

A FILM BY  
MOUNIR CHAKOR



# AMERICAN HOSTAGE

EXECUTION IS  
THEIR PLAN



FILMANCHOR PRESENTS "AMERICAN HOSTAGE"

ATIQ RAHMAN CHARLES MARTIN GARCIA THIBAUT WHITE SHREY NEIL DAVINA REID AND LEON SALEM

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOSEPH BOYLE AND WHEAT SOUND BY JOSEPH BOYLE AND JASON KUSHNER LIGHTING BY WHEAT EDITED BY MOUNIR CHAKOR

SOUND EDITING BY KILYOUNG BAEK MUSIC BY LEON SALEM WRITTEN, DIRECTED & PRODUCED BY MOUNIR CHAKOR

AMERICANHOSTAGEMOVIE.COM



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# AMERICAN HOSTAGE

## SHORT SYNOPSIS

Terrorists. Kidnapping. A plot gone wrong. American Hostage pulls back the curtains on a terrorist plot centered on a group of terrorists holding two American soldiers hostage on U.S. soil, demanding the release of all prisoners of Guantanamo Bay. With tensions high, emotions between the terrorists collide, which sets the story into a downward spiral.

Running Time: 100 Minutes

Shooting Format: HD

### PRESS CONTACT:

Melanie Bell  
melanie\_bell@outlook.com  
(813) 766-0175

### FILM CONTACT:

Filmanchor LLC  
www.filmanchor.com  
(424) 235-0678



# AMERICAN HOSTAGE

## LONG SYNOPSIS

Terrorists. Kidnapping. A plot gone wrong. *American Hostage* tells the story of four terrorists coming together to create change within the American government and affect their stance on Guantanamo Bay. With tensions high, emotions between the terrorists collide, which sets the story into a downward spiral.

*American Hostage* unveils the story of Asad, Hamal, Shahin and Fahdah, who have their individual motives for joining the war in terror.

Asad, the appointed leader of the group, manages the team with strict and clear direction, taking orders behind the scenes from Al-Saqri whose motives are unclear. Asad shows one weakness, the affection for fellow terrorist Fahdah, a soft spoken young Arab woman. Asad and Fahdah develop an adoration for each other, despite the disapproval from Fahdah's brother Hamal whose anger from the overall situation escalates throughout the story. Meanwhile Shahin, the fourth terrorist, and prisoner Sergeant Donald Young begin to form a bond as they share stories about family, faith and love.

Although the plan of gaining explicit media coverage after leaking the hostage tapes, the U.S. government shows no cooperation in response to the demands on Guantanamo Bay. The terrorists go through extreme measures in attempts to persuade the government one final time. But before their plan is executed, unforeseen circumstances arise that force them to think and act in a different direction...





# AMERICAN HOSTAGE

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

The idea for *American Hostage* was essentially born five years ago after reading a news story about how many American and European soldiers were taken hostage during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. I was astounded to further read about, and in some cases watch, the brutal videos that were released by the kidnappers.

When I started researching this idea for a movie, I found out that these kidnappings were not only limited to soldiers but expanded to journalists and tourists. 425 foreigners have been estimated kidnapped in Iraq since 2003 mostly for ransom or for prisoner exchanges. An al-Qaeda offshoot in North Africa has earned at least \$70 million, since 2003 by kidnapping foreigners. I also read an article that said that \$200,000 is what a Westerner goes for in Kandahar Province of Afghanistan. *TIME* featured an in-depth article on this topic called 'Terrorist Hostage Situations: Rescue or Ransom?'

This unfortunate reality is made evident by examples like Sean Langan, a British journalist, and his translator kidnapped by the Taliban in March 2008 or the former Australian soldier kidnapped in the southern Philippines for a ransom of \$2 million. Same goes for prisoner exchanges such as when Israel swapped hundreds of Palestinian prisoners for two Israeli soldiers or the more recent example when five Taliban terrorists from the prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba were exchanged for Army Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl causing a political uproar in the U.S.

The one news story that had the most prevalent effect on me and *American Hostage* was about the journalists, Daniel Pearl, who was kidnapped in Pakistan and Nicholas Berg who was abducted in Iraq. Snippets of the beheading videos with the victim still alive were widely aired on American news outlets, but none of the actual killing. Associated Press Television News, which provides news pictures and video to more than five hundred subscribers worldwide, distributed the video of the full beheading. The video was preceded by a printed warning that lasted a full minute: "Warning! Man is beheaded on camera, extremely graphic footage."

Since this film went into production, terrorist kidnappings have only intensified, and the recent brutal actions of terrorist groups like ISIS make the film more topical.

The movie *American Hostage* is about this subject matter. Only closer to home. The movie tells the story of four terrorists who take two American soldiers hostage on U.S. soil and threaten to kill them, demanding the release of all prisoners of Guantanamo Bay.

This is my first feature production, and these are the types of film that I, as a filmmaker, am interested in; films that tackle cultural and social issues and open the door to better understand our diverse and sometimes irrational world.



# AMERICAN HOSTAGE

## FILMMAKERS BIO

**Mounir Chakor** is an inspired filmmaker from Enschede, a small town in the Netherlands. He moved to the United States nearly eight years ago where he began his filmmaking career.

Chakor received his Bachelor and Master degrees in theater, film and television studies from Utrecht University in the Netherlands and attended the University of Florida for one year on an exchange program. His early work includes a short called *Brother, Brother* that was shown at the Gasparilla International Film Festival, in addition to a TV movie called *Kings 15 Things*.

In 2011, he founded Filmanchor LLC, a production company for independent film projects.

*American Hostage* is his first feature film, produced on a small budget, with talented actors and a strong storyline.

Chakor currently resides in Tampa, Florida with his wife and enjoys traveling and learning about different cultures.



# AMERICAN HOSTAGE

## Q & A WITH FILMMAKER MOUNIR CHAKOR

Q: Please explain your inspiration when writing *American Hostage*?

A: *The inspiration for my film stemmed from the international debate on government policies on negotiating the release of hostages taken by terrorist organizations. There are many examples around the world of westerners being kidnapped by terrorist organizations, either for ransom or for prisoner exchanges. Whether it's Sean Langan, a British journalist, and his translator kidnapped by the Taliban in March 2008 or the former Australian soldier kidnapped in the southern Philippines by the terrorist organization Abu Sayyaf that demanded a ransom of \$2 million. Same goes for prisoner exchanges when Israel swapped hundreds of Palestinian prisoners for two Israeli soldiers or the more recent example when five Taliban terrorists from the prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba were exchanged for Army Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl causing a political uproar in the U.S. I wanted to take this controversial topic and explore the motives and feelings of the terrorists as they make their demands on the government.*

Q: How did the film get off the ground? What was the process of getting it made?

A: *I began writing the script in 2011, based off an idea I had thought about the year before. Once the script was finished, I began casting and hiring my key crew members. Getting the right team in place was important but very challenging. I had several people drop out just days before shooting due to different personal circumstances. We were fortunate to find talented local professionals to step in to complete the shoot. From there we went through several editors, which significantly dragged out the post production process. It was a long journey from the time we filmed in the summer of 2012 to today with a complete 100-minute terrorism thriller. I just kept believing in the project and staying focused to see it through to the very end.*

Q: How long was the shoot? Where did you shoot?

A: *The shoot lasted 20 days. Most of it was shot in South Tampa with parts shot in Sarasota and the Tampa Police Department. We are very grateful for the support of the City of Tampa.*

Q: What was the most difficult scene to shoot?

A: *The day I think we'll all remember most vividly was the day we shot some of the garage scenes where they were holding hostages captive. All I have to say is – think of early September in Tampa, Florida, and what it would be like to sit in a closed garage without air conditioning for hours on end. The actors and crew members were troopers and I was very thankful for their patience and professionalism during one of the hottest days of the year.*



# AMERICAN HOSTAGE

Q: How do you want the audience to feel after they have seen the film?

A: *I want the audience to feel curiosity and discuss the story with friends and family. To tell a story is one thing, but to move a person to also tell the story to someone else is what I define as success.*

Q: What made this project come together and be a success?

A: *I would have to attribute the success of American Hostage to having the right people involved who were all equally committed to the film process and the quality of the production. With an independent film budget, it was critical to work with individuals who shared the love and appreciation for film.*

Q: What was your favorite part of making American Hostage?

A: *I enjoyed shooting the film with the crew and cast. We had a great team that made the strenuous 20-day shoot not only productive, but fun as well. I always enjoy being around other students of film and having discussions on techniques and memorable performances from other great productions.*

Q: What role do you think American Hostage has played in your personal growth as a director?

A: *As my first feature length production, I can't tell you how much I learned during these past 2.5 years. And although I'm very proud with how the film came together, there are plenty of things I would approach differently for the next go around. I received a Master's degree in filmmaking learning a number of film techniques, I did not learn the challenging part of running a business and management.*

# AMERICAN HOSTAGE

## CAST LIST *(In Order of Appearance)*

ATIQ RAHMAN | Asad  
THIBAUT WHITE | Hamal  
SHREY NEIL | Shahin  
CHARLES MARTIN GARCIA | Sgt. Donald Young  
JASON KIMBALL | Sgt. Anthony Morales  
DAVINA REID | Fahdah  
JOHN O'KEEFE | NBNC Anchor  
SHAUNA TROWER | NBNC Reporter  
MICHELE YEAGER | CBN Anchor  
LEON SALEM | Al-Saqri  
CHAD STEVENS | Clear News 7 Anchor  
TRACEY SHELDON | Mrs. Morales  
LUCAS MARTIN | Tommy Morales  
ALEXANDRA CRUZ | Clear News 7 Reporter  
AMY WOODRING | BTV Anchor  
ANDREA JORDAN | BTV Reporter  
MICAH ANDERSON | Roger Davis  
VIVIAN HANNA | Jasmine  
JAMES L. SEATON | Driver  
RANDALL E. SPEAKMAN | Jogger  
JIM ABDE | Officer Cooper  
MARION BLOUNT | Officer Kenneth  
BRIAN JALBERT | SWAT Officer  
GABRIEL LEE | SWAT Officer  
JERED ALLEN | SWAT Officer  
JIM DUNCAN | SWAT Officer  
TANYA CHRISTIANSEN | Agent Ally Garcia  
MARK WILLIAM MYERS | Agent Lee Martin  
STEVE HEINZ | Agent Walker  
JOSEPH MAMMINA | Agent Tom Wilson



# AMERICAN HOSTAGE

## CREW LIST

PRODUCER & DIRECTOR | Mounir Chakor

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER | Melanie Bell Chakor

CASTING DIRECTOR | Bobbi Hill

CASTING ASSISTANT | Gina Martin

PHOTOGRAPHY | Joseph Boyle and Wheat

SOUND RECORDING | Jason Kushner and Joseph Boyle

LIGHTING | Wheat

BOOM OPERATOR | Jason Kushner

EDITOR | Mounir Chakor

SOUND EDITOR | Kilyoung Baek

MUSIC | Leon Salem

MARKETING DIRECTOR | Melanie Bell Chakor



# AMERICAN HOSTAGE

## BEHIND THE SCENES

