

AMERICAN SOLDIER

Screenplay by
Moh Salim and Steven Shenck
WGA Reg. Number 1709713

LOGLINE

American GI Jack Forester returns to Tora Bora, Afghanistan to avenge his friends killed by the Taliban. Instead of hate and revenge, however, he finds friendship and love.

SYNOPSIS

In 1992, when Mujahidin fighters took control of Kabul, they killed many minority Hindu families. RITA KAPOOR's father was in the currency exchange business in Kabul and was wealthy. When the Mujahidin came asking him for money, he paid; they asked for more money, he paid. One night he had no more money to give, so they shot him and his wife and threw acid in Rita's face.

During fall 2008, American GI JACK FORESTER and his team are fighting Taliban forces in the Tora Bora Mountains. Al-Qaeda leader BEN YEZID's and Taliban leader MULLAH RABBANI's men kill two of Jack's best friends. After his loss, Jack asks his friend GORDO SORANO to join him on a trek to the Tora Bora Mountains to seek revenge against Taliban leader Mullah Rabbani. Gordo agrees, on one condition: if Jack first helps him find treasure hidden in a Tora Bora cave, he would help him with Rabbani. Jack agrees, and they head to Tora Bora.

While Jack and Gordo travel the Tora Bora Mountain trails searching for lost treasure, two Taliban operatives, SALAAM KHAN and JAANGUL SAAFI, follow them. While searching a dark cave, an explosion takes place. Gordo and Jaangul die; Jack loses his sight, and a two-foot long rod impales Salaam's leg. With the help of his German Shepard, Jack finds his way to Salaam's side. Though they are sworn enemies, the situation forces them to help each other in order to survive. After a long reflection, Jack makes the right decision and helps Salaam.

Salaam leads Jack to Rita Kapoor, a Hindu-Afghan nurse. Jack falls in love with her from the moment he meets her. Rita was a victim of Afghan Mujahidin. They killed her family and sprayed acid on her face, causing severe injuries. However there is no way for Jack to know of the burns and scars on Rita's face, as he is blind following the explosion in the cave. Jack falls in love with Rita because of who she is, not what she looks like.

Taliban leader MULLAH RABBANI and his followers are informed that Salaam and Rita are helping a wounded American soldier. He sends his men after them. The Taliban succeed in finding them while they are trying to escape to Pakistan.

Jack, Salaam and Rita are arrested. They are transported to an old castle in the mountains near the Afghan-Pakistani border. All hope seems lost, as they are separated from each other, tortured and nearly killed. They succeed in escaping but are captured again.

Mullah Rabbani asks Jack to kill Salaam, but he refuses, and in the ensuing shootout, Jack is killed. Salaam escapes, but Rita and the children who accompanied them on their journey are imprisoned. Rabbani forces Rita to convert to Islam and marry him. Rita refuses and lights herself on fire, killing herself.

BEAT SHEET

ACT I - TREASURE AND REVENGE

In 1992, when Mujahidin fighters took control of Kabul, they killed many minority Hindu families. RITA KAPOOR's father was in the currency exchange business in Kabul and was wealthy. When the Mujahidin came asking him for money, he paid; they asked for more money, he paid. One night he had no more money to give, so they shot him and his wife and threw acid in Rita's face.

During fall 2008, American GI JACK FORESTER and his team are fighting Taliban forces in the Tora Bora Mountains. Al-Qaeda leader BEN YEZID's and Taliban leader MULLAH RABBANI's men kill two of Jack's best friends. After his loss, Jack asks his friend GORDO SORANO to join him on a

trek to the Tora Bora Mountains to seek revenge against Taliban leader Mullah Rabbani.

Gordo agrees, on one condition: if Jack first helps him find treasure hidden in a Tora Bora cave, he would help him with Rabbani. After some hesitation, Jack agrees, and they head to Tora Bora.

Set-up: Page 1-10 - Jack is back in Tora Bora, Afghanistan.

Jack is back in Tora Bora. Through rugged hills in oppressive heat, two Taliban fighters, SALAAM KHAN and JANGUL SAFI follow Jack, Gordo and Boomer, Jack's faithful German shepherd into a cave.

Theme stated: Page 5 - Tolerance.

The theme of the film is stated by a citation of Tennessee Williams in a portion of the dialog between Gordo and Jack:

"There are no 'good' or 'bad' people. Some are a little better or a little worse, but all are activated more by misunderstanding than malice."

Catalyst: Page 12 - Something profound happens that changes the world of the main Character.

When Mullah Rabbani kills Jack's best friends, Jack struggles with what to do. He knows that Tora Bora is a dangerous place; on the other hand, helping a friend is a duty. Death is at hand but he has no choice. In two weeks, Jack is back in Tora Bora to find treasure with his friend Gordo and avenge the deaths of his friends.

Debate: From Page 12 to 25 - Working together with an enemy or not?

