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EXT. PRIPYAT - DAY

Pripyat, Ukraine
3.5 kilometers from the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant

From the roof of a building in Pripyat, we see the remains of the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant in the distance. The reactor tower stands tall and stark against the sky. The entire city is silent.

Leaves blow down empty streets between crumbling tenement blocks. Grass and trees sprout up through cracks in the pavement. In the distance bark wild dogs. The daylight is a muted gray beneath an oppressive ceiling of cloud.

A Ukrainian SOLDIER walks through the forest that has engulfed the dead city. His Kalashnikov is at the ready, although by his manner he does not seem to expect an ambush. Voices speaking in Ukrainian can be heard and the outlines of more SOLDIERS are visible through the woods. Somewhere is the sound of a helicopter.

He wears an intimidating GP-5 gas mask. He looks towards the sky, the wan daylight casting the shadow of the barren tree branches across his huge, round goggles. His Geiger counter crackles menacingly.

MACMILLAN

(whisper)

Oi, Suzy!

The soldier turns to see a man, Captain MACMILLAN, hurtling towards him dressed in a ghillie suit, a type of camouflage clothing designed to resemble heavy foliage. It looks like the man is wearing a hooded robe of moss.

MacMillan slams into him, knocking the Ukrainian soldier into a tree as he buries a knife in the man's neck. The man's cry is muffled by his gas mask. MacMillan twists the knife and eases the dead soldier to the ground before pulling out the weapon. MacMillan speaks in the thick brogue of the Scottish Highlands.

MACMILLAN

Beautiful. All clear.

He wipes the blade off on the man's clothing before returning it to his shoulder sheath and unslinging his suppressed carbine. Another ghillie-suited figure, PRICE, emerges from the underbrush, carrying a sniper rifle. Coils of rope are draped across his chest.

They sneak through the trees, two gray-green figures in a gray-green forest, until they reach a road where a line of trucks and jeeps are parked, surrounded by a score of SOLDIERS talking or patrolling. Behind them the white, Soviet-era apartment buildings of Pripyat loom over the forest like prehistoric monoliths. A Havoc attack HELICOPTER flies by overhead. Price's accent is East London, although not the stereotypical Cockney.

PRICE

Looks like they've bought out the entire Ukrainian army. It's a bloody convention out there.

He looks to his superior for instruction.

MACMILLAN

Get ready to move on my signal. We're goin' deep, and we're goin' hard.

PRICE

Surely you can't be serious.

It is a statement, not a question, as if it is part of a ritual between them.

MACMILLAN

Stay right behind me. Hold... Okay... Go!

When the soldiers aren't looking, the two men make a mad dash forward in a low crouch from behind the trees to hide between two jeeps. They glance around, but they timed their run just right and avoided being seen. MacMillan gets down on his belly and starts to crawl underneath the line of trucks, Price hot on his heels.

The two Britons keep glancing to the side as they crawl along, but the chattering soldiers do not see them; they are being good sentries and looking outwards. One SOLDIER pauses next to PRICE, who freezes, staring at the man's feet. The man drops his cigarette and crushes it beneath his boot, before moving off. Price lets out the breath he has been holding, and keeps crawling.

They reach the foremost truck, and pause, waiting for their opportunity. When it comes, they crawl out, spring to their feet, and race into the cover of a stand of trees on the opposite side of the road. Miraculously, the alarm is not raised. They look back when they are hidden, to see if they have been followed. They haven't.

MACMILLAN

That's how it's done, lad.

They stick to the thin strip of woodland to avoid being seen. After a jog between dilapidated buildings, they reach the back entrance of the Pripyat Palace of Culture, the city's sports and community center. The door hangs wide open on its rusting hinges, but in front of it a WILD DOG gnaws on the corpse of a DEER. MacMillan raises his hand.

MACMILLAN

Stop.

Price draws up behind him.

MACMILLAN

Leave it alone. It's a wild dog.

They begin to move around it towards the ramp up to the door, rifles trained on the animal.

MACMILLAN

Pooch doesn't look too friendly.
Keep your distance. No need to
attract unnecessary attention.

The dog notices them and begins to growl, but it does not attack as they slip inside, MACMILLAN in the lead.

INT. PALACE OF CULTURE - DAY

The two men move through a cafeteria where grass and saplings sprout up between the tiles, and dust hangs thick in the air. They head up a flight of stairs, and we can hear the ghostly shouts and laughter of children from a quarter century ago. They emerge on a balcony overlooking the entrance hall, and through the glass front they see the ominous shape of the power plant.

MACMILLAN stops, staring at it. PRICE joins him a few moments later.

MACMILLAN

Look at this place, Lieutenant.
Fifty thousand people used to live
in this city. Now it's a ghost
town. I've never seen anything like
it.

(turns to PRICE)

...This is what we're trying to
prevent.

The sweep of his arm takes in all of Pripyat.

MACMILLAN

Can you imagine this happening to
London or Glasgow or, God,
Inverness?

(horrorified silence)

We have to stop it from happening.
And for once, the politicians
realized that. This is Britain's
first black ops assassination since
the Second World War. We're the
best, you realize that, right?
Better than the Spetsnaz or the
Green Berets. That's why they sent
us, because failure is not an
option. We have to stop this deal
from going through. Cash for spent
fuel rods?

(shakes head)

That's one hell of a recipe for
disaster.

They start to head down to the ground floor, past galleries
of flaking Soviet murals, their footfalls raising small
clouds of dust on a floor strewn with rubble, books, papers,
and other debris. They are constantly looking around, wary of
possible ambush sites, choke points, the angle of the light.

PRICE

One shot, one kill, and it'll all
be over.

MACMILLAN

One? When the arms deal starts,
it's open season. I want you
nailing every last sod you can lay
your sights on.

PRICE

How many can we expect?

As they reach the ground floor, they pause and crouch at the
sound of an approaching helicopter. The Havoc flies over the
town square outside the center.

MACMILLAN

The arms dealer will have all the
soldiers he's bribed with him, as
well as some of his own men.
Twenty, maybe? Thirty? As for the
Russians... some bigwig from the
Ultranationalist Party, I imagine.

MACMILLAN(cont'd)

It'd be Makarov, if the Russian government hadn't murdered him last month. Sorry, plane accident.

(bitter chuckle)

Whoever they send, snipe him first. Maybe you can kick off a power struggle. He'll have a metric tonne of paramilitary with him, ex-Russian army and a few foreign mercenaries.

They step out through the front entrance onto the palace's portico.

EXT. PRIPYAT - DAY

They hop down one end of the portico to a covered walkway that runs along part of the square. In front of them is a crumbling, seven-story hotel, with a covered viewing area on the roof. Huge red Cyrillic letters proclaim it to be the Hotel Polissya.

MACMILLAN

Leftenant Price, there's the hotel. We should be able to observe the exchange from the top floor. Let's go.

I/E. POLISSYA HOTEL - DAY

Leaves and dirt are scattered across the floor of the rooftop observation area, overlooking the main plaza. A sapling has taken root in the gap between the tiles. Part of the rooftop collapsed at some point in the past.

The door creaks open and MACMILLAN and PRICE slide in, quiet as ghosts, still on the alert. When it becomes obvious the area is clear, they look out across the benighted city. The power plant dominates the horizon. They lean their rifles against the parapet, and Price tosses the coils of rope he has been carrying into the corner. Both men pull off their helmets and balaclavas.

PRICE reveals himself to be an intense, hard-faced man in his 30s with a short blond-brown beard and a heavy handlebar mustache. His buzz cut provides a sharp contrast.

MACMILLAN is a few years older, with a buzz cut and a full red beard and mustache shot with gray. He wears a radio headset.

Price pulls back his sleeve and looks at his watch.

PRICE

They should be here in a few hours.

They look out across the square. Price points as he speaks.

PRICE

This is a killing field. At this angle, they can't hide behind the steps. The trees might've provided some cover, but without their leaves...

He trails off, analyzing angles and lanes of fire. MacMillan watches him, with a teacher's pride in his eyes.

PRICE

Any Tom in the British Army could make the shot from up here.

MACMILLAN

Aye, but could any Tom have *gotten* up here?

That causes Price to stop and reflect.

MACMILLAN

The shot is easy. It's what comes before and after that's hard... Come on, let's set up our exfil before that Havoc comes back.

EXT. PRIPYAT - DAY

PRICE is setting up a booby trap at the stairwell. If anyone opens the door, it'll trigger a claymore mine. He hustles back inside.

I/E. POLISSYA HOTEL - DAY

In the corner of the observation area opposite to where they have set up, MACMILLAN attaches two grappling hooks to the parapet not facing the square, and lets down the ropes, which reach all the way to the bottom. PRICE joins him.

MACMILLAN

Well, we have some time on our hands.

They lean against an interior wall, out of sight of the plaza.

