

Last Man Home

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CREDITS over an exquisite, hand-drawn MAP. The script looks ancient but the borders are modern.

From MOUNTAINS we move south, past BAGHDAD, past the convergence of the TIGRIS and EUPHRATES, into KUWAIT.

We push into a live action shot--

EXT. KUWAITI DESERT - DAWN

--From high above, we SEE a MAN laboring through the desert. He appears to be dragging a REFLECTIVE SHEET through the sand.

The BLACK horizon yields a little BLUE, allowing us to make out a soldier's uniform - if not his country - on the drained man. His breathing is shallow, almost panicked, as he approaches an abandoned Iraqi tank.

SUPER: *March 31, 2003*

BINOCULARS POV: the 'desert man' sits heavily on the tank.

INT. WATCHTOWER - CONTINUOUS

AMERICAN GUARDS pass binoculars down the line, taking in the strange sight.

FIRST GUARD
(into radio; distorted)
Y'all we got an unknown approaching
the north gate. Be advised he
appears to be dragging an IED or
a... metal weapon of some kind--
(off radio)
Shit, what is that?

EXT. KUWAITI DESERT - CONTINUOUS

Still at a distance, we watch the man rise from the half-buried tank - a vestige from Iraq's failed invasion. He refastens a ROPE tied round his waste, pushing forward.

EXT. AL SALEM AIRBASE(U.S. CONTROLLED) - CONTINUOUS

The massive NORTH GATES swing open, exposing a flurry of activity. Out of the chaos TWO HUMVEES emerge, MEN on the up-guns, charging towards the threat.

As the Americans approach, the desert man assumes a disturbing stillness. His image flickers as the wind picks up, hiding him in SWIRLS of SAND.

An American NAVIGATOR squints through windshield wipers--

NAVIGATOR
Slow down...

DRIVER

What? What is it?

The deific winds suddenly die. The man's shape is clear now...

NAVIGATOR

It's one of ours.

The perched gunmen lower their heavy M2s... Before them a YOUNG MARINE stands at once beaten and defiant: blisters on his face, headphones on his ears. This is PRIVATE PATRICK WOLFF, 26. He can't HEAR the instructions shouted his way.

SIX GUARDS approach tentatively on foot, rifles pointed down.

Up close, Wolff doesn't look so cocky. He's blue from the cold and fights to control his shaking. His chin stays high, however, as he's slowly circled.

EXT. AL SALEM AIRBASE - DAY

The Humvees head back to base. We glide over them, approaching the HIGH WALL of the American garrison.

Inside, EIGHT HUNDRED SOLDIERS lie in wait. Just 39 miles from the Iraqi border, this staging point is ready to burst.

Further into the base, over another TALL WALL, we come to an 'OFF-LIMITS SECTION'.

An American flag is unfurled over a chrome casket. DOZENS of STAR-SPANGLED RECTANGLES are visible from the sky.

ON THE GROUND,

the sun beats down on lounging AMERICAN SOLDIERS. The scripts have already been written, the equipment prepped.

FIRE TEAMS group within PLATOONS. PLATOONS within COMPANIES. This would be the first time many of the young men had ever seen their entire BATTALION assembled. Some joke, some spar, but most are quiet. Minds distant. Bodies primed for war.

WOLFF (V.O.)

In the calm between the storms, I
can see the younger men thinking
back to their lives before this place.

We move amongst the waiting soldiers.

WOLFF (V.O.)

They'll soon find that this is a
mistake, as it opens the heart when
it needs to be shut, and gets one
no closer to being home.

More YOUNG FACES - 18, 19 years - none knowing what lays ahead.

WOLFF (V.O.)

I feel no shame that I prayed for this war. Not for the reasons you might think, or even respect, but because of a promise I made to my mother. A promise she would gladly have me break, but that I intend to keep.

Through a TENTED TRIAGE AREA we find Pvt. Wolff in bed. A NURSE, 25, dabs aloe on the marine's face. She moves lightly over scabs and burns, over hollow cheeks, up to BOYISH BLUE EYES. Wolff stares at the nurse in wonderment. She can't help blushing as he smiles.

NAVY DOCTOR (O.S.)

Are you feeling any dizziness?
Any shortness of breath? Son?

Across the bed a NAVY DOCTOR, 50, holds a chart. It takes Wolff a moment to focus his eyes and ears.

WOLFF

I found it.

NAVY DOCTOR

What did you find?

We move down the marine's body...an I.V. juts into his arm. The doctor lowers his clipboard, irked by Wolff's state.

NAVY DOCTOR

Private Wolff? Do you know how long you were gone for?

WOLFF

I gotta call my mom.
(deep breath)
Lemme call my mom.

NAVY DOCTOR

Easy, son. You don't have to fight. You're going home.

WOLFF

(sounds like)
'I kell.'

The doctor leans in close; Wolff's still in rough shape.

NAVY DOCTOR

What was that, son?

WOLFF

I said--
 (deep breath)
 --like hell I am.

EXT. BAGHDAD CITYSCAPE - MAGIC HOUR

Across the rooftops of Baghdad, a CAMERA CREW boldly sets up. The wail of the MUEZZIN calls the faithful to prayer.

SUPER: *Baghdad*
 April 5, 2003
 The ancient city will
 fall in three days

EXT. BAGHDAD STREET - CONTINUOUS

DAN HOBBS, early 40's, strolls through the heart of Baghdad in his uniform: jeans and a dress shirt. Up close his polished look crumbles: sand in his hair, behind his ears, in the small of his weathered eyes. He is at that rare, fleeting peak - where a young man's strength and an old man's savvy cross.

At present, Hobbs is carrying a VIDEO CAMERA down an empty street. A BAGHDAD TEEN, 18, hurries by his side, peaking at Hobbs' impeccable PRESS BADGE.

HOBBS
 Here we go son. Look at me.

The young man squares himself before a FORTIFIED BUILDING. Hobbs casually points the camera over the teen's shoulder.

HOBBS
 Just a little to your left.

CAMERA LENS POV: the Baghdad teen clears frame, revealing a DANCING DOT on a concrete wall.

HOBBS
 (into microphone)
 Okay, Crusher Zero Five this is
 Specter. I'm lazing the prison's
 northwest corner. Do you have my mark?

The teenager stares at Hobbs uneasily; he's looking at an American 'Tier 1 Operator' - the type of soldier that is busy whether his nation is officially at war or not.

Angle on Hobbs' skin-toned earpiece--

PILOT (O.S.)
 Roger Specter, I have your mark.

EXT. NARROW ALLEYWAY - CONTINUOUS

Barely visible in the dying dusk, an Opal taxi idles. Its ARABIC DRIVER sits composed behind the wheel. His long hair is collected in the back, his facial hair immaculate. This is ANWAR, 34, cool and precise.

In the passenger seat, a bearded, eagle-eyed WHITE MAN rocks subtly - like an athlete waiting to take the field. This is RENFREE, ferocious at 36.

RENFREE

(Southern)

This is the best part boys.
Newbs, you better be enjoying it.

Echeloned with the taxi, forward and right, is a diesel Mercedes sedan. Behind the wheel is NEWBS, 29, golden-haired, Midwestern boy. Too smart for the farm. This is his first shot in the 'Bigs', at the Tier 1 level.

NEWBS

(get off my back)

I'm enjoying it.

They speak through 'talk-boxes' - mikes at their throats, bugs in their ears. A far-off CLANK snaps Newbs' head forward.

ANWAR

(British; calmly)

Newbs, why don't give you me the descriptions again?

NEWBS

Okay, two cargos--

RENFREE

Jesus Christ, they'll be the white guys.

ANWAR

I'm not asking you, mate.

RENFREE

Newbs, look for the white helicopter pilots.

Newbs cracks a smile, the mood lightened. Then--

PILOT (O.S.)

Still have the mark.

RENFREE

(all business)

Alright, buckle up.

Anwar throws a PLATE-HANGER (light armor) over his head, tightening velcro straps at his side. Newbs fastens a SLG-SAUER PISTOL in a thigh holster, an M4 visible as his primary. These are neither taxi drivers nor tourists. They are Sergeant Major Hobbs' handpicked teammates:

ANWAR acts as **interpreter** and **medic**.
 RENFREE is the breacher - a **demolitions** and **weapons** expert.
 NEWBS is the communicator, handling all **satellite comms**.

Their complementing skills afford complete autonomy.

From an OVERHEAD of the cars, we pull away, higher and higher--

DISSOLVE TO:

SATELLITE IMAGE of the SAME. The white-hot outlines of the Opal and Mercedes are clearly visible. The surroundings are grainier - black and blue. Pull back to reveal--

INT. JOINT OPERATIONS CENTER, AL JABER AB, KUWAIT - CONTINUOUS

At the back of a growing GALLERY, a DIMINUTIVE CAPTAIN, 35, jockeys for position. He takes in a WALL OF PLASMA SCREENS: REAL-TIME GROUND IMAGERY from unmanned aerial vehicles.

CAPTAIN
 (to a Colleague)
 What's with the crowd?

COLLEAGUE
 It's Dan Hobbs' team.

CAPTAIN
 What are they doing?

COLLEAGUE
 They're about to give D.C. a front page win.

Behind a front row of INTEL COORDINATORS, a PALE, INSECT-LIKE MAN oversees. This is ULYSSES JENKES, 46, the J2 (Intel Head).

Ulysses has the edge of a man who's been faking it his whole life. Born to military blue-bloods, he's a mediocre man masquerading as a leader.

ULYSSES
 (to an 'Operator')
 What's happening with your boys?

The BESPECTACLED OPERATOR shields his microphone, annoyed--

OPERATOR
 Nothing's happening.
 (pointing to screen)
 That's our '1' on his way back.

The '1' is Hobbs, and this Operator is the voice in Hobbs' ear - his 'offensive coordinator'. He looks better suited to holding sway over an Ivy League classroom than a war room, but this is LEV, 33, as skilled as Hobbs' men in the field.

On screen, Hobbs' WHITE SILHOUETTE moves briskly down the sidewalk, towards his handpicked teammates in the alley.

PILOT (O.S.)
 (blaring over speakers)
 Still have the mark.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - CONTINUOUS

Newbs and Anwar listen together - Midwestern golden boy alongside the Arabic British veteran. The pressure builds by the second.

PILOT (O.S.)
 Tally target, wings level...

Renfree, Hobbs' petulant '2-Man', hangs on every word.

PILOT (O.S.)
 One away... One away.

Hobbs appears at the end of the alley. His casual gait breaks to a jog. He joins Newbs without a word.

PILOT (O.S.)
 10 seconds to impact... 5 seconds.

As they wait in the charged silence, Hobbs catches Newbs - still uneasy - looking wistfully to the sky.

HOBBS
 You know your job. Stay within it--

Suddenly, a DEAFENING WHISTLE precedes an EXPLOSION. Newbs doesn't hesitate, flooring the gas as the Mercedes rocks. Anwar follows in the Opal taxi.

EXT. BAGHDAD STREET - CONTINUOUS

The vehicles screech to a halt a half-block from the PRECISELY BOMBED BUILDING. Weapons drawn, the four men SPRINT toward the fire.

INT. HAKMIYAH PRISON - CONTINUOUS

Flashlights reveal several DEAD PRISON GUARDS; anyone on the main floor or higher was ripped apart. Newbs swivels once inside - he's to hold the entrance.

INT. JOINT OPERATIONS CENTER, KUWAIT - CONTINUOUS

In the dim, oxygen-rich hub, Lev has his arms outstretched, his fingers marking points on two different monitors:

ON THE LEFT,	ON THE RIGHT,
A thermal image of the bombed building.	The 'real' white and blue image.

LEV
No movement inside.
(to an Assistant)
What's this? Right here...

Senior in the room, COLONEL ALLISON, 55, sits less gleefully than the rest. It's less sport to him. He taps his pet's arm (the spindly Ulysses), keeping his eyes on a plasma screen--

COLONEL ALLISON
Whose camera is that?

Anwar's HELMET CAM projects frantic images from the ground.

ULYSSES
That's the British feller. S.A.S.

Back at the monitors, Lev pulls his microphone close--

LEV
Dan, it looks like we hit this place harder than we wanted. I'm seeing you right on top of a tear--

INT. HAKMIYAH PRISON - CONTINUOUS

LEV (O.S.)
(in Hobbs' ear)
--in the whole building.

Visibility nears zero as Renfree and Anwar push forward. Hobbs wipes SMOKE from his goggles; it's unrelenting.

HOBBS
Copy that... Hold!

RENFREE
I can see!

HOBBS

Hold!!

Anwar takes a moment to center himself, scanning the clear air behind him. Beyond a busted wall, the WARDEN'S OFFICE can be seen. GLASS CABINETS, PLAQUES...

The DUST clears ahead, revealing a massive HOLE IN THE FLOOR. Renfree was only a step away. Anwar feels a tug on his elbow; Hobbs' signals 'Down'--

ANWAR

(Arabic; subtitled)

Anyone alive down there?

RENFREE

Jesus, boys. If they are here I think we killed them.

Hobbs uncoils a rope, fastening it to an intact pillar. Anwar barely uses the rope, plunging into

THE PRISON BASEMENT.

The ceiling is falling on MIDDLE-EASTERN PRISONERS. Most are unconscious, many are likely dead. Against his training, Anwar hesitates - stunned by the pitiful state of his brethren.

Renfree pushes past, toward the end of the hall. Hobbs is more deliberate. He stops beside ANWAR. Prison bars separate them from a LONG-HAIRED, UNCONSCIOUS MAN on the floor.

RENFREE (O.S.)

Clear!

ANWAR

(to himself)

Echna bin bose alla-eh?

(to Hobbs; guiltily)

I don't know what this is.

HOBBS

I need a charge here!

Renfree hurries over, wrapping grey play-dough (Semtex) around the bars. He's stunned as he glimpses the BLOODIED INHABITANT--

RENFREE

Who the fuck--?

It's not his age (maybe 40) or his clothes (ragged beige pants and blouse) or even his skin (layers of dirt and blood), but his HAIR and EYES... FAIR and BLUE. The man is a WESTERNER.

INT. JOINT OPERATIONS CENTER - CONTINUOUS

The military brass lean in. Renfree's linear shape charge EXPLODES on the plasma screens, eliciting grunts of approval.

I/E. HAKMIYAH PRISON - CONTINUOUS

Newbs looks agitatedly to the street, praying for a little more time. No resistance yet, just a FEW CIVILIANS congregating.

HOBBS (O.S.)

We do not have the precious cargo.
We're coming out with one unknown.

NEWBS

Exfil route is clear. Exfil is clear.

INT. JOINT OPERATIONS CENTER, KUWAIT - MOMENTS LATER

Dead quiet in the room now. We can almost hear Lev's thumping heart as he watches the men drive through Baghdad.

Through the gallery, past hardened face after face, we come to the younger, wedged-in Captain--

CAPTAIN

Jesus...look how slow they're going.

EXT. BAGHDAD STREET - CONTINUOUS

The Mercedes and Opal creep through the still night. A GANG of TEENS turns slowly, inspecting the passing cars.

Newbs keeps his head low in the passenger seat. From the corner of his eye, he peeks at the WESTERNER in the back:

RENFREE

How's he doing back there?

The Westerner opens his eyes at the question.

NEWBS

(to Westerner)

You alright? What's your name?

The Westerner lifts his head, his face startlingly BLANK.

NEWBS

American?

WESTERNER

(weakly)

Enna mish zai-yokum.

Newbs looks back to Renfree--

RENFREE
That sucks.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. HOBBS' MERCEDES - CONTINUOUS

Hobbs navigates as Anwar drives.

RENFREE (O.S.)
(on radio)
Dan?

A ROADBLOCK appears ahead.

ANWAR
(annoyed)
Here we go.

HOBBS
Alright, we've got an obstruction
ahead. Back it up.

The Mercedes and Opal whine as they speed in reverse.

HOBBS
Left turn twenty yards.

NEWBS
Hey boss?

HOBBS
What!?

RENFREE
We've got a problem here. I don't
think this guy speaks English.

Hobbs and Anwar can't help looking at each other. Then--
POP! POP! POP! Shots pound their armored windshield. TWO
IRAQI MILITARY TRUCKS block the road ahead.

HOBBS
(calmly)
Contact. Dead ahead.

Anwar accelerates at first, then hits the brakes as an
IRAQI shoulders an RPG.

Renfree's already reversing, swinging a violent '180'.
Anwar does the same, retaking the lead. They've bought a
few seconds as they stop at a 'T' in the road - a
decision needs to be made. Hobbs strains over a map.

RENFREE

Anwar just turn either way!

HOBBS

Hang on, hang on.

Without warning, we HEAR a door opened. Renfree looks in his rearview mirror: the Westerner is GONE. Newbs watches him STROLL AWAY...

NEWBS

Oh god.

RENFREE

The fuck was that?!

Hobbs and Anwar watch as Newbs puts one leg out the door... SMALL-ARMS FIRE pelts the back of the Opal.

HOBBS

Stay in the car!

NEWBS

He's right there!

Another ROUND peppers the armored cars.

HOBBS

This is the '1', it's my call,
right turn ten yards! Go!

The cars peel right, turn again and disappear.

EXT. BAGHDAD OUTSKIRTS - NIGHT

The special operatives ride in a fog: 'What just happened?'

Off a dirt road, Hobbs watches his men TORCH the cars. They wrap rubber soles over their boots, disguising their treads. The MOON is their compass as they jog into the desert.

EXT. AL SALEM AIRBASE, KUWAIT - NIGHT

GUARDS perform an ancient duty, patrolling the tall walls of the base. Nothing but stillness.

WOLFF (O.S.)

I need to make a phone call.

INT. SICK BAY - CONTINUOUS

EMPTY BEDS along both sides of this dark room. Halfway down, a SINGLE, COUGHING SOLDIER reads by a lamp. At the end of the row, a CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER (NCIS), 45, and a JUNIOR ANALYST, 37, sit on fold-out chairs before a bedridden Private Wolff.

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER
We're almost done son... Now you're saying you don't believe he's still alive.

WOLFF
No, sir. Not anymore.

JUNIOR ANALYST
Well what's changed?

A soft lamp catches Wolff's face; his burnt skin is healing.

WOLFF
Just...it's time for me to let it go. If he was alive there'd be...more evidence by now. More support from people--

JUNIOR ANALYST
What about this wreckage you just...*plucked* from the desert?

WOLFF
No, it's not his plane.

JUNIOR ANALYST
Then why request it sent back to the states?

Wolff is stumped. The other bedridden soldier COUGHS violently.

WOLFF
Just...for a trophy, you know?

JUNIOR ANALYST
A trophy.

WOLFF
What are you gonna do with it?

JUNIOR ANALYST
(scoffing)
You might be the one person who hasn't noticed, but we're in a bit of a war at the moment. I can hardly send men treasure hunting.

Wolff smiles wryly to himself. He's thinking of breaking character; of breaking this analyst's face.

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER
At this point, son, I'm not sure what I can do for you.

WOLFF

First of all, you can get me out of this room.

(re: bedridden soldier)

This kid's coughing all the time, he's gonna fucking die. I can't get sick--

JUNIOR ANALYST

We can move you to a holding cell if you'd like. That's the alternative.

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER

(keeping the peace)

Alright.

The CWO shakes his head reassuringly at the suddenly panicked soldier down the line.

WOLFF

(to the CWO)

I just want to get back to my unit, sir. Make amends if I can.

JUNIOR ANALYST

His unit's halfway to Baghdad by now.

WOLFF

Sir, they took my clearance card. I was working on active files. If I could just get back in that room--

Wolff strains against his handcuffed wrist.

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER

Private. Stop. Look at yourself. I'm not here to reinstate you. I'm just trying to get you out of a court-martial.

WOLFF

But...I'm not gonna run again. I swear, I just want to help my country. I saw things out there that could help--

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER

Son, listen to me. I like you. And I don't believe a word you're saying.

Wolff's chest begins to heave; he's out of tactics.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM, Al JABER AIRBASE - NIGHT

Anwar sits at a table strewn with Dep't. of Defense ID PHOTOS. Across the table, an INTERROGATOR sits beneath a ONE-WAY MIRROR.

INTERROGATOR
Officer, these servicemen are all
listed as missing or--

ANWAR
(not looking)
They're all too young. We're shown
these before we go out. Unless
you've got someone new...

The Interrogator peeks back sheepishly at the ONE-WAY MIRROR.
We leave the men, moving THROUGH the reflecting glass--

In the OBSERVATION ROOM, we find a pale Colonel Allison
observing alongside Ulysses (the insect-like Intel Head).

COLONEL ALLISON
I'll be right back.

We follow Colonel Allison into a BUSY HALLWAY. He turns a
corner, finding Hobbs standing stoically, waiting for Anwar
like a worried parent.

COLONEL ALLISON
Dan.

Renfree and Newbs, resting on packs turned pillows, both wake
begrudgingly. The Colonel waves Hobbs over, before entering--
a MAIL ROOM. TWO YOUNG SORTERS stare blankly at the Colonel.

COLONEL ALLISON
Get out.

The Sorters jump up, passing Hobbs on his way in.

COLONEL ALLISON
Close the door.

Hobbs does so, bracing himself.

COLONEL ALLISON
You alright? Your boys alright?

HOBBS
Yeah.

COLONEL ALLISON
How about that wife of yours?
She's okay these days?

The forced pleasantries set Hobbs even more on edge.

HOBBS
I wouldn't know, sir.

COLONEL ALLISON

Cut the *sir* shit. This is an off-the-record about whatever the fuck happened out there.

(off Hobbs)

Whenever you're ready.

