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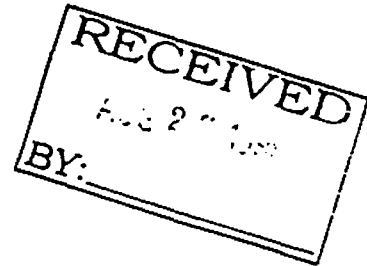
TO THE WHITE SEA

Screenplay by

DAVID PEOPLES & JANET PEOPLES

based on the novel by

JAMES DICKEY



FIRST DRAFT
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Producer: Richard Roth
Universal Studios
100 Universal City Plaza
Universal City, California 91608

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FADE IN:

EXT. BROOKS RANGE/ALASKA - DAY

Towering mountains...

snow-covered slopes that seem to go on forever...

stands of pine...

steep drops...

and, finally, almost lost in the white vastness, a tiny black dot.

LOOKING CLOSER, we DISCOVER a single isolated cabin, the only sign of human existence in this otherwise untouched world of primitive grandeur.

EXT. CABIN - DAY

TEN-YEAR-OLD MULDROW, sitting on a stack of split firewood, axe at his side, already has a weathered and independent look, even at his age. He's playing cat's cradle with a length of string, completely absorbed...

focusing on the hypnotically changing geometry of the string...

pattern after pattern after pattern...

until something, out of the corner of his eye, distracts him.

TEN-YEAR-OLD MULDROW'S POV: a SNOW HARE, crouching against a bank of snow fifteen yards away, barely visible, white on white.

TEN-YEAR-OLD MULDROW looks up at the sky, as if he knows what he'll see there.

TEN-YEAR-OLD MULDROW'S POV: a HAWK, riding the air currents directly overhead, wings motionless, gliding in long lazy circles. Hunting.

ANGLE ON TEN-YEAR-OLD MULDROW, looking back at the HARE.

ANGLE ON THE HARE, completely still, almost invisible.

ANGLE ON THE HAWK, circling lower now, graceful, ominous, deadly.

TITLES BEGIN

ANGLE ON THE BROOKS RANGE, seen from above. Wild, remote, magnificent!

As we SWOOP and DIP over steep snowy slopes that stretch forever, we HEAR a distinct VOICE, one we'll hear again, very intense, very intimate, MULDROW'S VOICE, not as a youth, but as a man...

MULDROW'S VOICE (v.o.)
When I tell you this, just say it came
from a voice in the wind: a voice
without a voice, which doesn't make a
sound. You can pick it up anytime it
snows, or even just when the wind is
from the north.

TITLES CONTINUE

Still from above, we SEE the continuing grandeur of the Alaskan
mountains and a herd of ELK, pushing through the snow.

We SEE snowy peaks and craggy windswept rock faces. A vast and
unforgiving wilderness.

TITLES CONTINUE

Everything is bluish white and cold and clear. And in the icy
cold and clarity, we HEAR another VOICE, a different quality
altogether, a rumbling drawling pontification, the sound of the
COLONEL addressing his troops, even as TITLES CONTINUE over the
snowscape...

COLONEL'S VOICE (o.s.)
Now for many of you here, you gunners,
this is your last run, this one here.
That's because after this one, after
this, it's gonna be no ammunition, no
gunners, gonna be nothing but bombs.

EXT. AIRFIELD/TINIAN ISLAND - DAY

START ON MULDROW'S EYES. In his twenties now, his eyes are
intense... like the eyes of a hawk or a hare.

COLONEL'S VOICE (o.s.)
We just got the good word this morning.
After this one, we're going all the way
with incendiaries.

MULDROW'S a sergeant, short, muscular, with jet black hair and dark
brown eyes, standing on the tarmac with ninety other CREWMEMBERS
of an American Bomber Squadron, all of them focused on the COLONEL
who, after a dramatic pause, continues speaking with passion.

COLONEL
Fire! This is what he's got to look
forward to. We're going to bring it to
him. Fire! We're going to put him in
it. That's saying, friends, that we're
going to put fire around him. We're
going to put it over him and underneath
him. We're going to bring it down on
him and on to him.

Behind the COLONEL, palm trees sag in the motionless air and B-29s are parked in ready rows.

TITLES CONTINUE

COLONEL

We're going to put it in his eyes and up his asshole, in his wife's twat, and in his baby's diaper. We're going to put it in his pockets where he can't get rid of it. White phosphorus, that'll hold on.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, motionless, listening intently, as are the others around him.

TITLES CONTINUE.

ANGLE ON THE COLONEL, ON CREWMEN, ON MULDROW.

COLONEL

We're going to put it in his dreams. Whatever heaven he's hoping for, we're fixing to make a hell out of it. White phosphorus and napalm. That's our good stuff for the little yellow man and his folks. We're going to make him a present of it, in his main city. Bestow it. Give it away. With both hands. With more than three hundred airplanes. Tokyo is going to remember us forever.

TITLES CONTINUE

ANGLE ON THE COLONEL, pausing, satisfied with his oratory, then beginning again...

COLONEL

But that's... tomorrow night. For this one here, this run tonight, it's just regular, gunners and all.

(all business now)

Today's date is March 8, year of our lord nineteen forty five. The time is...

(checks his watch)

ten hundred thirteen hours. We will rendezvous at angels nine, at sixteen three seven. Your course will be three five six degrees true. The target, as usual... Tokyo!

EXT. BROOKS RANGE/ALASKA - DAY

On a pine branch, set against the snowy splendor of the Brooks Range, a HAWK tears at the still quivering carcass of a SNOW HARE, ripping bloody strips of flesh with its savage beak.

TITLES CONCLUDE

EXT. AIRFIELD/TINIAN ISLAND - MID-DAY

Rows of B-29s glint in the mid-day sun.

ARMORERS, RIGGERS and MECHANICS are moving about, preparing the planes for flight.

EXT. TAIL SECTION/B-29

The plexiglass bubble is all soaped up. As the soap is wiped away, MULDROW becomes visible, cleaning the plexiglass from inside. Very intense. Meticulous.

INT. WAIST AREA/B-29

A nervous REDHEAD, about 19, is being briefed for his first mission by the portgunner, MICK, who's showing off the waist guns.

MICK

And these babies here, these are yer new girlfriends... U.S. twin fifties. They like a lot of rubbin' with a little bit of oil. Like yer girlfriend.

As MICK smirks at the REDHEAD, a RIGGER delivers a stack of chest parachutes and sets them down just inside the hatch.

The REDHEAD gives a quick glance at the chutes, chuckling uneasily.

REDHEAD

Yeah, heh, heh. Right. My girlfriend.

Just then, the REDHEAD is startled by a FIGURE crawling out of the tube leading from the tail section, snatching a parachute, turning and disappearing back into the tube.

MICK shrugs.

MICK

Muldrow. Tailgunner.

(then...)

Whyncha' gwan over to the barracks, see if ya can catch forty winks. I got a little card game I'm in. I'll see ya over there, okay?

REDHEAD

Uh, sure. Yeah.

EXT. WAIST SECTION/B-29

The REDHEAD drops out of the hatch onto the tarmac.

All around, CREWMEN are ambling away from the planes toward Quonset huts set among drooping palms a half mile away.

As the REDHEAD heads for the Quonset huts, he passes the tail section of the B-29.

Glancing at the plexi-bubble, he glimpses MULDROW inside.

REDHEAD'S POV OF MULDROW IN THE BUBBLE: MULDROW, carefully taping his chute to the bulkhead. Suddenly, MULDROW turns and looks out.

ANGLE ON THE REDHEAD, caught watching.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, his intense eyes considering the REDHEAD for just a second, then going back to taping the chute.

EXT. OFFICERS' QUARTERS - MINUTES LATER (AFTERNOON)

MAJOR SORBO, the pilot, is chatting with several CREWMEN as they pass close to the Quonset hut reserved for Officers.

MAJOR SORBO notices the REDHEAD insinuating himself in the group and looking at SORBO hesitantly.

MAJOR SORBO acknowledges the newcomer.

MAJOR SORBO

Mick fill you in okay?

REDHEAD

Yessir, I'm squared away.

MAJOR SORBO

Might as well get some rest. All of us. Gonna be a late night.

REDHEAD

Yes, sir. But... uh... er... sir, I was just wondering... uh... ?

The REDHEAD stammers, hesitating, wishing this was a private conversation. He's very conscious of the others listening.

MAJOR SORBO

What is it?

REDHEAD

Are we supposed to tape 'em in, Major?
The parachutes?

MAJOR SORBO

Tape? Tape them in?

REDHEAD

Like I seen one fella, the tailgunner,
I guess, he was tapin' it.

MAJOR SORBO

Muldrow!

REDHEAD

To the bulkhead... sir.

MAJOR SORBO can't hide his amusement, exchanging a glance with
TEX, the bombardier, then stopping to address the REDHEAD.

MAJOR SORBO

Sergeant Muldrow is what you would call
"idiosyncratic." From Alaska. He
tapes most everything to something.
Ask him about the knife he tapes to his
leg. Breadknife.

TEX grins and rolls his eyes.

REDHEAD

A breadknife, sir?

The other CREWMEN are grinning and exchanging knowing glances.

MAJOR SORBO

Because of... "how it cuts, how it
slides around the bone." He'll tell
you. But you don't have to follow his
example, it's not regulation.

MAJOR SORBO turns and heads for the Officers' quarters.

REDHEAD

Thank you, sir. Uh, sir? Is that a
religion?

MAJOR SORBO

Religion?! The breadknife?

REDHEAD

(embarrassed)
"Idio..." what you said.

MAJOR SORBO
"Idiosyncratic?" Not a religion. It means he's not average. But hell, a gunner as good as Muldrow, you don't have to be "average." Four confirmed kills. He'll tell you seven, but only four are confirmed. You're in a safer airplane when Muldrow's flying with you, protecting your ass. Better chance of coming back.

REDHEAD

Yes, sir.

MAJOR SORBO
Your first mission, right? You could pick up some tips maybe from Muldrow. Though bear in mind, he's not... "average."

SORBO'S mates really grin at the idea of MULDROW being "average".

INT. ENLISTED MEN'S QUARTERS - SHORTLY (AFTERNOON)

Fish hooks, a mini-compass, waterproof matches, Japanese currency, twine, a couple of small black stones, a silk map of Japan spread neatly on top of one of the thirty cots inside the hut. MULDROW'S hands are carefully sorting through the various articles, placing them one at a time into his emergency kit.

MULDROW

Seven!

MULDROW keeps his eyes on what he's doing as he says it, doesn't even look at the REDHEAD who's standing nervously at the foot of the cot watching MULDROW work.

The REDHEAD hesitates, clears his throat.

REDHEAD

Well, what he said, the Major, was four.

MULDROW

(evenly, not looking up)
What I say is... seven!

Again the REDHEAD hesitates as MULDROW continues to carefully examine each item before he puts it in his kit.

Behind MULDROW, we can SEE other SOLDIERS on their bunks, surrounded by pictures of loved ones or pin-ups of glamorous movie stars like Betty Grable.

But MULDROW'S wall is bare. There is nothing here to distract him.

REDHEAD

He says you got stuff taped all over.
Says you got a knife taped on you. A
breadknife.

MULDROW

That's right anyway. That's true
enough.

REDHEAD

How come?

MULDROW

Flexible blade. Goes around the bone.
Them hard blades, they don't always do
the job how you want the job done.
That answer your question? .

The REDHEAD nods, glances around the big room to make sure he
isn't making a fool of himself.

But no one's paying any attention to him. The other CREWMEN are
either napping or chatting in low voices. Somewhere a radio is
PLAYING, "Shoo Fly Pie" softly.

The REDHEAD indicates the items spread out on MULDROW'S cot.

REDHEAD

All that stuff, you figure it's any
good?

MULDROW .

It'll do. It's how good you use it.

REDHEAD

(worried)

What I heard is, them Japs, they'll
cut your head right off.

MULDROW

If you're lucky and they don't go
cutting your balls off first.

The REDHEAD tries to hide his alarm, changes the subject,
indicating the stones on the cot next to the silk map of Japan.

REDHEAD

Them stones. I don't have no stones in
my kit. What're them stones for?

MULDROW

Flints. For making fire. Better than
matches.

MULDROW scoops up the flints, hands them to the REDHEAD.

REDHEAD

Yeah?

The REDHEAD strikes the flints dubiously, tentatively as MULDROW watches solemnly.

The REDHEAD strikes the flints a couple more times unsuccessfully, then hands them back to MULDROW.

MULDROW strikes sparks from the flints easily, then returns them to the paraphernalia on his cot.

REDHEAD

Major says you're from Alaska.

MULDROW

That's right. Brooks Range. You listen to the Major, he knows what he's talking about.

(a beat...)

Mostly, anyhow.

(another beat)

Good pilot. Does his job.

Finished replacing all the items in his emergency kit, flints last, MULDROW turns and looks the REDHEAD in the eye.

MULDROW

What my job is, and yours, too, is shooting down them Japs.

REDHEAD .

(very nervous)

You shoot down two more, they say you're an ace.

MULDROW

What I am, friend, is, I'm an ace already. It's the shooting down of enemy planes, not the counting of them, that is what it's all about.

(suddenly narrowing his eyes)

What you oughtta do, is you oughtta shave.

REDHEAD

Shave?!

MULDROW

Real close. You're gonna be upstairs there for maybe fourteen hours. Wearing your oxygen mask now and again. Makes the mask fit tighter to your skin, a nice clean shave.

Turning his back on the REDHEAD, MULDROW flops down on his cot.

MULDROW

An' get some rest. Try and sleep a little..

MULDROW scrunches up and closes his eyes leaving the REDHEAD staring stupidly.

CLOSE ON MULDROW, eyes closed.

EXT. BROOKS RANGE - DAY

It's snowing lightly as we PAN off a line of trees. We SEE a snowy slope set against steep mountains and we DISCOVER a trail of hoof prints in the snow. As we FOCUS on the trail of hoof prints, we HEAR heavy breathing and we SEE the tips of snowshoes trudging across the snow and then the barrel of a rifle comes into view.

MULDROW'S VOICE (v.o.)

I was brought up in the snow. Until the time I was fifteen, I used snowshoes more than I used my natural feet. My feet felt wrong when I took off the shoes. My father used to tell me I was half snow goose and half wolverine.

Suddenly, the tracks end where a CARIBOU lies sprawled in the bloody snow, a WOLVERINE crouched over the huge carcass, tearing at the flesh with powerful jaws.

The fierce animal looks up from his kill, murderous eyes glittering, fangs dripping with blood, fixing his gaze on the intruder.

It's TWELVE-YEAR-OLD MULDROW who was tracking the CARIBOU. The boy stares right into the terrible gaze of the WOLVERINE.

MULDROW'S VOICE (v.o.)

I never saw but one wolverine, and my father never did see one; he just heard the stories about them, like the other trappers.

CLOSE ON THE FIERCE EYES OF THE WOLVERINE, implacable and savage, looking right at the boy, sizing him up.

MULDROW'S VOICE (v.o.)

But I was proud of mine because I knew then that the wildest animal in the world, the one with the most stories about him, the most bad and strong magic of any of them, had looked at me --- looked right at me for a good half a minute. That was enough.

Dismissing the boy as not worthy of his attention, the WOLVERINE turns back to the open gut pile of the CARIBOU and rips the flesh with strong jaws.

Just then, a harsh, unfamiliar VOICE interrupts.

ARLEN'S VOICE (o.s.)
You the big nip knocker told Red he had
to shave?! YOU!

INT. ENLISTED MEN'S QUARTERS - AFTERNOON

MULDROW blinks awake, looks up.

REDHEAD'S VOICE (o.s.)
Don't fool with him, Arlen. Don't fool
with him.

MULDROW'S POV: ARLEN, a muscular six-four barrel-chested PFC, looming at the foot of the bunk, ignoring the cautionary words of the REDHEAD hovering nervously behind him. The REDHEAD'S fearful expression is covered with shaving soap.

ARLEN
Just cause you done some missions
don't mean you can fun with my partner
here.

MULDROW is observing ARLEN'S stubbled jaw and the ominous snake tattoo coiled on his bulging forearm.

MULDROW
Fun?

Several GI'S on near-by cots hear the impending possible altercation and turn away. They don't need this.

ARLEN
About shaving for a mission.

MULDROW
I only said, if he's flyin' he should
shave, so his mask'll fit snug. And if
you're flyin', you should shave, too.

ARLEN
You ain't no officer.

MULDROW shrugs and breaks eye contact.

MULDROW
Suit yourself. No skin offa me.

The REDHEAD is pulling on ARLEN'S shoulder from behind, hissing in his ear.

REDHEAD

They said, "Don't fool with him."

ARLEN

This little prick? He don't have his big guns with him now. I could bust his back with one chop.

Cool as ice now, MULDROW stares at ARLEN intently.

MULDROW

You don't have to shave. Not if you don't want.

ARLEN

Darn right, I don't, little fella.

As ARLEN turns away, MULDROW sits up on the cot, slowly, no hurry. There's something animal-like about the way MULDROW moves, the way his muscles bunch, like he's coiled to spring.

MULDROW

But you ain't gonna break my back neither.

ARLEN turns back, looks MULDROW in the eye.

ARLEN

Said I could. If it was necessary.

MULDROW

Well, I wouldn't try it; Momma's boy. Let's see if you've got any guts. Let's see if that snake can give you what you ain't got. I'll bet you fifty dollars against twenty that I'm stronger than you are.

ARLEN

Oh, yeah?

MULDROW stands, climbs up on the cot, points overhead.

MULDROW

You see that brace right over your head? That long two-by-four? Jump up and grab it. Chin on it.

ARLEN

(relieved, sneers)
I can do twenty!

MULDROW

One is enough.

ARLEN is tall, and strong. He jumps up, grabs the two-by-four and chins himself easily, then drops gracefully to his feet.

ARLEN
How's that, asshole?

MULDROW
Not how I meant. Jump up and catch it like this. In a pinch grip. Four fingers against the thumb.

ARLEN
(dubious now)
I never done that.

MULDROW
Try it.

ARLEN jumps for the brace, grabs at it, can't hold, comes down, his face purple with the effort.

Around the barracks, GIs are watching out of the corner of their eyes, exchanging knowing looks.

ARLEN is trying again. Again, he fails.

MULDROW snorts contemptuously and, standing on the bunk, jumps for the brace, catches it in his pinch grip, swings there.

ARLEN and the REDHEAD are flabbergasted as....

MULDROW slowly raises himself, holding with thumb and fingers of both hands...

then lowers himself till he's extended.

And goes back up again, the sinews standing out in relief on his bulging forearms.

And then, one-"handed"!

ARLEN and the REDHEAD are staring in amazement when MULDROW suddenly lets go and drops, landing on his feet between them.

They both jump back like he's some kind of wild animal.

MULDROW looks ARLEN over with contempt.

MULDROW
You got no grip.
(indicates Arlen's tattoo)
You got a snake on you, but you ain't got a grip.
(a moment, smiles)
Shake.

MULDROW sticks his hand out to ARLEN.

ARLEN eyes the hand like it is a dangerous weapon, hesitates, considers MULDROW'S beady eyes.

ARLEN

How do you mean? Like... friendly?

MULDROW doesn't answer, just drills him with his eyes, hand extended.

ARLEN

You might be gonna try and mash my hand.

MULDROW

You wanna find out -- put it here.

ARLEN

(a long moment)

I got to be able to fire them fifties.

MULDROW gives him a mirthless smile and lowers his hand.

ARLEN

I owe you twenty.

Avoiding MULDROW'S gaze, ARLEN pulls out his wallet and takes out some bills.

MULDROW looks at the money, then he looks up at ARLEN, looks him in the eye.

MULDROW

You just hold on to it. And don't make no more trouble. Just use your head and you'll be okay. One more thing -- so your mask'll fit good when you're up there -- you oughta shave!

After a moment to consider, ARLEN nods, much chastened, and turns away.

EXT. 20,000 FEET - NIGHT

A squadron of B-29s in tight formation DRONES among broken clouds in moonlight.

INT. WAIST SECTION/B-29

The engine noise is relentless as the new starboard gunner, the REDHEAD, sweaty and scared, wearing an O2 mask, peers out into the night nervously while clutching his guns.

Across from him, the portgunner, MICK, waits patiently, semi-alert.

INT. TAIL BUBBLE/B-29

MULDROW crouches behind his guns in the plexiglass bubble, totally ready, totally calm, totally exposed to the night sky.

CLOSE ON MULDROW'S EYES, as sharp and alert as an animal's eyes.

MULDROW'S POV: spooky mountains of cumulus clouds backlit by bright moonlight. No sign of enemy aircraft.

