

BLACK HAWK DOWN

By

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Based on the book by
Mark Bowden

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BLACK HAWK DOWN

SOUNDS IN THE BLACKNESS. Whump-whump...WHUMP-WHUMP-WHUMP.
Boots slapping across hard packed earth. Many boots, a horde
of men running. Running for safety...

FADE IN:

EXT. BARREN PLANE - DAY

Anemic earth beneath a sky of purest blue. WHUMP-WHUMP-WHUMP,
sounds of boots coming closer. No speaking. Just boots.

CLOSE - THE FIRST pair passes, just a blur. Another pair.
Another. Black blurs kicking up dust.

PULLING BACK - they are not boots at all, but hooves.

EXT. AFRICAN LANDSCAPE - DAY

A HERD of goats trot briskly along the sun baked ground. The
sounds of BOOTS meld with the goat hooves, whump-clop.

AN AFRICAN BOY, wearing a colorful *ma-awis* robe, chatters at
his charges. Rawboned goats bleat in a chorus of protest.
The Boy shepherds the stragglers with a long staff.

The goats wander across a vast African veldt. A timeless
landscape of natural beauty and wonder. For all we know, this
is a hundred years ago or more...

UNTIL A RUMBLING from the sky drowns out the sounds of the
goats. The earth trembles. The Boy looks skyward.

IN THE SKY - a massive C-130 Starlifter aircraft bellows
overhead, startlingly out of place over this ageless landscape.

THE BOY - yanks a CELL PHONE from a pocket in his robe.
Punches numbers as he runs, goats forgotten. Chatters into
the phone as he reaches the top of A DUSTY HILL, revealing --

A MODERN CITY, sprawling across the African plane. Buildings
and homes spread as far as the eye can see, radiating toward
the shimmering Indian Ocean, a distant blue-green jewel.

TITLE: MOGADISHU, SOMALIA, OCTOBER 1993.

The C-130 drones directly toward Mogadishu. As it passes, the
body of the aircraft reveals a bright emblem: USA.

EXT. MOGADISHU STREET CORNER - DAY

A SOMALI Militia Man listens intently to the cell phone
pressed to his ear. Nods, says a few Somali words, hangs up.

THE MAN runs through the streets, pounding on doors, shouting at the top of his lungs a Somali sentence, over and over. The last word he repeats is very familiar..."Americans."

SOMALI MILITIA MEN bolt from their corrugated tin homes. Men tote rocket propelled grenade launchers (RPGs).

IN THE SKY - the distant C-130 comes into view, a spec over the city, four propellers churning hot African updrafts.

ON THE STREETS - dozens of Militia Men with RPGs run to pre-arranged sites. Squat above holes dug in the earth to absorb the back blast of the grenade launchers. They aim, and wait.

As they do, the bellow of TRUCK ENGINES fills the world...

EXT. ANOTHER PART OF MOGADISHU - DAY

VROOOM! A VEHICLE BLURS by, roaring past a third-world urban nightmare -- jigsaw houses of corrugated tin, streets lined with detritus, burned car hulks, stacks of old truck tires.

ENGINES rattle the corrugated tin homes as --

A US ARMY HUMVEES ROARS past, huge wheels kicking up clouds of orange Mogadishu dust. VRRROOOM! Another. Another. So close we can't make out how many vehicles there are.

Rail-thin Somalis, eyes dulled by starvation, watch the convoy go by. The people are soon lost in billowing clouds of dust...

EXT. ABOVE THE CONVOY - DAY

The convoy cruises through A SEA OF PEOPLE, crowding an expansive open air market. Waves of outstretched hands ripple and swell. Vacant eyes plead. A fractured humanity.

INT. A HUMVEE - CONT.

MATT EVERSOMANN, Staff Sergeant, U.S. Rangers, watches hordes of emaciated Somalis out his window. He whispers, awestruck:

EVERSMANN

My God...look at them all.

OVERHEAD - THE CONVOY of 25 military vehicles part the ocean of hunger and despair.

SEVEN US humvees escort FIFTEEN United Nations flatbed trucks. Trucks carry mountains of rice in ten pound bags.

TENS OF THOUSANDS of Somalis crowd the square.

IN THE SKY - four US BLACK HAWK HELICOPTERS roar over the convoy. Powerful rotors fill the world with thunder.

IN THE CHOPPERS - CREW CHIEFS stand in open cargo bay doors, gripping mounted .50 cal's, staring down, ready for anything.

TITLE: THIS IS A TRUE STORY.

IN THE HUMVEE - Eversmann shouts to be heard.

EVERSMANN
More than last week!

Next to him, CORPORAL JAMIE SMITH, tall and lean, with a perpetual grimace branded across his face, shrugs.

SMITH
Food ain't making it to the people.

EXT. THE BAKARA MARKETPLACE, MOGADISHU - DAY

THE CONVOY rumbles to a stop.

THE SEA of people washes over the trucks in a desperate wave.

SEVENTY U.S. RANGERS in full battle gear leap from humvees, try to push back the crowd. A nightmare sea of greedy hands.

EVERSMANN AND SMITH are in the midst of the chaos, shoving the crowd back. Like trying to push away the ocean at high-tide.

EVERSMANN
Back off! I said BACK OFF!

LT. COLONEL MCKNIGHT, face veteran-impassive, strides confidently past grabbing hands. Shouts to Eversmann:

MCKNIGHT
You want command someday, Eversmann?
Get your shit together. Take control
of this perimeter.

Eversmann turns to Smith, flashes a "sure thing" look. Then:

EVERSMANN
Get me those barriers! Let's move!

RANGERS toss collapsible metal barriers down from trucks. Quickly set them up and PUSH them against the crowd.

EVERSMANN
United Nations workers! U.N. People,
listen up! Move that food down here!

Whump! Bags of rice bearing the UN logo hit orange dirt.

UN PERSONNEL pass out ten-pound rice bags. Somali hands grab for them, tearing some bags in half, rice spilling everywhere. Handfuls are snatched from the dirt.

UN WORKERS with megaphones shout instructions in Somali. Tinny amplified voices drown in the cacophony.

OVERHEAD, the drone of an enormous aircraft catches the attention of Eversmann. He looks skyward to see --

THE C-130, flying low, two hundred feet off the deck.

EVERSMANN

What idiot would fly over the city?

SMITH

Someone who's in for a rough ride.

The aircraft's shadow flashes over them.

INT. C-130 STARLIFTER - DAY

Huge pallets of cargo and equipment fill the enormous belly of the aircraft. Rows of passenger seats in front sit empty, save for A LONE PASSENGER.

CHARLES TASKER, Assistant Director of the National Security Council, rubs his eyes. Puts a sheaf of reports back in his briefcase. Smooths wrinkles in his rumpled suit.

Then a sound -- a muffled BOOM.

Concerned, Tasker undoes his seatbelt. BOOM! closer now. The aircraft LUNGES, sending Tasker tumbling to the metal floor.

EXT. MOGADISHU STREET CORNER - DAY

The C-130 is bearing down at the Somali Militia Men. They point RPG tubes up at the looming aircraft. THEY FIRE.

PHWOOSH! Backblasts ERUPT into holes in the ground, nearly eclipsing shooters in flame. RPGs rise on wobbly smoke trails, dozens ascending to greet the C-130.

INT. C-130 STARLIFTER - DAY

TASKER, glasses askew on his face, rips open the cockpit door.

IN THE COCKPIT - TWO PILOTS struggle with the controls. Out of the panoramic windshield, smoke trails lace the sky.

TASKER

What the hell is going on?!

PILOT
Anti aircraft missiles!

BA-BOOM! Closer now, the C-130 is HURLED upward. The pilots PULL BACK on the flight controls, urging the behemoth to climb.

TASKER
Somalis don't have Stingers!

Boom! BOOM! Tasker careens into the doorframe.

TASKER
Why are we flying over the city?

PILOT
Tower's orders! Get back in your seat!

BOOM! BOOM! The airframe shakes, Tasker clutching the cockpit doorway, eyes wide. More RPG trails shudder up towards them.

EXT. US AIRBASE - DAY

The US Airbase hugs the coastline of the Indian Ocean. A long expanse of black runway sits empty.

A US HUMVEE speeds along an access road, tires belching dirt. The humvee comes to a squealing stop before the CONTROL TOWER.

A humvee door bangs open. GENERAL WILLIAM F. GARRISON steps out, unlit cigar clenched in his mouth, 9mm strapped in a shoulder holster. He looks to the Western sky.

THE SKY - the C-130 gains altitude, RPGs exploding underneath.

GENERAL GARRISON
Un-fucking-believable.

COLONEL MATTHEWS, mid-30s Army lifer, climbs out from behind the wheel. Garrison's right-hand-man points with his thumb.

COLONEL MATTHEWS
Tower, General?

GENERAL GARRISON
Tower.

INT. AIRBASE TOWER - CONT.

Three young AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS stand at attention. One finally speaks up, voice quivering:

AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLER
S-sir. 'Sposed to be some NSC prick on board. Thought I'd give him a taste of what we put up with every day. Sir.

Garrison's Texas drawl creaks like an old staircase.

GENERAL GARRISON

Son, no one screws with the NSC prick...
(eyes them all)
...Except for me. Understood?

The Men glance at one another, unsure if Garrison is joking.

EXT. BAKARA MARKET, THE MARKET'S EDGE - DAY

At the edge of the huge open market, ARMED SOMALI MILITIA stand on "technicals" (jeeps with a .50 caliber machine gun bolted on the back), like waiting jackals.

A WOMAN tries to get past them, refuses to give up her rice bag to militia men. They point AK-47s.

ON EVERSMAANN - he grabs a UN SOLDIER, points to the distance.

EVERSMANN

Who are those guys taking the food?

UN SOLDIER

Perhaps Darod Clan. Or Habr Gidr clan.
All are the same. Guns. Many guns.

RANGER CAPTAIN STEELE, a bulldog of a man, barrel-chests his way to Eversmann and Smith.

CAPTAIN STEELE

We're gone in one hour, Eversmann.

Eversmann nods, then hears the CRACK of gunfire.

AT THE CROWD'S EDGE - the woman defending her bag of rice now lies on the ground, blood pooling around her head.

EVERSMANN

Captain Steele! They just shot a woman!

INT. BLACK HAWK CHOPPER - DAY

Black Hawk pilot MIKE DURANT circles above the crowd. The crowd swells and moves like a single colossal beast.

CAPTAIN STEELE (O.S.)

Six Four, Militia at the northeast edge
of the market just killed a local.

DURANT

Roger that, Juliet One.

Durant swings his mighty craft toward the edge of the market.

SOMALI MILITIA tear-ass on their technicals, Durant's Black Hawk an avenging angel shrieking down from the clear blue sky. One man tumbles to the dirt. His comrades do not stop to help.

EXT. FOOD PROTECTION CONVOY - CONT.

EVERSMANN'S POV - Black Hawk rotors kick up a massive cloud of dust, obscuring the dead woman. Then she disappears from view.

EVERSMANN

For a bag of rice.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. AIRBASE - DAY

A harried Tasker, hair disheveled, lugs his briefcase across the tarmac, the massive C-130 parked behind him.

TASKER

What the hell were you doing sending me over the city? Trying to scare me?

REVERSE - General Garrison and Colonel Matthews wait at the humvee. Garrison takes the free time to light his Cuban.

GENERAL GARRISON

Pleasure as always, Mr. Tasker.
Welcome to scenic Mogadishu.

TASKER

I see the same intel you do, General.
You know the Somalis have been trying to obtain stingers for months.

GENERAL GARRISON

You coming or not?

Garrison motions to the Humvee. Tasker fumes, but gets in. Garrison rolls his eyes at Colonel Matthews, climbs in.

TASKER

(as the Humvee pulls away)
We could've been killed.

EXT. US MILITARY BASE - DAY

The General's humvee motors past the triple-perimeter fencing and armed checkpoint. A SENTRY salutes as the Humvee passes.

The base is comprised of a dozen unimaginative buildings. Flags on rooftops ripple halfheartedly in the breeze.

The humvee passes four Black Hawks, resting like napping beasts. Tan humvees and two five-ton flatbeds sit idle.

IN THE HUMVEE - Garrison sees a group of about 25 MEN standing around two dusty humvees.

GENERAL GARRISON

Looks like the D-Boys caught something.

ON THE MEN - this is the fearsome Delta Force. They are bigger, stronger, older and better trained than the Rangers. They wear no uniforms, eschew Army regulations, rank, attire.

TWO DEAD ANIMALS are strapped to the hoods of two humvees. Some of the soldiers nod at Garrison. Delta does not salute.

GENERAL GARRISON

(out the window)

What's cooking tonight, Sergeant?

SERGEANT PAUL HOWE, a massive Delta man with the body of a serious weight lifter, calls after him:

HOWE

Wild pig. Gonna make a nice barbecue.

IN THE HUMVEE -- Tasker watches the Delta men recede from view.

TASKER

It'd be nice if the Delta Force could catch something other than wild game.

GENERAL GARRISON

Mr. Tasker, Delta are the only soldiers I've commanded that don't need me to give them orders. They are the best.

The humvee stops before a squat dome bristling with antennae, the JOINT OPERATIONS CENTER is nicknamed "The Porcupine."

EXT. US MILITARY BASE - SUNSET

THE FOOD PROTECTION CONVOY returns to the base, Humvees rumbling through triple-perimeter fences.

BLACK HAWKS buzz over the convoy, peel off to the hangar, flying over --

THE BARRACKS - a metal coffin, half a football field long.

INT. THE BARRACKS - EVENING

Impersonal, utilitarian. Metal walls. Over 90 men crammed together in the sweltering night air.

Somehow, they've made it their home.

US flags hang from rafters. Pictures of girlfriends, family, pasted to walls. Marathon board and card games in session. Two ping-pong tables in a far corner.

AT A PING PONG TABLE - Eversmann and Smith play a heated game. They are very good. The white ball click-clacks between them.

SMITH

When are we gonna do something?

EVERSMANN

We are doing something.

SMITH

Protecting food shipments? There's not enough food for half these people.

EVERSMANN

Maybe we're just helping people, Smith. Simple as that.

SMITH

A woman got her head blown off today for a bag of Uncle Ben's. Some help.

EVERSMANN

So what's your solution?

Click-clack, click-clack. Smith shrugs.

SMITH

We shouldn't be here. Simple as that.

EVERSMANN

We just let a country commit genocide? Sit back and watch on CNN?

SMITH

Eversmann, what interest can the U.S. possibly have in a place like Somalia?

EVERSMANN

Humanitarian interests.

SMITH

Oh, screw that.

EVERSMANN

These people have no government, no food, no jobs. Aidid steals their food, kills anyone in his way.

SMITH

I was trained to fight, not serve rice.

EVERSMANN

You were trained to make a difference
in the world, Smith. So was I.

SMITH

Plenty of hungry people back in Jersey.

Smith hits a high lob, and --

EVERSMANN

Well, I believe in what we're doing.

--WHAP! Eversmann smacks the ball into Smith's forehead.

EXT. US MILITARY BASE - DAWN

THE SUN, an orange fireball over the Indian Ocean, blasts the
the US Base with morning light. Heat waves ripple from the
domed metal roof of the Joint Operations Center.

INT. JOINT OPERATIONS CENTER - MORNING

The nerve center. Maps, grids, satellite images. Walls lined
with monitors displaying different views of Mogadishu. A
glass wall separates the nerve center from a BRIEFING ROOM.

INT. BRIEFING ROOM - MORNING

A plaque reads: NEVER LEAVE A MAN BEHIND. Nearby: a picture
of MOHAMED AIDID. Words on the photo: PUBLIC ENEMY #1.

GENERAL GARRISON studies intel reports at a wide table.

GENERAL GARRISON

Stebbins!

JOHN STEBBINS trots in with a coffee pot. Short and squat,
Stebbins has a likeable baby face. Pours Garrison a fresh cup.

STEBBINS

That's your third cup, General.

GENERAL GARRISON

Thanks, mother hen.

TASKER slouches into the room. The NSC man looks wiped out.

GENERAL GARRISON

Morning, Mr. Tasker. Sleep well?

TASKER

It was hot. I slept like shit.

GENERAL GARRISON

That's the Mog for you. Have a seat.

TASKER

General, we have a lot to discuss--

GENERAL GARRISON

Have some coffee for Chrissakes. You got all week to grill me.

Tasker reluctantly sits. Stebbins pours him a cup, leaves.

TASKER

I'm not here to grill you, General. I'm here to interview prisoners, observe and report. Nothing more.

GENERAL GARRISON

Bullshit. Washington sent you here to give us a kick in the ass.

TASKER

Okay. Want the bottom line? You have the most elite soldiers in the world and the best equipment. Yet for two months you haven't been able to catch one little Mogadishu gang leader.

GENERAL GARRISON

CNN reminds me of that fact every day.

On a wall monitor behind Garrison, CNN airs a report on Somalia. Starving people, faces sunken, limbs emaciated.

TASKER

I don't think you realize just how concerned the NSC is about about getting into a drawn out conflict. They don't want an Iraq. Or Vietnam.

GENERAL GARRISON

Mister, I requested an AC-130 Spectre Gunship, more armor, and more men. I have been stonewalled at every turn.

TASKER

We feel you have adequate resources now.

GENERAL GARRISON

Give me the equipment I need and I'll level the city to find Aidid.

TASKER

Heavy armor could give the Somalis the wrong impression -- that we're an aggressive military operation.

GENERAL GARRISON

Well, we wouldn't want to send the wrong impression. Not to a man who murdered 24 Pakistani soldiers, some of whom, I might add, were flayed to death.

TASKER

I know. I saw the report.

GENERAL GARRISON

Aidid is a war criminal who must be captured with extreme prejudice.

TASKER

Then for God's sake, why hasn't he been?

Garrison puts his boots on the table with a thud. Leans back.

GENERAL GARRISON

Somali History 101: late 1800s, Mohamed Abdullah Hassan -- guy they called "Mad Mullah" -- murdered hundreds in a campaign of bloody territorialism. Your basic Muslim pain in the ass. The British Empire, local law at the time, decide to catch and arrest Mad Mullah. Six expeditions over twenty one years. Never caught him. The entire British Empire. At its zenith of its power. Couldn't capture the guy.

(eyes bore into Tasker)

One little Mogadishu Gang leader.

There is the sound of rotor blades: *whup, whup, whup* --

EXT. THE OCEAN - MORNING

Whup, whup, whup -- a Black Hawk eclipses the rising sun, the craft hugging the sandy coastline. Under the rotors, heat waves billow from the twin engines of the enormous machine.

INT. BLACK HAWK SUPER SIX FOUR - MORNING

Chopper pilot Mike Durant descends toward the US base. His cargo: new guys BLACKBURN and KOWALEWSKI. Durant shouts:

DURANT

Welcome to the Mog! Your new home!

INT. HEADQUARTERS - MORNING

Company clerk Stebbins gulps coffee as he types, wide-eyed Blackburn and ghostly Kowalewski before him.

STEBBINS

What brings you to this garden spot of the world, Blackburn?

BLACKBURN

Don't know. Got a call: "Get your gear, you're goin' to Africa."

STEBBINS

How old are you, anyway?

BLACKBURN

Eighteen. I'll be eighteen next month.

STEBBINS

Helluva first assignment. Doughnut?

Stebbins offers them a powdered doughnut from a box. They refuse. The clerk's nimble fingers select one that speaks to him. Stebbins cheerfully bites into it.

EXT. ROAD - MORNING

Bouncing along in a jeep on unpaved roads, Stebbins drives the two new guys toward the gleaming ocean.

STEBBINS

We been doing raids for almost two months. Raids last an hour, two, tops.

BLACKBURN

You been on all of 'em?

STEBBINS

Naw, the Army found out I do something more important. I can type.

In back, Kowalewski slathers his face with SPF 45 sunblock. He's white as the frosting on a wedding cake.

KOWALEWSKI

Sounds great. Doughnuts and coffee.

STEBBINS

To some, maybe. Not to me.

KOWALEWSKI

What, you'd rather get shot at?

STEBBINS

Couple years ago, I was working in a bagel shop back home. Wife and kid. Couldn't afford health insurance. Ten hour days in front of these huge ovens.

Stebbins takes a sharp turn, comes over a rise to see --

SEVEN BLACK HAWKS, circling in complex patterns over the shoreline. Endlessly practicing maneuvers.

STEBBINS

Saw those Army commercials, something clicked in me. Few years later, here I am -- in Africa! Typing... Never shoulda said I had office experience. Kept me out of the Gulf War, too.

He turns down a sandy road toward the FIRING RANGE.

INT. BLACK HAWK SUPER SIX FOUR - MORNING

Mike Durant choppers toward the ocean. Says into his headset:

DURANT

Elvis, come in. Six One, come in.

EXT. BLACK HAWK SUPER SIX ONE - CONT.

On the front of this Black Hawk is a crude painting of Elvis Presley, the words "VELVET ELVIS" painted beneath.

INSIDE - supercool CLIFF "ELVIS" WOLCOTT buzzes over the ocean. Black t-shirt reads "Night Stalkers Don't Quit."

ELVIS

Durant! You missed several examples of the best chopper piloting on earth.

DURANT (O.S.)

Can't be. I just got here.

ELVIS

You're no match for Elvis's genius. Where are you anyway?

IN DURANT'S CHOPPER - Durant takes the craft lower, revealing ELVIS'S chopper directly in front of him. Mere yards away.

DURANT

Right on your ass, genius.

ELVIS'S CHOPPER - Elvis smiles to himself.

ELVIS

Elvis is gonna shake you loose, Durant.
(bad imitation of the King:)
One for the money -- two for the show--

DURANT (O.S.)

God, please no! Don't sing!

Elvis cranks a BOOMBOX in the chopper, and the REAL "Blue Suede Shoes" takes over. "Three to get ready--"

ON THE CHOPPERS - Elvis' Black Hawk banks, hard, Durant right on his tail. The King BLARES from the boombox as the two choppers chase each other into the distance....

EXT. SOMEWHERE OUTSIDE MOGADISHU - DAY

GENTLE WIND whispers through waist high elephant grass that crowns a rolling hill outside the city perimeter. Something stirs within the sun baked vegetation...

TWO DELTA FORCE SOLDIERS - faces streaked with camouflage, crawl through the high grass. Stealthy as lions on the stalk.

A SNIPER'S SCOPE slides forward, trained on the city.

POV, SCOPE - Mogadishu neighborhood: kids play soccer with a tin can. Militia Men with AK-47s watch them with glazed eyes.

