

BURN RUN

Written by

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OVER BLACK:

The roar of jet engines echo in the distance, the quiet rumble of a truck motor right beside us.

A self-assured MALE VOICE speaks over the noise.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)
Repeat after me -- *'I am a U.S.
Contractor.'*

A muffled MONOTONE VOICE repeats verbatim.

MONOTONE VOICE (V.O.)
'I am a U.S. Contractor.'

SUPER: Since 2001, the United States has spent more than \$7.6 billion to crush the Afghan Opium Trade.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)
*'I do this job for the opportunity
to kill the enemies of my
country...'*

MONOTONE VOICE (V.O.)
*'I do this job for the opportunity
to kill the enemies of my
country...'*

SUPER: So far, cultivation has increased 3,500%. This black-market trade accounts for over 50% of Afghanistan's GDP--

MALE VOICE (V.O.)
*'...and to finally get that boat
I've always wanted.'*

MONOTONE VOICE (V.O.)
*'...and to finally get that boat
I've always wanted.'*

SUPER: --and 90% of the world's Heroin supply. Profits can be traced to the Taliban, Al Qaeda and other terrorist networks.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)
Pull your damn head through.

MONOTONE VOICE (V.O.)
'Pull your damn head--'

MALE VOICE (V.O.)
Not that part.

SUPER: For all intents and purposes, Afghanistan has deteriorated into a Narco-Terror-State.

EXT. KABUL INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - AFGHANISTAN - DAY

The top of a balding head peeks through the neck-hole of a ballistic body armor jersey.

MALE VOICE (O.C.)

Again... *'In any combat zone, I will locate the swimming pool, beer and women, because I can.'*

MONOTONE VOICE

(Muffled thru the jersey)

'In any combat zone, I will locate the swimming pool, beer and women, because I can.'

An oily forehead breaches the hole--

MALE VOICE (O.C.)

'I am my country's scapegoat, the plausible deniability warrior and I love it.'

--birthing a pair of brown eyes and bulbous nose; the jersey resembling Under Armor with Kevlar plates sewn in.

MONOTONE VOICE

But I'm not a warrior--

MALE VOICE (O.C.)

That doesn't matter for our purposes here today.

MONOTONE VOICE

(Reluctant)

'I am my country's scapegoat, the plausible deniability warrior and I love it.'

Monotone's chin finally slips through -- Meet:

SUPER: The PRINCIPAL or PACKAGE. What the Private Security Contractors are paid to protect.

He pulls the lower half of the jersey around his cushy love handles and looks at the Male Voice across from him.

A bearded good old boy with the chiseled steroid infused physique of a man half his age.

SUPER: BRAD HAWKINS - Handle: DUTCH -- // (Late 40s).

He's all jocked-up with wraparound Oakley shades and bulging tattooed biceps stretching out the arms of his T-shirt.

The Ink: A lion's paw encircled by a sniper score, the same logo printed on the chest of his T-shirt.

DUTCH

*Lastly, 'I will deploy on my terms
and if it ever gets too stupid...'*

PRINCIPAL

*'I will deploy on my terms and if
it ever gets too stupid...'*

DUTCH

*'I'll simply find another company
that pays more.'*

PRINCIPAL

*'I'll simply find another company
that pays more.'*

DUTCH

Good. You're an honorary Merc for
the next eight minutes or so.

Dutch presses a Kevlar helmet against the Principal's chest.

DUTCH (CONT'D)

Put that on.

He does and waits for Dutch's approval, jaw hitting the
ground when he hands him an M4 ASSAULT RIFLE instead.

PRINCIPAL

I... I don't know how to shoot--

DUTCH

Don't you worry about that, you're
our bullet bitch.

Dutch gestures to a second M4 slung over his shoulder.

DUTCH (CONT'D)

We get in the shit, you're Johnny
on the Spot with a reload. Get me?

The Principal swallows hard.

PRINCIPAL

Got you.

Dutch smiles like a proud parent.

DUTCH

Now... Take a look at yourself.

He spins the Principal face to face with the tinted windows of the tan up-armored GMC SUBURBAN they'll be riding in.

They stare at his reflection, decked out head to toe in full Battle Rattle and wielding a weapon that can unload 700-950 lethal rounds per minute.

The Principal smiles despite himself.

DUTCH (CONT'D)

C - D - I.

PRINCIPAL

Is that code?

DUTCH

Bet your ass it is.

The Principal's eyes reflect back, requesting a translation.

DUTCH (CONT'D)

Chicks - Dig - It. You look shit hot. Bosco, how's he look?

Another Contractor arrives at the truck with two cases of beer wrapped in Duty-Free bags.

BOSCO

Shit hot.

SUPER: DARREL FOSTER - Handle: BOSCO -- // (Mid 40s).

Bosco sports a beard as well, same wraparound Oakleys, same tan Royal Robbins 5.11 pants, same bulging biceps in a tight company T-shirt.

His moniker and faux-hawk a tribute to MR. T of THE A-TEAM.

Dutch shoves the Principal in back, behind another ripped Contractor -- Same beard, same sunglasses, same toned arms...

SUPER: MIGUEL RAMOS - Handle: LAMBO -- // (Mid 40s).

DUTCH

Adult beverages check. Get my goods?

Bosco tosses Dutch a TIC TAC multi-pack.

DUTCH (CONT'D)

God bless you brother.

INT. GMC SUBURBAN - NEXT

The Principal buckles his belt, but Lambo stops him.

LAMBO
Leave it off. Will slow us down
when we get in the shit.

Bosco hops in the rear cargo area with the beer and Dutch
slides in the front passenger seat.

PRINCIPAL
So, it's likely we're going to...
Get in the shit?

Bosco chuckles -- Lambo tossing the Principal a stern glare.

LAMBO
If the intel report's legit--

DUTCH
Don't make the guy shit himself.
(Winks at the Principal)
Plenty of time for that later.

Lambo eases on the gas, making his way through a maze of
jersey barriers towards the exit. A bold green sign
approaching the gate reads: ALL WEAPONS RED.

The Team click off the safety catches on their M4s, the
Principal mimicking them when Bosco clamps down on his wrist.

BOSCO
That don't mean you.

Lambo revs the engine, waiting for the automatic fence to
open like a caged horse at the starting gate.

Dutch hits play on the SUV's stereo -- AC/DC's HIGHWAY TO
HELL swelling through the speakers. The gate clears--

DUTCH
Roll hard.

Lambo punches the gas, screaming into a sea of Japanese cars.

The Principal takes in the sights out the tinted bullet-proof
windows.

EXT. GREAT MASSOUD ROAD - KABUL, AFGHANISTAN - NEXT

Sidewalks teeming with locals in front of clay buildings
plastered with Arabic signs the color of cake sprinkles.

Bearded men don the traditional Shalwar Kameez or slacks and button downs, but the women... They're covered head to toe in body length shawls with burqas masking their faces.

AFGHAN POLICE (ANP) are stationed on corners in grey uniforms wielding AK-47s, glaring at the Suburban as it passes.

INT. GMC SUBURBAN - NEXT

BOSCO

ANP's treacherous. Uniforms get
"stolen" by Haji's every other day.

DUTCH

Truck right.

A WHITE TOYOTA PICKUP merges in front of the Suburban.

Lambo cuts a hard left, speedometer creeping past 60mph, clipping the Pickups rear bumper, sending it spinning out of control.

DUTCH (CONT'D)

Car left.

A DATSUN tries to overtake them. Weapons ready, Lambo floors it, making sure they don't get boxed in.

The Datsun keeps pace, Bosco the only one who can make out the Passengers -- A FAMILY OF THREE.

Before he can speak, Lambo cuts them off and the Datsun Driver brakes hard to avoid a collision. The car skids--

CRASH

Rear-ended by the SUZUKI COMPACT tailing it.

The Principal spins around, watching the vehicles barrel off the road, taking out a rickety kiosk in the process.

LAMBO

Habudabi's never learn...

DUTCH

Group right up ahead.

The Team turns their attention to a group of YOUNG AFGHAN MEN congregating on a corner. The Principal locks eyes with one of them as they drive by, tension in the truck thick until--

DUTCH (CONT'D)

Cart.

--Dutch alerts them to a MERCHANT pulling a MULE yoked cart across the road.

Lambo accelerates to 70mph. The Merchant dives out of the way and the Suburban's bumper becomes one with the animals head--

THUD

Blood and brains splatter across the windshield. Dutch tosses a handful of Tic Tac's in his mouth.

DUTCH (CONT'D)

You're getting her washed soon as
we get back.

Lambo flicks on the wipers and adds fluid, washing the blood away as quickly as it came.

The Principal looks out the back windshield at the Merchant shaking his fist in the air, but they're already gone, none of the Contractors giving him a second thought.

DUTCH (CONT'D)

Kids!

The Principal recognizes distress in Dutch's voice for the very first time.

Lambo pumps the brakes and they skid to a stop, a yard away from a line of SCHOOL CHILDREN crossing the road. Their TEACHER like a mother mallard leading ducklings to water.

They scan each and every Afghan outside -- Men, Women and Children alike; zeroing in on their hands, looking for cell phones, garage door openers -- All potential DETONATORS.

LAMBO

I don't like this boss.

BOSCO

Too many eyes on us.

Seconds feel like minutes as nervous fingers hover over triggers. Dutch pops his door open and sticks his barrel out--

DUTCH

Imshi, Imshi, Imshi!

--firing two loud bullet bursts into the air. The Children scream as tears fill their eyes, fear turning them to statues when--

CRACK

--the side window splinters from a sniper shot, the crack in the glass right next to the Principal's head.

DUTCH (CONT'D)

Get down!

The Principal falls to the floor. Outside the Teacher grabs a few stragglers and carries them across the road.

DUTCH (CONT'D)

Drive!

Lambo floors it, driving straight towards the one remaining child standing stone still in the middle of the street--

CRACK

Another bullet nails the back windshield across from Bosco, the Suburban on a collision course with the Boy--

CRACK - CRACK

Two more bullets rip into the glass.

At the last possible second Lambo cuts the wheel, so close that the draft blows the Massoud cap right off the Boy's head.

The Principal peeks at Bosco through the gap below the seat.

BOSCO

This is the "kill zone."

Outside, two burnt out up-armored Suburbans have been left for dead on the side of the road.

DUTCH

Roundabout coming up.

The TRAFFIC CIRCLE is PURE CHAOS -- Cars, buses, bikes, pedestrians... Some moving with the current, others against.

DUTCH (CONT'D)

Bike left - Car right - Man three
o'clock.

Dutch fires off directions, calling the game as only someone with his experience can.

Lambo cuts right, left and right again, avoiding obstacles like a Formula One Driver, never bringing the truck below 50.

The Principal's eyes bulge from their sockets, heart beating through his chest.

The Contractors are cool and collected, just another typical day driving THE GREAT MASSOUD ROAD from KABUL INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT to the Coalition occupied RING OF STEEL.

Bosco points to a CHECK POINT guarded by AMERICAN MARINES.

BOSCO

That's home, the Ring of Steel.

The Principal's pulse slows, relief washing over him when--

A TAXI cuts across the median and stops in the middle of the road.

DUTCH

Got a V-Bed.

Dutch's voice betrays distress for the second time on the trip, Bosco's too, peering out the back.

BOSCO

Haji's on our six.

The Principal spins around, seeing the Young Afghan Man he locked eyes with behind the wheel of a car filled to the brim with Insurgents wielding AKs and Kalashnikovs.

LAMBO

He'll set it off we get within 20--

DUTCH

Don't stop.

Lambo punches the gas, the distance between the Suburban and Taxi shrinking with each passing second.

PRINCIPAL

Oh my God, is that a car bomb?

Dutch can see a GARAGE DOOR OPENER in the Insurgent's hand; Lambo reciting the Hail Mary in Spanish.

HAWK

He's got a plunger.

LAMBO

*Dios te salve, Maria.
Llena eres de gracia...*

They pick up speed, closing in on the Taxi--

40 yards... 35... 30...

The Insurgent presses down on the Opener--

25 yards... 20... 15...

Nothing.

10 yards... 5...

The Principal stares at the Insurgent punching the Opener over and over as they pass.

5 yards... 10... 15... 20...

The separation between the vehicles growing when--

BOOM

The Taxi explodes blowing out the Suburban's back windshield.

DUTCH

Down!

They speed through the Check Point into the Ring of Steel, the Marines eyeing them with envy, counting down the days until they can go private.

Bosco breathes a sigh of relief and pats a DIGITAL BOX on the floor beside the beer.

BOSCO

On the sixth day the Lord said,
"Let there be signal jammers."

The Suburban creeps below 50mph for the first time since leaving the airport, Highway to Hell fading to a whisper.

LAMBO

Welcome to the Ring of Steel.

The Principal returns to his seat as Bosco sniffs the air and looks over the Principal's shoulder -- A moist urine stain spreading across his crotch where the spare M4 is resting.

BOSCO

You piss on that weapon?

Dutch and Lambo let out a soft chuckle, releasing the last bit of built-up tension from their bodies.

They pull up to the PARK PLACE HOTEL and Bosco snaps a photo of the Principal's soiled crotch with his cell phone - CLICK.

Lambo and Bosco step out, but the Principal remains frozen in his seat. Dutch takes pity on him.

DUTCH

Adrenaline's a funny thing. Some
guys piss, puke... Me, my ass
puckers.

He tosses another handful of Tic Tac's in his mouth.

PRINCIPAL

Yeah?

DUTCH

Couldn't do this job right without
a healthy reminder of your
mortality.

(A beat)

Why you in country?

PRINCIPAL

I'm a-- A blogger...

He hands Dutch his card, who dwells on the Principal's
answer, considering the fact that he risked his life and the
lives of his Team for a lowly wanna be journalist.

DUTCH

First time risking my ass for a
blogger. Whatever the hell that is.

(A beat)

Welcome to Afghanistan.

SMASH CUT TO BLACK:

TITLE UP: **BURN RUN**

EXT. HELMAND PROVINCE - AFGHANISTAN - DAWN

A valley blanketed by a sea of blooming pink poppies,
insulated by a desolate mountain range that resembles the
surface of the moon.

Bearded FIELD HANDS in turbans work the crop, scoring
flowerless pods with a tri-blade knife, letting OPIUM GUM
ooze through the cuts like blood from a surgeon's scalpel.

Other WORKERS collect day old gum caked to the pods, a
process they'll do four or five times until the plant can no
longer produce the precious resin.

SUPER: Opium Gum -- The raw ingredient used to cook HEROIN.

A REFINERY sits at the edge of the field, protected by a ten
foot wall patrolled by GUARDS armed with AK-47s. Two of the
Guards turn a corner and disappear from view when--

The Field Hands collapse one by one below the flowers, like their legs have been cut out from under them.

Another Guard appears and looks towards the pastel field, surprised by their sudden disappearance when--

ZIP - THWACK

A bullet rips into his skull, splattering blood and brains across the wall, his body hitting the ground like a sack of flour.

The pink flowers sway in the wind like wakes on the ocean as midnight blue specks rise above the crest, moving fast through the stalks straight towards the Refinery.

The midnight specks come into sharper focus--

Turtle shell helmets belonging to AFGHAN COMMANDOS decked out in operational gear, carrying American made M4s with black Balaclavas masking their faces.

These are members of the U.S. trained FASTeam (Foreign Advisory Support) -- the AFGHAN COUNTER NARCOTICS TASK FORCE.

The very best this country has to offer from its thin pool of law enforcement recruits.

