

THE CELL

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THE CELL

TEASER

EXT. CHICAGO - ESTABLISHING - DAY

We see a quick montage of all that this quintessential American city has to offer: McDonalds, the busy floor of the Commodities Exchange, a smiling family walking by the lake, an employee dressing mannequins in a window at a fancy department store, an All-U-Can Eat buffet, Wrigley Field, beautiful women taking a cigarette break outside an office building, etc.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

A dingy, sparsely-furnished two bedroom apartment. We're in the living room and kitchenette area. A sheet covers the main window. MUSAB lounges on a thrift store couch, eating Pringles and watching "Live with Kelly and Regis" on a beat up twelve inch TV.

Suddenly a series of rhythmic knocks are heard at the door. Musab sits up, listens carefully. There's a beat.

SALAR (O.S.)

Musab. Open up.

Musab crosses to the door.

MUSAB

I need the password.

SALAR (O.S.)

I always forget it.

MUSAB

You know the rules. I can't let you in without it.

SALAR (O.S.)

Black Eagle?

Musab quickly undoes a series of locks and SALAR enters.

MUSAB

Close enough. It's Red Hawk. But I agree, it's a bad password. From now on it's --

He hears Kelly Ripa laughing on the TV.

MUSAB (CONT'D)
Kelly Ripa?

SALAR
Fine. Kelly Ripa.

Musab helps him off with his jacket.

MUSAB
Are you hungry?

SALAR
I wouldn't say no to a snack.

MUSAB
So, how was school?

SALAR
I aced my Managerial Accounting
test.

MUSAB
Congratulations. Hard work brings
many flowers into your garden.

SALAR
It's my professor. He makes
learning... fun.

There's the same rhythmic series of knocks.

AHMED (V.O.)
Red Hawk.

Musab opens the door. AHMED enters in bike messenger gear,
carrying a ten-speed over his shoulder.

MUSAB
I'll let you in but we've changed
the password.

AHMED
To what?

MUSAB
Kelly Ripa.

AHMED
Oh, I like her.

MUSAB
How was work?

Ahmed hangs the bike up on the wall.

AHMED

Good. It's getting cold out there.

SALAR

I heard it might snow.

MUSAB

Oh God. More snow. How do these Americans stand it?

AHMED

Well, they drink a lot of alcohol and then they go skiing and snowboarding.

Another series of knocks. Musab tenses.

ABU (V.O.)

Red Hawk.

MUSAB

Just a minute.

Musab quickly turns off the TV and hides the can of Pringles while Salar opens the door. ABU enters.

SALAR

Hey Abu. Just so you know, there's a new password. Kelly Ripa.

ABU

(angry)

What do you mean there's a new password? Only I can change the password. And who the hell is Kelly Ripa?

AHMED

She's a delightful co-host of the number one morning show in America. And co-star of a successful sitcom on ABC. Which is saying something because ABC has really been struggling with their new comedies.

Abu stares at him.

ABU

You know too much about this depraved culture.

AHMED

That's part of our job.

ABU

Don't tell me what's part of our job.

He crosses to the radiator. Gives it a kick.

ABU (CONT'D)

Is this thing working? I'm freezing.

MUSAB

Me too. I thought spring was coming. Abu, has there been any more talk of getting transferred to Arizona or Florida?

ABU

That is not a priority right now.

Musab pulls a Polaroid off the fridge.

MUSAB

Look at these photos from Gazir's cell. They love Daytona Beach.

AHMED

How'd they get invited to the MTV spring break party? Is that Carson Daly?

SALAR

(off picture)

Wow. Gazir really let himself go.

ABU

He's soft. We're here to teach the Western dogs a lesson, not join them.

Musab happily bounces out of the kitchenette, wearing oven mitts and carrying a tray.

MUSAB

Hot Pockets?

Abu angrily knocks them to the floor.

ABU

Swine!

AHMED
What's with you?

ABU
(sighs)
I got a communication today. Haseb
is coming.

They all tense.

SALAR
When?

ABU
This Friday.

SALAR
He only visits when there's
something wrong.

Musab stops picking up the Hot Pockets.

MUSAB
(whimpering)
He's going to slit our throats a
hundred ways.

AHMED
You only really need one way.

SALAR
We've got nothing to hide. We've
been doing our job.

