

KASHMIR

by

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It starts as interlocking POINTS OF LIGHT, arranged in neat, plant-cell grids. A soothing, abstract mosaic of red, blue and green, shifting in silence.

As we inch away from the points of light, they begin to assemble themselves into larger forms. The red, blue and green blend into a multitude of complex colors. By now, we know we're watching a

TV SCREEN

But we're still too close to make out the details. There is still no sound, and we are still moving away from the screen millimeter by millimeter, so slowly that a visceral unease is beginning to set in.

Finally, we can make out something recognizable: The letter "A." Then the word in which it is embedded, then the other words around it:

"DALLAS, TEXAS, FEBRUARY 3RD"

Not today's date, but a burn-in on CABLE NEWS FOOTAGE, as the CNN logo and news crawl eventually make clear.

Our perspective widens to encompass the bottom of the AMERICAN AIRLINES CENTER, home of the Dallas Mavericks. It is night time. Dozens of fire trucks and ambulances are parked helter-skelter on the street.

Several more seconds pass before the whole stadium comes into view, and we finally see what happened in Dallas on February 3rd:

A hundred-foot hole has been blown through the roof of the American Airlines Center. A column of coal-black smoke rises through it. Orange flames light the Dallas night like a midnight sun.

We cut away to the aftermath of the event from a safe video distance. The clean-up workers. The bulldozers. The stunned onlookers. The flowers on the sidewalks. Slowly, the SOUND FADES IN:

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

...the official death toll has been
revised downward to 2,517...

And in the b.g., the sound of MUZAK, bland and terrible.

CONTINUE PULL OUT TO:

INT. WALMART PHARMACY - EVENING

BURN IN: "Arcadia, California"

The FLAT-SCREEN TVs hanging above the pharmacy counter are there to pacify the customers while they wait -

- but this footage seems to be having the opposite effect on the CUSTOMERS in line tonight. The fluorescent lights make them all look sick.

At the counter, FRANK PIERCE (40s) cranes his neck to watch the TV intently. Pierce's hair is cropped close, military style. His face is weathered but he is extremely fit. In his arms, he holds his tired daughter EMMA (5).

EMMA

Where's Mom?

PIERCE

(staring at TV)

She's still at work, Sweetie.

Emma lays her head back down on Pierce's shoulder.

NEWSCASTER (ON TV)

For two weeks, all intelligence has pointed toward Sayim al-Bakr, the sixty-year-old militant who is believed to have assumed leadership of al-Qaeda.

ON TV, a PHOTO OF SAYM AL-BAKR. Sixty years old, an exile's lean cheeks, unkempt beard. What you'd expect - except for the eyes. The uncanny green of those eyes looks like a special effect.

Pierce scrutinizes al-Bakr's image.

PHARMACIST (O.S.)

Sir?

NEWSCASTER (ON TV)

The son of an Omani sheik, al-Bakr served as Osama bin Laden's intelligence chief until bin Laden's death last month.

PHARMACIST (O.S.)

Sir?

Pierce's eyes remain fixed on the TV, and al-Bakr.

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CONTINUED:

NEWSCASTER (ON TV)

He is thought to be hiding near the border of Iran and Afghanistan, where American special forces teams...

PHARMACIST (O.S.)

Sir?

EMMA (O.S.)

Dad, the man wants to talk to you.

His daughter's voice pulls him back. Pierce looks away from the TV to the pharmacist, waiting behind the counter with Pierce's prescription.

PIERCE

Sorry, sorry.

PHARMACIST

(coldly civil)

How would you like to pay for this, Sir?

Pierce hands the man a credit card, and the pharmacist runs it. When Pierce looks back to his daughter, he finds her staring at the TV screen above. Her incomprehension is laced with dread:

EMMA

Dad, where's Dallas?

He flips her over to his other arm so she's facing away from the TV.

PIERCE

It's far away, honey.

EMMA

How far from Los Angeles?

PIERCE

So far that —

PHARMACIST

Sir? It's not accepting the card. You've reached your limit.

PIERCE

(sighs)

Here, try this one.

Pierce fishes around in his wallet for another card. After finding it, he looks up and sees

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

A SOUR-FACED WOMAN behind him in line, flashing him an intolerant look. Behind her, others follow suit, aiming their various frustrations at Frank Pierce.

Pierce turns back around without saying anything, but he grinds his teeth. He does not wear powerlessness well.

INT. PIERCE APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

From his recliner, Pierce drinks a beer and watches the news. The room is clean, but the TV stand and shelves have a self-assembled look, and the upholstery on the couch and chairs is worn.

On the couch, Pierce's wife LINDA (30s) tries to ignore the TV, helping Emma select crayons for her coloring book. Linda is still pretty, but years of worry have dug crow's feet into the corners of her eyes.

EMMA

I'm coloring a vampire.

LINDA

And you're doing a very good job.

ON TV, the news broadcast switches to a gray-haired man behind a White House podium:

DEFENSE SECRETARY (ON TV)

We have tough men in the field, and they will not relent. Sooner, not later, they will bring this vermin to ground -

Linda grabs the remote and turns the TV off.

PIERCE

What the hell -

LINDA

We've been watching this stuff for two weeks, Frank.

(beat)

It's not your job anymore. It's someone else's job.

EMMA

Dad, I'm coloring a vampire.

Pierce starts to say something, but he sees the hope on his daughter's face, and knows that his wife is right. His own face softens. He finishes his beer.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PIERCE

All right, let's see that mean sucker.

She brings him the drawing.

EMMA

No, he's a good vampire.

PIERCE

Who ever heard of a good vampire?

He starts to tickle her before she can argue.

EXT. AYFO BAR - EVENING

BURN IN: "Cebu, Philippines"

Establishing shot of Ayfo, a small, dingy, open air beach bar on the tourist-heavy island of Cebu.

SERRA (SOUND ADVANCE)

(slight Texas accent)

Well, looks like there's still one way a guy like me can make a living...

INT. AYFO BAR - CONTINUOUS

[On a corner TV, CNN International drones on in the b.g.]

CARL SERRA(30s), blond and drunk in a loose-fitting Hawaiian shirt, plays cards with four other men (three Filipinos, one dark-skinned Caucasian). A huge pile of Philippine pesos sits in the middle of the table.

Serra throws down a Full House, Kings high.

Two FILIPINO MEN groan and throw their cards down.

Serra corrals the pot with a deft sweep of his arm, then polishes off his beer. He drips charisma and he knows it.

SERRA

Smiley, sorry you won't be able to afford that orthodontia this year...

"SMILEY"(40s), the third Filipino, smiles a wide, snaggle-toothed smile, even though Serra just cleaned him out.

SERRA

... but I'm so glad you could join our little game. I thank you, Texas thanks you.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SERRA (CONT'D)

And Uri thanks you, for giving me money I will no doubt piss away right here at his bar.

URI TZUR (late 20s), proprietor of the bar, is a scrawny, nappy-headed Israeli. His Buster Keaton deadpan is no poker face; it is his default expression. He looks at his own Full House (Queens High) with resignation.

URI

(Israeli accent)

I might as well let you drink for free.

Stuffing his pesos into his pockets, Serra rises and gives Uri a friendly pat on the back.

SERRA

I wouldn't recommend it. Uri, Smiley, fellas... Sleep tight.

Smiley smiles guilelessly and waves goodbye.

Uri watches Serra go. As his head turns, something on the corner TV pulls his eyes upward.

ON TV, an all-too-familiar image of Israeli soldiers shooting rubber bullets at rock-throwing Palestinians.

Uri's eyebrows dip with disapproval. He grabs the remote and changes the channel to a soccer match.

EXT. UNPAVED ROAD - CEBU - NIGHT

Serra walks home, his shirt and pants pockets bulging with peso notes. The night is hot enough to raise sweat on his brow. He is drunk enough to step in a muddy puddle in the center of the dirt road without noticing.

Up ahead, a rat-trap guest house so low-rent that no one has bothered to name it. The sign reads: GUEST HOUSE.

Home. Serra makes for the door. As he steps into the light of the guest house's single doorway bulb -

Smiley steps from behind a coconut palm and cuts him off.

SERRA

Smiley! It's been a long time.

Serra laughs at his own non-joke. As before, Smiley smiles broadly... but slowly, his smile fades.

Serra gets it, too late.

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CONTINUED:

SERRA

Aww, fu—

A BLACKJACK swings from the shadows behind him and knocks him half unconscious. Serra falls to his knees.

Two thick-necked local THUGS step into the light behind him and pick him up. A rivulet of blood runs from Serra's scalp, down his neck.

Serra looks at Smiley, now wavering in and out of focus. A third, wiry thug steps out behind Smiley and trains his REVOLVER on Serra.

SMILEY

You take my money, Funny Man. We need my money. We need it for important things.

SERRA

So why'd you gamble with it?

One of the muscle-bound thugs holds Serra's arms behind his back by the wrists, while the other one softens him up with PUNISHING BLOWS to the ribs and kidneys.

Serra's terror is now on full display, all bravado gone:

SERRA

Look, I was just messing around, man, I didn't mean anything by —

Smiley hits hard for a small guy. The brass knuckles help. Serra spits blood.

SMILEY

Shut up, Funny Man.

Thug 2 presses the serrations of a large, ugly KNIFE to Serra's neck as Smiley pulls a fistful of pesos from one of Serra's bulging pockets.

SERRA

Go ahead, it's yours, take it...

The thugs talk amongst themselves in Tagalog as Smiley takes his money back. Thug 1 continues to hold Serra.

THUG 3

[Let me shoot him.]

THUG 2,

[You'll wake people up. A knife is better.]

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

THUG 3

[With a knife, there is always screaming,
and we end up covered in blood and bad
smells. I want to shoot him.]

SERRA

Please, please, take it and go...

Shaking his head, his mouth beginning to swell where
Smiley hit him, Serra cuts a sorry figure -

Until Smiley takes the last of his pesos from Serra's
shirt pocket. When he grabs the money, he tears Serra's
pocket away with it, ripping free a large swath of the
cheap Hawaiian shirt in the process.

SMILEY

[That's all of it.]

Beneath his loose-fitting shirt, we catch a glimpse of
Serra's musculature for the first time. He looks like an
anatomical diagram.

SMILEY

[Knife him, Teo.]

Thug 2 raises the blade toward Serra's neck. Crestfallen,
Thug 3 LOWERS HIS GUN.

Serra sees the gun drop. The fear vanishes from his face.

SERRA

(in Tagalog)

[Wrong choice.]

There are no frills or flourishes in Serra's movements.
He is pure lightning efficiency:

Behind his back, Serra's arms explode downward, breaking
free of Thug 1's grasp.

Serra's left arm swings around to grab Thug 2's knife
hand and push it into a wristlock. By the time the WRIST
BREAKS, Serra's right hand is already there to collect
the KNIFE.

Serra flips the knife so the blade runs down the length
of his forearm, facing outward.

In a single spin, Serra CUTS THE THROATS OF THUGS 1 AND 2
with two whip-snaps of his arm.

Thug 3 is raising his gun again -

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

- thereby exposing his midsection. Serra drops, thrusts, rises and GUTS THE MAN like a trout.

Smiley reaches for the gun in his waistband, but Serra drops the knife and drops Smiley with a right hook.

On the ground, Smiley opens his eyes, disoriented but aware of what's happening. He tries to climb to his feet.

Breaking a man's neck isn't as easy as the stock movie twist-n-snap would suggest. Serra manages, but it takes him five or six seconds. With an extended, sickening CRUNCH, Smiley drops to the ground for the last time.

Serra goes through Smiley's pockets to recover his winnings. He has no use for the rest of Smiley's possessions: Pocketknife, nail file, address book. He puts them all back in Smiley's pockets.

But a HANDWRITTEN LIST OF PHONE NUMBERS catches Serra's attention. The neatness of the handwriting makes it even more cryptic, as if the list were so important that someone triple-checked and labored over each digit.

Serra pockets the phone numbers along with his money. He rubs his swollen jaw, checks for witnesses (there are none), and begins to drag the bodies around back.

EXT. PIERCE APARTMENT - MORNING

Pierce pulls away from his rundown apartment building in his old Pontiac.

EXT. 10 FREEWAY - MORNING

Pierce is stuck in standstill traffic in the morning commute.

INT. INTERNATIONAL NAVIGATIONAL TECHNOLOGIES, INC. - DAY

A soldering iron touches a solder wire and melts it with a wisp of noxious smoke, making a connection on a circuit board. And again. And again.

Rough hands slide the black plastic casing back over a HANDHELD ELECTRONIC DEVICE.

Sitting on a stool at his workbench, Pierce puts the black box aside. The modification is complete. He removes another handheld device from a huge stack to his left.

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CONTINUED:

He looks around his workplace at the dozen or so other high-tech menials, soldering away at workbenches identical to his own, each with a computer terminal.

A group of male INT, Inc. EXECUTIVES (25-35) returns from lunch, button-down shirts tucked into khaki pants. Pierce starts soldering again.

EXECUTIVE 1

They're looking for him in Afghanistan and Iran, I thought.

A frown of disagreement appears in Executive 2's goatee. He talks armchair-tough-guy know-it-all trash:

EXECUTIVE 2

Trust me, Al-Bakr's in Oman. His father's an Omani sheik. Oman. You wait and see.

EXECUTIVE 3

Can you imagine? Fifty million bucks.

Executive 3 slaps a folded New York Times against his palm. We briefly see an image of SAYIM AL-BAKR, and the headline:

"STATE DEPARTMENT OFFERS \$50 MILLION REWARD FOR AL-BAKR"

Upon mention of the reward, Pierce stops his work for a moment.

EXECUTIVE 2

Thanks, I'll just wait for our IPO.

Laughs all around. Pierce takes up his work again. As they pass him:

EXECUTIVE 3

What do you think about it, Pierce?

Pierce does not stop his soldering:

PIERCE

Not my job to think about it.

Executive 3's gaze drifts down to

Pierce's faded FOREARM TATTOO: A SKULL with a BAYONET IN THE EYE SOCKET and "USMC, 1971" written below it. Atypical ink for a high tech employee.

Pierce looks up and catches the man staring. Executive 3 averts his eyes... but Executive 2 pushes the issue:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

EXECUTIVE 2

Tell 'em, Pierce: He's in Oman.

Pierce sets down his soldering iron.

PIERCE

He's not in Oman, no way. Sultan Bin Said's been making nice to the UK going on twenty five years, and there's nothing he'd like better than to earn some Western Brownie points by handing over Public Enemy Number One. Iran? Probably not there either. No hardcore Sunni with a brain would ever hide in a Shiite country that swings moderate every two or three years.

(beat)

He could be somewhere in the half-million square miles of mountains along the Iranian-Afghan border. He could be in Syria. He could be in Aruba. They'll find him if they stumble onto the right intelligence. If they don't, they won't. No point arguing about it.

Pierce returns to his work. Executives 1 and 3 try to hold back their grins over Executive 2's verbal ass-whipping. For now, Executive 2 is all but speechless:

EXECUTIVE 2

You're right, you're right...

As they head toward the offices, though, he calls back:

EXECUTIVE 2

Hey, you'll have those GPS mods finished tonight, right? They ship tomorrow.

PIERCE

Yeah, they'll be done.

EXECUTIVE 2

Thanks, big guy. Really appreciate it.

Pierce watches him disappear into the front offices.

This smarmy little fucker is his boss.

On his way to the front, Executive 3 throws the folded New York Times into the trash. On the bottom half of the front page, we get a brief glimpse of a photo.

A photo of Smiley.

INT. AYFO BAR - DAY

Uri Tzur opens beers behind the bamboo bar. In the b.g., the corner TV is on CNN International. The only patrons in the place are a group of four RICH YOUNG SAUDIS(early 20s). They talk openly about Uri in Arabic.

YOUNG SAUDI 1

[I'm telling you, he's a fucking Israeli.]

YOUNG SAUDI 2

[No, if he was an Israeli, he'd have a Palestinian doing his shit work for him.]

They all laugh. Uri brings them their beers.

URI

(politely, in perfect Arabic)
[Three Budweisers and a Heineken. Can I get you anything to eat? Chips? Peanuts?]

Embarrassed, the Saudis shake their heads and mutter without making eye contact.

Serra stumbles into the bar, unsteady on his feet, tokens of last night's ordeal shining painfully on his face. He flops down at a table next to the Saudis and MOANS.

That's it for the Saudis. They put some money under the ashtray, take their beers and leave.

Uri notes the bruises and swellings on Serra's face.

URI

What the hell happened to you?

SERRA

Not everyone's as gracious a loser as you.

URI

You scared away my customers. After what happened to Smiley, I can't afford to lose any more.

Serra jumps from his seat and spins on Uri:

SERRA

How do you know what happened to Smiley?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

URI

It's two o'clock in the afternoon.
Everybody on the island knows by now.

Serra grabs Uri.

SERRA

(threatening)

How does everybody know?

URI

When a local guy turns out to be working
for Sayim al-Bakr, word gets around.

Serra's surprise wipes out his momentary suspicion of
Uri. He loosens his grip on Uri's shirt.

SERRA

Sayim al-Bakr...

URI

Yes!

(throws off Serra's hands)

You don't know? They found Smiley dead
down by the creek.

SERRA

How do they know he was working for al-
Bakr?

URI

His real name was... I forget, Kehar
something, it was in the Jakarta Post. I
guess they'd been looking for him on
Mindanao for a long time. They say he was
going to blow up the Shangri-La resort -
there were enough explosives in his
basement to blow up half the island.

Serra yanks the LIST OF PHONE NUMBERS he found on Smiley
from his pocket, making no move to pick up the peso notes
that fall to the floor.

Serra stares at the list, reading the numbers over.

URI

What? What is that?

SLOW PUSH IN ON SERRA as an incredible possibility takes
shape in his head.

SERRA (SOUND ADVANCE)

Hi, can I speak to Frank Pierce, please?

(CONTINUED)

PIERCE (SOUND ADVANCE)
This is he.

SERRA (SOUND ADVANCE)
Frank! It's been a long time. This is
Carl, Carl Serra.

INT. PIERCE APARTMENT - KITCHEN - EVENING

Pierce is on the phone, about to sit down to dinner with
his family.

PIERCE
Carl Serra...

SERRA (V.O.)
We worked together, for Executive Armor?
The security detail at Bandar Abbas, in
'97? You made one hell of an impression.

The mention triggers something in Pierce, subtly but
unequivocally shattering his composure.

PIERCE
I don't work for them anymore.

His wife Linda picks up on this line; it digs her worry
lines deeper.

SERRA (V.O.)
Yeah, me neither - though I did just
sweet talk your number out of them. I
find myself in need of a Full Service
Independent Operator, and eight years
after the fact, your name is the first
one comes to mind.

(beat)
I've got a job for us, Frank.

PIERCE
I've already got a job.

SERRA (V.O.)
This one pays better.

PIERCE
You're not understanding me. I don't do
contract work anymore.

SERRA (V.O.)
This isn't a contract. This one's on the
if-come.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PIERCE

I'm not in the game anymore, Mr... Serra.
I can't help you.

Pierce moves to hang up.

INT. PHONE BOOTH - CEBU - DAY

Serra is on a pay phone, in the middle of a tropical downpour. About to lose Pierce, he spills it:

SERRA

We can find Sayim al-Bakr.

Long pause, carrying over to

INT. PIERCE APARTMENT - KITCHEN

Pierce is skeptical, but he's no longer hanging up. He rises from the dinner table.

LINDA

Frank...