They approach in silence and press their backs to the wall, the COMMANDER sticking a PLASTIC EXPLOSIVE against it when--

Two Guards circle around the wall and catch them in the act.

One raises his AK and fires, but is riddled by bullets before he can aim, his shots flying wild into the air.

The second Guard doesn't even get that chance before his chest is ripped open by M4 rounds.

A YOUNG COMMANDO kicks their weapons away and puts a bullet in each of their heads -- THWACK-THWACK -- for good measure.

The Commander nods at his prized pupil. The rest of the Team stare in awe, M4s rattling around in their nervous hands.

VOICES echo from inside the Refinery as the Commander presses a button on the explosive and turns away--

BOOM

The wall crumbles and a hole appears -- Their entryway.

INT. HALLWAY - REFINERY - HELMAND PROVINCE - NEXT

A squad of Guards grab their AKs and move into the hall when--

CLINK - CLINK - CLINK

Their eyes fall to a grenade rolling around on the floor--

BOOM

The blast rips their bodies limb from limb in a cloud of dust. The midnight blue uniforms storm in and are met with return fire--

RAT-A-TAT-TAT-TAT

The first two Commandos weapons misfire, eyes wide as bullets tear into them and they collapse like a house of cards.

The Young Commando returns fire and takes out the Guards at the end of the hall, like shooting fish in a barrel.

This is a two man operation, the rest of the Team nothing more than human shields to throw in front of enemy fire.

The Young Commando releases his trigger when--

BANG - THWACK

An indiscriminate bullet catches him in the chest.

There's a lull in the fire fight as the rest of the Team move towards a room at the end of the hall, stepping over the scattered bloody limbs of their enemies.

Two Commandos take up positions outside the door, but the Commander hesitates, his eyes focused on the injured Young Commando behind them.

The MEDIC cuts his shirt open, fortunate to find the bullet flattened against the metal chest plate of his flak jacket.

Relieved, the Commander counts down from three with his fingers and they storm the room--

RAT-A-TAT-TAT-TAT

The last living Guard fires from behind the cover of a table barricade, but the Commandos unleash hell--

RAT-A-TAT-TAT-TAT

Tearing it to splintered shreds.

The Guard keels over and the Team continue towards a locked door at the back and a Commando takes his boot to it--

THUD - THUD - THUMP

INT. BACK ROOM - REFINERY - HELMAND PROVINCE - CONTINUOUS

The Team storm in shouting orders in PASHTO, the regional dialect of ethnic Pashtuns, the southern majority.

COMMANDOS

(Pashto - Subtitled)

Get down! On the ground! Now!

The Commander scans the room through the rear sight of his M4, eyes turning benign as he lowers the weapon.

Behind boiling oil drums and makeshift lab equipment are WOMEN and CHILDREN -- Tribal Families forced to refine the Opium Gum into heroin bricks that resemble boxed brown sugar.

He locks eyes with a YOUNG GIRL (10 or 11), her piercing green eyes boring into him.

He pulls his Balaclava below his chin -- Meet:

SUPER: SAIF - Commander of the Afghan FASTeam -- // (50s).

His thick black beard is peppered with flecks of grey below war weary eyes. He stares at the poor souls with compassion, knowing they have little choice in the work they do.

SAIF

(Pashto - Subtitled)

*Take the bricks and chemicals
outside and prep the building.*

(A beat)

And give them something to eat.

AFGHAN VOICE (PRELAP)

(Pashto - Translated)

*Dissolving the private security
companies is a serious program...*

INT. COMPANY HOUSE - KABUL, AFGHANISTAN - DAY

On screen, a SPOKESMAN for the Afghan President is addressing REPORTERS -- A British Voice translates.

AFGHAN SPOKESMAN (VIDEO)
*...that the government of
 Afghanistan will execute. Soon the
 President will set a deadline.*

LAMBO (O.C.)
 You hear this pendejo?

Lambo pounds a beer, an ethernet cable running from a jerry rigged router overflowing with splitters to the notebook computer in his lap streaming the Spokesman's address.

Bosco lounges across from him, beer in his left hand, dragging and dropping the Principal's crotch photo into an album of other piss and shit stain casualties with his right.

AFGHAN SPOKESMAN (VIDEO)
*We can no longer tolerate the
 existence of such parallel
 structures whether owned by
 foreigners or Afghans.*

He parks his laptop on the plywood-cinder block coffee table.

LAMBO
 Habudabi's trying to deport us.

Bosco chugs his beer and burps.

BOSCO
 What else is new?

LAMBO
 Haven't tucked enough away for that
 Harley I've been stalking on ebay.
 Two months of work down the drain.

AFGHAN SPOKESMAN (VIDEO)
*People do not trust these companies
 and believe their existence is
 against Afghanistan's national
 interests. We all should assist in
 strengthening the Afghan Army and
 Police Force.*

LAMBO
 Think that asshole means, inept
 army and corrupt police force.

Lambo glances at Dutch listening to the address as he scrolls through his laptop, beer in hand, sucking on Tic Tac's.

LAMBO (CONT'D)
 You hearing this boss?

DUTCH

Yup.

The subject line of the e-mail open in his browser reads:
MAPLE LEAF TREATMENT CENTER.

LAMBO

(Imitating Dutch)

What'cha reckon?

DUTCH

In the words of Robert Frost...

He scrolls to the bottom of the message, a cost quote to the tune of: \$32,389.76.

DUTCH (CONT'D)

"Nothing gold can stay."

WOMAN'S VOICE (*PRELAP*)

You've got some nerve...

INT. DUTCH'S BUNK - COMPANY HOUSE - LATER

The Voice barks through a pair of headphones connected to Dutch's laptop, a SKYPE call active on screen.

WOMAN'S VOICE (*SKYPE*)

...how could I let this happen?
Where the hell have you been the
last few years?

Dutch's room is Spartan, no pictures or memorabilia, just the essentials: A bed, sheets and GO BAG -- Ready to leave at the drop of a hat.

DUTCH

I've been in this shit hole risking
my life day in and day out--

WOMAN'S VOICE (*SKYPE*)

For what? You didn't kill Bin Laden
Brad. You drive a truck. Hell, you
don't even drive it.

He bites his tongue, refusing to get sucked into a battle that was lost years ago.

DUTCH

I don't have that kind of money
just lying around Sarah.

SARAH (SKYPE)
Where's it all go? You buying
lingerie for skanks over there too?

Dutch stews, not in the mood for a trip down memory lane.

DUTCH
Half goes right in your pocket
every month...
(A beat - Soft)
...and need I remind you about that
Jodi fuck in your Dear John letter?

SARAH (SKYPE)
You're a real piece of work, you
know that. I wouldn't be asking,
but the VA's slower than molasses
in January and won't cover anything
private.

Tense silence lingers over the line.

DUTCH
Can I talk to him?

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - SAME

SARAH (late-40s), crows feet and wrinkles from a Military
Wife/ex-Wife's existence; looks at her son -- BRANDON (20s),
unconscious in a hospital bed, an IV pumping fluid into him.

SARAH
He's in a coma.

(Intercut between the Hospital and Dutch's Bunk)

Tears well in her eyes.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Booze or grass I could handle, but
this...

Rock music blasts from another room, forcing Dutch to pump up
the volume on his speakers -- BERP - BERP - BERP.

SARAH (CONT'D)
News says its an epidemic, paper's
calling I-91 the Heroin Highway--

DUTCH
Jesus...

SARAH
Doctor said Maple Leaf's the best
thing. Get a hold of it before he's
out of control--

DUTCH
He's already out of control Sarah,
he OD'd for Christ's sake. That's
why I told you to take'em to detox--

SARAH
He's been in and outta there eight-
nine times already. They clean him
up and he's back on that junk a
week later. He needs rehab.

Silence returns for a tense moment and Dutch changes tactics.

DUTCH
I'll move some savings around,
transfer enough for the deposit and
figure out the rest.

SARAH
He needs more than that Brad--

DUTCH
What else is there?

SARAH
He needs you!
(A beat - Quiet)
He needs his father...

The line goes dead.

Dutch pops out the earbuds, limps over to his Go Bag and
grabs a bottle of PAIN KILLERS.

He eyes them with trepidation before tossing two back and
mixing some in with the Tic Tac's.

DUTCH (*PRELAP*)
That ban gonna stick?

INT. ASSIGNMENT OFFICE - COMPANY HOUSE - LATER

The ASSIGNMENT CAPTAIN (40s), is seated behind a plywood desk
in his makeshift office. The only decoration, a WWII era
poster with a smiling Marine holding a coffee mug that reads:

How About a Nice Cup of Shut The Fuck Up

ASSIGNMENT CAPTAIN
If Ghani wants his own guys
protecting his ass, be my guest.

He's rifling through a stack of manila file folders.

ASSIGNMENT CAPTAIN (CONT'D)
It comes to that, I'd bet my kid's
college fund he's dead in a month.

The A.C. or what Field Ops call a FOBBIT -- Someone who never
leaves the Forward Operating Base. A meek pencil pusher who
fancies himself a badass by the company he keeps.

DUTCH
Any news on my request?

ASSIGNMENT CAPTAIN
Not enough excitement on the
Massoud?

DUTCH
Done hundreds of back and forths
down that road. Statistically I
should've been tits up years ago.

ASSIGNMENT CAPTAIN
Maybe it's time to hang'em up. Put
in your twenty with the army, got
that pension waiting.

DUTCH
"Those who have hunted armed men
long enough and liked it, Never
really care for anything else
thereafter..."

The A.C. grins.

ASSIGNMENT CAPTAIN
Always with the quotes--

His smile cut short by DEATH METAL blaring from an adjacent
room. He slams his fist against the wall--

THUD - THUD - THUD

ASSIGNMENT CAPTAIN (CONT'D)
Turn it down.

--but the music carries on at full blast.

DUTCH

(Louder)

I'd like to look back on my time here and think I made a difference. Did something important, you know. Tired of this *Saving Private Ryan* shit, risking three good lives for a guy with an iPhone camera or some blog journo. Maybe get a bump in my day rate while I'm at it.

ASSIGNMENT CAPTAIN

It's bloggers and new assignments--

(Louder)

New assignments are easy to come by, I've got a stack right here.

The A.C. spins around and pounds the wall again--

THUD - THUD - THUD

--shouting now.

ASSIGNMENT CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

I said turn it down!

He turns back, his demeanor pleasant. Jeckyll to his Hyde a moment ago, but the Death Metal drones on.

ASSIGNMENT CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

(Loud)

You're asking me to put you on a top detail. I can make recs, but you know full well the final decision isn't mine.

(A beat - Hesitant)

And your whole negligent discharge--

DUTCH

It was accidental, not negligent and it was five fucking years ago.

ASSIGNMENT CAPTAIN

Guys still talk about it, like an urban legend.

DUTCH

I'm former Special Forces for fuck's sake. You've got beat cops from bum fuck nowhere with zero military training doing higher profile work.

The deafening music interrupts the A.C.'s train of thought. He spins around and gives the wall another beating--

THUD - THUD - THUD - THUD - THUD

--screaming at the top of his lungs.

ASSIGNMENT CAPTAIN
TURN IT THE FUCK DOWN!

Dutch steps out of the room - A moment later the music quiets to a whisper. He steps back in and returns to his chair.

DUTCH
Where were we?

ASSIGNMENT CAPTAIN
Limp's looking better.

DUTCH
What limp?

ASSIGNMENT CAPTAIN
(A beat - With a smirk)
Got a request for a three-man CAT
Team to assist on a transpo.

DUTCH
Where?

ASSIGNMENT CAPTAIN
Taliban country, Helmand Province.

DUTCH
That the paper work?

Dutch reaches for the folder, but the A.C. snaps it back.

ASSIGNMENT CAPTAIN
Job needs to be accepted sight
unseen.

He's piqued Dutch's interest.

DUTCH
Is it black?

The A.C.'s smirk replies in the affirmative.

DUTCH (CONT'D)
Using choppers?

The A.C. shakes his head.

DUTCH (CONT'D)
Ground convoy through there's
fucking insane.

ASSIGNMENT CAPTAIN
Certifiable.

DUTCH
Where do I sign?

He slides a NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT across the desk and Dutch scribbles his name on it without reading a word. The A.C. hands him a folder labeled -- BURN RUN.

DUTCH (CONT'D)
What's a Burn Run?

Dutch flips through the contents -- Satellite photos of the Refinery we witnessed being stormed by the Afghan FASTeam.

ASSIGNMENT CAPTAIN
Escorting a heroin seizure to an
incinerator facility at Camp
Leatherneck. War Wagon running tail
duty.

DUTCH
Why don't they burn it on site like
they've been doing?

ASSIGNMENT CAPTAIN
Keep reading...

Dutch turns a page to find a newspaper article with the headline: AFGHAN MONEY PIT.

ASSIGNMENT CAPTAIN (CONT'D)
Press are making a stink about the
open air burn pits. Congress is
shitting a brick because they
appropriated tens of millions of
dollars for incinerators all over
the damn place and they're just
sitting empty, collecting dust.

He turns the page -- Photos of AMERICAN SOLDIERS and AFGHAN CIVILIANS with gruesome red rashes all over their bodies.

DUTCH
Christ... We do this?

ASSIGNMENT CAPTAIN

Residual effects from the burn pits, thus the need to transport the seizure so it can be destroyed on the up and up. Filter out the toxic fumes and whatnot.

Dutch holds on a picture of an AFGHAN MAN (50s), labeled:

Hajji Juma Khan Mohammadhasni -- alias HJK

ASSIGNMENT CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

Administration wants to show they're taking a strong stance against the Narcos too. Point team's coming off Ambo detail. Idea is to get positive PR for the company. Security Contractors doing the right thing, working together, winning the hearts and minds of the Afghan people and all that shit.

DUTCH

Always with the hearts and minds.

ASSIGNMENT CAPTAIN

You take orders from A-squad. No questions, no fuck ups. That clear?

DUTCH

Crystal.

Dutch flips through the photos of A-Squad and holds on one labeled: SMITH, FRANCIS -- a wary look behind his eyes now.

DUTCH (CONT'D)

They request me specifically?

ASSIGNMENT CAPTAIN

Not that I know of. Why do you ask?

DUTCH

No reason. What happened to the team originally assigned?

ASSIGNMENT CAPTAIN

KIA. Rolled over the body of a dead Haji booby trapped with an IED.

Dutch makes a Sign of the Cross against his chest and leaves. The moment he's gone, the Death Metal returns at full blast.

ASSIGNMENT CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

SON OF A--

PRELAP: The roar of a Jet Engine takes us to--

EXT. CASA-212 TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT - SUNRISE

The plane sprints down the runway and takes off, cork screwing straight up, gaining altitude as fast as possible.

INT. CABIN - CASA-212 TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT - NEXT

The plane levels out and Dutch's Team size up A-Squad, whose pictures we've already seen:

SUPER: FRANK SMITH - Handle: SMITH -- // (Mid 40s).

SUPER: DEREK ADAMS - Handle: ADAMS -- // (Early 40s).

SUPER: RICK WINFIELD - Handle: WINNIE -- // (Early 40s).

All three look like they were pulled straight from a SOLDIER OF FORTUNE cover shoot -- Standard 5.11 Royal Robbins, but instead of T-shirt's, they're wearing polos, faces clean shaven, polished and professional.

These guys are the best of the best and don't need to advertise to prove it.

Adams whispers in Winnie's ear, noting the white, black and brown complexions of their new colleagues.

