

NATHAN X

"Pilot"

written by

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NATHAN X
"PILOT"

TEASER

OVER BLACK:

A slightly raspy, middle-aged male voice.

MCGRAW (V.O.)
Bellamy, Michigan has the largest
Muslim population in the United
States. I got no problem with that.
This is America.

EXT. PRECINCT - DAY

A white concrete building, slightly greyed by soot, reads
"BELLAMY POLICE." The American and Michigan flags snap in the
wind. Midsized city traffic rolls by.

MCGRAW (V.O.)
What I do got a problem with is
they don't talk to us. Someone
takes a bullet in front of their
eyes, they'll tell you they blinked
and they missed it. They don't
trust us, and that's not good.

INT. PRECINCT - CHIEF'S OFFICE - DAY

The nicest room in a not-particularly-nice building. CHIEF
BRIAN MCGRAW, 50s, sits at a desk strewn with the detritus of
police work and a few obligatory family photos.

McGraw is a ruddy, meat-and-potatoes, Midwestern cop of Irish
stock. He's plain-spoken but shrewd. He's addressing an
unseen person, and is outside his comfort zone.

MCGRAW
Gang activity is bleeding west from
Detroit, and our clearance rate is
comical. So I want a Muslim on the
squad. Someone to work the streets,
earn the trust of the community,
and be a public face. I know you
just got here, but I'm promoting
you to Detective and I'm giving you
a title: Special Liaison to the
Muslim Community. How does that
sound?

Reveal OFFICER DEVINDER SIDHU, 20s, an eager-to-please rookie in a freshly-pressed uniform. He wears the turban and thick, tied beard of a Sikh. He looks uncomfortable.

SIDHU

Sir, I ... I'm very honored. But are you aware that I'm not Muslim?

MCGRAW

What?

SIDHU

I'm not Muslim, sir.

MCGRAW

Then what's with the turban?

SIDHU

I'm Sikh.

MCGRAW

You're Sikh. And that's not Muslim?

SIDHU

No, sir.

MCGRAW

Don't call me "sir," call me "Chief."

SIDHU

Chief. Some Muslims do wear headgear but ... I'm Sikh.

McGraw doesn't know what to say. He's embarrassed, and like most men of his ilk, covers it up by being pissed.

MCGRAW

Well, how am I supposed to keep track of this crap?

INT. PRECINCT - BULLPEN - MOMENTS LATER

Sidhu leaves McGraw's office, keeping his head down.

The bullpen is scattered with PLAINCLOTHES and UNIFORMS, mostly white, a handful Black. Most are smiling, and the bolder ones are outright snickering. They saw this coming.

One of them grins with a particular ease. This is DETECTIVE SEAN FREEMAN, 30s, stocky, likable.

An unamused McGraw steps out of his office.

MCGRAW

Laugh it up, Keystone. We got a
dead girl in the morgue, and
nobody's saying a goddamn thing!

The levity abruptly stops. Even Freeman wipes the grin off
his face.

McGraw retreats to his office, SLAMMING the door hard, and
off that we--

HARD CUT TO:

INT. MORGUE - DAY

We're close on the face of FARHANA KHAN, 17, a beautiful
South Asian girl, face placid in death.

A body bag zips up to cover her face as we--

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

INT. CHEVY CAVALIER - DAY

SUPER: "Detroit, MI. Summer 2001"

Two 17-year-old Black kids are in the front of the car: Nate (YOUNG NATHAN) in the passenger seat, Godfrey (YOUNG GODLESS) behind the wheel. Both are nervous, but trying to put on a brave face.

RAHEEM, 20s, all smooth confidence and authority, leans in through the open window on the driver's side.

RAHEEM

Scared?

YOUNG GODLESS

Naw.

YOUNG NATHAN

Naw.

RAHEEM

Yeah, you are. That's good. I've only seen one dude who wasn't scared on his first job. Turned out he was a psychopath. I don't need psychopaths. I need soldiers.

YOUNG GODLESS

We're not psychopaths, Raheem.

RAHEEM

It's gonna be just like we talked about. Over in a heartbeat. You got this.

Raheem clocks that Young Nathan is staring straight ahead, rigidly.

RAHEEM (CONT'D)

Nate. Remember. Nobody's taking a bullet who doesn't deserve it.

OFF Young Nathan's blank expression, we--

END FLASHBACK

INT. PRISON CELL - DAY

SUPER: "20 years later"

A pair of eyes blink open. They belong to NATHAN FOWLER, now 37, a man who's worked hard to achieve a placid exterior that conceals his turbulent inner life.

Only one decoration adorns the cell walls: a tapestry of a crescent moon and star.

Nathan gets up from his top bunk, and fits a kufi (Muslim skullcap) on his bald head. He goes over to a small window covered by an iron grate. A NUTHATCH waits on the ledge outside. Nathan takes a crust of stale bread out of his pocket and feeds the bird some crumbs.

NATHAN

I'm going to miss you, little friend.

ISHMEL (O.S.)

Today's a special day.

ISHMEL, 70s, Black, also wearing a kufi, gets up from the bottom bunk.

ISHMEL (CONT'D)

You're finally a free man, Nathan.
After twenty long years.

NATHAN

Insha'allah.

Wordlessly, both men unroll prayer rugs and kneel down on them. They begin to pray softly.

NATHAN / ISHMEL

*'A 'oothu billaahi minash-
Shaytaanir-rajeem. Allaahu laa
'ilaaha 'illaa Huwal-Hayyul-
Qayyoom...*

Outside the window, the nuthatch cocks its head curiously at them.

INT. HOSSEIN HOME - DAY

Two 40ish Bangladeshi-American couples are seated in the living room, the KHANS and the HOSSEINS.

The Khans have the shattered, emotionally-drained look of people who have suffered a deep loss. The Hosseins look sympathetic, helpless. All four are exhausted.

Both Mrs. Khan and Mrs. Hossein wear hijabs (Muslim headscarfs). The Hosseins' handsome, self-possessed son, KALED, 18, watches the four adults impassively.

The silence is oppressive.

There's a KNOCK. Mr. Hossein jumps up and heads over to the front door. He looks through the keyhole, unlocks three locks, and swings open the door to reveal Freeman, the good-natured cop we saw earlier.

MR. HOSSEIN
Detective Freeman.

FREEMAN
Good morning, Mr. Hossein.

MR. HOSSEIN
How is the investigation going?

Mr. Khan appears behind his friend, looking hopeful.

MR. KHAN
Have you found my daughter's
killer?

FREEMAN
The entire department's working
very hard to do just that, Mr.
Khan. I'd like to invite Kaled down
to the station for a quick chat.

Still seated, Kaled looks up at the mention of his name. Mr. Khan exchanges glances with him. Mrs. Hossein joins them at the doorway.

MRS. HOSSEIN
Why? You already questioned him.

MR. HOSSEIN
My son did not kill Farhana. He
loved her. They were going to get
married.

FREEMAN
He hasn't been the most
cooperative. Getting some distance
from his family might jog his
memory on the details.

MR. KHAN

Detective, please. If we had any thought that Kaled was responsible, our families would not be grieving together like this.

Kaled stands up, looking resigned.

KALED

It's okay. It's okay, I'll go.

Kaled's sister PORI, 16, comes down the stairs, also dressed in a hijab. She quickly sees what's happening, and looks alarmed.

PORI

Kaled, no. Don't go.

KALED

It'll be fine, Pori. Trust me.

Kaled moves the three adults gently aside to join Freeman outside.

KALED (CONT'D)

Let's do this.

FREEMAN

Good man. If you didn't do anything, you got nothing to hide. Right?

Freeman leads him towards a squad car, as the families watch from the doorway.