He waves her down gently, assuring her everything's all right. But he walks away from the table, into the

LIVING ROOM

PIERCE

How do you plan on doing that? The Pentagon hasn't had any luck.

SERRA (V.O.)

I've got something they don't have.

PIERCE

And what's that?

INT. INT, INC. - DAY

Emma's VAMPIRE DRAWING sits on Pierce's workbench, torn from its coloring book. The first THREE PHONE NUMBERS FROM SMILEY'S LIST are scrawled on it.

SERRA (V.O.)

His phone numbers.

Pierce looks at the numbers for a moment, then stows them in a workbench drawer.

CUT TO:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The numbers are back on Pierce's desk again. He looks at them, then back to his soldering iron, then to the numbers again. Struggling against a strong urge, he looks away from his workbench altogether. -

His eyes land on a fellow menial tech worker: Fat, bald, in his forties, biting into a donut.

CUT TO:

Pierce types the first of Serra's three phone numbers -
- into a thin TEXT WINDOW on his COMPUTER SCREEN, below a bigger window containing a WORLD MAP.

IN THE TEXT WINDOW: **Searching...**

IN THE WORLD-MAP WINDOW, we ZOOM IN on the map like a meteor falling to Earth, closing in on Asia, Southwest Asia, the mountains between Pakistan and India.

CUT TO:

Pierce is on the phone.

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)

Welcome to the Central Intelligence Agency. If you are calling from the media, press one. If you would like to speak to an intelligence officer -

Pierce pushes "2".

CUT TO:

Pierce, on the phone.

IN THE MAP WINDOW, a RED DOT pulses in Eastern Pakistan, with precise coordinates beneath it.

PIERCE

He's not in Afghanistan or Iran. He's in Kashmir.

CIA OFFICER 1 (V.O.)

Who are you again?

PIERCE

My name is Frank Pierce. I was with Marine Recon, left to work for Executive Armor in '93, and -

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CIA OFFICER 1 (V.O.)
I'm sorry, could you hold?

Canned "Please Hold" music comes on.

CUT TO:

NEXT DAY

Same shot of Pierce, at his computer, typing the first number into the TEXT WINDOW again.

Searching...

Number Inoperative

ON THE VAMPIRE DRAWING, he CROSSES OUT THE FIRST NUMBER.

IN THE TEXT WINDOW, he types in the second number.

Searching...

IN THE MAP WINDOW, the pulsing red dot has moved a half inch to the left.

CUT TO:

Pierce is on the phone, less patient than yesterday.

PIERCE
He's moved ten miles since yesterday, but he's still in the region. This is a one-shot opportunity. He'll keep moving, and once these numbers run out -

CIA OFFICER 2 (V.O.)
Well, I could make it out there to take a statement from you on Friday -

PIERCE
These are dayphone numbers. He uses the phone for a day, and he tosses it. The first one's already dead, and I only have one more after this one -

CUT TO:

Different CIA Agent. Pierce's patience dwindling further.

CIA OFFICER 3 (V.O.)
Why do you think these satphones belong to al-Bakr?

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CONTINUED:

PIERCE

I told you, they were on that Jemaah Islamiyah guy who got killed in the Philippines two days ago, the one who was going to blow up the resort for him.

CIA OFFICER 3 (V.O.)

And you got them how?

PIERCE

Al-Bakr's in Kashmir, it's not important where I got them.

CIA OFFICER 3 (V.O.)

I think it's very important where you got them...

Pierce lays the receiver on the workbench and tries to rub the strain from his temples

CUT TO:

NEXT DAY

Same shot, Pierce at his workbench computer.

IN THE TEXT WINDOW

Number Inoperative

ON THE VAMPIRE DRAWING, PIERCE CROSSES OUT THE SECOND NUMBER. Only one number remains.

Pierce stares at the pulsing red dot over the mountains of Kashmir on his computer screen (in the same place as yesterday), as he makes a last ditch effort on the phone.

PIERCE

I gave you the coordinates, just send a U-2 or an EP-3E to check them out...

CIA OFFICER 4 (V.O.)

Well, to do that, I'd have to talk to my supervisor, and he'd have to put in a request with Naval Intelligence...

Pierce SLAMS DOWN THE PHONE.

INT. PIERCE APARTMENT - KITCHEN - EVENING

Pierce is on the phone with Serra again. Linda and Emma are audible in the b.g., behind the closed kitchen door.

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CONTINUED:

SERRA (V.O.)

Disputed territory between two nuclear powers - good choice for a hiding place. When was the last time US troops set foot in Kashmir?

PIERCE

They're one-day satphones. The first two are dead already, and he's already moved once. How many more have you got?

INT. PHILIPPINE AIRLINES TICKET OFFICE - DAY

Serra talks on a pay phone in the back of the dingy office. As he talks, he scrawls something on a scrap of paper, which he then hands to Uri, along with the pesos he "recovered" from Smiley, now bundled in a tight roll.

SERRA

Seven left. We've got seven days.

Uri looks at the paper, on which Serra has scrawled one word: ISLAMABAD. Uri goes to the ticket counter.

SERRA

They're looking for him a thousand miles in the wrong direction, Pierce. And we're the only ones who know.

INT. PIERCE APARTMENT - KITCHEN

Pierce picks up yesterday's NEWSPAPER from the counter: The one with the headline about the FIFTY MILLION DOLLAR REWARD, AL-BAKR'S PICTURE beneath it, and the smaller PICTURE OF "SMILEY" at the bottom.

PIERCE

Why call me?

SERRA (V.O.)

I've got what you'd call a limited skill set. I couldn't bloodhound those numbers, for one. It's like I said: I need a Full Service Independent Operator, and you're one of the only ones left.

PIERCE

There are others. Hilaire du Berrier, Saint Nick Howard, Diamond Joe Stehlin -

SERRA (V.O.)

I don't know those guys. I don't even know if they really exist.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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

(beat)

I've gotta say, from your tone of voice, you'd think I was asking you to join a mine-sweeping expedition. We're talking about hunting the worst man on Earth -

PIERCE

We're talking about two guys -

SERRA (V.O.)

Three. I've got an Israeli Army vet who speaks Arab.

PIERCE

- three guys, setting out to do a job the whole free world is crapping out on.

Pierce turns. The kitchen door is open now, and LINDA IS WATCHING HIM in the doorway, listening, looking at the NEWSPAPER still in his hand.

She knows exactly what he's talking about.

INT. PHILIPPINE AIRLINES TICKET OFFICE

Uri looks back from the ticket counter to make eye contact with Serra. The Israeli is uneasy. Serra motions for him to carry on.

SERRA

This isn't a job for the free world. It's a job for three guys. Guys with the right skills and the right intelligence.

INT. PIERCE APARTMENT - KITCHEN

Pierce looks Linda in the eye.

PIERCE

I can't do it. I've got a wife. And a daughter.

But Serra is breaking him down; he looks a bit like a junkie talking to his dealer. Sensing this, Linda exits the kitchen in anger and disappointment.

SERRA (V.O.)

Sixteen-and-a-half million dollars is a lot of Fuck You money, Frank. It's enough Fuck You for your wife, your daughter, and all your foul-mouthed grandkids.

PIERCE

This isn't about Fuck You money.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

As Pierce listens, he twists his WEDDING BAND.

SERRA (V.O.)

I don't care about your reasons, Frank -
I care about your skills. You bring along
whatever reasons you like. It's a job
that needs doing, we can agree on that
much, right? Right?

INT. PHILIPPINE AIRLINES OFFICE - FIVE MINUTES LATER

Uri returns to Serra, plane tickets in hand.

SERRA

We got him. He'll meet us in Islamabad.

URI

You trust this Pierce?

SERRA

We're old friends, I've seen him work.
Pierce knows. We need him.

URI

Serra... this is crazy. We can't -

SERRA

We can. It's doable.

URI

Even if we find him, I'll be dead weight.
I'll cost you a lot of money.

SERRA

A fluent Arabic speaker is never "dead
weight." Five million, ten million, fifty
million... as long as it's got "million"
after it, it's all the same to me. And
you're my only good friend in the world,
Uri. That enough for you?

It's enough for Uri. They clasp hands on it.

INT. INT, INC. - DAY

Pierce works on an INT consumer GPS TRACKING DEVICE with
a soldering iron, souping it up.

CUT TO:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Pierce downloads the GPS tracking software we've already seen from his computer to the GPS tracker.

CUT TO:

With a magnifying monocle in his eye, Pierce works on a PIECE OF MINIATURE CIRCUITRY the size of a camera battery.

INT. PIERCE APARTMENT - KITCHEN - LATE NIGHT

Pierce and Linda argue in hushed tones. Linda has had a few glasses of wine.

LINDA

I'm not going to just give you my blessing -

PIERCE

This is what I am, baby. I've spent seven years pretending to be something else, and where has it gotten us?

He indicates their dingy surroundings with his hand.

LINDA

You don't need to rescue us. Your daughter doesn't need a savior, Frank. She needs a father.

PIERCE

You know what she asked me the other day? She asked me how far away Dallas was. How far is it? What is there, really, standing between Dallas and our little girl?

LINDA

It's not your job! Let someone else -

PIERCE

I told you, there is no one else. I tried - no one else is listening. It's us or nobody. Seven days. We've got seven days to get to him. Then he's gone.

He takes her gently by the shoulders.

PIERCE

I can do this thing. I'm not much good for anything else, but I can do this. And no one else can.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Tears well in Linda's eyes.

LINDA

Frank, if you didn't come back, I
wouldn't know... I couldn't...

INT. PIERCE APARTMENT - EMMA'S BEDROOM

Pierce stands by his sleeping daughter's bedside.

PIERCE (V.O.)

I'm coming back.

In V.O., LINDA SIGHS, and is silent for a moment.

Pierce leans over and touches his lips to her forehead,
so lightly that she does not even stir.

LINDA (V.O.)

We better get you ready to go, then.

INT. ISLAMABAD AIRPORT - DAY

Pierce emerges from Pakistani customs into the Islamabad
terminal. This does not look like an airport. It looks
like a fish market.

He scans the chaotic throng of waiting families, tour
operators, touts, vendors and security men. His eyes pass
over signs for mountain treks, hotels, individuals...

And a BIG SIGN FOR OUTDOORS MAGAZINE, held by two
decidedly non-Pakistani men.

Pierce walks over and shakes hands with Serra and Uri.
The latter wears a camera around his neck.

The sight of Serra triggers Pierce's memory.

PIERCE

At Bandar Abbas...

SERRA

Right, the security detail for the
Iranian dissident...

PIERCE

You had a beard.

SERRA

Welcome back to the game. Your
credentials.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He hands Pierce a LAMINATED CARD identifying him as Eugene Jarvis, an employee of Outdoors magazine.

PIERCE

Thanks.

(in reference to the sign)

You shouldn't have. Any PR is bad PR.

SERRA

(unconcerned)

Eh, we're OK. Everybody loves a journalist.

Pierce grabs the sign and drops it on the floor.

PIERCE

Tell it to Danny Pearl. From now on, no displays.

Uri's face makes plain his mistrust of Pierce's immediate power grab.

Serra dislikes being told what to do even more than Uri, but he squelches his aggravation so quickly that we barely notice it.

SERRA

You got it, Captain. It's your show.

(checks his watch)

Our plane to Muzzafarabad leaves in a half-hour.

(grins)

Let's go hunting.

Serra's choice of words doesn't sit well with Pierce.

INT. FORTY-YEAR-OLD PROP PLANE - DAY

The packed plane shudders as it dips roughly between two mountains. Devout and terrified Muslims pray fervently.

A pallid Uri joins them, muttering inaudible Hebrew.

But Pierce and Serra have both flown on shitbox planes into shitbox places many times before. Serra is asleep.

Pierce studies a copy of OUTDOORS MAGAZINE.

INT. TAXI - DAY

Their cab plows suicidally down the pot-holed roads in a grubby town, past low-rent crap-filled bazaars, shanty housing, the rubble of once-grand colonial dwellings.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

And Pierce takes it all in. Anxious? Eager? He's hard to read. But something has come alive in his eyes, something that has been sleeping for a long time.

EXT. MUZZAFARABAD - MONTAGE

- As Uri buys nuts, Snickers bars, and other foods in bulk, a thin, filthy fifteen-year-old boy enters into his personal space and holds out his hand.

Sympathetic, Uri hands him a small coin.

Dozens of children wanting the same immediately mob Uri. Individually harmless, as a group they threaten to trample him, and each other. Holding his money tightly, Uri squeezes away from them, forced to shop elsewhere.

- In a dark back alley, Pierce and Serra buy TWO AUTOMATIC PISTOLS, a sawed-off SHOTGUN, a few boxes of ammo and a pair of NIGHT VISION GOGGLES.

- From a trekking outfitter, the men buy a PARKA and COLD WEATHER GEAR for Uri, who has never owned a warm coat.

- Uri scours a bazaar table, passing over cheap wallets, fake watches, baseball hats with counterfeit logos.

He turns to find a group of bearded men with long gray robes and white caps scrutinizing him warily. Trying to decide if he's an Arab... or someone less welcome.

INT. CAFE - EVENING

In a cafe, the wary glances continue, as Pierce, Serra and Uri sip tea, and quietly plot their route on a MAP.

Serra cradles his arm around the LIST OF SATPHONE NUMBERS like a prisoner guarding his meal tray. The first five numbers have been crossed out.

PIERCE

He hasn't moved for three days. He's still here, thirty miles from Keran.

ON THE MAP, Pierce draws a small circle in a mountainous region with a RED PEN.

URI

I heard he never sleeps in the same place for more than three or four nights. What if he moves?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PIERCE

We hope he doesn't go too fast or too far.

(beat)

First thing tomorrow morning, we'll hire a driver to Keran. We'll make it to Tiandu by tomorrow night.

ON THE MAP, Pierce's traces the trail route with the pen, a northeasterly zigzag along the crescent of Pakistani Kashmir, ending with a dot at the town of Tiandu.

SERRA

(following along on the list)

Four numbers left.

PIERCE

The next day we move from Tiandu to Chundol.

Pierce traces. Serra's index finger moves down the list.

SERRA

Three numbers —

They are interrupted by a beer-gutted Australian with a safari vest and a thick accent who steps into their midst (BOB HUGHES, 50s). Boisterous and irritating, he points at the camera around Uri's neck:

HUGHES

Fellow journos?

Nonchalantly but immediately, Pierce's left arm covers the red marks that reveals their route on the map.

PIERCE

Yep.

While Pierce has Hughes's attention, Serra folds and pockets the list.

HUGHES

I don't know how long it's been since I spoke to real people!

(extends his hand)

Bob Hughes. Pleasure to meet you.

They all shake his hand.

PIERCE

Eugene Jarvis.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SERRA

Bill Budge.

URI

Ed Rotberg.

HUGHES

Well, I need a lager. Any one else?
Parvinder, four lagers!

(under his breath)
These fuckin' wogs - any thirteen year
old'll sell you a Kalashnikov, but only
my pal Parvinder'll give a man a beer.

SERRA

Who do you work for?

HUGHES

I've done features for Geographic, did a
stint with Reuters, worked for Time, NBC,
GQ... whoever shells out the most. Bit of
a mercenary, you might say. Headed now to
the CNN field station in Srinagar, over
the border in Indian Kashmir, to file my
story on the Tajiki opium trade.

(beat)

And your business in lovely Muzzafarabad
is...?

SERRA

We're doing a piece on climbing Nanga
Parbat for Outdoors magazine.

ON THE MAP, Pierce circles a mountain more than fifty
miles away from their true destination. His left arm
still covers the trail they'll actually be taking.

HUGHES

Outdoors? I've done my time for old Geoff
Schiller! He still there, paying the
lowest wages on Fifth Avenue?

Serra and Uri are at a loss. This buffoon is about to
blow their cover before they even start.

But Pierce did his homework on the plane.

PIERCE

You've been gone a while, Bob. Schiller's
history. Now it's Dave Stenzel paying the
lowest wages on Fifth Avenue.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Hughes buys this without a thought and plows on. As he speaks, Pierce manages to inconspicuously pocket the map.

HUGHES

So Geoff's moving up in the world.
Brilliant. At least someone is.

(beat)

Look, mates, I know it's none of my business, and I know you've come a bloody long way, but Kashmir's a shit place for a walkabout. If the jihadis and the separatists don't get you, there are about fifty different tribes out here, all killing each other for the chance to kill you, steal your boots and turn your camera into a heroin cache. And even if you avoid all those and make it to Nanga Parbat in one piece, there's the weather to contend with. It's February. The weather can be deadly.

SERRA

We've worked in trouble spots before.

HUGHES

Not saying you haven't, not saying you haven't. Meant no disrespect.

Parvinder brings the beers. Hughes raises his, and the others follow suit.

HUGHES

Well then, Eugene, Bill, Ed... here's to new friends, shit beer, and not getting your head chopped off!

They drink to this, reluctantly.

INT. HOTEL - EVENING

On the beds, the men have laid out their gear, much of it bagged in Ziplocs: The GPS Tracker, the food, the night vision goggles, 100X binoculars, first aid kits.

Pierce surveys the gear in its totality for a moment. Then he starts to grab things and throw them across the room into the garbage pail, hitting every shot.

A bundle of tube socks goes.

URI

What are you doing?! Those are my socks!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PIERCE

Cotton socks are worthless. Don't keep you warm, don't keep you dry. I'll lend you a wool pair.

URI

One pair of socks?

PIERCE

(to Serra)

Didn't you say he was military?

SERRA

Israeli Defense Forces.

PIERCE

I never thought it was a good idea to make everybody serve in the military. Some people just aren't cut out for it.

Pierce throws a stack of Uri's t-shirts away. Uri's hostility mounts, but Serra gestures for him to refrain from expressing it and starts putting his own gear away, beginning with his COMBAT KNIFE.

PIERCE

We've got to travel light.

(tosses a pair of pants)

We've got almost fifty miles of mountain trails to cover in four days — that's if we're lucky, and al-Bakr doesn't move again. After we get him, it's just like Hughes said: The hills have eyes until we reach the Indian border.

SERRA

(dismissive)

The bandits are straight Mickey Mouse, and those jihadis only get two weeks of bullshit training with no ammo for target practice. They couldn't shoot off their balls with two bullets.

PIERCE

Anybody can kill anybody.

Coming from their oldest and wisest, this kind of talk worries Uri.

URI

I know I'm the junior partner here. But to me, this is sounding more and more like a very bad idea.

(CONTINUED)

Serra begins to protest, but Pierce cuts him off:

PIERCE

No, he's right. It is a very bad idea. If it was a good idea, we'd have half the French Foreign Legion and a dozen dirty hippy backpackers keeping us company. It's a very bad idea.

(beat)

But we're all going. And there are no junior partners on this expedition.

Uri smiles at what he takes to be Pierce's respect.

PIERCE

Whatever we end up doing - and we're gonna do things - you're as guilty as the rest of us. So wipe that bullshit right from your head.

Pierce punctuates his comment with the clang of Uri's comb as it hits the trash can. So much for Uri's smile.

INT. DEATH TRAP CAR - EARLY MORNING

On their way to their departure point at Keran the next morning, the men are bounced around the interior of a dangerous car being driven way too fast by a talkative DRIVER(30) with a thick black moustache.

DRIVER

(points at Uri's camera)

You are write for the magazine?

PIERCE

Yes.

DRIVER

I know very much the magazine. I know Time, Sports, Life. I see Playboy, one time. No good for Pakistan, big trouble - I am Aishwarya, you know Aishwarya?

