyd,” he says, “This was no amateur night; these guys knew what they were doing.”

Floyd swallows hard. Four bombs mean that two tons of explosives have been recovered by an unknown group for an unknown purpose.

George, John and Chubs are still sitting on the side, watching what is going on, like three little boys. The investigators approach and ask them for their shoes. The Bostonians are none too happy about leaving the island barefoot, but don’t protest when told it’s necessary to rule out their prints as part of the investigation.

Floyd apologizes, says he feels so sorry that their vacations are ending up like this. He explains he had no choice; he had to report the discovery. Unfortunately, whatever’s going on here most likely has some really significant implications.

But apart from the shoes, Floyd’s friends are actually really excited.

“Forget it, Floyd,” John says, a smile on his face. “Are they going to take your shoes, too? It’s only fair.”

George: “It was awesome, buddy. We had a great time. We’ve got a lot to tell the folks back home. Thank you, man. Really!”

“It’s show time, just like in the movies. And we’re part of this thing now,” says Chubs. “I’ve always wanted to act. Keep me in mind when you sell the rights.”

Floyd has a surprise for his friends, the cherry on the cake. “Once you guys get your gear from the boat, an FBI helicopter will take you back to the airport in San Juan. You can buy shoes there with your ladies, if you don’t have extra in your luggage. Enjoy the ride. We’ll keep in touch. But don’t say a word about this.”

The guys look sad, like they've lost the chance to talk about the most exciting thing that had ever happened to them.

"OK," Floyd relents. "Just tell your beautiful women...if it means, well, you know... Just don't let it go viral."

The trio beams, punches each other on the shoulders, hugs. A ride in an FBI chopper...priceless!

The unusual police activity has alarmed the tiny local population, who call reporters. They try to sneak into the site, but the police stop them and send them home. Everybody wants to know what's going on, but Floyd requests complete secrecy from his investigators. To contain rumors and control the situation, he gives a statement to the reporters:

"Several explosive items presented a certain danger, and since this area is under the jurisdiction of the US Fish and Wildlife Service, they contacted us and asked us to render the area safe. Consequently, it's temporally closed to the public until further notice. Public safety on the rest of the island is not of concern at this time. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter. Now please leave the area and go home."

Of course, nobody believes Floyd's aseptized speech but at least he's confident that whoever recovered the explosives will not hear about his investigation in the San Juan papers the next day.

October 26

The Miami FBI diver team arrives with its specialized equipment. It consists of eight forensic specialists, whose expertise includes technical diving. They are quickly briefed by the EOD Navy divers: there are so many unexploded bombs down there that the area is dangerous and the divers should not touch them. They can collect evidence all around but if they need anything on or attached to a bomb, they will have to ask the EOD divers to get it for them.

The event has turned the tiny, beautiful black-pebble beach and the seafloor into a crime scene. The aquatic environment and the presence of explosives present a number of challenges for the crime scene investigators, and it's very difficult to recover intact evidence due to the corrosive nature of sea water, currents and marine life.

The divers most likely will not be able to lift fingerprints on objects that have been submerged. The sweat glands which cover the friction skin surfaces of finger and palms and which are responsible for fingerprints secrete primarily water containing water- soluble solids. Thus, latent finger- or palm prints deposited by gland secretions get dissolved when the surface bearing such impressions is submersed in water. The divers could get lucky only if the latent finger- or palm prints survived the water submersion because a non-water-soluble contaminant—like oil, paint, or butter from a sandwich—was present on the fingers or palms, or already present on the surface touched by the hands.

The FBI divers get in their dry suits. Unlike the EOD divers, they use a suit made of vulcanized rubber with tri- or quad-laminated seals that are resistant to most hazardous materials and will keep them free from contaminants that may leak from the numerous bombs. They put on their full-face masks, similar to those worn by the fire service, with two way communications. Their standard issue full-face mask can protect the divers from coming face to face with contaminants.

The divers check their compressed-air-tank gauges and enter the water with their sophisticated equipment: mapping system, underwater metal detector and tools to dig, brush, cut or collect. They look like explorers from another planet. They start mapping the area, utilizing meticulous high-tech methods similar to those used in underwater archeology. Their goal is to map the precise location of every piece of evidence recovered and to carefully preserve each piece.

The divers pull yellow lines from spools to set up a grid on the seafloor that covers the underwater crime scene. Then the divers swim in line above each lane looking for evidence, slowly, with gentle fin strokes to avoid disturbing and moving sediments on the bottom. Every time they spot something of interest, they attach a line to a small buoy to mark the location. Each diver writes on plastic slate the details of his findings and then takes pictures.

After four hours of diving, they have collected and bagged all the evidence recovered on the seafloor: some tools, torn rubber bags, bomb parts and many other items that Floyd will send to the FBI laboratory at Quantico for forensic examination. He also has the water-jet and the bomb shells crated so he can send them along.

Unfortunately, investigators have not been able to lift a single fingerprint from the cutting machine. They took molds of tire tracks and footprints around it, but Floyd doesn't think any of that will be relevant because the scene has been contaminated by so many people.

Floyd pulls his phone out of his pocket and calls his chief at the FBI office in San Juan: "Robert, we've got someone who has recovered two tons of totally untraceable high-grade military explosive. This guy definitively knew what he was doing. He's a pro and he's disappeared. I hope he's made some mistakes. I'm starting with the locals, but I don't think this is a home-grown problem. I'll get back to you."

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Floyd stands on the beach in the middle of the crime scene with all the other officers standing around looking at him. He's walked back and forth so many times his shoes are filled with sand. There are evidence tags all over the place and already his mind goes to his first suspects: the local independistas. These are the local political parties and other Puerto Rican groups that

campaign for the independence of Puerto Rico.

The FBI has been watching Puerto Rican independista groups for years. The real threat could only come from only one of them: Los Macheteros, the Machete Army, a clandestine and terrorist organization with cells in the US and supported by Cuba. In the past, they claimed responsibility for numerous bombings and armed robberies. Although the group lost its leader, Filiberto Ojeda Rios, after he was killed in a shootout with the FBI in 2005, it's possible, Floyd figures, the group may try to resurface and launch attacks against the US to force the autonomy of the island.

But Floyd also thinks what he's seen goes too far beyond the scope of these separatist groups and he is legitimately concerned about international terrorism. After the killing of Osama Bin Laden in May 2011, law enforcement agencies have been put on alert. The new leaders of Al Qaeda had threatened to launch a large-scale attack on the US.

Floyd knows that whether it's domestic or international terrorism really doesn't matter. The bottom line is there could be very well some whacko out there building bombs with the explosive taken from this beach. And with the amount of explosive involved, any attack could be devastating...to both the civilian population and the government. Floyd makes the investigation a top priority. If there is a terrorist plot against the US, he's got to find it. If Al Qaeda is behind it, it has to be big.

## THE INVESTIGATION

**October 27**

Floyd is back in San Juan at the FBI field office. He walks down the hallway with his preliminary report on the Culebra missing- explosives investigation. He knocks at the door of the Director.

“Ahhh, Floyd, please come in. Have a chair. What you got?”

Floyd places the report on the Director’s desk and states his preliminary conclusions: “Well, the evidence shows that four suspects have managed to recover 4,000 pounds of military-grade explosive and took a great deal of effort to conceal it. I believe that there may be a terrorist cell somewhere preparing an attack in the US.”

“Hum, not so fast. What do you have to bring up a terrorist threat?”

He explains that, given the quantity of explosive made available to these individuals, the risk is major. A full investigation should be launched nationwide to find and stop these criminals before they use the explosives for a bombing.

The Director agrees, and what particularly concerns him is the high level of expertise that was required to recover the explosives from unexploded bombs, and the fact that the perpetrators tried to cover up their tracks. He orders Floyd to lead the investigation.

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Two days later, Floyd receives a call from the forensic lab in Quantico. They have identified the machine and the manufacturer. The lab confirms it is a mobile high-pressure water-jet cutting machine.

Armed with this preliminary information, Floyd sends his

first inquiries to the manufacturer. He gets a response quickly with the full specifications of the machine and the list of everyone who bought one during the last six months. Although the serial number had been removed from the water-jet, it wasn't difficult to find out who ordered the one shipped to Puerto Rico because it wasn't the kind of equipment that is sold in high volume.

Only one cutter was shipped to Puerto Rico and it was delivered on July 13. The purchase was tracked down to a person named Emilio Rodriguez, with an address in Culebra.

"Damn," Floyd says even though he's alone, "it's not going to be easy to find this guy. Half the people in Puerto Rico are named Rodriguez."

A search on the credit card transaction shows it had been issued by a bank in Brazil. It immediately raised a red flag, who in Puerto Rico would use a bank account in Brazil?

Because it's a US territory, shipments to Puerto Rico are not considered exports, so there's no custom paperwork. There are, however, both a local tax and a municipal tax. The only records available show that an Emilio Rodriguez presented himself, paid the taxes, and picked up the 2,000-pound machine with a pickup truck and left. A license-plate number was written on the delivery slip. Floyd asks the local police to run the license plate and to look for the truck on the island.

Floyd's surprised how quickly the report comes back. It provides an address in Culebra and a name, along with the make, model and color of a vehicle. The name matches the name on the delivery slip.

October 30

With a suspect's name and an address, Floyd scrambles a SWAT team and flies to Culebra with a warrant to search the

house and arrest anybody inside. Three helicopters land in the area. Floyd locates the house. The SWAT team regroups and approaches the house. They are all dressed in black with strap on body armor and helmet. They carry entry tools, shields, guns, assault rifles and move in coordinated steps. This anti-guerilla dressed up assault team is a frightening sight for the peaceful island.

At 18:15 Floyd gives the “go” to the SWAT team. They burst the door and storm the house.

“FBI! FBI! Search warrant! Nobody move!”

There’s a middle-age couple inside, absolutely terrified. They find themselves roughed up, stripped down to their underwear, handcuffed and carried, like sacks of potatoes, outside the house. Floyd finds their IDs on a table and runs a background check. They clear OK and are released immediately. But they are frightened and stand outside the house still half naked. They are German tourists who have rented the house for two weeks. *It was a bad call*, Floyd thinks, *but necessary*. While the couple waits outside, the FBI agents search the house.

The search of the house doesn’t turn up much: fingerprints are all over the place, but the house had been leased to so many people since and cleaned up in between that there are no tangible prints that could reveal anything significant.

Floyd calls the landlord who comes down to the house and shows him a copy of the lease to an Emilio Rodriguez. Floyd questions the landlord about the individual who leased the house.

“What can you tell me about the tenant?” asks Floyd.

“Well...he paid cash and he was a very good tenant.”

“What do you mean?”

“He did not trash my house. He never had a party and the neighbors never complained.”

“Did you notice anything unusual?”

“Well...to tell you the truth, the guy was a little weird. He lived like monk or something. There was no music, no girls, no family.”

“He never had visitors?”

“There was another guy with him, that’s all. And just before they left, two other guys showed up. You know, people here are a bit nosy. They look around. When visitors come to the island, it is for a purpose: fishing, vacation, good time, or even work. But for these guys, no one can tell why they came to the island. The neighbors, they told me these guys were Arabs.”

“What makes them say that?”

“Mr. Emilio pretended to be Brazilian, but he is an Arab. I could tell. And the neighbors...they heard them speak in Arabic. When they saw the neighbor, they continued in Portuguese.”

“So, they were hiding?”

“Oh yes... They were hiding something. They were up to no good. And now you are here, so they really were up to no good.”

“Did you find anything in the house after they left?”

“The only thing Mr. Emilio left behind is a tourist’s booklet of Puerto Rico.”

The landlord hands the brochure to Floyd. He takes it and bags it. He might get lucky with some prints. But the timing is bad: the machine was delivered four months ago. It’s a long time. The suspect is no longer on Culebra and the 4,000 pounds of explosives could be anywhere now.

Since the water-jet cutting-machine was found on Culebra, it was either delivered there by truck or transported by the suspect himself. Either way it had to go on the ferry. Because Mr. Emilio picked up the machine with his own car, it was most likely that he drove with the machine onto a ferry to Culebra and then to the house. The ferry arrival is the big event of the day for the tiny island, so somebody must have seen them.

People confirm that they saw two persons driving a pickup truck towing a big compressor. Being island-friendly, they tried to engage in conversation with the new arrivals but they drove off. Now it all makes sense to Floyd. The suspect picked up his machine, got onto the ferry, landed in Culebra, drove off road through the island's rugged terrain and brought the equipment to the remote beach where Floyd discovered it.

Floyd drives around the island with a partner to investigate further. They have a description of the pickup truck and they ask around if anyone remembers anything. Culebra is a very small island. Everyone knows each other. People remember Emilio. "The Brazilian guy," they called him. And "the rich guy," because he was spending a lot of money on equipment and to charter a boat. But he lived like a monk with a friend.

"A boat? What boat?" Floyd asks.

"He chartered boat, down at the port," the locals respond.

Floyd is intrigued and runs to the dock. He talks to boat rental agents and finds the owner, Louis, who chartered the 48-foot Sea Ray to Emilio. Floyd asks Louis if he can search the yacht. He also wants to see the charter agreement and know everything about Emilio. The documents show that Emilio chartered the boat without crew for a month and paid cash.

"One month? This guy chartered your boat for one month?"

"Yes..."

"At 3,000 dollars per day?"

"Huh? Yes."

"Hell! That's 90,000 dollars! Damn, I rented my boat for one week and I paid 10,000 dollars already! You did not go easy on this guy."

"Huh. Yes. But he paid cash," says Louis.

"So...a guy pays ninety grand for your boat, cash, and you don't report it?"

“Hola, oh, oh yes I did. I filled up the IRS form when I made the deposit at the bank.”

“It’s OK, Louis. We are not after you, OK? And then what, nobody asked you anything. What about the police?”

“Well...you know...it’s a small island here...nobody cares, and the police...they just good for parking tickets.”

Floyd is pissed. He tells his partner, “Bureaucrats! We have a banking system in place to track individuals engaged in criminal activities with large cash transactions and they do nothing, a surveillance should have been set up on those guys” He turns to Louis “...And what was he doing all this time?”

“I don’t know. He took the boat out almost every day. He told me he was scuba diving around the island with a friend.”

“Did you believe him?”

“Yes. Every time he came back he went to the scuba store to refill his tanks.”

“But what was he doing? Spear fishing? Photography? Did he take scuba students?”

“Oh, I asked him once. He looked at me with a nasty face. I did not ask again.”

Floyd thinks he knows exactly what they were doing, they were diving on un-exploded ordnance to recover the explosives.

As Floyd is inspecting the boat, Louis asks him, “Do you remember those Dutch tourists who were murdered on their boat?”

“Oh yes...I remember. The Coast Guard found their sailboat after an extensive search. About 300 miles away, with all the victims onboard shot dead. What a tragedy...Why? What does it have to do with Emilio?”

“It happened during the same period!”

Floyd thinks back to the murders. Gruesome. Made the news worldwide. And now that he thinks about it, his gut tells him they might be related to Emilio, but he doesn’t know how.

Floyd asks Louis, “Just to eliminate this possibility, do you think they could be drug related?”

“No way. I mean, we have bad guys here, but they kill each other. They would not do that to tourists. No way.”

“Yup...I agree.”

“After they found the boat with those poor dead tourists, everybody on the island was grilled by the police for weeks. They finally arrested some unemployed guys here, accusing them of a robbery gone bad,” says Louis.

“Yeah...I know. They were released,” Floyd says. “It’s still under investigation.”

“But these foreign guys...many people on the island were wondering what they were doing...diving around almost every day and they never brought anything from the sea, not even fish.”

“Huh? Really?”

“Yes. And when Mr. Emilio returned my boat, it smelled like rotten meat in there. The guy told me it was fish blood, but I didn’t believe him. They never brought fish. They didn’t even have fishing rods or spear guns on the boat, just scuba stuff.”

Floyd thinks there might be a link between the murder of these tourists and Emilio, so he asks for the police report. Maybe these tourists saw something and got caught up at the wrong place and at the wrong time. The police report has no explanations and no leads. The report doesn’t mention anything about Emilio. The police report states that the boat disappeared on August 7 and was found August 16 with 2 couples, raped, beaten and brutally murdered. The report describes a horrific crime scene and tells of unspeakable violence. The boat had been found powered up, auto pilot and contact on, but the engine had stopped after running out of fuel. It was a clear indication that the boat had been set on a course to the Atlantic Ocean and left running until it would run dry.

The forensic report, supported by blood splatter analysis,

mentioned that the two women were shot on the sailboat, while the two men had been shot somewhere else within the same time frame and transported on the sailboat. The time of death was confirmed on August 7. No weapons were found on board and the forensic reports indicated the bullets came from three different guns.

Since the victims were found on a boat with no one else on board, Floyd thinks another boat must have been involved. He thinks it's possible that Emilio's boat was the one, so he calls his office in San Juan and asks that a forensic team search the boat that Emilio chartered.

The next day, crime scene investigators show up with their equipment and go through the boat. They lift panels and floorboards, take samples, swab surfaces, spray luminol and look at everywhere with ultraviolet lights and special lenses. Luminol is used by forensic investigators to detect trace amounts of blood left at crime scenes. Blood exhibits chemiluminescence with a striking blue glow under an ultraviolet light. The investigators also find traces of TNT. The crime-scene technician comes out of the boat, spots Floyd on the dock and walks over.

"Floyd," the tech says, "the boat is soaked with blood and smeared with TNT. We have to impound it." He starts to leave, stops. "Oh, yeah, we also found this behind a console inside the cabin."

The technician hands Floyd a small plastic evidence bag with a USB flash drive inside.

Floyd's heart leaps. This could be a significant break.

Floyd approaches Louis and says, "Sir, I'm sorry to have to tell you this, but your boat is now a crime scene. I have to impound it. And we found a memory stick inside your boat? Do you know where it comes from?"

Louis is pissed. He looks at the small black USB drive and says, "I've never seen that before. I don't know what that is

other than it goes to a computer. I don't use computers on my boat. I'm just a fisherman." Louis walks away, talking to himself.

Back in the boat, the technicians take samples of blood droplets, which are all over the cabin and underneath the floorboards, despite a cleaning attempt. When they're done, Floyd collects all the evidence bags and sends them to the forensic labs in DC.

Because the island is so small and options are limited, Floyd is easily able to track where Emilio was buying his groceries. He wants to check on his habits and patterns for clues, and to try to build a profile. Among other Culebra customs, the locals eat a lot of pork. The store clerk remembers that Emilio never bought pork, not even once. In fact, the one time he was offered the chuletas (pork chops) special, he looked disgusted and stormed out.

Floyd is well aware that Muslims don't eat pork. The neighbors mentioned that Emilio was Arab. Emilio Rodriguez sure doesn't sound like an Arab name, but at this point Floyd's not about to discount anything.

Floyd returns to his office in San Juan, mulls over what he's learned and continues his investigation. It seems that Emilio stayed on the island for a couple of months, first alone, then a friend joined him and later two more individuals came. In the end they left all at once. They didn't fit with the usual tourist profile. Floyd can't find any witnesses who can provide any names for the other guys.

Floyd orders a nationwide airline-passenger-manifest search. The results show that an Emilio Rodriguez flew out of Puerto Rico to New York on August 18. On August 28, an Emilio Rodriguez flew from New York to Charleston, South Carolina. Floyd assumes it is the same Emilio because he's the only one who bought his tickets cash on both occasions.

Over the last six months, there are nine instances of

people with the name Emilio Rodriguez who traveled to or from Puerto Rico. Eight of them are consistent and accounted for: these people left and returned, or came and left, and paid with US credit cards with US addresses. The one Emilio who left Puerto Rico on August 18 is suspicious because there are no records of him flying in. It's possible he could be a Puerto Rican who never traveled before, but then how could he have placed an order online to buy the water-jet machine and pay with a Brazilian bank account? This action confirms to Floyd that he is not a Puerto Rican resident. Floyd also remembers locals calling him "the Brazilian."

The fact that Emilio was a foreigner with no entry records at Immigration means that he entered the US with a different passport and under a different name.

Witnesses say there was another individual with Emilio, so Floyd crosschecks the passenger manifest lists for all San Juan-New York flights on August 18 and all New York-Charleston flights on August 28, which are the days Emilio traveled. Floyd gets a break: there's a passenger who flew out of Puerto Rico to New York the same day as Emilio but on a different flight, and then the same passenger flew in the same plane with Emilio from New York to Charleston.

"What are the odds? I'm betting they had to know each other. Makes sense, huh?" Floyd tells the three other agents gathered in his office. "And listen to this. The name of the passenger is Ahmed Abdul Latif. Not exactly native Puerto Rican. Explains why they never bought pork chops. I want a copy of his passport...yesterday."

The FBI extends the nationwide airline records search and finds an Ahmed Abdul Latif who traveled to Puerto Rico on July 8, so now Floyd's convinced he's identified the second individual who was with Emilio.

Floyd believes that Emilio came from Brazil and that he

entered the US via San Juan with another identity. Then Emilio traveled to New York and never returned to Puerto Rico. Floyd realizes that, if Emilio is still in the US, there won't be an exit record from San Juan or from the US for his other identity.

Floyd knows that Emilio rented the house on Culebra from June 25. To find out the other alias Emilio used to enter the US, Floyd checks with San Juan Immigration to see who came to Puerto Rico in the month of June with a visa or under a visa-waiver program and who is still in the US.

Floyd gets a long list: students, non-immigrant visitors for temporary stay, specialized workers, and immigrants for permanent residence. Floyd assigns investigators to track every one of them.

Floyd also gets a list of visitors who came under the visa-waiver program. These visitors can legally stay up to 90 days as non-immigrants without a visa. But now with today being November 1st, Floyd knows that none of these visa-waiver recipients who entered Puerto Rico in June, four months ago, *should* still be in the US. As a law-enforcement officer, Floyd is very well aware that Puerto Rico is one of the favored ports of entry used by illegals to get into the USA.

Early in his FBI career, Floyd trained airport security staff how to “read” certain personal behavior that would indicate, with a high degree of certainty, people with legal or other problems. He trained security guards and airport employees to casually ask travelers very specific questions like where they were traveling to or from, and what their nationality was. Based on the travelers' answers to these questions, but most importantly on their behavior while answering the questions, suspicious passengers were subjected to more thorough questioning, the results of which were kept on file. Hoping to find relevant information, Floyd requests from US airports all the reports that fall within his timeframe.

Floyd is also well aware illegal immigrants often enter Puerto Rico from the sea, with many of these clandestine visitors trying to sneak into the island from the neighboring Caribbean Islands. But asking the CBIG (Caribbean Border Interagency Group) if they have any information from this timeframe won't help. If Emilio sneaked in by sea, they won't even know it. Illegal's who make it are obviously unknown and those who are caught are in custody or have been deported.

Floyd gets records for 36 people who entered the US through the airport and who overstayed their visa. Floyd eliminates people who do not match Emilio's description: women, Asians, blacks, light-color hair. Floyd is down to two individuals: an Italian named Ricardo Paolo Visconti and an Irish named Duncan O'Neal. He gets the passport photos and shows them to the landlord who identifies Ricardo as Emilio without hesitation. Now Floyd has identified two suspects, one with two aliases and a photo, and the other with a name.

November 3

Floyd receives the lab results from San Juan. The blood samples collected on Emilio's chartered boat match the DNA of two of the four victims found dead on the sailboat. So now Floyd has a quadruple murder case to pin on Emilio aka Ricardo Visconti.

Other samples taken from the boat and from the house in Culebra show positive for TNT. The boat contains particles of TNT while the house contains smears of TNT. The tech explains that the boat was used to transport the explosives, but no explosives were stored in the house. The suspects must have had TNT on their hands and fingers, and transferred it to the walls and fixtures in the house. Emilio transported the explosives on his boat and delivered it somewhere and contaminated the house with traces of TNT.

Many fingerprints turn up on the tourist booklet, but right now there's no way of knowing if they belong to the suspects. There is however something that is alarming given the fact that 4,000 pounds of explosives are unaccounted for: someone wrote a short message in the booklet, something in Arabic. The translation is frightening: it means *firestorm*, but most importantly, it also means that whoever wrote that note was an Arab. And what makes it even scarier is the content of the USB memory key.

The forensic report mentions that the memory stick was password protected, but whoever idiot used the key did not change the password; it was still the manufacturer's password. The forensic technicians were able to access it by simply typing *0000*.

The USB key contains a short video message in Arabic. Floyd plays the video on his laptop and reads the translation at the same time:

“Mujahedin! You go now to enemy land for Jihad, you have become part of our holy war against the infidels that have harmed our Muslims brothers for years. The unbelievers and their governments are waging a war against Islam. We are in a historic struggle between the Christians and the Jew dogs in the name of God. You must give to your mission the very highest religious priority for all our good Muslim brothers. You will find many Muslims in America who have deviated from true Islam but they will return to ‘pure Islam’ after our victory.

However, as Mujahedin it is not your role to defend pure Islam's sacred text, or speak of Islam. Do not oppose and do not encourage Islamic attacks in public or even in front of other Muslims! America has spies in our mosques and on Internet. They listen. They watch. You must remain invisible until you strike. Do not reveal yourself until you bring death to the infidels. Hide until you kill the unbeliever whose life has no value, whose

life has no sanctity. Fight the war secretly. Let the soft Islam deceive the kuffar. Watch the American politicians stand for the rights of Muslims. Watch the media separate Islam and radical Islam, as they don't see it is the same. We are defeating them, using their own laws and their own weapons against themselves.

You are ready for Jihad, go to the US and prepare for your mission. Never forget that you are subject to the destiny that Allah has decreed for you. You will live your life trusting in and submitting to Him, until he will command you to fight. Go to America and don't look back. Embed yourself in their society but don't melt into it. Take a local woman and marry her for papers. Assume different identities. Prepare for the operation until martyrdom...and promised heaven.

Allahu Akbar.”

After seeing and reading this tirade, Floyd is now totally convinced a sleeper cell is operational in the US, plotting a terrorist attack.

He requests the NSA enter the word *firestorm* in their database. If anyone includes *firestorm* in a message, email, transmission or broadcast, it will be picked up by NSA computers, traced and analyzed.

Floyd recalls his questioning of the store clerk who made the comment about Emilio's overblown reaction to pork. If Ahmed was with Emilio, and since Arabs do not eat pork; it makes sense. Floyd is now convinced that Emilio Rodriguez and Ricardo Visconti are both false identities and both men are Mahommedan's. And in Floyd's mind, anything that mixes Muslims, explosives and hiding is a recipe for a disaster.

The results of the forensic analysis on the water-jet cutting-machine and the bomb casings come back. There is TNT all over. The tool marks on the bombs confirm that it had been used to cut up the bombs. Since it has been at least three months since the explosives were extracted from the bombs and since

Emilio Rodriguez, the prime suspect, has flown to New York, Floyd is pretty sure that the explosives have reached the US too. But how? Not on Emilio's boat for sure, and you don't put 4,000 pounds in a small package. It could have been shipped the same way the water-jet machine was shipped: via surface shipping. But Floyd doesn't find any records of an Emilio Rodriguez, Ahmed or a Ricardo Visconti shipping anything to the US.

Even though it was unlikely these guys would manage to airfreight two tons and get away with it, Floyd doesn't completely rule out this possibility. Emilio could have used a different name. Witnesses mentioned two more individuals visited Emilio and Ahmed. Unfortunately, there are no records showing how they got there. Floyd has no names but those two guys could have shipped the explosives. Immigration records show that in his timeframe 12 foreigners with Arabic names traveled to Puerto Rico, but none of them shipped anything.

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Meanwhile, Emilio and Ahmed have no idea the FBI found their machinery on the beach, the empty bomb casings under the water and the USB key on the boat. They are far away, hiding in the US and, most importantly, they think they are better than any law-enforcement agency, so they couldn't care less.

Emilio's real name is Najhib Mahmmud Wadi, he is a 32-year-old Palestinian and had immigrated to Brazil after the first war in Iraq. He lives in Foz do Iguacu and like many other Palestinians he fled the fighting and poverty of the Middle East. But he also fled because he is wanted by Israeli security services as a suspect in several bombings.

This Brazilian region was home to one of the most important Arab communities in South America. Like many Arabs there, he was secretly waiting and hoping for the destruction of Israel so he could return. He blended in the Arab community and made friends. Najhib used to meet them at the mosque.

Eventually, his hatred for Israel and America got him noticed by the Imam of the mosque.

The Imam indoctrinated him in radical Islamism and convinced him that Jihad was the only way to heaven.

When the Imam was convinced Najhib would be a good recruit, he sent him to a training camp in Pakistan. Once there, he was recruited by Al Qaeda.

After his training, Najhib returned to Foz do Iguacu, where he married a Brazilian girl, offering her money. He learned how to speak Portuguese and Spanish. With his tan skin, mustache and big dark eyes, he passed for a South American. Despite the need of a wife to establish himself as a citizen; he utterly despised her for her free spirit. He could not stand looking at her because of the way she was dressed, wearing miniskirts and open shirts, showing a voluptuous body. She was a gorgeous woman, tall with long black hair. At home, she was always dancing or making sensual moves on the music playing from the radio. He had to struggle intensely to refrain from beating her for being sexually provocative. He had to pretend to be a good “Western” man until his marriage papers became final.

Once married, Najhib obtained the Brazilian citizenship and a fresh passport. He changed his name in the process. But his problems were not over. His *wife* wanted to be adored. She wanted to hear him say he likes the smell of her shampoo and the color of her eyes. She wanted to be kissed head-to-toe and treated like a girlfriend, but he found it disgusting to kiss her feet. He just could not put her on a pedestal, or even protect her, other than by locking her up in his apartment. He would not buy her flowers or chocolates, or take her to a dinner for two. In bed, he could never satisfy her and blamed it on her for being lusty and too complicated. All he wanted was a \$1.99 per minute peep show and a quick release, when she was looking for sleepless night passion. She wanted to be worshiped and he gave her

harassment for trying to make him commit a fundamental and unforgivable sin: worshiping somebody other than Allah. Eventually, he beat her up, and hit her so hard she ran away to her brothers. They wanted to knife him. To avoid complications, he paid off everybody and left her.

Holding a genuine Brazilian passport with a different identity allowed Najhib to disappear from the intelligence services' surveillance. Foz do Iguacu was also one of the most frequented tourist destinations in Brazil, with many Canadian, American and European visitors. Tourist attractions and the slums along the Parana River were the perfect places for Najhib's gang to run his theft and drug businesses. It was normal routine for Najhib and his mutts to prey on tourists and rob them of their valuables and especially their passports, which in the hands of a terrorist was worth gold.

In most countries, travelers holding European or American passports are not required to obtain visit visas, so a stolen European or US passport is a first-class ticket for a criminal or a terrorist to travel unfettered anywhere in the world, except to the country which issued the passport.

When the visa-waiver passport of a tourist is stolen, the absence of a visa makes it almost impossible to track it, which makes life easier for criminals. The country which issued the passport flags it as stolen for its own records, but it does not go any further. Interpol is swamped with hundreds of thousands of reports of stolen passports. Unfortunately, it lacks the coordination with other countries to share this data. So no country really knows what other countries passports have been stolen.

Between the three TBA countries, Najhib snatched hundreds of passports. He didn't use or sell them all. His goal was to increase the flow of stolen-passport data to make it more difficult for Interpol to keep records and track the stolen



passports which he personally used. His stash also provided a reserve of passports which Hamas and Hezbollah's operatives could use for their travels.

The terrorists would look for a resemblance between the physical description of a terrorist and an original passport, so there would be no need to alter the passport or change the picture. In the worst case scenario they would do some makeup artistry on the bogus user to increase the resemblance.

Thanks to his passport scheme, Najhib had, to his "genuine" Brazilian passport, three different passports he could use for travel: one from Germany, one from Italy, one from Greece. All had matching credit cards.

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Ahmed Abdul Latif is 38-years-old and lives in Toronto, Canada. He was born in Dubai in the UAE. His father was an Emirati married to a Pakistani woman. Ahmed grew up in Dubai and traveled many times to the UK, Canada and Pakistan, where Al Qaeda recruited him in 1995. He was trained in Pakistan and later fought in Afghanistan with Osama Bin Laden until he was captured by US soldiers, with a gun under his gown. Under questioning, he did not say anything, not a word. They did not know who he was, so they roughed him up a little. They blindfolded him with a towel over his head and waterboarded him in a warehouse guarded by wild dogs.

Ahmed managed to escape by climbing up the warehouse walls and ran away from the dogs. He fled into Pakistan across a river on the border. During his escape he was wounded by a mortar round. He had shrapnel on the left lower abdomen and was saved by a farmer once he got on the other side. Later, an Al Qaeda commander drove down and picked him up. Impressed by his actions, the commander recruited him.

Ahmed, his friends and members of his group were part of the London-tube terrorist attack that occurred in July, 2005.

Luckily for him, his name somehow never showed up anywhere.

He traveled to Canada where he married a young woman, and then he lured her to Dubai. Back in his world, he locked her up and convinced her to wear the veil, to cover her face and her body head-to-toe. She accepted this because he had told her it was to protect her. She never knew who he really was until she realized Ahmed's house was actually her prison.

Ahmed was an evil man trying to gain control over his wife's mind, forcing her to memorize portions of the Qur'an overnight. As it turned out, he hated anything and everything except for himself and Islam. He abused and took advantage of the love she had for him for his own benefit. His wife strived to be perfect, night and day. She strived to please Ahmed in all his religious demands, but all he wanted was her to be a sex slave and a free ticket for his Canadian citizenship.

Ahmed had been brainwashed since his youth. He was indoctrinated with the idea that he had the distinction, purpose and empowerment for Jihad. He was told he had been chosen by Allah to fight infidels. He belonged to those who are convinced that it is beautiful to die for Allah, and that it was the sure way to paradise.

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Now working together, Najhib and Ahmed are unaware that the FBI has issued a nationwide all-points bulletin (APB) regarding Emilio Rodriguez, alias Ricardo Paolo Visconti alias Emilio Rodriguez, and Ahmed Abdul Latif. They don't know they are wanted for murder and unlawful possession of explosive material or that they are considered armed, extremely dangerous and suspected terrorists. They are blissfully unaware that every law enforcement agency in the US has been provided with their descriptions.

## **November 4**

Floyd sends a report to the Department of Justice to warn that a terror cell is likely operating in the US and preparing a large scale attack with 4,000 pounds of explosives. Based on Floyd's report, the Department of Homeland Security issues an Elevated Threat Alert.

In response to his report, Floyd receives an older CIA top-secret report about a terrorist threat against the United States. A shocked Floyd discovers that according to the CIA, Al Qaeda is planning an attack in the US from the water. According to the memo, a terrorist cell is active in the US, but no one knows about their state of readiness or where they plan to attack. Floyd heart pounds in his chest; he believes he has uncovered the cell the CIA is referring to.

To Floyd, it's easy to see the connection between the CIA report and the recovery of two tons of explosive from a Navy training site off Culebra and his four suspects. The CIA memo asserts that terrorists might be developing a plan to launch their attacks with one or more suicide submarines ramming into targets on the water. What bothers Floyd most about the report is the plan's delivery system.

"What the hell," he says out loud, "Submarines? What kind? And where would they get the crew?"

Floyd wonders about the possibility of Chinese or North Korean diesel subs being bought illegally. He's aware that in US waters, patrol boats monitor the surface surrounding nuclear plants, cruise ships and oil tankers. Many times, floating barriers prevent boats to getting too close, so a suicide attack with a surface craft could be fairly easily thwarted. But he's unaware of any existing measures that would stop a submarine. The CIA report sends a chill down his spine. The news couldn't be worse.

Floyd asks the FBI Director to contact the CIA to

immediately arrange a meeting with the CIA officer who prepared the report. Together, they can share information and work as a team to find the terrorists. The next day Floyd receives a call from a deputy director at the CIA:

“Hello, Floyd. My name is Chance Flanagan at the CIA. I think we need to talk.”

“Agree...I can meet you tomorrow.”

## November 6

Floyd flies to Langley to meet with Chance at the CIA’s Office of Transnational Issues. The sign on his door says: Deputy Director for Intelligence. As Chance stands to introduce himself, he seems to be immovable, rooted in the ground like an ancient oak tree. Floyd is completely impressed when he hears what Chance has to say about his 30 years of experience as a master spy.

As their conversation continues, Chance paces around the room with a get-the-fuck-out-of-my-way attitude. He looks at Floyd with piercing and emotionless eyes.

“You did a pretty good job down there in Puerto Rico. It seems that we are after the same guys,” says Chance.

“Thanks. Yes, it looks like it so far. And what are you in charge of now?” asks Floyd.

Chance smiles. “I’m in charge of whatever it takes to eliminate threats against the US, and don’t-tell-me-about-it operations.”

“Oh. Black ops.”

“No... Black ops are black. My ops have no color. They don’t even exist.”

Chance points Floyd to a chair then sits at his desk.

Chance explains to Floyd that he has been working on this threat for six months, since May, 2011. “I was getting

Intelligence reports about Al Qaeda planning a large-scale attack on US soil with a weapon of mass destruction. Big enough to disrupt the country, politically and economically.”

Floyd leans forward, listening intently.

Chance continues: “My intercepts show that Al Qaeda wants to strike twice with one operation. I’m not sure if it means coordinated attacks to kill as many civilians as possible, or if it is only one attack designed to have a domino effect, kill people *and* ruin the economy. Regardless, the threat is frightening because the attack is aimed at shifting the world power to countries ruled by Islam.”

“They’re aiming pretty high,” Floyd says. “Two tons of TNT could pack a wallop, but I’m not sure it would qualify as a weapon of mass destruction.”

“No, those two tons, it’s just the match.”

“Just the match?”

“Al Qaeda is always on the lookout for ways to acquire a WMD, preferably a nuclear or chemical weapon, which they’d smuggle into the country and detonate. Problem is, they can’t get one. And even if they did, the intelligence networks and controls in place would detect it before the terrorists had a chance to launch their operation.”

“OK. So this means...?”

“Because terrorists don’t have and can’t get a WMD without being detected, they want to turn something into one. But for that, they need a lot of explosives to use as a triggering device. That’s where your TNT comes in.”

“Like 9/11,” Floyd says. “They used fully-fueled airplanes as missiles. The impact was the trigger. Something that wasn’t a weapon killed thousands of good people. Bastards.”

Chance smiles grimly. “I’ve been collecting threat scenarios where Al Qaeda turns something that’s already in the country into a WMD. We’ve got proof Al Qaeda is exploring

attack options like blowing up a coastal nuclear power plant or a chemical plant to create an environmental disaster. They've looked at sinking cruise ships on the high seas, blowing up an oil terminal, hijacking a tanker and blowing it up in a heavily populated area. In these scenarios, Al Qaeda triggers the explosion either from the inside of a hijacked ship or by having a large vessel filled with explosive materials ram into it. Your two tons explosives give them the booster charge."

Floyd leans back in his chair. "In your report, all the scenarios have one thing in common: they're all waterborne."

"Exactly! Bravo, young man!"

*Young man?* Floyd thinks. *Who does he--*

Chance continues: "The waterborne aspect was reinforced when we learned that Al Qaeda leaders gave instructions to a *naval* sleeper cell to attack the US with a WMD. Very basic instructions but with a high objective. There would be minimal control from Al Qaeda and little communication with the cell to avoid leaks and detection by intelligence agencies. Also, I have information from other sources that Al Qaeda is planning an attack using a submarine."

"I saw that. A submarine makes it a whole diff—"

"Intel confirms that some of these guys are well-trained: Iranian midget subs, combat diving, sabotage."

Floyd says, "My suspects in Puerto Rico fit the profile: divers who know how to operate a boat, recover unexploded ordinance underwater, and enter and leave the country undetected. I'd say they're very operational. But I don't know about the submarine."

"I can tell you they're looking for one. When I received the naval cell information, the mission had *already* been given a go. It means the cell is already operational, autonomous and embedded in America. For some reason the director here is reluctant to give me the OK to take more drastic action. Every

time I come up with a plan, the he always tells me: “Chance, you’re always looking for a chance to take chance.”

“No disrespect meant,” Floyd says, “but maybe he thinks your drastic actions are a bit too drastic, sir.”

“Don’t *sir* me. That’s an order. Understand my ops are always drastic. Is there another kind? I’m the last resort against our enemy. My motto is: *When in doubt, kill first. So America sleeps well.*”

Floyd nods. The guy’s overbearing, but he seems competent. Floyd asks the deputy director, “Have you seen the suspect names in my report before? Do you know who the mastermind is?”

“I don’t recognize the names, but I’m almost certain the commander of the naval cell is Hassan Khalil Mansoor.”

“What have you got on Hassan Khalil Mansion... whatever?”

“He’s a 52-year-old piece of shit, full-fledged member of Al Qaeda and Hamas operative, a tried-and-true terrorist. We figure he masterminded numerous terrorist attacks on US forces. He’s been wanted by us and the Israeli Mossad for years. I put undercover agents on his ass. They tracked him between Dubai, Europe and South America, but he always vanishes before we can put our hands on him. Recently, he was spotted in South America, dealing with Colombian drug traffickers, but right now I have no clues on his whereabouts.”

As Floyd hears Chance’s physical description of Hassan, he’s reminded of the man on the video he recovered from the boat in Vieques. Floyd decides to play the video for Chance.

When Hassan’s face comes up on the screen, Chance points his finger: “It’s him. That’s the motherfucker. Definitely Hassan. Shit! Where’d you get it?”

Floyd explains how he found the video.

Chance says, “The guy’s from Jordan, grew up in

Lebanon, studied civil engineering in France.”

Chance pauses for a moment, decides Floyd needs to know the full rundown. At the CIA, Hassan is known to be a cold blooded killer, a death lover with a morbid thirst for executions.

During the civil war in Lebanon, Hassan made the use of a chisel in the most horrific way as an executioner of the vilest kind. He used to strap a terrified and screaming, blindfolded victim into a chair. Usually the victims had been kidnapped, or were a hostage, or someone who'd been sentenced to death by his militia. Hassan would place a chisel on top of the unknowing victim's head and then—WHOMP!—drive it into his skull with a hammer. Then he'd hold the head forward to direct the stream of blood gushing out of the wound away from him and in front of the victim. He said it saved him a bullet and he liked to feel the body jolt as the chisel thrust. And then Hassan would go on with his daily routine as if he had just opened the morning mail.

Hassan fought in Afghanistan in 1985. There he met a young Saudi named Osama bin Laden and that is when he became an Al Qaeda member. It was reported two years later that bin Laden put him in charge of Al Qaeda naval operations, not that there were many naval operations. About all he did was to create a small force with a few boats to smuggle weapons into Gaza or Lebanon for Hamas military.

Chance pulls pictures from a file and shows them to Floyd: Hassan in frogman gear; Hassan standing on a midget Iranian submarine.

“We turned one of his operatives. He told us that Hassan travels back and forth between Dubai in the United Arab Emirates and South America, where he runs a weapons-and-drug-smuggling network to finance his operations and Hamas. I think that's where he operates the terrorist cell from, South America.”

“You mentioned a submarine. Drug runners use them,” Floyd says.



“Oh I am sure he must have tried to acquire a drug sub in Colombia. We can’t confirm that he got one.”

“If he did and he used it to pick up the explosives off Culebra, that would explain why we can’t find how they got off the island.” Floyd suggests.

Chance nods as he mulls it over. “Well, yes, it is possible. Puerto Rico is halfway to the US from Colombia. But my source tells me Hassan doesn’t have the submarine yet, or if he has one, it’s not from Colombia.”

“Humm. I’ve got to believe my suspects Emilio and Ahmed, along with the other two that I have not identified yet, are part of Hassan’s cell.”

Chance looks pleased. “It’s a little early to jump to conclusions, but I think you’re right. My informant says that Hassan’s cell has four guys. You’ve got four guys and you’ve identified two of them already and they had a video of Hassan, it’s very compelling. You want a drink?”

## THE CELL

The CIA had learned about Hassan's naval-operations cell from a young Muslim radical who had been captured by US Navy SEALs during a covert operation in Pakistan. The informant told everything he knew after a 30-minute session of waterboarding. He was talking so fast the interrogators thought he would have sold out his own mother. He knew about the cell because he had volunteered when Hassan was recruiting his mujahideen. He was turned down but he saw Hassan select 12 men from a pool of 50 volunteers, 20 of whom Hassan already knew and 30 were new radical Muslims turned over by Islamist groups and Imams from all over the world.

The informant said these groups and Imams served as a breeding ground for new terrorists. They recruited and indoctrinated young men in their mosques for years and seeded them with radical ideas so they could eventually become Islamic fighters. And when the fresh Islamists were ready, the Imams were sending them to the Middle East to become mujahideen.

Hassan chose his recruits from those Muslims who had been displaced all their lives; specifically, young men who grew up in a different country from where they were born, and who were living as expatriates somewhere else. As a result, the recruits had no standing at all in the host societies where they lived. What they all had in common was maritime experience, the same cosmopolitan background, the same urbanity, the same facility with languages and computer skills. Most lived in America, Canada or South America.

But these recruits had no imagination and no ability to think for themselves. Regardless of the question or situation, all responses were provided by the Qur'an, which they read every day for at least an hour. All ideas came from clerics and other Islamic preachers, who had developed their irreversibly

brainwashed minds. All these young men had lived, as far they could remember, under strict religious teaching, with at least three hours of Islamic lectures and prayers every single day, with no days off for good behavior. When they became full-grown adults, the recruits no longer had the capacity to think outside the Qur'an, nor could anyone talk them into challenging what they believed.

Hassan selected recruits with different educations, so they could complete each other with their specialized mechanical, communication, security, or management skills. He trained them in Pakistan. He indoctrinated them further, tested them continually and he took care of their families, which he viewed as a redundant means of control. He gave them the confidence and peace of mind that came from knowing that when they died in a military operation, their families would be taken care of, with money and support. For Hassan, the social networks and the tight bonds with relatives and co-cell members were the most important tool to keep his operatives motivated in a singular direction, isolated from the rest of the world.

Eventually, Hassan chose the best four operatives out of the 12 recruits to constitute his operational clandestine cell.

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The other two terrorists of the sleeper cell that Chance and Floyd don't know about are Yusuf and Abdullah. They are hiding in the US.

Yusuf Farouk Abdulmutallab was born in Pakistan and grew up in Jeddah in Saudi Arabia. Then he traveled to America where he lived almost a decade, pretending to be a student, taking advantage of the foreign-student visa program. He settled in a Muslim village in South Carolina called "Islamville," which was populated mostly by Pakistani immigrants.

Not only was Islamville a safe haven for young Muslims, but it was also a covert paramilitary compound for Islamic

radicals. There Yusuf got the opportunity to participate in guerilla and weapons training, right there, inside the United States. Motivated by their desire to be politically correct, local authorities tolerated this state within the state. Local residents were vehemently opposed to this concentration of “alien, swarthy Muslims” who refused to assimilate and rejected Western culture. They protested to the mayor, saying such a concentration of Muslims was a social threat and a time bomb, but were ignored.

As far back as he could remember, Yusuf was a devout Muslim. He used to go to the local mosque almost every day. It was a meeting point, a place where he received radical Islamic teaching. A place where he was scouted by the United States based Imam Abdul al-Naisaburi who was a Wahhabi cleric and a fanatic devoted to an extreme brand of Islam practiced dominantly in Saudi Arabia. The mosque itself was built with Saudi money.

Although a guest in the US, the Imam advocated for the imposition of Sharia law in the US. He advocated for forcing the courts to adapt to the Muslim standards and to practice Sharia law. He was already operating a parallel justice system very similar to Sharia law where he was settling women’s complaints and judging crimes committed within Muslim communities. The settlements reached by the Imam often meant perpetrators were able to escape the US justice system and long prison sentences. Victims often received large sums in compensation or had their debts cancelled. In return, they were also required to swear they would not take their case to any US court.

The Imam once declared to a reporter: “It would not even come to my mind to follow the principles of the American legal system.” Amazingly, his position did not bother the authorities.

The Imam’s extreme ideology considered all “non-believers” to be infidels and American to be the followers of the devil.

Yusuf asked the Imam one day how he could manage to be a guest in America and preach against America at the same time and not be deported.

The Imam responded, “Yusuf, one of America's greatest strengths is the openness of its society. But it is also one of its greatest weaknesses, which we use against them. America places great value upon transparency and honesty, and Americans assume it is the same with us. So they believe we have the best intentions. They believe that what we say is what we think. But we only say what they want to hear so we can gain traction and expand our cause.

“We use their legal system to guarantee our expansion in the US. We scare those writers and broadcasters critical of our Islamist actions with costly legal action against them, on the grounds of discrimination or inciting hate. We use their freedom of religion to develop Islam. We use our right to respond to force Islam into the US schools and universities to defend Islam against accusation of terrorism every time there is a terrorist act where Muslims are the accused. When our Jihadists attack America, we win twice. First, we beat them with the attack and we kill infidels. Second, after the attack America gives me the opportunity to defend and promote Islam and say that Islam has nothing to do with the attack. We use their cultural system to label anybody who is critical of Islam an Islamophobe.

“The truth is that, at this moment, there is nothing in the US legal and cultural system that can stop us from making the US an Islamic nation in a near future.

“We manipulate the public perception of radical Islamism to get more support and to silence Islamophobes. We make people believe that Muslim terrorists are only misinterpreting Islam.

“We manipulate international opinion to push anti-Americanism sentiment, which brings to us active supporters

against the US policies overseas.

“And thanks to our efforts we win more generous financial donors for our Jihad to establish Islamist ideology as the dominant global force.”

At the end of his speech, Imam Abdul told Yusuf that Jihad or support of Jihad was a Muslim duty. When the Imam mentioned that suicide bombers were martyrs worthy of the highest praise and reward in the eyes of Allah, Yusuf immediately felt he wanted to be part of it. After years of brainwashing, Yusuf realized that it was his destiny to be a Jihadist, a holy warrior to force the Jews out of Palestine and the Americans out of Muslim land.

The Imam asked the potential recruit, “Yusuf, if you really want to be part of the holy war against the kafirs I will send you to Lebanon. I have a very good friend there who can show you the way to join the mujahideen. Is that what you really want?”

Yusuf responded, “In the name of Allah the merciful and his prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, I want to be part of the Jihad. Oh Imam, please send me to this holy warrior.”

The Imam replied, “You are young and blessed by Allah, young Yusuf. Our Jihad needs men like you to fight the obstacles to the establishment of Islamic rule over the world, so we can see one day an Islamic state across America that suppresses of all other ideologies, movements, and decadent beliefs.”

The Imam sent Yusuf to a mosque in Lebanon and Hassan recruited him. For six months he received training in Pakistan. He learned commando techniques, scuba diving, weaponry and shooting. He practiced maneuvering on boats and clandestine sailing. He was already familiar with boating and navigation because he used to go fishing on the Red Sea when he was young, but he developed more clandestine skills with Hassan, such as how to sneak in and out of India by boat from Karachi.

Abdullah Mansoor Al Sharaf was the youngest recruit. He

was in charge of security and communications. He was from Syria and grew up in Lebanon. He was working part-time in a computer shop in Beirut when he was recruited. He spent most of his time spreading radical Islamism over the Internet: visiting Islamic websites, posting on forums and talking in chat rooms. He also used Facebook as a platform to reach out to Muslims in general because he did not want to limit his Islamic propaganda to the elite Muslim society on Jihadist websites.

He referred to himself as a cyber Islamic warrior. He used his computer as a weapon to stir up gullible Muslims and perpetuate the Islamic culture of death and martyrdom. He was very successful at brainwashing young men and converting them to radical Islamism, turning them into mindless bodies willing to kill over Islam, because of it, and for it. He quoted verses from the Qur'an all day long to support his stance on the persecution of the unbelievers.

One of his posts made his intentions very clear: The goal is to eradicate doubt and questions in peoples' minds and convince them that all the answers they need are in the Qur'an. Only radical Islam is dedicated to the conquest of the world by any means possible. There can be only one beacon on earth and it is Islam. The West must be annihilated."

Abdullah was obsessed at establishing Islam as the only cultural-social-religious ideology to dominate all aspects of life, which could be achieved only after all other forms of religions, free thinking and democracies had been eliminated. He believed that Western societies were all creations of the Devil and that removing all temptations and alternatives from the West was an absolute must in order for the world to submit to Islam. He preached the destruction of Israel and of all Western states.

Abdullah used to tell people that it was possible to live every hour of every day and every moment of their lives in a

paradise-like, peaceful environment far from the stress, worry and anxiety of this world just by the reading the Qur'an. He lived a by-the-book life, following the values of Islam, applying the commands and advice given in the Qur'an to every aspect of his life from the moment he got up in the morning until the time he fell asleep at night.

Abdullah received the same training as the others, during which he appeared to be a religious guide, like a young Imam in the making. He did not need to be brainwashed; he was doing it to himself just fine.

Abdullah had never been in America or even in the Western world before. He could not travel directly to the United States with his Syrian passport. He had no valid reason to support a visa application and he would be under scrutiny. Instead, he traveled to Mexico, where getting a visa was no issue at all.

He found himself in a very difficult situation where he had to find a woman and marry her for immigration papers: and not any woman, but an American woman. This was not the Middle East; he had no family to force an obedient Muslim woman to become his wife. He had to seduce one, but he did not know anything about seduction other than it was un-Islamic. As a Muslim there was no such a thing as seduction, his relations with women had always been strictly limited. Abdullah never had any interaction with women in his life, not in school where girls were segregated, not in public where women were not allowed to show their face or to interact with males unrelated to their family and not in social life where women were always excluded. The only women he got intimate with were prostitutes. With them, the seduction only went as far as "How much?"