ADAMS

Model of diversity these guys.

Smith holds Dutch's gaze for a nostalgic breath and Dutch stumbles over to the empty seat beside him.

DUTCH

Long time.

SMITH

What's it been, five-six years?
You're looking fit. Glad to see
you're still above ground.

DUTCH

Same to you.

The two shake and we catch a glimpse of the matching M.E.R.C. tattoos on their knuckles, some solid history between them.

SMITH

Where your boys schooled?

Dutch looks at his guys, chatting up Adams and Winnie.

DUTCH
Foster's former LAPD, SWAT. Ramos
there's a Jarhead.

ON BOSCO, LAMBO, WINNIE & ADAMS--

ADAMS
What's with the handles?

Lambo states the "obvious."

LAMBO
Latino Rambo, Lambo. Named the boss
after Schwarzenegger.

Winnie and Adams don't follow.

LAMBO (CONT'D)
Dutch...
(A beat)
From Predator.

WINNIE
What about you?

BOSCO
Bosco Albert Baracus.

Their faces a blank slate.

BOSCO (CONT'D)
Mr. T... The A-Team...

WINNIE
Movie Mercs. That's cute.

ON DUTCH & SMITH--

SMITH
How's Sarah and your boy? How old's
he now?

DUTCH
Brandon's twenty-two. Full grown.
Sarah knew what was good for her
and split a couple years back.

SMITH
Job isn't conducive to marriage,
but they always manage to stay on
the payroll after they quit.
(A beat)
(MORE)

SMITH (CONT'D)
Son still following in daddy's
footsteps?

DUTCH
A little too close. Having one
helluva time adjusting to civvy
life. Anything I say to 'em goes in
one ear and out the other.

SMITH
Can't blame yourself.

DUTCH
Can this time...

Dutch's thoughts turn to Brandon, but Adams interrupts.

ADAMS
You work Embassy detail in the
sandbox?

DUTCH
The Villa for a time--

Adams slaps the back of his chair.

ADAMS
I knew it!
(To Winnie)
Pay up.

Dutch looks at Smith, making a face that says: *It wasn't me.*

ADAMS (CONT'D)
Told you I recognized his name.

Embarrassment breaks through Dutch's tough veneer.

WINNIE
You're a Goddamn legend man.

ADAMS
Almost killed one of Bush's aides
with a negligent discharge, right?

FLASH TO:

*Inside an up-armored SUV -- A PRESIDENTIAL AIDE leans forward
in his seat, Dutch behind him in the cargo area. The truck
brakes without warning and Dutch's finger falls against the
trigger of his M4--*

BANG

ON SMITH -- Beside the Aide, turning to Dutch wide-eyed.

DUTCH (PRELAP)
Accidental and that was a long time ago--

BACK TO:

WINNIE
Heard it went right through the guy's headrest. That true?

ADAMS
I knew I recognized your name.

Smith puts an end to the inquiry.

SMITH
Cut the shit. I'd be six feet under if it wasn't for this guy. Saved my ass in Baghdad on a soup sandwich protection detail. Surrounded by Raghead's and he blasts outta there lugging me over his shoulder.

Smith puts a warmhearted hand on Dutch's shoulder before he dispels the tension.

DUTCH
Bet you say that to all the girls.
(A beat)
You boys coming off Ambo detail?

SMITH
Doing this last run before we rotate out.

DUTCH
Plum assignment.

SMITH
They're looking for guys to work in rotations. You apply?

DUTCH
A few times.

SMITH
Whole discharge incident's like a dark shadow, huh?

Dutch frowns, he's right.

SMITH (CONT'D)
 Say, everything goes well on this
 run, let me put in a call.

Smith leans forward, sincere.

SMITH (CONT'D)
 One mistake shouldn't define the
 rest of your career, not a guy with
 your skills and background. Pay's a
 helluva lot better too, eight fifty
 a day.

DUTCH
 I'd appreciate it Frank. Truly.

SMITH
 Can be just like old times.
 (Whispering)
 But keep it quiet. Looking for
 individuals, not teams.

Dutch nods, when the plane suddenly hits a thin pocket of air
 and vibrates hard. Bosco cinches his fingers around his
 armrest as the Pilot's voice comes over the loudspeaker.

PILOT (RADIO)
Park your asses and buckle up.

EXT. RUNWAY - CAMP BASTION AIR FIELD - MORNING

The plane is parked. Bosco dives out the door and falls to
 his knees, tossing his breakfast all over the tarmac.

Smith steps by, greeted by a company ATTACHÉ who directs them
 towards two desert camouflaged HUMVEES.

The Attaché gestures at Dutch's crew.

ATTACHÉ
 Who are the *Geardo's*?

SMITH
 You hear about Tommy?

ATTACHÉ
 Hear what?

ON DUTCH, BOSCO & LAMBO--

Admiring their new ride -- The sophistication and capacity
 for violence far more advanced than the up-armored SUV's.

DUTCH
Slackman, what you think?

Armor plating top to bottom with bulletproof windows and a beastly metal bumper for ramming through obstacles.

BOSCO
Shit - Hot.

ON SMITH & THE ATTACHÉ--

SMITH
Carcass IED. Dead Raghead stuffed with Potassium chlorate like a thanksgiving turkey.

ATTACHÉ
Haji's getting more and more creative by the day.

SMITH
Geardo's are eleventh hour replacements.

ON DUTCH, BOSCO & LAMBO--

The trucks have been fitted with .50 caliber SAW machine guns and 40mm MARK-19 automatic grenade launchers, giving them the unwarranted ability to protect themselves when under attack.

LAMBO
That a Forty Mike-Mike?

DUTCH
Damn right.

Bosco hums the A-Team theme song.

BOSCO
Da-da-da -- duh-duh-Duh...

PETTY
Shit hot indeed.

ON SMITH & THE ATTACHÉ--

The Attaché gives Lambo the stink-eye.

ATTACHÉ
Where'd they pull'em from? Rambo fan club?

Critiquing his tight T-shirt, ammo packed tactical vest and the bowie knife sheathed to his thigh.

SMITH

Massoud runners. Get all jocked up to overcompensate for the shit detail. Get paid peanuts to work the world's most deadly airport shuttle service.

The Attaché gives a quick look around and hands Smith a SAT PHONE. He pockets it, discreet.

ATTACHÉ

Line goes straight to the Old Man.

EXT. HUMVEE STAGING AREA - NEXT

Smith spreads a MAP across the hood of the truck, points **A** and **B**, connected by an orange highlighted route.

SMITH

Roll to the extraction point on Ring Road and escort the transport back to Leatherneck. All goes well, we'll be back in time for chow.

Smith looks Dutch's crew dead in the eye.

SMITH (CONT'D)

Watch our six, we'll get us where we need to go.

DUTCH

We get in the shit, split up... Where do we rendezvous?

Smith stares back stone-faced.

SMITH

This is a black contract. No one's coming if shit gets heavy. So let's make sure it doesn't come to that.

PRELAP: AC/DC's THUNDERSTRUCK fades in, gaining intensity as--

EXT. RING ROAD - HELMAND PROVINCE - DAY

--the humvees speed across HIGHWAY 1, the two-lane road that makes up Afghanistan's central highway system -- RING ROAD.

The mountains and desert bordering the highway are like something out of a Western Dystopia, barren, yet beautiful.

The scenic route gives way to the congested provincial capital - LASHKAR GAH - A sprawling grid of clay buildings that blend in with the surrounding taupe topography.

WHITE FLAGS are waving several miles outside of the city.

DUTCH (RADIO)
Someone surrendering?

SMITH (RADIO)
Those are Taliban flags.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - SAME

An OLD MAN (60s), is overseeing the setup of high-end computer monitors in a nondescript space with blacked out windows, when his pocket rings and he pulls out a SAT PHONE.

OLD MAN (SAT PHONE)
Clarridge.

INT. LEAD HUMVEE - SAME

Smith has the SAT PHONE at his ear.

SMITH (SAT PHONE)
En route with the CAT team.

EXT. MOUNTAIN PASS - HELMAND PROVINCE - NEXT

The humvees navigate more challenging terrain, traversing narrow rock filled paths difficult enough to cross on foot, let alone in a one ton military vehicle.

CLARRIDGE (SAT PHONE)
They the hero type?

They pass a Village populated by a Tribe that hasn't left the mountains for generations.

The Villagers aren't surprised to see the humvees though, familiar with occupying forces from decades of conflict. The British during the 1800s, the Soviets through the 1980s and since 2001, the U.S. Military.

SMITH (SAT PHONE)
Airport runners dying to get off
the Massoud. Worked with one of'em
in the sandbox some years back.

EXT. MOUNTAIN PASS - HELMAND PROVINCE - LATER

The trucks make their way through a narrow pass to find a sea of blooming pink poppies in the valley below.

CLARRIDGE (SAT PHONE)

And...?

Bosco pulls out his phone and snaps a few photos from his perch atop the turret -- CLICK-CLICK-CLICK.

SMITH (SAT PHONE)

He'll fall in line when the time comes.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - SAME

A computer monitor clicks -- ON -- displaying an aerial shot of the humvees from a Drone surveillance camera.

CLARRIDGE (SAT PHONE)

Make certain. I want no surprises.

EXT. REFINERY - HELMAND PROVINCE - DAY

The FASTeam and Field Hands are emptying a 20-ton JINGLE TRUCK. A 10-wheel diesel behemoth painted with intricate colored patterns and calligraphy, the art a popular time honored tradition across Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Thousands of chimes dangle from the base of the truck, meant to stand-out, not blend-in like the camouflaged humvees.

The Field Hands exchange bags of Seed for Heroin bricks, sacks of raw Opium and Precursor Conversion Chemicals.

This is all part of the U.S./Afghan Seed Exchange Program, with the naïve hope that Poppy Farmers will swap their cash crop for whatever seeds they're given.

The Women once working the Refinery are resting in the shade, consoling crying Children while Saif and the Young Commando dole out food rations.

SUPER: RAMIN - Officer with the Afghan FASTeam -- // (20s).

They speak DARI: The prevailing dialect in the northern, ethnically Tajik region of Afghanistan.

SAIF

(Dari - Subtitled)

You are a skilled fighter, but you
need to be more careful.

RAMIN

(Dari - Subtitled)

I am careful.

He hands the Green Eyed Girl from the Refinery a meal box.

SAIF

Then why do you have a hole in your
vest and a dent in your chest
plate?

The Girl hands Saif a poppy flower. He tucks it in his breast pocket, the pink petals a vibrant addition to his midnight blue uniform.

SAIF (CONT'D)

(Pashto - Subtitled)

I will cherish it.

RAMIN

All your years on the battlefield
and you've never been shot?

The Girl smiles, while Saif pulls Ramin aside.

SAIF

(Dari - Subtitled)

I taught you better than that.
Preservation first and foremost.

They hold each others gaze for a prickly moment when--

FARMER (O.C.)

(Pashto - Subtitled)

How am I supposed to feed my people
if you take our harvest?

--their conversation's cut short by an agitated FARMER.

SAIF

(Pashto - Subtitled)

We brought food, the wheat--

FARMER

Wheat is no good. Poppies are the
only crop the Taliban allows.

SAIF

*The Taliban doesn't make the law.
Fallow the poppies and plant the
wheat.*

The Farmer takes a handful of seed and throws it in the air.

FARMER

*When you leave and the Taliban
return, what then? We'll be blamed
for the loss and beaten...*

(A beat)

Your accent is northern. Tajik?

SAIF

What of it?

FARMER

*Only a Tajik would abuse a Pashtun
like this. Your people are rats.*

SAIF

Careful what you say.

FARMER

Laila, Laila... Come here.

His daughter - Laila - The Green Eyed Girl, traipses over with a push from her MOTHER.

FARMER (CONT'D)

Look at her, look at her face.

Saif locks eyes with the whimpering girl.

FARMER (CONT'D)

*She is the only virgin among the
women. The Taliban will demand a
baad and take her to settle my
debts. You must bring her with you
when you go or she's doomed--*

The poor Farmer's appeal interrupted by the rumbling engines of the humvees rolling up to the Refinery.

Ramin and the bumbling Commandos take up defensive positions with their M4s.

INT. REAR HUMVEE - SAME

Lambo and Dutch survey the nervous squad on approach.

LAMBO
We driving into an ambush?

DUTCH
Sure ain't the welcome wagon.

EXT. REFINERY - HELMAND PROVINCE - NEXT

The humvees idle and Smith steps out, hands in the air.

SMITH
(*Pashto - Subtitled*)
Stand down, we are here to help.

Ramin lines Smith up in his cross-hairs, leery of these unfamiliar Americans in Mercenary uniforms.

Bosco and Adams scan the area, each taking aim with their SAW, ready to return fire should the situation escalate.

SMITH (CONT'D)
Who is in charge?

Smith surveys the Commandos staring him down with their M4s.

SMITH (CONT'D)
(English - Sotto)
Fuck me...
(*Pashto - Subtitled*)
Who is in char--

SAIF
(English)
I am.

Saif moves towards Smith and gets right up in his face.

Bosco and Adams fingers brush against their triggers as Smith takes a moment to survey the poppy field.

SMITH
They're beautiful aren't they? In full bloom like that. Shame what they do with'em.
(A beat)
Bosses said you needed an escort.

SAIF
I wasn't briefed.

SMITH
I can see that, but here we are.
(Gesturing to the humvees)
(MORE)

SMITH (CONT'D)
Don't want those guns protecting
you, we'll be on our way.

Saif considers the offer for a dubious moment, before
extending a hand. They shake and Smith gets down to business.

SMITH (CONT'D)
(Re: the Jingle Truck)
Couldn't get a military transport?
Something a bit more low-profile.

Saif gestures at the humvees.

SAIF
You call those low-profile?

SMITH
They've got teeth and bite back.
(A beat)
How long until we can hit the road?

SAIF
An hour. Half that if your men
pitch in.

SMITH
Alright...
(To his Team)
Guns down, gloves on boys.

EXT. REFINERY - HELMAND PROVINCE - LATER

Dutch steps beside Smith as he studies Saif.

DUTCH
You know this guy?
(Off Smith's nod)
What's his story?

SMITH
You play little league growing up?

DUTCH
One game away from Williamsport.

SMITH
When you and I were taking batting
practice, Saif was shooting target
practice. Grew up fighting the
Soviets with the Mujihadeen.
(MORE)

SMITH (CONT'D)
 Commander in the Northern Alliance
 until he turned traitor and took a
 position in the Karzai regime. Been
 there ever since.

Saif loads the Jingle Truck alongside his Men.

ON SAIF--

Placing a tiny TILE TRACKER between two heroin bricks.

ON DUTCH & SMITH--

SMITH (CONT'D)
 Went through FAST training with the
 DEA, not that he needed it.
 (A beat)
 Guy's been at war longer than most
 of us put together.

Dutch studies him some more, looking all the seasoned veteran
 Smith described.

EXT. JINGLE TRUCK - SAME

Lambo and Bosco drop a stack of bricks in the Cargo Bed as
 its chimes jingle in the wind. Their eyes go wide, daunted by
 the sheer volume of the seizure.

BOSCO
 That's gotta be--

RAMIN (O.C.)
 (English)
 Over 20 tons.

BOSCO
 How much they make off it? The
 farmers?

RAMIN
 Enough to feed their families.

BOSCO
 Street value in London, Paris,
 Toronto... Hundreds of millions.

All three stare at the bricks, temptation bubbling below the
 surface. Bosco takes out his cell and snaps a photo - CLICK.