Still unable to move from the couch, Mrs. Khan, the grieving mother, watches through the window as Freeman puts Kaled in the back of the car, gets in the driver's seat, and drives away.

INT. PRISON CELL - DAY

A GUARD waits outside the cell as Nathan carefully folds his tapestry up and puts it in a plastic bag. He grabs his rolled-up prayer mat and tucks it under his arm. He turns to face Ishmel.

NATHAN

It's time.

Nathan and Ishmel come together in a heartfelt embrace.

ISHMEL

I'll miss you, my brother.

NATHAN

I would've killed myself without you. You opened my mind.

ISHMEL

Allah opened your mind. Take the wisdom you learned inside and make the outside a better place.

NATHAN

I'll try.

GUARD

You coming, Fowler, or you wanna stick around for another twenty?

The men break apart. Ishmel searches Nathan's face, penetrating.

ISHMEL

Nathan. Don't go after her. You won't find redemption that way.

Nathan avoids his look. Off Nathan's clouded face we cut to--

INT. GUN SHOP - DAY

ALIYAH, 21, Black, haunted, examines a used lever-action rifle.

From behind the counter, The STORE OWNER (rocking an impressive mullet) is mentally undressing her and not really trying to hide it. He saunters over.

STORE OWNER

Boyfriend's birthday?

Aliyah ignores him. The guy is undaunted.

STORE OWNER (CONT'D)

The Marlin 336. Beautiful firearm. Let me help you ...

He starts to reach around her from behind, but she spins around, expertly snaps the rifle up, and cocks the hammer.

STORE OWNER (CONT'D)

(raising hands)
Whoa. Easy there, little lady.

Aliyah lowers the rifle.

ALIYAH
I'll take it. I'll need a scope as well.

STORE OWNER
(nervous)
Can I ask you what you need it for?

ALIYAH
Deer hunting.

STORE OWNER
Deer season doesn't start till November.

ALIYAH
I like to be prepared.

She favors him with a hard smile that makes him gulp.

EXT. PRISON - DAY

An iron door swings open and Nathan walks out, into the bright daylight. His eyes blink as they adjust. He's dressed in circa-2000 streetwear, a plastic bag containing his only belongings. He closes his eyes and takes a deep breath of fresh air.

Nathan spots two vehicles parked at the curb: a Cadillac Escalade, tinted windows rolled up, and a police squad car with McGraw behind the wheel. His windows are down.

MCGRAW
A man gets out of prison after twenty years. Waiting for him are a cop and a gangster. Which car does he get into?

Nathan looks from the Escalade to McGraw and back again. He ignores both and starts walking.

The Escalade starts its engine and squeals away.

McGraw starts his own car and follows Nathan slowly.

MCGRAW (CONT'D)
And then there was one. Take a ride with me, Fowler.

NATHAN
No thank you, Chief.

MCGRAW

Come on. When was the last time you rode in a car? Don't make me arrest you for ... I dunno, disturbing the peace?

Nathan stops, turns to look at him.

NATHAN

What do you want?

McGraw stops the car and idles the engine.

MCGRAW

To buy you a coffee.

Nathan looks away, sighs, then looks back to McGraw.

NATHAN

I drink tea.

McGraw grins.

INT. DUNKIN' DONUTS - DAY

Nathan and McGraw sit at a table by the window. McGraw is polishing off a Chocolate Frosted as he winds down the same spiel he gave to Sidhu. Nathan holds a Dunkin' cup disdainfully.

MCGRAW

... your title would be Special Liaison to the Muslim Community. Technically you'd be an independent contractor, but we'd pay you a full-time salary, plus benefits. What do you say, Fowler?

Nathan winces at the sound of his name.

NATHAN

I no longer use the white slavemaster name of Fowler, which some blue-eyed devil imposed upon my paternal forebears.

McGraw takes a beat to let this land. Then sighs deeply.

MCGRAW

I feel a "no" coming ...

NATHAN

I bid farewell to a great man today. My cellmate. A Black freedom fighter whom our government framed for murder and put behind bars for going on fifty-four years. You want me to be the poster boy for a racist, corrupt, Islamophobic institution. My reply is I would rather spend the rest of my life behind bars. Thank you for the Dunkin's finest blend.

Nathan gets up, preparing to leave.

MCGRAW

You're giving me attitude about tea? You spent twenty years making yours in a goddamn toilet.

NATHAN

You're thinking of wine. I don't drink alcohol.

Nathan turns his back and heads for the exit.

MCGRAW

Fowler! We got a suspect in custody for the murder of a seventeen-year-old girl. He's not talking to us, he might talk to you.

Nathan freezes in mid-step. He looks tempted.

NATHAN

... Seventeen ... ?

MCGRAW

Hell of an age to die, ain't it?

NATHAN

(snapping out of it)
Find someone else.

He continues walking towards the door.

MCGRAW

How about giving something back to your community? How about redemption? Lemme know how the job market is for a convicted child killer, "Nathan X!"

Other patrons stare at McGraw. He sits back down, still steaming, turning his ire on one particular GAWKER.

MCGRAW (CONT'D)
What?! Eat your cruller.

EXT. HALFWAY HOUSE - DAY

This aluminum-sided box of a building is an eyesore.

INT. HALFWAY HOUSE - NATHAN'S ROOM - DAY

Nathan enters a drab room, a cot the only visible furniture. He's followed by the building manager, WALTER, 60, an ex-con, well-meaning.

WALTER
You know, it ain't the MGM Grand.
But as far as transitional housing
in the Detroit Metropolitan Area,
you could do a good sight worse.
It's clean, it's quiet, and I don't
put up with any nonsense.

Nathan wanders over to the window and peers outside. No birds.

NATHAN
It's an upgrade.

WALTER
What else? There's an employment
office within walking distance.
They're pretty good about hooking
our boys up. Trucking, dock work,
and such.

NATHAN
I'll pay them a visit.

WALTER
I'll lend you a shirt with a
collar.

Walter looks Nathan up and down, shakes his head at the circa-2000 gangster attire.

WALTER (CONT'D)
Can't do much about the pants.

INT. EMPLOYMENT AGENCY - DAY

Nathan, looking uncomfortable in his borrowed, button-down shirt, ill-matched with his sweatpants, sits in a worn-out office chair.

Across from him, a weary EMPLOYMENT AGENT taps away at a computer.

EMPLOYMENT AGENT

Do you have any job leads so far,
Mr. Fowler?

NATHAN

Nathan.

EMPLOYMENT AGENT

Nathan.

NATHAN

I had an offer from the Bellamy
Police Department to be a civilian
liaison.

EMPLOYMENT AGENT

Oh, that's impressive. Are you
waiting on that?

NATHAN

I said no. It wasn't to my liking.

The agent stares at him in disbelief.

EMPLOYMENT AGENT

I see. Well.

He turns back to his computer, taps some keys.

EMPLOYMENT AGENT (CONT'D)

Let's see what we can do with your
resume. Do you have any special
skills?

NATHAN

Ornithology.

EMPLOYMENT AGENT

Orni...? I'm sorry, I don't know
what that is.

NATHAN

The study of birds. With three years remaining on my sentence, I was finally given a cell with a window that opened. A bird, which I later identified as a white-breasted nuthatch, began to visit me at the break of every dawn. I acquired and devoured every book that I could about birds. I learned that the average lifespan of a white-breasted nuthatch is two and a half years. But that bird was still alive when I left. I believe it was hope, winged hope, sent to me by Allah.

The agent, who had been gamely typing, stops. Exhales.

EMPLOYMENT AGENT

Nathan. I'm gonna be honest with you. You need to call the Bellamy Police Department. And you need to take that job.

Nathan looks resigned. He's lost and out of place in the outside world. He has no money. He has no choice.