As relentless as the droning engines, MULDROW scrutinizes the passing clouds, searching for the enemy.

The clouds look snowy, like the Brooks Range.

CLOSE ON MULDROW'S SHARP EYES, peering into the night.

EXT. BROOKS RANGE - DAY

A dazzling white slope of snow.

A HAWK circles overhead, riding the air currents.

CLOSE ON THE SNOW, dazzling white.

ANGLE ON THE HAWK, making smaller circles now.

CLOSE ON THE SNOW. Blink! An eyelid opens in the whiteness revealing a tiny eye. It's a SNOW HARE, white and motionless, invisible except for the eye.

Immediately, there's a piercing SCREAM as the HAWK swoops down from the sky and grabs the rabbit with his talons and lifts it into the air.

CLOSE ON TWELVE-YEAR-OLD MULDROW, crouching in the snow fifteen yards away, staring with wonder.

TWELVE-YEAR-OLD MULDROW'S POV: the large bird, flying away, lifting higher and higher, the terrified rabbit struggling but unable to get free.

VOICE/INTERCOM (o.s.)

(urgently)

We got him on radar -- he's comin' in
above and behind us!

INT. TAIL BUBBLE/B-29

Cool as ice, MULDROW peers up through the bubble while his headset crackles and a different voice, MAJOR SORBO'S calm drawl, speaks through the headset.

MAJOR SORBO'S VOICE/INTERCOM (o.s.)

That right, Muldrow? You see anything?

MULDROW'S POV: far above, a Japanese Fighter, visible for just a second in the moonlight before disappearing again behind a cloud.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, watching through his sights, very calm, almost grinning now as he speaks softly into the headset, barely audible.

MULDROW

I see him.

INT. WAIST SECTION/B-29

MICK, at the port gun, completely alert now, tries to spot the enemy, too, while, across from him, on the starboard gun, the REDHEAD is almost hysterical.

REDHEAD

If he sees him, why don't he shoot?
Christ! I can't see him!

The bombardier, TEX, braces himself as he looks at the REDHEAD sympathetically and calls to him,

TEX

Take it easy, boy. This is just the beginning.

But just then, AKAKAKAKAKAKAKAK..... as bullets rip into the fuselage.

REDHEAD

(really losing it) .
JESUS CHRIST! WHATSA MATTER WITH HIM!
WHY DON'T HE SHOOT?!

INT. TAIL BUBBLE/B-29

Crouched behind his gun, MULDROW is trying to track the fighter through his sights.

MULDROW'S POV THROUGH THE SIGHTS: FLASHES in the darkness as the enemy pilot fires again.

Bullets rip into the tail section, a couple actually puncturing the plexi-bubble.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, unflustered by the near miss, coolly panning his twin fifty caliber guns.

MULDROW'S POV: the burst of machinegun fire ending, the sky going black. The enemy plane is invisible in the night sky.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, still sighting as he pans the gun, finger tensing on the trigger, a slow smile of triumph creasing his face.

MULDROW'S POV THROUGH THE SIGHTS: blackness. No target!

ANGLE ON MULDROW'S FINGER, squeezing the trigger.

ANGLE ON THE TWIN FIFTIES, suddenly bucking angrily, chattering, spewing fire and tracers into the darkness.

MULDROW'S POV THROUGH THE SIGHTS: the impenetrable blackness, suddenly erupting into an extravaganza of dazzling light, a huge EXPLOSION, very close.

INT. WAIST SECTION/B-29.

Light illuminates the men as the B-29 lurches violently almost throwing various CREWMEMBERS to the floor.

ANGLE ON THE TERRIFIED REDHEAD, holding on for dear life.

INT. TAIL BUBBLE/B-29

Hunched over his guns, MULDROW speaks softly into his headset.

MULDROW

Say, Major, you see that? You think I mighta hit that fella maybe?

INT. COCKPIT/B-29

MAJOR SORBO is bringing the plane back under control.

MAJOR SORBO

I saw it, Muldrow, and everybody else did, too! Now get the hell off the horn!

INT. WAIST SECTION/B-29

The REDHEAD is shaken up, scared, moaning.

REDHEAD

Jesus Christ! Jesus Christ!

INT. TAIL SECTION/B-29

Peering through his sights, MULDROW mutters into his headset...

MULDROW

That sonofabitch is gone. That damn nip ain't never gonna eat rice again, no sir. He's gone. He's a dead fucker. He's never gonna breathe again.

MAJOR SORBO'S VOICE/INTERCOM (o.s.)

I TOLD YOU TO SHUT UP, MULDROW! TEX, YOUR PLANE NOW.

INT. WAIST SECTION/B-29

TEX, the bombardier, acknowledges, takes charge of the plane now.

TEX
(into the intercom)
Aye, aye, sir.

Just then, the plane is hit with a barrage of small EXPLOSIONS and the REDHEAD, wide-eyed, YELLS,

REDHEAD
WHAT IS THAT?

TEX calmly looks down into his sights.

TEX'S POV THROUGH HIS SIGHTS: anti-aircraft fire, coming from the ground ahead, speeding through the air toward them.

EXT. AERIAL VIEW OF APPROACHING TOKYO - NIGHT

We HEAR the piercing SCREAMS of the air raid warnings and we SEE giant searchlights panning the skies, anti-aircraft fire streaking through the air, then exploding, and we SEE... a surrealistic scene of a city sky filled with giant tethered floating balloons.

The American planes ignore the anti-aircraft fire and, even when they're hit, continue toward their approaching destination.

INT. TAIL SECTION

MULDROW holds on tightly as he watches the sky lighting up outside from the anti-aircraft fire and the searchlights.

EXT. BOMBERS - NIGHT

Twelve B-29s, revealed by the anti-aircraft fire and the ground searchlights, open their bay doors.

INT. WAIST SECTION

CLOSE ON TEX, peering intently into his sights, waiting for the exact moment to release his bombs.

TEX'S POV THROUGH THE BOMBER'S SIGHTS: the docks of Tokyo immediately ahead.

CLOSE ON TEX'S RIGHT HAND, holding a lever firmly.

TEX'S VOICE INTO HIS HEADSET (o.s.)
Five, four, three, two, one!

The bombardier squeezes the lever.

TEX'S POV THROUGH THE BOMBER'S SIGHTS: 2,000 pound bombs being released.

EXT. BOMBERS - NIGHT

Bombs drop from the American planes and fall through the air, heading for their targets.

INT. TAIL BUBBLE/B-29

MULDROW stares down through the bubble.

MULDROW'S POV: a series of fiery EXPLOSIONS below like a row of flowers blooming.

INT. WAIST SECTION/B-29

TEX, watching through his sights, speaks into his headset.

TEX INTO HIS HEADSET

RIGHT ON TARGET! Your ship again,
Major. Let's get the hell outta here.

EXT. BOMBERS

As their bay doors close, the U.S. BOMBERS lift higher into the air and start making their turns to return to base.

INT. TAIL SECTION/MULDROW'S B-29

MULDROW stares out the plexiglass at the ground fires as the B-29 makes its turn.

Suddenly... BOOOOOOMMMMM!!!!!!

MULDROW is hurled over his gun butts.

Shocked, the breath knocked out of him, he tries to recover. He struggles to sit back, but there's a tremendous wind coming from midships and the plane is starting to tilt. He speaks urgently into his headset.

MULDROW

Major? Major? Hey... anybody?

No response. MULDROW yanks off his headset and extricates himself as fast as he can from his electrical connections and his seat belt.

The plane is starting to go nose-down now.

MULDROW grabs ahold of the webbing on his chair, then onto a piece of the bulkhead. Everything not completely secured is flying through the air.

Holding on as tightly as he can, MULDROW reaches his taped chute, pulls it off the bulkhead, and buckles it on.

Then, on hands and knees, and working against a tremendous wind, he crawls through the tube to the waist section of the plane.

WAIST SECTION

While holding on for dear life in the fierce wind, MULDROW stares, momentarily horrified.

MULDROW'S POV: a huge jagged gash in one side of the ship, opposite the closed hatch, and one wing is completely severed and it looks like the cockpit is gone, too. Several loose parachute packs are flying about and there's no one here. This plane is going down!

One of the loose chutes smacks MULDROW in the head as he braces himself and pulls the pins out of the hatch door. The chute disappears, sucked out of the hole in the side of the plane.

MULDROW can't budge the door.

Maintaining his calm, he grabs hold of a bar over the door with both hands and then swings back as far as he can and then forward with all his might, kicking the door. It opens!

Quickly, MULDROW hurls himself out of the spinning plane.

EXT. SKY - NIGHT

MULDROW'S POV AS HE TUMBLES END OVER END THROUGH THE AIR: the moonlit sky...

the falling plane...

ground fires...

a huge black patch with silver on it.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, tumbling through the nighttime sky while, behind him, the B-29, spiralling now, plummets downward.

CLOSE ON MULDROW, the wind whipping at him. He gets control of himself, spreads his arms and legs. For a long moment, he falls free... like a hawk riding the air currents.

CLOSE ON MULDROW'S EYES, as he falls. There's no way to tell what he's feeling. He seems to extend the moment, making it impossible not to wonder what he's thinking as he descends spread-eagled. Is he considering not pulling the rip-cord? Then...

ANGLE ON MULDROW, putting one arm across his face to protect it from the chute when it opens. He pulls on the chute handle as hard as he can.

The handle comes away and there's a loud CRACK like a rifle as the pack springs open.

MULDROW is jerked violently as the chute opens above him...

but then he stabilizes and starts floating down.

MULDROW'S POV: way off to the left, far below, another parachute floating downwards.

And immediately below, his plane, suddenly disappearing into the black patch with silver on it. Water! Ocean!

Quickly, he works the risers, trying to steer for land ahead where the fires are.

Downward...downward he drifts, still working the risers. The fires are getting closer.

EXT. BROOKS RANGE - DAY

From above, looking down on the snow, a HAWK drifts into view.

Looking down on the HAWK, we see what the HAWK sees! Sudden movement in the blank white snow!

Tiny and white, the SNOW HARE bolts, scampering across the vast whiteness... and the HAWK swoops down... as

a SIREN WAILS, long and urgent.

EXT. SKY/DOCKS OF TOKYO - NIGHT

SIRENS continue to WAIL as MULDROW drifts lower and lower...

and now he hears SHOUTS, ENGINES... not too far away.

Suddenly, he is jolted to a stop.

No longer falling, MULDROW sways "in place".

Confused, he looks down, but the moonlight is muted by drifting clouds now and MULDROW can't see the ground or make out what's there.

He looks up.

MULDROW'S POV: something strange and vague looms high above him, like a giant arm, barely visible in this light.

MULDROW pulls the risers tentatively. Nothing happens. His chute is caught on something.

He starts to pull himself up the shrouds.

ANGLE ON MULDROW'S HANDS, climbing hand over hand slowly in the darkness.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, struggling, grunting, working very hard. As strong as he is, pulling himself up this chute is an ordeal.

ANGLE ON THE SKY, as the clouds part briefly, flooding the scene with moonlight.

WIDE ANGLE ON MULDROW, a tiny figure struggling up the risers to where his parachute is caught on the top of the boom arm of a towering gantry crane!

MULDROW'S above the Tokyo docks, surrounded by huge loading cranes.

CLOSE ON MULDROW, observing the docks and the other cranes looming in the vague moonlight.

Then, he begins again his difficult struggle up the shrouds.

EXT. BOOM TOP/GANTRY CRANE

Grunting with effort, MULDROW makes it to the arm of the crane where he scrambles "aboard," shifting his body weight from his weary arms to the steel boom.

As he catches his breath, he looks around.

The moon goes behind the clouds again, obscuring the docks, but he can still see a few blazes to the West and he can hear the SIRENS.

But the B-29s are gone, the anti-aircraft fire has ceased and only a few searchlights still probe the sky.

MULDROW considers his trembling, bloody hands, shakes his head wearily as he recovers his breath.

MULDROW

Japs got to have a better hotel than
this here. Shit!

MULDROW begins his next task, recovering his chute. He climbs the remaining eight feet to the tip of the boom where part of the silk is snagged.

Then, he starts carefully retrieving the lines and the whole huge silken canopy.

Just then, the clouds part and brilliant moonlight illuminates the scene and MULDROW looks down with alarm to make sure he's not being observed.

His eyes widen!

MULDROW'S POV: a Japanese Military Cargo ship, docked below, with an armed SAILOR, on watch, strolling across the deck.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, frozen, watching.

ANGLE ON THE SAILOR, finally disappearing from view behind the superstructure on his way to the stern. The SAILOR never looked up.

ANGLE ON THE MOON, obscured again behind clouds.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, hastily retrieving the lines and the canopy.

ANGLE ON THE EASTERN HORIZON, where a faint glow is beginning to smear the clouds where sky and sea meet.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, having at last gathered the huge silk package.

He glances nervously at the Eastern first light.

Then, as quickly and as carefully as he can, MULDROW starts his awkward descent down the giant arm, hauling the bundle of silk and pack and cords with him.

EXT. DECK/CARGO SHIP

The Japanese SAILOR on watch appears again and starts patrolling the forward deck of the ship.

EXT. BOOM/CRANE

MULDROW is halted halfway down the boom arm, motionless, waiting for the SAILOR to look up and see him... or, hopefully, disappear again.

Nervously, MULDROW sneaks a glance toward the East where the first rays of the sun are just beginning to appear on the horizon.

Looking back to the ship, MULDROW sees the SAILOR heading aft, disappearing behind the superstructure.

MULDROW begins to descend again with new urgency.

Just then, the parachute slips!

MULDROW grabs the bundle a split second before it gets away from him.

MULDROW recovers his balance, collects himself... then continues down the boom toward the cab which sets on a steel platform thirty five feet above the dock.

INT. CAB/GANTRY CRANE

MULDROW enters the cab through the side door.

It's still dark in here.

MULDROW pokes around the cramped space where the metal seat for the crane operator is surrounded by the crane's controls.

Behind the seat is an open door that leads to the engine compartment.

MULDROW bundles up the parachute and stuffs it among oil cans, rags and spare parts just inside the engine compartment.

EXT. DOCKS - DAWN

The sun is rising quickly now, blood red like the rising sun on the Japanese flag.

EXT. CAB/GANTRY CRANE

MULDROW slips out of the cab onto the platform and looks down.

MULDROW'S POV: it's lighter now but the docks are still deserted except for the stacks of crates and supplies, some already loaded on pallets.

There's no sign of the SAILOR on the deck of the cargo ship.

CLOSE ON MULDROW, starting to climb down the ladder that leads from the cab platform to the ground thirty five feet below.

He gets about ten feet down when he hears an excited SHOUT! He freezes, caught in plain view twenty five feet up.

Looking down, MULDROW sees a JAPANESE MAN sprinting along the dock shouting excitedly in Japanese.

MULDROW'S POV OF THE SAILOR: appearing on the deck of the cargo ship, dashing to the railing and calling to the JAPANESE MAN.

The excited JAPANESE MAN responds to the SAILOR and points back in the direction he's come from, down the docks.

As the SAILOR looks where the JAPANESE MAN pointed, the JAPANESE MAN hurries off, heading around one of the large warehouses that line the dock.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, realizing he's not been spotted, scrambling the ten feet back up the ladder to the cab.

INT. CAB/GANTRY CRANE

MULDROW slips into the cab, shuts the door, scoots down, waits, then raises up and peeks through the window at the scene below.

MULDROW'S POV THROUGH THE WINDOW: hurrying down the dock from the direction the JAPANESE MAN came from is a noisy group of seven excited JAPANESE DOCKWORKERS, men in their fifties and sixties, all YELLING at an EIGHTH MAN, dressed differently than the others.

The DOCKWORKERS are shoving the EIGHTH MAN along, knocking him down, kicking him, dragging him to his feet, then shoving him down again as they move along the dock in the direction of the crane.

MULDROW notes that one of the DOCKWORKERS can only brutalize the EIGHTH MAN with his feet because his arms are full of parachute cloth.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, watching intensely now, eyes narrowed.

ANGLE ON THE DOCKWORKERS, passing the cargo ship, displaying their captive to the SAILOR at the rail. The DOCKWORKERS gesticulate, indicating the parachute and their prisoner... and for the first time, the prisoner is recognizable, not by face but by his shock of red hair. It's the REDHEAD, his flight suit torn and dripping wet, his face battered and bloodied beyond recognition.

ANGLE ON MULDROW; reacting to the REDHEAD and then to something else.

MULDROW'S POV: a jeep with four SOLDIERS appearing from between the warehouses where the JAPANESE MAN disappeared.

The jeep pulls up and the SOLDIERS jump out and take rough charge of the REDHEAD while the DOCKWORKERS jabber and wave their arms, describing the discovery and the capture to the SOLDIERS.

One SOLDIER takes the parachute, considers it... and looks around... and up.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, ducking down quickly.

After a long moment, he raises up and peeks out again cautiously.

MULDROW'S POV: the jeep, driving off with the REDHEAD in the back seat flanked by SOLDIERS.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, touching the spot where his knife is taped.

MULDROW'S POV: the DOCKWORKERS below, still excited, chattering among themselves.

Just then, a WHISTLE BLOWS and one of the men, a FOREMAN, takes charge, giving orders in Japanese, indicating the pallets stacked beside the cargo ship.

As the DOCKWORKERS disperse to their different tasks, one of them, a CRANE OPERATOR, ambles toward the crane where MULDROW is hiding.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, tensing as he sees where the man is headed.

EXT. DOCK - MORNING

The CRANE OPERATOR, carrying his lunch in a wooden Bento box, starts up the ladder toward the cab.

CLOSE ON THE CRANE OPERATOR, being careful not to drop his lunch, pulling himself up, rung after rung.

INT. CAB/GANTRY CRANE - SECONDS LATER

The CRANE OPERATOR opens the door, steps inside the tiny cab, slides into the seat at the controls, then sets his Bento box down on the floor next to him.

He doesn't see MULDROW... and neither do we!

The OPERATOR starts the crane's engine.

EXT. DOCK

The FOREMAN is standing near the stacks of crates and pallets ready to be loaded into the freighter. Looking up, the FOREMAN can see the CRANE OPERATOR, high above, a tiny figure.

FOREMAN'S POV: the CRANE OPERATOR, looking down, waiting.

ANGLE ON THE FOREMAN, giving hand signals to the OPERATOR.

ANGLE ON THE CRANE ARM, moving, positioning.

ANGLE ON THE HOOK, dangling from the crane arm, lowering...

ANGLE ON DOCK WORKERS, all older men, men too old to be in the army, standing next to the pallet, ready to help attach the hook.

INT. CAB/CRANE

The CRANE OPERATOR focuses on the scene below as he works the various levers.

CRANE OPERATOR'S POV: DOCKWORKERS, grabbing the hook and securing it to a loaded pallet as the FOREMAN watches.

Then, the FOREMAN looks up at the CRANE OPERATOR and signals.

ANGLE ON THE CRANE OPERATOR, nodding in response, then guiding the levers.

REVEAL MULDROW, only inches away from the CRANE OPERATOR, pressed back against the bulkhead behind him, motionless. It seems incredible that the CRANE OPERATOR hasn't noticed him.

ANGLE ON THE BREADKNIFE, gripped in MULDROW'S hand. Ready.

ANGLE ON THE CRANE OPERATOR, working the controls, intent on the scene below.

CRANE OPERATOR'S POV: the heavily loaded pallet, hovering over the freighter's open hold until a SAILOR signals the FOREMAN and then the FOREMAN signals the CRANE OPERATOR to start lowering the load into the gaping mouth of the hold.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, motionless, expressionless, watching the CRANE OPERATOR work the controls.

ANGLE ON THE CRANE OPERATOR, working the controls.

EXT. FREIGHTER DECK

The loaded pallet disappears gradually into the hold.

ANGLE ON THE SUN, climbing in the east.

EXT. DOCK - LATER (MID-MORNING)

Another pallet of supplies is rising from the diminished pile. Work is progressing; time is passing.

The heavy cargo swings out over the freighter.

EXT. BROOKS RANGE - WINTER AFTERNOON

Long shadows hide the face of the older man, MULDROW SR., as he skins a marten outside the cabin. It's freezing cold and MULDROW SR. is wearing a heavy Sears Roebuck late thirties down-jacket.

MULDROW'S VOICE (v.o.)

My father had been the loner of loners. He made himself that way, and it was right for him. Because of something that had happened to him back in Virginia -- he never told me, but I always thought this -- he had taken it on himself to get as far away from other people as he possibly could. To him that meant Alaska, and it defined the life I lived while I was growing up.

