

World War Z

Screenplay by

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Based on the novel by

Max Brooks

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Fade In:

BLACK SCREEN

No music. Dry. Just SOUNDS.

A man clearing his throat.

A chair scraping across hard floor.

A recorder being switched on and off.

He clears his throat again.

A woman's voice.

CHARLENE (V.O.)
Will this take long?

GERRY (V.O.)
Not long.

The chair scrapes again, we hear a microphone being tapped repeatedly, and a final cough, as we SEE --

-- LETTERS appear on screen. White against black. Courier font. Simple, stark and hard. They spell out --

WORLD WAR Z

-- and HOLD for a moment against the blackness before fading away as we HEAR:

GERRY (V.O.)
So, tell me about flight 575.

INT. STARK ROOM - POV SHOT -- DAY

We're looking at a woman in her 40s, CHARLENE ROSE, who is seated at a table with a glass of water in front of her, a bare, stark green wall behind her. She shifts uncomfortably, looking straight ahead at us, at our POV.

CHARLENE
What do you want me to say? I mean,
hasn't this been talked to death?

GERRY (O.S.)
Just tell me what happened, in your
own words. I --

CHARLENE
I'm just saying, is this really
necessary? It's not like it'll make
a difference or --

She looks off. Takes a moment. Glances down at her hands.

(CONTINUED)

CHARLENE

We were about three hours out of London
Heathrow, inbound to Los Angeles.
Halfway across the Atlantic.

INT. PASSENGER AIRLINE -- NIGHT

A three-years-younger Charlene is an airline attendant. She moves down the aisle, checking on passengers, as other attendants freshen drinks or bring DVD players.

CHARLENE

Would you like another glass of merlot?

PASSENGER

Yes, thanks.

She moves off to get it as another ATTENDANT approaches.

ATTENDANT

Charlene, you got a second?

CHARLENE

Sure.

The attendant pulls her aside into the galley.

ATTENDANT

We may have to land for a medical.

CHARLENE

You're kidding.

ATTENDANT

I know, I know. He was looking pretty pale when he got on board. I didn't think too much of it, but now he's wheezing and gray and --

CHARLENE

Heart?

ATTENDANT

I don't know, maybe. Can you keep an eye on him while I talk to the pilot, have him radio ahead to JFK and get us a landing clearance?

CHARLENE

Sure thing. Which seat?

ATTENDANT

14E.

The attendant heads away as Charlene moves down the aisle.

(CONTINUED)

CHARLENE (V.O.)

You have to understand that word was only just getting out about the infections. We hadn't been briefed on what to do, what to look for, who to let on and who to keep off. The system hadn't caught up.

She gets to row 14, where a man in a dark suit is sitting slouched his seat, head down. The passenger beside him on the aisle holds a handkerchief to his nose, keeping out a foul smell. She leans over the other passenger toward 14E.

CHARLENE

Sir? Sir, are you all right? Can I get you anything?

(beat)

Sir...?

She reaches toward the seat as suddenly the man in 14E LUNGES at her with a strangled cry, his mouth an angry slash, eyes yellow, face animalistic.

She JUMPS back as he twists in his seat, momentarily tangled in the seat belt. He lands on the passenger next to him and starts TEARING at his throat, blood gushing everywhere.

Passengers try to flee, screaming, as it attacks more of them, tearing through them like a wild animal.

EXT. PASSENGER AIRLINE -- NIGHT

CLOSE on a window as it's spattered with blood from the inside. The plane slowly ANGLES AWAY from us as we HEAR:

BORDER GUARD (V.O.)

I was working day shift on the San Diego Border Patrol, checking vehicle traffic northbound out of Tijuana.

INT. ANOTHER INTERVIEW ROOM -- DAY

A retired BORDER PATROL GUARD, his face hard, sits with his arms folded across his chest, giving a report he doesn't want to give.

BORDER GUARD

At most, it might take somebody who's been infected as long as three days to flip. But for the coyotes bringing folks up from southern or central Mexico, the trip could take six, seven days... changing cars, hiding out in the day, avoiding the *federales*...you see the problem.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BORDER GUARD (CONT'D)

(beat)

Halfway here, they'd flip. Now, the coyotes didn't want a bunch of Z's running around compromising their routes, and little Jose and Emilia didn't want to leave their daddy by the side of the road, so they'd tie 'em up and shove 'em in the trunk.

EXT. SAN DIEGO BORDER POST -- DAY

Cars are lined up in the lanes marked NOW ENTERING UNITED STATES as border guards and soldiers check IDs and do random searches. One of them is our Border Guard, a few years younger. He approaches a car filled with a family: a man, his wife or sister, and several younger children. He shines a flashlight in at them, then moves to the back of the car.

BORDER GUARD (V.O.)

The way we used to find 'em was that half the time, they'd cut air holes in the trunk. For Z's. Can you imagine? Fuckin' air holes.

He looks at the trunk of the dusty car. Doesn't see anything amiss. Then he looks a little closer. Brushes away the dust to REVEAL four or five tiny holes. He leans down, LISTENS...and hears the sound of scratching.

He draws his gun, calling to the other officers.

BORDER GUARD

WE'VE GOT ONE! OVER HERE!

More officers come on the run as the driver gets out of the car, pleading in Spanish, trying to talk his way out of this.

DRIVER

(pleading in Spanish)

BORDER GUARD

Get out of the way! Out of the fucking way!

He shoves him aside as another officer comes with a crowbar.

BORDER GUARD

Go, go, go!

The other officer shoves the crowbar into the gap around the trunk, YANKS it open, and --

-- a thing that was once the driver's brother LEAPS from the trunk, tearing at the ropes that bind him.

(CONTINUED)

BORDER GUARD
TAKE HIM DOWN!

They FIRE, hitting the thing over and over until it finally goes down.

For a moment, all is silent. Then: the sound of scratching. The border guard looks to where --

-- another thing that was once a four year old girl rises in the trunk, snarls, and LEAPS, its small form WIPING FRAME with a SCREAM as we

HARD CUT BACK TO:

INT. ANOTHER INTERVIEW ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

-- and the guard looks away, pushing down the memory. He turns and looks back at us, his expression defiant, his question more a challenge than anything else.

BORDER GUARD
You got any other questions?

And now we turn around for the first time to REVEAL GERRY LANE, late 30s, seated at the other end of the table. A three-ring binder is open in front of him, where he has carefully entered a number of notes on the interview. A recorder is set up on the table beside him. He looks up from his notes, his attitude aloof, distant, bureaucratic. Shakes his head.

GERRY
No, that'll be all. Thank you.

The border guard rises and without another word heads for the door as Gerry makes a few last notations, then closes the binder and rises.

EXT. CHICAGO STREET -- MOMENTS LATER

Gerry emerges from the building where the interviews were conducted. Blinks against the bright daylight, then starts down the sidewalk.

As he continues, we notice that while parts of the street look normal, other areas have been burned out, looted or abandoned. But there's not much debris in the street. We get the sense of a long, slow clean-up in process. The sound of hammering drifts up to us from somewhere down the street. People are walking here and there, or riding bicycles, but no cars.

DOLLY WITH HIM as he comes around a corner to REVEAL the husk of a burned military cargo plane still propped up where it fell against one of the apartment buildings. Kids have hung swings from the plane, playing in its shadow.

(CONTINUED)

Gerry tousles the hair of one of the kids as he passes the wreckage, taking no notice of it.

As he continues AWAY FROM CAMERA, we TILT UP to the bright sunlight and let the bone-white light WIPE CAMERA UNDER:

GERRY (V.O.)

They want us to file a report. On the war.

INT. UNITED NATIONS BUILDING - HALLWAY - FLASHBACK -- DAY

Gerry is walking down the hall with ROBERT MCENROE, British, patrician, old school, practical. The crest of the UN hangs on the wall, and as they continue on, they pass people cleaning up debris and workmen replacing several broken plate glass windows.

MCENROE

Yes. Well, more of a systems analysis, really. Where the system worked, where it didn't, how and in what ways the various organizational infrastructures failed to respond --

GERRY

Why?

MCENROE

In the aftermath of catastrophes on this scale -- not that there's ever been a catastrophe on this scale, but never mind that -- the United Nations has a responsibility to file a report for the public describing what went wrong, and why. We can't file that report until someone writes it. That would be you.

GERRY

You want me to spend six months of my life writing a report that nobody is ever going to want to read?

MCENROE

No, of course not. I brought you all the way out here because I like playing really elaborate versions of "pull my finger." Here....

He opens the door to his office and they enter --

INT. UN BUILDING - MCENROE'S OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

-- where McEnroe goes to his desk as Gerry closes the door.

(CONTINUED)

GERRY

So why me and not one of the other investigators?

MCENROE

Your reports, especially the one on Afghani reconstruction, speak to your ability to go places and talk to people no one else would dare approach. Also, you're not political. You have no ax to grind, there's nothing in your record to make any of our member nations think you're looking to skew the results in order to piss in someone's pond. That's essential to insuring the cooperation of our member nations.

He sits heavily behind his desk.

MCENROE

I won't lie to you, Gerry. Millions of people died in the war. Once the cleanup is done and the final figures are in, the number may be in the tens of millions. People want answers. They want to know why those in charge didn't connect the dots. Why it happened. What went wrong...and who's to blame. Everyone wants you to find who's responsible... as long as it's not them. So if you take the job, you're going to spend a lot of time looking over your shoulder.

GERRY

I'm surprised any of them want to go along with this.

MCENROE

They don't, but it would be rather hard for them to justify saying no. You'd start domestically -- we've set up meetings for you in San Diego, Chicago, a few other places -- then move on from there. We've secured permission for you to travel to China, Israel, Palestine, Germany, and anyplace else you like. You'll have access to anyone you want to speak with. To jump-start the process, each participating country has given us a list of people they think we should talk to.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MCENROE (CONT'D)

Very helpful, until you consider there's probably a list of people they'd prefer we didn't talk to, but still....

(beat)

It's a thankless job, no mistake. But you're the last one I can count on to get it done.

GERRY

It's just...I didn't think we'd be getting back to work for weeks yet. Karin and I, and the kids...we're just starting to put our lives back together. We took a shot at the lottery and got an apartment in a secure zone --

MCENROE

Congratulations.

GERRY

-- and I guess what I'm saying is, how can I justify taking six months away from my family now?

MCENROE

Maybe because now you can?

McEnroe sits heavily behind his desk, and for the first time we see a weariness in his expression. He's had this talk too many times with others.

MCENROE

Look, Gerry, I can't make you do this. The world really doesn't work that way anymore, does it? I could say that this is your chance to do for the world what you're doing for your family, help people put their lives back together by giving them some perspective on what the hell happened. I could say this will be good for you, give you some structure at a time when there's not a lot of that going around. And maybe some of that's even true...but it's also beside the point. The rules say we have to file a report, and by Christ we are going to file a report because --

He looks off, then down, quietly, for:

(CONTINUED)

MCENROE

-- because it would be the most normal thing any of us in this building have done in a very, very long time. And I'd like that, Gerry. I'd like that a great deal.

GERRY

I don't know, Mac...I mean, yes, the prospect of having something to do is appealing, but --

MCENROE

I don't need an answer right now. By tomorrow would be fine. Think it over. Let me know what you decide.

He turns his attention to the paperwork on his desk, the discussion over. Gerry rises and exits.

EXT. NEW YORK SKYLINE -- NIGHT

Something we're not used to seeing: instead of the usually bright New York skyline, most of the buildings are dark, only a few traces of the usual neon horizon are visible. Navigation lights blink on otherwise dark skyscrapers and towers.

EXT. GERRY'S NEIGHBORHOOD -- NIGHT

Candles glow in windows, on sills and porches. No one is walking around.

INT. GERRY'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Gerry is sitting with his wife, KARIN. They've finished dinner. The apartment is lit by a combination of candles, kerosene lamps, and rechargeable or crank-powered lanterns. We hear children in another room. Karin places her hand over Gerry's, then puts the last of the dishes on the counter.

KARIN

We've got gas for another hour. I'm going to put on some water to boil for the dishes, I can make you some tea.

GERRY

No, I'm fine.

She looks to him. His thoughts are a million miles away, and it's clear that he's anything but fine. He gets up, goes to the window, looks out.

KARIN

So have you figured out what you're going to tell MacReady?

(CONTINUED)

GERRY

I don't know...I don't want to leave you and the kids right now. I mean, yes, we've got the escort now for and that'll be a big help, but we're just starting to get things together again. It doesn't feel right just...leaving. I don't want to relive those years all over again. But at the same time, what happened, happened, Karin. We can't just pretend it didn't.

And though she looks away, there's a flash of steel in her voice.

KARIN

I can. I can do that just fine.

He looks to her, knowing what she's talking about. Goes to her and holds her.

GERRY

Yeah...I know. Still, we could use the money. And who knows, maybe it'll do some good. Maybe....

He stops, looks off. Wrestling with something, an inner possibility or idea he doesn't want to say out loud.

KARIN

Maybe what?

GERRY

I don't know...maybe nothing, but... I don't know. I'm just tired, that's all. Feels like I can never get enough sleep these days.

She searches his face and realizes that maybe he does need this...just as he needs her permission to do it.

KARIN

Look...tell you what. You know these guys aren't going to want you to turn over every stone, dot every I, cross every T. They want you to do just enough so everybody involved can say "Hey, it wasn't my fault." They're saying six months, but whenever you hit a point where you decide you're done, they'll be fine with it.

(beat)

My only concern is how I can get hold of you if there's an emergency, or a problem with Rachel. Most of the international lines are still down, and --

(CONTINUED)

GERRY

They'll give me a sat-phone. I'll
check in every couple of days.

KARIN

Then I'm okay with it.

(beat)

I'd better go tuck in Rachel.

He nods. She gives him a kiss, then heads out into the
adjoining room. He looks out at the night.

GERRY

All I want to do is sleep....

And we HOLD on his eyes as we go to

INT. HOTEL ROOM - CHICAGO - PRESENT -- MORNING

As Gerry wakes up. We're WIDE in the room, which is dominated
by a window running the length of the room. It's open,
revealing morning light, a balcony and the cityscape beyond.
The morning sun is the only source of light, though we don't
think much about it yet.

STAY WIDE as he slowly sits up, rubbing at his face. Pushing
the dream away. Then, finally, he gets up and walks OS.

INT. HALLWAY TO GERRY'S ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Gerry opens the door at a knock to find a hotel employee with
a small stainless steel tub of hot water. The hall is also
lit only by outside light. Gerry nods and the employee passes
him, heading into the room as the door closes.

INT. BATHROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Gerry is shaving, dipping his razor into a glass where he has
poured some of the hot water from the steel tub steaming on
the counter beside him. The room is lit by daylight from the
main room, and a small electric lantern. The lantern fizzes
slightly. He taps it. The lamp glows a bit brighter.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - CHICAGO - PRESENT - DAY

Gerry closes his suitcase, takes one last, weary look around,
picks up his bags and heads toward the door.

EXT. O'HARE AIRPORT - PRESENT -- DAY

A familiar sight, but something's wrong. The parking lots
are nearly empty. We see some travelers, but not many, and
most of them seem to be military.

INT. O'HARE AIRPORT -- CONTINUOUS

Hauling his bags, Gerry walks through the nearly deserted airport, walking past unoccupied airline kiosks toward the gates.

INT. INSPECTION AREA -- MOMENTS LATER

There are two lines, one for men, one for women. Several heavily armed SOLDIERS look on as they are directed into --

INT. SCREENED-OFF AREA -- CONTINUOUS

-- where Gerry removes his clothes as several soldiers and a doctor look on. When he is naked, the doctor runs a hand-held ultraviolet scanner over every inch of his body. Looking for signs of infection. In a tone that suggests such questions are routine, he asks:

DOCTOR

Have you had any physical contact with strangers in the last thirty-six hours? Any blood transfusions or injuries from bites, scratches or shared needles?

GERRY

No.

The doctor gives him a final once-over, then nods to the soldiers, who step back and relax slightly. One of the soldiers approaches Gerry.

SOLDIER

Transit papers.

Gerry hands over the papers as he finishes getting dressed. The soldier glances over the papers, noting the UN seal, then hands them back.

SOLDIER

Gate seven.
(calling off)
Next.

INT. AIRPORT - GATE SEVEN -- MOMENTS LATER

Gerry stands before several more soldiers and two CHINESE OFFICIALS who are inspecting his identification and papers. The officials look at him and his picture without enthusiasm, talk quietly between themselves in Chinese before reluctantly leading Gerry down the jetway.

INT. CHINESE MILITARY TRANSPORT PLANE -- EVENING

Lots of cargo, and a few cramped seats, the plane well on its way.

(CONTINUED)

Gerry sits by himself holding his bags, the officials off in another row. From time to time, they glance over at him with cold, unfriendly eyes. Nobody talks.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BACK ROAD -- DAY

Burning PYRES line the road where a Chinese military car bounces through the rural back-country. Gerry is in the car with the driver and a TRANSLATOR. They ride in silence.

As Gerry looks out the window, he sees several villages that have been burned out. Soldiers in sterile masks stand guard as villagers pile bodies covered in sheets onto the pyres, stacking them like cordwood. PULL BACK AND UP to see similar pyres burning in the distance as far as the eye can see.

EXT. FIELD HOSPITAL -- AFTERNOON

A military field hospital set well off the main roads. Several jeeps and cars are parked in front of it, including the one that was carrying Gerry earlier.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Gerry is putting the finishing touches to his interviewing setup: stereo microphones on the long table, a recorder parked discreetly to one side, chairs comfortably arranged.

He looks up as the Translator enters with DOCTOR SOONG TSAI, thin and straight and very, very careful.

TRANSLATOR

Mr. Lane...Doctor Soong Tsai, director
of field inspection services.

Dr. Tsai bows. Gerry returns it.

TRANSLATOR

You may ask whatever questions you
wish, and I will translate.

Tsai looks to Gerry and there's a sense of "the translator is only going to tell you what he wants to tell you." Gerry looks uncomfortable with this, but isn't sure if he should press the issue.

GERRY

Does Dr. Tsai speak English? It would
make things a lot simpler for me if --

TRANSLATOR

No. He does not speak English. You
will ask your questions, and I will
translate.

(CONTINUED)

Another glance. There's no way Tsai can make the first move without getting in trouble. Finally, Gerry comes to an inner decision.

GERRY

Well, then, I suppose we should get started. Please, sit.

Tsai moves toward a chair on the right. Without gesturing or looking up, Gerry says:

GERRY

You'll find the chair on the left is more comfortable.

Tsai hesitates, then sits in the left chair. The translator flushes as Gerry looks to him.

TRANSLATOR

I apologize. I misunderstood your question. Yes, he does have some English. But to avoid any further misunderstandings, I should --

GERRY

Mr. Xiao, I appreciate your help, but I have received permission from your government to interview subjects privately, so they will feel more at ease. I understand that Dr. Tsai's English is limited, and I will take full responsibility for a less than complete interview.

TRANSLATOR

Yes, but --

GERRY

I'll let you know when we're done. Thank you.

The translator doesn't like this, but there's not much he can do. He bows, turns and heads for the door, pausing to throw a warning glance in Tsai's direction. When the door is closed:

GERRY

I hope that little stunt of mine doesn't get you in trouble.

And in absolutely eloquent and flawless English:

DR. TSAI

In China, the ability to follow orders instantly, without question or hesitation is highly prized.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DR. TSAI (CONT'D)

I will tell them that my mistake was caused by my absolute dedication to always do exactly what I am told.

He smiles. Gerry returns it and heads toward the other end of the table where he's set up his equipment.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Dr. Tsai is in place, the equipment is running, Gerry has his notes in front of him, the interview is in process. Gerry's attitude is still very business-like and matter-of-fact.

GERRY

The very first instances of infection took place here in China, even though your government went out of its way to deny that there was anything wrong.

(beat)

You don't have to comment on that.

DR. TSAI

Thank you.

GERRY

I understand that you were on-site for one of those early outbreaks?

DR. TSAI

It was the first outbreak that I knew about. You understand the distinction, yes?

(beat)

I was working night shift at a hospital ten kilometers north of New Dachang when the call came in. It was quiet, just another driver injured when his motorcycle went off the road. We used to joke that your Harley-Davidsons killed more Chinese than all the GIs in the Korean War.

He smiles, but it's a hard smile. He looks at his hands.

DR. TSAI

I got to the village around midnight.

EXT. NEW DACHANG -- NIGHT

An elderly woman is leading Dr. Tsai toward a long, low-slung corrugated metal shack as other villagers look on, fear and worry on their faces.

DR. TSAI (V.O.)

As soon as I got there and saw their faces, I knew this was serious.

(CONTINUED)

They arrive at the door and the woman pushes it open. Tsai starts to take a step in, then pauses at a stench from inside before preceding the woman into --

INT. SHACK -- CONTINUOUS

-- where several men and women lay on straw pallets, their faces fevered, pale, some moaning softly in pain. Putting on latex gloves, Tsai bends to examine the woman nearest him. Her skin is mottled and dark in places, as if bruised from the inside-out.

She moans in pain as he carefully turns her arm, revealing a bite mark, red and inflamed. He glances at the next patient, who has an identical bite mark on his shoulder. *Note: All dialogue except for VO dialogue is in Chinese with English subtitles.*

DR. TSAI

Do they all have such bites?

(she nods)

How did it happen?

WOMAN

While they were fighting with him,
trying to subdue him.

DR. TSAI

Subdue who?

EXT. ANOTHER SHACK -- MOMENTS LATER

A villager stands outside a smaller shack, which has been padlocked. The woman nods to him as she approaches with Tsai, and the man unlocks the door, opening it just enough to peer inside, checking out the situation before opening it the rest of the way. Tsai precedes the woman into

INT. ANOTHER SHACK -- CONTINUOUS

-- and from Tsai's reaction the stench is even worse here than in the larger hut. A single bare bulb hangs from the ceiling, swinging slightly as we reveal --

-- what was once a young man, now shackled to a post in the middle of the room. His wrists and hands are bound, his mouth gagged, his complexion gray, his eyes rolling and unfocused. Then his gaze falls upon Tsai, and lock with an intensity that is frightening to behold.

