

# The Shadows in the Cave

## **The Power of Nightmares**

Transcript of Episode 3, "The Shadows in the Cave"

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**NOTE** by Mike Conley: Portions of the audio are difficult to understand; where possible, I provide my best guess at the actual words spoken, and precede them with a {?} indicator. Corrections from those with better hearing, audio equipment, or sensitivity to Arabic accents are welcome.

**VO:** In the past, politicians promised to create a better world. They had different ways of achieving this. But their power and authority came from the optimistic visions they offered to their people. Those dreams failed. And today, people have lost faith in ideologies. Increasingly, politicians are seen simply as managers of public life. But now, they have discovered a new role that restores their power and authority. Instead of delivering dreams, politicians now promise to protect us from nightmares. They say that they will rescue us from dreadful dangers that we cannot see and do not understand. And the greatest danger of all is international terrorism. A powerful and sinister network, with sleeper cells in countries across the world. A threat that needs to be fought by a war on terror. But much of this threat is a fantasy, which has been exaggerated and distorted by politicians. It's a dark illusion that has spread unquestioned through governments around the world, the security services, and the international media.

**VO:** This is a series of films about how and why that fantasy was created, and who it benefits. At the heart of the story are two groups: the American neoconservatives, and the radical Islamists. Last week's episode ended in the late '90s with both groups marginalized and out of power. But with the attacks of September 11th, the fates of both dramatically changed. The Islamists, after their moment of triumph, were virtually destroyed within months, while the neoconservatives took power in Washington. But then, the neoconservatives began to reconstruct the Islamists. They created a phantom enemy. And as this nightmare fantasy began to spread, politicians realized the newfound power it gave them in a deeply disillusioned age. Those with the darkest nightmares became the most powerful.

[ OPENING TITLES : THE POWER OF NIGHTMARES / THE RISE OF THE POLITICS OF FEAR / THE SHADOWS IN THE CAVE ]

[ TITLE: AFGHANISTAN 1998 ]

**VO:** At the end of the 1990s, Osama bin Laden had returned to Afghanistan. He was accompanied by Ayman Zawahiri, the most influential ideologist of the Islamist movement. For 20 years, Zawahiri had struggled to create revolutions in the Arab world, but all attempt had ended in bloody failure.

[ EXCERPT , CNN EXCLUSIVE VIDEO ]

**INTERVIEWER** (in Arabic, English subtitles): We haven't had any information about your whereabouts for some time. Where were you?

**AYMAN ZAWAHIRI:** {?} I was just home and clubs.

**INTERVIEWER:** Not in Afghanistan? Somewhere else?

**ZAWAHIRI:** Everywhere, everywhere.

**INTERVIEWER :** Everywhere?

**ZAWAHIRI:** I am a Muslim. Being a Muslim, you are wanted everywhere. Because if you—just if you say no to the superpowers, this immediately in itself is a crime you are wanted for.

**INTERVIEWER :** {?} Yes, but isn't what you do not to do with arms?

**ZAWAHIRI :** {?} It's aggressive but ask Allah, and he is greater than superpower.

**VO:** Zawahiri was a follower of the Egyptian revolutionary, Sayyed Qutb, who had been executed in 1966. Qutb's vision had been of a new type of modern state. It would contain all of the benefits of Western science and technology, but it would use Islam as a moral framework to protect people from the culture of Western liberalism. Qutb believed that this culture infected the minds of Muslims, turning them into selfish creatures who threatened to destroy the shared values that held society together. Throughout the 80s and 90s, Zawahiri had tried to persuade the masses to rise up and topple the rulers who had allowed this corruption to infect their countries.

[ EXCERPT , VIDEOTAPE OF SADAT ASSASSINATION ]

[ CUT TO AYMAN ZAWAHIRI IN EGYPTIAN COURTROOM CELL ]

**ZAWAHIRI** [haranguing courtroom]: We want to speak to the whole world. Who are we?

**VO:** But the revolutionaries became trapped in a horrific escalation of violence, because the masses refused to follow them. Islamism failed as a mass movement, and Zawahiri now came to the conclusion that a new strategy was needed.

**GILLES KEPEL , HISTORIAN OF ISLAMIST MOVEMENT:** They had no revolution at all. I mean, they had failed in their takeover, they had failed to topple the powers that be, and, you know, they became more and more interested in this idea that only a small vanguard could be successful. I mean, they had lost confidence in the spontaneous capacity of the masses to be mobilised. Then they decided to change strategy completely, and instead of striking at what they called the "near enemy"—i.e., the local regimes—they decided that they could strike at the "far away enemy"—i.e., at the West, at America—and that would impress the masses, and the masses would be mobilised.

[ TITLE : NAIROBI , AUGUST 1998 ]

**VO:** Zawahiri and bin Laden began implementing this new strategy in August, 1998. Two huge suicide bombs were detonated outside American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, killing more than 200 people. The bombings had a dramatic effect on the West. For the first time, the name "bin Laden" entered the public consciousness as a terrorist mastermind.

[ CUT TO AFGHANISTAN ]

**VO:** The suicide bombers had been recruited by bin Laden from the Islamist training camps in Afghanistan. But his and Zawahiri's operation was very much on the fringes of the Islamist movement. The overwhelming majority of the fighters in these camps had nothing at all to do with bin Laden or international terrorism. They were training to fight régimes in their own countries, such as Uzbekistan, Kashmir, and Chechnia. Their aim was to establish Islamist societies in the Western world, and they had no interest in attacking America. Bin Laden helped fund some of the camps, and in return was allowed to look for volunteers for his operations. But a number of senior Islamists were against his new strategy, including members of Zawahiri's own group, Islamic Jihad.

[ EXCERPT , CNN EXCLUSIVE VIDEO : BIN LADEN , SURROUNDED BY ARMED , MASKED SOLDIERS ]

**VO:** Even bin Laden's displays of strength to the Western media were faked. The fighters in this video had been hired for the day and told to bring their own weapons. For beyond this small group, bin Laden had no formal organisation—until the Americans invented one for him.

[ CUT TO MANHATTAN CITYSCAPE ]

[ TITLE : MANHATTAN , JANUARY 2001 ]

**VO:** In January, 2001, a trial began in a Manhattan courtroom of four men accused of the embassy bombings in east Africa. But the Americans had also decided to prosecute bin Laden in his absence. But to do this under American law, the prosecutors needed evidence of a criminal organisation because, as with the Mafia, that would allow them to prosecute the head of the organisation even if he could not be linked directly to the crime. And the evidence for that organisation was provided for them by an ex-associate of bin Laden's called Jamal al-Fadl.