Inside the cave, Jaangul fires at Gordo; the bullet hits a cache of small ammunition stored in the cave. An explosion goes off which kills Gordo and Jaangul. Jack loses his sight and a two-foot long rod impales Salaam's leg. Jack and Salaam are sworn enemies, but they need to help each other in order to survive.

Jack is blind; his best friend Gordo is dead; he is stuck in a cave behind enemy lines with just his rifle and his

dog. Jack knows that the moment he leaves the cave, blind and lonely, he is a dead man. On the other side, Salaam Khan knows that if the rock crushing his leg and the metal pipe stuck in his leg are removed by some miracle, he is still likely to die from bleeding out. No one can help him - not family, not Taliban, because he and the American are the only ones stuck in this cave. Salaam has resolved himself to a horrible death.

Soon it becomes clear to Jack and Salaam that, despite being sworn enemies, they must work together or die. Jack knows there are many things that could and would kill him in the Tora Bora Mountains. He is on an unauthorized mission so no helicopter is coming to rescue him.

Finally Jack makes the right decision; he works through the rocks with the help of his dog, Boomer to see what he can do for Salaam. Jack, with help from Boomer, walks blindly to the voice of Salaam and starts helping him. Jack removes the rock from Salaam's leg. Anticipating the pain of a hot metal rod rammed through his leg took great trust to accept that Jack would not just kill him. Jack and Salaam find a way to work together, each dependent on the other. There is no room for mistrust, or both men will die. At this point, Jack realizes that he has lost the treasure map. He is without his friend Gordo, and without treasure.

ACT II - FRIENDSHIP AND LOVE - B STORY

The B story is the story of an Afghan-Hindu young nurse named RITA KAPOOR. Rita comes from a Hindu-Afghan minority family. Her parents were killed by the Mujahidin when they took power in Afghanistan. Mujahidin leader Mullah Rabbani sprayed acid in Rita's face, leaving her with physical and emotional scars.

The rest of her family was killed in Jalalabad by the Taliban. Rita escapes from the Taliban and has been waiting for six months in a small village in Tora Bora for a human smuggler to help her go to Pakistan. In this small village, Rita Kapoor is helping mainly women who need medical help. Because there is no Medical Doctor in this village, she is forced to help anybody as a certified nurse in Tora Bora now. Salaam's fiancé Madina is helping Rita.

Fun and Games: Page 25 to 55- discovering a new world.

For Jack and Salaam, the journey begins. They walk out of the cave with difficulty. Boomer helps them out. They stumble onto a main trail. Jack walks with the help of a stick to find his way; Salaam walks using his gun as a crutch. The trail is very rough, and Boomer walks out front sniffing for mines. The journey is difficult and slow. Salaam and Jack meet two farmers, Taher and Aziz. The farmers have three donkeys. They trade Jack's American rifle for two donkeys. Jack helps Salaam up onto one of the donkeys, and Boomer leads the way as they walk down the trail out of the valley. Finally, they arrive at Madina's house.

Midpoint: Page 55 - Jack meets somebody who changes his life.

The next day, Jack meets Rita. Salaam takes Jack to Rita's house for treatment of both of their injuries. Jack can't see Rita's scars on her face. Jack falls in love with Rita, because of who she is, not what she looks like. Jack discovers a new world of humor, kindness and joy with an Afghan family. Madina joins them and she tries to talk Salaam into marrying her now and not waiting any longer. Rita grows fond of Jack, but distrusts him because he is an American and she feels he is shallow and lacks a moral compass. Rita is hiding something - a bad secret that is never to be spoken of - and Jack can feel that her fear pulls her away from him.

The Taliban Close In: Page 55 to 65 - Journey toward Afghanistan-Pakistan border.

Mullah Rabbani and his men are closing in fast. To escape from the Taliban, Jack, Salaam, Madina and Rita start another journey, a much longer and much more difficult one, as they go to Pakistan together.

Salaam and Madina rescue two children, YASMIN and ABDULLAH, from the village. They also take two donkeys. They are not able to get many explosives or much in the way of ammunition. Without an intervention from God, Jack, Salaam, Rita and Madina will be overrun quickly. Salaam, Jack,

Yasmin and Abdullah will all be beheaded if they are caught. Rita, Madina and Yasmin will be buried up to their necks and stones will be thrown at their heads until they die.

The unforgiving mountain gets steeper and there is no way out except for a cable from an old mine that Abdullah knows to be very old and unreliable. They finally escape down the cable to freedom. Soon enough they will be in Pakistan, and there they will be able to contact the American embassy and head to freedom and the American Dream.

ACT III - ADVENTURES IN JALALABAD

All is Lost: Page 65 - 75 - Separation and Torture.

The caravan passes through the frontier of Afghanistan and Pakistan. They are inside the territory of Pakistan, close to the US embassy, but Mullah Rabbani and the Jihad Martyrs are closing in. Mullah Rabbani's men go after Jack, Salaam and other members of Salaam's family while they are heading to Pakistan. Mullah Rabbani's men find them and arrest them. They are transported to an old castle on the mountains near the Afghan and Pakistani border. Mullah Rabbani separates Jack and Salaam from Rita, Madina and the kids. Al Qaeda leader Ben Yazid and Mullah Rabbani's men torture Jack and Salaam in order to get the treasure map from them. Boomer is able to get in and help them all escape.

Dark Night of the Soul: Page 75 to 90. Attack on NATO BASE.

Mullah Rabbani's warriors wait for Salaam to come back from his hiding place. When Salaam arrives they arrest him as well as the others. Mullah Rabbani orders them all killed. Al-Qaeda and the Taliban, with the help of Pakistani Military Officers, plan to attack the NATO BASE, near Jalalabad airport. They force the protagonists to wear backpacks full of explosives. They are forced to accompany Taliban suicide bombers to the military base and carry out a suicide bombing.

The next day, Al Qaeda, Pakistani ISI agents and the Taliban attack the NATO military base. NATO forces push them back. Mullah Rabbani takes the hostages back to the castle on the mountain. Inside the castle's large living

room, while our heroes are present, Karim Shah, seeking to humiliate Jack and demonstrate to Rita and Madina that the American is not their friend, says to Jack, "I would give you freedom to go back to America if you kill Salaam." Karim Shah pushes Salaam in front of Jack. He hands Jack a spring-loaded pistol. Karim tells Jack if he wants to be free, he needs to kill Salaam. Karim warns Jack not to be foolish and do something that would lead to the death of all of them. Jack does not succumb to Karim's threat and does not kill Salaam. Jack instead shoots towards the voice of Karim.

Karim Shah falls over and dies. Mullah Rabbani screams "no!" and rushes to Karim Shah's side. Rabbani's bodyguard turns around. Jack apologizes to Salaam for being unable to resist temptation. Rabbani's bodyguard fires his shotgun. The bullet hits Jack with enough force to throw him back. Jack dies. Just as Jack's body hits the ground, all hell breaks loose. Salaam grabs the distracted bodyguard's revolver and shoots Mullah Rabbani who is running and screaming for help. Rabbani gets shot multiple times as he tries to enter the next hall. Salaam then is thrown back into the next hall and a shootout ensues as he trades fire with numerous Taliban fighters.

The shootout ends when Salaam runs out of the house. Two Taliban fighters capture Rita and Madina and threaten to kill them unless Salaam surrenders. Feeling that he has no other choice, Salaam surrenders and he is brutally beaten by the wounded Rabbani.

The Finale: Page 91 to 101

Rita, Madina, Yasmin and Abdullah are all crouched in the corner of their cell. Wounded Rabbani walks into the room angry. Rabbani sees Rita looking up at him defiantly. Rabbani slaps Rita hard. Rita lets out a scream, which reverberates around the whole room, after which she bursts into tears. Rabbani says to Rita, "now the time has come for you to get married to me. We will do this in one week in Badran." Rabbani walks over to Rita, touches her cheek in a fond manner while Rita recoils. Rabbani tells he will prepare a special ceremony, where Rita will be converted to Islam.

Madina, Yasmin and Abdullah are forcefully evacuated from the cell. Rita is left alone in the cell. She screams in tears, and finally passes out. When she wakes up, it is dark. She finds a candle, matches and an old dirty Kerosene lamp. She takes a long look at the tank of Kerosene, bursts into tears, then pours the kerosene on her head, empty's the tank completely, and lights the match. We see the flames and the dark smoke, and the flaming body of Rita moving; then we see the whole house in flames.

Meanwhile, Salaam, Madina and Yasmin are looking for Mullah Rabbani. A spy from the Karzai regime, Shamsulldin, helps Salaam to find Rabbani.

Salaam, with the help of Madina and Yasmin, surprise Rabbani with his two bodyguards near an abandoned warehouse. As Rabbani and his two bodyguards get out of the truck and walk to the warehouse door, Salaam, Madina and Yasmin attack them. Yasmin who is a martial arts champion helps Salaam. Rabbani's bodyguards are neutralized by Yasmin's punches. Salaam handcuffs Rabbani; Rabbani is forced to carry two suicide vests that Salaam had found in the back of Rabbani's truck. Salaam, Yasmin and Madina leave the warehouse. We hear Rabbani screaming; the sound of an explosion rocks the air, and the warehouse erupts in flames.

At the final scene, in Heaven, White Mist reveals Rita, looking beautiful in a traditional white dress, without her acid scars. She smiles radiantly as she looks upon Jack in his uniform, cleaned up, walking toward her. They look at each other and smile. Jack caresses Rita's face and gives her a kiss on her forehead. They hold hands and walk towards the light in slow motion. The camera pulls back. The Hindi music starts and the heavenly gardens come alive. Two hundred women and men are in colorful Hindi garments, dancing with joy. In front of them is Gordo Sorano. It is an unbound celebration of matrimony, hope and friendship between Afghans and Americans. And at its center are Jack and Rita.