REVERSE - Snipers GARY GORDON and RANDY SHUGHART are nearly invisible in their camouflage. Shughart says to A THIRD MAN:

SHUGHART

You said this was gonna be fun, Mace.

JOHN "MACE" MACEJUNAS lies between the two snipers. Ice pick eyes, face molded with a sculptor's chisel. Mace mutters:

MACE

Aren't you guys having fun?

Gordon sticks a wad of chaw in his mouth.

GORDON

Fellas are probably barbecuing right now. Havin' a blast.

SHUGHART

We circled this whole city and I still don't know what you're looking for.

POV, SCOPE - a Somali TECHNICAL, bristling with Militia, roars down a tight street. Speeds toward smoke in the distance.

MACE

Nothing... Everything.

GORDON

That about covers it.

POV, SCOPE - narrow streets, cul-de-sacs, dead ends.

MACE

Mogadishu streets are like mazes. I
wanna know this place inside and out.
And not from the belly of a chopper.

SHUGHART sweeps his scope over the city. Mutters:

SHUGHART

What if Aidid stepped into your
crosshairs right now?

MACE

Supposed to arrest him, not assassinate
him. He's a war criminal.

GORDON

You believe all that, Mace?

MACE

Doesn't matter what I believe.

SHUGHART

Heard he ordered his Militia to kill
his own civilians, then blamed it on
the U.N. Me? I'd shoot the bastard.

GORDON

Yep. This man needs to die.
(spits)
Plain and simple.

Mace's eyes leave the scope. He starts crawling backward.

MACE

Come on. Let's get back to base. I'm
tired of eating grasshoppers.

The Delta soldiers disappear into the landscape. Only the
wind in the high grass remains.

EXT. FIRING RANGE - MORNING

Targets lined a 50 foot high sand dune. Over 100 soldiers
blast away at the distant targets.

CAPTAIN STEELE pulls up in a humvee. Shouts over gunfire:

CAPTAIN STEELE

Sergeant Eversmann!

EVERSMANN, watching new guys Blackburn and Kowalewski fire at
targets, shoulders his weapon. Trots over. Salutes.

CAPTAIN STEELE

Chalk Four's replacement Lieutenant had an epileptic seizure last night. We're fresh out of Lieutenants. Want the job?

EVERSMANN

You know I do, Captain.

CAPTAIN STEELE

Can you handle it? I need to know.

EVERSMANN

I can handle it, sir.

Steele considers him for a long moment. Nods.

CAPTAIN STEELE

You got Chalk Four. Don't screw it up.

Eversmann watches Steele walk away, controlling his excitement. Then, the smallest of smiles graces his face.

EXT. FIRING RANGE - MORNING

DOWN THE LINE - Rangers NELSON and WADDELL stop to reload. Nelson sighs in exasperation.

NELSON

Stop shooting at my targets!

Waddell, an 18 year-old with sharp, curious eyes, glances over.

WADDELL

Are you referring to me?

NELSON

Why don't you go read one of your books. Leave the shooting to men.

WADDELL

Is that what you are? A man?

Captain Steele appears behind them.

CAPTAIN STEELE

Nelson, Waddell, perimeter duty tonight.

Captain Steele walks off to correct a shooter's stance.

NELSON

Waddell, you truly are an asshole.

EXT. NEARBY SAND DUNES - MORNING

Eversmann and Smith walk through the sand, trailing new guys Blackburn and Kowalewski. They come to--

A ROW OF HUMVEES in the midst of practicing maneuvers. Eversmann calls up to a big kid named PILLA.

EVERSMANN

Pilla! Give the new guys a refresher on the .50 cal, willya?

PILLA

(thick Jersey accent)

Can do, Eversmann. Climb aboard, new guys -- Jesus! What's on your face?

KOWALEWSKI

Sun block.

PILLA

Oh. Okay. You guys fired a .50 caliber before, uh, what was your name?

KOWALEWSKI

Kowalewski.

PILLA

You're shittin' me?

(Kowalewski shakes his head)

You need a friggin nickname.

KOWALEWSKI

Fellas at Benning called me "Alphabet."

PILLA

That's perfect. Okay, climb into the turret, Alphabet.

("Alphabet" climbs in)

The beauty and terror of this weapon, gentlemen, is you can swing it around 360 degrees. Just don't turn around and blow your friend's head off...

EVERSMANN AND SMITH walk off toward the target range.

SMITH

How's it feel to be in command?

EVERSMANN

Exciting.

SMITH

Nervous?

EVERSMANN

Wouldn't you be? I'll have a dozen
guys I'm accountable for with Somalis
trying to kill us. I'm nervous as hell.

They head back toward the pop-pop! of the firing range.

EXT. PRISON ISLAND KISMAYO - LATE AFTERNOON

A BLACK HAWK lands on the offshore prison island of Kismayo.
Waves crash on craggy rocks below the landing pad.

General Garrison gets out, ducks rotor wash. He is followed
by Tasker and Colonel Matthews.

INT. PRISON ISLAND - CONT.

Dank stairwells lead down to dungeon conditions. Garrison and
Tasker are guided by a Pakistani prison guard. They stop at
the last cell. Garrison motions for the guard to open it.

GENERAL GARRISON

Here's your chance to interview a real
Mogadishu gang leader, Tasker.

A SOMALI MAN, reading a thick text, looks up at his visitors.

INT. PRISON CELL - LATER

Tasker sits opposite the prisoner. Garrison hovers behind.

TASKER

They treating you well here, Mr. Atto?

The Somali man is well dressed, wears a close-cropped beard
and wire rimmed glasses. Speaks excellent English:

ATTO

My name is Hassan. I am falsely
imprisoned. I am a schoolteacher.

Tasker pulls several photos from his briefcase -- all
surveillance shots of Atto with warlord Mohamed Aidid.

TASKER

Let's cut the bullshit. You are Osman
Otto, Mohamed Farah Aidid's second
lieutenant. You've been here four
weeks. We can keep you here for a year.

ATTO

Unless I betray my countrymen?

TASKER

Give us information to end the bloodshed. Then you can go home.

ATTO

Americans. Your motives are so naive, they are comic. Just how do you plan to stop the bloodshed?

TASKER

By arresting Mohamed Aidid.

ATTO

Mohamed Aidid is our leader. A hero. Why would I want to betray him?

TASKER

He's a monster. He ordered his own people killed. He murdered and flayed twenty-four Pakistani soldiers.

ATTO

You know what they say about desperate times... Aidid will restore the order to Somalia.

TASKER

We will restore the order here.

GENERAL GARRISON

You're wasting your time, Tasker.

ATTO

You take away Aidid, ten more like him rise up to take his place.

TASKER

We'll take our chances.

ATTO

Are you ready to go to war? To die for your beliefs? How about you, General? Are your soldiers ready to die?

(Garrison eyes him)

We are... You cannot "arrest" a belief.

Atto turns back to his text, interview terminated.

INT. MESS HALL, US BASE - EVENING

Chow time. Rangers stand in a line 100 men long.

Delta men Mace, Shughart and Gordon walk in, cut ahead of new guy Blackburn. The Delta men look like starving beasts.

BLACKBURN

Hey!

EVERSMANN grabs Blackburn's shoulder.

EVERSMANN

Don't, Blackburn. They're Delta.

ACROSS THE ROOM - pissed, Ranger Captain Steele walks over.

CAPTAIN STEELE

Get in line like everyone else.

Mace turns, looks at Steele like he's not even there.

MACE

We been out for three days. We're hungry.

Rangers watch the standoff. Steele is a spit and polish Army lifer. Mace looks like a surfer. The mess hall is silent.

CAPTAIN STEELE

(points to Mace's gun)

That's a hot weapon. Safety should be on at all times in the base.

Mace steps closer to Steele, holds up his index finger.

MACE

This is my safety.

Mace gets his tray of food. Shughart and Gordon follow.

CAPTAIN STEELE

Wait just a minute!

Delta Sergeant Howe intercedes. The massive Howe now puts one meaty arm out to stop Steele. His voice is a sack of gravel:

HOWE

Let it go. They got their food, let's call it quits, huh?

CAPTAIN STEELE

You Delta. You been walking around here for weeks like we're your servants. When the shit comes down, you D-Boys might just need the Rangers.

HOWE

When the shit comes down, Delta doesn't need anybody, Captain.

Howe leaves Steele standing there.

INT. BARRACKS - NIGHT

New guys Blackburn and Alphabet unpack their duffels at empty bunks. Alphabet lines six bottles of SPF 45 on his footlocker.

Blackburn notices a BLACK CURTAIN separating the barracks.

BLACKBURN

What's behind there?

Waddell, the kid with sharp eyes, reads a John Grisham book one bunk over. His buddy Nelson lies on the bunk above.

WADDELL

Open it and find out.

NELSON

Don't listen to Waddell, kid. That's Delta's side. You go in there, they throw you out. And I do mean throw.

DELTA'S SIDE OF THE CURTAIN - personal items are nonexistent. These men could disappear in an hour without leaving a trace.

SERGEANT HOWE cleans his weapon, biceps bulging. MACE does upside-down sit-ups, legs wrapped in a metal bunk frame.

Howe is a monster, but Mace is something else entirely. A veritable walking atlas of male musculature. Body fat: nil. You could sharpen a knife on his stomach muscles.

HOWE

When are you gonna upgrade that antique?

Howe motions to Mace's aged M-14, resting on Mace's bunk. Mace unhooks his legs, drops to the floor. Covets his rifle.

MACE

This? I'll never get rid of my M-14.

Howe grabs Mace's weapon. Hefts it. It's old and scarred.

HOWE

Old. Heavy. Big recoil. Try mine.

MACE

(picks up Howe's weapon)
Custom made CAR-15. Nice. Light.
Using the new 5.56 mm green-tip round?

HOWE

Punches through body armor.

MACE

Problem is, Somalis don't wear body armor. Those tungsten carbide penetrater tips will pass through a Skinny like a laser beam.

(nods to his own gun)

The M-14 was made for one purpose: to drop a man in his tracks.

(holds up a huge bullet)

This old beauty will blow right through a pine tree and leave a three foot exit hole.

They trade back. Howe stares down at his weapon doubtfully.

MACE

When I shoot someone, I wanna know their not getting up again.

HOWE

I doubt you'll shoot anyone here.

MACE

I don't know about that.

HOWE

This place is a mess. We'll be outta here faster than Panama.

MACE

Don't be too sure. Some of the Militia I saw were organized, motivated, and well armed. We better be ready.

Howe chews on this. Goes on cleaning his weapon.

EXT. THE CITY - NIGHT

Mogadishu in the moonlight: peaceful, welcoming. The buildings resemble those of a sleepy Mediterranean resort.

CLOSER - buildings are a uniform grimy orange. Corrugated tin roofs. Holes in walls for windows. Poverty abounds.

TWO CARGO TRUCKS rumble past. Armed Militia men wear the city's uniform of choice: disco-era Goodwill rejects. One wears a faded "Staying Alive" t-shirt.

THE TRUCK stops before a building. MILITIA unload crates.

INT. THE BUILDING - CONT.

An older Somali directs the off-loading. This is FIRIMBI. As crates are stacked, Firimbi grabs a crowbar and pries one open.

Six new AK-47s stare back.

Crates are stacked ceiling high. RPGs, grenades, tons of ammo.

Firimbi walks around back. Somalis load dozens of technicals with weapons for distribution to different neighborhoods.

Firimbi nods to himself. Speaks to the pale, cold moon.

FIRIMBI

(subtitled:)

Soon.

EXT. US MILITARY BASE - DAWN

A blood red sky rises over the base. First rays of sun beam down on Black Hawk windshields. The machines wait...

INT. JOINT OPERATIONS CENTER - MORNING

General Garrison leads a briefing. The room is filled with Delta, Ranger Officers and Pilots. Tasker stands in the back.

GENERAL GARRISON

A long-anticipated meeting of Aidid's senior cabinet is taking place today. And this time we know where, and when.

A tremor of excitement runs through the room. Eversmann tries to act cool, not overly excited. But he is.

GENERAL GARRISON

Our Somali spies assure us we can capture several top-tier Aidid officers. Possibly Aidid himself.

IN BACK: Stebbins projects a slide of Mogadishu streets on the large screen. Garrison's laser pointer zags across.

GENERAL GARRISON

Our target: a building next to the Olympic Hotel. Aidid's men will be somewhere in this three story structure.

(next slide: closer view)

Today's mission is composed of three elements: Strike Force, Security Force, and Extraction Force.

DELTA - faces impassive as they listen, hard as steel.

GENERAL GARRISON

First, the Strike Force: Delta. Delta will infiltrate the target building and seize all suspects within. Details are at the discretion of Delta, but I want these prisoners alive. Am I clear?

ON MACE AND HOWE - they nod at Garrison, not a problem.

GENERAL GARRISON

Security Force: Rangers. Four Ranger Chalks will take and hold four street corners around the target building.

Garrison's laser pointer flicks over four corners.

GENERAL GARRISON

I want this perimeter airtight. No one gets in, no one comes out. Captain Steele is in command of Ranger ground troops. Chalk leaders, remind your men of the rules of engagement before the mission. No firing unless someone points a weapon at you.

NEXT SLIDE: larger city view, the target building tiny.

GENERAL GARRISON

Last: Extraction Force. Lt. Colonel McKnight will lead his humvee column from the base to the target building.

MCKNIGHT, the impassive veteran, studies the map.

GENERAL GARRISON

The Extraction Force will load the Prisoners onto flatbed trucks. Rangers and Delta will load into the Humvees. Then back to base.

(laser points at a road)

Mission time: ninety minutes. Colonel?

COLONEL MATTHEWS

The mission code word today is "Irene."

GENERAL GARRISON

Be careful with the Somalis. We're hitting them during their Khat cycle.

HOWE

I'm sorry, General. Cot?

GENERAL GARRISON

Khat. Narcotic weed they chew. Gives them a wild energy. Top of their cycle is mid-afternoon. At night they're crashed out. So the timing today is poor, but can't be helped. Questions?

MACE

What kind of backup do we have?

GENERAL GARRISON
Tenth Mountain Division is at the UN
compound across the city, standing by.

ON HOWE AND MACE - they share a glance that shows how little
confidence they have in the 10th Mountain Division.

GENERAL GARRISON
We're heading into the belly of the
beast today; the core of Aidid's
militia. Use extreme caution.
(looks at the eager faces)
No one gets left behind. Good luck.

The men stand at attention.

INT. MEDICAL WARD - MORNING

A big Ranger named SIZEMORE idly foots a soccer ball as a
medic, SCHMID, examines his grotesquely inflamed elbow.

DOC SCHMID
I gotta ground you.

SIZEMORE
But there's a mission today!

DOC SCHMID
Bend it for me, Sizemore.
(Sizemore winces, can't)
Yeah. It's broken. And infected.

SIZEMORE
But I'm the assistant 60 gunner.

DOC SCHMID
I suggest you get a replacement.

SIZEMORE
We don't have a replacement.

Schmid prepares an injection.

DOC SCHMID
Well, I'm sure there's somebody.

INT. HEADQUARTERS - MORNING

A DOUGHNUT is dunked into a cup of coffee, devoured whole.

STEBBINS licks his fingers, takes a manila file folder from a
high pile. Oops, he spills his coffee on the files.

STEBBINS

Shit.

(spits crumbs everywhere)

Oh, shit!

He frantically brushes the doughnut fragments away as --
SIZEMORE appears in the doorway, elbow in a still-drying cast.

SIZEMORE

Stebby, how'd you like to put the
paperwork aside today? Take my place.

STEBBINS

(sees the cast)

You better not be screwing with me.

SIZEMORE

You know how to assist on the .60 gun?

STEBBINS

Hell yes, I do.

SIZEMORE

Then get your fucking gear.

CLOSE, ON THE DOUGHNUTS - Stebbins' form is a blur in the
doorway as he leaves his powdered friends behind.

INT. A TRAILER - MORNING

DELTA FORCE BRIEFING, men cluster around surveillance photos.
It's clear that this is a much different kind of briefing:

DELTA OPERATOR

Why, that's the stupidest fucking plan
I've ever heard.

ANOTHER DELTA

Then why don't you plan the mission,
you goddamn Neanderthal?

HOWE has to get in the middle of the two burly soldiers.

HOWE

Let's keep it simple, like always.
C Squad choppers in on the Little
Birds. B Squad in two Black Hawks, and
A Squad in the Hummers for back up.

(taps the photo)

C Squad hits the first floor. Keeps
going up till we find the pow-wow.

(nods from the men)

Shughart and Gordon are in the air to
cover the rooftops. Sound good?

Snipers Shughart and Gordon nod. Silence. Then, a sound:

MACE

Hmmm...

All eyes turn to the wiry, surfer-looking Operator.

HOWE

Who's that? Is that the Mutant Strain I hear? What's that "hmmm" mean?

MACE

Nothing. Just a regular "hmmm."

HOWE

Come on, Mace. What's on your mind?

MACE

According to the General, we're going to the worst part of the city at the worst time of day.

HOWE

You don't like it.

MACE

No. I don't.

HOWE

Me neither. There's nothing we can do.

Mace looks from the photos into the eyes of the other Delta.

MACE

Everything better go like clockwork.

INT. HELICOPTER HANGAR - MORNING

Eversmann briefs his Chalk. The eager faces include Smith, new kid Blackburn, Nelson and Waddell, others.

EVERSMANN

If you get out of the chopper on the left side, hold down the left side of the street. Get out on the right side, take the right side. Remember, you're Rangers, not ROTC asswipes. You're elite. So act like it. Questions?

Waddell raises his hand. Eversmann nods at him.

WADDELL

Am I supposed to take you seriously?

The men stifle laughter. Eversmann darkens.

EVERSMANN

Waddell, I didn't ask for this job.
But I'm in command. When we're out
there, you follow my orders like I'm a
four star general. Got it, dipshit?

WADDELL

Okay, okay. Sorry, Sergeant.

EVERSMANN

(the room is quiet now)
Check and re-check your gear. Then do
whatever helps you relax. I want you
cool and fluid. See you in a few hours.

INT. SECURE PHONE ROOM - MORNING

Chopper pilot Durant is allowed a rare phone call. He stares
at a photo of his young wife and infant son as he waits.

DURANT

Come on. Be there.

It rings and rings. Click. Woman's voice. Answering machine:

ANSWERING MACHINE (O.S.)

Lorrie, Mike and Joey aren't here right
now. Please leave a message!

There is the gleeful screech of a child's voice, then: Beep!

DURANT

Lorrie, they're letting me call again
tonight, so please be home. I'm safe.
Kiss Joey for me... That's it, I guess.
(doesn't want to hang up)
Miss you.

He hangs up. Puts the photo in his flight suit pocket.

EXT. THE TARMAC - MORNING

AH-6 "Little Bird" Choppers are being armed with rockets.
Forklift hydraulics whine as armaments are secured into place.

INT. HANGAR - CONT.

A HUGE kevlar vest slips over the company clerk's short body.
Sizemore straightens the vest. Sees Stebbins' hands shaking.

STEBBINS

I think I had too much coffee.

SIZEMORE

Look, in the first few minutes you'll be scared shitless. Then you'll be pissed they have the balls to shoot at you. That's when the anger takes over.

Sizemore starts tossing equipment from the overloaded clerk.

SIZEMORE

Shitcan the canteen. Two hour raid.
(tosses his NOD goggles)
Don't need night vision. Daytime raid.

STEBBINS

What if we get pinned down?

SIZEMORE

Somali Militia are a bunch of stoned burnouts. You'll be back in time for chow. Just take your corner and make sure no one gets past you.
(conks him on the helmet)
Yeah, the Skinnies are gonna be terrified of you, Stebby.

EXT. THE HUMVEE COLUMN - MORNING

PILLA, the big Jersey kid, loads .50 caliber rounds into the turret gun of his humvee. Wipes his hands in disgust.

PILLA

Alphabet, you're gettin' sunblock all over the ammo!

Alphabet, face pale white, hustles ammo to the Humvees.

ALPHABET

Sorry, Pilla. I don't wanna burn.

NEARBY - STRUEKER, Iowa farm boy and model Ranger, helps humvee leader McKnight hammer doors on the vehicles.

STRUEKER

You really think we need the doors, sir?

MCKNIGHT

These things'll stop a bullet at 20 yards. That we haven't even had them till now is sheer Army negligence.

McKnight finishes hammering. The door swings on its hinge.

INT. BASE CHAPEL - DAY

A garage sized hut. Sunlight beams through the open door. Religious icons of every variety hang on the wall. A row of lit candles in front offers flickering light.

EVERSMANN is kneeling before the candles. Crosses himself. Stands, turns to go. Jumps, startled when he sees --

MACE, sitting in the shadows in the corner. M-14 in pieces, each part being meticulously cleaned.

EVERSMANN
Shit. Didn't see you there.

MACE
...I like it in here. It's quiet.

Mace goes back to his weapon.

EVERSMANN
You're the guy who went to med school?

MACE
Three years.

Eversmann watches Mace work on the rifle.

EVERSMANN
Is it true what they say? You went 200 miles behind Iraqi lines in the Gulf?

Mace looks up, chiseled face in the shadows.

MACE
I like in here because it's quiet.

EVERSMANN
Sorry.
(moves to the door, turns)
Why do you Delta hate us?

MACE
We don't hate you.

EVERSMANN
You guys haven't said a word to the Rangers since you been here.

MACE
What do you want us to say?

EVERSMANN
Forget it.

Eversmann is about to leave when Mace speaks.

MACE

Hey. How come you Rangers are so gung-ho about getting into a battle?

EVERSMANN

Because. We want to test ourselves. Otherwise, we're like -- like a pro football team that never plays a game.

MACE

A game... In football, you get hit, you get up. In war, you get hit once, you're dead.

EVERSMANN

You know what I mean. War is what we all train for.

MACE

Be careful what you wish for.

EVERSMANN

I'd be lying if I said I didn't want to fight. You of of all people should understand.

MACE

Delta understand this: the best thing is to avoid confrontation. Because we been there. Rangers don't know, because you never been in a battle.

(looks up at Eversmann)

When you go through what I've been through, you come talk to me then.

Mace goes back to his weapon. Conversation over. Eversmann takes a last look at the stoic warrior. Then leaves.

INT. BARRACKS - DAY

Delta Sergeant Howe cleans his weapon. It seems to calm him.

HOWE

How's the novel coming, Griz?

"GRIZ" MARTIN, 20 year Delta vet with a splotchy birthmark on his face, draws in a sketchbook. Scowls.