ABU
Haseb doesn't think so. Admit it,
we've been getting sloppy. This
country, it makes you weak. It
hypnotizes you with the signs and
the slogans --

MUSAB
And the super sizes.

SALAR
And the sexy coeds.

AHMED
And the double coupons.

MUSAB
It's true. Everything's a bargain.

AHMED

Haseb can't have it both ways.
They want us to blend in, we blend
in.

MUSAB

I am personally offended that
anyone would think this country has
claimed us as one of its own.

There's a knock at the door.

PIZZA MAN (O.S.)

Domino's.

Abu glares at Musab.

MUSAB

(defensive)
We have to eat.

On Abu's reaction we...

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

EXT. FLORIST SHOP - DAY

People hurry by a florist shop on a busy Chicago street. An attractive young woman, ANDREA, arranges flowers in the front window.

Ahmed zooms by on his ten speed and disappears. A beat. Ahmed zooms by again from the opposite direction and disappears. Another beat. Then, Ahmed reappears slowly walking his bicycle and looking in the window.

INT. FLORIST SHOP - CONTINUOUS

A small bell rings as the front door opens and Ahmed enters.

ANDREA

Can I help y--

(stops)

Oh, I'm sorry, you can't bring your bike in here.

AHMED

Is it safe to leave it outside?

ANDREA

God no.

(pause)

I tell you what - you can leave it in here. The boss isn't around.

AHMED

Thank you very much.

ANDREA

How can I help you today?

AHMED

I'd like...some flowers.

ANDREA

You've come to the right place. Are they for a special someone? Your wife?

AHMED

Oh no, I am not married.

ANDREA

Girlfriend?

AHMED

Maybe.

ANDREA

Oh, I see. You like somebody but you're not sure if she likes you.

AHMED

Exactly. You have flowers for such a predicament?

ANDREA

I believe we do. Now, you don't want to start with roses, that'll scare her off.

AHMED

That would be bad.

ANDREA

I'll pull together a bouquet that no girl can resist.

Andrea starts pulling various flowers.

ANDREA (CONT'D)

So, how much money are we talking?

AHMED

Money is no object.

ANDREA

Oooh, a big spender.

Andrea shows him the bouquet.

ANDREA (CONT'D)

How's that?

AHMED

Beautiful.

ANDREA

All right, the damage is thirty five dollars.

Ahmed pulls out a big wad of cash and pays her.

ANDREA (CONT'D)

Wow, that's quite a bank roll for a bike messenger.

AHMED

(caught)

I'm a... very good bike messenger.

ANDREA

I can see that.

Andrea turns to the cash register and Ahmed holds out the flowers to her. She turns around with his change and he quickly chickens out and pulls the flowers back.

ANDREA (CONT'D)

Do you want to include a card?

AHMED

Uh, sure.

Andrea turns to get a card and Ahmed again holds out the flowers to her. She turns back to him and he quickly pulls the flowers to his chest.

ANDREA

Anybody who gets these is a lucky girl.

AHMED

(smiles)

In that case...

He begins to hand them to her when the bell rings on the door and a tough looking woman, MARTA, enters.

ANDREA

(to Ahmed, sharply)

Get that bike the hell out of here!

Ahmed stares at her.

ANDREA (CONT'D)

(sotto)

Sorry. It's my boss.

Frazzled, Ahmed grabs the flowers and his bike and hurries out.

ANDREA (CONT'D)

What a sweet guy.

MARTA

Lousy foreigners.

ANDREA

Marta, what are you talking about?
You're a foreigner.

MARTA

Oh please, Honduras is practically
Southern California. Now sweep up.

As Andrea grabs the broom, we:

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Ahmed sits on the sofa, depressed, staring at the bouquet.

AHMED

This bouquet mocks me.

We hear the toilet flush in the bathroom and Musab comes out,
buckling his belt, looking uncomfortable.

MUSAB

Whooo, that Domino's Cheesy Bread
isn't sitting too well.

AHMED

Well, you ate the whole bag.

MUSAB

Only because no one else was.
(beat)
It is a sin to waste.

Ahmed goes back to staring at the bouquet.

MUSAB (CONT'D)

Ahmed, cheer up. So you chickened
out with the American girl. There
are many more olives hanging from
the tree.

AHMED

Oh, but if you could see her. She
has the loveliest eyes and a smile
that melts my heart.

MUSAB

So ask her out! What - you think
just because she's American, she's
too good for you? You're bright,
you're funny, you're talented - who
made the best nail bomb in training
camp? You did.

AHMED

That's true.

MUSAB

So, you go back there, buy an even bigger bouquet, give it to her and tell her how you feel.

AHMED

You're right, Musab. Thanks. You're very wise.

MUSAB

Ooh - what time is it?
(checks watch)
Judge Judy's on!

Musab grabs the remote and turns on the TV.

AHMED

I don't know how you can watch so much television.

MUSAB

I am gathering information.

He watches the show for a beat.

MUSAB (CONT'D)

The American justice system is very strange. But this Judge Judy is stern but fair.

The TV sound goes in and out.

MUSAB (CONT'D)

Oh, this stupid set!

Musab rushes up and bangs the side of the set.

MUSAB (CONT'D)

I'm missing the verdict!

He bangs the top of the set. The sound and picture briefly reappear and then fade.

MUSAB (CONT'D)

It's so obvious the plaintiff was wrong in trimming back the neighbor's rose bushes.

A series of rhythmic knocks is heard. Musab quickly turns off the set and crosses to the door.

ABU (O.S.)

Red Hawk.

MUSAB

The password's Kelly Ri--
(opens door)
Never mind.

Abu enters the apartment, visibly upset.

ABU

Terrible news. Haseb is now
arriving tomorrow.

AHMED

That's too soon. We hardly have
any data, our intelligence reports
are incomplete--

ABU

Worse! Tomorrow is my bowling
night! The team needs me.

AHMED

So you miss one game.

ABU

You don't understand, it's the Tri-
City semi-finals. You can't just
not show up. You think we're
serious. I'm a no-show, these guys
will kill me.

MUSAB

I understand you going the first
couple times because they invited
you. But to actually join the
team?

ABU

They asked me to, I didn't want to
seem rude. Besides, I'm gathering
information. These guys drink beer
like crazy. Loose lips - yap-yap-
yap.

AHMED

What have you learned?

ABU

Well, Donald's had it with the
wife. For the first time in ten
years, he's seriously considering
divorce. I told him he has to hang
in there.

(beat)

(MORE)

ABU (CONT'D)

I can't miss this tournament. What am I going to do?

AHMED

Tell your bowling friends you're sick.

ABU

I can't lie to them, we're a team!

Series of knocks at door.

SALAR (O.S.)

Kelly Ripa.

ABU

Say the correct password!

SALAR (O.S.)

Oh, the old one? I forget. Something with a bird... Green Parrot?

ABU

Oh, get in here!

Abu undoes the locks and pulls Salar inside. Salar has a newspaper under his arm.

SALAR

I'm afraid I've got bad news.

AHMED

We know. Haseb's coming tomorrow night.

SALAR

He is? Oh man, I wanted to have my study group over.

ABU

You were going to invite your study group here?

SALAR

Well, the university library's being fumigated and we can't have it at Denise's because her Mom has the flu, so...

AHMED

Well, what's your bad news?

SALAR

Oh. Right.

Salar holds up the newspaper.

SALAR (CONT'D)

They closed the power plant.

MUSAB

What power plant?

ABU

The one we're supposed to blow up.

SALAR

Seems the city's switching to hydro-electric from coal.

MUSAB

Much cleaner. I saw a whole thing about it on the Discovery Channel.

ABU

We're dead men.

AHMED

Why? We can tell Haseb they just now closed it. How were we to know?

SALAR

Well, they actually closed it three months ago. It's being turned into a science museum.

ABU

Oh, that's an interesting tidbit you can share with Haseb while he's strangling you with your own intestines.

AHMED

All right everyone, just calm down. Haseb's not coming til tomorrow. That gives us a whole day to come up with a new plan and a new target. He'll be happy, everyone keeps their own intestines, you might even make your bowling league.

ABU
 You think so?? Don't even kid.
 (off their looks)
 I have a 208 average. I'm
 irreplaceable.

SALAR
 208? Is that good? That seems
 kind of high.

ABU
 No, see, in bowling the higher the
 score, the better.

MUSAB
 I've tried watching a couple
 tournaments on ESPN2. I just can't
 get into it.

ABU
 (hurt)
 You might feel differently if you
 ever bothered to show up and watch
 me.

MUSAB
 But, Abu, Wednesday nights? First,
 Smallville, then West Wing and then
 Law and Order, how can I miss that?

AHMED
 We should really get Tivo.

MUSAB
 Ooh, I have a coupon for free
 installation.

ABU
 Shut up, all of you!!!

On everyone's reaction we...

CUT TO:

EXT. O'HARE AIRPORT - DAY

Airplanes arrive and take off from the busy airport.

INT. AIRPORT SECURITY CHECK POINT - CONTINUOUS

A long line of passengers wait to pass through security. In
 the line, we see a large, dangerous-looking man, HASEB,
 talking in hushed tones on his cell phone.

HASEB

I'm in Chicago. Yes, a day early.
I wanted to surprise these useless
jackals. If things are as bad as I
think they are, I will personally
flay them and skin them alive.
(then, cheery)
Okay, bye Mom. Love you, too.

He hangs up. Then tenses as he approaches the checkpoint.

The trio of SECURITY GUARDS barely give Haseb a look as they wave him through. Haseb relaxes and begins to walk away when suddenly...

SECURITY GUARD #1

Sir!

Haseb freezes. The guard approaches him.

SECURITY GUARD #1 (CONT'D)

You dropped your paper.

Haseb smiles, nods, takes the paper and exits.

Suddenly, we hear a ruckus at the checkpoint. An elderly, Waspish looking woman with two canes has been stopped.

ELDERLY WOMAN

How dare you!

SECURITY GUARD #2

Put a sock in it! Just doing our
job.

He runs a security wand over the woman's body. It beeps.

SECURITY GUARD #1

Oh, hiding something from us!

ELDERLY WOMAN

Maybe it beeped because of the
metal plate in my hip.

SECURITY GUARD #2

Yeah, yeah. Take off your shoes.
(shoves her)
Now!!

As the elderly woman slowly tries to comply, we...

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Ahmed, Musab, Salar and Abu all stand at attention as Haseb is in mid-tirade.

HASEB

...you four make up the worst cell in our entire organization. Lyme, Connecticut's been up and running for only two weeks and they put you to shame! You're lazy, you're sloppy and Musab, look at you! You're a disgusting pig. You must have packed on twenty five pounds since training camp.

MUSAB

(proudly)
Only twenty, sir.

Abu signals for him to be quiet.

HASEB

I have a good mind to close this place up and ship you all back home.

This sends a shiver through all of them.

ABU

But, sir, we still have the power plant--

HASEB

The power plant's been closed for three months. When were you planning on telling me??

MUSAB

(sotto, to Abu)
I think he knows.

HASEB

And what is going on with the petty cash? Money is flowing out of this cell like shit out of a goose.

AHMED

Sir, you told us to blend in. Americans spend. It's a consumer driven society.

ABU
 Ahmed is right. Haseb, I know
 you're upset, but there is not one
 transaction we've made that was not
 for the cause.

A loud knock is heard at the door. They all tense up. Musab
 rushes over.

MUSAB
 (to door)
 What's the password?

SALAR
 (annoyed)
 Don't ask for the password. We're
 not expecting anyone. Besides, it
 keeps changing. I would like to
 know, on the record, is it Red Hawk
 or Kelly Ripa?

ABU
 Please shut up.

Another loud knock.

VOICE (O.S.)
 Delivery!

MUSAB
 What should we do? They've heard
 us talking.

AHMED
 Don't worry, I'll get rid of them.

Ahmed undoes the locks and opens the door halfway. It's
 quickly pushed open and two burly DELIVERY GUYS carry in a
 huge flat screen TV.

DELIVERY GUY #1
 Where d'ya want it?

MUSAB
 I think there's been some mistake.

DELIVERY GUY #2
 Musab Khadjimuirbaradi?

They all look at Musab, who smiles nervously.

MUSAB

I think there's another Musab
Khadjimuirbaradi on the seventh
floor.

DELIVERY GUY #1

If you make us carry this thing all
the way up to the seventh floor and
there isn't another Musab
Khadjimuirbaradi--

HASEB

(sharply)
Sign for it.

Musab nervously scribbles his name and the delivery man gives
him his copy.

DELIVERY GUY #1

There you go, buddy. Enjoy.

The delivery guys exit. Our five guys stand and stare at the
huge flat screen TV that now dominates the room.

MUSAB

Haseb, I know this might look
extravagant, but let me explain, in
America this is nothing! Mrs.
Rodriguez downstairs is on welfare
and has three TV's!

Haseb rips the invoice out of Musab's hand and reads it.

HASEB

(seething)
When you ordered this, you used
your real name??

MUSAB

Well, otherwise it's fraud.

Haseb explodes, tearing up the invoice into a million pieces
and throwing them to the floor.

HASEB

Next time, that will be your heart.

The men shudder. Haseb exhales loudly and runs his fingers
through his hair.

HASEB (CONT'D)

I should kill all of you. But I am a reasonable man and I believe in second chances. You have three hours to come up with a new plan.

ABU

That's more than fair. A thousand thank yous.

Haseb heads for the door. He points to his watch.

HASEB

I will be back at seven sharp.

SALAR

Oh, you just going to walk around? It's a great neighborhood.

AHMED

There's a theatre just around the corner. If you're looking to kill time and haven't caught "Lord of the Rings", I highly recommend it. Peter Jackson is a genius.

MUSAB

If you like ribs, you can't beat Ditka's.

SALAR

How about blues music? Chicago is the birthplace--

AHMED

I thought it was New Orleans.

MUSAB

You're both wrong. It's Memphis.

They stop and see Haseb glaring at them.

HASEB

I thought I would go to a mosque and pray.

MUSAB

(nods)

That's another good way to kill three hours.

Off Haseb's murderous look, we...

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT - LATER THAT DAY

Ahmed paces as Salar looks on. Musab enters from one of the bedrooms with a packed suitcase.

SALAR

Where do you think you're going?

MUSAB

It's called running for your life.

Ahmed grabs Musab's suitcase and puts it down.

AHMED

Nobody's going anywhere. Every problem has a solution.

SALAR

Ahmed's right. None of us are cowards.

MUSAB

Now, see, that's where you're wrong-

AHMED

Musab, calm yourself. We will think of something.

SALAR

There's a volleyball tournament coming up at my community college we can bomb.

AHMED

How many people go to something like that?

SALAR

I dunno. Actually, I hear ticket sales are slow.

A series of knocks.

ABU (O.S.)

Red Hawk! Kelly Ripa! I don't care! Open up!

Salar opens the door. Abu rushes in.

ABU (CONT'D)
Our problems are over!

MUSAB
(hopefully)
Haseb choked to death on a rib at
Ditka's?

ABU
No, I have here in my hand a
diskette full of top secret
information from the Chicago branch
of the U.S. Justice Department.

Abu proudly holds up a computer disk.

AHMED
How'd you get it?

ABU
My temp agency sometimes does
government work. I pulled a few
strings and they sent me over
there. I hacked in and downloaded
everything they got.

MUSAB
We're saved! This calls for
cinnamon buns.

Musab happily pads into the kitchen.

AHMED
You think this is enough to satisfy
Haseb?

ABU
He just has to bring something back
to his superiors. You know how it
is - the big guy threatens the next
guy, he threatens the guy below
him, he threatens Haseb, who
threatens us--

MUSAB
Well, who do we get to threaten?

ABU
Oh, you want everything.

SALAR
So, does this mean I can make my
class tonight?

AHMED

I don't see why not. And it also means Abu's free on Wednesday to go bowling.

ABU

(delighted)

Oh, now my team is assured victory in the Tri-City semi-finals. We will dance in the blood of the losers from Hal's Body and Paint Shop.

AHMED

Abu, a thousand congratulations. Once again, your computer skills have saved us.

SALAR

Thanks to you, we get AOL for free, Earthlink, I-Tunes -- I haven't paid for one song on my I-Pod.

Salar hugs Abu.

ABU

Please. We're a team. I have my computer skills, Ahmed is great with people, Salar, you are book smart and Musab--

Musab returns from the kitchenette wearing oven mitts, holding a pan.

MUSAB

(sing-song)

Hot cinnamon buns fresh out of the microwave!

They all smile and happily grab a cinnamon bun, as we...

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Abu sits at the computer while Haseb, Ahmed and Musab look over his shoulder expectantly.

ABU

It'll just take a few more seconds to bring the file up.

(MORE)

ABU (CONT'D)

We're about to see highly
classified information that's
recently been exchanged between top
Justice Department officials.

HASEB

You have done well. We are in the
belly of the capitalist beast.

Musab with oven mitts holds up a small tray.