As Tsai takes a step toward the young man, the woman instinctively reaches for his arm to stop him. He shakes it off and moves slowly toward the young man, who is pulling at his shackles, focused on Tsai and nothing else.

He stoops down next to the young man and, still wearing his gloves, begins an examination.

(CONTINUED)

The young man's head rolls and lolls, his mouth snapping and closing on the gag. Tsai reaches for the young man's wrist, finding where the pulse should be, and glances at his watch.

A BEAT...then another...and slowly Tsai's head rises to look into the young man's eyes.

DR. TSAI

No pulse...he has no pulse.
Impossible.

He digs in his bag for a stethoscope. Puts it to the man's chest. Moves it one way then another. His eyes widen. No heartbeat. He reaches for the bag again.

DR. TSAI

What happened to him?

WOMAN

He was swimming in the lake where some other men had disappeared. He said something bit his leg under the water.

DR. TSAI

When did this happen?

WOMAN

Three days ago.

He takes a needle to draw blood. Inserts the tip. Pulls back on the syringe. For a moment, nothing comes out. Then a thick, dark brown fluid enters the syringe, like blood that has nearly coagulated.

Tsai is still staring at this impossibility when the young man makes one more desperate lunge at him. The gag comes free and he SNAPS at Tsai, who scuttles back across the floor to get away. Frenzied now, the young man, or what's left of him, pulls and yanks and tears at his bonds...there's the SNAP of a shoulder separating and then --

-- the manacled arm is RIPPED FROM ITS SOCKET as the thing pulls harder. No blood drips from the wound, only the brown, thick sludge. Partially freed, it LUNGES for Tsai again and barely misses. Tsai retreats toward the door, the woman crying out hysterically, terrified. She yanks Tsai out the door to --

EXT. ANOTHER SHACK -- CONTINUOUS

-- and out into the night as the man standing guard SLAPS the padlock on again. From inside we can still hear the thing scratching and clawing, trying to get out. As Tsai tries to process what he has just seen, scared, breathing hard, we HEAR:

(CONTINUED)

DR. TSAI (V.O.)

What I saw that night was beyond anything I had been trained to handle. Whatever it was, there was no question that it was virulent and contagious.

EXT. NEW DACHANG -- MOMENTS LATER

Tsai is on a cell phone, pacing.

DR. TSAI (V.O.)

I called the Ministry of Health at once to give them a full report. The voice of the doctor at the other end of the line was...hard, official, routine in a way that made me think that perhaps I was not the first to make such a call.

VOICE ON PHONE

Have you had any direct skin-to-skin contact with the infected?

DR. TSAI

No.

VOICE ON PHONE

Good. Those already infected should be restrained. If any have passed into coma, vacate the room and secure the exit.

DR. TSAI

It's already been done. Look, we're going to need a full medical team here. We have to quarantine the area, post warnings --

VOICE ON PHONE

Are you armed?

This stops Tsai cold. He takes a BEAT, then:

DR. TSAI

Excuse me?

VOICE ON PHONE

Are you armed?

DR. TSAI

No...no, why should I be?

VOICE ON PHONE

Stay where you are. Support will arrive within two hours.

(CONTINUED)

DR. TSAI
Support? What kind of support? Look,
we're going to need --

Click and disconnect. He hesitates, then dials another number.

DR. TSAI (V.O.)
I knew then that something was wrong.
More wrong than I had suspected. So
I placed a second call to an old
friend, Dr. Gu Wen Kuei, at the
Institute of Infectious Diseases at
Chongqing University. We had not spoken
for some time, but I had his home
number. He was well connected inside
the government. If anyone would know
what was going on, it would be him.

INT. SHACK -- MOMENTS LATER

As the woman looks on, Tsai passes the cell phone over each
of the wounded villagers, sending back photos.

DR. TSAI (V.O.)
When I told him what I had seen, he
asked me to show him those who had
been infected.

Finished, he puts the cell phone back to his ear.

DR. TSAI
So what do you think? Gu?

KUEI (V.O.)
Are you alone?

DR. TSAI
No...just a minute.

He exits to --

EXT. NEW DACHANG -- CONTINUOUS

-- moving away until he's out of earshot.

DR. TSAI
Okay. I'm clear.

KUEI (on phone)
You've had no direct contact with the
infected?

DR. TSAI
No.

KUEI (on phone)
You've already called it in?

(CONTINUED)

DR. TSAI

Yes, of course. The medical team
should be arriving at any time, and --

KUEI (on phone)

There are no doctors coming. Do you
understand me, Soong? There are no
doctors coming. If you want to live
get out of there! Get out of there
right now!

Kuei hangs up. Tsai hesitates for a BEAT, not sure what to
do. Then reluctantly, he heads toward his jeep, walking faster
as he goes until he starts running.

EXT. ROAD -- LATER

Tsai is driving back the way he came when he passes a convoy
of five military troop trucks heading the other way, toward
the village. The soldiers are heavily armed. Tsai slows as
he watches them drive on, then continues away UNDER:

DR. TSAI (V.O.)

When I got back to the hospital, I
called the Ministry of Health to follow
up on my report.

(beat)

They said they received no such report.

(beat)

I tried calling my friend Gu, but he
was not at home, and he was not taking
calls at the university.

EXT. NEW DACHANG -- DAY

Tsai's jeep bounces up the rutted road that leads back to the
village.

DR. TSAI (V.O.)

There is something about the day that
dispels fears that seemed so real in
the night. So by late afternoon I
was ashamed of my decision to flee,
and decided to go back to the village.
I would not linger, just check to see
how things were going.

The jeep slows, stops. Tsai climbs out and stands looking
with horror at something we don't yet see.

DR. TSAI (V.O.)

What I saw...what I saw....

(beat)

There are no words.

He starts walking forward and we COME AROUND to REVEAL that
the village has been utterly destroyed.

(CONTINUED)

STAY WITH HIM as he walks through the ruins. Every building has been burned to the ground. Burned bodies lay on the dirt, cut down in mid-flight, attempting to escape. Bullet holes riddle everything in sight. He falls to his knees, tears coming at the slaughter. Stay with him long enough for the horror to really sink in, then:

GERRY (V.O.)
So what did you do then?

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM -- DAY

Back now with Gerry and Dr. Tsai, as the latter looks off into the distance.

DR. TSAI
What did I do?
(beat)
What did I do.

EXT. NEW DACHANG - DAY

Tsai struggles to his feet, wipes away the tears from his face, and walks back to the car. He gets in and, with one last look back, drives off UNDER:

DR. TSAI (V.O.)
I walked to my car, drove back to the hospital, and went back to work.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Gerry looks up, struck by this.

GERRY
You...went back to work.

DR. TSAI
Yes.

GERRY
As if nothing had happened.

DR. TSAI
Yes.

GERRY
And you told no one?

Tsai hesitates, a look of guilt and shame coming over him, then:

DR. TSAI
Three weeks later, I was in Beijing at a medical conference. There were several guests present from the United States, England and Switzerland.

EXT. BEIJING - BACK ALLEY - NIGHT

Tsai is held against a wall by two Chinese intelligence officers, one of whom whispers into his ear.

DR. TSAI (CONT'D)

The night before the conference, I was...visited by several agents of the PLA Second Department...our version of your CIA. They made it very clear that I was not to spread rumors that the government would find...counter-productive. If I spoke out, if I said anything at all about what I had seen, I would lose all I had. If I remained silent, I would be rewarded.

They drop him and walk out of the alley.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Back with the two of them.

DR. TSAI (CONT'D)

It was a very long night. But in the morning, I decided I would stay silent. I wonder every day what might have been changed had I but found my voice, and my courage, for just one moment.

He trails off into silence. It sits in the room for a BEAT before Gerry finally clears his throat.

GERRY

One last question. While this was certainly a very early case, it clearly wasn't the first because the young man had been attacked himself while swimming. Do you have any information at all on how the plague got started?

DR. TSAI

A patient zero? No. And because the government cauterized the area, I don't think we will ever know. It could have been caused by a virus, a biochemical accident, radiation --

(rueful smile)

Have you ever heard of the Jiang Shi?

Gerry shakes his head, no.

DR. TSAI

It means Walking Corpse.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DR. TSAI (CONT'D)

It's a very old legend, dating back to the earliest years of the Quing Dynasty, but I still heard stories of it, even as a child. When someone dies far from his village, and the family cannot afford to transport him home, they hire a Tao priest who has the power to reanimate the body and teach it to walk back to its village for burial.

(beat)

Perhaps one of them decided to keep walking.

Gerry nods, then switches off the recorder.

GERRY

Thank you.

DR. TSAI

(nods)

I am sure they will now parade you before all the ministries that will tell you they did everything they were supposed to do, and that even though no one could have expected what came, they all performed magnificently. But before you leave China, there is one other man you should see.

He slides a folded piece of paper across the table to Gerry, who unfolds it and reads the name written there.

GERRY

Dr. Kwang Jingshu. What should I --

DR. TSAI

Just...go and hear what he has to say. I know it will be difficult. The men who explained things to me also have their eyes on you, and that is a very dangerous place for you to be. I will understand if you cannot go. But I hope you will try.

Tsai is done. He looks off into the fading sunlight, where the smoke from hundreds of pyres rises into the sky.

DR. TSAI

When I first came here to supervise the cleanup -- my reward for keeping silent -- every waking moment I was aware of the smell of burning bodies.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DR. TSAI (CONT'D)

At night, I would go into a garden behind my house, to lose myself in the smell of flowers. Now...I hardly notice.

(beat)

And I no longer go into my garden, because I am afraid I will discover that I have lost the sense of smell.

And a final silence fills the room.

EXT. DOWNTOWN BEIJING -- EVENING

Just a moment to ESTABLISH. Unlike Chicago, the inner part of the city is awash in neon and light and color. But the lights of the city do not extend very far into the suburbs.

EXT. ROOFTOP -- EVENING

A reception is underway at an expensive suite overlooking the city. The sound of music and conversation filters through glass doors that open out onto the rooftop. Carrying a small plate of food, Gerry emerges from the party, in search of some air. He stands at the edge of the rooftop, looking out at the city for a BEAT before:

OFFICIAL (O.S.)

The lights are back on, do you see?

Gerry turns to see a Chinese OFFICIAL approaching, drink in hand. It's not his first. Also not his fourth. Gerry nods as the official comes alongside, joining him in looking out.

GERRY

Kind of hard to miss it.

OFFICIAL

We do what we have to, you see. We get it done.

(beat)

Are the lights back on in America?

GERRY

In some places. I just flew in from Chicago. They say they'll have the power on downtown in a few more weeks. The hospitals have to come first.

OFFICIAL

Of course. You see? You also do what is necessary. That is what we do, yes?

(beat)

Chicago. Is that far from Philadelphia?

(CONTINUED)

GERRY

Too far to walk.

OFFICIAL

(a smile)

My family and I visited Philadelphia once for a conference on international relations. Our hosts took us to a place for a...what is the term...a Philly cheese steak. You have had a Philly cheese steak?

GERRY

On occasion.

OFFICIAL

Do you like it better with the American cheese or Cheese Whiz?

GERRY

American.

OFFICIAL

My wife liked the American cheese. I liked the Cheese Whiz. I wonder if it is still there.

GERRY

Has there been any word on my request?

OFFICIAL

My superiors say we cannot allow you into the Northern provinces. The radiation level, you see...it is still too high. It is not safe.

GERRY

I understand. Well, I had to ask.

OFFICIAL

Of course.

(beat)

Do you have family still in America?

GERRY

My wife, Karin. Two daughters and a son, the youngest. He'll be two in June.

OFFICIAL

To be away so long...this must be hard on them, and you.

Gerry nods, looks out at the city, and his eyes tell us that this is very, very hard on him. So he changes the subject.

(CONTINUED)

GERRY

And you? Is your wife here with you in Beijing?

OFFICIAL

No. She --

(beat)

She was caught in the Northern provinces, you see, helping to evacuate her family when we --

He looks off, his eyes moist, working to shove down the emotion.

OFFICIAL

I learned what was to come the night before it happened. I was told that no one must know, that the fate of the country depended on it. But I knew she would call that night, and if I heard her voice, I would have to tell her the truth, because --

(I loved her)

-- so that night, I did not answer the phone. It rang all night....

And he knocks back his drink.

OFFICIAL

This is China, Mr. Lane, and in China we do what we must. The lights are on because we are not afraid to do what we must.

EXT. BEIJING HOTEL -- NIGHT

The government car bearing Gerry pulls up in front of the hotel. He gets out, nods good-night to the translator as another lower-level official approaches.

LOWER-LEVEL GUY

You had good time?

GERRY

Yes, very good time.

LOWER-LEVEL GUY

And now sleep? Early flight tomorrow. Going to Germany next?

GERRY

Berlin, yes. After a good night's sleep.

They continue into the hotel as the car speeds off.

INT. BEIJING HOTEL - GERRY'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Still dressed, Gerry sits on the edge of his bed. Looking at the note given him by Dr. Tsai with the name and address of Dr. Jingshu. Trying to decide what to do.

INT. GERRY'S HOME - FLASHBACK -- DAY

Pre-war. Gerry is in the living room, sitting on a comfy sofa, feet up, watching the evening news, which drones on in BG for a BEAT when Karin comes in and wraps her arms around his neck from behind.

KARIN

Nap-time. The kids are asleep.

GERRY

Um, hmm.

KARIN

I said the kids are asleep...and I don't have to be back at the office until three. Now, you can keep watching this if you want...or you can come upstairs where the Naked Horny Wife Network is playing.

She kisses the top of his head and heads off. He watches her go, smiling, then glances back at the TV just in time for:

REPORTER

Some continued jitters on the market today in response to an admission by the Chinese government concerning an outbreak in at least one province of what they are describing as African Rabies though this designation has not yet been confirmed by other health authorities.

His interest piqued, Gerry calls back:

GERRY

Hey Karin...there's a --

KARIN (O.S.)

There's a naked woman upstairs in bed. If you've got anything downstairs more interesting than that, go ahead and watch it.

He looks back at the TV.

ANCHOR

Bob, how is this strain different from normal rabies?

(CONTINUED)

Gerry turns off the TV. Just another story on the news. He walks over the back of the sofa and heads for the stairs.

INT. BEIJING HOTEL - GERRY'S ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Gerry is still looking at the note. Finally, his mind made up, he gets up, goes to the door, and opens it just enough to look down the hall. The lower-level guy we saw earlier is standing at the far end of the hall, by the stairs. Keeping watch. Gerry quietly closes the door again and makes his way to the narrow tenth-floor balcony that overlooks the city.

There is another, adjoining balcony for a room around the corner, with just a rail separating them. The other balcony door is open, curtains blowing in the breeze. Gerry hesitates, then steps over the railing onto the other balcony. Moving slowly, cautiously, he steps into --

INT. BEIJING HOTEL - OTHER ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

-- and though the room is shadowed and dark, we realize that there's a couple in bed together, having sex. They're so involved in what they're doing, however, that they are completely unaware of his presence in the shadows. He makes his way carefully through the room until he reaches the door and slowly opens it.

INT. BEIJING HOTEL - HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

We are now around the corner from the hall where the lower-level guy is keeping watch. Gerry slips out into the hall and makes his way to the stairwell.

EXT. BEIJING STREET -- MOMENTS LATER

Gerry flags down a taxi and shows him the piece of paper where Tsai has written down an address. The driver nods and Gerry gets in. The taxi speeds off into the night.

EXT. ANOTHER BEIJING STREET -- NIGHT

The lights have not yet reached this part of town. The buildings are old, littered with trash. Not a great area. The taxi stops in front of a squalid looking apartment building. Gerry gets out, leans in to the driver and points to the address, making sure this is the right place. He then pays the driver who heads off as he enters

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING -- CONTINUOUS

A narrow entrance to a four-floor walk-up and an equally narrow staircase, going straight up, with landings along the way for each tiny apartment. No lights, just a lone kerosene lamp hanging from one of the walls. Gerry pulls a keychain flashlight out of his pocket and walks slowly up the stairs.

(CONTINUED)

As he continues up, we hear children crying, or people talking behind closed doors. Along the wall are government posters, illustrated, showing what to do with a body. We see the drawing of a bound figure being tossed into a flaming pyre.

Gerry reaches the final landing and knocks at the door. For a moment, there's just silence. Then we hear locks being turned and the door opens.

GERRY

Dr. Tsai told me I should come.

The figure in the doorway steps aside and Gerry enters.

INT. JINGSHU'S APARTMENT -- MOMENTS LATER

Gerry is seated on a mat on the floor, his recording equipment set out in front of him as Jingshu brings two cups of tea and sits across from him and begins serving the tea.

We notice that Jingshu is blind. He wears dark glasses as he carefully but efficiently makes his way around the small apartment. His English is stiff, but still easily understood.

JINGSHU

Dr. Tsai, he is well?

GERRY

Very well. He sends his regards. He didn't have a chance to explain why he wanted me to see you, so --

JINGSHU

Do you wish to know how the infection first spread beyond China?

GERRY

Very much. That's one of the questions no one's been able to answer.

JINGSHU

You have a recorder?

GERRY

Yes.

JINGSHU

Turn it on.

Gerry obliges, switching on the equipment.

JINGSHU

I was a surgeon in Yinchuan, in the Gansu Province, north of the Yellow River. I went to school not far from there in Lanzhou.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JINGSHU (CONT'D)

It was our second largest city, after Beijing. Yinchuan was much smaller. Because we were near the border with Mongolia, there were many army bases in Yinchuan, so Yinchuan was very much an army city. The army did as it wished. You understand?

Gerry nods, then catches himself. Verbalizes it for him.

GERRY

Yes. I understand.

JINGSHU

I worked in a civilian hospital, but many times soldiers were brought in when the army hospital was crowded, or in case of emergency, or if they were drunk and there was a fight the soldiers did not want on the record.

(beat)

Sometimes, they came for other reasons.

INT. YINCHUAN HOSPITAL - OPERATING THEATER -- DAY

A pre-blindness Jingshu is finishing up work on a patient he's just operated on. His manner with the other surgical staff is professional, brisk, in charge. *(As before, all dialogue except for VO dialogue is spoken in Chinese with English subtitles.)*

JINGSHU

Close subcutaneous tissue with 3.0 interrupted absorbable suture, then the skin using 5.0 nylon sutures.

They go to work as Jingshu looks up to the operating theater door. A Chinese army SERGEANT is visible on the other side. He nods to Jingshu, who doesn't look happy to see him.

INT. OFFICE -- MOMENTS LATER

Jingshu is ensconced with the sergeant in his office.

JINGSHU

I told you, I'm done with this.

SERGEANT

This is a special case. Very wealthy. We need good hands. Your hands. We'll pay more.

JINGSHU

The money isn't the issue. I can't do this anymore.

(CONTINUED)

SERGEANT

One more time. One more time, and we forget you ever did this. If not, we will remember you did not do this. And our memory for such things is very long.

Jingshu's jaw works, but he's got nowhere to go on this. Finally, reluctantly and angrily, he nods.

EXT. ROAD -- AFTERNOON

A military jeep bounces down a long road, carrying Jingshu, the sergeant, and a driver.

JINGSHU

Who is the recipient?

SERGEANT

A German. Something-Muller. Very rich. My broker in Macau says he has been in a hospital in Germany for two weeks waiting for a heart transplant. If he does not get one soon, he dies. They said they would pay any price. My broker says when they called, they said "we decided to order in Chinese take out."

He laughs. Jingshu doesn't. He looks out the car to the approaching tents and buildings of an army base.

JINGSHU (V.O.)

For over twenty years, many in China had been involved in illegal organ transplants and organ harvesting. Specialized needs were hard to meet in the open market, so when something was needed quickly, phones rang in Beijing and Hong Kong. Fortunes were paid in exchange for a steady outward flow of hearts, kidneys, livers and corneas. No one asked where the organs came from. No one wanted to know.

(beat)

But of course they did know. They simply did not want to say it aloud. Did not want to know that they knew.

INT. FIELD HOSPITAL - OPERATING THEATER -- DAY

Jingshu and the sergeant, masked and gloved, enter a portable operating theater. A covered body is on the table.

(CONTINUED)

JINGSHU (V.O.)

Once the donor is deceased, you must get the body into surgery as quickly as possible, in order to guarantee that the organs will work correctly. Every minute counts.

Jingshu goes to the operating table and, as the sergeant watches, pulls back the sheet. He jumps back at what he sees.

A young man is on the table, wounded, dying...but for this moment, still alive. Jingshu looks to the sergeant.

JINGSHU

He's still alive.

SERGEANT

Not for long. Look at his wounds. He'll be dead in an hour, with or without his heart.

Jingshu examines the young man. A bullet hole is evident in his midsection.

JINGSHU

Gunshot....

SERGEANT

Shot while trying to escape.

JINGSHU

Escape what?

SERGEANT

Being shot.

He laughs again. Jingshu looks as if he'd like to take the scalpel to the sergeant, but pushes it down. He returns to examining the body, and notices that his hand is bandaged. He removes the bandage to notice that the fleshy part of the hand has been torn or bitten.

JINGSHU

What happened here?

SERGEANT

He said someone from another village had attacked him. Why?

Jingshu holds the scalpel. Hesitates. From the man's graying skin and overall look, it's pretty clear that he's not going to make it regardless.

JINGSHU

A bulletin came in this week to report any patients with unusual bite wounds to the authorities.

(CONTINUED)

SERGEANT

I am the authority, and I see nothing unusual. Now get to it.

Jingshu desperately doesn't want to do this. But with a last resigned glance he takes the scalpel and slowly slides it in.

INT. JINGSHU'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

With the two of them. Jingshu is pouring tea.

JINGSHU

We checked the heart for all the usual problems. HIV, AIDs, hepatitis, all the things we knew about. We did not, could not check for all the things we did not know about.

GERRY

And then?

JINGSHU

And then?

EXT. ORGAN BOX - EFX SHOT

CAMERA is attached to the back of the organ box so that it stays constantly in the center of FRAME as it goes from the tent to the jeep to the airport to a cargo hold to BLACK then --

-- to DAY as the cargo hold opens and in an ambulance, a hospital, an elevator, a gurney, and into an OPERATING THEATER in Berlin where doctors and a patient covered in green surgical sheets turns toward our POV.