HOBBS

Textbook entry. Intel was fine on the layout, personnel - just no sign of any helo pilots.

(mystified)

I don't know if it was just wishful thinking... I made a split-second decision on a prisoner I thought looked suspicious...

COLONEL ALLISON

Dan. He wasn't American, was he?

HOBBS

I don't know who or what he was.

COLONEL ALLISON

What are you-- shell-shocked? You got some sort of post-traumatic thing going on?

(enraged)

Half the Pentagon just watched you pull a man from that prison - a man we no longer have - and you want me to back you with that? Fucking 'wishful thinking'?

HOBBS

I'm sorry I embarrassed you.

COLONEL ALLISON

This isn't about me. I'm not responsible for this kind of thing. I can't be.

HOBBS

(temper flaring)

What are you so worked up for? You wanna hang me and my boys for this?

The Colonel calms. Hobbs is close to the mark.

COLONEL ALLISON

You knew Washington was all over this one. I could give a rip about press ops. But I need you to eliminate the possibility that this-- *unknown* was one of ours.

(MORE)

COLONEL ALLISON (cont'd)
(then; heavily)
Until you can do that, your team's
suspended from all other operations.

For all his experience, Hobbs is genuinely stunned.

HOBBS
Am I starting from where you're
starting on this?

COLONEL ALLISON
(annoyed)
Did you hit your head out there?

HOBBS
Do I know everything there is to
know here? Off the record.

COLONEL ALLISON
Just come to me when you know 'who
or what' you had. Me and no one else.

HOBBS
Yes sir.

COLONEL ALLISON
I'll buy you some time, but there
will be more questions and they may
have to be answered stateside. We
go back - I know that. But if it
comes down to you and me: who do
you think's flying back, Danny boy?

Hobbs smiles weakly. His old friend knows the chinks in his
armor. DOWN THE HALL, Newbs watches the Colonel storm away.

NEWBS
(nervously)
Is this a big deal? Why is this
such a big deal?

Renfree pulls his jacket down from his eyes as Hobbs appears--

RENFREE
Guess you should've locked the doors.

HOBBS
On your feet.

RENFREE
What's happening?

HOBBS
They're freezing us.

Newbs is still reeling from Renfree's jab.

NEWBS

This is on me. It's my fault.

HOBBS

We got no time for that Newbs.

The SOF leader waits as a PAIR of INTEL MEN pass.

HOBBS

We went off the page and we were middle-rate. This is what it feels like. Now the Colonel's taking heat for us - that's okay - that's his job. Our job is to fix this thing. Get Anwar outta there - make me a timeline of what you saw.

(leaning away)

What do we say, Newbs? Question.

NEWBS

Question everything but the order.

HOBBS

We can figure this thing out, boys. Whatever it is, whatever they want - we give it to'em or we miss this whole fucking war.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ulysses peers through the glass as Anwar excuses himself.

ULYSSES

(turning to Allison)

Maybe it's nobody. Maybe they just dropped the ball - they threw some albino Iraqi in their car--

COLONEL ALLISON

How well do you know Dan Hobbs?

(Ulysses shrugs)

We've got thirty other teams we could've sent! There's a reason he goes. They don't drop anything.

The Colonel sags, an obvious toll being taken.

ULYSSES

So why threaten him?

COLONEL ALLISON

Just lighting a fire.

ULYSSES

By sending him packing?

COLONEL ALLISON
 It's the only thing I know he's
 afraid of. The guy hasn't been
 home in years... He's terrified of
 losing that team.

In over his head, Ulysses chooses another tack--

ULYSSES
 Even if this unknown was American...
 Wouldn't that be a great story for us?

COLONEL ALLISON
 (in a fog)
 Sure. Heartwarming. Unless he
 tells a different story.

ULYSSES
 Why would he...? Who's he?

COLONEL ALLISON
 (to himself; bitterly)
 He's back to bite us, isn't he?
 (to Ulysses)
 Listen. You wanna get noticed?
 Impress the right people? You
 handle this with me.

Where Hobbs has *his* intel man (Lev), Ulysses belongs to Allison.

ULYSSES
 (tingling with ambition)
 Yes sir.

Beyond the men, we PUSH IN on the tinted glass; DANCING COLORS
 and SHAPES sharpen: we're watching FOOTAGE from Anwar's helmet
 cam. Pull back to reveal--

INT. FILM ROOM - NIGHT

Hobbs and Lev - the young, professorial 'offensive
 coordinator' - sit with coffees before a MONITOR. They
 look stumped, like a film editor and director out of ideas.

ON THE MONITOR, the SOF team moves with frightening
 efficiency through the dark prison. Above the violent
 pitch, Hobbs can he heard calling 'HOLD!'

HOBBS
 Hold it. Back it up.

Lev rewinds. We're watching Anwar's 'HOLDING' MOMENTS;
 he cranes toward the WARDEN'S OFFICE.

HOBBS
Freeze it.

The PLAQUES, the GLASS CABINETS...SOMETHING mounted on the wall--

HOBBS
Move in on that if you can.

It looks like a PILOT pinned to the wall, minus the body.

LEV
That...looks American.

It's clearly a PILOT'S HELMET, above an AMERICAN UNIFORM.

HOBBS
There's a patch there.

Lev exhales nervously, his fingers dancing on the keyboard.

LEV
Why do I know that's gonna be
a helicopter pilot?

HOBBS
You don't. See the tube?

An OXYGEN MASK hangs like an elephant's trunk.

LEV
Shit. It's a jet pilot.

HOBBS
(heavily)
What did we have?

Lev magnifies the patch, making out THREE STARS.

HOBBS
That's Air Force.

LEV
How do you know?

Off Hobbs' look, Lev slides to a nearby computer.

HOBBS
What are you doing?

LEV
I'm just gonna google it.

HOBBS
Jesus Christ, it's Air Force.

A web site displays several patches, among them: a TRIANGULAR, STEALTH-LIKE PLANE amid THREE STARS.

LEV
It's Air Force.

HOBBS
Is that right?

LEV
19th Tactical Fighter Wing.

HOBBS
Fine. Now see if they've lost anyone
in the raids over the last two weeks.

LEV
Doesn't look like it.

HOBBS
(aghast)
Well I guess it never happened if
it's not on the goddamn internet...
I am not kidding around son, move
away from that station!

Lev wheels back to the government mainframe.

HOBBS
I swear, you scare the shit out
of me sometimes Lev.

LEV
I was only saying--

HOBBS
Full clearance to nearly every
grade of intelligence in the most
powerful nation in the world, and
you're checking some chat room to
see if we're missing a pilot--

LEV
I meant not lately.
(pointing to his screen)
The 19th flew Stealth in the first
Gulf War. F-117's.
(off Hobbs)
They're not here this time around.

A beat.

HOBBS

No, that's... It's been twelve years.
(then; sickened)
Oh God.

LEV

What do we do? What do I do?

HOBBS

Stay on our system, roll up your
sleeves...and go back and find him.

INT. SICK BAY - NIGHT

We move along a BLANKETED BODY, past a HANDCUFFED WRIST, up to Private Wolff. His eyes dart about in the moonlit room. He's healthy again; *ready* again.

Suddenly Wolff bites at the TUBE in his arm, pulling it out with his teeth. He RISES, finding the 'Coughing Soldier' STARING. Wolff warns the soldier with a look, turning back to his HANDCUFFED WRIST. He focuses on the BED GRATE holding him captive...then begins SHAKING THE HELL OUT OF IT...

INT. OFFICE CUBICLES - NIGHT

Hobbs sits on Lev's desk, his men reading and sprawling around the tight space. COFFEES, SODAS and SNACKS everywhere. At an adjacent computer, Lev turns away from a blank screen--

LEV

I've checked every unit that flew
Stealth in the First Gulf War; I
can't find record of a missing plane.

RENFREE

Could there be a missing pilot
without a missing plane?

HOBBS

No.

ANWAR

Is it a clearance issue, perhaps?

LEV

If that were the case we'd be running
into red tape--

NEWBS (O.S.)

Hey! I'm the man, boys!

Newbs' approaches, his head bouncing above the cubicles.

NEWBS

Okay, so I did a search on John Doe wreckage - things without a home. Most of it's fifty year-old missile casings from the bottom of the ocean. Air Force is missing a couple nukes by the way--

HOBBS

(get to the point)

Newbs.

NEWBS

Okay. So then I find this.

Newbs delivers near-dripping PHOTOGRAPHS: PART OF A PLANE.

NEWBS

It belonged to an American plane... found last week...way inside Iraq.

HOBBS

How long's it been out there?

NEWBS

I don't think they know. But preliminary says it's an F-117.

RENFREE

The sand curtain's coming down.

NEWBS

I had an old Ranger buddy at Ali Al slip these out. He says everybody there's buzzing about it.

HOBBS

This is public over there?

NEWBS

No, nothing about the make. They're talking about the kid who found it. Supposedly he tied a rope around it, dragged it back over the border himself. They found him half-dead--

HOBBS

What kid?

NEWBS

Some jarhead imagery analyst. Check out these maps he drew.

RENFREE

The fuck was he doing by himself?

Newbs passes out the MAPS: TRACINGS and COORDINATES drawn overtop of 'HARD LINES'. Ulysses arrives behind Newbs.

ANWAR
Christ, look at these things.

HOBBS
(reading)
Patrick Wolff.

RENFREE
He signs it like he's a fucking artist.

Hobbs traces a finger over the map.

HOBBS
He is.
(then)
What exactly did he bring back?
The plane - what part is this?

NEWBS
Ah...

ULYSSES
It's part of a wing. One of our junior analysts placed it in storage.

HOBBS
You know who's gonna know what this thing is? Huh?

RENFREE
Who?

HOBBS
Us.
(holding up maps)
Get your gear, we're going up.

ULYSSES
You might want to check your source before you fire up the engines.

HOBBS
We'll check it on the way.

ULYSSES
There may not even be a plane out there, Dan.

HOBBS
Listen, if one of ours says there's a wreck out there, then--

ULYSSES

He's not one of ours. Not anymore.

Hobbs looks questioningly to Newbs.

NEWBS

They arrested him when he got back.

All eyes turn to WOLFF'S PHOTO on Lev's monitor.

ULYSSES (O.S.)

Just take a look at his file.

If you still wanna go, then go.

INT. SICK BAY - NIGHT

Down a long, moonlit row of empty beds, we find Wolff standing at a bathroom mirror.

LEV (O.S.)

Patrick Wolff. 3rd Battalion,
4th Marines. He's a birthday boy.
Enlisted the day he turned 18.

Wolff stares in the mirror, the bed grate hanging from his wrist. Using his free hand, Wolff does a strange thing: he begins DRAWING on his face with a marker.

LEV (O.S.)

The past six years he's been in
country more than out.

HOBBS (O.S.)

How's he managed that?

Wolff joylessly draws a moustache, sideburns - he's really making a mess of himself.

LEV (O.S.)

It's clever actually. He's skipping
from billet to billet, taking the
hardship duty stations nobody wants.
Bahrain, Qatar, Herat... Right now
he's an augment to the intelligence
section at Ali Al.

Wolff eyes a can of SHAVING CREAM.

LEV (O.S.)

This might be a mistake...it says
over the last four years...he's
been AWOL three times into Iraq.

INT. AIRPLANE HANGAR - A SHORT TIME LATER

A FLEET of AIRCRAFT - C-130's, F-18's - rest in the massive hangar. MECHANICS and PLANE CREWS buzz beneath the planes.

Barefoot in boxer shorts and a t-shirt, Wolff DRAGS the BED GRATE beneath the planes causing fits of laughter in his wake.

A WELDER, 40, removes his shield, getting a better look at Wolff: the marine's head is covered in shaving cream and - above his new moustache - the word 'SLUT' on his forehead.

WELDER
(Southern)
Damn, they did a number on you boy!
Hey Marvin! Come look at this.

MARVIN brings a few FRIENDS; they howl at the sight of Wolff. The 'hazed' soldier looks ready to cry--

WOLFF
(Southern; high-pitched)
You can't even fall asleep around
this place.

This really sets the mechanics into fits. The Welder notices Wolff's HANDCUFFS, grabbing a STEEL HELMET.

WELDER
Here kid. Put this on before
somebody gets a camera.

From a distance, we watch Wolff sit in his underwear with a welding shield on his head. SPARKS fly as the Welder cuts.

EXT. IRAQI DESERT - NIGHT

An MH-60 (modified Blackhawk) thunders past camera.

HELO PILOT(O.S.)
(radio-distorted)
One minute out.

The helicopter skims just above the earth.

I/E. MH-60 HELICOPTER - CONTINUOUS

A CREW CHIEF holds up his index finger - 'ONE MINUTE' - for the passengers. In contrast to Hobbs' tanned, relaxed men, a FORENSICS TEAM - including a WOMAN - rides uneasily. Hobbs speaks via headset with the CHIEF FORENSIC SCIENTIST, 50. The Chief is Hawaiian, very polite, and very uneasy this far from his lab. He examines Pvt. Wolff's MAP--

CHIEF
Who drew this?

HOBBS
Some kid, 1st Marine Division.

CHIEF
Is he with us now?

HOBBS
I'm having him picked up as we speak.

The Chief moves on to PHOTOGRAPHS of the RETRIEVED WING.

CHIEF
There's a lot I could tell you
just by working on this retrieved
piece. We don't necessarily have
to search for the wreckage.

HOBBS
As far I'm concerned, Chief, the
plane's already been found. We
want you to help us find its pilot.

CHIEF
You mean his remains.

Hobbs gives nothing away, scanning the dark horizon.

HOBBS
It's five hours 'til sun-up, so
prioritize if you have to.

CHIEF
Well ordinarily we'd establish what
it is, how it got there, and in
this case, who was flying.

HOBBS
Perfect. And I'd personally like
to know why this kid felt compelled
to drag a wing across the desert.

The Chief nods, peeking nervously out the window.

HOBBS
You'll be fine. We're in the middle
of nowhere.

CHIEF
That's what distracts me, Sergeant
Major. If no one on our side knew
about this crash site...then who
told him where it was?

Hobbs looks flummoxed as the MH-60 sets down.

EXT. IRAQI DESERT - CONTINUOUS

Anwar, Renfree and Newbs leap to the hard-packed sand, covering the ducking scientists. Hobbs leads his men at '12, 3, 6 & 9' - the scientists at the center of their clock.

With the WRECKAGE in the foreground, Hobbs' team searches. One by one, their lights train into camera, onto the debris.

HOBBS

Christ, we almost landed on it.

THREE PIECES of the plane lie scattered, debris in between. The CANOPY, notably, is intact.

HOBBS

(to the Chief)

Get your quick-tent up around it.
Lights out 'til then.

PILOT (O.S.)

(in Hobbs' ear)

Specter, this is Dancer One. Your taxi's leaving you on the wrong side of the tracks. Give us a holler when you want us back.

HOBBS

Copy.

The scientists watch forlornly as the Blackhawk lifts off.

HOBBS

(to his men)

Alright, push out. 150, 200 yards.

The Special Ops lower their NVG's (Night Vision Goggles), stalking out a perimeter.

INT. SICK BAY - NIGHT

Wolff towels his face dry, nearly whole again. As he dresses it's hard not to mark his build. No pretty beach muscles, just a wiry, practical strength. On his chest is an inked emblem we recognize...a TRIANGULAR PLANE AMIDST THREE STARS.

INT. GALLEY - A SHORT TIME LATER

A COOK beats eggs for hundreds. He looks up from his bowl as Wolff, fully-outfitted, stalks into the kitchen. With a familiar nod, the cook turns a blind eye.

Wolff dumps bottled water and MRE's (meals ready-to-eat) into his pack.

INT. JOINT INTELLIGENCE CENTER - A SHORT TIME LATER

Wolff stands, head sunk low, at the back of the busy hub. A YOUNG OFFICER makes eye-contact as he passes, LEAVING A RED FOLDER on a table. Looking left and right, Wolff steps forward... He SNATCHES the file and EXITS unnoticed.

EXT. ARMORY - A SHORT TIME LATER

A FENCED-IN TENT, within the base, acts as the weapons pen.

Inside, Wolff scans a rack: reverently pulling down an M4 RIFLE. Next, he opens a cupboard full of NIGHT VISION GOGGLES.

On his way out, Wolff finds the ARMORY GUARD, 19, returning.

ARMORY GUARD
What are you doing?

WOLFF
Where the fuck have you been?

ARMORY GUARD
I was in the head.

WOLFF
So you just leave the place unmanned?
Now I'm gonna get in shit.

Wolff brushes past the man, shaking his head.

WOLFF
I mean...
(sighing)
What's your name?

ARMORY GUARD
Lazareck.

WOLFF
Do you know who I am?

ARMORY GUARD
No.

Wolff nods like he's going to say more. Instead, he walks off.

ARMORY GUARD
Who?

EXT. IRAQI DESERT - NIGHT

Anwar scans the dark horizon: it FLASHES and THUNDERS.

ANWAR
Nice light show.

Hundreds of yards away, Renfree speaks into his own mike--

RENFREE
That is a fuckin' scrap right there.

LEV (O.S.)
(in their ears)
Alright gents, we're gonna have to take your word on the small-arms fire. We are picking up the Iraqi burners, but...we're having a little trouble discerning where they're firing.

RENFREE
It's three clicks northwest--

LEV (O.S.)
No, listen to me guys: we don't have another friendly unit within fifty miles of you.

Newbs' eyes are lit by the far-off fire.

NEWBS
So who's fighting them?

LEV (O.S.)
Well, we're working on it. But if I were you, I'd beat feet and get outta there.

The MH-60 returns, lowering from the sky.

RENFREE
Boss, are you catching all this?

INT. QUICK TENT, IRAQI DESERT - NIGHT

Hobbs follows the Chief through a 'crime scene' of sorts--

HOBBS
Few more minutes boys.
(to Chief)
It's no problem, keep going.

NUMBERED FLAGS litter the sand, corresponding to pieces of the plane. The Chief tries to keep his cool--

CHIEF
Obviously the meat of the plane is gone.
(MORE)

CHIEF (cont'd)
Probably taken right after the
crash. But for some reason, these
remaining pieces are very much
intact. This suggests a loss of
power and a flat spin.

HOBBS
So it wasn't hit in the sky?

CHIEF
No.

The Chief stoops over sleek black fuselage.

CHIEF
It is a Stealth plane - at least
these contours belong to a Stealth
canopy - but the material's...*off*.
I don't know that erosion could do
this.

HOBBS
How long has it been here?

CHIEF
Well... I don't know how to say this.
See all this?

The Chief points to 'TINY WIRES' in and about the canopy.

HOBBS
What is it?

CHIEF
It doesn't make sense, but we
believe it's Cyprinid.
(off Hobbs)
Fish.

Hobbs looks about: 'Are we still in the desert?'

HOBBS
How does that happen?

CHIEF
I don't know. It's everywhere.

HOBBS
Are they fossils?

CHIEF
Just regular bones.

The Chief motions to a STOUT, BEARDED SCIENTIST, 40, with
a scar from his eye to his ear.

CHIEF
That guy found a turtle shell
over there.

Shell in hand, the brawny scientist turns away from Hobbs.
NEARBY HEAVY ROUNDS sound over the bellowing wind.

CHIEF
Anyway, you asked what this marine -
this...*kid* - might have been trying
to prove?

Hobbs' attention is back on the plane's CANOPY.

HOBBS
Yeah?

CHIEF
See these burn marks here? Pretty
even right?

HOBBS
I guess. Yeah, they're even.

CHIEF
That means it was a good ejection.
That means he probably survived
the crash--

HOBBS
I know what it means.
(disbelieving)
This is an *American Stealth Bomber*?

CHIEF
Yes.

HOBBS
So why wasn't the wreckage bombed?

CHIEF
By us you mean?
(stumped)
That's a good question.

The by-the-book Sergeant Major reels. Nothing in the book
that covers this. BOOM! The nearby skirmish INTENSIFIES--

HOBBS
Is that it?

The Chief's Assistant carefully passes Hobbs a CLIPBOARD.

CHIEF
It's a knee board. Pilots scribble
on them while they're flying.

The decayed board has a single number imprinted: 171.

HOBBS
No serial number though.

CHIEF
Sergeant Major, can I give it to
you in the air?

HOBBS
Did you find a number?

CHIEF
Yes.

HOBBS
(pleasantly surprised)
Oh. Then hell yes, let's go.

As the scientists pack, DRUM-LIKE EXPLOSIONS take us to--

INT. JOINT OPERATIONS CENTER - LATER THAT NIGHT

Safely back in Kuwait, Hobbs leans over Lev's shoulder as
he punches in the SERIAL NUMBER...

LEV
C'mon...c'mon. Here we go.

Hobbs looks over his own shoulder: nobody's watching.

LEV
Fuck.

The computer continues SCANNING; no hits.

HOBBS
Nothing?

LEV
Well...not nothing. Remember when
I said we weren't running into any
red tape?

HOBBS
Yeah?

LEV
We just did. There's no record of
any plane by that serial number.
But...the *number* has a history.
(MORE)

LEV (cont'd)
 See, if I clean a number off the
 classified net - that number's gone,
 but I can't erase the cleaning. See?

ON THE MONITOR: 82-8505 alongside CLEANING DATES.

LEV
 Someone wants it gone, but this
 plane definitely existed.

HOBBS
 So how do we cut this tape?

LEV
 You can't. The number's useless.

Hobbs looks around, on the verge of smashing something.

HOBBS
 What about the clipboard? Did you
 see the number on the board?

LEV
 I tried it. It's too short to be
 anything.

HOBBS
 What was it?

LEV
 Um...one seven one.

HOBBS
 (amazed)
 Simple. It's not part of a serial
 number... It's a bandit number.

LEV
 A what?

HOBBS
 Every pilot that ever flew Stealth is
 assigned a bandit number. The first
 test pilot was #1. The operational
 pilots started at 150.

(Lev reels)
 Try 171. Do it.

Lev types feverishly. Then suddenly, a STREAM of DATA--

LEV
 Shit. Here he comes...

*CAPT. BRIAN C. WOLFF. DOB: 1/10/65. USAF Academy.
 19TH TACTICAL FIGHTER WING. BANDIT 171. KIA: 2/26/91.*

LEV
His plane went down February 26,
1991... It's him. There's your man.

Then, an ID PHOTO: a 26 YEAR-OLD beams with hope and pride.

HOBBS
Wait.

LEV
What?

HOBBS
Brian Wolff.
(hitting Lev's shoulder)
Wolff.

LEV
What?

HOBBS
Bring up the kid who started this.

LEV
What kid?

HOBBS
The kid who found the plane!

Lev hacks away - quickly calling forth Patrick Wolff's PHOTO.
THERE THEY ARE, side by side, for Hobbs and Lev to see.

LEV
(stunned)
Wolff.

HOBBS
He's looking for his brother.

INT. LONG HALLWAY - NIGHT

We push towards Wolff as he dials a long number on a wall-mounted phone. He waits, determination refilling his eyes. Above the phone, a list of OUTBOUND units. Wolff tears it down.

MOTHER (O.S.)
We used paper plates so I didn't have
to do dishes. Your poppie was here
with his radio, listening for stuff
over there. There's terrible things
on the radio and on the TV...

WOLFF
 Mom, please, just listen...
 (she does)
 I found his plane.

MOTHER (O.S.)
 What? What do you mean?

WOLFF
 I mean I found it. I found it Mom.

Wolff waits a long moment. A smile flashes over angst.

MOTHER (O.S.)
 Well I don't care. I never agreed
 to this. I didn't know there'd be
 another war. You're just a boy--

WOLFF
 Don't say that to me. I'm not.

Wolff waits again. No smile this time.

MOTHER (O.S.)
 (her voice breaking)
 Well where did you find it?

INT. GRAVES REGISTRATION - NIGHT

Head down, eyes forward, Wolff walks to a far-off EXIT. To his sides we SEE the CASKETS; Wolff is walking through the MORGUE at Ali Al.

Eyed by a SUSPICIOUS SUPERVISOR, Wolff thinks quickly - moving to an open casket; a TEENAGER lies inside, his neck stapled closed. Wolff rests his head against the casket, as if GRIEF-STRICKEN. When he finally lifts his head, Wolff finds himself alone. This time, he actually looks at the boy.

WOLFF (V.O.)
 I tell my mother, and she tells my
 uncles, and my grandfather, and my
 brother's old friends--

EXT. HANGAR - MOMENTS LATER

Wolff walks out the huge door, dwarfed by a long tarmac.

WOLFF (V.O.)
 --that I will find him or die
 trying... I don't tell them that
 either end will do me now.

Wolff approaches a barbed-wire fence. He drapes his rucksack over the nettles, hurling himself to the other side. Wolff stares into the desert - a long road ahead.

WOLFF (V.O.)

I prayed for this war because it will expedite my fate. If I should fall, then let it come quick. Let it come with a swiftness and mercy not afforded my brother.

Wolff begins to disappear in the night.

WOLFF (V.O.)

I allow myself this hope: that it will all be over soon. I'm tired of walking alone.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

ARABIC MAN (O.S.)

(on speakers)

Istana leh dee-eya.

The RECORDING reverberates around the room. An INTERPRETER translates for Ulysses and an irritated Colonel Allison.

COLONEL ALLISON

(to a speakerphone)

Can you hear that Mr. Secretary?

SECRETARY (O.S.)

I can hear it, but what makes us think one of them is Wolff's little brother?

ULYSSES

The call was made from Private Wolff's base earlier tonight. Four minutes previous, another call was made to Wolff's mother. He was reported missing two hours later.

SECRETARY

Unbelievable. He has to find the fucking plane before he's on our radar?

Hobbs and Lev are ushered into the room.

COLONEL ALLISON

Mr. Secretary I have the mission commander, Dan Hobbs, with us now.

SECRETARY (O.S.)

Fantastic, let's keep going.

HOBBS
(whispering to Allison)
I need to speak with you privately--

COLONEL ALLISON
Too late.

Bewildered, Lev mouths to Ulysses: '*Secretary?*' Ulysses simply slides a NOTE across the table: '*PVT WOLFF IS GONE.*' The TAPE RECORDING whirs back to life--

ARABIC MAN (O.S.)
Il marines bitaukom wislow.
El medina...alla widnaha.

INTERPRETER
Your marines have arrived.
The city is...on its ear.

WOLFF (O.S.)
...Hoe-wa lissa eye-ish?

INTERPRETER
...Is he still alive?

ARABIC MAN--(O.S.)
Mish-eyeref. Kenmah il
ragella bitaukem besteh.
Lil tehn.

INTERPRETER
I don't know. Your men had
him, but he was lost. Only
two nights ago.

Hobbs grows ashen. Down the long table, the JUNIOR ANALYST - the one who interrogated Wolff - sweats his ass off.

WOLFF (O.S.)
Inta mit-akkit ken hoe-wa.?

INTERPRETER
Are you sure it was him?

ARABIC MAN (O.S.)
Ehna kut sah allel tie-yara?

INTERPRETER
I was right about the plane,
wasn't I?

WOLFF (O.S.)
Yes. Inta arrif hoe-wa fein.

INTERPRETER
Do you know where he is now?

ARABIC MAN (O.S.)
Mish-eyeref akter min-kitta.
Il-wuzera bitta-ah-etna be-
igrou. Kulahadt be-igrou.

INTERPRETER
I don't know anymore. Our
officials are running -
fleeing. Everyone's fleeing.

WOLFF (O.S.)
Aud hennach, anay gai le
Baghdad. Mehe-tag ayia-haga
tenyah?

INTERPRETER
Stay there, I'm coming for
Baghdad. To Baghdad. Do you
need anything else?

ARABIC MAN (O.S.)
Wrough ma Eye-isa.

A chuckle is heard on the tape. The Interpreter hesitates--

INTERPRETER
Go with Jesus.

The speakers tweak as the line goes dead.

COLONEL ALLISON

Pretty good Arabic for a kid that's never had any language training.

HOBBS

(holding a FILE)

Colonel I have a collection of material this soldier has submitted to intelligence over the past six years. Not only has he learned the language, he's mapped half of southeastern Iraq himself.

(then)

Our findings at the wreckage--

COLONEL ALLISON

How is a man able to go AWOL four fucking times?

All eyes on the wilting Junior Analyst.

JUNIOR ANALYST

Well, he was busted down to Private each time, but...

COLONEL ALLISON

But what?

LEV

We couldn't afford to court-martial him. Each time he came back it was with side intel on enemy positions... He was bargaining.

The confession sits awkwardly in the room.

JUNIOR ANALYST

But we demoted the hell out of him.

Lev subtly drops his head. This guy's hopeless.

SECRETARY (O.S.)

Who's the other man on the tape?

ULYSSES

Mr. Secretary, we believe, given the shorthand they use with each other, plus the fact that Wolff is bartering American intel--

LEV

I didn't hear anything like that.

Ulysses gives his subordinate a look: 'Keep your mouth shut.'

ULYSSES

Nevertheless, he's exchanging something of ours for something of theirs - presumably information about his brother. It's likely the second voice belongs to an Iraqi Officer. Possibly Fedayeen. Possibly with intelligence ties that might be useful to Wolff.

SECRETARY (O.S.)

The bottom line is that this soldier represents a clear threat to the American initiative. Is that what I'm hearing?

Hobbs looks to Lev: 'What's going on here?'

COLONEL ALLISON

Anything on this, Sergeant Major?

Hobbs hesitates, reluctant to disclose his findings.

COLONEL ALLISON

We're all on the same team here, Dan.

HOBBS

Sir I don't know how Private Wolff's gathering intelligence, but all of it seems to be accurate. Our salvage operation confirmed that the plane belonged to his brother. Also--

(heavily)

--that his brother had a decent chance of surviving the initial crash.

Strangely, Hobbs seems to be losing the table's attention.

HOBBS

Beyond all the reports, my men believe it was his brother in the car with us that night.

SECRETARY (O.S.)

Major, it's my understanding that during this...*rescue* operation you came under fire on your way out. Is that correct?

HOBBS

Yes sir.

SECRETARY (O.S.)

Alright, now putting aside what your men may or may not believe, how likely is it that this man - whomever he was - could have survived the barrage you escaped?

HOBBS

Low sir.

SECRETARY (O.S.)

Alright then. Colonel?

Hobbs looks to the Colonel; something's been preordained.

COLONEL ALLISON

Dan, we'd like you to use that file to find it's author. We believe Private Wolff is hitching his way to Baghdad as we speak. Meet him when he gets there, meet him before that - even better - but stop him before he puts this country in harm's way. Whatever he's doing.

LEV

We think he's a traitor?

All eyes on Hobbs. Rank aside, this is his show.

HOBBS

I don't think he sees himself as American.

(then)

Based on what we have, it's my instinctive opinion...that he considers himself separate from both sides, and he's using our resources to his own end.

LEV

(to Colonel Allison)

Sir, if it's the younger brother you want, let us stay on the missing pilot's trail. We find the older one, we find may find Private Wolff along the way--

COLONEL ALLISON

(as if Lev weren't there)

Actually Dan, Agency already has a team on the missing pilot's remains. They're the ones who closed the book on him, so they feel it's their mess to clean up.

Hobbs gives nothing away.

COLONEL ALLISON

I was there twelve years ago Dan. We looked for this man - he was one of ours... Now he's just a talking point for liberals and subversives who want to cut this country down. Let's snuff this thing out before it becomes any more of a fiasco than it already is.

ULYSSES

Is this gonna be a problem, Dan?

HOBBS

Your Colonel knows, I'm a field man. I've never had a problem with an order my whole career.

COLONEL ALLISON

(relieved)

I knew he'd say that. You want out of this room, don't you?

HOBBS

It's just not my main event sir.

Hobbs smiles with the Colonel, comfortable under his wing.

HOBBS

(to Lev)

Let's get a list of every unit that moved out after Wolff's phone call. Also, if he's calling home, maybe have someone stateside visit his parents.

COLONEL ALLISON

You see? This thing'll be over before we know it.

The Colonel stays behind in the emptying room.

SECRETARY (O.S.)

Colonel? Colonel.

COLONEL ALLISON

(picking up the phone)

Yes sir.

SECRETARY (O.S.)

I don't wanna hear about any partisan politics. You make sure your boys play nice with CIA's boys. Got me?

COLONEL ALLISON
Understood.

SECRETARY (O.S.)
Understand that this kid - this...
marine - goes down before he digs up
a story we can't have told. The last
thing we need over here is to learn
that a young American was abandoned
by his country in the jaws of hell.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

A series of WADIS (floodwater gashes in mountains) clip the horizon. Out of place in the night is a far-off RED LIGHT...

A RED-LENSED FLASHLIGHT under his arm, Wolff folds up a map. Alone in the desert, he takes in sky: STARS everywhere. It's beautiful out here. Then, a RUMBLE. Wolff dons his NVGs, finding GREEN HEADLIGHTS coming his way.

Wolff flags down the charging AMERICAN UNIT. The driver, PVT LEE, 25, leans out his window--

PVT LEE
What are you doing out here!?

WOLFF
(happily)
Ah, it's fucking embarrassing man!

Wolff walks closer, a little trust built. He gets really into character now, shouting over a light wind--

WOLFF
We were stuck in a sandstorm,
couldn't see ten feet! I walked
off to take a piss and my fuckin'
unit drove off without me!

The driver looks a little amused, a little skeptical. A SOLDIER wearing a GAS MASK peeks from the rear of the truck.

WOLFF
Where you guys headed?

PVT LEE
Forward Base Falcon.

WOLFF
Perfect! You're saving my life!

Wolff opens the back door, jumping aboard--

INT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

It's like Star Wars in here: FOUR SOLDIERS stare at Wolff through gas masks. Private Lee puts his own mask back on.

WOLFF
How's everybody?

The soldiers nod, none interested in conversing.

WOLFF
Swell.

Their patches confirm Wolff's hunch - 8th ENGINEER SUPPORT. Wolff opens his pack, thumbing through cassette tapes. PVT SMOLUK, 24, watches Wolff, deciding to remove his mask. PVT JIMENEZ, 22, pulls up his mask enough to speak--

PVT JIMENEZ
(to Wolff)
You know something we don't know?

Wolff ponders that.

WOLFF
I don't think so.

PVT JIMENEZ
So how come you don't wear a mask?

WOLFF
Do you have an extra one?

Jimenez shakes his head, QUICKLY putting his mask back on. After a beat, so does Smoluk. Wolff smiles as he dons his headphones, like a frequent flyer settling into first class.

WOLFF (V.O.)
This war is my ride, my decoy,
my drawbridge into a castle of
secrets. This war is mine.

INT. SCREENING ROOM, AL JABER BASE - DAWN

The SOF team has taken over this 'rec room'. Anwar types on a LAPTOP, sending a DIGITAL MAP onto a PROJECTOR SCREEN.

HOBBS
Assume Private Wolff knows as much
as we do. The more I read, the
more it seems he had his hands in
everything at his fusion center.

Newbs kills the lights, leaving Hobbs in the shadows. Renfree watches from the back - feet up - as if he's at the movies.

HOBBS

The access he had was significant, and if he's trading on it, we're talking significant damage. Which makes it all the more important we get to him before he reaches the Fedayeen or Mukhabarat or whoever that asshole was on the tape.

ANWAR

(re: map on screen)
Operational, boss.

HOBBS

(in his own world)
Our boys are heading out to die, they don't need any help from this kid.

ANWAR

Boss?

HOBBS

Alright, so he knows what we know. We wanna catch this kid, we gotta know what he knows about his brother.

RENFREE

I'm already lost.

HOBBS

February 26, 1991. Captain Brian Wolff sets out on an air raid over Iraq. Never heard from again.

RENFREE

So little brother's...what? Twelve then?

(astonished)

Oh, that's a long time to get a hate on.

HOBBS

Yes it is. And if big brother's still alive, he'd be 38 today.

(re: image)

We found his plane here, last night.

Next to Hobbs in the front row, Newbs leans forward.

NEWBS

Wait. February 26th. That's weird.

RENFREE

Why is that weird, Newbs?

HOBBS
Renfree get up here, now.

NEWBS
Well, that's like-- When did the war end?

HOBBS
Official combat ceased February 28.

NEWBS
Yeah. I mean, you'd think if you were gonna get shot down, it would be early when their radar wasn't jacked to hell.

Even Renfree, joining the front row, has to take note.

HOBBS
(re: map)
Anyway, X marks the spot of the crash - that's us last night. And this...is the same spot twelve years ago.

It looks like an OCEAN has suddenly appeared over the 'X'.

RENFREE
Is that water?

HOBBS
Marshlands. The pieces we found were under water for several years.

ANWAR
Fuck, I didn't even think of that.

RENFREE
What?

HOBBS
After our forces withdrew in '91, some of those who tried and failed to overthrow Hussein hid in the marshes. They got shelter from the people living there: the ah--

ANWAR
Ma'dan.

HOBBS
Thank you Anwar. So guess the rest. Hussein's death squads moved in - burned villages - had the marshes completely drained. 100,000 Ma'dan were killed or uprooted--

ANWAR
250,000.

Hobbs nods, yielding the floor to Anwar.

NEWBS
Jesus. We were on it.

ANWAR
Pockets of marshland remain, maybe 5%.
But what it once was - The Garden of
Eden some say - it's all gone.

RENFREE
What do you mean Garden of Eden?
Like the bible, Garden of Eden?

ANWAR
Like the bible.

The men digest.

NEWBS
So that explains the turtle.

EXT. AMERICAN BASE - DAY

Wolff's engineers slow at the gates of a 'TENT CITY.' A
LONG, IMPOSING CARAVAN moves out.

SUPER: *Forward Falcon Base
56 miles SE of Baghdad*

INSIDE WOLFF'S VEHICLE, Wolff's nose is in the RED FOLDER he
snatched from Intel. We SEE what he READS:

*AFTER ACTION REPORT... APRIL 5... HOBBS, RENFREE...
CAME UNDER FIRE... UNKNOWN PRISONER LOST*

Disgusted, Wolff unfolds a PAGE from his pocket, kneading it
flat over the report... A man's pencil-drawn face:

CAPT. BRIAN WOLFF, at 38, as sketched by his kid brother.

PVT JIMENEZ(O.S.)
Shoot, essays, we already in Baghdad.

PVT SMOLUK
Speak English, man.

Pvt Jimenez holds a PRINTOUT from a satellite link.

PVT JIMENEZ
 This is English, bro. Marines,
 1st division, crossed the Tye-
 gris yesterday.

Wolff focuses on the passing caravan. He doesn't notice Pvt
 Lee's eyes on his 1st DIVISION RUCKSACK.

PVT SMOLUK (O.S.)
 I told you this was nothing!
 Pappy's going home--

WOLFF
 Where are those trucks headed?

PVT LEE
 Baghdad.

Stuffing his pack, Wolff jumps out the door.

PVT LEE
 Wait! What are you--

Wolff runs straight for the TRUCKS - about a DOZEN pour out
 the gates - until they suddenly stop streaming. Wolff has
 to change his tack, running frantically after the last one.

SEVEN GI's (3rd SQUAD, 7th CAVALRY) look on amused; 'What
 does this guy think he's doing?' SGT BROWN, a little older
 than his early-20's men, stands up in the truck's flatbed--

SGT BROWN
 What are you doing!?

WOLFF
 I need a ride!

PVT ROSE
 You ain't gonna make it!

SGT BROWN
 He might make it.

Brown's right. Wolff is closing the gap.

PVT WALSH
 Alright I'll put twenty down he
 doesn't make it.

The flatbed springs to life.

PVT SANDS
 I want that! I'll take that!

SGT BROWN
I'll take it too.

PVT STREATHER
Right here Sarg, I'll take your money!

PVT SANDS
(to Wolff)
Well come on you fuckin' jarhead!
Let's go!

Wolff runs harder, the truck ERUPTING for and against him.

SGT BROWN
Throw me your pack!

Wolff hurls it ahead.

PVT STREATHER
No! That's cheating!

The driver, DAVIS, 24, leans out his window, making sure he's not seeing things in his rearview mirror. Davis is a portly NG (National Guardsman). He subtly presses the gas.

Wolff immediately begins to lose ground. Private Sands hangs out the side of the truck--

PVT SANDS
Hey fat man! Are you speeding up!?

Wolff won't quit, but he's way behind.

SGT BROWN
Alright he didn't make it.

PVT SANDS
He's fucking speeding!

Sergeant Brown shrugs. He leans out the side of the truck--

SGT BROWN
Come on, stop for the guy!

NG DAVIS
We're not stopping!

Now the men grow quiet; it's not so funny anymore. Brown mournfully drops Wolff's pack out the back.

All the men watch as Wolff picks it up, without breaking stride, continuing after them.

PVT STREATHER
(low)
Son of a bitch.

The caravan approaches a HIGHWAY. The trucks begin to pile up. Still chasing, Wolff begins closing ground again.

PVT SANDS
(rising)
Oh yeah. Look at this. Oh yeah!!

PVT WALSH
This doesn't count!

PVT SANDS
It fucking counts! Why wouldn't it!?

PVT ROSE
(to driver)
Hurry up, go!

There's no way Wolff's not going to make it this time. His backers cheer as he approaches, ready to hoist him aboard. Instead, he runs RIGHT PAST them...

PVT SANDS
Where the hell's he going?

The men lean out the side to see Wolff rip their driver out of the truck.

PVT DAVIS
Hey! Aghh--

KIDNEY SHOT. Wolff stands over Davis as the man limps around in the sand, whimpering.

The stunned infantrymen pile out of the truck. Wolff turns, gasping: 'Who's next?' Sands laughs hysterically.

SGT BROWN
Everybody back in the truck!

PVT SANDS
Whatever! He had it coming!

SGT BROWN
(to Wolff)
What is wrong with you?

Wolff sizes up Brown, deciding he's worth answering.

WOLFF
Nothing.

SGT BROWN
Where's your unit?

WOLFF
I had to go back for a patch-up.

Brown isn't sure he buys it.

SGT BROWN
Let's see.

Wolff thinks a moment, then begins UNBUCKLING his PANTS.

SGT BROWN
Alright, Jesus. Come on.

PVT DAVIS
I'm not driving this psycho!

SGT BROWN
Shut up Private! Get back in the
truck, you're fine.
(to Wolff)
He's fine right?

INT. SCREENING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

IMAGES of the DISCOVERED PLANE WRECK on the large white screen.
Beneath projector light, Hobbs walks his boys through the facts.

HOBBS
(meditatively)
So he ejects...he's on the ground...
he's got to escape and evade at
least a night or two before we can
find him...but he doesn't make it.
Iraqi forces converge, close the net
around him...

ANWAR
Hard to believe they could be that
organized, that late in the game.
(then)
The last day of the war, it
would've been nothing but marauding
Iraqi units - headless horsemen
retreating from Kuwait.

NEWBS
But they did get him, though. I
mean, we saw him...right?

Renfree and Anwar look immediately uncomfortable.

HOBBS
No, Newbs is right. Certainly
that's what little brother thinks
and that's what we're after.

INT. BUSY HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

PRINTOUT in hand, Lev weaves hurriedly past CHATTING OFFICERS.
He catches the attention of ULYSSES, who decides to follow.

INT. SCREENING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Over an increasingly HEATED DEBATE, Renfree demands the floor--

RENFREE
Has anyone here ever punched out of
a fighter jet?

The men stare blankly at Renfree.

RENFREE
Ask any jet guy, he'll tell you
he'd much rather be shot at.

To Renfree's surprise, he has his teammates' attention.

RENFREE
Okay, first you've got two rockets
under your ass. You gotta hope they
explode a tenth of a second after the
canopy pops, otherwise your head's
going through it. If that works
properly, you still might get your
legs chopped off at the knees by the
instrument panel on the way out. And
if you do get out clean at 8 G's,
your chute can still fuck you with a
crossed line or a collapsed cell.
But if *all that* goes just right, it's
basically like dropping from a two-
story building... You're not
strolling away calling Mom
afterwards.

Ceiling lights sputter to life.

HOBBS
The ground was different...but I
bet you the sky was the same.
(off his men)
I bet you there was fire all around
this pilot, near the marshes. The
worst fighting in this area was
after the war, wasn't it Anwar?

ANWAR
That's right.

Hobbs' wheels turn, his men watching, when LEV BURSTS IN--

LEV
Hussein International Airport.

HOBBS
Take a breath and try again.

LEV
A maintenance unit picked up a lone
marine at 0500, took him to Forward
Base Falcon.

Newbs jumps out of his chair - a fireman without a pole.

HOBBS
Hang on, Newbs. Where's he now?

LEV
He jumped onto an army convoy
headed for Hussein International.

HOBBS
Okay, now let's go! Anwar, get us an
insert. Renner, bring up the latest
overhead imagery of the airport.
Also, a map for all Conventional and
SOF units in the area.

(to Lev)
Good work son. Now get back on the
phone and reach that army caravan.
I want you to find the unit, the
truck, the goddamn seat our boy's
sweating in. Newbs! Lev's gonna
print you something. We'll see you
on the tarmac.

(coyly)
Don't make us wait son.

In the doorway, we see Ulysses WATCHING. He slinks away,
the Judas in their midst.

EXT. TARMAC - A SHORT TIME LATER

'Desert camo' APACHES rest dwarfed by a C-130 ready to roar--

INT. C-130 - CONTINUOUS

TWENTY CLEAN-SHAVEN INFANTRYMEN sit in awe of Hobbs & co.

RENFREE
Where's Newbs?

Hobbs shakes his head, feigning disappointment. The top SOF man scans the nervous boys around him.

HOBBS
What do we got here? Huh? Who
am I looking at boys?

A WIDE-EYED G.I., 19, answers for his platoon.

G.I.
Hundred and first, sir.

HOBBS
Hundred and first! Bringing
freedom and seriousness to Baghdad.

The young men lighten a little.

HOBBS
I'm telling you boys, it is all
laughs up there, so you got your
work cut out for you. What do you
think, 2?

Renfree (the 2) motions to a STERN-LOOKING SOLDIER, 20.

RENFREE
Here's the ring leader.

The boys crack up.

HOBBS
Oh, you're fucked now.

Newbs hurries down the tarmac, lugging his pack.

RENFREE
Are you kidding me!? Hurry up!

Newbs hops up the ramp, accustomed to Renfree's ribbing.

RENFREE
What is wrong with you!?

HOBBS
Yeah, come on Newbs!

Newbs has to smile, accustomed to the basting. Anwar can't help joining in as the C-130's engines fire--

ANWAR
(with faux reluctance)
Pretty unprofessional.

Newbs looks at the infantrymen, all smirking as if he's beneath them. Where else could a ten-year veteran take such a beating?

About to raise the ramp, a CREWMAN waits for FOUR BURLY, PLAIN-CLOTHED MEN. Leading them, the SCARRED 'SCIENTIST' who held the turtle shell at the wreckage. It's clear now: the 'TURTLE MAN' IS HOBBS' OPPOSITE, HEADING a CIA TEAM.

As the 'AGENCY TEAM' settles into their seats - facing HOBBS' TEAM - the young men of the 101st grow quiet. They're stuck in the middle and they can feel the tension.

RENFREE
(to Anwar)
Recognize him?

ANWAR
From the wreckage, yeah? He's
the turtle man.

RENFREE
I never had him for a scientist.

The 'Turtle Man' turns to face Hobbs, reveling in the moment.

NEWBS
Hey boss?

HOBBS
Yeah.

NEWBS
You ever wonder - if we're looking
for the younger brother and all -
just who's looking for the older one?

Hobbs stares unblinkingly back at the Turtle Man.

HOBBS
No. And neither should you.

INT. CANOPIED TRUCK - DAY

Wolff stares out the back of the barreling truck: IRAQI ARMY UNIFORMS litter the highway, bordered by sand and nothingness.

PVT WALSH (O.S.)
Is there a reward?

Holding the SKETCH of Wolff's brother, Walsh draws looks of scorn from the other soldiers.

PVT WALSH
What? I'm already in the hole
'cause of the guy.

PVT STREATHER
So you were already there? You've
been to Baghdad?

WOLFF
Yeah, sure, I been there.

PVT SANDS
Piece of cake, right?

Wolff looks around, the young men hanging on his answer.

WOLFF
You guys patrolling?
(Brown nods)
Just don't point your weapon
unless you have to. They don't
like that much... Don't point your
dick at anything if you can help
it. They *really* don't like that.

The young men laugh, much like Hobbs' men of the 101st.

SGT BROWN
Is anybody looking for him?
Besides you?

The flatbed hushes. The Sergeant wants Wolff's real story.

WOLFF
I have a contact. Helping me.

PVT WALSH
So you're just...on your own?

Wolff considers it, as if for the first time. Then--

SGT BROWN
How'd you know he was alive?

WOLFF
He was seen two days ago, in the city.

SGT BROWN
No, I mean before. Why'd you assume
he was alive all these years?

WOLFF
Why would I assume any different?

Everyone has clued in now; Wolff is not returning to his unit.

PVT STREATHER
(to Wolff)
Where you guys from?

WOLFF
Who's that?

PVT STREATHER
(holding up sketch)
You and your brother. Where you from?

Wolff begins to answer as the truck suddenly BRAKES.
SGT Brown rises, peeking outside their canopied world--

THRONGS of IRAQI's march in exodus. Many of them walk barefoot, a few belongings on their back. The soldiers hop off the truck, offering water, bandages and smokes.

Against his first instinct, Wolff hangs noticeably back. He eyes the Iraqis suspiciously - even in their current state. Beyond them, a MASSIVE BRIDGE in the distance.

WOLFF
(to Brown)
Is that the Jumiriyah?

SGT BROWN
I have no idea.

Wolff frantically leafs through satellite images, finding a photo of the same bridge - long and arching, almost European.

WOLFF
Ha!

Wolff's jubilation wanes. He's on his own again.

WOLFF
This is my stop.

Wolff tosses his helmet, body armor, extra magazines. He's going bare bones. The 3rd/7th Cavalrymen watch reverently.

WOLFF
Good luck to you guys.

SGT BROWN
Hey... Make it home.

Wolff nods appreciatively, already on his way. Then--

PVT ROSE
Get some, you fucking jarhead!

Wolff looks back, his new friends still watching him.

ALL THE 3RD 7TH
 Open hell, Wolff! Get some! C'mon
 Wolff! Give'em fuckin' hell!

The adrenaline rushes in Wolff. He's barely able to contain himself as he walks on, through the Iraqi exodus.

WOLFF (V.O.)
 I'm from a town of three hundred.
 We have two main roads. I am
 entering a city of five million, and
 I know every section and every
 street... I will own this town
 between Sheriffs. I will take back
 what this place took from us.

In the distance, smoke and shimmer...BAGHDAD.

WOLFF(V.O.)
 With a body or a brother. That's
 how I'm going home.

EXT. JUMIRIYAH BRIDGE (OVER TIGRIS) - A SHORT TIME LATER

Wolff approaches a strange sight: SOLDIERS in a long, single-file line. Reaching the front, Wolff finds a BOYISH SOLDIER receiving benediction from a PRIEST in camouflage.

At first scoffing, guilt overtakes Wolff as he marches on. He does a half-assed sign of the cross. At the

MOUTH OF THE BRIDGE, a BOTTLENECK of SOLDIERS wait. Beyond the Tigris, CLOUDS of SMOKE above the city.

A SOLDIER shouts something in Arabic into a LOUDSPEAKER. Whatever it is, Wolff looks immediately down the empty bridge:

A WHITE VAN proceeds toward us, despite a WARNING SHOT. Wolff holds still, unfazed as the van is suddenly riddled with bullets. It comes to a whimpering stop on the curb, close enough that a SHREDDED IRAQI FAMILY can be seen within.

The FIRING SOLDIER paces frantically amidst the melee--

FIRING SOLDIER
 I'm not even sorry! It's so fuckin'
 stupid! I'm not even sorry!

He *is* sorry, though, as he suddenly throws up. In all the chaos, no one notices until now: Wolff is already halfway across the bridge.

IRATE CAPTAIN
 Hey! Soldier! What are you
 doing!? Soldier!!

CAPTAIN #2
Who the fuck's man is that!?

Wolff doesn't look back. He hurries on...into Baghdad's fire.

I/E. C-130 AIRCRAFT - DAY

The cargo plane banks through a slalom course of smoke.

From his window seat, Hobbs takes in the city below: the AMERICAN POSITIONS, clumped together like ants at the snaking TIGRIS RIVER.

Down the aisle, through the boys of the 101st, the Turtle Man approaches. He sits opposite Hobbs, taking a moment.

TURTLE MAN
Just want to say it's an honor
to be working with you.

HOBBS
I didn't realize you were.

TURTLE MAN
Well, just because our parents
aren't speaking doesn't mean we
can't be friends.

Hobbs' skin crawls.

TURTLE MAN
I appreciated your After Action
Report on the prison that night.
Very honest.

HOBBS
You're the team on the older brother?

TURTLE MAN
Officially we're the team on a dead
man. But if you find otherwise,
you'll let us know, won't you?

HOBBS
Sure, why not?
(then)
We can expect the same from you?

TURTLE MAN
What's that?

HOBBS
Let's say you cross paths with our
man - the one who's still officially
alive. He stays that way, right?

The Turtle Man stares smugly, giving little away.

TURTLE MAN

Of course. We never like to do
paperwork if we don't have to.

Hobbs smiles back at the Turtle Man, deciding to engage.

HOBBS

That fire fight, by the marshes...
You knew who was putting up the fight--

TURTLE MAN

I would've said something if it was
closer. It's just a little gun
club the natives kept alive. Kind
of a holdover from the first war.

HOBBS

The first war...
(almost laughing)
Did you guys even *try* to find him?

TURTLE MAN

(laughing himself)
Who? Our man?

Both leaders' MEN look on, confused, just out of earshot.

TURTLE MAN

Well, I wasn't running the show
twelve years ago, but not everybody
assumed the pilot was gone... We
watched those badlands for a year.

HOBBS

The marshlands.

TURTLE MAN

(nodding)
There were thoughts of going in...
The Republican Guard beat us to it.
They were tired of chasing rebels
into the swamps, so they torched the
whole place, drained it - called it
relocation. If Brian Wolff ever *was*
in the marshes - and I'm sure you
think he was - he wasn't after that.

Hobbs stares, surprised by the Turtle Man's candor.

HOBBS

Thank you.

TURTLE MAN
Like I said, it's a pleasure.

EXT. SOUTH BAGHDAD - DAY

Towering monuments - STATUES, MOSQUES, MINARETS - stand fast in a smoldering landscape.

Headphones pumping at his neck, Private Patrick Wolff walks brazenly NORTH. BAGHDAD RESIDENTS stand bewildered on both sides of the street. They've seen a lot the past few days, but a lone American soldier is apparently a first.

A GROUP of children run joyfully to Wolff--

CHILDREN
America!
(Arabic)
Give us candy! Anything!

Wolff turns to their outstretched hands--

WOLFF
(Arabic)
I don't have anything to give.

The children stop following, stunned. They run back to their PARENTS who sit poker-faced on stoops. It's the TEENS in the alleyways who stare loathsomely at Wolff. He returns their collective stink-eye, marching north...

EXT. DORA DISTRICT, SOUTHERN BAGHDAD - A SHORT TIME LATER

A STAFF SERGEANT, 30, holds his MEN behind TWO BRADLEY FIGHTING VEHICLES. They're caught at a disadvantage, SNIPERS FIRING from the buildings ahead.

Behind them, the Staff Sergeant fixes on a sight: a LONE SOLDIER stands frozen. Binoculars confirm it's a marine.

STAFF SERGEANT
Soldier! Come on! Soldier!

Wolff doesn't hear the man. He's mesmerized by a CHARRED MASS at his feet: ASHES and GRISTLE around TWO AK-47's... Wolff's on top of TWO HALF-CREMATED BODIES, cooking on the sidewalk.

Wolff looks ahead: he SEES the Americans aiming high, SEES the Staff Sergeant calling him, but they've got the wrong man. This isn't for him; this isn't why he's here. The Staff Sergeant stops calling, bewildered, as Wolff TURNS AWAY.

DEEPER INTO THE UNKNOWN, Wolff concentrates hard. He's the only thing making a sound down a narrow lane. FOUR-STORY TENEMENTS on both sides make him claustrophobic.

A LOW RUMBLE stops the marine in his tracks. Behind Wolff, a TANK suddenly appears, turning straight for Wolff. Huge metal teeth extend from the angular beast. It must be American, as Wolff never moves... Suddenly the hatch opens--

STIR-CRAZY NAVIGATOR
Dude, what are you doing?

WOLFF
Where you guys headed?

STIR-CRAZY NAVIGATOR
Just get in bro, you're in no man's land out here. This whole area's--

Phft! SHOCK on the navigator's face as a BULLET caroms an inch from his hip. He looks up when--

Phft! Half the navigator's face is gone. He FALLS to his side, smashing his lifeless head on the tank deck.

Wolff throws himself against the wall beneath the shots. He inhales deeply through his nose, controlling his adrenaline.

The tank's main gun rotates, but the lane is too narrow. SHOUTING is heard inside, before the tank barrels ahead.

His 9mm trained nearly straight up, Wolff backs away, inch by inch. No sign of the sniper. Nearly in the clear - his own ass saved - a calm sets over Wolff. He's battling his CONSCIENCE; a man is dead and it's his fault...

Wolff turns and runs. THUNDERING AIRCRAFT above takes us to--

EXT. HUSSEIN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

Seized only days ago, this airport is still technically a war zone. IRAQI COMMERCIAL AIRLINERS lie burnt about the tarmac.

The young men of the 101st toss down their luggage from the C-130. Beneath the plane, the Turtle Man leads his CIA team away; his charges nod smugly at Hobbs' men.

HOBBS
This is a goddamned zoo.

A truck weaves through the melee, SGT BROWN riding shotgun.

RENFREE
What is this shit?

SGT BROWN
You're looking for Private Wolff?

HOBBS
That's right.

SGT BROWN
He bailed out a few miles ago.

RENFREE
Oh for fuck's sake!

SGT BROWN
I didn't know. I got word too late.

HOBBS
Where did he get out?

SGT BROWN
Just short of a bridge we passed.

HOBBS
Show me.

Anwar produces a MAP, laying it on the hood of their new car.

HOBBS
Did he say where he was going? Who
he was meeting?

SGT BROWN
Nothing. Did he do something wrong?

ANWAR
(to Brown)
Have a look.

SGT BROWN
Right here. Jumbalaya or something.

HOBBS
Jumiriyah. Okay, what's above that?

ANWAR
That's the Ministry of Planning.
Just across the bridge.

HOBBS
Okay, that makes sense. What else?

NEWBS
I'm not sure but...

HOBBS
Spit it out son!

NEWBS
Isn't that where we lost his brother?

ANWAR

He's right. The prison's right there.

HOBBS

He's picking up where the trail went cold.

ANWAR

(daunted)

That's three miles ahead of the U.S. front.

RENFREE

He'd do it. He's not gonna wait.

NEWBS

Does that mean we're doing it?

Hobbs look to his men: it's their call too. All eyes on Newbs.

NEWBS

Yeah, no, I was just asking.

(simply)

I'm in.

Anwar's turn.

ANWAR

You're the white boys. If you're in, I'm in.

RENFREE

I'm starting to like this kid.

(wild-eyed)

He's gonna make this fun.

HOBBS

Alright boys, let's rope this kid and get back in the fight. Load up!

The team moves quickly: Hobbs and Newbs load into a WHITE SEDAN (Ford LTD); Renfree and Anwar into a TAN CHEVY WAGON.

EXT. ALLEY, HAKMIYAH PRISON - A SHORT TIME LATER

Wolff watches LOOTERS pour out of a MASSIVE HOLE (courtesy of Hobbs) in the wall. He squats over his rucksack, pulling on a LOOSE BLOUSE (akin to a nightshirt) as a YOUNG LOOTER runs past. The youngster looks back curiously, running on.

Partially hidden beneath a KEFFIYEH (scarf), Wolff crosses for the prison in awe. He's seen pictures of this place, but here it is and here he is.

DOGS begin BARKING - they hear the bombs coming. BAGHDAD residents begin looking skyward, running for shelter. Wolff hears a WHISTLE... then a SHOCKWAVE hurls him to the ground. A U.S. payload has landed only blocks away. Wolff picks himself up, running inside--

INT. BASEMENT, HAKMIYAH PRISON - MOMENTS LATER

LOOTERS flow down a LONG HALL; it's every man for himself. Keeping his head low, Wolff works upstream, FLOODED CELLS on both sides.

Ahead, staring into a cell, is a HEARTBROKEN IRAQI MAN, 50.
[The following exchange in ARABIC; SUBTITLED]

WOLFF

Why so much water?

The man sees Wolff's blue eyes. He's more fascinated than fearful that a white man could be down here.

HEARTBROKEN MAN

He is gone.

WOLFF

Who's gone?

The man points to an EMPTY CELL as he backs away.

HEARTBROKEN MAN

Some got out. Some were moved.

The man starts up a staircase.

WOLFF

Why the water?!

HEARTBROKEN MAN

The guards drowned everyone before they left.

Visibly weakened, Wolff looks into the nearest cell: a WITHERED BODY on the floor.

Wolff presses on, past BODY after BODY. At the end of the row, Wolff stops in his tracks. He moves to the bars, gripping them, staring inside:

We SEE what Wolff SEES. Scratches on the wall: B... C... W. Beneath the initials, a LIFELESS BODY.

WOLFF

(low)

Bri?

Wolff looks around, the soldier shocked right out of him.

WOLFF

I gotta... I gotta get into this...

Wolff pulls lightly on the bars, small tremors in his arms. He notices DUST falling on his head; the bars are bending infinitesimally. BOOM! More dust as an American payload shakes the building.

FIVE YOUNG TEENS, dragging PIPES and COPPER WIRES, part around Wolff like rats in an alley. Wolff snatches the weakest of the herd, a SLIGHT BOY. The youngster trembles in Wolff's grasp. [*The following exchange in ARABIC; SUBTITLED*]

WOLFF

Don't be afraid.

Wolff pushes the boy, squeezing him between the bars. The youngster SCREAMS, slapping Wolff wildly.

WOLFF

Please! Turn him over!

SLIGHT BOY

What?

Wolff considers what he's doing; his face flushes from the boy's slaps and his own shame.

WOLFF

Please. He's my brother.

The youngster calms - he understands - but he's still terrified. He turns slowly, inching towards the body. It seems an eternity to Wolff as the boy reaches down--

WOLFF

(sotto voce)

It's not you.

Suddenly, a FIGURE appears down the hall: IT'S HOBBS. Face to face with Wolff, Hobbs SEES a *recognition* on the younger man's face; it's colored with disappointment and rage.

HOBBS

Hi there.

Wolff turns back to the cell, watching the body land FACE UP: the DROWNED MAN is Middle-Eastern, perhaps 60. Wolff is suddenly filled with life again. A FRIEND of the Slight Boy appears, pointing at Wolff--

SLIGHT BOY'S FRIEND

There! That's him!

Hobbs hides his brandished SLG-SAUER behind his hip.

HOBBS
Patrick Wolff.

WOLFF
What are you doing here?

HOBBS
How'd you get in the basement?

Wolff clues in; Hobbs is calling his men. The marine begins to back away, peaking down at the Slight Boy--

WOLFF
Thank you.

HOBBS
Don't do it son! Don't move!!

Wolff KICKS a prison bar hard - freeing the Slight Boy - before turning and running. He pushes past BYSTANDERS as Hobbs follows, speaking into his mike--

HOBBS
He's going for the hole in the floor!
(to Bystanders)
Move! Move!

Wolff leaps for the ceiling, hoisting himself into--

THE MAIN LEVEL. Renfree's thirty yards away, his M4 on Wolff--

RENFREE
On the ground! Get on the fucking ground!

Wolff looks through the hole at Hobbs--

WOLFF
Me?

HOBBS
Don't do it son - don't move!
You're gonna get yourself hurt!

Wolff gets on his knees - we HEAR a WHISTLE outside - then BOOM! An air strike ROCKS the building, decking Renfree. Wolff recovers, meeting eyes with Hobbs, before hustling away--

EXT. HAKMIYAH PRISON - CONTINUOUS

Newbs runs frantically around the building--

RENFREE (O.S.)
Target is headed for the north exit!

Newbs reaches the north side, aiming expectantly at the door. An impulse turns Newbs around. He scans the NORTH-EXTENDING STREET: a FEW BYSTANDERS and a MAN IN A SCARF striding briskly away. The man looks back over his shoulder: it's Wolff.

NEWBS
I've got visual. He's northbound
on foot!

Wolff breaks into a SPRINT, Newbs following HARD. They powerful men blow past MERCHANTS, BYSTANDERS... MORE and MORE PEOPLE as they race north.

EXT. HAKMIYAH PRISON, SOUTH SIDE - CONTINUOUS

Renfree runs for the wagon, Hobbs and Anwar for the sedan.

RENFREE
He knew us! How'd he fucking make
us?!

HOBBS
I don't know.
(into radio)
Newbs, what's your position?

EXT. BAGHDAD STREET - CONTINUOUS

Newbs pounds the pavement, turning a corner after Wolff.

NEWBS
I don't know where I am! He just
went east off a main road!
(worriedly)
There's a lot of people around boss.

Wolff looks over his shoulder, Newbs staying right with him.

WOLFF
Mosaada! Mosaada!!

Newbs looks to the BYSTANDERS on both sides of the street; Wolff is calling for HELP.

HOBBS (O.S.)
You're in Indian country, Newbs.
Take him down or let him go! Do
not get any further north!

INT. HOBBS FORD LTD. - CONTINUOUS

Hobbs rides shotgun as Anwar barrels down a narrow lane.

ANWAR
What's happening?

HOBBS
He's leading him out to sea.

EXT. BAGHDAD STREET - CONTINUOUS

Blowing past a side street, both Wolff and Newbs glimpse an IRAQI ARMY TRUCK headed their way. They race on, the truck appearing behind them. A mounted machine gun UNLOADS - narrowly missing Newbs. He dives LEFT, behind a car.

Wolff ducks RIGHT, into an alley. He has a good view of Newbs, pinned behind the car and FIRING at the halted truck. Wolff looks down his alley: all clear. He could walk away...

WOLFF
Fuck!

Wolff turns and OPENS FIRE on the truck, quickly drawing FIRE.

WOLFF
(to Newbs)
Hey! Hey!!

Newbs finds Wolff through a cloud of bullet-sprayed concrete.

WOLFF
Come over when I say!

NEWBS
Fuck you!

Newbs' position is hammered as ANOTHER ARMORED TRUCK arrives.

NEWBS
Alright, say when!

Wolff comes around, PEPPERING both trucks as Newbs BREAKS for the alley. He makes it across, finding himself side-by-side with Wolff. The men make a temporary, unspoken pact.

WOLFF
C'mon.

NEWBS
Hang on.

Newbs loads a grenade onto his M4. He turns and FIRES, lifting the first Iraqi truck off the ground.

Wolff and Newbs cross an INTERSECTION, and ANOTHER, before darting down a NARROW ALLEYWAY. The men stop at the end - the coast seemingly clear - as their bodies quickly recover.

WOLFF

I guess I can see why he picked you.
Tenacious, heh? That's your skill
set? This wasn't very smart though.

Newbs peers around the corner, seeking his bearings.

WOLFF

Sorry about that. I shouldn't have
called attention like that.

(then)

You guys are on me now? I'm the job?

Newbs stays mum.

WOLFF

You alright?

NEWBS

(coldly; into radio)

Yeah, I'm with him right now.

Wolff stiffens, rebuffed. Newbs doesn't want to make friends.

NEWBS

I'm northeast of the prison. Maybe
twelve blocks.

(to Wolff)

Do you know where we are?

WOLFF

What happened to my brother?

Newbs ignores the question, scanning the street.

NEWBS

Definitely no landmarks. There's a
restaurant or cafe with a tarp--

MACHINE GUN FIRE nearby. Newbs looks pleadingly at Wolff.

WOLFF

Nafis.

NEWBS

We're on Nafis.

(then)

Nafis and what?

Wolff starts to sulk; he'll soon be on his own again.

WOLFF

Get your daddy to figure it out.

NEWBS
(to Wolff; re: Hobbs)
He wants to talk to you.

Newbs removes his earbug, approaching a wary Wolff.

WOLFF
Stay there. Throw it to me.

NEWBS
It's tied on.

WOLFF
Untie it.

Newbs puts down his rifle, tossing Wolff his 'comms'.

WOLFF
Hello?

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. HOBBS' FORD LTD.

HOBBS
Tell me where my boy is, I'll give
you a head start.

WOLFF
Tell me where my brother is and
forget the head start.

HOBBS
We lost him.

WOLFF
How?

Wolff waits; Hobbs is obviously deliberating.

HOBBS
We were taking fire. We had to
stop for a second. He just...
walked right back to them.

WOLFF
Why would he do that?

HOBBS
I don't think he wants to be found.

Wolff looks momentarily broken. He throws the earbug back.

WOLFF

That's a lie. Your boss is a
fucking liar. I trusted him.
You tell him that...

(tiring)

Nafis and Al-Jinub.

NEWBS

(into radio)

Nafis and Al-Jinub.

Wolff readies to run for it. Newbs looks ready to pounce.

WOLFF

Don't. Don't even think about it.

NEWBS

Where'd you get that weapon? You
pretending to be one of us?

WOLFF

I'm not one of anybody.

Wolff starts back down the narrow lane. Newbs burns,
letting him go, then looks out to the street:

A WHITE SEDAN pulls next to a cafe, prompting Newbs to move.
He gets halfway to the car when TWO CONFUSED BUSINESSMEN
step out - this is not Newbs' ride. Out in the open, Newbs
looks back: TWO THUGS carrying AK-47's spot him--

NEWBS

Aw shit.

INSERT:

--Wolff walks briskly, craning back at SMALL ARMS FIRE.

--Hobbs rides shotgun with Anwar, HEARING the fire.

BACK TO SCENE

Newbs FIRES from behind the sedan, holding off the thugs.
He never sees or feels a GUNMAN approach from behind.
The Gunman walks to nearly point blank range, FIRING a
9MM round into the back of Newbs' skull.

On a PARALLEL STREET, Wolff runs back. At an intersection,
he SEES a passing MOB dragging something.

CUT TO:

Hobbs and Anwar careen around a corner--

HOBBS
 (into radio)
 Newbs... C'mon Newbs, copy.

The SOUND of the MOB rings in their ears. Ahead, Renfree hits the brakes, stepping outside his vehicle.

HOBBS
 (re: radio)
 Cease all traffic.

Hobbs follows Renfree's lead - LISTENING for the mob...

BACK TO SCENE

Wolff runs parallel the growing, triumphal horde. They pick at Newbs like vultures. Wolff watches helplessly from the shadows...until it's more than he can take.

He STRIDES calmly up, behind the mass. The TWO THUGS trail proudly with their AK's. Near the front, Newbs' KILLER. Wolff SHOOTs the thugs in the back: ONE - TWO. Newbs' killer swivels - he takes it in the neck and chest.

Hell's busted. The mob scatters in panic. Wolff's adrenaline gets the best of him. He waits an extra, defiant moment - daring someone to come - before lifting Newbs out of the dead.

EXT. BACK ALLEY - A SHORT TIME LATER

A STARVING MUTT leads us down a garbage-strewn alley. Behind a bin, we find Wolff sitting comatose, knees to his chest. A tear has washed a clean line down his dirt-caked face.

Wolff notices the mutt, offering it a half-eaten energy bar--

WOLFF
 (whispering)
 Hey boy. What's this?

Tail between its legs, the mutt salivates. It waits until Wolff sets down the food, then inches forward.

WOLFF
 It's okay. Go ahead.

Wolff watches blissfully as the mutt chews. He holds out his hand... The mutt allows a few pats--

WOLFF
 Hey buddy... Watcha' doin'?

The mutt starts away--

WOLFF
 No. Wait boy. Wait! You want
 some more? I got more! I got...
 What do I got?

Nothing in his pack. Nothing in his pockets.

WOLFF
 (desperately)
 C'mon. Fuck!

The dog starts away again, sending Wolff into a spiral--

WOLFF
 Wait! Please... I got more--
 (losing it)
 Fuck! Where's all my fuckin' food?

Wolff catches his breath, laughing at the state of himself.

WOLFF
 Ahh shit.

The marine grunts a little, shaking it all out; the man
 expels the boy before our eyes. He looks to his left:

Reveal NEWBS' LIFELESS BODY, propped up next to him. Wolff
 untangles the microphone coil at Newbs' neck.

INT. HOBBS' FORD LTD. - MOMENTS LATER

Anwar and Hobbs creep down a narrow lane.

WOLFF (O.S.)
 (in their ears)
 Hello?

Anwar looks at Hobbs: 'That's not Newbs' voice.'

WOLFF (O.S.)
 Mr. Hobbs?

HOBBS
 Tell me where you are.

EXT. ROOFTOP - A SHORT TIME LATER

Prone, Wolff peers through the SIGHT on his rifle: a TAN
 STATION WAGON comes into frame. Renfree jumps out, faltering
 as he nears Newbs' PUMMELED BODY. It's a horrible sight.
 Hobbs steps out of the trailing sedan, scanning the alley. He
 looks UP - no sign of Wolff - before KICKING IN his door...

ON THE ROOFTOP, Wolff's already jogging away - ever NORTHBOUND.

EXT. JOINT OPERATIONS CENTER, KUWAIT - DAY

A fringe-toed lizard slinks towards the walled American base.

INT. ULYSSES' OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Ulysses closes his door, returning to his desk.

SECRETARY (O.S.)
(on speakerphone)
Is that what you're telling me?
That these are your best men?

ULYSSES
They were handpicked for both jobs.

SECRETARY (O.S.)
And both jobs they've fucked.

ULYSSES
With all due respect, Mr. Secretary,
they're chasing a man through a war.

SECRETARY (O.S.)
Oh, is there a war over there?
Listen to me you little trench-man:
thirty years I've been in the war
for public opinion. Your war
doesn't exist if I lose mine.

ULYSSES
(regrouping)
Sir, the soldier they're tracking is
exceptionally savvy. They're under
orders to bring him back alive--

SECRETARY (O.S.)
Well that may have to change. I
certainly never made that a priority.

ULYSSES
Yes sir.

SECRETARY (O.S.)
What is it you don't understand
about this?

Ulysses takes a deep breath.

ULYSSES
It's just...would it be so bad if we
found this missing pilot? I mean - we
didn't know he was alive all this time.

A pregnant pause on the line.

SECRETARY (O.S.)
That's not entirely true. Now take
me off the goddamn speakerphone.

EXT. OIL FIELD, BAGHDAD OUTSKIRTS - DUSK

A 3RD INFANTRY PLATOON protects the vast field, and -
temporarily - HOBBS' SURVIVING TEAM. Renfree and Anwar sit
mournfully off, enjoying the 360 degree cover at sunset.

Still seething, Hobbs stands by the civilian vehicles.
A PIPELINE BURNS violently in the background.

LEV (O.S.)
(in Hobbs' ear)
The J2 was asking if you'd be
coming back with Newbs. I told
him you'd want to stay out there.

HOBBS
You told him right.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. JOINT OPERATIONS CENTER - DAY

Lev rubs his eyes in the emptied-out nerve center.

LEV
Also, I spent an hour trying to
find a picture of you guys. No ID
photos posted, no nothing - you're
ghosts. Even if Wolff somehow
gained access to your write-up, I
can't figure how he recognized you.

Hobbs' mind races.

LEV
By the way, the Colonel's coming
himself for Newbs' body.

HOBBS
Say again.

LEV
He also wants a sit-down with you.

HOBBS
(mystified)
Okay. What about Wolff's parents?

LEV
We sent a rep out to the family's
home. Looks like a dry well.

HOBBS
Why's that?

LEV
The father's long gone. Up and left
when Wolff was four. The mother's
apparently...half there at best.
Sounds like she fell apart when the
older son went missing. She did
have something for you though.

Lev scans a transcript, amused by a passage--

LEV
(reading)
Tell Mr. Hobbs not to worry about the
older one. Let him go, she says.

HOBBS
Tell Mr. Hobbs?

LEV
She's only asking for Patrick back.

Hobbs looks thunderstruck. Then--

HOBBS
I know how he knows us.

LEV
How?

Hobbs motions to a sulking Renfree: 'Get off your ass.'

HOBBS
How did they find us, Lev? When
Intel was planning the prison bust.
How did they find our team?

LEV
Um...I think we were recommended.

HOBBS
By who?

LEV
(scrambling)
I'm not sure.

HOBBS
(to Renfree)
What'd he say to Newbs? Tell me what?

RENFREE
Tell him...he trusted you.

HOBBS
(on a roll)
Trusted me - what? What did I
promise him?

LEV
What's going on?

HOBBS
He didn't just recognize me. He
was angry with me.
(then)
We had a tip on two missing
helicopter pilots. Where did that
intel come from Lev?

LEV
I think it came from one of the
satellite bases.
(searching)
The local contact was secured by
an intelligence officer at Ali
Al... George Roby.

HOBBS
And Wolff was last assigned...?

LEV
He was an augment, to ah... George
Roby at Ali Al. Oh shit.

HOBBS
Is this kid something?
(amused)
There were never any helo pilots in
there. He tipped us after his brother.

The sun sinks behind Hobbs, blazing as it extinguishes.

LEV
What does this mean?

HOBBS
It means we're finally catching up.
Now roll up your sleeves and find
out what other intelligence - what
other contacts - came out of Ali Al
when Wolff was stationed there. If
we're lucky, he'll be following one
of his own leads.

INT. ONE-STORY BAGHDAD HOME - DUSK

An IRAQI MOTHER, 47, joins her TWO SONS at a modest dinner
table.

We move past SALEH, just 12, to a slight 18 YEAR-OLD. This is NASSER AL-OBTAINI. If he looks familiar, it's because he helped Hobbs 'paint' his target in our opening.

Beyond Nasser, a sliding glass door to a walled backyard.

MRS. AL-OBTAINI
(praying)
Bis-mileh il rah-men el rahim...

Young Saleh peeks, as he always does, while his mother and brother pray. Through the glass door he watches, stunned, as a MAN drops over the wall into his yard.

Opening her eyes after 'grace', Mrs. Al-Obtaini SHRIEKS at the sight of Private Wolff.

EXT. NASSER'S BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

Wolff hunches low at the SCREAM; 'Is this the right house?' Nasser opens the sliding glass door...

NASSER
(awestruck)
Patrick?

Wolff nearly smiles, relieved.

INT. NASSER'S HOME - A SHORT TIME LATER

Mrs. Al-Obtaini knocks on her son's door, bearing a plate of stew. She finds Wolff and her son hunched over BLUE PRINTS.

MRS. AL-OBTAINI
(to Wolff)
For you.

WOLFF
Shukran.

The food is a show of manners, not affection for Wolff. Mrs. Al-Obtaini lingers, clearly affected by the blue prints.

MRS. AL-OBTAINI
Sorry.

Nasser waits respectfully for his mother to go.

NASSER
My father was in charge of-- How do you say? Reversing the plane? Of designing from what he sees of your brother's plane.

WOLFF
Yeah, reverse engineering.

NASSER
He just could not stop the-- em--
radar from bouncing off. So when
they captured your brother, my father
would go and meet with him.

WOLFF
He'd meet with my brother?

NASSER
Yes.

Wolff nods as his emotions rush.

WOLFF
Wait. So your father was working
on the plane before they found him?

NASSER
Yes, for many months.

WOLFF
What do you mean, many months? I
don't understand - where did they
find him?

NASSER
Ma il Ma'dan. With the marsh
people. Not far from the plane
crash. Do you know the Ma'dan?

WOLFF
Yeah, I know the Marshlands,
it's just-- What was he doing?
Was he a prisoner there too?

Nasser simply shrugs; he doesn't know.

NASSER
They are a very secret people.
(re: blue prints)
May I?

WOLFF
Yeah.

NASSER
At first, when my father would meet
your brother...

WOLFF
Brian.

NASSER

Brian. They would sit as friends.
But as my father continued to fail,
he would be accompanied by a man.
An official who did...interrogations.
My father was fearful of this man.
He was ashamed-- Ashamed to watch
this man hurt your brother.

WOLFF

How?

NASSER

What?

WOLFF

How did he hurt him?

NASSER

I don't know how. My father
would say only, that he sometimes
would be sick to watch.

Wolff's jaw tightens.

NASSER

Then this man began to threaten my
father. And this is when my father
begins to tell me things. As he
becomes more afraid, the more he
says to me. My father was very
smart man, but he just could not...
accomplish this American plane.

Wolff runs his fingers over the blue prints.

NASSER

He would try all day at work, then
work in this room all night. Then
one day he just...does not come home.

WOLFF

How long ago was this?

NASSER

Three years.

WOLFF

How did you know my brother was at
that prison?

NASSER

I make it my business.

This is Wolff's kind of kid; they have a lot in common.

WOLFF

This man... The one who hurt my brother. You know where he is?

NASSER

If he is still in the city; if we are in time... Yes, I can find him.

Wolff's chest begins to heave.

WOLFF

And you think he's my best chance to find my brother?

NASSER

I think you have no other chance.

EXT. NASSER'S BACKYARD - NIGHT

Wolff stands off, guiltily, as Nasser's Mother pleads with her oldest son. She BEGS him not to go; refuses to let him go. Wolff meets eyes with young Saleh. The boy stares blankly at the American through the sliding glass door. Finally, Nasser breaks free of his mother.

MRS. AL-OBTAINI

Please sir! Please! He will come back, yes? Let him come back to us.

Wolff can't look away, but he can't answer. Nasser lifts himself over the fence as Wolff steels himself, following.

EXT. IRAQI PLANNING MINISTRY, ESTABLISHING - NIGHT

U.S. GUARDS stand staggered outside the AMERICAN-CONTROLLED monolith. This area will soon be known as the Green Zone.

INT. MAKESHIFT MESS HALL - A SHORT TIME LATER

Amid HOARDS of DINING SOLDIERS, we find Hobbs and Colonel Allison seated at a small table.

COLONEL ALLISON

Sorry about what happened today. I know that's the first boy you've lost.

Hobbs keeps chewing as the Colonel cradles a coffee canister.

HOBBS

Not hungry?

COLONEL ALLISON

Solids don't agree with me much these days. How are the other boys?

HOBBS

They're running a little hot.

COLONEL ALLISON

Did you know they're giving me my first star?

(then)

Yeah, confirmation hearing, the whole thing.

HOBBS

(obligatorily)

Guess they'll promote anybody.

The Colonel knows it's time to get to the point.

COLONEL ALLISON

I'm in a spot here, Dan. You know I hate this need-to-know bullshit. We just never thought this younger Wolff would take it this far.

Hobbs has stopped eating. He chooses his words carefully--

HOBBS

We're not worried about him sharing information, are we?

For the first time, Hobbs has questioned the order.

COLONEL ALLISON

In a way we are. You ever hear of a nonsense plane? It's a younger man's term I wish I never learned.

(off Hobbs)

February 26, 1991. I always thought it looked like a queer night for a plane to go down.

HOBBS

Wolff's older brother.

The Colonel swallows, steadying himself.

COLONEL ALLISON

Twelve years ago the stealth technology was coveted around the world. We'd been waiting years for a credible theater to drop a dummy plane.

HOBBS

What does that mean exactly?

COLONEL ALLISON
Faulty design, schematics. The
plan wasn't to end competing
programs, just to send their
engineers in the wrong direction.
(off Hobbs)
You wanna slow an advancing army?
How do you shoot?

HOBBS
(half in shock)
Shoot to wound, not kill.

COLONEL ALLISON
Worse for morale.

HOBBS
And Brian Wolff was in on it?

COLONEL ALLISON
He volunteered to help sell it.

CUT TO:

10,000 FEET from the earth. BRIAN WOLFF free-falls in his
pilot's uniform. He spins towards the surreal sight of a
STEALTH BOMBER, falling quietly through the VIOLET SKY. Calmly
euphoric, Brian turns away from the jet...STARS BRIGHT.

COLONEL ALLISON (V.O.)
The sight near the Marshlands was
chosen because 'A': we needed the
plane to be found, and 'B': we
needed the pilot to disappear.

Safely on the ground, Brian gathers his parachute, running
towards the smashed plane.

COLONEL ALLISON (V.O.)
He was supposed to parachute down
with the plane, run a few circles
around the wreck, and hide out
until we could retrieve him.

Through knee-high water and weeds, Brian sets out down a
BOUNTEOUS, MOONLIT STREAM.

BACK TO SCENE

HOBBS
That's why we didn't bomb it.

COLONEL ALLISON
We don't know for sure what
happened next.

(MORE)

COLONEL ALLISON (cont'd)
What we do know is that the Iraqi government sold pictures and pieces of the plane to the highest foreign bidders.

(then)
Our assumption today, is that these nations are none the wiser. Brian and Patrick Wolff represent loose ends that need to be tied.

HOBBS
But why assume the missing pilot was dead?

COLONEL ALLISON
The Iraqis claimed zero knowledge of the plane or its pilot. That put our government, at the highest level, in a very difficult position. Refusing to believe them - insisting he survived the crash - would mean revealing the plot.

HOBBS
(wryly)
Well, so long as it was worth it.

COLONEL ALLISON
Think of us like a great football team Dan. Number one rated offense - no one can touch us. But our defense is pretty damn average. You think NORAD could stand up to our own offensive technology? Christ, we're living in a golden-age. Our enemies are still carrying around bows and arrows.
(low)
It's far more important our enemies *don't* have this technology than we *do*. Now you know me, and I don't like these choices...but some things are worth more than one, even two soldiers' lives. Hell, that's what a kid signs up for.

Hobbs scans the YOUNG SOLDIERS around him.

HOBBS
(low)
I don't want to know this stuff.
This stuff is for you to worry about!

COLONEL ALLISON

(pressing on)

At this point in time - our nation
overextended as it is...this version
of history will be protected. And
those who protect are those who
survive. I taught you that, I know
I did. I put all my faith in you.
Now smarten up and return it to me.

(sharply)

End this thing for us. Promise me.

It's obvious Hobbs' resolve is cracking, his allegiance swaying.

HOBBS

We're not some fucking wet team.

COLONEL ALLISON

All I'm saying Danny...is why would
you pass up a shot on a man that
cost you one of your own?

HOBBS

I had the shot before I lost the man.

COLONEL ALLISON

Well...now it's after.

Hobbs stares off, no longer the leader we're used to seeing.
At the end of the day, he's just a field man. He NODS subtly.

EXT. AL HARSIA DISTRICT, BAGHDAD - NIGHT

Nasser walks ten feet ahead of Wolff, the Iraqi and the
American blending into a bizarre spring night. REBEL ROUSERS
cruise past in cars and trucks, as if celebrating a sporting
victory.

NASSER

Let me ask you a question.

WOLFF

Stay ahead.

NASSER

Okay, stay ahead.

(over his shoulder)

Why is it that marines never have
time for the shower, but can always
find time for the haircut?

(turning around))

You're darker than me, my friend.

Against his will, Wolff smiles wryly to himself. Just then, the marine cranes at a surreal sight: a SILVER MASERATI passes - FOUR TEENAGERS inside and ONE on the hood.

Wolff turns back to Nasser, finding the Baghdad native stopped at the sight of a MOSQUE. Wolff marvels at the ORNATE DOME and SPIRING MINARET. The TIGRIS flows quietly just beyond.

WOLFF
Is that it?

NASSER
Yes.

WOLFF
I need to make a phone call.

NASSER
Now?

WOLFF
Yeah. Now.

INT. PHONE BOOTH - MOMENTS LATER

Phone to his ear, Wolff waves Nasser away for his own safety. ARTILLERY SHELLS sound in the distance.

MRS. WOLFF/MOTHER (O.S.)
Hello?

WOLFF
Hi Mom.
(no response)
Mom?

MOTHER (O.S.)
Hi dear. How are you?

Mrs. Wolff is clearly masking a well of emotion at the sound of her son's voice.

WOLFF
Good. Things are going really well.

MOTHER (O.S.)
Are you coming home?

WOLFF
No Mom, not yet... I'm getting close.

MOTHER (O.S.)
You said you'd call on time.

WOLFF
I know. I will. I've just been--

MOTHER (O.S.)
These men are making me so nervous
Patrick. Why can't they find you?

WOLFF
What? What men?

MOTHER (O.S.)
Mr. Hobbs sent a man to the house.
Where are you that they can't find
you Patrick?

Wolff's face wrinkles in anger; he's going to have to hang up.

MOTHER (O.S.)
He said they're trying to find you.

WOLFF
Mom--

MOTHER (O.S.)
I don't understand. Why can't they
find you? Everything's supposed to
be over--

WOLFF
Mom I have to hang up.

MOTHER (O.S.)
I'm watching TV and there's still
fighting in the city so don't go
anywhere near there. Okay? Promise
me you'll stay away from there--

WOLFF
Okay, mom. I promise... I'll be okay.
(then; agonized)
I love you Mom.

Wolff hesitates, unable to hang up.

MOTHER (O.S.)
You're not a boy anymore, are you?

Wolff is blindsided, a nerve tapped.

WOLFF
No.

OUTSIDE THE BOOTH, Nasser turns knowingly, respectfully away.

WOLFF
I'm gonna find him, okay? Okay Mom?

MOTHER (O.S.)
Okay Paddy. Okay, you go and get him then.

Wolff crumples; it's what he's always yearned to hear. When he finally lifts his head, there's a 'will' in his eyes we've yet to see. He's got his mother behind him now.

INT. MEN'S ROOM, JOINT OPERATIONS CENTER - NIGHT

Lev bursts into the bathroom, finding Ulysses over a sink.

ULYSSES
What?

LEV
Hobbs was right. In the time Wolff was stationed at Ali Al, the intelligence section issued twice the normal rate of reports. High-profile officials, secret buildings, there're too many files.

ULYSSES
What do you got Lev?

LEV
Okay. Nearly half the reports list the same local source: Bassem Jarrar.

ULYSSES
Why does that sound familiar?

LEV
Well, we know him. He was with Hobbs when we targeted the prison.

INSERT:

EXT. HAKMIYAH PRISON (FROM OPENING SEQUENCE)

Hobbs pans his green-lensed 'targeting' camera right, revealing a MIDDLE-EASTERN FACE: NASSER (aka. BASSEM).

BACK TO SCENE

ULYSSES
He's just a kid.

Lev doesn't need to say 'I told you so.'

ULYSSES

Well, do we have anything on him?
A cell phone, anything?

LEV

We've got his home address.

ULYSSES

Alright, get after it.

(Lev starts away)

Lev. Take it to Agency first. Their
team's running the whole show now.

Lev can't believe his ears.

ULYSSES

That's from the top.

EXT. MOSQUE, ESTABLISHING - NIGHT

On the doorstep, Wolff checks his gear. His chest heaves -
his adrenaline flowing - which paralyzes Nasser.

WOLFF

Ready?

NASSER

(fibbing)

Yes.

WOLFF

Listen: you know how you're always
trying not to be angry?

Nasser nods: 'How did you know that?'

WOLFF

It's okay to be angry right now.
Let it go through you, my man.
Alright? Alright?!

Nasser gets it: a determined smile creeps up.

NASSER

Don't show them nothing else.

Ready or not, Wolff turns determinedly to the front door--

CUT TO:

BOOM! A BATTERED FRONT DOOR. Reveal--

INT. NASSER'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

The Turtle Man leads his men - SHOUTING as they storm the small home. Nasser's MOTHER appears quickly, finding the '2-Man' with a rifle in young SALEH's face.

3-MAN (O.S.)

Clear!

CLOSE on the Turtle Man; he's flushing out his prey.

INT. MAIN HALL, MOSQUE - NIGHT

Wolff and Nasser skip silently between tall pillars. Wolff follows candle light up to an ORNATE CEILING: 'So this is what the inside of a mosque looks like.' Then, LAUGHTER ahead--

INT. IMAM'S ROOM, MOSQUE - CONTINUOUS

FOUR IRAQI MEN, 50's, play cards at a table. They're having a hell of a time. Then slowly, one by one, they look up... Wolff stands before them, his bilingual RIFLE raised.

WOLFF

Tella eaduck.

The four men raise their hands. Wolff looks to his masked accomplice; Nasser shakes his head.

WOLFF

You don't see him?

Something in this windowless room has Nasser SPOOKED.

NASSER

(whispers)

That's him. There at the end.

Wolff stares at a FAT, SLICK-HAIRED MAN, 45. Finally, a FACE to put on all his hatred.

WOLFF

So what's wrong?

NASSER

It's all of them. They are all Fedayeen.

The marine keeps his M4 trained on 'THE FACE'.

WOLFF

You. Fat man, stand up.

The Face studies Wolff. It's several tense beats. Nasser pulls down on the base of his mask, feeling the EYES on him. The Fedayeen begin SHOUTING, CHASTISING Nasser for snitching.

WOLFF
Shut up! Inchev!

The Face rises, his eyes never leaving Wolff's.

WOLFF
C'mon out. Let's go.

The Face follows Wolff out of the Imam's room, into the CAVERNOUS MAIN HALL. Nasser quickly shuts the door, blocking it with a large desk. The Face stares blankly at Wolff.

WOLFF
Lift your shirt up. Spin around.

THE FACE
This is mistake. Sir? What I do to you? Sir?

No weapon on the Face. Wolff steps close - eye to eye - as if he might strike the man. Instead, he hands him a SKETCH. Wolff trembles as the Face stares at his brother's picture.

WOLFF
Did you know he had a younger brother? Did you cover that?

THE FACE
I'm sorry, I don't know what you mean.

Wolff BELTS him hard in the face, sending the man sprawling.

THE FACE
Please--

WOLFF
What would you do to him? Would you shock him? Huh? Stand up!

THE FACE
Please. I tell you, it's not me.

ANOTHER SHOT - this time to the gut. Wolff glances at Nasser - both men unsure of this course - as the Face recovers.

WOLFF
Fuck you! I know you know where he is!

Wolff hits him again with everything he has. Nasser looks on, repulsed.

INT. JOINT OPERATIONS CENTER - NIGHT

A GRUNT from 'Signals Intercept' weaves through the melee. He finds Lev concentrating at an elaborate control station.

GRUNT

We got a trace. Someone in Central Baghdad just called Wolff's mother.

He hands Lev a PRINTOUT.

LEV

Harsia District. Okay, nice job.

GRUNT

Do I give it to Agency?

LEV

Yeah, no I got it. I'll do it. Nice job.

Lev turns away, his mind - his *conscience* - racing.

INT. MAIN HALL, MOSQUE - CONTINUOUS

Wolff stands over the Face, both men exhausted.

THE FACE

Please, sir. Please. It's not me.

Wolff lands another PUNCH. His own resolve is crumbling.

WOLFF

(whispers to Nasser)

What do we do? I don't know what to do.

Nasser looks like he's going to be sick. He moves sullenly past Wolff. He stands before the Face - the man he has always feared - and REMOVES his wool mask.

NASSER

Do you know me?

The Face finally calms; no point in denying it now.

THE FACE

How did you two find each other?

NASSER

On the internet. He is going to
pay me ten thousand dollars if we
find his brother.

Despite his state, the Face begins to laugh. It verges on
the maniacal, as he resigns his life.

THE FACE

(to Wolff)

You spend six years looking for me?
What a waste of life. Your brother's--

(re: Nasser)

--his father's... yours, his, mine.
None of it is real.

WOLFF

What are you talking about?

THE FACE

It's not even a real plane.

WOLFF

Why? Why isn't it?

THE FACE

Do you have cigarette?

WOLFF

No.

THE FACE

(irritated)

I did worse than shock him.
Believe me. But he never speaks.

(to Nasser)

Even when he knows your father's
life depends. So I kill your
father in front of his brother.

(to Wolff)

And then I have him. Broken like
a baby.

Nasser looks helplessly to Wolff.

WOLFF

It's bullshit.

THE FACE

Bogus, he say. The plane is bogus.
Meant for us to spend years, and
millions, and embarrass ourselves to
our friends. We put smart men like
his father on an impossible job.

(to Nasser)

(MORE)

THE FACE (cont'd)
 And for the first time, I feel bad
 for my job, and what I do to you.
 Your father never had a chance.
 (re: Wolff)
 His country do this to you. His
 country.

Nasser looks frenziedly at Wolff. He raises the pistol Wolff
 has given him, turning it on the Face--

WOLFF
 Don't! Nasser please! Don't.

Nasser finally heels. The Face looks disappointed.

WOLFF
 Where's my brother?

THE FACE
 Dead. Even if he is not...you have
 nothing to offer me.

WOLFF
 You don't have to die here.

THE FACE
 I have seen his face. You're going
 to let me go. Go to jail perhaps?
 This is what I do, little Wolff.
 I know when someone is going to die.

Visibly weakened, Wolff now looks to Nasser for help.

NASSER
 You have two children. They live
 in the Mansour district. Your wife
 lives six blocks from my home.
 (re: Wolff)
 What do you think will happen if
 you give him nowhere else to go?
 You do this for a living, yes?
 Look in his eyes and ask if he will
 not find each one of them.

The Face does just that, not liking what he sees.

THE FACE
 (breaking; re: Wolff)
 Hah-lee yish-hed. Make him promise.

NASSER
 He promises.

Wolff nods, re-energized, but he's a step behind: 'What did
 they see in his eyes?'

THE FACE

(reluctantly)

In the first war, after the United States had left, there were stories of an American among the Ma'dan. He would fight alongside them, against us. When he was finally captured, it was decided he would not be made a martyr to the savages. He was kept alive.

WOLFF

Why did you keep it a secret?

THE FACE

What? We're going to return a man your country is not looking for?

(re: Nasser's father)

And, of course, we had work to do.

WOLFF

Please. If he's alive - if he was recaptured - where would he be?

THE FACE

All of the prisoners from Hakmiyah were moved underground. Higher and higher up the river. We did not expect you here so soon.

WOLFF

(desperately)

Where?

THE FACE

Ask the askaery.

WOLFF

(to Nasser)

What does that mean? Askaery?

NASSER

Like...warden.

WOLFF

I don't have time to find the fucking warden!

NASSER

Patrick!

WOLFF

What?!

NASSER
You can ask him now.

Nasser looks past the Face, to the blocked Imam's room.

NASSER
(to the Face)
The warden's in there, isn't he?

EXT. PHONEBOOTH, AL HARSIA DISTRICT - NIGHT

Hobbs stands outside Wolff's booth, scanning the vast cityscape: FIRES blend with pockets of 'spared' STREETLIGHT.

LEV (O.S.)
(in Hobbs' ear)
You've got a college, ministries,
an estate near there. No target
stands out.

HOBBS
What about Agency? Where's their
team?

LEV (O.S.)
I don't know. I checked their
video feeds; none of their
Predators are over Baghdad.

HOBBS
Wait a minute. Hang on.

HOBBS' BINOCULARS POV: we PAN from TWO PARKED SEDANS, through
a COURTYARD, to the TURTLE MAN outside the MOSQUE.

LEV (O.S.)
Dan... I know this kid cost us.
But I don't think Agency's
planning on just arresting him--

HOBBS
Mind your business son.

EXT. MOSQUE - CONTINUOUS

The Turtle Man's '2', '3' and '4' run silently through the
shadows around the building... Wolff is surrounded.

INT. MAIN HALL, MOSQUE - CONTINUOUS

Nasser pushes the desk away from the Imam's door. The Face
SHOUTS in Arabic - WARNING the THREE FEDAYEEN MEN not to
shoot - as Wolff PRODS him towards the door...

BOOM! Wolff kicks open the door...to SILENCE. The small room is EMPTY. Wolff scans the space: 'How can this be?'

ANOTHER BANG echoes through the front hall; SOMEONE has just entered the mosque. Wolff and Nasser listen behind, now.

INT. FOYER, MOSQUE - CONTINUOUS

The Turtle Man rushes into the MAIN HALL, towards the Imam's room. He speaks into a mike--

TURTLE MAN
I've got visual.

As we RUSH between the pillars, a FIGURE on the floor comes into focus: it's THE FACE - hands tied behind his back - staring up at the Turtle Man. The CIA operative removes a shirt from the prone man's mouth--

THE FACE
(re: Imam's room)
In there!

The Turtle Man enters the IMAM'S ROOM cautiously, finding it empty. He moves behind the Imam's desk, discovering a GRATE ripped off the lower wall. Down on his knees, the Turtle Man

FINDS a HOLE that SPIRALS DOWNWARD, into a dark abyss.

INT. BAGHDAD SEWERS - CONTINUOUS

Wolff leads Nasser down a DARK TUNNEL, tall enough for a subway car. A filthy stream flows over their boots. Then, the SOUND of a LIGHT BULB SMASHED ahead. The tunnel goes BLACK. Wolff pulls down his NVGs: we're alight in GREEN.

WOLFF
Don't make a sound.

Nasser nods, completely blind. Wolff edges forward, his 9MM curling around a bend... He finds ONE of the FEDAYEEN MEN - WEAPON drawn - waiting for a sound to fire.

Wolff steps nimbly forward - directly in the man's path... He's 15 feet away... 10 feet... 5... We're INCHES from the man's shaking face... Wolff puts his hand over the man's mouth, torquing him to the ground--

WOLFF
Shhhhhh.

The Fedayeen man slowly calms, his eyes still afire. Removing his NVGs, Wolff shines a FLASHLIGHT: there's a FORK ahead.

WOLFF
The warden. Askaery. Which way?

FEDAYEEN MAN
Shamehl. Left.

WOLFF
Where's he going?

FEDAYEEN MAN
To his flock.

Wolff looks up at Nasser: 'Is it possible?'

WOLFF
Is there a white man there?
(then)
Is there a white man!?

FEDAYEEN MAN
Yes! Okay. Yes.

Wolff rises, staring down the DARKER PATH.

NASSER
Patrick, I'd like to go home--

WOLFF
What? No, we're this close--

NASSER
I need to go home.

WOLFF
Listen to me. You gotta be tough -
you're the man of your house.
Think of your family--

NASSER
I am thinking of them Patrick.
I would like to see them again.

Wolff is stunned. This Iraqi boy, thrown together with him, sees his duty differently. Wolff stares down the PATH TO THE RIGHT, light leaking around the bend.

WOLFF
Okay. Okay, you're gonna go right.
(re: 9MM)
And you're gonna take this...

INT. IMAM'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

We've joined a SCREAMING MATCH in progress. The Turtle Man's '3' and '4' square off against Hobbs' and co.

3 MAN
Stand down!

RENFREE
(re: 3 Man's weapon)
I'll fuckin' feed you that!

HOBBS
Enough! Enough!!
(to the Face)
What's down there?

THE FACE
Just sewers, from the old city.
We use them to move around.

Hobbs SEES the SKETCH in the Face's hand, taking it for himself.

HOBBS
How far ahead is Wolff?

THE FACE
Only minutes.

Hobbs unloads some of his gear, nodding for Anwar to follow.

3-MAN
My boss is down there, there's no
way I'm letting you go--

The 3-Man GRABS Hobbs; Renfree THROWS the 3-Man against the wall.

HOBBS
I know he's down there. Give me a
pro word.

Hobbs puts his PISTOL under the 3-Man's chin.

HOBBS
One of your pro words. Right now son.

The 3-Man manages a smile, even as his throat is squeezed.
The 4-Man, a little younger than the rest, cracks--

4-MAN
Hoosier.

INT. SEWER - CONTINUOUS

The Turtle Man and his '2' move carefully through the slow-flowing filth. They SEE the FORK, but there's a NOISE behind--

HOBBS (O.S.)
(faint)
Hoosier! Hoosier!

The Turtle Man stays facing forward, his 2 aiming back.

TURTLE MAN
The fuck are they doing down here?

Both CIA men stand dumbfounded as Hobbs and Anwar arrive.

TURTLE MAN
Hobbs?

HOBBS
You've got the lead, we're just
backing you up.

TURTLE MAN
You jeopardize us like that?

HOBBS
You can write me up when this is over.

CUT TO:

DOWN THE RIGHT (LIT) TUNNEL,
Nasser trembles, his handgun in the back of the Fedayeen man.

NASSER
(Arabic; subtitled)
On your knees. Hands on your head.

Nasser looks back fearfully, over his shoulder...

BACK TO SCENE

HOBBS, RENFREE, the TURTLE MAN and his '2' react to GUNSHOTS.
The Turtle Man and his second immediately follow the sound,
down the RIGHT TUNNEL. Anwar looks to Hobbs--

HOBBS
Go with them.

AROUND a LONG BEND, the operatives find TWO MEN ON THEIR
KNEES, hands behind their heads. We track past the men,
revealing NASSER next to the FEDAYEEN MAN. The operatives
have been led astray - down the wrong tunnel.

BACK AT THE FORK, Hobbs moves down the DARK PATH, stepping on
bits of BROKEN LIGHT BULB. Suddenly, MUSIC booms ahead.

FURTHER DOWN the DARK PATH, we're with WOLFF. The MUSIC
THUMPS louder here - before suddenly stopping. After a
calculating beat, Wolff begins to RUN towards the sound, when--

BLAM! Wolff is grazed by a bullet, sending his NVGs flying.
The SHOTS CONTINUE as he reaches blindly for the goggles.

He finds them, and finds ANOTHER FEDAYEEN firing wildly from the base of a wall-mounted ladder. Wolff is accurate, killing the man with ONE SHOT...

HOBBS rounds a corner, finding Wolff in a FRENZY; the young marine's nerves are shattered. He's KICKING the man he has shot.

HOBBS

Patrick!

Hobbs moves towards Wolff, his WEAPON never wavering. Wolff holds up his hands, devastated.

WOLFF

He was shooting at me...

Alone with Wolff, it's clear: Hobbs doesn't have a plan.

HOBBS

(empathetically)

They're all shooting at you, aren't they?

Wolff nods emotionally, cracking in the face of compassion--

WOLFF

(child-like)

Yeah.

He looks back, over his shoulder - the Turtle Man is coming.

HOBBS

It's over son.

WOLFF

Please, he's right here! I know he is! I know he didn't die--

HOBBS

You're putting us all in danger--

WOLFF

(crying)

You know it too! You know he's still alive! I know you know it! He's right here...

It's a shot to Hobbs' gut. He presses on, still aimed at Wolff--

HOBBS

(re: Wolff's weapon)

Just lay it down.

Wolff bows his head, broken. He came so close. And then--

WOLFF

No. I can't.

HOBBS

They're coming son, now lay it down!

WOLFF

No... No way.

HOBBS

Lay it down!!

WOLFF

I can't!!

Hobbs can't believe it; this kid has no quit.

WOLFF

(to himself)

I promised her... I promised her...

Hobbs face tenses, his finger TIGHTENS on the trigger. His career flashes before his eyes. And then...he LETS IT GO. He lowers his weapon, approaching Wolff slowly--

WOLFF

Just let me go. I haven't asked anybody for anything. Let me finish it...

HOBBS

(calmly; re: ladder)

You think your brother's up there?

WOLFF

(stunned)

Yes sir.

Against his training - against his *will* - Hobbs only nods.