ANGLE ON TWELVE-YEAR-OLD MULDROW, watching intently as his father skins the animal.

MULDROW'S VOICE (v.o.)

He wanted me to be like him, and, believe me, I wanted to be like him. He was not a natural outdoorsman or any kind of pioneer type, but all the time I was living with him up there, I could tell that he took right to it.

TWELVE-YEAR-OLD MULDROW'S POV: as the furry skin pulls away, a tiny feather falls and, unnoticed by MULDROW SR., sticks to the bloody carcass.

ANGLE ON TWELVE-YEAR-OLD MULDROW, looking for the source of the feather.

TWELVE-YEAR-OLD MULDROW'S POV: a tear in MULDROW SR.'S jacket where tiny tufts of down are leaking.

MULDROW'S VOICE (v.o.)

A lot of times he told me he wished he had been raised like he was raising me. In a way we grew up together, learning the same things, the same way to connect with the land, the mountains, the animals and fish and birds, and with the seasons, and most especially with the cold.

ANGLE ON THE SKINNED MARTEN, pathetic in its skinless state, several feathers sticking to it.

ANGLE ON MULDROW SR., noticing the feathers, noticing the tear in his jacket, frowning.

INT. CAB/CRANE - MID-DAY

The cab is silent, the engine shut down. The CRANE OPERATOR, his back to MULDROW, is sitting and eating his lunch from a bowl he's pulled from the box he set down earlier. He's using chopsticks. CLICK... CLICK... CLICK... CLICK...

ANGLE ON MULDROW, only a few feet away, motionless, the knife still in his hand.

Like a statue, MULDROW reveals no discomfort.

CLICK... CLICK... CLICK...

EXT. CRANE - LATER (AFTERNOON)

The crane's engine is GRINDING loudly again as a heavy load rises.

INT. CAB/CRANE - AFTERNOON

The CRANE OPERATOR works the controls. Time is passing.

EXT. DOCKS - AFTERNOON

DOCKWORKERS hook up another pallet. It's getting later.

EXT. CARGO SHIP/DOCK - LATE AFTERNOON

The sun is low. The empty chain comes out of the hold and swings away.

There are no more pallets on the dock.

EXT. DOCKS

Looking west; the sun is sinking behind the buildings of Tokyo.

EXT. CARGO SHIP

SEAMEN are closing the hold.

EXT. CRANE/DOCK

The CRANE OPERATOR is climbing down the ladder to the ground where he joins other DOCKWORKERS leaving the docks in groups of three and four.

Behind him, we SEE all the cranes are silent, the docks deserted.

ANGLE ON THE SETTING SUN, disappearing behind Tokyo.

INT. CAB/CRANE - NIGHT

CLOSE ON EMERGENCY ITEMS, caught in a pool of light on the floor of the cab: compass, matches, twine, fish hooks, flints and so on.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, squatting in the cab, carefully going through his emergency kit by the light of his flashlight; checking each item and replacing it, much like a man counting his money.

ANGLE ON THE MOON, in the cloudless sky, pouring light into the dark cab.

ANGLE ON THE SILK MAP FROM THE EMERGENCY KIT, as MULDROW smooths it out and shines his light on it.

CLOSE ON MULDROW, inspecting the map.

MULDROW'S POV: as his eyes travel along the map, tracing a route from Tokyo to the northernmost tip of Japan and then across a narrow strait to the island marked "HOKKAIDO" and then across another strait to the first of some islands... a chain of them that must lead ultimately to... Alaska!

ANGLE ON MULDROW, staring at the map, considering the possibility for a long time.

MULDROW'S POV OF THE MAP, as his eyes focus on the island of Hokkaido.

EXT. BROOKS RANGE - DAY

A sunless day. The snow is blue with the freezing cold.

TWELVE-YEAR-OLD MULDROW moves gracefully across a snowfield in snowshoes.

MULDROW'S VOICE (v.o.)

Wherever it's cold enough, I can get along. Snow and wind are right for me. Nearly everything about the cold is good. The cold-weather birds are the best to eat and the prettiest by far: the cold-water fish are better, and stronger, and taste like fish ought to taste; the cold water makes the meat good and firm. And I love fur and the animals that grow it.

CLOSE ON TWELVE-YEAR-OLD MULDROW, his eyes as alert as any animal.

A SIREN STARTS WAILING URGENTLY!

INT. CAB/CRANE - NIGHT

As the SIREN continues to wail, MULDROW, who's been sitting on the floor of the cab with his back to the wall, dozing, gets to his feet.

He goes to the cab window and looks out at Tokyo. He can hear the first CONCUSSIONS and the DRONE of airplane engines.

MULDROW'S POV THROUGH THE CAB WINDOW: huge billowing FIRES just starting in the distance as dozens of searchlights probe the sky insistently, trying to spot the planes.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, his eyes glittering like fire. He's been waiting for this and if he speaks softly it's not without intensity.

MULDROW

Fire! Yeah! Put some fire on him!

MULDROW'S POV: Tokyo, under attack. And the DRONE of what must be hundreds of planes... louder and louder.

Sirens WAIL!

More EXPLOSIONS!

More fires.

More searchlights, stabbing the sky.

Then, a glimpse of one of the formations of B-29s, flying over the city, refusing to be deterred by the anti-aircraft fire EXPLODING all around them.

MULDROW'S VOICE (o.s.)

In his eyes -- up his asshole! In his pockets! In his wife's twat! Yes! White phosphorus and napalm!

EXT. CITY STREET/TOKYO - A LITTLE LATER (NIGHT)

Weird MOANING, a collective sound from the PEOPLE jamming the street, trying desperately to escape the inferno. They're wearing rags and bandanas tied over their mouths as they move like a single urgent stream past the three and four story buildings that line the street on both sides. Thick smoke eddies and swirls everywhere.

EXT. ANOTHER STREET/TOKYO - NIGHT

A wooden building suddenly EXPLODES in a wall of fire as a bomb hits it.

PEOPLE SCREAM as they swerve, trying to avoid flying timbers.

EXT. A THIRD STREET/TOKYO

FIREFIGHTERS are bravely firing a stream of water at a burning movie theater while PEOPLE flee all around them. The big poster on the front of the theater features two Japanese movie stars... burning.

The fire rages unabated in spite of the water.

The FIREMEN turn to run as the whole front of the building starts collapsing toward them.

EXT. SKY/TOKYO

Searchlights probe the night sky and one locks on a B-29 just as it dumps a long column of bombs.

The plane slides away, but remains trapped in the circle of white light, as SIRENS WAIL, BOMBS EXPLODE and ANTI-AIRCRAFT FIRE continues.

EXT. A FOURTH STREET/TOKYO

The eerie MOAN of the moving surge of PEOPLE mixes with the ROAR of the fire-wind whipping smoke between the low buildings.

IMAGE: a wall of smoke suddenly clears to reveal a TWO-YEAR-OLD CHILD alone in a first floor window, staring out at the stream of PEOPLE. Almost immediately, smoke obscures the image again.

IMAGE: a MAN and his WIFE, part of the fleeing crowd, are hurrying past a burning building when a flaming timber falls on the MAN. The WIFE stops, looks down in dismay at her husband trapped under the burning beam while the CROWD tries to go around her, but can't. She goes down, too... and is trampled!

IMAGE: a BALD MAN, big for a Japanese, is struggling along in the stream of people when suddenly, he's yanked out of the crowd by an unseen hand and disappears into the mouth of an alley.

EXT. ALLEY/TOKYO

The astonished BALD MAN stumbles into the alley off balance and reacts with amazement at what he sees!

BALD MAN'S POV: the muzzle of a forty-five, inches from his face... and beyond it, a vague view of MULDROW'S face.

BANG!

ANGLE ON MULDROW, glancing toward the mouth of the alley to see if anybody noticed anything.

MULDROW'S POV: terrified PEOPLE, pushing and jostling past the alley, not looking in here.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, looking down at the BALD MAN.

ANGLE ON THE BALD MAN, flat on his back, the top of his head gone.

MULDROW kneels down and quickly starts removing the dead man's clothing.

MONTAGE:

MULDROW pulls off the dead man's pants and blousy jacket...

strips off his own flight suit...

pulls on the Japanese MAN'S pants and jacket.

Sitting down, MULDROW tries to put on the dead MAN'S shoes. They won't fit. He tosses them aside, reaches for his GI boots, has to put them back on.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, glancing up.

MULDROW'S POV: an OLD WOMAN, looking down at him from a third story window, watching him while flames lick at the wood around the window.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, dismissing her -- she's a goner -- he's not interested. Instead, he glances around, looking for something, finding it.

Charred wood smoldering on the ground.

MULDROW rubs the hot wood, then smears black charcoal all over his face. Then, he pulls his white silk blood chit (bandana) out of his emergency kit, then slips the kit into a pocket.

ANGLE ON THE OLD WOMAN ABOVE, watching while flames dance around the window. Then, black smoke obscures her and she disappears. Gone!

EXT. BROOKS RANGE - DAY

A string of dead snowshoe hares bounce lifelessly over FIFTEEN-YEAR-OLD MULDROW'S shoulder as he makes his way along a steep ridge in snowshoes. He's more mature now, graceful, easy.

MULDROW'S VOICE (v.o.)

I had seen the snowshoe hare lie down, lie down in a bunch of low bushes, and make an outline in the snow, and then there's not any outline. I've seen that. The only thing left is the eyes, and I've seen the hare close his eyes, and I could have walked over the place where he was, and unless I stepped on him I never would have seen him, or known that he was here in the world.

FIFTEEN-YEAR-OLD MULDROW glances skyward and sees a HAWK circling lazily, hunting.

MULDROW'S VOICE (v.o.)

But most of the time I never saw the hare close his eyes. But once or twice -- once, to be honest, when the hare was in open snow and not in any bushes -- I saw the eyes closing, I saw the whole thing, the whole disappearance. I've seen that, that's what I had. I had it. I was there with it.

ANGLE ON THE DEAD EYES OF A HARE, bobbing along on MULDROW'S back as we HEAR EXPLOSIONS and SIRENS.

EXT. NIGHT SKY OVER TOKYO

Panning searchlights!

Ground-to air flak streaking across the sky.

Japanese fighter planes trying every maneuver possible.

An American B-29 plummets earthward, streaking flames.

Parachutes blossom in the night sky.

More anti-aircraft fire.

And still the waves of B-29s continue.

Rows of bombs slide from their bomb-bays.

EXT. ANOTHER STREET/TOKYO

Bedlam. A Vision of Hell. Screaming CHILDREN, frightened PEOPLE, some being trampled as the CROWD pushes forward, fire on all sides.

A BURNING MAN rushes out of a flaming building and staggers into the stream of PEOPLE.

The stream of people parts, trying to avoid the BURNING MAN who stumbles forward like a human torch and falls to the ground.

Hundreds of FEET shuffle urgently forward around the writhing BURNING MAN.

Among the hundreds of pairs of Japanese footwear, we NOTICE a single pair of GI BOOTS, almost lost in the blur of moving feet.

INVESTIGATING the GI BOOTS more closely, we DISCOVER the man wearing them, anonymous in the tide of humanity, his forehead blackened with charcoal, his face, like so many faces, covered with a cloth tied over his nose and mouth, his traditional Japanese clothing unremarkable. It's only the boots and the eyes that let us know it's MULDROW.

CLOSE ON MULDROW'S EYES, alert, calculating, scanning this way and that.

MULDROW'S POV: the frightened faces of those around him, mostly WOMEN, CHILDREN and OLD PEOPLE.

MULDROW'S POV: the footwear of those around him.

MULDROW spots SHOES more or less his own size.

They belong to a SLIM MAN just ahead in the CROWD.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, shouldering his way through the masses of people, angling toward the SLIM MAN.

ANGLE ON THE SLIM MAN, pressing forward, not noticing the man with the cloth over his face, MULDROW, at his side now.

SUDDEN SCREAMS! Flaming timbers topple from a burning building into the CROWD.

Unhesitatingly, the CROWD continues to surge forward, veering around the VICTIMS knocked to the ground by the timbers.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, avoiding the fallen VICTIMS of the burning timbers, keeping close to the SLIM MAN.

CLOSE ON MULDROW, looking ahead, finding what he's looking for.

MULDROW'S POV: ahead, a recessed doorway.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, jostling against the SLIM MAN, forcing him toward the doorway.

The SLIM MAN doesn't realize he's being deliberately directed as he fights for his footing in the surging, pushing mob.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, continuing to steer the SLIM MAN toward that doorway.

ANGLE ON THE SLIM MAN, reacting when he's suddenly pushed violently.

INT. DOORWAY/TOKYO STREET

The SLIM MAN careens into the doorway, gets his balance, turns and looks with astonishment at the masked man who pushed him.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, aiming his forty-five point blank into the SLIM MAN'S face and pulling the trigger.

CLICK! Nothing!

MULDROW pulls the trigger two more times, fast. CLICK! CLICK!

As MULDROW, disgusted, tosses the gun away, the SLIM MAN quickly slides around him and darts out of the doorway.

EXT. TOKYO STREET

The SLIM MAN is just about to melt into the stream of the CROWD when MULDROW'S hand yanks him back into the doorway.

Nobody notices.

INT. RECESSED DOORWAY/TOKYO STREET

MULDROW slices the throat of the SLIM MAN with his breadknife.

The SLIM MAN, looking astonished, slumps to the ground.

INT. RECESSED DOORWAY/TOKYO STREET - SECONDS LATER

MULDROW slips into the SLIM MAN'S shoes.

Then, he grabs the SLIM MAN'S shoulder bag, opens it and pulls out a strange looking musical instrument.

MULDROW stares at the stringed instrument for a moment, then he crams his army boots into the shoulder bag, hesitates half a second, then puts the instrument back in on top of the boots.

Slinging the pack over his shoulder, he steps from the doorway back into the surging, moaning CROWD.

EXT. LAKE/TOKYO - SHORTLY (NIGHT)

A scene as if from Dante's Inferno! The shores of a large lake in the middle of the burning city writhe with thousands of PEOPLE trying desperately to escape the terrible flames by plunging into the water, forcing those already in the lake to go deeper.

PEOPLE are drowning or being trampled. CHILDREN are screaming.

The water shimmers red from the flames towering into the sky all around the lake.

The whole city is on fire.

EXT. STREET/TOKYO

MULDROW, still masked, is almost indistinguishable from the JAPANESE around him as they move like a stream.

Looking ahead, MULDROW sees the bizarre agony of the lake for the first time and realizes that he's part of the "stream" flowing into the lake.

He makes an effort to veer to the side but it's impossible... he's caught in the tide of JAPANESE.

EXT. LAKE - NIGHT

MULDROW is among the seething MASS splashing into the water.

Stumbling forward, he's waist-deep in water before he can separate himself enough from those around him to stop his forward motion.

He turns, looks around, considers his dilemma.

MULDROW'S POV: fiery buildings, swirling smoke everywhere, and, here in the lake, hundreds of heads, trying to stay above water, everyone SCREAMING!

And thousands of other desperate PEOPLE pushing into the crowded water from the surrounding streets.

Just then, a surge of PEOPLE pushes MULDROW and he is forced to go deeper and he steps into a hole and goes under!

He comes up coughing and is turning when he sees...

MULDROW'S POV: the head of a JAPANESE WOMAN, wearing a wide-brimmed straw hat, only inches away from MULDROW, staring at him, wide-eyed, horrified.

MULDROW feels his face and realizes his bandana has slipped down and the water has probably washed off some of the charcoal.

MULDROW'S POV: the JAPANESE WOMAN, SCREAMING now and lifting her arm out of the water and pointing at him. But then, suddenly, she is wrenched beneath the water and held there.

The WOMAN struggles fiercely but MULDROW is strong and determined and soon the struggle stops. Only her floating hat remains.

MULDROW quickly pulls the bandana up to cover his lower face, then he takes the WOMAN'S hat and puts it on.

Then, keeping his head low, he checks around.

MULDROW'S POV: not one person in this MOB has noticed anything.

And still, PEOPLE crowd into the lake.

MULDROW pushes toward the shore, moving against the surge of PEOPLE, unstoppable this time, determined.

EXT. LAKE SHORE - MOMENTS LATER (NIGHT)

Pushing and shoving, MULDROW scrambles out of the lake and fights his way into a street which seems to be heading North around the lake.

EXT. STREET

This street isn't so crowded and MULDROW has no trouble moving against the flow of the CROWD.

It's hot. MULDROW'S face is slick with sweat. He seems to be heading into an inferno.

He turns into an alley.

EXT. ALLEY

A few JAPANESE dash past MULDROW in the opposite direction, but not many.

He takes another turn onto another street.

More flames.

EXT. ANOTHER STREET

This street is almost deserted. Flames on all sides. MULDROW can HEAR the SCREAMING and MOANING behind him. This is hell and he's alone now, walking right into it, unflinching.

EXT. YET ANOTHER TOKYO STREET - NIGHT

Fire everywhere. Blackened BODIES still smoking.

MULDROW walks along, alone now except for one old MAN who staggers past, his hair burnt off, his clothes charred and smoking.

Then, MULDRON sees something truly amazing.

MULDROW'S POV: a building EXPLODES and a MAN in flames is propelled by the blast out of an upper story window and across the street and into an open window of a completely different building.

MULDROW stares. Amazing! Inexplicable!

A moment, then he nods as if this made sense.

MULDROW

Yessiree. In his eyes and up his asshole!

ANGLE ON MULDRON, opening the bag he's carrying and pulling out the strange musical instrument. He plucks a string.

A weird sound, all but lost in the cacophony of PLANES, BOMBS and SIRENS, FLAK and FIRE.

MULDROW plucks the instrument louder as he walks along, making an eerie sound.

MULDROW

In his baby's diaper. Up his wife's twat. In his dreams!

EXT. BROOKS RANGE/ALASKA - DAY

Very quiet. SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD MULDRON trudges across the dazzling white snow in his snowshoes to his home.

When he reaches the tiny cabin, he takes off his snowshoes, leaves them on the porch and opens the door.

INT. CABIN/BROOKS RANGE - DAY

SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD MULDRON, about to take off his jacket, stops and stares!

SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD MULDRON'S POV: a red wall! So bright it's like a scream!

MULDROW SR. is kneeling at the foot of the wall, red paint dripping from the brush in his hand. He looks up and their eyes meet.

ANGLE ON SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD MULDROW, shaken. It's as though he's walked in on some terrible moment... a crime, a tragedy.

EXT. STREET/TOKYO - MORNING

A terrible sunrise. The red sun only barely shows through the thick curtain of fog-like smoke. There's white ash everywhere... like snow! . And it's quiet. Deathly quiet.

There are CORPSES burnt black beside smoldering buildings...

slumped in burnt out vehicles...

in the gutters...

in the streets.

Some of the CORPSES are tiny, the bodies of children, black as charcoal.

A few JAPANESE wander through the devastation, dazed, staring, unable to comprehend the horror.

EXT. ANOTHER STREET - MORNING

Two cargo trucks, military, grind through the destruction...

over still-smoldering timbers...

around burnt out vehicles...

around the charcoal CORPSES.

In the open backs of the moving cargo trucks, JAPANESE SOLDIERS loom over PRISONERS huddled on the truck floors.

ANGLE ON THE PRISONERS, badly wounded, severely beaten... AMERICANS in torn flight gear, swaying with the motion of the truck and suffering occasional random kicks from their captors.

We DISCOVER RED, slumped among the other PRISONERS, in very bad shape!

EXT. ROAD/OUTSKIRTS OF TOKYO - LATER (MORNING)

The trucks emerge from the devastated city streets and rumble along "suburban" streets now past low wooden unburned homes with neat gardens and, incongruously, Japanese FIGHTER PLANES squatting ominously in the yards of some of the homes, parked like cars.

The trucks grind past a stream of REFUGEES, woman and children and the elderly, trudging North, lugging possessions.

ANGLE ON ONE MAN, plodding wearily along, carrying a shoulder sack, his soot-covered face obscured by his hat and face bandana.

But when he sneaks a peek at the passing trucks, we RECOGNIZE this refugee. It's MULDROW.

MULDROW'S POV: the fierce Japanese SOLDIERS and the beaten and doomed American PRISONERS in the rear of the trucks.

CLOSE ON MULDROW, his face obscured, watching the trucks turning off up ahead. MULDROW'S eyes are narrowed and hard.

Just then, the SOUND of AIRPLANE ENGINES overheard distracts him, causes him to glance up.

MULDROW'S POV: SIX JAPANESE FIGHTERS, descending in tight formation, disappearing behind a low hill a mile away, obviously landing.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, appearing very Japanese as he passes another FIGHTER PLANE parked between two homes.

