

IN THE DARK

V 3.0.

by

Stefan Alexander  
and  
Anthony Aguilianti

Contact  
Stefan@nervous-energy.org

*NOTE: This film is dark. Literally. There is not a bit of sun or blue sky for the majority of the story. There is the light of explosions and fighting, or fire, though most of the action takes place at night. For scenes set in the day the sky is bruised with dark clouds.*

BLACKNESS

The sounds of gunfire and screams of MEN.

**SUPER: "War is dark. Black as pitch. It is not a God. It does not laugh or weep. It rewards neither skill nor daring. It is not a trial of souls, nor the measure of wills..."**

**It is merely the place where the iron bones of the earth meet the hollow bones of men and break them." - R. Scott Bakker, The Darkness That Comes Before**

FADE IN:

BEGIN DREAM SEQUENCE:

INT. ABANDONED FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

JOSHUA (30's), a dutiful man running so hard from something that he's run right into a war-zone, is seated up against a wall with bullet holes riddled in it.

His face is painted black and he wears black and green camouflage gear. There are no markings to indicate which side he fights for. No country. No flag. It's just his side, the enemy...and The War.

The whites of his eyes are wide with fear.

He momentarily releases the grip on his gun, and holds out his hand. He watches it tremble, failing in his attempts to steady it through gulping, heavy, breaths.

A SHOT RINGS OUT.

And another.

The bullet tracer whizzes by his head, a line of light in the darkness, and he throws himself to the ground, pressing himself into the dirt.

He arches his head up to see RILEY (black, late 20s, hides his trauma behind jokes, a JOKER CARD tucked into the band of his helmet), dressed in the same camouflage and black paint, huddled in a corner, talking into his radio.

RILEY

We're in deep shit! I need an update on that air support!

ARKADY (O.S.)

Sons of bitches!

Joshua turns to see ARKADY (20's), grizzled and older than his years, stand and fire his automatic rifle through a shattered window, staying low. Like the rest of his comrades, he too wears the dark camouflage and black paint.

He falls back as he's shot in the shoulder. He collapses to the ground, groaning, bleeding. It seems to snap Joshua out of his stupor.

JOSHUA

Medic! Medic!

SANDRA (20's), a capable and compassionate Scandinavian woman, but out of her depth, rushes over to Arkady and slides to avoid the hail of bullets spraying into the barn, shattering what windows remain

The wooden beams turn into splinters, breaking barrels apart, and shredding hay bales.

She quickly puts pressure on Arkady's wound. He howls in pain.

SANDRA

Hold still.

She turns to the others.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

We need to get out of here, now!

JOSHUA

Do NOT let him die!

Joshua crawls towards the back of the barn where GEORGIY (20's), brother to Arkady and a mountain of a man driven by a need for redemption, blindly fires through an open door. His eyes are intense through the camo paint and a thick, bushy beard.

GEORGIY

We're surrounded! There's an entire platoon of them!

Joshua peeks out for a moment and almost gets his head shot off as bullets dig into the frame and wood splinters.

Georgiy slams in another round of bullets into his rifle.

GEORGIY (CONT'D)

I'm running low! We need to move!

JOSHUA

Save your bullets!

Joshua looks up to the loft area to see THOMAS (40's), a literal cynical loose cannon, who has seen too much, scoping out the area with a sniper rifle, a solemn look on his grizzled face. A small golden crucifix hangs from his neck.

He looks away from his scope, and down towards Joshua. He shakes his head.

Joshua crawls back to where he was originally, where Riley desperately keeps trying the radio

The darkness of the barn is lit only by gunfire.

RILEY

This isn't a fucking drill! I need an ETA on the air support!

Suddenly, the radio crackles and...

COMMAND (ON RADIO)

Air support is ten minutes from your location.

RILEY

We don't have ten minutes!

The radio crackles.

RILEY (CONT'D)

Hello?! Command! Fuck!

Riley angrily throws the radio.

RILEY (CONT'D)

We're done for man! What do we do?  
What the hell do we do?!

Joshua contemplates for a moment. Arkady groans loudly in agony.

Joshua quickly turns to see blood still gushing out of Arkady's wound as Sandra desperately tries to stop the bleeding.

SANDRA

We need to get him out of here NOW.

GEORGIY (O.S.)

Josh!

Joshua whips his head towards the back of the barn to see Georgiy reloading again.

GEORGIY (CONT'D)

This is my last round! What's the plan?!

Sniper shots are heard from the loft as Thomas attempts to take out as many as he can.

Joshua anxiously ponders and then looks towards a small opening in the wall.

He quickly crawls towards it on his elbows, and rips away a piece of the wood.

JOSHUA

Stay here!

RILEY

Where are you going, Cap?!

Joshua crawls through the opening.

EXT. FIELD - CONTINUOUS

Joshua stays low, crawling through tall grass and cratered mud, as shots ring out from all directions.

Joshua slowly peeks up to see the barn getting shot up from multiple locations in the forest surrounding the barn.

The fire ceases abruptly.

Joshua furrows his brow in confusion and looks around.

OUT OF THE FOREST, IN FRONT OF THE BARN... two SOLDIERS step out with RPGs strapped on their shoulders.

Joshua's eyes widen in horror.

He stands and runs back towards the barn.

JOSHUA

Get out! Get out of the barn!

The Soldiers fire and the barn erupts in a huge ball of flame and smoke

The shockwave sends Joshua flying back into the grass.

Joshua lays on the ground for a few moments before groaning, as he slowly sits up, ears ringing.

He looks towards the barn to see that it's engulfed in flames and crumbling to pieces.

The roof is falling in on itself.

Joshua is distraught and shellshocked.

The ringing in his ears subsides and the sound of a whirling rotor blade fades in.

Joshua looks above to see four attack helicopters rise into view.

The guns open up. Bullets rain down.

Joshua covers his head as the sounds of constant fire and screams of agony are heard from within the barn.

Silence.

Joshua slowly looks up with confusion.

The barn is a shattered, smoking, ruin, still engulfed in flames, and there is no return fire from the surrounding forest.

He turns his gaze back to the barn, runs over and stops just before the flames.

Joshua lowers his head in defeat and closes his eyes.

A boy's voice echoes dreamily from behind Joshua:

GREG (V.O.)

Dad...

Joshua looks up in confusion, and spins around. No one is there.

GREG (V.O.)

Dad...

He whips around and frantically, searching for the origin of the voice.

JOSHUA

Greg...?

GREG (V.O.)

Dad... help me...

He panics and moves away from the barn.

JOSHUA

Greg?!

GREG (V.O.)

I don't wanna die...

JOSHUA

Greg?!

Greg's calls are heard all around him.

A click is heard and Joshua freezes. He slowly looks down and sees that he's stepped on a mine.

He trembles as he breathes with wide eyes.

GREG (V.O.)

Dad? I need you.

Joshua turns and...

BOOM!

END DREAM SEQUENCE:

INT. BASE - SLEEPING QUARTERS - NIGHT

Joshua jolts upright, gasping in the darkness. Sweating and trembling, he quickly composes himself.

The room is stark concrete, makeshift sleeping quarters. Others rest on uncomfortable cots.

Another thunderous clap. Joshua parts the curtains of a nearby window, revealing flashing lightning against dark clouds.

He lies back, exhales, swiping his hair from his brow.

He slips into his boots, noticing his teammates (Sandra, Arkady, Georgiy, and Thomas) asleep in their cots - alive.

Joshua stands, striding out bare-chested in boots and sweatpants.

Thomas, facing his cot, opens his eyes and tracks Joshua's exit, an observer from the shadows.

INT. BASE - COMMUNICATION ROOM - NIGHT

A low-lit hub of terminals, monitors, and wires; a makeshift communications space, not built for this purpose.

It's quiet; the night shift.

Somewhere amid it all, there is a satellite terminal.

Joshua sits down at it, opens a desktop call icon, and makes a video call.

TINA (early 30s) answers the video with a tired gaze; she's in bed, and he's woken her up.

TINA  
(on the screen)  
You couldn't have called a little earlier?

Joshua checks his watch.

JOSHUA  
Shit... sorry, honey. Didn't realize the time.

There is a pause as Joshua rubs his eyes.

TINA  
Where are you, right now?

JOSHUA  
You know I can't tell you.

Tina nods, understanding.

TINA  
Well, wherever it is, I hope you've got good weather.

JOSHUA  
You're kidding. I haven't seen the sun since I came here. Next opportunity I get, I'm working on my tan.

Tina lightly smiles. There's a sadness to it.

TINA  
We both miss you. A lot.

Joshua bristles at the mention of them 'both'.



TINA (CONT'D)

Do you want me to wake him up? I don't mind getting him.

JOSHUA

No, no. He has school in the morning. Let him sleep.

Tina nods.

TINA

Maybe you can read him a bedtime story next time?

JOSHUA

Yeah...that would be nice.

TINA

It's fine. Never mind.

JOSHUA

I said it would be nice, Tina-

TINA

He's getting used to you not being around, you know?

JOSHUA

Don't start this again-

TINA

Whatever, Josh.

JOSHUA

Don't you want to grow up in a safer world? Don't you want Greg to grow up in a safer world?

Tina scoffs.

TINA

Don't use him as an excuse.

Joshua looks down, winces, disappointed in himself. Tina starts to cry, trying to hold it together.

TINA (CONT'D)

Shit. I don't want to cry.

JOSHUA

Baby, look, I'm sorry. I'm tired, I'm stressed, I haven't eaten properly in days-

TINA

So am I, Joshua. You've no idea how hard it is doing this alone. The hospital visits. All the tests... promising him everything's going to be okay. I can't-

GREG (O.S.)

Mom...?

Tina quickly snaps around to see GREG (5) walking into the room and rubbing his eyes. He's thin, pale, sickly.

TINA

Hey, baby.

GREG

Is that dad?

Greg sits on Tina's lap with a weak smile, waves to Joshua, who waves back.

JOSHUA

Hi, buddy.

GREG

When are you coming home?

JOSHUA

Real soon, bud. Real soon. Then we'll go to baseball, and eat our weight in hot dogs. Like I promised.

GREG

Can we get popcorn?

JOSHUA

Whatever you want.

Joshua tries to keep his emotions in check.

GREG

I love you, Daddy.

JOSHUA

I love you too, but you need to go back to bed. It's late where you are.

GREG

Okay.

JOSHUA

I'll talk to you again soon okay.

Tina goes to speak, but the sound of a cleared throat alerts Joshua's attention to the doorway.

THOMAS (O.S.)

Joshua.

Joshua closes the program and turns to face Thomas, who stares at him with a slightly puzzled expression.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

We've started prepping for  
Commander Dorian's arrival  
tomorrow.

Joshua nods.

JOSHUA

Thanks. I'll be there in a minute.

Thomas nods, then slowly walks off.

INT. BASE - MEETING ROOM - DAY

It's another gloomy, rainy day. Joshua stands by a window and looks out. The team is seated amongst scattered chairs; Arkady and Georgiy sit near each other, while the rest are spread out.

The door opens and the COMMANDING OFFICER, DORIAN (40's), demanding, no-nonsense, former British military, enters the room. He's dressed in an officer's outfit (again, markings don't reveal which country).

JOSHUA

Attention!

The Team all quickly stands.

DORIAN

At ease.

JOSHUA

Yes, sir.

Joshua furrows his brow, as Arkady and Georgiy are the first to sit. He sits down near Riley.

DORIAN

I hope you've had the opportunity  
to get acquainted...

JOSHUA

Arkady and Georgiy briefed us on the lay of the land. They've been brilliant to have the past couple of weeks.

Arkady and Georgiy both give a thumbs up.

DORIAN

Good. The brother's local knowledge will be invaluable.

Dorian looks at Riley, doesn't recognize him.

JOSHUA

This is Riley. Comms expert and former special forces. We've served together, already.

DORIAN

Former?

Riley knocks on his left foot; clearly prosthetic.

RILEY

Prosthetic, sir.

Dorian inspects it, clearly not impressed.

DORIAN

Rather your leg than your arm. As long as you can hold a rifle, we'll take what we can get.

Joshua lightly smirks.

DORIAN (CONT'D)

Who else do we have?

JOSHUA

Sandra. Medic. Surgeon. Overseas volunteer. Been with us a few days.

DORIAN

Any battle experience?

SANDRA

I grew up outdoors. Learned survival skills. Worked on my father's boat. I know how to fend for myself.

Dorian frowns.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

Being here isn't so different.

Dorian appears to be losing faith in this rag-tag outfit.  
Joshua notices.

JOSHUA

With all due respect, sir, we had to cast the net wide to fill the roles you specified.

DORIAN

(to Thomas)

And you?

JOSHUA

Thomas was part of the unit that held off the advance at Bukovica Bridge. He's our latest addition to the team.

Dorian's eyebrows raise and he nods, impressed and relieved.

DORIAN

Well done.

THOMAS

My pleasure...sir.

Dorian turns and starts to pace the room.

DORIAN

I'll try and keep this brief.

(beat)

You've all seen the reports, even those of you who haven't been to the front.

Everybody shares sombre nods of agreement.

DORIAN (CONT'D)

The enemy are working to break the will of the civilian population. Murder, rape, torture.

THOMAS

Fuckers.

DORIAN

You're a part of the International Legion formed of volunteers. It's not the regular army, so temper your expectations on backup or supplies.

(MORE)

DORIAN (CONT'D)

Your mission is long-range reconnaissance, so we're working with what we have. Stay in small groups and make your moves at night.

Joshua looks around the room, eyeing each member.

JOSHUA

We may not be an army, but you're still expected to follow my orders.

Thomas rolls his eyes.