LAMBO
 Middleman between the farmer and
 dope fiend's making a killing.

INT. REFINERY - HELMAND PROVINCE - LATER

Commandos douse the walls with gasoline, the lab equipment piled high in the middle of the room beside the desecrated bodies of the Guards, limbs lying in a bloody heap.

EXT. REFINERY - HELMAND PROVINCE - NEXT

Ramin runs a trail of gasoline away from the building and Saif bends down to spark the fuel.

The flames race into the Refinery, plumes of black smoke billowing through the windows for a few seconds before--

BOOM

The building explodes.

ON DUTCH & SMITH--

Watching the flames.

DUTCH

They gonna burn the field?

SMITH

Back in the Bush days they would've. New policy says they can seize refined product and destroy the labs, but to steer clear of the crops. Obama wants to make nice with the people.

DUTCH

They'll just rebuild as soon as we're gone.

Smith replies like he's reading rule #64 from the company manual.

SMITH

Winning their hearts and minds, remember?

DUTCH

Right, hearts and minds...

INT. CABIN - JINGLE TRUCK - SHORT TIME LATER

Saif stares at the Farmer and Field Hands, watching their livelihood depart on the back of the truck as flames consume the Refinery behind them.

He searches for Laila, but she's M.I.A; her Mother struggling to make a break for the truck, but the Farmer holds her back.

SMITH (RADIO)
Slow roll out.

The Convoy pulls away, Saif troubled by the Mother's anguished cries as she drops to her knees.

EXT. RING ROAD - HELMAND PROVINCE - DAY

The Convoy reaches the bottom of the Pass and turn onto Ring Road, bringing the trucks above 20mph for the first time since leaving the Refinery.

SMITH (RADIO)
Balls to the walls boys.

THUNDERSTRUCK blasts from the speakers as they weave along snake-like, each truck only a few feet behind the other.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - SAME

Clarridge has the Sat Phone at his ear.

SMITH (SAT PHONE)
On the Ring, hot footing it west.

Clarridge taps out a TEXT MESSAGE on another device.

PRELAP: BUZZ - BUZZ

INT. SUV - SAME

A dark callused hand opens a flip phone and reads the message (Subtitled at the bottom of the screen):

Heading west on Ring Road from the extraction point.

The VOICE behind the hand speaks, but we don't see his face.

VOICE
(Pashto - Subtitled)
They're close.

INT. DRONE CONTROL ROOM - SAME

Clarridge and a DRONE OPERATOR are watching the three-truck Convoy from a birds eye view, the Jingle Truck sandwiched between the two humvees.

The DRONE CAMERA tilts to a fork in the road well ahead of the Lead Humvee.

CLARRIDGE (SAT PHONE)
Keep right at the fork.

SMITH (SAT PHONE)
Copy that.

INT. LEAD HUMVEE - SAME

They crest over an incline and the fork appears, Smith relaying the order to the Convoy through the radio.

SMITH (INTO RADIO)
Keep right ahead and follow us.

DUTCH (RADIO)
Copy.

INT. CABIN - JINGLE TRUCK - SAME

A nervous expression comes across Saif's face as they close in on the turn -- 25 yards... 20....

RAMIN
(*Dari - Subtitled*)
We can't reach the destination from that road.

SMITH (RADIO)
Saif you copy?

Saif veers left to stay on the Ring -- 15 yards... 10...

INT. LEAD HUMVEE - SAME

Smith spots the Jingle Truck drifting away in his side view mirror and readies his M4.

SMITH
Saddle up, Muj is about to go rogue.

INT. CABIN - JINGLE TRUCK - SAME

Saif watches Winnie sliding through the turret, the fork right on them now--

5 yards... 4... 3...

He massages the accelerator ready to speed away, despite Winnie taking aim with the SAW--

SMITH (RADIO)
Saif you copy?

--but at the last possible second, he cuts back and falls in line.

SAIF (INTO RADIO)
(English)
Copy.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - HELMAND PROVINCE - NEXT

The Convoy races down a DIRT ROAD that grows more and more desolate the further they travel, chimes on the Jingle Truck rattling like sleigh bells over every bump.

CLARRIDGE (SAT PHONE)
100 meters out.

INT. CABIN - JINGLE TRUCK - NEXT

Smith's voice booms over the radio.

SMITH (RADIO)
Take it down to 10 and park it.

INT. REAR HUMVEE - SAME

Lambo parks behind the Jingle Truck on a dirt AIRSTRIP, boxing it in.

LAMBO
Thought this was a straight shot to
Leatherneck?

DUTCH
So did I.
(Into the radio)
Why the hurry up and wait?

Smith replies with assurance.

SMITH (RADIO)
Sit tight, awaiting instructions.

Bosco scans the sprawling wasteland around them.

BOSCO
We're like babes in a dark wood out
here boss. Easy pickings.

DUTCH
Stay frosty. Probably got intel
about a threat on the Ring.

The Convoy stands by, adrenaline racing through their veins,
legs pulsing, eyes scanning the area for signs of trouble.

BOSCO
DC9 parked at the end of the strip,
looks friendly.

Dutch surveys the CARGO PLANE through binoculars.

DUTCH
The hell's it doing here?

INT. LEAD HUMVEE - NEXT

Smith glares at Saif's reflection in his side view mirror.

SMITH (SAT PHONE)
Status? Don't have all day.

EXT. AIRSTRIP - HELMAND PROVINCE - SAME

The Drone watches from above as dust clouds suddenly kick up
on the left and right sides of the screen.

CLARRIDGE (SAT PHONE)
Incoming three and nine.

SMITH (SAT PHONE)
They're surrounding us?

CLARRIDGE (SAT PHONE)
We were promised a clean exchange.

INT. REAR HUMVEE - SAME

Bosco spots the vehicles through his perch atop the turret.

BOSCO
Holy shit...
(To Dutch & Lambo)
We got company.

Dutch relays the information to the Lead Humvee.

DUTCH (INTO RADIO)
Potential hostiles, what are the
rules?

Smith replies immediately.

SMITH (RADIO)
Do - Not - Fire.

LAMBO
Shoot second ask questions from the
grave?

EXT. AIRSTRIP - HELMAND PROVINCE - NEXT

The Vehicles circle the Convoy, unidentifiable through
swirling clouds of dust.

SMITH (SAT PHONE)
How many?

The Drone Camera zooms in and they come into sharper focus.

CLARRIDGE (SAT PHONE)
*Four Techs, four pickups with
shooters and two SUVs.*

Eight retrofitted TOYOTA PICKUPS -- Four with bolt-mounted
machine guns -- TECHNIALS -- The other four overflowing with
armed MILITANTS guarding two black TOYOTA LAND CRUISERS.

SMITH (SAT PHONE)
*Sure don't look like they're here
for a clean exchange, Dewey.*

INT. LEAD HUMVEE - NEXT

Smith's Team tries to keep cool, battling decades of training
bubbling just below the surface.

SMITH
Any of these guys raise a finger,
you unleash hell.

INT. REAR HUMVEE - SAME

Dutch, Lambo and Bosco are many things, calm, not one of
them.

LAMBO

He want us to start looking for
shovels and six feet of soft ground
while we're at it?

Lambo's finger twitches over his trigger, foot against the
accelerator, ready to speed away at the drop of a hat.

DUTCH

Bosco, you see any flags?

Bosco scans the Militants for colors, symbols... Anything
that might give them an idea of who they're dealing with.

BOSCO

Look Talib, Muj, maybe Tajik...
Can't tell these Habudabi's apart.

His eyes land on the door of a Technical and a decal that's
out of focus.

BOSCO (CONT'D)

Hold on, think I got something.

He zeroes in on the door and the logo sharpens.

BOSCO (CONT'D)

Take a look, front right Tech.

Dutch surveys the truck through binoculars, the logo reads:

ALGHREN PLUMBING

GALVESTON, TEXAS

409-465-1033

We Repair What Your Husband "Fixed."

BOSCO (CONT'D)

Can't sell your work-truck without
it winding up in terrorist hands.

Bosco's quip is D.O.A., the tension inside the humvee growing
heavier by the second.

INT. LEAD HUMVEE - NEXT

Armed Militants in tunics and turbans exit the Pickups,
followed by a MASSIVE MAN standing near 6'5" and weighing
well over three hundred pounds.

INT. CABIN - JINGLE TRUCK - NEXT

Saif and Ramin watch as Smith exits the Lead Humvee--

RAMIN
(Dari - Subtitled)
We need to go.

--and make his way over to greet the Massive Man.

RAMIN (CONT'D)
Did you hear me? That's--

SAIF
(Dari - Subtitled)
I know who it is.

INT. REAR HUMVEE - SAME

Dutch observes the encounter, dumbfounded.

DUTCH
 Fuck me, that's Juma Khan.

BOSCO
 What's a Juma Khan?

DUTCH
 Hajji Juma Khan Mohammadhasni.
 Billionaire drug trafficker, brutal
 Warlord. Funds the Taliban, Al
 Qaeda. Anyone who will give him
 protection.

LAMBO
 That his H?

DUTCH
 Don't know, but I'm sure he
 wouldn't mind taking it.

Smith and JUMA KHAN (50s), signal to their respective
 Convoys. Winnie's voice comes over the radio a moment later.

WINNIE (RADIO)
Cover positions, stepping out.

Winnie and Adams drop back to the Jingle Truck--

EXT. JINGLE TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

--taking aim at Saif and Ramin.

WINNIE
 Out of the truck.

INT. REAR HUMVEE - SAME

Dutch, Lambo and Bosco watch with trepidation.

LAMBO
You know about this clusterfuck?

DUTCH
Catching up as we speak.

BOSCO
Embrace the suck Petty.

INT. CABIN - JINGLE TRUCK - SAME

Saif glares at Winnie outside his door.

WINNIE
Out, now.

Ramin cocks his M9 BERETTA below the window - CLICK-CLACK - but Saif puts a hand over it.

EXT. JINGLE TRUCK - NEXT

Saif and Ramin's boots hit the dirt as Dutch and Lambo exit the Rear Humvee.

SAIF
(English)
You know who that man is? What he has done to innocent people?

WINNIE
You two should swap war stories.
(To Dutch)
Frisk'em.

Dutch and Lambo approach with their M4s raised. Saif keeps his hands up as Dutch reaches for his Beretta.

SAIF
Torture, rape, murder...

Lambo reaches for the Ramin's weapon, but he takes aim at his head before he can grab it.

LAMBO
Muji fucker drew on me!

They're trapped in a standoff -- Dutch's M4 trained on Ramin.

DUTCH
Drop the gun, drop it!

PETTY
Shoot him Hawk--

SAIF
(English)
Ramin!

Ramin's aim is steady, trigger finger flexed.

PETTY
--blow his fucking head off!

SAIF
Please son...

DUTCH
Son?

Ramin puts pressure on the trigger, millimeters away from firing when--

He drops the gun to his side and Lambo punches him--

CRACK

Dutch breathes a sigh of relief and continues his pat down.

DUTCH (CONT'D)
They're clean.

WINNIE
Cuff'em.

Dutch pulls out a pair of zip ties and binds their wrists behind their backs.

SAIF
You know where his money goes?

He tries to tune him out.

SAIF (CONT'D)
The Taliban, Al Qaeda... To fund
the insurgency and attacks against
the West.

Winnie shoves gags in their mouths and covers them with a strip of tape.

WINNIE
Shut the fuck up.

EXT. JINGLE TRUCK - NEXT

The Cargo Bed door is propped open. Khan smiles at the brown bricks filling it, his grin vanishing when he sees--

LAILA

--curled up in a ball, tears welling in her eyes.

JUMA KHAN

(English)

What is this?

WINNIE

(Whispering to Smith)

Farmer must of tucked her back there before we left.

Smith plays along, like it's no big deal.

SMITH

Take her or leave her, up to you.

Khan shares a look with his lieutenant -- TOFAN (30s), his dark eyes examining the girl.

TOFAN

(Pashto - Subtitled)

She will make for an obedient wife.

Khan nods and Tofan yanks Laila's arm, handing her off to another Militant before he climbs inside the Cargo Bed with an aluminum clutch.

He removes an eyedropper and test tube, digging a knife tip of powder from a brick and slides it in the tube, adding a few drops of clear liquid.

The mixture turns reddish brown. Khan grins and pulls Smith aside.

JUMA KHAN

I have another request.

SMITH

What's that?

Khan gestures to Saif and Ramin.

JUMA KHAN

Those Tajik mutts.

SMITH

Saif's high up in the regime...

Khan's expression turns dark, a man not accustomed to hearing the word "No."

JUMA KHAN
 Keep them alive and you risk
 exposure.
 (Off Smith's grimace)
 Tens-of-thousands of Pashtuns want
 to see those Tajik's hang. What
 will it take?

EXT. AIRSTRIP - HELMAND PROVINCE - NEXT

Dutch and Bosco stand guard over Ramin and Saif -- Saif
 biting through the tape covering his mouth.

SAIF
 (English)
 You know of Juma Khan?

DUTCH
 Quiet.

SAIF
 Do you?

DUTCH
 Yeah.

SAIF
 Then you know your commander is
 making a deal with the devil.

Saif falls silent when he sees Laila in Militant hands, now
 understanding the source of her Mother's distress.

BOSCO
 What's he bitching about?

DUTCH
 Tape him up--

BOSCO
 He saying they're helping the
 enemy? That we're helping the
 enemy?

Dutch grabs Bosco by the vest and pulls him close.

DUTCH
 Tape him up and wait here.

EXT. AIRSTRIP - HELMAND PROVINCE - NEXT

Dutch arrives at Smith's side, the Militants delivering two STEEL BRIEFCASES to Adams and Winnie.

DUTCH

What the hell's going on Frank?

SMITH

Had to keep you in the dark.
Couldn't risk Saif catching wind.

DUTCH

You've gotta do better than that.
HJK's on D.O.D. kill lists.

SMITH

Play ball with me here, Dutch. No
one's gonna miss that junk. It's
not even a blip on the Pentagon's
radar.

Dutch shoots him a cold glare.

SMITH (CONT'D)

Gotta hand over Saif and his kid to
make it look like a hijacking.
Managed to squeeze out a little
something extra for them too, since
we had to get rid of them anyway.

DUTCH

This some Iran-Contra scam?

SMITH

Not that heavy, just moving the
cargo west. Load up the DC9 and
it's straight on to Canada. Move
some there, the rest crosses the
border.

DUTCH

Into the U.S.?

SMITH

Where do you think that shit all
over New England comes from,
Mexico? That's the DEA selling
Congress a bill of goods. Can't
tell the American people its coming
from Afghanistan, not with a war
on.

Dutch tries to keep it together in light of Brandon's overdose.

DUTCH
We're not drug runners Frank.

Smith looks him dead in the eye.

SMITH
Today we are. I need to know you're with me on this.

They hold each others gaze for a tense moment.

DUTCH
There another option?

Smith shakes his head.

SMITH
Play your part and we'll all go home with fatter pockets, no one the wiser.

But Dutch isn't so sure.

DUTCH
How much?

SMITH
Four hundred K. Each.
(Off Dutch's grin)
Smile, you just won the lottery without even buying a ticket.
(A beat)
Now call off your dog.

He looks deep into Smith's eyes, searching for even the slightest hint of betrayal.

DUTCH
Bosco...

BOSCO (O.C.)
Yeah boss?

DUTCH
Stand down.

Bosco abandons Saif and Ramin. Tofan tugs Laila towards them once he's gone.