INT. JINGSHU'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

CLOSE on Jingshu as he raises his cup of tea.

JINGSHU

...and then.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM -- DAY

A CODE BLUE is sounding, doctors rushing down the hall toward a high-priced hospital room. They BURST into the room to find --

-- what was once the German patient tearing out the throat of a nurse. It looks up at them and LEAPS at them with a SNARL.

INT. JINGSHU'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Jingshu feels his way to put the cup of tea back on its saucer.

(CONTINUED)

JINGSHU

We were the first such incident. But we were not the last. Not until the international embargo was put in place. The hysteria put an end to even the most carefully screened, legitimate transplants. Who knows how many people died waiting in hospitals for organs that would never arrive.

(beat)

That's all. I just...thought someone should know.

Gerry nods and finishes his tea. Looks to Jingshu.

GERRY

You said you were a surgeon. If I can ask...what happened to your eyes?

Jingshu "looks" away, his thoughts turned inward.

EXT. JINGSHU'S APARTMENT -- MOMENTS LATER

Gerry emerges from Jingshu's apartment, looking shaken by what he has just heard. He composes himself, takes a final breath of night air, and hurries away.

INT. JINGSHU'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Just the darkness, and the two men sitting in solemn silence until we HEAR:

DEXTER (V.O.)

So was I on this list of names they gave you?

EXT. BERLIN - WATERFRONT -- DAY

Gerry is walking along the waterfront with FRANK DEXTER, with the CIA. He is not recording this.

GERRY

No, but you were a big help when I did my report on Afgani reconstruction and a time when nobody else at the CIA would talk to me, so --

DEXTER

So you're going off the reservation.

GERRY

A little. When did the CIA first know there was a problem in China?

DEXTER

Depends on how you define know.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DEXTER (CONT'D)

Like every good intelligence agency the CIA spends a lot of its time monitoring communications between sovereign governments and their embassies. Such diplomatic messages are always encoded before being sent. Of course, we had the codes. We had their codes, they had our codes...it was a game. So yeah, we knew something was going on. The problem was, we were too smart for our own good. We didn't know that we knew.

(beat)

We'd noticed an uptick in the number of communiqués going back and forth between mainland China and her embassies around the world. But when we unscrambled the codes, we saw --

He stops, looks out at the water. Darkens.

DEXTER

Look, you have to remember that the first time we heard about this stuff happening, it was all so unbelievable. So we assumed this was a second code wrapped inside the main code. "Walking dead" as code for...I don't know... suicide bombers, or the capitalist system...hell, it could've been referring to actors from '70s sitcoms whose best years had passed, how the hell were we supposed to know that when they were talking about the walking dead, they were talking about the walking dead. Nobody speaks that plainly unless --

(beat)

-- well, unless there's something seriously wrong and there's no time for misunderstandings. But we didn't know that. We couldn't know that. We're not responsible.

GERRY

But the Israelis figured it out.

DEXTER

Yes they did, and my hat's off to them. That report of theirs, even coming in as late as it did, probably did more to save lives than all the big-mouth politicians on the planet. But the Jewish people are survivors, that's what they do.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DEXTER (CONT'D)

I'm not talking out of school here, no disrespect intended, hell, they'll tell you the same thing themselves. They're survivors. They think ahead. How they got there first on this one, you'll have to ask them. And if you do find out, tell me, because I'd love to hear about it. Call it professional curiosity.

GERRY

So you never saw the report when it first came in?

DEXTER

Nope...didn't even hear about it until months later.

Dexter starts walking again, almost as though walking away from that question, cutting off any further inquiry.

GERRY

You know, it would be a big help if I could put you on the record. It would only take me a few minutes to set everything up --

DEXTER

Not a chance. I spent twenty years at the agency avoiding microphones. I'm a bit old to start picking up new bad habits. Anything else?

Gerry digs a sheet of paper out of his pocket.

GERRY

I'm trying to backtrack how the infection spread even after everybody started putting on travel restrictions. The German government gave me this list of immigration officials, customs officers, none of whom have much to say beyond *yes, no, I don't know* and *I don't remember*. If you can think of anyone else I should talk to, I'd appreciate it. If not, I understand.

DEXTER

You understand? What happened to the Gerry Lane who'd gnaw off his own leg before taking no for an answer?

Gerry opens his mouth to reply...only to realize he doesn't have a good answer. Dexter looks to him with a flash of compassion, then takes the paper and puts it in his pocket.

(CONTINUED)

DEXTER

All right, I'll talk to some people,
see what I can do.

(beat)

You know, the other day, I was talking
to a friend of mine who's Jewish,
used to teach law in upstate New York,
and I said, "So if a Jewish zombie
eats another Jew, is it considered
kosher?" He thought about it for a
long time and finally he called me
back and said, "If the Jew he ate was
orthodox, then sure, why not. But
reformed? Not a chance." Love that.

Just then Dexter's cell phone beeps with a text message. He
glances at it, then snaps it closed and starts away.

DEXTER

I have to go now. I had one of my
guys distracting whoever's been tailing
you, but --

GERRY

I'm being followed?

DEXTER

(rueful smile)

A babe in the woods.

With that, Dexter starts walking away from Gerry, leaving him
beside the waterfront. As he goes, he calls back:

DEXTER

Hey, what do you call ten thousand
zombies in Washington, DC?

(beat)

Redundant.

(beat)

What do you call a hundred senators
whose brains have been eaten by
zombies?

(beat)

Status-fucking-quo.

(beat)

What do zombies and governments have
in common? Self-preservation at any
cost.

GERRY

That one wasn't funny.

DEXTER

Wasn't meant to be. Watch your step.

With that, he turns a corner, and disappears from view. Gerry
watches him go, then glances off to the side to see --

(CONTINUED)

-- a rather distinctive looking man who comes to stand by the railing further down-river. Gerry glances at the man just in time to catch him looking his way. The man turns his attention back to the river as Gerry heads off in the other direction.

EXT. BERLIN - STREET -- NIGHT

Gerry is buying a sausage wrapped in pita from a sidewalk vendor, who cooks them over a small grill. As the vendor hands him the sausage, Gerry looks past him to see the same man we noticed earlier, looking on from across the street.

Gerry takes his purchase and starts walking away, occasionally glancing back to see if the man is still there. He's in the process of looking back again when --

-- he bumps into another MAN coming around the corner. An envelope falls to the sidewalk. With a strong German accent:

MAN

Sorry.

The man sees the envelope on the sidewalk, picks it up, and hands it to Gerry.

MAN

I believe you dropped this.

GERRY

No, I --

MAN

I am very certain that you dropped this.

With that, he continues away. Gerry looks at the envelope, which is addressed to MR. BABE. Envelope in hand, he cuts into an alley and opens the envelope to see a list of names. At the top of the list: BRUNO HELF.

EXT. MOABIT PRISON - BERLIN - PRESENT -- DAY

A small prison in what was once West Berlin.

INT. MOABIT PRISON - INTERVIEW ROOM -- DAY

Gerry waits in a small, windowless interview room as we HEAR the sound of the door being unlocked. A prisoner is escorted into the room, BRUNO HELF. His handcuffs are unlocked and the guard steps outside as Gerry stands, extends a hand.

GERRY

Herr Helf, thank you for seeing me.

Helf takes the hand, shrugs. His accent is definite but the diction is clear. He sits.

(CONTINUED)

HELF

It's not like I was going anywhere.
Do you have cigarette?

GERRY

No, I'm afraid not.

HELF

You are American, the tobacco fields
are still there, I assumed you would
have cigarette.

GERRY

I don't smoke.

HELF

Ah. Next time you come to Berlin,
you should bring. Very hard to get
outside. In here, even harder. No
zigaretten, no drug traffic...the
dead have made the world of the living
healthier, yes?

(a laugh)

Did you know that the word zombie is
the same in English, German, French,
Italian, Spanish and Portugese? They
bring us together, eh? You can go
into any country in the world and
yell out, Zombie! and they will know
what you mean. Very, how you say,
handy for us, yes?

GERRY

Very.

(beat)

I spoke with your attorney this
morning. I assume he passed along
our conversation.

HELF

Yes. I talk to you, you talk to the
UN, the UN talks to the people who
run this place, and perhaps I am
getting out of here early. So, yes,
you ask your questions, I answer.

Gerry turns on the recorder.

GERRY

You were tried and found guilty of
smuggling people across the German
and Italian borders during the crisis.

HELF

I had a boat. A very nice boat. It
could carry ten, twenty people.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

HELF (CONT'D)

People paid me to use my boat. Sometimes they would bring their friends. Sometimes I would forget to mention to the authorities where I was going...and when I arrived, sometimes I would forget to mention that I was there. Oops.

GERRY

But how could any country control the infection if they couldn't control their own borders? Didn't it bother you that you were carrying people who might have been infected?

Helf leans in, pissed and making a point.

HELF

No, Herr Lane, it did not bother me, and I tell you why. There are rules on my boat, and rule number one is, I make the rules. Rule number two is, we do not take chances. Ever. With anyone, for any reason. Taking chances is not good business, it is stupid. My father once told me, the man who runs into a burning house is not a hero, he is a fool, because the fire does not know what courage is...and does not care. So yes, when the borders closed I took people on my boat. But I check every one of them. I look, I see. If there are marks, I say no. No marks, I say yes.

GERRY

Even so --

HELF

People were being over-run by these things, and their governments could do nothing to stop them. So what would you do, eh? Just stay and wait for those things, or try to escape to someplace where things were better? Did you? When you saw those things coming up your street, did you just stand around and wait?

Gerry looks down at his notes. There's something here, but we don't know it yet.

GERRY

No. No, I didn't.

(CONTINUED)

HELF

You ran.

GERRY

Yes.

HELF

You ran. They ran. We all ran. But with the roads and airports closed, where do you run to? You run to the sea...to the sea that gave us birth, and to hope beyond.

(beat)

You want to talk crimes, look to the bigger fish, who bribed people in the government, who took passengers and took money and checked only their wallets. They are not arrested because they can say we bribed this person, we bribed that person, and his boss... they have protection, you see. I did not, so I am here and they are not. But I know what they did, and they are the ones who should be here.

EXT. CARGO SHIP -- NIGHT

A cargo ship glides through the night, and we see crew members running, guns being fired.

HELF (V.O.)

Because of the embargo, container ships suddenly had no legal cargo to carry. So they took illegal cargo, a hundred, two hundred people at a time. They opened the doors and let in whoever had the money, no questions, no checks. The only marks they cared about were *deutschmarks*.

EXT. CARGO SHIP - DECK -- CONTINUOUS

Refugees are running out of the cargo hold and onto the deck as the crew comes on the run.

HELF (V.O.)

Many times, there was trouble.

Behind the refugees three newly-turned zombies roar out of the cargo hold, attacking anyone in their path. The armed crew members FIRE, not caring if they hit anyone who gets in the way. Two zombies go down. The third lunges toward the crew. They FIRE and finally bring it down.

EXT. CARGO SHIP - DECK -- LATER

Crew members are dragging several bound and gagged zombies to the edge of the ship as others look on, guns ready.

HELFF (V.O.)

Others they would catch before they turned and bind them. Then, when the living had become the dead, and the dead had become the undead, they were, shall we say...unloaded.

Snapping, tearing futilely at their bonds, the zombies are thrown overboard, disappearing into the dark water.

INT. MOABIT PRISON - INTERVIEW ROOM -- DAY

Back with Gerry and Helf. Helf leaning in, intense.

HELFF

What the crews did not understand...or did not care to understand...the dead do not need air. They do not need to breathe. And in the water, ropes expand...chains slip....

EXT. FLORIDA - BEACH -- DAY

A group of 20-year-olds are swimming in the surf, playing and splashing each other.

HELFF (V.O.)

...and sooner or later, every sea touches the shore somewhere.

Suddenly one of the guys swimming is YANKED down like a float on a fishing line...he BOBS back up again, screaming. The others don't react for a moment, not sure if he's just kidding around...then with another SCREAM he's pulled beneath the water, and blood stains the water.

SWIMMER

Shark! Get to the shore!

They swim as fast as they can, but as they get toward the shore, one by one, half of them are yanked down, disappearing into the water with screams and cries.

The few who make it to the shore fall, exhausted and terrified, looking back at the blood-stained surf --

-- as a hundred zombies walk out of the sea and LUNGE at the survivors, their SCREAMS ringing out across the CUT and taking us back to --

INT. MOABIT PRISON - INTERVIEW ROOM -- DAY

-- where Gerry looks to Helf across the table. He makes a note, the silence again as counterpoint to the screams of a second earlier.

GERRY

One last thing. During the hearing, you testified that you were there at the Indian port of Alang at the height of the great panic, but you didn't elaborate.

Helf looks down, his eyes darkening with memory...and a certain strange sadness.

HELF

I...do not like to talk about that night. Anything else, yes, but --

GERRY

Our information about what happened there is very sketchy. Very few survived, and fewer still will talk about it. It would be a big help.

Helf wrestles with this for a beat, in anguish, not sure he can talk about it.

HELF

No cigarettes at all? You're sure?

Gerry shakes his head, no. Helf steels himself, then:

HELF

Alang was not much of a seaport. It had no drydocks, no slipways. You would slide your boat up onto the shore like beached whales, take on cargo, then either push off or be towed back into the shallows.

(beat)

In the face of the infection, the Indian government was...how do you say...*Überwältigt*, overwhelmed. Paralyzed. People were desperate to escape. They would pay their whole life savings, just for a seat on a boat. Ships were pouring in from all over to pick them up. It was a feeding frenzy. For us...and for them.

EXT. PORT OF ALONG -- NIGHT

Dozens of boats and ships of every size and configuration choke the seaport. Some have been partially beached to pick up passengers, while others have sent out sideboats.

(CONTINUED)

The shoreline, which lay on this side of a high rise or hill, is thick with nearly ten thousand refugees, yelling, crying out, holding aloft passports and money, bargaining for a place, a seat, a chance, a hope.

Chaos and confusion, pushing and shoving, fights breaking out between the desperate and the determined. People wade into the sea, trying to climb onto boats already loaded to capacity only to be beaten back by men with oars, clubs and guns. There is panic, and the stench of madness.

CREW at the shore boats wave flashlights and shout out their different terms as other crew members struggle and pick through the people trying to get aboard:

CREW 1

Give me your money, everything you have, then I'll take you!

CREW 2

Women only! Here! Women only!

CREW 3

What have you got? I'll take food! Food and money!

Crew member 4, Indian himself, shines a light in the face of an Indian woman, then shoves her back.

CREW 4

Too dark...light skinned only, no untouchables, no lower castes! Here, you, over here!

In the melee we finally FIND Helf's ship, located offshore, as a handful of refugees climbs aboard from a sideboat.

SHIP'S SECOND

That's the last of them.

HELF

You checked them for wounds, then turn around and get more.

SHIP'S SECOND

They're clean.

HELF

Then we go.

The ship's second hurries off as Helf goes to the wheel and kicks the ship's engine into high gear. The boat cuts through the night when suddenly, in the distance --

-- we hear the sound of GUNSHOTS. He looks off to the shore. It takes him a moment, then a SOUND that no one could ever forget: ten thousand terrified people SCREAMING at once.

(CONTINUED)

HELFF
 ...merciful god....

ON THE SHORE

Hundreds, then thousands of zombies crest the hill, swarming down onto the stranded refugees. What was chaos before turns into blind, mass panic. Armed men fire, but the undead tide keeps coming.

People dive into the sea, swamp sideboats, struggle to get away, no other escape left. Crews kick away refugees and fight to get into the water.

A big boat cabled to a smaller one that has been beached to allow passengers begins pulling as more and more people jump onto the boat. It swerves, tilts and BREAKS, spilling people into the sea --

-- as the zombies plunge in as well while others tear apart those on the shore. The sea foams with people swimming toward the boats, which are themselves trying to escape, only to be caught in the maze of other boats crowding the port.

One boat rams another, trying to get out, capsizing both of them. Screams fill the night air as those who were aboard the ships struggle for their lives in the water.

Helf is torn by what he sees, the horror, the desperate screams of the men and women thrown overboard amid the waves and the death prowling below, snatching up at them and pulling them down.

He agonizes for a BEAT before suddenly turning the wheel and bringing the boat about, heading for the victims.

HELFF
 Stand by the ropes! Hurry!

SHIP'S SECOND
 Captain --

HELFF
 Do it!

The ship's second runs off to comply as Helf drives the ship right into the midst of the horror.

HELFF
 (half to himself)
 The fire does not recognize courage.
 Let's hope the sea does.
 (beat)
 Stupid...stupid....

But he does it anyway. And within moments --

(CONTINUED)

-- the people thrown overboard nearest his boat reach for ropes and anchor lines, for hands. Many of them are grabbed by zombies beneath the water and yanked down with a scream.

A zombie starts to pull itself up the anchor line. A crew member FIRES, and it falls back into the sea. The deck is crowded, the boat full. He shouts to his second.

HELFF

That's all we can carry...get us out of here!

The second runs to comply as Helf looks down to see a young woman still in the sea, clutching her infant child, fighting to stay above the water. She SCREAMS for help. Helf sees her and his reaction is immediate.

He JUMPS down to the lowest run of the side-ladder, reaching for her as she struggles with sea and child.

HELFF

Here! Over here!

He reaches into the churning waters as a Zombie BREAKS surface for a second, jaws SNAPPING for flesh, barely missing. Helf reaches again, and snares the woman just as the engines kick in.

HELFF

Hang on!

He yanks her up and they fall onto the deck as the boat DARTS forward, making its way through the maze of bigger and less maneuverable ships. Helf stands, a little unsteadily, to look out at the carnage through eyes numb with horror.

A container ship on fire.

A cargo ship where GUNSHOTS ring out, a firefight in progress.

Another ship sinking amid zombies bobbing all around, feeding.

Finally, Helf turns back to those who managed to make it on board, then to his second, who is talking with one of the other crew members who has been checking over the survivors.

HELFF

Are any of them infected?

SHIP'S SECOND

We're almost done checking, but so far --

CREW MEMBER

Sir!

(CONTINUED)

The crew member backs away from the woman and infant just pulled out of the water, yanking back a blanket to reveal the infant has blood on it. The woman screams.

WOMAN

No! She's not infected! The blood's from someone else in the boat! Here, here!

She frantically washes at the child's arm, and a moment later it's clear that the blood is only on the surface. The ship's second checks the infant, nods, it's okay. He looks to the other crew member.

SHIP'S SECOND

What about her?

CREW MEMBER

I checked her...no wounds.

Helf nods, and they allow themselves to breathe easier as the woman walks off, pulling a blanket around her as she carries her child off...and we look down to --

-- her bare feet, and see that as she walks, she leaves a slight footprint of blood. We CUT CLOSER to REVEAL a trace of a bite on the bottom of her heel.

EXT. HELF'S BOAT -- LATER

It's moving through the open sea now.

Helf emerges from the captain's cabin and walks past the rows of refugees sleeping, exhausted, on the exposed deck. He lights a cigarette, his hands still shaking.

He takes a breath of fresh air, allows himself a moment to realize that he has escaped unscathed...when he hears a sound. A wet, tearing sound, coming from the aft end of the boat.

He moves slowly, cautiously, to the aft end, where we see FROM BEHIND the woman rescued earlier, sitting on the deck, her back to us, still covered by the blanket. The sound is coming from here.

Helf shines a flashlight on her...comes around to the front...and discovers to his horror --

-- that she has turned. The thing that was a young woman a little while ago looks up at him absently as she quietly devours her infant child.

Helf's eyes go wide with the light of madness as he reaches for his gun, pulls it out and FIRES.

INT. MOABIT PRISON - INTERVIEW ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

The gunshot is still ECHOING in our ears as counterpoint to the silence and stillness in the room. Finally....

HELFF

Sometimes, since then, I think perhaps my father was right. I don't know...I don't know....

Helf looks away. Discovers wetness running down his face. Brushes at it with his palm.

HELFF

I would kill for a cigarette.

EXT. BERLIN - PARK BY UN OFFICE -- AFTERNOON

Gerry is sitting in a park beside the local office of the UN, alone, his gear packed beside him. We hear enough English from others in the park to know that there are other Americans in the area. He turns his face to the fading sun like a man desperate for light.

When he looks down again, he sees several CHILDREN playing, their mothers off to one side, talking quietly. The children are playing zombie. One of them walks toward the others, swaying from side to side, as they mock-shoot it, yelling

CHILDREN

Bang-bang!

But the "zombie" kid keeps coming as we go to SLOW-MOTION to feature the kid: eyes glazed, lurching toward them.

BACK ON GERRY as we HEAR:

HELFF (V.O.)

When you saw those things coming up your street, did you just stand around and wait?

EXT. FREEWAY - NEW YORK - FLASHBACK -- DAY

The freeway is a virtual parking lot. Cars extend into the distance as far as the eye can see. Horns honk to no purpose. Some people have even gotten out of their cars to sit on hoods or stand around and talk as, inside one of those cars in the far right lane--

-- we find Gerry with his wife Karin and their daughters: two-year old CONSTANCE and eight-year-old RACHEL. The car is loaded up with supplies. Constance is crying and Rachel is scared, partly by what she sees, and partly because Gerry is agitated, nervous...scared.

(CONTINUED)

KARIN
I knew we should've gone another way.

GERRY
This has to open up sooner or later.
We'll be okay.

RACHEL
Mom?

KARIN
It's all right, honey, everything's
okay. We're just going on a road
trip. Constance, sweetie, there's
nothing to be afraid of. You're safe
in here. Mommy and daddy are right
here.

GERRY
It's like a fucking parking lot.

He leans on the horn. It does nothing but amp up Constance's
crying.

GERRY
(out the window)
Come on, what the hell's the problem?

Then, gradually, we become aware that more and more cars are
honking, not annoyed, urgently...and now, the sound of people
screaming. Karin looks around, doesn't see anything.

