

RAMU

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INT. A DARK DEN. U.S. HOME -- DAY

FADE IN.

An old room filled with the memorabilia of decades past. There is a photograph of (a young) MARY standing next to TOM COLE in the jungle (Cole has a large spider in his hand), there are books everywhere, old wood carvings from the Pacific regions, spears, Hagen axes, and so on.

A puff of smoke drifts into frame. Camera seeks the smoker and finds the back of his head. He is an OLD MAN - perhaps he has ears that protrude - while the pipe he smokes protrudes past the nearest ear.

The only sound is the scratch of a fountain pen on paper. The Old Man has written the heading "RAMU" in a ledger-sized manuscript. He is well into the second paragraph by the time the page is revealed. As this is happening...

OLD MAN (V.O.)

How do you measure a wasted life? How do you measure nights without end...

INT. BEDROOM -- NIGHT

In poor light the Old Man tosses and turns, asleep, sweating.

OLD MAN (V.O.)

...nights filled with phantoms, and the nagging thought...Did I dream, or were those terrible things in my waking mind?

EXT. STREET -- DAY

A grey, overcast day. The Old Man, dressed in black, hobbles on crutches (his missing leg is not yet revealed). TWO YOUNG BOYS, one chasing the other, rush past him. He stumbles and falls against a parked car. He struggles to regain his balance.

OLD MAN (V.O.)

How do you measure all the small slights against dignity? All the times you felt other's eyes upon you, and a creeping shame inside your heart.

BACK TO:

The Old Man writes.

His hand pauses and leaves frame. It re-enters carrying old G.I. dogtags, and places them on the page. He begins to write once more.

OLD MAN (V.O.)

How do you measure bitterness? Is it by the foul cup you must daily swallow? Do you just curse the bad luck that was your life and move on, forgiving and forgetting? Or do you carry it every moment, like an unbearable burden you can never put down?...How did I come to this? Until now, all these years, I thought someone might listen, it was a delusion that kept me sane. But now, I feel life leaving my body, now, I have no choice but to tell my tale any way I can.

CROSSFADE TO:

A map of New Guinea. We are in a SLOW ZOOM to the highland regions of the Ramu River.

OLD MAN (V.O.)

My story...begins at the Ramu.

CROSSFADE TO:

EXT. AERIAL OVER JUNGLE -- DAY

No sound. Racing low over a river at high speed.

OLD MAN (V.O.)

The Ramu is the region of a mighty river flowing from the New Guinea highlands.

Fade up to the roar of a prop plane's engines.

EXT. AERIAL OVER JUNGLE -- DAY

ROYCE PALMER flies a US twin-engine Lightning. He pulls back on the joystick and the plane climbs. He levels off. He is thoughtful. He pulls back the canopy, takes off his wedding ring and drops it at his feet. He looks at something on the control

panel. It is a photograph of him and his teenage son, HARRY, arm in arm. Along with the photograph hangs Royce's dogtags.

EXT. JUNGLE -- DAY

Seen from the ground the plane flies by. A parachute billows behind it. As the plane continues from view the parachute floats slowly down.

EXT. A VILLAGE -- DAY

NATIVES go about their daily chores. Suddenly Royce crashes heavily to the ground in their midst. The Natives retreat in fear. As his chute comes down around him, ROYCE does not move. He has a large first aid-kit strapped to his chest.

As he lies unconscious fierce looking WARRIORS appear above him.

EXT. JUNGLE. PLANE SITE -- DAY

PLANE WRECK POV: SIX NATIVE HUNTERS move through the jungle. They halt as they see something. They approach cautiously.

OLD MAN (V.O.)

In 1952 drought had come to New Guinea. Many of the tribes were close to starvation. Six men from the village of Keneobatu, not far from the white settlement of Madang, had ventured deep into the Ramu. This was unusual. It was a taboo area. Hunger, unfortunately, does not pay homage to tradition.

The Hunters stop, startled as they see something. They have discovered the torn fuselage of Royce Palmer's plane. It is entangled in undergrowth, there for a number of years. They approach cautiously.

HUNTER 1 (Kila's father) climbs up onto what is left of a wing in order to look into the canopy.

Hunter 1 looks inside. The cockpit is empty. As he looks, Hunter 1 frowns, discovering something. Hunter 1 withdraws his hand from the cockpit, holding dogtags.

Hunter 1 gets down and Hunters 2-6 gather and look at the dogtags.

OLD MAN (V.O.)

It was then, that something more horrible than can be imagined came upon those poor souls.

A shadow falls over the men. They look round and up. Terror comes to their eyes.

SPECIAL FX: SOMETHING BIG gets among them - it is fast, black, and reptilian. It rips them limb from limb, decimating them. Hunter 1 is swept from frame. His body, lower half missing, is immediately dumped on the ground. As his vacant eyes stare, the carnage around him can be heard.

EXT. KILA'S VILLAGE -- DAY

KILA (Keela) is fourteen years old. He sits on the steps to a hut and pensively twirls a blade of grass. He watches his mother as she prepares a fire. She has a PICCANINNY in a bilum bag on her back. Kila stands.

KILA

(subtitled)

Muma, I am going to see if I can find papa.

KILA'S MOTHER gives him a stern glance, but ignores him.

I am going now, Muma.

KILA'S MOTHER

(subtitled)

No.

Kila stands.

KILA

Muma, I am going.

He begins to walk away.

KILA'S MOTHER

You are not going anywhere!

He keeps walking.

KILA'S MOTHER

Come back here, Kila! Do not walk away
from me when I am talking to you! Kila!

KILA

(still walking)

You forget I am a man now. I have taken my
vows and been cut. You cannot talk to me
like a child. You have Keeta now, he is
your piccaninny now!

KILA'S MOTHER

Kila! Kila!

He breaks into a run. Knowing she cannot stop him, Kila's Mother
goes back to her fire, muttering angrily as she breaks sticks to
fuel the flames.

EXT. RAMU VALLEY VIEW. JUNGLE. DUSK.

Kila makes his way though the jungle.

OLD MAN (V.O.)

The Ramu was some twenty five miles from
his village, and Kila had never traveled
so far on his own before.

Kila arrives at a ridge. He pulls aside some shrubbery.

But at last he found the valley.

He looks down on an impressive valley, the Ramu River running
through it.

EXT. JUNGLE, TREE -- NIGHT

Kila attempts to sleep in a tree. He lifts his head and looks out
over the jungle.

KILA

Papa!

He listens. The jungle is silent. He rests his head back and
tries to sleep.

SUGGESTED END TO OPENING CREDITS.

EXT. JUNGLE, TREE -- MORNING

Kila sleeps in the tree. The head of a large BOA CONSTRICTOR comes slowly down into frame. The snake begins to coil around him. At first, in his sleep, Kila grins and embraces the smooth body as if drawing up a blanket. But he wakes suddenly in fright, just in time to wiggle free and fall to the ground.

EXT. JUNGLE -- MORNING

Kila hits the ground hard but is instantly up and running.

EXT. JUNGLE -- MORNING

Kila runs in a blind panic. He suddenly bursts through a clearing only to find there is no ground beneath his feet. His eyes grow wide and he screams as he falls.

EXT. JUNGLE, CLIFF/RAMU RIVER -- MORNING

Kila falls a long way down and crashes into the water.

UNDERWATER. RAMU RIVER -- MORNING

Kila penetrates the water, rapidly sinking deeper, motionless, stunned. Finally he responds and hurries toward the surface.

EXT. RIVER -- DAY

Kila surfaces, gasping. After a moment to recover from the shock he attempts to get his bearings.

SFX: a splash.

Kila looks round at the sound.

THREE BIG CROCS propel into the water from the bank. Kila searches for and quickly picks up the first Croc, coming toward him.

Kila looks to the nearest bank and sees no Crocs, he puts his head down and swims hard.

EXT. RIVER -- DAY

As Kila swims, the Crocs gain on him. Will he make it in time?

Just when it seems the lead Croc will get him Kila finds his feet in the shallows and runs from the water.

EXT. JUNGLE -- DAY

Kila runs into a clearing. He dances around in circles, having a bad case of the hebbie-jeebies. He finally settles down.

KILA
(subtitled)
Gutplea monin.

SUPER TRANSLATION: Good morning.

He shudders and smiles, glad to be alive.

EXT. JUNGLE. TREE.

STOCK FOOTAGE. A strange species of Bird of Paradise shimmers and performs rapid 360 degree turns on a branch.

SOUND CONTINUOUS into the next scene.

EXT. JUNGLE -- DAY

Kila walks through the jungle, looking up at the canopy for the bird high above. He is intimidated by his surroundings.

As he walks his eyes come down to the ground. He halts, seeing something.

Kila kneels.

There is a human footprint on a bare patch of earth.

Kila's finger traces the outline of the print.

Kila looks up, hope in his heart. He moves from frame.

EXT. JUNGLE -- DAY

Kila jogs now, calling for his father. MUSIC BUILDS TO CLIMAX.

Kila halts. A look of horror comes to his face.

EXT. JUNGLE. PLANE SITE -- DAY

The jungle is darker, but this is the same region as seen earlier. In the foreground there is the downed fighter plane. In the distance there is Kila.

Flies buzz menacingly.

Camera discovers the source of the sound. The remains of Kila's father rotting nearby.

Kila's father has the lower portion of his body missing.

Kila moves slowly through frame, a look of growing anguish on his face.

He kneels beside his father.

EXT. JUNGLE -- DAY

Silent tears stream down Kila's face. He shakes his head, beginning to weep more fully. Kila's Father's face has an expression of terror upon it. Kila touches his father's face. His father's hand, still clenched near his face, holds the dogtags. Kila takes the dogtags.

LOW ANGLE: Kila cries now more fully. As he cries, however, SOMETHING ENORMOUS AND BLACK is directly behind and above him, filling the background. It has moved slightly.

SFX: a big animal's snort.

Kila freezes. He has heard the snort all too clearly.

He turns and immediately throws himself in terror past his father. On his backside on the ground he can only look in wide-eyed horror at the monster above him.

The remains of Kila's Father is dragged rapidly out of shot.

On Kila's horrified face as the sound of crunching bones can be heard.

Kila runs.

EXT. JUNGLE -- DAY

Kila runs frantically through the jungle, sometimes looking back. He stumbles and falls, gets up quickly, forces himself on.

INT. MADANG SETTLEMENT -- DAY

Kila relates his story to GODSON, the local Patrol Officer. As he tells his story, he hands Godson the dogtags. Godson looks them over carefully.

ECU dogtags in Godson's hand...

CROSSFADE TO:

EXT. RIVER BOAT -- DAY

Matching: the dogtags held in Palmer's hand.

Matching: the rear of a man's head. It is the Old Man's Head viewed from the rear as before and replete with pipe, but now much younger.

SUPER: 1953.

There is the chugging sound of a riverboat motor.

Palmer looks round at the jungle, his face finally revealed.

MARY (O.S.)

Oh look, there's the settlement.

Palmer looks round.

MARY, his attractive wife, sits beside him. She points ahead.

Two blasts of the boat's whistle.

EXT. MADANG JETTY -- DAY

Godson's khaki socks cut through frame and his legs move onto the jetty. The river boat is approaching the dock.

Excited NATIVES gather. The boat's arrival is a big event.

EXT. MADANG JETTY -- DAY

Godson extends a hand and helps Palmer onto the jetty.

GODSON

Hello, there. John Godson. Good to finally meet you, Mister Palmer.

PALMER

Yes, hello, same here. Please, call me Harry.

They shake hands but realize quickly they must help Mary. Both lend a hand pulling her up onto the jetty.

PALMER

And this is my wife, Mary.

GODSON

Really?! Well this is a surprise. My wife will be thrilled. Come up to the house and we'll have some pink lemonade.

PALMER

Oh, the bags.

Godson is already guiding Mary up the jetty.

GODSON

Oh, the boys will bring them.

Palmer hurries after them.

INT. GODSON RESIDENCE, SITTING ROOM -- DAY

Close on a big, snotty-nosed BABY with a contemptuous look on its face.

Mary grins perfunctorily, nursing a pink lemonade.

MARY

He's a beautiful baby.

MRS. GODSON

She.

Mary looks astonished, but rallies.

MARY

Oh, I thought because he was, I mean, she
was dressed in blue...

Her voice trails off. MRS. GODSON, a stern, middle-aged woman,
appears displeased. Mary looks in discomfort toward the next
room.

Palmer is there, talking to Godson.

INT. GODSON RESIDENCE, OFFICE - DAY

Indicating the general area on a map.

GODSON

Well, as I mentioned in my letters the
Ramu is not a safe area. I don't want to
alarm you but Ramu means 'valley of
death'. Even the natives avoid it. Taboo.
Lot of disease. Hope you brought plenty of
Atebrin and quinine.

PALMER

Yes. Ah, this taboo, is it to do with the
monster crocodile that ate those men?

GODSON

Oh, hardly think it's a monster. Most
likely no bigger than fifteen feet. You
have to remember the boy who found the
dogtags was exaggerating of course,
obviously about the deaths of the hunters
as well. I've sent for him. Should be here
soon.

PALMER

The boy?

Godson nods.

Well, will he take us to the Ramu?

GODSON

Oh, I'm sorry I can't go with you.

PALMER

No, I meant, Mary and me.

GODSON (Shocked)

You're taking your wife?

PALMER

Yes.

GODSON (smiling politely)

Ah, I don't think you quite realize how dangerous and difficult the terrain is up there. You are aware that head-hunting is still common in the highlands?

This is news to Palmer.

Godson hands him a NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC. The heading is 'The Head-Hunters of New Guinea'. There is a cover picture of a fierce looking New Guinea highlander with a bone through his nose.

GODSON (OS)

Just last week received news that two German missionaries got themselves eaten up near Winepee. (Points to it on a map) Got to go up and investigate next week.

PALMER

Do you think it's true?

GODSON

Of course. Didn't like that couple anyway. Lutherans.

Kila is brought to the outside door by the HOUSEBOY.

Ah, Kila.

He jerks his head to make the boy enter the room.

GODSON

Em Bos Palmer. En pikinini bilong man i bin stap insait long balus long Ramu.

SUBTITLES (if required): Kila, this is Mr. Palmer. He's the son of the man in the plane at the Ramu.

Palmer comes forward and extends his hand.

PALMER
Pleased to meet you.

Godson makes a discouraging sound and shakes his head. Palmer lowers his hand. Kila has made no attempt to take it.

PALMER (to Godson)
Does he speak English?

GODSON
Pidgin. Just ask a question, I'll translate.

PALMER
Would he take me to my father's plane?

GODSON
Inap bai kisim em go long balus we yu bin kisim doktek?

SUBTITLES: Will you take this boss to the plane where you got the dogtags?

KILA (scared)
Nogat, Bos, plis. bikpela pukpuk i stap long hap. Mi les long go bek gen long hap.

SUBTITLES: No, boss, please. The big crocodile is there. I don't want to go there again.

GODSON
He says, no, he's too scared.

PALMER
Well, will he at least take me close to it?

GODSON
Inap bai yu kisim em go clostu tasol.

SUBTITLES: Will you take him near the area?

KILA
Bai mi kisim em go arere long long maunten tasol. Man ya mas longlon g ya.

SUBTITLES: Only to the beginning of the valley. This boss must be crazy.

GODSON

He said he will take you to the Ramu Valley but after that you're on your own. He also added you must be insane.

Mary has come to the doorway adjoining the room, and is listening.