GRIZ

Children's book. For my daughter.

HOWE

Sweet. What's it about, butterflies?

GRIZ

About a warrior. In the Dark Ages.

He shows Howe the sketch: a medieval warrior in armor.

HOWE

That's really good.

(Griz shrugs)

What's the story?

GRIZ

This warrior, he spends all his time away from his family guarding the outskirts of the village from this vicious one-eyed giant. He stays away so long, battling for so many years, that everyone forgets about him.

HOWE

I'd buy this kid's book. What then?

GRIZ

He finally kills the giant and returns to the village. He lost an eye in the battle, and he's dragging the giant's big sword. When the villagers see him, they think he's the giant. They scream and drive him away and...

(shrugs, embarrassed)

I don't know how to end it.

HOWE

Let your subconscious chew on it. Bet you have an ending by tonight.

A MEGAPHONE in the ceiling above them crackles to life.

CAPTAIN STEELE (O.S.)

Attention. This is Captain Steele.

(life stops in the barracks)

GET IT ON!

A cheer erupts, and 150 men whirl into action.

EQUIPMENT is put on with robot-like efficiency. Soldiers pull on desert fatigues, camo boots, kevlar vests, helmets.

INT. THE HANGAR - DAY

Ammo is slapped into weapons, extra clips stuffed into pouches, grenades tied onto belts by the half dozen. Sixty gunners crisscross huge ammo bandoliers over their chests.

EXT. THE TARMAC - DAY

RANGERS run across the hot tarmac to Black Hawk choppers.

DELTA'S C SQUAD runs for four MH-6 Little Birds. Howe and Mace strap onto benches on the outside of the chopper.

EXT. THE BLACK HAWKS - CONT.

Garrison shakes hands with his men. He comes to Stebbins.

GENERAL GARRISON
I'll miss your coffee! Good luck!

STEBBINS
Thank you, sir!

They shake hands. Garrison moves down the line, shaking hands, telling his men to be careful, wishing them luck.

BLACKBURN
Does the General usually do that?

EVERSMANN
No. That's the first time.

Garrison gives a final salute to the entire force and --

THE ROTOR BLADES whine to life. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven BLACK HAWK CHOPPERS awaken from mechanical slumber. The sound is bone-rattling, awesome. A symphony of steel.

The Black Hawks are a thing of beauty. Rotor blades a uniform blurred mass of metal, engines spouting rippling exhaust...

And inside the cargo bays are the trained dogs of war.

INT. JOINT OPERATIONS CENTER - CONT.

Garrison strides past video stations manned by Technicians. Six radio frequencies fill the air.

GENERAL GARRISON
How's it look, gentlemen?

A TECHNICIAN monitors a SATELLITE FEED of Mogadishu.

TECHNICIAN
Satellite feed is good, General.

ANOTHER TECHNICIAN watches a screen.

TECHNICIAN #2
P3-Orion in position, General.

FLASH - a gleaming P3-Orion spy plane, circling at 3,000 feet.

TECHNICIAN #3 (O.S.)
OH-58 Alpha, Beta, Charlie, ready.

FLASH - three OH-58 Choppers, buzzing toward us, high over Mogadishu. Cameras trained on the city below.

COLONEL MATTHEWS (O.S.)
Command 2, come in.

FLASH - to Black Hawk designated Command 2, circling the city.

C2 PILOT
This is Command 2. We are good to go.

IN THE JOC - General Garrison looks at Colonel Matthews.

GENERAL GARRISON
Give the word, Colonel.

COLONEL MATTHEWS
(into his headset:)
All elements, Irene. I repeat, Irene.

INT. DURANT'S SUPER SIX FOUR - DAY

Mike Durant smiles. Speaks into his headset microphone.

DURANT
Fuckin' Irene.

IN ANOTHER CHOPPER - ELVIS flashes a satisfied grin at the code word. He lifts up on the controls as --

THE ARMADA ascends. Little Birds whirl skyward, Delta carried aloft outside the choppers, the ultimate thrill ride. Black Hawks rise from the earth in tight formation.

INT. HUMVEE LEADER MCKNIGHT'S VEHICLE - CONT.

Humvee leader McKnight gives the order on his radio:

MCKNIGHT
Uniform Six Four, moving out.

The squad of nine Humvees and two 5-ton trucks bellow off.

INT. DURANT'S SUPER SIX FOUR - CONT.

Reflections of Black Hawks shimmer in Durant's helmet visor. He banks his craft toward the city, to Mogadishu. To the Mog.

The US War Machine is on the move.

EXT. OVER THE CITY - DAY

Choppers buzz toward the city, Indian Ocean behind them.

Red LED numbers cross the screen: 3:40 PM.

INT. DURANT'S SUPER SIX FOUR - CONT.

Company clerk STEBBINS spots burning tires in the city below.

STEBBINS

What are the burning tires?

NELSON

Signals to the militia!

DURANT turns to Eversmann, holds up two fingers.

EVERSMANN

(nods, shouts to his men:)

TWO MINUTES!

His Chalk stares back, grim and resolved. They're going in.

EXT. OVER THE TARGET BUILDING - DAY

Four MH-6 Little Birds shriek from the sky. Delta boots hang from side benches as the nimble choppers LAND on Somali dirt.

RED NUMBERS: 3:44 PM

Delta leap from chopper benches, on the move immediately. They charge toward the target building through walls of dust.

DELTA FORCE wear nothing to indicate they are US Soldiers. Black plastic hockey helmets cover their heads (for easier mobility), radio earplugs and wraparound microphones installed.

INT. TARGET BUILDING - CONT.

Delta race up back steps, rifles sweeping, ready. Mace and Howe stop at the FIRST DOOR.

TEN DELTA, led by birthmark-splotched GRIZ, take THREE OTHER DOORS. No need for words, Delta flash complex hand signals.

Howe pulls the pin on a flash bang as MACE KICKS THE DOOR IN.

BOOM! Howe and Mace sweep the room. Eyes moving with the gun.

MACE

CLEAR!

The floor is filled with shouts of "CLEAR!" Delta charge back to the staircase. Elapsed time to clear the floor: 15 seconds.

INT. DURANT'S SUPER SIX FOUR - DAY

Nelson slaps a plastic football mouth guard in his mouth.

BLACKBURN

What's that for?

NELSON

Last jump, I almost bit my tongue off!

Nelson smiles, his teeth covered in black plastic.

A three-inch thick "fast-rope" is pushed from the chopper, hanging like a nylon umbilicus. Loaded with gear, men start fast-roping. Seventy feet down through the swirling brownout.

INT. TARGET BUILDING, THIRD FLOOR - CONT.

UP THE STAIRS, Delta come to closed double doors.

MACE AND HOWE kick in the doors -- TOSS FLASHBANGS. BOOM! BOOM!

DELTA storms the room. Terrified Somalis teeter on their knees or sprawl on the floor, temporarily deaf and blind.

HOWE

Down on the ground! NOW!NOW!NOW!

Delta moves with shocking speed. Guns in faces, booming voices. Foot in the back if necessary.

MACE

DO IT NOW! NOW! DOWN! DOWN!

Somalis hit the deck, hands outstretched.

A BATHROOM DOOR opens. A wide-eyed Somali zips his pants, as -- Howe does a quick leg sweep. WHUMP! Howe jams his CAR-15 with an underneath pump-action shotgun into the man's face.

MACE'S eyes sweep the room: typewriter ribbons, shelves of stationery, pencils. Mace and Howe look at each other--

MACE

Wrong building.

HOWE

Wrong building.

EXT. ON THE GROUND - CONT.

The helicopters deliver their forces to the streets of the ragged city. Futuristic warriors descend from an orange sky.

Ninety pairs of boots WHUMP! to the earth. Somalis run in terror, disappearing into their ramshackle dwellings.

The streets clear like magic.

INT. JOINT OPERATIONS CENTER - CONT.

Garrison watches the monitors. Black Hawks deliver personnel, then whirl off into cover formation.

EXT. SOMALI SKYLINE - DAY

The sky is filled with men hurtling down ropes from the bellies of Black Hawks. It looks like an alien invasion.

EXT. SURROUNDING SOMALI STREETS - DAY

Some Somalis run TOWARD the Americans, AK-47s in hand.

A THIN SOMALI, toting a well worn AK-47, joins several Somalis taking wild shots down the street. They stick guns around the corner and rattle off rounds.

The Thin Man gets his turn, climbing on the roof of a rusted car hulk, sticking his gun around the corner. KRATAkratakrack!

EXT. THE PERIMETER - DAY

Company Clerk STEBBINS fast ropes, hits the dirt, falls on his ass. Helmet rolls off. Grabs it, runs for the nearest wall. He can hear the POP! and ZING! of wild Somali gunfire.

RANGER CAPTAIN STEELE ropes down, a vengeful Christian Crusader ready to lay waste to the heathen hordes. Steele sees blurred, running figures, armed with AK-47s. Shouts:

CAPTAIN STEELE

Be sharp, men!

INT. DURANT'S SUPER SIX FOUR - DAY

A swirling dust cloud surrounds the chopper.

DURANT

Eversmann, I can't see shit. We may be a block off the mark here.

Eversmann nods. Turns, sees Blackburn still in the chopper.

EVERSMANN

Hit it, Blackburn!

BLACKBURN

(to himself:)

Don't bite your tongue.

A mere three feet away, the fastrope is almost invisible in the massive dust cloud. Blackburn jumps and --

MISSES THE ROPE.

FROM THE GROUND - Blackburn plummets inexorably toward the earth, scream filling the air as -- WHHHUMP! he hits the dirt with a sickening crunch. Scream dying in his throat.

UP IN THE CHOPPER - Eversmann can't believe it.

EVERSMANN

Holy shit!

EVERSMANN'S POV - he JUMPS, catches the rope, gloved hands sliding forever through the sandstorm. The dust clears and--

--BLACKBURN is in a heap on the ground. Blood gurgles from his mouth. One eye open, one shut. Horribly injured.

EVERSMANN

Blackburn! Can you hear me?

EXT. RANGER CAPTAIN STEELE'S CHALK ONE - DAY

STEBBINS sees Somalis firing from behind walls, piles of rubble, tree stumps. Fleeting forms blocks away. Shadows.

Stebbins hits the dirt near a freaked-out SIXTY GUNNER.

SIXTY GUNNER

Stay close with that ammo, Stebby.

STEBBINS

Is this, uh, normal enemy fire?

SIXTY GUNNER

Fuck no! This is ten times worse than I've ever seen it.

STEBBINS

Can we shoot them, then?

SIXTY GUNNER

Don't fire unless fired upon.

STEBBINS

How can you tell?

Stebbins hears a strange sound - *tchew...tchew...tchew!*

SIXTY GUNNER

That laser-beam sound means they're shooting near you. The sound like a dry twig snapping, that's the little sonic boomlet going right past your head. At you. You'll know.

Snap! Snap! SNAP!

SIXTY GUNNER

Now they're shooting at us!

The Ranger levels withering fire at an alley a half block away.

Stebbins sees figures with weapons firing a block away. He levels his gun and SHOOTs! He's shooting at the enemy! It's exhilarating. His breath comes in ragged gasps.

EXT. ANOTHER PART OF THE CITY - DAY

BOXES of AK-47s are broken open. Greedy hands grab weapons.

A CROWD of angry Somali Militia load up technicals. Slap banana clips into AK-47s.

A GROUP of Somali civilians argue. Some want weapons, others want nothing to do with the battle. One Man finally spits at another in disgust and grabs an AK-47.

CAR TIRES are piled high by boys who are too young to fight. The tires are set aflame, black smoke curling skyward.

IN THE SKY, dozens of signals burn. Visible from miles away.

INT. TARGET BUILDING - DAY

DELTA FORCE bursts into a new room in the CORRECT BUILDING, surprising A DOZEN Somalis. Delta level weapons at them --

MACE

Down!DOWN!DOWN!

HOWE

Now!NOW!NOW!

The Somalis hit the deck.

INT. A BLACK HAWK - DAY

WADDELL is the last man to fast rope. The chopper is already pinging with AK-47 fire. A chopper CO-PILOT shouts to him:

CO-PILOT

No fear!

EXT. THE BELLY OF A BLACK HAWK - DAY

Waddell slides down the fastrope, muttering:

WADDELL

Easy for you to fuckin' say.

His size twelve black boots whistle down, treads of his soles hitting us, our world going black.

RED NUMBERS -- 3:52 PM.

Waddell looks up at the monstrous war machine bellowing away. Then runs to Eversmann's Chalk. Sees Blackburn gurgling.

WADDELL

What happened?

EVERSMANN

Waddell, cover the damn corner.
I said cover the corner! NOW!

Waddell reluctantly runs to the corner. His buddy Nelson is shooting at a growing mass of armed militia one block North.

NELSON

Waddell, stay down! It's gettin' hairy. I already dropped three of 'em.

Waddell spots a SOMALI MILITIA MAN with his back to them, firing at another Chalk blocks away.

WADDELL

There's one! Shoot that guy!

NELSON

No, he'll come right to us, watch.

The Militia Man backs up, twenty yards away. Then, seemingly sensing something, he whirls, raises his AK-47 as --

Nelson opens up. Blasts a dozen rounds from his M-60 machine gun ("the pig") into the man -- *blat, blat, blat!*

WADDELL

(slightly sickened)

Well, you got him.

EXT. THE CITY - DAY

Grizzled veteran MCKNIGHT leads his HUMVEE EXTRACTION FORCE through a raging sandstorm kicked up by the Black Hawks.

MCKNIGHT

(into radio)

Uniform Six Four is in position.

The TARGET BUILDING looms through his dusty windshield.

EXT. EVERSMAANN'S CHALK FOUR POSITION - DAY

Doc Schmid sticks a plastic breathing tube down Blackburn's throat, inserts an IV in his arm. Eversmann grabs the radio.

EVERSMANN

Captain Steele, sir, I got a guy here who's hurt. Need to extract him ASAP.

CAPTAIN STEELE (O.S.)

Chopper cannot land at this time, Chalk Four. Try ground force, over.

DOC SCHMID

We gotta get him outta here, Eversmann.

Corporal Smith charges up, breathing hard.

SMITH

Eversmann, I think we got dropped in the wrong place.

Eversmann sees Chalk 3 three blocks away. Might as well be a million miles. He shouts into the radio:

EVERSMANN

Sir, we're quite a distance from the ground force. Can't get a visual.

CAPTAIN STEELE (O.S.)

Then send one of your men on foot.

Eversmann clicks off the radio. Looks at his men.

EVERSMANN

Who's the lucky volunteer?

No one jumps at the chance to run through enemy fire.

SMITH

I'm fast, I'll go.

Eversmann stares at Smith. They know this is no easy thing.

EVERSMANN

Then why are you still standing here?

Smith flashes a rare grin and takes off, dodging gunfire, running toward the Humvee squad, over two hundred yards away.

INT. JOINT OPERATIONS CENTER - CONT.

AT AN ENORMOUS MAP of Mogadishu -- Colonel Matthews marks the translucent overlay with four red Xs, representing Chalks.

COLONEL MATTHEWS

General, Sergeant Eversmann's Chalk Four is one block out of position.

INT. THE TARGET HOUSE - CONT.

Howe, Griz and other Delta have flex-cuffed a DOZEN SOMALI PRISONERS. Delta begin marching them down the stairs.

Mace sees an ancient computer on a desk. Snaps to Howe for his weapon. How tosses his CAR-15 with undercarriage shotgun.

MACE

Control--

(he RACKS the shotgun)

Alt--

BOOM! Mace blasts a hole through the computer.

MACE

Delete.

EXT. THE SURROUNDING STREETS - CONT.

Somali Technicals race toward the burning tire signals. Crazy Militia stuff handfuls of green Khat in their mouths.

They shout as they pass by -- "Kasooobaxa guryaha oo iska celsa cadowga!" ("Come out and defend your homes!").

ON A HOUSE - a SOMALI WOMAN pulls her three teenage sons inside her house. Shuts the door. The Technicals ROAR past.

EXT. CHALK FOUR'S POSITION - DAY

Eversmann and Doc Schmid load the unconscious Blackburn on a stretcher, temporary brace wrapped around his neck.

DOC SCHMID

Okay, go. Try to hold him level.

FOUR RANGERS lug the stretcher back toward the humvee squad.

EXT. HUMVEE EXTRACTION SQUAD - DAY

Red Numbers: 4:05 PM

The Rangers from Eversmann's Chalk carry the stretcher past company clerk Stebbins, who mutters:

STEBBINS

The new guy...

HOWE AND MACE put the Prisoners onto the trucks. They watch the Rangers load injured Blackburn in the back of a humvee.

MACE

I'll make sure the kid gets back okay.

HOWE

Good idea.

ANOTHER HUMVEE -- humvee commander McKnight clicks the radio.

MCKNIGHT

Command 2, I'm sending three Humvees out with a critical casualty.

C2 PILOT (O.S.)

Roger that, Uniform Six Four.

McKnight leans in the window of Iowa farm boy Strueker's humvee. Strueker is behind the wheel, Mace riding shotgun.

MCKNIGHT

Strueker, we'll be along soon.
Mission's almost over.

STRUEKER

Have him back in ten minutes, Colonel.

Strueker hits the gas. The three Humvees take off.

INT. JOINT OPERATIONS CENTER - CONT.

Colonel Matthews marks three Xs on the map.

GENERAL GARRISON

Let's keep an eye on them.

COLONEL MATTHEWS

Command 2, keep a visual on that humvee rescue group, over.

EXT. COMMAND 2 CHOPPER - CONT.

Cameras on the chopper belly are trained on the humvees below.

C2 PILOT

Roger that, Colonel.

EXT. MOGADISHU STREETS, HUMVEE RESCUE GROUP - DAY

Three humvees barrel through narrow streets.

At the first intersection, the vehicles immediately take heavy fire from every possible direction.

STRUEKER

RETURN FIRE!

Rangers FIRE out windows as they barrel along.

MACE fires precise shots out the open window, hitting every Militia man unfortunate enough to come into his sights.

EXT. THE SURROUNDING STREETS - CONT.

Technicals race ahead to set up ambushes. Somalis fire a blistering barrage at the Humvees from both sides of the street. Some Somalis hit each other. No one cares.

EXT. THE HUMVEE TURRET - CONT.

Jersey kid PILLA fires from the .50 caliber turret like mad. He looks like he's in fast motion, firing left, right, left.

PILLA'S POV - bumpy ride, muzzle flashes, crowds of people. Swiveling the .50, firing, firing. Eyes turn to a LONE SOMALI GUNMAN on the side of the road. The gunman aims, shoots --

AND PILLA'S HEAD ROCKS BACK. He collapses in a heap.

INT. STRUEKER'S HUMVEE - CONT.

A Ranger named THOMAS screams as Pilla flops into his lap, dead eyes staring up at him. Blood everywhere.

STRUEKER
(looks back)
What happened?!

THOMAS
Pilla's shot! He's dead!

BA-WHOOOM! Strueker's head whips around at the sound.

STRUEKER
What the hell was that?!

MACE
RPG! Here comes another!

PHWOOSH -- ZZZzzzzz! The second RPG whistles across the street, skims over the hood of the humvee --

And EXPLODES into the building next to them. BA-WHOOOM!

A Stone wall is OBLITERATED, blast deafening, vehicles showered with crumbled masonry, lost in pulverized dust.

MACE
FLOOR IT, STRUEKER!

HUMVEES APPEAR out of the dust cloud, engines howling.

INT. JOINT OPERATIONS CENTER - CONT.

McKnight and Strueker's radio communications crackle on the command net in the JOC.

MCKNIGHT (O.S.)
How's it going out there, Strueker?

STRUEKER (O.S.)
I don't want to talk about it, McKnight.

MCKNIGHT (O.S.)
Anyone hit?

STRUEKER (O.S.)
Yeah, one.

General Garrison turns from a monitor across the room, interest piqued. Others stop what they're doing and listen.

MCKNIGHT (O.S.)
Well, what's his name and status?

Long pause. Garrison and Matthews listen intently.

STRUEKER (O.S.)
It's Pilla. He's dead.

The JOC goes ghostly quiet. Garrison takes the cigar out of his mouth. Someone dead? This just didn't happen here.

GENERAL GARRISON
Get those guys back here. Fast.

Colonel Matthews scans the monitors, can't find the Humvees.

COLONEL MATTHEWS
What's the rescue humvees' position, C2?

C2 PILOT (O.S.)
Now headed toward Halwadig Road, base.

INT. THE HUMVEES - DAY

The three vehicles turn sharply and ROAR down Halwadig Road. Firing at anything that moves. The only problem is, every single window, corner, alley has Somalis SHOOTING AT THEM.

STRUEKER
Someone take Pilla's place!

No way. Rangers stare back in fear. MACE scrambles over the front seat, climbs past petrified Rangers.

MACE

It's mine.

IN THE TURRET - MACE fires the .50 caliber, punching fist-sized holes in walls with each round. Somali gunmen are blown backward into ramshackle dwellings.

PING! A bullet ricochets off the gun mount. PING! PING!

MACE

Christ!

He's gonna buy it up here just like Pilla. Mace goes "cyclic," unleashing on the massing Militia, full auto.

MACE

Motherfuckers!

Blood sprays walls as the Humvees ROAR BY.

EXT. EVERSMAHNN'S CHALK FOUR POSITION - DAY

Red Numbers: 4:14 PM

A Ranger named GALENTINE shoots at a distant crowd when -- SPLAT! he's sprayed with blood. Just like a tomato popped.

GALENTINE

Holy shit! MY THUMB!

EVERSMANN

Don't come across the street!

Galentine is like a sleepwalker. Thumb hanging by a thread, he strolls across the road, BULLETS hitting all around him.

Eversmann tackles him and presses him against the wall.

GALENTINE

It's my thumb. I think I'm hurt.

ACROSS THE STREET - KURTH, one of the African American Rangers, howls, shoulder spraying blood.

KURTH

Fuck it! I got hit, Sergeant!

EVERSMANN

STAY THERE! We'll come to you!

Doc Schmid wraps Galentine's hand in gauze.

DOC SCHMID

Eversmann, maybe we should fall back.

Eversmann sees the vast distance between their position and Chalk 3. Two blocks and a thousand bullets away.

EVERSMANN

We gotta keep the perimeter intact.

AT THE CORNER - Nelson strafes the Militia with his M-60 --
blat, blat, blat! Militia dive for cover as Waddell feeds
"the pig" a belt of ammo.