KARIN
Do you hear --

Gerry looks in the side-view mirror and sees --

-- FAR BEHIND THEM to where dozens of zombies pour out onto
the highway, swarming the cars, SMASHING windows and DIVING
in to attack drivers and passengers. People are desperate to
get out, but the cars are jammed bumper to bumper.

Some run for it but most of the cars are too close together
for them to open the doors, trapping them inside. Car after
car is attacked, some as they fight to escape, horns blaring
for help, people screaming, a veritable buffet as the zombies
move down the line of cars toward --

-- Gerry's car, and now the others have seen what's coming up
behind them.

KARIN
Oh my god --

GERRY
Hold on!

(CONTINUED)

He FLOORS the accelerator and SLAMS into the car in front of them, knocking it a foot or two forward, then puts the car in reverse and this time SLAMS into the car behind them, trying to buy room. The girls are screaming, tires smoking as he FORCES the car backward, buying another precious few inches as --

-- a zombie POUNDS against the side windows, BEATING at the glass, trying to get in. The screaming becomes shrieking as Gerry drives FORWARD one last time, and finally --

-- SWINGS the car around, with just enough room to get out of the far-right lane, the zombie hanging on as he CRASHES through --

-- the wooden-post retaining wall, bouncing down a six foot drop to an on-ramp. The zombie is hurled off and FALLS beneath the wheels of the car as --

-- Gerry GUNS the engine and speeds away. He risks a glance behind him to see other cars fleeing while the growing tide of zombies wash over the rest, tearing and devouring, the girls still SCREAMING as we go back to

EXT. BERLIN - PARK BY UN OFFICE -- AFTERNOON

-- where Gerry looks up from his thoughts to the kids playing zombie. One of the kids yelling "bang!" Gets up to complain.

FIRST BOY

You're supposed to fall down!

SECOND BOY

Nuh-uh! You didn't shoot me in the head.

FIRST BOY

Did so!

SECOND BOY

Did not!

And the two start tussling. The mothers, seeing this, come over to break it up as --

-- a German government car rolls up to the curb behind the bench where Gerry sits. He gets up, grabs his gear, and climbs inside. The car roars off down the street as we HEAR:

MCENROE (V.O.)

Listen, Gerry, I want you to know I'm getting some heat right now because of you.

INT. GERMAN GOVERNMENT CAR -- MOMENTS LATER

Gerry is on the sat-phone, heading to the airport. INTERCUT between him and McEnroe, who is calling from his office at the UN in New York.

MCENROE

There are a lot of people upset about who you've been talking to.

GERRY

I thought I could interview anyone I wanted.

MCENROE

With proper authorization, yes. But you're out there conducting unofficial interviews with criminals, smugglers members of the intelligence community --

GERRY

Look, Mac, if we're going to do this right we can't just look at the decisions that were made. We have to look at the elements that went into making those decisions. Besides, if I'm so far under the radar, how do you know who I've been meeting with?

MCENROE

I got a call this morning from Beijing, where you apparently interviewed a Doctor Jingshu without the permission of the Chinese government. They picked him up shortly after you left. He's in prison now, and he'll stay there at least until after the report is finished. Maybe longer.

GERRY

Christ....

MCENROE

There are a lot of people very high up the food chain here and abroad who are very nervous about this report. My contacts in the US State Department tell me they have a high level of knowledge about your activities. I suspect they have eyes and ears on you. I don't even know if this line is secure.

(beat)

Gerry, everyone signed onto this report because they believed they would be safe from any repercussions.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MCENROE (CONT'D)

If they start to feel otherwise, if they feel threatened, then they'd just as soon the report never saw the light of day. And there are any number of ways that can happen.

GERRY

What're you --

MCENROE

I'm saying that I can't guarantee your safety.

Gerry looks out the window, considering this.

MCENROE

Did you hear me? I said --

GERRY

I heard you. I just...with everything that's happened, I don't know if that's the same kind of threat it used to be.

(beat)

About Jingshu, is there anything we can do?

MCENROE

I can file a complaint, but that's all. For what it's worth, I'm sorry for what happened to him. We'll do what we can to help.

GERRY

I appreciate it. Thanks.

MCENROE

You know, for someone who didn't even want this job, you're digging in pretty deep.

GERRY

Well, it's...kind of getting under my skin, you know?

MCENROE

Yeah, I know. I know you.

(beat)

So where are you going now?

Gerry looks out the window, the Berlin airport looming ahead.

GERRY

Tel Aviv. I'll call when I get in.

Gerry turns off the sat phone and looks off as we HEAR:

(CONTINUED)

GERRY (V.O.)

You said you used to be a surgeon.
If I can ask...what happened to your
eyes?

INT. JINGSHU'S APARTMENT - FLASHBACK -- NIGHT

Back with the two of them in Jingshu's apartment.

JINGSHU

My eyes?

(beat)

As I said, Yinchuan was in the Northern
Provinces. That is where the Walking
Plague started, and where it spread
most quickly. By summer there were
almost half a million of them, mainly
concentrated in the north. There
were rumors the government was going
to cauterize the wound. We assumed
that meant blockades, checkpoints,
that no one would be allowed out.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD -- DAY

A flood of refugees extends down the road as far as the eye
can see. Jingshu is among them.

JINGSHU (V.O.)

To avoid being trapped, many of us
fled South, taking only as much as we
could carry. There was no gas, no
cars on the road other than military
trucks. Traffic over the bridge that
crossed the Yellow River was backed
up for days. We were waiting our
turn to cross. It was hot. I remember
children crying.

He looks up to the distant horizon.

JINGSHU (V.O.)

And then the sun touched the earth.

And a thermonuclear BLAST lights up the horizon, WHITING OUT
everything. He's looking right at the flash as it happens.
He throws an arm over his face and CRIES OUT.

INT. GERMAN GOVERNMENT CAR -- CONTINUOUS

The echoes of the explosion carry ACROSS THE CUT as Gerry
look up at the ROAR of an airplane passing overhead UNDER:

WARMBRUMM (V.O.)

The problem with most people is that
they don't believe something can happen
until it already has.

INT. WARMBRUMM HOME - KITCHEN -- EVENING

JURGEN WARMBRUMM, 50s, heavyset, avuncular, is cooking dinner and talking to Gerry as kids run in and out, grabbing nibbles from plates.

WARMBRUMM

That's not stupidity or weakness, that's just human nature. I don't blame anyone for not believing, and I don't claim to be smarter or better because I did. I just happened to be born into a group of people who live in constant fear of extinction. It has taught us through horrific trial and error to always be on our guard.

He looks to where one of the kids is edging toward a piece of dessert.

WARMBRUMM

You can eat that dessert before dinner if you wish, but in return you will not get another dessert until six months after you are married. Your choice.

The kid takes a powder. Warmbrumm looks to Gerry, smiles.

WARMBRUMM

You see? That is what we do in the intelligence service. We give those around us information and the illusion of choice when in fact we have already decided what needs to be done. That is one of the differences between Israel and the United States. In America, you decide what you are going to do, then you fix the intelligence around the policy. Here, we fix the policy around the intelligence. In Israeli politics, intelligence comes first. In US politics, intelligence is much harder to find. Pass the mushrooms.

Gerry picks up a colander of mushrooms and hands it across.

GERRY

So how did you do it?

WARMBRUMM

Do what?

(CONTINUED)

GERRY

Every other intelligence service intercepting communiqués between Mainland China and her embassies had the same information. But you were the first to figure out what was actually going on. How?

WARMBRUMM

Do you know what a minyan is, and where it comes from?

GERRY

It's ten men needed for prayer, or to sit shiva for the dead. I assume it comes from when God told Abraham He would spare Sodom and Gommorrah if he could find ten honest men.

WARMBRUMM

A logical and brilliant assumption.

GERRY

Thank you.

WARMBRUMM

Also completely wrong.

(beat)

On the eve of reaching the promised land, the people of Moses were getting cranky. Is it nice there, they said? Is there enough food? Is it safe? Is there ample parking? Moses said God tells me it's safe. The people said good for you, but to tell you the truth, after wandering in the desert for forty years, we're not so hot on what you or God have to say.

Warmbrunn goes to the stove, sets the fire going.

WARMBRUMM

So Moses created the first recorded intelligence agency. He picked ten men -- even called them spies -- and sent them to gather intelligence on the land of Canaan. They all came back with the same basic information. Yes, it's nice. Yes, there's food. Yes, there's ample parking. But safe? Nine said no, it's not safe, we should turn around and go back to Egypt. The tenth, Caleb, said they're wrong, it's safe enough. He held his ground even though everyone yelled and screamed and carried on.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

WARMBRUMM (CONT'D)

And he was right. And here we stand.

(beat)

You're wondering why I'm telling you this, aren't you?

GERRY

I assume there's a reason.

As the food begins to cook, Warmbrumm goes to the dining room, sits heavily.

WARMBRUMM

In the months before October 1973, Israeli intelligence saw footage of Arab troop movements but unanimously agreed that they did not pose a threat to us. A month later, the Arab attack almost drove us into the sea. To prevent similar mistakes in future, we created an intelligence version of a minyan. Given the same information, if nine of us come to the same conclusion, it is the responsibility of the tenth man to disagree. No matter how unlikely or improbable it may seem, the tenth man has to start digging on the assumption that the other nine might be wrong.

GERRY

And you were the tenth man.

WARMBRUMM

Luck of the draw. Like the Americans, everyone assumed that this talk of zombies was cover for something else. So I began my investigation on the assumption that when the Chinese said zombies, they meant zombies, that human beings were being reanimated as ravenous killing machines. I got a lot of ribbing by the rest of my department...until enough pieces began to come together to say that yes, this was true, this was happening, and it was a threat not just to us, but to the whole world.

(beat)

So I wrote up my report, and sent it upstream.

INT. MOSSAD HEADQUARTERS - CONFERENCE ROOM -- DAY

AKA the Israeli Secret Intelligence Service in Tel Aviv. At one end of a very long conference table sits a five years younger Warmbrumm.

(CONTINUED)

Midway up the table Warmbrumm's SECTION CHIEF sits, squirming uncomfortably, as at the far end of that long table a government OFFICIAL -- the head of Mossad -- sits reading Warmbrumm's report, which is in a manila folder.

As he finishes reading each page, he turns it over, reads the next one. The room is silent except for the sound of pages turning and the occasional cough. The section chief doesn't want to be here, and he keeps glancing to Warmbrumm with a "why are you doing this to me?" expression.

The painful silence continues for a BEAT, then Warmbrumm clears his throat, indicates the folder.

WARMBRUMM

I attached some high altitude
reconnaissance photos, but they don't
really show....

He tapers off at a lethal glance from his section chief.

Finally, the official finishes reading. He re-stacks all the pages, taps them so they're properly lined up, places them in the folder, closes the folder. Places his hands flat on the folder as he looks out across the table for another silent BEAT, then:

OFFICIAL

Zombies.

The section chief shifts uncomfortably, seeing his career passing in front of his eyes.

SECTION CHIEF

Minister, I --

The official silences him with a gesture. Still looking to Warmbrumm.

WARMBRUMM

The intercepts are very clear about
the aggressive nature of the infection.
They do not know whether it is spread
only by contact or if it is airborne,
but the process is always precisely
the same. The infected person dies --

SECTION CHIEF

Or seems to die. It could be similar
to catalepsy in that respect, creating
a condition that looks like death,
but --

WARMBRUMM

The infected person dies.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

WARMBRUMM (CONT'D)

The infection then reanimates the corpse at the most primitive, aggressive level. It attacks, it feeds, and continues to do so until destroyed, usually by a gunshot to the brain or decapitation.

(beat)

I've spoken to several neurologists who say there could be a bacteria that produces a biochemical bath that preserves the neural system even in death. Because only the instincts necessary for survival are revived -- violence and the need to feed -- it's possible that the infection can only reanimate the most primitive parts of the brain.

OFFICIAL

And your solution to this is a wall?

WARMBRUMM

Yes, in conjunction with heightened security checks. We must isolate anyone who exhibits signs of sickness or disorientation, anyone with visible wounds, especially bite marks. As to the wall, we already have secure fences along the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and elsewhere. We can start there and secure the rest in short order. People will protest the restrictions, but they are absolutely necessary.

OFFICIAL

Your report mentions Jerusalem.

WARMBRUMM

It's too wide-open, too exposed, there is no way we could secure it.

(soberly)

We would have to abandon Jerusalem.

This goes down hard. Warmbrumm leans in, his tone urgent.

WARMBRUMM

The infection spreads with frightening speed. One becomes two becomes four becomes eight and suddenly you are outnumbered. They do not respond to threats. They do not tire, do not register fear, do not notice pain, or injury, or loss of limb. If they are allowed to gain even the smallest foothold in Israel, it will be too late for all of us.

(CONTINUED)

Finished, he waits. The section chief risks a glance to the official, who is tapping his fingers on the report. Finally:

OFFICIAL

On my way here, I reviewed your personnel file. You have been with the Mossad for eleven years. No discipline problems, no drinking problems. Your last review described you as "efficient but not terribly imaginative," and pronounced you sane, sober and competent, three words that I wish were not at the other end of this report.

(beat)

You realize that if this report is incorrect, if any part of it is in error, that you will be held up to ridicule? That you will be fired in a manner so breathtaking in its rebuke that no intelligence service on the planet would ever, ever hire you? That your career and your life would be over? That for all intents and purposes you would be the walking dead? Do you truly understand that?

WARMBRUMM

I understand.

OFFICIAL

(sighs)

I was afraid you did.

He takes the folder, puts it in his briefcase, and stands.

OFFICIAL

I will convene a meeting with the Prime Minister at three o'clock. Be there.

(beat)

Meanwhile, I suggest you send a copy of this to our American friends. Perhaps they can add something of their own.

And he starts out of the room UNDER:

GERRY (V.O.)

And did you?

WARMBRUMM (V.O.)

Of course.

INT. CUBICLE -- MOMENTS LATER

Warmbrumm closes and seals a security envelope and in SLOW MOTION drops it into a tray and walks away. We STAY with the envelope UNDER:

WARMBRUMM (V.O.)

What happened to it after that, I
have no idea.

MONTAGE

STILL STAYING WITH THE ENVELOPE, keeping the same position in FRAME, as a hand takes it, puts it on a cart, and in an --

-- EXTREME HIGH SPEED sequence the cart rolls down the hall, turns to a delivery room, it's shoved into a clear plastic box, BLASTS out the building into a truck, then into an airplane cargo hold, it goes dark --

-- back to LIGHT as the box is offloaded onto another truck, it speeds across town, then the envelope is removed and --

-- placed on another cart, ROLLING down the halls of the CIA, still moving FAST FAST FAST until it arrives at a desk where the envelope is finally removed from the cart and put into the IN BOX on someone's desk.

PULL BACK to REVEAL that the desk belongs to the CIA agent we saw earlier, Dexter. He picks it up, phone cradled under his chin and flips casually through it.

DEXTER

Yeah, Palm Springs. Bags are packed,
we leave as soon as I'm done here.
Two weeks. Really looking forward to --

He stops as his gaze goes down the page. A BEAT, then:

DEXTER

Hmm? No, I'm here, I just --
(beat)

Did you send this, Arty? I'm holding
a report on Mossad stationery about
zombies. Don't give me that, you're
the one who sent a copy of a letter
on White House stationery about how
everybody in the agency was going to
be replaced by aliens from the Roswell
crash. This has your fingerprints
all over it. Yeah? Let's see.

He sits forward, holding the report over his head.

DEXTER

Very funny, people...who did this?

(CONTINUED)

Other agents glance up and go back to their work.

DEXTER

(into phone)

Okay, look, it's a great goof but I don't have time for this, I have to get the hell outta Dodge. See you in a couple of weeks.

He gets up and, as he walks out, tosses the report on an adjacent pile of other reports as we HEAR:

WARMBRUMM (V.O.)

The problem is that when we are confronted by something unexpected, something beyond what is considered possible, we refuse to look at it because we do not wish to expose ourselves to ridicule.

INT. WARMBRUMM HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Afternoon sunlight slants through the windows as Gerry sits with Warmbrumm.

WARMBRUMM

Becoming adults means accepting that some things are possible, and the rest...no. We fall asleep in our own lives, in the soft bed of our expectations. When you sleep in your home, there are sounds all around you, but they are expected sounds, and they do not wake you in the middle of the night. But then a new sound comes, an unexpected sound, an impossible sound, the sound of someone or something in your house. You sit up and think, is this real, or am I dreaming? At that moment you either wake up in your own life and deal with whatever that is...or perish. Some saw the intelligence for what it was, woke up at once, and survived. Others did not...and perished.

GERRY

Mr. Warmbrumm, it's been an honor. I can't thank you enough for --

WARMBRUMM

On the other hand, we also fall asleep when the horrors of the waking world are too much with us, and sleep is our only escape. This is no better.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

WARMBRUMM (CONT'D)

The world woke up to the certainty of horror; it must now awaken again to the possibility of hope.

(beat)

Take you. Do you know what I see when I look in your eyes? I see a man who is starting to wake up, and isn't sure he really wants to open his eyes all the way. You want my advice?

GERRY

Do I have a choice?

WARMBRUMM

Nobody comes to the end of their lives thinking, "I wish I had slept more." This is your wake up call, Mr. Lane. Time to get up.

Gerry holds his gaze for a BEAT, then looks away, uncomfortable with the truth that has just entered the room.

SALADIN (V.O.)

Of course we thought it was a Zionist lie. Who didn't? Who wouldn't?

EXT. STREET - OCCUPIED PALESTINE -- DAY

Gerry and an eighteen-year-old Palestinian, SALADIN KADAR, sit in the outdoor patio of a coffee shop, the sun hot above them. Here life seems the most normal. Couples sit in the shade, talking, holding hands. Children play, cars roll by.

SALADIN

When the Israelis said they were enacting a policy of voluntary quarantine, what was I supposed to think? Was I really supposed to believe that some kind of plague was turning dead bodies into monsters? Who could believe such foolishness, especially when it came from your most hated enemy?

INT. SALADIN'S HOME - KUWAIT -- NIGHT

Saladin, sixteen, his father ASHEED, mother and sister watch as Al Jazeera broadcasts the Israeli Ambassador speaking before the U.N. Saladin looks on with open contempt. But his father is watching with attentive, curious eyes.

AMBASSADOR

In the face of what we believe will become a worldwide pandemic, the state
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

AMBASSADOR (CONT'D)
of Israel is prepared to offer
sanctuary to any foreign-born citizens
of Israeli extraction, and any
Palestinians who have lived in formerly
occupied territories, or currently
live within the borders of Israel.

An Al Jazeera news reader appears on-screen.

AL JAZEERA REPORTER
Several nations introduced motions to
protest the action by the Israeli
government to seal its borders, but
were vetoed by the United States and
Britain. Later in the day --

Saladin gets up and turns off the TV. He's heard enough.

SALADIN
Can you believe that bastard? They
think we're stupid. I saw Rashi this
afternoon, he said the Israelis are
pulling out of Jerusalem. He saw the
trucks pulling out with his own eyes.
The Jews know that they're beaten.
They know we will be coming for them.

SISTER
Then why are they inviting Palestinians
to come live there?

SALADIN
It's a trick. They want to put us
around military bases and power plants
as human shields.

MOTHER
I don't know. I saw on Al Jazeera,
people have been getting sick, violent --

SALADIN
It's African Rabies. Rashi told me.
People get rabies sometimes, that's
all. They go insane, bite people,
and they get rabies. It's a new
strain, but it's not a big deal.

SISTER
And how does Rashi know so much?

SALADIN
He's signed up with the Children of
Yassin. He's going to be a martyr.
He sees the information they get from
all over the world. It's just rabies.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SALADIN (CONT'D)

The Jews are using it as an excuse to build their wall. He --

Saladin's father breaks his long silence. Looks to his wife.

ASHEED

It's time. This is what we've been hoping for.

MOTHER

I don't know --

ASHEED

We can't wait any longer. We have to go while we still can, before they change their mind.

SALADIN

Go? Go where?

ASHEED

Your mother and I lived in Israeli occupied territory in '67. We still have the paperwork.

SALADIN

What...what are you saying?

ASHEED

I'm saying your friend Rashi doesn't know what he's talking about.

SALADIN

And you do? A janitor at a hospital? What do you know about it?

ASHEED

I know what I've seen.

INT. KUWAIT HOSPITAL - HALLWAY -- DAY

Asheed is arriving for work in his janitor's clothing to see ARAB SOLDIERS running into and out of the hospital.

As he continues in, some soldiers are carried past him on stretchers, disappearing elsewhere into the hospital. The walls are cratered with bullet-holes. Doctors and nurses move on missions of urgency. The place looks like a war zone. As a nurse passes, he tries to get her attention.

ASHEED

What happened? Was there an attack?

She doesn't answer, rushing past him. Walking faster now, he comes to --

INT. HOSPITAL - EMERGENCY ROOM -- DAY

-- and the place is a slaughterhouse, crawling with soldiers. Bodies everywhere. Nurses and other staffers crying hysterically. A DOCTOR is arguing desperately with a SOLDIER.

DOCTOR

We have to get everyone out of here --

SOLDIER

No We have the situation under control! Go back to work!

DOCTOR

Listen, you son of a bitch, you don't know what you're dealing with here!

SOLDIER

Go back to your work! And tell no one about this! You understand? Or you will end up like the others we --

Then they hear a SCREAM from down the hall. They race in the direction it came from. Asheed follows down the hall to --

-- the morgue where what was once another DOCTOR lurches out into the hallway. It sees the soldiers and comes at them, snarling. They FIRE. The bullets riddle the thing, having no effect until one hits it in the head and it goes down.

ASHEED (V.O.)

What I saw...it was not rabies. It was not anything they, or I, have ever seen before.

INT. SALADIN'S HOME - KUWAIT -- NIGHT

Back where we were.

ASHEED

The soldiers, the government, they do not know how to deal with this. I have no love of the Jews but at least they are trying to deal with the coming storm. We will have a chance there.

SALADIN

No --

ASHEED

We'll go first thing tomorrow, while we can. If we wait I don't know if we can get out of here before --

SALADIN

I won't go!

(CONTINUED)

ASHEED

I'm your father, you'll do as I say!