MUSAB

Taquito?

Without taking his eyes off of computer screen, Haseb takes
one and eats it.

HASEB

Mmm...not bad.

MUSAB

Trader Joe's.

ABU

Ah - here we go.

The file comes up and Haseb starts to read aloud from the
screen.

HASEB

"The evidence of a significant
relationship between the size of
the organization and factors of the
management accounting system
provides management accountants
with a rationale in the choice of
accounting techniques and
practices..." -- what in the hell
is this??

MUSAB

Oh boy.

AHMED

That's Salar's.

HASEB

What?

AHMED

He has a presentation tonight in
his accounting class. He must have
taken the wrong disk.

ABU
 (nervous chuckle)
 Heh-heh. Silly Salar. Oh well.
 Water under the bridge.

HASEB
 That's funny, because that's what
 your lungs will be full of.

There's an awkward silence.

MUSAB
 (sotto)
 That's a very clever threat.

AHMED
 (sotto)
 Yeah, it's a thinker.

MUSAB
 (sotto)
 Yeah, because what he's saying is
 he's going to throw Abu from a
 bridge--

ABU
 Will you guys shut up!! Haseb,
 listen to me, I'll call Salar right
 now and tell him to bring us the
 disk. Problem solved!

Abu whips out his cell phone and speed dials.

MUSAB
 Uh... Abu, Salar never keeps his
 cell phone on during class out of
 respect for the teacher.

Abu throws the phone on the couch as Haseb walks to the door
 and puts on his coat.

AHMED
 Where are you going?

HASEB
 To the airport. I have a flight to
 catch.

ABU
 Haseb, Haseb, wait! I always make
 a back-up. When I was at the
 Justice department I transferred
 the files to my computer here.

(MORE)

ABU (CONT'D)
I just need to download it from the
hard drive.

Abu begins to nervously peck at the computer.

ABU (CONT'D)
See, all is not lost!

Abu presses a button with flourish and we hear a voice from
the computer:

COMPUTER (V.O.)
File located. Download will take 9
hours and 30 minutes.

ABU
Man, I gotta upgrade.

COMPUTER (V.O.)
Nine hours and 29 minutes.

ABU
See, time's flying.

AHMED
When is your flight?

HASEB
In three hours.

AHMED
Oh, that's not good.

Haseb glares at all of them as he heads for the door.

ABU
Haseb, please. These downloads
take time. It's over a thousand
pages of classified material.

HASEB
My plane leaves at 9:50 tonight. If
the correct disk is not in my hand,
you will have no hands --

The three men flinch. Musab leans into Ahmed.

MUSAB
(sotto)
At least we can still play soccer.

HASEB
-- then I will cut off your feet.

MUSAB

(sotto)

At least we can watch soccer.

HASEB

-- then I will cut off your heads.

MUSAB

(sotto)

Well, now he's just being a prick.

HASEB

I just have to say I am incredibly disappointed in all of you. You have let down me, your fellow soldiers and most importantly, the cause. You are a disgrace to your family and ancestors.

Haseb walks out the door as Musab waves.

MUSAB

(cheerily)

Well, goodbye!

Abu sits, depressed.

ABU

I'm confused. Is he going to cut off my hands, feet and head and then throw me off a bridge or is he going to throw me off a bridge and then cut off my hands, feet and head?

MUSAB

Yeah, he was all over the place.

Ahmed has put on his bike helmet and pulls down his ten speed from the wall.

ABU

Where are you going?

AHMED

There's still time. I will ride out to Salar's college and get the disk and then race to the airport and give it to Haseb.

MUSAB

You'll never make it.

AHMED
I've got to try.

Ahmed grabs his bike and hurries out the door.

MUSAB
Good luck. May you fly with the
speed of a thousand eagles.

There's a beat. Musab turns to Abu.

MUSAB (CONT'D)
With our sayings, why is it always
a thousand? Wouldn't fifty eagles
be enough?

Off Abu's glare, we...

CUT TO:

EXT. STREETS OF CHICAGO - DUSK

Ahmed zips through the heavy traffic on his ten speed.

INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM - NIGHT

A small community college classroom. Salar is about to start his presentation in front of a dozen or so students. His teacher, MR. BILLINGS, smiles at him.

MR. BILLINGS
Another presentation by Salar. You
going to wow us again, kid?

SALAR
Oh please. It is you, professor,
who wows us.

MR. BILLINGS
(to class)
Now, that's how you get an `A'.

The class laughs as Salar begins. He pushes a clicker and a screen is illuminated with the symbol for the Chicago Office of the U.S. Justice Department.

SALAR
Hmm. That's not right.

Suddenly, Ahmed bursts into the classroom, panting and sweating.

AHMED

(frantic)

Who numbers these classrooms?? 320-
A! 320-B! There's a Gibson Hall,
a Gibbons Hall. I've been running
all over the place!

Ahmed leans against a desk to catch his breath.

SALAR

What are you doing here?

AHMED

I've got your presentation. There
was a mix-up at home.
(pointedly)
Father-was-very-upset.

SALAR

Oh.

(then, realizing)

Oh! Well, then father probably
needs this.

Salar quickly turns off system and yanks out the disk.

AHMED

More-than-you-know.

Ahmed grabs the right disk from Salar and shoves it in his
satchel.

AHMED (CONT'D)

(to the class)

A thousand pardons.

Ahmed rushes out.

MR. BILLINGS

Is that your brother? I thought
you said you were an only child.

SALAR

No, I said I wanted to be an only
child. Well, now that all that
craziness is over - who wants to
learn about Theory and Methodology
in Managerial Accounting??

The class cheers.

INT. CLASSROOM HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Ahmed hurries down the hall.

ANDREA (O.S.)

Ahmed!

Ahmed turns, surprised.

ANDREA (CONT'D)

What are you doing here?

AHMED

Oh, um...delivering ...stuff. What about you? Are you a student here?

ANDREA

I take a few night courses.
Business.

AHMED

Good for you.

ANDREA

Yeah, I don't want to work in a flower shop my whole life. I hope one day to own one and make others work in a flower shop their whole lives.

AHMED

Everyone needs a dream.

ANDREA

So, did the lucky girl like the flowers?

AHMED

Huh? Oh. Yes. Big hit.

ANDREA

Listen, I don't have my class for another twenty minutes, want to grab a cup of coffee?

AHMED

(taken aback)

You are inviting me to join you for coffee?

ANDREA

Yeah. Is that okay?

AHMED

It is more than okay. It is fantastic. I love you forward American women.

(gasps)

I just remembered I have to be somewhere!

ANDREA

(disappointed)

Oh. Okay. Is it because I was too forward? I always do that.

AHMED

No, please, keep doing that. You are perfect. But I really must run.

ANDREA

Boy, you bike messengers lead exciting lives.

AHMED

You have no idea.

Ahmed runs off down the hall as Andrea calls out:

ANDREA

Where you going anyway?

AHMED

To the airport.

ANDREA

At this time of night? Oh, you're dead.

Ahmed flinches for a second and then continues on his way.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Abu sits depressed in front of the computer.

COMPUTER (V.O.)

Remaining download time: 7 hours and 26 minutes.

ABU

Thanks for the update.

Abu glances at Musab, who's watching a show on his new, huge flat screen TV.

ABU (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

MUSAB
If I'm going to be killed, I might
as well enjoy my impulse buy.

Abu shrugs and walks over to join him on the sofa.

ABU
(gesturing at screen)
So, what do we got?

MUSAB
(excited)
We have state-of-the-art liquid
crystal, high definition color on a
glorious fifty-eight inch flat
screen TV.

ABU
And all that for Jim Belushi.

MUSAB
No, Abu, it is really quite
amusing. See, his pretty blonde
wife is upset with him because,
once again, he has forgotten their
anniversary.

On Abu and Musab watching Jim and his TV family:

INT. TAXI CAB - NIGHT

A tense Ahmed sits in the back seat, checking his watch as a middle-aged, unshaven Caucasian drives the cab. They sit in horrible traffic. The driver, SEAN, leans on the horn. He speaks with a thick Irish brogue.

SEAN
I've been here two months from
Dublin and I'm ready to go back.
This bloody traffic, it's
everywhere! I don't know how you
Americans do it.

At being called an American, Ahmed can't help but smile.

INT. APARTMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT

Abu, Musab and now Salar sit on the sofa watching the huge television.

SALAR

I am confused. The fat man has the beautiful wife?

ABU

I'm confused, too. Is that still Jim Belushi?

