

THE SHOOTER

A drama in one act
by
Bradley Hayward

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SYNOPSIS

Deep within a forest in Afghanistan, an American soldier is held captive...by a twelve year old.

CHARACTERS

(2 males)

TOMMY (m).....American soldier, 18 years old. He's impatient, unable to sit still, and has an unpredictable temper. His head is shaved and there are primitive tattoos peeking out from underneath his dirty uniform.

OMAR (m).....Afghan soldier, 12 years old. He's patient, barely moves a muscle, and does not speak English. His uniform is too big for his tiny frame, making him look even younger.

SCENE

Midnight in Afghanistan, deep within a forest. Moonlight glows behind a wall of tree trunks and a large tree stump sits center stage.

RUNNING TIME

30 minutes.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THE SHOOTER was originally produced by Carrot River Junior Senior High School in Carrot River, Saskatchewan. It was directed by Dean Armstrong, Jennifer Carter, and Taryn Freemantle with the following cast:

TOMMY.....Taryn Freemantle

OMAR.....Sawyer Armstrong

Midnight in Afghanistan, deep within a forest. Moonlight glows behind a wall of tree trunks. TOMMY, an 18 year old American soldier, sits on a large tree stump. It's dead quiet and only his breathing can be heard as he shivers in the cold.

TOMMY

Quit playin' games, kid. Ya gonna shoot me or what?

OMAR, a 12 year old Afghan soldier, steps out from behind a tree trunk. He has a rifle pointed squarely at Tommy's head. Tommy turns and looks directly down the barrel of the gun.

Well, are ya? Now's your chance. Go on, get it over with.

Omar doesn't move. Not a muscle.

Fine. If that's they way you want it.

He takes his finger and points the barrel away from his face.

Then don't point that thing in my face.

Omar takes a step closer and looks at Tommy, curious.

You can do it, ya know.

He starts to twitch, as he continue to do sporadically throughout.

Go on, shoot me. But make it quick. My troops will be back, ya know. Mark my words, they'll be back. They don't leave no one behind.

Omar remains still. Tommy starts to laugh.

You're some kid, ya know that?

Omar doesn't respond. Tommy gets aggressive.

Ya hear me, kid?! Or are ya deaf?

Omar raises the rifle. Tommy raises his hands.

TOMMY (Continued)

Okay, okay. You can hear me. But if you're not gonna shoot me, I'm not sittin' here, okay? My ass is killin' me.

Tommy gets up and paces back and forth. Omar watches him like a hawk, keeping his rifle trained on him.

So whatcha gonna do, huh? You probably got some guys comin' for me, yeah? I bet your pals have somethin' planned. Somethin' real good. Lucky me.

Omar sits on the stump and lowers the gun onto his lap.

You don't like to shoot, huh? You like it hands-on? Is that what ya like? You wanna cut my head off, maybe?

Tommy stops pacing and looks up to the moon.

It's a good night for a beheading. The moonlight makes it perfect.

He points toward the sky.

You know that's the same moon I used to see as a kid. The exact same moon that used to keep me up at night. That's right. The same moon shines here as there. America, Afghanistan. No difference. It's the same damn moon. But that's all that's the same. Right, kid?

Tommy turns to Omar. He stares right back. Uncomfortable with the eye contact, Tommy resumes pacing.

You're no shooter. I can see that now. No shooter at all. If I had a gun, I'd show ya how it's done. There's an art to it. You gotta hold the gun firm in your hands. But not too tight. You wanna see? It's an art, I tell ya. An art.

He picks up an imaginary gun and points it out front, toward the moon. His movements are careful, even graceful.

The most important thing is not to hold the gun too tight. No, you gotta be gentle. A steady finger on the trigger. Then it's time to aim. Not right on, mind you. Guns never shoot right on. You gotta aim a little to the right. Right's better. People always run that way. Then you take a deep breath. A little nod to the gods. And BAM!

Omar flinches for the first time.
Tommy doesn't move, his eyes still
focused straight ahead.

TOMMY (Continued)

Then you gotta take a look. Find your target on the ground
and make sure you done it right.

He takes a deep breath.