PIERCE

No.

DRIVER

My tribe: Aishwarya. Many tribe: Gadha, Balti, Pashtun, all Muslim. No clothes, no good. You are write for the Playboy?

PIERCE

No.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DRIVER

Good, good, OK, OK. You want guide, porter? I carry for two of you, show you all good thing, keep bad man away from you, OK. You want?

PIERCE

No.

EXT. ROADSIDE - EARLY MORNING

The death trap car pulls over to the shoulder of a dirt road. Pierce, Serra and Uri get out. One last try:

DRIVER

I guide you. You walk alone, no good.

Pierce shakes his head and walks away from the car. Muttering to himself, the driver drives off.

A meadow stretches away from the road on a gentle decline, lush, beautiful, peppered with wildflowers. The air is warm and the sky is clear. Mountains rise up in the distance, bearded with pine forests, capped with snow, stretching as far as the eye can see.

Pierce appreciates the stunning view for about three seconds. Then Serra passes him the LIST OF NUMBERS, on which the first six numbers are now crossed out.

Pierce keys in the seventh number to his GPS tracker.

Serra takes the list back a bit too quickly, betraying his possessiveness over it.

ON THE GPS SCREEN, we see a detailed topographic map. Al-Bakr is represented by a blinking RED DOT in the center, and our men by a blinking GREEN DOT near the edges.

PIERCE

Still thirty miles from Keran.

SERRA

As long as he's taking calls, we can follow him wherever he goes.

URI

For four more days.

PIERCE

(checking a printed map)
The trail up to Tiandu starts on the other side of this valley.

(CONTINUED)

URI

If we get him, what do we do with him?

SERRA

When we get him, we kill him. It'll make him easier to transport.

URI

Transport? Why wouldn't we keep him alive, and call in the American Army to come take him from us?

SERRA

I don't know about you, but I ain't trusting some Colonel who's looking down the barrel of pay cuts and reduced VA benefits to help carry my sixteen million bucks.

PIERCE

The CNN field office that Australian mentioned — I know where Srinagar is. We can sidestep the Indian Army base north of Kupwara and take him there. A news man can't jump our claim on al-Bakr — and as soon as they broadcast our names, neither can anyone else.

(beat)

But we don't kill him.

SERRA

You want to lug this fucker all the way to India alive? This isn't a humanitarian mission, Frank. This is a piece of business.

Pierce absently twists his wedding band as he speaks:

PIERCE

I could give a shit what they do to him once we hand him over. But there's a war plan in his head. We're all targets on it, everyone you've ever given a shit about is a target on it.

SERRA

You think he's going to hand this "war plan" over as soon as they start Good Cop, Bad Cop on him? You'll never get a damn thing out of a guy like that.

PIERCE

We can't be sure.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SERRA

Oh, I'm sure.

PIERCE

You can't be.

For the first time, Serra and Pierce find themselves disagreeing over something truly important. Serra looks to Uri. It pains Uri to disagree with his friend, but:

URI

I agree with Frank.

SERRA

What kind of Israeli are you? I -

(sees he's beat)

Okay, okay. Two to one, majority wins.
Hell, I'm happy to bring him in alive,
all things remaining equal.

PIERCE

All things remaining equal?

Pierce and Serra look at each other for a beat, then laugh at the concept, seeing it for the hedge that it is.

Still laughing, Pierce takes his first step off the road into the valley. The other two follow.

EXT. KASHMIR VALLEY - MONTAGE

-Their walk is enjoyable enough at first: The men take in the fresh air, stepping briskly through the high grass. Pierce passes out Snickers bars.

-Pierce surprises them all with his energy, taking to the terrain like a wolf on leave from the zoo. He is more alive than before. Back in his element.

By the time they reach the trail on the other side of the meadow, he's a hundred yards ahead of Serra and Uri.

-The trail leads into FORESTS of pine and fir, and the incline begins to steepen. Pierce continues apace. Uri begins to flag. He drinks greedily from his canteen.

-The men climb on, edging past a herd of goats heading downhill, nodding politely at the goat herders. Unlike the suspicious men of Muzzafarabad, these rural people display only mild, benign curiosity toward them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

-By afternoon, even Serra is starting to look tired, but Pierce is still going strong, marching across a knee deep stream without slowing. On the near side of the stream, Uri looks to Pierce, fifty yards ahead, then gives Serra a "What's up with this?" look. Serra can only shrug.

-The men walk along a vista overlooking the meadow in which they began, now far below and miles away. The sun lends everyone and everything a warm and vibrant glow.

Uri looks ready to puke.

END MONTAGE.

EXT. FOREST - AFTERNOON

Uri uses the last of his energy to catch up to Pierce.

URI

Pierce, I'm very impressed with how fast you can march. But by the time we reach al-Bakr, he'll be able to knock me over with his little finger. We don't need to move this fast to make Tiandu by sundown.

Pierce is breathing heavily himself, but he points up into the trees:

PIERCE

Look. You see it?

URI

See what?

PIERCE

There, way off in the distance...

URI

What!?

PIERCE

The contingency. It's out there, waiting to fuck us up. Always build in time for the contingency.

(slaps Uri on the shoulder)

You can rest after we bring him in. I plan to.

Pierce walks ahead. Uri flutters his lips like an overworked draft horse, dragging behind until Serra catches up to him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

URI

Serra, this man - I don't care what he
"knows," I cannot do what I cannot -

Serra cuts Uri off by stuffing something into his mouth.

URI

(spitting)

What are you - Stop that - What is -

Serra jams the SMALL RED PILL between Uri's lips.

SERRA

It's a Go pill. Swallow it.

Uri does.

SERRA

Now Go Go Go.

CUT TO:

High on life and Dexedrine, Uri marches ahead of Pierce
and Serra, bounding through the trees.

PIERCE

What's his story?

SERRA

I know he went AWOL from the IDF. But
I've been drinking at his bar for the
past four years, and I still don't know
why. He won't talk about it.

(beat)

So why'd you leave Executive Armor?

PIERCE

Just got tired. Eight years ago I met a
girl and realized I'd rather spend my
life with her than with a bunch of sweaty
guys in a South American jungle. So I
walked away. I don't know if the game
changed or I did, but either way...

SERRA

Yeah, after four years of working as a
"Contractor" for a "Private Military
Firm" with some Haliburton motherfucker
in a bad suit breathing down my neck the
whole time, I was like, "Fuck this." If I
want to take orders from an MBA, there
are plenty of ways I can do it that don't
involve getting shot at or blown up.

(CONTINUED)

PIERCE

There are at that.

(beat)

It's not what it used to be. When a guy like Saint Nick Howard could invade Sierra Leone and topple a dictator with fifty men and a crossbow.

SERRA

Crossbow?

(laughs)

Shit, you were before my time. Nowadays there's not much left for a guy with my background and skill set, nothing except... well, I'm no angel, but I've got my limits.

PIERCE

The possibilities have all dried up.

SERRA

Not for us they haven't.

PIERCE

No. Not for us.

INT. MOUNTAIN LODGE - COMMON AREA - EVENING

There is very little in this lodge to distinguish it from the lodges that served Silk Road travelers seven hundred years ago, perhaps on this very spot.

The three men eat their heaps of rice and curried lentils off wooden plates, by the light of a clay lantern. The friendly lodge keeper who tops off their tea cups wears the same loose-fitting clothes and long, embroidered vest that people have been wearing here for centuries.

The land mine that cost him his left leg was a relatively recent addition to the region, however. And the images that adorn his walls are more recent still:

A poster of the Eiffel Tower, very odd in this place. A poster of Spongebob Squarepants, odder still.

And a large PHOTO OF SAYIM AL-BAKR, in a position of honor above the hearth. Green eyes glowing like neon.

Finished pouring the tea, the lodge keeper hobbles off on his crutches to tend the fire.

Pierce tosses a glance up at al-Bakr's picture.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PIERCE
(muttering)
The locals are fans.

SERRA
Looks like we won't be bringing him out
the same way we came in.

Pierce shakes his head in agreement.

Serra crosses off the seventh number on the list.

Uri is on the verge of falling asleep in his food.

INT. MOUNTAIN LODGE - SLEEPING QUARTERS - NIGHT

Uri sleeps like a dead man on a thin, grimy mattress.

A slap on the shoulder from Pierce startles him awake.

PIERCE
Time to go.

Fuzzy with sleep, Uri looks out the window at the dark.
Then he looks at his watch.

URI
(angry)
It's three thirty in the morning! Three-
and-a-half hours sleep, after eighteen
hours of walking!?

PIERCE
Don't want to be late for our meeting
with our contingency. When-

But Uri beats him to it:

URI
I know, I know...
(doing a surprisingly good
imitation of Pierce-as-John-
Wayne-tough-guy)
"When this is all over, I'll buy you a
silk hammock in Tahiti."

He steps into his shoes, swings on his pack and stomps
from the room.

EXT. TRAIL - MORNING

The men trudge up a narrow trail along a mountainside,
toward a tight bend around a volcanic rock face.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Uri walks ahead, still angry, camera bouncing around his neck. His hair is a mess. He has no comb. A pebble hits him in the back. He keeps walking.

The second pebble hits him in the head. He swings around, ready to blow up at them.

URI

Okay, I think we have to -

But Pierce and Serra have stopped walking, and Pierce is holding out his hand for Uri to do the same.

URI

What?

PIERCE

(quiet)

Listen.

Without the sound of their footfalls to mask it, they can now hear a DISTANT RUMBLING coming from the direction of the bend. As they listen, it grows louder.

They wait, remaining still. The rumbling gets even louder. The men draw closer together.

Uri looks off the trail to his right. A sheer, thousand-foot drop. They won't be running that way.

Uri's hand goes inside his jacket.

A PLUME OF DUST blows from around the corner, stirred up by the source of the approaching rumble.

Serra reaches over his shoulder, opens the top of his pack and makes sure the sawed-off shotgun is in reach.

The wind carries the THICKENING DUST CLOUD toward them, obscuring their view of whatever is headed their way.

Serra begins to pull the shotgun from his pack -

In his jacket, Uri snaps the slide on his gun -

From out of the dust, the first thundering hooves appear--

They belong to a SHEEP.

Uri relaxes. Serra quickly pushes the shotgun back into his pack and cinches it before the first tribal shepherd rounds the bend.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

More than a hundred sheep flow around our men like water, led by four shepherds.

When one of them passes, Uri nods at him respectfully. The man sails a glob of black tobacco spit into the gorge on his left and walks on.

Cute. Our men pass a wry grin amongst themselves.

One of the approaching shepherds has an eight-year-old son. Uri smiles at the boy.

The boy smiles back. Then he puts his fingers to his mouth and lets out a WHISTLE that would shatter glass, if there were any around to shatter.

The sheep all stop their forward motion. Pierce, Serra and Uri find themselves stranded in a dusty, white, lanolin-greased sea. They are confused for about a second-

Until they look behind them and see the spitting shepherd pointing a MACHINE PISTOL their way.

In front of them, two of the three remaining shepherds have GUNS trained on them as well.

And the moustached DRIVER who brought them from Muzzafarabad to Keran rounds the corner. He speaks to his fellows in Punjabi, not knowing Pierce speaks it as well.

SHEPHERD 1

[These are the ones?]

DRIVER

(nods)

[The journalists. They work for a big magazine.]

SERRA

We are journalists! Let me show you -

Pierce speaks quietly to Serra, while Uri stares unblinkingly at the guns aimed at him:

PIERCE

They know we're journalists. They want to hold us, and make our magazine pay a ransom. Our cover story backfired.

SERRA

Ah, fuck.

The driver glowers at Pierce.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

DRIVER

(to Pierce)

See? You need guide. Many bad men.

He smirks and pats the young boy on the shoulder.

SERRA

Options?

URI

Go with them for now?

SERRA

Not an option.

We PUSH IN ON PIERCE while Uri and Serra discuss the situation. He turns to look at the bandit behind him.

URI (O.S.)

How many guns have they got?

SERRA (O.S.)

No more than we do.

By now, we're CLOSE ON PIERCE'S EYES. With sharp, precise movements, they take stock of the men in front of him. One, two, three, four.

URI (O.S.)

But they've got theirs pointed at us.

SERRA (O.S.)

True.

Again, PIERCE'S EYES: One, two, three, four.

BACK TO A FULL ANGLE ON PIERCE. His movements are too fast to register, but for the record:

His right hand dips into his jacket and emerges with his automatic. His right hand continues swinging to the right, and his upper torso twists. When his right arm is pointed straight behind him, he fires the gun. His right arm swings back in the other direction with elbow locked, until the gun is pointed forward. He shoots again, shifts and locks to a new position, shoots again, shifts and locks to a third position, shoots again, and shifts and locks to a fourth position.

The sheep flee in a terrified downhill stampede, raising a heavy cloud of dust. As the wind clears the dust we

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

WIDEN TO REVEAL that Pierce has killed four men with four shots in less than two seconds.

Serra is impressed... but Uri is awestruck.

URI

Ben Zonah.

Only the driver remains. Pierce is locked onto him -

- but the man has the eight-year-old boy in his arms, holding him so the boy's body covers his face and chest. He peeks through the boy's armpit as he backs away, rounding the bend around which he came.

SERRA

Take the shot.

Horror distorts Uri's face. His reaction to Serra's suggestion is immediate and visceral:

URI

No!

But Serra continues to push.

SERRA

Go on, take it, you've got him!

Pierce gives Serra a withering look: What the fuck? Then he looks to Uri, and sees Uri's hand going for his own gun, in case Pierce actually tries it.

Pierce lets his weapon swing on his finger from the trigger guard as the driver disappears around the bend.

PIERCE

(to Uri)

Easy. I would never.

(to Serra)

There are limits.

Serra is outnumbered again. Backing down does not come naturally for him, but he does it once more.

SERRA

You're right, I just thought you could -
no, you're right. My mistake.

Relieved, Uri sees Pierce in a whole new light.

URI

So that was our - contingency.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

PIERCE
(looking at the GPS tracker)
Our first contingency.

Pierce holds out the GPS tracker for Serra and Uri.

ON THE GPS TRACKER, al-Bakr's blinking RED DOT IS MOVING slowly - in a straight line away from them.

URI
Shit, I knew it! He's moving away from us!

PIERCE
And we can't stay the night in Chundol anymore. Word of this'll spread.

SERRA
Yep. That's it for our cover story.

Serra straps his COMBAT KNIFE to his boot.

URI
So what now?

Pierce takes out the map with the red zig-zag of their planned route along the trail on it, and draws a STRAIGHT RED LINE right through the middle of the red zigzag, a beeline for al-Bakr.

PIERCE
We head straight for him, and move faster than he does.

URI
(looking around)
Which way?

Pierce turns to his left and points up at the 55° incline of the rock face before him.

Uri is not happy. But he lifts the camera from around his neck, tosses it into the gorge, and takes the first step onto the incline. Using his hands, he clambers forward.

EXT. MOUNTAINS - AFTERNOON

Tired after a hard morning of climbing, Pierce looks at the tracker.

ON THE GPS TRACKER, we see that al-Bakr is still moving away from them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PIERCE

He's moving faster than we are.

SERRA

Well, we're going mostly vertical.

URI

It gets better.

In front of them, a 150-foot RIDGE rises from the earth, at an 80° angle to the ground on which they stand.

SERRA

It'd be nice to have some harnesses and carabiners and spikes.

PIERCE

We've got ropes.

URI

You want me to free climb that?

PIERCE

One of us can help you while the other one waits down here with the packs. When you get to the top, you'll haul up the packs with the ropes, and the one who stayed behind will follow you up.

(beat)

We don't have much choice.

URI

Which one of you stays behind?

CUT TO:

Pierce is on the ground, looking up, with all three packs at his feet. Above him -

A frightened but resolute Uri is near the top of the ridge, locked into precarious footholds and handholds.

He grabs a handhold above him with his right hand and pulls himself up to reach a higher protuberance with his left. His left foot finds a foothold, and his right foot finds purchase on a sharp jutting rock -

But the ROCK BREAKS, and Uri's left foot also slips free. He's hanging by his hands.

His hands are sweating.

His right foot flails around -

(CONTINUED)

- until a HAND catches it from below.

Serra's. He is right below Uri, flush against the rock, wedged between a single overhead handhold and two footholds.

SERRA

Push.

Uri lifts himself with his right leg, and all Serra's muscles lock in iron tension to hold Uri's body weight.

Uri's left foot finds a new foothold, and he scrambles his way to the safety of the top.

CUT TO:

A BACKPACK, being hauled up the rock face by Serra, who unties the pack and lowers the rope.

The ROPE snakes down the side of the ridge.

On the ground, Pierce grabs the rope when it reaches him. His pack is the only one left.

In his other hand, he holds the GPS tracker, on which al-Bakr's red dot is still moving away from them. He stares at the tracker itself; now that al-Bakr has moved, only the person holding this device will be able to find him.

Pierce tries to put the tracker in his largest pocket. It doesn't fit. He tries fit it in his waistband. No luck.

He looks up. High above, Serra looks down on him, waiting, his face too far away to read.

Pierce huffs. Then he stuffs the GPS tracker in his pack, fastens the rope securely to the pack, and tugs on it.

The pack begins to make its way up the rock face. Almost immediately thereafter, Pierce starts his climb.

CUT TO:

Pierce climbs as quickly as he can.

He hooks his fingers on a 1" hold, a reckless choice. They go white with strain as he lifts himself.

He gazes up at the top of the ridge.

Nobody looks back down at him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

He grabs another handhold and lifts himself again, double-time, hurrying to reach the top.

CUT TO:

Pierce pulls himself over the top of the ridge. He finds himself inside a tight cone of rock, on the stage of a sort of miniature, natural amphitheater.

Neither Serra, nor Uri, nor the three backpacks are anywhere to be found.

Frantic, fearing he's been ditched, Pierce bounds to the top row of the amphitheater and slides down the slope of the other side -

-- where Serra and Uri are waiting. Serra grins.

SERRA

We thought you might've bailed on us.

He holds out Pierce's pack. Pierce grabs it, pulls out his GPS tracker and checks it.

ON THE TRACKER, al-Bakr's red dot has stopped moving.

PIERCE

(sighs relief)

He stopped.

Pierce takes out the map, takes a measurement with his fingers, runs some numbers in his head.

PIERCE

As long as we keep pace, he's still in range.

SERRA

That's great. Except we scouted around, and there's only one way out of here.

Serra points at another ridge, even higher than the one they just climbed, and every bit as steep.

EXT. HIGH RIDGE - EVENING

It is dark when the men reach the end of their climb. At this altitude, the soil starts to give way to rock, and the vegetation thins out: Sporadic bushes, sickly trees.

They've made good time, but their bodies have paid the price.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They're not acclimated to breathing the thin air, much less exerting themselves for ten straight hours in same. All three men are ready to drop, Uri especially.

Serra CROSSES OUT THE EIGHTH NUMBER on the satphone list
Pierce looks at the tracker.

ON THE GPS TRACKER: Al-Bakr's RED DOT is still.

PIERCE
He's staying put, for now.

SERRA
Must be a safe haven.

Pierce shoots a quick glance over to Serra, who actively avoids meeting it.

Uri is too tired to notice.

URI
Stop here. Sleep.

Uri drops his pack, falls on it, and is asleep in seconds.

Serra and Pierce exchange a look, then do the same.

