

"BLOOD DIAMOND"
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THESE WORDS APPEAR:

"SIERRA LEONE, 1999"

1 INT. - A HUT - BEFORE DAWN

1

A MAN'S HAND, hardworking, rough, lights twigs under a kettle.

Predawn light trickles through the tin walls onto well worn farming tools...hoe, pick, axe, a yoke for an ox. Animist totems and charms hang. We are in a typical Mende FARMER'S HUT. Except for the ENGLISH SCHOOLBOOKS on a shelf.

The HAND that lit the kettle takes the books off the shelf and gently nudges a 14-year-old BOY awake with them. The boy, DIA is his name, groans in sleepy protest.

SOLOMON VANDY smiles down at his son.

SOLOMON
(in Mende; subtitled)
Don't want to be late.

The boy sits up, half asleep. Sleepily pulls a shirt over his head. His English is more schooled than his father's.

DIA
(in Mende; subtitled)
English boys go to school every day?

Solomon fills a tin cup of powdered milk. He is a man marked by quiet patience, in the worn trousers and white cotton shirt of a Mende farmer. He hands the cup to the boy.

SOLOMON
(in Mende; subtitled)
Yes, they do.

DIA
(in Mende; subtitled)
Not every day.

SOLOMON
(in Mende; subtitled)
Every day. Just like you. So you
can become a doctor. Not walk behind
an ox like your father.

The boy catches his MOTHER's eye as she breast-feeds his INFANT BROTHER. His twelve-year old sister, N'YANDA, snuggles with them. She sticks her tongue out at her brother.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)
Don't worry. She will be joining
you next year.

JASSIE sends both her men a kiss as they head out.

JASSIE
 (in Mende, subtitled)
Be careful on the road.

Solomon gives his wife an "I know" look.

2 EXT. HUT - VILLAGE - CONTINUOUS 2

Solomon and Dia emerge into the early light. Their hut is in a hamlet amidst cassava patches eeked out of the jungle.

DIA
 Don't want to be a doctor.
 (off Solomon's look)
 I want to be President.

Solomon puts his arm around him. They head into the fields.

CREDITS OVER

3 SOLOMON AS HE WORKS IN THE FIELDS. IT IS A TIMELESS 3
 PICTURE. ONE OF PASTORAL BEAUTY AND SIMPLICITY.

4 AT NOONTIME, JASSIE AND N'YANDA GRING LUNCH. THEY SIT IN 4
 THE SHADE OF A HUGE BEOBOB TREE.

5 DIA RETURNS HOME, CARRYING HIS SCHOOLBOOKS. NOW HE WORKS 5
 BESIDE HIS FATHER.

6 THE SUN IS ALREADY LOW AS THEY RETURN TO THE VILLAGE 6

CREDITS END

Solomon stands stock still, sensing something ... A few chickens flit away without crowing. The oxen are skittish.

SOLOMON
 Go back inside... NOW!

Dia is confused. Solomon pushes him into the hut as grinning TEENAGE REBELS appear. One wears a Tupac t-shirt. He rakes everything with AK-47 FIRE. Huts. Animals. People.

Solomon dives to the ground. VILLAGERS run screaming. Chickens squawk, oxen bray. A rumble. Two mud-splattered PICK-UP TRUCKS with sawed-off roofs crash through the brush, full of R.U.F. REBELS, who quickly jump off -- shouting, wielding machetes and automatic rifles, BANDOLIERS OF AMMO criss-crossed on their bare chests, GRENADES on their belts.

Solomon cowers amidst the gunfire, looks around frantically. Men and boys are being rounded up. Huts set on fire. Suddenly he is yanked up as two REBELS pull him away--

Jassie exits their hut, infant in her arms, mad with fear --

JASSIE

Solomon!

He shouts back. Only one word.

SOLOMON

Run!

She doesn't. She just stands there screaming his name. Now Solomon's son and daughter come out of the hut.

DIA

PAPA!

Solomon, the rifle choking him, as he's dragged away.

SOLOMON

RUN!

Jassie grabs her son's arm. He resists, staring in anguish at his father. But she tugs at him. And with the two younger children in tow, they join others. Running.

Solomon watches them disappear into the bush.

7 IN THE NEXT MOMENT

7

he's rounded up with the OTHER MALES. Only a few able-bodied among them. Most are old, skinny men and terrified boys.

REBELS prod them with rifles, making them form a line. All under the watchful sunglasses of an R.U.F. COLONEL.

The FIRST VILLAGER is shoved to his knees in front of a tree stump. A muscle-bound, SHIRTLESS REBEL with a gleaming AXE struts over, his eyes glazed from palm wine and marijuana.

A second rebel grabs the village man's HAND and places it on the stump. The man pulls his hand away. Tupac t-shirt puts the Ak-47 to his head.

The choice is clear. Your head or your hands.

The villager tries to scramble away. RAT-A-TAT! Bullet through his head. The choice is made for him.

The next man in line is made to kneel at the stump.

TUPAC T-SHIRT

Long sleeve or short sleeve?

The other stoned rebels find this hilarious.

ON SOLOMON, witnessing his mutilation as terrified WALLS rise around him. The discarded limb is thrown into a bag.

The next in line, A STRONG YOUNG MAN, is pushed to the stump.

R.U.F. COLONEL
Not him. He can work.

The STRONG YOUNG MAN is herded into a waiting truck. Next comes AN OLD MAN. Shaking, he offers his withered hand.

ON SOLOMON. The "crunch" of the axe bores into his soul.

The old man is lifted to his feet in clinical shock. Both his forearms end in bloody stumps.

R.U.F. COLONEL (CONT'D)
You are the messenger. Spread the word. Guv'ment say da future is in your hands? We say R.U.F. is da future. Revolution is at hand.

Solomon is next. He closes his eyes as his hand is placed on the tree stump slick with blood. The Colonel looks him over. Motions the henchmen to stop.

R.U. F. COLONEL
You will need your hands.

Solomon is herded into the truck.

8 EXT. SIERRA LEONE --(SEEN FROM ABOVE) 8

A seaplane soars above the bush. At the stick, DANNY ARCHER. He has seen more in his thirty years than most people have seen in a lifetime of watching bad television.

He scans the landscape then dips toward the estuary of a broad river, eventually splashing to a stop.

9 NEARBY, ON THE SANDY BANK 9

Sitting in a lawn chair is COMMANDER RAMBO, a twenty year-old R.U.F. fighter with a goatee, wrap-around sunglasses, and a Bob Marley t-shirt. Arrayed behind him, several BODYGUARDS cradle automatic weapons while eating m&m's. A huge BOOM BOX throbs out Tupac's "If I Die 2Nite."

10 INT. COCKPIT 10

FAWAZ, a thin Lebanese man, sits beside Archer and eyes the rebels waiting on the riverbank. Murmurs a prayer in Arabic.

ARCHER
Say one for me, my friend.

Archer closes his eyes for a moment, then checks the clip on his 9mm Sig-Sauer before tucking it into his belt and pulling his shirt-tails over it. Takes a deep breath.

11 EXT. ON SHORE

11

Archer wades in and approaches the group. Imagine teenagers on a corner in Bed-Sty carrying AK-47's. Their menace is palpable even as they laugh and pass around a big spliff.

ARCHER

You are Colonel Zero?

COMMANDER RAMBO

I am Commander Rambo.

ARCHER

What happened to Colonel Zero?

No response. A few of the rebels giggle.

COMMANDER RAMBO

He was not committed to the revolution. You are here to help us in our struggle against the oppressor.

ARCHER

I'm here to do business.

They eye each other in silence.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

You have something for me.

COMMANDER RAMBO

First you will show me what you have brought.

ARCHER

No. First you will pay for them.

Rambo looks at him with dead eyes. Archer looks back with eyes equally dead. A nasty stand-off. Until Rambo hands him a small, filthy cloth SACK. Archer tips a few rough diamonds into his hand.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

(in Krio; subtitled)

This is not what was agreed.

COMANDER RAMBO

(in Krio; subtitled)

Maybe I will take the weapons and give you nothing.

Archer closes his eyes again, looks back at the seaplane. The cargo door SLIDES OPEN, revealing the muzzle of a M-130 Assault Weapon. Fawaz racks its slide.

In response, the Rebels slide the bolts on their weapons.

ARCHER
 (in Krio; subtitled)
 Maybe I'll just do my business with
 the government. At least the
 oppressor pays his bills.

He turns and starts back toward the plane.

COMMANDER RAMBO
 Wait... Wait...

Rambo smiles as if it has all been a joke. He reaches into
 a rusty coffee can and pulls out a huge handful of diamonds.

COMMANDER RAMBO (CONT'D)
 This is what you want? Here... So
 many, I don't know what to do with
 them all.

He gestures for Archer to hold out his hands and pours him a
 handful.

COMMANDER
 You bring a satellite dish next time,
 yah? I want to watch NYPD Blue.

11A MOMENTS LATER 11A

As the seaplane takes off, we see the rebels unloading crates
 of RPGs with Ukranian markings.

12 INT. PLANE 12

Fawaz gleefully examines their haul.

FAWAZ
 I'm buying an electronics store.
 Sit on my ass all day, drink sweet
 tea and watch dvd's. How about it,
 Danny?

Archer closes his eyes for a moment. He is free.

ARCHER
 Fly the plane.

13 EXT. DIAMOND FIELD - SIERRA LEONE - DAY 13

An open pit alluvial mine carved beside a jungle river. Men
 and boys toil knee deep in muddy water. They dig with their
 hands, shoveling silt into wooden troughs. All under the
 watchful eyes and guns of R.U.F. REBELS who stand on the
 banks passing a fat joint rolled in newspaper.

Meanwhile, their leader -- CAPTAIN POISON -- spouts twisted
 revolutionary dogma to the diggers:

CAPTAIN POISON

The Freetown gov-a-ment and their
white masters have raped your land
to feed their greed! We have freed
you! No more slave and master here!
We are all brothers!

Solomon, his back straining under the weight of a circular
sieve, pauses to wipe sweat from his eyes. He's prodded
with a rifle, looks up into the fierce FACE of Captain Poison.

CAPTAIN POISON (CONT'D)

Back to work! Your work is your
liberation! Work harder! Dig harder!

Solomon turns back to his sieve. ANOTHER DIGGER, peers into
his sieve, plucks something out, holds it up in his hand.

DIGGER

Kunaa!

All work stops. A rebel comes over. The digger hands him
the tiny, milky crystal. A diamond. Without a word, the
Commander wraps the stone in a piece of paper.

As work resumes, Solomon watches the piece of paper handed
off to a RUNNER, who runs it over to the SAME COMMANDER, who
sits under the shade of a palm frond umbrella reading a
Hustler magazine. He stuffs the diamond into his shirt pocket
without even looking at it.

Across from Solomon, a 3RD DIGGER glances around. Furtively
picks a stone from the sieve and slips it into his mouth.

He meets Solomon's eyes. Solomon looks away, keeps working.
When he becomes aware of Captain Poison's eyes on him.
Solomon tries to shake off the eyes by shaking the sieve.

Captain Poison remains staring at him, intently. Then, calmly
walks over to the 3rd digger with the diamond in his mouth.
AND SHOOTS HIM, at point blank range.

Everything stops. Poison turns back to Solomon.

CAPTAIN POISON

You. Bring him out.

Solomon puts down his sieve. Looks at the BODY floating
next to him, turning the muddy water red ...

SOLOMON (V.O.)

Dear Jassie. I cannot write well
enough to put in a letter all the
thoughts in my head.

14 EXT. R.U.F. DIAMOND CAMP - SUNSET 14

Solomon devours a meager portion of rice gruel in a tin cup. Others sleep in their fetid clothes on the ground.

SOLOMON (V.O.)
Even if I could, my guards would not
let me send it.

15 EXT. DIAMOND CAMP - NIGHT 15

Solomon sits shivering, looking out at the guards on watch. Beyond, a lit TENT where rebels drink and shout back at a satellite TV playing, "Who Wants To Be a Millionaire."

SOLOMON (V.O.)
I do not know where you are. I do
not even know where I am.

16 EXT. SOMEWHERE IN THE BINTUMANI FOOTHILLS 16

Jassie and the children are among a group of homeless Mende. Dia carries the infant. Hearing trucks coming, they scatter into the bush. An R.U.F. convoy roars past. After a moment, they return to the road.

SOLOMON (V.O.)
I only know that my thoughts fly
over the mountains to you.

17 EXT. BED OF GRASS - NIGHT 17

Solomon lays there. Eyes open in a living nightmare.

SOLOMON (V.O.)
I will find you, Jassie. If it takes
my whole life. We will be together.

18 EXT. MOUNTAINS - DAY 18

A high pass. Misty peaks in the distance. A BRILLIANT RED SHAPE comes into view - the bright headdress of a HAUSA SHEPHERD. He carries a spear as he leads a herd of GOATS, bells clinking around their necks.

Picking up the rear is Archer, checking a handheld GPS. His SATELLITE PHONE buzzes...

ARCHER
We're two clicks from the strip.
What've you got?

19 EXT/INT. TWIN ENGINE TURBO PROP - FLYING - SAME 19

Piloted by Fawaz. He speaks into his SAT phone, worriedly looking down on the dense jungle canopy.

FAWAZ
...Company.

20 EXT. MOUNTAINS - SAME

20

Sure enough, over the hill, comes an armed patrol of ECOMOG SOLDIERS. The TROOP LEADER approaches Archer.

TROOP LEADER
Papers.

Archer fishes out identification. Hands it over.

ARCHER
Elliot Smith, National Geographic.

TROOP LEADER
You are crossing into Liberia.

ARCHER
I have a letter from the Minister of Interior and a Liberian visa as well.
(as the Captain studies the papers)
Doing a story on the Hausa who, as you know, are allowed to cross the border to get to grazing grounds.

Up above, the tiny plane drones past. The troop leader glances up, then at Archer, who courteously offers an unopened pack of cigarettes from his shirt pocket.

ARCHER (CONT'D)
Ever read National Geographic?

The troop leader ignores him, walks over to a goat and runs his hands down the goat's back, under its chin. His hands part a tuft of hair -- revealing a surgically straight line of STITCHES in the goat's skin.

Archer feels the shape of the 9mm under his shirt, looks around at the rifles. Too many of them.

The troop leader takes out a KNIFE and cuts into the stitches. The goat squeals a little and kicks angrily. From under the goat's skin, he takes a dozen small, rough DIAMONDS.

The troop leader draws his .45 on Archer.

TROOP LEADER
You are under arrest for smuggling.

ARCHER
Now you listen here, my man. I am a good friend of Minister Somora. He will not be pleased you have interfered with his business.

Clearly the name of Minister Somora carries some weight.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

You know who I am, don't you? What
I am...? I don't think you want to
mess with me. Or my friends, eh?

(changes his tack)

How about I just look the other way
and you pocket one or two of those
stones. Buy something nice for the
wife. Or maybe the mistress, eh?

(re the shepherds)

Who's going to tell? Them?

The shepherds look, uncertain, from Archer to the soldier.

TROOP LEADER

No.

The troop leader FIRES. One of the shepherds falls dead.
The other is cut down as he tries to flee. The leader frowns
at Archer, whose world has suddenly turned upside down.

TROOP LEADER (CONT'D)

We will go back to Freetown and ask
Minister Somora how he wishes to
thank his business associate.

21 INT. AN ANONYMOUS ROOM -- DAY

21

Archer is handcuffed to a chair. A large, rotund FIGURE
enters, silhouetted against the bright windows.

ARCHER

Mr. Minister, there seems to have
been a terrible misunderst--

SOMORA BACKHANDS him. Archer's head rocks backwards.

MINISTER SOMORA

I thought we were friends.

ARCHER

You're right, you're right... I
took a little initiative but--

Another SLAP.

MINISTER SOMORA

Have I not been good to you?

ARCHER

(licks his split lip)
Absolutely. And I was planning to
cut you in. Haven't I always been--

This SLAP knocks Archer's chair backwards to the cement. He lies there for a moment. Somora looms over him.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

Look... if you wanted to kill me, you would've done it already. So what is it you want me to do?

Somora smiles. One of his teeth has a tiny diamond.

22 INT. THE UNITED NATIONS - NEW YORK - DAY

22

The SECRETARY GENERAL of the UN addresses a a full ASSEMBLY.

SECRETARY GENERAL

We propose then to prohibit the direct or indirect import of all rough diamonds from conflict zones to the territory of Member States.

He looks at the front row where TWO MEN IN SAVILLE ROW SUITS sit among the Representatives. One is sandy-haired, 40, his name is SIMMONS. He serves a distinguished-looking older man, 60, with a shock of white hair. His name is DE WENTE.

SECRETARY GENERAL (CONT'D)

As we know, these stones are only a small percentage of the legitimate diamond industry -- whose trade is crucial to the economies of several emerging nations, and I applaud their support of such a ban.

The well-dressed diamond industry reps smile back.

23 LATER - CHAMPAGNE IS SERVED

23

in a reception hall. The Diamond industry REPS and WIVES mingle with UN MEMBERS and other DIGNITARIES. US AMBASSADOR WALKER approaches De Wente, holds out his hand.

AMBASSADOR WALKER

Mister De Wente... Judd Walker--

DE WENTE

Ambassador. Good to finally meet you.

AMBASSADOR WALKER

You don't spend much time this side of the Atlantic.

DE WENTE

I'm hoping to change that. Perhaps with your help.

AMBASSADOR WALKER

Mr. De Wente, I'm afraid I don't have much faith in any industry's ability to police itself.

DE WENTE

I assure you, sir, we both want the same thing. These 'conflict' stones put the legitimacy of our entire business at risk.

De Wente's young blonde WIFE appears at his side. It's hard to decide which is more beautiful, the woman or the two-million-dollar DIAMOND NECKLACE she's wearing.

DE WENTE (CONT'D)

Darling... This is Ambassador Walker.

DE WENTE'S WIFE

How nice to meet you.

DE WENTE

(his arm around her)
It's my belief, Ambassador, that diamonds should be associated with romance and beauty. Not warfare. Don't you agree?

How can the Ambassador not be dazzled? From the glittering diamonds, we cut to:

24 EXT. DIAMOND FIELD - PIT - DAY

24

Solomon works in the muddy water, his eyes transfixed by the sparkling reflections of the river and the swaying trees that seem so unaffected by the brutality beneath.

SOLOMON (V.O.)

Dear Jassie. How can it be that one stone is worth more than another?

Solomon wills himself back to the soul-killing work.