SALADIN

No! You want to go to the Jews, you want to the yahud's whore and live in their internment camps, go! I won't! I've joined the Children of Yassin!

ASHEED

What?

SALADIN

Like Rashi I will be a martyr! I will be a hero to our people! Not a coward who runs to the Jews to hide!

And his father LUNGES at him, grabs him by the shirt and RAMS him up against a wall, fury in his face.

ASHEED

You will go! I am your father! You will obey me!

He slaps Saladin, hard. Yanks him back up and hits him again.

ASHEED

You will leave with this family or you will not leave this room alive! Do you understand me? Do you understand me?

Saladin's stunned silence is his answer. His father studies him for one more BEAT then drops him. He looks to his wife.

ASHEED

Start packing. We take only what we can carry. Hurry.

She moves off. We PAN BACK to Saladin UNDER:

SALADIN (V.O.)

It was the first time he had ever slapped me.

EXT. STREET - OCCUPIED PALESTINE -- DAY

Back with Saladin and Gerry in the present.

SALADIN

All my life, he had been this quiet, docile little man who almost never raised his voice. Now suddenly he was this lion protecting his cubs.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SALADIN (CONT'D)

He knew that fear was the only thing he had left that he could use to save my life. If I was not afraid of the plague, then by god I would be afraid of him. I hated him for it. I thought he was a coward. I thought, I will go, and I will show him the truth, and then he will see, he will understand, and apologize.

He takes a long sip of coffee, looks off.

SALADIN

By then, the Arab League had started imposing travel restrictions to try and contain the plague, so there were no direct flights to Israel. We had to fly from Kuwait City to Cairo, then take a bus across the Sinai Desert to the checkpoint at Taba.

EXT. TABA -- DAY

A dozen or so buses have parked in a designated safe zone. A chain link fence ribbons off in both directions, with just one way through. The entrance is heavily guarded by soldiers and trained dogs who are brought to sniff at everyone who passes through the gate.

The crowd from the latest bus -- including Saladin's family -- are ushered through the checkpoint single-file. Soldiers with guns never take their eyes off the new arrivals as they move through.

Ahead of Saladin, a man starts through the gate when the dogs suddenly begin BARKING at him, snarling, trying to get to him. The soldiers quickly move in and, with a few quiet words, pull the guy out of line.

The procession stops as the man is taken a few steps away and searched, examined. His shirt is pulled up to reveal wounds. The soldiers quickly march him toward a tent in the distance as the go-ahead is given to the procession to continue.

Saladin walks guardedly past the dogs, which sniff at him but don't react. Nor do they react to anyone else in his family. Several more get through then again --

-- the dogs start BARKING at another man, an American. Again the soldiers move in.

MAN

Look, what's the problem? I'm okay.

They start to pull him away. He resists.

(CONTINUED)

MAN

Leggo...I'm am American, you can't
treat me like this...let GO! I --

The argument is suddenly interrupted by the sound of OS
GUNFIRE. They turn to see a BLACK VAN racing toward the gate
as a soldier fires another warning shot. He yells for the
van to stop. It doesn't.

The soldier FIRES at the van. It swerves but keeps on coming.
Now everybody is shooting at it as it --

-- CRASHES through the gate and straight at Saladin as --

-- an Israeli soldier DIVES at Saladin, barely getting him
out of the way as the van CAREENS through FRAME under a hail
of gunfire and finally --

-- SLAMS into a guard rail. Soldiers shouting orders swarm
toward the van as Saladin looks up.

SALADIN (V.O.)

I thought it was a suicide bomber, a
martyr in the name of Jihad, come to
deliver God's vengeance against the
Jews. But there was no explosion.
No bomb.

The soldiers draw closer, guns up.

SALADIN (V.O.)

It was a suicide driver, all right.
But the cargo was not a bomb. It was
a different kind of weapon. Another
kind of terror.

Suddenly the doors of the van open and out swarm half a dozen
zombies wearing clothes that identify them as Orthodox Jews.
They are on one of the soldiers too fast for him to escape as
the other soldiers FIRE at them.

One of them heads for Saladin, who is too paralyzed by what
he is seeing to move, when a GUNSHOT takes it down. It falls
just inches short of reaching Saladin. Dried, coagulated
blood seeps from its head. As the soldiers move in to clean
up the scene, still escorting away the American, Saladin looks
at the now-fully-dead zombie UNDER:

SALADIN (V.O.)

At the time, though, I did not fully
understand the nature of the terror.

EXT. TEL AVIV STREET -- DAY

Finishing up with Saladin and Gerry, seated at the table.
The afternoon light is slanting toward evening.

(CONTINUED)

SALADIN

First my people would capture the undead and keep them in cellars, or shacks. Then they would kidnap Jews, expose them to the infection, and keep them in chains until they turned. Then they would be shoved into vans and crashed through the barricades. Better than a bomb because a bomb can not get up and walk around. And if the Israelis manage to kill the things, it meant Jew killing Jew. It was, as you say in America, a two-fer.

GERRY

But you were given shelter by Israel, you survived because of that.

SALADIN

It served their interests. Those who stayed are cleaning up the streets for them. The Jews created the plague in the first place, you know. Everyone knows it. They were going to use it against us, but it got out of control. That's how they knew what was coming.

EXT. OCCUPIED PALESTINE - AFTERNOON

Gerry is being driven back through a burned-out part of town, looking thoughtfully out at it. As they pass a lot where cars are jammed in together for sale or barter, we go to

EXT. CAR LOT - FLASHBACK -- DAY

Gerry's wife Karin stands beside Rachel and Constance as in BG Gerry is talking with a salesman next to a large but rather old looking RV, big enough to hold a family. The salesman nods as Gerry hands him some cash and the keys to his car. The salesman goes inside to get the paperwork as Gerry hustles over to Karin.

GERRY

Okay, start getting the car unpacked. As soon as we can get everything in, we go.

RACHEL

But I liked the car.

GERRY

It won't do us any good where we're going. Now be a good girl and help your mother, I'll be right back.

He hurries off to the sales office as Karin goes to the car and starts taking out boxes.

INT. RV -- LATER

Gerry drives the RV down a long, rural road, Karin seated beside him, Constance asleep on a back seat, and Rachel perched at a window, looking forlornly out at the passing scenery.

RACHEL

I don't like this thing. It smells like old people.

GERRY

It'll pass honey, as soon as we can air it out a bit.

(to Karin)

We'll stop at the first supermarket we find. Remember, everything in cans, nothing perishable.

KARIN

What about frozen food?

GERRY

Keeping the freezer going means running the engine, and we'll need to conserve gas. We can pick up a few things, just for now, but nothing long term, it'll just spoil.

RACHEL

I don't understand...where are we going?

GERRY

We're going North.

RACHEL

Why?

GERRY

Because winter's coming.

RACHEL

But won't it be cold?

GERRY

That's the idea. See, Daddy saw a report at the office he works in at the UN. The report --

RACHEL

You shouldn't talk about yourself in the third person, it's creeping me out.

He looks to Karin, who shrugs.

(CONTINUED)

KARIN

She got an A in grammar this semester.

GERRY

Anyway, I got hold of a report from Finland, where it's a lot colder than it is here, and their winter starts earlier. What they discovered is that it doesn't make any difference whether you're alive, or --

(beat)

-- or whatever, sooner or later a body exposed to snow and ice freezes and stops moving. Once the snows come in, it'll literally stop those things in their tracks.

RACHEL

Does it destroy them?

GERRY

We don't know for sure. They may just go to sleep for a long time. But either way, it'll be long enough for the government to get things in hand up here in the North.

RACHEL

So what're they going to do about the south?

GERRY

They're not sure. Nobody's sure.

(beat)

So we're going north, away from the big cities and off the beaten track, near the Canadian border. Besides, fewer people means fewer problems. Think of it as a big camping trip.

RACHEL

For how long?

KARIN

Just until they get things under control. I'm sure it won't be long.

RACHEL

Why don't we just go somewhere they're not?

Another awkward pause, then:

GERRY

Because there isn't any such place, sweetie.

EXT. RV -- CONTINUOUS

The RV roars off into the distance it passes a freeway sign:
WOLFE ISLAND/CAPE VINCENT CANADIAN/US BORDER CHECKPOINT 120
MILES.

EXT. TEL AVIV AIRPORT -- DAY

Not quite as bad as what we saw in Chicago, but still largely
deserted, few people, and fewer cars.

INT. TEL AVIV AIRPORT -- DAY

Gerry once again stands naked as a doctor runs an ultraviolet
scanner over his body, checking for infection as armed Israeli
soldiers look on.

INT. TEL AVIV AIRPORT - BOARDING AREA LOUNGE -- LATER

Back in his clothes, alone, Gerry waits for his plane. He
glances up to a MONITOR showing CNN International. There's a
NEWS ANCHOR on-screen.

NEWS ANCHOR

-- where the governor of California
pledged again that full power will be
restored to Los Angeles and San Diego
within ninety days.

(beat)

In related news, a class action suit
was filed against the government today
by citizens still caught in the Dallas
area red zone. CNN reporter Craig
Culhaine has more.

And we go from the monitor to FULL SCREEN IMAGES OF

EXT. DALLAS NEIGHBORHOOD - FILE FOOTAGE - DAY

A pleasant neighborhood. Children playing. People taking
their pets to a dog-walk. Couples strolling.

CRAIG (V.O.)

Once, this was a suburban neighborhood
where children played, barbeques
charred hot dogs on the Fourth of
July, and couples strolled hand in
hand in that pre-war long summer night
we thought would never end. This is
that same neighborhood today.

EXT. DALLAS NEIGHBORHOOD -- NIGHT

The reporter, CRAIG CULHAINE, stands in front of a high fence
topped with razor wire and surrounded by debris and filth.
On the other side of the fence, people watch as he does his
on-camera report.

(CONTINUED)

CRAIG

Behind this fence, over a hundred thousand people have made it very clear that they're ready to come home. But the fence has still not come down, and like other civilians still caught in red zones in Milwaukee, Miami, Las Vegas and a dozen other states, they're not happy about it.

EXT. DALLAS COURTHOUSE -- DAY

SHOT DOCUMENTARY/NEWS FOOTAGE STYLE. A protest march is going on under the watchful eyes of police and soldiers. People carry signs and placards stating LET US GO HOME, TEAR DOWN THE FENCE, THIS IS STILL AMERICA, SET **US** PEOPLE FREE and so on. They chant loudly and angrily UNDER:

REVEREND CARROLL (V.O.)

The governor and the head of the Texas national guard promised that when the hostilities were over, we could return home.

EXT. DALLAS STREET -- DAY

More NEWS FOOTAGE of a SPOKESMAN for the group, who speaks to the reporter as some of his supporters look on. A chyron at the bottom of the screen identifies him as REVEREND ELLIOT CARROLL, SPOKESMAN, CITIZENS UNITED.

REVEREND CARROLL

Well, the fighting's over. The President came out on TV and, uh, and announced that the crisis was over. But it's six months later and we're still stuck here. We're tired of living in these conditions, we're tired of being treated like bait, there's no need for it, and, uh, we're making it clear here today with our voices and this lawsuit that we've had enough, and we want to go home.

MILITARY SPOKESMAN (V.O.)

We've explained to Reverend Carroll that we are trying to get everyone home as fast as we can.

INT. NATIONAL GUARD OFFICE -- DAY

The military SPOKESMAN is walking down a long hall.

MILITARY SPOKESMAN

While we've achieved strategic control over most of the country, on a tactical (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MILITARY SPOKESMAN (CONT'D)

basis we're still discovering the occasional infection. Before the sweep and clear teams can pronounce an area secure, they have to conduct a house-by-house search, and that takes time. Even if there's only one case in a ten mile radius, that's one case more than we can allow. We sympathize with those in the red zones, but we ask for their continued patience so that we can finish what we started.

As he continues away we HEAR:

TEXAS SENATOR CABRILLO (V.O.)

People need to remember that the red zones were created for a purpose that has not yet been fully realized.

INT. TEXAS STATE SENATE - OFFICE -- DAY

The woman on-camera is identified by chyron as TEXAS STATE SENATOR LOUISA CABRILLO. She sits very calmly beside her desk, dressed in a stylish red suit.

TEXAS SENATOR CABRILLO

In order to deal with the crisis we had to get as many people as possible into areas that were geographically inaccessible to the infected, who traveled exclusively on foot. When those were full, other people were moved into areas that were well protected and supplied, but were still accessible by foot. This would in turn attract the infected, drawing them into designated kill zones.

EXT. FORTIFIED NEIGHBORHOOD -- EVENING

SHOOT HAND-HELD. The onscreen chyron announces that this is FILE FOOTAGE. Soldiers atop rooftops above a long fence FIRE downward at a group of zombies moving toward it.

TEXAS SENATOR CABRILLO (V.O.)

Instead of fighting a war of attrition in the sprawling streets of our cities, this program allowed us to draw the infected to us in a controlled fashion, allowing our forces to eliminate the enemy in large numbers whenever they tried to gain access to a red zone.

Gunfire takes out one wave of zombies, then mows down another as they come toward the fence. It's like a shooting gallery. Soldiers WHOOP and HOLLER as they drop the oncoming zombies.

EXT. DALLAS STREET -- DAY

Back with Reverend Carroll and the crowd behind him.

REVEREND CARROLL

You can call us whatever you like, you can say we were magnets for the infected, or bait or, uh, or that we were some kind of f[bleeped]g roach motel, I don't care. We did what we were asked to do, and we're done, and we want to go home. If there's still a few, uh, a few problems here and there, we can deal with it.

INT. TEL AVIV AIRPORT - BOARDING AREA LOUNGE -- DAY

Back where we were with Gerry watching the monitor as Craig Culhain re-appears on screen.

CRAIG

While government sources will not give an official timeline for when those in the red zones will be free to return home, unofficially they estimate that it could take another two months for the more densely constructed areas to be cleared.

UNDER this an Israeli soldier approaches Gerry and nods, the plane ready to go. Gerry grabs his bags and moves OS.

EXT. LAX -- DAY

As a military cargo plane lands at the commercial airport. As we PAN WITH the plane, we notice that some of the buildings in the LA skyline are charred, blackened.

EXT. BEVERLY HILLS -- DAY

Gerry is in a sleek car being driven through a Beverly Hills rather different than we are used to seeing. Some mansions have been burned down or broken into, with big wooden panels securing what were once grand windows overlooking even grander properties. Armed security guards toting MAC-10 machineguns patrol every corner, each accompanied by a trained Doberman or German shepherd. A high-priced killing zone for anything that get within range.

Gerry turns his face to the sun as the car passes a van with the words REMAINS RETRIEVAL AND DISPOSAL SYSTEMS, INC. What look like body bags are being removed from one elegant home by employees in pristine white uniforms, shoes and gloves.

HOSTESS (V.O.)

Please try to excuse the mess.

INT. CANON DRIVE HOME -- DAY

A huge house, ten thousand square feet if it's an inch, on a good amount of property behind a massive hedge. A small party is in progress: wine in crystal glasses, candles, music, canapés on display served by domestics.

But there are signs of the recent unpleasantness: several windows have been replaced by wooden boards, we see workers around the outside of the house, cleaning up debris, and there's water damage to some walls where doors were broken in, a sense that things are not quite entirely back to normal.

The HOSTESS in her mid-40s is walking half-backwards as she escorts Gerry into the main room. Several other guests are already present, sitting or standing around the place in small clutches of conversation.

HOSTESS

Like most of the folks around here, we're just moving back in again, so it's going to take a while before we get everything back to normal. I'm afraid Breck's running a bit late, but there's food in the kitchen and cold drinks

(a smile)

Yes, cold drinks. The people who owned the house before we did put in solar panels on the south roof. After we bought the place we were going to have them removed because, well, it's just not the vision, is it? But now I'm glad we didn't. Isn't it funny how things just work out sometimes?

The OS doorbell rings.

HOSTESS

I should get that. Please, make yourself comfortable.

She hurries off to answer the door as Gerry looks around, as "comfortable" in these surroundings as a long-tailed cat in a room full of rocking chairs.

FIRST GUEST (V.O.)

Before the war I didn't have time for the news. I mean, who did?

POV MONTAGE

Each individual GUEST is shot head-on, from Gerry's POV, cutting from one to the next to the next, as he moves through the house. The first one up is a young woman.

(CONTINUED)

FIRST GUEST

Every day you're just rushing from one thing to the next. You get the girls up in time to drive them to school, then it's Pilates, lunch, the gym down on Beverly -- I like to make sure there's shoes, purses and clothes at the other end of my workouts to remind me why I'm doing this -- some quick shopping, then pick the girls up, making sure Magda remembers that we're low-carb three times a week because Jennifer's a little --

(mouths the word "fat")

-- then there's homework, a DVD, or a recital at the school, then it's lights out and the whole thing starts over the next day. How am I supposed to notice some kind of new infection in China in all of that? There's always some kind of new infection somewhere, who can keep track? Who wants to? It's just too depressing.

(a smile)

My husband Todd does this impression of American TV news covering problems overseas. "Something terrible happened in Europe today, but no Americans were injured, so here's the sports." Isn't that funny?

HARD CUT TO another part of the room, and a male guest.

SECOND GUEST

So what's the purpose of this report of yours?

HARD CUT TO another guest, also male.

THIRD GUEST

I resent the implication that we weren't paying attention. The problem is that we were paying too much attention to too many things. HIV, AIDS, Ebola, terrorism, hurricanes, Iraq, Iran, Korea, global warming --

HARD CUT TO a fourth guest, a woman who has had a bit too much to drink.

FOURTH GUEST

They said to go someplace where no one could get to you by foot, and our place in Vail was perfect, you practically had to helicopter in to get there, which is what we did.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

FOURTH GUEST (CONT'D)

We thought we'd stocked up pretty reasonably but halfway through that first winter we had to radio out to somebody with access to fuel and a helicopter to bring us food. Talk about ordering in....

(takes a drink)

Five hundred dollars for a steak, twenty dollars for a box of cereal. We had it to pay, that's not really an issue, pick a price and there's always somebody willing to pay it, and it's usually us, but still....

(beat)

I saw these people on the news complaining that they can't get home. They should do what I did, have someone send a car around for you.

And she laughs, like this is the funniest joke in the world.

HARD CUT back to the second guest.

SECOND GUEST

I'm still not sure I understand the purpose of this report of yours.

HARD CUT TO a fifth guest, female, more serious, her eyes haunted, looking off into the distance of her memories.

FIFTH GUEST

The boys heard about it first, they were always on the internet looking for what adolescent boys always look for on the internet. They stumbled on a story about rabies making people lose their minds and begin attacking people, then it was African rabies, then it wasn't rabies at all, and then they came across all these stories about those things...zombies.....

(beat)

The boys were already on Zolof and Ritalin SR, but when they saw that we had to up the dose to keep them from levitating right off the ground. Then we heard about cases in LA and Andrew bought a gun and pretty soon I was dipping into the Zolof myself. Then one night I heard this sound, and a window broke, and I ran down to see some...thing trying to yank my son through the window and I screamed and I grabbed onto him and I held on and I started yelling for Andrew and

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

FIFTH GUEST (CONT'D)

suddenly there was a gunshot and he
shot right past my head, and....

(beat)

I should stop. Andrew doesn't like
it when I talk about those days.
Tell you the truth, neither do I.

She sips quietly at her drink.

HARD CUT BACK TO the third guest.

THIRD GUEST

-- STDs, hepatitis, anthrax, freeway
snipers, school shootings, holes in
the ozone layer, whole species going
extinct, every day we're on the brink
of some new planetary catastrophe and
on top of all that I'm supposed to
start worrying about fucking zombies?
Please. It's not my fault. It's not
anybody's fault. If you're looking
for someone to blame, look somewhere
else.

And finally we HARD CUT BACK to the second guest.

SECOND GUEST

So who's paying you to write this
report anyway?

We HOLD on him for a BEAT as he sips his wine...as we begin
to realize that this guy is almost certainly asking questions
on the behalf of other parties.

EXT. CANON DRIVE HOME -- DAY

Gerry is sitting by himself beside the pool as BRECKINRIDGE
"BRECK" SCOTT emerges from the house, drink in hand. He sees
Gerry and starts toward him, hand extended.

BRECK

Mr. Lane? Breckinridge Scott. Breck
for short. Your liaison at the UN is
very persistent.

GERRY

He's very good at making it hard for
people to say no.

BRECK

Well, the conditions of my plea bargain
say I have to cooperate with any
authorized investigation.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BRECK (CONT'D)

I'm still not sure this is authorized under the terms of the original settlement, but my attorneys say when in doubt, best to show good faith.

(beat)

You do realize that I've been given full immunity, right? I don't want any surprises or fishing expeditions.

GERRY

I understand.

BRECK

Good. Then let's get this over with.

INT. CANON DRIVE HOME -- DAY

We're in Breck's home office. Lots of expensive pens, watches, clocks, and other high-end rich-guy toys.

BRECK

Fear is the most valuable commodity in the universe, Gerry. Turn on the TV, and what do you see when the commercials roll around?

GERRY

People selling products...?

BRECK

People selling the fear of you having to live without their products. Fear of aging, fear of loneliness, fear of poverty, fear of failure... fear of incontinence, spotting, smelling, falling...the fear that you're not as good looking as you want, fear that you can't get it up anymore and fear of what happens if you do and you catch something. Fear is the most basic emotion we have. Back when we still lived in trees, fear is what kept our ancestors alive. Fear is primal. Fear sells.

(beat)

Fear...sells.

INT. CORPORATE OFFICE - FLASHBACK -- MORNING

Breck is sitting in an expensive looking office somewhere in Manhattan watching the Bloomberg News, stock market tickers surrounding a screen where we see a NEWS REPORT. *This is the same report that Gerry saw earlier in our story.*

(CONTINUED)

BRECK (V.O.)

And let me tell you something, pal. I've been a consultant with the pharmaceuticals industry for twenty years, but the first time I heard about the outbreaks, I saw the opportunity of a lifetime.

REPORTER

Some continued jitters on the market today in response to an admission by the Chinese government concerning an outbreak in at least one province of what they are describing as African Rabies though this designation has not yet been confirmed by other health authorities.

ANCHOR

Bob, how is this strain different from normal rabies?

REPORTER

Mainly in the speed by which the infection is passed between humans. Beyond that, it seems to exhibit all the usual symptoms: pain, fatigue, headaches, irritability, followed by seizures, hallucinations that can often turn violent, then paralysis culminating in death.

ANCHOR

Is that in most cases, or --

REPORTER

Rabies is almost always fatal, Chris.

(beat)

Several doctors, speaking on behalf of the Chinese government, insist that they have taken all the necessary steps to contain the outbreak but to date have not allowed anyone from the World Health Organization or the UN in to confirm that.

The ANCHOR appears in a split-screen.

ANCHOR

Bob, has anyone in the Administration commented on what might happen if the virus should reach American shores?

REPORTER

Now that travel has been limited in the area where the infections were

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

REPORTER (CONT'D)

reported, they seem to feel that the situation in China does not represent an immediate threat. But like SARS or bird flu, this infection could pose a serious threat to Americans if it did show up here.

ANCHOR

Let me follow up on that for a moment.

We begin to FADE OUT the audio as Breck reaches for the phone.

BRECK (V.O.)

Two minutes of reporting and an hour of terrifying speculation about how many people might die if this thing ever reached the United States.

(beat)

God bless the network news.

As he raises the phone we PUSH INTO one of the holes in the mouthpiece, moving fast-fast-fast and ROCKET INTO --

INT. PHONE LINES - CGI

Electrical pulses FLASHING down phone lines that angle off in every direction, suddenly veering UP and out of a SATELLITE DISH, then zooming through the open air and zooming down to --

EXT. GOLF COURSE -- DAY

-- where we find a WELL-DRESSED MAN on the golf course, holding a nine-iron in one hand, his cell phone in the other.

WELL DRESSED MAN

Rabies vaccine? Yeah, we manufacture one, though it's never been a big money maker for us. It's mainly for vets, forestry workers and spelunkers. You get one dose, then two more seven days and twenty-eight days later.

(listens)

Sure, we could probably cook up a low-strength vaccine you could do in one dose. The FDA? Don't worry about those guys...if we can turn this into a profit center for the company, the FDA will gladly kiss our ass.

On the last sentence we PUSH INTO the speaker holes on his cell phone and bounce BACK INTO THE AIR, zooming through the air at hyperspeed before hitting --

-- more COMMUNICATION LINES and OUT AGAIN into --

INT. SENATE HEARING ROOM -- DAY

-- our POV EMERGING from the microphone in front of a SENATOR who is speaking for the cheap seats and the television cameras. Our POV FLOATS there before him for:

SENATOR

-- staggering to believe that my fellow senators would put the interests of a bloated bureaucracy ahead of the needs of the people who elected them. People don't need big government, they need big protection, they need it big-time and they need it right now! In light of the serious and growing threat posed by this new infection, which has now been reported here in the United States, I move that the Phalanx vaccine be approved for immediate release. For god's sake let's give the people of this country the help they need and a little peace of mind!

We ZOOM back into the microphone and the COMMUNICATIONS LINES, moving even faster than before, coming out of --

INT. SUBURBAN HOME - LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

-- the speaker of a TV set tuned to the news, which shows SECURITY CAMERA FOOTAGE of a small riot going on at a drug store, people shoving each other in the scramble for boxes of Phalanx. PAN AROUND to REVEAL a family looking on.

REPORTER (V.O.)

-- where several near-riots took place as customers jammed pharmacies in a rush to buy the Phalanx anti-rabies vaccine as more cases of infection were reported along the Eastern Seaboard of the United States.

FATHER

Damn it, I knew we should've gone by the store earlier, now they're gonna be sold out.

SON

It's not rabies! I saw it on the Internet, the government isn't telling the truth, it's something that makes dead people come back and --

FATHER

(to mother)

I told you to keep him off the computer, didn't I? Jesus --

(CONTINUED)

He reaches to switch off the TV just as we dive back into the speakers and into --

-- the communications lines, faster and faster, as we HEAR a surge of VOICES reporting shortages, asking when Phalanx will come in, complaining that it doesn't work, some people screaming...a cacophony that grows LOUDER AND LOUDER as we finally come out at last into --

INT. CANON DRIVE HOME -- DAY

-- as our POV emerges from the phone and we're back where we were with Breck and Gerry.

GERRY
You made billions.

BRECK
(a smile)
Lefton Pharmaceuticals made billions.
Me...I did okay. Very, very okay.

GERRY
On something that didn't work.

BRECK
It did work.

GERRY
What are you talking about? It didn't do anything to stop the infections.

BRECK
It worked against rabies. That's what they said it was, and that's what we made a vaccine for.

GERRY
But when it became clear that the problem wasn't rabies, you still didn't discontinue Phalanx. Why?

BRECK
We were waiting for more research. Why take something off the market until you're sure?

GERRY
So you just lied to people.

BRECK
No. We even added a label saying "Will stop some infections." Which it would. Against rabies. We never said it would stop you from turning into a freaking Zombie.

(CONTINUED)

Technically, we didn't lie.

(beat)

Look, whatever the results may have been, it gave a lot of people comfort, and some sense of security --

GERRY

False security.

BRECK

Nothing was gonna work, so what difference did it make? Because of Phanalx, the biomedical industry began to come back, which helped jump start the stock market, which gave the sense of a recovery, which lead to a real, if temporary, recovery. We ended the recession. I ended the recession. On a per-dollar basis we saved the freaking country.

GERRY

You can't seriously believe that.

BRECK

Fucking A. You ask me, the one they should've investigated was that news-bitch who pulled the rug out by going on national TV to say that Phanalx was useless against "the Death Plague." She didn't just close down Lefton, she told the whole country that they had nothing to protect them against this stuff, that they were all gonna die. You want to talk about the Great Panic? It started that night on the evening news. But I don't see her on trial, I don't see her having to sit here and answer your fucking questions.

(beat)

No offense. I just get pissed off at the hypocrisy of it, that's all. What we did was a fraction of what went wrong at the battle of Yonkers, but I don't see one general in jail over what happened that day.

He looks off, and we see the beginnings of tears in his eyes.

BRECK

All we did was make a little money giving people what they said they wanted. Where's the crime?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BRECK (CONT'D)

You want to blame somebody, blame the Chinese for calling it rabies, blame the FDA for giving us their blessings, blame Congress, hell, blame the President, he was right there saying "you're doing a great job, Leftie."

(beat)

And you know what? Blame the sheep who bought Phalanx without bothering to do a little responsible research. I didn't hold a gun to their heads. They chose to buy it. Now they're all pissed off? Fuck 'em. Cry me a river. Boo-fucking-hoo.

And he looks away.

EXT. CANON DRIVE HOME - DAY

Gerry emerges from the house into the warm sunlight. He closes his eyes, letting it wash over his face, as if cleansing it. Then he opens his eyes.

Across the street, one of the body disposal trucks sits parked. From a discreet vent at the back of the truck SMOKE rises into the air. Instead of pyres as in China, here it's all done discreetly, in sterile looking vans. We follow the smoke as it rises into the sky and MATCH CUT TO --

EXT. CAMPGROUND -- DAY

-- where smoke rises from a small campfire where a man waits with his fourteen-year-old son clutching a wounded arm. The man is STAN, the boy THOMAS. There's a swirl of snow in the air and a dusting of it on the ground, maybe an inch or more, the first coat of winter snow. There's another camper parked nearby, belonging to these two.

Gerry emerges from the camper with a pressure bandage, and hands it to Stan.

GERRY

Here you go, this should help.

STAN

Thanks.

GERRY

Not a problem.

Stan goes to his son and starts bandaging up the arm as Thomas nods toward their camper.

THOMAS

Shouldn't we do this inside? It's cold out here.

(CONTINUED)

STAN

Cold'll slow the bleeding. Besides, we don't want blood in the camper. Sooner or later we're gonna leave here and I don't want any of those things smelling blood as we go by.

THOMAS

They're all going to be gone by then.

STAN

I wouldn't count on it.

(to Gerry)

I appreciate you helping out. We got everything we needed when we headed out except medical supplies. Every drug store and pharmacy we came across was empty. Between the looters, addicts and the Zs, wasn't much left.

GERRY

It's not a problem, really.

STAN

I can give you something in trade.

GERRY

Maybe later.

They turn as a CAR with a camper shell moves through in the background. Other campers, RVs, mobile homes and a scattering of cars are present, not a crowd, but enough to be noticeable. The new car is an addition to the group. They watch as it glides toward an empty, open spot a few hundred yards away. Stan shakes his head as he watches the car settle in.

STAN

Don't know what they think they're gonna accomplish out here in that thing. Shell ain't gonna do much good when the real snows come. And I'd bet good money they don't have more than a few days worth of supplies in there. They'll be coming around for food real soon, you'll see.

(beat, softer)

You sure you got enough ammo for the long haul there, Gerry?

GERRY

I'm good.

STAN

Bad enough we have to watch out for those things...our own kind, that's hard. Can't blame 'em, I guess.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

STAN (CONT'D)

The schools teach you everything except how to survive. Kids like my son here come out knowing everything in the world about what kind of software there is, but how to look for water? Rotate crops? What part of a tree you can eat and what'll kill you?

THOMAS

Here he goes.

STAN

I spent my first fifteen years on a farm in Texas. Put myself through college. Built my own company from the bottom up. The guys on the board of directors used to kid me about being a farm-boy. For them, roughing it was driving to Palm Springs in a BMW instead of a Mercedes. Yeah, they're not laughing now, I can tell you that for goddamn sure.

THOMAS

Dad, can we just --

The conversation is interrupted by the SOUND of iron pipes hitting metal...an alarm from elsewhere in the camp.

Gerry reaches inside the RV and grabs a shotgun. Stan already has his .45 in hand.

STAN

Came from back that way!

They start running, other refugees folding in alongside as they run. But they don't get very far when they see --

-- a lone zombie, its skin blackened and blue, covered in snow, lurching slowly forward through the line of trees. It's nearly frozen solid, icicles hanging from its mouth and eyes. It's barely even able to move, let alone threaten anybody.

As Gerry and Stan arrive, two of the other refugees, both in their 20s, are already there, poking at it with long sticks, knocking it back, hitting it with baseball bats. It snarls and swings ineffectually. They're enjoying this.

FIRST CAMPER

Yeah! Come on! Get some! Here I am!

SECOND CAMPER

Not fast enough! Come on!

(CONTINUED)

The thing swings at them. They duck and backpedal. Gerry and Stan look on with disgust.

Then one of the campers gets too close, swings, and trips on the snow-covered ground. The zombie sees its opportunity. It springs toward the camper only to be SHOT cleanly in the head by Stan. It falls to the ground, inert.

STAN

What the hell do you think this is,
some kind of fucking game?

FIRST CAMPER

We were just --

STAN

Put it with the others. Go on. We
don't want the smell bringing in more
of those things.

The first camper looks as though he'd like to argue the point, but swallows it back. Yanks up his friend as if this was all his fault, and they start toward the inert zombie.

Gerry looks back to the RV, and sees Rachel in the window, looking out, having seen all of this. He waves to her, tries to look reassuring. She doesn't even register him.

He starts back as Stan folds in alongside. As they walk, we notice some of the other refugees cutting down trees. Bonfires burn nearby, providing needed warmth. Stan nods toward them.

STAN

Look at 'em. Just like I was saying.
Don't know the first thing about long
term planning. Not their fault, I
guess. You live your whole life
without ever being more than two miles
away from a McDonald's or a Von's,
who needs to worry about provisions,
or how the fuck you live when the
lights go out and stay out and the
water runs out.

(beat)

They think it's a license to do
whatever they want. We know better,
don't we? You and me, we're alike.
We don't do what we want, we do what
we have to. What's necessary. And
that's why we're gonna survive. These
guys....

(shakes head)

...they're already dead, they just
don't know it yet. Just like those
things out there.

(CONTINUED)

With that, he goes back to attend to his son. Gerry watches him go, then glances to the car that brought in the new arrivals. They're still running the engine, warming their hands on the heat from the vents. They wave to Gerry. He nods distantly, then looks to the window where he saw Rachel a moment earlier, but has since moved away. He starts toward the RV as we go to a

DRAMATIC DOWNSHOT/HELICOPTER SHOT

Looking DOWN at Gerry moving toward the RV, then pulling UP and UP until we're high above the countryside, moving faster and faster until we can see, in the distance, freeways full of cars that have been abandoned or turned over, covered by snow. We keep PULLING UP until we see --

EXT. CITY -- CONTINUOUS

-- parts of the nearest big city on fire, not one big fire but a series of slow but insistent fires, ribbons of smoke rising lazily into the air, visible against a cloak of snow.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CAMPGROUND - FLASHBACK -- NIGHT

The snows have fallen even more heavily now, piled in thick drifts around the campground, engulfing many of the camping vehicles. Trees have been cut down all over the place. Gerry walks through the camp, his heavy coat pulled close around him against the bitter cold, carrying a rudimentary snow-fishing rig. In the snow we notice abandoned DVD players, Gameboys, Ipods and other now-useless gadgets.

He pauses beside the car with the camper-shell that arrived in a prior scene, now covered in snow. He goes to it, brushes aside the snow to see the young couple inside frozen to death, huddled against one another in their last moments.

Gerry turns from the sight and continues toward the RV UNDER:

KARIN (V.O.)

You couldn't catch anything?

INT. RV -- MOMENTS LATER

Karin sits on the edge of Rachel's bed. Rachel is fevered, ill, half conscious. Gerry paces in the main part of the RV, angry at himself. Their two-year-old is crying in BG.

GERRY

I dug a dozen holes in the ice,
nothing. The fish have all gone deep.

KARIN

Or they've already been fished out.

(CONTINUED)

GERRY

There's another lake a couple miles farther down the road. I'll leave tonight so I can be there when the dawn comes, they'll be feeding then.

(beat)

How's her fever?

KARIN

Not good. A hundred and one. We need to get some solid food in her, she's not strong enough to fight the infection on what we've got here.

GERRY

I know, I know....

He goes to Constance, who is crying.

CONSTANCE

Is Rachel gonna die?

GERRY

No honey, Rachel's not going to die. She's just real sick. But she'll get better. You'll see.

He glances to Karin, whose eyes show great doubt.

EXT. CAMPGROUND -- LATER

In the pre-dawn hours, Gerry exits the RV, equipped for both fish and any game he might come upon. As he starts away, he glances to the same car, and we notice that the passenger door is slightly askew, as though someone opened it but couldn't quite get it closed again.

Cautious, not knowing what this might forebode, he moves toward the car. Brushes away the new snow. Looks inside.

The body of the frozen young woman is gone. He glances around, sees tracks in the snow where something was dragged.

His gaze follows the drag-tracks to a nearby camper, Stan's camper. We continue to FOLLOW his gaze as he looks up...and sees a thin trail of smoke rising from the camper's stove.

Gerry closes his eyes, refusing to acknowledge the horror of what he knows happened...and continues off as we HEAR:

GERRY (V.O.)

Karin, just wanted you to know...I'm coming home.

INT. MILITARY CAR -- MORNING

Gerry is in the rear seat of a jeep, talking on the sat-phone. A lone Air Force driver is in the seat in front of him.

GERRY

I'm catching a flight to a SAC base in Nebraska, then back to New York from there.

(beat)

Yeah, me too. I've missed you. Give the kids a kiss for me. See you soon.

He hangs up as they arrive at a parking lot where a military helicopter is waiting.

EXT. AIR FORCE BASE -- AFTERNOON

The helicopter is parked. Gerry is getting off. He grabs his bags and, with a last look back at the silent pilot, moves toward an approaching PRIVATE who helps with his bags.

PRIVATE

Mr. Lane? Private Hanson. I've been told we'll have a car ready to take you into town first thing tomorrow morning. Meanwhile, we've got a room set up for you in the barracks.

GERRY

Thanks.

PRIVATE

So how was the flight? Looks like it was mighty cold up there.

GERRY

It was. But you know what? It woke me right up.

PRIVATE

Outstanding. Right this way, sir.

As they continue toward the barracks, Gerry looks off to notice one of the buildings has an unusually high degree of security and armed trucks around it.

INT. BARRACKS - ROOM -- EVENING

Dinner has been finished, plates empty on a table as the private clears up. Gerry is looking out the window at the same well-protected building.

PRIVATE

I checked with the transport chief, he says the car will come around for you at noon. Anything else?

(CONTINUED)

GERRY

What's the deal with that building
across the way?

The private looks past him through the window.

PRIVATE

Oh, that...sir, you are looking at
the transitional place of residence
for the Vice President of the United
States.

GERRY

You're kidding.

PRIVATE

No sir, I don't have kind of rank.
He got here a couple months ago,
staying until the sweep and clear
teams have finished going through
every last house in Washington. When
they're gone, he goes. Well, unless
there's anything else, I'll be going.

Gerry nods absently, and the private leaves. He considers
the building across the way. Nods quietly to himself.

EXT. AIRFIELD -- MORNING

Gerry emerges from the barracks to see the VICE-PRESIDENT
talking with a COLONEL and several other officers, flanked by
Marines in dress uniforms. He straightens and heads for them.

GERRY

Mr. Vice President...Mr. Vice
President.

The military escorts move to intercept him.

GERRY

Gerry Lane. I'm with the United
Nations. I'd like to talk to you.

The VP confers with the colonel, and nods to the officers who
let Gerry past.

VICE PRESIDENT

I'd heard you were here, Mr. Lane.
What can I do for you?

GERRY

Answer a few questions.

The VP looks to his escort, then back.

VICE PRESIDENT

I can give you ten minutes. No more.

(CONTINUED)

GERRY

That'll be fine.

The marines fall into place behind them as they head to

INT. MILITARY DINING ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

A big room where a hundred soldiers might dine otherwise. Empty tables and empty chairs. A big, echoing space. The VICE-PRESIDENT is putting balls into a cup as Gerry enters.

VICE PRESIDENT

So how's this report of yours going?

GERRY

Very well.

VICE PRESIDENT

I'd love to see a copy before it's released.

Gerry doesn't say yes or no. The VP notes it and goes back to his game as Gerry digs out his recorder.

VICE PRESIDENT

Still, I'm sure in the end it will reflect well on the country. I'd even go so far as to say it's in the interests of national security that the report reflects well on the steps taken before, during and after the war. People have to know they can trust their government. What happened was no one's fault. The system broke down under the weight of an enemy no one could have anticipated or planned for.

GERRY

Is it all right if I record this?

VICE PRESIDENT

Sure. Anyway, that's the official point of view. Personally, I don't see the point of this report. People don't want any reminders of that terrible time. They just want to get on with their lives. What happened, happened, now everybody wants to play the blame game.

GERRY

Almost a month after the Israelis discovered the first outbreaks in China, the CIA sent a report of its own to the White House.

(CONTINUED)

VICE PRESIDENT

That's correct. We devoted an entire meeting to going over that report and its recommendations.

GERRY

Can you tell me what was in the report?

VICE PRESIDENT

The usual alarmist crap we always got from the CIA or half a dozen other agencies I could name. Every administration gets dozens of reports a week describing one thing or another as "the greatest threat to human existence in history." Global warming, AIDs, Ebola, avian flu, living dead... can you imagine what this country would look like if the federal government panicked every time one of these reports came through? We provided a measured, reasonable response.

GERRY

Which was...?

VICE PRESIDENT

We produced an extremely high quality educational video for state and local law enforcement about what to do in case of an outbreak. And we had the department of Health and Human Services put a page up on its website about how citizens should handle infected family members.

GERRY

Wouldn't it have been more effective, and given more weight to the outbreak, if the President had gone on national television to talk about it?

The Vice President looks at him with disdain and disbelief as he goes back to putting.

VICE PRESIDENT

The President of the United States is not going to go on every major news channel and say we've got zombies at the front door. Can you imagine what the press would do with that? Or the opposition? They'd have a field day, he'd look ridiculous.

GERRY

But that was the truth.

(CONTINUED)

VICE PRESIDENT

Spoken with 20-20 hindsight. We were elected on a promise to restore peace and prosperity, to clean up the shit left behind by the previous administration. After eight years spent fighting every two-bit tyrant on the planet, people wanted a break. They wanted some peace and quiet. Do you really think we were going to go out there and tell them "Guess what, if you think those were eight hard years, you haven't seen anything yet"? Especially if there was still some doubt about what was really going on in China?

GERRY

Even so, steps could have been taken at that early stage to warn the public --

The VP turns back to Gerry, getting riled up.

VICE PRESIDENT

Do you have any idea what would've happened if we'd told the public that this wasn't just some new strain of rabies, it was a lethal uber-plague that reanimated the dead? There would've been panic, protest marches, riots, billions in damage to private property. And right in the middle of it all you just know that somebody in congress would've introduced the Zombie Protection Act and we'd be fighting it out in the courts instead of the streets, where it mattered. Next subject.

The Veep moves off as Gerry checks his notes.

GERRY

When the outbreaks first started here in the US, local and state law enforcement asked for additional funds and resources to deal with the problem.

VICE PRESIDENT

When have cops not asked for more men on the streets, better gear, more training hours, or money for community outreach programs?

GERRY

So you never took any steps to solve the situation?

(CONTINUED)

VICE PRESIDENT

The government never solves anything,
Mr. Lane. All we can do is manage
them the best we can.

He sits heavily, deciding to go for a more avuncular approach.

VICE PRESIDENT

Look, son, can anybody "solve" crime?
Can anybody "solve" poverty? Can you
"solve" disease, unemployment, war or
any of society's other problems? All
any government can do is try to manage
those problems well enough so that
people can go on with their lives.
That's not cynicism, that's maturity.

GERRY

So let me see if I understand your
position.

VICE PRESIDENT

The administration's position.

GERRY

The administration's position was
that you gave this problem the amount
of attention that it deserved --

VICE PRESIDENT

That's right.

GERRY

-- especially given that at any time,
the government always has a lot on
its plate, and because another public
scare was the last thing the American
people wanted.

VICE PRESIDENT

Got it in one.

GERRY

So you believed that the threat was
small enough to be managed by
additional law enforcement training
at home --

VICE PRESIDENT

Right.

GERRY

-- even though the administration had
received detailed warnings from its
allies to the contrary; warnings that
made it very clear that this was a
global catastrophe in the making.

(CONTINUED)

VICE PRESIDENT

Grow up. Mistakes were made. Get over it.

GERRY

Mistakes like Yonkers?

VICE PRESIDENT

If you're going to start politicizing a national tragedy --

GERRY

Some have suggested that better leadership would've prevented that tragedy.

VICE PRESIDENT

Every man there did the best he could, they had the finest weapons and the best advice. If you're going to start attacking the troops --

GERRY

We lost the whole country that day, sir. What they saw caused them to lose faith in the ability of the government to protect them. It took two years to undo the damage of that one day, and even then the only way we could put one half of the country back together was by using the other half as bait and turning what was left into a kill zone.

VICE PRESIDENT

This interview is over, Mr. Lane.

And the Vice President stalks away, a colonel coming up alongside as Gerry is escorted away.

EXT. AIRFIELD -- LATER

An Air Force helicopter is waiting, rotors slicing the air as Gerry hurries toward it, carrying his bags and equipment.

An AIRMAN holds the door open as Gerry climbs inside, then slams it shut as the chopper RISES into the morning sky.

INT. AIR FORCE HELICOPTER -- DAY

The chopper is flying high above some very rocky and isolated terrain. Gerry, wearing a radio headset, looks down at the ground as it flashes past beneath them. From his posture and attitude it's evident that they've been flying for a while. We give this a long MOMENT as he glances forward to notice the pilot and co-pilot conferring for a BEAT, then:

(CONTINUED)

PILOT

Sir?

Gerry sits up, hearing the voice on his headset.

GERRY

Yes?

PILOT

We're registering a pressure drop in the fuel lines. We're going to have to land and check it out.

GERRY

Are we in a secure zone?

PILOT

Only partially. Should be okay if we don't stick around too long.

GERRY

Is there any other way to --

PILOT

Negative. We can't risk running out of fuel at ten thousand feet. Shouldn't take long.

Gerry nods as the chopper begins its descent.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - GAS STATION -- DAY

The chopper has landed on the concrete lot of a long-deserted gas station well off the beaten track. The words NO MORE GAS have been crudely painted on the front window of the building. There are only a couple of other structures nearby, a corrugated tin shack, a storage area, and the road, which ribbons past the gas station, also empty.

The pilot and co-pilot check out the rear of the chopper as Gerry stretches his legs. He glances back at the pilots.

GERRY

Anything I can do to help?

PILOT

Not really, sir...unless you want to check the garage and see if you can find a pipe wrench? Biggest one they've got. Might save us some time.

GERRY

Right.

Gerry nods and heads across the lot to --

INT. GAS STATION -- CONTINUOUS

-- where he wedges himself through a door that has already been partly broken in. He glances around the front office. The place is a mess. There are brown streaks on the walls that might be blood, old blood. The cash register is open, the cash drawer empty below a post-it that reads JIM -- WILL PAY YOU BACK LATER -- BOBBY.

He continues into the shadowed garage, where some tools remain on the work bench. He picks through them, looking for a good sized pipe wrench. Doesn't see what he needs. Goes to one of two tall storage cabinets. As he approaches one, we notice that --

-- the not-quite-closed door to the other storage cabinet starts to OPEN behind him. It CREAKS and Gerry spins around at the sudden sound as --

-- a CAT emerges from the cabinet, sees him, and takes off. Gerry smiles, relieved, as he opens the other cabinet --

-- and a badly decomposed zombie LURCHES OUT of the cabinet with a snarl.

Gerry BACKPEDALS fast, falling back over the counter as the thing lunges at him. It's so decomposed that the muscles are in tatters, tendons hanging free, but that only slows it down a little.

From outside we HEAR TWO GUNSHOTS as the thing comes around the table at Gerry. He scrambles to his feet, grabbing anything at hand and throwing it at the zombie as he plunges back through the office and out to --

EXT. GAS STATION -- CONTINUOUS

-- where he starts to run for the chopper.

GERRY
Over here! Help! Over --

And for just an instant, he stops at what he sees.

The chopper still sits on the lot, but the pilot and co-pilot are gone, raising ominous possibilities about the gunshots heard moments earlier.

Gerry turns to see the zombie emerging from the gas station, coming after him.

Gerry runs to the chopper, tries the doors. They're locked. He turns to see a second and third zombie emerging from the surrounding woods. Heading his way.

GERRY
...ogod....

(CONTINUED)

He takes off, running for all he's worth.

The zombies pursue.

Gerry crashes through the surrounding woods, breathing hard, desperate, terrified, trying to put as much distance between himself and his pursuers as possible.

We catch glimpses of the zombies in pursuit, hear snarls and the crash of feet against underbrush.

Gerry zigs one way, then another, trying to lose them when he comes into a CLEARING...and stops, his eyes wide in horror.

Zombies lay on the ground, momentarily inert, covering the whole length of side by side by side, like beetles, blackened by sun and bloated by rain, distorted by the elements. Dozens of them. They could be mistaken for dead bodies piled into a mass grave until --

-- Gerry INHALES in CLOSE-UP.

And one of the zombies, hearing a living breath, opens its eyes.

They all open their eyes. Snapping awake like trap-door spiders, attentions sprung by the arrival of prey.

Gerry starts running again, angling off, his face a mask of sheer, unadulterated terror.

He runs, stumbles, picks himself up again, keeps running... but the zombies are closing the gap, swarming in at him from all sides. No way out.

Then: there's the RUSH of wind and the ROAR of rotors as the helicopter appears overhead. A nylon rope-ladder tumbles out of the door ahead of him, the space between the trees too narrow for a landing.

Gerry sprints for the ladder as the zombies close in around him, grabbing at his clothes, snapping at him, jaws closing on air as GUNSHOTS from above take out one, then another of them, but the rest keep coming as with one final LEAP --

-- Gerry snares the rope ladder and hangs on for dear life as the chopper SOARS up into the air. He risks a glance down to see that the place where he is now filled with zombies who glare up at the helicopter with naked rage.

INT. AIR FORCE HELICOPTER -- MOMENTS LATER

The co-pilot helps Gerry climb into the chopper, then slams the door shut. Taps the pilot on the back of his helmet.

CO-PILOT

Clear!

(CONTINUED)

PILOT

Copy that.

(beat)

How about we save the sweep-and-clear
teams some trouble?

CO-PILOT

Works for me.

The pilot brings the chopper around.

EXT. WOODS -- CONTINUOUS

The helicopter comes in low, heading toward the zombies. As soon as it's in range it FIRES from a belly-mounted minigun, splattering and scattering the zombies as, a moment later --

-- the chopper FIRES an air-to-ground NAPALM rocket that SLAMS into the center of the group as the chopper soars upward and the EXPLOSION sends fire and smoke and blast roaring through the woods.

INT. AIR FORCE HELICOPTER -- CONTINUOUS

As Gerry, still breathing hard, pulls himself into his seat and buckles in, pulling on his headset.

PILOT

You all right, sir?

GERRY

Yeah...yeah, fine...thanks...I'd be
dead right now if not for you guys.

PILOT

Yes, you would be.

The pilot turns to look at him, his expression deadly serious.

PILOT

And I'd remember that if I were you
when it comes time to file that report
of yours. Oh, and one other thing.

(beat)

Stay out of Yonkers, Mr. Lane. Like
the dead, some things just don't merit
being dug up again.And in his eyes we see the truth: they did this on purpose,
to intimidate him. Gerry says nothing, only nods as the pilot
returns to his instruments and toggles his com system.

PILOT

Blue-14-alpha to base, tell the
colonel...the message has been
transmitted and received.

EXT. AIR FORCE HELICOPTER -- CONTINUOUS

As the helicopter soars off into the distance.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY -- EVENING

What we can see of the skyline is mostly familiar, but there are some high-rises and skyscrapers still charred and blackened. Many buildings have lights on, but others don't. It's an ominous, darkened version of the New York we have always known.

EXT. NEW YORK - NEIGHBORHOOD -- EVENING

A military car pulls up, and Gerry -- exhausted, wan -- gets out. Closes the door. The car pulls away. He takes a moment to look around.

Once, this was a sleepy bedroom community. Not anymore. As with Chicago, many buildings are either burned out or boarded up. There are signs of past looting, but also traces of slow reconstruction. Garbage -- bagged but still redolent -- is piled up on street corners and curbs. Feral dogs and cats move freely down the street. Lights are on here and there, but it's spotty, inconsistent.

There are a few people out here and there, on errands or long walks, some on bikes...and now we notice something we haven't noticed before: everyone on the street is armed. Some carry holstered handguns, others rifles or shotguns. The weapons are carried with the kind of practiced ease that says these people have been carrying these weapons for a long time. It's not a statement, it's a life-style.

Finally, Gerry crosses the street and heads toward a low-slung brownstone apartment building, where lights glow on some floors and not others.

INT. GERRY'S APARTMENT -- MOMENTS LATER

Gerry enters the silent apartment, closes the door behind him, and sets his bags down on the floor. The place is only partially lit, a couple of lamps here and there, the rest given over to shadows. We can HEAR water running somewhere.

GERRY

Karin...?

No reply. He continues into --

INT. KITCHEN -- CONTINUOUS

-- where Karin is doing dishes as he enters the room behind her. She speaks without turning around to face him.

(CONTINUED)

KARIN

Sorry. I didn't want to wake
Constance, she just got to sleep.

He goes to her, holds her. Hard. She reaches for him.

KARIN

You okay?

GERRY

Yeah, I'm just...just glad to be home,
that's all.

KARIN

So it's over? You got everything you
need?

GERRY

Yeah. It's over. How're things here?

She pulls back, goes to finish what she was doing.

KARIN

Good. We've got power and hot water
five hours a day now.

GERRY

And Rachel?

KARIN

She has her moments.

He nods absently. We'll discover what that means soon enough.

GERRY

Is she in bed?

KARIN

The escort left about an hour ago. I
haven't tucked her in yet. You can
do it if you want.

GERRY

Good. Then we can talk. I want to
tell you everything about --

KARIN

Gerry...I know that doing this was
something you had to do, and maybe
it'll even be important, but...of all
the things we can talk about tonight,
that's not one of them. All right?
Just for tonight, I don't want to
think about that time. I want to
think about now.

(CONTINUED)

GERRY

All right.

He gives her a kiss and heads upstairs to --

INT. RACHEL'S ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

-- where he gently nudges open the door to REVEAL Rachel, now a few years older than when last we saw her, asleep in bed, illuminated by the dim light from the hallway. It's a familiar scene, seemingly normal in every respect.

Moving quietly, he sits on the edge of the bed. Gently brushes the hair away from her face. He takes a long moment, just looking at her face in the half-light as we go to

EXT. FROZEN LAKE - FLASHBACK -- DAY

Gerry is sitting beside an ice-covered lake, his shotgun a few feet away, half a dozen fishing lines extending into the water beneath the ice. It's freezing, his breath frosting as he rubs his arms. He's been there a long time. There are no fish in the waiting bucket.

Arms folded tight against his chest for warmth, he rocks slowly back and forth for a moment...then slows...stops. Looks off.

On the other side of the lake, a few hundred yards away, we see a lone deer, looking nearly starved itself, trying to find bits of grass beneath the snow. It hasn't seen him.

Hands trembling from the bitter cold, Gerry slowly reaches for the shotgun...inch by slow by painful inch...but in the instant before he can grab it --

-- the deer SEES him and LEAPS toward the protective woods as --

-- Gerry GRABS the shotgun and FIRES wild, missing it. He starts running, feet pistoning snow and ice, running for all he's worth, pursuing the deer through the woods, running and falling and running, FIRING and running --

-- until he falls again, and when he looks up, there's no sign of the deer. He's breathing hard, tired and frustrated and grieving. He SLAMS a fist into the brutal, cold ground, as though trying to wound the already wounded earth. Hits it again and again until he falls back, exhausted and sobbing.

EXT. CAMPGROUND - FLASHBACK -- DAY

Gerry returns to the campground, again with nothing to show for his efforts. He passes the car with its camper shell.

Now both the frozen passenger and the driver are gone. Fresh drag-tracks lead to Stan's camper. Gerry continues past it.

INT. RV - FLASHBACK -- DAY

Rachel is in bed, fevered, eyes fluttering, barely conscious. As he did in the present, Gerry brushes the hair away from her face, which is sweating, pale. In BG, Karin watches with her hand over her face, tears flowing, breathing punctuated by sobs despite her attempts to hold them back.

Gerry is also crying, the kind of tears that come in such a constant stream that they're no longer noticed, they're just there. He stands slowly, approaches Karin, who backs away.

GERRY

Karin --

KARIN

Do something.

GERRY

-- Karin, listen to me, I --

KARIN

Do something!

GERRY

There's nothing else to do, we --

KARIN

(cold, desperate)

Yes there is.

She locks eyes with him, and there is a ferocity behind her eyes. An unspoken ultimatum. He understands at once...and there is horror and inevitability in his eyes.

GERRY

No....

KARIN

Gerry, you have to --

GERRY

I can't...don't ask me...we can't do that...can't do that to her --

KARIN

If we don't she's going to die!

She yanks him around to where he can see Rachel.

KARIN

Look at her! Damn you, look at her, Gerry! Look at her and you tell me what you can't do! You tell me --

And she breaks down. Rushes away from him. He looks to Rachel, his soul in agony.

(CONTINUED)

He turns, looking for some escape from this moment, but there's nowhere to go....

GERRY

God...god...god help us...god help
us...GOD...!

He turns and BURSTS out the door to

EXT. CAMPGROUND - FLASHBACK -- CONTINUOUS

-- the door BANGING shut behind him as he falls against it, fists balled, pressed to his head, a moment of silent agony. Tears flowing. Then, fighting for every step, he starts across the way...toward the camper next door.

INT. RV - FLASHBACK -- MOMENTS LATER

We're looking OUT through a window as Gerry emerges from the camper carrying a small parcel wrapped in paper. He continues into the RV --

-- and hands it to Karin. She takes it without saying anything and moves off. We HEAR paper being unwrapped.

INT. RV - FLASHBACK -- LATER

Rachel is sitting up in bed a little as Karin dips a spoon into a bowl of soup and meat, carefully tipping it into Rachel's mouth. She's trying to smile for Rachel, to let it seem like everything's all right, but tears are rolling down her face as she carefully portions out each spoon.

EXT. RV - FLASHBACK -- CONTINUOUS

Gerry is sitting balled on the cold ground, his back pressed to the RV...and the strangled sounds that come from him speak of horror and grief and pain and necessity, sounds no human throat should ever have to make...as now we're back in --

INT. RACHEL'S ROOM - PRESENT -- EVENING

-- where Gerry looks on Rachel's sleeping face for a BEAT longer, then he reaches off to one side of the bed --

-- and pulls out a long belt, like an airplane belt, with a clasp on one end. He reaches across the bed and pulls out a matching belt from the other side.

He slides one clasp into another. Click. Then another. With the familiarity of habit and long practice, he belts her into the bed. He fastens another one across the lower part of her body. She barely stirs.

And as he leaves the room, allowing a sliver of light in from the hallway to illuminate her face, we now understand what Karin meant by *tucking her in*.

(CONTINUED)

On this tableaux we go back to

INT. RACHEL'S ROOM - PRESENT - NIGHT

As he brushes the hair away from her eyes, seeming to be wrestling with some inner decision.

INT. GERRY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Gerry is staring at the sat phone, still considering. Finally, his mind made up, he picks up the phone, dials. Waits. Then:

GERRY

Mac? Gerry. Yeah, I know what time it is. You said you had contacts in the State Department. How high do they go? No, it can't wait, I --
(beat)

I need a favor, Mac. A big one.

INT. GERRY'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN -- MORNING

Gerry goes to the kitchen, tries the lights. They don't come on. He takes a match to a stove-top burner. It lights. He reaches for the coffee pot --

-- when he hears the sat-phone softly RINGING with an incoming call, the first we've seen. He goes to the phone. Looks at the display. It reads UNKNOWN CALLER.

He picks up the sat-phone, turns it to receive.

GERRY

Yes?

VOICE ON PHONE

A mutual friend said I should give you a call.

GERRY

Who is this?

VOICE ON PHONE

No names. I'll meet you in one hour. If you're not there on time, I'm gone, and this conversation never happened. Understand?

GERRY

Yes.

VOICE ON PHONE

Good. Write down this address.

Gerry reaches for a pen and paper.

EXT. SAW MILL RIVER PARKWAY - COMP SHOT -- DAY

HELICOPTER SHOT. It looks like a bombed out war zone, which is precisely what it is. Apartment buildings with their facades cratered by blast, stores and supermarkets devastated, the parkway itself cratered and torn apart by massive tank treads and explosions. Empty now, deserted, awaiting the next wave of reconstruction. We see a traffic sign: *WELCOME TO YONKERS*.

We FAVOR one of the high-rise condos whose front walls have been blown out, exposing the apartments within, damaged by water and blast, bed-sheets and clothes hanging from exposed beams and shards of debris like weathered flags.

Gerry pulls up into the shadow of one of those buildings and gets out of the car. Looks around. Wind whips through the concrete canyon. Nervous, not sure if this is a set-up, he starts walking through the piles of debris. Walking faster now, he turns at the SOUND of pebbles slipping down a ruined wall. Gaping, blown-out windows stare down like the eyes of the dead. There could be anyone up there.

He goes from a fast-walk to a trot, hurrying down the street and ducking into an abandoned condo.

INT. ABANDONED CONDO -- DAY

Breathing hard, Gerry steps into an upper floor of one of these condos, alone, anxious. Wind whips through the blown-out building. Then he HEARS footsteps behind him.

MAJOR CASEY (O.S.)

You're sure you weren't followed?

Gerry turns to see MAJOR HANK CASEY approaching. The Major is in uniform.

GERRY

Positive. I ditched the car half a mile back, hoofed it in from there.

The major nods, grudgingly accepting the assurance.

MAJOR CASEY

I don't have a lot of time. Plane's standing by at JFK. More goddamned looting in Dallas. Every time we get the place put back together --

GERRY

You were here, you were in Yonkers when it all went down.

(casey nods)

I want to know everything. The details of what happened, the planning, the mistakes --

(CONTINUED)

MAJOR CASEY

You don't ask for a lot, do you?

GERRY

Just the truth.

MAJOR CASEY

How much do you know about what happened that day?

GERRY

Only what I saw on the news, same as the rest of the country. There wasn't much time for analysis afterward, and those few who survived were split up and told not to talk to anyone on grounds of national security. The penalty was...and is...rather stiff, I understand.

MAJOR CASEY

Which is why if I do this, you don't use my name, rank or company. I don't want my name anywhere near this. Got it?

Gerry nods. Casey grudgingly accepts Gerry's word then turns, looks out one of the gaping wounds in the condo where a whole wall has been blown out, exposing the empty street beyond. He nods to the devastation.

MAJOR CASEY

Mr. Lane, I have been with the military since I was old enough to enlist. I served in Somalia, Afghanistan, Kuwait, Iraq, Iran and a few places where American forces were never reported to have been...but I was there. During those years I learned two things. I learned to tell when a mission is being directed by men in uniform, and when it's being handled by amateurs, by politicians. Yonkers was strictly amateur night, all politics.

(beat)

I also learned that Americans are an all-or-nothing people. We like the big win, the touchdown, the knockout in the first round. It's not just about winning, it's about winning in a way that is devastating and uncontested.

He begins moving around the room, the words coming with increasing energy...slowly winding up inside.

(CONTINUED)

MAJOR CASEY

As we came out of that first winter with the plague still out of control, people were terrified that we wouldn't be able to contain this thing. You saw it. Panic in the streets, crowds with guns shooting anything that moved, riots....

(beat)

The administration decided that what the country needed was one well-publicized stand-up battle with us as the winners.

CAMERA GLIDES OUT of the condo into

EXT. ABANDONED CONDO -- CONTINUOUS

-- HOVERING IN MID-AIR over the street as the walls of the condo start to REBUILD THEMSELVES...debris falling upward, windows un-shattering...we're moving backward in time, going back to the moment he's describing.

MAJOR CASEY (V.O.)

A smack-down like that would go a long way toward getting people to calm down so we could do what was necessary to win this thing in the long term. It was the right decision. Unfortunately, it was the last right decision made that day.

EXT. SAW MILL RIVER PARKWAY -- DAY

And now all is as it was, all the buildings intact. We HEAR the roar of helicopters soaring overhead...the cries of the mob, thousands of people (CGI ENHANCE) surging between the buildings on either side, frantically trying to escape as --

-- soldiers move into position while others direct the crowd which streams around the emplacements the way a stream flows around a series of stones.

MAJOR CASEY (V.O.)

The Saw Mill River Parkway ran right through our main line of defense, and the refugees streaming down the freeway were leading the dead right to us. It was a natural choke point. So that's where the brass decided we'd make our stand...on the ground and in the shit.

PULL BACK and UP to REVEAL at least five or six companies of soldiers and heavy equipment moving into position.

(CONTINUED)

MAJOR CASEY (V.O.)
 What the fuck were they thinking?

INTERCUT WITH CASEY IN THE PRESENT, IN THE BLASTED OUT CONDO.

As he paces, growing increasingly agitated by the memory.

MAJOR CASEY
 They should've put us on the roofs.
 There should've been snipers in every
 balcony, every window. Hell, we
 could've put a whole company right on
 top of the A&P and turned the whole
 goddamned parkway into a shooting
 gallery. Just airlift in ammo, guns,
 beer and porta-potties. But no.
 Where'd they put us? On the ground!

BACK TO SCENE

As soldiers in bulky anti-contamination suits and guns get into position, building up sandbags and getting behind tanks as the last of the civilians race past. We find Casey in the past, in the midst of all this, looking pissed as he waves soldiers and materiel into position.

MAJOR CASEY (V.O.)
 Right on the fucking ground, behind
 sandbags! Sandbags! You know what
 you call that position? Cover and
concealment. You know when you use
 it? When the enemy is coming at you
 with small arms fire, artillery and
 air-dropped ordinance! That sound to
 you like the enemy we were fighting?
 Did you see any Z's calling in air
 strikes?

BACK WITH CASEY

Pacing, agitated.

MAJOR CASEY
 If we had to be on the ground then
 they should've put five companies on
 the firing line with as many guns and
 ammo as we could've carried, turned
 every square inch into a kill-zone.
 Fire until your gun starts to melt
 then get out of the way for the next
 guy. Instead they took up half the
 goddamn road with big-ticket toys,
 'cause they wanted to impress the
 folks watching back home.

(CONTINUED)

BACK TO SCENE

Casey in the past looks up to see a horde of media helicopters soaring overhead while military choppers hang back for the moment.

MAJOR CASEY (V.O.)

They brought in CNN, ABC, NBC, CBS, Fox, Bloomberg, they even brought in the Christian Network News who wanted a front seat just in case this really was the end of the world. Hell, I'm pretty sure I saw a chopper from ESPN, and folks in Vegas were taking bets on how fast and how bad we'd wipe out the Z's.

INTERCUT faster and faster now between Casey in the present, describing this, and --

-- the scene at the time, **QUICK SHOTS** of heavy equipment being moved into place as soldiers bark orders and move urgently.

MAJOR CASEY (V.O.)

We had tanks, Bradleys, armored Humvees, mortars, we had a bridge laying system and I still don't know what the fuck they were planning to do with that.

Massive trucks with satellite gear roll into position, belching smoke and fumes.

MAJOR CASEY (V.O.)

We had bigass electronic warfare vehicles crammed with radar and jamming equipment for Christ's sake. And when logic said we needed to be able to move fast, what do they do? On the hottest day of the year they stuck everybody in big, hot, bulky suits designed to protect against radiation and biochem weapons and if you were in one you couldn't run for shit.

Soldiers not already in the bulky suits hurry to climb into them as officers SHOUT orders to get ready.

MAJOR CASEY (V.O.)

And what made those suits so hot and heavy? A whole goddamned wireless networking system with GPS, downloadable maps, real time satellite recon, and the ability to hear and see what any other member of the unit was hearing and seeing.

(CONTINUED)

BACK WITH CASEY IN THE PRESENT.

MAJOR CASEY

Think! You've seen these things!
 You're looking at the goddamned fucking
 walking dead! You're looking at the
 most horrifying sight you will ever
 see from cradle to grave!

BACK TO SCENE

Looking through an eyepiece that shows the zombies starting
 to emerge into the street beyond where the soldiers have set
 up their firing line. MULTIPLY the image to two, four, eight,
 sixteen different POINTS OF VIEW of the same scene.

MAJOR CASEY (V.O.)

Now you're not just seeing the horror
 in front of you, you're seeing the
 horror times a thousand other eyes, a
 thousand other voices.

ON A SOLDIER breathing hard, his breath fogging up the eye
 pieces in his hood. QUICK CUTS of other soldiers reacting
 the same way.

MAJOR CASEY (V.O.)

You've never heard a thousand hardened
 jarheads at the same exact second
 take in a breath so hard, so sudden
 and shuddering, that you could feel
 the fear in them, never felt it spread
 like wildfire as they recognized that
 fear in each other. I have. I heard
 that sound, I know that feeling, and
 every night I pray to God I never
 have to experience it again.

BACK TO SCENE

As the first few hundred zombies emerge from the street that
 leads to the parkway, abandoned cars and empty buildings on
 either side.

MAJOR CASEY

And then they came for us.

A soldier receives a transmission on his helmet radio, yells
 to the rest:

SOLDIER

Fire in the hole!

Everybody kisses the ground as the Comanche helicopter at the
 other end of the parkway fires two ROCKETS. In mid-air above
 the street they BURST into a hundred smaller bomblets which --

(CONTINUED)

-- EXPLODE all over the street, blowing zombies every which way and causing SECONDARY EXPLOSIONS as the gas tanks of cars are ignited. Thick black smoke swallows the scene.

The troops CHEER. Media helicopters SWING IN for a closer look.

The smoke CLEARS...and though a lot of the zombies have been destroyed, others were not affected or were only damaged, leaving limbs and organs hanging. They keep coming.

The cheers fade.

The Comanche FIRES a second salvo. The rockets and bomblets SLAM into the approaching zombies, blowing the whole place to hell. Walls of nearby buildings collapse. As before, many of the zombies are destroyed...but their numbers continue to grow, reinforced by others joining their ranks from behind. There are now five, six, seven hundred...a thousand.

They keep coming.

The soldiers look to each other, getting nervous. We SEE the carnage through their eye-pieces hooked to the nets, to cameras on their helmets or guns...the grainy black-and-white video giving the scene a stark realism and horror.

Another SOLDIER yells into a walkie-talkie.

ANOTHER SOLDIER

Fire!

Artillery cannons and chain-guns on the tanks and the Humvees BLAST out at the approaching tide, shredding the first rows and blowing up more buildings on either side. The zombies don't notice as debris falls around them. Rockets slam into walls above and around them, but their eyes never leave the soldiers in the distance...intense, intent, determined.

Hundreds of cannon, artillery and mortar rounds are fired. The road is transformed into hell incarnate, a vision of fire, smoke, explosions...a solid wall of absolute destruction.

We FIND Casey in the midst of this, with his men, hunkered down on the ground as the withering firestorm continues.

MAJOR CASEY (V.O.)

Nothing can survive this, I thought.
It was a fucking meat grinder, a wood chipper...we weren't even blowing them to bits anymore, it was like they were evaporating into the air by the assault, blown into clouds of blood and organic material.

The firestorm seems to go on forever, a roar loud as the end of the world that grows and grows...and finally stops.

(CONTINUED)

The smoke at the end of the parkway swirls and parts. The streets and buildings are covered in blood and body parts. Hundreds, maybe even a thousand bodies totally vaporized by the attack.

The next thousand keep coming.

And the thousand after that.

The tanks, humvees and artillery fire again, but in smaller numbers.

MAJOR CASEY (V.O.)

Then it happened.

The soldiers look over to the big vehicles, and see that some of them have stopped firing.

MAJOR CASEY (V.O.)

The big guns, the tanks and the humvees
and the Comanches...started running
out of ammo.

SOLDIER

What the fuck...?

BACK WITH CASEY

In the present as he stalks the room.

MAJOR CASEY

They gave us all these toys...you'd think one of those freaking West Point jerkoffs would've stopped to make sure they had enough shit to shoot, wouldn't you? How many big rounds and what kind of ammo would be required for a sustained battle.

(beat)

The Bradleys only carried a handful of ground-to-ground rockets, the kind that did us the most good. The rest of their racks were only set up to handle ground-to-air rockets and heat-seekers. They shot their wad of relevant munitions in the first fifteen minutes.

BACK TO SCENE

As a tank FIRES a silver object that STREAKS past CAMERA.

MAJOR CASEY (V.O.)

You know what an armor-piercing depleted-uranium dart does to a horde of walking zombies?

(CONTINUED)

FOLLOW the dart as it penetrates a hundred zombies, crashing through chests and legs and stomachs and hearts, one after another after another until it comes out the other end, embedding itself into a wall at the far side.

The zombies who were holed by the dart keep coming, heedless of the gaping wounds in their bodies.

MAJOR CASEY (V.O.)

Absolutely nothing.

We've PULLED BACK and UP now to see that the zombies are now uncomfortably close to the first line of soldiers, too close now for heavy munitions fire. Fingers tighten on triggers as the word comes --

ANOTHER SOLDIER

Open fire! Fire at will!

The soldiers OPEN FIRE, a withering assault on the zombies, who only gain speed and momentum now that they are within feeding range. Some are struck in the head and fall but most the rest just keeping on coming, walking right over the bodies of those who were destroyed.

They go from a fast walk to a stalking trot.

The fire intensifies.

They keep coming.

Soldiers get to their feet from behind the sandbags, yelling, firing.

SOLDIER

Die, motherfuckers! Die!

And in an instant the zombies are all over them. The defense line breaks, transforming into a series of desperate fights, zombies swarming through their ranks. Blood and screams. Gunfire and snarls. Soldiers falling, struggling, hand to hand.

We SEE the battle magnified a hundred times over in the POV gun cameras and helmet cameras of the soldiers...one after another going to STATIC as they are pulled down and killed.

A Humvee, swarmed by a dozen of them, GUNS the engine in reverse, trying to get the hell out of there...and SLAMS into a tank, the accident cutting off escape for other vehicles.

An armored personnel carrier, also swarmed, BLASTS away with its chaingun, striking another vehicle that EXPLODES, burning metal and fuel POURING across the parkway.

(CONTINUED)

Zombies ablaze in burning fuel take down soldiers trying to retreat, while other vehicles run them down only to burst into flame as well.

It's a scene of utter, absolute carnage...an inferno...a rout.

In this we FIND Major Casey, fighting for his life, surrounded by zombies, FIRING for all he's worth.

MAJOR CASEY

Retreat! Fall back! Get the hell out of there!

He yanks a soldier away from a zombie coming at him from behind and BLASTS, only to turn and find another coming right at him. He barely gets it when he turns --

-- to find a swarm of others coming on the run. He raises his gun, knowing this is it --

-- when a HAND reaches out of a nearby armored personnel carrier and YANKS him inside as somebody yells --

SOLDIER

Hang on!

-- and the APC ROARS ahead, driving right over the edge of the parkway. It falls twenty feet and BOUNCES hard, barely staying upright before continuing on.

EXT. SAW MILL RIVER PARKWAY - COMP SHOT -- DAY

HELICOPTER SHOT looking down at the carnage, with other media choppers SOARING PAST beneath us...then we slowly --

-- PULL BACK and UP, higher and higher, until we can now SEE the roads leading to the parkway, all of them choked with more and more of the zombies, drawn to the struggle...slowly revealing more and more of them...ten thousand, a hundred thousand...half a million of them, so high now that they look like a river, surging toward the battle zone, and with one last view of the sheer scope of it we go back to --

INT. ABANDONED CONDO - PRESENT -- AFTERNOON

-- where Major Casey looks out at the wreckage left behind from that day.

MAJOR CASEY

Three battalions, two armored divisions, another fifteen hundred infantry, two companies of Marines... over five thousand men in all.

(beat)

One hundred and fifteen survivors.

(CONTINUED)

GERRY

(quietly)

The news said three hundred.

MAJOR CASEY

(hard)

The rest were infected. They flipped within three days and had to be destroyed.

He turns back to Gerry, almost as though having momentarily forgotten that he was there.

MAJOR CASEY

There's a saying in the military that we always fight the next war with the strategies and tactics of the last war, and maybe that's true, but --

(beat)

I know you're never gonna use this in your report, but you want to know what I think happened? What I think really happened?

(beat)

I think god took a little time off. He'd left us with enough supplies and resources to get by for a while, and he went off to spend some time, I dunno, working out the trajectories of new-born comets and the next evolution in butterfly wings, whatever the hell it is divine beings do in their spare time. Then one day, he decided to check in on us.

He turns and looks back out the window at the destruction.

MAJOR CASEY

I think he looked down at the world of infinite possibilities he'd created and saw that we'd burned down the garden of Eden and turned every inch of arable land into strip malls. I think he saw his creations had become a people who would sell each other out for ten dollars and a better parking spot. He saw bomb blasts and body counts, anthrax in the mail, wars for profit, billion dollar CEO golden parachutes and everybody out for himself, screw the next guy. He saw us feeding on each other. And He said, "Let me show you what that really looks like. Let me show you what that looks like...to me." And He did.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MAJOR CASEY (CONT'D)

(softer)

Yeah, He sure did that, didn't He?
Only question now is whether or not
we get the message. I hope we do.
God, I hope we do.

(beat)

I have to go. Plane's waiting.

Gerry nods numbly, struck to the core by what he has heard
and, through Casey's words, seen. Finally, he manages:

GERRY

Thank you.

Casey nods, then starts out, only to pause in the doorway, as
though struggling with some hard inner decision. He turns
back, a look of finality in his eyes, his voice low but firm.

MAJOR CASEY

Mr. Lane?

GERRY

Yes?

MAJOR CASEY

When you write your report...use my
name. Truth's gotta start somewhere.

And with that, he exits, leaving Gerry alone in the shattered
remains of the building for a BEAT as we go to

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. NEW YORK CITY -- EVENING

The shadows lengthen, the lights on in some buildings.

INT. UN BUILDING - GERRY'S OFFICE -- EVENING

He's at the keyboard, typing his report as one of the
interviews from earlier plays in BG. We see some of the other
buildings outside his window, also lit. There's a rather
sizable stack of printed manuscript beside the computer,
covered with edits catching typos. We get the sense that
this is going to be a very lengthy report.

This goes on for another BEAT when the lights go out, both in
Gerry's office and the buildings visible outside. He barely
reacts, this is part of the new world they live in. He reaches
to a small backup generator parked beside his desk and switches
it on. The computer and desk lamp flare back to life. He
continues writing.

INT. GERRY'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Gerry is on his back, in bed, staring up at the ceiling. Karin is on her side, her back to him, still closed to him. He rolls over, touches her shoulder. She doesn't respond. He rolls back again.

INT. UN BUILDING - COPY ROOM -- DAY

Gerry is running off copies of his report. From the size of the stack it's at least five hundred pages.

We see a typed cover page: *UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL COMMISSION REPORT ON THE ZOMBIE WAR, Prepared by Gerald Lane.*

INT. UN BUILDING - GERRY'S OFFICE -- DAY

It's several weeks later. Gerry is working as an interoffice packet lands at his desk. The packet is marked United Nations Printing Office. He unties the string and opens the packet.

A slender booklet slides onto his desk. The cover page reads *UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL COMMISSION REPORT ON THE ZOMBIE WAR, Prepared by Gerald Lane.*

He picks it up...looks inside the packet in case there's more to it. Picks it up again. It's barely a hundred pages, if that. He takes it and marches out of the office.

INT. UN BUILDING - MCENROE'S OFFICE -- MOMENTS LATER

Gerry is pacing, pissed, as McEnroe sits behind his desk, doing his best to be reasonable and placating.

GERRY

You gutted the report! You took out everything that meant anything!

MCENROE

Gerry --

GERRY

You can't do this --

MCENROE

It's already been done. The report's printed, it's going out this afternoon.

GERRY

This is bullshit --

MCENROE

Everyone who participated in the report did so on the anticipation that they would have the chance to review the document before it was released to

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MCENROE (CONT'D)

ensure that the material was constructive and strictly objective. This will be a good guideline for us to use in evaluating where the system broke down.

GERRY

Fuck you. You tore the heart out of it.

MCENROE

What you gave us, the depth and detail, it was amazing, Gerry, it really was, but it was just too...intimate.

GERRY

Too intimate. What the hell does that mean?

MCENROE

Too many opinions, too many feelings. That's not what this report was supposed to be about. We were looking for clear facts and figures, unclouded by the human factor.

GERRY

But the human factor's the whole point, Mac. By excluding the human factor we're creating the exact same sort of personal detachment that caused this in the first place! You're not preventing this from ever happening again, you're practically guaranteeing it!

MCENROE

You're taking this far too personally --

GERRY

And in the end...Mac, at the end of the day, the end of the week, the end of history itself...isn't the human factor the only difference between us and those things out there? Take that away...and what's left? Take that away, and we're them, and they're us, and what's the point of anything anymore?

MCENROE

Gerry, you know how the system works, you know member nations get to approve what comes out of the United Nations.

(CONTINUED)

GERRY

I'm not going to just roll over on this, Mac. I won't. I'll fight this.

MCENROE

And you'll lose. I don't understand why you're taking this so personally. You didn't even want this assignment, remember? But lately you've been on it like a dog on a bone. Why? Why is this so important to you?

Gerry hesitates, it's the question he hasn't answered, the secret he's been carrying. He stalks away, doesn't look at McEnroe. Agonizes. Finally:

GERRY

During the war, we did things...we all did things to survive, that... that in another place and time we could never have done. Awful things. Terrible things. For the most part we did them with our eyes open.

(beat)

We did...we did what was necessary. But Rachel....

INT. RV - FLASHBACK -- DAY

Rachel, in the RV, is looking a little better, though still weak. Holding an empty bowl, she manages to stand from the bed and move down toward the front of the RV.

GERRY (V.O.)

...but Rachel....

RACHEL

Mom...? Dad...?

She looks around, doesn't see them. Steadying herself against the walls, she moves to the kitchen, where a large pot of soup or stew is steaming on the stove. She puts the bowl down beside it. Looks around.

RACHEL

Mom?

She looks out to see Karin and Gerry outside, talking by the line of trees, outside earshot. Satisfied that they're around, she starts to turn back, then decides she's still a little hungry. She reaches in to ladle out some more of the food. She digs the ladle down deep --

GERRY (V.O.)

She didn't know, she didn't know, she didn't --

(CONTINUED)

-- and comes up with the skeletal remains of a human hand, boiling in the broth to pull out every bit of nutrition.

She SCREAMS. A scream as big as the world, a scream that ECHOES ACROSS THE CUT TO --

INT. UN BUILDING - MCENROE'S OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

-- where Gerry is pacing, distraught.

GERRY

When she found out...see, we hadn't had a chance to prepare her, or even lie to her, it was --

(beat)

She knew what kind of things fed on human flesh. She'd seen them, and when she realized --

(beat)

She just...broke.

He sits heavily across from McEnroe, covering his face.

GERRY

For days she wouldn't even talk, it was as if she wasn't there anymore, inside her own body. Then finally we were able to get her to respond, and the thing of it is, Mac...the goddamned thing of it is...sometimes it was her, just as she's always been, but other times --

(beat)

We can't leave her alone.

EXT. STREET -- DAY

Rachel is walking alongside a FEMALE ESCORT, who holds her hand tightly. Nearby we see several other children playing, their parents looking on or chatting. Like everyone else, they're armed.

GERRY (V.O.)

We hired an escort to bring her to school and stay with her whenever one of us wasn't around, because sometimes....

Rachel looks off to the other children, and then, suddenly her face darkens.

GERRY (V.O.)

...sometimes....

Before the escort can react Rachel YANKS free of her hand and LUNGES for the other children, SNARLING and biting.

(CONTINUED)

The other parents react instantly. Some reach for their weapons as the escort RUNS desperately to Rachel.

ESCORT

No! No, don't!

She grabs Rachel, holding her tight as Rachel struggles to get loose. The escort reaches into her coat to pull out a hand-lettered sign on a looped length of string...a sign written in a mother's careful handwriting...a sign that says *Not Dead*. The escort forces it over Rachel's head and around her neck as she cries out to the parents.

ESCORT

She's not dead...she's not dead...
she's not dead!

With one last lunge, Rachel goes limp in the escort's arms, her eyes vacant, far away. The escort, crying, rocks Rachel back and forth in her arms.

ESCORT

She's not dead...not dead...not dead.

INT. UN BUILDING - MCENROE'S OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

The room is very quiet for a BEAT, then:

GERRY

I need to be able to look Rachel in the eye, to look right down into her soul, wherever it's hiding in her, and tell her it's not going to happen again...that the common coin of our humanity is something deeper and more profound than personal convenience and enlightened self-interest...and more than that --

(beat)

-- I need her to understand, to believe that we're not them, and they're not us, and she's --

(can't finish it)

I need to tell her that, Mac, I need both of us to know I'm telling the truth, because maybe...maybe it'll do some good...maybe it'll do some good.

(beat)

Maybe it'll....

His voice fades away, and he realizes that he's crying. He looks away. Silence returns for a long BEAT. Finally, McEnroe clears his throat. Moved. Nonetheless:

(CONTINUED)

MCENROE

Gerry, we both know that I cannot have an insurrection in my department. You're putting me in a position where I will have no choice but to fire you, effective immediately.

GERRY

After everything I've done --

MCENROE

I told you, in here you cannot win, so....

(beat)

We never signed a contract for the work you did for us, did we?

GERRY

No...no, there's nothing to compel you to use what I gave you, or --

MCENROE

You misunderstand me.

(beat)

If we don't have a contract with you, and if you no longer work here, then anything you developed above and beyond what we use in our version of this report is by all rights your property. You can do with it as you wish.

Gerry searches McEnroe's face, not sure he's hearing what he's hearing.

GERRY

What're you --

MCENROE

I'm saying that legally you can do whatever you want with the sections we chose to delete. Put it online, put it in an article, a series of articles, a book...it's your material, Gerry, your research. We can't stop you.

(beat)

I imagine that when I officially find this out, I will be most cross with our legal department. Harsh words will doubtless be spoken, your credibility smeared and your reputation debased, but in the end there's nothing we can do to stop you.

He pulls the complete manuscript out of a drawer and slides it across to Gerry.

(CONTINUED)

MCENROE

Take it. Go home. Kiss your children.
Make love to your wife. And come
back tomorrow. We have work to do,
you know.

Gerry takes the manuscript, moves to the door. Glances back.

GERRY

Thank you.

MCENROE

For what?

Meaning: *we never had this conversation.* Gerry nods and exits.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING -- DAY

Gerry holds a thick envelope containing his manuscript. He looks up at the skyscraper that towers over him. Hesitates for just a BEAT, then enters.

EXT. GERRY'S APARTMENT -- AFTERNOON

Gerry gets out of a car, heading toward the front steps.

INT. PUBLISHING HOUSE - PRINTING FACILITIES -- AFTERNOON

Pages are ejected from a printing press, collated, dropped into stacks.

EXT. GERRY'S APARTMENT -- CONTINUOUS

Gerry looks up to see the escort sitting with Rachel outside the apartment.

INT. PUBLISHING HOUSE - PRINTING FACILITIES -- CONTINUOUS

Bound editions come off the press bearing the title *WORLD WAR Z, An Oral History of the Zombie War.*

EXT. GERRY'S APARTMENT -- CONTINUOUS

Gerry pauses beside Rachel, who looks up at him and smiles. She is wearing the sign that says *Not Dead*. He touches her face, smoothing the hair out of her eyes, and continues into the apartment as --

-- we stay with Rachel, playing, the sign dangling in front of her. *Not Dead. Not Dead.*

Not Dead.

FADE OUT: