

BACKPACK

Written by

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## BACKPACK/

By Prithvi Tikhe

FADE IN:

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - EVENING

A wall clock reads 4:30 p.m. A young man, ROHAN (21), with a beard and no mustache, wearing a taqiyah cap works as a cashier. The store is empty other than Rohan and another EMPLOYEE who stocks goods at the back.

Rohan receives a phone call at the convenience store.

SISTER (ON THE PHONE)

Mom's no more. Please come home soon. We need you.

Rohan is in shock and drops the phone. His face turns red and his eyes begin to fill with tears.

A CUSTOMER walks in. Rohan quickly wipes his face, picks up the phone and attends to the customer. After the customer leaves, he paces back and forth. The clock monotonously TICKS. He repeatedly looks at the clock and the register.

The wall clock reads 4:55 p.m.

Rohan cautiously looks around and quickly puts about half of the cash from the register in an envelope. He wipes his forehead and face multiple times. He stares intently at the envelope and the cash inside. He takes the cash out of the envelope and puts it back in the register.

He momentarily stares at the cash and again places it back in the envelope. His hand shakes as he quickly scribbles on the envelope. With trembling hands, he takes out his backpack and puts the envelope inside. He puts the backpack on both shoulders, scans the room multiple times, clocks out, and hurries out of the store and walks fast towards New York Penn Station.

INT. NEW YORK PENN STATION

PEOPLE rush in and out of trains. Large lines form at the newsstands and coffee shops. CUSTOMERS shove each other to secure a place in line while BARISTAS are surrounded by steam as they attempt to fix everyone's order. HOMELESS PEOPLE wander around the station as they sort through trash cans.

COPS casually monitor the area, while some greet PASSENGERS. A digital clock reads 5:10 p.m. Rohan approaches the ticket counter and is out of breath.

ROHAN

One ticket to Boston departing  
today at 5:45 p.m., please.

He pays, grabs the ticket and puts it in the front pouch of his backpack. While he closes the pouch in a rush, the wire of his charger gets stuck. He pulls the zipper to and fro a few times, tries to release the stuck wire, gets frustrated and then gives up, leaves the wire hanging out of the pouch.

Rohan then hurries to a bench, sits down and sets the backpack beside him. He sweats, his hands shake. He rests his forehead on the palms of his hands and breaks down in tears.

Rohan sobs profusely, his hands cover his face. He hyperventilates. He wipes the tears away with his sleeve. He suddenly realizes that passersby stare at him. Unable to stop crying, he hastily heads towards the bathroom, tries to control his tears.

INT. BATHROOM

Rohan washes his face with water. He stares at the mirror and his eyes are red and swollen. Beads of sweat cover his forehead. He wets a paper towel and presses it onto his face.

His hands grasp the side of the sink tightly. He reaches down for his backpack and does not feel anything. Rohan is in shock and looks down at the floor.

ROHAN

Shit!

He panics and barges out of the bathroom.

BENCH

A middle aged WOMAN carries shopping bags and a rolling suitcase approaches the bench where Rohan had left his backpack. She sits down and rests her bags on the floor. She notices that the backpack next to her is overstuffed.

She looks around and then back at the backpack several times and notices a wire hanging out of the front pouch of the backpack. She worries.

WOMAN

(whispers)

Oh my God!

She frantically gets up from the bench and bumps into a  
PASSERBY.

PASSERBY

Hey, lady. You all right?

She points towards the backpack with a trembling finger and stammers. The passerby opens his eyes wide. A GROUP OF PEOPLE stand close by.

PASSERBY (CONT'D)

(whispers)

Yo, guys!

Within moments a crowd gathers around the backpack.

EXT. BATHROOM

Rohan bumps into another person in a rush to get to the backpack. He dashes towards the bench.

BENCH

Rohan is worried by the crowd and pushes his way to the front. He tries to calm down, but stutters.

ROHAN

(to the woman)

What's going on?

The woman sweats and shakes. She screams and points at the backpack.

WOMAN

BOMB!!

Chaos ensues and people are in a frenzy. Cops arrive at the bench, cordon off the area and control the crowd. Rohan starts to yell.

ROHAN

Hey it's my backpack! Don't touch it! It's mine!

A cop glances at him suspiciously and looks at him up and down. Rohan aggressively pushes him and tries to make it to the backpack. In the process, Rohan struggles with the cop and pushes him over. He grabs the backpack and flees. The cop grabs his radio.

COP

We got a 10-33! Need immediate assistance! Now! We got a runner!

Rohan sprints towards the platform from where he has to catch the train and holds tightly on to the backpack. He bumps and pushes people aside as more cops chase him.

COP (CONT'D)

Freeze!

Rohan flees down the stairs. He misses a step and rolls down and in the process drops the backpack. He limps as he gets up and grabs the backpack with one hand. He hears the cops' voices.

He looks up at the board. To his disappointment it says "Philadelphia". He looks around frantically and sees the board on the other side of the tracks say "Boston-LEAVING". He is in a state of panic.

He pants and grabs his leg. He darts towards the Boston train on the other side of the tracks. The Boston train is slowly moves away from the platform. The cops gets closer.

A train approaches on the Philadelphia platform, but he is too delirious to stop. He tightly holds the backpack against his chest and jumps.

The cop, who Rohan had pushed over, steps down on to the tracks. After a thorough inspection he decides to open the backpack. He sees a computer charger, laptop, books, shoes, and an envelope with the cash inside. The envelope says, "For Mom's Funeral."

FADE OUT