

Thou Shalt Not Kill

A TV script

by

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TITLE OVER: "...whoever kills a human being, except as punishment for murder or other villainy in the land, shall be regarded as having killed all mankind."

The Koran

FADE IN:

EXT. NEW YORK CITY DAY

SEAN walks on a clear, fall day into St. Patrick's cathedral.

MAN

(looking around,
to wife)

Yeah, Bobby Kennedy's funeral
was here.

Sean walks up the aisle to the confessional. Statues stand in the front of the church as a Gregorian chant leads the camera to Christ on the cross.

INT. CONFESSIONAL BOX

A slider opens to darkness within.

SEAN

Bless me Father for I have
sinned.

PRIEST

Yes, my son.

SEAN

I killed a man.

PRIEST

Killed?

SEAN

I shot him in the back.

PRIEST

Oh!

SEAN

Twice.

PRIEST

Tell me about it my son.

JET NOISES FROM 'BACK IN THE USSR' JOHN LENNON

INT. JFK INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Sean walks to check-in counter and leaves on a plane for London. His backpack reads "Doctors Without Borders."

INT. HEATHROW AND THE INTERNATIONAL DROVES OF PEOPLE

EXT. VAST DESERT FROM AIRPLANE SUNSET

INT. DALAL AIRPORT PRE-DAWN

SEAN yawns, stretches, and walks across busy terminal to escalator. His head emerges into sea of Indonesian women seated or sleeping on the floor. All wear head scarves. He walks to cafeteria. Middle East chatter and announcements. He puts knapsack at an empty table and luggage by his chair. Men wearing white thobes sit at the tables. He brings a burger to table on a Styrofoam plate and a Coke.

A traditionally dressed Afghanistan man, Abdullah, walks in behind him and disappears towards counter. Sean eats.

The man sits near Sean with two fried eggs on a Styrofoam plate. He has a cheap wooden prosthesis on his right hand and tries to eat the egg with his left fingers. It slips. He tries to cut it with plastic knife. Sean watches him try again without success.

SEAN lays down burger, takes a leather pouch from his luggage and goes to man's table. Man quickly moves a bundle off chair and to the floor with his good hand. His plastic knife drops to floor beside bundle. Sean picks up the plastic knife but brings out a stainless steel scalpel from leather the pouch and cuts the man's eggs in smooth easy strokes. Yellow-red yoke runs out over white plate. Their eyes meet. Smiles. Sean returns to his table and the man eats the egg with a plastic fork, glancing towards him. The large cafeteria clock over counter shows 4:16.

10 MINUTES LATER

Abdullah sits with egg-stained plate. He looks at clock. He takes the bundle into his lap. A shiny electrical coil is seen inside. Camera moves away in fear to take in whole room from new elevation. Abdullah looks at people then sees Sean. He looks down at the bundle, back at Sean, then at the clock. Then he sees the toilet sign. Sean looks up at the clock then sets his own watch. Abdullah gets up and goes towards toilet. Passing Sean he puts prosthesis on Sean's shoulder from behind.

ABDULLAH

(in perfect English)

Thank you for the eggs.

Clock shows 4:29. People rush in from a new arrival. Some are Westerners in business suits who enter toilet. Abdullah joins them as the dawn Call to Prayer rings out.

INT. TOILET MORNING

Abdullah stands in front of, but not using, the only vacant urinal with his back to camera, reciting the Call to Prayer.

ABDULLAH

Allahu Akbar!

AMERICAN

(wearing business suit)

You going to use that thing buddy?

Abdullah turns around with a dead expression and the shiny bomb in his hand. He tosses it to the American, then ducks around a corner into a booth, slamming the door behind him.

AMERICAN
Jesus Christ!

Bomb explodes.

INT. CAFETERIA

Wall of toilet explodes out into cafeteria. Concrete, bricks and shards of ceramic shoot through the air sticking into walls, posts and people. Sean sits at his far table as a shard of ceramic nicks his right cheek. Others dig into a post beside him. He leans ahead and puts his arm over his head. Two drops of his blood land on his white Styrofoam plate.

EXT. DALAL AIRPORT SUNRISE

Sean holds a cloth to his face. He exits the airport into a push of ambulances, stretchers and Arab taxi drivers seeking passengers. A large American soldier walks by with his uniform, covered in plastic, on his arm.

SOLDIER
What a blast! You're not in Kansas now Dorothy. Look! I wore this at the airport in Saudi and I can still smell their spit on it. But only on the back! The cowardly bastards! Goin' my way?

SEAN
No, I'm going a different way.

SOLDIER
Suit yourself.
(to Arab taxi driver)
Let's go Ahab.

INT. HAMOD HOSPITAL, DALAL DAY

Frantic activity as injured are brought in for treatment. It is a modern and efficient place with Egyptian doctors and Pilipino nurses. One rushing trolley carries a patient with a wooden arm prosthesis. A white, blood-soaked sheet covers him. Sean comes in wearing a surgeon's green frock and name tag. He has three stitches in his cheek. He scrubs and goes into the OR and works there all day.

INT. HAMOD HOSPITAL NEXT MORNING

Sean enters with white medical smock.

DUTY NURSE

Thanks for your help yesterday,
Doctor.

SEAN

Glad I was here. Where
are the patients from the
explosion?

NURSE

(pointing)

On D ward and some are still
in emergency.

Sean walks through swinging doors to view patients. Many are suffering badly. Then he sees the prosthesis, comes nearer and beckons a nurse.

SEAN

Has this man been conscious?

NURSE

He's an Afghan from the bombing.
He doesn't speak English.

SEAN

He's the bomber. Notify the
authorities.

The man's eye flinches. Nurse leaves. Sean reads chart at end of bed.

ABDULLAH
(in pain)
So, brother, you turned me in.

SEAN
Yeah.

ABDULLAH
I'll be tortured and killed.

SEAN
(looking at other beds)
That sounds about right. I'm surprised you survived the blast.

ABDULLAH
(wincing)
I jumped into a stall and closed the door. But those things don't go all the way down to the floor.

SEAN
(reading chart)
Lost both feet. You should have stood on the toilet.

ABDULLAH
Limb after limb, I give for Allah.

SEAN
Yeah.

EXT. HAMOD HOSPITAL DAY

Police cars stop at the hospital doors with a screech of breaks. Uniformed and plain-clothes officers rush into hospital. One black Mercedes hangs back as a middle-aged Arab in western clothes kisses a woman wearing an abiaha and burkha in the back seat.

MAHMED
I'll be home as soon as I can.

WIFE
(Upset)

Our anniversary! Our thirtieth anniversary!

MAHMED

I know! What can be done?

(Gets out.)

As soon as I can!

INT. HAMOD HOSPITAL WARD D DAY

Officers circle bed, some with guns drawn.

POLICE OFFICER

Shoot him now.

SEAN

What? Who's in charge here?

OFFICER

We will ask the questions.

(to assistant)

Try in Afghani.

ASSISTANT

Quemgo habitanno nerdi?

SEAN

He speaks perfect English.

OFFICER

How do you know? You have spoken to him?

All eyes on Sean. Mahmed enters.

ABDULLAH

He's my brother.

(winces)

MAHMED

I am Chief Inspector Mahmed al Qardi.
Are you the doctor who identified the bomber?

SEAN

Yes.

MAHMED

How do you know him?

SEAN

I saw him at the airport when
he blew it up.

MAHMED

Hum! (then, loudly) Jasim!
How many casualties?

JASIM

(taking notes from nurse)
Four dead and thirteen injured, sir.

MAHMED

(to ABDULLAH)

You are under arrest for
terrorism, bombing and murder.

(to officers)

Get a wheelchair.

SEAN

What are you doing? This man
can't be moved.

MAHMED

(smiling patiently)

You are speaking as a doctor,
but I must act as a police
officer.

SEAN

We're not in your police station,
we're in my hospital. I'm in
charge of this ward,
and I will not let this man
be moved. He is badly
injured. If you remove
a dying foreign citizen from
hospital you'll have an
international incident on
your hands.

MAHMED

He may escape.

SEAN

(pulling aside the sheets)
He has no feet and only one hand, how
can he escape?

Blood is oozing from the bandages on the Abdullah's feet.

MAHMED

I will leave an armed guard here
on the ward and someone must be
responsible for his custody.

SEAN

I will be.

MAHMED

If he escapes you will be in a
Saudi jail and your Canadian
embassy won't be able to help you.

SEAN

I'm an American.

MAHMED

With Doctors Without Borders?
(Turning) Jasim, you stay. I want
names and identity numbers of any
visitors or phone calls. (to Sean) You
arrived in Dalal on the flight from
London last night?

SEAN

Yes.

MAHMED

You are a volunteer at this hospital
with Doctors Without Borders.

Sean nods.

MAHMED

Then you cannot be the head of this
ward if you are a volunteer.

SEAN

I am acting head.

MAHMED
Yes, you certainly are acting. Welcome
to Arabia Dr. Golding.

EXT. SEAN'S VILLA EVENING

Sean parks, gets out of car and puts key in the door of his villa. Again awkward as key works clockwise.

INT. SEAN'S VILLA EVENING

It is typical Gulf fare with high ceilings, big wooden doors, Arabic geometric designs, no closets, and nothing on walls. He throws keys on the table, stops and looks around.

INT. SEAN'S VILLA NIGHT

Sean speaks to his mother by phone:

SEAN
The Arabs are taller than I
thought and the place is cleaner,
except for the dust.

INT. MOTHER'S HOME EVENING

MOTHER
What did we hear about a bombing?

SEAN
It was no big deal, Mother. There's
only been one in the history
of the country.

MOTHER
Was it near you? Could you
hear the bang?

SEAN
No, Mother, not even near me.

MOTHER

Jenny was asking about you.

SEAN

You spoke with her?

MOTHER

She came over one evening and we had a chat.

SEAN

Mother, Jenny and I are finished. We talked about all that before I left.

MOTHER

That's not what she's saying now. She's still wearing your engagement ring.

SEAN

What?

MOTHER

And Sean...

SEAN

What?

MOTHER

She's going over there to visit you.

SEAN

She can't do that. It's over.

MOTHER

Tell her that. You know she's very determined.

INT. SEAN'S BEDROOM NIGHT

Sean tosses and turns in bed.