

ONE LAST MISSION

EXTRACT

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'ONE LAST MISSION'

INT. ISRAELI LECTURE THEATRE - DAY

A shaft of light pierces the darkened room illuminating a screen with aerial shots of a parched desert landscape bisected by a river. The occasional glint of a belt buckle indicates the presence of a dozen members of the military. The sound of jet engines swell.

EXT. TWO F15 ISRAELI FIGHTERS -DAY

The fighters scream overhead leaving white crystalline trails in the blue sky as they soar over the icy peaks of Mt Hermon.

INT. COCKPIT ISRAELI FIGHTER -DAY

Staccato ground-control chatter in Hebrew intersperses the deep throb of the engines. The pilot concentrates on a screen showing the mountainous foothills including the fast approaching dam. Figures giving altitude and distance scroll across the screen as he locks onto the structure. He flicks a switch releasing a 2000 lb bomb which comes into view briefly prior before obliterating the dam in a silent flash. He is given the thumbs up by the pilot in the accompanying jet.

EXT. MARINE RESEARCH LAB, BELIZE - EVENING

International Herald Tribune headlines: 'Israelis bomb Lebanese dam'. A mobile phone rings. Mike Kravitz puts down the paper and struggles to find it. He is a lean and weathered 46 year old, lying in a hammock slung between palm trees with a barbeque sizzling in the background.

GEORGE (O.S.)

Mike. Howya doing old buddy

MIKE

George?

GEORGE (O.S.)

Got it in one.

MIKE

How'd you find me?

GEORGE (O.S.)

Have you forgotten? We have people to do just that.

MIKE

Of Course. You in New York?

GEORGE (O.S.)
Snowed in.

MIKE
Tough. Let me tell you I'm
suffering out here too - no air
conditioning - primitive latrines -
crap food. It's sheer hell.

Mike strips a crayfish and eats it.

GEORGE (O.S.)
Don't bullshit me - you rustic
hippy, you.

MIKE
What's happening?

GEORGE (O.S.)
I need you on a mission.

MIKE
Mission days are over. My job is to
nursemaid these green-horn
students.

One of them throws an empty beer can at him. He catches it
and lobs it back.

MIKE (CONT'D)
No respect for their elders.

GEORGE (O.S.)
I'm paying top dollar.

MIKE
Top dollar for what?

GEORGE (O.S.)
Fact finding mission to the Middle
East. The situation's heating up.
Politicians are getting nowhere.

Mike laughs.

MIKE
There's a surprise. Anyway, top
dollar's not going to tear me away
from this place.

One of the women in a sarong hands him another beer

GEORGE (O.S.)
No red tape.

MIKE

No.

GEORGE (O.S.)

\$15,000 per week....

MIKE

No.

GEORGE (O.S.)

Remember, you said once how you'd like just one mission that was going to make a real difference?

Mike takes a sip of beer.

MIKE

I'll phone you tomorrow morning.

GEORGE (O.S.)

Attaboy.....and don't work too hard.

Mike looks across at the woman in a sarong. She smiles back.

MIKE

I won't.

INT. LEBANESE HOSPITAL - DAY

A female reporter is standing in the emergency ward as fresh casualties are wheeled in

REPORTER

I'm in a hospital close to the site of the bombing of the reservoir. 20 construction workers have died and casualties are still being brought in.

V.O. continues over film

REPORTER (V.O. CONT'D) (CONT'D)

The Lebanese President has lodged a protest with the UN. An Israeli spokesman said that the construction was financed by the Syrians to divert waters illegally from the Jordan River. The Syrian foreign office is refusing to comment on the situation.

INT. UN BUILDING NEW YORK - DAY

Snow swirls between skyscrapers outside the smoke-glassed windows as Mike, still shivering in a light-weight tropical suit talks to George Levin, his chipper ex-boss. George wears a designer suit and mind-numbingly bright tie. A muted TV in the corner shows Israeli troop movements.

MIKE

You're expecting me to walk into a war zone and solve problems which shed-loads of experts have spent years working on... with no success?

GEORGE

This is a potentially explosive situation, Mike.

MIKE

George, when is it not an explosive situation in the Middle East?

GEORGE

We need to keep exploring ...anything to de-fuse the situation.

MIKE

Agreed but why not trawl through all those reports sitting on dusty shelves? Save yourself a fortune.

GEORGE

I need a detailed report on how access to water is continually acting as a flash point between the Arabs and Israelis.

MIKE

Here's the answer for free - it IS a continual source of conflict.

GEORGE

Thanks Mike - but I need chapter and verse on it, and more importantly, what alternative sources of water could be taped into.

(pause)

MIKE

If I take this on, and it's still a big if, I'll need you to action the findings. I'm not gonna have my ass shot off for a stack of paper.

GEORGE

You got it.

MIKE

OK, give me a day and I'll be back.

EXT. SYRIAN-ISRAEL BORDER - NIGHT

Syrian tanks on the move.

INT. HOTEL BEDROOM, NEW YORK - NIGHT

Pull back from TV screen showing tank movements. Mike is slumped in a chair watching.

NEWSREADER

Units of the Syrian army have re-entered Lebanon this evening. The US President has warned that America is fully in support of Israel. The Russians are backing the Syrians and Lebanese.

INT. UN BUILDING, NEW YORK - DAY

Mike and George resume discussions.

MIKE

Here's the scene: I need a team of 5 investigators; a base with communication and IT equipment; a couple of land cruisers; and budget of \$1.5 million

GEORGE

Some list!

Mike nods and smiles thinly

MIKE

I'll also need the co-operation of all parties to the dispute.

GEORGE

OK, we'll cue everyone up but the budget could be a problem.

MIKE

No problem... I suggest you look elsewhere.

Mike gets up and offers his hand.

GEORGE

Please, not so fast. I have a certain leeway but I'll need to run it past a few people first. Why don't you take in some lunch?

MIKE

OK but maybe you need to have a contingency plan.

GEORGE

If I need one, I'll devise one but you're my first choice. I'm sure we can find a way. 2pm suit you?

MIKE

Fine.

INT. CANTEEN - DAY

Mike is eating moodily. A TV screen behind him shows a crowd of placard-waving Palestinians alongside the Israeli security wall protesting about being cut off from their land and water.

INT. UN BUILDING, NEW YORK - AFTERNOON

The meeting reconvenes with the addition of a buttoned down bureaucrat in a symphony of beige.

GEORGE

I've taken the liberty of bringing in Dr Simon Grant, seconded from the US State Department.

MIKE

We've met.

Mike looks at Dr Grant grimly

GEORGE

Dr Grant has agreed to accompany the mission to contribute his knowledge of the area. Simon, you had some questions?

DR GRANT

First off - the \$1.5 million dollars you requested for 6 weeks - does that include fees for everyone?

MIKE

It does.

DR GRANT
Including yourself?

MIKE
Including myself.

Dr Grant barely acknowledges the reply.

DR GRANT
Secondly, we fully approve of your
choice of male experts....
(icily)
.....but we're curious about your
choice of female team members.
Presumably there is a reason for
your choice?

MIKE
Correct. They are all experts in
their fields which means they will
be able to throw fresh perspectives
on the situation - something which
I understand is required of this
mission. Any other questions?

DR GRANT
Not at the moment.

Mike turns to George.

MIKE
I appreciate the offer of help from
Dr Grant but perhaps the two of us
could discuss the fine details
alone.

George looks at Dr Grant and then back at Mike.

GEORGE
Would you mind Simon?

Dr Grant gets up reluctantly

DR GRANT
I look forward to working with you
later on a detailed strategy.

Mike smiles frostily. Dr Grant leaves.

MIKE
There's no way I'm having that
stiff on my team. He's a total
bureaucrat guaranteed to tow the US
party line. Our neutrality will be
compromised.

He gets up and prepares to leave. George looks sheepish for
once.

GEORGE

I had my arm twisted by the big-wigs. But I'm sure we can work something out.

MIKE

Something, without Dr Grant.

GEORGE

Leave it to me.

They shake hands and Mike walks out.

INT. KENNEDY AIRPORT, NEW YORK - NIGHT

Mike is in the departure lounge watching a televised session of the United Nations with the Russian Ambassador haranguing the US. Mike's phone rings

GEORGE (V.O.)

Your budget, team and resources have been approved.

MIKE

Minus Dr Grant?

GEORGE (V.O.)

Minus Dr. Grant.

MIKE

Excellent. Can you set up a video conferencing link for me?

GEORGE (V.O.)

Sure can.

Mike picks up his bag and heads for the exit