

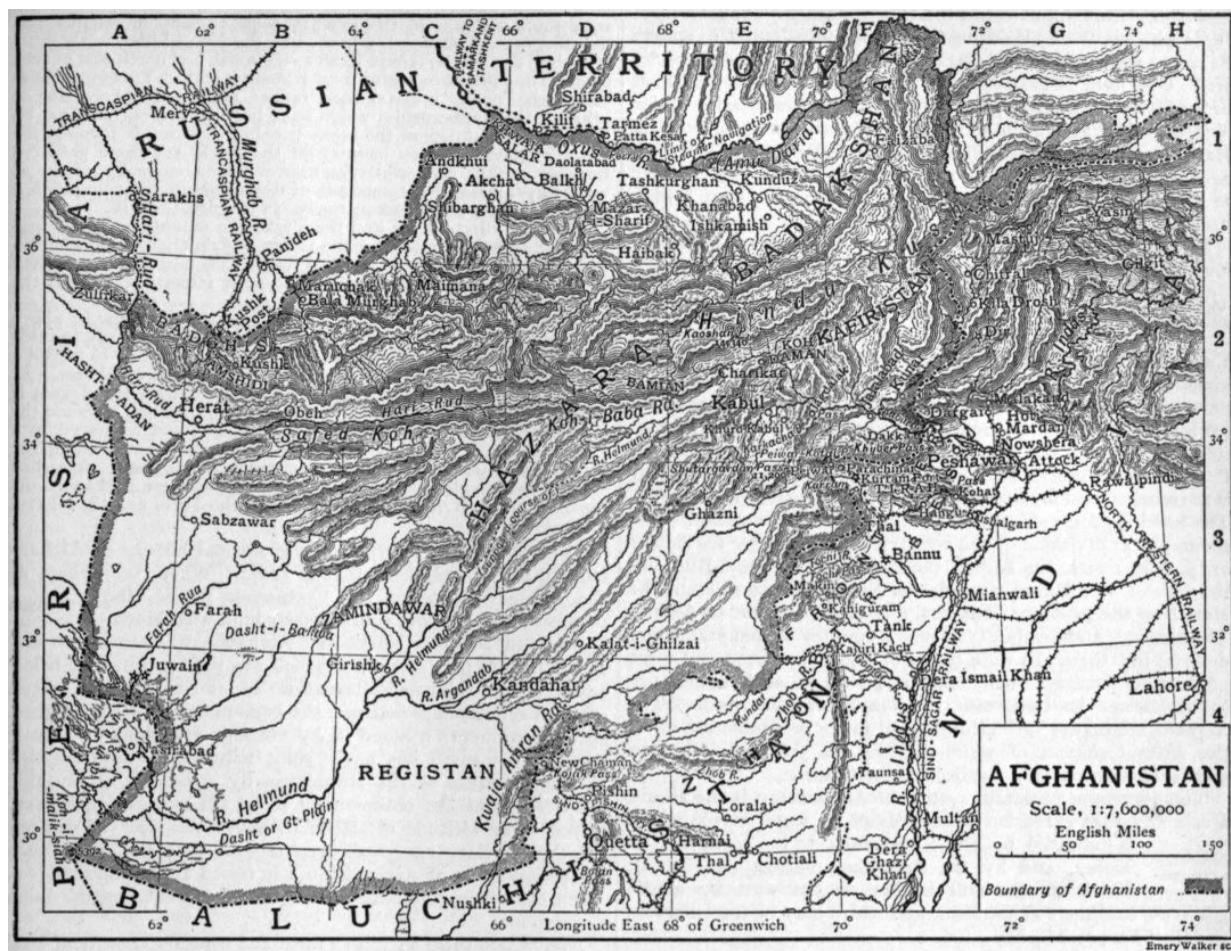
WAR FACE

An Original Screenplay

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For thousands of years, foreign armies have attempted to conquer Afghanistan. From Alexander the Great, Ghengis Khan, Indian and British Empires, to the Soviet Union and United States.

To this day not one has been able to rule the northern mountains of the Hindu Kush, where Pashtun culture collides with Pagan idols, forming the land of the non-believers.

Running through the heart of it is the valley of death, the Korengal. Generation upon generation of Soldier has called it "The most dangerous place on earth." In 2010, the U.S. Army and its allies abandoned all but one OutPost.

It is here where the supernatural still reigns supreme, lording over its graveyard of fallen empires...

FADE IN:

Pure inky black. Like a night that's never met the moon.

As a simple gas lantern catches, its flames reveal a set of working hands, craggy and worn with age. They thread a needle through severed, burned skin.

FROM ABOVE:

We follow a brittle piece of lumber. Three rusted nails. Two boards of rotting wood hammered together. Plank on plank on plank, creating a framework for the resting of a head.

Two long timbers make the sides. A smaller one for the bottom. We pull back slowly to reveal a COFFIN. Then a second, and a third, all lying next to each other. *Each, unusually small.*

INT. PREPARATION ROOM - FROM ABOVE

In the main room of a traditional Afghan house, the bodies of THREE HUMANOID CREATURES lie blackened by fire. They look like children- save for their orbital deformities and narrow, stick-shaped limbs.

Two ELDERS take turns cleaning them gently, covering their slender frames with white shrouds.

EXT. ROAD - FROM ABOVE - DUSK

An orange glow washes over a funeral procession of NURISTANIS. Men with red beards and dirty white shawls. Women dressed traditionally in blue burqas.

Each with their hands raised skyward to help carry the coffins down a narrow road. We HEAR screams, sobs, chants. Unchecked pain and anger.

EXT. BURIAL GROUND - FROM ABOVE - DUSK

The caskets are lowered into the ground. Scoops of dirt THUD and CRACK against the wood.

-- WE PULL BACK FURTHER REVEALING --

Hundreds of markers line a riverside. A new grave, freshly filled with volcanic rocks instead of soil, catches our eye. It's at least 20 feet long.

INT. B-HUT - NIGHT

A makeshift hooch for soldiers partitioned by plywood for a sense of privacy. We float over one wall- down past PHOTOS of friends and family. A golden retriever. Bachelorette party. Bubbly smiles. Handwritten letters. A child's drawing.

The photos pulse and flutter with the THUD of an impact in the far distance. One picture shakes loose, falling like a feather to the floor. It lands next to a pair of combat boots. A hand reaches out and takes it.

CLOSE UP: A beautiful couple on top of a mountain. Happy and in love. A young daughter between them.

-- A RUMBLE LIKE THUNDER --

AMELIA YATES, 40s, the same woman from the photo but world-weary now, studies the image. There's sadness in her eyes. Longing. Maybe even guilt.

A LOUD THUMP. The WHISTLE of a rocket as it soars high above...

She turns away from the photo and stares up at the ceiling. Her eyes trace a white wire that runs to a single light bulb.

The earth GROWLS. The ceiling SHAKES. Someone else stirs in the sleeping quarters.

MARY (O.S.)
That was a close one.

Amelia rolls out of bed, wearing nothing but a Yale sweatshirt and a pair of boxers. She lets out a yawn and ties her hair into a ponytail.

She drops to the floor and stretches. Downward dog. Cobra pose. Amelia cracks her neck and transitions into a push-up routine. Fast. Strong.

In between each rep, we get a sense of her room. An M4 Carbine rifle lies on a stack of ACUs, the gray-green camouflage of the U.S. Army.

Below her bed, a collection of pirated DVDs and several books on the history of Afghanistan. An iPod. Noise-canceling headphones.

The light turns on. Someone lets out a groan.

FEMALE SOLDIER #1 (O.S.)
Mary. It's just a fuckin' rocket attack. Turn off the lights.

MARY (O.S.)
They're going to make the
announcement.

Another VIBRATION, followed by a smashing, sickening IMPACT.

FEMALE SOLDIER #1
Mary, turn off the lights. I swear
to God.

A stack of M4 magazines scatter. One round pops loose and rolls beneath Amelia. She scoops it up with one hand, finishing the push-up with the other.

LOUDSPEAKER (O.S.)
(Monotone, pre-recorded)
The base is under attack. I repeat,
the base is under attack. Take
shelter. Take shelter.

MARY (O.S.)
Told you. It's raining lead.

FEMALE SOLDIER #1 (O.S.)
Don't even start. I need a dip.
Who's got a can?

FEMALE SOLDIER #2 (O.S.)
What kind of girl smokes and dips?

FEMALE SOLDIER #1 (O.S.)
This bitch.

LAUGHTER breaks out as Amelia dawns the ACU bottoms. She removes the Yale sweatshirt and replaces it with a black bra, tan shirt, and an ACU cover. The rank of MAJOR. She unbundles a pair of green socks. Laces up her boots.

Amelia's cell phone RINGS.

AMELIA (INTO PHONE)
This is Major Yates.

She looks at her watch.

AMELIA (CONT'D)
I'll be there in five.

Amelia pulls her interceptor body armor over her head, ratcheting down the velcro. She loads her magazine pouches, slaps one in her rifle. Checks the selector switch: *Weapon on safe*. She dawns her brain bucket, cat eyes, and rank reflected back at us.

Finally, she places a custom combat KNIFE in the heel of her left boot.

Commotion as she opens the door. Five FEMALE SOLDIERS, all dressed in varying degrees of readiness, armed with rifles and wearing their helmets, walk forward. One yawns.

FEMALE SOLDIER #2

Damn, Major Yates, you goin' to win this war by yourself?

AMELIA

Official recall.

FEMALE SOLDIER #2

You know, you're not supposed to be walking out there alone. Not after what happened.

AMELIA

Good thing I've got my rifle.

EXT. B-HUT - NIGHT

A distant rumble followed by a close THUMP puts a spring in everyone's step.

Amelia walks past a bomb shelter filled with SOLDIERS wearing mismatched uniforms and personal items of clothing. Joking about. Trying to stay warm. Smoking cigarettes.

LOUDSPEAKER (O.S.)

The base is under attack. I repeat, the base is under attack. Take shelter. Take shelter.

EXT. BAGRAM AIRFIELD - NIGHT

Tracer rounds snap and streak through the sky like horizontal lightning as Amelia walks down the side of a dirt road.

Somewhere a siren wails. Attack helicopters roar up and over the perimeter, hunting an unseen enemy beyond the wire.

Amelia passes Bagram's PX, a large retail store that's essentially a Walmart for the deployed... There's even a Dairy Queen, the "DQ" lit up in neon light. Followed by a knock-off version of Starbucks. A little taste of America. *But the harder they try, the further it away it feels...*

INT. AIR HANGER - NIGHT

Sitting beneath the colossal frame of a Soviet air hanger, a small compound of conex boxes cut up and welded together to form offices.

Amelia enters the hanger, crossing the cavernous hall to an office door with a complicated cipher and dial lock. A thunderous ECHO in the rafters far above rattles her nerves.

It takes her three times to get the code right. RUMBLE. Finally, she pulls open the heavy door.

INT. OFFICE - NIGHT

Three unoccupied desks. The only light spilling from a CID badge (Criminal Investigation Division) screen saver.

Small wooden crosses stand unused, meant for holding a weapon, IBA and helmet. Amelia places her gear onto the cross, creating a mini-soldier, and sits down behind a desk.

She removes her CID badge and sidearm, a black M9 Beretta. She checks the chamber.

JACKSON (O.S.)
Why are you sitting in the dark?

SERGEANT FIRST CLASS JACKSON, 30s, snaps on the overhead lights. Amelia shields her eyes; the fluorescents harshly illuminate the cramped office. Walls covered in details from investigations. Pictures of CRIME SCENES.

AMELIA
It's the only way I can get off.

Jackson just smiles and shakes his head-

JACKSON
I've known you for too long.

AMELIA
Way too long.

JACKSON
Colonel Williams wants to see you.

AMELIA
Why?

JACKSON
He's sending you to the Korengal.

AMELIA

Korengal. COP Halloran. Isn't that
an all-male unit?

INT. XO'S OFFICE - NIGHT

A chilly office in another Soviet-era building. This one's painted in docile green. A picture of Ahmad Shah Massoud hangs next to a dusty framed photo of the former Afghan king, Mohammad Zahir Shah.

Amelia sits on a folding chair. Army propaganda on the wall behind her. Pamphlets about reenlisting while being deployed for large bonuses. STDs. Alcoholism. Suicide prevention training.

Somewhere a clock ticks.

COLONEL CAMPBELL, 50s, comes in signaling for Amelia to stay seated. Campbell's soft around the edges. Head shaved. Deep circles trap his eyes. You get the sense he hasn't slept much on this deployment.

CAMPBELL

Major Yates. Sorry to disturb you
so late.

AMELIA

I was up. The rocket attack-

CAMPBELL

*Rocket attack? I didn't even hear
it.*

AMELIA

You might need some R&R, Sir.

CAMPBELL

No, I just need to retire.

Campbell sits, then takes a minute, sizing up Amelia.

CAMPBELL (CONT'D)

An interpreter's gone missing up at
COP Halloran. You know anything
about the Korengal?

AMELIA

Yeah, they say it's the most
dangerous place on earth.

CAMPBELL

It is.

Campbell points to the MAP behind his desk: We see northern Afghanistan's topography. Endless mountain ranges, impenetrable forests.

CAMPBELL (CONT'D)
Halloran is our last remaining OutPost in the region. It's become too dangerous to even resupply. Our helos get hit on every trip. We've never been able to control it.

Colonel Campbell picks a FOLDER up from his desk and hands it to Amelia...

CAMPBELL (CONT'D)
The unit stationed there faces complex attacks three times a week. Mortared every night. Right now, their unit's manning is at 50%, something we haven't seen since Vietnam. The Pentagon's worried COP Halloran could fall to the enemy. And now we've got this mess- I need a quick investigation. Just clear it off the books.

She opens the file.

CLOSE UP - DOCUMENTS

We SEE a picture of the translator, ISMAIL, 20s. Information on the unit. TICs (Troops in Contact) reports, behavioral reprimands. A single, partially REDACTED sheet in black catches her attention. Just the crest of the Central Intelligence Agency, watermarked in the corner.

CAMPBELL (CONT'D)
Wheeler was supposed to fly there tomorrow. But he had a family emergency. I was wondering if you would go instead.

AMELIA
A missing translator? Why involve CID?

Campbell points to the document Amelia's holding.

CAMPBELL
I've seen the classified version. CIA's accusing someone at Halloran of being complicit in his disappearance.
(MORE)

CAMPBELL (CONT'D)

The term they used was war crime,
which makes it a CID issue. But
they won't release the name.
Something about cover status. Cross
border ops. I need boots on the
ground to obtain facts.