THOMAS

Which are?

DORIAN

On the way. For now-

Dorian pulls out a rolled up map and hands it to Joshua.

DORIAN (CONT'D)

-your priority is to establish an FOB at the marked position. Any questions?

Dorian looks around the room but no one speaks.

DORIAN (CONT'D)

Good luck. You'll need it. Written across the faces of the team are a mixture of excitement, fear, and resolve.

INT. BASE - OPERATIONS ROOM - LATER

The Team stand looking over the map, with an area circled in red.

JOSHUA

The location is about ten miles out. We'll move once the sun sets.

Sandra scoffs.

SANDRA

What sun?

Joshua looks out at the deep grey outside.

JOSHUA

Rest up for the remainder of today, and be ready to move at dusk.

RILEY

Yes, sir.

GEORGIY

Come on, let's get out there and  
make a difference.

ARKADY

Hell, yeah!

Arkady and Georgiy high five.

THOMAS

(under his breath)  
Monkey see, monkey do.

Joshua turns his gaze to Thomas.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

They say jump, and we ask how high,  
right?

JOSHUA

Is there a problem, Thomas?

Thomas looks around the round and snickers.

THOMAS

Just saying. Let's not pretend any  
of us signed up out of the goodness  
of our hearts, or some moral  
obligation.

RILEY

So, pray tell, why are we doing  
this?

THOMAS

We've all got our reasons.  
(to Arkady and Georgiy)  
Whether it's because you fucked up  
somewhere along the road and need  
retribution...  
(to Sandra)  
...Or to make Daddy proud...  
(to Riley)  
Or because you've something to  
prove.

Thomas looks down at Riley's leg. Riley snaps back with an  
aggressive glance.

Thomas turns to Joshua.

THOMAS (CONT'D)  
And whatever you're here for.

Joshua bristles.

JOSHUA  
The same as you all, I hope.

THOMAS  
Whatever helps you sleep at night.

Thomas exits the room.

Riley whistles.

RILEY  
What the hell was his problem?

Joshua shrugs.

JOSHUA  
There's always one. Anyone else got  
an issue?

ARKADY  
No, sir.

JOSHUA  
Good.

GEORGIY  
So. How high do you need us to  
jump?

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

It could be Europe, but it's hard to tell, what with all the devastation.

Shelled buildings. Burnt out vehicles. Piles of rubble. This place has seen a lot of action, and is seemingly abandoned.

The Team, with Joshua leading and Thomas bringing up the rear, moves through the shadows, guns raised and scanning the empty doorways and windows.

They pass the body of a SOLDIER - impossible to tell which side it belonged to - a CROW picking at the rotting, bloated, flesh.

RILEY  
Is that one of ours?



ARKADY

It's not anything, anymore.

There is sudden MOVEMENT ahead; the noise of something stirring the debris.

Joshua raises his hand, indicating for the team to stop. They raise their guns in the direction of the sound. Tensions are raised.

A MANGY DOG appears into the ruined street. They all breathe a sigh of relief.

The dog starts to growl a low, rumbling tone.

JOSHUA

Easy...

It slowly moves closer towards the group.

GEORGIY

Should I shoot it?

The dog's slow pace turns into a run as it sprints towards them, barking now.

Joshua aims his weapon at the dog...

Then the dog activates an IED trip-mine.

THOMAS

DOWN!

Thomas and the others throw themselves onto the ground, as the mine EXPLODES.

The team shield themselves, as debris and fleshy pieces of dog guts rain down on them.

Eventually, as the dust settles, they start to look up, one-by-one.

Arkady nods to Riley's arm.

ARKADY

Riley, you've got some dog on you.

Riley wipes some guts off his sleeve.

RILEY

Fuck!

JOSHUA

Let's keep going. Keep your eyes  
open for more.

RILEY

Dogs or IED's?

THOMAS

Both.

They move on through the ruins as it begins to rain.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF CITY - FIELD - NIGHT

A field riddled with shell craters, abandoned trenches - and  
bodies, almost swallowed by the mud.

This was the site of a furious battle. Hundreds killed, and  
left here to rot.

Joshua focuses on the body of one soldier in particular,  
who's eyes have been gouged out by maggots, which squirm in  
all directions around the sockets.

The Team pick their way through the nightmare scene, stepping  
carefully over and around the corpses, as rain hammers down.

They cover their noses, and keep going.

EXT. CAMP - NIGHT

A small woodland clearing in the shadow of a bridge that has  
been shelled, and collapsed into the river.

A few bodies float down stream.

Just inside the tree-line, the Team put up their tents.

Thomas pounds stakes into the ground, to erect a large tent.

Joshua, wearing headphones, speaks into a field radio kit. He  
nods in affirmation.

JOSHUA

(into the radio)

Roger that.

Joshua looks over at Thomas and the others.

EXT. MAIN TENT - LATER

A makeshift operations room; a table with a map, the radio, and a few chairs.

The tent is open, as the rain continues to fall outside.

Arkady and Georgiy clean their rifles.

Sandra looks tense, while Riley plays with a switchblade, twirling it around in his hand.

Thomas looks at him with disdain.

RILEY  
Scouting what?

JOSHUA  
They want us to get eyes on a suspected resupply point, and report back troop numbers.

He looks around the area as Riley, Arkady, and Georgiy seem eager to go. Sandra is apprehensive and Thomas has his back to him, staring out at the rain.

SANDRA  
Can't they send in drones?

JOSHUA  
It's downtown. Too many tall buildings apparently.

Sandra nods.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)  
Riley and Arkady, you're with me.  
Sandra and Thomas, stay with the base.

Sandra breathes a sigh of relief. Georgiy tweaks Arkady's cheek.

GEORGIY  
Take care of my little baby brother.

Arkady slaps his hand away.

ARKADY  
We're eleven months apart, asshole.

GEORGIY  
It's almost a year and you know it.

Arkady jokingly pokes Georgiy's stomach, but before he can retaliate.

JOSHUA

Let's move.

INT. APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

An abandoned apartment; the outside wall has been blown away by shelling. The room has been turned upside down - a teddy bear lays on the floor, covered in dust and debris.

Joshua and Arkady lay on their stomachs. Arkady looks out through his rifle sights, while Joshua takes in the scene with binoculars.

POV: BINOCULAR view of an apartment complex. There are a few flickering lights behind a couple of ground floor windows, but otherwise, all is quiet.

JOSHUA

Not seeing any movement.

ARKADY

We should check the other side.

JOSHUA

Let's regroup with the others.  
We'll be able to cover more angles.

Arkady nods, as he and Joshua get to their feet.

Riley checks the refrigerator and makes a look of disgust.

RILEY

Who wants some moldy old meat?

JOSHUA

I'll pass.

Riley eyes light up as he reaches to grab something; two bottles of beer.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)

We're on duty, Riley.

RILEY

One's not gonna kill us. It'll take the edge off.

JOSHUA

Fine, knock yourself out. Take five.

Riley hands one beer to Arkady. They crack the tops off on the windowsill, and clink them together in a cheers.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)

Either of you got any info on Thomas? Seems like a hard nut.

RILEY

The kind of nut that's best left uncracked.

ARKADY

You think he's a risk to our operation?

Riley chuckles and shakes his head.

RILEY

Nah. I've served with his sort. Think they've seen it all. They'll bitch and moan, but when it comes to war, he's the first person I'd turn to.

Joshua nods in agreement.

JOSHUA

You've worked with him before?

RILEY

No, but I did my research on everyone. It's good to know who'll be beside you when the shit starts to fly.

Joshua bristles.

RILEY (CONT'D)

To be honest, you're the biggest mystery of us all, cap.

Joshua flashes a look of intrigue.

RILEY (CONT'D)

I've worked with you for what-several months now?

JOSHUA

Around that.

RILEY

But I never stopped to think...Family man. Young kid.

(MORE)

RILEY (CONT'D)

Why would you leave all that behind to come to a shithole like this?

JOSHUA

Maybe I want my son to grow up in a better world.

RILEY

Nah. That's not it. I mean, that's what you tell yourself, sure, but you're running from something. Otherwise you wouldn't be here. We're all running from something.

He looks down at his foot.

RILEY (CONT'D)

Well, I'm not running, but you know...

Joshua grabs the bottle and takes a sip of Riley's beer.

JOSHUA

You don't know me, Riley.

RILEY

I don't. But, Thomas was right when he said that we've all got a reason. I know that much...sir.

Joshua looks at him as he hands back the beer. Arkady shifts, awkwardly. Then...

JOSHUA

Leave the beers. We're wasting time.

Joshua leaves. Riley raises an eyebrow at Arkady; he's touched a nerve. He takes one last gulp of beer, and follows after the others.

Unbeknownst to the group, FADDEI (10), a small boy, dressed in fatigues, stands by the door frame, hidden in the shadows.

He quickly scampers off, once the three are out of sight.

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - CAR PARK - CONTINUOUS

Faddei runs at full speed, silently across the car park.

His gasps of breath are heavy, as he continuously turns his head back and fourth out of panic of being spotted.

INT. ABANDONED BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Another abandoned building, collapsed from shelling, barely stands to the side of the car park.

Faddei makes his way inside to the small room, where many ENEMY SOLDIERS are huddled, standing over various maps, cleaning various weaponry, and speaking to each other in hushed tones.

A man, COMMANDER FAZISTSKI (40's), sporting a large jacket, donned with war medals on the torso, turns to face Faddei, his expression one of intrigue.

COMMANDER FAZISTSKI  
(in Local Dialect)  
So?

Faddei looks across at another young soldier, who is slightly older, MALIK (16).

Malik smiles warmly and nods.

Faddei swallows hard and clears his throat.

FADDEI  
(in Local Dialect)  
There were three people in the apartment.

COMMANDER FAZISTSKI  
And?

FADDEI  
They left.

COMMANDER FAZISTSKI  
And?

Faddei stares at the Commander, confused.

FADDEI  
What?

The commander steps forward.

COMMANDER FAZISTSKI  
And?!

Faddei jumps at the raised tone in his tone.

He looks across at Malik, who mouths a word "sir" in the dialect and motions a salute signal.

Faddei salutes quickly.

FADDEI  
Sir. Sorry-sir.

The commander approaches Faddei and towers over him.  
He quickly ruffles Faddei's hair and lets out a laugh.  
The other soldier follow with their own laughter.

COMMANDER FAZISTSKI  
(to everyone)  
Come on, let's move out. We camp in  
the apartment, tonight. Follow  
their tracks in the morning.

As the soldiers begin to flood out, Malik walks up to Faddei and places his hand on his shoulder.

MALIK  
You okay, Faddei?

Faddei nods, unconvincingly.

MALIK (CONT'D)  
Commander Fazistski is just ribbing  
you. I remember my first scouting  
mission. I was shit scared. It's  
normal.

Malik hands Faddei a hot drink.

MALIK (CONT'D)  
Have some of this. You've earned  
it.

FADDEI  
Thanks, Malik.

Faddei takes a large sip.

EXT. CAMP - LATER

At the perimeter of the camp, Georgiy sharpens his knife, keeping watch whilst sat against a wall of sandbags.

There's movement in the trees. Georgiy tenses, immediately drops the knife, and raises his gun.

From the tree-line, Joshua, Riley, and Arkady emerge. Georgiy quickly relaxes.



GEORGIY

What happened to the codeword?

JOSHUA

What happened to you keeping watch?

ARKADY

We were watching you for ten minutes, sharpening your knife without a care in the world.

RILEY

Could've taken you out ages ago.

GEORGIY

Bullshit.

JOSHUA

What's bullshit is you letting your guard down.

Thomas and Sandra emerge from their tents.

SANDRA

What's going on?

RILEY

Arkady's idiot brother was playing with his knife instead of keeping watch.

ARKADY

Hey, don't talk to him like that, man.

RILEY

Aw. Brotherly love.

Arkady lunges for Riley, pushing him over.

JOSHUA

That's enough! Cut that shit out, now!

They ignore him. Riley gets back up and pushes Arkady backwards. The fight continues.

THOMAS

Fuck's sake, Joshua. You want to take some control here?

Joshua shouts at the two men.

JOSHUA

Shut that shit down. Now.

Joshua grabs Arkady, and pulls him off Riley, separating the two men.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)

We're moving out. All of us.

Thomas gives Joshua a bitter look, disapproving of his leadership.

Joshua notices, and flashes Thomas his own look of disdain. He take one final look at a bruise on Riley's face as his mind wonders to another time...

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

INT. GREG'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Joshua kneels down in front of a crying Greg, who sits on the edge of his bed.

On the side of his face, a large bruise can be seen.

Joshua softly dampens it with a wet cloth.

In the background, Tina stands nervously.

JOSHUA

Hey...it's okay, buddy. It's just a nasty knock, that's all. It's gonna hurt at first. They always do.

Greg nods, still teary.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Tina and Joshua lay in bed together.

Tina has her arm wrapped around Joshua tightly.

TINA

I just...don't understand. I saw him knock his face against the wardrobe...it wasn't even that hard. How could it bruise that badly?

Joshua strokes Tina's head softly.

JOSHUA

I don't know. To be honest, I'm more impressed by how he did it. Tripped over a ball and fell straight into it? Sounds like something out of a benny hill sketch.

Tina lets out a laugh and gently slaps Joshua on the chest.

TINA

Stop it, he's our baby! Don't be mean.

Joshua lets out a grin.

JOSHUA

I was thinking, maybe we should get away for a while.

TINA

Like a holiday?

JOSHUA

Sure, a holiday.

TINA

What about Greg?

JOSHUA

He can stay with Nan and Pop for a week or so. What do you think? I just feel like we haven't had any quality time together recently-

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

Dad? Mom?