EXT. AIRFIELD - LATER (AFTERNOON)

A patched-together ZERO makes a landing on a runway.

A Japanese Flag flaps in the breeze.

Inside the squat tin hangars that glint in the sun, MECHANICS work feverishly to repair disabled fighter planes.

Close by one of the hangars, the two cargo trucks are parked.

A group of JAPANESE SOLDIERS is gathered near the trucks.

EXT. RIDGE OVERLOOKING THE AIRFIELD

On his belly in tall grass, MULDROW peers down at the airfield through his tiny telescope.

MULDROW'S POV THROUGH THE TELESCOPE: the SOLDIERS are leading a badly wounded AMERICAN PRISONER whose hands are tied behind his back, wind whipping at his torn and bloodied flight suit.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, watching, expressionlessly.

MULDROW'S POV THROUGH THE TELESCOPE: the SOLDIERS, forcing the PRISONER to his knees. The PRISONER'S face is contorted in terrible pain and he topples to his side and an OFFICER yanks his head up roughly by his hair. Again, we SEE the PRISONER'S face, distorted by agony and terror.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, watching... his face like stone.

MULDROW'S POV THROUGH THE TELESCOPE: the OFFICER, raising a sword with both hands high above the PRISONER.

Then, as the OFFICER swings the sword downward with all his might, the steel catches the sunlight and FLASHES blindingly.

The sword connects and the PRISONER'S head flops forward, dangling as blood spurts high into the air.

Again the OFFICER swings.

Again the sword FLASHES.

This time, the head is completely severed and hits the ground and rolls.

The PRISONER'S headless body jerks.

SOLDIERS gather around the twitching corpse and kick it again and again and again.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - AFTERNOON

While REFUGEES trudge up the country road that leads past the airfield, MULDROW huddles behind a small near-by wall. He's still wearing the hat, but he has his bandana slipped down off his face. He's just sitting there, holding his emergency kit, thinking.

Suddenly, he dumps the contents of the kit out onto his lap and stares at the items.

Along with the survival implements are two chocolate candy bars.

MULDROW looks at them hungrily... deciding.

Finally, he repacks the kit excepting for the tiny compass and one of the chocolate bars.

Then, he peeks over the wall at the REFUGEES. Nothing's changed.

He settles back down and eats his chocolate bar... slowly. He licks the tinfoil cover and then his fingers for any last remains of the candy.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - LATER (DAY)

Knots of REFUGEES trudge North.

His face covered again, almost indistinguishable from the others, MULDROW is among them, just another refugee.

Except that now, suddenly, he angles to the opposite side of the road.

Then, after making sure no-one's paying attention, he leaves the road and starts across an open field. Still shuffling. Still Japanese.

EXT. BROOKS RANGE - DAY

Falling snow. A SNOW HARE closes his eyes. Disappears.

Moments pass. Nothing but snow.

Then, a LYNX slinks by, sniffing. On the trail.

INT. JAPANESE FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

An OLD MAN, a WOMAN and a LITTLE GIRL are seated on mats at a low table lit by a candle, eating from bowls.

The OLD MAN, chewing the whole time, moves his chopsticks back and forth between the bowl and his mouth. CLICK... CLICK... CLICK...

When his bowl is empty, the WOMAN puts more rice into his bowl.

The LITTLE GIRL is eating hungrily when something catches her eye and she looks up.

She sees a strange spot of light on the wall opposite the window.

The OLD MAN and the WOMAN go on eating, oblivious to the LITTLE GIRL and the spot of light.

The LITTLE GIRL frowns with interest as the spot of light moves playfully on the wall.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

MULDROW is crouched outside the house in the darkness, peering in the window, manipulating his knife blade so that the candlelight flashes off the blade and the spot of light darts about inside the house.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

The LITTLE GIRL is mesmerized by the mystery of the traveling spot of light.

Up the wall, across, darting.

It occurs to her suddenly to look toward the window.

Looking directly at the window, she catches the sharp glint of the knife blade.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

MULDROW scrambles urgently off into the darkness like an animal.

Then, after a long moment, the door of the house opens and the OLD MAN, framed by the light in the doorway, peers out into the darkness.

Nothing!

EXT. FIELD - ONE HOUR LATER (NIGHT)

CLOSE ON MULDROW, illuminated by bright moonlight as he scrunches up in a depression he's made at the edge of a field. Shivering from the cold, clutching his breadknife in one hand, he begins to pull branches over himself.

A WIDER VIEW, as MULDROW pulls the last branch into place and... disappears.

WIDER STILL of the moonlit field, as if MULDROW doesn't exist.

EXT. BROOKS RANGE - LATE AFTERNOON

Snow. The end of the day. Long shadows.

Like a ghost, SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD MULDROW slips through the shadows in a white hooded jacket and white leggings.

MULDROW'S VOICE (v.o.)

I was at home in the snow; I was all right. I knew, in the white outfit that I used to wear, that if I closed my eyes I would be as out of the world as the snowshoe hare -- the snowshoe hare on one side or the lynx on the other. I could hide or attack, wait for the danger to pass or kill something before it even knew I was there.

A HARE, invisible a split second before, suddenly materializes like snow coming to life and bursts into the open.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

ANGLE ON A DEAD HARE, eyes unblinking, part of a string of four hares hanging over SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD MULDROW'S shoulder as he enters the cabin.

Even in the dim lanternlight, the single red wall is spooky.

MULDROW'S VOICE (v.o.)

When my father painted the inside of the cabin, and made the wall that way, he said it was because you got starved for color up there in all that snow, and craved it like elk and caribou crave salt. I believed him then, believed that was the reason for the paint, but now I had come to think, without any notion why, that there was another reason.

EXT. FERRIS WHEEL/CARNIVAL/GREELY, COLORADO - NIGHT

Carney MUSIC BLARES as the brightly lit Ferris Wheel, filled with laughing RIDERS, turns around and around.

SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD MULDROW, looking uncomfortable in cheap slacks and a check shirt, is looking up at the Ferris Wheel.

MULDROW'S VOICE (v.o.)

Later that year, my father took me south, all the way down to the States, to Colorado, because he thought maybe we ought to move there, get off the Brooks Range so I could grow up with more people around, not just Indians and Eskimos.

SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD MULDROW'S POV: an eighteen year old BLONDE GIRL on the Ferris Wheel, squealing as her car descends from the top of the wheel.

She's very pretty with a good figure that shapes her University of Colorado sweater.

Behind SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD MULDROW, CARNIES, weathered looking men and women, pitch their games in brassy voices as the BOY turns and starts wandering among their booths.

Suddenly he stops, staring.

He's at the entrance to the Freak Show where a BARKER stands in front of a lurid poster depicting horrific pictures of THE HERMAPHRODITE, THE BIRD MAN, THE ARMLESS LEGLESS TORSO, THE ALLIGATOR LADY, FUR-COVERED BABIES, A LEVITATING INDIAN FAKIR and more.

BARKER

UNNATURAL DISTORTIONS OF NATURE. A MAN WITH FEATHERS! BORN THAT WAY! MAKES STRANGE SOUNDS! REMEMBERS BEYOND THE GRAVE! HIS PREVIOUS LIFE AS A BIRD!

Just then, while SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD MULDROW stares at the poster and the BARKER, a laughing BRUNETTE on the arm of a COLLEGE KID jostles YOUNG MULDROW accidentally in passing and doesn't even look at him... as if YOUNG MULDROW wasn't even there.

MULDROW'S VOICE (v.o.)

We stayed in Colorado a week. Neither one of us liked it, and we went back north as soon as we could.

EXT. FIELD/JAPAN - FIRST LIGHT

SWANS! Gorgeous in the pale light preceding sunrise, six of them, white as snow, fly gracefully overhead and begin a descent.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, whiskers showing now, blinking awake and staring up through the branches at the SWANS overhead.

WIDER ON THE FIELD. No sign of MULDROW. Even in daylight, he's invisible.

Until, suddenly, the ground moves, branches shift, and MULDROW "materializes", sitting up.

As he watches, the SWANS dip down behind some trees.

MULDROW shivers miserably. It's been a long cold night.

He sits up, pulls out the second chocolate bar, stares at it for a long time, deciding. Then, he tears the tinfoil off it and wolfs down the candy.

He gets every bit. He's licking the tinfoil for the second time when there's a RATTLE OF WINGS overhead and he looks up.

Another formation of SWANS passes over him, moves on, then dips below the same trees.

EXT. LAKE/PARK - DAY

SWANS by the hundreds!

RATTLING their wings, spreading them wide to land in the large lake or to maintain their position on the crowded surface of the water.

The lake lies in a densely wooded area, fenced off, like a park.

A few WOMEN and CHILDREN are feeding the SWANS.

Beside a small shack at one end of the lake, the CARETAKER, an old man in baggy clothes, keeps an eye on things.

EXT. JAPANESE WOODS - DAY

Outside the fenced area, among the trees, shadows obscure a motionless, almost invisible presence, crouched among the tree trunks, observing the park below.... MULDROW!

MULDROW'S POV: WOMEN and CHILDREN feeding SWANS and, further away, the CARETAKER, watching his kingdom from his vantage point behind the shack.

ANGLE ON MULDROW'S EYES, sharp, alert!

EXT. HILLS/COLORADO - DAY

Bright sunlight blazes down on a rock.

From several yards away, SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD MULDROW stares at the rock with intensity.

Why? It's just a rock in the middle of a wilderness.

But there's something about the rock. MULDROW keeps staring at it.

Suddenly, the surface of the rock seems to... undulate. To ripple. It's a RATTLESNAKE, revealing itself, coiling lazily, ominously.

ANGLE ON THE RATTLESNAKE'S EYES, glittering!

EXT. JAPANESE WOODS - LATE AFTERNOON

The sun is low in the sky sending sharp rays into the woods among the deep shadows.

If MULDROW is still there, he's entirely lost in shadow.

But a spot of reflected light flits among the trees like a butterfly...

something silvery, flashing in the shadows like polished steel...

lurching playfully, drunkenly across the trunks of trees.

EXT. PARK

The last WOMEN and CHILDREN leave the park.

The ancient CARETAKER locks the gate behind them.

EXT. LAKE - SUNSET

As the sun starts sinking behind the trees, SWANS crowd the surface of the lake, spreading their wings, jostling to establish territory while other SWANS drop from the sky and hover with beating wings, looking for an open spot in the sea of white feathers that obscures the dark water.

EXT. LAKESIDE SHACK/PARK

Cradling an injured SWAN gently in his arms, the CARETAKER shuffles to his shack and disappears inside with the bird, closing the door behind him.

A quiet moment. Then, a spot of light dances briefly, playfully, on the door.

INT. SHACK - LAST LIGHT

The CARETAKER has laid the injured SWAN on a bench under a glowing lantern and he's gently examining the bird's leg in the small silent room.

The old man's shadow looms on the wall as he looks at the injury with sympathetic eyes.

He's reaching for a bandage when suddenly, his head is yanked violently, brutally, and a knife flashes urgently in the lantern-light.

The CARETAKER gasps as his throat opens up and gushes blood. He reaches for the wound but, before his hands can find it, he slumps to the floor.

ANGLE ON THE SWAN, struggling weakly to rise on the bench.

Too late. MULDROW'S knife beheads the SWAN!

ANGLE ON MULDROW, cutting urgently.

ANGLE ON THE KNIFE, severing one of the SWAN'S haunches.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, pulling feathers by the handful from the haunch.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, gnawing the raw, not completely plucked flesh, MULDROW'S jaws dripping with blood.

EXT. LAKE - NIGHT

Sleeping, their heads tucked under their wings, SWANS bob gently on the crowded surface, a peaceful scene.

Suddenly, there's a STIRRING among the SWANS along the bank and then there's the SOUND of DESPERATE WINGS and urgent, horrible swan CRIES.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, wading in the shallow water at the edge of the lake, clubbing SWANS with a big stick with all his might. He lifts the club high into the air, then brings it down, hard.

Again and again.

INT. SHACK - LATER (NIGHT)

Lanternlight. A heap of plucked SWAN carcasses.

MULDROW'S shadow on the wall, lurching wildly. What's he up to?

ANGLE ON MULDROW, tossing a plucked carcass on the pile, grabbing another dead SWAN and pulling urgently at its feathers.

ANGLE ON A SACK, almost overflowing with feathers as MULDROW adds more.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, pausing from the plucking, biting into raw flesh, tearing off a piece of meat with his teeth.

INT. LAKESIDE SHACK - LATER (NIGHT)

MULDROW examines the articles of clothing he has removed from the old MAN.

Baggy pants, a tunic.

Then, he rumages through the CARETAKER'S meager possessions looking for anything useful.

He finds a ball of twine and stares at it for a long time.

INT. LAKESIDE SHACK - LATER (NIGHT)

MULDROW is sound asleep, curled up on a mat, covered with a thin blanket.

EXT. LAKE - DAWN

The sun is just rising beyond the trees.

On the lake, SWANS stir in the first rosy rays of the rising sun.

EXT. SHACK - DAWN

The shack door opens and MULDROW exits dressed in the old man's baggy clothes and carrying the shoulder bag and the bag of feathers and wearing the hat tilted over his face to obscure it.

MULDROW looks very Japanese as he makes his way into the woods.

ANGLE ON THE CARETAKER, his blank eyes staring at infinity from his severed head, mounted ostentatiously over the shack's door!

EXT. TERRACES - NOON

Terraced rice paddies climb the steep slopes like stairs.

WOMEN, ankle deep in the water, are bent over, working in the paddies, planting the Spring rice shoots.

None of them look up as MULDROW, in his Japanese clothes and carrying his bulky sacks, shuffles up a farmer's path near-by.

EXT. BROOKS RANGE - DAY

A LYNX, difficult to see against the snow, is lying in wait as a SNOW HARE, oblivious to the danger, moves closer to the spot where the LYNX crouches.

EXT. HOUSES/JAPANESE RURAL VILLAGE - EVENING

It's just getting dark. Some of the little houses glow with light coming from their windows.

A few CHILDREN dash through the near dark, playing.

INT. HOUSE - EVENING

A JAPANESE MAN is listening to a radio broadcast about the war. The news does not seem good.

When the broadcast is finished, the old MAN switches off the radio and sits there staring at it, brooding.

Just then, his WIFE enters the room and says something to the man in Japanese and he nods and gets to his feet.

Neither of them notices a spot of light climbing the wall and jumping wildly to the ceiling.

The JAPANESE MAN goes to the door and opens it.

The spot of light disappears abruptly.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

A few yards behind the house, the JAPANESE MAN seems to disappear into the ground!

CLOSE ON MULDROW'S EYES, watching. Where did the MAN go?

ANGLE ON THE GROUND. There's a hole. After a long moment, the JAPANESE MAN reappears, coming up out of the hole carrying a sack.

He shuffles back to the house.

As the JAPANESE MAN steps inside, we DISCOVER MULDROW only two feet away, motionless, pressed back against the wall among the shadows, knife in hand.

INT. HOLE - MOMENTS LATER (NIGHT)

MULDROW climbs down a little ladder into the dark hole.

Then, he turns on his flashlight and shines it around and sees various sacks and some large square cans.

MULDROW glances furtively up at the mouth of the hole.

No one.

He turns to a sack, opens it, shines his light inside. Rice!
Raw rice.

A second sack is full of dried fish.

As he grabs the two sacks, there's a NOISE! MULDROW freezes, switches off his light, then glances up.

Two sets of eyes stare down at him from above!

EXT. HOLE - NIGHT

Two LITTLE BOYS, four and five years old, stand motionless at the top of the hole.

Their eyes are fixed on MULDROW as he climbs out of the hole carrying his new-found sacks of raw rice and dried fish.

MULDROW checks around, making sure no one else is looking.

MULDROW'S POV: inside the house, the WOMAN can be seen moving around.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, turning back to the BOYS, considering them gravely.

They stare at him, wide-eyed with wonder. A strange sight.

MULDROW sets the sacks down very slowly so as not to alarm the children. Then, he reaches very slowly into his pocket.

The LITTLE BOYS' eyes follow his hand as it disappears into the pocket. What is this strange looking man going to pull out?

ANGLE ON THE LITTLE BOYS, their eyes reacting to MULDROW'S hand emerging from the pocket, following his hand as he raises it, eyes widening in... alarm? wonder?

ANGLE ON MULDROW'S HANDS, skillfully manipulating a length of twine into a cat's cradle.

The BOYS stare mesmerized at the fluctuating geometric shapes in front of them.

MULDROW gives them a sort of smile, almost a lunatic smile.

ANGLE ON THE PARTIAL MOON, glowing in the sky above.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, slipping into the shadows with all his sacks and bags.

ANGLE ON THE LITTLE BOYS, stock still, still mesmerized, watching him go. Was he real? Or a vision? A man from Mars with a long nose?

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Moonlight penetrates the shadows.

MULDROW is hungrily eating swan meat, dried fish and uncooked rice.

EXT. WOODS - LATER (NIGHT)

The waning moon slides from behind clouds.

In a clump of dense brush, MULDROW shoves his feet and legs into the bag of feathers, puts his head on the sack of rice and curls up to sleep.

EXT. POINT BARROW/ALASKA - DAY

UNULUK ESKIMOS, men, women, children, their faces reflecting the harsh weather and hard times, are gathered outside their crudely constructed homes surrounded by oil drums, car parts, fishing gear.

In their midst is a young woman wearing an Eskimo parka but obviously different. She's has blonde hair tied back in a pony tail and there is no bad weather or hard times written on her face. She's young and pretty, call her KANSAS, and she has a clipboard and she's busy talking and writing.

MULDROW'S VOICE (v.o.)

This college girl from Kansas, she was working with the Unuluk Eskimos one summer...

EXT. BAR/POINT BARROW - NIGHT

Neon lights. Signs glowing, winking. Mostly bars.

WHITES, ESKIMOS.

EIGHTEEN-YEAR-OLD MULDROW comes out of a bar with KANSAS. She's laughing cheerfully, her hair loose now, not in a ponytail.

MULDROW'S VOICE (cont. v.o.)

She took up with me because she thought I could get her out into the country around the Brooks Range, and other places she couldn't go on her own. I told her she was just using me, trying to fuck herself on up through the tree line. That was all right with her, she said; she'd get to see the real Alaska and we'd both get some good fucks out of it!

KANSAS is laughing raucously, tossing her blond hair.

EXT. GRAND TRADITIONAL JAPANESE HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

This house is different than the other houses we have seen. This house is grander, more prosperous, and surrounded by well-tended paths and formal gardens giving way to woods. It is not part of a "neighborhood." There are no other houses in sight. There is a sense of great privacy, almost isolation.

A BLIND MAN steps out of the house with his wife, fiftyish, following deferentially behind him. The BLIND MAN is in his late sixties, at once slim, prideful, graceful for his age, but also a little frail. As he leads the way, his opaque eyes wander uselessly as he moves his head, listening.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, behind one of the many trees that surround the house, watching the couple take their early morning constitutional down a path away from the house.

MULDROW is very gaunt now, very disheveled and dirty, and his whiskers have become a beard.

INT. KITCHEN AREA/GRAND HOUSE - SHORTLY (MORNING)

Light from outside seeps through parchment-covered windows into the perfectly tidy and spotless "kitchen".

It's absolutely silent in here until a panel door slides open and MULDROW, carrying two of his sacks and holding his breadknife in front of him, peeks in and checks around.

No one.

Then, keeping as quiet as he can, and maintaining his alertness, he comes into the room, slides the panel door shut behind him, creeps to the various cupboards and starts checking their contents.

Dishes... pans... ceramic pots, most of them filled with dried food!

MULDROW grabs a huge handful of dried apples from one of the pots and stuffs the fruit into his mouth and chews hungrily as he rifles through the rest of the food supply, selecting what he wants and cramming the items into one of the sacks.

INT. SLEEPING QUARTERS/GRAND HOUSE - SHORTLY (MORNING)

Light pours into the silent room from a narrow horizontal window high in the wall, a window designed for light, not for view.

There are framed photographs on top of a tansu chest beside the floor mats that serve as beds.

One photo is old and features a military officer of high rank in his forties in dress uniform wearing decorations and a sword: the BLIND MAN before he lost his sight.

The other photograph is newer, showing a YOUNG PILOT standing in his flight gear beside a Zero.

Just then, a panel on one wall slides opens slowly... slowly, revealing MULDROW standing in the hallway, carrying his sacks, one of them much fuller now, and still holding that breadknife.

After satisfying himself the room is empty, he enters, closes the panel behind him and looks around, his eyes falling on the photographs.-

For a moment, he stares at the face of the YOUNG PILOT.

Then, he starts opening the drawers of the tansu chest and rummaging through the contents.

EXT. PATH - DAY

The BLIND MAN and his WIFE are returning along the path toward their house. The BLIND MAN still leads, his WIFE, a step or two behind. Because of her docility and his blindness, they seem very vulnerable.

INT. SLEEPING QUARTERS/GRAND HOUSE - DAY

MULDROW is in the bedroom selecting various items of clothing, tossing others aside. The ones he wants he stuffs into a sack.

Suddenly, he stiffens, freezes. Listens.

Silence, but then, a very faint sound of a door sliding open.

MULDROW grabs his knife and his stuffed sacks.

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

The BLIND MAN and his WIFE are just entering the shadowy, windowless hallway when the BLIND MAN stiffens, suddenly alert.

Sensing this, his WIFE freezes, looks at him, alarmed.

ANGLE ON THE BLIND MAN, straining to hear.

Nothing. Just silence.

Then, the FAINTEST SOUND. A footstep?

The BLIND MAN turns, touches his WIFE'S shoulder and makes a signal with his head.

With a look of fear on her face, she nevertheless obediently steps through a panel into the kitchen and slides the panel shut behind her, leaving her husband alone in the corridor.

The BLIND MAN, as frail and vulnerable as a snow hare, is alert, listening.

INT. SLEEPING QUARTERS - DAY

His knife ready, MULDROW carefully, quietly, slowly slides the panel open.

INT. CORRIDOR

The hallway is dark except for faint light coming from an open panel toward the front of the house.

MULDROW steps into the dark hallway and looks all around .

The hallway appears to be empty.

Sacks in one hand, that knife in the other, MULDROW tiptoes toward that open panel at the front of the house.

When he reaches the opening, he pauses for one moment, then, his knife held in front of him, he starts to step through...

WHOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOSH! CLANG! MULDROW pulls his head back just in time to avoid a whizzing steel blade that only barely misses MULDROW but hits his raised knife and sends it clattering to the floor.

MULDROW is quickly stepping back into the hall just as the blade WHIZZES again, a semi-vertical rather than a horizontal stroke this time, just as swift, just as deadly.

The BLIND MAN is in front of him now, advancing, his sword gripped in both hands samurai style.

The sword WHISTLES as the BLIND MAN makes a deadly horizontal swing.

MULDROW backpedals hastily, an easy target in the narrow corridor.

The BLIND MAN raises the sword and WHOOOOOSH!!!! makes an angled vertical swing.

In full retreat, MULDROW grabs a panel, slides it open, jumps into the bedroom, and slams the panel shut behind him!

INT. SLEEPING QUARTERS/GRAND HOUSE

MULDROW backs toward a corner, pulls out his short army issue knife and stands motionless facing the door.

Slowly, cautiously the panel slides open... but the BLIND MAN doesn't enter.

Stock still, MULDROW watches the open panel.

No one.

MULDROW doesn't move.

INT. HALLWAY/GRAND HOUSE

In the gloomy hallway, the BLIND MAN stands motionless, pressed against the wall beside the open panel, out of sight from the sleeping quarters, his sword ready.

EXT. GRAND HOUSE - AFTERNOON

The sun has passed its zenith.

Afternoon shadows are gathering around the house.

The surrounding woods are quiet.

INT. SLEEPING QUARTERS/GRAND HOUSE

MULDROW hasn't moved for hours. Frozen in place, he listens closely, trying to hear the faintest SOUND.

INT. HALLWAY/GRAND HOUSE

Also still motionless, the BLIND MAN remains just outside the open panel, his sword ready.

EXT. GRAND HOUSE - DUSK

The sun is lost behind trees, the woods are darkening.

Shadows engulf the house now.

INT. SLEEPING QUARTERS - DUSK

Still motionless, MULDROW looks concerned.

EXT. GRAND HOUSE - NIGHT

Very quiet. The house is dark and lifeless.

The slit of the tiny moon is visible above the trees now.

INT. SLEEPING QUARTERS/GRAND HOUSE - NIGHT

Just enough moonlight slants through the horizontal window high in the wall to reveal MULDROW... completely still in the shadows.

Waiting.

INT. HALLWAY/GRAND HOUSE

The motionless BLIND MAN is all but invisible, except for a bit of moonlight glittering on his sightless eyes.

Waiting.

INT. SLEEPING QUARTERS/GRAND HOUSE

After a long moment, finally, MULDROW moves. His free hand. Very slowly, reaching... reaching... reaching into a pocket.

INT. HALLWAY/GRAND HOUSE

The BLIND MAN cocks his head. Did he hear something?

He's not sure. His hands flex on the sword handle. Preparing.

INT. SLEEPING QUARTERS/GRAND HOUSE

MULDROW very slowly pulls the silk map from his pocket. Very slowly.

When he has it in his hand, he balls it up.

Sweat beads on his forehead, on his lip.

Then, he flicks the piece of silk high into the air in front of the open panel.

The WHISPER of SILK! Exaggerated! MADE UNNATURALLY AUDIBLE SO THAT WE TOO HEAR the cloth unfold in SLOW MOTION, opening, spreading, drifting downward... downward...

BAM! The BLIND MAN jumps into the open panel and WHOOOOOSH! Slices the silk in two in mid-air with the terrible Samurai sword. He raises the sword to bring it down again...

But, just then, MULDROW takes two swift steps, knife raised.

The BLIND MAN, hearing the steps, turns fast and practically impales himself on the knife as it sinks into his neck.

Blood fountains all over MULDROW but the BLIND MAN, his jugular cut, makes a valiant effort to swing his sword one more time.

MULDROW ducks, the sword misses, and the BLIND MAN collapses to the floor.

MULDROW falls on him swiftly, finishing him off with one swift cut.

Then, without hesitation, MULDROW is on his feet, dashing from the room.

INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT

MULDROW slams opens a panel, darts into a room quickly, comes back out, slams opens another panel, darts into another room.

INT. OTHER ROOM - NIGHT

MULDROW looks around urgently.

He spots a panel.

He yanks it open revealing a storage closet and is about to slam it shut when there's a soft SOB.

A moment. Then, MULDROW pushes aside sacks and boxes until he exposes the WIFE crouched fearfully behind a carton.

Her eyes full of terror, she looks up helplessly.

Even in this dim light, she can see the blood-covered man with the bloody knife in his hand looming over her.

INT. BATHING CHAMBER/GRAND HOUSE - LATER (NIGHT)

CLOSE ON steaming water. Pinkish water. Sloshing.

DISCOVER MULDROW, naked, bathing in a big wooden tub, washing off the blood while steam clouds around him in the small candle-lit room.

INT. BATHING CHAMBER/GRAND HOUSE - LATER (NIGHT)

Using a straight razor, MULDROW shaves, standing naked in front of a partially steamed mirror in the bathing chamber. His muscular body looks clean and pink as he carefully scrapes at the thick patina of whiskers covering his jaw.

EXT. GRAND HOUSE - LATER (NIGHT)

The night is crystal clear and the sliver of moon illuminates the house and the woods.

INT. SLEEPING QUARTERS/GRAND HOUSE - NIGHT

Moonlight streams in through the horizontal window.

ANGLE ON THE PHOTOS on the tansu chest. The Military Officer who became the old BLIND MAN stares out of the picture, his sword at his side. Beside him, the YOUNG PILOT peers out of the other picture.

Beneath the pictures, MULDROW is sound asleep on one of the mats where the BLIND MAN and his WIFE used to sleep.

EXT. WATERFALL/BROOKS RANGE - LATE AFTERNOON

Clear water explodes across the rocks.

The snow has melted.

KANSAS lies on her back staring straight up at the blue sky with vacant dead eyes. She's stark naked. Her neck is broken.

EIGHTEEN-YEAR-OLD MULDROW is five yards away moving rocks, creating a cavity near the side of the waterfall.

Finished, he turns, goes to her, lifts her easily, her pony tail flopping listlessly.

He carries her corpse to the hole and drops her into it.

Then, he begins replacing the rocks, covering her naked body.

His face reveals nothing. He is without affect.

INT. DINING AREA/GRAND HOUSE - MORNING

Morning light streams in the high window.

The silk map of Japan lies spread on the table, neat stitches traversing the landscape which the BLIND MAN severed and which MULDROW has obviously mended with needle and thread.

MULDROW is seated on a mat at the low table sewing "pockets" into an expanse of material with needle and thread. Clean and shaven, he's wearing "new" clothes from the BLIND MAN'S wardrobe.

There's food in front of MULDROW and, from time to time, he takes a bite.

When he's completed another "pocket", he fills it with swan feathers from his sack and sews it closed. He's obviously creating a crude feather-filled quilt in the tubular shape of a sleeping bag. He seems to get great satisfaction from this activity.

INT. SLEEPING AREA/GRAND HOUSE - LATER (MORNING)

Ready to leave, carrying his provision-stuffed sacks and bag, MULDROW steps into the "bedroom" and approaches the chest.

He sets his sacks down on the floor and faces the photo of the Military Officer who became the BLIND MAN.

Drawing himself to attention, MULDROW formally salutes the photograph.

MULDROW

Well, sir, I'd be probably the only American gunner in Japan heading North, sighting on Polaris, carrying a load of feathers for warmth. And I do appreciate the use of your razor and your bed, not to mention food and clothes and such.

The Military Officer who became the BLIND MAN gazes back solemnly from the photo.

MULDROW turns now to the shot of the YOUNG PILOT.

MULDROW

He done good, your old man -- I hope to be half the man he was when I reach however old he was.

The YOUNG PILOT in the photo stares at MULDROW unblinkingly.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Two ELDERLY JAPANESE MEN are walking along the road heading South. One of them is saying something with much vigor.

Then, they both pause and bow to another JAPANESE MAN approaching from the other direction.

This JAPANESE MAN, laden with sacks and a shoulder bag, his face obscured by his hat brim, gives a little bow in response and keeps his face averted. Of course it's MULDROW.

Trudging along, MULDROW waits until he's out of earshot before he begins to repeat the phrase he heard the ELDERLY JAPANESE MAN say. Then, softly, MULDROW says the phrase over and over again phonetically as he walks.

He's walking and repeating the phrase when a piercing WHISTLE far off in the distance attracts his attention.

Looking to his left, MULDROW can just make out a tiny moving column of smoke and, once again, there's that long drawn-out WHISTLE.

EXT. JAPANESE TOWN - NIGHT

Deserted streets. Dark.

MULDROW looks old and Japanese as he shuffles along the street with his shoulder bag and sacks, taking the tiny steps he's seen Japanese take.

A PLUMP JAPANESE MAN steps out of a small wooden building and crosses the street. He bows politely to MULDROW in passing and says a short Japanese phrase.

MULDROW grunts, bows back, then mutters the phrase he heard earlier.

Startled, the PLUMP JAPANESE MAN pauses, glances back, frowning at MULDROW'S obviously inappropriate response.

But MULDROW just keeps on moving, still muttering.

The PLUMP JAPANESE MAN shrugs, then continues on his way in the opposite direction.

MULDROW stops muttering and pauses when he sees Japanese "newspaper" pictures nailed to a building wall.

He steps closer and stares at the horrific pictures of the recent Tokyo firebombing...

hundreds of buildings blazing...

completely razed sections of the city...

rows of charred corpses that seem to go on forever.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, thinking he hears something. He stops staring at the pictures and turns and listens intensely, straining to hear.

We HEAR it now. It's the train. Not too far away.

MULDROW starts hurrying toward it.

EXT. TRAIN STATION - SHORTLY (NIGHT)

A LOCOMOTIVE waits in the station, PANTING and WHEEZING.

RAILROAD WORKERS attend to the wheels while the ENGINEER stands beside the locomotive sipping tea.

Off to the side, in the shadows, MULDROW considers the situation.

MULDROW'S POV: a long string of freight cars, stretching back into the darkness. Most of the cars are gondola cars heaped high with logs.

EXT. SPEEDING TRAIN - LATER (NIGHT)

Its whistle SCREAMING, the train rockets through the dark cold countryside.

CLOSE ON ONE OF THE GONDOLA CARS, near the rear, laden with logs.

DISCOVER MULDROW, nestled among the huge logs, tucked into his bag of feathers, his head resting on his sacks, peering out into the night from his "cave" of logs, protected from the WIND that RUSHES inches away as the train rocks through the night.

MULDROW'S POV: woods, blurring past, silhouetted by moonlight, speeding patterns of light and dark, abstract, hallucinatory.

CLOSE ON MULDROW, squinting at the patterns.

MULDROW'S POV: the blurring moon and trees becoming vague shapes that suggest CREATURES... predatory BEASTS.

EXT. BROOKS RANGE - DAY

Thick snow obscures a herd of CARIBOU foraging in the snow.

MULDROW'S VOICE (v.o.)

I can tell you right now, it is exciting to hide. And there are ways of doing it that are better than others. When you hide without any cover, without any concealment except the way you are, and there's not any difference between you and where you are, then you're in another place from where you seem to be: a place that's completely yours, and will be as long as you stay still.

As MULDROW'S VOICE speaks, we DISCOVER SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD MULDROW standing motionless among the CARIBOU in his white clothing. He is not invisible, but he is as still as a statue. The huge beasts amble within ten feet of him, oblivious to him.

EXT. GONDOLA CAR/MOVING - NIGHT

From his refuge among the logs, MULDROW blinks. And resumes staring into the speeding darkness and moonlight. WIND RUSHES past.

EXT. BROOKS RANGE - NIGHT

RUSHING WIND!

A strange VISION!

A full moon illuminates a vast windswept snowfield where DEER HEADS stick out of the snow. Are the heads severed? Or are the bodies of the deer buried in the snow?

No way to tell. The wind MOANS and RUSHES.

Hundreds and hundreds of deer heads, their eyes open and blank.

EXT. SPEEDING GONDOLA CAR - NIGHT

Asleep among the logs, WIND rushing above him, MULDROW seems to flinch in his sleep, wincing, reacting to something.

EXT. SNOW FIELD - DAY

SEEN FROM ABOVE, through thickly falling snow.

We GLIDE over the vast field in blinding flurries of snow, looking down.

Far below, we GLIMPSE a bizarre image, obscured by the thickly falling snow: a HUMAN FIGURE, staggering in deep, bloody snow, feathers stuck to him.

Then, he's gone, lost in the whiteness as SUDDEN THUNDER CRASHES! BOOMING SOUNDS!

EXT. SIDING/JAPAN - NIGHT

Logs are tumbling from an open gondola car parked at a siding making a HUGE ECHOING CLATTER as they slam to the ground and roll.

As the last tumbling log comes to a halt, RAILROAD WORKERS close the gondola car and signal with a lantern.

Up ahead, the engine WHEEZES and GASPS and, with a sharp jerk, the empty gondola car lurches forward and the next car, piled high with logs, moves into position.

WE CRANE UP AND ACROSS THE TRAIN, REVEALING: MULDROW, with all his sacks, slipping into the darkness on the other side of the train.

EXT. TOWN - MINUTES LATER (NIGHT)

Behind him, the CRASHING THUNDER of logs being unloaded continues as MULDROW trudges up the deserted street.

Seeing a single lighted window, MULDROW approaches it.

The window is steamed up from inside diffusing the pleasant glow of light.

MULDROW peeks in.

MULDROW'S POV THROUGH THE STEAMED-UP WINDOW: a blurry glimpse of a NAKED WOMAN of twenty standing in front of a pool, facing the window and looking right at it as she pours a bucket of water over her head.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, staring, mesmerized.

Amazed? Awed? Lustful? Impossible to interpret his fascination.

MULDROW'S POV THROUGH THE STEAMED-UP WINDOW: clouds of steam, rising up as the water courses over the lithe body of the NAKED WOMAN.

Then, she seems to dissolve and disappear as condensation covers the glass.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, staring stupidly at the translucent blank of the window for a long moment.

With effort, he recovers and orients himself: a lonely man in a dark town in a foreign country.

He turns and trudges along the deserted street and disappears into the shadows.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Barely visible in the moonlight, MULDROW is huddled in his homemade "sleeping bag" under some bushes.

INT. HOTEL ROOM/ALASKA - NIGHT

Her blonde hair loose, KANSAS is stark naked, displaying herself sexily to EIGHTEEN-YEAR-OLD MULDROW who can see her shapely ass in the full length mirror behind her.

EXT. WOODS/FIELD - DAY

MULDROW, carrying his sacks and bag, trudges through the edge of the woods that border some fields.

There is a poor farmhouse in a clearing ahead.

MULDROW angles further into the woods so no one will spot him.

EXT. FARMHOUSE

An old mangy YELLOW DOG, snoozing in the back yard of the farmhouse suddenly comes awake. He lifts his head and his ears prick up and his eyes shine as he looks toward the woods, his nose sniffing for a scent.

Yes! The YELLOW DOG leaps to his feet and starts racing toward the woods.

EXT. WOODS

MULDROW hears the approaching DOG and starts running...

as fast as he can.

The YELLOW DOG is in the woods now and closing on MULDROW'S heels.

MULDROW can't outrun the YELLOW DOG but he keeps going.

ANGLE ON THE OLD YELLOW DOG, starting to tire, deciding he's done his job. He slows, then stops and BARKS a stern warning to MULDROW.

ANGLE ON MULDRON, realizing the YELLOW DOG has stopped. MULDRON stops running full-out, then slows, finally, to a walk.

Then, with the YELLOW DOG'S barking receding behind him, MULDRON tries to catch his breath as he continues walking.

He checks his compass.

It shows North.

EXT. FIELD/JAPAN - LATE AFTERNOON

Silence.

The sun is low in the sky behind clouds giving a hazy light.

Ground fog hovers waist-high over a field where ghostly ROBED FIGURES move about silently in criss cross patterns studying the ground, some carrying baskets. They don't make a sound... and they don't look real. They look like phantoms.

ANGLE ON MULDRON, emerging from some woods at the edge of the field, stopping and staring at the mysterious "phantoms" a hundred yards away.

MULDRON'S POV OF THE ROBED FIGURES: moving to and fro in the waist-high fog, examining the ground, occasionally bending over, picking something up, putting it into a basket.

It's an eerie vision, almost unreal. A dream!

One ROBED FIGURE, his face obscured by his cowl, turns and looks right at MULDRON.

ANGLE ON MULDRON, stiffening, deciding. He could run... but he doesn't.

MULDRON'S POV: the ROBED FIGURE, approaching at a leisurely pace.

Behind him, the other ROBED FIGURES continue to scrutinize the ground, completely oblivious to their comrade and MULDRON.

ANGLE ON MULDRON, dropping his sacks and bag to the ground.

ANGLE ON THE ROBED FIGURE, getting closer, his face still hidden.

ANGLE ON MULDRON, his eyes straight ahead as his hand secretly finds his knife, grips the handle, ready, ready, dangerous. Like an animal.

ROBED FIGURE'S VOICE

I guess I ought to ask you...

MULDROW

Ask me what?

MULDROW reveals no surprise at being addressed in English as he looks at the face of the robed figure, visible now in his cowl. A Caucasian! With an American accent! About twenty-five years old.

AMERICAN

What are you doing here?

MULDROW'S hand relaxes slightly on the handle of his knife.

MULDROW

How come you knew I wasn't a Nip?
(then, responding to a pause...)
Japanese, I mean.

AMERICAN

I just knew it.

MULDROW

You mean you know it now. Looking at me close like you are.

AMERICAN

No, I knew it when I saw you standing there. No Japanese would do that. You were too straight. You looked like you owned the place.

As MULDROW considers that, he glances over the AMERICAN'S shoulder at the ROBED FIGURES in the field as they continue to criss cross in the fog.

Seeing MULDROW'S look, the AMERICAN smiles in a friendly way.

AMERICAN

Don't worry about them. They don't even know you're here. It's a state of mind. It doesn't have anything to do with this field, or with you. Or with me either, for that matter. You need to hide, don't you?

MULDROW

I been hiding.

AMERICAN

You can stay with us. We've got plenty to eat, all you want. I'll bet you're hungry.

As MULDROW considers the eager AMERICAN dubiously, the AMERICAN puts a hand on MULDROW'S sleeve as if to pull him along.

AMERICAN

We've got some fish, dried vegetables,
maybe some fresh, too. I'll see.

(pulling Muldrow along)

I won't say you can stay as long as you
like, because I don't think you want to
be a monk, ha ha.. You're military,
right?

As the AMERICAN gently guides MULDROW toward the GHOSTLY FIGURES,
MULDROW keeps a suspicious eye on them even as he responds...

MULDROW

Air Force. I bailed out over Tokyo the
day before the big firebomb raid. I've
been moving North ever since.