MUSAB

No, that's Kevin James. This is "King Of Queens", another highly amusing show about a fat man and a long-suffering beautiful wife.

ABU

Oh, what does it matter. Even this laugh track can't lift my spirits. We are all dead.

SALAR

Yes, I can't believe Ahmed hasn't answered our page.

ABU

Obviously, he didn't make it.

There is a long beat as this sinks in.

SALAR

Well, I guess we can expect a visit from one of Haseb's executioners.

MUSAB

I wonder who he's going to use? I hope it's Tazir. He's quick and merciful.

ABU

As long as it's not Aldhar. Mr. Show Off. "Oh, whose spine is this in my hands?"

Another long beat.

SALAR

I'm really going to miss this country.

ABU

Salar!

SALAR

What? I am. I really liked my community college. Dr. Billings was a wonderful teacher. And my classmates, they treated me as an equal. And Abu, are you telling me you're not going to miss your bowling friends?

ABU

That is true. Donald is a good man. He once said that I was the only person he could really talk to.

(beat)

But how can you talk to a friend when he doesn't have a head?

SALAR

True.

MUSAB

You know what I will miss? Wal-Mart and cookie dough.

Musab holds up a half-eaten roll of raw cookie dough and offers it to Abu. Abu takes a bite.

ABU

Oh, sweet paradise. Keep that away from me.

(beat)

Oh, what the hell.

Abu rips off a huge piece and passes it to Salar. All three begin chowing down. Suddenly, we hear the familiar series of knocks. They react.

AHMED (O.S.)

Kelly Ripa.

They throw down the cookie dough and all hurry to the door. Ahmed enters casually. They all look at him.

AHMED (CONT'D)

I didn't get there in time.

Musab starts whimpering and looking to the heavens.

AHMED (CONT'D)

But, luckily because of heightened security, his plane was delayed and I put the disk right in Haseb's hand.

MUSAB

Oh, glorious of glorious days! We are saved.

ABU

We are saved, right? Haseb was happy?

AHMED

He was thrilled. He said we're guaranteed another year here in Chicago.

They all cheer and clap each other on the back.

SALAR

That's fantastic news!

AHMED

I'll say. Oh, to be here when the Cubs win the World Series.

MUSAB

Are you crazy? They're going nowhere without a middle reliever.

AHMED

What are you talking about? They picked up LaTroy Hawkins.

MUSAB

Ah, he's a bum.

Abu picks up the cookie dough and shares with Salar.

ABU

Where has this been all my life?

SALAR

If you like that, do you know they put it in ice cream?

ABU

No way! We must get some.

And as our foursome discusses baseball and ice cream, we...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

We are in mid-celebration. Music is playing from a boombox and our group is drinking and eating. Suddenly, from the computer we hear:

COMPUTER (V.O.)
File's done.

They all stop. Abu quickly shuts off the music and they hurry to the computer.

ABU
And now we can see all the
classified information that is
shared by this country's top
government officials.

Abu hits a button and begins reading.

ABU (CONT'D)
"Hey Joe, did you get a load of the
new receptionist? What a pair of
tits on her!"

They all gasp in shock.

ABU (CONT'D)
I don't understand. What is this?

SALAR
It's called instant messaging.
Read on.

ABU
"Larry on the 3rd floor totalled
his Jag last night. What a lush.
Ten bucks says he's in rehab by the
end of the month." I'm so
confused. Is that what these
people do all day?

AHMED
Try another page.

Abu clicks down.

ABU
Ah, here we go. Molly's Tex-Mex
Chili Recipe...?

MUSAB
(reading)
Oh, five cloves is way too much
garlic.

Abu scrolls down some more, utterly confused.

ABU
Recipes, Ziggy cartoons, what's
this? Joke Of The Day?

Salar reads over his shoulder.

SALAR
"Yo mama's so fat, at the zoo, the
elephants started throwing her
peanuts."

There's a pause.

MUSAB
Oh, then she must be very fat.

ABU
(chuckles)
That is rather amusing. I must
share that with Donald and rest of
the bowling team.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MOUNTAINS OF AFGHANISTAN - DAY

We sweep over the rugged, rocky terrain until we zoom in on
one particular cave. From within it's dark confines, we hear
someone laughing.

VOICE (O.S.)
"...the elephants started throwing
her peanuts!!"

As the laugh gets louder, we:

FADE OUT.

END OF SHOW