AMELIA

When's the flight?

CAMPBELL

0600.

AMELIA

Halloran's an all-male unit.

Campbell nods-

CAMPBELL

That's why I wanted Wheeler to do
it. The Army will look the other
way on this one. They just want it
buried. No more bad news plastered
on the front page of the Times or
USA Today.

AMELIA

I'm in.

CAMPBELL

Good. Thank you.

Amelia stands and salutes.

CAMPBELL (CONT'D)

Major, one more thing. Remember,
those men have been up there for 15
months. Under constant threat, day
and night. Most of them haven't
been home to see their wives,
girlfriends, children. It might be
hard to separate the fact from
fiction. Keep your head down.

AMELIA

Yes, Sir.

EXT. DISNEY DRIVE - NIGHT

The long, straight road of Bagram Airfield. Amelia walks in
the dark, distant impacts rumbling. The SCREECH of a fighter
jet as it accelerates down the tarmac...

The noise claws at our ears, growing LOUDER and LOUDER before disappearing completely.

She lights a cigarette, illuminating her breath in the chilly air. Her boots echo off the rocks as she passes Bagram's old prison, the BTIF, infamous for its legacy of enhanced interrogation.

A MILITARY POLICE (MP) GUARD from the tower CAT CALLS in her direction, then salutes when he notices her rank... She gives him the finger without breaking stride.

INT. BAGRAM DINING FACILITY - NIGHT

The DFAC's nearly deserted this late. Hot chow smolders in large metal tubs. Half the lights are out. Drab.

Amelia clears her weapon and scans her ID card.

She tries to make a salad out of a variety of leftovers but finds the lettuce rotten. She gives up, settling for a box of Cheerios and almond milk.

Amelia sits at a table by herself. The manilla folder marked "Halloran" in front of her.

In the background, a LOCAL NATIONAL mops the floor, while the TV plays coverage of Barack Obama giving a speech that places the date of events on November 8th, 2010. (NOTE: This EXACT timeline is important for the ending.) The quality sucks, static lines snapping back and forth.

She's about to open the file when ELI REEVES, 40s, sporting a dark beard and holstered Sig Sauer, sits down across from her. He bites into a red delicious.

ELI
Major Yates.

In the dim lights of the DFAC, Eli's a handsome man. But he wears the shit-eating grin of someone from the beltway.

AMELIA
Eli. CIA slumming at an Army DFAC?
What, did you run out of caviar?

Eli raises a finger and whispers-

ELI
Careful. No one's supposed to know about the caviar.

Another crunch of the apple.

ELI (CONT'D)
How long has it been? Three months?
Helmand? I miss seeing you
around...

He smiles.

ELI (CONT'D)
I meant to ask if you ever solved
that case. Burning of the Korans.

AMELIA
Sent three soldiers home.

ELI
Three? Never made sense to me. War
crimes. What do you expect some 18-
year-old to do? Best friend gets
killed by a roadside bomb. Who
cares if he desecrated a book or
two-

AMELIA
I don't need the ethics lesson,
Eli. I'm too tired. And I head out
to the Korengal first thing.

ELI
Korengal? Really?

Eli glances at the folder on the table... Amelia slides it
out of his reach.

ELI (CONT'D)
Heavy shit up there.

AMELIA
I've been outside the wire.

ELI
There's outside the wire, Yates...
And then there's outside the wire.
You know what I mean?

AMELIA
No. I don't.

ELI
Is this about the translator?

AMELIA
How do you know? (A beat) Can you
tell me why it's classified?

ELI

Major, you might be in over your head.

AMELIA

If you're not going to help-

Amelia rises with her tray. Eli grabs her-

ELI

From one *friend* to another. Be careful out there. *And in here.* That poor contractor from KBR. Raped and strangled to death in a bomb shelter. You'd think a base as big as Bagram would be safe. All that wire keeping the wolves out. Or maybe, it's keeping them in...

AMELIA

Goodnight, Eli.

ELI

Goodnight.

INT. MWR BUILDING - NIGHT

SOLDIERS play video games and pool. Some read in the small library made up of paperbacks and used comics.

We find Amelia in a private phone booth making a morale call. The phone rings and rings. Finally, connects to voicemail.

TRENT (O.S.)

Hi, you've reached Trent Yates. I can't come to the phone right now, but if you leave a message-

Amelia opens up a combat pouch on her uniform and removes a wedding band. She rotates it between her fingers-

AMELIA (INTO PHONE)

Trent, it's me. I'm going out for a while. Few days. I'm not sure if I'll be able to reach you. I love you. Just checking in. Hope Leah's okay. Let me know how the appointment with her went. And I'll try to call before the first day of school.

Amelia hangs up. Then dials another number.

DAD (O.S.)

Hello?

AMELIA (INTO PHONE)

Hey, Dad. It's me.

DAD (O.S.)

Amelia. I'm so glad to hear your voice. How's it going over there? You got the Taliban on the run?

AMELIA (INTO PHONE)

Not exactly.

DAD (O.S.)

Well. At least it's not Vietnam.

AMELIA (INTO PHONE)

Yeah, yeah. How could I forget? You had one pair of socks for three weeks, and you never even got trench foot.

DAD (O.S.)

I'm only teasing you. I'm proud.

AMELIA (INTO PHONE)

I know.

DAD (O.S.)

How are you, really?

AMELIA (INTO PHONE)

I'm tired. And I miss my girl.

DAD (O.S.)

Leah. She's fine, she's fine. Trent takes such good care of her. And Mom's spoiling her rotten.

AMELIA (INTO PHONE)

Oh yeah?

DAD (O.S.)

Bought her some robotic dog-

Amelia laughs-

AMELIA (INTO PHONE)

Robotic dog?

DAD (O.S.)

She can talk her grandmother into anything.

AMELIA (INTO PHONE)
How's mom?

DAD (O.S.)
She's...

AMELIA (INTO PHONE)
Still upset that I'm over here.

DAD (O.S.)
She loves you, that's all. Tough
for a mother to think her baby girl
could be at war.

AMELIA (INTO PHONE)
I was never going to be a lawyer.

DAD (O.S.)
She knows that. Deep down.

AMELIA (INTO PHONE)
I wished she had said it. (A beat)
Okay, Dad. I better go.

DAD (O.S.)
Come home safe.

AMELIA (INTO PHONE)
Bye, dad.

Click.

CUT TO:

EXT. B-HUT VILLAGE - NIGHT

Hundreds of B-huts stand organized in rows like a refugee camp for soldiers. Amelia walks between them, face lit by the cherry of her cigarette. The RUMBLE of artillery in the distance.

Amelia stops. Listening to the gravel CRUNCH behind her. She turns: There's no one there...

She continues on, walking through the maze of plywood houses, slipping in between the shadows. Headed for her own when-

She stops again... The FOOTSTEPS CONTINUE.

AMELIA
Who's there?

Amelia stubs out the cigarette. Waiting. Listening. She continues on-

But behind her, the BOOTS grow closer... Moving with more speed-

Amelia extracts her combat knife, pure instinct taking over-
SHE SPINS AND BURIES THE KNIFE IN SOMEONE'S THROAT...

The person stumbles back, collapsing to the ground. Gurgling. Sucking sounds. Hands to the wound... *The image becomes clearer as the shape pulls out a cell phone. Light illuminating the face. Eli.*

AMELIA (CONT'D)
Oh my God. Eli.

Amelia drops to the ground, trying to help him... Dark blood pours over her own hands as she tries to apply pressure.

AMELIA (CONT'D)
I thought- *I thought-*

ELI
Help. Please. *Amelia.* Help-

INT. JACKSON'S B-HUT - LATER - NIGHT

Frantic KNOCKS on the door.

AMELIA (O.S.)
It's Major Yates.

JACKSON
Go away.

AMELIA (O.S.)
Jackson, open the door. Now.

Jackson sighs, throws the covers off his bed and climbs out.

JACKSON
This better be fuckin'-

He pulls open the door. Eyes wide as he sees Amelia standing there... Her uniform stained in blood. She's in a state of complete shock.

JACKSON (CONT'D)
What the fuck happened?

AMELIA

I... was *attacked*.

JACKSON

Attacked? By who?

AMELIA

Eli. Eli Graves. *I killed him.*
Please. Oh, God. Please. Let me in.

Jackson ushers Amelia to his bed, locking the door behind him. He sits down. Jackson can't help but stare- She's a disheveled mess. Blood on her uniform, face, and hair. Cracked fingernails-

JACKSON

You should go to the MPs. Right now. It was only self defense.

Amelia nods her head... Tears cascade down her cheeks.

AMELIA

(Barely a whisper)
But... *What if it wasn't?*

JACKSON

You said he attacked you.

Her voice quivers as she tries to explain-

AMELIA

I-I heard someone coming. The contractor... Found in the bunker, I-I-I couldn't stop thinking... I spun... It happened so fast. Fuck, they're going to court marshal me! Throw me out of the Army!

JACKSON

Amelia, you've got nothing to-

AMELIA

They'll take away my benefits. My daughter's healthcare. Oh my God, Jackson. What am I going to do?!? What the FUCK DO I DO?!?

A beat.

JACKSON

Get rid of your clothes. Shower.
Where's the knife?

Amelia, trembling, takes it out of her pocket. The blade's slick and red.

JACKSON (CONT'D)

Get rid of that too. If they don't have the weapon, and they don't have a witness, they'll think it was the same perp from the last attack. You're a good person, Amelia. And a good officer. We can make this go away.

AMELIA

Promise. Please. Promise.

JACKSON

Yes. But you need to move- Now-

INT. SHOWER TRAILER - NIGHT

An old conex box that's been converted into a bay of shower stalls. Steam and exposed plumbing... We HEAR moaning.

BEHIND A CURTAIN:

Amelia showers, sobbing... Scrubbing her body hard. Blood rinses off of her hands and swirls down the drain.

-- MOMENTS LATER --

Toweled off, she takes her ruined uniform, removes her name tag, rank, and buries the rest at the bottom of a trash can.

TITLE OVER:

WAR FACE

I/E. HELICOPTER - FIRST LIGHT

Blades spin, thumping, contorting the air. Through the open door of a Black Hawk, we watch Amelia cross the tarmac in full battle rattle. She heaves her overstuffed rucksack onto the helo's floor and climbs in.

The helicopter is empty save for the DOOR GUNNER and PILOTS. She places a pair of headphones on, and the engine noise disappears, replaced by an electric-sounding whine.

Behind her, a large pallet of resupplies. Wooden crates marked by ammunition calibers and explosive types.

The Black Hawk shudders back and forth, the vibrations growing with a rush of fuel to the engine. The helicopter moves up and off the ground, rotating for the mountains.

The Gunner FIRES warning shots from his .249. Leans out the door watching the terrain rush by below.

The helo levels off and Amelia settles back into her chair.

EXT. AFGHANISTAN - DAWN

The Black Hawk moves north, passing lush green farm fields irrigated by canals. Villages clustered around newly paved roads. Mosques. Intricate blue minarets. Brick factories. Slums. Roving caravans of nomads.

But the colossal mountains begin to suffocate the plains, forcing farmers and livestock closer to the water...

We soar over their jagged mountain tops, passing abandoned OutPosts of war, unclaimed on the peaks like rotting steeples.

The Black Hawk labors with the altitude. It pitches and haws before swooping down to finally REVEAL:

A timeless valley full of permanent shadows. The Korengal. An emerald green river slices between the slopes and the trees.

A scattering of stone-age houses built on the sides of the mountains look like mushrooms growing from the trunk of tall oaks.

INT. HELICOPTER - LATER - DAY

GUNNER (OVER RADIO)
Wake up!

Amelia lurches from a deep sleep. Eyes spring open. Unsure where she is... The Gunner FIRES a three-round burst from his machine gun.

Through the open door, Amelia watches as the Black Hawk circles the rocky crest of a mountain. We see an impassible pinnacle to the north. Valley to the south. Linking the two, an unfinished road that stops prematurely up the ridge.

On the very top:

Mud, brick, and hesco barriers have been lashed together with rebar and concertina wire.

This is Combat OutPost (COP) Halloran. Balancing a thousand feet above the valley below. Just an avalanche away from never existing at all.

The helicopter swoops down, fighting against the wind shear. Amelia reaches out to stabilize herself.

GUNNER (OVER RADIO) (CONT'D)
We're not landing. You're going to
have to climb down and jump out.

Amelia fumbles with the headset.

AMELIA (OVER RADIO)
What?

GUNNER (OVER RADIO)
We can't land here! It's too hot.
We're just dropping and picking up.
Supplies first.

The second Gunner leaves his seat. He pushes the pallet for the door. With two swift kicks, the supplies tumbles out of frame.

GUNNER (CONT'D)
Okay. You're next. Go!

Amelia unbuckles herself from the seat, struggling to sling her weapon and mount her pack at the same time. The Gunner shakes his head. He grabs her backpack, ripping it from her and throws it out the door-

GUNNER (OVER RADIO) (CONT'D)
Ma'am, take your tampon out and get
off my damn bird!

Amelia buries her pride and climbs forward. Below her:

Two Soldiers carry a BODY BAG, waiting with their heads lowered to avoid the rotor wash, five feet under the skids.

Amelia jumps- Landing hard with her rifle. The Gunner watches as she collects her pack.

EXT. COMBAT OUTPOST HALLORAN - DAY

The two soldiers push the body up, lifting it to the height of the Black Hawk. The Gunners grapple with the weight of the body...

Finally loaded in, the helicopter hovers for a second more before diving for the valley below.

For a moment, everything becomes quiet... Until the Black Hawk returns, rotors thumping, steady now, headed off for the horizon.

REED (O.S.)

I hope you like it here, Ma'am
because that was the last bus out
for a week.

Amelia turns to see CAPTAIN REED, 30s, African American. He salutes her. Reed has a kind smile and a shaved head. He skips the mandatory undershirt, letting a gold crucifix hang down on his chest.

REED (CONT'D)

Zahir Reed.

AMELIA

Amelia Yates.

He extends a hand.

REED

Nice to meet you, Major Yates.
Welcome to COP Halloran.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

The COP is not much more than a collection of small buildings. Four sagging guard towers mark the corners, giving it a dilapidated, castle-like appearance. Concertina wire runs triple-stacked around the perimeter. A rats' nest of metal.