(indicating the Ghostly Figures)

What about these? They ain't gonna
make anything of an American staying
with them? An American Soldier?
That's hard to believe.

They're almost among the GHOSTLY FIGURES who continue criss-
crossing back and forth, back and forth, oblivious to MULDROW.

AMERICAN

You can believe it, though. This mist
is just right for these people.
They're like ghosts, like zombies.
They just float.

It's true! The strange figures look like they're floating as
MULDROW and the AMERICAN pass among them, then continue up a
slope.

AMERICAN

What is that? A... "firebomb raid?"
Is the war almost over?

EXT. SLOPE - MOMENTS LATER (DAY)

Moments later, having reached the top, MULDROW and the AMERICAN
are descending the other side of the hill. MULDROW'S eyes are on
a Temple squatting at the foot of the hill, their destination
apparently, as the AMERICAN chatters on...

AMERICAN

We never have any contact with anybody
but ourselves. There are a few farms
around here and a temporary military
base down the road somewhere but we
hardly ever see anyone.

MULDROW reacts to this last information with a frown.

EXT. STAIRS/TEMPLE - MOMENTS LATER (DAY)

MULDROW takes everything in as he and the AMERICAN pass shrines and walk up the steps that lead to the temple.

AMERICAN

I came over here just before the war, in '39, six years ago, and my mother used to send me things, mostly food that she'd put up, canned and all.

(slyly)

I've got a stash. I could cook you some bean soup, and you can have all the figs and peaches and damson plums you want.

The AMERICAN opens a door that leads inside.

INT. CELL/TEMPLE - LATER (EVENING)

MULDROW sits on a mat, the only "furniture" in the room except for a wooden "pillow," eating hungrily as the AMERICAN watches and chatters...

AMERICAN

I was in school, pre-med, and I had written around to get into medical school somewhere. I was accepted at Tulane, and probably would have gone there if I had stayed.

MULDROW

(eating)

I heard of that. One of the gunners in my outfit went to Tulane. Played basketball.

AMERICAN

I couldn't get interested in that kind of game if you paid me. I just used to read all the time. I read a lot of philosophy. I read a lot of books on religion, and even about magic. Time, theories about time -- I used to like those.

MULDROW

(still wolfing down food)

Time? What kind of theory can you have about time? Time is time.

AMERICAN

Oh, some would say not. Some would say that what most people call time is not real time.

MULDROW

What is it, then?

AMERICAN

What you call time is nothing but a convenience. A clock is just a machine. Real time is different from that. Real time is what you live and not the clicking of a machine. Real time is not mechanical. Do you dream a lot?

MULDROW

(startled, suspicious)

About like anybody else, I guess.

AMERICAN

Well, you really are two people. One of them lives the mechanical time of the clock. The other one of them watches what the first one does. He watches from the dream, when the spirit comes loose from the clock. The second self can go backward in time. He can also go forward. Have you ever dreamed something that turned out to happen later on?

MULDROW gives him a sharp look, really suspicious now. Then he takes another bite of food, chews it, then...

MULDROW

Nope.

AMERICAN

When I was doing all that reading I ran across stuff like that, and it interested me a whole lot more than medical school did. Somehow or other I wanted to get free from science. I wanted to get into a situation that operated according to different laws, or maybe didn't have any laws. As near as I was able to tell, the best kind of that kind of thinking, which goes beyond thinking, or before or behind thinking, was in Japan. That's where they start with the void and try to get back to it. A total blank.

Still chewing, MULDROW looks dubious. Then, after a long moment,

MULDROW

That military base you were tellin' me about -- what do those Nip soldiers think of you and your pals?

AMERICAN

(a shrug)

They don't bother us. They only think about the upcoming American invasion. They're expecting you, you know. They're training the locals and building what they call... "pillboxes," coastal fortifications. Oh, once they offered to grade a slope for us. Said there could be things they might do for us later on, if we cooperated. Personally I don't think it's a bad idea to keep on the good side of soldiers. But, my colleagues, they just looked right through them. So, as I say, we don't have much contact with anyone. Outsiders tend to think we're kind of nuts. And that's all right with us. Maybe we are.

He smiles at MULDROW who doesn't disagree.

AMERICAN

You had enough? Come on -- let me show you the garden.

EXT. COURTYARD - EVENING

Glittering stars overhead and a few flickering glowing lanterns inside the temple provide the only light out here in the courtyard.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, looking puzzled.

MULDROW'S VOICE

This sure don't look like no garden I ever seen.

MULDROW and the AMERICAN are staring at a courtyard... mostly bare except for small smooth stones and a few larger ones over in a corner.

AMERICAN

The whole thing is ceremonial.

MULDROW

(trying to be agreeable)
You don't grow nothing. What do you do, just look at it?

AMERICAN

And think. Meditate. Try to become nothing.

MULDROW

Mmmmmmm.

AMERICAN

Or, in another sense, you are part of the garden. Without you to observe the garden, there is no garden. You bring a great deal to the garden as the observer. At least half.

MULDROW

Mmmmmmmmm.

AMERICAN

A few months ago we tore the whole thing up and threw the rocks out into the field where you found us. That's what we were all doing out there, looking for the rocks.

MULDROW

How come you done that, tore it up?

AMERICAN

So we could build it back. Over there in the corner's the only place that's finished. Pretty soon the whole thing'll be just like it was, just like it's been for hundreds and hundreds of years.

MULDROW

(looking up, finding a star)
Polaris -- north -- that's where I'm goin'. All the way -- right outta Japan!

The AMERICAN looks at MULDROW with real interest but doesn't say anything.

INT. BARE ROOM - HOURS LATER (NIGHT)

UUNNNH! MULDROW comes awake with a start, kicked in the ribs.

A flashlight beam blinds him.

Feet and legs everywhere around him. VOICES! Sharp! Japanese!

He twists urgently just in time to avoid a rifle butt hitting him in the face. WHAM! The gun butt slams the floor loudly.

Someone yanks him roughly to his feet, the light staying on his face, dazzling him.

A bayonet pushes sharply against him, punctures his coat.

There are three JAPANESE SOLDIERS in the room yelling excitedly in Japanese.

One, a SERGEANT, snaps questions at MULDROW.

JAPANESE SERGEANT
(Japanese w/English subtitles)
You American? What unit? How'd you
get here?

WHACK! A SOLDIER smacks MULDROW hard in the face with a rifle butt.

MULDROW spits out a tooth between bloody lips as the SERGEANT continues to scream questions at him.

SERGEANT
(Japanese w/English subtitles)
What unit? Where are your comrades?
Speak up, you degenerate piece of shit!

INT. CORRIDOR/TEMPLE - NIGHT

The JAPANESE SOLDIERS hustle MULDROW through the corridor past stone-faced MONKS.

MULDROW'S vision is blurred by pain. Lights sway violently revealing bits of the ceiling.

He gets just a glimpse of the AMERICAN hovering behind several MONKS, watching.

Then, MULDROW is dragged out into the night.

EXT. ROAD - SHORTLY (ALMOST DAWN)

A "TU 23", a 3 TON 6 x 4 ISUZU MILITARY CARGO TRUCK, clatters and bounces along a rough road.

INT. CAB/ISUZU TRUCK/MOVING

SOLDIER #1 is at the wheel, the SERGEANT beside him.

INT. TRUCK BED/ISUZU/MOVING

SOLDIER #3 sits on the floor in the canvas-covered bed of the truck, leaning against the cab, cradling a rifle, his eyes on a tarp-covered mound in the middle of the truck bed.

SOLDIER #3'S POV: the tarp, moving. Whatever's under it is squirming slightly... then pausing... then moving again.

ANGLE ON SOLDIER #3, watching the movement with narrowed eyes.

ANGLE ON THE TARP, shifting slightly.

ANGLE ON SOLDIER #3, getting to his feet, staggering forward in the swaying truck, then, bracing himself against the side of the truck, kicking the tarp hard!

A GRUNT of pain from the tarp.

SOLDIER #3 kicks two more times, then leans down and peels the tarp back part way revealing MULDROW'S bruised and swollen face and his arms behind his back in a way that could only mean he's tied.

SOLDIER #3 screams a command in Japanese.

MULDROW just stares at him stupidly.

SOLDIER #3 leans close and spits in MULDROW'S face, then covers him with the tarp again, and returns to his seat against the cab.

EXT. TREE/BROOKS RANGE - DAY

A FISHER MARTEN lurks in the branches of a tree in a dazzling white world of snow. The MARTEN is motionless, "coiled," ready to spring.

EXT. ROAD - A HALF HOUR LATER (SUNRISE)

The ISUZU bounces along the deserted road in the early light.

INT. TRUCK BED/ISUZU/MOVING

Seated with his back against the cab, SOLDIER #3 nods slightly, comes awake with a start, stares at the tarp.

SOLDIER #3'S POV: the tarp, motionless.

ANGLE ON SOLDIER #3, his head sagging again, nodding off.

The truck rocks and bounces along the rough road, SOLDIER #3 dozing until....

MULDROW'S MUFFLED VOICE BOOMS OUT, half-singing, half-bellowing the words of the Baptist Hymn, "Love Lifted Me."

MULDROW'S VOICE

(singing)

"I was sinking deep in sin
Far from the peaceful shore..."

SOLDIER #3 comes awake abruptly, looks at the tarp, astonished!

ANGLE ON THE TARP, squirming, thrashing violently as MULDROW continues to sing...

MULDROW'S VOICE

"Very deeply stained within
Sinking to rise no more...

SOLDIER #3 scrambles to his feet, grabbing the sides for support as the truck lurches, then struggles to get his balance.

MULDROW'S VOICE

"But the master of the deep
Heard my despairing cry...

SOLDIER #3, outraged, kicks the squirming tarp twice... hard!

The "singing" stops. The squirming stops. The tarp is still.

SOLDIER #3 reaches down as before, yanks the tarp back exposing MULDROW just as before.

MULDROW grins a bloody smile, revealing his missing tooth, as he resumes his singing.

MULDROW

"Love lifted me...
Oh, yes...

Even more outraged now, SOLDIER #3 sticks his face close to MULDROW'S and SCREAMS at him. And again he spits at MULDROW.

As the gob of spit slithers down MULDROW'S face, SOLDIER #3, satisfied, starts to straighten up...

Suddenly MULDROW twists, his legs tripping the SOLDIER.

SOLDIER #3 loses his balance and topples... and almost before he lands on the truck floor, MULDROW scrambles on top of him like an animal.

With his hands still tied together but in front of him now, MULDROW chokes SOLDIER #3 mercilessly.

SOLDIER #3'S eyes bulge.

He kicks and squirms.

But MULDROW'S hands are very strong.

The SOLDIER turns purple, stops kicking -- his body twitches.

MULDROW'S face is only inches away from SOLDIER #3'S face.

SOLDIER #3 goes limp. Dead!

MULDROW rolls off him and starts gnawing urgently at the thick rope around his wrist.

INT. CAB/ISUZU TRUCK/MOVING

In the cab, the SERGEANT is nodding half-asleep in the passenger seat while the DRIVER maneuvers the old truck over the pot-holed road.

Everything in the truck is loose and rattling. Non-functioning gauges are dangling out of the dash, hanging by wires, bobbing.

CRACK! A shot rings out.

Startled, the DRIVER looks to the SERGEANT who is wide awake now!

CRACK! Another shot!

EXT. ROAD - MORNING

The truck skids to a stop in a cloud of dust and the cab doors fly open. The DRIVER jumps out and heads back on one side of the truck, pistol in hand, while the SERGEANT jumps out and heads back on the other side, his rifle ready.

EXT. REAR OF THE ISUZU TRUCK

The SERGEANT and the DRIVER pause on each side of the truck.

The SERGEANT calls out a name.

No answer.

The SERGEANT peers around the rear and signals the DRIVER.

The DRIVER nods. And when the SERGEANT lunges around the rear of the truck, the DRIVER does, too.

Neither man can see anything inside the shadowy interior but the tarp-covered mound on the floor.

Panicked, both men fire a flurry of shots at the tarp.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

CRACK! CRACK!

BANG!

CRACK!

Echoey silence.

The DRIVER and the SERGEANT exchange a mystified look.

Then, they both scramble up over the tailgate and into the cargo area of the truck.

INT. TRUCK BED

A nod from the SERGEANT and the DRIVER lifts the tarp and reacts.
The SERGEANT reacts, too.

It's SOLDIER #3, eyes bulging sightlessly, dead!

Confounded, the SERGEANT looks at the DRIVER who looks equally bamboozled.

Then the DRIVER notices something.

Right behind the cab, a slash of light is seeping down through the canvas roof.

Pointing, the DRIVER steps forward to check it out.

ANGLE ON THE SERGEANT, following, the two of them together now.

ANGLE ON THE DRIVER, directly under the tear, looking up, studying it, reaching up to investigate the tear.

Suddenly, light floods in as the flap falls away and, at almost the same instant, CRACK! a SHOT rings out from a rifle barrel only inches away from the DRIVER'S face.

The DRIVER'S faces caves in, shot at close range.

ANGLE ON THE SERGEANT, confused, horrified.

CRACK! A shot gets him in the chest, blowing him backwards.

EXT. CAB ROOF/ISUZU TRUCK/STOPPED

Perched on the cab roof where just a moment ago he was holding the flap of canvas closed, MULDROW works the bolt action rifle yet again, pumping another shot through the opening at the SERGEANT. CRACK!

INT. TRUCK BED/ISUZU

MULDROW drops through the hole in the canvas, rifle in hand.

He slams the rifle butt brutally into the dead men's skulls, just to make sure they're dead!

INT. CAB/ISUZU TRUCK - MOMENTS LATER (MORNING)

MULDROW appears at the open door on the passenger side and looks in.

He spots his sacks and his shoulder bag on the floor.

Grabbing his shoulder bag, he dumps the contents on the seat.

Hastily, he makes an inventory.

The compass.

Flints.

Matches.

Everything.

Beat up as he is, MULDROW looks pleased. He gives a sort of a grin, stretching his swollen lips, revealing his missing tooth.

EXT. ROAD/COUNTRYSIDE - MID-DAY

An ancient civilian farm truck sputters along, heading South, past several JAPANESE walking along the side of the road carrying baskets.

A North-bound truck rumbles along in the other direction. It's the ISUZU cargo truck. The canvas covering the rear section is torn and flapping loosely in the wind.

EXT. "SUBURBS" - LATER (DAY)

Little houses, close together, line the road. A populous area.

The ISUZU clatters into view, rattling past the houses.

A sedan and another truck are behind the ISUZU.

INT. CAB/ISUZU TRUCK/MOVING

MULDROW is at the wheel. He's wearing a Japanese Soldier's clothes and cap with the bill pulled low over his forehead to conceal his battered dirt-smeared Caucasian face.

He glances at the passenger seat.

His silk map of Japan lies spread open on the seat.

He glances up at the sun and then down at the little compass in the palm of his hand.

ANGLE ON THE COMPASS, pointing almost due North.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, looking ahead.

MULDROW'S POV THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD: a big town, coming up. A very big town.

There's a sign by the side of the road. It must be the name of the town.

EXT. ROADSIDE

ANGLE ON THE SIGN, written in Japanese, not comprehensible to Westerners.

INT. CAB/ISUZU TRUCK/MOVING

ANGLE ON MULDROW, squinting at the sign, trying to make sense of it, but he can't.

He looks down at his silk map again.

His finger touches two large dots on the map. Two possibilities.

He doesn't know which one is the town ahead, but either one, he's making progress. He's heading toward Hokkaido.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, checking his rear view mirror.

ANGLE ON THE REAR VIEW MIRROR, revealing the car and the truck behind him and, behind them, more traffic now.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, looking ahead again. No choice but to keep going. He takes a deep breath.

EXT. BUSY INTERSECTION/MORIOKA

PEDESTRIANS spill from the sidewalks into the crowded street where VENDORS with pushcarts, wheelbarrows, and three-wheeled bikes compete for the right of way with HONKING trucks and cars.

The ISUZU noses slowly into the intersection and crawls along in traffic that flows like a sea of mud.

INT. CAB/ISUZU/MOVING SLOWLY

MULDROW is very nervous, tugging the bill of his cap lower, a pistol on his lap. It's the first time we've seen him so anxious.

Horns HONK behind him.

He glances in the rear view mirror.

ANGLE ON THE REAR VIEW MIRROR, revealing a solid stream of traffic behind him, HORNS urging him forward.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, nervously fingering the pistol. He's sweating as he tries to maneuver the truck forward into the chaos of HONKING cars, trucks, pushcarts, and PEDESTRIANS.

Just then, the whole morass of honking traffic comes to a halt.

The truck idles noisily, popping and farting. Will it stall?

ANGLE ON THE TRUCK'S INDICATORS, all of them totally useless.

MULDROW angrily hits the broken gas gauge with his fist, but it remains broken.

MULDROW is sweating when suddenly the truck door shivers.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

Grabbing his pistol urgently, MULDROW looks for the danger!

MULDROW'S POV OUT THE DRIVER'S WINDOW: three laughing BOYS with sticks, moving from vehicle to vehicle, banging each one loudly.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, relaxing his grip on the pistol.

Just then, he catches a JAPANESE DRIVER looking right at him from a near-by car.

MULDROW averts his face, looking down.

After a moment, he sneaks a glance.

MULDROW'S POV: the JAPANESE DRIVER, staring blankly ahead now.

Just then, HORNS BLARE behind him. Traffic is moving again.

MULDROW shifts the noisy gears and the truck lurches forward.

EXT. ANOTHER STREET/MORIOKA

Traffic is flowing slightly better here. The ISUZU chugs along behind an ancient CAR that is spewing black exhaust.

INT. CAB/ISUZU/MOVING SLOWLY

MULDROW checks the sun through the windshield, then glances at his compass.

CLOSE ON THE COMPASS, indicating North to the right.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, steering right at the next corner, turning onto the street, then reacting to what he sees ahead!

MULDROW'S POV THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD: a Military vehicle in front of him! An ISUZU exactly like the one he's driving. And in the canvas-covered rear of the truck are a dozen teenaged JAPANESE SOLDIERS sitting on benches facing each other!

ANGLE ON MULDROW, not happy with this development, slouching down behind the wheel as far as he can, pulling his cap down further over his eyes, trying to make himself invisible.

Nervously, he checks the rear view mirror.

ANGLE ON THE REAR VIEW MIRROR, revealing yet another ISUZU Military truck pulling up behind him, one SOLDIER at the wheel, another SOLDIER next to him in the passenger seat.

EXT. DIFFERENT STREET/MORIOKA

A line of identical Japanese Army cargo trucks rumbles through the street, one of them, the eleventh, with a torn flap of canvas.

EXT. HIGHWAY/NORTH OF MORIOKA - LATER (AFTERNOON)

The whole sixteen truck convoy of ISUZUS is in view, evenly spaced, passing through low hills in late afternoon.

ANGLE ON THE ELEVENTH TRUCK IN LINE, a flapping tear in the canvas behind the cab.

INT. CAB/ISUZU/MOVING

A very worried-looking MULDROW, his hands clutching the steering wheel tightly, drives along in the convoy. Stuck. There's nothing he can do.

Suddenly, the lead truck turns left at a fork in the road and all the other trucks follow.

When MULDROW'S truck is almost at the fork, sweat breaks out on his face. What should he do? Can he chance turning the other way?

He hastily checks his compass.

CLOSE ON THE COMPASS, due North is to the left.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, suddenly grinning, gap toothed.

At the fork, he turns the steering wheel to the left and follows the other trucks.

He glances at the silk map spread open on the passenger seat.

He starts to shake with laughter.

EXT. CARIBOU/BROOKS RANGE - DAY

Falling snow. Then, almost ghost-like, a herd of CARIBOU appears, moving slowly across an open slope. Not as neat as a convoy but the same idea.

INT. CAB/ELEVENTH ISUZU/MOVING - AFTERNOON

MULDROW, still grinning, maintains the appropriate distance behind the truck ahead of him.

A few white flakes hit his windshield and MULDROW stops grinning and stares, amazed.

More white flakes, splatting against the windshield, then melting and sliding down the glass.

MULDROW cautiously lowers his window and sticks his fingers out, then brings them back in and stares at the melting white flakes of snow which he brings to his swollen lips as if the flakes were the sacrament. He grins broadly.

But he's having a hard time seeing now as the thick flakes obscure the windshield so he fumbles around until he finds the windshield wiper switch.

He turns it on, but the blade is broken in half and skips across the glass doing a miserable job.

MULDROW can just barely see the SOLDIERS in the rear of the truck in front of him.

