

ORDERS OF BATTLE

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Gasping.

DAVID HYDE (Early 30s) blood smeared and clad only in a hospital gown, races through the forest.

Panicked, wild eyes look back over his shoulder.

A craft roars high overhead.

INT. BUNKER - LIT

A single bulb illuminates the shelter.

David sits bolts upright, waking from a nightmare.

He glances at the calendar on the wall. The days are all crossed off with a marker pen. After that there's simply a question mark.

INT. BUNKER - LIT

Sounds of cabinets opening and closing. Tins and pots being knocked around.

David snatches the last tin down from the now empty shelves.

INT. BUNKER - NIGHT

David's sat at a small table in the middle of the shelter, spooning the last of some cold beans into his mouth.

He chews thoughtfully, regarding the two way radio in front of him. There's only static - hissing- white noise.

He sighs in frustration.

DAVID  
Come one, somebody.

He clicks through more frequencies. There's only static.

But then...

Electronic, inhuman conversation - ALIEN sounds.

He shuts the power off, terrified.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

David checks a snare trap. It's empty.

He's in camouflage fatigues and looks like he hasn't bathed or washed in a long time.

DAVID  
God dammit.

He leaves the trap.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

A toy robot, half buried by leaves. It's full of scorch marks and the head's been partly melted.

Worn out boots stop beside it. A dirty hand reaches down, picking it up.

David studies the toy.

He gives weak smile.

DAVID  
Hey little buddy. How did you get out here?

He looks around. Only the sound of birds and wind rustled leaves answer him.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
Must've been a hell of a blast to launch you this far.

He regards the un-melted side of the face.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
I hear you. Been a rough time for me too. We better get going, buddy.

INT. BUNKER - LIT

The robot stands on the counter beside empty tins.

David is at the table scraping the bottom of the containers for the last scraps of food.

He's becoming increasingly frustrated as he licks pitiful amounts of food off the tip of a dirty spoon.

He jumps up, throwing the spoon aside.

DAVID  
God dammit!

He kicks the chair over.

The robot bears unflinching witness to his meltdown.

He collapses to the ground.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
(Dejected) What's the point?

INT. BUNKER - LIT

David holds a pistol to the side of his head. The hammer's cocked. He pulls the trigger...

CLICK.

He grins at the robot.

DAVID  
Always been OCD. Wouldn't want to screw something up as simple as this.

He presses a single cartridge into the magazine, inserts it and racks the slide.

He presses the muzzle to his temple.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
Okay.

His finger curls around the trigger, beginning to tighten. His eyes close and he whispers what might be a prayer under his breath.

Suddenly, the radio blares, scaring the crap out of him.

The weapon drops from his fingers.

AMY (O.S.)  
Hello? Is anyone there?

David scrambles for the mic. He grabs the coiled line, pulling the transmitter up.

DAVID  
Hello, can you hear me?

INT. BUNKER - LIT

David's crouched forward, talking into the mic.

DAVID  
(Holding back tears)  
They experimented on me.

AMY (O.S.)  
The aliens?

DAVID  
Yeah, they had me in some kind of hospital. But there were people helping them. I waited for my chance. There was a guard, fat, lazy. I knew I could get the drop on him. I bashed that traitor's brains in, took his weapon and just ran.

AMY (O.S.)  
Jesus!

DAVID  
Been laying low ever since. Things aren't looking so good, to be honest.

AMY (O.S.)  
You're not thinking of giving up?

David's eyes flit towards the discarded gun.

AMY (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
What's your name?

DAVID  
David.

AMY (O.S.)  
Well, listen to me David. You can't lose hope.

DAVID  
I need food, real bad.

AMY (O.S.)  
So, you scavenge. There'll be a lot of food lying around the city.

DAVID

I won't go back there. You don't know what its like being a lab rat.

AMY (O.S.)

You have to survive. You're part of the resistance now.

DAVID

A resistance? You don't understand what you're up against. I've been a soldier. I know what war is. This isn't a war, it's annihilation.

AMY (O.S.)

We have a weapon, David.

DAVID

What?

AMY

I work in a government laboratory, deep underground. We're readying a prototype laser cannon right now. Our boys are going to blow holes through these things.