MACMILLAN

So, did you pack some newspapers?

Price's face is stony.

MACMILLAN

Oh relax, Lieutenant. It was a joke.

MacMillan pulls out a cigar case from a pocket and lights up. He offers it to Price.

PRICE

I don't smoke. Those things'll kill you.

MacMillan chuckles and stares at the smoke of his exhalation as it drifts to the ceiling. The Havoc thunders by overhead again.

MACMILLAN

Oh bugger me, give it a rest. All he's doin' is wastin' fuel. And besides, we're in the middle of the Exclusion Zone. There's not another human being for miles. Who do they expect?

PRICE

A sniper team from the Special Air Service?

MACMILLAN

If they're expecting us, I'm a Dutchman.

MacMillan walks over to the southern balustrade and stares towards the power plant for a long moment.

MACMILLAN

They say they want to take Russia back to the days of the USSR, and people take them seriously! People even vote for them! Can you believe that?

Price strolls over to join him and looks towards the power plant, straight into the dead face of Reactor 4. He gestures toward it with his chin.

PRICE

Not with that there.

MACMILLAN

Aye. By Christ, if the Soviet Union has a tombstone, that's it there.

Both men stare in melancholic silence.

MACMILLAN

This has to be stopped, and that's why they sent us. It doesn't matter if we live or die. So I have to ask you, Lieutenant Price... When it's down to the wire, do you have the will to give your all?

Price thinks for a moment.

PRICE

My grandfather died trying to sink the German battleship Tirpitz, during World War Two.

MACMILLAN

Oh, aye?

PRICE

My grandmother says I look just like him. She was still pregnant with my father when he died. And whenever she spoke of him, she'd quote the Bible, John 15:13.

MacMillan shakes his head, not understanding the reference.

PRICE

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." ...I realize that we have to be willing to commit everything, absolutely *everything*... I'm all in.

EXT. PRIPYAT - DAY

The sun's progress is invisible above the leaden clouds. Wind rustles through the trees. From the square below, the camera slowly zooms in on the top story of the Polissya Hotel.

I/E. POLISSYA HOTEL - DAY

PRICE has set up the sniper rifle, an enormous M82A1, on the parapet. MACMILLAN watches with a monocular.

PRICE looks down the scope at the intersection in front of the square. An ARMS DEALER and a dozen SOLDIERS have set up tables on the road. Nearby are a few parked jeeps. The Havoc helicopter slowly circles the plaza on patrol.

MACMILLAN

The wind's getting a bit choppy. You can compensate for it, or you can wait it out, but they might leave before it dies down. It's your call.

Several more jeeps pull up, and several armed GUARDS begin to get out. Through Price's scope, we see IMRAN ZAKHAEV (70) exit one of the vehicles, lugging an enormous black suitcase. He is an old and evil-looking man, bald, but with a gray goatee. He wears military fatigues and a leather jacket. He sets the case down on the hood of one of the dealer's jeeps.

PRICE

Right, I think I see him. Christ, that's Imran Zakhaev. He's the chairman of the entire Ultranationalist Party. The man's supposed to be a ghost.

ZAKHAEV opens up the suitcase, turning to the ARMS DEALER as the man comes over to look.

MACMILLAN

We're still going through with this. Wait for my mark.

The DEALER takes out a gold bar from Zakhaev's briefcase, appraising it as Zakhaev watches. He tosses it to his #2 MAN, who inspects it, then tosses it back.

MACMILLAN

Target acquired. I have a positive ID on Imran Zakhaev. Range 172 meters. Wind... Push to left. Fire when ready.

The DEALER puts the bar back in and shuts the case. At this distance, none of their dialogue can be heard.

There is the sound of the approaching Havoc, and then the helicopter flies in front of the hotel and stops, blocking their view.

MACMILLAN

Ach, where did he come from? Patience, laddie. Wait for a clear shot.

The helicopter hovers for a few moments, before continuing on its patrol. Zakhaev now seems to be arguing with the dealer and his #2. Time slows, and the ambient sound fades. He is pacing about, shouting, and just as he throws his arms up in the air in frustration...

PRICE FIRES, the gunshot thunderous, and the recoil raising dust from the floor. The bullet errs. The target was Zakhaev's heart, but it shears off his left arm instead and passes through to nail a hapless GUARD in the leg behind him, and blow out the jeep tire behind *him*. Both men collapse immediately.

MACMILLAN

Target's down. I think I saw his
arm fly off. Shock and blood
loss'll take care o' the rest.

Naturally, the others panic and begin racing to their vehicles. PRICE is angling in on the DEALER. PRICE FIRES, compensating correctly for the wind. The bullet swerves to nail the DEALER as he races to his vehicle. The man falls to the ground spinning like a top. PRICE looks up from his scope to see the Havoc homing in on them.

MACMILLAN

Shite, they're onto us! We got the
main guys. Let's go.

They rise, PRICE snatching up the sniper rifle. They race across to the grappling hooks. The helicopter drifts almost lazily alongside them, its autocannon roaring, each round large enough to cut a man in twain. The two SAS crouch as they run, and are pelted by exploding masonry. Dust and plaster fills the observation area.

The two men begin to rappel down the other side of the hotel.

EXT. PARK - DAY

As they descend, the helicopter fires its rockets, sending the entire top floor of the hotel up in a massive explosion that resounds across the dead city. Rubble and one of the enormous red letters rain past the two snipers. They reach the ground.

MACMILLAN

Leftenant Price, follow me!

They flee through the overgrown parkland, away from the plaza. MacMillan shouts into his headset.

MACMILLAN

Big Bird, this is Alpha Six. We have been compromised. I repeat, we have been compromised, now heading to Extraction Point Four!

An American voice crackles on the radio.

BIG BIRD

Alpha Six, Big Bird is en route, ETA three minutes. Don't be late. We're stretching our fuel as it is. Out.

The helicopter rises over the hotel, its autocannon chattering. Dirt flies up around the two men.

MACMILLAN

Price, take it down!

PRICE

It's too high! The recoil--

MACMILLAN

Just do it!

PRICE crouches and aims. He takes a deep breath and freezes. Once more sound fades and time seems to slow. He is still as a statue as shots kick up around him. MACMILLAN is already shooting, twitching away from the tracers flashing past. Price stares down his scope, the barrel unmoving.

PRICE FIRES, the recoil knocking him over, but he strikes the Havoc's main rotor, and the bullet smashes through to take out the tail rotor as well. Smoke begins to billow from the rotors and the Havoc careens wildly in the air. Price lets out his breath, and gets back on his feet. One shot, one kill.

MACMILLAN

(laughing)

That's the style, Price! *That's the style!* Good night, ya bastard.

They turn and begin to walk away, like heroes in a Hollywood blockbuster. They fail to notice the helicopter suddenly surge forward in its death throes. It clips the hotel, and the crash causes them to turn and see the gunship BARRELING down on them. The helicopter fires, but the shot goes wide and a fusillade of rockets whoosh overhead.

MACMILLAN

Aw bollocks! Run!

PRICE runs off, but MACMILLAN trips over himself as he tries to escape. He rolls and is back on his feet again. The helicopter SMASHES into the ground and raises a massive cloud of dust. It slides forward, plowing up soil and trees, its blades snapping off like twigs, and the earth shaking impact knocks MacMillan down again. He falls heavily, twisting his leg and smashing his knee against a stone.

Price races back to help him, but he is too late. MacMillan scrambles to get away, and is enveloped in a huge cloud of dust as the helicopter grinds to a halt, seemingly right on top of him.

PRICE

Captain!

Price rushes to his captain and sees the helicopter has stopped just short of him. MacMillan, still on his belly, stops one of the slowly turning rotor blades with a hand.

PRICE

You lead a charmed life, Captain MacMillan.

MACMILLAN

Shut up and give me a hand.

Price does, and MacMillan tries to get to his feet, using his carbine as a crutch.

MACMILLAN

Jesus!

He falls down.

MACMILLAN

Aw crap, I think I blew out my knee when I fell.

PRICE

You must be joking.

Without prompting, Price pulls him over his shoulders in a fireman's lift.

MACMILLAN

The extraction point is at the Ferris wheel. We can still make it if we hurry.

They race through the park and reach the extraction point, in the shadow of Pripyat's famous Ferris wheel.

The rusting iron monstrosity rears above the treetops. Price carefully sets MacMillan down behind cover, and takes cover himself.

Long moments pass by. Inky black smoke rises from the burning hotel. Wind blows through the grass and leaves drift across the pavement in front of the Ferris wheel. A dog barks in the distance.

Beneath the oppressive clouds, the world is still, the silence total. It can almost be described as peaceful. The two men wait, surveying their surroundings, their rifles at the ready for the slightest movement. MACMILLAN scans the skies unblinking.

MACMILLAN

I can't believe they'll let us go,
just like that. Stay on your guard.