EXT. HIGH RIDGE - DAWN

As the sunrise paints the mountains purple and pink -

Uri jerks roughly into consciousness, shivering, sucking down panicked breaths. The air is thin and cold. His locally-bought parka is not of the same quality as the other men's parkas, and neither is his sleeping bag.

SERRA (O.S.)
Hard to sleep at altitude, ain't it?

Serra is awake already, sitting on a boulder, scanning a swath of horizon with the BINOCULARS.

Uri rises, gritting his teeth against the pain that shoots through his strained muscles.

URI
What are you doing?

SERRA
We're only five miles away, says the Cap'n.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SERRA (CONT'D)

We can't move on until we find their lookouts. Otherwise they'll find us.

Uri looks around and finds Pierce sitting beneath a tree, working with a long piece of TWINE.

EXT. HIGH RIDGE - AFTERNOON

Uri now sits on the boulder and mans the binoculars, while Pierce and Serra sit against the same boulder. Pierce passes Serra a photograph.

PIERCE

That's her...

(passes another photo)

And that's Emma, taken last year.

SERRA

(approvingly)

Shit, Frank, you're almost a real person.

Pierce takes back the photos and picks up the end of his twine. It stretches forty feet, to a NOOSE with a chunk of Snickers in the middle.

PIERCE

I've been trying. I'm doing this for them.

He can't help but look down at his wedding band.

SERRA

(unusually serious)

Yeah, Real Person's the way to go. How many mercs have you met who died happy?

PIERCE

I think we'll be the first.

(beat)

So where's Mrs. Carl Serra, then?

Serra reaches into his pocket and passes his wallet to Pierce. Pierce puts down the twine to take the wallet.

In Serra's wallet, a PHOTO of an ABSOLUTELY STUNNING WOMAN of Filipina-Indian extraction.

SERRA

Mohanee.

An appreciative wince from Pierce's bachelor days steals onto his face.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PIERCE

Well played.

Uri puts the binoculars down and looks over his shoulder.

URI

Mohanee? Who is Mohanee?

Uri grabs the wallet from Pierce.

SERRA

Get back on the binoculars.

URI

She is beautiful! Where is she, why don't I know her?

SERRA

Because she was killed four years ago in a Jemaah Islamiyah bombing on Mindanao.

Silence.

URI

I'm sorry, Carl.

SERRA

Yeah? I didn't know you were a member of Jemaah Islamiyah.

URI

No, it's just -

SERRA

(smiling sadly)

Binoculars.

Uri takes one last look at the picture of Serra's dead wife, hands back the wallet and returns to his watch.

PIERCE

So this Jemaah Islamiyah lieutenant who - passed away on your island -

SERRA

Lucky coincidence. He came after me. I didn't even know until after.

PIERCE

When you found out, it must've felt good.

Serra abruptly shifts the tone of the conversation:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SERRA

Killing his boss would feel better.

URI (O.S.)

I found them!

Pierce scrambles up to the boulder, grabs the binoculars from Uri and looks.

THROUGH THE BINOCULARS, in the distance across sharp hills, Pierce can just make out two tiny figures, sitting on a rock similar to the one he's sitting on now.

Pierce removes the GPS tracker from its Ziploc bag and points it along his line of sight.

ON THE TRACKER, his line of sight lines up perfectly with the RED BLIP that represents al-Bakr.

PIERCE

Dead on. I'm guessing they'll change shifts once it gets dark. When the sun goes down, we'll head over there and follow the day shift back to base.

URI

I can't believe we made it.

PIERCE

We haven't. This is just the starting line.

EXT. HIGH RIDGE - DUSK

The sun drops below the horizon, sending up a wash of color in its wake.

Serra crosses off another satphone number on the list. Only one more number remains. Forty feet away -

A WILD HARE sniffs at the Snickers in the middle of the noose. The hare isn't happy with the Snickers, but he's hungry, and the pickings are slim. He nibbles at it.

On the boulder, Pierce lifts the twine and yanks -

The hare jerks and flails, but it's too late. He's got a leash. Pierce walks along the length of twine and picks up the animal by the scruff.

URI

We don't have a fire. We're going to eat it raw?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PIERCE

We're not going to eat it at all.

Pierce looks to the west as the last spot of sun drops below the mountains.

PIERCE

Time to go.

Pierce puts the hare between his shirt and coat and zips it in. Uri looks to Serra for clarification, but Serra is already on his way toward the jihadis.

EXT. MOUNTAINS - NIGHT

Wearing the NIGHT GOGGLES, Pierce walks point with Uri and Serra behind him, their faces covered in black camo.

CUT TO:

Halted at the foot of a rise, Pierce looks up.

PIERCE'S NIGHT VISION POV of the JIHADI NIGHT SHIFT coming to relieve the DAY WATCHMEN. The day watchmen exchange Arabic words, toss the night guys the remainder of their cigarettes and head back.

Pierce heads after the day shift guys, and Uri and Serra follow within touching distance. They stick to the low ground beneath the jihadis for as long as they can.

But the day watchmen turn left, away from the edge of the high ground on which they're walking.

PIERCE

They turned. I lost them. Come on.

Pierce jogs along the base of the hill until he sees some brush cover at the top that they can use when they get up there. Quickly and quietly, he scrambles up the hill.

Serra follows, moving with equal dexterity.

Uri is lagging. Serra watches him climb.

Pierce peers around the side of the brush.

PIERCE

They're a hundred yards away... they're turning, we're going to lose them...

Uri is near the top.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SERRA

Come on... hurry the fuck up...

Uri's foot pushes off a rock -

His foot slips -

Serra's hand shoots out to catch Uri's hand -

And their hands connect with a loud CLAP.

Pierce peers around the side of the brush again.

PIERCE'S NIGHT VISION POV of the watchmen, one calling the other to his side to investigate the noise he heard.

PIERCE

They're coming.

One of the watchmen snaps the bolt on his Kalashnikov.

Uri reaches for his gun - but Pierce stays his hand.

The watchmen's footsteps are audible.

Uri tries for his gun, and again, Pierce stops him.

URI

(mouthing silently)

What are you doing?!

Serra taps Uri on the shoulder and holds out his hand: Wait.

Through the brush, Pierce watches the watchmen draw closer. He sees both their gun barrels raise to ready position. Light from their flashlights strains through the brush leaves, bleaching out his night vision.

Pierce looks away from the flashlights.

Uri is sweating with fear, but Pierce holds his gun arm tight. He waits for the sound of the second watchman's GUN BOLT -

- and times the opening of his JACKET ZIPPER to coincide with it.

He reaches for the HARE, pulls it out by the scruff and tosses it around the side of the brush. Terrified, it runs out into the open.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

The lead watchman shines a flashlight on the hare. It freezes.

WATCHMAN 1.
[It's a fucking rabbit.]

WATCHMAN 2
[Like I said. Come on, I'm exhausted.]

They lower their weapons and head back the way they came.

URI
(to Pierce)
Thanks.

PIERCE
Be careful. That was my only rabbit.

Pierce watches the watchmen as they round a huge boulder.

Ten long seconds pass. Then Pierce leads the other two across the hardscrabble ground to the boulder, where they take cover again.

His back against the cool rock, Pierce edges around the side, breathing heavy. He hears DISTANT VOICES. Taking a deep breath, he pops his head out and takes a look.

PIERCE'S POV of a long natural runway, leading sharply downward into the rock. Many bulges and protrusions in the rock walls provide ample cover along the runway -

- but from the right angle, Pierce can see the watchmen talking to two more ARMED GUARDS. Soon, the watchmen step past the guards and disappear into the mouth of a cave.

Pierce spins back around the boulder to his companions.

SERRA
Caves?

Pierce nods.

URI
Could we wait for al-Bakr to come out?

SERRA
It's not just one cave. It's a whole network. There are probably ten exits.

URI
Do we go in after them?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SERRA

If we storm in and start shooting before we know exactly where he is, his boys whisk him out one of the other ten exits.

PIERCE

Or kill him, if they're cornered. They probably have a standing order.

We see Serra linger on this possibility for a moment.

URI

So we use the GPS to find him.

PIERCE

Not precise enough. We need feet and inches. Besides, he might not have the satphone on him.

(beat)

All we have left is the Trojan Horse.

Pierce and Serra exchange looks. Neither man is happy about it.

SERRA

You got the equipment?

Pierce nods and turns to Uri.

PIERCE

Your Arabic is fluent?

Uri figures out what the "Trojan Horse" maneuver entails, more or less.

URI

Oh no, I'm not -- you motherfuckers --

This close to the prize, Serra's usual geniality fades:

SERRA

You speak Arabic! What the hell else did you think I brought you for?

URI

You never told me this --

SERRA

I didn't know for sure. And if I had told you, you wouldn't have come.

URI

Motherfucker --

(CONTINUED)

PIERCE

(calmly)

One phone number left, Uri. One more day.

Serra holds out the SATPHONE LIST, with its lone remaining number.

PIERCE

He'll move after that. You know he will.
We can wait, hope he comes out our exit.
But realistically? This is our only shot.

Uri doesn't want to believe it, but he knows Pierce is right. He closes his eyes, steels himself and nods.

CUT TO:

IN PIERCE'S HAND, the two small pieces of camera-battery-sized MINIELECTRONICS we saw him working on with a monocle back at INT, Inc..

He hands one to Uri.

PIERCE

Bite hard and swallow.

Uri takes it.

URI

How hard?

PIERCE

Hard.

Uri throws the thing in his mouth, crunches down on it and swallows.

ON PIERCE'S GPS TRACKER, Pierce pushes some buttons. The detailed topographic map we've seen many times before disappears, replaced by a SIMPLE GRID.

At the center of the grid is a flashing YELLOW DOT.

As Serra wipes the black from Uri's face with a T-shirt, Pierce points at the yellow dot on the GPS and explains:

PIERCE

This is you. You march up there with no pack, no gun, no anything but this piece-of-shit local parka you've got on. You tell them you've been wandering around these mountains for days looking for them, just so you could join their cause.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

PIERCE (CONT'D)

Tell them a heartbreaking sob-story, tell them whatever you need to tell them to get inside those caves. Talk your way up the food chain in there until they bring you to al-Bakr.

URI

They won't bring me to al-Bakr!

PIERCE

They will. Al-Bakr will have to vet you before they'll let you stay. Once you are in his presence, you'll bite this second transmitter and swallow it. Lodge it up behind your molars - they'll search you good. Once we know exactly where he is, we'll come in and extract you and him.

Uri cannot control his trembling.

SERRA

You're nervous as hell. That's good. If you were to walk up there and deliver some smooth, watertight routine, they'd blow your head right off.

Uri's trembling escalates. He throws his pack on the ground and puts the second transmitter in his mouth.

URI

God help you if you don't come get me.

PIERCE

You get in there, and we'll come get you. That's a promise.

Serra nods agreement.

Uri raises his hands over his head, steps around the boulder and heads for the belly of the beast.

EXT. CAVE ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Uri kicks a rock, alerting the GUARDS to his presence. They blind him with their flashlights and immediately level their weapons at him.

[Both the guards' dress and their use of Arabic reveal them to be Arabs, not Pakistanis, for those who can recognize the difference:]

GUARD #1

[Stop! Who are you?]

(CONTINUED)

URI

[My name is Abu Yassin.]

GUARD 1

[What are you doing here?]

URI

[I - I am here to wage jihad.]

Keeping their guns and lights on him, the two guards approach Uri to scrutinize him more closely. Sleep-deprived, worse for the wear, hair a tangled mess without his comb... he does look the part.

GUARD 1

[Where are you from?]

URI

[I am from Jabaliyah, in Gaza.]

While Guard 2 keeps him covered, Guard 1 leans in close. Uri can feel the man's breath on him. He tries to rein in his shivering, but his jaw still quivers.

The guard stares into Uri's eyes. Uri tries to stare back, but he cannot stop blinking.

Without warning, the guard grabs a revolver from his waistband and backhands Uri across the face with it.

GUARD 1

[Liar! Jew!]

The guard puts the revolver to Uri's temple.

URI

[I am not.]

GUARD 1

[You're a Jew from Tel Aviv.]

He cocks the hammer on the revolver.

BACK TO PIERCE AND SERRA

watching from behind the rocks. Serra wants to step in.

SERRA

Let's go.

PIERCE

No. I think he's all right.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BACK TO URI AND GUARDS

URI

[I have never been to Tel Aviv. I tried to go once, and the army turned me away at the Erez crossing.]

The guard hits Uri again with the gun barrel - a dangerous thing to do with a cocked revolver.

GUARD 1

["Erez"! What other Hebrew do you know, Jew?]

URI

(in Hebrew)

Echad, shteim, shalosh, arba... shalom... Ben Zonah.

(back to Arabic)

[That is "son of a bitch." It is what we call them.]

GUARD 1

[I don't believe you.]

He jams the barrel of the cocked gun between Uri's lips.

Even Guard 2 seems taken aback.

Guard 1 wraps his finger around the trigger -

The hammer is motionless but ready -

Uri closes his eyes -

Guard 2 looks away -

BACK TO PIERCE AND SERRA

SERRA

You're wrong. Come on...

Maybe Serra is right. Serra puts his hand on the shotgun's pump, and Pierce gets his automatic ready.

BACK TO URI AND GUARDS

Uri's eyes are still cinched shut -

Guard 1 smiles a cruel smile -

He begins to squeeze the trigger -

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

BACK TO PIERCE AND SERRA

Stepping out, guns ready -

BACK TO URI AND GUARDS

Guard 1 squeezes the trigger -

The hammer falls -

Click.

BACK TO PIERCE AND SERRA

standing down, retreating quietly back to their cover.

BACK TO URI AND GUARDS

Guard 1 frisks Uri thoroughly: Waist, torso, arms, legs. He unceremoniously grabs Uri's crotch through his pants, and runs his hand between his ass cheeks.

He even checks in Uri's mouth, under his tongue... but he misses the transmitter hidden up behind Uri's molars.

Then he pushes Uri toward the mouth of the cave.

BACK TO PIERCE AND SERRA

watching Uri as Guard 1 leads him into the cave, with Guard 2 staying behind.

Pierce looks down at his GPS tracker.

ON THE TRACKER SCREEN, we see URI'S YELLOW DOT, moving off the center of the grid at a rightward diagonal.

INT. CAVES - CONTINUOUS

The caves are lit with bulbs strung across the low ceiling. Somewhere, a portable generator hums.

Uri and the guard walk single file, with Uri in front; the passages are so narrow, there are places where they could not walk side by side.

They come upon a group of two more guards and squeeze by them. The confinement intensifies Uri's fear, but his escort cannot see it, because he is behind Uri.

He leads Uri around a gentle rightward bend. They come upon three more jihadis. Uri averts his eyes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They go straight for another ten paces, then around a 90° left turn -

EXT. CAVE ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS .

ON THE TRACKER, Uri's yellow dot moves sharply leftward.

PIERCE (O.S.)

Ninety degrees left...

Hidden from the lone guard, Pierce and Serra monitor Uri on the tracker. When his yellow dot reaches the edge of the screen, the grid scrolls to keep up with him.

PIERCE

Straight five yards... thirty degrees right... straight...

SERRA

You want me to write this down?

PIERCE

No.

INT. CAVES - NIGHT

Uri has been locked in a small room and left to wait. He sits on a metal frame chair.

The earthen floor has been covered with mats. Droplets of water well on the ceiling. One falls on Uri's shoulder.

A 35-year-old LIEUTENANT with a black beard, beige robes and a dirty turban enters and speaks to him in Arabic.

LIEUTENANT

[You have come all the way from Gaza?]

URI

(nodding)

[Yes sir. Through Lebanon, Syria, Iraq -]

LIEUTENANT

[How did you find us?]

URI

[In Karachi, I was told the fighting was up here. Against the Indians.]

LIEUTENANT

[You do not know who we are?]

Uri's earnest guilelessness is impressive:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

URI

[You are jihadis, like me.]

(sudden worry)

[Aren't you?]

An indulgent smile flickers on the corners of the Lieutenant's mouth.

LIEUTENANT

[Wait here.]

He leaves the room and locks Uri in again.

EXT. CAVE ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Serra looks at Uri's yellow dot on the tracker screen and huffs impatiently.

SERRA

He's been sitting there for fifteen minutes. I say we go in.

PIERCE

He hasn't found al-Bakr yet. His dot's still yellow.

SERRA

He could be dead.

PIERCE

If he's dead, he can wait another fifteen minutes.

INT. CAVES - NIGHT

The door of Uri's room opens. The Lieutenant beckons.

LIEUTENANT

[Come.]

He leads Uri through convoluted cave passageways.

Uri's cheek bulges as his tongue fishes for the transmitter, dislodging it from behind his molars, maneuvering it into place.

They come to a door guarded by two young men with machine guns. The Lieutenant nods to them, then opens the door.

A small room with cushions on the floor. A few hanging TAPESTRIES add an aesthetic touch to this otherwise coldly functional place.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A man in loose-fitting robes is adjusting a space heater, bent over with his back to them. He turns and takes in Uri with neon green eyes we've seen many times before, but never in person.

This is SAYIM AL BAKR(60).

Uri BITES DOWN HARD ON THE TRANSMITTER and swallows.

Al-Bakr smiles at him, gentle and reassuring.

Uri smiles timidly back.

EXT. CAVE ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

ON THE TRACKER, Uri's DOT turns from YELLOW TO GREEN.

PIERCE

He's there.

(beat)

They're staying put. You ready?

Pierce readies his gun - but this time it's Serra pushing the barrel down and shaking his head.

From his boot sheath, Serra pulls his COMBAT KNIFE.

He tests the blade with a light flick on his thumbnail. It cuts a thin groove into the nail as easily as it would through water.

PIERCE

Remember, we agreed...alive.

Serra nods grudging assent.

INT. CAVES - AL-BAKR'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

Uri is in a room with the most wanted man in the world and his lieutenant. They speak Arabic.

AL-BAKR

[We will sit?]

Al-Bakr's voice is quiet, almost shy.

URI

[Yes, Sir, thank you.]

They sit, Uri facing the door, al-Bakr facing Uri. Uri's fear is real; the lieutenant thinks he knows its source:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LIEUTENANT

(amused)

[He did not know you were here. He thought he'd just wandered into a regular jihadi outpost.]

AL-BAKR

[But that is all we are, Ahmad.]

With tobacco-stained fingers, Al-Bakr takes out a pack of CIGARETTES. His Lieutenant moves to light it for him, but al-Bakr refuses him with all the patience of your favorite grade school teacher.

AL-BAKR

[Serve Allah, my friend, not me.]

He removes a book of matches from a robe pocket and lights the cigarette. Uri takes the opportunity to cast a quick, nervous glance over al-Bakr's shoulder at the door, clearly eager for Pierce and Serra to retrieve him.

Al-Bakr returns the matches to his pocket.

AL-BAKR

[Although perhaps you could serve our guest something to eat. Are you hungry?]

URI

[Yes, Sir, I am.]

AL-BAKR

[Some dates, perhaps, Ahmad. And tea?]

(off Uri's nod)

[Tea for the three of us, please.]

The Lieutenant exits to fulfill al-Bakr's polite request, leaving Uri alone with al-Bakr. The latter inhales his cigarette with relish. He notices Uri watching him and exhales with a chuffing laugh.

AL-BAKR (CONT'D)

[Unseemly, I know.]

URI

[No, I did not mean --]

AL-BAKR

[It's okay. You're right, it's a bad habit. But the Koran does not expressly forbid it, and Allah can see inside my heart. He knows how much I want to quit.]

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

They share a quiet laugh about al-Bakr's weakness. He holds the pack out to Uri. Uri politely refuses.

AL-BAKR (CONT'D)

[So...Abu?]

(off Uri's nod)

[You have come a long way in search of jihad, Abu.]

URI

[Yes. I am from Gaza, and I have fought with Hezbollah in Lebanon - only I am Sunni, and many of them did not want my help, so I moved on to -]

AL-BAKR

[You do not need to impress me with everywhere you have been. Most men are too lazy to fight injustice on their own doorstep, yet you have travelled thousands of miles to fight it here, with us. This is impressive enough.]

URI

[Thank you.]

In Uri's diffident smile, we can read his happiness over his success in tricking al-Bakr. He relaxes a bit.

AL-BAKR

[But tell me, Abu: What brought you to jihad with enough passion to keep you going for thousands of miles?]

Uri has relaxed too soon. He sees this simple question for what it is: A test. If he does not pass it - or at least make his answer last long enough for Pierce and Serra to reach him - he will die in these caves.

A SLOW ZOOM ON URI as we watch him tell his story.
[Intercut with FLASHES of same in italics.]

URI

[I am from Jabaliyah, just outside Gaza City. My father was a painter. He needed a permit from the Israelis every time he wanted to paint a house. Some days it was Yes, some days No.]

FLASH ON a YOUNG PALESTINIAN BOY, his little sister at his side, as two soldiers throw open his door and storm into his house. The camera is at the boy's level, waist-high to the soldiers. The boy is angry.

(CONTINUED)

URI

[He was out painting someone else's house the day two soldiers came to ours, looking for Hamas. I was home watching my little sister, Fatima. I remember being very angry with them. How dare they storm into my house and act like this?]

FLASH ON an over-the-shoulder shot of the young boy as he follows the soldiers through the rooms of his house.

URI

[I followed them into every room while they searched. They found nothing, of course. When they were done, I followed them outside.]

FLASH ON the boy following the soldiers outside. His sister watches through the window.

FLASH ON his father, coming up the street.

URI

[My father was on his way home. When he saw the soldiers, he thought they had come to check his painter's permit. So he reached into his coat to show them.]

FLASH ON an Israeli soldier raising his rifle.

URI

[The older soldier thought he was reaching for a gun. He didn't yell for him to stop. He shot my father dead.]

FLASH ON an Israeli soldier firing.

FLASH ON the boy's father falling.

FLASH ON the boy's stunned face. He turns, shakes his head, yells and runs for the door of his house...

URI

[My little sister, Fatima, seven years old, she was watching through the window. When she saw my father fall, she ran out the front door, screaming.]

FLASH ON the boy's sister, running out the door, yelling.

URI

[And the younger soldier...]

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

FLASH ON an Israeli soldier, turning, rifle already raised to his face.

URI
[The younger soldier...]

FLASH ON the younger soldier firing.

URI
[He spun and shot my sister in the head.]

FLASH ON the little girl falling.

URI
[One shot...]

FLASH ON the boy screaming.

URI
[My little Fatima...]

FLASH ON the younger soldier, realizing with horror what he's done. He lowers the rifle...

URI
[She was seven...]

The younger soldier is Uri.

Al-Bakr rises to comfort his new recruit. He squeezes Uri's shoulders, making him stand upright and strong.

AL-BAKR
[What happened to this soldier, the one who shot your sister?]

Uri's repulsion is completely genuine:

URI
[He was acquitted.]

Serra KICKS DOWN THE DOOR and KNOCKS AL-BAKR UNCONSCIOUS with his elbow before he has time to turn around. Pierce enters after him.

Pierce's hands are clean, but Serra looks like he's just gotten off a shift on the slaughterhouse floor.

INT. CAVES

Pierce jogs in front, Uri behind, and as the strongest of the three, Serra fireman-carries an unconscious al-Bakr through the caves, up and out the way they came.

(CONTINUED)

As they go, they pass numerous examples of Serra's handiwork:

Two guards, throats cut.

Al-Bakr's black-bearded lieutenant, stabbed in the back before his throat was cut.

Four more dead jihadis with smiling necks.

All done without a shot, without a sound.

EXT. MOUNTAINS - NIGHT

With a makeshift stretcher fashioned from al-Bakr's hanging wall tapestries, Pierce and Serra carry al-Bakr (now gagged and blindfolded) on an upward fast march across sharp and stony ground. Uri follows close behind.

They are all running on full adrenaline overload. They do not speak, but in each shot their faces say it for them:

We've got him, on this stretcher.

The most wanted man alive.

Fifty million dollars.

EXT. MOUNTAINS - DAWN

Six hours later, the sun is rising, snow flurries are falling, and the last of their adrenaline is gone. Exhausted, they drop al-Bakr roughly on the ground.

Then they fall to the ground themselves, their lungs working double time to suck oxygen from the thin air.

SERRA

Damn... fifty million bucks is heavy.

Uri laughs at Serra's joke, spurring Serra to laugh at it himself. Pierce starts to chuckle in spite of himself, and soon they're all caught up in an escalating crescendo of LAUGHTER.

PIERCE

Stop... stop, I'm gonna pass out...

SERRA

I believe that's the first time I've heard you laugh since we started, Frank.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PIERCE

Yeah, well...

SERRA

Feels good, doesn't it? To be back on the job?

Serra kills the joke.

PIERCE

Get some sleep. I'll take first watch.

EXT. MOUNTAINS - MORNING

Uri is pulled from sleep by an unpleasant thought. He jostles Serra awake.

URI

Carl... the watchmen.

SERRA

Heh? Wha?

URI

We never got the night watchmen. The two who replaced the ones we followed back.

SERRA

I promise you, when they saw the present we left them in those caves, the first thing they did was shit their pants, the second thing they did was shit their pants, and the third thing they did was start running.

PIERCE

They probably think half the First Marine Expeditionary Force is coming after them. Their main concern is going to be keeping themselves alive.

Al-Bakr coughs out protest sounds through his gag.

SERRA

Hey, Jackson's awake!

Pierce reaches to undo the gag.

PIERCE

You shout, we shoot you.

Pierce removes the gag but leaves the BLINDFOLD. Al-Bakr coughs and swallows. His English is almost perfect:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AL-BAKR

You are wrong about my men. You fear death, but they love it.

SERRA

No, we love death too. We just like to stay on the right end of it.

PIERCE

Tell you what: You agree to walk on your own, and we'll leave the gag off. We'll still keep you blindfolded, but at least you'll be able to breathe the fresh air.

AL-BAKR

And if I do not want to walk?

PIERCE

Then we'll cut you into three pieces to divide the load.

Pierce looks at Serra. Serra smiles wide.

EXT. MOUNTAINS - DAY

Al-Bakr is still blindfolded. His hands are bound behind his back by PLASTIC MILITARY RESTRAINTS.

Serra walks with al-Bakr, keeping a hand on him at all times, making sure he doesn't fall. Pierce walks point, Uri brings up the rear. Uphill all the way, as usual.

AL-BAKR

How did you find me?

With a hint of pride, Serra takes out the neatly folded LIST OF NUMBERS and taps al-Bakr on the head with it.

SERRA

A friend of yours left me a nice list of your phone numbers.

AL-BAKR

(confused for a moment)

There are no lists. Everything is committed to memory. Where did you -

(beat)

Ah, yes. Never mind. I know.

(beat)

I never should have trusted him. He smiled too much.

The men find al-Bakr's precise deduction unsettling.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AL-BAKR

You know that you cannot bring me out the same way you came in. If anybody sees you with me, they will kill you.

This upsets Serra further - possibly because it's exactly what he said himself, back at the mountain lodge when he saw al-Bakr's picture on prominent display.

SERRA

Big favor, Jackson: Shut the fuck up.

Al-Bakr smells the air and gauges the wind on his cheek.

AL-BAKR

You are headed for the Murzil Pass, yes?

Uri looks to Pierce, and Pierce nods; al-Bakr is right.

AL-BAKR

That's a good idea. It is what I would do if I were you.

SERRA

Seriously? Shut the fuck up.

AL-BAKR

I hope you have warm clothes. The pass is just over 16,000 feet. It gets very cold.

Serra glares at him. Al-Bakr is silent for a long beat.

AL-BAKR

So where is the little Jew who calls himself Abu? Why doesn't he speak?

SERRA

(serious warning)

Jackson...

AL-BAKR

And why do you call me "Jackson," when you know my real name?

Serra smacks al-Bakr upside the head - not hard enough to hurt him, but hard enough to make Pierce wary.

SERRA

Because that's your name now. You're Jackson.

(smack)

You're Sally.

(smack)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SERRA (CONT'D)

You're Spongebob Fucking Squarepants.
(smack smack)
You're nothing at all now, Jackson.
You're cargo.

AL-BAKR

"The threat of torture can be more
damaging than the torture itself. In
fact, most subjects underestimate their
capacity to withstand the actual
sensation of pain."

SERRA

What the fuck is that?

AL-BAKR

It is from the CIA's Kubark Interrogation
Manual. You would have read it in your
training, if you had been good enough for
special forces. Clearly, you were not.

Serra balls up his fist to deliver the actual sensation
of pain, but Pierce motions for him to hold off. He gets
right up close to al-Bakr and speaks quietly in his ear.

PIERCE

You've got a hell of a memory.

Al-Bakr smirks and shrugs.

PIERCE

Well, always remember this: We got you.
We beat you. All of your men who love
death so much are dead now, because one
little Jew tricked them. And you.

He pats al-Bakr softly on the cheek. Al-Bakr jerks his
head away. They start walking again.

IN AL-BAKR'S HAND, we see that he has extracted the book
of MATCHES he used to light his cigarette from his
pocket. He keeps them well-hidden.

EXT. HIGH MOUNTAINS - EARLY EVENING

The treeline is far beneath them now. They have crossed
into an alien landscape of pebbles and gray-black rocks,
barren as the moon.

Standing alone in a light snowfall on the edge of a
cliff, Pierce surveys the horizon with binoculars.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THROUGH THE BINOCULARS, he sees a thin tendril of smoke coming from a group of PRIMITIVE STRUCTURES about two miles away and five hundred feet beneath them.

Turning uphill and to the right, he sees the distant white haze of a piece of serious WEATHER.

He lowers the binoculars and returns to the rest of the group, encamped in a shallow alcove in the rock. They have bound al-Bakr's feet with twine for the night.

PIERCE

There's a small village a few miles off,
but no one's coming after us.

URI

Good.

Shivering in his substandard parka, Uri throws a few more sticks into their small fire, a luxury they are allowing themselves now that they've reached real isolation.

PIERCE

There's some bad weather ahead, which is
also good. The harder it is for us to get
over that pass, the less likely we'll be
to meet anyone along the way.

AL-BAKR

Yes, you're correct about that.

The men look at one another, wondering what to make of their enemy's approval of their course of action. They won't give him the satisfaction of discussing it in front of him; Serra claps, signaling a subject change.

SERRA

There's something serious we have to
discuss.

URI

What?

SERRA

You know what. I can't believe we've let
it go this long.

(beat)

What are you going to do with all the
money we get for Jackson?

URI

(shivering) *

Buy a better coat.

(CONTINUED)

Laughter.

SERRA

You both realize that we are going to be the most famous people in the world? What I'm gonna do is those seventy two virgins, way before Jackson or his buddies get their shot at 'em in Paradise. That's right, Jackson: After all that devotion, Allah's gonna be delivering you some used merchandise. And Pierce?

PIERCE

The money. Right.

(beat)

I'll tell you what I'm not going to do. I'm not going to avoid my mailbox because of the bills that might be hiding there. I'm not going to get a sinking feeling in my stomach every time my little girl gets a gold star on a damn spelling test, because I won't be able to afford to send her to a good college if she gets in.

(beat)

And I'm not going to battle the traffic just to take my wife and kid up to Malibu on a Saturday. No, I'm going to take them to Hawaii instead, go sit on the beach there for a month or so. My wife and I'll make ourselves another kid. Then maybe we'll start thinking about the money.

(twisting his wedding band)

This is all for them.

SERRA

That's the second time you said that.

PIERCE

Yeah?

SERRA

Yeah.

Serra smiles as though he's caught Pierce in a lie.

PIERCE

What are you trying to do?

SERRA

Just talking, Frank.

Pierce stands.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

PIERCE

Too much talking.

Pierce steps away, removing himself from the group.

EXT. HIGH MOUNTAINS - DAY

New day. Higher altitude. Same moonscape, but more snow.

Our men walk on, in the same Pierce/ Serra & al-Bakr /Uri formation, al-Bakr blindfolded as before.

Pierce stops.

PIERCE

Last three Snickers.

Pierce passes out the final candy bars. As he does so -

Al-Bakr feels around purposefully with his left foot, unseen by his hungry captors, reading the three yards of ground before him like braille.

Pierce bites off half the bar and starts walking again.

Serra grabs al-Bakr's right arm and pulls him onward.

Uri's Snickers satisfies him.

With impressive precision, Al-Bakr jams his left foot between two large rocks and falls forward with all his weight. His ANKLE BENDS into an unnatural angle with a sick-making SNAP.

Al-Bakr howls in pain. Only Serra's grip prevents him from falling.

SERRA

What the -

URI

Look, his foot -

SERRA

Cocksucker - come on, you can still walk-

Serra tries to drag al-Bakr forward. Al-Bakr cannot walk. Serra drags anyway.

SERRA

You cocksucker, get moving or -

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AL-BAKR

You blindfolded me!

URI

There's no way. Look at his ankle.

Pierce lifts al-Bakr's pant-leg. His ankle is already swelling like a water balloon. Pierce's fingers brush the ankle. Al-Bakr draws sharp breath.

PIERCE

He's not going anywhere.

SERRA

Shit.

URI

So? What?

Pierce paces, kicks dirt and snow, thinks.

PIERCE

There's a village about five miles away, down there.

(points)

They're bound to have a donkey. I'll go buy one, you two wait here with him.

URI

I'll go.

PIERCE

Don't take this the wrong way, but you're-

URI

I'm dark-skinned, and I speak Arabic. You speak Punjabi, but you're whiter than my teeth. You do the tracking, Serra does the killing... jihadi impersonation is my job. Where do you keep the money?

CUT TO:

Uri disappears downhill into a curtain of light snow. Pierce and Serra watch him go. When Uri's out of earshot:

SERRA

You ever interrogated anybody, Pierce?

PIERCE

Can't say I have.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Serra gets up and strolls over to al-Bakr, seated against a rock.

SERRA

I tried to extract some information from a True Believer, one time. Tried so hard that our former bosses at Executive Armor gave me a pink slip for my efforts. But that bastard never said a thing.

PIERCE

Khaled Sheikh Mohammed was a True Believer, and he still ponied up choice information once we got our hands on him. You'll have to do better than that.

SERRA

(exasperated, grabs
binoculars)

I'm gonna go have a look around.

Pierce watches Serra leave. Al-Bakr is still blindfolded, but behind his back, inside his robe sleeves, he bends his MATCHES back, one at a time. Loosening them up.

EXT. MOUNTAIN VILLAGE - DAY

Outside a rock hut, Uri is trying to purchase a raggedy DONKEY from an old villager. Unfortunately, the villager does not speak Arabic.

Uri points at the donkey and waves a few bills. The villager shakes his head. Insufficient offer.

Uri adds a few more bills. The villager nods twice, takes the money and hands over the donkey's reins.

Uri takes the donkey. Another obstacle overcome. He pulls the obstinate animal toward the uphill trail.

HUGHES (O.S.)

Lost, mate?

Uri turns to see Bob Hughes, the pain-in-the-ass Aussie.

HUGHES

Remember me? Bob Hughes, journo
extraordinaire?

URI

Yes, hi! No, no, we're not lost.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HUGHES

But I thought you lot were doing a piece on climbing Nanga Parbat? You're a good fifty miles off course, Skipper!

Uri tries to salvage their cover story, but his task is made more difficult by the villager who sold him the donkey, and is now being extremely pushy in his attempts to sell him other items. He starts with a fake Rolex.

URI

What it was — the weather, like you said, it was terrible. We had to turn back—
(to villager, re: watch)
No, thank you, no.

HUGHES

But I looked at the weather report just yesterday, mate. Things are getting hairy down here, but they're supposed to be as clear as May in Paris up north a bit.

Hughes is bluffing, of course; but Uri takes too long to realize it.

URI

No, no, the report is wrong. The snow, and the winds, they were terrible —

The villager busts out a cheap bracelet, a pocketknife, stuff from the same warehouse of crappy Third World merchandise as the stuff in the Muzzafarabad bazaar.

HUGHES

Right, right, weather bureau's mistake. So the winds were terrible, eh?

URI

Yes, terrible.

The villager pushes a CHEAP WALLET in Uri's face.

HUGHES

So terrible they blew your camera right off your neck. Aren't you afraid of missing the big shot?

Uri avoids eye contact with Hughes by feigning interest in the CHEAP WALLET. He checks it out, opens it —

And shock warps his face.

EXT. HIGH MOUNTAINS - DAY

Serra leads the blindfolded and hobbled al-Bakr on the donkey. The path is extremely narrow, not really a path at all. The men walk single file, Pierce ahead, Uri behind. To their left, the drop-off is precipitous.

They all move slowly, to conserve oxygen.

SERRA

(nonchalant, to Uri)

He's a journalist, he smelled a story.
What the hell - if Bob Hughes can follow
us all the way to the end without getting
killed, I say we give it to him.

Pierce looks over his shoulder at Uri. He doesn't take the news of Hughes' appearing act as lightly as Serra.

Uri picks up his pace, moving toward Pierce. He wants very badly to tell Pierce something...

But when he reaches Serra, Serra grabs his shoulder.

SERRA

If I say it's all good, you know it's all
good, right?

URI

Right.

SERRA

Right.

(motions behind him)

You better get back there. Don't want to
leave our rear flank exposed.

Uri nods and stops moving, falling back into position.

EXT. HIGH MOUNTAINS - AFTERNOON

They are definitely heading into the serious weather seen earlier. The men have all their cold weather gear on.

Serra and Pierce are doing all right - but as already established, Uri's parka is low grade. He hugs his arms tightly across his chest.

They have wrapped al-Bakr in the hanging tapestries that once served as his stretcher. They don't look like much, nor does his turban, but al-Bakr seems to be doing fine.

(CONTINUED)

SERRA

(re: al-Bakr)

I don't like it: Us humping it uphill,
Uri freezing his ass off, and this evil
fuck up there on his donkey like Jesus.

AL-BAKR

I revere Jesus. He was an apostle of
Allah.

PIERCE

I don't want to hear about Jesus.

An eerie polyphonic HUM causes Al-Bakr to cock his
blindfolded head.

AL-BAKR

We should be passing the Devil's Horns,
on the left.

To the left, the mountains have eroded into TWO SLABS OF
BLACK ROCK, jutting parallel into the sky. When the wind
hits them at the right angle, they create the two
dissonant notes just heard.

AL-BAKR

The Murzil Pass is not far. A few hours.

An icy gust hits the men full in the face. Al-Bakr
breathes deeply, taking in the wind, gauging it.

AL-BAKR

But we seem to be headed into an ice
storm.

The men are irritated... but wary.

EXT. MURZIL PASS - DUSK

The Murzil Pass is a flat expanse at 16,007ft above sea
level, with only a naked wooden post to mark it. It is
walled in by steep mountains all around, their black
rocks peeking through holes in the snow covering.

Or that's what it looks like on a clear day. Right now,
the Murzil Pass is sheet after sheet of biting HAIL,
falling from the sky onto the four men.

Somewhere, there is an exit out of this mountain cage and
down the other side of the pass, but even Pierce cannot
find it. His binoculars are useless, and 70MPH gusts make
orientation impossible.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The donkey BRAYS with fear, but on his back, al-Bakr is sanguine. Laughing, in fact. His shout is barely audible over the wind:

AL-BAKR

It looks as though you'll be receiving your just rewards after all!

Serra spins around, looking for some shelter, but all he sees is falling ice, punctuated by brief glimpses of uninviting snow and stone.

Uri is freezing to death.

Pierce knows they only have one option. He fights his way to the donkey against the wind.

PIERCE

If you and your men were caught in this, what would you do?

AL-BAKR

I would lead them to the shelter, of course!

PIERCE

Where is the shelter?

AL-BAKR

With a blindfold on, even I could not find it.

Pierce undoes the blindfold, unveiling al-Bakr's green eyes. He looks around, then points decisively:

AL-BAKR

That way!

Pierce drags the donkey in the direction of al-Bakr's finger; Serra helps Uri along after them.

PIERCE

Where?!

AL-BAKR

Keep going until you reach the rock!

The ice is falling so fast and hard, Pierce doesn't know he's reached the rock until his shoulder smashes into it: A black, chest-high BOULDER.

AL-BAKR

Push it out of the way!

(CONTINUED)

Pierce tries to push it, but it's too heavy.

PIERCE

Serra!

Serra joins him, both men digging in, shoulders in the rock. The boulder stays put.

Al-Bakr laughs at them.

AL-BAKR

Harder!

Uri is barely functional, but he stumbles to their side and throws himself against the rock, and together the three men make one final push.

The boulder rolls a foot. Behind it, a crescent of an opening into the mountain.

Heartened, they push again. It rolls another foot. The opening is only four feet high.

AL-BAKR

One more!

One more push, and the boulder gives way.

Uri falls unconscious into the narrow mouth of a small cave. Pierce pushes him in and follows himself.

INT. MURZIL PASS HIDDEN SHELTER - EVENING

As stubborn as the donkey is, he doesn't need much prodding from Serra to squeeze into the shelter, away from the falling ice. Serra throws al-Bakr in after him.

Once inside, Pierce turns on a flashlight, illuminating the space: 7'x7', roughly circular, with a 6' ceiling. Nothing much, but it keeps the ice away.

Pierce and Serra block the entryway with their packs as best as they can. Pierce slaps Uri's cheeks and shakes him until he regains consciousness.

Serra glowers at al-Bakr. Al-Bakr meets his gaze. When he turns to Uri, Uri looks away.

SERRA

Why help us? Don't you love death as much as all your friends?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AL-BAKR

You want to make a gift to your government of the information I have in my head - to say Thank You for all that money, perhaps? I, on the other hand, want an opportunity to escape.

(beat)

It's a simple gamble. By helping you, I am wagering that I will get my chance before you get yours.

SERRA

Not likely.

AL-BAKR

No? Who is standing in my way?

(to Pierce)

A man driven by desperation.

Pierce shakes his head, immune to taunting.

AL-BAKR

(to Serra)

A man driven by greed.

(to Uri)

And a man driven by guilt.

(smiles)

A baby killer.

Uri's jaw starts to tremble.

AL-BAKR

What, they don't know? You haven't told your close friends what you did? I see. Maybe not such close friends after all. What's one little Palestinian girl amongst close friends?

And before anyone knows what's happening, Uri's gun is in al-Bakr's face.

Serra lights up with bloodlust - or maybe it's just the convenience of the thing:

SERRA

Do it. This is gonna be hard enough without this fucker doing everything he can to get away.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

AL-BAKR

Yes, do it. Every drop of my blood you spill, the blood of a hundred Jews will spill onto the street. Kill me, you'll have enough for another Holocaust.

PIERCE

It won't erase anything you've done.

SERRA

Is there a bigger piece of shit alive in this world? Pull the trigger!

Uri's finger starts to pull the trigger.

PIERCE

Pull the trigger and everything he knows disappears out the back of his head.

AL-BAKR

Blood on the streets of New York, blood on the streets of Jerusalem...

Al-Bakr fixes Pierce with his glinting green eyes:

AL-BAKR

And blood on the streets of Los Angeles.

Pierce takes al-Bakr's statement for the threat that it is, and flushes with anger.

As Uri stands on the edge of the act, Serra takes notice of Pierce's reaction and calls him out on it:

SERRA

You're not telling me that you - shit, you do, don't you? He tells you he's got something special planned for your wife and little girl, and you buy it. Forget it, you're a lost cause.

(beat)

His people killed my wife, Uri. Top him.

Uri looks to Serra; instead of the expected sympathy, a hint of disapproval surfaces on Uri's face. He lets the gun drop and backs away.

Pierce grabs al-Bakr, blindfold in hand. Al-Bakr laughs:

AL-BAKR

Small men, living small lives. What are any of you to a man driven by God?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Holding the blindfold like a garrotte, Pierce wedges it between al-Bakr's teeth, gagging him securely once again.

This time, Serra makes no effort to hide his indignation at being overruled by Pierce yet again.

EXT. MURZIL PASS - DAY

Pierce emerges from the shelter to find the ice storm long gone. The air is clear and cold.

Then Uri emerges. Together, they look until they find the way over the pass, a gap in the mountains a few hundred yards to their left.

Serra is trying to push the donkey through the shelter entrance, but the donkey doesn't want to leave. Until he changes his mind, Serra and al-Bakr are trapped inside.

URI

Thank you for stopping me.

PIERCE

I don't think you'd have done it, with or without me.

URI

Yes I would have.

Uri has something else he wants to tell Pierce.

SERRA (O.S.)

Will one of you come and yank the reins on this idiot thing?

Uri hands Pierce a CHEAP WALLET.

URI

I bought it when I bought the donkey.

Pierce opens the wallet. Inside, a PHOTO of an ABSOLUTELY STUNNING WOMAN of Filipina-Indian extraction.

"Mohanee." Serra's "dead wife."

URI

The picture came with the wallet.

SERRA (O.S.)

Uri! Some help!

Uri jogs back to help him.

EXT. MOUNTAINS - DAY

The men have spent several hours in a steep descent. The rocky wall to their left is whiskered with long grass and lined with trees thirty feet above their heads.

To their right, a river is faintly audible below.

Serra walks point. Pierce leads al-Bakr on the donkey, Uri close behind him. Al-Bakr is still gagged, and his hands are still bound behind his back.

Serra stops abruptly and speaks without turning:

SERRA

(angry)

OK, anybody want to tell me why I've been getting the silent treatment for the last five hours, while you two whisper to each other like Catholic school girlfriends?

Something hits the dust at Serra's feet: The WALLET Uri bought. Serra picks it up and flips it open. With his back still to Uri and Pierce:

SERRA

Where'd you get it?

URI

I bought it in the village.

Finally, Serra turns around:

SERRA

Uri...I thought we was pals.

Now that Al-Bakr can see them, he can see they're not watching him. He knows it's safe to flip open the matchbook behind his back, BEND A MATCH around the back of the book and deftly LIGHT IT with one hand.

URI

So did I. Why would you lie about a thing like that?

SERRA

So I made some things up in the interest of team bonding.

Al-Bakr bends his wrists so the FLAME STARTS TO MELT HIS PLASTIC RESTRAINTS. It BURNS HIS WRISTS in the process, but he projects pure calm as his captors widen the rifts between themselves.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PIERCE

Or maybe getting al-Bakr out alive was just too much trouble for you. Maybe righteous vengeance for your dead wife seemed like an easier sell than you being too lazy to do this job right.

Cornered, Serra lashes out at him.

SERRA

Oh, I forgot, you're a Family Man, you've got higher principles. That's why you're the Captain, right? You want to save your family from the bad man's evil plans. I bet you convinced the wifey of that, no problem. Shit, by the time you were done with her, she was probably helping you pack.

Pierce's silence tells Serra that he's hit a nerve. So he keeps hitting:

SERRA

(to Uri)

Well lemme tell you, I ain't convinced. You should've heard Captain Family Man here when I first called him about this expedition. He was lickin' his chops like a junkie.

PIERCE

I'm about done hearing this.

But Serra's not done. He steps in closer to Pierce.

SERRA

I say you're here for you, just like I am. I say your story about your family's as big a lie as mine. How long did it take you to leave 'em behind and get back on the job, Frank? Three days? That's real devotion.

Unseen by our men, al-Bakr strikes a fresh match.

For the first time, Pierce is on the verge of losing control.

PIERCE

You don't know what you're talking about. You should stop now.

(CONTINUED)

URI

Yes, enough.

But Serra steps in closer still and keeps going.

SERRA

Sure you love 'em well enough, you bring your wife flowers, you buy your kid nice birthday presents...

URI

Enough...

SERRA

But at the end of the day, Pierce, when you had to make the choice, it turned out your family didn't mean shit.

Pierce lands a HARD RIGHT UPSIDE SERRA'S HEAD, enough to knock most men out - but it doesn't even knock Serra down. He buckles, but quickly regains his footing. Rubbing his cheek, he turns back toward Pierce.

SERRA

You know what I'm thinking? I'm thinking it's time our team had a new Captain.

Serra rotates his right foot in his boot, the one with the COMBAT KNIFE strapped to it. His ANKLE CRACKS.

Uri tries to hold Serra back, but Serra tosses him aside. He steps to Pierce. This will not end well -

But BULLETS RAISE THE DUST BETWEEN THEM, SHOTS sounding from the trees overhead, saving them from each other for the time being.

Al-Bakr shakes out his match and closes his hand over the matchbook as

Serra grabs al-Bakr's donkey and yanks it over a five-foot drop to their right, taking cover. Pierce and Uri follow him over the drop.

The next drop is about a thousand feet, into the river.

Serra and Pierce exchange a look that tells us the score is far from settled between them. Then Pierce puts his binoculars over the ridge and looks through them, keeping his head below the line of fire.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

THROUGH THE BINOCULARS, Pierce finds a MAN IN TRIBAL COSTUME, looking in his general vicinity down the sights of an old M2 rifle.

And another. And two more. Five, six, seven... Finally, he sees a familiar, moustached face:

PIERCE

It's our friend the driver.

SERRA

What the fuck is it with this guy?!

PIERCE

I killed his kinsmen. I owe him a blood debt. You and Uri are the interest.

SERRA

They were gonna kidnap us!

PIERCE

Good point. Why don't you explain it to him?

The driver sees Pierce's binoculars, raises his rifle - Pierce lets go of the binoculars, narrowly avoiding the bullet that destroys them.

They draw their guns. Serra puts his in al-Bakr's face.

SERRA

Stay put now.

Al-Bakr nods and obeys.

But when Serra turns to start shooting at the bandits, al-Bakr picks up where he left off in his efforts to free himself. He waits until several rounds have been fired, so the gunpowder can mask the smell of burning flesh.

The bandits know what they're doing; every time one of our men raises his head to shoot at the bandits advancing down the hill, the bandits on top of the hill lay down suppressing fire from behind the trees.

Uri looks at the thousand-foot drop behind him.

The treetop fire is coming heavy. The advancing men are coming closer.

Things don't look good.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

But amidst the gunfire, another sound: A WHISTLE, followed by a meaty TTTTHNKK! And another, and another.

With each TTTTHNKK!, the suppressing fire thins. Soon it's gone all together. Fearing a trick, Pierce peeks warily from their cover -

- in time to see one of the BANDITS, as confused as Pierce is by the cessation of gunfire, catch a METAL ARROW SHAFT through his THROAT.

On top of the hill, many bandits lie dead, the moustached driver among them, all served the same.

One by one, the bandits who were clambering down the hillside after our men find themselves on the wrong end of deadly accurate arrow shots.

The last tries to run, but Serra shoots him dead.

Silence.

One last man emerges from the trees above. Pierce, Serra and Uri all take aim.

But the man pays them no mind, sliding down the hillside past the corpses he made, until we can make him out.

It's the Australian, Bob Hughes, with a scoped aluminum CROSSBOW slung over his shoulder.

[Al-Bakr's wrists are blackened in spots. He's half-way through the restraints, but they still hold fast when he strains against them with all his might. He stops his escape efforts for now.]

HUGHES

Hello hello! Scratches, scrapes?

URI

(confused)

Bob Hughes?

But Pierce sees the crossbow and winces:

PIERCE

No. Nick Howard. Saint Nick Howard.

URI

You know him, Pierce?

PIERCE

Only by his crossbow.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

HUGHES/SAINT NICK

Frank Pierce? The Frank Pierce? After all these years! It's a pleasure to finally make your acquaintance. I've heard a lot about you.

PIERCE

Yeah, likewise.

URI

You're not a journalist?

HUGHES/SAINT NICK

If I was a fucking journalist, those wogs would be frying up your liver by now.

He sees al-Bakr behind the donkey.

HUGHES/SAINT NICK

Well hello my darling.

(to Pierce)

And in one piece, no less. You're a solid international citizen, Frank.

EXT. MOUNTAINS - DAY

SAINT NICK HOWARD walks with the men. In addition to his crossbow, he now has some other gear: A small pack, a walking stick, an M16.

Pierce grudgingly accepts the man's presence as a fait accompli. Uri's not sure what to think. Serra simmers.

The real Saint Nick is as garrulous as Bob Hughes:

SAINT NICK

I had it on pretty good authority he was here in Kashmir somewhere, but damned if I could find out where. All my usual suspects were coming up empty.

(to Pierce)

You narrowed it down considerably, Frank, when you covered up the map down at Parvinder's cafe. Still, that big arm of yours covered a lot of territory. You'd have seen me for sure, if I followed you on the way up... it was sheer luck that I came upon your Israeli friend in beautiful, metropolitan Chilgit a ways back. My luck and yours.

SERRA

How's it your luck?

(CONTINUED)

SAINT NICK

You speak Gadha, little man? Aishwarya, Pashtun, Balti? I do - enough to know the jihadis have put the word out on you.

SERRA

Jihadis my ass. I took out ten of them without firing a shot.

SAINT NICK

That's the problem. They were real upset like, ran crying to their daddies in Paki Army Intelligence. Their daddies felt bad for 'em. Gave 'em a whole bunch of nasty new toys to dry their tears.

(beat)

You should consider yourself lucky to have a new partner with a solid skill set. Twelve-point-five million sure beats being blown to pieces by a bunch of wogs.

Angrily, Serra yanks the donkey to a halt.

SERRA

We're not taking new partners.

Smiling as wide as his namesake, Saint Nick invades Serra's personal space.

SAINT NICK

Oh yes you are, little man. Take it in stride.

EXT. FORESTED MOUNTAIN - NIGHT

Pierce and Uri sleep beneath a tree. Al-Bakr sleeps on his side ten feet away from Pierce, gagged, bound, covered with his now-filthy tapestries. Saint Nick is twenty feet from Uri, sleeping on his side.

Serra is supposed to be on al-Bakr watch, but he is not. He's moving in a belly crawl toward Pierce.

Al-Bakr opens his eyes and sees that his guard has left his post. Behind his back, he pushes his hands from beneath the tapestries and prepares another match.

Serra closes on Pierce, moving so slowly and meticulously that it's difficult to watch him. Pierce does not stir.

Al-Bakr lights his match and positions the flame beneath the restraints.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A foot away from Pierce, Serra reaches for him slowly -
- and taps him once on the shoulder. Pierce's eyes snap open, and his hand makes it halfway to his gun before he sees Serra, unarmed, with his finger to his lips.

Uri stirs but does not wake. Serra leans in close to Pierce, and both men speak in low whispers.

SERRA

I don't care about the money, Frank.
Fifty million, twenty, ten... they all
look the same from where I'm standing.
But I'm not going to let that shrimp-on-
the-barbie fucker hijack this expedition.
We did this.

PIERCE

You won't be able stop him.

SERRA

We could stop him.

PIERCE

Not if the stories about him are true.
Not if half of them are true.

SERRA

Anybody can kill anybody. We can get him
while he sleeps.

The faint moonlight glints off SAINT NICK'S KNIFE BLADE
as it skates over the skin of Serra's throat.

SAINT NICK (O.S.)

I don't sleep, Carl.

Behind Serra, Nick's head rises. He speaks in his ear.

SAINT NICK

And I ain't just anybody.

Uri opens his eyes and sees what follows.

PIERCE

Don't kill him.

A silent acknowledgement of mutual respect passes between Nick and Pierce, a respect neither could ever have for Serra. Nick nods, then lifts his blade from Serra's neck.

(CONTINUED)

SAINT NICK

Even with all four of us, our odds are still shit.

(to Serra)

But no more bright ideas from you.

With a flick of his wrist, he NICKS SERRA'S FOREHEAD, drawing blood.

SAINT NICK

Next time, little man, it's *Chinatown*.

He taps the flat of the blade on Serra's nostril, then goes back to his spot.

PIERCE

Looks like you got what you wanted. We definitely have a new Captain.

Pierce rolls over and closes his eyes.

Serra rises and trudges back to his watch, no longer the alpha killer in the group.

Al-Bakr feigns sleep. His wrists are looking grim... but those restraints are three-quarters gone. He pulls his hands back under the tapestry before Serra can see them.

EXT. RAVINE - MORNING

SAINT NICK

Those bandits may have been dirty wogs, but they were just like us at heart: Freelancers, looking to make a buck ransoming some journos...

Pierce, Serra and Uri have been listening to a steady stream of Saint Nick's self-impressed pontificating for several hours, and it shows. Serra runs his fingers over the nick in his forehead that Saint Nick made last night.

SAINT NICK

...and half the Paki Army is freelancing for the mullahs in Karachi. And our friend here, he used to freelance for bin Laden, who used to freelance for Uncle Sam until he set up his own shop...

The path ends alongside a steep ravine. A RIVER runs through it, eighty feet down. A flimsy, hundred-foot BRIDGE spans the ravine, and the path picks up on the other side.

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CONTINUED:

The bridge consists of four thick ROPES: Two threaded through either side of the 6' cross planks, and two hand-ropes to hold onto while walking.

Nick slides his walking stick beneath the donkey's saddle, so he can hold onto the hand-ropes with both hands. Uri goes first.

Then Pierce, leading al-Bakr on the donkey, draped in his heavy tapestries.

Serra waits for Saint Nick to go, but Nick politely motions him on and follows ten feet behind him.

It's not an easy hundred feet. Every step anyone takes tilts the bridge in one direction or the other.

There is movement beneath al-Bakr's tapestries - movement *in front of him*, over the donkey's mane. [We may recall that al-Bakr's hands were bound behind his back.]

The donkey huffs, shakes its head as if to shake off a gadfly and trots ahead, past Uri. Pierce maintains his grip on the reins, but when the animal veers right, the
BRIDGE TILTS -

The donkey skids toward the edge and brays, terrified -

Al-Bakr leans away from the fall -

Uri grabs the hand-ropes and holds his breath, and Serra grabs the ropes too -

Saint Nick "Wooooo!"s like he's on a roller coaster -

Pierce grabs the donkey's saddle and leans left, stopping the donkey's slide. The bridge steadies itself.

Uri breathes again.

SAINT NICK

Well done, Frank!

The men start walking again. Pierce and al-Bakr are in front now, about forty feet from the other side.

From beneath al-Bakr's dirty tapestries, the heavy handle of NICK'S WALKING STICK extends along the donkey's front leg, held at the thin end by AL-BAKR'S FREED HANDS.