I can tell you this, Harry, none of the boys will go anywhere near the Ramu unless you have a croc hunter along.

PALMER

Well, do you know any good ones?

GODSON

What? (snorts a laugh) I didn't mean you should actually seek out a hunter. In fact I meant the opposite. Believe me, croc hunters are a strange breed.

MARY

Meaning?

Godson is surprised to see her joining their conversation.

GODSON

They go barefoot. Sleep on the ground. Stink worse than the crocs. In town they're drunk for weeks, then one day they're gone again. In short, I'd rather trust a crocodile (looking at Mary) ...and that's without the complication of a pretty woman.

MARY

I can take care of myself, Mr. Godson.

Godson grins dismissively and looks away.

PALMER

So there's no one you can recommend?

GODSON

Well...there is one man. He's the best.
But he's retired. He has a plantation not
far down the coast.

(CONTINUES IN V.O.)

CROSSFADE TO:

EXT. COLE PLANTATION -- DAY

Following an OLD 1940's CAR along a dirt road through lines of
coconut palms. As the car passes we hold on some trees and see
they are being harvested by NATIVE WORKERS.

GODSON (V.O. Continuous)

But I must warn you. He won't be happy to
see you, and I doubt he will agree to
come.

EXT. COLE PLANTATION -- DAY

The car nears the house; a magnificent colonial style building
surrounded by beautiful lawns and gardens. MEG COLE is in the
garden as the car pulls up.

GODSON

Hello, there.

MEG

John! How lovely.

Godson gets out and kisses her on the cheek.

GODSON

Yes, good to see you too.

MEG

Well it's nice to see you putting on a few
pounds, you used to be so skinny.

GODSON

Oh, I'll work if off soon. Heading up to
Winepee.

MEG

Oh yes, those silly Lutherans. Who'd've thought natives would eat sour kraut.

Godson laughs and looks round at the Palmers alighting from the car.

GODSON

Oh, Meg, these are the Palmers. This is Harry and this is Mary.

MEG

Oh dear, you poor girl, (to Godson) I suppose you haven't told her yet.

Godson shakes his head.

MEG

You see, dear, you must never be called Mary. All the house girls are called Meri. If the blacks hear you called that they think you're no better than they are. My name's Mary, but I'm called Meg now.

MARY

Well, I hope we're not here so long it matters.

MEG

Oh, American? How nice. Never met a lady American before. Always been curious.

MARY

Oh, why's that?

MEG

Well the men are all such sex maniacs. I figure the women must either be totally frigid or bloody good in bed. (To Palmer) Which one is she?

PALMER

Oh...She's a Lutheran.

Meg is taken slightly aback then bursts into a raucous laugh.

GODSON

Where's Tom?

MEG

Oh, saw him round back somewhere. Why don't you go round him up and I'll meet you in the lounge with these lovely people.

GODSON

Right you are.

Godson departs. Meg takes Mary's arm and leads her toward the house.

MEG (confidentially)

Thank God he didn't bring that wife of his. Can't stand that woman.

She has glanced around and caught sight of Kila standing just out of the car.

MWG

Oh dear, do you know you have a boy in your car?

PALMER (nonplused)

Yes.

MEG

Oh.

Meg attempts to make light of it and pulls Mary on.

INT. LOUNGE. COLE HOMESTEAD -- DAY

A MERI (house girl servant) wearing a sarong, serves the Palmers gin and tonics. Meg already has hers. Palmer smokes his pipe.

MEG

Hope you don't mind gin and tonic. It's all we drink up here. Indian tonic is full of quinine, you see. Good for the malaria.

MARY

Oh no, it's fine, it's my drink.

MEG

Oh well, you'll fit right in. Let's get pissed.

Mary sprays some of her drink and bursts out laughing. The happy moment is broken by the darkness of the expression on TOM COLE'S face as he sweeps into the room, Godson in tow. He nods a curt hello to the couple. Palmer half stands to offer his hand.

PALMER

Oh...

COLE

No, please.

Cole waves him dismissively back down.

COLE

You won't be staying. John just told me. Damned stupid thing. Why don't you just let the man rest in peace?

PALMER

Well...We don't know for sure he's dead.

COLE

'Course he's dead. After what, eight years? Don't be stupid.

Palmer is taken aback, but musters conviction.

PALMER

Well while there's any hope we must look.

COLE

He was a warrior. His coffin is his plane. Let him be. He died as he lived.

MARY

Mr. Cole, with or without you we are going into the Ramu, either to find Royce Palmer or bring back his remains.

Cole's eyebrow goes up and he looks at Godson.

COLE

(Jerking his head toward Mary)
Gets better.

Meg gets up.

MEG

You'll excuse me. I can see this is going
to get embarrassing so I'll toddle off.
(Grinning to Mary) I'm a terrible coward
that way.

Kila is standing just outside the door on the verandah.

MEG

Oh. Inside, you.

COLE

Who's this?

MEG (leaning back in)

Someone else for you to terrorize,
darling.

She departs.

GODSON

This is Kila Rono. He's the boy who found
the dogtags.

COLE

Come here, you!

Scared, Kila crosses to him.

COLE

Yu save long mi?

SUBTITLES: You know who I am?

Kila nods.

COLE

Yu save yu nonap long paolim mi. Mi inap long lukluklong skin bilong yu inap I go long bun bilong yu. Mi save lukluk olsem pukpuk I save lukluk. Nau yu mas tokim mi stret. I bin gat pukpuk?

SUBTITLES: Well then you know not to bullshit me. I see straight through you into your bones. I see like the crocodile. Now you better tell me the truth...Was there a croc?

Kila nods.

COLE

Noken giamanim mi. Yu giamanim mi, bai mi silip kam long bel bilong mi long nait na katim nek bilong yu...I bin gat pukpuk?

SUBTITLES: Don't lie to me. You lie to me, I'll come on my belly through the night and cut your throat...Was there a croc?

Kila nods, scared.

COLE

Em bin kilim papa bilong yu?

SUBTITLES: Did he kill your father?

Kila nods.

COLE

Em bin kilim papa bilong yu na narapela fourpela man?

SUBTITLES: Did he kill your father and four other men?

Kila nods.

COLE

Em bin?

SUBTITLES: Did he?

Kila nods.

COLE

Pukpuk ya I bikpela olsem wanem?

SUBTITLES: How big was this croc?

KILA
Faivpela ten fit.

SUBTITLES: Fifty feet.

Cole slaps him angrily to the floor.

PALMER (jumping to his feet)
Mr. Cole, I protest!

Cole is pointing at Palmer but looking at Kila.

COLE
Stay out of it, you. (To Kila) Get up. Get up!

Kila gets up. An enormous razor-sharp knife appears in Cole's hand. Mary gasps.

COLE
Mi save les long ol giaman lain. Bai mi askim yu wanpela moa taim. Na sapos yu giamanim mi, bai mi save, bikos mi inap long lukim tingting bilong yu long tupela ai bilong yu. Bai mi skinim yu ya, na lusim yu long san...Longpela olsem wanem?

SUBTITLES: I don't like liars. I am going to ask you once more, and if you lie, I will know, because I see your soul straight through your eyes. I will skin you alive, and leave you in the sun...How long?

Kila is terrified, but knows he must answer.

KILA
Bos, faivpela ten fit.

SUBTITLES: Boss, it was fifty feet.

Cole grabs him by the throat and pins him to the wall.

COLE
Giaman!!

SUBTITLES: Liar!

KILA
Faivpela ten fit!

SUBTITLES: It was fifty feet!

COLE
Giaman!!

SUBTITLES: Liar!!

Mary gets to her feet.

MARY
Please, Mr. Godson, you're a policeman, do
something!

Godson watches impassively.

COLE
(shouting into Kila's face, choking him, the knife raised)
Bai mi askim yu wanpela moa askim bifo bai
mi brukim leva bilong yu. Kala bilong
pukpuk i olsem wanem?

SUBTITLES: I'm going to ask you one more question before I tear
out your heart! What color was the croc?!

Kila is choking.

MARY
Please, please, stop it!

PALMER
Mr. Cole, stop!

COLE
Kala?!

SUBTITLES: What color?!

KILA (choking)
Blekpela.

SUBTITLES: Black.

Surprise registers around Cole's eyes. He lets Kila go. Kila drops to the floor, gasping for breath. Mary rushes to his aid.

MARY (to Cole)

Oh, what is wrong with you?!

Cole is looking at Godson. Because he appears calm and rational it is obvious the threat was a ploy which Godson condoned.

COLE

Well, he's telling the truth. Least he thinks he is.

Cole looks with great civility at the Palmers.

You'll stay for dinner of course.

Palmer is stunned. He looks at Mary. She is cradling Kila and returns his shocked stare.

INT. DINING ROOM -- NIGHT

Cole, Palmer, Mary, Meg and Godson are seated round the dining table, eating dinner, drinking gin and tonic. There is a HOUSE BOY present, dressed in white, and the MERI we saw serving drinks earlier. Both stand back against the wall when they are not serving. Palmer is sitting opposite his wife, and next to Cole at the head of the table. Godson is at the other end of the table and Meg is next to Palmer.

PALMER

There's one thing I don't understand, Mr. Cole, everyone seems so concerned that Kila estimates the croc at 50 feet. What's wrong with that? He's only a boy.

COLE

(eating)

Tom or Cole for Christ's sake. What are you getting at?

PALMER

Well, I'd judge you to be six four. So how tall are you really?

COLE

Six two.

PALMER

(gesturing, 'you see')

Even right next to you I can't judge, and I'm an adult.

COLE

Meri, show us your tits!

Mary looks shocked. Meg bursts out laughing.

MEG

Told you about the name.

The house Meri comes forward and undoes her sarong. She bares only one breast and reveals it has been removed and is horribly scarred.

COLE

(still eating)

Meri, how big that croc that took your titty?

HOUSE MERI

Sixteen feet, Boss.

COLE

Thank you.

Cole goes back to eating, considering the argument concluded. The MERI returns to her position. Palmer is nonplused.

PALMER

Sorry, I ... (don't understand)

COLE

Well you heard her, man. Sixteen. Not fifteen, sixteen. Now you'd think if something was ripping your tit off you wouldn't take time to estimate its precise length.

PALMER

But...

COLE

They see crocs from piccininny dawn 'til dusk. She said sixteen because it was sixteen. George.

The HOUSE BOY steps forward. Cole moves the pepper and salt shakers apart in front of him.

COLE

These croc's eyes, George, how long that fella?

GEORGE

Six feet, boss.

Cole moves them further apart and cocks his head.

GEORGE

Thirteen and a half feet, boss.

Cole moves them so they are on opposite sides of the table. George smiles, and shrugs. Cole grins too and waves him back. George resumes his place.

COLE

He couldn't get the last one because he's never seen anything that big. Neither have I, neither has anyone. But that's at least how wide the eyes would be on a fifty footer.

They all stare at the shakers.

Mary, hold my hand.

Mary looks round at the Meri, but then sees Cole is extending his hand to her and looking impatient. She takes it.

MEG

Told you.

COLE

Now take your husband's hand, and (to Palmer) give me yours. A croc gets to about 12 feet in 10 years, then he starts to fatten up, gets wider and wider. He's still growing in length too, but now only an inch a year. So a sixteen footer is old and big. This is the girth of the croc that took Mary's titty.

He pauses, giving them time to realize the extent of the girth.

HIGH ANGLE: The full size of the circle of their arms.

Now the rest of you join hands, and Mary, hold Meri's hand.

The Meri takes Godson's hand. Mary is fractionally confused, quickly looking from the Meri to Cole, but then the Meri takes her other hand. Mary looks at Meg to make comment, which she does with an 'I told you so' grin. Mary pokes her tongue.

COLE

There, now that's the girth on a fifty footer.

HIGH ANGLE: They are all holding hands.

They used to be that big once. When they were bloody dinosaurs.

Palmer drops his hands, causing the rest to.

PALMER

Yes, but I still don't see why you place store in a young boy's story.

COLE

He said the croc was black. Ever seen or heard of a black croc, Mr. Palmer?

PALMER

No.

COLE

That's because there aren't any, except, in the Ramu. My father once saw part of a black hide. He swore the scales were as big as his palm. The native said it came from the Ramu.

GODSON

And?

COLE

That story is forty years old. Never heard it since. So if the boy is lying about the length, why lie about the color?

EXT. COLE HOMESTEAD. VERANDAH -- NIGHT

Kila sits on the edge of the verandah outside the dining room. He eats a bowl of ice cream, enjoying it.

INT. DINING ROOM/LOUNGE -- NIGHT

Later. The men are in the adjoining lounge, drinking port and smoking cigars. Mary is still at the table with Meg. Meg smokes.

MARY

He's very direct, isn't he.

MEG

Oh, he's just an old bull. But he's a damned good shag.

Meg laughs. Mary smiles.

MEG

Forgive me saying so, but your husband doesn't look like the kind of man who would go into the jungle just to recover some bones, even if they are his father's. Hundreds of men missing in action over here, but I don't see their relatives in the jungles looking for them.

MARY

You don't think he could still be alive?

Meg shakes her head confidently. Mary looks round at Palmer, then back at Meg.

MARY

Can you keep a secret? Even from your husband, I mean.

Meg nods.

MARY

Harry's father, Royce, was this small town doctor.

EXT. LOWSET SUBURBAN HOUSE. PORCH -- DAY

A door opens a YOUNG ROYCE PALMER, his sleeves rolled up and tie loosened, opens the door. A TEENAGE BLACK GIRL stands on the porch. Royce reluctantly ushers her inside. He checks the street to see no one is observing before hurriedly shutting the door.

MARY (V.O.)

This young black girl got herself into trouble. Royce helped her by performing an illegal abortion.

INT. SURGERY -- DAY

The Black Girl, lying down, sweats profusely and is in pain. Royce observes her, worried.

MARY (V.O.)

But things went wrong, and they had to send her to hospital.

EXT. SURGERY -- DAY

Royce shuts the ambulance door and taps on it. The ambulance drives away. Anxiously, Royce watches it go.

INT. SITTING ROOM, HOUSE -- DAY

Royce reads from a letter. He slumps in the chair in despair. TEENAGE HARRY and his MOTHER look on.

MARY (V.O.)

Charges were laid, and anyway, Royce got disbarred. He couldn't get a job anywhere, he was ruined.

EXT. HOUSE -- DAY

Royce, in a suit, kisses his wife and hugs Teenage Harry. He gets in his car and drives away. Teenage Harry is particularly distressed.

MARY (V.O.)

When they bombed Pearl Harbor he volunteered for the air force. He had no choice. There was no other way he could feed his family.

BACK TO:

Meg pulls a 'that's quite a story' face, exhales smoke, and looks toward the lounge.

INT. LOUNGE -- NIGHT

There is a framed picture of Cole and a dozen BEARERS holding up an enormous croc's hide.

COLE (OS)

That was old Willie. Biggest croc in recorded history.

The men are having port and cigars. Palmer smokes his pipe.

PALMER

God. How long is that?

COLE

Twenty-eight feet six and one half inches. Tracked him for fifteen years. Wily old bastard. Still, you live three hundred years or so and you learn a thing or two.

PALMER

Can they live that long?

GODSON

No one knows. They're essentially immortal, like those giant tortoises.

COLE

Sometimes miss the hunt. I'd almost come out of retirement for something bigger than old Willie.

GODSON

You're not really buying that boy's story?

COLE

No. But my father was no liar.

