

the grey

Story by

Ian Mackenzie Jeffers & Joe Carnahan
Based on the short story 'Ghost Walkers'
By Ian Mackenzie Jeffers

Screenplay by

Joe Carnahan and Ian Mackenzie Jeffers

6/21/07

EXT. ARCTIC TUNDRA - OIL-CAMP - NIGHT

Dark snow-scape, sheets of blizzard whip sideways, graceful, brutal...through the snow, in the distance: Lights glow, oil-derricks tower. A massive arctic oil-camp, pumps thumping, trucks grinding...

OTTWAY (V.O.)

...A job at the end of the world...

A flash of purple glow in the sky, borealis, snow smothers.

OTTWAY (cont'd)

...right where I belong...

EXT. OIL-CAMP - NIGHT

Shift-change. A THOUSAND OIL-WORKERS stream through camp; behemoth trucks, elephantine drill-bores, mega-dozers dwarfing. A little hangar-city sits in the background.

OTTWAY (V.O.)

The Pipeline. Plunging into miles of permafrost, pumping out the oil at the bottom...night and day don't define, dark a month straight, the sky bruises black then fades back again...the drills work through it.

OTTWAY. 30's, tall, solidly-made, going the opposite way through the river of workers, as if he's invisible.

OTTWAY (V.O.) (cont'd)

*Murderers. Ex-Cons. Fugitives.
Deviants. Drifters--*

Ottway catches a shoulder bump from a by-passer, keeps moving.

OTTWAY (V.O.) (cont'd)

*--Assholes...Men unfit for mankind.
Our 'employee population' This is what the middle ages must have looked like a thousand years ago...this is what Hell must look like today.*

Ottway, as he walks, staring straight ahead, people seem to look right through him...

EXT. OIL-CAMP - BY HANGARS - NIGHT

OTTWAY walks by a small annex, *neon crucifix* over the door-- he glances up, a scowl flashes-- he keeps going.

A hangar-sized pre-fab looms, he heads for it-- shrugs a Remington Model 700 hunting rifle tight to his shoulder.

OTTWAY (V.O.)

*Twelve hour shifts, sitting on a
fence-line slamming bullets into
the skulls of wild animals that get
too close to the 'workforce'--*

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. OIL CAMP - FLASHBACK

BOOM-- Ottway fires the Remington, fast racks the bolt and fires another round a split second later-- *BOOM--* two shots that travel like one.

In the distance, a grey wolf drops to the ground, felled less than a hundred yards from a team of drillers.

Ottway stares after, smoke wisps ebbing from the rifle barrel, swirling in the snowfall.

OTTWAY (V.O.)

*A salaried killer for a big
petroleum concern...This is where
my life has landed...*

Ottway, his rifle shouldered, ambles down to the dead animal. Workmen observe from a distance, watching as Ottway kneels over the wolf, staring down, slowly running a gloved hand over its silver-white pelage...

...Blood begins to seep from under the carcass, steam rising from a small pool collecting just beneath its muzzle.

Ottway stares, then removes a glove...repeating the same gesture...his bare hand brushing over the animal's hide.

RETURN TO:

INT. OIL-CAMP - BAR - NIGHT

A hangar-sized dive. Permanent fluorescent dinge. Ottway passes through-- MALE and FEMALE WORKERS drink, yell for more; foos-ball tables, b-ball on the big-screens, he watches beers and shots being poured/spilled, keeps going.

OTTWAY (V.O.)
*Everything's over heated here...
 everybody steams...*

By the big-screens; WORKERS drinking, watching the game: PIKE, BURKE, all 30's-- LEWENDEN, 20's, bull-necked, linebacker grin, lights a smoke, does an air-wank at: HENRICK, 30, a scrapper, smarter than the others. Ottway passes, watching. He settles at the bar, signals for a shot. BARKEEP pours, slides. Ottway slicks it, calls for another.

OTTWAY (V.O.) (cont'd)
*My forefathers came up to this
 country when it was wild Klondike.
 A bad tribe of white men too evil
 to live anywhere else. Banished to
 the Barrens...*

A formerly-friendly poker game explodes-- fists fracture jaws, knives are pulled plunged/stuck, carving flab, broken beer bottles gouge, twist, an INUIT cups a slashed face, another man screams drool/blood.

Ottway stands to leave-- sees Henrick, looking at him strange, not watching the fight..

OTTWAY (V.O.) (cont'd)
...not much has changed.

Ottway moves on.

EXT. TUNDRA - NIGHT

OTTWAY trudges through the blinding snow, stares at the tundra...He sits down in the snow, wind blasting him, looks off into the dark...

OTTWAY (V.O.)
*Windshear that feels like lead. The
 kind of cold that punches and
 punctures and burns. That rips
 across your balls and rattles your
 soul.*

*Something so fucking frozen, it
just steals everything, your air,
your step, your will...*

*Ottway blinks back the snow, breathes out. He lifts his head:
Clouds move above, amorphous masses, drifting by, peaceful
and elegant, marking time...*

*OTTWAY (V.O.) (cont'd)
I gotta get the hell outta here...*

*Ottway closes his eyes, the snowfall drifts feather-like
past, gathering on his face...he sits like this for several
moments...*

*...Suddenly, his eyes snap open and he raises his rifle,
sliding the muzzle into his mouth. He sets his weight, leans
back, letting his free hand move to the trigger...and closes
his eyes again--*

*There's a low graveling sound, muffled/muted by the gale
winds- Ottway's eyes open slowly-- gaze off into the snow.*

*Out of the spindrift haze, a large shape looms...Ottway's
eyes fix, focus:*

*A GRIZZLY BEAR, towering, twelve feet high off his haunches,
shambling through the snow-- lips curled back, head weaving,
sniffing the frozen air, smelling Ottway--*

*--Ottway, rifle still in his mouth-- doesn't budge, stares
dead into the bear's eyes-- keeps staring-- the bear rears,
canting its huge head, big gaping maw hanging open.*

*...slowly, Ottway withdraws the rifle from his mouth--
spittle drooping off the barrel-- terrified, he turns the
weapon around...and aims it at the bear...flipping the safety
'off'...*

*The bear rears higher, gut-growl, swatting snow-- stops--
Ottway's finger curls over the trigger-- the bear steps in
again-- stops-- then with a big loping turn, lumbers back
into the woods, gone...Ottway watches after...then gradually
lowers his rifle.*

*OTTWAY (V.O.) (cont'd)
...but not today...*

He bows his head against the flurries, snow picking up, blizzard winds slamming in, slowly soaking him, he stands, takes a step forward, toward tundra, stops...staring...

Gazing out at the dark, then back at camp, winds raging...He finally pulls his hood over, pulls his parka tight.

OTTWAY (V.O.) (cont'd)
...and not tomorrow...

Snow blasts him...he heads back toward his shelter...tears freeze over his face as they fall.

OTTWAY (V.O.) (cont'd)
I don't know why I did half the things I've done.

INT. OIL CAMP - BUNK HOUSE - DAY

Desolate cinder-block room, small, windowless save a small port-hole, triple-paned, perpetually fogged. Ottway sits uncomfortably, shirt off, writing a letter by hand, a task he treats as though he were being branded by a hot iron.

OTTWAY (V.O.)
I wish I could explain it to you better than this. But I just can't. I know if I come back, try to help you, try to be there, then I'll fuck it up and I'll keep fucking it up. I wish it wasn't that way, that I wasn't this way, but it is and I am...I know you don't believe me but there's not a minute when I'm not thinking about you...

INT. MOTEL ROOM - ON THE BED - LATER

Ottway sprawling on the bed, fully-dressed, duffel packed, eyes on the ceiling. Something crumpled up, like paper, sits on his chest...we realize it's a POLAROID of some kind.

Ottway glances over-- A picture on the night-stand: A WOMAN, dark eyes, auburn hair, beautiful. She's sitting on Ottway's lap. They're both laughing.

OTTWAY (V.O.) (cont'd)
*...when I don't wish I was lying
 next to you and looking back into
 those eyes that you save just for
 me. I want to see your face...feel
 your hands in mine, feel you
 against me...but I know that
 wouldn't be any better...I move
 like I imagine the damned do,
cursed...and I don't know why.*

He turns the picture down on its face and sits up. The Polaroid falls off his chest, onto the bed. We still can't make out the image.

Clock numbers click over: 4:44--4:45...Ottway hauls off the bed, catches himself in the mirror, blinks, turns away...

OTTWAY (cont'd)
*...I'll take care of you. Every
 single check I get, I'll send
 along...Just know that you're
 always with me, in the deepest part
 of my heart and I love you, however
 it might look. We're flying back
 into Anchorage today. I'll call you
 if I can...and I'm sorry...I'm
 sorry I can't be any better than
 this.*

He zips his duffel-- goes to the door-- he looks back at the crumpled polaroid-- *stands and stares, his head sags...*

INT. COMMERCIAL AIRFIELD - SNOW-COVERED TARMAC - DAY

Open airfield, runway lit with gas lamps. In the background, wind and snow slam off the fuselage of a big 737 powering up on the tarmac.

"PETREX OIL CORP" on the tail, wings bounce in the battering winds. A COMPANY CLERK stands impatiently at the jet-way stairs, checking ID's against his list.

CLERK
 (yells over wind)
*Let's load in, I'm fucking freezing
 here!*

Ottway, hugging his duffel, making his way through the crowd of scattered faces: HENRICK, LEWENDEN, BURKE, PIKE, CIMOSKI, only mid-20's but a long-timer. LUTTINGER, tool-setter, heavy-built. FLANNERY 20's, skinny, pump-operator. Everybody ambles up the jet-way stairs, single-file.

Ottway shows his I.D., clambers up the steps to board.

INT. PLANE - LATER - NIGHT

Ottway stows his duffel, finds a window seat. He sits for a moment, getting settled before removing the letter he was writing earlier from his jacket pocket...

...he stares at it, a single handwritten page-- then abruptly rips it up, stuffing it into the seat-back pouch in front of him.

At that moment, Flannery plows into aisle seat next to him, sends snow spray everywhere, strafing Ottway.

FLANNERY

Sorry, sorry bro. Sorry.

Ottway wipes his face, swipes his jacket of drift.

FLANNERY (cont'd)

It is as *cold* as this
motherfucker's ever been.

(to Ottway)

Y'think?

OTTWAY

I can't tell.

FLANNERY

I can. Shit my ball hairs are frozen solid by about 3 in the afternoon and it used to take 'em till at least 4:30 to get like that. I ain't shittin' either, I strip down for the showers and icicles have formed, on my nutsack.

(beat)

Is that some ice cold crazy shit?

OTTWAY

Sounds like it.

FLANNERY

I shit you not, you stand there shivering in the mirror, looking at these like, *stalagmites*, dangling from your balls and you're bound to have a big fucking personal moment, that nice long look in the mirror that always ends with: '*What the FUCK am I doing here?*'

(beat)

You had those?

OTTWAY

I think everybody has.

FLANNERY

Fuck bro I've done time that was easier than this. Federal too, went U.A., Unauthorized Absence. I was a Navy Midshipmen, those fuckin' JAG motherfuckers hunted me all the way back to Apache Junction, Arizona, put me in cuffs, off to Leavenworth bro, hard time. Three year stretch, shit that feels like a day trip compared to this. You got a girl back in Anchorage?

OTTWAY

(a moment)

No.

(pause, looks down)

Not one that I want to talk about.

FLANNERY

I got me a few. One of 'em had to get a scrape, at least that's what she told me. She's been hitting me up for money ever since, I'm like bitch, *we both fucked!* I'll split it with you, whatever, I ain't askin you to do the dutch, out-of-pocket, I'm no punk...

Ottway seems especially put off by this topic.

FLANNERY (cont'd)

You got kids?

Ottway, an odd beat, something belated in his reaction.

OTTWAY

...no.

FLANNERY

I got one. Eight years old. Seen her twice her whole life, name's Taylor. The mom's a cunt. Knocked her up in high school, her parents hate me. Live in El Paso. I send my daughter birthday cards and shit, they don't even let her write back.

Ottway doesn't answer, doesn't encourage. In spite of that:

FLANNERY (cont'd)

I'm Flannery by the way, Todd.
You're *Ottman*?

OTTWAY

Ottway.

FLANNERY

Oop. Yeah, cool. Ottway, okay.
(pure time-filler)

So you blast critters huh? What's the biggest piece a'game you taken down? Like a Kodiak? You ever kill one of them? I hear those fuckers are just flat evil, maneaters...I seen that documentary that asshole did, that fag who loved bears--

--Ottway has had enough--

OTTWAY

--listen, I'm just going to lean my head back, you can keep talking but I just need to go quiet for a little while...

...and Ottway does...Flannery, not sure if he should be offended, just sits...He looks back over at Ottway and after a beat, gets up and finds another seat.

INT. PLANE - LATER

Ottway, on the nod. Other WORKERS futz/fiddle with I-pods, Gameboys, Playboys, buzzing with chit-chat. Turbines at speed, jet rumbling down the runway, lifting-off, *bumping and bucking through the headwinds*--

An enormous loud thump-- everything jerks-- everybody goes quiet--

HENRICK, sitting across from Ottway, offers:

HENRICK

(anxious)

In theory we can fly in this shit--

A FLIGHT-ATTENDANT passes rushing to her seat to strap in. LUTTINGER, another worker, flipping through a Hustler magazine, shaking his head from side to side.

LUTTINGER

Like it'd give the fucking company
a bad fiscal quarter to wait an
hour.

The plane humps and bumps, struggling as it lifts, rattles rough, wind buffets, everybody on edge, waiting, pages suspended, Gameboys paused, a collective breath being held.

Flannery, without prompt:

FLANNERY

(to those within earshot)

Hey, If this fucker goes down,
don't do the 'head between the
knees' crash position shit--

A chorus of hatred and loathing erupts, aimed at Flannery. Multiple voices, shared scorn:

VOICE

--fuck are you saying that
out loud for asshole--

PIKE

--you fucking idiot, shut-the-
fuck-up with that!!

VOICE #2

--Jinx us douchebag! Keep
your mouth shut--!

HENRICK

--Stop talking Flannery--!

FLANNERY (cont'd)

I'm saying, I seen this plane crash
on 'Discovery Channel', these
peoples spines went through the top
of their skulls 'cuz they was bent
over like t--

PIKE

--Flannery! I'm gonna kick the fuck
outta you! SHUT UP--!

FLANNERY

--I'm saying is all--

LEWENDEN

PIKE

--Stop saying. Don't speak-- --say another goddamn thing!

Flannery shrugs, shakes his head, 'only-trying-to-help...'

The air gradually smooths...the turbulence subsides.

Buzz of talk slowly returns, some grovelling about Flannery, a few threats are floated-- but soon, everybody is back to their games, their girly-mags...

...Ottway never stirs.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Morning. Sunlight off white sheets. Everything glows. A face there, A WOMAN, just awake, auburn-haired, blinking right back at us...the same woman from the photo in Ottway's room.

Ottway, wearing his full weather gear, hat, thermals, parka-- lies on the bed across from her. He smiles, touches her, hand filthy, the color of ground grease.

She smiles back, touching his hand, kissing it lightly. He cups her face, draws her to him. He kisses her softly. A shared gaze.

Her smile never changes as she draws her head slowly back and suddenly slams it forward-- her skull smashing into his face-- blood bursting, a scream just starting to escape him, as--

SMASH BACK TO:

INT. PLANE - LATER - NIGHT

BANG-- metal banging moves through us-- Ottway's head bumps--
slaps the wall, he snaps awake-- blinks--

A HARDER BANG-- spine-shot-head-smack, tremor teeth-buzzing--
the plane drop-slides, jolts-- everybody's up rude--

FLANNERY awake-- scared-- looks around--

FLANNERY

--the fuck was that?

Ottway-- looks up at the flight-attendant, she looks back--
frightened-- fuck that terrified-- he sees it.

BANG-- another ripping-wrenching sound-- the plane tilts,
ROLLS OVER-- upside-down-- grown men scream shrill-- OTTWAY,
hanging by his seat-belt, overhead bins pop, luggage dumps
down--

The plane twists over again-- right-side up, slide-dumps, the
bottom drops out-- everything lurches out of frame below us--

The plane catches air again-- half-a-breath-- the airframe
groans/shudders metal frays-- the plane nosedives down--
faster and steeper-- debris flies front-to-rear, ransacked--
colliding with Ottway, everybody else-- bags/bottles/books--

THE FLIGHT ATTENDANT-- catapults by Ottway, skirt up, girl in
a tornado-- her heel smacks Ottway in the face-- ammonia
floods his sinuses, vision pinholes-- don't-pass-out--

The plane tips deeper, end-over-ends, guys fly by, grabbing
at seats, screaming shrill, the treble of pure terror, a
sound like the end of the world...

The plane catches, rights, barely, then banks down again--
starts a slow rotating dive-- everyone, everything spinning
like a lotto-drum, Ottway braces-- the plane breaks loose,
bulkhead collapsing-- can't hold-- bolted seats shear-- fly--
Ottway, muscles screaming, hammer-locked, holding fast--

The spin stops abrupt, flying sideways now, bottom-dropping
glide, limbs shoot through windows, torn free-- plastic
panels, metal pops, heads crack walls, carpet-- then--

BANG-- hard impact-- hitting the ground-- shaking/jarring--
steel grinds, splits, moonlight gaps through torn airframe--
a white world strobing by--

Truck-loads of debris shoot forward-- a bloody head spins by
like a bowling ball-- Seats crush accordion pancake/belly-
balls/spine/smack-- lights pop-- glass explodes--

SNOW plows in, white avalanche, freezing air hissing past--
plane in pieces still slapping-sliding-- Ottway upside down
now-- all sides crushing in-- sideways speed, g's pulling--
Ottway clenches, trying to keep his head on his neck,

Ottway's side of the plane tears loose-- shoots out of the spin, whip-crack-- bullets into the dark-- slams into cornices of snow-- plows through-- plumes into the air--

OTTWAY-- spinning-- upside-down-- then everything stops dead...buzzing...

...white...

...silent.

EXT. OUTSIDE WRECKAGE - NIGHT

Ottway's chunk of plane half-buried, sticking out of snow-- mounds plowed up around, flakes falling, calm-- dead-silence...

A tiny hole-- Ottway's fingers pop out-- his hand, clawing, smothered gasping--

He digs, manic, shoves, scrapes, gets a hand out, his mouth up to the hole-- he can't breathe, mouth/nose snow-packed--

He spits, blows snow-- sucks air-- shoves his arm up, gasping, frantic-- gets his head free, yelling, gulping air, hoarse--

He scrambles up and out-- collapses in the snow, upside-down, lopsided, everything buzzing-- He looks up-- a cloudless sky stretches above. Stars. More than he can ever remember seeing.

He flops upright, we flip with him, snow vertical now. He sits, hip-deep in it-- gasping, dizzy, smacked, buzzing, out of the dark/grey, adjusting, he sees:

Snow, trees, metal, seats, bags-- and bodies everywhere; arms, legs, pieces-- scattered, dark dots in distance-- a huge slab of wing stabbed vertically in the snow, towering, burning--

To the other side: wreck-trail-- gaping swath, blackened, smashed trees-- charred chunks of the plane cratered, broken tube of fuselage, stump of tail-assembly juts, smoking, acrid/toxic.

Ottway stares at it all, blinking...the stench of spilled jet fuel overwhelms him fast, noxious, chemical-- he spits up an empty stomach.

SOMEBODY STANDS UP CLOSE BY-- flops right over again--

Beyond that, in dark snow: SOMEBODY ELSE moving, crawling, standing, capsizing.

OTTWAY-- gulping oxygen now, grouper fish, bringing all he can into his lungs-- the air's thin-- they must be at higher altitude-- He gets to his feet, wincing, pulls his legs out of ass-high snow, starts slogging toward the survivors.

ACROSS THE SNOW

Ottway passes BODY after BODY, more and more and more of them, scattered over the distance. Ottway stares, keeps slogging--

EXT. FUSELAGE - BROKEN WING - NIGHT

OTTWAY-- makes his way to: Flannery, in shredded boxers, freezing, bleeding, broken-- he sits there, crying-- shock/trauma-- Ottway reaches him.

FLANNERY

(blubbering, pissed)

*I lost my fucking pants-- they're
they're-- I--*

Ottway looks-- no blankets near, some seats-- he pulls off his sweater...

OTTWAY

Put this on--

FLANNERY

My hand is fucked, my leg--

OTTWAY

Duck into it, duck your head.

Flannery lowers his head, Ottway slips it over.

Ottway rushes to a seat, tears the cover off, wades back, wraps it around Flannery's shivering form-- over gashes, gaping wounds, Flannery winces/whines-- freezing...

OTTWAY (cont'd)

You going to be able to walk?

FLANNERY

(in agony-- fighting it)
 I don't-- everything feels fuckin'
broken-- just give me a minute--
 I'm going to just-- sit here-- a
 second-- catch my breath...
 (wave of pain)
 --god-DAMN it hurts like a
sonofabitch--

Ottway-- looks at the leg-- bloated purple/black balloon.

OTTWAY

It's good that it hurts.
 Y'understand?

FLANNERY

(laughs-- gasping)
It's good? Well then I'm fuckin'
fabulous--

OTTWAY

You bleeding anywhere else?

Flannery breaks, begins to weep again--

FLANNERY

*I don't know, man--! I-- I'm not--
 I can't feel where--*

OTTWAY

--Alright, listen, try not to move
 too much. I'll come back.

Flannery's eyes seize Ottway's, he reaches for him.

FLANNERY

--No man, no-- just stay here--

OTTWAY

--take it easy. You're alright. Two
 minutes. Try not to move.

Ottway pulls away from Flannery, keeps searching.

EXT. ACROSS SNOW - CONTINUOUS

Ottway, eyes moving over twisted clumps, littering the snow.
 Bodies and debris entangled.

Movement-- crawling, near a row of ruined seats-- a man starts to get up, gives up, flops--

Ottway moves faster-- heading for him--

EXT. BY TWISTED SEATS - NIGHT

LUTTINGER-- on all fours in the snow, huffing hard, wheezing wild-- OTTWAY reaches him.

OTTWAY

You OK?

Luttinger, staring at the snow-- doesn't speak.

OTTWAY (cont'd)

Luts? Can you hear me?

LUTTINGER

...I can hear you.

OTTWAY

Can you stand?

LUTTINGER

What just happened...?

Ottway. A beat.

OTTWAY

...Are you serious?

(after another beat)

The plane went down. We crashed.

Luttinger looks up, tears form from pure shock.

LUTTINGER

Bullshit. Bullshit...that couldn't have happened-- I was asleep, *I was sound asleep.*

(beat)

The pilots?

OTTWAY

...'The pilots'...what?

A longer beat.

LUTTINGER

Can they still fly us out of here?

OTTWAY

The plane is gone man. It's in pieces.

Luttinger reaches up, hand shaking horribly, touching his ear, babbling--

LUTTINGER

My ears, they won't stop ringing, I can't hear out of this one-- *I gotta call Cathy, I need to make a quick call, tell her what happened--*

OTTWAY

--listen, you're in shock. You're in shock but I need you to stand up and help me.

LUTTINGER

Got the-- okay-- I need, there's *vicodin* in my bag, my legs won't stop shakin'-- my fingers, I can't make a fist...

Luttinger turns to look; wreckage-- bodies-- blood--

LUTTINGER (cont'd)

(gaped jawed, staring)

Ohhhh...wow...that is so *fucked up*.

Luttinger's eyes are glassy, vague, gone. He starts to laugh, titters that turn to deep baritone belly-laughes, fear-fed. He can't help himself.

LUTTINGER (cont'd)

(looking up at Ottway)

Are a bunch of people dead?

OTTWAY

(hauling him up)

Yeah...now I need your help finding the one's that aren't. Can you walk?

Ottway holds Luttinger under the arms, steadying him. Luttinger nods repeatedly, tottering...

OTTWAY (cont'd)
(toward Flannery)
Let's get him inside some shelter
first.

EXT. ACROSS TUNDRA - NIGHT

OTTWAY and LUTTINGER, half-dragging FLANNERY through the snow, heading for fuselage-- *past body after body...*

LUTTINGER
Holy-fuck...this is, there's-- *some*
of their faces are gone--

OTTWAY
--Stop looking at 'em. Watch the
trees, don't look around.

Flannery stares at the sky crying, doesn't dare cast his gaze anywhere but up. *Ottway stares at each dark clump, watching for signs of life...there aren't any....*

He stops at one body-- torn, bloody-- it's half-a-pilot, Ottway discerns what's left of the uniform-- he looks up, squints into the distance, sees a large shape, convex, like an igloo might look-- *it's a chunk of smashed cockpit*, half-buried in the snow. Luttinger sees it as well.

They look at each other.

OTTWAY (cont'd)
Radio.

LUTTINGER
You think it'll work?

Not likely. They head for it anyway...

EXT. SMASHED COCKPIT - NIGHT

They reach the cockpit-- metal-shorn, squashed, windows blown out-- a tight crawl-space the only way in.

OTTWAY sinks to his knees, stoops to burrow, dig, clearing through wires and snow-- crawling through the hole. Flannery and Luttinger wait outside...

INT. COCKPIT - NIGHT

Ottway bunched ball-tight, under the bent crush-- wires spew like ruptured ganglia--- panels hanging, no signs of life-- barely any room inside, Ottway has to squeeze, shove-- stray sparks pop and fall, remnant electrical current cycling out.

--he finds a radio-mic-- toggles the talk-button on-and-off-- nothing-- he reaches into the crack between ripped metal squashed together-- looks over what's left of the instrument-panels, tries every switch-- nothing-- all dead.

He twists/shimmies back out through the opening.

EXT. COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

OTTWAY angles out, stands.

OTTWAY

Forget it, it's fucked. And it's
too tight in there for three of us.

They look out across the snowscape, smoke drifts in dead gales across the wreckage. A thrashed section of fuselage stands out...without a word between them, they start trudging toward it.

EXT. OUTSIDE FUSELAGE - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

They come upon the demolished fuselage-- embedded in the snow, frozen soil plowed up on impact-- A gaping wound in airframe, splayed wide...an opening.

INT. WRECKED FUSELAGE - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

The three men clamber insider-- chaos-- upside-down field-hospital, total triage--

Everybody yelling-- bleeding, bandaged with blankets, seat-covers-- overhead bins ajar, shredded metal, scattered seats, oxygen-mask tubes tangled underfoot-- clothes-- bodies--

CIMOSKI-- leg gone below the knee-- gasping, gaping, holding his thigh-- in deep shock, mind-fried, babbling--

CIMOSKI

*Went-down-went-down-we-went-down-
we-went-down...*

Luttinger kneels down next to him.

LUTTINGER

Billy. Bill. Hey, hey--

Cimoski looks up at this stranger-- keeps babbling.

Ottway pushes through to:

HENRICK-- kneeling over LEWENDEN, holding a blanket to Lewenden's guts, he's ripped open, blood flooding up, Henrick can't stop it-- Lewenden-- gasping-- terrified-- Ottway eases Flannery down-- steps closer--

Pike sees Flannery, seethes:

PIKE

You happy fuckhead! You had to open your fat fucking mouth, put the whammy on!

FLANNERY

I didn't do shit! Did I crash us!?

Talget-- trying cell-phone after cell-phone littered around-- no signal on any of them--

PIKE

Heal up good, so I can fuck you up again fresh!

TALGET

Fuck, COME ON!

Ottway and Luttinger look at him-- Pike chides--

PIKE

(turning on Talget)

They aren't going to work out here asshole-- you think they got towers!? You calling 9-1-1! You fucking calling a cab?

Talget hurls the phone he's holding.

TALGET

SHUT THE FUCK UP!

Henrick struggles with Lewenden-- the more he tries to staunch the wounds, the more blood flows--

LEWENDEN

(gasping-- panicked)

*Can you-- why won't it stop, why
won't the blood slow down-- I got
something in my chest, it feels wet
inside, don't let me die, don't-let-
me-die, don't --come on--ohfuck-
ohfuck-ohfuck--no-no-no-no...*

(beat, looks at others)

*Why are they standing back-- why
are you guys back so far! Get in
here! Y'gotta get close! HELP ME!*

Henrick-- desperate-- shifts his grip, *something bursts,
artery red-- strafes/sprays his face, everyone else's-- Burke
and Pike fall backward--*

Henrick, stumped, panicking-- *Lewenden's spurting-- clutching
his guts-- looks at Henrick-- pleading...*

LEWENDEN (cont'd)

*Henny-- do something, do something,
I can't lose all this blood--!
There's too much coming out of me!
I know this is wrong-- it's all
numb now-- my whole middle--*

Henrick just stares at him-- *Ottway kneels down. Lewenden
recognizes him-- is somehow reassured.*

LEWENDEN (cont'd)

*Ottway, Ottway, good, you-- can you
do anything for me? I don't like
this...this is not feeling right.*

Ottway sees all the blood, Lewenden going cadaver-gray...no
hope.

OTTWAY

(gently)

Lew. Listen. I have to say this.

(beat, clear)

*...You're going to die...okay.
That's what happening.*

PIKE

N'fuck are you telling him that f--

--Ottway glowers up at Pike, cuts him off cold. Everyone else stares at Ottway-- Talget kneels next to Ottway-- lays his hand on Lewenden-- Lewenden, wide-eyed at both of them--

OTTWAY

It's OK--

LEWENDEN

No, no, no, no, no, no, no,
no...wait, wait, wait, wait, I--

--Lewenden looks around at the others-- terror seizes then abates-- like a fist clenching and unclenching--

OTTWAY

(gently-- intently)

Look at me-- look at me Lew--

Lewenden-- gasping-- eyes closing-- opening-- gasping-- trembling, head shaking-- fight-- blood going-- quieting...

...Ottway won't let go of his eyes...

OTTWAY (cont'd)

(softly)

It's OK. It's OK. It'll slide over
you...it'll start to feel warm...

(beat)

Let it move over you, it's alright.
Let your thoughts go...all the good
things. All the good things...

Lewenden nods slowly, transported, eyes cast toward a future we won't see. Tears slip down his cheeks...silence swallows everything. Then:

OTTWAY (cont'd)

(drawing closer)

Who do you love?

Lewenden, trembling, death just a door away. It's now that he finds focus:

LEWENDEN

...my daughter Rosie...she's six.

OTTWAY

(a smile, a nod, sincere)

...let her take you then...

(touching his forehead)
...let her take you...

The spurting slows, stops-- becomes a slow dribbling run. Lewenden opens his eyes, looks at Ottway-- and closes them again. They all stare down, then...clear as can be, Lewenden says the following:

LEWENDEN
...wait for me...

...Ottway and Talget keep their hands on him...

The others stare...Lewenden goes still, the life leaves him. Talget takes his hand away, hot-stove, he looks down at his hand as if it had betrayed him, seems ashamed...

TALGET
 (quietly)
...I felt it go...

No one responds...Ottway lowers his head, reverent, removes his own hand from Lewenden. He turns, looks at the others-- silence-- Flannery stares.

FLANNERY
 Did he just die?
 (dumbstruck)
 He just died didn't he...

More silence. Ottway stands, wipes blood, his eyes misting-- he looks at Henrick-- the tears burn out, all-business now.

OTTWAY
 This everybody?

Blank stares, eyes agog, everybody still badly shaken.

OTTWAY (cont'd)
*Is this everybody who's still
 alive?*

Henrick-- processing-- looks around--

HENRICK
 Uh-- yeah-- I-- guess, uh--
 we're...

Ottway nods, counting--

OTTWAY

OK, we got eight. Eight that we know of.

The others, looking at Ottway, just blinking up. Luttinger stands-- Cimoski has passed out...

LUTTINGER

I don't know how much longer Bill's gonna last, we need to get medical assi--

OTTWAY

(as if ignoring Luttinger)
--we need a fire. We smashed those trees out there coming in. We should gather up that wood and anything else that'll burn, seats, luggage, anything--

Nobody moves-- *Ottway-- turns-- starts going through Lewenden's pockets--*

TALGET

What are you doing?

Ottway pulls a bic-lighter from Lewenden's pocket-- tosses the lighter to Burke-- Burke stares.

OTTWAY

I said we need a fire-- it's ten below and dropping.

No answer-- Ottway glares at them now.

OTTWAY (cont'd)

So we don't die. We build up the fire. Then we find food, then at daybreak, we figure out which way west is and start walking.

They don't move--

OTTWAY (cont'd)

Nobody's going to find us. Not here.

Flannery, Luttinger-- panic seeping in--

FLANNERY

Somebody'll find us--
 somebody's fucking searching
 or something-- they know we
 went down--

LUTTINGER

--They have to, our plane
 fell off the radar, they
 would have to know--

OTTWAY (cont'd)

--If they send fifty planes, maybe
 they'll find us, but they won't
 send fifty planes...and it doesn't
 matter, we don't have enough time
 to wait for the one or two they
will send.

PIKE

And why would Corporate give a shit
 anyway?

Everybody looks at Pike.

PIKE (cont'd)

Ask. How much headache and for who?
 Us? Pump jockeys, Drillers? Rig
 pigs? *Really?* Who else? Couple of
 accountants, administrators...
 fuckin' *middle-management*.

(beat)

How much payroll did they just
 pocket off that crash?

Pike is absolutely right. The rest of the men realize this at
 once. Ottway doesn't let it deaden their will.

OTTWAY

No matter.

(beat for emphasis)

*We need to move and work now or
 we're all fucked.*

Still no reaction-- too spooked-- Ottway gauges it-- inertia
 they don't need--

OTTWAY (cont'd)

Unless you want to freeze to death.

(beat, hard)

Cuz' that's the one thing that *will*
 come for you.

Luttinger gapes at the recently dead Lewenden.

LUTTINGER

I've got kids. I've got kids to
get back to--

HENRICK

--everybody's got kids to get back
to, wives, family--

They all nod numb-- Ottway pulls a ski-jacket loose from
under a crushed seat-- slides into it-- a size too small.
Finds a heavy flannel shirt, slips that on over.

OTTWAY

--good, so we got goals in mind.
Family, wives, whatever.
(beat)
Here it is again: One. Fire. Two.
Food.

Ottway pries open the overhead bin at his feet-- blankets
inside-- he grabs a bundle, uses one like a scarf, starts for
the opening.

Henrick and Talget locate sweatshirts-- flannels-- jackets--
One-by-one the others start to mobilize, gather outerwear,
blankets-- and follow Ottway outside.

EXT. TUNDRA - WRECK-TRAIL - NIGHT

The men gather loose wood, loading into blankets, dragging
them across the snow-- fuselage in the distance.

Henrick starts dragging his load back, the others trail.

Ottway in the rear-- watches the others slogging, snow
crunches under boots-- he looks out at the night-- the
tundra, dark clumps, bodies, bags-- the snow just starting to
fall-- something triggers-- He stops, suddenly-- silence
moves in, footsteps recede, the others keep going--

Ottway keeps peering into the dark--

*One dark clump in snow, a hundred yards off-- can't see if
it's a bag or a body, can barely make out-- but it looks like
it's moving--*

Ottway drops the wood-- takes another step--

*It moves again-- shadow in a shadow-- like someone trying to
get up-- shudders-- shakes-- convulses--*

Ottway-- eyes widen-- neck prickles-- he yells:

OTTWAY
Hey! I'm coming--

The OTHERS-- too far ahead-- don't hear-- keep going--

Ottway-- running...

OTTWAY (cont'd)
Hey-- I'm coming-- I see you-- I
see you!

The clump-- twitching, shuddering--

The lump of a back-- shoulders-- fur-lined-- rising up--
twitching...

OTTWAY (cont'd)
...hey...!

OTTWAY-- running-- slows, looking-- he sees:

TWO EYES TURN BACK TOWARD HIM GLOWING:

IT'S A WOLF-- ripping at a dead-man-- tearing at his scalp
snapping up chunks of flesh--

Ottway rushes in--

OTTWAY (cont'd)
(yelling)
GET OFF HIM YOU MOTHERFUCKER!

The wolf's head comes around but it doesn't move-- just
watches Ottway charge--

OTTWAY (cont'd)
(yelling louder)
GET THE FUCK OFF OF HIM!

The wolf stares, doesn't turn to flee, doesn't flicker--
Ottway, closing-- then he's hit-- blindside-- like a bus
smacking him-- tastes amonia in the back of his throat,
fighting a blackout-- he's suddenly face-down in snow--
shoved-- smothered-- suffocating...

ANOTHER WOLF locked on him from behind-- claws/teeth/rabid
blur-- Ottway twists madly-- white puffs of ski-jacket
flying, blood-marked--

Ottway roars, shoves up backward, the animal's full thrashing weight on him-- gets to his knees, feels teeth tearing, trying to purchase skin-- He twists/writhes wild-- drives up off that knee, fighting the hundred plus pounds on his back-- knee-deep snow-- wolf's snarling/snapping.

He staggers up, gets a leg under-- pivots, turns his body, spinning-- the wolf hangs with him, *hind legs splaying, paddling air-- he won't let go--* a blur of fur/teeth/paws, Ottway's arms batting, wild, trying to swat--

He gets his arm behind, gets a lock, fistful of fur, punching away trying to yank the thing off-- then--

He's hit again--

THE FIRST WOLF-- on his other side-- Ottway staggers, but stays up-- the weight of TWO WOLVES hanging on him-- He thrashes right-left-right-- crazy to get them off-- growling as loud as they are-- but they're holding fast--

Ottway finally twists far enough, grabbing for the one locked under his arm-pit, burrowing-- he sees the top of its head, grabs the wolf's ears--

Ottway roars like God would-- pulls hard enough to yank its ears off-- The wolf only burrows deeper up under Ottway's arm, Ottway screams-- shifts, starts bashing down on the top of the wolf's head with his elbow, harder-- harder-- trying to crack its skull-- the wolf digs deeper-- Ottway hears the dull 'click' as its jaws lock.

The other wolf-- on Ottway's back, teeth snagging his shoulder, mouth moving over it-- Ottway slams a free elbow back into the wolf's jaw, knocks it loose, it yelps, snaking to the snow--

Ottway turns-- tries to smash the other one-- complicates his balance-- *keels over backward into snow- the wolf goes for his throat-- teeth gnashing like clattering dinner plates*

Ottway gets both arms under it and shoves-- pressing it up off him-- gets fast to his feet, dazed, punchy-- knees a tilt-a-whirl, he caroms off a tree-- looks:

HENRICK-- right there, Ottway didn't hear him over his own screaming-- Henrick's swinging a log, yelling at the wolves-- driving them off--

HENRICK

BACK! BACK!

Both wolves bolt back, circle, stare at Henrick-- dark silver pelages, bristling on end like black blades of grass-- they growl and gnash and snap-- Pike and Talget come rushing up, see Ottway, the wolves-- arm themselves with loose timber.

Ottway-- wobbly-- shaking-- spitting blood-- backing away--

--Then...just like that, the wolves turn and lope off into darkness...gone. Everyone stares after them, looking around at one another. Just the sounds of Ottway trying to get his wind.

He bleeds, shivers, glances at the others...then turns *and starts walking back for the wood he dropped*. He bends down, restacks the wood and starts silently dragging it back toward the broken fuselage...

EXT. OUTSIDE FUSELAGE - NIGHT

Ottway, blood pushing up through his jeans-- as he chucks his pile of wood on the growing fire-- the rest of the men huddle in, clinging to the heat.

Ottway scans the darkness around them-- watching, wary--

The others stare at his face-- covered in cuts-- a mask of drying blood. He looks up. A loaded beat, then:

OTTWAY

Must've pissed 'em off.

Henrick and Talget laugh-- tense as death but they laugh...so does everyone else.

Ottway sits, Henrick helps him to the ground. Ottway looks down, pants black with blood, like his jacket. He starts peeling the jacket off...fresh pain or trying to...

Henrick and Luttinger help him, black blood sticking to the jacket-- the shirt, shredded--

Henrick carefully pulls the tattered shirt off, blood drains from dime-sized holes in Ottway's side-- the OTHERS stare-- his back-- teeth-gouged, claw-sliced.

HENRICK

(to Burke)

See if there's any thermals lying around, or anything heavy, sweatshirt-- any of the luggage.

Ottway pulls up his pants leg-- puncture wounds cover.

Talget grabs handfuls of snow-- starts wiping the wounds clean. Ottway finds a broken piece of plastic window-- looks at his reflection: White. Bloody. Ghastly.

HENRICK (cont'd)

Do we have any dressing? Medical--

Luttinger forages, finds hand-towels, frayed pillow slip-covers.

HENRICK (cont'd)

(to Ottway)

This is gonna be the most half-assed field dressing ever.

OTTWAY

Well, I've never had one, so I won't know the difference.

Burke returns, thermals in hand.

BURKE

Hoodie too. Looks like it'll fit.

Ottway nods his thanks, takes them, Henrick helps slip the thermal on, it's tight, then the hooded sweatshirt.

Talget takes blankets, starts packaging Ottway up, best he can. Ottway bites back pain-- blood stains blossom up through the blankets.

HENRICK

How bad did they get you?

OTTWAY

(downplaying it)

Broke the skin some.

HENRICK

Yeah, they did didn't they. How are your ribs?

OTTWAY

I don't know, I can't see 'em.

HENRICK

They're bruising pretty fast.

OTTWAY

They don't feel cracked.

HENRICK

(as he swabs blood)

Fuck, they really got at you.

OTTWAY

Maybe I'll turn into the wolf-man now.

Flannery, his small smile quickly curdling to concern.

FLANNERY

Wait-- that's not-- that shit's not real, right? You can't...

Ottway looks over at him. Doesn't have the strength to laugh as hard as he'd like to at that one.

PIKE

Asswipe. What do you think--?

FLANNERY

--I don't know, like with rabies or whatever, I didn't think the motherfucker was gonna grow claws and teeth and shit!

Talget doesn't find any of it funny-- gazing out into the darkness--

TALGET

Are there more of them?

OTTWAY

Wolves? Maybe. Yeah. Most likely.

(beat)

But we shouldn't be worrying about them right now. We should be worried about finding food.

Peanuts, frozen dinners, anything we can scrounge up..

(off everyone's silence)

...they're probably only passing through.

HENRICK
Passing through--?

LUTTINGER
--passing through as opposed to what?

OTTWAY (cont'd)
As opposed to living here. Hunting here.

They're all sitting up now.

HENRICK
Hunting? What is th--

PIKE
--what does that mean?

OTTWAY (cont'd)
Exactly what it sounds like.
Wolves have a territorial range of about three-hundred miles, a kill range of thirty--

HENRICK
A 'kill range' means--

OTTWAY
--we're close to their den. Where they really dig in.
(beat)
If we're within that radius, then they'll come after us.

LUTTINGER
How can we tell if we are?

OTTWAY
We can't. They might have been feeding, there's bodies everywhere. I threatened them-- they attacked.

FLANNERY
What about that fuckin-- whatever 'radial-radius' if we're in that what-- they're gonna *fight us*? I thought they were scared of humans.

OTTWAY
Not if we're near their den. They're not scared of anything then.

(beat)

We can't run away from them,
they're too fast and they stay on
top of the snow, we don't.

They all stare.

TALGET

So-- what-- we do what?

OTTWAY

We see what they do. They might
just be sniffing us out, we can
walk outta here, no hassle...but if
we're in that kill range...

Ottway's voice trails out behind *thoughts he'd rather not think.*

OTTWAY (cont'd)

I counted three. Probably outcasts,
Omegas, not part of a pack.

LUTTINGER

How big is a pack?

OTTWAY

Eight to ten wolves. Sometimes as
high as twenty but that's rare.

FLANNERY

What kind of wolves are they? What
do they call the ones that just eat
plants and shit.

OTTWAY

They don't call 'em 'wolves.'

HENRICK

Herbivores? Is that--

OTTWAY

--that's wishful thinking.

PIKE

Hey man, hey-- whatever
'Ottway' when did you become
King Shit all a'the sudden?
Fuckin' animal expert-

BURKE

--You see what just happened
to him?

OTTWAY (cont'd)

They pay me to kill those things.
To keep them from killing you.

So it makes sense for me to know
that they're man-eaters and don't
give a shit about shrubs and
berries.

(beat)

There's blood in the air. There's
death. They know that...they know
we're wounded. They can smell it.

They're all staring-- terrified-- Ottway shrugs-- covering...

OTTWAY (cont'd)

Hopefully, they won't fuck with us.

Burke, prompted somehow, looks at CIMOSKI: *He's blue--
motionless-- stiff--* Burke lays a hand on him...

BURKE

Shit...This guy just
died...Cimoski, this dude.
(looking at others)
He's dead--

Luttinger draws closer, staring at Cimoski.

LUTTINGER

(lowering his head)
Ahh shit Billy...

Flannery glares at Cimoski, seated right next to him.

FLANNERY

How-- he was mumbling something in
his sleep, half a second ago...

Nobody says anything. Ottway looks over at Cimoski.

OTTWAY

He's better off. If he hadn't bled
out, he would've frozen to death.
(beat)
We should move him outside. The
others too.

LUTTINGER

Why? Shouldn't we--

OTTWAY

We don't have enough room in here
as it is. We gotta move them out.

(beat)

Then we have to find food.

Ottway gets up, something deep driving him. He pulls the bloody blankets off of himself, reaches down, takes the dead Lewenden under the arms-- hefts him and starts dragging him toward the opening-- they all watch--

Talget gets up, crosses in front of Ottway, Ottway looks at him-- He bends down-- takes Lewenden's feet and together they carry him out.

Flannery can't take his eyes off Cimoski's face. Henrick stands, looks at Pike, the others...

HENRICK

Come on...

EXT. OUTSIDE FUSELAGE- NIGHT

Ottway and Talget lay Lewenden's body down away from the fuselage, near *ANOTHER CORPSE-- A MAN IN A SUIT--* frost gathering on his face, packing his eyes and nose.

Henrick and Pike carry Cimoski's body, crossing to Ottway and Talget. They lay him down, next to the suited corpse. Pike sees a big shiny watch on the dead suit's wrist--

PIKE

Look at this-- hey, hey, *this*
fuckin' thing here--

Pike squats down, starts prying it off--

HENRICK

Hey-- Jesus, man--

PIKE

(prying it off)
No-- I saw one of these once,
it's got a *beacon* in it, a
GPS thing--

Pike gets the watch off, pulls out a silver wire, foot-and-a-half-- *the watch display starts blinking, beeping--*

PIKE (cont'd)

It works-- holy shit, it's beeping!
(looking toward the sky)
This thing will reach up to like
40,000 feet!

Talget looks, smirks.

TALGET

So a passing jumbo jet can swoop
down--

PIKE

(quickly)
--fuck off--

TALGET

--pick us up?

HENRICK

(pointing to Talget)
You're on his ass about using a
cellphone, but a fucking *wristwatch*
is supposed to save us?

Pike sees something else on the suited man, reaches down,
yanks a billfold from his breast pocket. He begins flipping
through it, removing cash.

PIKE

Calf's skin...not cheap. Nice.
(to dead body)
Since you cocksucks didn't give us
any kinda holiday bonus. I'll
accept this on behalf of--

OTTWAY

(disgusted)
--Put that back.

A beat. Pike turns.

PIKE

What?

OTTWAY

Put it back. We're not looting dead
bodies for fucking *swag*.
Necessity's one thing--

--Pike shoves the wallet into his back pocket.

PIKE

--You got lucky tonight--
(points out the dead)
--you should be lying with them.
Don't push it.

OTTWAY

I'm not gonna say it again.

Pike, smug, all swagger, looking at Ottway, still bleeding from his wounds. Ottway waits, then moves toward him.

PIKE

Motherfucker, you better take a big step back--

OTTWAY

(flat, emotionless)

--I'm going to start beating the shit out of you, in five seconds.

Pike sneers, rolls his shoulders. Ottway glares, waits...

OTTWAY (cont'd)

And you're gonna blow all your strength and swallow a lot of blood, for a fucking billfold.

Pike, still not returning the wallet. You can see Ottway counting down...Pike never breaks Ottway's gaze as he removes the wallet, dropping it back down on the dead body.

OTTWAY (cont'd)

(still staring at Pike)

Food. Everybody. *Find it. Now.*

INT. FUSELAGE - GALLEY - NIGHT

Ottway, digging in wreckage-- finds frozen dinners, tray after tray-- starts piling them up-- everybody's scavenging-- bags of peanuts, danish cookies, trail mix-- they fill vomit bags with what foodstuffs they can find.

Talget finds a *tray of mini-bottles-- scotch-- vodka*, scattered-- starts stuffing them into his pack

Henrick finds bags of nuts, chips-- it's barely enough to feed one man for a day...

EXT. PLANE - FIRESIDE - NIGHT

Smothered silence as snow falls. Ottway dumps in-flight magazines on the fire as men rummage peanuts and thaw frozen dinners over the flames.

Flannery looks on as ice drips from a brownish hunk of meat, stuck to the end of the stick. Luttinger squints at it.

FLANNERY

S'uh...fuckin'-- Salisbury steak. I think, I can't tell.

Luttinger holds up his stick, stuck with something raw and unidentifiable.

FLANNERY (cont'd)

N'fuck did you get that?

LUTTINGER

Out of the-- near the thing, the rolling thing, serving-whatever, the thing with the wheels.

FLANNERY

Bunch of dead bodies all over, make sure you know where that meat came from. It's like that movie where they start taking chunks of frozen ass out of that guy-- the one with the soccer players.

LUTTINGER

Yeah, the plane crash one. The dude in 'Training Day'--

FLANNERY

That'd be fucking funny as fuck--
 (points to Luttinger's stick)
 --that was like 'dead ass on a stick' Or you thought like a severed dick was a hotdog! Too funny!

HENRICK

Shit yeah, that's...*hysterical*...

FLANNERY

(oblivious)

Would you do that? I mean starving, all you've got is a cut-off dick?

Ottway tries to ignore Flannery, blows snow off a dinner roll, gnaws on it.

LUTTINGER
My own or somebody else's?

FLANNERY
(didn't even consider)
Ohhhh shit, that is fucke-- can you
imagine having to eat your own
dick? How hungry would you have to
be, to start snackin' on your own
rig, woul...

...Ottway sees something, looks up:

PAST THE FIRELIGHT-- IN THE DARKNESS--

Dark gray lines-- dark-in-dark-- shoot past our vision--

AT THE FIRESIDE

Ottway jumps up, runs, everyone gets to their feet, half-panic, confused-- trying to see what he sees-- they stumble after him.

He gets a hundred yards from the fire-- In the dark: another gray line-- one by one-- A CIRCLE OF WOLVES staring at him--

Henrick-- Burke-- Luttinger-- Flannery, Pike, Talget, all arrive-- look out-- see Ottway standing there-- see the wolves mass out of the mist, more than before-- six-- seven-- eight-- nine of them...more wolves than men.

THE BIGGEST WOLF-- 'The Alpha' locks eyes with Ottway. Talget and Pike stare. Henrick, in awe, his voice pinched with fear.

HENRICK
There's more than three.

Nobody answers...

The Alpha turns slow, trots away-- he's gone-- all the other wolves turn, evaporate into the pale dark...Ottway keeps staring, then;

OTTWAY
Let's sit in shifts. Two hours at a time. I'll go first, everybody else get some sleep.

PIKE
Yeah, that shit's happening.

FLANNERY

Why are they so fuckin' big? I seen
wolves on nature shows and shit,
they look like dogs-- those things
look like fuckin' dinosaurs.

HENRICK

(to Ottway)

Are those bigger than the ones
you've seen?

Ottway, still staring after them, nods slow.

OTTWAY

We're remote, middle of nowhere.
They probably have to take down
bigger kill-- bison, bears-- it's
genetic maybe, their size...

More silence. Just men breathing, thinking...Luttinger asks
the question everybody wants an answer to:

LUTTINGER

...What the hell were they doing?

OTTWAY

...waiting.

HENRICK

(looking at Ottway)

...For what?

Ottway just looks back at Henrick...his face a blank.

INT. FUSELAGE - LATER - NIGHT

Ottway, propped up by the opening, on watch. He sits, eyes
heavy, everybody else is down, light sleep, restless-- he
looks out; a pale blue glow, a world of ice-- he nods, grows
still, rouses himself...

In the distance...he sees a shape, moonlit from above...

...A WOMAN, only her auburn hair distinguishable at this
distance. She stands, hands folded quietly in front of
her...serene...timeless. We feel like we've seen her...

Ottway blinks her back, lowers his eyes, can't look back up.

OTTWAY

No, no, no, no, no...

Ottway rummages his duffel, picks through, finds a scavenged packet of instant-coffee, rips it open, pours it dry down his throat, follows it with bottled water...

OTTWAY (cont'd)

(stares down-dead serious)

...I don't need that shit right now...stay outta here.

He lifts his head, looks out again...and the Woman is gone.

He readjusts, eyes wide now, a nice caffeine surge tweaks acuity-- he fixes his gaze on the perimeter...watching.

INT. FUSELAGE - LATER - NIGHT

Ottway, looking out at Burke posted by the fire, his shift, but Ottway still on guard-- exhausted-- lying among scattered food trays, wrappers-- they've shared/split up what little there was to eat...

OTTWAY

Hey...

Burke looks over, bleary, bloodshot, fighting exhaustion/sickness.

OTTWAY (cont'd)

I still don't know your name.

BURKE

Burke. My name is Burke.

(beat)

We never met up there.

OTTWAY

Ottway.

(beat)

Don't drift off on us Burke.

Burke, weak smile, a nod to reassure himself. Ottway leans back, his eyes start to close...he fights to keep them open but finally succumbs to sleep...

INT. FUSELAGE - LATER - NIGHT

OTTWAY, passed out...BURKE and the others, all lie sleeping...LUTTINGER sits on watch, has to piss. Gets up quietly, tiptoeing past the others.

EXT. OUTSIDE FUSELAGE - NIGHT

Luttinger steps outside the fuselage, freezing, scared to go too far-- he moves gingerly across the snow, looking around, fearful--

He stops-- unzips-- starts pissing in the snow-- a beat before A WOLF rockets out of the darkness-- right into his belly-- driving him backwards, slamming him to the permafrost, ripping, snarling incisors, snapping into his guts-- he gasps for breath, opens his mouth to scream--

ANOTHER WOLF-- shoots down, locks on to Luttinger's throat, tearing the sound from it-- nobody hears him die.

EXT. OUTSIDE FUSELAGE - MORNING

Ottway awake, sun's up, fire's embering, snow forever...dark rim of trees, far distance-- Ottway stands, looks out, no sign of wolves...the others sleep...

He stacks more wood on the fire-- goes out to perimeter, unzips-- takes a leak-- and sees--

Paw-prints, everywhere, yellow blots in the snow-- all around them...

Ottway scans, further out:

Luttinger's remains fluttering in the breeze-- He sprints over, shouting back over his shoulder for the others.

Henrick and the rest of the men stumble out, rubbing sleep from their eyes, stumbling over to Ottway. They all get a good look at what's left of Luttinger, strewn all over the snow-- Henrick's stomach revolts.

BURKE

They ate him! Jesus, they ate him..

OTTWAY

They weren't eating him. They were killing him.

*
*
*
*
*

(in grim assessment)
They aren't passing through.

Henrick wipes his mouth, stares.

HENRICK
--*the fuck?* The fuck did we *not*
hear him!? How many did it take to--

A wave of nausea washes over and Henrick retches again.

OTTWAY
We could dig in...make a stand of
some kind--
(glances back at fuselage)
--not enough cover though...

Flannery looks over at Ottway, his jaw ajar.

FLANNERY
Wait, *what?* What do you mean
'stand'? Like *fight* those
motherfuckin' giant things!

Ottway's eyes move over the snow; paw-prints inked with blood
and piss.

OTTWAY
--they'll get bolder and bolder.
They'll start to come in on us...

HENRICK
--why would they--? *It isn't for*
food! We're not harming them in a--

OTTWAY
--we're a threat.

Everybody stares, eyes travelling from Ottway to Luttinger's
torn corpse.

OTTWAY (cont'd)
We don't belong here. That's it.

Ottway gazes out...in the distance, a forest. Trees. Cover.

OTTWAY (cont'd)
Yeah...they're coming.
(beat, back to the men)
We could get to the tree-line.

(half-hopeful)
 They might stay off us if we look
 like we're leaving.

PIKE
 Oh fuck that, what they '*might*'
 do bullshit--

OTTWAY
 They pissed all over this place.
 They mean to have it...We can't
 wait 'em out, we'll starve.

Ottway takes in the vast space between them and the forest.

OTTWAY (cont'd)
 Lot of bad space between us and
 that forest but in there, we can
 defend ourselves better. Not so
 exposed.
 (shakes his head)
 I don't know.

PIKE
 Yeah you don't know. And nobody
 nominated you shit-- it's gettin'
 to that point in the evening girls,
 ollie-ollie-otts and free-- fuck'n
 each to his own.

TALGET
 No, it's better-- we should
 game plan, figure out what
 we're--

PIKE
 --How do you want to do that?
 Huh? You wanna draw it up in
 the snow?

HENRICK
 You go it alone, you're as good as
 dead.

PIKE
 Oh bullshit-- survive this fuckin--
This ain't shit!

OTTWAY
 I'm gathering my stuff and getting
 into the trees. If you want to do
 the same, I say we loot everything.
 Pick the wreck site clean. It'll be
 all we have.

FLANNERY
I don't want to do that--

BURKE
--I don't either.

FLANNERY
Why not *stay* in the plane, the
plane, it's cover at least--

OTTWAY
--I just told you, look at all the
piss. They're marking this area and
we're *wide open* out here. There's
not enough shelter.

HENRICK
(staring at the snow)
These things, they're calling us
out. Is that--

OTTWAY
--yeah.
(beat for emphasis)
That's *exactly* what they're doing.

EXT. WRECK-SITE - LATER - DAY

Everybody *rushing, near-frantic--* keeping watch out--
rummaging among the dead-- *grabbing anything they can;*
jackets-- candy bars-- back-packs--

OTTWAY
Take the clothes off the bodies, we
can use 'em-- I know it's fucked
up, just do it.

Ottway finds a knife in a bag-- sees another knife on a dead body near Burke-- Burke walks right by it--

OTTWAY (cont'd)
(yells, re: the knife)
You might want that Burke.

Burke-- sees the knife-- has to undo the dead-man's belt to pull it loose-- The others see this, start rooting around, looking for knives, from hip-belts, loose day-packs--

Burke seems slow, out of it-- Ottway notices.

OTWAY (cont'd)
You alright?

Burke nods, more out of need-- trying to convince himself he's not sick.

BURKE

Just my breath, breathing, having some trouble.

OTTWAY

Air's thin, we're at elevation. If you need to rest now--

BURKE

--no, I'd rather be moving. I'll work it out, I'm fine.

Ottway, not convinced-- but what can he do.

Pike - at the wood-pile, by the fire-- takes the beacon-watch down-- ties it to his pack-- joins the others.

Talget sits in the snow, pulls a mini-bottle of Jack Daniels out of his pocket, downs it.

Ottway, ready to pack out, gazing at the dead-- they all do: Dozens of bodies and dozens more, decaying, scattered across the snow.

Ottway walks back to Lewenden, bends down, gets under Lewenden's hip-pocket-- *pulls Lewenden's wallet out*--

OTTWAY

Somebody should take all the wallets. For the families.

Pike scoffs.

OTTWAY (cont'd)

(aimed at Pike)

Henrick. You mind holding 'em?

Henrick nods, Ottway hands Lewenden's wallet to him and goes to the next body, patting it down. Henrick pulls his backpack, dropping Lewenden's wallet into it.

The others follow suit, gathering up the wallets of the deceased, bringing them to Henrick, humbled by what they're holding...pieces of men's lives, squandered early, lost for all time.

Ottway suddenly remembers something, reaches for his own pocket, nothing there, Henrick looks at him.

HENRICK

You lose yours?

OTTWAY

(patting himself down)

Don't know if I should take that as
a good sign or a bad one.

He looks down at his feet, maybe he dropped it.

PIKE

(already impatient)

Let's go, it's getting darker.

Ottway-- really looking now, he slings his pack off his shoulder, foraging through...it's nowhere to be found.

HENRICK

You probably lost it when we--

OTTWAY

--need that goddamn thing--

HENRICK

--went down--

Ottway looks back at the fuselage.

BURKE

(spooked, looking around)

C'mon, what the fuck. Forget it.

Let's go!

Ottway, determined-- trudges back to the fuselage, flashlight up.

HENRICK

Ottway, if it's cash--

OTTWAY

--it's not cash.

INT. WRECKED FUSELAGE - CONTINUOUS

Ottway ducks inside-- light strafing-- finds the part of wreckage he bunked in, digs, digs-- finds it. Read his expression: Relief. He looks inside. Whatever was supposed to be there, is.

He pockets the wallet. Exits.

EXT. WRECK SITE - CONTINUOUS

The last of the wallets are dropped into Henrick's pack as Ottway arrives.

OTTWAY

OK.

HENRICK

You get it?

OTTWAY

I got it. Let's go.

Ottway turns, starts walking. Everybody pulls their packs on, underway, starting after Ottway, except for:

HENRICK, hanging back-- he looks at the scattered dead, the stack of them by the plane...*LEWENDEN*, *CIMOSKI*, the many more. He yells to the rest of the men.

HENRICK

Wait--

Ottway stops, looks back at Henrick.

HENRICK (cont'd)

I feel like somebody should say something, all these bodies here...everybody that died. Doesn't seem decent or Christian to just walk away...

Ottway says nothing. The rest stare back, bowing their heads.

HENRICK (cont'd)

...Uh, I don't know any official prayers or anything, so I guess, God, bless all these men...they were, a lot of 'em, our friends and we could be laying here with them, so thank you for sparing us and helping us...and please keep that up if you can.

Gallows humor, not a grin...everybody quietly listens to the wind...then:

OTTWAY

We get about two hours of daylight today. Let's move.

Ottway starts for open tundra, marching out across the snow...

He stops, scans, takes another step-- sees something half-buried in snow, recognizes it-- his rifle-bag, he rushes over, drops, digs it out, unzips the bag:

His Remington Model 700 hangs in pieces, stock shattered-- barrel pretzeled-- he tosses it, retrieves his Mossberg 12-gauge shotgun-- twisted almost in half-- he checks the breach, useless-- he throws it aside, angry--

--he returns to the bag, forages, turns it inside out, retrieves a box of shotgun shells-- pulls it open-- mostly empty; six shells intact...he stuffs them in his pack.

He dusts snow off a coil of trussing rope near his pack, gauges its length-- thirty or so feet. He stuffs it into his bag then stands and starts walking again...

EXT. CLEARING - DAY

Marching past remnant wreckage, fuselage far behind them, the forest in the distance doesn't look any closer.

Ottway keeps his eyes moving, wary, so do the others... they're marooned in a white, wide open space with no cover.

Dead bodies like totems, do-not-trespass, a human debris of snapped spines and torn torsos, of faces fixed in horror, frozen in death...limbs ripped from their owners, lying everywhere.

Eyes avert, nobody stares too long.

Wild animals have been at some of the bodies. A few kit foxes, feeding off the dead, dart away as the men get close.

TALGET

We should be burying these bodies,
lettin' 'em sit, get picked at--

OTTWAY

It'd take us weeks to do that.

HENRICK

And you know how deep you'd have to dig?

TALGET
It's sacrilege.

OTTWAY
And this is survival.
(beat)
You can't have both.

They walk. Henrick engages Ottway; small talk to take their minds elsewhere...

HENRICK
So, you're a hunter, yeah?
Professional?

Ottway, watching the trees...

OTTWAY
Never professionally or legally.

BURKE
Poacher?

OTTWAY
Yeah, more or less.
(beat)
Keep your eyes out-- everybody.
(points for emphasis)
Eyes out there.

Heads on swivels, everybody doing 360's. Henrick presses Ottway.

HENRICK
But it's not like you've hunted
wolves, right? They're not--

OTTWAY
--I've shot and killed everything
feathered or furred. At least once.

BURKE
Everything? Like *endangered*--

OTTWAY
--I didn't give a shit, it was
point and shoot. Paid bills. I
couldn't tell you what I killed. I
couldn't count it.

PIKE

Big man. Big fucking badass. Where are you without your rifle hotshot?

OTTWAY

No pal, where are you without my rifle.

PIKE

I always thought it was bullshit, sneaking up on 'em, blastin' 'em from a mile away. You want to mix it up? Get in there with your bare hands and fuckin' *earn it*.

OTTWAY

You might get that chance.

FLANNERY

You kill a lot of wolves?

Ottway-- not enjoying this inquiry--

OTTWAY

A few.

BURKE

How many is that?

Ottway shrugs off his response.

TALGET

You know what the Inuit say--
(beat)

--wolf's the only animal that understands revenge. You kill a wolf, and his brothers, the rest of the pack, will come for you...They avenge their dead.

The others look at Ottway, his back to them, walking.

TALGET (cont'd)

--They call 'em 'Ghost Walkers' wolves, they say if one tries to kill you and you live then you're a Ghost Walker too...

Ottway-- annoyed now...

OTTWAY

...you know, I don't really want to hear any more about the goddamn wolves--

TALGET

--I'm just saying, where these wolves are con--

Ottway turns back 'cut-the-shit' quick.

OTTWAY

--No. Get out of your head, get out of there or you'll start seeing 'em *everywhere*.

(beat, stops, everybody)

They run on instinct and scent, that's why they survive out here so stop thinking this thing and start *feeling* it, or you're dead.

(beat, aimed at Talget)

Y'got it?

A beat. Pike, incensed.

PIKE

--Kinda bullshit is that to say--

OTTWAY

--it's real. It's fucking real is what it is.

Ottway turns back, Tundra stretches...they trudge on.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ACROSS CLEARING - LATER - DAY

An ocean of white-- wreck-site lost behind them, *forest still no closer*-- they look tiny, exposed, alone.

Flannery, hobbling in the rear, his badly swollen leg making his foot speed over the snow a problem. He tries desperately to keep up--

FLANNERY

(facetiously as possible)

Don't worry about me motherfuckers, I'm fine! If you want to just *run* to the trees, that's cool too!

Ottway out in front-- Henrick looks at the trees in the distance--

HENRICK

It didn't look this far before--

Ottway-- no answer-- looks back--

Flannery-- in the rear-- fighting to keep up but dropping further and further back-- Burke just ahead of him-- looking pale, sickly.

OTTWAY

(re; Flannery, Burke)

Let's slow up. Slow down...

Nobody likes that idea-- Ottway stops-- the others stop-- grudgingly--

Ottway-- looking back at Flannery-- struggling through the snow...something catches the corner of his eye-- a line, flitting, in shadows, you look, it's gone-- Ottway turns--

A WOLF-- running across the snow, full sprint-- straight at Flannery-- Burke sees it-- stumbles away, terrified--

Instinct pushes Ottway to run-- charging Flannery-- the wolf--

He rushes toward Burke-- yelling--

Flannery-- sees Ottway-- sees the wolf-- eyes widen-- starts hobbling as fast as he can--

The wolf sees Ottway coming-- changes direction-- starts running right at him--

Ottway keeps his line, the others rush in behind him--

TWO MORE WOLVES, from the other side, charging-- Ottway can't turn, he's committed to the one coming at him-- he yells:

OTTWAY (cont'd)

Get on those fuckers-- get on 'em!

The others hesitate-- see them heading toward Flannery, start chasing those wolves, leaving Ottway alone to face his--

--the two on Flannery are too close, *in range*--

They shoot forward into Flannery-- hitting him like free safeties-- the full weight of each wolf colliding with his body at nearly thirty miles per hour, smashing/fracturing-- He goes down hard, hollering, shrieking--

*Everyone stops-- Ottway looks at the wolf in front of him.
The wolf holds, stares back at Ottway--*

*Flannery fights for his life-- being bit in the face and
neck, teeth gouge flesh-- hook bone-- pull and tear-- more
members of the pack race in, six adult wolves, ravaging him--*

*Ottway screams at the wolves, moves laterally-- the wolf in
front of him mirrors his movement-- cutting him off, letting
the rest of the pack feast--*

*--everybody's shocked at the speed-- the ferocity-- Flannery
cries out, terrified, final-- Ottway, enraged, right at the
wolf in front of him.*

OTTWAY (cont'd)

*YOU FUCKING-COCKSUCKERS-WE' RE-GONNA-
KILL-YOU!*

*The wolf bares teeth-- feels Ottway's aggression. Ottway
looks for something to heave-- finds a branch, tosses it--
the wolf sidesteps, stands firm.*

*Flannery-- dead already, loose limbs being torn, rag-doll,
the men want to charge in-- but don't dare. Suddenly-- the
wolves stop-- lift their heads, look at the men, red-muzzled.*

*They leave Flannery, turn and trot away...The wolf standing
sentry in front of Ottway peels off, joining the rest of the
pack...*

*The men stare after-- suddenly alone in the clearing-- snow,
wind gusts. Flannery, torn to pieces, tufts of down from his
ski-jacket-- saturated in blood-- skitter across the snow.*

Henrick stares-- he starts for Flannery-- Talget reacts--

TALGET

*Wait, they might be tricking y--
Wait! He's dead--*

*Burke, terrified, staring at all that red running from
Flannery.*

*Henrick keeps going-- Ottway follows him-- eyes up--
scanning...Ottway arrives-- stands next to Henrick, both
baffled and awed, gazing down at Flannery's remains...*

HENRICK

What the fucking hell...for what?
 (to Ottway)
 For what?

Ottway reaches into the bloody mass, fishes out Flannery's wallet.

OTTWAY

....I don't know.

Ottway removes sundry items from Flannery including his knife, matches, etc. He then begins scooping snow over the remains, covering red with white. The cold hitting Flannery's exposed parts causes tremors-- pre-rigor twitches rippling across his limbs-- Henrick leaps back.

HENRICK

Fuck! *Wait, he's alive, he's moving, he's moving!*

OTTWAY

It's nerves, the nerves are still firing, forget it, he's gone...

Ottway keeps covering Flannery, the tremors gradually diminish, tapering off, the body settling in state. Henrick stares at Flannery's face, pocked with bite marks, dead eyes cast skyward, snow covering the left but not the right...Henrick has to look away.

Ottway straightens up, gazing down at the snow mound.

OTTWAY (cont'd)

If you want to say something...

Henrick, shaking his head 'no'-- sign of the cross instead, issued over Flannery's body.

Ottway turns back-- walks past the others-- toward the forest...

OTTWAY (cont'd)

Let's keep moving.

EXT. CLEARING - LATER - DUSK

Later-- still walking-- sun lower, dusking already, into polar night-- *trees still no closer-- tundra vast, open--*

Burke-- now the rear-most-- doing his desperate best to keep up, almost running-- looking back all the while-- doesn't want to end up like Flannery--

Ottway, the others, ahead, side to side, over their shoulders, vigilant, alert.

OTTWAY

It's going to be dark soon.

HENRICK

Do we build a fire?

OTTWAY

Nothing to build it with until we make those trees. I misjudged the distance.

Pike scoffs.

PIKE

That's good, Flannery got tore to shit, *lost his life*, 'cuz you can't measure-- is it a mile, is it ten-- *why the fuck are we following this guy!?*

None of the others react/respond. Pike's rant goes unaddressed. He traipses after.

Burke watches the light wane, recede.

BURKE

We're going to be out here in the dark with those things...?

Ottway stops walking-- slings his backpack down-- *pulls out his knife*-- looks back at the others.

OTTWAY

Listen. We're moving west. Doesn't matter.

(beat)

We have no idea if we're going toward their den or away from it.

PIKE

(low but audible)
...*fuck this fucking clown...*

OTTWAY

They might keep coming for us.

(beat)

Fill your hands with whatever you got.

Everybody else pulls their packs down, remove their knives.

PIKE

Why the fuck didn't we stay with the plane?

OTTWAY

They would've surrounded us.

PIKE

How do you know they're not doing that now!

Ottway ignores Pike. They press on. Their pace picks up. A shred of moonlight on them, snow glows faintly. Ottway watches the tree-line...between light and dark-- *he catches sight of something...*

A WOLF-- trotting at the edge of the group, flanking them...

Ottway touches Henrick's arm, he looks, the others look too--

The wolf keeps his line, moving parallel-- watching them.

Ottway scans left-- *ANOTHER WOLF-- just as far, their other flank-- like the other one, he just watches...disappearing in and out of the darkness--*

Ottway gazes into the grey-- grips his knife tighter...the trees appear out of the haze before them. The forest close now, within running distance. Dark redwoods and pines, a depthless black world.

TALGET

Are we any safer in there?

Ottway, still watching the snow, the wolves on their flanks...then:

ANOTHER WOLF-- right in front of them, from nowhere, blocking their path to the trees-- standing/staring--

Everyone stops dead-- stares.

OTTWAY

...fuck...

Ottway angles away from the wolf blocking their path-- he starts walking again-- The others follow.

OTTWAY (cont'd)

--Keep walking. Don't stop. And
don't run.

Burke can't take it-- looks from the trees to the wolves-- and bolts-- *starts running as fast as he can*--

OTTWAY (cont'd)

(yells after him)

Don't fucking run--

Burke charges for the trees-- the wolves start for him-- Ottway throws his pack down-- starts chasing Burke-- trying to run him down--

Wolves-- coming straight at them-- again-- they attack-- slam into Burke-- Burke drops his knife, topples over--

Ottway-- runs faster, straight at the wolves--

Henrick, the others, hesitate-- *and charge after him*--

Ottway-- knife up-- reaches Burke, slashes at the back of the wolf trying to get at Burke's throat-- it snap-turns, teeth flashing at Ottway--

Ottway slashes in again, the wolf flips back, off Burke-- Burke's still in the snow, WOLVES all over him, arms, legs--

Ottway slashes at the next wolf-- Henrick reaches them-- starts slashing too, the wolves evade, hold on--

Talget arrives, all of them, flailing blades, whizzing wild-- the wolves snap, release Burke-- backing off, circling--

Burke-- bleeding-- scrambles up--

WOLVES circling, Ottway, the others-- Ottway looks at the snow, blood from the wolves, spotting--

OTTWAY (cont'd)

*Back to back now, show them the
knives! We cut 'em! We hurt 'em!*

The wolves circle, snarl-- The men collapse in, backs to one another, knives up-- Ottway sees the wolf with a limp, blood dripping from its haunch-- he plays a hunch-- lunges with his knife-- the wolf retreats/jumps-- He scared it.

OTTWAY (cont'd)

Yeah! *Fuck you! Come on! Come on in here you pricks!*

Ottway, baiting them-- the wolves still circling, but widening their orbit, staying back.

Ottway-- looks at the guys-- at the trees-- he and Henrick look at each other--

OTTWAY (cont'd)

Let's get into the trees. Everybody got legs?

(beat)

Burke?

BURKE

(staring, knife trembling)

Yeah-- yeah--

OTTWAY

You can run?

BURKE

Now you want me to run?

OTTWAY

Now you need to, yeah.

Burke, drained deep, the attack took a lot of him...maybe everything. In spite of that:

BURKE

I'm good, I can do it...I can do it.

OTTWAY

Let 'em get back, push a little, push 'em toward the trees...NOW!

The five of them break-- All running for their lives-- into the trees--

EXT. THE FOREST - NIGHT

They run into--

Almost total dark-- giant timbers tower, a maze of ancient fallen trees, lightning-falls, all angles, stretching away--

Ottway and the rest of the men run as fast as they can-- tree limbs slap and catch and tear-- they plow through, emptying their lungs-- come around a huge tree- gargantuan-- They take cover in its hollow-- gasping, looking back...

...nothing. No sign of the pack...not even a single wolf.

PIKE

Are they there? Are they there?!

OTTWAY

(looking out)

Get as deep in here as you can.

Everybody squirms into the hollow, sardine-tight, winded, everybody battling for air.

TALGET

(gasping)

Fuck-- fuck, man--

Henrick, gasping-- looking at the endless dark maze around them-- silence-- breath misting...Ottway feels it out, looks-- smells--...doesn't like it.

OTTWAY

Forget it. We gotta keep moving.

They look at Ottway-- blink-- Pike, disbelief, pissed.

PIKE

Fuck that! You don't know what the fuck you're talking about! Don't Run/Run, get to cover/LEAVE COVER. FUCK YOU!

OTTWAY

It's not enough! They can still flank us, if we can move, we have to.

TALGET

*We got in here! We rest! We need
the rest!*

PIKE

*I'm not moving! Fuck you! I'm-not-
moving!*

Ottway starts out of the hollow-- down the snowy slope, under
vast fallen trees-- The others-- terrified-- hanging back--
Ottway looks back at them-- almost kindly--

OTTWAY

*Come on. You stay here they'll
outrun you.*

They all get to their feet-- and follow-- Burke, Henrick,
Talget-- then, reluctantly-- Pike.

EXT. DEEPER FOREST - LATER - NIGHT

Deeper into the maze, near-black, slashes of moonlight cut
the snow vertically, the dead trees loom down-- ancient ice-
beards hang.

They walk down into a gully, rocks, trees surround-- ice-
cliff-- no back door...Ottway stops.

OTTWAY

Here. Let's make a fire. Fast.

Everybody looks around.

HENRICK

They'll see a fire.

Ottway-- his pack off his shoulder, pulling pieces of wood
free--

OTTWAY

*They know where we are.
(beat, off the silence)
They're waiting...we spooked 'em, I
don't know but they haven't left.*

PIKE

*(looks around)
This is a fucking dead end! We're
boxing ourselves in!*

OTTWAY

They can't get in behind us.

(pointing)

They'll have to hit us out front.

PIKE

(pointing)

Yeah and push us off that fucking cliff!

Ottway-- lighter to kindling-- watches it-- it catches-- everyone stares into the dark-- the fire builds slow. For a long time, everybody just breathes...

..then, nearby, the sounds of a fight, snarling, tearing, baying-- pack battle, pitched, vicious--

HENRICK

What is that?

More growling, gnashing teeth, a wounded wolf cries out.

OTTWAY

They're *fighting*--

Then all at once, the sounds cut-- like a plug was pulled-- and it goes graveyard quiet again.

TALGET

What was that?

OTTWAY

Maybe one of 'em went at the Alpha.
The Leader. Tried to take over.

TALGET

What does that mean?

BURKE

That big fuckin'-- the big
one--

HENRICK

--they took him on.

--the conversation is clipped by a bellows-like, deep-lunged HOWL that rips through the trees.

OTTWAY

He put it down.

(beat, still listening)

Whatever challenge that was, the Alpha put it down.

The howl echoes off like taunt.

HENRICK

...How the fuck are we supposed to...

(long pause)

How do we get out of this, do we--

OTTWAY

(like a brick wall)

--kill 'em.

Ottway returns to tending the fire-- stares into it.

OTTWAY (cont'd)

One at a time-- tip the numbers.

The fire pops-- crackles--

OTTWAY (cont'd)

That's what they're doing to us.

One of us lags, falls behind--

that's who they hit.

They look at Ottway-- he stands, starts grabbing branches, hacking them loose-- he gathers them, starts sharpening points-- making spears-- the others watch him, follow suit. Ottway lowers the tip to the flame, blackening it. Hardening it.

Then he digs in his pocket, pulls out the shotgun shells-- begins fitting one to the end of the stick, the tip rests right against the firing cap of the shell.

OTTWAY (cont'd)

Friction tape, electrical tape--

any kind of--

--Talget digs into his bag-- half-roll of electrical-tape. Ottway wraps, examines-- makeshift shotgun spear. He hands them out, makes more--

OTTWAY (cont'd)

(jabbing the air)

It's a bang-stick-- improv'd.

(demonstrating)

Jab with it when the wolf gets

close, hit 'em hard-- let it get

real close.

(sharpens, points)

The tip has to drive into the
firing cap, set off the shell.

They look at the spear-- they get it--

OTTWAY (cont'd)
The round discharges, pull it
loose, you have a spear.
(beat, to Pike)
Unless you still want to fist fight
'em.

Pike, exhausted, just flips Ottway off. The rest settle in
around the fire, all busy, knives shaving, sharpening,
making as many spears as they can--

It falls quiet as they work--

Pike, not really engaged, concentrating on the beacon-watch
instead-- listening to it, holding it up to his ear. It's
still beeping, transmitting...

Henrick looks at Ottway as he finishes sharpening a branch--

HENRICK
How much light we get tomorrow?

Ottway-- knife working-- glancing up at the dark--

OTTWAY
Two hours. An hour the day after
that...Then dark until spring.

Henrick-- looking out-- wolves eyes, refracting light--
reflecting back--

HENRICK
How well do they see at night?

OTTWAY
They're nocturnal.

BURKE
Let's talk about something else.
Anything else. Fuck'n, let's eat,
let's-- *Henrick*, you got all that
booze, let's break it out.

HENRICK
Yeah, yeah--

Henrick finishes his spear, slings his pack, starts pulling out bottles, tossing them-- the fire pops, fizzes-- Pike abandons his spear, drains a bottle of Jim Beam in seconds flat, breathes fire--

PIKE

Oh momma, that's nice. Feel it
slide right through your chest,
land on your sack. Lovely stuff.

(beat, to Henrick)

How many more of those do you got?

Henrick, tossing bottles to Talget and Burke.

HENRICK

PIKE

(digging in pack)

Some of 'em broke. I got--
shit, I got Ketel One all
over the bottom of this...

--Give me another one.

HENRICK

I got six left.

PIKE

(holding out hands)

Now you got five. Toss.

Henrick reluctant-- flings Pike a mini-bottle of Dewars.

HENRICK

You just burned your allotment.

PIKE

Says who? You the booze police?

HENRICK

Mules make the rules. You want to
load up, hump this shit yourself,
you can drink yourself stupid--

TALGET

--that happened *years* ago--

HENRICK

--and I recommend rationing what y--

PIKE

--I recommend kissing my ass.

(fiddles with bottle cap)

You guys and your rules and your orders and all your bullshit. Where are we? *Look around. This is Fucked City, population 5 and dwindling.*

(beat, kills bottle)

Two days? Three maybe, unless we *really* pull our shit together and who's in charge of that right now? *Him?*

(to Ottway)

The great white hunter?

(tossing his-spear)

And his jerry-rigged fuckin' wolf-sticks?

Ottway, over the fire, mind elsewhere-- Talget takes up for him.

TALGET

Why do you *constantly* break balls and bitch abou--

PIKE

TALGET

--'cuz I want to *live* fuckface! I don't want some timberwolf shitting my remains all over this mountain--

--then get in the goddamn game-

PIKE

TALGET

--Which one--

-or lie down and die--

PIKE

--I'll save you a spot assho--

--Ottway cuts through, clean--

OTTWAY

--you're scared...

A beat. A look.

PIKE

What?

OTTWAY

You're scared.

(looks at Pike)

You don't need all the bluster.
What's wrong with being scared?

PIKE
...I'm not fucking scared.

OTTWAY
You're not?
(long beat)
...I'm terrified.
(another beat)
Not an ounce of shame, saying
that...I'm scared shitless.

PIKE
'Cuz you're a punk.
(with a gutless sneer)
I don't walk through this world
with fear in my heart.

Ottway scoffs, shakes his head.

OTTWAY
You pick that up in the pen?
Some cellblock bullshit? 'The
Convict's Creed--'

PIKE
--n'fuck you say?

OTTWAY
Talking tough means *jackshit* in
this situation. You're not scared?
Then you're a *fool*. Worse, you're a
fucking liar.

Pike, his back up, bristling-- alcohol fuels the bully--

PIKE
You know what, you fucking bitch-
ass motherfu--

--Pike stands, Ottway too. The others rise, ready to
intervene.

PIKE (cont'd)
--sicka you fuckin' doggin' me,
talkin' shit, you wanna knuckle up
faggot? You wanna ride? Let's go.

Talget steps between Ottway and an advancing Pike.

TALGET

C'mon, c'mon--

--Pike shoves past. Ottway stands square-- waits.

PIKE

(to Talget)

Get your fuckin' hands off me--
you're gonna get hurt--

TALGET

C'mon, sit back dow--

--and Pike slams a forearm shiver into Talget's grill, like he wanted to kill him-- knocks him flat. Everybody starts, jumps back. Pike turns on Ottway, *pulls his knife*, Talget spits blood, backpedals snow.

Uproar from Burke and Henrick.

BURKE

Put that down!

HENRICK

What the fuck are you doing!?

PIKE

(enraged, at Ottway)

*SICK OF YOUR BULLSHIT! YOU GOT
FLANNERY KILLED! YOU'RE GONNA GET
US ALL KILLED! **FUCK YOU!** YOU DON'T
RUN THIS! YOU DON'T RULE SHIT! I'LL
SHOVE THIS THROUGH YOUR FUCKING
HEART!--*

--Ottway doesn't move, waits-- Pike comes in low, slashing, doesn't see how close to the fire he is. Ottway drives a boot down, kicks up ash and ember-- hitting Pike flush in the face, blinding him-- Pike shrieks, flails with the blade--

Ottway grabs/grapples, arm-bars Pike-- boot raking his shin, taking his balance-- ripping his arm up his back-- popping his shoulder at the socket-- Pike screams, knife falling away. Ottway shoves his face toward the fire, grabs the knife, then, sensing something-- he looks up...

...and sees the ALPHA MALE, his big muzzle dripping gore, licking blood off his snout, watching the men fight...just standing there, staring. Everybody looks, gape-jawed.

Pike rolls around, screaming in pain.

OTTWAY

(to Pike, but not taking
his eyes off the Alpha)
Stop moving. Stop. It's dislocated.

PIKE

--you piece of shit! Pop-it-back
in! POP-IT-BACK-IN!

Ottway plants a hand on Pike's shoulder blade and the other
around his bicep-- shoves-pulls, resetting the arm in the
socket. Pike leaps up, spitting fury, seizure-like-- then he
sees the wolf...anger flashes, fades to fear fast.

*The Alpha glares at Pike, takes a small step in his
direction. Pike trips back. Falls.*

OTTWAY

(to Pike, urgent)
Don't. Don't. Get back up. Get up.

Pike staggers up, weaves, shoulder throbbing. *The Alpha
lowers its huge head-- as if taking aim on him.*

PIKE

(at a terrified rasp)
*N'fuck is that thing doing!? Why is
it moving like that!?*

Ottway, reaching for one of the shotgun-spears.

OTTWAY

*Don't move back. Stay right where
you are-- stare right back at him.*

*The Alpha, head hung low, grows statue-still, exhaling in big
plumes-- nostrils flared-- feral eyes fixed on Pike.*

Pike, tensed, tight-- Henrick draws his knife, slow. Burke
sees this, follows suit.

The Alpha is literally locked on Pike...Time suspends.
Seconds stretch, strain...become unbearable epochs.

OTTWAY (cont'd)

(low, harsh)
Don't. Fucking. Move.

...the Alpha finally lifts his massive head and turns, trotting into the misty treeline-- several gray shapes follow/fall into formation...everybody breathes big sighs.

PIKE

What the fuck-- What did it want?

OTTWAY

You.

Pike turns. Ottway throws the knife back over to him.

OTTWAY (cont'd)

You pull any shit with me again

Pike and I'm gonna kill you.

Pike, plucking the knife up out of the snow, looks back. Ottway stares.

OTTWAY (cont'd)

I want an understanding.

Pike returns the knife to its sheath, nods short, pissed at himself, disappointed. He sits. Everyone resumes their spot around the fire. Talget spits blood in Pike's direction.

TALGET

You fuckin' steal on me like that again-- cheapshot me, we're going--

Pike looks up at Talget, real remorse.

PIKE

--I apologize...I'm sorry.

That wasn't cool. I was angry.

Talget, his temper still tweaked, anger like leaking acid. Ottway plays peacemaker.

OTTWAY

No more beefs. Let's squash all the bullshit. We got big, Moby-Dick sized fish to fry, so fuck whatever's between us now. It can wait.

(beat)

Talget. *Conserve it.* Yeah?

Talget, still tastes blood, but lets it lie. He nods to Ottway.

OTTWAY (cont'd)

Alright, if anybody wants to rest,
now is probably the time t--

--Pike **suddenly lunges toward the fire**, as if propelled, as if levitating-- the air is pushed/shoved out of him hard-- the shock on his face says something horrible is happening-- he hits, sprawling, face first, going into the rim of the fire, arms raking embers, scalding--

--at the same moment, Ottway and the rest of the men realize that there's a wolf on his back...He's been hit blind from behind.

The men scramble up, the wolf skids off, its hind legs grazing the fire, paddling ash-- a yelp escapes-- its fur catches, burns, smokes, but it stays on Pike, it's snout rooting between his shoulders, ripping fabric, big head thrashing-- Pike screams.

Ottway grabs the bang-stick, leaps across, raises it like a Vampire-Hunter and drives it into the wolf's back-- the shell explodes, blowing the end off the stick-- discharging across and into the wolf-- it rears up howling, enraged, hurt.

The shell smokes, ignited, half-submerged in fur and flesh. The wolf is off Pike, snapping like wild, trying to tear the smoking shell out-- Talget rushes in, sinks the shaft of his spear into the wolf-- but the round doesn't go off-- he yanks it free, the shell spooling away from the electrical tape.

The wolf snaps back, whiplash fast, tearing into Talget's fist. Talget falls away, seizing his hand, the thumb nearly torn away completely.

Burke fires empty mini-bottles, two going wide, one striking and shattering off the animal's skull-- the other hitting its haunches, knocking it off balance.

Henrick is next, he misses wide-- bang-stick striking ground, round going off, blasting snow, sending hardpack haze into the air.

Ottway grabs a partially burning log from the fire with gloved hands and clouts the confused wolf, crushing it across the back of its head, it splays out supine, yipping madly--

Pike, anger/aggression redirected now-- unsheathes his knife, launches himself on top of the prone animal, sticking it with the speed of a sewing bobbin-- the blade slipping through the animal's hide like hot butter.

The wolf goes soft, limp, slumps-- Pike keeps driving the knife into it, over and over, frothing fury.

Ottway finally hauls him off. Pike sniffs the wolf's blood slathered over his hands-- something in him needs to taste it, he does, smiles to himself, relishing it-- the lunatic momentarily released...

The wolf bleeds out, short spasms ripple through, snout to tail-- lapse, resume...then it goes still.

The men look down at it...stunned, still struggling with that initial shock as another realization slowly takes shape...

...they just killed this thing...Together.

Some primal pulse passes between them and at once they erupt in rough cheer-- kicking the animal's carcass, taunting its dead form, exulting one another with back-slaps, fist-bumps...a unity earned.

BURKE

(breathless, spent)

Is it the big one? That big fucker?

Ottway, stepping around to look closer at the carcass.

OTTWAY

...no. It's not the Alpha.

HENRICK

You sure?

OTTWAY

Yeah. It's a male, but it's smaller.

(beat)

They sent him in.

HENRICK

(heaving)

Commando.

OTTWAY

(nods)

Yeah.

(to Pike)

To test you.

Pike, standing, wolf's blood drying on his hands. He lifts his boot, stomping on the dead animal.

PIKE

Did I pass bitch!?

(punctuates with stomps)

Did I-- Fucking-- PASS!

OTTWAY

(to Talget)

How's your hand?

Talget, already wrapping it. Ottway crosses to him. Talget holds it up to the firelight. Ottway inspects.

OTTWAY (cont'd)

I can see the tendons. We have to stitch it.

TALGET

With what?

OTTWAY

I don't know. Wrap it really tight for now, we'll figure it out--

--Ottway becomes aware of the dark lines moving laterally out of the corner of his eye-- looks-- the wolves, massing out there close...At least a dozen, maybe the entire pack.

A beat...Ottway looks back down at the dead wolf.

OTTWAY (cont'd)

Get a spit, put it up.

HENRICK

What?

OTTWAY

Find the biggest branch we can and bring it to a point-- then let's run it right through the carcass.

(beat, to the others)

We're gonna cook this sonofabitch.

(beat, looks back out)
And we're gonna eat it.

The wolves, their yellow eyes flittering back, just watch.

EXT. FIRESIDE - LATER

The carcass of the wolf roasts over the fire. Branches erected in an 'X' bow under the animal's dead weight. Another branch has been run through its length.

Ottway and the others watch it roast, the flesh pops and peels. Hunks of gamy fur and fat sluice off, bubble and burn.

The wolves observe from the mid-distance, the whole pack spooked, pacing.

OTTWAY
(to Burke)
Burke. Slide over about five feet.
Let 'em get a good look.

Burke does. Strange keening yelps rise up shrill as the wolf's carcass comes into full view...almost as if the pack were mourning.

PIKE
(with a big grin)
...We're flipping 'em out.

Ottway just nods.

HENRICK
Is that possible?

OTTWAY
We killed one of 'em. They know.

Ottway stands. Goes to the wolves hind quarters, charred, cooked through, its rear paw withered black by the heat. Ottway grabs it, tears the back leg off-- greasy, gristle-like meat, sinewy and unappetizing, sags off the bone.

OTTWAY (cont'd)
I don't care how bad it is.
Everybody take a hunk, eat it. Let
them see you eating it.

Ottway tears in, ripping at the meat, filling his mouth with it, a taste that's both rancid and bitter. He chokes it down.

OTTWAY (cont'd)

We're hungry enough and we need the meat. You need it for *the fight*.

Talget, finishing a makeshift field wrap over his hand with cocktail napkins and electrical tape. He tears off some of the wolf meat on the other hind quarter, gnaws on it, gags.

TALGET

Fuuuuuuuck, this is bad.

Pike takes his knife, slicing right into the animal's side-- black, pebbly meat comes loose-- he eats it right off the blade. The taste seems to please him, he smiles.

PIKE

Shit, I've had a lot worse-- this bitch is eatin' like filet mignon in a famine.

Henrick, carving into the ribs, pulling the puckered meat free, lapping it up. He just as quickly spits it out--

HENRICK

Goddamn-- this thing had an infection, I've tasted bad meat-- this is bad. *Fuck*.

OTTWAY

Then burn it black, but eat it.
It's all we're gonna get right now.

Henrick, spittle and chewed meat hang in ropes that he wipes free. He returns his hunk of meat to the fire.

Ottway looks over at Burke, huddling, shaking.

OTTWAY (cont'd)

Burke, you okay?

Burke tries to shake it off. Looks pale.

BURKE

Just feel-- my head's off. I don't know-- fuck'n really dizzy.

Pike, still energized by the kill, starts hacking at the wolf's head, wedging his blade into its back, both hands-- prying, pulling-- the animal's spine separates, pops, something loosed-- Pike yanks, exerting great effort.

HENRICK

Pike, what the fuck--

Henrick steps toward Pike-- Ottway stops him, looks-- *'let him have this...'*

Pike, grunting, grinning, hauls the wolf's head free from its body, hoisting it by its dead scruff. He walks to the edge of camp, the rest of the pack still out there, glimpses, glances, fluttering in the firelight.

Pike lifts the wolf's head, screaming at the top of his lungs, wailing a war-cry that his chronic smoker's cough cuts short-- doubling him over. He laughs, sputters, does a full spin with the head, heaving it out in the darkness-- discus throw.

The other men laugh themselves hoarse...a smile even escapes Ottway.

Then...the wolves howl back in rebuke. Raw. Bestial. A choral roar that rises and overwhelms in chilling crescendo. It might be three of them, but it sounds like *three-thousand*...a sound so animal and powerful and pure that it simply humbles.

Pike, stock still. His revelry lost under the weight of the baying wolves. The others too, their smiles fading, the stakes refreshed...their sense of despair returning anew.

EXT. FIRESIDE - LATER

Everybody wired, wide awake. Burke bundled up, coughing, not doing well. The remains of the wolf have burnt to cinders. Ottway dumps fresh logs on the fire, kneels next to Burke.

OTTWAY

Hey, how you feeling?

Burke just shakes his head 'no', his breathing labored.

OTTWAY (cont'd)

I'm gonna move you closer to the fire alright, lie still.

Ottway gently lifts Burke, he cries out in pain.

BURKE

FUCK--my bones-- it hurts in my bones-- what is that? My head, my head is fucking killing me...

Ottway motions Henrick over. Voice pitched low.

OTTWAY

I wish I knew what was wrong with him.

HENRICK

(whispering)

He could be hypoxic.

Burke picks up the urgency in their conversation.

BURKE

Please don't fucking whisper man, please, that shit'll freak me out--

HENRICK

--Burke, it's cool. I told Ottway you might have hypoxia, it's the elevation--

BURKE

--what does it cause? 'hypoxia'-- whatever, whatever you just said--

HENRICK

--It's just altitude sickness.

(looks at Ottway, lying)

It's not serious. We just have to keep you warm, keep your body temperature up.

(kneeling next to Burke)

Just rest man, that's the best thing.

Burke nods, his skin a deep bruised blue now. He slowly succumbs to unconsciousness. Everyone else settles in around the fire.

OTTWAY

(to Talget)

How's your hand?

Talget holds it up.

TALGET

Perfect. I can't feel it.

Ottway nods, rubs his eyes. Everybody stares at the fire, too tired to worry about wolves now. Pike checks his beacon-watch once again.

HENRICK

That thing still working?

Pike nods.

PIKE

Told you. Up to 40,000 feet. This shit had to save somebody at some point. How else could they market the motherfucker?

Talget leans in close, warms his bad hand. You can see him hesitating...wanting to share something but unsure of how to proceed...Finally:

TALGET

...I just keep sitting here thinking, even with all this going on. We hit the ground at over *four-hundred miles an hour*...and made it. We're here. Why? Why would we go through something like that, that crash, if we weren't-- if it wasn't meant to be, or ordained by--

Pike actually cackles, still fussing with the beacon-watch.

PIKE

--by who? 'The Almighty?' That fucking fairy tale? How 'bout old fashioned, blind fucking luck bro. *That's* what's got you here. Flannery survived that crash, so did Luttinger, doesn't matter. Fate doesn't give a fuck. Dead is dead.
(strapping the watch back to onto his pack)
And where do you think they are now? Heaven? Being fitted for wings? You know where they are...? ***They aren't...that's*** where.
Black. Nothing. Gone.

TALGET

I don't believe that.

OTTWAY

...I do.

Talget looks over at Ottway, a little thrown.

OTTWAY (cont'd)

I wish I didn't. I really wish I could believe in that stuff, but for me, none of it's...It's all...

PIKE

Fucking fantasy, fable. *The bible?* Give me a break! Might as well be motherfuckin' 'Mother Goose'

OTTWAY

(scoops up snow)

This is real. The cold.

(exhales, breath misting)

That's real, the air in my lungs.

(pulls up sleeve)

This, where I got bit, that's real. I press on it, I feel pain...It's *this* world that I'm worried about, not the next.

(longer beat)

My brother told me once 'How do we know that the last few seconds of our lives, that last time your brain fires, doesn't just stretch out endlessly and that's your eternity'-- but in reality it's all over in a few seconds.

TALGET

Jesus Christ--

PIKE

(off of Talget's remark)

--let's hope so homey! For your sake!

HENRICK

(right at Ottway)

What about your faith?

OTTWAY

What about it?

HENRICK
Where do you put it?

OTTWAY
(without hesitation)
In my head, in my heart and in my
hands...

TALGET
So you're an atheist?

Ottway slowly shakes his head 'no'...

OTTWAY
...a realist.

Ottway's words hang heavy. The fire pops and cracks...
Regardless of individual differences, a bond has been forged
between them, however forced...these men are now enjoined.

Suddenly, Burke sits upright, as if he were on a spring.

BURKE
Emma? Emma!
(looks around at the
others)
Is she with you guys...?

Henrick moves to him.

HENRICK
Burke-- what? Where's Emma?

BURKE
(glazed, gone)
I just heard her. She's over there.
We were talking. I thought she was
going to be staying here...

'What-the-fuck' looks fly around the fire.

HENRICK
Lay back down, she's not here just
yet.

BURKE
Tell her I'm in back, I'll be
out...I'm here...

Henrick coaxes Burke back down, he passes out again.

PIKE

...is he seeing things?

HENRICK

(nodding)

He's hallucinating. It's hypoxia.
Not enough oxygen is getting to his
brain.

PIKE

Why aren't the rest of us getting
that?

HENRICK

Depends on the person. Some people
can't take the altitude.

PIKE

Fuck, don't let that happen
to me--

TALGET

--Who's Emma?

HENRICK (cont'd)

...his little sister.

(beat, choking up)

She died when he was a kid. Had
that spinal thing, meningitis.

This hits each of them-- Hard. Henrick tears up, wipes--
recovers-- can't linger on this...a beat, then:

HENRICK (cont'd)

Y'know my dad is probably asleep in
his chair right now and he's got
these goddamn glasses on his chest
that always fall off and wind up
wedged down in the-- the cushion,
never knows where they are-- my
brother and I lifted that chair up
one day, Superbowl Sunday one year,
fuckin' six pairs of reading
glasses fell out--

The others laugh. Force themselves. Ottway just listens.

HENRICK (CONTD) (cont'd)

He's in that chair and my mom's
gone off to bed and the house is
quiet and smells just like it did
when I was a kid...

Pike sours at this.

PIKE

Don't talk about those fuckin' things man, it's depressing.

TALGET

Bro, after your whole 'God is a buncha bullshit' routine, doesn't exist, that's depressing? What Henrick said?

Pike smiles at his own contradictions.

PIKE

I just don't want to be reminded of that stuff...not now.

OTTWAY

...You should. You should remind yourself. Those things from your life, whatever they are...make you want that next minute more than the last. Make you fight for it.

(beat, unforced)

The way this one woman felt, Palm Beach, a decade back. I don't even remember her so much as the skin on her shoulders, these little freckles from the sun. I kissed her there and she tasted like Coppertone.

(beat)

The way I heard this baby laugh once and it put a lump in my throat.

(beat)

Sitting with my little brother after his wife died and rubbing the back of his neck while he cried...I can't hear him at all, he's not making a sound. I just see these tears hitting the tips of his shoes...Moments that mean nothing to you...and everything to me.

Each of them ponder this...consider their pasts. The most profound, the most memorable moments of their lives, some spectacles, some merely snapshots...

They all fall silent. An odd stillness takes, holds...

TALGET

My daughter Lily. She's five and a half, six in June. I think of her.

(beat, smiles big)

I'll be laying there on the couch or whatever and she's got this long hair almost to her waist and she'll come up and hover over me. I could be dead asleep and she'll start shaking her head back and forth, tickling me, all this hair in my face, laughing like a little nut. Laughs herself silly, just thinks it's the funniest thing.

(beat)

I miss that the most.

Pike nods slowly, in what would to be appear deep appreciation...then lets all the air out:

PIKE

I just want to fuck one more time.

Everybody roars. Even Talget.

TALGET

That's just great
motherfucker. Ruin my story--
--ruin this sweet little
moment I'm sharing about my
daughter--

PIKE

--Sorry homey, sorry-- didn't
mean to wreck your shit--

PIKE (cont'd)

--mine's nothing that precious, I
just can't go out on that last
horrible piece of ass I had. This
fucking fifty-three year old
hooker, half-Eskimo, gives me the
clap like she meant to giftwrap it.

More laughter. This is the release they need.

PIKE (cont'd)

Two-fifty, two-sixty, the bitch was
basically a Peterbilt with a clit.

Henrick coughs and sputters, tears coming to his eyes.

PIKE (cont'd)
The idea that *I'd punch out* and
that would be my swan song--

TALGET
--*that's* fucking depressing.

PIKE
Deeply.
(offers toast to Talget)
You speak a *mouthful* my man.

Henrick and Pike clink bottles. Drink. Laugh some more. It ebbs, returns to relative quiet. Just the wind in the trees. Then:

HENRICK
(drains his bottle)
I just don't feel like I'm done
yet...I don't feel like I'm here to
die.
(oddly, toward Ottway)
That this is it.

OTTWAY
...And you think you would know?

HENRICK
I think I would.
(nods, thoughtful)
I hope I would.

Ottway nods, thinks.

OTTWAY
My father was-- not without love
but a motherfucker of a human being
when he wanted to be-- hunter,
badass, barfighter, all that shit--
never shed a tear, saw weakness
everywhere...
(beat)
But he had this whole thing for -I
don't know what you'd call it-
poems, poetry, reading them,
quoting them-- probably thought it
rounded him off, made him more of a
renaissance man.
(beat)

And there was one that hung over
the desk in his den my whole life
and it was only when I was a lot
older that I realized...he had
written it. It was untitled. Four
lines.

(longer pause)

I read it at his funeral:

(beat, reciting)

'Once more into the fray...'

(beat)

*'Into the last good fight I'll ever
know...'*

(beat)

'Live and die on this day...'

(beat)

'Live and die on this day...'

The fire pops and cracks. Everyone stares, a kind of awed
silence. They remain this way for several moments. Then,
Ottway glances up at the horizon.

A beat. He stands. Stares...

OTTWAY (cont'd)

...those look like storm clouds.

Henrick looks out at the horizon as well.

HENRICK

...Blizzard?

OTTWAY

Good bet.

PIKE

Shit, based on the luck we've had
so far, it's a 'fucking lock.

TALGET

How long?

OTTWAY

Hour before it hits. Maybe less. We
should dig in against the trees,
snow's deep enough.

HENRICK

What about Burke?

Ottway looks down at the slumbering Burke, his condition seeming to worsen by the second.

OTTWAY

Bundle him up, get him as deep into the snow as we can.

(beat, grim)

I'm just worried if we lose that fire...then we'll all freeze.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. CAMPSITE - LATER

A storm the size of Hell...unleashed with the same fury.

Brutal-- sub-zero windshear and spindrift blown sideways-- like an atomic bomb-- battering everything-- the storm's endless, deafening din mutes anything below a scream. Ottway, unable to communicate with the others, lies prone in a small, self-dug hovel, trying to ride it out-- Burke lies bundled next to him, inert, helpless...unable to escape the elements.

The others, Henrick, Pike and Talget, lie three across in a separate shelter, clinging to whatever warmth they can.

Ottway, doing his best to keep Burke awake and alert, to the point of pounding on him-- anything to keep him alive.

OTTWAY

(yelling like a madman)

BURKE! STAY AWAKE! DON'T SLEEP!

DON'T SLEEP! GODDAMIT! GET UP!!

Ottway hammers him with the heels of his fists-- but Burke remains non-responsive.

EXT. CAMPSITE - DAWN

The storm has broke.

Burke...staring up dead...his features distorted and distended by frostbite. He's being slowly stripped of his clothes by a bereaved Talget.

Burke's sock --the only dry thing on his body-- is peeled off with great pain...Talget takes the sock, staggering over to:

Ottway, Henrick and Pike, struggling to clear enough space for a new fire-- moving like pre-oiled Tin-Men, purple from exposure, they shake, shudder-- soaked to the bone by the storm. Ottway pushes his words out as though lifting a piano.

OTTWAY

(under tremendous strain)

--we'll-- h-hav-- hy-hypo--therm-ia
in another hour-- unless--
w'restar- thisss...

Pike, black rings under his eyes, unscrewing the last mini-bottle of whiskey-- a near-Herculean task now-- He uses his teeth, cracks the seal, manages to pour it onto Burke's sock.

Ottway, his fingers like frozen mallets, trying to coax the lighter to life-- but can't find friction with his raw thumb.

PIKE

(to Ottway)

H-hurry, b'for-- it freezzsss...

Ottway bears down, his whole world narrowed down to *that lighter*-- to igniting it-- he tries again, fails, again, fails...anger forces a clenched fist, he fights for circulation, his thumb flicks, it lights-- flame fluttering, Ottway quickly puts it to the whiskey-soaked sock.

It catches, the flames spread-- he drops the sock onto the pile-- but a sudden gust snuffs the would-be blaze.

OTTWAY

FFFFFFUUUUUUUUUCKKK!

Anger his only source of heat-- Ottway removes the knife from his belt with great difficulty. He holds the lighter up, piercing the plastic cover with the tip of the blade, lighter fluid leaks, spreads, but flash freezes against the steel...

Ottway roots around, fishes out the last shotgun shell from his pocket, brings it to his mouth and bites down-- breaking the cap-- he spits-- buckshot and gunpowder spill over his glove-- he grips the leaking lighter tight in his gloved hand, looks around at the others--

He brings his free thumb to the spark-wheel, flicks it-- it lights, flames ripple, pop-- a small explosion engulfs his whole hand, blinding him for a moment-- he wrist-flicks his burning glove into the wood pile-- motioning the men in.

OTTWAY (cont'd)
 (eyes slammed shut)
--close-close!! --cut the wind!!

The men huddle tight, arms on shoulders, drop down around the fire, staring, praying to a God some only seldom believe in. The fire spreads-- wind whipping-- threatening to extinguish fledgling flames-- the men draw even closer, head-to-head, doing everything they can to cut the gale ripping across.

The kindling ignites, burns, smoke begins to rise...

The four of them, Ottway, Pike, Talget and Henrick begin to laugh this hoarse, hardened, ghastly laughter. The kind that the truly maniacal make...a sound both desperate and defiant.

The fire spreads, the men stay huddled, letting it burn, letting the smoke float up and fill their lungs.

EXT. FIRESIDE - DAY

Fire at an inferno-like level. Clothing stripped, drying on sticks, the four survivors wrapped up with cheap in-flight felt blankets, inches from the blaze, trying to stave off frostbite.

Talget has fallen asleep. Pike-- a raw, ragged cough, picked up post-storm, now plagues him. He shifts restlessly, hacking. His health deteriorating. Henrick dozes fitfully, sitting upright, unable to get comfortable.

Ottway, steadfast, even in extreme exhaustion, rotates his clothes so they dry...he finds a lump in his jacket, forages, pulls out his wet wallet. He stares, turning it in his hand.

He slowly opens it, extracting something...

...it's the crumpled Polaroid from his hotel room.

He starts to open it carefully, slowly, it's soggy, hard to separate. He manages to ease the edges apart, stare down...

...we don't see what the image is. And we won't...

It's significance can only be gleaned in his eyes...and in the tears that fill them.

He becomes aware of something, at the edge of his sight...that Woman...closer now. Her auburn hair alight on the breeze. Ottway doesn't turn toward her.

He just shakes his head 'no' as if wishing her away, as if he hasn't the strength to face her.

He buries his head in his hands, still holding that Polaroid. After a moment, he looks up...the woman is gone, but Henrick is awake.

Ottway quickly composes himself, tucking the Polaroid back into his wallet.

He casts his gaze to the sky: The borealis flashes, purple to orange-- then, he hears something. A sound...steady and heavy like timber being snapped/smashed. Ottway stands, listens.

HENRICK

What is that?

Henrick is on his feet now. Pike and Talget awake abrupt, confused, sleep slows cognizance-- they snap to suddenly-- fear flushed-- spinning in place--

TALGET

What-what-what??

PIKE

*What the fuck-- is it them?
Are they back?*

Again, the same sound, a crushing shudder, something colliding, grinding...breaking apart.

OTTWAY

(soft, as he realizes)
...Ice floes.
(beat, to the others)
Those are ice floes breaking
apart...*There's a river.*

Henrick looks around.

HENRICK

Where?

Ottway follows the sound as it recedes. It leads him to the edge of the nearby cliff. He arrives, peers down: An abyss from here...Two-hundred vertical feet of mostly sheer face covered with ice and snow.

Henrick, Pike and Talget hobble up behind.

OTTWAY
(looking down)
Waterway must be pretty big, we can
hear it all the way up here.

TALGET
You think there's--

OTTWAY
--docks, boats--

PIKE
--way the fuck out here?

HENRICK
At least if we're following a
river, we've got a better shot of
finding shelter.

Pike, coughing, easing toward the edge, giraffe-neck, just
peering over the lip.

PIKE
Who's fucking climbing down that?

TALGET
I can't. There's no way I can get
down that.

HENRICK
(looks around, assessing)
We walk it? Figure out another way
down?

Ottway's not looking down but out...at the giant fir trees
about thirty feet off the cliff's face.

OTTWAY
It's gotta be a couple miles over
this terrain getting down there...
(beat)
Those trees though.

HENRICK
What trees?

Ottway points.

OTTWAY

Thirty feet out, another twenty down. We get a tether of some kind, secure it between here and there...and we can climb down.

PIKE

Unless you got some fucking flying squirrel somewhere in your family tree--

HENRICK

--He's not talking abo--

(turning to Ottway)

--you're not talking about *jumping off the cliff*...?

(off Ottway's silence)

You are talking about jumping off the cliff.

OTTWAY

It's an idea...I didn't say it was a *good* one.

Talget looks back at their campsite.

TALGET

We're walking away from that fire, we're walking away fr--

OTTWAY

--if we don't keep moving, we're dead. That's about all I'm aware of right now. If we don't stay on our feet, in motion, we won't make it.

Their silence says he's right.

HENRICK

I'll do it. Let me do it.

OTTWAY

What?

HENRICK

You--

(to Ottway and Pike)

Both of you were attacked, bit up.

(as Pike coughs)

You're looking worse by the minute.

(to Talget)
 He's got a bad hand.
 (with regret, reluctance)
 I'm the least damaged...Let me do
 it.

EXT. CLIFFSIDE - LATER

A ligature/yoke made from forsaken thermals and parkas and anchored with the trussing rope Ottway recovered from the wreck-site. It stretches close to fifty feet.

It's being knotted and cinched around a backpack that Henrick is strapping into with Talget's help.

At the cliff's edge, Ottway and Pike are completing a crude snow ramp, piled up by hand, the surface covered with branches for traction-- giving Henrick a hard running start off the side.

HENRICK
 It's interesting-- the moments
 before you're about to pull the
 single stupidest fucking stunt you
 will ever pull.

TALGET
 I'll bet. Lotta voices huh?

HENRICK
 Yeah and every of 'em screaming
 'ASSWIPE' at the top of their
 lungs.

TALGET
 This'll wind up being a wild story
 you tell at a party, with a girl on
 your lap.

Henrick finishes fastening the last buckle on the backpack.

HENRICK
 How great would that be?

TALGET
 The greatest.

Ottway approaches.

OTTWAY

Alright brother. You ready?

Henrick nods, pulling the backpack tight.

OTTWAY (cont'd)

(pointing to snow ramp)

Top of that, give you a pretty good running start, get you to speed. After that, you're free-falling about twenty feet but it'll feel like twenty-thousand.

HENRICK

Is this suppose to pass for a pep talk?

Ottway ignores him, too dialed into the details.

OTTWAY

As soon as we feel this go taut we're gonna take the slack so we can keep you from hitting too hard.

(beat, points)

We'll anchor to that tree and spread out along the line so if one part of this thing separates, we can still grab on. You get in ther--

HENRICK

--I'll figure it out.

OTTWAY

If you can tie off to the trunk--

HENRICK

--That's what I'm gonna do.

Henrick starts toward the ramp. Pike, his voice a whiskey-cut rasp from all that coughing, limps alongside.

PIKE

If you gotta go, this is a pretty cool way to punch out. Better a flying leap than those fucking wolves...

HENRICK
 (sarcasm at its apex)
 ...Goddamn you just have this
 great gift--

PIKE
 --I know, I know--

--for saying *exactly* what
 somebody needs to hear--

--I get that alot.

HENRICK
 (can't supress smile)
Dick.

Pike laughs, coughs, spits.

PIKE
 And don't bitch-out, mid-flight,
 start flailing around-- get in
 there like a fucking spider monkey
 man, make it happen.

Henrick trudges up to the top of the snow ramp. Ottway, Pike and Talget take up the makeshift yoke, securing it around a tree and taking their places along its length.

HENRICK
 (quietly)
 Fuck, I hope there's something down
 there.

Ottway, Pike and Talget gather up the line, getting good grips.

HENRICK (cont'd)
 (turns to the them)
 Don't hang me up, make sure I've
 got enough slack to get across.

OTTWAY
 Get your legs under you, push off
 that edge.

Henrick nods, readies himself-- deep breath, a pause for prayer-- then he simply *rushes off the edge of the cliff*-- launching out into the ether-- his body extending spread-eagle, stretching in mock flight as he clears the span-- falling-- a high-dive headlong into the trees-- he hits the treetop, disappears--

--the line snaps taut-- seams pop, one of the parkas being pulled apart.

Ottway seizes the fraying fabric, holding it together-- the line comes loose, pulled free from the tree-- Pike snatches it, wraps it, his heels dragging, digging Tug-O-War, Talget does the same--

IN THE TREES

--Henrick, battered by branches, slapped/raked/slashed grabbing, groping-- gets his arm hooked, halting his descent-- he's hung up, poked and punctured-- he looks at his hands, covered in cuts-- smiles-- breathes...

Ottway's voice echoes across...

OTTWAY (O.S.) (cont'd)
...you in there?

HENRICK
I'm alright...

OTTWAY (O.S.)
Can you tie off to anything?

Henrick eases a leg down-- finds his footing-- does the same with the other leg. He's now standing at the top of the tree.

HENRICK
Give me a minute...is that all the slack?

OTTWAY (O.S.)
...yeah.

Henrick slowly, painfully slips out of the backpack-- edging toward the base of the tree, boots sliding gingerly, branch bowing beneath-- He lashes the backpack to the tree, turns it in on itself, creating a rough bowline knot-- tugs it snug.

HENRICK
Alright.

CLIFFSIDE

Ottway, Pike and Talget have re-secured the line. It now stretches taut over the span, angling down into the trees, some two-hundred feet above the earth.

OTTWAY
Anybody got an urge to go first?

PIKE
 (coughing)
 I'm up.

Pike grabs the line, hooking a weary leg over and Ranger-Crawling-- the line dipping with his weight as he slowly pulls himself across, disappearing into the dense pine.

A beat, a cough, then:

PIKE (O.S.) (cont'd)
Alright, I'm cool...

Ottway turns to Talget.

OTTWAY
 Don't stay on long, clear it as quick as you can. You ready?

TALGET
 Not yet. You go.

OTTWAY
 What about your hand?

TALGET
 I'll be alright. Go ahead. Anything happens, you haul me in.

A beat. Ottway stares.

OTTWAY
 You don't look that fired up.

TALGET
 I just fucking hate heights. Flips me out.

OTTWAY
 Then go and I'll make sure--

TALGET
 --no, no. I'm good. You cross, it'll be good for my, whatever, my *confidence*-- seriously.

Ottway nods, taking hold of the line-- same drill-- simple Ranger-Crawl, legs loped over, hand-over-hand as he crosses. Like Pike, he clears the span quickly. He looks back at Talget before tucking into the trees.

Talget, alone now-- steeling himself-- fixing his stare on those trees-- don't fucking look down.

OTTWAY

Talget, you ready?

A nod. He takes up the line, gets his legs up, hooks his bad hand, pulls with his good one-- and starts inching across the steadily sagging line.

It's slow going-- sluggish-- Talget is taking too much time...

OTTWAY (cont'd)

*Don't stay on that line too long,
get across...*

Fear creeps in-- spreads viral-- Talget's having trouble now-- hands lagging-- legs not responding-- the line sags lower.

OTTWAY (cont'd)

Talget--

TALGET

--I hear you, Fuck, *I can hear you--*

OTTWAY

Hurry up.

Talget, mid-way across the void-- makes the mistake of looking down-- vertigo seizes instantly, everything spins-- one arm leaves the line-- he reacts, reaches-- catches-- his feet flail, slip/spasm--

TALGET

*Wait-- godda-- it's giving--
itsgiving--!!*

IN THE TREES

Ottway/Pike/Henrick see Talget struggling,

OTTWAY

Talget! Stop, STOP!

Too late-- the line abruptly comes untethered from the other side-- Talget, still clinging to it, swings down like a pendulum, slamming into the tree just below them--

OTTWAY (cont'd)

--GRAB IT! GRAB IT!

Pike grabs the other attached end and along with Henrick, attempts to hold it fast--

--Ottway, climbing down through a lattice of branches, overgrown, crisscrossed-- an impenetrable snarl. He maneuvers through-- moving as quickly as he can-- trying to reach Talget--

--who is horribly shaken, in shock, hanging upside down, babbling, blood rupturing from a head wound, running into his eyes, his hands slick with it.

OTTWAY (cont'd)
Talget! Stay still!

Talget's trying to sit up, his grip slips, branches bow and snap beneath him-- he plummets-- free-falling over a hundred feet-- body being battered-- heavy limbs knocking him end over end, ratcheting him like a rag doll--

He lands-- limp wreckage-- spine severing-- back breaking on impact...his air stolen in a slow, steady wheeze...a punctured lung leaking...he doesn't breathe, can't breathe... He can only blink up at the vast canopy of trees above.

IN THE TREES

Ottway, Pike and Henrick, on their way down, still near the top.

PIKE
You see him!?

OTTWAY
No!

EXT. GROUND - CONTINUOUS

Talget, staring up, overcome by a deep, bracing calm...the end encroaching...his world going slowly, softly gray...

A little GIRL looms in over him, her long hair brushing his face. She laughs, he stares up at her...Every part of him in ruins, the pieces broken beyond repair...only a small smile remains.

TALGET
(faint as death)
...hey baby girl...

The little girl grins down, moving her head back and forth, gently at first, then growing gradually, swaying side to side, a motion that becomes more and more manic-- until it mimics a kind of thrashing...

IN THE TREES

Ottway can hear the wolves attacking Talget, snarling, ripping-- fifty feet from the forest floor-- he can only catch glimpses-- fur swarming-- tugging-- tearing--

OTTWAY

*YOU MOTHERFUCKERS!! LEAVE HIM
ALONE!*

Ottway reaches the lower branches-- pulls his knife-- skidding across the backside of the tree-- vaults down-- looks-- Talget is gone-- dead-- no sign of him-- spotted snow, shredded clothes-- paw prints everywhere--

Pike and Henrick leap down from the tree behind him.

Ottway listens...nothing.

OTTWAY (cont'd)

TALGET!

Nothing but a barren stillness...soundless...motionless.

OTTWAY (cont'd)

TALGET!

HENRICK

(quietly)
They got him--

--I hope the fall killed him--

PIKE

--These fuckin'
things...these fuckin'
things...what-what--

--they won't let-- picking us
off, picking us, fucking off,
we-- everything we're doing,
leave us alone, trying
to...get home goddamit

(screams now)

--**WHAT THE FUCK DO YOU WANT!!**

Pike's howl stretches out and across the trees, endless at first, then echoing off...leaving only the shuddering chop of shifting ice on the wind.

Ottway reaches down, digging Talget's wallet out of the detritus, handing it to an aggrieved Henrick, who swipes away stray tears that have caught in his stubble.

Pike, staring at the snow, his cough has gone wet, his breathing a bog of rasp and wheeze after that outburst.

PIKE

They're not gonna let us out of
here are they?

(looks up at Ottway)

Are they?

Ottway-- nods-- long silence-- then...

OTTWAY

Don't think about fighting them.
Just-- let it go to your muscle.
If they're on you, if you're down--
don't think about dying. Just--
let it go to your blood-- just
fucking *fight*. If you die, you die,
just-- let your body fight.

(off their silence)

It'll fight, trust me...It'll fight
even after you think you're dead.

(long pause)

Now let's find that river.

EXT. RIVER BANK - LATER

Ottway, Henrick and Pike; grim ghosts, marching, battle-scarred, starving, freezing, moving along the bank like mourners. The river is a wide, vast expanse of frazil ice pans and breakup jam. Jagged, crystalline turrets jut up through the surface at clashing angles.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. RIVER BANK - LATER STILL

Light like magic hour. A dim, failing glow settling across the world. The ice moves, migrates-- a sound akin to ship masts being snapped like pencil lead.

Ottway leads the trudge...the next step more difficult than the last. A bracing gale blows across the river, buffeting their path, their boots moored in thick winter mud...

Every one of them has reached the outer edges of personal perseverance...beyond exhaustion there is only expiration.

In the mid-distance, maybe a mile down river, the ice jam cedes to a flat, featureless surface of sheet ice.

OTTWAY

Okay, a little ways up here, we can get out of this mud, get on the river, it'll be smoother goi--

Then:

PIKE

--Forget it.

Ottway turns back to Pike, who stops suddenly, staring down at the muck covering his boots. Henrick stops, looks over his shoulder at Pike.

After another beat:

PIKE (cont'd)

(still staring down)

...I'm gassed. Fuck it.

He removes his hat. This gray visage grinning back up at them, ghastly, skin like parchment-- the color of peat coal, stretched over his skull...it's clear.

He's dying...

...Ottway knows this without Pike uttering another word.

PIKE (cont'd)

Whatever I had in the tank, I burned back there. I'm fucking beat. I'm gonna sit down--

OTTWAY

(as Pike moves to do so)

--if you sit down--

PIKE

--I know.

(slow nod)

I know what's gonna happen. I don't want to argue. I just want to sit.

Pike stumbles over to a snow-covered stump, wracked with that cough. He sits.

PIKE (cont'd)
I just had this thought, *really*
clear too...I'm done.

Henrick stares back at him in disbelief.

HENRICK
What?.. c'mon man...Up, get up! We
came this fucking far! There could
be a cabin down river--
(points to the distance)
--Right there!

PIKE
It's a mile up, at least...I can't
walk that...I can't walk another
fifty feet, fuck it...

Pike retrieves something, tossing it to Henrick, who goes
lopsided to catch Pike's wallet.

HENRICK
(dumbstruck, staring down)
What the fu...
(from wallet up to Pike)
...You're serious...?

Pike just nods, folding his hands in his lap, drawing deep
breaths, that relentless cough slowly abating...he gazes down
at the beacon-watch, turning it in his hands.

PIKE
I really thought this goddamn
thing'd work.
(long pause, up to Ottway)
Does it slide over you? You told
Luttinger back on the plane, that
it slid over you...death.

Henrick, incensed by Pike's behavior, ignoring him.

HENRICK
(to Ottway)
Fuck this, we can carry him. We get
a litter together, we can drag him--

PIKE

--Henrick, I'm not going *anywhere*.
I don't want to.

(beat, with resolve)
 I don't need to.

Henrick stares.

HENRICK

What the fuck is wrong with you!?
 You're just gonna sit here! *That's it?* Is that what you want to do?
 After what we've been through!? *The shit we've survived so far!*

PIKE

That's exactly why.
 (clear-headed, resigned)
 What's really waiting for me
 brother...back in the world?

Pike, a comprehension...pointless to press on, a lost cause to continue...he just shakes his head, staring out at the vast expanse of ice, the mountains beyond it.

PIKE (cont'd)

How would I ever beat this? When
 would it ever be *better*...Look at
 that.

Ottway and Henrick follow Pike's gaze...the quieting snow, the sway of the pines: Nature untouched and untainted by human trespass.

PIKE (cont'd)

...to be able to choose...to *greet*
 it...and go gracefully.
 (a nod to the mountains)
 ...I feel like that's all for me...
 (long pause)
 ...that this is the place to let it
 go...

Pike stares up at Ottway.

PIKE (cont'd)

(to Ottway)
 You know about this...how this
 feels...where I'm at right now.

Ottway nods. Pike nods back.

PIKE (cont'd)
I just feel...completely fucking
alive.

Pike looks at both men, smiles.

PIKE (cont'd)
...man is it *something*...

He extends his hand toward Henrick.

PIKE (cont'd)
My first name is John...

Henrick shakes.

HENRICK
Pete.

PIKE
(a smile)
Pete.
(beat)
You look like a 'Pete.'
(shakes his hand firm)
Be strong. Go hard.

Henrick, agog.

HENRICK
(numb, as Pike withdraws
his hand)
...*can't believe this*...

Pike then shakes with Ottway.

PIKE
John Pike.

OTTWAY
(a small smile)
John Ottway.

Pike belly-laughs at this, his cough returning.

PIKE
(sputtering, laughing)
Ha! Of course. Of course that's
your name.

Then, placing something in Ottway's hand, Pike imparts the simplest of sentiments...

PIKE (cont'd)

Luck.

Ottway looks down at his palm...Pike has placed the beacon-watch inside it.

Pike lowers his head, releasing this long, slow sigh as he settles in for what will be the final few hours of his life.

Henrick looks on. This strange sort of envy in his eyes.

Ottway tucks the beacon-watch away and after another moment...he and Henrick move on.

...neither man can bring themselves to look back...

EXT. FROZEN RIVER - LATER

Ottway and Henrick hobble along the frozen river in silence. One eye up river, looking for signs of shelter, wolves. The other watching for fissures/fault-lines in the ice beneath them.

Henrick, Pike still heavy on his mind...

HENRICK

Ask you something?

Ottway, gruff, a short nod.

HENRICK (cont'd)

Where were you headed that night?

Ottway looks over at him. Waits. Walks. Then answers.

OTTWAY

What night?

FLASH TO:

INT. OIL-CAMP BAR - FLASHBACK

Ottway, slicking whiskey shots. The card game fight breaks out. Everybody stares...except Henrick...he's watching Ottway.

HENRICK (V.O.)
Our last night in camp. In the bar,
I saw you. You had your rifle.
You went out.

RETURN TO:

EXT. CAMPSITE - CONTINUOUS

Ottway shrugs it off.

OTTWAY
My shift.

HENRICK
No.
(beat)
You worked that morning. I
remember.

Ottway looks over at Henrick.

OTTWAY
I went out, yeah...

Henrick just nods, adding:

HENRICK
...with your rifle...

Ottway grows very grim, still...like Henrick knows something
he shouldn't. The moment loads, grows *lead*en...Finally:

OTTWAY
Did you follow me?

HENRICK
No.
(beat)
But I didn't think I'd ever see you
alive again.
(long beat)
Back there with Pike, that look he
had. I've only seen it one other
time.
(beat)
On you...that last night in camp.

Ottway keeps his gaze fixed on the ice in front of him.
Walks.

OTTWAY
...Doesn't matter now, does it.

HENRICK
No.

OTTWAY
...then what was your question...?

HENRICK
What changed your mind?

FLASH TO:

EXT. OIL-CAMP - ICE FIELD - FLASHBACK

Ottway-- rifle sliding into his mouth-- 'safety' flipped off.

A BEAR breaks the clearing in front of him-- twelve feet high off his haunches-- lips curled back, head weaving, sniffing the frozen air, smelling him--

Ottway-- the rifle still in his mouth-- stares dead into its eyes-- keeps staring-- then...he withdraws the rifle from his mouth-- terrified, turning it...and taking aim on the bear.

FLASH TO:

INT. OIL-CAMP BARRACKS - FLASHBACK

Ottway, lying on the bed, the Polaroid in his hand, tears in his eyes. He sits up, crumples it, drops it...weeps...

RETURN TO:

EXT. FROZEN RIVER - CONTINUOUS

Ottway, still staring at his steps.

OTTWAY
...Fear.

Henrick considers this. Then:

HENRICK
...better the devil you know...

OTTWAY
...than the devil you don't...
(beat, looking over)
...yeah.

--Henrick suddenly falters-- his right foot abruptly punching through the brittle ice pan.

HENRICK

(a shocked snort/laugh)

--Oh, fuck...alright-- *it's thinner than we thought.*

Henrick looks down, his leg half-submerged, mid-thigh. Ottway hurries over, taking him by the arm.

HENRICK (cont'd)

Shit, that's cold! The current's--

(struggling with his grip)

--no, I can't, just grab my arm and I can-- be careful, it's--

OTTWAY

--It's anchor ice, I wasn't paying attention--

(as he tugs on Henrick)

Pull yourself up, can you get any--

--And the floe breaks apart completely-- ice fracturing beneath their feet, rim collapsing, revealing the river rushing below-- the current catches Henrick instantly-- hauling him under.

Ottway lunges/leaps/gropes-- snatching a hook on Henrick's backpack, holding him fast-- Henrick flails underwater-- Ottway pulls-- the current is too swift, too strong-- the small ice shelf beneath him begins to buckle-- separate--

--he has to let Henrick go--

--who is sucked under the surface and dragged down river--

--Ottway is up like a shot, moving-- running on renewed legs-- full sprint-- side-stepping soft spots in the ice, looking through its opaque surface and seeing Henrick beneath it, being pulled along, clawing/thrashing...slowly drowning--

Ottway pulls ahead-- puts distance between himself and Henrick--

He slides across the ice, pulling his knife from its sheath and hacking like mad-- trying to chop a hole in the surface so he can haul Henrick back through.

Henrick's struggles cease-- he goes still, amorphous-- approaching Ottway--

--who slashes at the surface-- blade breaking a hole big enough to get both arms through-- He plunges them in as Henrick passes beneath-- snagging him by his jacket-- trying to drag/dredge him up through the gap in the ice.

He strains, pulls-- dead-lifting Henrick from the depths-- who clears the frozen surface just below his shoulder. He flops limp, lifeless, purplish-blue-- not breathing-- Ottway can't wait to get him out of the ice-- he digs a finger into Henrick's mouth, clearing the airway-- tilting his head back as far as it will go and blowing air down his throat.

OTTWAY

*Breathe-breathe-breathe...you
weren't under that long! C'mon!
FUCK THIS!*

Ottway waits, repeats, trying desperately to resuscitate him.

OTTWAY (cont'd)

THIS IS BULLSHIT!! BREATHE!!

Ottway slaps Henrick-- once, twice-- his head lolls slack-- he's still not breathing. Ottway is back in, frantic-- blowing air down his throat, checking his pulse--

--Henrick suddenly gags/sputters-- barking up bile and river water-- taking in a great, gulping lungfuls of air-- He tries to speak, his vocal cords swimming in stomach acid--

HENRICK

(with a horrible rasp)

Jesus! Jesus Christ, was I out??
Did-I-go-- shit-get-me-out, pull--!

Henrick, a bout of nervous titters/tics, half-laughter-- the throb and buzz of adrenaline surging-- a convulsive shudder racks his entire body-- Ottway is crouched next to him-- still clutching him by the shoulder.

OTTWAY

*--You're okay, you're okay-- I got
you. Relax--*

HENRICK

--I'm stuck--

Ottway takes hold of Henrick's backpack--

OTTWAY

We get this off-- I can pull you through--

HENRICK

I can't hang on-- there's nothing to hang onto-- fuck man-fuck hurry-it's-fucking-cold-- Jesus.

OTTWAY

Can you touch the bottom?

HENRICK

(shaking his head)

No-- no it's too deep.

Ottway manages to slip Henrick's backpack off.

OTTWAY

Alright-- easy now-- I'm going to grab you under you arm an--

--as the ice gives again-- like a floor falling out from under them-- and Henrick is gone-- back under the ice-- dragged down reaching-- into the swirling black.

Ottway drops through-- up to his waist-- water so cold it feels like fire swallowing his legs-- major muscles cramp and spasm-- the sensation shoots up his trunk-- shorting fine motor skills, making his hands useless-- he almost drops the knife, *doesn't--*

--spins and slams it into the solid ice instead-- pulls-- the current pulls back-- hard...it's excruciating...

...he's got another ten seconds to live...

...he could let go...he could let it take him...

...it would be easy now...there's nothing left to fight for...they're all gone...every last man.

--Then, something kicks inside and with sudden supreme effort and a roar that seems to rise from the dead center of his soul-- he grabs the knife's hilt with both hands, hauling himself free from the river's grasp.

He rolls to safety-- glances back over-- only Henrick's backpack remains-- he's gone.

Ottway, exhausted beyond all mortal measure...he's finally been beaten...everything brought to bear on him at once...and he begins to break...weeping before he even realizes it's happening.

He lies there, sobbing, staring up at the sky for the longest time...gutshot with grief, babbling to himself-- a tangle of thoughts, gummed up with tears, barely discernible:

OTTWAY (cont'd)
*...nothing worked...nothing we did
 worked...cost 'em all...killed 'em
 all. I killed 'em...I killed 'em...*

Then...staring up, eyes clear...as quietly as peace itself:

OTTWAY (cont'd)
 (addressing the heavens)
 ...do something...
 (long pause)
 ...do something you Passive. Prick.
 Cocksucking. Phony. Fraudulent.
 Motherfucker. Do. Something.
 (screaming now)
 C'MON! PROVE IT! FUCK 'FAITH' EARN
 IT! Prayer in a piggy bank-- 'maybe
 one day--' well this is that
fucking day!-- SHOW ME SOMETHING
 REAL! I NEED IT RIGHT NOW! NOT
 LATER! NOW! SHOW ME AND I WILL
 BELIEVE IN YOU TILL THE DAY I DIE!
 (beat)
 I'M CALLING ON YOU!
 (beat)
 I'M CALLING ON YOU NOW...

Ottway's rage reverbs off...silence returns...the clouds swirl above, the wind picks up...and we see a wolf move across the river bank behind him.

Ottway sees it as well..sitting up slowly, struggling to his feet, knife at his side...

OTTWAY (cont'd)
 (quietly)
 Fuck it then...
 (beat, even more quietly)
 ...do it myself...

...and then he catches her in the corner of his eye. That woman...auburn hair, swirling about her face...closer now than she's ever been. Right on the bank.

Ottway won't look over.

OTTWAY (cont'd)

...you're not here.

(beat)

...this is my mind turning...this is me imagining you...

(beat, slamming eyes shut)

Get outta here. Get outta here. Get outta here...

Ottway waits, keeps his eyes shut-- waits some more-- then opens them...and once again, she's gone.

He stares down at himself-- soaked to the bone-- boots waterlogged-- ice already frosting over the seams on his jeans-- he's going stiff, muscles no longer liquid, mind no longer lucid-- pain that doesn't abate but burns.

...he pays it all little heed, pressing on instead...this small, shrunken, shivering form, stumbling across a godforsaken landscape...lost...

EXT. TREES -- RIVER'S EDGE - LATER

Ottway, aware of the wolves moving on his periphery, either side-- forever flanking him but keeping their distance. Their curiosity feels more like fear now. Ottway's vibing death, *doom*-- carrying it like a odor: A condemned man.

But he feels himself being pushed-- maneuvered into position-- They're cutting off his path, forcing him into a bottleneck.

A gauntlet.

There's a break in the trees, more light flooding than anywhere else in the forest-- a clearing-- He starts toward it.

EXT. CLEARING - SAME

It's littered with something, twisted dark forms-- dead-wood-- downed trees...*something*...

He reaches the edge-- the trees part, the huge clearing opens, stretching away...strewn with *carcass after carcass...dead animals*, black, rotting-- bone/fur/meat turned black by the elements-- hard to make out what's what.

Ottway moves among the carcasses-- meat stripped, some hide hanging dry-- antlers sticking out of snow-- decomposing caribou, moose, elk--

He looks across the clearing-- to a cliff-- to the forest beyond-- the trail of dead seems to lead out...it feels like an exit...it feels like an end to all of this...

He moves over this death-trail-- around rotting carrion-- piled across the snow-- marking the distance.

Another carcass, larger-- Ottway draws closer-- it's huge. A brown bear, face down dead; bleach-white bone polished by the arctic breeze, protrudes up through the haunches--

Ottway scans-- kill after kill, lying along the vast braids of snow swept plain, ceding to the cliff on the far side...a dark slash down the front-- a cave opening in the face.

Shelter.

Ottway starts for it-- purposeful strides despite his depleted state-- not noticing that the dead elk and caribou have given way to a different animal-- wolves.

Ottway stops. Looks. Dead wolves-- scattered, in a ring-- like a battle-ground...fresher kill-- the cold hasn't congealed their blood-- it's everywhere-- *pocked across the clearing-- leading to the cave*.

Ottway's eyes glass with grim recognition.

OTTWAY
(barely audible)
...their den...

At that moment-- in the mid-distance, closer to the cave wall, one of the carcasses stands--

IT'S A HUGE WOLF-- on point, looking back at Ottway.

CARCASS AFTER CARCASS-- ALL SLEEPING WOLVES-- STAND. Dozens of them, a huge wolfpack, a tribe...

...and Ottway has walked right into them.

They mass, a rough formation, the entire pack assembles, begins to move toward him.

Ottway-- on instinct now-- his hands erratic, frayed mind failing-- both backpacks off-- he drops down on his knees-- dumps them, *surveys*; empty mini-bottles of booze, electrical tape, an extra knife-- then, from the other backpack:

Wallets: All that remains of the dead. Dozens of them. Ottway stares. He picks one up. Opens it, a photo stares back:

Lewenden, with a little girl, grinning, a random snapshot from some forgotten summer day.

FLASH TO:

INT. WRECKED FUSELAGE - PAST

Lewenden lies trembling, dying...

LEWENDEN
...my daughter Rosie...she's six.

RETURN TO:

EXT. CLEARING - CONTINUOUS

Ottway sets his wallet down, grabs another. Opens. More family photos-- big grins on beautiful little faces-- more wallets, Ottway flips through:

The wolves, still coming toward him, two-hundred yards off, an easy trot-- their hopelessly overpowered prey clammers on his knees in the middle of the ice.

Ottway grabs another wallet, Burke.

FLASH TO:

EXT. WRECK SITE - FLASHBACK

Burke, sitting on watch.

OTTWAY
I still don't know your name.

BURKE
Burke. We never met up there.

OTTWAY

Ottway.

(beat)

Don't drift off on us Burke...

FLASH TO:

EXT. - FLASHBACK

Ottway struggles to keep Burke conscious.

OTTWAY

(yelling like a madman)

STAY AWAKE! DON'T SLEEP! DON'T
SLEEP! GODDAMIT! GET UP!!

Ottway pounds on him-- but Burke remains non-responsive.

RETURN TO:

EXT. CLEARING - CONTINUOUS

More wallets, more images of family forsaken, forgotten. The sole remnants/ruins of ordinary men, their passing unmarked...unavenged.

Ottway finds Luttinger's wallet, Flannery's...lives lost. Casualties condemned by chance...cheated.

Something begins to stir inside Ottway, a second wind of sorts-- the soul's reserve...His eyes sharpen, his movements hone-- he keeps flipping through the wallets, tears form, feeding a growing fury...

...fueling a final surge...a last stand.

He finds Talget's billfold, opens it: *Talget with his kids, a wedding photo, a picture of his parents.*

The wolf pack draws closer still, a hundred fifty yards out, their pace picks up.

Ottway grabs another wallet-- Henrick's-- flips through. Henrick with a boy on his shoulders-- at a ballgame-- this sweet-faced kid...a father who is never coming home.

Ottway pulls one final wallet...his own. He removes that Polaroid, staring at it.

The wolves close. A hundred yards out, their muzzles low to the ground, eyes locked onto Ottway.

Ottway looks down at the pile of wallets, like rocks formed for a rough grave. He places the Polaroid on top, as though marking a memorial.

Then, he speaks...clear and strong without fear.

OTTWAY

(as if in prayer)

Now...Everyone in my life. Everyone that I love...let that flow from me. Let them feel it as I feel it now...take it all. Leave *nothing* in my heart.

(beat, grave)

Fill me only with what I need to fight.

The wolves, seventy-five yards away, teeth bared as they prepare to hit Ottway en masse.

Ottway, fast, facile. Takes the empty mini-bottles, gripping them between the fingers on his left hand-- electrical tape in the right-- he begins wrapping his left hand like a boxer, pre-bout, cinching the tape, circulation-cutting tight--

OTTWAY (cont'd)

(to himself, quietly)

...once more into the fray...

The wolves break into a hard run-- fifty yards away.

OTTWAY (cont'd)

...into the last good fight I'll ever know...

Ottway slams his taped hand down, shattering the mini-bottles, snapping them off to blunt, jagged edges-- a set of crude claws.

The wolves, a single sustained *snarl*-- forty yards out.

Ottway takes up his knife, grips it tight-- clumsily but quickly rough wraps the hilt with his bottle-clawed left hand, securing it with electrical tape inside the palm of his right-- pulls, using his teeth, tearing the tape free...

OTTWAY (cont'd)

...live and die on this day...

Ottway looks back down at the pile of wallets...the Polaroid on top catches in the breeze...its image remains a mystery to us.

OTTWAY (cont'd)
...live and die on this day.

The wolves-- well within striking distance-- Ottway is up now with surprising speed, like a sprinter-- low to the ground-- arms affixed in front-- feral, ferocious-- rushing headlong into the wolves-- the pack breaks pace, confused by Ottway's behavior--

He wails a war cry-- a sound foreign to even his own ears-- He targets the Alpha, ignoring the rest of the pack, hitting full stride, running right into them-- slamming into the shocked Alpha-- left fist gouging-- right slashing wild--

The big wolf rears, snaps-- canines catching, pulling-- Ottway keeps stabbing/punching/slashing-- the other wolves spread/scatter-- stay back.

The combatants break, Ottway breathing spit and blood-- the Alpha bearing serrated teeth-- licking its muzzle--

Ottway digs blood and fur/flesh clots from the smashed bottle tops-- he flicks the knife blade at the Alpha-- spritzes it with its own viscera.

The hurt Alpha rushes, leaps-- hits Ottway waist high-- snarl/gnash flashing-- Ottway cleaves down, catching it mid-flight, carving into its right shoulder-- feeling tendons tug/snag-- the blade slicing through--

The Alpha lands, howls-- limps-- turns back, teeth and snout sodden with blood.

Ottway rolls-- gets to his feet, sees a huge gash open across his own belly-- The Alpha got him-- he's cut-- deep, somehow-- he blinks-- blood soaks out across his shirt--

He looks at the Alpha, blood drains from its neck, hitting the snow-- its left leg game-- it's circles. The other wolves yip and stammer-- confused--

Ottway, his eyes blurring-- his legs shuddering-- he's bleeding to death on his feet--

He looks back, over his shoulder-- wolves inching closer, his strength sapped-- leaving him-- he stares ahead-- doesn't move-- blinks, blood flooding his middle-- black pinching in at the edge of his vision--

The Alpha goes at him again-- hits him full-- rooting/ripping fabric, locking on to the flesh of his chest-- ripping into him as Ottway falls--

--thrusting both weapons up-- he feels flesh/mangled fur, drives deeper, blood floods over his hands-- thick and wet as they open one another's guts...The Alpha-- gore-caked muzzle dripping down-- teeth tearing-- suddenly flops over, paws paddling air, whimpering-- *its underside shredded.*

Ottway tries to sit-- finish the animal, but falters, collapsing to his knees-- falling over on the big wolf's side, far too fatigued to fight any longer...prepared to die...welcoming it now.

His head rests on the animal's rib-cage, moving up and down, like a bellows...its breathing steadily but slowly diminishing...dying down.

They gaze at one another...the Alpha's eyes extinguishing. Ottway watching his own reflection fade in its eyes. Its labored breathing coming to a slow...eventual...halt.

The Alpha goes limp, silent, *lifeless*...Ottway stares. Its eyes marbling over, snout falling softly into the snow.

The other wolves stare and stare...silent-- then-- one of the wolves comes forward, sniffs at the dead Alpha-- looks at Ottway-- then turns...the others follow.

Ottway can barely see-- in blurred fragment-- the other wolves trailing away-- pulling back, following a new leader.

This Alpha sits, a good distance across the snow. The rest of the pack sit next to him, just staring at Ottway-- The new Alpha tilts his head back, and howls-- long, piercing, though the sky, dozens of wolves all join him, all howling...

Ottway passes out-- a second, and hour-- impossible to tell-- he fights for consciousness-- awakens, half-grog-- stares out into the empty tundra. The wolves are long gone.

He looks up-- fragments of sky-- of ice-- A bright flare of borealis cuts across-- it's night, he didn't notice. The borealis goes purple/red/gold...then black.

He goes black. Time slips. Then...pin-pricks of light poke through, scattered, de-focused...daybreak.

He opens his eyes. The woman looms above him, her auburn hair flowing across her face. Ottway gazes up, eyes clear and child-like.

Her hand descends toward him...he takes it, feels himself go weightless, airborne-- spinning, gazing back down, the tundra recedes, a vast white world-- the tops of the pines come into view as he ascends higher and higher--

--light shifts, distorts-- he spins back-- looks up--

Rotors spin above him-- **A helicopter...** sound crashes in sudden-- deafening, real. The woman is gone-- a RESCUE WORKER in her place, goggles gazing down-- a harness holding them aloft--

Ottway struggles to stay conscious-- flutters-- fails...

CUT TO BLACK

SLOW FADE UP ON:

INT. HOSPITAL - DAYS LATER

Ottway pries his eyes open, pushing back the haze, battling back into consciousness-- He gazes up, I-V's dangle and drip. Drugs slur speech/vision-- a world of streaks and abstracts-- he struggles, tries to find focus....his eyesight adjusts, stabilizes...mind sobering, settling.

He brings his hand to his face, feels-- heavily bandaged-- blackened and scarred by partial frostbite, badly swollen.

He senses a presence, peers up...standing by his bedside. A woman. Auburn hair.

...It's her.

We recognize her now: The photo from Ottway's night-stand. The one he left behind...the woman from his dream.

She stares down, smiling through a flood of tears.

He holds up his gauze-wrapped hand, hoping she's real now.

She takes his hand, holding it in her own...before gently placing it against her belly...

...where Ottway spreads his fingers out, slow and full.

CUT TO BLACK

THE END