

The Interview

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BLACK SCREEN:

The SOUND of a TICKING WATCH is heard as the Close-Up of a WATCH fades into view. The second hand hits 12 NOON...

EXT. EUROPEAN CITY CENTERS. BUSY STREETS - DAY

RAPID MONTAGE:

1. LONDON - Traffic moves across LONDON BRIDGE. A massive BOMB suddenly explodes in the center, collapsing part of the bridge into the water.
2. BARCELONA - The AQUARIUM and harbor promenade is bustling with people. A docked SAILBOAT suddenly explodes, destroying a section of the harbor and part of the Aquarium.
3. PARIS - The steps of the GRAND OPERA HOUSE are crowded with people. A BOMB suddenly explodes in the Opera House, blowing out the doors and collapsing the roof.
4. BERLIN - The main avenue of the city, the KU'DAMM, is overflowing with people and traffic. A BOMB detonates under the street. Carnage rips through the air.
5. ATHENS - The statue garden of the NATIONAL MUSEUM in the heart of the city is crowded with tourists and students. A BOMB explodes, vaporizing the entire open gallery.

INT. BRUSSELS. EUROPEAN INTERPOL HEADQUARTERS - DAY

The headquarters is in a frenzied panic with personnel rushing to and fro, speaking a dozen different languages.

We follow one man on a cell phone speaking Arabic into the main SITUATION ROOM where thirty people are manning phones and computers. His name is FAROUD, a French-Algerian agent.

He hangs up his phone and looks up at a giant VIDEO SCREEN. Multiple news channels cover the chaos all over Europe.

An older man with grey hair, JOSEPH, stands next to Faroud and watches the video screen. He is the calm in the center of the storm.

JOSEPH

What is the bad news from Algiers,
Faroud?

FAROUD

Not a whisper.

JOSEPH

Same with the rest of North Africa.
Must be the Levant or Gulf area.

FAROUD

Al-Qaeda?

JOSEPH

No. Something bigger. Much
bigger. Bombs like these have
never been used anywhere in the
world by terrorists. This is a new
threat; a statement.

On the giant video screen above them, security cameras show
the blasts from different cities.

FAROUD

Syria? Iran?

JOSEPH

Perhaps. For now, we are in the
dark. Its been two hours since the
blasts and we have absolutely
nothing. No one has taken
responsibility. This is unusual.

A pretty 30 year old Greek Woman, ALEX, rushes in with a
piece of paper.

ALEX

Joseph, sir. I've got something.

She hands him the report.

JOSEPH

Tell me.

ALEX

The bombs are all made with the
same components. Tri-clinium
Dorite.

JOSEPH

Am I supposed to have a reaction to
that, Alex?

ALEX

(nervous/uncomfortable)

Sir, no sir. It is an experimental
explosive being produced by only
one country in the world as part of
a new long-range missile system.

JOSEPH
Who? Russia?

ALEX
Our scientists are still confirming
the data, but are 99% sure...

JOSEPH
(impatient)
Who!?

ALEX
Sir. It is exclusively produced by
the United States of America.

Joseph stares at both Alex and Faroud and then turns his back
on them to stare at the devastation on the monitors.

JOSEPH
(whispering)
Get me The Pentagon on the phone
immediately. This information is
now classified.

Alex and Faroud leave the room. Joseph tears the bomb report
into tiny pieces and places them in his pocket.

INT. THE PENTAGON, WASHINGTON D.C. - DAY

Five SUITS walk into a de-briefing office deep within the
Pentagon. Suit 1 is the Alpha.

SUIT 1
What do we know?

SUIT 2
What we know is irrelevant right
now. What Interpol knows is
critical. They made the bombs out
to be ours. Home-grown U.S. prime.

SUIT 1
From where?

SUIT 4
Sir, it appears to be military
grade from a long range ballistic
missile program, FIREFLY.
Operational as of eight months ago
out of a secret test facility in
Nevada.

SUIT 1

Well, how the fuck did it get into Europe, boys?

SUIT 5

(uncomfortable)

Sir, it seems to be material stolen from a shipment of components.

SUIT 1

What? When did a shipment of high-tech bombs get stolen?

SUIT 3

Four months ago.

SUIT 5

Army brass was keeping it under a tight lid so they could track it down themselves before anyone else knew it was missing.

SUIT 1

(sarcastic)

Guess they ran out of time, huh?

SUIT 3

They figured it was an inside job, so they were more interested in finding the mole than retrieving the materials. They notified us this morning when they recognized the signature of the blasts to be their own.