DUTCH (CONT'D)
They're gonna kill'em both and do
unspeakable things to that girl.

SMITH
Need bodies to make it look legit,
the more virtuous the better. The
girl, well... Her father shouldn't
of put her back there in the first
place.

(A beat)
Gonna burn your humvee too and
ditch it. Squeeze six in the lead.

EXT. REAR HUMVEE - NEXT

Bosco joins Lambo at the truck--

BOSCO
I didn't sign on to deliver these
guys to their fucking execution or
sell a kid into slavery.

--watching the Militants force Laila, Saif and Ramin towards
their convoy.

BOSCO (CONT'D)
If this is the mission, I want no
part of it.

EXT. AIRSTRIP - HELMAND PROVINCE - NEXT

Ramin spins around and attacks Tofan, but he's quick to beat
him to the ground with the butt of his AK.

TOFAN
(*Pashto - Subtitled*)
On your knees.

The Militant shoves Saif's head against the ground; a brazen
Islamic insult. Tofan unsheathes a PESH-KABZ KNIFE, the
curved blade shining bright in the hot sun.

RAMIN
(*Pashto - Subtitled*)
Cowards!

The blade scrapes across his neck stubble like a straight
edge razor, Saif and Laila forced to watch a few feet away.

TOFAN

*Keep his eyes open. I want him to
watch his son bleed.*

The blade draws its first drop of blood, Saif watching his son's last moments on earth, powerless.

SAIF

(Dari - Subtitled)

Look at me son, look at my eyes.

Ramin struggles as the knife parts his flesh and blood drips down his neck.

SAIF (CONT'D)

I am here, I am with you.

EXT. AIRSTRIP - HELMAND PROVINCE - SAME

TIGHT CUTS BETWEEN DUTCH, LAMBO & BOSCO'S EYES--

All watching with utter revulsion when--

BANG - BANG - BANG - BANG - BANG - BANG

Gunshots ring out, followed by dead SILENCE...

EXT. REAR HUMVEE - NEXT

Lambo and Bosco scan the stark landscape for the source of the shots and land on--

DUTCH

Saif's Beretta smoking in his hand.

EXT. AIRSTRIP - HELMAND PROVINCE - NEXT

Tofan and the Militants are splayed out on the ground, blood seeping into the dry earth like a sponge.

EXT. REAR HUMVEE - NEXT

Lambo and Bosco's stunned stares glued to Dutch.

LAMBO

(Spanish - Subtitled)

God Dammit...

ALL HELL BREAKS LOOSE

The Militants open fire sending the Contractors diving for cover. Bosco returns fire, forcing the Militants to seek refuge behind their Pickups.

EXT. AIRSTRIP - HELMAND PROVINCE - NEXT

Dutch runs towards Saif, Ramin and Laila as gunshots zip past his head. He dives beside them and cuts the zip ties from their wrists.

DUTCH

Stay low.

Laila is frozen a few feet away like a deer in headlights, bullets kicking up dust by her feet. Dutch scoops her up and shields her with his body--

ZIP - THWACK

--letting out a guttural growl when a bullet grazes his back.

INT. REAR HUMVEE - NEXT

Bosco on the SAW, chewing through ammo--

CA-CHUG - CA-CHUG - CA-CHUG

--pinning down the Militants.

EXT. TOYOTA LAND CRUISER - NEXT

Juma Khan shouts orders at his Men.

JUMA KHAN

(Pashto - Subtitled)

*Do not let those dogs leave with
the truck!*

Machine gun fire erupts from the Technical beside him--

CA-CHUG - CA-CHUG - CA-CHUG

--spraying bullets at the Contractor Convoy.

INT. REAR HUMVEE - NEXT

Bosco returns fire from the SAW--

CA-CHUG - CA-CHUG - CA-CHUG

--cutting down the GUNNER atop the Tech, a replacement filling his shoes a moment later.

EXT. AIRSTRIP - HELMAND PROVINCE - NEXT

Dutch considers the dash back to the humvees that will leave them even more exposed.

SAIF
(English)
Cover me. I need to close it.

Dutch holds Laila close, firing indiscriminately at the Militants, while Saif pulls out a mini-sewing kit and stitches Ramin's severed flesh with a hook needle.

RAMIN
(Dari - Gargled)
It's not deep--

Blood bubbles from the gash with each breath Ramin takes, Dutch covering Laila's watery eyes to block out the horror.

SAIF
(Dari - Subtitled)
Be still.

Saif's hand trembles as he threads his son's flesh back together, tying it off as best he can.

DUTCH
Can you run?

Ramin nods.

DUTCH (CONT'D)
Let's move.

Dutch signals to Bosco, who lays down cover fire as they sprint across the desert, enemy fire poking holes in the ground by their feet.

EXT. TOYOTA LAND CRUISER - NEXT

One of Khan's Men shoulders an RPG and brings his finger to the trigger, about to fire when--

BANG - BANG

Khan puts two in his skull.

JUMA KHAN
(Pashto - Subtitled)
*You want to destroy what we came
here for?*

EXT. JINGLE TRUCK - NEXT

Smith is trapped against the back-side of the truck, the tactical mistake registering on his face.

SMITH
Shit...

INT. LEAD HUMVEE - NEXT

Dutch tucks Laila in the backseat and slides behind the wheel, firing up the engine when Ramin hops out.

DUTCH
Where the hell you going?

He follows Ramin's reflection in the side view mirror, making it safely inside the Jingle Truck.

INT. CABIN - JINGLE TRUCK - NEXT

Ramin twists the key and the engine roars back to life.

RAMIN (INTO RADIO)
(English)
Drive!

EXT. AIRSTRIP - HELMAND PROVINCE - NEXT

The Drone tracks the Convoy as it speeds away.

CLARRIDGE (SAT PHONE)
What the hell's going on Frank?

SMITH (SAT PHONE)
*The exchange has been compromised.
I repeat, the exchange has been
compromised.*

INT. LEAD HUMVEE - NEXT

Dutch speeds towards Ring Road with the Technicals in hot pursuit. He turns to Saif, signaling the SAW.

DUTCH
You qualified on that thing?

Saif nods and slides through the turret. Dutch eases on the brake and lets the Jingle Truck pull ahead, forming a protective barrier beside the Rear Humvee.

EXT. RING ROAD - HELMAND PROVINCE - NEXT

Bosco and Saif chew through ammo, peppering the enemy Tech's gaining ground--

CA-CHUG - CA-CHUG - CA-CHUG

The Militants return fire from their bolt mounted .50 cal's, bullets ricocheting off the armor plating of the humvees.

PING - PING - PING

INT. REAR HUMVEE - CONTINUOUS

Bosco fires a string of grenades at the lead Tech--

Boom - Boom - BOOM!

--blowing it off the road.

BOSCO (INTO RADIO)
Tally one Tango.

EXT. RING ROAD - HELMAND PROVINCE - SAME

Dutch and Lambo floor it, but the heavy humvees max out at 50mph, the Jingle Truck and its heavy payload not able to go any faster.

The lighter Toyotas keep pace -- A Technical and standard Pickup flank left, while the second Technical veers right, trying to get a clean shot at the Jingle Truck's tires--

CA-CHUG - CA-CHUG - CA-CHUG

A slew of bullets poke holes in the pavement, ONE perforating the Jingle Truck's back right wheel.

INT. REAR HUMVEE - SAME

Bosco spins the SAW and unloads on the right flanking Tech--

CA-CHUG - CA-CHUG - CA-CHUG

--taking out its front tires.

The Tech kart-wheels onto its roof. The Militant on the .50 cal tossed from the bed like a rag doll and the Driver inside crushed like a bug.

BOSCO (INTO RADIO)
Mark two Tango--

ZIP - PING - THWACK

A shot ricochets off the metal turret, grazing Bosco's neck.

BOSCO (CONT'D)
Shit!

He drops inside the humvee, leaving Saif as the sole shooter.

EXT. RING ROAD - HELMAND PROVINCE - SAME

The Drone watches from above as the violent chase rages on.

INT. REAR HUMVEE - NEXT

Bosco does his best to dress the wound as blood soaks through the thin strips of gauze he's patching it with.

LAMBO
You good?

BOSCO
Flesh wound.
(Unveiling it)
How's it look?

Lambo glances at Bosco in the rearview, his neck painted in blood.

LAMBO
Shit hot.

INT. LEAD HUMVEE - NEXT

Laila is balled up on the floor, whimpering at Saif's feet as he unloads on the Tech and Pickup swerving to avoid his fire.

He has to choose one target and elects the Tech--

CA-CHUG - CA-CHUG - CA-CHUG

--letting the Militant Pickup run end on the gunnerless Rear Humvee.

INT. CABIN - JINGLE TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

It pulls alongside the Jingle Truck, its chimes clapping like a belly dancers hip scarf.

Ramin glances at the Militant aiming at his window--

RAT-A-TAT-TAT-TAT

He ducks, glass shattering over him as he cuts a hard left--

EXT. RING ROAD - HELMAND PROVINCE - CONTINUOUS

CRASH

--side-swiping the Pickup and bumping it off the road.

INT. CABIN - JINGLE TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Ramin straightens out, keeping his left hand tight on the wheel and firing out the broken window with his right--

BANG - BANG - BANG

INT. LEAD HUMVEE - SAME

Dutch shouts into the radio over Laila's high pitched cries.

DUTCH (INTO RADIO)
Take'em out Ramos.

INT. REAR HUMVEE - SAME

Lambo follows the Pickup as it straightens out, ready to take another run at the Jingle Truck.

LAMBO (INTO RADIO)
That Muj still owes me an apology.

Lambo drops the pedal to the floor and--

EXT. RING ROAD - HELMAND PROVINCE - CONTINUOUS

THUD

--rams the Pickup with his beast of a bumper. The Militant standing inside the bed tumbles out the back--

THUMP - THUMP

Crushed underneath the Rear Humvee's tires.

INT. REAR HUMVEE - CONTINUOUS

LAMBO
Shit way to go.

Lambo punches it again, ramming into the back of the Pickup--

THUD

EXT. RING ROAD - HELMAND PROVINCE - CONTINUOUS

--trapping it against the grill of the Jingle Truck like the cross section of a T-bar.

The Rear Humvee rams into the Pickup a third time--

THUD

Sending it spinning off the front bumper, headed straight for the Lead Humvee...

INT. LEAD HUMVEE - CONTINUOUS

Dutch cuts the wheel--

SCREECH

--taking cover behind the Jingle Truck as the Pickup rolls past--

CRASH

--colliding with the trailing enemy Tech.

DUTCH
That was close.

Dutch picks up speed and retakes his position at the front of the Convoy.

EXT. AIRSTRIP - HELMAND PROVINCE - DAY

Smith, Winnie and Adams are surrounded by Khan's Men, staring down the barrels of their AK-47s.

SMITH

Kill us and you ruin all the
cooperation you have going forward.

Khan is inscrutable.

JUMA KHAN

(English)

What cooperation? You are not
military or CIA. You are security
guards, bag men. Replaceable.

He surveys the stark landscape.

JUMA KHAN (CONT'D)

Who will rescue you?
(Looking up to the sky)
I do not hear helicopters.

Khan looks Smith dead in the eye.

JUMA KHAN (CONT'D)

The calvary is not coming.

He pulls out a RUSSIAN MAKAROV REVOLVER and brings it to
Adams' head.

JUMA KHAN (CONT'D)

A mercenary has no allegiance. You
fight for money, you are loyal to
money, like me.

(A beat)

Tell me why I shouldn't kill your
comrade where he stands?

SMITH

We can get it back.

Khan grins.

JUMA KHAN

Yes... and to make sure you do.

The Militants restrain Adams--

ADAMS

Get the hell off me--

--and drag him away.

ADAMS (CONT'D)
No, no... Frank--

They cork a pistol in his mouth to shut him up.

JUMA KHAN
Collateral.

Tofan steps forward, his wounds serious, but not fatal.

JUMA KHAN (CONT'D)
Tofan will join you. He has
associates in the city.

He gestures to several Militants lying dead in the dirt.

JUMA KHAN (CONT'D)
(Pashto - Subtitled)
Take their truck, they won't be
needing it.
(To Smith - English)
Bring me my cargo and money and
your brother keeps his head.

LAMBO (PRELAP)
Light it up...

INT. LEAD HUMVEE - LATER

LAMBO (RADIO)
...burn the dope and ditch that
tambourine of a truck.

Dutch reaches for the radio, but Saif gets to it first.

SAIF (INTO RADIO)
(English)
We do that, we have no protection.
As long as we have the truck they
won't use RPG's or IED's. They
can't risk losing the seizure, it's
too valuable.

He hands Dutch the radio.

DUTCH (INTO RADIO)
He's right. Smith's gonna come at
us, hard.

LAMBO (RADIO)
How do you know he's even alive?

DUTCH (INTO RADIO)
He's alive. Trust me on that.

LAMBO (RADIO)
(Reluctant)
Copy...

DUTCH
Is there another way we can go? Get
off the Ring?

Saif pulls out a paper map and draws a route with his finger
through the provincial capital -- LASHKAR GAH.

SAIF
The road through Lashkar Gah is too
dangerous. The city is filled with
Warlords loyal to the Taliban and
with nightfall coming... The
highway is the only choice.

Dutch glances at Laila's reflection in the rearview mirror,
head buried in her arms.

DUTCH
Highway it is.

INT. REAR HUMVEE - NEXT

Lambo pleads his case to Bosco.

LAMBO
Burn it, put'em in our trucks or
leave'em on the side of the road.
Hot foot it to Leatherneck... Worst
comes to worst, we get axed and
shipped back to the states.

BOSCO
You saw that turncoat Smith
buddying it up with Khan. They want
us tits up.

LAMBO
You trust these guys any better?
That Muj who pulled a gun on yours
truly?

Bosco nods, simpatico.

LAMBO (CONT'D)

Jingle Truck's slow and easier to spot out here than a girl with a perm. Burn it and we're still completing the mission... You see those briefcases?

(Off Bosco's nod)

How much you think's in there?

(Off Bosco's smirk)

Anyone gonna care if one goes missing?

EXT. RING ROAD - HELMAND PROVINCE - LATER

The Drone follows the Convoy from the air.

CLARRIDGE (SAT PHONE)

Closing in on Lashkar Gah.

INT. TECHNICAL - SAME

Smith drives, Tofan riding shotgun with Winnie on the mount.

SMITH (SAT PHONE)

How fast they traveling?

CLARRIDGE (SAT PHONE)

Fuck should I know, drive fast and catch up.

INT. LEAD HUMVEE - AFTERNOON

Dutch winces and extends his knee, in visible pain. He pulls the Tic Tac's from his pocket, but Saif extends a hand.

SAIF

(English)

For the girl.

He taps some candy into Saif's palm, making sure the Pain Pills he placed inside don't get mixed in.

SAIF (CONT'D)

(Pashto - Subtitled)

Laila... Laila...

She peeks out from her cocoon.

LAILA

(Pashto - Subtitled)

Where is my mother?

SAIF
*I will bring you to her. I promise.
 Here...*

He drops the Tic Tac's in her palm.

SAIF (CONT'D)
Like this.

He brings the candy to his lips and she follows along, tasting artificial mint flavor for the very first time.

SAIF (CONT'D)
Good, yes?

She smiles, Saif taking the poppy flower from his pocket and tucking it above her ear.

SAIF (CONT'D)
 (English)
 Why did you do it? Why did you save us?