Pierce walks a pace ahead of the donkey, unaware.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Al-Bakr THROWS OFF HIS TAPESTRIES and CRACKS PIERCE OVER THE HEAD with the handle of the walking stick.

Pierce falls to the walkway.

Serra sees this and moves toward al-Bakr, shotgun ready.

SERRA

Last mistake, Jackson.

But al-Bakr tears off his gag, cups his hands around his mouth and cries to the hills with a LOUD ULULATION -

And on the ravine walls stretching above them on both sides, AL-BAKR'S JIHADIS throw aside their leafy cover and start SHOOTING. Twelve to fifteen of them in total.

[If we're very observant, we might notice among them the two night watchmen that Serra and Pierce didn't have the time to dispatch when rescuing Uri from the caves.]

The jihadi bullets pin our men down, forcing them into a crouch before they return fire.

This allows al-Bakr to kick the donkey onward with his good leg, away from them, toward the end of the bridge.

Uri focuses on the jihadis on the far side of the bridge. When he sees al-Bakr reach the path, he fires on him -

But Uri is no good with moving targets. His bullets hit the dirt around the donkey's hooves.

Al-Bakr is getting away.

At this range, Serra's shotgun doesn't have much effect against the jihadis.

Saint Nick, however, picks them off like carnival ducks with his M16. He smiles wide at Serra.

With a nod, Serra concedes that the man he contemplated killing last night is now saving his life.

Al-Bakr whips the donkey onward with the walking stick and gallops down the path away from his captors.

Serra turns and sees al-Bakr getting away. He's stuck in the middle of the bridge, but Uri is close to the far end, nearer to al-Bakr.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SERRA

(to Uri)

Get Al-Bakr!

Saint Nick turns to see al-Bakr's donkey about to round a bend in the path, and Uri waffling between going after al-Bakr and helping a half-conscious Pierce.

SAINT NICK

For fuck's sake...

Saint Nick spins and aims his M16 at al-Bakr -

But before he can fire, THE TOP OF HIS HEAD DISAPPEARS.

Uri spins in the direction of the shot and looks down the barrel of his automatic -

- to the sniper in the hills. Lining up his next shot.

The sniper is eleven years old.

Uri hesitates.

The boy sees Uri aiming at him and re-aims his weapon at Uri.

Through the sights of their respective guns, Uri and the boy fix each other with one-eyed stares.

Uri's gun trembles for a moment - but he stills it, closes both his eyes and FIRES TWICE.

The boy's chest blooms red, and he goes down.

Serra makes his way to Saint Nick and grabs his M16. He uses Nick's body for cover as he shoots the three remaining jihadis on Uri's side of the ravine.

Then the M16's clip runs out, and Serra is still pinned down in the middle of the bridge by a jihadi on the near side. He shouts back to Uri:

SERRA

Get al-Bakr!

URI

Pierce...

Pierce doesn't trust Serra, but he remains on mission:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

PIERCE

(to Uri)

Go get him. Take him alive.

Uri steps onto the path, grabs a Kalashnikov from a fallen jihadi and sprints after al-Bakr.

But on the near side, three new jihadis join the fray. It seems there was something to Saint Nick's earlier claims: The new men wear Pakistani army uniforms, and one of them has a shiny new RUSSIAN GRENADE LAUNCHER.

He aims the bulbous minaret payload and fires -

Still in a daze, Pierce hears the Roman candle HISS of the RPG and grips the walkway rope beside him -

Serra leaps as far as he can toward the ravine's far side, dropping his gun, grabbing the right hand-rope -

The GRENADE HITS the post that anchors the right hand-rope on the near side of the ravine -

And Serra SWINGS free on the LOOSE RIGHT HAND-ROPE, on a quickening parabola, bracing himself -

- for the rough IMPACT against the stony wall on the ravine's far side. Serra GRUNTS with pain and immediately begins to climb the rope.

The jihadis on loan from the Pakistani army have another grenade ready on the launcher tube. They fire -

On the near side of the ravine, both the LEFT HAND-ROPE and the LEFT WALKWAY ROPE are BLOWN from their moorings, leaving only the right walkway rope intact.

The WALKWAY PLANKS TILT TO VERTICAL, dumping Saint Nick's body into the river below.

Pierce is about thirty feet from safety. He only has time to GRIP THE LOOSE LEFT WALKWAY ROPE -

But his weight SNAPS THE CROSS PLANK through which the rope is threaded, and the next, pulling away from them like a slowly opening zipper, splintering the ends -

The fifth cross plank holds, though, for now. Pierce DANGLES OVER THE RIVER, eighty feet below him.

Serra reaches the top of the rope and swings himself onto the path. Across the ravine, he sees -

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

— the jihadis, loading another grenade onto the launcher.

Serra takes a rifle from a dead jihadi on the ground beside him, aims, FIRES THREE TIMES —

The GRENADE EXPLODES, blowing the jihadis to pieces.

The remaining jihadis flee. Our men have won the battle.

But Pierce is dangling from the left walkway rope, five feet away from the six-foot hanging cross plank that the rope is threaded through. This puts him eleven feet from the right walkway rope, the last secure rope remaining.

He is weak from the blow to the head and weighed down by his pack. He looks up at Serra, on the path above.

Serra looks down at Pierce.

PIERCE

Reel in the rope so I can grab the plank.

Serra considers his options. Both men know what those options are.

On Serra's boot, his combat knife traces a slow circle as he CRACKS his ankle.

PIERCE

Serra!

Serra has made his decision.

SERRA

We should have killed him, Pierce.

He kneels.

His right hand hovers at his boot-side, next to the knife—

— before grabbing the rope to save Pierce. He pulls with both hands, and Pierce rises a foot toward the plank.

SERRA

We should have killed Nick and al-Bakr both. I meant what I said. All the money, half the money, it's all the same to me —

Pierce nods, acknowledging that Serra is doing the right thing. Serra pulls again, putting Pierce within a foot of the cross plank.

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CONTINUED: (6)

SERRA

- but this is our thing. From now on, no more Captains, no more junior partners.

Serra pulls one last time, and Pierce's knuckles hit the plank. With his right hand, he reaches up as high on the plank as he can -

But Pierce's grip isn't strong enough. His hand slides six inches down, taking thick splinters -

Until he swings his left hand up and grabs the other side of the plank, stopping himself just before he slides off the bottom. He now hangs from a wood plank that is hanging from the walkway rope hanging across the ravine.

SERRA

Jesus...

Serra's genuine relief makes it clear that he has no desire to see Pierce fall.

Exhausted, Pierce climbs the plank toward the one secure rope remaining on the bridge -

SERRA

And when we get al-Bakr back, he's a dead m-

Suddenly, the top of the PLANK CRACKS -

And PIERCE PLUMMETS SEVENTY FIVE FEET, arms flailing, and HITS THE WATER so hard it may as well be concrete.

SERRA

No... no no no no...

Serra scrambles along the path, keeping up with Pierce as-

Pierce floats downstream, motionless, like a discarded toy soldier. Then he hits a hydraulic, and is pulled under the water.

SERRA

Pierce! Pierce! Pierce!

Serra scans the river, but Pierce is nowhere to be seen.

Serra stops his scrambling and calling, and allows himself a moment of silence for Frank Pierce.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (7)

But he has to move on. Serra looks at the path before him. He sees the hoofprints of al-Bakr's donkey and Uri's bootprints.

Jihadi rifle in hand, he takes off after al-Bakr.

EXT. MOUNTAINS - DAY

Al-Bakr rides the donkey down the steep and winding trail, with the river on his right and the foliage-thick mountainside to his left.

He lays into the donkey with Nick's walking stick. The donkey runs as fast as it can manage (not very fast), stirring up dust.

Looking ahead, he sees an empty trail before him. Turning around, he sees no one behind him.

Al-Bakr allows himself a satisfied smile -

- and URI DIVES from the mountainside foliage to his left, his stolen Kalashnikov rattling at his side, and KNOCKS AL-BAKR OFF HIS DONKEY.

When al-Bakr hits the ground, he jars his broken ankle and screams out in pain. While he clutches at his ankle, Uri rises and looks to

The tired donkey, stopped a few yards down the trail.

Running on adrenaline, Uri pulls al-Bakr up by the robes and heaves him over his shoulder. Al-Bakr tries to swing at Uri with the walking stick, but Uri grabs it and tosses it off the trail.

AL-BAKR

(in Arabic)

[I swear to you, that your blood and the blood of all your-]

Uri roughly slings al-Bakr across the donkey's saddle on his stomach. Al-Bakr moans.

URI

Lech tiezdayen. [Hebrew, "Fuck You"]

Uri hears a single FOOTSTEP behind him. For a beat, he registers the presence of another human being, and what this might mean.

He takes a quick breath, grabs the assault rifle at his side and spins to face -

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

- Serra, who's got his own borrowed jihadi rifle in hand.

Tentatively, Uri lowers his rifle most of the way. An uncomfortable silence passes between the two men. Al-Bakr watches with interest, still breathing heavily.

URI

Where's Pierce?

SERRA

He didn't make it.

Uri's gun stays down, but his hands stay on it.

SERRA

They blew the bridge. I tried to save him, but he fell into the river.

Uri stares at Serra, mute and unblinking, as if he's trying to bore a hole into Serra's head with his eyes.

SERRA

You don't believe me.

(beat)

Fine, we can discuss it en route. We've got to reach India before al-Bakr's friends reach us, and we can't afford to carry him alive anymore -

Serra begins to raise his gun at al-Bakr -

- but Uri raises his gun at Serra first.

URI

No.

Serra lowers his gun.

SERRA

Look, you think I like the odds of getting out of this alive with only your sorry ass to help me? I'm only gonna tell you one more time: Pierce fell. I had nothing to do with it.

Serra starts to raise the gun again.

Uri snaps the bolt on the Kalashnikov and looks at Serra through the sights.

URI

Drop it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Exasperated, Serra lets his hands fall to his sides, keeping the rifle in his right hand.

SERRA

You're not going to shoot me, Uri.

URI

I just shot a boy who was ten years old.
I'll shoot you.

Does Serra believe him?

SERRA

Whatever, we don't have time for this...

Serra tries to raise the gun at al-Bakr again.

Uri SHOTS the dirt five inches from Serra feet.

SERRA

You little fucker!

URI

Drop it.

Serra drops the gun.

Slung over the donkey, al-Bakr snickers.

URI

Throw the knife halfway between us.
Underhand, in the sheath.

Cursing under his breath, Serra crouches, lifts the knife with thumb and forefinger, and throws it into the dust.

SERRA

This is a big mistake.

EXT. MOUNTAINS - DAY

Uri walks down the trail. Serra's KNIFE is in his waistband. With one hand, he holds the reins on the donkey that carries al-Bakr, wrists securely bound again.

With the other, he keeps the rifle aimed at Serra, who walks ahead, a ten-yard safety buffer between them.

SERRA

So what's your plan?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

URI

I'm marching you to India. They can hand us all over to the Americans and let them sort things out.

SERRA

Sure you're not planning on marching me out of earshot, killing me for "murdering" Pierce and taking the whole prize for yourself?

Uri is still fuming over Serra's "murder" of Pierce.

URI

It's what you deserve.

SERRA

You here that, Jackson? We're in the hands of a dangerous man.

But Uri's seriousness brings an uncharacteristic hint of worry to Serra's face.

SERRA

We better move. It's open season on us.

URI

Fine with me.

They pick up the pace.

SERRA

If I figure right, it's a nonstop twenty hour walk to India.

(beat)

Bet you fifty million bucks I can walk farther than you can.

Serra covers his mouth to COUGH, presumably from all the dust, and keeps walking.

They are moving out of the wooded mountains. Stretching ahead, we see barren rock-and-dust country. Wasteland.

EXT. RIVER - DAY

Pierce floats down the river on his back, arms splayed, eyes closed. He remains lifeless -

Until he coughs and awakens.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The impact from the seventy-five-foot fall was enormous. In a stupor, he lolls his head, confused, unsure where he is. When he tries to swim, he's hampered by his pack.

He looks downstream.

PIERCE'S UPSIDE-DOWN POV of the approaching RAPIDS, ROCKS jutting from the frothing water, coming up on him fast -

He SMASHES into a rock. The water spins him around the side of it. The hydraulic hole on the other side of the rock sucks him into its whirling undercurrent, tumbles him around and spits him out.

He ricochets into another rock and HITS HIS HEAD.

PIERCE'S POV as he starts to lose consciousness again. When everything fades to black, he'll be done for.

But gray lines criss-cross his POV: A FISHING NET, stretched across the river.

Tangled in the net, Pierce gets reeled in.

PIERCE'S POV of the SHADOWY FIGURES doing the reeling from the river bank, dark and out-of-focus. They grow darker and more indistinct as Pierce BLACKS OUT.

EXT. WASTELAND - AFTERNOON

Wide open land, gently rolling. No cover.

Uri still has his rifle trained on Serra, but he's getting tired. Al-Bakr hangs across the donkey's saddle like a sack of rice.

Serra, on the other hand, is going strong. As Uri begins to lag, the gap between them stretches.

URI

Slow down.

Serra can hear the weariness in Uri's voice. He deftly dips his hand into his vest pocket without Uri noticing.

SERRA

Gotta move, man, gotta move. The Ayatollahs are coming.

URI

Slow down!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Serra does as he's told. But between Serra's left thumb and forefinger we see what Uri does not: A RED PILL.

Uri has forgotten about Serra's supply of Dexedrine.

Serra "coughs" again and pops the Go pill.

INT. MUD HUT - LATE AFTERNOON

PIERCE'S POV as he awakens. He is at floor level, lying on a straw mat.

Gradually, his rescuers come into focus, hovering over him in unfamiliar tribal garb. He does not know whether they are his captors as well.

Assuming the worst, he shoots to a sitting position, headache be damned, throwing off the wool blankets. Startled, the tribesmen jump back. Pierce looks frantically around the room -

Until he sees his PACK in the corner, unopened. He feels for his gun; it is still in its holster.

He is in a mud hut. One door, no windows.

PIERCE
(in Punjabi)
[Who are you?]

They do not speak Punjabi.

PIERCE
(in Pashtun)
[My name is Frank Pierce.]

They do not speak Pashtun. Pierce is all out of tribal languages.

PIERCE
Hello.

TRIBESMAN
Hello!

The TRIBESMAN is thirty, but he looks much older.

PIERCE
(slowly)
My name is Frank Pierce. Thank you.

TRIBESMAN
Hello. Hello.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PIERCE

Yeah. Hello.

The tribesmen back away from Pierce as he stands - but when he reels, they rush to catch him before he falls.

PIERCE

Thank you.

Pierce is much taller than these men; he has to slouch to prevent his head from hitting the roof of the hut.

He looks at his watch. He's been out for a while.

PIERCE

Shit. Thank you again...

Pierce throws on his pack and leaves the hut.

EXT. MUD HUT - CONTINUOUS

But the tribesmen do not want him to leave. The Hello Man grabs him by the hand and pulls him toward another hut.

PIERCE

No, I have to go... I have to find my friends, I have to help them...

When Pierce tries to pull his hand away, the Hello Man's grip remains firm. There is no threat in his face, however, only supplication.

Pierce is in a big hurry. He is in the Big Hurry.

But these men saved his life. He goes with the Hello Man and the rest.

INT. ANOTHER MUD HUT - LATE AFTERNOON

A SEVEN-YEAR-OLD GIRL lies on a straw mat, covered with blankets to the waist. Pierce can see his own breath in the air, but the girl is sweating with fever.

He feels the girl's forehead and tells the Hello Man, even though he doesn't understand the word:

PIERCE

Fever.

One of the tribesmen pulls back the blankets and shows him why: Her HAND IS MISSING.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Hello Man pantomimes an explosion from the floor, with sound effects.

PIERCE

A mine? God dammit...

He wipes the sweat from her forehead with his punished hands. His thoughts of his own daughter are plain to see.

He looks to the Hello Man, who points repeatedly between himself and the girl.

PIERCE

Your daughter.

They share a bond, these men who want to protect their children from the shitty world. For a moment, Pierce's eyes go to the wedding band on his own hand.

He unwraps the dirty cloth from the girl's wound. The stump has almost healed, but it is angry with infection.

CUT TO:

Pierce cleans out the wound with iodine from his first aid kit. His pack sits open at his side.

CUT TO:

Pierce puts two Tylenol on his own tongue and swallows them with water from his canteen. He opens his mouth and sticks out his tongue. A demonstration.

PIERCE

See? All gone. Your turn.

The sick girl complies, opening her mouth. He puts a TYLENOL and an ANTIBIOTIC on her tongue, and gives her some water to wash it down.

She opens her mouth and sticks out her tongue. All gone.

Pierce smiles. She smiles back weakly.

EXT. ANOTHER MUD HUT - EARLY EVENING

From his pack, Pierce gives the tribesman Tylenol, antibiotics, iodine, his food.

Then he removes the night vision goggles in their Ziploc bag: Useless, smashed by the impact of his fall into the river. He tosses them aside. The flashlight: Also broken.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Hoping hard, Pierce takes out the GPS tracker. He flips the switch -

It lights up. Relieved, Pierce punches through to a map of the surrounding territory.

ON THE TRACKER, Pierce zooms out until he finds a GREEN DOT: Uri's signal, from the transmitter he swallowed before entering the caves.

The tribesman watch over his shoulder, mystified.

ON THE TRACKER, the dot is moving, very slowly.

Pierce smiles; Uri, at least, is still alive and moving. He puts the tracker in his pocket and pinpoints Uri's location on the PAPER MAP.

With the appearance of the paper map, a look of understanding surfaces on the Hello Man's face.

Pierce's smile fades. Uri is a long way off.

PIERCE

Thank you again.

Orienting by the setting sun, he pockets his map and heads toward Uri - but the Hello Man stops him again.

PIERCE

I really have to go...I'll never catch them...

The Hello Man is dragging him toward the river. Several of the other tribesmen push him along.

He begins to resist, but it soon becomes clear: They're trying to help him. He goes with them.

EXT. MOUNTAINS - EARLY EVENING

On the mountain trail where Serra caught up with Uri earlier in the day, JIHADI REINFORCEMENTS find the gun and knife that Uri made Serra drop.

Uri's and Serra's TRACKS are better preserved up here, where the high rock walls provide cover from the wind. Serra and Uri are miles away, of course...

But the jihadis have HORSES. They mount them and ride along the trail of footprints.

EXT. WASTELAND - EARLY EVENING

The land is flattening, growing taut like a pulled sheet.

Uri drinks some water. He is sweating out more than he is taking in and he is as tired as he's ever been. He shakes the canteen. One good drink left.

Uri gives the last drink to al-Bakr, to keep him alive. Al-Bakr is too thirsty to refuse. Uri throws the empty canteen aside, then sheds his pack all together.

Serra has already left his pack behind. He drinks from his own canteen and taunts Uri, singing loudly:

SERRA

"Wastin' away again in Margaritaville
Searching for my lost shaker of salt..."

Uri looks over his shoulder to the heights behind them. No one around to hear the singing, yet.

SERRA

"Some people claim that there's a woman
to blame, but I know..."

Serra throws down another Go pill.

SERRA

"It's my own damn fault."

EXT. RIVER BANK - EARLY EVENING

By the riverside, just past the rapids that nearly killed Pierce, a LOG RAFT is tied to a tree.

The Hello Man unties the raft and hands the rope to Pierce. Another man hands him a LONG POLE.

The Hello Man takes the map from Pierce and shows him.

ON THE MAP, the man's callused finger points out two possibilities: The long diagonal to Uri's location, over treacherous ground -

And the long STRAIGHT LINE DOWN THE RIVER, followed by a short jog up to Uri over flat ground.

Pierce looks at the river, flowing swiftly past him. Much faster than he could run for any length of time.

The Hello Man has just made it possible for Pierce to catch up with Uri and Serra.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Pierce shakes his hand and smiles warmly. Then he hops onto the raft and pushes off the riverbed with the pole, guiding the raft into the middle of the river where the current is fastest.

EXT. WASTELAND - NIGHT

The JIHADI HORSEMEN reach the end of the mountains, and arrive at the edge of the barren flatlands where Uri and Serra started their march. The moonlight carves sharp shadows into their faces.

Once the wind cover of the mountains disappears, Serra's and Uri's tracks disappear as well, eroding into nothing about ten yards from the end of the trail.

But that's enough to point the horsemen in the right direction. The lead rider kicks his horse into motion and shoots down the tracks, straight as an arrow.

The others follow, galloping over the stone plain.

EXT. RIVER - LATE NIGHT

Pierce steers his raft with the long pole. There are no rapids or rocks in this stretch of water. It's smooth going, at a nice 10MPH clip. He's making time, cutting through the black water.

He pulls his GPS tracker from his pack.

ON THE TRACKER, Uri's green dot glows in the night. He is still moving. Barely.

Squinting at the map in the moonlight, Pierce sees that he is as close to Uri's signal as he's going to get.

ON THE MAP, he also sees that Uri's dot is very close to the INDIAN BORDER.

With the pole, Pierce heaves the raft toward the shore.

EXT. WASTELAND - A HALF-HOUR BEFORE DAWN

Uri and Serra march across the flatlands, toward the border between Pakistan and India. A slight dawn glow bleeds over the eastern horizon.

Uri still holds the reins of al-Bakr's donkey in one hand. Al-Bakr himself appears to be unconscious. Even the donkey looks to be on its last legs.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Serra's steps are sharp and even, a speed-freak metronome. He doesn't have to turn around to see how Uri is doing; he hears the syncopated stumblings and knows the Israeli is asleep on his feet..

The Go-pills are taking their toll on Serra, however. His mouth is very, very dry. He mutters to himself through cracked lips.

EXT. WASTELAND - FIFTEEN MINUTES BEFORE DAWN

Low, rolling hills surround Pierce, covered in patchy grass. He runs in Uri's direction, up the hill in front of him.

From the hilltop, Pierce sees the barren rock-and-dust country that Serra and Uri are walking across, stretching out in front of him.

He jogs down into the wasteland.

EXT. WASTELAND - FIVE MINUTES BEFORE DAWN

Almost Daylight. Uri and Serra stagger toward

A WHITE SIGN on the horizon, suspended from a post in front of an old CONCERTINA WIRE FENCE. The writing on the sign is too small to make out from this distance.

Uri tries to keep his gun on Serra, but his arm flails. His control over his own movements is fading; each step looks like the prelude to a fall. He lurches, jerking the donkey's reins, causing the animal to whinny in protest.

In URI'S POV, even though the sun is coming up, the color is washing out of the world, dimming all but Serra's distant, shadowy figure.

Uri is no longer leading this figure. He is following it.

URI'S POV deteriorates further. Serra is walking away from him, straight ahead - and then, after a swift, jarring perspective shift, he is gone.

Uri stops.

EXT. WASTELAND - FOUR MINUTES BEFORE DAWN

Pierce stops to check the tracker.

ON THE GPS TRACKER, Uri's dot is very close...

But abruptly, the dot stops moving.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Something has gone wrong.

Pierce drops his pack, unholsters his gun and runs as fast as he can in Uri's direction.

EXT. WASTELAND - THREE MINUTES BEFORE DAWN

Someone has been kind enough to cut a gap in the concertina wire coils. The weathered, white SIGN in front of them has writing in several languages on it. The English reads: LINE OF CONTROL.

Fifty yards from the sign, Serra is now close enough to read it. His eyes widen. This is the Indian border. The finish line. He looks back to

Uri, standing still, barely conscious.

The DONKEY'S REINS slip from Uri's grasp, and the animal starts walking again, slowly, in Serra's direction, with al-Bakr on its back.

URI'S POV. He sees al-Bakr slipping away from him. His vision BLURS. Al-Bakr and the donkey disappear.

Uri panics. Where's the donkey!? His head rolls on his neck as he searches for it.

URI'S POV. Again, everything BLURS. When the world resolves itself, the donkey is still nowhere to be seen, but Serra is back, closer, off to the left. He is facing Uri now, but his face is a nightmarish smudge.

Uri SHOOTS at Serra.

EXT. WASTELAND - TWO MINUTES BEFORE DAWN

Pierce is running hard with a military cadence when he hears the NEARBY SHOT.

He picks up to a full-on sprint.

EXT. WASTELAND - ONE MINUTE BEFORE DAWN

Swooning, Uri makes a last ditch attempt to save himself from Serra.

Uri's POV, careening around the landscape. The donkey is there, in the distance, and then gone again. With a BLUR, Serra reappears, closer still, to his right.

Uri SHOOTS again.

EXT. WASTELAND - JIHADIS

Hearing the DISTANT SHOT, the jihadis spur their horses onward, charging toward the sound..

EXT. WASTELAND - DAWN

The sun breaks the eastern horizon.

Uri reels.

URI'S POV, an abstract fog. He manages to steady his eyes until he can see TWO SERRAS, close, on the right -

Uri SHOOTs twice and misses both of them -

Uri's world pitches and swirls -

He falls into the dust. When he looks up -

URI'S POV of Serra looking down on him, lent a demonic cast by the reddish dawn light and Uri's own sleep-starved mind.

Uri uses the last of his strength to lift the rifle and point it at Serra -

But before he can shoot, Serra grabs the rifle and SMASHES THE GUN STOCK into Uri's head.

Uri jerks and is still. Slowly, blood begins to well around his temple.

Aiming away from Uri, Serra pulls the trigger.

Click. The clip was empty.

Remorse cuts through Serra:

SERRA

Awww, man... Why'd you make me do that? I didn't want to... Why? Why?! Why?!

Fueled by the speed, Serra slides from remorse right into rage, screaming at his unconscious friend, punctuating each word by SMASHING OF THE RIFLE STOCK INTO URI'S HEAD, just below the edge of the frame:

SERRA

Why did you make me do that?!

Then Serra remembers why he did it, and spins around looking for the donkey.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He finds the animal about 75 yards away from him, wandering aimlessly toward the line of control, al-Bakr still on its back.

Serra drops and grabs his KNIFE from Uri's waistband, then runs like a wild animal to the donkey's side. Al-Bakr is still draped across the saddle. Serra shakes him back to consciousness.

SERRA

It was you, you fuck, this all happened for you, because of you, he died for you.

With a flip of his thumb and a flick of his wrist, Serra tosses the knife's sheath aside.

SERRA

They want what's in your head, they wanted to bring it in? I'll bring in what's in your head, I'll bring it in for them, that's the least I can do...

Serra grabs al-Bakr's head and puts the knife to his throat -

- and a BULLET HITS THE DUST AT SERRA'S FEET.

Serra spins. Behind him, in the dawn light, he sees

Pierce, standing over Uri's body in a firing stance, gun in hand. His face shakes with silent fury over Serra's brutal handiwork.

Serra calls out:

SERRA

Pierce, I -

Another SHOT from Pierce's gun nicks Serra's leg.

Serra has seen firsthand what Pierce can do with a gun. For a second, he is at a loss -

Pierce takes deep breaths, steadying his shaking, angry hands, and gets a bead on Serra's head -

Then Serra grabs al-Bakr under his arms, yanks him off the donkey and wields him like a human shield, just like the moustached driver did with the young boy five long days ago. Al-Bakr's head lolls.

Pierce lowers his gun, unwilling to risk the shot.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Serra smiles like a chess player who's just pulled off a surprise check. Keeping al-Bakr in front of him, he backs toward the wire fence along the Line of Control.

Pierce keeps pace with him. When he speeds up in an attempt to close the gap between them, however -

Serra puts the blade to al-Bakr's neck.

SERRA

Careful. Wouldn't want to damage the prize.

Pierce looks back at Uri's body.

PIERCE

This isn't just about the prize anymore.

SERRA

So take the shot.

(stepping back)

Go ahead. He's the worst piece of toxic shit on earth. Roll the dice.

His finger stays on the trigger, but Pierce doesn't fire.

SERRA

You're a good man, Frank Pierce. But you're one naive son of a bitch -

Serra is interrupted by a SHOT. The bullet misses by a long shot; he does not even see it hit. Both he and Pierce turn to see

THE JIHADIS, specks on the horizon, probably a mile and a half away. They're far off, but clearly, they see Pierce and Serra.

Serra jumps through the gap in the concertina wire fence, dragging al-Bakr after him.

From where Pierce is standing, Serra appears to have thrown himself over a cliff, dropping abruptly from view.

Pierce sprints to the fence. When he looks over the edge, he sees Serra at the tail end of a BREAKNECK SKID down an PEBBLY INCLINE, dragging al-Bakr as he goes.

At the bottom of the incline is a long strip of mostly-dead FIELD, thicker than a football field is long, stretching far as the eye can see to the left and right.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

On the far side of the field: A MILITARY OUTPOST, flying the saffron, white and green INDIAN FLAG.

Pierce looks behind him again.

The jihadis are on the move. A tiny cloud of hoof-stirred dust, coming his way.

Without hesitation, Pierce shoves the gun in his waistband and throws himself down the incline.

He does not notice the SIGNPOST to his right that has been uprooted and left face down on the ground. We do.

EXT. FIELD - DAWN

Pierce is shooting down the incline, gritting his teeth as the pebbles grate his back.

At the bottom, Serra has an unconscious al-Bakr in a fireman's carry and is already running across the field, through scattered tufts of grass.

EXT. INDIAN MILITARY BASE - DAWN

On the lookout post atop a high wall, the three INDIAN SENTRIES on-duty are smoking, and ogling magazine pictures of buxom Bollywood starlets.

One of them takes a perfunctory look across the field with binoculars, for lack of anything better to do.

THROUGH THE BINOCULARS, he scans the length of the field—
— and comes upon Serra, running toward them with al-Bakr over his shoulder.

The sentry drops the binoculars and goes for his gun. But another sentry picks them up to look for himself.

The first sentry is about to shoot —

— but the second sentry smacks the gun down.

INDIAN SENTRY 2

[What are you doing?! That one's blond!]

INDIAN SENTRY 1

[What?! Give me those...]

(takes binoculars),

[Shit! He's not stopping!]

All three men run down the spiral stairs.

EXT. FIELD - DAWN

Serra sees Indian soldiers far away, at the base of the wall, waving to him.

Taking it for a welcome, he waves back with his free hand.

CUT TO:

Pierce is gaining on Serra and al-Bakr.

But he's only a few steps onto the field before he sees a HUMAN SKELETON, blown to pieces over several square yards, many of the bones charred and cracked in half.

Pierce stops moving, though this allows Serra to pull away from him. He spins, scanning the field's perimeter.

PIERCE'S POV of a DISTANT SIGN, not very prominently displayed: A triangle with a red border, and a skull-and-crossbones in its white center.

Serra is about fifteen yards from Pierce.

PIERCE

Serra! Stop!

SERRA

Fuck you!

He keeps going, until:

PIERCE

We're in a minefield!

Serra stops. He's closer to the Indian soldiers now — close enough to see that they're not waving at him but waving him off, telling him to stop.

EXT. INDIAN MILITARY BASE

INDIAN SENTRY 2

(to Sentry 3)

[Get the map!]

The junior sentry runs into the base.

INDIAN SENTRY 2

(to Serra and Pierce)

We are getting the map! Do not move!

EXT. MINE FIELD

The minefield is old and windswept, without much grass to hold the earth down. A few inches in front of his foot, Serra sees the EXPOSED EDGE of an SIX FOOT CIRCLE.

SERRA
Antitank mines, no less.

PIERCE
They'll be here in a minute.

SERRA
(turns to face Pierce)
So why are we doing this? We've got our man, alive, just like you wanted him, the big secret to all the bad things in the world, right here! In here!

He smacks the back of al-Bakr's head, rousing him.

SERRA
Let's turn him in!

PIERCE
While we're at it, let's turn you in.

Thoroughly tweaked, Serra is only partly coherent:

SERRA
For Uri? That was a mistake, all a big mistake. He thought I killed you, so you can see how I ended up without a choice. It all follows, one thing forces another thing to happen, forces another, forces another, once it gets going, the momentum is too much, you can't stop it...

Al-Bakr tries to take stock of his surroundings through fluttering eyelids.

Pierce TAKES A STEP TOWARD SERRA, into the minefield.

SERRA
See? Momentum! You're swept up in it too, it's like a deck of cards, man, you can shuffle and shuffle, but once you deal...

Pierce DRAWS HIS GUN from his waistband.

Serra slides al-Bakr off his shoulder and flips him around to face Pierce, holding him like a rag doll.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SERRA

Now I've got no choice either. Only got one card to play.

He draws his KNIFE and PRESSES IT TO AL-BAKR'S THROAT.

SERRA

Throw down your gun.

PIERCE

Kill him and you won't make it ten feet.

SERRA

And if I don't kill him, what do I win then, Frank? Throw the gun away.

Pierce levels the gun at Serra. Serra steps toward the exposed edge of the huge ANTITANK MINE.

SERRA

Shoot and we'll both fall forward onto this baby here, Italian VS-67 antitank. Won't be a piece of him left.

Serra begins to dig the blade into al-Bakr's throat. Al-Bakr's eyes widen, and he stiffens.

The FIRST JIHADI reaches the ledge above them and begins to fire on Pierce and Serra.

The INDIAN SOLDIERS return fire, killing the jihadi.

PIERCE

There are more coming. If we don't get to that base, all of us will -

SERRA

Throw the fucking gun!

Pierce takes a wary step closer.

Serra applies more pressure to the knife. A DROP OF BLOOD snakes down al-Bakr's neck.

Another TWO JIHADIS reach the ledge and start to shoot - one at the Indians, one at Serra.

The Indians mow down the jihadis with a MOUNTED MACHINE GUN.

Pierce's eyes shift focus from the gun, to the WEDDING BAND on his finger.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

He throws the gun behind him, where Serra cannot get it.

Serra knocks al-Bakr unconscious with an elbow and leaves him on the ground.

SERRA

I never wanted this, Frank, you've got to believe that... but I don't like the odds on me ever seeing my half of the reward, not with you calling me a murderer on CNN. This is my last chance, Family Man. 'Fraid there can only be one story.

PIERCE

You've got a knack with stories.

SERRA

That I do.

Serra flips his knife so the blade runs down the length of his forearm, facing outward.

On the ledge, the rest of the jihadi contingency has arrived. The Indians have the mounted machine gun, but the jihadis outnumber them.

A STREAK OF JIHADI FIRE strafes the ground near Serra, but he barely registers it. He starts to move toward Pierce, stepping carefully in his own footprints.

Pierce looks to the gun, but he is farther away from it than Serra is from him. So he turns to engage Serra in a knife fight, without a knife of his own, in the midst of a full-on firefight, in the middle of a minefield.

Unarmed, Pierce wraps his shirt around his left forearm to protect himself.

SERRA

That doesn't work too well.

PIERCE

I know.

A jihadi bullet DETONATES AN ANTIPERSONNEL MINE ten yards from Pierce.

Serra jabs with his knife hand, and Pierce sidesteps it—

— but he looks at the ground for a second before putting his foot down, and that second is all Serra needs to SLICE PIERCE'S SHOULDER OPEN. Pierce lets out an involuntary CRY OF PAIN.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

On the ground where Serra left him, AL-BAKR OPENS HIS EYES.

Serra tries to follow up his success with a quick jab.

Pierce jumps onto the safe footprints Serra made on the way over and avoids it.

Serra's jab leaves him off balance; Pierce kicks him over, he falls —

— and lands with his face a few inches away from the exposed edge of an ANTIPERSONNEL MINE.

But before Pierce can attack or escape, A JIHADI BULLET HITS HIM IN THE LEG. Pierce cries out again and clutches the leg wound.

Al-Bakr rolls over onto his stomach and starts to crawl forward like a caterpillar with his broken ankle and bound wrists. He does not look at Pierce and Serra; his full concentration is focused on the ground immediately in front of his face.

Pierce is too consumed with pain to register al-Bakr's movement, and Serra maintains an amphetamine fixation on the task at hand: Killing Pierce. Serra rises.

SERRA

Tough break for Frank Pierce.

Serra lashes out at Pierce. Pierce raises his hand to block Serra at the wrist, which he does — but Serra slides the knife down and OPENS UP PIERCE'S PALM.

CLOSE ON AL-BAKR as he rises on his good foot. It takes everything he's got. He looks up —

THE JIHADIS motion frantically to their leader, telling him to make his way toward them.

But al-Bakr just smiles placidly, closes his eyes and begins to mutter under his breath.

Pierce steps away from Serra and stares at him for an instant. Then he wobbles and drops to his knees.

Serra prepares to deliver the killing strike. Pierce's eyes seem unfocused.

PIERCE

You were right, Carl. *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

SERRA

About what?

PIERCE

We should have killed him.

Pierce's eyes aren't unfocused; Serra realizes this, and turns to see what they're focused on -

Al-Bakr, fifteen feet away from them. Slowly, Al-Bakr begins to fall forward -

At his feet is the massive ANTITANK MINE seen earlier -

From above, we watch it happen: The mine, al-Bakr, Serra and Pierce, in perfect alignment, like points along a dotted line -

Al-Bakr SLAMS INTO THE MINE with all his weight-

The BLAST knocks Pierce over -

And BLOWS SERRA FORWARD onto Pierce.

All Pierce hears after the mine blast is a steady RINGING. In reflexive combat mode, he throws Serra off him with all his strength -

But Serra rolls and comes thickly to rest, face down. The entire back side of his body served as a shield against the shrapnel that would have otherwise killed Pierce. Serra is dead.

Pierce registers this with a deep breath. But when he looks back toward the blast site -

Al-Bakr is gone, reduced to a patina of debris spread across the minefield, and a red mist that the wind carries away.

Everything Pierce has come for has vanished into the air.

Too late, the Indians start with the MORTAR FIRE.

A heavy shell hits in the jihadis midst, killing four of them. The rest of the jihadis retreat, their mission to rescue al-Bakr failed.

Pierce looks to

An INDIAN SENTRY, making his way toward Pierce with the MINEFIELD MAP in hand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

He is speaking, but Pierce cannot making out what the sentry is saying over the RINGING in his ears until the man gets very close.

INDIAN SENTRY 3

I am coming for you! Do not move!

(reaches Pierce, angry)

What the hell are you doing out here!? We should have bloody shot you -

Pierce turns away from the sentry, back to his own thoughts. Something tells the sentry it's a bad idea to talk to Pierce like this. His tone softens.

INDIAN SENTRY 3

You're hurt.

Pierce looks over his wounds as if he'd forgotten about them, and concedes the point with a slight nod.

INDIAN SENTRY 3

He threw himself on the mine. Who was he?

Gazing across the minefield, Pierce shakes his head.

PIERCE

Doesn't matter now, does it?

INDIAN SENTRY 3

Who are you?

Pierce turns back to face the sentry once again.

PIERCE

My name is Frank Pierce. I'm an American.

END