

OPERATION AJAX

A play in three acts

Story by John Waller
Stage play by John Waller & Mike Etherington

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CAST OF CHARACTERS (in order of appearance)

1. **PRINCESS ASHRAF** - Dynamic and forceful sister of the Shah, born in 1920. Volatile, stubborn, rebellious, with an iron will. Forceful and scheming, considered to be the power behind her brother's throne.
2. **MOHAMMAD MOSSADEGH** - A bald, elderly Machiavellian genius, charismatic orator, consummate showman. Born in 1881, Mossadegh was educated in the west, his greatest strength his ability to mesmerize crowds with his speechmaking.
3. **HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY MOHAMMED REZA SHAH PAHLAVI, SHAH OF IRAN** - Born 1919, he is gentle, reserved and painfully shy. A creature of indecision, beset by formless doubts and fears. He succeeded his father, Reza Khan, who lead the coup d'état in 1921.
4. **DEAN ACHESON** - Mustached US Secretary of State to President Harry Truman, aged 69.
5. **KERMIT (KIM) ROOSEVELT** - Born 1916, Head of the Middle East Department of the CIA, grandson of Theodore Roosevelt. Effective, organized, charming and shrewd.
6. **GENERAL WALTER BEDELL ("BEEDLE") SMITH** - Director of the CIA until Dulles took over in 1952. Blunt, action man, aged 57
7. **NORMAN DARBYSHIRE** - British SIS Operative. Suave, charming, aged 35.
8. **BILL HERMAN** - Rough, ex-journalist. Principal Area Director, aged 35
9. **NOSSEY** - Iranian British Agent, aka "The Mad Musician" for his love of Strauss. Eccentric, he speaks in Persian-English. He wears a long mangy coat that hides a myriad of items.
10. **LOY HENDERSON** - U.S. Ambassador to Tehran, aged 61

SETTINGS

ACT I

- I.I: Princess Ashraf's Office, Royal Palace, Tehran - Morning
- I.II: Royal Palace, Tehran - Day
- I.III: D.C. Offices of Secretary of State - Mirror of 1.1 - Day
- I.IV: CIA Director's Office - Day
- I.V: Opulent Hotel Bedroom, South of France - Evening

ACT II

- II.I: Royal Palace, Tehran - Day
- II.II: Royal Palace Grounds - Night
- II.III: Herman's Embassy Office - Night
- II.IV: Herman's Embassy Office - Day
- II.V: Herman's Embassy Office
- II.VI: Herman's Embassy Office
- II.VII: Herman's Embassy Office
- II.VIII: Herman's Embassy Office
- II.IX: Mossadegh's Parliamentary Office
- II.X: Herman's Embassy Office

ACT III

- III.I: Under Secretary of State Office, State Department, D.C.
- III.II: Military Court, Tehran
- III.III: Hotel Room, USA

PRODUCTION NOTES

Operation Ajax deals with the initially positive reaction towards Iran by the Truman presidency, the paranoia of the Eisenhower regime towards the communist threat and then the coup itself.

Act I presents the background to the coup:

- I.I In 1950, Mossadegh and Princess Ashraf argue over the former's relationship with her father, the previous Shah - they are now enemies.
- I.II Ashraf challenges her brother to stop Mossadegh becoming Prime Minister.
- I.III In 1951, in his Washington offices, Secretary of State Dean Acheson is charmed by Mossadegh.
- I.IV January 1953. General 'Beedle' Smith, CIA director, plans the coup with Kim Roosevelt who will execute it. They agree to bribe Princess Ashraf to persuade the Shah to support the coup.
- I.V Princess Ashraf is in deep debt from her gambling addiction in the South of France, where she has been exiled to

Act II is set over 11 days in August 1953 in Bill Herman's office in the US Embassy in Tehran. It follows the coup through its failure at the first attempt to its final success:

- II.I Ashraf fails to persuade the Shah to support the coup
- II.II Roosevelt threatens the Shah that he will leave Iran if the Shah doesn't go along with the coup
- II.III Roosevelt, Herman and Nossey celebrate the forthcoming coup
- II.IV The royal decrees don't get to Shah before he flies off to the Mazandaran province on the Caspian Sea
- II.V Decrees arrive back by road
- II.VI First attempt at the coup fails
- II.VII Royal decrees stenciled for distribution, communists demonstrate, the Shah leaves the country
- II.VIII 'Beedle' Smith says come home, but Roosevelt refuses and tells the Ambassador to visit Mossadegh
- II.IX The Ambassador and Mossadegh have a row
- II.X The Coup succeeds.

Act III deals with the aftermath of the coup:

- III.I Gen. 'Beedle' Smith & Roosevelt plan their next coup in Guatemala
- III.II Mossadegh is sentenced to prison, here is his last speech
- III.III Roosevelt looks back at the time of the Islamic Revolution

Staging Suggestions:

Indicated Projections may be used and altered, or avoided, at the discretion of the director. They are included to guide.

Possible Minimal Staging Option:

The staging requirements can be minimal: large wall-mounted portraits of presidents etc.; a double flag stand; and a sofa with plush cushions (1.5), as the back seat of a car (2.2) and as a bed (2.5); on the wall a map of the world (1.3), and of Iran (2.3) and (3.1); a desk on top of which is a typewriter, a telephone and a radio (2.3). A window behind which is a back projector (2.7) and (2.10).

OPENING PROJECTION 1: IN 1921, THE PERSIAN SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLIC MARCHED ON TEHRAN TO OVERTHROW THE CORRUPT RULING QAJAR DYNASTY.

OPENING PROJECTION 2: IRAN WAS CORRUPT AND INEFFICIENT, RIVEN WITH CIVIL UNREST, RELIANT ON BRITAIN AND RUSSIA FOR ECONOMIC AND MILITARY SUPPORT. THE BRITISH GREW INCREASINGLY CONCERNED FOR THEIR OIL INTERESTS.

OPENING PROJECTION 3: ON JANUARY 14TH, WITH THE EXPLICIT SUPPORT OF THE BRITISH, REZA KHAN LEAD THE COUP D'ETAT, AND WAS INSTALLED AS THE NEW SHAH OF IRAN, ONE WHOM THE BRITISH COULD CONTROL.

WE ARE IN PRINCESS ASHRAF'S PRIVATE OFFICE IN THE ROYAL PALACE.

AN OFFICIAL, YET COMFORTABLE SPACE, THIS OFFICE IS ASHRAF'S PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL KINGDOM. AN IMPOSING DESK STANDS FACING A LARGE, FRAMED PORTRAIT OF THE SHAH. A SMALLER, MORE INTIMATE PHOTO OF THE SHAH RESTS ON THE DESK. TWO LOW CHAIRS FACE THE DESK.

SEVERAL MINIMAL PERSONAL ITEMS COMPETE FOR SPACE WITH THICK, HEAVY TOMES ON THE SMALL BOOKCASE ALONG THE WALL. A SABLE COAT HANGS ON A COAT STAND BY A DOOR.

ON PROJECTION: **ROYAL PALACE, TEHRAN, 1950**

AT RISE, PRINCESS ASHRAF SITS BEHIND HER DESK, EXAMINING A REPORT. PAPERS ARE SPREAD ACROSS HER DESK, METICULOUSLY ORDERED. AS THE DOOR OPENS TO ADMIT A SERVANT AND MOHAMMAD MOSSADEGH,

SHE CLOSSES THE REPORT AND TUCKS IT INTO A DRAWER.

SHE STANDS TO WELCOME HER GUEST. MOSSADEGH, A SEEMINGLY FRAIL OLD MAN, HOBBLES IN, SUPPORTED BY AN ORNATE CANE.

ASHRAF: Doctor Mossadegh, thank you for coming to see me. Please. (SHE GESTURES TO A CHAIR, BEFORE RETAKING HER SEAT. SHE DISMISSES THE SERVANT WITH A SMALL WAVE)

MOSSADEGH LOOKS AROUND AND DRAGS ONE OF THE LOW CHAIRS AROUND THE DESK, UNTIL HE SITS NEXT TO, RATHER THAN OPPOSITE, PRINCESS ASHRAF. SHE DOES NOT GIVE WAY ONE INCH.

MOSSADEGH: Your Imperial Highness, I have waited a long time for this meeting. It is indeed a pleasure to be here. I appreciate how busy you are. I thank you for taking the time to meet with me.

ASHRAF: Perhaps it has been too long since we last met. Your fellow representatives have certainly monopolized my time.

MOSSADEGH: (PAUSE) I understand that you have many friends in Parliament. That is good! I'm sure they tell you of our proceedings every day, perhaps even about my Oil Commission, which I am most humbled to chair...?

BEAT. HE SEARCHES FOR A RESPONSE, ANY UNSPOKEN CUE TO CONTINUE. ASHRAF SITS IN STONY SILENCE, POKER FACED.

MOSSADEGH: (HESITANTLY, GAINING CONFIDENCE) My princess. You must be aware of our struggle. So much of our future will depend on our re-taking control of our oil assets. As it stands, Britain takes nearly all of our revenue, and...

ASHRAF: (FIRMLY HALTING HIM) As you say, I am indeed very busy. I asked you here to discuss my new "Imperial Organization for Social Services".

MOSSADEGH: I have followed your work with much interest. My admiration for your soup kitchen is shared amongst many. The articles in your newspaper extoll your achievements.

ANGERED AT HIS FLIPPANCY, SHE STANDS AND MOVES TO FACE THE

PORTRAIT OF THE SHAH, BEAT,
BEFORE TURNING BACK TO
MOSSADEGH, WHO HAS REMAINED
SEATED

ASHRAF: (BARELY CONTROLLING HER GROWING FERVOR) Doctor Mossadegh, when we first entered our city's slums, we literally fell ill. Intellectual understanding is one thing! But the reality? Our own eyes had never even glimpsed the everyday misery that breeds such apathy and despair. I knew there were people less fortunate than I - but people who have no place to live, no food to eat, and no clothes to wear? Creatures jammed into such miserable, filthy quarters, with so little to sustain them? Until you see, you feel this, understanding is meaningless.

MOSSADEGH: Little has changed these past decades.

ASHRAF: Quite so! And when I took a jeep into more remote villages, I found the conditions to be no less grim. Out there, it is not unusual to find an entire family living on the pitiful yield of a date palm and a pair of scrawny goats. Living on the edge, these people have no protection, no hope to survive any pestilence, be it earthquake, drought or epidemic! They want for little, but receive nothing.

MOSSADEGH: (STEERING BACK TO HIS AGENDA) And this is why we need the oil money! To build the roads to these villages, to take them the food and medicine they need! But we cannot do that without controlling the oil.

ASHRAF: (BARELY HEARING HIM, BACK UNDER CONTROL, SHE FACES ASHRAF) To business. We are expanding our mission as fast as possible. We have extended our efforts to establish clinics in some of these areas, but we now need more support! We are hoping you will assist us with this.

MOSSADEGH LAUGHS. HE STANDS

MOSSADEGH: (RECOGNIZING HIS PETITION IS NOT GOING TO BE HEARD, HE DROPS HIS FACADE OF FRIENDSHIP, AND JABS) I am sure that many of your friends will be able to help you with this. I regret that I am unable to. Please understand, I would only be too happy to do my part, but thanks to your father, after he had me imprisoned, I have few friends remaining in politics.

ASHRAF: (SENSING AN OLD ARGUMENT) You were imprisoned for being a British agent. It was well known...

MOSSADEGH: (LAUGHING) That was the standard charge at the time.

ASHRAF: (RISING TO THE BAIT, ANNOYED AT THE INTERRUPTION) It was well known that you returned from your European studies on a British ship, and that it was the British who gave you the Governorship of Fars Province. These are facts.

MOSSADEGH: It was, in fact, the dignitaries of Shiraz that asked me to be their Governor!

ASHRAF: Do you deny working with the British in Fars Province?

MOSSADEGH: (GETTING WORKED UP) Far from it! It was the only way anything could be achieved.

ASHRAF: So you say our father had you imprisoned unfairly?

MOSSADEGH: (STAMPING HIS CANE FOR EMPHASIS) Yes. Yes, I do! I was arrested for no reason but my desire to help my people! Your father had me imprisoned in squalor in Birjand. Did you know that many were murdered in jail? I tried to commit suicide to avoid the same fate! At least that way death would come on my terms! Only when my son approached your brother, begging for clemency, was I released! Your brother, our Shah, was very brave to petition your father on my behalf. I have thanked him many times - publicly! But the scar of my imprisonment has never healed. My youngest daughter, my dearest Khadijeh, still only nineteen, has never recovered from the trauma! She has been in psychiatric hospitals in Switzerland ever since she tried to throw herself under your father's car. So yes! I resent my unfair imprisonment! You have a lot of nerve coming to me for help, after all your father did to me!

ASHRAF: But you were always against my father!

MOSSADEGH: Ah that is not true! When he was Minister for War, I became his Minister of Finance. Gladly. He asked me to use my knowledge to the benefit of our country, to bring order to Iran's finance! I was honored to be asked to do so. I admired and respected your father! I did not love and respect the dictator he became!

ASHRAF: This country has always needed a strong leader. But against every great achievement, you have

ASHRAF. CONT.: stood. Even our Trans Iranian Railway. It is counted as one of the greatest engineering achievements in the world, and you opposed it from the start!

MOSSADEGH HAS BY THIS POINT
WALKED AROUND TO CONFRONT ASHRAF
WHERE SHE STANDS, BENEATH THE
PORTRAIT OF THE SHAH

MOSSADEGH: It was paid for by taxes on the very food that feeds our poorest! Your father took food from the very mouths you are so desperate to now champion. The money we spent, much of it being paid to foreigners, should have been used to build roads that our citizens could use to improve their lives!

ASHRAF: (QUIETLY FUMING) My father built roads...

MOSSADEGH: (AS IF LECTURING A PETULANT CHILD) Your father built an empire of corrugated washboards! I said this at the time, your 'marvelous' Railway was built for the British to transport weapons to Russia for their war!

ASHRAF: And Stalin was grateful! Why, he told me so personally when I visited him to negotiate his retreat from Azerbaijan! He was absolutely charming.