That's the hardest part. 'Cause if you didn't, you gotta
start all over again. Only this time your aim is lower.

Omar stands behind him and points his
gun at the moon, then lowers his aim.
They stand in matching positions,
silent. Tommy takes a deep breath.

An art, I tell ya.

Suddenly, he twitches and resumes
pacing. Omar sits back down.

That's how ya shoot, kid. So go ahead, I'm right here. I
don't know what you're waitin' for.

Omar doesn't move. Irritated, Tommy
charges toward him.

You're driving me crazy, kid! Ya know that? You got the
gun, you get to call the shots. But you're just sittin'
there. I don't like it! I don't like it at all! You gotta
act! Didn't nobody ever teach you how to act?

Omar takes his hands off the gun to
scratch an itch. Then he adjusts
himself and puts his palms back on
the gun. Tommy gets furious.

Right there! That's what I'm talkin' about. You gotta keep
your guard up. What's stoppin' me from takin' that gun from
ya, huh? You gotta protect it, kid.

He gets nose to nose with Omar.

You gotta protect yourself!

He takes a deep breath.

Ya know what?

Tommy waits for an answer. Omar
remains still as a statue.

TOMMY (Continued)

I'm hungry. So if you're not gonna shoot me, I'm gonna eat. Okay?

Tommy sits on the ground next to Omar. He reaches behind the stump and grabs his backpack. As he opens the zipper, Omar hoists up the rifle and aims it at Tommy.

Don't!

Tommy drops the bag at his feet and puts his hands up. Omar keeps his aim steady. Neither of them move. Finally, Tommy takes a slow breath.

There ain't nothin' in there to hurt ya. Promise.

He kicks the bag over to Omar. Omar sets the rifle in his lap, then picks up the bag. Tommy nods carefully.

Look.

Omar unzips the bag and digs through its contents. He gets overanxious and sticks his head right in. With Omar's guard down, Tommy eyes the rifle. Slowly, very slowly, he reaches for it. Suddenly, Omar pulls his head out and Tommy quickly retreats.

See. Just some snacks and...

He holds his hands out.

Can I?

Omar hands him the bag.

Let's see...

He rifles through the bag. Omar watches eagerly. Finally, Tommy pulls out a fruit roll-up.

You ever had a fruit roll-up?

He rips into the candy and tosses the wrapper to the ground.

Probably not, huh? Smell it.

He holds it up to Omar's nose. He takes a whiff.

TOMMY (Continued)

Good, huh? Blueberry, I think. Or grape, maybe. They're both good, so it don't matter.

He unrolls the fruit roll-up and peels off the thin piece of cellophane. This also gets tossed on the ground. He shoves as much of it as he can in his mouth. A large chunk dangles from his lips.

It's real tasty.

Omar licks his upper lip. Tommy stops chewing and talks with his mouth full.

Ya want some?

Omar tilts his head.

It's okay. I'll share.

With the candy still in his mouth, he tears off a hunk and holds it out to Omar.

Here ya go. Try it.

Omar carefully takes it and sniffs. Tommy watches and waits. Omar doesn't move it from under his nose, so Tommy gets annoyed again.

Whatcha waiting for, kid? Eat it!

Omar doesn't do a thing.

It's not poisoned, if that's what you're worried about. I'm havin' it, aren't I? Come on! Eat it, kid! Like this.

He demonstrates by pulling out a wad of chewed up candy from his mouth. He shows it to Omar, then puts it back on his tongue.

Like that. It tastes good. I promise.

Omar sniffs the roll-up again, then finally puts it in his mouth. He chews very slowly, savoring the flavor.

TOMMY (Continued)

That's it. Ya like it?

Omar just keeps chewing. Tommy hopes he'll talk back, so he makes yummy noises.

Mmmm-mmm-mmm, right? You like it, don't ya? Say something, dammit! Anything. Yum? Yum-eee?

Omar begins to laugh.

Well, I just want to know if ya like it. You don't have to laugh.

Omar stops laughing. There's a long pause. Tommy swallows. Finally, Tommy leans in.

So, do ya? Huh? Do ya like it? Yum-eee?

Omar nods.

Good. You're a goddamn statue, so I'll take any answer I can get.

Tommy licks his fingers, then his upper lip. Suddenly, Omar starts to laugh.

What now?

Omar points to Tommy's mouth, still laughing.

What? I got some on my face?

He licks his hand and wipes his lips.

Where is it? Come on, tell me! Am I blue all over?

Omar shakes his head, still smiling. Then he sticks out his tongue. It's bright blue.

Oh, my tongue is blue. Yeah, that happens.

He grins, then sticks out his tongue. He speaks with it hanging out.

You think this is funny? My tongue is blue and you think it's funny?

He sticks out his tongue farther and wags it around. He makes funny sounds, like one would while seeing the doctor.

TOMMY (Continued)

Ahhhh!

Omar doubles over. Then he sticks out his own tongue.

OMAR

Ahhhh!

Omar laughs as he wags his tongue around.

TOMMY

My little brother likes the green kind. Sour apple, I think. He can eat, like, a whole box at a time. Then his tongue turns green, not blue. That's why I call him Ribbit.

This memory makes him laugh.

Get it? Like the sound a frog makes? 'Cause his tongue was green! But one time he ate two whole boxes. At once! He got real sick. He puked all over. Bright green puke.

He sticks out his tongue again.

Ribbit, ribbit.

Omar laughs even harder.

OMAR

Ribbit, ribbit!

TOMMY

That's right.

Omar continues to laugh until he chokes on a hiccup.

Okay, it's not that funny.

Tommy gets up and starts pacing again.

And I'm still hungry.

Omar continues to hiccup. Tommy walks back and forth like a pendulum, with his eyes on Omar the whole time.

TOMMY (Continued)

I think he's probably your age. My brother, I mean. He's twelve. Maybe thirteen, I dunno.

This thought sobers him up quickly and he stops moving.

I guess it's not so funny. His puking, I mean.

Omar has settled down too, despite his hiccups.

You should have some water, kid. To stop those hiccups. Yeah, let's get ya some water.

He sits back down next to Omar and digs through his bag. He pulls out a canteen.

Here ya go. Drink this.

He twists off the cap and hands it over.

Go on.

Omar takes a swig. Water dribbles down his face.

You're a lot like my brother, ya know that? He spills, too.

Omar starts to guzzle the water as if he's been thirsty for days.

Hey, come on! Save some for me.

He grabs the bottle back and gulps some down himself.

Ah, that's good.

Omar nods and takes a deep breath. His hiccups are gone.

His name is Trevor. My little brother, I mean. Tommy and Trevor. That's my name. Tommy. I wonder what yours is. I betcha it's a good name. I heard that names here mean somethin'. I don't think Tommy means nothin'. I bet it don't.

He points to his chest and speaks very slowly.

Tommy. That's me.

He points at Omar.

TOMMY (Continued)

What's your name?

Omar shakes his head. Tommy points to himself again.

Taaaw-meee.

He points to Omar.

And...

OMAR

Taaaw-meee?

Tommy nods.

TOMMY

That's right. I'm Tommy, and you are...

He cranes his neck, hoping for an answer.

OMAR

Tommy.

TOMMY

No, I'm Tommy. You are...

OMAR

Tommy.

Tommy throws up his arms, frustrated.

TOMMY

Nevermind!

He leaps back up and paces. Omar speaks to himself as he tries to figure it out.

OMAR

Tommy... Tommy...

Suddenly, it hits him.

Omar.

Surprised, Tommy rushes back.

TOMMY

What did you say?

Omar points to himself.

OMAR

Omar.

TOMMY

Omar?

Omar nods enthusiastically.

Well, that's just great. Goddamn great! Hi, Omar. I'm Tommy.

OMAR

Omar.

TOMMY

Omar's a good name. Sounds like it means somethin'. Not like Tommy. It don't mean nothin', I know it.

He extends his hand to shake with Omar.

Well, Omar, put 'er there.

Omar shrugs.

I wanna shake hands. You haven't killed me yet, so I want to shake. I want to shake hands with a kid whose name means somethin'.

END OF PREVIEW. To request a complete script, or to apply for production rights, contact the author at haywardb@hotmail.com