

TERRORISTA #1

by

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CHARACTERS

MIKHAEL TOPOROV - 21, Chechen with American accent, laid-back

MARCIA LEHMAN - 50, brash, ballsy New York lawyer

VADIM TOPOROV - 26, Chechen, muscular, determined

SAM - 20, all American young man

PRISON GUARD, 40s, American, portly

LITTLE BOY - 10, all American kid who spends his days on his bicycle

OLGA, Mikhael and Vadim's mother, glamorous, 40

SLUTBERRY, early 20s

GIRL IN WHEELCHAIR, early 20s

*Note:*

SLUTBERRY and GIRL IN WHEELCHAIR to be played by the same actress

MARCIA and OLGA to be played by the same actress

ACT [1]

SCENE [1]

*There are three walls on the stage, about 10 foot apart with a door in the middle wall. The cell is sparsely furnished: a bed, 2 small steel stools, a tiny steel table, and a wheelchair which is prominently in the middle of the stage. There is also a Nintendo and a 1980s style TV, but they should look like oversized props as they're only in Mikhael's imagination.*

*[Note: the 'real' people walk through the door at the back, people in Mikhael's mind come in from the side, they should walk 'through' the walls if possible.]*

*Mikhael is on the stage. He is stood on a small steel stool, trying to grab onto a CCTV camera in the corner. He gives the camera the finger.*

MIKHAEL:           Not guilty. Not guilty. Not guilty. Not guilty.

*Slutberry walks on stage through the wall, she is unaware of Mikhael but he can see her. Behind her are projections of tweets with the #FreeMikhael hashtag, all expressing how much he's their teenage hero. She stands in front of the wheelchair. Mikhael stands and admires her speech, is thrilled with himself.*

SLUTBERRY:        It just makes you want to cry...his perfectness. His Twitter page is like a prayer place, you feel like you're connected to him, you just have hope. He's like a drug addiction. I'm part of the fandom, I could kill you if I wanted to. I love him. I'm getting one of his tweets tattooed on me

tomorrow. I don't even care if he's a terrorist, he's cute. I don't want him to die. I know he's innocent. He is far too beautiful - his face captured my heart. He's adorable. I wonder what he's thinking about right now.

*Slutberry takes a moment, then sits in the wheelchair. She is different: less defiant, broken. Mikhael is unemotional, unmoved, starts to fiddle about with the TV as she talks.*

YOUNG WOMAN: Huge chunks had been blown off my leg - it looked like a shark ate me for lunch - and my left hand was completely broken. My body swelled so much that when my mom arrived she told hospital staff they'd sent her to the wrong room. I was basically unconscious for the first seven days. Later in the week he was brought to the same floor of the hospital that I was on. Every time I would go to surgery my mom has to look at the guard standing outside his room - she just wanted to go in there and kill him, you know?

*Slutberry stands up and pushes the wheelchair off the stage through the wall. Mikhael has finally tuned the TV into the right channel. Pokemon comes on. Mikhael is ecstatic, starts singing along to the Pokemon theme.*

MIKHAEL: I wanna be the very best, like no one ever was, to catch them is my real test, to train them is my cause, I will travel across the land, searching far and wide, each Pokemon to understand, the power that's inside-

*Vadim charges on through the wall. He has a tyre track across*

*his face and shirt. He's wearing jeans and a hooded top. His skin is red where his blood has coagulated under his skin, he is a walking corpse, full of hate. Pokemon stops, Mikhael wonders what's wrong with the TV.*

VADIM:               What the fuck happened?

*Mikhael jumps up.*

MIKHAEL:            Bro!

VADIM:               What the fuck did you do?

MIKHAEL:            What the fuck did I do?

*Vadim squares up to Mikhael and stands right up in his face.*

MIKHAEL:            What's that on your face?

VADIM:               What's that on my face? It's a tyre mark. It's on my chest too. Why did you drive over me?

*Long pause.*

MIKHAEL:            Oh shit.

VADIM:               Did Allah tell you to do it? Did Allah instruct you? Did he talk to you, did he say "Mikhael, run over your brother with the car"?

MIKHAEL:            No no no it wasn't like that, I didn't know, I didn't realise -

VADIM:               Where are you now brother? Where are you now?

MIKHAEL:            Umm...in prison?

VADIM:               What purpose does this serve?

MIKHAEL:            Purpose?

VADIM: You either die and meet Allah or you stay alive and fight as a soldier. We had an agreement. You had an agreement with Allah.

MIKHAEL: OK, well I stay alive and fight as a soldier.

VADIM: How you gonna fight from here?

MIKHAEL: Well,

VADIM: A soldier has to be on the field. A soldier cannot fight from jail. Now you do nothing. What were you doing when I came in?

MIKHAEL: Praying?

VADIM: Praying? At the altar of Nintendo? Or to the God of Pokemon?

MIKHAEL: I wasn't killed! I can't help not being killed.

VADIM: We were in the car. We got out of the car, I walked towards the police and they shot me. The policeman ran out of bullets. I did not even flinch when his bullets hit me. That is because I am a soldier. It gave me the time to shoot him, to fight. Where were you?

MIKHAEL: I was behind you! I was right behind you!

VADIM: Behind me Mikhael. Not fighting in the field. Hiding. You weren't willing to die for Allah.

MIKHAEL: No that wasn't how it was.

VADIM: I was dying for our fallen brothers, and what do you do?

MIKHAEL: No no no...

VADIM: You drive over me. I am surviving the bullets...then my fellow soldier knocks me over with the car. Fucking knocks me right down. You killed me Mikhael.

MIKHAEL: No it wasn't like that, I had to get away, we'd both be killed, I had to fight on as a soldier.

VADIM: We would have both died in glory and gone to Paradise.

MIKHAEL: I had to get away - to fight!

VADIM: Where are you now?

MIKHAEL: What?

VADIM: Stuck in a cell? Playing with Nintendo, playing with yourself, just like when you were at home. Why are you not praying? Why are you not down on your knees, right now, praying to Allah and hoping he gives you the forgiveness you really don't deserve? Why are you not praying?

MIKHAEL: I have been praying!

VADIM: Why have you not been praying every moment of the day to Allah, to be near to him, to ask him for guidance, to reassure him you're still his soldier?

MIKHAEL: I have been praying!

VADIM: Why haven't you been praying?

MIKHAEL: I have! I have been praying! (Beat) I don't know where Mecca is.

VADIM: What?

MIKHAEL: I don't know which direction Mecca is.

VADIM: That is your excuse? You don't pray because you don't know which way to point?

*He slaps Mikhael across the face so hard Mikhael falls down and strikes his head on the bed. Vadim walks up and down, thinking things over.*

VADIM: Always I've had to cover for you, to guide you, to show you the way, to right your wrongs. Now you must right your own wrong.

MIKHAEL: *(checking his head for blood)* What do I do? Tell me! What do I do? Brother?

VADIM: I can't keep telling you what to do.

*Vadim leaves the stage through a wall. Mikhael is left desolate on stage. Not sure what to do.*

MIKHAEL: *(screaming)* What did I do wrong? You told me to do it, why was it wrong?

*Mikhael is agitated at being left on his own.*

MIKHAEL: Vadim! Vadim! Vadim! Vadim!

PRISONER: (O.S.) Will you shut the fuck up! Fucking new guys.

MIKHAEL: Momma? Momma? I want my Momma!



*Mikhael lies on his bed, cries into his pillow.*

ACT [1]                    SCENE [2]

*The door at the back of the cell is opened. Marcia Lehman walks in. The prison guard looks around the door.*

PRISON GUARD:    You sure you OK here on your own lady?

MARCIA:            Yes I'll be fine.

PRISON GUARD:    Cos if can wait half an hour I can get an officer to sit in with you. I'd be happier if an officer sat in with you.

MARCIA:            There's CCTV. You can watch me on that.

PRISON GUARD:    On your head be it, lady.

*Marcia takes the stools and the table, puts them in the middle of the cell. Mikhael looks up, interested, but not enough to get up.*

MARCIA:            *(nods towards the CCTV)* So I saw your little act of rebellion. Very grown up.

MIKHAEL:          I would have pissed on it if I could piss that high.

MARCIA:            I'm sure that would have made the prison guards go home and cry.

MIKHAEL:          I want my fucking lawyer.

MARCIA:            I wouldn't recommend urinating in the courtroom, any disrespect to the families of those killed and wounded will not help your defence.

MIKHAEL: Fuck you. I want my fucking lawyer.

MARCIA: No flicking the bird, or bad language.

MIKHAEL: I want my fucking lawyer.

MARCIA: I am your fucking lawyer.

MIKHAEL: I wanna real lawyer.

MARCIA: I am a real lawyer.

MIKHAEL: I don't believe you. You're a chick. And you're old. And overweight. And you dress real bad.

MARCIA: Oh no. Well I'm old, fat, female - which apparently is now an insult who knew - and I dress badly. Whereas you're just a hip, fly young thing with great hair. But one of us gets to go home tonight.

MIKHAEL: Fuck you!

MARCIA: Your language is getting verbose.

MIKHAEL: There's no way you're representing me. This is a joke. You don't know nothing 'bout me. I ain't verbose. Or loquacious.

*Mikhael smirks and folds his arms. She can swivel on that.*

MARCIA: Your name is Mikhael Toporov. You're 19 years old, you're originally from Chechnya but moved to American when you were 8 years old and you're now an American citizen. You have - *had* - an old brother, Vadim, and you have two sisters. You still have both your parents who

went back to Chechnya and you hate your mother. You like Nintendo, have an obsession with Eminem, Pokemon and Space Dandy.

MIKHAEL: I ain't into Space Dandy. That's for fags.

MARCIA: It says here you like Japanese anime Space Dandy.

MIKHAEL: Maybe when I was like 12.

*A pause while Mikhael mulls over the situation.*

MIKHAEL: So they really sent you as my fucking lawyer? I'm up for mass murder - you even seen a mass murder case before lady?

MARCIA: I have represented the Unabomber, Susan Smith who drowned her two children, the Atlanta Olympics bomber, and James Holmes the Batman shooter. All received life sentences instead of the death penalty. If there is so much a chink in the armour of the Government I will exploit it until you could drive a truck through it.

MIKHAEL: James Holmes? The Batman killer?

MARCIA: Yup.

MIKHAEL: But he's famous. What's he like in real life? He looks like a badass. Is he a badass?

MARCIA: He shot children dead. He is not a 'badass'.

MIKHAEL: Hey wait - they're all famous. Do you only represent famous people? Am I famous?

MARCIA: We need to discuss your plea. You'll be pleading guilty.

MIKHAEL: Nah - nah this is a joke right?

MARCIA: You didn't plant bombs in the elementary school that killed 3 people and injured 265?

MIKHAEL: Nah nah I did that.

MARCIA: So in what way are you not guilty?

MIKHAEL: America did it.

MARCIA: America planted the bombs?

MIKHAEL: It's America's fault. We had no other option. It was an act of retribution, defiance, a stand against the killing of our people. Not an act of murder.

MARCIA: If you plead not guilty then I can guarantee that you will be found guilty. If you have pleaded not guilty they will give you the death penalty. If you admit your guilt, you will get life in prison, if you look remorseful enough you might actually get out at some point.

MIKHAEL: You have to do your job better. "A good lawyer knows the law; a badass one takes the judge to lunch."

MARCIA: Which Facebook meme did you get that from?

MIKHAEL: I'm pleading not guilty.

MARCIA: You need to plead guilty.

MIKHAEL:           Then you got to understand why I am not guilty. I'm seen as a hero.

MARCIA:            You're seen as a monster.

*She gets out a copy of the Rolling Stone magazine with Mikhael on the cover.*

MARCIA:            "A riveting account of how Mikhael Toporov became a monster."

MIKHAEL:           This is fucking awesome!

*He rips the magazine away from her. He is back in his world. Out of the magazine come hundreds of copies of the front cover, Mikhael is ecstatically sticking them up on the walls. Marcia walks to the front of the stage, talks to the audience.*

MARCIA:            My entire career has been based on death penalty cases, but despite that, I've had hardly any clients who I didn't like. If you scratch the surface and find out what's going on underneath they've always had very troubled lives, and it's finally got to the point where they're here. You have to see the whole person, not just come in once a day to talk to them about their crime. You always find they've never had anyone to fight their corner, and when a lawyer finally does it can be a very powerful thing.

Mikhael is a different case, people mostly admit they did it or they didn't. He's so proud of planting those bombs, but he refuses to understand that makes him guilty. It's as if the whole country is insane and he's the

only normal one. Does he really think he's a hero because he's on the cover of a magazine? We're fighting two different cases, the prosecutor want to know if is guilty of making and planting those bombs, and he thinks he's on trial for being pushed to the point where it's necessary to make a stand by killing people.

But if he doesn't plead guilty, then he's going to die.

*Marcia goes over to the door at the back of the prison cell.*

MARCIA: Hello, can you let me out please?

*Waits, the door is unlocked with a clatter and she's let out.*