

Title: 115 Degrees

Writer: David M. O’Neill

Novel: Richard Jessup - Threat

Format: Film

Genre: Extortion, Suspense-Action-Thriller

Tone: Bourne Identity, Quantum of Solace, SALT

Period: Current / Settings: New York - Mideast

Blacklist Coverage: [Coverage](#)

Sites: [David M. O'Neill](#) / [Directing Awards - Reel](#) / [115 Degrees](#)

Logline: In the wake of his twin brother’s kidnapping by insurgent militants, an operative must conduct a series of stateside tasks in order to earn enough money to finance an off-the-books rescue mission.

115 Degrees is based on the novel “Threat” written by Pulitzer-nominated and famed novelist, (The Cincinnati Kid) - Richard Jessup. After having read the novel, I reached out to the Jessup estate, explored a relationship, and ultimately secured an option on the material. I was drawn to the property from its unique way of telling a story and the author’s unwavering specificity in its execution.

The Story is a New York City extortion thriller, about a private, off-the-books, government contracted, warfare-specialist named Harrison Fowler who secretly targets a geopolitically sensitive religious site in the heart of Manhattan to glean illusive location information of insurgent-held international Red Cross workers – one of which happens to be that of his own identical-twin brother. In the vein of such films as Jason Bourne, Salt, Quantum of Solace, Fowler is a lone operative who works to locate the Syrian held hostages but must also *execute a meticulous plan to raise 9 million* for the mission itself. What's left in the aftershocks are bewildered authorities, a blackmailed New York State governor, a fixed horse-race “somehow” paying off 30 to 1, and a handful of heroes who suddenly find themselves rescued and safely flying back again home again on a C-130 transport. 115 Degrees is set primarily in New York City carrying geopolitical overtones along with an unlikely love story which proves instrumental in securing our hero’s objectives.

The story begins when a beer can, and a note are found in the deepest, most penetrating, sensitive part of a NY City mosque down near the 911 fallen Trade Tower Site. Bypassing all security measures, and what could be thought of as an act of a xenophobic lunatic, the note left behind by Fowler is chilling. It reads: “This proves that I can and will penetrate your security”. Day to day, Fowler is accessible; those around him know him to be a student studying at Columbia University and somebody who works in a NY City, Persian take-out restaurant. As part of his cover, he goes by Dennis Mason. He lives in a dorm on the Upper East Side, delivers sandwiches during the day while targeting those he’s designated as mission critical in his off hours.

To find the location and to secure the mission funding, Mason’s plan spans over five designated areas: 1) to secure the location coordinates of the hostages inside insurgent held Rimaldi, 2) to raise 9 million dollars by leveraging the NY State Governor to fix a horse race, 3) to deflect local and federal authorities, 4) to maximize the threat of perceived devastation, 5) and lastly, to launch a rescue mission in time to save those who are about to be executed – one of which includes his own twin brother.

As the first contact is made with the target, a chance encounter establishes our female complement, Niyousha Dayoub - Syrian Expatriate. A bit of an accidental relationship occurs when she is threatened in a subway by four U.S. planted, "SOHS Operatives" – (Syrian Operative Homeland Sympathizers). They're after a sensitive thumb-drive containing mapping evacuation routes from anti-Assad rebels in Niyousha's possession. Mason steps in to secure the situation with lethal skill, calibrates her usefulness, and sets her up in his dorm with a separate room on the floor below. He navigates his carefully planned and guarded undertaking, all the while leading a double-life as a University of Columbia history student along with being a highly-trained, dedicated, U.S. warfare-specialist.

Off the grid, Niyousha begins getting her life back-in-order and reestablishes her familiar Syrian network which draws closer the U.S. based, floating insurgent SOHS. Fowler learns Niyousha's once-thought, deceased father, separated by warring factions in Syria, is actually working under an alias as the head of security at the mosque he's targeted.

Mason, not beneath any simple-solution leading to mission success, begins establishing himself as a long-range horse better with local bookies throughout the Tri-State area. Playing into his second-objective - that of securing an untraceable pay-off of the mission's 9 million dollars, Mason ratchets up the tension by treading once more into, sacrosanct, targeted territory. He leaves a second beer can in a bank of elevators – a third, and fourth in other sensitive and protected areas – but this time he includes a tube with the architectural plans letting the authorities know he's had access to the site's construction. "X" marks the spot where he's placed into the building a lethal amount of plastic-explosive, thermal-incendiary. To show them what he is capable of, Mason rigs an abandoned shell of a structure in the Bronx and lets his adversaries know what will happen if his eventual-demand is not met.

With a dial of his cell, he brings it down, with fire and fury. New York City is now of full alert for possibly the next 9-11.

Pressure on the corrupt Imam intensifies. We learn the domestic SOH militants are tied to him although Niyousha's estranged father is unaware. She continues her underground work by uploading vital information for those escaping Syria. Christmas arrives and the relationship with Niyousha becomes formalized. Six months into his mission, Mason picks up a phone and at last finally makes his definitive demand. He orders the Governor to "fix" the most lucrative horse race of the year - if not, the mosque comes down like that of the World Trade Towers".

Laying off 130 bets at 2,000 dollars each, at 30 to 1 across on every bookie from Jersey to Hampton Bays, Mason captures the second part of his 2nd objective – an untraceable pay-off of 9 million dollars.

With no physical drop off point for his ransom, and all picked up at \$30,000 at a time from every bookie willing to take the bet, Mason/Fowler's shadow conspiracy leaves city-authorities bewildered and looking for answers from a vanishing threat. Now, fully funded, a second secret mission begins up the Euphrates River through Iran to bring home insurgent held hostages along with his only living relative – his identical twin brother.