Dutch dwells on the question for a curious moment, tapping out a couple Pain Pills from the Tic Tac pack and popping them in his mouth.

DUTCH
 Bum knee.

SAIF
 We owe you a blood debt.

DUTCH
 That's your custom. Where I'm from it's called doing the right thing.

SAIF
 You have children?

DUTCH
 Got me a son, like you.

SAIF
 Only a parent will understand the virtue of that deed...
 (A beat)
 We move heaven and earth to keep our children safe. That is why I keep Ramin close, under my watch.
 (A beat)
 You are fortunate your son was born in America, away from all this.

DUTCH
 (A beat)
 Yeah... Fortunate.

INT. CABIN - JINGLE TRUCK - LATER

Ramin keeps pace with the Lead Humvee when a repetitive--

THUD... THUD... THUD... THUD... THUD...

--echoes outside.

INT. LEAD HUMVEE - SAME

Lambo's voice beckons over the radio.

LAMBO (RADIO)
Problem boss.

DUTCH (INTO RADIO)
 What's that?

LAMBO (RADIO)
Jingle's got a blowout.

Dutch looks to Saif for guidance.

DUTCH
 What do you recommend?

Saif points to a plume of smoke billowing into the air against the hot orange glow of the late afternoon sun.

SAIF
 (English)
 We can stop there.

DUTCH
 It safe?

SAIF
 They won't bring trouble.

EXT. RING ROAD - HELMAND PROVINCE - NEXT

The Drone watches the Convoy pull off the highway and stop at the outskirts of an IDP CAMP (Internally Displaced Persons).

INT. LEAD HUMVEE - NEXT

Dutch takes in the crude stone shelters and mud huts resting at the bottom of a dry dirt slope that elevates the highway.

The Camp is inhabited by emaciated REFUGEES wandering around like hollowed out skeletons, hair matted with filth, eyes glossed over.

He looks closer... Several of them inhaling smoke from thin scraps of foil.

DUTCH
This a drug camp?

Saif nods.

SAIF
You have places like this in
America?

Dutch eyes a Refugee inhaling fumes from a lit scrap of foil--

FLASH TO:

A highway underpass -- Dutch stepping over JUNKIES comatose on the ground beside weeks old garbage swarming with flies. He studies each and every face, searching until he finds--

BRANDON

--passed out with a belt wrapped around his bicep and hypodermic dangling from his forearm.

BACK TO:

The Refugee falling into a drug fueled euphoria.

DUTCH
You'd be surprised.

EXT. JINGLE TRUCK - NEXT

Lambo and Bosco scan the decrepit addicts littering the Camp, the truck's chimes chattering in the wind.

LAMBO
Like the Night of the Living Dead.

Bosco takes out his phone and snaps a quick photo -- CLICK.

DUTCH

Get that tire changed. Every minute
down is a minute they make up.

Saif and Ramin take the lead.

DUTCH (CONT'D)

(To Lambo & Bosco)

Keep a sharp eye on that road--

Dutch's orders interrupted by Laila dashing out of the humvee
into the Camp.

DUTCH (CONT'D)

Shit...

EXT. IDP CAMP - HELMAND PROVINCE - NEXT

Laila runs through the maze of shacks and hovels, eyes waist
high, bouncing between the Refugees wandering aimlessly like
zombie's in a horror film.

ON DUTCH & BOSCO--

Bumping into lethargic bodies blocking their path as they
give chase.

DUTCH

(Pashto - Subtitled)

Move it!

BOSCO

(Pashto - Subtitled)

Outta the way!

EXT. JINGLE TRUCK - SAME

Saif and Ramin change the tire while Lambo stands guard.

RAMIN

(Eng - re: Lambo's Tattoo)

Why don't you fight for your
military?

LAMBO

Company's part of the military
technically, just happen to pay
more.

RAMIN

So, you fight for money?

Lambo goes quiet, resentment from the standoff still fresh in his mind.

EXT. IDP CAMP - HELMAND PROVINCE - NEXT

Dutch and Bosco spot Laila's head bobbing up and down in the sea of gaunt bodies. She darts around a shack and they circle opposite ends to cut her off.

We stay with Dutch, glancing at a young Refugee inhaling noxious fumes. He double takes, seeing--

BRANDON'S FACE

He blinks twice and the face changes back to the Refugee, relief washing over him as he shakes off the apparition.

EXT. JINGLE TRUCK - SAME

Ramin unscrews a lug nut, still arguing with Lambo.

LAMBO
9/11, Bin Laden--

RAMIN
(English)
Bin Laden is gone, mission accomplished.

LAMBO
You can't keep the country secure!

RAMIN
America gave weapons to Bin Laden, Hekmatyar and many others to fight the Soviets, decades before your towers came down.

LAMBO
I don't need a history lesson kid.

EXT. IDP CAMP - HELMAND PROVINCE - NEXT

Bosco circles around a hovel and hears a BABY'S shrill cries, finding its MOTHER inhaling crude Heroin powder up her nose.

BOSCO
(Sotto)
Third Ring of hell...

Tears spill from the Baby's eyes, muddying its grimy cheeks as Bosco approaches.

BOSCO (CONT'D)
It's alright...

The Child's Mother is staring off into oblivion.

BOSCO (CONT'D)
Hey, lady...

Bosco shakes her, but she doesn't respond, lost in delirium.

BOSCO (CONT'D)
(To the Baby)
You thirsty?

He dribbles drops of water against its lips from his canteen.

EXT. IDP CAMP - HELMAND PROVINCE - SAME

Laila looks for an escape route when she's snatched up and carried off, her screams muffled by a filthy hand covering her mouth.

ON DUTCH--

Scanning the area, but Laila is nowhere to be found.

EXT. JINGLE TRUCK - NEXT

Saif pulls Lambo aside, while Ramin tries to mount the new tire.

SAIF
(English)
We are fighting the enemies our
father's birthed and our sons--
(Nods at Ramin)
They will fight the enemies we
conceive, long after we are gone.

LAMBO
Good thing I don't have kids.
(Off Saif's smirk)
Why don't you disarm, go home?

SAIF
This is our home. What choice do we
have?

They look towards the edge of the Camp where a horde of Refugees are drawing near--

LAMBO
Back to your camp.

SAIF
(Pashto - Subtitled)
Back from where you came, go!

--far too many for the small contingent to contain without using force.

INT. SHACK - IDP CAMP - HELMAND PROVINCE - NEXT

A hand is clamped over Laila's mouth, dampening her cries for help.

The ABDUCTOR runs his other hand up her thigh, making its way higher when--

SHE BITES DOWN

The Abductor shouts and rips it away, Laila's cries earsplitting at full volume.

EXT. IDP CAMP - HELMAND PROVINCE - NEXT

Bosco desperately tries to soothe the Baby.

BOSCO
You hungry?

He pulls out a protein pouch and tries to feed him, but the mush just dribbles down the Baby's chin.

EXT. JINGLE TRUCK - NEXT

A Refugee breaks from the pack and scales the side of the Cargo Bed.

LAMBO
Get'em off'a there.

Ramin abandons the wheel and hits the Refugee with the TIRE IRON, but more and more flock to the truck, Lambo grabbing at their legs as they continue to swarm.

EXT. IDP CAMP - HELMAND PROVINCE - NEXT

Bosco grabs the Mother's arm and shakes her.

BOSCO
Your kid's in agony.

The Mother turns to her Baby and rubs Heroin residue against its gums. A moment later the cries subside, the Child an addict before its first birthday.

INT. SHACK - IDP CAMP - HELMAND PROVINCE - NEXT

The Abductor rears back and slaps Laila across the face--

WHACK

She goes quiet, his hand returning to her thigh when--

CRACK

The Abductor collapses, the back of his head bleeding out, walloped by the butt of Dutch's M4.

EXT. JINGLE TRUCK - NEXT

Lambo and Saif battle the horde, tearing at their legs as they try to scale the walls of the Cargo Bed.

LAMBO
Get down!

RAMIN
(Pashto - Subtitled)
Off!

The sheer number of bodies is overwhelming, leaving Lambo no choice but to fire a bullet burst in the air--

RAT-A-TAT-TAT-TAT

EXT. IDP CAMP - HELMAND PROVINCE - NEXT

Bosco turns towards the shots and hops to his feet, but hesitates.

He turns back to the Baby, unable to turn a blind eye to the abuse it will endure living like this.

EXT. JINGLE TRUCK - NEXT

Several Refugees scurry away, but others persevere and reach the top, forcing Saif to climb up after them.

SAIF
(Dari - Subtitled)
You close?

RAMIN
(Dari - Subtitled)
I'm going as fast as I...

THUMP - CRACK

Ramin cut off by a Refugee landing on the ground beside him.

RAMIN (CONT'D)
...can.

EXT. IDP CAMP - HELMAND PROVINCE - SAME

The aerial view from the Drone is more telling. Rows upon rows of bodies swarming the Convoy.

CLARRIDGE (RADIO)
They're stalled. You're a mile out.

SMITH (RADIO)
Copy that.

EXT. IDP CAMP - HELMAND PROVINCE - NEXT

Ramin tightens the final lug nut and springs to his feet.

RAMIN
(English)
Let's go.

The Contractors push through the desperate Refugees and return to the safety of the trucks.

INT. LEAD HUMVEE - NEXT

Bosco arrives at Dutch's side and passes Laila--

THE BABY

DUTCH
What the hell is that?

BOSCO
I couldn't leave him.

Out of time, Dutch slides behind the wheel and punches the gas.

DUTCH
(To Saif)
I thought you said it was safe.

INT. TOYOTA TECHNICAL - LATER

Taillights come into view, a sign on the side of the road pointing towards the turn off for Lashkar Gah.

CLARRIDGE (SAT PHONE)
*They're back up. You need to get
them off the Ring.*

Smith floors it and looks to Tofan.

SMITH
Can your people close off the road?

Tofan pulls out a CELL PHONE and makes a call.

TOFAN (INTO CELL)
(Pashto - Subtitled)
Block the highway.

INT. LEAD HUMVEE - LATER

Dutch puts his experience to work, weaving through traffic in tight formation, the Convoy never dipping below 50mph.

They nearly get boxed in by a DATSUN, but Dutch clips its back tire, sending it spinning out to the side of the road.

SAIF
(English)
And you wonder why the people want
you gone.

Dutch shoots him a cold glare, in no mood for criticism.

EXT. RING ROAD - HELMAND PROVINCE - LATER

Two beat-up SUZUKI COMPACTS with weighted down trunks come to a stop, closing off both lanes of traffic.

BEARDED MEN in tunics hop into a THIRD CAR as traffic builds behind them, drivers laying on their horns and--

BOOM

The Cars explode.

INT. THIRD CAR - NEXT

The Driver has a Cell Phone against his ear, passing the Bearded Men a pair of Afghan National Police UNIFORMS.

BEARDED MAN (INTO CELL)
(Pashto - Subtitled)
It is done.

INT. TOYOTA TECHNICAL - SAME

Tofan hangs up and looks Smith dead in the eye.

TOFAN
(English)
Your comrade may keep his head
after all.

EXT. RING ROAD - HELMAND PROVINCE - EVENING

The Drone hovers above the smoldering Suzuki's, NIGHT VISION engaged as plumes of smoke billow into the air.

EXT. RING ROAD - HELMAND PROVINCE - SAME

The Bearded Men in Police Uniforms erect a barricade in front of the wreckage, directing cars down a DETOUR -- The exit for Lashkar Gah.

INT. REAR HUMVEE - SHORT TIME LATER

Lambo checks his side view mirror, glancing at what appears to be typical commuter traffic behind them.

His eyes turn back to the road, but we hold on the mirror and spot the Technical changing lanes five or six cars back.

Lambo glances at the glass again, but the Tech is out of sight, having taken cover behind a BUS.

INT. LEAD HUMVEE - NEXT

The traffic up ahead is at a standstill.

DUTCH (INTO RADIO)
 Let's run the fenders.
 (To Saif - Eyeing Laila)
 Take the wheel and don't let her
 out.

EXT. RING ROAD - HELMAND PROVINCE - NEXT

Dutch and Bosco jog along the front of the Lead Humvee, tapping on windows with their gun barrels and directing cars off the road to make way for the Convoy.

DUTCH
 (Pashto - Subtitled)
 Pull over!

BOSCO
 (Pashto - Subtitled)
 Move it!

They are hyper alert, scanning each and every vehicle with a critical eye, anyone inside a potential Insurgent.

The traffic grows more and more congested the further they travel, horns honking, radios blasting Persian Pop, Driver's shouting at the top of their lungs...

INT. REAR HUMVEE - NEXT

Lambo glances at the side view mirror again and his eyes go wide, spotting the Technical several cars back.

LAMBO (INTO RADIO)
 Tango on our six.

EXT. RING ROAD - HELMAND PROVINCE - NEXT

Dutch and Bosco turn around, catching sight of the Technical moving through the sea of traffic.

INT. REAR HUMVEE - NEXT

Lambo slides through the turret, eye against the SAWs sight.

DUTCH (RADIO)
 Got a visual?

LAMBO (INTO RADIO)
 Winnie on the mount, Smith behind
 the wheel, Adams is M.I.A. and...
 (A beat - Shocked)
 They've got that Haji with'em.

INT. LEAD HUMVEE - NEXT

Saif veers over and falls back behind the Jingle Truck,
 forming a protective barrier beside the Rear Humvee.

DUTCH (RADIO)
 Anyone got a shot?

Traffic is moving at a snails pace.

SAIF (INTO RADIO)
 (English)
 They're hiding behind civilians.

Sure enough, the Technical keeps its distance, staying behind
 the protection of unknowing civilian cars.

INT. CIVILIAN TRUCK - NEXT

The TRUCK DRIVER looks in his rearview, the Technical right
 on his ass. He swallows hard, opens his door and abandons it.

EXT. RING ROAD - HELMAND PROVINCE - NEXT

Traffic comes to a DEAD STOP -- Smith, Winnie and Tofan hop
 out and disappear into the maze of idling cars.

INT. REAR HUMVEE - SAME

Lambo follows them through the SAWS rear sight until they
 vanish behind the vehicles.

LAMBO (INTO RADIO)
 Targets on foot.

EXT. RING ROAD - LASHKAR GAH - SAME

The Drone surveys the action from above, passing along intel
 to Smith's Team on the ground.

CLARRIDGE (SAT PHONE)
 Two on foot, two on the SAWS.

SMITH (SAT PHONE)
Copy that.

INT. LEAD HUMVEE - NEXT

Laila peeks through the bottom edge of a bulletproof window at the frightened PASSENGERS trapped inside their cars when--

CRACK - CRACK - CRACK

She screams -- Two shots splintering the tempered glass above her head, the other one right in front of her face.

SAIF
(Pashto - Subtitled)
Get on the floor. Don't move.

She falls to floor, cradling the Baby tight against her.

EXT. RING ROAD - HELMAND PROVINCE - NEXT

A bearded CIVILIAN pops his door open, but an unseen force slams it shut, trapping him inside.

INT. REAR HUMVEE - SAME

Lambo watches the Civilian rip at the door handle -- Seeing a ghost like glimpse of Tofan's reflection in a window.

LAMBO (INTO RADIO)
Haji outside a white Mitsubishi two
cars back. Civilian present.

EXT. RING ROAD - HELMAND PROVINCE - NEXT

Dutch crawls towards the Mitsubishi as quiet as a mouse, the Civilian inside pleading to be released.

He puts his back to the bumper, finger on the trigger. Dutch takes one final breath and spins towards his target--

RAT-A-TAT-TAT-TAT

--but Tofan isn't there.

DUTCH (INTO RADIO)
Where's he at Lambo?

Dutch stays low and moves towards the door, popping it open.

DUTCH (CONT'D)
 (Pashto - Subtitled)
 Go, go, go.

The Civilian hops out of the car and--

RAT-A-TAT-TAT-TAT

Bullets riddle his body and tear into the side of the car, dropping the Civilian to the pavement with blood stains polka-dotting his white shawl.

Dutch takes cover, managing to escape the scene unscathed.

DUTCH (INTO RADIO) (CONT'D)
 Someone get eyes on!

EXT. RING ROAD - HELMAND PROVINCE - NEXT

One Uniformed Insurgent directs vehicles down the detour while the other opens the trunk, an AFGHAN MAN'S lifeless body lying inside.

EXT. RING ROAD - HELMAND PROVINCE - NEXT

Bosco peeks around the edge of a car and--

RAT-A-TAT-TAT-TAT

--twisting back as bullets zip past.

BOSCO (INTO RADIO)
 Someone find these guys before I
 catch one in the mouth.

INT. LEAD HUMVEE - NEXT

Saif glances at the Rear Humvee, but Lambo isn't there, the SAW deserted.

EXT. RING ROAD - HELMAND PROVINCE - NEXT

Dutch hears Smith's voice echo from somewhere in the forest of idling cars.

SMITH (O.C.)
 Give us the truck Dutch. Toss the
 money inside and go. No one needs
 to die over this.

DUTCH

I'm no drug runner Frank. You can have the money, but we keep the truck.

SMITH (O.C.)

No can do.

Smith's voice rings out from a different location entirely, not staying in one spot for more than a moment.

SMITH (O.C.) (CONT'D)

This isn't a negotiation. It's an offer, best and final.

DUTCH (INTO RADIO)

(Whispering)

Lambo, you have eyes on?

He waits... No response.

DUTCH (INTO RADIO) (CONT'D)

Lambo do you have--

CLICK

Dutch's question cut short by a gun barrel hitting the back of his head. He looks at the reflection in the car next to him and sees--

LAMBO

--holding a pistol against his head.

LAMBO

Do what he says Dutch.

DUTCH

Ramos think about--

LAMBO

About how you're willing to get us all killed over some fucking smack?

DUTCH

It's bigger than that--

LAMBO

Bigger than what? You want this to be the Op that gets you sent home in a box?

Lambo presses the pistol even harder against Dutch's skull.

LAMBO (CONT'D)

Could kickoff a pretty nice third act with that cash cushion. Don't have anyone vouching to get me on a top detail like you have... or had anyway.

(A beat)

Individuals, not teams right?

Dutch's face falls, Lambo having overheard his conversation with Smith in the transport plane.

DUTCH

It's drug money, Taliban money--

LAMBO

So? What's your life worth or Bosco's or mine? Risking it every damn day in this God forsaken place. We deserve it. Every penny.

Lambo's voice begins to tremble.

LAMBO (CONT'D)

You and your Muj buddies can ride off into the sunset, but me and Bosco, we'll take up with Smith.

(A beat - Shouting)

Don't shoot...

EXT. RING ROAD - HELMAND PROVINCE - SAME

Bosco watches Lambo and Dutch materialize from below the hood of a car.

LAMBO (O.C.)

...hold your fire.

BOSCO

(Sotto)

Shit...

EXT. RING ROAD - HELMAND PROVINCE - SAME

Lambo shouts into the maze of idling cars.

LAMBO

I'll take the deal.

DUTCH

Ramos, we're doing something important for once--

THUD

Lambo hits Dutch in the back of the head with the gun barrel.

LAMBO

Shut up.

(Shouting)

You've got two of us with you,
right Bosco?

Bosco doesn't reply.

LAMBO (CONT'D)

What do you say Smith?

EXT. RING ROAD - HELMAND PROVINCE - SAME

Smith has the Sat Phone at his ear.

CLARRIDGE (SAT PHONE)

Put a bullet in his head.

SMITH (SAT PHONE)

What?

CLARRIDGE (SAT PHONE)

Put - A - Bullet - In - His - Head.

SMITH (SAT PHONE)

That necessary? They're giving up--

CLARRIDGE (SAT PHONE)

It's your lives or theirs...

(A beat)

Take your pick.

EXT. RING ROAD - HELMAND PROVINCE - NEXT

The gun barrel rattles against Dutch's head, sweat dripping down Lambo's brow.

DUTCH

My son Ramos, I got him hooked on
pain pills after he got back from
Iraq. Thought I was helping him...

(A beat)

Graduated to heroin when they cut
off my prescription.

Lambo's glare breaks, compassion cutting through the mask.

DUTCH (CONT'D)
They're moving that junk State
side. I can't let that happen.

EXT. RING ROAD - HELMAND PROVINCE - SAME

Smith's back against the opposite side of the same car,
hearing Dutch's confession.

DUTCH (O.C.)
Not knowing what I do... Not with
my kid in a coma.

Smith fights his inner turmoil, spotting Tofan a few cars
back, taking aim with his AK.

He tries to wave him off, but Tofan ignores the order.

SMITH
No!

RAT-A-TAT-TAT-TAT

EXT. RING ROAD - HELMAND PROVINCE - SAME

Lambo's body goes stiff and he falls to the ground.

Dutch drops down beside him and drags his body behind the
cover of a car.

He takes in his injuries, blood seeping through the bullet
holes in his chest.

DUTCH
Hey, hey... Look at me.

Lambo glances up from his hemorrhaging torso.

DUTCH (CONT'D)
It's alright, you're gonna be fine.

He holds Dutch's gaze, struggling to speak.

LAMBO
Shit man, I shouldn'a drawn on you.

Dutch tries to plug the wounds, but blood spills out like
water through a sieve.

DUTCH
The hell you do that for, huh?

Lambo takes his last dying breath, staring straight up at the sky.

INT. CABIN - JINGLE TRUCK - NEXT

There's a break in the traffic and Ramin eases on the gas, driving over a DEAD BODY lying in the middle of the road.

EXT. RING ROAD - HELMAND PROVINCE - SAME

TIGHT ON THE BODY--

The dead AFGHAN MAN from the Insurgents trunk, wires peeking through the neck of his shirt.

ON A UNIFORMED INSURGENT--

Watching the Body close, a cell phone detonator in his hand.

The Jingle Truck passes over it, the Lead Humvee trailing right behind.

INT. CABIN - JINGLE TRUCK - SAME

The Baby begins to cry. Saif sniffs the air and turns to Laila--

SAIF
(Pashto - Subtitled)
He needs to be changed.

--not seeing the Body and he rolls over it.

EXT. RING ROAD - HELMAND PROVINCE - SAME

Dutch races back towards the trucks when--

BOOM

The Body explodes, sending the Lead Humvee flipping backwards through the air.

INT. CABIN - JINGLE TRUCK - SAME

Ramin sees the explosion in his side view mirror and slams on the brake.

EXT. RING ROAD - HELMAND PROVINCE - NEXT

He arrives at the humvee, smoke billowing from its undercarriage, the front end blown apart.

RAMIN
(Dari - Subtitled)
Father, father, can you hear me?

Saif dangles upside down in the drivers seat.

Dutch looks through the shattered back windows, finding Laila lying among shards of broken glass, but the Baby isn't there.

Soft cries catch his ear and he looks up, the Baby wedged underneath the seat, where Laila tucked him.

ON BOSCO--

Standing over them and laying down cover fire--

RAT-A-TAT-TAT-TAT

--keeping Smith, Winnie and Tofan at bay.

ON RAMIN--

Pulling Saif from the humvee, his face covered in gashes, dripping blood.

Bosco helps carry him to the Jingle Truck, Dutch arriving a moment later with Laila and the Baby, tucking them inside.

INT. LEAD HUMVEE - NEXT

Dutch and Bosco hop in.

BOSCO
Lambo?

Dutch looks at Bosco with anguished eyes that answer his question.

EXT. RING ROAD - HELMAND PROVINCE - NEXT

The Drone follows the Convoy as they race off the Ring and down the EXIT for Lashkar Gah, the Technical in hot pursuit.

CLARRIDGE (SAT PHONE)
Diverted into the city.

EXT. CITY STREETS - LASHKAR GAH - NEXT

The streets are teeming with people despite the constant threat of violence, the Convoy like Monster Trucks on the narrow roads.

The Jingle Truck struggles to keep up with the humvee, its 22-foot-long body slowing them down at every turn.

INT. CABIN - JINGLE TRUCK - NEXT

Saif stirs, just as Ramin spots the Technical gaining ground in his side view mirror.

RAMIN
(*Dari - Subtitled*)
Hey, hey... Wake up.

He shakes Saif until he comes to.

SAIF
(*Dari - Subtitled*)
Stop it...

Ramin looks in the mirror again, the Technical closing in.

RAMIN
(*Dari - Subtitled*)
Take the wheel.

SAIF
(*Dari - Subtitled*)
Give me a minute.

RAMIN
(*Dari - Subtitled*)
We don't have one.

Ramin begins to climb out the window--

SAIF
(*Dari - Subtitled*)
Hey...

--forcing Saif to grab hold of the wheel.

INT. CARGO BED - JINGLE TRUCK - NEXT

Ramin lands inside and lays across the Heroin bricks. He crawls to the edge and peeks over at Winnie on the bolt mounted .50 Cal, firing at the Jingle Truck's back tires--

CA-CHUG - CA-CHUG - CA-CHUG

He grabs a plastic container of PRECURSOR CONVERSION CHEMICALS and unscrews the top, stuffing a strip of cloth down the neck.

He lights the rag and lets the flame eat away at the cloth fuse before he drops it out.

INT. TECHNICAL - SAME

Smith and Tofan watch chemical Molotov cocktail fall to the ground and roll under the Tech's front end--

SMITH

Shit...

EXT. CITY STREETS - LASHKAR GAH - SAME

BOOM

The precursor cocktail explodes, flipping the Tech Bed forward, launching Winnie into the air like a boulder fired from a catapult.

INT. LEAD HUMVEE - NEXT

Dutch turns down a narrow street lined by SHOPS and TEA HOUSES. TWO CARS come to a stop in the middle of the road.

He punches the gas and slips by on the sidewalk, sending the CUSTOMERS diving from their tables.

INT. CABIN - JINGLE TRUCK - NEXT

Saif stares down the blockade and drops the pedal to the floor -- Dutch's voice booming over the radio.

DUTCH (RADIO)

V-bed!

The Militants inside smash buttons on their Cell Phone Detonators as the Jingle Truck barrels towards them and--

EXT. CITY STREETS - LASHKAR GAH - CONTINUOUS

CRASH

--splits the barricade in two.

BOOM

The Cars explode, a wall of flames creeping over the edge of the Cargo Bed's iron walls.

INT. CABIN - JINGLE TRUCK - SAME

The explosion shocks Laila awake and triggers piercing cries from the Baby.

EXT. CITY STREETS - LASHKAR GAH - NEXT

The Lead Humvee races down another narrow stretch, the Jingle Truck hot on its heels as they approach--

PEACE SQUARE

A roundabout decorated by a statue of a GLOBE resting between two massive DOVES.

INT. LEAD HUMVEE - NEXT

Dutch floors it--

25mph... 30... 35...

The Jingle Truck keeps pace, the Convoy moving with one brain.

40mph... 45... 50...

Dutch looks out his window, the traffic circle empty, not a single automobile or pedestrian in sight.

DUTCH
Something's wrong...

They roll into the roundabout and--

CRASH

BLACK.

OVER BLACK:

Shallow breaths, panicked moans...

A light clicks - ON - revealing Brandon in bed, in the throes of a night terror. Dutch takes a seat on the edge of the mattress and places a hand on his shoulder.

DUTCH (CONT'D)
It's alright son, it's alright...

Brandon shoots up, beads of sweat dripping down his brow.

DUTCH (CONT'D)
Here.

Dutch drops a couple Pain Pills in his palm.

DUTCH (CONT'D)
Helps with the aches and pains...

He taps his temple.

DUTCH (CONT'D)
...and that dark shit too.

Brandon swallows them down and looks Dutch square in the eye.

BRANDON
Wake up Dutch... Wake up--

BACK TO:

Dutch's eyes flicker open -- The Car that broad-sided them crushed against the Jingle Truck's front end, a hole in the windshield where the driver was ejected.

Saif's at his door, shaking him.

SAIF
--Dutch, wake up...

INT. CARGO BED - JINGLE TRUCK - SAME

Ramin looks at the rooftops where Militants are taking aim.

EXT. PEACE SQUARE - LASHKAR GAH - SAME

Even more swarm the square, AKs and Kalashnikovs at the ready.

INT. LEAD HUMVEE - SAME

Bosco is unconscious on the floor below the turret.

DUTCH
Help me with him.

INT. CARGO BED - JINGLE TRUCK - SAME

Ramin continues to scan the rooftops, spotting a Militant taking aim with an RPG.

INT. LEAD HUMVEE - SAME

Dutch reaches for Bosco when Ramin's voice comes through the radio.

RAMIN (RADIO)
(English)
Rocket, take cover!

Saif looks to the rooftop where the Militant has them dead to rights.

SAIF
Come, now!

He pulls on Dutch's arm, but he swats it off.

DUTCH
Help me dammit!

The Militant fires the rocket and Saif tears him away--

DUTCH (CONT'D)
No, no, no...

--Bosco's hand slips though Dutch's fingers.

EXT. PEACE SQUARE - LASHKAR GAH - CONTINUOUS

Saif drags him kicking and screaming behind a WALL and--

BOOM

The rocket explodes, the humvees armor plating and bulletproof glass no match for the blast.

Dutch tries to break free, but Saif holds him back, the only one recognizing the grim reality of the situation.

INT. DRONE CONTROL ROOM - SAME

The Drone Op stares at his screen in horror.

DRONE OPERATOR
At least one casualty. They'll have
video of it online within the hour.

Clarridge is quiet, watching the mission unravel from the safety of a computer screen.

He moves his hand towards the holster at his hip, draws his PISTOL and takes aim at the Drone Op--

BANG

The Drone Op's head crashes against his desk - THUD - blood splattering across the flat-screens streaming video of the Convoy.

Clarridge creeps out and locks the door.

EXT. CONTRACTOR ALLEY - CAMP LEATHERNECK - CONTINUOUS

Clarridge leans against an up-armored Suburban, pulls out a cigarette and lights up.

EXT. PEACE SQUARE - LASHKAR GAH - SHORT TIME LATER

Militants drag Bosco's body from the wreckage, his skin charred, face unrecognizable.

Another hops in the Jingle Truck and drives off -- Laila and the Baby trapped inside, Ramin still hiding in the Cargo Bed.

Dutch and Saif watch, utterly helpless in this moment.

SAIF

(English)

We can't walk the streets like
this.

Saif leads Dutch inside a bombed out APARTMENT BUILDING.

Militants fire celebratory bullet bursts into the air, capturing video of Bosco's charred remains on their cell phones as they slap his corpse with the heels of their shoes.

INT. DATSUN - NEXT

Smith and Tofan roll past the smoldering humvee in a stolen car, the Militants still celebrating over Bosco's charred remains.

SMITH

Jesus Christ...

TOFAN
 (English)
 You will not find him here.

Tofan makes a call.

TOFAN (CONT'D)
 (Pashto - Subtitled)
 Where?
 (A beat - English)
 Drive.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - LASHKAR GAH - NIGHT

Dutch and Saif have traded their uniforms for shawls and turbans, Dutch looking native if you don't get a good look at his face.

SAIF
 (English)
 Keep your head down.

Saif pulls a TRACKING BEACON from his pocket, matching the Tracker he left in the Cargo Bed earlier.

DUTCH
 You've had that the whole time?

He nods as he picks the lock on the door of a PARKED CAR.

DUTCH (CONT'D)
 Don't you think that would be
 something important for me to know?

SAIF
 Now you know.

EXT. QALA-E-BOST RUINS - LATER

The Jingle Truck is parked under an 11th Century arch illuminated by Land Cruiser headlights, the entrance to the ruins of the ancient citadel -- BOST.

Smith moves towards Juma Khan with Tofan at his back, when a flashlight clicks on revealing--

ADAMS

--down on his knees, face swollen and bruised.

SMITH
 You got it back, now let him go.

JUMA KHAN

Yes, but you were not the one to
recover it.

Tofan puts a gun to Smith's head.

JUMA KHAN (CONT'D)

(Pashto - Subtitled)

Where is the other one?

TOFAN

(Pashto - Subtitled)

Dead.

A Militant pours GASOLINE over Adams head and Khan flicks on
a lighter.

JUMA KHAN

Americans and your arrogance. Just
like the Soviets and the British
before you. The Great Game. What
Arthur Connolly called it before
the Uzbek's took his head. East and
West fighting for control of lands
they know nothing about. This place
has stood for thousands of years.
Our ancestors drove back Ghengis
Khan and Tarlemene, great
conquerors of their time.

(A beat)

Afghanistan has never fallen and it
never will. We are a patient
people. Time... it is our strongest
weapon.

He moves the lighter towards Adams when--

LAILA

--steps out of the Jingle Truck with the Baby in her arms.

TOFAN

(Pashto - Subtitled)

It's the girl.

JUMA KHAN

(Pashto - Subtitled)

*Bring her to me. I want her to
remember this night.*

Tofan drags Laila over and Khan takes her by the hand.

JUMA KHAN (CONT'D)

You see this man.

He lifts her chin, forcing her to look Adams in the eye, mumbling at her through swollen and bloody lips.

ADAMS

Shoot me, please shoot me...

JUMA KHAN

He is our enemy and must be punished.

Khan puts the lighter in her hand, the tiny flame flickering in the wind.

JUMA KHAN (CONT'D)

Touch it here...

He moves her trembling hand towards Adams' vest, light from the flame highlighting his battered face.

ADAMS

Don't burn me alive, please--

WHOOSH

Flames engulf him, piercing screams echoing through the cold night air as tears fall from Laila's eyes. She tries to look away, but Khan forces her to watch.

JUMA KHAN

Do not look away.

(To Smith - English)

Men like me, we do not deal in Opium. We deal in bloodshed. The day this country becomes stable is the day my fortune dries up. Your so called cooperation... I don't need it. I can find corrupt men like you and Clarridge anywhere.

EXT. ENTRANCE - QALA-E-BOST RUINS - NIGHT

GUARDS patrol the entrance when--

THWUCK - THWUCK

--Dutch and Saif pop up from out of nowhere and slit their throats, killing them softly.

EXT. QALA-E-BOST RUINS - NEXT

Smith is on his knees beside Adams' smouldering remains, a Militant holding the container of Gasoline above his head.

JUMA KHAN
Your Government will not
acknowledge your death. No one will
know, no one will care.

The Militant is about to pour the propellant when--

VRRRROOM

The Jingle Truck's engine purrs, Ramin behind the wheel. Khan
and the Militants turn towards it.

KHAN
(Pashto - Subtitled)
Kill him.

They aim their weapons, ready to fire when--

RAT-A-TAT-TAT-TAT

ON DUTCH & SAIF--

Raining down a hail of gunfire, Militants collapsing one by
one, along with Khan and Tofan.

Saif grabs Laila and they race to the Jingle Truck.

DUTCH
Go, go, go.

Ramin drops the pedal to the floor and speeds away.

EXT. QALA-E-BOST RUINS - NEXT

Tofan runs towards the Jingle Truck and grabs hold of the
Cargo Bed, securing his footing on the back bumper, hitching
a ride.

EXT. QALA-E-BOST RUINS - NEXT

Smith pushes a Militant off him and he sits up, the container
of Gasoline right beside him.

ON KHAN--

Lying in the dirt, a bullet wound to his stomach as Smith
steps beside him.

KHAN
(English)
I can make you a very rich man--

SMITH

I don't want it, not anymore.

Khan realizes he can't change Smith's mind, no matter what he offers.

KHAN

Make it a quick death.

SMITH

(Gesturing to Adams)

As quick as you gave him.

Smith pours the fuel over Khan's legs and sparks a flame, bringing it to the bottom of his shawl--

WHOOSH

Khan's robes ignite, his piercing screams echoing through the cold night air.

INT. CABIN - JINGLE TRUCK - NIGHT

Ramin is behind the wheel, Laila on Saif's lap and the Baby in Dutch's arms, beside him.

Headlights shine bright, blazing a trail.

Outside a road sign reads: CAMP LEATHERNECK 5 MILES.

Dutch replays Lambo's words over and over in his head.

LAMBO (V.O.)

*...you're willing to get us all
killed over some fucking smack?*

The truck crests over an incline -- Headlights shining bright in their eyes, casting the MAN standing in front of an up-armored GMC Suburban, in shadow.

Dutch pulls out his binoculars, the dark silhouette flagging them down.

DUTCH

Might be friendly.

SAIF

(English)

Friendly like you or "friendly"
like the others?

INT. CABIN - JINGLE TRUCK - NEXT

The Man arrives outside Dutch's door and his worn face comes into focus--

CLARRIDGE

CLARRIDGE

Word from dispatch said you might need some help.

(A beat)

What happened to everybody else?

DUTCH

Clusterfuck, lost most everyone.

Clarridge shakes his head, playing up his grief.

CLARRIDGE

Got med supplies in the truck. Food and water too. Whatever you need.

The Baby cries.

CLARRIDGE (CONT'D)

That a kid?

Dutch nods and looks at Saif.

DUTCH

Get Laila and the baby cleaned up?

Saif nods in agreement.

EXT. RING ROAD - HELMAND PROVINCE - NEXT

Dutch follows Clarridge towards the Suburban with the Baby in his arms, a paternal look coming across his face as Laila clings to his leg.

CLARRIDGE

Dispatch said you hadn't called in since early this morning.

DUTCH

Who'd you say you're with?

Clarridge flashes a badge with the same company logo printed across Dutch's shirt and tattooed on his arm.

INT. CABIN - JINGLE TRUCK - SAME

Saif watches Dutch lift Laila inside the Suburban.

RAMIN
(Dari - Subtitled)
You must go with them.

SAIF
(Dari - Subtitled)
Why? We have plenty of room--

A gun barrel enters frame. Saif looks at Ramin's reflection in the rearview mirror, his son aiming the gun at his head.

SAIF (CONT'D)
Put that dow--

RAMIN
It is the only way I can protect you.

SAIF
Where will you take it?

RAMIN
Where it is needed.

SAIF
Northern Alliance?

RAMIN
They have fought for Afghanistan longer than Karzai, Ghani or any Pashtun.

(A beat)
You turned your back on them. They haven't forgotten.

SAIF
It is not that simple--

RAMIN
When the Americans leave and the Taliban return at full force, the Mujihadeen will need that money.

Saif looks Ramin square in the eye.

SAIF
You are your own man.
(A beat)
Will you die for their cause?

RAMIN

Yes.

SAIF

Then nothing I say will change your mind.

He turns to the door and pops it open when--

THWUCK

Blood splashes against the back of Saif's neck.

He turns back, Ramin's throat slashed open, Tofan clutching the Pesh-Kabz Knife outside the window.

TOFAN

(Pashto - Subtitled)

A job cannot be left undone.

Saif reaches for his gun but Tofan gets to his first--

BANG

--catching Saif in the gut and he falls out the door.

EXT. RING ROAD - HELMAND PROVINCE - SAME

Dutch passes the Baby to Laila and closes the door, withdrawing his M4 when--

CLICK

--a gun barrel hits the side of his head.

CLARRIDGE

Drop it.

Dutch lowers his weapon to the pavement.

CLARRIDGE (CONT'D)

Guess you're the hero type after all. Proving to be a much bigger pain in the ass than I bargained for.

DUTCH

Who are you?

CLARRIDGE

I'm the guy running this Op. You didn't actually think Frank was the mastermind, did you?

Clarridge glances at Tofan, who disappears behind the side of the Jingle Truck.

CLARRIDGE (CONT'D)
Let me ask you something... Is that
truck really worth dying for?

EXT. JINGLE TRUCK - NEXT

Saif is lying against the front right tire, clutching his abdomen as Tofan kneels beside him and aims the Marakov Revolver between his eyes.

TOFAN
(Pashto - Subtitled)
Your bloodline ends here.

EXT. RING ROAD - HELMAND PROVINCE - NEXT

CLARRIDGE
I read your file. It's like you
were custom made to be my fall guy--
*Disgruntled Contractor demoted to a
shit detail, gets together with a
couple of corrupt Mujidaheen to
smuggle heroin...*

EXT. JINGLE TRUCK - NEXT

TOFAN
Open your mouth.

Saif doesn't obey, Tofan jams the barrel between his teeth.

TOFAN (CONT'D)
You will see your son in paradise.

He brushes his finger against the trigger when--

THWUCK

Tofan's eyes bulge from their sockets, wind escaping him.

EXT. RING ROAD - HELMAND PROVINCE - NEXT

CLARRIDGE
Knew you couldn't resist working
with Frank, but the truth is, he
was just as surprised to see you as
you were to see him.
(MORE)

CLARRIDGE (CONT'D)

(A beat)

Now close your eyes, you won't feel
a thing.

Dutch closes them...

EXT. JINGLE TRUCK - NEXT

THWUCK

Saif drives the blade deeper into Tofan's stomach--

THWUCK

--twisting the blade as he falls to the ground.

EXT. RING ROAD - HELMAND PROVINCE - NEXT

Clarridge is about to pull the trigger when the rumble of an engine stops him, turning to find one of Khan's LAND CRUISERS pulling up behind the Jingle Truck.

He holds Dutch in front of him like a shield, breathing a sigh of relief when Smith steps out.

CLARRIDGE

You want the honors?

He pushes Dutch to the ground.

SMITH

Sure.

INIT. JINGLE TRUCK - SAME

Saif struggles to climb inside the cabin, Ramin lying against the steering wheel with blood dripping from his throat. He touches his face, tears welling in his.

SAIF

(Dari - Subtitled)

I tried to keep you safe my son...

BANG

EXT. RING ROAD - HELMAND PROVINCE - NEXT

Clarridge stares at Smith wide-eyed, a crimson stain expanding across his chest and he falls to the ground.

Smith looks at Dutch, down on his knees and extends a hand to help him to his feet when--

BANG - BANG - BANG

Smith's body shudders, bullets tearing into his back.

Dutch glances at the Jingle Truck, Saif with the Revolver smoking in his hand.

DUTCH
Hold your fire!

Saif drops the weapon and falls back inside.

Dutch crawls to Smith's side, blood seeping into the dry earth underneath him. He takes Smith's hand, their matching M.E.R.C. tattoos together again.

SMITH
Glad to see you're still above
ground...

Smith's eyes flicker and close for the last time.

INT. CABIN - JINGLE TRUCK - LATER

Dutch drives, Laila holding the Baby and Saif leaning against the door beside her, Ramin's body in his arms.

She removes a bushel of pink Poppy Flowers from her pocket and pins them to his beard.

SAIF
(Pashto - Subtitled)
How do I look?

LAILA
(Pashto - Subtitled)
Very pretty.

They arrive outside the gates of CAMP LEATHERNECK, MARINE sentries aiming down on them from guard towers.

Dutch hops out with his hands in the air. Time slows as the Marines descend on the vehicle...

FADE TO BLACK:

The rhythmic pulsing of a HEART MONITOR spiking.

BEEP..... BEEP..... BEEP.....

INT. HOSPITAL - CAMP LEATHERNECK - DAY

Dutch sits on the edge of a hospital bed, a NURSE dressing his wounds. She finishes up and hands him a PILL BOTTLE.

NURSE
For the pain.

Dutch clutches the bottle tight in his hand and moves to the curtain separator, where Saif is resting in his own bed.

DUTCH
I'm being discharged.

SAIF
(English)
Go, be with your family, before
it's too late.

Dutch extends a hand and the two men shake.

INT. HOSPITAL - CAMPE LEATHERNECK - LATER

Dutch stands over the Baby, tubes taped to its tiny hands feeding him fluids.

DOCTOR
The methadone will curb the
withdrawal until we can ween him
off. He's lucky you rescued him.

DUTCH
Better man than me did that.

INT. INCINERATION FACILITY - DAY

Pallets stacked with bricks of Heroin and Precursor
Conversion Chemicals are resting on a CONVEYOR BELT.

An ATTENDANT turns to Dutch--

ATTENDANT
Would you like the honors?

--pointing at a GREEN POWER BUTTON.

DUTCH
Give me a second.

Dutch shoves something between two of the stacked bricks.

He punches the button, the belt buzzing as a high pitched ALARM cries out and the pallets moves towards a steel door.

It opens -- Two tame pilot lights ablaze.

TIGHT ON THE BRICKS: Where Dutch has placed the Pill Bottle.

The pallets cross the threshold and--

WHOOSH

--the flames excite and ignite the pallets. The roar of the flames takes us to--

EXT. REFINERY - HELMAND PROVINCE - DAYS LATER

--the quite rumble of a PICKUP TRUCK pulling over the narrow pass, pink poppy flowers decorating the valley below.

Construction on a new Refinery is already underway.

The Farmer moves towards the truck as it comes to a stop. Laila climbs out and runs to her Mother.

INT. PICKUP TRUCK - SAME

Saif watches the reunion with a satisfied smile.

EXT. REFINERY - HELMAND PROVINCE - NEXT

Saif joins the family, holding the Baby in his arms.

SAIF

(Pashto - Subtitled)

Can you care for another?

The Farmer looks at him, reluctant.

FARMER

(Pashto - Subtitled)

We can hardly feed our own.

Saif nods and hands him a duffle bag.

SAIF

For your debts.

He moves back to the truck with the Baby in his arms.

The Farmer looks in the bag -- It's filled with cash.

INT. PICKUP TRUCK - NEXT

Saif gets behind the wheel, the Baby strapped in beside him.

SAIF

We must give you a name my son.

The Baby stares up at his newly adopted father as Saif turns the key, the rumble of the engine taking us to--

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

--a truck grill. The GMC logo front and center, HIGHWAY TO HELL playing softly through its speakers.

We pull out wide to find that it's not an up-armored Suburban at all, but a RED PICKUP.

INT. RED GMC PICKUP - NEXT

Dutch is behind the wheel, driving a rural stretch of ROUTE 91. Red, yellow and orange autumn leaves adorn the trees.

He tosses back a few Tic Tac's and holds out his hand, offering some to--

BRANDON

BRANDON

Thanks.

EXT. MAPLE LEAF TREATMENT CENTER - NEXT

The two stand outside the entrance of the REHAB FACILITY.

DUTCH

Ready?

BRANDON

Are you?

Brandon moves towards the entrance, Dutch following in his footsteps a moment later.

FADE TO BLACK:

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