

DOWN RANGE

by
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SUPER OVER BLACK: **"War is the result of failed diplomacy."**

Airplane propellers, the steady hum builds.

FADE IN:

EXT. SKIES OVER AFGHANISTAN - DAY

The Hindu Kush mountain range. Spring... the beginning of fighting season. Only the highest peaks still have snow.

A four prop military transport, the C-130, descends towards a populated landscape nestled in the mountain's basin.

SUPER: **"This is Afghanistan...**

America's longest war."

A FIGURE peeks through one of the cargo windows...

INT. C-130 - DAY

That figure is SUNGLASSES, a special-ops bubba with forearm tattoos and beard. He sets his Oakley's on top of his head.

SUNGLASSES

Was hoping for more snow this time of year.

Napping next to him is BALL CAP, another *spook* in cargo pants. Tipping up his hat brim, he looks over and yawns.

BALL CAP

You afraid hajji might get the jump on us this summer?

A sardonic snort and a smirk... the thought sounds absurd.

Among the two men... cargo net seating only. Crammed in like sardines, DEPLOYED MILITARY huddle nuts-to-butts, all donned in body armor, helmets and multi-cam fatigues. Most find a way to sleep.

SUNGLASSES

What do you think of the stewardess?

Sunglasses points towards the back of the plane.

On the flight stool sits a beautiful CREW CHIEF. Headphones on, listening to flight deck chatter.

BALL CAP

About a desert seven, um, real world six.

SUNGLASSES

No way, man. She's at least... at least, a real world nine.

BALL CAP

Hey, I'm picky. Spent my downtime in Thailand, where the women are quite exquisite.

SUNGLASSES

Say you're that picky after about a week in the suck.

Sunglasses snickers. He fist bumps Ball Cap.

Crew Chief looks over to the men, hand touching her headset. She stands and crosses the cargo hold to the latrine curtain.

LATRINE

Like death warmed over sits CAPTAIN FRANK FELLOWS (30s), an astute Air Force prosecutor wanting to be anywhere but here.

Fellows scribbles notes onto a stapled legal document:
"Illegal shooting" "Afghan civilian" "Motives?" "Evidence?"

A bit of turbulence jars the plane, sending his face into a bucket... vomiting. The curtain shakes.

CREW CHIEF (O.S.)

We're landing. Need you to strap in.

Fellows repositions his glasses then wipes his brow and chin with a white handkerchief embroidered with **"F.F."**

His thumb runs across the initials... some fond memory hits him. He folds the hanky up and tucks it into his sleeve.

CARGO SEATS

Crew Chief approaches the special-ops guys-- feet up in the way. With a bright smile, she dives her hand... *'Landing.'*

The two men smirk, sit up and let her pass. She disappears into the flight deck as they share an *'I told you so'* look.

A nauseous Fellows stumbles about the other passengers, waking up a lot of them. They grumble as he passes.

BALL CAP

Check out this guy.

Fellows reaches Sunglasses and Ball Cap. They stare him up and down.

SUNGLASSES

Can we help you, boss?

Fellows taps his name-tape: "**FELLOWS**". He points to the matching name-tape on the backpack that Sunglasses made into an armrest. Sunglasses leans up.

Fellows grabs his backpack and takes his seat between the two hulking men. He bear hugs his backpack.

A barf bag appears. Crew Chief squats down to eye-level.

CREW CHIEF

Here you go, Captain. Sorry I couldn't locate any dramamine earlier.

FELLOWS

I think I'll be all right until we land.

CREW CHIEF

I'm afraid we do combat landings in Afghanistan. Lots of steep turns.

Fellows reluctantly takes the barf bag.

CREW CHIEF (CONT'D)

Cheer up, it's better than your helmet.

Fellows finds a little solace in her smile, he's not built for this. Crew Chief rushes back to the cockpit.

The C-130's engines rev to a higher pitch. The plane banks hard and descends into a sharp dive.

Fellows can't hold back and vomits into the barf bag. Sunglasses and Ball Cap shake their heads in disbelief and uncomfortably lean away.

EXT. SKIES OVER AFGHANISTAN - DAY

The C-130 levels out for approach.

Like an oasis in the middle of a dusty wasteland, a congested blast wall fortress quickly comes into view.

INT. BAGRAM AIRFIELD - PASSENGER TERMINAL - DAY

The hustle and bustle of military arriving and departing.

The double doors to the ramp swing open. Tired, sweaty SOLDIERS file in. They find their SPONSORS or FIRST SERGEANTS and disperse. The once busy room quickly grows quiet.

A woman in cargo pants and tucked in polo with a sidearm on her belt, MAJOR RINK (40s), taps her foot while checking her watch. She grabs the attention of a passing First Sergeant.

RINK
Was that the flight from the 'Deid?

FIRST SERGEANT
Yes, ma'am.

RINK
Shit, he didn't make it. Thank you,
First Sergeant.

The First Sergeant nods and exits with his platoon.

Rink grabs the courtesy phone off the wall and dials.

Fellows trudges in. He drops his gear on a chair and looks around, removing his helmet and body armor. The helmet falls off the chair, hitting the concrete floor-- CRACK!

Rink glances over to see Fellows unbuttoning his blouse.

RINK (CONT'D)
You Captain Fellows?

Fellows adjusts his glasses.

FELLOWS
Are you Major Rink?

RINK
Yes I am.

Fellows buttons his blouse back up. Rink crosses over.

RINK (CONT'D)
Deborah Rink, Office of Special
Investigation, welcome to Bagram.
Did you have a good flight, Captain?

Rink extends her hand. Fellows stands and shakes it quickly.

FELLOWS
Oh, for some reason I pictured you
as a man.

Rink pulls back her hand... a look of 'really?'

RINK
Is there anyone you need to call
back home?

FELLOWS

Why?

RINK

To let them know you arrived safely.

FELLOWS

Oh... um, no, no one I need to call.

RINK

...Okaaay then. Need you to collect your gear and follow me.

Fellows looks at his gear. He huffs.

RINK (CONT'D)

I've got this for you.

Rink snatches up his heavy body armor like it's nothing.

RINK (CONT'D)

Where's your sidearm?

FELLOWS

I was told it would be issued to me here.

Rink shakes her head, *figures*.

EXT. ARMORY - DAY

Reinforced tan-colored shipping container with a cage window.

Fellows steps away holding his newly issued pistol. He fumbles to put it in his drop holster.

RINK

Were you able to review the case?

FELLOWS

I read it on the plane, just a sec.

Fellows focuses his attention down and finally holsters his pistol... not a gun guy. He retrieves the deposition from his backpack.

FELLOWS (CONT'D)

My summary is on the back page. When's the meeting with the accused?

Rink steps off the curb towards a parked white government truck. She tosses his body armor in the bed.

RINK

Get in, door's open.

I/E. TRUCK - DAY

Disney Blvd. Rink drives. Fellows takes in the scenery...

A base in transition from tactical to enduring. Steel Conex buildings, stacked three high. Wood barracks huts. Demolition. New construction. SOLDIERS walk to chow. A LOCAL NATIONAL pumps shit out of an outhouse into a black-water truck.

Rink turns off Disney Blvd. onto...

EXT. PERIMETER ROAD - DAY

The truck races around the dirt road along Bagram's blast wall. Watch towers every hundred yards.

The blast wall turns into a fence line. Beyond it, a barren landscape of dirt mounds serving as a buffer to ground attack.

A dust storm brews in the far-off distance.

Fellows sees off base for the first time. His eyes widen.

RINK
First deployment?

FELLOWS
First time anywhere.

A low pitched whine builds. Fellows looks back at the runway.

A two-ship of A-10 attack aircraft take off above them, flying towards the mountains in the distance.

Fellows' amazement is like a little kid's.

RINK
First time seeing A-10's fly?

FELLOWS
Does it show?

Rink smirks.

RINK
Those planes support a lot of troops in contact. You hear that engine whine and you know bad news is gonna rain down on the enemy. They know it too, very well. That sound alone acts like a deterrent.

FELLOWS

I'm so busy with case work or court,
I don't go anywhere near the flight
line.

The barriers begin again. A convoy of armored fighting
VEHICLES barrel around a blind corner, hogging the middle of
the road.

FELLOWS (CONT'D)

Look out!

Rink cranks the wheel and hits the gas, speeding towards the
narrow shoulder. The truck sideswipes the airfield fence
line. The last vehicle narrowly misses them. She hits the
brakes and smacks her horn.

RINK

Those fucking M-RAPs. Everyday, always
in the middle of the road. They make
those things so the damn driver can't
see ten feet in front of them.

Rink hits the gas and drives away.

EXT. ENTRY CONTROL POINT #10 - DAY

Gateway to the *wild west*. In the guard tower, a SENTRY stands
overwatch.

SKY ABOVE

A hovering camera DRONE tracks above a convoy of tan M.R.A.P.
(Mine Resistant Ambush Protection) vehicles.

DRONE POV: The "M-RAPs" are a bad-ass hulking marvel of modern
wartime ingenuity. Self-contained, up-armored with double
thick bullet-proof windows. The gun turrets have a 360 degree
protection of metal shields and canopies. Anti-rocket wire
mesh nets are fastened all the way around the vehicle's body.

SOLDIERS donned in their full armor and battle loads meander
about doing various tasks to ready their vehicles. Some fuck
off... chain smoke... one guy does pull-ups off the door.

The drone descends towards a tech savvy soldier...
SPECIALIST WU (20s). Quick fingers, smart mouth. He types on
a chest mount laptop.

The palm-sized hovering camera lands on Wu's open hand. He
puts the drone next to a couple of battery packs inside an
open pelican case. Wu shuts the case and walks towards...

I/E. VEHICLE #3 - DAY

The third vehicle in a four vehicle convoy. The hood is up. One INDIVIDUAL works on the engine.

In the turret, PRIVATE JOHNSON (20s), a big country meathead gunner, meticulously ops checks a Browning .50 caliber machine gun. He squirts gun oil into the mechanisms and wipes it down with a rag.

JOHNSON

You done testing the hornet?

Wu lifts the pelican case up as a confirmation.

WU

Yep, you done sleeping with that fifty cal?

JOHNSON

Hey, don't bad mouth, Daisy.

(pets the machine gun)

Shh, don't listen to him, sweet girl.

CRUZ (30s), by-the-book Staff Sergeant, rushes past the vehicle.

CRUZ

Specialist Wu, you clean out that vehicle, yet?

WU

Nah, Staff Sergeant, night shift was supposed to clean it.

CRUZ

You can fix the blame or fix the problem. One will get a boot up your ass.

Cruz runs to an impromptu meeting at the front of the convoy.

WU

Why's it gotta be like that, Staff Sergeant?

Wu's posture slumps, he opens the door.

The M-RAP's cab is all function, no comfort. Between the driver and passenger seat is a reinforced computer monitor and radio bay stations. In the rear are two seats, turret access, several bags, ammo cans and pelican cases.

Wu polices up empty water bottles, some not so empty-- dip spit or piss. He tosses them into a trash bag.

WU (CONT'D)
Awww, disgusting pigs.

Johnson ducks back down into the M-RAP.

JOHNSON
Hey let me have an empty.

WU
Why?

JOHNSON
Because I'm already in my armor,
dickhead.

Johnson snatches it away. He rotates the turret away from Wu. He unbuttons his fly and pisses in the bottle.

WU
You are one sick redneck.

Wu smacks Johnson's ass.

JOHNSON
Hey! I'm actually trying not to piss
on your seat.

Wu meanders to the front of the M-RAP. The hood slams startling him. He yelps.

At the hood stands starry-eyed PVT 1ST CLASS HODDY (30s). The vehicle's petite driver who joined up late in life yet holds her own. She smiles as she wipes grease off her hands with a rag.

WU
We should really put a bell on you.

Wu pats Hoddy on the top of her head as he struts to the passenger side.

Hoddy balls up the rag and hook shots it at Wu.

HODDY
Incoming!

Wu opens the trash bag, the rag bounces off his chest and falls inside. Hoddy makes a fist and pumps the air.

HODDY (CONT'D)
Two points.

Hoddy pulls the handle on the driver's side door. It sticks.

HODDY (CONT'D)

Door hydraulics are sticking again.

She puts her boot up on the running bar and yanks hard, it finally opens.

JOHNSON

Report it to motor pool.

Hoddy dons her body armor, it engulfs her.

HODDY

Already did, four weeks ago. They say it's a low priority fix.

WU

Blowjobs would probably expedite things.

HODDY

Good idea, I'll let you borrow my kneepads.

Defeated with no comeback, Wu crosses over to a dumpster.

Hoddy pulls her kneepads up from her ankles and straps them down.

INT. PORT-A-POTTIE - DAY

Dick graffiti all over the walls.

A soldier, CORPORAL WOMACK (20s), a sleep deprived and depressed combat medic, sticks the barrel of a pistol in his mouth. He closes his eyes as his finger caresses the trigger.

Banging on the door interrupts.

DICKHEAD SOLDIER (O.S.)

Hurry up, asshole!

Womack opens his eyes and removes the pistol from his mouth, placing it back into his holster.

The door swings open, Womack rushes past the DICKHEAD SOLDIER.

DICKHEAD SOLDIER (CONT'D)

Were you fappin' it in there or what?

Dickhead soldier rushes inside. It's a production to remove his armor and gear... quickly drops his trousers... relief! He laughs at the dick graffiti, until-- no toilet paper!

DICKHEAD SOLDIER (CONT'D)

Aww, fuck.

EXT. PORT-A-JOHN - DAY

Womack smirks, tossing a roll of toilet paper into the air.
He crosses the road over towards...

I/E. VEHICLE #3

All doors are open.

Hoddy takes a small wallet sized PHOTO of her three year-old daughter from her helmet. She sticks it up in the dashboard.

Sitting behind Hoddy, Wu plays a video game on his smartphone.
He kicks the seat in front of him.

WU

Surprised you don't need a booster
seat to drive this thing.

Hoddy pulls a spring blade from the shaft of her boot-- CLICK!
Wu and Johnson swallow hard.

JOHNSON

I'll be up here if you need me.

Johnson climbs into the turret.

WU

Uh, nice blade.

HODDY

I call her Rape Whistle.

Hoddy smiles then folds down the blade. She tucks it back
into her boot.

HODDY (CONT'D)

Honestly if it came down to it... I
doubt I could every use it. Seems a
little too up close and personal.

A roll of toilet paper hits Johnson in the helmet. He turns
to see Womack climb into the back seat.

HODDY (CONT'D)

Hey, Womack's back.

JOHNSON

What up, partner?

WU

Where have you been?

WOMACK

Was ordered to go to combat stress.

Those words have weight, everyone is silent.

HODDY

Regardless, it's good to have you
back.

EXT. ENTRY CONTROL POINT #10 - DAY

The white truck pulls up, a GATE GUARD puts his hand up.
Rink flashes her badge. The guard quickly waves them on.

INT. TRUCK

Rink drives towards a small sector command building.

FELLOWS

Is this the road to billeting?

RINK

No, this is the convoy gate.

FELLOWS

Why in the world are we here?

Rink parks the truck.

RINK

The detainee is still at the FOB.
The Germans have custody and won't
release him.

FELLOWS

Last I checked we're all NATO, falling
under the same status of forces
agreement.

RINK

It's not that simple, Afghan National
Army is imbedded with the Germans
and they're the ones being difficult.
Their colonel has direct access to
heavies in Kabul. And with the
security agreements in total flux...
it's extremely political right now.

FELLOWS

Sounds like something the state
department should handle.

RINK

Protests in the area are getting
progressively worse, the situation
is getting violent fast. We don't
need another Kuran burning.

(MORE)

RINK (CONT'D)

With this thing heating up, we're really out of options and have to move quick. So... I need you to get on a convoy down range to negotiate the prisoner release. Get statements while you're there and--

FELLOWS

Now wait a minute, I came here to determine if the case is strong enough for trial, hopefully negotiating a quick settlement. And now you want me to go out there?

(points to the gate)

Risking my life? This whole thing sounds absurd. Absolutely not, I won't do it.

RINK

I was on the phone all night with your commander and you know what he told me?

FELLOWS

What did he say?

RINK

Honestly... he said you're his best JAG with a solid handle on international law.

Fellows gets a little smug with that compliment.

RINK (CONT'D)

But you're his shittiest officer.

That comment *kicks* Fellows in the gut.

Rink shifts to drive.

EXT. CONVOY - DAY

Smoking a cigarette at the front of the convoy, Staff Sergeant Cruz stands in a briefing with two other soldiers.

A rosy cheeks LIEUTENANT (20s) and a battle hardened, grizzly FIRST SERGEANT STEEL (40s).

LIEUTENANT

Orders come from high up, First Sergeant.

STEEL

L.T., I don't give a flying shit how high up the chain it is, you can't just run willy nilly out there. That's how people die.

The white truck pulls over next to the men.

LIEUTENANT

He's here.

Steel shoots the approaching truck a dirty look.

STEEL

I can't believe I got sucked into this...

(To Cruz)

Staff Sergeant Cruz, some Air Force Captain's riding in your vehicle this range.

CRUZ

That's all I need, First Sergeant, a pair of boots I can't yell at.

LIEUTENANT

Just have everyone form up.

Cruz nods and jogs back down the convoy, yelling at soldiers to form up.

INT. TRUCK - DAY

Fellows enumerates with his fingers.

FELLOWS

I don't have that kind of training. I sit at a desk all day, hell I couldn't even keep my breakfast down on the flight in. I barely qualified on my pistol and I certainly didn't sign up for combat.

RINK

But you signed up, right?

FELLOWS

My orders clearly state Bagram Airfield not some FOB in the sticks.

RINK

God, you lawyers actually sound like lawyers. The mission dictates you go, so your orders were changed.

Fellows is beaten and knows it.

RINK (CONT'D)
Listen, all you have to do is keep
your head down, mouth shut and stay
inside the vehicle. You'll be there
and back in no time.

Rink offers her hand.

RINK (CONT'D)
Just call me when you get to the
FOB.

Fellows reluctantly shakes it and opens his door.

RINK (CONT'D)
And don't worry, these are the world's
most highly trained soldiers keeping
you safe.

INT. VEHICLE #3 - DAY

Johnson's legs dangle from the turret seat, he lets one rip--
PFFFFT!! Long and wet... he rotates the turret in a circle.

JOHNSON (O.S.)
Hey ya'll, I can't tell, is the turret
operational? Can somebody take a
closer look for me?

WU
Dude, quit crop with the dusting, my
mouth was open. Aww, you switch
protein powder or something?
(waves his hand)
'Cause, you smell like a bag of ripe
assholes.

With a closed fist, Hoddy *charlie-horses* Johnson several
times in the thigh. Johnson belts out an uproarious laugh.

JOHNSON
Ow. All right. I give. Dang, girl.

Hoddy stops punching.

HODDY
Next time, I punch your nuts.

Johnson crosses his legs.

Womack smiles for the first time as Wu can't stop laughing.

Hoddy looks ahead to the front of the convoy where...

Fellows emerges from the truck. Looking uncomfortable, he adjusts his helmet as the Lieutenant greets him.

HODDY (CONT'D)
Who's that guy?

The other soldiers look ahead.

HODDY (CONT'D)
He looks Air Force.

Cruz runs over and sticks his head in the cab.

CRUZ
Form up, L.T. wants us up front for the mission brief.

Everyone groans.

WU
Guess we ain't playing Xbox later.

FRONT OF CONVOY - DAY

The convoy soldiers huddle in a semicircle.

LIEUTENANT
You guys have been tasked a lot, busting your ass these past couple weeks. I know today was supposed to be a down day but we have new orders.

The crowd deflates from the news-- moans and groans.

STEEL
Lock it up!

LIEUTENANT
This is Captain Frank Fellows from the Air Force Judge Advocates office. We're escorting Captain Fellows down range to FOB Chadwick, A-SAP.

Fellows gives a half-hearted wave.

LIEUTENANT (CONT'D)
We're taking route purple, through the main village and past the river, two hours there. Sixty minutes on post then R.T.B., okay. With most of the mountain pass thawed, might see a significant up-tick of activity. No promises.

Lieutenant shuffles through a small notebook. As if he's said it a hundred times...

LIEUTENANT (CONT'D)

Only other intel are rumblings for a 'complex attack' to hit Bagram any day now. That's all I got. Questions?

WU

Sir, can you go into exactly what this complex attack consists of? Because we've been hearing that same thing over and over.

Lt shakes his head. Hoddy steps in front of Wu.

HODDY

Sir, what's at FOB Chadwick?

LIEUTENANT

Captain Fellows, your show.

Fellows steps forward, uneasy. He nervously removes his glasses and cleans them with his handkerchief.

FELLOWS

I'm sure everyone is aware of the unlawful shooting that took place last week.

CRUZ

(quietly to Johnson)

Unlawful? Heard it was self defense.

Fellows clears his throat.

FELLOWS

We... we have a, uh, unique situation where our I-SAF partners have custody of the airman in question and I have to facilitate a release, which, ah, which means...

Steel steps in.

STEEL

Which means all you need to know is we're on escort duty.

LIEUTENANT

Okay, everyone has their vehicle assignments this range. If I die, First Sergeant Steel is in charge, if he dies Sergeant Cruz is in charge then Corporal Tolliver. Good to go?

(MORE)

LIEUTENANT (CONT'D)

(silence)

All right folks, let's mount up.

The gravity of the situation sinks into Fellows.

I/E. VEHICLE #3 - DAY

The soldiers have their place in the vehicle.

Cruz lingers half-way out of the front passenger seat sucking down a cigarette.

Wu sees Steel escort Fellows over.

WU

Oh, keep walking, dude. Keep walking.
Fuuu--

STEEL

Sergeant Cruz, Captain Fellows is
with you.

Cruz hops up, embarrassed by his cigarette, he quickly extinguishes it with his boot heel and pockets the butt. He stands at parade rest and gives Fellows a friendly nod.

Steel opens the back door where Womack is sitting.

STEEL (CONT'D)

Corporal Womack, you're in two with
me. Captain, vehicle three is the
safest one in the convoy. May I ask
where your rifle is?

FELLOWS

I was issued this gun, right here.

Fellows pats the drop holster on his thigh.

STEEL

Captain, that sidearm is not gonna
cut it, not on my convoy. Everyone
has a duty to protect this convoy,
including you. Womack, give him your
M-4.

WOMACK

What am I gonna use, First Sergeant?

STEEL

We'll put you in the crow's nest on
two.

Womack deflates. He unslings his rifle and hands it to Fellows.

FELLOWS

Okay, I've never shot one of these before.

Steel... heavy sigh.

STEEL

Let me give you the quick and dirty. Pull this lever to rack it back, chambering a round. Safety's here. If you need to fire, the red dot in the scope goes on your target, flip the safety to fire. One trigger squeeze equals one round. Questions?

FELLOWS

Where do I begin? Um.

Steel pats Fellows on the back.

STEEL

There's one in the chamber, it's on safe. Just point it in a direction where you don't shoot anyone on our side.

Steel storms off. Womack slinks behind him.

STEEL (CONT'D)

Already a God damn shit show.

Fellows climbs in the vehicle. Everyone inside stares at him in silence.

FELLOWS

What?

(raises rifle)

Lawyers don't get this kind of training.

HODDY

Captain, don't worry about First Sergeant Steel, he's only cranky on days that end in 'Y.'

Fellows attempts a half-hearted smile.

LIEUTENANT (V.O.)

(from radio)

Horsemen, we're cleared to move out.

The vehicle commanders confirm in order.

Johnson's hand drops from the turret.

JOHNSON

Wu, hand me my tourniquets.

Wu hands a few velcro quick tourniquets to Johnson.

Johnson pulls the loose tourniquets up to his thighs and shoulders.

FELLOWS

Why is he putting those on?

WU

Sir, if a gunner gets shot he can cinch the tourniquet down and continue firing.

FELLOWS

Wait, you think we'll get shot at?

WU

(smiling)

Welcome to the M.P.'s, sir.

Hoddy revs the M-RAP's engine and shifts into drive.

Fellows swallows hard as the convoy rolls towards the gate. They pass a spray painted plywood SIGN: "**COMPLACENCY KILLS**" The convoy pulls out past the gate.

EXT. BAGRAM AIRFIELD - DAY

An empty dirt road disappears into the distance. The convoy blazes a trail on dusty open ground away from the base.

A brown DUST DEVIL twirls in a nearby dirt field.

INT. VEHICLE #3

Wu pulls out his smartphone and records video.

WU

Check it out.

Everyone looks over:

The scene is quite memorizing as the dust devil cuts a path through the rolling terrain-- an almost calming effect. Just as the twister materialized, it dissipates.

FELLOWS

I guess we're not in Kansas anymore.

TURRET

Johnson racks the action on the .50 cal.

JOHNSON

You got that right, Dorothy.

CAB

CRUZ

Johnson, you got your harness on?

JOHNSON (O.S.)

It cuts the circulation off to my nuts, Staff Sergeant.

CRUZ

I don't want you falling out in the event of a roll-over. Get it on!

WU

Yeah Johnson, you better strap in with the way P.F.C. Hoddy drives.

Hoddy jerks the wheel and corrects it back throwing Johnson off balance. She smiles.

Fellows stares out the window-- *'what'd I just get into?'*

EXT. UP THE ROAD - DAY

The convoy passes a few ruins in a sort of no-man's land.

Rusted soviet-era vehicles... garbage... dirt... all bulldozed up into long mounds.

INT. RUINS - DAY

A dilapidated mud hut, a good distance away from the road.

A dirty motorcycle propped against the wall.

An unknown LOCAL MAN leans up into the window and spies on the convoy as it passes. He looks through a loose rifle scope tethered to a para-cord necklace.

The man's clothing is a touch more westernized-- jeans, sheep skin jacket, aviator sunglasses... this is MOTORCYCLE ALI. He stuffs the scope under his shirt and dials a cellphone. Speaks the local Dari dialect...

MOTORCYCLE ALI

Four american military trucks leave Bagram towards the north.

He watches the convoy-- an erupting rooster tail of dust disappearing into the horizon.

Motorcycle Ali jump starts the motorcycle, revving the throttle. He rides off...

EXT. RUINS - DAY

Emerging from the doorway, he pops a wheelie and rides the back wheel down a goat trail... jumping a dirty mound like a skilled motocross rider. He disappears into the valley.

EXT. BAZAAR - DAY

A small village, more civilized than most. LOCALS conduct business among the various shops.

INT. RUG SHOP - DAY

The store front has an AFGHAN WOMAN on her knees hand knotting a rug.

Beyond the beaded curtains...

IN THE BACK

An AFGHAN ELDER shuts a flip phone and tucks it inside his robe. He places a tobacco pipe into his mouth, lights it and smokes.

A younger man with piercing blue eyes and a slight orange tint to his beard, ANWAR (40s), prays in the middle of the room. He finishes and looks over to the elder. The elder nods his approval.

Anwar rushes out the backdoor.

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

Two skinny teens push a stick into the dirt. One has burn scars across his face, BURNT FACE. The other teen, LITTLE BULLY, snatches the stick away from burnt face.

A third boy with no legs, LEGLESS, sits against the building and watches the other two play.

The two able bodied teens see Anwar approach, they run towards him, delighted.

Anwar pats each one on the head. Locking eyes with them, he holds up his hand and spreads his fingers. He points to each of his fingers, one at a time... counting.

The boys understand.

Anwar smiles and gives Little Bully a medium sized rock.

ANWAR

(Dari)

Go!

The boys nod and run down the alley. Anwar returns to the shop, patting Legless on the head as he passes by.

I/E. VEHICLE #3 - DAY

Convoy rolls on. Wu gives Fellows the nickel tour.

WU

She's got a high clearance, V-shaped underbelly, making her resistant to most I.E.D.s. Those steel nets can displace a direct hit by an R.P.G. Umm, .50 cal in the turret... yeah, that's about it. Any other questions?

FELLOWS

Sure, what do M.P.'s do?

WU

Security details mostly. Patrols. Provide protection to E.O.D. or other operations outside the base. Escorting you out to a FOB is a little off tasking for us. But ain't nothing the 437th Military Police can't handle, HOO-AH?

JOHNSON/HODDY

Hoo-ah!

CRUZ

Lock it up, Wu. We're beyond the buffer, need your eyes and ears on now.

Wu shuts down and looks back out his window.

FELLOWS

What? I can't ask questions?

Cruz tosses a dirty look to Fellows.

CRUZ

Sir, I may not have mentioned this before but we need all eyes spotting.

FELLOWS

I missed your name before. Sergeant? What rank is that?

CRUZ

Cruz. Staff Sergeant stripes.

FELLOWS

What do I need to be looking for,
Staff Sergeant Cruz?

CRUZ

Okay, sir, I'll bite. You want to be
involved?

FELLOWS

Sure.

CRUZ

All right, you need to look for
anything out of the ordinary. Signs
of I.E.D.'s: Wires, vehicles that
look too low to the ground, fresh
dirt, garbage piles, dead animals.
Old tires are a good indicator.
Someone acting suspicious. Always
looking beyond the obvious. Things
in the distance, things in the
foreground. You ride in this vehicle,
you become its eyes and ears.

Fellows seems overwhelmed but willing, he glances outside.

FELLOWS

I see a stack of rocks.

CRUZ

There's a lot of that around here.
Can't call E.O.D. every time there's
a stack of rocks.

LIEUTENANT (V.O.)

(radio)

All vehicles, all vehicles, stand-
fast.

Vehicle #2 stops suddenly. Hoddy hits the brake pedal, the M-
RAP slides to a stop on the dirt road.

FELLOWS

What's going on?

EXT. ROAD - DAY

An elderly GOAT HERDER (50s) with an AK-47 slung over his
shoulder and a malnourished DIRTY KID (10) lead a few dozen
goats across the road. Vehicle #1 honks its horn.

INT. VEHICLE #3

Fellows rises up from his seat for a better look.

FELLOWS

That man has a gun, that's out of the ordinary.

CRUZ

Just about everyone in this country carries a rifle, it's quite common. When the locals don't follow your instructions, that's when you worry. Like if some hajji terrorist at a FOB became a threat, the situation to use deadly force might be justifiable, right?

FELLOWS

What do you mean by that, exactly?

The radio crackle interrupts...

LIEUTENANT (V.O.)

Vehicles two, three and four... have one of your folks dismount and see if you can expedite this situation.

WU

I got it, Staff Sergeant.

Cruz nods. Wu exits the vehicle.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

The interpreter, NADEEM (30s), jumps from the back door of vehicle #1. He's dressed in an Afghan National Army uniform. Nadeem has his rifle at the ready and approaches the Afghan.

NADEEM

(Dari)

How many times I tell you not to be on this road?

The goat herder puts his hands up. The dirty kid stands next to the herder and stares.

NADEEM (CONT'D)

(Dari)

Come on, boy! Get them out of here. Let's go! Hurry, hurry!

Wu and a PALE SOLDIER stand watch. The goats cross the road.

INT. VEHICLE #3 - DAY

Cruz types into the reinforced computer in the front console.

FELLOWS

What is that?

CRUZ

This? This is called the blue force tracker. It's basically a fancy GPS-enabled system that shows us where all the friendly and hostiles are.

HODDY

More like blue force *tattletale*.

CRUZ

Shh, don't tell anyone.

FELLOWS

And what are you keying in exactly?

Cruz exhales, annoyed.

CRUZ

So what I'm doing is keying in mister goat herder with the AK-47. And that intel will feed to all our forces in the area. For instance, here's E.O.D. demining in the south. A marine patrol to the east and we have some civil engineers doing road maintenance way west of here.

Fellows raises up and looks at the screen: A geo-map of Pashwar province-- roads, rivers, villages. Blue Icons represent friendly units.

FELLOWS

Looks like it gives you a nice operations picture of the area.

CRUZ

Something like that.

EXT. CONVOY - DAY

The dismounted soldiers wave the vehicles through a path in the middle of the goat herd.

Vehicle #3 slowly passes the old goat herder. A fascinated Fellows gets a closer look, studying the man... wrinkled, tan with a grey beard... soviet era AK-47.

The last vehicle passes the herd.

Nadeem opens the door to vehicle #2.

WU
Hey Nadeem, *doset dashetem boz!*

Nadeem shakes his head and flips Wu off.

NADEEM
Fuck your mother.

Wu smiles as he climbs back into vehicle #3.

INT. VEHICLE #3 - DAY

FELLOWS
What did you say to him?

WU
Who the interpreter, Nadeem? Called him a goat fucker.

Hoddy shakes her head in disappointment.