Suddenly, a WATER PUMP BREAKS -- gushing like a fire hose -- knocking over Solomon and several diggers. Solomon's sieve is swept down river. He swims after the SIEVE. Grabs it, sloshing his way back, when he stops...

There, underwater, by the riverbank, is something SHINY ENOUGH to reflect the sun. As the silt washes away, the object remains underwater. A ROCK of a startling pink color.

Solomon blinks down at it. The DIAMOND sparkles up at him.

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

And how can a thing that comes from
our mother the earth be so beautiful
as to make people want to kill?

Solomon looks around. Rebel guards are fixing the pump,
shouting at diggers to get back to work.

Solomon scoops the diamond into his sieve, covers it with
silt. His heart is pounding as he wades back to the bank.

REBEL GUARD

You daydreaming? Get back to work!

Solomon nods. Quickly submerges his silt-heaped sieve.

25 EXT. UNDERNEATH THE MUDDY WATER - CONTINUOUS 25

Solomon overturns the sieve. His BARE FOOT catches the
diamond.

26 EXT. ABOVE THE WATER - SAME 26

Solomon raises his hand to get the guards' attention. He
clutches his abdomen, painfully.

SOLOMON

I must go badly.
(pleading)
Can't hold it in, boss.

The guard motions him out. Solomon climbs out, sliding his
second foot carefully. He shuffles to the edge of the jungle.

CAPTAIN POISON

Stop.

Solomon freezes. Poison searches Solomon. Starting with
his hair, his ears, nose. Squeezing his cheeks to see into
his mouth. Frisking his pants, unrolling his cuffs.

CAPTAIN POISON (CONT'D)

Lift your foot.

Solomon lifts his right foot. They check between his toes.

CAPTAIN POISON (CONT'D)

The other.

Solomon, looking into Poison's eyes, lifts his left foot.
Poison checks between the toes. Satisfied.

CAPTAIN POISON (CONT'D)

Make it quick.

CLOSE ON SOLOMON'S FOOT, as he lowers it. The toes curl
into the soft muddy earth, obviously retrieving something.

27 EXT. EDGE OF JUNGLE - MOMENTS LATER

27

As Solomon squats behind a fallen tree, he eyes the guards through the broad leaves.

Quickly, his toes release the muddy gob under his foot. He rubs the mud off it. It's raw beauty is almost unnatural.

He glances back to make sure he is unobserved and then rips the cuff off his pants.

A CLICK at his head.

Solomon slowly looks up ... into the BARREL OF A COLT .45.

CAPTAIN POISON

Give it to me.

Solomon doesn't move. What difference does it make? He awaits the crack of the gun, when:

A MORTAR ROUND COMES SCREAMING OUT OF THE JUNGLE.

THE EXPLOSION knocks Solomon to the ground.

MORE MORTARS. ECOMOG government troops appear, firing automatic weapons. Solomon scrambles over to Poison's bleeding body, removes the MACHETE from the belt.

As shrapnel shreds the greenery, he furiously digs with the machete. Wraps the DIAMOND in his TORN GREEN CUFF and plants it in the hole.

When he is STRUCK IN THE HEAD BY A RIFLE BUTT.

He falls. ECOMOG SOLDIERS are shouting at him in Mende. Solomon realizes he still holds the machete, lets it drop.

SOLOMON

Don't shoot! I am not R.U.F!

Around him ECOMOG soldiers beat the rebel prisoners with sticks -- in the distance, others are EXECUTED at random.

28 EXT. FREETOWN - DAY

28

A convoy of MILITARY TRUCKS rolls through teeming streets. Women walk with baskets on their heads, tribal bells jingling around their ankles. "Businessmen" in white suits sip Coca-Colas outside a hotel. A UN helicopter circles overhead.

29 EXT. BACK OF A MILITARY TRUCK - SAME

29

Solomon sits chained to other rebel prisoners. He's never been to a city, never seen so many people. It's overwhelming.

He stares at the BEGGARS who run alongside. War orphans, the same age as his own son. He searches every face ...

30 INT. FREETOWN PRISON (PADEMBA ROAD) -- DAY

30

Archer looks up from a game of solitaire as REBEL PRISONERS are marched past his dank cell.

REBEL #1
R.U.F. is coming! Operation Chop
Hands! Get ready, my brothers!

Archer turns his attention back to his game as the cell door next to his is opened and Solomon is thrown in.

SOLOMON
I am not R.U.F. My name is Solomon
Vandy! I am a farmer!

Archer assesses him. Solomon gives him a hard stare.

MORE PRISONERS are brought in, one carried on a stretcher. A bandage covers half his face. But when he turns his head, we see that it's Captain Poison. Solomon turns away.

Poison lifts his head, squinting through the CELL BARS.

CAPTAIN POISON
What did you do with it?

Solomon doesn't acknowledge Poison.

CAPTAIN POISON (CONT'D)
I'm talking to you! You hear me!?
Where is the diamond!?

Archer pricks up his ears, but goes on playing solitaire.

CAPTAIN POISON (CONT'D)
A pink diamond. I saw you take it!!

Archer's hand, flipping over a card, stops. Listening intently now but careful not to show it.

SOLOMON
You are mad. I do not know you.

CAPTAIN POISON
I saw it with my own eyes!!

Poison reaches into his sweat stained shirt, an IVORY CHARM from around his neck. Holds it up for all to see.

CAPTAIN POISON (CONT'D)
This big! Biggest I have ever seen!!

Solomon just shakes his head, absurdly.

BUT ARCHER'S EYES...are on the ivory charm, even as he keeps playing solitaire. Poison calls to the guards.

CAPTAIN POISON (CONT'D)

I will give a thousand dollars to
the man who cuts it out of him!

These words do something to Solomon. He stands and rips off his shirt. Then his torn pants. Everything. Until he stands completely naked, facing Captain Poison through the bars.

SOLOMON

Where is a diamond? Do you see a
diamond!? You devils have taken my
family. My home. Everything! Here!
Look! What is left!? What is left!?
If there is a diamond, then you are
the one who has taken it!!

Poison lifts his upper body from the stretcher.

CAPTAIN POISON

Liar! He's a LIAR!

The army guards have had enough. They silence Poison with a rifle butt to the face. As they drag him away, they give Solomon a "got my eye on you, too" glare.

Archer lays out a new hand of solitaire. His eyes move to Solomon, then away. He's heard all he has to.

Solomon begins putting his clothes back on. The fury still in his eyes. Through the bars, he gives Archer a final glare. Archer turns away, just keeps playing cards.

But then ... ever so carefully ... he picks out the ACE OF DIAMONDS. Folds it in half. He gets up and goes to his cell door. Waits until a PRISON GUARD passes by.

ARCHER

Excuse me, brother. Think you could
get a message to Minister Somora?

The prison guard sees the PACK OF CIGARETTES - and the folded card - that Archer holds through the bars.

31 EXT. PRISON GATE -- NEXT DAY

31

Archer walks out into the street, blinks in the sunlight.

ACROSS THE STREET - THE SAME SCENE

is observed in the REARVIEW MIRROR of a parked car by a man with a reddish crewcut. His name is JOOST.

FAWAZ appears and hands Archer his hat.

FAWAZ
How on earth did you get them to let
you go?

ARCHER
There's a farmer in there. He
might've found a pink.

FAWAZ
And what? You told Somora you'd get
hold of it?

ARCHER
I need to contact our friends in
London.

FAWAZ
I thought we were working for Somora.

ARCHER
Who needs Somora if the pink is real?

Archer can tell that Fawaz is holding something back.

ARCHER (CONT'D)
--What?

FAWAZ
London wants nothing more to do with
you.

Fawaz hands him a newspaper clipping.

ARCHER
(reads)
"The arrest in Sierra Leone on June
One of Daniel Archer, former mercenary
and smuggler with ties to the De
Wente diamond cartel highlights the
trafficking problem blah blah blah..."
(crumples it)
Fucking hell.

He starts off down the street, calling over his shoulder.

ARCHER (CONT'D)
His name is Solomon something...
Mortgage the plane if you have to --
just get him out.

32 INT. A SHABBY ROOM IN AN APARTMENT HOTEL -- DAY

32

Dripping wet from a shower, Archer is working the phone.

ARCHER
 (on the phone)
Well, can you tell Mr. De Wente
 Danny Archer called?.....Archer.
 A...R...

JUMP CUT -- LATER -- ANOTHER CALL

Archer smokes his tenth cigarette.

ARCHER (CONT'D)
 (on the phone)
 What time did he say he'd be back?

JUMP CUT -- LATER -- ANOTHER CALL

Archer pounds his fist into a wall.

ARCHER (CONT'D)
 Yes, he definitely knows what this
 is in regard to.....Yes....
 Yes.....I've been holding....

In frustration, he throws the phone across the room.

33 EXT. FREETOWN STREET -- DAY

33

Archer leaves the shabby hotel, having changed clothes. He is mobbed by the inevitable swarm of beggars who call him by name...."Arrrr-cherrr, Arrrr-cherrr."

ARCHER
 Piss off.

He pushes his way past without a trace of compassion.

34 MEANWHILE -- THE DOOR TO ARCHER'S HOTEL ROOM IS KICKED OPEN

34

JOOST, the man we saw surveilling Archer, enters and begins to SEARCH the room. He is professional and brutal -- ripping apart bedding, smashing the phone machine, even slitting the carpet into thin strips with a razor blade.

It is clear he is looking for something quite small.

35 EXT. BEACH BAR -- DAY

35

Every war zone has a place like this. Soldiers, smugglers, opportunists of every stripe stand shoulder to shoulder at a bamboo bar. Bad guys and do-gooders, UN workers and eco-backpackers drink overpriced, watered-down liquor, trade gossip, and hook up for desperate expatriate sex. "Sierra Afrique" blends African drums and electric bass.

Every now and then, in the distant hills, the muted SOUND OF AN EXPLOSION and a rising COLUMN OF SMOKE. No one pays any attention. There is serious drinking to be done.

As Archer shoulders his way past, we OVERHEAR brief snippets of conversation. A Nigerian peacekeeper hits on a tipsy blond Red Cross Worker.

PEACEKEEPER

This place is nothing but hustlers and dopers. I will take you back to Nigeria. Show you the real Africa.

RED CROSS WORKER

Is that so?

He whispers in her ear and she giggles. Next to them, two SUITS from the Chemical Bank:

SUIT #1

-- Fifty thousand in cash. And that's just to get a meeting with him.

SUIT #2

The only difference between the crooks who run the country and the R.U.F.--

The AFRICAN BARTENDER (M'ED) serves their drinks.

AFRICAN BARTENDER (M'ED)

--is fifty miles. Word on de street dey took Marampa yesterday.

He points up into the hills where another explosion rises.

AFRICAN BARTENDER (M'ED) (CONT'D)

Time to reconfirm dose flight reservations, maybe.

Archer approaches the bar. His arrival is cause for several whispered remarks among those in the know.

AFRICAN BARTENDER (M'ED) (CONT'D)

How de body, Mr. Archer?

ARCHER

Every day above ground, M'ed...
(looks to the hills)
Your rebel friends planning to visit us one of these days?

AFRICAN BARTENDER (M'ED)

Oh, I 'magine dey come do some shopping verry soon.

He laughs darkly. Archer salutes him with his drink. Nearby, an ATTRACTIVE WOMAN taps her swizzle stick on the bar as Oasis' "Party Like It's '99" ends:

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
 This is the Voice of America. Another
 good day on Wall Street, the Dow
 Jones up twenty-five points, the
 Nasdaq up forty... In the White House,
 President Clinton again defended his
 relationship with Monica Lewinsky--

The woman near Archer speaks up:

WOMAN
 Are you listening to this? The
 world's falling apart and all we
 hear about is Blowjobgate...

Archer turns to MADDY BOWEN. Maddy's a 'handful' whose beauty
 belies the kind of fierce intelligence that sends most men
 running for the door. Archer likes what he sees.

ARCHER
 When's the last time the world wasn't
 falling apart?

MADDY
 Oh. A realist. Been there, done
 that, got the t-shirt. Is that it?

ARCHER
 Danny Archer.

MADDY
 Maddy Bowen.

ARCHER
 (appraising her)
 American.

MADDY
 Guilty.

ARCHER
 Americans usually are.

Maddy raises an eyebrow. He plays rough. She likes it.

MADDY
 Ouch.

ARCHER
 Don't tell me, you're here to make a
 difference.

MADDY
 And you're here to make a buck.

Archer smiles. It's been a long time since he was interested.

ARCHER

See that guy? Government minister caught pocketing disaster relief money. Bad move, know why? Wasn't giving a big enough cut to his boss...

(points nearby)

That one...? Sells AK-47's to the rebels and waits for a cease-fire to buy 'em at a discount, then after the fighting starts again, sells them back at a profit.

MADDY

And your point is?

ARCHER

The point is, it's Africa. There is no point. You want another?

MADDY

Vodka. Rocks.

Archer catches Med's eye -- who nods approvingly at Maddy.

ARCHER

M'ed. Same again.

MADDY

You were born here?

ARCHER

Rhodesia.

MADDY

You were there during the war? Must have been rough.

ARCHER

(offering nothing)

Loved it.

MADDY

And you're a smuggler.

ARCHER

Am I?

MADDY

Somehow I don't take you as the UNICEF type.

Archer just smiles.

MADDY (CONT'D)

I was going to say 'soldier-of-fortune' but it's such a cliché.

ARCHER
How about hired gun. People seem to like that one.

MADDY
Diamonds?

ARCHER
What if I told you I was a missionary.

MADDY
(laughs)
For De Wente?

ARCHER
It's not just rude to ask those kind of questions, Ms. Bowen, it's also dangerous.

MADDY
I'll take my chances.
(leans closer)
So... tell me about blood diamonds.

And then, suddenly, Archer gets it. His face turns to stone.

ARCHER
...You're a journalist.

MADDY
That's right.

Archer stands up from his stool.

ARCHER
Piss off.

He throws some money onto the bar. Maddy follows him out.

36 EXT. BEACH BAR -- CONTINUOUS

36

MADDY
De Wente Diamonds closed its buying offices here to avoid U.N. sanctions. But they're using cut-outs to buy stones from the rebels on the cheap. That way nobody accuses them of profiting from the war --which they clearly are.

ARCHER
I'm shocked.

MADDY

You got popped trying to go free-lance, so they cut you loose and let you rot in jail.

(grabs him)

Don't you want a chance to get even?

He keeps walking.

MADDY (CONT'D)

Hey, wait a second.

She grabs his arm. Moves closer.

MADDY (CONT'D)

(the slightest sexual promise)

Help me out here...

He can't help but give a bitter laugh.

ARCHER

Maddy, right?

(she nods)

...Usually I liked to be kissed before I get fucked.

He walks off, leaving her to the inevitable swarm of beggars.

37 INT. ARCHER'S HOTEL ROOM -- AFTERNOON (MUSIC OVER) 37

Archer walks in and sees the wreckage of his life.

IN THE BATHROOM -- MOMENTS LATER (MUSIC OVER)

Archer stares at himself in the remains of his mirror. He opens a bottle of vodka and chugs it.

38 A FLASH CUT -- GRAINY BLACK & WHITE 38

South African Security Forces BREAK DOWN a door and roust a sleeping middle-aged ANC supporter from his bed. His wife SCREAMS as Archer puts a bag over the man's head.

39 BACK TO THE BATHROOM 39

Archer takes a long pull of vodka and tosses the bottle. With a pliers he grips a false crown atop A BACK TOOTH.

40 ANOTHER FLASH CUT -- GRAINY BLACK & WHITE 40

The Black prisoner is naked, tied to a chair. We do not see what is being done to him. Instead, we study Archer's face as he watches.

- 41 BACK TO THE BATHROOM 41
 Bright drops of blood drip into the sink. Ignoring the incredible pain, Archer rips out the crown.
 Into his palm, he taps a bloody ROUGH DIAMOND.
- 42 EXT. RAWDON STREET (FREETOWN) -- SUNSET (MUSIC OVER) 42
 A crowded street of little STOREFRONTS with hand-painted signs of diamonds. Street merchants lick their palms and hiss as Archer passes.
- 43 INT. FAST EDDIE'S -- LATER (MUSIC OVER) 43
 Little more than a corrugated shack. We see Archer haggling, and reluctantly accepting less cash than his stone is worth.
- 44 INT. FREETOWN - STREETS - LATER THAT DAY 44
 Joost is waiting in the road, making no attempt to hide.

ARCHER

Joost.

JOOST

Long time, mate.

ARCHER

How's Alice?

JOOST

Well, thanks.

ARCHER

Tim must be in college.

JOOST

Big kids, big problems... you know.

ARCHER

Company's doing well?

JOOST

Can't complain. Eleven wars on the continent, business is brisk.

(looks at him)

Heard you had a bit of trouble in the bush.

ARCHER

Somora called you.

JOOST

Minister Somora and the Colonel are old friends.

Joost smiles. Archer takes out a pack of cigarettes, offers one. Joost demurs. Archer pats his pockets for a match.

ARCHER
Got a light?

Joost reaches into his pocket, takes out a lighter. As he leans in to light Archer's cigarette--

ARCHER GRABS HIS HEAD AND SMASHES IT DOWN ONTO HIS UP-THRUST KNEE, LOW-PUNCHES HIM IN THE GROIN, SWEEPS HIS LEGS OUT FROM UNDER HIM, AND THEN STOMPS HIM IN THE KIDNEYS.

ARCHER (CONT'D)
Next time the Colonel has a question.
All he has to do is ask.

He walks away, leaving Joost writhing in the street.

45 EXT. CAPE TOWN AIRPORT -- DAY (MUSIC OVER) 45

Archer pays cash for a round-trip ticket to London.

46 EXT. LONDON (CHARTERHOUSE STREET) -- DAY (MUSIC OVER) 46

The global nexus of the diamond trade. A cab pulls up and Archer gets out, wearing a suit.

ACROSS THE STREET, a small group of PROTESTERS with signs that read, "No Blood Diamonds," and "DTC Funds Torture." One sign has a drawing of a diamond ring on a severed finger.

47 INT. DIAMOND TRADING COMPANY (DTC) -- DAY (MUSIC OVER) 47

Archer passes through security: fingerprint reader, scanner, the works. He is buzzed through an ANTI-BALLISTIC DOOR.

48 INT. IN A WAITING ROOM 48

He glances at the well-lit display cases -- one of which features a replica of the 530-carat "Star of Africa".

