

CITIZEN KHAN

Cast:

Omar Khan

Salima, his daughter

Judy - Radio Taxi Control

Mohammed

Shah

SCENE 1.

FADE IN: TRAFFIC NOISE AND MUSIC FROM CAR RADIO.

KHAN : (HUMS AND SINGS TO AFGHANI MUSIC)

CONTROL: Car six. Come in car six.

KHAN : Six.

CONTROL: Where are you, six?

KHAN: Six – My head is in Slough High Street. My heart in Kabul.

CONTROL: Six – Turn the music down. Job for you.

MUSIC DOWN.

KHAN: (SIGHS) Always the job comes at going home time.

CONTROL: Six – Tough, darling, tough. Go to 32 Herschel Road. Pick up Mrs Higgins. For Wexham Park Hospital.

KHAN: Six – Your voice is as sweet as honey.

CONTROL: Six, you will get into trouble if you go on like that.

KHAN : Six – Will you please.....

KHAN: Six – OK , OK. Stay cool

CAR STARTING UP AND DRIVING OFF.

KHAN : I am Omar Khan. Date of Birth: Fifteen March 1959.

KHAN: Country of Origin: Afghanistan. Place of Birth: Kabul.

Entered to UK 2003. Asylum seeker. Given Indefinite

Citizen Khan

Leave to Remain – ‘leave to remain’ – this is funny Home Office English I think. I live in Slough. Daughter lives here with me. Wife in Kabul looking after sick mother..
Oh, excuse me...

CAR HORN AND AGGRESSIVE SHOUTS

(SHOUTS) What’s matter with you? Crazy man!
People like you should not be taxi driver!

Excuse me – we have taxi war here. Some drivers do not like mini-cabs like me. They have Mercedes. I have Vauxhall Corsa. One day I will have Mercedes. So where was I? Ah yes. ID? You want my ID? National Insurance Number, Gas Bill – I have them all. Rent book. Also Immigration Certificate. Passport? No, I do not have British passport. This is problem. So.....

GUNSHOTS

What happens here?

SKIDDING TO HALT. MUFFLED SHOUTING

Six!

CONTROL :

Six.

KHAN :

Trouble – big trouble!

CONTROL:

Six – You playing silly games again?

KHAN:

No. Outside betting shop. There is robber! Has gun.

Citizen Khan

Running this way.

CONTROL :

Six – Stay in car. Six – you hear?

RUNNING FOOTSTEPS. SHOUTS.

KHAN:

Stop!

OPENS CAR DOOR. EXITS
FXTWO BODIES FALLING ON ROAD. GRUNTS

KHAN :

(OFFSTAGE) Got you!

POLICE CAR SIREN – GETTING CLOSER

CONTROL :

Six – Come in Six. (PAUSE) Six – where are you?

KHAN:

(RE-ENTERS,BREATHING HEAVILY) Six.

CONTROL:

Six – you OK?

KHAN:

Six – OK . A bit shooked up. I done rugby tackle.

Just like in films. Got his gun. Now police got him.

So, now I go do pick up.

CONTROL :

Six – Take it easy now. You know what you
are, darlin’?

KHAN:

No, what?

CONTROL:

You’re a have-a-go hero!

KHAN:

You know me. I love to have a go. Just like in films.

SCENE 2

KHAN AT HOME WITH DAUGHTER

SALIMA: (READS)“The Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police commends Mr Omar Khan for assisting the Police to foil a robbery in Slough High Street on May 3rd 2008. His brave action was that of a good citizen.” Wow, Baba jan, that’s really cool!

KHAN: So now I am good citizen of UK. I will get British passport.

SALIMA: But Baba jan.....

KHAN: Now I can go home to see your mother and they will let me back into UK.

SALIMA: Baba jan – you know you must take the test before you can become a citizen.

KHAN: No need now I have this from top policeman.

SALIMA: You must still take the test.

KHAN : I pay taxes, I have driving licence, and now I have this from police chief. Is that not enough?

SALIMA: You still have to take the test. That’s the law.

KHAN: I am too old to take exams.

SALIMA You can do it, Baba jan. I took it last year and it is

not hard.

KHAN: Do not argue with me. It cost £34 to take test. That is whole day's wages! We cannot afford.

SALIMA: But Baba jan, you are always nagging me to study for my law exams. You must set me a good example by doing the test – and passing. I will help you to get ready for it.

KHAN: You bully me like your mother. I am tired. I will think about it. Why must I do so much to get passport?.

SCENE 3

FADE UP: TRAFFIC NOISE. LOW RADIO

CONTROL EXCHANGES. KHAN IS IN CAR

KHAN: (READING) "Life in the United Kingdom – A Journey to Citizenship". Hm. One hundred and forty five pages. That is a long journey.

CONTROL: Six – Where are you?

KHAN: Six – Tesco car park.

CONTROL: Six – Why aren't you on the road?

KHAN: I study – Life in the United Kingdom.

CONTROL: What, in Tesco's car park on a wet Monday. Not much life there.

KHAN: It is book I must read for the citizen test. Listen, you are born British citizen. I will ask you test question.

CONTROL: Oh, hurry up then. I have a job for you.

KHAN: What type of constitution does the UK have? Written or unwritten?

CONTROL : Six – Er, it must be written, otherwise nobody would know what it was.

KHAN: Wrong! It is unwritten. Why you not learn that at school?

CONTROL : Six – Alright, clever clogs, that's enough. Here's your job. Pick up Mr Shah at Rail Station. Take him to Community Centre, Farnham Road.

KHAN: What you call me? Clever clogs? What means that?

CONTROL : Six – Stop wasting time!

KHAN: Tonight you meet your clever clogs to discuss British constitution?

CONTROL : Six – will you please....?

KHAN: Six - OK,, I go, I go.

FX CAR PULLING UP

KHAN: Mr. Shah?

SHAH: Yes.

KHAN: For Community Centre?

SHAH: That's right. I will come in front seat.

DRIVING OFF.

KHAN: Nice day.

SHAH: Yes. I see you have Afghan flag on windscreen.

KHAN: Yes, I am from Kabul. Where you from?

SHAH: Also from Kabul.

KHAN: Why you come here?

SHAH: I was teacher.in Kabul. The Taliban did not like what I taught and stopped girls coming to my school.
Why did you leave?

KHAN: I was stunt man for films and TV. The Taliban did not like our films. They smashed all our studio and cameras. When my daughter could not go to school it was too much.

SHAH: And now Kabul is in the hands of the warlords again.
Is there no end to our country' misery! So how do you

like it here?

KHAN: It gets better. At first life was hard, and my English was not good. Slough is good for refugees. I get help from Slough Refugee Support when I came here. I got taxi job last year.

SHAH: Could you not get job as stunt man here?

KHAN: I tried. But so far no success. Too old I think.

SHAH: I see you have the big blue book.

KHAN: Oh, you mean the citizen test book. Yes, I read when I have time.

SHAH: It is not easy to read – many big English words.

KHAN: I agree. 'Constitutional monarchy', 'Parliament democracy', 'Devolved power' I have to ask my daughter to explain some of them.

SHAH: I think you meant 'Devolved power'

KHAN: Ah, yes, of course. You have taken the test?

SHAH: Yes – I took it last year.

KHAN: You passed?

SHAH: I did. I got 80 per cent right.

KHAN: So now you are UK citizen.

SHAH: Yes, but still a citizen of Afghanistan. One day I will go back.

KHAN: I dream of that, but in my head I think I will stay here.

SHAH: We both still have a life, *shokr e Khoda*, thanks be to God.

Scene 4

KHAN & SALIMA AT COMPUTER KEYBOARD

SALIMA: So, Baba jan, this is a mock test to help you prepare for the real one next week. It's all done on line.

KHAN: On line? What line? Where is line?

SALIMA: You know – on computer at the test centre.

KHAN: I not like computers.

SALIMA: I know, but all you've got to do is use the mouse here to tick the right answer.

KHAN: So my future depends on a mouse. How much time I got?

SALIMA: Forty five minutes. You have to answer 24 questions and get at least 18 correct to pass. Here, try this one: 'At what age are people allowed to buy alcohol? 16 or 18?

KHAN: Easy – 18. But Friday nights I see drunken boys and girls much younger than that. I will not let them in my taxi.

SALIMA: Binge drinkers.

KHAN: I hope you will never be one.

SALIMA: I will never touch alcohol.

KHAN: People in this country drink too much. It is sad to see young girls getting drunk.

SALIMA: Here try this one; What is a quango? A dance, a type of fruit, or a form of independent public organisation?

KHAN: I read about this the other day, but it is a mystery.

SALIMA: I agree. But it's certainly not a dance or a fruit. Here's one that's bound to come up. What is the role of the monarch?

KHAN: They mean the Queen?

SALIMA: Yes. Does she rule the country or does she perform a mainly ceremonial role?

KHAN: What means 'ceremonial'?

SALIMA: It means she opens things like new sessions of Parliament or new buildings.

KHAN: She seems to have power, but I believe she has none.

SALIMA: Right, Baba jan,

KHAN: That is sad for her. But she has big castles to live in. I take people to Windsor Castle sometimes. The police at the gate know me well. Now we finish.

SALIMA: Just one more. At what age are people allowed to marry? 16, 18, Or 21?

KHAN I think 16.

SALIMA: Correct.

KHAN: Soon you will marry and go away and leave me.

SALIMA: That is a long way ahead, Baba jan. Perhaps in 10 years' time.

KHAN: Your children will be British citizens. They will not fly kites like we do in Kabul.

SALIMA: We will see. You had a letter from Mummy today. What news?

KHAN: She says food is scarce and very expensive. Her mother is still very sick. She sends her love to you.

SALIMA: Soon you will be able to go to see her.

KHAN: *Inshallah*. But first I must pass the test.

SCENE 5

FADE UP INTERIOR CAR SOUND

KHAN : (TO AUDIENCE) I have not seen my wife for five years. It is hard for her.

It is hard for a man. I look at other women here. I meet some who are nice. I like to, how you say, flirt with them. Sometimes women kiss me in the taxi, but they are silly with drink. I love my wife. She writes me good letters. Today her letter had some very nice words from a film she saw. *'I will use a flower petal for paper, And write you the sweetest letter, You are the sultan of my heart, the sultan of my heart.'* Aiee!

CONTROL : Six.

KHAN: Six – Hello Judy. How are you?

CONTROL (D): Six: I'm good. And you?

KHAN: I am cool, as my daughter says.

CONTROL : Six: Courier job for you. Go to 16 Ragstone Gardens, pick up package and take to Windsor Castle main gate.

KHAN: Six: I go on Her Majesty's Service. Wilco,out.

MUSIC TRANSITION

KHAN: Six.

CONTROL : Six.

KHAN: Six. I am on relief road to Windsor. This package has funny smell. It seems to be smoking.

CONTROL : Six - How big is it?

KHAN: Six - It is all wrapped up in large plastic bag. Very heavy. I put it on back seat.

CONTROL: Six – Sounds suspicious. I will call the police.

KHAN : Six – It is smoking very much now. I think it may be bomb.

CONTROL: Six – Stop and get out!

KHAN: Six – Not safe – many cars. I cannot leave here.

CONTROL: Omar – stop and get out.!

KHAN: Six – I just coming to river Thames bridge. I know what to do. I go for swim with car. Just like film stunt.

RIVER LIGHTS DOWN. FX CRASH AS CAR GOES INTO RIVER.

FADE UP LOCAL RADIO IDENT

LOCAL RADIO

More on this morning's incident on the road into Windsor. A car, believed to be a minicab, came off the road at the bridge, broke through the barrier and plunged 20 feet into the Thames. The driver, Omar Khan managed to free himself and swim to the bank. He told us that he deliberately went into the river because he believed he had a suspicious package in his cab, which he was delivering to Windsor Castle. Police frogmen have confirmed that the package contained a device made of fertiliser chemicals. Two men have been arrested in Slough. Earlier this month taxi driver Khan helped the police to foil an armed raid in Slough High Street.

SCENE 6

CITIZENSHIP CEREMONY – BACKGROUND VOICES CHATTING AND MUSIC

SALIMA: This_is the moment you have worked for Baba jan. Are you nervous?

KHAN: A little. I was more nervous doing the test.

SALIMA: Well you got through that OK.

KHAN: I like more to do film stunts, not tests.

Citizen Khan

SALIMA: Your river crash was not a stunt, was it Baba jan?

KHAN: No, but it was like a stunt I did once for a film in Kabul. Ah here is Judy. Hello. It is good to see you here with us.

JUDY: Well thanks for inviting me.

KHAN: You are not just a pretty voice, you know.

JUDY: All right Car 6. Keep your mind on the job.

KHAN: I have letter from Her Majesty to thank me.

JUDY: You saved her from another Annus Horribilis. I expect she will give you a medal. I suppose you look down on us now you are famous.

KHAN: I am the same old Omar. I will still drive taxi. But now it will be mine. And it will be Mercedes.

SALIMA: They want you to go up on the platform now Baba jan.
Remember to speak up.

KHAN: And you remember to take video to send to your mother.

FADE UP: APPLAUSE

KHAN: I, Omar Khan, do solemnly, sincerely and truly declare and affirm that on becoming a British citizen, I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second, her Heirs and Successors, according to law.