ON THE SOMALIS - weapons of the dead are snatched and reused.
Every time a figure drops, another armed figure pops up...

...And then the ragtag crowd ADVANCES toward Chalk Four.

NELSON

Eversmann, THEY'RE COMING!

The plaster wall above their heads is sandblasted. Relentless.

DOC SCHMID

Do something, Eversmann!

EVERSMANN

We gotta keep the perimeter intact!

Then, Eversmann hears salvation. Whup-whup-whup...

A BLACK HAWK HELICOPTER descends overhead. The chopper's
shadow falls over Eversmann. It's Durant's Super Six Four.

INT. DURANT'S SUPER SIX FOUR - CONT.

DURANT sees Eversmann's lanky arm pointing down the road.
Durant nods, turns the chopper toward the massing crowd.

DURANT

(into headset)

Going guns hot. Guns hot.

He hits the safety button on the flight stick, allowing his
Crew Chiefs in back to now fire their weapons--

A CREW CHIEF aims his mounted 7.62 mm minigun, helmet visor
reflecting the distant crowd as he mutters into his headset--

CREW CHIEF

Roger, hot on seven six-two mike-mike.

He fires.

ON THE MINIGUN - wwwhhIRRRR! bbbBBBBRAAAAAPPP! five 7.62 mm
cannons are a blur, hydraulics whining -- 4,000 rounds per
minute blasting hot death into the armed Somalis down the
street. Fire arcs from the gleaming weapon.

EXT. ON THE SOMALI MILITIA - CONT.

The minigun slices through the mass of armed humanity like a scythe through late-summer wheat.

ON NELSON AND WADDELL - they see dozens of bodies sprawled on the road, weapons blasted from their hands. Blood everywhere.

WADDELL
Goddamn, Nelson! Goddamn!

EXT. A GRASSY FIELD - DAY

A Somali Technical drops off three Militia. They heft RPG tubes and brown tarps. Run to pre-dug HOLES IN THE GROUND.

They cover themselves with brown tarps, point RPGs skyward...

...And wait for their prey to appear in the skies.

INT. ELVIS'S SUPER SIX ONE - CONT.

ELVIS turns his Black Hawk in a tight circle over the city, skies alive with tracer bullets and RPG smoke trails.

Elvis's two Crew Chiefs in back fire a minigun and .50 cal from either side of the chopper. They have many, many targets.

EXT. THE GROUND BELOW - CONT.

A Somali Militia tosses aside his dirt-brown tarp, aims at the tail section of Elvis's passing chopper and FIRES! WHOOOOSH!

INT. ELVIS'S BLACK HAWK - CONT.

Elvis is circling when -- wwwwHUMP! The Black Hawk hits an invisible brick wall in midair.

ELVIS
What the hell?

The chopper spins. Fast. Faster. G-force intensifying.

ELVIS
Hang on!

Smoke fills the chopper. The Crew Chiefs' eyes go wide. Is this the end? The chopper spins like a deadly carnival ride.

ELVIS struggles with the controls, ground rushing closer, engine whining like a wounded elephant. Then, Elvis speaks the inevitable words into his comlink:

ELVIS
Six One going down.

EXT. EVERSMAANN'S CHALK FOUR POSITION - CONT.

Eversmann stops firing as Elvis's chopper spins in the sky.

WADDELL

(points to the sky)

You guys look at this! Look at this!

ON THE CHOPPER - a Crew Chief in the cargo hold hangs onto his gun handle, feet in midair, riding the craft down.

EVERSMAANN

Oh my God...

INT. ELVIS'S BLACK HAWK - CONT.

IMPACT! The chopper RAMS INTO a building, flips sickeningly sideways, and BURROWS into the earth. The violence of the crash is incredible -- glass explodes, metal buckles and rips, rotor blades shatter, shards of hot metal ZINGING everywhere...

EXT. EVERSMAANN'S CHALK FOUR POSITION - CONT.

Eversmann grabs the radio and shouts into the handset--

EVERSMAANN

BLACK HAWK DOWN!

INT. JOINT OPERATIONS CENTER - CONT.

General Garrison watches Elvis's chopper crash in vivid technicolor. Frantic voices overlap on the command net:

FRANTIC VOICES

We got a Black Hawk Down! We got a
Black Hawk Down! Six One is down!

(another voice:)

BLACK HAWK DOWN IN THE CITY!

ON A MONITOR - Garrison sees the city coming alive, as if someone poked a stick into a hornet's nest. *Tens of thousands* of Somalis begin to surround Chalk vantage points.

GENERAL GARRISON

Oh my God...

INT. DURANT'S CHOPPER - DAY

Durant sees smoke rising from his friend's ruined helicopter, a few hundred yards away. He whispers:

DURANT

Elvis...

EXT. SURROUNDING BLOCKS - DAY

Somalis, drawn by the distant smoke from the downed chopper, run toward the crash. They shout to others to follow.

ON A PARTICULAR house, made of nothing more than corrugated tin, two SOMALI MILITIA emerge from the dark doorway.

These guys are clearly different from the rag-tag soldiers we've seen so far. They are cool, collected. Battle-hardened.

These are the HARDCORE MILITIA.

FIVE MORE men emerge from the shack. All chewing on khat. Each are armed to the teeth with grenades, AK-47s, RPG tubes.

The last Somali emerges. He wears sunglasses with one lens popped out. He hefts a SAW machine gun, a bandolier of ammo around his bare chest. This is the leader of the group.

"SUNGLASSES" mutters something to his men. They nod. Start locking and loading. Then they take off at a light trot down the street. Toward the battle...

EXT. HUMVEE LEADER MCKNIGHT'S SQUAD - DAY

BACK AT THE TARGET house, McKnight's squad still struggles with the bound PRISONERS. The Somalis kick at the Rangers.

MCKNIGHT

(to the prisoners:)

Just stay calm, understand? Don't screw with us, we won't screw with you.

A DRIVER named MADDOX leans out of a Humvee and shouts:

MADDOX

Sir! A chopper just went down!

EXT. EVERSMAANN'S CHALK FOUR POSITION - DAY

The smoke billowing into the sky is tantalizingly close to Eversmann's position. Eversmann yells into the radio:

EVERSMANN

Captain, we need to move to the chopper!

CAPTAIN STEELE (O.S.)

Negative. Perimeter stays intact.

EVERSMANN

I can see hostiles running to the crash!

CAPTAIN STEELE (O.S.)

Sit tight for a second.

INT. JOINT OPERATIONS CENTER - CONT.

Colonel Matthews is on the radio with Steele.

CAPTAIN STEELE (O.S.)

Colonel, permission to send a small unit to Elvis's crash, over?

ON THE MAP - Matthews draws A BIG RED X, marked "SIX ONE."
"CHALK FOUR - EVRSMNN" is three long blocks from the site.

COLONEL MATTHEWS

McKnight is still dealing with the prisoners. Eversmann is closest. Should I give them the okay?

Garrison studies the map. Their neat plan is out the window. Time to improvise. He nods to Colonel Matthews.

GENERAL GARRISON

Not the whole group.

COLONEL MATTHEWS

Steele, don't send the whole Chalk.

GENERAL GARRISON

I want a little bird at the crash, now.
(shouts to the frozen room)
Let's move!

EXT. EVERSMAANN'S CHALK FOUR POSITION - DAY

Doc Schmid finishes wrapping Galentine's thumb in gauze.

EVERSMANN

Who's coming with me?

DOC SCHMID

Sergeant, you can't--

KURTH

I can move.

Kurth looks at Galentine, who hesitates. Then --

GALENTINE

I can shoot with my good hand.

EVERSMANN

Good. Nelson, you and Waddell hold this position. No one gets past you.

NELSON

Why me?

EVERSMANN

Because you're dependable. The rest of you, come with me. You too, Doc.

Smith, Kurth, Galentine, and Doc Schmid follow Eversmann.

NELSON

Shit. I hate being dependable.

EXT. THE STREETS - DAY

RUNNING through the streets, Eversmann's group ducks as they pass windows. They get no more than fifteen yards when --

KRATAKRATAKRACK! AK-47 fire blazes at them. Everyone hits the deck. Eversmann dives behind a six inch pipe sticking out of the ground. It's ridiculous, but the only cover around.

Eversmann opens up, BRRRAAPP! His men join in. The team drives the crowd into the shadows, obliterating entire stucco walls with their firepower. They expend whole clips of ammo.

EVERSMANN

Let's go!

EXT. STREET CORNER - DAY

Eversmann changes clips on the run. FIRES into open windows. Bullets hit the ground around him as the group turns a corner.

THE NOSE OF THE CHOPPER is in sight, fifty yards away. The words "VELVET ELVIS" are half buried in the dirt.

EVERSMANN

I see it!

Oddly, the strangled wail of "Heartbreak Hotel" echoes from the wreckage, Elvis's boombox struggling to stay alive.

TWO SOMALI gunmen charge around the corner. Wild-eyed, teeth stained by Khat. They AIM RIGHT AT EVERSMANN.

Training taking over, Eversmann drops to one knee. BRRRAAAPPP! Bullets arc across the two men, chests bursting red. Two slugs, center mass. Dead before they hit the dirt.

EVERSMANN

Holy shit...

He killed two people. Up close. He stares at them as--

SMITH

Come on, Eversmann!

Eversmann runs, stealing one last look at the men he killed.

INT. JOINT OPERATIONS CENTER - CONT.

Garrison and Matthews watch Eversmann's group on their monitor, their tiny forms running toward the downed chopper.

GENERAL GARRISON
Come on, Sergeant. Get there.

EXT. ELVIS'S CRASH SITE - CONT.

An AH-6 Little Bird SHRIEKS over Eversmann's head and begins a slow descent in front of ELVIS'S RUINED CHOPPER. The alley is so tight, the pilot has to take the chopper in BACKWARD.

Swirling through the smoke, the Pilot slowly lowers the chopper. Rotor blades nick the sides of walls -- ZING!

As soon as the Little Bird lands, SOMALIS round the corner, firing. THE PILOTS stick handguns out the windows and FIRE.

EXT. ELVIS'S CRASH SITE - CONT.

Eversmann rounds the corner, sees--

THE LITTLE BIRD, under heavy fire. Pilots shooting back. A bullet CRACKS into the cockpit bubble over the Pilot's head.

BBBRAAAPPP! Eversmann and Smith sweep the crowd. Six Somalis fall dead. The others flee, dragging wounded and lifeless.

EVERSMANN
Let's move!

INT. ELVIS'S CHOPPER - CONT.

Smoke choking them, bullets PING! around the heads of the two dazed Crew Chiefs. HANDS reach in the chopper, pulling them out. It's Eversmann and Corporal Smith.

EXT. ELVIS'S CRASH SITE - CONT.

Eversmann and Smith help the dazed Crew Chiefs to the chopper.

LITTLE BIRD PILOT
(shouts over the rotors)
I only have room for two!

They load the Crew Chiefs into the cramped helicopter. Despite the pain, one grabs Eversmann's arm:

CREW CHIEF
Help Elvis.

The Pilot takes off, rotor blades whirring into the sky.

INT. JOINT OPERATIONS CENTER - CONT.

Garrison sees the Little Bird taking off.

GENERAL GARRISON

They made it.

INT. ELVIS'S BLACK HAWK - CONT.

Eversmann crawls through swirling smoke in the devastated chopper. "Heartbreak Hotel" slowly spools from the partially crushed boombox, somewhere in the metal. The sound is eerie.

Eversmann sees the CO-PILOT, body crushed in the mass of twisted steel. An arm is visible in the metal. A helmet.

Eversmann crawls forward. Gently pulls ELVIS back. The pilot's legs are crushed in the control panel. Elvis groans.

EVERSMANN

We're gonna get you outta here, Elvis.

INT. JOINT OPERATIONS CENTER - CONT.

Garrison and Colonel Matthews hear the Pilot over the radio:

LITTLE BIRD PILOT (O.S.)

Base, be advised: Elvis is still alive.

GENERAL GARRISON

Colonel, I want every soldier on the ground to haul ass to that chopper. If there's even a chance to save Elvis...

(trails off, taps a monitor)

...When they secure the area, McKnight's Humvees will drive over and load everyone up. Then, back to base.

EXT. RANGER CAPTAIN STEELE'S POSITION - DAY

Steele ducks wild gunfire as he gets orders on the radio.

CAPTAIN STEELE

Listen up! We're headed to the crashed chopper. Chalks 2 and 3 will lead, Chalk One bringing up the rear.

DELTA SERGEANT HOWE can see smoke from Elvis's chopper, far in the distance. His biceps bulge as he reloads his weapon.

HOWE

On foot? That'll be fun.

CAPTAIN STEELE

Have anything useful to say?

HOWE

Moving the entire ground force is a bad call. It'll be sheer chaos.

CAPTAIN STEELE

I get paid to follow orders, Sergeant.

HOWE

And I get paid to think.

Steele's younger Rangers stare back at the Captain, scared.

CAPTAIN STEELE

We got wounded pilots, men.

(pointedly, to Howe)

We're moving out!

Howe locks and loads. Shakes his head.

HOWE

Your neat plan isn't gonna work. It'll be a foot race to stay alive.

INT. US BASE, HANGAR - DAY

Red Numbers: 4:29 PM

At the base, SIZEMORE itches under the cast on his arm. He and a dozen soldiers listen to increasingly frantic voices on the command net. The mood is somber in the hangar.

The abrupt rumble of HUMVEE ENGINES echo in the hangar. Sizemore and the others run to the door to see--

STRUEKER'S HUMVEE SQUAD - pulling into the compound and coming to a skidding halt. Sizemore stops dead in his tracks.

The sight is unbelievable.

The Humvees are riddled with bullet holes. Bullet resistant windshields are spiderwebbed and pockmarked, or gone altogether. The remaining glass is flecked with red.

Blood spattered Rangers pile out of the Humvees. MACE helps a Medic carry the injured BLACKBURN off to the medical ward. Shouts at dumbfounded Rangers clogging hallways:

MACE

Outta the way!

THOMAS, the Ranger who had Pilla fall into his lap, gets out of the humvee, eyes red, uniform stained with Pilla's blood.

THOMAS

Pilla -- Pilla's dead.

Sizemore rips open the humvee door. Pilla's body spills halfway out, gaping hole in his ruined forehead.

SIZEMORE

Oh, my GOD!

EXT. ELVIS'S CRASH SITE - DAY

A half-speed "Love Me Tender" moans from the dying boombox. Eversmann's men are on their bellies under the crumpled chopper hull. GUNFIRE shrieks at them from every direction.

GALENTINE

Let's get the hell outta here!

Eversmann crawls out of the chopper, crawls to his men.

EVERSMANN

We're not going anywhere! Elvis is still alive!

BULLETS rake the hull of the chopper over their heads. Eversmann's chalk stays low, returning fire.

GALENTINE

We're dead if we stay here!

Eversmann crouches over to Galentine, grabs his uniform.

EVERSMANN

We do not leave men behind!
(everyone stares at him)
You're Rangers, goddammit! We don't leave men behind!

INT. JOINT OPERATIONS CENTER - DAY

General Garrison watches the bank of monitors showing overhead views of the ENTIRE GROUND FORCE, moving out. Over 70 men run through the perilous city. And who is out front?--

EXT. SOMALI STREETS - DAY

--The company clerk, Stebbins.

STEBBINS' POV - we hear his labored breathing as he RUNS from building to building, hugging walls, when --

A SOMALI darts out in front of him, AK-47 raised. Stebbins FIRES, pure instinct. The big Somali goes down.

THE MAN clutches his chest in amazement, looks at Stebbins. Stebbins stops running, stands over the dying man.

HOWE

Keep moving, Stebbins. He's dead.

Stebbins runs, glances back. The man has stopped moving.

HOWE

And stay away from the walls.

STEBBINS

Why?

HOWE

Because bullets like walls.

STEBBINS

Oh. Okay.

INT. ELVIS'S BLACK HAWK - DAY

Eversmann climbs back in the crushed cockpit. Doc Schmid hovers over Elvis. The pilot moans, writhes in pain.

DOC SCHMID

His legs are wedged in the metal. BP is low. Internal bleeding...

(shakes his head)

...It doesn't look good, Sergeant.

Elvis's eyes slowly open. Confused, Elvis looks at his own mangled body. Winces. Sees Eversmann. Reaches out to him.

EVERSMANN

Hang on, Elvis.

ON THE HANDS - Elvis's bloody hand grips Eversmann's, tight.

EXT. TARGET BUILDING - DAY

Red Numbers: 4:35 PM

SOMALI prisoners are cuffed on the back of the flatbeds. Humvee leader McKnight stands before his men.

MCKNIGHT

We a got a chopper down in the city.

(stares of disbelief)

One of the pilots may still be alive.

We're going to link up with the ground force, get 'em out, and exfil to base.

So follow me. And don't get lost.

McKnight gets in the Humvee, grabs the radio.

MCKNIGHT

Command 2, vector us in.

C2 PILOT (O.S.)
Two blocks north, three blocks east,
McKnight. You can't miss it.

SIX HUMVEES rumble away, two flatbeds with the PRISONERS sandwiched in the middle of the column.

EXT. SOMALI STREETS - DAY

RANGER CAPTAIN STEELE sees his group of soldiers breaking down, running, scattering. Just like Howe predicted.

CAPTAIN STEELE
Slow down! Slow down, goddammit!

UP AHEAD - a RANGER is sprinting when, SCHWOCK! he goes down like he's sliding into home plate. Pants covered in blood.

CAPTAIN STEELE
Where you hit?

INJURED RANGER
Right in the ass!

CAPTAIN STEELE
Pick him up and keep moving!

EXT. DOWN THE STREET - CONT.

Company Clerk Stebbins and thirty others inch closer to the crash site. Stebbins shouts over to a Delta Operator:

STEBBINS
I can see the chopper!

The Delta Man nods, just as a bullet EXPLODES into his hockey helmet. The Delta man goes limp. Just like that.

STEBBINS
Ho-lee *shit*.
(shouts, voice shaking:)
Sergeant Howe! A Delta guy just got
shot! I think he's dead!

Howe DRAGS his comrade's limp body by the uniform collar. Pulls him to a Somali house. Turns and KICKS IN THE DOOR.

INT. THE HOUSE - DAY

Howe sweeps the rooms. Empty. He drags the Delta man inside the house. Checks for a pulse. Dead.

INT. JOINT OPERATIONS CENTER - CONT.

ON MONITORS - massing Somali militia surrounds Steele and Howe's position. Streets literally crawl with the enemy.

CAPTAIN STEELE (O.S.)

Command, we have a Delta man with a head wound, need immediate evac.

GENERAL GARRISON

There's no way we can send a chopper. They've gotta secure a perimeter first.

COLONEL MATTHEWS

(into headset:)

It's too hot to land a bird, Captain. You need to secure that crash site ASAP.

INT. ELVIS'S BLACK HAWK - CONT.

Doc Schmid has an IV in Elvis's arm. Shines a penlight into the pilot's pupils. Looks at Eversmann and shakes his head.

DOC SCHMID

We're losing him, Eversmann.

As the boombox finally dies, Elvis's bloody hand slips from Eversmann's grasp. Elvis lets out one last breath...

And he's gone.

EXT. BLOCKS FROM THE CRASH SITE - DAY

Ranger Captain Steele looks around him. Chaos. Bedlam. Still three blocks from the smoking chopper wreckage.

ACROSS THE STREET, a Ranger gets SHOT through the arm. Blood sprays the walls in a Rorschach splatter. He howls in agony.

CAPTAIN STEELE

Help that man!

A Ranger helps the wounded man when -- BAM! he's shot, too.

CAPTAIN STEELE

(into radio)

Command, we're taking heavy arms fire. We need relief NOW!

COLONEL MATTHEWS (O.S.)

You have to link up with Sergeant Eversmann and secure that site before anyone can come in there, Captain!

Steele clicks off as BULLETS spray around his feet. He rolls, radio on his back clanking in the sand, bullets trailing him.

One Ranger rolls out of the way, but ANOTHER RANGER is shot in the shin. He HOWLS in agony, leg a ruined mess.

CAPTAIN STEELE

In here, men!

He drags the wounded Ranger into a walled COURTYARD. Rangers dive in after them, bullets buzzing by like deadly insects.

CAPTAIN STEELE

Strongpoint this courtyard!

(points at two Rangers)

You two come with me.

Steele KICKS in the door to the house. Looks inside. Empty.

CAPTAIN STEELE

This is a casualty collection site.

All non-wounded in that courtyard!

(bellows)

Where's the medic!

EXT. ELVIS'S BLACK HAWK - DAY

Eversmann's men are still on their bellies under the ruined helicopter, firing at targets down the street. Muzzle flashes blast from seemingly everywhere, blocks away.

EVERSMANN crawls up next to Corporal Smith.

EVERSMANN

Elvis is gone.

The others hear this. There's a moment of stunned silence.

INT. DURANT'S SUPER SIX FOUR - DAY

Under Durant's craft, the sky is laced with RPG smoke trails.

DURANT

Super Six Four is assuming Six One's
low cap over the city, base.

COLONEL MATTHEWS (O.S.)

Roger that, Six Four.

Through the plexiglas underfoot, Durant sees tin roofs, burning tires, muzzle flashes, all blurring by...

And then it happens. WHUMP! Like a speed bump in the sky.

DURANT
We're hit! Hang on!

DURANT steers the listing chopper, Crew Chiefs wide-eyed as smoke billows out the back. But it doesn't go down.

DURANT
Six Four is hit! Trailing smoke.
Attempting to get back to base.

CRACK-WHHOOOM!

ON DURANT'S CHOPPER - the tail rotor to Super Six Four simply flings off into the air, disappearing in a whirlwind of metal.

INSIDE - Durant struggles with the controls, world spinning in sickening circles. His feet slam pedals.

DURANT
Shut off the engines!

His CO-PILOT raises his arms against the G-forces and YANKS the power levers. THE WORLD IS RUSHING UP AT THEM.

INT. JOINT OPERATIONS CENTER - CONT.

The entire JOC listens to Durant on the command net.

DURANT (O.S.)
Six Four is going down.

Static explodes onto the airwaves...

EXT. HUMVEE LEADER MCKNIGHT'S SQUAD - DAY

Red Numbers: 4:37 PM

McKnight's HUMVEE EXTRACTION FORCE makes a slow turn down a narrow street. The vehicles clank and bellow along when--

--The world simply becomes bullets...

The ENTIRE BLOCK firing at once, a FUSILLADE of hot lead.

MCKNIGHT
RETURN FIRE!