PALMER

Does that mean you'll come with us to the Ramu?

Cole puffs his cigar. As smoke drifts from his mouth, he studies Palmer.

COLE

We'll see.

Palmer grins, slightly unnerved by Cole's stare.

INT. LOUNGE -- DAY

Godson, Meg, Mary, and Palmer sit around. Palmer smokes his pipe, staring out the door, lost to his own thoughts. Godson reads a paper while Meg chats to Mary and they drink tea.

MEG

Well you see it was easy for Tom. He was born here. But I came up from Brisbane. It's not so much the heat I don't like but in twenty years I can't get used to the bloody insects. I mean moths as big as your face and stick insects a foot long. Gives you the Tom-tits.

Mary grins.

Cole enters carrying a notebook and pen and wearing half-moon reading glasses.

COLE

Alright, let's talk shop. It'll cost you two thousand pounds, that's Australian pounds, payable in advance. Too rich?

Palmer and Mary exchange a look. Palmer looks down sadly.

PALMER

Yes, yes I'm afraid it's far too rich.

MARY

Harry.

But Palmer says nothing.

COLE (pocketing his glasses)

Well, that was short and sweet.

He begins to leave.

MARY

We'll pay.

Palmer frowns at her.

MARY

Harry, it's alright. (To the others) We were saving for a house. (To Harry) I don't mind. We can save a few more years.

Palmer looks at her gratefully.

COLE

Good. Then it's settled.

He turns to leave, but stops.

Oh, and another thing. You're not coming.

MARY

The hell I'm not.

GODSON

Mary, Tom's right. It's no place for a woman.

MARY

Correct me if I'm wrong but half the native population is female, is it not.

COLE

Palmer, talk to your wife for Christ's sake.

MARY

I speak for myself, Mr. Cole.

COLE

Madam, I have never hunted with a white woman in my life. Sometimes a Meri to keep me warm at night, but never a white Mary.

Mary looks at Meg in alarm, but Meg shrugs at the old news.

MARY

My place is with my husband.

All look at Palmer for a final decision.

PALMER

Mary saved half the money, she's entitled. I want her along.

Cole sighs, very reluctant, but conceding. He meets Godson's eyes. Their exchange demonstrates they both think it is a mistake.

EXT. THE RAMU RIVER, AERIAL -- DAY

A Dakota airplane (or DC3) in flight. It is following the Ramu River on its course through the seemingly endless jungle.

EXT. DAKOTA IN FLIGHT. FUSELAGE INT. -- DAY

Passengers sit on drop seats running both sides of the gutted fuselage. Palmer and Mary are seated to the front, Godson is opposite. Next to Godson are SGT. WALO ILUPAU and NATIVE POLICEMAN 1, and next to them is the boy, Kila, looking out the window.

Mary looks at Kila.

It is his first flight. He is captivated. He looks round at Mary, catches her watching him, and smiles. Mary grins maternally. Kila looks back out the window.

NATIVE BEARERS 1-4 are further down the plane. Piled on the floor between them are pallets of supplies tied down with canvas and rope. The 5th bearer is a giant, PAKETEPAK. He reads a "Phantom" comic.

Through the open cockpit door Cole can be seen flying the plane.

The noise from the din of the engines is great. Conversation is almost impossible. Mary indicates to Palmer she is going up to the cockpit. Appearing airsick, Palmer nods uncaringly.

As Mary leaves, Godson sees Palmer is sick. He pulls a sick bag from the wall behind him and passes it to Palmer, and Palmer nods his thanks, opening it.

EXT. DAKOTA IN FLIGHT. COCKPIT -- DAY

Mary enters the cockpit. Cole acknowledges her. As she leans forward for a better view he looks her over, attracted.

COLE
(yelling and pointing)
Sit down!

Mary sits in the co-pilots chair. She peers excitedly out the window.

The Ramu is beautiful below, and Mary enjoys the view.

She turns to Cole.

MARY
Is it much further?!

Cole shakes his head. He takes tobacco makings from his pocket.

COLE
Take the wheel!

MARY
I can't fly!

Cole has already taken his hands off the wheel.

COLE

Just like a car!

He indicates she should take the wheel. Mary does so, sitting upright and forward.

Cole has rolled and lit the cigarette. As he draws on it he leans back, enjoying his view of Mary.

Mary is enjoying the experience of flying.

EXT. FAITA AIRFIELD -- DAY

The plane approaches.

EXT. DAKOTA IN FLIGHT. CABIN -- DAY

Cole throws his cigarette stub out the quarter glass window and peers below. He sees something.

Faita airfield. There are abandoned LIGHTNING FIGHTERS and BOSTON A20 BOMBERS, and/or B25 MITCHELL BOMBERS still parked near the strip.

COLE

There she is!

Mary looks.

COLE

Better go strap in!

MARY

Can I stay here?!

COLE

Alright! Tell the others!

Mary does so.

EXT. DAKOTA IN FLIGHT. FUSELAGE -- DAY

Mary appears from the cockpit.

MARY (to everyone)

We're going to land!

She makes a 'seatbelt' motion and immediately returns to the cabin.

Palmer is a little put out that his wife is about to share the moment with Cole. His eyes go on to Godson.

Godson is already watching him.

Palmer is embarrassed and breaks the look. He does up his seatbealt.

EXT. DAKOTA IN FLIGHT. CABIN -- DAY

Mary is strapping in as they strafe the airfield. Cole banks the plane hard over.

INTERCUT:

EXT. FAITA AIRSTRIP -- DAY

The Dakota banks out over the Ramu. It swings round, lines up with the strip, and comes into land.

Mary is apprehensive and yet excited about the landing. She takes a moment to look admiringly at Cole.

As they land there are a few almighty thumps i.e. the plane bounces with Cole's poor landing.

Mary is scared.

Cole reverses the pitch of the propellers and the engines roar. Cole turns the plane ready for take off then taxis to a halt.

COLE

(switching off the electricals)
Ah, that wasn't so bad.

He gets up.

Could almost pass my license.

Mary freezes.

EXT. FAITA AIRSTRIP -- DAY

As the NATIVES unload the plane and construct rafts, Palmer and Mary are exploring the old war planes.

PALMER

Dad must've flown missions from this very strip. You know, when I read his letters and tried to imagine the war and what he was going through, I never pictured this.

MARY

What do you mean?

PALMER

Well, listen. So peaceful. And look. There's nothing. A few old sheds. I mean, it wasn't like the movies, this was ordinary people fighting with what they had. I mean, it's just so...

Mary waits. Palmer looks at her.

...lonely.

MARY

Harry...You don't think we're making a mistake? I mean, I just didn't realize the jungle was so big. The chances of us...

PALMER

I have to find my father.

MARY

You know he must be dead. You saw what we flew over.

PALMER

I have to try. You know that.

MARY

Meg said something...said there were hundreds of men missing in action here, but their relatives weren't here looking for them.

Palmer moves away. Mary comes closer.

MARY

Harry, I'll help, because I'm your wife,
and it's not the money, it's just I need
to understand...

Palmer squirms. Eventually...

PALMER

Something I haven't told you...That girl
my father helped, the one that got him
disbarred?...She was a friend of the
family...and...she was pregnant by me.

Mary is astonished.

MARY

Did your father know?

Palmer shakes his head.

Mary is in two minds about this revelation.

EXT. AERIAL. THE RAMU RIVER -- DAY

We are flying low over the waters of the Ramu. Rounding a bend
the rafts are discovered heading across river. Not much further
along there are rapids.

EXT. THE RAMU RIVER. RAFTS -- DAY

All of the people on the rafts are working poles, except Mary,
who sits on supplies in the middle of a raft.

SFX: a distant roar.

MARY

What's that noise?

No one answers. Mary is thoughtful for a moment.

MARY

Should I be helping?

COLE

Oh, no.

MARY

Is there rough water ahead?

No one answers.

Mary gathers her feminine privileges are not appreciated.
Accumulating guilt forces her to say more.

MARY

Will we be putting ashore soon? Making
camp?

No one answers.

Mary slaps a mosquito and frowns.

COLE

You taking your Atebrin?

MARY

No, turns your skin yellow.

COLE

Oh, you'd prefer malaria? You know there's
no cure.

MARY

What about quinine?

Cole shakes his head.

MARY

Then why do they give it?

COLE

To stop you dying of malaria. Only one
problem with quinine. Some people are
allergic. Trouble is, we don't know who is
until we give it to them.

MARY

Well...what happens if you're allergic?

COLE

You turn black, go into a coma...and die.

MARY

You like scaring me, don't you...uncle Tom?

COLE

If I was your uncle, young lady, I'd be slapping your bare bottom right now.

MARY (sexual, mock pity)

Oh, and here's you, up a creek without your paddle.

Cole uncharacteristically laughs, surprised by her sauciness. Palmer, working a pole, looks slightly back at Mary, not liking her flirtation.

EXT. RIVERSIDE CAMP. WHITE CAMP -- DUSK.

Mary looks at her Atebrin tablets, the jar open and a few pills spilt onto her palm. She sniffs them, screws her face up, returns them to the jar, and is sealing it as...

Fish are slapped onto a rock.

Mary starts. The rock is beside her. Palmer holds the fishing line.

As they talk the others can be seen setting up camp. There are two camps being ordered, one for the whites and one for the blacks. They are some 25 yards apart.

PALMER

Supper is served.

MARY

Oh...Did you catch them?

PALMER

No, there's a market down there.

For a moment Mary looks, then realizes.

MARY

Well how are you going to cook them?

PALMER

You leave that to me, m'dear.

He attempts to peck her on the lips but she turns away.

COLE
(busy with something, not looking round)
You can't eat those.

PALMER
Why?

Cole crosses to them, extracting his knife. He slices some of the flesh and peels it back.

FX: Long thin worms move in the flesh.

COLE
Wire worms. Rap round your liver and slice it slowly in half.

Palmer and Mary stare at the fish. Palmer's show of bravado for Mary has grounded, and more to the point, because of Cole.

MARY
Well then what's for supper?

COLE
Oh, this is like one of those big shops you people have.

MARY
Shops?

COLE
Those big food shops.

PALMER (condescending)
Supermarkets?

COLE
You just have to know what to put in your basket, that's all

There is the sound of a pig squealing and excited native voices.

COLE
There, see, the boys have already caught their supper.

The Bearers are talking excitedly as one holds a struggling BUSH PIG'S back leg.

COLE

Come on.

He walks toward the jungle. Palmer and Mary follow.

EXT. JUNGLE -- DUSK

Cole, Mary and Palmer walk. Cole stops and points upward.

COLE

There.

MARY

Where?

COLE

There.

Mary's face goes tight.

FULL FOCUS: An enormous SPIDER on an enormous web, is right next to her face.

COLE

It's a bird-catcher.

PALMER

It eats birds?

Mary and Palmer watch in horror as Cole pulls it down from its web. The spider hisses loudly.

COLE

Careful, spits acid.

PALMER

But you can't eat that.

COLE

Try and stop me.

PALMER

Could I get a photo?

Cole and Mary oblige. They are posed as in the photograph seen in the old man's den in the opening scene. Palmer is looking through a small camera when he sees something. He frowns and looks up slowly. No longer paying attention to the photograph he presses the button and the photograph is taken. Cole and Mary see his expression and turn to look behind them.

Four BUNDI, headhunters in full war paint, watch them. They carry murderous axes. For a moment, everyone is frozen.

COLE

Listen carefully. As casually as you can, start walking back to camp.

PALMER

Why? What...

COLE

Do it.

Palmer and Mary exchange a nervous glance then do as instructed. Cole remains, staring at the Bundi. After he is sure Palmer and Mary have a head start he holds up his hand in greeting. The Bundi do not react. Cole takes his tobacco pouch from his pocket, holds it up, and places it on a log. He turns and walks away. The Bundi have not moved.

EXT. RIVERSIDE CAMP. WHITE CAMP. DUSK.

Cole enters camp. Palmer and Mary have already alerted Godson, who holds his rifle.

GODSON

What flavor?

COLE

Bundi. Four. Teach me to leave camp without my rifle.

Godson looks round and whistles. Sgt. Walo Ilupau and Native Policeman 1, in the black camp, look round. Godson whistles again, signaling four men, then the direction. SGT. WALO ILUPAU and NATIVE POLICEMAN 1 pick up machetes and come running. Cole collects his rifle as Godson, Walo Ilupau and Native Policeman 1 hurriedly leave camp.

COLE (to the Palmers)
Nothing to worry about.

Palmer and Mary exchange a nervous glance.

EXT. RIVERSIDE CAMP. WHITE CAMP -- NIGHT

Cole is adding wood to the fire.

As the scene continues there are intermittent distant sounds of the PIG SCREAMING from the black camp.

Mary reacts to these noises.

SFX: a loud, not so distant, CROCODILE ROAR.

Mary is becoming unnerved.

Mary (alarmed)
What was that?

COLE
Oh, an old bull croc, looking for a lover.

PALMER
So are you going to tell us who those men were?

COLE
They're Bundi. A long way from home.
Probably just looking for food in the drought.

PALMER
Well why did John go after them?

COLE
They're headhunters. And they particularly hate white people.

Palmer and Mary exchange a nervous glance.

MARY
Aren't you worried about John?

COLE
No.

MARY

Why?

COLE

'Cause he's behind you.

Mary starts as she discovers Godson is indeed behind them.

COLE

Any luck?

Godson tosses him back his tobacco pouch.

GODSON

They don't like your brand.

MARY

You find them?

GODSON

No, they skeedaddled. Still, can't be too careful with Bundi.

PALMER

Well, will we be safe tonight?

GODSON

If he doesn't fall asleep.

He indicates. The Palmers look.

Sgt. Walo Ilupau is sitting on higher ground between the two camps. He has Godson's rifle.

Cole squats by the fire, the SPIDER in his hand.

FX: Holding the SPIDER by the legs in one hand, Cole holds it out over the fire. The SPIDER thrashes and hisses momentarily, then succumbs.

Godson, Mary, and Palmer are also watching with interest.

MARY

What does it taste like?

COLE

Crab.

Palmer pulls a can of baked beans from a satchel beside him. He shows it surreptitiously to Mary. She glances at it but ignores him.

Cole is eating the spider with great relish, crunching and chewing noises heard.

He grins encouragingly at Mary and Palmer, then offers it. Palmer shows him his baked beans. Cole shrugs and continues eating.

Mary's and Palmer's expression is disguised disgust.

GODSON

Can I have some?

COLE (deadpan)

Get your own bloody spider.

He hands it to Godson. Mary and Palmer watch as Godson also eats.

There is a particularly loud squeal from the pig.

MARY

(looking round)

Why does that poor pig keep squealing like that? Why don't they just kill it?

COLE

They're cooking it.

MARY

Alive?

Cole ignores her. She looks at Godson. He nods.

MARY (to Cole)

Well, why are you letting them?

COLE

It's how they cook...You just saw me cook a spider alive.

MARY

That's a spider.

COLE

Tell that to the spider.

GODSON

(handing Cole back the spider)
What do you think happened to the
Lutherans?

MARY

You mean they cooked them alive? On a
spit?!

GODSON

Well they wouldn't eat them raw.

COLE(exchanging agreement with Godson)
Nothing uncivilized about them.

Mary stands and picks up Cole's rifle.

MARY

Well they're not doing it in this camp.

GODSON

Ah, I wouldn't do that.

Mary sets off.

GODSON

That gun's got a very strong recoil!

COLE

I knew this'd happen with a white woman.

Godson nods in agreement, and they look accusingly at Palmer.
Palmer does not react, but looks with concern toward his wife.

HIS POV: Mary disappears into the gloom toward the black camp.

Sgt. Walo Ilupau watches, bemused, as Mary marches past.

Presently...

SFX: A rifle shot.

With the loud boom and flash of light the pig stops screaming abruptly.

Mary marches back into camp, puts down the rifle, and enters the tent. As she does so we see her backside is dirty where the rifle recoil set her on her backside.

Palmer looks at the other two men, who are looking at him. He decides he had better cut his losses and follow Mary. He picks up the baked beans, a can opener and two spoons and goes along. As he passes Cole.

COLE

Beans in bed? (to Godson) Should be interesting.

He eats his spider, crunching on it.

INT. TENT. CAMP -- NIGHT

Later. Palmer and Mary are in bed together. Through the canvas there is a faint glow from the fire outside. Mary rolls over. She groans in disgust at a smell and flutters the blanket.

MARY

Was that you?

PALMER

(sniffs and nods)
Beginning to know the difference.

MARY

Can't you sleep either?

PALMER

Did for a while. Always imagined the jungle to be full of sounds. So quiet...You find that old guy, Cole, attractive, don't you?

MARY

He's just interesting.

Mary sighs, irritated.

PALMER

Why're you so angry?

MARY

Gee, I don't know. Could be the heat, the headhunters, the crocodiles, or maybe because I just realized we're doing all this just so you can feel better about yourself.

PALMER

That's not fair.

MARY

Isn't it? If you'd told your dad you made that girl pregnant the outcome would have been the same. He helped a friend of the family. End of story. Us coming here achieves exactly nothing.

PALMER

We don't know that.

MARY

If a small boy can walk into the Ramu in a week, and your father is alive, then why couldn't he walk out in eight years?

Palmer can't make an answer. Mary tuts and turns away.

EXT. RIVERSIDE CAMP. WHITE CAMP -- NIGHT

Looking through the fire, Cole is lying on his side, awake, listening.

Closer, slow zoom in to his staring eyes.

CROSSFADE:

EXT. CROC'S EYE -- DAY

ECU: a crocodile's staring, predator's eye. (The eye, because it belongs to the giant PUKPUK, is surrounded with black skin.)

CROSSFADE:

EXT. RIVERSIDE CAMP. WHITE CAMP -- DAWN

The fire is now smoldering embers. Cole gets up onto one elbow, not having slept well on the hard ground. Godson is already up, shaving.

GODSON

You've gone soft living on that plantation.

Cole grunts. He begins to put on his boots.

Mary exits the tent. She crosses to one of the bags and pulls out her toiletry bag. She begins to enter the jungle.

COLE

Hey. Don't go more than fifty yards.

MARY

Why? You said those Bundi people are gone.

COLE

(pulling on his second boot)
You can get lost forever at a hundred yards.

Mary rolls her eyes and begins to leave.

COLE (sharply)

Stay where you are.

Mary halts indignantly.

MARY

Mr. Cole, I...

COLE

Move and you're dead.

Cole grabs a small length of rope and stands slowly.

There is a huge Komodo dragon lying up a tree next to Mary.

MARY (not sure she believes him)
How?

COLE

A Dragon.

MARY

A what?

COLE

What part of the word 'dragon' don't you comprehend?

Palmer comes from the tent.

GODSON

Tell her, Harry.

PALMER

What?

COLE

About the four hundred pound lizard that's going to fall on her head.

Palmer suddenly sees it.

PALMER

Jesus, what's that?!

Mary realizes Cole is serious.

MARY

Where is it?

COLE

It's waiting for you to move then it's going to fall on you. S'how it hunts pigs.

The comparison is not lost on Mary.

Cole lays a rope out gently and it lands at Mary's feet.

The Komodo's eyes flair slightly at the movement.

Over his shoulder to Godson:

COLE

Ready?

Godson now has his rifle. He takes aim.

COLE

(to Mary) Alright. When I say 'now', reach down fast and pick up the rope. I'll jerk you away, and you stay on the ground. Okay?

Mary nods.

COLE

Ready?

Mary concentrates on the end of the rope, knowing it is her salvation.

.....Now.

Mary grabs the rope.

Cole jerks.

The Dragon drops.

Mary sprawls.

Godson fires.

The Dragon dies.

Cole helps Mary to her feet. As he speaks he hands her her toiletry bag.

COLE (quietly threatening)

Why don't you go to the toilet, then you and I, are going to have a little chat.

Mary nods meekly.

EXT. THIRTY YARDS FROM CAMP -- DAY

Mary has her shorts round her ankles, sitting over a small, fallen tree branch.

She raises up and looks over her shoulder. She is only thirty yards out of camp. Cole, Godson, Palmer and some Bearers are striking camp.

Mary reaches into her toiletry bag and pulls out a toilet roll. She pulls off the last two sheets which is all that is left on the roll, and groans with annoyance.

MARY

Oh, Harry.

She fumbles for something else to wipe her bottom with.

Mary tears off a large lily-shaped leaf and wipes her bottom with it. She is rolling her eyes, not thrilled with the experience.

EXT. CAMP BY THE RIVER. WHITE CAMP -- DAY

Mary is coming back into camp. She frowns, then stops.

MARY

Oh...Oh...Ohhhhhh!...Ohhhhhhhhhhhh!!!

She runs into camp, running in tight circles, yelling 'Ohhhh!!'. The men watch her quizzically, wondering what she wants.

PALMER

What's wrong?

MARY

My bottom!! My bottom's on fire!!!

COLE

Pull down her pants.

PALMER

What?

COLE

Pull down her pants.

Palmer, assisted by Mary, pulls her pants down around her ankles. Cole takes a glance at her bottom. To Godson:

COLE

Insect repellent.

Godson tosses him the repellent.

Cole squirts plenty on his hand and as he and Palmer lean her forward he rubs it vigorously between the cheeks of her backside.

COLE

In the river.

Taking an arm each they hoist her off the ground and carry her, shorts around her ankles, to the river. They drop her into a seated position in the shallow water.

MARY (great relief)

Oh!!...Oh!!!...Ohhh!!! Oh, that's so nice...that is so nice.

Everyone has gathered by the water. They are laughing.

COLE (to Palmer)

Life's never boring 'round her, is it?

He turns to go, but hesitates.

COLE

Nice ass, by the way.

He leaves. Palmer looks at Mary, amused, but then after Cole, thoughtful about the remark.

EXT. JUNGLE. PLANE SITE -- DAY

A CASSOWARY (large, flightless emu-sized bird) walks past the plane wreck. It turns and moves away behind some shrubbery. A pause. There is a sudden commotion.

FX: There is a partial glimpse of the HUGE CROCODILE HEAD as it flicks back to swallow the bird.

The sounds of it being consumed.

EXT. JUNGLE. MUSIC/TREKKING MONTAGE -- DAY

When walking, Cole and Godson wear their rifles strapped diagonally across their backs, (their ammunition is around their waist) and they each carry a machete.

1] The party is making its way through the jungle. It is heavy going, with three Bearers in front hacking a path with machetes.

2] Palmer slaps at insects and is having difficulty with the terrain.

3] Cole points out some unique wildlife to Mary e.g. a tree kangaroo, a bird of paradise. Palmer notices them being friendly.

4] A wider perspective of the party's progress, showing the magnificent backdrop of the rugged terrain and how difficult their passage must be.

EXT. A CLEARING, RIDGE -- DAY

The weary party is putting down their gear and taking a break. Palmer sits on a log near Kila Rono. He takes a stick of gum from his pocket. Kila watches. Palmer unwraps the gum and puts the stick in his mouth. Kila loses interest and looks away. He turns his head back to see Palmer holding a stick of gum in front of him. He takes it shyly. He unwraps it and puts it in his mouth, amazed at how good it tastes. Palmer is smiling indulgently.

COLE

Smell that?

Everyone goes quiet, smelling the air. Eventually Godson stands up, frowning.

GODSON

Smoke?

COLE

Green smoke.

Godson concentrates.

GODSON

Yes.

They are suddenly propelled into action, getting everyone up, helping the boys with the gear.

MARY

What's going on?

COLE

Fire! Get your pack on!

As they hurry forward Palmer points down the slope on the other side of the ridge.

PALMER

Shouldn't we go that way?!

COLE

No! This way!

The group is running along the ridge, taking the longest route down to the river.

MARY

How can you have a fire in the jungle?!

COLE

You'd be surprised!

EXT. RIDGE -- DAY

As they reach the end of level ground on the peninsula, Cole orders two of the Bearers to dump their supplies and pushes them forward, arming them with his and Godson's machetes. As they begin their plunge down the steep slope toward the river bend, the giant, Paketepak, spearheads their charge. Behind him the speed of their descent is truly amazing and it is all the Palmers can do to keep up.

The sound of roaring flames is suddenly heard.

COLE

Move! Move!

Palmer looks back.

FX: The fire is at the top of the slope, like a monster poised and peering down on them. It hesitates, then plunges over the edge, moving toward them at great speed.

PALMER

Move! Move!

The fire rapidly gains on them. Members of the party are slipping and sliding, careening forward, finding their feet again and hurtling on. The roar of the fire is growing loud in their ears but now individual explosions can be heard.

MARY

Oh, God, we're not going to make it!

COLE

We'll make it! We'll make it!

EXT. RIVERSIDE -- DAY

The jungle suddenly parts in front of Paketepak and the river is revealed. Palmer looks round. The fire is huge and coming fast, the sound now deafening.

PALMER

Hurry! Hurry!

It is now every man for himself. The Bearers throw their supply packs ahead of them, torn between doing their job and saving their lives. Mary is tumbling first on her backside, then on her side. Cole grabs her by the waist over the last twenty yards and carries her bodily to the water. He heaves her in.

Palmer is the last in. He arrives just as the flames hit the embankment treetops. The radiance of heat is so intense everyone immediately submerges, swimming out underwater.

EXT. UNDERWATER SEQUENCE. RIVER -- DAY

Desperate for air after their exertions, each person surfaces for the briefest time, gasps in a lungful of scorched air, and continues on.

EXT. RIVER -- DAY

With everyone in chest-deep water, the party reforms. They watch the fire.

Suddenly, as they watch, Paketepak screams and falls back, his arms flailing.

Cole comes forward, checking the water.

COLE

There's a pack! Of course there's a bloody pack! It's on the bend!

Palmer and Mary are confused. The Bearers are backing away from the deep water, jabbering loudly in fear to each other.

To his horror, Palmer suddenly sees the reason for Cole's concern. At least four large CROCODILES begin tearing apart Paketepak's body.

COLE

John! Get me up! Get me up!

Godson submerges completely, behind Cole. He stands, bearing the big man on his shoulders.

COLE

Where's the bull?! Find me the bull!

Palmer is confused. He sees Cole is not even looking at the crocs devouring Paketepak.

GODSON

There!

Palmer looks. He sees a big croc on the far side of them moving slowly in, stalking them.

Cole takes careful aim and fires.

The Coc rolls violently, dying.

Cole reloads and starts killing the Crocs that are eating Paketepak.

When they are dead. Godson lowers Cole into the water.

EXT. RIVER -- DAY

Cole looks intently at the patch of red that used to be Paketepak as the current takes it down the river.

COLE

Who was it?

GODSON

Paketepak.

Cole is stunned and saddened. He lowers his eyes, but as his head comes slowly up, he is enraged.

Palmer shakes his head, not understanding Cole.

Kila Rono is scared of Cole, and hugs Mary.

COLE

(to Godson) They knew they had us on that ridge! Those mongrels knew where we were and knew which way the wind was blowing! That's premeditated murder and if you so much as lift a finger to stop me I'll have you too!

GODSON

Alright, but we'll do it my way.

EXT. RIVERSIDE -- DAY

The party is setting up camp. The landscape is completely changed, with the charred underbrush now black and smoldering, much more open to the eye.

Cole and Godson check their rifles. An exhausted Mary and Palmer look on.

PALMER

Look...no one here is telling us anything and as this is our expedition, I think you should keep us in the picture...

COLE

This doesn't concern you!

PALMER

Alright. But if you're planning something then you could at least...

COLE

Where in the bloody hell do you think you are? Baltimore?!

GODSON

I think we should talk this over.

COLE

I don't need you to do this! I'll take care of it myself!

GODSON

No you won't, Tom, and I'm telling you that as a patrolman, friend or not, and if you do try something without me there'll be trouble.

Cole is barely containing himself, but holds his tongue.

GODSON

Like I said, we'll do it my way, then it's official. Besides, I want to send a very clear message to these Bundi, I've had enough of them.

MARY

Do you mean it was those four men we saw?

Godson gives her a curt nod.

Palmer stiffens, finally realizing what is going on.

GODSON

Sergeant. Set fire to the spare shirt in your kit. Half burn it.

Sgt. Walo Ilupau immediately obeys the order.

GODSON

(to Cole) We'll go back up the slope and set up.

PALMER

Well, why is he burning the shirt?

GODSON

These are Bundi. They eat people. But they cook them first. They're going to come looking for their dinner.

The Sergeant has the shirt well alight.

GODSON

Alright, put it out. Put it on.

PALMER

I'm coming.

GODSON

What?!

COLE

No. You're not.

GODSON

I can't allow it, Harry. This is an administration matter, none of your business.

PALMER

Listen up. If you don't want this reported to higher authorities when we get back then I'm coming. That's no threat, just fact.

Cole steps closer.

COLE

Why do you want to come?

PALMER

Let's just say I have a belief in justice...but not the kind you're going to dispense.

GODSON

Alright, you can come.

COLE

What?!

GODSON

He can come! It's a patrol matter. (threatening to Palmer) But keep this in mind. You step over the line out there, and I'll have your balls for breakfast. What we do out here, stays out here. Understood?

The party sets off. Palmer exchanges a meaningful look with Mary before joining them.

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE -- DAY

Cole, Godson, Sgt. Walo Ilupau, Native Policeman 1, and Palmer are walking quickly up the mountain. The landscape is scorched, still burning in places. Palmer has fallen behind, barely able to keep up.

Godson comes to a halt.

GODSON

Here looks good.

COLE

(shakes his head)

I want them on level ground. Four of them, two rifles. You know how those pricks can run.

Godson nods and they set off again. Palmer has just caught up, hoping for a breather. He is distraught to see them move on again.

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE. AMBUSH SITE -- DAY

As Palmer arrives, wheezing, Godson is giving final instructions to Sgt. Walo Ilupau, who is lying on the ground in the open, facing downhill.

GODSON

Just twitch a little.

As Godson moves off to be with Policeman 1 he directs Palmer to be with Cole. Exhausted, Palmer staggers across and falls against the tree beside which Cole is squatting.

EXT. AMBUSH SITE -- DAY

Sgt. Walo Ilupau lies on the ground, twitching slightly, groaning occasionally.

Palmer and Cole are behind the tree, waiting.

PALMER

Look, I'm sorry for speaking out before...

COLE

Never apologize for standing up for principle. Long as that's what you were doing.

PALMER

What do you mean?

COLE

Weren't just showing off for the missus again, were you?

Palmer is thoughtful.

PALMER

No...I wasn't.

COLE

Good.

Palmer stares at him. Cole notices.

COLE

Don't try and work me out, Harry, I'll tell you straight. My intentions are strictly dishonorable. Ask any woman.

He stares at him, then grins slightly. Palmer is bemused, but grins back.

PALMER

What are we going to do when the Bundi get here? Shoot them?

COLE

(shake of the head)

John's decision. Remember what he said, don't cross the line.

Cole's head suddenly flicks round. He has heard something. He looks across to Godson. They too are alert to the sounds.

EXT. AMBUSH SITE -- DAY

Palmer holds his breath, only able to see Sgt. Walo Ilupau on the ground, twitching and groaning. He stiffens as he hears approaching native voices.

The Bundi, now certain their plan has worked, comment quietly among themselves, the tones of their voices suggesting they are well pleased with the sight of the sergeant's body. Their bravado now up, the increasing sounds of their feet running across the crisped forest mulch can be heard.

BUNDI 1 arrives beside Sgt. Walo Ilupau. He smiles evilly, sure he has the Sergeant at his mercy. Carrying a large, murderous flint ax, he drops it, produces an equally murderous knife and is about to roll the sergeant over when Godson suddenly steps out, aiming his rifle.

GODSON

Dropim!

Cole immediately follows.

COLE

Dropim!

BUNDI 1-4, seeing they are covered from both sides by rifles, drop their weapons.

Even so, the size twelve boot belonging to Sgt. Walo Ilupau springs up like a steel spring, collecting Bundi 1 in the mouth, knocking him to the ground.

Palmer steps out. The Bundi are terrified. Bundi 3 & 4 (brothers) consider running, but Cole snarls, raising the rifle, and they change their minds.

Bundi 1, his lower lip bleeding, is kicked to his feet by Sgt. Walo Ilupau, and herded together with the others. Sgt. Walo Ilupau and Policeman 1 poke them roughly with the blades of their machetes, making them line up side by side as Godson and Cole come forward in front of them.

GODSON

Hamstring fourpela.

Sgt. Walo Ilupau and Policeman 1 slash at a hamstring muscle on a single leg of each man before them. The blows are light, but whipped through accurately, the razor sharp blades slicing to a considerable depth into the muscle. Bundi 2 falls down, but the others are left standing, hobbling painfully with the wound.

For a moment the Bundi, now partially crippled, look round at their captors, wondering what is going to happen next. The man on the ground is kicked hard by Policeman 1 and climbs to his feet.

GODSON

Orait, giv fourpela eks, no naif.

Godson moves in quickly and shoves two men to one side with the broad of his rifle, separating them into pairs. Each man is then handed back his ax.

Palmer watches, fascinated. Godson, using sign language, directs the Bundi to fight each other. The Bundi understand but hesitate, not wanting to fight their companions. GODSON fires the rifle from the hip, the bullet throwing a spray of earth in the air beside the nearest man's foot.

Bundi 3, the youngest, begins to whimper, then openly cry. He is jabbering in Bundi and coming pathetically forward, pointing at the man he is paired with.

COLE

It's his brother.

Godson marches in quickly, smacks the man away with his rifle butt, shoving him toward the other two, then does the same with Bundi 2. The partners exchanged, they all now know there is no choice, each man must fight his fellow tribesman, or be shot.

EXT. AMBUSH SITE -- DAY

FIGHT SEQUENCE. Bundi I 1 kills Bundi 3, and Bundi 4 kills Bundi 2. Enraged to see his brother dead, Bundi 4 kills Bundi 1.

Bundi 4 drags himself to Bundi 3, and collapses on him, weeping.

Immediately Cole, Godson, Sgt. Walo Ilupau, and Policeman 1, march briskly away, down the hill. Palmer is left looking with shock and pity at Bundi 3.

Bearers mournful dirge...

EXT. BUSHFIRE CAMPSITE, WHITE CAMP -- NIGHT

...The Bearers (their camp closer than normal) sing a mournful dirge. Palmer, beside Mary by the fire, is exhausted and thoughtful about the day's happenings. He looks at Cole, sitting opposite and smoking.

PALMER

Had you known Paketepak long?

COLE

Since he was a boy. Didn't deserve to die like that. Not eaten by crocs.

PALMER

You hate crocs.

COLE

No. Just know them. They're nothing but hate. Evil as evil is.

Mary hugs herself, not wanting to be there.

EXT. GRASSLANDS - DAY

The party trudges on through grassland. Palmer is alongside Mary. He wipes his neck with a handkerchief.

PALMER

God, so dry here. I wouldn't have thought New Guinea had grass like this.

They notice Cole is at a dead stop in front of them. They pull up behind him.

PALMER

What's wrong?

Cole is listening. He looks around. He moves a few feet in another direction, listening.

MARY

Mr. Cole?

Cole ignores her. He listens some more. He turns to Godson. Palmer and Mary look back at Godson.

Godson is still and listening too. So are the Bearers.

Palmer and Mary exchange a look of confusion.

SFX: The faint sound of thunder/rumble, building.

Cole turns to Godson.

Godson points to his left.

Cole looks. He nods.

MARY

What's coming?

Sound is building rapidly. Eventually...

COLE

That.

Mary and Palmer look. Their mouths drop open.

FX: Racing across the grasslands there appears to be a tidal wave. It is an earthquake shockwave running through the ground and heaving the earth up several feet, the grass looking like a large, breaking wave.

COLE

(taking off his rifle)

Alright I want everybody down on your belly! Silip long bel bilong yu!

TRANSLATION: Face down on your belly!

Everyone quickly obeys.

As the sound builds: In the grass, Mary, Palmer, Godson, Cole, Sgt. Walo Ilupau, Kila. All express different levels of fear as they wait. At the last instant Palmer puts his arm around Mary.

FX: The wave is coming rapidly at them, sound building to a roar. As it hits them people are thrown up to twenty feet in different directions.

EXT. GRASSLANDS -- DAY

Mary rolls to a halt on her back.

SFX: The rumble is dying quickly away.

MARY (to herself)
What the hell was that?

She gets up, looking for others. She sees Cole, Godson, Bearers getting slowly to their feet.

MARY
Harry?...Harry?!!

PALMER (OS) (weak)
Over here.

Sore and sorry, he gets to his knees. Cole crosses to him.

COLE
Alright?

PALMER
What the hell was that?

COLE
Just a tremor. There's a volcano over there. Must've farted.

He moves away and raises his voice.

Anyone hurt?!

GODSON (OS)
Over here.

Cole crosses to Godson and finds him standing over Sgt. Walo Ilupau. The Sergeant lies on his side, his eyes open, staring. Godson rolls him over. There is a rock beneath his head, covered in blood.

Godson sighs wearily.

GODSON
Better bury him.

COLE
(moving away)
Fine. I'll put the kettle on.

Mary and Palmer are shocked and distressed.

EXT. GRASSLANDS -- DAY

LOW ANGLE: A shovel pats down earth on the fresh grave. The Bearers immediately pick up their gear and the party leaves.

Palmer and Mary are left by the grave, watching the retreating forms in silent comment upon the lack of ceremony. Eventually, they look back at the grave. Palmer crosses himself, Mary also. They follow the others.

Bearers mournful dirge...

EXT. GRASSLANDS CAMPSITE, WHITE CAMP -- NIGHT

...The Bearers are singing a mournful dirge.

Mary, Palmer, Cole and Godson are sitting round the campfire, drinking tea.

Palmer smokes his pipe. Cole pulls a cleaning cloth on a cord through the barrel of his rifle and is generally cleaning and oiling it. The music comes from the black camp.

MARY
What's that they're singing?

GODSON
Funeral song.

MARY
What was his name?

GODSON
Walo. Walo Ilupau.

MARY
Did you know him well?

GODSON
He was a good friend.

MARY

Forgive me saying so, but you didn't seem upset when he died.

GODSON

You see death a lot here.

PALMER

Maybe it was fate.

Cole snorts disapproval.

PALMER

You don't believe in fate?

COLE

Ever bump your head just a little?

PALMER

Of course.

COLE

Is it fate when you do that?

PALMER

I don't think so.

COLE

Well Walo Ilaupa bumped his head.

PALMER

Walo Ilaupa died.

COLE

So when does it become fate? A bump, concussion, brain damage, or death?

He waits expectantly. Palmer is daunted and looks away. Mary has seen the small defeat of her husband and doesn't like it.

Cole stares into the flames.

EXT. CROC'S EYE - DAY

ECU: a crocodile's staring, predator's eye. (The eye, because it belongs to the giant PUKPUK, is surrounded with black skin.)

EXT. RAMU VALLEY VIEW. JUNGLE -- DAY

This is the same location from which Kila viewed the Ramu Valley (and from where he later fell into the Ramu River.) The party approaches the area and halts.

KILA (pointing)

Em hap we oli bin kilim papa bilong mi,
Bos, na em hap we balus na man wok long
stap. Yu lukluk go, aninit long ol diwai,
aburusim ol diwa i isilip nabaut.

SUBTITLES (necessary for this scene): There is where my father was killed, Boss, and there is where the plane and man are. You see there, under the trees, just before the log jam.

COLE

Bai yu nonap kam wantaim mipela?

SUBTITLES: You won't come down with us?

KILA

Nogat, bos, em hap bilong idai na igat
bikpela pukpuk stret istap long hap.

SUBTITLES: No, boss, it is the valley of death and there is a giant pukpuk there.

Cole looks at him with impatience.

COLE

Bilong wanem ol pukpuk I save painim
kaikai long graun, Kila?

SUBTITLES: Why would a crocodile hunt on land, Kila?

KILA

Imas longpela taim bilong san.

SUBTITLES: Maybe it is the drought.

Cole looks him up and down but decides not to press the point. He takes some shillings from his pocket.

COLE

Givim dispela long mama bilong yu. Tokim em olsem Tom Cole I tok yu bin strong.

SUBTITLES: Give these to your mother. Tell her Tom Cole said you were brave.

Kila looks at the money, then back up at Cole. He nods and begins to leave.

Mary moves quickly past Cole.

Mary catches up to Kila.

MARY

Kila. Thank you for bringing us. I don't know what to say. You've been so kind, so brave for a little boy.

She kisses his cheek.

Watch out for the Dragons and the earthquakes and spiders and snakes and crocodiles and...Goodbye, Kila.

She hugs him, and finally lets go. Kila smiles.

KILA

Oum hereva low commoni las. Ou low ura gugaya lougu. Tomana ea heriva. Usuan low ator sisia bemona.

SUBTITLES: I don't know what you said but I'd really like to mount you. My father said the dog position is best.

Mary is devotedly nodding with maternal understanding, savoring the precious moment.

REACTION SHOT: Cole looks away and scratches his nose.

Kila walks away, turning and waving occasionally. Mary lovingly watches him depart.

EXT. RAMU VALLEY VIEW. JUNGLE -- DAY

Same time and location.

GODSON (to Palmer)
Well, I'm afraid I must press on to
Winepee.

PALMER (glancing at Cole)
What? Oh no, surely not.

GODSON
Yes, duty calls.

They shake hands.

PALMER
What a pity. Mary. John's leaving.

MARY
(crossing from Kila's departure)
D'you mean leaving leaving?

Palmer nods. Godson moves to meet Mary.

GODSON
Goodbye, Mary. I hope things turn out well
for you down there. Hope you haven't come
all this way for nothing.

MARY
Must you go, John?

She shakes his hand.

GODSON
Yes, we've already stayed too long. You'll
be right with Tom. Don't worry. He's a
good man.

Godson crosses to Cole to shake his hand.

GODSON
See you in Madang.

COLE
What happened when the cannibal met the
Lutheran?

GODSON

What?

COLE

Nothing. Just passed him in the bush.

GODSON (smiling)

I'll be sure to tell them that one.

He waves, walking away.

GODSON

Bye all.

COLE

They've already heard it!

Godson and Native Policeman 1 leave.

COLE

Right.

Cole crosses to a shrub and pulls it aside, revealing the valley below. To himself...

COLE

Let us see, what we shall see, said the man in the funny green coat. We're all alive, fit, young and strong, and after all it's only a moat. Let us see if the lizards indeed have teeth...six inches long.

EXT. JUNGLE -- DAY

Kila sits at the base of a tree. He threads the shilling pieces onto his neck band. (Shillings in New Guinea were Australian shillings with the centers punched out, known as 'holy shillings'.) As Kila threads the last one on, he pauses and looks back in the direction of the valley. He knows the danger the party faces and feels guilty.

EXT. JUNGLE. PLANE SITE - DAY

The plane is in the foreground, the party approaching in the distance. Cole, in front, stops. With his machete he indicates the plane to Palmer. Palmer and Mary hurry forward.

EXT. JUNGLE. PLANE SITE - DAY

Palmer climbs up onto the plane wing. He looks into the cockpit. The seat is empty.

Cole arrives.

MARY

Is it him?

Palmer shakes his head. He reaches in and pulls out the faded photograph of himself (as a boy) and his father. He hands it down to Mary.

As Mary looks up she sees Palmer looking confused.

MARY

What?

PALMER

Why would his dogtags be here, but there is no body?

EXT. JUNGLE. PLANE SITE -- DAY

Cole is interested in markings on the ground. He sees something and frowns. He kneels and examines it. It seems to be an impossibly large footprint but is indistinct. He looks up at one of the Bearers.

COLE

Lukim longpela bilong hap i go long wara.

SUBTITLES: See how far to the river.

Bearer 1 nods and begins to do as requested. He is moving off in the direction we know the giant Pukpuk to be.

COLE

Lukaut.

SUBTITLES: Be careful.

Bearer 1 hesitates, nods, and goes on.

Cole has gone back to the markings.

Bearer 1 exits into the area where the Cassowary was seen to go. Tension builds with the expectation the Pukpuk will strike, but...

Bearer 1 screams (OS).

Cole stands.

Bearer 1 staggers back, a spear through his midriff.

Bearer 2, beside Cole, receives a spear through the throat.

Suddenly they are swarmed upon by CANNIBALS. Bearers 3&4 are overpowered. Without time to unstrap his rifle, Cole cuts two Cannibals down with his machete. A third he slashes with his knife. There are too many, however, and he is wrestled to the ground. He is disarmed (though not of his ammunition), and hauled to his feet. Cole, Palmer, Mary and Bearers 3&4 are led away.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

The party is led at spear point.

PALMER (to Mary)
So much for the Ramu being uninhabited.

Palmer is jabbed with a spear for talking.

Cole looks around, watchful. He sees something ahead.

There is a giant, black totem pole of a crocodile, beyond which is a village.

EXT. CANNIBAL VILLAGE - DAY

The party enters the village and are jostled by other Cannibals. There are numerous BLACK TOTEM POLES OF CROCODILES decorating the area, suggesting a crocodile cult.

EXT. CANNIBAL VILLAGE - DAY

The remains of a man, tied to a spit, roasts over a fire. He is cooked, and has had large sections of flesh sliced off him.

Mary gasps in horror and is hugged by Palmer, himself deeply shaken.

Frowning with curiosity, Cole steps forward and pulls off a piece of meat. He puts it in his mouth and chews. He spits it out.

COLE

Tastes nothing like pork.

Mary and Palmer are wide-eyed appalled.

Cole is suddenly smacked across the face with a club. He collapses, spitting blood. The group is pushed to their knees. They have their hands tied in front and a length of wood shoved horizontally through the crook of each elbow and behind their backs. A rope is then tied around their necks and back down to the piece of wood, hauling it up to the armpit. In the case of Cole, they use his rifle as the piece of wood.

As this is happening...

INT. NEARBY HUT -- DAY

HANDHELD: Looking out between fronds, someone is watching.
(Suggesting Royce Palmer's POV.)

INT. PRISON HUT - DAY

Cole, followed by Mary, Palmer and Bearers 3&4 are shoved heavily into the room. Cole falls to his knees.

GODSON

Well, look what the cat dragged in.

Godson sits on the floor, tied up like the others. The Cannibals depart.

COLE

Aren't you in the wrong village?

GODSON

They let you keep your rifle? Decent of them.

COLE

Obviously don't know what it is. They take yours?

Godson nods. Cole gets to his feet.

Loaded?

GODSON

(shaking his head)

Which is why you've still got yours. They must think it's just a club. Not even a good one.

COLE

That your man on the spit?

Godson nods.

Thought I recognized him.

MARY (almost hysterical)

He ate some of him. He actually ate some of him!

COLE

Didn't swallow.

Godson is intrigued.

GODSON

What'd it taste like?

COLE

Too much body.

MARY

You...? What is wrong with both of you?!

Cole is walking toward her.

COLE

Mary, Mary, Mary, it's alright, it's alright.

MARY

It's not alright?!

Cole suddenly headbutts her, knocking her down and out.

PALMER

Why, you!!

He puts his head down and charges. He runs into Cole's rock hard stomach and collapses. Cole looks down at him.

COLE

They kill the scared ones first. They tell the scared ones by those who scream loudest. Tell your wife that.

Cole crosses to the door. Immediately two Cannibals outside poke at him with spears. He retreats back into the hut.

Cole is thinking hard.

INT. PRISON HUT -- LATE AFTERNOON.

Mary is conscious, looking a bit resentful. She and Palmer lean against one wall, with Cole and Godson opposite. Between them sit Bearers 3&4. Godson appears lost to his thoughts.

MARY (to Godson)

What are you thinking?

Godson blinks and snaps out of it.

GODSON

I was hoping eating protocol isn't order of arrival.

Mary rolls her eyes. Godson looks at Cole.

GODSON

(indicating direction with his head)
You see that huge ramp on the river?

Cole shakes his head.

GODSON

It's very big. Never seen natives build a boat ramp before.

COLE

Maybe they sail on weekends.

GODSON

The Ramu Regatta?

COLE

That's the one.

Cannibals GUARDS 1&2 enter suddenly. They haul Bearer 3 to his feet. The man is paralyzed with fear. He begins to scream, trying to resist. They haul him away. Mary begins to cry. She looks accusingly at Godson.

MARY

Well now you know! It's a lottery!

She breaks down into full tears. Godson looks at Cole, who returns the look and shrugs.

COLE

Chivalry's dead if women can't go first.

EXT. CANNIBAL VILLAGE - NIGHT

A man's agonized screams can be heard. Bearer 3 roasts over the fire. The Natives are high on beetle nut and fermented drinks. A few drugged-out CANNIBAL TEENAGERS wrestle over Godson's rifle. One is peering down the barrel, another snatches it from him and uses it as a club to hit a third.

EXT. CANNIBAL VILLAGE -- NIGHT

Fierce looking CANNIBAL CHIEF, with muscular CANNIBAL GUARDS 3-7, carrying torches, march toward the prison hut and through the jam of Cannibals surrounding the largest fire, where Bearer 3 is being turned slowly on a spit. Bearer 3 is horribly burnt and screaming.

INT. PRISON HUT -- NIGHT.

Close on Cole's hands. He is flexing them slowly and continuously.

GODSON (OS)

Going numb?

COLE

Cutting my wrists.

GODSON

Yes. Lost the feeling in my hands an hour ago. Think they wet the cane before they tie it. Stops you struggling. Ingenious.

There is a particularly loud scream from Bearer 3.

GODSON

He's taking a long time to die.

COLE

(nodding)

Rono Bageri. Tough bloke. Been with me ten years.

GODSON

Got a plan?

COLE

Yes. Leave camp before the next meal. If you can chew through the bindings down my back, I might get my rifle free. If I can shoot a few the rest might run.

GODSON

Tom...You know how you've always admired my teeth?

Cole nods.

GODSON

I know it's not a good time but...they're false.

COLE

You lying bastard.

GODSON

Well, I didn't actually lie.

COLE

Same thing.

The CHIEF and GUARDS 3-7 enter. The Chief orders Bearer 4 be taken out. Bearer 4 is taken away, screaming and struggling in terror. The Chief looks at the strange white people. Finally, after looking at the men he examines Mary's blond hair. He frowns heavily. He barks an order. The Guards produce bindings and strap the prisoner's heads to the hut's supporting posts. They bind each head to each post by looping the rope under each person's nose. All the Cannibals leave.

GODSON (to Cole)

Must've heard you.

MARY

Why are they taking our bearers first?

COLE

Would you eat the chocolate first or the vanilla?

PALMER

You know, I honestly hope they take you next.

EXT. ROYCE'S HUT - NIGHT

Behind a white man, dressed as a native. He has a long mane of blond/grey hair. He enters the hut.

INT. ROYCE'S HUT - NIGHT

Native girl, WIFE 1, is lying down. WIFE 2 is lying beside her with a space between them. ROYCE, still seen from behind, enters frame and the women are watching him. He takes off his loin cloth and lies between them. His face is not yet seen.

EXT. CANNIBAL VILLAGE -- NIGHT

Bearer 4 is now over the fire. He screams.

A large black totem pole seems more evil now, more oppressive.

SFX: The scream carries into the next scene with an echoing quality.

EXT. DREAM SEQUENCE.

Cole, standing in a dugout canoe, rifle at the ready, is straining to see through thick mist. He thinks he can see something coming toward him. Tension builds.

Suddenly, and with a growl, a CROC leaps up and seizes his throat.

SMASH CUT:

INT. PRISON HUT - MORNING

Cole wakes with a start. He realizes someone is before him.

The Cannibal Chief leans forward and takes a cartridge from his ammunition belt. The Chief sits cross-legged on the floor, close to him. The Chief has intense, almost angry eyes. He studies the bullet in great detail. He bites it, then looks at it once more.

COLE (friendly, respectful)
Good morning. Please, eat as many as you like. You know, last time I saw a face like yours Tarzan was stuffing a banana into it.

Chief looks him over. Cole smiles.

COLE
That's right, you ugly, great ape.

The Chief finally grins.

Cole's eyes drop down to the Chief's belt and he sees his knife.

COLE

Oh, so you have my knife. Obvious the idiot that took it would give it to the chief idiot.

The Chief has not missed Cole's reference to the knife. He takes it out.

Cole lifts his hands so the Chief may cut his bindings. The Chief grins cruelly. Cole lowers his hands.

COLE

I was afraid of that.

The Chief cuts across Cole's shirt, exposing his left breast. He slowly pinches Cole's nipple. He squeezes it hard and observes Cole's face closely, testing him. Cole does not flinch.

Deliberately, the Chief takes the knife and slowly cuts off Cole's nipple.

Cole takes the pain, the Chief observing him.

Finally the Chief's hand comes away with the nipple.

Eyes locked to the Chief, Cole pokes out his tongue and opens his mouth wide. The Chief does not understand. Cautiously, he places the nipple on Cole's tongue, and Cole swallows it.

COLE

Mmmm, yum, yum.

He winks and grins. The Chief finds it most strange, and somewhat annoyed, realizes he has been beaten at his own game. He gets to his feet, crosses to the doorway, hesitates, frowns back at Cole, then leaves.

Cole slumps, still coping with the pain. He is bleeding considerably from the wound.

As the others look on, Mary has silent tears of compassion.

EXT. CANNIBAL VILLAGE. RIVERSIDE - DAY

A number of Cannibals carry large spiral horns. Others begin a drum beat on Hagen drums. Those on the horns attach them to

linked cane ropes which take their weight. They then blow through them, creating an eerie sound.

A giant ramp runs into the river, and the Cannibals have gathered before it. There is a chair/throne set for the Chief, front and center, and barricades behind which the rest of the tribe gather. There are two jumping towers either side of the ramp. (New Guinea natives first invented 'bungy jumping' to test their young men's courage. A native jumps off a tower, a rope round his ankles. His fall is broken by a trip lever and soft, sloping ground which he actually impacts. In this case the sloping ground is on the river bank.)

EXT. PRISON HUT - DAY

Mary, Palmer, Godson and Cole listen.

PALMER

What's that noise mean?

All are listening tensely.

EXT. JUMPING TOWER -- DAY

A CANNIBAL JUMPER, hands folded across his chest, falls off the tower some fifty feet to impact with the river bank.

The Cannibals cheer.

EXT. CANNIBAL VILLAGE - DAY

The Chief gives an order. Cannibals GUARDS 8-11 march toward the hut where the prisoners are housed.

INT. NEARBY HUT -- DAY

HANDHELD: From within the hut GUARDS 8-11 enter the prison hut, across the compound (as before suggesting someone, Royce Palmer, is watching).

INT. PRISON HUT -- DAY

GUARDS 8-11 enter.

There is cheer from the crowd outside as another native jumps from a tower.

The Guards cut the ropes binding the prisoners heads to the posts. Palmer, Mary, Godson and Cole are hauled to their feet and forced toward the door.

EXT. CANNIBAL VILLAGE -- DAY

Cole, Godson, Mary and Palmer are led out across the compound.

INT. NEARBY HUT -- DAY

HANDHELD: From within the hut the four prisoners are being led by Guards toward the river.

EXT. CANNIBAL VILLAGE -- DAY

Mary, Palmer and Cole are taken to a rail barricade overlooking the ramp. Godson is separated from the others and taken to stone steps leading down to the ramp.

Mary, Palmer and Cole watch as Godson has his hands freed and the pole removed. He has ropes tied round his wrists and pulled tight from opposite directions. These ropes are tied to posts on the jumping towers either side of the head of the ramp. Godson is now in a crucifix position overlooking the ramp and lagoon-like section of the river.

Two CANNIBAL JUMPERS simultaneously go off the towers.

The Cannibals cheer.

Godson, scared, facing the water, watches it, wondering what is going to happen.

The giant horns blare continuously.

INTERCUT:

EXT. CANNIBAL VILLAGE. JUMPING TOWER -- DAY

A CANNIBAL JUMPER, about to jump, shouts something to the Chief and points to the water.

The Chief gives a signal.

Horn and drumbeats stop.

Something very big and black can be seen surfacing not far away. It appears to be a crocodile, (PUKPUK) of gigantic proportions. (50 feet, 20 tons)

Godson watches intently. He sees the size of the Pukpuk. His eyes widen.

The Pukpuk is swimming steadily toward him.

Mary, Palmer, and Cole look on in amazement.

INTERCUT:

EXT. CANNIBAL VILLAGE. RAMP -- DAY

FX: The Pukpuk comes slowly up the ramp. It has some twenty yards to crawl before it is upon Godson.

Godson is petrified, watching the nightmare come toward him. He is about to lose control when:

COLE

Tough it out, John! Tough it out!

The Pukpuk is almost upon him.

GODSON

Tell Nancy I love her, Tom!

The Pukpuk is very close. It opens its jaws wide and hisses loud.

GODSON

(screaming) Kiss my baby for me!

The Pukpuk takes him.

The Cannibals cheer.

The Pukpuk throws Godson back into its throat and swallows him. It thrashes its head to sever the ropes.

The Chief turn to observe the prisoners.

The Pukpuk moves into the water and disappears.

The Cannibals cheer.

Cole stares at the water. As the Guards begin to lead them away, he looks round and meets the Chief's eyes, giving him a murderous look. Guard 1, behind him, sees the look on his face and, intimidated, steps aside.

The Chief is intrigued.

INT. PRISON HUT - DAY

Mary, Palmer and Cole are back in position, lashed to the hut posts. From the lengths of the beards on the men a few days have passed. Flies are gathered on the wound on Cole's chest. He is slumped, in a fevered sleep.

The drums and the horns outside suddenly start up again, and all three prisoners realize another sacrifice is due.

PALMER

Oh, no.

MARY

They'll be coming for us soon.

Palmer's look tells her how much he loves her, and she grins, understanding.

COLE (OS)

Kila.

They look at Cole. He is awake, but looking toward the rear of the hut. They look round to find Kila struggling to get through the thatching that joins the ceiling to the wall.

Kila struggles through and drops to the floor. He smiles at Mary.

COLE (snapping)

Kam long hia, manai.

Kila crosses to him.

COLE

Yu gat naif?

SUBTITLES: Do you have a knife?

KILA

Nogat, tasol mi bin poainim dispela.

SUBTITLES: No, but I made this.

He produces a sharp rock and begins cutting through Cole's bindings. It is slow progress.

COLE

Olsem wanem na yu stap longpela taim
stret.

SUBTITLES: What took you so long?

KILA

I bin had long aburusim ol lain i lukautim
ol.

SUBTITLES: It was hard to get past their guards.

COLE (hoarse whisper)

Hurry, boy, hurry.

Cole looks round.

COLE

Wanpela man wok long kam!

SUBTITLES: Someone's coming!

In a panic Kila drops the rock and looks around for a place to hide. He sees some thatch matting against the wall and dives behind it.

CANNIBAL GUARDS 8-10 enter. They immediately begin cutting the head bindings away and hauling the prisoners to their feet.

Cole falls forward, to the rock, beside him on the ground.

As they haul Cole to his feet his hand scavenges for and picks up the rock.

Cole is led away.

When they are all gone Kila peeps out from behind the matting.

INT. CANNIBAL VILLAGE - DAY

Cole, Palmer and Mary are escorted by GUARDS 8-10 toward the river.

EXT. CANNIBAL VILLAGE -- DAY

The same set up as before. This time it is Mary that is separated from the others. She screams, and is carried/dragged down to the ramp.

Palmer and Cole are being led to the observation point as before.

As Palmer screams at the Guards and to Mary, Cole looks to one side and sees something.

Godson's rifle is against a hut wall.

Cole can hardly believe their good luck.

EXT. CANNIBAL VILLAGE -- DAY

Palmer is cursing everyone and anything, and in between yelling encouragement to his wife. Cole tries to get his attention. Eventually, he kicks him.

PALMER

What?!

COLE

Over there, John's rifle. See it?

Palmer looks.

Godson's rifle.

Palmer nods.

COLE

If I can get us free, you get to it.

PALMER

It has no bullets.

Cole gets closer to him and elevates his hip.

COLE

Take some.

Palmer surreptitiously does so.

ECU: His fingers are removing bullets from the belt.

Palmer moves away. Cole looks down at his bindings.

Cole is cutting through the bindings using Kila's sharp rock.

PALMER

Hurry.

He sees something, above.

Oh, no.

The jumping tower. The JUMPER on the tower is shouting and gesticulating at the water.

EXT. RAMP -- DAY

Mary sees the great bulk of the Pukpuk break the surface of the water.

FX: The Pukpuk roars and the water dances/shimmies around it.

Mary begins screaming.

The Pukpuk swims toward her.

The Chief moves forward in his chair, eyes gleaming with interest.

Cole is cutting.

Mary is screaming.

The Pukpuk is at the shore.

Mary is screaming.

Cole is cutting.

Palmer watches transfixed.

The Pukpuk climbs the ramp.

Mary screams with all her might.

PALMER (screaming)
Hurry, Tom!! Hurry!!

Cole cuts the bonds.

Cole takes his rifle and knocks their immediate GUARDS flat. He intercepts a swipe from an ax, takes the ax, kills the Guard, then another. He swipes with the ax and frees Palmer. Palmer races for the other rifle.

Before the next Guard can come at him Cole cocks his rifle and shoots point blank.

The loud noise and death of the Guard has a profound affect on the crowd. There is a collective gasp of fear. Cole cocks the rifle once more, fires. Another native dies.

Palmer has reached the rifle and is loading it as he is attacked. His attacker, however, falls dead, struck by a bullet from Cole. Palmer then shoots his next attacker.

Cole leaps the barrier and races for the Chief. He downs the nearest Guard and the other Guards retreat. Cole slaps the Chief's face and snatches his knife back. He disembowels the Chief with the knife, who falls to his knees, cradling his intestines.

Cole looks at Mary.

The Pukpuk is upon her. It opens its mouth, lunges forward and eats her in one gulp.

PALMER
No! Mary, no!!

EXT. RAMP -- DAY

Cole is down on the ramp, walking forward straight at the Pukpuk, reloading, firing, reloading, firing, reloading firing.

As the Pukpuk thrashes in pain, Camera notes the rope. It is still bound to a pole of the jumping tower (and still around Mary's wrist).

Enraged, the Pukpuk lunges forward with amazing speed. It engulfs Cole with its jaws.

EXT. INSIDE PUKPUK'S JAWS -- DAY

FX: Inside the Pukpuk's jaws, Cole realizes his rifle has jammed its jaws apart.

INTERCUT:

EXT. RAMP -- DAY

FX: The Pukpuk is thrashing back and forth, the rifle holding its jaws open.

Cole is hanging onto the rifle for dear life. He looks down.

The cavernous throat yawns before him.

To his amazement, Cole sees something. Beside his leg is Mary's hand, the rope still around it.

Holding the rifle, Cole grabs the hand.

The Pukpuk thrashes violently to one side. It's jaws hit one of the towers. The tower topples, the man on it falling to his death.

The rope to the other tower is now at full stretch.

SFX: A WET SUCTION SOUND, Cole and Mary are flung violently into the water (jerked out by the rope).

Enraged, the Pukpuk moves forward, up the ramp. It demolishes the barricades and is moving forward into the village. Cannibals scream and flee. The Pukpuk swings its tail, killing Cannibals and demolishing the throne, etc..

Palmer stands transfixed with fear. Kila appears and pulls him away.

EXT. RAMP. WATER -- DAY

Cole, bleeding from lacerations, stands in the shallow water. He pulls Mary up. Mary's gasp for air is a scream. Cole pulls her to her feet, barely conscious. They struggle to one side of the ramp and make their way out.

EXT. CANNIBAL VILLAGE -- DAY

The Pukpuk thrashes. It finally frees its jaws when the rifle snaps loudly in half. It then devours the Chief, still alive and on his knees. All is mayhem.

EXT. CANNIBAL VILLAGE -- DAY

Cole and Mary meet with Palmer and Kila. They hurry on.

EXT. JUNGLE. PLANE SITE -- DAY

Kila and Palmer followed by Cole, supporting Mary, arrive at the site. Cole drops Mary to the ground. He takes his ammunition belt and hands it to Palmer.

COLE

Here.

He grabs Mary. They continue on.

EXT. JUNGLE. RIVER, LOG JAM -- DAY

As they run. Palmer, lagging, is desperately loading bullets into the breach. Cannibals follow. Palmer stops, takes aim, and shoots one. As the others hurry on, he re-cocks and shoots another.

COLE (indicating the log jam)
Across here! Quick!

He picks Mary up in his arms and they begin to cross the log jam.

Back to Palmer. He takes aim.

A Cannibal throws a spear, just as Palmer shoots him.

The spear penetrates Palmer's leg.

Kila sees what has happened to Palmer and goes back for him.

Palmer, despite the pain, is desperately reloading.

A Cannibal jumps him, raising an ax to kill him. Palmer shoots point blank. The Cannibal falls on him, pinning him down, and causing his leg great pain.

Kila arrives. He helps Palmer to his feet. He leads him to the log jam.

EXT. LOG JAM -- DAY

Cole is helping Mary across the log jam. They are about half-way across, the water high on the up-river side. He turns to see what has happened to Kila and Palmer.

FX: Suddenly the Pukpuk (on the up-river side) lunges at them. It smashes through the log jam. With the huge release of water, all are thrown into the flood.

EXT. JUNGLE. LOG JAM -- DAY

Palmer and Kila stop as they see what has happened. Kila forces Palmer to continue on along their side of the river.

EXT. RIVER -- DAY

In the turbulent water, Cole and Mary can be seen surfacing from time to time.

EXT. RAPIDS -- DAY

Following the passage of Cole and Mary through the rapids.

EXT. JUNGLE. PLANE SITE -- DAY

Cannibals are attempting to track through the sandy soil beside the plane. As they pass Kila and Palmer are revealed lying in the crawl space created by the curve of the fuselage against the undergrowth. Kila holds his hand over Palmer's mouth. Palmer is in extreme pain.

EXT. RAPIDS TO WATERHOLE -- DAY

In the final section of rapids, Mary comes over a short waterfall into a deep pond. Cole soon follows.

They surface. Cole swims to Mary and helps her across to the nearest bank (which is furthestmost from the side on which Palmer and Kila are fleeing.)

EXT. RIVER BANK CLIFFS -- DAY

Exhausted. Cole and Mary arrive at the riverbank. They can find no way out for the moment, the cliffs dominating their position. They are under the branches of a tree, the branches like a weeping willow, hanging down to the water. They pant, gathering their breath after their ordeal. Mary is facing more toward the waterfall.

FX: In the background, the giant form of the Pukpuk slides noiselessly down the waterfall and into their pond.

Mary's eyes grow wide.

MARY

Tom, Tom.

He is barely responding. She shakes him.

MARY

Tom!...Cole!!

He looks at her.

It's here...It's here.

He wakes fully, realizing what she is saying. He desperately looks for a way out of the water. He begins pulling himself up, using a hanging branch of the tree.

Mary looks round.

The Pukpuk surfaces and sees them. With a growl it moves toward them.

Mary slaps Cole's back hard.

MARY

Hurry! Hurry!

Cole's expression shows she is not helping.

Mary realizes there is no time. She looks at the cliff.

There is a ledge close to the water.

She puts her head down and swims hard for the ledge.

Cole is making progress.

The Pukpuk is closing.

Mary is swimming.

The Pukpuk chooses Cole as the target.

Mary makes the cliff. She reaches up for the ledge and begins to pull herself out.

The Pukpuk is closing on Cole.

Cole looks round and sees it. He sees it is coming directly for him. He doubles his efforts.

Mary is up on the ledge, desperately looking for hand holds to go higher.

Cole gets up to a branch.

The Pukpuk arrives at the tree.

The Pukpuk roars, causing water to dance around it.

Cole tries to get further into the tree.

The Pukpuk raises out of the water, vertically up.

It snaps at Cole, biting the branch in half. Cole leaps.

With a huge splash, the Pukpuk falls back into the water.

Cole crashes into the cliff face. He desperately reaches for vines, anything to get a hold. He finds a handhold.

SFX: The Pukpuk roars in frustration.

It sees Mary. It heads for her.

Mary has made it up several feet to another ledge. She looks round.

The Pukpuk is coming for her.

Terrified, Mary desperately pulls herself further up.

The Pukpuk is coming.

Mary is climbing.

The Pukpuk is close.

Mary finds another ledge.

She is not far up. The Pukpuk can still get her.

The Pukpuk arrives at the bottom ledge.

Cole is desperately making his way across the cliff face.

Mary turns and looks down.

The Pukpuk is partially out of the water, it's front feet on the bottom ledge.

Mary turns fully round, her back to the cliff.

The Pukpuk sinks down, ready to leap for her.

Mary screams.

The Pukpuk leaps.

Mary is grabbed by the hair and pulled up. The Pukpuk slams against the cliff, barely missing her feet.

Jaws nash.

Mary realizes that Cole has her. They are on a higher ledge. In absolute amazement she realizes she is alright. They look down.

The Pukpuk below in the water, looks up at them and growls.

It leaps again, but misses. The impact rocks Mary and Cole.

Mary and Cole realize they are safe, and slump. Mary suddenly realizes her scalp is killing her.

MARY

Owwww!

She looks accusingly at Cole. He considers her unappreciative.

EXT. JUNGLE. RIVER-SIDE HIDING SPOT -- DUSK.

In their hide-out, Palmer and Kila rest. Palmer gets to his elbows. He looks at his wound. The spear has many barbs upon it and cannot be pulled out.

Palmer looks at Kila. Kila knows what must be done, and Palmer nods, giving him permission. Kila scrounges around and finds a stick for Palmer to bite on. He puts it in Palmer's mouth and moves round into position over the leg. Palmer nods, ready. Kila forces the spear through his leg. Palmer is in utter agony, but valiantly tries not to make a sound. Kila must bounce his weight in order to push the spear through. Finally with a 'tearing flesh sound' it breaks through. He pushes the spear further, then with a quick jerk breaks it. He pulls the shaft out, then the front half of the spear.

Palmer lifts his head weakly. His eyes roll back in his head, and he passes out.

Kila cannot tell if Palmer is still alive.

EXT. CLIFF -- NIGHT

Mary and Cole huddle. Mary shivers violently. Water runoff from the cliff above falls on them constantly.

MARY

So cold.

COLE

There's a warm belly down there.

FX: The Pukpuk is in the water, waiting.

Mary half laughs.

MARY

We'll never get out of this.

COLE

Who gets out of a croc's belly?

Mary realizes he's right.

Cole looks up.

COLE

Maybe in the morning.

Mary looks up.

With the moon above them, it can be seen that the cliff is an overhang and glistening with moisture. A flying fox cuts across the moon.

Mary shakes her head at the impossibility of the task.

EXT. RAMU RIVER -- SUNRISE.

Establishing: the first streaks of sunlight break the horizon.

EXT. CLIFF -- SUNRISE.

Cole's trembling hand scrounges desperately for a hand-hold along the wet rock. He heaves himself slowly up.

He is a dozen feet above Mary, who is looking anxiously up at him, and beyond her is the Pukpuk, waiting.

The Pukpuk watches. There is a low, desirous growl, and the water dances around it.

EXT. JUNGLE. RIVER-SIDE. SUNRISE.

Keeping a distance from the river, Kila assists Palmer through the jungle, Palmer using the rifle as a crutch. His leg has been bound with the sleeve of his shirt. Their progress is tediously slow.

Kila attempts to take him one way, but Palmer resists. Kila tries again to take him in a different direction. Palmer pushes him solidly away.

PALMER

Missus...we go there, to river,
for missus...um...Mary, my meri...
meri, woman, yes?

Kila shakes his head, frowning, and moving his arms in a tumbling motion round and round in front of him, describing the collapse of the log jam and someone drowning. He tries to tug Palmer in a different direction once more. Palmer pushes him off, becoming impatient.

PALMER

I'm sorry, sorry...I go to look
for Mary. You...you go home.
Thank you, Kila. But you go home now.

He nods his thanks, pats his shoulder, and limps on. KILA watches him worriedly. Despite his good sense telling him not to, he goes to Palmer and helps him once more.

EXT. CLIFF -- SUNRISE.

Cole is higher. He takes a hand hold. It suddenly gives way.

Cole falls.

FX: Cole falls toward the water near the Pukpuk.

EXT. RIVER/POND -- SUNRISE.

Cole hits the water.

FX: The Pukpuk whirls, snapping. It misses. Cole surfaces behind it. He makes desperately for the tree. The Pukpuk follows.

Cole is at the tree. He climbs up an overhanging branch. The Pukpuk snaps at him. It misses and falls back. Cole makes a few more feet. The Pukpuk leaps. It misses, but its crashing bulk butts Cole away in a long arc.

Cole swings round on the branch. Mary and Cole yell as it looks like he will crash straight into her. But he lands on the ledge right beside her. He lets the branch go.

COLE

(not moving, face to cliff)
Well.....That didn't work.

EXT. JUNGLE. RIVER-SIDE -- DAY

Palmer and Kila limp on. Kila halts them. They hurriedly find cover under ground foliage.

Lying on the ground Palmer and Kila see the muscular legs of CANNIBALS 1&2 walk past in the opposite direction, mere feet away. They have distinctive feathers decorating their legs. Cannibal 1'S legs pass, but Cannibal 2 pauses. His legs turn toward them. Tension builds. Finally, Cannibal 2'S toes flex, and he moves on.

Palmer and Kila breathe a sigh of relief.

EXT. CLIFF -- DAY

Cole sits beside Mary. He sees something and stands.

The bodies of a few dead Cannibals float in the water.

MARY
What?

COLE
Look.

She sees the bodies.

MARY
So?

COLE
How do you feel after a big meal?

MARY
What? I don't know...full?

COLE
Drowsy. Find some rocks.

They look for rocks, prying them off the cliff face with Cole's knife, scrounging for them on the ledge.

They toss them out near the Bodies, creating splashes.

COLE
C'mon, you stupid bastard. Look.

He throws a rock.

COLE

Look!

He throws another.

A rock lands near one of the bodies.

COLE

Look! Out there!

INTERCUT:

EXT. RIVER/POND -- DAY

FX: The Pukpuk looks round at the noise. With a growl it moves toward the bodies.

MARY

He's going!

The Pukpuk swims toward the bodies. It gets to the first. It gulps it down.

COLE

Good. Throw for the next one.

They do so.

EXT. JUNGLE RIVER-SIDE -- DAY

Palmer and Kila move on. Palmer halts. He has seen something.

PALMER

Look.

Kila looks.

Through a gap in the trees, on the far side of the river, Cole and Mary are on the cliff-face.

PALMER

Come on.

With misgivings Kila follows him toward to the river.

EXT. CLIFF -- DAY

The Pukpuk sleeps on the bottom, directly below Cole and Mary.

MARY

Well, he's asleep. What now?

COLE

Now we find some way down without waking him. If I hold your arm, you think you can make it to there?

MARY

Maybe. But how'll you get down?

COLE

First things first.

PALMER (OS) (distant)

Mary!

They look up.

Palmer is by the water on the far side, waving.

Mary waves back. She is happy he is alive.

PALMER (yelling)

Can I help?!

COLE (yelling)

Shut up! (to himself) Nitwit.

MARY

He's only trying to help.

COLE (muttering)

So was Judas.

Palmer has his hand to his ear, not hearing properly.

Mary realizes he may say more. She puts her finger to her mouth.

Palmer signals he understands.

Cole makes signs: He mimes pulling a rope.

Palmer shrugs, holding his hands up, not understanding.

Cole makes giant jaws with his arms, opening and shutting, then points to the water below.

Palmer realizes what he means.

Cole pretends to tie a rope round his waist, points to Mary and then mimes lowering her with a rope.

Palmer frowns. He makes the jaws sign and shrugs in question.

Cole mimes sleeping, his hands together by his angled cheek.

Palmer's head goes back in understanding. He holds his finger up, asking them to wait, and hurries back to Kila.

EXT. JUNGLE -- DAY

Kila splits a rock to make a blade. He succeeds in splitting it.

Palmer watches, frowning.

EXT. JUNGLE -- DAY

High in a tree, Kila saws through a vine. He succeeds in cutting through and the vine falls to earth.

Palmer limps over and picks it up.

EXT. JUNGLE -- DAY

1] Behind Kila, with Palmer pulling on the vine, Kila is slitting it longitudinally with the rock blade. It is hard, slow work.

2] They split the halves of the vine into quarters.

3] Kila now weaves the quarters into a rope, as Palmer watches.

EXT. CLIFF -- DAY

Cole and Mary sit, waiting.

MARY

What's taking them so long?

Cole ignores the complaint.

MARY

How are you going to get down when you lower me?

COLE

Just remember, if a croc hears a noise in the water it'll ignore it. But if it hears a noise on the water, it'll come up looking.

MARY

Answer my question.

COLE

I'm going after some insurance.

Mary's look requests further explanation.

COLE

Some tribes in the highlands hunt crocs by tying them up while they sleep.

Mary realizes what he is getting at.

MARY

You must be insane.

Cole looks at her. His look turns gentle.

Mary is surprised to see the look in his eyes. She realizes his affection for her.

We are following her hand as it travels slowly up to his face and rests gently on it.

Her eyes silently plead for him not to do what he is contemplating, and she shakes her head.

She moves closer and kisses him gently on the mouth.

MARY

Come with me.

He lowers his eyes and takes her hand slowly from his face.

His hand rests on hers. He pats it, then takes his hand away.

Cole looks away.

Mary, still watching him, lowers her eyes sadly.

EXT. JUNGLE. RIVER-SIDE -- DAY

Kila enters the water, a large coil of the fashioned rope over his shoulder.

He looks back at Palmer.

Palmer lies in the undergrowth, back from the river, his rifle at the ready. He waves encouragingly to Kila.

Kila looks at Cole.

INTERCUT:

EXT. CLIFF -- DAY

Cole stands. He mimes a swimming action, then holds his finger to his lips.

Kila's nod tells him he already understands he must be silent.

Kila swims, towing the rope.

Cole and Mary watch tensely.

Palmer watches, sweat, unnoticed, dripping from his nose.

EXT. UNDERWATER -- DAY

The Pukpuk on the bottom, it's eyes shut.

EXT. JUNGLE. RIVER-SIDE -- DAY

An elevated position. About a half-mile away, Kila can be seen midway across the pond.

Camera discovers muscular black legs, replete with feathered decorations in the foreground.

Cannibal 1 points. Cannibal 2 is also looking. They proceed quickly downriver.

EXT. CLIFF -- DAY

Kila stands on the ledge. He picks up the rope and flings an end up to Cole. Cole misses, and looks startled. The rope falls back, but Kila catches it just off the surface. Cole is relieved. Kila tries again. This time Cole catches it.

Cole has the rope round his waist and assists Mary to lower herself down.

Once down Mary takes off the rope, now scared she must enter the water with the Pukpuk. Forcing herself, Mary and Kila slip silently into the water and begin to swim quietly toward the other bank.

Cole watches them go.

EXT. RIVER/POND -- DAY

Mary and Kila swim.

EXT. UNDERWATER -- DAY

The Pukpuk sleeps.

INTERCUT:

EXT. CLIFF -- DAY

Cole looks out over the water.

Mary and Kila are mid-way across.

Cole looks down.

He sees the form of the Pukpuk below the water.

Cole lowers himself over the ledge until he is at full arm extension, face flat against the rock, the rope still tied around his waist. He lets go and slips the remaining few feet down the face until with a thump he reaches the lower ledge. A few pebbles 'plop' into the water. Cole notes them, wondering if it will disturb the Pukpuk.

FX: Pukpuk is asleep, as the pebbles rain down.

Cole turns on the tiny ledge and checks the Pukpuk.

To his relief it lies still as before.

The rope untied from his waist, Cole coils it then slips quietly into the water. He takes a breath and submerges.

INTERCUT:

EXT. UNDERWATER -- DAY

FX: Cole swims down the ten feet or so to the Pukpuk. He slips the rope round a back leg, on the far side of the Pukpuk i.e. we cannot see him tying it off round the leg, but can see his head and shoulders above its lower back.

EXT. JUNGLE. RIVER-SIDE -- DAY

Palmer waits, watching anxiously.

Mary and Kila are three-quarters the way across.

Suddenly Palmer sees something off to the up-river side. He lowers his head.

Cannibals 1 & 2 approach in stealth along the river bank.

Palmer is alarmed. He looks at Mary and Kila, then back to the Cannibals.

EXT. RIVER/POND -- DAY

Cole surfaces and takes several breaths. He goes under again.

EXT. UNDERWATER -- DAY

Cole arrives beside the Pukpuk. He has already tied the far back leg, and looped over the croc's back and wrapped the nearest back leg several times with the rope. He swims diagonally over to the far front leg.

EXT. RIVERSIDE -- DAY

The Cannibals are talking in low voices. Cannibal 1 decides to load his bow.

Palmer checks the rifle, and cocks it as quietly as he can. He agonizes over what to do.

Mary and Kila are closer.

EXT. UNDERWATER -- DAY

Cole is now on our side of the Pukpuk once more, tying off the nearest front leg. (there is enough rope left to go round its jaws.)

EXT. RIVERSIDE -- DAY

Cannibal 1, with the bow, pulls the string back, aiming for Mary.

SFX: The sound of the cane string straining as it is drawn further and further back.

Desperately, Palmer finds a large rock next to him. He suddenly stands and hurls the rock two-handed.

The rock hits Cannibal 1 in the back of the head. He falls forward into the water with a loud splash.

EXT. UNDERWATER -- DAY

Cole is tying off the front leg, right beside the pukpuk's eye.

The Pukpuk's eye springs open.

Cole shouts in fright.

The Pukpuk lunges round at him. Pushing off the bottom, Cole leaps for its back, grabbing the rope running over its shoulders.

EXT. RIVER/POND -- DAY

The Pukpuk surfaces, Cole on its back, holding onto the rope. The Pukpuk thrashes round.

The rope is twisting round Cole's wrist as he is thrown to one side.

The Pukpuk looks for the source of the sound.

Mary and Kila are in the distance, swimming.

With a growl the Pukpuk surges for them.

EXT. RIVERSIDE -- DAY

Palmer is charging Cannibal 2, hoping to scare him with the rifle, not wanting to discharge it. Cannibal 2 throws his ax. It collects Palmer across the head and he is poleaxed, unconscious.

Cannibal 2 makes to finish him, but looks round at Mary and Kila. He realizes they have not seen the struggle. He quickly hides behind a tree by the bank.

EXT. RIVER/POND -- DAY

In the water, some ten yards behind Mary, Kila looks round. His eyes grow wide.

FX: The Pukpuk is heading for them at speed.

Kila turns to Mary.

KILA

Missus! Missus!

Mary looks round. Her expression turns to horror. They both put their heads down and swim hard for the bank.

INTERCUT:

Mary, Kila swimming.

Cannibal 2, waiting.

The Pukpuk coming.

Cole on its back, gasping for air, in agony at the pain in his wrist from the twisted rope.

Mary and Kila swimming.

Cole's knife appears in his hand. He stabs again and again at the Pukpuk, drawing blood.

The Pukpuk roars in pain.

Mary and Kila are almost at the bank.

Cole cuts at the rope holding his wrist.

Mary stands up in the shallow water. She rushes for the bank.

Cole cuts the rope and falls away into the water.

Mary is coming onto the bank, running. Cannibal 2 steps out in front of her. He swings his ax. Mary ducks, sprawling on the ground. Cannibal 2 spins round. He has her on the ground before him. He grins cruelly, and raises the ax. Mary holds up her hand to protect herself. The ax begins to come down.

Cannibal 2 is snapped up by the Pukpuk. He is lifted straight up above Mary. The Pukpuk tosses him high, and he falls back half inside the jaws.

Mary is directly below the massive head, watching.

Kila sprints past them.

Mary gets up and follows Kila.

Kila and Mary quickly drag Palmer's unconscious body away from the river. She looks back.

The Pukpuk is gulping down Cannibal 2.

EXT. RIVER -- DAY

Cole, knife between his teeth, swims for the bank further down stream. All is calm, it seems he will make it. The location, however, is where Kila barely escaped the crocodiles. Cole stops as he sees something.

On the riverbank are three large (normal-size and color) crocs.

Cole
(knife between the teeth)
Oh...fuck.

The crocs slip quickly into the water and come toward him.

Cole treads water. He takes the knife from his teeth. He watches his nemesis moving smoothly toward him. His expression turns fierce. He brandishes the knife.

COLE

Come on, you bastards! Come on!

The crocs come at him. Cole stabs at them, but it is useless. In a moment he is gone.

The crocs death-roll, tearing him to pieces, the water turning red with blood.

EXT. UNDERWATER - DAY

SOFT, SAD MUSIC. SLOW MO: His knife spins over and over, catching less and less light as it sinks into the murky depths.

EXT. TRAVEL MONTAGE.

A] Mary and Kila assist a delirious Palmer.

B] Mary and Kila have made a stretcher and are hauling Palmer up a steep slope. They are barely making progress, straining with all their might.

C] It is night. Mary, Kila and Palmer try to sleep. They are freezing cold and huddle together. Hordes of mosquitoes constantly bother them. They have covered themselves with leaves. Palmer's leg is looking bad.

D] In twilight Mary and Kila haul Palmer through a swamp. It is tedious progress through sucking mud. Mosquitoes swarm.

E] Mary and Kila haul Palmer through the jungle. Mary falls down. Kila helps her. She has a raging fever. She struggles back to her feet.

F] Mary and Kila pull Palmer up a slope. They are almost to a ledge, but as they arrive, THREE WARRIORS are standing, waiting. Mary and Kila collapse, defeated.

INT. NATIVE HUT -- NIGHT

There is a fireplace in the middle of the hut. Mary has a high fever, shivering violently. She is attended to by NATIVE WOMEN. Palmer lies nearby, only half-conscious. Kila sits nearby.

EXT. VILLAGE -- NIGHT

Following the white man with the mane of blonde hair. He arrives at the hut that Palmer and Mary are in and enters.

INT. HUT -- NIGHT

The white man, Royce Palmer, crosses to his son and kneels. Palmer looks at him.

OLD MAN (V.O.)

I drifted in and out of consciousness.
Then, like a dream, I saw my father.

Royce Palmer's face. He strokes his son's face gently. He looks at his leg. It is infected.

OLD MAN (V.O.)

He told me Mary had malaria. I remember
he asked me if she was allergic to quinine.

Royce is asking the question, and referring to Mary.

I couldn't answer.

Royce prepares a large shot of quinine. He moves to Mary and takes her arm. Palmer watches.

I was glad Mary was getting help.
She had been so brave.

Royce gives Mary the injection.

ECU: the injection bottle, marked 'QUININE'.

Palmer's eyes roll back in his head.

INT. HOSPITAL -- NIGHT

High Angle: A pinpoint of light appears in the middle of blackness. Slow zoom through the light to discover Palmer below in bed, surrounded by blackness. The stump of his bandaged, amputated leg is above the bed sheets. Palmer is reading a letter. Image slowly rotates as the letter is read.

ROYCE (V.O.)

My dear son. I can't imagine the pain I've put you through that you should come so far to look for me. I don't know how I can make you understand, but when I came to be in the war I found I could not kill another. I once took a sacred oath to save life, and when it came down to it, I could not kill another man. Maybe that makes me a coward. I don't know. So I stole some medical supplies and deliberately bailed out of my plane.

EXT. VILLAGE. ROYCE MONTAGE -- DAY

A] Royce, injured in his parachute landing, is being nursed by NATIVES. Near him is the big first aid kit previously seen strapped to him when he parachuted.

ROYCE (V.O.)

I was lucky to land in a village where the people are kind.

B] Royce, his hair longer and now wearing only a loin cloth, is being brought food by WIFE 2, while WIFE 1 sits with him, smiling.

ROYCE (V.O.)

I have everything I need here and I am happy.

C] Royce, his hair longer, wearing a stethoscope, listens to a PICCININNY'S chest while the CHILD'S MOTHER holds the baby.

ROYCE (V.O.)

In return, I am a doctor for my hosts.

D] Royce sits with the Chief at a feast while Dancers parade before them. He is handed a drink by the Chief and toasts him.

ROYCE (V.O.)

I am respected and want for nothing.

BACK TO.

Palmer below in the hospital bed. Zooming back through the light to resurrect the white dot in the middle of blackness.

ROYCE (V.O.)

I hope I can make you understand I could not come back, what with the shame I had brought on us already, and then to add desertion to that. Son, I don't know what force, if any, shapes our lives, but I am happy with the way my life has gone. Before coming here I did not realize how much I disliked my life back home. I'm happy now. Thank you for coming for me. Your loving father, Royce.

Palmer lowers the letter.

Eventually the white dot disappears.

EXT. DESERTED SUBURBAN STREET. GRAY DAY.

FADE IN. A lone figure moves slowly forward on crutches, a leg missing. It is Harry Palmer.

OLD MAN (V.O.)

When I arrived home, I tried to tell people. But no one believed my story.

CROSSFADE TO.

INT. A DARK DEN -- NIGHT

Back in the same room as in Scene 1.

The Old Man from behind as before. He is still writing.

He is now many pages into the ledger, both pages visible, filled with writing.

OLD MAN (V.O.)

That pukpuk, that monster, he'll still be there. Still lurking in the green waters of the Ramu, where he has hunted for hundreds of years. One day someone will kill him. Someone, someday, will surely kill him.

The Old Man shuts the manuscript, and lays the pen upon it. He swivels on the chair, but his face is still not visible. His amputated leg is apparent as he picks up some crutches, and moves to the other side of the room. He lies down on a sofa, and puts his hand to his forehead.

INT. DARK DEN -- DAY

An old blind is lifted. Bright sunshine streams into the room.

MAN 1 is dressed in a suit. He looks toward the sofa. With Man 1 watching, AMBULANCE MEN lift the Old Man's body, covered in a sheet, onto an ambulance stretcher. They wheel him from the room.

WORKER 1 (OS)

Ah, what'll we do with all these old books?

Man 1 looks toward the desk.

WORKER 1 is standing by the desk, waiting for a reply. Man 1, holds up his hand, instructing him to wait. He exits the room.

INT. HALL TO KITCHEN -- DAY

Man 1 comes from the den and walks down the hall. He enters the kitchen. He is looking at someone as he sits down.

MAN 1

Sorry to disturb you, ma'am, but what do you want us to do with all the books in there?

An OLD LADY looks back at him. She seems distracted, very sad. She looks at him, not sure of what he is saying.

MAN 1

He seemed to be working on something at the desk.

Old Lady shrugs and looks away.

MAN 1

How about I tell him to store 'em in the attic?

Old Lady nods.

INT. DEN -- DAY

Worker 1 quickly packs the books from the desk into a box. He picks up the manuscript and shoves it in with all the rest. He begins taping the box.

INT. ATTIC -- DAY

Worker 1 carries boxes into the attic. He drops them heavily onto floorboards. There is a taped box with 'Books' scrawled in texta across it. In the background, Worker 1 shuts the door.

EXT. OLD HOUSE. SUBURBAN STREET -- DAY.

A grey day. An hydraulic platform lifts the Old Lady in a wheel chair into the back of a taxi van. Suitcases are beside her chair. Man 1 watches. He comes round to the side window.

MAN 1

Bye bye, Ma'am.

The Old Lady does not respond. She is watching the house. She places her hand on the glass and grins lovingly, sadly. The taxi moves from frame.

Man watches the taxi go.

EXT. CAB INT, MOVING -- DAY

The Old Lady looks down. In her lap she has the photograph of her and Cole, taken from the den. Her hand caresses the frame.

ECU: Her eyes grin lovingly.

FADE OUT.