PRICE looks across the grass, contemplative, until...

PRICE

Movement. Southeast.

A squad of SOLDIERS closes in on them, darting between the trees.

MACMILLAN

I see 'em. Let 'em get closer.
(radio)
Big Bird, where are you? We are
heavily outnumbered.

BIG BIRD

Copy that, Alpha. We'll be there
ASAP. Hold tight.

Deathly silence as the SOLDIERS advance, a thin line of men, looking for the two snipers. PRICE stares down his scope, waiting for the perfect shot. One soldier gets slightly ahead of the rest, so he is lined up in PRICE's sights with another man behind him.

PRICE FIRES. The shot rip through the chests of both men and they fall screaming. The soldiers start shooting, spraying fire indiscriminately. MACMILLAN shoots, his M4A1's suppressed report unimpressive next to the M82's thunderclap. Still, another man falls.

A second thunderclap, and a soldier reels back, soaked in blood. Some men are dashing forward, racing for the paltry cover offered by trees and stands of high grass. Others are on their bellies, firing.

A light machine gun opens up, pouring automatic fire on the Britons. Shots are pinging off the Ferris wheel, occasionally raising sparks.

PRICE

They're moving in on the right!

MacMillan tracks two men trying to flank them and fires a burst. The first is struck in the hip and staggers, but keeps running. The second is hit in the chest and goes down, but is still very much alive, judging by his screams.

The first man takes cover behind a thin tree and starts firing, but with a third thunderclap, the tree is split in two and falls with a crash. Needless to say, the soldier falls slain. The second, mortally wounded and on the ground, is still shooting with his pistol.

A SOLDIER rises up out of the high grass, about to lob a grenade. A fourth thunderclap, and he falls. A moment later his body is torn apart by the grenade blast. We see the battle from over head, tracers lancing back and forth, men writhing on the ground in agony. PRICE is snapping his rifle back and forth, firing as quickly as he can. He flinches as a bullet ricochets off the gondola he is hiding next to.

MACMILLAN

Do ya hear that?

Suddenly BIG BIRD, a Super Stallion helicopter, flies into view. The SOLDIERS look up, but when the copter's .50 cal machine gun starts raking them, those still standing flee.

PRICE rises, picks up MACMILLAN and hustles toward the Super Stallion.

BIG BIRD

Alpha Team, this is Big Bird. We're at bingo fuel. You've got thirty seconds. Get your ass on board, over.

The Super Stallion touches down on the pavement in front of the Ferris wheel, and four SAS commandos pile out, guns blazing. Those UKRAINIANS that can still run are in full retreat. Those that can't are brutally put down. PRICE gets aboard, setting MACMILLAN down gently before collapsing in the seat opposite him. The SAS pile in behind.

BIG BIRD lifts off and flies over the city, shots glancing off it. The Ferris wheel fades into the distance, and the helicopter swings by the burning hotel. The square is now devoid of men.

MACMILLAN rubs his knee, and gasps quietly.

MACMILLAN

God, this is bad. I think I'll have to retire 'cos of this. I'm too old for this shite anyway... At least me wife and bairns'll be happy. Think they'll give me a pension for this?

He taps his leg, and laughs.

PRICE

So you can go back to Inverness while I continue getting shot to hell for Queen and country?

MACMILLAN

Aye, I like the sound of that. That'll mean you're in charge of the men, though. God ha' mercy.

The two of them smile, and PRICE looks across the Ukrainian landscape, the wind blowing across his face.

FADE OUT.

ONE YEAR LATER.

FADE IN:

**22nd SAS Regiment HQ
Credenhill, England**

INT. HANGAR - DAY

The hangar day slides open, and PRICE strides into the dark hangar, dramatically backlit, wearing a boonie hat, and puffing on a cigar. There are a few more lines about his eyes since we last saw him. A SQUAD of SAS COMMANDOS stand at attention, some blinking in the sudden sunlight, all in their early 20s. Close on PRICE's heels is his right hand man, GAZ, a Cockney with a closely-trimmed beard and mustache and a baseball cap sporting the Union Jack.

GAZ

These are the men, Captain Price.

Price paces slowly back and forth along the line while Gaz waits, his easy posture at odds with the other men.

PRICE

I know who you are, but do you know who *I* am?

SOLDIERS

Sir, no, sir!

PRICE

I am Captain Price, and I am the commanding officer of Bravo Team.

He pauses for dramatic effect, but the SOLDIERS do not react: they have never heard of it.

PRICE

You do not know who I am, because everything I have ever done for Britain is classified. When Her Majesty wants something done quickly, quietly, and with absolute certainty of success, she calls Bravo. I have good news and bad news. Good news first: The world's in great shape. We've got a civil war in Russia, government loyalists against Ultrationalist rebels, and six thousand nukes at stake.

GAZ

Just another day at the office.

PRICE

Second, Code Name Nikolai has been captured in Russia. Nikolai is our informant in the Ultrationalist camp. We believe he is being transported aboard an Estonian freighter. There is a small crew and security detail on board. Nikolai's in hell right now. We're gonna walk him out. We take care of our friends.

(pause)

The bad news is that HQ has deemed this mission of such importance that I must take one of you muppets with me. What I need to know today is which of you has the minerals to serve with me. *WILL!*

A few men twitch.

PRICE

That is what I am looking for! I will not take a man who is unwilling to commit *absolutely everything*, to be motivated by everything he encounters, to do whatever is asked of him to the absolute best of his abilities without fear or hesitation! We are on the verge of World War Three. Her Majesty's government knows this, and they have called on *us*, the S A S, to step into the shit and start mopping up. We are goddamned supermen, and what you will be asked to do in Bravo Team will be nothing less than superhuman. The cargo ship op will be only the first of our missions in Russia. I will choose one of you, and you will obey my orders without question. Whoever that man may be, for the next few days I will not be his captain, I will be his God! And Gaz will be Jesus Christ, my son and prophet.

He gestures towards his second in command. GAZ grins, rolls back and forth on the balls of his feet, and flexes the fingers clutching his G36 rifle.

PRICE

And you will be an unstoppable hell god titan king of death, praying with every breath for the chance to tear out a Russian's heart with your bare hands! If you are not, then you will *die* on the end of that Russian's bayonet, your scream frozen in your throat by the cold.

He stops in the middle of the line, and takes a drag on his cigar.

PRICE

So which of you ladies thinks you're the one?

Silence.

PRICE steps in front of one young soldier.

PRICE
What's your name, soldier?

GRIFFEN
Sir, Griffen, sir!

PRICE
How old are you, Griffen?

GRIFFEN
Twenty, soldier!

PRICE
Like hell you are. If you're
dropped into Russia, you'll be
tripping over your goddamned
umbilical cord.

He moves to the next soldier in line, one of the oldest
there, 'old' being defined as about 24.

PRICE
And who are you? Basil Fawlty?

In all honesty, there is a resemblance.

WALLCROFT
Sir, no, sir! Trooper Wallcroft,
sir!

PRICE
And why did you join the SAS,
Trooper Wallcroft?

Price takes a long drag on his cigar and exhales.

WALLCROFT
Sir, because I want to kill
Russians, sir!

GAZ
And I'd like to sleep with Keeley
Hazell. Doesn't mean it's gonna
happen, mate!

Price gives a twitch of his whiskers in response, and is
about to move along when Wallcroft starts to cough on the
cigar smoke shrouding Price's head.

PRICE
Do you want a gas mask, Wallcroft?
Good God, man, have you ever even
been in combat?

GRIFFEN

Sir, Iraq and Afghanistan, sir! I was mentioned in dispatches at Fallujah.

PRICE

You were at Fallujah? We nearly burned that entire godforsaken shithole down with white phosphorus, and you're bothered by *cigar smoke*?

He moves along and stops in front of a SOLDIER with a high and tight crew cut and a Glasgow half-smile: a scar on his left cheek extending from the edge of his mouth to his ear.

PRICE

And where are you from, soldier?

SOAP

Glasgow, sir!

PRICE

A Scotsman, eh? So will you be running in front of my team in woad paint and screaming your head off, trying to decapitate the first Russian you see with a claymore?

CU - SOAP'S STONY FACE

SOAP

Sir, no, sir! I was a sniper before I entered Selection, sir!

PRICE

What's your name?

SOAP

Soap, sir!

PRICE

And what brings you here, Soap?

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

A small congregation of MOURNERS stand beside an open grave and a casket draped with the Union Jack. The day is grim and overcast.

At a respectable distance is a single bagpiper, and the sound of his somber playing is joined by a woman singing a dirge in Scottish Gaelic.

A CHAPLAIN stands holding an open Bible, reading. As he finishes, two SOLDIERS and a SERGEANT in the dress uniform of the Royal Regiment of Scotland begin to fold the flag. SEVEN MORE stand at attention nearby.

As the soldiers lift the flag off the casket, we see the name on it: CSGT W. MACTAVISH.

SOAP stands in the front row with his family in a dark civilian suit. He looks almost reputable, but nothing can hide the scar on his cheek. The soldiers fold the flag and the SERGEANT hands it to Soap's MOTHER.

He marches over to the HONOR GUARD. When he reaches the end of the line, he whirls to face the crowd.

SERGEANT
Present *arms!*

The HONOR GUARD does so, while the remaining two soldiers salute. The SERGEANT glances at SOAP.

CU - SOAP'S FACE

Back to the sergeant.

SERGEANT
Fire!

CU - SOAP'S FACE

He twitches as the guns fire.

CUT TO:

INT. MILITARY BASE

The same close up as SOAP's head is shaved by an Army barber. We hear the guns' second volley.

CUT TO:

INT. TRAINING COURSE - NIGHT

A filthy SOAP ducks his head down as he and other RECRUITS crawl through a foot of muddy water beneath lines of barbed wire. The camera is night vision green.

Quick cuts of other SOLDIERS screaming down at him. As the men crawl, others fire off rifles above their heads.

DRILL SERGEANT
Go, go, move ya maggots!

Soap reaches the end and springs up for the next obstacle. We hear the guns' third volley.

CUT TO:

EXT. AFGHAN VALLEY - DAY

SOAP in full combat gear leaping to his feet. He is firing from the minaret of a bombed-out rural mosque. He is oblivious to the shots whizzing past all around him as he snipes at INSURGENTS running across the streets below. Three men die in as many seconds beneath his tranquil fury.

His SPOTTER is next to him, crouching down as he fires with his assault rifle. The two men are ankle-deep in spent casings. An open box of ammunition sits next to them. Dust rains down on them as the edges of the minaret are chipped away by bullets.

The village they are in lies in the center of a yellow-gray mountain valley where a massive pitched battle is being waged. Streams of tracers and RPGs lance across from entrenched positions on both sides of the valley. Orange fireballs blossom over its entire length.

As SOAP fires, an RPG screams past, missing him by less than a meter.

SPOTTER
We have to bug out of here now!
Where's the bloody chopper!?

A Lynx helicopter spins past the mosque, black smoke streaming from its tail rotor. SOAP stares as it passes.

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE - DAY

SOAP stands at attention before Captain MACMILLAN's desk in dress uniform, a respectably large ribbon bar on his chest and the three chevrons of a sergeant on his shoulder. His eyes stare straight ahead as Captain MACMILLAN leafs through a report and talks. A cane leans against his desk.

He rises with a smile, leaning heavily on his desk, and offers Soap his hand, but all we can hear is the woman singing and the pulsing of a drum.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ARMY BASE - DAY

CU - SOAP'S FACE

We're back in Credenhill.

SOAP

To serve my country, sir!

PRICE

Oh sod me. An idealist. When a Russian rebel lunges out of the snow reeking of vodka and trying to lodge an RPG up your backside, will your love for Queen and country stop him?

SOAP

Sir, no, sir!

PRICE

What then!?

SOAP

Five rounds rapid, sir!

PRICE nods, and looks down the line, assessing the rest of them.

PRICE

You're all dismissed. Soap, get your gear, wheels up at 1400.

The men disperse save PRICE and GAZ.

GAZ

I know Soap personally, sir. He's a good man, and Captain MacMillan had recommended him.

Price gives an assenting grunt and thinks for a moment.

PRICE

I haven't been back to the old USSR in over a year. It was hell then, and that was before the bombings and reprisals started...

PRICE(cont'd)

It was daft of us to think that killing Zakhaev would stop the fighting.

(looks away)

Hm. Soap better be up for it. He looks like a shaved gorilla, I'll give him that, but I wouldn't be surprised if he craps himself the first time he sees a Russian.

GAZ

I think you're too hard on him, sir.

PRICE

Maybe.

(shakes head)

I can count on you at least. You better mount up, Gaz. We'll be going in shortly.

GAZ

Deep and hard, sir?

Price gives a derisive snort.

PRICE

No. This'll be a walk in the park for you and me.

He drops the cigar and crushes it beneath his heel.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE BLACK SEA - NIGHT

Lightning splits the sky, revealing a freighter riding enormous swells on the storm-tossed Black Sea. Bravo Team flies towards it in a Sea Stallion helicopter, Hammer 2-4. The men are clad in black and khaki, and wear night vision monoculars. PRICE smokes a fresh cigar with a studied nonchalance. He holds an enormous length of coiled rope in his lap, one end attached to the helicopter. SOAP and GAZ are with him, both pensive. PRICE still has his boonie hat, and GAZ his Union Jack baseball cap. SOAP has a five o'clock shadow that will grow throughout the film.

Words appear on screen:

Day 1 - 01:23:37
Somewhere in the Black Sea

The seconds are ticking away.

HAMMER 2-4
Command, this is Hammer 2-4. We
have visual on target. ETA 30
seconds. Goin' dark.

COMMAND
Copy, 2-4.

The Sea Stallion sweeps past the ship, and the SAS study the
deck, strewn with cargo containers.

HAMMER 2-4
10 seconds.

SOAP
Rules of engagement, sir?

PRICE flings his cigar into the ocean.

PRICE
Crew expendable. Lock and load.

HAMMER 2-4
Radio check to a secure channel.

The Sea Stallion closes to hover over the bridge and PRICE
throws the rope over the edge.

HAMMER 2-4
Green light. Go, go, go!

PRICE, GAZ, and SOAP slide down the rope to land outside the
bridge. A moment later the rope falls down behind them. Four
CREWMEN inside look up in surprise.

PRICE
Weapons free!

The hail of fire from the silenced carbines shatters the
windows and cuts down the crewmen.

PRICE
Bridge secure. Soap, Gaz, we've got
to reach the hold before anything
happens to the informant. Let's go!

PRICE and the men reach a door. He moves to open it.

PRICE
On my mark... Go.

He swings it open and they step inside.

PRICE
Check your corners.

INT. FREIGHTER - NIGHT

They are all inside, and PRICE gestures forward. The deck sways back and forth as the ship rides the stormy sea.

PRICE
Squad, on me.

They race down the stairs at the back of the bridge, SOAP taking point.

PRICE
Stairs clear!

They enter a corridor. At the far end a DRUNKEN CREWMAN lurches out of the crew quarters, bottle in hand, yelling in Russian at no one in particular. The squad draws up, and SOAP drops him with a short burst.

SOAP
Last call.

GAZ chuckles.

PRICE
Hallway clear!

GAZ
Didn't you tell me that you don't
drink, Soap?

GAZ jogs forward and checks the doorway from which he emerged as the other SAS scour the other compartments. Two CREWMEN sleep in their bunks. GAZ shoots them both in the head.

GAZ
Sleep tight.

SOAP joins him.

SOAP
No, I don't, 'cos bein' the only
sober man in a bar fight is a
laugh.

GAZ
(laughing)
Some Glaswegian you are.

PRICE

Stow it. Crew quarters clear. Move up.

They start moving down the corridor, ready for the slightest hint of danger.

HAMMER 2-4

Bravo Six, Hammer is at bingo fuel. We're buggin' out. Big Bird will be on station for evac in five.

PRICE

Copy, Hammer.
(to his men)
Check those corners!

They reach a T-intersection, and SOAP glances around the corner.

SOAP

Clear left.

GAZ dashes across so SOAP and GAZ are hugging the walls on both sides, and he glances in.

GAZ

Clear right.

PRICE

Hallway clear! Move up.

They move down the corridor and SOAP heads down another flight of stairs, the other two men lingering at the top.

SOAP

Clear right.

PRICE

Stairs clear!

They all rush down.

INT. BRIDGE - NIGHT

One CREWMAN, his life's blood seeping across the floor, grabs onto one of the terminals and hauls himself up, scrabbling for the radio.

INT. FREIGHTER - NIGHT

Bravo Team slowly descends into the bowels of the ship, until, suddenly, as they turn the corner around some machinery:

SOAP
Movement right.

He drops to one knee and shoots a GUARD coming up the corridor. The bullets cut him down and strike pipes on the wall behind him. Steam begins to spray, obscuring the corridor.

SOAP
Tango down.

PRICE
Hallway clear! Bloody hell, let's move. He may still be alive.

They move forward and reach the engine room. The two ENGINEERS are mowed down.

PRICE
Gaz, cut the power.

They all activate their monoculars' night vision as Gaz cuts the power. The team's carbines are fitted with infrared laser sights, projecting beams visible only with night vision.

They head towards the cargo hold in deadly silence. PRICE opens the door, and they all slide through. GAZ is first through and emerges on a catwalk overlooking the cargo hold. Three GUARDS blunder through the darkness. One of them calls out.

SASHA
Viktor, elektrik--

GAZ shoots him, and he collapses unceremoniously to the floor. They head down to the ground floor. A GUARD slinks along the side of a cargo container, his rifle at the ready, his eyes desperately trying to penetrate the gloom. He hears the soft sound of PRICE's boots.

VIKTOR
(whisper)
Sasha?

PRICE shoots him. The SAS methodically move between the shipping containers.

As GAZ moves up, his leather boots can be heard faintly against the metal. A GUARD whips around a corner, pistol in one hand, flashlight in the other. He flips it on, illuminating and momentarily blinding GAZ. A burst from SOAP across the hold drops the guard. He lurches back, his pistol shot going into the ceiling.

The flashlight rolls across the floor and illuminates a badly bruised NIKOLAI, a young man in army fatigues, slumped against a container. He raises his hand against the light, crying out in dismay. SOAP and PRICE run over, still wary.

PRICE
Report - all clear?

SOAP
Roger that. No tangos in sight.

GAZ
Nice shot, mate.

SOAP gives a perfunctory nod. Nothing more need be said about it. PRICE comes up to grab NIKOLAI by the shoulder, and the Russian realizes the voices are in English.

PRICE
It's him.

PRICE puts a finger to his ear.

PRICE
Big Bird, this is Bravo Six. We have the package.

BIG BIRD
Bravo Six, this is Big Bird. We're on our way. Out.

GAZ
Nikolai, are you alright? Can you walk?

They help him up.

NIKOLAI
About time you English showed up!
What kept you?

He grins, and SOAP the Scotsman grumbles under his breath.

SOAP
English?

NIKOLAI

Thank you for getting me out of here.

NIKOLAI takes up the flashlight to find his way.

BIG BIRD

Bravo Six, I've got two bogies heading your way fast. Get the hell outta there.

SOAP

Fast movers. Probably MiGs. We'd better go.

GAZ

When did the Ultrationalists get MiGs?

PRICE

Alright, everyone topside. Double time!

They rush for the exit.

BIG BIRD

Enemy aircraft inbound. Shit! They've--

An enormous EXPLOSION rips open the cargo hold, knocking the entire team to the floor. Orange flames light up the interior.

BIG BIRD

Bravo Six! Come in! Bravo Six, what's your status?

Water is rushing in, flooding the hold with frightening speed. PRICE staggers to his feet and switches off his monocular; the firelight is more than enough illumination.

GAZ

Shit! What the hell happened!?

SOAP

The ship's sinking! We've got to go. Now!

GAZ and SOAP scramble up.

BIG BIRD

Bravo Six, come in, damn it!

PRICE
Big Bird, this is Bravo Six. We're
on our way out.

PRICE yanks the still-dazed NIKOLAI to his feet.

PRICE
On your feet, soldier! We are
leaving!

They flee.

PRICE
Get to the catwalks! Move, move,
move!

GAZ
Move your arses! Come on! Let's go!

They sprint up the stairs to the catwalk. The ship is beginning to pitch sideways. Metal sheeting starts to fall away from the walls. Ahead of them a fresh breach opens, and an icy torrent pours in. SOAP slips.

PRICE
Back on your feet! Let's go!

They race through the waterfall. More sheeting falls away.

SOAP
Watch your head!

The catwalk begins to buckle beneath them.

GAZ
Go, go! Keep moving! It's breakin'
away!

PRICE
Come on, come on!

As they reach the exit, the catwalk breaks apart, and SOAP, the last, must make a flying leap through the door. In the corridor, pipes along the wall begin to fall off.

SOAP
Watch the pipes!

Steam is spraying from the pipes, rivets are popping, the entire ship is falling apart.

BIG BIRD

Talk to me, Bravo Six! Where the hell are you?

PRICE

Stand by! We're almost topside!

They race up stairways, fighting through the water cascading down them. They reach the deck level, and slide down the corridor. It is now at nearly a 45 degree angle; trash and debris fall alongside them.

NIKOLAI

Which way!? Which way to the helicopter?

PRICE

To the right! To the right!

GAZ

We're runnin' outta time! Come on! Let's go!

They get outside, and see the last of the containers rolling off the side of the ship. They run up the empty, rain-slicked deck.

PRICE

Keep moving!

GAZ

Where the hell is he?

Rising over the gunwale is BIG BIRD, backlit by lightning. They all leap aboard. SOAP is last.

GAZ

Soap! Jump for it!

SOAP lands heavily on the edge, legs flailing in the air, and begins to slide off. He scrabbles desperately, but at the last moment PRICE grabs him.

PRICE

Gotcha!

He hauls him in.

PRICE

How'd a muppet like you get past Selection?

He slaps him on the back.

PRICE
We're all aboard! Go!

BIG BIRD
Roger that, we're outta here.
Command, this is Big Bird. Package
secured, returning to base, out.

The men watch as the ship sinks beneath the waves. NIKOLAI, the informant, speaks up.

NIKOLAI
Have the Americans already attacked
Al-Asad?

PRICE
No, their invasion begins in a few
hours. Why?

NIKOLAI
The Americans are making a mistake.
They will never take the man alive.

DISSOLVE TO:

Ankara Air Station, Turkey

INT. CONCRETE BUNKER

An unsettlingly nondescript room, with a single desk and two chairs facing each other. A single lamp hangs from the ceiling. A door swings wide and PRICE and NIKOLAI enter and come to attention towards the business-suited INTELLIGENCE OFFICER in the center of the room.

I-MAN
At ease. Have a seat, Nikolai.

He motions for NIKOLAI to sit in the chair. He does so, and PRICE leans against a wall.

I-MAN
Casualties, Captain Price?

PRICE
None, sir. I dismissed them; they
should be at the mess.

I-MAN
Very well.
(turning to Nikolai)

I-MAN(cont'd)

Sorry it took us so long, Nikolai,
but the Ultrationalists are a
slippery bunch.

He pulls a photo out of the manila folder on the table and
shoves it towards Nikolai. The picture is of a goateed Arab
in a khaki-and-olive military uniform and red beret.

I-MAN

Khaled al-Asad. Currently the
second most powerful man in the
Middle East. He recently staged a
coup in his home country and the US
is gearing up for an invasion.

NIKOLAI

Why should the US care?

I-MAN

Because the previous president,
Yasir Al-Fulani, was one of our
closest allies in the Middle East
and, to put it bluntly, he exported
450,000 barrels of oil a day to the
US. No one knows where Al-Fulani is
now, but Al-Asad has shut down all
shipments to the United States. The
oil must flow.

NIKOLAI

Al-Asad is not stupid, nor is he an
idealist. He knows he cannot stand
up against a full-on American
invasion.

Nikolai pushes the photo back towards the intelligence
officer.

I-MAN

Then why stage the coup? It can't
be for power; he knows we've been
watching him, and we'd be coming
for him the moment he makes his
move. Money? It's certainly
possible, but he is currently one
of the most wanted men in the
world. His face is on every news
channel. If he seeks asylum in some
country, chances are he'll die in a
tragic plane accident.

(nods to Price)

And chances are it'll be this bloke
who's holding the rocket launcher.

Price does not smile; he merely gives the slightest tilt of his head in acknowledgment.

I-MAN

And if he spends the rest of his years hiding in mountain caves bugging goats, what use is his money? What you say is true: the man has not an ounce of ideology in him, and therefore *Al-Asad has no motivation*. His closest friends are the Russian Ultrationalist Party, of which you, until last week, were a member. So tell me... Why is he doing this?

Nikolai thinks as we hear a jet land overhead. Price glances up. Dust falls from cracks in the ceiling.

NIKOLAI

The coup is - I believe you English have an expression - a red herring.

PRICE

To what?

I-MAN

The Yanks will only be there for a short time, enough to see Al-Asad on trial and Al-Fulani president again. They have no intention of an occupation, nor do they need one. It was a coup d'etat. The man on the street *hates* Khaled al-Asad; they want their president back. That's a damned small window of opportunity. Do they think they can topple Moscow in that time?

NIKOLAI

No, it has to be something they can do in a small time span. The Ultrationalists must be planning something specific, something big...

PRICE

How big? 10 megatons big?

I-MAN

Do you seriously think they'll get their hands on a nuke? Jesus...

NIKOLAI

To fire a single missile you need the unlock codes, and only the top commanders know those. It's all but impossible to execute a rogue launch.

PRICE

No need to launch, they could just nick one.

I-MAN

The Russians don't even know where half their nukes are. If one goes missing, there's a damn fine chance no one will notice. Where will they detonate it? London? New York? They could smuggle them in on cargo ships. God, and what's to stop them stealing more than one? Why not five? Ten? *Fifteen?*

The officer trails off, horrified.

PRICE

I think someone needs to make a phone call to US Central Command.

I-MAN

Even if we tell the Americans, they won't call it off. They'll say what's the word of one undercover agent, who had his cover blown, against the suffering of an entire nation.

PRICE

And 450,000 barrels of oil a day.

The officer taps his fingers on the table for a minute.

I-MAN

Hell, the US *will* believe us, they'll wring their hands and say they'll keep their eyes peeled, but they will not stop the landings. People will die, but this will be a short, victorious war for the Americans. There'll be crowd-pleasing fireworks, they'll put a legitimately good man back in the office, and the lads will be back home for Christmas.

I-MAN(cont'd)

(laughs)

The White House would be an idiot to pass it up! The bombs are probably already falling. ...That still leaves us with the question of who's going to stop the Ultrationalists...

He stops, and turns very deliberately to look at Price. Price is not surprised in the least.

PRICE

Where do you want us?

CUT TO:

EXT. ARAB CITY - DAY

Darkness, and then a pair of doors swings open. We are briefly blinded by light. The scene resolves itself, and we see a courtyard full of Arab SOLDIERS armed with a wild variety of weapons. A few GUARD DOGS stand at attention.

A man is dragged out of the doorway by two SOLDIERS. He is YASIR AL-FULANI, a man in his 30s with a thin black goatee and wearing a modest suit. He would be handsome, if he weren't badly beaten. One eye is swollen shut, his clothes are spattered in blood, and by the way the men carry him, it looks like his legs have been broken.

An old, beat-up car is waiting in the street, one door open. Above the buildings on the other side of the street are the spires of a mosque. A Hind helicopter hovers over it, and SOLDIERS are rappelling down.

The soldiers throw Al-Fulani in the backseat. As he struggles upright, one SOLDIER in a red beret slams him in the face with the butt of his AK, knocking him down again. The SOLDIER slams the door shut and hammers the roof of the car: the signal to go. When Al-Fulani sits up, blood is streaming from his nose.

In the driver's seat is a SOLDIER in a balaclava that hides his face. A pistol is shoved into the closed shade flap on the passenger side. Hanging from the rearview mirror on a string is a mushroomed .50 caliber round, the same kind of ammunition used by an M82 sniper rifle...

The passenger turns to look at Al-Fulani with faint contempt, and it is none other than Ultrationalist chairman IMRAN ZAKHAEV. The sleeve of his jacket has been pinned up; he is short an arm, but still very much alive.

He turns away, and the vehicle starts forward through the narrow, medieval streets. For every car they pass, they see the wrecked remains of another, some still on fire, or an army truck. The driver snakes his car through the packed streets. A SQUAD of SOLDIERS dashes past them. ZAKHAEV speaks in untranslated Arabic.

ZAKHAEV

Turn left up here.

He points, and they fall in behind a BMP-2 infantry fighting vehicle, essentially a small tank. They ride through dusty lanes, past burning barrels and palm trees wilting in the midday heat. Zakhaev's cell phone rings, and he answers it.

ZAKHAEV

...We have him. We're bringing him right now...

He turns to appraise Al-Fulani. They drive through a slum, where two SOLDIERS are hammering on the door of a house. As the car passes, one soldier kicks in the door and rushes inside.

ZAKHAEV

...He looks terrible. What did you expect?

Further along, two SOLDIERS have a CIVILIAN on the ground, by the curbside. One is binding the man's hand while the other covers him with his rifle.

Zakhaev hangs up. More CIVILIANS are fleeing through the streets, and another arrest is being carried out at a marketplace. The BMP turns right, the car left.

Al-Fulani, who has finally staunched his nosebleed, speaks in subtitled Arabic.

AL-FULANI

Please, where are you taking me?

He is ignored.

AL-FULANI

Are you Al-Asad's men? Please, I'll make it worth your while. I'm the president! I have money, in an account, in Switzerland! I'll give you all of it, please, just get me out of here. And the Americans! If you help me, the Americans will reward you both. They'll be here soon enough anyway.

The car slows as a CIVILIAN runs across the street in front of them, bullets whizzing past him. He slams into a garbage can, falls, rolls, and is back on his feet, running down a side alley. The car keeps going and falls in behind a flatbed truck with a squad of SOLDIERS.

They part ways with the truck and drive down another street, where a dozen PRISONERS have been placed against the wall. SOLDIERS are throwing them to the ground and tying their hands one by one. Overhead more SOLDIERS rappel down from a helicopter onto the roof of a tenement block. Al-Fulani is staring at Zakhaev.

AL-FULANI

Wait, I recognize you... You're Imran Zakhaev! I thought they had killed you. You - what are you doing in my country?

Ahead, some CIVILIANS are putting up resistance, hiding behind cover and firing with AKs, but they are quickly overrun by a SQUAD of SOLDIERS.

AL-FULANI

This is insanity! I am America's greatest friend in the Middle East; they *will* intervene. Does Al-Asad want to bring the entire US army down on his head?

A BMP-2 disgorging SOLDIERS blocks the road up ahead. Zakhaev points, still without subtitles.

ZAKHAEV

Left up here. Take the alley.

The DRIVER obeys. They head down an alley. A MAN who has been spray-painting Al-Fulani's name on the wall sees them, and sprints away.

AL-FULANI

Did you hear me? The Americans will be here before the week is out!

Zakhaev speaks, finally subtitled.

ZAKHAEV

Indeed they will. Thousands of them.

They pass a yard with a snarling DOG. Ahead, another helicopter flies by.

AL-FULANI

Tens of thousands! What makes you think you'll beat them?

A MAN peeks out from a dumpster, then hastily drops the lid again when he sees the approaching car.

ZAKHAEV

Because we have the will to do what they would not. It is not through force of arms, but through the sovereign will that we shall destroy the West. We will deal them a blow they shall remember forever.

AL-FULANI

You're mad!

They turn out onto a seaside road. Waves crash against the shore, spraying the street. Jet fighters whoosh overhead. There are even more SOLDIERS here.

AL-FULANI

But, but what does my country have to do with yours?

ZAKHAEV

Your country is where I will unveil my... supreme act of will... Yes, that is what it truly is. Would that I could reveal it to you. Only Al-Asad knows, and even he is staggered by it. He is a liar and a hypocrite, but he has his uses.

AL-FULANI

Why are you doing this?

Zakhaev legitimately ponders the question.

ZAKHAEV

I was raised by my uncle. He was at Stalingrad, and fought all the way across Europe to drive the Germans out, and I am glad he died before he saw our Motherland betrayed to the West, saw her turned into a land of corruption, degeneracy, and poverty. I will not be judged by you, you collaborationist pig, not when you have lived the life you have.

He turns to look at him.

ZAKHAEV

Let me tell you of betrayal:
Betrayal is cowardice. Betrayal is
refusing to lead by example.
Betrayal is your leaders letting
the West rape your country while
they drink and whore in their
yachts and penthouses! *That* is why
I do this.

As he speaks, they drive past a wall where an EXECUTION SQUAD
mows down a dozen CIVILIANS. Al-Fulani stares in horror.
ZAKHAEV settles back in his seat.

ZAKHAEV

The West tried to kill me, and as I
lay dying on the pavement, I
realized: They are afraid of me.
They know I have the will to carry
out my mission... Revenge is like a
ghost... It takes over every man it
touches... Its thirst cannot be
quenched until the last man
standing has fallen.

The car swings towards an old seaside fortress, built in some
distant century, but still tall and magnificent. A tank is
parked outside it, and a helicopter is landing nearby. The
nation's flag, a tricolor like France's, save for a pair of
crossed red scimitars in its center, flaps in the sea breeze.

The car reaches the main gate, and stops. A dozen SOLDIERS
are exalting, ululating, and firing their rifles into the
air. One SOLDIER, a red-and-white keffiyeh obscuring all of
his face save his eyes, walks over to open the door. Zakhiev
and Al-Fulani look at each other in the rearview mirror.

ZAKHAEV

The world's men of action will look
in wonder, and ask how it came to
this.

The SOLDIER opens the door and drags AL-FULANI out. We can
hear AL-ASAD's voice bellowing over a speaker in subtitled
Arabic.

AL-ASAD

Today we rise again as one nation,
in the face of betrayal and
corruption!

AL-ASAD(cont'd)

We all trusted this man to deliver our great nation into a new era of prosperity, but like our monarchy before the Revolution, he has been colluding with the West with only self interest at heart! Collusion breeds slavery, and we shall not be enslaved! The time has come to show our true strength. They underestimate our resolve.

The SOLDIER brings his boot down HARD on Al-Fulani's face. He blacks out.

EXT. FORTRESS - DAY

As two SOLDIERS drag a semi-conscious Al-Fulani by the arms through the fortress's empty outer ward, we can still hear Al-Asad's booming voice, and cheering crowds.

AL-ASAD

Let us show that we do not fear them. As one people we shall free our brethren from the yoke of foreign oppression! Our armies are strong and our cause is just. As I speak, our forces are nearing their objectives, by which we will restore the independence of a once great nation. Our noble jihad has begun.

They go down a corridor, and through Al-Fulani's blurred eyes, the courtyard beyond looks like the proverbial light at the end of the tunnel. ZAKHAEV stands there, waiting for him, and the chanting of the SOLDIERS from the balconies has a pulsing rhythm, like a heartbeat. In the center of the courtyard is a single, bloody stake.

ZAKHAEV yanks up Al-Fulani's head, inspecting him, before nodding. The soldiers bind him to the stake.

AL-ASAD

Just as they lay waste to our country, we shall lay waste to theirs.

We finally see AL-ASAD, who has been delivering his speech to a television camera set up in the courtyard. He steps away from the camera to ZAKHAEV, who draws a pistol on him. Al-Asad steps back in alarm, but the Russian flips the pistol in his hand, offering him the grip.

He takes it and walks back into the frame of the camera, holding the pistol up in front of him.

AL-ASAD

This is how it begins.

He turns and walks up to Al-Fulani. Time slows, and we hear the beating of Al-Fulani's heart. Al-Asad's eyes are hidden behind a pair of aviator sunglasses, but he smiles as he cocks the gun and FIRES. The flash of the muzzle and...

CUT TO:

INT. NEWS DESK

From the camera's POV, we see Al-Asad put a bullet in Al-Fulani's head, the entire back of his skull blowing out in an explosion of gore. The image freezes, and compresses to fill a quarter of the screen. An attractive, smartly-dressed NEWS ANCHOR sits at a desk. A crawl runs across the bottom of the screen as she speaks, there is a corporate logo in the corner, and it is as if we are watching any nightly news channel in America.

FEMALE ANCHOR

In less than a day after the televised execution of deposed Arab leader Yasir Al-Fulani, US Marines stationed on high alert in the Persian Gulf were given the order to invade the small but oil-rich nation.

The shocking image of Al-Fulani's execution is replaced by a computer graphic showing helicopters taking off from ships and flying towards a shore.

FEMALE ANCHOR

His successor, Khaled Al-Asad, conducted the shocking execution personally on national television, accusing Al-Fulani of placing foreign interests ahead of those of his countrymen.

The computer graphic expands to fill the entire screen, and it dissolves into what it is actually depicting.

EXT. PORT CITY - EVENING

Dozens of Seahawk and Viper helicopters fly over the wine-dark waters of the Persian Gulf towards the setting sun.

They pass oil platforms rising from the ocean, and a squadron of F-35 jet fighters thunder by, leaving contrails in the darkening sky.

FEMALE ANCHOR (V.O.)

While the exact time and location of the American invasion have been withheld for security reasons, the US Secretary of Defense stated that the forces deployed would be significant and that Al-Asad would not be permitted to further destabilize the region with his military expansionism.

Words appear on screen:

Day 3 - 18:00:04
The Persian Gulf

The seconds are ticking away. The helicopters' radio communications can be heard. Of chief importance are TIGER 2-4, a Seahawk, and DEADLY, a Viper with a female pilot. US MARINES look down as the helicopters race over the waters, ready to provide supporting fire.

COMMAND

All call signs, this is Command. Spotters have a possible fix on Al-Asad at a TV station at the east end of the capital city. 1st Battalion is en route. Force Recon and Wild Weasel units have taken out most of the air defenses but Al-Asad's ground forces still pose a serious threat.

TIGER 2-4

In formation, approaching objective. 30 seconds. Shoreline coming into view.

DEADLY

Copy, Tiger 2-4.

TIGER 2-4

Shoreline in 10 seconds.

DEADLY

Copy.

They swoop over the port. Massive columns of smoke from tire fires rise above the city, and the air is filled with the smoke trails of a dozen RPGs shooting up from wharves and rooftops. We focus in on Tiger 2-4.

I/E. TIGER 2-4 - EVENING

Within are several MARINES, a NAVY CORPSMAN, and the platoon officers, LIEUTENANT VASQUEZ and STAFF SERGEANT GRIGGS. Griggs is a black man of 30, one of the oldest in the chopper, but as fit as any man a decade younger. He has cut-off sleeves and carries an M249 machine gun.

Tiger 2-4 seem to be literally spitting fire from every angle: the nose, the rocket pods, and the Marines in the doorways blazing away with their rifles. Two miniguns, one on either side of the chopper, are roaring and spewing a constant stream of cartridges.

A chorus of Marines are singing "The Ride of the Valkyries"; all of them except Vasquez are crowing, laughing, and jeering at the running soldiers beneath them. They are, quite simply, having the time of their lives.

TIGER 2-4

Taking fire here. RPGs on the rooftops.

DEADLY

Roger that, we've got RPGs down here. Tiger, this is Deadly. We'll take out the big targets. Mop up any troublemakers with the minigun.

They fly over the dusty yellow-gray city. Small arms fire is coming up from the rooftops and palm groves.

GRIGGS

Sir, there's a ton of 'em out there!

LT. VASQUEZ

Shut up and keep 'em pinned down!

GRIGGS

Roger that, *suppressing fire!*

A TECHNICAL, a pickup with a machine gun mounted in the back, rattles along a street below, the MG chattering, but a salvo from Tiger 2-4's minigun rips it apart.

MINIGUNNER
Yeah, get some! Wooh!

Tiger 2-4 swerves to avoid getting hit by a rocket.

TIGER 2-4
Shit that was close!

The Marines are not alarmed; indeed, the near-miss prompts shouts of "Hell yeah!" "Ho-o-o-ly shit, did you see that!?" and similar remarks.

The sheer sound of war hammers down on the viewer: the helicopters' rotors, the miniguns, the rockets, the explosions, the shouts and screams of Al-Asad's men, and the cries and exultations of the Marines, who are behaving as if they're starring in their own personal action movie.

It is a reasonable belief: The American air assaults drives all in a rout before them. The attack on the TV station is only part of a massive assault on the capital city. The skyline is filled with explosions, streams of anti-aircraft fire, and helicopters.

DEADLY
Got a visual on the target.

We see it: a surprisingly modern television station in the middle of the sprawling medieval city. It fronts onto a square, which has at its center an enormous statue of a man in a business suit holding up an AK. Antlike figures are fleeing to the cover of the buildings. A MINIGUNNER slices the statue in half at the knees for fun, and it smashes to pieces as it falls.

TIGER 2-4
Command, this is Tiger 2-4.
Infantry is making a run for it, we
are clear to land, over.

VASQUEZ shouts over his radio as the Seahawk helicopters take up positions around the station.

VASQUEZ
It looks like we're rolling in with
everything we got. We're gonna
secure the perimeter and grab Al-
Asad. We get this bastard, we end
this war right here, right now.
Oorah? Lock and load, Marines!

TIGER 2-4
 Five seconds... Standby for green
 light...

The Seahawks stop to hover in midair. In another helicopter is SERGEANT JACKSON, tall, dark, and gaunt. His SQUAD is with him.

VASQUEZ
 Down the rope! Go, go!

JACKSON
 Go, go, go!

EXT. TV STATION - EVENING

They rappel into the middle of the parking lot behind the television station. Gunfire immediately erupts in the surrounding neighborhood, but Jackson's squad seem to be in a relative calm spot.

JACKSON
 Squad, on me to the target
 building!
 (radio)
 We've got the TV station locked
 down and surrounded, sir!

VASQUEZ
 Good, get in position to breach.

JACKSON
 Left side door breach! Stack up!

They all line up on either side of the door. We can hear Al-Asad's speech from earlier in the film playing inside. Jackson attaches a breaching charge to the door, and steps aside. It explodes the door.

JACKSON
 Breaching! Breaching!

INT. LOBBY

He races in and shoots two dazed MILITIAMEN inside. As the smoke clears, we see they are in a well-appointed lobby in the Western style, like any studio in America.

JACKSON
 Clear! Squad, on me.

They push through corridors, exchanging shots with retreating SOLDIERS and MILITIAMEN. The halls are soon filled with the dust of pulverized plaster and wood. The enemy puts up little resistance, and are soon hightailing it deeper into the studio.

JACKSON

They're pulling back. Stay sharp!
It could be a trap.

The Marines jog down empty hallways until they reach a huge office area. Jackson peeks through the door.

INT. CUBICLE FARM

Dozens of low cubicles are arranged in the center of an enormous room with a blue carpet; a typical white-collar workroom. Doors lead to the offices of more important journalists, and on one wall is an enormous screen projecting a map of the world. There is a second story balcony. Televisions are everywhere, playing Al-Asad's speech.

The men slide inside warily, keeping to one wall.

MARINE #1

Contact! Second floor!

Fighting erupts. We see Al-Asad's MILITIA and SOLDIERS plunging fire down on the Americans, caught in the open.

MARINE #2

Ambush!