HOBBS

I'm gonna go first. Alright?

Wolff nods, relieved. He's tired of clearing the path.

UP THE LADDER,

Hobbs finds a flue-like vent; it's as if he's climbing out of an INVERTED CHIMNEY. He pushes SMOOTH ROCKS out of the way; they CLANK together with a familiar sound. As he claws further out, we SEE that these ROCKS are actually PINS. Hobbs has just pulled himself onto a-

BOWLING LANE. TACKY FLUORESCENT LIGHTS cast an eerie feel. Wolff follows, sharing a look with Hobbs as they move in tandem, covering each other.

Hobbs moves up a staircase, finding a LOCKED DOOR. Wolff, meanwhile, moves to the--

NEXT ROOM. SUDDENLY it BURSTS TO LIFE: A DISCO BALL swirls above a DANCE FLOOR as TRANCE MUSIC BLARES. Hobbs hurries to cover Wolff, but no threat emerges. Both men fix on the sight of a GAUDY, OVERSIZED, ROUND BED. Hobbs approaches disgustedly, checking underneath, when--

SHOTS SOUND ahead. Wolff finds the DOOR to the NEXT ROOM locked. He steps aside as Hobbs blows it open, then charges through, into--

An UNDERGROUND PRISON. The WARDEN stands profile to Wolff, FIRING into an UNSEEN CELL. It's as if he's shooting fish in a barrel. The Warden turns to a petrified Wolff, then SNAPS VIOLENTLY BACKWARD. Hobbs has fired over Wolff's shoulder.

On his back, the Warden stares up at Wolff - convulsing from Hobbs' continuing fire - before BLOWING his own head off.

Reduced to nothingness, Wolff wades forward. What's around the corner? What's in that cell? He's nearly there, when--

TURTLE MAN

(over the music)

Drop your weapon! Down! On your
fucking knees!

Wolff complies slowly. As he lays his chest down, he sees a PILE OF HUDDLED BODIES - perhaps TWO DOZEN - inside the cell. On top: FAMISHED, BLOOD-SOAKED, LIFELESS PRISONERS. The 'lucky' ones push out from underneath. No sign of Brian Wolff.

Patrick Wolff looks back at Hobbs as his ARMS ARE TIED behind his back. Nothing the SOF leader can do. It opens a floodgate; Wolff begins crying unabashedly, WHALING over the BLARING MUSIC. It's almost more than Hobbs can take.

HOBBS

Turn it off! Kill the fucking music!

Suddenly the music dies. Wolff tries to subdue himself - hiding his face in the cold ground - over the deafening SILENCE.

DISSOLVE TO:

Up a dark staircase, a DOOR opens to ANGELIC LIGHT. REVEAL--

INT. ATRIUM, AL SUJUD PALACE - DAWN

First light breaks through THREE-STORY WINDOWS, onto crystal and ivory. Guided by CIA and SOF operatives alike, CADAVEROUS PRISONERS walk awestruck past a MARBLE STAIRCASE, between GILDED PILLARS, capturing a view of--

A MASSIVE POOL on a TERRACE. AMERICAN SOLDIERS - unaware of the new guests - celebrate their spoils. A NAKED SOLDIER springs off a diving board, to the HOLLERS of his friends. One by one, the lounging soldiers pause at the sight of the emerging prisoners. It's been years since these forgotten men have seen the sun.

LATER, Wolff sits comatose in handcuffs, away from the sparkling pool. He looks up as a SHADOW LOOMS--

NASSER

I wasn't going to make you pay me
the ten thousand...if we had found
your brother.

WOLFF

It's okay.

NASSER

They're letting me go. I'm taking
my family.

WOLFF

Where?

NASSER

My father left us enough to leave.
I don't know where our home will be
but I know it is not here.

Anwar waits to escort Nasser off.

NASSER

I would like to see New York
someday. Your family is from...?

WOLFF

Oregon.

NASSER

Is this close to New York?

WOLFF

Yeah. Close enough.

NASSER

I hope I will see you, my friend.
And I will think of your mother's
face when she sees you again.

Wolff nearly smiles.

WOLFF

I owe you more than ten grand.

Nasser shakes his head as he's lead away, past a row of BODIES UNDER WHITE SHEETS, to a--

TRIAGE AREA. MEDICS attend to a ROW of FREED PRISONERS. The Turtle Man's team poses glibly for pictures, not *with* the prisoners, but standing over them - like hunters over animals.

Down the long line, Hobbs stands shiftily, HIDING something in his hand. Whatever it is, Wolff rises, confused. We SEE that Hobbs is carrying WOLFF'S SKETCH. He moves slyly down the line, giving each prisoner a good look at BRIAN WOLFF. Then, suddenly, a MURMUR behind Hobbs. He returns to TWO EMACIATED, LONG-BEARDED MEN (we'll soon learn they are MA'DAN).

MA'DAN MAN #1
Ragil min il samah.

MA'DAN MAN #2
Ah.

MA'DAN MAN #1
(pointing at sketch)
Ragil min il samah!

Hobbs looks around, finding a nearby FEMALE INTERPRETER--

HOBBS
Hey, come here. What's he saying?

MADAN MAN #2
Ragil min il samah!

FEMALE INTERPRETER
Man from the sky...
(then; confidently)
Man from the heavens.

Wolff watches from afar, Renfree at his side--

WOLFF
(wanting to be included)
Hey. Hey!!

RENFREE
Shut your mouth.

Renfree clearly bears hard feelings over Newbs' death.

HOBBS
(re: sketch)
When did they last see him?

The interpreter ASKS and LISTENS. Then--

FEMALE INTERPRETER

Two days ago. There was a bomb.
American bomb. He was taken.

HOBBS

Before that.

FEMALE INTERPRETER

They've been moved together...
underground...
(disbelieving)
Ten years underground.

HOBBS

Ask how they know him.

The Ma'dan men ANSWER the interpreter reverently.

FEMALE INTERPRETER

He fought with us...for our home.
He's our brother.

HOBBS

Where is home?

FEMALE INTERPRETER

Baytak fein?

MADAN MAN #1

Ma Ma'dan.

Hobbs shakes his head slowly; he can barely believe it.

WOLFF (O.S.)

Hey!!

Hobbs can't look at Wolff; his own mind races.

RENFREE (O.S.)

Boss!

The CIA team is moving out, and they're taking Wolff along.

HOBBS

(rushing over)

That's my collar, Turtle Man!

TURTLE MAN

The hell it's yours! This was my
operation you crashed - he's our
man now!

WOLFF

(to Hobbs; re: Ma'dan)

Who are those men?

HOBBS

Shut up.

(to Turtle Man; aside)

You wanna talk to him? Go ahead.

But this is my guy.

TURTLE MAN

You're under orders to hand him over--

HOBBS

I never got that order.

Hobbs noticeably removes his earpiece, shutting out Colonel Allison and company.

TURTLE MAN

Well, whether you did or you didn't, you're still at theater-level command. My orders are straight from D.C.

Hobbs feels all eyes - *his* men, the CIA men - on him.

HOBBS

Okay, you rolled him up, it's your show.... But I lost a man to this kid. Let me take him in for you.

The Turtle Man looks disgusted by his former idol's groveling.

HOBBS

You boys stay in the game. You've still got the older one to find, right?

TURTLE MAN

You know, I used to hear *this* and *that* about Dan Hobbs. Look at you now. Can't even protect your own team.

Hobbs absorbs the blow, to the humiliation of Renfree and Anwar. The Turtle Man's '2, 3 and 4' stand gloating.

TURTLE MAN

Maybe you're right. Maybe you've stayed a little too long.

HOBBS

Maybe so... Now there's a half-dozen journalists on their way; I'm sure they'd love to hear all this. Or we can be on our separate ways. Let it be finished.

TURTLE MAN

(to Hobbs)

We're working together *now*, aren't we?

(to Wolff)

You had your fun kid? Huh? He's gone. Nobody's fault. Go home to your momma.

HOBBS

(to Renfree; re: Wolff)

Get him outta my sight.

Renfree **SHOVES** Wolff away.

WOLFF

Wait.

RENFREE

(trust me)

Just keep walking.

The pair passes a 2ND LIEUTENANT, 35, coaching THREE YOUNG, CONVENTIONAL SOLDIERS for their upcoming interviews:

2ND LT.

Listen up. You found them all in the same cell. One of you - you decide - found the stairs that led down...

EXT. PALACE GATE - A SHORT TIME LATER

A MOTORCADE of JOURNALISTS filters through SAND BAGS and CHICKEN WIRE. Out their windows, WOLFF is clearly visible, slumped in the passenger seat of Hobbs' waiting vehicle. The journalists stare at him blankly - forever unknowing of his tale - as they enter the lush grounds.

Wolff is startled as he's suddenly joined by Hobbs in the car--

WOLFF

What were they saying?

Hobbs hesitates, taking his hand off the ignition.

HOBBS

You think your brother's still alive?

Wolff is caught off guard; he's still a beaten man. Then--

WOLFF

Yes.

HOBBS

If he is alive; if he escaped us all that night; where would he be headed?

WOLFF
Home. Right?

HOBBS
(heavily)
What if somehow, this place became
his home? Those men were Ma'dan.
They lived with him for ten years
down there. They called him their
brother, too.

Hurt and anger alternate on Wolff's face.

WOLFF
You think he's going back to the
Marshlands?

HOBBS
Yes.

Wolff has missed it all along - and he's blaming himself.

WOLFF
You figured it out? Just like that?

HOBBS
It's just a theory. If you would've
heard those men--

WOLFF
I never thought of it... I don't
know why.

HOBBS
You're the one who brought us here.

Wolff looks off, the pieces finally falling into place.

WOLFF
Did you know it wasn't even a real
plane?

HOBBS
Yeah, I heard that.

WOLFF
So... Does that mean he chose to
go away?

EXT. IRAQI DESERT - DAY

A DOZEN CRAMPED PASSENGERS ride in a truck's flatbed, captive
to the draining sun. Down the line - Are they prisoners? - a
GAUNT MAN stares off, his PALE SKIN visible between MATTED
LOCKS of hair... it's BRIAN WOLFF.

The truck pulls to the side of a barely-there road. Brian RISES - just a hitchhiker - limping down to scorched earth. He watches the truck off, turning to a vast desert:

A STREAM cuts through the sand, towards the horizon. With the clothes on his back, Brian Wolff starts into the unknown.

INT. JOINT OPERATIONS CENTER - DAY

The room is starting to fill again, an event in the making. Intel Head Ulysses paces nervously behind the control stations.

LEV
(methodically)
How copy, over? Dan are you there?

Lev shakes his head at Ulysses. A boyish ASSISTANT OPERATIONS OFFICER (Asst. OpsO), 28, holds out a phone for the Colonel--

ASST. OPSO
Sir? It's the Secretary.

The Colonel nearly breaks into a sweat before our eyes.

COLONEL ALLISON
Take a message.

ULYSSES
(re: Hobbs)
Why isn't he answering? This is a fucking disgrace.

LEV
(defending Hobbs)
They just found two dozen--

ULYSSES
I don't care what they just found, we're gonna have a different war on our hands in a second--

HOBBS (O.S.)
(on speakers; distorted)
Sorry about that--

LEV
Quiet!

The intelligence room grinds to a halt.

HOBBS (O.S.)
Alright, calm down boys. We're back online.

LEV

Dan, did you just take Wolff from the site?

HOBBS (O.S.)

That's affirmative, he's with us.

LEV

We've lost jurisdiction Dan. You're to return to the site and hand him over to Agency.

HOBBS (O.S.)

Sure. As soon as I speak to the Colonel on a secure line.

Ulysses turns to Colonel Allison; Hobbs' old friend looks stupefied. Ulysses nearly rips the receiver off Lev's head--

ULYSSES

Sergeant Major this is the J2. Your direct order is to turn around immediately. Do you hear me?

(no reply)

There is no grey here, Sergeant Major. This is your career you're driving away from.

Ulysses is suddenly self-conscious in the quiet room.

ULYSSES

You wanna force my hand here, Dan? Do you know really what you're doing?

HOBBS (O.S.)

Just waiting for the Colonel, now.

ULYSSES

This is not a negotiation.

HOBBS (O.S.)

No, it isn't.

The speakers 'click'.

LEV

He's gone.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - DUSK

Hobbs pulls off a road less traveled, into the partial shade of a leafless tree - it's branches reaching upwards. Sumerians in ancient Mesopotamia would call it a 'Tree of Truth.'

Wolff watches Hobbs check his rearview, re-check his comms.

HOBBS

Don't go sitting there, getting your hopes too high.

(off Wolff)

I can't help you find him after today.

WOLFF

My mother spends most of everyday staring into nothing, wondering what happened to her son. I never expected to bring him home. Half the reason I carry this picture is 'cause I barely remember him. I just wanted to be able to go home and tell her what happened.

HOBBS

And you're out from that shadow.

Wolff takes a moment, confronted by this truth.

WOLFF

(confessing)

Yes sir.

In another life, Wolff would be welcome on Hobbs' team.

COLONEL ALLISON (O.S.)

(in Hobbs' ear)

Danny boy.

HOBBS

Colonel?

COLONEL ALLISON (O.S.)

What's going on out there, Dan?

Hobbs passes an earpiece to Wolff, INCLUDING HIM.

HOBBS

You knew he was alive, didn't you sir? From the beginning.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. JOINT OPERATIONS CENTER - DAY

The Colonel retreats to a corner of the busy nerve center. Ulysses hovers obediently nearby.

COLONEL ALLISON

I never lied to you Dan. I was trying to protect you...from things that should stay in the black.

Wolff looks anxiously to Hobbs.

COLONEL ALLISON
 Alright. I deal you in - you bring
 the boy in. Okay, Dan?

HOBBS
 From the beginning.

The Colonel steels himself.

COLONEL ALLISON
 At the very least, we know he
 survived the first day.

HOBBS
 We all know that--

COLONEL ALLISON
 No. We knew because he called us.

Wolff's already busting at the seams.

COLONEL ALLISON
 You already know where it happened.
 In the middle of those damn marshes.

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. IRAQI DESERT - DUSK

Brian Wolff - an old man now - stands bleary-eyed at the end
 of a stream. His yellow brick road has dried up. In the
 distance, strewn WRECKAGE comes into focus. *His* wreckage.

COLONEL ALLISON (O.S.)
 Planning started months beforehand.
 Nobody thought to check if we'd be
 dropping him square into a genocide.

Brian moves reverently between the remaining, sacred pieces.
 We SEE him slowly remembering. Eleven years of confinement
 have the pilot - above all else - SIMPLER.

COLONEL ALLISON
 It was the end of the war, remember.
 There were droves of Iraqi units
 retreating from Kuwait. They were
 torching the Marshlands on their way.
 Killing, raping - you name it. Brian
 Wolff witnessed what we only learned
 years later... We think he somehow
 became engaged in the fight.

HOBBS

Based on what?

COLONEL ALLISON

According to Wolff himself, he hit the ground pretty hard. Shattered a few things. These... *marsh savages* nursed him back.

(then)

I was the one who declared him killed in action - less than a week before he finally called. But I also offered him a last pick up point... He wasn't interested in setting up a new time or place.

HOBBS

He wanted support for them.

COLONEL ALLISON

Our bags were packed at that point in the war. A conventional insertion was out of the question.

(then)

Whatever he saw - whatever bond he formed with these people who sheltered him - I swear we never heard from him again.

HOBBS

So we washed our hands and left him there.

COLONEL ALLISON

In hindsight...in his eyes...yes.

Hobbs has forgotten that Wolff is sitting next to him. He turns to find the young soldier fighting back tears.

HOBBS

That's why he walked away from us.

COLONEL ALLISON

Over the years we've interviewed a number of people who claim to have seen the pilot in Iraqi jails. Some claim he was moving through the Marshlands for months before he was rolled up. Most of these folk-hero stories fall apart - just recited verse. These marsh people, the ah--

HOBBS

Ma'dan.

COLONEL ALLISON

Who knows what goes on in there?
It's all legends and ghost stories
and medieval shit. It's an intel
man's nightmare. Anyway, nothing
to change his status from K.I.A.

HOBBS

Why didn't you change it when he
called?

COLONEL ALLISON

(stumbling)

Well, the family's allowed death
benefits this way--

HOBBS

Sir. Why couldn't you change it?

COLONEL ALLISON

(snapping)

Goddamn it, because he defected. Do
you know what that means? An
American officer, under my charge.
Do you know what that would've done
to me? Christ, I couldn't stomach
that Dan - I didn't deserve that.
Dead or defected, what difference
did it make? This country didn't
need that then, at the end of that
war... You think we need it now?
At the start of this one?

HOBBS

What I think, sir, is that even now
...you're still trying to convince
yourself you did the right thing.

COLONEL ALLISON

Easy there Dan. I trusted you
here, now bring him in--

Hobbs removes his earpiece, motioning Wolff to do the same.
The SOF leader gives Wolff a moment to collect himself.

HOBBS

Okay?
(then; soldierly)
Y'alright?

WOLFF

Yes sir.

The other SOF vehicle arrives. Inside, we SEE the MA'DAN MEN
from the palace. Hobbs steps out to greet them.

HOBBS
(re: Ma'dan)
Get'em out.

Strangely, Renfree and Anwar stay put.

HOBBS
End of the line for you boys.
I appreciate the thought - now
open the door.

RENFREE
(rolling down window)
It's these power locks. I can't
figure them out over here.

Hobbs knows his men's loyalty.

HOBBS
Guys: I'm an old man. I've had my
fun. You follow me off this road...

RENFREE
We never had a choice. That's what
I'm going with.
(to Anwar)
What about you?

ANWAR
(thousand-yard stare)
The old man never gave us a choice.

Hobbs asks Renfree again - this time without words. He
knows his 'second's' ambition. Renfree nods subtly. Then--

ANWAR
He lost his fucking mind out there.

HOBBS
Alright, I got it.

Hobbs peers in at the uncomprehending Ma'dan.

HOBBS
Let's take'em home.

INT. JOINT OPERATIONS CENTER - CONTINUOUS

Ulysses waits for an answer from a dazed Colonel Allison.

ULYSSES
Sir? Sir, I need a directive.

COLONEL ALLISON
Give me another move. What other
moves do we have?

Allison looks pleadingly - even to young Lev. No one wants
to be a Colonel right now.

COLONEL ALLISON
Yeah...everybody's quiet now. No
Generals here? Nobody wants their
first star.
(to himself; sardonically)
We all sign up for it, don't we?

The Colonel turns to Ulysses, giving a somber 'Go-ahead.'

ULYSSES
(to an Operator)
Get me my opposite at Agency.
(to Lev; re: Hobbs)
Where are they headed?

A monitor displays a BLINKING DOT.

LEV
They're not moving.

ULYSSES
Bullshit, they dumped us. I know
where they're going.
(to Asst. OpsO)
You. Show me on this map. Where's
the stealth wreckage?

ASST. OPSO
Roughly, um... Here.

The assistant points to a SPOT not far from HOBBS' DOT.

ULYSSES
That's it. He's showing Wolff the
wreckage.

LEV
Wolff's the one who showed it to us.

ULYSSES
Well, what the fuck are they doing?
(into phone)
Yeah, this is the J2. We've got a
SOF team--
(searching)
--We're not aware of their operational
status. Yeah, that's them. As of
now...we are cutting them adrift.
(MORE)

ULYSSES (cont'd)
 (to Lev)
 Send them the last location.

Lev has just been asked to pull the trigger on his own team.
Ulysses stays on the phone, answering a question--

 ULYSSES
 No. What channel?
 (to Asst. OpsO)
 Agency has a predator over the
 wreckage... Guess they agree with me.

Colonel Allison watches disgustedly, having signed Hobbs' death warrant. The assistant tunes in a DRONE FEED. On the screen, an 'ANT' moves between a litter of metal--

 ASST. OPSO
 Oh shit.

 ULYSSES
 What is that?

 LEV
 It's a person.

EXT. WRECKAGE SIGHT, DESERT - DUSK

Staring skyward, Brian Wolff cranes down to the PATH he trod twelve years previous; DRY EARTH where a stream once flowed to the Marshlands. A LONG FISSURE in the earth extends to the horizon, leaving at least a trace.

Finally, he starts down the desiccated path.

EXT. DESERT, SOUTHEAST OF BAGHDAD - CONTINUOUS

The unmarked SOF vehicles cruise over hard-packed sand, deeper into the unknown. Hobbs and Wolff stare silently into the DIMMING HORIZON.

 WOLFF
 Did you speak to my mother?

 HOBBS
 Not personally. You wanna call her?

 WOLFF
 No. I call her at set times.

 HOBBS
 Anybody else? No girls?

 WOLFF
 Only girls I know are seventeen.

HOBBS

Right. Well not anymore though,
right? Now she's all grown up.

WOLFF

No, there is no... I've never had
a girlfriend.

It makes sense, but still catches Hobbs off guard.

HOBBS

Well, you don't want'em anyway.
They turn into wives who let your
next door neighbor drive your car...
sleep in your bed when your
daughters are away.

WOLFF

You better get back there.

HOBBS

I seem to be working on it.

Wolff takes in the passing terrain: it's GREEN now.

WOLFF

I'm sorry about Newbs.

Hobbs absorbs the apology.

HOBBS

That was for show back there. Anyway
you're going back too. Like it or
not, I gotta return this team before
they find us on their own. I don't
want this thing settled out here.

WOLFF

You're in pretty big trouble, heh?

HOBBS

I suppose I'm in your boat now.
You might have to show me how you
got out of those court-martials.

WOLFF

Yeah, you can bargain with them.
If you know something.

HOBBS

With what I know now... Christ,
they may have to promote me.

WOLFF

Or kill you.

Wolff isn't trying to be rude, he just means it.

HOBBS

We make it back to base - I expect we'll both be swept under the rug. Anyway, better to face that kind of music than the Turtle Man's.

Wolff is in a dreamworld, contemplating his fate.

WOLFF

No, I think I'm fucked this time.

HOBBS

You'll see. I bet they put somebody on your flight. You'll spot him. He'll buddy up to you - talk about your favorite team - then he'll offer you a deal: keep your mouth shut and go straight home. It's up to you, but I'd take it. I'd start thinking about who you wanna look up; what you wanna do with your real life.

For the first time in years, Wolff thinks about it.

WOLFF

I'd like to go to school. If I'm not too old. Maybe join the Reserves so they can pay for it.

HOBBS

You been in service-- what? Seven years? You send your checks home?

WOLFF

To my mom. She won't touch'em though.

HOBBS

Seven years at your pay grade... You may be able to afford school.

WOLFF

Is it a lot?

HOBBS

About a hundred grand.

Wolff smiles to himself; a LAUGH escapes.

WOLFF

Forget school.

Hobbs checks his rearview mirror: the other SOF vehicle follows.

WOLFF

What about you? What're you gonna do?

Wolff has unknowingly tapped Hobbs' greatest fear.

HOBBS

Don't know. This is my real life.

(then)

When we get there, I want you to watch these men with their families.

You pulled them out of the ground, and you should remember that if...

If we don't find anything else to tell your mother.

EXT. EDGE OF MARSHLANDS - MAGIC HOUR

A MA'DAN ELDER, 65, uses a long pole to advance down a narrow stream. Atop the embankment, the AMERICAN CARS pass.

Behind Renfree and Anwar, the Ma'dans spark to life.

RENFREE

What are they saying?

ANWAR

We're almost there.

Then, in the distance, the ethereal beauty of a

MA'DAN VILLAGE. Torches illuminate DOZENS of THATCH HUTS on beds of reed, buoying down a lush river like floating candles... A way of life unchanged in 5,000 years.

Hobbs brakes at a distance as Ma'dan VILLAGERS begin to congregate. Dressed in colorful robes, CHILDREN are scurried behind ADULTS. Wolff steps out of the car slowly, as exotic to the Ma'dan as they are to him. The two Ma'dan passengers remove a BODY shrouded in a white sheet. They hoist the drowned man above their shoulders.

No longer threatened, the villagers come forward, swarming the fallen Ma'dan. One of the freed prisoners breaks away, falling into the arms of his OVERJOYED FATHER. Wolff takes it all in...forgetting himself for a moment.

EXT. RIVER EMBANKMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT

Through waist-high weeds, BRIAN WOLFF emerges. He has forged his way to the MARSHLANDS. Over a bend, the Ma'dan village appears before him. A string of TORCHES along the river leads to a POLESTAR of LIGHT...a gathering.

Brian steps quietly down a beaten path, stopping suddenly: he SEES the parked AMERICAN VEHICLES.

INT. JOINT OPERATIONS CENTER - CONTINUOUS

CIA's drone has followed the 'ant', Brian Wolff, all the way to the Marshlands. Our intel men squint at the live feed--

LEV

Oh no.

ASST. OPSO

What?

COLONEL ALLISON

That's us, isn't it? Those are our cars.

Lev instinctively grabs his headset; he needs to warn Hobbs.

ULYSSES

Don't. Don't you dare.

LEV

(to Colonel; pleadingly)
Sir, this is Agency's feed. You know they're seeing this. Don't leave us out there like this.

The beleaguered Colonel wilts. He turns away, abandoning Hobbs.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

Headlights off, the CIA vehicles speed through the desert. Inside, the Turtle Man dons a black vest.

TURTLE MAN

(into radio)

What are we - ten, twenty minutes out?
Okay, what do you see? Alright, don't make it too easy for us.

(to his men)

Boys? Who's up for killing two birds with one stone?

INT. MA'DAN CATHEDRAL - CONTINUOUS

We pull away from the DROWNED MA'DAN MAN, revealing an ornate, cathedral-like room made entirely of REEDS. PRAYING MA'DAN hum a low, haunting dirge.

On the fringe of the vigil - just outside the doors - Hobbs, Renfree, Anwar and Wolff look on as honored guests.

BRIAN WOLFF'S POV: the COLORFUL VIGIL comes into focus.

Ever alert, Hobbs hears a RUSTLE above the din. Behind him, across the river, a FIGURE steps weakly forward.

With his matted hair and ghostlike frame, Hobbs might not recognize the man had they not already met.

HOBBS
(astonished)
No.

Wolff turns slowly, finding the man observing the ceremony, completely still. The man's FACE flickers in torch light.

WOLFF
(to Hobbs)
What?

Wolff simply doesn't recognize him. Anwar and Renfree take a step forward; *they* do.

WOLFF
(dawning on him)
What?

Wolff wants Hobbs to say it out loud; he's too afraid to believe it.

BRIAN WOLFF'S POV: Blocking the vigil, the American operatives he fled only days previous. The ONE he *doesn't* recognize steps tentatively forward, into the river...

At first recoiling, something keeps Brian on the shore. He watches the water recede from the approaching man's waist... to his knees... It's Patrick's WELLING EYES - still full of worship - that give him away.

PATRICK WOLFF
Hi Bri...
(a beat)
Bri?

Words don't come easily to Brian; he's still in rough shape.

BRIAN WOLFF
...Paddy?

PATRICK WOLFF
Are you okay?

BRIAN WOLFF
What are you...?

PATRICK WOLFF
I told Mom I'd come get you...I
didn't mean to take so long.

Patrick means to laugh, but it's mostly tears. He steps forward, prompting Brian - just a shell now - to retreat.

BRIAN WOLFF
You're a soldier now?

PATRICK WOLFF
Sort of. Not really.

BRIAN WOLFF
How'd you get here?

PATRICK WOLFF
I found your plane. And then--

BRIAN WOLFF
You're gonna get hurt over here.

Patrick didn't expect this: disapproval.

PATRICK WOLFF
I'm okay.

BRIAN WOLFF
(re: Hobbs)
You're with them?

PATRICK WOLFF
They're gonna help us get back.

BRIAN WOLFF
(shaking his head)
Back where?

It's a SHOT to Patrick's gut. Frightened, he looks back
ACROSS THE RIVER, to Hobbs--

HOBBS
(to Anwar)
Keep him over there. I don't know
if he's a hero - a ghost to these
people - don't let them see him.
(to Renfree)
Switch on. See if anyone's answering.

RENFREE
Why? They'll know where we are.

Too tired to argue, Hobbs 'opens' his own radio.

INT. JOINT OPERATIONS CENTER - CONTINUOUS

HOBBS (O.S.)
How copy, over? This is Hobbs,
how copy over?

Lev, Ulysses, and Colonel Allison stand before the WALL of
MONITORS, as if watching a heart-wrenching scene from a film.

In fact, they're watching the TURTLE MAN'S VEHICLES charge through the desert, towards the Marshlands.

HOBBS (O.S.)
Colonel, if you're there... I'm
with them both. Both brothers. I
don't think it has to be this way.
They don't want any attention.

Lev's in agony, unable to warn Hobbs. He locks eyes with the Colonel. The older man totters before TURNING COWARDLY AWAY.

HOBBS (V.O.)
Anyone there? How copy, over?

Lev looks at the Asst. Ops0 as if to say 'Nice knowing you.'
He grabs his receiver--

LEV
Dan, they already know he's there!
They're on top of you! Four of them--

Ulysses LUNGES for the receiver--

LEV
They know both of them are there!

A GUARD helps Ulysses wrestle the receiver away. Lev doesn't struggle, resigned to his fate as he's ushered from the room.

ULYSSES
Well done! You're done! That's
your fucking career!

The Colonel ignores the ruckus, staring catatonically at the TURTLE MAN'S CHARGING VEHICLES--

I/E. CIA VEHICLES, MARSHLAND OUTSKIRTS - NIGHT

--M4's are loaded, comms checked; the wet team is prepping on the fly. Out the window, the Turtle Man notices the changing terrain: a RIVER runs alongside.

EXT. MA'DAN VILLAGE - NIGHT

VILLAGERS scurry for shelter. In the midst of the panic, a YOUNG MA'DAN WOMAN answers Hobbs in Arabic--

ANWAR
(translating)
By car, there's only the way you came.

HOBBS
(to Renfree and Anwar)
Take some claymores, wire the road.
They're cocky enough to drive up.

Hobbs' '2' and '3' don't need to be told twice. Hobbs starts the other way with (Patrick) Wolff at his side.

WOLFF

Mr. Hobbs--

HOBBS

It's twelve miles to the Iranian border.

WOLFF

Mr. Hobbs--

HOBBS

Once you make it across, you'll find villages like this one every few miles. Just tell them who your brother is. They'll take you in.

WOLFF

What if he doesn't want to go home? I don't think he wants to come home.

HOBBS

(sympathetically)

That's between the two of you now.

Brian Wolff waits by the river. TWO MA'DAN GUIDES stand ready over a LONG, NARROW BOAT.

WOLFF

I'm supposed to call now. Is there time to call my mom? I know if she could just talk to him...

HOBBS

I wish there were.

Wolff calms, accepting his resuming exile.

WOLFF

How do we get back to the states?

HOBBS

(wryly)

I'll find you.

BRIAN WOLFF

(to Hobbs)

Leave him be! Let's go Paddy.

Wolff turns apologetically to Hobbs.

HOBBS

It's fine.

(then)

He'll see what you did, son - what kind of man you are now. He'll go.

Hobbs starts away, war on his hands.

WOLFF

You're short a man. He's got four.

HOBBS

Go home.

EXT. PERIMETER, MA'DAN VILLAGE - NIGHT

Anwar and Renfree emerge from waist-high reeds, creeping down a dirt road. Around a bend, their hearts stop: TWO WHITE SEDANS - the Turtle Man's cars - sit parked.

Renfree rushes the cars - clearing them - before checking the hoods; they're HOT. Anwar scurries to high ground, looking back over the vast field leading to the village. Pulling down thermal goggles, Anwar spots them:

FOUR CREEPING BODIES, only yards from the first Ma'dan huts.

ANWAR

Four bogeys, six hundred yards.
I don't have a shot.

Renfree sets up to fire.

ANWAR

Dan, come in? These fucking radios!
(to Renfree)
It's too far.

RENFREE

Which one's the Turtle Man? I can't tell.

ANWAR

Go for the leader.

Renfree FIRES his M4. The CRAWLING HEAT in his sight suddenly stops...lifeless. The OTHER THREE begin to run. Anwar fires a FLARE over the assassins--

EXT. MA'DAN VILLAGE - CONTINUOUS

--Exposed, the Turtle Man rushes past his '4', swiping his EARPICE. He's down to 3 and he's not happy about it.

DOWNRIVER,

Young Patrick Wolff watches the DYING FLARE in the distance. Brian Wolff shares the pontoon-like vessel with his little brother, smiling innocently at the 'fireworks'.

BRIAN WOLFF

Do I look different? It's okay, so do you.

Brian sees his younger brother's uneasiness. Patrick looks like he's about to jump ship.

BRIAN WOLFF

Forget about them. You're staying with me, you hear me?

PATRICK WOLFF

I'm not leaving you, I just--

BRIAN WOLFF

We don't owe them anything. You hear me? You said yourself: you're not a soldier. You're my little brother and you're gonna sit down!
(out of breath)
You don't owe him anything.

PATRICK WOLFF

I know, it's just... He didn't owe me anything either.

I/E. MA'DAN CATHEDRAL - CONTINUOUS

The CIA '3-Man' sneaks up to the closed cathedral, sensing the energy within. He silently swings the door open, finding FIFTY MOURNING MA'DAN staring at him...

BEHIND THE CATHEDRAL,

The Turtle Man skirts THROUGH THE REEDS above the river. Then, suddenly, he STOPS, scanning the FIELD before him... Nothing but the breeze to the naked eye.

TURTLE MAN

(answering, into radio)
Holding.

CUT TO:

INT. JOINT OPERATIONS CENTER - CONTINUOUS

A MONITOR displays the Turtle Man's HEAT SIGNATURE. He continues to hold, just above the river. Ahead of him, DOZENS of ARMED MA'DAN LIE WAITING in the grass.

COLONEL ALLISON
 (re: Turtle Man)
 Come on, keep going.

Colonel Allison has joined the operators in the front row. Ulysses, for his part, stands fast at a distance.

BACK TO SCENE

The Turtle Man moves swiftly down the embankment, slipping noiselessly into DARK WATER. He trudges forward, barely visible in the half moon. Again, the Turtle Man freezes, looking ahead--

TURTLE MAN
 (into radio)
 Where?

The Turtle Man recedes into the brush, nearly DISAPPEARING.

AGENCY OPSO (O.S.)
 Fifty yards down, opposite side.

TURTLE MAN
 I don't see him.

CUT TO:

INT. JOINT OPERATIONS CENTER - CONTINUOUS

The TURTLE MAN is barely visible on the monitor. Across the river, fifty yards down, a TRACE of HEAT--

COLONEL ALLISON
 (re: stationary body)
 What is that?

ASST. OPSO
 That's our 1.

The suspense pulls Ulysses in.

BACK TO SCENE

We PUSH INTO the reeds. We're nearly on top of HOBBS before we can SEE him, waiting patiently for his prey.

Behind Hobbs, up the embankment, SOMEONE slinks through the field. It's WOLFF - stepping over the ARMED MA'DAN lying in the grass. He's heading back UPRIVER, unaware of the impending showdown between Hobbs and the Turtle Man below.

INT. CATHEDRAL - CONTINUOUS

The CIA 3-Man moves weaves between the statue-like Ma'dan. Halfway to the altar, the 3-Man watches as the MA'DAN WOMEN calmly DRAG THEIR CHILDREN to the ground. TWENTY MEN remain standing, most with RIFLES at their sides. The 3-Man swivels slowly, surrounded... He lowers his rifle.

EXT. RIVER - CONTINUOUS

Renfree leaps from one FLOATING HUT to the next, the cathedral visible ahead. He moves around a circular hut, finding a YOUNG BOY, 7, paralyzed with fear. Renfree holds a finger to his mouth - 'Shhh' - but the boy holds out his own finger, POINTING TO A FIGURE on the shore: the CIA 2-MAN.

In a split second, Renfree grabs the boy and DIVES into the water. The 2-Man FIRES an RPG, eviscerating the hut. He waits, finger on the trigger, for any sign of life.

UNDERWATER, Renfree holds the boy down on the riverbed. The young Ma'dan STRAINS, desperate for air. Finally, Renfree wraps himself around the boy, PUSHING UP to the surface--

POP! POP! POP! The 2-Man crumples - SHOT THREE TIMES - just as Renfree and the boy resurface. WOLFF arrives, out of breath, SMOKING GUN in hand.

DOWNRIVER, The Turtle Man remains in a chess match with Hobbs, neither willing to move.

AGENCY OPSO (O.S.)
(in Turtle Man's ear)
Our two is down. Repeat, the two
is down. Cease all traffic.

TURTLE MAN
No. Leave it open... Leave it!

UPRIVER, Renfree looks at Wolff, stunned, as he swims the boy to shore. Wolff looks down at the man he has killed, carefully REMOVING HIS RADIO...

TURTLE MAN (O.S.)
(in Wolff's ear)
Repeat, I have a visual on Wolff.

Wolff looks downriver, panicked.

TURTLE MAN (O.S.)
I'll have a clean shot in thirty
seconds.

Wolff RUNS before Renfree can stop him. Eight years spent searching for his brother, only to have abandoned him.

CUT TO:

--FAR DOWNRIVER,

The Ma'dan Guides push the vessel forward. Brian Wolff faces stern - unaware of any danger - concerned only for his brother.

BACK TO SCENE

We TRACK with Patrick Wolff as he RUNS atop the riverbank.

TURTLE MAN (O.S.)

Twenty seconds.

WOLFF (V.O.)

I'd like to say I saw my mother's face. But nothing comes. Nothing flashes like they say it does. I think back on my life before this place, and I can't remember what to think about. I can't remember not looking for my brother.

From his 'hide site', Hobbs hears a RUMBLING above him.

TURTLE MAN (O.S.)

Ten seconds.

WOLFF (V.O.)

Funny thing about this place: I found I could fit in with almost anyone here. In my experience, you meet the nicest people in war. They're willing to die for people they're not even related to.

We SEE what the Turtle Man SEES: WOLFF runs as hard as he can atop the riverbank, straight INTO THE TURTLE MAN'S SIGHTS--

TURTLE MAN

Five seconds.

WOLFF (V.O.)

None of them would claim me as one of their own. But I claim them. They're all my brothers--

Wolff never sees it coming. The Turtle Man RISES from the reeds - exposing himself - and FIRES... HOBBS breaks towards the Turtle Man, EMPTYING his M4 in a FURY.

--Gliding down the river, Brian Wolff RISES at the gunfire.

The TURTLE MAN'S BODY floats into the open. Hobbs looks back, over his shoulder, still unsure of what has happened. He runs up the steep bank, finding WOLFF LYING IN THE TALL, WAVING GRASS. Wolff's eyes dart about - he's lost - before locking on Hobbs.

HOBBS

Easy now... Right here.

Hobbs runs his FLASHLIGHT over Wolff's body: BLOOD on his neck and chin, splattered from a hole beneath his collarbone. Wolff can only manage SHORT, VIOLENT GASPS--

WOLFF

Shot him--

Hobbs presses on the wound, blood spurting everywhere.

WOLFF

(crying)

They shot him.

HOBBS

Easy, son. Who shot him?

WOLFF

I heard him on his radio. He was gonna shoot my brother. I couldn't make it back...

HOBBS

No, they didn't--

WOLFF

They shot him!

HOBBS

Nobody shot your brother.

Wolff focuses his panicked eyes.

WOLFF

They didn't?

HOBBS

No. They shot you.

WOLFF

(heartened)

Oh... Really?

Wolff's so happy he could die. He laughs through his tears. Hobbs has to smile, battling his own emotions.

HOBBS

Yeah.

WOLFF

Really? You're not fucking lying to me are you?

HOBBS

No, I'm not lying.

Wolff calms. He breathes steadily, blood pumping from his wound, up from his lungs and out through his mouth...

WOLFF

Is it good or bad that it doesn't hurt? Is that good or bad?

Wolff doesn't notice: Hobbs RELEASES his hold on the wound.

HOBBS

I don't know, I've never been shot.

WOLFF

Oh, my mom's gonna be so mad at me.

Hobbs isn't smiling anymore. Neither is Wolff. The FEAR creeps into him a last time--

WOLFF

Don't tell her all the bad stuff I did, okay?

Hobbs nods, overcome.

WOLFF

Promise you won't tell her?

HOBBS

I'll let your brother tell her.

Wolff smiles again; he likes that thought. Hobbs looks off, over the Marshlands, unable to watch Wolff 'go'. He peeks at the boy - confirming his fate - then off again...

The Ma'dan gather at a distance. They know a great light has gone out. Beyond, the TORCHES flicker down the MOONLIT STREAM.

INT. JOINT OPERATIONS CENTER - LATER THAT NIGHT

An eerie calm after the storm. The Asst. OpsO holds a phone--

ASST. OPSO

Sir? It's the Secretary. Sir?

Ulysses rises slowly, neatly gathering his jacket and exiting the emptied room. Colonel Allison sits alone in the low, never-ending buzz. The old man stares off, contemplating his part in this play.

EXT. WOLFF RESIDENCE - DAWN

Light breaks through a clear, flowing STREAM. The SOUND of the river winds through naked birch trees, up to a traditional TWO-STORY HOME. Inside a sun porch, a WOMAN'S SILHOUETTE.

INT. WOLFF HOME - CONTINUOUS

Mrs. Wolff moves through the shadows of her home, toward the FRONT DOOR. She passes a FAMILY PORTRAIT and we HOLD on it:

Between a TALL SOLDIER and a PROUD MOTHER, YOUNG WOLFF BEAMS. Only 12 years old, he's barely recognizable, without the weight of the world on his shoulders.

EXT. WOLFF HOME - CONTINUOUS

Down a long gravel driveway, bordered by a green field, a MILITARY VEHICLE comes to rest.

Beautifully frail, MRS. WOLFF steps tentatively onto her front steps. Hope and anguish written on her face.

Still at a distance, a DRIVER steps out of the car, followed by a MAN IN UNIFORM. Mrs. Wolff moves forward, toward the CLEAN-CUT SOLDIER... then stops... This ISN'T HER PATRICK. She looks past him to the EMPTY vehicle--

MRS. WOLFF

No.

BRIAN WOLFF steps forward, ashamedly offering himself. At once Mrs. Wolff RECOGNIZES HER FIRST SON...and that her last is never coming home. She folds to the ground--

MRS. WOLFF

(resisting)

No. No. No.

Her words are free of panic or alarm. Only sorrow remains. Brian goes to his mother; she can't face him as he lifts her off the ground.

MRS. WOLFF

No!

And then, she LOOKS AT HIM, allowing herself the joy. She takes in his features, touching his WEATHERED FACE, before crumpling in his arms.

Only yards away, the driver watches... IT'S HOBBS, fulfilling his promise to Wolff. He looks respectfully away, toward Wolff's home. We follow his lead, OVER THE HOME, ABOVE THE TREES, all the way to the vast DESCHUTES RIVER...

From high above, a YOUNG BOY runs beside the flow, toward the BLUE OCEAN in the distance. It's WOLFF, just a boy again... forever free.

THE END