INT. PRECINCT - NIGHT

Freeman and McGraw escort Nathan through the precinct. They earn quizzical looks from the other officers, who wonder who the hell this guy is.

Freeman reads off a file folder as he walks.

FREEMAN

Victim is Farhana Khan, seventeen, a student at Bellamy High School.

MCGRAW

Body was found yesterday morning in the park by a jogger.

Nathan locks eyes briefly with the turban-wearing Officer Sidhu.

FREEMAN

M.E. says the C.O.D. is loss of blood from hemorrhagic infiltration into the tissue of the neck--

MCGRAW

Freeman. We're dealing with a civilian here.

FREEMAN

Sorry. Her throat was cut. No murder weapon.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The three men walk inside, McGraw closing the door behind them. Through a pane of one-way glass, Kaled can be seen sitting on a fold-out chair at a table. He looks oddly calm, considering his circumstances.

MCGRAW

This young man is Kaled Hossein, eighteen, Farhana's classmate and boyfriend.

FREEMAN

His parents say he was asleep at the time of the murder, but we checked his bedroom window. It's an easy escape, and we lifted fresh prints.

MCGRAW

One of Kaled's teachers says he saw Kaled and Farhana fighting the day she died. Teacher's a white guy. Nobody else will talk.

NATHAN

You have enough to bring this kid in?

MCGRAW

Come on, man. It's always the boyfriend.

FREEMAN

One more thing. Kid's got a part-time job at -- get this -- a slaughterhouse.

NATHAN

What's the name of the slaughterhouse?

FREEMAN

(reading from a file)
Zabiha Halal.

NATHAN

(nodding)

In a Halal slaughterhouse, the animals are killed by an Islamic method called *dhabiha*.

FREEMAN

What does that mean?

NATHAN

It means you slice them in the throat while they're still alive.

Freeman and McGraw exchange looks.

FREEMAN

Damn.

McGraw chuckles and grabs Nathan's shoulder.

MCGRAW

What'd I tell you? Five minutes on the job, and my man's proved his worth.

Nathan has been staring at Kaled intently.

NATHAN

Can I talk to him?

MCGRAW

It's what you're here for.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

Nathan enters the room and sits down across from Kaled.

NATHAN

As-salamu alaykum.

KALED

So they found a Muslim cop.

NATHAN

I'm not a cop.

KALED

Then who the hell are you?

NATHAN

I'm a man who got out of prison yesterday, and who is now trying to serve Allah as best he can.

(MORE)

NATHAN (CONT'D)

What were you and Farhana fighting about on the day she died?

Kaled smirks.

KALED

I've heard about guys like you. You convert in prison 'cause the Halal meals are better and maybe you read some Malcolm X. But you're not one of us. Nobody came for you after 9/11.

NATHAN

Nor for you because you weren't born yet. Are you saying because I'm Black I'm not a real Muslim?

KALED

I'm saying I already told the cops everything I know.

Nathan lets Kaled stew in silence for a moment.

NATHAN

I went to prison because I murdered someone.

KALED

(despite himself)
Who?

NATHAN

A seventeen-year-old girl. That was twenty years ago. A man can't take such an act back. But if his faith is strong, and his remorse is sincere, one day, he can begin his life anew.

Kaled's eyes well up with tears.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

Kaled, did you kill Farhana?

Kaled is silent for a long time, unable to look Nathan in the eye.

KALED

I loved Farhana.

INT. PRECINCT - CHIEF'S OFFICE - NIGHT

McGraw and Nathan are attentive as Freeman reads from a yellow notepad.

NATHAN

"At 4:57 AM on Wednesday, September 30, I cut Farhana Khan's throat with a knife in Bellamy Park. She broke up with me that morning, which made me very angry. In that moment, I wanted her dead rather than ever see her with another guy. I used a knife from the slaughterhouse I work at, and afterwards I threw it in the Rouge River. I'm sorry for my actions. Signed, Kaled Hossein."

Freeman grins widely. McGraw chuckles and slaps Nathan on the back.

MCGRAW

You know, Nathan, for a cop-hater, you make a pretty damn fine cop.
(to Freeman)
Can you believe this? Thirty minutes in the box, and homeboy gets a signed confession.

FREEMAN

You're making the rest of us look bad, Nate.

NATHAN

This is a false confession.

The smiles freeze on McGraw and Freeman's faces.

MCGRAW

I'm sorry, what?

NATHAN

You heard me. The kid's lying. He didn't do it.

McGraw and Freeman stare at Nathan, incredulous.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. PRECINCT - CHIEF'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Nathan, Freeman, and McGraw are where we left them.

NATHAN

He starts off saying 4:57 AM. Why would he be that specific?

MCGRAW

Maybe he looked at his phone right before he did the deed.

FREEMAN

Wanted to mark the moment.

Nathan shakes his head.

NATHAN

4:57 was the time of the Muslim morning prayer on Wednesday. He knew I'd pick up on that.

MCGRAW

So?

NATHAN

So I think he's protecting someone. He's willing to take the fall, but he's also sending me a message that the real killer's still out there.

MCGRAW

Oh, Jesus. I don't need this right now.

FREEMAN

Nathan, you got a signed confession, man. That's the Holy Grail.

MCGRAW

Or for you, what, the holy ... scimitar?

FREEMAN

The point is, you did great work here. Why you want to undo your great work?

NATHAN

Because I don't want to be responsible for sending the wrong man to jail. Look, give me twenty-four hours. To re-interview the folks who wouldn't talk to white police.

MCGRAW

No. It's over. I'm sending it to the D.A.

NATHAN

Chief, you brought me on to get you good press. You make a big collar like this and you're wrong? I'm guessing that's bad press. But what do I know? I'm not a policeman.

McGraw steams. He looks over at Freeman for help, but Freeman only shrugs.

MCGRAW

Twenty-four hours.
(nods to Freeman)
He goes with you.

Nathan and Freeman move quickly towards the door.

MCGRAW (CONT'D)

(calling after)
You know, you could stand to lose the attitude, Nathan X!

He slams the confession down on his desk in frustration.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

INT. CHEVY CAVALIER - DAY

The car is parked by the curb in a run-down, residential neighborhood. Young Nathan and Young Godless wait in silence. Nervous tension hangs in the air.

YOUNG GODLESS

What time is it now?

YOUNG NATHAN

A minute since you last asked me.

Another beat of silence.

YOUNG GODLESS

Yo, Nate. You believe Raheem? That these fools deserve to die?

YOUNG NATHAN

If Raheem wants them dead, they must've done something bad. But I don't think about it, to be honest with you. I'm a soldier. I follow orders.

Young Godless digests this. Young Nathan checks his circa-2000 flip phone.

YOUNG NATHAN (CONT'D)

It's time.

Young Nathan pulls out a semi-automatic pistol and cocks it. Young Godless starts the engine.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. NATHAN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

CLOSE ON: Nathan, asleep in the cot. The lights turn on, and his eyes flicker open.

Sitting on a fold-out chair is GODFREY "GODLESS" DAVIS, 37. A world removed from the cocksure kid we saw in the flashbacks. This man is shrewd, charismatic, hardened by the things he's seen the past twenty years-- many of which he's done himself.

He's wearing Nathan's kufi.

GODLESS

(mocking)

As-salamu alaykum, my brother.

NATHAN

Godfrey.

GODLESS

They don't call me that anymore.

NATHAN

That's right, I heard. You're Godless now.

GODLESS

You know why they call me that? They say I'm so evil, I couldn't possibly believe in a higher power.

NATHAN

You came up with it yourself.

Godless cracks up. Nathan still has his number.

GODLESS

My man.

NATHAN

It's kind of you to visit me,
"Godless." First time in twenty
years.

Godless gets abruptly serious. Sincere.

GODLESS

I wanted to, man. You know I
couldn't. They never stopped
looking for the driver. No statute
of limitations on accessory.