HODDY
That's just wrong, man.

WU
What? My Dari is very limited. I have to brush up on what I do know.

The convoy rolls on.

EXT. 30 MILES OUTSIDE BAGRAM AIRFIELD - DAY

The dusty fields turn to trees. The roads are better maintained. Semi-trucks pass giving the convoy a wide berth.

EXT. CHARIKAR VILLAGE - DAY

Civilization in a 3rd world country with one foot caught in the stone age. The convoy cruises by as farm shacks, shanties and mud huts turn to shops and bazaars in the village center.

FELLOWS
Staff Sergeant, what is this place?

Cruz was enjoying the silence...

CRUZ
Welcome to Charikar, capitol of Pashwar province. We're probably thirty miles from Bagram.

FELLOWS
Are we stopping here?

CRUZ

Oh, no.

LIEUTENANT (V.O.)

(radio)

All vehicles, we're passing the heart of the village. Stay vigilante, report anything suspicious.

The convoy passes Motorcycle Ali lounging on his bike outside the rug shop. He has a jovial conversation on his cell phone.

Fellows stares at the man, as the M-RAP passes by. Bad vibes, he leans up.

FELLOWS

Should we be worried?

CRUZ

Not really, coalition forces have a fairly good relationship with the local population. Several outreach missions are staged from Bagram. South Korean school, Egyptian Clinic.

Fellows looks out the window. LITTLE AFGHAN CHILDREN wave and run along side.

AFGHAN WOMEN yell after them, trying to keep them out of the road.

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

Anwar's two teenage boys, Little Bully and Burnt Face, run towards a wooden ladder. They climb it.

EXT. ROOF TOP - DAY

The teens appear on the roof.

They run to the edge of the shop, peeking over, looking down the road.

In the distance, the convoy approaches. They look at each other and dump rocks out of their pockets.

EXT. VILLAGE ROAD - DAY

Groups of children continue running along side the convoy, smiling and waving.

INT. VEHICLE #3 - DAY

Hoddy honks the horn, waving them out of the road.

HODDY

The kids and women are out and about.
That's a good sign.

WU

Yeah, no middle fingers today.

EXT. ROOF TOP - DAY

Little Bully grabs a rock and throws it.

INT. VEHICLE #3 - DAY

The rock hits the windshield with a CRACK!

Fellows flinches, ducking behind the seat.

Hoddy jerks the steering wheel.

The M-RAP veers left. Hoddy corrects the vehicle back.

FELLOWS

Was that a gunshot!?

JOHNSON (O.S.)

Just a rock!

More rocks hit the convoy.

STEEL (V.O.)

(radio)

Permission to engage.

LIEUTENANT (V.O.)

(radio)

Just push through, do not engage. I
repeat do not engage. It's just kids
throwing rocks.

Rocks pepper the vehicle like a hail storm. Each knock puts
an uneasy Fellows lower in his seat.

EXT. ROOF TOP

The two teens throw rock after rock as fast as they can.
They stay back away from the edge enough not to be seen.

The convoy passes by, they run out of rocks and hide. They
quietly laugh to each other like it's a game.

INT. VEHICLE #3 - TURRET

Johnson grabs his piss bottle wedged in the back of the
turret. He unscrews the cap.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

The convoy stops, vehicles parking in a diamond formation--
three hundred-sixty degree protection.

I/E. VEHICLE #3 - DAY

Johnson leans out the turret.

JOHNSON
Womack! You know who got hit?

From the vehicle two turret, Womack shakes his head.

WOMACK
No idea.

LIEUTENANT (V.O.)
(radio)
All vehicles dismount, need a
perimeter. Dispatch two per vehicle.
Repeat, two per vehicle. Wait for my
command.

Cruz turns to Fellows.

CRUZ
Sir, I need you to exit the vehicle
and point your rifle up in that
direction. Specialist Wu will show
you what to do.

LIEUTENANT (V.O.)
(radio)
Ready... Dismount! Dismount! Dismount!

FELLOWS
Wait, what?

CRUZ
Sir, I know it's outside your comfort
zone but we need all guns.

LIEUTENANT (V.O.)
(radio)
What's the hold up three?

CRUZ
Sir, the position you're sitting in
is reserved for dismount duty and I
need to log this activity.

Fellows reaches for the door handle, his hand shakes.

LIEUTENANT (V.O.)
 (radio)
 Let's go vehicle three!

Cruz shakes his head and keys the radio.

CRUZ
 Vehicle three dismounting.

Cruz hands the radio and checklist off to Hoddy.

CRUZ (CONT'D)
 Hoddy, you're in charge of the
 vehicle. Wu, you're with me.

FELLOWS
 Wait, it's okay, I got it.

Fellows opens his door and hops out. Wu exits.

LIEUTENANT (V.O.)
 (radio)
 Dust-off nine-nine, this is warhorse,
 standby for nine line medevac.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Soldiers take a knee and scan around their respective sectors.

In the distance are mud hut buildings, every open window
 looks suspicious. A few ONLOOKERS grow more curious.

Fellows follows Wu to the periphery of the convoy. They take
 a knee.

FELLOWS
 What do I do?

WU
 Sir, down the street there, that's
 your sector to watch, okay?

Fellows exhales deeply and nods.

WU (CONT'D)
 If anyone approaches just put your
 hand up and tell them to stop, if
 that doesn't work, well they
 understand a barrel pointed at them.
 Got it?

FELLOWS
 Understood.

Wu looks back to the vehicles.

WU
Johnson, who got hit?

From the turret, Johnson turns.

JOHNSON
Rutledge, he took a rock to the face.

EXT. ROOF TOP - DAY

The two teens peak up from the roof. They see the convoy in the distance.

Burnt Face counts the soldiers on his fingers. He holds up his hands to Little Bully.

BURNT FACE
(Dari)
This many?

Little Bully smacks the top of Burnt Face's head.

LITTLE BULLY
(Dari)
No stupid, double, twenty americans.

The teens watch the Lieutenant direct several soldiers as they hoist Dickhead Soldier from the Vehicle #1 turret. Dickhead Soldier holds a hand over his bleeding eye.

The teens look at each other, realizing the gravity of what they've done. It doesn't set well.

LITTLE BULLY (CONT'D)
(Dari)
Let's get out of here.

EXT. CONVOY - DAY

Lieutenant hustles over to vehicle #2.

LIEUTENANT
We need a medic! Corporal Womack,
get over here!

WOMACK
Hoo-ah, L.T.

A soldier from inside Vehicle #2 hands a medic's satchel up to Womack. Womack climbs off the turret, jumping down. He runs over.

Dickhead soldier is leaned against the vehicle. Womack bends down.

WOMACK (CONT'D)

Let me see, real quick.

Dickhead Soldier takes his hand away to reveal a swollen eye. Blood runs down from a gash above his eyelid.

WOMACK (CONT'D)

It's not as bad as it probably feels.
I have to bandage both eyes, okay?

DICKHEAD SOLDIER

Yeah sure, boss.

Womack removes a dressing and bandage from the satchel. He wraps Dickhead Soldier's eyes like a blindfold.

DUST OFF 99 (V.O.)

(radio)

War Horse this is Dust Off nine-nine,
go for nine line.

The Lieutenant pushes buttons on a green G.P.S. tethered to his chest armor. He keys the radio on his hip and speaks into his headset.

LIEUTENANT

Line one, coordinates nine-dot-zero-one-zero-one by seven-dot-one-one-tree-five. Line two, War Horse one-five. Line tree, one, priority. Line four none. Line five, one, walking. Line six, area secure. Line seven, violet smoke. Line eight, U.S., injured. Line nine, none. How copy, over?

EXT. BAGRAM AIRFIELD - DAY

The dust storm in full force. High winds. Aircraft grounded. Visibility, nil. Flight line operations are at a halt.

GROUND CREW run to take cover in hangars. Radio chatter...

DUST OFF 99 (V.O.)

War Horse that's a solid copy. E.T.A. sixty mike, over.

LIEUTENANT (V.O.)

That's unacceptable, dust-off nine-nine, request expedite.

DUST OFF 99 (V.O.)

Base Ops grounded all flights, winds in excess of sixty knots.

(MORE)

DUST OFF 99 (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Recommend you press and seek medical
 at destination.

EXT. CONVOY - DAY

The onlookers curiously approach the convoy, yet know to
 keep their distance.

Nadeem charges forward towards the townsfolk.

NADEEM

(Dari)
 Who threw the rocks? You? Are you
 Taliban?

The onlookers shake their heads.

ON FELLOWS

His eyes track a million miles an hour. He focuses in on
 something in the distance back down the road...

An ANGRY WOMAN yelling at a crowd of children. She takes
 something small from one of the children and hides it under
 her burka. She races towards the convoy.

Fellows stands putting his hand up.

FELLOWS

Stop. Stop! I said stop!

The angry woman screams Dari phrases and marches forward.

Fellows raises his weapon. The angry woman, calms slightly
 but gingerly steps forward. Pointing back to the children.

FELLOWS (CONT'D)

What do I do? She's not stopping. Do
 I shoot her?

Wu stands weapon raised.

WU

Stop!

FELLOWS

What if she has a suicide vest or
 something?

WU

I don't know, I don't know what to
 do.

FELLOWS

She's too close and won't listen...
I, I gotta shoot, right? I'm gonna
shoot.

Fellows aims. His thumb toggles the weapon to fire. Index
finger quivers above the trigger...

The woman inching closer, pleading with him.

Nadeem rushes in. He smacks both rifle barrels down.

NADEEM

Captain, don't shoot!

Nadeem approaches the woman.

NADEEM (CONT'D)

(Dari)

Hands up! Now!

The woman immediately complies.

Fellows, a sweaty mess, looks over to Wu. Wu shrugs his
shoulders.

The Lieutenant and Steel arrive.

LIEUTENANT

What's going on here?

FELLOWS

That woman wouldn't stop.

Nadeem calms the woman down. She hands him something and
rushes back to the onlookers. She continues screaming,
agitating the other townsfolk.

WU

L.T., the Captain said she was wearing
a suicide vest.

LIEUTENANT

You serious? Everyone get back, take
cover!

Soldiers duck and huddle close to the vehicles.

Nadeem turns back to Fellows.

NADEEM

No, no, no, no, no! The woman is
harmless, she's upset because someone
hit her child with this.

Nadeem hands the empty plastic piss bottle to Fellows.

STEEL

Jesus Christ.

(to soldiers)

False alarm, stand easy!

(to Fellows)

You almost put an innocent woman down thinking this fucking bottle was a suicide vest. What's the matter with you?

Steel snatches the bottle up and tosses it away.

LIEUTENANT

Captain, sir, do me a favor, sling that rifle and head back to your vehicle.

FELLOWS

Now wait a second, I was just doing what I was told.

LIEUTENANT

And we appreciate it but you being out here is doing more harm than good.

Steel interrupts.

STEEL

Hey, L.T. we're exposed here, no bird flying in the shit headed our way.

Fellows slinks back to the M-RAP and climbs inside.

I/E. VEHICLE #3

Fellows buckles his seat belt, looking out the window as Steel storms over to the middle of the convoy. Fellows eavesdrops on the conversation.

STEEL

Womack, can he walk?

WOMACK

Rutledge, how you feeling, buddy?

DICKHEAD SOLDIER

I'm good, First Sergeant.

STEEL

All right, let's get him back in the vehicle and press.

LIEUTENANT

I don't know, First Sergeant. Maybe we should head back to base. We're closer to Bagram than the FOB.

STEEL

"I don't know?" I. Don't. Know! Those three words will get you killed, Lieutenant.

Steel makes eye contact with Fellows but quickly looks away.

The onlookers grow more upset and yell.

NADEEM

Lieutenant, I don't like our situation here. We are past the village.

LIEUTENANT

Okay, let's press.
(shouts to all)
Mount up. Move out.

Womack helps Dickhead Soldier back to Vehicle #1. All soldiers return to their vehicles.

STEEL

Now we got two useless window lickers on this shit show.

'Useless'-- another pin in the 'Fellows voodoo doll.'

EXT. GOAT TRAIL - DAY

An AFGHAN FARMER leads a horse drawn cart up the trail. They meet SEVERAL HEAVILY ARMED TALIBAN. All the men have scarves hiding their faces. The men mount a machine gun in the bed of a red pick-up truck, creating an improvised BATTLEWAGON.

A faded blue pickup truck speeds towards the group.

The LEADER exits the blue truck, seeming pleased with the Battlewagon. He crosses to the back of the cart and greets the farmer.

The farmer lifts up a blanket revealing a half dozen cylinders, each capped with a concave copper disc.

The leader pulls down his face scarf, it's Anwar.

ANWAR

(Dari)
From Pakistan?

FARMER

(Dari)

No, Iran. Very special explosives.

The farmer motions with his fist that a solid projectile shoots out of the cylinder.

FARMER (CONT'D)

More powerful. Goes through all armor,
like this.

His fist hits his other flat hand and raises both hands into the air mimicking a giant explosion.

Anwar shakes the farmer's hand. The man smiles and nods.

Anwar's cellphone rings. He answers. Anwar looks over to the men loading the cylinders into the bed of the faded blue pick-up.

ANWAR

We have an opportunity. Take them to
the bridge. We don't have much time.
Hurry! Go!

Anwar's men quickly load the rest of the cylinders then disperse to their vehicles.

INT. VEHICLE #3 - DAY

The convoy reaches the village outskirts back into desolation.

Fellows fidgets in his seat.

FELLOWS

Staff Sergeant Cruz, is that soldier
going to be all right?

Cruz ignores Fellows and keys information into the computer.

FELLOWS (CONT'D)

(to self)

Ignoring me... it's kind of
disrespectful.

Cruz stops typing. He can't hold it back.

CRUZ

Goddamnit Captain, I have a job to
do and you're interrupting like a
fucking little kid sitting in the
back seat of a soccer mom's minivan.
You want respect? Just because you
have a college degree and bars on
your uniform, I have to respect you?

FELLOWS

Settle down.

Hoddy and Wu want to be anywhere but here.

CRUZ

How much combat experience do you have?

FELLOWS

None.

CRUZ

None, that's right. This is my fourth fucking deployment and guess what? You have no idea what it's like outside the wire making split second decisions. The rules of engagement are never so cut and dry as you people make them out to be. You read some report and think that's enough to fuck somebody's life over forever.

FELLOWS

Now wait a minute. Where did this animosity towards me come from?

CRUZ

The man you're prosecuting is a good buddy of mine, who was simply doing his job. The hajji he shot and killed was a clear threat. You're leading this witch hunt to hang a good Airman. So which side are you on, ours or theirs... *sirrrr?*

Cruz readies for a battle of wits.

Fellows backs off, the cab gets awkwardly quiet.

FELLOWS

For the record, I'm on the side of the United States government.

Cruz clenches his teeth together, tenses up... Hoddy reaches over and squeezes Cruz's wrist, he relaxes.

HODDY

Sir, you don't think the shooting was justified?

FELLOWS

It doesn't matter, I'm a prosecuting attorney.

(MORE)

FELLOWS (CONT'D)

In most cases, the suspects are guilty. And I wouldn't be here if there wasn't enough evidence for a strong case to prosecute.

CRUZ

I heard the hajji was going for my buddy's gun which means he had to use deadly force. And this was after they conducted a random search, finding a tape recorder in his bedroll.

FELLOWS

I've read the investigation. Which, maybe contains more information than the G.I. rumor mill. And you're right the man did have an illegal tape recorder. That happened to have a tape of prayers. That alone doesn't justify deadly force. Another forgotten detail, the man was shot in the back. And--

Radio static interrupts.

LIEUTENANT (V.O.)

(radio)

All vehicles, we're about ten mike from Golden Gate, stay frosty.

FELLOWS

Forget it, I really can't discuss an open investigation.

CRUZ

(into radio)

Vehicle 3, copies.

Fellows looks over to Wu, whispers...

FELLOWS

Golden Gate?

WU

It's a bridge. Bridges are tricky, good place for an ambush.

EXT. ROAD TO BRIDGE - DAY

The road ahead twists along a gorge cutting across an expansive valley full of rolling hills, chasms and ravines

EXT. BRIDGE - DAY

The convoy slows down and stops 500 feet from a narrow one-lane bridge. The bridge spans a free flowing river. Sturdy wood pylons disappear into the rushing water.

LIEUTENANT (V.O.)

(radio)

We're going to cross one at a time.