The mountains completely surround the OutPost, equal parts stunning and claustrophobic.

AMELIA

Does the snow last through summer?

REED

Only on the highest peaks. Serves as a reminder.

AMELIA

Of what?

REED

How bad the winter here can be.
Come on, let's get you settled.

Amelia hefts up her pack and follows him, boots squishing in the soft, mid-day mud.

He points at the Tactical Operations Command (TOC) building.

REED (CONT'D)
That's the TOC. Twenty four hour
watch. Seven days a week. Open 365
a year. Radio. Comms. Sat link if
you need it.

AMELIA
Do cell phones work up here?

Reed laughs.

REED
Hell no.

Bundles of multi-colored wire run through plywood walls,
spooling over green sandbags. The top of the building is
covered by a variety of communication devices. Satellite
dishes, VHF frequency extenders.

A long, slender pole runs 20 feet up into the air. An
American flag, tattered, snaps in the wind.

REED (CONT'D)
DFAC's over there. Specialist James
can cook up almost anything if he's
got somethin' to work with. Which
usually ain't much.

The Dining Facility (DFAC) is a barn-like structure with a
skull and bone painting above the doorway. Two Soldiers sit
outside, tops off, playing cards.

REED (CONT'D)
Me and First Sergeant are in there.

Reed nods at a sandbag and mud-caked bunker.

REED (CONT'D)
Rest of the grunts live over here.

INT. BARRACKS - DAY

A dozen or so bunk beds are jammed together, looking like the
inside of a submarine. Soldiers have done their best to make
it home. The walls covered with lude pin-ups, photos of
family. Christmas lights.

REED
We've got you in the weapons room.

AMELIA

Where is everyone?

REED

Scattered to the wind. It's a down day.

INT. WEAPONS ROOM - DAY

Lockers full of different weapon systems line the walls. M9 Berettas, shotguns, M4s, RPGs, and claymore mines. An insane amount of firepower for such a small base.

PRIVATE FIRST CLASS DUFFY, 25, stands behind a desk cleaning a light machine gun and smoking a cigarette. Duffy's an ink head, arms covered in tattoos. The infantry crest. His mother's name. Probably a few ex-girlfriends.

REED

Duffy, put that shit out. You know the rules.

He turns, not seeming them come in-

DUFFY

Shit. Sorry, Sir.

He stubs the cigarette out on the desk, leaving a black circle.

REED

This is Major Yates. She's with CID. Assigned to help us find Ismail.

Duffy looks up. *There's something off about Duffy. Like he's high.*

DUFFY

What's CID?

AMELIA

Criminal Investigation Division.
I'm a Special Agent. Like a detective.

Duffy smiles. Half his teeth have been kicked in.

DUFFY

I've never met a Special Agent.
Hell, I barely qualified to carry this. You ever fired a 2-4-9, Ma'am?

AMELIA

I have.

DUFFY

Seen combat?

AMELIA

I've been rocketed.

DUFFY

That ain't combat, ma'am.

Duffy brutally strips the .249 down in seconds, demonstrating his proficiency. He's built like a single piece of muscle. Reptilian, sinewy.

Amelia drops her pack on a small green cot set up in the corner.

REED

We lock the weapons room at 1800.
It's your space then. Since we
don't have a female latrine, First
Sergeant will make a schedule.

DUFFY

Sir, if the Major shits, is she
gonna have to stir it?

REED

Duffy. Knock it off.

DUFFY

What'd I say, Sir? Everyone's got
to stir the shit. I was just
statin' the obvious.

REED

You wanna spend the rest of the day
peeling onions on KP?

Duffy drops the weapon.

DUFFY

Hell no. Nice to meet you, Ma'am.
Welcome to COP Halloran.

He salutes.

REED

Sorry about that. Come on, I want
you to meet Kinney.

EXT. COMBAT OUTPOST HALLORAN - DAY

Captain Reed leads Amelia around the perimeter. Towering above them: hesco barriers shoved so full of concrete and dirt that they've begun to rupture at the seams.

AMELIA

How long have you been out here?

REED

Me? Eight months and six days. I was a replacement. Last CO ate his rifle.

Before Amelia can respond-

REED (CONT'D)

Mac!

MASTER SERGEANT KINNEY, 50s, is feeding three IED-sniffing DOGS in their kennels.

KINNEY

Good boys.

He finishes with a pat on the head. Kinney's a former 7th Special Forces Green Beret. His hair, just within regulation. A large gash on his neck from mortar shrapnel. He dusts off his hand and offers it to Amelia.

KINNEY (CONT'D)

Hope you don't mind if I skip the salute. We're a little more casual out here. Call me Mac.

AMELIA

Amelia.

She takes his hand.

REED

I was showing her around our little Ritz.

KINNEY

Welcome.

AMELIA

Is it just a platoon here?

KINNEY

What's left of one. We're about half of what we should be.

Kinney spits his dip.

KINNEY (CONT'D)
NATO wants to completely pull out
of the valley. Now the unit slotted
to replace us ain't rippin' in
anymore. Going someplace south.
Probably someplace warm.

REED
Mac misses the heat. Kentucky boy
at heart.

KINNEY
Born and raised. Ma'am, where you
from?

AMELIA
Chicago, but I've lived everywhere.
I'm an Army brat.

KINNEY
Ah-

AMELIA
If you don't mind me asking... Who
was the one flying out?

REED
That was Sergeant Morrison.

KINNEY
Pitty. Hell of a shot, Morrison.
Hell of a shot.

I/E. GUARD TOWER - AFTERNOON

The three climb the stairs to the top of the tower.

Amelia looks down at the Korengal: An oasis of green
surrounded by jagged, unending mountains. Rich, black soil.
Tall spidery pines. And a cold, clear river running through
it all.

AMELIA
It looks peaceful.

KINNEY
All battlefields are. Until the
slaughter begins.

AMELIA
Why was this OutPost built here?

REED

To prevent the Taliban from
crossing the valley back to
Pakistan.

AMELIA

Is it working?

REED

You tell me, Ma'am.

Kinney pulls a dip bottle out of his ACU cargo pouch.

KINNEY

We sit up here. Watch the valley.
Get attacked. Brass tells us to go
meet the locals. We get attacked.
Brass says work with the ANA. We
get attacked. That's how we lost
Morrison.

Reed points to a distant Fire Support Base (FSB) on a separate peak.

REED

That's Ullman over there. Super-
secret squirrel shit. CIA. Morrison
was on a routine resupply when he
was ambushed coming back.

AMELIA

Is that when you last saw Ismail?

Kinney nods and spits.

KINNEY

Ismail was on loan. They'd come and
take him for cross border missions
every so often. In exchange for
smokes, beer, and the occasional
piece of intel. The boys are bad.
They hunt monsters.

AMELIA

Monsters?

KINNEY

Tier 1 targets. The big fish.
Usama. Once they even bagged an ISI
agent. Working for the other side.
They let the Afghans do the
killing. Cleaner that way. No
paperwork.

A beat.

AMELIA
Show me where he lived.

EXT. ISMAIL'S TRAILER - AFTERNOON

Kinney shuffles up the steps and unlocks the door.

KINNEY
Don't think you'll find much,
Ma'am. Besides the usual Haji shit.

INT. ISMAIL'S TRAILER - AFTERNOON

A small room with a single bed and a prayer rug. Nothing on the walls. No sense of his personality. Kinney tries the lights. They don't turn on.

KINNEY
Huh, must be a short.

Amelia steps into the dark. She opens a drawer. Moves her hand through his clothes. Then looks under his bed...

There's an unusual SYMBOL carved into the cheap linoleum. She takes a BIC out of her pocket and flicks it. The flame catches, revealing an intricate PATTERN. A house with seven snakes...

AMELIA
What was Ismail like?

KINNEY
Quiet. Kept to himself.
Replaced an older terp we had,
Mohammad, after he burned out. Came
from the village below.

AMELIA
Did anyone in the unit ever have an
issue with him?

KINNEY
(Shakes his head)
Our boys know to keep their
distance from the terps.

AMELIA
Why?

KINNEY

They usually don't have a long shelf life. Best not to make friends with someone you're likely to see die. See, these terps don't have much combat training. Some barely know how to use a rifle.

A beat.

AMELIA

Someone in your unit has been accused of committing a war crime. And it involves the disappearance of your interpreter.

REED

War crime?

KINNEY

What? Who?

AMELIA

I don't know. CIA classified the name. That's what I'm here to find out.

KINNEY

This is *bullshit*. I know my men-

AMELIA

And I believe you. But I still need to interview everyone in the platoon and take sworn statements. It's the only way to make this go away.

REED

Of course. Whatever you need.

KINNEY

You ever do anything wrong, Ma'am? Ever look the other way?

After a tense beat-

REED

I'd recommend we finish up the tour soon. Daylight's short up here. We can use the TOC after dinner to conduct your interviews.

AMELIA

Thank you. I know this is
difficult.

EXT. COMBAT OUTPOST HALLORAN - LATER - AFTERNOON

Reed, Kinney, and Amelia stop in front of six porta potties
and a generator.

KINNEY

Where we shit and put our make up
on in the morning.

AMELIA

Is there a shower?

KINNEY

Birdbaths or the fire hose. Up to
you.

The generator TURNS OVER startling Amelia.

REED

We run the big jenny during the
day. A smaller one only for the TOC
at night. That way, we can hear if
someone's coming.

EXT. MAIN GATE - AFTERNOON

Two large steel doors painted black. Ominous. Linking the
concertina and the barriers together.

REED

Only way out or in. Unless you've
got the guts to climb over the
wire. This thing is built to
withstand 5,000 pounds of
explosives.

KINNEY

Come on, time to see your fighting
position.

EXT. BUNKER - DUSK

Two narrow boards act as seats. Sandbags stacked around the
outside.

KINNEY

If it mortars stay in here. No reason to go anywhere else. Rumor has it this used to lead to the old Mujahidden tunnels.

Mac unclips a FLASHLIGHT from his belt and shines it in... Illuminating the back. Thick concrete.

KINNEY (CONT'D)

They're all over the mountains. The tunnels. But I wouldn't go into one.

AMELIA

Why?

KINNEY

Booby traps leftover from the Cold War.

EXT. PERIMETER - DUSK

Amelia follows Kinney and Reed through the narrow passage that separates the officers' quarters from the DFAC. They cross planks over puddles of mud.

A series of lookouts have been cut into the side of the COP's perimeter, allowing the platoon a way to return fire.

KINNEY

If there's an assault on base or fire from one of the ridgelines, come here. We've got Corporal Schlaack assigned to watch out for you. Smart kid. Handles the intel.

Amelia peers through a slit:

There's a mystical quality to the light as it slowly disappears below. The rays of sun seem separated somehow, like beacons, bouncing off the mountains.

AMELIA

I can handle myself.

REED

We don't doubt you can, Major Yates. But things can get a bit confusing during a firefight.

Amelia looks out the slit again. No sign of any life. Kinney's watch beeps.

KINNEY

Time to get our chow on.

AMELIA

Already? I feel like I just arrived.

REED

Time seems to run faster out here.

AMELIA

Usually you hear soldiers complaining about the opposite.

REED

Daytime that is. The night's last forever.

INT. DFAC - DUSK

Homey. A large beam splits the ceiling. Three communal tables. A refrigerator for bottled water. Another for Gatorade, near beer and soda.

SOLDIERS sit scattered, eating dinner. They all stop when they see Amelia enter with Kinney and Reed.

SPECIALIST JAMES, 25, kind of soft looking for a kid in the infantry, works behind the counter. He wears Coke-bottle glasses. He scoops steaming pasta and sauce onto Amelia's plate.

AMELIA

What's the meat?

JAMES

A chef never tells.

AMELIA

Do you have any greens?

JAMES

We haven't had lettuce in six months. We've got some apples, though from the village below.

James points to a collection of fruit. The apples are bruised. The fruit, rotting...

AMELIA

Thanks.

Amelia works her way over to Kinney and Reed, already seated at a table.

Soldiers glance as Amelia passes. She sets her plate down.

KINNEY
This your first deployment, Major?

AMELIA
Yes. Yours?

KINNEY
Fifth. First with a regular unit
since 2003.

REED
I'm on my second. Iraq last year.

From behind, we hear someone say, "*I can smell that peach. Fuckin' ripe, bro.*" LAUGHTER breaks out. "*Dude, shut up. She's a Major.*"

Amelia turns red. Looks down at her food, trying not to engage. But Kinney's pissed...

KINNEY
Who said that? Who the fuck just
said that? Y'all want to be
collecting shells 'til midnight?

PRIVATE
Come on, Top. She's the first piece
of ass I've seen in a year that
ain't digital!

More laughter. CORPORAL SCHLAACK, 28, stands... Walking over to the Private.

SCHLAACK
Get up! Get up now!

PRIVATE
What?

Schlaack violently kicks the soldier's chair back... Hoisting him by the arms.

SCHLAACK
I'm going to smoke the shit out of
you.

HOOTS and HOLLERS as the unit delights in the drama. Reed bangs his fist down on the table.

REED

Alright, listen up! This is Major Yates from CID. The Major is here to help us find out what happened to Ismail.

Amelia's eyes wander around the DFAC, settling in on a table of soldiers. PRIVATE GRADY, 20s, already a freak of nature, stares back. The type of guy who's attracted to the military for all the wrong reasons.

REED (CONT'D)

And she out ranks me. So you treat her with the respect she commands. Hooah?

SOLDIERS IN UNISON

(Cultish)

Hooah.

GRADY

Ismail's dead.

The SCRAPING sounds of chairs and plates stop. The DFAC becomes tense and silent.

KINNEY

Grady, what-

GRADY

I'm only saying what everyone else is thinking. He's been gone a week. No one makes it out there- not on their own.

KINNEY

GI party tonight. Grady, you fuckin' lead it.

Groans all around.

KINNEY (CONT'D)

Everyone up! Let's go! Let's go! I want to be eating off the barracks floor! It better be spotless!

INT. TACTICAL OPERATIONS COMMAND - NIGHT

A mishmash of gear, pelican cases, laptops, and rolled maps. There's a table covered in RADIO EQUIPMENT.

IMAGERY products line the walls; black and white photos of target compounds complete with military analysis. Arrows pointing to potential bunker and cache locations.

Corporal Schlaack stands in front of Reed, Kinney, and Amelia, pointing to a satellite PHOTO of the Afghan-Pakistan border.