A FLAT-SCREEN MONITOR

plays a Ridley Scott commercial for De Wente diamonds. Romantic. Flashy. A young man proposes to a beautiful blushing girl. An older couple celebrate their anniversary. Rappers wearing 'bling' on the Grammy Awards.

DTC CLERK
Mister Simmons will see you now.

49 INT. DTC EXECUTIVE OFFICES -- DAY 49

ROLAND SIMMONS'S office is tasteful and inoffensive. So is Roland Simmons. We last saw him at the UN.

SIMMONS
Come in. Come in. Tea?

ARCHER
No thanks.

SIMMONS
So. What brings you to London?

ARCHER
Reg... Spare me.

Simmons adjusts the trousers of his bespoke suit. He'd rather talk about anything but business, but if Archer insists:

SIMMONS
A month ago, officers of this company sat in front of the United Nations and pledged to uphold a ban on "conflict" diamonds.
(looks out the window)
We are no longer accepting the stones you supply. I'm truly sorry you've come all this way, but our relationship is officially over.

Archer looks around. Realizes.

ARCHER
You're recording this.

Simmons smiles. Archer doesn't give a shit. Record this.

ARCHER (CONT'D)
You're losing your hold on the global market. Big finds in Russia, Canada. You need me more than ever.

Simmons glances at his watch.

SIMMONS
You don't plan to lecture me on the trade, do you?

ARCHER
The trade? Oh, that has such a nicer ring to it than "cartel." "Cartel" is for Columbian drug dealers and oil sheiks. It's so... unbecoming.

Archer stands and walks to a FRAMED WALL PHOTO of the distinguished older MAN whom we last saw at the UN.

ARCHER (CONT'D)
But since it's just the two of us, Reg, let's cut the bullshit.
(MORE)

ARCHER (CONT'D)

You've got eight-billion-dollars-worth of stones gathering dust in those vaults downstairs.

(leans forward)

If you didn't keep 'em off the market, that rock on your finger would cost less than your shoes.

SIMMONS

Fine. Write a book. Tell the BBC.

ARCHER

(continuing over him)

--Which is why it would be a shame if, say, another company got all the press, not the mention the profits from the largest pink ever to find its way to market--

This pulls Simmons up short.

SIMMONS

You're bluffing.

ARCHER

Probably. But if I'm not, you're going to be the one having to explain to Mr. De Wente how it happened.

He stands and starts out.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

Nice talking to you, Reg. Love the new hairline.

Simmons holds up a hand, as if to say, 'wait a second.' He flips a switch and MUSIC fills the room.

SIMMONS

What are you asking?

ARCHER

Ten percent of market as a finder's fee.

SIMMONS

Five.

ARCHER

Seven.

SIMMONS

Agreed.

ARCHER

Always a pleasure doing business.

He turns and walks out. Simmons picks up the phone.

SIMMONS

Get me De Wente.

50 EXT. FREETOWN PRISON -- DAY

50

Solomon walks out of prison to find Fawaz waiting.

FAWAZ

Solomon Vandy?

SOLOMON

What do you want?

FAWAZ

Some friends of mine thought you look like an honest man.

Fawaz hands him a wad of cash and walks away.

51 EXT. HIGH COMMISSION FOR REFUGEES OFFICE - DAY

51

An abandoned school. Men, women with babies swaddled in tribal cloth. They are impatient, unruly.

Solomon sees the line snaking around the block. He walks casually toward the front, acting as if he knows someone.

SOLOMON

Hello my brother. How's de body?

REFUGEE #1

Do I know you?

Solomon insinuates himself beside him in line.

SOLOMON

Sure, sure. We met at your cousin's wedding. Don't you remember?

Another refugee, farther back in line, calls out angrily.

REFUGEE #2

Back in line!

Other refugees join in calling "end of the line," etc. Solomon ignores them, focusing on the man beside him.

SOLOMON

--and how is the happy couple?

The angry refugee GRABS Solomon by the arm.

REFUGEE #2

Hey, mon, who you think you are?

Solomon turns on him with quiet menace.

SOLOMON
If you don't let go, I will break
your arm. Then I will break your
head.

The wild look in Solomon's eye is truly terrifying. The man recoils in fear. The other refugees stop their grumbling.

52 INSIDE THE OFFICE

52

Hundreds of NAMES, posted on reams of paper cover the walls.

Solomon searches the list methodically. Even as he's shoved and pushed, he holds his ground. The names he seeks are not there.

SOLOMON (V.O.)
Dear Jassie. Can it be that no one
in our country has a home?

He looks around for someone in authority. Hears an African SOLDIER speaking Mende.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)
(in Mende, subtitled)
*Please, I must talk to someone. My
family's name is not on the list.*

The soldier, who is being yelled at by five other people simultaneously, replies angrily in subtitled Mende:

MENDE SOLDIER
Go to Kambe, there is another list.

SOLOMON
I have been to Kambe, and Mombolo,
and Tibili, and--

MENDE SOLDIER
Talk to the whites.

He points to a harried RED CROSS OFFICIAL who fields an onslaught of questions. Solomon pushes his way to him.

SOLOMON
Excuse me, sir, my name is--

RED CROSS OFFICIAL
--Check the list.

SOLOMON
I have checked the lists.

The Brit shouts to be heard over the tumult.

RED CROSS OFFICIAL
You have to file papers with the
Office of Refugees!

SOLOMON
I have filed papers!

RED CROSS OFFICIAL
Then God help you, man. Because I
can't.

Solomon wants to scream at him, but the Brit is right.

53 EXT. OUTSIDE THE FIELD OFFICE 53

Solomon sits in the middle of the crowded street. Bereft.

SOLOMON (V.O.)
They told us freedom would make our
country into a paradise. But it has
turned it into a sewer instead.

54 EXT. SOMEWHERE IN THE SIERRA LEONE HILLS -- CONTINUOUS 54

Dia, Jassie and his sister wait for food at an R.U.F. outpost.
A rebel wearing a DOO-RAG eyes them. Dia glares as the man
offers his twelve year-old sister a Milky Way bar.

Jassie pulls her daughter away but ANOTHER SOLDIER puts his
arm around her waist -- pinning her arms behind her back.

R.U.F. SOLDIER
Maybe you are my new wife!

Doo Rag starts to lead N'yanda away. Dia flings himself at
the rebel, but OTHERS jump him and begin to beat him with
their rifle butts. Jassie's screams are drowned out by the
laughter of their tormentors.

Dia, meanwhile, is lifted up and THROWN into the back of a
truck with several other TEENAGE BOYS.

55 EXT. CAPE TOWN AIRPORT -- DAY 55

Archer walks to the curb. Joost is waiting beside a Mercedes.
His eyes are still black-and-blue behind sunglasses.

JOOST
He wants to see you.

ARCHER
I'm going back to Sierra Leone,
actually.

Two square-jawed MERCENARIES emerge from the Mercedes, the
outline of handguns obvious beneath the tails of their shirts.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

I don't suppose, 'I'm sorry,' would suffice?

Joost smiles thinly. The mercenaries unobtrusively hem in Archer on both sides. He expects to be pummeled at any moment. Instead they politely open the car door.

JOOST

After you.

56 EXT. CAPE TOWN COUNTRYSIDE -- DAY 56

The Mercedes winds its way into the South African Veldt, passing elegant stables, grape orchards and cricket pitches.

57 INSIDE THE CAR 57

Archer expects to be beaten at any moment. It doesn't happen.

57A DRIVING DEEPER INTO THE VELDT 57A

The landscape has grown barren. At a gate lined with barbed wire, a sign -- "Executive Outcomes" -- is flanked by armed soldiers wearing crimson berets, who wave them on. They follow a deserted dirt road, until--

58 A RUSSIAN ATTACK HELICOPTER 58

materializes out of nowhere. After making a perilously close pass, it flies away.

BESIDE AN OLD VICTORIAN FARMHOUSE

The Mercedes glides to a stop beside a spreading acacia.

COLONEL THEO COETSEE, 60,

Looks like he could still lead a platoon on a fifty mile forced-march in hostile conditions. In fact, he still does.

THE COLONEL

Hello, Danny.

ARCHER

Sir.

THE COLONEL

You look better than Joost here.

ARCHER

A misunderstanding between friends.

The Colonel chuckles and pours him a marula martini.

THE COLONEL
 (raising his glass)
 Here's to us and those like us--

ARCHER
 (finishing the toast)
 --Damn few.

They sip.

THE COLONEL
 I want you to come back.

ARCHER
 Thanks but I prefer not to.

THE COLONEL
 We'll be coming your way soon. Our
 lawyers are in conversation with the
 government of Sierra Leone, such as
 it is.

Archer smiles darkly.

THE COLONEL (CONT'D)
 They want us to take back the diamond
 mines and I need someone who knows
 his way around up there.

Archer just takes another sip. The Colonel studies him.

THE COLONEL (CONT'D)
 According to our Minister Somora,
 you've got something in the works.
 Something...pink.

ARCHER
 (dismissive)
 The fantasy of some Mende farmer...

THE COLONEL
 There is the small matter of payment
 on some RPG's. You haven't forgotten
 who arranged that shipment from our
 Ukranian friends...?

ARCHER
 But who is it, I wonder, who tipped
 off the ECOMOG to the goat routine?

The Colonel's tone loses some of its warmth.

THE COLONEL
 Pay your debt in cash or come back
 to work. Your choice.

ARCHER

If I had a hundred grand you think
I'd still be on this continent?

THE COLONEL

(laughs)

Oh, Danny... You'll never leave.
You're African to the bone.

(dismissing him)

Joost will see you back to Cape Town.

ARCHER

I appreciate that. Thank you.

THE COLONEL

We'll meet again soon?

ARCHER

No disrespect, sir, but I hope not.

THE COLONEL

You think selling weapons is better
than using them? At least when it's
you pulling the trigger, you know
you're not the target.

The Colonel chuckles, and gives Joost a subtle nod.

59 BEHIND THE FARMHOUSE

59

They approach the parked Mercedes. Archer turns to Joost.

ARCHER

Okay, just get it over with.

The two mercenaries grab Archer's arms. Joost smiles
sympathetically and then begins to beat the shit out of him.

60 INT. THE "EXECUTIVE HOTEL" - FREETOWN - DAY

60

Half of its SIGN has been blown away. A filthy red carpet
leads to a colonial facade.

Solomon, in a red vest that serves as a uniform, carries a
businessman's bags. As the businessman gets into a cab, a
pack of Marlboro 100's falls out of the man's pocket.

SOLOMON (V.O.)

Dear Jassie. It has been so many
weeks and I still cannot find you.

Solomon waits until the cab pulls away. Then he kneels and
pockets the cigarettes.

61 INT. THE "EXECUTIVE" HOTEL - LATER 61

Solomon carries bags up a back stairs. He checks to see if anyone is watching then rifles the bags for anything of value.

62 EXT. FREETOWN STREET -- DAY 62

At an open-air market, Solomon exchanges the cigarettes and other stolen items for hard currency.

SOLOMON (V.O.)

The city is loud and crowded and dirty. I miss the farm and cannot help wondering what has happened to the cassava crop.

63 INT. HOSPITAL -- DAY 63

Solomon bribes a UNICEF OFFICIAL with the currency.

He walks past rows of civilian casualties, many of them children. He forces himself to smile at each face he passes.

64 EXT. SQUATTER'S CAMP -- NIGHT 64

Places like this define every city in the third world. Solomon has taken residence in the rusted hull of an old car. It is bare except for an extra shirt folded neatly.

SOLOMON (V.O.)

Most of all I miss our family all together in the hut at night, the sound of the childrens' breathing, and your warmth beside me.

He lights a candle before a wooden animist statue.

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

Whenever I feel myself losing hope, I think of these things and I know it will be all right.

65 EXT. SOMEWHERE IN THE BUSH -- CONTINUOUS 65

Dia sits in a dark hut along with several TEENAGE CAPTIVES. The door is flung open and GUARDS brutally drive them out to form a line. Dia stands, terrified, in a driving rain.

R.U.F. TRAINER

Your mothers and fathers are dead.
Your brothers and sisters are dead.
You are dead too. But you will be reborn with us. We are your family now.

66 ANOTHER DAY 66

Dia and others are being taught to fire an AK-47.

67 ANOTHER DAY 67

Dia carries a plastic jug of palm wine through the rebel camp. Handing it an older guerilla, he inadvertently SPILLS some on the man's t-shirt. The man begins to BEAT him.

68 LATER 68

Dia is held down by two rebels as a cut is opened in his arm and an unidentified powdery drug is poured into the cut.

69 LATER 69

Dia is bouncing off the walls of the hut -- stoned out of his mind. Several teenage boys are similarly wasted.

70 EXT. FREETOWN STREET (ARCHER'S HOTEL) -- NIGHT 70

Archer gets out of a cab, carrying his bag. His face is swollen and sunglasses cover a black eye.

A MILITARY JEEP is parked in front of his hotel. Several ECOMOG troops loiter, perhaps waiting for him, perhaps not.

Not taking any chances, Archer turns away.

EXPLOSIONS LIKE DISTANT THUNDER rumble through the stifling night as he walks. A car is on fire. A sense of things growing out of control.

A YOUNG AFRICAN WOMAN, miniskirt, big earrings beckons him.

HOOKER

You lonely tonight, Archer?

(pulls down her top)

I'm safe. No HIV. You use condom.

71 EXT. BEACH BAR -- NIGHT 71

Half of it is burnt. People crowd the remaining half, drinking as heavily as ever. The African Techno-Beat throbs. Archer gets Med's attention at the bar, sets down his bag.

ARCHER

Mind looking after this for me?

(M'ed nods)

...Like what you've done to the place.

BARTENDER (M'ED)

Fokking R.U.F. try to hit the gov'ment building 'cross da street. Shit, mahn, half da people heah be R.U.F.

(MORE)

BARTENDER (M'ED) (CONT'D)
 (hands him the usual)
 Good for business doh. Ever'body
 drink much as dey can 'fore de rebels
 come an drink up de rest.

ARCHER
 Might be time to get your family
 out, my friend.

The facade of Med's professional joviality disappears.

BARTENDER
 And go where, mahn? Jus' fire up de
 chopper and fly away like you people?
 No, mahn, dis my country. We here
 long 'fore you came and long after
 you gone.

He stares at Archer, his eyes a tragic mask of defiance and
 despair. He turns away.

Fawaz approaches. He is a nervous wreck.

FAWAZ
 Oh, my God, are you all right?

ARCHER
 Where's the farmer?

FAWAZ
 He found a job at a hotel. Spends
 all his time at the refugee offices.
 Not exactly the behavior of a man in
 possession of a priceless stone.

Another EXPLOSION in the distant hills. Fawaz flinches.

FAWAZ (CONT'D)
 The main road to Masiaka is cut in
 three places. The government's gonna
 fall any second, and I'm following
 some delusional farmer.

Archer sees Maddy through the crowd. She's standing apart,
 looking somewhat dazed as she moves slowly to the music.

FAWAZ (CONT'D)
 The man was a digger. The odds of
 him getting away with even a small
 stone is zero. They slit you open
 alive just for sweating.

ARCHER
 I think Somora is looking for me.

FAWAZ
 (really worried now)
 Allah forfend...

ARCHER
 (moving away)
 Just stay on the farmer.

FAWAZ
 But--

Archer has already begun heading toward Maddy. She sees him coming and watches him walk toward her. They meet in the middle of a crowded dance floor. All around them, sweaty bodies are swaying to the African beat.

MADDY
 Am I supposed to kiss you or fuck
 you? I can't remember.

ARCHER
 How about you dance with me.

MADDY
 Should I ask what happened to your
 face?

He takes her hand and leads her into the surging crowd.

MADDY (CONT'D)
 I guess not.

They dance as best they can in the crush.

MADDY (CONT'D)
 This is insane. I'm drunk in an
 African bar dancing with a mercenary.

ARCHER
 What would they say in Ohio?

MADDY
 Chicago.

ARCHER
 ...You can tell a lot about someone
 by the way they dance.

MADDY
 Then you can probably tell right
 away that I can't dance.

They look at each other.

MADDY (CONT'D)

In Mozambique, you were part of a search-and-destroy unit targeting ANC leaders. Then in Angola, you hooked up with De Wente and started trading guns for diamonds.

ARCHER

Is this on the record?

MADDY

But you blew it all getting greedy and trying to go it alone. Why?

He doesn't answer. They are looking at each other. The music is pounding. Sweat is pouring off both of them but neither bothers to wipe it away.

MADDY (CONT'D)

So you're, what, a Nihilist? Opportunist? Scumbag?

ARCHER

Maybe I just wasn't breast-fed in childhood.

MADDY

You think I've never met people like you?

ARCHER

I think you get off on people like me.

MADDY

Fuck you.

ARCHER

That, too.

They keep dancing, their faces very close.

MADDY

What I'll...never understand... is how...you can...compartmentalize... human suffering.

He stops dancing. Looks at her.

ARCHER

Thanks for the dance.

He walks away.

He lights a cigarette. She appears and stands quietly beside him. Together they watch the distant explosions.

MADDY

I didn't actually hurt your feelings?

He takes a long drag. Exhales.

ARCHER

How long you been in Africa?

MADDY

Four months. Before that Kosovo.

ARCHER

Okay. How many Blacks do you know back in the States -- besides the girl who cleans your house and the man who picks up your garbage?

MADDY

What's that got to do with it?

ARCHER

I know Blacks. Grew up with 'em, fought with 'em. Behind the calm eyes and the gentle smile, they're burning with hate for what we've done to 'em. They hate you, hate me, hate each other and hate themselves. And your bleeding heart isn't gonna stop 'em butchering each other. Half the continent is starving and the rest is dying of AIDS while their leaders sell medicine to build palaces and drive Mercedes.

MADDY

That doesn't make it right.

ARCHER

No it doesn't. But apart from a few do-gooders who show up for a week with their flak jackets, their laptops, and their little bottles of hand sanitizer the White world doesn't give a fuck about the Black world. Look at Sudan. Look at Rwanda. Your country loses thirty-four marines in Somalia and then does nothing as a million people die. Except put pictures of starving children on TV to flagellate their guilty conscience.

(MORE)

ARCHER (CONT'D)

(shakes his head)

So someone's got to do the dirty work-- you think America doesn't sell arms or hire professionals? You call them 'contractors'. I sell guns. If I don't, somebody else will.

MADDY

The law of the jungle.

(sighs)

If only I had a nickel for every piece-of-shit who uses it to justify his existence.

He turns to look at her, her face radiant with sweat.

ARCHER

I like your smell.

MADDY

Well, that makes me weak at the knees.

ARCHER

It's all gonna blow any minute. You should get out.

MADDY

An ECOMOG relief column leaves in the morning. What about you?

ARCHER

Business to finish up.

MADDY

What could possibly be worth staying and getting yourself killed over?

He looks at her, offers a grim smile.

MADDY (CONT'D)

Oh. Right.

He indicates the bare "wedding ring" finger of her left hand.

ARCHER

Tell me you never dreamt of having a sparkly diamond of your very own.

(as he walks away)

...Peace.

73 EXT. SQUATTER CAMP -- NEXT DAY

73

Solomon emerges from his rusted hulk to find Archer waiting. Archer looks as if he's been up all night avoiding the Minister's troops -- which in fact he has.

ARCHER
What did you do, bury it?

Solomon instinctively looks to see if anyone is listening.

ARCHER (CONT'D)
I would have buried it.

SOLOMON
(heart racing)
What are you talking about?

Archer removes his sunglasses, looks Solomon in the eye.

ARCHER
What am I talking about?

SOLOMON
I must go to work.

Archer follows as Solomon walks through the shantytown.

ARCHER
My friend Fawaz paid an awfully large
bribe to get you out of jail.

SOLOMON
I will pay Mister Fawaz back. He
has my word. And now you have my
word. And we have finished speaking.

Solomon runs for a crowded bus. Archer watches him disappear.

74 INT. EXECUTIVE HOTEL -- LATER THAT DAY

74

Solomon is carrying bags for Western businessmen frantic to get out of Freetown before it's too late.

Depositing their bags in a taxi, he walks back into the lobby to find Archer leaning against a post, smoking a cigarette.

ARCHER
Why would that R.U.F. captain with
the bandaged eye make up such a story.

Solomon again tries to ignore him.

ARCHER (CONT'D)
What are you going to do, sell it
yourself? To who? For how much?
You need help, friend, whether you
want it or not.

Another porter is eavesdropping. Solomon escapes into the alley beside the hotel, turns on Archer.

75 EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

75

SOLOMON

I know who you are. And what you are. Men like you have turned my country into a land of thieves and killers. I do not need your help.

ARCHER

What if I could help find your family?

At these words, something feral appears in Solomon's eyes.

SOLOMON

What do you know of my family?

ARCHER

The relief agencies are useless, the hospitals are overwhelmed. There are other ways.

SOLOMON

Liar!

ARCHER

I know people. White people.

Solomon LUNGES -- pinning Archer against the wall. Archer could fight. He doesn't.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

The...right...stone--

Solomon wants nothing more than to strangle him, but he also intuits Archer might be his only hope. He relaxes his grip.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

--can buy anything. Information. Safety. Even freedom. But a big stone doesn't stay secret. The minute you show it, your life is worthless. I'm guessing the only reason you're still alive is because you haven't told anyone where it is. Right?

Archer's pitch -- fueled by desperation -- is mesmerizing.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

The last pink to come out of Africa fetched ten million dollars. I know because I carried it out. You know what I got for it?

He opens his shirt. A HUGE SCAR crosses his chest.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

I was lucky. I learned that a man
will do anything for a diamond.

SOLOMON

You would say anything. How can I
trust you--?

NEARBY, THE CRUMP OF AN EXPLOSION, FOLLOWED BY THE CHATTER
OF AUTOMATIC WEAPONS...FROM A BLOCK OR TWO AWAY.

ARCHER

Hear that? It's started. They
must've snuck into the city overnight.
(looks at Solomon)
What's it gonna be, friend?

A BLOCK AWAY

Three cut-down trucks of Rebels SQUEAL into view and begin
spraying everything with automatic weapons.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

Yes or no.

A whole life can change with a single syllable.

SOLOMON

Yes.

A TRUCK COMES CAREENING AROUND THE CORNER. Archer pushes
Solomon as the wall behind them is stitched with bullets.

ARCHER

Go. GO!

They begin to run.

76 THEY RUN THROUGH THE CITY

76

Their fates suddenly joined by the need to stay alive.

And death lurks at every corner.

Bands of teenagers roam the streets, FIRING AUTOMATIC WEAPONS
at anything that moves. Signs, store windows, cars. Urban
Rap dopplers past as trucks with boom boxes speed by.

At an intersection, an impromptu ROADBLOCK. People are pulled
out of cars and beaten while their cars are set on fire.

Archer and Solomon double back and sprint past the Executive
hotel where a gang of Rebels are entering. From inside comes
the sound of SCREAMING and more GUNFIRE.

People are being taken -- black and white alike -- and forced
into trucks. MINISTER SOMORA is led away at gunpoint.

Women are dragged by the hair into alleyways. A man is thrown out of a fourth-story window.

In fact, it was much worse than anything we can ever show.

Archer and Solomon continue to run for their lives.

Storefronts are looted. It's impossible to tell the rebels from the civilians. Adults carry televisions. Two men carry a barca-lounger. Teenage boys wear womens' wigs and throw molotov cocktails made from Swedish vodka. Rebel teenagers are sacking The Beach Bar -- drinking everything in sight. Me'd lies dead, splayed across the bar.

Archer and Solomon run through the darkening streets as rockets light up the sky.

A gun battle between retreating government soldiers and advancing rebels traps them in a crossfire.

They dive into a restaurant doorway, taking refuge with others huddled, terrified, on the floor. Windows are shot out as rounds rip in and plaster rains down on their heads.

After a deafening moment -- quiet. Archer watches through a crack in the door as ECOMOG troops are lined up against a wall and executed.

77 HOURS LATER - DARK AT LAST

77

Archer and Solomon set off again

They do their best to stay in shadows, hugging the walls of pock-marked buildings, as they try to sneak past the roving patrols and trucks filled with men, and out of the city.

SOLOMON

How...much....farther?

ARCHER

Sooner...or...later...we'll be in the bush.

78 AN HALF-HOUR LATER

78

They are still running.

Both men are exhausted, filthy with soot and sweat, their chests heaving. But neither even considers stopping. Around them, the houses are becoming fewer.

79 UP AHEAD - AN OPEN FIELD

79

And then another. Nothing beyond except a tangle of banana trees, ruined cassava groves, and the densely-covered hills.

ARCHER

There--!

With renewed energy, they pick themselves up and run:

THE SOUND OF VOICES -- CLOSE AT HAND

Sends them DIVING into a ditch.

Three R.U.F. soldiers are setting up a machine gun. Solomon looks around wildly. There is nowhere to go. If they are still there by daybreak, they will be discovered. If they try to run, they will be shot.

A look of resolve steals over Archer's face as he reaches into his boot for his knife. Without a backward glance, he slithers out of the ditch.

80 THE KILLING OF THE THREE SOLDIERS

80

Is a deadly ballet. One's throat is slit, the second is gutted. But his weapon FIRES -- alerting the third soldier, who whirls -- just in time for his body to be stitched by rounds from the dead man's AK-47 -- which Archer now holds.

It has all happened in a matter of seconds. But the gunfire has alerted more soldiers from nearby.

ARCHER

COME ON!

Archer and Solomon take off into the field -- as TRACERS soon begin to streak past.

81 AT LAST THEY BREAK INTO THE BRUSH

81

Vines whipping against their faces, thorns ripping their hands and clothes -- until long after the gunfire has stopped.

At last they stop.

Bent over double. Gasping for breath in the humid night.

Alive.

The two men look at one another. They could never articulate it, but both intuitively know this will be the defining journey of their lives.

82 EXT. MAKENI ROAD -- DAWN (FROM HIGH ABOVE)

82

In Cambodia, in El Salvador, in Sudan as in Sierra Leone, the image of a downtrodden, dispossessed multitude traveling on foot toward an uncertain end has become the signature image of our time. It is the Age of the Refugee.

Archer and Solomon trudge amidst the throng. Ox-drawn carts and thousands of shuffling feet churn up a sea of dust.

SOLOMON
Where are we going?

ARCHER
There's a relief camp in Port Loki. Journalists will have access to a SAT-phone. I'll have Fawaz meet us with the plane.

SOLOMON
I have agreed to nothing.

Archer looks straight ahead as he walks.

ARCHER
You will.

83 EXT. ECOMOG STAGING AREA - MASIKA - DAY

83

In a soccer stadium, ECOMOG soldiers distribute stacks of GRAIN bearing the UNICEF stencil, BOXES of MEDICAL SUPPLIES.

Archer is outside the fence, talking to a guard. He is buffeted by hordes of refugees trying to get to the food.

ARCHER
--I work for the Cape Town Herald. My wallet, my credentials, everything's still in Freetown. We barely got out with our lives...

GUARD
Back away from the fence--

Archer gives up. Solomon has been watching.

SOLOMON
You are not a journalist.

ARCHER
I'm trying to get us out of here.

SOLOMON
It is as I said. You will say anything.

Archer sees JOURNALISTS. He waylays an Australian CAMERAMAN.

ARCHER
Hey, mate. I'm looking for someone you might know. Name's Maddy Bowen. American. If you've met her you wouldn't forget it.

AUSSIE CAMERAMAN

I know her.

ARCHER

Could you tell her Archer's here and I've got the story she wants.

AUSSIE CAMERAMAN

I'm out of here in an hour. If I see her before then, I'll tell her.

ARCHER

Thanks. Cheers.

84 LATER --

84

Archer and Solomon are broiling under a relentless sun. Solomon searches every passing face. Archer dozes.

MADDY (O.S.)

You got out.

ARCHER

Hello, Maddy. This is Solomon Vandy.

MADDY

How do you do?

(to Archer; all
business)

I'm on deadline and I've been waiting four hours to use a SAT-phone. What do you want to tell me.

Archer moves her out of Solomon's earshot.

ARCHER

An outfit named Star Mines is buying blood diamonds.

MADDY

And...?

ARCHER

De Wente has no visible ties to Star -- but through a maze of crossholdings and offshore banks, they own it. In violation of the very trade embargo they pledged to uphold.

MADDY

You have proof of this.

(he nods)

And you'll go on record?

He looks at her.

ARCHER
If you help me out.

MADDY
I knew it.

ARCHER
Before you say anything -- the man is a Mende farmer. His village was burned to the ground. He was forced to work the mines, but his family fled -- wife and three children. He's been trying to find them but he's drowning in red tape.

Maddy looks again at Solomon.

MADDY
How do you even know this man?

ARCHER
I know him.

Maddy looks back at Archer.

MADDY
You're using me.

ARCHER
And you're using me. Isn't that how it works?
(leaning in)
You want to make a difference, Maddy? Start with this man. You've got access to U.N. databases, you know all the N.G.O.'s.

MADDY
Look around, Archer. What difference does helping one man make?

He looks at her.

MADDY (CONT'D)
Jesus. Did I really say that?

Maddy's eyes remain on his, conflicted, as we HEAR the BEATING OF HELICOPTER BLADES...

85 EXT/INT. UNHCR HELICOPTER - DAY

85

LOOKING DOWN on a sweep of grassland on which a sea of flapping white tents suddenly appears...thousands of them...

MADDY (V.O.)
There it is.

86 INT. HELICOPTER - SAME

86

Solomon, Archer and Maddy have hitched a ride on a U.N. chopper. Solomon's never been up in one. He stares down at the sprawling tent city below.

MADDY

At the moment, the second largest refugee camp in Africa.

SOLOMON

My wife is here? In Guinea?

Maddy reads from the computer manifest in her hand.

MADDY

Jassie Vandy, Kono District. Crossed into Guinea six weeks ago.

SOLOMON

Six weeks. And my children?

Maddy hesitates, folds the manifest, then just nods.

MADDY

You would have found them. Sometimes it takes a year before new manifests reach the field offices.

(glances at Archer)

I was lucky to get access to the UNHCR database.

SOLOMON

I do not know how to thank you.

What can Maddy say? She nods.

87 EXT. REFUGEE CAMP - DAY

87

Archer, Solomon and Maddy step off the chopper to find-- A SEA OF HUMANITY behind a CHAIN FENCE stretching for miles.

WORKERS with World Food Program armbands unload supplies as REFUGEES rush the fence, pressing forward, shouting.

MADDY

This is what a million people look like.

Solomon stares. These are his people.

CLOSE ON ARCHER taking it all in. He's seen pretty much everything there is to see in life. But no one is unaffected.

MADDY (CONT'D)

You might catch a minute of this on
CNN somewhere between weather and
sports.

As they approach the fence, Solomon sees that many of the
refugees are AMPUTEES. Some reaching through the chain link
with stumps of arms. Solomon's heart is pounding.

MADDY (CONT'D)

It says they're in Sector Two.

Solomon follows as Maddy shows her BADGE to a UN GUARD, who
reads her slip of paper and points out the right direction.

Archer stares through the fence at two KIDS, each with one
leg, yet managing to kick a plastic jug back and forth.

Other amputees stare sullenly. A sign reads, "NO PHOTOS FOR
JOURNALISTS WITHOUT \$\$\$"

A WRINKLED OLD MAN blows his lips at Archer through the fence.
Archer walks on. The old man shadows him. Until Archer
realizes the fellow is gesturing to the cigarettes in his
shirt pocket. Archer takes out a cigarette, is about to
slip one through the fence --

When he sees the man has no hands.

Grimly, Archer sticks the cigarette in the man's mouth.
Then moves on.

88 EXT. REFUGEE CAMP - SECTOR TWO GATE - LATER

88

A FRENCH UN GUARD relays the paper to an AFRICAN WFP MONITOR.

FRENCH GUARD

Stay at the fence. Quarantine.

Solomon grips the fence, watching the WFP monitor as he
disappears into the teeming mass.

Archer has rejoined them. He notices Maddy's expression.

ARCHER

What's wrong?

Maddy shakes her head. But Archer can tell she's keeping
something from him.

Solomon catches sight of the WFP monitor. He has a woman
with him. A woman carrying a little boy and a young girl.

SOLOMON

Jassie ...?

(and then he's sure)

Jassie! JASSIE!

Jassie hears her name, looks up through the hordes of people.

JASSIE
Solo! SOLO!!

SOLOMON
JASSIE!!

Solomon's face morphs from disbelief to joy as Jassie runs through a crush of bodies to him --

Their fingers GRASP each others through the fence. They run their hands over each others faces, unable to speak.

Solomon looks at the one-year-old in her arms, an infant when last he saw him. He touches him through the fence. The girl, silent, offers a weak smile. She's seen too much.

Then Solomon looks around, puzzled.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)
Dia?
(to Jassie, in Mende)
Where is Dia?

The boy is nowhere in sight.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)
Where is my son?

Watching this, Archer turns to Maddy.

ARCHER
He has a son who goes to school,
reads English.

MADDY
There were only two children listed
on the manifest.

ARCHER
--What?

Maddy turns away, her eyes brimming.

AT THE FENCE, Solomon reads Jassie's eyes.

SOLOMON
Where is he!?

She rubs her cheek against his hand, her body trembling.

JASSIE
They...took him.

Solomon looks at her, incomprehensibly. And the words come out in a flood of Mende - that breaks into a WAIL of grief.

Solomon drops to the ground as if every muscle in his body had been cut. He struggles for breath.

Archer cannot watch their grief ... yet cannot turn away.

ARCHER

Fuck this ...

A GUARD tries to pry Solomon's hands from the fence, but he won't let go. Sensing trouble, the guard calls ANOTHER GUARD over. Both of them try to pull Solomon from the fence.

SOLOMON

Let them out.

Jassie doesn't let go of her husband's hands.

JASSIE

Solo ... Solo ...

Solomon starts shaking the fence.

SOLOMON

Let them out!

The guards begin to beat his hands with their rifle butts. But Solomon keeps shaking the fence as if to uproot the steel posts.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)

LET THEM OUT!

Archer puts himself between Solomon and the guards.

ARCHER

Get off him!

A guard points his rifle and shouts in an unknown dialect.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

Fine! Just get off him!

89 INT. HELICOPTER - LATER

89

Archer and Maddy ride in silence. Solomon stares out the chopper window. His knuckles bandaged. Devoid of emotion.

MADDY

They're afraid some of the refugees might be rebels. They won't be released until there's a cease-fire. I'm sorry.

Solomon stares out at the distant fog-shrouded mountains.

SOLOMON

What you want, Mister Archer, is
beyond those hills. That is where I
buried it.

Archer's heart skips a beat. What was only spoken of is now
real.

Maddy looks at Solomon, his face knotted in grief. And then
back at Archer. She is putting the pieces together.

90 EXT. ECOMOG STAGING AREA - MASIACA - EVENING

90

Maddy marches away from the helicopter.

ARCHER

Maddy, wait...

He grabs her arm. She wrenches free of his grip.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

I didn't take his son! Don't pin
that on me!

MADDY

I pin it on all of us. Especially
you.

ARCHER

Yah, we fucked the black man. My
father did and my grandfather before
him. Now the black man fucks himself.
Tell me something I don't know.

Tired, furious, done with sparring, she walks off.

91 EXT. ECOMOG STAGING AREA -- MASIACA -- NIGHT

91

Solomon and Archer huddle beside a fire. Around them are
hundreds of fires, each with huddled figures silhouetted.

Solomon's sharpens the blade of a MACHETE with a whetstone.
Archer pores over a MAP with a flashlight.

ARCHER

You say the mine is near the Moa
River. Where exactly on this map?

Solomon's eyes remain on the machete blade.

SOLOMON

I do not need a map.

ARCHER

Well, I do.

We follow his finger ON THE MAP as he talks.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

We're here.... The press convoy is going to Kailahun. Diamond mines are here. Where did you bury it?

He looks over and sees that Solomon is CUTTING a line up one arm with the machete, drawing blood.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

You understand, when we get to Kailahun, we're gonna have to go overland. You better damn well be able to find it.

Solomon is lost in a world of ritual.

SOLOMON

(almost to himself)

My son is a very good student. He walks five miles to the Sisters' school every morning to study English. He is going to be a doctor one day.

The pain of self-injury is an attempt to inure himself to the pain of loss. He turns away to stare into the fire.

Archer has to walk away.

92 NEARBY - AN ABANDONED BUILDING

92

houses the paltry assortment of journalists. Archer walks past the guards with a wave of the finger. They assume -- because he is white -- that he belongs there.

MADDY is hunched over a portable typewriter, typing with two fingers. Archer leans over her shoulder to read.

ARCHER

"...in the ninety degree heat, farmer Solomon Vandy drops to his knees against the chain-link fence--"

Maddy whirls around. Archer finishes the sentence.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

"--rattling the wire with his powerful hands..."

MADDY

(defensive)

...What?

ARCHER

Nothing.

MADDY

You think I'm exploiting his grief.

Archer just looks at her. She loses it.

MADDY (CONT'D)

You think I like being here? Do you have any idea what I could make back in the states writing garbage about movie stars--?

(righteous fury)

All anybody sees here are victims. Not people. With faces. And lives. They deserve a voice.

(shaking her head)

And the world deserves to know where the things they buy come from. And how much they really cost.

(turns away)

So get out of my face and let me work.

Archer watches her work for a moment. Rubs his eyes.

ARCHER

...Solomon thinks his son is going to be a doctor one day.

(she looks up)

What's the life expectancy for infants in a camp like this? What's going to happen to a twelve year-old girl? That diamond is the only chance he's got of getting his family out.

MADDY

You expect me to believe you give a rat's ass about his family.

ARCHER

No. I'm just exploiting his grief.

She glares at him, then looks away. There are inherent contradictions in both their intentions.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

I need to get to Kailahun. The only way now is with a UN convoy. I'm a TV journalist and he's our cameraman.

Maddy's shaking her head. She won't do it.

MADDY

No.

ARCHER

I sewed R.U.F. diamonds into the skins of goats. I was smuggling them across the border into Liberia.

Maddy is taken by surprise. She's wary but ready to listen.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

The stones go to a middleman in
Monrovia...

93 FLASH CUT -- THE BACK ROOM OF A SEEDY SHOP 93

Fawaz spills a bag of rough diamonds onto the counter.

ARCHER (V.O.)

...who pays off a customs official
who certifies the diamonds were mined
in Liberia...so they can be
legitimately exported.

94 FLASH CUT -- A CUSTOMS DESK 94

where a CERTIFICATE OF ORIGIN bearing a Liberian seal is
signed, stamped and affixed to a WOODEN BOX NAILED SHUT.

ARCHER (V.O.)

Once they reach London or the Antwerp
cutting houses -- no questions asked.

95 FLASH CUTS -- IN THE BOWELS OF THE DTC - LONDON 95

A SORTER discards the certificate of origin -- spills the
DIAMONDS onto a SORTING TABLE, mixes them with OTHER DIAMONDS.

ARCHER (V.O.)

They become like any other diamond.

96 FLASH CUT -- WIDER 96

There are many sorting tables, each with PILES OF DIAMONDS.
Electronic surveillance cameras observe it all.

MADDY (V.O.)

And De Wente knows about all this?

ARCHER (V.O.)

Supply and demand, Maddy. Control
the supply and you keep demand high.

97 FLASH CUT -- THE UN 97

DeWente and Simmons sit before the General Assembly piously
accepting the congratulations for their righteous stand.

ARCHER

When African rebels flood the market
with a billion dollars worth of rough,
De Wente can't afford to ignore it.
Technically speaking he's not
promoting the war. He's just giving
them the means to do it.

98 BACK IN THE ABANDONED BUILDING -- NIGHT

98

Maddy's staring at Archer. He's giving her the biggest story of her career.

MADDY

You'll go on the record?

Archer gives her a long look. Nods yes.

ARCHER

And if I come out with this stone...
Danny Archer -- such as he is --
disappears from the face of the earth.

99 INT. PRESS BUS - MORNING

99

Someone is using strips of tape to write "TV" on the side of the bus. Aboard the bus, a Spanish reporter speaks into a digital recorder. A CNN reporter chats with a French radio type. A BBC crew plays cards across the seats.

Solomon stands outside the bus awkwardly holding a video-camera, a laminated PRESS ID around his neck.

SOLOMON

I cannot do this--

ARCHER

Why not?

SOLOMON

I am not a journalist.

ARCHER

Of course you're not.

SOLOMON

Then how can I say I am?

ARCHER

Because you do, because that's how
you get on the bus...Just do it!

Archer and Solomon make their way down the aisle, Archer smiling to all like he belongs there, Solomon massively uncomfortable. They nod to Maddy. Solomon takes a seat beside a Spanish reporter.

SOLOMON

(utterly wooden)

I am...the cameraman.

100 EXT/INT. JOURNALIST'S BUS (TRAVELING) -- DAY

100

The UNICEF convoy winds its way through the Kanagari hills. Solomon stares out at the passing landscape.

SOLOMON (V.O.)

Dia. Yesterday I rode in a helicopter. Oh, my God. You would not believe how big and beautiful is this land of ours.

101 A MUDDY JUNGLE TRAIL 101

A platoon of child soldiers trudges along, singing a revolutionary song: "*The people will benefit from the riches of their land; R.U.F. is the savior we need.*" A nineteen year-old leader prods Dia to sing louder.

102 BACK TO THE BUS 102

where Solomon is talking quietly to Maddy.

SOLOMON (V.O.)

I have been living in the white people's world. Computers, video-cameras and satellite phones. You would like it very much.

103 AN R.U.F. ENCAMPMENT 103

The child soldiers prepare for battle. Under the watchful eye of their older commanders, some field-strip weapons and paint their faces, while others sniff amphetamines. Two strong men hold Dia's arm and inject him.

SOLOMON (V.O.)

I hope you are able to keep up with your schoolwork. You must study hard if you truly hope to be a doctor.

104 A FIREFIGHT IN THE JUNGLE 104

A platoon of R.U.F. is ATTACKING a small hamlet. Older fighters walk behind the child soldiers, threatening to shoot them unless they advance.

Dia fires his AK-47 indiscriminately. He kills an ox and then a man who tries to flee. Tears stream down his face.

SOLOMON (V.O.)

Your mother and sisters are alive, Dia. You must keep yourself alive, too. Until I can find you. And bring you home.

105 THE BUS COMES TO A SUDDEN, CREAKING STOP. 105

Everyone looks out the window. Up ahead, the road is blocked by shouting VILLAGERS. ECOMOG soldiers try to keep order.

IRISH JOURNALIST

What's going on?

A RED CROSS TRUCK lies overturned on the road. Charred. A hole in its side from the RPG that hit it.

IRISH JOURNALIST (CONT'D)
Christ. Must have been an RPG.

The word, "RPG" has a special resonance for Archer. Cameramen rush to grab their gear. Time to go to work.

ARCHER
Wait. No...

The journalists push past him.

ARCHER (CONT'D)
The R.U.F. is out there, just waiting for another target... It's dangerous.

MADDY
(gives him a look)
Duh.

She pushes past him down the aisle.

106 OUTSIDE THE BUS

106

Maddy and Solomon navigate the confusion of soldiers and villagers. Journalists speak into recorders "...*these people, having come only to help, have now become targets.*"

A SOLDIER eyes Solomon suspiciously. Why isn't he using the camera? Archer lifts it to Solomon's eye and turns it on.

THROUGH THE VIEWFINDER (VIDEO IMAGE)

Solomon PANS the tragic scene -- coming to rest on a MOTHER begging for someone to help her wounded son.

The sound of gunfire. ECOMOG troops have seen something in the tree-line and have begun exchanging fire.

ARCHER
Hurry it up, folks! Unless you want to end up the same way!

Solomon can't move, just stares at the boy and mother.

ARCHER (CONT'D)
Solomon--- let's go.

Solomon puts down the camera and approaches the boy.

ARCHER (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

Solomon picks up the boy and begins carrying him to the bus.

ARCHER (CONT'D)
No... What are you doing!?

107 AT THE BUS

107

Maddy helps the injured boy aboard. A JOURNALIST stops him.

FRENCH JOURNALIST
You can't do this -- there's no room!

AUSSIE JOURNALIST
Let 'em on, you bloody frog!

MORE JOURNALISTS join in: "ferchrissake" -- "might as well do something!" -- "Make room" -- "Who the hell needs this?"

TV CAMERAMAN
Lay him across the seat. Easy--

The boy's mother chatters her thanks in Mende.

AUSSIE JOURNALIST
Where you blokes gonna sit?

Good question. Archer looks around. No seats left.

ARCHER
Bollocks...

COCKNEY JOURNALIST
They can ride with me. Come on.

108 LATER -- ARCHER, SOLOMON AND MADDY

108

now ride in the Land Cruiser. A loquacious COCKNEY JOURNALIST is driving. Ahead, the bus belches black diesel.

COCKNEY JOURNALIST
--Like the fookin' M-4. Just what this place needs, bit of environmental blight on top of the rest of it.

From the passenger seat, Archer looks back and sees Maddy nodding off in the back, her head resting against the window.

COCKNEY JOURNALIST (CONT'D)
--Diesel fumes, toxic chemicals, pesticides, maybe a nuclear reactor or two to melt down...

A TREMENDOUS EXPLOSION AHEAD

The lead mini-bus has HIT A LAND MINE. A fireball rises into a chimney of black smoke.

AUTOMATIC WEAPONS FIRE FROM THE BUSH

R.U.F. fighters are emerging from the treeline.

JUST AHEAD

The bus is RAKED with fire. IT SKIDS TO A STOP, blocking their way. Rebels, armed with Ak-47's, close in.

ARCHER
GET OFF THE ROAD!

But the Cockney falls against Archer, SHOT in the head. The car KEEPS MOVING as Archer tries to reach past the dead man and grab the wheel. Before he can gain control:

THE LAND CRUISER CAREENS off the shoulder of the road, SMASHING into a tree.

GUNFIRE shatters their windows as Solomon THROWS HIMSELF on top of Maddy, pushing her down to the floor of the vehicle.

ARCHER manages to push the dead journalist out the door and throw the Land Cruiser into reverse.

R.U.F. FIGHTERS -- who have been running toward the car -- are forced to scatter or else be run over.

As Archer rams the shifter into first, a REBEL runs up to the car from behind, his weapon held above his head, preparing to shoot down into the back seat. Just as he FIRES, the car lurches forward and his bullets stitch the cargo hatch.

THE LAND CRUISER

Swerves away, taking off the front bumper of the lead truck. A rebel raises an RPG to his shoulder, takes aim. Fires.

ARCHER swerves at the last moment. The RPG passes by, its exhaust trail the only evidence of the near-miss.

They crashe headlong into the brush. It's a bone-jarring ride: jagged branches loom and penetrate the windows, the chassis groans as tires pound over roots and hidden boulders.

BACK ON THE ROAD

Journalists are roused at gunpoint toward an uncertain fate.

109 EXT. DIRT ROAD -- AN HOUR LATER -- AT DUSK

109

The Land Cruiser emerges from the bush. It's a wreck. The wheels grind against the wells, two tires are flat, smashed windshield, bullet holes along its length.

Archer stops and has to force the door open to get out. He peers under the bonnet. Bullet holes. It's hopeless.

ARCHER
Grab your things.

They have no choice but to set off on foot.

110 LATER - THE NIGHT SKY IS SPECTACULAR

110

As they trudge along under a bright canopy of stars. One might even think of diamonds. Archer uses dead reckoning.

ARCHER
The Southern Cross. Long as we head
North, we'll hit the main road.

They walk in silence for a moment.

MADDY
What do you think happened to the
people on the bus.

ARCHER
You really want to think about it?

Up ahead, Solomon stares up at a particularly bright star.

SOLOMON
Kya kwayera taariq.

MADDY
We call it Venus.

SOLOMON
We say the moon's wife.
(pointing)
She follows him through the sky.
Two days before the new moon, she
comes out alone, looking for him.
The moon and his wife are never
separated for very long.

He is thinking of Jassie. Maddy is moved.

111 AT FIRST LIGHT - A BURNT-OUT CHURCH

111

Looms out of the jungle as they walk a narrow track. Pornographic GRAFFITI has been spray-painted on the church, and "West Side Niggaz." HEADLESS BODIES hang from the trees.

112 SUDDENLY - OUT OF THE JUNGLE

112

Come a scary-looking band of semi-primitive natives adorned with colorful amulets, shells and talismans. They carry a miscellany of handguns, machetes and spears.

SOLOMON
Be very still.
(MORE)

SOLOMON (CONT'D)
 Do not look them in the eye.
 (to Archer)
 They are Kamajor.

The HEADSMAN gestures angrily at Archer. Solomon lowers his eyes and responds deferentially. Archer whispers to Maddy:

ARCHER
 Local militia. Protecting their homes.

The Headsman gestures with his machete. Several of his men prod Archer forward with an old double-barreled shotgun.

113 LATER - THEY WALK A JUNGLE PATH 113

Archer looks around for any means of escape. There is none.

114 EXT. MENDE VILLAGE -- DAY 114

They emerge from the bush to discover a cluster of buildings untouched by the ravages of war. Flowering gardens and neatly-raked paths. After all they have seen, it seems dreamlike.

A GROUP OF CHILDREN

Emerge from the building and race toward them.

MENDE CHILDREN
 Where are you from? Have you come from America? Do you have CD's?

A GENTLE VOICE calls out.

GENTLE VOICE
 Don't be bothering the people now.
 Let them come in.

The children instantly obey. BENJAMIN KAPANAY appears in doorway. He is a tall, sixty-five year-old distinguished-looking Mende with a trim white beard.

BENJAMIN
 (in Mende; subtitles)
 Thank you, Ubani. You can leave them here. I take responsibility.

KAMAJOR HEADMAN
 (in Mende; subtitles)
 Good. Now they are your problem.

The Kamajors back away, vanishing into the forest.

BENJAMIN
 If you're looking for money, weapons or fuel, I don't have any.

ARCHER
How about food?

BENJAMIN
If you ask politely. My name is
Benjamin Kapanay.

ARCHER
Danny Archer. And this is--

MADDY
--Maddy Bowen. How do you do?

BENJAMIN
Very well, thank you. Chicago?

MADDY
How--

BENJAMIN
--I recognize the accent.
(to Solomon; in Mende)
Welcome, Brother.

SOLOMON
(in Mende; subtitles)
I am Solomon Vandy, from Bo.

BENJAMIN
(in Mende; subtitles)
What should I make of your companions?

Solomon doesn't know how to answer. He lies badly.

SOLOMON
(in Mende; subtitles)
They are... journalists.

BENJAMIN
(in Mende; subtitles)
Ah. And I suppose you are, too.

Solomon looks away, ashamed. Benjamin turns to Maddy.

BENJAMIN (CONT'D)
Might I interest you in a glass of
lemonade?

115 EXT. MENDE VILLAGE -- LUNCH

115

Under a covered porch, they eat lunch -- served by Benjamin's young Mende wife and his three children.

BENJAMIN
-- I don't understand why anyone
would willingly live in that cold.
(MORE)

BENJAMIN (CONT'D)

The wind off the lake. I cried every night my first winter.

MADDY

How did you end up at Northwestern?

BENJAMIN

Because of President Kennedy, who else?

MADDY

Excuse me?

BENJAMIN

By way of James McGrath, a young Peace Corps volunteer from Winnetka -- who found a semi-literate Mende boy and was foolish enough to believe he could benefit from higher education.

ARCHER

How long were you in the States?

BENJAMIN

Which time? I ended up getting my Masters at Stanford -- better climate.

MADDY

But you came back?

BENJAMIN

To show my people the way. Hah.

They are served a platter of vegetables by a well-mannered ten year-old boy. Benjamin's son, UCHENNA.

BENJAMIN (CONT'D)

Thank you, Uchenna.

SOLOMON

You built this school?

BENJAMIN

Starting in 1967. Children from all over the district find their way here. Over five hundred graduates since we began.

MADDY

That's remarkable. Would you mind if I turned on my tape recorder.

BENJAMIN

I'll make you a deal, Miss Bowen -- I give you an interview and you teach at my school for a month.

MADDY

(laughs)
I'd like that.

BENJAMIN

But you won't do it.

MADDY

No.

BENJAMIN

An honest journalist, how refreshing.
The truth is, I have done well to
keep a low profile. This is a very
dangerous part of the country with
the diamond mines so close by.

Solomon, meanwhile, hasn't been able to take his eyes off of
Benjamin's young son. The boy smiles back at him.

SOLOMON

My son wants to be a doctor.

BENJAMIN

Very good. Where is he now?

A silence.

ARCHER

We don't know.

BENJAMIN

I understand...

116 A SERIES OF IMAGES

116

Benjamin gives them a tour: a group of eight year-olds crowd
around a single computer; a ten year-old girl is being taught
to use an artificial limb; twelve year-old boys play cricket.

BENJAMIN

Many of these children were taken by
the R.U.F. We have taken them back.

(looks at Solomon)

Some of them have been made to do
horrible things. We are trying to
bring them back to life.

Solomon turns away to hide the surge of emotion.

117 LATER -- AT SUNSET

117

They sit drinking wine. The African sunset is inimitable.

BENJAMIN

-- it was all very clear in 1964.

(MORE)

BENJAMIN (CONT'D)

Political freedom plus economic development equals happiness. But sometimes revolution leads to chaos and economic opportunity doesn't necessarily bring out the best in people. Certain personality types realized freedom could be another name for greed.

(raises his glass)

And here we are.

MADDY

But look what you've accomplished.

BENJAMIN

And look what good it has done my country...

MADDY

"There is no easy walk to freedom." We can only do the best we can.

BENJAMIN

Mandela. His best is a bit better than mine...

He takes a long look at his children.

ARCHER

Had many attacks in the area?

BENJAMIN

I've known most of the young people in this district since they were born. The local commander is still afraid I'll come after him with my ruler.

ARCHER

You think because your intentions are good they'll spare you?

Benjamin takes the question in stride.

BENJAMIN

My heart always told me that people are inherently good. My experience suggests otherwise. Which to believe?

Benjamin turns his penetrating gaze on Archer.

BENJAMIN (CONT'D)

What about you, Mr. Archer? In your long career as a...journalist... Would you say people are mostly good?

Archer stares back. The SOUND of A CHILDREN'S CHOIR...

118 IN THE CENTER OF THE VILLAGE -- THAT NIGHT 118

The children are singing "High We Exult Thee, Realm of the Free," the national anthem of Sierra Leone. Solomon and Maddy sit with Benjamin and his family.

Maddy sees Archer get up and walk away.

119 AT THE EDGE OF THE COMPOUND 119

Archer stands alone. He takes a long pull from a plastic jug. Maddy steps out from the shadows.

ARCHER

Palm wine. Sap comes right out of the tree.

He offers to her and she takes a swig. Makes a face.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

You get used to it.

He takes another long drink. He's pretty drunk.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

Drank this as a boy.

MADDY

Rhodesia.
(off his look)
I take notes.

Indeed, her little spiral notebook is already in hand. He looks at her -- considering -- then, what the hell...

ARCHER

I got sent to South Africa when the muntz overran the farm in '76.

MADDY

--After you lost your parents.

ARCHER

(dark laugh)
That's a polite way of putting it.
Mum was raped. Dad was decapitated
and hung from a hook in the barn.

MADDY

You were, what, ten years old?

ARCHER

Nine. Boo-hoo.

MADDY

Then at eighteen you joined the
army...

Archer peers at her.

ARCHER

Want to hear about the first time I
banged a journalist?

She just looks at him. He takes another long drink. Relents.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

Yah, yah. First they had us doing
dirty little jobs in the townships.

MADDY

With the Security services.

ARCHER

You think you know about the Security
services?

(another dark laugh)

You don't know shite. That was a
picnic compared to what we did on
the Moz border. Sometimes I think,
'God will forgive us for what we
did.' Then I look around and I
wonder...what would God want with a
place like this?

He takes another drink but the jug is empty. He tosses it.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

By '94 I'm a ten years vet. Then
poof. No more apartheid, no more
army. Thanks very much, see ya later.
Truth and reconciliation. Kumbaya.

He raises his middle finger in a universal gesture.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

They told us we were fighting
Communism. Protecting our 'way of
life.'

(a rueful laugh)

It's about who gets what. Oil.
Coltan. Diamonds. So one day I
decided, fuck it, now I want mine.

MADDY

Are you going to steal his diamond?

ARCHER

We have no chance in hell of getting
the diamond.

MADDY

Doesn't answer the question.

ARCHER

That diamond -- whether I steal it
or just take the commission -- is my
ticket out of here.

MADDY

To go where?

Archer hasn't gotten that far in his thinking.

120 EXT. HILL COUNTRY - NEXT MORNING (SEEN FROM ABOVE)

120

Benjamin drives them down roads that are little more than
animal tracks. Bush pigs scamper. Chimpanzees chatter above.

Solomon looks up into the canopy of forest as the sun darts
in and out of view.

SOLOMON (V.O.)

Dear Dia. I have found a place for
your studies once you return home.

Benjamin shows Maddy the hippos splashing in the river.

BENJAMIN

Do not be fooled by the movie where
they wear pink skirts and dance on
their toes. They are extremely
dangerous, easily angered, and very
fast.

Benjamin's love of all that he sees is infectious. As he
plays tour guide, they forget for a moment their dire
circumstances and surrender to the joys of the natural world.

SOLOMON (V.O.)

There is a man I want you to meet.
He is a teacher. You will like him.

Benjamin turns a wry eye to Archer.

BENJAMIN

What story will you be covering when
I drop you in Kailahun, Mr. Archer?

ARCHER

Thank you for your help, Mr. Kapanay.
I won't forget it.

BENJAMIN

I hope the story will end the way
you want it to.

121 UP AHEAD - A TEMPORARY ROADBLOCK

121

guarded by TWO TWELVE YEAR-OLD CHILD SOLDIERS.

ARCHER

Keep going.

BENJAMIN

What--?

ARCHER

Drive right at them. They'll panic.

Instead Benjamin slows the car.

BENJAMIN

Do you know where the word, 'infantry'
comes from? It means child soldier.
They are just children.

THE TWO R.U.F. SOLDIERS

are indeed children. One wears a Michael Jordan jersey, the
other has skateboard stickers on his Ingram submachine gun.
But their eyes are glazed and deadened.

BENJAMIN (CONT'D)

Hello, little brothers. What are
your names?

CHILD SOLDIER #1

I am Dead Body. Who dis mothafuckah?

BENJAMIN

We are teachers on our way to
Kailahun.

CHILD SOLDIER #2

Only R.U.F on da road!

BENJAMIN

I understand but we have to--

CHILD SOLDIER #2

ONLY R.U.F!

BENJAMIN

Now listen here! I am--

The boy FIRES HIS WEAPON without warning. Benjamin is hit
in the chest.

ARCHER

JESUS FUCKING CHRIST!

He leans over and STOMPS ON THE GAS PEDAL. The car LURCHES FORWARD, knocking aside the other boy. Archer has to practically straddle the wounded man to speed away.

122 IN THE CAR (TRAVELING)

122

Benjamin tries to speak. Blood bubbles from his lips.

ARCHER

Do NOT try to talk. If you're not dead, it's only because you're hit in the lung not the heart.

Solomon is leaning over the seat, opening Benjamin's shirt.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

(to Solomon)

Don't worry about the entry wound. Lean him forward, there's going to be a big hole in his back. Press your hand against it. Keep it there.

(to Maddy)

If there's any wine left in that jug, pour it all over everything.

(to Benjamin)

How far to Kailahun?

BENJAMIN

(weakly)

You...said...not to talk.

ARCHER

A fucking comedian.

He pushes the old car's accelerator to its limit.

123 IN THE CAR (TRAVELING) -- DUSK

123

Benjamin is slumped, unconscious, against the passenger door.

ARCHER

How's his pulse?

MADDY

It's a pulse.

124 ROUNDING A BEND

124

They are suddenly confronted by two ARMORED CARS and a platoon of white mercenaries carrying Uzi's. The soldiers all wear maroon berets with the initials E.O.

125 MOMENTS LATER - TWO MEDICS ATTACH AN IV TO BENJAMIN

125

Archer and Solomon help place him on a litter. He is conscious again.

ARCHER
You'll be all right.

BENJAMIN
(looks him in the eye)
Will you?

He is hurried away as--

AN ATTACK HELICOPTER TAKES OFF NEARBY

Raising a cloud of dust. Joost appears out of the confusion.

JOOST
Archer...what the fuck--

ARCHER
Good to see you, too, Joost.

Maddy is furiously scribbling notes of all she sees.

JOOST
We're evacuating all non-military
personnel. Relief workers,
journalists.
(to Archer)
Shite-bags.

ARCHER
How far's the front line?

JOOST
There is no front line. Little
buggers are everywhere.
(starts off)
Colonel's this way.

126 THE COLONEL'S HQ

126

A large tent. The Colonel pores over a map while talking on a SAT-phone. Archer and Joost enter.

THE COLONEL
(on the phone)
--but if we block their escape by
cutting the bridge--
(sees Archer)
Wait One...
(covers the mouthpiece)
Archer. Don't want to say I told
you so--

ARCHER
But you will.

THE COLONEL

The Sierra Leone government has hired us to recapture the diamond mines.

ARCHER

In return for a mining concession or two, no doubt.

THE COLONEL

(a modest nod)

I've got a C-130 touching down at 1400. Everybody not prepared to get dirty is on it.

(checks his watch)

You've got thirty minutes to make up your mind. You're either with us or out of here.

He turns back to his conversation. Archer is dismissed.

127 EXT. ANOTHER PART OF THE CAMP -- NIGHT

127

Maddy is waiting as Archer walks back.

ARCHER

How is he?

MADDY

They say he'll live.

ARCHER

You're on a plane for Ghana in half an hour.

(looks at her)

Do me one last favor.

Maddy just looks at him. Archer indicates a young MERCENARY standing guard in front of a large supply tent.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

Go tell that guard you want to put his face on the cover of Soldier Of Fortune magazine.

MADDY

You're going in.

(Archer nods)

You and Solomon.

Archer nods again. She shakes her head.

MADDY (CONT'D)

Now?

(another nod)

You're an idiot.

ARCHER
Help me or not?

Maddy shakes her head sadly. She turns away, pushing the hair out of her face as she approaches the YOUNG MERCENARY.

MADDY
Hi, there. Maddy Bowen, Vanity Fair.
You mind if I ask you a few questions?

YOUNG MERCENARY
Depends what they are--

MADDY
Oh, so you're familiar with our
devious ways, are you?

She flashes a devastating smile. And while his back is turned, we SEE Archer edge past toward the back of the tent.

128 INSIDE THE SUPPLY TENT 128

Archer forages for whatever he can lay his hands on. Into his pack he stuffs K-rations, a GPS, first-aid kit.

He desperately looks for one more thing. And there it is. A SAT-phone. He stuffs it in. Outside, the SOUND of a plane.

129 EXT. AIRSTRIP -- MOMENTS LATER 129

A giant C-130 Hercules touches down.

THE SWARM OF JOURNALISTS

Aid workers, and refugees surge onto the tarmac. Carrying her bag, Maddy moves against the tide, looking around. Solomon appears beside her, subtly taking her arm.

SOLOMON
This way.

ARCHER is waiting behind a tent, the pack already on his shoulders. She turns to Solomon.

MADDY
Good luck to you, Solomon Bo.

Solomon takes her hand in both of his.

SOLOMON
Thank you for all you've done.

MADDY
I hope you find what you're looking
for.

She turns to Archer. They look at each other.

ARCHER
Yeah. Thanks.

MADDY
--Just keeping my end of the deal.

A moment of silence. She can be as tough as he can.

ARCHER
Listen--

MADDY
No, you listen--

And they just stare at each other.

ARCHER
In another life, maybe.

MADDY
Sure... Okay...

ARCHER
Find yourself a good man, Maddy.
You deserve to be happy.

She considers him -- wishing she were less affected by him.

MADDY
I have three sisters. All married
to "good men." Long as their
prescriptions are filled they're
happy. No thanks. I prefer my life.
(hands him her card)
Office phone, home phone, cell phone.
I'm used to being pursued, but what
the hell.

He smiles.

MADDY (CONT'D)
It's a world phone, by the way.

ARCHER
You should get on the plane.

MADDY
So should you.

He smiles and turns away.

MADDY (CONT'D)
Are you going to call me?

ARCHER
Soon as I'm near a phone...

MADDY

Yeah, right.

She turns toward the plane. They head the opposite way.

130 IN THE BUSH 130

Archer and Solomon begin to jog.

131 BACK AT THE AIRSTRIP 131

Maddy is about to board the plane when Joost waylays her.

JOOST

Where is he?

MADDY

Where is who?

She continues up the steps to the plane. Joost looks around. No sign of Archer. The wheels begin to turn in his head.

132 ARCHER AND SOLOMON TREK 132

into the bush. They move quickly, putting distance between themselves and the E.O.camp. As they run, THE CAMERA rises up, higher and higher, until their tiny figures have disappeared and the FRAME IS FILLED WITH NOTHING BUT GREEN.

We sense of the immensity of the challenge that lies ahead.

133 EXT. THE BUSH -- LATER 133

Archer and Solomon have stopped to catch their breath. Archer digs out the SAT-phone, fires it up and punches in a number.

ARCHER

(on the phone)

...Fawaz? ...I know. No time now....
That's right....Two days to get in,
one to get out. I'll call when we're
headed for the strip. Right... 'Bye.

He looks up to see if Solomon has been listening. But Solomon is staring off into the jungle.

SOLOMON (V.O.)

Dear Dia. I am coming. With every
step I am closer. I can feel you
are nearby. I am coming soon.

134 EXT. A JUNGLE TRAIL -- ELSEWHERE 134

A column of R.U.F. guerrillas walk a jungle trail. We can SEE by the gouges of earth that they are in diamond country. Dia, looking much older, carries an AK-47.

135 BACK TO ARCHER AND SOLOMON 135

as he stuffs the SAT-phone into his back. He sets off without a word, knowing Solomon will follow.

136 THEY TRAVEL BY NIGHT 136

On narrow dirt roads, lit only by the moon.

137 HEADLIGHTS APPROACH 137

Archer and Solomon take cover as TRUCKS pass filled with R.U.F. teenagers, laughing, smoking ganja, music blasting.

Solomon studies each passing face. Almost involuntarily he rises to his feet -- trying to get a better look. Suddenly he thinks he sees a familiar face -- could it be Dia? He moves closer -- but the truck is moving away.

SOLOMON

Dia!!

Heads turn in the passing truck. It's not Dia.

Suddenly Solomon is grabbed from behind and thrown to the ground. Archer looms over him.

ARCHER

What the fuck are you doing!!

SOLOMON

GET OFF ME!

Meanwhile, on the road, the trucks have slowed. Suddenly--

THE BRUSH EXPLODES WITH GUNFIRE

Red and Green TRACERS shred the dense foliage around them. Bullets WHIZ by their heads, RICOCHET off ancient trees.

They scramble to their feet and race blindly back into the bush. Behind them, the SOUND of their pursuers.

Soon the brush grows more dense. In the pitch darkness they are literally fighting their way forward, flailing with both arms to rip holes through the thick foliage. Their hands and faces are soon cut and bleeding.

138 THEY RUN 138

Until they can run no further. Archer stumbles and falls. Solomon crumples to the ground beside him. As they lie there, winded, they HEAR VOICES.

They can see the GLOW OF CIGARETTES through the foliage only a few yards away as R.U.F. soldiers approach.

ON SOLOMON AND ARCHER

as the soldiers' boots pass within inches of their hiding place. They bury their faces deeper in the mud.

139 DAYBREAK

139

finds them still hiding. Cautiously, they emerge -- stiff, wet, and miserable from a night spent on the jungle floor.

ARCHER

(furious)

Next time you pull something like that I will shoot you myself.

SOLOMON

(equally furious)

Shoot me now. It is what you are planning anyway.

ARCHER

What are you talking about?

SOLOMON

You think I do not know the kind of man you are? You buy diamonds from the same people who took my son.

ARCHER

--Maddy told you.

SOLOMON

Is this true?

Archer looks at him.

ARCHER

Yes. It is true.

SOLOMON

And all you have said... How the diamond will free my family. This, too, is a lie. Is it not?

ARCHER

I don't know. Maybe.

(looks at him)

But I'm not the only one who tells lies, am I?

SOLOMON

I do not lie.

ARCHER

No? You don't give a fuck about finding the diamond.

(MORE)

ARCHER (CONT'D)

You're out here looking for your son. And you'd cut my heart out in a second if it means a chance to get him back.

Solomon is shocked into silence. Archer is right.

SOLOMON

Yes. It is true.

The two men stare at each other.

ARCHER

Long as we understand each other.

He sets off into the brush, limping heavily.

SOLOMON

You are hurt.

ARCHER

(without looking back)
I'm fine.

Solomon reaches to take the heavy pack from Archer's shoulder. Archer grabs his hand. They lock eyes for a moment.

SOLOMON

You think I'm going to steal it?

Archer turns and walks away. Solomon looks down to see BRIGHT DROPS OF BLOOD from Archer's boot staining the ground.

140 LATER - THE UNMISTAKABLE SOUND OF APPROACHING HELICOPTERS 140

forces them to take cover. Two E.O. gunships streak past. Are the choppers looking for them, or is it a coincidence?

141 LATER THAT DAY - THE SUN HAS REACHED ITS ZENITH 141

as they trudge onward. Archer's limp is more pronounced. He tips back his canteen and finds it empty. Solomon notices. He passes his canteen to Archer, who hesitates for a moment, then laughs and puts his mouth to a black man's canteen.

142 LATER - THEY TRAVERSE A HIGH RIDGE 142

In the distance, we see the receding peaks. Archer begins a conversation, as much out of boredom as anything else.

ARCHER

So you're a farmer...

Solomon looks at him warily. Nods.

ARCHER (CONT'D)
What do you grow?

SOLOMON
.....Casava.

ARCHER
I grew up on a farm.
(remembering...)
Hated every minute of it.

End of conversation. They walk on in silence.

143 STILL LATER - DEEP PITS IN THE EARTH 143

Begin to appear as Archer and Solomon climb through a hilly landscape. Solomon stares at the diamond mines.

SOLOMON
It is like they are eating the earth.

He walks on. Archer labors to keep up with Solomon's pace.

144 ABANDONED HOUSES 144

caved-in and listing, line a street where deep pits have been dug beneath their foundations. Impoverished SQUATTERS follow them with listless, hungry eyes as they pass.

Archer is jittery to be observed. But in Africa, people are everywhere. Blood squishes in his boot as he walks.

145 BY SUNSET 145

They have been walking for twelve hours. Archer has to sit.

ARCHER
How much farther--?

SOLOMON
One day more.

He kneels before Archer.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)
Let me see your leg.

ARCHER
It's fine.

Solomon touches it and Archer GRUNTS in pain.

ARCHER (CONT'D)
It's infected. From lying there all fucking night.

Solomon lifts Archer's pant leg. Examines it.

SOLOMON
Give me your knife.

ARCHER
In the other boot.

Solomon takes the K-Bar. Archer grits his teeth. We cannot see what Solomon does -- but from the expression on Archer's face, we can only imagine.

Solomon stands. Archer tries to but the pain is overwhelming.

SOLOMON
I will be back.

Archer pulls his Sig-Sauer 9mm from his belt.

ARCHER
No--

Solomon starts walking away. COCKS the weapon.

ARCHER (CONT'D)
You think I won't shoot you.

SOLOMON
Shoot me, then. And try to find the
diamond yourself.
(keeps walking)
I will be back.

146 LATER THAT NIGHT - A SMALL VILLAGE

146

has been taken over by CHILD SOLDIERS. They sit, throwing bullets into a barrel fire and LAUGHING as they explode.

Solomon creeps to the edge of a hut -- peering at the faces.

No Dia.

Six more teenagers are loading the spoils of the village onto a truck. One of them could be Dia. He isn't.

147 HOURS LATER - THE MOON HAS RISEN

147

Archer awakens to see Solomon walking toward him out of the bush. He carries a poultice made of leaves and mud.

He kneels and begins to apply it to Archer's wound.

SOLOMON
I thought about not coming back.
(looks at him)
I talked to my son about it.

Archer looks at him. What the hell is he talking about?

SOLOMON (CONT'D)

I talk to him all the time.
 (works on the leg)
 He says I must forgive what you have
 done in the past. And trust that
 you will help get my family back.

Archer doesn't know how to respond to this simple absolution.

ARCHER

You're fucking crazy.

Solomon finishes wrapping the poultice.

SOLOMON

I will go and find us water.

He stands again and walks away.

Archer can't bear feeling powerless. Fighting the pain, he
 stands and tries to walk. It's excruciating. Still he
 continues hobbling -- until finally he sits on the ground.

148 CAPE TOWN AIRPORT TERMINAL -- NIGHT

148

Maddy de-planes with a contingent of journalists. Like
 everyone else who gets off a plane these days, she turns on
 her cell phone to check for messages. There are none.

Archer hasn't called.

149 DAWN IN THE JUNGLE

149

is soft and full of promise. Low clouds hang just above the
 treetops as first light touches the moist greenery.

Archer's face is at peace as he wakes. Solomon sleeps nearby.

Archer reaches to scratch his nose and realizes he is covered
 with BLACK ANTS. Scrambling to his knees, he frantically
 brushes them off. They are in his ears, inside his shirt.
 Solomon awakens and begins to laugh at Archer's frenzy.

ARCHER

I HATE FUCKING ANTS!

SOLOMON

I think you are feeling better.

And then Solomon realizes that he, too, is infested. He
 reaches into his pants and begins to hop around. Now it's
 Archer's turn to laugh.

Soon they are both sitting on the ground, LAUGHING for no
 reason -- except, of course, as a release from all that has
 befallen them.

glow pink in the dawn as they walk. A herd of antelope burst from the brush and bound majestically away.

SOLOMON
...You are how old?

ARCHER
Me? Thirty. One.

SOLOMON
And you have no wife?

ARCHER
No.

SOLOMON
No children?

ARCHER
No.

Solomon shakes his head. After a moment, Archer can't resist.

ARCHER (CONT'D)
--What?

SOLOMON
Truly, I do not understand white people.

ARCHER
That makes two of us.

AS THEY CREST A HILL

Solomon suddenly stops. He looks around. Then he falls to his knees. Archer climbs to where he is and looks around--

A MASS GRAVE

has been fashioned from an abandoned diamond pit. BODIES piled high -- men, women, children. None of them soldiers.

ARCHER (CONT'D)
Animals.

SOLOMON
No animal would ever do such a thing.
It makes no sense.

Solomon forces himself to walk among the corpses, praying that his son is not among them. Tears stream down his cheeks.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)

My people value life. The Mende
find it hard even to take the life
of a chicken. God gives life; only
he may take it back.

(a strangled cry)

How can they do this?

Archer has no answer. Just looks at him.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)

(numbly)

Why is there so much evil here?

What is wrong with us?

151 HOURS LATER

151

Archer uses a tree branch as a cane.

ARCHER

(feeling his forehead)

I've stopped sweating. We've got to
find water.

SOLOMON

Then we must move faster.

Archer nods and pushes himself past the pain in his leg.

152 HOURS LATER - THE SUN IS SCORCHING AT MID-DAY

152

Archer stumbles. Solomon offers a hand to lift him to his
feet. Archer ignores it. Ahead is a CLEARING, and in it:

A BULL ELEPHANT

stands tall and menacing. Beside him, on the ground, is his
mate -- grievously wounded and BELLOWING piteously.

For a moment, Archer and Solomon are too stunned to speak.

ARCHER

Back away. And watch where you step.

Solomon freezes.

SOLOMON

Is it--

ARCHER

A minefield. Yes.

They stare at the MAGNIFICENT CREATURE who refuses to leave
his fallen mate. Slowly they retrace their steps.

No sooner have they turned their backs than AN EXPLOSION
shakes the ground and A FLOCK OF BIRDS rises over the field.

They know what it means. Grimly, they keep moving.

153 THE JUNGLE AT NIGHT

153

is a freaky place at the best of times with strange shapes, shadows, and noises everywhere. In their state, it feels like a bad acid trip. Solomon hears the WHISPERED VOICE of his son. He carries on an imagined conversation.

SOLOMON

....Why? The cows will do fine in the upper pasture...

ARCHER

Hey...

SOLOMON

(in a kind of trance)

-- Yes. And next year we will plant coffee--

ARCHER

HEY!

(Solomon is startled)

You're hallucinating.

SOLOMON

No. I am not.

154 HOURS LATER - ARCHER

154

Archer is half-asleep as they trudge through deep jungle. He stops suddenly. A SNAKE hangs menacingly from a tree.

ARCHER

Do you see that?

SOLOMON

What?

ARCHER

The...snake.

SOLOMON

No.

ARCHER

Good.

Archer now sees that it is only a tree branch.

THEY WALK ON FOR A MOMENT

This time it is Solomon who stops short.

SOLOMON

Wait...
 (listening)
 Can you hear it?

Archer listens hard. A weird croaking sound. Frogs?

ARCHER

Frogs!!

SOLOMON

YES!

Frogs mean water. They stumble forward to discover--

A SMALL STREAM BED

They fling themselves onto their bellies and begin to drink.

ARCHER

What if...this water...is bad?

SOLOMON

You can wait for beer.

Good point. Archer drinks his fill.

155 THE NEXT MORNING

155

Finds them sitting by the stream. Archer studies his map.

ARCHER

This must be the Meli. It runs from
 the North. The Moa runs from the
 East. Where the rivers meet is where
 the mine is, right?

Solomon says nothing.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

Right?

Solomon just glares at him.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

You get that diamond, you can hire a
 team of people to find him. You can
 buy the whole damn government!
 (leaning in)
 What are you gonna do, spend the
 rest of your life searching the bush?

Solomon looks at him. Yes. If necessary.

156 HOURS LATER - THEY FOLLOW THE STREAM

156

now grown into a broad river.

157 HOURS LATER - THEY CLIMB A STEEP RAVINE

157

Archer is struggling. Once again, Solomon offers a hand to help him over a boulder. This time, Archer grudgingly accepts the hand. The moment is underplayed but deeply significant.

Cresting a hill, Solomon looks down on the confluence of the two rivers. A familiar gorge.

SOLOMON'S POV - THE DIAMOND MINING CAMP

is spread out below. HOLES and PITS pock the landscape. Archer joins him at the overlook.

ARCHER

That's it, isn't it?

Solomon's face is clouded with memory. It's a place from his nightmares. A place he hoped never to see again.

A LARGE CONTINGENT OF R.U.F. TROOPS

is encamped near the mines. Archer can see dozens of tiny fires with troops huddled beside them.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

Christ.

He kneels -- trying to figure out their next move.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

Okay...

He digs into his pack for the SAT-phone.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

The E.O. would want to know about a force this size. If I call Joost, he'll send in an air strike...

(the plan unfolds)

We use it as a diversion.

Below them, TEENAGE REBELS play soccer in a ragged field. Is Dia among them? It is too far away to know.

SOLOMON

No air strike.

ARCHER

How do we get in there without some kind of diversion?

SOLOMON

No...air...strike.

ARCHER

He isn't down there.

SOLOMON
How do you know?

ARCHER
(coldly)
I'm calling it in.
(turns on SAT-phone)
They'll come in at first light.
Low. Over that ridge. That's how
much time you've got.

Solomon turns and starts down the hill.

ARCHER (CONT'D)
Hold up there, boy--!

Solomon reacts to Archer's instinctive use of "boy."

ARCHER (CONT'D)
I'm not letting you get yourself
killed until I have that fucking
stone. We wait for dark.

A LIST OF CALL NUMBERS is taped to the inside of the SAT-
phone's case. Archer punches in a number.

ARCHER (CONT'D)
(on the SAT-phone)
Get me Joost.....Archer....He'll
know-- Ask if he's interested in the
location of a major R.U.F. camp.....

158 LATER -- THE DIAMOND CAMP -- NIGHT

158

is just as we remember it. Muddy and exhausted SLAVE WORKERS
try to keep out of A DRIVING RAIN, squatting under corrugated
tin roofs while eating their tiny portion of rice gruel.

Rebel soldiers -- adults and teenagers alike -- eat Red Cross
rations while trying to keep warm and dry.

ARCHER AND SOLOMON

have crawled forward to the edge of the camp.

ARCHER
I can't walk in there. You stay in
my line of sight and I'll cover you.
If he's not there, we move around
the perimeter. The air strike happens
at 0600.
(racks the slide of
his Sig-Sauer)
You do exactly as I say. And don't
mistake me for your friend. You
fuck with me and I'll surely kill
you.

A SENTRY

huddles miserably in the rain.

Archer SPRINGS out of the shadows and choke-holds him -- then drags him back into the bushes where Solomon is hiding. Archer takes his weapon - an H&K assault rifle.

Solomon stands up and walks into the camp as inconspicuously as possible. Archer watches under cover of the brush as:

159 SOLOMON

159

insinuates himself among the miserable workers, moving from hut to hut -- trying to see if Dia is among them.

He isn't. Solomon moves deeper into the village.

ARCHER

curses as Solomon walks out of his line of sight.

160 IN THE CAMP

160

Solomon is about to give up hope, when--

HE SEES DIA. Solomon blinks back his disbelief.

Dia's with TWO OLDER REBELS, who are watching him take a hit from a big spliff, laughing as he chokes on the smoke.

Solomon tries to will Dia to turn in his direction.

161 ARCHER

161

Scuttles through the bush -- trying to get a line of sight.

162 EXT. TWO SENTRIES

162

appear nearby -- carrying food for the sentry Archer has killed. Unable to find him, they begin to CALL out for him.

163 IN THE CAMP

163

Dia and the other soldiers separate. Solomon moves out from the shadows.

SOLOMON
(whispering)
Dia--

Dia turns -- uncomprehending.

Solomon takes his arm.

DIA
 (suddenly fearful)
 NO!

SOLOMON
 Dia, it's me!

Three months of horror, of depravation, of trauma, of unspeakable acts have taken root in the soul of this young boy. His face contorts in struggle. Then--

DIA
 GET AWAY FROM ME! GET AWAY!
 (screaming)
 FARMER! TRAITOR!

He tries to break free of Solomon's grasp. A few other soldiers HEAR him cry out. They turn to look.

164 ARCHER 164

hears it as well. He steps from his hiding place -- trying to see what is happening.

165 AN R.U.F. SOLDIER 165

sees Solomon holding Dia by the arm. He HITS HIM IN THE BACK with his rifle butt. Solomon crumples to the ground.

166 ARCHER 166

aims the assault rifle, but the GUARDS have picked up Solomon and -- at sixty yards, at night, in the driving rain -- there's no way Archer can get off a clean shot. Then--

The SOUND of a SLIDE being racked. The barrel of an AK-47 is placed against Archer's head.

167 EXT. THE REBEL CAMP -- NEXT MORNING 167

Solomon's arms have been TIED behind his back -- the rope looped over a tree branch and re-tied. He looks up to see--

DIA, standing with several guards. His face is hard and withdrawn. He turns away from Solomon's gaze.

A SHOVEL is thrown at Solomon's feet.

VOICE
 I knew you would come back.

Solomon looks up into the disfigured face of CAPTAIN POISON. A brutal scar only adds to the malice in his eyes.

Poison motions to the dozens of HOLES that pock the landscape -- giant scars of diamond fields that have been mined out.

POISON

See how I have dug. I have found nothing.

(to Solomon)

You will dig again for me. You will dig up what you have come back for.

SOLOMON

No.

POISON

No? Do you think the white man will rescue you?

He turns Solomon's head violently to the left, where:

ARCHER

Has been made to kneel, arms tied behind his back, head to the ground, with a gun held to the back of his skull.

POISON (CONT'D)

This white man is the cause of your suffering. This white man, his masters abroad -- and his black puppets in the government.

Poison whips out a dog-eared manifesto from his army jacket.

POISON (CONT'D)

Foday Sankoh say -- resist and overthrow those who would exploit you! Shed their blood.

He slaps Solomon's head with the book.

POISON (CONT'D)

Maybe some more digging will help you learn this lesson.

The rope holding Solomon is cut. He falls to the ground and is prodded to his feet by several SOLDIERS holding Ak-47's.

Solomon looks down at the shovel. But doesn't move. Surreptitiously Archer glances at his watch. It is 5:59.

POISON (CONT'D)

Pick it up.

SOLOMON

Why? You are going to kill me anyway.

With a sigh, Poison whispers in Solomon's ear:

POISON

I do not need to kill you, Solomon Vandy. Because now you have a name. And a family. If you do not give me this diamond, I will find this family -- just as I have found your son.

He goes to Dia and puts his arm around him.

POISON (CONT'D)

I will rape your wife in front of you, then slit her throat.
(smiles)
And I will keep your daughters for myself.

It is the first time we have seen the light go out of Solomon's eyes -- in part because of Poison's words, but mostly because of Dia's look of indifference.

POISON (CONT'D)

You think I am a devil. But only because I have lived in hell. I want to get out. You will help me.

Curiously enough, these words could have been Archer's when first we met him. He watches as:

Solomon takes the shovel. All his hopes and dreams end here. He must dig the earth one last time to save his family.

He looks out at the jungle. Nothing looks familiar -- the trees SWIRLING...making him dizzy.

SOLOMON

I don't remember...

Archer, head to the ground, watches Solomon closely. Sneaks another peek at his watch. 0600 hours. No air strike.

POISON

Find it! Or your family will die!

As if sleep-walking, Solomon begins to walk toward the pits. Poison and several armed rebels follow close behind.

168 THE FIRST ROCKET EXPLODES

168

in the middle of the camp -- sending a corrugated hut sky high. Everyone is knocked to the ground.

An E.O. HELICOPTER GUNSHIP streaks by overhead. THE SECOND ROCKET hits a truck -- instantly turning it into a fireball.

THE GUNSHIP'S GATLING GUNS

fire. 800 ROUNDS PER SECOND chew up everything in its path.

ARCHER'S GUARD

is almost cut in half by the devastating firepower. Archer rolls behind a tree -- CHUNKS FLY from its base.

SOLOMON, CAPTAIN POISON AND AN R.U.F. GUARD

have been knocked into a muddy DIAMOND PIT. Solomon hugs the ground as the jet SCREAMS over -- stitching the ground.

ARCHER gets to his feet and sprints toward Dia -- ignoring the EXPLOSIONS all around him. Since his hands are still tied behind his back --he hurtles a BODYCHECK into the back of the SOLDIER guarding the boy.

He THROWS HIMSELF on top of the boy -- as the gunships make another pass -- KILLING R.U.F. soldiers who try to escape.

169 EXT. AT THE BOTTOM OF THE DIAMOND PIT

169

Solomon turns over the body of a dead guard and finds A MACHETE in his belt. Captain Poison looks up from the muck and reaches for his 9mm -- only it isn't in his holster. Frantically, he digs in the mud. It's nowhere to be found.

Solomon, meanwhile, gets to his feet and moves toward Poison -- who frantically tries to climb out of the pit --

The sides are high and slick. The closer Solomon gets, the more frantically Poison tries to claw his way out. But the walls are just too slippery...

He FALLS back -- sliding down -- at last finding his gun. He raises it, but it's too late -- Solomon RAISES THE MACHETE.

All we can see is the lip of the pit, but we can HEAR Poison's SCREAMS as Solomon's powerful arm RISES and FALLS.

Solomon's face is contorted -- as the rage that has been buried for so long finds its expression. He brings the machete down again -- and again with all his might. Blood spattering him. Until he stops.

With disbelief and horror at what he's done.

170 TWO ARMORED VEHICLES

170

appear with .50 caliber machine guns FIRING from their mounts. Behind them, MERCENARIES wearing the red beret of the E.O.

Joost organizes blocking positions around the perimeter of the village -- cutting down anyone who tries to escape.

It is all over in a matter of minutes.

171 A SILENCE

171

As the SMOKE and DUST clears, hardly a soul is moving. THE COLONEL strides into camp followed by TWO BODYGUARDS.

ARCHER squints into the sun as the Colonel looms above him.

THE COLONEL

Thank you for calling in the location.

ARCHER

You're welcome.

THE COLONEL

Then again, you had an ulterior motive.

SOLOMON emerges from the pit, covered in blood. He is a terrifying sight -- this gentle man transformed into some kind of monster.

THE COLONEL (CONT'D)

This must be the famous Mr. Vandy.
(to Archer)
Introduce us.

ARCHER

This is Colonel Coetsee. He wants the diamond.

THE COLONEL

No more than you.

Archer nods. True enough.

THE COLONEL (CONT'D)

(calls out)
Joost.

Joost appears, holding a 9mm to Dia's head. Dia is shocked by his father's appearance.

THE COLONEL (CONT'D)

(calls out)
Lt. Gans.

A mercenary LIEUTENANT appears.

THE COLONEL (CONT'D)

You will organize the withdrawal.
We move out in thirty minutes.
(turns to Solomon)
Let's take a walk, shall we?

The Colonel's two bodyguards follow.

172 MOMENTS LATER - ARCHER AND SOLOMON

172

are led at gunpoint into the diamond fields by the Colonel's BODYGUARDS. The Colonel and Joost follow behind with Dia.

JOOST
How much farther?

Solomon doesn't answer. They pass one pit after another.

A SAT-phone RINGS in the pack carried by one of the Colonel's bodyguards. The guard answers it and hands it to The Colonel.

THE COLONEL
(on the SAT-phone)
.....No.....No transport for
prisoners.....Shoot them, that's
what they pay us for.....

He hands the phone back to the bodyguard.

173 HALF A MILE ON - IN A GROVE BY THE RIVERSIDE

173

Solomon stops. The others react, expectant.

Looming out of the thick growth is THE RUBBER TREE. Vines have covered its base, but it's definitely the same tree.

Solomon measures the distance. Takes another few steps.

He is about to raise the shovel. Then stops dead, the muscles of his arm tensing. Inches from his foot, unmistakable -- is the TRIGGER of a land mine -- partially covered by vines.

Solomon glances back to Joost, who stands several yards away. He doesn't see it.

Solomon looks back at the trigger -- an idea forming. He turns in Archer's direction...

SOLOMON
(looking around)
An elephant graveyard.

JOOST
What? Keep digging.

Archer knows Solomon is trying him something -- in code.

Solomon carefully takes a step sideways. Sinks the shovel into the earth. Swallows. He's still in one piece.

He sinks the shovel in again. And again. Digging.

The Colonel watches, intently.

Solomon throws the shovel aside. Gets down on his knees, digging with his hands now. Faster. Scooping out dirt and rocks and sand. Until there is nothing left to scrape out.

He stares into the empty hole, confounded...

He looks to Joost, then Archer, then back into the hole. Grabs the shovel again, starts digging the hole larger, wider.

SOLOMON

It is not here ... it is not here!

THE COLONEL

What do you mean?

SOLOMON

This is where I buried the stone.
In this place. But it is not here!
(beside himself)
Someone has taken it! Come see for yourself!

The Colonel motions Joost over to Solomon. Joost leaves Dia by the Colonel's side.

As the mercenary ventures over --

Solomon glances at Archer, his eyes convey something. Archer reads the look. Out of the corner of his eye, he sees:

The TRIGGER. It lies between Solomon's hole and Joost.

Solomon tries desperately not to look at the trigger as Joost comes closer. Closer.

Joost's boot HITS the TRIGGER. CLICK. A millisecond of realization on the stunned mercenary's face before--

THE EXPLOSION blows him to bits.

Solomon is already DIVING behind a tree stump as--

Dia is thrown to the ground.