Womack and Steel dismount from vehicle two.

Nadeem from vehicle one, who posts on the shoulder.

NADEEM

First Sergeant Steel, I will stay here and direct the vehicles onto the bridge.

Steel gives him a nod.

Womack and Steel tread lightly across the bridge, both on opposite sides looking down along the edge. No evidence of foul play.

STEEL

Stay here and make sure we stay on track.

WOMACK

Hoo-ah, First Sergeant.

Womack posts at the mid-point of the bridge as Steel returns to the convoy.

Steel gives a thumbs up to the Lieutenant as he passes vehicle one and climbs back into vehicle two.

A faint rev of an engine, vehicle one slowly crosses the bridge.

Reaching the mid-point, Womack waves them by.

INT. VEHICLE #3

Fellows nervously watches from the back seat.

LIEUTENANT (V.O.)

(radio)

Okay, we're across.

STEEL (V.O.)

(radio)

Copy. Vehicle two, crossing.

EXT. BRIDGE

Vehicle two rolls forward onto the bridge passing Nadeem, he gives the thumbs up.

Hoddy presses the gas, their vehicle moves forward taking the space where vehicle two once was.

Vehicle two passes Womack at the half way point.

INT. VEHICLE #3

Hoddy toggles the windshield wipers switch, clearing the dusty windshield.

STEEL (V.O.)

(radio)

Vehicle two, good to go.

CRUZ

Johnson, call out anything, I don't care how small.

JOHNSON (O.S.)

Gotcha, boss.

Cruz turns around, his demeanor is back to the hardened professional sergeant from before.

CRUZ

That goes for everyone, hoo-ah?

Cruz locks eyes with Fellows. Fellows nods and grips the stock of his rifle... *'this is no joke.'*

Cruz keys the radio.

CRUZ (CONT'D)

(into radio)

Vehicle three, crossing.

Hoddy steps on the gas.

HODDY

Here we go, guys.

BRIDGE

Nadeem waves the vehicle forward. The M-RAP rolls onto the wooden bridge. The soldiers hear every creak and crack as the tires roll forward. Unsettling. Tense.

Fellows turns and looks out his side of the window...

Below, a thirty foot drop into brown murky water. Lots of overgrowth and garbage line the rocky river banks. He scans along it... *'Taliban hiding?'* He adjusts his glasses...

Just the wind playing tricks, shaking the overgrown brush.

Fellows pulls out his handkerchief from inside his sleeve and pats the sweat from his brow, looking towards Wu.

FELLOWS

Afghans build this bridge?

WU

Negative, Army Corps of Engineers built this about a year and a half ago.

The vehicle reaches the midpoint, they see a smiling Womack waving them forward. He sticks out his tongue as they pass.

Wu fist bumps the window.

Womack keys the radio mounted on his chest.

WOMACK (V.O.)

(radio)

Looking good vehicle three.

HODDY

(sigh)

I miss him.

FAR SIDE OF BRIDGE

Vehicle three arrives behind vehicle two on the other side.

CRUZ

(into radio)

Vehicle three, good to go.

Fellows shifts his focus to the landscape outside his window-- bushes, rocks, birds, trees... a tree?

Fellows leans into his window and squints.

In the tree is an old cellphone with a wire that runs down the trunk into the dirt.

Fellows hesitates, looking around the cab, no one else sees this cellphone. *'Do I call it out?'* He keeps his mouth shut.

VEHICLE #4 COMMANDER (V.O.)

(radio)

Vehicle four, moving.

Fellows peeks into the side rear view mirror and watches as vehicle four rolls onto the bridge. He leans over to Wu.

FELLOWS

(whispers)

Specialist, I don't want to come off
as the boy who cried wolf but I see
a cellphone?

WU

Cellphone?

FELLOWS

Hanging... in that far tree. That's
out of the ordinary, right?

Wu unbuckles his seat belt and leans all the way over. He looks where Fellows is looking.

Wu tries to trace the wire, he finds it again just outside the door.

WU

Cellphone's a trigger. I.E.D., Staff
Sergeant!

Wu hops back in his seat.

CRUZ

What?

FELLOWS

Cellphone! Wires! Over in that tree.

Cruz looks out the window, he brings the handset up to his mouth.

CRUZ

Where?

Johnson turns his turret to the passenger side.

JOHNSON (O.S.)

I see it, it's a daisy chain, I.E.D!
Get out of here!

Johnson pounds on the roof. Cruz keys the radio.

Wu smacks the back of Hoddy's helmet.

WU

Go, Hoddy! Hit the fucking gas!

Hoddy STOMPS the gas pedal. CRANKS the steering wheel.

CRUZ
(into radio)
I.E...

The vehicle lunges forward, trading paint with vehicle two. Cruz drops the radio handset into the floor boards.

A grind of metal, Vehicle #3 scrapes past, speeding away.

LIEUTENANT (V.O.)
(radio)
Say again, did not receive last message.

Cruz pulls on the mic cord but it's caught under the seat.

Fellows catches a scene from the rear view mirror:

The bridge... a rocket flies into view...

BRIDGE

Womack's eyes grow big as saucers.

The rocket hits the middle of the bridge. An explosion of wood and fire.

Vehicle #4 DROPS straight into the river. Womack tumbles end-over-end into the water.

RIVER DITCH

Motorcycle Ali sets down the rocket launcher and keys his cellphone.

TREE

The cellphone in the tree lights up receiving the call.

VEHICLE #3

Speeds past vehicle one. Hoddy pounds the horn.

STEEL (V.O.)
(radio)
Ambush! Ambu--

The radio blurts a high pitched squeal ending in static.

Everything slows...

VEHICLES #1 AND #2

A magnificent eruption of dirt and fire plume under the remaining M-RAPs-- enveloping the vehicles, blasting them into the air. An echoing BOOM!

Real time...

DOORS, TURRETS, TIRES separate and zip across the sky.

Turret gunners tossed out like burnt rag dolls. Carnage.

VEHICLE #3

Races down the dirt road away from the explosion.

The concussive force hits the cab shaking everyone... inner-ears RING. Everyone yells and curses.

Hoddy loses control, the vehicle's back-end fishtails in the talcum powder dirt as if sliding on ice.

HODDY

Hang on!

She cranks the wheel into the slide... regains control.

Wu slams against the door. The bulk of his body armor prevents him from grabbing his seat belt and strapping back in.

Fellows notices, he reaches over and grabs the buckle, he slides the harness across Wu's chest. Clicks the buckle home.

EXT. HILL ABOVE ROADSIDE - DAY

Heavily armed Taliban line the hills adjacent to the road. Anwar watches the M-RAP approach. He drops his arm, signaling. The men open fire...

I./E. VEHICLE #3

Bullets pepper the vehicle from all sides like a hail storm on a tin roof. Much louder and sharper sounding than the rocks from before.

JOHNSON

Son of a buck!

Johnson rotates the turret to the opposite side.

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Contact ten o'clock!

He unleashes hell, firing his .50 Cal. A series of controlled bursts.

THUP-THUP-THUP-THUP-THUP! THUP-THUP-THUP-THUP-THUP!

Shell casings pour into the cab. Fellows shields his face from the waterfall of hot brass.

The M-RAP speeds past the hills into a grand valley.

Cruz grabs the dashboard, he leans down fumbling for the radio mic.

CRUZ

Just go! Go, go, go!

On the passenger side, Motorcycle Ali jumps his bike up from the gully parallel to the road. Fully loaded R.P.G. on his back.

JOHNSON

Turns the turret towards the motorcycle. He fires. The trail of bullets just miss the motorcycle.

Motorcycle Ali zigzags across the road, making Johnson miss.

JOHNSON

Come on, Daisy.

Distracting-- the motorcycle pulls in close to the M-RAP. Johnson lowers the machine gun.

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Fuck I can't get the angle.

Hoddy veers the M-RAP towards the motorcycle.

Ali leans away.

Johnson grabs his pistol, reaches outside the turret as far as he can and fires off several shots.

Ali smiles and cranks his throttle. The motorcycle speeds away.

HODDY

Looks at the rear view mirror: the red Battlewagon races onto the road like a scene from *Mad Max*. Her eyes go wide.

HODDY

Technical, six o'clock!

Hoddy elbows Johnson in the shin.

BATTLEWAGON

The TALIBAN GUNNER racks the action and fires the soviet-era heavy machine gun.

RRRRRPT-RRRRRPT-RRRRRPT! RRRRRPT-RRRRRPT-RRRRRPT!

JOHNSON

Metal and sparks erupt like fire crackers around the turret.

JOHNSON
Gotcha, boss!

Johnson turns the turret to the rear. He fires.

THUP-THUP-THUP-THUP-THUP! THUP-THUP-THUP-THUP-THUP!

Johnson's the better shot.

BATTLEWAGON

Engine block bursts into flames, smokes. The WOUNDED DRIVER loses control.

The Battlewagon veers off road. The Gunner keeps firing.

The Battlewagon hits a bump and tumbles, wrecking sideways into a ditch. The Gunner flies off. The vehicle explodes.

CAB

Johnson slumps down. He took a round in the shoulder. Blood runs down his limp arm. He presses his opposite palm against the wound trying to stop the bleeding. His quick tourniquet falls down to his wrist.

Johnson looks to Fellows.

JOHNSON (CONT'D)
Little help here, boss.

FELLOWS
Yes, tourniquet.

Fellows puts his rifle down and slides the quick tourniquet up past the shoulder wound. He twists the plastic dow rod several times.

JOHNSON
Tighter.

Johnson winces as Fellows twists a few more times and velcros the rod, holding it in place.

FELLOWS

You all right?

Running on adrenaline, the gunner training kicks back in... Johnson ignores him and returns to the turret... duty first. *Protect the convoy... protect the vehicle.*

ROAD

Motorcycle Ali disappears over a hill on the road ahead.

The M-RAP speeds out of range from the initial ambush zone. The hilltop firing stops.

CAB

CRUZ

Keep going 'til we reach the FOB!

Cruz unbuckles and squats down in the floor board, grasping for the radio handset.

The M-RAP speeds over the hill, nothing in view but settling dust, a ravine on the left and rolling hills on the right.

HODDY

What happened to that motorcycle?

Cruz emerges from the floor boards with the radio handset. He adjusts his helmet.

Motorcycle Ali, staged on the hill above, lifts the rocket launcher onto his shoulder.

CRUZ

R.P.G!

Hoddy floors it.

EXT. HILL ABOVE ROAD

Motorcycle Ali aims, leading the vehicle then fires the rocket.

The rocket zooms through the air. The high angle bypasses the anti-R.P.G. mesh shield and hits the passenger side front quarter panel. THUMP!

The hood and passenger door buckle. The front tire shreds. Shrapnel spider-webs the windshield.

INT. VEHICLE #3

The blast knocks Cruz unconscious, he slumps forward. Everyone shudders.

The vehicle tips sideways.

Hoddy overcompensates the steering. No front passenger tire to grip the road.

HODDY
Guys, hang on!

The vehicle veers into...

RAVINE

DEEP, STEEP and ROCKY. M-RAP upends into a BARREL ROLL. Equipment flies out of the rear cargo, scattering down the ravine.

The radio antennas snap off the roof like twigs.

INT. VEHICLE #3

Cruz tumbles around the front like a pinball.

The unsettling twist and bend of metal.

Rolling...

Johnson squats down covering his head.

Fellows braces.

Cruz's helmet hits the blue force tracker, smashing the computer screen.

A final drop. The vehicle slams into a narrow gully. The impact forces everyone forward... CRACK!

CUT TO: BLACK

EXT. FAR SIDE OF BRIDGE - DAY

Two giant balls of flame... the ambushed M-RAPs. No survivors.

EXT. RIVER - DAY

Vehicle #4 sinks. Water rushes inside. Soldiers scream. The #4 GUNNER scrambles out of the turret into the water.

The M-RAP quickly submerges. No one else makes it.

The gunner fights to keep his head above water. The heavy body armor weighs him down. He goes under, yanking his quick release. The plates drop off. He breaks the water's surface, gasping for air.

He swims to the shore, stumbling up in the knee deep water. He stops and pulls out his pistol, looking up.

Taliban Soldiers open fire.

Bullets riddle the gunner's chest, he drops face down. The current takes him down stream.

EXT. BOTTOM OF RAVINE - DAY

Dust settles. The M-RAP rests right side up, wedged in the narrow gully exposing its top half.

A completely pock marked wreck-- Mesh shields sheared off. Turret caved in. Totally exposed and out of commission.

INT. VEHICLE #3

Moaning in the background.

The interior is a disaster. Equipment thrown about. Smoke wafts. Windshield covered in dirt. Sunlight peaks in through the cracks.

Hoddy, a few scrapes and bruises, keys the radio receiver, with a dry, cracking voice...

HODDY

Bagram Command this is war horse,
we've been ambushed, over.

Nothing but static. She wipes away the blood running from her nose.

HODDY (CONT'D)

I say again, Bravo Charlie this is
war horse, ambush hit us, we're
immobile, need immediate assistance.

Hoddy toggles some switches on the base station, no use.

TURRET

Mangled, the canopy and shield bent inward. Once an open view, the twisted heavy metal makes egress impossible.

Johnson comes to, coughing and covered in dust. He unbuckles the groin restraints.

HODDY (O.S.)

Can anyone hear me? Hello? Any I-SAF
forces?

Johnson looks through the small turret window noticing the antenna pole snapped in half.

JOHNSON

Hey, antenna's fucked. You won't be able to pick up anything.

HODDY (O.S.)

What?

JOHNSON

The antenna, it's gone.

CAB

Frustrated, Hoddy gives up, tossing the receiver aside. Head in hands, she looks up at the picture of her daughter in the dashboard. Tears form around her eyes, she wipes them away. Now's not the time.

Wu throws his helmet off. Looks up to Johnson.

WU

Holy shit, bro. We almost fucking died. You good?

JOHNSON

My nuts hurt but I'm straight.

WU

Hoddy, you good?

Hoddy nods and dries her eyes, taking great care so the other soldiers don't notice.

WU (CONT'D)

Hoddy?

HODDY

Yeah, I'm good.

WU

Shit, Sergeant's out cold.

Cruz is slumped forward, his head smashed into the broken computer monitor, his lower half wedged in the floorboard. His face bathed in blood.

Hoddy looks back to Fellows.

Fellows is frozen in his seat, eyes dart around. Forgot how to breath.

HODDY

Captain?

She drives her palm into his chest. Fellows inhales deeply.

FELLOWS

Oh God! I- I- I... couldn't breath.
Felt like I got punched in the ears,
chest and stomach all at once.

HODDY

Wind got knocked out of you. Sir,
can you move?

FELLOWS

I think so. Yes.

HODDY

Good, I need you to help me with the
sergeant. Wu, you too.

WU

Yeah, yeah.

Fellows sticks his helmet into the floor and unbuckles.

HODDY

I'm going to stabilize his head and
neck. Just grab his drag strap...

Fellows reaches around the seat, he grabs the strap. Wu
reaches over assisting.

HODDY (CONT'D)

There you go and 3, 2, 1... pull.

The two men pull Cruz back into his seat while Hoddy
stabilizes his head and neck.

Hoddy removes his helmet.

Cruz has a large gash across his forehead. She pulls out a
glass shard, blood follows.

Everyone gasps from the gruesome sight.

HODDY (CONT'D)

He's alive at least.

Hoddy digs into Cruz's first aid kit on his chest armor.

TURRET

Johnson surveys the turret, pressing on the metal canopy...
nothing, it doesn't budge.

HODDY (O.S.)

Open that dressing.

WU (O.S.)

On it.

Johnson toggles the joystick, the turret shudders then all power dies. He checks the perimeter outside.

The steep walls of the ravine run several hundred yards up on all sides, no sign of Taliban... yet.

The narrow ravine floor funnels downward, turning down a blind corner. The only easy approach for the enemy.

Johnson unlocks the turret and rotates it manually, pointing the .50 cal down towards the blind corner. He checks the suitability of the weapon.

FELLOWS (O.S.)

Let me help with that dressing.

HODDY (O.S.)

Sure.

Johnson opens and closes the fist of his wounded arm. The skin is ghost white. Adrenaline subsiding, the pain hits him. He checks his tourniquet.

CAB

Hoddy finishes securing the dressing around Cruz's head.

FELLOWS

Let's lean his seat back a bit and buckle him in.

Hoddy nods and buckles the seat belt.

HODDY

Best we can do.

Wu sits back into his seat.

WU

Man, this vehicle is one mangled piece of shit. Motor-pool's gonna be pissed at you, Hoddy.

Wu looks outside. The driver's side of the vehicle is butted against the wall of the gully. Wu tries the door handle... nothing. He leans his shoulder into it... nothing.

WU (CONT'D)

Hoddy, my door's stuck. Try yours.

Hoddy nods, she pulls. Nothing.

HODDY
 Mine won't open.

She reaches over Cruz and tries his door, buckled in from the blast. Nothing.

HODDY (CONT'D)
 Sir, try your door.

Fellows pulls on the handle, nothing. He shakes his head.

HODDY (CONT'D)
 Let's go through the turret.

WU
 Johnson, move your big ass.

Johnson crouches into the cab.

JOHNSON
 Turret's fucked.

WU
 What do you mean the turret's fucked?

JOHNSON
 I mean, we're not getting out that way.

WU
 That makes no sense. Quit screwing around and egress.

JOHNSON
 I am telling you, the turret is fucked!

WU
 Fuck you, man! Go!

Wu pushes Johnson.

HODDY
 Guys stop.

Johnson pushes back.

JOHNSON
 You bowing up on me?

Wu pushes back. They get into small scuffle of grabbing their body armor and pushing each other back and forth.

HODDY
 Stop it!

Johnson over powers Wu and slams him into Hoddy.

Hoddy pulls Johnson by the collar but he's too big for her.

Fellows tries to process the commotion. This feels like the most claustrophobic place on earth. The bickering increases. Fellows clenches his teeth.

Out of breath with a look of pale death in his face, Johnson rears back to clock Wu...

On instinct, Fellows hooks around Johnson's forearm. Yelling...

FELLOWS
Hey! That's enough!

Dumfounded, everyone looks at Fellows.

Johnson eases off.

FELLOWS (CONT'D)
Is everyone all right?

Silence.

FELLOWS (CONT'D)
Private Johnson, your tourniquet,
you're still bleeding.

Johnson looks over and sees his tourniquet came loose. Blood streams down his arm.

FELLOWS (CONT'D)
Specialist, help him out.

Wu nods. Johnson crouches down and exposes his shoulder for Wu. Wu twists the tourniquet down. They share an *'I'm sorry'* look.

Fellows leans back into his seat. He tries the door handle again, the handle pulls up but the door won't open.

FELLOWS (CONT'D)
Why can't I open my door?

HODDY
From the looks of it, the vehicle is
wedged in this ditch blocking all
the doors.

FELLOWS
Does the military know these things
are death traps?

HODDY

(laughs)

If all else fails we egress out the top.

JOHNSON

Told you, turret's fucked.

FELLOWS

Specialist, can you check out the turret?

WU

Trade me places.

Johnson slumps into the back seat trading places with Wu.

TURRET

Wu climbs up.

WU

The metal canopy is bent inward from the roll-over.

Fellows looks up into the turret.

FELLOWS

Can you bend it back?

With both hands, Wu presses as hard as he can.

WU

Negative, sir. It's completely caved in. Would take a cutting torch to get through that metal.

Wu crouches back into the cab.

FELLOWS

So we're trapped.

WU

It seems that way.

FELLOWS

Who's in charge if Sergeant Cruz goes down?

Blank stares. No one steps up.

FELLOWS (CONT'D)

Your Lieutenant was very specific with the pecking order. So who's in charge?

WU
I hate to say this, sir, but you
are.

FELLOWS
Me? I'm just an attorney.

HODDY
Sir, you have the rank.

FELLOWS
I... I'm not a combat soldier.

The soldiers sort of shake their heads. Fellows looks around
noticing the morale sucked out of everyone's faces.

WU
(under breath)
Cruz was right.

FELLOWS
The radio... let's radio for help
and wait for them to come get us.

JOHNSON
Antenna's busted.

FELLOWS
Wu, you're the radio specialist.

Hoddy hands the receiver to Wu.

WU
Bagram this is War Horse, we're
disabled from an ambush, need
assistance, over.

Static.

WU (CONT'D)
Check, check, radio check. Over.

Static. Wu hands the receiver to Fellows.

Fellows keys it and blows into it.

FELLOWS
Hello? Hello, hello.

WU
With the antenna broken, it doesn't
have the range to get a signal out
of this deep ravine.

FELLOWS

If you can make it outside, you think you can fix it?

WU

I dunno, maybe. Probably. It's worth a shot.

FELLOWS

Then let's find a way out of here.

LATER

Fellows heaves on his door handle.

FELLOWS

Put your feet into it.

Wu kicks the door as Fellows puts his shoulder into it. They exert all their energy. Nothing, the door doesn't move.

FELLOWS (CONT'D)

It just needs some more leverage, maybe the top half will start to bend out. Everyone, all at once. Ready, one, two, three!

They push, kick, shove. Nothing.

FELLOWS (CONT'D)

One, two, three!

Again, nothing.

FELLOWS (CONT'D)

Let's do it again, one, two, three!

Nothing.

FELLOWS (CONT'D)

Let's try the front door.

The soldiers move into position.

FELLOWS (CONT'D)

Ready, one, two, three!

Nothing.

FELLOWS (CONT'D)

Again, in three, two, one!

JOHNSON

Fucking useless.

FELLOWS

Let's just try it again. In one, two--

A volley of bullets hits the side of the vehicle.

Everyone ducks and covers their head, except Johnson who stands-fast.

EXT. TOP OF RAVINE - DAY

A view of the M-RAP deep in the ravine through a sniper scope. Motorcycle Ali looks up from the scope on his AK-47. He looks at the terrain further down the valley.

Ali stands and addresses a group of TALIBAN FIGHTERS.

MOTORCYCLE ALI

(Dari)

Go further down the road and find a way down.

Fighters nod their heads, they run off down the road. Ali goes back to watching the M-RAP.

INT. VEHICLE #3 - DAY

Everyone is fetal, head down, piled on each other.

JOHNSON

It's just small arms fire, you pussies.

HODDY

Wu, get your ass out of my face.

WU

What's the matter, don't like the view?

Wu wiggles his ass then sits up and laughs.

FELLOWS

Can those bullets penetrate the armor?

JOHNSON

Nah, need something bigger like maybe a fifty cal. But I took out their technical.

FELLOWS

What about a rocket?

JOHNSON

Yeah that'll rattle our fillings for sure.

FELLOWS

We're completely exposed down here.
Just keep trying the radio, maybe
it'll get through.

Hoddy nods, keys the handset.

HODDY

Bravo Charlie this is war horse,
over.

WU

Oh, wait a minute, switch over to
the internal convoy frequency.

Hoddy toggles the switch.

EXT. RIVER'S EDGE - DAY

Down river from the bridge. Womack, alive, sits on the bank
in tears. His pistol drawn... he stares at it. He buries his
head in his hands. Gun barrel brushes against his temple.

The radio burps static...

HODDY (V.O.)

(radio)

This is vehicle three, does any
warhorse copy? Anyone alive out there?

Shocked, Womack drops the gun away from his head.

HODDY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I say again, any horsemen out there?
We're in bad shape.

Womack's shaky hand keys the radio.

INT. VEHICLE #3

Everyone with bated breath...

WOMACK (V.O.)

This is warhorse 15.

The cab erupts in a joyful noise.

HODDY

It's Womack. He's alive!
(into radio)
Warhorse 15 this Warhorse 13.

WOMACK (V.O.)
 (radio, frantic)
 You guys are alive? Everyone else is
 toast. I don't know what to do.

HODDY
 What do I say?

FELLOWS
 Let me have it.

Hoddy hands the radio to Fellows.

FELLOWS (CONT'D)
 Corporal this is Captain Fell...
 err, the captain. Where are you?

WOMACK (V.O.)
 (radio)
 I'm downstream, almost back to the
 bridge. Oh shit.

The line goes dead.

FELLOWS
 Corporal? Corporal?

Everyone listens intently. Nothing.

FELLOWS (CONT'D)
 Corporal, you there? Corporal, come
 in.

WU
 Dumbshit's dead.

HODDY
 Don't you say that.

FELLOWS
 Corporal?

Static.

WOMACK (V.O.)
 (radio, whispering)
 Oh fuck, hajji's everywhere.

FELLOWS
 How many?

WOMACK (V.O.)
 Looks like a platoon just passed by
 me. Where are you guys? I'll make my
 way to you.

FELLOWS

No good, we're stuck in a ravine that looks extremely steep to traverse on foot, so listen to me. What I need you to do is head back to that village and call for help. You think you can do that?

WOMACK (V.O.)

On my own, on foot. It's a long haul.

FELLOWS

Unless you can think of another way?

EXT. RIVER EDGE - DAY

Womack stares at the black smoke rising into the sky.

WOMACK

Okay, Captain. You guys sit tight and stay safe, I'll stay on the line as long as I can.

FELLOWS (V.O.)

Thank you, Corporal.

Womack crouches down as he evades the river's edge.

EXT. CHARIKAR VILLAGE - DAY

The DUST STORM ransacks the village.

Mountains disappear into the giant wave of dust as far as the eye can see. It ferociously rolls into the valley towards the blown out bridge.

INT. VEHICLE #3 - DAY

Fellows looks around the cab. Wu is up in the turret.

FELLOWS

What about driving forward?

HODDY

Engine's fried.

FELLOWS

What about the stuff in here? What do we have?

HODDY

Um, in the rear cargo there's a Satcom phone.

FELLOWS

That's no good. I mean what do we have access to inside the vehicle?

HODDY

Inside... G.P.S., blue force tracker but that's busted up.

JOHNSON

A few grenades, some ammo cans. Rifles, we can shoot out the windows.

FELLOWS

Really?

HODDY

Sir, he's kidding.

WU

Pelican case with the black hornet drone.

The radio crackles static. We hear a howling wind.

WOMACK (V.O.)

(radio, barely audible)

War horse, you got a huge dust st-- headed-- way-- I'm gonna circ-- See if--

Static.

FELLOWS

Corporal. We lost you. Say again? Corporal. Corporal?

TURRET

Wu's eyes grow wide. The dust cloud races towards them.

WU

Oh shit, incoming.

EXT. VEHICLE #3 - DAY

A giant dust cloud engulfs the vehicle.

INT. VEHICLE #3 - DAY

Darkness. Wind howls, whistles and whips as dust shoots in through the cracks like a backfiring shop-vac.

Wu drops down from the turret into the cab, coughing.

EXT. FURTHER DOWN THE VALLEY - DAY

Taliban Fighters with head and face scarves wrapped tight run down the incline. The dust storm does not phase the squad of fighters as they make their way to the bottom.

INT. VEHICLE #3 - DAY

Silence, except for the white noise of wind whistling inside. The soldiers sit in their own little world.

Wu squats down between Johnson and Fellows. He punches buttons on his smartphone, playing a first person shooter game. Zombie headshots, left and right.

FELLOWS

I find it ironic that you're playing
a game so violent.

WU

Sir, helps me unwind. Kinda clears
my head, ya know.

Johnson's breathing is a little forced and heavy. He winces from the shoulder wound.

FELLOWS

We'll just... just hold out, the
storm should keep them from attacking
and Corporal Womack will call in
help as soon as possible and we'll
be back to base in no time.

Hoddy looks up and forces a smile, she looks back down to the photo she's holding.

The silence grows uncomfortable.

FELLOWS (CONT'D)

Who's that in the photo?

Hoddy's eyes brighten. She hands the photo over.

Fellows takes a closer look. It's a three-year old spitting image of Hoddy.

HODDY

That's my daughter.

FELLOWS

Beautiful little girl, she looks
just like you.

Wu looks up from his video game, interested.

Fellows hands the photo back to Hoddy.

HODDY
Thank you, she turned four just last
week. Can't wait to see her.

Hoddy kisses the photo and sticks it in her blouse pocket.

FELLOWS
Where is she now?

HODDY
Staying with my mom.

WU
You have a kid?

HODDY
Yes, you jerk.

Hoddy socks Wu in the arm.

WU
Ow, you little munchkin, how do you
hit so hard.

FELLOWS
What about you? You got someone
special back at home?

Wu chuckles.

WU
You know how it is, Captain. I gotta
keep my options open. Can't be held
down by any one girl.

HODDY
Oh, shut up, man. Who's that girl
you skype with all the time?

JOHNSON
Sarah.

WU
Old news, Sarah was last deployment.
Her name is Michelle.

FELLOWS
Michelle, huh? Tell us about her?

WU
I'll do one better.

Wu slides his finger across the smartphone, showing everyone a picture of MICHELLE: A sultry duck-faced *selfie*, complete with heavy make-up and pushed-up cleavage.

Fellows leans in for a closer look.

FELLOWS

She's pretty. You have reception on that thing?

WU

I wish, no 4G in the suck. But that's the girl.

FELLOWS

The girl. You proposing marriage?

Wu turns red. A grin grows across his face. He gets excited.

WU

As soon as I get back. Planned out and everything. Get off the plane, kiss my girl, drop to one knee, pop the question. Girl can't deny a man in uniform. Especially one as smooth as me.

JOHNSON

Mister Smooth, how you fixin' to get her the ring straight off the plane?

WU

I haven't figured that out yet.

FELLOWS

Just have a relative meet you at the gate and hand it to you. Airlines give security passes to relatives of ticketed passengers.

WU

Oh snap, Captain. That's a good idea.

JOHNSON

Soon as I get home, I'm gonna go bow hunting. Got a twelve point monster buck named "Lucky." Been taunting my granddad's farm the past six years.

FELLOWS

Where's home, private?

JOHNSON

Sir, would you believe me if I told you I was from L.A.?

FELLOWS

You're kidding, you're from California?

JOHNSON

Shit no, I'm from Lower Alabama,
L.A. you get it?

Fellows smiles as the wind subsides. The cab of the vehicle brightens. The DUST STORM is gone.

FELLOWS

Well, I'm sure you'll get back to
hunting in no time.

WU

You're not bow hunting with your arm
messed up like that.

Johnson's demeanor shifts to foul.

FELLOWS

Specialist, why don't you climb back
into the turret and see what's up?

TURRET

Wu climbs into the turret.

WU

Sorry, I'm just saying, he needs to
go rehab and can't pull back a forty
pound test string with a messed up
arm--

Wu grabs the dual handles of the .50 cal and looks forward.
The sun is in his eyes, silhouetting...

...The squad of Taliban Fighters creeping towards the vehicle,
weapons raised.

WU (CONT'D)

Oh shit! Contact, twelve o'clock!

On instinct, Wu presses the butterfly trigger with his thumbs--

THUP-THUP-THUP!

The massive recoil shakes Wu.

The tracers hit the fighters closest to the vehicle. They
drop dead.

The fighters out of range disperse and return fire. Hitting
the vehicle.

Wu pivots the machine gun left and right, up and down...
dust puffs snake down the gully.

The last bit of ammo feeds into the receiver. The machine
gun ceases firing. The barrel left smoking.

WU (CONT'D)

Hand me another can!

More return fire.

CAB

Hoddy reaches for the ammo can, works on unstrapping the
ratchet strap and loosens the belt.

JOHNSON

Undo that strap.

WU

Hurry the fuck up!

HODDY

I'm working on it!

Fellows grabs his M-4 rifle and hands it up to Wu.

FELLOWS

Use this!

TURRET

Wu fires the M-4 through the cracks of the turret.

A fighter goes down. The rest run back around the corner.

HODDY

Can, coming at you!

WU

What? I can't fucking hear anymore.

HODDY

Ammo!!

WU

Oh! Why didn't you say so!

Wu hands the rifle down and grabs the ammo can.

Tosses the empty can down.

Drops the new can in the holder. Opens the receiver.

Feeds the belt in. Slams it shut.

Racks the action, a round is stuck. The action doesn't move.

Indiscernible shouting in Dari in the distance. Return fire. A group of fighters run down to the right. Wu works the action but it doesn't budge.

WU (CONT'D)

It's jammed, fuck, it's jammed.
They're trying to flank us!

Johnson musters up.

JOHNSON

Move, I got it!

With one good arm, Johnson yanks Wu down into the cab and appears into the turret. Helmet in hand.

Johnson smacks the helmet against the jam. It slides home. He drops the helmet and presses the trigger with one hand. The gun fires wildly out of control. He stops firing.

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Don't do this to me, Daisy.

Johnson tries to grab the other handle with his bad arm but it's too painful to lift.

Johnson looks at the tourniquet and rips off the velcro. He clenches his fist as feeling returns. Johnson tosses the tourniquet aside.

CAB

The tourniquet drops into the cab. Fellows grabs it.

FELLOWS

Johnson, put this back on!

TURRET

Johnson takes out the advancing fighters, one-by-one.

JOHNSON

Kind of busy, boss.

Blood rushes down Johnson's arm but he keeps firing.

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

That's my girl, Daisy!

The last bit of ammo feeds into the machine gun.

The dust settles, all is quiet. He scans the horizon for movement. Nothing but lifeless bodies.

Johnson's breathing shallows. Sweat beads across his brow. His eyes dart back and forth as they glaze over. Still nothing. Satisfied with a big smile...

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

I think they're all smoked.

Johnson takes one last breath and drops into the cab like a sack of potatoes.

CAB

Fellows and Wu lay Johnson out on the middle console.

Fellows clasps his hands together. He pushes hard and fast on the center of Johnson's chest. A steady pace.

FELLOWS

Is there a defibrillator?

WU

Rear cargo.

Fellows grows out of breath. He pauses, checks his pulse.

FELLOWS

I got nothing.

WU

Switch out.

Fellows sits back. Wu takes over the chest compressions.

HODDY

He needs a blood transfusion and all that was stored in vehicle two.

Hoddy places two fingers to his carotid artery. She looks up and shakes her head - "No."

HODDY (CONT'D)

He's gone.

Wu keeps pressing Johnson's chest-- not wanting to accept it. Hoddy squeezes Wu's arm. Tears form around his eyes. He stops and leans back.

LATER

Fellows places a blouse over Johnson. A somber moment. No one makes eye contact. Fellows stares down at the tourniquet in his hand. He squeezes it.

FELLOWS
 (whispers)
 So young, what a waste.

Fellows pockets the tourniquet.

FELLOWS (CONT'D)
 Wu.

Wu rubs his finger in his ear, still deaf from earlier.

FELLOWS (CONT'D)
 Specialist Wu!

WU
 What?

FELLOWS
 You mentioned something earlier called
 the black hornet, what is that?

Wu stares back at the Captain, an idea hits him.

LATER

Fellows holds a small monitor in his lap. A cable feeds up to the...

TURRET

Wu launches the mini-DRONE through a small space in the turret. It gains altitude. Wu toggles the controls on the chest mount laptop.

EXT. RAVINE - DAY

The drone flies upward away from the vehicle.

DRONE FEED POV...

A ravine with a 30 degree slope, tough terrain for the enemy to safely reach them without being seen.

The drone gains altitude back to the road.

INT. VEHICLE #3 - DAY

Wu monitors the controls from his perch in the turret. He looks up to the sky through the small gaps.

The *hornet* zips away like a humming bird and disappears into the glaring sun now high in the sky.

Wu peaks down to Fellows, engrossed in the footage. He shares his monitor view with Hoddy.

WU

It should be stealthy enough that
they won't know it's overhead. Hello?
You guys listening?

Wu squats down back into the cab. He looks over at...

HODDY

Oh my God!

Hoddy and the Captain are glued to the screen.

WU

What's the matter?

EXT. BRIDGE - DAY

DRONE FEED POV...

Birds eye view. Tracking into frame, black smoke bellows from two burnt out vehicles like funeral pyres. Charred bodies. The remains of the convoy. This is the first time the soldiers see the carnage.

A landscape of TALIBAN FIGHTERS gather nearby. Upwards of three dozen.

Several of the fighters rough-house two wounded US SOLDIERS down the road. They push them into a clearing. The soldiers have their hands bound behind their backs. Canvas bags cover their heads.

The light blue pick-up truck drives up. Another half-dozen armed fighters ride in the bed.

From the passenger side, Anwar climbs out.

EXT. CLEARING - DAY

The group of Taliban cheer and scream.

Two fighters kick the back of the US Soldiers' legs. The soldiers fall to their knees.

They remove the bags from their heads: Revealing Womack and First Sergeant Steel, bloodied and beaten. Steel has third degree burns.

Womack has a dejected look on his face, head down, he cries...

WOMACK

I really didn't want to die today,
First Sergeant.

STEEL
 Keep your chin up, son. Look these
 sons-a-bitches in the eye.

Two fighters aim their rifles at the back of their heads.

Anwar steps forward.

ANWAR
 (Dari)
 For your crimes against the people
 of this country, you are sentenced
 to death.

The two fighters look to Anwar for his go ahead. Anwar pushes
 their rifles down.

The two fighters look really confused.

ANWAR (CONT'D)
 (Dari)
 Put your rifles away.

Anwar looks around the ground, grabs something.

ANWAR (CONT'D)
 (Dari)
 My brothers, we are low on ammunition.
 Save your bullets.

Anwar lifts a STONE high into the air.

ANWAR (CONT'D)
 (Dari)
 Stone the infidels! Praise Allah!

Taliban fighters cheer in unison. They all grab stones.

There's nothing for the two soldiers to do. Womack closes
 his eyes. Steel charges the fighters.

Stones fly...

EXT. HIGH ABOVE CLEARING - DAY

DRONE FEED POV...

The two soldiers drop to the ground... convulsing from the
 onslaught of rocks.

INT. VEHICLE #3 - DAY

Hoddy covers her mouth, tears stream down her face.

WU

First Sergeant... and Womack! This isn't happening, is it? Who's going to rescue us?

HODDY

Turn it off.

WU

I'm gonna kill those motherfuckers.

HODDY

Wu, turn it off!

Hoddy pushes Wu.

WU

All right.

Wu snaps out of his fury and starts typing on his chest mount laptop.

FELLOWS

Wait, leave it on.

Fellows leans closer to the screen.

EXT. HIGH ABOVE CLEARING - DAY

Motorcycle Ali rides up to the group of Taliban. He parks his bike and approaches Anwar.

MOTORCYCLE ALI

I found a way down.

Anwar waves everyone over and points down the road. The men run down the road towards the direction of the ravine.

INT. VEHICLE #3 - DAY

FELLOWS

Wu, can you track down the valley?

WU

Yeah, let me set the way points so the drone just does a lazy circle.

FELLOWS

We need to figure something out because we have a ton of fighters headed our way. This ravine is pretty steep so it's going to take some time for the rest to reach us. The video feed will give us situational awareness.

Fellows lets out a deep breath.

FELLOWS (CONT'D)

What happens if we never arrive at
our destination?

Hoddy checks her watch.

HODDY

We're not overdue for another hour.
But if we were overdue they can track
us on G.P.S.

FELLOWS

Okay, so they know our position,
wouldn't they notice we stopped for
a long time?

WU

Yeah, if anyone in the ops center
gave a shit which they don't. Bunch
of useless POG's. They just watch
movies all day and go to the chow
hall.

FELLOWS

(whispers to Hoddy)
Pogs?

HODDY

People other than grunts.

LATER

Wu and Hoddy take inventory of the weapons.

Fellows holds the video feed.

FELLOWS

How do I punch in?

WU

That button right there zooms in.

FELLOWS

And that's the distance marker?

WU

Yes.

Wu returns to his conversation with Hoddy.

WU (CONT'D)

Two cans of .50 cal. Four rifles with fifteen magazines. Eight grenades. Five pistols, two mags a piece.

HODDY

Don't forget your ear pro.

Wu stuffs ear plugs into his ears.

WU

Ear pro, check. Eye pro, check. And enough fire power to give them a bad day at least. Okay, so once the .50 is out, you hand me rifle after rifle.

HODDY

Got it.

WU

If I go down, you take my place. We'll get you a stool or something.

HODDY

Shut it.

WU

And then if the Captain is the last man standing, sir, feel free to help yourself to any of these weapons and take out as many as you can.

Fellows counts to himself as he watches the feed. He grabs a black marker from the front and writes some basic calculations on the door.

WU (CONT'D)

Captain. Captain?

Fellows ignores Wu and pops into the turret.

TURRET

Fellows scans the horizon, he looks behind. He looks down to the video feed on the monitor, studying it.

FELLOWS

Specialist, come up here a second.

Wu climbs into the turret, it's tight but the two men manage.

FELLOWS (CONT'D)

Are you able to remove this machine gun from it's mount?

WU

Yeah, wait, what? Why?

Fellows drops back into the cab.

CAB

Fellows hands the monitor to Wu.

FELLOWS

I say instead of making a Custard's last stand, we remove the machine gun.

WU

Say again, sir?

FELLOWS

P.F.C. Hoddy is small enough to fit through that space.

(to Hoddy)

And you make a run for that Satcom phone in the rear cargo.

WU

Sir, that fifty is our primary deterrent against the hajjis.

FELLOWS

Listen, you put me in charge. I didn't want to be but no one else stepped up. I really believe this is our best course of action and if we don't act fast, we may never get another opportunity.

WU

It's a dumb idea, she can't fit.

HODDY

I can fit.

Fellows looks to Hoddy.

HODDY (CONT'D)

I can fit, I'm small enough to make it through. Not with all my gear on but I know I can fit.

FELLOWS

Based on the distance and speed they're traveling, I'd say, the enemy will be on us in fifteen, maybe twenty minutes.

An emergency beep emits from the laptop. A light blinks on the monitor... low battery.

WU

Oh shit.

FELLOWS

What is it?

WU

Drone has a low battery, I gotta fly it back to the vehicle right now or else it'll drop out of the sky.

FELLOWS

Do you have a spare?

WU

Yeah, Captain but I have to take it completely apart to switch it out.

Wu types commands into the laptop.

EXT. SKIES ABOVE - DAY

The drone descends towards the M-RAP.

INT. VEHICLE #3 - LATER

The .50 cal drops into the cab. Fellows takes it from Wu.

WU

Coming through. I still think this is a bad idea. We'll have no idea what the enemy is up to.

Fellows lays the machine gun next to the pelican case with the drone laying on top.

FELLOWS

There's no time to argue. I stand by my decision.

Hoddy removes her outer blouse, revealing just her t-shirt. She tosses the blouse in the front seat.

HODDY

Sir, sorry we couldn't get you down range for your meeting.

Hoddy shakes a little from nerves. Fellows grabs her hand.

FELLOWS

Don't worry about that, state department should've handled it anyway. You ready?

Hoddy nods. Fellows and Wu hoist her into the small gap, head first. It's tight so she outstretches her arms, making it to her hips.

Some finagling and she gets her hips past the pinch point. Her legs follow... RIP! Her pant leg tears on a metal spur.

Hoddy howls in pain as she drops out. She winces, grabbing her calf. She moves her hand away, it's bloody.

FELLOWS (CONT'D)

You all right?

HODDY

I cut my leg but it doesn't seem too bad.

FELLOWS

Wait, take this.

Fellows offers a pistol but Hoddy disappears towards the back. The men hear her rummage through the rear cargo.

Hoddy appears at the front from the other side...

HODDY

I got it!

SNIPER SCOPE POV:

The cross-hairs' view swings over to the M-RAP as Hoddy climbs on top of the hood.

INT. VEHICLE #3

Gun fire erupts from the top of the ravine. Hoddy rolls off the hood and takes cover behind the vehicle.

The firing continues. She rises up to the driver's side window and locks eyes with Fellows not knowing what to do.

FELLOWS

Take the phone! Run! Hide!

Hoddy hobbles down the gully. More gun fire. She stumbles, DROPPING the satellite phone case. She reaches... bullets hit the dirt between her and the case.

Locking eyes with Fellows, she leaves it, reaching the blind corner. She falls, disappearing in the distance.

WU

They shot her. I think they shot her!

Wu grabs his rifle and pops into the turret. Puts the rifle through the gap and aims it up the ravine.

Fires. Several three round bursts. Aiming haphazardly at indiscriminate targets... up and down the ravine side.

A bee's nest of hot brass ricochets off the turret.

His face is full of tears... a snotty mess.

CLICK. No more ammo.

WU (CONT'D)

You motherfuckers!

Brings the rifle back into the turret. Presses the magazine release.

The empty magazine drops, on reflex he grabs a second one from his pouch and slaps it in.

Yanks the charging handle.

Aims out the turret. Fires! Empty.

Third magazine. Slapped in place. Fires! Empty.

Last magazine. Fires! Empty.

It drops into the cab. He reaches for another and realizes he has no more.

CAB

Wu drops back down.

WU

Captain, hand me a magazine from Hoddy's gear.

Fellows squeezes Wu's shoulder.

FELLOWS

Calm down.

Wu shrugs his shoulder away.

WU

Man, give me a magazine.

FELLOWS

We need to save it.

WU

Fuck that, we're not getting out of here.

FELLOWS

If they rush us again we need every round.

Wu hops into the driver's seat.

WU

Fuck you, Captain.

Tossing his rifle on top of the dashboard, Wu turns the ignition, nothing. He grabs the radio handset. Keys it.

WU (CONT'D)

(into radio)

Anybody who cares, there's a couple of soon to be dead soldiers if you don't fucking do anything!

No response. He tosses the handset up against his rifle.

EXT. TOP OF RAVINE - DAY

Anwar steps forward. The conversation is in Dari.

ANWAR

Enough! Save your bullets, there is no use from this distance.

The fighters stop and nod. Motorcycle Ali stands up next to Anwar. Anwar surveys the surroundings:

Down the road, the battlegon lies sideways in a ditch. A twisted wreck of metal, fire and smoke. The machine gun obliterated.

MOTORCYCLE ALI

Our fighters will not be able to penetrate their thick armor and we are defenseless against any air attacks.

ANWAR

Rockets?

MOTORCYCLE ALI

No more rockets.

ANWAR

Where is our nearest cache?

MOTORCYCLE ALI
Other side of Charikar Village.

ANWAR
Go get it, hurry.

Motorcycle Ali hops on his bike and jump starts it. He revs the throttle and drives off.

Anwar returns to the back of his light blue pickup truck. A few beat up green Jerry cans: "**Petro**" painted on the side. He picks one up and shakes it, the sound of sloshing fuel.

INT. VEHICLE #3 - DAY

Wu removes his helmet and chucks it into the floor boards. He buries his head into his arms on the steering wheel.

WU
It's your fault she's dead.

Fellows takes that one on the chin.

FELLOWS
You're right. I made a bad decision.
Whether it was right or wrong, I
made a decision.

Fellows grabs Hoddy's blouse, his thumb crossing her name-tape. He tears off the velcro name-tape as a reminder when the PHOTO of Hoddy's daughter slips out from the pocket.

Fellows grabs the photo. Stares down... *complete guilt staring back. Same starry-eyes as her mother. His chin quivers...*

Moaning breaks the silence. Cruz rolls to his side.

CRUZ
Who's dead?

Wu looks up.

Fellows stuffs the photo in his blouse pocket.

WU
Hey, Staff Sergeant. How ya feeling?

Cruz sits up. He touches the bandage on his forehead, winces from the pain.

CRUZ
Like a hard boiled turd.

He rubs the tears from his eyes. Blinks.

CRUZ (CONT'D)
Did we get hit or something?

WU
Caught with our pants down.

CRUZ
How long was I out?

FELLOWS
A long time.

Cruz looks over with an *'oh you're still here'* expression.

CRUZ
Did anyone call it in?

Wu grabs the radio. Keys it.

WU
(into radio)
Welcome to McDonalds, you want fries
with that?

He tosses it down.

WU (CONT'D)
Radio's tits up.

Cruz notices Johnson's body covered in the back seat.

CRUZ
Is that Johnson?

Wu nods.

CRUZ (CONT'D)
Damn it. Where's Hoddy?

WU
Ask the Captain.

FELLOWS
We were trapped in here. The turret
had just enough space for P.F.C.
Hoddy to fit through. She was going
for the satellite phone in the back
and took fire. We think she went
down on the other side of that corner.

Cruz stands in the turret to look for himself. No exit here.

CRUZ
You ordered her out through the
turret?

Cruz sits back down.

FELLOWS
Yes... yes, I did.

Cruz stares Fellows down.

FELLOWS (CONT'D)
You have something to say to me,
Staff Sergeant?

CRUZ
Given the circumstances, I would've
done the same thing.

LATER

Cruz puts a cigarette between his lips. He offers the pack.

CRUZ
Anyone else?

FELLOWS
Not a smoker.

CRUZ
Wu, smoke?

Wu ducks down from the turret.

WU
No thanks, Staff Sergeant.