MOSSADEGH: So I've heard. And generous no? (HE GOES TO THE COAT STAND, AND TUGS ON THE FUR) This is from him I believe?

ASHRAF: Did he not withdraw his troops?

MOSSADEGH: Whilst expecting us to give him all oil rights to Northern Iran! It is only thanks to our perceptive Parliament, thinking for the people, that the Soviets never got their prize! If we had given them what they want, we would never be able to now tell the British Anglo-Iranian Oil Company to get out of the South! Anglo-Iranian. Don't make me laugh! Do you realize the British will make more profit this year than we have been paid for the last 50 years! And you wanted to repeat this with the Soviets?

ASHRAF: (INCENSED) For you, everything is about the oil! They warned me about this. When my father negotiated a better deal from the British, what did you do? You opposed it again!

MOSSADEGH: And we are still suffering from it! You say you want more support, more money for your Social

MOSS. CONT.: Services Organization? This is how we do it: we take back our oil! Our agreement, back from 1933 no less, gives us but a small percentage of the profits. Today, Saudi gives the Americans only half the profit, and in Mexico they nationalized the British and American oil companies! They took back what was theirs! (HE TAKES A BREATH AND STEADIES HIMSELF.) The Americans recognize that fair market value compensation must be paid for the property, the oil, they take. The British do not, and this is why they must go. Far from the insulting few percent we get from them, I would set aside a quarter of the profits for their compensation, and retain the rest. We would use the money for infrastructure, education, and the poor! There is your money for social services!

ASHRAF: You are preaching to me on the need to nationalize? Like many Iranians, my brother and I are for the nationalization - provided it is carried out in a rational manner, through the proper channels.

MOSSADEGH: Your Imperial Highness, he has only said this in private. Now is the time for action. Public action. We must pass the necessary Acts in Parliament. My commission is determined that the British must go - properly, and rationally, compensated of course. It is time for your brother and yourself to come out from the shadows to publicly support us. (LONG BEAT - MOSSADEGH WONDERS IF HE'S REACHED THE PRINCESS.)

PRINCESS ASHRAF QUIETLY TURNS TO FACE THE PORTRAIT, AND RINGS A SMALL BELL ON THE BOOKCASE BELOW IT

ASHRAF: (QUIETLY) I've had enough. You come here and insult first my father, then my brother, and myself. I should have listened to my friends.

THE SERVANT ENTERS, HOLDING THE DOOR OPEN

ASHRAF: (TO THE SERVANT) Please show this gentleman out.

MOSSADEGH QUIETLY RETREATS, FOLLOWING THE SERVANT, BUT PAUSES IN THE DOORWAY

MOSSADEGH: I apologize if you feel I have insulted you. But my life does not have the slightest value compared with the lives of future generations

MOSS. CONT.: of the Iranian People. I thank you again for seeing me.

HE BOWS, AND EXITS

BLACKOUT

END OF SCENE I.I

ACT I SCENE II

WE ARE IN THE PALACE OF THE
SHAH, TEHRAN. IT IS AN ORNATE
ROOM, PUNCTUATED BY IRANIAN
FLAGS, AND A LARGE PHOTOGRAPH OF
THE SHAH.

ON PROJECTION: **ROYAL PALACE,
TEHRAN, SATURDAY APRIL 28TH,
1951**

AT RISE, THE SHAH IS PACING UP
AND DOWN. HE LOOKS TIRED, THE
WEIGHT OF THE WORLD ON HIS
SHOULDERS HE LOOKS AT HIS WATCH.
PRINCESS ASHRAF ENTERS. IN
CONTRAST, SHE HAS AGED WELL.

SHAH: Sister! I have been waiting. Whatever kept you?
Sayed Zia al-Din has been outside for the best
part of an hour!

ASHRAF: (WORRIED) Brother, there is trouble. Real
trouble. The Parliament has refused to support
Sayed Zia for Prime Minister.

SHAH: But the British only agreed to Sayyed Zia! They
remember him from when he lead with father. He
has always had strong British connections! They
said Husain Ala was too weak, and Sayyed Zia
was the strong leader the parliament needs!

ASHRAF: That is not all. Parliament voted for
Mossadegh.

BEAT

SHAH: (DISBELIEF) But that's not possible. Husain Ala
met him not two days ago and Mossadegh showed
no interest in becoming Prime Minister. Hell,
the British will not have this - he has been
their enemy for 40 years!

ASHRAF: And ours! He has hated the Pahlavi dynasty ever
since we ousted the Qajar. Never forget: he is
the son of a Qajar princess. We must always be
wary of that man.

SHAH: Tell me what happened in Parliament.

ASHRAF: They met in closed session and our man, as we
agreed, put Mossadegh forward as a candidate,
knowing that he didn't want the job - he's too
old and decrepit. He was then to propose Sayyed
once

ASHRAF CONT.: Mossadegh turned down the proposal. But Mossadegh accepted! And parliament voted for him.

SHAH: But it was a straw vote?

ASHRAF: Of course! That is tradition - only the old man demanded the assembly conducted a secret ballot.

SHAH: Which he won.

ASHRAF: Seventy-Nine to Twelve

THERE IS A LONG PAUSE

SHAH: So what happens now? I have to agree to his nomination and appoint him Prime Minister, the constitution insists. But the moment I do, he'll immediately put his Oil Nationalization bill before Parliament. (BEAT) Perhaps we can get it defeated and he'll resign? We can stop him later?

ASHRAF: Mossadegh will never let that happen. A condition of him accepting his nomination is that his bill be passed before his nomination comes to you at the Palace. He won that vote as well, unanimously. If he becomes Prime Minister, there is nothing we can do to stop him.

SHAH: (LOST) Ashraf ... what do we do now?

ASHRAF: (LONG BEAT) We find an alternate that Parliament will accept.

SHAH: We've tried that before.

ASHRAF: (GRUDGINGLY) That is true. You appointed Hajir. Islamic Fedayeen assassinated him. You appointed Razmara - assassinated. You appoint Husain, and within a year the British want him gone.

SHAH: So tell me what to do!

ASHRAF: I may have a solution. We must question Mossadegh's loyalty.

THE SHAH LOOKS AT HER, CONFUSED

ASHRAF CONT.: It has worked before. When you appointed Hajir, Qavam was in the way. He had the majority, but was not, malleable. So I met with him, told him

ASHRAF CONT.: that there were rumors he would set out to overthrow your rule.

SHAH: He would not have dared...

ASHRAF: (INTERRUPTING) That is beside the point. Listen. He denied it, and he begged to prove his loyalty to the crown. To do so, I told him he must resign. Naturally he refused, but agreed to hold a vote of confidence. With some assistance, he lost this vote, and you were free to appoint Hajir.

SHAH: That would never work with Mossadegh. What if he won? The people would find out you tried to get rid of him. What then? There would be an uprising! The man is a fanatic! He is too popular! The people believe the spells he cast over them.

ASHRAF: (FURIOUS) So you will sit back and do nothing? You will not fight for our throne? Are you man or mouse? Answer me!

SHAH: Sister...

ASHRAF: (ON FIRE) So you will cower in the palace gardens? Play with your dogs? Lie with your horses? Do nothing to stop this travesty? Your father's empire...

SHAH: THERE IS NOTHING I CAN DO! Ashraf, you must face the truth: we will lose! We have lost!

ASHRAF: Then the throne is lost. If you do nothing, I will be forced into exile. Mossadegh has no love for me. (VENEMOUSLY) Nor I him.

THE SHAH STANDS IN PITIFUL SILENCE

ASHRAF CONT.: (QUIET PASSION - DESPERATE TO GET THROUGH TO HIM!) Mossadegh is our enemy. (BEAT) Will you do nothing?

THE SHAH TURNS AWAY, IN DENIAL

ASHRAF CONT.: I'm serious. Choose. (BEAT) Me or Mossadegh.

HE TAKES A DEEP BREATH, STEELING HIMSELF

SHAH: (CHOOSING HIS WORDS CAREFULLY) Sister. I have no choice. I must, and will, stand by our Constitution. Mossadegh will be Prime Minister. And he will hang himself without your help.

ASHRAF:

(QUIET) Then it's goodbye. We will leave immediately. You will not see me again until Mossadegh is gone.

ASHRAF STALKS OUT

BLACKOUT

END OF SCENE I.II

WE ARE IN DEAN ACHESON'S OFFICE, IN WASHINGTON DC. IT IS A CLONE OF PRINCESS ASHRAF'S OFFICE, BUT WITH US FLAGS AND A PHOTOGRAPH OF PRESIDENT TRUMAN. A LARGE, WELL ANNOTATED MAP OF THE WORLD IS MOUNTED ON A BOARD AT THE BACK.

ON PROJECTION: **STATE DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON D.C. OCTOBER 1951**

AT RISE, ACHESON IS WAITING FOR HIS GUEST, MOSSADEGH, TO ARRIVE. THE DOOR OPENS, AND, AS BEFORE, MOSSADEGH SLOWLY HOBBLER IN ON HIS CANE.

WHEN HE SEES ACHESON, HOWEVER, HE CAREFULLY SETS HIS CANE ASIDE IN THE COAT STAND, AND WITH GREAT POISE, WALKS IN TO GREET ACHESON. ACHESON DARTS OUT FROM BEHIND THE DESK TO SHAKE HIS HAND.

ACHESON: Prime Minister Mossadegh! President Truman has bid welcome you to Washington. Please allow me to congratulate you! Time Man of the Year!

MOSSADEGH: (SITS, TUCKING HIS LEGS UNDER HIM.) It is not often one has the opportunity to beat President Truman and Mr. Churchill at their own game. I am therefore truly honored to have received this accolade. Mr. Secretary of State, if I may call you this, it is my sincere pleasure to be in the greatest country on earth. Your invitation was most gracious. (HE SETTLES HIMSELF) I have also greatly appreciated the opportunity to briefly glimpse your history! Your Liberty Hall in 'Philly' - yes? - was most inspiring.

ACHESON: Haha yes indeed. (BEAT) Well thank you for visiting! It means a lot to us here.

MOSSADEGH: It means a lot to us Persians also. Your constitution, your democracy, are what we strive to emulate. For many years our elections have been rife with interference, although our British 'masters' deny it. (BEAT) Only now do we finally have a truly elected Parliament. Your country is a model for us all.

ACHESON: (MOVED - SINCERE) You do us great honor, Prime Minister Mossadegh. Thank you. (BEAT - WALKS OVER TO THE MAP) It is indeed an honor for us to have you here. You've come a very long way to address our United Nations.

MOSSADEGH: (HUMBLY WAVING THIS AWAY) Mr. Secretary, I speak for a poor country, a desert. Just sand, sheep...

ACHESON: And oil. (BEAT) Lots of it. You are the Texas of the east.

MOSSADEGH JUST LAUGHS, WITH A SMALL SHRUG. CARDS ON THE TABLE

MOSSADEGH: That may be true. But Americans run Texas. Iran is different. The British have run my country for far too long, with their spies and corruption. Now, with the promise of change, they cry foul. (SAD LAUGH) They call us Wogs on the rampage, Mr. Secretary. (BEAT) Do I look like a golliwog? (HE STROKES HIS BARE HEAD)

ACHESON: I wish I were in a position to apologise for the disrespect, Mohammad, if I may call you that? You couldn't look more different. (BEAT) Of course, Wog can also be defined as Western Oriental Gentleman. That being the case, sir, you surely fit the bill.

MOSSADEGH: (LAUGHS) You are most kind. Worthy, I hope so. Oriental, to the west, so perhaps. Gentleman, most certainly. (BEAT) I will take that as a compliment sir!

ACHESON: I'm glad to hear it! Please don't be offended by the British and their... outdated sensibilities. (BEAT - THEY BOTH LAUGH) They can't be all bad surely?

MOSSADEGH: When I was governor-general of Fars, a Major Weir, British army, came to me. He told me that my people hate the British Militia, the South Persian Rifles. But that he could stop the hatred. (BEAT) Days later I find out he has sent the Rifles to 'punish' the chieftains who, he said, were stirring the trouble. I replied that far from helping, his use of the Rifles had only increased the people's hatred. (BEAT) I believe he knew this already, but just did not care. (LIGHTER) His successor was better, but the point stands.

ACHESON: (MORE RESPECTFUL) And how do the Persian's see us?

OVER THE TOP OF ONE ANOTHER:

Mossadegh:

Acheson:

Mr. Prime Minister, as you know, President Truman tried to help. When he heard the British were considering an invasion he was apoplectic...

(RILED UP - NOT LISTENING)
Eden thinks an alternative Government will be more stable. The only alternative will be Communist rule!

(TRYING TO GET A WORD IN)
...but when he offered Averell Harriman as peacemaker...

For which I thank you...

..., Harriman was met off the airplane by a mob of thugs, screaming anti American slogans!

MOSSADEGH: Communist Thugs! An illegal demonstration stirred up by the Tudeh Party. (LAUGHING) They used to call me a 'British' agent. Now they accuse me of working for you. You American's are their real enemy - the enemy of their masters, (SPITTING), the U.S.S.R. (CALMING) I instructed my police to break up the demonstration...

ACHESON: Hundreds were injured - twenty were killed!

MOSSADEGH: For which Police Chief General Zahedi himself was sacked and punished - along with others! You American's think I am a madman who would ally with the Russians - a 'Soviet Agent'? I turned them down long ago. Nobody can ever say I was bribed.

ACHESON: There are some who remain unconvinced. You must understand, there is a great fear of communist power.

MOSSADEGH: My record is clear. (KEEN TO MOVE ON, MOSSADEGH LEANS FORWARD EARNESTLY) MR Secretary, you must understand my only desire is to solve our oil equation so I can retire in peace.

ACHESON: Then why not settle matters with the British!

MOSSADEGH: (PAUSING FOR EFFECT) I have just come from your United Nations, where the British submitted a resolution to force Iran to maintain the status

MOSS. CONT.: quo, pending some final settlement. The Anglo-Iranian Oil Company will stop at nothing to safeguard their profits. Naturally their absurd resolution was rejected. Since the last century, British and Russian have interfered with Iranian politics at every turn. To protect their economic interests. They skirt our laws, our independence, our democracy, our rights! With absolute disregard for the sacrifices given to obtain them.

ACHESON: The British don't see it that way. Look at it from their point of view. They have lost valuable income, from a past close friend and ally.

MOSSADEGH: (GRUDGINLY) We have always been friends with England. It was the Oil Company that dragged the country needlessly into the dispute.

ACHESON: Then be friends with England. We believe we have a solution, which we are prepared to take to the British on behalf of Iran.

ACHESON OPENS A FILE ON HIS
DESK, PASSES A PAGE TO
MOSSADEGH.

ACHESON CONT.: You could supply oil to the British at a slight discount...

MOSSADEGH: Thirty-three percent is slight?

ACHESON: (CONTINUING) ...in compensation for the nationalization. You would still control the production. Two hundred thousand tons over the next two years. The compensation problem could then be put to arbitration.

MOSSADEGH: We have already agreed to compensate the British for the money it spent building its wells and refineries. But they must state the maximum compensation they would expect.

ACHESON: Absolutely.

A LONG PAUSE. MOSSADEGH PONDERES
ACHESON'S PROPOSAL

MOSSADEGH: And you will suggest this to the British. They get oil at a third off, and we get control?

ACHESON: I plan to put the proposal to the Foreign Secretary Eden before you leave Washington. Do you agree with our proposal?

MOSSADEGH:

(ASSESES ACHESON TO SEE IF HIS WORD CAN BE TRUSTED) You Americans reached a fair agreement with the Saudi's. Perhaps the British will agree to your proposal. (BEAT) Mr. Secretary, when I entered parliament, people said I was a 'free-agent'. I want to be free of foreign powers. I want the British out of my country. (BEAT) So. Yes. I agree.

BLACKOUT

END OF SCENE I.III

ACT I SCENE IV

WE ARE IN THE OFFICE OF GENERAL
"BEEDLE" SMITH, DIRECTOR OF THE
CIA. A LARGE PHOTO OF EISENHOWER
LOOMS OVER A SPARSE OFFICE. TWO
AMERICAN FLAGS STAND TO ONE SIDE
OF A LOW GREY SOFA. A LARGE,
PLUSH LEATHER CHAIR SITS TO ONE
SIDE

ON PROJECTION: **CIA, JANUARY 1953**

AT RISE, BEEDLE PACES FURIOUSLY.

BEEDLE: (AGGRESSIVE) Roosevelt, get in here!

ROOSEVELT hurries through the
door, arms laden with papers. He
sits.

BEEDLE CONT.: Listen Kim. We're into '53, and a hell of a
lot's happening. With Ike elected we're now
running the show. (BEAT) So when are those
fucking British gonna get their butts over here
to talk. Mossy went back to Iran over a year
ago!

ROOSEVELT: Mossy sir?

BEEDLE: Mossadegh! After his UN bullshit the Brits
won't accept Acheson's proposal, and, here,
read this... (HE GRABS A PAGE OFF HIS DESK AND
HANDS TO ROOSEVELT)

ROOSEVELT STARTS TO READ, BEFORE
BEEDLE EXCITEDLY GRABS IT BACK
OUT OF HIS HAND

BEEDLE CONT.: Mossadegh has to "fail, has to be crushed -
punished". Fucking Limey's couldn't run a yard
sale. Now Mossy's kicked them out, and he's
still in power! When is our Goddamned operation
going to go! Iran is one of the Chief's
(GESTURES TO THE PHOTO) key focuses. The op's
been approved - what the hell are we waiting
for?!

ROOSEVELT: General Beedle, Sir. You and John Foster Dulles
will meet the British immediately after
Inauguration on the, uh, 20th. They're every bit
as eager as we are. And I know for certain
Foster's keen.

BEEDLE: Foster's keen huh? He'll always 'fight the good fight' against the Commies. Of course he'll never accuse Mossy of that.

ROOSEVELT: But he'll sure as hell argue that if Mossadegh were to be, uh, assassinated, removed from power, the power vacuum would create an ideal opportunity for the communists.

BEEDLE: And where in the hell would that leave us! The whole free world relies on the Middle East for oil. It cannot fall into Commie hands. We have to get control of this situation.

ROOSEVELT: But the Soviet reaction...

BEEDLE: The Soviets won't do shit; hey this is their playbook. No, they can't object. Right here and now, we've gotta do something. We cannot just contain. There have to be regions where the US of A will simply not allow to fall to the commies. If they do, through covert or overt aggression, or subversion, we will be forced to consider those an act of war. Iran is now one of those areas.

ROOSEVELT: And the British are on board with this? What does Mr. Churchill think, Sir?

BEEDLE: When the Brits were kicked out Iran, they lost a chunk of their income - 300 million dollars a year, so they claim. So Churchill has no time for 'Mossy Duck', as he calls him (CHUCKLES). You gotta remember - it was Churchill who secured them oil wells in Abadan in '14. His (CHECKS HIS PAPER) 'Prize from fairyland beyond our wildest dreams" has fast become a nightmare. (BEAT) Being kicked out of Iran was a serious blow to their empire and their Suez Position. Now if Mossy Duck wasn't so popular throughout the region, this would have been a lot easier. The Brits - that sonnofabitch Eden - refused to do a deal, for pride, prestige, whatever bullshit. Now they want us to solve their problem.

ROOSEVELT: We have a lot of leg work to do Sir, but you can be sure that we'll pull this off.

BEEDLE SETTLES INTO HIS CHAIR.

BEEDLE: (GRUNTS, IRRITABLE) Well, get down to it boy, get this operation movin'!

ROOSEVELT TAKES THIS CUE TO OPEN THE TOPMOST FILE HE HOLDS, AND PASSES IT TO BEEDLE

ROOSEVELT: There's a lot of ground to cover. We've gotta be sure Mossadegh seems as vulnerable as we need him to be. We gotta be sure that he is seen, in the eyes of his people, to be in bed with the Russians, but most importantly, we've got to be certain the Shah really has the country's backin'.

BEEDLE: So what's the story with Mossy? Is he still strong?

ROOSEVELT: He was real popular at first Sir, back when they nationalized. 98% approval ratings. But the British then went and sabotaged their own wells at Abadan, to prove Mossadegh couldn't run them. They blockaded the ports, and cut off Iran's economic lifeline. With all the oil revenue gone, the country's economy is going south, fast - and fierce opposition is building.

BEEDLE: And what's the Soviet threat?

ROOSEVELT: We assess the Soviet threat to indeed be genuine, dangerous, and imminent. The Russians favor their unsuspecting ally, Mossadegh. If it comes to a showdown, we'll only succeed if the Iranian army and people get behind the Shah. They have to back him against Mossadegh and the Russians for this to work. But in my mind there is no doubt about it. The army has always stood behind the royalty. The Shah's father was a military man after all. It's all down to the people. With the economy in the mess it's in, even the ever-popular Mossadegh is in trouble with them. Sir, I think the crowd will support the piper, if that piper pays.

BEEDLE: Well go be the piper! Get your ass over there and make damn sure, damn soon, we clench this thing.

ROOSEVELT: I'll get onto it right away Sir.

HE MOVES TO LEAVE, BEEDLE
GRUNTS, AND HE TURNS BACK TO SEE
A FILE THRUST TOWARDS HIM

BEEDLE: Before you go, touch base with this guy (HANDS ROOSEVELT THE FILE). Bill Herman - new principal area director, zero agency connections. Work through him on this. Zero agency exposure! Herman'll be your primary contact. Details and photo in the file. He'll meet you at the Embassy in Tehran.

ROOSEVELT: Yes sir. We've also scared up a couple Iranians to help. Pay them enough and they'll turn the crowds against Mossadegh. The Boscoe brothers. London has a strong local network also, to get us to the Shah. We haven't made direct contact with the Shah yet, but their man Nossey will sort that. Right now it's too early to get him on side, but from what we understand, there's no love lost between him and Mossadegh. (BEAT) We'll get an ops plan together for your, and London's, approval.

BEEBLE: Good. Good work Kim. (PAUSES - BUT DOES NOT DISMISS ROOSEVELT) What's this gonna cost us?

ROOSEVELT: The price? - Minimal. And for securing a nation from the communists, no price is too high. The possible cost, to the U.S? (BEAT) Sir, we'll be starting riots, slandering a leader. We'll be hell bent on portraying their leader as a corrupt, Islamophobic commie, intent on destroying the morale of their armed forces. We'll be paying thugs to attack religious leaders, on 'Mossadegh's' orders. We'll be bribing the parliament, the police, the army. But we'll be securing a nation.

BEEBLE: Sounds like money well spent. But Kim, if things go wrong...

ROOSEVELT: Then Iran will fall to the Russians. Which it will anyway if we do nothing.

BEEBLE: (SELF REASSURING) Our case is strong. I'm sure Ike'll agree. Anyhow boy, you're doin' good. Got faith in you. So go, do it, and do it fast.

ROOSEVELT: Yes, Sir!

BLACKOUT

END OF SCENE I.IV

ACT I

SCENE V

WE ARE IN AN EXTRAVAGANT HOTEL ON THE FRENCH RIVIERA. GOLD LINES THE WALLS. OPULENCE IS THE MAINSTAY.

ON PROJECTION: **FRENCH RIVIERA, JULY 16TH 1953**

AT RISE: PRINCESS ASHRAF LEADS BRITISH SIS OPERATIVE NORMAN DARBYSHIRE INTO HER ROOM. SHE SITS ON THE SOFA, STREWN WITH PLUSH VELVET CUSHIONS.

DARBYSHIRE CARRIES A HOLD-ALL AND SITS OPPOSITE HER.

ASHRAF: Mr. Darbyshire, I apologies for being so hasty this morning with the American.

DARBYSHIRE: Your Highness, it is I who should be apologizing. It was highly disrespectful of me to suggest you would accept a blank check.

ASHRAF: And most un-British! You are normally a most courteous people.

DARBYSHIRE: And you are very brave yourself, to risk your life on such a hazardous mission.

ASHRAF: I would do anything to help my brother and my country. I do not require payment for doing so.

DARBYSHIRE: I understand this is far from your first such undertaking. I believe you met Stalin in Moscow no less!

ASHRAF: Such a charming man. Not at all what I expected. A soft, plump man with a thick moustache!

DARBYSHIRE: (FLIRTING) But to visit the Kremlin, that took true bravery.

ASHRAF: (HER ACTIONS MIMIC HER WORDS) I remember, when I was leaving. He put his hand on my shoulder, looked into my eyes and said 'Ana Pravda Patriot". Here is a true patriot!

DARBYSHIRE: Indeed. I should have realized that, and not made that uncouth suggestion. I beg your forgiveness. Perhaps we can start again?

ASHRAF: Of course. I fully understand your assumption. France is such an expensive place, and word has

ASHRAF CONT.: obviously spread that luck has turned against me. This of course will not last.

DARBYSHIRE: (SMILING) I explained earlier that I spoke for Winston Churchill, and the American you met is a personal representative of John Foster Dulles?

ASHRAF: Hah, I asked him to convey my regards to Mr. Dulles, to congratulate him on letting the genie Mossadegh out of the bottle!

DARBYSHIRE: Something Britain whole heartedly agrees with you upon.

ASHRAF: It is good to hear you will both be putting him back in his bottle. Such an evil man!

DARBYSHIRE: (CONSPIRATORIALLY) Now, our intelligence tells us that the Shah is still fiercely popular with his people. And, indeed, that the majority of officers and troops are loyal to the crown. This is now the time for action, and so we must ask for your help! Your Highness, you have always been close to you brother. If you choose to accept the mission, we can give you the details immediately.

ASHRAF: Yes of course! I will help my country in any way I can and (SMIRKS) I do not need a blank check to do so. So tell me, what is your plan?

DARBYSHIRE REACHES INTO HIS COAT
POCKET, EXTRACTS A DIARY, AND
READS FROM IT

DARBYSHIRE: The first step is to get a message to the Shah. We must be absolutely sure the courier is trustworthy - there must be no possibility of a leak! We immediately thought of you. This mission is far too sensitive for regular channels.

ASHRAF: Mr. Darbyshire, you must be aware I am in exile. I have no valid passport.

DARBYSHIRE: Leave the details to us. (BEAT) Will you do this - for your family?

ASHRAF: (PROUD) Of course. How soon can you put me on an airplane?

DARBYSHIRE: (PLEASED - THIS HAS ALL GONE TO PLAN) The day after tomorrow. I will brief you tomorrow on what to say to your brother, and will give you your papers then, along with some, ah, documents, for him. If you can get the train to

DARB. CONT Paris tomorrow afternoon, you'll be on the evening plane from Orly to Tehran. Is there anyone you can trust in Iran to meet you?

ASHRAF: That should not be a problem. I will cable a friend a coded message. However, if the press finds out about my arrival, they will go berserk.

DARBYSHIRE: Then it's up to us to get you in without them finding out.

ASHRAF: My brother will not be happy. He wants a quiet life, and is suspicious of the British.

DARBYSHIRE: We understand the Shah's concerns about us, but he must rest assured we're working closely with the Americans, including one he knows well - General Schwarzkopf. We will give you a letter, to give to the Shah, explaining that the General will be coming to see him. He's on a military tour of the Middle East, so his presence should not be seen as anything other than routine. It is our hope his visit will reassure the Shah of the American's sincerity.

ASHRAF: A splendid idea. The Shah and the General are old friends. I'm sure he'll be delighted at the reunion.

DARBYSHIRE: We want the Shah to be completely confident that this mission is supported and sanctioned at the highest levels. Mr. Churchill will be making a speech after you have been to Iran, and will include in it a phrase of the Shah's choosing, as a demonstration of this.

HE PAUSES. CHOOSING HIS WORDS CAREFULLY. HE REACHES FOR THE HOLD ALL

DARB. CONT.: Your Highness, you have been so graceful in your support for our plans, that I hoped some small token of our appreciation would not be taken as an insult?

ASHRAF: So charming, Mr. Darbyshire. I look forward to helping my country, and would accept a small gift with pleasure.

DARBYSHIRE: In which case, permit me to meet with you tomorrow morning. Would nine be too early?

ASHRAF: Perfect, Until tomorrow. Au revoir.