Archer seizes the moment -- sending an OPEN-HAND STRIKE to the throat of his would-be executioner, then grabbing the AK-47, and shooting him before ripping the gun out of his hands.

ARCHER

STAY DOWN!

SOLOMON remains flattened behind the tree stump, head down.

Archer sprays GUNFIRE at the mercenaries -- hitting the Colonel and the guards. He expends the entire clip.

And no one is left standing ...

He looks back at the rebel camp -- knowing that other mercenaries have heard the GUNFIRE.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

Let's go!

Solomon gets up, orients himself and begins to count steps. Spears the shovel into the earth. Digs.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

(admiringly)

You lying bastard...

Solomon throws the shovel down.

THERE IN THE HOLE -- peeking out of the dirt -- is the torn green cuff of a pantleg. Solomon digs it out with his hands.

FAR OFF VOICES

can be heard -- coming their way. Armed E.O. mercenaries.

Archer rams a fresh clip into the machine gun, and reaches into the dead bodyguard's pack for his SAT-phone. But as he looks up, he sees --

DIA

holding The Colonel's 9mm. Aimed at him.

SOLOMON

Dia--

Dia's eyes flicker from Archer to Solomon and then back.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)

Dia, look at me.

Dia looks into Solomon's eyes.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)

(in Mende)

You are Dia Vandy. Of the proud Mende.
Your mother loves you -- and she
waits by the fire making plaintains
and red palm stew with your sister,
N'yanda, and the new baby.

(moves closer)

The cows wait for you. And Babu the
wild dog who minds no one but you.

(moves closer still)

And I am your father who loves you.
And you will go home with me, and be
my son.

He walks right up to him, ignoring the gun, and wraps his arms around him.

Dia goes limp, the gun hangs loosely at his side -- as he allows himself to be held.

BEHIND THEM, THE JUNGLE ERUPTS WITH GUNFIRE

Solomon throws Dia to the ground. Archer takes cover.

FOUR MERCENARIES ARE ADVANCING

across the river -- firing as they come.

Archer RETURNS FIRE, hitting two. The others hit the ground.

ARCHER
MOVE, MOVE, MOVE!!!

He SHOVES Solomon and Dia to their feet.

ANOTHER SPRAY OF GUNFIRE pins them down.

ARCHER (CONT'D)
When I start firing. You run!
(stands up)
....NOW!

He lays down COVERING FIRE -- as Solomon and Dia head for the brush. Archer waits until they are safe, then--

It's his turn to make a run. He takes off.

It's only thirty yards or so, but they seem an eternity.

He is almost into the brush when--

He is HIT in the back. He grunts and doubles over.

ARCHER (CONT'D)
Fuck!

He fights the shock and the pain -- adrenaline kicking in -- and stumbles into the dense cover.

174 UP AHEAD - IN THE BUSH

174

He finds Solomon waiting. Solomon has no notion that Archer has been wounded.

SOLOMON
How far?

ARCHER
(through gritted teeth)
There's...a strip...on a ridge...
fifteen kilometers...south. Fawaz
will meet us.....GO!.....

They take off in that direction.

175 IN THE JUNGLE -- MINUTES LATER

175

An eerie quiet, broken only by the calls of exotic birds.

Archer leads them -- paying for every step. The entry wound in his back is small, almost unnoticeable.

He stops and pulls out the SAT-phone. Dials.

ARCHER
(on the SAT-phone)
.....Where are you? We're twelve
clicks out..... Two hours at most...

FAWAZ (O.S.)
--You have it?

ARCHER
(on the SAT-phone)
...Roger that.

FAWAZ (O.S.)
Carrying a lot of fuel. Don't know
if I can handle three more onboard.

Archer looks up ahead to where Solomon and Dia are waiting.

ARCHER
(on the SAT-phone)
I'll get it sorted.

He punches the button and starts off again.

176 THREE KILOMETERS LATER

176

Solomon is STARING at the bloody exit wound below Archer's arm pit -- the stain spreading.

Archer sees him see it. Looks at him.

SOLOMON
You must sit.

ARCHER
Yeah, let's just have tea.

He starts moving again.

177 THREE KILOMETERS LATER

177

Archer has to stop. His breathing is labored. He wipes his mouth. Looks at his hand. No blood.

ARCHER
Missed...the lung...but it's
still....collapsed. Could...
be....worse....I guess.

SOLOMON

Rest now. They will not find us.

Archer looks around. As if sensing their pursuit.

ARCHER

They're good.
 (struggles to his
 feet)
 Let's go...

He wills himself onward.

178 THREE MORE KILOMETERS

178

have taken their toll. Archer is stumbling now. Solomon says something to Dia in Mende.

SOLOMON

We will carry you.

ARCHER

No.

SOLOMON

Yes.

They each take one of Archer's arms over their shoulders. Yoked together, they struggle on.

179 TWO KILOMETERS MORE

179

And they have reached the base of a rocky ridge. Archer takes out the binoculars and sees--

BINOCULAR POV -- OFF IN THE DISTANCE

TWO E.O. ARMORED VEHICLES churn up dust as they approach. Behind them come a squad of infantry on foot.

IN THE SKY ABOVE

The Cessna appears, circling.

THE RIDGE ABOVE THEM IS VERY STEEP

with dense brush blocking their way. In order to make it to the landing strip, they will have to climb it.

It would be difficult enough to climb on one's own, but to carry another man -- as Solomon tries as he hoists Archer over his shoulder -- is beyond imagining.

ARCHER

....wait...

SOLOMON

No--

One step. Another step. And then another.

Solomon's strength is tremendous. They make progress. Hand over hand. Rock by rock.

Solomon's face contorts with the effort. His legs tremble but still he keeps going. The top of the ravine appears, far away, but tantalizingly in sight.

For a moment we might even believe they will make it -- but then Solomon loses his footing. He stumbles.

Archer is slammed to the ground, grunting in pain. Solomon reaches to pick him up again.

ARCHER
STOP! DAMN'T!.

Archer's shirt-front is SOAKED in BLOOD. He is pale and gasping for breath. Solomon goes to pick him up again.

ARCHER (CONT'D)
No. Let me...see it...

SOLOMON
Mr. Archer--

ARCHER
You....want it all...for yourself.

Solomon shakes his head, smiles ruefully. This is the moment he realizes Archer is not going to make it.

He hands Archer the wrapped stone. Archer peels it open.

Even wrapped in a dirty cloth, it takes the breath away -- like something from the Gods.

ARCHER (CONT'D)
It's real...

He holds it up to the warm afternoon light.

ARCHER (CONT'D)
So....beautiful.

Archer looks up to see Solomon staring at him. He wraps it back in the cloth.

ARCHER (CONT'D)
Take it.

SOLOMON
I thought you would steal it from
me.

ARCHER
It occurred to me.

Solomon smiles.

SOLOMON
To me, as well.

180 UP ABOVE 180

The plane touches down.

181 DOWN BELOW 181

The Armored Cars are getting closer.

182 ARCHER 182

Looks over at Solomon -- who has his arm protectively around
Dia.

IN THE BEAUTIFUL AFTERNOON LIGHT

The boy looks like the same innocent child he once was.

ARCHER
Take.....your....boy....home.

Solomon looks back at him, tears in his eyes.

He nods. In deep and simple gratitude.

Archer nods back. Then--

ARCHER (CONT'D)
Help me...

He struggles to pick up the machine gun. Solomon puts it
into his hands.

ARCHER (CONT'D)
Put the strap...over my shoulder.

Solomon helps secure it in place.

.50 CALIBER ROUNDS FROM THE ARMORED CAR

Begin to land -- short -- but getting closer.

183 ARCHER FIRES A BURST FROM HIS MACHINE GUN 183

Momentarily stopping their progress.

ARCHER
GO NOW.

SOLOMON
Goodbye....Danny.

Archer's eyes flicker for a moment. Smiles.

ARCHER
Tell Fawaz if he tries to cheat you,
I'll be waiting for him in Hell.

Solomon nods once more.

Dia meets Archer's eyes for the first time, then looks away.

Solomon leads his son up the ridge.

184 ARCHER 184

settles himself -- as comfortably as he is able -- among the rocks. He FIRES another burst -- to distract them from Solomon and Dia as they climb the ridge.

185 DOWN BELOW 185

The attacking mercenaries scramble for cover.

186 ABOVE - ON THE LANDING STRIP 186

We SEE Solomon and Dia run for the plane. We CANNOT HEAR what is said above the ROAR OF THE PROP.

187 BACK TO ARCHER 187

He has taken the SAT-phone from the pack. In his hand is Maddy's card. He dials.

188 EXT. CAPE TOWN - AN OUTDOOR CAFE -- INTERCUT 188

Maddy sits with a group of journalists. Her cell phone RINGS.

MADDY
Maddy Bowen...

ARCHER
Told you I would call.

Maddy is shocked to hear his voice. She immediately gets up and walks away from the table.

MADDY
And I'm so glad you did. When am I going to see you?

ARCHER
Little problem there.

MADDY

What do you mean--?

Above on the ridge, Archer HEARS the plane taking off.

ARCHER

Listen...Maddy...I want you...to do
me another favor.

By now Maddy can hear the weakness in his voice, the labored
breathing. Then, the SOUND of gunfire from below.

MADDY

Archer, are you all right?

ARCHER

Listen, I need you to go to Guinea.

MADDY

Archer, what's going on--?

ARCHER

Will you just shut up and listen--
Got to...meet Solomon at the UN camp.
Found...his son...but they're...going
to need...help.

MADDY

You're hurt. Oh, my God-- where are
you?

ARCHER

I'm in a really...beautiful place...
And...I wish you were here...

MADDY

Archer, oh, shit. Let me get you
help--

ARCHER

.....You take care of Solomon....
Tell his story.....I gotta go...

Maddy's eyes are welling up.

MADDY

Archer---

ARCHER

Goodbye, Maddy...

MADDY

Archer--!

The connection has been lost. Archer has hung up.

189 ARCHER

189

pushes away the phone and sits back against a mossy rock, his face in repose. He looks up at the shafts of sunlight made visible by the dust and haze.

In the quiet, birds flit, insects buzz, the leafy branches of trees hundreds of years old sway in the breeze.

It reminds us of how Solomon experienced the natural world when first he found the diamond.

He looks down -- a half-smile on his face as DROPS OF HIS BLOOD mix with the red dirt of Africa.

He looks up into the sky -- where THE CESSNA grows smaller and smaller as it flies out of view.

190 ARMED E.O. MERCENARIES

190

swarm up the hillside toward Archer. We expect him to return FIRE, but he doesn't.

As the first soldier reaches his position, we SEE that Archer is dead. He sits with his back against the mossy rock -- eyes closed. At peace at last.

191 EXT. LONDON (TO ESTABLISH) -- DAY

191

From pastoral tranquility to the chaos of urban life. Solomon stands transfixed by the noise, the traffic, the crowded sidewalks of the City of London.

He stands at a street corner, uncomfortable in a suit two sizes too small and stiff new leather shoes.

Maddy is there by his side. She gently touches his arm.

MADDY

Come on. We're almost there.

192 THEY REACH THE EMBANKMENT

192

Maddy stops beside the Hungerford footbridge.

MADDY

Just walk to the middle.

SOLOMON

You're not coming?

MADDY

I'm not here.

Solomon collects himself. He has survived hostile jungle, mercenaries and the R.U.F.. Yet this seems as daunting.

193 IN THE MIDDLE OF THE BRIDGE

193

Solomon waits. A man approaches. It's Simmons.

SIMMONS

You are Solomon Vandy?

Solomon nods. Several paces behind Simmons are two BODYGUARDS.

SOLOMON

And you are?

SIMMONS

I am the end of your journey.

Simmons motions for a briefcase. One of the men brings it forward, unlocks the combination, opens it.

194 THE IMAGE FREEZES. CLICK.

194

Maddy is behind a wall, taking pictures with a telephoto.

195 EXT. THE BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

195

SIMMONS

You must understand, Mister Vandy,
that your diamond could have ended
up no place else but with us.

Solomon stares at the neat rows of POUND NOTES.

SIMMONS (CONT'D)

It's all yours.

Solomon looks from the money, to Simmons.

SOLOMON

It is not enough.

SIMMONS

I assure you, two million pounds is
more than anyone will offer you for
that stone, under the circumstances.

SOLOMON

I want what was promised to me by
Mister Archer.

SIMMONS

(swallowing irritation)
...What was promised to you?

SOLOMON

My family.

SIMMONS

Your family?

SOLOMON

They are in a refugee camp. When they are here, you will get the stone.

Simmons takes a moment to digest this.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)

I will take the money, too.

Simmons sees that Solomon is serious.

SIMMONS

May I see what I'm buying?

SOLOMON

You will get the stone once my family is here.

SIMMONS

How do I even know you have it?

SOLOMON

You have my word.

He looks from Simmons, to the other men, back to Simmons.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)

Mister Archer told me this business is based on a person's word. And a deal is made with a handshake.

With a cordial smile, he extends his hand to Simmons.

196 INT. SMALL LONDON HOTEL ROOM - EVENING (MUSIC OVER) 196

Solomon sits on the edge of the BED, waiting. The little room is littered with empty boxes of take-out.

197 LATER - TIFFANY'S ON BOND ST. (MUSIC OVER) 197

Solomon stares at a DIAMOND NECKLACE the window. He's never seen a polished stone, let alone forty in a dazzling setting.

WOMAN'S VOICE (ENGLISH ACCENT)

Now that's what I call bling.

He looks up to find an attractive ENGLISH WOMAN, black, 30's.

SOLOMON

I beg your pardon?

BLACK WOMAN

...You're African.

(off his look...)

I'm good with accents.

She offers her hand.

BLACK WOMAN (CONT'D)
Elizabeth Sweet.

SOLOMON
I am Solomon Vandy.

198 LATER - AS THEY WALK ALONG REGENT STREET

198

BLACK WOMAN (ELIZABETH)
--then after university I went to
straight to work for the bank. I've
always regretted not having taken
more time off to travel. Africa
especially.

SOLOMON
It is very beautiful.

BLACK WOMAN
I can only imagine. Tell me about
Sierra Leone...

Solomon stops walking. Suddenly very afraid.

SOLOMON
How do you know where I come from?

BLACK WOMAN
You said--

SOLOMON
No. I did not say.
(steps toward her)
WHO ARE YOU? WHAT DO YOU WANT?

BLACK WOMAN
(backpedaling)
Look--

SOLOMON
GET AWAY FROM ME!

BLACK WOMAN
They only want to make sure you have
it--

Solomon looks around, suddenly frightened, certain now they
are being observed. He turns and runs off down the street.

199 LATER - BACK IN SOLOMON'S HOTEL ROOM (MUSIC OVER)

199

He sits alone on the bed. The phone RINGS. He picks it up.

SOLOMON
Hello?

His eyes begin to well.

200 INT. HEATHROW INTERNATIONAL TERMINAL - DAY

200

Solomon watches the travelers coming through the customs gate, his eyes moving over every face.

Maddy is nearby, watching from a respectful remove.

Then...there they are... Like a vision. Only real.

JASSIE

Sola!

She runs to him. Solomon's daughter approaches more tentatively. Solomon kneels down, scoops her in his arms.

Nearby, Dia stands awkwardly, something damaged in his eyes. Slowly he allows himself to be drawn into his father's arms.

Maddy is crying as well.

The family remains in an embrace as the world moves around them, unaware of the moment's significance.

201 EXT. WATERLOO BRIDGE -- DAY

201

Solomon and Simmons meet again. A Bentley idles nearby.

SIMMONS

You are satisfied?

Solomon nods, starts to reach into his pocket.

SIMMONS (CONT'D)

Not here.

He climbs into the waiting car. Solomon warily follows.

202 IN THE CAR

202

Simmon's ASSOCIATE hands over the briefcase. Simmons takes the dirty, torn-off pantleg with some distaste, but when he opens it, his expression changes to wonder.

SIMMONS

Extraordinary.

The two associates stare at the stone in disbelief.

SIMMONS (CONT'D)

May I drop you somewhere, Mr. Vandy?

SOLOMON

No. Thank you.

Solomon opens the door, uses a phrase we have heard before.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)
Always a pleasure doing business.

203 FOUR STORIES UNDERGROUND -- LATER (MUSIC OVER) 203

The thick STEEL DOOR of the VAULT hisses open. The DIAMOND, now locked in a glass box, is wheeled in on a cart. Security cameras follow it. The box is placed in its own STEEL DRAWER, amid a wall of steel drawers ...

204 INT. A SMALL OFFICE -- SAME (MUSIC CONT) 204

Maddy types away on a laptop.

205 EXT. FRONT OF DTC BUILDING - LONDON - DAY (MUSIC CONT) 205

As De Wente steps out of a shiny LIMO, he is met by several TV CAMERAS and REPORTERS.

REPORTER
Mister De Wente! Cary Wright, CNN.
Could you comment on allegations
that your company buys blood diamonds
from Sierra Leone?

BODYGUARDS insist the reporters keep their distance.

DE WENTE
I'm not going to comment on some
sensationalist magazine article. De
Wente International is as concerned
as anyone about diamonds from these
regions reaching the marketplace.

206 INT. UN HEARING ROOM 206

Superimpose: UN Subcommittee on International Trade, 2002

AMBASSADOR WALKER
--this situation is accountable for
unspeakable tragedy...
(scans the room)
...The natural resources of a nation
are the sovereign property of its
people...

THE FACES OF REPRESENTATIVES, thoughtful and skeptical alike --
TO MADDY'S FACE as she sits among the reporters. The words
wash over her.

AMBASSADOR WALKER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
...They are not ours to steal, or
take by force, or exploit in the
name of our comfort, our corporations,
or our consumerism.

207 INT. OUTSIDE THE UN CHAMBERS - SAME

207

SOLOMON sits on a marble bench wearing his new suit.

AMBASSADOR WALKER (V.O.)
The Third World is not a world apart
and the witness you will hear today
speaks on its behalf.

In Solomon's lap is a copy of Vanity Fair. It is open to Maddy's story on the diamond trade.

On a facing page are PHOTOGRAPHS: workers in a diamond mine; Solomon at the refugee camp; child soldiers clutching weapons;

And a picture of Archer. Vibrant, intense, haunted.

A UN PAGE opens the DOOR.

UN PAGE
They're ready for you, sir.

Solomon closes the magazine. Stands. And heads in.

AMBASSADOR WALKER (V.O.)
*Let us hear the voice of that world,
let us learn from that voice, and
let us ignore it no more.*

FADE OUT: