

Alpha by David Benioff

EXT. PRAGUE - DAWN

The sun rises over the Czech capitol, lighting the old church towers, the bunker-like government headquarters of the Communist era, and the glass facades of the new buildings.

EXT. RADLICE - DAY

A leafy, quiet corner of the city. We PULL IN on an old house that has been converted into a bed-and-breakfast. A sign on the wrought-iron gate reads: *Pension Kafka*.

INT. PENSION KAFKA - DAY

In the dining room, a TOUR GROUP from Germany stands at the breakfast buffet, chatting as they load their plates.

INT. SUVORIN'S BEDROOM - DAY

ALEXEY SUVORIN stares at his face in the chipped mirror above the sink. He is neither young nor old, neither handsome nor ugly. His intelligent eyes are rimmed with shadows-- Alexey hasn't slept well in months.

He looks at the canister of shaving cream on the sink's ledge. He unscrews the bottom of the canister, pulls out a lead tube and gazes at it.

The lead tube is marked with the tri-foil symbol, black on a yellow background-- the international sign for radiation.

Alexey unbuttons his shirt. He wears a kind of modified holster, with a tubular sheath below his left armpit. He secures the lead tube in the sheath and fastens the straps.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Alexey closes his bedroom door behind him. He now wears an overcoat, buttoned to the collar.

INT. STAIRCASE - DAY

Alexey walks down the steps. Two young GERMAN BOYS race by him, jostling his arm as they sprint toward the dining room.

Alexey jerks away from them, hands moving to protect his hidden treasure. The boys pay him no heed. Alexey licks his lips and continues to the front door.

EXT. PENSION KAFKA - DAY

Alexey walks down the quiet street, arms crossed over his chest. He walks farther and farther from the camera, finally turning the corner and disappearing.

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The moment he's gone, four black police vans marked POLICIE barrel down the road from the opposite direction. They screech to a halt in front of the Kafka, deliberately blocking the street to all traffic.

The doors burst open and CZECH OFFICERS charge out of three vans. They wear tactical combat gear: bulletproof vests, riot helmets, etc. All carry Skorpion machine pistols.

The officers quickly set up a perimeter, racing to seal off the pension and prevent any escape.

Two Americans step out of the fourth van. They're not carrying weapons, nor are they armored in SWAT gear. They wear black windbreakers with POLICIE emblazoned on the back.

CAPTAIN THOMAS WHISTLER and LIEUTENANT LEON BIELSKI have the easy familiarity of men who have battled as comrades for years.

Whistler has the swagger of a natural athlete. Physical grace is evident in all his movement.

Bielski, several years younger, lacks Whistler's born confidence. He has the quiet intensity of a man who has struggled for everything he possesses.

They watch the Czech officers on the porch of the pension kick open the front door and storm inside.

WHISTLER
Could have tried the door knob.

BIELSKI
No fun in that.

INT. PENSION KAFKA - DAY

Czech officers sweep through the ground floor of the hostel, guns at the ready.

Two officers stop at the registration desk. The CLERK on duty, watching the morning weather report on television, turns and stares at the officers. They shout at him in Czech.

Other officers enter the dining room. A German MOTHER drops her plate of breakfast pastries. The plate shatters on the hardwood floor. A YOUNG GIRL starts to cry. Her FATHER holds her hand, though he's clearly terrified as well.

The officers at the registration desk continue hollering at the clerk. He seems to be in shock. He shakes his head repeatedly. One of the officers shows the clerk a photograph.

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INSERT PHOTOGRAPH: Alexey Suvorin

The clerk nods. He says a number in Czech. He turns to grab the room key from its hook. When he turns back, key in hand, the officers are already charging up the stairs.

EXT. PENSION KAFKA - DAWN

Whistler and Bielski are joined by the driver of the van and the passenger: CRLIK, a headset-wearing Czech police captain, and NIKOLAI KOVALENKO, a weathered, sad-eyed major in the GRU, Russia's military intelligence service.

Kovalenko wearily watches the Czech police lay siege to the pension. He shakes his head and lights a cigarette.

Crlik listens to the chatter on his headset, watches his men infiltrate the bed-and-breakfast, and occasionally utters a one-word order in Czech.

Czech officers are now on all four sides of the house, on the roof, and stationed by neighboring houses.

Whistler looks into the back of the van. The interior is not visible from our angle.

WHISTLER

Huc-quo.

Five dogs jump out of the van. They're a fierce-looking gang. Each is a mix of wolf, German Shepherd, and Belgian Malinois.

Each dog has an ID number tattooed on the inside of his left ear. The lead dog, LOLA, is missing his right ear. The largest dog of the group, Lola is muscular and black-muzzled.

The other four dogs look like brothers: CASSIUS, BRUTUS, CAESAR, and ANTONY.

They sit in a semi-circle in front of Whistler, awaiting command. Kovalenko stares at the dogs with distaste.

KOVALENKO

We have good dogs in Russia. Maybe even
Czechs have good dogs. Why we need
American dogs, I do not know.

WHISTLER

You're about to find out.

Kovalenko smiles.

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CONTINUED:

KOVALENKO

Yes, yes. Everything American is better.
(sighing)
This is nuclear physicist we look for.
Not Bin Laden.

BIELSKI

If you were more careful with your
plutonium, we wouldn't need to be so
careful with your scientist.

INT. HALLWAY - DAWN

Four officers aim their cocked machine pistols at the door of
Suvorin's room while a fifth readies a battering ram.

INT. SUVORIN'S BEDROOM - DAWN

The bedroom door collapses and the Czech officers burst into
the room, ready to open fire.

The room is empty. One of the officers spots the empty
shaving cream cannister lying atop the bed.

EXT. PENSION KAFKA- DAWN

Crlík presses one of the earpieces to listen better. He
speaks into the microphone and then looks at Whistler.

CRLIK

Gone.

INT. RADLICKA SUBWAY STATION - DAY

Suvorin waits nervously for the train. He checks his watch
and then peers into the dark tunnel again. He sees the lights
of the approaching train.

INT. SUVORIN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Whistler and the dogs enter the room. None of the dogs are
leashed. Whistler walks to the bed and pulls down the covers.
Lola sniffs the sheets and pillow cases.

Whistler opens Suvorin's suitcase. Lola sniffs the clothes
inside. Finally Lola stops sniffing and looks up at Whistler.

INT. YELLOW LINE TRAIN - DAY

In the middle of a car packed with CZECHS and TOURISTS,
Suvorin seems separated from the humanity around him. He
stares at the faces. Nobody notices him. He closes his eyes.

EXT. PENSION KAFKA- DAY

Whistler exits the hostel, surrounded by the dogs. Lola, in front, keeps his muzzle to the ground. He's on to the scent. He walks in the direction Suvorin walked earlier.

We've never seen dogs move this way before. They are clearly a pack but they're not wild-- they glide along the sidewalk in set formation.

Whenever Lola changes direction, the others mimic the movement-- never deviating from their formation, never needing to look at the other dogs.

Nothing distracts the dogs from their mission. PIGEONS, edible trash, puddles of dog urine and the like fail to elicit any interest from the canine trackers.

Whistler nods to Bielski, who turns to Crlik.

BIELSKI

We're on.

INT. SMICHOVSKE STATION - DAY

Passengers file off Suvorin's car, replaced by newcomers.

A YOUNG MOTHER runs down the station's stairway, tugging along her five-year-old DAUGHTER, who clutches a green stuffed FROG in her free hand.

They get to the bottom of the stairs. The subway doors are still open. They're going to make it.

DAUGHTER

Maminka!

The mother turns. Her daughter, mouth open in an O of despair, has dropped her frog in the middle of the stairs.

The mother shakes her head, scoops up her daughter, hurries up the stairs, grabs the frog and runs back to the train.

Too late. The doors are closing.

But a BULL-NECKED MAN blocks the door and beckons for the mother. She hurries through the partially-closed door.

INT. YELLOW LINE TRAIN - CONTINUOUS

The automated voice on the PA system urges passengers to step away from the doors.

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The young mother smiles at the bull-necked man. He winks at the little girl, who clings to her dirty frog and buries her face in her mother's shoulder.

Suvorin stares at the mother and the little girl. He pulls a wallet out of his jacket pocket, opens it, and gazes at a snapshot sheathed in plastic.

INSERT SNAPSHOT: Suvorin's wife, a smiling brunette, sits on the beach. His daughter, a five-year-old girl with a topknot, covers the mother's eyes and sticks out her tongue.

Suvorin stares at the picture.

EXT. RADLICKA SUBWAY STATION - DAY

Whistler and the dogs approach the station. Czech officers jog alongside them, keeping away curious BYSTANDERS.

The team runs down the stairs ~~into~~ the station.

INT. RADLICKA SUBWAY STATION - ~~DAY~~

Lola sniffs the platform, exactly where Suvorin had been standing minutes before. Lola looks up at Whistler. Whistler turns to Crlik.

WHISTLER

~~He took this train. How many more stops~~
does it make?

Crlik quickly calculates in his head.

CRLIK

Fifteen.

WHISTLER

Let's take 'em in order. Lola will tell us where he came up.

EXT. ANDEL STATION - DAY

Suvorin climbs the stairs exiting the station. He walks toward the Vltava River.

EXT. SMICHOVSKE STATION - DAY

The brakes on the black Policie van squeal as it slams to a stop in front of the station.

Whistler opens the back door and jumps down, followed by Lola. Crlik exits the driver's side and joins them.

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Lola walks a circle around the subway entrance, casting for a scent. At the completion of the circle he looks at Whistler.

WHISTLER
Is this the only exit?

Crlik nods.

WHISTLER (CONT'D)
Keep going.

EXT. CAFE VLTAVA - DAY

Suvorin pauses in front of the bustling cafe. LOCALS and TOURISTS crowd the outdoor tables, drinking coffee, chatting, watching the river flow by.

MAJKO (O.S.)
Doctor Suvorin.

Suvorin wheels about and sees MAJKO-- a smiling Albanian man with thick black eyebrows-- sitting at a table alone.

Suvorin looks around, making sure no one has followed him. He sits beside Majko.

MAJKO (CONT'D)
A beautiful day, no?

SUVORIN
Did you bring the money?

Suvorin's English is quite good. He's an educated man.

MAJKO
Relax, Doctor. Have a coffee.

SUVORIN
Relax? Do you know what's sitting under my arm?

MAJKO
So you have it.

SUVORIN
Did you bring the money?

Majko smiles again and shakes his head.

MAJKO
Have you ever tried to put five million dollars in a briefcase?

EXT. ANDEL STATION - DAY

Whistler and Lola exit the van. Lola circles the station entrance. He stops, sniffing at a particular smell. He starts loping toward the Vltava.

EXT. VLTAVA RIVER PROMENADE - DAY

The five dogs lead Whistler, Bielski, and the Czech officers along the scenic promenade. The vans follow behind.

PEDESTRIANS hurry out of the way, gawking at the phalanx of war dogs and heavily-armed men.

EXT. SPALENA STREET - DAY

Majko and Suvorin stand at the mouth of a cobblestone street veering off from the busy thoroughfare.

Suvorin shakes his head angrily.

SUVORIN

A public place, I told you.

MAJKO

You want to count your money, yes? You think counting five million dollars in a cafe might look suspicious?

Suvorin frowns, urgency overcoming his better judgment.

SUVORIN

Where?

Majko points to a black Mercedes with tinted windows parked halfway down the alley.

MAJKO

My car.

EXT. CAFE VLTAVA - DAY

Lola leads the team of dogs and men to the table where Suvorin had sat. Lola sniffs the seat, Suvorin's napkin, the rim of the coffee cup.

The CUSTOMERS sit rigidly in their seats, not sure if they should flee or stay put.

Crlik grabs a WAITER, points at the empty table and barks a question. The waiter responds, pointing down the street.

Crlik turns to Whistler and Bielski.

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CRLIK
He left two minutes ago. With other man.

BIELSKI
He's making the handoff.

But Whistler is already moving, following Lola, who has picked up the scent trail again.

INT. BLACK MERCEDES - DAY

Majko sits in the driver's seat with a heavy suitcase on his lap. Suvorin sits in the passenger seat.

MAJKO
You're about to be a rich man, Doctor.

He hands the suitcase to Suvorin. Suvorin unbuttons his coat, pulls out the lead tube, and hands it to Majko. Majko inspects the radiation warning, impressed.

MAJKO (CONT'D)
It's not so heavy.

Suvorin begins to unzip the suitcase.

SUVORIN
Four kilograms. It's enough.

MAJKO
I want to see it.

Suvorin turns and stares at Majko. Finally he begins to laugh. The sound is strange and unpleasant, as if Suvorin hasn't practiced his laughter in many years.

SUVORIN
You want to see it. Ah.
(still chuckling)
You've heard of radiation? If I show you,
we'll both be dead by Sunday.

Suvorin returns his attention to the suitcase.

MAJKO
Do you mind if I smoke?

Suvorin shakes his head, releases the clasps on the suitcase and opens it. He stares at stacks of US hundred dollar bills.

Majko opens the front windows to let the smoke out. He taps off his ash outside his window-- a signal that Suvorin doesn't notice.

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MAJKO (CONT'D)
What will you buy?

SUVORIN
A heart.

Majko stares at the physicist.

SUVORIN (CONT'D)
My daughter needs a new heart.
(beat)
She was born with a defective left
ventricle.

As Suvorin flips through the stacks of bills he sees that below the top layer of greenbacks is nothing but white paper.

He turns to Majko, his mouth opening to speak. He never hears the approaching footsteps, never sees a second Albanian, KUKA, walk up to the car and lean in the passenger window.

Kuka slits Suvorin's throat with practiced efficiency. He opens the door and hauls Suvorin out of the car, leaving the Russian to gurgle and die.

Majko takes a handkerchief out of his pocket and wipes the blood off the seat.

~~Kuka throws the suitcase into the back and gets into the~~
passenger seat. Majko hands him the lead tube. Kuka inspects the radiation warning and smiles.

Majko rolls up the windows and starts the car.

EXT. SPALENA STREET - DAY

Lola pauses at the mouth of the cobblestone alley.

The black Mercedes pulls up to the intersection of the alley and the wide riverside boulevard. Majko waits to make a left turn onto the traffic-packed street.

Whistler glances at the Mercedes and then back at Lola. Lola trots into the alley.

Majko and Kuka see the dogs and heavily-armed officers.

Lola freezes. Whistler notices the change in body language. He peers down the alleyway and spots Suvorin's corpse lying in the shadows.

He turns back to the black Mercedes.

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Majko hits the gas.

The Mercedes explodes out of the mouth of the alley, barely dodging several cars. One of the civilian cars smashes into the front fender of the lead police van and another car rear-ends the first. The police vans are now trapped.

Whistler yells at Crlik and points at the escaping car.

WHISTLER

Black Mercedes! Black Mercedes!

Majko redefines aggressive driving. He slaloms the Mercedes through the traffic, accelerating all the while.

WHISTLER (CONT'D)

(to his dog pack)

Al-tah-je-jay.

Lola and the other dogs burst out of their stances, their speed astonishing as they whip past panicked people on the sidewalk. Lola keeps an eye on the Mercedes and the other dogs follow Lola.

Whistler trails after his dogs, Beretta in hand.

Crlik shouts in Czech. The police officers unsling their machine pistols. Pedestrians duck for cover.

There are too many civilians on the sidewalks, too many civilians walking along the riverside promenade, and too many cars in the road-- the officers cannot risk firing. They begin chasing the Mercedes on foot.

Bielski jumps into the back of the police van.

CUT TO:

A TRUCK DRIVER wheels a dolly loaded with soft drink cartons toward the back entrance of a supermarket. He turns and sees five massive dogs hurtling toward him.

The driver drops the dolly and backs up against his truck. Lola and the other dogs leap over the fallen dolly and continue their chase.

CUT TO:

MAJKO, despite his driving skill, cannot slip through all the rush hour traffic. Boxed in for a moment between cars and a RIDER on a motor scooter, Majko swerves left, knocking the rider off his scooter.

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The fallen rider tumbles over the asphalt. Cars behind the downed man slam to a halt, narrowly avoiding crushing him.

Majko speeds forward, unable to find a clear path to freedom.

CUT TO:

CRLIK speaks at a rapid clip into his headset, trying to coordinate efforts with headquarters.

Bielski jumps out of the back of the police van, holding a Robar RC50 sniper rifle with a McMillan day/night scope. He dashes across the street, stopping oncoming traffic with a raised hand. Motorists brake for a man with a sniper rifle.

CUT TO:

AN ARISTOCRATIC MATRON walks her ~~POODLE~~ POODLE down the sidewalk. The matron stares in horror as Lola and the pack rumble past them. Caesar hurdles the long leash.

The poodle hides until the war dogs pass and then barks angrily at their backs. Whistler comes by a few seconds later and the poodle yaps at the American.

CUT TO:

KUKA, in the passenger seat, looks out his window and sees the dog pack chasing them on the sidewalk. His eyes widen. He draws a compact machine pistol from a shoulder holster.

CUT TO:

BIELSKI runs toward the balustrade overlooking the river. Five-foot high marble posts divide the steel balustrade every twenty feet, and Bielski clammers atop one of these posts.

CUT TO:

LOLA nears an intersection. An idling truck waits in the crosswalk, blocking passage. Lola veers into the busy thoroughfare, followed by the other dogs.

The dogs weave in and out of traffic, dodging fenders and tires. They gain on the Mercedes.

CUT TO:

KUKA leans out of the passenger window. He fires at the dogs.

The running dogs are difficult targets. Bullets buzz past Lola, tearing into a Volkswagen's door, smashing a Skoda's sideview mirror, punching holes in a florist shop's window.

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Lola runs under a truck's axle as bullets perforate the truck's side panels. He emerges on the other side, unscathed.

CUT TO:

WHISTLER, a block behind the dogs, sees Kuka aim the machine pistol for another burst. He sees a group of SCHOOLGIRLS staring at the mayhem, standing in the line of fire.

Whistler charges toward the girls, screaming.

WHISTLER (CONT'D)

Down! Down!

A REDHEAD GIRL apparently understands English. She drops to the sidewalk and her friends follow suit just as a fusillade of bullets pockmarks the bricks of the building behind them.

Whistler reaches the girls and quickly checks to see that none of them are hurt.

WHISTLER (CONT'D)

Okay?

The girls nod.

REDHEAD GIRL

Okay.

CUT TO:

KUKA ejects the spent magazine and reaches for another. Majko turns to check their pursuers. When he looks back to the road a city bus blocks his path. He slams on the brakes.

Kuka inserts a fresh magazine. As he leans out the window, Lola jumps at him, biting down hard on his gun hand. Kuka screams, dropping the machine pistol.

Majko punches the gas, forcing Lola to release Kuka. Majko drives in the only direction available to him-- onto the wide promenade. PEDESTRIANS cower behind trees and benches.

Majko struggles with the wheel as the car lurches to the right.

CUT TO:

THE MERCEDES' right rear tire has burst. Strips of rubber spin off the wheel. The left rear tire explodes a moment later, and the car plows into an oak tree.

CUT TO:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

BIELSKI peers through the scope of his rifle. A plume of smoke rises from the Robar's muzzle.

Kovalenko stands a few feet from Bielski, watching the distant car through a pair of binoculars. He lowers the binoculars and stares at Bielski, awed.

Majko's Mercedes is nearly a mile distant.

CUT TO:

THE COLLISION with the tree sent Kuka headfirst into the windshield. He sags over the dashboard, bleeding from the scalp, either dead or unconscious.

Majko is momentarily dazed but the steering wheel protected him from grave damage.

Majko grabs the lead tube and shoves it in his jacket pocket. He snatches a pistol from the glove box, jumps out of the car and runs. He looks back. The war dogs are gaining on him.

Majko spots a YOUNG WOMAN in a yellow sweater crouched by the balustrade. He grabs her, forces her upright, and holds the pistol to her temple.

The five dogs stop in their tracks, watching Majko carefully. The young woman flinches from the cold steel of the gun. Her eyes are clenched shut. ~~Majko's breathing is ragged.~~

CUT TO:

WHISTLER, running toward the action, slows to a walk. Beretta held in two hands, he tries to stay out of Majko's sight.

CUT TO:

BIELSKI'S finger tightens on the trigger of his Robar. Kovalenko watches the situation through his binoculars.

 KOVALENKO
Careful, my friend.

CUT TO:

MAJKO is cornered and he knows it, but he looks like a man who wants to go down fighting.

Whistler kneels thirty yards from the Albanian, lining up the sights of his Beretta. The word he speaks is uttered in a conversational tone of voice, too quiet for Majko to hear.

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WHISTLER

Ca-lo.

The five dogs charge. Majko's eyes widen. He aims at Lola.

Before he can squeeze the trigger the dogs cross paths, weaving in and out of each other's lanes, performing stutter steps and other maneuvers to avoid fire.

His attention fixed on Lola, Majko doesn't see the dogs that hit him. One comes in low, another high-- they smash Majko to the ground with the force of two hundred and twenty pounds of fur, fangs, and muscle. The pistol flies from his hand.

Lola grips the Albanian's throat in his jaws. Whistler jogs toward them, holding his gun on Majko. He pats Majko down and pulls out the lead tube.

Crlik and the Czech officers run toward the scene.

CUT TO:

TELESCOPIC SIGHT POV

The tri-foil symbol is clearly visible in Bielski's sights.

END POV

BIELSKI

We got it.

He lowers his rifle, hops off the marble post, and begins the long walk toward Whistler and the dogs. Kovalenko lowers his binoculars and follows Bielski.

KOVALENKO

Lieutenant Bielski--

Bielski stops and looks at the older man.

KOVALENKO (CONT'D)

I... I owe you and Captain Whistler great debt.

(beat)

Thank you.

Bielski shrugs.

BIELSKI

Don't thank me. Thank the dogs.

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CONTINUED: (5)

KOVALENKO

Maybe you tell them for me. I don't want to get so close.

Bielski grins and resumes his march toward the Mercedes.

BIELSKI

Cold War's over, Major. They won't bite.

EXT. ADEN - NIGHT

The port of Aden is built on one of the world's largest natural harbors. Red warning lights blink on the massive container ships pulling in and out of anchorages.

The city itself is a sprawl of warehouses, tenements, mosques and mud houses climbing the hills on the outskirts.

EXT. MA'ALLA NATIONAL PRISON - NIGHT

The high walls of the prison rise above a hilltop overlooking the port. Tall lampposts cast high-intensity light. GUARDS carrying rifles man the watchtowers.

INT. NORTH GATEHOUSE - NIGHT

A YOUNG GUARD sits inside the warmly lit gatehouse, playing backgammon on an old wooden board. After rolling the dice and making his move, he turns the board around and rolls again.

The guard pricks up his ears. Now we hear it: the grumbling of an old engine, rapidly approaching.

EXT. NORTH GATEHOUSE - NIGHT

The young guard exits the gatehouse. A battered truck speeds toward the north gate. The guard blinks as the truck's headlights shine on his face.

An amplified voice from a watchtower loudspeaker shouts a warning, but the truck speeds up as it nears the gate.

The guards in the towers fire. Bullets crack the asphalt around the speeding truck, ventilate the radiator, split the windshield with a spiderweb crack.

The truck never slows. The guard standing by the gate seems too stunned to move.

The truck slams into the gate and explodes. The force of the blast obliterates everything within eighty feet, shattering the lights of the nearby lampposts, incinerating the gatehouse, blasting the heavy steel gate off its posts.

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The nearest guardtower sways. One of its support legs snaps. The tower topples forward with a groan of bending steel, smashing against the prison wall and falling into the yard.

Klaxons break the silence. The few functioning lampposts light the front of the prison at strange angles of deep shadow and bright illumination.

INT. CELL BLOCK - CONTINUOUS

Inside the cell block, the PRISONERS bash their metal bowls against the bars of their cells. They chant in unison.

One prisoner, VALGHOBK, sits cross-legged on his bed. The black spade of his beard rests on his chest, a kufi covers his shaved head. He reads the Koran by fluorescent light.

He looks up now, listening to the prisoners' chanting and the panicked shouts of the guards.

Valghobek closes his Koran and waves.

EXT. MA'ALLA NATIONAL PRISON - MOMENTS LATER

An ambulance races down the road to the prison, siren wailing. The DRIVER steers the ambulance through the wreckage at the front gate.

A rifle-wielding guard jogs over to the ambulance, hand held in the air. The ambulance stops.

The driver, a GREEN-EYED PARAMEDIC, rolls down the window. The guard leans in and asks a question in Arabic.

The paramedic looks at his watch. He smiles at the guard.

A terrible explosion rocks the prison, this time from the south gate. The guard stares with wonder at a tremendous geyser of flame rising into the sky.

The guard turns back to the paramedic and sees the muzzle of an automatic inches from his face. The paramedic fires.

INT. MA'ALLA NATIONAL PRISON - MOMENTS LATER

The green-eyed "paramedic", MURAD BORZ, strides down one of the prison's long corridors. Six more "PARAMEDICS" follow him, all carrying large medical kits.

The prison is in chaos, a maelstrom of blaring klaxons, screaming prisoners, and static-ridden orders booming from loudspeakers.

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Borz stops by a plexiglass-windowed guard booth separating the corridor from the cellblock. The GUARD inside, surrounded by closed-circuit television monitors, stares out at Borz.

The guard presses a button and a door slides open. Borz steps into the guard booth, followed by his men. The guard presses another button and the door leading to the cell block slides open. Stairs descend to the cells.

Borz walks into the cellblock, followed by his men. The last man to leave the booth hands the guard an envelope.

PARAMEDIC

Allahu Akbar.

The guard nods, slipping the envelope inside his jacket.

INT. CELL BLOCK - NIGHT

Borz walks between the parallel rows of prison cells. The prisoners, clamorous just seconds before, grow eerily quiet as Borz walks past them. They know his face. They stare at him worshipfully.

Borz stops in front of Valghobek's cell. He looks up at the plexiglass booth. The cell door slides open.

INT. VALGHOBEK'S CELL - NIGHT

Valghobek rises from his bed. For a moment the two men stare at each other. A broad smile splits Valghobek's beard. He embraces Borz. His Chechen words are subtitled in English.

VALGHOBEK

I knew you would not forget me.

BORZ

I never forget.

Two of the ersatz paramedics enter the cell and unfold a stretcher. A third paramedic opens his kit and pulls out a prison guard uniform and a roll of bandages.

INT. CELL BLOCK - NIGHT

The stretcher bearers carry Valghobek, who now wears a guard uniform. His face is fully bandaged.

Borz follows behind them. He stops in the center of the cell block. All of the prisoners watch him in awed silence.

Borz speaks perfect Arabic.

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CONTINUED:

BORZ.

I will see you next in Paradise.

The prisoners cry out with the glory of men who have just seen the Messiah. Their wordless collective howl takes on a rhythm, becoming a ululation of rage and adoration.

EXT. LAKE ORLIK - DAY

Steep, densely forested slopes rise above the pristine blue lake an hour south of Prague. BEACHGOERS lounge on the sand.

Whistler wears a West Virginia Mountaineers shirt. He holds a Nerf football in his hand. Lola's lined up to his left, Caesar to his right.

Across the scrimmage line, the other dogs wait for the snap.

Bielski sits close by, sipping from a bottle of Czech beer and paging through a Czech-English dictionary.

WHISTLER

Hut... hut... hike!

Whistler drops back three steps and surveys the field.

BIELSKI

(not looking up from book)

One Mississippi, two Mississippi...

Lola and Caesar sprint toward the imaginary endzone. Cassius and Brutus cover the receivers, while Antony waits at the line, glaring at Whistler.

BIELSKI (CONT'O)

Three Mississippi, four Mississippi,
five!

Antony rushes the quarterback. Whistler scrambles, looks downfield, and heaves the ball.

Lola and Cassius jump for the ball. Both dogs soar high above the sand. Lola snares the Nerf in his jaws. When he lands, Cassius and Brutus tackle him. All three dogs roll in the sand, play fighting, ignoring the loose ball.

Antony and Caesar run over and join the fracas.

BIELSKI (CONT'D)

And another bench-clearing brawl...

WHISTLER

Lola's been fumbling a lot lately.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BIELSKI

Maybe he's checking out the cheerleaders.

Bielski gestures with his chin and Whistler turns to watch two tanned Czech women in bikinis-- APOLINA and FRANTISKA-- lay down their towels a few yards away. Apolina, a black-haired, blue-eyed beauty, glances over at the men.

BIELSKI (CONT'D)

You train the dogs how to do that Coppertone thing yet?

Whistler never takes his eyes off Apolina.

WHISTLER

How do you say "beautiful ears" in Czech?

Bielski stares at him, disgusted.

BIELSKI

Everywhere we go you do this "beautiful ears" thing. Time for a new line, man.

WHISTLER

Give me the book.

He grabs for the book but Bielski holds it out of reach.

BIELSKI

Okay, okay, give me a second.
 (flipping through pages)
 Obliceq...
 (flipping more pages)
 tuk. Obliceq tuk.

WHISTLER

Oblicek tug?

BIELSKI

Obliceq tuk.

WHISTLER

Okay.

Whistler snatches the dictionary out of Bielski's hand.

WHISTLER (CONT'D)

You think I'm a moron?

He ambles over to the women, searching for his pickup line in the dictionary.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Bielski turns and sees that Lola has silently sat beside him. Lola watches the Czech women suspiciously. Bielski raises his hand to pet the big dog.

BIELSKI

Hey, big fella.

Lola growls, low and ominous. Bielski pulls his hand back.

Whistler sits next to the Czech women, who don't seem especially pleased to be disturbed. Whistler, unfazed, points at Apolina's ears.

BIELSKI (CONT'D)

Five bucks he pulls it off.

Lola does not respond.

The Czech women begin to laugh and Apolina covers her ears with mock bashfulness. Whistler turns to Bielski and curls a finger: *come over here*. Bielski holds out his palm to Lola, who stares at him blankly.

Bielski stands and starts walking toward Whistler. He stops in midstride when he hears his cellphone ringing.

He pulls the phone out of his shorts' pocket and inspects the incoming call number.

BIELSKI (CONT'D)

Oh, shit.

(answering phone)

Bielski.

(watching the laughing Czechs)

No. No. We're on three-day leave.

(beat)

Uh huh. Uh huh. When? Uh huh.

(beat)

All right.

He turns off the phone and walks over to Whistler and the women. Whistler already seems to be their new best friend.

Apolina runs her fingers over the tattoo on Whistler's biceps: a dagger over two crossed arrows. Below the dagger is black Latin script: *De Opresso Liber*.

APOLINA

You don't look like soldier.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

WHISTLER

Well... I'm a special kind of soldier.
 (noticing Bielski)
 Frantiska and Alopina, this is--

APOLINA

Apolina.

WHISTLER

Apolina. Apolina. Goddamn, that's a
 beautiful name. This is Leon Bielski.

BIELSKI

Dobry den.

APOLINA

Dobry den.

FRANTISKA

Dobry den.

BIELSKI (CONT'D)

We got to head to the airport.

WHISTLER

You're kidding.

Bielski shakes his head.

WHISTLER (CONT'D)

Where we going?

BIELSKI

Yemen. Whole team's gonna be there.

Whistler gives Apolina a sorrowful look. He kisses her hand
 and stands.

APOLINA

You leave so soon?

WHISTLER

I'll come back and find you in two weeks.

Apolina pouts-- playful but genuinely disappointed.

APOLINA

Maybe I hide.

Whistler crouches down and tears the washing directions tag
 from the corner of Apolina's towel.

WHISTLER

I'll find you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Whistler walks away, followed by Bielski and the dogs.
Apolina stares at the corner of her towel, confused.

EXT. SANA'A MILITARY AIRFIELD - DAY

The bleached, sun-baked airfield stands in brutal contrast to the lush hills around Lake Orlik. YEMENI SENTRIES armed with assault rifles patrol a chainlink fence topped with concertina wire.

Whistler and Bielski, now in uniform, stand on the tarmac near a DC-10, duffel bags by their feet. A cargo loader lifts the dogs' travel kennels out of the jet's cargo bay.

WHISTLER
Shortest three day leave of my life.

BIELSKI
How long has Lola been with us? Four years?

WHISTLER
Four and a half.

BIELSKI
How come he still doesn't like me?

WHISTLER
Who says he doesn't like you?

BIELSKI
Four and a half years and he won't let me pet him?

Whistler shrugs.

WHISTLER
I like you, brother, but I wouldn't let you pet me either.

The cargo loader stops in front of them and Whistler unlatches the kennel door. All five dogs hop out of their cage, a bit dazed from the travel and the climate shift.

WHISTLER (CONT'D)
Dogs have their own language. I'm fluent.
You're illiterate.

As they speak, Whistler checks the dogs' tongues for signs of dehydration. He pops small pills into the backs of their mouths, forcing them to swallow their medicines.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WHISTLER (CONT'D)

These are war dogs, you know? Their fathers were war dogs, and their fathers before them. Two things you got to know about war dogs.

BIELSKI

You want me taking notes, Dr. Doolittle?

WHISTLER

Number one, if you're not with them, you're against them. And number two, if you're with them, they will die before letting you get hurt.

BIELSKI

So that's my question. Am I with Lola?

WHISTLER

Any one of these dogs would take a bullet for you. Never doubt that.

Three Humvees pull up, carrying ~~S.A.~~ American soldiers in desert fatigues: GIBSON, CARPENTER, MOLLOY, RAMIREZ, LARSEN, and PHELAN. The soldiers jump out and salute Whistler and Bielski. The officers return the salute.

None of the soldiers are musclebound brutes-- no Rambos here. An elite unit of the Special Forces, the Echo Team members are wiry and exceedingly fit.

Whistler surveys their faces. The men are clearly glad to see him, and the feeling is returned though Whistler tries his best to hide his affection.

WHISTLER (CONT'D)

Goddamn. I truly command the ugliest sons of bitches in the United States Armed Forces. I assume no one here got laid the last two weeks?

The soldiers shove Gibson forward. He grins at Whistler with teeth washed brown from tobacco juice.

WHISTLER (CONT'D)

Gibson? You kidding me?

The men laugh. Gibson spits a stream of dark juice onto the tarmac. Whistler stares at the spittle in disgust.

WHISTLER (CONT'D)

I don't believe you ever kissed a girl, Gibson.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Gibson shrugs, smirking.

BIELSKI

Not when she was volunteering, anyway.

Gibson's drawl is pure Carolina backwoods.

GIBSON

Once they get accustomed to the flavor, sir, they can't get enough.

Whistler looks at Bielski. They pick up their duffel bags and load them into one of the Humvees.

WHISTLER

(to Bielski)

That boy's the reason I left the South.

INT. FEDERAL POLICE HEADQUARTERS -- DAY

The spartan conference room features a framed photograph of the President of Yemen on the wall.

The Echo Team soldiers sit at the conference table with MAJOR ABDULBAQI and two younger Yemeni officers: LIEUTENANT AL-UDHARI and SERGEANT AL-YAMAN.

A projector casts an image of a scowling, bearded man onto a bare white wall: Valghobek.

Carpenter, balding and bespectacled, looks more like a high school chemistry teacher than an elite soldier. He stands by the projection on the wall.

CARPENTER

Rustam Valghobek. Chechen separatist. Fought the Russians in Chechnya, fought the Americans in Afghanistan.

GIBSON

And got his ass kicked both times.

Whistler turns to look at Gibson and Gibson shuts up.

CARPENTER

He escaped the bombing in Tora Bora and managed to make his way down here. He and his crew were responsible for a series of car bombings targeting Americans, until a raid planned by Major Abdulbaqi--

Abdulbaqi nods, pleased by the props.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARPENTER (CONT'D)

--resulted in his capture three months ago. Initially uncooperative, Valghobek started giving us some very useful information recently. Two nights ago he was busted out.

MAJOR ABDULBAQI

We believe Murad Borz led the raid.

The Echo Team soldiers perk up at the mention of Borz. Clearly the name impresses them. Carpenter clicks to the next slide, an old, blurred photograph of Borz.

CARPENTER

Murad Borz. Only man in history to make the Most Wanted Lists in the U.S. of A. and Russia.

Carpenter clicks to the next slide, a map of southern Yemen.

CARPENTER (CONT'D)

The joint Yemeni-U.S. search force has been concentrating on the Aden area--

As Carpenter speaks, a young YEMENI CLERK rushes into the room and hands Major Abdulbaqi a note.

CARPENTER (CONT'D)

--moving out in concentric circles to--

Abdulbaqi stands.

MAJOR ABDULBAQI

He's been spotted outside of Dhamar.

Everyone turns to look at Whistler.

WHISTLER

Major, you have any of Valghobek's clothing?

MAJOR ABDULBAQI

Yes. We keep for you.

WHISTLER

Let's go hunting.

EXT. SKIES OF YEMEN - DAY

A Blackhawk helicopter hurtles south, skimming over the hilltops of central Yemen.

INT. BLACKHAWK HELICOPTER - DAY

A PILOT and CO-PILOT sit at the flight deck. Strapped in by the open side door, a GUNNER mans a gas-operated machine gun.

The Echo Team members attend their own thoughts as possible combat approaches. Bielski assembles his sniper rifle. Carpenter studies the lines on his palm. Gibson sleeps.

Lieutenant Al-Udhari and Sergeant Al-Yaman accompany the Americans. Both Yemenis have their eyes closed. Their lips move quickly as they pray.

The dogs lie on the floor of the Blackhawk, wearing nylon-mesh harnesses.

Whistler holds a gray, sweat-stained tee-shirt close to Lola's muzzle. After Lola's dome sniffing Whistler passes the shirt to the other dogs.

The pilot activates the intercom.

PILOT

Five minutes to drop site.

EXT. SKIES OF YEMEN - DAY

This region of Yemen is lush and fertile. Green hills, many terraced for coffee growing, plunge into verdant valleys.

As the Blackhawk roars through the sky, FARMERS on the ground stare up at its whirling blades.

INT. BLACKHAWK HELICOPTER - DAY

Whistler crouches on the floor of the helicopter, hooking carabiners on the dogs' harnesses to nylon ropes already tied to anchors mounted near the side door.

All the soldiers are ready to jump.

BIELSKI

(to Whistler)

Team set!

Whistler nods, clicking shut the carabiner on Lola's harness.

WHISTLER

(to pilot)

Drop ready!

EXT. YEMENI VILLAGE - CONTINUOUS

The helicopter hovers thirty feet above a hillside village. There is no place to land on the steeply-sloping terrain.

INT. BLACKHAWK HELICOPTER - CONTINUOUS

The co-pilot turns and gives Whistler the thumbs up.

CO-PILOT

Go!

EXT. YEMENI VILLAGE - CONTINUOUS

The men begin jumping from the side door, sliding down their rappel lines and landing in the grass. They grip their rifles, checking the surrounding area for enemies.

YEMENI WOMEN and CHILDREN peer feagfully at the soldiers from the doors of their mud huts.

INT. BLACKHAWK HELICOPTER - CONTINUOUS

WHISTLER

Tsa doninee.

The dogs jump out of the helicopter.

EXT. YEMENI VILLAGE - CONTINUOUS

The dogs, hooked by their harnesses to the rappel lines, descend to the ground. When they hit the grass Echo Team soldiers disengage their carabines.

Whistler hits the grass after his pack.

The anchors in the helicopter reel in the ropes. The Blackhawk rises back above the tree line and heads for home.

An OLD VILLAGER wearing a traditional futah walks over to greet the soldiers. He speaks quietly with Al-Udhari. After a moment, Al-Udhari approaches Whistler and Bielski.

AL-UDHARI

This is the man who spotted Valghobek. He saw his face in newspaper.

The old man probably doesn't speak a word of English, but he nods anyway, flashing his rotted teeth.

AL-UDHARI (CONT'D)

He saw him walking up that path, toward the coffee plantation.

CONTINUED:

Al-Udhari points out a narrow dirt path carving through the tall grass. In the distance, a sprawling coffee plantation spreads across a series of rolling hills.

Whistler leads Lola to the dirt path.

WHISTLER

Dane-lei.

Lola dips his muzzle to the path. Within seconds he's picked up the scent. He begins trotting toward the plantation.

WHISTLER (CONT'D)

He's got it.

The old man watches the soldiers follow Lola.

EXT. DIRT PATH - DAY

The ten soldiers march toward the rolling hills. The dogs surround them: Brutus behind, guarding the rear, Caesar and Cassius on the sides, guarding the flanks, Antony in the center, and Lola on point, tracking the scent.

Periodically Brutus walks backwards, allowing him to scan the area behind the soldiers more carefully.

Al-Udhari, marching behind Bielski, stares at Lola.

LIEUTENANT AL-UDHARI

(to Bielski; pointing at Lola)

This dog, she is the leader?

BIELSKI

He. Yeah, he's the alpha.

LIEUTENANT AL-UDHARI

He? I believed Lola is a girl's name?

BIELSKI

It's kind of a dumb joke. From the Kinks song? You probably don't know it.

LIEUTENANT AL-UDHARI

Lola! Lo lo lo Lola!

BIELSKI

Right.

LIEUTENANT AL-UDHARI

(singing softly and badly)

Well, I'm not dumb but I can't understand

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LIEUTENANT AL-UDHARI (CONT'D)
 why she walk like a woman but talk like a
 man.

Bielski and Whistler exchange glances. Sergeant Al-Yaman, who
 speaks no English, joins Al-Udhari in belting out the chorus.

LIEUTENANT AL-UDHARI (CONT'D) SERGEANT AL-YAMAN
 Oh my Lola, lo lo lo lo Lola, Oh my Lola, lo lo lo lo Lola,
 lo lo lo lo Lola. lo lo lo lo Lola.

Whistler frowns at the Yemenis. Al-Udhari and Al-Yaman,
 embarrassed, shut up.

EXT. COFFEE PLANTATION - DAY

The soldiers and dogs follow Lola along the dirt path. The
 path winds up a high hill terraced for coffee growing.

The coffee plants are beautiful: shiny, dark green leaves;
 delicate white flowers; small red berries.

Bielski surveys the area. No workers-- or any people
 whatsoever-- are in sight.

BIELSKI
 (to Lieutenant Al-Udhari)
 Where is everyone?

AL-UDHARI
 Today is Friday.

Bielski squints, not getting the implication.

AL-UDHARI (CONT'D)
 The day of prayer.

Bielski nods and continues climbing the hill. Molloy and
 Gibson walk near the rear of the unit. Molloy pauses to
 inhale the air around him.

MOLLOY
 Breathe that coffee, man. Got to be the
 best smell in the world.

Gibson walks past him, spitting a stream of tobacco juice
 onto a coffee plant.

GIBSON
 'cept your mama's pussy.

Midway up the hillside a windowless tool shed abuts the path.
 Lola abruptly stops twenty yards from the shed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Whistler, in the front of the unit, raises his hand. The soldiers immediately halt and raise their rifles.

Bielski pauses by a low stone wall forty yards from the shed. He sinks to one knee and steadies the Robar on the wall.

Whistler gives a low whistle. The dogs look at him. The five fingers of his right hand spread wide, Whistler makes a fanning motion up the hillside in the direction of the shed.

The five dogs immediately fan out, surrounding the shed.

Whistler signals for Echo Team to follow him. The American soldiers creep toward the shed noiselessly. Bielski remains in the rear, one eye shut, one eye staring through his scope.

WHISTLER

(softly)

A-ye-shi.

Lola circles the shed, sniffing the doorframe and the ground beside the walls. Completing the circle he looks at Whistler. Whistler turns to Larsen, who crouches a few yards away.

WHISTLER (CONT'D)

(whisper)

No bombs.

Larsen nods, gets flat and belly crawls the final five yards to the door of the shed. He looks back at Whistler. Whistler gives Larsen a nod. Larsen reaches up and slowly, patiently, tugs on the handle of the shed door.

Bielski's index finger tightens on the trigger of his rifle.

The door begins to swing open. Larsen jerks his right hand away from the handle and aims his M-16.

The soldiers, utterly motionless, watch as the warped wood door creaks open.

Before we can see inside the shed, we see Larsen's expression change.

RUSTAM VALGHOBEK is crucified to the shed door, dirty bare feet dangling. Teardrops of dried blood crust his cheeks, below empty eye sockets.

Whistler stares at the dead Chechen. His eyes widen.

WHISTLER (CONT'D)

BACK! BACK! EVERYONE BACK!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Before the men can react we hear the crack of a sniper rifle. Al-Udhari pitches forward, the bullet punching clean through his helmet.

Al-Yaman stares at his fallen friend. He opens his mouth to cry out and takes a bullet in the throat.

The soldiers are caught in the open, in the middle of the plantation, with no cover.

A bullet rips through Gibson's thigh. He goes down, staring at his leg, too stunned to feel any pain yet.

The Echo Team soldiers fire into the coffee plants, but they haven't even seen the enemy yet.

The dogs have. Brutus, Cassius, and Antony race through the coffee plants.

They run the zig-zag patterns we've seen before-- but they can't evade automatic fire from thirty assault rifles. One after another, the dogs are shot dead.

From the pattern of fire it's evident that Echo Team is surrounded by ambushers hiding in the coffee plants.

Whistler, crouching low to the ground, sees Bielski waiting behind the low stone wall, searching for targets. Whistler points at the wall. His men nod.

Staying low, Whistler hustles down the path to Gibson and grabs the wounded man under the armpits. Carpenter takes Gibson by the boots and they run toward the stone wall.

CUT TO:

A GUERRILLA hiding in the coffee plants aims his AK-47 at the retreating Americans. The top of his head is barely visible above the green plants.

Blood sprays from his ear and the guerilla collapses.

CUT TO:

BIELSKI searches for new targets as his comrades run toward him. They're twenty yards away.

They don't make it.

We hear the whine of rocket-propelled grenades. Bielski ducks behind the stone wall.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

We hear several tremendous booms, see intense flashes of white light. No explosions, though-- these are concussion grenades.

Everything goes silent.

MOS: The men are thrown to the ground. Molloy, Larsen, and Phelan are unconscious. Gibson holds his wounded leg; blood seeps between his fingers. Carpenter and Ramirez roll on the ground, hands on their ears, unable to stand.

Whistler, on his knees but still somehow cognizant, rakes the surrounding terraces with automatic fire, but he doesn't know where the enemy is hiding.

When he empties his clip he removes the magazine and tries to insert another but his hands aren't working right.

BIELSKI raises his head above the stone wall. Steel-jacketed bullets whistle past his face. He ducks down again. The enemy has spotted him. His position is no longer viable.

He looks downhill. Beyond a cove of acacia trees the steep hill drops out of sight. If he can get to the trees, he'll be out of the line of fire.

Back pressed against the stone wall, Bielski breathes hard. Bullets smash the stones behind him. He crawls to a new position ten feet down the wall and peeks above the stones.

Whistler's staring right at him. Whistler's lips are moving but we can't hear what he says.

Finally Bielski runs in a crouch toward the acacia trees. Bullets zip by him but he makes it to the bend in the path and disappears from sight.

CUT TO:

LOLA and Caesar run to Whistler. Whistler blinks, staring at the dogs. They stand on either side of him, trying to protect him from whatever's about to happen.

Whistler tries to speak. He can't get the words out.

The dogs, hackles raised, crouch in their fighting stances, looking into the coffee plants. Whistler follows their gaze.

Thirty heavily armed GUERRILLAS, widely spaced, move toward Whistler.

Whistler swallows. He tries to speak again.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

END MOS

WHISTLER (CONT'D)

Ye-tsan.

The dogs turn to look at Whistler.

WHISTLER (CONT'D)

Ye-tsan!

Even if you don't speak Navajo, you know he's ordering them to run.

For another moment the dogs hesitate, but they are trained to obey orders and finally they run downhill, plunging through the coffee plants as bullets whip past them.

Whistler watches them go. He turns back toward the enemy, just in time to see a rifle butt smash into his jaw.

Whistler falls.

CUT TO:

BIELSKI runs through the dense underbrush, panting.

A bird's cry in the foliage above sounds like a scream, and Bielski points his rifle toward the sky, spooked.

Still running, he trips and falls to the ground beside a tall acacia tree. He turns to see what tripped him: a man's leg.

Bielski scrambles backward, finger on the Robar's trigger.

The old villager, throat slit, sits with his back against the tree trunk. Long steel spikes have been hammered through his palms and into the trunk of the tree.

Rial notes (the currency of Yemen) have been stuffed into the old man's mouth.

Bielski backs away from this terrible tableau. He backs into the muzzle of a rifle. Bielski freezes.

Two lean YEMENI GUERILLAS have their AK-47s aimed at Bielski's head. One of them now comes forward and grabs Bielski's rifle. He admires the Robar's scope.

The other guerilla smiles at Bielski with green-tinged teeth. Bielski looks at the man's belt, and we see what Bielski sees: two more long steel spikes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

The guerillas chatter for a moment in Yemeni Arabic. One of them kicks out Bielski's feet, forcing him to the ground, holding his muzzle against the back of Bielski's head.

The other guerilla unsheathes a sharp knife. He forces Bielski's head back, exposing his pale throat. The blade cuts into Bielski's skin.

Lola and Caesar leap from the underbrush, their approach so silent the Yemenis don't see them until they're in the air.

Powerful as linebackers, the dogs knock both men to the ground. We hear a single gunshot.

Lola is on the knife-wielding Yemeni and his jaws go to work. Caesar is no less efficient. In seconds both Yemenis are dead, their throats torn out.

Caesar staggers off his kill. Blood spills from a gunshot to the belly. Caesar lies down near Bielski, sniffs his wound, and rests his head on the ground, waiting to die.

Bielski grabs his gun and stands. Caesar shudders, entering his death throes. Lola stares at Bielski.

Bielski points his gun at Caesar's head. For a second Caesar looks up at Bielski. Finally Caesar closes his eyes.

We stay on Bielski's face as he pulls the trigger.

EXT. YEMEN VILLAGE - DAY

The quiet little village is now the center of military activity, with Humvees and Army trucks parked on the outskirts.

AMERICAN and YEMENI SOLDIERS hurry in and out of hastily-erected Army tents. One of these tents, marked with a large red cross, is the field hospital.

INT. FIELD HOSPITAL - DAY

Bielski sits on an examining table. An American ARMY DOCTOR stitches the cut on his neck.

Major Abdulbaqi and COLONEL ELLIS, the commanding officer of the U.S. forces in Yemen, watch the doctor work.

The doctor threads the needle through the skin of Bielski's throat. Bielski doesn't flinch. His eyes are open but he seems to be looking somewhere far away.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED.

BIELSKI

They knew we were coming, sir.

COLONEL ELLIS

Apparently.

BIELSKI

No, they knew we were coming. Dogs followed Valghobek's scent right into the ambush.

COLONEL ELLIS

Valghobek was squealing. So they shut him up. And they knew we'd track him.

(beat)

Thing I don't get, those dogs are trained to sniff out enemies from half a mile away. But they led you right into--

BIELSKI

Right into a coffee plantation. Coffee masks odors. They got Valghobek to walk the path barefoot, leave a trail for the dogs. And they hid in the coffee plants.

COLONEL ELLIS

We recovered three enemy bodies. Islamic Army of Aden-Abyane, all of them.

~~MAJOR ABDULBAQI~~

Islamic Army provides foot soldiers, nothing else. This ambush, this was not planned by Yemenis. This is Borz.

The doctor tapes a bandage onto Bielski's wound.

BIELSKI

They're all dead?

COLONEL ELLIS

Who's that?

BIELSKI

My team.

COLONEL ELLIS

We haven't found any American bodies yet.

(beat)

We think we've got a hostage situation.

MAJOR ABDULBAQI

My hypothesis, they already have left Yemen.

CONTINUED: (2)

COLONEL ELLIS

Army intelligence is sending a few men down. You'll get a thorough debriefing when they get here.

Ellis clasps Bielski's shoulder.

COLONEL ELLIS (CONT'D)

I'm glad you made it out, Lieutenant.

Ellis turns to leave, followed by the Yemenis.

BIELSKI

Colonel Ellis?

Ellis turns back and regards the young soldier.

BIELSKI (CONT'D)

I'm only here because I ran.

Ellis studies Bielski for a long beat.

COLONEL ELLIS

That's a fact, Lieutenant.

The officers depart.

EXT. YEMENI HILL - SUNSET

Bielski, throat bandaged, sits alone atop a lush hill overlooking the coffee plantation. Blackhawk helicopters roar through the sky and Army trucks motor down the dirt road.

Bielski watches the coffee plants sway in the evening breeze.

He watches INVESTIGATORS, Yemeni and American, search amidst the terraced hillside ambush site for evidence: bullet shells, fragments of clothing, stray hairs.

Bielski hears a noise and turns. Lola climbs the hill and sits a few feet away.

The one-eared dog and the lieutenant stare at each other.

EXT. GULF OF ADEN - NIGHT

A quarter-moon hangs low in the sky. A freighter rumbles through the water, the deep bass of its diesels a constant background hum.

A forty-foot motorboat approaches from the east, flashing its searchlight three times. The motorboat cuts its engines and cruises silently alongside the freighter.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAILORS aboard the freighter lower a dinghy to the motorboat.

The scene on the boat is lit mostly by flashlights. At first it's hard to tell what's going on.

The seven captured men from Echo Team are hooded and shackled. CHECHEN GUERILLAS on the motorboat pass the Americans to their comrades on the dinghy.

One of the captives lies on his back, strapped to a long board. When the guerillas drop this injured man onto the dinghy he screams out in pain.

After the captives are all in the dinghy the winches begin to operate again, hoisting the dinghy up.

INT. FREIGHTER'S HOLD - NIGHT

Six of the captives kneel on the steel floor. The injured captive lies on his back, still strapped to the board. Fat moths circle an overhead light.

Three CHECHEN GUERILLAS, carrying AK-47s, lean against the wall, smoking handrolled cigarettes. Their leader, Borz, sits on a folding chair, watching the injured captive writhe.

Lean and hungry-looking, Borz keeps his hair cropped short and his jaw shaved clean. His demeanor is that of a military commander, not a religious fanatic.

He speaks a quiet word in Chechen. One of his fighters removes the captives' hoods. The Americans look dazed, disoriented. They blink in the fluorescent light.

The injured captive is Gibson, shot in the leg. His face is coated with a sheen of sweat.

Whistler makes a quick count of his men.

Borz stands and walks down the line of kneeling prisoners. He spots the captain's bars on Whistler's uniform.

BORZ

Stand.

Borz speaks decent English, heavily accented but correct. Whistler stands. The two men stare into each other's eyes.

BORZ (CONT'D)

You are Captain Whistler.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Whistler's eyes are unfocused. He hasn't had a drink of water in twelve hours. Dried blood mats his hair where the rifle butt struck him.

He never turns from his interrogator.

WHISTLER

Captain Thomas Brian Whistler, United States Army, serial number 624787.

Borz nods, half smiling.

BORZ

I am Murad Borz. Do you know the name?

Whistler hesitates a second before nodding. Gibson groans from the floor. Borz ignores him.

BORZ (CONT'D)

You are responsible for all these men, yes?

WHISTLER

My name is Captain Thomas Brian Whistler, United States Army, serial number 624787.

BORZ

Name, rank, serial number, yes, yes. I know your code of conduct.

Borz leans closer, staring into Whistler's face.

BORZ (CONT'D)

It must be shameful for you-- all your technology, your spy satellites, your robot planes, your cruise missiles.

(beat)

I have nothing. No money, no computers. Just men with guns.

(beat)

But look at you. All your soldiers are my prisoners.

WHISTLER

Not all of them.

(beat, re: Gibson)

That man needs medical attention.

BORZ

Yes. But he's not going to get it.

(beat)

Your dogs were very good, Captain Whistler, very well trained.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BORZ (CONT'D)

I do not like killing your dogs.

(beat)

Americans, on the other hand...

WHISTLER

My government's not negotiating with you.

If you think--

BORZ

I don't want anything from your
government, Captain Whistler.

(beat)

I want something from you.

EXT. FORT HUACHUCA, ARIZONA - HELIPAD - DAY

A vast army base in the foothills of the Huachuca mountains.
A Blackhawk helicopter lands on a concrete helipad.Bielski jumps out of the helicopter and walks briskly toward
a waiting Jeep.A SERGEANT waits by the Jeep. He salutes Bielski. Bielski
returns the salute. Both men get into the Jeep, and a PRIVATE
behind the wheel drives them away.

EXT. FORT HUACHUCA - RESERVOIR - DAY

A walking path encircles the man-made reservoir. COLONEL
~~WILLIAM VARNEY (55) -- fit, gray-haired, and authoritative--~~
jogs at a brisk clip. He rounds a bend and sees Bielski
standing beneath a juniper tree, waiting for him.Varney slows to a walk and stops beside Bielski. Bielski
salutes. Varney returns the salute and appraises the
lieutenant. He sees the bandage on Bielski's throat.

COLONEL VARNEY

They cut you.

BIELSKI

Nothing serious, sir.

COLONEL VARNEY

Take a walk with me.

EXT. FORT HUACHUCA - RESERVOIR - MOMENTS LATER

The two officers walk around the reservoir.

COLONEL VARNEY

Borz must have been planning it for
months.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BIELSKI
Anything from Intelligence?

Varney spits.

COLONEL VARNEY
Intelligence couldn't find pussy in a
whorehouse. They've been looking for Borz
seven years, all they got is dead
informants.

BIELSKI
Why Echo Team?

Both men stop walking. Varney studies Bielski's face.

COLONEL VARNEY
Pardon?

BIELSKI
They wanted us, sir. They could've gone
after anyone but they wanted us.

Varney shakes his head.

COLONEL VARNEY
Wrong place at the wrong time. We're all
the same to these guys.

Bielski nods, but he's not convinced. Something else is
bothering him.

BIELSKI
Sir... you read the reports. You heard I
ran from the battle.

COLONEL VARNEY
You retreated, son.

BIELSKI
No, sir. I ran.

Both men are silent for a moment.

COLONEL VARNEY
I promise you one thing-- wherever Tommy
is right now, he's glad you ain't with
him.

BIELSKI
We can find him, sir.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

For a long count Varney inspects Bielski. Bielski returns the colonel's gaze without blinking.

COLONEL VARNEY

You good with dogs?

EXT. FORT HUACHUCA - KENNELS - DAY

PRIVATE HOVEY (22), a moon-faced soldier with a linebacker's build and a deep woods accent, leads Bielski past a long row of thirty kennels. The dogs' names are printed on placards posted above the kennels.

HOVEY

Can't tell you how honored I am to meet you, sir. I've heard some wild stories.

BIELSKI

What kind of stories?

HOVEY

Friend of mine took a sniper training course from you at Fort Bragg, sir. Says you're the best shot in the U.S. Army. Saw you plug a quarter with an M40A1 at eight hundred meters,

BIELSKI

Your friend likes to exaggerate.

HOVEY

Yes sir. Afraid he does.

Bielski nods.

BIELSKI

It was a silver dollar.

None of the clamor and chaos of the dog pound here: the war dogs watch Hovey and Bielski in disconcerting silence.

Bielski sees the names above the other kennels they pass: John, Paul, George, Ringo.

BIELSKI (CONT'D)

Someone's got a sense of humor.

HOVEY

Why's that?

BIELSKI

John, Paul, George, and Ringo?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Hovey stares at him blankly.

BIELSKI (CONT'D)

Never mind.

Hovey stops by Paul's kennel and unlatches the door.

HOVEY

These are the new dogs for Echo Team,
sir.

Paul steps out of his kennel and sniffs at Bielski's boots.
Bielski kneels and scratches behind Paul's ear.

BIELSKI

What do you say, buddy?

GIULIETTA (O.S.)

He says you're a bitch.

Bielski stands. A civilian, DR. GIULIETTA MARZI, walks toward them. Wearing jeans, a denim jacket, a Cat Diesel Power baseball cap, and work boots, Giuletta never makes eye contact with either soldier.

She stares right at Paul, though.

GIULIETTA (CONT'D)

Dzah.

Paul returns to his kennel. Giuletta locks the door.

HOVEY

Lieutenant Bielski, Dr. Giuletta Marzi--

Giuletta walks to a shed adjacent to Paul's kennel.

GIULIETTA

Vertical height is status for a dog. You
get down on your knees, you're giving up
power.

HOVEY

Dr. Marzi's our head trainer.

She opens the shed door and drags out a forty-pound bag of
feed. Private Hovey comes over to help.

HOVEY (CONT'D)

Can I help you with that, ma'am?

Giuletta brushes by him, hauling the feed bag by herself to
a picnic table where thirty dog bowls are stacked.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GIULIETTA
And then you pet him.

BIELSKI
Petting is bad?

GIULIETTA
You want to pet your girlfriend's
Chihuahua, go right ahead. But don't pet
my dogs.

Giulietta begins scooping dog food into the bowls.

GIULIETTA (CONT'D)
Dogs don't know what petting is. It's all
grooming to them. And you know who does
the grooming?

HOVEY
The bitch?

Bielski gives Hovey a look. Hovey smiles and shrugs.

GIULIETTA
A bitch or a low-status ~~le~~.
Subordinates groom their leaders. Never
the other way around.

Giulietta grabs a tray of medicine bottles from the shed. She
begins divvying up the various ~~medicines~~, putting certain
powders in certain bowls.

HOVEY
I should get you back ~~to~~ ~~me~~.
Lieutenant. Colonel Varney wanted to see
you at thirteen hundred hours.

Bielski follows Hovey toward a waiting Jeep. Halfway there
Bielski stops and turns back to Giulietta.

BIELSKI
I don't have a girlfriend. And if I did,
she wouldn't have a Chihuahua.

Bielski and Hovey get into the Jeep. Giulietta raises her
head and looks at Bielski for the first time before returning
her scrutiny to the dog food.

EXT. GROZNY - NIGHT

An old school bus with blacked-out windows coasts down
darkened streets. This sector of Grozny has no electricity.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Our only view of the city is the black road in the headlights. No people are in sight.

The bus pulls up to the truck entrance of a brick ware. Bullet holes pimple the facade. Russian-language signs are defaced with Chechen graffiti.

After a moment a steel door begins rolling up and the bus drives into the warehouse.

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

The CHECHEN GUERILLAS inside the warehouse are a battle-scarred crew. None are dressed in conformity with our notion of Islamic terrorists. Instead they wear the international uniform of hard young men: hooded sweatshirts, jeans, work boots. All have rifles slung to their shoulders.

The youngest of them, LYOMA (14), sits on a packing crate. He watches as guerillas lead the hooded, shackled Americans out of the bus and into the light.

Gibson, on a stretcher, is deposited on the floor. He cries out in pain when his leg is jostled.

Borz steps out of the bus. He sees his son. Lyoma stands and approaches his father. He kisses his father's hand.

Borz pulls a chain from his pocket: Lieutenant Al-Udhari's dog tags, still flecked with blood. Borz unbuttons the collar of the boy's shirt and slips the chain over his head.

As Lyoma looks down at the tags we see he already wears six other dog tags, from six different armies.

Borz goes to Whistler and removes the captain's hood.

BORZ

Your wounded man begins to stink. He has gangrene, I think.

WHISTLER

You're responsible for his medical care.

BORZ

Yes? Is this the Geneva Convention?

(beat)

Forty of my men are in your Camp X-Ray. Does the Geneva Convention apply to them?

WHISTLER

That man will die within a week if he's not treated.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Borz unholsters his automatic.

BORZ

No, no. He'll die right now.

Whistler's eyes widen. He lunges for Borz but the Chechen sidesteps and clubs Whistler with the butt of his pistol.

Whistler falls, blood spilling from his mouth. Two guerillas train the muzzles of their rifles on Whistler's head.

WHISTLER

He's just a fucking kid.

Borz shrugs.

BORZ

He's a soldier.

Borz speaks again to his men. Two of them grab Gibson's stretcher and begin carrying him away.

BORZ (CONT'D)

Americans are so afraid to die. That is why we will beat you. We know the life of this world is but a sport and a pastime.

Borz signals to the Chechens holding Whistler down. They grab the American under the arms and hoist him to his feet.

EXT. WAREHOUSE COURTYARD - NIGHT

The stretcher bearers set Gibson down and prop his back against a brick wall.

Whistler is led to a spot twenty feet from Gibson. The Chechens hold him tightly.

Borz follows in the rear, accompanied by his son.

Face damp and feverish, eyes glazed, Gibson tries to curl himself into a fetal position. The pain dominates him-- he doesn't know where he is or what's about to happen.

GIBSON

(hoarse whisper)

Give it back to me... give it back...

Borz looks at Whistler. He sees that Whistler is staring at Gibson with an expression commingling guilt, despair and anger. Borz seems pleased at the effect.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BORZ
They tell me you have a gift, Captain
Whistler.

Whistler turns and looks at Borz.

BORZ (CONT'D)
They tell me you can find anything.

WHISTLER
The dogs find things. Not me.

BORZ
Yes. But you train the dogs. Isn't this
true?

Whistler looks at Gibson again, the young Southerner writhing
in his agony.

WHISTLER
Please don't do this.

BORZ
I'm not doing anything.

Borz hands his son his pistol. The boy, bewildered, stares at
the heavy black automatic and then up at his father.

The following exchange is in Chechen, with English subtitles.

LYOMA
Me?

Borz cups the back of his son's head.

BORZ
Are you afraid?

Lyoma nods. Borz releases him.

BORZ (CONT'D)
Good. Fear is a gift.

Lyoma stares at Gibson. The wounded man still argues with
whatever phantoms occupy his mind.

GIBSON
I want it... it's mine...

Whistler looks from Gibson to Lyoma to Borz.

WHISTLER
Don't do this. Please--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BORZ

I know you don't want to kill a sick man. But being a soldier is not about killing the people you want to kill. It would be nice, wouldn't it? If we only shot the men we hated.

(beat)

This man fights for the enemy. He volunteered for the job.

LYOMA

Father--

BORZ

No, this is not something to discuss. This is not a conversation we are having.

Lyoma cannot take his eyes off the wounded American.

WHISTLER

You want me, not him. You don't need to do this.

Borz taps the base of Lyoma's skull with his finger.

BORZ

Here's where the bullet goes.

~~Borz steps away from his son and folds his arms.~~

Lyoma looks at the other Chechens. All of them watch him, waiting to see how he'll react.

WHISTLER

Kid, look at me. Look at me!

Lyoma turns and looks at Whistler. It's not clear if he's responding to the English or the sound of Whistler's voice.

WHISTLER (CONT'D)

You don't need to do this. Do you understand?

Lyoma turns and walks toward Gibson. Whistler groans, bucking against his captors, surging toward his wounded soldier. He drags the Chechen several feet, until one of them grabs Whistler's throat in a choke hold.

Whistler, deprived of oxygen, cannot continue the struggle. He can only watch, helpless, as Lyoma shoots Gibson in the back of the head.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

The gunshot seems to leech all the fury from Whistler. He sags in his captors' grasp, staring blankly at the dead man.

BORZ

My brother is a prisoner of the Russians.
You will find him for me.

(beat)

Do not forget, Captain: you have five
more men.

EXT. FORT HUACHUCA - DUSK

A cloud of bats bursts out from under a bridge crossing the Kalewanda River. They swarm about the street lights, feasting on flies and moths.

EXT. FORT HUACHUCA - OFFICERS' BARRACKS - NIGHT

Bielski walks down a path lit by tall street lamps. At the entrance to the officers' barracks he slides his security card into the slot and opens the door.

GIULIETTA (O.S.)

Lieutenant Bielski.

Bielski wheels around. He's still a little jittery after the events in Yemen. A flashlight is aimed at his head.

Giulietta stands in the shadows, holding the flashlight.

GIULIETTA (CONT'D)

Where do you think you're going?

Bielski, caught in the spotlight, looks at her, looks at the building behind him, looks back at her.

BIELSKI

To my room?

GIULIETTA

You don't sleep in the officers'
barracks, Lieutenant.

Bielski stares at her for a moment, nonplussed.

BIELSKI

Well, yes, actually I do, Dr. Marzi. I'm
an officer. Officers sleep in the
officers' barracks.

GIULIETTA

Whistler didn't tell you anything, did
he?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BIELSKI

Tell me anything about what?

Giulietta, irritated, exhales. She turns and walks away from the barracks. Bielski watches her go. After a few steps she turns back and stares at him.

GIULIETTA

Are you coming?

EXT. FORT HUACHUCA - FOOTPATH - NIGHT

Giulietta, lighting their path with her flashlight, leads Bielski toward the kennels.

GIULIETTA

You and Whistler are close.

Bielski looks at her for a moment and nods.

BIELSKI

Thank you for using the present tense.

(beat)

He did his K9 training with you?

Giulietta gives a curt nod.

BIELSKI (CONT'D)

~~You two get along?~~

She hesitates. Clearly she has mixed feelings about Whistler.

GIULIETTA

No one alive is better with dogs, I'll give him that.

(beat)

You get Lola within three miles of Whistler, he'll find your friend.

BIELSKI

Lola's not real fond of me.

GIULIETTA

You don't need to be his buddy. You need to be his alpha.

They walk in silence for a few seconds.

BIELSKI

I'm alive because of the dogs you trained.

Giulietta does not respond.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BIELSKI (CONT'D)

I guess I'm trying to say thank you.

Giulietta leads him toward a kennel much larger than the others. She hands Bielski the flashlight, reaches for the key ring hooked to a belt loop on her jeans and unlocks the door.

INT. FORT HUACHUCA - LARGE KENNEL - NIGHT

An unshaded bulb hangs from the top of the kennel. Giulietta pulls a string, turning on the light.

Five dogs lie on the floor: Ringo, John, Paul, George, and Lola. Paul's head and belly are bandaged.

Ringo is the runt of the litter, twenty pounds lighter than the other dogs (and forty pounds lighter than Lola). He's also the most hyper. When he sees his den mother he jumps up and runs in circles until Lola ~~stands~~ and snarls at him.

GIULIETTA

Cidahi.

Lola immediately sits.

BIELSKI

You speak to the dogs in Navajo.

GIULIETTA

Wow. Whistler actually told you something.

BIELSKI

What's wrong with "altah?"

GIULIETTA

These are war dogs. They're trained to kill people.

BIELSKI

(quiet)

I've seen them work.

GIULIETTA

So it's important that only the right folks give them commands. Not many people speak Navajo these days.

Bielski points at Paul's bandages.

BIELSKI

What happened to him?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GIULIETTA

Lola happened to him.

Bielski looks at the big dog. Lola stares right back with his hitman eyes.

GIULIETTA (CONT'D)

This pack grew up together, except Lola. Any time you try to integrate a new dog there's a testing period. Paul used to be the alpha. Not anymore.

Lola, still staring at Bielski, utters a very low, very sinister growl.

BIELSKI

And I'm the new dog today.

Giulietta pats a platform raised several feet above the floor. A sleeping bag is unrolled atop the platform.

GIULIETTA

Starting tonight you sleep with the dogs. A little bit higher than them so they know who's boss. You take all your meals with them. Make sure you eat first. Don't let any of them touch your food.

BIELSKI

Do you sleep with them too?

Giulietta stares at Bielski, unamused.

BIELSKI (CONT'D)

No, I mean-- they're following your commands.

GIULIETTA

They think I'm their mother, Lieutenant. I was the first thing they saw when they opened their eyes. They grew up trusting me. But you're an outsider. You've got to prove yourself.

BIELSKI

Lola's been on my team four and a half years.

GIULIETTA

The way Lola sees it, you've been on his team. And you obviously didn't make much of an impression.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BIELSKI

So I eat with them, I sleep with them,
and pretty soon I'm the alpha?

For the first time since we've known her, Giulietta smiles.

GIULIETTA

It's not that easy. There's already an
alpha. And right now, as far as he's
concerned, you're just a bitch on two
legs.

(beat)

Good night, Lieutenant.

Giulietta exits, leaving Bielski alone in the kennel with the
dogs. The dogs stare up at Bielski.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

Two armed CHECHEN GUERRILLAS stand outside the warehouse,
watching a band of CHECHEN BOYS play soccer on the street.

INT. BUNKER - DAY

The bunker in the warehouse's basement looks like a dungeon.
Mold grows on the stone walls. A concrete staircase along the
back wall rises to the main floor.

Ten cells, no larger than broom closets, feature windowless
walls, small grates in the floor for toilets, and heavy oak
doors with narrow, barred slots at eye height.

For a moment we visit each American in his solitude. Ramirez
shadowboxes in his cell, his filthy, frayed socks skimming
over the stone floor as he sticks and moves.

Larsen paces nervously, muttering to himself. Carpenter
stands at the door of his cell, looking through the barred
slot. He sees Borz and two Chechens with rifles descending
the stairs to the bunker.

INT. WHISTLER'S CELL - DAY

Whistler sits in a corner of his cell, staring at the floor,
a blanket draped over his legs. He looks smaller than the man
we've come to know, as if Gibson's death has diminished him.

The cell door swing opens. Borz steps in, followed by two
men. Borz looks at an untouched plate of rice on the floor.

BORZ

No hunger, Captain?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Whistler refuses to answer or even look at Borz.

BORZ (CONT'D)

I brought someone to see you.

One of the Chechens, holding a rope leash, drags a nearly pure-blooded WOLF into the cell. Hulking and yellow-eyed, his only concession to domestication is a spiked collar.

The wolf growls, infuriated to be tethered to a human.

Whistler raises his eyes and looks at the wolf. For a moment man and wolf stare at each other. Whistler lowers his eyes again and says nothing.

BORZ (CONT'D)

The Russians hide my brother in a cell far below the ground. He will not be easy to find.

(beat)

They say wolves are the best trackers.

(beat)

They also say wolves cannot be trained.

WHISTLER

My name is Captain Thomas Brian Whistler,
United States Army, serial number 624787.

Borz narrows his eyes. He pulls five sets of dog tags from his pocket and lets them dangle from his fingers.

BORZ

I let you choose who dies next.

Borz raises the dog tags and glances at the names.

BORZ (CONT'D)

Carpenter... Ramirez... Larsen...

Whistler closes his eyes.

BORZ (CONT'D)

Molloy... Phelan...

Whistler taps the floor beside him and gives a soft whistle.

The wolf stares at Whistler but makes no move.

WHISTLER

Let go the goddamn leash.

Borz mutters to his underling, who releases the rope leash. Whistler taps the floor again, gives his soft whistle.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

The wolf pads over to him, dragging the rope, cautious but curious. Whistler holds out his hand. The wolf sniffs his hand. Whistler slowly pulls his hand closer to his body, and the wolf steps closer.

The wolf relaxes. Whistler-- all his movements patient and non-threatening-- lets the beast lick his hand.

Borz and his men exchange glances, impressed by how quickly Whistler established a rapport with the animal.

BORZ

You can teach him to find my brother?

Whistler doesn't respond right away. The wolf seems more and more comfortable around him, nuzzling Whistler's neck.

WHISTLER

I need some meat.

Borz, expecting this request, pulls a strip of beef jerky out of his pocket and tosses it to Whistler.

Whistler catches the jerky and lets the wolf sniff it. The wolf immediately perks up. He opens his jaws but Whistler pulls the jerky away.

WHISTLER (CONT'D)

Get him out of here.

Borz gestures to a Chechen, who grabs the wolf's leash and tugs. The wolf, baring his teeth, stares balefully at the Chechen but finally pads out of the cell and out of sight.

Whistler deposits the strip of beef in his blanket, bundles the blanket, and tosses it in the far corner of the room.

Borz watches him the whole time, curious.

WHISTLER (CONT'D)

Bring him back.

Borz nods to the unseen Chechen, who leads the wolf back into the cell. Whistler again taps the floor. The wolf lopes over, more eagerly this time.

Whistler allows the wolf to sniff his beef-scented fingers. Then he opens his hand wide: *where is it?*

The wolf looks around, trying to see where Whistler hid the meat. He sniffs at Whistler's leg, sniffs behind Whistler's back, begins casting for a scent on the floor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Whistler and the Chechens watch the wolf. After five seconds, Whistler shakes his head.

WHISTLER (CONT'D)

He's no good.

The wolf, circling the cell, gets closer and closer to the blanket in the corner.

BORZ

You do not give him enough time. He will find it.

WHISTLER

This part you can't train. He's not a tracker.

Borz hesitates. Finally he mutters to his man and the Chechen grabs the wolf and leads him out of the room again.

BORZ

Do not try to trick me, Captain. I am not a patient man.

WHISTLER

That dog won't hunt.

Borz studies Whistler for another beat.

BORZ

I have another.

Borz calls out an order.

BORZ (CONT'D)

You grew up a hunter, yes?

(off Whistler's non-response)

Before the wars began, I loved to hunt. Rabbits, deer. One time I shoot a bear. I would like to teach my son to hunt. But it is not possible now.

WHISTLER

You taught your son to murder.

BORZ

Yes. This is called becoming a soldier.

The Chechen underling returns to the bunker, leading a second wolf, this one female and blue-eyed.

BORZ (CONT'D)

She is called Bula.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

The Chechen underling releases the wolf. Whistler taps the floor and gives his soft whistle.

The wolf enters the cell. She ignores Whistler and hustles to the far corner, where she nudges the rolled blanket with her nose. She unwraps the blanket and devours the beef jerky.

Something close to a smile crosses Whistler's lips.

WHISTLER

She'll do.

EXT. FORT HUACHUCA - DAWN

The sun rises above Thunder Mountain. In the center of the base, two PRIVATES unfold the American flag, hook it to the flag pole pulleys, and raise it.

The fort's BUGLER wipes his trumpet's mouthpiece and plays.

INT. FORT HUACHUCA - LARGE KENNEL - DAWN

Bielski, sleeping on his platform, groggily opens his eyes as the morning reveille plays. He stretches his arms, rolls over, and looks straight into the eyes of Lola, sitting on the floor beside the platform.

Bielski, startled, jerks back. Lola licks his lips.

GIULIETTA (O.S.)

Lieutenant Bielski.

Giulietta stands at the kennel's door.

GIULIETTA (CONT'D)

Ready for breakfast.

EXT. KENNELS - DAY

Six dog bowls, filled with food, are fitted onto a kind of modified trough, allowing the dogs to eat standing up.

Giulietta and Bielski stand beside the trough. The dogs sit obediently behind Giulietta, eyeing the food hungrily but waiting for permission.

BIELSKI

I was kind of hoping you were joking about this part.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GIULIETTA

There's a difference between being a dog's master and being his alpha. The pack needs to believe you're one of them.

BIELSKI

The lack of fur might give it away.

Giulietta sees Bielski looking at the dog food with distaste.

GIULIETTA

Your bowl's on the far right.

(beat)

Don't worry, it's corned beef hash. I cooked it myself.

Bielski walks over to the trough. One bowl contains corned beef hash; the other five are filled with dry dog food.

GIULIETTA (CONT'D)

A'shee.

The five dogs hurry over to the trough. Bielski kneels beside them and begins scooping hash into his mouth, boxing out the other dogs when they sniff curiously at his bowl.

EXT. FORT HUACHUCA - FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

~~The dogs of the pack sit in the far endzone awaiting command. Each of them wears a vest outfitted with black sensors. Ringo, the runt, sees a squirrel running toward a nearby tree. He stands, jaws opening, his whole body twitching.~~

A long, low, guttural growl rushes through Lola's bared teeth. Ringo quickly sits, mournful eyes following the lucky squirrel's progress.

Hovey stands on the fifty-yard line, wearing a thickly-padded protective outfit. He pulls on a helmet with a face mask. He looks like a hockey goalie, except for the M-16 in his hands.

Giulietta sits in the stands, holding a clipboard. Bielski and Colonel Varney sit a dozen feet away from her.

BIELSKI

Any information, sir?

COLONEL VARNEY

Official word is, we're tracking a number of good leads. Reality is, we have no idea where they are or if they're alive.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BIELSKI

We can find them, sir.

COLONEL VARNEY

Lieutenant, we've got spy satellites searching every corner of the globe. CIA, FBI, DIA, NSA-- the whole goddamn alphabet's looking for them. Two nights ago the Indonesian police raided a warehouse in Jakarta because we got a tip that our boys might be there. You think we're not making every effort?

BIELSKI

I think we're using the wrong tools, sir. The best tracking device in the world is a dog, and our dogs--

COLONEL VARNEY

You're preaching to the choir, son. But right now, we don't even know what continent they're on. So unless these mutts learned how to smell a man from ten thousand miles away, we got to wait.

Bielski wants to argue the point further but Varney moves on, gesturing to Hovey.

COLONEL VARNEY (CONT'D)

So that's the world's most expensive laser tag gun?

BIELSKI

Yes, sir.

(calling out)

Private Hovey, could you give us a demonstration?

Sampaio aims at Lola in the corner of the endzone. He squeezes the trigger. We don't hear a gunshot or see any flash of light, but one of the sensors on Lola's vest emits a high-pitched squeal.

Lola immediately lies down.

BIELSKI (CONT'D)

If the laser hits one of the sensors, it gives off a special beep and the dogs are trained to lie down.

Giulietta cups her hands over her mouth and shouts to Lola.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GIULIETTA

Yeh-zihn!

Lola stands. Colonel Varney leans a little closer to Bielski, speaking softly so his voice won't carry.

COLONEL VARNEY

How come Dr. Marzi's giving the orders?

BIELSKI

Lola won't follow my commands till I become the alpha.

COLONEL VARNEY

Kind of like the Army, huh?

GIULIETTA

(calling out)

Are you ready, Private Hovey?

Hovey gives the thumbs up.

GIULIETTA (CONT'D)

(to Varney and Bielski)

I hope your boy can take a hit.

(shouting)

Al-tah-je-jay!

The dogs bound out of the endzone, their speed astounding.

Hovey drops to one knee and aims his rifle.

Clearly Giulietta has been working hard on the dogs' evasive skills. They're even more difficult to target than the pack we saw in Prague and Yemen.

Every time Hovey is ready to shoot the dog's reverse directions. And he only has 2.5 seconds.

Lola flattens Hovey, knocking the M-16 high into the air. Before Hovey hits the ground the other four dogs are on him, tearing into his protective padding.

Varney and Bielski wince.

GIULIETTA (CONT'D)

Ta-akwai-i!

The dogs immediately release Hovey and back away from him. For a moment Hovey lies on the grass, not moving. Finally he groans and stands. A clod of earth clings to his helmet.

Giulietta makes a final note in her clipboard.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

GIULIETTA (CONT'D)

Dogs one, Private Hovey... zero.

EXT. FORT HUACHUCA - FOOTBALL FIELD - LATER

Giulietta sits in the grass next to George. She uses tweezers to pull a splinter from the dog's paw. George, quiet and stoic, watches her work.

Bielski approaches them.

BIELSKI

Is he okay?

GIULIETTA

He'll be fine.

George nuzzles her face as she wipes his paw with an antiseptic pad.

BIELSKI

They love you.

Giulietta, tending George, doesn't respond.

BIELSKI (CONT'D)

So what's wrong with people?

Now Giulietta looks up.

GIULIETTA

Excuse me?

BIELSKI

It's just-- I see the way you treat the dogs, the way they look at you. They're your family. But people... I mean, correct me if I'm wrong, but you seem to like dogs better than people.

Giulietta stares at Bielski for a while before responding.

GIULIETTA

I understand dogs better than people.

(beat)

Dog behavior is complicated, but it follows a logic. It makes sense to me. If you win a dog's trust, he will never betray you.

(beat)

But people...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Giulietta, face flushed, abruptly quits talking, furious at herself for revealing too much. She turns from him, gathering her gear.

BIELSKI

Some of us are okay, you know.

She looks at him.

BIELSKI (CONT'D)

People, I mean.

For a moment something in her face seems to soften-- but the moment passes. She turns toward the waiting dogs.

GIULIETTA

Huc-quo.

The dogs follow her toward their kennels.

EXT. WAREHOUSE COURTYARD - DAY

A four-week beard darkens Whistler's face. His cheekbones press against his skin-- he's lost weight.

Bula sits beside him, waiting for a command.

WHISTLER

Dane-lei.

Bula lowers her muzzle to the ground, casting for a scent. Walking in an expanding spiral from the center of the large courtyard, Bula finds the scent she's looking for.

She lopes over to a pile of packing crates stacked against the brick wall. She jumps atop one of the crates.

INT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

Borz and Lyoma stand at a window on the second floor, looking down at Whistler and Bula. Father and son speak in Chechen.

BORZ

He has nothing but this wolf. So, he makes her everything. And every day she gets better.

Bula sniffs at the brick wall. She nudges one of the bricks with her paw. The brick is loose. After some effort, Bula manages to pry the brick free. It falls to the ground.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Bula sticks her muzzle into the hiding place and pulls out an old sock. She shakes the sock triumphantly, as if trying to break its neck.

A half-smile curls Borz's lips. He's impressed.

BORZ (CONT'D)

The man has a gift for taming the beast.

Whistler looks up at Borz. Borz returns Whistler's gaze.

LYOMA

He'll try to escape.

BORZ

Of course he will. He's a good soldier.

(beat)

But we cannot kill him until he takes us to Marorsk.

INT. WHISTLER'S CELL - NIGHT

Whistler sits by the cell's door. A blanket draped over his shoulders. His breath is visible in the frigid air.

Whistler whistles softly. He waits a moment and whistles again.

INT. RAMIREZ'S CELL - NIGHT

Ramirez, palms on the stone floor and feet in the air, does a series of handstand pushups. He's lost a good deal of weight but his strength hasn't faded; he presses his entire body, over and over, never stopping for breath.

LARSEN (O.S.)

(whisper)

Ramirez?

Ramirez stops, still upside down, and listens. When he hears Larsen's voice again he flips to a standing position and walks to the door.

Peeking through the barred slot, he sees Larsen, in the opposite cell, face pressed to his own barred slot.

Larsen looks worse than Ramirez. Hunger and fatigue have conspired to age his face.

The two soldiers keep their voices low.

LARSEN (CONT'D)

You jerking off in there?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RAMIREZ

Uh huh. Got a picture of your mama on my wall.

Larsen lightly batters his head against the bars.

LARSEN

I've got a serious jones for a cigarette.

(beat)

Couple hours ago I dreamed I was walking through a tobacco field with Charlize Theron.

(beat)

And she was holding a cheeseburger.

RAMIREZ

J.Lo, man. With a chocolate milkshake.

LARSEN

Damn.

The soldiers are quiet for a moment, contemplating paradise.

RAMIREZ

You think our boys are coming for us?

LARSEN

They're looking for us.

Ramirez sighs, face pressed to the steel bars.

RAMIREZ

It's a long way from J.Lo.

The soldiers hear steps and turn to see Bula descending the staircase into the bunker. Bula stops at Whistler's cell and sniffs underneath the door.

RAMIREZ (CONT'D)

They got the Captain training wolves?

Bula mewls softly, frustrated she can't get inside.

LARSEN

He hasn't seemed right since they killed Gibson. Don't know why he's helping them.

INT. WHISTLER'S CELL - CONTINUOUS

Whistler watches Bula sniff at the underside of the door.

EXT. FORT HUACHUCA - FIRING RANGE - DAY

Giulietta fixes a large photograph to a wood target, hammering a nail through each corner. She wears goggles, ear protectors around her neck, and a gun holstered at her hip.

In the photograph, a mustachioed man smiles at the camera.

As Giulietta walks back to the firing line she sees Bielski waiting for her. He also wears ear protectors around his neck. He peers at the photo, thirty yards distant.

BIELSKI

Who's that? Saddam Hussein?

GIULIETTA

My ex-husband.

She flips the ear protector ~~headset~~ over her ears and unholsters her Beretta. Bielski stands to her left (i.e., away from where the shell casings will fly), facing her not the target. He flips his headset over his ears.

GIULIETTA (CONT'D)

You're going to stand ~~right~~ there?

Bielski makes the I can't hear you expression, tapping his ear protectors. Giulietta rolls her eyes and gets into her shooting position. She raises her gun and fires.

BIELSKI

You're aiming high.

Giulietta turns and glares at Bielski. He has never turned to look at the target.

GIULIETTA

You're not even looking at the target.

Bielski glances at the target. A bullet has clipped the top edge of the photograph, missing the smiling man.

BIELSKI

You're aiming high.

GIULIETTA

Did I ask you for a lesson?

Bielski taps the ear protectors: I can't hear you. Giulietta clenches her jaw. She fires three shots. The bullet holes form a neat grouping around the smiling man's face.

Giulietta, satisfied, flips off her headset.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GIULIETTA (CONT'D)
Any complaints, Lieutenant?

BIELSKI
Nope, that's nice shooting.
(beat)
If he was armed, of course, he'd have
killed you after that first miss...

Giulietta's face flushes. She offers him the Beretta.

GIULIETTA
You think you can do better?

Bielski stares at the gun in his hand as if it were a
beguiling alien object.

BIELSKI
Me?

GIULIETTA
Since you seem to be the master.

Bielski raises the pistol and fires four shots.

The sound of the bullets' impact is slightly different than
before, the distinctive keen of metal on metal.

Giulietta stares at the target. There are no new bullet holes
on the smiling man's face. She is quiet, almost embarrassed.

GIULIETTA (CONT'D)
I think you missed.

The smiling man seems to tremble in the breeze for a second
before sliding off the wood target and fluttering to the
ground. Giulietta stares at the bare target in disbelief.

GIULIETTA (CONT'D)
You shot out the *nails*?

Bielski hands the gun back to Giulietta.

BIELSKI
I'm ready for Lola.

Giulietta, still a little stunned by the shooting, stares at
Bielski. Bielski stares back, unblinking.

GIULIETTA
You understand what you have to do?
(beat)
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GIULIETTA (CONT'D)

No pads, no helmet, no weapon. Just you and Lola.

BIELSKI

That dog's my only chance to find my team.

Giulietta nods.

GIULIETTA

Meet me at the obstacle course at 0900 hours.

EXT. SCHOOLBUS - DAY

The schoolbus with blacked-out windows rolls through the streets of Grozny. We STAY CLOSE on the bus, never seeing the streets beyond. No other cars are in sight.

INT. SCHOOLBUS - DAY

Whistler sits near the front of the bus, his hands shackled, a blindfold covering his eyes. Bula sits beside him.

Borz and Lyoma sit directly behind Whistler. Six more armed Chechens are sprawled about the bus. AK-47s in their laps. Borz leans forward to whisper in Whistler's ear.

BORZ

Be careful today, Captain. I watch you always.

WHISTLER

She can't learn to track in a warehouse.

BORZ

If you try any tricks, I don't kill you. You I need. I kill your men.

EXT. SCHOOLBUS - DAY

The bus parks at the corner of an intersection.

The bus doors open and Borz leads Whistler down the steps and onto the sidewalk. Bula follows Whistler to the sidewalk and sits beside him, waiting.

WHISTLER

I need to see her to train her.

Borz unties the blindfold from Whistler's head. Whistler blinks in the sunlight, hands still shackled.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BORZ

What do you see, Captain?

We STAY CLOSE on Whistler as he stares at the city around him. He turns slowly, absorbing the sight.

We rise above Whistler and PULL BACK, slowly at first and then more rapidly, farther and farther back until Whistler stands far below us, a small figure in the center of Grozny.

The city is a ruin. Entire blocks have been bombed into heaps of rubble. The few standing buildings are burnt-out shells, staring out at the devastation with windowless eyes.

The roads are cratered, exposed pipes and cables peeking out from shattered asphalt. Abandoned Russian tanks, hulking and fire-blackened, rust in the streets.

No cars are in sight. No people. Even the pigeons seem to have abandoned Grozny.

We return to street level. Borz watches Whistler carefully, noting the American's stunned expression.

BORZ (CONT'D)

This is my city. This is what they have done to us.

Lyoma and the other young Chechens wait, sullen and bored. The tragedy of the ravaged city holds little sway over those who grew up in the ruins.

BORZ (CONT'D)

I will not see Grozny rebuilt in my lifetime. But my son will, in sha' allah.
(beat)

This isn't your war, Captain. Find my brother and take your men home.

Whistler, followed by Bula, walks over to Lyoma. The Chechens tense, fingers inside their trigger guards.

WHISTLER

Dane-lei.

Bula sniffs at the hem of Lyoma's sweatshirt, at his boots. She sniffs at a cell phone holstered on Lyoma's belt.

Whistler looks at the phone. He crouches beside Bula.

WHISTLER (CONT'D)

Atsah.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Bula tries to turn but Whistler holds her head between his palms, making sure Bula learns the scent.

WHISTLER (CONT'D)

Atsah.

Whistler stands and looks at Borz.

WHISTLER (CONT'D)

Tell your son he has ten minutes to hide.

Borz repeats the words in Chechen. Lyoma hesitates, looking between his father, Whistler, and Bula. Finally, eyes narrowed, he walks away from the group.

EXT. GROZNY - MINUTES LATER

Bula, muzzle to the ground, picks her way through the heaped concrete of a toppled tenement. Whistler walks behind her, followed by Borz and the other Chechens.

A lone wall of cinderblocks, two stories high, still stands at the edge of the ruined block. When the group passes the wall Whistler stops. Borz follows Whistler's gaze.

A Russian soldier hangs from a lamppost. He has been dead for some time. His killers stole his boots, and the young soldier's white feet dangle ten feet above the street.

Borz seems amused by Whistler's horror.

EXT. GROZNY - MINUTES LATER

The group walks past the shell of a gutted department store. All the mannequins behind the broken windows have been stripped of their clothing.

Bula, walking ten yards in front of the group, abruptly halts. Whistler holds up his hand. The Chechens stop.

A moment later we hear the noise of heavy treads on asphalt. The Chechens jump inside the storefront just as an armored personal carrier turns a corner and heads toward them.

Bula stands in the street, warily watching the approaching Russians. A GUNNER manning a heavy machine-gun spots her.

The Chechens and Whistler lie prone atop the broken glass in the storefront, among the fallen mannequins, partly concealed from the street.

Bula turns and looks directly at Whistler.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The gunner calls down to the driver of the APC. The vehicle brakes. The gunner rotates in his turret, trying to spot the wolf's master-- Bula's collar indicates she's not wild.

Bula walks toward Whistler. The Chechens ready their rifles as the APC begins moving toward them.

Bula looks over his shoulder. She sees that she's leading the Russians to Whistler's hiding place.

Bula runs down the street, passing the department store without another glance.

The gunner calls down to the driver. He grins and closes one eye, aiming. He lets off a volley of high-caliber bullets.

The bullets chew into the asphalt behind Bula.

Whistler bites his lip, watching Bula run.

The APC passes the department store. The gunner readies the machine gun for another burst ~~but~~ the moment he fires Bula darts sidewise, disappearing down a narrow alleyway.

The gunner throws up his hands in mock exasperation, calling down to the driver below. Whatever the driver says makes the gunner laugh, and the APC continues on its way.

After a moment the Chechens and Whistler sit up, brushing the broken glass off their jackets.

Borz pulls out a cell phone and punches in a number. Nobody answers. Borz puts away the phone and turns to one of his men, speaking Chechen.

BORZ

Lyoma is out there.

Borz turns to Whistler and switches to English.

BORZ (CONT'D)

If my boy dies because of you, I will burn a thousand Americans.

EXT. GROZNY - LATER

The group hurries through rubble-strewn streets, keeping to the shadows of the ruined buildings.

Whistler hears footsteps. Turning, he sees Bula bounding toward them, followed by Lyoma.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Bula sits by Whistler's feet, her tail wagging happily. Borz examines his son and the wolf. He nods, satisfied.

Borz takes off his pack and pulls out a PFM-1 butterfly mine. He hands it to Whistler.

BORZ

Teach her to find these land mines. I have removed explosives.

Whistler stares at the land mine in his hand.

BORZ (CONT'D)

The Russians guard my brother well.

EXT. FORT HUACHUCA - TRAINING GROUND - DAY

Bielski and Giulietta watch the dogs run through a specialized obstacle course. Giulietta wears a backpack.

Lola leads the pack in their headlong sprint over hurdles, through concrete tunnels, under gleaming tripwires. The dogs scramble up ten-foot-high wood ~~stumps~~.

At the end of the circuit they swim across a wide moat and attack five LIFESIZE DUMMIES, tearing the padded mannequins to shreds until Giulietta calls out to them.

GIULIETTA

Ta-akwai-i.

The dogs relax, breathing hard, shaking the water from their fur. Giulietta turns and looks at Bielski.

GIULIETTA (CONT'D)

You ready?

Bielski nods. He removes his camouflage jacket, his dog tags and his watch.

GIULIETTA (CONT'D)

You can't show any fear. If he senses fear he'll never submit.

BIELSKI

I know.

GIULIETTA

When he rolls over on his back, that's the posture of submission--

BIELSKI

I know.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Giulietta watches as Bielski unhooks his sidearm holster and carefully rests it on the ground. She reaches into her backpack and pulls out a tranquilizer gun.

GIULIETTA

If it gets too bad I'll tranquilize him. It takes about ten seconds to kick in, so protect yourself until he goes down.

BIELSKI

I guess you're not allowed to tranquilize him before we fight.

Giulietta flashes one of her exceedingly rare smiles and shakes her head.

Bielski nods. For a moment they maintain eye contact, a longer moment than they've shared before. Finally Bielski turns and walks toward the dog.

Halfway there he asks a question over his shoulder.

BIELSKI (CONT'D)

Who are you rooting for, anyway?

Bielski turns back to the dog. Lola stares him down.

GIULIETTA

(under her breath)

I'm rooting for you, idiot.

Bielski advances on the dog. Lola growls, hackles raised.

Bielski stands over Lola. Their eye contact never wavers-- a great provocation for any fighting dog.

BIELSKI

Cidahi.

Bielski orders the dog to sit but Lola doesn't budge.

BIELSKI (CONT'D)

Cidahi!

Lola pounces, a blur of dark fur and gleaming fangs. Bielski finds himself on his back, scrambling to control Lola's head before the dog's jaws can tear his throat out.

Giulietta nervously fingers the butt of her tranquilizer. The other dogs watch the fight carefully. Ringo pants, tongue lolling from his mouth, almost overcome with excitement.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Bielski manages to get his hand on Lola's collar. Bielski's forearms are already raked with claw marks. He tries to pull Lola's head to the side but the dog is too strong.

Lola snaps viciously at Bielski, white teeth gnashing inches from Bielski's face and throat.

Ringo looks from the battle to Giulietta and back, as if wondering when the den mother will end this brutality.

Giulietta clicks off the safety on her tranquilizer and hurries toward the fight.

Bielski struggles to his knees. Lola keeps lunging for him and Bielski has to bob and weave to avoid the sharp fangs.

Bielski sweeps his leg, knocking Lola's hind paws off the ground. Lola falls to the side and rolls back to his feet as Bielski quickly stands.

The dog charges in again, springing off the ground. Bielski manages to sidestep the charge. Lola lands, turns, and comes back at him, forcing Bielski to maneuver like a matador.

On the dog's third jump, Bielski grabs Lola's collar and uses the dog's momentum to slam him to the ground.

Bielski scrambles on top of Lola. Man and dog are face to face. There is no trace of fear in Bielski's eyes.

Bielski presses his forearm against the dog's throat.

BIELSKI (CONT'D)

Nenacha!

Lola struggles to escape Bielski's hold, a low, choked growl passing through the dog's bared teeth.

BIELSKI (CONT'D)

Nenacha!

(beat)

Nenacha!

Lola unclenches his jaws. His tail goes slack. He turns his belly to the air and offers up his throat, his entire body relaxing in Bielski's grip.

Bielski, a little stunned by the victory, stares down at Lola for a moment before releasing him.

BIELSKI (CONT'D)

(cautious)

Good boy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Bielski stands.

GIULIETTA
Tell him to sit.

BIELSKI
Cidahi.

Lola promptly sits. The other dogs follow suit. All of them stare at Bielski, awaiting further command. Bielski, eyebrows raised, looks at Giulietta.

GIULIETTA
You're the alpha.

Giulietta takes Bielski's left hand and lifts it. Three parallel gashes run from his wrist to his elbow.

GIULIETTA (CONT'D)
We need to get you to the infirmary.

Bielski looks at her hand and then into her eyes. They've never stood this close before.

Giulietta releases his hand.

GIULIETTA (CONT'D)
You weren't afraid of him. And he knew
it. That's why he gave up.

BIELSKI
I was fucking terrified. I faked it.

GIULIETTA
What's the difference between faking
courage and being courageous?

She leads him toward the infirmary. The five dogs follow.

GIULIETTA (CONT'D)
Come on. Tomorrow you start training your
pack.

EXT. THUNDER MOUNTAIN - DAWN

Arm bandaged, Bielski leads his five dogs on a run up Thunder Mountain. The dogs are in diamond formation: Lola at point, Ringo and George on flank, John in the rear, and Paul keeping pace with Bielski in the middle.

The trail is steep and jammed with scree, but Bielski and the dogs never slow or hesitate. When they reaches the summit Bielski looks over Arizona.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The dogs, finished checking the summit for enemies and booby traps, stand in a protective ring around Bielski.

The dogs' behavior around Bielski has changed radically. He is their undisputed leader now, but more than this, he is one of them.

Bielski himself looks different-- with five superbly-trained war dogs obeying his every command, the lieutenant's posture and expression convey a new sense of power.

Bielski whistles. The dogs look at him. The five fingers of his right hand spread wide, Bielski makes a fanning motion toward the rising sun in the east.

The five dogs fan out and race across the mountain ridge, moving with the synchronicity of a flock of birds.

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

ELBEK, a shaven-headed Chechen-guerilla, has fallen asleep. He sits on a wood chair, feet propped up on another chair, AK-47 lying on the floor beside him.

Lyoma sleeps on a thin mat beside Elbek's chair. The boy twitches in his dreams, lips moving. His own AK-47 lies beside him.

A television with rabbit ear antennae, sitting atop a packing crate, shows highlights from the afternoon's football match between the Kutaisi Torpedo and the Tbilisi Lokomotivi.

On a coffee table in front of Elbek, remnants of the Chechens' dinner congeal on dirty plates. Lyoma's cell phone rests atop a newspaper.

INT. WHISTLER'S CELL - NIGHT

Whistler sits by the door of his frigid cell, breath rising in vapors above his head. A six-week beard does little to hide clear signs of emaciation.

Whistler mutters one Navajo word, over and over, to the door.

WHISTLER

Atsah... atsah... atsah...

INT. BUNKER - CONTINUOUS

Bula lies on the other side of Whistler's door.

WHISTLER (O.S.)

Atsah... atsah...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Bula lolls her head to the side, mewling softly, confused.

Ramirez peers through the barred slot on his door. He stares at Bula and listens to Whistler's muttered chant. Larsen's face appears at his slot. The two soldiers exchange glances.

LARSEN
(whispering)
What's he doing?

WHISTLER (O.S.)
Atsah... atsah...

Ramirez shakes his head.

RAMIREZ
I think he's losing it, man.

Bula rises and runs up the stairs

INT. WHISTLER'S CELL - MOMENTS LATER

Whistler rests his forehead against the cold wood of his door. He breathes deeply, waiting.

We hear Bula coming back down the staircase.

INT. BUNKER - CONTINUOUS

Larsen's eyes widen when he sees Bula.

The she-wolf approaches Whistler's door, a cell phone gripped gently in her jaws.

She nudges the phone under Whistler's door.

INT. WHISTLER'S CELL - CONTINUOUS

Whistler's face has not broken into smile in weeks. When he sees the phone sliding under the door, the old Whistler returns for a moment.

WHISTLER
(whispering)
That's my girl.

He scoops up the phone and retreats to the cell's corner.

INT. BUNKER - CONTINUOUS

Ramirez and Larsen stare at each other. Ramirez grins.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RAMIREZ
(whispering)
O Captain, my captain.

INT. WHISTLER'S CELL - CONTINUOUS

Whistler studies the phone. Perhaps he's trying to remember an international code.

The phone rings loudly.

Whistler hunches over the phone, trying to silence it, trying to find the off button on the strange model. Another loud ring-- Whistler finds the button and silences the phone.

He looks up at the door of his cell.

INT. BUNKER - CONTINUOUS

Ramirez and Larsen exchange a worried glance.

INT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Lyoma stirs in his sleep. He opens his eyes and blinks: did he hear a ringing phone or was it a dream?

INT. WHISTLER'S CELL - CONTINUOUS

Whistler holds his breath, listening for footsteps. Hearing nothing, he examines the phone ~~again~~. He enters a number and lifts the phone to his ear.

CHECHEN OPERATOR (O.S.)
Kyygsh dyl chyo michhaa' ju?

WHISTLER
(whispering)
I need to make a call to America.

CHECHEN OPERATOR (O.S.)
Muux du ghulqsh?

WHISTLER
Do you speak English? America. I...
call... America.

INT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Lyoma sits up and looks at Elbek, who snores softly. Lyoma glances at a televised goalie punching away a penalty kick.

Lyoma looks at the table. The phone is gone.

INT. WHISTLER'S CELL - CONTINUOUS

WHISTLER

America. Please-- American operator?

CHECHEN OPERATOR (O.S.)

Laaral txyogar doogharg?

Whistler closes his eyes.

WHISTLER

English. America. English.

CHECHEN OPERATOR (O.S.)

Byys jaqq.

INT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Lyoma, holding his AK-47, shakes Elbek's thick arm. The older man blinks, opens his eyes, and looks at Lyoma. The boy gestures for Elbek to grab his rifle.

INT. WHISTLER'S CELL - CONTINUOUS

Whistler, eyes closed, rocks in the corner of his cell. He holds the phone to his ear but the Chechen operator seems to have hung up.

~~Whistler exhales. Just as he decides to hang up, the phone crackles to life.~~

AMERICAN OPERATOR (O.S.)

Welcome to AT&T, how may I help you?

INT. JUNIOR'S BAR - DAY

Festooned with neon beer signs and various Armed Forces insignias, this Sierra Vista sports bar-- just outside the Fort's perimeter-- caters primarily to off-duty soldiers.

On this Sunday afternoon, Bielski sits at the bar, nursing a bottle of beer and watching football on television.

A few feet away, Private Hovey shows the tattoos on his biceps to a couple of LOCAL WOMEN. The first tattoo depicts a bald eagle's head superimposed over an outlined map of Iraq.

HOVEY

Got this one for serving in GW2.

The local women nod politely. He shows them a tattooed replica of the Special Forces emblem.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOVEY (CONT'D)

This one here's for Special Forces. I'm Special Forces. We're like the guys, when you hear about stuff going on anywhere in the world, we're the first ones to go in.

The women exchange glances. One of them rolls her eyes.

HOVEY (CONT'D)

Buy you ladies a drink?

LOCAL WOMAN 1

What's your rank, honey?

HOVEY

What?

LOCAL WOMAN 1

You a private?

Hovey hesitates for a second.

HOVEY

Private First Class.

LOCAL WOMAN 2

I think your friend is calling you.

Hovey looks around. Nobody is calling him. He turns back to the women. Finally he gets the ~~hint~~.

HOVEY

All right, well--

LOCAL WOMAN 1

Bye, sweetie.

Hovey lowers his head and shuffles over to Bielski, just as the BARTENDER hands the lieutenant two fresh bottles of beer. Bielski, trying to conceal a smile, hands one to Hovey.

BIELSKI

Tattoos didn't work?

HOVEY

No sir.

They tap glass and drink.

BIELSKI

You should try telling her she's got beautiful ears.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Hovey seems interested by the approach.

HOVEY
Yeah? That works?

BIELSKI
Never seen it fail.

HOVEY
Not that it matters to you. You're all set.

BIELSKI
What are you talking about?

HOVEY
I seen the way you look at Dr. Marzi.

Bielski, about to answer, hears a ring from his cell phone. He pulls the phone out of his pocket and looks at it.

HOVEY (CONT'D)
That's probably her calling right now.

The bar is crowded and noisy. Bielski gets up from his stool. The phone rings again.

BIELSKI
I'll be right back.

Bielski walks out of the bar as the phone rings a third time.

INT. BUNKER - NIGHT

Elbek and Lyoma descend the stairs, holding their AK-47s. Lyoma glances at Bula, who lies on the stone floor, watching them serenely.

EXT. JUNIOR'S BAR - DAY

Outside of the bar, the Arizona sun beats down on the cars in the parking lot. The phone rings a fourth time. Bielski finally turns the phone on and raises it to his ear.

BIELSKI
Bielski.

Whistler's voice is static-ridden and muffled. Only one word comes through before the connection is severed.

WHISTLER
...Grozny...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Only a single word, distorted by distance, but Bielski immediately recognizes the voice.

BIELSKI

Tommy? Tommy?

INT. BUNKER - NIGHT

Lyoma, hearing a muffled voice, walks toward Whistler's cell. He peers in through the barred slot. Whistler lies completely hidden beneath his blanket.

Lyoma calls to Elbek, who walks over, key ring in hand, preparing to open Whistler's door.

RAMIREZ (O.S.)

I CAN'T TAKE IT! I CAN'T FUCKING TAKE IT!

Hollering at the top of his lungs and throwing his body against his cell door, Ramirez startles the two Chechens.

RAMIREZ (CONT'D)

GET ME OUT! GET ME THE FUCK OUT OF HERE!

Two more Chechen guerillas join Lyoma and Elbek in the bunker. Elbek and Lyoma hurry away from Whistler's cell and go to Ramirez's. Ramirez spits on Lyoma. Elbek, furious, unlocks the door as the other Chechens level their rifles.

Ramirez charges out, throwing punches. He manages to land a solid right cross, knocking Elbek to the floor.

The American prisoners (except Whistler), now awake and standing by their doors, cheer for their battling comrade.

LARSEN

Hit 'em, Sammy! Hit that motherfucker!

CARPENTER

Watch your back, Sammy!

One of the other Chechens swats Ramirez in the back of the head with the butt of his rifle. Ramirez goes down hard, but doesn't lose consciousness.

Bleeding from the scalp, he crawls toward his assailant.

Unseen by everyone, Bula has crept over to Whistler's door, her muzzle pressed to the gap between floor and door.

Elbek stands, wiping the blood from his nose. He kicks Ramirez in the ribs, savagely and repeatedly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Lyoma gives the Chechens an order (subtitled in English).

LYOMA
Check his cell.

Elbek hoists Ramirez upright and slams him against the wall. He pats the prisoner down, thoroughly, while another Chechen goes into the cell, shakes Ramirez's blanket and scrutinizes the floor. No phone, no place to hide a phone.

Elbek tosses a semi-conscious Ramirez back into his cell and locks the door.

Lyoma sees Bula running up the stairs. He stares after her for a moment before pointing at Whistler's cell.

The Chechens throw open Whistler's door. Elbek grabs Whistler, shoves him against the wall, and pats him down.

Lyoma quickly searches the cell. He approaches Whistler (still pressed against the wall by Elbek). The boy opens his mouth to speak-- but is interrupted by a ringing cell phone.

Upstairs.

Lyoma frowns. Whistler maintains his expression of sleepy non-comprehension. Lyoma hurries out of the cell.

INT. WAREHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Lyoma jogs over to the coffee table. He stares down at his ringing cell phone.

EXT. FORT HUACHUCA - COLONEL VARNEY'S HOUSE - DAY

The Colonel lives in an elegant Cape Cod house. The front lawn is immaculate behind its white picket fence.

Bielski, still in his civilian clothes, jogs up the flagstone path and onto the porch. He rings the front door bell. After a moment's pause, he rings again.

Colonel Varney, wearing an Army tee-shirt and sweatpants, holding the Sunday paper in one hand, opens the door.

BIELSKI
They're alive.

EXT. U.S. ARMY INTELLIGENCE CENTER, FORT HUACHUCA - NIGHT

INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS hurry up and down the steps of the squat, concrete-gray building.

INT. OFFICE CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Bielski sits on a bench outside an office, impatiently tapping his bootsoles on the linoleum floor.

The office door swings open and a young AIDE leans out.

AIDE

The Colonel would like to see you.

INT. COLONEL VARNEY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Bielski walks into Varney's spartan office. An old Don't Tread on Me flag hangs on the wall, next to framed photos of a young Varney, shirtless and bandoliered, on the Mekong.

Varney nods to his aide.

COLONEL VARNEY

Thank you, Sergeant Rennert. I'll see you tomorrow.

The aide nods and exits the office.

COLONEL VARNEY (CONT'D)

The geeks at NSA are working on the call.

BIELSKI

And?

COLONEL VARNEY

It was made on a cell phone, so we're not gonna get an exact location. But they're confident they can identify the base station. That should put us within a few miles.

BIELSKI

That's all we need, sir. Get us close and Lola will find him.

COLONEL VARNEY

You're forgetting something, Lieutenant. Grozny belongs to Russia. Last I heard, President Putin wasn't too keen on U.S. Special Forces soldiers running around his neighborhood.

BIELSKI

There's someone I can call.

COLONEL VARNEY

If it were up to me--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BIELSKI

I was born without brothers, sir, and
then I got seven.

(beat)

Let me make one call.

INT. SANDUNOVSKIYE BATHS - MASSAGE ROOM - DAY

Nikolai Kovalenko, the GRU major last seen in Prague, lies
face down on a padded table, naked save for a towel folded
over his backside.

A heavy-set MASSEUSE, her forearms thicker than many NFL All-
Pros, whips Kovalenko with a long bundle of birch twigs.

Kovalenko's cell phone-- sitting in the pocket of his
bathrobe, hanging from a hook on the door-- rings. Kovalenko,
still face down, groans with annoyance.

The masseuse offers him the phone. He sighs and looks up at
her. She raises one thick eyebrow flirtatiously. Kovalenko
smiles and takes the phone.

KOVALENKO

Da?

EXT. LIBBY AIRFIELD - DAY

Bielski stands on the tarmac, checking his gear, waiting to
board a C-141 Starlifter. Colonel Varney and Private Hovey
have come to see him off. Bielski salutes both men and walks
over to Giulietta.

Giulietta loads the dogs into their travel kennels.

BIELSKI

I know it's not easy for you.

GIULIETTA

What's not easy for me?

BIELSKI

You're there when these dogs are born.
You feed them, you bathe them, you train
them, every day, for years. And then one
afternoon some Army asshole comes along
and hauls them off to the wars.

GIULIETTA

That's the job, isn't it.

Giulietta defies her own policy by scratching Lola behind his
mangled ear. She guides the dog into the travel kennel.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BIELSKI

I'll do everything I can to keep them safe.

GIULIETTA

They'll keep you safe.

(beat)

Don't die, Leon.

Both of them are a little surprised by this comment.

BIELSKI

You know my name?

GIULIETTA

Lucky guess. You look like a Leon.

Bielski is shocked.

BIELSKI

You made a joke?

GIULIETTA

All right, goodbye, Lieutenant.

She extends her hand. Bielski wants to say something else but finally he smiles and shakes her hand.

BIELSKI

Thank you, Giulietta.

He turns and walks toward the plane.

CARGO LOADERS hoist the dog kennels. Giulietta watches them haul her stoic dogs into the C-141's belly.

Bielski climbs the stairs. At the hatchway he pauses, turns, and jogs back down.

He runs over to Giulietta, grabs her shoulders, and kisses her full on the lips. He pulls back and looks at her.

BIELSKI (CONT'D)

Okay?

Giulietta's a bit stunned, eyes unfocused, but she nods.

BIELSKI (CONT'D)

Okay.

He kisses her again, turns and runs back up the stairs.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Hovey, standing next to Colonel Varney, grins and gives Bielski a big thumbs up.

HOVEY

I knew he liked her.

The colonel glances at the private and Hovey loses the grin.

HOVEY (CONT'D)

Sir.

Varney smiles himself before turning and walking away, followed by Hovey.

The jet's hatch closes. A DRIVER tows away the mobile stairs.

Giulietta stands alone on the tarmac.

INT. WHISTLER'S CELL - NIGHT

Borz throws open the door and walks in, followed by several of his men. He carries a down parka. He stands over Whistler, who blinks, just awakened from a deep sleep.

BORZ

Come, Captain Whistler. We go.

~~Borz throws the down parka to Whistler. Whistler, still~~
groggy, looks at the parka and then back at Whistler.

BORZ (CONT'D)

Very cold, where we go.

WHISTLER

We're leaving Grozny?

BORZ

(smiling)

Were you waiting for someone?

EXT. RURAL ROAD, CHECHNYA - NIGHT

The bus with blacked-out windows motors down a rutted road in the countryside outside of Grozny. The area is desolate. Only the occasional burnt shell of a farmhouse still stands.

EXT. BEECH FOREST - NIGHT

The bus turns onto a dirt path winding through a beech forest. After a few more turns the bus enters a clearing.

A paved runway, painted in camouflage colors to conceal it from enemy aircraft, extends for several hundred yards.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

At the end of the runway, an old Tupolev jet has already started its engines. Save for a dim red glow in the cockpit, the jet's lights are all off.

The bus stops near the Tupolev. Borz steps out, followed by Lyoma, a band of twelve heavily-armed Chechens, Whistler, Ramirez and Bula. The Chechens quickly board the plane.

Elbek, one hand on Whistler's elbow (Whistler and Ramirez's hands are shackled) guides him up the stairway, passes him off to a Chechen inside the plane and returns to the bus.

Moments later the stairway is retracted and the hatch closed. The jet guns its engines and rockets down the short runway.

The Tupolev goes airborne at the edge of the runway and clears the closest trees by mere feet.

EXT. GROZNY AIRPORT - DAY

Twenty years of fighting have left the terminal buildings in ruin. Only military planes now use the runways; commercial carriers stopped flying here years ago.

A SPETSNAZ UNIT (the Russian Special Forces), wearing urban camouflage and wielding Groza assault rifles, escorts Bielski and his five dogs toward a convoy of military vehicles.

Bielski carries a duffel bag and a case for his sniper rifle.

Kovalenko stands by an armored van, smoking a cigarette. He shakes Bielski's hand.

KOVALENKO

I call in many debts, bringing you here.
You understand?

BIELSKI

I appreciate it.

KOVALENKO

I have seen what your dogs can do.
Seventeen years we look for Murad Borz.

(beat)

Make me look good, eh?

EXT. ROADS OF GROZNY - DAY

The military convoy travels through the bombed-out city.

INT. ARMORED VAN - DAY

Kovalenko drives, one hand on the wheel, another holding his cigarette. Bielski sits in the passenger seat. The five dogs are in the back.

Bielski stares at the empty shells of the still-standing buildings. Kovalenko notes the American's horror.

KOVALENKO

This war has been very ugly.

EXT. RADIO TOWER - DAY

The convoy is parked beside a radio tower. Kovalenko and Bielski stand by the van. Kovalenko gestures at the tower.

KOVALENKO

How you say... ah--

BIELSKI

Base station.

KOVALENKO

Yes, base station, ah, transmits from here. So, our technicals say four kilometer range--

Bielski opens the back of the armored van. The five dogs hop out. Bielski leans into the back of the van, reaches into his duffel bag, and pulls out a West Virginia Mountaineers shirt (last seen on Whistler's back at Lake Orlik).

Bielski holds the shirt by Lola's muzzle. The dog immediately recognizes the scent and looks up at Bielski. Bielski nods.

BIELSKI

Dane-lei.

EXT. GROZNY - DAY

Lola leads Bielski and the Russians through the streets of Grozny, casting for a scent. The other dogs walk in diamond formation, scouting for trouble.

The Spetsnaz soldiers, hardened from years of combat, are not thrilled to follow an American soldier and an American dog.

Lola approaches a gutted department store. We recognize the spot where Whistler and the Chechens hid from the Russians.

Lola picks his way through the broken glass, sniffing at the fallen mannequins.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Lola returns to the street. Nose to the pavement, he follows the scent path. Everyone follows Lola.

BIELSKI

We're on.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

Tanks, APCs, and Spetsnaz soldiers surround the warehouse. SNIPERS on the rooftops of neighboring buildings fix their sites on the warehouse's doors.

The Spetsnaz soldiers wear black balaclavas and body armor. Some carry Groza assault rifles; other wield the fearsome KS-23M 4-gauge shotgun.

Bielski and Kovalenko stand by the armored van. Kovalenko speaks on a walkie-talkie while Bielski assembles his rifle.

Kovalenko lowers the walkie-talkie and turns to Bielski.

KOVALENKO

You are sure?

BIELSKI

He was in there recently. That's all I know.

Kovalenko nods and gives a final command on his walkie-talkie. He lowers the walkie-talkie and puts a hand on Bielski's shoulder.

KOVALENKO

You have done your job, my friend. You cannot go inside.

Bielski stares at Kovalenko, disbelieving.

BIELSKI

I got you here.

KOVALENKO

It is not my decision.

Kovalenko gestures at the Spetsnaz soldiers.

KOVALENKO (CONT'D)

These men are very good. This is what they train for.

Covered by the snipers, the Spetsnaz soldiers approach the warehouse. A group of four soldiers crouch by one of the doors, readying a portable battering ram.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Lola, circling the warehouse, stops by the steel rolling door at the truck entrance.

Something he smells makes the hackles on the back of his neck rise. He stands straight and looks at Bielski.

Bielski, arguing with Kovalenko, does not notice.

For the first time in the movie, Lola BARKS.

Bielski and Kovalenko turn and look at the dog.

EXT. SKIES OF RUSSIA - DAY

The Tupolev jet cruises east.

INT. TUPOLEV - DAY

The cabin is cramped. Most of the Chechens sleep, their rifles cradled in their laps.

Ramirez sleeps as well, head bowed. face battered from the previous night's heroics. Whistler looks through the window. The immense eastern Russian plains roll toward the horizon.

BORZ (O.S.)

The beautiful thing about mobile phones.

Whistler turns to look at Borz. The Chechen warlord sits next to Lyoma, who holds his cell phone.

BORZ (CONT'D)

They list the numbers you've called.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

Bielski stares at the barking dog. His eyes widen.

BIELSKI

Tell them to back off. Back off!

Kovalenko, momentarily stunned, raises his walkie-talkie to his mouth.

Lola sprints toward Bielski.

The Spetsnaz soldiers slam the battering ram into the door, smashing the locks.

A TREMENDOUS EXPLOSION incinerates the Russian soldiers by the door, triggering a series of massive blasts throughout the warehouse.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Every window on the building bursts, showering the area with splinters of broken glass.

The roof of the warehouse collapses, tons of masonry falling inward, each floor caving in successively as the building implodes. A dense dust cloud billows out, covering everything with a shroud of ash.

The force of the blast knocks Bielski and Kovalenko to the ground. Both men lie motionless in the dust.

Lola, coat white with dust, runs over to Bielski and licks his face, anxiously trying to revive his alpha-- an affection for Bielski Lola's never shown before.

The other four dogs circle their fallen leader, sniffing at him, licking his hands.

Bielski blinks. He slowly sits up, rubbing the dust from his eyes. He looks at the dogs, who stare back at him with unmistakable relief, tongues lolling from their mouths.

Bielski turns to Kovalenko, who pushes himself to a sitting position. The Russian is unhurt. Bielski stands.

The warehouse is gone. Nothing remains but a heap of broken concrete and twisted steel.

The surviving Spetsnaz soldiers shout into their walkie-talkies and run to their fallen comrades.

Bielski stares at the rubble.

EXT. GRU STATION - DAY

ARMED SENTRIES patrol the heavily fortified Grozny headquarters of the Russian military intelligence bureau.

INT. GRU STATION - DAY

Bielski sits in a small office. Street maps of Grozny are pinned to the wall alongside photographs of wanted men.

Lola sits beside Bielski. Both man and dog stare at the floor. Kovalenko enters the office. He offers Bielski a cup of coffee. The American shakes his head without looking up.

Kovalenko sighs, looks at the coffee, and drinks it himself. He makes a sour face and tosses the coffee cup in the trash.

KOVALENKO

Everything in this country tastes like ashes.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KOVALENKO (CONT'D)

(beat)

So far we find four bodies in rubble.
Wearing American uniforms.

Bielski closes his eyes.

KOVALENKO (CONT'D)

They arrest thirty Chechens today. This
is how they work here. They arrest
everybody and maybe they get lucky, maybe
one had contact with Americans.

Bielski finally looks up.

BIELSKI

Where are they?

INT. HOLDING ROOM - DAY

Thirty hand-cuffed CHECHEN SUSPECTS sit on a long bench in a
brightly-lit room. Four GUARDS, holding submachine guns,
watch the detainees.

Kovalenko leads Bielski and Lola into the room. One of the
guards barks a command in Russian and the suspects stand.

Bielski crouches beside Lola.

BIELSKI

Dane-lei.

Lola walks quickly down the line of detainees and then back,
ruling some suspects out immediately. He sniffs several of
the men's shoes and hands. Some men take only a moment, some
seem to warrant an extended inspection.

During this inspection, the CAMERA STAYS AT LOLA'S LEVEL (we
don't see the suspects' faces).

Halfway down the line, Lola stops in front of one man. Lola's
head rises as he sniffs the man's boots, his knees, his
hands. As Lola's muzzle climbs higher, we slowly PAN UP,
until we realize that we're looking at Elbek.

Lola, tail wagging, keeps sniffing Elbek, who is obviously
terrified of the dog. Elbek tries to back away from the
Lola's snout. Lola looks at Bielski.

Elbek nervously calls out in Russian.

BIELSKI (CONT'D)

What'd he say?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KOVALENKO

He hates dogs.

BIELSKI

Dog's not real fond of him, either.

Bielski walks closer to Elbek, until their faces are inches apart.

BIELSKI (CONT'D)

You touched Tommy, didn't you?

Elbek nervously looks from Bielski to Lola.

BIELSKI (CONT'D)

You fucking touched him.

Kovalenko sees that Bielski is about to lose control. He puts a hand on the young American's shoulder and nods to the guards. Two of them approach Elbek, grab him under the armpits, and lead him to the door. Elbek doesn't struggle.

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

Bielski paces back and forth across the linoleum floor of a long, sterile hallway. Lola sits quietly, head turning to follow his alpha's movements.

Kovalenko walks down the corridor followed by SOBAKOV, a GRU operative with a wrestler's cauliflower ears.

KOVALENKO

I will have someone take you back to hotel. This could take time.

Bielski watches Sobakov roll his shirtsleeves to his elbow. Sobakov has the battered knuckles of a man who bruises people for a living.

BIELSKI

What are you going to do to him?

Kovalenko glances at Sobakov and then back at Bielski.

KOVALENKO

Let us take care of this man, Lieutenant.

BIELSKI

Maybe there's another way.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

Bielski leads Lola into the interrogation room. Elbek sits in a straight-backed chair. When he sees Bielski he smirks-- but the smirk evaporates when Lola enters the room.

Kovalenko follows Bielski into the room and closes the door.

BIELSKI

Ne-tah.

Lola growls and pads closer to Elbek, who shrinks from the beast.

BIELSKI (CONT'D)

Tell him a dog is God's lie detector.

Kovalenko repeats the words to Elbek in Russian. Elbek responds with a stream of rapid, Chechen-accented Russian.

KOVALENKO

He says he knows nothing. He is welder,
not rebel.

Lola growls at Elbek again and bares his teeth.

BIELSKI

~~Dog's not buying it.~~

Bielski unhooks Lola's leash from his collar.

BIELSKI (CONT'D)

Why don't we leave these two alone for a
minute?

Bielski opens the door for Kovalenko. The two men prepare to leave as Lola looms in front of Elbek, glaring at the terrified man, saliva dripping from his fangs.

Elbek, voice breaking with fear, calls out to Kovalenko. Kovalenko shrugs and looks at Bielski.

KOVALENKO

He asks us where we go?

BIELSKI

I need to sleep.

They walk out the door.

KOVALENKO

Good. I take you to hotel.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Before Kovalenko can close the door, Elbek hollers out to him. Kovalenko leans inside the room and asks a question in Russian. Elbek, staring at Lola, answers.

Kovalenko appraises the Chechen for a moment before turning to Bielski.

KOVALENKO (CONT'D)

He says two Americans are still alive.

EXT. SIBERIAN RUNWAY - DAY

The Tupolev jet touches down on a dirt runway tucked between two hills in the Siberian wilderness. An old Army truck with chains on its tires waits by the side of the runway.

EXT. SIBERIAN ROAD - DAY

The Army truck drives through a majestic, desolate landscape. Towering pine trees rise above the snow-covered foothills of the Sikhote-Alin Mountains.

INT. ARMY TRUCK - DAY

The Chechens, Ramirez and Whistler sit on two facing benches in the back of the truck. Bula lies on the floor.

EXT. SIBERIAN ROAD - DAY

The truck pulls off the road and stops in a dense copse of tree. Two Chechens, MAIRBEK and HASSAN, hop out of the back truck and run into the woods.

EXT. SIBERIAN FOREST - DAY

Mairbek, wearing gloves with studs on the palm, climbs a tall tree. He sits on a thick branch and raises a pair of binoculars.

BINOCULARS POV

A guardhouse sits by the gate of an electrified fence. Warning signs in Russian, crammed with exclamation points and skull-and-crossbones symbols, are posted every thirty feet.

Two RUSSIAN SOLDIERS sits inside the guardhouse while a third drunkenly urinates outside, trying to spell his name in the snow.

END POV

Mairbek lowers his binoculars and raises an RPG-7 rocket-propelled grenade launcher.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Mairbek turns to look at Hassan, who sights through the scope of his sniper rifle. Hassan glances at Mairbek and nods.

Mairbek aims his RPG and fires.

CUT TO:

THE ROCKET whistles through the air and explodes inside the guardhouse.

The drunken soldier, knocked flat by the concussion, rises to his feet and stares at the burning guardhouse.

He runs, tripping in the thick snow. Before he has gone ten feet, a single shot to the back of the head knocks him face-forward into the snow.

CUT TO:

HASSAN lowers his rifle and winks at Mairbek.

EXT. ELECTRIFIED FENCE - DAY

The truck pulls up to the gate. The guardhouse still burns. Black smoke curls and evanesces in the bright blue sky.

The Chechens jump out of the truck. Borz signals for Whistler to join them and the American steps down, followed by Bula.

Hassan crouches beside the body of the drunken soldier. He finds a key the dead soldier wore around his neck.

Hassan walks to the gate's control box and turns the key. The gate rolls open.

Borz gestures to the expanse of snow and pine trees lying behind the fence.

BORZ

I am told ten thousand land mines lie between here and my brother's prison. We do not have much time.

Whistler looks down at Bula. She stares back up at him.

EXT. SNOWFIELD - DAY

Bula lopes across the minefield, muzzle close to the snow.

The truck drives slowly behind her. Whistler sits on the hood of the truck, legs dangling to one side, watching Bula.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Bula pauses in mid-stride, one curled paw raised just above the ground. Whistler holds up his hand. The truck stops.

CLOSE ON A PFM-1 BUTTERFLY MINE

Only the top prong of the landmine is visible above the snow.

Bula finds another route. The truck backs up a few feet and then follows Bula's new path.

INT. GRU HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Back in the office, Kovalenko sits at the desk, reviewing a radar chart. Bielski stands behind Kovalenko, looking over the Russian's shoulder.

KOVALENKO

Our radar sees unauthorized plane flying north from Grozny at 0400. So it seems our Chechen tells truth. Radar loses contact near Caucasus Mountains. Later radar tracks plane landing latitude 58 north, 87 east.

Kovalenko unfolds a large map of Russia bearing latitude and longitude numbers. He runs his finger to the proper coordinates.

KOVALENKO (CONT'D)

This is where Borz goes. And your friend.

Bielski looks at the spot. Even on the map, Siberia looks like endless wilderness, with no town names within a hundred miles of the location.

BIELSKI

There's nothing there.

Kovalenko leans back in his chair and sighs wearily.

KOVALENKO

There is something.

EXT. MARORSK - DAY

The Army truck parks twenty yards from the gate of a forty-foot high concrete wall. The wall-- topped with barbed wire, ringed with watchtowers-- extends as far as the eye can see, curving gradually to encircle whatever lies within.

No sentries man the watchtowers or gate. Frozen snow covers everything. Long icicles dangle from the watchtowers. Fissures spiderweb the wall.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

No one has touched this wall in forty years.

The Chechens and Whistler hop out of the truck. One of the Chechens, ALAEV, carries a pack to the gate. He removes a brick of C4 and begins molding the plastique around the gate's support posts.

Whistler surveys the wall, puzzled at the lack of guards.

WHISTLER

What is this place?

BORZ

Marorsk.

The name means nothing to Whistler.

BORZ (CONT'D)

You've never heard of ~~Marorsk~~?

(bitter smile)

A great Russian tragedy. But you will never read a book about ~~Marorsk~~, never see it on the news.

Alaev, finished placing the explosives, hurries back to the truck. He activates a remote ~~detonator~~.

~~The high gate topples backwards, plunging into the deep snow.~~

EXT. GROZNY AIRPORT - DAY

A convoy of Russian military vehicles speeds onto the tarmac. A Russian Air Force AN-124 Condor, fueled and ready to fly, waits for its passengers.

INT. AN-124 CONDOR - DAY

Bielski, Kovalenko, and a team of forty RUSSIAN AIRBORNE soldiers sit in the belly of the plane.

While the Russian soldiers double-check their parachutes, Bielski attaches the dog's harnesses. The Russian soldiers periodically glance at the dogs-- they've never seen anything like this before.

BIELSKI

You're not jumping with us today,
Nikolai?

Kovalenko is the only man onboard without a parachute. He smiles and shakes his head.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KOVALENKO

I do not jump.

BIELSKI

So tell me where we're going.

Kovalenko sighs.

KOVALENKO

A city called Marorsk.

BIELSKI

How come it's not on the map?

KOVALENKO

Because it does not exist.

EXT. MARORSK - DAY

The Army truck rolls over the fallen gate and enters the closed city of Marorsk. The city was built in the '50s. The truck passes street after street of identical, Soviet-era apartment blocks.

Every window is frosted over. The sidewalks are buried beneath three feet of snow. Every few blocks the truck passes a '50s-era Russian car with flat tires and a helmet of snow.

INT. ARMY TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Whistler stares out the back of the truck at the empty city.

WHISTLER

Where is everyone?

Borz, loading bullets into the magazine of his assault rifle, does not answer for a moment.

BORZ

Under the snow.

The truck stops at a square in the center of the walled-in city. A statue of Stalin stands on a pedestal in the heart of the square, a mound of snow capping his bronze head.

EXT. STALIN SQUARE - CONTINUOUS

The Chechens, Whistler, Ramirez and Bula jump out of the truck. The DRIVER stays in his seat. When everyone is out he drives back toward the front gate.

All the Chechens grip AK-47s except Hassan, who holds his sniper rifle, and Borz, who carries a KLIN submachine-gun.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Borz gives an order and Hassan unlocks Whistler's handcuffs. Whistler rubs his chafed wrists.

Borz pulls a strip of white cloth out of his coat pocket. He hands it to Whistler. Whistler stares at the rag.

BORZ

This is from my brother's shirt.

Borz gestures at Bula.

BORZ (CONT'D)

Tell her to begin.

Whistler looks around the empty boulevards of the closed city. He shakes his head.

WHISTLER

Nobody's here.

Borz unholsters his pistol and hands it to Lyoma.

Lyoma-- this time without hesitation-- walks behind Ramirez and presses the gun's muzzle against the base of the American's skull.

BORZ

~~This is why I bring your soldier.~~

(beat)

My brother has waited a long time.

Whistler looks at Ramirez. The young soldier stares back at his captain, eyes fierce and unblinking.

RAMIREZ

You do what you got to do, Captain.

Lyoma cocks the hammer of the automatic.

Whistler stares at Ramirez another moment before crouching beside Bula. He lets the dog sniff the rag.

WHISTLER

Dane-lei.

EXT. SKIES OF RUSSIA - DAY

The Condor soars high above the plains of Eastern Russia.

INT. AN-124 CONDOR - DAY

Bielski sets the altimeters on the dogs' parachutes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KOVALENKO

We call them ZATOs. Closed cities-- built during Stalin years. Security very tight-- nobody goes in or out unless KGB say yes.

BIELSKI

I've heard of them. For military research?

KOVALENKO

Every atomic bomb-- designed and built inside ZATOs.

BIELSKI

So they were building nukes in Marorsk?

Kovalenko eyes the Russian airborne soldiers. None of them are paying attention to him.

KOVALENKO

No. Marorsk is different.

EXT. STREETS OF MARORSK - DAY

Bula runs through the snow, sniffing at the steps of the buildings she passes, at the barred windows of ground floor offices. Periodically she stops and sniffs the air.

The city is utterly devoid of life, but there are no signs of warfare. No bomb craters mar the streets, no bullet holes perforate the walls, no burnt-out tanks rust on the avenues.

Whistler trails behind Bula, followed by the Chechens and the shackled Ramirez. Borz checks his watch.

BORZ

The Russians will come soon. I begin to think you play games with me, Captain.

Bula stops by a grate on the sidewalk next to a low-slung, thick-walled building. She circles the grate, sniffing. Whistler watches her carefully.

Borz looks at Whistler. Whistler nods.

INT. AN-124 CONDOR - DAY

Kovalenko lights an unfiltered cigarette and inhales deeply.

KOVALENKO

This was during heart of Cold War. Both sides experiment with many things.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Bielski, attaching the carabiners on the dogs' harnesses to the static line, looks up at Kovalenko.

KOVALENKO (CONT'D)

Thousands of Soviet Union's best scientists went to Marorsk. They had one objective. To build perfect weapon.

Kovalenko takes another drag on his cigarette.

KOVALENKO (CONT'D)

They succeeded.

EXT. RESEARCH FACILITY - DAY

The Chechens approach the front door of the thick-walled building. Borz tries the door knob. The door swings open.

Borz turns and smiles at Whistler.

BORZ

No thieves in Marorsk.

INT. RESEARCH FACILITY - MOMENTS LATER

The city has no electricity. The Chechens attach flashlights to the barrels of their rifles.

~~Lyoma pulls an electric lantern from his pack, which brightens the area. The hallway floors are covered with several inches of dust.~~

Some of the doors off the hallway are ajar, revealing laboratories stocked with 1963-era scientific equipment. The lab tables are cluttered with beakers and test tubes, as if the forty-year-old experiments were about to resume.

Bula leads the men to a staircase that appears to descend several hundred feet. Whistler taps the wall with his knuckle. The steel-reinforced concrete seems to be exceedingly thick.

WHISTLER

They weren't worried about thieves, they were worried about bombers.

BORZ

Yes. They were smart.

WHISTLER

How did you find out about this place?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BORZ

It is remarkable what a general will tell you when you unpeel the skin from his skull.

(beat)

I gave him a quick death, he gave me Marorsk.

INT. SUBTERRANEAN LEVEL - MOMENTS LATER

At the bottom of the staircase Bula sniffs at a steel door covered with Russian warning signs.

Lyoma tries the door but this one is locked. Alaev begins to remove the C4 from his pack but Borz wags his finger: no!

Borz issues a command to a wiry young Chechen with sideburns sculpted into sharp scimitars-- KANTA. Kanta removes his pack and pulls out a lockpicking kit.

Borz watches Kanta work on the door's intricate lock.

BORZ

The best car thief in Grozny. One of my men caught him stealing. I offer him choice: follow me or watch me cut off your hands.

Kanta uses a pick and a tension tool to jimmy the lock. The tumblers fall into place and ~~Kanta~~ swings the door open.

Borz smiles at Whistler.

BORZ (CONT'D)

The art of war is the art of persuasion.

INT. SUBTERRANEAN VAULT - CONTINUOUS

Bula and the men enter the vault. The air down here has not been disturbed in over thirty years, and the men cough as dust swirls through the beams of their flashlights.

RAMIREZ

Jesus Christ.

The glow from Lyoma's lantern reveals a well-preserved chamber. Three of the walls are covered with arrays of analog gauges and dials. The fourth wall is glass.

The SKELETONS of two Russian soldiers, still dressed in their 1950s-era uniforms, sit on wood chairs, skulls bowed to the cockpit-style console that faces the glass wall.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Two Tokarev pistols lie on the floor beside the dead men's chairs. Each of their skulls is perforated by a neat bullet hole-- each man shot himself in the mouth.

Whistler stares at the skeletons and then at Borz.

WHISTLER

What the hell happened here?

BORZ

They decided a bullet is a better way to die.

(beat)

These were good soldiers. They died at their posts.

Borz sees that Bula is sniffing at the bottom of a door set into the glass wall. Borz crouches beside Bula and strokes the dog's head, whispering Chechen words of praise.

Borz stands and tries the door. This one is open.

INT. UNDERGROUND RAILWAY TERMINUS - CONTINUOUS

Lyoma and the others follow Borz. Lyoma's lantern illuminates a single stainless-steel railcar sitting on train tracks that plunge into a deep tunnel carved through the bedrock.

Borz slides open the door of the railcar. A heavy steel rack is bolted to the floor of the car. Four stainless steel canisters are secured to the rack.

The canisters are stamped with red-and-black biohazard symbols. Borz gazes at the canisters the way a hungry man stares at a bowl of soup.

BORZ

My Father is Allah. My Brother is Death.

INT. AN-124 CONDOR - DAY

Kovalenko jabs his cigarette out on the bulkhead.

KOVALENKO

Our scientists create strain of smallpox, resisting all vaccines, all antibiotics.

Kovalenko stares at the butt of his dead cigarette.

KOVALENKO (CONT'D)

Such wonderful killer. Impossible to detect. Agent could smuggle plastic vial through any airport, anywhere.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KOVALENKO (CONT'D)

(beat)

But forty years ago, something goes wrong
in Marorsk. Perhaps accident, perhaps
sabotage, nobody knows.

BIELSKI

There was a leak.

Kovalenko nods.

KOVALENKO

They quarantine city, surround with tanks
and soldiers. Nobody can leave-- millions
would die if infection spreads. City was
secret-- no mail, no telephones. Very few
people outside know what happens.

BIELSKI

Everybody died?

KOVALENKO

Forty thousand. Some survive smallpox,
but... nobody survive winter.

(beat)

No one has walked in Marorsk in forty
years.

BIELSKI

But there's no more weaponized smallpox
in there?

(beat)

Right? Nikolai?

Kovalenko reaches for another cigarette.

KOVALENKO

I am only Major. No one will tell me.

He lights the cigarette.

KOVALENKO (CONT'D)

But it seems someone told Borz.

INT. RAILCAR - DAY

Borz steps into the car. He runs his fingers over the
canisters and whispers an Arabic verse.

BORZ

And I shall deliver the enemy's sword
unto your hand, and his lamentations
shall echo from the seven portals of Hell
to the gates of Paradise.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Whistler, standing outside the car, stares at the biohazard symbols and then at the white rag in his hand.

WHISTLER

What's on the rag?

BORZ

Ammonia, fluorine, colloidal silver.

(beat)

What the Russians use to clean their special weapons.

Borz inspects the car's control panel.

BORZ (CONT'D)

Now we see how good the engineers of Marorsk truly were.

Borz throws a switch. After a moment of silence, a diesel-fueled backup power generator hums into life. Interior lights and headlights flicker and shine. Borz smiles.

INT. AN-124 CONDOR - DAY

An intercom near Kovalenko's head buzzes. Kovalenko lifts the receiver and listens for a moment. He replaces the receiver.

KOVALENKO

~~I have call from Moscow. Perhaps we learn more.~~

The Russian walks to the front of the plane and disappears inside the cockpit.

INT. UNDERGROUND RAILWAY TERMINUS - DAY

Borz steps out of the car and approaches Whistler.

BORZ

Even forty years ago, America had its spy planes. They knew about Marorsk. So the Russians hide these weapons underground. They put them on a diesel-fueled train, so if the bombing starts, even if they lose electricity, the weapons escape.

Whistler still stares at the stainless steel cannisters.

WHISTLER

What's in them?

BORZ

Revenge.

INT. AN-124 CONDOR - DAY

Kovalenko returns to the cargo hold, where Bielski, the dogs, and the Russian paratroopers are ready to jump.

Kovalenko avoids Bielski's eyes and licks his lips.

BIELSKI

What's the word?

KOVALENKO

It seems these weapons still exist in Marorsk. We cannot let Borz get them.

(beat)

We are going to destroy weapons.

BIELSKI

Yeah, well, about time.

KOVALENKO

You do not understand, my friend. We will destroy entire city.

BIELSKI

That will just release the smallpox--

Kovalenko shakes his head.

KOVALENKO

High heat kills virus. These bombs they drop, they will burn everything.

BIELSKI

Tommy's down there.

KOVALENKO:

I am sorry.

EXT. SKIES OF SIBERIA - DAY

A screaming comes across the sky as four Tu-22 Blinders, bellies pregnant with heavy bombs, streak toward Marorsk.

INT. UNDERGROUND RAILWAY TERMINUS - DAY

Borz checks his watch.

BORZ

The Russians come soon.

He glances at Bula, who sits by Whistler's feet.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BORZ (CONT'D)

You trained this wolf well. The people of
a free Chechnya will remember her.

Borz nods to Alaev, who stands behind Whistler. Alaev raises
his AK-47, muzzle aimed at the back of Whistler's head.

WHISTLER

(softly)

Naz-tsaid.

Bula leaps at Alaev, tackling the Chechen and biting down
hard on his throat. Alaev's AK-47 flies into the air and
Whistler catches it.

The burst of violence startles the Chechens, allowing Ramirez
to wheel around and knee Kanta directly in the groin.

As Grozny's best car thief sinks to the floor, Ramirez knees
him again in the chin. Kanta collapses.

Whistler fires on the Chechens, killing one and forcing the
others to dive for cover. Whistler packs into the railcar.

WHISTLER (CONT'D)

Ramirez!

Ramirez sees his captain in the railcar. He runs toward the
car, never noticing Borz, in the shadows, leveling his
pistol. The gun's report echoes down the dark tunnel.

Shot through the temple, Ramirez spins and falls.

Whistler rakes the shadows with automatic fire. The clip on
his AK-47 runs dry and he tosses the rifle onto the floor.
Bula jumps into the car.

INT. RAILCAR - CONTINUOUS

Whistler, crouching below the window line, slides the door
shut. Keeping low, he moves to the control panel. The
lettering is Cyrillic, but a throttle looks like a throttle.
Whistler slams the throttle forward.

INT. UNDERGROUND RAILWAY TERMINUS - CONTINUOUS

Hassan, kneeling in the shadows next to Borz, aims his rifle
at Whistler's head, which has edged above the window line.

The cannisters of smallpox are directly behind Whistler.

Borz puts his hand on Hassan's rifle and forces him to lower
the gun.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The railcar's wheels turn and the compact train rolls down the tunnel, slowly at first but gradually gaining speed.

Borz runs onto the tracks, following the car. He calls over his shoulder to his men in subtitled Chechen.

BORZ

Come!

His men dash after him.

INT. UNDERGROUND RAILWAY - CONTINUOUS

The railcar accelerates, barrelling through the tunnel, leaving the Chechens far behind.

EXT. SKIES OF SIBERIA - DAY

The Condor has begun to descend.

INT. AN-124 CONDOR - DAY

The paratroopers have removed their parachutes. Kovalenko sits beside Bielski.

KOVALENKO

You understand we have no choice?

(beat)

Strap yourself in, my friend. We need to refuel. There is an ~~airfield~~ near Marorsk.

INT. UNDERGROUND RAILWAY - DAY

The railcar hurtles through the darkness.

INT. RAILCAR - DAY

Whistler peers into the tunnel ahead. Bula pants by his side.

The car's headlights shine on the end of the line-- a massive coiled spring fast approaching.

Whistler pulls back on the throttle.

INT. UNDERGROUND BUNKER - CONTINUOUS

The railcar slows before bumping into the coiled spring and shivering to a halt.

The bunker is unlit save for the railcar's lights. Whistler slides open the car's door and surveys the area.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Bula, standing by the open door, suddenly stiffens, ears pulled back. Whistler notices.

INT. BUNKER STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

The Chechen driver of the Army truck descends a long spiral staircase, flashlight in hand.

INT. UNDERGROUND BUNKER - CONTINUOUS

The driver walks into the bunker, clearly expecting to see his comrades.

DRIVER
Muux du ghulqsh?

He stops when he sees that the railcar is empty. He frowns, not understanding. When he turns to inspect the rest of the bunker, the butt of an AK-47 crushes his face.

INT. RAILCAR - MOMENTS LATER

Whistler carries the driver's pistol in one hand and his pack in the other. He slides the pistol into his waistband. He carefully removes the smallpox canisters from their rack and slips them into the pack.

EXT. MARORSK AIRFIELD - DAY

The spartan airfield consists of little more than a runway, a large hangar, and a fueling station built on a plateau in the shadows of the Sikhote-Alin Mountains.

Bielski walks away from the grounded Condor, followed by his dogs. He ducks his head when a supersonic boom cracks in the sky above him.

The squadron of Tu-22s roars overhead.

Bielski jogs to the end of the runway. Built on a plateau overlooking the valley of Marorsk, the closed city is visible three miles away.

INT. BUNKER STAIRWELL - DAY

Whistler climbs to the top of the stairwell. He sees the blue sky of Siberia beyond an open trap door.

EXT. SIBERIAN FOREST - MOMENTS LATER

Whistler and Bula emerge into dazzling sunlight. The bunker is completely hidden from above.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Even the top of the trap door is surfaced with fake pine needles and grass (now powdered with snow), mimicking the forest floor.

Whistler hurries toward the waiting Army truck. A moment before he gets there, the forest shakes as a seismic boom rattles the snow from the pine trees.

EXT. MARORSK AIRFIELD - DAY

Bielski, standing at the edge of the airfield, watches the Russian bombers attack the closed city.

Bombs tumble from the Tu-22s before blazing toward Marorsk, streaks of white light.

The hills tremble. Small mushroom clouds rise above the ZATO.

INT. ARMY TRUCK - DAY

Whistler and Bula jump into the front of the truck. Whistler gently deposits the weapons-laden pack on the passenger seat. He reaches for the ignition key.

The key is not in the ignition. He checks the visor: no key. Whistler curses silently.

WHISTLER

(to Bula)

Cha.

Bula stays in the truck while Whistler gets out and runs back to the trapdoor.

INT. UNDERGROUND BUNKER - MOMENTS LATER

Whistler crouches beside the Chechen driver's body. He searches through the man's pockets and finally finds the key.

Hearing noises, Whistler looks up.

Flashlight beams dance near the mouth of the tunnel. In the distance we hear Chechen voices.

Whistler runs.

EXT. AIRFIELD - DAY

Kovalenko walks to the edge of the airfield and stands beside Bielski. The two men watch Marorsk erupt into flames.

Bielski turns away, unable to watch anymore. He notices Lola circling in the snow beyond the airfield, nose in the air.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Lola trots a few feet and looks back at Bielski. Bielski, confused, stares at the dog. Lola trots farther in the same direction before pausing and looking back at Bielski.

KOVALENKO

What does he do?

BIELSKI

He smells something.

Lola repeats the trot-and-pause indicator again. Bielski walks toward him, into the snow, followed by the other dogs.

INT. ARMY TRUCK - DAY

Whistler jumps into the truck and slips the key into the ignition.

The engine rolls over on the first try. Whistler slips the shift into first gear and hits the gas. The engine revs but the truck doesn't move.

Whistler tries to figure out what he's doing wrong.

The parking brake is engaged. Whistler disengages the brake and hits the gas again.

~~The truck rolls forward. No road in sight, Whistler steers between the trees.~~

The passenger side window explodes. Whistler and Bula duck as bullets thump into the truck's body.

EXT. SIBERIAN FOREST - CONTINUOUS

The Chechens, two hundred yards from the truck, fire at full automatic, ventilating the truckbed's canvas roof, shooting out the taillights.

Hassan, the sniper, drops to one knee. Patient while the others fire wildly, Hassan squeezes the trigger.

INT. ARMY TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Whistler bounces in his seat as a bullet pierces the radiator and the truck lurches to a stop.

EXT. SIBERIAN FOREST - CONTINUOUS

Whistler jumps out of the stalled truck, pistol in hand, pack on his back, followed by Bula. Another bullet punctures the hood, two feet from Whistler.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Whistler fires at the Chechens, forcing them to duck.

Whistler runs to the other side of the truck, and sprints into the woods, Bula by his side, keeping the truck between them and the Chechens.

EXT. MARORSK AIRFIELD - DAY

Lola runs toward the pine forest. The other dogs have formed their diamond pattern with Bielski in the center.

Kovalenko yells at Bielski from the edge of the runway.

KOVALENKO
Lieutenant! Lieutenant!

EXT. SIBERIAN FOREST - DAY

Borz leads his squad through ~~stands~~ of old birches and pines. They follow a clear set of boot and paw prints winding through the trees.

EXT. FOOTHILLS - DAY

Whistler runs through the woods crowding the base of the Sikhote-Alin Mountains. He turns back-- the men pursuing him are not yet in sight.

Whistler sees his boot prints and Bula's paw prints leading trackers directly to him.

Whistler kneels beside Bula and grips her face.

WHISTLER
Ye-tsan.

Bula stares at Whistler, unwilling to abandon him.

WHISTLER (CONT'D)
Ye-tsan.

Finally Bula runs.

Whistler surveils his surroundings. Closer to the mountains, he spots a tumble of heavy boulders and what appears to be the narrow opening of a cave.

Whistler breaks a branch of pine needles off the nearest tree. He begins shuffling backwards toward the cave. As he moves he sweeps the newly-made footprints with the pine branch, erasing the signs of his progress.

We hear Chechen voices, not far off.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Whistler backs toward the cave as quickly as he can.

EXT. SIBERIAN FOREST - DAY

Borz gives Hassan an order. The sniper nods, looks for a suitable tree, and begins climbing.

The rest of the Chechens continue following the prints.

EXT. FOREST EDGE - DAY

Bielski and his dogs approach the edge of the pine forest.

Lola stops, hearing something approaching. All five dogs lower into fighting stances, ears pulled back.

Bula emerges from the woods. Lola snarls and charges at her.

The dogs jump at the same time, springing far above the snowy ground, biting at each other's throats as they clash in mid-air. They circle each other.

Bielski doesn't have time for this. He aims his rifle at the wolf but Lola keeps blocking his shot.

BIELSKI

Tanh-ya!

Lola lies down, as ordered-- but so does the wolf. Bielski, amazed that the wolf followed his command, lowers his rifle.

BIELSKI (CONT'D)

Huc-quo.

Bula walks over to Bielski. Bielski crouches beside her.

BIELSKI (CONT'D)

Where's your Daddy, sweetheart?

INT. CREVICE - DAY

Whistler crouches in a narrow crevice between two boulders. He's in the shadows, but only six feet from the bright snowfields sloping down from the mountains.

He shivers in the cold, trying to keep his teeth from chattering. He counts the bullets in his pistol's magazine. Three left. He quietly clicks the magazine back into place and wraps his arms around his knees for warmth.

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - DAY

Borz sees the trail of boot prints abruptly end. The paw prints veer off in a different direction.

Borz motions to his men and they take cover behind trees.

Borz crouches, studying the ground. The boot prints disappear by a birch tree. Borz sees the pale exposed wood where the branch was broken.

Borz scans the area and finally spots what he's looking for: scattered pine needles-- detritus from the branch Whistler used to cover his tracks-- leading in the direction of the mountainside boulders.

Borz, speaking in low tones, points out the trail of needles to his men. The Chechens spot the needles. Rifles trained on the boulders, they advance toward the crevice.

INT. CREVICE - CONTINUOUS

Whistler realizes that Borz has seen through his evasion tactic. He takes a deep breath. The hunt is over.

EXT. SIBERIAN PINE - DAY

Hassan sits on a sturdy branch high above the forest floor.

SNIPER SCOPE POV

The Chechens carefully pick their way through the scree as they advance on Whistler's hideout. Whistler is not in sight.

END POV

INT. CREVICE - CONTINUOUS

Whistler aims at the closest Chechen. He only has three bullets. Eight Chechens are coming toward him.

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - CONTINUOUS

The nearest Chechen is now twenty yards from the crevice.

The CRACK of an automatic pistol resounds down the slope. The Chechen falls to the ground, shot in the throat.

The Chechens open fire, blasting the snow-covered boulders, but they don't know exactly where the pistol shot came from.

EXT. SIBERIAN FOREST - DAY

Bielski, his dogs and Bula march quickly through the woods. They freeze in their tracks, listening to the gunfire. From the sound of it, the shots come from a mile away.

BIELSKI

Lola!

The big dog turns and looks at his alpha.

BIELSKI (CONT'D)

Al-tah-je-jay!

Lola sprints toward the mountainside. He runs faster than we've seen before, muscles coiling below his dark fur, paws barely touching the snow.

Bielski hurries behind, guarded by the dogs, but they cannot come close to matching Lola's pace. Bielski glances at the pines towering above them.

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - DAY

The Chechens crawl forward on their bellies.

Mairbek, hidden behind a large boulder, pulls the RPG out of his pack.

Another shot rings out and a Chechen slumps forward, blood pooling in the snow, shot between the eyes.

Mairbek peers around the boulder. He sees a thin wisp of smoke rising from the direction the pistol shots came from.

Mairbek fires. The rocket-propelled grenade smashes into the rocks near the crevice and explodes. The blast sends up a plume of snow and shattered stone that drifts in the wind.

Everything grows ominously silent. The Chechens survey the area, rifles trained on the boulders.

They speak a few words to each other, watching the smoking rocks for any sign of life. One of them shouts an apparent compliment to Mairbek, who grins proudly.

A pistol shot to the chest fells Mairbek.

The surviving Chechens fire into the rocks, reloading when their magazines are empty.

After a ten-second fusillade they pause, guns still trained on the crevice.

EXT. SIBERIAN PINE - CONTINUOUS

Hassan peers through his rifle scope.

SNIPER SCOPE POV

The crevice Whistler hides within is visible, but the American is not.

END POV

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - CONTINUOUS

Borz yells a command, in Chechen, from the tree line.

BORZ

He has no more bullets! Take him!

The Chechens lying in the snow exchange glances. None of them wants to experiment with the American's ammunition.

BORZ (CONT'D)

Surkho! Take him!

SURKHO, a powerfully-built young Chechen, chews his lip. He pushes himself off his belly and runs toward the crevice, rifle leveled at the shadows within.

Surkho reaches the boulders and presses his back against the rock. He tightens his finger on the trigger and pivots into the mouth of the crevice.

After the glare of the bright snow, our eyes-- and Surkho's-- take a moment to adjust to the gloom inside the crevice.

Whistler crouches in the far corner. The empty pistol is discarded at his feet. He holds a rock in his hand.

Surkho freezes for a moment when he sees the American, but then realizes Whistler carries nothing but a rock.

Surkho smiles and points the muzzle of his AK-47 at Whistler's head. Whistler springs toward the Chechen but the gap between them is too far.

The Chechen topples forward, collapsing on top of Whistler, shot through the heart.

The distinct boom of a .50 caliber bullet breaking the sound barrier echoes across the gorge.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

We travel backward along the bullet's path, out of the cave's shadows into the bright sunshine, over the scree and down the snowy slopes, through thick stands of woods, up to the high branches of a towering, sixty-foot-high walnut tree a good mile from Whistler's crevice.

Bielski straddles a branch, staring through the scope of his sniper rifle. A plume of smoke rises from the muzzle.

Bielski selects another target and squeezes the trigger.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - CONTINUOUS

A gut-shot Chechen tumbles down the slope. The remaining Chechens, now realizing they're being attacked from another direction, run in a panic through the thick snow.

More sniper bullets whistle through the air. The precision is uncanny. None of the Chechens on the slope make it back to the woods.

EXT. SIBERIAN PINE - CONTINUOUS

Hassan, startled, shifts on his branch and scans the woods with his scope.

SNIPER SCOPE POV

At first we see nothing but trees and snow. But then something pops out-- something metallic glinting in the sunlight.

The scope focuses on the distant object. Bielski, sitting atop the walnut tree, comes into view.

END POV

A slight smile crosses Hassan's face. He adjusts his rifle for the difficult shot.

The sound of claws digging into bark forces Hassan to lower his rifle. He stares down.

Lola scrambles up the tree with the climbing skill of a Rhodesian Ridgeback.

Hassan struggles to get a bead on the dog climbing directly below him. Lola clambers to the other side of the trunk, forcing Hassan to pivot awkwardly on his branch.

Before Hassan can pull the trigger, Lola leaps on him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Man and dog plummet to the soft snow below. Hassan, shaken by the fall but uninjured, reaches for his fallen rifle. Lola scrambles to his feet as the sniper raises his gun.

Ringo dives on the Chechen, jaws clamping down on the man's hand. Hassan screams as Paul and Lola join the fray, ending the sniper with brutal efficiency.

EXT. SIBERIAN FOREST - DAY

Borz and Lyoma, the last of the Chechens, run through the woods. While Borz never seems to tire or show fear, Lyoma looks exhausted.

George and John chase them now, gaining ground quickly. Borz pulls out a grenade, turns, and hurls it at the dogs.

The dogs, trained to recognize a grenade, split off in separate directions, sprinting to safety before the explosion.

INT. CREVICE - DAY

Whistler pushes Surkho off of him. He stares into the distance where the sniper shot must have come from. He smiles. He knows only one man who could have made that shot.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - DAY

Borz and Lyoma run toward a clearing in the woods. As they leave the cover of the trees, Borz pauses, perhaps sensing something is amiss. Whatever he detects, he does not raise his voice in time.

KOVALENKO (U.S.)

(Russian with English subtitle)

Halt!

Borz and Lyoma stop in the center of the clearing. They slowly turn and realize they are surrounded: Kovalenko and the forty Russian airborne soldiers emerge from the woods, rifles trained on the Chechens.

KOVALENKO (CONT'D)

Drop your weapons!

Lyoma looks up at his father.

Borz stares into his son's eyes. For all his brutality, there can be no doubt that Borz loves his child.

In one swift motion Borz raises his gun and shoots Lyoma in the head.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The paratroopers open fire. Dozens of bullets wrack Borz's body. He sags to his knees before falling beside Lyoma.

Kovalenko approaches the fallen warlord and kicks aside Borz's submachine-gun. He stares down at Borz, who gasps for air, blood leaking from his mouth and nostrils.

KOVALENKO (CONT'D)

You killed your own son.

Borz closes his eyes.

BORZ

Better to die a free man than live as a slave.

Borz's back arches as his last breath passes through him.

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - DAY

Whistler stumbles down the slope. Now that the battle is over and his adrenaline has faded, his hunger and exhaustion begin to assert themselves.

Lola sprints out of the woods and tackles Whistler, licking his beard happily. Whistler laughs and kisses the dog.

BIELSKI (O.S.)

Tommy.

Whistler raises his head and sees Bielski walking toward him. Whistler stands. The two men stare at each other. Both have changed radically since the last time they saw each other.

They embrace.

EXT. SKIES OF SIBERIA - SUNSET

The Condor wings west toward the setting sun.

INT. AN-124 CONDOR - SUNSET

Kovalenko offers his flask to Bielski and Whistler. Both men take swigs. Bielski grimaces.

KOVALENKO

Potato vodka! Best in world.

Kovalenko takes a long guzzle. He stands and walks through the cabin, offering the flask to the grateful paratroopers.

Bielski watches the Russians drink.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BIELSKI
I ran on you.

Whistler squints, confused.

BIELSKI (CONT'D)
In Yemen. I ran.

Whistler realizes what Bielski is talking about.

WHISTLER
I ordered you to run.

Bielski stares at his friend.

BIELSKI
You did?

Whistler nods.

BIELSKI (CONT'D)
I never heard the order.

Whistler watches his friend with great fondness.

WHISTLER
Jesus Christ, Leon.
(beat)
Best shot I ever saw, by the way.

EXT. KLUCENICE - NIGHT

CZECH PEDESTRIANS stroll along the cobblestone streets of the quaint town. It's Christmas time. The trees are strung with lights. The shop windows glow with inviting warmth.

INT. RESTAURANT JEZERA - NIGHT

Apolina, the black-haired beauty last seen on the shore of Lake Orlik, stands beside the table of a well-fed CZECH FAMILY, jotting down their order.

She smiles and walks away from their table.

WHISTLER (O.S.)
Apolina.

Apolina turns and sees Whistler standing in the doorway. Lola sits by his feet.

Whistler holds up the tag from Apolina's beach towel. His next line is in Czech-- clearly he's been practicing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WHISTLER (CONT'D)

I'm sorry I'm late.

Apolina, still a bit shocked, raises her hand to her mouth as her face breaks into a wide grin.

EXT. FORT HUACHUCA - HILLSIDE - DAY

Giulietta sits with her back against a juniper tree, feeding a newborn PUPPY with an eyedropper of milk. The puppy is so young his eyes haven't opened yet.

BIELSKI (O.S.)

Hard to believe he's gonna be a soldier some day.

Giulietta looks up and sees Bielski standing in the sunshine. A big smile brightens her face. She averts her eyes but cannot hide how happy she is to see him.

She looks down at the blind pup in her arms.

GIULIETTA

This one's not a fighter. This one stays home with me.

BIELSKI

Lucky-dog.

Bielski sits in the shade of the juniper tree, a few feet away from Giulietta and the puppy.

We begin to PULL BACK, moving farther from the juniper tree. We see a few older puppies, roughhousing in the grass. We continue PULLING BACK, and see adult dogs sleeping in the sun, chasing each other in circles, lapping up water from bowls. Far from the world of land mines and snipers, with no officers shouting orders and no guns firing bullets, this looks like paradise for dogs.

Bielski and Giulietta sit under the tree, the only two people in sight.