Joshua and Tina look over to see Greg, who is covered in a thick rash.

He suddenly collapses on the floor.

END FLASHBACK:

EXT. CITY - SUBURBS - LATER

A residential district; more shelled tower blocks, and the street full of debris.

All around are the remains of tanks and armored vehicles.

The horizon is lit up by the occasional distant WHUMPF of shelling, and gunfire.

Tracer rounds cut through the sky.

They reach a playground the end of the street as Joshua stops dead at what he sees.

The Team slowly approaches a large hole in the ground, likely created from a bombing, but now filled to the brim with dead CIVILIANS.

Joshua focuses on one in particular...a small boy, his face smeared in blood. His mind flashes to an image..

QUICK CUT:

- Joshua collapsed on the floor.

END QUICK CUT:

Some of the women are half naked, their clothes ripped and torn away, and blood between their legs with foreign objects stuck up there.

Sandra cups her mouth and looks away in horror.

Thomas steps ahead and grabs a jacket off of one of the Civilian men's bodies. He then places the jacket over a naked Civilian woman.

He slowly kneels and performs the sign of the cross, before silently praying as he grips his crucifix.

They watch, solemn, as Thomas slowly stands and takes a step back to be in line with the rest.

JOSHUA

If we didn't already know, this is why we're here.

ARKADY

It better not all be scouting missions. I want to make a difference.

RILEY

You mean, you want payback.

THOMAS

Be careful what you wish for.

They all stare for a moment longer.

JOSHUA

Come on.

Joshua turns and walks off through the park. The others follow.

EXT. CITY APARTMENT COMPLEX - PARK - CONTINUOUS

The Team reach the far side of the park, which looks out at the apartment complex; more signs of devastation everywhere.

Joshua gives them a hand signal, and they crouch against a low wall, and look out. In the distance, a faint, flickering, light is coming from a campfire at the entrance to one of the buildings.

There are two ENEMY SOLDIERS sat around it.

RILEY

Well, they weren't there before.

THOMAS

What's the play?

JOSHUA

Scout the perimeter.

SANDRA

They'll see us if we start snooping around, surely?

Joshua turns to Arkady and Georgiy.

JOSHUA

Take them out. Quietly.

The two brothers nod, and head off, keeping low.

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - CAR PARK - CONTINUOUS

Arkady and Georgiy move through the destruction of the car park in front of the apartment complex, staying out of sight, as they close in on the campsite.

They come to a stop behind a burnt-out car. Georgiy looks out at the two enemy soldiers.

He pulls out his knife, and takes Arkady's own knife from its sheath.

He signals for Arkady to stay put, then quietly slips off and moves amongst the shadows towards the campsite. Arkady watches him go.

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - CAMPSITE - CONTINUOUS

The two enemy soldiers are silent, just staring into the fire, eyes wide in filthy, battle-worn, faces.

A KNIFE whistles through the air, embedding itself into one of their throats.

The other soldier looks up, alarmed, but before he can act, Georgiy bursts from the shadows, and stabs him in the neck.

Gurgling, both soldiers fall to the ground, blood spilling from their throats.

Georgiy removes both knives as Arkady joins him. He hands it back to him.

Georgiy nods and the two head inside the building.

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - PARK - CONTINUOUS

The others watch as Georgiy and Arkady head into the building.

JOSHUA

Where the fuck are they going?

INT. APARTMENT COMPLEX BUILDING - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Enemy Soldiers are asleep and scattered about the lobby. Most of them are obviously conscripts.

Arkady and Georgiy slowly creep in. Arkady moves to a YOUNG SOLDIER (barely 18). He covers his mouth with one hand and slits his throat with another.

He holds his hand over the Young Soldier's mouth as he dies.

Georgiy goes up to another SOLDIER (20's) and stabs him in his temple.

The soldier's face spasms as the knife is plunged in. To Georgiy's surprise, he grabs a hold of his arm, squeezing tightly, resisting.

Georgiy moves the blade in deeper, as the soldier lets out a grunt.

ARKADY  
(whispers)  
Georgiy...what are you doing? Kill  
him?

Finally, Georgiy is able to plunge the knife all the way through, causing the soldier to immediately die.

The two move through the room, silently, killing everyone inside.

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - CAMPSITE - CONTINUOUS

Joshua leads Sandra, Thomas and Riley towards the entrance of the building, moving in formation, guns drawn.

Sandra looks down at the two dead guards.

RILEY  
Nicely done.

INT. APARTMENT COMPLEX BUILDING - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Joshua and the Team enters the inky darkness of the building lobby and see various Soldiers laying in pools of blood.

Ahead, Georgiy slits the throat of the last sleeping soldier.

SANDRA  
Jesus.

Riley steps ahead and looks around in awe.

RILEY  
Feel better now?

There's a sudden blur of motion, as Commander Fazistski rushes out of a nearby room and charges at Riley with a knife.

COMMANDER FAZISTSKI  
(in Local Dialect)  
You foreign bastards! This is our  
land!

BANG!

The Commander's head explodes like a watermelon, as he drops dead and Arkady stands a few feet away with a smoking pistol.

RILEY  
Holy shit...  
(beat)  
Thanks, dude...

Arkady nods and holsters his gun, before spitting on the Commander's dead body.

Riley shivers at the sight of the Commander's skull. A mangled mess of bone and brain.

Joshua turns to Georgiy and Arkady, angrily.

JOSHUA  
What were you two doing?

ARKADY  
You said take them out.

JOSHUA  
The guards. Not an entire  
battalion. We don't take risks like  
that.

GEORGIY  
Oh well.

JOSHUA  
Is that all you've got to say?

Georgiy shrugs.

GEORGIY  
A few less enemy to hurt us.

Then, towards the back of the room, a SMALL FIGURE darts towards an exit.

The figure is Faddei.

The boy glances back at them, and for a moment, from the POV of Joshua, he looks like GREG.

Thomas raises his gun, but Joshua knocks the barrel aside. The shot goes wide.

Thomas glares at Joshua and there is a moment of tension.

RILEY  
Well they definitely know we're  
here now.

Joshua shoots an accusing glance at Georgiy and Arkady.



SANDRA  
Was that a kid?!

ARKADY  
We've heard rumors of them using  
child soldiers.

THOMAS  
They're fast, nimble - and hungry.  
Makes sense.

SANDRA  
I didn't sign up to kill kids.

Shouts and commotion rise up from elsewhere in the building.

JOSHUA  
We need to move. NOW!

The team move out, quickly.

EXT. CITY - RETAIL STREET - CONTINUOUS

Fleeing, the Team move as fast as they can through this shopping district, staying in the shadows of burnt-out stores.

There are shouts from behind them as enemy soldiers moving in.

Thomas runs ahead, leading the team.

THOMAS  
Go right! Retreat!

They cut across a ruined street as a few shots ring out, just missing them.

JOSHUA  
Fucking move!

They head down an alleyway between two small stores as more enemy rounds strike the masonry at the entrance to the alley.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - LATER

Making their retreat, the team cross a hillside in formation, silhouettes against the first hint of a sickly purple dawn.

EXT. CAMP - DAWN

Rays of desaturated sunlight struggle through branches of trees.

The Team are back at camp and the mood is solemn. The others stand around as Joshua rails on Arkady and Georgiy.

JOSHUA

You almost got the entire squad killed.

ARKADY

It was my idea. Georgiy just came to watch my back.

JOSHUA

Our orders were recon only, and not to engage.

GEORGIY

What does any of it matter? The Northern Front is where this war gets decided. We all know we're just a side-show down here.

JOSHUA

Can it, Georgiy. We are making a difference.

Arkady lowers his head and nods.

ARKADY

We fucked up. Sorry, sir.

Thomas glares at Joshua.

THOMAS

If you ask me, what was really reckless was leaving a combatant on the battlefield when we had a chance to take him out.

SANDRA

You're talking about killing a kid.

THOMAS

You think that kid would hesitate to kill any of us?

Joshua turns away from him and addresses the others.

JOSHUA

Our position has been compromised,  
and we're moving to a new location.  
Everyone, pack up.

The sound of a jet zooming towards the group rises in volume.

The Team all look up and watch as a jet flies overhead,  
disappearing beyond the trees.

A moment later, a huge explosion rises from beyond the  
northern part of the city. The Team watches in silence for  
several moments.

THOMAS

Riley, call command. Check that  
wasn't them that got hit.

RILEY

On it.

Riley heads for the main tent.

JOSHUA

Everyone else, move.

Thomas and Joshua exchange another look.

INT. MAIN TENT - NIGHT

Riley uses the radio, trying to hail someone.

RILEY

Command. This is Troop Twelve.  
Over.

Nothing. Just static.

RILEY (CONT'D)

Troop Twelve for Command. Is anyone  
there? Over.

Joshua comes in.

JOSHUA

Anything?

RILEY

They're not answering.

JOSHUA

Shit.

The others gather at the entrance to the tent.

SANDRA

Was it them? Have they been hit?

ARKADY

Are we on our own out here?

THOMAS

We were always on our own.

GEORGIY

I told you they don't care about  
the Southern front.

Joshua thinks, then...

JOSHUA

This doesn't change anything.  
Gather the gear. We'll try to  
reconnect with Command once we've  
re-situated.

They all get back to work and exit the tent apart from Joshua, who hangs back. He removes his helmet, places it on the table, and sits down.

He runs his hands over his face, trying to gather himself. He looks up, and notices something tucked into the lining of his helmet: a PHOTOGRAPH, crumpled and sweat-damaged

He takes it out.

ON PHOTOGRAPH:

**It's of him with Tina and Greg - before the boy got sick.**

BACK TO SCENE:

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Joshua and Tina lay on the bed together, kissing passionately.

Tina runs her fingers along a scar on Joshua's top right shoulder.

They both watch her as she traces the scar with her fingers.

TINA

Please don't go.

JOSHUA

I need to.

TINA

No, you don't.

Joshua lifts Tina's chin up so that they're eye to eye.

JOSHUA

No matter where I am, I'm always here with both of you.

TINA

That's bullshit, and you know it. What about what we need? What about Greg? If he gets worse than he is now-

An immediate sound of thunder rumbles and Tina looks towards the window as lightning flashes.

END FLASHBACK:

EXT. FARM - CAMP 2 - DAY

A flash from an explosion settles in the distance.

Everybody is situated at a new base, in the grounds of an abandoned farm. Nearby, on the edge of the camp, a calf lays dead and rotting, riddled with bullet holes.

Joshua comes out of the main tent and only finds Thomas seated on the ground, sharpening his knife.

JOSHUA

Where's everyone else?

THOMAS

Went to get water from the river.

JOSHUA

All of them?

Thomas shrugs.

THOMAS

Gives us a chance to talk.

Joshua kneels down beside Thomas.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

I want to apologize for how I spoke when we first met. I know I can be a prick sometimes.

Joshua isn't sure how to respond, taken aback. He nods.

JOSHUA

Right. Can't say I saw that coming, but apology accepted.

THOMAS

You were right to put Tweedle Dumb and Tweedle Dee in their place last night.

JOSHUA

They disobeyed orders.

THOMAS

But-

Joshua braces.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Don't ever stop me from taking a shot again...sir.

JOSHUA

It was a kid, Thomas.

THOMAS

It was the enemy.

JOSHUA

I know you think I'm soft, but this isn't my first war either.

THOMAS

I'm not interested in a pissing contest. I will do whatever it takes to survive this, and if you take decisions that I consider reckless, I will let you know my opinion...very clearly.

JOSHUA

We won't win this war by sinking to the level of the enemy, Thomas.

THOMAS

Won't we?

There is a brief moment of eye contact between the two men, before the others return from the creek, with water bottles now filled. They're laughing and smiling, breaking the tension between Joshua and Thomas.

RILEY

What do you call a group of kids  
who enlists in the military?

(beat)

The INFANTry!

Sandra shakes her head.

ARKADY

That's terrible.

RILEY

Fine. I got another.

(beat)

Why does the military have a strict  
dress code for ceremonies and  
events?

(beat)

Civilian CASUAL TEES are not  
acceptable.

Thomas grits his teeth, then gets up and punches Riley across the face. He then quickly gets on top of Riley and chokes him.

THOMAS

You think that's fucking funny?!

Joshua quickly rushes over and pulls on Thomas as Riley gasps for air.

JOSHUA

Thomas! Stand down, now!

Thomas growls in anger as he chokes Riley with more force.

Joshua bear hugs Thomas and yanks him off of Riley.

Riley coughs and gasps for air as Sandra quickly helps him sit up.

Thomas shoves Joshua away.

Joshua glares at Thomas. Thomas then turns away in anger and walks into his tent.

Sandra shoves a piece of cotton into Riley's bleeding nose.

RILEY  
Is it broken? Is it broken?

Sandra squeezes the bridge of his nose as he screams.

SANDRA  
No... you're good.

RILEY  
What the fuck...what the fuck?!

Joshua shakes his head and heads towards the main tent.

INT. MAIN TENT - CONTINUOUS

Joshua sits in front of the comm station and holds the radio in his hand.

JOSHUA  
Troop Twelve to Command. Come in.

No response. Anger builds.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)  
Troop Twelve to fucking Command.  
Come in!

No response.

Joshua bangs his fist on the table in anger.

Suddenly, a crackle and then...

COMMAND  
(via radio)  
Command to Troop Twelve.

Joshua's eyes widen and he quickly responds.

JOSHUA  
We're here!

COMMAND  
Status report, Troop Twelve.

JOSHUA  
We've moved on from our original position. We're further into the countryside about four clicks north. Some farm outside of Kradec.

Silence, just the hiss of static.



JOSHUA (CONT'D)  
Awaiting orders. Over.

More silence. Then...

COMMAND (ON RADIO)  
Stay put.

JOSHUA  
We saw the attack from the jet.  
Anything we should be aware of?

Joshua anxiously awaits for an answer.

EXT. FARM - CAMP 2 - DAY

The team sit around as Joshua briefs them. Riley has bloody tissue stuffed up his nose. Thomas looks tense and irritated.

JOSHUA  
Command are in bad shape. They were  
hit last night. Done attack.

SANDRA  
So what was the jet?

JOSHUA  
They bombed a fuel storage and  
ammunition depot, then attacked on  
foot. Took out an entire battalion.

ARKADY  
Fuckers.

JOSHUA  
They tortured and killed two high  
ranking officers in front of their  
men, before sticking their heads on  
spikes.

There is a general shock from the team, audible in gasps.

SANDRA  
So what are we doing?

JOSHUA  
Observation.

The entire team groan.

GEORGIY  
Why do we even have guns if we  
can't use them?

JOSHUA

A nearby town has been occupied.  
We're to go in, and report back on  
troop movements.

ARKADY

This is such horseshit.

JOSHUA

We move out tonight. Until then,  
Thomas you're on first watch. The  
rest of you get some shut-eye.  
We're gonna need all the sleep we  
can get, while we still can-

An explosion abruptly rips through the camp, destroying the  
main tent, and sending Joshua and Arkady flying.

Chaos.

The Team scatters as another rocket is shot towards the  
centre of camp from a DRONE.

Thomas fires up at the Drone which is barely distinguishable  
from the dark sky.

The Drone turns and takes aim at him but he keeps firing.

A dazed Thomas staggers out from the main tent, and fumbles  
with his gun.

Riley rushes over and dives into him, as the two just get out  
of the way of another explosion.

Thomas rifles through a duffle bag and finds a grenade. He  
quickly bites the pin out and looks back to see the Drone  
flying towards Sandra, who fires shots at it with her pistol.

Thomas flings the grenade towards the Drone and it explodes  
just as it reaches it.

One of the propellers shoot towards Sandra and cuts her on  
the arm as she dives out of the way. She cries out in pain as  
the blood spurts in the air, covering Joshua's overalls.

Joshua stands still, completely in awe.

The Drone falls to the ground, destroyed.

The Team stands around in shock for a moment and Joshua  
hurries over to Sandra, snapping out of his trance.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)

Are you okay?

SANDRA  
Just a scratch...ah!

Sandra holds the cut on her arm and rips her sleeve off. She then ties it tightly around her wound.

JOSHUA  
Pack essentials and leave  
everything else! Move! Move!

The Team quickly scatters to pack up the camp as a dazed Arkady emerges from beneath a stack of toppled crates.

Georgiy embraces him, relieved.

EXT. WOODLAND - CAMP 3 - DAY

Having left their tents behind, the Team are working with just basic essentials.

They have changed down to civilian clothing, and are hiding weapons within.

Georgiy tugs at his ill-fitting top.

GEORGIY  
Was this all you could get?

RILEY  
It was all I could find at short  
notice. Sorry it's not designer.

Sandra looks over at Thomas.

SANDRA  
Is it normal to pretend we didn't  
just get blown the fuck up?!

THOMAS  
That's war, sweetheart. But if you  
want to sit around comparing  
trauma, be my guest.

Sandra looks anxiously at him, as she conceals her pistol.

Riley straightens out the collar on his shirt.

RILEY  
Hey, Sandra... fashion advice.  
Should I wear this with one button  
open or two? What do the ladies  
like?

Sandra looks him up and down.

SANDRA  
Nothing I suggest can help you  
there.

Georgiy bursts out laughing.

RILEY  
Ha ha, laugh it up. Hilarious.

Thomas shakes his head in anger.

THOMAS  
Are we done here?

They all straighten up.

RILEY  
What's wrong, Tommy? Jealous I  
might get all the attention from  
the hotties in town?

THOMAS  
I'm more worried you're going to  
stick out like a sore thumb.

Thomas looks at Joshua for validation.

SANDRA  
Thomas has a point. The area isn't  
exactly known for its diversity.

RILEY  
Just gotta walk in there like I  
belong.

THOMAS  
He can't come.

RILEY  
Told you he's jealous.

Thomas steps up to Riley and cocks his pistol.

JOSHUA  
Everybody, that's Enough! I know we  
just got fucked, but let's keep our  
heads and stopping pissing around.  
Riley...we won't leave you behind.  
But, you do stand out. Just don't  
do anything stupid and you'll get  
away with it.

RILEY

You'll barely know I'm there.

JOSHUA

(to Thomas)

As for you. You've done enough for one day. Just give it a rest.

Thomas glares at Riley for a moment longer and then walks off. The others follow as Joshua pushes ahead of Thomas, reminding him of who's in charge.

EXT. MARKET TOWN - BRIDGE - DAY

It's raining from dark clouds as Arkady and Georgiy cross a partially-destroyed bridge, heading towards the town over the surrounding river.

EXT. MARKET TOWN - MAIN ROAD INTO TOWN - DAY

Sandra and Thomas make their way past the burnt-out remains of an armored vehicle. Several shellshocked townsfolk keep their heads down as they go about their business.

They head past a small stall selling a meagre selection of fresh fruit and another offering milk and eggs.

EXT. MARKET TOWN - OUTSKIRTS - CONTINUOUS

Riley and Joshua enter the town through a destroyed wall, picking their way over the rubble, checking the coast is clear.

EXT. MARKET TOWN - DAY

Late afternoon as rain falls hard. A handful of CIVILIANS walk the streets of this once-pretty Market Town, umbrellas or hoods doing little to keep them dry.

There are generators everywhere, windows boarded up, buildings surrounded by sandbags. The signs of bomb damage are on several structures.

Arkady and Georgiy try to blend into the scene, heading for a café - still open - where Thomas and Sandra are already seated, drinking coffee.

Thomas tries not to make it obvious that he's scanning the street.

Riley hangs back in an alleyway, with a hat pulled down over his face, his hands in his pockets.

Sandra looks around, surreptitiously scanning the faces of civilians, looking for signs of combatants.

Thomas spots a shadow passing by an upper-story window and fixes his attention on it, until the window opens, and a woman hangs a rug over the sill.

Sandra looks across and bristles, as a group of armed troops walk through the town square.

They meet up with another group, exchange a few words, and disperse

One soldier glances over at Arkady and Georgiy, who tensely try not to react.

In the alley, Riley stares across the way at a HOMELESS WOMAN (40's), who's seated up against a building and dressed in filthy clothes.

As he starts to approach her, Thomas notices and bristles.

THOMAS  
(to himself)  
Shit. What is he doing?

Still in the alleyway is Joshua.

He's looking out at a group of enemy soldiers standing near a burnt-out clothing store, noticing too late that Riley has walked off.

JOSHUA  
(hisses)  
Riley - get back here.

At the café, two soldiers enter the outside seating area.

Sandra and Thomas tense up as they talk to a couple at another table.

They glance over at Thomas and Sandra, and head over.

CAFÉ SOLDIER  
(in local dialect)  
Good afternoon.

Thomas and Sandra say nothing and try to ignore them.

CAFÉ SOLDIER (CONT'D)  
Are you deaf? I am talking to you.

Thomas and Sandra lock eyes. There is a mounting tension... then, breaking the moment, Thomas smiles.

THOMAS  
(in Local Dialect)  
How can I help you?

CAFÉ SOLDIER  
Do you have a light?

The soldier pulls out a pack of cigarettes. Thomas reaches into his jacket.

The soldiers grip their weapons, just in case.

Thomas then he pulls out a Zippo lighter.

In the alleyway, watching Riley, Joshua recoils, as Faddei approaches the group of nearby soldiers.

He realizes that Faddei has noticed Riley approaching the homeless woman.

Joshua pulls out his gun, and aims it at Faddei.

His finger tightens on the trigger, but he cannot bring himself to fire.

At the café, the soldier is trying to light his cigarette, but the lighter is only sparking.

Thomas looks past the soldiers, angrily glaring at Riley, who is crouched and talking to the homeless woman. He reaches back into his jacket and grips his pistol underneath his shirt.

Faddei says something to the soldiers, and it all happens fast, before Joshua, or the others, can react.

Riley offers some food to the Homeless Woman and...

BANG!

The Homeless Woman is shot in the head and killed instantly. Riley stands there in shock, staring at the mushy mess that was once her face several seconds ago, then turns to see the Soldiers rushing towards him, firing.

Riley quickly takes cover behind a concrete tank blockade.

The Team stays still as other Civilians scream and run. The Soldiers mow them down without a care.

Arkady angrily screams and throws a café table to the side. He takes out his gun and fires, killing the Café Soldier.

Thomas pulls out his gun and kills the other.

The Soldiers take aim at the café and light it up as the Team quickly takes cover.

The windows and tables splinter and shatter. In the chaos, Faddei runs off.

Joshua lets off a few rounds, but it alerts the Soldiers to his position

He ducks under a hail of bullets as Georgiy crawls to be next to Arkady.

GEORGIY

You have the loosest trigger finger  
I've ever seen!

Sandra dives through a broken window in the café for cover.

Riley pokes out of his hiding spot and fires his pistol, taking out a Soldier.

Half of the Soldiers turn in his direction and rip shots off towards him, but he quickly ducks back into cover.

GEORGIY (CONT'D)

I can't get a shot off!

ARKADY

Cover me!

GEORGIY

What?! Don't you fucking dare!

Arkady swiftly moves out from cover and calmly walks towards the Soldiers as he fires.

Georgiy rolls out of cover and fires more shots to distract the Soldiers.

Within seconds, Arkady is shot in his arm. He spins, and drops to the ground.

GEORGIY (CONT'D)

Arkady!

Thomas angrily rips a grenade from inside his belt, bites the pin, and throws it into the middle of the Soldiers.



The grenade explodes, sending the Soldiers flying into the air. One of them rolls around on the floor, screaming with agony as fire engulfs his body.

Once the smoke clears, Thomas and Joshua emerge and quickly shoot the remaining Soldiers until they're all dead.

A few moments later, Riley slowly peers out and breathes a sigh of relief.

Joshua makes it over to the café.

Sandra rushes over to Arkady and helps him to his feet. She quickly inspects the wound, as Arkady groans in pain.

ARKADY

Good thing it wasn't my shooting arm...

SANDRA

I don't see an exit wound. The bullet is still lodged in there.

JOSHUA

Georgiy, go with them. We'll stay back and make sure no one follows.

Georgiy nods and quickly follows after Sandra and Arkady, heading over to relative cover.

Riley comes out from his cover, and is immediately thrown up against a wall by Thomas.

THOMAS

You careless piece of shit!  
(beat)  
He could have died because of you!

RILEY

I was trying to help that woman!

THOMAS

It's her or us!

RILEY

Then what the fuck are we here for?!

Joshua gets between them and pulls them apart.

THOMAS

You pull a stunt like that again and next time someone is gonna die. Might even be you. Mark my words.

JOSHUA  
Cool it! Both of you!  
(to Thomas)  
Check the CAFÉ for any civilian  
survivors.

Thomas angrily glares at Riley for a moment longer and then walks off.

RILEY  
I'm sorry, Cap --

JOSHUA  
Can it, Riley. If you find anyone  
still breathing, keep them alive.

THOMAS  
You sure that's a good idea?

JOSHUA  
Don't worry. I'll let you have some  
fun with them.

Joshua turns and walks down the street where Faddei was last seen.

RILEY  
Where are you going?

Joshua calls back.

JOSHUA  
That's an order!

The others watch him go, and then head into the café.

Joshua continues down the street, gun drawn.

He reaches the alleyway that he saw Faddei run down.

Back pressed up against the outside wall, he checks the coast is clear, then enters the alleyway.

EXT. MARKET TOWN - ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Joshua sees Faddei crouched next to a dumpster, trembling.

Joshua slowly approaches until Faddei notices.

Faddei gasps in fear, quickly takes out a pistol, and sloppily fires a shot that just narrowly misses Joshua.

Joshua freezes and holds up his hands, as Faddei heaves his breaths in fright and disbelief that he shot his weapon.

JOSHUA  
Can you understand me?

Faddei nods.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)  
I'm not gonna hurt you.

Faddei keeps his gun trained on Joshua, hands trembling, as Joshua takes a few slow steps forwards.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)  
It's okay.

A walkie talkie on Faddei's belt chimes in with orders in a different language.

It gives Joshua the distraction he needs to reach out and grab Faddei's gun.

Faddei scoots backwards, pressed up against the wall.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)  
I can protect you. I can save you.  
I can get you out of here. Away  
from all of these bad men-

Then, the walkie talkie sounds off with a barking order.

Faddei shakes his head as he fights back tears, terrified.

Faddei quickly gets up and runs down the alleyway as Joshua sighs in defeat.

A moment later, Riley rushes over with his gun drawn.

RILEY  
We heard a shot.

JOSHUA  
I'm fine.

Joshua looks off, but Faddei has disappeared.

Someone whistles for their attention.

EXT. MARKET TOWN - DAY

Joshua and Riley emerge from the alleyway to see Thomas standing outside the café with his gun pointed at two ENEMY SOLDIERS, ALEXANDER (early 40s, cocky) and ADAM (16, gaunt, scared)

Both have their hands up in the air in surrender. They look defeated and malnourished.

THOMAS  
Alive, right?

JOSHUA  
Well done.

INT. ENEMY CAMP - EVENING

Faddei sits on the edge of a small bunk, sipping on what appears to be a soup of some kind.

On the bunk across from him, Malik does the same.

MALIK  
(in Local dialect)  
This soup just gets worse and worse  
huh?

Faddei lets out a small grin, but it quickly fades.

MALIK (CONT'D)  
What's the matter?

Faddei places the soup down on the table and looks around cautiously.

FADDEI  
(in Local dialect)  
One of-one of them-

MALIK  
The enemy?

Faddei nods.

FADDEI  
He corned me in the town. Told me  
that he could save me from this  
place. Get me away from here. I  
almost...I almost went with him-

Malik places his bowl of soup down on the table hard.

MALIK

No! You cannot do that, Faddei! You cannot even think about that! They are the enemy!

FADDEI

But the way he spoke to me...it was calm and nice...friendly-

MALIK

That's how they trap you! Did you not hear Commander Kazatsky's heed of warning he gave to us, before he was slaughtered, with the rest of our sleeping soldiers! He told us that they will come here and use tricks to lure us-

FADDEI

Tricks to lure us into their traps. I remember.

Malik composes himself.

MALIK

We barely made it out of there alive. Before I knew you were safe, I thought you had-I thought you had-

Malik reaches across and holds Faddei's arm gently and reassuringly.

MALIK (CONT'D)

We will get out of here...together. You and me. But only once the enemy is defeated, can we leave. You understand that, don't you?

Faddei nods.

A SOLDIER walks in with a sense of urgency.

SOLDIER

(in Local dialect)  
Get ready to leave! Go, go, go!

Faddei and Malik quickly get up.

INT. WOODLAND - CAMP 3 - DUSK

Alexander and Adam, with sacks over their head and hands tied behind their back, are sat down on the ground. Thomas keeps his gun trained on them as Sandra comes over.

JOSHUA  
How's Arkady?

SANDRA  
Got the bullet out and dressed the  
wound. He'll live.

GEORGIY  
Why are we keeping these assholes  
alive? They'll never talk. They'd  
rather have a bullet in their head  
than betray their country.

JOSHUA  
Maybe we can convince them  
otherwise.

Joshua looks at Thomas.

SANDRA  
We should separate them. The  
younger one is probably more scared  
than the older. He'll be easier to  
crack.

JOSHUA  
Do you have interrogation  
experience?

SANDRA  
My father does. He was a human  
intelligence collector when he was  
in the military, then became a PI  
after that. He taught me a lot.

RILEY  
Wait. What? Your dad taught you how  
to interrogate people? I thought he  
owned a fishing boat.

Sandra shrugs.

SANDRA  
It was an unconventional  
upbringing.

RILEY  
No shit.

SANDRA  
I've never actually...done it  
though. For real.

JOSHUA

And you don't have to, Sandra.

Sandra puts her surgical bag around her shoulder.

SANDRA

It's okay. I'll just look at it as first aid, but in reverse. Thomas. A little help?

THOMAS

I'd be happy to.

As a concerned Joshua looks on, Thomas drags Alexander to his feet, and shoves him forward.

INT. SHED - CAMP 3 - NIGHT

An old, mouldering, woodland shed that the Team has turned into their new base.

Alexander is on his knees with the sack over his head. Sandra yanks the sack off to reveal Alexander's hardened face.

ALEXANDER

So they're sending their bitches to do their dirty work now?

Thomas punches him in the face as Alexander spits out blood.

Sandra smiles and sets down her bag with a clang of surgical instruments within.

Sandra opens her back and pulls out a surgical knife.

She takes a deep breath in, and kneels down to his level, twirling the knife on the tip of her finger.

SANDRA

I'll give you a choice. You can either go home to your family in one piece, or several. What'll it be?

Alexander spits in her face. She wipes it off, unfazed.

ALEXANDER

We know what you people do to prisoners. Just kill me and get it over with.

SANDRA

Oh, by the time I'm done, you're going to wish I had killed you.

THOMAS

Whatever you've heard about us, the reality is far, far worse.

SANDRA

We're freelancers, outside the usual rules.

THOMAS

So don't think we think we give a fuck about your human rights.

SANDRA

Give us the answers I want and maybe we'll go easy.

THOMAS

What do you know about troop positions in the local area?

He sneers at them.

Sandra doesn't hesitate as she elbows Alexander in the face and sends him to the ground. She then quickly moves on top of him and holds the surgical knife close to one of his eyes.

SANDRA

You move, I cut.

(beat)

Tell me what the next moves are.

ALEXANDER

Fuck you!

SANDRA

I'll only ask one more time!

ALEXANDER

You won't do shit, bitch!

Alexander spits on Sandra again.

Sandra swallows hard, and looks at Thomas. He nods.

She takes a deep breath out and composes herself.

SANDRA

Wrong answer.



Sandra slowly cuts into the bottom of his eye as he screams. The blade tears at jelly of his eye as Sandra winces at the sight.

EXT. WOODLAND - CAMP 3 - CONTINUOUS

Georgiy, the wounded Arkady, and Riley are seated around a small fire as they listen to the screams of Alexander. Georgiy smirks as Joshua furrows his brow in worry, pacing around the campfire.

Joshua takes a step towards the shed, wanting to intervene.

Georgiy steps in front of him.

GEORGIY

Leave it, sir. They know what they're doing.

JOSHUA

We have to be better than this don't we?

More screams from Alexander.

RILEY

That does sound pretty bad.

Adam, the bag still over his head, whimpers as he trembles.

INT. SHED - CAMP 3 - NIGHT

Alexander's eye is fully cut out and blood drips out of the empty socket.

Sandra has a numb sort of look in her eyes. She's overcome the wall.

SANDRA

Talk.

Alexander grimaces and shakes his head.

Sandra plunges the knife into his shoulder as he yelps in agony.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

Talk!

Sandra rips the knife from his shoulder and stabs his other shoulder. The squelch of the impact is loud.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

Talk!

Sandra rips the knife from the other shoulder and stabs his right leg.

Even Thomas is shocked at her violence as he raises his eyebrows.

Sandra looks down to where her knife impaled his leg and her eyes widen. Blood pours out at an abnormal rate.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

Oops.

Alexander notices.

ALEXANDER

What...? What?!

SANDRA

I hit your femoral artery. You'll bleed out in a few minutes.

A frightened gaze comes over him.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

I can save you...

ALEXANDER

Okay-okay!

Alexander trembles in fear. Thomas gives Sandra an approving nod.

EXT. WOODLAND - CAMP 3 - CONTINUOUS

A few minutes later.

Sandra walks out of the tent with blood on her uniform, followed by Thomas. They both carry the body of Alexander, who has a bag over his head. Joshua quickly stands and walks over to them, concerned.

SANDRA

They're planning on ambushing units in the southern portion of the region.

THOMAS

They laid out mines on the outskirts, behind our forces, in the event they try to retreat.

JOSHUA

I want to talk to him.

THOMAS

Yeah, that's not gonna be possible.

Thomas removes the bag from the head, and Joshua looks down at Alexander's lifeless, socket less, pale face, which is now placed onto the floor.

There is a heavy silence, as Joshua and the others realize what this means.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

What about him?

Joshua thinks, trying to hang onto his sanity, and then pulls the bag from Adams's head.

JOSHUA

Did you hear all that? Your friend is dead. She-they...we killed him.

Adam glances at the blood-covered Sandra.

ADAM

I'd expect nothing less from monsters.

JOSHUA

We are not monsters.

ADAM

I grew up hearing the stories of what you do to prisoners. Beheading them. Raping them!

Joshua is stunned to hear this from the enemy.

JOSHUA

They're all lies. We're nothing like you.

SANDRA

Well, you say that-

Sandra throws down an eyeball into Adam's lap. Riley, Georgiy and Arkady recoil.

RILEY

Fucking hell, Sandra. Remind me never to get on your bad side.

Joshua tries to gather himself, and roll with it, but he's shaken.

JOSHUA

(to Adam)

Do you want to end up like him?

Adam shakes his head.

ADAM

I won't betray my country.

JOSHUA

Is a flag really worth dying for?

ADAM

You tell me.

Adam and Joshua lock eyes.

ADAM (CONT'D)

(singing shakily)

*This Victory Day  
Is saturated with gunpowder,  
It's a celebration  
With temples already grey,  
It's joy  
With tears upon our eyes  
Victory Day!  
Victory Day!  
Victory Day!*

The singing continues over.

GEORGIY

Just kill him. He's losing it.

JOSHUA

He's as much a victim of this war as anyone else.

SANDRA

Georgiy is right. We've got what we needed, cap.

Joshua sighs, rubbing his eyes.

JOSHUA

Release him into the forest.

THOMAS

Are you out of your fucking mind?

GEORGIY

He's brainwashed by propaganda! We should end his miserable life, now-

Joshua is struggling to hold onto his sense of sanity, as the reality of war rolls over him like a train.

JOSHUA

No.

RILEY

Yeah, I don't think we should kill him. He's just a kid, for Christ sake.

SANDRA

I don't want to kill kids either, but if we let him go, he's just going to tell the rest of them where we are.

There's tension; Joshua and Riley on one side, the others on the other, Arkady somewhere in the middle of the divide.

Thomas grips his gun.

JOSHUA

So we blindfold him.

THOMAS

I won't let you do this, Joshua.

JOSHUA

I am in command, and you will do as I order.

A group of SOLDIERS emerge from the trees, guns drawn.

SOLDIER 1

Wrong.

They turn to face the soldiers. We hear their guns being cocked.

SOLDIER 2

Drop your weapons.

The Team has no choice but to throw their weapons onto the ground, and raise their hands. Thomas curses.

SOLDIER 1

Get him up.

Soldier 2 moves forwards, pulls out a knife, and cuts through the ropes holding ADAM's hands.

Getting to his feet, ADAM wastes no time hitting Sandra square in the face, knocking her out. Georgiy steps forwards.

GEORGIY

Hey!

Soldier 2 hits Georgiy with the butt of his gun and he falls to the ground, groaning.

The Soldiers throw Arkady, Thomas, and Riley down on the ground with guns aimed at them. Arkady winces in pain from his bullet wound.

Joshua notices Faddei standing near the outskirts of camp, behind the soldiers.

The pair lock eyes for a moment, before Thomas is also forced to his knees.

Next to Faddei, stands Malik.

The pair stare at the corpse of Alexander, which lays on the floor.

MALIK

(whispers)

See what they do...how they lure you in. They get the information, then they gut you like a fish.

Faddei winces at the sight of Alexander's eyeball-less socket as the bag is removed from his head by a soldier.

MALIK (CONT'D)

That could have been you, Faddei.

SOLDIER 2

Hands behind your heads.

The Team does as instructed.

SOLDIER 1

Strip the camp and take the woman back to base.

The Soldiers start gathering up the Team's equipment.

SOLDIER 2

What about the rest of them?

SOLDIER 1  
Kill them, but take your time. Make  
it nice and slow.

Soldier 1, Soldier 2, and a group of others pick up Sandra,  
and drag her off into the woods.

Faddei glances back at Joshua, before leaving with them.

The remaining soldiers hang back.

SOLDIER 2  
(in Local Dialect)  
Shouldn't we just...kill them?  
Straight away.

Soldier 1 looks back at Soldier 2, with an annoyed  
expression.

SOLDIER 1  
(in Local Dialect)  
What?

SOLDIER 2  
Why do we need to torture them  
first?

SOLDIER 1  
These are the same bastards that  
killed Fazistski! They deserve to  
be punished-

Soldier 2 shakes his head.

SOLDIER 2  
I didn't sign up for this. I signed  
up to defend our country-

SOLDIER 1  
And you are defending it! Now, make  
it slow, or you'll be finding  
yourself on the end of a court  
marshal, soldier!

Soldier 1 sighs, then nods.

They move in, and start beating Thomas, Joshua, Arkady,  
Georgiy and Riley with their feet and guns.

They're overwhelmed; there are outnumbered two-to-one, being  
beaten hard.

Adam joins in the beating, taking out his rage on Thomas.

Thomas crawls forwards as Adam continues kicking him.

ADAM

Where do you think you're going, my friend?

Thomas crawls towards the camp fire.

ADAM (CONT'D)

There's only one way this is headed.

Thomas reaches out, and grabs a flaming log from the fire.

He spins onto his back and hits Adam square in the face with it.

And again.

Adam goes down hard, screaming with pain as the log sears and bruises his flesh.

Screaming with rage, Thomas throws himself at another soldier, and wrestles his gun from him, before any of the enemy are aware what is happening.

He turns the gun on the rest of the troops, cutting them all down.

After the final shot, there is almost a silence in the clearing.

Just the rasping breaths of the team remains.

Joshua gets to his feet.

ARKADY

Now what the fuck do we do?

RILEY

We've got their guns.

A shot rings out, grazing Riley's arm

Adam has come around, and holds a gun.

Joshua reacts instinctively, kicking the gun out of Adam's hands, and knocking him down, before he brings his boot down on Adams's head.

Again, and again, and again, smashing it into a pulp.

Thomas pulls him away, and he begins to snap back to reality.



Joshua is breathless, staring wide-eyed, unable to believe what he's just done.

GEORGIY  
Joshua, you good?

JOSHUA  
I-I-didn't mean-I-didn't-

Joshua trembles, in shock at his own actions. The others look at him, concerned; is he losing it?

INT. SHED - CAMP 3 - DUSK

Joshua sits in a corner, lost in his own thoughts, as Thomas, Riley, Georgiy and Arkady discuss the situation.

THOMAS  
They were on foot, so their base  
can't be far.

ARKADY  
We can't just launch an attack.  
We're low on ammo, we've lost our  
comms-

RILEY  
We could go in quiet. Find Sandra.  
Get out.

ARKADY  
It'll be too heavily guarded.

GEORGIY  
(sarcastic)  
Maybe we should ask the Captain for  
his advice?

RILEY  
Dial it back a bit, eh, Georgiy?

There's a moment of silence, as they all look over at Joshua, desperate for his leadership.

ARKADY  
What do you suggest we do, Joshua?

RILEY  
Cap. We're listening. Just tell us.

Joshua nods and avoids eye contact with Georgiy and Thomas; he's out of his depth, losing grip on his humanity.

JOSHUA

We-we-need a new comm system. So we can call command for support.

ARKADY

Where are we meant to find a new comms system?

RILEY

I could do a recce of the area. See what it turns up.

GEORGIY

We don't have time for that. We need to get Sandra back. ASAP.

JOSHUA

We're outnumbered. Outgunned-we can't help her.

GEORGIY

Seriously, Cap, I'm starting to think you'd rather be at home.

Joshua leaps to his feet, suddenly furious.

JOSHUA

What is that meant to mean?!

Joshua faces off with Georgiy.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)

You don't know anything about me or my life. You don't know why I'm here. You don't get to say that.

GEORGIY

Okay, okay. I'm sorry.

Joshua gathers himself and calms down.

JOSHUA

No. I'm sorry. I shouldn't have-of course. Yes. We're going to rescue Sandra.

RILEY

How?

THOMAS

Well, we have uniforms.

Thomas nods towards Alexander's body, which lays motionless.

Joshua drifts off into a thought...

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

A dimly lit hospital ward, with a single bed illuminated by small lamps.

The sound of a beeping ECG machine whirrs in the background.

On the bed, lies Greg, motionless, connected to several tubes.

Tina sits on the bed beside him, caressing his cheeks.

In the corner of the room, an outline of a DOCTOR (40's), donned in a white lab coat.

DOCTOR (V.O.)  
I'm so sorry. Your son has stage  
four leukemia.

Joshua just stands, staring, several meters away, with tears down his cheek.

END FLASHBACK:

FADE TO:

EXT. ENEMY CAMP - NIGHT

SOLDIER 2 stands guard outside of the entrance to the camp - a temporary base, with barbed wire fortifications, tents and a few vehicles inside, constructed around the remains of a small town.

He's talking on a cell phone, cheerfully, trying to be seductive.

SOLDIER 2  
-I'll drag you up those stairs the  
second I'm through the door. I'm  
putting aside some of my wages to  
pay for a new bed.

Soldier 2 looks up with a furrowed brow, and quickly puts away his phone, as he hears groaning. He aims his gun.

SOLDIER 2 (CONT'D)  
Hold it. Who's there?

Thomas, dressed in Alexander's uniform limps out of the darkness and towards Soldier 2, head bowed as if badly injured.

SOLDIER 2 (CONT'D)  
I said hold it!

Thomas collapses on the ground.

SOLDIER 2 (CONT'D)  
Shit...

Soldier 2 hurries over to Thomas.

SOLDIER 2 (CONT'D)  
What the hell happened to you?

A sudden whistle is heard off to the side, which causes Soldier 2 to look in that direction.

Thomas quickly takes out his switchblade and stabs Soldier 2 in the throat. He drags the blade across his throat and slits it open, leaving the soldier to gurgle on his last breaths.

Soldier 2 grabs at the gushing wound and topples over.

Thomas works to undress Soldier 2 as he dies.

Joshua emerges from the trees and looks down at the dying enemy soldier.

THOMAS  
Sure you're up to this?

Joshua nods.

THOMAS (CONT'D)  
I know what you're going through,  
you know?  
(beat)  
It happened to me a long time ago.  
You're crossing the threshold.

JOSHUA  
What threshold?

THOMAS  
The one we all have to cross sooner  
or later. War comes for everybody.  
Even those who think they've got it  
together.

The pair go to move forward, but Joshua stops in his tracks.

JOSHUA

I-I have a son, Thomas.

THOMAS

I have two daughters.

Joshua is taken aback, surprised.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Haven't seen them in years.

JOSHUA

I want to be able to look him in an eye when I go home.

Thomas places his hand on Joshua's shoulder.

THOMAS

Once you've crossed, it will get easier from here. Trust me. Your boy will still be there when you get back.

Joshua looks on, unconvinced.

INT. ENEMY CAMP - PERIMETER - CONTINUOUS

In a pitch black corner of the base, dressed in the bloodstained enemy uniforms, Joshua clammers beneath the wire fence, as Thomas holds it open for him.

Once he's through, Joshua does the same for Thomas.

INT. ENEMY CAMP - CONTINUOUS

Moments later, Thomas and Joshua walk through the camp, acting as if they belong there. Some Soldiers stare at the bloodstains, while others ignore them completely.

Thomas notices a group of Soldiers, drinking and laughing. He motions towards Joshua to follow him.

The Soldiers pass around a bottle of vodka and Thomas motions for the bottle. They pass it to him and takes a big swig. He talks to them in the local language.

THOMAS

That bitch still alive? I need someone to cuddle up with tonight.

The Soldiers laugh.

SOLDIER 3  
Go see for yourself.

He nods his head towards a Soldier peeing into the open basement window of an abandoned store.

Thomas and Joshua exchange a glance and walk over as the peeing Soldier finishes up.

They peer into the window to see Sandra laying on the ground, bloody, beaten, and barely breathing.

THOMAS  
(to himself)  
Christ...Joshua, look-

Joshua is distracted; he notices Faddei seated by himself near a small fire, some way off.

Thomas nudges him, concerned.

THOMAS (CONT'D)  
Hey.

Joshua looks back at him and Thomas gestures forward.

Joshua nods. Thomas eyes him up and down, checking him out.

INT. ENEMY CAMP - BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

An armed Soldier guards a door to what was once a storeroom.

THOMAS  
You're off the clock.

He looks up as Joshua and Thomas approach.

The Soldier frowns in confusion.

Suddenly, Thomas pulls the switchblade out and thrusts it into the Soldier's head.

The Soldier falls and Thomas rips the blade in and out of the temple area of the Soldier's head.

Joshua doesn't even react.

He steps over the Soldier's body, and kicks open the door.

INT. ENEMY CAMP - BASEMENT STORE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The door bursts open, revealing Sandra. The sight of her seems to snap Joshua out of it.

He rushes over, and kneels next to her.

JOSHUA

Sandra? Can you hear me?

Sandra breathes in raspy breaths and slowly opens her eyes.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)

We're gonna get you out of here.

Thomas joins them and the two help Sandra up. They put her arms over their shoulders and carry her towards the door.

Sandra chokes out some air, then stops breathing entirely.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)

Sandra! Shit.

Joshua lays her down and feels her pulse. Fear overcomes him. He quickly performs CPR, panicked

Joshua works frantically to resuscitate Sandra, but it's no use. She's gone.

Thomas slowly turns to see Joshua putting in his last effort to bring Sandra back.

Joshua meets Thomas' gaze and the two stare in silence.

Joshua collapses back onto the ground, unable to believe he couldn't save her, his sanity slipping away.

EXT. ENEMY CAMP - CONTINUOUS

Joshua and Thomas walk out of the building, trying to stay calm and composed.

JOSHUA

Go.

THOMAS

What do you mean 'go'?

JOSHUA

I'll meet you back at the rendezvous.

Joshua looks over at Faddei and Thomas realizes what he's about to do.

THOMAS

Don't be an idiot, man.

Joshua doesn't respond and walks over to Faddei. Thomas waits a moment.

He glares at the Soldiers still laughing and drinking, and then turns and walks towards the exit, saving himself, and leaving Joshua to his suicidal behavior.

Joshua takes a seat next to Faddei, who nervously shifts away from him. He then furrows his brow and glares at Joshua in confusion.

JOSHUA

(low)

You don't need to say a word. All you have to do is follow me and no one will question it.

Faddei nervously looks around at the other Soldiers.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)

(low)

You don't belong here with these people.

Faddei fights back his emotions.

Joshua takes a moment.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)

What's your name?

FADDEI

Faddei.

JOSHUA

Faddei, despite what these men have told you, I am not the enemy. I'm a father. I have a son just like you.

(beat)

When was the last time you saw your parents?

FADDEI

I-I-don't know.

Joshua lowers his head in anger.

Soldier 3 whistles in their direction.



SOLDIER 3

Boy! Come here!

Faddei quickly stands but Joshua takes his hand.

JOSHUA

I'll come for you. I promise.

Faddei nervously stares at him for a moment and then quickly runs over to Soldier 3.

Joshua sighs in defeat before he stands and moves out of the camp.

Faddei and Malik, who was in the area the whole time, watch him go.

Malik and Faddei make eye contact, as Malik shakes his head.

EXT. WOODLAND - CAMP 3 - NIGHT

Thomas jogs back into camp, followed by Joshua, where Georgiy, Arkady and Riley are waiting.

RILEY

The prodigal sons return! Where's Sandra?

Thomas continues on into the shed, as Joshua stops in front of his men. He then drops Sandra's dog tag on the ground.

Georgiy and Arkady boil in anger, as Riley lowers his head in sadness.

RILEY (CONT'D)

Shit...no?

Joshua nods slowly.

INT. WOODLAND - CAMP 3 - LATER

A makeshift grave has been fastened in the dirt.

Sticking out from the top, Sandra's dog tag is draped over the rubble.

Surrounding the grave are several torches, burning brightly.

Each team member is stood around the grave, their helmets in hand, out of respect.

JOSHUA

Would anyone like to say any words?

Riley steps forward, and clears his throat.

RILEY

Sandra was a badass bitch. She really was the epitome of women can do anything. But more than that...she was a nice person. Since she joined the team, she was nothing but nice to me. And I'll always respect that about her.

Riley steps back, and the woodland area is quiet for another minute.

JOSHUA

Anybody else?

THOMAS

Yeah...I'd like to say a few words, too.

Thomas steps forward, to everybody's surprise.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

I respected Sandra too. She was a good medic, a good soldier, and one hell of an interrogator.

A murmur of laughs surround the grave.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

But she's also a symbol. A martyr, if you like. She wouldn't be dead if we hadn't been distracted...arguing about whether or not the man who knocked her out cold could live.

JOSHUA

Thomas-

THOMAS

No, let me finish. She wouldn't be dead, if we had just made a fucking decision and stuck with it! This is war people! This is the gritty reality of the shit that we find ourselves in! And I'll be damned if I'm gonna keep letting us make the same rookie mistakes-

Something quickly rolls out of the trees, and lands next to the grave, a SMOKE BOMB.

RILEY

Shit! They followed us!

It starts hissing out a thick wall of smoke, as six more smoke bombs land around the camp.

JOSHUA

Get ready!

His Team start to grab their weapons, as the smoke becomes thicker

Shadows start moving in the dense black smoke, getting closer.

Joshua and the others take aim.

Joshua covers his mouth and nose with his shirt and rendezvous with Thomas, Arkady, Georgiy, and Riley.

Thomas makes a signal to them, and they all quickly turn so that they have their backs to each other and can cover all angles.

Joshua sees a shadow moving in the haze.

BANG!

Arkady spots another moving shadow.

BANG!

Screams are heard close by. Georgiy takes aim.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

The Team move in unison until they're on the edge of the smoke. They then all turn towards the smoke and fire a blanket of shots into the unknown.

Joshua motions for them to cease fire. They stop, and listen - but hear nothing except silence.

The smoke slowly clears and their eyes widen in shock.

Joshua slowly moves forward and walks amongst a dozen dead CHILD SOLDIERS - poorly equipped, and none any older than 15.

Joshua checks the pulse of one of the Children, his eyes staring lifeless, his head blown open.

ARKADY

Jesus.

Thomas steps forward and grabs the weapons off of the Children Soldiers.

RILEY

Dude, what are you doing?

THOMAS

They don't need them.

Arkady charges over and hits a gun out of Thomas' hand.

ARKADY

Fucking stop!

THOMAS

They're dead. What does it matter?

RILEY

Yeah-dead kids. We killed them. We killed all of them.

GEORGIY

Why the fuck are they sending kids?

ARKADY

Cheaper to feed. Easier to indoctrinate and manipulate. They can point a gun as well as anyone.

THOMAS

Plus it fucks with the heads of your enemies.

Thomas looks over at Joshua.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Joshua?

Joshua frantically searches the bodies, turning some over and checking their faces, as Riley approaches.

The others look over at him.

RILEY

What is he doing?

Joshua turns over the last one to reveal that it's not Faddei. He breathes a sigh of relief.

GEORGIY

Thomas is right, Arkady. We need  
the ammo and guns.

Arkady walks off.

THOMAS

Can I continue, or is he gonna  
continue being an ass?

GEORGIY

Don't be an asshole, yourself, for  
once, Thomas.

Thomas shakes his head and grabs the guns.

Joshua yanks the dog tag off of the Child Soldier.

JOSHUA

Help me gather them up.

RILEY

Why?

JOSHUA

Their parents deserve to know what  
happened to their children. Take  
their tags, and then we're going to  
bury them properly.

Thomas sighs.

THOMAS

(under his breath)

This is what I was fucking talking  
about.

INT. RAILWAY TUNNEL - DAWN

The following morning.

The Team have regrouped in this abandoned railway tunnel.  
Dimly lit, water dripping from the roof.

Georgiy stands at the entrance to the tunnel, keeping watch.

The others sit in silence, with their scavenged weapons and  
ammo. Thomas strips and cleans one of the guns.

EXT. RAILWAY TUNNEL - DAWN

Some way away from the entrance to the tunnel, Joshua pulls out the cell phone we saw Soldier 2 talking on. He dials and waits...

