

Omer Fast

Take a Deep Breath

TAKE A DEEP BREATH

by

Omer Fast

In the summer of 2002, Martin F. was standing outside a falafel shop in Jerusalem when it exploded. A trained medic, he went in and discovered the body of a young man on the floor. The young man had lost both legs below the waist, as well as an arm, but his eyes were open and focused. A few seconds passed while the two looked at each other. Knowing it was probably in vain, Martin F. decided to administer mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. After a minute or two, the young man's eyes rolled up into his head and he expired. As he walked out, Martin F. saw that a group of people had gathered, including two policemen, who wanted to know how many casualties were inside. When he responded that there was only one, Martin F. realized the young man he had just left inside was a suicide bomber.

In the following script, extracts recorded from a conversation with Martin F. in 2008 alternate with fictional scenes in which a team of actors attempts to stage his ordeal for the camera.

There are two cameras shooting simultaneously.

Each shoots a different view.

1 I/E. FALAFEL SHOP IN JERUSALEM. DAY.

Off-screen sound of a muffled explosion.

CAMERA "A" AN EXPLODED FALAFEL SHOP ON A STREET IN JERUSALEM. THE STORE WINDOW HAS BEEN BLOWN OUT. SMOKE IS COMING OUT. THE STREET IS EMPTY. THERE IS SHATTERED GLASS AND BLOOD ON THE SIDEWALK, AS WELL AS A SINGLE SEVERED HUMAN ARM.

CAMERA "B" PARALLEL SHOT, REVEALING MF FROM BEHIND, STANDING FARTHER DOWN AND LOOKING TOWARDS THE EXPLODED FACADE.

MARTIN F. (V.O.)

Where do I start here? That morning I took off from work for an hour or so. I went with my wife out on a few chores. And when I came back I decided to go for lunch. I headed for my favorite falafel place on Prophets Street. And within fifteen seconds I heard this boom. Not as noisy as you'd really expect. And I see smoke emerging from the falafel place itself.

MF begins to walk towards facade.

BOTH CAMERAS MOVE TOWARDS THE BLASTED WINDOW.

MARTIN F. (V.O.)

The plate glass window is all shattered. There's complete silence. Maybe a few car alarms go off. There's glass on the sidewalk. And the first thing that really hits me is a human arm by the door.

MF pauses just in front of the facade.

MARTIN F. (V.O.)

But I am a medic. I was trained in the army to deal with casualties. So I headed over there. Not too fast, mind you. I was not in a rush. I was hoping that some magic ambulance was going to come out of nowhere; they'd do all the dirty work. They'd go in and I would be able to be on the outside looking in. But nobody was there, so I walk in.

MF walks through the open door into the shop.

CAMERA "A" TRACKS THROUGH BLASTED WINDOW INTO THE SHOP AS MF WALKS IN THROUGH DOOR. IT CLOSES IN ON AN INJURED BODY LYING IN A PUDDLE OF BLOOD. IT IS A YOUNG MAN, PRACTICALLY A TEENAGER. HE IS MISSING BOTH LEGS AND AN ARM. THE GROIN AREA OF HIS PANTS DISPLAYS AN AWKWARD TUMESCENCE.

CAMERA "B" OVERTAKES MF AS HE APPROACHES THE FACADE, CROSSING AND FOLLOWING MF'S POV. AS IT APPROACHES THE BODY, IT TILTS UP TO REVEAL CAMERA "A" AND THE CREW.

MARTIN F. (V.O.)

Glass all over the place. And blood, but... I see this one fellow lying on the floor. He had no legs. I leaned down and looked at him for a second or two.

CAMERA "A" ZOOMS IN; THE LEGLESS MAN SUDDENLY OPENS HIS EYES AND LOOKS AT THE CAMERA.

2 INT. FALAFEL SHOP IN JERUSALEM. DAY.

OMER

Oh no, Cut...

Legless Man immediately closes his eyes.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

(Loudly)

Cut!

CAMERA "A": CUTS BRIEFLY.

CAMERA "B": STAYS ON THE CREW.

SOUNDMAN

Dude, that was perfect! What happened?

OMER

He opened his eyes.

CAMERA "A" BACK ON TO CLOSE-UP OF SOUNDMAN. FROM NOW ON BOTH CAMERAS CUT BETWEEN VARIOUS CREW MEMBERS AS THEY SPEAK.

SOUNDMAN

Who did?

OMER

I forgot his name. He looked right at the camera.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Are you sure?

CAMERMAN

Eyes wide shut, Omar. It's like the third time he does that.

CAMERA "A" CU OF BOMBER. HIS EYES ARE CLOSED. HE DOESN'T MOVE.

CAMERMAN

Actually, there was another problem. I don't know how to put it but...

People look the Camerman questioningly.

CAMERMAN

(Smiling, embarrassed)

Um, he's got a lump in his pants.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

A lump? What are you talking about?

CAMERMAN

His pants. Um, look, there's a bump, a lump, it looks like...

OMER

A what?

Pause. Some people notice. Suppressed laughter. Bomber opens eyes.

SOUNDMAN

Whoa, dude, is that what I think it is?!

OMER

I don't get it. Am I missing something?

SOUNDMAN

(Laughs)

The guy's got a boner! For real! Hey, you're in the wrong film, man!

BOMBER

(Smiles)

What? Where?

Pause. Everyone notices. Bomber strains to look down at his crotch.

SOUNDMAN

(To Bomber)

You're not turned on by this whole thing, are you?

BOMBER

(Still smiling but less sure)

Come on, it's not me...

SOUNDMAN

Uh-huh...

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

It's not him, you idiots. It's just a bump in his costume!

CAMERMAN

Man, I don't care what it is! If you look through the camera, it looks just like a hard on!

SOUNDMAN

I heard this shit happens when people are hanged...

BOMBER

(More concerned)

Seriously! It's not me!

SOUNDMAN

Hey, no worries, dude. It happens to everyone.

BOMBER

But this is all a prosthetic, remember? I'm actually under the platform.

OMER

Well, could we get the make-up guy in here?

CAMERMAN

And a bucket of ice!

Cameraman and Soundman high-five each other, laughing. FX guy runs in, reaches into Bomber's pants and starts fiddling. A PA runs in with ice and is shooed away. The crew loves it.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

(Disgusted)

Would you guys grow up already?!

FX guy finishes and runs off. Bomber relaxes.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Ugh. All right. On to the next problem: Did you look at the camera?

BOMBER

(Shrugs)

I thought it already passed me.

OMER

OK, could we stop messing around and do it again? Just the last shot? The close-up?

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Just a second, Omer. I'm not sure he gets it. Hey look, the camera was not yet past you when you opened your eyes, OK? Just stay dead with your eyes closed until we're finished.

BOMBER

Well, how am I supposed to know where the camera is if my eyes are closed?

CAMERMAN

Listen Einstein, you're a suicide bomber! You're dead! You don't care about cameras!

BOMBER

(Points to Cam "A")

Not even this one?

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

It's really simple. You close your eyes when we say "action." You open them when we say "cut." That's all there is to it. (to Omer) Has he ever acted before?

BOMBER

Isn't it better if I keep my eyes open?

Pause. Disbelief.

BOMBER

I mean, it's not a peaceful death, right? I just think that it'll look more real.

Pause. The entire crew stares at the Bomber.

BOMBER

Fine. I'll keep my eyes closed if that's what you want.

SOUNDMAN

(Seriously, to Omer)

Maybe we should try water-boarding?

OMER

(Ignores him)

No. He's right. Let's do it again. From the top. With his eyes opened.

CAMERMAN

What, the whole scene, Omar?

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

I'm not sure that's such a good idea, Omer...

OMER

What can I say? He's right. It will look more realistic.

CAMERMAN

How's he know what's more realistic?

SOUNDMAN

Yeah, man, like have you died in a suicide bombing before?

BOMBER

Have you ever seen a dead body?

CAMERMAN

Have you?

BOMBER

Yes.

CAMERMAN

Where?

BOMBER

At home. Where I'm from... (Shrugs) I've seen many.

SOUNDMAN

What are you? Like an undertaker on weekends?

BOMBER

I'm a Kosovar.

SOUNDMAN

(Laughing)

A Crossover? What's that supposed to mean?

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

He's from the Balkans, genius.

SOUNDMAN

Oh right! The Balkans. Now everything's clear.
That's where Frodo's from, isn't it?

Someone laughs.

OMER

Ok, I think we should re-

CAMERMAN

(Cuts him off)

Nah, nah, hold on, Omar! I got to ask this guy a
question...

Cameraman leans aggressively towards Bomber.

CAMERMAN (CONT'D)

Who died? Come on, man. Give me some names. Where
was it? When did it happen?

Pause. Bomber closes his eyes and settles back into his pose.

CAMERMAN

(Laughs dismissively)

Just what I thought. This guy is pulling your leg,
Omar...

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

(To Omer)

Are you sure you want to do the whole thing all
over again? We're an hour behind. All the extras
are waiting...

Pause. Omer thinks.

SOUNDMAN

(To Camerman)

Did they have Arabs in Lord of the Rings?

CAMERMAN

He's not an Arab.

SOUNDMAN

What is he then?

CAMERMAN

He's a liar.

BOMBER

I'm an Albanian.

SOUNDMAN

Arabian, Albanian... (turns) Could somebody get us
an atlas?

OMER

(Fumbles, taking out an iPhone)

Here. I can google it...

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Hey Omer? We really don't have time for this. If
you're not happy with how things are going, I'd
suggest we try one take without him.

BOMBER

(Opens his eyes)

Are you serious?

Omer looks up from the iPhone.

CAMERMAN

(Laughing)

But he's the suicide bomber! What am I going to shoot? A puddle of fake blood and some pieces of latex?

SOUNDMAN

You can shoot some falafel balls, man. Look, this stuff's got great texture!

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Why don't we break for lunch and talk about it?

OMER

But he's right; we can't just pretend the guy isn't here. I mean, he IS the suicide bomber. That's kind of a big part of the story!

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

All right. Then let's get someone else. (takes out her own iPhone) I know this casting agency...

BOMBER

Wait a minute! I have a contract!

CAMERMAN

You had a contract.

Bomber tries to get up, struggling with the prosthetics.

OMER

(Runs towards Bomber)

Please just stay where you are! I promise:
Whatever we decide, you'll get paid for today...

BOMBER

(Still struggling)

I'm not doing this for money!

Bomber finally manages to get up. AD looks up from iPhone.

CAMERMAN

No? Then why are you doing this? To be famous? For your showreel?

SOUNDMAN

(Quietly)

For like the seventy virgins, man, I'd do it...

Bomber steps menacingly towards Cameraman. AD walks in to break them up. Omer sits down in despair.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

OK, that's enough. Let's break for lunch everyone!
Now! I mean it.

Pause. Cameraman and Bomber stare at each, huffing and puffing.
Cameraman struts off. Soundman bumbles after him. Bomber sits down
next to Omer, exhausted.

OMER

Listen, I'm really sorry about this. I didn't
realize you had this - you know - history...

Bomber looks at Omer without responding.

OMER

Did you lose someone close?

Bomber and Omer look at each other.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Omer? I think we should talk for a minute.

BOMBER

I need to make a phone call.

OMER

Sure.

BOMBER

I don't have a phone.

AD doesn't offer her iPhone. Reluctantly, Omer hands over his.

OMER

Here. Just be careful. (Smiles apologetically)
It's an iPhone...

Bomber quietly takes phone. He then reaches up and slowly peels off
his nose, it's a bumpy prosthetic.

BOMBER

(Gives nose to Omer)

Here. This is yours.

Bomber walks off.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

(Smiling)

All right. That's one casualty. Can I call the
casting agency now?

Pause. Omer thinks. Assistant Director starts scrolling through contacts again.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Come on, Omer. He's just a day player. There's nothing special about him. Oh, and while we're at it, we should fire that burn victim chick.

OMER

But she's the only woman on our whole set!

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Yeah, but she's not in the original story, right? Plus she's a bad actress.

OMER

It's a small role. She's just a casualty!

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

I'm not sure you were watching her face, Omer. She was vamping, not dying.

OMER

What is that supposed to mean?

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

(Sighs, angry)

All right. Fine.

Why don't I just call them all back and do it over again? Eyes open, eyes closed, shirt on, shirt off. Whatever you want. Frankly, I think you're too caught up in details.

Pause. Omer looks around, unable to decide.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Well? (Carefully) Omer?

BOTH CAMERAS CUT.

3 INT. FALAFEL SHOP IN JERUSALEM. DAY.

Everything is the same as at the beginning of Scene 2, except for the Bomber. He's now played by an older, decidedly lighter-skinned, blue-eyed man (Amputee).

CAMERA "A": MEDIUM CLOSE ON BOMBER.

CAMERA "B": SHOOTING ALONGSIDE, MEDIUM WIDE ON MF STAND-IN.

MARTIN F. (V.O.)

His eyes were open. He was a mess, but I don't remember any blood in or around his face.

MF approaches.

MARTIN F.

He was a mess. He was missing his legs. He was missing one arm. But he was focused on me.

MF leans down and carefully looks into the Amputee's face.

MARTIN F.

So I thought: "Maybe the medical crews will arrive? Some miracle will happen. I'm going to give him an extra few seconds..." So I started giving him mouth-to-mouth.

MF presses his lips to the Amputee's, breathing and then begins administering CPR.

MARTIN F.

His eyes flashed on me for the first couple of seconds. After that I didn't really have eye contact with him. I would say that his body was in complete - what's it called? When you lose tonus... He was in bad shape. I said, "Everything's gonna be OK. Tinshom Amok," - breathe deeply.

MF continues the CPR. The Amputee starts to fade.

MARTIN F.

And then I saw one guy who was leaning in the doorway. His hands were on his hips. And he was kind of shaking his head from side to side, like, "The guy's a goner..."

MF looks up. The Amputee dies quietly.

MARTIN F.

He looked for some reason very authoritative to me. I stopped the CPR. I got up and walked outside.

MF stands up slowly.

CAMERA "A" FOLLOWS MF AS HE STANDS UP.

CAMERA "B" CUTS TO THE TEAM AGAIN.

OMER

And...cut. Thanks a lot.

CAMERMAN

All right! What a difference!

CAMERA "A" CUTS.

CAMERA "B" CONTINUES.

Crew members clap, visibly relieved. FX guy and PA's walk in and begin helping the Amputee up.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

(Sits near Amputee)

Didn't I tell you this guy would be great?

SOUNDMAN

Yeah man, great suicide bombing! Mazal Tov!

OMER

(Sits near Assistant Director)

I still think he's too old for the part. I mean, the real bomber was just a teenager...

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Who cares about the real bomber? At least this guy can act! The other one couldn't even play dead for one minute.

AMPUTEES

(Getting up)

If you think that was good, I can also roll over and fetch a ball...

Crew is having difficulties helping the Amputee up. Omer and Assistant Director watch, uncomfortably. The Amputee is finally extricated, getting up and brushing himself off.

AMPUTEES

I'm going to go for lunch.

Amputee stumbles off, still wearing a bloodied shirt and stump.

CAMERA "B" CUTS.

A buffet of soft drinks and fast food. Several extras are milling about. Amputee walks in and stands in line behind a young, pretty woman, whose face is partly burned. Burned Woman picks through the buffet, putting food on her plate. Amputee takes a plate and follows.

Cameras are behind the table on a track, spaced apart but parallel to each other. They shoot simultaneously.

AMPUTEE

So...How did you die?

BURNED WOMAN

You know what? I don't care.

AMPUTEE

Really? Most people do.

BURNED WOMAN

Do they? Well, like most people then, I guess it was the explosion.

AMPUTEE

So why don't you care?

BURNED WOMAN

Because I quit.

AMPUTEE

You died - and then you quit?

BURNED WOMAN

No. I quit before I died. I mean, I didn't die. I refused to.

AMPUTEE

Good for you. (Chews)
So why'd you quit?

BURNED WOMAN

Because they lied to me.

AMPUTEE

About your dying?

BURNED WOMAN

About how they wanted me to die: They wanted me to die with my shirt off!

Amputee shakes his head laughing. Burned Woman also smiles.

BURNED WOMAN (CONT'D)

Can you believe it? They never said anything about that in rehearsals and now it's supposed to be more realistic! Like the blast just ripped it off...

AMPUTEE

At least you got to rehearse.

Woman finally looks at him, holds out her hand. Amputee smiles, unable to shake hands he gestures at his stump.

BURNED WOMAN

Oh sorry. I guess we haven't met. So what's your story?

AMPUTEE

Me? I'm the suicide bomber.

BURNED WOMAN

(Laughs)

No way, really? Aren't you a little old for the part?

AMPUTEE

Actually, I'm just doing this as a favor to my agent. They called her one hour ago. Totally desperate. Apparently the young guy I'm replacing couldn't follow directions.

BURNED WOMAN

Yeah, I heard he had problems. I didn't know they got rid of him too...

They continue loading their plates, moving down the lunch line while nibbling.

AMPUTEE

It's a shame. There's some good people here. The real story is quite poignant. Unfortunately the director, what's his name, Omar something? He's more interested in gimmicks than storytelling.

BURNED WOMAN

You mean the explosion?

AMPUTEE

There was an explosion?

BURNED WOMAN

Real loud, a big fireball! I guess they wanted authentic reactions.

Amputee nods. Burned Woman pauses, angry.

BURNED WOMAN

It's totally irresponsible. You know, I bet they don't even have a permit for that! Jerks. Someone should report them.

Burned Woman looks around, losing interest in her food. Amputee studies a tortilla chip.

AMPUTEE

Anyway, so I'm also wrapped for the day. Got any plans for the evening?

BURNED WOMAN

Taking a bath and cuddling with a good book.

AMPUTEE

Wow! That sounds good! (Reaches for another tortilla chip. Winks.) Like some company?

Pause. Burned Woman smiles.

BURNED WOMAN

I'm afraid not.

AMPUTEE

Why not?

BURNED WOMAN

It's against the rules.

AMPUTEE

What rules? It is a non-union shoot.

Bomber from Scene 1 enters, holding an iPhone.

BURNED WOMAN

Let's see, Rule Number One? (Taps his stump, smiling) Never go out with a victim.

BOMBER

So how do we get home? Do they even have a car? Is somebody driving us?

AMPUTEE

Is this your boyfriend?

BURNED WOMAN

(Laughs)

What him? Oh no!

(To Bomber)

Sorry, I can't even remember your name!

BOMBER

That's all right.

(To Amputee)

We were both fired.

Bomber throws the iPhone into a plate of tortilla chips. Amputee looks on with amusement. Burned Woman looks embarrassed, possibly hurt. Pause.

BURNED WOMAN

Hey, you know what? I know a good car service.

(Reaching out for phone) Let me call one for you.

Burned Woman picks up the iPhone and starts dialing. Amputee and Bomber are suddenly left facing each other.

BURNED WOMAN (CONT'D)

Hello? Could you please send a car to Melrose and Kenmore ASAP. (Listens) It's a storefront on Kenmore. I don't know the exact number but you can't miss it. There's been an explosion.

(Listens) No, no, it's a film set, we don't need an ambulance. (Listens) My name? (Looks up at Bomber) Sorry, what was your name again?

BOMBER

Keith.

BURNED WOMAN

Keith, what?

BOMBER

Keith Richards.

Burned Woman stares at him for a moment before finally finishing the call.

BURNED WOMAN

Just send someone quickly. A young guy called Keith will be waiting.

Hangs up and holds up the iPhone for Bomber.

BOMBER

That's OK. It's not mine. Keep it.

Pause. Burned Woman continues to hold out the iPhone.

AMPUTEE

So do you ever bend your rules? I mean, they're there to be broken, right?

BURNED WOMAN

Rule Number Two: Never go out with a beggar.

Burned Woman walks away, this time not smiling. She joins the Bomber on the other side of the table. Amputee looks on.

AMPUTEE

(Approaches)

What if I told you my injury's real?

BURNED WOMAN

(Smiles)

Yeah, sure. You're crippled and he's Keith Richards.

AMPUTEE

I prefer differently-abled. But, yes, I'm a real amputee.

Burned Woman stops smiling. Bomber looks up with interest.

AMPUTEE (CONT'D)

Oh please don't stop smiling...

BURNED WOMAN

I don't think this is funny.

AMPUTEE

And don't lose your sense of humor! That's always the worst part!

Burned Woman moves away. Amputee pockets the iPhone, follows.

AMPUTEE (CONT'D)

I had a career. Nothing spectacular, mind you, never a Hamlet. Just a few supporting roles, a couple of features, theater, television...

(Looks at stump) Then this happened. I won't bore you. The details are dreary. Needless to say, my agent stopped taking my calls. I stopped getting

callbacks. You know, with one arm you can't even work as a waiter!

BURNED WOMAN

Can you please leave me alone?

AMPUTEE

About one year ago, the phone started ringing again. It's a niche, sure, but it's growing. There's a lot more demand for amputees now, for various reasons.

BOMBER

Hey man, aren't you laying it kind of thick?

AMPUTEE

(turns to Bomber)

In the beginning, I also thought it was weird. But you know what? Times are changing. We're fighting two wars now. One hour ago, I was home, watching TV. Then my agent called. "Suicide Bomber? Sure! What could be easier?"

Burned Woman tries to walk off but Amputee steps in front of her.

AMPUTEE (CONT'D)

So I get lots of work. I can even start being selective. And best of all: since my arm's already gone, I don't have to spend hours in make-up!

BURNED WOMAN

Bravo. I'm all choked up. I get it.

BOMBER

This guy is putting you on!

BURNED WOMAN

Do I care? Does it matter?

AMPUTEE

It doesn't. (Moves to Bomber) And I'm not.

Amputee steps in front of Bomber. Bomber looks up at him slowly.

BOMBER

OK, so why don't you prove it? Come on (Taps at Amputee's stump) Come on, show us your moneymaker.

AMPUTEE

Don't touch me!

Amputee pushes Bomber away but he persists, touching, tugging more forcefully at the stump.

BOMBER

Come on! Show us that money-maker!

(To Burned Woman) You wanna see it? You want to see his moneymaker?

The two start to struggle more intensely, the Amputee mainly trying to protect his stump and the Bomber pushing him backwards. Finally, the Amputee suddenly reaches out to slap at the Bomber with his good hand. Bomber has just been waiting for this and expertly throws him to the ground. Several extras break up the fight. Bomber looks down with disdain and is escorted away. Amputee slowly sits up, visibly shaken. He tries to tidy himself. Burned Woman leans down next to him. A moment passes.

BURNED WOMAN

Are you all right?

Amputee does not answer. He looks quite shaken up.

BURNED WOMAN

Look, for whatever it's worth, I'm really sorry.

Pause. Burned Woman helps Amputee get up.

BURNED WOMAN (CONT'D)

So, is it really true?

AMPUTEE

(Mutters)

Well, there's only one way to find out, isn't there?

Burned Woman looks at him, a smile finally breaking her otherwise concerned expression.

BURNED WOMAN

And what happens if you're not a real amputee?

A tense moment passes. Suddenly Burned Woman cannot suppress a laugh.

VOICE 1

Cut.

VOICE 2

(Loudly)

Cut!

VOICE 3

Ok, that's a cut.

CAMERA "A" CUTS.

VOICE 2

What happened now?

VOICE 1

She laughed.

VOICE 2

Was she not supposed to?

VOICE 1

No. She wasn't.

BURNED WOMAN

(Still laughing)

Oh my God, Omer! I'm so sorry.

VOICE 1

Well that's great. But the scene was not over!

BURNED WOMAN

I'm so sorry! I know! It's just. (Laughs) My scars started peeling!

VOICE 2

Fuck. Could we get makeup in here?

AMPUTEE

They're not scars yet, darling. They're burns.

Pause. Burned Woman and Amputee walk away.

CAMERA "B" TURNS ON, FOLLOWING THE TWO ACTORS AND STOPPING SUDDENLY AT THE FACADE OF THE FALAFEL SHOP.

5 EXT. FALAFEL SHOP. DAY.

A small crowd of policemen and onlookers are standing around. A team of medics are inside the shop, sorting through the debris, collecting body parts, photographing.

CAMERA "A" SHOWS THE SCENE FROM OUTSIDE, SHOOTING THROUGH THE FROZEN CROWD.

CAMERA "B" SHOWS THE SCENE FROM INSIDE, FOLLOWING THE MEDICS WHO

PERFORM THEIR ROLES IN A SERIES OF STILLLS.

MARTIN F. (V.O.)

By this point, there was a whole scene outside the falafel place. I was shunted across the street by the police, and I joined the onlookers. And it was only then that it dawned on me: "When you have a suicide bombing and you only have one casualty - maybe I had just taken care of the suicide bomber..." And I remember a wave of nausea that rolled over me. And I don't think the nausea was because I had any moral reprehension at treating this guy. It was the shock of what had just happened. Plus I think there was the smell of blood in my mouth... I realized that I had to get the police to test this guy for diseases. So I went back to my office. The first thing I did was scrub my hands. I noticed some blood on my thumbs - in the cuticle area - and I was scrubbing at it and getting dish-soap, and soaping up my lips, inside and out... I wanted it out. Afterwards, of course, I was thinking: "What made you do this? Was it because you thought this was some polluted sub human?" No. It wasn't that at all. It was really very rational. People who had diseases had been recruited. They'd go into crowds with bombs filled with rat poison, in order to enhance the effects of the explosives... If anything, this was a real face-to-face confrontation with evil! On the other hand, maybe I'm building this up too much. Because at that point, I don't think I was thinking of him as evil. He was a human being I was trying to save. And he was seventeen-and-a-half, eighteen years old. Afterwards comes maybe all the editorializing and adding the little ethical finishing touches on things. For my own benefit, by the way, I never really looked into too much of his background. I didn't want to personalize him more than I had to.

BOTH CAMERAS BEGIN TO TRACK ACROSS THE SCENE OUTSIDE.

MARTIN F.

As it happens, a day and a half later, I did get a phone call. They finished the blood work on him and it turned out he proved positive for Hepatitis. So I don't think I was trying to scrub away the evil. It was more just, "There's something potentially very bad about this blood here..."

Two LAPD officers enter the scene and walk between the extras who are still frozen in their poses. They pause in center frame of CAM "A" looking towards the crew.

CAMERA "B" CONTINUES SHOOTING FROM BEHIND.

6 EXT. ON SET OUTSIDE OF FALAFEL SHOP. DAY.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

(Whispering)

Oh, shit!

SOUNDMAN

What? Not again!

CAMERMAN

Are these guys in the script? Should I cut?

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

(Whispering)

Yes. I mean, no they're not in the script. Cut!!

The extras un-freeze. The two Cops approach CAM "A".

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Can we help you, Officer?

GOOD COP

You guys have a permit?

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Sure. The director has it. Where the hell is he?

(On walkie talkie)

Can someone get Omer?

BAD COP

(Peering into CAM "A")

Is that thing running? Let's shut it down, OK?

CAMERA "A" CUTS BRIEFLY.

CAMERA "B" CONTINUES CUTTING BETWEEN ACTORS.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Is there a problem, Officer?

BAD COP

You bet there's a problem. We got calls. Complaints.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Really? From whom? About what?

GOOD COP

People who live here. Someone complained about hearing explosions.

SOUNDMAN

What people? The homeless?

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

(Whispering)

Shut up!

BAD COP

You being a wise guy? 'Cause we can do this in ten minutes or we can stay till our shift is over.

Omer stumbles in, breathless, walks up to Cops.

OMER

I'm really sorry, Officer. It's gonna be a little while until the permit can get here. Can somebody get you guys coffee or something?

GOOD COP

Are you in charge here?

OMER

(Unsure)

Yes.

GOOD COP

I'm gonna need to see some ID please.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Oh boy.

(Loudly)

All right, break for five minutes everyone!

Omer hands the Good Cop his ID. The set starts to clear.

GOOD COP

So what's going on here? Are you making a film about terrorism?

Pause. No one answers. Good Cop looks up from the ID.

BAD COP

Well? Is it an action film or a thriller?

SOUNDMAN

It's a pastiche.

OMER

It's not!

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

(Whispering to Soundman)

Be quiet.

CAMERMAN

(Laughs)

A pastiche? Where d'you pick that one up, Webster?

SOUNDMAN

You know, like a comedy.

OMER

It's not a pastiche!

CAMERMAN

It's a tragedy.

BAD COP

Hey, hey, hey! Hold on! What is this, the Three Stooges?

OMER

No, no. It's just hard to explain. We're trying to make a short film about filming a suicide bombing, which is based on an interview with a guy in Jerusalem. But it's shot as a series of stills. Like a wax museum. Or a frozen ballet...

Other crew members start looking uncomfortable.

OMER (CONT'D)

But with real people, not dummies. (Pauses. Unsure.) No one's supposed to be moving.

Indeed no one moves. Soundman guffaws. Good Cop hands back the ID.

GOOD COP

Here you go. My son's in Afghanistan.

Pause. No one knows what to say.

GOOD COP (CONT'D)

What's your movie called?

OMER

"Regarding the Pain of Others".

BAD COP

Recording the what?

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Not recording, regarding. Maybe you've heard of Susan Sontag?

BAD COP

I've heard of Susan Sarandon. (Smiles) Is she around? Can I get an autograph?

A PA gives the Good Cop a film permit. He looks at it.

GOOD COP

Have you been using explosives?

OMER

No sir.

GOOD COP

No pyrotechnics? No firearms?

SOUNDMAN

I got a lighter.

OMER

We have a smoke machine. But it keeps breaking down. Please, look around if you like.

GOOD COP

(Holding permit)

Because you do not have a permit for explosives. (Looks up) You guys know that?

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

It's not a Hollywood film.

BAD COP

It sounds like a B movie.

GOOD COP

Is it a political film?

CAMERMAN

It's a tragedy.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Like we said, it is a silent film. (To crew) No one's supposed to be talking.

BAD COP

So it's a silent film. Like Charlie Chaplin.

OMER

(Smiles)

No, no. It's nothing like that, Officer. (Thinks)
Do you know what tableaux vivants are?

BAD COP

Yeah. Sure. (Winks) That's mineral water, no?
French? Sparkling?

Burned Woman approaches.

BAD COP

Let me ask you a question: Are you guys faggots or something?

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Wait a second here!

GOOD COP

(Taking over)

Here's the problem: Someone in the area complained about hearing explosions. Now, I'm not accusing you guys of anything, but the call was specific and credible. We'd just like to get to the bottom of this. Is there a Keith around here?

BURNED WOMAN

I think I know what's going on, Officer.

Everyone looks at her.

BURNED WOMAN (CONT'D)

I think it was the suicide bomber, Keith Richards.

GOOD COP

The who?

SOUNDMAN

(Air guitar)

Not The Who, man! The Stones!

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

(To Burned Woman)

What are you talking about?

BURNED WOMAN

Keith Richards! The young suicide bomber you fired!

No one believes her.

BURNED WOMAN (CONT'D)

He was on the phone during lunch. He said he was calling a taxi but I could swear he was lying!

OMER

Oh my God! (Frantically checking pockets) That guy stole my iPhone!

BURNED WOMAN

Anyway, he didn't know the address here so he put me on the phone. When I tried to give driving directions, the dispatcher said a police car was coming.

Pause. Soundman whistles.

GOOD COP

And why would he do this?

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

(Shrugs)

Because we fired him. Because he was vengeful.

SOUNDMAN

Because he's a fucked up albino cross-dresser.

CAMERMAN

(Laughing)

Would you stop it already? The guy was a Kosovar.

BURNED WOMAN

Whatever he was, you should press charges against him. He also assaulted someone. What's his name? The amputee! The older guy who replaced him.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

What amputee??!

OMER

(To Assistant Director)

Was there an amputee in the cast?

The crew looks confused. The Cops look at each other.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

(Angry, to Burned Woman)

Hey, what are you doing here anyway? Didn't we fire you?

A tense staredown between the Assistant Director and Burned Woman.

BAD COP

(Laughing)

Man! You should all go on "Springer".

Burned Woman loses the staredown. She exits.

GOOD COP

(To Omer)

So this suicide bomber, Keith Richards, do you know what his real name was?

SOUNDMAN

Pete Townsend.

OMER

Actually, we don't know his name, Officer. But I can describe what he looks like.

Good Cop takes out a pad. Pause. Omer thinks.

OMER (CONT'D)

He had black hair. It was gelled. He was about this tall...

SOUNDMAN

No, no! He had brown hair and was much shorter! Oh, and he had this nose!

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

The nose was fake! It was a prosthetic. We did it in make-up.

Pause. Bad Cop rolls his eyes and sighs.

OMER

Well, he had brown eyes. We can all agree on that.

CAMERMAN

His eyes were green, Omar! Don't you remember? He kept opening them. That's why you fired him!

OMER

All right, they were brown-green.

SOUNDMAN

They were hazel.

GOOD COP

Don't you guys take polaroids of your actors?

SOUNDMAN

You mean like a lie-detector test?

BAD COP

That's a polygraph.

OMER

Of course, we have headshots. But they're all on my iPhone and that guy stole it.

Pause. Good Cop puts his notepad back in his pocket.

GOOD COP

All right, here's my card. When you get your story straight, come down to the precinct.

The two Cops leave. The crew looks crestfallen.

CAMERMAN

(Slaps his forehead)

No! No! Wait a minute! We got him right here on camera!

Cameraman excitedly fiddles with CAM "A" while everyone watches him without much enthusiasm. Camera rewinds. Cameraman peeps into viewfinder excitedly and presses stop.

CAMERMAN

Look! Let me just play it back.

Soundman gets up. Assistant Director continues peering into her iPhone and Omer peers into space.

CAMERMAN

(Triumphantly presses play)

Voila!

BOTH CAMERAS CUT BACK TO SCENE 1.

SOUNDMAN

A picture is worth everything man!

End/Loop to beginning

Omer Fast (Jerusalem, 1972) uses his films to explore the possibilities offered by the cinematic medium: possibilities for expressing emotions, concentrating on individuals, or placing their personal stories within a broader historical context. The borders of cinematic form begin to melt when Omer Fast links collective memory and the individual unconscious on the same layer of his medium.