DARBYSHIRE HANDS HER THE HOLD ALL, AND WITH A BOW, EXITS AS

SHE OPENS IT. SHE EXTRACTS A
GORGEOUS WHITE FUR COAT. SHE
PUTS IT ON, AND TWIRLS IN
DELIGHT. SHE THEN FEELS IN THE
BAG AGAIN, AND PULLS OUT A LARGE
PACKET OF CASH. SHE KISSES IT,
AND PLACES IT BACK INTO THE BAG.

BLACKOUT

END OF SCENE I.V

END OF ACT I

ACT II

SCENE I

WE ARE IN THE PALACE OF THE
SHAH, TEHRAN

ON PROJECTION: **ROYAL PALACE,
TEHRAN, JULY 29TH, 1953**

AT RISE, THE SHAH IS SEATED,
READING A LETTER. PRINCESS
ASHRAF ENTERS. THEY DO NOT
EMBRACE. HE REMAINS SEATED, BUT
DOES NOT GESTURE FOR HER TO SIT.
SHE REMAINS STANDING, FACING HIS
DESK.

SHAH: (COLDLY) Princess. (BEAT). Your arrival is most pleasing. Your imminent departure more so. But I can spare a few minutes.

ASHRAF: I return to my own country and you, my dear brother. But you refuse to see me. Tell me what is going on?

SHAH: You are an uninvited, unwanted guest. From what I hear, you arrive with no visa, ignore our borders, and run into hiding.

ASHRAF: Well Mossadegh's men found me soon enough regardless. After I received your message that I was not welcome.

SHAH: Let me guess, you ignored our wishes and told them to go away?

ASHRAF: I said to tell Mossadegh to go to hell. I am an Iranian, and I will stay in my country as long as I wish! (PAUSE - CALMER) I have only come to beg funds for my son's, your nephew's hospital expenses. My plane waits at the airport to take me away.

SHAH: Oh sister. Word gets back. I hear it's rather a large bill no? Your extravagant life does not sit well with the people of Iran. We are an Islamic nation! Whilst a proud nation, we are a poor one. Now you know why you are not welcome.

THE SHAH TURNS HIS CHAIR AROUND
TO FACE AWAY FROM HER

SHAH CONT.: I am in agreement with Mossadegh. You may remain in Tehran until your business is complete. The government and palace have been instructed to assist you. But you will not leave the Palace without an escort and my express permission.

ASHRAF: In other words, I am under house arrest.

THE SHAH TURNS BACK TO FACE HER,
EARNEST

SHAH: Savor your blessings! Mossadegh remembers your plots against him. Even now your allies strive to block his every bill. But at heart he is a decent man. He has offered to help. You are an illegal; he could have made you leave immediately.

ASHRAF: (AGITATED) What's the matter with you? Have you gone soft? Mossadegh is the same evil man he was when I left! (BEAT). So why change your mind and let me see you?

SHAH: (HE SHOWS HER THE LETTER, BUT GESTURES TO HER TO KEEP SILENT. HE STANDS, AND CHECKS THE ROOM TO ENSURE NOBODY IS EAVESDROPPING). I have received this letter. I understand you have a message for me? I understand General Schwarzkopf has a similar intent. Before you leave, I thought it wise to therefore hear you out.

ASHRAF: (ASSESSING) The British and the Americans have been working on a plan to get rid of Mossadegh.

SHAH: (BLINDSIDED, SHOCKED) What? This is unacceptable. I will have nothing to do with this. This could bring down our entire dynasty Ashraf? How have you gotten caught up in this?

ASHRAF: Please listen! Before leaving France, I spoke with a charming Englishman...

SHAH: You know I do not trust the British.

ASHRAF: ...to prove he was genuine, he asks you to think of a phrase. Churchill himself will then use your words in his next speech. Then you will know he is genuine. Schwarzkopf is to repeat this briefing, to prove America's intent.

SHAH: (PAUSE) I am inclined to ask you to leave immediately - what if I say no to the plans?

ASHRAF: You will be responsible for the fall of Iran.

SHAH: An exaggeration...

ASHRAF: (INTERRUPTING) You must know, by now, that the political and popular opposition to Mossadegh

ASHRAF CONT.: is growing. Now you must become the focus of these forces. With some assistance, they can overcome Mossadegh's power and prevent Iran's fall to the Soviets! If you fail to lead, you will be responsible for the collapse of our nation, and the loss of independence to the USSR.

THE SHAH JUST STANDS IN SILENCE

ASHRAF CONT.: Mossadegh is leading the country to economic ruin...

SHAH: With the loss of the oil revenue.

ASHRAF: ...with his open invitation to communist infiltration! He will permit a communist takeover of the country. Oil is a secondary issue.

SHAH: But the Tudeh communists have been banned!

ASHRAF: Don't be naïve, brother. Face the facts. The British and American's have always supported you. If you don't agree, their support will withdraw. Iran will receive no further finance from the United States...

SHAH: Sister, I know how much you hate Mossadegh, but I am not sure I can believe you. The American's cannot and will not withdraw their money, they can't. If their concern is the Soviets, to do so would be disastrous for them. No, they would not do such a thing.

ASHRAF: You must listen to General Schwarzkopf then. If not your sister, maybe you will believe your friend. He will tell you again what you find so hard to believe now. (BEAT) You must make up your mind.

SHE HEADS TO LEAVE, TURNING FOR ONE LAST JIBE

ASHRAF CONT.: I asked you before: "Mossadegh or I" You chose Mossadegh, and look what our country has become. Now you must choose again: Iran or Mossadegh. I love my country, Brother. Choose wisely.

SHAH: (TROUBLED) I will think on what you've said.

HE MOVES TO EMBRACE HER, BUT SHE DOESN'T RECIPROCATE.

SHAH CONT.: (AWKWARD WAVE INSTEAD) Well. I wish you safe passage to France. Um...Bon voyage!

ASHRAF:

Au revoir.

SHE TURNS, PAUSES IN THE DOOR AS
IF REGRETTING HER LACK OF
EMBRACE, BUT STEELS HERSELF AND
LEAVES

BLACKOUT

END OF SCENE II.I

ACT II

SCENE II

WE ARE IN THE GROUNDS OF THE PALACE OF THE SHAH, TEHRAN. A GAZEBO RESTS TO ONE SIDE.

ON PROJECTION: **TEHRAN, MIDNIGHT, FRIDAY AUGUST 7TH 1953**

AT RISE, THE NOISE OF A LARGE CAR IS HEARD APPROACHING. IT STOPS. ROOSEVELT IS HIDING IN THE CAR. THE SHAH ENTERS STAGE AND CALLS OUT TO HIM.

SHAH: Rise, Mr. Roosevelt. I can assure you, it is quite safe.

ROOSEVELT: (LOOKING AT HIS WATCH AND SMILING) Good evening, well... good morning, your Imperial Highness. (HE STEPS OUT OF HIS HIDING PLACE).

THE SHAH GESTURES ROOSEVELT TO TAKE A SEAT IN THE GAZEBO. HE SITS, AND STARES INTO THE DISTANCE AS ROOSEVELT EARNESTLY SPEAKS TO HIM

ROOS. CONT.: Your highness, we have run out of time. It is past time for you to honour your commitment. For the past few months, not a day has gone past without my team working tirelessly to secure your future. We understand your reluctance sir, but the time has come to act.

THE SHAH CANNOT MEET ROOSEVELT'S EYE.

ROOS. CONT.: We have the momentum sir! Royalist protestors march through the streets, members of your parliament hold ready to stand by you when you move...

SHAH: (SNIDE) At what price Mr. Roosevelt?

ROOSEVELT: (IGNORING THE COMMENT) Every day, articles run through every paper, denouncing Mossadegh for his communist leanings. We must capitalise on the position we're in to free Iran from...

SHAH: (REPRIMANDING) I am now quite aware of the 'work' your CIA is doing. (BEAT - ROOSEVELT HAS THE GRACE TO LOOK QUIETLY EMBARRASSED) You Americans are always in such a hurry. In Persia we have the patience of millennia behind us. It is imperative that every detail be quite clear before we can move.

ROOSEVELT: (FRUSTRATED, STANDS) Sir. General Schwarzkopf explained this to you not last week! Your sister well before that. Our plans were very clearly explained to you. (SITS, CALMS) Your highness, this is our fourth meeting, and will be our last, unless matters change. Mossadegh's spies are everywhere. Unless we act fast, the truth will out. I am of the belief that we have less than a week to oust the Old Bugger.

SHAH: This is a risky business. One that I'm yet to be convinced is justified. What happens if, when, everything goes wrong? You will disappear and I. I will be left, (BEAT) to 'take the fall', as you Americans say. Give me a reason to believe your country will stand by its word?!

ROOSEVELT: (FEARING HE'S LOSING THE SHAH) Times have changed sir... President Truman...

SHAH: Pah, your President Truman has refused my every request for military equipment and weapons! I have told him, we stand with America in the war against the Soviets, yet...

ROOSEVELT: Beggin' your pardon, Your Highness. President Eisenhower sits in the chair now, and your struggle is his priority. (AS IF SHARING A SECRET) I have personally been briefed by the Secretary of State regarding this matter. He is gravely concerned of the rise of your communist party, and of the inaction of the Iranian government. He fears further development will prohibit the United States standing with Iran. I assure you sir; it is therefore his priority to ensure this does not come to pass.

SHAH: But how can I be sure...

ROOSEVELT: At your instruction, sir, did the President not declare, most ardently, at the Governor's convention, that 'the United States would not sit idly by and see Iran fall behind the Iron Curtain'? Your highness, the President does not alter his speech for just anybody. The British, I am assured, will do the same.

SHAH: But...

ROOSEVELT: (TAKING COMMAND) Sir you have two days. By noon the day after tomorrow, we need to know you are in agreement and that you'll work for us, with us, to safeguard the revolution. If we do not hear by then, I will leave the country and you

ROOS. CONT.: will never see us again. Your one window to save Iran will close.

SHAH: I must have time to review the details!

ROOSEVELT: Time is up Sir. Our principals have agreed with your choice for Prime Minister, Fazlollah Zahedi. It should be taken as a sign of their belief in you, sir, that they have agreed. (CHOOSING HIS WORDS CAREFULLY) The British were distinctly displeased. Hell, they've even agreed to fund his attempts to persuade his fellow officers to support his bid. This is your country. And it is our hope sir, that with our support, you will take back control of your nation.

SHAH: If only I had your confidence, Mr. Roosevelt. You ask me to walk a dangerous path. (BEAT). Mr. Roosevelt I am concerned. This royal decree you insist upon, to be sent out to my senior officers, demanding loyalty. What, what if it falls into the wrong hands? At best Mossadegh will have evidence of a plan, at worst, my forces could turn against me!

ROOSEVELT: You lead the army, your Highness...

SHAH: I am the Supreme Commander of all Iranian forces, but this will mean nothing if I am in jail under Mossadegh.

ROOSEVELT: There is no need to worry, your Highness. Everything will go according to plan, and your role is quite simple sir. Choose your officers, those you can trust completely. Once they have your word offering strength and support for a coup, they will follow along. Inform them Zahedi is to be prime minister, and we will take it from there. You can await the results from afar, perhaps from Tabriz, in Azerbaijan. Support for your empire, and your family, is strong there.

SHAH: They live under the Soviet gun. No, I will fly to Mazandaran, on the Caspian. Should anything go wrong...

ROOSEVELT: Nothing will sir.

SHAH: ... Should anything go wrong, we will plan from there. (GRANDIOUS) I shall follow in the footsteps of Mohammed, his flight from Mecca to Medina. Do you know the Hegira?

ROOSEVELT: An excellent plan sir. One final detail, however. Before you leave, we need you to sign royal decrees, dismissing Mossadegh and appointing Zahedi, to be circulated to the people to support the coup. You have my word that they will remain under lock and key until you are safely away from Tehran.

SHAH: You must promise me they will not be used before I am in Mazandaran...

ROOSEVELT: Sir. You can trust my word. But this must be done fast. You have two days. I will carry out our plans as detailed, but unless I hear from you before then, with the signed decrees, I, and the US Government, will leave Iran in disgust.

SHAH: (MESSAGE RECEIVED - BEAT) Mr. Roosevelt, you have made yourself perfectly clear. (BEAT). I will take my leave. My chauffer will come to drive you home.

THE SHAH EXITS, AND ROOSEVELT
WAITS, THINKING INTENTLY

BLACKOUT

END OF SCENE II.II

ACT II

SCENE III

WE ARE IN BILL HERMAN'S OFFICE, US EMBASSY, TEHRAN. PROFESSIONALLY BLAND, THERE ARE NO PERSONAL TOUCHES, NOTHING TO INDICATE ANYTHING ABOUT IT'S OWNER. WHERE A PHOTO OF EISENHOWER ONCE STOOD, A MAP OF IRAN TAKES ITS PLACE ON THE WALL. THE PHOTO LIES ON ITS SIDE, RESTING UP AGAINST THE WALL BENEATH THE MAP. WE SEE THE DIRT IMPRINT OF WHERE THE FRAME ONCE HUNG.

ON THE DESK LIES A TYPEWRITER, TELEPHONE, AND A PORTABLE RADIO, COMING OUT OF A BRIEFCASE. A TORN SOFA COMPLETES THE OFFICE, BENEATH A WINDOW LOOKING OUT OVER THE STREET.

ON PROJECTION: **US EMBASSY, TEHRAN, SATURDAY AUGUST 8TH, 1953**

AT RISE, ROOSEVELT AND HERMAN ARE DRINKING BOOTLEG SCOTCH, THE BOTTLE NEARING EMPTY. HERMAN AT HIS DESK, ROOSEVELT ON THE SOFA.

THE DOOR SLAMS OPEN. BRITISH AGENT NOSSEY BACKS IN, CARRYING A CRATE OF WHISKY AND A BOX OF FOOD. AS HE CAREFULLY PLACES THE WHISKY IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DESK, THE FOOD SLIPS OUT OF HIS GRASP ONTO THE FLOOR. HE DOES NOT NOTICE. HE PULLS A BOTTLE OUT, AND JUMPS UP ONTO THE WINDOW SILL, SITTING WITH HIS FEET ON THE SOFA

NOSSEY: A wonderful evening, my friends. Wonderful.