**JASON BURKE , AUTHOR, "AL QAEDA" :** During the investigation of the 1998 bombings, there is a walk-in source, Jamal al-Fadl, who is a Sudanese militant who was with bin Laden in the early 90s, who has been passed around a whole series of Middle East secret services, none of whom want much to do with him, and who ends up in America and is taken on by—uh—the American government, effectively, as a key prosecution witness and is given a huge amount of American taxpayers' money at the same time. And his account is used as raw material to build up a picture of Al Qaeda. The picture that the FBI want to build up is one that will fit the existing laws that they will have to use to prosecute those responsible for the bombing. Now, those laws were drawn up to counteract organised crime: the Mafia, drugs crime, crimes where people being a member of an organisation is extremely important. You have to have an organisation to get a prosecution. And you have al-Fadl and a number of other witness, a number of other sources, who are happy to feed into this. You've got material that, looked at in a certain way, can be seen to show this organisation's existence. You put the two together and you get what is the first bin Laden myth—the first Al Qaeda myth. And because it's one of the first, it's extremely influential.

**VO:** The picture al-Fadl drew for the Americans of bin Laden was of an all-powerful figure at the head of a large terrorist network that had an organised network of control. He also said that bin Laden had given this network a name: "Al Qaeda." It was a dramatic and powerful picture of bin Laden, but it bore little relationship to the truth.

[ EXCERPT, CNN EXCLUSIVE VIDEO : BIN LADEN AND SOLDIERS ]

**VO:** The reality was that bin Laden and Ayman Zawahiri had become the focus of a loose association of disillusioned Islamist militants who were attracted by the new strategy. But there was no organisation. These were militants who mostly planned their own operations and looked to bin Laden for funding and assistance. He was not their commander. There is also no evidence that bin Laden used the term "Al Qaeda" to refer to the name of a group until after September the 11th, when he realized that this was the term the Americans have given it.

[ CUT TO MANHATTAN SKYLINE ]

**VO:** In reality, Jamal al-Fadl was on the run from bin Laden, having stolen money from him. In return for his evidence, the Americans gave him witness protection in America and hundreds of thousands of dollars. Many lawyers at the trial believed that al-Fadl exaggerated and lied to give the Americans the picture of a terrorist organisation that they needed to prosecute bin Laden.

**SAM SCHMIDT** , DEFENCE LAWYER EMBASSY BOMBINGS TRIAL: And there were selective portions of al-Fadl's testimony that I believe was false, to help support the picture that he helped the Americans join together. I think he lied in a number of specific testimony about a unified image of what this organisation was. It made Al Qaeda the new Mafia or the new Communists. It made them identifiable as a group and therefore made it easier to prosecute any person associated with Al Qaeda for any acts or statements made by bin Laden—who talked a lot.

**BURKE** : The idea—which is critical to the FBI's prosecution—that bin Laden ran a coherent organisation with operatives and cells all around the world of which you could be a member is a myth. There is no Al Qaeda organisation. There is no international network with a leader, with cadres who will unquestioningly obey orders, with tentacles that stretch out to sleeper cells in America, in Africa, in Europe. That idea of a coherent, structured terrorist network with an organised capability simply does not exist.

**VO:** What did exist was a powerful idea that was about to inspire a single, devastating act that would lead the whole world into believing the myth that had begun to be constructed in the Manhattan courtroom.

[ CUT TO MANHATTAN SKYLINE : WORLD TRADE CENTER TOWERS . ONE TOWER HAS BEEN HIT , AND IS ON FIRE .]

**MAN** (off-camera) : What's this other jet doing? What's this other jet doing?

**WOMAN** (off-camera) : What the hell's that?

[ AIRCRAFT ENTERS VIEW FROM LEFT , CRASHES INTO SECOND TOWER. FIREBALL ERUPTS .]

**MAN** : Holy—fuck!

**WOMAN** : Oh my God! Oh my God! Jesus fucking Christ!

[ ARM PASSES BEFORE CAMERA LENS ]

**MAN #2** : Don't touch it!

**WOMAN** [ SOBBING ]: Oh my God! Oh my God!

[ OTHER EXCLAMATIONS AND SOBBING IN BACKGROUND AS SMOKE BILLOWS FROM TOWERS ]

**VO**: The attack on America by 19 hijackers shocked the world. It was Ayman Zawahiri's new strategy, implemented in a brutal and spectacular way. But neither he nor bin Laden were the originators of what was called the "Planes Operation." It was the brainchild of an Islamist militant called Khalid Sheik Mohammed, who came to bin Laden for funding and help in finding volunteers. But in the wake of panic created by the attacks, the politicians reached for the model which had been created by the trial earlier that year: the hijackers were just the tip of a vast, international terrorist network which was called, "Al Qaeda."

[ CUT TO INTERIOR, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, UNITED STATES CONGRESS ]

**GEORGE W BUSH** , PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES [ ON SPEAKER'S PODIUM ] : Al Qaeda is to terror what the Mafia is to crime. There are thousands of these terrorists in more than 60 countries. They are recruited from their own nations and neighborhoods, and brought to camps in places like Afghanistan, where they are trained in the tactics of terror.

[ CUT TO PENTAGON BRIEFING ROOM ]

**DONALD RUMSFELD** , SECRETARY OF DEFENSE: This one network, Al Qaeda, that's receiving so much discussion and publicity make have activities in 50 to 60 countries, including the United States.

[ CUT TO OTHER INTERIOR, PODIUM ]

**BUSH**: Our war is against networks and groups, people who coddle them, people who try to hide them, people who fund them. This is our calling.

**VO**: And the attacks had another dramatic effect: they brought the neoconservatives back to power in America. When George Bush first became president, he had appointed neoconservatives like Paul Wolfowitz, and their allies like Donald Rumsfeld, to his administration. But their grand vision of America's role in the world was largely ignored by this new régime.

[ TITLE : SEPTEMBER 2000 ]

[ CUT TO PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE ]

**BUSH** : I just don't think it's the role of the United States to walk into another country and say, "We do it this way, so should you."

[ TITLE: BUT NOW ]

**BUSH** : We're going to find those who, uh, who, uh, uh, those evil-doers.

**VO**: But now, the neoconservatives became all-powerful, because this terror network proved that what they had been predicting through the 1990s was correct: that America was at risk from terrifying new forces in a hostile world. A small group formed that began to shape America's response to the attacks. At its heart were

Donald Rumsfeld and Paul Wolfowitz, along with the vice-president, Dick Cheney, and Richard Perle, who was a senior advisor to the Pentagon. The last time these men had been in power together was 20 years before, under President Reagan. Back then, they had taken on and, as they saw it, defeated a source of evil that wanted to take over America: the Soviet Union. And now they saw this new war on terror in the same epic terms.

