

IN THE MAELSTROM OF MADNESS

Synopsis

Hero of this story is KARIM (40), French guy traveling by car to visit his girlfriend in Serbia. Rebekah (32) works part-time for a Belgrade-based Company. Karim intending to surprise her and ask her to marry him, arrives at a time she's over-booked with previously scheduled appointments. So she proposes Karim takes a lunch-break on a raft restaurant slightly out of his route. When he arrives on spot, he realizes the restaurant is closed during winter's period.

As Karim's leaving, enraged AVRAM (35) appears. Hearing that Karim is a stranger pulls out a gun and accuses him of kidnapping his brother MILAN. Avram shows a bag with money he brought for ransom and demands an exchange. As terrified Karim tries to prove his innocence, STEVAN (48) with tied hostage IVAN (55) parks in front of the restaurant, demanding to know where is his kidnapped wife. This insane situation escalates to gunfight where Avram and Ivan lose their lives. Wounded Stevan takes Karim hostage, convinced, same as Avram, that he is the one who stands behind it all being a foreigner, same as the kidnapper taking his wife. At that point Stevan gets a call from the kidnapper with new instructions. Stevan takes a bag with Avram's money, while Karim is forced to drive a car with gun pointed to his head.

Instructed by a distorted English speaking voice, two men are now in the car on their way to the specified gas station. The whole time, Karim is vainly trying to convince Stevan this has been a misunderstanding and is begging him to let him go. Car stops and the two of them, as instructed are walking into the restroom area. There they find a stick with a mirror tied to one end. Confused, they are leaving the gas station. The kidnapper orders they change the vehicle. It is the same vehicle that Stevan brought to restaurant earlier. They realize that kidnapper is watching them the whole time. They enter the vehicle. Distorted voice tells them to look under the car with the stick and the mirror. There is a bomb that will explode if one of them leaves the vehicle. They get new instructions, to drive to an abandoned gravel pit nearby. Desperate Karim is now forced to continue this journey with Stevan as his car remains at the gas station.

Driving through the night the two of them run into the police patrol. They stop them asking them to step out of the vehicle. Their only way out is - escape. Karim hits the pedal and police go after them. After a few kilometers, Karim decides to make a risk, turning off the lights, and swerving off the road and into a cornfield. The police car passes by without seeing them. They take the alternative roads and fields all the way to the gravel pit. During this whole ordeal, as they converse with one another, Stevan is convinced with Karim's innocence.

Unfortunately, it changes nothing for Karims, as a masked kidnapper appears in front of them with Stevan's wife. Stevan is begging him to let go of his wife, throwing a bag of money to him. With a distorted voice, the masked kidnapper says he is not interested in money and begins to explain his reasons. According to the kidnapper, his sister was killed two years ago. She was with a friend at the music festival where she was raped by Avram

and his brother Milan. At one point she was able to escape them, and, as she was running get hit by Ivan's car who then fled the scene. With serious injuries she was finally taken to a hospital but that night, the surgeon on duty was drunk. It was Stevan. And this finally led to her death.

From that point on, the kidnapper was coming up with a plan for revenge. His original plan was to gather all of those guilty of his sister's death, forces them to get into a car-bomb that would eventually explode. The kidnapper offers Stevan a chance to save himself by killing Karim, an unwanted witness. After a long moral questioning Stevan realizes that he can't do so and refuses to shoot. Immediately the kidnapper shoots his wife. Raging Stevan shoots and kills the kidnapper. After the initial shock, Karim moves the car closer to the masked body, allowing Stevan to look at the kidnapper's face. As he reveals him, beneath the mask we see Milan. Avram's kidnapped brother. His mouth are taped. And they realize that the whole time the real kidnapper has been talking to them through the speakers attached to Milan's clothes. Stunned Karim sees a red dot that stops at Stevan's forehead. No chance to react, Stevan has already been hit by a sniper. Karim lies down in the car. He listens for the footsteps approaching the car. Karim understands that this is it. Steps unexpectedly move away. He is waiting for some time and in the distance hears the motorcycle departing. He looks and sees there's no money bag. Karim draws Milan's hanging body back into the car and leaves.

Karim call Rebekah, telling her what he's been through. Not knowing where he's at, she says she'll wait for him at the gas station where he left his car and she'll call the police. At the gas station he finally meets with Rebekah. She calls the police and goest into the store to get a bottle of water. Karim accidentally finds a sniper and a bag of money in the car, realizing he's been set up. Looking for Rebekah, he sees her in the back of the parking lot, adjusting the wig, ready to leave. She points the gun at him admitting she stands behind it all, and he's a part of the deal. In fact, he was a man who gave MDMA to her sister on the night of her death. He was planned to stand as a scapegoat. Karim is stupefied. He realizes that he's been in love with a total stranger. In desperation, he shows her the ring he intended to propose with. She looks at the ring, laughing in his face. This angers him and he attacks her. She shoots him in the shoulder. Holding him at gunpoint, ready to finish him off, two patrol cars arrive. Officers immediately point the guns at her. Realizing that she won't be humiliated going to jail, she provokes the police to shoot her and they kill her. Karim screams, lying on the concrete, sobbing.