David sits up straight.

AMY (CONT'D)

When we do we'll need you to have your shit together. Time for you to be a soldier again.

David's chest swells with pride.

DAVID

I won't let you down.

AMY (O.S.)

I can't say anything more for the moment. Standby for another transmission at 0800.

DAVID

Before you go.

AMY (O.S.)

Yes?

DAVID

What's your name?

WOMAN

Amy.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

An exhausted David collapses back against a tree, sliding down the trunk. It takes him some moments to get his breath back.

When he does he checks his backpack. It's crammed with looted supplies, cans, bottles and various food packs.

Voices just behind startle him. He jumps to his feet and hurries away.

INT. BUNKER - LIT

David covers the ceiling hatch with his pistol.

The robot watches everything.

Footsteps close in all around.

David holds his breath, listening, waiting. We hear guttural, alien voices.

Then suddenly a human one, a man's.

HUMAN (O.S.)

He came this way.

David's pistol arm trembles.

HUMAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)

God damn it. Where did he go?

More harsh alien language. Then, to David's intense relief, the boots start to move away.

INT. BUNKER - LIT

David is sitting against the wall, radio in hand. The table is full of tins and supplies.

DAVID

I got seen today.

AMY (O.S.)

What happened?

DAVID

I broke into a house on the outskirts of town. But there were people there. How?

AMY (O.S.)

Collaborators.

DAVID

They almost caught me.

AMY (O.S.)

But they didn't. You have skills, David. We're going to need those very soon.

DAVID

When do I get to meet you?

AMY (O.S.)

Soon. But for now, why don't you tell me about yourself? How long were you a soldier?

DAVID

Twelve years. Four tours in the sandbox. Some called it hell, but it made sense to me. Not the same with civilian life. Here I can't even hold down a job.

AMY (O.S.)

I'm sorry.

DAVID

When you're over there you feel like what you do matters. Your pals count on you with their lives... You rotate back here and you're shit. You don't matter to anyone. No one knows you. No one understands.

AMY (O.S.)

But now you have your purpose again.

DAVID

Yeah.

He gives a soft laugh.

AMY (O.S.)

What's funny?

DAVID

Folks laughed at me when I built this shelter, said I was crazy. Where are they now? All dead.

AMY (O.S.)

And you're alive. I want you to stay that way. You hear me?

DAVID

Yeah.

AMY (O.S.)

You're a soldier, David. You know what orders of battle are, right?

DAVID

Of course.

AMY (O.S.)

Well, yours are to stay alive, stay hidden and when it's time, join in the big battle. We'll be counting on you. Until 0800.

EXT. FOREST - RIVER - DAY

David crouches by the river, filling canteens with fresh water.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

David, the canteens slung over his shoulder, marches back towards his bunker.

As he reaches the clearing, he sees a figure dead ahead, wearing a hunter's cap and an orange vest. The man carries a rifle slung over one shoulder.

The HUNTER's checking the area carefully.

He taps a boot against the bunker's camouflaged air vent.

David darts behind a tree, watching closely.

The man crouches down, running an eye over the ground. He goes down onto his knees, reaching out for something. He knocks away leaves and grass to reveal the metal entrance hatch to the bunker.

He grabs a walkie talkie.

HUNTER  
Hey guys. I think I found  
something.

David sprints from cover.

The Hunter starts to lift the hatch. Too late, he sees David coming at him.

HUNTER (CONT'D)  
What the-

He turns.

A boot across his jaw knocks him unconscious.

INT. BUNKER - LIT

Water splashes across the Hunter's face. He gives a groan as eyelids flicker open.

David's glaring at him.

HUNTER  
Where am I? What the hell's going  
on?

His captor shoves the pistol to his head.

DAVID  
I ask the questions! Are they with  
you?

HUNTER  
Who?

David cocks the weapon.

DAVID  
Don't mess with me. The aliens.

HUNTER  
I don't know what you're talking  
about! Please!

David strikes him across the head with the weapon.

DAVID  
You're a traitor, a collaborator.  
Look at you! Fat. Eating like a  
king while the rest of us scurry  
around like rats. I should end you  
right now.

He fingers tightens around the trigger.

HUNTER

Please. I'll tell you anything you want to know, just don't do this! I have kids. A wife.

DAVID

How long have you been working for them?

HUNTER

Them?

DAVID

(Shouting)

The aliens. Don't make me say it again. Are they with you?

The captive swallows nervously.

HUNTER

No.

The radio crackles.

AMY (O.S.)

David?

David grabs the mic.

DAVID

Amy? I got one. I caught a collaborator. I'm interrogating him now.

The Hunter watches in disbelief. David's talking on a CB radio with a frayed wire and broken power supply. There's no one at the other end.

Then he notices the can of "Amy's chicken soup" on the ground, just by his captor's boot.

A robot toy, in perfect condition, stands guard, watching him.

Eyes bulging with terror, the man begins working the rope binding his hands behind his back.

DAVID (CONT'D)

(Into the mic) Don't worry I'm gonna get all the information out of him I can. I'll report back later.

David sets down the mic and sits across from the Hunter. He lays the pistol on the table.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
You're going to tell me everything  
you know about the aliens' plans,  
their positions and troop  
strengths.

The Hunter's lip trembles. Or I'm going to kill you.

HUNTER  
I...

A ringtone sounds, shattering the tension.

David snatches the cell phone out of his captive's shirt pocket.

The screen displays "Pumpkin".

DAVID  
Pumpkin? Is that a code word?

HUNTER  
My daughter.

DAVID  
Talk.

David holds the phone to the man's ear.

HUNTER  
Hey, Pumpkin.

PUMPKIN (O.S.)  
Dad, you're late, we have dinner  
out. When are you coming home?

David's eyes narrow, confused, suspicious.

HUNTER  
I don't know. I got some car  
trouble.

PUMPKIN  
We were worried, you being out  
there. Mom said you were closing in  
on that guy. Did you find him?

The man's eyes flit towards David.

HUNTER  
No, baby.

PUMPKIN

I'm glad. The news said he's real dangerous. Mom says you shouldn't have volunteered to help with the police hunt in the first place. What that guy did at...

HUNTER

(Cutting her short)  
I'll be back as soon as I can, okay? Tell your Mom not to worry.

PUMPKIN (O.S.)

Okay. Get that car fixed.

HUNTER

I'm on it. I love you. And I lo-

David cuts the call.

DAVID

Your psy-ops are something else. I almost believed you.

HUNTER

That was my daughter. Look, just let me go. I won't tell anyone you're here, I swear.

DAVID

Do you think I'm an idiot? Cell towers and communication were all knocked out by the EMP.

HUNTER

EMP?

DAVID

Electromagnetic pulse. Don't play dumb. The only way that phone of yours could work is if you're using the aliens' technology.

David freezes. Suddenly, he can hear something.

Then we too make out the voices above us. Boots are closing in.

David drops his pistol and instead grabs the man's rifle. He aims it at the hatch.

HUNTER

What are you doing?

DAVID  
(Whispers) Shut up. Make a sound  
I'll kill you.

HUNTER  
Those aren't aliens out there.  
They're regular people, like you  
and me.

Behind his back, he's working the ropes loose.

DAVID  
If they're people, then they're  
collaborators.

The captive continues to work the ropes. They're coming  
loose.

A voice above.

VOICE (O.S.)  
Wait.

David turns to listen.

The Hunter pulls a hand free and snatches the pistol off the  
table.

VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Signal's coming from here.

The man just makes it back into his seat as David turns  
furious eyes on him. The captive hides the weapon behind him.

DAVID  
You led them right here.

HUNTER  
My phone's GPS. It's the way our  
team keeps track of each other.

David aims the rifle at him.

DAVID  
You'll die first.

The Hunter springs from the chair and lunges towards his  
captor, knocking the rifle out of David's hands.

The two men go down and a struggle for the pistol ensues.  
They fight for some moments before a gun shot is heard. The  
Hunter stiffen then goes still, glassy eyes stare above,  
unseeing.

David pushes him away. The dead man still clutches the pistol.

The hatch above opens.

David picks the rifle back up and takes aim.

DAVD  
(Whispering)  
Filthy collaborators.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Rifle shots fill the air, several weapons being fired all at once.

Then silence.

FADE OUT: