

**Sound from the Silence:**  
The Spy Who Was A Lover

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## **Inspired by real events**

*"It's better to fight for love than for the land or hate,"* he always said.

He was Roshan Mirza...

He could get anywhere... without any hindrance.

Barriers could not stop him.

He was like a spirit, a free spirit moving through the universe...

interacting with everyday life - and walking through another life that's beyond anyone's perception...

*He was a spy - but a spy who questioned every convention.*

*He was a "new James Bond..."*

*"No guns, no revolver - just poetry and music, that was his tool box."*

He was out for an unusual quest, the most unusual quest a spy ever had.

He wanted to stop the *war machines* and beat their *masterminds* in today's world affairs, so he became a part of the *machine* to challenge its very function. But on his journey for idealism, he got into an impasse: financial pitfalls, disillusion and a *broken relationship* with the woman of his life who ended up in a *web* inside a military compound. All this just intensified his quest...

He emerged as *a sound from the silence...*

*He was the spy who was a lover."*

*Sound from the Silence*, on the one hand, goes into the core of *grand political conflicts* - and on the other hand, reflects the *social taboos and misconceptions* deeply rooted in the collective psychology of modern men and women in the context of *relationship complexities...*

## PROLOGUE

“So you think you’re a *hero*.”

“No, I think I am a *loser*.”

“But then, who says a loser cannot be a hero?” A soft whisper touched the introspective reflections. After all, a loser’s life, when full of rich events and pitfalls, victories & defeats, winning & losing, is not a life that’s really lost, unlike a life that’s been flat and dull where nothing substantial happens.

A loser is different from a failure.

“Okay, so you’re a hero who lost. Then where are you now?”

“Maybe nowhere... or somewhere... this nowhere is still somewhere.”

He had been trying to reach for “self-realization,” fulfillment through the possibilities inherent in one’s nature - the quest for a higher self.

“But look at your romantic aspirations, altruism, and all those values that were once so dear to you - where have they brought you? To an impasse where now nothing is happening.”

He looks around his shabby room. It’s hard even to think here. It’s in a miserable hotel in Paris, and Paris has so many miserable hotels just like this one. Now he is living in one of them. The typical success of an immigrant - the making of a lot of money - had never been his idea of an achievement. Yet, his present situation is far from what he ever envisaged. He is Roshan Mirza. He has lost his stylish apartment, his car, and his woman! He takes out a record from the Beatles collection and places it on the player and it begins to play. The song is *Imagine*, by John Lennon.

“You may say I’m a dreamer, but I’m not the only one,  
I hope one day you’ll join us, and the world will be as one.”

His music collection, mostly from the 1970s & ’80s, is among the very few things that he has left. His room and his closet are a mess. Summer clothes are tangled with winter clothes, shoes tumbling out of boxes, sweaters threatening to avalanche off the shelves. His correspondence is tardy. His bedside table is buckling under a stack of partially read and unread books.

His head is messy with heavy clouds.

He is standing in a long and dark tunnel.

Nevertheless, there’s a light somewhere at the other end.

Is it a light or an illusion? He doesn’t know. Who knows?





## [A WORLD OF CINEMA/CANNES FILM FESTIVAL-1997](#)

### **SCREENING OF THE DEBUT FILM:**

The huge crowds of spectators were gathering outside the *Palais des Festivals* in Cannes. This was 1997, the fiftieth anniversary of the world's top film festival. *Roshan Mirza* entered the *Palais* through its main doors and walked down to his booth in Allee 19. *Saira* was setting up the flyers of his film, *Desperate Connections*.

Roshan wrote and directed this film, and now he was presenting it at Cannes-1997.

"Have you got nothing else to do except hanging out in the *Martinez Bar*?" *Saira* asked him.

"I was in the Eastman Kodak's seminar on independent filmmaking," he said entering the adjacent booth of *Menahem Golan*.

*Hollywood film mogul Menahem Golan*, co-founder of *Cannon Film Group*, was as enthusiastic as ever. He was promoting his new film, *The Road to Glory*, which was set and shot in Russia. Roshan had known *Menahem Golan* from the time when he had 21st Century Film Corporation with *Ami Artzi*.

"Hi, Roshan, when are you screening your movie? I'd like to see your work," *Menahem* said.

"Today, 5 pm, at the *Cinema Ambassadors*," Roshan replied, giving him a few invitations for the screening. He heard *Saira* calling him impatiently. She was on the phone. "Roshan, call from Monte Carlo TV, hurry up."

He took the phone.

"You can pick up your film," someone from Monte Carlo Television's Tele-Cine section was saying. He took a sigh of relief.

"Don't be so relaxed," said *Saira*, "you still have to drive to Monte Carlo in this traffic, pick up your film, and get back to Cannes at the *Ambassadors* before five."

She was right. How could he relax? From the day he started working on this film about *child labour* and the manipulation of public opinion to this day at Cannes, he found himself in a state of *non-stop battle*. *Making an independent film turned out to be a test of nerves...*

**GULSHAN GROVER** called from Bombay - the *Bollywood* in India... He congratulated Roshan. *Gulshan Grover*, the famous "*Bad Man*" of Indian movies was supposed to play a role in this film, but due to some scheduling problem, he could not perform. Nevertheless, he was happy that Roshan had brought his *first film* that far...

In Paris, after editing and having the film print ready, Roshan had no time left to transfer it to video. Now in Cannes, *Alex Massis* of *Angelika Films* asked him for a video tape, for considering his film for distribution. Therefore, he spoke to Monte Carlo TV to transfer his film to video, and they agreed. Last night, he had left the film print at the TV studio in Monte Carlo. However, he also needed the film print because he had a screening scheduled in Cannes today at 5 p.m. at the *Cinema Ambassadors*. He had also invited

Carine from *MIRAMAX* for this screening, though he was really not sure that someone from *MIRAMAX* would show up.

His film was about to be *selected* for the *Directors' Fortnight*. The closing date for submitting films for the *selection* was April 18, 1997. He received the call from the office of *Directors' Fortnight*. They were waiting for his film, but he was still editing it, so as soon as he edited the *first 60 minutes of the film*, he gave it to the *Directors' Fortnight* selection office in Paris, while continued to work on the film's last 30 minutes.

Pierre-Henri Deleau, Délégué Général of *Directors' Fortnight* viewed the *first 60 minutes* of his film. He liked it, and he gave him ten more days after the closing date to give them the complete film.

"You'll be submitting the film quite late, but I'd place it in the late-night screenings," he said. *He was really trying to encourage his efforts...*

By the time he completed the editing, the festival was just two days away.

Pierre-Henri Deleau had already gone to Cannes. Roshan called his office in Cannes, saying, "My film is ready now."

He called him back, saying, "The programming-schedule of *Directors' Fortnight* has been already sent to the press." *Roshan missed the Directors' Fortnight by a thin line...* He had arranged some screenings on his own at *Espace Miramar* and at the *Cinema Ambassades*.

Now he was driving on the French Riviera, from Monte Carlo to Cannes, after picking up his film print from Monte Carlo TV. The screening at the *Ambassades* was scheduled for 5 p.m. It was 4.40 p.m., and entering Cannes at this hour during the festival period was a *tough task*. By the time he entered *Rue Antibes* in Cannes, it was 5.35 p.m. He was getting more and more tense.

"*No one is going to wait for you that long,*" he thought, "and *Miramax* - just forget it."

He stopped the car beside *Ambassades*. *Champoo*, his associate, was nervously waiting outside the movie theater. They quickly pulled out the film cans, and ran to the projection room, left the cans with the projectionist, and came down. In the lobby, Roshan saw Catherine, his Director of photography. She had just arrived from Paris for this screening. "How is everything?" Roshan asked *Champoo* hastily.

"No one has left so far," *Champoo* told him happily. To his amazement, Carine from *MIRAMAX* was present. Roshan introduced her to his Director of photography. He apologized to everyone for the delay, and introduced the film's background briefly.

Finally, that evening, the *first screening* of his *first film* began at this movie theater in Cannes.



Cannes-1997, Cinema Ambassadors  
With a world-renowned filmmaker Menahem Golan (in the middle)







Saira: The companion in all the ventures



## HYDERABAD - HOLLYWOOD – WASHINGTON EXPERIENCING THE AMERICANA

**In 2008**, an historical election in America reverberated not only the political circles, but also the social and cultural atmosphere everywhere. Barack Obama pointed out, “*My campaign has energized Americans who have never before been involved in the political process.*” His campaign also revealed that as a nineteen -year old, he travelled to Karachi and Hyderabad in Pakistan. “*This experience taught me about some of the most important aspects of a foreign policy,*” Obama said. Here, one could visualize a 19-year old Obama strolling somewhere in Hyderabad, sometime around 1972. Did this city contribute anything to his spirit and awareness? *Influences* in this age always affect, to a large extent, the visions and beliefs of our future.

At about the same time, when Obama was probably absorbing, conceiving, and experiencing some of “*his voyages of youth*” in this city called *Hyderabad* (150 km from Karachi), the soul of a *dreamer* emerged from this same town... and a while later, *merged* into Hollywood, with an *up-close look* at the *affairs and the spectacles* in Washington D.C.

Roshan Mirza had been living in Paris, a city he loved with his heart and soul. He had travelled from Paris to the world capital of movies for an independent research on a “controversial and sensitive” subject in order to explore it through film.

At Cannes-1998, he had discussions with some American producers on the project of making another film. Two producers had invited him to come to Hollywood. One was Sam Lupowitz from *PAN AM Pictures* who was present at Cannes-1998 with his film *THE VERSACE MURDER* about the world-renowned Italian fashion designer Johnny Versace. The other producer was George Shamieh from *PM Entertainment* whose popular TV series *LOS ANGELES HEAT* was telecast every week on French TV M6, at 18h.30. So, he was given the green light to travel to Hollywood by the graces of these two men and explore the inspiration for his next film...



### **HOLLYWOOD, 1998:**

Roshan Mirza was sitting with *Peter DeAnda*, a well-known American actor from the 1970s. He was having his large-size beer while they were in *Snow White Café* at 6769 Hollywood Boulevard. Peter DeAnda had acted in many landmark movies including *Shaft*, *Lady Liberty*, *New Centurions*, *Come Back Charleston Blue* - to name a few...

He had also contributed and raised his voice against “*BLAXPLOITATION*” in the 1970s when a large number of films with black performers were made and aimed at the black audience, though generally made by white producers.

During the time when Roshan met him, Peter DeAnda was having his *downtimes*. Though soon after he started performing in the TV series “*Beverly Hills-90210*”. Roshan met Peter DeAnda - with *some* grey hairs at 60, and a lot of *wit*. Besides being in the movies, he had also performed in many Broadway and off-Broadway plays. He was nominated twice for an NAACP Image Award. To say the least, he truly inspired Roshan, “*Did they light any fire?*” *Let’s just say there was a light in the fire and a fire in the light - or perhaps both.*

Peter DeAnda contributed a lot to Roshan’s enlightenment: when Roshan asked him naively, “So why do you call it a ‘*BLAXPLOITATION*’ period if more black performers were given the opportunity in popular cinema?”

Peter laughed and said, “You know, I was among those who tried to raise an awareness about the *irony* of that atmosphere. Because, during that period, the cinema going audience had fallen significantly, so the white producers started making so many films with black actors in order to capitalize on the black Americans' attention. We explained to the black Americans that this is just a temporary phase, and once the

cinemas are packed again with audiences, the white producers will bring back their prominently white heroes to the screen.”

*Peter was leaning through the rear window of his memoir:* “At that time, I emphasized that the black performers should try to utilize the opportunities coming from this periodical phase to establish themselves in their own right, and not just to be carried-away with these *moments* of success.” He finished his chilli burger and they made a move to the *Studio Café* at 6633 Hollywood Boulevard at the crossing of Cherokee. A dreamer and a veteran were sharing their vision...

“So what do you envisage for your venture in Hollywood? You’re gonna make a film here - right?” Peter asked.

“Yes,” Roshan responded. “Hollywood is interesting, yes, but that’s all. I’m sure there is more to the story. I am here to try to make the connection between Hollywood and Washington D.C. It’s from there that the larger balls are thrown out.”

“So what kind of bricks and stones are you going to use to construct the bridge to reach up to that end?” said Peter.

“I am here to do an *independent investigation* on a controversial and sensitive subject, and explore it through a film,” Roshan responded. Then he shared with Peter DeAnda the subject matter and underlying story that he was working on. “Two CIA agents were shot dead outside the CIA headquarters in Langley by a Pakistani man Aimal Kanshi. The story has hit the world news headlines. I am sure there’s much more in the story than in the news. I aim to expose the truth beyond the news... I am going to utilize the result of this work as ‘*my contribution*’ to the knowledge of the American people. Last week, I registered the *outline* of this story ‘THE GREAT COVER-UP’ with the Writers Guild of America in Los Angeles.”

Peter DeAnda and Roshan Mirza, almost every day, moved through various hangouts around *Sunset Boulevard* and in *the Westwood Village*, the neighbourhood of UCLA - University of California, Los Angeles. Two cafés GYPSY and NEWS ROOM were their favourite places in *Westwood Village*.

Roshan finished two large-size American croissants with a cappuccino, and walked into the University Campus, just a few steps from here (*his days at Karachi University Campus sparked in his mind*). Now he was standing in the *University School of Law* at UCLA - a major institution in Los Angeles.

“Hummm... *I should communicate with the students here...*”

He was looking through the pages of *UCLA Journal of International Law & Foreign Affairs*, near its office in room 1357. He approached *UCLA Black Law Students Association* - and met Teresa Kerr, its President and Joseph Collier, the Vice President. Then he moved to the *Chicano-Latino Law Review* in room 2246. Its Editor in Chief Theresa Archuletta and Executive Editor Alexis Brunet were energetic people. *Educated persons from the marginal sector can always throw a different light on mainstream society, and contribute creatively.*

“*Student movements anywhere, when they start taking form and shape, contribute to some great change everywhere. The uprising at Berkeley in the 1960's awakened the*



*students, women, artists, workers - and reached its peak in Paris in May 1968. I am going to contribute my efforts - for the birth of a student movement in this university.”* The romanticism and the idealism were whispering to him softly... His thought being, *whatever is happening OR may happen in this world IS my concern. I should not be interested in being a silent spectator or engaging in the living-room discussions and academic debates. I have to act as a catalyst in the implementation-process of practical solutions. Philosophical radicals of the early 19th century in Britain - The Fabian Society - Austin, Ricardo, George Bernard Shaw expanding BENTHAM's concept of “utilitarianism”: Translate liberalism from philosophical premises into practical conclusions of law, economics and politics - radical reform through the existing institutions and constitutional governments. There is no future in being a “living-room revolutionary” in an armchair.*

“**A fine blend of diverse cultures is the bridge to progress...**” Peter was saying. Roshan’s eyes sparked for a moment, “Listen, Peter, here in America, Hollywood and ‘PEOPLE’ from the Hollywood phenomenon have always had a significant influence on the American people’s collective thought-process and choice. You *had* Ronald Reagan; you *have* Schwarzenegger on the way...”



Snow White Cafe