GREG (V.O.)  
(on the phone)  
Hello?

JOSHUA  
Hey, bud. It's dad.

Joshua tries to sound as normal as possible, but his voice is faltering, cracking.

GREG (V.O.)  
Dad! Where have you-

Greg coughs loudly and hard. A look of worry comes over Joshua.

JOSHUA  
You okay, Greg?

GREG (V.O.)  
Everyone at school makes fun of me  
for my cough.

Joshua trembles in sadness and anger. Tears start streaming down his face.

JOSHUA  
I hope you don't listen to them.

GREG (V.O.)  
Mom really wants to talk. Bye Dad!

JOSHUA  
Wait! I love-

But Greg has gone. There's silence for a moment. Then...

TINA (V.O.)  
Please don't go.

Joshua's brow furrows.

JOSHUA  
Go? I'm already here, Tina. What do  
you mean-

TINA (V.O.)  
Fuck you, Josh.

JOSHUA

Tina-

TINA (V.O.)

Fuck. You.

The call ends.

Joshua throws the phone against a tree, shattering it.

INT. RAILWAY TUNNEL - DAWN

Joshua enters the tunnel. His men look up at him. He's broken.

THOMAS

Surprised you got any signal out here. The comms lines are usually dead in this region.

Joshua ignores him and sits down, head in his hands.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

You should leave.

Joshua looks at him.

JOSHUA

What?

THOMAS

Head back to command. Ask for a discharge. Go home to your family, Joshua.

RILEY

Nobody would blame you for leaving all this behind, cap. You've done us well so far.

JOSHUA

I'm staying here. I'm not going back.

ARKADY

Why the fuck would you rather be here?

JOSHUA

I don't have to explain myself to you. Any of you!

The sound of an armored vehicle is heard approaching.

GEORGIY

We got a vehicle over here!

They all turn and aim their weapons as the vehicle approaches the tunnel.

GEORGIY (CONT'D)

It's one of ours! Hey!

Georgiy flags down the armored vehicle, and it slows to a halt.

The others stand, and come to the entrance.

The door of the vehicle slowly opens and two HANDS emerge up in the air to signal they mean no harm.

GEORGIY (CONT'D)

Hold it there. Slowly.

HARRY (early 30s, cheerful and upbeat, despite everything) emerges, and the Team lowers their weapons.

HARRY

Troop Twelve? Been looking for you all day. Name's Harry. Troop Eight.

Harry looks at the state they're in.

HARRY (CONT'D)

Well, you boys look like shit.

INT. TUNNEL - CAMP 4 - DAY

Later. The tunnel has been made more comfortable, with beds, supplies, and a new comms unit.

The Team eats some food while Harry brings over a box of supplies.

HARRY

This is all we can spare at the moment.

He puts down the box.

RILEY

What's the latest from the front?

HARRY

Nothing good, but we could use you.



THOMAS

For what?

HARRY

The enemy has taken over a longhouse, and are running some sort of training operation. Command wants to know what.

ARKADY

After what we've been through, it'll feel like a vacation.

JOSHUA

What do you need us to do?

Thomas looks at Joshua with unease.

EXT. FIELD - ABANDONED LONGHOUSE - NIGHT

Joshua, Georgiy, Arkady and Riley, along with Harry and two other allies - CHRIS and DANIEL (both 20s, regular squaddies) ,are concealed on the outskirts of the longhouse, in the middle of a field.

Nearby, Thomas looks through binoculars.

THOMAS

I got movement inside.

HARRY

Can you tell how many?

THOMAS

More than a few.

Suddenly, an alarm goes off and all the lights in the longhouse turn on.

JOSHUA

What's happening?

Thomas scans the area. Right outside the longhouse, Child Soldiers spill out into a training grounds area as Soldiers bark orders.

Thomas slowly lowers the binoculars.

THOMAS

More kids.

Joshua furrows his brow and snatches the binoculars away from Thomas. He peers through them and watches as the Children Soldiers go through a drill.

GEORGIY  
This is fucked.

RILEY  
You reckon they're drugging them?

GEORGIY  
What?

RILEY  
What I heard is they get the kids  
hooked on all kinds of shit, so  
they fight for their next fix.

Arkady gets up and moves towards the training grounds.

JOSHUA  
Arkady!

Georgiy lunges after him, tackles him to the ground.

ARKADY  
Get off of me!

GEORGIY  
Not like this! You'll be killed.

Arkady groans in frustration.

HARRY  
Shut him up!

Georgiy grips Arkady into a sleeper hold.

GEORGIY  
Don't make me do it...

Arkady taps out and Georgiy releases him. Arkady spills forward and catches his breath.

ARKADY  
This is what we're here for. To  
stand up for the defenseless. Tell  
them, Cap.

Georgiy looks over at Joshua, but he's lost for words and direction.

JOSHUA

No, he's right. This isn't our mission.

A dark look crosses Joshua's face as emotion is replaced by a hollow void; a bomb crater where his heart used to be.

Thomas eyes Joshua with a surprised, yet hopeful expression.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)

We can't save them all. No matter what I do he'll still die.

ARKADY

(confused)

Who will? What the fuck's happened to you?

Arkady shakes his head in bewilderment and disgust. Riley and Georgiy don't know what's going on with Joshua, but they're shaken by it.

HARRY

We got what we came for. Go back to your FOB and wait for orders.

ARKADY

Wait for orders. Fuck's sake.

HARRY

I'm not getting my crew killed because you want to play hero. Move out. Now.

Harry signals to Chris and Daniel, and they move out.

The others look back at the longhouse, where the children are going through their paces.

One of the boys trips and falls, and is shot by a SOLDIER.

They all flinch.

JOSHUA

You heard him. Let's move out.

Joshua lowers his head, turns and walks off, not looking back, as he's followed by the others.

INT. TUNNEL - CAMP 4 - DAY

It's raining outside the tunnel, as Arkady and Georgiy stand guard.

Riley and Thomas take an inventory of their ammo and weapons.

Joshua is on the comms, taking a message from Command.

COMMAND

(on radio)

We've identified an enemy  
stronghold close to your location.  
Heavily fortified and manned.

JOSHUA

Scope it out and report back?

COMMAND

Negative. Take it out.

JOSHUA

There are only five of us left --

COMMAND

Explosives will be supplied to your  
location. Cripple their armor.

The others look over.

COMMAND (CONT'D)

This is high priority.

JOSHUA

Understood.

He ends the call, and looks at his men.

RILEY

A suicide mission...

A tiny, barely sane, smile plays at the corner of Joshua's lips.

JOSHUA

We have our orders.

Thomas nods at Joshua, satisfied; he's crossed the threshold.

EXT. HILLSIDE - ENEMY BASE - NIGHT

The Team has taken a position overlooking the base; it's far more fortified than others, a semi-permanent camp with guard towers, and high fences.

Thomas scopes out the area with binoculars as Arkady and Georgiy ready the explosives. Riley loads a rifle and cocks it.

Joshua moves to Thomas and crouches.

THOMAS

First the good news. They just sent out an entire battalion.

JOSHUA

And the bad news?

THOMAS

There is another battalion waiting for us, and from what I can see five tanks for us to destroy.

JOSHUA

What about access?

THOMAS

There's a fence we can cut through that avoids any guards. They switch positions every ten minutes, so soldiers will be walking about.

JOSHUA

We'll wait until the next guard swap and make our move.

GEORGIY

Cap. Are you sure you're up to this?

JOSHUA

Why wouldn't I be?

GEORGIY

You seem... I dunno. Different.

Thomas nods, satisfied Joshua is ready.

EXT. ENEMY BASE - NIGHT

Riley uses a fence cutter to snip into the metal rings and create an opening.

One by one - lead by Joshua - they slip inside.

Joshua slowly looks ahead and signals that the coast is clear.

Arkady and Georgiy moves to the first tank.

Arkady takes one of the explosives out of Georgiy's backpack and places it underneath the tank.

He arms it and the two make their way back over to Joshua, Thomas, and Riley.

The Team moves as a unit in the shadows of various crates, holding weapons and ammunition.

They reach the second tank and Arkady taps Joshua.

He counts down from five with his fingers and then...

BOOM!

The first bomb detonates and explodes the tank

Immediately an alarm sounds, and troops pour out of buildings.

The Team stays in the shadows, as enemy Soldiers rush towards the flames, guns raised.

The guard towers scan the outside of the base with searchlights.

Joshua checks the area and signals for them to keep moving. They stop at the next tank.

Arkady and Georgiy quickly work to place and arm the second explosive.

The Team moves on as the second explosion rips through the tank.

This causes even more commotion as Soldiers now train their weapons on that location.

The searchlights switch from scanning the outside of the base to inside the perimeter.

One Soldier stops and turns his attention towards the third tank, as Riley and Georgiy place and arm the third explosive.

Georgiy helps Arkady out from underneath the tank as a Soldier cocks a rifle and takes aim.

Then a single... POP! The Soldier drops dead and they turn to see Thomas with his pistol aimed.

They all look at each other with wide eyes.

They run back to cover as...

BOOM!

The third explosion destroys the tank, taking out three more soldiers in the explosion.

Arkady emerges from beneath a fourth tank, where he placed another explosive.

ARKADY

Let's go.

They start moving back to the shadows.

Riley looks out at the base, swarming with soldiers.

RILEY

Fuck. There's millions of them!

ARKADY

We're not getting out of here.

GEORGIY

Yes we are!

SOLDIER 5 emerges from a building and spots the Team.

SOLDIER 5

Over here!

Arkady quickly flips his rifle and sprays Soldier 5 with bullets.

JOSHUA

Stay in formation!

The entire base now knows they're here. Enemy soldiers start taking up positions, firing at them.

The Team watches each other's backs as they back shoot towards the Soldiers.

Joshua sees Faddei and another CHILD SOLDIER (14) near to the fourth - still un-exploded - tank.

It seems to bring him back to himself.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)

No... Fuck!

Joshua breaks formation and runs towards them.

THOMAS

Joshua!

Joshua sprints as fast as he can, waving his arms.

JOSHUA

Get away from the tank!

Faddei turns in fright. Then, a look of realization as he turns back to the tank.

The other Child Soldier peers under the tank and sees the explosive strapped to the underbelly.

Faddei turns and runs at the last moment.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)

Get away from--

BOOM!

The explosion swallows up the Child Soldier and sends Joshua flying backwards. His body hits the ground hard and he lays motionless.

Georgiy rushes over to Joshua's body.

The Soldiers press forward and shoot in the Team's direction.

Georgiy reaches Joshua and checks his pulse.

He grabs Joshua underneath his arms and drags him back towards the Team as they lay down cover fire.

Before anybody can react, Georgiy is shot in the chest and falls to the ground next to Joshua.

ARKADY

No! NO!!

Arkady breaks formation and hurries over to Georgiy.

RILEY

Arkady! Don't!

Riley chases after him as Thomas screams and empties all of his bullets in a wild cover fire.

Arkady falls to his knees and check Georgiy's pulse.

ARKADY

You stupid asshole!

Arkady slaps Georgiy's face, as blood gushes out of his wound.

Riley attempts to pull Joshua away.



RILEY

Arkady... I need your help!

Arkady desperately keeps pumping Georgiy's chest.

RILEY (CONT'D)

Arkady!

Arkady looks up with a frantic gaze.

A Jeep-like vehicle pulls up in front of them and blocks incoming fire.

Thomas crawls out of the driver's seat and hurries over to Riley. The two pick up Joshua and bring him back to the vehicle.

THOMAS

Get your fat ass in here, Arkady! I have no problem leaving you!

Arkady takes a moment and then pushes Georgiy over onto his side. He reaches into the backpack and pulls out the final explosive device.

ARKADY

I'm sorry brother...

Arkady quickly gets into the vehicle, as bullets shatter the windshield.

Thomas peels off towards a fence and bursts through it as the vehicle drives off road and out of sight.

The Soldiers run towards Georgiy's body so that they can follow after the vehicle.

Just as a majority of them are near... BOOM!

He booby-trapped his brother's body.

INT. ENEMY VEHICLE (MOVING) - CONTINUOUS

Arkady looks back as the flames from the explosion rise to the sky.

THOMAS

Riley? Shit!

They look at Riley, seated in the back. He took a hit from behind; his entire face is missing.

Another bullet pierces through the vehicle and hits Joshua in the shoulder, causing him to quickly pass out as his head falls to his lap.

THOMAS (V.O.)  
Joshua?! Joshua?!

FADE TO:

BEGIN DREAM SEQUENCE:

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Joshua holds Riley's mangled body in his arms as he groans in agony. Thunder booms and lighting fills the sky.

Joshua lowers his head, wracked with grief.

Joshua looks up in shock to see Georgiy now laying in his arms. His face is pale and the large wound in his chest has a river of blood flowing from it.

He just stares into Joshua's eyes, trying to spit out words, but unable to.

Georgiy's head falls to the side.

Lightning flashes and Sandra is now laying in Joshua's arms. She's badly beaten and swollen.

Again, she just stares.

Joshua stands in shock and slowly backs away. Sandra crawls towards him, blood spewing from her mouth.

Joshua turns to run but stops with a startled gaze as Greg stands in front of him. He's pale, sickly, and has tubes running from his arms.

GREG  
Help me, Dad...

Within seconds, Sandra lunges onto Joshua's shoulders.

END DREAM SEQUENCE:

INT. TUNNEL - CAMP 4 - DAY

Joshua sits up in his bunk with a start. He looks to the end of the bed where the dog tags of the child soldiers are hanging.

THOMAS  
Bad dreams, huh?

Thomas sits down near to Joshua, cleaning his rifle.

THOMAS (CONT'D)  
Now you know why I try not to  
sleep.

Joshua suddenly grabs his shoulder in pain, which is  
bandaged.

THOMAS (CONT'D)  
You'll be fine. Flesh wound.  
Knocked you out cold, though.

Arkady prowls the entrance to the tunnel.

Joshua looks over at Arkady.

JOSHUA  
He's angry with me.

THOMAS  
Can't exactly blame him.

Joshua nods, guilt-ridden.

THOMAS (CONT'D)  
I thought you had what it takes,  
Joshua. I thought you'd crossed  
that threshold.

JOSHUA  
What is this fucking threshold you  
keep mentioning?

THOMAS  
You can't fight a war like this  
with one foot back in the real  
world. You either cross over  
completely, or your baggage gets  
you killed.

JOSHUA  
You're not making any sense.

THOMAS  
I've seen it before. You thought  
coming here would help you forget,  
but you couldn't leave it behind.  
You're just a liability. To  
yourself. To us.

JOSHUA  
 Fuck you, Thomas. We're not  
 machines.

He gets up and walks over to Arkady.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)  
 Arkady. I'm sorry.

ARKADY  
 Go to Hell.

JOSHUA  
 What it'll take? Here-

He pulls out his knife, and offers it to Arkady.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)  
 Come on. Eye for an eye. That's  
 what we do isn't it? Take it.

Confused, Arkady takes the knife, tentatively.

Joshua thumps his chest.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)  
 Do it. Right there. Right through  
 the heart. Come on. DO IT!!

Arkady looks at the knife and weighs up whether to do it.  
 Thomas tenses. Arkady grips the knife tighter.

Arkady screams in frustration and throws the knife aside,  
 before turning to walks away.

With a roar, Joshua throws himself at Arkady, knocking him to  
 the ground.

Arkady spins around and Joshua punches him in the face.

Arkady hits him back, knocking him onto his ass. Joshua  
 screams at him, insanely.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)  
 DO IT!! KILL ME!!!

Arkady storms off.

Joshua breathes a sigh of relief, mixed with a little  
 disappointment and embarrassment. Thomas relaxes.

THOMAS  
 Get it out of your system did you?

Joshua suddenly breaks down into tears, and hugs his body.

JOSHUA

Everybody...everybody I care  
about...they die. They always die!

THOMAS

Joshua, come on, enough. You still  
have your wife...your kid. They're  
waiting for you, back home. If you  
keep this up, you'll never get back  
home!

JOSHUA

No!

THOMAS

Joshua, get a grip of yourself.

JOSHUA

No!

THOMAS

Joshua-

JOSHUA

NO!

THOMAS

Fuck me, you know I could have  
pegged you for a crackpot ever  
since I saw you on the monitors at  
home base. Playing recorded video  
calls and speaking to your wife and  
kid like they're speaking back to  
you. What the fuck's that about,  
huh?

JOSHUA

No! No!-That's not true-

THOMAS

You were never fit to lead this  
group. Never!

JOSHUA

NO! NO! You're wrong!

Thomas, agitated, leans down and grabs Joshua by the collar.

THOMAS

Listen to me! Would your son want  
to see you like this? Huh?!

(MORE)

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Would he not be ashamed to see his  
father cry like this!

Joshua shakes his head.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

ANSWER ME!

JOSHUA

He wouldn't be ashamed...because  
he's not here. He's dead.

Thomas quickly lets go of Joshua's collar and stand up  
slowly.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)

He's dead...he's dead...my son's  
dead.

Thomas and Arkady share a glance.

THOMAS

He died? Why didn't-why didn't you  
tell us, Joshua?

JOSHUA

I couldn't-I couldn't-I

CUT TO:

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Tina and Joshua are mid argument as Greg's lifeless body lays  
in the hospital bed.

Both have tears streaming down their cheeks.

TINA

Please don't go.

JOSHUA

I have to, Tina. I'm already  
registered.

TINA (V.O.)

Fuck you, Josh.

JOSHUA

Tina-

TINA (V.O.)  
 Fuck. You. How can you just up and  
 leave...after this?! How?

Joshua goes to speak, but can't.

TINA  
 Answer me!

JOSHUA  
 No...I can't do this, I-I-can't-

TINA  
 Don't you dare leave, you coward!  
 If you leave, we're done! You hear  
 me?!

Joshua quickly exits the hospital room, leaving Tina alone,  
 in tears.

END FLASHBACK:

INT. TUNNEL - CAMP 4 - DAY

Thomas takes it in, considering this revelation.

JOSHUA  
 I couldn't face it. That's why I  
 signed up for another tour of duty.  
 I couldn't be there. Couldn't stay  
 knowing-

Joshua trails off.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)  
 I left my wife. I'm a coward.

Thomas nods.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)  
 I just thought if I could save that  
 one kid here-

THOMAS  
 Then why don't we?

Joshua frowns.

JOSHUA  
 It'd be suicide. Three of us  
 against a base that size.

THOMAS

They won't be expecting it. Not so soon. Most of their men will be spread out looking for us.

JOSHUA

We'd be walking into Hell.

Thomas shrugs.

THOMAS

Back on one of my first tours, the enemy was strapping kids with suicide bombs and sending them into camps. One of them killed my whole troop. All, except me.

(beat)

I became blind with rage and murdered as many men as I could. It felt good. It felt as if I was doing them justice.

(beat)

Then, I came upon a camp and they were strapping a little girl, no older than five, with a bomb. I killed all of them around her before they saw me coming. All that was left was the crying little girl, begging for me to save her.

Thomas lowers his head.

JOSHUA

And did you?

Thomas doesn't answer, and continues looking down.

He pulls his cross from underneath his shirt and grips it tightly.

THOMAS

Sometimes, I think this is the only thing keeping me going.

JOSHUA

Religion?

Thomas shakes his head.

THOMAS

The belief that we can come back...come back from anything.

The sound of a gun being cocked alerts the two men.



ARKADY (O.S.)  
 So, what the hell are we waiting  
 for?

Joshua turns to face Arkady, who is standing in the entrance to the tunnel, armed.

EXT. HILLSIDE - ENEMY BASE - DAY

The base from the night before. The remains of the tanks are where they left them

Thomas was right: the base seems almost deserted, just a few troops hanging around, their defense down.

Arkady looks at the scene from the hillside, through his sniper rifle scope.

He watches through as Joshua and Thomas, tooled up with as many guns and grenades as they can handle, approach the main entrance.

INT. ENEMY BASE - COURTYARD - CONTINUOUS

Faddei and Malik stand beside each other in the courtyard, aiming weapons at several plastic targets in the distance.

Malik seems to have fantastic aim, whilst Faddei struggles to hold the grip properly.

As Faddei fails to make another shot, Malik turns to help.

MALIK  
 (in Local dialect)  
 Here. Hold it like this.

Malik readjusts Faddei's hand position and holds his arm higher.

MALIK (CONT'D)  
 Spread your legs wider.

Malik gently kicks Faddei's legs to make a better stance.

MALIK (CONT'D)  
 Now, aim and shoot.

Faddei fires several bullets, each one hitting the target.

He turns to face Malik, smiling innocently.

FADDEI  
 (in Local Dialect)  
 Wow, that actually worked!

MALIK  
 Soon, you'll be good enough that  
 they'll let you out with me on  
 scouting missions.

FADDEI  
 You think?

MALIK  
 I know.

Malik smiles, ruffling Faddei's hair.

The sudden sound of gunshots alerts the pair.

MALIK (CONT'D)  
 Quick, get down to the bunker.

FADDEI  
 But Malik, I want to help you-

MALIK  
 I'll be fine! I'll catch up to you  
 later, okay? Stay safe.

Faddei nods as Malik follows the soldiers.

EXT. HILLSIDE - ENEMY BASE - CONTINUOUS

Thomas and Joshua stroll right up to the guards and shoot  
 both of them.

It takes the camp off guard. Before the troops can fully  
 mobilize, they quickly aim and fire their rifles, mowing down  
 as many Soldiers as they can before retaliation.

Arkady meanwhile takes out as many of them as he can with his  
 sniper rifle.

BEGIN QUICK CUTS:

- Carnage, as the driven Thomas and Joshua shoot and move.
- BOOM! Joshua throws a grenade.
- BOOM! A Soldier drops.
- BOOM! Joshua takes out one of the guards in a guard tower.

- BOOM! And the other.

- BOOM! Another grenade thrown into a group of Soldiers.

END QUICK CUTS:

The Soldiers panic and disperse in order to take cover.

A bullet whizzes by Arkady from above. He looks up and shoots a Soldier out of a tree, who falls hard to the ground.

Joshua is tackled to the ground by another Soldier who attempts to force a knife down into his chest.

The two struggle as the Soldier is seemingly going to overpower Joshua and stab him. But then...

BOOM! The Soldier's head explodes from a sniper shot.

Joshua shoves the body off of him and wipes blood from his face without any sort of reaction.

He gets up, sees a Soldier running, aims his rifle, and takes him down.

Thomas throws a grenade into a fuel depot. It explodes, taking several tents down with it.

He throws another beneath a jeep.

BOOM! It flips up into the air.

BOOM! And another.

The base begins to burn.

Arkady looks away from his scope with a sigh. He stands, puts the rifle over his shoulder and runs down the hillside to join them.

The shooting has died down, but for the occasional sporadic shot as Joshua takes out stragglers.

Thomas exits a tent with Malik held by the back of his collar. He throws Malik to the ground in front of Joshua.

Thomas joins them just as Joshua takes out his pistol and aims it at his head who sobs with a pleading gaze.

MALIK

Please don't kill me...They made me  
do things.

Joshua wraps a trembling finger around the trigger.

MALIK (CONT'D)

They said they would kill my sister  
if I didn't... She's only fourteen.

JOSHUA

Bullshit.

MALIK

It's true. I'm sorry. I didn't want  
to fight.

THOMAS

Joshua!

Joshua slowly turns and looks over his shoulder at Thomas.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

He's just a kid. Right?

Joshua puts the gun to the Teenage Soldier's head.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

You said it yourself. He's an  
innocent victim in all this.

JOSHUA

(to Malik)

Have you killed?

Malik trembles in fear.

He nods and sobs. Arkady jogs over to join them.

Joshua cocks the gun as the Teenage Soldier loudly sobs.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)

Where's Faddei?

Malik looks up, surprised, but tries to quickly conceal his  
reaction.

MALIK

Who?

JOSHUA

A kid, about ten.

Malik shrugs.

Joshua lowers his gun.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)

Go.

Malik runs off.

He quickly reaches down to grab a weapon from a dead soldier, and turns to shoot quickly, spraying bullets.

Joshua quickly puts him down with two bullets, killing him instantly.

Joshua and Arkady watch as he falls. Behind them, Thomas collapses on the ground.

They quickly turn around and rush over to Thomas, who covers a bleeding wound near his ribs.

THOMAS

Little bastard struck me.

JOSHUA

No, no, no, no!

Joshua and Arkady attempt to pick Thomas up.

THOMAS

No... don't... Go find that boy.

They hesitate and look into Thomas' eyes.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

I don't want to be saved...

Joshua kneels next to him.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Please.

Joshua nods.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Find the boy, and go home, before  
it's too-

Thomas dies. Joshua closes his eyes, and places him gently onto the ground.

INT. ENEMY BASE - BUNKER - DAY

Darkness, which, with a groan of metal hinges, is flooded with sudden light as the door is opened.

A dozen young boys - child soldiers, starving and scared - shield themselves from the glare.

Joshua looks in.

He scans the faces, until he sees the one he came to find.

Faddei looks up at him, with hope in his eyes.

JOSHUA

Faddei? I can take you somewhere  
safe. All of you can be taken  
somewhere safe.

Faddei nods and looks around at the destruction.

What seems like endless dead bodies lay strewn across the  
base.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)

I know you're scared. That's okay.  
It's normal to be scared.

Joshua hands Faddei a weapon.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)

Take this. Just in case.

Faddei looks at Arkady, who smiles warmly at him.

Joshua and Arkady lead Faddei and the young children out of  
the enemy base.

Faddei freezes, his body begins to shake.

Joshua notices.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)

Hey, what's going on?

Faddei kneels next to Malik, tears in his eyes.

FADDEI

Ma-Malik?

He shakes his body, but it doesn't move.

JOSHUA

Faddei...Faddei, come on.

Faddei looks at Malik's weapon, then back at Joshua.

He quickly turns his gun on Joshua, missing by several inches  
as the recoil sends him flying back.

The bullet, instead, hits Arkady in the jugular. Blood quirts  
from the wound as if it's from a hose. Arkady places his hand  
to his neck, but it's too late. He collapses and dies  
instantly.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)

Arkady! No!

Joshua quickly lowers his weapon to the floor and throws his hands in the air.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)

Hey...it's okay...I know you're scared.

Joshua inches forward slowly.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)

I know...I Know...

Faddei takes a deep breath in, adjusts his stance and grips the pistol.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)

Just hand me the weapon, Faddei-

Faddei fires off several bullets, all of which make contact with Joshua's chest, sending him flying backwards.

He collapses onto the floor, onto his back.

Gasping for air, Joshua starts to hallucinate.

The sun begins to finally shine through the grey clouds.

As Faddei looms over Joshua's body, he begins to turn into Greg.

Joshua lets out a wry smile from the corner of his lips.

GREG

Daddy?

JOSHUA

Greg. You're home. I...I love you so much son-

Joshua is shot in the head by Faddei several times until the magazine empties.

As Faddei runs off to catch up with the others, Joshua's dead body lies in the sand...covered by sunlight.

FADE TO BLACK.

**THE END.**