NATHAN

By now you've done a lot worse than
accessory.

GODLESS

What can I say? Your little homie's
all glowed up.

Godless laughs, then switches abruptly to serious again.
Leans in. Puts his hand on Nathan's shoulder.

GODLESS (CONT'D)

Nate. You did twenty years hard
time, you never gave me up. That's
what character is. Thank you.

NATHAN

And now we're done.

GODLESS

Naw man, we're just getting
started. I'm gonna get you out of
this dump. Get you a crib, a ride,
cell phone. Get you laid.

NATHAN

No, Godfrey. I made a choice to
lead a different kind of life.

Godless shakes his head in disbelief.

GODLESS

I heard it, I didn't want to believe it. I sent my boy Chili to pick you up, he says you got in a cop car instead.

NATHAN

I'm helping the police solve a murder.

GODLESS

Get out of here.

NATHAN

Do you know anything about the girl who got her throat cut in Bellamy Park?

GODLESS

No crime occurs in this town without my knowing who, what, where, and why. But damned if I'm gonna breathe a word of it to you.

NATHAN

The police have the wrong kid in custody. I've got a day to find the real killer. Please.

Godless stares at him, shaking his head.

GODLESS

I can't have you working for the police, Nathan. No matter what you've done for me. I can't have that.

NATHAN

I'm an independent contractor. I work for myself. So I'm going to do what I please.

GODLESS

If it wasn't for our history, you'd be dead already.

NATHAN

Give me my kufi back. You defile it.

Godless smirks, takes Nathan's kufi off his head, and tosses it to him.

GODLESS

I'd get one that's bulletproof.

He turns around and walks out the door, closing it behind him. Off Nathan, looking grim...

EXT. ALIYAH'S APARTMENT - DAY

To establish. It's not a total shithole.

EXT. ALIYAH'S APARTMENT - DAY

Aliyah exits a door on the ground floor, carrying a basket of laundry.

An off-putting, middle-aged man, WADE, has been waiting for her. He's the property manager, and a perv.

WADE

Doing some delicates?

ALIYAH

(startled)

Jesus, Wade.

Wade walks beside her as she heads for her unit.

WADE

I'm sorry. Couldn't help myself.

ALIYAH

I know, I know, I'm late on rent.

WADE

Don't make me break your legs.
They're such beautiful legs.

ALIYAH

I just need a few more days.

Wade skips ahead of her and puts his arm against the wall to block her path. He gets in close.

WADE

Remember, if you can't come up with
the money, we can always make
alternate arrangements.

Aliyah, disgusted but caught on the wrong end of a power dynamic, walks around him.

ALIYAH
I'll get the money.

She keeps walking. Behind her back, Wade sticks his tongue out lasciviously and rubs his groin.

INT. TAXI - DAY

Nathan sits in the back seat of a parked taxi, spying on Aliyah and Wade through a pair of binoculars. He witnesses Wade's crass actions, and looks disgusted.

The antsy DRIVER pipes up.

DRIVER
Hey, brother. Much as I appreciate you supporting the dying taxicab industry, this is weird.

NATHAN
How so?

The driver twists around to look at Nathan.

DRIVER
Your lady stepping out on you or something?

NATHAN
No, sir. I don't have a lady. I'm birdwatching.

DRIVER
Whatever. It's your money, bro.

NATHAN
Why is the taxicab industry dying?

The driver turns around again, incredulous.

DRIVER
Seriously? Where have you been the last ten years?

INT. WADE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Wade slips into his apartment, a sly grin on his face. He whistles to himself, all but rubbing his hands in glee, as he makes his way over to a framed Dogs Playing Poker painting on his wall.

Wade stops whistling as he approaches, his footsteps getting lighter. He quietly slides the painting out of the way, revealing a spyhole. He looks through it.

HIS POV: A woman's bedroom. Aliyah walks into view, in the process of undressing.

Wade smiles lasciviously.

Suddenly, Nathan roughly pulls Wade away from the wall and THROWS HIM ON THE GROUND like a sack of potatoes.

The wind knocked out of him, Wade starts to scramble to his feet. Before he can, Nathan kneels on top of him, covering Wade's mouth with a hand.

NATHAN

If that hole isn't sealed up when I drop by again, I'll kill you. That's not a figure of speech. I just got out of prison for murder, and to be honest, I kind of liked it there. I'm going to take my hand off your mouth and you're going to say, "Yes, sir, I understand." Got it?

Wade nods, his eyes wide with fear. Nathan removes his hand.

WADE

You're him! You're the guy!

NATHAN

What guy?

WADE

I mean, yes, sir, I understand.

NATHAN

(impatient)

What do you mean, I'm the guy?

WADE

Bro. She's obsessed with you. Look through the hole.

NATHAN

Absolutely not.

Through the window, Nathan spots Aliyah leaving her apartment. He puts his hand back over Wade's mouth. Nathan watches as Aliyah locks the door behind her and leaves.

He looks back down at Wade, thinking.

INT. ALIYAH'S BEDROOM - DAY

Nathan and Wade are standing in the bedroom, staring at a wall that we can't see. Wade twirls a set of keys in his finger.

WADE

I told you, man. Obsessed.

REVEAL: Aliyah's wall. It's a collage of newspaper clippings and printed-out web articles about Nathan.

The clippings range from old ("Youth Arrested For Bellamy Drive-By") to current ("Notorious Gang Member To Be Released After 20 Year Term").

There are also several opinion pieces with the byline "Nathan X." They have titles like "How Islam Saved Me In Prison" and "Dostoyevsky Would Be Appalled By America's Prisons."

WADE (CONT'D)

Who are you to her, man?

NATHAN

Shut up.

Nathan continues to take in the wall, clearly shaken.

INT. FREEMAN'S CAR - DAY

Freeman drives this marked squad car. Nathan rides shotgun. His attention is held mostly by the Farhana Khan case file he's reading, not by Freeman's amiable banter.

FREEMAN

Some guys might be put out by the situation, but I'm happy to have you on board, man. You've already proven your worth, far as I'm concerned. And don't get me wrong, I fully think the kid is guilty, but nothing wrong with crossing our t's and dotting our i's. You don't say much, huh?

Nathan doesn't say anything.

FREEMAN (CONT'D)

Hey, check it out: you probably don't think of cops as well-read, but I've studied all the world's major religions, including yours.

(MORE)

FREEMAN (CONT'D)

Question for you: you ever made it out to whatchamacallit there -- Mecca?

NATHAN

It's hard to make Hajj when you're in prison.

FREEMAN

Right, right. Well I hope you get there someday, man.

Nathan looks up from the file.

NATHAN

These families, the Hosseins and the Khans: how observant are they?

FREEMAN

Like, religious? Well, the ladies all wear the headscarves and they go to mosque on the regular. But Farhana...

Freeman trails off, looking uncomfortable.

NATHAN

What about Farhana?

FREEMAN

I get the impression she was pretty wild.

He takes out his cell phone and scrolls through it as he drives.

FREEMAN (CONT'D)

Don't do what I'm doing right now, we'll arrest you for it. You know what Instagram is?

NATHAN

No.

FREEMAN

It's like people posting pictures about how great their life is. And if you're a young lady, oftentimes that includes... well, take a look.

Nathan takes the phone. Looks at it. Scrolls through it silently. Hands it back.

NATHAN

You are correct. That girl was not observant.

Freeman is unable to conceal a smirk.

INT. HOSSEIN HOME - DAY

Nathan and Freeman sit with the Hosseins and Khans, minus Mrs. Hossein.

A kid we haven't seen before has joined them. His name's ALI, 18, wary, Kaled's best friend.

MR. HOSSEIN

Why can we not see our son?

MR. KHAN

Why are you holding an innocent child and not looking for the real murderer?

ALI

You guys can't hold him forever without charging him.

FREEMAN

Would you like us to charge him?

NATHAN

Who are you?

ALI

Ali. I'm Kaled's friend.

FREEMAN

Listen, you folks need to stop criticizing the way we're doing things, and start giving us more information...

Mrs. Hossein enters with a tray of tea.

FREEMAN (CONT'D)

Oh, is this chai? Dope.

He takes a cup eagerly, as does Nathan.

NATHAN

(in Bangla)

Forgive him. He's a bit of a child.

The Bengalis manage smiles.

FREEMAN

What'd you say?

NATHAN

Muslim joke.

FREEMAN

You made a joke?

NATHAN

My friends, I wonder if there's anything else you can tell us about Farhana. According to the file, the only thing anyone told the police was, "She was a good girl."

Mr. and Mrs. Khan look at each other.

MRS. KHAN

(reluctantly)

The truth is, Farhana was wild.

Freeman raises an eyebrow. This is new.

MR. KHAN

We could not control her, no matter how we tried.

MRS. KHAN

We didn't know what she was doing, who she was hanging out with ...

Mrs. Khan gets choked up and can't continue. Nathan shifts his attention to Pori, who's looking down. She's wearing a dark hijab with flower patterns on it.

NATHAN

I like your hijab, Pori.

PORI

Thank you.

NATHAN

Did you know Farhana?

PORI

I didn't approve of her.

MRS. HOSSEIN

Pori is a very obedient girl.

PORI

I know who killed her.

The entire room goes silent.

NATHAN
Who killed her?

Pori looks up, fixing her gaze only on Nathan.

PORI
A jinn.

FREEMAN
A gin? What's a gin?

MRS. HOSSEIN
Pori, don't say such things.

NATHAN
In Islamic folklore, a jinn is
demon. Some believe they possess
people. Make them do evil things.

Silence falls over the group. Pori looks down again.

EXT. HOSSEIN HOME - DAY

Nathan and Freeman walk back to Freeman's car.

FREEMAN
Well, that's it, we've cracked the
case. Just gotta find this jinn.
Should we set a trap for it? Tie a
goat to a tree?

Nathan glares at him, unamused.

FREEMAN (CONT'D)
I don't mean any disrespect. You
gotta have a little levity on the
job. It's called gallows humor.

Ali comes out of the house.

ALI
Hey! Lemme talk to the Muslim
alone.

Nathan looks at Freeman, who shrugs.

FREEMAN
Go for it.

Nathan jerks his head towards the side of the house, and
walks over. Ali meets him there, looking nervous.

ALI

Okay so here's the deal, and no one else knows this. About a month ago, Farhana told me she was seeing someone else on the side.

NATHAN

Who?

ALI

She didn't say. She just said whoever it was ... would blow my mind.

NATHAN

Why didn't you tell anyone this before?

ALI

'Cause it makes Kaled look bad.

NATHAN

Why's that?

ALI

(reluctantly)

He found out about it ... on the day of the murder. That's what they were fighting about.

Nathan deflates.

ALI (CONT'D)

Look, I know that gives him motive, or whatever. But I swear to you: Kaled's not a killer. You gotta find out who this other guy was.

Off Nathan, looking into Ali's eyes and seeing sincerity there.

INT. FREEMAN'S CAR - DAY

Freeman and Nathan sit in the still-parked car.

FREEMAN

So you're telling me we got two new suspects. A genie, and a mystery man. Or maybe the genie is the mystery man?

Nathan ignores him, thinking.

FREEMAN (CONT'D)

I gotta hand it to you, Nate: they open up way more to you than they ever did to me.

NATHAN

I'd like to see Farhana's Instagram again.

Freeman shrugs, digs for his phone, and hands it over.

FREEMAN

(smirking)

Would you like some privacy?

Nathan glares at him, takes the phone, and starts scanning.

NATHAN

Most of these bedroom photos, Farhana's holding the phone herself.

FREEMAN

Selfies.

NATHAN

But some of them, there's another person taking the shot.

FREEMAN

She could've set the phone down and put it on a timer.

NATHAN

Or not. Look at what's hanging on the chair.

He hands the phone back to Freeman.

EXTREME CLOSE: behind a preening Farhana in lingerie, a familiar-looking piece of cloth hangs over the back of a chair.

FREEMAN

That's Pori's headscarf.

NATHAN

Pori, who said she didn't know Farhana.

FREEMAN

(sighing)

We gotta bring her in.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Pori sits in the hotseat, looking withdrawn and terrified.

Nathan sits opposite her. There's a yellow notepad and a pen on the table.

Nathan slides Freeman's phone, open to the Farhana lingerie post, over to the girl.

NATHAN

Pori, is this your hijab?

Pori looks away from both the phone and Nathan.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

Did you take this picture?

Pori remains silent. Nathan takes out a Quran and places it on the table between them.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

I believe in these verses. I believe they were taught by the archangel Gabriel and declared by the prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. However, the Messenger could not read or write. And so the Quran, like other religious texts, was transcribed by men. Flawed men, who reflected the biases and prejudices of their time. Therefore, I believe these holy verses are open to interpretation...

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

INT. PRISON CELL - NIGHT

NATHAN (V.O.)

... Particularly when it comes to who we are permitted to love ...

Nathan lies awake on the top bunk of his bed, restless.

He slips down to the floor, where Ishmel sleeps in the bottom bunk. Nathan climbs onto the mattress with Ishmel, embracing him from behind.

END FLASHBACK

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Nathan and Pori are where we left them.

NATHAN

Pori, I think you started seeing Farhana behind Kaled's back. You felt shame, for betraying both your brother and your religion, but your love for Farhana was intense. So much so that when she ended things, in a capricious way, you snapped. And you did something terrible. I will tell you the same thing I told your brother, when I thought he was culpable: if you have genuine remorse, you can be redeemed.

Pori is crying silently. She takes the pen from the pad. For a moment, it seems like she might write a confession like her brother. Instead, she just takes it and holds it beneath the table.

PORI

I already told you who killed Farhana. It was a jinn. Nobody human could do that.

NATHAN

How do you know it was a jinn? Did it take human form? What did the human look like?

Pori is silent, staring down.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

I see you've taken the pen. Is there anything you'd like to write down for me?

Pori shakes her head. Then she drops the pen on the floor. It makes a loud sound in the silence.

Nathan assesses for a moment, then kneels down to pick it up.

Underneath the table, Pori is showing him her open palm, on which she's drawn what looks to be a crude depiction of an EAGLE.

Nathan picks up the pen and returns to his seat.

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Nathan and Freeman stand in the designated smoking area, a bit removed from the main entrance, behind a modern art sculpture.

Nathan lights a cigarette and offers Nathan one.

FREEMAN

You smoke?

Nathan shakes his head.

FREEMAN (CONT'D)

Shocker. Listen, Nathan. I respect what you uncovered in twenty-four hours. But it's not enough. It's theories. And we got a confession.

NATHAN

A false confession.

FREEMAN

So you say.

An SUV with tints approaches on the lane closest to them. The passenger-side window is down. There's no one in the passenger seat, but something tells Nathan that he and Freeman need to--

NATHAN

GET DOWN!

Nathan pulls Freeman down behind the sculpture as the unseen driver UNLOADS AUTOMATIC GUNFIRE on them.

Freeman draws his gun, runs into the street, and FIRES uselessly after the long-gone vehicle.

FREEMAN

You get a plate? What kind of suicidal bastard shoots a cop on his home turf?

NATHAN

You weren't the target. I was. And they meant to miss.

FREEMAN

What the hell are you talking about?

NATHAN

This wasn't a drive-by. It was a warning.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. PRECINCT - CHIEF'S OFFICE - DAY

McGraw sits on the edge of his desk, looking agitated.
Freeman is reading off his notepad. Nathan stands by calmly.

FREEMAN

Silver Ford Explorer. First two letters of the plate "VR" or possibly "UR." Probably boosted. Shooter was also the driver, which you don't see every day.

Freeman pulls a plastic baggie out of his pocket, containing a bullet, and sets it on McGraw's desk.

FREEMAN (CONT'D)

I pulled a slug from the wall, a nine millimeter. My guess is Glock 19 converted to full auto.

MCGRAW

(to Nathan)

Isn't that your weapon of choice?

NATHAN

I don't use guns anymore.

MCGRAW

Seems like your old homies still do.

(to Freeman)

You know what this guy told a judge twenty years ago? The driver was a kid he never met before who never gave his name. Could've cut his time in half, but he never turned.

Freeman looks at Nathan with respect.

FREEMAN

There's a code on the streets just like there's a code in here.

McGraw looks annoyed, as this wasn't the reaction he was hoping for.

MCGRAW

Yeah, Nate's real stand-up.

(to Nathan)

Your buddy's been busy these past twenty years. He's hurt a lot of people. You ever think about that?

NATHAN
All the time.

MCGRAW
He reach out to you by any chance?
Maybe to catch up over brunch?

Nathan picks up the baggie with the slug in it.

NATHAN
This was him reaching out.

MCGRAW
I'm already tired of you.
(to Freeman)
In the AM, we go to the D.A. with
Kaled.

Nathan starts to protest, but--

MCGRAW (CONT'D)
Get out of my office.

INT. PRECINCT - KITCHEN - DAY

Officer Sidhu sits at a table unwrapping a sandwich.

Nathan enters. The two men nod to each other. As Nathan heads for the fridge, Sidhu takes a bite of his sandwich and GAGS.

NATHAN
Something wrong with your sandwich?

SIDHU
It must've gone bad.

Nathan's eyes travel to a trash bin beside the fridge, where an empty CAN OF DOG FOOD lies on top.

He then looks outside the kitchen to the bullpen, where some officers are snickering.

He looks back at Sidhu.

NATHAN
You getting hazed?

SIDHU
Every rookie gets hazed.

NATHAN

Does every rookie get dog food in their sandwich? Or just the guys with turbans.

Sidhu doesn't say anything.

INT. ALIYAH'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Aliyah has her rifle separated into parts, and is painstakingly cleaning it with a brush.

INT. ALIYAH'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT

Aliyah kneels at the foot of her bed, dressed in nightwear. She clasps her hands and whispers a prayer.

ALIYAH

I have to do something you're not going to like. I have to break a commandment. I have to sin. But I won't ask you to forgive me...

Aliyah opens her eyes and stares straight at the Nathan collage on her wall.

ALIYAH (CONT'D)

...Because forgiveness is the one part of what you teach that I never could get behind.

(closes eyes)

Amen.

INT. PRECINCT - WEIGHT ROOM - NIGHT

A bare-bones gym for cops. Freeman is working the bench press, muscles rippling under a tank top.

Nathan enters. Freeman finishes a set and sits up, wiping himself with a towel.

FREEMAN

You still here?

NATHAN

Thought I'd be the only one.

FREEMAN

I like coming here late at night. Helps me think.

Freeman watches Nathan make his way over to the free weights.

FREEMAN (CONT'D)

Hey, you must've gotten pretty jacked in prison, right?

NATHAN

Are you going to ask me how much I bench?

FREEMAN

Ha ha. You want to work in? I'll spot you.

Nathan catches sight of a tattoo on Freeman's upper forearm--

--IT'S AN EAGLE, and it matches what Pori drew.

Nathan tries to be casual.

NATHAN

You know, I didn't anticipate this, but this room reminds me of prison in a way that's not entirely pleasant. Have a good night, Sean.

FREEMAN

Yeah. You too.

Nathan exits. Freeman looks suspicious.

INT. PRECINCT - NATHAN'S DESK - NIGHT

Nathan hurries into the bullpen area, rummaging for a piece of paper in his pocket.

He grabs the first office phone he sees and, consulting the paper, dials and waits, drumming his fingers impatiently.

PORI (V.O.)

(from phone)

This is Pori. Please leave a message.

NATHAN

(into phone)

Pori. It's Nathan. Call me back immediately at this number. I know who the jinn is.

He hangs up the phone, and leans back in his chair, thinking.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

INT. CHEVY CAVALIER - DAY

Young Godless drives. Young Nathan grips his Glock tightly. Both are both silent and breathing shallowly.

They approach their targets: a couple of GUYS hanging out on a porch, blissfully unaware of what lies in store for them. A boom box blasts RAP MUSIC.

As the car gets closer, Nathan gives his best gangster sneer, points the gun out the window, pulls the trigger--

--and it jams.

YOUNG NATHAN
Mother-- are you serious?!

He smacks the gun.

YOUNG GODLESS
What's happening?!

YOUNG NATHAN
It jammed!

Meanwhile, the targets have dived for safety.

They're past ideal range, but Young Nathan tries again, this time WILDLY FIRING OFF SEVERAL ROUNDS.

His eyes go wide in horror.

YOUNG NATHAN (CONT'D)
NO!!!

YOUNG GODLESS
What?! What'd you do?!

Young Nathan slumps back in his seat, all machismo gone, just a terrified kid now.

YOUNG NATHAN
I hit a girl, I hit a girl,
Godfrey, we have to go back.

YOUNG GODLESS
Are you trippin?

He slams the accelerator.

A PHONE RINGS.

END FLASHBACK

INT. PRECINCT - NIGHT

Nathan is still by the office phone, but has fallen asleep on the chair.

The phone RINGS.

Nathan wakes with a start, and immediately grabs the receiver.

NATHAN
(into phone)
This is Nathan.

PORI (V.O.)
(from phone)
This is Pori.

Nathan exhales in relief.

INT. HOSSAIN HOME - PORI'S BEDROOM - NIGHT (INTERCUT)

Pori sits on her bed, talking into her phone. She twists a bedsheet in her hand, anxiously.

PORI
(into phone)
I'm ready to tell you everything I
know. But not over the phone.

Nathan takes this in, thinking.

NATHAN
(into phone)
I can meet you anywhere.

PORI
(into phone)
Bellamy High. The baseball diamond.
Come alone. *Taqiya*.

Pori ends the call.

We reveal that Freeman is sitting on the bed beside her, watching her intently.

FREEMAN

You did good.

He brushes her cheek with his hand. She shudders.

INT. PRECINCT - HOLDING CELL - NIGHT

Kaled tosses and turns on a bunk in his holding cell. Drunks and sex workers sleep in adjoining cells.

Nathan rushes down the hall, stopping at Kaled's cell and shouting at him through the bars.

NATHAN

Kaled! I know Freeman killed Farhana.

Kaled sits bolt upright. He gets off the bunk and walks slowly towards Nathan, processing this new information.

KALED

He made me take the fall.

NATHAN

I know.

KALED

He said he'd kill Pori if I didn't.

NATHAN

He has her now.

KALED

What?! What do you mean he "has her?"

NATHAN

She called me and asked to meet, but I think he was with her, forcing her to give a false location.

KALED

What makes you think that?

NATHAN

She signed off with an Arabic word, *Taqiya*. That means--

KALED

"Deception in the case of self-preservation."

Kaled manages a small, proud smile.

KALED (CONT'D)
Smart girl...

NATHAN
Kaled, I think he's going to kill her. Do you have any idea where he might take her to do that?

Kaled thinks for a moment.

KALED
Bellamy Park.

NATHAN
Same place he did Farhana? Why so obvious?

KALED
That's how his mind works. Dude's a psychopath. Thinks he's untouchable.

Nathan takes this in for a beat, then runs off.

KALED (CONT'D)
(shouting after him)
Hey! Let me out! I can help!

DRUNK GUY (O.S.)
Shut up!

Kaled slams his palm against the bars in frustration.

EXT. PRECINCT - PARKING LOT

A dozen or so squad cars are parked in this gated lot.

Nathan comes running out the door. He runs up to the closest car, and tries the door. It's locked.

He runs to another car, tries its door -- also locked.

Third time's the charm, as the next car has its driver-side window open. With a sigh of relief, Nathan opens the door and slides behind the wheel.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Parked on the adjoining street is the same Escalade that tried to pick up Nathan outside the prison.

INT. CHILI'S CAR - NIGHT

Inside the Escalade, CHAD "CHILI" ROGERS, 20's, Black, is watching Nathan through a pair of binoculars. The car is full of weed smoke. Chili starts to laugh, then coughs.

BINOCULARS POV: Nathan sits inside the squad car, struggling to start it.

INT. SQUAD CAR - NIGHT

Nathan has the dashboard panel pried open, but is flummoxed by what he sees.

NATHAN
What the hell ...

He sighs in frustration.

INT. CHILI'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Chili is chuckling to himself as he dials his cell.

CHILI
(into phone)
Check it out. Our man was just trying to hotwire an electric car ... Yeah, man, a lot has changed in twenty years ... I dunno, he gave up. Probably praying to Allah for a magic carpet.

Suddenly, a pair of hands reach through the window and grab Chili by the collar.

CHILI (CONT'D)
What the--

Nathan pulls Chili out of the car through the window--

CHILI (CONT'D)
Come on, man! Be cool!

--and throws him to the ground. Nathan favors Chili with a disgusted look.

NATHAN
Don't get high on the job.

Nathan gets inside the car.

CHILI

Mother...

Chili's phone lies on the ground.

GODLESS (V.O.)

(from phone)

Chili? Chili, what's happening?

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Half a block away, a Ford Focus sits parked with its lights and motor off, but someone inside.

INT. ALIYAH'S CAR - NIGHT

Aliyah is inside the Ford. She watches Chili pick himself up from the ground and grab the back of his head, wincing. Then Nathan drives off in the Escalade.

With a determined look on her face, Aliyah twists the keys in the ignition and drives off in pursuit of Nathan.

INT. GODLESS' HOUSE - NIGHT

The living room of a man with a lot of drug money and not a lot of taste.

Godless sits on leather couch, shirtless, smoking a blunt. His phone is on the coffee table, on speaker. He's agitated.

GODLESS

Chili! Chili! Where the hell are you, man?

EXT. STREET - INTERCUT

A humiliated Chili sits on the pavement, roughed up, his car gone. He picks up his phone.

CHILI

He took my ride, man.

GODLESS

Who? Nate?

CHILI

He came outta nowhere, I swear.

Godless face-palms.

GODLESS

Keep your ass where it's at. I'll
pick you up my damn self.

Godless hits "end" on his cell, then looks around the room.

GODLESS (CONT'D)

Where's my shirt?

EXT. BELLAMY PARK - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

This empty parking lot is elevated over the park itself. Bellamy Park is a typical suburban sanctuary: lit by lamplight, half grass, half thick patches of trees and brush.

Freeman's car is the only one in the lot. It's empty.

A familiar Escalade drives in slowly. Nathan's behind the wheel. He spots Freeman's car, and parks at the opposite end of the lot. He gets out of the car, crouches down, and makes his way stealthily out of the lot and into the park.

Moments later, another car enters. It's Aliyah's. She parks, gets out, and pops her trunk. After looking around to make sure no one's watching, she takes out her newly-purchased rifle. Then she quickly darts into some bushes.

Finally, an SUV drives in. Godless is behind the wheel, Chili in the passenger seat.

INT. GODLESS' SUV - CONTINUOUS

Godless comes to a stop and kills the engine. Chili takes out his Glock.

GODLESS

Make it quick.

CHILI

If there's a scratch on my car, I'm
gonna make it slow.

Chili exits the SUV. He stops to examine the state of his Escalade. Godless gives him a "what the hell?" look/hand gesture. Chili waves in apology and continues towards the park.

Godless takes out a cordless receiver, turns it on, and places it in the cup-holder.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

Freeman has the back of Pori's shirt bunched in his fist as he force-marches her through the park. She's bound and gagged. He's wearing rubber gloves and has a thick coil of rope around his shoulder.

FREEMAN

You brought this on yourself, Pori. All you had to do was keep your mouth shut and let your brother take the fall. But you ratted me out. I'm not sure how, but you did. Your little slut lover Farhana was gonna rat me out too. So I had to take care of her. And now I'm going to take care of you.

They reach a thickly-wooded area, underneath a tall oak tree.

FREEMAN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry to say that you are going to commit a very tragic suicide.

He takes the rope and tosses it over a tree branch, then starts to fashion a noose.

NATHAN (O.S.)

Let her go, Freeman.

Freeman drops the noose, draws his gun, and holds it to Pori's head.

Nathan emerges from the shadows, empty hands held up.

EXT. PARK - HILL - NIGHT

In a clump of bushes, level with the parking lot and overlooking the park, we find Aliyah. She lies on her stomach, rifle assembled, peering through the sight.

CROSS-HAIRS POV: There's a clear line of sight through the trees to the stand-off below.

But there's a problem: Freeman and Pori are standing in the way of a clean shot at Nathan.

ALIYAH

Goddammit ... move. Move.

EXT. PARK - BUSHES - NIGHT

In a thick patch of brush near the stand-off, we find Chili. He crouches down, Glock drawn and at the ready, watching the scene unfold.

Chili whispers into his phone.

CHILI
Our boy's standing off with that
dirty cop. Freeland or whatever.
The cop is packing...

INT. GODLESS' SUV - NIGHT

Godless holds his phone in his left hand while he fiddles with the receiver in his right.

CHILI (V.O.)
(from phone)
... He's got some Indian girl with
him.

Freeman's voice comes out of the receiver -- somehow, Godless has them bugged.

FREEMAN (V.O.)
(from receiver)
I'm not gonna tell you again.

GODLESS
(into phone)
Shhhh. I can hear them.

FREEMAN (V.O.)
(from receiver)
Get out of here, Fowler.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

Nathan has his hands in the air, as Freeman continues to hold his gun to the head of a terrified Pori.

NATHAN
I'm not going anywhere.

FREEMAN
I'm impressed you found me. You
coulda been a good cop. Too bad you
were brainwashed in prison.

Nathan lowers his hands and starts slowly advancing on the pair.

NATHAN

I'm not the one who's been brainwashed. I have a pretty good idea where you've been doing all your reading about religion.

FREEMAN

You weren't actually supposed to do anything, you dumb yo. Why couldn't you just give us some good PR and cash your check?

NATHAN

Because I have to stop you. You've been terrorizing the Muslim population of Bellamy.

FREEMAN

I've been keeping them in check. They have to stay scared of us or they'll take over. You know they control entire no-go zones in France where cops aren't even allowed?

NATHAN

That's patently false.

FREEMAN

Of course you deny it, you're one of them. Hell, maybe you want to live under Sharia law. But guess what, Obama? I got a real problem with it.

NATHAN

If you find Muslims so repellent, why were you sleeping with Farhana?

FREEMAN

Shut up.

NATHAN

Did it sting when she dumped you? She was just a high school girl. Did it hurt your feelings?

FREEMAN

I said shut up!

Freeman moves his gun from Pori's head to point it at Nathan.

FREEMAN (CONT'D)

How stupid are you, coming here
unarmed? You think Allah makes you
bulletproof?

Nathan raises his hands again.

