

THE ROCKETS' RED GLARE

Synopsis

On a quiet June weekend, a team of al Qaeda terrorists gains access to an industrial facility in Oak Ridge, Tennessee and steals 60,000 curies of highly-dispersible radioactive cesium. Sixteen dirty bombs are made, and twelve are distributed to their allies, the domestic hate group White Aryan Resistance. These bombs are disguised as fireworks and will be deployed for use during the upcoming 4th of July celebrations, spreading terror and economic chaos across the country.

The other four bombs are dispatched with radical Salafi Muslim suicide bombers to be detonated simultaneously at high-value targets scattered across America the week before the holiday. This unprecedented attack seems to be the beginning of a highly orchestrated Islamist terror program, but it is in fact a diversion to focus law enforcement and Homeland Security on radical Muslims to ensure the primary plan remains invisible.

The plan is the brainchild of Ibrahim al Hasan, a distant cousin in the Saudi Royal Family who has been tasked to establish al Qaeda of North America while working under his guise as the Commercial Attaché at the Saudi Consulate in Houston. Al Hasan was given the assignment by Osama bin Laden himself, and when bin Laden is killed by the U.S. military, he is determined to exact retribution. Without the necessary manpower resources, and with Muslims under heavy surveillance, he enlists the aid of the White Aryan Resistance, a domestic hate group with plenty of anonymous white, Christian soldiers but little money or capability.

A traffic accident involving one of the bomb teams perturbs al Hasan's meticulous plan. It is in fact not an accident, but the work of his supposed ally, Tag Grainger, founder and leader of WAR. Tag has a plan of his own, and directing the search for the stolen cesium at al Hasan is part of it. The accident results in the death of the two suicide bombers - one in the accident and the other in a shoot-out with police. The authorities are alerted to the cesium theft and soon discover the source of the cesium, but the destination remains unknown.

On Friday, just five days after the theft, the three remaining suicide bombs are deployed and set to detonate. In Chicago, an alert foot patrolman spots the terrorists and kills them both, leaving the bomb unexploded but out of its containment and posing a huge radiation hazard in the middle of The Loop. In Washington, the deployment is botched and the bomb detonated while still inside the cargo van transporting it, containing much of the damage. In Orlando, luck runs out and a motorcycle-born terrorist is able to breach EPCOT security and detonate his weapon, killing scores and leaving the tourist attraction contaminated and crippled.

It has finally happened - terrorists have detonated a weapon of mass destruction on American soil and killed many of its citizens. The authorities pull out all stops to find this previously unknown terrorist group and recover the remaining cesium. America is stunned, and normal life collapses overnight. Malls and theaters are empty, hospitals are overrun, stocks plummet, gold and oil go through the roof, and all the crazies come out of the woodwork to follow their own vision of right.

In the midst of the frenzy to find the Islami-fascists, Cal Bellotta, a terror and WMD expert, is tasked to analyze the attacks and guide authorities in prevention and response. He quickly becomes

skeptical of the conventional wisdom of radical Salafi Muslims as the perpetrators, and he is joined by Ray Nassiri, an American Muslim and computer genius working as a civilian for the Army's Information Dominance Center, one of the most powerful computer systems in the world. His unorthodox methods uncover a faint trail leading to WAR, and Cal grows more and more convinced that he is correct.

Cal and Ray stand alone against the combined law enforcement and Homeland Security apparatus. But even there, they find one FBI senior agent who, while not a believer, is willing to try almost anything when he has no other investigative paths to follow. They uncover part of the WAR network and roll them up, finding some of the cesium in the process. But the evidence implicating WAR is far from solid, and AQNA remains the focus. When some of the discovered cesium containers are found empty, the pressure heightens, and fears of an impending detonation reinforces the focus on Muslim terrorists.

Through Tag Grainger's plan, Ibrahim al Hasan is uncovered as the possible ringleader and he is forced to flee when the Saudi secret police, Mabahith, try to capture him. He holes up in Maricao, Venezuela with his family and tries to salvage his plan for vengeance from the Cuban Consulate there. Tag decides to silence al Hasan and sends his assassin to complete the task. For once, Ibrahim outsmarts Tag and captures and executes the assassin with the help of his teenage daughter's cell phone taser. Now the gloves are off and Tag and Ibrahim vow each other's death, with Ibrahim getting a friendly mufti in Yemen to declare a fatwa against Tag, guaranteeing his assassination.

As the investigation progresses, the authorities capture the leader of the cesium theft team and he reveals the destinations. Tracking these down, they discover more are missing, and Cal and Ray use their knowledge and technology to discern the new terrorist plan is a simultaneous detonation of the last three bombs in Washington.

With mounting evidence of WAR involvement, the authorities prepare a raid on their fortified compound in the desolate mountains of Montana, intending to capture Tag and his computers to locate the last three bombs. Tag is killed in the raid and the computers intentionally destroyed, and their evidence with them.

Cal is at a dead-end, with the information in the hands of the now-convinced authorities, his job is done. They, in turn, have fallen back on their sole remaining investigative resource - local police searching on the ground. With the city in a virtual lockdown, two of the bombs are eventually found and recovered, but the last bomb is on the move, intended for a drive-by dirty bomb attack on the White House.

As a last resort, Cal had surveyed his contacts at the government radiological labs and finds one of them is working on an untested detection technology that can track the density of moving objects, just as infra-red can track the heat signature. With no time left, Cal's jury-rigged detector is flying and with Ray's help narrowing the search grid, they locate the last bomb as the terrorist is preparing for its release. The ensuing helicopter-car chase through downtown DC ends with an FBI sniper.

The avowed terrorist policy of the United States is investigation - attribution - retribution. With the investigation complete, and the villains clearly identified, it is time for retribution. In the final scenes, drones are flying over the Middle-East and South America, and under Title 50 of the U.S. Code, justice is served via Hellfire missiles.