Cruz lights his cigarette and slips the pack into his pocket. He pulls his wallet lanyard from under his shirt. He removes a photo and hands it to Wu.

CRUZ
Wu, do me a favor?

PHOTO: Wife and three young kids - two girls, one boy.

CRUZ (CONT'D)
If I die and you make it, tell my
wife and kids I did my best and I
love them. Tell the boy, *Jesus*, he's
now the man of the house and to
respect his mother.

WU
Daaaamn Staff Sergeant! Your wife's
hot.

CRUZ
Give me that back. That's the mother
of my children you're disrespecting.

Cruz grabs the photo back. He smiles.

CRUZ (CONT'D)
She's a stone cold fox, isn't she?

WU
Check this out.

Wu takes his smartphone out. He flips to a photo of his
girlfriend and shows it to Cruz.

CRUZ
Very nice.

WU
I planned on using my tax free
deployment money to buy her a proper
ring when I get back.

Fellows smiles from the banter.

CRUZ
What about you, sir? Anyone you want
us to reach out to? You know, just
in case.

FELLOWS
I have no one special.

WU
Really? No one?

FELLOWS
I have an ex-wife, I guess. The
relationship is over and I really
screwed her over in the divorce. Me
being a lawyer, you know how it goes.
But for some reason I kept this.

Fellows takes out his handkerchief and rubs the sewn initials:
"F.F." He shows it to the two soldiers.

FELLOWS (CONT'D)
She gave it to me on my birthday
early on in our marriage. I like to
keep things, mementos and what not.
They remind me of big events in my
life.

(MORE)

FELLOWS (CONT'D)

Sad thing is those aren't even her initials, they're mine... *Frank Fellows*. Not so much a reminder of her but more as a reminder of how selfish I can be. That I need to quit trying to escape my problems and just deal with them head on.

Fellows folds the handkerchief back up and slides it back up his sleeve.

FELLOWS (CONT'D)

So no, there's no one you need to contact because we're going to get out of here... alive. That drone, how long would it take to change the battery and launch it?

WU

Five minutes, less than that.

FELLOWS

About ten miles east of here is a civil engineering unit. I remember seeing it on the blue force tracker.

Fellows grabs the black marker.

FELLOWS (CONT'D)

So we're going to write a message on that drone and send it to them.

EXT. CHARIKAR VILLAGE - DAY

Motorcycle Ali cruises through the Bazaars. He stops at the shop that sells handmade Afghan rugs.

He enters the store front.

He exits with a rolled up afghan rug hiding two rockets. He straps it to the back of his motorcycle and speeds away.

INT. VEHICLE #3 - DAY

With a marker, Cruz writes on the drone:

"S.O.S. 437th AMBUSHED - RAVINE PAST GOLDEN GATE - SEND HELP!"

He hands the drone to Wu.

Wu holds the drone outside the turret. It takes off.

Fellows and Cruz watch the video feed.

EXT. SKIES ABOVE

The drone flies up the ravine and tracks across the river.

TURRET

Wu stands watch, rifle at the ready. He looks around the countryside. It's pretty peaceful. No sign of the Taliban.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF CHARIKAR VILLAGE - DAY

Motorcycle Ali speeds down the dirt road. He skids to a halt and removes his sunglasses, spotting something high in the sky.

The drone passes above him across the road. He revs the throttle and follows it.

I/E. VEHICLE #3 - DAY

Fellows and Cruz stare at the video monitor.

CRUZ

I think I see the civil engineers in
the distance, about four clicks away.

Wu ducks down.

WU

Yeah?

CRUZ

I think it's gonna make it.

WU

Fuck yeah, Captain! High five!

Fellows smiles and high fives Wu.

The drone loses altitude and crashes.

CRUZ

Something happened, it crashed.

FELLOWS

What you mean it crashed?

Wu ducks in.

WU

Did we lose the signal?

Cruz shows him the video screen...

EXT. FIELD - DAY

DRONE POV: In the dirt.

Motorcycle Ali walks into frame. He lowers his rifle and slings it on his back.

He approaches the crashed drone. His boot heel smashes the camera. The feed cuts to static.

INT. VEHICLE #3

Wu grabs the monitor from Cruz.

WU

What the fuck now?

The two soldiers look over to Fellows for direction. He's got nothing for them.

Bullets ping the side of the vehicle. Everyone ducks.

EXT. VEHICLE #3 - DAY

A flaming jerry can hits the hood. Two more follow from the top of the ravine. They explode into a ball of fire, engulfing the front quarter panel and tire of the vehicle.

The fire spreads across the hood, immediately blackening the windows.

INT. VEHICLE #3 - DAY

Smoke pours in through the air vents, filling the cabin.

Coughing...

CRUZ

Oh God, I'm not going out like this.

Cruz scrambles for the doors, he puts his shoulder into it.

Wu climbs back into the turret. He fires his weapon at the retreating enemy.

He drops back down.

Cruz pulls out his pistol.

CRUZ (CONT'D)

Wu! You do me, I do you?

WU

Fuck you, Staff Sergeant!

The smoke grows worse. Coughing...

CRUZ

I'm a devout Catholic, man, I can't
off myself. Decide fast... Or Captain!
Captain, can do us both?

FELLOWS

Let's not be stupid.

CRUZ

I'd rather die quickly than burn to
death.

Cruz offers the grip of his pistol to Fellows. Coughing...

FELLOWS

I... I can't.

Wu chambers a round and points his pistol at Cruz.

WU

Okay. Same time.

Cruz points his pistol at Wu.

CRUZ

Aim for center mass.

They stare each other down.

CRUZ (CONT'D)

Wait, grenade.

Cruz holsters his sidearm and grabs a grenade.

CRUZ (CONT'D)

Pull the pin. The force and pressure
should take us all out, really quick,
painless.

More coughing, the fire spreads outside, the heat cracks the
windshield. Fellows' silence signals he's okay with the idea.

Cruz prays to himself in Spanish. He hands the grenade to
Wu.

Wu fondles the pin with his index finger. He slowly pulls...

Fellows' hand covers the grenade, preventing the pin from
being pulled.

FELLOWS

Stop! Give it to me.

(MORE)

FELLOWS (CONT'D)

If there's enough pressure to kill
us all then there's enough pressure
to blow open one of those doors.
Maybe even the turret.

Wu releases his grip on the grenade.

TURRET

Smoke funnels in from the cab. Grenade in hand, Fellows tries
to determine the best placement.

Cruz pops his head up.

CRUZ

Here give it to me, you close the
cover.

Fellows hands the grenade off to Cruz. Fellows grabs the
handle to the ceiling cover.

CRUZ (CONT'D)

We'll have about three seconds to
get under body armor.

Cruz pulls the pin.

CRUZ (CONT'D)

Fire in the hole.

Cruz releases the spoon and stuffs the grenade into a corner
near the gun shield. He ducks back into the cab.

Fellows pulls the ceiling cover closed but it gets caught on
the bent in metal, leaving a gap.

FELLOWS

It won't shut.

CRUZ

Leave it! Take cover!

Fellows leaves it.

CAB

Unsure what to do, Fellows grabs Johnson's body and pulls it
over him like a shield.

CRUZ (CONT'D)

Cover your ears!

A pause... BOOM!

EXT. VEHICLE #3 - DAY

The explosion bursts the turret outward. Gun shield blows off, flipping into the gully. An open escape.

CAB

Fellows shudders... inner ears ring.

Wu tosses off the body armor he was hiding under. He scrambles out the top.

WU

We got an exit!

I/E. VEHICLE #3 - DAY

Wu crawls out. He gets to his knees and aims his pistol up the ravine to provide cover.

Cruz climbs... he stops.

Fellows still shell shocked.

CRUZ

Wu! Help me get the Captain.

Cruz grabs Fellows' blouse at the shoulders, he yanks him up, leading him to the turret.

Wu reaches in and grabs Fellows out by the sleeves. He drags him out onto the roof.

WU

Grab Johnson.

The fire spreads.

CRUZ

There's no time.

Cruz files out, shoulders his rifle. They all ditch off the side as the fire engulfs the M-RAP.

The two soldiers two-person drag Fellows away from the burning vehicle.

Fellows comes to and gains his feet back under him. He runs back towards the vehicle.

The two soldiers look back.

CRUZ (CONT'D)

Captain, come back, it's going to explode.

Fellows grabs the pelican case containing the Satcom phone. Fellows hugs the case close to his chest and stumbles towards Cruz and Wu.

The men run around the blind corner as the M-RAP explodes.

EXT. FAR SIDE OF GULLY - DAY

Around the blind corner, the men catch their breath.

WU

Fuck, we left Johnson to burn.

FELLOWS

Where's Hoddy?

CRUZ

What do you mean?

FELLOWS

She went down right here, so where's the body?

CRUZ

Keep moving, we're exposed here.

They run down the gully.

EXT. TOP OF RAVINE - BLUE TRUCK - DAY

Driving. CLOSE on Anwar sitting in the passenger side. He looks up as a mushroom cloud of smoke erupts up from the ravine. He smiles, satisfied.

ANWAR

(Dari)

Just up ahead. This is good.

He looks to the bed of the truck. A tied up Hoddy sits surrounded by Taliban.

EXT. SMALL GROVE OF TREES - DAY

The soldiers take cover under the trees growing from the sides of the gully.

Cruz jumps down as Fellows and Wu drop down on either side of him. Everyone breathing heavy.

Cruz unslings his rifle.

CRUZ

Wu, keep watch.

Wu nods as Cruz swaps his rifle for Wu's pistol.

Wu function checks the rifle. Clicks the safety selector to burst and holds his rifle at the ready. He steps forward to take a knee then scans the higher parts of the ravine.

CRUZ (CONT'D)

Assessment.

WU

I got nothing on the horizon, three-sixty. Smoke probably hid our escape. If they think we're still alive then we would've had contact by now. Personnel green, weapon...

Wu tips his rifle sideways and gets a look at the clip.

WU (CONT'D)

Thirty rifle rounds.

CRUZ

Make em count. Captain? You good to go? Any injuries?

FELLOWS

My head hurts a little but I think I'm okay.

Cruz offers the handle of the pistol.

CRUZ

Need you to watch his backside.

Fellows doesn't hesitate, he sets the pelican case down and grabs the pistol, Cruz doesn't release. He locks eyes with Fellows.

CRUZ (CONT'D)

Safety's off, you got a full clip, don't be afraid to use it.

Fellows nods as Cruz lets go.

CRUZ (CONT'D)

Good work grabbing this.

Cruz opens the pelican case and digs the phone from the foam insert. He flips up the antenna, the phone boots up. He dials the emergency number on a sticker adhered to the back.

FIGHTERS (O.S.)

Hurry! Hurry!

The yelling sounds close. The men huddle together, planting against the gully wall.

TOP SIDE OF GULLY

The trees and gully provide concealment from the patrol of fighters passing by. They seem upbeat.

BELOW GROVE TREES

The soldiers hold tight. Breath held.

A few more steps to the gully by the passing fighters and the soldiers would be exposed.

TOP SIDE OF GULLY

The fighters move on with the exception of one fighter. He loiters in the back and listens intently.

A secondary explosion from the M-RAP draws his attention.

FIGHTER (O.S.)

Let's go!

The fighter runs and catches up with the others.

BELOW GROVE TREES

The soldiers breath a sigh of relief.

LATER

Wu scans the perimeter. Fellows watches Cruz on the Satcom phone, he ends the call.

CRUZ

Ops wants us to get into a better position and spot for an air strike. Based on the terrain, it's too dangerous for a quick rescue.

EXT. CLEARING NEAR BRIDGE - DAY

A few dozen fighters are formed up. The faded blue pick-up truck speeds towards the fighters. It stops.

Anwar exits. The fighters pull Hoddy out of the back.

The fighters cheer and chant.

FIGHTERS (O.S.)

(Dari)

Kill the infidel! Kill the infidel!

EXT. HILL ABOVE BRIDGE - DAY

On their bellies, Fellows, Wu and Cruz watch the scene below.

FELLOWS

Is that Hoddy? She's alive.

Cruz has the Satcom phone to his ear.

EXT. SKIES ABOVE AFGHANISTAN - DAY

A two-ship of A-10 attack aircraft drop from the cloud cover and race through the sky. Mountains blurring below.

Sunlight reflects off their distinct shark-mouth nose art.

COMMAND PILOT

Expected time on target, ten mike.

EXT. HILL ABOVE BRIDGE - DAY

The men hold tight.

CRUZ

Copy that, Hawg Two-One.

Cruz looks over to Fellows and Wu.

CRUZ (CONT'D)

Ten minutes until the air strike.

FELLOWS

We need to rescue her.

CRUZ

Captain, do the math. There's three of us. There's over three dozen Taliban over there. If we expose ourselves, we're dead.

FELLOWS

So there's nothing we can do?

CRUZ

No sir. Maybe after the air strike in the chaos of it all...

Fellows exhales, slides his pistol over to Cruz.

CRUZ (CONT'D)

Captain, what are you doing?

FELLOWS

I can't watch this. I'll take that cigarette now.

Cruz reaches in his cargo pocket, removing the pack of cigarettes. Fellows snatches them away and crawls backwards down the backside of the hill.

CRUZ
You're welcome, lighter's in the
pack.

WU
That Captain's an odd duck.

Cruz turns back towards the fighters in the distance: Anwar rallies his soldiers.

They see Fellows crouching near the brush line below.

WU (CONT'D)
Is that? Shit, what's he doing?

CRUZ
Stay put, just stay put.

EXT. BRUSH - DAY

Fellows looks on from his position behind a bush.

CRUZ
(whispered yell)
Captain, get back here.

FELLOWS
(to self)
Just make a case. Frank, just make a
case. I hope they understand me.

Fellows ignores their pleas and takes a deep breath, standing in full view.

CRUZ
(whispered yell)
No, what are you doing?

Fellows marches towards the crowd in the distance.

EXT. CLEARING - DAY

The crowd grows more irritated. They grab rocks.

Hoddy stands uneasy, she looks down not making eye contact.

ANWAR
(Dari)
Men, we have destroyed the infidel
and will drive them all from our
homelands.

A fighter sees Fellows approach, he raises his rifle. Fellows immediately raises his hands high in the air, freezing in place.

FELLOWS
No gun! No gun!

FIGHTER
(Dari)
You, stop! Stop! What's in your hand?
Show me your hand!

The fighter points to the cigarettes.

FELLOWS
Cigarettes.

FIGHTER
(Dari)
Let me see, slowly.

The fighter snatches the cigarettes away, checking them out.

The crowd of fighters look on, confused and shocked as if this American is crazy to stroll into this.

The fighter grabs Fellows, rough-houses him forward by the collar past the crowd towards Anwar.

FIGHTER (CONT'D)
(Dari)
We captured another American.

FELLOWS
Good afternoon. How are you?

Fellows offers his hand to shake.

Anwar is dumfounded. He stares at Fellows' hand.

FELLOWS (CONT'D)
General, yes? You're the general?
Are you good? Cigarette? Have a
cigarette with me.

Fellows again offers his hand to shake.

Anwar laughs. The men follow with laughter.

Fellows smiles, grasping this levity.

Anwar seems amused.

ANWAR
(Dari)
Crazy american. What is he saying?

FELLOWS
Cigarette, yes?

Fellows points to the fighter holding the cigarettes then pantomimes smoking.

NADEEM (O.S.)
 Captain, you don't have to talk to
 him like he's a child.

Nadeem the interpreter, alive and well, appears from among the men.

NADEEM (CONT'D)
 (Dari)
 He is asking you to have a cigarette
 with him.

Fellows, mouth agape as shock floods his face.

Anwar ponders a moment. He shakes Fellows' hand.

ANWAR
 (Dari)
 Yes, let's sit.
 (English)
 Cigarette.

EXT. HILL ABOVE BRIDGE - DAY

Wu and Cruz look on amazed.

CRUZ
 Nadeem?

WU
 That fucking traitor, I knew he was
 bullshit.

In the distance, Anwar and Fellows sit on the ground, the fighters surround them.

CRUZ
 I can't believe they didn't just
 shoot him.

Wu aims his M-4 rifle towards the clearing. He puts the red dot site on Nadeem.

WU
 I got a clear shot on Nadeem, Staff
 Sergeant.

CRUZ
 Stand-fast, you shoot him, they're
 both dead.

COMMAND PILOT (V.O.)
 Warhorse this Hawg two-one, we are
 about five mike from your location.

Cruz checks his watch.

CRUZ
 I think I know what the Captain has
 in mind.
 (into radio)
 Be advised we have friendlies in the
 kill zone. Friendlies are danger
 close.

COMMAND PILOT (V.O.)
 Copy, we'll fly-by for a visual.

EXT. CLEARING - DAY

Nadeem stands above Anwar who finishes lighting his cigarette.
 He passes the lighter back to Fellows.

Fellows lights his cigarette. He takes a drag and coughs.
 He's not a smoker.

Anwar laughs.

ANWAR
 (Dari)
 You don't smoke?

Nadeem interprets between the two men.

FELLOWS
 No, first time.

ANWAR
 You do not seem like a normal soldier.
 Who are you?

FELLOWS
 I'm a Judge Advocate prosecutor for
 the United States Air Force.

NADEEM
 Attorney.

Anwar chuckles. Nadeem translates to all the fighters. They
 yell and grow anxious. They pick up rocks.

ANWAR
 Perfect. You and this woman are on
 trial for crimes against, Allah.
 Crimes against my homeland.
 (MORE)

ANWAR (CONT'D)

The punishment for this... death.
Bring the woman over here.

Anwar points to the fighter holding Hoddy. The fighter steps her forward and drops her on the ground.

FELLOWS

You all right?

Fellows locks eyes with Hoddy-- a little shaken.

HODDY

Yeah, I'm straight, Captain.

Fellows scans down to Hoddy's torn pant leg. It's saturated in blood. In the shaft of her boot, he notices the top of her BOOT KNIFE is still hidden away. Fellows turns to Anwar.

FELLOWS

Since we're on trial for our lives,
allow me to make a case in our
defense.

Anwar rubs his beard.

ANWAR

Make your case, Captain.

FELLOWS

You and I are alike in a lot of ways.
We volunteered for the defense of
our country to feed our families.
Just like you. Just like your men.
Years ago, bad men trained here and
invaded our country, killing many of
our people. We had no other choice
but to retaliate. This woman, she
volunteered to feed her child. She
too had no other choice. In fact, my
mission today was to travel to a
base to prosecute an America. A
soldier. For the wrongful death of
one of your countrymen. I was
representing your country in a fair
trial. I was representing the
interests of Afghanistan. I ask today,
now, you do what is fair--

ANWAR

Enough, what do you want?

FELLOWS

Safe passage.

(MORE)

FELLOWS (CONT'D)

You and your men go your way, we go ours. No retribution for what has taken place today.

ANWAR

Impossible. Your generals will not allow it.

FELLOWS

Attack planes are headed this way as we speak, if you let us go they will not attack.

ANWAR

Liar, I see no planes.

Fellows drops his cigarette. He grinds his boot heel into it, checking his watch.

An engine whine grows in the distance.

Fighters spot the two-ship of A-10's approaching. They yell and panic. Rifles raised.

FELLOWS

Please! Have your men hold their fire. The planes will not attack.

Anwar turns to Nadeem and nods.

NADEEM

(Dari)

Hold your fire!

Anwar grabs Hoddy by the arm away from the group.

ANWAR

Bring him.

Anwar throws Hoddy to the ground. Nadeem grabs Fellows.

NADEEM

Let's go. On your knees.

Fellows complies.

NADEEM (CONT'D)

Hands up, both of you.

The two raise their arms. Anwar points his rifle to the back of Hoddy's head. Nadeem does the same to Fellows.

The A-10's approach.

EXT. SKIES ABOVE CLEARING - DAY

The A-10's bank, passing the crowd. The COMMAND PILOT sees Hoddy and Fellows on their knees, almost like human shields.

COMMAND PILOT

I see our friendlies. We'll track off and make another pass.

The A-10's veer off, tracking towards the mountains. They stay close.

EXT. CLEARING - DAY

Fellows turns, looking upward at Nadeem.

FELLOWS

We can all walk away from this, Nadeem. You know the capabilities of those planes. There's no other way out of this.

NADEEM

Shut up.

FELLOWS

I can guarantee everyone's safety. Just give me a chance to negotiate.

NADEEM

I said, shut up!

Nadeem kicks Fellows in the back. Fellows falls to his face.

FELLOWS

All that time spent with our soldiers. You know the U.S. military is honorable. Deep down you know it's true. Tell your leader. Just tell him.

Nadeem presses the muzzle of his rifle up to Fellows' temple.

ANWAR

(Dari)

What's he saying?

NADEEM

(Dari)

Nothing.

ANWAR

(Dari)

Tell me.

Nadeem reluctantly translates.

ANWAR (CONT'D)

(English)

Freedom? Hey, American, you give us
freedom?

FELLOWS

Yes! Yes, I give you freedom.

ANWAR

(Dari)

Let him up.

Nadeem hesitates then takes his rifle away from Fellows' head.

NADEEM

Yes, give us our freedom, Captain.

Fellows presses himself up to his knees. He takes his time dusting himself off then rises to his feet.

FELLOWS

Let her go. Once she's safely out of
range, I'll give you your freedom.

Nadeem translates.

Anwar points his rifle away from Hoddy's head.

ANWAR

Woman. You go.

Hoddy looks over at Fellows.

HODDY

Sir?

FELLOWS

Just get to the river, don't look
back. Slowly.

Hoddy nods and limps away.

NADEEM

Now, you give us our freedom, Captain.

EXT. HILL ABOVE BRIDGE

Cruz and Wu are beside themselves.

CRUZ

I can't believe they let her go.

EXT. CLEARING - DAY

The whine of the A-10 engines return. Fellows looks over his shoulder and spots the two-ship racing towards the group of fighters. He raises his arms.

Fellows reaches into his sleeve and pulls out his white handkerchief. He steps away from the group and waves it high over his head.

EXT. SKIES ABOVE AFGHANISTAN - DAY

The A-10's approach.

COMMAND PILOT

War horse, what do you want to do here?

CRUZ (V.O.)

(radio)

Wave-off, I think they're letting our friendlies go free.

EXT. CLEARING - DAY

The A-10's buzz by. They dip their wings back and forth as a confirmation of the cease fire.

LATER

NADEEM

Until next time, Captain.

Nadeem climbs into the faded blue truck, starts the engine. The other fighters disperse towards other vehicles.

Anwar remains with Fellows. Anwar's rifle at the ready.

EXT. ROAD TO BRIDGE - DAY

Motorcycle Ali speeds down the dirt road. The burnt out bridge in the distance. He sees the two attack planes circling beyond it.

A worried look intensifies across his face. He guns the throttle, gaining speed.

EXT. CLEARING - DAY

Anwar stares at Fellows.

ANWAR

Trust to keep your word, Captain.
Planes no attack, no follow, yes?

FELLOWS

Yes. You have my word.

Fellows puts his hand in the air - 'scout's honor'.

Anwar... a pause then a smile. He relaxes the grip on his rifle and climbs into the passenger seat of the blue truck. Nadeem turns the steering wheel, the truck peels out.

A dust cloud in the truck's wake-- envelops a coughing Fellows. He turns and runs towards the river.

EXT. RIVER - DAY

The revved engine of a motorcycle builds in the distance.

Hoddy hears it and ducks into cover near the river bank.

Motorcycle Ali appears and rides across the shallows. He speeds up the bank towards the top of the clearing.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Motorcycle Ali leans the bike against a large rock. He takes his AK-47 off his shoulder and sets it on the rock.

Pulls the carpet off the back of the bike, unrolls it on the ground. Revealing the rocket launcher and two rockets.

He loads the rocket launcher.

Takes aim at the lead A-10.

Fellows sees this, he runs.

FELLOWS

Stop!

Too late. Motorcycle Ali pulls the trigger. The rocket flies towards the lead A-10.

INT. COCK PIT - DAY

Alarms. The pilot flips some switches.

COMMAND PILOT

Holy shit, did we seriously just get fired on?

EXT. SKIES ABOVE AFGHANISTAN - DAY

The A-10 dips out of the way. The rocket misses and explodes in the sky above.

COMMAND PILOT

Hawg two-two. Go hot, follow my lead.

HAWG 22 (V.O.)

(radio)

Copy that, Hawg two-one, weapons hot.

EXT. CLEARING - DAY

An upset Motorcycle Ali, quickly reloads the second rocket. He takes aim.

Fellows dives, tackling Motorcycle Ali to the dirt. The rocket launcher falls off his shoulder.

EXT. RIVER

The men roll down the embankment. Kicking, fighting, scratching. Fellows loses his glasses. They get crushed in the fray as the men roll into foot deep water.

The men jockey for leverage over the other, it's visceral.

Motorcycle Ali overtakes Fellows and rolls on top of him. He punches Fellows in the stomach several times.

Fellows bawls and struggles to breath. Fellows grabs a rock and takes a swing.

But Motorcycle Ali blocks it and puts his knee onto Fellows' arm, pinning him. Fellows' legs scramble and kick but it's too much weight.

Motorcycle Ali presses Fellows' face into the water. Fellows struggles up but can't resurface.

Fellows grabs for anything but Ali is too much for him. He can't raise his head above the water and is drowning. Fellows movements grow slow.

With her boot knife, Hoddy stabs Motorcycle Ali's neck. He falls face down into the muddy water.

Fellows rises up, coughing up river water.

Hoddy steps over Fellows.

HODDY

Sir, are you okay?

Hoddy offers her hand. Fellows grabs it and Hoddy helps him to his feet.

Fellows places his hands on his knees, catching his breath.
He wipes his chin.

FELLOWS

Yeah... I believe, I'm straight.

EXT. HILL ABOVE CLEARING - DAY

Cruz listens to the Satcom phone.

COMMAND PILOT (V.O.)

War horse, cease fire is over. Stay
off that road and keep your head
down, ass down. Guns are hot.

The A-10's descend on the retreating convoy of fighters.

COMMAND PILOT (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Guns, guns, guns! Guns, guns, guns,
guns, guns!

EXT. SKIES ABOVE CLEARING - DAY

The A-10's fly in close. The gatling cannons erupt fire...

BRRRRRRRR! BRRRRRRRR!

Rounds shred the landscape.

A tidal-wave of destruction storms along the road towards
the escaping vehicles.

BRRRRRRRR! BRRRRRRRR!

The convoy of Taliban trucks shred and burst into flames,
exploding one-by-one.

Several trucks diverge but it's no use... the rear aircraft's
line of fire chews them up like a thresher in a cornfield.

EXT. NEAR BRIDGE - DAY

Fellows stands up to witness the carnage.

FELLOWS

Oh no, stop!

Fellows runs up to the road, waving his handkerchief but
it's no use.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

The faded blue truck in the lead. Nadeem hits the gas,
screaming.

In the passenger seat, Anwar looks back as the vehicles behind him are taken apart.

Nadeem cranks the steering wheel hard. The vehicle stumbles off road. The tidal wave of bullets cuts past them.

The A-10's cease fire, ending the onslaught.

The jets wave-off and bank towards the mountains...

COMMAND PILOT (V.O.)
War horse, we're bingo fuel, stay
safe. Rescue's on its way. Good luck.

...Disappearing into the horizon.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

The faded blue truck brakes.

I/E. TRUCK - DAY

Anwar angrily looks back at his decimated forces.

ANWAR
(Dari)
Find the Captain!

Wheels spins. The truck races back down the road.

EXT. HILL ABOVE BRIDGE - DAY

Wu takes aim at the truck and fires. The truck disappears from view past the hills.

CRUZ
Let's go, double time.

Cruz and Wu climb off the hill, laying chase.

EXT. CLEARING - DAY

Fellows stands, disappointed. His diplomacy thrown out the window. His fingers loosen, the handkerchief slips into the wind. Tumbling, twisting, turning... the HANDKERCHIEF gone.

The faded blue truck appears over the horizon.

INT. TRUCK - DAY

Nadeem hits the gas.

Anwar racks the action on his AK-47. He leans outside the window.

Fires the rifle... RAT-A-TAT-TAT!

EXT. NEAR BRIDGE - DAY

Rounds pepper the dust in front of Fellows, a round HITS him in the thigh. Fellows doubles over.

Hoddy jumps for cover, rolling back down the embankment.

Fellows takes cover behind the large rock next to the motorcycle. He grabs the tourniquet out of his pocket and puts it on his leg, twisting it down. Wincing from the pain.

TRUCK

Anwar sits back into his seat. He drops the magazine out.

The truck gains speed, closing the gap.

NEAR BRIDGE

Fellows leans up on the rock, pressing Ali's AK-47 against his shoulder.

FELLOWS

Rack the action, put the red dot on
the target and pull the trigger.
Where's the stupid red dot, First
Sergeant?

No glasses. A near-sided Fellows squints then racks the action, aims. The truck is in his sights... sort of.

TRUCK

Anwar sees Fellows with the rifle aimed at him.

NEAR BRIDGE

Fellows fires. The AK-47 fires wildly missing the truck completely until it runs out of bullets.

TRUCK

Anwar smiles. He looks over to Nadeem.

ANWAR

(Dari)
I want him alive so I can cut off
his head.

Anwar takes his time reloading his rifle.

NEAR BRIDGE

Fellows leaves the cover of the rock and limps past the motorcycle.

FELLOWS
 (Steel Impression)
 Son, that weapon's not gonna cut it.
 Not on my convoy.

Fellows tosses the AK-47 aside and grabs the discarded rocket launcher. Puts it on his shoulder. Finger on the trigger.

TRUCK

Nadeem hits the brakes. The truck slides to a halt. Nadeem throws his hands in the air. Anwar hesitates, he drops his rifle in his lap and raise his hand. Rules of engagement are very clear here, the enemy surrendered.

ON FELLOWS

He dips the rocket down a moment. A beat.

TRUCK

Anwar squints his eyes. He raises the AK-47 up.

ON FELLOWS

The rocket launcher levels back up on his shoulder.

FELLOWS
 Fuck diplomacy!

Fellows squeezes the trigger.

TRUCK

Anwar and Nadeem scream. Their eyes go wide. The rocket flies into the truck, exploding into a grandiose ball of fire.

CUT TO: BLACK

Helicopter blades cut the air-- the sound builds.

EXT. RIVER - DAY

Rushing water. The white handkerchief embroidered with "**F.F.**" floats down river.

CLEARING ABOVE RIVER

A two-ship of rescue helicopters take-off.

The remains of the faded blue truck... a charred blackened frame on fire, black smoke rises into the sky.

I/E. HELICOPTER - DAY

The special operations guy, Ball Cap, holds an I.V. above Fellows who fades back into consciousness.

Sunglasses rides behind the chain gun on the side of the helicopter.

BALL CAP

Hey there Captain. Well, you had a tough first day.

A loopy Fellows...

FELLOWS

Hey, I know this guy. I know you.

BALL CAP

I gave you something for the pain.
And the potential nausea for our
ride back to Bagram.

FELLOWS

Oh, that feels good.

Fellows looks over to see Cruz staring him down. Hoddy and Wu are behind him.

CRUZ

Captain Fellows.

Cruz's gruff demeanor turns into a smile.

CRUZ (CONT'D)

You did pretty good for your first
time in combat, sir.

FELLOWS

I did? So I got the bad guys?

WU

No. Not even close. You passed out
and the helo took them out.

FELLOWS

Oh... really?

Hoddy smiles and winks, giving it away. Fellows' expression changes to disbelief.

WU

Hey, we always clown the new grunt.
It's tradition.

FELLOWS

Fuck you guys.

CRUZ

Fuck you too, sir!

WU

Yeah, fuck you too, sir!

The soldiers render a salute - Respect. Fellows salutes back.

Hoddy sits back down behind them and stares out into the landscape below.

FELLOWS

Private First Class Hoddy, I have something for you.

Hoddy looks over.

HODDY

Sir?

Fellows takes the PHOTO from his pocket and hands it over to her. With a shaky hand, Hoddy takes it.

HODDY (CONT'D)

Thank you for saving this.

Fellows grabs her hand, squeezes it.

FELLOWS

No, thank you. It saved me.

Hoddy erupts into a ball of tears and laughter she doesn't let go of Fellows' hand.

Sunglasses points to Hoddy without her seeing and looks back to Ball Cap. He shrugs, not impressed, holding up six fingers. Sunglasses disagrees and holds up eight fingers.

Happy to be alive, the soldiers all whoop and holler.

The helicopters fly towards the mountains, disappearing into the distance.

FADE OUT: