

C O V E R G U Y

by Daryl Henry

FADE IN:

EXT. DOWNTOWN BEIRUT - DAY

The CAMERA BEGINS a ghostly exploration of bombed ruins. What was once a Mediterranean city that could rival any in France is now a wasteland, painfully recovering from a decade of invasion and civil war.

EXT. DERELICT BUILDING - DAY

Six stories of crumbling reinforced concrete, a hundred black eyes staring out at the waterfront.

INT. BARREN ROOM - DAY

A tripod-mounted 35mm camera with a 500mm lens is aimed through a charred wall where there was once a window. Behind it an angular YOUNG MAN wearing jeans, sandals and a leather aviator's jacket sits on a broken chair. He glances up from reading a college text on Geology to see:

HIS POV OUT THE GAP

A city street near the docks, dusted with sand. Below, one or two battered cars glide by, windows shut. A PEDESTRIAN shuffles along the sidewalk.

INT. BARREN ROOM - DAY

TIMOTHY JARDEEN, 22, stands up, focuses the telephoto lens on the pedestrian.

HIS POV THROUGH THE LENS

The pedestrian shuffles innocently along, wearing a Palestinian *kaffiyeh* held to his head with a double strand of black rope. Then the view PANS to a:

BEDROOM WINDOW

In an intact block of flats across a vacant lot where a voluptuous naked WOMAN is drying herself with a towel.

BACK INSIDE

Jardeen watches for a moment then swings his camera a few degrees, aims it toward the docks.

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HIS POV OF A WHARF

Where two CREW MEMBERS descend the gangway of a rusting freighter. One of them carries a small but heavy aluminum suitcase.

EXT. STREET NEAR WHARF - DAY

Concealed in an alleyway is a decrepit Mercedes-Benz with Syrian plates. At the wheel a scar-faced WOMAN is concealed behind a Bedouin shawl, checking out the street. Something high in the ruined building catches her eye.

THE WOMAN'S POV

Of the charred window-- a glint of sunshine off the lens. street again In a squeal of tires the woman guns the Mercedes, pulls in at the wharf. The two crewmen from the freighter jump into the rear seat.

INT. BARREN ROOM - DAY

Jardeen snaps pictures of the Mercedes as it careens in a half-circle and speeds up the street, disappearing from view. Jardeen lets his breath out, pans to the bedroom window opposite.

HIS POV

The naked woman is waving across at him.

BACK INSIDE

Jardeen sighs, waves back, begins folding up his tripod.

EXT. STREET BELOW - DAY

The Mercedes parks at what was once the front door. The two seamen climb out, hurry into the destroyed lobby.

INT. BARREN ROOM - DAY

After an interminable moment the door behind Jardeen is SHATTERED from its remaining hinge and crashes to the floor.

He swings around in time to see a long curved dagger flash through the air. He ducks to one side, not far enough. The knife pierces his left arm, pinning it to the window frame.

He jerks the blade free, pivots in time to see the attacker diving across the room. Grimacing, Jardeen extends the knife in front of him, bracing it with both hands. Unable to slow his momentum, the sailor impales himself and slumps, unbelieving, to the floor.

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The second sailor crashes into the room, dives for Jardeen. They wrestle amidst the debris. The wounded sailor crawls to the window ledge, hollers down for help.

EXT. STREET BELOW - DAY

The scar-faced woman jumps from the Mercedes and scurries into the lobby, unlimbering an Uzi MACHINE PISTOL.

EXT. DERELICT BUILDING - DAY

Viewed from the sidewalk underneath the window, the first sailor, dangerously close to the edge, loses his balance, trips and falls, plunging toward the street below. He lands on the roof of the Mercedes and doesn't move.

INT. BARREN ROOM - DAY

The uneven fight rages. Jardeen's glasses are knocked loose; one lens is cracked. He pockets them, claws his way free, swings his tripod at the feet of the second sailor, bowling him over. The man staggers to his feet, lunges at him. Jardeen continues to swirl in a circle using the tripod like a scythe, backing toward the door. Then he flings the camera at his assailant and escapes down the hall.

INT. DERELICT BUILDING - STAIRWELL - DAY

Jardeen meets the scar-faced woman on her way up. She hesitates. He doesn't. He leaps out a hole in the wall, grabbing for a bundle of telephone lines that loop down to the sidewalk.

EXT. DERELICT BUILDING - DAY

The lines sag. One or two snap in two. Hanging on desperately to those that remain, Jardeen begins sliding toward the ground, burning his hands. More lines break. Soon he's supported by only one, which frays, groans and disintegrates. Jardeen tumbles end over end toward the ground-- and lands safely in the only tree left standing on the block. He slithers to the sidewalk. Sped on by a splattering of Uzi fire from above, he jumps into the Mercedes and speeds off. He doesn't notice the sailor on the roof.

EXT. BEIRUT STREETS - DAY

Jardeen drives like a charioteer, weaving through the rubble. He doesn't take time to look behind him. If he did he could slow down; nobody is chasing him.

The wounded sailor, who has made quite an impression, clings to the roof.