EXT. PARK - HILL - NIGHT

Aliyah is still lying on her stomach and peering through the
sight. She holds her breath. Her finger on the trigger.

She FIRES.

ALIYAH

Goddammit.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

CHIPS FLY OFF A TREE where the bullet hits.

Aliyah missed her target.

FREEMAN

What the hell?

Pori takes advantage of the distraction to ELBOW FREEMAN IN
THE CROTCH. He doubles over in pain. Pori dashes off.

FREEMAN (CONT'D)

Pori! Get back here!

Nathan charges Freeman. Before Freeman can fire a round,
Nathan collides with him at full speed. They crash to the
ground and grapple.

EXT. PARK - BUSHES - NIGHT

Chili's on the phone, his eyes wide as he follows the action
unfolding in front of his eyes.

CHILI

(into phone)

It wasn't them! Someone else is
shooting at them!

GODLESS (V.O.)

(from phone)

Who?!

CHILI
(into phone)
I don't know who! This is some
grassy knoll shit!

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

Freeman and Nathan roll on the ground, grappling for control of Freeman's gun.

Freeman straddles Nathan and pushes the gun closer and closer, trying to get the barrel under Nathan's chin.

FREEMAN
Shouldn't you be stronger? All you
had to do for twenty years was pump
iron and take it from behind.

Behind Freeman, Pori emerges, carrying a pathetically small stick.

NATHAN
Stay back, Pori. I've got this.

Pori hesitates, uncertain.

FREEMAN
You don't got anything. I'm gonna
kill you. Then I'm gonna kill her.
You're not a hero, Nathan Fowler.
You were born a thug, and you're
gonna die one.

Nathan closes his eyes and starts WHISPERING A PRAYER IN ARABIC.

He starts pushing back on Freeman's gun, slowly and steadily, both men GRUNTING with the effort.

The barrel rests under Freeman's chin. Freeman, defiant, knows it's over.

FREEMAN (CONT'D)
Heil Hitler.

Nathan PULLS THE TRIGGER.

EXT. PARK - BUSHES - NIGHT

Chili winces at the sound of the GUNSHOT. He breathlessly reports back via phone.

CHILI
Goddamn. Goddamn. Nate shot the
pig. Blew his head clean off.

GODLESS (V.O.)
(from phone)
Get back to the car. Now.

Chili scrambles out of there.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

Nathan examines a bullet lodged in a tree.

He turns around, walks a few paces, and shouts into the
night.

NATHAN
Aliyah! Run!

The sound of SIRENS starts up in the distance.

EXT. PARK - HILL - NIGHT

CROSS-HAIRS POV: Aliyah has Nathan in her sights.

She starts to pull the trigger.

NATHAN (O.S.)
Run now!

Aliyah's finger stops on the trigger. The sirens get louder.

ALIYAH
Goddammit.

She scrambles to her feet, and runs for it.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

Nathan hears whimpering. He walks a few paces to find Pori
hiding behind a tree and crying. He pulls her into an
embrace.

NATHAN
It's gonna be okay.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

A young, Black WOMAN fusses with a baby in a stroller.

WOMAN

Who's a good girl? Who's the best
baby?

Shockingly, a BULLET enters her head from behind.

She falls forward to the ground, her fall pushing the
abandoned stroller forward.

The Cavalier drives by, young Nathan gaping through the
passenger window, horrified at what he's done.

In the carriage, the orphaned baby bawls, covered in her
mother's blood.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ALIYAH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

That same crying face, 20 years later. Aliyah lies on her
bed, the rifle beside her, bawling her eyes out.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

INT. NATHAN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Nathan wakes up. Sunlight streams through the curtain-free window. Nathan reaches for his kufi, but just before he puts it on, he feels around in the lining. There's something in there--

--it's an ELECTRONIC BUG.

Nathan frowns, thinking. Then he decides to put the bug back in.

He hears some CHIRPING and looks up to his window. It's a nuthatch out on the ledge. Nathan smiles.

INT. PRECINCT - MCGRAW'S OFFICE - DAY

McGraw is on his phone.

MCGRAW

He's not exactly what we wanted.
He's too insubordinate. But he's
what we got ... Uh-huh. The Freep
is pulling a negative story on us.
They want to do a puff piece on him
instead. It's working.

There's a KNOCK on the door.

MCGRAW (CONT'D)

Speak of the devil. Gotta go ... of
course he thinks it was my idea.

McGraw hangs up.

MCGRAW (CONT'D)

Come in!

Nathan enters.

MCGRAW (CONT'D)

Why didn't you call for backup?

NATHAN

I don't have a phone.

McGraw slams a hand on the desk.

MCGRAW

Don't be cute! You just blew a hole
in my best detective!

NATHAN

Your best detective had a tattoo
marking him as a member of a white
supremacist militia called The
Nest. He was using the Muslim
community as a playground...

INT. GODLESS' SUV - DAY

Godless and Chili sit in silence in the car, listening to the
bugged conversation on speaker.

NATHAN (V.O.)

... Raping and killing with
immunity. I don't believe you
endorsed it, but I do believe you
looked the other way ...

INT. PRECINCT - MCGRAW'S OFFICE - DAY

NATHAN

... That's why I didn't call for
backup.

MCGRAW

Are you done, you self-righteous
prick? 'Cause I've been doing some
digging myself.

He takes a folder off his desk and tosses it at Nathan.

MCGRAW (CONT'D)

You told me you said goodbye to
your cellmate when you checked out.
Your cellmate died seven years ago.
You've been alone since then, per
your own request.

Nathan opens the folder. He sees a picture of Ishmel along
with the descriptor "DECEASED." Nathan stares out the window.

NATHAN

I'm never alone.

MCGRAW

Sure. Here's something else. Last
night, our techs pulled a thirty-
caliber slug out of a tree.

(MORE)

MCGRAW (CONT'D)

Freeman shoots a twenty-two. I could ask questions but I won't. You might say I'm looking the other way.

NATHAN

And why would you do that?

MCGRAW

Because you're valuable to me.

NATHAN

As Special Liaison to the Muslim Community.

McGraw shrugs.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

But that's a sham, isn't it? What you really want is Godless. And you think you can get to him through me.

MCGRAW

Why would I think that? You told me he hasn't reached out. And you're a man of integrity.

He stares at Nathan with a challenging smirk. Nathan holds his gaze.

MCGRAW (CONT'D)

Now if you're quite done with your conspiracy theories, I've got a job for you.

He tosses Nathan another folder.

MCGRAW (CONT'D)

There's been a series of vandalisms of local mosques I'd like you to look into.

Nathan flips through the folder.

MCGRAW (CONT'D)

You're gonna need a new partner. Try not to shoot this one.

Nathan looks up at him.

NATHAN

I know who I want.

INT. GODLESS' SUV - DAY

Chili takes out his gun.

CHILI

This time I won't miss.

GODLESS

Put it away. The hit's off. Nate isn't gonna give us up. Matter of fact, he could be useful.

Chili sighs in disappointment, and puts the gun away

INT. PRECINCT - BULLPEN - DAY

Nathan leaves McGraw's office. He takes the bug out of his kufi, and tosses it in a SMIRKING COP's coffee, much to the cop's dismay.

SMIRKING COP

What the hell?

INT. GODLESS' SUV - DAY

Godless and Chili wince at the LOUD STATIC that comes out of the speaker.

INT. PRECINCT - BULLPEN - DAY

Nathan spots Sidhu.

NATHAN

Hey, Sidhu. Let's go to work.

Without pausing to see Sidhu's reaction, Nathan continues towards the exit.

Following a moment of confusion, Sidhu scrambles to his feet and follows Nathan, a slight smile on his face.

All eyes in the precinct watch the two men as they leave the building.

FADE OUT.

END OF EPISODE