**RICHARD PERLE** , CHAIRMAN PENTAGON DEFENSE POLICY BOARD 2001-2003: The struggle against Soviet totalitarianism was a struggle between fundamental value questions. "Good" and "evil" is about as effective a shorthand as I can imagine in this regard, and there's something rather similar going on in the war on terror. It isn't a war on terror, it's a war on terrorists who want to impose an intolerant tyranny on all mankind, an Islamic universe in which we are all compelled to accept their beliefs and live by their lights, and in that sense this is a battle between good and evil.

**VO:** But, as previous episodes have shown, the neoconservatives distorted and exaggerated the Soviet threat. They created the image of a hidden, international web of evil run from Moscow that planned to dominate the world, when, in reality, the Soviet Union was on its last legs, collapsing from within. Now, they did the same with the Islamists. They took a failing movement which had lost mass support and began to reconstruct it into the image of a powerful network of evil, controlled from the center by bin Laden from his lair in Afghanistan. They did this because it fitted with their vision of America's unique destiny to fight an epic battle against the forces of evil throughout the world.

**VINCENT CANNISTRARO** , HEAD OF COUNTER - TERRORISM , CIA , 1988-90: What the neoconservatives are doing is taking a concept that they developed during the competition with the Soviet Union, i.e., Soviet Communism was evil, it wanted to take over our country, wanted to take over our people, our classrooms, our society. It was that kind of concept of evil that they took—an exaggerated one, to be sure—and then apply it to a new threat, where it didn't apply at all, and yet it was layered with the same kind of cultural baggage. The policy says there's a network, the policy says that network is evil, they want to infiltrate our classrooms, they want to take our society, they want all our women to wear, you know, veils, and this is what we have to deal with and therefore since we know it's evil let's just kill it, and that will make it go away.

[ CUT TO TANKS AND VEHICLES ROLLING DOWN A ROAD IN AFGHANISTAN ]

**VO:** And so the Americans set off to invade Afghanistan, to find and destroy the heart of this network.

[ TITLE: AFGHANISTAN, NOVEMBER 2001 ]

[ CUT TO DESOLATE TERRAIN , MOUNTAINS IN BACKGROUND , SHOOTING IN FOREGROUND ]

**VO:** To do this, the Americans allied themselves with a group called the Northern Alliance. They were a loose collection of warlords, fighting a war of resistance against the Taliban, the Islamists who controlled Afghanistan. The Taliban's best troops were the thousands of foreign fighters from the training camps who the Northern Alliance hated.

[ NORTHERN ALLIANCE TROOPS RETRIEVE IDENTITY PAPERS FROM DEAD TALIBAN FIGHTERS . ONE HOLDS AN IDENTITY CARD UP TO THE CAMERA ]

**NORTHERN ALLIANCE SOLDIER** : Pakistan, eh! Pakistan! Pakistan!

**VO**: And now, they took their revenge on the foreign fighters. The Americans believed that these men were Al Qaeda terrorists, and the Northern Alliance did nothing to disabuse them of this, because they were paid by the Americans for each prisoner they delivered. But the majority of these fighters had never had anything to do with bin Laden or international terrorism. Both they and the Taliban were radical nationalists who wanted to create Islamist societies in their own countries. But now, they were either killed or taken off to Guantánamo Bay and Islamism, as an organised movement for changing the Muslim world, was obliterated in Afghanistan. But as it disappeared, it was replaced by ever more extravagant fantasies about the power and reach of the Al Qaeda network.

[ TITLE : TORA BORA ]

**VO**: In December, the Northern Alliance told the Americans that bin Laden was hiding in the mountains of Tora Bora. They were convinced they had found the heart of his organisation.

[ EXCERPT , "MEET THE PRESS ," NBC TV ]

**TIM RUSSERT** : The search for Osama bin Laden: there was constant discussion about him hiding out in caves and I think many times the American people have a perception that it's a little hole dug out of the side of a mountain.

**DONALD RUMSFELD** [ OFF CAMERA ]: Oh, no.

[ CUT TO DIAGRAM OF HIDDEN CAVE HEADQUARTERS MARKED "SOURCE: THE TIMES OF LONDON", DEPICTING A MULTI-STORY UNDERGROUND COMMAND POST ]

**RUSSERT** : This is it. This is a fortress.

**RUMSFELD** : Yes.

**RUSSERT** : A complex. Multi-tiered. [ READING , AS LABELS ARE DISPLAYED ON DIAGRAM ] "Bedrooms and Offices" on the top, as you can see. "Secret Exits" on the side, and on the bottom. "Cut Deep to Avoid Thermal Detection." A ventilation system, to allow people to breathe and to carry on. The entrances, large enough to drive trucks and even tanks. Even computer systems and telephone systems. It's a very sophisticated operation.

[ CUT TO STUDIO ]

**RUMSFELD** : Oh, you bet. This—this is serious business. And—and there's not one of those; there are many of those.

[ CUT TO TORA BORA , AFGHANISTAN : B-52S BOMBING MOUNTAINS ]

**VO**: For days, the Americans bombed the mountains of Tora Bora with the most powerful weapons they had. The Northern Alliance had been paid more than a million

dollars for their help and information, and now their fighters set off up the mountains to storm bin Laden's fortress and bring back the Al Qaeda terrorists and their leader.

[ NORTHERN ALLIANCE SOLDIERS SEARCHING CAVE OPENINGS ]

**VO:** But all they found were a few small caves, which were either empty or had been used to store ammunition. There was no underground bunker system, no secret tunnels: the fortress didn't exist. The Northern Alliance did produce some prisoners they claimed were Al Qaeda fighters, but there was no proof of this, and one rumor was that the Northern Alliance was simply kidnapping anyone who looked remotely like an Arab and selling them to the Americans for yet more money.

[ FADE TO AMERICAN FORCES IN TORA BORA ]

**VO:** The Americans now began to search all the caves in all the mountains in eastern Afghanistan for the hidden Al Qaeda network.

**AMERICAN SOLDIER** , SPEAKING INTO RADIO : We found a cave. The rest of it is open. Break.

[ CUT TO INTERIOR , COMMAND POST ]

**AMERICAN ARMY SERGEANT** : If nobody went up to look into that cave, people could've been hiding up there for days and watching everything that we did.

[ CUT TO VIEW OF MISSILE STRIKING CAVE OPENING , SOLDIERS INSPECT DAMAGE ]

**VO:** But wherever they looked, there was nothing there. Al Qaeda seemed to have completely disappeared.

[ FADE TO VIEW OF HELICOPTERS FLYING OVER AFGHANISTAN MOUNTAIN RANGE ]

**VO:** But then, the British arrived to help. They were convinced they could hunt down Al Qaeda because of what they said was their unique experience in fighting terrorism in Northern Ireland. They could succeed where others had failed.

[ CLOSE UP ON BRIGADIER ROGER LANE , COMMANDER , BRITISH FORCES , ADDRESSING AN OFF-CAMERA AUDIENCE ]

**BRIGADIER LANE** : The hunt for Al Qaeda Taliban goes on, and we stand shoulder to shoulder with the United States and our other coalition allies in the global war on terrorism.

[ TITLE : FIVE WEEKS LATER ]

**INTERVIEWER** : But how many Al Qaeda have you captured?

**LANE** : We haven't, uh, captured any Al Qaeda, but...

**INTERVIEWER** : And how many have you actually managed to kill here in south-east Afghanistan?

**LANE** : We haven't killed any.



[ EXCERPT , *THE THIEF OF BAGHDAD* : MARKETPLACE SCENE , SCROLL IS UNROLLED READING :

Ten thousand pieces of gold for the body of Ali Baba and the destruction of the band of thieves.

by order of  
Hulagu, Khan of the Mongols  
and Ruler of Baghdad ]

[ SCENES OF MEN ON HORSEBACK JUMPING CHASMS AND ESCAPING ]

[ CUT TO CNN EXCLUSIVE VIDEO OF BIN LADEN , WAVING .]

[ FADE TO BLACK ]

[ FADE TO AFGHANISTAN EXTERIOR ]

**VO:** The terrible truth was that there was nothing there because Al Qaeda as an organisation did not exist. The attacks on America had been planned by a small group that had come together around bin Laden in the late 90s. What united them was an idea: an extreme interpretation of Islamism developed by Ayman Zawahiri. With the American invasion, that group had been destroyed, killed or scattered. What was left was the idea, and the real danger was the way this idea could inspire groups and individuals around the world who had no relationship to each other. In looking for an organisation, the Americans and the British were chasing a phantom enemy and missing the real threat.

**JASON BURKE** , AUTHOR, "AL QAEDA" : I was with the Royal Marines as they trooped around eastern Afghanistan, and every time they got a location for a supposed Al Qaeda or Taliban element or base, they'd turn up and there was no one there, or there'd be a few startled shepherds, and that struck me then as being a wonderful image to the war on terror, because people are looking for something that isn't there. There is no organisation with its terrorist operatives, cells, sleeper cells, so on and so forth. What there is is an idea, prevalent among young, angry Muslim males throughout the Islamic world. That idea is what poses a threat.

[ CUT TO WASHINGTON , D.C., MONUMENTS AND SKYLINE ]

**VO:** But the neoconservatives were now increasingly locked into this fantasy, and next they set out to uncover the network in America itself.

**PAUL WOLFOWITZ** , US DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE : This is a network that has penetrated into some 60 countries, including very definitely our own, and it's got to be rooted out. Our intelligence priority, in many ways, is getting after the network here in the United States first. We will do whatever we need to do to go after these networks and dismantle them.

[ CUT TO FLYOVER OF NEW ENGLAND TOWN ]

**VO:** The American government set out to search for the Al Qaeda organisation inside its own country. Thousands were detained as all branches of the law and the military were told to look for terrorists.

[ CUT TO VIEW OF GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE , SAN FRANCISCO ]

**CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL OFFICER** : You don't really know what a terrorist looks like, what kind of car they drive, or anything else, so it's just basically everything and everybody and anything out here.

[ CUT TO NEWS TITLE : "AMERICA UNDER ATTACK" ]

[ CUT TO SCENES OF EMERGENCY RESPONSE VEHICLES ]

**VO**: And, bit by bit, the government found the network: a series of hidden cells in cities around the country from Buffalo to Portland.

[ CUT TO PRESIDENTIAL PODIUM ]

**GEORGE W BUSH** : We've thwarted terrorists in Buffalo and Seattle, Portland, Detroit, North Carolina, and Tampa, Florida. We're determined to stop the enemy before he can strike our people.

**VO**: The Americans called them "sleeper cells," and decided that they had just been waiting to strike. But in reality there is very little evidence that any of those arrested had anything at all to do with terrorist plots. From Portland to the suburb of Buffalo called Lackawanna, yet again the Americans were chasing a phantom enemy.

**DAVID COLE** , PROFESSOR OF LAW , GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY : They say "terrorist sleeper cell." That's what—they—they call the Lackawanna people a terrorist sleeper cell, the Detroit people a terrorist cell, the Portland people a terrorist cell. But when you look at the details, the facts just don't support that, and they have not proved that any group within the United States has plotted to engage in any terrorist—uh—activity within the United States in all of the cases that they've brought since 9/11.

[ CUT TO HOME VIDEO OF YOUTHS AT DISNEYLAND , CALIFORNIA ]

**VO**: The evidence behind all of the sleeper cell cases is flimsy and often bizarre. This tape was one of the central pieces of evidence in the first of the cases. It was found in a raid on this house...

[ CUT TO EXTERIOR VIEW OF HOUSE ]

**VO** ... in Detroit. Four Arab men were arrested on suspicion of being an Al Qaeda sleeper cell.

[ VIEWS OF ARREST PHOTOGRAPHS OF SUSPECTS . TITLE : DETROIT ACCUSED ]

**VO**: They had been accused by another immigrant called Mr Hmimssa. But Mr Hmimssa was, in reality, an international con man with 12 aliases and wanted for fraud across America.

[ CUT TO PHOTOGRAPH ; TITLE : YOUSSEF HMIMSSA , US GOVERNMENT WITNESS ]

**VO**: Despite this, the FBI offered to reduce his sentence for fraud if he testified against the men. And to back up Mr Hmimssa's allegations, the FBI turned to the

videotape. On the surface it was the innocent record of a trip to Disneyland by a group of teenagers who had nothing to do with the accused, but the government had discovered a hidden and sinister purpose to the tape.

**RON HANSEN** , REPORTER - THE DETROIT NEWS : The government expert who has looked into surveillance tapes—"casing tapes," as he referred to them—said that one of the objectives of making these kinds of tapes is to disguise the nature, the real purpose, of the tape, and he explained it that the tape is made to look benign, made to look like a tourist tape to obscure its real purpose as a tape to case Disneyland, and that the very appearance of it as being just a tourist tape is actually evidence that it's not a tourist tape.

[ CUT TO DISNEYLAND VIDEO ; YOUTH IS SPEAKING TO CAMERA ]

**YOUTH** [ HOLDING IMAGINARY MICROPHONE ]: Al-Jazeera, Hollywood, Los Angeles, California. Hello?

[ CUT TO DISNEYLAND VIDEO ; INTERIOR OF INDIANA JONES RIDE ]

**RON HANSEN** : I could never get past the fact that the tape just looked like a tourist tape. The Disneyland ride, for example, was a lengthy queue, people just making their way to the ride. The camera occasionally pans to look at the rocks on the wall, made to look like an Indiana Jones movie, and after several minutes the camera pans across and shows a trash can momentarily, and then continues off to look into the crowd. The expert basically said that, by flashing on that trash can for a moment, the people who are part of this conspiracy to conduct these kinds of terrorist operations, they would understand what this is all about: how to locate a bomb in Disneyland in California.

[ CUT TO VIEW OF YOUTHS IN RESTAURANT ]

**YOUTH** , WAVING : Hello!

**RON HANSEN** : All the talking and bantering were intended to disguise the hidden message contained within the tape.

[ CUT TO VIEW OF YOUTHS DANCING ON VIDEOTAPE ]

**VO**: The government was convinced that the tape was full of hidden messages. A brief shot of a tree outside the group's hotel room was there, they said, to show where to place a sniper to attack the cars on the freeway.

[ CUT TO SHAKY VIEW OF SHADOW ALONG SIDEWALK AS INDIVIDUAL CARRIES CAMERA ]

**VO**: And what looked like a camera which had accidentally been left running was in reality a terrorist secretly counting out distances to show others where to place a bomb.

[ CUT TO VIEW OF US AIR FORCE JET LANDING ]

**VO**: And the government also said that the Detroit cell was planning to attack US military bases around the world. Yet again, they found hidden evidence of this in a day planner they discovered under the sofa in the house in Detroit. What looked like doodles were in reality, they said, a plan to attack a US base in Turkey.

**WILLIAM SWOR** , DEFENCE LAWYER , DETROIT SLEEPER CELL TRIAL , INDICATING COPY OF DRAWINGS FROM DAY PLANNER : The government brought in its security officer from the base to testify that she interpreted this as being the main runways. She identified these as being AWACS airplanes and these as being fighter jets. She said that these solid lines were lines of fire and she also said that this down here was a hardened bunker.

VO: But the drawings in the day planner were discovered to have actually been the work of a madman. They were the fantasies of a Yemeni who believed that he was the minister of defence for the whole of the Middle East. He had committed suicide a year before any of the accused had arrived in Detroit, leaving the day planner lying under the sofa in the house. Despite this, two of the accused were found guilty. But then, the government's only witness, Mr Hmimssa, told two of his cellmates that he had made the whole thing up to get his fraud charges reduced. The terrorism convictions have now been overturned by the judge in the case, but it was acclaimed by the President as the first success in the war on terror at home.

[ INTERIOR , HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES , SPEAKER'S DAIS ]

**GEORGE W BUSH** : We have the terrorists on the run. We're keeping them on the run. One by one the terrorists are learning the meaning of American justice.

[ CUT TO VIDEOTAPE , YOUTHS HAVING A PILLOW FIGHT ]

[ CUT TO BUFFALO , NEW YORK , SKYLINE ]

VO: Another case, in the city of Buffalo, New York, seemed on the surface to be more substantial. Six young Yemeni-Americans had gone to an Islamist training camp in Afghanistan.

[ CUT TO AFGHANISTAN , TRAINING CAMP ]

VO: They travelled there in early 2001 and spent between 2 and 6 weeks training and being taught Islamist revolutionary theory. Two of them even met bin Laden on one of his tours of the camp. They then returned to the Buffalo suburb of Lackawanna, where they lived, but they did nothing. The FBI heard about their trip and they watched the six men around the clock for nearly a year, but there was no suspicious behavior.

[ CUT TO LACKAWANNA , SUBURBAN STREET ]

VO: But then, one of the men, Mr al-Bakri, went to Bahrain and sent his friends an E-mail. It said he was going to get married and that he wouldn't be seeing them for awhile. The CIA, who had been monitoring their E-mails, understood this to be a coded message: the cell was about to launch a suicide attack on the US Fifth Fleet.

**JOHN MOLLOY** , DEFENCE LAWYER , LACKAWANNA TRIAL : The FBI, the government, took that phrase to mean something sinister. They believed that the word "wedding" was a code. They believed that the phrase "not seeing you anymore" indicated that Muktar al-Bakri was a suicide bomber. The reality is that Mr al-Bakri was in Bahrain to get married and the reality of him getting married was that he wouldn't be around his friends anymore.

[ CUT TO NEWS FOOTAGE OF POLICE ]

[ CUT TO US JUSTICE DEPARTMENT PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT ]

JUSTICE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL: Good afternoon. In the past 24 hours, United States law enforcement has identified and disrupted an Al Qaeda-trained terrorist cell on American soil.

**VO:** The arrests were announced proudly by Washington as another sleeper cell plotting an attack. But it soon became clear that there was no evidence for this at all, other than the E-mail.

**COLE :** And the best the government can point to as a sleeper cell are these, you know, young men in Lackawanna, in New York, who, yes, went to Afghanistan, trained in an Al Qaeda training camp, but to all appearances had no intention to ever take any action on the basis of that. One of them faked an injury to try to get out early. They came back to the United States. We had them under intensive surveillance and we found no evidence—not one shred of evidence—that they ever planned or intended to engage in any kind of criminal, much less terrorist, act. That's the best they can show for a sleeper cell.

**VO:** Faced with the fact that there was no evidence, the government quietly dropped any charges of their being a terrorist cell. Instead, they were prosecuted simply for having gone to the training camp, and for having bought uniforms there. And all the other cases were even flimsier: A group of students who supported the liberation of Kashmir were found paint-balling in the woods of Virginia. They were convicted of training to attack America. A group of African-Americans from Oregon tried to go to Afghanistan to support the Taliban but got lost in China. All these groups, the government said, were part of a hidden and terrifying Al Qaeda network.

**SWOR :** The government had a legitimate concern at the beginning, but they let that concern, and they took it, and they made it a panic. They had reasonable questions and took them and made a complete fantasy out of them. They started out with a conclusion and then filled in all the blanks to the questions. So this was totally driven by the need—or the desire—to have terrorists. You build this conclusion based on this assumption, and this assumption, and this assumption, and, sure, if you go—if you build assumptions upon assumptions, you can go anywhere!

**INTERVIEWER :** It's a work of imagination.

**SWOR :** It is. It's a fantasy, and it's a fantasy that it was politically expedient to sell.

[ CUT TO PRESIDENTIAL PRESS CONFERENCE ]

**GEORGE W BUSH :** And make no mistake about it: we got a war here just like we got a war abroad.

[ CUT TO BRITAIN : GOLF COURSES ; INTERIOR , DOWNING STREET : DAVID BLUNKETT ]

**VO:** In Britain, too, the government and most of the media have created the overwhelming impression that there is a hidden network of Al Qaeda sleeper cells waiting to attack.

[ CUT TO POLICE OFFICERS AT CRIME SCENE ]

**VO:** But, yet again, there is very little evidence for this. Of the 664 people arrested under the Terrorism Act since September the 11th, none of them have been convicted of belonging to Al Qaeda. Only 3 people have so far been convicted of having any association with any Islamist groups, and none of those convictions were for being involved in a terror plot; they were for fundraising, or possessing Islamist literature. The majority of people convicted under the Terrorism Act since September the 11th have actually been members of Irish terrorist groups like the UVF or the Real IRA. And many of the arrests that were dramatically announced as being part of a hidden Al Qaeda network were, in reality, as absurd as the cases in America. For example, the London police swooped on a Mr Zain ul-Abedin who they said was running an international network for terrorist training. It turned out to be a self-defence course for bodyguards. He called it "Ultimate Jihad Challenge." His only client was a security guard from a supermarket, who wanted to learn how to defend himself against shoplifters. Mr Zain ul-Abedin was cleared of all charges. Then there was the Hogmanay terror cell who, it was alleged, were planning to attack Edinburgh. All charges against them were quietly dropped when it was revealed that a key part of the evidence, a map that showed the targets they were going to attack, turned out to have been left in their flat by an Australian backpacker who had ringed the tourist sites he wanted to see. And even the most frightening and high profile of the plots uncovered turned out to be without foundation. No one was ever arrested for planning gas attacks on the London tubes; it was a fantasy that swept through the media. Just as in America, there is no evidence yet of the terrifying and sinister network lurking under the surface of our society which both government and the media continually tell us is there.

[ CUT TO MEETING ROOM ]

**INTERVIEWER :** So there was no network.

**BILL DURODIE ,** DIRECTOR , INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR SECURITY ANALYSIS , KINGS COLLEGE : No.

**INTERVIEWER :** Never.

**DURODIE :** Probably not.

**INTERVIEWER :** We invented it.

**BILL DURODIE :** "Invention" is too string a term. I think we projected it—um, we projected our own worst fears, and that what we see is a fantasy that's been created.

[ CUT TO BBC NEWS INTERVIEW ]

**GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN :** Al Qaeda is a global network with global reach.

[ CUT TO BBC NEWS READER ]

**READER :** The target, a deadly web of terror.

[ CUT TO BILL DURODIE IN MEETING ROOM ]

**DURODIE :** I'm not saying that an atrocity might not happen on the British mainland. What I am saying is that we have an exaggerated perception of the possibility of terrorism that is quite disabling, and we only need to look at the

evidence to understand that the figures simply don't bear out the way that we have responded as a society.

[ CUT TO LONDON SKYLINE , WESTMINSTER , ETC . ]

**VO:** What the British and American governments have done is both distort and exaggerate the real nature of the threat. There are dangerous and fanatical groups around the world who've been inspired by the extreme Islamist theories, and they are prepared to use the techniques of mass terror on civilians. The bombings in Madrid showed this only too clearly. But this is not a new phenomenon. What is new is the way the American and other governments have transformed this complex and disparate threat into a simplistic fantasy of an organised web of uniquely powerful terrorists who may strike anywhere and at any moment. But no one questioned this fantasy because, increasingly, it was serving the interests of so many people. For the press, television, and hundreds of terrorism experts, the fact that it seemed so like fiction made it irresistible to their audiences. And the Islamists, too, began to realise that by feeding this media fantasy they could become a powerful organisation—if only in people's imaginations.

The prime mover in this was one of bin Laden's associates, who had been captured by the Americans. He was called Abu Zubaydah. He began to tell his interrogators of terrifying plots that Al Qaeda was preparing, some of which, he said, they had copied from Hollywood movies like *Godzilla*, which they had watched in Afghanistan.

[ CUT TO INTERIOR, BRIEFING ROOM ]

**DR JOHN PRADOS** , NATIONAL SECURITY ARCHIVE , WASHINGTON DC : Zubaydah told the interrogators a set of stories based on what he thought would alarm us. He told us, for example—coming out of a movie that had been recent at that time, *Godzilla*, in which the Brooklyn Bridge was destroyed by the monster—he told us that Al Qaeda was interested in destroying the Brooklyn Bridge. He told us of attacks on mass transit sources like subway trains. He told us there were intentions of attacking apartment buildings and shopping centers, the Statue of Liberty, all manner of things.

[ EXCERPT , *GODZILLA* : MONSTER RISING OVER BROOKLYN BRIDGE ]

[ CUT TO PRESS CONFERENCE ROOM, DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, WASHINGTON, D.C. ]

**JOHN ASHCROFT** , ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES : Recent intelligence reports suggest that Al Qaeda leaders have emphasised planning for attacks on apartment buildings, hotels, and other soft or lightly-secured targets in the United States.

[ CUT TO ANOTHER PRESS CONFERENCE ]

**ASHCROFT** : Terrorists are considering physical attacks against US financial institutions.

[ EXCERPT , *GODZILLA*: MONSTER RAMPAGING THROUGH STREETS , CRUSHING CARS ]

**VO:** And Abu Zubaydah also told his interrogators of a terrifying new weapon the Islamists intended to use: an explosive device that could spray radiation through cities, the "dirty bomb."

[ EXCERPT , CBS EVENING NEWS ]

**DAN RATHER :** First, a CBS News exclusive about a captured Al Qaeda leader who says his fellow terrorists have the know-how to build a very dangerous weapon and get it to the United States.

**VO:** And the media took the bait. They portrayed the dirty bomb as an extraordinary weapon that would kill thousands of people, and, in the process, they made the hidden enemy even more terrifying. But, in reality, the threat of a dirty bomb is yet another illusion. Its aim is to spread radioactive material through a conventional explosion, but almost all studies of such a possible weapon have concluded that the radiation spread in this way would not kill anybody because the radioactive material would be so dispersed, and, providing the area was cleaned promptly, the long-term effects would be negligible. In the past, both the American army and the Iraqi military tested such devices and both concluded that they were completely ineffectual weapons for this very reason.

[ CUT TO INTERIOR , LIVING ROOM ]

**INTERVIEWER :** How dangerous would a dirty bomb be?

**DR THEODORE ROCKWELL , NUCLEAR SCIENTIST AND RADIATION RISK EXPERT :** The deaths would be few, if any, and the answer is, probably none.

**INTERVIEWER :** Really?

**ROCKWELL :** Yes. And that's been said over and over again, but then people immediately say after that, "But, you know, people won't believe that, and they'll panic." And then all the people working on this project, you know, the defence and so forth, breathe a big sigh of relief because they got their problem back: you know, we're gonna all panic. I don't think it would kill anybody and I think you'll have trouble finding a serious report that would claim otherwise. The Department of Energy actually set up such a test and they actually measured what happened. And they—they—the measurements were extremely low. They calculated that the most exposed individual would get a fairly high dose—not life-threatening, but fairly high—and I checked into how the calculation was done, and they assume that after the attack, no one moves for one year. One year. Now, that's ridiculous.

[ CUT TO ANOTHER INTERIOR , LIVING ROOM ]

**LEWIS Z KOCH , BULLETIN OF ATOMIC SCIENTISTS :** The dirty bomb—the danger from radioactivity is basically next to nothing. The danger from panic, however, is horrendous. That's where the irony comes. This—instead of the government saying, "Look, this is not a serious weapon; the serious danger of this is the panic that would ensue, and there is no reason for panic. Don't panic."

[ CUT TO VIEW OF ATOMIC BOMB EXPLODING , DESTROYING TEST HOUSES AND OBJECTS ]



**BRITISH NARRATOR** : Ladies and gentlemen, this is not the end of our show; however, something very much like this could happen at any moment. We just thought we ought to prepare you and more or less put you in the mood. Thank you. And now, back to our story.

[ CUT , CITY SKYLINE ]

**VO**: The scale of this fantasy just kept growing as more and more groups realised the power it gave them—above all, the group that had been instrumental in first spreading the idea: the neoconservatives. Because they now found that they could use it to help them realise their vision: that America had a special destiny to overcome evil in the world, and this epic mission would give meaning and purpose to the American people.

[ CUT , INTERIOR , ROOM IN IRAQ , SADDAM HUSSEIN AND OFFICERS ]

**VO**: To do this, they were going to start with Iraq, and, just as they had discovered a hidden reality of terror beneath the surface in America, they now found hidden links that previously no one had suspected between the Al Qaeda network and Saddam Hussein.

[ CUT , SPEAKER'S DAIS, UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ]

**GEORGE W BUSH** : Evidence from intelligence sources, secret communications, and statements by people now in custody reveal that Saddam Hussein aids and protects terrorists, including members of Al Qaeda. Imagine those 19 hijackers with other weapons and other plans, this time armed by Saddam Hussein.

[ CUT , OFFICE INTERIOR ]

**RICHARD PERLE** , CHAIRMAN, PENTAGON DEFENSE POLICY BOARD, 2001-2003: I continue to be amazed at the people who say there are no links. It simply isn't true. What hasn't been established is a direct link between Saddam's intelligence and the 9/11 plotters, although even there there is evidence that suggests, very possibly, facilitation and assistance to the 9/11 hijackers.

**INTERVIEWER** : There really is evidence?

**PERLE** : There really is evidence.

**INTERVIEWER** : So, when people say there is no association between Al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein, they're wrong.

**RICHARD PERLE** : They're flatly wrong.

**INTERVIEWER** : Really?

**RICHARD PERLE** : Absolutely wrong.

[ CUT , INTERIOR, AL-JAZEERA STUDIOS ; ARABIC VOICES IN BACKGROUND ]

[ SUBTITLE : THE BOMBING HAS STARTED ]

[ VIEW OF TELEVISION MONITORS DISPLAYING ATTACK ON BAGHDAD ; CUT TO REACTION OF NEWSROOM STAFF ]

**VO:** The driving force behind these new global policies in the war on terror was the power of a dark fantasy: a sinister web of hidden and interlinked threats that stretched around the world. And such was the power of that fantasy that it also began to transform the very nature of politics because, increasingly, politicians were discovering that their ability to imagine the future and the terrible dangers it held gave them a new and heroic role in the world.

[ CUT TO SCENE OF FUTURISTIC ROADWAY AND COUPLE DRIVING IN FUTURE CAR ]

**VO:** In the post-War years, politicians had also used their imaginations, but to project optimistic visions of a better future that they could create for their people, and it was these visions that gave them power and authority.

[ CUT , INTERIOR , DOWNING STREET : ANGLE ON TONY BLAIR ]

**VO:** But those dreams collapsed, and politicians like Tony Blair became more like managers of public life, their policies determined often by focus groups. But now, the war on terror allowed politicians like Blair to portray a new, grand vision of the future. But this vision was a dark one of imagined threats, and a new force began to drive politics: the fear of an imagined future.

[ CUT , INTERIOR, TONY BLAIR ADDRESSING AUDIENCE ]

**TONY BLAIR :** Not a conventional fear about a conventional threat, but the fear that one day these new threats of weapons of mass destruction, rogue states, and international terrorism combine to deliver a catastrophe to our world. And then the shame of knowing that I saw that threat, day after day, and did nothing to stop it.

[ CUT , ANOTHER ADDRESS ]

**BLAIR :** It may not erupt and engulf us this month or next, perhaps not even this year or next ...

[ CUT , CLOSE-UP ON TONY BLAIR , SPEAKING TO INTERVIEWER BEFORE STUDIO AUDIENCE ]

**BLAIR :** I just think these—these dangers are there, I think that it's difficult sometimes for people to see how they all come together—I think that it's my duty to tell it to you if I really believe it, and I do really believe it. I may be wrong in believing it, but I do believe it.

[ CUT , EXTERIOR , MOONLIT , DARK CITY SKYLINE ]

**VO:** What Blair argued was that faced by the new threat of a global terror network, the politician's role was now to look into the future and imagine the worst that might happen and then act ahead of time to prevent it. In doing this, Blair was embracing an idea that had actually been developed by the Green movement: it was called the "precautionary principle." Back in the 1980s, thinkers within the ecology movement believed the world was being threatened by global warming, but at the time there was little scientific evidence to prove this. So they put forward the radical idea that governments had a higher duty: they couldn't wait for the evidence, because by then it would be too late; they had to act imaginatively, on intuition, in order to save the world from a looming catastrophe.

[ CUT , INTERIOR , MEETING ROOM ]

**DURODIE** : In essence, the precautionary principle says that not having the evidence that something might be a problem is not a reason for not taking action as if it were a problem. That's a very famous triple-negative phrase that effectively says that action without evidence is justified. It requires imagining what the worst might be and applying that imagination upon the worst evidence that currently exists.

[ CUT , INTERIOR , HALL ; ANGLE ON TONY BLAIR ADDRESSING STATE FUNCTION ]

**BLAIR** : Would Al Qaeda buy weapons of mass destruction if they could? Certainly. Does it have the financial resources? Probably. Would it use such weapons? Definitely.

[ CUT , INTERIOR , MEETING ROOM ]

**DURODIE** : But once you start imagining what could happen, then—then there's no limit. What if they had access to it? What if they could effectively deploy it? What if we weren't prepared? What it is is a shift from the scientific, "what is" evidence-based decision making to this speculative, imaginary, "what if"-based, worst case scenario.

[ CUT , EXTERIOR , CAMP X-RAY , Guantánamo Bay, Cuba ]

**VO**: And it was this principle that now began to shape government policy in the war on terror. In both America and Britain, individuals were detained in high-security prisons, not for any crimes they had committed, but because the politicians believed—or imagined—that they might commit an atrocity in the future, even though there was no evidence they intended to do this. The American attorney general explained this shift to what he called the "paradigm of prevention."

[ CUT , INTERIOR , HEARING ROOM , UNITED STATES CONGRESS ]

**ASHCROFT** : We had to make a shift in the way we thought about things, so being reactive, waiting for a crime to be committed, or waiting for there to be evidence of the commission of a crime didn't seem to us to be an appropriate way to protect the American people.

[ CUT , INTERIOR , OFFICE ]

**DAVID COLE** : Under the preventive paradigm, instead of holding people accountable for what you can prove that they have done in the past, you lock them up based on what you think or speculate they might do in the future. And how—how can a person who's locked up based on what you think they might do in the future disprove your speculation? It's impossible, and so what ends up happening is the government short-circuits all the processes that are designed to distinguish the innocent from the guilty because they simply don't fit this mode of locking people up for what they might do in the future.

**VO**: The supporters of the precautionary principle argue that this loss of rights is the price that society has to pay when faced by the unique and terrifying threat of the Al Qaeda network. But, as this series has shown, the idea of a hidden, organised web of terror is largely a fantasy, and by embracing the precautionary principle, the politicians have become trapped in a vicious circle: they imagine the worst about an

organisation that doesn't even exist. But no one questions this because the very basis of the precautionary principle is to imagine the worst without supporting evidence, and, instead, those with the darkest imaginations become the most influential.

[ CUT , INTERIOR , RESTAURANT ]

**DAVID JOHNSTON** , INTELLIGENCE SPECIALIST , NEW YORK TIMES : You'll hear about meetings where terrorist matters are discussed in the intelligence community, and always the person with the most dire assessment, the person with the—who has the, kind of, the strongest sense that something should be done will frequently carry the day at meetings. We thus believe the most dire estimate of what could happen here. The sense of disbelief has vanished.

**INTERVIEWER** : So the person with the most vivid imagination becomes the most powerful.

**JOHNSTON** : In a sense, that's correct.

[ CUT , INTERIOR , FBI OFFICE ]

**FBI OFFICIAL** : We knew that Al Qaeda's tentacles were beginning to become far-reaching.

[ CUT , INTERIOR , BRITISH MEETING ROOM ]

**BRITISH OFFICIAL** : There will be an attack. It is "when" within the United Kingdom; I think the "if" is academic.

[ CUT , TONY BLAIR AT PODIUM , ADDRESSING AUDIENCE ]

**BLAIR** : It is only a matter of time, and its potential is huge.

[ EXCERPT , *GODZILLA*: WALL OF WATER SLAMS INTO CITY ]

[ CUT , INTERIOR , RESTAURANT ]

**JOHNSTON** : How will we ever know when it's over? How will we ever know when the threat is gone? In the mindset we are now in, once we declare it to be over will be exactly the time that we believe that they will strike.

[ CUT , BRITISH NEWSSTAND ]

**NEWS VENDOR** : You know, uh, it's just—it's the way we live today. We're living on a knife edge.

[ CUT , AERIAL VIEW OF LONDON , FOLLOWED BY SCENES OF DISASTERS , ETC ]

**VO**: This story began over 30 years ago as the dream that politics could create a better world began to fall apart. Out of that collapse came two groups: the Islamists and the neoconservatives. Looking back, we can now see that these groups were the last political idealists who, in an age of growing disillusion, tried to reassert the inspirational power of political visions that would give meaning to people's lives.

[ CUT , VIEW OF ARABIC CROWD ]

[ SUBTITLES OVER CROWD SCENES: We will fight for an Islamic state, we will die for it.]

[ CUT , PAUL WOLFOWITZ ENTERING PRESS BRIEFING ROOM ]

**VO:** But both have failed in their attempts to transform the world and, instead, together they have created today's strange fantasy of fear which politicians have seized on. Because in an age when all the grand ideas have lost credibility, fear of a phantom enemy is all the politicians have left to maintain their power.

[ CUT , INTERIOR , HALL , REPUBLICAN NATIONAL CONVENTION ]

**BUSH :** And we have seen Americans in uniform storming mountain strongholds and charging through sandstorms. We have fought the terrorists across the earth because the lives of our citizens are at stake. And America and the world are safer.

[ CUT , INTERIOR , HALL , DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION ]

**JOHN KERRY , UNITED STATES SENATOR AND PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE:** The stakes are high. We are a nation at war, a global war on terror against unlike we've ever known before....

[ CUT , RNC ]

**BUSH :** Faced with that choice I will defend America every time.

[ CUT , ANGLE ON CHEERING CROWDS OF REPUBLICANS ]

[ CUT , INTERIOR , MEETING ROOM ]

**DURODIE :** In a society that believes in nothing, fear becomes the only agenda. Whilst the 20th century was dominated between a conflict between a free-market Right and a socialist Left, even though both of those outlooks had their limitations and their problems, at least they believed in something, whereas what we are seeing now is a society that believes in nothing. And a society that believes in nothing is particularly frightened by people who believe in anything, and, therefore, we label those people as fundamentalists or fanatics, and they have much greater purchase in terms of the fear that they instill in society than they truly deserve. But that's a measure of how much we have become isolated and atomised rather than of their inherent strength.

[ CUT , EXTERIOR DOWNING STREET , TONY BLAIR WALKING TOWARD DOOR ]

**VO:** But the fear will not last, and just as the dreams that politicians once promised turned out to be illusions, so, too, will the nightmares, and then our politicians will have to face the fact that they have no visions, either good or bad, to offer us any longer.

[ END CREDITS:

MUSIC: "Raindrops Keep Fallin' on My Head"]

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