SCHLAACK

This was taken the day of Ismail's last known mission.

Schlaack uses a laser pointer. The HEAT BLOOM is pixelated, the shapes undefined. But you can see the outline of a small unit crossing the border into the Tribal Areas.

SCHLAACK (CONT'D)

It's an Omega team. CIA-led Afghan unit. Allows infiltration into Pakistan without an executive order from the President. We lost contact 72 hours later.

AMELIA

You lost contact with the unit?

SCHLAACK

Correct.

AMELIA

So an entire *unit* is missing, not just Ismail?

KINNEY

At first we thought it was a comms issue. Nothing fuckin' works up here. Push-to-talk. VHF. Sat phones. We've added extra repeaters. Raised the tower. Tried different freaks.

Amelia spies the table covered in COMMS gear; a radio humming lightly.

REED

This valley. I've never experienced anything like it. Friday it took us three calls to get through to Bagram Airfield for Close Air Support.

SCHLAACK

The night before they left, CIA
radioed us. Said FSB Ullman was
under attack. Asked for our help.

REED

But it wasn't.

AMELIA

What do you mean?

REED

Rico and James were on watch. The
mountain was quiet.

AMELIA

Is it possible they couldn't have
seen it?

KINNEY

From those guard towers, you could
see two fireflies fuckin' a mile
away. Not a chance. And the last
time Ullman got hit- sounded like
the 4th of July. Shit, I almost
broke out the sparklers.

Kinney throws Reed his dip can.

REED

We rucked over the morning after
and we found the base deserted.

KINNEY

Total ghost town.

Reed points back at the HEAT BLOOM.

REED

That's when Schlaack requested
imagery from Bagram. They just
vanished. Over the border. Left
their weapons, radios. Everything.

KINNEY

Then we lost Morrison. Haven't been
back since.

AMELIA

We have a DUSTWUN situation. They
could be in the hands of the
Taliban. This is not something for
CID alone- I need to call HQ.

REED

We already did. Requested air assets, drone coverage. But Colonel Campbell said the unit and mission was classified. That it had to be handled by CIA. He referred us to someone- But we haven't been able to reach him... Mac, what was his name again?

KINNEY

I think I've got his card around here somewhere.

Kinney shuffles through his wallet. Pulls out a card and holds it out for Amelia.

CLOSE UP: *Eli Reeves. OGA. GS-15.*

Amelia just stares at the card.

KINNEY (CONT'D)

Amelia?

AMELIA

What?

KINNEY

You're shaking.

AMELIA

I'm just-

After a beat, Kinney takes the card and returns it to his wallet. Amelia snaps out of it-

AMELIA (CONT'D)

I need to interview the rest of the platoon.

REED

Of course.

AMELIA

And I'll need to go to Firebase Ullman.

Kinney and Reed share a look.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

Logbooks. Maps. Anything to trace their last operation. How soon can we go?

KINNEY

We can't.

AMELIA

Why?

REED

It's too dangerous for someone without combat experience. We can't let you outside the wire.

AMELIA

My job here is to investigate accusations of a potential war crime. I can't do that confined to this base-

KINNEY

And my job is to keep you and my men safe. If Bagram wanted an agent to visit Ullman, they should have sent a man.

AMELIA

Sorry, Mac. You're stuck with me.

INT. TACTICAL OPERATIONS COMMAND - LATER - MONTAGE

Amelia interviews each of the soldiers on the missing translator. *They all look bored, dejected, or interested in something else.*

AMELIA

Did you ever witness or participate in any inhuman or degrading treatment of your translator, Ismail Haqqani?

Soldiers shake their heads. Sign brief written statements.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

Have you ever participated in anything that you think may have been in violation of the Law of War?

GRADY just leers at her. Eyes drifting down her face towards her blouse. Amelia holds her ground...

AMELIA (CONT'D)

Do you understand the question, Private Grady?

GRADY

They smell like dogs.

AMELIA

Who smells like dogs?

GRADY

Wet... Dogs.

AMELIA

Did you ever feel that your orders
were unclear or that your chain of
command was dehumanizing towards
Ismail?

GRADY

Can I go now? My rifle doesn't
clean itself.

AMELIA

I need you to write a statement
first.

Amelia slides a piece of paper and a pen over to Grady. He writes a single line and signs his name.

Amelia looks down: *Fuck off.*

GRADY

We good?

Grady stands.

AMELIA

Private Grady, earlier this evening
you said that no one could make it
out there on their own. Why?

GRADY

Because whatever is out there-
ain't natural.

Grady exits the TOC. Amelia watches the door close then sighs... Perplexed by his response.

She collects the handwritten statements, takes out her laptop, and types up her report.

INT. TACTICAL OPERATIONS COMMAND - LATER - NIGHT

Captain Reed comes back in with a knock. He has a cup of coffee for Amelia.

REED

How's it going? The guys
cooperating?

She takes the coffee.

AMELIA

Mostly. Thanks.

REED

Don't take it personally, Amelia.
Everyone is wired tight. Especially
after Morrison.

Reed manipulates one of the radios.

AMELIA

I still need statements from
Private First Class Rico and
Specialist James.

Reed looks at his watch.

REED

Rico's on guard. Sure he wouldn't
mind the company.

AMELIA

Where can I find James?

REED

Still in the kitchen.

I/E. GUARD TOWER - NIGHT

AMELIA (O.S.)

Major Yates approaching.

Amelia climbs up the stairs. PFC RICO, 26, Puerto Rican, is
behind the .50 CAL. He's smoking a joint... When he sees her,
he flicks it over the edge.

RICO

Evening, Ma'am.

AMELIA

Was that pot?

Rico is a small, compact kid. He looks overmatched for the
large weapon he's handling. He nods.

RICO

They don't test our urine anymore.
Do you care?

AMELIA

It's your career, Rico. Not mine.

RICO

I'm getting out next summer.

AMELIA

Mind if I sit down? The CO said I
could get a statement from you.

RICO

Sure.

Rico moves his jacket and Night Vision Goggles out of the way
so Amelia can sit. She takes out a red filter and snaps it
onto her flashlight. Then pulls out her notebook.

AMELIA

Quiet night.

RICO

So far.

Amelia looks out and over the sandbags. The valley is
completely dark, but even so, we can still make out the
shadow of the village...

AMELIA

How often do you go down there?

RICO

We used to go every week. For the
loya jirga. That's when all the
elders would sit around in a circle
and share bread. Tell us how bad we
were doing. But lately, no one
wants to do much of anything.

AMELIA

Why?

RICO

They call us double-digit midgets.
Sixty seven days and a wake up. No
one wants to get shot.

AMELIA

I see... Rico, where are you from?

RICO
New Mexico. You?

AMELIA
Maine.

RICO
Maine. The crab place.

AMELIA
Actually, it's-

A SCREECHING SOUND AS SOMETHING FLIES INTO THE GUARD TOWER...
Amelia GASPS as a BAT SLAMS INTO THE ROOF... Then bounces off
the floor...

Rico kicks at it until the creature flies free... Silence
returning.

RICO
Shit. It was just a bat. You okay?

AMELIA
I'm fine.

Amelia adjusts her uniform... Breathing out a nervous sigh of
relief-

RICO
Can I ask you a question?

AMELIA
Sure.

RICO
What's it like- You know- Being a
female in the military?

AMELIA
Same as being a male I assume.

RICO
I mean, was your basic training
easier? I heard they give out
stress cards to the females.

AMELIA
Private Rico. I went through the
same exact training as you. Shot
the same weapons. Climbed through
the same obstacle courses. Have to
wear the same uniform. Follow the
same rules. And the Officer's
course is no joke.

RICO

I didn't mean to be disrespectful.
We just don't see many. You know,
being infantry and all.

AMELIA

Thank you, Rico.

Rico nods and shifts his attention back to the .50 Cal's sights.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

Did you work with Ismail?

RICO

Oh yeah. Plenty of times. He gave
me this-

Rico pulls a small, worn BOOK from his ACU pocket. The writing is in Pashtun.

RICO (CONT'D)

Means "Tribes and Customs of Kafiristan." I carry it around now, kind of like a good luck charm. Ever since I've had it- Well. I'm still here, right?

CLOSE UP: *Using her red lens, Amelia examines the pages. There are PENTAGRAMS, PRISMS, and other SYMBOLS that look like swastikas. Then, crude hand-drawn STICK FIGURES.*

RICO (CONT'D)

We've come across these in the village. Even swastikas. I thought they were Nazis at first. But here it keeps the evil spirits away.

AMELIA

What's Kafiristan?

RICO

Means "Non-believer." The locals here rejected Islam for thousands of years. The rest of the country thinks they're kind of backwards.

Rico puts the book carefully back in his pocket.

AMELIA

Rico, did you ever witness any harassment directed at Ismail? Maybe from someone in the platoon who didn't like him?

RICO
Do I need a lawyer?

AMELIA
Do you think you need a lawyer,
Private Rico?

RICO
I didn't see anything.

AMELIA
Captain Reed told me you were on
guard duty the night before Ismail
disappeared.

RICO
Yeah, Ullman's right over there.

Rico picks up his Night Vision Goggles and passes them to
Amelia.

RICO (CONT'D)
Ten O'clock.

Amelia rises, leaning her body against the sandbags. She
looks out-

P.O.V. - NIGHT VISION

The ridge is lit up in green. She sweeps down the hill coming
across the firebase. No signs of life.

AMELIA
He said you didn't see the attack.

RICO
It's not that I didn't see it,
Ma'am. *It didn't happen.* We heard
them on the radio. Firing their
weapons. Screaming. Calling us for
help. But I was up here the whole
time. Not a light. And it was
completely quiet when you turned
the radio off. It was like a play.

AMELIA
A play?

RICO
My grandma told me a story about
how one day she was listening to
the radio. And this news reporter
came on and said there was an alien
invasion. Her whole town panicked.
(MORE)

RICO (CONT'D)

Turned out it was a play. *War of the Worlds*. Anyways, it was like they were performing for us. But the strangest thing- *They were terrified*. It sounded real- Just... It wasn't.

A beat.

RICO (CONT'D)

Things happen up here, Ma'am. Things we can't understand. Or maybe don't want to.

GRADY (O.S.)

Rico believes in magic.

Grady comes up the stairs, slamming his gear down. Rico steps back from the .50 CAL removing his helmet.

RICO

You're late.

GRADY

So?

Grady playfully tackles Rico, trying to put him in a chokehold. Rico fights back, but Grady is just too powerful. He taps out.

RICO

Fuckin' punto.

GRADY

What'd I tell you about using those beaner words around me? You know my granddaddy scalped your kind for fun.

Rico shoves him back.

AMELIA

Rico, I'll need you to sign a statement. You can drop it off to me in the morning.

Amelia walks down the steps-

GRADY (O.S.)

You sleep well, Ma'am, ya hear? Pull that woobie down tight, close your eyes, and try to block out the sounds of grown men crying.

INT. DFAC - NIGHT

It's dark as Amelia enters the dining facility. The tables clean. Floor freshly mopped. She follows a single light still on in the kitchen.

AMELIA
Specialist James?

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

An immaculate place. A bottle of bleach and a mop bucket half-filled on the floor. Someone's WHISPERING inside the large walk-in freezer.

AMELIA
Hello?

Specialist James is facing away from Amelia as she listens, trying to figure out who exactly he's talking to.

AMELIA (CONT'D)
James?

INT. WALK-IN FREEZER - NIGHT

She passes hanging meat. Frozen goods.

AMELIA
Specialist James.

She taps him on the shoulder.

FLASH: A slithering *BLACK EEL* crawls on the back of James' ACUs. Disappearing down his neck. As if MERGING with his skin.

James spins- Amelia's so startled she falls backward, slipping on the floor and crashing to the ground.

JAMES
Shit, Ma'am. You okay?

James pulls his earphones out. Amelia can't help but stare up at him as if waiting for the eel to reappear.

JAMES (CONT'D)
I didn't hear you commin' in. Let me help you up.

INT. DFAC - LATER - NIGHT

James brings Amelia over a steaming cup of tea.

AMELIA

Thanks.

She curls her hands around it. On the backside of Amelia's arms, we see a series of SCARS that run vertically. Slash marks. Long since healed. Maybe a decade or so ago.

James rolls up his sleeves. The same cut marks. But newer.

JAMES

It's kind of addicting, right?
Something about the pain...

Amelia tries to hide hers.

AMELIA

Clears your head.

JAMES

I started cutting in high school.
Haven't been able to stop- Guess I
should have picked up smoking
instead.

A beat.

AMELIA

I need a sworn statement from you
on Ismail.

James takes off his glasses and wipes them.

JAMES

Sure.

Amelia opens a manilla folder and slides the form across the table... James looks at it. Pulling out a pen then stops-

AMELIA

What is it?

JAMES

Major, what if I told you that none
of us has seen a living, breathing
Taliban fighter in 12 months. Would
you believe me?

AMELIA

I thought you were attacked
everyday.

JAMES

We are.

A beat.

AMELIA

Captain Reed said the enemy doesn't get close. Because of the ridge.

JAMES

All those patrols? All those guard duties, and we haven't seen a single living soul? There's something wrong here. Not just the war. It's in the water. In the air. Something... Sick.

AMELIA

Tell me what you think happened to Ismail.

James puts his glasses back on.

JAMES

I don't know, ma'am. I'm sorry. I really don't.

INT. WEAPONS ROOM - NIGHT

Pitch black as Amelia shuts the door and places the lock.

She turns on her headlamp to illuminate the space: Lockers full of weapons. Duffy's disassembled .50 CAL on the table in front of her.

She sits down on the cot, removing her boots. Smelling her socks. From her rucksack, she pulls out some baby wipes. Cleans her feet, armpits, and face. She removes her blouse.

The headlamp catches the scars on her arms... The cuts seem fresher somehow. Almost new. She runs a finger over one of them, tracing an outline...

Amelia flips open her combat knife. Studying her own reflection. Then she reaches down inside her bag again.

This time pulling out a flip phone: Eli's. She searches through the contacts... Finding Wife. Clicks to call... The line rings... And connects.

ELI'S WIFE (O.S.)

Hello?

Amelia slams the phone shut. Placing it deep within her bag. It VIBRATES... *Incoming call.* She reaches back down and removes the battery.

EXT. COMBAT OUTPOST HALLORAN - NIGHT

In flip flops, a tan undershirt, and her ACU pants, Amelia makes her way to the porta potties. She opens the plastic green door recently marked "Ladyboy Only."