SUIT 1

Get me General Zane on the phone right now.

SUIT 4

Sir, I don't think he'll be much help, sir.

SUIT 1

Well, why's that?

SUIT 4

He shot himself in the head this morning at his home here in D.C.

SUIT 1

Well, God Damn it, can any of you throw me a bone before I brief the President?!

The four Suits stare at their boss in silence.

SUIT 3

Army Intel guesses that all the stolen material had to be used in the bombings. The terrorists have none left.

SUIT 1

Yes, but now they have a taste for it. If they got their hands on it once, they'll want it again. We need to find out who supplied them. Anything? Anything at all?

SUIT 2

The best lead we have is through an ongoing investigation led by the FBI and ATF...

SUIT 1

Oh God, we're doomed!

SUIT 2

Sir, the FBI and ATF notified the Pentagon an hour ago that they are looking for a U.S. based arms dealer who they suspected to have stolen the shipment from the military.

SUIT 1

Do they have an address on this guy? Maybe a pretty picture or something?

SUIT 2

Not exactly. Only a name, "Draco." They don't even know if he exists.

Suit 2 opens a manila envelope and pulls out a dark blurry 8x10 PHOTO. The image is of a man wearing a hat with most of his face obscured. Suit 2 hands the photo to Suit 1.

SUIT 1

Get the Directors of the FBI and the ATF on the phone right now. Find out if the CIA knows anything.

(MORE)

SUIT 1 (CONT'D)

I want full clearance in all
branches. We're gonna nail this
guy.

INT. BRUSSELS. INTERPOL HEADQUARTERS. OFFICE - DAY

ECU of same PHOTO of Draco. Pull out to reveal Joseph
holding it in his hand as he sits at his desk in his office.
A knock at the door gets his attention. He slides the photo
under the leather desk-mat in front of him.

JOSEPH

Come in.

Alex accompanies an American Diplomat, MICHAEL SHARP.

ALEX

Joseph, this is Michael Sharp, the
new Pentagon liaison for the E.U.

JOSEPH

I wish I was welcoming you to
Brussels under different
circumstances, Mister Sharp.
Please, be seated. Thank you,
Alex.

Alex nods her head and departs.

MICHAEL

Thank you for seeing me so
promptly, sir.

JOSEPH

No, thank you, Mister Sharp. What
news do you bring me from the other
side of the pond?

MICHAEL

Not good, I'm afraid. Your people
are correct. The bomb components
would appear to be ours,
unofficially. They were apparently
stolen from an army shipment by a
man we call "Draco". Have you any
Intel on him?

JOSEPH

No, none. First I've heard of him.
Thought you Americans prided
yourself on not having terrorist
organizations living on your soil.

MICHAEL

Sir, this man is no terrorist. He's worse: an international arms dealer capable of getting his hands on the world's nastiest weapons and selling them to the highest bidder. We've been tracking him for years with no luck.

JOSEPH

What kind of bombs am I dealing with here?

MICHAEL

In liquid form, the substance can be smuggled in a bottle of champagne. It requires a chemical reaction, so it's stable to transport. You can shoot it and it won't blow up.

JOSEPH

Fun stuff you boys make.

MICHAEL

Well, sir, Europe was lucky that the terrorists didn't really know what they were doing. They used the wrong primer.

JOSEPH

(aggravated)

"Lucky?" I'm sorry, Mister Sharp... did you just come into my office and tell me that over five thousand European citizens are "lucky" to have your bombs rip through their bodies?

MICHAEL

Sir, it could have been much, much worse. I am here to prevent a second occurrence.

JOSEPH

No, Mister Sharp. With all due respect, I believe you are here to help me cover up your nation's blunder.

MICHAEL

No, Joseph. I'm here to help you save lives.

Michael gets up and grabs his coat.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

You have my private line. Please call with any developments. My office will keep you up to date with any information we gather. Good day.

JOSEPH

Good day.

As the door closes behind Michael, Joseph picks up his phone.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

Carmella, get me a flight to Prague immediately. Call Warden Slevbovich and tell him I'm coming to visit.

Joseph hangs up the phone and pulls out the photograph of Draco and stares at it.

INT. MESS HALL. PRAGUE HIGH SECURITY PRISON - DAY

A prison BRAWL is taking place in the main cafeteria section. Two groups are fighting one another tooth and nail.

A group gets the upper hand and corners one man, IVAN. Ivan, muscular beyond belief, is covered in Viking Tattoos and fights like a trained professional.

Cornered, he stays calm as the entire prison starts cheering his name: "IVAN! IVAN! IVAN!" The winning gang rushes in and smother him.

One by one, he viciously and critically injures each man, breaking bones, ripping off ears, biting noses, crushing testicles. He's unstoppable until someone shanks him in his shoulder with a homemade knife. He grabs the guy and breaks his neck.

GUNSHOTS go off and GUARDS in riot-gear rush in, stopping the fight. The prisoners boo as the guards put Ivan in shackles at gunpoint. As he's led off, the entire prison erupts in a cheer. They chant his name: "IVAN!, IVAN!, IVAN!, IVAN!..."

INT. PRISON INTERROGATION CELL - NIGHT

Naked, Ivan sits in chains at a table. Like an animal, he tries to drink from a plastic cup in front of him, unable to use his hands. A door SLAMS behind him, getting his attention. Two men enter speaking in Czech. One exits, and the other stands behind Ivan and comes into view. It is Joseph.

JOSEPH

I almost didn't recognize you with all those tattoos, Ivan.

Recognizing the voice, Ivan's demeanor changes. His face fills with tension.

IVAN

Joseph? Is that you? Let me see your face in the light.

Joseph cautiously walks around Ivan and sits across from him.

JOSEPH

They tell me you can't get out of those chains, but you and I know different, ay Ivan?

IVAN

No, they are right. If I could get out of these chains, you wouldn't be breathing right now.

JOSEPH

Ivan, is that anyway to speak to an old friend?

IVAN

(sinister)
Get out.

JOSEPH

I'm here to offer you freedom...

IVAN

Get out.

JOSEPH

Freedom, Ivan. Freedom...

IVAN

(growling)
I'm free here, in these chains.
(MORE)

IVAN (CONT'D)

At least here I know what I am: an animal. Here, I know what the future holds for me: nothing. Here, I am at peace away from your world of lies. Here, there is truth.

JOSEPH

You may never have a chance like this again, Ivan. Please, give me five minutes. I promise...

IVAN

(explodes)

Promise!? How dare you speak to me about promises! I have been reduced to an animal in chains because of your promises!

JOSEPH

(upset)

I am truly sorry. It was out of my hands... until now. Let me help.

Ivan's breathing settles and he calms down a little.

IVAN

Speak if you must. I have no choice but to listen, do I, *commandante*?

JOSEPH

I haven't been called that in a long time. Listen, I come here at great personal risk.

Ivan glares at him with death in his eyes.

IVAN

(sinister)

You have no idea.

Joseph leans forward and open-hand smacks Ivan across the face with all his might.

JOSEPH

(furious/screaming)

Wake up! This is not a dream! The world crashes down around us and you sit there in a pool of pity! Life is not fair! It is a horrible, detestable place, and no one, NO ONE, knows that more than me!

(MORE)

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

I put you here and now I can get you out... for a price. I won't come again, Ivan. I WILL let you rot in here and die, lost to the world. Do you understand?

IVAN

(broken)

I understood years ago, Joseph. Who do you want me to kill this time? A president? A priest? Who?

JOSEPH

It is a little more complicated than that.

Ivan's head droops and he stares down, feeling dirty.

IVAN

It always is, Joseph. I'm yours. Just get me out.

JOSEPH

You'll be briefed once you're on the outside.

Joseph gets up and passes Ivan. He pauses at the door with his back to Ivan.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

I never meant for this to happen to you, Ivan. It just did.

Ivan raises his head.

IVAN

Joseph.

JOSEPH

Yes?

IVAN

I want a full pardon, a new name, new history, a new life.

JOSEPH

It's a little more complicated than that. Get yourself ready. You leave tonight.

Joseph quietly exits the interrogation room. Ivan sits alone and stares forward. A tear rolls down his cold, stoic face.

IVAN
 (muttering)
 When this is all done, you are a
 dead man. I promise you that.

EXT. PRAGUE. PRISON - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Alarms, search-lights, and dogs suddenly break the still of the night.

Ivan runs for his life along a fence of the prison. Encountering two guards, he kills them both with spikes clutched in his hands.

He sprints forward, climbs over a barbed wire fence, and reaches a 20 foot wall. Bullets whiz past him and hit the wall as he leaps half-way up the wall and punches the bloody spikes into the mortar between the bricks in quick strides, quickly pulling himself over the wall.

He lands on the other side of the wall and sprints down a hill. Dogs are chasing right behind him as more bullets whiz around him.

Running full speed, he dives off a fifty foot drop into a fast-moving river and disappears into the night.

EXT. BRUSSELS. CAFE - DAY

Joseph's face is half covered by a newspaper he is reading. The front page has a prison photo of Ivan and reads: "Daring prison escape leaves four dead!" Faroud approaches and sits next to him. A WAITER approaches.

FAROUD
 Cafe' ole'.

WAITER
 Wee, monsieur.

The Waiter exits. Faroud leans close to Joseph and whispers.

FAROUD
 (nervous)
 This is a big gamble, Joseph. How do you know he won't come straight for us and kill us for putting him in there in the first place?

JOSEPH
 Revenge is the last thing on his
 mind. He wants to be free.

FAROUD
 Where is he now?

JOSEPH
 He could be anywhere.

Faroud's eyes open wider and looks around suspiciously.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)
 Relax. He'll contact us soon.
 Today or tomorrow. One thing is
 for sure, he's our only hope of
 getting to Draco. The Americans
 are either unable to find Draco, or
 unwilling.

FAROUD
 How do you know Ivan hasn't just
 run off and ditched the mission?

JOSEPH
 My dear Faroud, he has something
 rare in this world. Something you
 and I both lack.

FAROUD
 (shoots him a look)
 And what is that?

JOSEPH
 Integrity.

Joseph smiles and sips his cappuccino.

EXT. NAPLES, ITALY. OLD QUARTER - DAY

Wearing an Italian wool cap low over his eyes, Ivan winds his
 way through the maze-like streets of Naples.

Coming up on an unmarked doorway, he enters without knocking.

INT. NAPLES. RESTAURANT - DAY

Ivan walks up to the dimly lit restaurant. The following is
 in Italian with English subtitles.

IVAN

I need to speak to Paulo. (*Scusa, devo parlare con Paulo.*)

BARTENDER

Who? Don't know anyone named Paulo. We're closed. (*Chi? Non conosco "Paulo". Noi siamo chiusi.*)

Ivan looks around the near-empty restaurant and eyes a few of the shady looking MEN who stare him down. Ivan tries again.

IVAN

My name's Ivan. I need to speak to him. Now. (*Mi chiamo Ivan. Devo parlare con lui. Adesso.*)

BARTENDER

(aggravated)

We're closed, now. Come back later. (*Noi siamo chiusi adesso. Ritorni piu tardi.*)

Two MEN behind Ivan cock shotguns and point the barrels at his head. He stays calm and stares at the bartender.

IVAN

I don't think this is a good idea for you guys. (*Non credo che quest' e' un buon idea per voi.*)

A bathroom door further in the restaurant opens and a large portly man in his fifties, PAULO, exits, drying off his hands. He stares menacingly at Ivan and walks towards him as he pulls a gun out and points it at Ivan.

Paulo stops a few feet away with the gun raised at Ivan's face. All the thugs in the restaurant are frozen in anticipation of what is to come next. Ivan's stone-cold demeanor cracks first, and he begins to laugh.

The Bartender and the gun-wielding thugs glance at each other and Paulo in confusion. Suddenly, Paulo too begins to laugh and takes a few steps towards Ivan and embraces him like a son, kissing him on each cheek.

PAULO

(cheery)

Ivan! You crazy son-of-ma-bitch!
I can't believe you here!

IVAN

I needed some good linguini, so I figured I'd stop by!

They both laugh and the thugs lower their shot-guns.

PAULO

(to bartender)

Apri una bottiglia di champagne!

Paulo and Ivan pull up stools at the bar and sit. The Bartender pops open a bottle of champagne and pours two glasses. Paulo puts a fatherly hand on Ivan's shoulder.

PAULO (CONT'D)

Sorry for the rude welcome. It's been a long time, and no one from the old crew is around these days. The company has grown.

IVAN

I've heard. Sorry I haven't been in touch over the past five years; been a bit tied up.

PAULO

Yeah, I know. When did you get out?

IVAN

A few days ago.

PAULO

Early parole?

IVAN

Not exactly. Guess you don't read the papers, huh?

PAULO

Only to see which one of my football teams are covering the odds. Why? You hot?

IVAN

Very. I need a place to stay for a couple days, and then I need a way out.

PAULO

Out of what?

IVAN

Europe.

PAULO

Europe? I was hoping you were coming back to work. Is it that bad?

IVAN

Yeah. That bad. Killed four prison guards as I broke out.

Paulo spits on the ground with disgust.

PAULO

Good riddance. Where do you wanna go? I've got the family working in Argentina now and some friends in Hong Kong who owe me a favor.

IVAN

I had somewhere else in mind.

PAULO

(curious)

Where?

IVAN

America.

PAULO

(surprised)

America?! Are you crazy! If you are hot, the last place you wanna fly into is America. The airports are impossible now.

IVAN

You still ship motorcycles to the states?

PAULO

Yes.

IVAN

When's the next load leave?

PAULO

Tomorrow. We'll set it up nice for you. Be like a cruise, almost. You be in America by end of the week. Anything else?

IVAN

Yes. I need to go to work for someone.

PAULO

Big-time or small-time?

IVAN

Big-time.

PAULO

Providence or New York?

IVAN

Bigger than that. I wanna work for Draco.

Paulo's demeanor suddenly changes. He motions to his bodyguards and the Bartender to leave.

PAULO

(in Italian to his men)

Lock the front door and leave us alone.

BARTENDER

Si, Paulo.

The Bartender and the men all quietly file out of the room.

PAULO

(in English to Ivan)

How do you know this name, Draco?

IVAN

You learn more about the underworld in prison than you do out here.

PAULO

I can't help you. Impossible. I can get you to America, but then you are on your own.

IVAN

I know you deal with him. Tell him who I am and what I've done for you and where I've been for the last five years. If you set it up, he'll take me in.

PAULO

You have no idea what you are asking of me. He doesn't exist, *capisce?*

IVAN

I come to you as the only person I can trust. The only person who can help me. I need to get there and disappear.

PAULO

That's the problem. One false move with Draco and you will disappear... forever. Sorry, no. I would give you my only daughter, but I can't do what you ask. Anything else. Anything.

IVAN

You once told me that if I ever needed a favor in return, I could ask. Now I'm asking.

PAULO

I cannot refuse a favor asked by the man who saved my life not once, but twice...

IVAN

I don't want to put it like that.

PAULO

But you did. You may regret the day you asked for this favor *figlio mio. Capisce?*

IVAN

Capisco.

INT. BRUSSELS. INTERPOL HEADQUARTERS. OFFICE - DAY

Joseph sits at his desk. He stares blankly at his computer. Alex and Faroud walk in. They are clearly shaken.

FAROUD

You heard?

JOSEPH

Of course.

ALEX

What do we do?

JOSEPH

We continue to track down the bomb supplier and the terrorist cell with all possible means.

FAROUD

You think they'll do it? I mean, the terrorists, if they don't get what they want?

JOSEPH

I think you know the answer to that question.

ALEX

The governments won't give in, will they?

JOSEPH

No. Give in to one terrorist and you give in to all of them.

FAROUD

Then we wait til they bomb us again and hope to catch them?

JOSEPH

We still have a chance. Ivan made contact an hour ago. One of our field agents gave him a beacon before his trip.

FAROUD

Trip? I thought you were using him to track down the cell here in Europe?

JOSEPH

No. I have a much more dangerous job for him. He's off to America to track down Draco. Find Draco and we'll find the cell.

EXT. NAPLES SHIPPING HARBOR - DAY

A dock CRANE hoists a red SHIPPING CONTAINER onto a cargo SHIP. "DUCATI" is painted on the side of the container.

MONTAGE:

1. The ship cruises out of Naples harbor. The sprawling city and Mount Vesuvius can be seen in the distance.
2. The ship plows through the ocean's open waters.
3. The ship passes through the Panama Canal.
4. The ship docks at Los Angeles Harbor.
5. Cranes unload the cargo containers. We follow the Ducati Container as it's hoisted off and placed into a holding yard.

INT. BRUSSELS. EUROPEAN INTERPOL HEADQUARTERS - DAY

In the Central Command room, Joseph and his staff track Ivan's movements and current location on a monitor.

ALEX

Sir, he hasn't moved in hours.
Perhaps he ditched the motorcycle
beacon and walked out.

JOSEPH

No. He's waiting for something.

FAROUD

If he waits any longer, he won't
make the meeting.

JOSEPH

He's fine. Let me know the moment
he moves.

EXT. LOS ANGELES HARBOR. CARGO HOLDING YARD - NIGHT

The Holding Yard is surrounded by barbed wire fences. The Ducati container is high in the air on top of two other containers. One of its doors swings open slowly. We hear the sound of a motorcycle start up and rev.

Two GUARDS at a nearby security shack get up as they hear the noise and take out their flashlights to see what's up.

Suddenly, we hear tires squeal and an all BLACK DUCATI and a rider blast out the container full speed to make the jump, landing perfectly.

The motorcycle spins around and heads for the guard shack and main gate where the two Guards are trying to pull out their guns in time... too late.