

# Argo

**Director: Ben Affleck**  
**2012 (120')**



On November 4, 1979, as the Iranian revolution reaches its boiling point, militants storm the U.S. embassy in Tehran, taking 52 Americans hostage. But, during the chaos, six Americans manage to slip away and find refuge in the home of the Canadian ambassador. Knowing it is only a matter of time before the six are found out and likely killed, a CIA "exfiltration" specialist named Tony Mendez (Ben Affleck) comes up with a risky plan to get them safely out of the country. A plan so incredible, it could only happen in the movies.

## Vocabulary and expressions:

**To split:** Colloquial expression meaning to leave or to flee.

*We should all split.*

**To brief somebody:** To give information to somebody so that they are fully informed.

*I'll go brief the President.*

**Exfil or Exfiltration:** The removal of personnel or units from areas under enemy control by stealth, deception, surprise, or clandestine means.

**To fuck up:** Vulgar and colloquial expression meaning to make a mess of a situation.

*Don't fuck up!*

**A cover story:** A fabricated story used to conceal a true purpose.

**To sanction something:** If somebody in authority sanctions an action or practice, they officially approve of it and allow it to be done.

*The U.S. government has just sanctioned your science-fiction movie.*

**A location scout:** A person who looks for suitable locations for filming.

**A mug shot:** A photograph of someone, especially a photograph of a criminal taken by the police (an informal word).

**Behead, beheading:** If someone is beheaded, someone cuts their head off, usually because they have been found guilty of a crime.

**To figure something out:** To succeed in solving or understanding a problem or situation.

*We think our housekeeper has figured out who they are.*

**In turnaround:** If a movie is "in turnaround" it is in a state of limbo after a movie studio has decided to not continue making it.

*It's in turnaround.*

**A picture:** Another word for a movie or film.

*What happened to your picture?*

### **Very brief timeline of Iran from 1950 to 1980:**

**1950:** The Prime Minister Ali Razmara is assassinated after 9 months in office. He is succeeded by the nationalist, Mohammad Musaddiq. The Iranian government recognizes Israel.

**1951:** The parliament nationalizes the oil industry in April. The Anglo-Iranian Oil Company is disabled and Shah and Musaddiq collide. Britain boycotts the purchase of Iranian oil and uses navy to block oil exports from Iran.

**1953:** Shah and his wife, Soraya are forced to live Iran. They come back after only a few days in Europe with the help of western countries, including United States. Musaddiq is overthrown in a coup orchestrated by Britain and the U.S.

**1964:** The clergy oppose Shah's reforms and the outspoken Khomeini is exiled. Khomeini is sent to Turkey first and then Iraq, where he stays from 1965 to 1978.

**1967:** Shah is crowned as the king of kings in a lavish ceremony watched by the world media. He is granted the title Arya Mihr (the Light of the Aryans) by the parliament.

**1975:** The Shah dissolves the two-existing government backed parties. Iran officially becomes a one-party system. The beginning of the Iranian calendar is changed from the Prophet Muhammad's Hijrat to the start of the Achaemenid dynasty.

**1978:** In September, massive demonstrations against shah leads to riots and strikes. Martial law is imposed.

**1979, January 16th:** The Shah and his family are forced into exile. An interim government headed by Shapour Bakhtiyar is appointed by the shah.

**1979, February 1st:** Ayatollah Khomeini returns to Iran following almost 15 years of exile in Iraq and a few months in France. The interim government is

dismissed.

**1979, April 1st:** The Islamic Republic of Iran is proclaimed following a referendum.

**1979, November 4th:** 52 Americans are taken hostage inside the US embassy by the militant students in Tehran. They demanded the extradition of the Shah who was receiving treatment in US for cancer.

**1980:** The first president of the new republic, Bani Sadr is elected in January. Shah dies in Egypt in July. Iraq invades Iran in September. The American hostages are released after 444 days in captivity.

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