ROOSEVELT: (NO CLUE WHO THIS IS, RISING ANGRILY) Excuse me...?

HERMAN: (INTERRUPTING, INTRODUCES THEM). Bill: Nossey. Nossey's our man on the ground.

NOSSEY: (EXTENDS HIS HAND DOWN TO ROOSEVELT) We will be great friends. Tell me, do you like *kalian*?

HERMAN: Nossey, you know the rules...

NOSSEY: (WITH A JESTERS HALF BOW) Oh but most certainly, honorable chieftain. I merely wished to extend my own welcome to our grand friend.

ROOSEVELT DOESN'T KNOW WHAT TO THINK. HERMAN JUST TOSSES HIM ANOTHER BOTTLE. TAKES ONE HIMSELF, AND CHECKS OUT THE LABEL

HERMAN: The United States would like to thank you for your contribution to the cause, Nossey. Always the best. Real good of you to bring the food. So great.

HE GESTURES FOR ROOSEVELT TO PICK THE FOOD UP, AS HE GOES TO THE RECORD PLAYER. HE PUTS ON THE BLUE DANUBE. ROOSEVELT LOOKS AT HIM ODDLY.

NOSSEY: My mother made them. What a party we're having! (HE STARTS TO SWAY)

ROOSEVELT LOOKS BEWILDERED, TRIES TO CATCH UP. NOSSEY WAS NOT WHAT HE WAS EXPECTING.

ROOSEVELT: You're Nossey... Hey you're some dude! I gotta thank you for getting me in to the Shah. You shoulda seen him Bill, I came in on the back seat of the royal car, under a blanket. Shah was shitting himself every time he came out, scared what people would do if they knew he was meeting an American.

NOSSEY: No Problem man! I sent message to Fat Man in Palace! "Little shot has lively word from two big shots in America!" Word is to "pull up your socks and get going!" (NOSSEY CRUMBLES INTO LAUGHTER - ROOSEVELT HAS NO IDEA WHAT HE'S TALKING ABOUT. IN EXPLANATION:) He fixed up meetings. Went good yes?

ROOSEVELT: (TAKES A LONG GULP). Sure, sure. I mean, he's real hesitant. Taken this long to get him to stop refusing outright! Told him I had a million dollars for the operation, didn't change at all. So I've laid down the law. Told him we'd leave day after tomorrow if he doesn't sort his shit out. Think it's worked. (BEAT - REASSURING HIMSELF) He'll go for it. He's gonna fly up his estate on the Caspian, pretend he's ignorant of the whole affair. He'll go to Baghdad if it all goes down the pisser.

NOSSEY: Magical my friend, magical! So, what do you want me to do now?

ROOSEVELT: Bill briefed you? (HERMAN NODS) We need those decrees typed and delivered to the Shah, stat! He's gotta sign before he bugs out.

NOSSEY: I typed already. I'll make many copies for you. (HE PULLS OUT A SCRUMPLED BALL OF PAPER FROM HIS COAT AND THROWS IT TO ROOSEVELT)

ROOSEVELT: (UNFOLDING IT, PASSES IT STRAIGHT TO HERMAN) What's it say Bill? You speak Farsi.

HERMAN: (TRANSLATING: "To his Excellency Fazlollah Zahedi" Nossey you can't even spell right. "The situation in the country demands that We appoint an experienced and well informed person to take on the reins of State. Being aware of your merits and capabilities, we appoint you Prime Minister, by this Royal Decree, and ordain that you exert adequate efforts to remove this present crisis and raise the standard of living of the people. Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, Supreme Commander, Shah of... It's undated. Looks great to me! (HE THROWS IT BACK TO NOSSEY, TURNS TO ROOSEVELT) Kim, did he buy the telegram?

ROOSEVELT: (RECITING FROM MEMORY) Blah, Blah..."cable from President Eisenhower..." (FALSE OVERSINCERITY) "I wish your Imperial Majesty Godspeed!" If the Pahlavis and Roosevelts, working together, cannot solve this little problem, then there is little hope anywhere. I have complete faith that you will get this done!"

HERMAN: Kim, that's a stroke of genius. Ike actually said that?

ROOSEVELT: Of course not, I made it up. Ike would never send a cable. You kidding me?

HERMAN: But the Shah believed it was from him?

ROOSEVELT: Hook, line and sinker. He truly believes I am the messenger of the American and British people. Ever since Ike said his piece in that Governor speech. That clinched it!

NOSSEY: You and the Shah are greatest buddies!

ROOSEVELT: Hey, don't go too far. He likes me enough. Even likes his alias "Boy Scout" Liked Mossadegh's "old bugger" even more. There's no love between those two. (TO NOSSEY) Aren't you supposed to be taking him those decrees?

NOSSEY SHRUGS, FINISHES THE
BOTTLE, THEN HEADS OUT

HERMAN: (CHECKS HIS WATCH, AFTER NOSSEY'S GONE) Nearly time. He'll have those signed by midnight. We can get him on that plane first thing, and get the ball rolling.

ROOSEVELT: It's in the palm of our hands, man.

HERMAN: Once Mossadegh's arrested, we'll get our Boscoe boys out onto the street. Drum up the crowd for the Shah. Let nature take its course. (TAKES A SWIG). How did he take it, having to flee?

ROOSEVELT: Hah, he's quite happy to run and hide. He likened it to Mohammed's journey from Mecca. Hedge of Ra or something.

HERMAN: The Hegira? That crazy Muslim story. Mohammed ran for publicity. Makes sense. Maybe your Shah's not as simple as it appears.

ROOSEVELT: Hey, even he can see the advantage of being out of the way if this goes south. (FINISHES HIS BOTTLE, LIES BACK ONTO THE SOFA) Put on another record Bill, and pass a bottle.

HERMAN TOSSES A BOTTLE AT
ROOSEVELT, THROWS ON ANOTHER
RECORD. "LUCK BE A LADY TONIGHT"
RINGS OUT. DESPITE THE UPBEAT
TONE, NEITHER HERMAN OR
ROOSEVELT SHOW MUCH EXCITEMENT.

ROOS. CONT.: Hey, Good choice. Could be our campaign song. So let's have a toast. (HE REACHES UP, BOTTLE SPILLING) TO SUCCESS!

BOTH: SUCCESS!

ROOSEVELT: (DROPS THE BOTTLE) I'm going to sleep on the couch... in case I'm needed. (HE ROLLS OVER, AND IMMEDIATELY STARTS SNORING

HERMAN: (SMIRKS - HIS BOTTLE IS NEARLY FULL) 'Til the morning, Kim.

HERMAN TAKES THE BOTTLE WITH HIM
AS HE EXITS. AS HE SLAMS THE
DOOR SHUT, ROOSEVELT ROLLS OFF
THE SOFA AND HITS THE FLOOR. HE
DOESN'T WAKE. HE SNORES AWAY.

BLACKOUT

END OF SCENE II.III

BILL HERMAN'S OFFICE - DIRECT
CONTINUATION OF II.III, THE
MORNING AFTER.

AT RISE, ROOSEVELT HASN'T MOVED
FROM THE FLOOR. LIGHT STREAMS
THROUGH THE WINDOW, WE HEAR THE
CALL TO PRAYER.

HERMAN: (O/S YELLING) Fucking Hell. Can nobody do
anything in this goddamn country?

HERMAN STORMS THROUGH THE DOOR,
MEEKLY FOLLOWED BY NOSSEY. HE
KICKS ROOSEVELT AWAKE, BEFORE
PUNCHING HIS CHAIR

ROOSEVELT: (DAZED) What in God's name is going on?

HERMAN: The fat-ass Nossey gave the royal decrees to -
he loused everything up. Can you goddamn
believe it?

ROOSEVELT: Wait, what d'ya mean? (TO NOSSEY, URGENTLY)
Nossey, what's happened?

NOSSEY: Weelllllll...Fat man didn't get to Palace in
time. Fat man says bad weather in
mountains...Shah already took off. Went to
Mazandaran early.

ROOSEVELT: (QUIETLY) Fuck.

HERMAN: Whose side is Fat-Ass on anyway? Or is he just
a useless sonnofabitch. (HE KICKS A CHAIR
ACROSS ROOM, NOSSEY JUMPS OUT OF THE WAY)

NOSSEY: (AS HE GETS AGITATED, HIS ENGLISH GETS WORSE)
He good man! He would give life for Shah!

HERMAN: Oh he'll give his life alright. He'll be hung
as a traitor. If this fails, the Shah is done,
it's curtains for him? Hell, maybe he's gotten
cold feet. (TO ROOSEVELT) Kim, what's our
egress?

ROOSEVELT: We're not there yet Bill. (TO HIMSELF) Why
didn't he sign the decrees? (DRAGS HIMSELF UP
ONTO THE SOFA - HANGOVER KICKS IN. HOLDING HIS
HEAD IN HIS HANDS:) What do we do now. For
Chrissake!

A LONG PAUSE, AS EVERYONE,
INCLUDING NOSSEY, TRIES TO
FIGURE OUT WHAT TO DO.

HERMAN: Fuck it. Someone'll have to take them to the Shah. Wherever the fuck he is.

ROOSEVELT: Ajax goes down tomorrow Bill, there's no time. Who the hell would we get anyway?

HERMAN: It's that or we sign them ourselves. Got any better ideas? (TAKES CHARGE) Who do we have we can trust?

NOSSEY: Nassiry! Colonel Nassiry is good. Commander of Imperial Bodyguard. Shah trusts him.

HERMAN: Get him on a plane to fly the damn things to Mazandaran. The Shah'll be at his palace in Ramsar or at his mountain lodge. Kim - did he say where he was going exactly?

ROOSEVELT: It didn't seem relevant at the time. How do we get hold of Nassiry anyway?

NOSSEY: Buddies, I know friend of Nassiry. He will take to colonel.

HERMAN: It's not your Fat-Ass is it?

NOSSEY: No...

ROOSEVELT: Whatever, Nossey - get it done. Where are the documents anyway?

NOSSEY: Well, Fat Man has at palace...

HERMAN: (SHOUTING) Well get them back! Get them to Nassiry! And get goddamn Nassiry on the goddamn plane! Now!

ROOSEVELT: (CALMER, WITH URGENCY) Nossey, tell him to fly to Ramsar - makes more sense he'd go there. He needs to fly now. If he doesn't go soon, he won't be able to get back in time. Weather's turning.

NOSSEY TURNS TO LEAVE.

ROOS. CONT.: Bring some copies back here before you go. We may need them.

HERMAN: (YELLS - THROWS A BOOK AT NOSSEY) RUN!!

NOSSEY DUCKS, AND DARTS OUT THE DOOR

BLACKOUT

END OF SCENE II.IV

ACT II

SCENE V

WE ARE IN HERMAN'S OFFICE, THREE DAYS LATER. IT IS NIGHT. THE OFFICE IS A MESS, BOTTLES STREWN. THE MAP IS HEAVILY SCRIBBLED ON, AND A DETAIL OF TEHRAN HAS BEEN STAPLED ON TOP OF IT.

PROJECTION: **THREE DAYS LATER, WEDNESDAY AUGUST 12th**

AT RISE, ROOSEVELT IS PLAYING DARTS, USING THE MAP AS A DARTS BOARD. HERMAN PACES AROUND THE ROOM ANXIOUSLY.

ROOSEVELT: You'll wear a hole into the floor man.

HERMAN: (Agitated) Three days! Three whole fucking days! We're stuck here, doing jack! Not a fucking thing we can do! Fuck! (He falls into the sofa)

ROOSEVELT: Ah, you're just pissed I keep beating you. Another game?

HERMAN: Fuck off. When this is over, I swear I'll never play that god-awful game again! Is this all you did at Harvard?

ROOSEVELT: Hell no... We played chess.

HERMAN NERVOUSLY LAUGHS

ROOS. CONT.: (THROWS ANOTHER DART, PAST HERMAN, WHO DOESN'T EVEN BLINK) And what did the college of life teach you?

HERMAN: How to sit and drink, then do or die. The way of a journalist. (HE TAKES ANOTHER DRINK)

ROOSEVELT: And what will it be today, Bill, Do or Die?

HERMAN: (BEAT) If we're gonna die, let's at least get drunk first.

ROOSEVELT TAKES THE BOTTLE OFF HIM AND TAKES A SWIG.

ROOSEVELT: (LOOKS OUT THE WINDOW) Those clouds haven't lifted in two days. There's no way he's going to make it back with those damn documents.

THERE IS A LOUD RUCKUS OFF-STAGE. ROOSEVELT GETS UP TO GO

INVESTIGATE. HE COMES BACK
MOMENTS LATER WITH NOSSEY IN
TOW. HE HOLDS A THICK ENVELOPE

ROOSEVELT: Oh man, what a dirty bunch of thugs! Every damn one wants to hug and kiss me!

HERMAN: (DRILY) Any pretty ones?

ROOSEVELT: (IGNORES HIM) But Nassiry's men can be however filthy they want. Bill, Colonel Nassiry drove over mountains with the signed decrees. He broke curfew, but made it back.

NOSSEY: You happy now yes? Great friends!

ROOSEVELT: (SARCASTIC) Ecstatic. All the hugging and kissing is just what I want.

HERMAN: Show me them.

ROOSEVELT PULLS OUT A THICK
SHEAF OF PAPERS FROM THE
ENVELOPE

ROOSEVELT: Beautiful. Certainly looks like his signature.

HERMAN: Let me see! Nossey, are they genuine.

NOSSEY: (EXCITED) Absolutely Mr. Herman. Without any shadow of doubt... What job next?

ROOSEVELT: Hold on. Where was Nassiry, Nossey, there was no sign of him?

HERMAN: Never mind. Time is running out. Nossey. When can Nassiry get these to the right people.

NOSSEY: Tomorrow is weekend, and Friday no good. We wait until Saturday. Saturday good!

ROOSEVELT: Saturday? Hell that's a long time to wait. (BEAT) Fine. I'll keep them safe until then. We'll go from there. Let's hope there are no loose tongues. We're dead meat otherwise.

HERMAN: Go home Nossey. We don't want any questions asked.

BLACKOUT

END OF SCENE II.V

ACT II

SCENE VI

BILL HERMAN'S OFFICE

ON PROJECTION: **SATURDAY, AUGUST
16th**

AT RISE, HERMAN AND ROOSEVELT
ENTER THE OFFICE, HURRIEDLY

ROOSEVELT: Turn on the radio Bill, we'll just catch the seven o'clock news. (BEAT) God knows what's going on - absolute peace in the city last night. The only troops to be seen were by Mossadegh's house. That must be a good omen.

THE RADIO COMES TO LIFE, MIDWAY
THROUGH A MILITARY FANFARE

ANNOUNCER: (IN FARSI, ON RADIO) STAND BY. PRIME MINISTER MOHAMMAD MOSSADEGH WILL ADDRESS THE NATION

ROOSEVELT: What the hell is he saying Bill?

HERMAN: (MOSSADEGH SPEAKING ON RADIO. HERMAN LIVE TRANSLATING A BEAT BEHIND) My fellow Iranians. Last night there was an attempted royalist coup. Rest assured, your government is safe. We are still learning the facts...

HERMAN CONT.: (TURNING OFF THE RADIO) I got the message. The old bugger is alive and well. Says there's been a coup. It's been stopped. Shit. We've lost.

ROOSEVELT: (BIZARRELY ENERGISED) Not yet Bill! First strike's to Mossadegh, yes, but the game's not over yet. We can't lose this. (THINKING TO HIMSELF. BEAT) We've got to get Zahedi to a safe house. Mossadegh will know he's the Shah's replacement for him. He'll be out for blood.

THE PHONE RINGS. BOTH MEN JUMP

HERMAN: (ANSWERING) Hello? Dick! A friend at last. What the hell's going on. Thank God you speak the lingo. What did Mossadegh say. (LISTENS - GRUNTS IN REPLY TO WHAT HE HEARS) Uh-huh... Right... Uh-huh. That's Mossadegh's Chief right...? Ok. Yeah, we have a leak... (ROOSEVELT IS GETTING AGITATED NOT KNOWING WHAT'S GOING ON) Shit, what foreign help? Does he know...? The Brits - well let's hope he keeps thinking that. Gives us a chance.

(HE HOLDS HIS HAND OVER THE
PHONE AND UPDATES ROOSEVELT)

HERMAN CONT.: Mossadegh knew. Someone tipped him off. (DOWN PHONE) Hold on, I'm telling Kim. (BACK TO ROOSEVELT). Nassiry's been arrested. Mossadegh found out this wasn't domestic. He thinks it's the Brits that are behind it. (BACK TO THE PHONE) You're kidding me?

ROOSEVELT: What happened to Zahedi? He's the key to everything!

HERMAN: (DOWN PHONE) Dick, Kim's asking about Zahedi (LISTENING) Right... Thank God. (TO ROOSEVELT) Zahedi's fine. Got out in time. His friend's with Dick now. Mustafa something? Knows Zahedi's location, wants you to meet him.

ROOSEVELT: Hand me the phone (HERMAN DOES SO) Hi Dick. For chrissake hold on to him. If he can get me to Zahedi, I'll be right over. (BEAT) Oh, and Dick? Bill's gonna get a couple of journo's over to you to interview Mustafa.

HERMAN: What?

ROOSEVELT: (TO HERMAN) We have to get the message out: The Shah has sacked Mossadegh and appointed Zahedi in his place. This flips it onto Mossadegh. It's our way out of this. (DOWN THE PHONE) Don Schwind from AP, Kennett Love from the Times...Good man. Thanks. (HE HANGS UP)

HERMAN: What's the message you want out there?

ROOSEVELT: That Mossadegh has illegally exiled the Shah. Should play well.

HERMAN: Agreed. (REACHING FOR THE PHONE, DIALS) The last time we tried that, his supporters went ape shit. This may yet go our way. (DOWN THE PHONE) Nossey? Get round here. There's work to do.

BLACKOUT

END OF SCENE II.VI

HERMAN'S OFFICE. THE NEXT DAY.

ON PROJECTION: **SUNDAY, AUGUST
17th**

AT RISE, A CROWD IS HEARD
ROARING O/S. NOSSEY STANDS AT
THE WINDOW LOOKING OUT. HERMAN
AND ROOSEVELT ARE WORKING AT THE
DESK.

CROWD: (IN FARSI) DOWN WITH THE SHAH! DOWN WITH THE
SHAH!

ROOSEVELT: What's the matter Nossey? You're not your happy
self. Where's our Waltz King today?

NOSSEY: Your joke is not funny. I am, as you say, shit
scared. Shit scared! The crowd is searching for
supporters of Shah

ROOSEVELT: Relax - you're in the American Embassy. You're
safe. Come on, you have work to do. Have you
typed the two decrees?

NOSSEY PASSES THEM TO ROOSEVELT

ROOS. CONT.: Great. We'll make copies. How many do you think
we'll need Bill?

HERMAN: (GOES OVER TO THE MAP ON THE WALL) Mustafa can
take one to the commander in Isfahan (GESTURES
TO THE AREA). It's vital we get him on side -
he controls the south.

ROOSEVELT: (GETTING IN ON THE ACTION, GESTURES) His Buddy
Mohsen can take another one to the guy in
Kermanshah in the west. They should be all for
us, now Mossy's stopped them pumping. They'll
come around easily. That leaves the north:
Tabriz - who is too far away for to get here in
time in any case.

HERMAN: Don't worry about Tabriz. They're pro-shah. I
was there when his troops got rid of the
Russians.

ROOSEVELT: Nonetheless it'd be better to get all their
support. Then we need copies for all agents, to
get to any friendly politicians here. We'll
need money for them too.

HERMAN: And Press. Don't forget the Roscoe brothers.
We'll need them for the crowds.

ROOSEVELT: We're looking at several thousand. (SHOWS HERMAN THE ORIGINALS) What do you think Bill? These look the part?

HERMAN: Excellent job, Nossey. Get two thousand run up as fast as you can. (HE HANDS THE ORIGINAL BACK TO NOSSEY)

ROOSEVELT: The Boscoes will work wonders with these, and a case full of dollars. Should get enough of a crowd into the Bazaar to kick up one hell of a storm.

HERMAN: And when the shit hits the fan?

ROOSEVELT: The game will be won. (HE PUNCHES HERMAN IN THE SHOULDER, FRIENDLY)

THE CROWD GETS LOUDER

NOSSEY: (WORRIED) Friends?? Talk about shit - it's the bloody communists. Tudeh party has its thugs out in force. They're organised - and marching!

ROOSEVELT: (ASIDE TO HERMAN) Some of them must be ours right?

HERMAN NODS SUBTLY

NOSSEY: They've taken the street. They're looking, ah, looting, shops and... (HE STEPS AWAY FROM THE WINDOW) They breaking the Shah's statue.

ROOSEVELT: (COGS TURNING) Bill this could work in our favor. The more they loot, the more the people, and army, will turn against them (BEAT). Bill, second round goes to us. (HE TURNS ON THE RADIO)

NOSSEY: (TRANSLATES A BEAT AFTER THE ANNOUNCER, IN FARSI, ON RADIO) His Imperial Majesty Mohammed Reza Shah Pahlavi, Shahanshah of Iran, has departed from Iran. His destination is unknown, but all reports suggest he is heading to Iraq.

ROOSEVELT: Get going Nossey, get those decrees printed! We have to get them out before the day is out.

NOSSEY CHARGES OUT

BLACKOUT

END OF SCENE II.VII

BILL HERMAN'S OFFICE

PROJECTION: THE SAME EVENING

AT RISE, HERMAN RESTS ON THE SOFA. THE RADIO BLARES. ROOSEVELT IS SLUMPED ON THE FLOOR, BACK TO THE WALL.

HERMAN: (LISTENING) That's the foreign minister again. Boy does he lay it on thick. (HE STANDS, THEATRICAL) "O Traitor Shah!" You, shameless person, have ended the criminal dynasty of the Pahlavi's, fleeing into the arms of the British!

ROOSEVELT: If we can't fix this, the Shah's finished (BEAT) as are we.

AMBASSADOR HENDERSON ENTERS, FURIOUS. ROOSEVELT AND HERMAN SCRAMBLE TO STAND

ROOSEVELT: Ambassador Henderson, we weren't expecting you...

HENDERSON: I was in Beirut when I heard the news. I commandeered a plane and flew straight here. Roosevelt, how badly have you fucked up this operation?

ROOSEVELT: (BLAGGING) We've run into some minor complications sir, but everything is under control. Two, maybe three days, should see things develop to our favor.

HENDERSON: It no longer matters. Beedle Smith has cabled. He's pissed. Our orders are to get out, immediately. Ajax is finished.

ROOSEVELT: Ambassador we cannot do that. All the groundwork has been laid. (SCRAMBLING) Send Beedle a cable - Zahedi will be installed by tomorrow, and the Shah will return triumphant, by the weekend - latest!

HENDERSON: What the hell are you doing? What have you done that can't be undone?

ROOSEVELT: We've set the stage! A lot has changed since you've been in Beirut sir! Mossadegh has been inundated with negative press - the tide is turning against him. The people are rising. (MORE HONESTLY NOW) And we're in with Zahedi

ROOS. CONT.: for 135 large. If we drop out we lose that, down the pan. Forgetting all the other costs.

HENDERSON SITS, TIRED NOW

ROOS. CONT.: (TAKING THIS AS A CUE TO CONTINUE) Sir, we have 30 members of parliament willing to vote against Mossadegh. The army will come out for the Shah, we're certain of it! The religious leaders are up in arms about Mossadegh, their 'Enemy of Islam'. The people will follow their leaders!

HENDERSON: What don't you understand? If you fail, the United States will be persona non grata in Iran. Mossadegh will kick us out, wholesale! Leaving the door wide open for the soviets.

LONG PAUSE. ROOSEVELT, SEEING HE'S NOT GOING TO WIN, THINKS FAST

ROOSEVELT: (SLOWLY, GETTING FASTER) Then it's our job. Our job to persuade Mossadegh that the United States have had no part in the proceedings, and believe the interference to be Soviet led. He won't be happy, but it may work.

HERMAN: (CAUGHT SHORT, BUT CATCHES ON FAST) You think that would work? (ROOSEVELT NODS). Ambassador, could you threaten to pull everyone out, if the situation doesn't calm down?

ROOSEVELT: Go and see Mossadegh to complain about the harassment of Americans.

HERMAN: That's good Kim.

HENDERSON: (THINKING IT OVER) It may work. Mossadegh is still pro-American, and is at heart a decent fellow. He'll be upset that diplomatic guests of Iran have been mistreated. His people are steeped in their culture of hospitality.

ROOSEVELT: Ask for the police to protect the embassy against attack. It'll pull them off the street at least

HERMAN: Allowing the mobs to run wild. All undecideds will turn to the Shah, they won't want anarchy and communists to take over.

HENDERSON: And what if Mossy catches on? Suggests the Shah is fleeing?

ROOSEVELT: (RECITING) The United States takes the official position that the Shah remains Iran's leader,

ROOS. CONT.: even in absentia. Remind him that although he has fled, the same could be said of his Prophet Muhammed from Mecca, to dramatize a point.

HENDERSON: That'll confuse him. Hell it confuses me...

ROOSEVELT: And tell Beedle all will be resolved in three days! By the time the message reaches him, we'll have won.

HERMAN: Give the old bugger both barrels, Ambassador.

HENDERSON EXITS

BLACKOUT

END OF SCENE II.VIII

WE ARE IN THE PARLIAMENTARY OFFICE MOHAMMAD MOSSADEGH. IRANIAN FLAGS DECORATE THE SPACE. THERE ARE NO U.S. FLAGS - A DELIBERATE SNUB TO THE VISITING U.S. AMBASSADOR. A STACK OF NEWSPAPERS RESTS ON A SHELF BELOW THE PORTRAIT

PROJECTION: **TUESDAY 18TH AUGUST**

AT RISE, MOSSADEGH IS DRESSED IN FORMAL ATTIRE, HENDERSON IN A SUIT. HENDERSON ENTERS THE OFFICE, TO A COOL RECEPTION. MOSSADEGH'S RESENTMENT OF HENDERSON IS MASKED BY HIS COURTESY.

MOSSADEGH: Mr. Ambassador. (HE GESTURES TO A SEAT). I have summoned you here to answer to a grave charge that has been brought to my attention?

HENDERSON: Dr. Mossadegh?

MOSSADEGH: Two years ago, your predecessor, promised my country a significant loan - one which did not appear. Not only did it never arrive, he was soon recalled, at the British government's behest, I should add.

HENDERSON: I recall, however...

MOSSADEGH: Your subsequent offer of aid was contingent on my acquiescence to further, crippling, British oil demands. Naturally we declined your 'gracious' offer.

HENDERSON: Sir, if I may...

MOSSADEGH: (HE STANDS) You may not. I have not finished. Mr. Ambassador, at every turn, I find your government against me. Members of parliament bribed to vote against me; No confidence motions that, whilst unsuccessful, damaged the reputation of my government in the extreme. Now I am informed that operatives from your country are behind grievous attempts to remove me from my position. Propaganda. Lies. Slander! (WITH EACH SHRILL STATEMENT, HE SLIDES A NEWSPAPER ONTO THE FLOOR). Why are they working against us, Mr. Ambassador? Why are they so desperate to support a craven tyrant who flees in the face of opposition? To say this is improper is an understatement.

HENDERSON: Mr. Prime Minister. In the eyes of the United States of America, the Shah is the still the legal and rightful leader of Iran.

MOSSADEGH: You have no business interfering in domestic policy in Iran. Mr. Ambassador, these American sanctioned actions are a most serious act of aggression.

HENDERSON: Let me assure you...

MOSSADEGH: No words will reassure. Only actions. Mr. Ambassador, your country's actions have stirred mayhem in my country. Only recently, after our last meeting, as I departed the Palace, I was ambushed by a hostile crowd, riled up by your paid infiltrators no doubt. Whilst you may pass through unharmed, I contend with mobs screaming for my death! A coincidence? I would have been killed were it not for the quick action of my servant. The palace guards were nowhere to be seen. (SARCASM) Whilst I am certain His Majesty would mourn my passing, his remembrance would continue only until my body were thrown into a ditch to rot! And now, now the crowds have regained their sense, and turned to support their government, the Shah has flown into hiding!