IN THE HUMVEES - Rangers in the .50 caliber turrets blast anything that moves. Entire trees explode and topple as the Humvee squad howls past.

EXT. SOMALI STREETS - DAY

The HARDCORE SOMALI MILITIA charge down back alleys, taking shortcuts. They know all the secrets of the city.

In the distance, GUNFIRE echoes. They head toward the fight.

EXT. ELVIS'S DOWNED BLACK HAWK - DAY

Eversmann's group are under heavy fire. Boxed in a dead-end courtyard. The situation does not look good.

KURTH

Running low on ammo!

DOC SCHMID

What's the plan, Sergeant?

Almost in answer, Eversmann sees A FLYING OBJECT, like a soup can with a stick in it, spiraling end over end toward him.

It lands against the far wall. Eversmann screams --

EVERSMANN

GRENADE!

Everyone dives for cover, Eversmann leaping over the crumpled tail of Elvis's chopper when--

BA-WHOOOOM!

Eversmann is thrown end over end. Lands with a rib-jarring WHUMP! Chunks of plaster and dirt explode around him.

Deafened, Eversmann tries to shake it off. The courtyard is enveloped in a blinding dust cloud. Eversmann wheezes, then:

EVERSMANN

Kurth?

A voice out of the dust cloud, coughing:

KURTH

Y-yeah.

EVERSMANN

Galentine?

GALENTINE

Fuck! Shit, I'm here, Sarge.

EVERSMANN

Doc?...Schmid?

DOC SCHMID

Yeah. I'm okay.

EVERSMANN

Smith?

Nothing. Then, a flat monotone, almost comic:

SMITH

Yeah, dude. I'm alright.

Eversmann looks at the blasted wall, dust clearing to reveal--
A FIVE-FOOT HOLE. The hole leads into a house.

EVERSMANN

Everyone inside!

EXT. THE CITY - DAY

A tree stirs in a lazy breeze. This place is peaceful. Far off, the sound of gunfire. Too far to be of any concern...

REVERSE - DURANT regains consciousness, peers at the tree through the shattered cockpit. Tries to make sense of it.

Durant tries to move. He screams in pain.

EXT. HUMVEE LEADER MCKNIGHT'S SQUAD - DAY

A blizzard of bullets rake the metal humvee hulls. Rangers inside return fire, plastering both sides of the street.

ON HOUSES - Armed Somalis firing from doorways and windows are blasted into the shadows, weapons flying from hands, dying screams erupting from their throats.

THE FLATBEDS - SOMALI PRISONERS cower in fear. Bullets WHIZ past them. THWOCK! One of them gets shot in the head.

INT. JOINT OPERATIONS CENTER - CONT.

In the high tech operations center, TECHNICIANS look up in wonder as two blood spattered SOLDIERS walk past them. It's Mace, the Delta's Mutant Strain, and Iowa farm boy Strueker.

GENERAL GARRISON

Colonel Matthews, as soon as McKnight hooks up with the ground troops, I want everyone to move to Durant's crash.

STRUEKER

General, a minute.

Garrison turns, sees the gore splattered Mace and Strueker.

COLONEL MATTHEWS

Okay you two, leave, right now.

MACE

We wanna go back out.

GENERAL GARRISON
No one goes back out.

MACE
Our guys are in there. We're going.

GENERAL GARRISON
In what, son?

STRUEKER
Three humvees, sir.

GENERAL GARRISON
(considers)
Engines still working?

STRUEKER
They can run, General.

Garrison taps the monitor showing DURANT'S crashed chopper.

GENERAL GARRISON
Can you get there?

Mace's chiseled face betrays no fear or hesitation.

MACE
Yes we can.

INT. RAMSHACKLE HOUSE - DAY

EVERSMANN and his team FIRE out small windows at the hordes of attacking Somalis. Eversmann's rifle CLICKS empty.

EVERSMANN
Ammo! Who's got a clip?

ANOTHER GRENADE flies in the window. This one lands in his lap. Eversmann doesn't think, just chucks it back outside--

BA-BOOM! The blast shakes the walls. Eversmann peers out the window, sees two men with a basket of grenades--

CRACK! CRACK! Eversmann's 9mm sidearm barks twice, one bullet in the head for each man. Grenades spill into the dirt, live grenade still in the dead man's hand--

EVERSMANN
Everyone down!

The entire grenade stash EXPLODES. Shrapnel whizzes into the windows, embedding into walls over the Rangers' heads.

INT. US BASE, THE HANGAR - DAY

Red Numbers: 4:45 PM

Strueker gathers his group of battle-jangled Rangers.

STRUEKER

Listen, men. There's another chopper
down in the city. It's Mike Durant's.

The soldiers react: "Jesus Christ!" "Mother fuckers!"

STRUEKER

I know, I know.... We're going back
out there to help.

Now there is a prolonged silence. Men stare at him like he's
fucking nuts. The Humvees behind them are swiss cheese.

MACE

We're wasting time.

The Mutant Strain is already re-supplied with grenades and
clips of ammo. Rangers stare at him in awe.

THOMAS

No way! You saw what happened to
Pilla! Now way I'm going!

Dozens of frightened eyes fall on Strueker.

STRUEKER

Men, you don't have to do this if you
don't want to. I'm not gonna order you
to do it. But we have men who will die
out there if we don't roll out.

(eyes the scared Rangers)

Five minutes, then we're leaving. Stay
behind, it's a choice you make. Alone.

Strueker turns away. Sees Sizemore gearing up.

STRUEKER

What are you doing, Sizemore?

SIZEMORE

Pilla was my friend. I'm going.

STRUEKER

Not with that cast. That's an order.

~ SIZEMORE

Fine.

Sizemore pulls out his huge survival knife, cuts off his cast. Flings it into a garbage barrel.

SIZEMORE
Now I'm going.

STRUEKER
...Get your helmet.

Strueker moves to get ammo when the scared Thomas corners him.

THOMAS
Sir, I can't go back out there. I'm
sorry. See, I'm...I'm married.

STRUEKER
I understand. I'm married too.

THOMAS
(deliberate, rational)
You don't understand. I can't do it.

STRUEKER
Listen, I'm shit scared, too. I'm
terrified to go back out. But it's
what you do while you're scared that
makes you a Ranger. Your choice.

Thomas shuffles away, eyes wide. The hangar echoes with clips slapping into weapons. No one speaks. Men take deep breaths.

And outside, the Mog waits for them to return....

INT. JOINT OPERATIONS CENTER - CONT.

TASKER walks in, casually sipping coffee, and is assaulted by the chaos of the usually calm JOC.

TASKER
What's going on, General?

GENERAL GARRISON
Not now, Tasker.
(to Colonel Matthews)
With the amount of roadblocks the
Somalis are putting up, a division of
men wouldn't help. We need armor.

The last part is directed at Tasker, who shifts uncomfortably.

COLONEL MATTHEWS
Only three tanks in Mogadishu.
Malaysians have 'em. Pakistanis and
Italians have APCs.

GENERAL GARRISON

Get them. All of them. Roust whoever
you have to, but get that armor.

(looks at the monitors)

We're gonna need it.

EXT. BASE, THE HANGAR - DAY

Three mauled Humvees ROAR out the hangar, back toward the Mog.

Red Numbers: 4:51 PM

MACE is up on the .50 caliber. Sizemore is in the back, next
to him is Thomas. The scared Ranger went along after all.

THE HUMVEES roar past the front gate, take a left at the first
major road. Suddenly, GUNFIRE! Coming from everywhere.

They're barely 100 yards outside the base, and already the
city is trying to kill them.

INSIDE A HUMVEE - men fire back, familiar sound of bullets
raking the vehicle's metal skin. THOMAS mutters with dread:

THOMAS

Not again. Not again...

INT. SOMALI HOUSE - DAY

Eversmann and his men DUCK as gunfire explodes through open
windows, slugs slamming into concrete walls behind them.

EVERSMANN

Cover me.

SMITH

You nuts? Where are you going?

EVERSMANN

Gotta get a visual on Captain Steele.
We can't stay here.

Eversmann crouches to the doorway. Nods at his men. Then
charges out the door.

ON THE STREET - Eversmann hits the deck as his men FIRE from
the windows of the house, covering him.

EVERSMANN'S POV - across the street, a block away, DELTA
SERGEANT HOWE and his group are firing to the West. Not far
at all. The only problem --

THE STREET is a bullet festival. Eversmann sees tracer rounds
and blurred metal slugs flying past. The dirt road is alive
with bullet hits, dust and rock bursting skyward.

EVERSMANN'S POV - on Eversmann's side of the street, CAPTAIN STEELE'S courtyard perimeter is visible three blocks away.

Eversmann crawls backward into the house.

INT. STRUEKER'S HUMVEE RESCUE SQUAD - DAY

Mace lets loose a deadly sweep of the .50 caliber. A crowd of Somali gunmen fall like tenpins.

Smoke from Durant's helicopter crash appears on the horizon.

MACE
(from the turret:)
There it is!

STRUEKER
I see it! Only a klick away.

The Humvees rumble directly toward the smoke, almost there--

STRUEKER
No! NO!

A TEN FOOT HIGH CONCRETE WALL separates them from the city.

INT. JOINT OPERATIONS CENTER - CONT.

Strueker's frustrated voice comes over the radio.

STRUEKER (O.S.)
You need to find us another route.

A Technician at the P3 Orion video screen shakes his head.

COLONEL MATTHEWS
There isn't one.

STRUEKER (O.S.)
Find one. Got a wall in front of us.

COLONEL MATTHEWS
The only other route is all the way
around the city, through the backside.

BACK IN STRUEKER'S HUMVEE -

STRUEKER
Fine, we'll take it.

MACE
We're not leaving those guys! Let's go
on foot.

STRUEKER

Without humvees we're dead.

MACE

Anyone coming with me?

(no one makes a sound)

Fuck it. I'm walkin'.

Mace hops from the turret, trots to the wall, M-14 in hand.

STRUEKER

Wait! Mace! MACE!

Strueker watches helplessly as the Mutant Strain climbs a tree and scrambles over the wall. Disappears into the city...

Strueker looks back at the wide eyed Rangers in his vehicle. They'd never make it on foot. Torn, he looks back at the wall.

STRUEKER

Good luck, Mace.

INT. BLACK HAWK SUPER SIX TWO - DAY

Flying low over Durant's crashed chopper, the crew of SUPER SIX TWO see Durant and his Co-Pilot moving in the cockpit.

In the back of the airborne chopper, two familiar faces: DELTA SNIPERS SHUGHART AND GORDON. They fire their custom made rifles at myriad targets below. They hit everything.

GORDON

(shouts at the Pilot)

We gotta get on the ground, man!

INT. JOINT OPERATIONS CENTER - CONT.

Colonel Matthews listens on a headset.

COLONEL MATTHEWS

Delta snipers Gordon and Shughart want to be put down at Durant's crash site.

GENERAL GARRISON

Rescue squad won't get there for at least an hour. Two guys will never hold off that crowd. Even Delta guys.

INT. BLACK HAWK SUPER SIX TWO - DAY

The Pilot shouts back at the Delta snipers.

SUPER SIX TWO PILOT

Command says you could be on your own for almost an hour. Says it's suicide.

Shughart and Gordon look at each other. Then, in unison --

GORDON
Put us in!

SHUGHART
Put us in!

INT. JOINT OPERATIONS CENTER - DAY

A clock on the wall reads: 5:05.

Colonel Matthews points to a monitor showing Strueker's three humvees circling the city to get to the other side.

COLONEL MATTHEWS
General, I honestly don't know if
Strueker can get to Durant's chopper.

Garrison rubs his forehead.

GENERAL GARRISON
McKnight's squad will have to do it.
After they load up everybody at Elvis's
site, they'll go to Durant's.

Colonel Matthews stares at Garrison for a beat. Quietly:

COLONEL MATTHEWS
Sir, there's not enough room in those
humvees for all those men.

GENERAL GARRISON
We have no other options, Colonel.

Matthews nods. It's grim, but the General is right.

GENERAL GARRISON
Where's McKnight now?

COLONEL MATTHEWS
Should be at Elvis's crash soon.
They're encountering some light
resistance.

INT. HUMVEE LEADER MCKNIGHT'S VEHICLE - DAY

GUNFIRE EVERYWHERE! SOMEONE SCREAMS! Humvee doors are raked with bullets. Men in back are hit in the legs, arms. Light resistance? It's the fucking end of the world.

HOLES OF LIGHT, like laser beams, shoot through the doors. McKnight kicks his legs in a frenzy as more beams poke through.

MCKNIGHT
JESUS CHRIST!

An RPG spirals toward them, EXPLODING into a tree on the right. BAWHOOOM! The Humvee is showered in red-hot woodpulp.

Rangers fire out side doors and out the back at anything that moves. SPLAT! Blood sprays the inside of the cab.

RANGER

I'm hit!

MCKNIGHT keeps firing out his window. Another voice in back:

ANOTHER RANGER

Shit! I'm hit!

Soldiers shout in agony as bullets pierce through the doors and hit LEGS, BOOTS, ARMS, SHOULDERS.

On the floor of the humvee, drops of blood form a red puddle.

EXT. DURANT'S CHOPPER - DAY

Durant looks down at his leg. The broken femur creates a nauseating bulge in his flight suit. Durant stares at it.

DURANT

Leg's broke. Think my back is broken.

CO-PILOT

It is, 'cause mine's broken too. Let's get the hell outta here, Durant.

DURANT

I can't move. You go.

In a haze of pain, the Co-Pilot gets his door open and squirms out of the wreckage. Crawls to a doorway.

Durant turns in his seat to see his injured crew.

IN BACK - One man is covered in blood, muttering nonsense:

CREW CHIEF

...G-gotta clean up this mess! Mess!

SECOND CREW CHIEF

Oh, God! I'm hurt! Hurt!

Durant turns back, the cockpit suddenly filled with the faces of Delta Snipers SHUGHART and GORDON.

DURANT

Jesus, it's good to see you guys.

GORDON

Durant. How bad?

DURANT

Broken back. Leg. More, I think.

Durant is gently lifted from the chopper and propped against a wall. Shughart gives him an M-16.

SHUGHART

Anyone sticks their head around the corner -- shoot 'em.

Durant nods. The Delta snipers move to help the Crew Chiefs. Durant is alone along the wall, cradling his gun.

INT. SOMALI HOUSE - DAY

EVERSMANN and his men crouch in the cramped house.

EVERSMANN

Sergeant Howe is across the street and down a block.

KURTH

What are we waiting for? Let's go!

EVERSMANN

The middle of the street is a bullet funnel. One step in it and you're dead.

GALENTINE

So -- so what do we do?

EVERSMANN

Get to Steele. He's on our side of the street with defensible perimeter and numbers. But he's three blocks away.

GALENTINE

Why can't we stay here?

The small squalid house feels like a deathtrap.

EVERSMANN

Just a matter of time before the Skinnies launch a rocket through the window, and we're all toast.

SMITH

Okay, let's do it.

GALENTINE

Wait a minute, wait a minute. I've been shot, you haven't. It fucking hurts. I don't wanna get shot again!

Everyone is staring at Eversmann, eyes wide, scared.

EVERSMANN

No one's getting shot. We're all gonna make it. But we have to move, now.

Galentine stares at him. Nods, knows he's right.

GALENTINE

Okay.

EVERSMANN

When you get out the door, don't stop.
Run like hell. Let's do it.

EXT. SOMALI HOUSE - CONT.

Eversmann rolls out the front door, BLASTING down the block. Bullets EXPLODE into the door frame all around him as --

HIS MEN CHARGE out, Galentine in the lead. Crouched low, moving quick, bullets track them, hitting just above their heads, missing by inches as--

EVERSMANN rolls, bullets popping into the ground all around him. Then he's ON HIS FEET, running like hell after his men.

AT THE FIRST INTERSECTION - Bullets blaze in both directions across the road -- a deadly crossfire.

Eversmann sees his men simply RUN RIGHT THROUGH the crossfire, not stopping for shit, not even firing. RUNNING.

Eversmann BELLOWS and charges through the intersection, weaving, bobbing, bullets SNAPPING past his head.

EXT. DELTA SERGEANT HOWE'S POSITION - CONT.

Delta Howe, Stebbins, and others see Eversmann's men CHARGING down the block on the other side of the street, ducking fire.

STEBBINS

Go, Eversmann...

Howe's group nails Somalis who come out of the shadows to fire at the fleeing Rangers.

EXT. RANGER CAPTAIN STEELE'S POSITION - DAY

Steele sees Eversmann's men running flat out for the courtyard.

CAPTAIN STEELE

Cover fire!

Steele and his men lay down cover fire to the South. Bullets scatter Somali gunmen by the dozen.

EVERSMANN'S men LEAP into Steele's courtyard, landing on top of each other in a pile of arms and legs as--

EVERSMANN FEELS BULLETS hitting all around him. He's not gonna make it, he's gonna die--

EVERSMANN
AAAAAAAHHHH!

Eversmann leaps, skying over the five foot courtyard wall--

IN THE COURTYARD - Eversmann does a full flip, landing right on his his ass. WHUMP! His helmet goes flying off.

He tries to catch his breath. Galentine, Kurth, Smith and Doc Schmid are all okay. Everyone made it.

CAPTAIN STEELE
Good work, Sergeant.

Eversmann nods, wide-eyed, chest heaving. Gasps out:

EVERSMANN
Thanks.

EXT. MOGADISHU STREET CORNER - DAY

A blurred movement. A man with a gun, running from darkened doorway to doorway. Quick, precise movements. It's MACE.

Mace scans the strangely quiet street. Sees purple smoke markers in the distance, Durant's chopper 500 yards away.

Mace moves, swift and low. A ghost. A fleeting shadow.

EXT. DURANT'S CRASH SITE - DAY

Delta snipers GORDON AND SHUGHART are sprawled out under the ruined chopper tail, ammo clips piled beside them.

THEY FIRE at endless targets. Countless AK-47 muzzle flashes flare from every direction. A living nightmare.

GORDON
I'm dry!

Gordon slaps in a clip, Shughart covering them.

GORDON'S POV - firing again, he hits EVERYTHING. Militia are nailed in the head, in the chest, some targets 100 yards away.

SHUGHART
Dry!

Shughart grabs a clip. Gordon covers.

OVERHEAD - there are THOUSANDS OF SOMALIS edging closer to them, an armed, furious mob that will stop at nothing.

GORDON

Dry!

Gordon grabs a clip. Pile of ammo getting smaller.

BEHIND THE CHOPPER - the chopper blocks Durant's view, but he hears it all: Bbbraap! BRAAAPPP! Delta guns roar.

A SOMALI pops his head around the corner. Durant fires, not really trying to hit him. The face disappears.

Then, TWO Somali heads poke around the corner. Durant fires a quick burst. The heads duck away.

ON GORDON AND SHUGHART - The crowd of Somalis are now charging at them, making suicide runs. Too many of them.

GORDON

Randy!

ON THE PILE OF CLIPS - Gordon reaches for the last one.

SHUGHART

I know!

GORDON

I'm almost out!

The chopper tail above them PINGS! with bullets.

SHUGHART

Hang on, Gary!

It's like a human swarm. They drop Somalis by the dozen, but the targets are all around. Then, one bullet finds its mark:

GORDON

AAAHHH!

Gordon's head rocks back. He goes limp.

SHUGHART

Gary!

EXT. AN ALLEY - DAY

In an alley lined with brown, ailing vegetation, a sole figure moves. It's Mace, on the move again, in the shadows.

AT A DOORWAY - Mace stops, takes cover in the small alcove. Abruptly, the door OPENS behind him. Mace whirls.

Two Somali Militia look up at him in shock. They clearly didn't expect to see an American soldier in their doorway. They shout in surprise, raise their weapons.

MILITIA MAN
(in Somali, subtitled)
Hey! Over here! American!

BRAAP! BRAAP! Mace dispatches them with two quick bursts.

VOICES, shouting. His shots have been heard. Mace runs --

INTO THE RAMSHACKLE HOUSE - through the "living room," into a bedroom. Open window -- he DIVES into the back alley just as--

A CROWD of armed Somalis charge through the front door. They find two dead comrades in spreading pools of blood...

But no trace of the phantom gunman.

EXT. DURANT'S CRASH SITE - DAY

Durant sees Shughart crawl around the chopper.

SHUGHART
What's the support frequency on the survival radio?

DURANT
Aren't you guys with the rescue squad?
(Shughart reloads)
Where's the rescue squad?!

SHUGHART
I'm your rescue squad.

Shughart squirms back under the chopper.

DURANT
My God...we're all gonna die.

INT. HUMVEE LEADER MCKNIGHT'S VEHICLE - DAY

RED NUMBERS: 5:19 PM

ON THE FLOOR of the humvee, the puddle of blood is now a POOL.

Humvee leader McKnight hears the C2 Pilot on the radio:

C2 PILOT (O.S.)
Left turn! Left turn!

Maddox, the driver, is already PAST THE STREET.

MCKNIGHT

Command Two, we need to know before we get to the goddamn street!

C2 PILOT (O.S.)

Sorry, McKnight. I just saw the turn myself. Take the next left.

THROUGH THE CRACKED WINDSHIELD - the next left turn is ROADBLOCKED by an enormous pile of burning tires.

MCKNIGHT

Got a roadblock. C2, at this rate we'll never get to Elvis's chopper!

C2 PILOT (O.S.)

Roger. Next possible left.

HIGH OVERHEAD - the C2 Black Hawk shrieks over the Humvee column, the battered vehicles making a left. The column snakes down a wide, quiet street.

INT. HUMVEE LEADER MCKNIGHT'S VEHICLE - CONT.

Deserted street. No crowds of Militia. That's because...

INT. VARIOUS BUILDINGS - CONT.

...everyone is inside.

DOZENS of Somali militia crouch within crumbling buildings. Every Somali has a AK-47 or RPG tube.

THE HARDCORE MILITIA is here. They have set up in several adjacent houses, stacking weapons and ammo at their feet.

SUNGLASSES puts his SAW on an old table inside a house. Aims out the front door at the approaching Humvee column.

INT. MCKNIGHT'S HUMVEE - CONT.

The only sound is the chugging Humvee engines and the groans of the wounded Rangers. No gunfire, until --

THE STREET OPENS UP ON THEM. All at once.

KRATAKRATACRACK! A storm of bullets rips into the humvees. RPGs shriek past -- PHWOOOSH! BOOM! BOOM! EXPLODING into dwellings, showering humvees with concrete.

MCKNIGHT

(shouts into the radio:)

AMBUSH! AMBUSH!

Maddox FLOORS the gas.

ON THE STREET - Somalis appear in every window, every doorway. RPG snipers on rooftops FIRE down at the Ranger column.

THE RANGERS - every humvee window has Ranger weapons sweeping the street -- a hellstorm of bullets.

THE TURRET - a Ranger simply has his hand exposed, gripping the .50 cal trigger, BLASTING BLINDLY at the Somalis.

Fifty-cal slugs carve chunks into walls, people. Blood splatters walls as the Rangers roar past.

SUNGLASSES - lets loose, BLASTING the bullet-resistant windshield of McKnight's humvee. Bullets CRACK the glass.

MCKNIGHT'S HUMVEE - a bad dream. Bullets PING! like hailstones. RPGs explode all around. Relentless. And then--

--It's over. As quickly as it started. The vehicles are clear of the ambush. The Humvees growl along the dirt road, metal skin riddled with bullets, engines smoking, tires flat.

MCKNIGHT

Everyone okay back there--

MCKNIGHT'S mouths snaps shut as -- an RPG comes directly at him. Smoke trail spiraling at his head.

MCKNIGHT

HOLD ON!

The RPG nicks the top of the roof, deflects --

SKIPS OVER the second humvee...

But EXPLODES INTO THE THIRD HUMVEE.

BAAWHOOOOM! Right into the windshield.

INT. THE THIRD HUMVEE - CONT.

The world explodes. Complete blackness, blast deafening. Someone's leg goes sailing out the window.

EXT. THE THIRD HUMVEE - CONT.

THREE MEN are BLOWN from the Humvee, orange fireball scattering them like unwanted toys during a child's tantrum.

INT. THE FLATBED TRUCK - CONT.

In the FLATBED trailing the ruined Humvee, the DRIVER stomps on the brakes -- too late! His wide eyes meet those of --

A WOUNDED RANGER, lying in a pool of his own blood. The Ranger tries to scramble away, notices only then that one of his shredded pant legs is empty.

He puts up a useless hand to ward off the five ton monster--
--THE TRUCK runs over him, body twisting under the wheels.

EXT. HUMVEE LEADER MCKNIGHT'S VEHICLE - CONT.

MCKNIGHT leaps from his vehicle. Shouts:

MCKNIGHT

Give me a defensive perimeter until we
can load the wounded!

RANGERS surround the humvees, firing at windows, doorways, rooftops. Blasting anything that moves.

ON SUNGLASSES - the Somali ducks from the doorway as it
EXPLODES with Ranger rounds.

MCKNIGHT - runs to the decimated third vehicle. Comes upon the writhing Delta Operator GRIZ, the guy with the birthmark on his face who was writing a children's book.

Griz has no lower half of his body.

Griz mutters something, somehow still alive. He reaches up at McKnight, like something out of a fucking horror movie. McKnight leans down to hear him, grabs his hand.

GRIZ

...I know h-how the s-story ends.

MCKNIGHT

(doesn't understand)

Okay, Griz. Okay....

Griz nods at McKnight, eyes wide with desperation, seeing something far away. Then Griz fades, and dies...

EXT. SOMEWHERE NEAR THE TARGET BUILDING - DAY

NELSON AND WADDELL, the two men left to watch over the corner so long ago, have stopped firing their weapons. It's quiet.

WADDELL

Get the feeling we missed something?

Nelson grabs his walkie talkie.

NELSON

Sergeant Eversmann, uh, where are you?

EVERSMANN (O.S.)
 ...Near Elvis's chopper, where are you?

NELSON
 Waddell and me are still here at the
 original blocking position.

EVERSMANN (O.S.)
 No one told you? We're all at the
 crash. Take that alley three blocks
 east and turn left. You can't miss us.

Waddell and Nelson share a look.

WADDELL
 They left us behind?

NELSON
 Guess we're running for it.

WADDELL
 Guess so.

They RUN.

EXT. HUMVEE LEADER MCKNIGHT'S SQUAD - DAY

Men load the wounded and dead Rangers into vehicles. McKnight
 put Griz's body in the back of a humvee. SHOUTS:

MCKNIGHT
 Let's go! LET'S GO!

INT. HUMVEE LEADER MCKNIGHT'S VEHICLE - CONT.

McKnight hops into the cab, shouts at Maddox --

MCKNIGHT
 Get us off this fucking street!
 (shouts into the radio)
 Command, we got serious casualties,
 here. We need to come back to base.

C2 PILOT (O.S.)
 JOC wants you at Elvis's crash site.

MCKNIGHT
 Where the hell is the crash site?

A BULLET explodes through the door, splats! into McKnight's
 thigh. He screams, turns to see a Somali holding an AK-47.

MCKNIGHT
 Fucking Skinny!

He BLASTS the Somali, blowing him over a low wall.

MADDOX

Fuck!

MADDOX cries out as a bullet splats! into his boot.

INT. COMMAND 2 CHOPPER - DAY

The C2 Black Hawk has taken a lazy turn in the sky.

C2 PILOT

Orion, I've lost sight of Elvis's
chopper, can you zero McKnight in?

INT. P-3 ORION SPY PLANE - CONT.

High overhead, the high-tech observation plane is a complete contrast to the chaos below -- quiet, calm. TECHNICIANS monitor the city below them in climate controlled comfort.

P3 ORION TECHNICIAN

Command Two, this is Orion. That's a
rog. Tell them to get to Halwadig
road, and go straight for a klick.

C2 PILOT (O.S.)

Did you say Halwadig road?

P3 ORION TECHNICIAN

Roger that. Halwadig, then straight.

INT. HUMVEE LEADER MCKNIGHT'S VEHICLE - CONT.

The radio gives McKnight the bad news:

C2 PILOT (O.S.)

McKnight, we need you to turn around
and head back to Halwadig.

MCKNIGHT

We just came through a major ambush.
Isn't there another way?

C2 PILOT (O.S.)

That's the info I'm getting from Orion.
You need to turn around and head back.

McKnight looks at Maddox. Shakes his head.

MCKNIGHT

I can't fucking believe this.

(sighs)

Okay, turn us around, Maddox.

Maddox executes a K-turn. Faces of confused and angry drivers stare through cracked windshields. The column turns around.

THROUGH MCKNIGHT'S WINDSHIELD - the long, wide road where they were ambushed lies straight ahead. The street seems to be waiting for them.

The Humvees engines rumble.

MCKNIGHT

Let's get it over with.

Maddox hits the gas. They head right back into the ambush.

MCKNIGHT

Get ready!

Hell begins anew. HUNDREDS of rounds RAKE the vehicles, punching holes through metal.

Every wall is alive with ricochets, the air is full of tracer fire, arcing along with the sluggish convoy.

THE HUMVEES - bullets SPLAT into Ranger arms, legs. One Ranger wheezes as a round THUDS into his ceramic breastplate.

ON THE BUILDINGS - armed Militia men howl with bloodlust, firing their weapons at the Americans.

SUNGLASSES - he and his men calmly track the sluggish humvee column, nailing dark passenger windows, tires, windshields...

Sunglasses sees MCKNIGHT come into view. He has a perfect shot. KRATAKRACK!

ON MCKNIGHT - bullets PING! into the doorframe, ricochet wildly, a bullet SLICING into McKnight's neck. Blood sprays the windshield.

MCKNIGHT

Shit!

McKnight presses his neck, firing his weapon the other hand.

INT. P-3 ORION SPY PLANE - CONT.

The technicians have McKnight's humvees on the monitors.

P3 ORION TECHNICIAN

They need to keep going straight,
they're halfway there.

C2 PILOT (O.S.)

Did you say straight?

P3 ORION TECHNICIAN
Straight for another quarter click.

C2 PILOT (O.S.)
Wait a minute. Which crash are you directing them to?

P3 ORION TECHNICIAN
Durant's crash. We got men taking heavy fire down there, over.

INT. HUMVEE LEADER MCKNIGHT'S VEHICLE - CONT.

McKnight listens to the radio in disbelief.

C2 PILOT (O.S.)
McKnight, uh, Orion was steering you toward the second crash site.

MCKNIGHT
Second crash site?

C2 PILOT (O.S.)
Durant's Six Four went down. A small group is under heavy fire there.

MCKNIGHT
How far is it? Can we go there first?

INT. JOINT OPERATIONS CENTER - CONT.

Garrison, monitoring the conversation, grabs the headset.

GENERAL GARRISON
You have to get to Elvis's crash first!
The entire ground force is waiting.

INT. HUMVEE LEADER MCKNIGHT'S VEHICLE - CONT.

The Humvees are slowing, drivers confused.

MCKNIGHT
General, we're close. We could get Durant out, then head to Elvis's crash.

GENERAL GARRISON (O.S.)
You've got to get to the ground force. Everything depends on it. You need numbers, McKnight. Now do it!

McKnight clearly wants to get to Durant. Shakes his head.

MCKNIGHT
C2, vector me in.

C2 PILOT (O.S.)
Turn around and head back.

ON THE HUMVEES -- they do a sluggish turn, heading back.

MCKNIGHT (O.S.)
Sorry, Durant...

EXT. DURANT'S CHOPPER - DAY

Durant hears a frantic fusillade from the other side of the chopper. Then, a sharp scream. And the shooting stops.

DURANT
Shughart? You there?... Anyone?

Durant looks down at his measly little gun.

Somali faces peer around the side of the chopper. Over walls. From nearby windows. Dozens of them.

Durant doesn't shoot. Places his gun on the ground.

Pulls out the PHOTO from his breast pocket. His thumb rubs over his wife and his infant son. Closes his eyes, whispers:

DURANT
I hope you both have a wonderful life.

Durant clutches the photo. Folds his hands across his chest, turns his eyes to the heavens.

The crowd descends upon him.

INT. P-3 ORION SPY PLANE - CONT.

A Technician tracks McKnight's Squad on the video screen.

P3 ORION TECHNICIAN
Left turn, left turn!

INT. COMMAND 2 CHOPPER - CONT.

The Pilot shouts into his headset:

C2 PILOT
Left turn! Uniform Six Four, left turn!

INT. MCKNIGHT'S HUMVEE - CONT.

The directions come too late. McKnight says into the radio:

MCKNIGHT
Let us talk with Orion directly!

C2 PILOT (O.S.)
You don't have their frequency on your
radio.

MCKNIGHT
This delay is killing us!

C2 PILOT (O.S.)
Roger, working on it.

McKnight staunches the bleeding on his neck.

MCKNIGHT
They're working on it, Maddox.

MADDOX
I feel better already, sir.

EXT. CITY STREETS - DAY

The abandoned NELSON and WADDELL crouch at a corner, wheezing
to catch their breath.

WADDELL
Nelson, look!

TWO BLOCKS OVER - McKnight's Humvee squad is rolling past!

WADDELL
Where the hell are they going?

NELSON
Damned if I know.

WADDELL
Nelson, look out!

Waddell knocks Nelson to the ground as -- KRATAKRACK! gunfire
roars overhead. Waddell uses Nelson as a level surface to
fire. He BLASTS the Somalis down the block.

NELSON
I can't fucking hear! Never shoot your
gun that close to my head again!

Another Somali pops out down the block. Waddell uses Nelson's
HELMET to rest his gun. Waddell fires. Nelson screams.

EXT. DURANT'S CRASH SITE - DAY

AN AK-47 RIFLE BUTT smashes into Mike Durant's face, breaking
his nose and shattering the orbital bone of his left eye.

THE PHOTO of his family falls from his grasp. In a haze of pain, Durant crawls after the snapshot. Someone STOMPS on his hand. The photo is kicked away.

Durant curls into a ball as the crowd kicks and beats him.

SOMALIS

Ranger! Ranger! You die, Somalia!

A SOMALI TECHNICAL wheels into the crowd. FIRIMBI (the Somali we saw in the beginning) hops down, levels a machine gun at the crowd. His Militia men hop off and flank him.

FIRIMBI

(in Somali, subtitled:)

Mohamed Farrah Aidid claims this American as a hostage! Alive.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE CITY, STRUEKER'S HUMVEE SQUAD - DAY

Iowa farm boy STRUEKER'S squad of three battered humvees searches for a way into the city. Roadblocks at every street.

STRUEKER (O.S.)

Command, we are still unable to get to the second crash site.

INT. JOINT OPERATIONS CENTER - CONT.

Garrison watches a MONITOR that shows the Somalis swarming over Durant's chopper. He grabs the radio.

GENERAL GARRISON

Roger. It's too late, Strueker.

INT. STRUEKER'S HUMVEE - CONT.

Strueker slams the radio down in frustration. Then:

STRUEKER

Screw it. We're going in.

(shouts to his men)

McKnight needs help! We're going in!

From the back seat, SIZEMORE leans forward, seeing nothing but roadblocks out the pockmarked windshield.

SIZEMORE

Uh, where exactly do have in mind, sir?

Strueker points at an enormous mound of metal, tires, garbage that blocks an upcoming street. It's all on FIRE.

STRUEKER

Through there.

EXT. ROADBLOCKED STREET - DAY

Somalis roll more tires to the burning roadblock when--

VrrROOOOM! A humvee grille EXPLODES through the mountain of debris, punching through burning metal and tires, sending flaming junk skyward. Flames rain down on the street.

The Humvee takes out part of a wall, sending fifty-pound chunks of concrete hurtling through the air. The wide bodied Humvee wobbles on two wheels before crashing back to earth.

IN THE .50 CALIBER TURRET - a Ranger DUCKS as the wave of flames and heat roars across the roof -- WHOOSH!

Flames trail the humvees as they barrel down the street.

IN THE HUMVEE - Strueker grabs the radio.

STRUEKER

Command Two! Get us to McKnight!

EXT. MOGADISHU STREETS - DAY

MACE is on the move, rounding a corner, finally finding --

DURANT'S CHOPPER, listing to one side like a harpooned whale. Mace does a quick check of the chopper.

Bullet-riddled. Empty. No bodies. The only thing left...

...Gary Gordon's black hockey helmet. A neat bullet hole through the plastic. Mace picks it up.

MACE

Gordon. Shughart...

Mace's ever-cool veneer cracks. One hand goes to his mouth. He bites back the anger that bubbles up from down deep.

He drops the bloody helmet to the dirt. It rolls away.

EXT. A FEW BLOCKS AWAY - DAY

A crowd of Somalis drag the dead, half-naked body of Gary Gordon through the streets. People spit on the body, kick it.

Gordon doesn't even look human anymore. Dragged by a piece of rope tied around his ankle, it's a barbaric sight.

EXT. NEAR ELVIS'S CRASH SITE - LATE AFTERNOON

Company Clerk STEBBINS and Delta Howe are on the same corner, firing at targets when - WHOOSH! An RPG streaks at them --

HOWE

DOWN!

HOWE leaps away as STEBBINS ducks. BAWHOOOOM! Stebbins vanishes in an orange fireball....

The smoke clears. Howe runs over. Stebbins is still in one piece, face blackened by the blast.

HOWE

You okay, Stebbins?

STEBBINS

Ears are ringing.

HOWE

Stay close to me. And keep shooting.

STEBBINS

Can't tell who's militia and who isn't.

HOWE

At this point, anyone coming this way isn't bringing flowers.

EXT. SOMALI STREETS - DAY

Two SOMALI GUNMEN take wild shots down the block at Sergeant Howe's position. The Somali men hide behind an old car hulk. A VOICE calls out from behind:

VOICE

(in Somali, subtitled)

Hey! Over here! American!

One of the men whirls, gun in hand--

CRACK! SHWOCK! His chest explodes. The Somali screams like a kitten caught in the wheel well of a speeding Buick.

The other Somali whirls, splattered with his comrade's blood, sees a figure blocking out the sun --

REVERSE - it's MACE. He FIRES. Death comes quickly.

EXT. RANGER CAPTAIN STEELE'S POSITION - DAY

Red Numbers - 5:59 PM

Waddell and Nelson, the two stragglers, finally made it. But they can't get across the street. Eversmann shouts over:

EVERSMANN :

Don't cross over! It's safer to go your side to Sergeant Howe's position!

Waddell and Nelson nod and charge up toward Stebbins and Howe.

EXT. NEAR ELVIS'S CRASH SITE - DAY

DELTA HOWE is firing at distant targets when A HAND grips his shoulder. Howe whirls. MACE has a placating hand in the air.

MACE

It's me, Howe. It's me.

HOWE

Christ. The hell did you come from?

MACE

Durant's chopper. Gordon, Shughart...

Mace trails off. Shakes his head. Howe's upper lip twitches, once. His eyes turns to stone.

HOWE

Then let's get some.

Mace nods, slaps in a fresh clip. Locks and loads.

MACE

Yeah. Let's.

INT. RANGER STRUEKER'S HUMVEE - DAY

SIZEMORE and scared Ranger THOMAS fire wildly out the back of the humvee as STRUEKER shouts into the radio in the front seat:

STRUEKER

Where? Where are they?!

C2 PILOT

(garbled:)

--blocks ahead...under fire...

SIZEMORE

Strueker! There they are!

McKnight's humvee convoy are a mere three blocks ahead. Smoke pours from the crippled vehicles.

EXT. HUMVEE SQUAD - DAY

McKnight's Humvee column staggers on rims, sparks spraying. Walls on either side are sandblasted with hundreds of rounds.

BONG! a bullet RINGS into Maddox's helmet, spinning it around, driving goggles twisting over his forehead.

MADDOX

Ahh! I CAN'T SEE!

MCKNIGHT

Put your glasses on, dumb ass.

MADDOX

I'VE BEEN SHOT! I'm blind!

They're headed right for a WALL. McKnight reaches over for the wheel, grimaces in pain. Leg shot, he can't move.

MCKNIGHT

Veer right!

(Maddox turns, hard)

Too far! Left! Veer left!

The Humvee takes out a chunk of wall, sprays plaster.

ON THE STREET - a SOMALI MAN on crutches appears in front of the truck, looks up in horror, and raises his arms, as--

MCKNIGHT

Look out!

Too late. The Man disappears under the tires. CRUNCH!

MADDOX

What was that?

MCKNIGHT

Nothing, you just ran over somebody.

Maddox and McKnight, both wounded, start laughing. Giddy, ridiculous laughter. They can't stop until --

BOOM! Maddox RAMS a tree. The Humvee comes to a dead stop.

INT. STRUEKER'S HUMVEE - CONT.

Strueker's three humvees race along next to McKnight's limping, devastated humvee squad. Strueker stops, jumps out.

STRUEKER

(to Sizemore)

Take over! I'm gonna find McKnight.

EXT. HUMVEE SQUAD - CONT.

Strueker runs past flatbeds with SOMALI PRISONERS. Some are dead. All are terrified. Strueker makes it to the lead humvee, yanks open the door.

STRUEKER

My God!

MADDOX AND MCKNIGHT look like they've been dipped in blood. The entire cab is spattered red.

STRUEKER
You guys okay?

MCKNIGHT
He's blind, and I'm shot to shit.

STRUEKER
Move over, I'll drive.

Strueker starts the engine, gets the Humvee moving again.

EXT. DELTA SERGEANT HOWE'S POSITION - DUSK

The sky is turning a burnished amber. Gunfire is a constant.

SOMALI MILITIA are tossing burning tires, hunks of metal, old furniture, anything -- onto embryonic blockades.

REVERSE - Delta Howe and Mace watch from their position.

HOWE
Just what I thought. Roadblocks.

MACE
You take the two on the left.

MACE'S POV - four Somalis pile detritus onto the growing pile. AK-47s slung over their shoulders.

Mace fires his M-14 - Boom!Boom! Howe fires his CAR-15 simultaneously - Brraap! Four Somalis topple over, blood spraying the new roadblock. The men do not move again.

Mace sees Steele's Rangers cowering behind walls, not shooting, terrified. Mace mutters:

MACE
Tell those fuckers to get in the fight.

EXT. RANGER CAPTAIN STEELE'S POSITION - DUSK

Steele hears the radio crackle to life. Howe growling:

HOWE
Captain Steele, get your men to start shooting at the enemy.

INTERCUT - Steele sees his scared Rangers.

CAPTAIN STEELE
(into the radio:)
You don't give me orders, Howe.

HOWE
Get your men to fight or we're all dead.

CAPTAIN STEELE

We'll hold out until the Humvees arrive.

HOWE

The sun is setting. The Humvees aren't coming. They would've been here by now.

CAPTAIN STEELE

They'll be here.

HOWE

No one is coming. We're at the goddamn Alamo. Do you get it now, sir?

Steele knows Howe is right. Looks at his frightened men.

CAPTAIN STEELE

Yeah...I get it.

HOWE

Somalis are setting up roadblocks all around us.

Steele sees Somalis a block away rolling old tires, carrying pieces of corrugated tin, garbage, chunks of plaster.

HOWE

Gotta keep one street open or the rescue squad will never get in. I respectfully suggest you tell your men to start shooting the enemy.

CAPTAIN STEELE

(clicks off)

I need two men across the street covering the Southeast. Come on men. We can't let them set up a roadblock.

The men look across the street. It's a bullet festival.

EVERSMANN

Hey sir, no way. Whoever puts one toe out there is dead. It's a bullet funnel. Take it from me.

CAPTAIN STEELE

How about following orders, Eversmann?

EVERSMANN

Order all you want. The courtyard is as far my men go.

Eversmann's men nod, thankful he's speaking up.

CAPTAIN STEELE
I'm in command of ground forces.

EVERSMANN
No one from my chalk crosses that road.
Steele sighs and shakes his head.

CAPTAIN STEELE
Okay. Okay, Sergeant.

EVERSMANN
Smith, Galentine, take that hole in the wall. Kurth, you're with me at the edge of the courtyard. See anyone setting up roadblocks -- take 'em out.
Eversmann's men hop to it, take up positions.

EVERSMANN
We'll hold this street, Captain. We'll hold it as long as it takes.

INT. MCKNIGHT'S HUMVEE - DUSK

A ROADBLOCK fills the entire street. McKnight grabs the radio:

MCKNIGHT
The road to Elvis's chopper is blocked.
McKnight presses curlex gauze into his leg wound.

COLONEL MATTHEWS (O.S.)
We really need you to get there.

MCKNIGHT
We've got many wounded, including me. Vehicles that are halfway running.

COLONEL MATTHEWS (O.S.)
You have to try again, McKnight.

McKnight and Strueker share a glance. Maddox blinks rapidly.

MADDOX
I'm still blind, McKnight.

McKnight hears groans of men in back, sounds of tire rims grinding on the road. He speaks deliberately into the radio.

MCKNIGHT
Negative.
(to his men in the humvee)
We're headed home.

GENERAL GARRISON (O.S.)
This is General Garrison. You will get
to that downed helicopter, McKnight.

MCKNIGHT
Sir, we'll be lucky if we make it back
to base.

He tosses the handset on the dash in anger.

INT. JOINT OPERATIONS CENTER - CONT.

Garrison gives the headset back to Matthews. The chain of
command has broken down.

GENERAL GARRISON
He's right...
(stares at the monitors)
Colonel, bring them home.

COLONEL MATTHEWS
Yes sir.

EXT. ELVIS'S CRASH SITE - DUSK

The city strangely quiet for a moment. A lull in the battle.
The only sound is the Rangers changing ammo mags.

Red Numbers: 6:25 PM

STEBBINS, WADDELL and NELSON wait for targets, spread out
along the corner. Oddly, a DOVE lands right near his face.
Pecks at the ground. Then flies skyward, oblivious.

STEBBINS
(wistfully watching it go)
Peace...

Nelson whispers over:

NELSON
Steb. Case we don't make it? I want
you to know you're doing a great job.

STEBBINS
Beats making coffee.

Stebbins smiles as, -- ANOTHER RPG arcs at them. BOOOOM!
Stebbins is eclipsed in an orange fireball once again.

NELSON
Stebbins!

No movement. A cloud of dust where he used to be... Then,
incredibly, Stebbins stands up. FIRES DOWN THE ROAD.

STEBBINS
Mother FUCKERS!

He rushes the corner, takes out three Somali gunmen. A wild animal, he charges, putting bullets into heads, bodies.

WADDELL
Go, Stebby.

Even Howe and Mace watch in admiration.

Five Somalis dart into the road. Stebbins UNLOADS, wiping them out with a wave of his gun. AK-47s fly from their hands.

HOWE
Stebbins! Get the hell back here!

Stebbins snaps out of his trance. Charges back to Howe.

STEBBINS
Those assholes tried to kill me!

EXT. COMBINED HUMVEE SQUAD - DUSK

The combined Humvee column chugs along, bullets raking metal.

McKnight sees a SOMALI MAN carrying a dead BOY in his arms. The man is in a daze, crossing in front of the Humvees rumbling at him. He never looks at them. Just keeps walking.

INT. FIVE TON TRUCK - CONT.

New guy ALPHABET drives, another Ranger next to him. CRACK! -- the Ranger screams, shot in the shoulder.

RANGER
I'm hit, Alphabet!

Then -- SCWOCK!THUD! Alphabet is nailed in the breast pocket over his kevlar vest. White fluid EXPLODES into the truck cab, the entire interior showered in white goop.

RANGER
What is that? Is that bone marrow?!

ALPHABET
(gasping for breath)
S-sun block!

RANGER
ALPHABET, LOOK OUT!

ACROSS THE STREET -- a Somali fires an RPG right at the truck. WHA-CRUNCH! The rocket PUNCHES through the driver's side door.

Alphabet makes a high squealing noise as the rocket SHWOCKS! into his chest, shearing his left arm from his body. It embeds inside him...but doesn't explode.

Alphabet slumps over, foot stomping the gas. The truck REAR ENDS McKnight's humvee. KA-WHUNK!

ON THE LEAD HUMVEE - STRUEKER charges back to the five-ton. Sees Alphabet dead. Shouts to the wounded Ranger inside:

STRUEKER

Come on, man! Grab Alphabet! Careful,
that rocket in his chest is still live!

They carry Alphabet to a Humvee. Rocket fins stick out one side of his body, nose cone out the other.

They lay Alphabet in the back of a humvee, onto a pile of groaning, wounded men. Someone whimpers in the pile:

RANGER

I wanna go home!

The wounded Ranger tries to climb in the Humvee as well.

STRUEKER

Get back in that truck and drive.

RANGER

I'm shot.

STRUEKER

Everyone's shot. We need the prisoners.

The bewildered Ranger nods, reluctantly runs back to the truck, huge hole in the ruined door. SOMALI PRISONERS are still on the flatbed.

EXT. K4 TRAFFIC CIRCLE - SUNSET

THE SUN, fading in the sky, bleeds as it touches the horizon.

Red Numbers: 6:49 PM

THOUSANDS of civilians line the streets at the huge K4 Traffic Circle. Stare as crippled, bullet-riddled Humvees stagger by.

McKnight's humvee grinds on rims. The humvee behind has lost an axle, pushed from behind in fits and starts by another humvee. Groaning metal and grinding steel fills the air.

IN THE HUMVEE BEHIND - SIZEMORE pushes the demolished Humvee along in front of him, stepping on the gas. Scared Ranger Thomas keeps his gun aimed at Somali civilians.

THOMAS

What about those guys, Sizemore?
Eversmann, Smith, Stebby, they're all
back there. What're we gonna do?

SIZEMORE

We're gonna go back to base, gear up,
and fuckin' go get 'em.

THOMAS

Oh. Great.

INT. MCKNIGHT'S HUMVEE - CONT.

McKnight holds his neck wound. Then sees something, far off.

MCKNIGHT

We're gonna make it.

MADDOX

What is it? What do you see?

MCKNIGHT

I can see the ocean.

The Indian Ocean is a beckoning jewel. The Humvees barrel
home, sun setting behind them....

INT. JOINT OPERATIONS CENTER - CONT.

Colonel Matthews runs down the situation to the General.

COLONEL MATTHEWS

All personnel are missing from Durant's
crash. At Elvis's crash site, Rangers
and Delta have taken two nearby houses.
Somalis are setting up roadblocks
around them.

GENERAL GARRISON

They set up those roadblocks and then
they squeeze. We have got to get to
those men, Colonel.

COLONEL MATTHEWS

How long should I tell them before we
can get there?

Garrison leans over the monitors. Stares at the images.

GENERAL GARRISON

They may have to hold on until dawn.

EXT. THE CITY - NIGHT

THE STARS. Shining against a black sky.

Red Numbers: 7:45 PM

The city is bathed in darkness. Complete, disquieting silence.

Then... BBbbbRAAPPP!

The red blaze of a muzzle flashes lights up the night sky.
The grunt of the sixty gun, the pig, joins the chorus.

STEBBINS, WADDELL and NELSON fire at the fleeting enemy.

WADDELL

Stebbins! Your nine!

Stebbins looks over his shoulder, just in time to see another
RPG whistling toward him. WWHHaaa-BOOOM! He disappears.

Nelson takes out the RPG man with a hail of gunfire.

NELSON

This time Stebby's really gone.

Waddell finds Stebbins under a blanket of plaster and concrete
chunks. Tosses twenty-pound slabs of concrete away.

WADDELL

Stebbins, can you hear me?

STEBBINS

Yeah...just let me rest for a minute.

KRATAKRATA-KRAK! big slugs rip into concrete above their
heads. Waddell hits the deck.

MACE

Where's this guy shooting from, dude?

MACE appears in the window above them. Waddell points.

WADDELL

Building on the corner.

THE BUILDING - muzzle flashes flare from inside the structure.

MACE loads a 203 grenade launcher with three fat rounds. Aims
the weapon. PHWOMP!PHWOMP!PHWOMP!

ON THE BUILDING - the grenades arc 180 feet in the air and
into a small window. Perfect shots.

The entire structure EXPLODES into the night sky. A small orange and black mushroom cloud blossoms into the air.

MACE

Musta been some kind of ammo dump.

INT. JOINT OPERATIONS CENTER - CONT.

Colonel Matthews hangs up a phone. Finds Garrison.

COLONEL MATTHEWS

We've got three M-48 tanks, dozen APCs and Condors, twice as many Humvees from the Pakistanis and Malaysians. They're lining up outside the base right now at Tanzania Road, along with about 300 men of the 10th Mountain.

GENERAL GARRISON

This is the last hope to get those men out. I need an evac plan that will work. I need someone who knows the route and the city.

COLONEL MATTHEWS

We got a volunteer. He's wounded, but knows the city. He was very insistent.

GENERAL GARRISON

Who?

EXT. THE U.S. BASE - NIGHT

MCKNIGHT spreads a map onto the hull of a tank. One leg is bandaged tight. Neck is patched up as well.

MCKNIGHT

We won't be coming back to base. After we pick the men up, we'll go north to triage at the soccer stadium. Medical personnel are setting up there now.

McKnight explains the mission to the Pakistanis and Malaysians.

Behind McKnight, three enormous tanks wait. Six white Armored Personnel Carriers behind them, diesels rumbling in the night.

MCKNIGHT

The tanks will plow through any roadblocks here--

PAKISTANI TANK DRIVER

No. No roadblocks.

MCKNIGHT
That's what tanks do. They barrel over things. They *crush* things.

PAKISTANI TANK DRIVER
Roadblocks have land mines.

MCKNIGHT
There's roadblocks everywhere. How the hell are we supposed to get to our men?

PAKISTANI TANK DRIVER
This is your mess. Do not expect us to risk our lives for your mistakes.

INT. UNKNOWN LOCATION - NIGHT

Mike Durant sits on an old mattress, back against a wall. Winces as a SOMALI DOCTOR puts his leg in a makeshift splint.

MANY soldiers are in the room. A video camera is on a tripod, aimed at Durant. FIRIMBI walks in the room.

FIRIMBI
My name is Firimbi.
(sits down, disarming smile)
And your name?

Durant's face is a parade of contusions. He croaks:

DURANT
Durant. Michael Durant.

FIRIMBI
We want you to make a videotape.

DURANT
I demand to be released to the UN
Peacekeeping force.

A Militia Man swiftly shoves a rifle into Durant's gut. Durant wheezes in pain.

SOMALI MILITIA
Ranger!

He points at the video camera.

FIRIMBI
Answer simple questions, and the men
will leave, yes?

Durant closes his eyes, nods. Firimbi reads prepared text.

FIRIMBI

Why are the Rangers in Somalia?

DURANT

Peace. We're on a peacekeeping mission.

FIRIMBI

You Rangers kill Somalis, true?

DURANT

I'm not a Ranger. I fly helicopters.
I'm what's called a Night Stalker.

FIRIMBI

You kill innocent people. For weeks
you terrorize and kill civilians,
militia. Have you nothing to say?

Durant clams up. The Militia Man threatens with the gun butt.

DURANT

Innocent people being killed is not
good.

Firimbi seems satisfied, puts the paper away. Snaps at the
Militia Men. They shut off the camera and take it away.

Firimbi offers Durant a cigarette. Durant shakes his head.

FIRIMBI

Are you innocent, Michael Durant?

EXT. SOMALI STREETS - NIGHT

Pitch black. No streetlights in this city.

The HARDCORE MILITIA creeps down the block. Their leader
still wears his trademark sunglasses, one lens popped out.

SUNGLASSES uses hand motions to his men. They spread out
along the street, take positions in the dark.

EXT. RANGER CAPTAIN STEELE'S POSITION - NIGHT

Steele's men fire at Somali Militia a block south. Every time
the Somalis try to build on the small roadblock, the Ranger
force drops them in a hail of blistering fire.

CAPTAIN STEELE

Anyone have their night vision goggles?
Eversmann? Any of your men have them?

EVERSMANN

We didn't think we'd need them, sir.

CAPTAIN STEELE

Dammit. Neither did I. The one
advantage we'd have over these people
at night and it's back at the base.

ZING! ZING! Bullets whiz past the big Captain's head.

CAPTAIN STEELE

It's too dark to see! Fall back
inside, men!

TWO BLOCKS AWAY - Sunglasses takes aim at a LARGE HOLE in the
courtyard wall. Finger tightening on the trigger, as --

IN THE COURTYARD - Corporal Smith is last to head inside.
He's firing through the same large hole in the courtyard wall.

BAM!--THWOCK! His leg suddenly EXPLODES in a shower of blood.

SMITH

Oh, God! I'M HIT!

INT. THE BUILDING - CONT.

Doc Schmid works on a Ranger's ruined shin when Eversmann and
Steele pull the howling Smith inside.

EVERSMANN

Doc! We need help here!

Doc Schmid comes over, jams an IV drip into Smith's arm. Cuts
open Smith's pants at the hip. Blood SPRAYS four feet skyward.

SMITH

It's my artery! I'm gonna die!

EVERSMANN

You're not gonna die, Smith.

DOC SCHMID

I have to stop the bleeding. I have to
reach inside the wound, okay?

(Smith nods, frantic)

This is going to hurt. Bad. I'm sorry.

Schmid pushes two fingers into the ragged wound. Smith
SCREAMS in agony.

Smith grips Eversmann's hand, crushing it, knuckles white.

EVERSMANN

Captain, do something.

Steele grabs the radio. Clicks on the handset.

CAPTAIN STEELE

This is Steele. I've got many wounded, one critically. Now where's our evac?

COLONEL MATTHEWS (O.S.)

We're putting together an evac now...
You have to hang on.

CAPTAIN STEELE

I got a guy here who is going to die if you don't get a chopper in here.

COLONEL MATTHEWS (O.S.)

You have to wait. Command out.

INT. UNKNOWN LOCATION - NIGHT

Durant and Firimbi are alone in the cramped room. Durant winces as waves of pain wash over him.

FIRIMBI

I'm sorry. We have no pain medicine.
Our country is very poor.

DURANT

I'll be fine.

Durant tries to hold it together. Delirious with agony.

FIRIMBI

You would like to be somewhere else, I know. Times Square? Epcot Center?

DURANT

Downtown Detroit would be a relief.

FIRIMBI

Your President should not have sent you here, Durant. Wrong place, wrong time.

DURANT

We just want to help you people.

FIRIMBI

You cannot just come in and make new government. Who do you think you are? The world is not America. The world is not all Coke and smiles. This is the real world. This is how it works.

INT. THE HANGAR AT THE US BASE - NIGHT

GENERAL GARRISON walks through the triage. Watches as the medics pull the sheet over Dom Pilla's head...

...over Griz Martin, the Delta man who was blown in half.
At a table, a Ranger is being worked on by triage medics.

GENERAL GARRISON

How is he?

TRIAGE MEDIC

This kid lost a leg, got run over by a
truck, and he's still alive.

(shakes his head in wonder)

And he just might make it, too.

GENERAL GARRISON

Good.

Blackburn, the kid who fell out of the chopper, lies on a
table, complex neck brace on his head.

ANOTHER MEDIC

He'll pull through, General. He's got
motion in his legs, too.

GENERAL GARRISON

That's good.

Garrison heads back toward the JOC when he sees two soldiers
carefully placing Alphabet into a bunker of sandbags.

GENERAL GARRISON

What are you men doing?

SOLDIER

The RPG in his chest is still live,
sir. They told us to put him in here.

Garrison watches as they cover Alphabet's body with sandbags.

Garrison's eyes take in the carnage. He's seen this thing
before. But not in a long, long time.

INT. RANGER CAPTAIN STEELE'S BUILDING - NIGHT

Smith is still screaming. Steele comes over.

CAPTAIN STEELE

Can't you give him something?

DOC SCHMID

BP is too low. Gotta get him to base.

Eversmann looks at Steele. Steele shakes his head.

SMITH

Ah, Jesus. I can't die here!

(looks at Eversmann)

Matt, I can't die here! I can't--

I'm -- I'm gonna die in this shitty
fucking house in *fucking* Africa!

INT. SOMALI HOUSE - NIGHT

Stebbins sits on a ratty couch, hair wild, face blackened.
Rangers crowd the room, some wounded, some FIRING out windows.

Stebbins looks down to see MACE cutting off his boot.

STEBBINS

Hey, Mace. Not my boot, man!

Mace ignores him, slowly tugs off Stebbins right boot. A
golfball sized piece of shrapnel sticks out of his foot.

STEBBINS

Holy shit...

MACE

Does it hurt?

STEBBINS

No. It doesn't, actually.

MACE

Looks like the wound was cauterized.

Mace starts expertly wrapping Stebbins' foot in gauze.

STEBBINS

You Delta guys all medics, too?

MACE

No. I went to Med school.

STEBBINS

A doctor? You could be makin' serious
bank. Why you doing this?

MACE

Dropped out after three years.

STEBBINS

Oh. Too hard?

MACE

Too dull.

(Mace finishes the work)

If that starts to smart you let me know.

INT. RANGER CAPTAIN STEELE'S BUILDING - NIGHT

Schmid has his fingers inside Smith's bloody leg, trying to pinch the artery. It's impossible to even make out a wound.

DOC SCHMID
I'm out of IVs, Eversmann.

EVERSMANN
Sir! We need to get him out of here!

Steele picks up the radio. Clicks the handset:

CAPTAIN STEELE
Command, we're low on ammo and IVs.
(softer, imploring:)
We need an evac. Just a Little Bird or something. For Corporal Smith. Please.

INT. JOINT OPERATIONS CENTER - CONT.

Matthews looks at the General. Garrison shakes his head.

GENERAL GARRISON
I can't risk another helicopter crew for one man.

INT. RANGER CAPTAIN STEELE'S BUILDING - NIGHT

Smith begins to whimper in confused pain. Eyes wild.

CAPTAIN STEELE
Dammit, Colonel, he'll die if we don't get him out right now!

COLONEL MATTHEWS (O.S.)
I'm sorry. Command out.

Steele blinks back frustration. Sees Smith's distant gaze. The wounded under Steele's command stare back with dazed eyes.

CAPTAIN STEELE
Please, God...please help my men.

EXT. THE BASE - NIGHT

MCKNIGHT looks at his watch: 11:23 PM. Turns to see --

A convoy of three TANKS, six APCs and nearly ONE HUNDRED American, Italian, Malay and Pakistani armored vehicles.

MCKNIGHT
(into the radio)
Let's move out... Move out!
(nothing happens)
Fucking radios must be on all different
frequencies.

McKnight climbs up on the top of the humvee, wincing in pain.
He waves his arms impatiently in a whirling motion.

Humvees rumble to life. Tanks belch smoke. APC motors turn
over and awaken. The chorus of engines is deafening.

The entire monstrous convoy rumbles slowly into the city,
sounding like a great, clanking, huffing beast.

IN THE VEHICLES -- we see familiar faces of volunteers:
STRUEKER, SIZEMORE, THOMAS. Everyone from the Humvee squads
who can move or hold a weapon is in this rescue column.

INT. RANGER CAPTAIN STEELE'S BUILDING - NIGHT

Pale moonlight trickles into crooked windows. An immense pool
of blood on the floor gleams dull black.

Corporal Smith's face is deathly pale. He is fading fast.

SMITH
Matt? Matt?

EVERSMANN
Yeah, Jamie.

SMITH
Why are we here? What are we even
doing here?

His imploring eyes look up at Eversmann.

EVERSMANN
I don't know...I don't know.

SMITH
Tell my family...I did good today.

EVERSMANN
You'll tell 'em yourself.

SMITH
Just tell my parents, Matt. That I
love them and I fought well.

EVERSMANN
Don't do this, buddy. Help's coming.
Please, Jamie. Don't give up.

SMITH

Make sure you tell them...

Smith's eyes roll into the back of his head.

EVERSMANN

Jamie? Jamie! Smith!

DOC SCHMID

Corporal Smith! Hang on!

(pounds on Smith's chest)

Do you hear me?! HANG ON!

The Rangers watch as Schmid compresses Smith's chest over and over. From the window, Steele watches with dread.

Eversmann watches helplessly, his friend pale and lifeless.

EVERSMANN

...He's gone. Let him go, Doc.

Eversmann grabs Schmid's arm. Schmid sits back, frustrated, angry. Stands, covered to his waist in Smith's blood.

DOC SCHMID

This isn't right, Eversmann. He'd be alive if they sent in one goddamn chopper. This just isn't fucking right.

Schmid walks away, breaks a chair with a vicious kick of his boot. Sits on the floor and puts his head in his bloody hands.

EVERSMANN

I know.

INT. JOINT OPERATIONS CENTER - CONT.

ON A MONITOR - infrared figures of Rangers hiding in buildings illuminate the video screens. White blobs, like something out of a low-tech video game.

Occasionally a figure will fire their weapon down the block. The weapon's heat signature flares white.

ANOTHER SCREEN - HUNDREDS of Somali heat signatures mass fifty feet away from the stranded Rangers. A swarm of white blobs.

A LITTLE BIRD chopper enters the screen. HEAT BLOOMS flare from the machine guns, raking Somali heat signatures. The little white blobs scatter in dozens of directions.

GENERAL GARRISON - watching the monitor, nods in approval.

GENERAL GARRISON

Keep the Little Birds flying all night long. We gotta hold back the city.

INT. STEELE'S BUILDING - NIGHT

Eversmann covers Smith's body with a tattered blanket.

SCARED RANGER

Sergeant. Is anyone coming for us?

EVERSMANN

They'll be here. Sit tight.

(grabs the radio:)

Base, we need a drop of Ammo, water, and Night Vision goggles, now.

COLONEL MATTHEWS (O.S.)

I'm advised it's too hot for a drop --

EVERSMANN

Colonel, I'm advising you that if you don't make this drop, we will not survive the night. By morning they'll have us barricaded, and no convoy will get in! Do it, sir. Now.

Eversmann clicks off. Moves to the window, where Steele stares out into the dark streets.

CAPTAIN STEELE

Those bastards block off that road, we're dead meat.

EVERSMANN

Corporal Smith is dead.

CAPTAIN STEELE

I know. I'm sorry.

Steele looks at Eversmann, then back out the window. He seems like a shell of his former bulldog self.

CAPTAIN STEELE

You know, you can train and train, but you never train for something like this. Not like this.

EVERSMANN

Just gotta hold on until they come.

From behind them:

SCARED RANGER

Maybe no one's coming!

CAPTAIN STEELE

They'll be here.

SCARED RANGER

They wouldn't even come for Smith. Why should they come for us? They left us!

(getting hysterical)

Those bastards are gonna box us in here, and trap us, and kill us!

EVERSMANN

Shitcan that talk! YOU HEAR ME?

He shuts up. The other Rangers stare back at Eversmann.

EVERSMANN

I don't want to hear any more of that bullshit. We're getting out of this city. We're all getting out. Alive.

INT. SOMALI HOUSE - NIGHT

Nelson sits on the couch next to Stebbins, exhausted.

NELSON

How's the foot?

STEBBINS

Got a metal golfball in it.

(Nelson laughs)

Man, if I get outta here... I'm going straight back to that bagel shop.

(off Nelson's blank stare)

I hated that shop. I wanted to "see the world." I seen it, alright. I seen Germany, Saudi, and Africa -- all behind a desk. Waiting for a friggin battle. Waiting to fight. And now...

(looks at Nelson)

...I never want another.

INT. STEELE'S BUILDING - NIGHT

A LITTLE BIRD chopper shrieks overhead, right over the courtyard. The Co-Pilot pushes a large duffel bag out the window. It flops into the dirt.

Steele and Eversmann move to the door. The bag is tantalizingly close, just sitting there. Waiting. Without saying a word, Eversmann darts out and grabs the bag.

KRATAKRACK! Eversmann dives back into the building.

INSIDE - he rip open the bag. Night Vision goggles stare back.

EXT. DELTA SERGEANT HOWE'S POSITION - NIGHT

MACE AND HOWE see a black satchel spiraling down at them from the hovering LITTLE BIRD. Mace CATCHES it like a dropped baby.

Mace pulls out two night vision goggles. Hands a set to Howe.

MACE

Show time.

EXT. THE CITY - NIGHT

Red Numbers: 1:30 AM

McKnight stands in the turret of the lead Humvee, going back down the same dangerous streets. This time, he's got all the awesome power of the United States 10th Mountain Division, and the Pakistani and Malaysian Army behind him. Over 500 men.

They simply DEMOLISH anything in their path. Somalis foolish enough to shoot at the massive convoy are completely obliterated in a roaring fusillade of .50 caliber slugs.

The monstrous convoy is unwieldy, sluggish, but moves forward with the inexorability of a coming ice age. It will arrive.

EXT. SOMALI STREETS - NIGHT

Red Numbers: 2:19 AM

THE HARDCORE MILITIA creep closer to Steele's position, the courtyard only 50 feet away. SUNGLASSES hugs the wall, lugging his SAW. His men trail behind.

Sunglasses directs his men to fan out. They take positions, getting good angles on the courtyard. Visibility is almost nil, the building a ghostly white monolith in the night.

They have Captain Steele's building surrounded.

Sunglasses hisses something into the night.

DOZENS of SOMALIS run from the shadows, start piling junk onto the growing roadblock. Old furniture, metal, even a compact car, long since stripped, is lugged toward the heap.

ON THE SOMALIS - two men chattering to each other get ready to throw an old couch on the pile when --

A GRENADE rolls to a stop at their feet. One man screams something in Somali, drops the couch as --

BA-WHOOM! The Militia men are BLASTED APART. The couch is OBLITERATED. Shrieks of anguish echo through the night.

NEARBY - Delta Sergeant Howe wears his night vision goggles. Crouched against a building, he tosses another grenade into the roadblock. And another.

BA-WHOOM! The roadblock EXPLODES, metal WHIZZING past.

ON THE HARDCORE MILITIA - the Militia men start to crawl back to safety, grenades rattling them.

FOUR HARDCORE MILITIA back up, whispering to each other when--

REVERSE - two shadows flank them. Too late, they see --

EVERSMANN and STEELE, night vision goggles on. The Rangers fire. Bbbraapp! Bbbrapp!

HARDCORE MILITIA drop, weapons blasted from their hands. Gargled cries echo in the night.

BBRAAAPPP! CAPTAIN STEELE mows two of them down with a cruel sweep of his weapon.

EVERSMANN'S POV - the world is green, bright. He sees the Somali militia plain as day. TRACKS one running Militia man with his sights. Eversmann pulls the trigger.

BBBRAAAAPPP!

THE MILITIA MAN pinwheels for balance like a wino doing the 100 yard dash. Doesn't realize he's been shot three times. He tumbles to the earth. Doesn't move.

The night is quiet again.

SEVEN HARDCORE MILITIA lay dead along the road. Staring into forever. They never even saw the shadow men who killed them.

EVERSMANN screams into the night --

EVERSMANN

His name was Corporal Jamie Smith, you motherfuckers!

EXT. ANOTHER SOMALI STREET - CONT.

SUNGLASSES gets to his feet. Comrade's death screams spooking him, he retreats. His usual calm gone, Sunglasses turns and runs flat out down a narrow alleyway.

A FIGURE APPEARS in front of him. A MAN with an insect-like appendage growing out of his head.

Sunglasses slides to a halt, raises his weapon at --

MACE, night vision goggles strapped on. Weapon leveled.

MACE

Hi there.

BOOM!BOOM!BOOM! Three quick shots from Mace's lethal M-14.

SUNGLASSES SCREAMS as bullets explode into his chest, weapon flying skyward, blowing him back through a corrugated tin wall.

EXT. THE CITY - CONT.

THE CONVOY still motors slowly through the city. Windows in a Somali house lights up with AK-47 muzzle flashes.

The return fire from the convoy is withering. The entire structure crumbles like a bunch of saltine crackers as .50 caliber rounds pound it to dust.

EXT. CAPTAIN STEELE'S POSITION - NIGHT

Eversmann and Steele watch the empty street with night vision.

EVERSMANN'S POV - he can see HOWE and MACE, 50 feet away, crouched on either side of the street, near what used to be the roadblock. Now it's a scattered mess.

EVERSMANN

We got an open road, Captain. All we need is the damn convoy.

INT. SOMALI HOUSE - NIGHT

NELSON looks at his watch. 5:00 AM.

NELSON

They should be here in a few minutes with hot coffee, fellas.

WADDELL

I hope they bring croissants.

Some bitter laughter comes back to him. Then, a sound. Far off, getting closer.

NELSON

Hey... What is that?
(knows the sound)
What the hell is that?

Mechanical throbbing. Like a pulse. Engines....

WADDELL

They're coming! They're really coming!

EXT. RANGER CAPTAIN STEELE'S BUILDING - NIGHT

Sounds of the RUMBLING convoy reaches their ears. Captain Steele shouts back to the Somali house.

CAPTAIN STEELE

They're coming to get us, men!

INSIDE - the wounded, exhausted Rangers cheer.

INT. JOINT OPERATIONS CENTER - CONT.

Colonel Matthews listens to his headset.

COLONEL MATTHEWS

General, Somalis have Mike Durant prisoner. They have a videotape. Aidid is going to leak it to CNN.

Garrison shakes his head. It keeps getting worse.

GENERAL GARRISON

Get me a Little Bird in the air right now. Get two in the air. Let Durant know we're not gonna leave him behind.

INT. UNKNOWN LOCATION - NIGHT

Durant and Firimbi talk into the night.

FIRIMBI

You have children?

DURANT

A son. I'd like to see him again.

FIRIMBI

And you will. It is Somali tradition never to hurt a prisoner.

DURANT

You just break their noses?

FIRIMBI

I apologize for them. To them, Americans are the enemy.

DURANT

We aren't your enemy.

FIRIMBI

You are trying to kill Mohamed Aidid.

DURANT

Arrest, not kill. He's a war criminal.

FIRIMBI

Even if you get Aidid, and you will not, what good do you do? Another man will rise to take Aidid's place.... You come in the middle of a very old battle. You can do nothing.

INT. STEELE'S BUILDING - NIGHT

Eversmann peers out the doorway. HEADLIGHT GLARE washes over his face. He rips off the night vision goggles to see--

A UN HUMVEE, rolling right up at him. A voice rings out:

MCKNIGHT

United States Rangers, come out!

EVERSMANN

Goddamn, Colonel, it's good to see you!

MCKNIGHT

Get your men together, Eversmann.
We're getting out of here.

EXT. DELTA SERGEANT HOWE'S POSITION - CONT.

Howe and Mace jog back to the Somali house full of Rangers and Delta. Convoy headlights cast their shadows against the walls.

MACE

We're gone.

HOWE

(shouts in at the men)
Delta! Rangers! We are leaving!

Mace gets his arm under company clerk Stebbins, lifts him to his feet. Mace helps Stebbins limp toward the rumbling convoy.

STEBBINS

It's beautiful.

EXT. OVER THE CITY - NIGHT

An AH-6 Little Bird streaks high over the city. A megaphoned voice rings down at the city.

LITTLE BIRD PILOT (O.S.)

Mike Durant, we will not leave you.
Mike Durant, we will find you...

INT. UNKNOWN LOCATION - NIGHT

Durant's eyes widen, spirits lifting as the sound reaches him.

LITTLE BIRD PILOT (O.S.)
Mike Durant, NSDQ. Mike Durant, NSDQ.
Mike Durant, we will find you...

The voice fades as the chopper streaks into the night.

FIRIMBI
NSDQ?

DURANT . .
Night Stalkers Don't Quit.

EXT. SOMALI STREETS - NIGHT

The DEAD are zipped up in body bags, carried to a UN APC.

EVERSMANN AND STEELE carry Corporal Smith's body to the APC.
Load him inside. Eversmann stands there, can't bring himself
to turn away from the sight of his friend's body in the bag.

MACE AND HOWE help carry the dead Delta man to the APC.

THE WOUNDED are loaded carefully into APCs. Cramped and hot.
Metal coffins.

STEBBINS limps inside the vehicle. The Ranger who got shot in
the ass climbs in with him, lies on one side.

RANGER
Stebby! Thought you were dead for sure!

STEBBINS
No, just a helluva cramp in the foot.

RANGER
At least you can sit on the toilet.

EXT. UN HUMVEE - NIGHT

McKnight speaks to the Captain of the Pakistani group.

MCKNIGHT
As soon as we get the pilots bodies out
of the choppers, we leave. Okay?

PAKISTANI CAPTAIN
As soon as the bodies are out. Yes.

EXT. ELVIS'S BLACK HAWK - NIGHT

Men go to work with heavy saws to cut the two Pilots out of
the wreckage. Their slumped forms are a grisly reminder of
how metal machines of war can crush a man like so much meat.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE CITY - DAWN

THE SUN, rising now.

And still the convoy hasn't moved.

EXT. ELVIS'S BLACK HAWK - CONT.

The Co-Pilot is out, but crews still work to cut Elvis from the wreckage. Mace and Howe help the crew, prying the control panel back with crowbars, muscles straining.

Eversmann rushes over to McKnight.

EVERSMANN

Sir, we gotta go. The sun is coming up
and we're all going to get shot at.

MCKNIGHT

General doesn't want a man left behind
to be mutilated.

INT. THE APC - DAWN

INSIDE THE APC - hot. Wounded groaning, delirious. Stebbins pounds on the plexiglas partition at the Pakistani driver.

STEBBINS

Hey, what's the hold up! Let's go!

PAKISTANI APC DRIVER

Hospital! Pilots out, then Hospital.

PING!PING! bullets ricochet off the metal hull of the APC.

STEBBINS

Now! You sadist!

EXT. THE APC CONVOY - DAWN

Nelson and Waddell hide behind a white UN APC. Bullets start PINGING off the vehicles.

NELSON

Jesus! These things are bullet magnets.

They duck back inside the building where they hid all night.

WADDELL

LET'S GO!

NELSON

Save your breath. If the Somalis don't
kill us, the U.S. Army will.

EXT. ELVIS'S BLACK HAWK - DAWN

They finally lift Elvis's body out of the wreckage. His mangled remains are zipped into a plastic body bag.

MACE places THERMITE GRENADES in the mangled control panel.

MACE

Fire in the hole!

Everyone backs off, takes cover behind APCs.

Muffled explosions BOOM! WHU-THUD! shake the earth, remains of the control panel and technology destroyed.

EXT. THE APC CONVOY - DAWN

The Pakistani Captain sees the dead Pilots are extracted. He talks into his radio to the other APCs.

AT AN APC - Steele rounds up non-wounded men. Rangers Nelson and Waddell. Eversmann and Doc Schmid. Delta Howe and Mace.

CAPTAIN STEELE

We'll have to squeeze in these APCs.
Just don't sit on a wounded--

VROOOOMM! The APC driver takes off. THE CONVOY STARTS TO MOVE. Steele charges after the vehicle, pounding on the side.

CAPTAIN STEELE

Wait! WAIT! WE HAVE MEN OUT HERE!

IN THE APC - McKnight grabs the driver by the collar.

MCKNIGHT

Stop! We still have men back there!

PAKISTANI APC DRIVER

Orders. Pilots out, go to Hospital!

MCKNIGHT

(grabs the radio:)

Stop! We have friendlies back there!

The column keeps rolling. No one is paying attention to him.

EXT. BACK AT THE SOMALI BUILDING - DAWN

The sun now bathes the city in white light. Eversmann, Mace, Howe, Nelson, Waddell, and Doc Schmid watch in horror as the convoy disappears down the block.

WADDELL

You telling me we fought all night, and
now we have to RUN THROUGH MOGADISHU?

MACE

God bless the US Army.

And he starts RUNNING.

EXT. MOGADISHU STREETS - MORNING

The small group of soldiers are now running along the same
dangerous streets they battled over the day before.

The men are exhausted, gasping for air as they charge down the
crooked, dirty streets. Legs like lead weights.

KRATAKRATAKRAK! machine guns rake the road ahead of them. The
group slides to a stop. Howe and Steele share a glance.

HOWE

Steele, half the group covers, half the
group runs. We leapfrog. Okay?
(Steele nods)

Go!

Howe and Mace FIRE down the intersection, killing three Somali
snipers. Steele, Eversmann and the others charge across.

On the other side, Steele and Eversmann cover Howe and Mace.

CAPTAIN STEELE

Go!

The Delta Operators charge across to safety.

They use this tactic at every intersection. It's painstaking.
Somali gunfire is getting more intense. The men are sweating,
running, huffing, firing. Running.

They can see the APCs, distant blocks ahead.

EXT. ANOTHER BLOCK - CONT.

WADDELL and NELSON charge down the block, walls next to them
chipping and exploding. They share a wild glance.

NELSON

Holy shit! Holy shit! Holy shit!

WADDELL

Keep running!

AT A CORNER - the group comes to a halt. Gasping for breath.

EVERSMANN

I've lost sight of the convoy.

Howe comes charging up from behind, bullets following him.

HOWE

Keep going!

THEY CHARGE out into the street as --

A HAIL OF bullets follows them from every window. SMACK!
Nelson is hit in the shoulder. He screams.

NELSON

HOLY SHIT!

Eversmann and Waddell pick him up. Nelson stands, wobbly.

EVERSMANN

Can you run?

NELSON

Y-yeah. Let's go.

The group charges to the corner. They turn to see --

AN ENORMOUS ROADBLOCK. Burning tires, car hulks. Piles of flaming garbage. No way around it.

MACE

Quick! Back the way we came!

The group runs back down the street, bullets whizzing by.
They take a left turn, sprinting down --

A NEW BLOCK. This one is quieter. No roadblocks or Militia,
it should be easy to--

WADDELL

GRENADE!

Everyone ducks as a grenade SAILS over a wall and lands at
SCHMID'S FEET. Doc Schmid dives as--

BOOOOOM! The Doc's body is completely lost in the blast.

EVERSMANN

Schmid?! Where's the Doc?

WADDELL

He blew up!

Waddell sees nothing but a crater and a pile of dust.

EVERSMANN

Whattya mean, he blew up?

WADDELL

I mean, he blew up, Sergeant!

TEN YARDS away, Schmid stands from behind some brush. Pants blown almost completely off, underwear showing through.

DOC SCHMID

They blew my pants off!

CAPTAIN STEELE

Let's go!

The group charges down the block, expending whole clips of ammo as they go. Shooting for the sake of shooting. For the comforting sound of the machine gun's bellow.

EXT. LARGE INTERSECTION - MORNING

Halwadig Road and National Street. The APC and tanks move down this road and into the safety of THE SOCCER STADIUM.

Eversmann, Steele, Howe, Mace, Nelson, Waddell, and Doc Schmid eye the entrance. Guarded by friendlies. Steele shouts--

CAPTAIN STEELE

There it is! The finish line, men!

EVERSMANN

Let's do it!

All of them stand up on wobbly legs. THEY RUN.

Charging past an alley, the group FIRES in both directions. SOMALI gunmen fall as the small group howls past.

Past another alley. GUNS BLAZING. And another.

ON WADDELL AND NELSON - they see an old Pakistani soldier behind a .50 caliber, cigarette hanging from his lips, frantically waving them to the stadium entrance. THEY RUN.

WADDELL

Don't have to tell us twice!

EVERSMANN'S POV - his breath comes in gasps, sounds of an asthmatic grandmother forced to sprint on a treadmill.

The entrance is in sight. Doctors are inside, white tables and sheets and water and safety and food and shelter and--

-- EVERSMANN crosses the finish line, sliding on his stomach. Mace, Howe, Steele, charge in after them, collapsing in a heap.

The light of the sunrise eclipses them and --

The world fades to white.

EXT. THE SOCCER STADIUM - MORNING

Wounded are being tended to by medics. Stebbins smokes a cigarette as someone works on his foot. Happy to be alive.

Medics work on Nelson, Galentine, Kurth. Almost everyone has been shot. Others walk around in a daze. Except--

EVERSMANN, who grabs another handful of grenades and ammo clips. He shoves them in pockets, pouches, anywhere.

EVERSMANN'S POV - dozens of young Rangers, shell shocked, exhausted, sit the dirt, staring into nothingness. Uniforms splattered with friends' blood, or their own.

MACE appears next to Eversmann, starts reloading his weapon in silence. Grabs some grenades.

Mace's eyes meet Eversmann's. Eversmann stares back at Mace.

MACE

Now you know what I now.

Eversmann is silent. Eyes distant. Changed somehow. He nods.

HOWE

Eversmann. You ready?

HOWE trots up, locking and loading.

EVERSMANN

Ready.

Steele charges up.

CAPTAIN STEELE

Couldn't get the General on the radio.

MACE

Screw it. Let's go back out right now.

CAPTAIN STEELE

We can't just go back without--

MACE

Durant is still alive. Would you want us to leave you in there?

They all stare at Steele. Finally, he nods.

CAPTAIN STEELE
What the hell. Let's go.

THEY run across the compound toward a Black Hawk. Mace gives the Pilot the thumbs up. The Pilot jumps in the cockpit, starts the engines. Massive rotors begin to whine.

As they climb into the cargo hold --

ANOTHER CHOPPER appears in the sky, coming toward the soccer stadium. Descends quickly. Lands.

GARRISON, MATTHEWS and TASKER get off the chopper. The General runs over to the four soldiers.

GENERAL GARRISON
Captain! Where are you going?

CAPTAIN STEELE
Back in, sir.

GENERAL GARRISON
No one's going anywhere.

EVERSMANN
We have men still in there, sir!

MACE
Durant, Gordon, Shughart -- they're all still in that city.

GENERAL GARRISON
You go in there, get shot down, it starts all over again.

HOWE
That's a chance we're willing to take.

GENERAL GARRISON
It's not a chance I'm willing to take.

Garrison makes a throat-cutting gesture to the chopper Pilot. The Pilot nods and kills the engines.

CAPTAIN STEELE
This isn't over, sir!

GENERAL GARRISON
It is over. A dozen soldiers are dead! Six more are dying! Nobody under my command goes back into that city!
(looks at each one of them)
It's all over now. Understood?

CAPTAIN STEELE

I understand that we're at war now, sir.

GENERAL GARRISON

This isn't a war. This was never a war. It's a goddamn CNN special report.

Eversmann can't stay silent anymore.

EVERSMANN

General, I will not believe that my men were shot, were killed -- that my best friend died in front of me, for some *special report!* If we don't go back in there, you take away we fought for!

Captain Steele puts a gentle hand on Eversmann's arm.

TASKER

Listen to your General. It's all over.

CAPTAIN STEELE

Says who?

TASKER

Says the Commander In Chief. Let's face it, we got our butts kicked. Time to cut our losses. They won.

Eversmann steps up to Tasker, glares at him.

EVERSMANN

We won. We got caught in there and we survived. We fought for the man next to us, and we survived.

(voice choked)

We won.

Eversmann walks past Tasker, past the General. Heads toward the stadium exit.

TASKER

You can't go back in there.

Mace, Howe and Steele glance at each other. Then they follow Eversmann.

TASKER

General, tell your men to stop.

Garrison does nothing.

TASKER

General, do something! We can't send men back in there.

Tasker charges alongside the men.

TASKER

You can't go back in there!

MACE

Watch us.

Mace pushes Tasker aside. Tasker throws his hands in the air.

TASKER

Order your men to stand down, Garrison!

(charges to Eversmann)

Do the words International Incident
mean anything to you?

Tasker stands in Eversmann's path.

TASKER

Stop! Where do you think you're going,
soldier?

Eversmann's thousand yard stare bores through Tasker's head.

EVERSMANN

To make sure our men died for
something.

Eversmann takes one step around Tasker keeps walking for the
stadium exit. Mace, Howe and Steele follow.

ON GARRISON - watching his soldiers walk back toward the Mog.

ON THE STADIUM ENTRANCE - The four blood spattered soldiers
head back. Toward the massive rising sun. Back into the city.

DISSOLVE:

OVER A BLOOD RED SUN -- white letters crawl onto the screen...

"The search for Gary Gordon and Randy Shughart lasted for
days. Their bodies were never recovered."

"President Clinton immediately recalled the American ground
forces in Somalia. They were home within the month."

PHOTO - soldiers carry their duffel bags onto army aircraft.

"General Garrison was blamed for the entire episode. His
promising military career came to an end."

"Secretary of Defense Les Aspin was asked to resign."

EXT. MILITARY AIRPORT - DAY

A wheelchair-bound Mike Durant is guided across the tarmac. A crowd of soldiers cheer him on as NEWS CREWS tape the event. Durant nods at the cameras and gives a thumbs-up.

"Michael Durant was released by his captors eleven days later."

Durant is carefully loaded into a Black Hawk chopper.

"Eighteen US soldiers were killed in the 24 hour raid in Mogadishu. Eighty-four were wounded."

The Black Hawk's cargo door is closed. The pilot takes the machine into the sky. Turns toward the setting sun.

"Red Cross estimated the Somali dead at over 500. The wounded and injured numbered into the thousands."

ON THE SUN - blood red, setting over the abandoned US Base...

PHOTO - STEBBINS. "John Stebbins received the Silver Star for his part in the battle."

PHOTO - MACE - "John Macejunas is still a member of the covert Delta Force."

PHOTO - EVERSMAANN - "Matt Eversmann stayed in the Military."

PHOTO - SHUGHART AND GORDON. "For their efforts to protect Mike Durant and his crew, Delta Snipers Randy Shughart and Gary Gordon were the first soldiers since the Vietnam War to receive the Medal of Honor."

ON THE BLACK HAWK - rotor blades thundering, heat waves billowing out the engines, the Black Hawk flies toward the setting sun. The chopper fades.... Dissolves completely.

A last ray of light desperately holds onto the sky, then dies.

FADE OUT.