The fracas is a confused mess of intersecting tracers, explosions, screams, and shouted commands in Arabic and English. Most of the MARINES are able to stick to the walls, but a few are caught in the middle of the cubicles and hide behind what little cover they can find. The computers at all the desks are blown to pieces in the ensuing gunfight. The balcony's balustrade is made of glass which is soon shattered and comes raining down. A two-story battle is in full swing.

MARINE #3

RPG!

An RPG sails down to explode in the middle of one cubicle cluster. MARINES sprint across the floor, angling for the best firing position at the upper stories. Al-Asad's TROOPS have little cover on the balconies. They had the advantage of surprise, but have since lost it, and the battle is swiftly turning against them.

One MARINE fires a rifle grenade onto the upper storey and sends two HAPLESS MILITIA flying over the balustrade. One was carrying an RPG, and another enterprising MARINE snatches it up and launches a rocket up into the upper story, collapsing part of the balcony. Others follow suit, blasting apart the balcony. Rocket and grenade blasts deafen the ears, and a bank of monitors hanging from the ceiling comes crashing down in an explosion of sparks and broken glass. Papers are fluttering down, thrown into the air by the explosions.

And as quickly as it begins, it ends.

JACKSON
Cease fire, cease fire!

The room is silent save for the sound of settling debris and the groans of injured militiamen. The floor is littered with papers and spent casings. A few broken television monitors spark.

JACKSON
Room clear! Check the bodies. We need a positive ID on Al-Asad.

MARINE #1
Negative ID over here, sir.

MARINE #2
No sign of Al-Asad here, sir.

JACKSON
Then he's on the upper floors.
Move!

They move down a side corridor. JACKSON carefully opens a door, carbine at the ready, and steps through.

INT. LOBBY - SUNSET

The glass front of the main entrance hall reveals the sun is setting outside. The place is quite nice, in fact. The glass front lets the light in, and there are a couple of small trees in planters. The squad follows JACKSON in.

An Abrams tank rumbles past outside.

MARINE #1
There goes our boys.

MARINE #2
Oorah.

MARINE #3

Oorah.

They sweep through the lobby.

GRIGGS (RADIO)

Hold your fire! Friendlies coming out!

A door opens, and out steps SSgt. GRIGGS and a few other men, including a Navy CORPSMAN.

JACKSON

No sign of Al-Asad, sir. Where's the lieutenant?

GRIGGS

Lieutenant Vasquez was hit. I'm in charge.

JACKSON

Shit. Alright, fall in, Marines. Stay frosty.

GRIGGS

(to the men behind him)
Come on. We're not missin' this party.

They head up the stairs, and after passing through a small green room, come out on the roof.

EXT. ROOFTOP - SUNSET

The soldiers move along the rooftop through a maze of ventilation ducts and satellite dishes. They head up another flight of stairs.

GRIGGS

Watch your six, Devil Dog.

Al-Asad's voice is growing steadily louder. They jog across another rooftop. Two F-35 jets roar past overhead.

Finally they reach an entrance. At the end of the corridor is a locked door. Al-Asad's voice is coming from inside, still speechifying.

GRIGGS

I think he's in there. I hear him.

The Marines, 25 or so all told, line up along the corridor, backs against the wall.

JACKSON

Do it.

One MARINE with a shotgun steps forward, shoots out the hinges, and kicks the door open.

INT. NEWS ROOM

The MARINES pour inside. There is a brightly lit news desk and a recording station, but no Al-Asad. A television plays his speech in the middle of the room.

MARINE #1

Clear!

MARINE #2

Clear!

JACKSON

Room clear!

MARINE #2

He's not here.

JACKSON

It's on a loop. The broadcast is a recording.

GRIGGS

Heh. Yeah. Score one for military intelligence.

JACKSON pulls out his sidearm and shoots the television in disgust. Al-Asad's voice can still be heard.

JACKSON

Someone turn that shit off.

GRIGGS

Roger that. I got something better anyway.

GRIGGS saunters into the recording station, and interfaces his iPod with the speakers. Two MARINES smash open a vending machine and start looting it.

Al-Asad's voice cuts and the speakers start blasting Edwin Star's "War". Jackson's squad exchange a few looks and roll their eyes.

GRIGGS
Yeah. Oorah.

Griggs returns to the news desk, grinning from ear to ear.

JACKSON
I never liked that song.

GRIGGS
It's a classic, man!

JACKSON
Being black and all, always seemed to me the answer was "freeing slaves".

GRIGGS
Christ, you must have a picture of Lincoln in your footlocker. Damn Boy Scout.

A MARINE eating chips from the looted vending machine calls over.

MARINE #1
If we're playing 'Nam classics, someone put on "Surfin' Bird".

GRIGGS
What would you know, Private? All you listen to is death metal. Good God, y'all.
(indicating the chips)
Jesus, Roycewicz, we're in the middle of a war zone.

The MARINE drops the chips, smiling, and raises his hands up. GRIGGS puts a finger to his ear.

GRIGGS
Command, this is Red Dog. TV station secure. No sign of Al-Asad. The broadcast is a recording. ... Roger that, Command. Out. Marines! Rally up! We're evacuating the wounded, and then we got a new assignment. Get your gear and get ready to move out!

EXT. CITY - SUNSET

Outside in the streets, sporadic fighting is still going on. Seahawks and tandem-rotor Sea Knights have landed in the parking lot. Marines are piling on board.

GRIGGS, JACKSON, and the rest of his squad stroll out of the TV station. Griggs walks over to a Seahawk, and turns to Jackson.

GRIGGS

Your boys did well in there,
Jackson.

JACKSON

They did their job, sir.

GRIGGS

We've got an advance team pinned
down two clicks north of here.
We're gonna bail 'em out. I'll see
you there.

Griggs boards the Seahawk, and it lifts off.

GRIGGS

(shouting down to him)
Semper fi!

More helicopters lift off. JACKSON's men pile aboard the last Sea Knight in the parking lot, OUTLAW 2-5, and it takes off, a minute or so behind the rest of the group.

COMMAND

Outlaw, be advised, we have a
situation here, over.

OUTLAW 2-5

Go ahead, Command, over.

Outlaw lifts off. It is soon joined on its flank by DEADLY. Streams of antiaircraft fire still shoot up here and there over the city.

COMMAND

SEAL Team Six has located a
possible nuclear device at the
presidential palace to the west.

<p>COMMAND</p> <p>NEST teams are on the way. Until the device is verified safe, all forces are to fall back to the east, over.</p>	<p>MARINE #1</p> <p>Wait, what did he say? ... Oh, <i>shit</i>.</p>
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An RPG comes streaking up to strike DEADLY in the tail rotor just as Command utters 'over.'

DEADLY

We're hit, we're hit! I've lost the
tail rotor!

It struggles along for a few seconds before going into a tail spin over a narrow T - intersection.

DEADLY

Mayday, mayday, this is Deadly,
going in hard. We're going down.

The Viper crashes in the middle of the intersection, clipping a building on the way down. It's impact raises an enormous cloud of dust.

OUTLAW 2-5

We have a Viper down. I repeat, we
have a Viper down.

Outlaw circles over the crash site.

OUTLAW 2-5

Deadly, this is Outlaw Two-Five.
Come in, over!

No response, but we see flashes from within the dust cloud and the rattle of small arms.

OUTLAW 2-5

Command, I have a visual on the
crash site. I see small arms fire
coming from the cockpit. Request
permission to initiate search and
rescue, over.

COMMAND

Copy, 2-5. Be advised you will *not*
be at a safe distance in the event
that nuke goes off. Do you
understand?

OUTLAW 2-5

Roger that. We know what we're
getting into.

COMMAND

Alright, 2-5. It's your call.
Retrieve the pilot if you can. Out.

OUTLAW 2-5

Deadly, do you copy? What's your
status, over?

Outlaw lands in a square near the intersection.

DEADLY

(coughing)

I'm here! Keating is KIA! Hostiles
moving in fast! I could sure use
some help down here!

EXT. CITY - TWILIGHT

The ramp slams down and JACKSON'S SQUAD piles out. The
sergeant's is the first boot to touch the ground. The CREW
CHIEF waves them past.

OUTLAW 2-5

Hold on, we're coming to you.

JACKSON

In and out in 60 seconds, boys!
Grab the pilot! No one gets left
behind!

They race forward, JACKSON at the fore. Two of Al-Asad's
SOLDIERS race out of alleyways in front of him, heading for
the crash site. They hardly notice Jackson until he cuts them
down with his carbine.

COMMAND

Be advised, 2-5, hostiles advancing
parallel southwest of your position
towards the crash site.

Jackson's men swarm around the intersection. Down the other
two streets, hordes of MILITIA and SOLDIERS are firing. Shots
are pinging off the wreck of the helicopter as JACKSON runs
up to DEADLY, who is firing at the enemy with her submachine
gun.

He grabs her and pulls her out of the cockpit.

JACKSON

Back to the LZ! Go!