The Japanese SOLDIERS are huddled together to keep warm and are passing a precious cigarette.

Glancing in his rear view mirror, MULDROW sees the DRIVER of the truck behind him laugh at something the SOLDIER in the passenger seat said.

MULDROW grins, too, then starts singing softly,

MULDROW
Jingle bells, Jingle bells, Jingle all
the way...

EXT. BIRDS EYE VIEW - DAY

Looking down through falling snow, we can SEE the column of trucks passing along a winding road through a valley.

EXT. ROAD - AN HOUR LATER (AFTERNOON)

Big tires roll through almost four inches of snow on the unplowed road as the convoy rolls North.

INT. CAB/ELEVENTH ISUZU/MOVING - AFTERNOON

The broken windshield wiper keeps going, barely managing to do its job.

MULDROW reacts to what he can just make out through the obscured windshield.

MULDROW'S POV THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD: the lead two trucks, turning off to the right.

MULDROW keeps following the truck ahead of him, right past the turnoff the two lead trucks took.

EXT. BIRD'S EYE VIEW - AN HOUR LATER (DUSK)

It's getting dark as four trucks turn left and leave the column.

Some others must have already split off because it's now only a seven truck convoy. Their headlights are on and it's stopped snowing.

INT. CAB/ELEVENTH ISUZU/MOVING - (DUSK)

MULDROW glances in his rear view mirror in time to see headlights behind him veering off to the right.

MULDROW raises his eyebrow. He's the last truck in a line of five trucks.

EXT. HILLS - LATER (NIGHT)

A line of three ISUZUS grinds up over a ridge.

As they start down the other side of the ridge, the two lead trucks turn off to the right.

The last ISUZU, the one with the flapping canvas, doesn't turn off to the right. It just continues straight along the road... all alone.

INT. CAB/ELEVENTH ISUZU/MOVING - NIGHT

MULDROW grins with satisfaction. He's on his own again. Pretty weird.

He shines his flashlight on the compass.

ANGLE ON THE COMPASS, pointing almost due North.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, shining his light on the map beside him.

ANGLE ON THE SILK MAP, open on the passenger seat, showing the Northernmost tip of Japan where only a narrow strip of water separates Japan from the island of Hokkaido.

EXT. ROADSIDE - NIGHT

Three JEEPS are pulled to the side of a rural road. There's no snow here. Nervous SOLDIERS stand about waiting for orders while other SOLDIERS scramble around in a gully below, waving flashlights and speaking excitedly.

EXT. GULLY - NIGHT

Flashlight beams reveal the cause of the excitement.

Three SOLDIERS lie dead and bloody in the gully. The largest one is naked. All three are headless!

JAPANESE OFFICERS are standing over the bodies engaged in an agitated discussion when sudden SHOUTING from near-by gets their attention.

The OFFICERS hurry through undergrowth for ten yards in the direction of the SHOUTING.

EXT. CLEARING - NIGHT

As the OFFICERS burst into the clearing, they find an excited SOLDIER pointing his flashlight at the ground where three battered heads have been placed neatly: the DRIVER, the SERGEANT, SOLDIER #3.

The OFFICERS stare, horrified at the discovery!

INT. CABIN/BROOKS RANGE - DAY

Light pours in a window illuminating the violently-red wall.

SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD MULDROW stares unblinkingly at the redness.

EXT. HONSHU COAST/NORTHERN JAPAN - DAWN

From high up, we SEE below... the steep hills, dusted with snow.

It's very quiet. We HEAR only the wind.

The only sign of civilization is a deserted unpaved road winding north along a ridge.

The coast is visible about five miles ahead. It's the Strait of Hokkaido, a vast black body of water that looks like an ocean except for the faintest suggestion of land on the distant horizon.

To the East, yet another sunrise.

CRASH! BANG!

A CROW bursts into the air, SCREAMING indignantly, startled by these sudden metallic sounds.

WHAM! BANG A BANG BANG CRUNCH BANG!

EXT. GROUND/SLOPE - DAWN

The source of the CLATTER is the ISUZU, plunging down a steep slope...

bouncing off trees and rocks...

scattering metallic debris for two hundred yards...

then, disappearing into a clump of trees.

WHAM! CRUNCH! SILENCE!

The noises stop. There was no more gas in the truck so there's no fire. Now, there's just profound silence.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, on the edge of the road' at the top of the slope looking down at the spot where the truck disappeared.

With a grunt of satisfaction, he picks up his sacks, shoulders his bag, and trudges North, leaving the road, heading up the next slope.

EXT. BEACH/HONSHU - AFTERNOON

Near a small village is a beach lined with small fishing boats, about the size of narrow rowboats, moored by ropes attached to building block "anchors" on the sand.

A single **FISHERMAN** approaches a boat, unties it, pushes the boat down into the water.

Unhurriedly, he scrambles over the gunwales, settles himself in the boat, then begins to row out into the strait.

CHILDREN are running along the beach, playing.

DISCOVER MULDROW, crouched behind a rotting sailboat up the beach. No longer wearing his soldier outfit, he's in his civilian Japanese clothes again as he studies every activity on the beach.

He sees a **SECOND FISHERMAN** launching a boat.

He sees more **FISHERMEN** talking in a group down the beach.

Now he sees a **THIRD FISHERMAN**, rowing toward the shore, reaching it, jumping out, beaching his boat and attaching it to one of the anchor blocks.

MULDROW watches the **THIRD FISHERMAN** grab a sack out of the boat, toss it over his shoulder, and head to the village, leaving his boat behind on the sand among the other beached boats.

EXT. BEACH - HOURS LATER (EVENING)

Last light. Black water.

Lanterns bob on the water near the beach. Each of the little fishing boats has a single lantern in the bow, and several boats are just heading out into the strait for the night's fishing.

The beach is almost deserted except for a SINGLE FISHERMAN who's preparing to launch his boat. The SINGLE FISHERMAN takes no notice of MULDROW as MULDROW selects a boat twenty yards up the beach, puts his sacks and bag into it, pushes it into the water, and scrambles in.

INT. BOAT/SHALLOW WATER

After rearranging his bag and sacks on the floor boards, and placing his pistol within easy reach, MULDROW picks up the oars and begins to row.

Suddenly a VOICE calls out sharply!

MULDROW glances to his right and sees the SINGLE FISHERMAN only ten yards away in his boat, his glowing lantern bobbing.

The SINGLE FISHERMAN has stopped rowing and is looking very angry as he calls out sharply to MULDROW again.

MULDROW eyes the pistol, deciding. Then, suddenly, he has an idea.

MULDROW reaches into his emergency kit, pulls the matches out, then hastily lights the lantern in his bow. Now his boat looks like the other boats.

Shaking his head with irritation, but apparently satisfied, the SINGLE FISHERMAN rows off now.

MULDROW checks around. There's no one watching.

He takes some line out of one of his sacks and lashes the two oars together making them into a double-bladed Eskimo paddle.

EXT. STRAIT - LATER (NIGHT)

MULDROW propels his boat with his home-made paddle.

He looks around. In the distance, a few lanterns bob in the darkness.

MULDROW checks his compass by lanternlight, glances at the stars, then extinguishes the lantern.

Sighting on one bright star ahead, he paddles silently through the dark water.

EXT. SNOWFIELD/BROOKS RANGE - DAY

Snow falls, obscuring the heads of the deer protruding from the snow in a line that continues until it disappears in the distance.

Vaguely, a strange HUMAN/BIRD FIGURE lunges briefly into view, its feathers dropping, fluttering away.

Staggering, the FIGURE disappears in a curtain of falling snow so quickly it's as though it was never there.

But the snow where it stepped is blood red.

EXT. STRAIT - NIGHT

Stars glitter overhead as MULDROW, all alone in the darkness, continues paddling.

But suddenly, something is wrong!

There's a faint DRONING SOUND, more a vibration than a sound. Like pure energy!

The stars disappear!

MULDROW reacts, slack-jawed and wide-eyed, as he realizes there's an enormous SHADOW looming above him, wiping out the sky!

From his tiny boat, MULDROW stops paddling and looks up, amazed.

Gradually he realizes what's only 30 yards from him is a huge Japanese BATTLESHIP sliding quietly through the night with no running lights.

Dwarfed by the giant ship, MULDROW finds himself suddenly rocked violently in its wash. He has to hold on tightly.

A new low DRONING behind him causes him to turn and see another great shadow sliding past in the opposite direction. Another huge SHIP.

A light winks briefly on one deck...

answered on the other.

Meanwhile, MULDROW is barely afloat as water from the two ships roils around him and his own boat takes on water.

EXT. HOKKAIDO - MORNING

Snow is falling on the rocky beach as MULDROW stumbles towards the shore, dragging the water-filled boat behind him.

He's soaked and he's trembling from the cold as he looks around for signs of life and calls out...

MULDROW

GO AHEAD, SHOOT ME. YOU GOT ME, GO
AHEAD. YOU WANT TO SHOOT ME, COME ON,
SHOOT!

But the bleak shoreline is deserted as far as he can see through the thickly falling snow.

Reaching land, he wearily hauls the boat a few feet up onto the beach, then, exhausted, he flops down on the stony shore and tries to recover.

Then, he raises his head and looks around again. All around.

Nothing but waves slapping at the rocks, wiping away the coating of snow.

MULDROW gets to his feet and starts salvaging what he can from the boat.

He reaches into the eight inches of water and retrieves his soaking shoulder bag.

Then, he pulls out his sopping "sleeping bag" sack of feathers.

He finds the sack of food. Everything looks ruined.

He flings the sack away.

He reaches into the water and pulls out the Japanese pistol he took from the DRIVER. He considers the dripping wet weapon disgustedly ... then hurls it into the ocean, as far as he can.

Then, MULDROW lifts his face to the snow and lets it fall on his face even as he shivers violently.

MULDROW .

Well, here you are. Damn near dead
but... you've made it this far.

EXT. ROCKS/HOKKAIDO - DAY

CLOSE ON MULDROW, wet, shivering, squatting among the rocks, his hands striking his flints against each other, again and again, until there are sparks.

EXT. ROCKS/HOKKAIDO - NIGHT

A fire blazes among the rocks as the snow continues to fall.

MULDROW huddles beside the fire trying to get warm.

Near-by, in a recess in the rocks, most of his clothes and his "sleeping bag" hang over frames of branches, "drying".

EXT. LYNX/BROOKS RANGE - DAY

A LYNX fills the frame, his fierce predator eyes watching something with murderous intensity.

EXT. TREES/SNOWFIELD - DAY

Snow is falling among a stand of trees. It could almost be the Brooks Range... except a white SNOW MONKEY scampers into view along a branch, followed by several more SNOW MONKEYS.

They look down.

SNOW MONKEYS' POV: a MAN, plodding through the snow, below.

The MAN looks up at the MONKEYS.

It's MULDROW. He grins. A gap-toothed grin. A whiskered face.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

MULDROW is lashing a knife to the tip of a long branch, making a spear.

Snow falls around him.

EXT. SLOPE - DAY

Snow continues to fall, almost obscuring a herd of fifteen foraging sharp-horned GOATS.

Suddenly, one of the GOATS stiffens with alarm. And takes off, the other GOATS following, dashing toward some trees.

As the FIRST GOAT reaches the trees, MULDROW lunges from behind one of the trunks and sinks his spear deep into the animal's chest, practically lifting the animal off the ground.

As the FIRST GOAT goes down, the other GOATS abruptly reverse direction and head back the other way.

Ignoring the fleeing GOATS, MULDROW yanks his spear free even as the FIRST GOAT, bleeding heavily, struggles to his feet and tries to gore MULDROW.

But MULDROW stabs him again and again with his knife/spear, trying to bring the GOAT down.

Finally, the animal sinks to his knees spouting blood from his wounds, then collapses completely in the snow.

MULDROW, exhausted and splattered with blood, looks down at the dead beast.

MULDROW'S POV: an arrow, protruding from the FIRST GOAT'S flank!

ANGLE ON MULDROW, startled, confused, turning to the spot where the GOATS were grazing and HEARING a sudden, sharp CRY.

MULDROW'S POV: a SECOND GOAT, with two arrows sticking out of him, goring something on the ground, something furry.

Again, a VOICE cries out, and the furry thing rolls away from the lethal horn and scrambles up on hind legs... an old Ainu man in furs, a HUNTER.

The HUNTER has a knife in hand and he's trying to kill the SECOND GOAT but again the SECOND GOAT charges and the HUNTER tries to stab but misses, gets butted hard by the horn and goes down again, the SECOND GOAT over him, goring him.

Just then, MULDROW'S spear hits the SECOND GOAT deep in the flank and the surprised animal flops to the ground.

MULDROW charges forward, lunges for the spear, pulls it out of the SECOND GOAT, then drives it hard into the animal again.

Severely wounded now, but refusing to concede, the SECOND GOAT twists violently so that the spear is yanked from MULDROW'S hands and falls to the ground.

MULDROW reaches for his spear but the SECOND GOAT jumps to his feet and charges MULDROW, piercing MULDROW'S leg with his sharp horn, tearing at the flesh.

MULDROW screams, spins away, yanks out his breadknife.

The SECOND GOAT pauses, badly wounded.

MULDROW attacks with the knife, goes around the horn, lands on the SECOND GOAT'S back, stabbing, stabbing, stabbing.

ANGLE ON THE HUNTER, getting to his feet, seeing MULDROW on the SECOND GOAT, killing it.

The HUNTER picks up his bow and quiver from the ground. He's an old guy, wizzened, with a wispy grey beard.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, getting to his feet, looking toward the HUNTER.

The HUNTER, already moving away, looks back, and their eyes meet.

Then, the HUNTER looks further down on MULDROW'S body.

MULDROW follows the HUNTER'S look.

There's a huge tear in MULDROW'S pants that reveals blood and ripped flesh.

MULDROW looks back at the HUNTER.

But the HUNTER is disappearing into a veil of snow... like a ghost.

EXT. TREES - AN HOUR LATER (LATE AFTERNOON)

Snow falls silently as MULDROW drags branches to complete a makeshift lean-to. MULDROW is trying to ignore his pain.

INT. LEAN-TO - A HALF HOUR LATER (LATE AFTERNOON)

MULDROW is skinning a GOAT.

He pauses to tear off a piece of flesh and wolf it down raw.

Then, he glances at his wounded leg.

It looks bad.

He packs snow into the wound and goes back to the GOAT.

While MULDROW bleeds into the snow from his leg, he drinks and sucks blood from the GOAT.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

It's stopped snowing.

From the snow-covered lean-to comes a long MOAN of pain.

EXT. SNOWY SLOPE/BROOKS RANGE - DAY

Thickly falling snow obscures the sky, everything.

A HERD of CARIBOU are almost invisible moving across the field, appearing, then disappearing in the falling snow.

Then, we DISCOVER DEER HEADS protruding from the snow, blank-eyed. Dead. We HEAR MUTTERING SOUNDS.....

INT. LEAN-TO - MORNING

MUTTERING SOUNDS continue! WORDS in some strange language! MULDROW opens his eyes.

Everything is blurry. It looks like the HUNTER has been multiplied. Eight fur-covered AINU MEN armed with bows and arrows and spears loom over him, surrounding him.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, trying to get up, but he can't. He's too weak.

MULDROW

You fellas... you fellas... you with
the Insurance Company?

EXT. AINU VILLAGE - DAY

AINU WOMEN and CHILDREN gather to watch the AINU MEN carry the strange caucasian to a hut.

The AINU, an exotic-looking tribe of diminutive people, have never seen anything as "exotic" as the injured American.

MULDROW, riding on a hide-covered stretcher, stares back at the WOMEN and CHILDREN with unfocused eyes. Does he even see them?

EXT. SNOWFIELD/BROOKS RANGE - AFTERNOON

Falling snow, and the long row of DEERHEADS protruding from the snow, their eyes fixed on infinity.

INT. HUT/HOKKAIDO - NIGHT

MULDROW blinks awake. Sweating with fever, eyes unfocused.

MULDROW'S POV: a BEAR, teeth bared, slowly coming into focus.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, blinking, trying to orient himself.

MULDROW'S POV: the BEAR, sharper now. Just the head. Glassy-eyed. Dead! Affixed forever to the wall of the rude hut.

And now MULDROW sees the bear's paws, one on each side of the head, also fastened to the wall. Just then, a CLICKING SOUND distracts MULDROW.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, turning his attention to an ancient AINU WOMAN appearing in the dim light of the hut, leaning over MULDROW, putting a cup to his lips.

As MULDROW sips weakly from the cup, his eyes go to the source of the CLICKING SOUND.

MULDROW'S POV: a BEAR-TOOTH NECKLACE, hanging from her neck.

ANGLE ON THE AINU WOMAN, grinning at MULDROW as he drinks.

She points to her own mouth where several teeth are missing, then she reaches out a finger and touches the space in MULDROW'S mouth and she LAUGHS and LAUGHS.

MULDROW, weak as he is, LAUGHS, too.

INT. HUT - DAY

Naked except for a crude bandage on his thigh, MULDROW stands, tries to walk on his leg, grimacing with each painful, tentative step.

His eyes catch the BEAR'S HEAD.

It's as if the BEAR is watching him.

Suddenly, light floods the dim interior as the door opens.

MULDROW turns to see the HUNTER he encountered with the GOATS.

The HUNTER hands MULDROW a bundle of skins and furs like the ones he's wearing.

MULDROW smiles gratefully as he takes the clothes.

MULDROW

I sure can use these.

The HUNTER grins his weathered, goateed face in a friendly way.

MULDROW'S eyes go to the necklace of bear claws around the HUNTER'S neck.

INT. HUT - NIGHT

MULDROW, dressed in skins and furs, eats meat hungrily while the AINU WOMAN hovers in attendance.

EXT. HUT - LATER (NIGHT)

Alone now, outside the hut, leaning on a make-shift cane, MULDROW looks up at the sky.

An infinity of stars glitters overhead.

Just then, MULDROW is distracted by VOICES and movement.

Glancing along a neat row of huts, he sees excited AINU MEN and WOMEN hurrying into the largest hut.

Other grinning AINU emerge from their huts and head to the big hut, too.

Curious, MULDROW limps toward the large hut slowly.

As he nears it, he can see light spilling from the hut and he hears strange CHANTING.

INT. LARGE HUT - NIGHT

MULDROW enters.

MULDROW'S POV: AINU, turning, seeing him, smiling, welcoming him into the smokey "community" hut.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, looking around.

The huge room is crowded with AINU MEN and WOMEN, their attention focused on CHANTING WOMEN in the center of the room.

The CHANTING WOMEN are performing a ceremony, dancing with diminutive steps around a freshly killed BEAR whose huge carcass is sprawled in front of a fire, eyes open, teeth in view.

The HUNTER touches MULDROW'S shoulder, points where he should sit.

MULDROW joins the HUNTER in the large circle of AINU MEN.

Suddenly, a MALE DANCER, wearing a bear head and bear paws, bursts into the hut, dances up to the dead BEAR and starts SCREAMING at the dead animal belligerently.

The AINU cheer the MALE DANCER who now struts arrogantly around the circle, then returns and pokes the carcass while verbally insulting the lifeless BEAR.

MULDROW frowns, not enthusiastic about this sport.

The MALE DANCER continues to abuse the carcass, expressing contempt for the dead animal while the AINU delight in the ceremony.

INT. HUT - AN HOUR LATER (NIGHT)

The dead BEAR is a gory mess. She's being butchered. Slabs of meat are being torn from her bloody carcass.

MULDROW declines the piece of meat an AINU MAN offers him, MULDROW'S eyes going instead to the vacant eyes of the dead BEAR'S severed head set beside the fire.

The BEAR'S dead eyes look back at MULDROW.

A very serious MULDROW turns now and watches two YOUNGSTERS taunt two BEAR CUBS.

Each BEAR CUB is imprisoned in a separate crude tiny wooden cage.

MULDROW grimly watches the terrified CUBS snap and snarl as they're poked with sticks and abused by TAUNTS.

Near-by, AINU LAUGH encouragingly at the sport.

CLOSE ON MULDROW'S EYES, narrowing, suddenly very intense, piercing.

INT. HUT - LATER (DAWN)

A flashlight beam illuminates the remaining contents of MULDROW'S survival kit as he checks to make sure everything's there... the flints... the compass... the needle and thread... the rest.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, lit from the spill of his flashlight, dressed in heavy furs, seeming to take pleasure in his possessions as he repacks them carefully, then stows them into his shoulder bag.

Then, slinging the shoulder bag over his shoulder, MULDROW grabs his knife/spear and a tribal spear with a stone point, his sacks, a pair of snow-shoes, and exits the hut.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAWN

Snow is falling thickly as the old HUNTER, heading for a hut with an armful of firewood, notices something and pauses.

HUNTER'S POV: through the thick curtain of falling snow, MULDROW, carrying all his possessions and using a tribal spear for a cane, disappearing into the large community hut.

ANGLE ON THE HUNTER, curious, heading for the large hut.

INT. LARGE HUT - DAWN

The HUNTER enters the large hut and blinks to adjust his eyes to the gloom. He looks around.

He spots MULDROW bent over the bear cages in the corner. The CUBS inside are snarling.

The HUNTER approaches MULDROW friendly, curious.

Sensing him, MULDROW, on his knees, turns and looks up at the approaching HUNTER.

The HUNTER grins amiably.

EXT. LARGE HUT - SHORTLY (DAWN)

A BEAR CUB bursts out of the large hut and races through the falling snow, eager to get away from this man-made hell.

As the terrified CUB disappears into the thickly falling snow, the SECOND CUB bursts out of the large hut and bolts off in the same direction as the first CUB.

A long moment, then a grim MULDROW emerges from the hut, carrying all his things. He marches off after the bears, his snowshoes making tracks. He's using the spear-cane and he's still limping, but he's obviously strong and mostly healed.

ANGLE ON MULDROW'S SNOWSHOE TRACKS, disappearing as rapidly falling snow fills them.

EXT. RIDGE/HONSHU - DAY

Pouring rain. A grim day. Gloomy light.

Several JAPANESE SOLDIERS are gathered beside a road watching an approaching vehicle.

As the vehicle pulls up, three JAPANESE OFFICERS step out into the rain. They are the same JAPANESE OFFICERS who earlier viewed the decapitated SOLDIERS.

The OFFICERS approach the SOLDIERS who salute them and then the senior SOLDIER speaks, gesticulating, pointing off the road.

The JAPANESE OFFICERS look where he's pointing.

Fifty feet down a gully, obscured by the rain and the brush, they can just make out a vehicle.

It's a military cargo truck, an ISUZU.

The JAPANESE OFFICERS exchange glances with each other.

EXT. SNOWY PLAIN/FROM ABOVE - DAY

Seen from five hundred feet up, MULDROW is a tiny figure below, making his way across a vast field of snow, the only living creature in sight. He's behaving strangely. He hurls his spear... at nothing! Nothing visible, anyway.

Then he hurries across the snow, barely limping, and retrieves the spear.

And hurls it again!

At nothing.

EXT. SNOWY PLAIN/LOW ANGLE - DAY

Seen more closely, MULDROW retrieves the pointed weapon. He looks very happy.

With a huge grin, he hurls it again with all his might. He seems to be feeling some sort of... joy.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

A vast sky full of stars like millions of tiny diamonds.

From an opening in a lean-to, MULDROW stares up through the trees at the stars... and chuckles cheerfully. He looks happy.

EXT. SNOWY PLAIN - DAY

Rabbit tracks make a trail across the dazzling field of snow heading toward a distant stand of trees.

MULDROW, on snowshoes, not limping now, follows the tracks. He's close to the middle of the snow-covered field, still almost a mile from the trees when he stops and stares.

The tracks end abruptly. A mile from the woods. No sign of the rabbit.

Just snow with tracks.

Then, snow with no tracks.

MULDROW stares at the spot where the rabbit seems to have vanished.

MULDROW looks up and scans the sky slowly.

MULDROW'S POV: a clear cloudless sky, nothing in sight.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, staring at the empty sky, thoughtful.

INT. CABIN/BROOKS RANGE - NIGHT

Seated in a chair by the red wall, reading intently by lanternlight, MULDROW SR. looks up to see SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD MULDROW enter the cabin with a string of just-caught and gutted fish.

MULDROW'S VOICE (v.o.)

My father was a good hunter -- pretty good, anyway, but not as good as he wanted to be.

MULDROW SR. nods to his son then goes back to reading as the boy takes the fish to the kitchen area.

MULDROW'S VOICE (v.o.)

He had a lot of books up there in the cabin with one red wall.

Having laid the fish on the counter preparatory to cooking them, YOUNG MULDROW turns and watches his father engrossed in his book.

MULDROW'S VOICE (v.o.)

More than half the books were about hunting in Africa, and India, and places all over the world. There was even one story about men hunting each other, like big game.

The boy is framed against the red wall in the shadowy cabin.

EXT. SNOWY PLAIN/HOKKAIDO - DAY

A RABBIT is racing across the expanse of snow when, suddenly, a huge fierce bird strikes from above. It's a HAWK.

The RABBIT twists in the talons as the bird starts to lift off, wings flapping, and the RABBIT wriggles free.

But the HAWK immediately drops on the RABBIT again and this time the struggle is brief. The HAWK kills the RABBIT.

But then, suddenly, the HAWK looks up sharply from its lifeless prey.

A shadow falls on the HAWK and the fierce bird, wings spreading, backs away from his meal... slowly... reluctantly... glaring.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, approaching on his snowshoes.

Angrily, the HAWK rises up on powerful wings.

HAWK'S POV WHILE LIFTING INTO THE AIR: MULDROW, diminishing in size as he looks up and watches the rising bird.

A BELL TINKLES, faintly. Did we even hear it?

Then, seen from above, MULDROW reaches down and picks up the RABBIT.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, standing, RABBIT in hand. He looks up at the HAWK.

MULDROW'S POV: the HAWK, gliding toward some trees in the distance.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, surprised. Not by the HAWK but by something else he sees.

Beyond the distant woods where the HAWK is disappearing, a thread of smoke is rising up into the sky!

INT. CABIN/ALASKA - DAY

The bright red wall! Violent red!

SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD MULDROW steps in front of the wall. He looks uneasy, outlined in bright red. Nervous.

MULDROW'S VOICE (v.o.)

Something had happened to him that made him want to be by himself, or maybe he was just that way all the time.

ANGLE ON MULDROW SR., looking directly at his son. MULDROW SR.'s eyes are piercing and dangerous looking.

MULDROW'S VOICE (v.o.)

Like I say, he never did give me the straight of it.

EXT. SNOWY PLAINS/HOKKAIDO - LATER (AFTERNOON)

Emerging from the woods onto a descending slope of an open snowy plain, MULDROW considers the landscape ahead.

MULDROW'S POV: the snow-covered plain and, in the distance, against a rise, a shack in the midst of the whiteness with a column of smoke snaking up from a chimney.

EXT. SHACK - AFTERNOON

Behind the shack, two very large, very ferocious HAWKS are resting on a man-made perch eating scraps of meat from the hand of a very ANCIENT MAN wearing animal skins.

When the last scrap is gone, the ANCIENT MAN carefully places a hood over the head of the first HAWK, blinding the bird. The HAWK does not resist the hood.

The ANCIENT MAN produces a second hood and is about to place it on the second bird when both HAWKS stiffen slightly.

Alerted by the birds, the ANCIENT MAN turns and sees a man approaching on snowshoes. MULDROW! Toting sacks and spears.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, looking at the ANCIENT MAN and the HAWKS, fifteen yards away.

ANGLE ON THE ANCIENT MAN, tiny, stooped, his face as wizened and weathered as a raisin. He watches MULDROW reach into his bearskin pants.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, pulling something from his pocket...

ANGLE ON THE ANCIENT MAN, watching.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, holding up the dead RABBIT.

ANGLE ON THE ANCIENT MAN'S FACE, crinkling into a broad smile.

INT. SHACK - LATER (EVENING)

In the flickering light of the fire and one very old oil lamp, the ANCIENT MAN and MULDROW sit on the floor of the small hut, sharing a meal of stewed rabbit in silence, concentrating on their food, sneaking occasional peeks at each other.

When he is finished, the ANCIENT MAN examines MULDROW carefully for a long time, deciding.

Then, with some difficulty, the ANCIENT MAN gets to his feet, hobbles over to a small chest, opens it, takes out a scroll, returns to MULDROW and hands the prize to him.

MULDROW wipes his hands on his clothes, then takes the scroll and carefully unwinds it and examines it while the ANCIENT MAN sits down again and watches MULDROW.

MULDROW'S POV: the scroll shows different carefully detailed drawings of predator birds.

Wings, spread or closed...

talons...

beaks...

eyes.

The drawings are magnificent.

MULDROW looks up at the ANCIENT MAN and nods gravely.

The ANCIENT MAN looks pleased.

MULDROW carefully rewinds the scroll and hands it back to the ANCIENT MAN, but the old man shakes his head no and pushes it back into MULDROW'S hands.

MULDROW looks suprised. Not used to such gifts.

EXT. JAPANESE FISHING VILLAGE - AFTERNOON

JAPANESE VILLAGERS stand in a group as three JAPANESE OFFICERS question them earnestly; the same JAPANESE OFFICERS we've seen before.

FISHERMEN point down the beach at the line of moored fishing boats and one VILLAGER points to his own chest indicating ownership, then starts leading the OFFICERS down to the beach where his stolen boat used to be moored.

Another FISHERMAN, the one who yelled at MULDROW to turn his lantern on, is telling that story to the OFFICERS as the swarm of VILLAGERS troops down to the beach.

INT. SHACK - MORNING

MULDROW'S eyes come open alertly. He's lying on a mat in the shack.

Already bundled in furs, the ANCIENT MAN is grinning at him from across the hut.

MULDROW comes as close to grinning back as he is capable.

EXT. SHACK - LATER (DAY)

The ANCIENT MAN is showing MULDROW how to inspect the claws of the FIRST HAWK as the magnificent BIRD sits on the perch.

After examining the HAWK'S incredible talons, MULDROW glances up and looks into the bird's fierce eyes.

Their eyes meet. Predators! Both of them!

Then, the FIRST HAWK'S eyes disappear as the ANCIENT MAN places the hood over the FIRST HAWK'S head.

MULDROW looks up.

Wheeling out of the sky is the SECOND HAWK, dropping toward them, a small rabbit in its talons.

The ANCIENT MAN taps MULDROW, hands him a piece of leather and shows MULDROW how to drape it over his forearm.

The SECOND HAWK comes in, braking with his wings.

MULDROW holds his forearm out and the big bird drops the dead rabbit and lands heavily on MULDROW'S arm.

MULDROW is at first startled, but then he grins happily.

The ANCIENT MAN smiles weakly, exhausted, old.

INT: SHACK - NIGHT

In the flickering dim light, the ANCIENT MAN lies on his bed while MULDROW spoon-feeds him from a bowl.

EXT. SNOWY PLAIN - DAY

A huge, open expanse of snow. MULDROW throws his spear as far as he can throw it. He WHOOPS joyously.

Then, he snowshoes to the spear and picks it up.

He glances up.

The two HAWKS are gliding high overhead, riding the air currents.

MULDROW grins and hurls his spear at another snowbank, laughing exuberantly.

HAWK'S POV: MULDROW, far below, a tiny figure, retrieving his spear and hurling it yet again... at nothing!

INT. SHACK - EVENING

In the dim light, MULDROW is preparing a stew from a RABBIT he's cut up.

He glances toward the ANCIENT MAN.

Lying on his bed, the ANCIENT MAN'S breathing is labored. Near the end.

MULDROW leaves the stew and goes to his shoulder bag, opens it, finds what he's looking for.

The sewn silk bandana with the map of Japan and this part of the world.

MULDROW takes it over to the dying old man and shyly shows it to him.

The ANCIENT MAN tries to focus on it and comprehend its meaning.

MULDROW points to the various places with his finger while he speaks softly.

MULDROW

I know you can't understand a word I say but this here's Japan... and up here...

(touches the man, then the map)
this is where you are. This is you!

The ANCIENT MAN studies the silk map, struggling to understand.

MULDROW points to himself and then to "North-east" off the map.

MULDROW

Now where I come from... up here... that's right off the map... I used to think I'd get back there but I don't think so no more. That's how come I'm here. I'm thinking this is as close to home as I'm gonna get. But it's okay. All this cold and snow. This is where I belong. Here. You and me. You understand that? You and me.

It's not clear the dying ANCIENT MAN understands any of this, but he touches the silk, caressing it, and then he seems to smile.

EXT. STRAIT/SHORELINE/HOKKAIDO - DAY

Snow is falling on a thirty-five foot launch motoring slowly in stormy water off the coast of Hokkaido.

Standing in the bow of the launch, along with JAPANESE SOLDIERS, are the JAPANESE OFFICERS we've seen before.

One of OFFICERS is looking through binoculars, scanning the rocky coast, looking for something.

JAPANESE OFFICER'S POV THROUGH THE BINOCULARS: rocky beach... rocky beach... rocky beach... splintered wood, lodged among some rocks! Part of a boat.

ANGLE ON THE JAPANESE OFFICER, victorious, passing the binoculars to one of the other OFFICERS.

EXT. SHACK - MORNING

A HAWK rises from MULDROW'S leather-covered forearm.

CLOSE ON MULDROW'S EYES, watching the bird climb on powerful wings.

HAWK'S POV: as he rises, looking down at the snowy landscape.

CLOSE ON THE HAWK, scanning the plain.

CLOSE ON MULDROW'S EYES, watching the HAWK.

HAWK'S POV: swooping down over the snow, then rising, rising...

CLOSE ON THE HAWK'S FIERCE EYES.

CLOSE ON MULDROW'S EYES.

HAWK'S POV: as he approaches the distant woods, then gliding over the trees.

CLOSE ON MULDROW'S EYES, as if he can see what the HAWK sees.

INT. SHACK - LATER (DAY)

The ANCIENT MAN lies on his bed staring straight up with sightless eyes. Dead.

MULDROW looks down at him solemnly for a long time .

EXT. LARGE HUT - DAWN (FLASHBACK)

A BEAR CUB bursts out of the large hut and races through the falling snow exactly as before.

The SECOND CUB bursts out of the large hut and bolts off in the same direction exactly as before.

INT. LARGE HUT - DAWN

MULDROW starts out the door on snowshoes, carrying all his gear and his spears...

while behind him, the old HUNTER'S dead eyes stare from inside one of the wooden cages where his body has been crammed.

MULDROW'S VOICE (v.o.)

I was sorry I had killed the little bearded man who had hunted goats the same time I did.

EXT. HUT - DAWN

Using a spear as a cane, MULDROW limps off in the direction the BEAR CUBS went and the snow obscures him exactly as before.

MULDROW'S VOICE (v.o.)

Because in a way he had been a good friend to me, and he was a hunter, too. But there wasn't anything I could do about it now.

ANGLE ON SNOWSHOE TRACKS, disappearing as rapidly falling snow fills them exactly as before. (END OF FLASHBACK)

EXT. SHACK - DAY

MULDROW is filling in the grave he's dug with a shovel.

The ANCIENT MAN lies in a shallow grave in the frozen ground and bits of ice and snow and frozen dirt fall over him.

Some snow flakes settle on MULDRROW'S jacket.

He looks up and snow falls on his face.

INT. SHACK - LATER (AFTERNOON)

MULDROW sits on the floor holding the ANCIENT MAN'S scroll but MULDRROW isn't looking at the drawings. He's staring straight ahead... at nothing.

CLOSE ON MULDRROW'S EYES, intense.

EXT. SKY/SNOWY PLAIN - DAY

HAWK'S POV: looking down on the open plain through falling snow, indistinct shapes, HUMANS, emerging from a fringe of woods and starting across the snowy plain, fanned out.

CLOSE ON THE HAWK'S EYES, sharp, observing, as the WIND rushes and the BELL TINKLES.

INT. SHACK - AFTERNOON

MULDROW'S eyes stare straight ahead... as if he's seeing what the HAWK sees.

Do we hear the faint TINKLE of a BELL?

MULDROW blinks.

EXT. SHACK - AFTERNOON

Snow is falling thickly as MULDRROW steps out of the shack.

He looks up at the sky as snow falls on his face.

EXT. SKY/SNOWY SLOPE - AFTERNOON

HAWK'S POV: as he swoops low, those vague HUMAN FIGURES, plodding forward through thickly falling snow.

The bell TINKLES.

EXT. SHACK - AFTERNOON

MULDROW is looking up, squinting into the falling snow.

Then, his mind made up, he turns and steps back into the shack.

INT. SHACK - AFTERNOON

MULDROW enters. He's not in a hurry. He takes his "sleeping bag" of feathers, rips it open, and dumps feathers all over the floor of the shack.

Then, satisfied, MULDROW takes a knife and slashes his forearm causing blood to flow copiously.

MULDROW'S VOICE (v.o.)

The great thing about birds, especially if they're predators, is that anybody who loves them and understands how they operate gets to be like them; his mind, his imagination, can fly with them, and the birds know it.

MULDROW smears blood on his skin and on his clothes.

MULDROW'S VOICE (v.o.)

The hawks were flying day and night, whether they were in the air or sleeping on the perch. They're always out there over the snow, over the woods and trees, over the rocks, with that superhuman eyesight, with power over everything they can see, or ever will see.

MULDROW is rolling in the feathers and the feathers are sticking to his skin and to his clothes. Very strange.

MULDROW'S VOICE (v.o.)

I would tell anybody who hears me saying this, look around you and be honest with yourself. For most of you, flight is not in you, and never will be in you. Even when you're in aircraft, it's not.

EXT. SNOWY SLOPE - AFTERNOON

Very quiet.

The faint TINKLE of the HAWK'S BELL is nearly inaudible.

The snow is falling even thicker now. There's almost no visibility.

EXT. SHACK - AFTERNOON

The door opens a crack and MULDROW, covered with feathers, looks out into the blinding snow. MULDROW looks bizarre.

MULDROW'S POV: a blizzard of falling snow, obscuring everything.

ANGLE ON MULDROW, squinting, peering into the snow, trying to see through it.

MULDROW'S POV: VAGUE SHAPES, in the snow, near a ridge. Or maybe not. Too vague to know if they're human or...

FLASH! BANG! A streak of fire comes from the VAGUE SHAPES. Then, a sharp CRACK and YELLS!

ANGLE ON MULDROW, wood splintering behind him.

But instead of retreating, the strange feathered figure steps right out of the shack and into the falling snow...

MULDROW'S VOICE (v.o.)

I knew I had found it, what I had been looking for, in all the blood and the fucking and the war, in everything I had done and everybody I had had to deal with. I knew I had found it, but up to now I had never had the full thing.

More FLASHES! More SHOTS ring out! More wood SPLINTERING off the shack behind him.

And MULDROW, continuing to move forward...

forward toward the vague, ominous approaching shapes.

MULDROW'S VOICE (v.o.)

In the wind, the swan feathers fluttered on me and I could have flown. I could have flown with the hawks and the swans if I had wanted to.

FLASHES! Loud dry CRACKS of rifle fire. POP! POP! POP!

MULDROW shudders. Hit!

Stagger forward unsteadily.

MULDROW'S VOICE (v.o.)

A bullet went through me but didn't touch me. It was happening!

The vague shapes become JAPANESE SOLDIERS. Advancing. FIRING!

MULDROW lunges toward them in the snow, feathered arms raised.

Seeming to welcome a fusillade of bullets!

MULDROW'S VOICE (v.o.)

I didn't mind.

HAWK'S POV: rising up, looking down on MULDROW and the advancing JAPANESE SOLDIERS.

MULDROW'S VOICE (v.o.)

I was in the place I tried to get to. I had made it in exactly the shape I wanted to be in, though maybe just a little beat up. But the main thing was I had got to the place, to the landscape and the weather, there I was, standing there with the bullets going through, and me not feeling a thing.

High up, looking down through flurries of snow, a barrage of muffled SHOTS now.

Far below, MULDROW drops to his knees in a blood red patch of snow.

He's on all fours as JAPANESE SOLDIERS surround him.

MULDROW'S VOICE (v.o.)

And then, it was there, too. A red wall blazed. For a second there was a terrible heat, like somebody had opened a furnace door, the most terrible heat, something that could have burned up the whole world, and I was sure I was gone.

Swirling snow obscures the scene below as WE RISE YET HIGHER where the only SOUND is the RUSHING WIND and the faint TINKLING of the BELL, barely audible.

MULDROW'S VOICE (v.o.)

But the cold and the snow came back. The wind mixed the flakes, and I knew I had it. I was in it and part of it. And I will be everywhere in it from now on.

CLOSE ON THE HAWK, riding the wind, gliding.

CLOSE ON THE EYES OF THE HAWK.

MULDROW'S VOICE (v.o.)

Everywhere in it, for the first time and the last... as soon as I close my eyes.

ANGLE ON THE HAWK, gliding off into obscurity in the curtain of snow... disappearing.

EVERYTHING IS WHITE. A BELL TINKLES FAINTLY.

FADE OUT