HENDERSON: Ah, but Mr. Prime Minister, His Majesty's actions bear striking similarity to those of the Prophet Mohammad...

MOSSADEGH: (OUTRAGED) How dare you compare the Shah to the Prophet. How dare you!

HENDERSON: (FIRM) The Prophet fled not from fear, but to highlight his exile. His Hegira marked the rise of Islam as a world force. His Majesty's Hegira may prove to mark his own rise!

MOSSADEGH: (SENSING A BLOW ABOUT TO COME) We did not send him into exile. He left on his own accord - proof enough that he is behind the attempted overthrow of my Government!

HENDERSON: (IGNORING HIM, PRESSING THE IMPLIED THREAT) My fellow citizens are most distressed, and disturbed, to see a man, an ally, a friendly leader of a friendly nation, sent into exile by his subordinates - for no reason save political intrigue. This concerns us, Mr. Mossadegh.

MOSSADEGH: I do not know where you have heard these, these malicious lies, but they are patently untrue. My government...

HENDERSON: Your government is failing in its duty. To its people, its Shah... its guests.

MOSSADEGH: Mr. Ambassador...

HENDERSON: (THE HAMMER FALLS) Prime Minister Mossadegh. My fellow U.S citizens walk the streets of Tehran in fear for their lives. Their wives and children are tormented, their property damaged, their lives threatened by the rampant uncontrollable mobs that have taken control of Tehran. The Shah, fearing for his life perhaps, may have chosen the sanest route. (BEAT) Mr. Prime Minister, until you can control your people, which the U.S. government has little confidence in you achieving, we have no alternative. Your Excellency, effective immediately, I am instructing our diplomatic service to recall all personnel and dependents currently stationed in Iran, in addition to all United States citizens whose presence is not vital to our national interest.

MOSSADEGH: (VISIBLY SHAKEN) Mr. Ambassador I implore you to think! You cannot do that! (LONG PAUSE, HE THINKS DESPERATELY - PANICKING). Permit me more time! I will ensure your compatriots are afforded greater protection. The United States is a most valued ally. I will do everything in my power to ensure our bond is not shattered as collateral damage in our internal hiccups.

HENDERSON: (STARES LONG AND HARD AT MOSSADEGH) I will expect action. Your understanding is appreciated. I hope to meet soon under better circumstances.

NOT WAITING TO BE DISMISSED,
HENDERSON LEAVES. MOSSADEGH
COLLAPSES INTO HIS CHAIR, BEFORE
REACHING FOR HIS PHONE.

BLACKOUT

END OF SCENE II.IX

BILL HERMAN'S OFFICE, US EMBASSY

ON PROJECTION: **WEDNESDAY AUGUST
19TH, EARLY MORNING**

AT RISE, HERMAN PACES THE OFFICE. ROOSEVELT STANDS AT THE MAP, GLARING AT THE TELEPHONE, DARING IT TO RING.

WHEN IT RINGS, THEY BOTH STARTLE. ROOSEVELT DIVES TO PICK IT UP

ROOSEVELT: (DOWN THE PHONE) What...? Did I hear the radio? No you know I don't speak the lingo. What happened...? Fuck really?

HERMAN LOOKS AT HIM, WORRIED.
ROOSEVELT IS POKER FACED

ROOS. CONT.: Zindabad Shah? Long live the Shah? That's great! Dick, you're a saint! (HE SLAMS THE PHONE DOWN, TURNS TO HERMAN, WHO'S HOLDING HIS BREATH) Now don't get too excited...

HERMAN: (BURSTING) FOR GOD'S SAKE KIM! What's happening?

ROOSEVELT: Tabriz has come out for the Shah?

HERMAN: For real?

ROOSEVELT: As real as it gets. Dick says all through the northern suburbs people are cheering, blasting their horns. If you don't have a picture of the Shah in your windshield, heaven help you!

HERMAN: Don't get too excited. The Northern suburbs are the wealthy. It's the southern that truly count...

AS HE SPEAKS, AN AIDE COMES IN
AND HANDS HIM A TELEGRAM

HERMAN CONT.: Fuck. It's confirmed. (HE HANDS THE PAPER TO ROOSEVELT) Isfahan, the local army commander, won't get off the fence. We'll need to do something about that.

ROOSEVELT: (WHO HAS READ THE REST OF THE TELEGRAM) Maybe, but look here, Mohsen has persuaded the commander in Kermanshah to come out for the Shah. He's sending a battalion to Tehran to support the Shah. Mustafa and Mohsen are now

ROOS. CONT.: off to collect a... (HE READS THE PAPER) ...a task force, they call it.

HERMAN: Have we heard from Noss-

ON CUE, NOSSEY BURST THROUGH THE DOOR, EXCITEMENT RADIATING

NOSSEY: Nossey is here, my friends. Nossey is at your service! Mr. Bill, Mr. Kim, Tehran is crackling! On Monday, police attack everyone! Yesterday, Mossadegh bans all demonstrations, then send out soldiers under old Police Chief.

ROOSEVELT: He's playing right into our hands. The Chief's an outspoken royalist! He'd rather depose the government for the Shah than defend it.

NOSSEY: Soldiers are going crazy! They smash rioters! Hurl tear gas! Mossadegh orders all political supporters to stay home - even Tudeh thugs are gone!

ROOSEVELT: The field is ours Bill.

HERMAN: Ah, don't jinx it Kim!

NOSSEY: I have more... (HE WAITS, HOPING...AND HERMAN PASSES HIM A BOTTLE FROM A CUPBOARD. NOSSEY TAKES A LARGE SWIG TO CELEBRATE) Colonel Nassiry is free! I hear from police headquarters last night. All his men have been freed. I am sure Nassiry will marshal Imperial Guard to support Shah! Tanks and troops...

ROOSEVELT: Calm down Nossey. You've done good. (NOSSEY COLLAPSES INTO THE SOFA, EXHAUSTED. TO HERMAN:) Bill, that's the firepower we need to win the day.

NOSSEY: I forget. (HE REACHES INTO HIS COAT, AND PULLS OUT THE DAYS PAPERS, SLIGHTLY CRUMPLED) All papers have copies of royal decree. Six have interviews with Zahedi...

ROOSEVELT: They must be fake. We still have him in hiding. What do they say?

NOSSEY: (SCANNING) That Zahedi is legal Government. Basically. Papers supporting Mossadegh and Tudeh - they're all being ransacked. Set on fire! (HE'S EXCITED BY THAT)

ROOSEVELT: (NOT WANTING TO TAKE CREDIT) Well, we'll take what we can get. Once Tehran radio is taken, we'll control everything in and out.

NOSSEY: I came in through Shah...I mean Bazaar! But everything is Shah there. Hundreds of people are coming! All shout for the Immortal Shah!

HERMAN: Check and Mate. The 'Shah' is victorious. See any troops, Nossey?

NOSSEY: Everywhere sir! (HE MOCK SALUTES) They control all main squares. Mossadegh men, all gone.

ROOSEVELT MIMES STEPPING ONTO THE PLATE, BAT UP AND HOME RUN, OUT OF THE PARK. HE BASKS IN HIS IMAGINED ADULATION.

NOSSEY: Is there anything else I can do?

HERMAN: Sure. Cross your fingers. Touch wood (JOKING) Dance a jig, for all... (I care)

NOSSEY: (INTERRUPTING HIM. MYSTIFIED) Touch wood? I do not know this jig, but dance waltz, this I will do for you.

HERMAN: Just keep doing whatever you can think of to keep things crackling our way. Can you do that?

NOSSEY: (WITH A WINK AND MOCK SALUTE) You command for a wish Sir!

NOSSEY WALTZES OUT. HERMAN SLUMPS ONTO THE SOFA.

HERMAN: So what happens now Kim?

A NOISE FROM OUTSIDE, A CHANTING CROWD CAN BE HEARD IN THE DISTANCE. HERMAN AND ROOSEVELT GO TO THE WINDOW

ROOSEVELT: (QUIETLY) The bazaar. Shite look! (HE GESTURES)

HERMAN: There must be thousands there. It's a fucking circus. Is that a juggler, for real?

ROOSEVELT: Even the police are joining, look. (HE PATS HERMAN ON THE BACK). Our dollars have sure been well spent.

HERMAN: (WHISPER CHANTING ALONG WITH THE CROWD) Zindabad Shah! Zindabad Shah!

ROOSEVELT: I told you we'd do it. (HE TURNS AWAY, RE-ENERGISED FOR THE NEXT STEP) First order of business - I've got to get the Shah back. Our man in Rome hears talk that the Shah just wants to leave Iran and live out his days there.

ROOS. CONT.: Needless to say, maybe we can offer him a better proposition.

HERMAN: And what do you want me to do?

ROOSEVELT: Enjoy the moment. Be careful, there's going to be a fight. But the battle's won Bill. The chips have fallen into our corner. Take some time to soak it in. I'm going to get Zahedi out of whatever basement he's holed up in.

HERMAN: (CONCERNED, A MOMENT OF CONSCIENCE. QUIETLY) Kim, they're going to lynch him. (BEAT. KIM STOPS PLANNING AND LOOKS AT HIM) Mossy's troops will put up a fight, but he's lost. Unless he runs out the back, they'll get him, you know...

ROOSEVELT: Bill, stop. (BEAT) Whatever happens, you did you part well. Enjoy it. This will be a day you'll never forget.

THEY BOTH STAND IN SILENCE

BLACKOUT

END OF SCENE II.X

END OF ACT II

WE ARE IN THE NEWLY PROMOTED
BEEDLE SMITH'S NEW OFFICE, STATE
DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON D.C.
PHOTO OF EISENHOWER ON THE WALL.
PATRIOTIC EMBELLISHMENTS DRIVE
HOME THE LOCATION. A LARGE MAP
OF IRAN, ON A WHEELED CORKBOARD,
HAS BEEN BROUGHT INTO THE ROOM

ON PROJECTION: **ONE MONTH LATER**

AT RISE, BEEDLE SMITH WAITS IN
HIS OFFICE. HE STUDIES THE MAP
OF IRAN TO PREP HIMSELF.

A KNOCK.

BEEDLE: (EBULLIENT) Come in! Come in!

THE DOOR PUSHES OPEN TO ADMIT
ROOSEVELT, POLISHED UP, IN A
SHARP SUIT.

BEEDLE CONT.: The hero returns

ROOSEVELT: (SHAKES BEEDLES HAND) Nice office General. Is
this a promotion? CIA Chief to Secretary of
State...

BEEDLE: Under Secretary. (HE GESTURES FOR ROOSEVELT TO
SIT, AND TAKES A SEAT NEXT TO HIM). Sideways
move. Dulles is Secretary now. His brother has
my old job. They'll join us in a few minutes,
along with everyone else. But give me the
rundown whilst we have a moment. Just the
highlights.

ROOSEVELT: Mossadegh escaped, over the back fence again.
But he gave himself up just before the Shah
returned. He's under house arrest in his
village now. The Shah only wants to give him
three years. After that he'd be free to move
about as he pleases... within the village
limits, of course.

BEEDLE LAUGHS

ROOS. CONT.: Of course if the military get their way they'll
lock him up to shut him up. Before I left,
Zahedi ordered him sent to military prison,
charging him with treason.

BEEDLE: Things don't look so great for him do they? The
Shah must be a happy man. Mossadegh's gone, his
man in charge. By the way, we've sent Zahedi

BEEDLE CONT.: five million to fund his treasury - should keep him on side.

ROOSEVELT: I'd expect so. And the Shah's more than pleased. I met him before I took off. (HE GESTURES AS HE SPEAKS, MIMICING THE SHAH) "I owe my throne to God, my people, my army - and to you!"

BEEDLE: And to the Central Intelligence Agency of the United States.

ROOSEVELT: Well I didn't push that one. (BEAT) Gave me a present. (HE EXTRACTS TWO GOLD CIGARETTE CASES FROM HIS POCKET) Fat one's from him, thin from Zahedi.

HE OPENS THE FAT ONE UP, AND
OFFERS BEEDLE A CIGARETTE.
BEEDLE DECLINES, BUT ROOSEVELT
LIGHTS UP ANYWAY

BEEDLE: So what does the future hold for us?

ROOSEVELT: I told them that they owe us, and the Brits, absolutely nothing, except for a brief thanks, - which they gave and I graciously accepted. I was subjected to far too many rounds of hugging and kissing. A bizarre culture, General.

BEEDLE: The Dulles Boys will be delighted. Ike has already sent his congratulations. And I hear the Brits send their thanks.

ROOSEVELT: Mr. Churchill was most complimentary. (BEAT) I met him, during my London stop. He was in good form. Mind you, he was in bed recovering from a stroke, but if I'm that clued in after something like that, it'll be a mercy. (BEAT) He'd followed the whole thing. Start to finish. Didn't miss a beat. As I left, he called for me one last time. "Young man," he said, "this has been the finest operation since the war. If I'd been a few years younger, I would have loved nothing better than to have served under your command." (LONG BEAT) I'll never forget that, General, never.

BEEDLE: Nor should you. A well done all round. (HE SHAKES ROOSEVELT'S HAND, GETS CLOSER)

ROOSEVELT: Thank you sir.

BEEDLE: (CHECKING HIS WATCH) Now enough of that, we still have a minute. (HE GOES TO THE IRAN MAP, AND FLIPS THE BOARD OVER TO REVEAL ANOTHER MAP) What do you know about Guatemala?

ROOSEVELT: (NONPLUSSED) Guatemala sir?

BEEDLE: In about two minutes, you are going to offered the command of a, ahem, sensitive situation that is developing in Guatemala. This is all top secret of course, but given your track record, the least you deserve is a warning.

HE GOES TO A SHELF AND PULLS OUT
A RINGBINDER

BEEDLE CONT.: Some young jerk, Colonel Arbenz, got into power a couple years ago. Committed to social justice and reform. The usual. (HE PULLS OUT A SHEET OF PAPER FROM THE BINDER) "All the riches of Guatemala are not as important as the life, health and happiness of the humblest of its people..." He goes on like this. Ah, here we go. "We must distribute the riches so those who have less benefit more, while those that have more benefit, but to a lesser extent. How could it be otherwise?"

PAUSE

ROOSEVELT: I could be hearing wrong, but it sounds awfully like a communist manifesto.

BEEDLE: You heard right. And that is why, Kim, you are going to oust the jackass. We don't want this communist crap on our doorstep. Your Persian success has put you top of the list for this. You up to it?

ROOSEVELT: (BEAT - STANDS) It will be an honour, and a privilege, sir, to serve my president, and my country.

BEEDLE CLASPS HIS SHOULDER

BEEDLE: Good. Now, act surprised when they tell you. They'll be waiting. Are you ready?

ROOSEVELT: Yessir!

BEEDLE: Then into battle we go.

BEEDLE MARCHES OUT, ROOSEVELT
FOLLOWING

BLACKOUT

END OF SCENE III.I

WE ARE IN AN AUSTERE IRANIAN MILITARY COURT. TWO FLAGS FRAME A NEW, MORE REGAL, PORTRAIT OF THE SHAH.

AT RISE, RANKS OF MILITARY OFFICES SIT BEHIND A SOLITARY MOSSADEGH, ENCASED IN A WOODEN DOCK, FACING A JUDGE ON A RAISED DAIS. THE JUDGE BANGS HIS GAVEL JUST ONCE. THE GUNSHOT-ESQUE NOISE RINGS OUT, SILENCING THE COURT

OFFICER: ALL RISE

ALL STAND, EXCEPT THE JUDGE

JUDGE: (INEVITABLE) After due consideration of the evidence presented, I have reached a judgement. (LONG PAUSE) I find you guilty of crimes against the state of Iran. Before I pass sentence, you are permitted to make a short statement.

MOSSADEGH: (DIGNIFIED - TURNS FROM THE JUDGE, TO FACE THE OFFICERS) Thank you, your honour. My only crime. My only crime was to remove the network of colonial imperialism from this land. To purge the stain of political, economic and covert influence from this land I so love! My life, reputation, person and property - and those of others like me - do not have the slightest value compared with the lives, the independence, the greatness and the pride of millions of Iranians, and millions more in the generations to come!

JUDGE: The sentence for your crimes is death. (BEAT) However. (BEAT) Our laws prohibit those over 60 to be sentenced to death. As you are now aged 72, I hereby order you to serve three years' solitary confinement in prison. (BANGS HIS GAVEL - THE MILITARY STARTS TO ROAR IN PROTEST - THEY WANTED THE DEATH PENALTY) You will be permitted to appeal to the Supreme Court.

MOSSADEGH: (RAISING HIS VOICE ABOVE THE CROWD) I will appeal. Under our beloved constitution, this case should have been seen there in the first place! (THE CROWD SILENCES - LONG PAUSE) It is already quite clear that I shall die in prison. The prosecution has made this quite clear. You, sir, will have silenced the voice and energy which I have always used in service of the

MOSS. CONT.: people! I say farewell to the brave and dear people of Iran, man and woman, and urge them to remember that God will be their help and support. Do not fear what I have done.

BLACKOUT

END OF SCENE III.II

WE ARE IN BILL HERMAN'S HOTEL ROOM. THE YEAR IS 1979. ON A LOW COFFEE TABLE SITS A PHONE, TWO GLASSES (ONE HALF FULL, THE OTHER EMPTY), AND A BOTTLE OF BOURBON. A TAPE RECORDER LIES ON THE TABLE.

ON PROJECTION: 1979

A TIRED HERMAN, STILL DRESSED THE SAME, SITS ON THE SOFA. HE HOLDS A SMALL NOTEBOOK.

AT RISE, THE PHONE RINGS

HERMAN: Herman, yes that's me (Listens) Send him up, thank you! (HE HANGS UP)

HE DIALS A NUMBER FROM MEMORY

HERMAN CONT.: Hey Tom...Hey don't worry! He's on his way up... Shit, Tom. I told you he would come! And he'll talk, well, he'll talk to me. But off the fucking record - like I said right off the bat. (LISTENS TO TOM'S REPLY) He won't answer that. I told you before, he'll walk at (TOM REPLIES AT LENGTH) Christ he said that? 'Satan', 'Great Satan!' - well I do agree that's over the top (TOM REPLIES) Well I'll get his angle on that as well. Trust me Tom, I'll get it. But it's off the record. Deep background only. (THERE'S A KNOCK ON THE DOOR) Tom I've got to go. He's here. I'll call you later.

HERMAN SLAMS DOWN THE PHONE, STARTS THE RECORDER, DOWNS HIS GLASS AND GOES TO OPEN THE DOOR. ROOSEVELT STANDS THERE, HE HASN'T AGED WELL. HERMAN REACHES OUT TO SHAKE HIS HAND, AND PULLS HIM IN.

ROOSEVELT: Hi Bill. Great to see...after all these years huh?

HERMAN: Thanks for coming Kim.

ROOSEVELT: The last 30 years have sure flown by.

HERMAN: 26. But you look well! (HE GESTURES FOR KIM TO SIT, AND POURS HIM A DRINK) So how've you been keeping?

ROOSEVELT: Oh, still standing. (TAKES THE DRINK, CUTS TO THE CHASE). So why'd you ask me here Bill? Not another round of darts I hope. Swore off that after the last disaster. (HE LAUGHS WEAKLY)

HERMAN: Hell no! You'd have only beat me! Cheers.

THEY CLINK GLASSES

ROOSEVELT: So what've you been up to buddy?

HERMAN: This and that. Busy as ever. In fact, just got back from another trip to Tehran.

ROOSEVELT: So why do you want to see me? Sounds like you know perfectly well what's happenin' over there.

HERMAN: (GIVES UP TRYING TO BE COY) My editor asked me to get your views on the embassy occupation in Tehran yesterday.

ROOSEVELT: Oh come on Bill, he wants more than that!

HERMAN: He knows you'd only agree to be interviewed by me.

ROOSEVELT: So - and I haven't agreed to anything, for the record.

HERMAN: And, he knows you ran the coup in '53

LONG PAUSE. ROOSEVELT TOYS WITH HIS DRINK. HERMAN READIES HIS PEN.

ROOSEVELT: So he's one of those that thinks there'll be another coup.

HERMAN: I didn't say that.

ROOSEVELT: You didn't have to. A lot of people would agree with him. (TAKES A DRINK, WEIGHING HIS OPTIONS) OK. If that's what we're here for, let's cut to the chase. And Bill, I don't want my name appearing anywhere. This is as off-record as you get. If it gets out...

HERMAN: It never will!

ROOSEVELT: (BEAT) I'll choose to believe that. (LONG BEAT) So. Let's go back a year. Brezinzki, Carter's National Security Adviser proposes using the military to crackdown on opposition to the Shah...

HERMAN: ...and last week he met with the Iranian PM in Algiers. No wonder the students thought there'd be another coup and occupied the embassy.

ROOSEVELT: Exactly. Tell your editor that.

HERMAN: I need more than that Kim...

ROOSEVELT: (STUDYING THE GLASS) Come on Bill, you know how it's been in Tehran. I'm sure there are young radicals spreading rumours through the bazaars "The Americans this, The Americans that". Anti-American sentiment has only oiled the opposition to the Shah. (HE STANDS UP, VENTING) You know, I read that over fifty thousand US nationals are living in Iran. Fifty thousand Bill! From what I hear, not a shred of respect for the Iranians between them.

HERMAN: It's worse than you think. First time I went back to Tehran, in '75, our troops ridiculed the locals: "raghead sand niggers" and "stinkies". No respect.

ROOSEVELT: (TAKES IT IN) So when I left the Company in '61, before the Bay of Pigs fiasco, you know I went to Northrop right?

HERMAN: You guys did well selling all that hardware.

ROOSEVELT: Yeah well, that's another story. Point is. This year, Bell signed a 1.5-billion-dollar contract for their choppers. To pass the time, their flyboys race motorcycles in a mosque, whilst drinking. You would have thought somebody would have some sense, but apparently not. But we've sent so much hardware, the high ups in Tehran just turn a blind eye. (ROOSEVELT IS ON A ROLL, GETTING THIS OFF HIS CHEST). You know, between seventy-three and four, the Iranians bought 6-billion-dollars worth of tech? That's confidential by the way. You can't print that.

HERMAN: Holy Shit! That's big money.

ROOSEVELT: You don't say. The average Iranian doesn't have running water, let alone any prospect, and we stand by and happily reap the benefits of the miss-spend. Maybe we're not great, but we're not the ones spending the money!

HE HANDS HIS GLASS TO HERMAN WHO
FILLS IT UP

ROOSEVELT: The Shah failed his people, Bill. Yeah he had early economic success, but he couldn't grasp

the will of the people. He's a walking tragedy. Makes you wonder if it was worth the effort, huh? (BEAT) So what else does your editor want from me?

HERMAN: KHOMEINI...

ROOSEVELT: Hah, a man with a big chip on his shoulder. Deported from Iran in '64, he's back when the Shah flees again. He's an opportunist. It's too early to judge him though. But you have to ask: If we hadn't ousted Mossadegh, would we have Khomeini. Who was the greater evil, you know?

HERMAN: Final question Kim. This morning, he calls America the "Great Satan". Any comment?

ROOSEVELT: Oh what a joke? Now we're the bad guys. Look, the Iranians have always needed a Satan. First the Limeys, now us. It's a cycle man.

HERMAN: Thanks Kim, I think that's everything.

ROOSEVELT: Make of it what you will. Hope your editor's satisfied.

HERMAN STOPS THE RECORDER, AND PUTS IT INTO HIS BRIEFCASE. WHEN ROOSEVELT STARTS TO PUT HIS COAT ON, HERMAN INTERRUPTS.

HERMAN: Do you ever regret it?

LONG PAUSE. ROOSEVELT LOOKS AT HERMAN, EMOTIONS CAREFULLY CONTROLLED

ROOSEVELT: (RECLINING IN HIS CHAIR) You know, right before I resigned, I met with Foster and Alan Dulles. I told them what I'll tell you. If we, the CIA or whoever, every orchestrate anything again, coup, whatever you will, we must be absolutely sure the people want what we want. At the end of the day, who did the Iranians want? Mossadegh, or us? (BEAT) Just because we can, doesn't mean we should. We shouldn't take our 'success' to mean we can just overthrow governments at will. World won't thank us for that. (LONG PAUSE) Did you ever hear what happened to Mossadegh?

HERMAN: Yeah. The Supreme court granted his appeal, eventually. He lived out his days under guard in his village. Died two years ago. (SMILES IN MEMORY) I was in Tehran in March. Joined a tribute, pilgrimage really, to his village. A

million people Kim. Came any way they could.
All to pay respects to his grave.

ROOSEVELT: (SADDENED) He was their hero. One we destroyed.
Hell, maybe he was the good guy.

HERMAN: We can't change the past.

ROOSEVELT: (PULLING HIMSELF TOGETHER) Sadly no. Look Bill,
history will forget us, will forget what we
did, what we worked for, will forget that 1953
was the year the U.S. became hated in the
Middle East. They'll remember Mossadegh. Not
the way they should, perhaps, but they'll
remember. Perhaps it's better that way.

HERMAN: **Headline:** Roosevelt regrets orchestrating Iran
coup.

ROOSEVELT: 1953 - the year the US got stuck in the muck
and played hell with democracy. Bill I'm not
stupid. Your editor would have a field day with
this. But let it lie. It's over. Done. Enough
already.

HERMAN SITS QUIETLY, BEFORE
TEARING THE FINAL PAGE OF NOTES
OUT OF HIS BOOK. HE REFILLS BOTH
GLASSES AND PICKS HIS UP,
LOOKING THOUGHTFULLY

HERMAN: (HE RAISES HIS GLASS IN A TOAST) To respect...

ROOSEVELT: (RAISING HIS GLASS BACK) ...To Iran.

THEY CLINK GLASSES

BLACKOUT

END OF SCENE III.X

END OF ACT III

CURTAIN

FURTHER READING:

Dean Acheson: Present at the Creation, My Years in the State Department

Michael Axworthy: Revolutionary Iran, A History of the Islamic Republic

Christopher de Ballaigue: Patriot of Persia, Muhammad Mossadegh and a very British coup

D.K.R. Crosswell: Beetle, the Life of General Walter Bedell Smith

Mark J Gasiorowski and Malcolm Byrne: Mohammad Mosaddeq and the 1953 Coup in Iran

Stephen Kinzer: All the Shah's Men, An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror

Stephen Kinzer: Overthrow, America's Century of Regime Change from Hawaii to Iraq

Ludwell Lee Montague: General Walter Bedell Smith as Director of Central Intelligence, October 1950 - February 1953

Musaddiq's Memoirs: The end of the British Empire in Iran

H.I.M. Mohammed Reza Shah Pahlavi, Shahanshah of Iran: Mission for My Country

Princess Ashraf Pahlavi: Faces in a Mirror, Memoirs from Exile

Kermit Roosevelt: Counter Coup, the Struggle for the Control of Iran

Andrew Scott Cooper: The Oil Kings

Ray Takeyh: Hidden Iran, Paradox and Power in the Islamic Republic

Donald Wilber: Regime change in Iran

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

Nine years after the coup, John Waller, a 22 year-old Cambridge graduate hitch-hiking to India, witnessed the hate of the Tehran 'crowd' towards the Americans and the British. The incident is recorded in his seventh book *Hitchhiking to India in 1962, India, the Balkans and Greece in 2015* which was published in March 2016.

Operation Ajax, the CIA Coup in Iran, is immensely relevant today following the US/Iran reconciliation, global Islamophobia and Sunni/Shia conflict. It was a turning point in the history of the Middle East and the start of the American Empire: coup in Guatemala (1954); Vietnam elections cancelled (1956); invasion of Cuba (1961); coup in Congo (1961), Brazil (1964), Dominican Republic (1965), Indonesia (1967) and Chile (1973) leading to invasion of Iraq (2003).

It is based on extensive research, details of which are shown above, including Stephen Kinzer's book 'All the Shah's Men', which the Washington Post Book World described as "for anyone with more than a passing interest in how the United States got into such a pickle in the Middle East."