

EXT. MOUNTAIN GAS STATION - NIGHT

It's a dark night. The lights are on in the office building, and WORRIED VOICES come from within.

Baraz trudges up the road, barely able to stand. He leans against a tree on the edge of the station lot, panting.

INT. GAS STATION OFFICE - NIGHT

Abdullah and his men are huddled in chairs around the room. All eyes are on Shaheen, in the center.

ABDULLAH
(in Pashto)
How many men were in the safehouse?

SHAHEEN
(also in Pashto)
Almost a dozen.

The crowd GASPS.

MULLAH BAHMAN
Inshallah...
(God wills it...)

ABDULLAH
And Firoz is sure it wasn't
soldiers? But then who?

The door bursts open- Baraz stands in the doorway.

BARAZ
Abdullah! I'm sorry to interrupt.
It's urgent. We need to talk.

ABDULLAH
Come in, come in. What's wrong?

Baraz flicks a glance at Shaheen.

BARAZ
I'm sorry, Commander. This is for
your ears only.

EXT. MOUNTAIN GAS STATION - NIGHT

Baraz holds the door open for Abdullah as they go outside. Abdullah wraps his cloak tightly around his body. Baraz leads him away from the station office.

ABDULLAH

What is this, Baraz? Is it about
the reward money?

They stand along a ridge at the edge of the road. A few scattered lights dot the sleeping village far below.

WIDE - ON BARAZ AND ABDULLAH

From higher up the mountain. We're maybe two-hundred yards away. Baraz hisses something in Abdullah's ear, but we can't hear what he says.

A long, thin shape swings INTO VIEW. We're looking DOWN THE BARREL OF A RIFLE. It's pointed right at Abdullah's head.

BACK TO SCENE

ABDULLAH

It's one of my men?

BARAZ

Even the top ranks can't be trusted
with that much money on the line.

RIFLE POV

Abdullah turns away and crosses his arms. Baraz steps closer- the barrel is now pointed at him. The unseen SHOOTER adjusts his aim back to Abdullah.

BACK TO SCENE

The Commander scowls down at the village, his back to Baraz.

ABDULLAH

They're moving soon, aren't they.

Baraz reaches into his vest.

BARAZ

I'm lucky I got here in time. I
thought I would be too late.

He silently pulls out the gun and points it at the back of Abdullah's head.

There's a distant CRACK! The top of Abdullah's turban is RIPPED OPEN as a BULLET WHIZZES by.

The two men scramble for cover under the edge of the ridge. Abdullah pokes his head up cautiously while Baraz lies prone on the steep slope.

The rifle fires again- CRACK! CRACK! and the bullets kick up clouds of dust as they PIFF! into the ground.

BARAZ

Soldiers?

ABDULLAH

I can't tell. Can't see anyone...

More GUNFIRE erupts, this time from the Station Office.

ON THE OFFICE BUILDING

Where Govad sprays a Kalashnikov assault rifle up and down the road as Shaheen, Bahman and Sharif slip out the door.

Abdullah and Baraz make a sprint across the station lot, and meet the others behind the abandoned gas pumps.

SHAHEEN

Commander, are you hurt?

ABDULLAH

No, I'm fine.

Baraz inspects a small tear on his sleeve.

BARAZ

Only a flesh wound. I think I'll live, boys...

ABDULLAH

The shots came from up the ridge. It sounded like only one gun, but I can't be sure.

SHAHEEN

We'll find him, Commander. Let's go!

He, Bahman, Sharif and Govad tear off across the street, guns drawn. Baraz hurries after them, fumbling for the TT-33.

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - ABOVE THE ROAD - CONTINUOUS

The others have spread out among the scattered trees. Baraz pants as he runs up the steep slope of the mountain.

Something moves in front of him- a BLURRY FIGURE dives behind a boulder. Baraz fumbles with the gun and FIRES TWICE! He rushes up to the boulder and brandishes the weapon at the cowering figure on the other side.

BARAZ

Aha! Got you!