INT. PORTA POTTY - NIGHT

The headlamp illuminates a fresh coil of shit on the seat.

AMELIA

You've got to be kidding me.

She tries her best to squat and not dry heave at the same time. Through the crack in the door, she watches a group of Soldiers walk to the barracks.

In the john next to her, someone is PANTING.

VOICE (O.S.)

Oh yeah. Oh yeah. Fuck me, bitch.
Fuck me.

INT. PREPARATION ROOM - DAY

Amelia stands over the bodies of the THREE HUMANOID CREATURES from our opening sequence. This time, she's the one cleaning them. Covering their slender frames with white shrouds.

A slender, elongated, almost translucent hand reaches out for hers...

VOICE (O.S.)

Leave.

INT. WEAPONS ROOM - NIGHT

Amelia's SCREAMING, sitting upright on the cot... But we can't HEAR her over the sound of a SAW MACHINE GUN CUTTING THROUGH THE AIR.

TOC INTERCOM (VOICE OF DUFFY)
Haji approaching the wire! Take
your spots!

Amelia, dressed only in her black PT shorts and a bra, grabs her helmet, boots, and M4 and runs for the door.

EXT. COMBAT OUTPOST HALLORAN - MOMENTS LATER

Both guard towers are FIRING into the dark of night. Soldiers at their positions. Waiting. Looking through the slits in the perimeter.

Two turn to watch Amelia, helmet on, boots unlaced, no top, just a bra, as she dashes for her spot. Schlaack takes his position beside her.

SCHLAACK

Sorry, but you're gonna get shit
for looking like that.

AMELIA

I wasn't thinking.

SCHLAACK

At least you made it out here. That
counts for something.

Amelia checks her weapon.

AMELIA

Where are they?

SCHLAACK

South Guard caught 10 to 12 guys
moving up the ridgeline.

Schlaack snaps his Night Vision into place. Amelia looks down the line: The rest of the platoon is wearing NVGs.

AMELIA

Fuck, I forgot my NVGs.

SCHLAACK

The approach seems deserted.

A three-round BURST from an M4.

VOICE (O.S.)

Cease fire! Cease fire!

For a moment, the night is still. We hear the clinking of brass under boots.

Then the MOANING begins. Like a child in agony.

SCHLAACK
Jesus.

AMELIA
What? What is it?

SCHLAACK
Haji's stuck in the wire.

SLOSHING SOUNDS. Guts falling out. Someone pukes down the line.

AMELIA
Why can't they help him?

SCHLAACK
Too dangerous. We'll have to wait until first light.

The SCREAMING continues as the SOLDIERS settle into place.
Trying to sleep against impossible odds.

EXT. COMBAT OUTPOST HALLORAN - DAWN

Schlaack gently nudges Amelia, who startles from a deep sleep. His ACU top covers her.

Amelia shakes herself awake. Embarrassed.

SCHLAACK
You were talking in your sleep.
Who's Eli?

Amelia rips the top off and throws it at him. She runs for the weapons room.

INT. WEAPONS ROOM - DAWN

Amelia sits on her cot, settling herself. Slowing her breathing.

Then, drops off the cot and does a set of push-ups... Moving faster and faster until her muscles give out, and she collapses to the floor in total exhaustion...

EXT. OUTER PERIMETER - MORNING

The platoon's leadership is outside the base, inspecting the concertina wire. Schlaack stands next to Amelia, who's the only one wearing her FULL BATTLE RATTLE.

KINNEY

I've never seen a .50 Cal do that.

SCHLAACK

It wasn't a .50 Cal, Top. Duffy
shot him with his M4.

REED

Maybe he was wearing an explosive
belt, and the gunfire set it off.

KINNEY

I've seen suicide bombers explode
up close. He'd be scattered about
like Reese's Pieces. No, this looks
like someone dipped him in a vat of
motor oil, lit him on fire, and
threw him into the wire.

Our camera reverses to show the TALIBAN FIGHTER caught on the
top string. His entrails reach ten feet to the ground.
Everything charred. Blackened as if he'd been roasted alive.

Amelia can't stop staring at the fighter... His mouth open
and twisted, permanently frozen in agony.

REED

We need to bring his body down to
the village.

AMELIA

On the way back, can you stop at
FSB Ullman?

REED

I guess we could. What do you need?

AMELIA

Photograph everything. Collect any
intel, documents, and bring them
back to me.

EXT. COMBAT OUTPOST HALLORAN - DAY

Kinney and the platoon are gathered in a circle. The Taliban
fighter's remains in a BODY BAG. Amelia stands behind it.

KINNEY

Alright. Mission is simple. Body
drop at the village. Then we're
going to knock on the door of
Ullman. James, you're on point.

JAMES
Roger, First Sergeant.

KINNEY
I want to be back up here by 1500 hours. Giants are playing. And Duffy got satellite to work.

REED
You heard the man. Mac's got a game to catch.

Amelia watches as the large black gates slowly open... The platoon moves forward wearily. Radios and packs bobbing up and down. They disappear out of view.

The gate rolls back, the doors slamming together. A Soldier throws a metal bar down, locking it.

I/E. GUARD TOWER - DAY

Amelia climbs the stairs. Duffy's on guard, turning away from his line of sight when he hears her.

DUFFY
Ma' am.

AMELIA
Duffy.

DUFFY
Wanna a looksie?

Duffy extends a pair of BINOS. Amelia takes them-

P.O.V. - BINOCULARS

The patrol makes its way down the mountain pass. It's a tough slog. Steep drops and sharp rocks.

DUFFY (CONT'D)
You smoke?

AMELIA
Yeah.

Duffy pulls out a pack of cigarettes and offers them to Amelia. She nods, taking one. She returns the favor by sharing her lighter. Duffy exhales.

DUFFY

Sorry about the other day. What I said. Ever since Morrison died, my brain's been mush.

AMELIA

It's okay.

They both enjoy the smoke. Nicotine rush rolling over. Amelia looks down at the valley. Then up at the sun haloing the top of a 15,000-foot peak in the Hindu Kush.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

Duffy, anything happen out here that you can't explain?

DUFFY

Like what?

AMELIA

Rico and James both told me stories.

DUFFY

(Thinking)

Hmmm. Morrison had a whopper.

Duffy flicks his butt off the guard rail. He points at the opposite tower.

DUFFY (CONT'D)

Back in February. We had mid-tour canceled cause of the weather. Snowin' and stormin' like a bitch. Early morning. Morrison watched a British soldier dig a grave.

AMELIA

I didn't know we had allies up here.

DUFFY

You don't understand. Morrison watched a *Colonial British Soldier*. You know the kind with a musket and the stupid hat? He watched him dig a grave. Twenty feet long. He said he just watched him work. Frozen. Couldn't move. Couldn't touch his radio. Looked as real as you or me.

AMELIA

And you believed him?

DUFFY
Morrison never lied. (A beat) That
was his problem.

INT. TACTICAL OPERATIONS COMMAND - LATER - DAY

Amelia wanders through the empty TOC, inspecting maps and random bits of gear. She sits down at the desk and looks at the radio. CHATTER from the unit as they continue on their mission.

REED (OVER RADIO)
COP Halloran. COP Halloran. This is Reed.

Amelia struggles to find the switch to communicate.

REED (CONT'D)
Major Yates? You there? Amelia, push the little black button. Next to the-

She hits it.

AMELIA (INTO RADIO)
Roger, this is Yates. Read you loud and clear.

REED (OVER RADIO)
Approaching FSB Ullman.

Static BLASTS back at her, punctuated by the different VOICES of the unit, communicating.

SCHLAACK (OVER RADIO)
Door is wide open.

REED (OVER RADIO)
Roger. Use caution.

We HEAR boots on the ground.

SCHLAACK (OVER RADIO)
Clear. Nothing. Moving forward.

JAMES (OVER RADIO)
Looks like it's been deserted.

KINNEY (OVER RADIO)
Rifles and light machine gun left in the south tower. Grady, come secure these and bring them to the weapons room.

GRADY (OVER RADIO)
I'm on it.

REED (OVER RADIO)
Schlaack, status on buildings.

SCHLAACK (OVER RADIO)
Clearing. TOC secure. James you
copy?

JAMES (OVER RADIO)
Yeah. Barracks too. Looks like they
left fast.

REED (OVER RADIO)
Okay, Mac. I'm bringing in the rest
of the team.

KINNEY (OVER RADIO)
Copy. Setting a perimeter.

REED (OVER RADIO)
Yates. What are we looking for?

Amelia pushes the button again-

AMELIA (INTO RADIO)
Intel documents. Logbook. PERSTAT.

REED (OVER RADIO)
Schlaack, James, you hear that?

SCHLAACK (OVER RADIO)
Copy.

JAMES (OVER RADIO)
The SCIFF's cipher-locked. No way
we are getting into that.

GRADY (OVER RADIO)
Holy shit, look at all these
explosives.

KINNEY (OVER RADIO)
Secure that shit for a controlled
det. I don't want it falling into
the enemy's hands. Good copy,
Grady?

GRADY (OVER RADIO)
Yeah. Yeah.

REED (OVER RADIO)
Mac, let's get out of here. I don't like the feel of this.

KINNEY (OVER RADIO)
Roger, I'll round up the cats.

REED (OVER RADIO)
Yates, tell the guys on guard to expect us back in a couple of hours. We're huffin' it.

A SECURE PHONE RINGS in the corner...

AMELIA (OVER RADIO)
Copy.

Amelia lets go of the radio and crosses the TOC to pick it up.

AMELIA (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)
COP Halloran.

JACKSON (O.S.)
Major Yates? It's Jackson...

Amelia sits down in the chair... Heart pounding-

AMELIA
Jackson.

JACKSON (O.S.)
How's it going up there?

AMELIA
It's not just the translator who disappeared. It's the entire unit.

JACKSON (O.S.)
Does Campbell know about this?

AMELIA
Apparently he decided it wasn't worth filling me in.

JACKSON (O.S.)
Anything you need?

AMELIA
(Barely a whisper)
Any updates on-

JACKSON (O.S.)
On what? Not sure I'm tracking.

AMELIA

On... *You know-* Eli.

JACKSON (O.S.)

Eli? Oh, you mean Mr. Graves?

A beat.

JACKSON (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I haven't seen him since Helmand.
Do you want me to call over to his
office?

AMELIA

(Perplexed)

No... Jackson. Listen. About what
happened.

A beat... Clicking sounds on the other end.

JACKSON (O.S.)

Just sent an email. Out of office
reply. Says he's in Kandahar.
Amelia? You okay?

Amelia's shaking... Trying to hold herself together.

AMELIA

Jackson. *What happened...* The
attack.

Another beat.

JACKSON (O.S.)

I'm sorry, Ma'am. I do't know what-
Oh shit. Speak of the devil and he
shall appear. He's calling.

AMELIA

Who's calling?

JACKSON (O.S.)

I'll put him on speaker.

AMELIA

What-

JACKSON (O.S.)

Mr. Graves?

ELI (O.S.)

Yeah? Who is this?

JACKSON (O.S.)
Sergeant First Class Jackson. I've
got Major Yates on the line for
you.

ELI (O.S.)
(Sounding surprised)
Amelia? How's it going up there in
the Korengal?

Amelia SLAMS down the phone. Scared shitless. She stumbles
out of the TOC-

EXT. COMBAT OUTPOST HALLORAN - DAY

And into the light... Crossing the empty base. Duffy calls
down from the guard tower-

DUFFY
Ma'am! Anyword on return?

She just looks at him.

DUFFY (CONT'D)
Ma'am?

Duffy's puts a blunt to his lips, inhaling.

In the DISTANCE... A RUMBLE... Amelia watches as a LARGE
PLUME of SMOKE RISES into the cloudless sky...

DUFFY (CONT'D)
Don't worry, Ma'am. That's us. Just
blowing shit up.

Amelia walks for the weapons room...

INT. WEAPONS ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Amelia SLAMS the door shut... Then, furiously digs through
her rucksack, trying to find Eli's phone...

AMELIA
Where is it- Where is it- Come
on...

Reaching the bottom, she dumps the backpack upside down,
emptying its contents... It's not there.

AMELIA (CONT'D)
What the fuck is going on?!?

DUFFY (O.S.)
Major Yates! Major Yates! Come quick!

EXT. MAIN GATE - DAY

The front gate is wide open. Duffy and a couple of other Soldiers have their rifles pointed out. Amelia approaches.

AMELIA
What is it?

DUFFY
Female outside the perimeter. Can you try talking to her?

Just beyond the two blast doors, a WOMAN stands in a BLUE BURQA...

OUTSIDE:

Amelia eases her way forwards... Looking back at Duffy and the other Soldiers, standing there, providing overwatch.

AMELIA
Do you need help?

No response. Just the hood of the intricately designed burqa stares back at her. Amelia takes another step closer.

AMELIA (CONT'D)
Can you speak English?

A single drop of blood falls off the left hand of the woman to the dirt below...

AMELIA (CONT'D)
Let me help you.

The Woman lifts the burqa revealing a SUICIDE VEST STRAPPED TO HER CHEST... She reaches for the detonator-

AMELIA (CONT'D)
No!

BOOOOOOM!!! The body's EVISCERATED, the head flying off in one direction... Blood soaks Amelia as she-

INT. WEAPONS ROOM - LATER - DAY

Wakes on her cot... IT WAS JUST A FUCKING DREAM. But before Amelia can even process it-

POPS and GUNFIRE in the distance... The portable RADIO on the workbench CRACKLES and comes to life.

REED (OVER RADIO)
Contact left! Contact left! In the
woods!

Amelia takes the radio and runs out the door...

INT. TACTICAL OPERATIONS COMMAND - DAY

The SOUNDS of WAR play over the radio as Amelia enters the building... Bursts of static and gunfire; an EXPLOSION tests the limits of the radio's speaker.

KINNEY (OVER RADIO)
Schlaack! Get those guys to lay
down fire!

REED (OVER RADIO)
Talk to me! Talk to me!

SCHLAACK (OVER RADIO)
Rico went forward with James. We're
pinned here. I can't reach 'em!

REED (OVER RADIO)
Put some fire in the trees and move
forward!

SCHLAACK (OVER RADIO)
Captain, I can't even raise my
fuckin' head!

KINNEY (OVER RADIO)
Where's it coming from?

SCHLAACK (OVER RADIO)
Northeast. Nine O'clock.

KINNEY (OVER RADIO)
Schlaack, call for air support!
Now!

SCHLAACK (OVER RADIO)
Spooky-Tree, this is First Platoon,
Alpha Company. Requesting immediate
air support. Enemy grids as
follows.

KINNEY (OVER RADIO)
I'm moving down the line. I've got
Rico. I've got him.

The GUNFIRE mixes between the radio speaker and what we can now HEAR outside the base.

REED (OVER RADIO)
Schlaack, what's our standoff?

SCHLAACK (OVER RADIO)
Two hundred meters.

REED (OVER RADIO)
That's way too close. We've got to move back!

SCHLAACK (OVER RADIO)
There's nowhere to go, Sir. Nowhere to go- It just drops off!

REED (OVER RADIO)
Move back, god damn it!

SCHLAACK (OVER RADIO)
A-10 inbound.

The WHINE of a jet as it moves fast through the sky passing over COP Halloran, SHAKING THE WALLS OF THE TOC.

The BURP of the gunship as it opens up... BRAAAAAAAPPPPP!!!!

REED (OVER RADIO)
Holy shit! I can feel the heat...
Schlaack tell him to make another pass!

SCHLAACK (OVER RADIO)
Copy.

KINNEY (OVER RADIO)
No, God! No! Not James-

The jet SCREAMS back around, making another run... The noise is so LOUD it sounds as if it's going to drop right on Halloran...

BOOM! BOOM! KA-BOOM!!!!

REED (OVER RADIO)
Cease fire! Cease fire!

QUIET.

REED (OVER RADIO) (CONT'D)
Mac. Give me an update.

A beat.

REED (CONT'D)
Mac, damnit! Now!

KINNEY (OVER RADIO)
Two, no three routine. James is
dead. We lost James, over.

A beat. Amelia's hand goes to her mouth... *Horrified*.

EXT. MAIN GATE - DUSK

Duffy swings the metal latch off, and the gate opens...

Tired, covered in dirt and blood, the unit trudges in. Shell
shocked by the day's events. Grady and Rico carry a black
body bag forward.

Amelia stands to the side, watching as the soldiers stop and
drops their packs.

REED
Rico. Grady. Take James to the DFAC
and put him in the freezer.

Rico throws up... Schlaack pats him on the back.

SCHLAACK
It's okay, Rico. I can take him.

RICO
No, I want to. *I need to*.

Schlaack offers him some of the water from his Camelback. A
beat and then-

REED
Look, I know it's tough. But it's
what we all signed up for.

Grady, blood on his ACUs, snaps off his helmet and lets it
tumble to the ground.

REED (CONT'D)
James would want you to carry on.

Grady raises a bloody finger and points it at Amelia.

GRADY
It's her fucking fault.

KINNEY
That's enough, Grady.

GRADY

She's the one that made us go out
there. If it wasn't for her, James
would still be alive!

KINNEY

I said enough!

GRADY

Second soldier in a fuckin' week.

REED

Schlaack, go with Rico. Grady, drop
and give me twenty.

Schlaack and Rico pick up the body bag and head off.

GRADY

This is why females shouldn't mix
with infantry.

Grady drops and does 20 push-ups with ease. Finished, he
dusts himself off and walks for his rucksack, looking back at
Amelia.

GRADY (CONT'D)

Ain't got any blood on you yet.

Suddenly, he spins... *bullrushing for Amelia*, arms
outstretched, he grabs at her face-

GRADY (CONT'D)

Here's some for you... Here's some
for you, you fucking cunt!

Amelia breaks Grady's hold... Following it up with a
ROUNDHOUSE KICK to the chest. Grady tumbles back-

*Amelia charges at him- CONNECTING with two quick blows to his
face, knocking Grady OUT COLD.*

The Soldiers stare at her in silence. Amelia fixes her
uniform. Then walks out of frame.

REED

Someone help that piece of shit up.

INT. WEAPONS ROOM - DUSK

Using a pocket MIRROR, Amelia brutally scrubs her face,
removing the dried blood from Grady.

EXT. COMBAT OUTPOST HALLORAN - NIGHT

The platoon stands in formation under the watchful lights of the north guard tower. Reed and Kinney are out front.

KINNEY
Atten-tion!

Arms snap to the sides. Backs straight.

KINNEY (CONT'D)
Specialist James! Specialist Dylan
James! Specialist Dylan A. James!

Rico and Schlaack step forward and fold a flag.

A single FLARE is fired, the bright red light illuminating the COP and the valley below, before burning out and disappearing completely.

INT. TACTICAL OPERATIONS COMMAND - LATER - NIGHT

Amelia's sitting at the table across from Corporal Schlaack. Scattered in front of them: Documents and logbooks recovered from FSB Ullman. *But most of them are burned... Impossible to read.*

AMELIA
This is all you found?

SCHLAACK
From the burn barrel. The rest we
couldn't get to. Locked inside
their SCIF.

Of the charred documents, one MAP remains partially intact... With WAYPOINTS that cross into Pakistan.

AMELIA
What were they doing in the tribal
areas?

SCHLAACK
About two weeks ago, I got a
request. They wanted imagery.

Schlaack stands and walks over to a cipher-locked cabinet. He opens it, bringing back a stack of printed SATELLITE IMAGES. He hands them to Amelia...

AMELIA
A target package.

We PUSH IN on a blurry image of a traditional Pakistani farmhouse. A PAGAN-LIKE SYMBOL painted on the roof... A room with seven swimming snakes.

AMELIA (CONT'D)
I've seen this before...

The phone CHIRPS. Schlaack picks it up.

SCHLAACK (INTO PHONE)
COP Halloran. One second. Ma'am,
it's for you.

He hands her the phone.

AMELIA (INTO PHONE)
This is Major Yates.

JACKSON (O.S.)
Yates, it's me.

AMELIA
Schlaack, will you give me a
moment.

SCHLAACK
Sure.

Schlaack stands and walks out of the TOC.

AMELIA (INTO PHONE)
Go ahead.

JACKSON (O.S.)
I've got an update from your
friend.

A beat.

AMELIA (INTO PHONE)
(Hushed)
Eli?

JACKSON (O.S.)
He passed me something. Check your
sipr email.

Amelia opens up her laptop and connects it to the TOC's fiberoptic line. After a moment, her CLASSIFIED EMAIL opens. A single message from Jackson.

CLOSE UP: EMAIL ATTACHMENT

It's Sergeant Morrison's personnel file. She scrolls through it, finding-

A COUNSELING LETTER.

*"Morrison claimed that **several bodies** had been found mutilated... "**Disemboweled**"... Morrison has been counseled for making false accusations related to the treatment of translator Ismail by Private Grady. Recommend reduction in rank."*

JACKSON (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Think it'll help?

AMELIA (INTO PHONE)
Yeah... Listen, Jackson. You'd tell me if I was losing my mind, right?

Jackson laughs a little.

JACKSON (O.S.)
You were always nuts.

AMELIA (INTO PHONE)
Thursday night. Remember after you told me to see Colonel Campbell. I came by...

JACKSON (O.S.)
Thursday? (A beat) No. You went to the XO's, and I worked out. Couldn't sleep worth shit, not after the rocket attack.

A beat.

AMELIA (INTO PHONE)
Do you believe in lucid dreaming?

JACKSON (O.S.)
Lucid what?

AMELIA (INTO PHONE)
Dreaming. I must have been dreaming.

JACKSON (O.S.)
You sound tired. Get some rest, Ma'am.

INT. DFAC - NIGHT

Amelia sits by herself, poking at an MRE pouch of cold penne pasta. She takes her combat knife out of her boot and examines the blade: It's perfectly clean.

INT. WALK-IN FREEZER - NIGHT

A black body bag rests on a stainless steel table surrounded by hanging pieces of frozen meat...

EXT. COMBAT OUTPOST HALLORAN - MORNING

Early sun. The Platoon stands at the edge of the helicopter landing site.

The THUMP-THUMP-THUMP of approaching rotors. A Black Hawk soars over, circling the COP and kicking up dust. It settles, wheels touching down on the baked mud.

The cargo door opens... MAJOR GENERAL STUART, 50s, the Division Commander, exits dressed in his full kit. He's built like a giraffe. Awkwardly returning a salute to Captain Reed while ducking to avoid the rotors.

The helicopter's engine slowly dies as Reed and Kinney greet him.

Behind them, Duffy and Rico pass the body bag of Specialist James up to the DOOR GUNNER. Somberly, they rejoin the formation.

STUART
At ease, men.

Stuart removes his helmet. The cultish-personality of an Army lifer.

STUART (CONT'D)
You've done one hell of a job up here. A hell of a job. Every morning I personally ask for an update on Halloran. Hooah!

SOLDIERS IN UNISON
Hooah!

STUART
I know you lost one of your own yesterday. And I know how tough that can be.

(MORE)

STUART (CONT'D)
But we make it through. As a platoon. As a division. We're family.

General Stuart walks in-between the formation. From his pocket, he pulls out the Unit's combat patch. He slaps one on the right arm of each soldier. Following it up with a Division challenge coin.

STUART (CONT'D)
There's a lot of tradition with a combat patch. You men will have seen more combat than most ever will in 20 years of service.

Stuart stops in front of Amelia. Coldly locking eyes. Then he moves on to the next soldier...

EXT. COMBAT OUTPOST HALLORAN - LATER - DAY

The rotors of the Black Hawk spin furiously as Stuart climbs in. Dust cakes the unit as the helicopter takes off, disappearing over the perimeter and into the valley below.

-- MOMENTS LATER --

The platoon takes turns punching each other's new combat patches. There's a sense of camaraderie. Maybe even a little bit of joy.

EXT. TACTICAL OPERATIONS COMMAND - DUSK

The last licks of sunlight settle over the base. Amelia's boots crunch on the gravel as she approaches the TOC.

She knocks on the door and enters.

INT. TACTICAL OPERATIONS COMMAND - SAME

Reed and Kinney sit at the table cleaning their rifles. Kinney's got his top off. His undershirt stained with sweat. Reed spits into his dip bottle.

AMELIA
You wanted to see me?

REED
HQ called about an hour ago.
They've closed your case. You're on
the next bird out.

AMELIA

But I didn't even file my report.
Does this have to do with General
Stuart?

REED

Getting you out of here first thing
makes sense for everybody. You took
your statements. Did your job. Time
to move on.

AMELIA

How come you didn't tell me about
Morrison?

A beat.

REED

Tell you what?

AMELIA

That he had an official letter of
reprimand in his file. For accusing
Grady of mistreatment towards
Ismail.

KINNEY

We didn't tell you- because we
handled it. Morrison lied.

REED

Resupply coming in tomorrow at
0600. Don't be late.

INT. WEAPONS ROOM - DUSK

Rico is carefully placing two shotguns in a locker when
Amelia enters.

RICO

Sorry, Ma'am. Just finishing up
inventory.

AMELIA

It's okay.

She starts to repack her ruck.

RICO

Going somewhere?

AMELIA

Yeah. Bagram.

RICO

Why?

Amelia slams her gear down in frustration.

AMELIA

They closed the case.

A beat. Rico crosses to the door and stops. Looks back-

RICO

It wasn't your fault James died. It was mine. I was supposed to be watching his six. (A beat) I'm going to lie to myself- for the rest of my life. And pretend that I did.

Rico leaves, shutting the door softly behind him.

Amelia sits down and removes the combat knife from her boot... She CUTS a fresh line just below her wrist, watching as the blood drips to the floor...

INT. WEAPONS ROOM - LATER - NIGHT

Amelia lies on her cot, rucksack packed in front of her, already dressed in her ACUs. She has a PICTURE of Trent and Leah on her chest... She falls asleep.

POV - AMELIA - DREAMING

QUICK FLASHES: Of scenes from before... Stabbing Eli. The Female Suicide Bomber... The cleaning of the HUMANOID CREATURES... One of which opens a deformed eye- the seven snakes swimming like tadpoles across its iris...

A SHRIEKING NOISE ERUPTS FROM THE BASE'S LOUDSPEAKER.

Amelia springs up and off the cot... Hurriedly stuffs her feet into her boots without lacing them. She grabs her rifle and helmet and runs for the door-

EXT. COMBAT OUTPOST HALLORAN - NIGHT

Amelia emerges from the weapons room to see Schlaack running across the base.

AMELIA

What's happening?

SCHLAACK
Head for the bunker!

The SIREN's sound is muted by a .50 CAL RIPPING through the air from one of the guard towers.

Amelia runs down the narrow passageway for the bunker.

INT. BUNKER - NIGHT

Amelia takes a seat by herself, four or five feet from the opening. She loads her M4. Slowly rotates the selector switch off safe and points the barrel at the door...

-- A FLURRY OF CLOSE SHOTS --

Through the mouth of the bunker, we see Soldiers running back and forth... Frantically searching.

UNKNOWN SOLDIER (O.S.)
What the fuck was that!?!?

UNKNOWN SOLDIER #2 (O.S.)
It's on the roof!

DUFFY (O.S.)
How many are there?

UNKNOWN SOLDIER #2 (O.S.)
At least four! Jesus! What is that!

A HIGH-PITCHED WHINE. The sound of something being strangled. The breath slips away...

SOMEONE OR SOMETHING APPROACHES THE UNLIT BUNKER.

AMELIA
Who's there?!? Identify yourself!

Crunch. Crunch. CRUNCH. The footsteps approach. Inches away... Amelia's heart pounds in her chest. The sound MUTATES. *No longer boots... But something CRAWLING... Dragging itself forward.*

Amelia peers closer to the edge. Closer to the opening of the bunker... Now the SOUND is BEHIND HER... She whips around, struggling to find her flashlight...

DUFFY (O.S.)
Do you see?

Behind her, Duffy's standing with his weapon pointed into the bunker past Amelia. His NVGs glow GREEN.

AMELIA
What? Duffy?!? What is it?!?

Duffy runs off leaving her alone...

Amelia finds her flashlight. Tries to hold it while she steadies herself and raises her rifle. The flashlight SNAPS ON AND-

THE BUNKER IS EMPTY.

UNKNOWN SOLDIER (O.S.)
Oh, God! Top, come quick!

The SHRIEKING ALARM STOPS.

REED (ON LOUDSPEAKER)
The perimeter is secure. Repeat,
the perimeter is secure. Everyone
calm the fuck down.

EXT. DOG KENNELS - NIGHT

The platoon stands in a semi-circle looking in at the kennels.

THE DOORS ARE ALL OPEN. Inside, the dogs have been reduced to fur and blood. One leg has been completely ripped off. Another's jaw separated from the skull. The remaining eye washed over with blood and discharge, staring back out.

KINNEY
How could this happen? How could-

Reed approaches Kinney and gets his first look. He gags, almost throwing up-

REED
Why would they do that? Breach the perimeter to kill the dogs? What are they, taunting us?

SCHLAACK
Sir, we didn't find any signs of infiltration. No cuts in the wire. Nothing.

DUFFY
They were on the roof. They climbed up the TOC- over the barracks. Then... Then... Flew.

KINNEY

Flew? You've been smoking too much shit, Duffy.

DUFFY

I swear, Top. You've got to believe me.

REED

Did anyone else see them?

SOLDIER #1

(Meekly)

I did.

SOLDIER #2

Me too.

A beat.

REED

Who was on guard?

SCHLAACK

Rico. And Grady-

Schlaack's eyes shift to the back of the group. Grady's walking towards the platoon, the front of his ACUs covered in blood.

REED

Grady, what the hell happened?

Grady's white as a ghost.

REED (CONT'D)

Why the fuck are you covered in blood?

Kinney pushes his way through the Soldiers.

KINNEY

You. You killed those fuckin' dogs, didn't you?

Kinney shoves Grady.

GRADY

What?

KINNEY

Why else would you be covered in blood?!?

Grady looks down at his hands. The expression on his face, completely blank. Not understanding.

KINNEY (CONT'D)
You fucking piece of shit!

Kinney launches himself at Grady, knocking him down. He kicks him in the stomach.

KINNEY (CONT'D)
You sick fuck. They're just dogs!

Reed and Schlaack race forward to restrain Kinney...

REED
Enough! Enough, Mac!

But the damage is done. Blood courses from Grady's mouth.

REED (CONT'D)
Where's Rico?

SCHLAACK
Still in the tower.

REED
Someone relieve him. (A beat)
Grady, bury the dogs outside the gate.

GRADY
You want-

REED
You heard me! Get a shovel and get a move on! Go!

EXT. PERIMETER - NIGHT

FLAMES from the burn pit illuminate Grady as he carries the remains of the dogs outside the base. The fire reflects off his eyes.

He digs a shallow grave. Removes his ACU blouse, covered in sweat and blood. He places the dogs in the ground. We catch a glimpse of something else...

Human remains.

INT. TACTICAL OPERATIONS COMMAND - LATER - NIGHT

Reed, Kinney, and Amelia sit on one side of the table. Rico on the other.

REED
You really want me to call this in?

Rico nods.

REED (CONT'D)
And what do you think HQ will say
when I tell them our base was
attacked by monsters?

RICO
It's what happened, Sir.

A beat.

REED
You're tired, Rico. Go get some
rest.

Rico shuffles out the door.

AMELIA
Other soldiers saw it too.

REED
I didn't know crazy could be
contagious.

AMELIA
Look- Believe them or not. You have
to accept the fact that something's
going on here. Maybe Ismail missing
was just the start-

REED
Start of what? Us losing our
fucking minds? I'll tell you what
it is, Ma'am. 15 months. 15 months
they've been sitting up here, in
the mud, in the dark. Getting shot
at. There are no monsters out
there.

A beat.

KINNEY
Ever heard of FOB Bermel?

Amelia shakes her head.

KINNEY (CONT'D)
Forward Operating Base in Paktika.
Right on the border. Back in 2006-

REED
It was overrun...

KINNEY
That was the official story.
Resupply bird found the platoon
mutilated. But it wasn't by the
enemy. They had turned on each
other. The cook poisoned the
Captain. Someone lit the barracks
on fire and locked the door-

AMELIA
Jesus.

KINNEY
They found three bodies cut up in
the burn pit...

A beat. Reed looks disturbed.

REED
Whatever this is- I want Grady kept
under watch until we figure out.
Ma'am. I think you might be lucky
to be leaving...

INT. BUNKER - FIRST LIGHT

Grady sits, wrists bound with zip ties, on one of the wooden
benches. He's got a gash on his head from where Kinney hit
him. A swollen lip. A Soldier stands watch.

INT. DFAC - MORNING

Amelia pours herself a cup of coffee... She's got her ruck
packed. Already wearing her IBA and ballistic helmet. Ready
to fly for Bagram...

Schlaack comes barging in.

SCHLAACK
Ma'am. Captain Reed told me to come
find you.

AMELIA
What is it?

SCHLAACK
It's better if you just see for
yourself.

EXT. MAIN GATE - MORNING

The gate is wide open. Two Soldiers stand watch as a solitary figure marches forward in a dirty white shawl. ISMAIL.

He raises his hands and is searched thoroughly for weapons.

KINNEY
Impossible... Im-

Both Reed and Kinney look like they see a ghost.

REED
Ismail, where have you been?

ISMAIL
Water. I need. Water.

Reed snaps his fingers, and Schlaack comes forward with a canteen. He hands it to Ismail.

REED
Go ahead. Drink.

Ismail raises the bottle, almost as if he's nervous. Then drinks feverishly from it.

REED (CONT'D)
You had everyone worried. They even sent Major Yates here to help find you.

Ismail looks at Amelia for the first time. His cheeks, hollow. Skin, coarse and thin, like he's a hundred years past his age.

ISMAIL
How did I get here?

KINNEY
You tell us.

AMELIA
Ismail, where's the rest of the Omega team?

ISMAIL
I need to lie down.

REED

Schlaack. Take him back to his room. And put a soldier on watch. No visitors. Understand me?

SCHLAACK

Yes, Sir.

Schlaack helps Ismail, unsteady on his legs. He puts an arm around him, and the two trudge off...

AMELIA

I'll need to take his statement before I leave.

A beat.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

Reed?

REED

You'll have plenty of time. Bird's been canceled. Expecting bad weather.

AMELIA

When's the next flight out?

REED

Tomorrow morning. If you're lucky.

EXT. COMBAT OUTPOST HALLORAN - AFTERNOON

A thick mist wraps its fingers around the base. Drizzle becomes a steady rain. Then sheets of it, pouring down, soaking all the buildings... In the guard towers, Soldiers stand watch in green oversized ponchos.

Amelia struggles to light her cigarette just outside the TOC... She covers her head as she makes a run for it...

EXT. ISMAIL'S TRAILER - AFTERNOON

A Soldier stands by as Amelia POUNDS on Ismail's door.

AMELIA

Ismail! It's Major Yates. I need to speak with you. Ismail!

She HAMMERS the door again. Looks at the Soldier-

AMELIA (CONT'D)
Did he leave?

SOLDIER #1
Not since I've been on duty.

Amelia turns the handle finding it unlocked...

INT. ISMAIL'S TRAILER - MOMENTS LATER

Amelia comes in with a gust of wind... Her muddy boots marking the cheap linoleum.

AMELIA
Ismail?

But the trailer's empty. Just like it was before... The bed still made.

EXT. ISMAIL'S TRAILER - SAME

Amelia comes back out...

AMELIA
He's not in there.

SOLDIER #1
I was only told to watch the door.

EXT. COMBAT OUTPOST HALLORAN - AFTERNOON

Amelia walks back through the pouring rain... She opens the door to the TOC-

INT. TACTICAL OPERATIONS COMMAND - AFTERNOON

But finds it empty...

EXT. OFFICERS QUARTERS - AFTERNOON

Amelia knocks on Reed's door... After a moment, he finally answers. *Reed looks sick.*

AMELIA
Ismail. He's not in his trailer.

REED
You sure?

AMELIA

Course I'm fucking sure. I just checked.

REED

Then he's probably at the DFAC.
Ma'am, you should dry off.

Reed starts to cough...

REED (CONT'D)

You'll catch a cold like the rest of us.

INT. DFAC - MOMENTS LATER

Amelia enters... The lights are off. She walks in between the tables and neatly stacked chairs...

INT. KITCHEN - SAME

Empty, save for THREE BLACK BODY BAGS, recently unrolled. Amelia unzips one-

Nothing.

INT. WEAPONS ROOM - LATER

Rain DRUMS against the roof. Amelia takes off her soaked uniform, stripping down to her underwear and bra. She's freezing. RAPID KNOCKS on the door.

AMELIA

Just a second.

Amelia, sighs, throws her damp top back on, and opens the door a crack.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

Yeah?

It's Schlaack, soaked himself.

SCHLAACK

Sorry to disturb you, Ma'am. But you've got watch. Thirty minutes.

AMELIA

Me? Why?

SCHLAACK

We're short. Everyone's pulling extra duty since... You know, Grady.

AMELIA

What do I need?

SCHLAACK

Rifle. Helmet. IBA. Usual shit. See you out there.

AMELIA

Wait, Corporal. Why are there body bags in the kitchen?

SCHLAACK

No idea.

INT. WEAPONS ROOM - LATER

Amelia gears up. She adjusts the straps to her helmet. Loads her AMMO POUCHES. Stashes a bottle of water in one of her ACU cargo pockets.

EXT. COMBAT OUTPOST HALLORAN - DUSK

The sky has cleared, the rain gone. The OutPost is covered in large puddles; a roaring brook of mud moves in between the barracks and the TOC.

Duffy and Rico lay planks of wood across it.

I/E. GUARD TOWER - DUSK

Schlaack's behind the .50 Cal looking out at the sun as it settles behind the mountains and valley.

Amelia raises her rifle and looks out through the scope.

P.O.V. - SCOPE

A flock of geese passes through her view, quietly following the river, floating gently on the drafts of wind that filter between the mountains.

SCHLAACK

When's the last time you pulled guard duty?

AMELIA
Officer Candidate School.

SCHLAACK
That's a while... I don't mind it.
Let's me think. (A beat) Why'd you
join?

AMELIA
I'm an Army brat. Dad fought in
Vietnam. Bounced around from base
to base as a kid. Kind of all I
know. What about you?

SCHLAACK
Me- I wish I never signed up. If I
could go back- I'd stop myself from
ever coming here. Now I think I'll
never leave.

The final light from the valley fades... That canyon-like
coolness returning.

INT. DFAC - NIGHT

Amelia comes in, finished with guard duty, and grabs a
Gatorade from the fridge. She sits down, wiped. Takes off her
helmet.

The door swings open. Grady's standing there, wrists bound in
front of him. Rico ushers Grady in and over to Amelia's
table...

RICO
Ma'am, Grady's got something he
wants to tell you. Go ahead, Grady.

After some hesitation... Grady speaks-

GRADY
I killed Ismail.

AMELIA
What?

GRADY
(Tears forming)
We were on patrol. I shot him.
Burned his body. Buried it outside
the gate. I can show you. I just
wanted to come clean. I can't live
with it anymore... I can't-

AMELIA
But Ismail's alive...

RICO
He can't be. That's what we're trying to tell you.

AMELIA
But I watched him walk through the gate-

GRADY
That wasn't Ismail, Ma'am.

RUMBLE... Like a mortar impacting in the distance. The chow hall lights flicker. They all look up-

THUMP. THUMP. THUMP. SCREEEEEEECCHHHHHH...

AMELIA
What is that?

CLAWING TALONS AGAINST THE ROOF... Duffy bursts into the chow hall, his face drained of color, in terror-

DUFFY
They're inside the fucking base!

RICO
Who?!?

THE LIGHTS GO OUT COMPLETELY AS GUNFIRE ERUPTS! SOMEONE'S SHOOTING JUST OUTSIDE THE DFAC... Amelia spins to keep up with the sounds when-

DUFFY
Fighting positions! Now!

Duffy rushes back out, leaving the door wide open.

Amelia watches as the dark outside is interrupted by LIGHT BLASTING FROM MULTIPLE BARRELS.

GRADY
Rico, let me fight.

Rico looks to Amelia, hesitates, then cuts free Grady's hands.

RICO
Ma'am, I'm sorry we lied.

EXT. COMBAT OUTPOST HALLORAN - NIGHT

Gunfire illuminates the base, *strobing*. Giving us only glimpses... We see the front gate is WIDE OPEN.

Amelia's drawn to the doors- to a SWARMING SHAPE darker than the night... COMING CLOSER. MOVING LIKE A STORM CLOUD, it sweeps over the perimeter.

The glass from the guard tower's spotlight EXPLODES!

M4s CHATTER WILDLY, sending orange tracer rounds through the dark just inches above Amelia's head...

She smashes into a SOLDIER wearing his NVGs. One lens cracked and off. They both fall to the ground.

SOLDIER #1
Get off me! Get off me!

The Soldier spins free, MANICALLY FIRING his M4 on FULL AUTO into the blackness.

Schlaack runs by-

AMELIA
Schlaack!

SCHLAACK
Head to the bunker!

KA-BOOM!!! A LARGE EXPLOSION just outside the Guard Tower illuminates the entire COP for THREE SECONDS.

1... *LARGE STICK CREATURES CLIMB THE WALLS OF THE TOC AND THE BARRACKS LOOKING LIKE DADDY LONG LEGS.*

2... *One SWOOPS DOWN AND GRABS A SOLDIER, hurling him into the air...*

3... *Amelia sprints for the bunker.*

INT. BUNKER - NIGHT

Pure black. Amelia feels her way forward against the wall...

Looking back at the mouth of the bunker, we watch and listen to the horror playing out... Amelia raises her weapon at the opening. Waiting.

A WRETCHING SOUND FROM WITHIN. She scrambles for her flashlight... *Searches the floor. The bench. Traces the walls of the bunker up- illuminating:*

A CREATURE ABOVE HER. Clutching the ceiling with its long, talon-like fingers. Its head widens, jaw detaching. The teeth spinning like a whirlpool...

Amelia SCREAMS...

EXT. COMBAT OUTPOST HALLORAN - NIGHT

She runs for the TOC; the .50 CAL OPENS UP from Guard Tower West...

The Gunner's SWARMED BY THE BLACK MIST... *Dismantling the tower piece by piece...* The GUNNER SCREAMS as he's swallowed up in a pool of blackness.

The SWARM releases him, dropping the body into the burn pit below... The pit ERUPTS IN FLAMES illuminating Amelia just as she reaches the TOC's door.

Amelia can't help but watch as the Gunner disintegrates. SCREAMING. PLEADING. Like trying to pull her forward.

GUNNER
Help me!!!

Terrified, she opens the TOC's door-

INT. TACTICAL OPERATIONS COMMAND - NIGHT

She slams the door shut, resting up against it. Catching her breath.

Amelia crosses to the radio and presses the black button to transmit.

AMELIA (INTO RADIO)
Bagram HQ. Bagram HQ, this is Major Yates. Can you hear me?

Nothing. She tries to change the frequency. Different channels. Then the volume knob. Not even static.

Amelia drops below the desk to see: *The wires to the radio have been severed.*

AMELIA (CONT'D)
No.

She stands slowly... Backing up. Bumping into-

CAPTAIN REED, lying on the floor. A single line of blood drips from the corner of his mouth, cascading off the gold cross hanging from his neck.

There's a hole through his head. His right eye replaced with a crater.

-- THE DOOR OPENS --

It's Schlaack, Rico, and Duffy.

SCHLAACK
We've got to barricade this place!
Come on!

Duffy slams the door shut. For a moment the terrifying sounds of war are cut off. Rico pushes a desk up against it and flips it over, off its legs. Schlaack stacks heavy pelican cases behind it.

SCHLAACK (CONT'D)
Major Yates. Look for some wood.
Anything.

Amelia's still staring at Captain Reed.

SCHLAACK (CONT'D)
Yates!

In the corner of the TOC, a stack of loose two by fours. Amelia grabs three and brings them to Rico.

SCHLAACK (CONT'D)
Duffy, find some nails.

Duffy locates a container of nails and a hammer. He brings them back and starts to mount the boards to the door.

Schlaack tries the radio.

AMELIA
It's cut.

Schlaack sees the severed wires.

DUFFY
What's cut? The comms?!?

SCHLAACK
Just shut up for a moment! Let me think.

Rico takes the hammer from Duffy and finishes the job.

THUMP. THUMP. THUMP on the door from the outside. THUMP.
THUMP. THUMP.

Amelia moves for the door-

SCHLAACK (CONT'D)
No. Don't.

AMELIA
What about the rest of the unit?

SCHLAACK
We're it.

DUFFY
Someone lit the barracks on fire.
Cooked them... cooked them alive-

Schlaack takes off his ACU top and covers Reed's face.

AMELIA
Kinney?

A beat... A SCREAM FROM SOMETHING NOT HUMAN OUTSIDE THE
WALLS... Now the sound moves across the roof of the TOC...

SCHLAACK
He's gone.

EXT. BURN PIT - NIGHT

*Kinney stands in the middle of human shit. Entrails seeping
from his stomach... Eyes illuminated by the burning remains
of the Gunner.*

INT. TACTICAL OPERATIONS COMMAND - MOMENTS LATER

AMELIA
We've got to get out of here.

SCHLAACK
The bunker. Leads to the tunnels.
And to the village below...

AMELIA
But there was something in there...
With me- I felt-

*RIPPPPPP!!! SLASH... The roof is being torn apart. Shingle by
shingle.*

SCHLAACK
 We'll all go together. Okay? It's
 our only chance.

Amelia nods.

AMELIA
 We'll need a distraction. The
 humvee- We light the fucking humvee
 on fire and roll it out the front
 gate.

From the corner of the room, the RADIO COMES ALIVE.

Collectively their heads turn as one... *A glimmer of hope.*
 But then- Realization. *THE CORDS REMAIN CUT.* Somehow, the
 BLACK BUTTON DEPRESSES.

RADIO (GRADY'S VOICE)
 Spooky-Tree, this is 1st Platoon,
 Alpha Company. Requesting immediate
 air support. Grids as follows... 34
 degrees... 53...

Rico runs to the radio. He tries to speak, but Grady's voice
 continues over.

RADIO (CONT'D)
 North... 70 degrees.

SCHLAACK
 That's our location!

SPOOKY-TREE (OVER RADIO)
 Roger, 1st Platoon. To confirm -
 That's uh- We're confused here...
 That's COP Halloran.

RADIO (GRADY'S VOICE)
 Confirmed, Spooky-Tree. Base has
 been overrun. Moving to Ullman.
 Base has been evacuated. Requesting
 immediate airstrike on Halloran.

AMELIA
 Schlaack. We've got to go!

RADIO (GRADY'S VOICE)
 Major Yates? Major Yates, is that
 you?!?

DUFFY
 They can't. They can't hit our
 base. We're Americans...

RADIO (GRADY'S VOICE)
I'm coming for you. I'm going to
eat your fucking soul. Show me your
war face, Captain!

SCHLAACK
Open the door!

Rico and Duffy pull the desk back. Pry off the wood...

RADIO (GRADY'S VOICE)
I'm gonna put my hands around your
neck. Watch the pain fill your
eyes. I'm going to smell your last
breath.

A DRONE BUZZES overhead-

SPOOKY-TREE (OVER RADIO)
1st Platoon. We've got a Reaper on
site.

The RAPID WHOOSH of HELLFIRE MISSILES... The walls of the TOC
PULSE and MOVE...

The HIGH PITCHED WHISTLE OF A 500 POUND JDAM AS IT FALLS FROM
THE SKY OVERHEAD...

SCHLAACK
Now!

Schlaack and Rico finally pry the door open-

Amelia tumbles through **and into**

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. COMBAT OUTPOST HALLORAN - DUSK

Winter. A cold wind sweeps over Halloran but 175 years
before...

BRITISH SOLDIERS are setting up a base on top of the
mountain... We see trenches dug. Lines run. Cannons placed...
Below, the valley looks the same. A soft, fresh patch of snow
covers everything.

A CRY from a SOLDIER in the distance.

BRITISH SOLDIER
Bring the doctor! Bring a lantern!

A SWINGING LANTERN MOVES FORWARD... We follow as it's handed to a young DOCTOR climbing up the loose topsoil of a trench.

Below him, Soldiers and Indian conscripts work hand in hand...

EXT. PERIMETER - DUSK

The young Doctor moves out of the encampment, coming to a GRAVEYARD filled with markers.

Three Soldiers brush off one peculiar site. A BURIAL PLOT TWENTY FEET LONG and only TWO FEET WIDE.

A pickax and shovel CLANG off the wooden casket. Chunks of frozen earth removed...

They stare down:

Inside the coffin, the SKELETAL REMAINS OF A GIANT. The Doctor stumbles forward trying to examine when-

CRYES OF AN ATTACK...

Behind them, the base starts to BURN...

BACK TO:

INT. PORTA POTTY - NIGHT

Amelia opens her eyes... SCREAMS from soldiers and unseen beasts. The WHINE of the reaper drone circling above.

OUTSIDE THE DOOR:

Scratch... Scratch... Scratch...

Between the cracks of the door and the frame, something moves. The skin, white. Almost translucent.

Amelia looks down through the hole below. The SHIT BEGINS TO SWIRL... She slams the cover down and looks back up:

A YELLOW EYE. BLACK MARKS ACROSS THE IRIS. MOVING BACK AND FORTH. FOLLOWING HER THROUGH THE SLIT...

Amelia KICKS open the door and FIRES HER WEAPON!

EXT. PORTA POTTY - NIGHT

Into the stomach of RICO! He falls backward, clutching his guts.

Amelia drops her weapon, staring down in horror-

AMELIA

Rico! I'm sorry- I'm so sorry. I thought- I thought...

She tries to comfort him as best she can. Blood spills out and over his ACUs- Rico seizes... She grips his hands... Watching as the life slowly drains from his eyes.

SCHLAACK (O.S.)

Yates!

Breaking her trance... **Amelia stands and surveys the scene:**

The humvee plan has gone awry. The vehicle burns in place with its doors open. The body of Duffy lies next to one of the wheels... His severed head, on the ground a few feet away-

AMELIA

Schlaack!!!

The whole COP is on FIRE, smoke and flames billowing out into the night. In the far distance, the outline of a soldier. Grady? Kinney? We can't be sure...

SCHLAACK

Get to the bunker! The tunnels!

A Soldier raises his weapon and FIRES FULL AUTO RIPPING SCHLAACK APART.

RICO

Yates!

Amelia drops her gaze... Rico stares up at her, MISSING HIS EYES.

RICO (CONT'D)

Show me your war face!

Amelia runs as fast as she can-

BUT THE DISTANCE BETWEEN HER AND THE BUNKER STRETCHES ON AND ON FOREVER...

NOW SHE'S NOT MOVING, STUCK IN A DREAM'S QUICKSAND... THERE'S NO SENSE OF UP OR DOWN. A SAW-LIKE NOISE SPEEDS UP IN THE BACKGROUND... RACING TO CATCH UP WITH AMELIA-

When ISMAIL'S DOOR OPENS- the Translator himself appears, framed by the light from within like an angel or a jinn- *He reaches out a hand...*

Amelia stumbles, falling... The ground beneath her giving away to BLACKNESS WHEN-

Ismail grabs her and pulls her in...

INT. ISMAIL'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Amelia OPENS HER EYES... She's lying on an intricate prayer rug, candles surrounding her. We SEE the house of snakes drawn on the walls. Outside, no sound. Complete silence as if the war has disappeared...

Ismail stands over her as Amelia tries to sit up... She finds herself pinned to the floor. As if some unseen weight was sitting on her.

AMELIA

What is this place?

SMOKE EMERGES from Ismail's mouth... Crossing the room, floating like a SNAKE for Amelia... It finds her mouth, and she can't help but inhale.

ISMAIL

Home to the Watchers.

Ismail points up:

The ceiling becomes see-through. Dark, primordial. FIREBALLS STREAK into the sky... Plummeting from the heavens.

AMELIA

Who are you?

ISMAIL

A translator. Between different worlds. Yours and theirs.

AMELIA

What do they want?

ISMAIL

Solatium.

EXT. KORENGAL VALLEY - DAY

1st Platoon walks in formation... Some of the men, like Rico and James, have tears in their eyes... Uniforms stained with blood and sweat...

In the background, an ENTIRE VILLAGE BURNS...

EXT. KORENGAL VALLEY - DUSK

The fire team stops at the bank of the river... Taking off their tops, trying to clean off the blood. Grady drops to a knee and drinks from his Camelback. He looks back at Ismail, standing on the trail...

GRADY

*Ismail. What happened back there.
Stays between us? Okay? We good?*

Ismail just stares ahead blankly. Shell shocked.

GRADY (CONT'D)
I said... Are we good?

Grady watches him for a moment before raising his rifle.

BANG!

A single shot echoes as Ismail drops like a brick.

EXT. PERIMETER - NIGHT

*Grady pours lighter fluid into a freshly dug pit. MATCH CUT
Ismail's BURNING BODY IN THE GRAVE WITH-*

EXT. BURIAL GROUND - FROM ABOVE - DUSK

The CASKETS from the opening sequence as they're lowered into the ground. Scoops of dirt THUD and CRACK against the wood.

-- WE PULL BACK REVEALING --

TALL SHADOWS RIPPLE BACK AND FORTH. AT FIRST, WE THINK MAYBE THEY'RE TREES...

BUT THEN WE REALIZE: THE GODS STAND AMONG THEM. TOWERING ABOVE.

INT. ISMAIL'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Back with Amelia and Ismail... He releases her hand.

ISMAIL

You were never stationed here.

Amelia nods.

ISMAIL (CONT'D)

Then you can still leave.

AMELIA

How?

ISMAIL

The bunker.

AMELIA

Where does it lead?

ISMAIL

Into your past.

EXT. COMBAT OUTPOST HALLORAN - NIGHT

The CARNAGE continues to play on, as Amelia exits Ismail's trailer... The barracks, TOC, and DFAC burning to the ground, casting plumes of smoke into the sky.

Only one of the guard posts remains standing: A tattered American flag, the stars and stripes on FIRE, snapping in the wind.

She passes Schlaack and Grady's bodies, flies already swarming over open eyes, and spots the bunker in the distance...

INT. BUNKER - NIGHT

Amelia enters... Sliding her hand down the side of the concrete... Until she comes to the end.

AMELIA

No. No! No!

Amelia kicks at the wall, slams her shoulder into it...

The SOUND of SOMETHING draws her attention back to the mouth of the BUNKER: Standing there, framed by the fires, One of the BUTCHERED DOGS... It growls, showing its razor-sharp teeth...

IT SPRINTS FOR HER!

Amelia turns to flee- This time finding the back wall gone...

INT. TUNNELS - NIGHT

Amelia runs through the dark, the sounds of the DOG fast approaching...

Then VOICES... Grady's, Rico's, Schlaack's, Kinney's... ALL PLEADING...

VOICES IN THE DARK
Major Yates! Major Yates! Don't leave us! Show us your war face!

Amelia just runs faster and faster... Bouncing off the dirt and concrete. Not DARING TO LOOK BACK UNTIL-

SHE TUMBLES INTO A BRIGHT BLINDING WHITE LIGHT...

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Amelia WAKES... Startled. Not knowing where she is... Someone rouses in the bed next to her... Trent. Her husband. He smiles and closes his eyes, draping his arm around her.

TRENT
It's early.

The sound of FEET fast approaching. Amelia's eyes SNAP to the open door-

And there's LEAH, 6, standing in her PJs, smiling. She jumps up onto the bed and embraces her mother.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

The coffee pot bubbles. Trent's reading the newspaper while keeping an eye on Leah, seated at the kitchen table, eating her Cheerios.

Amelia comes in, freshly showered. She reaches for the coffee.

TRENT
You okay, hun?

As she pours a cup-

AMELIA

Yeah, I just. What day is it?

TRENT

What day is it, Leah?

LEAH

Wednesday!

TRENT

Must have been a deep sleep, babe.
Want me to fix you breakfast?

AMELIA

Ummm...

TRENT

Take a seat, hun.

Trent hands her the newspaper... Amelia sits. She starts to read the front page of the NY Times-

CLOSE UP - NEWSPAPER

"OBAMA." "Racial Barrier Falls in Decisive Victory."

AMELIA

(Confused)

Why are you reading this?

TRENT

I don't know- Cause it's the paper?

AMELIA

No, the date. It's old.

TRENT

What are you talking about?

Trent double taps the date. NOVEMBER 5TH, 2008.

TRENT (CONT'D)

Oh- I think I know. Mommy's getting cold feet. Only a few more weeks until OCS. Just admit it- you already miss us...

AMELIA

But it's 2010. It's November 2010.

Leah and Trent both look at Amelia with curiosity, then concern. Trent crosses to her.

TRENT

Honey. I don't know what you took
last night to help you sleep- But I
can promise... You're not a time
traveler.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Amelia locks the door and stares at herself in the mirror.
And stares. And stares. And stares.

Until-

Flashing across the whites of her eyes: *The seven swimming snakes.*

SMASH TO BLACK.