Abdullah did not have the will or the persistence to pursue a woman. To begin with, he didn't think a woman deserved to be pursued. Consequently, he preyed on young American women of Mexican origin. He looked for weak girls, those he could

manipulate to marry him so he could get a green card. His main tools were money and authority. Fortunately for him, he spoke Spanish fluently, was good looking, tall and skinny with frizzy hair with a thin mustache, a good talker, and had plenty of money to flash to look rich. He would try on a girl and when it didn't work out, he would go to the next.

Eventually, he met Jessica Sanchez in the resort city of Acapulco. She was working in the US and was on an extended vacation in Mexico, visiting her family. Abdullah played the handsome exotic provider, paying for everything. After a few months, she became dependant on him. He purposely raised the quality of her lifestyle, which she loved couldn't afford on her salary. He created needs she did not have before, needs she would never be able to fulfill if he left her. When he asked her to marry him, she accepted right away. They got married in California and nine months later he was granted a fraudulent green card, claiming to be a legal permanent US resident.

Abdullah moved to San Diego, California, where Jessica worked, and he rented a bigger apartment. He lived a double life: part-time with his wife; part-time living alone in another apartment in Los Angeles, where he established his sleeper base. To justify his absences, he told his wife he had to travel often for his business.

Like the other members of the cell, he had to acquire guns, so he asked his young wife to buy a gun for him. He explained to her that as a foreigner and for his business, he needed a gun for protection.

Jessica was living with a terrorist and she never suspected anything. One day she went to a gun show with him to purchase a Glock 45 under her name. A big caliber gun with a high power stopping bullet. A few months later, Abdullah bought another gun the same way.

He had also been looking for an assault rifle for some

time: Something that would allow him to get through bullet proof vests to gun down cops if the group was attacked. They were difficult to find. When they were easily available, it was because the source was a police informant. Abdullah knew there was a big risk of falling into a sting operation while trying to buy an illegal gun on the streets. But at one point, an opportunity presented itself with a corrupt commercial gun dealer, a Federal Firearms Licensee (FFL), who was selling weapons illegally on the side. Although Abdullah needed only one or two assault rifles, he had to buy 10 Kalashnikov AK-47s for the deal to come through.

The gun dealer told him, “I trust the guy who buys a case of weapons. I don’t trust the guy who buys only one gun.”

Abdullah closed the deal on the 10 AK 47s. Everyone in the cell had extensive training with them. He also bought 5,000 rounds of ammunition. It was more ammo than they needed, unless they were going to hold a siege.

Once established in the US, Abdullah set up a printing company as a front. He never got involved with the Muslim community and he never went to the mosque to avoid the mosque crawlers.

Abdullah improved the communication system within the clandestine cell. The four terrorists and the commander lived in different places, different countries. Secrecy and secure transmissions were a must for their survival and the success of their mission.

He set up different levels of communications and he taught his co-cell members how to use them. They were simple but almost impossible for any spy agency to track.

For routine messages, they used chat rooms and forums where they “talked” live. They logged on from Internet cafés, registered a temporary user name. Then Abdullah would open a private chat room and they would stay there for an hour “talking” to each other, but always making sure to avoid certain words, like

explosive or *bomb* or *attack*, which could be picked up by NSA computers. For these words they would use code names only known to the cell.

To exchange more important information, they used the “virtual dead drop” system. In the old spy world, a dead drop was a small, hollow secret enclosure, or a hollow object, where a microfilm or message on a small piece of folded paper could be left. The spies did not have to meet in person to exchange the message; one left the message at the designated location; later the other spy collected it. This way they could never be caught together and they didn’t need to know each other.

Today, with modern technology and Internet, the dead drops are virtual. Hassan learned this secret communication technique from the Madrid train bombers. The Madrid terrorists knew that any emails they would send or receive could be intercepted by the police as they traversed the Internet. So, instead of sending messages from one email account to another, the terrorists simply shared one email account. They all knew the user name and password. They would log on from any cyber bar whenever they needed. They used the “save draft” feature of their email service to communicate. One terrorist would write a message and save it as a draft, but he would never send it. When another terrorist later logged onto the system, he could read the draft, amend it or add something in response, and save it again for the other terrorists to read.

With this technique, the messages were exchanged without ever being sent outside the one account. Nothing was sent, which meant there was nothing that could be intercepted. Hassan and his terrorists had their little private virtual forum. They exchanged information without sending anything and no spy agencies in the world would know about it.

To communicate more precise and sensitive instructions, Abdullah introduced steganography to the group. This is a

technique used to hide messages in graphic or audio files. Abdullah told them they should never use cryptography, even though everybody else does, thinking it is safe. But it is not.

Abdullah explained: “In cryptography, your message is encrypted, then transmitted. When you send an encrypted message, the transmission shows that it carries an encrypted message, so somehow it flags itself. Spy agencies can pick it up just because it’s an encrypted message. Then they feed it into their artificial intelligence supercomputers to decipher, and they can catch you. We don’t want that.

“With steganography, it’s different. You use a special software to hide your message in a stupid picture that nobody cares about. The message is not encrypted; it’s just embedded in the picture. When the picture is transmitted, no one sees an encryption. They just see a dumb picture and no one pays attention, no one needs to feed it in a super computer. It goes right under their ugly nose unnoticed.”

Abdullah explained how to use the software and how to email pictures of sunsets, dogs, trees and boring stuff with a hidden message embedded in them. On the other end, when they receive the picture, they know there is more in it, so they extract the message from the picture with the same special software and read it. Abdullah taught them how they could also use sound files in the same way, how they can embed a secret message in an audio track of Britney Spears.

“I guarantee you, cops will skip right by when they hear it’s a Britney Spear’s song,” he told them.

For direct orders or calls for contact or calls for meeting, Abdullah showed them how to use the Craigslist website. It is a form of steganography. He taught them how to write and post a for-sale ad in the classifieds, and how to write the ad in such a way that it would not draw any interest either because the price was exorbitant or because the item had no interest or value. The

ad would contain key words that would constitute the message. The coded meaning could only be understood by the recipient.

HASSAN

After Hassan completed the training of his Jihadists he returned to Argentina, but he wasn't there to tango. He was preparing his operation and running his drug business. He lived in Eldorado, on the Argentinean side of the Parana River in a large villa. As a precaution, he had most of his meetings on his boat, cruising on the river so he could watch and make sure no one was following him and spying on him. He often used a portable satellite phone to communicate from his boat and give instructions to his couriers and to make arrangements to wire money to his operatives in the US and to Dubai to help fund Hamas operations in the Middle East.

He went by the name of Emanuel Ortiz, but people always called him Hassan and everybody knew he was an Arab because he was always talking loud in Arabic on his phone. A thick mustache across his face gave him a nasty look, reinforced by his baldness and long greasy hair on the side.

On his river cruises, Hassan often stopped at pre-arranged rendezvous spots under the cover of the forest to meet couriers and pick up and drop off packages. He would give them envelopes with large amounts of cash, two or three hundred thousand dollars, to deliver to members of his terror group.

The region was just perfect for his criminal activities. He had established a base there and he was running an extensive and very lucrative drug-and-gun-smuggling network. With three countries sharing the same border along a river that ran in between them, it was a very convenient place to hide, smuggle whatever and cross borders without being seen.

When Hassan traveled back to Dubai every other month, it was either from Brazil, Paraguay or Argentina. The different locations made him difficult to track by the spy agencies that were after him. He illegally acquired an Argentinean passport and

always traveled under his false identity. He didn't raise suspicion because he spoke a perfect Spanish and he even looked Hispanic.

Hassan traveled to the US several times, but clandestinely since his real name was flagged and he could not apply for a visa under his false name. He had previously entered the United States from Argentina by flying to the Dominican Republic and then sneaking into Puerto Rico by boat at night. This was fairly easy as the islands are separated by only 80 miles. Then he flew to the US continental on a domestic flight.

It was from Argentina that Hassan contacted the four terrorists he had selected to constitute his terrorist sleeper cell. He told them they had been given the privilege to be the ones to carry out the attack against the enemy of Allah. They all met again with Hassan in Dubai and then traveled to Pakistan for their ultimate training and to learn how to work together. They trained in real combat situations, with weapons and explosives. They practiced counter-surveillance and secret communications. They practiced infiltration and exfiltration, entering and exiting India by sea and by clandestine means.

Hassan taught them how to live in America and how take advantage of the system to establish themselves in the country and hide. He taught them it was an absolute necessity to marry a woman as a means to get immigration papers, buy guns under her name, and use her as a legal sex slave. He reminded them that the Qur'an forbade them to make friends with the unbeliever, unless it was a means to conduct their holy war. No one in the Al Qaeda network knew their identities, with the exception of Hassan.

Hassan traveled often to the United Arab Emirates to meet Ahmed and to move money from his drug business and sometimes to trade weapons. Dubai was a perfect place to have clandestine meetings and to channel drug money. Dubai was the preferred stop over for Jihadists and terrorists. Several times Hassan opened suitcases loaded with cash at the Dubai customs

counter for their routine check, but as long as he wasn't carrying porn or pain killers, the officer did not mind and let him go.

Ahmed lived in Canada. It was easy for him to travel to Dubai as there were no restrictions or scrutiny for passengers travelling to Dubai, like there were in the US.

It was easy for Hassan to meet with Najhib. The fact that Najhib lived in Foz do Iguacu in Brazil was a fantastic opportunity for Hassan to expand his drug trafficking operation. First, because the city was only 60 miles from Hassan's home in Eldorado in Argentina. Second, because both cities were located in the South American Tri-Border Area (TBA) where Brazil, Paraguay and Argentina share the same borders.

To get to meetings, Najhib didn't even have to check with Immigration. He just went down the river on a boat and landed on the Argentinean side. It was a lawless region that operated as the hub of a multi-billion-dollar business in money laundering, arms sales, drug trafficking, and other criminal enterprises, including harboring terrorists like Najhib and Hassan.

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On April 20, Najhib took his boat and went down the Parana River to meet with his cell commander. After three hours on the river, Najhib docked on the floating pontoon and was greeted by Hassan. They drove to his house and drank some tea. It was noon, time for prayer, the second prayer of the day.

They performed *Wudu* together. The ceremony consisted of their mandatory procedural ablutions, running water on their hands, their face, their ears; blowing their noses in their fingers; washing their feet making sure the water reached between their toes. The repeated each step three times. They had to repeat the same ritual five times every single day. Then they stood together, shoulder-to-shoulder and foot-to-foot to pray and prostrate for 15 minutes.

After prayers and Qur'anic recitations, Hassan told



Najhib, “We have to talk about the operation.”

Hassan showed Najhib the list of equipment and materials he needed for the operation. They discussed the budget, the operation would cost a little under 1 million dollar. Hassan explained how he was going to arrange the funding through different accounts in South America, Dubai and Canada.

Then Hassan got more specific: “I need you to get a shitload of explosives, two tons. It’s in Puerto Rico, under the water. Go there and dive on the abandoned American Navy bombing sites to see how you can collect explosives from their misfired bombs. You are the bomb maker of the group and you are experienced in the techniques to recover explosives from the fields. I know you can do it. Inshallah.”

Hassan himself had learned how, during the wars in Vietnam, Laos, Algeria, West Bank, Gaza, and Iraq, rebels and militants would manage to recover unexploded bombs, neutralize them and recycle the explosives to use them against the very same military that had dropped the bombs on them.

Najhib, too, saw how his father recovered explosives from the unexploded Israeli bombs in Gaza, and how he would re-use them in makeshift rockets and bombs. Najhib was born in Gaza, he grew up in the middle of the fighting. His toys were makeshift guns, artillery shell casings or bullets. His playgrounds were blown up tanks. Then he became a Hezbollah operative and later moved to Egypt. He traveled often to Jordan and Lebanon for Hezbollah operations. In Lebanon, Najhib learned from a German United Nations soldier how to cut and remove base fuses and detonators from unexploded bombs, using a high-pressure water-jet cutting-machine. After that, it was safe to recover the explosives by cutting open their steel casings with the same machine.

Najhib had tricked the German soldier to teach him the high-pressure water-jet cutting technique by pretending it was for

humanitarian purposes, for demining and to dispose of bombs in civilian areas. In reality, Najhib was interested in recovering explosives, not disposing them. Then he went to Iraq to defuse and recover explosives from unexploded US bombs and re-used them to make IEDs, the deadly road side improvised explosive devices which killed so many US soldiers.

He lost two fingers during his “career” because of the premature explosion of a detonator. He considered his stumps to be badges of honor, the reward of a long and extensive criminal career in manipulating explosives.

Najhib was very surprised to learn that America had bombing sites in Puerto Rico with bombs just lying around. He questioned Hassan: “Where are these bombs? How do you know for sure they are there? And where is this Puerto Rico?”

“I discovered the bombs by accident,” Hassan said. “I used to sneak into the US through the Caribbean island of Puerto Rico. One time, in 2003, when I was there I was reading a newspaper in a café when I came upon a very interesting article. It said that locals and fishermen were protesting against the US Navy because of the thousands of unexploded ordnance and other misfired bombs the Navy had left underwater and on land around the islands of Culebra and Vieques.

“I remembered Osama’s teaching and Al Qaeda methodology, which is to use the enemy’s tools against himself. Inshallah. I then found extensive and well-documented literature about the type and the condition of those live munitions, which had been dropped on practice targets for years. I learned that a significant number of these munitions did not explode on impact and were never disposed of. The bombs are a gift from the US military.”

Hassan smiled at Najhib. “Listen carefully,” he said. Then he explained that the cleanup of these hazardous areas proved to be too expensive and, potentially, an environmental issue. As a

result, thousands of unexploded bombs, with their explosives intact, were just lying there under the water. Hassan needed Najhib to explore these areas and assess how he could recover these bombs to recycle the explosives. If the recovery operation were successful, the explosives would be totally untraceable, and nobody would know anything

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On April 25, Najhib traveled to Puerto Rico with a stolen Italian passport under the name of Ricardo Paolo Visconti. Once there, he rented a pickup truck and bought a rubber boat on a small trailer. The boat was powered by a small outboard engine. He also rented scuba equipment, so he could check under the water.

He took the ferry to Vieques and put his dinghy in the water. He cruised alone around the island until he came upon the bombing ranges. He put on his scuba equipment and explored the underwater sites. As predicted, he found hundreds of unexploded bombs. They were in less than 20 feet of water. Sometimes there were so many bombs that they were piled up on top of each other. Some were very old and buried; others were more recent on top of the seabed.

After a week of diving, Najhib had marked on a map the locations, the depths, the condition, the number and the size of the bombs. He also noticed that, because the area was so isolated, no one was ever around, watching or monitoring his actions.

Back in San Juan, he put the inflatable in storage to use it later as he knew he would be coming back.

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On May 3, Najhib left Puerto Rico and returned to Argentina to meet with Hassan. He was on the plane when he heard that Osama Bin Laden had been killed by US Navy SEALs. He could not believe it. He was devastated. He felt an immense sorrow...and immense doubt at the same time. Perhaps it was not true.

The next day Najhib met with Hassan. As he approached the front door, Hassan came out. They looked at each other, speechless. They turned their hands to the sky and said, “Inshallah”.

Najhib could only manage a few words: “So, it is true?”

“Yes,” said Hassan. “The dogs killed him. We have lost our spiritual leader and holy warrior. He is a martyr.”

Najhib’s sadness turned to an incomprehensible anger. He wanted to kill everyone in retaliation. Hassan told him he would have his chance to do it.

“The death of Osama does not change anything in our plan,” said Hassan. “It reinforces it.”

Najhib nodded slowly in agreement. The look on his face told Hassan that he was ready to die.

Hassan said, “It’s getting difficult. They kill our brothers, one after another. And I am on their list, and the Jew pigs, they want me, too. We need to strike.”

Najhib punched left palm with his right fist, then—HAH!—snapped his open hand outward, as if striking an enemy.

“You know...they almost got me last year” Hassan continued. “I was in Dubai to meet with my friend Mahmoud al-Mabhouh, a Palestinian commander in the Hamas Brigades. I had an arms shipment in transit in Dubai for them. I was making arrangement with Mahmoud to get the weapons to Gaza, and out of nowhere, fucking dogs from the Mossad killed him in his hotel room. I was in a hotel across the street, they didn’t get me, Inshallah. The Dubai Chief police is my friend, he did not see them coming. It was too late to warn Mahmoud, but he told me to leave immediately because the Israelis were looking for me, too. Now more than ever we have reasons to attack America and stop them and get them off my back.”

Hassan put his hand on Najhib’s shoulder. “Now, let’s get back to our business. Tell me about your trip,” he said.

They went inside the house and sat in the sofa. Najhib confirmed everything about the bombing ranges. He described how he found dozens of 2,000 pound bombs sitting intact on the seabed. He confirmed that it was possible to lift them safely from the seafloor and tow them somewhere where he could open them up and recover the explosives. Najhib said Allah must be with them because the bombs were in a very isolated location. No one would see them.

Najhib said he just needed to buy specific equipment to work under the water, lift the bombs and cut their casings. Then he asked, “What do I do with the explosives. Two tons, that’s a lot. How am I going to bring them to the US?”

Hassan’s eyes sparkled, and with a dry laugh—heh...heh...heh—he responded to Najhib: “That’s the beauty of Puerto Rico, mujahidin. Because it is a US territory, anyone who sails from the States directly to Puerto Rico or from Puerto Rico directly to the States flying a US flag is not required to report to Immigration or US Customs. You can arrive unchecked. No passport control. Nothing. It is just like going on a fishing trip and coming back or driving from Los Angeles to Chicago.

“Yusuf will get a boat and sail to Puerto Rico with Abdullah to help you guys. You’ll hide the explosives on the boat and they’ll bring it back to the US. Nobody will even know they were there.

“Ahmed will fly directly to Puerto Rico and dive with you to retrieve the bombs, so you will all go to Puerto Rico.

“In the meantime, go back to Brazil, do your business and wait for my instructions. You will go back soon to Puerto Rico with the others to get those explosives.”

After the meeting Hassan escorted Najhib back to the river. Najhib said goodbye to Hassan, hopped in his boat and motored off.

Later, Hassan went online and left a message on the

virtual dead drop, telling the others about Najhib's findings in Puerto Rico, He told Yusuf to buy a sailboat big enough to accommodate 4,000 pounds of cargo. The boat, he said, must be sufficiently seaworthy for an ocean crossing. He told Yusuf to register the boat and practice with it in preparation of a sailing trip to Puerto Rico with Abdullah. Hassan also asked Ahmed and Abdullah to pray and mourn the death of their leader Osama.

In the US, Yusuf opened the email account like he did everyday to check for virtual dead drop messages. He read Hassan's message and he started looking online right away for a large, used sailboat to refurbish. Yusuf lived in Charleston on South Carolina's east coast and there were many boats for sale. It took him only a week to find the right boat. To avoid attention from authorities, the police or the tax administration, he purchased a low-priced boat and paid cash, with money channeled through Dubai and brought by Ahmed.

The boat was cheap because it needed an extensive refurbishing and many other repairs. But Yusuf had plenty of drug money to launder, so he was able to refurbish the boat and install new equipment without having to declare the money he was spending on it.

In May, 2011, Yusuf was the owner of a 54-foot motorsailer. He took it out of the water and put it on a local "Do It Yourself" boatyard to have all repairs and renovations done privately. In two months, he had everything fixed and re-painted. He replaced all the sails with new ones, serviced the diesel engine, installed a new propeller, and changed all the dock lines. He repaired all the electrical, updated the interior and the furniture. Yusuf had all the work done by marine workers, mechanics, carpenters, electricians, and he paid them all in cash. There was no paper trail.

By July, Yusuf had a brand new boat with an original bill of sale showing a value way below the actual value, so no one at

the IRS would bother asking him how he bought the boat.

He put the boat back in the water and went to the Department of Natural Resources to transfer the title and register the boat under his name. By then he already had a South Carolina driver's license and a green card to support his application so he got the registration right away. The green card sham had been part of his plans when he established himself in the country. He became a permanent US resident with a fake marriage, as instructed by Hassan.

Yusuf found a woman to marry, or more exactly, one had been arranged for him. She was an American Muslim woman of Indonesian origin and he married her only to take the required path to US permanent residency and circumvent immigration laws. He had no difficulties to fool the immigration officer. He was helped in the process by years of disinformation and political correctness that had blinded American leaders. As a result, US officials were not allowed to screen immigrants to determine whether or not they held Islamist sentiments. It would fall under discrimination and "Islamophobia". Yusuf told the Officer that becoming a permanent resident made him feel that he was being born again, but they were just empty words to hide his true intentions. It didn't matter where he was born, reborn or living in the US. His belief was that Jihad was permanent, global, and not linked with a specific country or citizenship.

The relationship with this woman was fabricated; the marriage was a sham. She was told that to be a good Muslim woman she had to marry him. He controlled her using Islam and money. He paid her bills so she did not have to work. In fact, she was not allowed to. Yusuf was violent and often beat her up using silly reasons as pretexts. He would beat her just because his food was cold.

Another time he came home and saw her watching the movie *300*. He became enraged. He screamed at her, telling her

how bad a Muslim wife she was, and how depraved she had become to watch half-naked men walking in underwear. He reminded her that Islam forbids watching movies if they are not of religious nature. She could not say a word, she was frightened and shaking. He started to beat her up and then he locked her in a closet. She banged on the door, crying and begging him to let her out. He opened the door and punched her in the stomach, she could not breath and she collapsed. He looked at her and he told her: “Ohhh...now you are quiet, woman.”

Then Yusuf slammed the door on her. He kept her inside the whole day and night, with no food and no water. He considered his wife more like a commodity than a person. They did not share the same bedroom. She was not allowed to have friends and especially not male friends. He checked her phone bills all the time to see who and where she was calling.

Yusuf had no friends either, besides the other cell members. He had no relationships, certainly not with a woman whom he considered impure and a whore. Yusuf’s fraudulent marriage had provided him an invaluable cover with total impunity, where he could build up a terrorist infrastructure. The boat was his greatest achievement.

When Yusuf returned to South Carolina after his training, Hassan told him to avoid Islamville and live somewhere else to maintain his cover and to avoid the attention from the police and their spies. He lived in a different apartment from his wife, but he continued to use her address as a decoy for his papers and ID’s. He never returned to his mosque because he was told they were full of “mosque crawlers” (FBI informants). He was afraid he could be spotted if he was seen talking to the Imam. Even so, he prayed five times a day and followed the strict rules of the Qur’an: waking up at five every morning for his first prayer.

Yusuf was a “nobody” citizen. He worked as an IT technician, trying to keep quiet and stay invisible despite his dark



skin and a long beard. He felt he was like a soldier behind enemy lines, hiding and laying in wait to strike. Like the other terrorists in his group, he was a loner, living with an utter hatred for the American society. He was only a pretext for a deadly purpose, he was a plant deeply embedded in the country ready for Jihad. He was the result of three decades of radical Islamism.

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Yusuf was sailing on a regular basis to improve his seamanship. He kept the boat well maintained so it would be available on short notice for any type of action. He knew one day he would be ordered to sail to Puerto Rico, pick up 2 tons of explosives, and sail them back to the US.

As part of his mission, Yusuf needed to acquire guns. Like the others, he used his wife. On one occasion, he went with her to a gun shop to buy a Glock 45 semi-automatic pistol. She bought it under her name. She took the class at the firing range and a few days later, when her application was approved, she returned to the gun shop to pick up the large-caliber pistol. Then she gave it to Yusuf.

Now that he had a gun, she was even more frightened of him. After a while, Yusuf took her two more times to buy guns at two different gun shops. He bought the ammunition at Wal-Mart, a little at a time. After six months, he had stockpiled over 2,000 rounds.

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Hassan had been looking for a submarine for a while, small enough to be able to sneak into a harbor and big enough to accommodate two tons of cargo. Since he was running a drug-trafficking operation in South America, he approached his drug partners in Colombia and asked them about their drug submarines to see if he could buy one or build one to use for his operation. The Colombians were intrigued and concerned by Hassan's request. They didn't want competition in smuggling drugs with

submarines. Hassan explained to them that he only needed one and that it was for his arms-and-weapons smuggling business. Hassan didn't want to reveal his plot for a terrorist attack, so he told the Colombians he needed to smuggle explosives in the US for a big buyer.

In May, Hassan traveled to the western Colombian shore where he met up with narco-traffickers who took him to a clandestine shipyard by boat. It was way up a river and deep in the jungle, infested with mosquitoes and gnats.

There Hassan saw a compound under the cover of the forest and guarded by heavily-armed men. As usual, Hassan was arrogant and cursed everything, from the mud he had all over his legs to the guys who were working there in squalid conditions. It didn't help that they were making fun of Hassan as he was faking to be OK while trying to catch his breath. Overweight with a big belly, he was not fit for a hike in the muddy jungle.

There he was shown a 75-foot submersible being built out of fiberglass and wood to better evade radar detection. It was designed to transport 10 tons of drugs and could carry five crew members on a 3,000 mile voyage. It had a small tower in the middle so the crew could look out and steer the sub with the aid of a GPS.

But it wasn't really a submarine. The boat was actually a submersible that ran just below the surface. It had the capacity to transport tons of cargo, but it was not capable of submerging completely under the water.

Another major problem was that the shipyard was on the western coast of Columbia and, therefore, there was no realistic way to get the boat to the Caribbean Sea. The Columbians told Hassan most of their shipments were going to the west coast of Mexico or to San Diego in California, so they didn't need to travel to the Caribbean Sea. However, due to the demand for trans-Caribbean shipments, they had just started the construction

of real submarines on the east side of Columbia.

Following this lead, Hassan traveled east to the banks of a jungle river on the eastern shore of Columbia near the border with Panama. The “Choco Antioquia” is where narcos were constructing a 100-foot submarine. The boat was powered by an electric diesel and had a cylindrical hull made out of fiberglass and Kevlar. Its conning tower stood about 10 feet tall and it had a periscope and air conditioning. It even had a toilet. The vessel had a cargo capacity of about 22,000 pounds (10 metric tons) of cargo, a crew of five or six people, and the ability to fully submerge down to 65 feet (20 m). It had a range of 6,000 miles, one-third of which could be submerged.

Impressive as it was, the submarine was way too big for Hassan’s plan. It could be spotted by plane during transit at shallow depth, and it would be almost impossible for it to enter a harbor undetected. The submarine was also too big to be transported by road on a trailer.

For his operation, Hassan needed an attack submarine which could be transported by road and which could be launched in the water within the harbor itself. It had to be a small submarine because of the restricted water space and because the submarine had to sneak between the keel of the tanker and the bottom of the harbor for a more devastating explosion, with a clearance of probably no more than 10 feet.

Hassan knew that a modern torpedo does not “hit” a ship’s hull and that a warhead is more effective when it explodes under the ship rather than against the side of the hull. Hassan was frustrated and angry, so he abandoned the Colombian-submarine option because their designs were not adapted to his mission and because of the uncertainty of a 2,500-mile voyage from the shores of Columbia to Boston Harbor.

When Hassan returned to Argentina, the Colombian-narco sub option wasn’t the only thing he left behind. Hassan left

crucial information about himself that would feed many people in the intelligence food chain and would eventually end up on Chance's desk.

Hassan was arrogant and egomaniacal. Because he wanted to be known as *the* Middle Eastern high-ranking commander, he chose not to move around only under the alias of Emanuel Ortiz; he had to use his first name, Hassan, every time. Even if he was travelling with his Emanuel Ortiz passport, every thug knew him as Hassan.

Nobody liked him in South America, not even his crime partners, because he had no honor. He was barely accepted, and his partnership was perceived as a mere balance between profit and competition. The narcos were proud of their drug submarines and actually quite successful. Nonetheless, Hassan looked at them like amateurs and bottom feeders. He looked at their subs with scorn on his face, almost advertising that he could do better. At the same time, he was letting everybody know that Hassan 'the Commander' was looking for a submarine to transport explosives to America.

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Hassan's research found only a handful of submarine manufacturers in the world. It was a very limited market. He knew about the Iranian midget subs, but even if they were available, there was no way Hassan could ship one of these to the US. He could buy a small tourist submarine in Europe and then ship it to the US, but because of the scrutiny, the regulations and the attention such a commodity would get from the shipping companies and US Customs, it would be too visible and dangerous. The only viable solution was to purchase a submarine which was already in the US.

Hassan sourced three sub builders in the US, but after looking at their specifications he quickly narrowed it down to one. Many of these submarines were too slow or were better

fitted for scientific research than for actual travel under the water at a reasonable speed. Hassan was interested in a very sleek submarine built by a South Florida submarine-manufacturing company near West Palm Beach. He checked the information on their website and contacted them. The submarine company offered different types of recreational submarines for private use or tourist charter. One of the models was a three passenger submarine, which seemed big enough to accommodate a two-ton payload, while at the same time meeting Hassan's speed requirements. He was surprised to discover that *anyone* in the US could actually buy a submarine. There were no special requirements like there are for weapons. It was pretty much like buying a fishing boat.

Hassan decided to further investigate the three-passenger submarine. He instructed Ahmed to research the company, look at their submarines, travel to West Palm Beach for a sea trial, and place an order if the sub was suitable for their operation. Including the pilot-training course.

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On June 10, Hassan asked Najhib to come down to El Dorado for an update on the operation. Najhib took his dinghy and went down the river. He met with Hassan at the dock. Hassan told him the operation was a go; he had talked to Al Qaeda leaders. They all agreed that Osama's death would not change anything and, on the contrary, politically this was the perfect opportunity to launch a large-scale attack in the US. Hassan told Najhib, he wanted it to be the largest attack ever on US soil, so that America would get the message from Osama.

“What message?” asked Najhib.

Hassan showed Najhib a piece of paper, but he pulled it away when Najhib reached for it.

“This is the last message our holy warrior posted before he was slaughtered by the Americans, Hassan said. “It's perfect

timing for our operation. I am going to read it to you. This is Osama's last message. Pass it on to the others when you see them."

Hassan looked at the paper solemnly, then read in a reverential tone: "America will not be able to dream of security until we live in security in Palestine. It is unfair that you live in peace while our brothers in Gaza live in insecurity. Accordingly, and with the will of God, our attacks will continue against you as long as your support for Israel continues."

After reading the message, Hassan explained to Najhib that he had planned the attack before Osama's death, back in 2004. He wanted to blow up an Algerian liquid natural gas (LNG) tanker in Boston to create a huge secondary explosion with the ignition of the gas. Boston is the only city in the world, he said, where LNG tankers go through a city's densely populated areas before docking at the gas terminal.

Hassan knew he would never be able to acquire a weapon of mass destruction and smuggle it into the US, but he didn't have to. Those LNG tankers were floating gas bombs. He could turn one of them into a WMD and ignite the gas cargo while the ship was inside the American city.

"Najhib, you must realize those LNG tankers each carry more than 30 million gallons of liquefied natural gas," said Hassan. "If it was released from the holds, it would evaporate to form a 20-billion-gallon cloud of natural gas over the city. And ignited, it would create a fireball of unimaginable proportions that would incinerate the city completely."

"Inshallah," Najhib said. "It's like an atomic bomb?"

"Yes. Those tankers are like floating nuclear bombs. Americans think they are safe, but in 2004, for some reason, they stopped those shipments from Algeria. I don't know why. I had to abandon my plan. But last year they allowed the shipments to resume. So now we can wipe out the city with one tanker. And

now, Najhib, we are going to do it. We are going to open hell's gates for America.”

Najhib asked, “How about our leaders...Osama...Al Qaeda...what did they say?”

“I told Osama three months before they killed him. I informed him that I was initiating an operation with a submarine attack on a tanker. Osama greeted my initiative with enthusiasm and we praised Allah. But as a successful Al Qaeda leader myself, I can decide on and plan my own operations, acquire my own weapons, train my own people, schedule final dates and orchestrate my attack without anyone's permission or blessing. You must remember, Najhib, Al Qaeda is not an organization. It is a way of working, an ideology.”

After giving Najhib a moment to digest what he had just heard, Hassan continued: “So in 2010, when the LNG shipments resumed to Boston, I conceived a plan for a submarine suicide-attack on a LNG tanker right in the center of Boston. It would destroy the city like a nuclear blast. Now the LNG tankers come from Yemen instead of Algeria, which is even better for us because Yemen is an Al Qaeda stronghold. I have people there who inform me when the ships leave.

“For months, I followed the developments of what was happening in Boston regarding the resumption of LNG deliveries. The city officials, the politicians, the mayor, celebrities and environmentalists, they were all against it...screaming about the dangers. Finally though, it brought me great joy when the Coast Guard announced they would allow the tankers to pass through the city. They claimed they had a security plan to protect the tankers until they offloaded the gas at the LNG terminal in Everett. They promised that nothing could happen to the tanker and that the population was safe, blah, blah, blah.”

Najhib noticed how red-faced and sweaty his commander was getting as he detailed how brilliant he was to outsmart the Americans.

Hassan explained that the Coast Guard explored every possible way to attack a tanker, ranging from missiles, rockets, suicide boats ramming into the tanker, suicide airplanes crashing into the tanker, and hijacking, utilizing stowaway terrorists. He said the Coast Guard set up a full range of preventive measures with the deployment of law enforcement tools to intercept and destroy such attacks. These measures included security checks, background checks for every crew member, tanker inspections, hull inspections by divers, police boats in the harbor, interception of any boat that approached within 500 yards of a tanker, and police cruisers on every dock. In the end, everybody seemed confident that letting a LNG tanker through Boston harbor was safe.

“But,” Hassan said gleefully, “the Coast Guard plan had a hole; there was one type of attack that was never taken into consideration: an attack by a human torpedo. I don’t know why they ignored it, but as a result there are no preventive actions and no plans to stop a submarine attack. No one is watching what is going on under the water. So we can do it.”

Hassan explained that a small submarine on a collision course in shallow water can approach a tanker undetected, pass under the escort of police boats and blow up beneath the ship. He said that electronic sensors would be unable to detect a mini-submarine in the “noisy” environment of a harbor, with all the activity of nearby boats and the multiple echoes reflecting between the bottom and the surface.

“And even if the submarine was detected by sonar, what would they do? What could they do? It would be too late. Impossible to stop. Especially once the sub gets underneath the tanker. With its hull the size of three football fields, the tanker would completely shield the submarine beneath it, until it detonated right in the center of the hull.” Hassan smiled, as if he were imagining the explosion.



Najhib responded that it was a good plan, but he did not know anything about human torpedoes or submarines. “How are we going to do it?” he asked.

Hassan explained to Najhib that he had been expertly trained for underwater attacks and that he would pass on what he had learned.

“I taught the tactic to Ahmed,” said Hassan. “I learned it years ago when I was diving with all sorts of battery-powered underwater-scooters. It was tough. They were too small and not powerful enough to pull a diver with explosives and weapons. Then I tried Iranian-built human-torpedoes, semi-submersibles and other low-profile surface craft, but the technology was not there. These vehicles were not reliable enough to be able to take anybody or anything anywhere underwater.

“And another thing, all these vehicles were ‘wet’ submersibles, which meant you were submerged inside the cabin with water all around you. It was more like a vehicle to transport divers than a submarine. The cabin was not watertight. Even though you were inside the cabin, you were submersed in water and you had to carry a breathing apparatus.

“The scuba equipment I was using was not suitable for an underwater attack, too bulky and too limited in air capacity.

“That’s why I moved on and trained with commando-type diving apparatus. I got a Russian military closed-circuit “rebreather.” They are very compact. You wear them on the chest and they are very discreet. Stealth, because you don’t exhale bubbles in the water that can be visible at the surface and you don’t make any noise. When you breathe underwater with standard scuba gear, it makes a lot of noise: bubble noise and the noise of the compressed air expanding through your regulator. This noise can be detected in secured areas where the police and the Navy have listening devices hidden under the water.”

Hassan told Najhib he learnt how to swim under the

surface undetected and how to breathe with pure oxygen instead of compressed air, like in scuba diving. He learned the limitations of using pure oxygen underwater. It was not like breathing oxygen in an airplane or at the hospital, where there was no risk whatsoever. Under the water and beyond 20 feet in depth, pure oxygen under pressure becomes too concentrated and toxic, and causes cardiac arrest and death.

Hassan knew very well about cardiac arrest because, during training, one of his instructors suffered a cardiac arrest and died before his eyes. Hassan, the instructor and two other divers, all equipped with rebreathers, were operating a wet-sub six feet below the surface when the instructor lost control and started an uncontrolled descent. Hassan opened the cockpit and bailed out with the other two divers. He watched the instructor from above as he tried to regain control of the sub. But once he passed the 20-foot limit, the instructor became non-responsive. The sub stopped on the bottom 35 feet down.

Hassan surfaced immediately, as he could not go below 20 feet either to rescue the instructor. He called for help. It took 10 long minutes for a support scuba diver to grab his equipment and jump in the water. He went down and pulled the instructor back to the surface. They laid him on the ground. The instructor had no pulse. They all stood there, looking at the instructor with a fatalistic attitude. They did not apply cardiac massage to revive him because they believed that whatever happened to the instructor was of Allah's will. If he had decreed to shorten the instructor's earthly life there was no sense to fight it.

Hassan sighed. "So I learned the hard way that breathing pure oxygen underwater is not forgiving. There is no warning, no precursor signs, no symptoms. You go beyond the limit, you die. Simple.

"After months of training, failures and the death of an instructor, I realized those subs and closed circuit oxygen

rebreathers were too complicated and dangerous and not reliable enough to use for a submarine attack. I had to think about something else for my underwater attacks and that's why I started to look for real submarines with a watertight cabin."

"Like the one in Florida?" asked Najhib.

"Yes. Exactly. With my experience and Ahmed's training, he can be ready for a submarine attack on the tanker. I need a dry submarine with a watertight cabin. I looked everywhere. The only one we can use for our operation is the one in Florida."

"Ahmed has been trained on subs already, in Dubai. It should not be difficult for him." said Najhib.

"Yes, *I* know," Hassan continued, clearly annoyed at Najhib's stating of the obvious. It pissed him off when his operatives didn't show him the proper respect.

"Ahmed's training is one of the reasons I selected him for our attack," Hassan said. "And you, Najhib, as the bomb maker of the group, once we have the sub, you have the responsibility to rig it with a bomb. It must be big enough to blow up the fucking ship. You will build the biggest Al Qaeda bomb ever."

Hassan explained to Najhib that a Navy torpedo is loaded with only 300 kilos of explosives, and that it was not enough to guarantee that it would break open the hull of a monster ship. He told him that for the attack on the USS Cole, the brothers used 300 kilos of explosives and the ship did not even sink. He told him that LNG tankers have a reinforced double hull and that is why he wanted two tons of explosives, to make sure that the bomb would tear apart the ship and ignite the gas.

Hassan reviewed the details of the Puerto Rican operation for the last time. He told Najhib, "We are done now...it's time for you to leave Brazil. Go on with your Jihad. Don't look back, you will not return. Inshallah."

On June 20, Najhib was packing and leaving Brazil. He didn't have much to settle. He had no friends and no job. The criminal enterprises he was running would be taken over by local thugs. He gave Hassan all his sensitive documents and materials. Then he burned what he didn't need and left with virtually no trace that he had ever existed.

Najhib flew to Puerto Rico with his Italian passport. Again he had no problem clearing US immigration under the visa waiver program: he looked Italian and his Arabic accent passed for an Italian accent.

Once in Puerto Rico, Najhib swapped identities, switching from his Italian passport to his Brazilian passport, under the name of Emilio Rodriguez. He checked into a budget hotel. It took him a few days to find a suitable vehicle in the classifieds. His first choice was a 4x4 Toyota pickup that he felt would easily handle the rugged terrain of Culebra. Scoping the papers, he also found several villas for rent on Culebra and he called to schedule visits.

Najhib met the owner of the Toyota and bought the vehicle cash after two hours of bargaining. He kept the old license tag so he could drive the pickup unnoticed while he looked for a place to live. Once he had a real address, it would be no problem to register the 4x4 under his Brazilian name.

He drove the truck onto the ferry that services Culebra. Once Najhib arrived on the tiny island, he began looking for a villa to establish his base for the two months. He chose the most isolated villa and met with the landlord. The owner felt very lucky that, in these difficult economic times, he could find a tenant who would pay cash in advance.

The owner turned on the water and power. The next morning a phone company employee connected the land line. The lease and other utilities bill provided Najhib with an official address and he returned to San Juan to register the pickup.

Najhib went online and purchased a mobile water-jet cutting-machine from a company in the US. Although a very specialized and very expensive piece of machinery, it was categorized as construction equipment and, as such, did not require any permits, license or particular endorsements. Najhib ordered the machine under the name of Emilio Rodriguez, living at the address in Culebra. He wired the money through his credit card. He expected to receive the machine in about 30 days.

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On the 1st of July, one month after Hassan left Colombia, Eduardo Estevez, “El Churacca,” a high-level member of the Colombian drug cartel, bargained Hassan’s information with the Colombian police. He told the local police chief that an individual named Emanuel Ortiz, also known as “Hassan,” a Middle Eastern terrorist hiding in Argentina, was looking to acquire a submarine from the drug cartel to smuggle explosives on the east coast of the US.

Eduardo had, from time to time, to “leak” intel to the police so they would get credit. In return for the information, the police would look the other way for a while, and be less overzealous when fighting his drug operations.

This time, Eduardo wanted to give more than “mules” to be caught, something more important and also something that would not affect his drug trafficking operations. His information would be channeled all the way up. It was to everyone’s advantage: the drug cartel would have a little relief, the local police could bargain this info with his headquarters in Bogota, the headquarters could bargain with the CIA, and the CIA would look good to the President of the United States by providing him some serious information about a threat against the US.

THE CARIBBEAN TRIP

On July 5, A thousand miles away, in West Palm Beach, Florida, it was a beautiful and sunny day. Many people were enjoying the afternoon on the white beaches of Peanut Island, which was in an inlet of the Intracoastal Waterway. Across from the island was a large marina.

Suddenly, out of the blue, a 25-foot-long yellow submarine surfaced in front of the marina. It looked like something out of a movie: cigar-shaped, three clear-plastic domes on top, with fins on the sides and a tail like a fish. The sub moved silently past the small island. The pilot and the occupants opened the canopies, which made the submarine look like an F16 taxiing to its hangar.

Local residents were familiar with this unusual sighting, but it was always an event to watch. The amazed tourists on Peanut Island shouted and pointed as the sub moved closer to the marina's boat ramp.

The sub was a recreational vessel manufactured for yacht owners or resorts. The company that built them put them in the bay on a regular basis for testing. The launches were often covered by TV stations.

As they were pulling the yellow submarine out of the water, a gentleman, who seemed extremely interested, approached the pilot. He said he wanted to try one of the subs as soon as possible. If he was excited by the experience, he would buy one.

After a short discussion of specifications, delivery times and pricing, the gentleman gave the pilot \$1,000 in cash as a non-refundable deposit for a 30-minute ride. They agreed the deposit would be carried forward as a down payment should the gentleman decide to place an order. After a quick handshake, the sub was re-launched.

Once inside the cockpit, the gentleman felt like he was inside the interior of a sports car, comfortable but tight. The pilot's assistants closed and secured the canopy on the passenger. The pilot turned on the air system. The passenger had an incredible panoramic view through the clear, hemispherical canopy. He could hear the hiss of fresh air as it flowed inside the cabin.

As the passenger listened intently, the pilot explained what he was doing and why through a headset with a microphone. Once they were a hundred yards away from the docks, the pilot indicated he was ready to dive. The gentleman excitedly responded that he was ready and gave a thumb up.

The pilot opened the valves to release air from the hull. The submarine quickly sunk below the surface with a bubbling sound. As the submarine disappeared below the bay, the passenger couldn't help but hold his breath as he watched the surface of the water rise up canopy.

The visibility was good, with at least 50 feet all around. The sandy bottom was 20 feet down. Fish darted around the sub.

The pilot demonstrated the sub's maneuverability and speed. It moved around like a little spaceship.

After 30 minutes, the pilot ran the vertical thrusters and went up, back to the surface. Then he blew compressed air into the ballasts to float the submarine higher on the water and he headed back to the boat ramp.

The passenger was ecstatic. He definitely wanted to buy a submarine exactly like this one. He promised to come back to the factory the next day with a down payment on his order. He explained that, since he lived outside the US, he had to go to a bank to get cash.

Everything is always unusual in the submarine business, so the pilot was not surprised by this enthusiastic passenger. Of course, he'd seen this type of reaction before so he really didn't

expect that he'd see the gentleman again.

But the next day, the happy passenger did show up and met with the owner of the company, Chris Stanton.

Chris explained that submarines were rare commodities; each was built to order. Although most people believed submarine ownership was somehow restricted or regulated, the truth was anyone could buy one. Their owners had only to register with their state's licensing bureau and display a hull sticker, like any other vessel. Submarines could transit on the water anywhere they want, as if they were a surface craft. However, for obvious safety reasons, their underwater operation was restricted to open water or to designated "safe" areas. Certainly, it would be very hazardous for a submarine to surface in the middle of a channel or just in front of a boat in a waterway. Other than that, there were no other requirements for private use.

Since the customer mentioned that he lived outside the US, Chris also mentioned that the State Department enforced much stricter rules when the submarines were to be exported. Subs couldn't be exported without a license because of their dual-use capabilities. Even a tourist submarine could be converted into a weapons system. For this reason, all submarines built in the US were on the State Department's munitions-control list. Chris said he never understood why this authorization process applied only to the submarines to be exported and not to the ones to be operated within the United States. He said he guessed you had to have faith an American would never use a sub against his own country.

The happy passenger introduced himself as businessman from Toronto: Henry Desjardin. Henry said he was 35, a Canadian citizen and wealthy enough to afford the purchase of a \$350,000 submarine for his personal use. He said he was going to use the submarine in the US, so he didn't need to apply for the export license. He showed his scuba-diving credentials and

explained that he had heard of the company years ago. He even sent some inquiries but never followed up. He said he was lucky to stumble upon their sea trial while visiting West Palm Beach.

Henry placed his order for a three-passenger submarine. He signed the paperwork, provided his information and address, and then pulled out a large envelope with €100,000 cash in it for the deposit. Not big actually, equivalent to \$135,000 but with €500 value per note the deposit required far fewer banknotes than with the traditional 100 dollar bill. A large cash deposit is always unusual, buying a submarine IS unusual, paying for it in Euros makes it even more unusual, but as long as it was not in smelling-drug-money 20 dollar bills, Chris was fine with it, business is business, he said.

Chris told Henry that his submarine would be ready for inspection and delivery in three months. At that time, he would have to take the submarine-pilot course, which lasts a few days. After shaking hands, happy Henry left the factory, with his order, documents, brochure, video and pictures in hand.

However, the Henry Desjardin who walked out was not who he said he was. Chris had no idea he had just sold a submersible to an Al Qaeda terrorist. The pilot had been a little surprised by the line of questions that Henry kept following, as if he was more interested in knowing how much weight the submarine could carry rather than how many people he could transport, but that made him sound more like a drug smuggler than anything.

Indeed, Mr. Desjardin was involved in drug trafficking...from South America. But the submarine wasn't meant to transport any drugs at all. Rather, it would transport explosives, and lots of it, because in reality Mr. Henry Desjardin was Ahmed Abdul Latif, the Canadian member of Hassan's terrorist cell. It was under Hassan's orders that Ahmed used his false identity to purchase the submarine so it could be converted into a weapon of mass destruction.

On Hassan's instruction, Ahmed had taken a bus from Toronto to New York and then from New York to West Palm Beach. His mission was to try out the submarine, determine if it met their requirements for conversion into a human torpedo and, if so, place an order. As a Canadian citizen, Ahmed had no problem entering the US under the visa-waiver program. He cleared US Immigration without a glitch. The bus ride was long and boring, but Hassan did not want Ahmed to fly. By taking the bus, he would stay off the grids and would not appear on flight-passenger lists.

Ahmed was one of the few terrorist divers trained in underwater demolition. He was qualified to carry out suicide-submarine attacks on individual ships, seaports and the cities that hosted them. In the United Arab Emirates, he learned how to operate a French-built, military non-pressurized "wet submersible." These subs were in service in the UAE Special Forces. Ahmed knew an Emirati officer who facilitated access to the base and training on one of their machines. It was shaped like a big torpedo. It could carry two frogmen, along with their closed-circuit rebreathers and the explosives to be used in sabotage missions.

After his training, Ahmed moved back to Toronto with his wife to wait for further instructions.

Once in Canada, his wife ran away from her oppressive and abusive husband, and filed for divorce. The process took much longer than she hoped because he denied any abuse. Ahmed made it very difficult to believe that such a handsome guy could be violent. With his long and thin nose and a trimmed beard, he had the look of a cool and neatly unshaven seductor. She felt it unfair as she knew an Emirati could, in the UAE, divorce his wife in less than a minute. All he had to do was say aloud: "I divorce you, I divorce you, I divorce you." In any case, Ahmed's wife celebrated the day her divorce became final. She knew how

dangerous a fraud her husband was.

Not only did Ahmed hold a Canadian passport, but he also had tricked his wife into helping him, unknowingly, acquire cloned identities from her relatives and friends. Ahmed carried a set of fake identification from Canada under the name of Henry Desjardin that he used when he did not want to reveal his Arab origin.

Ahmed was ruthlessly violent in his beliefs yet managed to hide his Muslim radicalism behind a good education and a degree in chemistry from Oxford University in England. To disguise his Arabic accent, he tried to speak with a British accent. In reality, he sounded, oddly enough, more Canadian than British.

With Ahmed, everything about him was fake, from his accent to his education. As with many other Emiratis, his father had purchased his degree from Oxford University. The only chemistry lessons he ever learned involved alcohol consumption during drinking parties. Ahmed rarely if ever attended any classes at all. He was too busy spending money with hookers.

Ahmed was the typical Emirati, obsessed with guns, cameras, gadgets, phones, all kinds of electric toys and sex. His ready-to-go-anywhere-anytime attitude was so ingrained that it was practically an obsession. From Canada, he traveled to Dubai on a regular basis to get cash from the local banks where Hassan laundered his money.

He worked in Canada as a mechanic and drove frequently to the US to meet Yusuf and Abdullah, bringing them the cash they needed to live and support the cell. After his wife divorced him, Ahmed was a loner, rejected by Canadian society, incapable of building a relationship with any woman, all of whom he viewed as impure and inferior beings.

Hassan once spoke to Ahmed about Canadian women: "Tell me about these Canadian women. Dubai has a map of all

the hookers in the world but I never fucked a Canadian whore.”

Ahmed said, “I don’t respect Canadian girls. They are not obedient. They act and dress like sluts. They deserve to be fucked to pieces. They should not complain about it because they are nothing but sex slaves taken from our enemies.”

Hassan looked at him and said, “Bravo, brother.”

Bitter and frustrated more than ever, Ahmed vowed Jihad against the West.

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On July 7, Ahmed contacted Hassan from the computer in the lobby of his West Palm Beach hotel. He had been trained to never use his own laptop, which could be traced or monitored. He left a message on the virtual dead drop to let Hassan know that he had ordered the submarine.

With the sailboat ready and the submarine ordered, Hassan decided they were ready to move on to the next step. He left a message for Ahmed, telling him to fly to Puerto Rico and join Najhib to start working on the explosive recovery operation. Najhib would give him all the details once he got there.

Ahmed booked a flight from Miami to San Juan Airport in Puerto Rico, but because it was a domestic flight he did not have to check with immigration or Customs. The next day, after a four-hour flight, he was picked up by Najhib at the taxi area.

They stayed a few days in San Juan to buy supplies, food and scuba equipment. However, they spent most of their time in strip bars, massage parlors and indulging with prostitutes. Their behavior was a hundred times worse than the behavior they condemned the West for.

Najhib was extremely violent with the girls. Most of the prostitutes he picked up were illegal immigrants from the Dominican Republic. He knew, because they were illegals, they would never file a complaint after he beat them up, so he took advantage of their situation to treat them like sex slaves. He liked

to tie them up naked and face down on the kitchen table for hours. He would repeatedly whip them. Although he was paying them, it was rape more than anything. He liked to control and to humiliate them.

When they were alone, Najhib explained to Ahmed they were going to retrieve large unexploded bombs abandoned on the seabed near the old US Navy bombing ranges. They would recover the explosives and hide them in Yusuf's boat so he could smuggle them into the continental US.

Based on Najhib's task description, Ahmed ordered specific equipment and tools from online scuba stores. He tried to think of everything they would need to work underwater. It took him a long time to find the "lift bags."

Ahmed explained to Najhib that lift bags were big inflatable balloons made of reinforced rubberized fabric, which they would secure to the bombs with belts and rings. Using air from scuba tanks, they would inflate the balloons to raise the bombs, like divers in underwater salvage or archeology operations. Once the bombs were just below the surface, they would tow them to a secured area.

"The bigger the air bag, the bigger the bomb we can move," said Ahmed.

After they were finished with their shopping and sexual errands they drove onto the ferry to Culebra.

They spent most of the day inside the house, praying, watching TV and Islamic videos. They prayed, repeating Qur'anic verses hundreds of times to increase their Islamic credit. They did not go out or enjoy the island.

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On July 12, Najhib received a notification that his water-jet cutting-machine had arrived and was ready to be picked up.

The next day, Najhib and Ahmed took the ferry and drove to the consignment company in San Juan. It took them all the

morning to get there. By the time they arrived, it was already 11.45 am. The terrorists didn't think they could sign the paperwork and take delivery of the machine before 12.20 pm, which was the, time of "Dhuhr," the noon prayer.

They could not miss the prayer, of course. But they certainly didn't want to worship their god in front of the curious eyes of horrified company employees on this island of infidels. Najhib and Ahmed looked for a secluded area where they could adhere to their rituals without creating an awkward scene. The most obvious location was a department store at the corner on the other side of the street.

They frantically entered the store and went to the bathroom to perform their compulsive washing and snorting, splashing and spilling water all over the place. Then they grabbed some clothes off the racks and went to the fitting rooms, pretending they were going to try them on. They prayed for 15 minutes.

An employee who spotted Najhib's bare feet sticking out from the bottom of the door as he was prostrating on the floor knocked and asked, "Everything all right, sir?"

"Yes, ma'am, we almost finished, thank you," responded Najhib nervously.

The two men emerged from the fitting room, left the clothes and exited the store, with the employee staring at them and wondering what they had been up to.

Then they went straight to the consignment company. They had three hours before the next prayer and finding another hiding place to pray.

Najhib spotted the water-jet cutting-machine in the chained yard. Wrapped in clear plastic, the big yellow machine was bolted to a trailer with four wheels. Najhib signed the receipts and other documents. He went to another office to pay some local taxes and walked to the loading area. Najhib and Ahmed picked up crates of accessories and put them in the back

of the pickup truck. Then Najhib hooked up the machine behind the truck and drove off.

Nobody asked them anything. No one raised an eyebrow.

Late in the afternoon they were back on Culebra Island. The ferry arrived at Dewey, the only town, on the southwest corner of the island. As Najhib drove very slowly out of the ferry terminal, towing the water-jet compressor, everyone noticed. Nosy residents asked Najhib what he was towing but he ignored them. He just drove off.

Once they arrived at their villa they parked the water jet inside the garage and Najhib looked around one more time to see if any neighbors were watching.

Najhib left a message on the virtual dead drop to inform Hassan, Yusuf and Abdullah that he had the machine.

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When Hassan read the message he knew his cell was ready for the next step. Hassan updated the last message with instructions to Yusuf and Abdullah, telling them to quit their jobs and to take the boat to Vieques. He told them they would not be going back to work after their mission in Puerto Rico.

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Yusuf needed a deckhand to help him sail the boat to Puerto Rico; he could not sail the boat alone. Abdullah was not a seaman, but he was told to go to Charleston and join Yusuf for the trip.

Yusuf picked him up at the bus terminal. The first thing Abdullah asked about was how rough the water would be on the trip. He was concerned and asked Yusuf if he had much experience sailing in the Caribbean Sea. Yusuf told him not to worry. It would take about ten days, right across the Bermuda Triangle. They would spend about ten days working with Najhib and Ahmed. Then it would take another ten days or so to make it back to the US.

In Culebra, Najhib took the machine out of the garage and drove around the island to practice with it, cutting pieces of 18-inch steel pipe, steel beams and concrete blocks that he would bring with him. There were only two real roads on the island so it was impossible for Najhib to drive unnoticed since the roads were also home to a number of accommodations, bars and restaurants.

Local residents wondered what the two men were doing, driving around with a compressor and a pile of junk in the back of their truck. They quickly learned not to ask questions because of the arrogant, nasty responses they received.

The police in Culebra were never a challenge; they were nothing more than parking attendants. The only risk Najhib and Ahmed took during their practice sessions was to accidentally park in front of a fire hydrant, in a handicapped area, or along a curve in the road.

Najhib told Ahmed it was crazy to drive on the island and he had to be careful. “Many streets are one way or only allow parking on one side of the street. Unfortunately, these idiots didn’t put any signs to tell us which or where.”

Each time they parked at the most secluded place they could find, Najhib explained to Ahmed how the water-jet cutting-machine worked and how to use it. He wanted to make sure Ahmed understood.

“Using intensifier pumps,” Najhib said, “the system shoots a needle of ultra-high-pressure water. It’s twenty times the pressure inside your scuba tank, Ahmed. The machine mixes some abrasive compound with the water to make it coarse. The pressure and the speed of the water are so high that the stream cuts through steel or concrete beams like they were butter. Because it’s just water there are no sparks and no heat. This means there’s no risk that we could ignite the explosives and blow ourselves up.”

Ahmed smiled. He hoped Najhib was right.

With this technique and with his experience, Najhib knew he could recycle the explosives safely. Even if there was a risk with an unstable bomb, he could control the cutting remotely and stay as far away from the bomb as far as the length of the hoses would allow. If a bomb blew up, he hoped to survive the blast and he would go look for another bomb.

The good news was that there were so many bombs that Najhib would be able to pick up the bombs of his choice and hopefully avoid unstable ones. Because the bombing sites had been abandoned with no surveillance whatsoever for years, Najhib felt the chances of him being spotted or apprehended were negligible.

Najhib and Ahmed split their time between training with the cutting machine, preparing their equipment and worshipping Allah in the house for endless hours. Only their extreme hatred, fueled as it was by their religion, could explain how the two men could remain untouched by the tropical beauty and lush atmosphere of the virgin island. Palm trees, sand, waves breaking on the beach, it all meant nothing. The two men had no desire to sample the island lifestyle. They never wanted to go to out to a club or meet their neighbors or tourists. They never listened to music as it was forbidden by the Qur'an. All these activities were forbidden and considered distractions because they could only draw them away from worshipping Allah.

Sometimes, at their house, they would listen to songs but only because they were of a religious nature or vocalized poems telling about the life of their prophet Muhammad. They kept the sound turned down low so it didn't alarm their neighbors. They hated going to malls and department stores because of the music playing inside. Now they hated it even more when cars and bars on the island blared loud music in the evening. The incredible popularity of Latin music on this exotic Caribbean island with its

half-naked girls dancing in the street reinforced more than ever their profound and irreversible resentment for this side of the world and all the people who lived in it. The terrorists bore it now only because they knew they were an instrument to put it all to an end.

The locals noticed how Najhib and Ahmed always avoided conversations and greetings. Culebra is an island where residents and tourists stop to chat with each other. Because nearly everyone is employed in the tourist industry, Culebrans are friendly to travelers. They help change a flat tire and remind you to wear sunscreen, but they are also curious and nosy. This friendliness caused many problems for Najhib and Ahmed, who didn't want to talk to anyone ever.

Although they never missed a prayer, Najhib and Ahmed hid their devotion to their religion for fear that it would lead to scrutiny. It wasn't just that they felt they didn't belong to this world. It was mostly that they believed they were in a part of the world that was an aberration and doomed to annihilation because of all the misery it created for the Arab world.

These radical Islamists were death lovers. They had a morbid and sick appetite for gruesome killings and blood. Their computers were full of videos of executions, hangings and decapitations. They even fantasized their own deaths, which they knew were inevitable in the course of their Jihad, everything else was irrelevant.

The process that had driven these men to become suicide bombers was actually very simple. After years of brainwashing and frustration, they believed that life was a mere transition to the next realm of existence. The best way to get a good shot at that realm was to send infidels to hell and die in the process.

Like everybody else, they knew they would die, but they felt they were given the privilege to know how and when, and, even more important, to know why.

Najhib and Ahmed actually enjoyed their malevolence toward Westerners. They thrived on tears and pain.

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July 20, Ahmed went to the marina and chartered a 48-foot cruising yacht. He explained to the owner that they were divers and wanted to explore the waters around the island. He paid \$90,000 cash and left a significant security deposit to ease the reluctance of the old fisherman who didn't seem to trust the two rude guys.

The next two days Najhib and Ahmed cruised around the island and dove at different locations, but they were just fooling around. It was all a ruse to mislead any fisherman or locals who might be watching from a distance. Najhib did not want to show them what they were really after.

When they were convinced no one was spying on them, they followed Najhib's map to check the sites with unexploded bombs.

They put on their scuba gear and jumped in the water. Najhib showed Ahmed the bombs they were going to retrieve from the bottom. It was only 15-feet deep where the four 2,000-pound MK84 aerial bombs rested on the seabed.

Shortly afterward, they surfaced and climbed onboard the boat. As they chugged away from the area, Najhib lectured Ahmed: "The MK84 is the largest of the American MK airplane-bomb series. It's exactly the bomb I was looking for because of its size and the amount of explosives inside."

Najhib explained that the larger the bomb, the fewer bombs he would need to cut open to collect the explosives. This would also lessen the risk that comes from tampering with live bombs. They were looking for the most accessible and the easiest ones to pull out of their underwater tomb. There were so many that it would not be difficult.

“In some places,” Najhib told Ahmed, “they are even piled up in layers. Damn, if one goes off, at least 50 bombs will blow up at the same time.”

Equipment deliveries were more frequent now. Najhib and Ahmed decided to go to San Juan to pick up the packages to avoid attracting attention from their neighbors, who might notice the frequency of the deliveries. Their trips were also provided excuses that enabled them to resume their heavy drinking and depraved habits with prostitutes.

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In Charleston, Yusuf and Abdullah lived together and didn't feel lonely anymore. They enjoyed praying together. Yusuf went through the details of the boat trip and the mission with Abdullah. Yusuf explained to him that during the refurbishing of the boat he had made some modifications inside the bilge, (the dead space between the floor and the bottom hull) to accommodate and hide the two tons of explosives Najhib was going to pull out of his bombs. Yusuf had prepared to conceal his cargo and smuggle it into the US. He had also built a cache inside the boat to hide their weapons, the Glock 45s and the AK47s because they were not going for a mission like this unarmed.

Abdullah said to Yusuf, “You mentioned we are going to sail across the Bermuda Triangle. I've heard stories... Is there any risk with our sailing over there?”

“Oh, Abdullah, be a man. Any risk with our sailing over there? Ha. All these legends about disappearances in the Bermuda Triangle are riddled with misrepresentation of facts and even outright fabrication from unbelievers.”

“Yes, but with so many stories, there must be something...”

Yusuf scowled. “You, better than anyone else should know that there is no such a thing in the Qur'an. No UFOs. No extra-terrestrial life. No little green humanoids in the Bermuda

Triangle. The Qur'an is quite clear. We are God's best creation with the sole purpose of serving Him.”

“Inshallah,” said Abdullah.

“Even if there are unexplained phenomena,” Yusuf said, “They can only be another manifestation of Allah's power to challenge us.”

They told each other 20 times that the truth was only in the Qur'an and that Allah would guide them on the ocean through his teachings. After two hours praying, Abdullah had no fear because he knew Allah would give them blessings during their crossing in the form of winds and waves to push them to their destination. After completing their trip, they would be worthy of a reward in Allah's sight.

Although the teachings of the Qur'an told Yusuf that Allah would make the ocean subservient and despite the fact that Yusuf was an Islamic fanatic, he was not going to just jump on the boat and go. He was fully aware that the Qur'an was not the Chapman piloting and seamanship book. He was fully aware that he needed a little more preparation to sail 1,400 nautical miles across the ocean from the US to Vieques. So Yusuf carefully planned his trip. He and Abdullah went to town and bought food, replacement parts and first aid supplies. They bought electronic charts and loaded them in Yusuf's GPS navigation system.

The boat could cruise under engine power with its 75 HP diesel engine, under sail pushed by the winds or under both sail and engine. The fuel tanks had a 200 gallon capacity, but the terrorists bought jerry cans to store an additional 200 gallons. If there was no wind, they could cruise under engine power for an extended time and arrive as scheduled.

Yusuf checked the weather forecast online. It looked good so he felt that he was blessed indeed, believing as he did that Allah had something to do with it. With wind blowing across the boat at 25 mph and three-foot waves, it would be a little rough for

Abdullah. A daily Dramamine pill would keep him from puking his meals to the fish. The wind was expected to change direction and force during the trip, but all together Yusuf expected he'd be sailing eight days out of the ten, with two days on the engine.

Abdullah knew the trip would be long and uncomfortable. He comforted himself with the knowledge that it was a small enough price to pay to have the privilege to be part of the attack. And besides, the boat was the only way to sneak the explosives into the US.

Abdullah was utterly excited and proud to be the spear of Al Qaeda to strike America. He believed his suicide bombing was going to make history as he had been told it would destroy a city and bring down America. As the bomber of the operation, he knew that when he rode the two-ton bomb to trigger the 700-kilotons blast he would be the ultimate Islamic warrior.

Before leaving Charleston, Abdullah and Yusuf went to a disco to try hook up with girls. They thought discos were a marketplace for prostitutes, as they were in the Middle East. However, this was not the case in Charleston. The guys were badly mistaken. Abdullah and Yusuf looked totally out of place as they stood gazing at girls in mini-skirts and looking at the behavior of so many couples which they felt to be utterly shocking. They were stunned to see men and women moving provocatively, touching each other and kissing in front of everybody. The terrorists did not try anything, afraid to find themselves in trouble if they asked the wrong women how much they charged. Instead, they just gawked at sexy girls, not with desire or attraction, but with hate and disgust, because they could not have them.

Abdullah and Yusuf despised discos and places like them. They believed they were a bad influence on Islamic countries where weak Muslims could be distracted and tempted. They grew up listening to the constant claim that Western culture was a

detriment to the expansion of Islam.

Both men wanted to suppress all these places and all the harm they believed they brought to the Arab world. They didn't need a preacher anymore; they were programmed to self-indoctrinate and hold onto their beliefs in the face of against any provocation, critics or discussions.

Yusuf and Abdullah were trained to repeat the same sentences over and over again, hundreds of times. One reason for this was the more repeats the more rewards in Allah's eyes. It was the Islamic equivalent of heaven coupons so they could get the best spot in paradise. Another reason, which they didn't know about, was that repeating the same sentence hundreds of times had a hypnotic effect. It shut down any high functioning of their brains, eliminating judgment, doubt and free thinking. Such repetition kept their minds locked tight in a small box, small enough that that was never room for soul searching.

And thanks to the double language in the Qur'an, these devout Muslims could always find the right verses to fit their agenda. While the text of the Qur'an itself remained unchanged through time as they boasted, the way the teachers interpreted the words and applied them to daily life was in their hands.

So Yusuf and Abdullah could do pretty much everything they wanted with the justification that the Qur'an allowed it one way or the other. They could drink alcohol because the Qur'an allowed certain forms of fermented beverages and it said that *rivers of wine will be given to believers*.

They could entertain prostitutes because the Qur'an allowed them to take sex slaves on infidel land. In their eyes, a prostitute and an infidel woman were the same whores; one gave sex for money and the other because she liked it. The Qur'an promised them virgins, called *angels*, with *round breasts and appetizing vaginas*. Muhammad had been heard saying that a good believer would receive 72 wives as a reward. The two men

were impervious to their own contradictions, always finding a justification for their actions, even when they were wrong. They always called Western countries lands of moral decay but their laptops were full of porn.

The Jihadists were pure-bred bigots and their hypocrisy was only matched by their depravity.

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On July 24, Yusuf left a message on the virtual dead drop to inform Hassan and Najhib that they were leaving Charleston.

The next day at dawn before Yusuf and Abdullah left, they performed their prayers and ablutions. They prayed to Allah to flush Satan out of their bodies. For these devout Muslims, Satan was omnipresent. Not only they were surrounded by the manifestations of the devil and exposed to his followers, but they believed Satan sneaked inside their body every night.

Their Morning Prayer was all about fighting Satan. First, they had to untie the knots they believed Satan had tied up around their neck during their sleep, then they had to flush him out of their nose because they believed Satan had slept inside it during the night. What may have looked like the gross actions of disgusting Muslims seeping water in their nose, snorting and then blowing their noses to spray boogies all over their fingers and the sink was in fact a ritual to get Satan out of their nostrils.

When the ritual was completed, they did their prostrations facing Mecca, repeating the same sentences over and over to win Allah's love and approval.

After a substantial breakfast, they packed their things. They took four Glock pistols and two Kalashnikov assault rifles with them and left the condo for the marina. "Inshallah," they both said when they saw the boat.

Allah again. There wasn't a single action during the day or a single thought where Allah was not involved. They boarded the boat with bags and boxes of supplies. Yusuf checked everything for the



last time and he hid the weapons in the hiding place underneath the floorboards.

Yusuf powered the boat, started the generator, started the engine, turned on the AC and untied the lines. He shifted the engine into reverse, turned around, left the marina and went down the river.

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In Vieques, Najhib read Yusuf's message on the virtual dead drop that they were leaving. He expected them to arrive on August 4.

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As they passed Drum Island in the inlet, Yusuf and Abdullah saw a US Navy nuclear aircraft carrier at the dock. They considered it the spear of their enemy. They wished they could blow it up, but for now they only had muffled insults to throw at it.

Yusuf and Abdullah cleared the harbor and raised the sails. Yusuf set the course at 135 degrees. The wind was coming across on their starboard. With a 25 mph wind they picked up some speed and were underway at eight knots for their nonstop crossing to Vieques.

After an hour and half they were in international waters, with no one in sight. Six hours later, Yusuf was still at the wheel, and already Abdullah did not feel good. But instead of staying on the deck watching the beautiful ocean, he made the mistake of going down below deck to sit inside the cabin. As he went below, he told Yusuf, "It's too hot outside and I'm sick like a dog, I am going to lie down in the cabin."

No, Abdullah was not sick like a dog, not yet, not even close. But and he was about to learn the difference. Being inside the cabin without having a fixed reference in sight, like the horizon, the motion of the boat moving in all directions made the seasickness much worse. Abdullah's stomach turned upside

down. He puked all over the cabin, moaning in pain under the contractions once he had nothing left to throw up.

Yusuf was happy to take the night watch at the wheel, not because he couldn't count on Abdullah until he got better, but because the confined space inside the cabin smelt like vomit.

After three days, Yusuf was exhausted. He hadn't slept much because Abdullah stayed in his bunk pretty much the whole time. Reading the Qur'an was of no help to Abdullah. He wasn't eating much either. Yusuf forced him to eat and drink enough water so he wouldn't get dehydrated and compromise their mission.

On the fourth day, Abdullah got better and ate like a horse. As a result, it wasn't long before he had to use the bathroom.

On a moving boat, something as simple as going to the head turned into an utter inconvenience for these devout Muslims. Relieving themselves while following the rules of the Qur'an proved much more difficult than in their daily lives onshore. Because the Qur'an instructs a good Muslim exactly how to take a shit, Abdullah had strict rules to follow. Like every Muslim, he believed bathrooms were haunted by demons, so every time he had to go to the toilet, he had to recite a prayer to seek protection to Allah from the devils.

Given the configuration of the boat and its route (the heading), the tight quarters, the size of the toilet, the small door, the boat's motion due to the swell, following the mandatory Muslim rules to answer the call of nature proved to be very difficult, especially for Abdullah who had little boating experience.

First, emergency or not, even with explosive diarrhea, he wouldn't dare enter the bathroom and dump without reciting his supplication to Allah. Before going through the door he had to say: "O Allah, I seek refuge with You from male and female devils..."

Only then could he go through the door opening. But he had to go in with his left leg first. Entering the bathroom with his right leg was forbidden.

But it was an awkward entry to say the least. Abdullah he had to open the door to the left while holding the knob with his left hand and twisting his body right to enter left leg first with his left hand behind his back. Given the arrangement of the bathroom and its door, the Muslim way to enter was totally opposite the natural way, which was with the right leg and right shoulder first, facing the door when you open it.

Once inside, Abdullah was not allowed to hold his dick with his right hand. He could only use his left hand to hold his cock and aim it at the bowl, which rewarded him with several bumps on the head for having his left hand busy holding his wang when he needed his left hand to stop his head from hitting the bulkhead on the left side when the boat rocked fast.

But that wasn't the end of it. In order to take a dump, Abdullah faced an even greater challenge: he was not allowed to sit on the tiny toilet like the infidels. He had to climb on it and squat, and at the same time, turn himself in the appropriate direction so he would never face or point his loaded ass to Mecca while shooting crap. As a result: More bumps on the head, more mess in the bathroom. Abdullah was so awfully obsessed with the goings on below his waistline that even in the middle of the ocean he had to ask Yusuf what direction Mecca was. He begged Yusuf to not to turn the boat without warning while he was perched on the can.

Warning or not, it was a sailboat, and sometimes Yusuf had to make 90-degree turns to catch the wind. That was too bad for Abdullah on the potty trying to turn on himself and keep the same direction, he splattered the whole toilet in the process. After all the complications he would eventually leave the bathroom after reciting another supplication: "O Allah, I seek Your forgiveness..."

Forgiveness was fully appropriate given the stinky mess Abdullah had left behind. Truly, by then, the only demon in the toilet was the one that had come out of Abdullah's ass.

The one thing that kept Abdullah from throwing in the glove and crying to go back home was his hatred for Americans. Whatever suffering he was going through, in the end he knew it was the price to pay for the chance to kill a lot of infidels. The thought of inflicting harm to others made him feel better and less frustrated of his own miserable life.

One night Abdullah was so sick, he did not even make it to the head, he threw up in what he thought to be a trash can when it was in fact Yusuf's hamper. Of course the next day, as a hypocrite, Abdullah did not mention anything. When Yusuf checked on his laundry a couple of days later, all he pulled out of the hamper was a dried up block of clothes glued together by rotten vomit. He didn't even try to wash them. Instead he threw the whole thing overboard. From that point on, the atmosphere on the boat was ruined.

To pass the time, they watched on the DVD Qur'anic lectures and movies about the spirit of Islam. They didn't have Hollywood blockbusters, which they considered depraved and violent and which were forbidden under Islamic laws. However, they hypocritically watched their porn flicks over and over again.

The weather was getting warmer, a sign they were getting close to the Caribbean. Dolphins accompanied them for several hours, jumping out of the water and crossing in front of the bow.

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On August 4, after 10 days sailing they were in sight of Vieques. Yusuf and Abdullah had made it as planned. They were hungry, tired, relieved. Yusuf had been on a boat before, but only for short fishing trips, so for both it was a first crossing and they were proud of their achievement. It had been very tough for Abdullah. The boat was a mess. And they knew they had yet to

go back to the US the other way around after the mission in Vieques.

Yusuf pulled up the charts on his chart plotter to locate the buoys and markers he needed to get to the marina. He headed for the small town harbor of Vieques on the north of the island.

Already in US waters, Yusuf passed right between Puerto Rico and Culebra. He made sure to fly his US flag so he wouldn't get pulled over or checked by Immigration.

They arrived at the village bay. Yusuf lowered the sails and stopped at the fuel station to refuel and refill the fresh water tanks. The surface was calm and so clear he could see the bottom. Ten days at sea and the beautiful scenery of a small fishing village on a tropical island didn't impact the terrorists' minds whatsoever. They ignored Miguel the attendant, who was being friendly and talkative.

Suddenly Yusuf spoke to Miguel: "While you're at it, can you clean my boat and take the laundry out?"

Miguel was shocked and started laughing his head off. When he calmed down enough to speak, he said, "Yeah right, and how about a blow job? What do you think? There's no maid service here and you don't get a free windscreen wash."

Yusuf looked indignant. "Why? It's not included with the fuel price? It's almost fifteen hundred dollars!"

"No way, man."

"Do I get a discount if I pay cash?"

"Why? You gonna pay with camels if there's no discount?"

"You fucking racist pig!"

"*Muy bien amigo.*" Miguel responded. "Are you going to pay me now or after I call the cops?"

Yusuf was furious! He looked at the dock attendant with total disdain. He wanted to kill him. Instead, he just threw the cash into Miguel's face and left.

Yusuf anchored the boat about 200 hundred yards away. He shut down the engine, but kept the generator on to power the AC and the refrigerator, the radio and the water-pressure pumps.

Yusuf figured out the direction of Mecca and he and Abdullah prayed for half an hour, reciting the same sayings over and over again.

After a few hours waiting at anchor, no one from any agency bothered asking them anything. Yusuf figured they were safe.

Yusuf removed the four Glock 45s and some ammo from the hiding place and put them in his bags.

The two men packed their things and put their dinghy in the water. They jumped in and paddled to shore. After they stepped on the dock, they felt the huge relief that sailors get when finally walking on something that wasn't rocking.

They went to a small hotel to rent a room and get cleaned up. Yusuf went to the lobby to use the hotel computer and left a message on the virtual dead drop to let Najhib know they had arrived and would wait for them at the hotel.

To avoid being tracked through his mobile phone's roaming service, Yusuf had left his phone in Charleston. Najhib would bring local prepaid mobile phones for them. There was no way to link these phones to their users.

The next day, early in the morning after prayer, Najhib and Ahmed took their boat to Vieques. They met with their friends at the hotel. They went to Yusuf's room for a short briefing. Yusuf gave to everyone a loaded gun. Then they left the hotel and went on Najhib's boat for their first operational meeting in a long time.

Najhib told the group he brought with him an encrypted USB key with an important recorded video message from their commander.

Najhib hadn't watched the video yet because Hassan had told him it could be watched only once, after which the data would self-destroy.

This was the first time Hassan gave Najhib a USB key with an encryption chip. It would self-destroy after one wrong password was tried. It would also self-destroy all its data if someone tried power surges or other physical means in an attempt to disable the key's security mechanisms. These security features were important in case Najhib was searched while traveling and crossing borders, or if the USB key was seized or stolen. They were also important to prevent an idiot like Najhib from saving older Hassan's video messages. Against Hassan's orders, Najhib saved older and normal USB keys that contained videos of Hassan's lectures.

When the others had gathered around, Najhib inserted the secure USB key in his laptop computer. He very carefully entered the password and played the video.

Hassan appeared on the screen in military fatigues, telling them they were on a Jihad to destroy an American city to avenge bin Laden's death, bring down America for occupying Arab land and to establish a world unified Islamic State. The message also conveyed instructions and prayers:

“Allahu Akbar! Allahu Akbar! Allahu Akbar!

“Mujahideen! My brothers, if you watch this message, it means you made it so far in your war against the infidel. Inshallah!

“Your mission is to slaughter the pigs and push our ultimate goal to establish the world Caliphate.

“You are not alone. All over the world, our brothers support your Jihad and pray for you. Our Imams prepare the terrain for after your attack. They are undermining the Western institutions that restrict the ascendancy of Islam. They have the ears of the Western politicians. They pursue Islamization with the

secret goal to establish Sharia on the whole world.

“After our operation, our clerics will cry crocodile tears. They will offer condolences. They will say they are no part in this attack. They will represent themselves as the victims of inhumane aggression through the media and ask for more rights and for more protection...and they will get it. They will deceive the world saying that Islam has no connection to violence. They will deceive the world about the nature of Jihad.

“Jihad plays a major role for the Islamization but it is necessary to deny it. Don’t listen to the West when they call you *terrorist*. You are holy warriors blessed by Allah and promised to paradise. You are freedom fighters just like the Americans during their revolution.

“After your victorious attack on America, many voices will scream against your action, but some will explain your actions and proclaim it was not motivated by Islam but by legitimate grievances for Arab Freedom and withdrawal of Western military occupying forces, and reversal of occidental influences on our culture. So we win, twice and either way...and always.

“Our brothers are hindering wider U.S counter-terror policies by providing inaccurate analysis, posting plots and conspiracies about a *war on Islam* and opposing almost every counter-terror initiative undertaken by the American government, suggesting instead that the correct response to terrorism is to change U.S. foreign policy, our ultimate goal.

“All these efforts need you to succeed in your operation; you have been chosen to bring down America with the blessing of Allah!

Go to Boston, blow up the tanker. Open Hell’s gates for Satan’s tongue of fire to incinerate this city of un-believers and you will go to paradise.”

Hassan’s tirade went on and on.

Hassan continued with lectures of the same old litanies accusing America and European countries of waging a crusade against the Islamic Nations for the past four decades and maintaining a military occupation of Islamic lands in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Next, Hassan addressed the concept of martyrdom. He explained that martyrdom was not suicide but was part of the religion of Islam, the wholesome of complete submission to the will of Allah, which sometimes required dying in the course of this submission.

He told them their ultimate sacrifice had become necessary and justifiable because they were fighting against the invading unbelievers.

When the message ended, Najhib pulled out the now useless USB key and threw it in the water.

For a while, the terrorists sat in silence, alone with their thoughts.

Finally Najhib spoke and went over the operation. "Listen closely now," he said. "You must understand completely.

"Ahmed and I dive under the water with scuba equipment to retrieve four unexploded bombs left by the Americans."

Najhib pointed at Yusuf and Abdullah: "You stay on the boat to help if we need you and to watch for any boats that come too close.

"I remove the detonators and cut open the bombs to collect the explosives. I already have the device to do it.

"Yusuf and Abdullah, you hide the explosive inside your boat and smuggle it into the US.

"Once you get back to the US, Ahmed and I fly to join you. We then rig the bomb inside the submarine.

"Yusuf, you transport the submarine to Boston.

"Ahmed, you are the submarine pilot. You bring the sub just under the tanker.

“Abdullah, you are the bomber. You detonate the bomb to blow up the tanker.”

Najhib explained it will be the biggest attack in US history.

The tanker explosion will be equivalent to the detonation of a thermonuclear bomb.

The men looked at each other and smiled. They were proud for having been chosen for this mission. They were ready to become martyrs.

Najhib told the others that he had already been diving for a month. “I drew a map,” he said. “There are several bombs that can be safely removed from the seabed. The water is only 15-feet deep, and the location is far away from anyone’s sight.”

When Najhib had finished, the terrorists called it a day and prayed together, with prostrations and recitations.

Najhib took Yusuf and Abdullah back to shore. He and Ahmed headed back to his house in Culebra. Yusuf and Abdullah went back to the hotel and stayed in their room for the rest of the day.

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On August 5 early in the morning, Najhib and Ahmed picked up Yusuf and Abdullah at their hotel. They had no time to waste. The four men boarded Najhib’s boat and headed for the first dive site, a remote beach north of Vieques at the edge of the bombing range. Nobody was around: no fishermen, no tourists on a boat.

Before Najhib dropped anchor, Ahmed put on a mask and snorkel and jumped into the water. He wanted to make sure there was no unexploded ordnance underneath the boat. In such shallow water, the heavy anchor could trigger an explosion if it fell directly on some misfired bomb or artillery shell.

The seabed was littered with bombs. Ahmed guided the boat right above a spot clear of any bombs and Najhib dropped the anchor.

Ahmed and Najhib put on swimsuits and scuba gear. They grabbed their tools and lift bags, and entered the water, leaving Yusuf and Abdullah on the deck to watch the boat and to keep a lookout.

The two divers swam to their first bomb, an MK84, lying flat on the sandy bottom. It was intact, buried almost halfway. The exposed portion was covered with a layer of marine growth. The detonator was still in place. Ahmed was impressed by the cigar-shaped bomb's size: it was 10-feet long and 18 inches in diameter, with stabilizing fins at the rear.

They blew the sand away with their fins and exposed the nose of the bomb and its detonator. Najhib showed Ahmed how to dig channels in the sand underneath the bomb. They slid the lift belts through the channels, pushing and twisting them through the sand.

When the ends appeared on the opposite sides, they made a loop around the casing and attached each end to a lift bag, rated at 1,000 pounds lift capacity.

Because of all the years spent underwater, the detonator mechanical system was all corroded and frozen up. Only the explosive compound remained dangerous and sensitive to direct shock or heat. As he struggled with the belts, Najhib realized that he actually felt safer working on a submerged bomb as opposed to one half-buried on land.

It took them 20 minutes to secure the belts around the bomb. Because of the effort and stress, Najhib and Ahmed breathed much more air than usual. They were forced to go back to the boat to swap out new compressed-air tanks.

They took their time because all their swimming, digging and fin-kicking had clouded the water with sand and sediment. Just before they decided to head up to the surface, they could barely see anything anymore. It would take a while before the water would clear.

As devout Jihadists, all four men took an extended prayer break before Najhib and Ahmed went back in the water.

They connected hoses from their scuba tanks to the lift bags and inflated each bag a little bit at a time, making sure to keep the bags evenly inflated. Najhib checked the tension on the belts as the additional air filled the bags and the bag pulled up on the belts. As the bags filled and became more balloon-like, the 2,000-pound bomb was becoming weightless. Najhib added more air and the bomb detached from the bottom. It rose slowly to the surface, hanging under the air bags. When the bags pierced the surface, Najhib inflated them completely to insure good floatation.

They attach the air bags to the boat with a tow line and climbed back on board. Najhib looked all around to make sure no one around was watching. He started the engines and moved slowly. They could see the long cigar shaped bomb hanging five feet under the surface.

As they cruised, Najhib realized the four bright-yellow lift bags were too visible and could attract unwanted attention. *Damn!* Najhib thought, *I should have painted them dark blue before I used them.* He told Ahmed that if anyone came in their direction, they would have to cut the towline and pierce the air bags to sink the bombs. It would be very dangerous but they had no other choice. They had to keep their plan secret.

It took them two scary and tense hours to reach the neighboring island of Culebra, where Najhib had chosen an isolated beach as a work site. This was where he would cut open the bombs. In a mixture of sarcasm and misogyny, whenever he spoke of the beach, he called it the *whore*.

Once they arrived at the beach, they made sure again there was no bomb under the boat and dropped the anchor. They put on their scuba gear, jumped in the water, and swam the air bags as close to the beach as possible, dragging the bomb along

with them. The bomb was so heavy they had to fin-kick their asses off just to move a little bit.

Finally, they pulled the bomb above a clear spot in only six feet of water. They deflated the bags slightly to slowly lower the bomb to the bottom. Once on the bomb lay on the bottom, they unhooked the air bags but left the belts on the bombs. They would keep the bomb hidden where it was until they got three more. Only then, would they start removing the explosives.

After this mind-boggling first-bomb recovery, the four terrorists returned to Vieques, where they separated. Before Najhib and Ahmed returned to their house in Culebra, they dropped by the scuba-diving center to have their tanks refilled. When they got to the house, Najhib painted the lift bags dark blue so they wouldn't be so visible when they towed them the next time. He didn't want to be mistaken for a drug smuggler and be caught because of something else.

Yusuf and Abdullah returned to the sailboat to check if everything was all right. Then they went back to their hotel.

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On August 6, the Jihadists returned to the bombing range to retrieve their second bomb. It was the same size and type as the first. They towed it to Culebra. Back at the beach, they lowered the bomb to the bottom next to the first one. After that, they returned to Vieques for their third bomb.

At the end of the day, the men returned to Vieques. Yusuf and Abdullah went to their hotel. Najhib and Abdullah went by the dive shop to refill six scuba tanks. The store owner asked them how the diving was going. Najhib mumbled something and left. Then they went grocery shopping and returned to their villa on Culebra.

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On August 7, the third day of bomb recovery, the Arabs pulled their fourth and last bomb out of the sea bottom and

cruised to Culebra. As they approached their beach, they saw a sailboat, the *Conchita*, anchored in the bay. Four people laughed as they swam around the boat. They seemed to playing some sort of game. Most likely they were tourists who had no idea what was hidden on the seabed below.

Yusuf took out his binoculars, studied the boat. It was flying a flag from St. Maarten, a Dutch and French Caribbean island 200 hundred miles east of Puerto Rico. He looked in the water and watched the swimmers.

“Two couples,” he said to his friends. “From St. Maarten, at least the boat is.”

“Damn! They are going to fuck up our plans” said Abdullah

Najhib looked concerned. “We can’t do shit with a bomb in tow, we have to put the bomb on the bottom.”

The terrorists arrived at the beach. The tourists waved to them. Abdullah waved back and told Yusuf: “Get ready! We are going to board the sailboat. Najhib, take us alongside the sailboat. We’ll take care of those bastards while you go hide the bomb, ok?”

Najhib nodded a “yes” and approached the sailboat. Abdullah was on the deck, waving at the tourists, with a fake smile. The innocent and friendly tourists had no idea what horror was coming at them.

Najhib stopped the boat so it nudged gently against the sailboat and the tourists got out of the water and climbed on their boat. Ahmed looked all around with the binoculars to see if there was anybody watching. He gave a sign to Yusuf to indicate that the area was clear.

The tourists were all very happy and smiling. They said they had dropped the anchor there and were going to stay for a week. The two couples in their mid-30s, blond hair, tall.

One of the women said: “Are you from around here? It’s such a beautiful place.”

Suddenly, Yusuf pulled his gun from under his shirt and pointed it at the two couples.

Abdullah pulled his gun, watched the boaters, covered Yusuf.

“Don’t move and shut the fuck up or I’ll you all!” shouted Yusuf.

The visitors turned pale. Completely terrified. The women started crying and, suddenly aware of Abdullah’s intense stare and how small their bikinis were, covered their chests with their arms.

Yusuf jumped on their boat, waved his gun in the air and yelled, “Anyone one else on board?”

One of the blond-haired men responded: “It’s only the four of us. What do you want? We haven’t done anything wrong. What do you want?”

Abdullah leaped onboard. With a big ugly knife, he cut pieces of dock line from the deck and tied the tourists’ hands behind their backs. They shook in fear.

One of the men kept moving his hands out of Abdullah’s reach. Rage filled his eyes. Yusuf pushed his gun deep in the man’s cheek.

“Ohhh. No. No. No! Don’t you fucking think about it, man...or I’ll kill you. You do what I say and that’s it.”

Next, Yusuf and Abdullah pushed the four tourists down inside the cabin.

Ahmed watched from the deck of the power boat. When the tourists were out of sight, he told Najhib to go ahead and lower the bomb to the bottom.

Najhib steered his boat close to the beach, above the same spot where he had placed the other three bombs. It took Najhib and Abdullah ten minutes to lay the bomb on the seabed, next to the others. Najhib now had four 2,000-pound bombs lined up in six feet of water. They swam back to the surface and climbed on

the power boat. They looked around again, but saw no one. The area was completely deserted. After they dried off and got dressed, Najhib started the boat and piloted his boat back to the sailboat.

Najhib shouted in Arabic to Yusuf: “We have to get out of here right away. Start the sailboat and take a heading north. I’ll follow you. Stop when you reach 25 miles.”

Yusuf started the sailboat’s diesel engine, raised the anchor and sailed away.

Inside the cabin the two couples were terrified.

“Who are you? Where are you taking us? What do you want? We can give you money. Please let us go” one of the guys begged.

“I said shut up!” shouted Abdullah. He slapped the man who’d just spoken.

Abdullah took some pillow cases from the beds and pulled them over the heads of all four tourists. “We’re going for a ride,” he said. “Relax and be quiet.”

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Two hours later, Yusuf was still at the helm, steering the sailboat. Najhib followed, a thousand yards behind. Yusuf stopped the boat. They were in the middle of nowhere in international waters.

When Najhib arrived, they tied the boats together, and all four Muslims went down into the sailboat’s cabin. Najhib searched the small space. He found the tourists’ cash, passports and IDs. They were all Dutch. Najhib also found two bottles of whiskey and shared them with his three eager friends.

Wiping whiskey from his chin, Najhib told the Dutch: “We’ll shoot you if you fucking move.”

The two women went rigid when they felt a knife cutting the strings of the tops and bottoms of their bikinis. Then they sobbed softly.

Najhib pulled off the cut pieces of cloth and spread the women's legs. The four terrorists' eyes locked on the completely naked women. They enjoyed the power they had over these innocent boaters. The Arabs seemed to share the same thought: they had an unexpected opportunity to fulfill their perversions and release their frustrations.

Yusuf said: "I want to see the guys too." He started laughing.

Yusuf cut and removed the swim trunks of the two men. In total contradiction with Islam, Yusuf was homosexual, although he had always vehemently denied it in public. Like many Muslims who could not have access to women because of the social restrictions imposed in their countries, he indulged himself since early in his life with sex with other men. Forcing Asian male workers from the subcontinent to have sex with him was a very common practice, taboo and hidden. For Yusuf and for many of his Muslim brothers, sex was nothing more than a release of a lusty desire inflamed by the physical attributes of a woman or a man. Completely disregarded were the women's and men's spiritual attributes and personalities. They were reduced to mere objects.

Najhib removed the pillow cases from the tourists' heads. "So...who is with who?"

The women identified their boyfriends.

Najhib put his gun against the head of one of the women and said, "Well, if you don't mind, we are going to shuffle couples about a little bit. Let's play a game. You two girls play with each other and you two guys work on each other, all right?"

Yusuf gestured to the men. "You better be good because the one who doesn't get his dick up, dies. But wait! Let's go somewhere private."

The terrorist yanked the two men to their feet and forced them up onto the deck of the sailboat. Yusuf prodded them with

his gun barrel, forcing them onto Najhib's boat and down inside the cabin.

Abdullah followed Yusuf and said, "Your girls stay here with my friends. Don't do anything stupid or we shoot your boys dead. All right."

Then Abdullah got in Najhib's boat and looked at the 2 men:

"Now get on each other if you want to live. I want to see some love action."

Abdullah watched the two men touching each other.

Yusuf put his gun in one guy's mouth and said, "You want to suck your friend's dick or you want to suck my gun and eat a bullet. Think about it, dude. You can do better than that. I can do whatever I want with you because I am the one holding the gun. Do what I say."

On the sailboat, Najhib grabbed one of the women by the hair and pulled her inside one of the staterooms. She resisted as best she could with her hands tied. Najhib beat her up. Then he closed the door and raped her repeatedly.

When he came out, he said to Ahmed: "Your turn. Get the other one. I'll watch my bitch."

Ahmed grabbed the second woman by the neck and pulled her inside the stateroom. She screamed, twisted, kicked. He punched and punched her, and raped her violently.

On Najhib's boat, Yusuf forced one of the guys inside a stateroom, and raped him at gunpoint.

The other man, alone in the cabin with Abdullah, tried a desperate move. He jumped on Abdullah and headbutted him, knocking him unconscious. With his hands tied behind him, the Dutchman struggled to grab Abdullah's gun.

Yusuf came out of the stateroom. He saw Abdullah on the floor with the naked, blond guy on top. Yusuf kicked him in the head and pushed him off. Then he shot the Dutchman twice in the

chest. The man jerked back, tried to stand up then collapsed, groaning and gurgling blood out of his mouth.

Yusuf squatted, watched him die. “What did you think you were doing?” he asked.

Abdullah regained consciousness. He stood up and went into an unspeakable rage. He went wild, screaming and cursing. Suddenly he stopped, rushed to the stateroom and raped the first man inside. When he had finished, Abdullah stood up and shot the Dutchman in the stomach.

The wounded man bent over at the impact of the bullet and moaned in pain. Then he screamed, “You shot me! You shot me!”

And Abdullah shot him five more times.

On the sailboat, the girls heard the gun shots and screamed hysterically. Najhib beat them and pushed them into the salon. He sat them on the sofa.

The women were desperate. They were hurt, violated. They couldn't talk. They wept. They knew they were going to die.

Najhib tied up their feet and said, “Now you watch each other die, infidels and depraved bitches.”

The two women screamed in despair. Their eyes showed an absolute and unimaginable terror.

All at once Najhib went into a demon-like rage against one of the women. He threw her to the floor, grabbed her head and slammed it repeatedly on the wooden planks. He screamed insults, every demeaning curse he could think of. His reason: he hated attractive women. He smashed her face. He wanted to destroy anything that showed femininity and beauty. She bled from the nose, the mouth, the eyes. Najhib stood up and shot her in the heart.

Yusuf went back on the sailboat. The last woman was hysterical, begging for her life. But her words had no affect the

sadistic Muslim men. Yusuf shot her in the stomach. She grabbed her belly, trying to stop the bleeding. Yusuf finished her with two more shots in the chest.

The scene inside the boats depicted an unbelievable cruelty, a violence that could only have been fueled by a deep hatred.

Najhib came out of the cabin and walked on the deck to look around. He took a deep breath and stretched as he had just walked out of a fun movie. There was nobody around and they were quite far from shore.

They decided to leave the area, Yusuf searched the *Conchita*, looked for a GPS beacon or anything that could give its position. They pulled the men's dead bodies out of Najhib's boat and dumped them inside the *Conchita*'s cabin. The terrorists threw the tourists' wallets, passports, IDs and any other identifying papers they could find into the ocean.

There was an autopilot on the *Conchita*, so Najhib set it up to guide the sailboat toward the center of the Atlantic. By the time anybody found the boat, the killers would be long gone. They wiped off all fingerprints they could have left on the *Conchita*, pushed the throttle to cruise speed and jumped on Najhib's boat.

Najhib and his friends watched the *Conchita* motor away, straight toward oblivion.

Najhib turned his boat around and headed to Vieques. The cabin had blood pools everywhere. One bullet had hit the face of one of the men and blown off part of his skull, leaving blood and brain splatters all over the walls. For the next two hours, they cleaned up the blood stains and remained completely silent, as if nothing had happened. During this frantic clean up, while Najhib was moving his bag, one of his old USB keys slipped out and slid behind the console. It was a key on which Hassan had recorded an older message.

The terrorists returned to Culebra and they all went to Najhib's house. They prayed and prostrated, carefully observing the usual rituals. They recanted their horrific crimes and laughed about the horror on their victims' faces before they were shot.

The men waited two days before they returned to the area where they had hijacked the sailboat and where the four bombs were sitting under the water, Najhib wanted to make sure that no one else had spotted their activity and that no one was looking for the *Conchita* there. He drove to the beach with his pickup truck to inspect the area. He scrutinized the ocean and the island, but nobody was around. He expected that somebody somewhere would be looking for these people sooner or later. But since Najhib didn't need to take his boat out anymore, that did not concern him.

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On August 11, the Jihadists took the cutting machine out of the garage and hooked it up behind Najhib's truck. They all got in the pickup and headed off to the beach. Najhib drove as close to the water as possible. They off loaded the scuba equipment and the lift bags.

Ahmed and Najhib put on their wetsuits and scuba gear. They grabbed the lift bags and they looked around. They were happy to see that the area was totally deserted. They entered the water. They swam 50 yards to the area where they had left the bombs. It was fairly easy to attach the belts from the first bomb to the lift bags.

They inflated the lift bags and raised the bomb three feet above the seafloor. They swam it a bit closer to the beach so it was within reach of the pressure hoses from the cutting machine.

Najhib attached the nozzle bracket to the bomb, around the detonator base, so it could cut completely around it, as if the bracket was mounted on a pipe. The detonator was the most sensitive component. Even with the triggering mechanism

completely jammed by rust and sediment after years underwater, the explosive inside was still live and much more sensitive than a normal explosive. Shock or heat could detonate it.

Removing the detonator was the most critical part of the operation. There were two detonators per bomb, one on each end. Working underwater was an advantage. Najhib could do the job unseen and it was safer to work on explosives. After Najhib finished installing the nozzle bracket, he and Ahmed got out of the water and unstrapped their scuba equipment.

Najhib stood in front of the machine. As he started it, he told his friends to stand behind him. Najhib adjusted the pressure in the nozzles remotely, so even if the bomb blew up accidentally, they would be far enough away to be safe. They couldn't see anything under the surface because the water was turning murky. As the water-jet cut the bomb it sprayed sand all around.

Najhib could feel the pressurized water going through the hoses.

The ultra-thin water-jet cut the steel casing of the bomb by follow its contour. After the jet completed its 360-degree trip, the tip of the bomb, with the detonator screwed to it, dropped smoothly to the sandy bottom.

Najhib returned to the water to attach the bracket at the rear of the bomb and repeated the operation. After Najhib removed the two detonators, the bomb was safe. Then he installed the nozzles bracket to the center of the bomb and cut it in half. The two halves hung suspended under the lift bags. He lowered them to the seabed.

One after another, Najhib raised the bombs with the lift bags, then attached the cutting nozzles. Next he went back to the beach, where he remotely controlled the nozzles. Back and forth. Back and forth. It took them the whole day to cut up the bombs. When they were done, they left the bombs under the water,

hooked the cutting machine to the car and drove off.

The next morning they returned to the site. Najhib and Ahmed went into the water and attached ropes to the bomb halves. Then Najhib came out of the water with the ropes and had Yusuf attach them to the pickup truck. Ever so slowly, the truck pulled the bomb parts closer to the beach. As the bombs came out of the water, Najhib made sure they slid onto the tarp he'd spread to keep the sand out of the freshly cut area.

Ahmed and Abdullah rolled and aligned the eight half-bombs on the tarp. They could see the TNT through the cut. It looked like a solid plastic block.

As they worked, the beach looked like a construction site, with tools all over and the water-jet compressor in the center. Abdullah kept watch, with his eyes glued to the binoculars to see if anybody was around.

They had their AK47s loaded and cocked. They were ready to shoot anyone who showed up.

Najhib started the machine and used the water-pressure lance to gouge the Tritonal explosive out of the casings. Najhib knew that Tritonal neither absorbs nor dissolves in water and that it is not affected by moisture even after decades under the surface. After five hours, the group of terrorists had recovered 3,700 pounds of pieces, bits and chunks of TNT. They piled it and hid it under the tarp, they covered it with rocks and branches, hoping no one would snoop around and find it. They left the site to spend the night at Najhib's place.

Their operation took such a long time because they not only had to take breaks to eat and drink, but they also spent a good portion of the day in lectures, prostrations and prayers. Together the latter consumed three to five hours out of the working day.

Abdullah was the lecturer. Every day he reminded them of their spiritual mission and their martyrdom. The murder of

four innocent people was in no way a violation of their beliefs. They did not feel any guilt whatsoever since in their mind, these people were nothing other than vile creatures.

He constantly reminded the group, day after day, that they alone carried the hope and the responsibility for the entire Islamic world. With the blessing of Allah, their mission would be a success. Their attack would destroy America and tip the whole world into Islam.

These crazed men had long reached the point of no return. Nothing could convince them to give up their criminal enterprise. They were just ready and waiting to die, taking with them as many innocent people as possible.

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On August 12, Najhib drove back to the beach. He stopped at a distance from their construction site so Abdullah could check with binoculars to see if anything had been had been disturbed by unwanted visitors.

Ahmed went to the marina and boarded Najhib's boat. He drove it to the beach and dropped the anchor in waist-deep water. But before they could load the TNT on the boat, they had to prepare it for transportation. Najhib had brought equipment to melt it and cast it. Now the site now looked like an outdoor kitchen.

Najhib set up two very large cauldrons on a gas range and filled them with water. When the water boiled, he put a smaller pot in the hot water with pieces of TNT in it to melt. Najhib knew that TNT melts at 80 °C (176 °F), which was below the temperature of boiling water and far below the temperature at which it would spontaneously detonate. Once the TNT turned to a thick and pasty liquid, Najhib poured it into molds to cast bricks weighing ten pounds each. Once they cooled, the men loaded the explosives, brick by brick, onto the boat.

It took Najhib two days to melt the whole load. When he was finished, he had 370 bricks of TNT, about 40 cubic feet of explosives.

They tied the empty bomb casings to the back of the boat and Ahmed dragged them back into the water so that no one would find them. Then he released the lines and dropped them in the water.

Finally, the terrorists carefully removed everything they'd brought with them from the beach. They put on the boat the cauldrons, the tools and the outdoor kitchen ranges so they could dump them in the ocean later. They piled up the rubber hoses and anything else associated with the water-jet on top of the machine. Then Najhib pried out the serial number plate and poured gasoline on the \$70,000 compressor. He torched the whole thing, creating a huge ball of fire. They left the area for good as the machine was still burning.

On August 14, Yusuf and Abdullah made their last preparations to leave Vieques: storing food, checking the weather forecast, buying extra fuel in jerry cans.

The next day, early in the morning, they raised the anchor and left. No one was going to miss them. They had never entered a single conversation with anyone on the island. But their arrogance would be remembered.

They headed to the rendezvous position to meet with Najhib, 20 miles north of Culebra and outside the US territorial waters to avoid police detection during the transfer of the explosives from one boat to the other.

After two hours, they arrived as planned. Najhib was already there waiting. He was busy throwing in the water all the materials he no longer needed, including the scuba equipment. The ocean was calm. They were in the middle of nowhere with nobody around. They transferred the whole stash of explosives and hid the bricks in the bottom of the boat, in the bilge area.

Yusuf collected the guns and put them back in the hiding place. The boat was two tons heavier now. Ahmed applied blue duct tape all around the hull to simulate a fake a load line above the waterline, so that the boat would not look like it was overloaded. Yusuf wasn't worried. Even if he was pulled over and the boat searched, it would be a drug search, with drug-sniffing dogs. These dogs could not sniff out explosives.

Once they had loaded and hidden all the explosives on the sailboat, they prayed and prostrated on the deck and said goodbye to each other.

Yusuf put up the sails; Najhib and Ahmed jumped on their boat and watched them sail away. They would meet again in South Carolina, for the next step of their operation.

Najhib and Ahmed returned to Culebra, they left a message for Hassan to inform him they had completed the collection of explosives. They stayed in the house, keeping a low profile and looking around to see if anyone had noticed anything.

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The next day Najhib and Ahmed returned the boat at the marina. During the inspection, Louis, the owner sniffed around in the cabin and asked Najhib what that foul was. Najhib said he had no idea and that he didn't smell anything. But he was lying. He realized that some blood drippings from the dead tourists must have seeped under the cabin floor and were now rotting. Najhib told the owner that they had been fishing and maybe it was rotting fish-blood. It sounded like a normal explanation so they signed off on the paperwork. Louis returned the security deposit and they left.

As they were heading for the pickup truck, Louis called Najhib and asked him if they had seen a boat called the *Conchita*? Najhib responded that he never saw that boat and asked why he was asking.

He said the boat had disappeared with four tourists

onboard and it was weird because there hadn't been any bad weather. Everybody on the island was looking for them. Najhib told Louis he was sorry he couldn't help and left.

When they got out of hearing distance, Najhib said to Ahmed, "I told you they were going to look for those bastards."

Najhib returned the keys to the house in the same fashion: a tour of the premises with the owner and signing the release papers was all it took. They left the house.

Najhib and Ahmed drove onto the ferry to San Juan. Shortly after docking, they checked into a hotel. Their plan was to wait for Yusuf and Abdullah to arrive in Charleston before flying back to the US. They didn't go anywhere. They spent the time locked up in their room, eating pizzas and watching porn movies. Two days later they read an article in the local newspaper about the *Conchita*. It had been found by the Coast Guard after having been missing for days. The article said that four Dutch tourists had been found murdered on board.

Najhib told Ahmed: "Tourists my ass. Fornicators, sinners and unbelievers...yes"

The police had launched a huge investigation. The mass murder was turning into an international event. The Netherlands authorities were clamoring for answers. The police were investigating and suspected a robbery gone bad. Locals wanted to know exactly what happened and pressed authorities to catch the killers.

"This is not good," Ahmed said to Najhib. "We have to leave immediately. Cops are going to be crawling all over the island. Sooner or later they are going to find out about our boat and I don't want to face islander detectives."

"Let's pack. Let's get out of here," Najhib agreed.

Najhib drove his pickup truck to a bad neighborhood outside San Juan. He left it there unlocked, so that it could be easily stolen and cannibalized. He trusted the thieves would

recycle the car so thoroughly there was no need for him to torch it.

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On August 18, Najhib and Ahmed separated and took two different flights to New York, where they would wait for Yusuf's message. Although they were both on domestic flights with no immigration control, Najhib still did not want to be on the same plane with Ahmed. He knew flying separately was a better way to cover their tracks.

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Yusuf and Abdullah were en route to the US. The weather was bad. Abdullah was sick. And when he wasn't, he fought with Yusuf, who yelled at him for trashing the boat and not contributing to the cleaning and cooking.

After twelve days, they were approaching Charleston. It took them a little bit longer because the boat was heavier. While outside US territorial waters, Yusuf punctured the empty jerry cans and dumped them in the ocean. He didn't want a bunch of empty fuel cans on deck to make it look like they'd been on a long trip. He also threw overboard anything that was from Puerto Rico: food packages, receipts, maps and documents.

Yusuf and Abdullah felt relieved when they came within sight of Charleston but their relief was short-lived. As they approached the harbor, police and Coast Guard boats seemed to be everywhere. The two men had no idea what was going on or what had happened. They thought that maybe Najhib or Ahmed had been caught and that the police were now looking for them for the killing of the four Dutch tourists.

Stricken with fear they had no choice but to continue ahead. There was no way they could turn back and escape high-speed police boats.

Abdullah was going crazy. He didn't want to get caught before killing as many police officers as possible. He told Yusuf,

“Najhib should have rigged the explosives so we could blow them up if the police stopped us.”

Yusuf tried to calm his friend. He said, “Don’t worry about it. They have no reason to stop us.”

Yusuf was scared too, but he didn’t want to show it. He composed himself just as a police boat approached them. The officer on deck waved them to take another direction. At the same time, a voice on Channel 16 told them to get away from this route.

Yusuf didn’t waste any time. He complied immediately. The terrorists then could see that a US Navy aircraft carrier was leaving the harbor. It was a false alarm. The police were just clearing the way for the nuclear warship.

Yusuf realized that even with the explosives in the boat they wouldn’t have been able to blow up the carrier because of the security around the warship. The aircraft carrier was unapproachable. Once they passed the warship, they entered the harbor and went up the river. Yusuf lowered the sails and motored to the marina.

It was with an immense relief that he docked the boat; Yusuf and Abdullah were in bad shape and exhausted. Before doing anything they took a nap. When they woke up a couple hours later, they cleaned up the boat, took the trash out and went to a cyber café to leave a message on the virtual dead drop for Najhib and Hassan, and then they went to Yusuf’s condo.

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Najhib received Yusuf’s coded message that they were back in Charleston and that the boat was berthed and secured in the marina. Najhib and Ahmed cheered, but they were lazy. Instead of taking the bus, they ignored Hassan’s instructions not to fly and booked a flight to Charleston. They left a message on the virtual dead drop with their flight details.

When Hassan saw the message he was pissed, but it was

too late. The two goons were already airborne.

Yusuf drove to the airport to pick up Najhib and Ahmed. He was surprised to see them coming out of a New York flight gate. "What happened," he asked. "You were supposed to take the bus."

"Nah, it's all right. Nobody knows we're here," said Najhib.

"Yeah, but that's the point, you fucking idiot," hissed Yusuf. "Now they know...I can't believe this. You don't need to advertise and red flag your names and your trips."

"What's the difference?" Najhib asked. "We would have flown from Puerto Rico to Charleston if they hadn't found those Dutch tourists."

"No, you wouldn't have. There is no direct flight to Charleston, you idiot. You were supposed to take the bus in between to cover your tracks! Now they got you on their list twice and they know you are here. What the fuck happened over there?" Yusuf was red with anger.

"The police found the *Conchita* and the dead people onboard. It was getting too hot for us. Cops crawling all over the islands. Sticking their noses everywhere. We had to leave on the first flight," Najhib explained.

Yusuf was pissed. He drove to his condo where they continued their debriefing. Yusuf described the trip back to Charleston. The bad weather all the way. They were so sick most of the time that they barely kept anything in their stomachs. They felt so bad after they arrived, that they had to rest for three hours before they could get out of the boat, get clean and eat. They recounted the Puerto Rico operation and then spent two hours praying to Allah and listening to lectures.

Yusuf told Najhib they needed to rent a warehouse for the submarine right away.

The next day they went out of town to a depressed area

and leased a 1,500 square-foot shop where they could store the explosives and assemble the bomb. The area was quiet. Most of the warehouses were vacant, which meant that they wouldn't have too many nosy neighbors or passersby watching what they were doing.

Yusuf told his friends, "We have to go back to the marina to offload the explosives from the boat and bring them here. We have to do it a little at a time to avoid detection. Everybody is watching everybody down here."

The cell members took great care not to look suspicious as they offloaded the 40 cubic feet of bags. Somebody might see them and tip the police for two good reasons: first, they looked like Arabs. Second, people could assume the bags contained drugs. When they weren't on the boat, the four men hid themselves in the warehouse. They were in contact with Hassan every day, exchanging information and receiving instructions.

It took them three weeks to transfer all the bricks of TNT to the warehouse. Back and forth they went, going to the boat, pretending to have a good time, eating, drinking, going out on short trips, all the while carrying bags of TNT off of the boat, day after day.

When Yusuf was finished with the boat and all the explosives were removed from the cache, he no longer needed the sailboat. He made sure he did not leave anything on board and at night, he changed the decals on the hull, put a phony registration number and changed the name of the boat. He exited the sailboat, looked behind one last time, and walked away.

The terrorists didn't realize that despite their efforts to hide, they looked suspicious for another reason. They always avoided contact with the other boaters: no greetings, no casual conversation, no friendship. This lack of communication was totally unusual in a boating community.

THE PLOT

Najhib received a picture from Hassan. It was a picture of a bird in the middle of the forest. The picture contained a coded message from Hassan, with the latest instructions. The group went to the warehouse to extract the message and discuss the operation.

Their orders were to travel to Boston to scout the city and the harbor, while waiting for the delivery of the submarine. They also had to find a small warehouse to store the submarine. Hassan told them to observe the police and the Coast Guard in the harbor, and watch the tankers when they came in. They were to check for evidence of any sub-surface counter measures and make sure no one was expecting a suicide submarine.

Hassan asked Ahmed to look for the best spot to attack the tanker. It had to be as close as possible to heavily-populated areas and deep enough so the sub would have the clearance to pass under the ship.

Hassan asked Yusuf to look for a boat ramp where he could launch the submarine.

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On September 3, the four terrorists left Charleston and drove to Boston in Yusuf's car. They didn't fly. They didn't want to repeat Najhib's mistake. They had to stay under the radar in case their names were in the system. By booking a flight, they could also indicate to the police the location of their target, if their names were picked up.

They had been trained to avoid tripping intelligence wires with data. The less they had to show an ID, the less info they would feed to police computers. With nothing to chew on, all the best data-mining algorithms on police super computers couldn't produce any results. Every time it was possible, they drove instead of flying, walked instead of driving and paid cash instead of using electronic payments.



Driving to Boston was also the opportunity for Yusuf to recon the route and get familiar with the usual happenings along the way, such as traffic, road construction, timing, police patrols. It was a rehearsal for the day he would make the drive, pulling the submarine on its trailer.

They arrived in the city on September 4. It was their first time in Boston. They looked at the buildings and the people in the streets with the morbid awareness that a firestorm was going to wipe out everything. The terrorists enjoyed staring at people whom they knew were going to die. They felt superior, knowing that their action would be the cause of deaths and destruction. In their arrogance, they mocked passersby and the city from inside the car.

They went downtown to the harbor and checked into four different hotels, all with waterfront view. They all had fake and untraceable driver's licenses to show at the front desk. Between all four rooms, they had a wide view of the whole harbor. They could monitor all activities and vessels. They knew what they had to do.

Najhib checked in the Fairmont on Battery Wharf. From his room, he had a direct view of the harbor and the US Coast Guard station, with its patrol boats. His assignment was to observe and identify the police boats, time their schedule and note every detail when a LNG tanker passed through the harbor, including speed and number of escort boats.

Ahmed checked into the Green Turtle Floating Hotel, which was just before that area of the channel where LNG tankers made the turn to go to the off loading terminal. His assignment was to determine the best location to detonate the bomb and check the channel depth for his underwater navigation.

Yusuf checked in Seaport Boston Hotel. His room had a view of the entrance of the harbor. His assignment was to observe all tankers and the position of the escort boats when they entered

the harbor. In addition, he was to rent a warehouse to hide the submarine before the attack and to find a boat ramp to launch the submarine.

Abdullah checked in the Boston Yacht Haven. His assignment was to provide security for the group, set up security routes, identify and list internet cafés and meeting places, locate law enforcement buildings and search for surveillance systems.

Now separated, the quartet of terrorists switched into complete covert mode. They communicated between each other with untraceable prepaid mobile phones or by email in internet cafés. They met in person only after making counter-surveillance checks on each other, to make sure every single time that none of them had been followed. They repeated their surveillance checks before returning to their hotels.

They walked through specially selected “security” routes, through small streets or avenues with little traffic, with one another watching their backs. They walked casually. They never looked over their shoulder to detect surveillance and never did anything that could be considered suspect behavior.

They did the counter-surveillance for each other but not for themselves. They took turns being “watcher” or “walker”. When one was walking, his friends were watching. They were placed at two different spots along his path, disguised, standing in the street, hiding from inside a store, or sitting in a café, watching the street. When the walker came in sight of a watcher at the first spot, the watcher would observe and note who and how many people were walking behind the walker. Then the watcher at the second spot would watch and check if anyone seen at the first spot was behind the walker on the second spot. If so, this would indicate the walker was being followed.

If no one had been spotted, one of the watchers would put a sign somewhere at the end of the security route to indicate the walker that he was clear. The routes were chosen so that there

was no logical way for anybody to pass by both spots. One of the watchers would put a mark on a designated spot, like a chalk mark on a wall or on a lamppost. The absence of a mark would tell the walker that he had company and had been burnt. It meant *danger* and that he had to take evasive measures, take his followers off his trail and disappear, and kill his followers if needed.

The presence of a mark would indicate to the walker that there was no danger and that he was clear to go ahead to his hotel or to the meeting.

They kept switching roles to check one another, all day long, every time they had to meet somewhere. It was time consuming because it took 45 minutes for each one of them, but it was a question of survival. At this juncture, they each carried a concealed weapon and were extremely dangerous.

Ahmed scouted the harbor and the adjacent areas to locate the most populated places. He went to the LNG terminal to see where the tankers off loaded their cargo. He worked with city maps and Google Earth. Based on Hassan's estimate of a five-mile radius for the fireball, he triangulated the area to pinpoint where it was best to torpedo the tanker. He narrowed it down to a zone right in front of North Boston Island and across the US Coast Guard station.

The channel was as wide as the length of a LNG tanker and the target area was only 500 yards away from residential and commercial buildings. For Ahmed, it looked like shooting a fish in a barrel, the giant tanker could not maneuver in such restricted water space and would not be able to escape.

Looking at the maps, Ahmed noticed something that Hassan never mentioned before: right in the target area there were two tunnels that ran under the harbor channel as they connected Old Boston to East Boston. Ahmed researched the tunnels and realized that if he landed the submarine right on top

of the tunnel ceilings, the explosion would not only blow up the tanker but also collapse the tunnels as well, drowning everybody inside. It was killing two birds with one stone.

Yusuf walked around the harbor looking for a boat ramp.

Abdullah went to the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game to check for any regulations that might restrict the launching of a boat within the harbor. Of course, he didn't mention a submarine, nor did he intend to register the sub or ask permission to launch it. He just wanted to know the rules so he could find a way to get around them. He paid five bucks for a 150-page book at the Office of Fishing and Boating Access, which contained all the info he needed, along with pictures and maps.

After a few days and miles of walking, the terrorists had their first clandestine meeting in a small café downtown Boston. This was going to be the only time they would meet in *this* café. They were trained not to have habits or routines, or if they had habits, they were not showing them. Praying to Allah and prostrating on the ground was one habit they never wanted to do in plain sight because of the attention it would attract. They went to the mosque separately to comply with their Islamic duties but avoided any contacts with the local Muslim community.

They spoke Spanish to each other and used code names. The tanker was the *cow*. The submarine was the *beer can*. *Milking the cow* meant drive the sub under the tanker. *Pop the beer can* meant detonate the bomb.

The cell members exchanged information and documents to advise each other of their activities. Ahmed told the others where he would attack the tanker, so that they could update their research around this area. Yusuf found the closest boat ramp to the attack area with easy access to the harbor. It was on Little Mystic Channel near Terminal Street. The channel was a half-mile long arm of water that ran to the harbor channel and passed

under the Tobin Memorial Bridge. It put the launch of the submarine a mile and half from the tanker, or a 30-minute trip. Ahmed asked Yusuf to pick a warehouse close to the boat ramp and on the same side of the city, so they would not have to cross a bridge or take a tunnel and take the risk to get stuck in traffic. They discussed the tunnel discovery and agreed it was a great idea to blow up the tanker while it passed above the tunnel with the submarine in between. It would add to the chaos and kill the people in the tunnels, who could otherwise survive the blast.

After they left the café, they separated on foot and checked on each other for two hours to make sure they were not followed. They left nothing behind: no trail, no papers, no match boxes, and no receipts. There was nothing a witness could write down: they had no car, no license plate.

After a few days, Yusuf found a small garage that was close enough to the boat ramp. He walked there alone and paid cash for three months rent. After a couple of weeks of inactivity, the neighbors would forget to wonder who the new tenant was and what his business was. Yusuf drove back and forth between the warehouse and the boat ramp to rehearse for the attack. The group continued to scout the whole area from Castle Island to Point Shirley. They took note of everything and took pictures like tourists.

After one week, the moment they were waiting for came. It was the end of the afternoon when an enormous LNG tanker entered the harbor. All four men went to their observation points to look at how the gigantic vessel was making its way through the harbor. They measured the speed of the tanker when it passed downtown and again when it passed Charlestown before docking at the LNG terminal.

They took notes of the port authorities' routine in the harbor.

They wrote down the names of all the boats escorting the

tanker: tugs boats, pilot boats, Coast Guard vessels, police patrol boats. They even noted the tail number of the helicopters hovering above.

It was all in the open. There was no need to sneak anywhere or hide. They either walked around or watched from the hotel windows.

Ahmed noticed how the police kept all boats outside a security buffer zone around the tanker. Yusuf observed that police cruisers were parked at the end of nearly every pier in direct sight of the channel and that fire engines were waiting in strategic locations along the channel.

The security detail was spectacular, but more of a showoff than anything. It caught everybody's attention. It disrupted every boater, fishermen and professional in the harbor because they had to stop everything during the transit of the tanker. It was almost as if nobody thought anything could happen because of this huge armada of law enforcement vessels. But the giant had an Achilles' heel that made this entire plan useless: no one was watching under the water. More than ever, the terrorists were banking on the false assumption of safety to enable them to attack where authorities were not expecting it.

The water was so murky nothing below the surface was visible. Reportedly, the police sent divers to inspect the tankers' hulls, this was done outside the harbor. Once the tanker had passed within the city limits it was too late. No police divers were going to stop a six-ton submarine.

The Jihadists took turns walking the parking lot at the Mystic River Marina. Ahmed checked the boat ramp: how long it was and how deep the water was at its end. Only a few cars were parked there and there was no traffic.

They drove in taxis through the tunnels that passed under the harbor and visited the airport.

After several days of research, they went for a meeting in

a different location to share their information. This time, they encountered a problem. Their choice was a busy bar with a lot of people. The terrorists were at a table, talking softly about their operation. On the other side of the bar, a group of six girls stared at them. They were obviously interested in these four young, exotic-looking males sitting by themselves.

The girls asked the waiter to bring the men four beers. Although it was against Islamic law to drink alcohol, in this case the terrorists could have done so by applying the Dhuroora, a get-away-with-it rule in the Qur'an which allows Muslims to sidestep Islamic law when the lawbreaking is forced upon them by necessity and without willful disobedience.

Even so, the terrorists declined the beers and ignored the girls, which the waiter found particularly odd. The real reason behind the men's actions was that they didn't know how to deal with free-spirited and provocative women.

Two of the girls took their being ignored as a challenge and walked to the table of the terrorists. One woman in tight pants put her hands on Najhib shoulders then turned around and sat on his lap. She grabbed his hand and noticed he was missing two fingers, so she kissed it and pressed it on her breast.

Najhib squirmed, looked panicked, confused.

"My boobs aren't good enough for you, handsome?" the woman asked.

Everybody inside the bar laughed and screamed.

The second girl took out her phone and snapped pictures of her friend in Najhib's lap.

The four terrorists looked at each other, speechless, stood up and walked to the door.

"Tough guys, huh!" someone shouted.

"Scared of girls!" the bartender jeered.

"Run away, you fucking ragheads! Run away."

Everyone in the bar cheered as the terrorists escaped.

Najhib fumed with rage as he and his friends stood across the street from the bar. He checked his watch: it was 1:35 a.m. He knew they had a problem.

“The whore got a picture of me,” Najhib said. “We need to get her camera; it jeopardizes our operation.”

Yusuf responded: “We get the cunt. We snatch her phone and we leave tomorrow.”

The Arabs waited outside for an hour, until the girl with the camera came out of the bar with a male companion. They walked to a parking lot, unaware that the four terrorists were following them. Stopping at a Ford Explorer, the man unlocked the passenger door for the girl.

Suddenly, Najhib and Abdullah jumped out of the dark, guns aimed at the couple! They grabbed them both by the hair, jammed the gun barrels between their eyes, pushed them into the back seat.

Ahmed and Yusuf kept watch as their partners climbed into the front seat and threatened to kill the couple if they made a move or screamed.

“Now give me your phone, bitch,” Najhib said.

The girl trembled. She took her phone out of her purse and handed it to Najhib.

“Still want to sit on my lap, whore,” Najhib sneered. “How dared you?”

She begged them to not hurt her, but Najhib nodded at Abdullah just before he shot her in the chest. Abdullah shot her friend in the head. They waited and watched the girl bleed to death, then got out of the car. Abdullah tucked his gun under his shirt and stretched his arms, like he was just getting up from a nap. They shut the car’s doors and the terrorists walked back to their hotels.

On September 25, they left Boston and drove back to Charleston.



## ALERT

November 7

At CIA Headquarters in Langley, Virginia, Chance and Floyd prepare a memo for the Director of the CIA to warn Homeland Security, Congress and the Department of Justice about a possible attack on the US. The memo details how Al Qaeda leader Hassan Khalil Mansoor might be in possession of two tons of explosives and in the process of acquiring a small submarine, capable of attacking targets on the water.

Chance explains how Hassan is changing his tactics from surface attacks to subsurface attacks. In 2001, Chance previously warned of possible submarine attacks, but no one took him seriously. Nothing was done, but nothing happened, so he lost quite a bit of credibility. This time, Chance and Floyd present collaborating documentation: police reports, forensic analysis, specifications and descriptions of mini-submarines.

Intercepted documents and drawings show Hassan is looking to acquire systems involving human-guided underwater sleds equipped with explosives designed to detonate under a ship's hull, but there is no confirmation whether a submarine is already in the hands of a terrorist group or not.

Chance explains that the information in the documents represents the underwater equivalent of explosive devices used routinely by suicide bombers in the past. However, Al Qaeda leaders now frequently use the term *insurgent submersibles* in their communications. Chance points out that the advances in technology have made small subs more accessible to Jihadist groups and Al Qaeda's use of the term *insurgent submersibles* clearly indicates that the US could face terrorist submarine suicide attacks.

Because Chance knows that many in the US government

don't believe Al Qaeda is capable of launching a submarine suicide attack against the US, he emphasizes that drug smugglers linked to the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia: FARC) are already using semi-submersible vessels to transport multi-ton cargoes of cocaine on the Pacific coast. He stresses that recently the US Coast Guard caught a large drug-laden submarine in the Caribbean Sea, off the coast of Honduras. He cites a report that states the 60-foot-long midget sub the smugglers used had a range of about 3,000 miles and did not fully submerge but rather skimmed the surface. Chance notes that these craft are actually "submersibles" rather than true submarines; they don't have a snorkel or a periscope above the water. This fact simplifies construction but limits the depth at which each vessel can run.

However, he goes on, if a hundred of these submersibles are suspected of having already left the South American shores, why wouldn't it be possible for terrorists to have just one?

He describes those attack submarines not as a warship but as modified drug-submarines or a modified commercial vessel which can be deployed for a terrorist attack or used as a floating bomb. Chance states that thanks to technological developments and clever design, what used to be available only to the world's major navies is now available to the average terrorist. This fact makes the US coasts more vulnerable now than during World War II.

Chance warns that the threat level to military and civilian facilities from waterborne attacks, both surface and subsurface, is significant. Anything floating on the water or situated on the coasts of waterways could be targeted: cruise ships, cargo ships, Navy ships, chemical plants, nuclear plants, oil terminals, ferries and the list goes on and on. Chance points out there's no way the US can protect them all.

The CIA agent says that because terrorists are looking at

the highest possible death toll, a seaborne attack on floating targets could take place in different environments. An oil tanker was likely to be attacked in port and not at sea, while a cruise ship was likely to be attacked at sea and not in port. Ferries in big cities like New York could be easy targets. Chance's memo details the kamikaze methodology used in previous terrorist attacks:

In October 2000, in Aden Yemen, two men in a small boat approached the US Navy destroyer *USS Cole*, came alongside at amidships and killed themselves when their explosives went off. And in October 2002, off the coast of Yemen, Al Qaeda suicide bombers operating two high-speed boats loaded with explosives rammed into the French-owned supertanker *Limburg*, resulting in one crewmember's death and a massive oil spill.

In their warning, Chance and Floyd catalogue the methods law enforcement and armed forces are using for detecting and defeating waterborne attacks. To date the approach is to maintain a "sufficient" space around the asset, where no one is allowed to enter. This method is called "Restrict the Water space" (RW), and uses patrol boats or floating barriers as well as remote sensors to detect, classify and track approaching traffic. These barriers can deter or delay surface attacks so that patrol boats have the chance to detect the attackers and intercept them before they can reach a critical standoff distance from the protected asset.

The methods are similar for land facilities on waterways, such as water intakes for nuclear power and chemical plants. As a result, Chance explains that nearly all critical waterfronts are now protected with floating boat barriers, installed at or near the edge of the available RW. But Chance warns that civilian assets are still in the "open."

In conclusion, Chance emphasizes that, unfortunately,

none of these methods and barriers whatsoever can stop a subsurface attack in the US. Although attack-divers and submersibles would be much slower than a surface craft, the time required for their detection, classification and response is too long. Chance even questions the reliability of the acoustic detection systems in shallow waters because of the noise saturated environment inside a port.

## **THE SUBMARINE**

**November 9**

In Charleston, Ahmed receives an email from Chris, the owner of the submarine company in Florida: his submarine is ready for inspection and delivery. Ahmed, aka Mr. Henry Desjardin, calls Chris back and makes arrangements for the delivery and his training.

On the appropriate day, Ahmed takes the train to avoid airline passenger screening and travels to West Palm Beach. He checks into a motel. Early the next morning, he's at the factory to meet with Chris for the presentation of his submarine and to start the training.

The submarine is beautiful, so cool looking: bright yellow with three clear-acrylic domes for the passengers. But truth be known, Ahmed couldn't care less about the design. For him, the submarine is just a weapon of mass destruction.

Chris describes how the sub's main motors and vertical thrusters allow the pilot to steer the submarine in every direction, like an underwater helicopter. Ahmed/Henry starts with his training right away: first, in class with lessons on theory and then on a simulator, which is very much like a flight simulator or a video game on a giant computer screen.

Although the submarine looks simple and is almost as easy to drive as a golf cart, it's a vehicle with a life-support system, which means its operation requires strict attention. Ahmed realizes he has to take his job seriously. He won't get very far underwater without significant piloting skills.

He learns everything about the different components of the submarine: the electric systems and battery-powered propulsion, with its controls.

He learns about the life-support system that provides fresh

air for the passengers in the cabin.

He learns about the monitoring systems and instruments that inform the pilot of the status of all systems and of possible hazards in the water surrounding the submarine.

Visibility under the water rarely exceeds 50 feet, 100 at the most, so Ahmed pays close attention on how to use sonar and depth sounders to “see” what’s ahead, above and below. He wants to know how to avoid collisions with obstacles and reefs, how to avoid hard landings on the seabed and how to avoid hitting other vessels. He becomes totally familiar with the small digital screens that display the distances from the surface, from the bottom and from any obstacle. Like any boat captain, Ahmed learns about maneuvering, navigation, weather and boating regulations. Fortunately for him, he’s already knowledgeable in this field because of his sailboat experience.

Ahmed is fascinated by the capabilities of the submarine. He understands why Hassan asked him to look into one and purchase it, if it proved quiet and sneaky. This one seems perfect. Certainly, once the mini-submarine is under the surface, no one can see it and no one can stop it. Coastal waters are too shallow for a Navy submarine to maneuver to hunt a midget submarine. Ahmed’s convinced nothing can seek and destroy a miniature submarine that lurks in the murky and restricted waters of a harbor.

Even if detection systems were installed in the harbor, sonar returns in shallow water are always cluttered. And even if a highly-trained anti-submarine warfare technician were on duty and were able to detect an enemy mini-submarine in the complex sonar picture, it would be too late to take any countermeasures.

Once Ahmed has completed his theory course, the instructor prepares him for the underwater course. The crew drives Ahmed to the marina to train him on his own submarine.

The instructor explains to Ahmed how to drive a car in

reverse with a submarine in tow on a trailer, and how to launch it in the water. Once they are at the boat ramp, Ahmed practices and learns the launch and recovery of the submarine. It's pretty much like launching a boat on a trailer.

Ahmed is surprised to see how quick and easy it is to launch the submarine. In preparation for his mission, he mentally pictures the submarine on the trailer, covered with a tarp to hide it. He imagines backing up with the car and lining up the trailer with the ramp, uncovering the submarine at the last minute before backing the trailer into the water to launch the sub. He estimates that it will take less than 30 seconds to launch the submarine after it is uncovered.

The crew launches the submarine in only four feet of water. While holding it, they open the canopies so the instructor-pilot and Ahmed can climb inside the cabin. Ahmed takes the pilot seat, with the instructor just behind him. The third seat is left empty.

Both men put on headsets with microphones so they can speak to each other in the cabin and communicate with the surface crew when they are under the water. It works like a radio system, except it's based on ultrasonic waves instead of radio waves.

After clearance from the instructor, Ahmed engages all the systems as he learned the day before. He pushes forward on the motor controls. The submarine moves ahead without any noise. *It's so quiet*, Ahmed thinks.

Once they are far enough from the boat ramp, Ahmed and the instructor close the canopies and secure them airtight. Ahmed opens the air system valves to ventilate the cabin with fresh air and prepares for diving. With the domes sealed, Ahmed feels he is in a different world. It's like being inside a cocoon, insulated from a hostile outside environment.

Ahmed follows the instructions of the instructor-pilot and

vents the air out of the ballasts. The submarine loses its buoyancy and slowly lowers in the water. As it lowers, the waterline reaches the domes. Ahmed can now see the transition point, where the waterline is halfway up the clear dome: above the line is the surface, the normal world; below the line is the underwater world.

This is not the first time Ahmed has operated a mini-sub, but he is scared. The transition from surface to subsurface creates an unnerving sinking sensation. At least this time Ahmed is dry. The mini-sub he learned to operate in Dubai for Al Qaeda were wet-sub, more like sitting on a torpedo, where the passengers hang on with scuba gear strapped on their backs.

Ahmed submerges the sub completely and pilots it as though he were flying a helicopter. With his right hand on the control stick, he makes the sub go up and down by moving the fish-like fins on either side of the sub. The pedals at his feet move a rudder in the tail that turns the boat left and right. His left hand is on a small control box with miniature throttles that regulate the direction, forward or reverse, and speed of the sub's electric motors.

But the difference between a helicopter and the sub is that in the submarine everything happens in slow motion. The submarine is heavy and has momentum, and this is something Ahmed needs to get familiar with. The submarine has no brakes. Ahmed has to burst the motors in reverse to slow down or stop. Ahmed learns to anticipate the movements as the submarine cuts through the water and to get familiar with the delays in moving and stopping.

He learns how to land on the bottom. He practices landing without looking outside, just reading the instruments.

At one point the instructor seems a bit annoyed by all the time Ahmed spends on bottom landings. He tells him, "Henry, you're good. Very good. OK? Believe me. There's no need



dedicating so much time practicing your landing procedure. OK?”

But for Ahmed, it's most important. He knows that the day he launches the attack he will have to land the submarine on the bottom without visibility. He wants to make sure he can manage landings and navigation using just his instruments.

After three days of diving, practicing and testing, Ahmed gets his pilot qualification. From now on he can operate the submarine on his own, solo or with passengers.

After Ahmed's last session with the sub, they all go back to the office to finalize the contract and the certificates. The title and the pilot license are issued to Henry Desjardin, not under Ahmed's real name.

Ahmed pays the balance with cash. The \$215,000 is a large sum of money. Paying cash isn't illegal, but it raises a red flag. It's definitely unusual and Chris hesitates. *Money is money*, Chris finally decides. Besides, he doesn't have many other options but to let the submarine go with no questions asked. He needs the money for his company. His business has been hit by the recession and he's almost bankrupt. He hadn't sold a single submarine for a year, so Henry's order came as a blessing. Even so, Chris realizes he's going to have to do some imaginative accounting and creative paperwork to be able to deposit so much cash at the bank without attracting unwanted attention.

When Hassan asked Ahmed to look into buying a submarine, he had no idea he could buy one just like that and drive off with it as if it was a jet ski. But that's how it turns out. Ahmed goes to a trucking company and makes arrangements to have his submarine transported to an address in Savannah, Georgia. Two days later, a flatbed truck shows up at the submarine company to pick it up. The driver pulls the trailer with the sub onto the flatbed and secures it. Ahmed covers it with a tarp to keep it away from curious eyes, then leaves for the train station and returns to Charleston.

Chris is a little suspicious about Henry/Ahmed. He's concerned this guy might use his submarine for something illegal, like drug smuggling. Chris doesn't want to report the transaction to the police for fear that they might seize the submarine and the cash, leaving him with his company in limbo. And there is always the risk of retaliation if Henry is a thug. Unsure what to do, Chris does nothing. And besides, as far as Chris knows, Henry/Ahmed didn't break any laws.

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Back in Charleston, Ahmed is picked up by Yusuf. They drive down to Savannah, which is only a 90 mile drive. They go to the address Ahmed gave to the truck driver. It's the parking lot of a big mall. Once there, they wait for the truck. The reason for the deception is that if someone is following the truck or if someone reported the delivery address to some government agency, it will not lead them to Charleston.

Ahmed and Yusuf wait a couple of hours. Finally, Ahmed calls the truck driver to check on his location. He says he is only one hour away from the address. Yusuf leaves Ahmed in the parking lot and drives down the road the driver said he was coming in on. Yusuf stops and waits on the side of the road.

When the truck comes down the road, Yusuf spots it and checks if anyone is tailing the truck. There is nobody, so he drives off and follows the truck from a distance. When the truck arrives at the parking lot, Yusuf sees Ahmed waving at the driver. Yusuf parks his car on the other end of the lot and walks to the truck. The driver doesn't seem to be surprised to be delivering a submarine on a parking lot; actually, he couldn't care less.

The driver offloads the submarine. Ahmed and the driver both sign the paperwork and the truck driver leaves. Yusuf walks back to the other side of the parking lot, takes his car and drives to the submarine, hooks up the trailer, attaches a trailer license plate and leaves the parking lot.

The two terrorists drive back to Charleston. The submarine on its trailer is surprisingly easy to maneuver. It's completely wrapped up so other drivers and people on the roadside can't see what they're towing.

After two hours on the road, Ahmed and Yusuf arrive at the warehouse. Najhib and Abdullah are waiting. They park the submarine inside and close the door. They are excited to have the submarine at last. They unwrap it, touch it and walk around it. They open the domes, climb up and sit inside the cabin, Ahmed goes behind the controls and shows his friends how they work. They realized what an incredible vessel they have to deliver death to the Americans.

November 10

Floyd is back in Puerto Rico. He's in his office, looking at the pictures of the underwater bomb pictures from Culebra and Vieques. As he compares them, he's struck by a detail: the bombs he saw on the seabed when he dove in Culebra have much more marine growth on them than the bombs that were cut open.

After staring at the pictures for a long time, Floyd remembers something Matt told him about the bombing range in Culebra: when it was closed in 1975 because of incidents with the locals, the Navy merely moved the training missions to Vieques. Floyd realizes there can be only one explanation for the difference in marine growth on the bombs in his pictures: the bombs that were cut open were more recent. This means they came from Vieques, not Culebra. It means the suspects must have retrieved the bombs from Vieques and taken them to Culebra.

How could he have missed Vieques in his investigation? Floyd wonders. He calls Matt and confirms that the bombs that were recovered came from Vieques.

Floyd scrambles a helicopter and flies to Vieques to interview locals. His first stop is at the fishing village. He asks the attendant, Miguel, at the port house if he remembers anything unusual during that time.

“Hell yes!” Miguel says. “I remember two assholes. They came in on a sailboat and treated me like shit.”

“What sailboat?” asks Floyd.

Miguel responds, “Those two fucking ‘paki,’ they arrived one day on their damn boat, dropped anchor, stayed a couple of weeks. Assholes acted like the world belonged to them. Arrogant like you would not believe. They finally refueled and left, without giving a tip to anyone.”

“What kind of sailboat? From where?”

“I’m not sure. A big one. Maybe a 50-footer Something like that. Two masts. US flag.”

“Anybody got the registration?” asks Floyd.

“Yeah, me...probably. They didn’t talk much to anybody so nobody asked them anything.”

“The registration?”

“I always write them on the refueling slip.”

“Well, do you mind looking for it? Presto...por favor. Miguel?” asks Floyd.

After ten minutes, Miguel pulls a slip out of a box and gives it to Floyd.

Floyd gives a thumb up to Miguel, studies the slip. “You called them ‘paki.’ What do you mean? What’s a ‘paki’?”

“A raghead! How do you call a fucking Arab up there?”

“Oh, I see...so you are positive...they were Arabs.”

“Absolutely. I served two years in Iraq, I know an Arab when I see one. Fucking barbarians. I hope you catch them...Only thing they’re ever up to is no good.”

Floyd walks out of the port office and onto the dock. He pulls out his phone, calls his director in San Juan.

“Robert, it’s Floyd. I’m in Vieques. I got a break here.”

“Tell me. What’s happening?”

“Remember the two other suspects we knew nothing about? Well, they were in Vieques. They came by sailboat and left at the same time as the others. I bet they left with the TNT. They must be the ones who transported the explosives. There’s no other possibility. I have the boat registration. It’s from South Carolina.”

“And what makes you so sure they are your suspects?” Robert asks. “Tourists go back and forth by boat all year long over there.”

“Robert,” Floyd says, “the two guys were Arabs.”

“Terrific work, Floyd. Sounds like you nailed it. They must be the ones who transported the TNT. I’ll book a flight for you. Call your girlfriend. Tell her you’ll be out of town for a while. And call Chance. You’ll work together.”

Robert is impressed; the investigation just moved up ten notches. A quick check with the Coast Guard reveals that the boat is registered in Charleston to a Yusuf Farouk Abdulmutallab. Another Muslim. The plot thickens. If he has a boat registered under his name, he must have a driver’s license too. Once they put him in the system, if Yusuf gets pulled over by a cop, anywhere, he’ll be arrested.

November 12

Ahmed signs a bill of sale and the title to transfer the submarine from Henry Desjardin to Yusuf so he can register it under his name at the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources. This way he can get a hull number. It’s just like registering a recreational boat. More importantly, the sub will be registered under a different name than Henry’s in case Chris reports it.

With his paperwork in hand, Yusuf goes to the DNR, stands in line and keeps a low profile. He switches his first and last name on the application purposely to fuck up the system. The name-scrambling game is a common practice used by Arabs who know they will come up against “foreigners” who are not familiar with the order of Arab names. If the clerk notices the error on the application, he can just claim he didn’t know. He writes down on the application: Farouk Abdulmutallab Yusuf. Technically, it’s a different person. He completes the form, checks “other” for the type of vessel and writes “submersible,” as it sounds a little more discreet and smaller than “submarine.” The last thing Yusuf wants is to talk about his submarine to a government employee or have to explain that it’s not a 200-foot WWII German U-boat.

Then Yusuf hands the documents to the clerk and pays the fees and taxes. The lady doesn’t notice the name switch and doesn’t even pay attention to the “submersible” type of vessel. She gives Yusuf the registration and hull number. As Yusuf is leaving the building, Floyd is entering. He has no idea he just missed the terrorist by a hair.

Armed with a warrant, he accesses the system and pulls Yusuf information on the boat registration, including a copy of his driver license. Even without the name scrambling Floyd would not have seen the submarine registration because Yusuf’s application has not been processed yet.

The boat registration reveals the address of Yusuf Farouk Abdulmutallab.

Floyd goes to the local FBI office to set up an intervention at the suspect’s address. An hour later, a SWAT team bursts through the door of the apartment. They find Yusuf’s wife and arrest her.

FBI agents search the premises but can’t find anything significant. She lives alone, no men clothes or shoes. Floyd is very frustrated.

The woman is completely terrified and doesn't understand what's going on. She explains that her husband doesn't live with her. She is taken in custody under heavy escort, and brought to the field office for questioning.

Floyd is under pressure, he better find something quick or something bad is going to happen. He tells the agents about the sailboat. He calls the police and the Coast Guard and asks them to search for the boat in all nearby marinas and at sea.

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Yusuf has no idea his wife has been arrested and her apartment searched. Before the terrorists go further with the rigging of the submarine into a human torpedo, they need to take it to the water to practice all together. Until now, only Ahmed is familiar to the launching and piloting. Ahmed needs to perfect his navigation skills and Abdullah needs to train for the bomb attack.

There are very few places around Charleston that are suitable for diving in a submarine. This is especially true for a terrorist group in training that doesn't want to attract the attention of law enforcement. And with a US nuclear aircraft carrier in Charleston Harbor, the inlet is the last place the terrorists want to be seen, pulled over, screened or *rubber gloved*.

They drive to Folly Island instead. It's ten miles away and south of Charleston Inlet. The small marina there will be a perfect spot to launch the submarine, go around and dive off Folly Beach. It's not only ironic but also coincidental that terrorists would practice for an attack with a weapon of mass destruction at a beach called "Folly."

At this time of the year, with the water so cold, there are very few people at the beach or at the marina. Ahmed is relieved to be able to practice without an audience. Ahmed takes the wheel of the car and shows Yusuf how to drive in reverse with a trailer and how to launch the submarine. When the attack happens, Yusuf will be the one in charge of launching the sub.

After three runs, they switch places and Yusuf takes the wheel. He needs more than a few attempts to overcome the confusion of turning the wheel in the opposite direction where he wants the trailer to go. Finally, though, he has it mastered: while going in reverse, turning the wheel right turns the car right, but with a trailer, turning the wheel right turns the trailer left.

Confident, Yusuf tells Ahmed and Abdullah to get in the sub. Once inside the cabin, Ahmed gives him the go and Yusuf launches the sub. As soon as the sub hits the water, Ahmed engages the motors in reverse and pulls off the ramp. Najhib and Yusuf watch the sub as it cruises down the middle of the inlet and heads down the river to the ocean. It's not long before Ahmed and Abdullah close the dome hatches and disappear under the water.

This is Abdullah's first dive ever, a premiere. He's so scared he trembles. And he prays loudly to Allah from inside the cabin.

The visibility is poor; they can barely see anything outside.

This is also Ahmed's first dive without his instructor. He's clumsy. It's not that easy to pilot the submarine after all. His first landing on the bottom is hard and scares Abdullah even more. Ahmed stays on the seafloor a few minutes to let his panic pass. Then he focuses, recalls the piloting procedures, and takes off from the seafloor. He gets better control. Visibility seems worse: there is no marine life and a lot of sand in suspension.

After many erratic maneuvers, Ahmed is able to maintain a fixed depth and performs different drills. Abdullah starts feeling a little more comfortable. The water is cold, much colder than in West Palm Beach. After one hour underwater, Ahmed and Abdullah are getting really cold inside the sub. Ahmed isn't sure where he is. After turning left and right so many times, he lost track. After another half-hour Yusuf decides he's had enough for one day and he surfaces the submarine. When he pierces the



surface, he's facing the ocean so he thinks he is lost in the middle of nowhere.

A quick turn of his head and Ahmed sees with relief that the beach is right behind him. He calls Najhib on the radio to tell him he is heading back to the marina. Ahmed drives the sub back into the river and faces the boat ramp. He moves farther and aligns the sub with the trailer and, with a motor burst, slides onto the trailer skids.

Najhib walks down the ramp into the cold water to secure the submarine to the trailer. Then he jumps out of the way to let Yusuf pull the trailer out of the water. Ahmed and Abdullah open the domes and climb out of the submarine, exhausted.

They cover up the submarine and Yusuf drives off back to the warehouse. Inside the car, Abdullah dominates the conversation; he cannot help but to talk about his experience, even though he's still shaking.

Back in the warehouse, they pray, then clean up the submarine and recharge the batteries. Ahmed inspects the hull and the propellers to check that he hasn't damaged anything. Other than a few scratches on the bottom of the hull, everything is fine.

All four men go the scuba store to refill the compressed-air tanks. The sub has a lot of tanks, eight cylinders in all.

The attendant at the scuba shop is surprised. There are hardly any divers at this time of year. He tries to engage in conversation and asks the men how the diving was, but Ahmed responds with only three words.

"It's all good" Ahmed says. But that's it. No thank you. No nothing. He just ignores the store attendant and walks out to join his friends.

For the next several days they return to the marina to practice further.

## November 16

At the end of the fourth day of diving practice, when Ahmed comes back to the harbor in the submarine, he sees from a distance a police officer talking to Najhib at the ramp. His heart almost jumps out of his chest. What happened? Ahmed has no other choice but to return to the marina and get back on the trailer, but he fears the worst. He sees Yusuf next to the car, signaling for Ahmed to get the sub on the trailer. Once it's secured, Yusuf gets back in the car and pulls the sub out of the water. He parks close to the ramp. Ahmed and Abdullah get out of the cabin.

The officer immediately comes forward. He's from the Department of Natural Resources. He acknowledges that both Ahmed and Abdullah are wearing their lifejackets. Then he asks to see their safety equipment. Ahmed gets back in the cabin and pulls out a box containing the submarine registration, a horn, a fire extinguisher and some flares.

The officer checks the equipment, checks the hull number and the registration. He goes back inside his car. The terrorists can see him talk on the radio. They are petrified, afraid he might call for backup.

After a few minutes, the officer comes back to Ahmed and tells him he's going to inspect the submarine. All these IDs of Arabic names are confusing and because of the name scrambling, the officer doesn't find anything in the database. Yusuf's tricks worked!

The officer gets inside the cabin and looks around. He is obviously out of his league and doesn't seem to know what to look for or where. Thing is, he feels these Arab-looking guys are up to no good but he can't find anything to hold them on. The officer gets out of the sub and tells the men they are free to go. The officer walks to his car, looks back at the submarine and drives off.

The terrorists don't waste any time, they cover up the sub, get back in their car and drive away. Back in the warehouse, they decide they've had enough training. They don't want to risk any more police questioning or do anything that might jeopardize their mission. After a short discussion and still with the fear in their stomach, they all pray and prostrate for the evening prayer.

Between his training in Florida and the practice at Folly Beach, Ahmed has almost 20 hours of piloting experience. He knows now how to submerge quickly, land smoothly, how to estimate distance and travel time. He also knows now how to navigate without visibility by reading the instruments, which is pretty much like flying IFR (Instrument Flight Rules) with an airplane. The conditions he's been practicing in virtually duplicate those he will encounter in Boston Harbor: murky water with no visibility. They put the sub's batteries on charge and drop the scuba tanks for to be refilled...for the last time.

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In Langley, Chance receives a secret message from one of his sources. During his career Chance had developed an extensive network of sources all over the world. One of them was in the Columbian police: a captain at their headquarters in Bogota named Raoul Estevez. Raoul indicates in his message that he has important information to share. Chance knows Raoul very well. He knows he would not ask him to fly down to Colombia to just talk about something trivial.

Chance grabs his phone and calls Floyd. "Hey partner, how are you?"

"Fine...so what's new?"

"I feel like having a Colombian pina colada. Why don't you join me? Pack your bags. We fly to Bogota tomorrow."

"Bogota? Shit, man. Don't you think it is a little bit far for a cocktail? What's going on?"

"Don't ask. I'll pick you up at San Juan Airport."

“What do you mean? I’m not in Puerto Rico. I’m in Charleston. I just searched a suspect’s address.”

“Something came up. I need you to come with me. I’ll pick you up at the Charleston Airport.”

“But where, what flight?”

“I’m taking a company plane. I’ll text my tail number.”
Chance hangs up, Floyd looks at his phone, looking for answers. “*Spooks!*” is the only one that comes to mind.

November 17

The group of terrorist is in the warehouse. They lift the submarine off its trailer with a portable gantry crane and set it to rest on wood blocks to make it more accessible and easier to work on. They prepare the submarine for painting and remove all the decals, Ahmed wants to change the color from bright yellow to blue. It is not just to make it less conspicuous; but with a new color, anyone looking for a yellow submarine might miss a blue one. Ahmed knows that sooner or later the police officer at the marina will report a yellow submarine.

With a shop compressor, Ahmed paints the whole hull with a deep blue marine paint. The blue will somewhat camouflage the submarine when it’s on the surface and make it invisible when submerged. In order to make the sub look more commercial they place large Cool Light Beer decals on the hull so that it would take a little longer before anyone looking at it would think the submarine is suspicious. It is all a matter of delay and misdirection, the Jihadists had been taught. Leading people to think the sub was some sort of advertising promotion could give them the extra minutes they need to make it to the water.

After two days, the paint has cured. Najhib starts loading the submarine with the explosives. The maximum payload of the submarine is 2,000 pounds. Najhib has to pack the submersible

with 3,700 pounds of explosives, which is 1,700 pounds over the recommended load. Najhib feels the extra weight is nothing the sub can't handle. The waterline will be higher than normal but no one will notice.

The terrorists open up the deck plates to access the ballasts. These are big compartments that stretch from the top to the bottom of the sub's hull. There are valves at the tops of the ballasts and open slots at their bottoms. When the valves at the top are opened and the air escapes, water floods inside the compartments. When the ballasts are full of water, the sub sinks. When the water inside the ballasts is forced out through the slots on the hull's bottom by compressed air, the sub rises. Air in the ballasts provides flotation for the submarine at the surface.

Since the ballasts are very large to accommodate enough air to provide high flotation, there's plenty of room inside for Najhib to install the explosives. He feels it's a very safe hiding place because no one would really think of getting inside the ballasts for a routine check. Block after block, Najhib loads the ballasts very carefully with the TNT bricks. He packs them against one another, tight and compact. He doesn't need to make them watertight as TNT doesn't dissolve in water. It doesn't matter if it gets wet when the ballasts are flooded.

Next, Najhib connects the explosives with waterproof electric blasting-caps and booster charges, he links together the multiple explosive blocks throughout the hull of the submarine. This will enable the TNT to detonate all at once. To insure there won't be any misfire, Najhib doubles the triggering electric lines and passes them to the cabin through the bulkhead with a watertight connector.

After two days of packing explosives, Najhib checks them one last time and seals all deck hatches. The submarine is now loaded and ready with 3,700 pounds of explosives connected to a control box in the passenger compartment. Najhib shows

Abdullah how to connect the control box to arm and trigger the bomb. It's like a suicide vest but much bigger Najhib tells him. Abdullah's eyes sparkle. He's proud to be the bomber. He feels important. He feels rewarded.

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Chance and Floyd are flying in a CIA jet in route to Bogota. Chance explains that he was contacted by one of his sources and that he may have crucial information to help with their case.

"And you might help me with your Spanish," says Chance.

"Don't count it. I only speak a little Spanish!"

"Really? An FBI agent stationed in Puerto Rico?"

"Wasn't required for my assignment, and most everybody I deal with speaks pretty good English."

"How about your girlfriend? She's from Puerto Rico right? You speak to her in English?"

"Pffff...you spies. You seem to know much about me... Yes, we speak in English."

"OK. So what did you find in Charleston?"

"I think I've found the trail of my two other suspects. I'm convinced they transported the explosives in the US on a sailboat."

"And where's the boat?"

"I don't know. It's been four days. I asked the police and the Coast Guard to look for the sailboat. It hasn't turned up yet. Damn. How difficult can it be to find a 50-foot sailboat?"

"Depends if they know what they are looking for."

"I gave them the hull number."

"The hull number, huh? What do you expect, Floyd? You really think these guys are going to leave their hull number for you to find it? Come on. Man. Tell me you're better than that."

Floyd realizes his mistake. He calls the field office in Charleston. He asks them to reverse the hull numbers and cross

check the registrations with the database of all sailboats over 45 feet in the area, and to interview boat owners who are berthed nearby.

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Later in the afternoon, they meet Raoul in a hotel room in Bogota. Raoul tells them that he learned from a reliable informant inside the drug cartel that a Middle Eastern Individual named Hassan Emanuel Ortiz was in the process of acquiring a drug submarine to smuggle explosives to the east coast of the US. The individual had visited several unknown submarine yards. Chance and Floyd are baffled by this information and they look at each other intensely.

Raoul provides the specifications of the submarines Hassan was interested in, with pictures, but he doesn't know the location where they are being built. He says that Hassan told the narcos that he would come back to buy a big sub after he had made additional arrangements with his buyer about the "merchandise" he intended to transport. Raoul also indicates that Hassan has his own drug-trafficking network between South America and Europe.

Chance already knows about the drug network, but he doesn't mention it. Raoul gives Chance a phone number where Hassan can be reached. The number indicates that it is a satellite phone.

For the CIA and FBI agents, Raoul's information makes sense. It corroborates other information about Hassan and Al Qaeda wanting to use submarines for terrorist operations.

Chance asks Raoul, "Are you sure you can trust your informant?"

"We got the info from "El Churacca," one of the narco bosses. He said the Hassan guy is real asshole and a pervert. He treated them like they were peasants. A very rude and insulting man. The informant said Hassan should be happy to be alive. The

narcos wanted to kill him, but instead they decided to rat him out.”

“Why do you say he is a pervert?” asks Floyd.

“The informant said that, as a courtesy, they introduced him to a girl at a party, a real “Chica caliente,” a beautiful Colombian woman. Big natural boobs, very pretty, to accompany him. Later in his hotel room, Hassan beat up the girl and threw her out because she insulted him. She told the narcos she insulted Hassan because he asked her to find underage girls for him. She said he wanted a couple of nine-year-olds and that it should not be difficult to find such girls in the mountains, deep inside the country.

“So she insulted him, called him a pervert. And he beat her up. Nice guy,” Chance says.

“The narcos did not like his actions at all. You got a sick puppy there, amigos, a gun smuggler, a terrorist and an ugly pervert who likes young girls. I hope you catch the bastard.”

“What’s his name again?”

“Hassan Emanuel Ortiz.”

“It sounds like a mix of Arabic and Spanish names. What do you know about that?”

Raoul replied, “His passport says Emanuel Ortiz, and the informant calls him Hassan. He says he is definitely an Arab. He was always on his satellite phone, shouting in Arabic, like he was the only one around, like the informant was too dumb to recognize the language he used.”

Raoul doesn’t have the full name, but Chance feels Hassan is most likely the same Hassan Khalil Mansoor he’d been hunting for years. And it wasn’t the first time Chance had heard that the 52-year-old Hassan liked to have sex with underage girls. The act, although despicable, was not uncommon with Arabs.

Chance pours Raoul a drink and says, “Don’t worry, we’ll get him. I’ve worked against Arabs long enough to know them well.

These Muslim guys are appalling. You have no idea... I mean, look, it starts with their prophet. They follow his example in the Qur'an. This pedophile thug boasted that he married a six-year-old girl and that he had sex with her when she turned nine. Because of this, they all think pedophilia is OK. I've been in the Middle East for many years. I've seen how these guys live. I don't mean to sound prejudiced, but they are disgusting people. They have sex with their cousins and they fuck donkeys on their farms. I've seen it with my own eyes when I was undercover."

Chance thanks Raoul for the information and gives him an envelope with 50,000 dollars for his "expenses."

With Hassan's satellite phone number, Chance knows the CIA will be able to pinpoint his location and track him down the minute he turns his phone on.

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Chance and Floyd leave Raoul and head for the bars in town. They spot a busy one and Chance tells Floyd, "I promised you a pina colada, so let's get in there and have some fun."

As they enter the bar, the noise stops instantly as everyone turns around to welcome the two foreigners. They sit at a table. The room is filled with joy, warmth and laughter. A pretty waitress comes over with a smile: "Buenas tarde guapo, soy Camilla y yo seré su mesera esta noche, en que le puedo servir?"

"Dame dos pina coladas, por favor," responds Floyd, with a strong English accent.

Floyd translates for Chance: "Her name is Camilla. She took my order." The bar is full of people, mostly young, exotic-looking women.

For an hour, they sip on their creamy drinks. They enjoy the atmosphere and make observations about locals.

Then Floyd notices something. "Look on your left. That table back there on the other side of the room, with two guys."

“Yes, I already saw them,” Chance says. “They’re not laughing like everybody else. They’re talking about us.”

“Who are they? Raoul’s friends?”

“Could be, but I doubt he’d dare put a trail on me or I’ll kick his ass. Anyways, let’s head back to the hotel. We’ll fly early tomorrow morning.”

When Chance and Floyd leave the bar, the two guys in the back rush to the door to watch them. They follow Chance and Floyd down the street. Suddenly two other guys pop up at the other end of the street and walk toward them. They are muggers who saw in these mid-life men easy prey to rob. Chance and Floyd are cornered between four knife-wielding thugs.

“Stand against the wall,” Chance says quietly to Floyd. Floyd is scared and backs off, wondering what Chance is up to.

One of the guys yells at Chance in English with a heavy Spanish accent. He demands his money, watch and valuables.

Chance doesn’t respond, instead, he stands with his feet shoulder-width apart, imperceptibly bending his knees and shifting his weight onto his slightly-turned-in toes. His arms are relaxed, held in front of his waist, with open hands. Chance eyes the guy in front of him who is swinging a huge Bowie knife. It’s a death trap, yes, but the other way around. There is no fear, no sweat, in the 55-year-old man, standing in a fundamental karate guard-position and ready to strike.

Without warning the punk moves forward with a slash to cut Chance’s face. That’s what Chance was waiting for. At the speed of light, he dodges the blade and throws a double-punch in front-stance to the guy’s heart and throat, with an out-of-this-world guttural sound.

With a crushed throat and a cardiac arrest, the goon drops on the ground. The other three criminals don’t even have the time to realize what’s coming. Chance moves around throwing deadly sidekicks and finger-strikes to their necks and vital

organs. Like in a coordinated ballet, with his mind and body in perfect harmony, Chance annihilates his other three opponents. Floyd is hypnotized by the scene he just saw. Never before had he heard the sound of crushing bones and punched flesh.

The almost inhuman shouts Chance was making when hitting these guys frightened him to his guts.

“Let’s get out of here, man,” Chance says. “These thugs will be dead in five minutes” Chance isn’t even out of breath. He’s calm, as if nothing had happened. They rush to the hotel, making sure they are not followed.

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The next day they leave Bogota and fly to Charleston.

In the plane Floyd can’t help but to ask Chance what happened in the street, and how he managed to beat four guys at once?

“Floyd, the minute these guys pulled a knife on me, they were dead. I just can’t take that.”

“Yes, but wait. What I saw would make Bruce Lee run away.”

“Nooo. Bruce Lee was a Kung Fu Master, I’m a Shotokan Karate Sensei. I started learning karate since I was 18. Now I’m black belt 5th Dan and still learning.”

“Learning what? That was already pretty damn impressive!”

“Karate is an excellent school, a perfect system of training and enhancement of a human being's mental and physical capabilities.”

“Shit, you are a dangerous man.”

“No I’m not, but nobody pulls a knife on me. And you know what? That’s exactly how I feel when I see those Arabs sneaking in my country forcing their medievalist standards on us and plotting to blow themselves up.”

In the morning, they land in Charleston. As they walk through the terminal Chance says, “I love airports. You want to know why?”

“Not really,” Floyd says. “I hate airports. Waste of time.”

“Look around. Lots of beautiful girls on their way to somewhere. Makes you think you’re still in the game.”

“Yeah, I guess so. I notice, but I never really pay attention.”

“I do. All the time. I met my wife in an airport; she was a flight attendant.”

November 19

In Charleston, the US Coast Guard notifies Floyd they found a sailboat matching his description. It’s berthed at a slip in Charleston. Their suspicion was reinforced after they interviewed boaters and yacht owners who told about the four Arab-looking guys acting suspiciously and avoiding everybody.

There was nobody onboard the sailboat. The Coast Guard ran the hull number in the computer and it came up with no records. Chance was right, the number was fake.

Floyd cordons off the entire marina and searches the boat. Nothing inside. He orders a forensic team to come on board. They tear up the bulkheads, the floor and the cabinets. They uncover the cache in the bilge. The first test indicates a strong presence of TNT. This discovery confirms yet again the link between the suspects in Puerto Rico and the explosives.

“That’s where they hid the TNT. I knew it!” Floyd says to Chance.

“Yes, but it’s not here anymore!”

“Fuck! Fuck! Fuck! Where’d they take it?”

The forensics team lifts fingerprints, swabs body fluids for DNA.

The questioning of Yusuf's wife gives nothing, she doesn't know anything. Yusuf is a ghost and he disappeared months ago, she says. This poor woman is just another abused woman at the hand of a Muslim. She's a victim. Yusuf used her and her address all along only to dump her once he no longer needed her.

November 20

The four terrorists have a briefing at the warehouse and conclude they are ready for the attack. The sub is rigged. The battery is charged. The compressed-air tanks are full. Abdullah posts an ad on Craigslist to inform Hassan that they are on standby for the attack and waiting for his instructions. When they are finished they pray and kiss the floor.

When they pause, Abdullah addresses the group: "My brothers, this life is short. It is a temporary life. We were not created for this world. This world is a bridge to the hereafter. After our attack, we will be granted heaven. Allahu Akbar. Allahu Akbar. Allahu Akbar."

They finish their prayers and leave the garage and separate. Abdullah and Yusuf go to the condo. Ahmed and Najhib go to their hotels.

Back to his room Najhib grabs the phone and calls escort services. After two hours and 35 calls, many searches on Internet and bargaining, he gets a date with a hooker at her place. Najhib wants to enjoy one more time an earthly sex slave before he gets his 72 virgins in heaven.

Thirty minutes later Najhib arrives at an apartment building to meet with the girl. He calls her again, she tells him the apartment number and she buzzes him in. He goes upstairs and sees a tall, voluptuous blonde girl in a mini-skirt and high heels, standing in the door frame. She welcomes Najhib with a

kiss and lets him inside. He is watching her with hate but he is speechless gazing at her long legs. Her mini-skirt is so short that he can see a black thong when she sits down across the sofa, and she makes no effort to hide it.

She is a little bit talkative and very sultry, but he does not respond. He doesn't want to talk. She asks him to get the *gift* issue out of the way so that they can get romantic. He counts out the money; one, two, three, just like that, not even in an envelope as she requested on the phone.

She thinks that he is a little rude. She stands up, dims the lights and poses in front of him. She pulls down her skirt and removes her tank top. She dances and makes sensual moves. She turns around, removes her bra, then bents over and removes her thong and throws it at Najhib, who dodges it with a smirk on his face.

She is completely naked and sits down on his lap with her legs wide opened. She lures him, dominates him with her sexuality. She controls him. He doesn't like it when she grabs his head and pulls it into her breasts.

As a Muslim man, Najhib believes dominating his women is his prerogative, not hers. He wants to subordinate her, and he does not want to show his thirst for lust. He pushes her on the side and she lies on the sofa. He takes off his pants and lies on top of her. He looks at her like she is a demon sent by the devil, meant to cause sinful thoughts in men. He wants her to be a salve. He hates these women who have personality and want to enjoy sex instead of giving sex.

He calls her a whore, not because she is one, but because she is sexually provocative and uses her sex appeal to lure him. He "knows" she needs to be punished for that. He had been taught all his life that Men are created to enjoy sex and that women are simply the suppliers of their pleasures. He finds her to be the perfect example for the prevalence of decadence and sin

he sees in the lands of the infidels. He turns her over and tells her to be quiet, then holds her with her arms in the back. She does not like it and tries to resist, she tells him she does not like it rough.

He asks her, “Do you like sex?”

“Ohhh, I love it honey. I can’t live without sex. Take me, but be gentle.”

He believes her, but he doesn’t realize that he is just another john and that she says the same thing to all her clients.

Najhib raises his voice: “You see, it’s because of women like you who seek access to sexual fulfillment that your world is sick.” He slaps her, and she screams. Najhib continues, “You really are a slut...cunt. Let me contribute to your sexual morality and virtue. Let me show you how to control your sexual appetite, bitch.”

Suddenly, he gets rough, grabbing her by the neck, trying to immobilize her.

She pushes him away and asks him to get off her.

But he doesn’t. Instead he gets more violent. He yells, “You whore! Just submit to me. You are my slave!”

The blonde gets off the sofa. He catches her by the hair and forces her down on the floor. She hits a table and knocks it over. He covers her with his body. He likes to feel her resistance.

“Eventually you will be obedient, whore! I know you like it!”

She screams, “Fucking pig!” Slips out of his grasp, turns, slaps him in the face.

This infuriates Najhib even more. “You call me a PIG! You fucking cunt. You worthless piece of meat.”

The woman tries to run away. He catches her by her foot and drags her back.

He beats her repeatedly with his fists. She’s screaming and crying, trying to wiggle out of his grip.

She bites his hand.

Najhib looks at her with a smile. “Hmmmmm...nice. You think you can hurt me with that, bitch?”

Najhib punches the woman in the face and flips her over. He’s clamping down on her neck from behind with a choke hold when suddenly—

The door bursts open!

Three cops, guns drawn, rush inside! They jump Najhib! He fights back. Knocks off one officer with a punch to the chin. Najhib dives for his pants. Tries to get his gun out of the pocket...

One of the officers puts his gun to Najhib’s temple! “Don’t you fucking move, you mother fucker. One twitch and I’ll blow your brains out.”

From another room, a girl appears, trembling and scared. She tells the cops she is the roommate who made the 911 call when she heard her friend scream.

The cops slam Najhib’s face against the wall until he drops to the floor.

A cop finds the Glock in Najhib’s pants. “No ID,” he tells the other cops. “But these will help.” He carefully holds up Najhib’s mobile phone and hotel key. He tosses the pants to Najhib, who spits blood as he puts them on. When he’s done, they cuff him.

They carry him downstairs like a bag of trash.

Down on the street, people gather and watch the police officers as they throw their suspect on the hood of a police cruiser. When they ask him his name, he doesn’t respond. When they ask him where he lives, he doesn’t respond.

One of the cops says, “OK, you piece of shit, we’ve got your concealed weapon, we’ve got your phone, we’ve got you. You are done. We’ll find out who you are no matter what it takes. For now you are under arrest for sexual assault and battery,

assault on an officer, and unlawful weapon possession.”

Another police officer reads him his rights. They push Najhib into the back of the cruiser, then slam the door on him.

Najhib flips on his back and kicks the window with his feet, repeatedly, one, two, three times. At the fourth kick, the glass shatters and he tries to get out. The cops have had enough. They yank him out, whack him with their nightsticks, tazer him, pepper spray him and shackle his feet before they throw him back in the cruiser.

One of the police officer says, “Fuck! This nut is an animal.”

At the police station, the cops take Najhib’s mug shot and run his fingerprints in the system, but they find no match. Najhib has never been on Yusuf’s boat so he did not leave his fingerprints there. They have a suspect and since they don’t know who he is, they book him under “John Doe.”

For Najhib, the wheel has turned, now he is on the receiving end of suffering. A very dangerous sociopath is locked up.

November 21

It’s 11.00 in the morning and the terrorists haven’t heard from Najhib. He didn’t show up at the garage. Abdullah calls his prepaid mobile but somebody else answers and keeps asking, “Who is it? Who is it?” Abdullah hangs up.

Abdullah calls Najhib’s hotel room. No response. They know something is wrong. They are very concerned. Abdullah leaves the garage and goes to an Internet café to read the *Charleston Gazette* online news. He plans to search the police booking blotter and, if unsuccessful, then he’ll check to see if there are any stories about anyone being hospitalized after an accident. Scrolling down the most recent arrests and mug shots

Abdullah's heart stops when he spots Najhib in a prison issue jump suit, with his face all bruised up.

The report says that an unidentified man was arrested during the night and charged with sexual assault and battery, resisting arrest, carrying a concealed weapon and assault on a police officer. This is bad news and a terrible blow for their operation.

Abdullah leaves a draft in the virtual dead drop to inform Hassan that Najhib has been caught by the police in an unrelated case, and that they have to move out. He gets off the Internet and deletes the pages he visited from the search history in the computer and leaves the café to go back to the garage.

There, he informs Ahmed and Yusuf, "This is bad news, brothers. Najhib is in jail. He's been arrested."

"Fuck. Fuck. Fuck. Arrested for what?" asks Ahmed.

"I don't know exactly. The article said for sexual assault, and assault on a cop, and he had his gun." Abdullah says grimly.

Yusuf exhales. "Oh shit. He probably had a problem with a fucking bitch. No chance he'll get out on that."

"He hasn't said who he was. They booked him under John Doe," says Abdullah.

"Nahhh. I'm not worried about that," Ahmed says. "They'll never get anything out of him. They don't know who they're dealing with, fucking amateurs."

"I informed Hassan, we should move out, just in case." says Abdullah.

Yusuf shakes his head. "Fuck. I can't believe they got Najhib."

"What did he have in his hotel room?" asks Abdullah.

"Nothing. His stuff is here." Yusuf replies.

Ahmed makes a decision. "Let's go to your condo and pack, we leave tomorrow. We need to find another place to hide."

They go to Yusuf's apartment and pack everything;

Ahmed decides to avoid his hotel and to spend the night at Yusuf's condo. They don't sleep well that night, afraid the police might burst through their door, swarm the room and arrest them in their sleep.

In the morning, Abdullah goes to another Internet café to check the dead-drop email. There is a response from Hassan, and it is only one word:

"Firestorm."

It's the code name for their operation. *Firestorm* means they have the green light to launch the operation.

Abdullah is so excited he races back to the condo to tell his friends they have the green light for the operation. They have to leave for Boston right away.

They are at the point of no return. Only death can stop them. They destroy their current prepaid mobile phones in the microwave and switch to new ones.

The only information they need now is the time and date of arrival of the tanker to establish the actual date of their suicide attack.

They go to the garage and prepare the submarine for the drive. Yusuf checks everything: tag, license, tire pressure. They must not be pulled over by the police for any reasons.

Ahmed opens the deck plates of the top of the submarine and hides the Glockes, the Kalashnikovs and the ammo inside the ballasts.

Then he wraps up the submarine with a tarp so that no one from the outside can guess what is underneath. They hook up the trailer to Yusuf's car, leave the warehouse and hit the road for the 900-mile drive to Boston.

THE HUNT

November 22

It's evening, Yusuf, Ahmed and Abdullah have just arrived in Boston, they go straight to the garage which Yusuf had rented earlier and they park the explosive-laden submarine inside. Then they separate and go downtown on the harbor to check in three different hotels, like they did a month ago. They do nothing that could attract attention or justify an ID check. They don't drive, they use public transportations or they walk. They don't use credit cards; they pay only with cash. No one but themselves has their phone numbers so they can't be traced through phone towers.

They live in a parallel world. They see their lives as in a mere transition into eternity in heaven. Even Hassan can no longer control them. At this point, they wouldn't abort, even if Hassan ordered it. Their parallel world is insulating them completely, no one can stop the operation.

They are operational and ready to strike, waiting for the coded message that will tell them when the next LNG tanker arrives in Boston harbor. As a failsafe measure, they are to attack the second tanker if they missed the first one because they did not get any message. Even if Hassan was killed, captured or under duress, it would not stop them.

Hassan's message is to be hidden in the pet section posted in the classifieds of the Boston Craigslist. The terrorists have to go online and check the classifieds every day. They are looking for a title that contains the three keywords: *albino*, *Shepherd* and *adoption*, in this order. Once they open the message, they will be able to determine the time and date of arrival of the tanker by a calculation based on the dog's date of birth.

It's a simple equation known only to them and Hassan.

They have to add two months and two days to the dog's date of birth to get the date of arrival. The ad will mention a moving date as a deadline to claim the dog. The deadline translates into the time of arrival. Every day, one of the terrorists goes to a cyber café to check the *Boston Craigslist* classifieds for the coded message.

The code is simple, low-tech, untraceable and undecipherable. Hassan can log onto *Craigslist* from anywhere in the world, post a free ad with the message, and no one will notice anything. The ads are posted live. Hassan leaves an email address in the ad for contact, but it's a dead email address, opened in a cyber café with a free email account that doesn't identify anybody. There's nothing in the ad to raise a flag or trigger an intelligence wire on the NSA computers. Nobody could come up to any conclusions by reading the text in the ad.

The time and date of arrival of the LNG tanker are to be provided to Hassan by an informant in Yemen. He is a Yemeni working at the gas company office and has no knowledge of the attack. Every time a tanker leaves Yemen, the captain of the ship informs the company of his ETA in Boston. This information is copied by the informant, who then passes the details to Hassan. When Hassan receives the ETA for the next tanker, he will put it in on Craigslist.

Abdullah checks in the Boston Harbor Hotel on Rowes Wharf and asks for an upper floor with view of the harbor. When he gets up to his room, he has a perfect view of the harbor channel and a long-distance view of the ocean. He will be able to spot the tanker at least seven miles offshore.

Ahmed checks in the Green Turtle Floating Hotel, close to the boat ramp where he will be launching the sub.

Yusuf checks in the Fairmont Hotel on Battery Wharf. From his room, he has a direct outlook of the harbor, the Coast Guard station with its patrol boats and of the target area.

Between all three terrorists they have a long-range, panoramic view of the whole harbor, where they can monitor activities and vessels. Najhib is no longer with them but they can go ahead without him, the bomb is rigged. Abdullah only needs to arm it.

November 26

It's been five days since the police in Charleston took Najhib into custody, but he hasn't said a word. He even refuses to talk to the public defender that has been provided for him.

One of the detectives is going through APBs and other Wanted Bulletins when he notices that his John Doe resembles the FBI APB from Puerto Rico. He calls the FBI field office in Charleston to let them know he has a suspect that resembles the man they're looking for. The Charleston agent calls Floyd immediately.

"Hey Floyd, you sitting down? I've got something for you. A detective with the Charlestown police called. They're holding a guy at the city jail that matches the suspect in your APB."

"What? Are you sure?" Floyd can't believe it. Here he is in Charleston and one of his suspects is in custody...right here? "On what charges?" Floyd asks.

"Sexual assault and battery, assault on an officer and possession of concealed weapon," responds the agent.

Floyd tells the agent to get the mug shot from the detective so he can run it through the FBI facial recognition system to see if there is a match. Through the years, Floyd's always been impressed with how quickly and accurately the recognition system matches selected facial features from virtually any digital image with those in its facial database.

And it's a match! Floyd nearly falls out of his chair! He catches up with Chance at the office coffee machine.

“They got him. They got him. They got the Vieques guy. He’s in the downtown lockup. Let’s go squeeze the bastard!”

Their car races to the jail, sirens wailing. Floyd calls the detective and tells him the man they’re holding is a top priority suspect, a high-value terrorist and extremely dangerous. He and a team of FBI agents are coming to interrogate him.

Floyd and Chance arrive at the jail where Najhib is now held in isolation. The detective briefs Floyd on the nature of the case they have against him.

Najhib, in shackles, sits at a table in a special interrogation room. The chain from his shackles is attached to the floor. He can barely move and doesn’t even know the time of the day, if he knows the day at all. Hidden cameras monitor Najhib from different angles so that Chance, FBI psychiatrists and profilers, who watch from an adjoining room, can try to read his mind. They can also watch him directly through a one-way window.

Floyd enters the room. “Hello, sir. My name is Floyd Allister. I’m a Special Agent with the FBI. I’m here to ask you some questions. But first, what do you want me to call you? You don’t have any ID with you. I don’t know who you are.”

Najhib looks at Floyd with a glacial stare in his eyes. “I did not do anything. You have to let me go. I am not talking to you...because I am innocent. The police have starved me and did not let me sleep. I have been beaten and I protest. You have to let me go.”

“Well sir, first you are going to have to talk to me. You have to—”

“I don’t HAVE to talk to you! You represent nothing.”

“What’s your name?”

“I don’t remember. The police beat me up. I have amnesia. I don’t remember. I need to see a doctor.”

“The police beat you up? Really? And you can’t remember anything? How about the sexual assault on the poor girl you beat up? Did you forget that too?”

“What assault? I disciplined her. That’s all. I’m the man, huh. Just teaching her some virtue.”

“You disciplined her?”

“Yes. Why ask me? You never discipline your woman?”

“No, I don’t. You’re the one charged with assault here, not me. YOU answer the questions. YOU don’t ask questions.”

“Pffff. Only a dog pig doesn’t discipline his woman. And why would the FBI be involved in an assault case anyways?”

“In America, it’s not called discipline; it’s called assault. Where are you coming from with this discipline thing?”

“I’m not here to justify myself for a crime I did not commit. In my religion, if a woman fails to be subservient, we are allowed to discipline her. That’s all what happened with this woman.”

“She’s not your woman.”

“She was for one hour. She belonged to me. You can’t judge me for that. I don’t recognize man’s law, only God’s law, Sharia law. You have to respect my rights and my freedom of religion.”

Floyd jams his hands in his pockets to keep himself from punching the prick in the face. He’s never been confronted with such arrogance.

Finally, he’s calm enough to continue the interrogation. “Well, you can pray all day if you want. But it’s man’s law here, not God’s. If you refuse to give me your name, you will be held until we find out who you are. And you will go to prison for sexual assault, so why don’t just give me your name? So we can move on?”

“I don’t remember and fuck you!”

“You are going to change your tone, sir. I did not insult you. You are only going to make things worse for yourself. You know that?”

Najhib looks Floyd straight in the eyes and says, “WHOOOOOOOO! I am terrified.”

Floyd leaves the interrogation room to speak with the observation team.

The Charleston detective tells him: “I told you. He’s been like that from day one. He won’t say anything. He’s very arrogant. Acts like he couldn’t care less about anything. He’s a tough one. You’re gonna have a problem cracking this nut.”

Floyd tells the group he’s going to have to shake the suspect up a bit.

As he enters the interrogation room, Floyd says, “You like the shackles? Why don’t you tell me a little more about how you disciplined this woman?”

“There is nothing to say. She’s a whore, not a virgin. I have no respect for your women. They are easy. They fuck for money. She was mine. She disobeyed me. I punished her. Halas!”

“Halas? Are you Arabic?”

“Do I look Chinese to you?”

“So...an Arab. Where from?”

“I don’t remember.”

“Fine. Once you’re convicted of sexual assault, you’ll be jailed with other sexual offenders. We’ll see how that refreshes your memory.”

“There was no sexual assault. She was fucked before. So what? Our women don’t do that. They keep their virginity for their husband. Here they have no shame, and they deserve to be punished.”

“Where did you learn that?”

“In the Qur’an, the words of Allah the merciful and the Prophet Muhammad. Peace be upon him.”

“Then get ready to face man-made law. The law of Allah does not apply here. I have one more question. Who is Ahmed Abdul Latif?”

Najhib looks like he's been punched in the stomach. Although he's been trained to not show emotion and to resist to interrogation, he never expected that question.

Najhib's eyes move from the wall in front of him to Floyd's eyes and then he turns to stone. He has no idea how Floyd got the name, or if Ahmed has been arrested, too. The worst thoughts go through his mind: Ahmed is the only one who can pilot the submarine; he is key to this operation. Najhib doesn't care about himself; he knows he is already dead.

Floyd has noticed how the question about Ahmed has changed Najhib's demeanor. Still, the man remains mute. He refuses to say a single word. Floyd goes on for another two hours, making threats, being soft. Nothing makes the man talk.

Najhib remembers his interrogation training. He knows he has nothing to gain. He knows he won't be able to talk his way out of his situation. His tactic is to say nothing. If the police ask a particular question, it means they don't know the answer. Even the best bluffs will not work against him.

Najhib will mislead his captors, deceive them and delay them as much as possible to give his friends the time they need to finish the operation. He knows he will be locked up anyways. He is not afraid. The police officers are afraid. He believes in God, while they only have doubts. When they leave their homes in the morning to go to work, they hope to go back home at the end of the day. When Najhib left his home, he knew he would not return. He knew he would die.

When Floyd talks to Najhib, nothing connects. There is no communication, no mutual comprehension. Floyd walks out of the room with a grim expression on his face. Chance greets Floyd with a smile.

“You knew, huh? You knew I wouldn’t get anything from him?” Floyd asks.

“Yup, I knew it. But you have to learn for yourself, Floyd. Every young man does. Especially with guys like him. You have to learn what you’re dealing with,” says Chance.

“I’ve interrogated hundreds of suspects, but I have to admit this one is tough, but I will break him.”

Chance shakes his head. “No you won’t. Let me explain something to you. You and the other officers, you’re paid to do your job. He’s not. He’s a criminal, but you can’t make the mistake of looking at him like he’s a criminal. Look at him like he’s a soldier. He lives by the texts and teachings of Islam and uses them to justify violence. Anything else is just temporal and means nothing. He’s goal is to serve his God until his death.”

November 27

An officer at The Department of Natural Resources contacts Floyd and informs him that they’ve found another vessel registered to the owner of the sailboat. He explains it took time to find it because the suspect mixed up his names when he registered it. He faxes over the bill of sale and registration.

Floyd is with Chance when the fax is received. Floyd’s eyes open wide he sees that the vessel is a submersible.

“What the fuck is this? The guy has a 25-foot submarine? God damn it, Chance. We better find it fast because I have a pretty good idea where the TNT is.”

Chance looks somber. He tells Floyd, “This is bad news. Everything I warned against in my report is unfolding before our eyes.”

The bill of sale says Yusuf bought the submarine from Henry Desjardin.

While Chance and Floyd discuss their options, Floyd gets

another call. It's the DNR officer again. He says he forgot to mention a report where one of their officers inspected a 25-foot yellow submarine on Folly Beach. It was a three passenger sub. The four individuals involved were Middle Eastern looking. There were no violations so the officer let them go.

Floyd hangs up, tells Chance, "Well, this sub confirms the terrorist threat in your report. The bastards want to use it for a suicide attack. And they have the explosives already, God knows where. But it all links together: Puerto Rico, the explosives, the suspects, the sailboat and the submarine."

Chance looks outraged. "You know I am fucking pissed at all our do-nothing politicians. Do you know that, years ago, our director spoke at an anti-terrorism conference and said that an Al Qaeda terrorist network planned to acquire a variety of vessels, including mini-submarines, to use as human torpedoes? It doesn't get any clearer than that. But nobody believed him. They said it was too complicated. They said there was no way to smuggle a mini-sub into the US."

"But guess what? They didn't have to smuggle it."

"I know. I bet the sub was already here...or built in the US. And it's small enough to hide while you convert it into a bomb," says Chance.

"Once again, you're right," Floyd says. "I've got the registration. Let me find out what I can."

Floyd sends an inquiry with the submarine hull number to the Coast Guard and to Customs offices throughout the US to find out where the submarine came from.

The Coast Guard doesn't have the list of submarines or vessels produced in the US, but all hull numbers have a code that links them to their manufacturer. The Customs offices have all the hull numbers of vessels which have been imported or exported.

Floyd gets the responses right away: no subs were

imported and only two were registered for export by the State Department's military-affairs office. Floyd is told that all submarines to be exported, whether recreational or not, are on the munitions control list because they can be converted for military use.

The Coast Guard comes back with a match. The hull number is assigned to a submarine manufacturer in Florida.

Floyd tells Chance they need to fly to West Palm Beach to visit the company which built and delivered the submarine they are looking for.

The next day they arrive at the submarine company and meet with Chris, the sub builder, who wonders what's going on when he sees the badges and credentials flipping in his face. Floyd explains to Chris that he may have sold unknowingly a submarine to a terrorist cell. Chris turns livid, and needs to sit down. He's afraid and he feels guilty for not having reported the \$350,000 cash transaction to the police.

"Don't worry, Chris, you haven't broken the law, but we need to know everything about the submarine and the man who bought it," says Floyd.

Floyd shows Chris a copy of Yusuf driver license and asks, "Is this the man you sold the submarine to?"

"No, that's not him" responds Chris.

He tells Floyd he remembers the buyer and the circumstances of the purchase very well. He says that the buyer's credentials and IDs showed that he was a Canadian Citizen named Henry Desjardin. Strangely, he looked Arab and spoke English with a British accent. Chris gives Floyd a copy of Henry IDs and photos of the yellow submarine that he delivered and was picked up by a transport company.

Chris brings to Floyd's attention the fact that Mr. Desjardin bought the submarine with cash and took great pains to hide where he wanted the submarine delivered.

Floyd tracks down and calls the truck driver who made the delivery. He asks him where he delivered the submarine. When Floyd hears that the submarine was delivered to a parking lot in Georgia, he knows there is something definitively not right here. Floyd emails Yusuf's picture to the truck driver. He recognizes him as the second individual who was on the parking lot with Henry Desjardin when he delivered the submarine.

The name Henri Desjardin turns up nothing. It's most likely a false identity but the picture on the ID is real, according to Chris. Floyd has also a picture of the sub; he is confident it will be easy to spot on the road or on the water.

Floyd and Chance go to their hotel. Chance tells him that he recognizes the Florida sub.

"It is the same submarine," Chance says, "I saw on email that was intercepted from an email account in Argentina that was linked to Hassan. Thing is, we couldn't figure out where the sub came from."

Chance is grave. He looks very concerned and it strikes Floyd as unusual that a man with his experience would be affected like that. He says, "You look like you spotted an atomic bomb, Chance"

"You may not be too far from it, Floyd. I think we have a dire situation here. We *must* find those guys. I'm convinced now these are the folks building the WMD that I warned against. And they're here, right under our noses."

Floyd and Chance return to the FBI's Charleston field office to review the evidence. The suspect in custody is Emilio Rodriguez. He's Middle Eastern and linked to the explosives in Vieques. He flew from Puerto Rico to New York, and then from New York to Charleston. The submarine was purchased by another Middle Eastern individual, and delivered to Savannah only 80 miles from Charleston, where it was registered to Yusuf. The TNT was shipped from Vieques to Charleston by Yusuf.

“Why did they go to New York?” Chance asks. “Do you think it’s their target?”

“Yes, it may very well be. They’re obsessed with New York,” responds Floyd.

Chance watches the video recordings of Emilio’s interrogation. When he’s seen enough, he says, “Floyd, listen, it’s really bad. I’ve worked on fuckos like him before. He’s hard-core terrorist. You’ll never get anything from him. He’s already dead. We need to get medieval on his ass to force him to tell us where the submarine is and what their target is. Hand him over to me. I have someone who will make him talk.”

Floyd studies Chance, thinks over what he said, then says, “I think I know what you mean...but...we can’t do that. You guys do anything you want to suspects in secret prisons, but here at the bureau...we don’t do that and we don’t condone that. Sorry. Let’s do some real police work and we’ll find them.”

“Floyd, you’re wasting precious time when you’ve got yourself a ticking bomb. I guess we’ll have to see how your police work works. I can’t make you do anything you don’t want to. Not my jurisdiction.

“But mark my words, you don’t know these guys. I do. You don’t understand, there’s nothing you can say to a guy like him to scare him into talking to you. They don’t think like you. They’ve been indoctrinated for 30 years. You can’t beat that with civil-rights speeches and chicken-wrap breaks in the interrogation room. Down the road, you will have to choose.”

Floyd tells Chance that the decision isn’t his anyway. It’s agency policy. What they should be doing is trying to identify potential targets. He tells Chance they have a meeting in DC at the Weapons of Mass Destruction Directorate to discuss their options as to how prevent the attack.

“These guys are the experts,” Floyd says. “Their specialty is building a cohesive and coordinated approach to WMD threats.

Their focus is prevention, and that's what we're trying to do, prevent. We tell them everything they've got, maybe they can help us keep this submarine attack from becoming freaking reality."

November 30

It's Yusuf's turn to go to the cyber café to check for messages. He comes out of his hotel and walks on a security route for 40 minutes before he can sit in the café. Ahmed and Abdullah are watching his back. It's cold outside. After ten minutes, Yusuf arrives at an intersection and makes a right. He sees Abdullah sitting at a bus stop and he continues his walk, as if they don't know each other.

Abdullah sees only one lady taking the same route as Yusuf. He calls Ahmed, who waits at the second recon spot, and says, "One lady, blue jacket, shopping bag."

Yusuf continues and nonchalantly walks in the direction of the second spot. He doesn't see Ahmed, but he knows he is somewhere under cover, watching him.

There's a US Mail box on the street. Yusuf drops an envelope in it, then he makes a right and enters a small alley to walk in the direction of the third spot. The mail drop is a trap. If any law enforcement officer took the bait and opened the mailbox to recover Yusuf's letter, Ahmed would see it. It would blow the police surveillance.

After ten minutes nothing has happened. Ahmed calls Abdullah and tells him the route is clear and he can post the "clear" signal. Abdullah hangs up and goes to a predetermined street sign. He makes a mark with a chalk and walks away.

When Yusuf arrives at the street sign he looks with a quick glance for the chalk mark. There it is. Now he knows he is clear to go to the café and go online to check for messages. He

enters the cyber café, takes a computer station and goes online to check on the *Craigslist* classifieds.

Yusuf sees an ad in the pet section. It reads: “Young puppy, *albino* German *Shepherd* for *adoption*. Born October 3. Deadline to pick up dog is December 10 because we’re moving out.” Yusuf’s heart jumps in his chest. He recognizes the three keywords that indicate the date for Jihad!

He takes a pad and pen from his shirt, writes, “October plus two months is December. 3 plus 2 is 5.”

Now Yusuf knows the day of the tanker arrival is December 5. The *10* in December 10 of the ad means 10:00 am. The Arab smiles because he knows the day of his martyrdom. The tanker will arrive December 5 at ten o’ clock in the morning.

December 5 falls on a Monday. Yusuf thinks this is good because it is a working day and the attack will kill more people. Now more than ever he is on alert, but he is confident he was not under surveillance when he came to the café. He thinks of Najhib. Even under torture by the police, he could not reveal the date because he does not know it.

Yusuf leaves the café and scratches his left ear to signal Abdullah, who is watching from inside a store across the street, that he received a message. Before he returns to his hotel room, Yusuf takes a second security route to make sure no one is following him from the café. Then he calls his brothers to tell them they need to meet to get ready for the big day of prayers.

Later in the evening, they all meet at the Ritz Carlton Boston Hotel. They like this big hotel. There is plenty of space to meet and they can sit at a table without anybody staring at them. They discuss the date and the last preparations.

Interestingly, the attack falls on Ashura, the day of commemoration of the martyrdom of Hussain bin Ali, the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad. The date of mourning is observed on the 10th of the first month of the Islamic year, which

falls on December 5 for the year 2011. The terrorists see this concurrence as a blessing more than a coincidence and a strong sign from Allah. For the terrorists, who are Shi'a Muslims, Ashura is of particular significance because they consider Husain the rightful successor of Muhammad. Ahmed and Abdullah's martyrdom will connect them with Husain Bin Ali, who was killed fighting to keep Islam alive.

However, this holy commemoration is not a day to party. On the contrary, Yusuf knows two times he walked the street in Karachi, whipping himself with chains and razor blades and letting his blood run. He walked with hundreds others to mourn the fact that he was absent at the battle to save Husain and his people.

Abdullah tells his friends there could not be a better day for the attack because Husain's martyrdom is widely interpreted by Shi'a as a symbol of the struggle against injustice, tyranny, and oppression by unbelievers. He explains that Muslims from all over the world will consider their attack as a both blow against American tyranny and a blessing from Allah, who sent a vessel of death in Boston Harbor for his followers to destroy the city.

Hassan, the mastermind of the operation, has estimated the firestorm will be five miles long. Looking at the city map and the fire pattern, the terrorists realize that the Roxbury Mosque on Malcolm X Boulevard will be outside and almost at the limit of the blast. They are elated at the idea that the 70,000 square-foot building, the largest mosque on the east coast, will be one of the few surviving buildings in Boston after the explosion. Its survival will flaunt even more the Islamic victory over America. The men see it as a win-win situation because the mosque was built after a long controversy. The construction of the Islamic center was opposed by many Americans. Already a first victory and soon to be a tremendous monument commemorating the

largest Islamic attack ever, the mosque will remind all of the power of Allah.

December 1

Floyd and Chance fly to Washington, DC, to present their report to a secret panel of authorities at the WMD Directorate. The CIA, the FBI, Congress, and even the White House are represented. The best special agents, professionals in crisis management, tactical officers, hostage negotiators, bombs technicians and intelligence officers are there. It looks like a war room, with huge flat screens on the walls and armed guards at the doors. The room can barely accommodate everybody. Every space is filled. The atmosphere is tense.

Floyd starts the meeting with a summary of the case in Puerto Rico, where 4,000 pounds of TNT have been recovered by trained terrorists, who are believed to be operating a clandestine cell in the US. He says they have a suspect in custody but he refuses to talk. Floyd explains that the suspect may be a member of the clandestine terrorist cell that plans an attack that will cause mass destruction. Floyd adds that the suspect may have foreknowledge of the attack. He concludes that two other suspects at large have been identified and are in possession of a mini-submarine.

Then it is Chance's turn. He starts with a strong statement: "Gentlemen, there's no room for failure when it comes to weapons of mass destruction. Even a single incident could be catastrophic."

Chance's talk becomes more aggressive and even scary. He warns that liquefied natural gas (LNG) carriers and other ships carrying extremely volatile cargo could be targeted and be effectively used as weapons of mass destruction in major ports. His estimates predict that the detonation of a large LNG carrier

could approximate the power of a thermonuclear weapon.

In front of dead-silent audience he says, “Yes, gentlemen, you heard me. According to a briefing at the Maritime Security Council’s (MSC) annual International Maritime Security Summit, held in Washington last month, a large ship loaded with LNG could explode with a force of 700 kilotons. That’s more than twenty times the size of the bomb that was dropped on Hiroshima.”

Everyone in the room seems dazed, bewildered, stunned. The expressions on their faces seem to ask, “How did this happen? How did we get here?”

Chance explains that LNG ships are not the only vulnerable opportunities; commercial ships and ports are also potential targets.

Chances leans forward on the podium and says, “Cruise ships are out there in the open sea with thousands of passengers and virtually no defenses. The port of New York, the third largest in the country, is located in the middle of a city. There is little to keep terrorists from the cargo ships and ferry boats plying New York waters. Because we have yet to have a systematic approach in monitoring modern vessels and their potential conversion into WMDs, we may be facing a terrorist attack with devastating consequences.”

Deborah Campbell, a White House adviser, says that Al Qaeda's most effective maritime attacks to date have been carried out not by tankers, mini-sub subs or human torpedoes, but by small boats loaded with explosives and operated by suicidal terrorists. She objects to freezing or restricting all surface commercial activity based on some unlikely submarine-attack scenario.

The Commandant of the Coast Guard, Admiral Craig Beckham, says that all tankers in the US are escorted and no craft can approach them. His opinion is that they should focus on other targets.

Chance responds that Al Qaeda terrorist cells are always probing the gaping holes in the post-9/11 security architecture. Much like drug smugglers who take the advantage of being able to travel clandestinely underwater to transport drugs, terrorists could transport a bomb under the water.

Chance says, "I've seen those drug subs. It's appalling how easily these craft enter American territorial waters. Any tiny submarine that carries tons of cocaine can also carry tons of explosives."

Floyd takes his turn to speak: "Civilian midget submarines are manufactured for recreational use, but these can be easily modified for military use or terrorism. A dramatic submersible strike would certainly appeal to Al Qaeda. We know there is a small cell of Jihadists out there, which has overcome the technical and financial burden to acquire a submarine. They've got one and are trained to operate it. It can be easily modified in a garage to carry 4,000 pounds of TNT. It's not inconceivable at this point that this craft could be used in a suicide attack on targets such as nuclear warships or fuel tankers."

Chance continues, "A popular tactic used by terrorists is suicide bombing. The bombs range from the explosive vest to the commercial airliner. The use of a mini-submarine instead of a truck to bomb a target is very real at this point of time. Wherever there are resources and opportunity, an Al Qaeda cell will strike."

Deborah Campbell still isn't convinced. "But the use of suicide bombers is seen by many Muslims as contradictory to Islam's teachings," she says. "A trained submarine pilot is no goat herder from the Pakistani mountains; he must be highly educated, which certainly would make it difficult to convince him to blow himself up."

"Not necessarily," Chance says. "The pilots who flew their planes into the World Trade Center were also highly

educated. Groups who support suicide attacks refer to such attacks as ‘martyrdom operations.’ And the suicide-bombers who commit them are referred to as ‘martyrs.’

“Muslims always use double-speak to deceive us. Their arguments would make us believe they don’t support suicide attacks. They use the word *suicide* when they well know it is not suicide but *martyrdom* they are talking about. Martyrdom is supported and rewarded in the Qur’an, suicide is not. The bombers and their sympathizers believe that suicide bombers, as martyrs to the cause of Jihad against the enemy, will receive the rewards of paradise for their actions.”

The meeting ends with the distribution of notices and wanted flyers, with a description of the submarine and the names of the suspects. As frightening as Chance’s and Floyd’s report was, and as urgent its need for action, nothing was done. The meeting turned out to be just another meeting.

But not for everyone. Kathy Cormack, the National Security Advisor believes the threat is real. Alone with Chance and Floyd, she tells them they have the green light to do whatever needs to be done to catch the terrorists.

“I *will* follow up on your case, gentlemen,” she says. “I want an update every day.”

December 2

Floyd and Chance go to the jail in Charleston to check on Najhib. The prison guards tell Floyd that he ripped up his cell and threw feces at them. He tried to cut his wrists with a plastic knife. Then he ran full force across his cell and slammed his head onto the wall. They had to take him to the infirmary to take X-rays and check him for head trauma. There, he bit a nurse so hard he chopped two of her fingers off. As she screamed in pain, he cursed at her like a madman, spitting blood along with his words.

Back in the interrogation room, Floyd questions Najhib the whole day with no results. Chance watches from the next room. Najhib howls, spits, kicks, curses, refuses to talk. Floyd feels incredible frustration and stress at his lack of progress.

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On a conference call, Chance and Floyd brief Kathy Cormack on the absence of results. Floyd states that Najhib is a fanatic with superior mental strength.

Chance tells her that Floyd is not getting anywhere because the suspect believes he is a martyr. “This terrorist is highly dedicated and steeled to resist interrogation. He will remain silent and will toy with Floyd.”

Kathy Cormack is furious.

Chance tells her he attributes the failure of Floyd’s interrogation to the fortitude of Najhib, and that alternative interrogation methods should be considered. He, as a representative of the CIA, strongly suggests bringing in his highly-trained operative, a former US Army interrogator, to force the suspect to divulge the terrorist cell plan. Coercive interrogation methods will be used, but monitored by a medical practitioner, before, during, and after the sessions.

Floyd disagrees, arguing that the military’s interrogators tend to be low-ranking sadistic soldiers who have no understanding of the psychological aspects of harsh interrogations and who have no idea how to interpret the information extracted from suspects.

Floyd says, “They want to know the location of a bomb, or an arms cache, or the whereabouts of an insurgent for an immediate intervention. What we need to know is the objectives of our enemies and how they are organized, so we can understand them on a long term.”

Chance explodes. “Well, pardon my French, Floyd, but fuck your long-term understanding! You’ve got yourself a 4,000

pounds bomb out there! You bet your ass we want to act immediately. We want to stop the bastards!”

Chance continues, “The suspect refused to answer your questions. Do you have any other FBI-approved tactics in mind to get his to change his mind?”

Floyd avoids the question and claims that the suspect's answers may be used not only to avert any immediate threat but as evidence to prosecute him. “If there were a trial and he hasn't confessed,” Floyd says, “he could actually walk away free”

Chance responds, “And how many people will not walk free if we don't make him talk? Let me interrogate him my way before it's too late. Who cares about his day in court? We want to thwart the attack.”

“Let me continue with the suspect,” insists Floyd. “I can persuade him with sophisticated psychological interrogation techniques that it is in his interest to disclose information. I can use tactics that are designed to induce the suspect's cooperation in order to obtain vital information without torturing him.”

Chance rejects Floyd's proposal. He says that trying to obtain intelligence from the most violent people on earth is far outside the realm of normal police procedures.

“Looking for the suspect's cooperation is ridiculous,” Chance argues. ”This guy is playing you like a drum. The only thing he's interested in is seeing their attack succeed. It's criminal to do nothing. Innocent civilians will die because of your ineffective questioning, Floyd. Give us the bastard. In three days you will have your information.”

Floyd reminds his colleague that the police are absolutely prohibited from using force, threats of force, and other forms of physical or mental torture to produce a confession.

“Chance,” says Floyd, “the prohibition of these practices is a fundamental aspect of our constitution. All citizens, whether innocent, suspect or actually guilty, receive the benefit of its protection.”



Chance responds, “First of all, we have no idea whether or not he’s a citizen. And frankly, I don’t give a shit if he is. An attack is an attack. Any extreme tactic, including torture, is fine with me if it produces the information we need to stop the attack.”

“Ms. Cormack,” Floyd counters, “law enforcement officials cannot be allowed to decide for themselves when and where desperate situations call for desperate measures. The cost of following constitutional rules may be high in some situations, but it’s the price of upholding the values that distinguish us from our enemies.”

Chance can’t believe how Floyd is letting his ideals blind him from the facts.

Kathy Cormack says, “Had law enforcement officials arrested terrorists boarding one of the airplanes on September 11 and learned that other planes were headed toward unknown occupied buildings, don’t you think there would have been an understandable incentive to torture those terrorists to learn the location of the buildings and evacuate them?”

Floyd responds that a few hours of torture would not have been enough. He points out that Chance has already said it might take up to three days to make the terrorist talk. “And what we have here,” Floyd says, “is not a ticking bomb situation.”

“Yes it is!” Chance says. “You just don’t know it yet. You’ve got to understand a ticking-bomb scenario is not a long-term event. When you hear the tic toc, you’ll have ten minutes to duck, not hours.

“Ms. Cormack, the FBI experience in preventing terrorist attacks is a long-term affair, with informants, wiretaps, and undercover agents. They track wannabe terrorists and allow their sting operations to play out almost to the last stage in order to fully understand their MOs. The fanatics in a ticking-bomb situation play outside of the FBI’s modus operandi. The FBI just

doesn't have the tools to stop it. They may arrest a couple of suspects and even extract some confessions from them, but *they* will *NOT* stop their clock."

Chance explains that no matter how hardcore the subjects are, they always divulge their plans under sufficient torture.

Floyd challenges him and tells him that while torture of terrorist suspects may provide more data, it doesn't discriminate between truths and lies.

Chance is adamant. "We need to put this sicko under severe pain until he gives up his secrets. And we need to do it right now. Countless lives depend on our prompt action."

Kathy Cormack has been listening intently. She tells them, "Listen gentlemen, the Pentagon wants to kill the bombers before they strike, but they need the FBI to find them. Floyd, you want evidence that will hold up in court. Chance, you want to squeeze the suspect to find the terrorists."

Floyd says, "Madam, the CIA always resists interference from the judiciary and our attorneys. They always want to do everything their way, in the dark."

Chance responds, "The FBI is politically liberal, uninformed, and infiltrated by the left wings. They all think that a terrorist under torture wouldn't be believable, so extreme force is not worth trying."

"Ok", says Floyd. "Let's compromise. Let's set up judicial monitoring of the torture interrogation."

"Not possible" says Kathy. "The U.S. judiciary is publicly elected with politically-appointed judges. It can't hold its own against intelligence agencies, especially in matters of national security. You can't propose legalization of torture in ticking-bomb cases. There's no way you're gonna get "torture warrants" from judges."

Floyd mentions the possibility of abuse in the interrogation of suspected terrorists and raises the question of how to limit the interrogation.

Chance responds it's not a matter of limiting abuse; it's a matter of managing both zealous interrogation and vigorous resistance. "The only limit that should be taken into consideration is limiting the number of possible victims."

"So what now?" Floyd asks. "Are you going to waterboard my suspect?"

Chance explains that his experts have a range of "coercive" interrogation techniques that he would rather not debate here. He adds that waterboarding won't work on these suspects anyways because they're now trained to survive waterboarding.

Ms. Cormack says, "OK. I've heard enough. This conversation isn't going anywhere.

"However, we need to get any information the suspect might have *now* because any delay could be disastrous. To save lives and time, any method available to procure the information should be utilized. I'd rather be an advocate of coercive interrogation and take the heat from the liberals rather than lead the cleanup of a society destroyed by terrorists.

"Chance," the National Security Advisor says, "I want you to take the suspect into custody. We need to know as much as possible as soon as possible."

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Later that day, written orders come from the National Security Adviser. The top priority is to save lives, at any cost. The CIA is to proceed with the harsh interrogation.

Chance contacts his top specialist, Mr. Smith, who had been on standby since before the conference call. Smith looks like a college professor, not like the torturer from a B movie Floyd tried to depict. He's is a tall man, thin, fair complexion with white hair, in his late 50s.

As he heads to the airport for the short flight to Charleston, Smith feels satisfaction. He knew his time would

come. It always does. Eventually, everyone realizes it's better to look the other way instead of risking the loss of American lives while debating the human rights of terrorists. Inflicting pain on one individual locked up in a cell is far better than watching your own people being blown to pieces and your economy being ruined. When time's running out, they always call Smith...and then forget about him for a few days.

The FBI surrenders Najhib to Chance and few CIA operatives.

The FBI, with Floyd as its lead agent, is in an awkward situation, very uncomfortable. They don't want to be involved in the torture, yet they will receive information obtained because of it. And they will take action based on it.

Floyd and Chance are in a less than amicable situation, especially after the confrontation in front of the National Security Advisor over the use of torture during interrogations. Unknown to Chance, Floyd is still trying to stop the torture. He frantically calls everyone at the bureau, asking if anybody has learned anything new about the suspects at large or the location of the submarine.

But there is nothing. Floyd gets angry. "Come on! You can't find a freaking 25-foot yellow submarine?"

In Boston, Ahmed, Yusuf and Abdullah take separate routes to the Roxbury mosque for prayers. For Ahmed and Abdullah, it is the last Friday prayer and the last mosque they will ever see in their earthly lives. They feel they are steps away from entering paradise.

December 3

Charleston. 2:15 am. A black van stops in the jail courtyard. Three identical vans follow. Armed men black jump suits and ninja masks jump out of the vans and form a security

perimeter. Prison guards bring Najhib out of the building. He's strapped in a restraint chair, with a hood on his head. The sounds he makes are muffled because of the gag stuck in his mouth. He jerks his head back and forth. The men lift Najhib's chair up inside the van. The convoy drives off.

An hour later, the convoy enters a fenced and guarded warehouse. The armed men take Najhib to an interrogation room, which has been hastily prepared for the torture session.

There, they strip him naked, leaving only the hood over his head. They strap him in an X position on a horizontal wooden cross. His arms are stretched and secured on four-inch-thick wood beams. His hands and fingers are strapped palms down on the wood beams.

Najhib's head has no support, so he has to continuously make a tiring effort to keep it from hanging. The room has been chilled to keep the prisoner cold.

Mr. Smith enters the room. He wears a white jump suit, yellow-rubber kitchen gloves and rubber boots. He's obviously now the man in charge. Smith walks to the prisoner, removes his hood, pulls out the gag. Then he stares deeply into Najhib's eyes...

"Hi. I'm Agent Smith. *You* are here because of *your* decision not to talk to us. You are the depository of a secret and I am here to extract it from you. I know your accomplices are preparing an attack in the US, and I want to know where and when. It's a simple question: where and when.

"I previously told my colleagues that they would be wasting their time with you, using their traditional interrogation techniques. Now that they've exhausted all humane methods to convince you to tell us where and when this attack will take place, it's my turn to step in. I'm here to force you to give me some information: where and when. Simple enough?

"I will ask you the same question over and over, and you

will have to repeat the answer several times to convince me. Unfortunately, the pain will not go away, even after you talk. Even if you told me the truth right now, I'd still have to hurt you before I'd be convinced you're telling me the truth.

“You will be monitored by doctors to make sure you don't pass out on me. Or die before you give me the information I want from you.

“I know that after I begin, you will start talking. So don't be surprised if I don't stop hurting you, because I will not listen. I know you will lie to me or try to deceive me just to stop the pain. I know your games. I know you are trained to endure interrogation. Even under unbearable pain, you will continue to tell me lies... until I break you. Then you will tell me the truth. But I can't be sure when this will be. This is why I will not listen and I will continue to hurt you...

“...until I am sure you are not lying anymore. You ready?

“Question...where's the attack going to be?”

Smith puts on a headset and looks at Najhib with a smile.

“You will excuse my headset. It's Verdi's *Aida*. I don't want to be inconvenienced by your screams. Ahhhh. Verdi. You should have tried listening to him. The story takes place in ancient Egypt. It might have opened your eyes to pre-Islamic Egyptian culture.”

Smith grabs a hammer and shows it to Najhib. Smith says, “Ohhh, I see you've lost two fingers already. Good. See if this reminds you what it was like.”

Smith takes aim at the last phalange of the prisoner's first finger, raises his arm and suddenly swings the hammer down and crushes the finger. Najhib's whole body jolts in reflex. A loud and long scream! But Smith can't hear it.

Najhib's face is deformed by the pain. His lips draw back from his teeth. He turns his head left and right. He lifts his head, trying to look at his finger. The bone is crushed and the nail

sticks out of the skin. The wound bleeds. Blood splatters decorate Smith's jump suit, which is purposely white in order to amplify the psychological impact of seeing the blood on the prisoner. Smith backs away as a doctor comes forward to stop the bleeding and apply some gauze to the wound, provoking even more pain.

Smith comes back. Najhib begs him to stop. He tells Smith that he will talk, but Smith looks at him...

"Shush. Shush. Shush. Not now, buddy. Not now. We just got started. I know you're going to bullshit me. You're not ready yet."

Smith puts his headset back on and dangles the hammer again in front of Najhib's eyes. This time it's stained in blood.

Najhib shakes his head, screams, "NO! NO!"

Smith aims at the middle finger. He swings the hammer down on the last phalange and smashes another fingertip. The fingernail spins away, sticks on Smith's jumpsuit.

Najhib shakes even more violently. He closes his eyes and pants.

Smith leaves as the doctor moves in to fix the finger.

An hour later, Smith returns to the room and approaches Najhib with a glass of water. He lifts Najhib's head by the hair and puts the glass on the prisoner's lips. He lets him drink the whole glass.

Smith looks at Najhib, with the hammer in one hand and the glass in the other...

Finally, Smith says, "Pain. Relief. Pain. Relief. Your choice. Where is the attack to be?"

Najhib screams at his tormentor: "I swear, I don't know. I am telling you the truth. I don't know. Fucking bastard!"

Smith says, "Very well. Hammer it is."

And Smith puts his headset back on.

He grabs the hammer, shows it to Najhib and slams the third finger.

Najhib is in excruciating pain. His entire body trembles.

Smith tells him, “You know what a phalange is? It’s any of the bones in your hand. You’ve got 19 more I can crush. Why don’t you give up now and keep your fingers. Tell me where the attack is going to be.”

Najhib cries and implores Smith to stop the torture. He still insists he doesn’t know. He says he was arrested before he found out.

Without warning, Smith swings the hammer for the fourth time and crushes the little finger’s last phalange.

Najhib screams like a banshee at full howl! His body shakes as he tries to free his legs and arms.

“This one is for the girl you beat up, you bastard. Now tell me, where’s the attack going to be? You’ve been identified. We know who you are. We know you recovered the explosives in Puerto Rico.”

Najhib looks scared. “I don’t know. Please stop. I’ll tell you the address where the submarine is. But please stop.”

“You see? You are trying to deceive me. I don’t give a shit about the address of the submarine. I want to know the address of the target.”

Najhib shouts the address. He repeats it three times. For the first time since his arrest, Najhib gives a piece of information. The address belongs to the garage in Charleston, where the submarine was parked.

Chance is watching and listening from inside a booth outside the interrogation room. He calls Floyd and gives him the address. Floyd asks if they are done with the torture. Chance responds that the suspect is just buying time. Chance suspects the other terrorists are almost certainly gone. They probably bailed as soon as it became obvious they weren’t going to hear from their friend. But maybe they left something behind.

Smith walks out of the room. The doctor takes care of

Najhib. He covers him with a blanket and gives him warm tea.

Najhib talks to the doctor, asks him to let him go, to release him from the monster. The doctor remains silent, untouched.

When the doctor walks away, Najhib screams, “You a fucking bastard, too! Animal! Fuck your mot, you pig!”

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Floyd immediately scrambles a SWAT team. He calls the police, tells them to set up a perimeter around the garage. Minutes later, he arrives on the scene. The SWAT team is ready. Floyd gives the go and the officers smash the door open, storm inside. Seconds later they come out and the SWAT leader reports on the radio: “Clear! Clear! Nothing in here. They’re gone!”

Floyd enters the garage. His team swipes surfaces all around, takes samples, lifts prints, takes photos. Minutes later, his crime scene technicians confirm there are traces of TNT all over the place.

They interview the neighbors, looking for any who might have seen the men leaving the garage with a SUV and towing a trailer. The neighbors provide no help. They didn’t know it was a sub because it was covered with a tarp. Nobody paid attention to the license tag.

Floyd still doesn’t have anything significant. The explosives were there. The sub was there. Najhib didn’t lie, but the submarine is gone.

Floyd reports to Kathy Cormack. He confirms traces of explosives have been found at the location given by the prisoner, the same explosives recovered in Puerto Rico.

Advisor Cormack shouts into the phone: “We’ve wasted enough time. Get back to Smith. Tell him we’ve got a ticking bomb now. Tell Smith he better get tough on this guy’s ass or it’s going to blow in our faces.”

Floyd meets with Chance and Smith in the observation room, and shares the conversation with Kathy about the ticking bomb.

“Ahhh. So now you hear it? Tic toc. Tic toc. It’s about time, huh,” Chance says.

Smith explains he needs two more days.

“Two more?” Floyd asks.

“This nut has been trained to resist torture. You should’ve let me work on him from the beginning. I need two more days to make him spill it up.

“Let me explain something to you, Agent Allister. There are four different type of pain.

“When you go to the dentist, it’s pain but you take it. It’s self imposed. You accept it because there is no other way around it. You know that in the dentist’s office pain is normal and inevitable. You expect it and you accept it. This is medical pain, and you take it.

“When you run a marathon, it’s painstaking. Once again it’s self-imposed. You accept it because if you don’t, there’s no way you’ll finish the race, let alone win it. This is athletic pain, and you take it.

“A martyr under torture takes the pain because he expected it. He was even looking for it. He was prepared. It was his motive. It’s martyr pain. He accepts it, and he can take it.

“You remember that poor guy who got caught in a crevasse with his arm pinned by a boulder? That guy amputated his own arm by himself with a camping tool in order to survive. He accepted an unbearable pain to get out, and he took the pain.

“When you get assaulted, beat up, mugged, raped, when you are victimized, abused, tortured, you suffer much more because you are not prepared. The pain is unjustifiable. You are punished for nothing. It’s a punitive pain. And this pain you can’t take. No one can take punitive pain.

“Anyone under punitive pain will say or do anything to stop the pain and the punishment.

“Right now, I’m at the level of medical pain with your guy. He is buying time. He knew the garage would be empty. I knew it too.

“I need two more days to get to the psychological level of punishment and punitive pain. Once there, he will tell me everything I want to know.”

Floyd stares at Smith. The man is unnervingly detached.

“Look,” Smith says, “I take no pleasure in this, but I can tell one thing with certainty. When it’s over, I’ll sleep and sleep well...if lives are saved. If I did nothing and lives are lost, I won’t sleep at all.”

Floyd is shocked. He feels like a schoolboy being lectured by a professor. He feels lost. Like everything he knew, everything he used to justify his actions, his career, his way of life somehow was being challenged.

On one hand, torture isn’t something he can accept. On the other, he now has doubts about all his values, doubts about who is right, who is wrong, doubts about his role in law enforcement. Floyd exhales deeply and gives an “I give up” wave to the other men. He leaves the room. He doesn’t know anything anymore.

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Floyd returns to the FBI office in Charleston and, with his team, he assesses the possible targets. Chance told him the attack would take place on the east coast of the United States so Floyd makes a list, with some notes. From south to north, the potential targets of the attack could be:

Miami, Florida – crowded with five or six cruise ships and thousands of passengers at any given time.

Jacksonville, Florida - on the naval base, they could try to blow up a nuclear-powered ship, blast open the nuclear reactor to

provoke a nuclear environmental disaster. A nuclear-powered ship is easy to spot; they are the only vessels without a smokestack.

Savannah, Georgia - the terrorists could blow up a LNG tanker or the LNG terminal.

Charleston, SC - where Najhib was arrested, a nuclear aircraft carrier is docked there. The terrorists could try to sink it, and create a nuclear disaster.

Norfolk, Virginia - the terrorists could attack a nuclear warship to provoke a nuclear disaster.

New York - everyday large ferries carry thousands of people, and the big city remains a prime target for terrorists.

Boston - terrorists could blow up a LNG tanker or the LNG terminal.

Floyd sends a team of Special Agents to every location on his list to investigate locally and coordinate preventive measures. But he realizes there are too many targets, tankers, Navy ships and cruise ships, he can't watch them all.

Floyd thinks the attack will take place in New York because the suspects flew there from Puerto Rico just before going to Charleston. However, that's mostly a hunch. He doesn't have enough evidence to confirm a real threat.

As he's getting ready to fly to New York, Floyd receives a police bulletin from Boston. The message directs him to look at the photo of a murder suspect that seems to match his APB from his Puerto Rican case. Floyd immediately recognizes Najhib in the picture. He jumps out of his chair.

"What the hell?" Floyd wonders.

Floyd grabs the phone and calls the Boston detective. He tells him he recognizes his suspect and asks him about the case.

Detective O'Malley explains that a young couple was found shot dead three months ago inside their car on a parking lot at night. The couple had spent the evening in a nearby bar. They left together and, based on what they could put together, they

were forced into their cars by the killers. The ballistic report shows that the shots were fired by two 45 caliber pistols. *Same caliber as the murders of the Dutch tourists*, thinks Floyd. The detective is looking for two killers. Nothing was missing or stolen, except the mobile phone of the woman.

Witnesses came forward and explained there was a situation inside the bar with four Arabic guys, and one of the victim's friends took a picture of the victim sitting on the lap of one of the Arabic men. The detectives believe the woman was killed because of that picture. The perpetrator didn't want his picture taken. Fortunately, the detective says, the victim sent the picture to her friend shortly after she took it. That's how the police got the photo of Najhib.

Floyd thinks that if Najhib was in Boston and killed someone to avoid identification, it must be related to the terrorist cell. He calls Chance to let him know he has a lead in Boston and he is flying there right away to investigate.

On his way to the airport, he calls George, his banker/bartender friend from Boston. He tells him he's on his way to Boston to investigate a lead in the Puerto Rican case with the missing explosives. George is totally happy and tells Floyd he can stay at his home, instead of checking into a hotel. Floyd accepts the invitation and boards his plane.

He arrives late in the evening. George is at the airport to pick him up. John and Chubs are there waiting with George. Floyd's delighted; it's like old times. After hugs, jokes, and a quick beer at an airport bar, they drive to George's apartment. Floyd hugs George's wife. They've known each other for what seems like forever. Floyd asks about their children.

"The kids are in bed, man. You can them in the morning," says George.

Everyone gets comfortable in the living room and Floyd explains what is going on. He skips the part about torturing the

suspect. Floyd is ashamed to even know about it.

John, Chubs and George are fascinated. They all talk at the same time. They can't believe how their vacation turned into a major-league terrorist threat on the US. They are very concerned that Boston might be the target of the terrorists.

"Floyd, this is our city. We live here. You've got to stop those Islamic fanatics," says George.

"I know. I know. That's why I'm here. It could be Boston, but I'm hoping to find enough info to be able to cross it off the list of potential targets."

Floyd's statement pretty much kills the party mood. After a few beers, they're feeling better, especially once they start talking about the good times they'll have on their next visit to Vieques.

December 4

Mr. Smith starts the second day of interrogation.

Smith is the top CIA interrogator. His assignments have taken him to Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan and even to Europe, where he extracted information from high-profile terrorists and bomb-makers.

Every time Smith tears and burns human flesh, he keeps in mind his five children, his wife and the American people. He wants nothing more than to keep them all safe from the extremists he calls "the barbarians". Nobody knows what Smith does. His program doesn't even exist. After every session, he fulfills the martyr dreams of his suspects. He straps 20 pounds of C4 onto them and vaporizes them in remote fields. In every case, the information he's provided has thwarted a terrorist attack. In every case, the CIA has caught the terrorists before their attack.

Smith is nervous about this case; he feels the suspect is abnormally resistant to torture. He knows there's a ticking bomb

somewhere and that his suspect knows where. He's confident he'll get the man to talk. No one can resist his best efforts. But how long will it take?

Najhib's right hand is swollen; a mix of purple, blue and green; with bloody dressings on his fingers. He is still naked, strapped on the cross.

Smith lays a hand on Najhib's chest and crushes Najhib's wounded hand with his fist. Najhib squeals in pain then breathes deeply, trying to control the pain. He turns his head in an attempt to look at his hand. Smith tells Najhib he has a visitor.

A woman enters the room and approaches Najhib. She's tall, blond, pretty, wearing a tight white jump suit that molds tightly to her body. She walks and stands in front of Najhib, right between his legs. She looks down at his genitals, with a smirk on her face.

"Let me introduce you to Susan, my assistant." Smith says.

Najhib's face turns to stone. He can't bear to look into her eyes. He is enraged and intimidated to be spread naked in front of a woman. He looks away.

Smith tells the woman, "You see, he's not ready. Look at the rage in his eyes. He's not humiliated yet."

Then he turns to Najhib and says "Man, she is looking at your nuts. And they are small. She is the last woman you will ever see. She is going to watch you when you suffer.

"Or...we can stop right here. You tell me where the attack is going to be."

"I don't know," Najhib insists. "They did not tell me. I already told you where to find them."

Smith shakes his head. "You told me because you knew they would be gone by the time we get there."

Susan is watching. She moves close to Najhib and whispers something in Arabic in his ears. He yells in reaction, grunts and pulls on his limbs.

Susan is a CIA agent, one of Chance's covert team members. She speaks Arabic because she grew up in Egypt. Her mother, an American woman from Ohio married a Muslim Egyptian, who was student in the US. When he graduated, he took her back to Egypt, much to her misfortune. He tried to convert her to Islam but she refused. Her life turned to hell. Susan saw her mother repeatedly beaten over the years, abused and humiliated. Both were locked up in their house. One evening, the beating was so severe that her mother fell unconscious. Susan, then a teenager, was so scared she escaped from a window and ran to the US Consulate.

The police went to the house and took her mother to the hospital. She had suffered brain damage and never recovered. The Egyptian police never charged her husband and the Consulate never pursued Egyptian authorities because US authorities did not want to stain their diplomatic relations with the Egyptian government. Susan's mother was repatriated to the US, where she remains in a vegetative state. On the day of the beating, Susan took the oath to fight for her country against Islamists.

Chance wanted a woman to be part of his torture-interrogation team. In dealing with Muslims, a female agent was the ultimate psychological weapon. A Muslim man views women as inferior beings. Western women, in particular, are viewed as impure whores. Smith knew that, for Najhib, having a woman touching his body and inflicting physical pain would add to his distress and mental anguish.

Smith works on the prisoner for the next three hours, smashing Najhib's fingers on the other hand. A physician comes every 20 minutes to treat him, to give him a shot of adrenaline and to give him water.

Najhib has been strapped on the cross for more than 24 hours now. He peed on himself and soiled the floor underneath

the cross. His joints are painful, having been tied up in the same position, with no support for his back and head. His neck hurts him because of his trying to hold his head up. He has a severe headache. Susan feeds him cod liver oil by force, with a plastic tube inserted in his mouth. The oil has an awful taste, rancid and very fishy.

As Najhib tries to spit out the oil, Susan says, “It’s full of vitamins and is recommended in the event of fractures. Enjoy it, because it’s the last food you will ever have.”

FIRESTORM

In Boston, the three terrorists prepare for the attack. They're extra careful as they perform the security-route check while driving to the garage.

Ahmed checks the batteries of the submarine and checks the compressed air tanks to make sure they are full. Abdullah removes the AK-47s from the ballasts and loads the magazines with ammo. Ahmed connects the detonators electric leads to the trigger box inside the cabin and shows Abdullah the sequencing, arming, and then trigger.

They set up a stage with a green sheet in the background. Slogans written in Arabic are written across the green sheet. Yusuf records a video message with Ahmed and Abdullah standing in front of sheet. They claim credit for the attack and curse America. They say it is the time for all Muslims to stand up to take advantage of the wounded giant on the ground, to slaughter him, and to take over the world.

“Brothers...we have hit America...destroyed one of their Cities, the giant is on his knees, wounded, weak, ruined, Brothers! Rise in arms, finish him off and take over, be Islam spread all over America and rid of the infidels and the Jews! Allahu Akbar!... Allahu Akbar!... Allahu Akbar!

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Smith continues to torture Najhib. When he passes out, Smith uses a stun gun to wake him up. Since all his fingers are smashed to the knuckles, Smith asks Susan to continue with electro shocks.

It's not exactly retribution, but Susan feels some closure by inflicting pain on this radical Islamist. She thinks of her mother and of all the female victims of abuse whose most basic human rights were violated by men using Islam as an excuse. According to Floyd, this naked, quivering man is responsible for

beating women and killing six innocent civilians in cold blood.

Susan rolls a cart with wires and a control box next to the cross. She plugs the control box to a wall socket.

Suddenly, Susan grabs Najhib's genitals. He yells violently, but not out of pain. This time the hurt is his feeling of degradation for being grabbed there by a woman. The humiliation is three folds, one: because he is spread naked and exposed, two: because he's exposed in front of a woman, three: because she's an unbeliever. Najhib can't bear being naked in the hands of a woman. He's afraid he'll show his reaction to the pain she will inflict on him. It's the supreme insult.

Susan intends to instill a feeling of degradation in Najhib far beyond anything he could ever imagine. The psychological effect will be so powerful he'll feel Allah has abandoned him.

Expecting the worst, Najhib insults Susan, curses her. His whole body shakes, his veins bulge as he struggles to escape the straps holding him down.

Susan stares into Najhib's eyes and smiles as she takes the end of one the wires and wraps the electrode around Najhib's penis and testicles. The other end of the wire runs through a wooden insulating handle and ends at a metallic rod.

Susan tells Najhib, "The French used electricity to fry Algerians' balls during the Algerian War. It worked well. Those rebels talked so fast the interrogators couldn't keep up with their note taking. Now I am going to fry yours."

Susan looks over to Smith, who nods a "yes."

Susan moves closer to Najhib, rubs a hand over his chest and says, "Oh, I almost forgot. I apologize for touching you all over while having my period. It's just bad timing. I hope you won't mind."

Najhib screams! Twists violently against his restraints. Tries to shake Susan's hand off his chest. "Get that fucking cunt away from me," he yells. "Dirty piece of shit."

There is nothing on earth a Muslim man feels is dirtier than a menstruating woman. Susan knows it. She writhes against his body.

Suddenly, Susan stands straight. She slaps Najhib's face with such force that the shock stops Najhib mid-scream.

Smiling sweetly, she gives Najhib a sexy wink, then pulls a hood over his head. Being blindfolded adds to Najhib's sense of helplessness as he won't be able to anticipate where and when the moving electrode will touch his body.

Susan walks back to the cart, throws a switch, rotates the rheostat to set the current level and grabs the wooden handle.

Najhib is terrified; he hears the buzzing of the machine.

Smith throws a bucket of ice-cold saltwater on Najhib's body to increase the effect of the shocks by reducing the electrical resistance of his skin.

Susan touches Najhib's nipples with the rod and slides it down to his belly. Najhib's body jolts in a reflex. He is convulsed by excruciating pain and violent muscle contractions as the current flows through his genitals with a sizzling sound. It's both physical and mental pain.

### **December 5, 2011, 5.00 AM**

The day of the attack. Yusuf, Abdullah and Ahmed wake up in their separate hotel rooms. They pray and chant "Allahu Akbar." They chant quietly because they don't want to alarm the hotel's guests or employees. They repeat the same two words for over an hour, aware that 2,000 repetitions assure a better reward in the afterlife.

They read the Qur'an just for the sake of moving their eyes over the pages because, once again, rewards are based on the number of readings, not comprehension.

Yusuf plugs a video camera to his laptop. He logs onto

Skype and connects with Hassan. For five minutes, they talk about Allah, their martyrdom and the operation. Hassan hooks up a camera on his computer and focuses it on the screen to record Yusuf's last message and the explosion. Hassan doesn't use screen-recording software.

Yusuf sees Hassan's camera on his screen, with its red light blinking. Hassan is recording. Yusuf faces the camera; he looks serene.

He begins his message: "You, American people, you will never live in security until our brothers, the Palestinian people, live in security. Today the world watches you burn in hell. And watches your country collapse. Today you pay for killing our leader and holy mujahidin in front of his children. Allah is rewarding you with his punishment: a firestorm. This firestorm will destroy the great Satan. Death to America. Allahu Akbar! Allahu Akbar! Allahu Akbar!"

Yusuf attaches his camera to the window with suction cups and aims it at the target area in the channel.

Hassan keeps his camera on his computer screen so he can record the explosion of the tanker.

Yusuf calls Abdullah and tells him to keep watch from his window until he sees the tanker on the horizon. Then he calls Ahmed and tells him to meet him at the garage. As Yusuf leaves his room, he places the "Do not disturb" sign on the door.

The tanker approaches *Long island* where the Coast Guard ships are waiting. The huge ship stops for the Coast Guardsmen to board and inspect the tanker, as part of their routine security check.

Four divers get ready to inspect the hull. They jump in the frigid waters and swim under the 1,000-foot-long tanker. Two divers start at the rudder. The two others start at bow. The water is clear. The divers look for anything unusual that could have been attached to the hull: a limpet bomb, a container, something

odd sticking out where it shouldn't be. The divers can hear the throb of the ship's engines, still running on idle.

After 30 minutes, they meet under the keel in the center of the hull. They've found nothing. There's no threat. The divers report a "clear to go," which means the boat can go ahead and off load at the terminal.

The pilot climbs onboard the tanker and goes to the bridge so he can take over the ship. With the clearance from the Coast Guard, he's free to guide the tanker through the harbor to the terminal. The tanker is about 90 minutes from target area.

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Detective Sean O'Malley and Floyd are in the parking lot where the couple was shot. Sean explains how it happened, while Floyd looks at the crime-scene photos.

Sean says, "We've been looking for this Arabic guy all over the city. He just evaporated. We found the hotel where he was staying, but he left the day after the murders so he was long gone by the time we got there. He's a ruthless fuck. He killed those people for nothing."

"We've got him in custody in Charleston," Floyd says. "He's being interrogated. He's involved in a quadruple murder in Puerto Rico. We believe he's a terrorist preparing an attack, but we don't know where. It might be Boston. We just don't know. His guys have been scouting the whole east coast."

"An attack on Boston? What the hell? Why didn't you— Can I question him? He's my suspect, too."

"No, you can't," says Floyd. "Not at this point. We're focusing on where their bomb is."

The tanker is in range. Abdullah can see it on the horizon from his hotel window. He grabs his binoculars and looks closer. A big Coast Guard ship escorts the tanker. Both vessels move slowly. It's time to go.

Abdullah calls Yusuf and tells him the tanker is coming, they synchronize and set their watches. The estimated time for the tanker to reach the target area is 60 minutes.

Abdullah leaves the hotel and takes a taxi directly to the Mystic Channel Boat Ramp, where he'll wait there for Ahmed and Yusuf.

At the garage, Ahmed checks the submarine a final time. It's tied securely on the trailer, ready to go. Air tanks are full. Batteries are charged. License plate is on. Tag on. Ahmed connects the leads to the trigger box, and Yusuf covers up the submarine completely with a blue tarp to hide it. He hooks up the trailer to the car, opens the garage door and gets in the car with Yusuf.

Yusuf moves into the traffic. He's nervous while driving, but they're not attracting any attention from anybody. They're on a suicide course. No matter what happens, Ahmed will jump in the sub and trigger the bomb or he will die trying.

The two men are vulnerable until they launch the submarine. They hold their assault rifles and automatic pistols, ready to shoot their way to the water if they have to.

Barely ten minutes from launch, as they drive toward the boat ramp, a police cruiser pulls alongside. Ahmed looks straight ahead, avoiding eye contact. He knows the police officer would smell something if he eyeballs him. Ahmed has his finger on the trigger, but the police officer is just checking out the trailer. Satisfied, he drives off.

Abdullah arrives at the boat ramp and waits for Yusuf and Ahmed. He checks around and calls Yusuf to tell him it is clear.

9:15 am

Smith and Susan are exhausted. They've fried Najhib's balls the whole night. The prisoner is broken. He's nothing but a

lump of hurting flesh. He's lost his mind, his self-control and the will to resist. His head hangs over the edge of the beam. He groans in pain.

Smith asks him again, "What's the target? Where is it? Tell me now. It's over. I'll let you die in peace."

After 48 hours of pain, Najhib breaks down. He's lost any notion of space and time. After suffering overwhelming physical and mental stress, he's totally disoriented. He can't remember his training. Nothing matters. Najhib can barely talk. He moans something. Smith walks closer, puts his ear next to Najhib's face.

"What is it? Where's the attack?"

Utterly broken, Najhib has become open to persuasion. Now compliant, he says in a faint voice, "Boston. It's Boston... Tanker...the Gas tanker...with our Submarine..."

"When? When?"

"I don't know. I swear I don't know." Najhib starts crying.

"Fuck!" Smith shouts. He's not absolutely certain if it's deceit or delirium but he jumps up and says, "It's over!"

He turns to face the doctor: "Hey, Doc. He's yours now. It's over."

Smith grabs his phone and calls Floyd: "Floyd!! It's Boston. Blowing up a LNG tanker with the submarine. I don't know when. Couldn't get it from him. That's all I know. The guy's done. Move fast. Good luck."

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Floyd's still with Detective O'Malley when he takes the call. He freezes for a few seconds as Smith's words sink in.

"When's the next tanker arriving?" he asks the detective. "Can you check?"

"No need to check. It's today...now. Most Boston cops are already on tanker-security watch."

Floyd leaves a message for Kathy Cormack.



Floyd calls headquarters to request raise the alert level in Boston to “Severe.”

Floyd grabs the radio in Sean’s car and yells, “This is FBI Special Agent Floyd Allister. We’ve got a terrorist attack in progress. Get every fucking cop in the street and on the water looking for a 25-foot yellow submarine. The submarine is a bomb. I repeat, terrorist attack in progress. Use lethal force to stop it at all cost.”

He calls his team in Boston, Special Agents Paul and Michael.

“Paul, I just got the info. The target’s a tanker in Boston Harbor. Be on alert and look for a submarine.”

### **9:30 AM**

The huge tanker is now entering the harbor, escorted by a flotilla of police boats. Their crews are armed and watch vigilantly. The ship looks out of place, way too massive.

The Coast Guard receives the “severe” alert from Homeland Security, along with a message that there may be a subsurface attack on the tanker in progress. The alert specifies a 25-foot yellow submarine.

The Coast Guard Commander is dumbfounded. He doesn’t understand and can’t picture the threat. He calls all his units and orders them to watch for attack divers or submersibles. All the way down the chain of command, there’s a similar confusion. No one knows what they’re expected to do or what to picture.

The Commander contacts the pilot on the tanker, but it’s too late. The tanker has reached the point of no return, it can’t stop or turn around; it’s too big. And besides, where would it head if it could turn? They don’t know where the submarine is. It could be anywhere.

The ship has no options other than to go straight ahead. Plus, the pilot expects the threat to be at sea and not inside the harbor.

The message alert is also broadcast to police officers on patrol. But it's too vague. They too don't know what to expect.

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Yusuf and Ahmed arrive at the public boat ramp on Little Mystic Channel. The gate is open and there are no guards. Yusuf drives in.

Abdullah is waiting in the parking lot. He spots his friends and waves. When they've stopped next to him, he explains that a couple of guys have just launched a 28-foot center-console boat and their empty trailer is in the way.

Yusuf waits nervously for them to clear the boat ramp. He lowers his window to talk to Abdullah. Yusuf wants to shoot the boat guys, but Abdullah tells him to hold off.

"Everything's OK," Abdullah says. "Don't worry, brother."

After two minutes, one of the boat guys drives off with the empty trailer, parks his car, then joins his friend on the 28-footer.

Yusuf drives the car to the boat ramp and, with Abdullah guiding him, backs the trailer into position in front of the ramp. Yusuf signals "go" to Ahmed, who jumps out of the car and removes the tarp. The submarine is now in plain sight.

Ahmed's heart beats hard and fast. Adrenaline flows through his veins. Ahmed and Abdullah detach the tie downs which hold the submarine on the trailer. They open the dome hatches. They jump inside the cockpit and close the canopies. Some onlookers gather near the ramp to watch what looks like a Discovery Channel submarine documentary in the making.

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Sean and Floyd are at a Dunkin' Donuts buying coffees when Sean's phone rings. Sean listens intently then...

"Gotta go, Floyd! Our 911 dispatcher just got a call from some folks who saw three Middle Eastern individuals launch a blue submarine."

Floyd and Sean jump in the cop car and drive full speed, sirens wailing. Floyd calls Michael and Paul and tells them to get to Mystic Channel boat ramp immediately.

"Stop the damn submarine!" Floyd shouts.

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The just-launched 28-footer is still in the middle of Mystic Channel, its progress blocked by a police boat.

Sitting in the sub, Abdullah tells Ahmed, "I think we're trapped."

Ahmed responds, "No we're not. We'll dive and go right under them. They won't even know we're here."

Ahmed gives a hand signal to Yusuf, who's watching in his rearview mirror, to indicate that he is ready for launch. The ramp is clear.

Yusuf shifts the car in reverse, backs the trailer down the ramp, gains a bit of momentum.

Ahmed waves goodbye to Yusuf as the tail of the submarine hits the water. Ahmed follows his check list to not make mistakes under the stress, he engages the air system and the electrical power. Yusuf backs farther down the ramp and sees the sub rise up off the trailer skids and float free.

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While Sean drives like maniac through the city, Floyd calls his Boston friends. George is the first to pick up.

Floyd says, "George, this is Floyd. Shut up and listen. Call John and Chubs. Everybody leave Boston. Right now! The terrorist attack is underway. And it's here. Wherever you are, get the hell out!"

George responds, “What? What’s going on? Is it that thing with Puerto Rico?”

“Yes. Now go! Get out. Tell as many people as you can. Get out!”

“Out of where?” asks George.

“The city, George. Get the fuck out of Boston!”

George looks at his phone in disbelief. He’s stunned by what he’s just heard. “Global fucking catastrophe,” he mutters. Then he hits speed dial...

### **9:45 AM**

As soon as the submarine lifts off the trailer, Ahmed engages the motors in reverse and moves away from the boat ramp. He makes a quarter-turn and then thrusts the submarine into forward.

Yusuf pulls the empty trailer out of the water and drives off the ramp.

As they pull into the ramp parking lot, Sean and Floyd spot the empty trailer. Sean squeals his cruiser to a stop, blocking Yusuf’s car.

Sean and Floyd jump out, guns drawn.

Another police cruiser arrives--siren wailing--in response to the 911 call. The officer jumps out of the car pointing his gun at Yusuf.

The radio in the cruiser blasts: “Highest priority. Stop a 25-foot yellow submarine. Use of lethal force is authorized. Terrorist attack in progress.”

The excitement at the ramp is drawing a crowd. People gather and watch.

Floyd points his gun at Yusuf and orders him to get out of the car. Hands in the air.

From the sub, Ahmed sees the activity at the ramp. It

doesn't look good, but there's no time to figure out what's happening. He opens the valves to flood the ballasts so he can submerge the sub and get out of sight as quickly as possible.

Floyd approaches Yusuf's car while Sean stays back to cover him. Yusuf's too nervous to wait for Floyd to get close enough for a clear shot. He lowers the window, aims his assault rifle...

Floyd jumps sideways just in time to dodge a gust of bullets. He runs for cover behind Sean's car.

Yusuf shoots nonstop.

Sean jumps behind the cruiser and ducks.

Yusuf keeps shooting, peppering both cruisers with bullet holes. He empties a magazine, removes it, inserts a new one, continues to shoot. The heavy automatic gunfire sounds like a war zone. Shell casings fly everywhere.

Sean yells in his radio for backup. They realize the guy shooting at them is providing cover for the subs escape.

Floyd notes the sub is blue, not yellow, and has Sean radio the word to all agencies. He has him say the sub is an immediate threat to the tanker in the harbor.

Floyd hopes the fact that so many police officers on duty had been briefed for the tanker-arrival security-detail before they received the FBI alert might give them some advantage. Something they could use to stop the sub. But he wasn't sure what it might be.

At the ramp, it's all chaos and panic. Bullets buzz and ricochet everywhere. Everybody's running away or crouching on the ground. Floyd returns fire at the car. He yells at Sean to shoot at the submersing submarine a hundred yards away.

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As the air escapes from the ballasts, the submarine sinks lower on the water's surface. Ahmed is absorbed by the controls and focuses on getting the sub below the surface as quickly as

possible. He sees Yusuf engaged in a heavy gunfight with the police. He spots one officer pointing his gun in the direction of the submarine and firing.

Ahmed doesn't wait. He runs the vertical thrusters. The submarine disappears under the surface, leaving a trail of bubbles. *Just in time*, Ahmed thinks, as he hears bullets hitting the water.

The water is so murky that at a depth of only three feet, the submarine is completely invisible from the surface.

Five hundred yards away, the two police officers on a patrol boat have heard the unmistakable sound of an assault rifle, but they have no idea what's going on.

Sean radios the police boat: "Stop the sub. Stop the blue submarine. Open fire. Stop the sub. Don't let it get by you."

The police officer on the boat, who hasn't seen the submarine, doesn't understand. He responds, "Repeat. Repeat. A blue submarine. Where? "

The deputies onboard are confused. The radio alert mentioned a yellow submarine. Now there's a blue one? Is it another one? A multiple sub attack? The officers have never considered a sub attack. They've never been trained. Without training or an action plan, they decide the best thing to do is to open fire, randomly, into the water.

Maybe they'll hit something.

A stray bullet hits one of the 175-horsepower outboards on the 28-foot center-console boat that was being stopped. The outboard blows up in a ball of fire! The three passengers onboard scream in panic, not knowing which hell to choose from: a fire on the boat or terror in the water, with an enemy submarine lurking and police officers shooting all over the channel.

In the parking lot, Yusuf tries to drive around Sean's car so he can get away. Shooting through the windows, he tries to maneuver past, but the trailer behind gets entangled in a concrete

post and immobilizes his car. Yusuf hits the gas pedal. The tires spin in a cloud of white smoke. A third cruiser arrives and blocks the exit of the parking lot.

Floyd yells, “Sean! Do you have any automatic weapons in your car? We need to stop this guy now!”

Sean crawls behind his car, opens the trunk, pulls out an M16 and gives it to Floyd.

Floyd braces himself against the car’s fender, takes a deep breath, aims... Shoots!

His bullets cripple the car. The radiator is blown apart. Steam vapors rise. Tire chunks fly.

Unhurt, Yusuf realizes he can’t go anywhere in the car. He jumps out, tries to run away through the back of the parking lot. Floyd sees him and opens fire.

Yusuf is struck by a spray of bullets and spins like a disarticulated doll. He’s dead before hitting the ground.

Floyd calls the FBI helicopter on standby, and asks the pilot to pick him up in the parking lot.

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Ahmed’s sub is three feet below the surface. Only a small camera periscope sticks out of the water, with a GPS antenna on top. Ahmed sees the police boat in his periscope. It’s blocking the channel and moving in his direction. The officers are shooting in the water with M16s, but they don’t know where the submarine is.

Ahmed pushes down on the joystick and dives deeper so he can pass under the police boat. After ten seconds, he goes back up to periscope depth to check where he is going. He swings the periscope to look behind and sees that he’s passed the police boat. The officers are still shooting in the water and searching for the submarine, but they’re looking in the wrong direction. Ahmed swings the periscope forward and steers the sub out of the Mystic Channel into the harbor.

There is no visibility under the water, Ahmed is completely blind and relies on his sonar, the GPS and the periscope. He makes a 90-degree turn and positions the submarine in the center of the harbor navigation channel, which will be the course of the tanker. He has a blinking marker on his GPS screen to display the location of his target position, just above Boston's underwater tunnels.

Ahmed tells Abdulla, "We are thirteen hundred yards and 15 minutes from the target."

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At the boat ramp parking lot, Sean reports to police headquarters that a submarine attack is in progress in the harbor. The sub is 25-feet long and blue. The dispatchers and other officers listening at the control center are staggered. This is the first submarine attack in the US and they have no plan for action. They know the location and the size of the submarine but they have no idea what it looks like or how to stop it. They ask if it's a captured Navy submarine with torpedoes.

Sean explains, "It looks like a 25-foot tourist mini-sub, blue hull, modified into a suicide submarine."

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Ahmed is unaware of what's happening on the surface. He's completely insulated from the world above, in the watertight cabin. He is undetectable. No one can reach him. And he's amazingly close to his target.

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Paul and Michael arrive at the ramp in an unmarked car. They show their credentials and walk over to the dead terrorist. Floyd is searching the body. He empties the man's pockets, pulls out a bunch of flyers and Islamic pamphlets, all bearing marks of Al Qaeda. The big score is the terrorist's driver's license. It identifies the dead man as Yusuf Farouk Abdulmutallab.

"Two more to go" says Floyd, as Paul and Michael kneel

for a closer look at the corpse.

The FBI helicopter lands, picks up Floyd and takes off immediately. Floyd scrutinizes the water, looking for the submarine under the surface, but he doesn't see anything.

He's in radio contact with another police helicopter that's hovering above the rear of the tanker. Floyd asks the crew to look for any sub-surface activity, but they don't see anything either. The situation is critical.

Floyd calls all law enforcement officers in patrol boats and tells them to throw concussion grenades in the water surrounding the tanker at regular intervals. The police don't have any on board. The Coast Guard has some, but they're at the station. They can only shoot in the water around the tanker. The Coast Guard sends a high-speed patrol boat to get the grenades from the Coast Guard station.

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Ahmed sees the tanker in the camera periscope. It's moving straight in his direction, escorted by a flotilla of law-enforcement boats with blue lights whirling. Ahmed steers the explosives-laden submarine so it stays in the path of the floating gas tank.

The submarine is much slower than a suicide speedboat, but the police can't see it. The submarine closes on the tanker, hidden below the surface in the cloak of the murky waters. The tanker can't go anywhere and Ahmed can't miss a 150-foot wide target.

The tanker is getting bigger and bigger, closer and closer.

Ahmed tells Abdullah, "The tanker is at 300 yards. It's huge. I can barely see anything else in the periscope. Arm the bomb. Now."

Abdullah throws a switch and a red light shines.

"Bomb is armed."

Ahmed braces for his attack dive. He knows the police are

looking for them because the escort boats are moving in every direction, shooting in the water and dropping grenades. He can hear the blasts, but he is out of range.

Ahmed checks his GPS. He's now directly above the underwater tunnels that run below the harbor. The tanker is at 200 yards and closing.

He stops the submarine to maintain the same position and runs his vertical propellers to go straight down in the murky waters. Ahmed is now in total darkness, with only a glowing green light coming out of the instruments.

The sub is still going down, slowly. The depth gauge marks 10 feet, 20 feet. With no periscope and no GPS, Ahmed relies only on his sonar. He can see the tanker's hull approaching on the screen, with the distance indicated in bold letters.

The cabin pressurization system is kicks in and introduces fresh air into the cabin. The used air is simultaneously vented outside the cabin. As the submarine vents the used air in the water, it releases a trail of bubbles to the surface, like a scuba diver.

Ahmed is dropping below 30 feet and the range finder indicates the altitude above the bottom at 10 feet. Then...three feet...two...one...touchdown. Ahmed lands the sub smoothly on the muddy bottom. He's directly in the path of the tanker that's approaching right above them.

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The FBI helicopter pilot notifies Floyd that he's just seen a pool of bubbles on the surface in the middle of the channel. The pilot circles back then hovers above the bubbles.

Floyd looks down at the bubbles, says, "If the bubbles were in a trail, it would mean the sub is moving. The bubbles being in a pool means the sub isn't moving. It's sitting on the bottom. Right below us."

Floyd reports the location of the submarine over the radio

just as the supertanker smashes through the bubble pool. Floyd realizes it's too late. Floyd stares at the scene and unknowingly holds his breath. He bites his lip, as if to control pain.

The unthinkable is about to happen right before his eyes. All the horrific scenarios he studied are now becoming real. For a second, he refuses to believe it. It's not possible. Floyd feels totally helpless. His world is crumbling. Now with the submarine under the tanker, it's all over. There's nothing he can do. No time. The submarine is completely shielded by the tanker's huge hull and the sub is going to blow up at any time.

Floyd shouts at the pilot, "Get us out of here. Now! Go! Go! Get us the hell out of Dodge or we're gonna get blown out!"

The helicopter engine roars as pilot turns out to sea, accelerates, gains altitude.

Floyd immediately sends a warning: "Mayday Mayday. Mayday. Evacuate the area around the tanker. Explosion imminent. Evacuate!"

The mayday call is heard on all boats and law-enforcement vehicles in Boston.

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Ahmed and Abdullah don't have to wait long before the tanker's massive bulbous bow is passing ten feet right above their heads. They can't see the hull, but they can feel its wake as it shakes the submarine. They can hear the tanker's engines. The sonar screen is turning black, saturated by the huge amount of echoes from the hull being so close and so massive.

Abdullah has a timer to determine exactly when the center of the eleven hundred foot long ship will be right above the submarine. Abdullah knows the speed of the ship and her full length. A simple equation tells him it will take 20 seconds for the tanker to clear half of its length.

## 10.15 AM

As soon as the sonar turns black, Abdullah starts the timer. After fifteen seconds, he counts...

“5... 4... 3... 2... 1.”

He squeezes the red push-button with his thumb.

Ahmed and Abdullah scream “Allahuuu-Akbaaar!”

The bomb goes off just below the keel of the tanker.

The Jihadists are vaporized instantly as the 3,700 pounds of TNT detonate in a massive explosion.

The tanker is right in the center of Boston Harbor channel, only 300 yards from shore when the blast breaks the water’s surface.

A gigantic white-spray dome forms all around the tanker. The super-fast shockwave hits the ship and bends her upward, causing considerable structural damage to the double hull and breaking open the liquefied-gas holds inside. The engine compartment at the rear of the tanker is violently shaken by the shockwave and the huge machinery breaks apart, igniting the diesel fuel inside the compartment. A plume of black smoke bursts out of the ship’s stack.

In a tenth of a second, the high pressure and colossal bubble created by the explosive gazes reaches its maximum volume, lifts and engulfs the tanker, as if it was a plastic toy boat. Then it implodes under the water pressure, causing the ship body to bend downwards this time.

The collapse of the bubble on itself causes, in reaction, an explosive, gigantic high-speed vertical water-jet that cuts its way up through the broken ship with a more devastating effect. A huge column of water mixed with liquefied gas and hull debris rises 500 feet above the ship. The tanker disintegrates and its entire hull breaks open. More than 35 million gallons of liquefied gas pour out of the torn insulated-stainless-steel walls.

Four escort boats alongside the tanker are caught in the minus- 260-degree liquid cascading from the wreckage. The extreme deep-cold liquid cracks open the boats' hulls and instantly freezes the crew into sculptured ice human statues.

The released gas instantaneously vaporizes and creates a vapor cloud that expands astronomically and spreads around rapidly. The underwater deflagration has created a 40-foot-wide crater at the bottom of the harbor.

The shockwave has collapsed the ceilings of both underwater tunnels beneath the harbor. Water rushes inside with a terrible roaring sound like a high-speed death train. It's so fast that drivers caught in the traffic have no way to escape. The power goes off, plunging the tunnels into an eerie world of shaking light, created by the headlights of the submerged vehicles being crushed against each other and carried away by the raging water.

Cars at the entrance of the tunnels are blown backwards by the force of vapors, dust and compressed air, driven by the piston-like surge of the water as it rushes inland. It's as though the cars were shot out of a giant cannon. After one minute, the tunnels are completely flooded and over 400 people have drowned.

Near the blast's center, everything is in total chaos. Liquid gas escapes and evaporates out of control. Escort boats that haven't sunk try to get away. Alarms go off throughout the city. People in the city have heard and felt with terror the huge explosion. Many start evacuating their buildings without knowing where to go.

Inside the helicopter, Floyd is powerless. He watches in horror as the catastrophe unfolds. From the sky, it looks as though a colossal fog machine is oozing a deadly, expanding fog from the twisted, shredded wreckage of the tanker.

After ten minutes, the vapor cloud stretches over the

historical downtown on North Boston Island. The wind pushes and shapes the cloud into a two-mile-long devil's-tongue of ignitable gas. More people evacuate their buildings and swarm into the streets. They don't know what happened and run in every direction. Many feel dizzy and fall unconscious due to the high concentration of the odorless and tasteless gas. Most of the thousands of displaced people have no idea they're walking and breathing in a lethal, explosive gas cloud.

At eleven minutes, the fire inside the ship's engine room breaks out of the sealed compartment and ignites the gas cloud. An unimaginable doomsday hyper blast rocks the harbor and all nearby buildings.

The resulting inferno spreads and forms a tsunami of flame over the city, incinerating everything and everyone in its path. Two helicopters hovering above the harbor blow up and disappear in the fireball. Boats in the harbor in the path of the cloud and around the wreckage of the tanker are instantly destroyed.

For the people on the ground, the sky and the air burst into flames, killing instantly anyone caught in the gas mist.

Still in the helicopter, Floyd's five miles away from the firestorm, trying to assess the amount of devastation created by the LNG tanker turned into a weapon of mass destruction in the center of Boston. Looking through his binoculars at the blast site, he sees a huge cloud of extremely hot gases, air and smoke rising so rapidly that it creates an incredibly powerful updraft. On the ground, air outside the ball of fire is sucked inward with such force that it sweeps men, women, children and vehicles into the glowing inferno. The flames are so intense and the size of the fire is so vast that they create and sustain their own wind system, with Cat-5 hurricane force winds. Floyd can feel the radiating heat from the distance.

Paul, Michael, and Sean barely made it out of the Mystic

parking lot, about three miles from the blast, on a street crowded with people, they can feel the scorching heat. They tell people to drop everything and get as far away from the blast as possible.

With its fuel running low, Floyd's helicopter lands at Middlesex Air Force Base just outside Boston.

The explosion has caused the power grid to shut down throughout the entire city. People are trapped in elevators and plunged into darkness. TV and radio go silent. Telephone landlines turn off. Mobile-phone towers cease to transmit. Wi-Fi's go blank. The whole electronic spectrum disappears, leaving people who need it the most with no way to send or receive information.

Boston's subway system shuts down. The trains stop in the middle of tunnels or halfway at the platforms. The emergency lights switch on. People are stunned and silent in fear of what is going to happen next.

Subway travelers feel a small breeze starting to pick up speed and power. As the firestorm above sucks the air out of the subway tunnels, a wind system is created inside North Station and the Haymarket Square Station, on the green and orange lines. The wind intensifies inside the Bowdoin Station and the stops at Government Center, State Street and the Aquarium, on the blue line. The breeze turns into a hurricane in a wind tunnel. People underground cling onto columns, rails, poles, benches and whatever sticks out to stop them from being sucked into the flow.

Passengers inside the immobilized cars at the platforms are trapped with no way out, but they are safe from the sucking winds and the raging fire above. For now, they're surviving on the air trapped inside the cars. But, in the dim emergency lighting, they can see the horrific deaths of the people on the platform, as they gasp for fresh air and die of asphyxiation.

The last people alive on the platform hang onto the cars, bang desperately on the windows and doors, trying to get inside,

to get away from the air flow that sucks everything into the fire. But the people inside block the doors in fear of certain death if they let them open.

On the ground in the areas adjacent to the fires, confusion adds to the nightmare. With no information and no evacuation plans, many run inadvertently to their deaths. They see a clear path in the opposite direction of the fires, run for it, not realizing it's in the wind path. Before they can get to safety, they're swept up by tongues of fire, as if Hell had release its dragons to hunt every living soul. For those who survive the initial blast, it's total panic, total chaos. Everywhere, people are screaming and shouting in fear of death, looking for an escape, running away from a sky filled with flame-spewing winds.

On the edge of the blast area, people run out of buildings into the streets. Desperate, blackened and groaning, many who are horribly burnt can't run for long and drop lifeless as a surf of flames engulfs them.

Rescuers and firemen who haven't perished in the fires rush to the outskirts of the firestorm. They can't approach close enough to help victims because of the fire winds and the radiating heat. They can only rescue those who made it out.

No rescuers, no fire department in Boston or anywhere else in the world is prepared and equipped to handle an event like this. It's impossible to rescue so many victims at once. The scale of this disaster is so large and unprecedented that it can only be compared to a nuclear explosion.

The concentration of buildings makes everything worse and produces secondary fires so rapidly that emergency response teams are prevented from doing anything. The fires rage further, fueled by the ultra-hazardous liquefied natural gas still pouring from the tanker and evaporating from the lake of liquefied gas that has formed in the harbor.

Fifteen minutes after the blast, the LNG inferno



temperatures on the ground are extreme and reach 3,500 degrees Fahrenheit. The radiant heat produced by the flames burns unprotected bystanders to a crisp and sets buildings a half mile away aflame. The radiating heat ignites anchored and moored boats within 600 yards of the fire's edge. They blow up, one after another, a chain reaction that spills burning fuel on the water and spreads fires in every direction. The Coast Guard station located only 400 yards from the blast has disappeared in flames and smoke.

Paul, Michael, and Sean continue evacuating building after building. Before they let people out on the street, the officers tell the residents to wrap themselves up with wet sheets for protection against the heat. Dozens of sweltering silhouettes walk away like ghosts.

On the other side of the harbor channel and in the direction opposite from the wind, buildings and residences are spontaneously ignited by radiating and convective heat coming from the fires. One after another they burst into flames, from the waterfront up to Meridian Street and east toward Logan Airport. The fires have Dante's proportions and coalesce into one unimaginably huge firestorm.

After 30 minutes, the fires are spreading exponentially, fueled by burning gasoline from hundreds and hundreds of exploding cars and by burning debris, borne aloft by the hot gasses and carried downwind at more than a hundred miles an hour. Boston's old buildings and houses feed the expanding fires as every bit of combustible material, from exterior trim to interior furniture and fabric, turns into fuel. The close proximity of the burning buildings creates a situation where the fires are self-sustaining.

As airport authorities order the immediate evacuation of Logan International, the fire reaches the parking area. More than 500 cars catch fire. Their exploding gas tanks spread the inferno.

All commercial flights are re-routed to other airports. Pilots circling above the city report a three-mile-high column of dense black smoke and burning debris. Airport technicians start moving the airplanes at the north end of the runways to keep them as far as possible from the unbearable radiating heat.

After one hour, the inferno has turned into a horrific and unstoppable apocalyptic event. Three hundred city blocks within a four-square-mile area are burning simultaneously. Most people weren't able to escape. Five fire stations in downtown Boston are caught in the fire and destroyed. Three on the outskirts are evacuated. Twenty-five stations around Boston respond and converge on the fire but are overwhelmed by the size of the disaster.

Building after building, block after block, the fire is inexorably spreading. People who didn't evacuate their buildings previously realize the fire is moving closer. They decide it's time to go. But for many, it's too late. Once outside in the street, their clothes are set ablaze by the radiating heat. They start running, gesticulating wildly, with screeching and horrendous sounds, until they collapse dead.

On the water, firefighters can't do much either. A recently launched 70-foot, state-of-the-art fireboat was too close to the blast. Its bridge was blown away, instantly killing all the men onboard and leaving a burning wreck in the middle of the harbor. Another fireboat, a 45-foot vessel, converges on the burning lake of gas, but it can't get within range of its water cannons. Next to the enormous fires, the water cannons look like squirt guns. The fireboat is rerouted to Logan Airport to try and contain the fire in the terminals.

Cameras in news helicopters show the world an unrecognizable scene. East and North Boston are engulfed in a firestorm. The city is a burning, melting quagmire of horror.

After one and a half hours, the airport is on fire and the planes which hadn't been moved blow up, one after another. Jet-fuel explosions now seem insignificant events.

The scale and nature of the inferno makes it impossible for firefighters to extinguish anything, or to even approach the fringe of the fire. Because of the hundred-mile-an-hour torching winds, nothing and nobody can stop the firestorm until it burns itself out.

With the center of Boston in flames, the entire local government has vanished. City hall has burned to the ground, taking the mayor and his staff in the inferno. The Massachusetts State House is a smoldering ruin. The governor, every legislator, staff member and visitor, including two school groups, perished on this busy Monday morning. The Court House is gone.

Most local agencies, along with federal agencies, such as the FBI and EPA, no longer exist. There's no police headquarters, no command center, no communication network evaluate and organize the needs of the city. There's nothing authorities can do because there are no authorities anymore.

The emergency rescue teams and firefighters who did not perish in the firestorm are acting on their own professional initiative. They do what they can. A few police cruisers roam the streets, using their loudspeakers to communicate with ghost-like survivors. For the most part, people are left to themselves, disoriented with no information.

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As images of the inferno and the cataclysmic devastation circle the globe, other disturbing images surface in the Middle East. Thousands of Muslims in Pakistan, Lebanon, Libya, Jordan and Egypt celebrate and chant in the streets. They parade in their cars, honk their horns, wave Palestinian flags, display placards:

“To Hell with the great Satan,”

“Burn in Hell,”

“Down with America.”

Just like after 911 and every time a disaster hits the US, the Islamists rejoice.

Al Qaeda claims the attack on several Islamic websites. To support their claim, they show video footage of the harbor, filmed from a window. The video shows the tanker with its escort of police boats moving closer until the exact moment the LNG tanker is hit by an underwater explosion.

In the background, someone reads a message in Arabic:

“Whoever does not believe in Allah and His Messenger, we have prepared a Blazing Fire for the disbelievers. The unbelievers and pagans among the People of the Book shall burn forever in the fire of Hell. They are the vilest of all creatures. Allahu Akbar. Allahu Akbar. Allahu Akbar.”

ALLEVIATION

In America, the Muslim community watches the news in silence. They are laying low in fear of inflaming public sentiment by whatever they may say. They fear the public will no longer buy into their messages of “peace.”

After the death of the governor, Massachusetts’ lieutenant governor, who was visiting Washington, DC, on the day of the blast, is sworn into office. He declares a State of Emergency and requests the President order the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to respond to the disaster.

That night, the President of the United States, Lisa Henfield, addresses the stunned nation:

“My fellow Americans, at 10:15 this morning, our country suffered the most devastating attack in its history. Terrorists blew up a fully-loaded tanker, filled with liquid natural gas, in Boston Harbor. At present, it’s far too soon to estimate the number of lives lost or the amount of damage. All I can say with certainty is that the losses far exceed those of 9/11.

“The victims of the attack were pursuing their regular, peaceful, Monday-morning lives. The victims include children, parents, teachers, firemen, policemen, government workers, shop owners, businessmen and women, students, tourists, the young and the elderly, moms and dads, friends and neighbors.

“You’ve seen the horrific images on TV: the massive fire, the buildings collapsing, the roads buckling. You’ve seen the burned and broken bodies. These were people like you. People like me.

“As we mourn their tragic loss, we also remember their strength, their resolve, their courage. And, as we feel outrage and anger, I assure you America will retaliate with a force that is powerful, ferocious, and far more devastating in its impact than that which was released on us.

“Our nation will not be intimidated. Let the perpetrators understand that, no matter how divided Americans may seem when dealing with political issues, we stand as one when attacked. No effort will be spared. No strategy will be off limits. No weapon will go unused.

“The terrorists involved in the Boston attack were Arab Islamists. We believe four operatives carried out the suicide assault. One is in custody. One was killed by our security forces. Two died when they detonated the explosives in a mini-submarine that was beneath the tanker.

“It is reasonable to expect Al Qaeda was involved. This means there may be other operatives within our country. Rest assured that our intelligence and law enforcement agencies are on full alert and authorized to use any means at their disposal to prevent additional attacks.

“However, based on the methods used in previous attacks by Al Qaeda, it is also reasonable to expect that the mastermind behind the terrorist cell is hiding outside our borders, like the coward he is. Let this terrorist understand that boundaries and political agreements will not protect him. As they did with Osama bin Laden, our forces will find him. Justice will be swift, and it will extend to all who support and harbor him.

“Immediately following the attack, I ordered the military, as well as all appropriate agencies, to locate and destroy any and all individuals or groups involved.

“In addition, I ordered elements from all the emergency and response teams throughout our great country to go to Boston to assist the courageous first responders and citizen volunteers, who have put their lives on the line to save as many possible.

“Although our loss is huge, it cannot and will not diminish or destroy our spirit, our resolve, or our American way of life. No matter what the terrorists hoped to achieve by their attack, they have failed.

“I want to thank the members of Congress who have joined me in condemning this attack. I appreciate the support of the many world leaders who have expressed their condolences and offered assistance. Together, America and our friends and allies stand united in our belief that there is no place in this world for terrorism or those who perpetuate it.

“As you pray tonight for those who grieve, for those whose lives have been devastated, and for those who wonder if their lives will ever return to normalcy, I ask you to pray also for our heroic first responders, our military and our fellow citizens from every walk of life who will not be deterred by terrorism.

“Let us always remember what happened today. And let the terrorists never forget that America will always defend her freedom and the right to live in peace.

“Thank you. And God bless America.”

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American resiliency shows itself even before the President finishes speaking. In the face of gigantic expanding fires and countless victims, emergency professionals regroup, organize their response and set priorities. Victims will be rescued first. Then everyone in a two-mile-wide corridor around the burning area will be evacuated. Finally, the fires will be fought.

An incredible ballet of vehicles starts emerging out of the chaos and whirls around the burning city to evacuate people. Orchestrated by police cruisers, buses pick up frightened residents, ambulances rescue burn victims who are wandering in the streets, and military trucks collect dead bodies from the streets. Chinook helicopters land on rooftops and rescue thankful survivors.

Rescue teams in heat-protection suits enter buildings near the fires and check basements and elevators, looking for people to evacuate. They rush them out under protective sheets and embark them in armored vehicles.

They take victims so badly injured they can barely move or breathe and place them on stretchers and load them into helicopters.

The helicopters and an armada of ragtag rescue vehicles bring the rescuees to a bus terminal three miles west. Here, the victims are evaluated, treated, brought to nearby hospitals or released.

Private Citizens volunteer their cars, gas and driving skills to transport their neighbors. Helicopter owners assist in the recovery of the wounded and the evacuation of victims.

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After five hours, the two-mile-wide corridor around the burning city has been cleared of its residents.

Facing a burning area so vast with no operable fire hydrants, federal authorities decide to launch an unprecedented aerial firefighting and water-bombing on the fires. But it's a high-risk operation for the flight crews, who, in addition to the usual firefighting risks, have to fly through smoke and airborne debris.

Since no one believes anyone inside the fire zone could have survived the blaze, the authorities don't even consider the risk of hurting or killing anyone on the ground or inside burning buildings by dropping thousands of pounds of water.

A massive and never-before-seen joint effort between the military, federal and state agencies, and other firefighting organizations takes place. They mobilize aircraft and fly them to Boston.

Within hours, Hercules C-130s and Sea Stallion helicopters start landing at Hanscom Air Force Base in Middlesex, 15 miles from Boston. The planes are from Air Force, Marine and National Guard units as far away as California. Even the province of Quebec sends helicopters. While some of the planes transport supplies, most are specially equipped with reservoirs.

They fill up their tanks with water in minutes, and begin nonstop water drops on Boston. They start at Logan Airport's Terminals to reduce the fires and their lethal source of radiating heat so that the runways can be rendered safe for air operations.

After hundreds of sorties, the fires at the terminals are suppressed but the huge fuel tanks north of the airport have blown up and are spreading fires to buildings and residences west of the airport.

The edge of fires being 1 mile away from the runways, firefighting planes can now land without being affected by radiating heat and flying burning debris. FEMA reopens the airport for emergency crews and National Guard operations.

Firefighters take advantage of the proximity of the runways to the harbor channel to refill their tankers with seawater.

The helicopter news reports that at least 50 aircrafts are fighting the fires. The pilots have wildfire experience, but the Boston fires are totally different. Instead of vegetation on fire progressing in lines it is a global area made of buildings on fire. The pilots try to put out buildings on the edge of the fire zone in hopes of containing the blaze. Because of thermal updrafts, the planes fly higher than usual, making the task even more difficult.

Helicopters with water in buckets drop their water on one building at a time while large airplanes splash 10 buildings in a row.

Unfortunately, the heat is so intense that much of the water is vaporized on the walls before reaching the interior of the burning building.

The pilots decide to try a different tactic: instead of water, they drop massive amounts of foam at shorter intervals. The foam sticks to the building walls. It doesn't drain away like water.

The Hercules C-130s blanket the burning structures with foam, which slows the progress of the fires, but fails to suppress them.

A group commander on the ground targets a high-rise office engulfed in fire. The building acts like a fountain of fire, spreading flames all around. He orders a crew to fly at very low altitude and drop foam *through* the building, instead of on top of it.

The commander hopes the forward momentum of the 3,000 gallons of foam will penetrate the building, reach and extinguish the burning surfaces, sticking to them so the fire can't reignite.

Thirty minutes later, a C-130 comes in from the east at low altitude. It banks right and turns to line up with the high-rise. Dipping even lower, the pilot drops his load of foam right on target.

The foam bursts into the building and knocks down the fire. With the loss of weight, the plane gains altitude, but it veers over a sea of flames, catches a thermal updraft and is thrown violently upward, shaking wildly. The pilot corrects then overcorrects in a desperate attempt to stabilize the plane. Wings banking left and right, the C-130 suddenly nosedives into the harbor, disintegrating in a huge splash.

The crews on the ground are stunned. The commander is devastated. The commander decides they can't save any burning buildings. Their only option is to bomb and cool off the unburned buildings just to the outside of the fire line to prevent the inferno from spreading farther.

The new plan works. The fire's progress stalls then, after 20 hours of water-and-foam bombing, stops. There is hope. There is hope.

Two days after the attack, the fires inside the containment zone have burned out, but the heat radiating from the rubble and the falling ruins still make it impossible to enter the area. A five-by-three mile portion of the city is totally obliterated, incinerated beyond imagination. The center of Boston is a frightening sight of inconceivable desolation and destruction. A thick layer of ash covers everything. Spikes of ruined structures rise through the debris.

Even now, night still spreads a macabre haze over the city, with red-glowing fluorescence.

Around the perimeter of the blast zone, emergency teams and soldiers install huge pumps to spray water on the ruins, cooling off the rubble and stabilizing the ashes. This will enable recovery teams to enter the area.

When it's deemed safe, the first recovery team puts on their protective suits and breathing apparatus to assess the damage and evaluate what it will take to clean up. They look like astronauts walking on some distant, hellish planet.

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In Argentina, it has been two days since Hassan saw the explosion on Yusuf's camera uplink. Hassan posted the video on Islamic websites, along with Ahmed's and Abdullah's martyrdom messages.

Hassan hasn't received any message from Yusuf and it worries him. It's not normal. Yusuf should've gotten out of the area by now. The silence means that Yusuf, like Najhib, could've been caught. Or killed during the attack. It also means that, sooner or later, the Americans could very well come looking for him.

Now, that Hassan is alone and possibly marked for death, he becomes nervous, sloppy. He doesn't think straight. He packs up in a rush and leaves his house. He looks up in the sky to see if there are helicopters overhead, looking for him.

Hassan gets on his boat and crosses the river-border into Brazil. He goes to his bank and wires six million dollars to an account in Zurich.

From there, Hassan takes a taxi directly to the airport, where makes a fatal mistake. He books a direct flight to Zurich. Had he flown to the Middle East first, there would be no passenger manifest list because neither South America nor the Middle East shares passenger data with the US. But because of the existing protocol between the US and Europe, when Hassan books his flight to Zurich, his Argentinean name passes through the European security system then onto the US system. And CIA picks it up.

Two hours later Hassan is on a plane to Europe.

At the same time, Chance gets an alert on his computer screen. He immediately scrambles his assassination squad: the Taipan Team. He sends Susan and three other operatives to Zurich to pick up Hassan's trail.

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Three days after the blaze, the temperature of the rubble has decreased significantly. More than 10,000 regular military and National Guardsmen from around the nation have arrived in Boston to participate in every aspect of the emergency response, from medical care to law enforcement to debris removal.

Floyd and Sean enter the pit of hell with a team of FBI agents and police officers to help organize the recovery and sort the bodies. They all wear jumpsuits and filter-masks to protect them against exposure to burned debris and toxic ash, which most likely contained unknown contaminants and carcinogens.

Some of the searchers are sickened by the nightmarish sight and throw up.

Floyd walks off by himself so no one can see him crying. He feels a profound, gut-wrenching guilt. He knows he had a chance to prevent this devastation. And he knows that he failed.

Streets are only recognizable by the trail of torched-vehicle carcasses, with their cremated passengers inside. The bodies have dried to the size of small children.

Floyd walks through a one-foot-thick layer of ashes. Heaps of twisted, charred bodies are heaped amid piles of rubble. Inside of the ruins of buildings and houses are corpses of people who crouched to the ground and died in a desperate search for oxygen.

Most victims are burnt beyond recognition. Floyd reaches out to lift a body from the street and it crumbles into a pile of ashes.

In the subway, victims that were sucked up by the windstorm are mangled and jammed in the stairwells like dead leaves in a gutter.

There are no survivors inside the fire zone.

Rescue workers and officers are shocked by the terrifying sight and speak their hearts. An older police officer and Iraq war vet is beyond sorrow. He's pure anger, anger toward those responsible for this barbaric attack, and even angrier toward those who quietly supported Muslims extremists by doing nothing to prevent such an attack. He doesn't know Floyd, but he confronts him.

“Where is the fucking peace-loving Muslim community now? Where the hell are they now? Tell me! How long before they ever condemn this as an act of Muslim extremists? How long before they start pretending they had nothing to do with it? How long before all the politically-correct assholes start telling them it's OK. Don't worry about it? It's just some bad apples? Well, fuck them! Fuck them all!”

Nobody says a word. Floyd keeps quiet. They all know he's right.

The first estimates indicate a staggering number of dead and wounded: 80,000 people died or disappeared in the fire, and 150,000 are in need of immediate attention for severe burns.

FEMA turns the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center into a triage center and makeshift-medical facility. It's right outside the blast area. Helicopter landing pads and boat access to the harbor are set up. Dozens of helicopters and a small fleet of private boats transport the wounded.

Many broken and burned survivors arrive dazed or completely irrational. Most aren't even aware of their life-threatening injuries, particularly dehydration. Virtually all have lost love ones, along with everything else.

The National Guard sets up a command post in the Convention Center to process the thousands and thousands of survivors. They are cycled through triage and treatment. Victims in the worst shape are evacuated to nearby hospitals. Those in decent shape and who have lost their homes are hydrated and sent to Boston University. Hospitals in nearby cities are crowded with victims, crying and dying people. The US Navy is dispatches two hospital ships to Boston Harbor.

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Four days after the attack, FEMA officials hold a teleconference among all National Guard commanders and state representatives to list what they need and see who can provide what to help Boston. The states' mutual-aid pact bypasses the federal chain of command that led to the much-publicized infighting among the Louisiana governor, FEMA and the White House, after hurricane Katrina.

Requests for assistance from the acting governor of Massachusetts are distributed nationwide, sorted and assigned. Help pours in.

More than ever, Americans display the compassion and solidarity for which they are well known. From all over the

country, hundreds of doctors, nurses, health workers, and volunteers fly in to treat survivors. The same planes fly out victims and refugees to hospitals and shelters in other states. Cargo planes bring logistical supplies, machineries, generators, food and water.

At least 10,000 people, victims and volunteer workers, are housed on five cruise ships docked in Boston Harbor. More ships are on the way.

The National Guard distributes thousands of combat rations, also known as Meals Ready to Eat (MREs), to victims and volunteers. There is no shortage of food, blood or medical care. Blood drives are launched throughout the nation, but there are reports of confrontations between Americans and Muslims.

Many angry Americans threaten to walk out and boycott blood centers if they accept blood from Muslims. Some protesters display placards saying: “Muslims, we don’t want your poisoned blood.” To avoid possible shortages and any kind of controversy, the blood centers decline donations from people who look like Middle Eastern.

From all over the east coast, earth-moving equipment and heavy-duty vehicles are rolled onto cargo ships and barges, and brought to Boston.

Because of the unprecedented number of volunteers and their wide variety of skills, authorities can focus on search, rescue and life-saving. Donations pour in: equipment, clothes, toys, food, TVs, radios, electronics.

At least as important as the material help are the social workers providing counseling and moral support. These volunteers arrive in abundance: someone to talk to, a hand to hold and a friend for those who have lost everything.

Many Boston police officers and firefighters have died in the attack. Those who survived were left with no headquarters and no command center. Their communication network has been

wiped out so their radios no longer work. In order to fulfill their professional and personal commitments, these displaced public servants hook up with National Guard units to assist in the cleaning of the devastated zone.

Hundreds of front-wheel loaders, excavators, cranes and trucks move into the still-smoldering fire zone and slowly remove the rubble. Great care is taken because their work reveals hundreds and hundreds of bodies. Mortuary teams with refrigerated trucks have the gruesome task of recovering the dead. They set up a morgue at the cruise-line terminals, where they begin the long and painful process of trying to identify the victims.

The never-ending piles of debris, car wrecks and ashes are loaded on trucks and barges, and transported to a vast landfill north of Boston.

As cleaning teams remove debris, they uncover, half buried in the rubble, what looks like giant sarcophaguses. There were many banks in downtown Boston, and all that remains are the blackened vaults and safes. Virtually every bank manager vanished in the inferno, along with their keys, passwords and combinations. It will be a long time before anyone can open the vaults and safes, and assess if anything more than smoke inside.

A terrible smell has spread all over the city, and a blanket of smoke now extends out nearly 300 miles. Many residents, young and old, fall ill and are brought to the medical centers, with lung and throat issues. Many rescue workers develop impaired-lung functions.

Rumors run wild with speculation that the terrorists' bomb contained poisons that it released into the air.

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In Zurich, Susan's team has picked up Hassan's trail. He is running from bank to bank, moving money from Zurich to a bank account in Dubai. The team is able to follow the money

trail; they obtain an address in Jordan.

Hassan has more than enough money to retire and have a good life, but CIA is not going to let it happen. The team tries to set up a hit, but Hassan flies to Jordan before everything is in place.

The CIA director requests the Mossad's cooperation; he wants them to find him in Jordan and kill him. The Israelis are not difficult to convince. They've been looking for Hassan for years.

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The day after the attack, the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE), the American Stock Exchange (AMEX), and NASDAQ did not open and remain closed until further notice to avoid a panic and the subsequent economic catastrophe.

North American Gas, the company that owns the LNG plant in Boston, fears its stocks will plunge because of the attack and because federal authorities issued an order prohibiting future deliveries of LNG to their marine terminal in Everett. The tankers will have to be redirected and offload their LNG at an existing offshore terminal, 18 miles out to sea.

Nonetheless, the economy is hit hard. No amount will ever cover the value of the lives lost, but early estimates of property losses and lost production of goods and services are expected to exceed \$500 billion. The losses are comparable to wartime losses. Some 400 city blocks in the center of Boston, including government buildings, have been reduced to ashes. The infrastructure is severely damaged. Even the prison was destroyed, taking with it the lives of 800 hundred inmates and 200 staff.

The costs are astronomical and most of them are insured. The insurance industry will be unable to meet its obligations and will most likely declare bankruptcy in order to escape them. Some of claims they are looking at include: the loss of lives, the

loss of buildings, the loss of civilian aircraft caught in the airport fire; the loss of the firefighting C-130; the loss of the US Coast Guard vessels, fireboats and other utility vessels; the loss of the tanker and its cargo of LNG; the damages to the subway system; the flooded tunnels; thousands of vehicles.

The local economy has ceased to exist. The federal government is providing billions of dollars in immediate assistance to what's left of the government of Boston for clean up and reconstruction.

The attack destroyed countless small businesses, but unlike after natural disasters where Small Business Administration provides assistance with grants and Economic Injury Disaster Loans, there is no help needed for Boston's dead, no need to build homes for the vanished, no need to relocate businesses that have gone up in flames, along with their employees, managers and owners. The center of Boston is a big black hole, a void where the sound and bustle of human life, of all that's human and wonderful have been sucked in.

Najhib is in solitary confinement in a secret cell inside a US Army Fort near Washington, DC. He received medical aid and is recovering from his injuries. The rest of his fingers have been amputated. He will never be released, ever.

Najhib knows something happened because of the looks on the faces of the guards, and also because investigators have replaced interrogators. Another indicator is that they are inquiring about his past and not about the future. It can only mean that the future has happened. It means his friends blew up the tanker.

Because he has been tortured, Najhib will be spared the death penalty, but the specter of Smith lurks around his cell and his mind. Although broken, he feels his mission has been accomplished. He is in peace. He feels he earned his straight path to heaven and he offers no resistance to questioning.

Every other day, Chance questions Najhib. Chance gives him small details about what happened as a bargain to get more from him. Najhib learned that Yusuf died in the attack, and that he is the only survivor of the cell.

Chance wants Hassan. He wants the mastermind. He does everything possible to convince Najhib to talk about how he was recruited, how he was trained, his contacts, his funding. The more Najhib talks, the more he is willing to talk on other matters, such as the details of Hassan's network. His information allows Chance to build a file so Chance can hunt Hassan.

Najhib tells Chance about the house in Argentina and Hassan's drug smuggling network between South America and Europe. He tells Chance that Hassan is probably not in Argentina anymore, and that, more likely, he is safe in Jordan.

Najhib gives Chance Hassan's phone number. It's a satellite phone number, and it's the same number than Captain Raoul Estevez gave him back in Columbia, so Najhib is not lying. With the number, the CIA will be able to pinpoint his position when he turns his phone on.

But Chance will never forget Najhib's victims, the people he brutally murdered for no reason. Once Chance gets everything he needs from the terrorist, he will send him to oblivion. Access to his Qur'an will be denied. The same goop made out of pork will be the only food served to him. With the years to come in solitary confinement, Najhib will forget his past and he will have no future. With no communication or information from the outside, the nothingness of the present will slowly drive him to insanity.

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Four days into his onsite investigation and the continual discovery of hundreds of dead bodies, Floyd is flown to Washington, DC, and hospitalized for depression. In addition to the unknown dead, Floyd learned that two of his friends died in

the blast. George, who he called just before the attack, was found dead in his charred car, with his wife and two children. John died in his office building. Chubs made it out after he received the call from George. Although he survived, he's devastated.

Floyd knew George's family; he feels a terrible loss and bears the weight of formidable guilt. He will miss John and his joviality tremendously. His Boston friends were like brothers to him.

Floyd turns in his resignation but the Bureau won't let him go. They insist he complete his investigation. Homeland Security wants to know exactly what happened and who is responsible.

There are conflicting opinions about how the bombing came to be successful. One thing known for certain is that the lack of cooperation between agencies helped enabled the attackers. The Bureau opposed torture and Najhib was in their custody. When Kathy Cormack eventually gave the OK, it was too late.

By the time the terrorist finally gave up his secrets under Smith's hammer and Susan's electric jolts, the attack was in already in progress. Nobody could stop it. Hesitation and doubt were the culprits and Floyd was caught right in between.

THE FRACTURE

One week after the terrorist attack, images of the devastation are still shown on the media like an endless nightmare. Aerial footage shows the cleanup crews slowly progressing through the fuming ruins of the city. It looks like a never-ending story, a continuation of the attacks on the World Trade Center: same uniforms, same faces dirtied by ashes, same horror in the eyes. But as time passes, it becomes clear the effect of the bombing of Boston is different than what occurred after the September 11 attack. Shock and sadness are slowly being replaced with visceral anger.

The words *Muslim*, *Islam*, and *Allahu Akbar* create revulsion. The American people could deal with the lone wolves, the abortion clinic bombers and the Timothy McVeigh's, like they did in earlier times with the Ku Klux Klan, the racists and other domestic extremists.

But these four words, *Muslim*, *Islam*, and *Allahu Akbar*, represent something alien. Islamic rules and standards had always been perceived as awkward and fundamentally irreconcilable with the traditional American values. But they had been tolerated, if not accepted, for reasons of equality and civil rights. People now feel as though an alien body has imbedded itself in the country. Not only does it not contribute anything to our culture, it is now turning into a monster.

During the past ten years, Americans have lived at the "elevated" terror-alert level. Somehow they were almost expecting another terror attack. But nobody anticipated something of this magnitude. People are outraged and, no matter where they live, they take the attack personally. They feel as though someone allowed intruders to break into their own home, kill everybody inside and burn the house to the ground. People are saying that, ten years after 9/11, nothing has changed. Things

just got worse. It's not just a couple of towers that went down, this time it was an entire city. And it's not a natural disaster like hurricane Katrina. It's destruction brought by Muslims...again.

People blame the attack on political correctness and on the leaders of the country for letting this happen. If 9/11 was a wakeup call, this attack is a wakeup call with a vengeance. The anger begins to reveal itself in public places, where people suspected of Middle Eastern origin or displaying Islamic features are avoided, or singled out and called out.

To make it worst, Arab officials all over the world, heads of state, ambassadors and religious leaders send messages of condolence and condemnation of the terrorist attack, but their messages provoke immediate negative reactions and total rejection. Americans feel insulted by the deceitful dual attitude. They see Muslims as wearing a mask: a face on the outside that pretends to preach peace, and, behind it, a hateful face that pushes for worldwide Islamic domination.

In the United States, the Muslim American Council (MAC), the leading Muslim lobby in the country, condemns the attack and calls upon Muslim Americans to come forward with their skills and resources to help alleviate the sufferings of people of Boston and their families. But now the message is seen as completely hypocritical. The Chairman of the American Anti-Defamation Alliance (AADA), Igor Livy, protests on TV and denounces the hypocrisy.

“Why does MAC always cry after a Muslim radical blows himself up and dismiss any connection of the terrorist with Islam, blaming it instead on the Muslim radical “misinterpretation” of the Qur'an, and does nothing to prevent it or condemn it before it happens?” he asks.

As a result of their growing anger, people refuse monetary donations, medical assistance, food, or shelter for victims from Muslim organizations.

Muslim leaders see that American people are far from being psychologically defeated and demoralized. Islamists desperately come forward to make statements on TV, trying to dissociate the bombers from Islam to avoid a backlash. However, they are aggressively challenged by reporters and audiences. No one believes them and, in the end, all the Muslim leaders can come up with are the usual empty words.

After a group of Muslims goes public with the claim that Muslim Americans are victims too, people respond by asking Muslims if they will need special rights and protection as well.

It doesn't take long before it actually happens. During an interview, Mustapha Sayed Alawi, the Chairman of MAC, call for restrictions on the freedom of speech and demand Muslims to be of special and privileged class that is beyond criticism.

He requests security and police protection for Muslim communities and himself against Islamophobes. He says he fears racist attacks. He claims Muslims are targeted by terror policies. Mustapha demands the US Government issue an official declaration, recognizing the truth that Islam had nothing to do with the Boston attack.

The reporter conducting the interview is shocked.

"Nothing to do?" the reporter asks. "How can you say that? We saw the tapes. Everyone did. The terrorists used the preaching of Islam to justify their attack. Those terrorists didn't blow up Boston chanting the Lord's Prayer. They were chanting Allahu Akbar."

"No" Ahmed Sayed responds. "The attack has nothing to do with Islam, in the same way a US soldier raping an Iraqi girl does not make America guilty of the act. That's why I am asking for more rights to speak for Islam. I want to share the Islamic faith with those who are the wrong side, and explain why we should petition to limit freedom of speech because it is a contributing factor for hate speech against Muslims."

The reporter is outraged. “*Those* who are on the wrong side? *Who* is on the wrong side? Do you mean *every non-Muslim?*”

Ahmed responds: “Ohhh, you see. Your question is hate speech. If you are going to distort what I say, I can’t stop you. It’s a free country. Have a nice day.” And the cleric just walks out of the room.

The more Muslim spokesmen like Mustapha Sayed talk, the more they fuel the general resentment against Muslims communities. People are accusing Muslim Americans to be a fifth column.

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From his hospital bed, Floyd watches the news. Imams and Muslim officials deliver inflammatory speeches to rejoicing crowds in Lebanon, while burning American flags. Floyd turns up the volume so he can hear an Imam in the middle of a sermon:

“...Have no mercy on the Jews and the Americans who support them. Fight them. Kill them. Wherever you are, kill them and those who stand by them. They are all in one trench against the Arabs and the Muslims.

“The more you attack them, the quicker you ruin them. When people fear America is going to be destroyed then people will dump the dollar, buy gold or Euros, and the US economy will go down the drain. When America is bankrupt, they cannot support the Jews. The Jews are the terrorists. They should be slaughtered. They should be murdered. Such is the word of Allah.”

Nauseated by what he sees, Floyd switches channels, only to find another sermon. This one is being delivered by Sheikh Abdul Salam from a mosque in Gaza, with subtitles in English:

“Allah is almighty. Our holy warriors have unleashed hell’s fire on America. We must prepare the ground for the army of Allah, which is coming, according to divine predetermination.



We must prepare a foothold for them. Allah willing, this unjust state, Israel, will be erased. This unjust state, the United States, will be erased. This unjust state, Britain, will be erased. Blessings to whoever wages Jihad for the sake of Allah. Blessings to whoever raids for the sake of Allah. Blessings to whoever puts a belt of explosives on his body or on his son's body and plunges into the midst of the unbelievers, crying 'Allahu Akbar.' Praise to Allah. There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is His messenger."

The call to war is all over the news. Floyd thinks this would not be the case had he caught the terrorists in time. He feels he screwed up. He had the intel. He had a suspect. He had picture ID of Ahmed and Yusuf. But it didn't help him catch them because they were ghosts. The terrorists lived in a warp zone, completely outside the normal world, where no law-enforcement officer had access to catch them.

Making things worse, Floyd had opposed Chance's desire to torture Najhib to make him divulge his secrets. This cost valuable time. When Chance started to torture the terrorist, it went for naught, because it was too late. Floyd is troubled. He has doubts. He doesn't know where he fits in anymore.

For years Floyd believed in fighting the war on terror. Now he realizes that terrorism is a tactic. A war on a tactic can have no other outcome but failure.

For the last ten years, Floyd believed sending US forces to the Middle East would rid the region of terrorists. This would mean that people in the states could live in safety, raise their families and have a prosperous life. Floyd lost his beliefs on December 5, when he saw an American city going up in flames, like in a doomsday movie.

A week after the suicide submarine attack, the "war on terror" is still ongoing, and it looks like the Muslim fanatics are winning. Floyd understands why people feel betrayed. Years of

diplomacy and billions of dollars spent on wars have not stopped the killers. How easy it was for them to sneak into the country and strike again.

Floyd sees the rising signs of alienation against Muslims. He sees people rejecting Muslims all over the US. Many people claim that Muslims have been taking advantage of the Constitution, using freedom of speech and the tenets of pluralism to implant their own standards and slowly change the foundation of the country.

Floyd sees the double standard, even in his hospital. Initially, he hadn't noticed, but this time as a nurse enters his room, he's struck by the fact that she's wearing long sleeves, while all the other doctors and nurses at the hospital wear short-sleeved uniforms.

Perplexed, Floyd says, "Nurse, please forgive my asking, but why are you wearing long sleeves when everybody else here is wearing short sleeves?"

The nurse looks embarrassed and responds, "Sir, in my religion, exposure of female skin between the wrist and the elbow is not allowed."

"And what religion is that?" asks Floyd.

"Islam, sir," she says.

"So...how can you wash your arms, if they are covered?" he asks.

"I only wash my hands, sir," she responds.

Floyd gets angry. He struggles to control himself. "You mean to tell me that you don't scrub your arms up to the elbow, like everyone else, because it hurts your feelings? But it's all right to expose *me* to your germs? Fine! I don't want to be treated by your dirty ass. Get the hell out of my room."

The nurse blushes and rushes out.

Chance catches the closing door and walks in.

"Hello, young man. Am I interrupting something? I'm

just checking on you. How are you?”

Floyd switches off the TV and responds, “Hey, mystery man! What a surprise.”

“What was going on with the nurse?” asks Chance. “I’ve never heard you talk like that before.”

“Pisses me off, Chance. Seems like there’s a rule for everybody and a rule for Muslims?” Floyd says.

“Exactly, buddy. Good. Now you get it.”

Chance briefs Floyd on the latest developments. He tells Floyd how the FBI and the CIA reconstructed the attack, how they acquired detailed information on all the terrorists involved. Chance tells Floyd the President is furious because the bombers came from Arab countries where, except for Syria, we have significant political, military and commercial relationships.

“Now, the President wants to strike and eradicate that scourge. She’s had it with this war, this Jihad that Islam has been waging against the rest of the world for 1,400 years. The President said that they attacked us because their subversive demographic conquest wasn’t going fast enough. They launched the attack on Boston to demoralize our people and push their agenda. I told her Muslims have been very successful in Europe so far. Bit by bit they’re taking over. She said she’d be damned if she was going to let that happen in the US.”

Floyd asks Chance if he could clarify “subversive demographic conquest.”

Chance says that he’s been warning the government for years about the Islamic tactic of slowly increasing the number of Muslims in a country until, ultimately, they become the majority...and the rulers.

He continues, “I told the President that once implanted, the Muslims bend the laws toward Sharia law. After a long and almost invisible process, the indigenous citizens lose their nation, their culture, their land, and their fundamental human rights...forever.

“And if that isn’t enough,” Chance says, “Muslim radicals in the Middle East are exploiting the Boston attack by calling for the destruction of America, physically and economically. So now we’re actually expecting more attacks. That, my friend, is why the President wants to send a strong, unmistakable message to the countries which harbor terrorists and promote Islam.

“Get better, amigo. Time to get back to work. We’re going to strike like never before and we’re going to need you.”

Chance says goodbye and leaves the room.

Floyd isn’t the only one watching TV. Across the US, people are astounded by the bearded men spewing their hatred. The Americans realize that it will never end: as long as Islam exists, there will be Islamic extremists. And with the extremists, comes their weapon of choice: suicide bombers. The time when many believed that Islam and radical Islam were two different things is gone. After Boston there is just Islam. Tolerance disappeared in the fire.

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With the government in Boston essentially non-functional, residents are beginning to feel they have no one to turn to express their anger and their concerns. Impressed as they are by the level of assistance they’re receiving, they’re questioning why they’ve been put in the position of needing aid in the first place. As a result, many are turning their anger directly at Muslims.

It’s not difficult to find Muslims in Boston. They meet at the “Mosque for the Praising of Allah.” The mosque survived the firestorm and now stands unscathed, 600 feet away from the edge of the burned-out area. It’s as though the mosque were a beacon of victory, celebrating the destruction of the city and its cathedral.

The Boston Cathedral, mother church of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston and the largest church in New England, is now a scorched ruin. What was once a majestic

example of the Gothic Revival has been reduced to nothing more than a pile of puddingstone, with the mosque standing in the background. For many residents, it's too much to ignore.

On this second Friday after the attack, the Imam of Boston preaches his morning sermon to hundreds of Muslims. He takes his usual stance against America and says, "Pick up the gun and the sword and do your job."

But this time, he forgets one of his own often-repeated warnings to the community. He forgets about the FBI "mosque crawlers" spying on Muslims. This morning an anonymous Boston resident snuck into the mosque and recorded the sermon. It was in Arabic so he didn't understand what the Imam was advocating.

However, after he left the mosque, the fake Muslim had the recording dubbed in English, with subtitles. When the amateur spy realizes the Imam is issuing a call to arms, he uploads the video on YouTube.

The sermon immediately goes viral and spreads throughout the nation. People in Boston are outraged and gather spontaneously. They march toward the mosque in protest of the Islamic terrorist attack and the insurrectional, treasonous sermon.

Inside the mosque, the Imam and other Muslim representatives work to barricade the windows and doors. They've found out their call to arms has been leaked and expect some sort of response from the locals.

Protesters, residents, and passersby chant slogans and wave placards as they head toward the mosque. One protester talks in front of a camera, reminding the reporter that a number of terrorist plots had originated from that very same mosque last year alone. The FBI thwarted one plot and arrested five radical Imams.

The protest is broadcast live nationwide. As part of her report, the reporter tells about the controversy which surrounded

the construction of the mosque a few years back. The mosque was built on land that the Mayor of Boston *gave* to the Muslims radicals.

When the reporter concludes, the picture is quite clear. The marchers are approaching a mosque, built with Boston taxpayer money, that became the terrorist plotting-center that now stands in front of a city destroyed by a Muslim terrorist attack.

As the protestors get closer to the mosque, police in full riot gear wait in line in front of the building. People start shouting and calling the police officers corrupt.

The reporter goes live and explains that Imams who are barricaded inside the mosque donated money to the police six months ago so that officers could be “taught” tolerance toward Islamists.

Cameras show the placards carried by protestors:

“Boston Police paid by Muslims”

“Mosque training camp for terrorists to kill Americans”

“Tolerance to Muslims leads to destruction”

People are mad and surge closer to the mosque. Suddenly, the police charge, swinging batons. They hit protesters in the legs and on their heads. They drag women by the hair. Throw men face down on the ground, cuff and arrest as many as possible.

More and more people join the protest. And as the police are about to be overwhelmed by the crowd, the National Guard sends in several hundred soldiers, trained in policing and crowd control.

CBS News broadcasts the very disturbing images of troops arresting American people in front of the mosque. The commentators say the people were arrested when trying to confront those they believed were responsible for the attack.

Throughout the United States people are mortified to watch the victims of the Boston attack being rounded up like

criminals, with the ruins of the city in the background. People from Boston are turning against US officials.

A rescue worker shouts into a camera, “It’s insane! America is upside down. Muslims invade us, destroy our cities, and get police protection? What’s going on?”

The police violence around the mosque trips a tipping point when the public opinion overwhelmingly condemns the police actions. Debates take place throughout the country. The Muslim community tries to defend itself. But as people become more informed and more critical, Muslim speakers get caught in their own contradictions.

Whenever there’s a debate, Muslims rant and denounce hate speech toward Islam. They claim they have always condemned acts of terrorism, but more and more YouTube videos are turning up and, when translated, Imams are caught on tape calling for Jihad. They also justify any and all attacks when they are against unbelievers, as written in the Qur’an.

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The *New York Times* publishes an interview with a member of the Muslim elite: Sheikh Abu Al Sami Sayyed from Beirut, Lebanon:

Reporter Lester Kahn: “Good evening, Sheikh Abu. In the light of the bombing that happened two weeks ago in Boston could you tell us how Muslims view such an attack on America?”

Sheikh Abu: “As Salam alaikum, all good Muslims think the same. The Muslims in America may behave differently from Muslims in the Middle East, but they are the same Muslims. They worship Allah. They study and recite the same Qur’an, which is the supreme and divine scripture that overrides and supersedes all the human rights and freedoms.

“The attack on Boston is tragic, but unfortunately it is the consequence of America trying to impose its domination on the rest of the world.”

Reporter Lester Kahn: “Was killing thousands and thousands of innocent civilians justifiable?”

Sheikh Abu: “Christians have been killing innocent Muslims for the last 200 years without any reason. Is your way of justifying your atrocities more valid than ours?”

“Americans may be casualties of war, but they are not innocent victims. Don’t fool yourself. Americans support their President, who wages war in Muslim countries and supports Israel’s killing our Palestinian brothers.

“It’s quite logical to defend Islamic military operations. Non-Muslims are guilty of not having accepted Islam. Therefore killing non-Muslims is not killing innocent people. Only Muslims are innocent, according to the Qur’an. If you accept this, it all becomes very logical. It was very logical for the Jihadists to attack Boston. Can you accept this?”

Reporter Lester Kahn: “Do you think all Muslims accept your logic?”

Sheikh Abu: “It’s not my logic. It’s the word of God in the Qur’an. No Muslims are allowed to question anything in the Qur’an or to oppose an Imam. If they side with non-Muslims against Muslims then they are not Muslims. Of course, they keep their beliefs quiet in America so they don’t get arrested or deported. But at the end of the day, good Muslims live all their lives praying to Allah, above all other things. They pray to win his favors for an afterlife in Heaven.”

Reporter Lester Kahn: “Do you think the Muslim communities enable terrorism because they don’t criticize radical Islamism?”

Sheikh Abu: “Muslims are not at liberty to enable anything, Islam means submission. Even if they are American citizens, it doesn’t matter. They are Muslim before being Americans.

“Have you ever seen an Islamic peace movement? No.



Because resistance is part of our holy war. The French resistance during WWII was called terrorist by the Germans. And yet they helped free their country. Our militants are doing the exact same thing. You call it terrorism because you are the aggressor. Some Muslims may at times reject or condemn our Jihad, but if they do so, then they are not good Muslims.

“But to respond to your question, good Muslims don’t enable terrorism because Jihad is not terrorism. It is the struggle of insurgents who want to free their land. Muslims in America not only accept terrorism, but support it. However, it is part of our strategy to not show this support. Muslims may lie to hide their support because a Muslim is allowed to lie when it is to protect himself from his enemy.”

Reporter Lester Kahn: “Do you think extremists resort to violence because Islam has lost most of the major political debates in contemporary life, and is in retreat on most core issues of Islamic political, economic and social practice?”

Sheikh Abu: “Debates are useless, unless exploited to preach the Qur’an. In this case, it works. The number of Muslim countries is increasing. The degree of Islamization in Western countries is increasing. Muslim influence is increasing. Muslim control of the world’s economy is increasing. The number of mosques and madrassas being built and attended around the world is increasing. If non-believers understood there is only one way and it is Sharia, then there would not be any violence.”

Reporter Lester Kahn: “You want the entire world to be under Sharia law?”

Sheikh Abu: “Democracies have failed. Sharia is the law of God. How can you reject it? Islam isn’t yet equal in power and influence in America to that of other faiths, but it will become dominant. The Qur’an, the sacred Muslim book of scripture, should be the highest authority in the world. Islam should be the only accepted religion on Earth.”

Reporter Lester Kahn: “How do you justify a suicide attack? Aren’t they forbidden in the Qur’an?”

Sheikh Abu: “Yes, the Qur’an forbids suicide, of course. But a suicide bomber is not committing suicide when his act is part of a martyrdom military operation. During your wars, many American soldiers fought to the death, knowing they were going to die. This was not considered suicide by your standards. It is the same with our warriors. Martyrdom is not suicide. It is justifiable by the Qur’an.”

Reporter Lester Kahn: “Thank you, Sheikh Abu.”

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Throughout the United States, the rejection of anything Muslim is growing exponentially. Spontaneous attacks become commonplace. Groups of people attack mosques with sledge hammers and baseball bats. They burst through the doors and, once inside, destroy everything. They beat up any Muslims they find hiding within. The assaults stop only when police-car sirens announce the arrival of the authorities. The attackers flee before the police can catch them.

The attacks are turning into a nationwide anti-Islamic wave. Social media and news reports fuel more attacks and give ideas to those who had not yet thought to join in.

There are so many attacks that the police are overwhelmed and their forces are monopolized by their attempts to guard mosques, and protect and escort Muslims. The fact that police are now protecting Muslims fuels even more anger. The anti-Muslim wave escalates to the point that the first Muslim dies at the hands of an angry mob.

The death occurs in Texas. A group, made up mostly of Latinos, chases Ibrahim Al Sultan, the Imam of the local mosque. Having lost a sandal jumping out the window of his burning mosque, Ibrahim runs with his other sandal flopping loosely around his ankle, tripping over his long gown. It’s the worst

possible attire when running for his life. It's a just a matter of seconds before he trips and falls headfirst on the curb, smashing his teeth.

The Mexicans catch him. One of them shouts something in Spanish and pulls a Bowie knife out of his boot. He grabs Ibrahim and plunges the blade into his side, right up to the guard. The cleric collapses, coughing blood and wheezing. He dies minutes later, drowning in his blood. The Mexicans run away, covered by the smoke coming out of the mosque.

The evening news reports the event nationwide. The attack was caught on surveillance cameras. People cheer in their living rooms as they watch the video. Later that night, six mosques throughout the country are set on fire in celebration.

An unexpected consequence of increased police protection for Muslims is that crime rates skyrocket. Once criminals realize that the police are occupied protecting Muslims and chasing anti-Muslims, they decide to take to the streets to sell their drugs and stolen goods, and to rob citizens and banks.

Wherever police officers are diverted to the protection of Muslims, chaos ensues. But even as the thugs realize that the police have been reassigned to Muslim neighborhoods, potential victims realize the same thing. Locals start taking up arms. They stock up on guns and ammo, and get ready to protect themselves. Many confrontations with hoodlums end violently. With no cops around to maintain order and peace, ordinary citizens execute criminals on the spot. Inevitably, Muslims caught without police protection receive the same fate.

Fire departments are overwhelmed with calls, not only for burning mosques but also for residences where Muslim figures are living and hiding. In Chicago, saboteurs have blocked three fire stations with stolen trucks so firemen could not respond to alarms at a nearby torched mosque.

Nationwide, police arrest more and more people for assault and arson.

In Seattle, the mayor assigns police protection to a prominent Muslim personality, Mohammed Al Shafique, who claims he's received death threats. The American Anti-Defamation Alliance reacts by posting a video on YouTube that shows exactly who the mayor is protecting. In this video, Al Shafique is seen giving a conference in Arabic, advocating implementing Sharia law in the US. He explains how the laws in the US discriminate against pious and devoted Muslims, preventing them from conforming to the Qur'an in matters of polygamy, marriage with pre-pubescent girls and the disciplining of to their wives. Al Shafique makes his claims in such natural way that it seems as if his desires are absolutely normal. He insists Americans should make the effort to understand. The result is an explosion of rage and a huge increase in searches on YouTube for videos of Arab clerics, showing their true face.

It's not long before a former US Army sniper decides to go on a Muslim shooting spree. With his high-powered rifle, he roams the city, hunting for Muslims to kill. He's aided by social media on the Internet. Neighbors and people who live near Muslims post the addresses where Muslims live.

After a warm-up run, during which he guns down six Arabs, the former sniper decides to take on the Seattle mayor's Muslim favorite. He's not difficult to spot because of the police escort around him. Early in the morning, the sniper takes a position in a warehouse 700 yards away from the porch of Al Shafique's home. He sets up his 338 Lapua bolt-action rifle, ranges his scope and waits.

After almost two hours and two burritos, police officers appear in the street and talk into their radios, a sign that Al Shafique is coming out. The sniper takes a deep breath, exhales halfway and holds it, his finger on the trigger. He sees the Imam in his crosshair, walking down the hall. As soon as Al Shafique comes out on the porch, the sniper squeezes the trigger.

Like every other time, the sniper enjoys the recoil-slap of the rifle stock on his shoulder as the rifle fires. In his scope, the sniper sees the bullet blow off half of Al Shafique's face. He collapses on the ground, flips on side and dies in a pool of blood.

The police officers run for cover, trying to spot the shooter. The sniper calmly conceals his weapon in a makeshift cardboard box and leaves the building unnoticed, as if he was carrying some office materials.

The next day, Yahoo has to close the comments section on the article about the sniper because of the cheers and the huge numbers of thumbs up.

Other people throughout the country follow the sniper's example and start shooting Muslims, either from a distance or at point-blank range. The Muslim community is completely terrorized, and hides. Muslims can't go to the grocery store without being booed and yelled at. Most of the mosques have stopped their Friday service, as Muslims become targets when they emerge from the buildings.

Throughout America, the streets are jammed with huge crowds, protesting against Islam and against the government agencies which protects the Muslims. The country rejects every aspect of Islam. People demand Islam and the Qur'an be made illegal in the US.

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At the hospital, Floyd watches with disgust and profound guilt as the ideological war over Islam gradually plunges his country into chaos. He internalizes every sickening step down the road to hell. Suddenly, with a soft howl, he snaps. He rages. He tosses every piece of medical equipment against the wall, smashes every chair. When his room is totally demolished, he leaves the hospital.

Walking down the city street, oblivious of everyone and everything around him, Floyd has time to think. Damned for what

he did and damned for what he didn't do, Floyd can't cope with the attack and its consequences. He feels responsible not only for what happened, but also for the unthinking life he'd led that enabled its happening. His was a life of prefabricated politically-correct opinions, imposed goals, and vanity. Instead of analyzing and challenging the standards that were placed before him, he complacently accepted them. He sold out his life only to delay the inevitable. He bought into a system that eventually failed. When the explosion ripped through Boston, it ripped him apart as well. It made him realize his life had had no purpose.

Every time there's a hearing on the attack investigation and whether it was right or wrong to torture the terrorist, Floyd finds a small bit of solace in a quote from Bertrand Russell: "War does not determine who is right - only who is left."

All Floyd knows is that because he and the others debated for too long, trying to determine the moral implications of torture, 100,000 people didn't have the chance to be among those left after the attack.

Floyd realizes he can no longer live his old life. He wants to spend time with his family...or alone meditating. He jumps in a taxi, heads for the airport. He'll return to Puerto Rico, to his girlfriend and son. He'll live in each and every moment, savoring every experience, and teach his son to do the same.

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The President of the United States, Lisa Henfield, calls for a "ghost meeting" with her closest advisors to discuss the three immediate crises facing the United States: domestic unrest on the brink of chaos, oil production in the Middle East, and how to deal with countries where terrorism originates.

The ghost meeting takes place in a "white room," a totally insulated room where no radio waves or sounds can get in or out. President Henfield reminds everyone the ghost meeting is totally off the record. All surveillance cameras are shut off. There are

no recorders of any kind. Officially the meeting doesn't even exist.

Present are the Joint Chief of Staff Admiral Mike Roman; the CIA Director Victor Kempft, accompanied by Chance; the Chief of the Joint Special Force Command Charles Iacono; and Homeland Security Chief Barry Taylor.

The President opens with a statement regarding the domestic situation:

“Gentlemen, as you may be aware, the attack on Boston has led to a severe erosion of confidence in ‘the system.’ People have lost trust in their representatives. They feel as though the Constitution is being used by elected officials to serve their personal interests while ignoring the interests of those they were elected to serve. They also feel Muslims manipulate the Constitution and the Bill of Rights to elevate their way of life into a position which is superior to and has power over *our* way of life. Ultimately, the people feel they are the ones to suffer the consequences, and they are unsure who their enemy truly is.

“In order to preserve peace, the National Guard has been deployed into areas with large Muslim communities. Should these armed camps come under attack by anti-Islamists, the confrontation could escalate into guerilla warfare. And, frankly, the last thing I want to see is our National Guard siding with Muslims to shoot on American citizens.”

President Lisa believes the domestic situation is critical because there is an irreversible rift between Americans and Muslims. She explains the political landscape is grave. People want to amend the Constitution.

“Quite simply, the tenets of Islam can never be reconciled with our Constitution. The truth of the matter is, Muslims were never fully integrated into our country and will never be fully accepted by our people. They cannot mix. It's like oil and water. Only two percent of the population is Muslim, but this two

percent is poison. We are going to flush it out. It's a matter of survival.

“Islamists destroyed Boston and killed a 100,000 people. We will rid the country of that scourge.

“There's no need to change the Constitution. We will make Islam illegal.

“I will declare that Islam is not a religion. I will declare that it is a totalitarian political agenda, masquerading as religion in order to attack everything we stand for. Islam is at war against our Constitution.

“Every fundamental of Islam stands diametrically opposed to our Constitution.

“Islam opposes separation of church and state; the First Amendment of the Constitution requires it.

“Islam seeks to eradicate freedom of religion; the First Amendment defends it.

“Islam suppresses freedom of speech; the First Amendment guarantees it.

“Islam strips man of the right to trial by jury, due process, and freedom from self-incrimination; gentlemen, our founding fathers fought bled and died to preserve these rights, in our Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Amendments.

“Islam commands cruel and unusual punishments; our Eighth Amendment forbids them.

“Islam proclaims all men slaves to Allah and to Islamic leaders; our supreme law abolished slavery and involuntary servitude with the Fourteenth Amendment.

“When I look at what is happening in Europe, I see that instead of assimilating into a society, Islam seeks to establish a state-within-a-state, to insinuate Sharia law into the existing system of law and expand it by degrees until...until what? Until it consumes it?

“Islam is not a ‘religion;’ it is a hegemony whose ultimate

stated goal is to eradicate all other religions, and destroy all states and governments anywhere on the face of the earth which are opposed to Islam, including US.

“Islam is more dangerous than Nazism and Communism combined. We defeated Nazism in 15 years. Communism collapsed under its own contradictions after 70 years. But Islam has been around for 1,400 years and it has consumed innumerable nations, cultures, and civilizations.

“Islam is not compatible with our Constitution, period. We are not going to fight it; we are going to outlaw it. And make sure it never comes back...ever. Either Congress passes this law, or there won't be a Congress anymore. There are only 7,000,000 Muslims in America, and fewer than 3,000 mosques. If we rigorously enforce the new law, the problem will resolve itself by massive exodus, rejection of Islam, and conversion to Christianity.”

The President announces to her cabinet that she is going to send a strong message to the Muslim world. She will order an immediate stop to all financial aid to Arab countries. The billions of dollars saved will be used domestically and to rebuild Boston.

The President next addresses oil production in the Middle East. With hundreds of billions of barrels of light crude at stake, she doesn't want a disruption in oil production and shipments. She says that everyone knows how important oil is to our economy, but most Americans don't really care whether the people in Middle East enjoy political freedom or not.

“If the crisis spreads to the oil-producing countries, the oil supply may stop for the time being.

“Depending on how severe the oil shortages might be, whether real or perceived, it's possible the oil-hungry nations of the world could invade the Middle East to pump out the oil for their own good.

“As it stands right now, we pay too much money to the

Middle East for oil. They use their oil profits to fund the terrorists who attack us. Because of our dependence on oil, our economy and our security are at risk from Arab countries that control the oil. In the long term, we must discover and implement ways to cut our demand on foreign oil. In the short term, we must make sure oil will continue to flow, by whatever means necessary.”

Lisa Henfield is reluctant to burn US reserves if there is a disruption in oil production due to US military action against Arab countries.”

“Persian Gulf countries provide barely ten percent of the oil consumed domestically. But we still need to make sure we get that oil,” she says.

With China consuming increasingly large amounts of oil, the President doesn’t want a confrontation with China over oil, especially since it could possibly trigger a world war. If that were to occur, though, she expects Europe, Russia, and India would join whichever side could promise the most oil for their needs.

CIA Director Victor Kempft tells the President, “The Middle East will never unite to act as a single entity in a conflict with the US. Their self-interest will always supersede any mutual goals. Oil-producing Arab countries are already weakened by civil unrest. They fear Arab spring crossing their borders.

“Our best option is to let the current leaders die off, or eliminate them and deal with their successors. No one will shed tears for the tyrants. Embargoes or wars would only create famine. If starved, the people of Iran and other Muslim countries would assemble and attack Europe for food and resources.” Victor warns.

Admiral Roman says that America's forces are stretched well beyond the limit. Conventional military intervention to seize oil wells or to even protect them so they remain under the control of our allies is not an option.”

“I know,” the President says. “I know all too well.

Instead, I am going to make them an offer they can't refuse."

All the President's advisors look at her and at each other thinking.

Chance is the one who finally speaks. "An offer," he says, "and offer they can't refuse. Like in *The Godfather*?"

"Pretty much," she responds.

President Henfield moves on to the issue of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal. She knows she can't remove Islam from the United States and eliminate threats abroad, while an Islamic Pakistan has a nuclear arsenal. She sees the risk of those bombs falling into, or being given to, the wrong hands. Even worse they could be used by Pakistan against the US and its allies. Nuclear blackmail is also a possibility.

The President knows Pakistan has betrayed the US and lied numerous times before, extorting billions in aid from the West in support of its war against the Taliban, while informing them of US raids so they could get away.

The growing antipathy toward America in Pakistan and the celebrations after the bombing of Boston have angered the President. She doesn't trust the Pakistani military apparatus, especially the powerful Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) agency, which holds Islamist views and is sympathetic to the Afghan Taliban.

"How can we trust the Pakistan military when they oppose their own government's attempts to suppress Islamist organizations?" she asks. "One of the terrorists in the Boston attack came from Pakistan, which is another reason why we can't trust them, why we have to go after them."

It's been clear for quite a while where the President's talk is heading. The advisors have grim looks on their faces.

The President tells her advisers that the Joint Special Forces Command and the US Armed Forces have been secretly preparing to fly commandos into Pakistan to seize its nuclear

weapons. She says the Boston attack made such a preemptive strike more necessary than ever. Hopefully, casualties will be limited. She asks her advisors their opinions of the impact of such military action on the Arab world.

Most agree that because the Arab world has civil uprisings to deal with and has no love for Pakistan, there won't be any reaction other than protests. They believe Russia and China will initially fret and fume, and publically denounce such an action, but the last thing either wants is the possibility of nuclear warheads ending up with anti-Russia or anti-China forces.

One advisor says that China might take advantage of US aggression in Pakistan to attack and invade Taiwan.

“So be it!” responds the President. “And I am sure Russia will attack Chechnya to rid of their Muslims as well. No doubt we will look the other way.”

Next, President Henfield invites Chance to talk about Pakistan Nuclear arsenal.

Chance says. “We believe Pakistan has as many as 100 nuclear warheads in extremely well-guarded underground facilities. Fortunately, their ground-based air defenses are minimal. To maintain security, they don't store the weapons fully-assembled. Warheads, detonators and missiles are kept separately, but they're able to be married up fairly quickly in the event of a national crisis, such as a confrontation with India. The problem is that the multiple storage sites complicate a military operation. But we know the locations of all the warhead-storage sites.

“If we use Special Forces in a conventional covert attack, fighting would be intense and we will suffer casualties. The success of the mission will be determined by the amount and quality of the resistance. The Pakistanis have already earmarked army units, which will come to the aid of the guard units. To ensure a successful mission, we must attack utilizing unconventional weapons. I recommend going with Operation

Hephaestus. It's the only way to guarantee that we come away with the warheads. ”

Admiral Roman, Joint Chief of Staff, looks at Chance and the President in amazement. “I don't have to tell you this is the most terrifying option in our arsenal, Madam President. We've never used these weapons before. We're not even supposed to have them. The world will be shocked, but I doubt anyone will ever attack us again once they know what we have. There will be some diplomatic outrage, but I agree with Chance.”

The President smiles. The meeting's going the way she hoped it would. “And what about Syria, Chance? One of the bombers was Syrian,” she says. “Their government needs a lesson, one they won't forget.”

“Operation Capsicum,” says Chance, “provides the most benefit to the US, as well as the most deniability. If we were to attack with our armed forces, we would be seen as inflicting another tragedy on the world of Islam.

“Instead, Operation Capsicum targets the Syrian President and eliminates him. With no leader, the country will fall into chaos, and we can manipulate some opposition leaders in the right direction.

“Syria has long played a dangerous game, with both missile deployment and rearming Hezbollah. According to our intel, Hezbollah is sitting on 40,000 long, medium and short-range missiles. Since the 2006 Lebanon War, Syrian territory has served as a conduit for military material from Iran. Plunging Syria into chaos will provide a cover while we go after these guys, and it will distract them from attacking Israel with these weapons.”

“Arab countries are always ready to stab each other in the back,” Chance says. “Palestine, Libya, Iraq and Sudan have all been betrayed at one time or another. The betrayal of Syria as it slides into the abyss should come as no surprise.”

The President asks her staff, “Is there anything else we should do to eradicate terrorism? Disarmament of foreign powers is not sufficient. The Boston attack proved the components for weapons of mass destruction can be found discarded in our own country.

“Increasing homeland security isn’t sufficient because the terrorists always seem to find weaknesses or holes and exploit them.

“After every terrorist attempt on a commercial airplane, we increase security. Every time there’s an attack on the subway or in a public park, we increase security. 9/11 proved increasing airport security didn’t work. Coast Guard security around Boston Harbor didn’t work.

“The only credible solution is deterrence; it worked against the Soviets. It’s clear to me that we need to deliver a powerful message. Leaders of governments that support or harbor terrorists will be held individually responsible. They will be eliminated, like bin Laden was eliminated. If their successors act in the same way, they will be eliminated. Ultimately, they’ll think twice before they allow radicals to recruit and train suicide bombers in their countries. If they want to live, they’ll stop terrorism.

The President turns to Chance and asks, “Have you found the mastermind of the Boston attack?”

“Yes Madam. We know who he is, where he is, and we have a plan in place to terminate him.”

“Make sure you let me know when you succeed.”

President Henfield turns to Admiral Roman and says, “Admiral, proceed with Operation Hephaestus. Chance, proceed with Operation Capsicum.”

The President closes the ghost meeting.

Nationwide, the bad feelings against Muslims intensify. In Dover, Tennessee, a news crew filming a group of Muslims outside a mosque is assaulted by several men. The attackers throw the camera on the ground, smashing it into pieces. They beat up the reporters. One of the reporters drops unconscious. His fall triggers a frenzy of punches and kicks on his motionless body. The reporter bleeds profusely from the head and the mouth, as the aggressors continue the assault with their fists and feet.

From a distance, another reporter films the scene. Two police cruisers arrive. The assailants flee and take refuge inside the mosque.

The officers call for backup and quickly set up a perimeter around the mosque. The badly-beaten reporter is evacuated in an ambulance. The second reporter shows the police officers the footage of the assault. The police can clearly identify the assailants and they decide enter the mosque to apprehend the suspects.

As they approach the mosque, shots are fired through the door from the inside, nearly hitting the lead officer. The police officers draw their guns and open the doors. More shots are fired from inside the mosque. One officer gets shot in the leg and falls on the ground. The officers return fire.

Backup arrives and a massive shootout follows. The gunmen inside the mosque are using automatic rifles, AK-47s. The police match the firepower with their M16s.

A SWAT team storms the mosque, throwing in stun grenades. After a 10-minute battle, all guns go silent. The SWAT team comes out with three bloodied suspects in handcuffs. The team leader says there are five dead perpetrators inside.

When investigators search the mosque they find a significant armory inside: assault rifles and handguns and pamphlets calling for rebellion against the US. It's revealed that the mosque and the guns are all affiliated with a Muslim militia,

which has been operating for years under the complacent eyes of the authorities.

The cops already know about the militia. It's called the American United Islamic Front, and it's based on a 30-acre compound just outside town. It's fenced by barbed wire. A guarded entrance behind a metal gate blocks entry to outsiders. Security cameras surround the facility. Inside, sentries are on duty.

Now though, after this blatant attack, the police decide they can't ignore the militia any longer. They decide to shut it down.

On a national level, the same 180-degree shift in sentiment occurs. Muslims go from being protected by police to being targeted by law enforcement. Anyone who looks Middle Eastern or has a name that sounds Arabic or Muslim becomes a suspect. Profiling is endorsed. Anyone fitting the profile is besieged by anti-Muslim sentiment. They are immediately singled out by airport security.

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After a few days with his family, Floyd is called back to FBI headquarters in Washington. The change is remarkable. He's a different man.

Floyd reports to FBI Director Donny Joe Wilson. He says, "I'm done accepting the company line on faith, without challenging it. From now on, I've got to be convinced. I've got to believe in what I'm doing."

"Good," says Donny Joe Wilson, "because I'm promoting you to Deputy Director. And I've got a mission you can believe in. You're in charge of a new department to investigate, hunt and arrest a new breed of criminal: islamist conspirators, with no capital *I*."

Floyd's first action is to eliminate the Muslim militias throughout the country. Within days, task forces of FBI agents



and National Guardsmen, supported by armored vehicles, launch coordinated raids on 35 Muslim compounds and other suspicious enclaves. In most, they find well-armed Muslim militia, made up of a surprisingly high number of foreign militants, who were operating under the noses of federal and state law-enforcement for years. The raids are swift and extremely violent. Many radicals prefer to die as martyrs rather than to be taken alive. After a few hours of firefights, authorities crush these rebellious nests.

Local residents rejoice. “These guys had us scared,” a retired lady says. “They were always were firing their automatic weapons for target practice. And this is a family neighborhood. Children live here.”

A store manager continues, “We called the FBI but nothing was ever done.”

Another resident says, “They’ve been training for guerilla warfare for years. I’m surprised it took so long to stop them.”

Authorities round up thousands of Muslim radicals who are charged with seditious conspiracy—plotting plotting to levy war against the US—possessing a firearm during a crime of violence, possessing and teaching the use of explosives, and attempting to use a weapon of mass destruction: homemade bombs.

The Muslim leaders of these communities are arrested and charged with conspiracy to overthrow the government of the United States. Searches of the premises turn up documents and videos, indicating that Muslim groups were about to launch an Arab Spring in the US to support their rebellion.

Floyd’s swift actions terminate the spring.

A Muslim leader in shackles makes a brief statement to the press outside a courthouse: “The training camps are legitimate. Every Muslim man or woman has the right to learn how to defend himself against racists. We are victims of

discrimination and Islamophobia. Allahu Akbar!”

He’s led away by marshals.

Following these arrests, the US opens internment camps where the police confine 5,000 young Muslim men, considered high-risk. Muslims are expelled in mass from the US. Many resist and call for insurrection. They are immediately arrested.

The crackdown in the US ignites an outraged response from Muslim civil-rights groups. MAC is the first one to question the legitimacy of these detentions and to argue that civil rights protections have been violated.

Later the same night that MAC issues its statement, an unidentified commando force breaks into the MAC building and bombs their offices.

At the very same time, the leader of MAC, Mustapha Sayed Alawi rushes out of his house to get to his car and drive to the scene. He’s met by four masked and armed men. He’s beaten, handcuffed and forced to his knees. One of the assailants puts the barrel of his shotgun in his mouth and tells him, “Leave the country. There won’t be another warning.”

The other men torch his car and all flee. Mustapha collapses on the ground, completely terrified crying and puking all over.

Without police protection, attacks against Muslims skyrocket. Every night, small groups gather in the streets to retaliate against Muslims and their property. Some cars are stolen and rammed into mosques. Others are set on fire. Shops are vandalized.

In the Arab world, the attacks against Muslims are denounced by mass media and governments urge the US to stop the aggression.

In countries like Iraq and Pakistan, Muslim clerics call for armed counter-attacks and uprisings in the US and in Europe.

The aftermath of the attacks in the US trigger tensions in

other countries between Muslims and non-Muslims.

In London, mobs of young South Asian Muslims protest in front of the US Embassy. The protest is an excuse for them to take to the streets and spew their hatred against the system. They start breaking windows and then turn extremely violent, torching cars and looting local businesses.

In response, far-right anti-protesters pour into the streets, carrying anti-Muslim placards to provoke fights. Many carry guns under their coats.

The young South Asians attack the far-right activists with stones, bricks and anything else they can find. All hell breaks loose.

Outnumbered, the anti-protesters pull out pistols and shotguns, and open fire on the Muslim protesters. Nearly a hundred protesters are killed.

The event triggers more anti-Muslim marches all over Europe, including in Germany, France, and Denmark. Years of frustration with governments that have been favoring Muslims under the guise of political correctness and deep anti-Muslim sentiment combine to unleash brutal and violent attacks on Muslim communities. Firearms long-stored in attics make it into the streets in the hands of vigilante-type mobs, attacking Muslim neighborhoods.

Any Middle-Eastern-looking young male or anyone with a Muslim-sounding name becomes a target and is beaten or killed.

The police stay outside the areas in turmoil, and focus on keeping the fights from spreading into otherwise peaceful areas.

In a global cascade of events, numerous countries—including Canada, China, the United Kingdom, France, Russia, Germany, and India—freeze the bank accounts of businesses and individuals they suspect of having ties with terrorist groups. They also freeze funds they suspect might be funneled to insurrectional groups.

In Argentina, home of Hassan, thousands of Arabs are expelled on suspicion of terrorism. Their assets are frozen.

Russia attacks Chechnya.

The world is at war. World War III has begun: the Western world against Islam.

## **PAYBACK**

The President of the United States has given the go to Operation Hephaestus. With the combined participation of the UK, France and Israel, it's the largest covert operation ever.

President Lisa Henfield and her staff are in the war room at the Joint Special Force Command, watching on multiple screens the deployment of an armada of 200 aircraft, including stealth helicopters. Over 2,500 elite commandos are onboard.

The joint Special Forces under CIA command are called Nuclear Commandos. They include snatch-nuke squads from the US Special Forces and Navy SEALs, the British elite SAS, the French 13 RDP and the Israeli commandos' elite Unit 262.

Their orders are to take control of an estimated 100 nuclear warheads dispersed among 10 high-security Pakistani military bases and to secure them so they can be transported to a secret storage depot in New Mexico.

The Nuclear Commandos are accompanied by scientists from America's Nuclear Agency Search Team. Their job is to identify what to take and what to ignore.

Because the Pakistanis store their nuclear warheads and nuclear triggers separate from the bombs or missiles that will ultimately deliver them, the Nuclear Commandos have prepared to attack 10 different heavily-guarded bases.

It's a moonless night. The first waves of stealth Black Hawk helicopters fly close to the ground. Black Hawks fly more quietly and are harder to detect on radar than conventional helicopters. They are flown by "Night Stalkers," pilots specially trained for the most sensitive operations.

The Black Hawks enter Pakistani airspace without being detected. They are supported by multiple aircraft, including fighter jets and drones. The Air Force also has teams of combat search-and-rescue on standby, with large heavy-lift Chinook

helicopters. The Chinooks come from air bases in Afghanistan and from aircraft carriers in the Arabian Sea.

The helicopters use hilly terrain and nap-of-the-earth flight techniques to reach the bases, without appearing on radar and alerting the Pakistani military. The Pakistani military was trained and equipped by the US, so the commandos have an extensive knowledge of their defensive capabilities.

The US command watches live the activities on Pakistani air bases; everything is quiet. The command has this capability because when the US supplied F-16 Fighting Falcons to Pakistan, one of the conditions was that they would be kept at a Pakistani military base under 24-hour US surveillance.

Just outside Pakistani air space, above Afghanistan and the Arabian Sea, coalition surveillance planes monitor the attack, ready to scramble jet fighters in case Pakistanis jets take off.

Onboard the unmarked stealth helicopters, the commandos are equipped with assault rifles with suppressors, body armor, handguns and, for the first time, with a chemical-warfare hooded-suit and full-face gas masks. In addition, the pilots and navigators use night-vision goggles and infrared imagers.

In a perfectly coordinated assault, the helicopters arrive simultaneously above the 10 bases at 2:15 am. But instead of landing, they hover and spray a mist of the latest generation nerve agent novichok. The helicopter rotors drive the deadly gas downward.

On the ground, inside the fortified storage-sites, guards scramble and sound the alarm. In seconds, soldiers swarm out of their barracks, heavily-armed and searching the darkness for the attackers. As they emerge, the soldiers come into contact with the odorless nerve gas and are immediately affected. One breath is all it takes to inhale a lethal dose.

Within seconds the Pakistani guards are subject to profuse salivation and violent contractions. They curl up on the ground,

urinating and defecating uncontrollably. After a few minutes, they become paralyzed and die of asphyxiation.

The helicopters land behind the storage buildings without firing a single shot and drop the commandos.

The President authorized the chemical attack to avoid American casualties and to ensure the success of the nuke-snatch operation. It seems to be working. Any additional guards that straggle out of the bunkers are caught in the invisible gas cloud and fall in violent convulsions.

Inside the buildings, chaos reigns. The guards have no idea who or what they are facing. The commandos move quickly alongside the buildings. Carrying portable canisters, they spray nerve gas through broken windows and other openings to smoke the enemy in his hole.

Inside, the armed and well-equipped specially-selected and meticulously-trained Pakistani personnel of the Security Division are powerless and drop on the floor like flies as the deadly mist infiltrates the bunkers. Realizing they are under chemical attack, some Pakistani guards put on gas masks, but it's ineffective. The poison mist is so toxic that it kills through skin contact. A tiny droplet the size of a salt grain is enough to kill a man in minutes.

The commandos move inside and blow up the reinforced doors, one after another. They spray the poisonous gas ahead of them to clear their way.

The Pakistani armed forces outside the bases run away. Without chemical protection, they are unwilling to enter. All the sites have air defenses, but the men to arm them are either dead or have run for their lives.

After 15 minutes, the commandos reach the last line of elite Pakistani soldiers, who were charged with protecting the warhead components. They have already been exposed to the gas and are dying in horrific convulsions.

The second wave of helicopters, with more commandos and the scientists, lands inside the bases. The scientists move swiftly and join the first units in the warhead storage-rooms where they start preparing the warheads for transport. The other commandos stay outside to secure the area.

The second wave of helicopters has been detected and the Pakistani Air Force scrambles its F-16s. But immediately after the first wave of six Pakistani jet fighters takes off, their engines shut down and the pilots eject, moments before their planes crash in balls of fire that illuminate the night. In reaction, the Pakistani Air Force stops its air operations and grounds all airplanes to avoid total destruction of its aircraft. The airspace is now under total US control.

The Pakistanis had no idea their F-16s were equipped with a countermeasure engine-shutdown that was remotely activated by the high-altitude US patrol planes. The shutdown system was designed to prevent foreign air forces from using American planes against the US.

With clockwork precision, the Chinook helicopters, which were kept on standby on the ground in a deserted area on the other side of the border, land in the highly-toxic base to pick up the warheads.

After one hour, the commandos evacuate the base and leave behind non-kinetic weapons. Fifteen minutes later, these weapons fire bursts of high-energy microwaves in a bluish, gloomy light. The microwaves fry every electronic circuit on the base, including any nuclear triggers the scientists might have missed.

All helicopters fly to India to a decontamination compound that had been prepared in secrecy. After landing, huge showers douse the aircraft. The crews, commandos, scientists, every piece of equipment and the warheads are treated. All men walk through a decontaminating tent with showers of chemicals



before they can take off their suits, where they've been sweating for the last two hours. Doctors check every one of them for nerve agent exposure. Eight Navy SEALs get seizures caused by minor exposure and are immediately treated with Atropine, the counter-chemical agent.

After decontamination and cleanup, the nuclear warheads are reloaded on the Chinook helicopters. They take off and, two hours later, land on a US aircraft carrier in the Arabian Sea. The warheads are now secure and can be transported to the US.

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The world wakes up to the news that unidentified forces have attacked all Pakistani bases with chemical weapons and seized all the nuclear warheads. The entire Muslim world goes berserk. Pakistan screams war crime and Geneva Convention violation.

Pakistan goes before the UN to condemn the US, but the motion is vetoed by the US, UK and France. The US keeps silent during the hearing. The US representative neither denies nor claims US responsibility for the attack. China and Russia have nothing to say, which is part of a bargain that enables them to make certain moves within their countries, unchecked by the UN, the US and Europe.

Because of the ease with which the elite forces fooled the Pakistani air defense, the ease with which they snatched 100 nuclear warheads, and the ease with which CIA death squads are killing high-profile Muslim officials, the entire Arab world is scared of the US like never before. They view America as wounded beast, cornered, raging, ready to fight to death to defend itself. No one is going to try anything against the US, which has once again proven it is the most powerful country in the world and can inflict deadly strikes anywhere.

The US Embassies throughout the Muslim world are on high alert. All foreigners are scared, but the locals are even more

scared of what would happen if anyone touched an American citizen or if a crowd decided to put a US Embassy under siege.

The success of the nuke-snatch operation so deep inside Pakistani territory has eroded the Pakistani military's standing in the eyes of its own people. New questions are raised about those in power. It will not be long before people take to the streets and overthrow the current government.

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On the oil front, Russia and China discreetly acknowledge that the US is only looking to guarantee the status quo on oil production.

In a preemptive action and to deliver an obvious message to those responsible for oil production that oil output should remain as it was before the attack on Boston, the US Navy fires cruise missiles on the properties of some of the ministries of oil in the Middle East.

At 4:00 am, eight palaces in Saudi Arabia and in the UAE are blown apart, killing everybody inside, including the oil ministers who lived there. The message is clear: shut the oil valves or speculate on crude oil and you will be served a tomahawk for breakfast. As a result, oil prices fall to eighty dollars a barrel.

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That night the President of the United States addresses the nation: “My fellow citizens, you have no doubt seen on the news a number of military actions unfolding in the Middle East. Some are preemptive strikes. I will neither confirm nor deny the participation of our forces in these operations.

“However, let it be known that what happened in Boston will never happen again. I want to make it clear that any foreign government found liable for recruiting terrorists, training terrorists or channeling funds to terrorist groups will be subject to similar actions.

“If a radical Islamist, anywhere, buys even a box of matches without permission from his government, or accesses Islamist websites from a local network, it is the rulers of his country who will suffer the consequences, personally and painfully. From this point forward, I pass on to these rulers the responsibility for the war on terror. Let them henceforth find and deal with all future terrorists.

“To those responsible for and also to those who carried out the attack on Boston, I say this: we will hunt you down and kill you. I consider this an act of self-defense. I authorize the use of any means in our arsenal to eliminate specific high-level, belligerent Muslim leaders.

“I am launching Operation Cleanslate to find and punish these animals.”

~ ~ ~

From his office in Langley, Chance sends his operatives all over the world to seek out and eradicate the Islamist threat, once and for all. This time there are no Tomahawks, no stealth bombers and no F-15 bombing strikes. Instead, there are stealth assassination teams. They are silent. They are invisible and deadly. Their missions are to be carried out in such a way that the President and the country itself are provided with plausible deniability. All the teams carry the name of a poisonous snake.

At the moment, Chance is directing Mamba Team and its 15 commandos. They are onboard a nuclear attack-submarine in the Persian Gulf, 15 miles off the coast of the United Arab Emirates.

Right on schedule, the submarine surfaces under the cloak of night and releases the commandos in three large inflatable boats, with their gear, including weapons and explosives.

Their mission is to shut down Dubai, eliminate its ruler and deliver a message that communicates the wisdom of compliance with the President’s objectives to Dubai’s neighbors, Abu Dhabi and Bahrain.

The three Zodiacs leave the submarine and motor at full speed in the direction of Jebel Ali, where the main power plant is located.

After an hour, the commandos hit the beach just in front of the power plant. One man remains on the boat, turns around and returns to the sea to hide and wait. The commandos split into four teams of three men and go straight to the large fuel reservoirs. They all have their targets mapped, timed and designated. They are dressed in black jump suits and look like ninjas.

The commandos attach timer-triggered, half-pound explosive charges to every other tank, and on the containment wall that surrounds them, so that the burning fuel can spill through and spread the fires.

They run towards the building housing the gas turbines which power the huge alternators that produce the electricity for the Emirate. They storm inside the control room, and, at gunpoint, order the staff to drop their mobile phones and, if they want to live, to leave the plant immediately and run to the beach. One of the engineers triggers an alarm, which sounds throughout the plant, but it only adds to the panic of the employees.

The commandos put small explosive charges on the turbines, exit the building and continue on to the next one.

Employees from the other buildings hear the alarm and run out. As soon as they see the armed men in black, they join their colleagues in running to the beach.

As they run, the explosives on the reservoirs go off, igniting huge balls of fire. Burning fuel spills out and sloshes over to the adjacent reservoirs. Soon after, the explosive charges inside the building go off, destroying the turbines. After 10 minutes the whole facility is engulfed in flames. Most of the city of Dubai plunges into darkness. The power is out. It's 3:00 am. Most people are sleeping but ringing phones wake them up as

people near the power plant hear the explosions and start calling everywhere.

The commandos' plan takes them onto Sheikh Zayed Road, the main artery. There, they commandeer several vehicles. Some commandos speak Arabic to confuse the drivers, so they don't know where the commandos come from.

In the tiny Emirate, civilians are mostly expatriates. The commandos' priority is to avoid, at all cost, the loss of civilian lives. However, every uniform or local in white gown interfering is shot dead without questions.

At this early hour, the roads are still deserted. Two teams drive in the direction of the ruler's palace. The other teams speed toward the other power plant next to International City, just east outside Dubai.

There, they repeat the same scenario, only this time the staff has been warned and has evacuated the plant already. A few guards trying to stop the commandos are shot dead. The black-hooded men destroy fuel reservoirs, the containment walls and the turbines. Now, with the backup plant destroyed, the entire city is totally black. The only lights in the city come from the flames rising above the power plants.

The two teams at the palace face light resistance. One of the commandos spots a helicopter inside the compound, starting its engine. Fearing that the chopper will be used to evacuate the ruler, the commando grabs his 50-caliber rifle and blows apart its gas-turbine engine. Half of the helicopter is destroyed, but the crew escapes and runs in all directions, screaming. The men in black run inside and shoot anybody carrying a weapon. They bust open every single door to search the rooms. At gun point, they start gathering everybody the huge lobby.

They find the ruler of Dubai, Sheikh Al Matoumi, hiding behind the drapes in his suite. He is holding an Israeli UZI submachine gun, but he doesn't fire. Instead, he's trying to

control his bowels, as shit is dropping between his feet. After a slap in the face and a twist of his arm to disarm him, he's thrown on the floor and lands face first in his turd.

The commando says, "Oops. Sorry. Didn't do it on purpose."

Al Matoumi begs the commandos to let him go. "Don't shoot. Don't shoot. Let me go. Why are you doing this?"

The lead commando says, "You're disgusting. Look at yourself."

The commando handcuffs him and takes him away.

The operatives find one of his sons, the heir Sheikh Hammoud, hidden under his bed. He is peeing on himself, trembling and begging for his life. He looks different from the pictures the commandos carry; his frail body shows the effects of years of drug addiction. They drag him outside and in front of his father.

The lead commando asks, "Does it run in the family to shit yourself and beg?"

Al Matoumi screams, "What do you want? Leave us alone. If you want money, I can give you some."

"Quiet, you fucking goat herder! We're here because one of the terrorists in the Boston attack was one of yours, an Emirati. You bred and trained the bastard."

"No. No! It was not me. I did not know him. Please, I have nothing to do with him. I'll give you his family. Take them," Al Matoumi whimpers.

"Let me finish, piece of shit. The money that the terrorists used, guess where it came from, huh?"

"I don't know. Not me. I had nothing to do with it."

"The money was funneled to the terrorists through Dubai, through *your* banking system. And something else, your terrorist was trained on frogman submersibles by the UAE military, right here in Abu Dhabi."

Then the Commando looks at Sheikh Hammoud and tells him, “Your father, the ruler Sheikh Al Matoumi, either looked the other way or let it happen. Either way, he is responsible. I hope you learn from that.”

The lead commando continues to lecture Al Matoumi and tells him that Dubai has been a financial platform for money laundering and terrorist funding for too damn long. He also tells him that he has always played a double game, helping the West on one side, harboring and supporting terrorists on the other.

Al Matoumi screams, “But look! Please! I am helping the US military. I host your Navy warship here.”

“Yeah, right. What a hypocrite. Pretending to support us while at the same time you open a back door to Iran, allowing illicit trades to sidestep the embargo.

“You are also responsible for the largest state-sponsored scam in the world. You ripped off banks and private investors with your real estate Ponzi scheme. You stole two hundred billion dollars and the victims have no recourse because of your corrupt justice system. Today, my friend, is payback.”

“No. No! NO!” screams Al Matoumi.

“Anyway, you will be the new ruler soon enough and you will behave. If you breed terrorists again, I will be back to kill you and the rest of your family. Harbor a terrorist again, you will die for it...like your father,” says the commando, as he looks at Hammoud.

The lead commando grabs the ruler by the hair and pushes him to his knees. He puts a gun to his head. The ruler screams and offers thirty million dollars to let him go. He cries and begs for his life. “I can make you rich beyond imagination. All of you. Just let me go. Say you did not find me. Please. I beg you. I have cash right here.”

The lead commando replies, “You have no honor. You should leave this world with dignity. You stink and you are a coward.”

The agent squeezes the trigger. The bullet rips through Al Matoumi's head. His body collapses backward, blood squirting out of his wound.

His son watches, as if hypnotized, terrified. He has been living in a gold castle, served, groomed, and now the brutal reality of his new life hits him hard.

Next, all four commando units converge on the airport. They destroy the generator with a gust of bullets.

They drive to the control tower and go up to the control room. There, they order the air-traffic controllers to exit immediately, warning them that any incoming planes will be shot down, and that only outbound planes evacuating the population will be allowed to fly.

The employees acknowledge the message and rush out. All of them are expatriates, foreigners employed by the Emirate. They couldn't care less about the control tower.

The commandos drop five pounds of C4 on the consoles and leave. After two minutes, the top level of the control tower explodes out into the sky.

The city wakes up in shock. With no electricity to run air conditioning, produce fresh water, pump gas into cars and broadcast phone communications, Dubai is put a halt. In a few hours, life and work will be unbearable in the Emirate because of the heat outside and the scorching sun. Dubai has no natural resources and relies solely on artificial life-support systems, which need power. With no power plant, those systems will shut down and expatriates will leave the Emirates. The city is down. Already many residents abandon their cars at the airport, planning to leave on the first planes available.

The four commando teams drive south and pass the artificial island of Palm Jebel Ali. They drive to the beach and call for the boats out at sea to pick them up.

From the beach, they spot a UAE Coast Guard patrol

boat. One of the commandos lies down, sets up his 50-caliber sniper-rifle and takes aim. His spotter calculates the range of the boat and after a few seconds the shooter pulls the trigger.

Inside the helm station, the skipper's head blows off. His body drops like a lump of flesh.

From the beach, the commando observes the Coast Guard turning away. "Good. They got the message."

The rubber boats arrive at the beach and the commandos jump in, then head off to their recovery point with the submarine.

Chance doesn't have to wait for the commandos report to know how the mission went. Breaking-news reports interrupt broadcasts all over the world:

"Unidentified assailants shut down Dubai and kill its ruler."

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Throughout America, people cheer. No one doubts that the US is behind this covert operation.

A week later, Chance launches operation capsicum. A plane takes off from Ankara in Turkey for a flight to Djibouti on the horn of Africa. On Syrian air traffic control monitors, the plane bears all the marks and transponder signals of a normal commercial flight.

The plane passes 35,000 feet above Lebanon, six miles from Syrian airspace.

Though, the plane appears to be a commercial flight, it's operated by the CIA. Chance is on board, giving his last instructions to his operatives. They are Triple S agents, members of Viper Team, a highly-specialized team of assassins.

The large door at the back of the airplane opens on the darkness of the night. Outside, it's fifty degrees below zero. Glowing spots on the ground indicate small towns, here and there. Four parachutists with thirty pounds of equipment strapped on their legs, walk to the edge of the open deck. They wear

helmets with integrated night-vision goggles and oxygen masks connected to small canisters on their sides. They carry nine-millimeter Heckler & Koch submachine guns with integrated suppressors, navigation boards with GPSs and radios.

The parachutists attach light sticks on their helmets, so they don't lose sight of each other. They are waiting for the green light. Between the engine rumbles and the roaring of the air outside, it's very noisy inside the plane. As the plane passes Baalbek, a much bigger city and well visible from above, the light over the deck turns from red to green.

Chance gives his team a thumbs up. They jump together into the black void and are caught in the wake of the plane. They spread their arms and legs, arch their bodies to stabilize their fall and after a few seconds pull the rip cords of their parachutes. Whomp! Their parachutes open and stop their 150-mph freefalls.

Dead silence. The operatives are suspended in their harnesses under their parachutes. They check their equipment and pull on the toggles on the end of steering lines attached to the trailing edge of the parachutes to turn and take a heading in the direction of the Syrian border. They form a line to fly together, with the leader in first position. He sets the travel course for a 25-mile insertion into Syria. They check their compasses and their GPSs. The four parachutists just made a HAHO, or high-altitude high-opening jump.

On Syrian radar, Chance's plane looks like a normal commercial flight and the parachutists are invisible. The high-altitude jump allows the operatives to enter Syria undetected. By opening their parachutes at high altitude instead of low altitude, no one can hear the loud noise when the parachute opens.

They wear insulated suits and gloves to protect themselves from the extreme cold. Underneath, they wear Arabic clothes so they can blend in the population after they touch ground. To look Middle Eastern, they've grown beards and are suntanned.

Through their goggles, the parachutists see the ground, as if it were daytime; the difference is that they see it in a two-tone color scale, made up of white and green.

The leader uses way points and earth marks to navigate. They change direction with the wind. They aim at the landing zone in crop fields, 25 miles from Damascus and 20 miles from the Lebanese border. There is barely any wind when the parachutists prepare for landing, they check their weapons just in case, but there's nobody around.

Twenty minutes after they jumped out of the airplane, they pull on the toggles to level off their parachutes and touch gently down. They crouch, look around. Everything is quiet. They remove their insulated jump suits and quickly dig a hole to bury their parachutes and harnesses.

Viper Team is now in enemy territory and operational. Their mission is to kill the President of Syria. They are untraceable. They have no passports. They don't exist.

Triple S agents—Sneak, Stage, Sink—are trained to enter and exit countries clandestinely. They stage a scenario, put the mark in the center and disappear. Their specialty is to kill their targets and make it look like an accident. Chance sent Triple S agents because Syria is a very difficult country in which to operate.

The Syrian government conducts intense physical and electronic surveillance of both Syrian citizens and foreign visitors. Personal possessions in hotel rooms are searched. Internet connections, telephones, and fax machines are monitored. Any encounter with a Syrian citizen can be subject to scrutiny by State Security. Loitering, photographing of facilities or behavior deemed suspicious may result in being arrested by security services.

Possession of weapons and specific-use electronic devices including GPS, short-wave or handheld radio equipment, or

similar devices is completely illegal.

One of the operatives speaks Arabic and they have Syrian money. A CIA agent from the embassy, already working in the country, has left a car parked in a nearby village for the operatives to pick up.

It's 3:20 am. The agents walk two miles to reach the village. They find the car per the plan, recover the key from a cache underneath, and drive off toward the capital.

At 03:55, they arrive at the residence of Oleg Staganovitch, a mechanic supervisor who works at the airport. Oleg isn't like any other mechanic. He's in charge of the presidential planes. Later this day, President Ahab flies in his private jet to meet with the Iranian leader.

Disguised as a uniformed police officer, one operative knocks on the door. A confused and half-asleep Russian man appears and lets the police officer enter. In a split move, the agent grabs Oleg by the neck and injects him with a powerful sedative with an automatic syringe. Oleg is instantly knocked out and falls asleep after 30 seconds.

The agent rushes to the bedroom and injects a terrified, screaming, naked girlfriend with the same dose of the powerful hypnotic. The injected drug also induces anterograde amnesia. When Oleg and his girlfriend wake up, they won't remember the recent events before they received the drug, who did it and what happened.

The three other agents get inside the residence to prepare the Oleg clones. One of the agents goes to Oleg's closet and grabs a set of his shirts and pants. The CIA file was complete with physical statistics and pictures of Oleg. Two silicone masks are ready to apply on two operative faces. After 30 minutes of makeup artistry, two agents look exactly like Oleg.

One clone and another agent stay in the apartment to monitor Oleg and his girlfriend. The clone's there to stand in for

Oleg in case someone shows up at the door.

The other clone takes Oleg's car and drives to the airport with the fourth secret agent. The agents have all the credentials and forged passes they'll need to access the airport and the special hangar where the presidential plane is parked.

Oleg's double drives up to the airport gate. The Syrian guard recognizes him and lets him enter. He drives farther to the hangar to another check point. It's very early in the morning at the end of the night shift. Everyone's tired. The guard doesn't even look at the pass and lets waves them on.

Oleg parks his car and walks inside the hangar, the other operative stays in the car and keeps watch.

One of the armed guards next to the plane nonchalantly asks Oleg what he's up to.

Oleg responds, "Routine check before the afternoon flight of his highness."

Oleg enters the plane and sits in the pilot's seat. He puts on rubber gloves and a protective mask. From the coffee mug he was holding, he pulls out a small bottle containing a clear liquid. He opens the bottle and, with a brush, he applies layers of the chemical on the pilot's control-column and on the head sets.

He repeats the operation on the co-pilot side. Then he moves on to the other headsets inside the cockpit, to make sure that any crewmember inside the plane will have their skin in direct contact with the chemical.

When done, Oleg removes the gloves and the mask. He leaves the airplane.

The two agents return to the apartment. They pick up the other operatives and leave. Oleg and his girlfriend are still sleeping.

The operatives drive east to the porous Syrian border with Iraq. Three hours later they sneak out of the country. They cross into Iraq and contact Chance with their satellite phone. The

agents inform him that the mission was a success.

“The food has been peppered. Capsicum is the flavor of the day,” says the team leader.

“The falcon has left its nest,” Chance responds, which means that the President Ahab’s plane has just taken off.

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Inside the plane, President Ahab relaxes in the salon and flirts with a Russian hostess, lifting her skirt and squeezing her butt. For the pilots and the engineer, it’s a routine flight. The chemical that was applied by the agent on the controls and headsets is a powerful transdermal psychedelic drug. It’s an elaborate form of LSD but incredibly more potent.

Totally unaware, the pilots introduce the drug into their blood streams by grabbing the controls with their hands and by having their ears in contact with the surface of the headsets.

After 20 minutes both pilots start having imaginary conversations. One of the pilots asks the engineer to turn up the music when, in fact, there’s no music at all in the plane.

They experience visual distortion and color changes. They become indifferent to their surroundings and start to maneuver the plane erratically, as if they were in an arcade game. One of the president’s security officers rushes to the cockpit and watches in horror as the crew goes nuts.

The co-pilot stands next to a small window on the side of fuselage. He’s struggling to open it. “The morning breeze on the beach is fantastic today,” he says. “Let’s take a deep breath. Then we can feed the birds.”

The officer grabs the pilot by his shirt and shakes him, screaming, “What the fuck are you doing? Are you insane?”

The pilot responds with a smile: “It’s cool, man,” he laughs. “Sing with me: di...di...da...da...di...oh... Don’t move. You have wonderful butterflies in your hair.”

“What the fuck are you talking about? What butterflies?”

The co-pilot jerks his head in time with an imaginary song. He sings something incomprehensible.

The engineer moves his arms up and down in the air. He is talking to colors, as if *blue* and *red* were people. “Listen, guys. Listen. Blue and Red are talking to me. They are so sweet.”

“What’s going on here?” screams the security officer, as the plane banks and spirals out of control.

Inside the cabin, panic rules. The President clings to his seat. His eyes are wide open. He knows he is on his way to his death and prays.

Two minutes later, the plane crashes and explodes in the mountains of Sanadaj in Iran.

Three hours later, a breaking-news report states that President Ahab died in a plane crash on his way to Teheran.

In Syria, the long-oppressed people chant and dance in the streets, celebrating the death of the tyrant. They see his death as a blessing from Allah. Rebellion sweeps the country.

Hamas leaders are stunned. In Iran, Hezbollah members are dumbfounded. They have all lost a powerful friend.

Chance is in Bagdad when he receives a satellite call from his agents. They are in Iraq at the extraction position.

Chance scrambles a helicopter and flies there to repatriate his agents. He lands in a cloud of dust in the middle of the desert, jumps out of the helicopter to greet his men. The operatives climb into the helicopter. It lifts off immediately.

Inside the cabin, the men look at each other with a spark in the eyes and a very small smile on the sides of their mouths. There’s no need for cocktail conversation. The mission is accomplished. So they take a nap.

Chance understands his men perfectly; he was once a Triple S agent himself. He enjoys a small, private laugh as he thinks of Oleg’s situation, but he doesn’t feel sorry for him. Oleg

will be in a bad place when the State Security officers question him about his morning inspection. And it will get worse when he tries to convince them that he was sleeping and that he never inspected the plane in the morning. The poor guy and his girlfriend are probably going to be raped and tortured to death for lying to the officers. After all, one should not work for tyrants.

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The world is at war, but it's not a conventional war with warplanes and troops. It's an ideological war, like when the West was at war against communism. Western countries fight Islam as a hegemonic ideology.

The world population turns against Islam in mass. The choice given to Muslims is to swear allegiance to the countries where they're living, renounce Islam, convert to Christianity or be deported. Millions of Muslims leave the West. Millions more abandon Islam.

Many countries that endured civil unrest and social problems for years because of the steep rise in Muslim immigration jump on the opportunity to deport in mass all foreigners of the Muslim faith.

In Europe, the huge amount of hate that accumulated for decades against Muslims explodes. The tension unleashes extreme violence.

This is especially true in the United Kingdom, where thousands of Muslims who tried to force their standards and Sharia law down the throats of UK citizens, find themselves at the end of the trajectories of flying bricks, stones, iron bars and bullets. Pakistanis and Bangladeshis in London are confronted by an angry and vengeful population. The archbishop who recommended that Sharia law should to be allowed in England was kidnapped by masked men and left naked, chained to a lamppost with a Pakistani flagpole up his ass.

There is a wave of assassinations of high-profile Arabs by



rogue veterans who target Middle Eastern guests in London's five-star hotels. The rich Middle Easterners who leave their silver Rolls-Royces and gold-plated Lamborghinis at valet parking are prime targets of lone shooters. When the snipers see a parking valet bringing an ultra-expensive car to the hotel entry, they take position and wait. Within a few minutes, the Arab owner shows up with his usual smirk on his face. As he turns to get into his car, he's greeted by a high-power bullet to the head.

The next day, the shooters read in the papers the resume of whomever they shot the day before. It doesn't take long before all high-profile Arabs fly out of the country in their private jets.

In this war, conventional troops are not involved. The only troops at work are Special Forces and other clandestine units who hunt and kill radical Islamists and Imams, wherever they may be.

Every week, Chance's agents make the headlines. The news reports assassinations by ninja commandos and freak accidents involving Arab personalities and alleged terrorists. Nobody claims or denies the attacks. When a Muslim or a civil-rights leader publicly accuses the US or the UK, he turns up dead a week later.

In the Middle East, leaders try to deal with domestic uprisings and the threat of dying in a weird accident or being shot dead, if their actions are perceived as being even slightly off the interest of the rest of the world, and America in particular.

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Taipan Team followed Hassan in Jordan but lost his trail. A few days later, the CIA located him in the resort city of Talabay on the Gulf of Aqaba by tracking his satellite phone from space, after Hassan made a call. Mossad secret agents combed the small town and found him living in a condominium. With this information, Chance set up a combined operation with the Mossad to kill him. Taipan Team is reinforced with Israeli

operatives. They all look Middle Eastern, tanned and bearded.

Hassan lives alone in a two-bedroom apartment on the sixth floor of a modern building, 200 yards from the marina. He's under surveillance 24/7 by Taipan Team.

Hassan's security detail includes two bodyguards who are always on the lookout, providing tight security and escorting him everywhere he goes. When Hassan is home, they live in the next-door apartment. They carry pistols and submachine guns to protect Hassan, who has become a high-profile figure.

Hassan is a sexual deviant, a dirty old man who likes to prey on young girls. In South America, he had to hide his pedophilia because it was illegal and considered vile. Back in a Muslim country, he can indulge himself and have sex with young Muslim girls, as there are no laws to prevent statutory rape of underage girls. Hassan takes advantage of the fact that, under Islamic law, a girl is considered an adult when she hits puberty.

Hassan found through a taxi driver the address in Aqaba of a good provider of young girls, 12 miles north of Talabay. To check him out, he sends out one of his bodyguards and asks him to find a young girl. After texting each other and sending pictures of girls, Hassan agrees on a little girl. She's just turned 13. Hassan makes an arrangement with Zaida, the woman who runs the agency, so she can bring the girl to his apartment.

"No problem. I'll bring her myself tomorrow," Zaida says.

The next day, Zaida and a little girl, both covered under veils, head to toe, are driven by an Indian chauffeur to Hassan's condominium. They arrive at the building and Janeer, the driver, stops at the entrance.

One of the bodyguards is waiting outside and opens the doors to let the woman and the young girl out of the car. Janeer drives around the building to park the car and wait. Outside the building, Taipan operatives are on alert and watching the whole scene.

The bodyguard accompanies the woman and the little girl to the elevator. They all go up to the sixth floor where Hassan's apartment is situated. The elevator doors open.

Zaida and the girl follow the bodyguard down the hallway. They squeeze past two workers using a ladder to replace electric bulbs and panels in the ceiling. The second bodyguard stands in front Hassan's door, holding a machinegun and watching the workers with a disdainful look. When he sees Zaida and the girl, he knocks on the door to announce them.

The door lock clicks and Hassan himself opens the door. When the little girl sees Hassan in the doorway, she starts screaming and struggles to keep from entering the apartment. She scares everybody. The workers look at the girl in shock. The woman hushes the girl. The bodyguards snarl at the woman, telling her to control her girl.

Hassan opens the door wide in an effort to get his prize out of the hallway before anyone sees her. "Shhhh. Shhhh. Come in! Come in! Hurry!"

Suddenly, the two workers on their ladders pull automatic pistols with silencers out of the ceiling panels. They aim at the bodyguards and, in less than two seconds...pop-pop...pop-pop... shoot the two goons dead. Double tap: one bullet in the head; one bullet in the heart. The silencers are so effective that the shell casings bouncing on the wood floor make more noise than the gunshots.

The two bodyguards bounce off the doorframe and fall into the apartment, keeping Hassan from shutting the door. The two workmen jump over the bodies and rush inside, chasing Hassan, who runs corner to corner, screaming like an animal caught in a trap.

Hassan squeals with a high-pitch sound. One of the workers punches him in the liver to quiet him down. Hassan collapses on the floor in pain, gasping for air.

The woman and the young girl grab the two dead bodies and pull them inside, leaving a trail of blood from the front door. The bodyguards bled profusely, but inside the apartment, so the pool of blood didn't spill out into the hall.

The building is almost empty. The little girl looks down the hallway: left then right, nothing, no movement. She ducks inside and closes the door. The woman and the girl remove their veils, but she is not a little girl, she is a MOSSAD agent, a short woman in disguise. She nods at her "mother."

Susan shakes her head to free her hair and looks at Hassan with a smile. She says, "I took care of your boy, Najhib. He told me a lot about you. He even helped me find you...so I can take care of you now."

Chance knew of the terrorist pervert's old habits and, in concert with Mossad operatives, posed as a provider of young girls. Ultimately, they managed to set up the trap to kill Hassan. The driver, the girl, the girl's agent, and the workers on the ladder, it was all Chance's fabrication, a death squad at its best.

Hassan is still on the floor, trying to catch his breath, holding his stomach. His eyes are wide open, black and terrified. He stares at Susan.

One of the men slaps Hassan's face and tells him to keep quiet. Then he grabs his ankles and zip ties them.

Susan grabs Hassan's head by the hair and says, "I brought you a souvenir from Boston. And it's not a little girl. Today you die in pain...pig!"

Susan puts a long industrial zip tie around his neck and jerks it so tight it buries itself in the skin.

Hassan reacts violently but he is not screaming anymore. His nostrils and his mouth are open wide and he makes gurgling noises as he fights to catch a breath.

Hassan tries to loosen the zip tie with his fingers, but it's inside a groove, deep in his skin. He can't get a grip.

The hit team left his hands free on purpose to let him struggle more and make him feel helpless, like his victims in Boston.

Hassan kicks with his feet, as though pushing on something that isn't there. He arches his body, shakes violently. His eyes pop out and turn red. His whole face is turning blue and expresses terror as he realizes death is near. He flops around on the floor like a fish, from his back to his front.

The hit team watches the monster die, as his body convulses with the last death spasms and a wheezing sound comes out of his throat. After five minutes, one of the operatives checks for a pulse then shoots Hassan in the head, just to make sure.

The other man collects Hassan's documents and his laptop for Intel and to find more targets to kill. Susan takes pictures of Hassan's dead body for the President.

She grabs her pistol, opens the door and checks the hallway. The hit team leaves the apartment. The women aren't wearing the veil this time to give them a different appearance when they exit the building. They go down the stairs and pass the door. They join Janeer, the driver, but they don't need the car. They all walk to the marina, where a 45-foot speedboat is waiting, engines running.

Chance is at the wheel. He greets his team.

They all jump in the boat and Chance speeds off in direction of Eilat, the Israeli city, 10 miles north on the other side of the Gulf of Aqaba.

Susan taps on Chance shoulder and says, "Mission accomplished, boss. The taipan has delivered his venom. The mastermind of the Boston attack is dead."

The wind lifts and twists her hair. Her face is peaceful, her eyes on the horizon.

In the US, the fissure between Americans and Muslims causes massive layoffs of Muslim employees. Employers justify these terminations of employment for economic reasons and never mention the employee's religion, which could lead to lawsuits from what is left of the Muslim rights organization.

Muslims can't go to the grocery store without hearing insults behind their backs. They can't take a bus or a subway without seeing everybody getting out, including the drivers. Travelers protest passively: they boycott transportation companies when Muslims are allowed to ride. People refuse to board airplanes when they see Middle Easterners among the passengers. The economic impact is significant, and it forces the companies to refuse certain passengers, under the guise of security concerns. As far the few lawsuits that make it to the courts are concerned, most juries find in favor of the defendants in less than an hour of deliberation.

As a consequence of the anti-Middle Eastern sentiment, Muslims are no longer able to find jobs. They live off government help for a while, but soon find themselves not only without any resources but confronted by deep hatred. Muslims flee the country in a mass exodus. Many others convert to Christianity or reject Islam.

With the economy already in bad shape and too many vacant houses on the market, many Muslims who bought real estate can't find a buyer and abandon their houses in their rush to leave the country.

For a majority of Muslims, the new world is a tragic human drama. They are viewed as a plague. They're torn between their faith and the cherished American life that is now denied to them. Many lived and prospered in the US after fleeing terribly corrupt and desperately poor countries, where they had little hope to make a comfortable life.

Deported to their country, they feel like they're traveling

back in time to a land they're not fit to live in anymore. They cry, they scream, they shout they have nothing to do with those extremists, that they've been taken hostage by radicals who used the religion for Jihad. The tragedy is many Muslim Americans are paying the price for passively supporting their Islamic brothers when they were in training to kill innocents in the name of Allah.

Now it's too late. There's no going back. A hundred thousand people died in a horrific inferno at the hands of extremists who used the Qur'an as justification for their attack. Why did it happen? Because the Muslim community never stood up to voice their opposition to their religious leaders. Because they never cleaned up their own house. Because they never got rid of their Islamist radicals themselves.

Friends, neighbors, retailers, employees, everyone tells them the same thing: "Too late. Too little. You should have publicly condemned the actions of your brothers before they attacked us."

"Why didn't you protest, like you did against anti-Muslim rallies or against someone who drew a cartoon of Muhammad?"

"It was your job, not ours, to strip-search Muslim extremists, watch them, harass and persecute them to such an extent that we never would have had to."

"You enabled Islamic terrorism because you never rejected it."

"Where are your peace movements?"

"Where is your Nobel peace prize?"

The Muslim community has the same response, Muslims all say they could never oppose an Imam because Islam does not allow it.

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A group of US senators led by Senator Bill Richardson introduces a bill to make it illegal to follow the Islamic moral

code. The Senators claim that adherence to Islam is prima facie evidence of an act in support of the overthrow of the US Government, through the abrogation, destruction, or violation of the US Constitution and the imposition of Sharia law on the American people. The bill makes it a felony punishable by 20 years in prison to knowingly act in furtherance of, or to support the adherence to, Islam. Senator Bill Richardson argues that some Muslims interpret Sharia law as a license to commit terrorist acts, while the silent Muslim majority allows it and indirectly funds it, and therefore is an accomplice.

“Muslims in America,” Senator Richardson says, “cannot follow the US Constitution and the Qur’an and be faithful to both. They must choose one or the other. In our society, there cannot be rules for Muslims and rules for everyone else.

“Islam is a political, militant and legal doctrine totally adverse to America values. The Qur’an contains numerous sayings, repeated in the book over and over again, which, based on religious tenets, promote disharmony, pedophilia, feelings of enmity, hatred and ill-will between different religious communities and incite people to commit violence and disturb public tranquility.

“The Qur’an depicts crimes committed by its founder, Muhammad, as acceptable actions. It contains doctrines which presently legitimize the criminal acts of pedophilia, assassination, the oppression of women by suppressing their human rights, the penalties of stoning and dismemberment, and the utilization of terror as a weapon of intimidation and control by Islam’s political fascist regime.”

Senator Richardson’s bill also decrees the practice of the Islamic rituals of foot-washing, nose blowing and prostrating prayer, either in public or at the place of work, unsanitary and illegal.

Since Islam is no longer a religion, Muslims can also be prosecuted as organized crime members under the RICO act.



The US imposes a complete halt to immigration from all countries where Sharia law is the law of the land, including Afghanistan, Iran, Nigeria, Pakistan, Palestinian National Authority, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, United Arab Emirates and Yemen. Muslims who try to immigrate to the US, utilizing any corrupt, immoral or deceptive means are forever barred from entry.

Throughout the US, mosques are seized and reassigned for other public purposes.

Islam becomes illegal in the US on the grounds that it is an insurrectional and foreign political system rather than a faith.

## EPILOG

Six months later, Floyd, Chubs and Chance stand on a beach, looking at a magnificent sunset. Overwhelmed by the intense emotion of the moment, none of the men can speak. Having walked out into the waves, they have water to their knees and water in their eyes.

Behind them on the sand, Floyd's little boy runs around with Chance's children. The ladies are talk softly as they discuss the haunting significance of what the men went through.

The gathering takes place on Culebra, on the same beach where it all started, where a group of friends stumbled upon a discarded machine. Chance asked to accompany Floyd and Bob to pay respects to their friends, George and John.

Earlier that day, they dove and buried an urn under a stone on the seafloor, right on the bombing site. The urn contained ashes from Boston. The engraving on the urn read:

In Remembrance – George & John  
Boston - December 5, 2011

"There is surely nothing other than the single purpose of the present moment. A man's whole life is a succession of moment after moment. There will be nothing else to do, and nothing else to pursue. Live being true to the single purpose of the moment."

Yamamoto Tsunetomo