

VIRULENTS

Written by

John Cox

Based on the Virgin Comics graphic novel.

FIRST REVISION

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NEW REGENCY

FADE IN:

EXT. OPEN DESERT - AFGHANISTAN - DAY

SUPER: Afghanistan

A young AFGHAN BOY stands in the desert, tending a flock of four mangy goats. A low RUMBLE sounds from behind him. The boy turns just in time to have a huge B-52H soar low over his head with a tremendous ROAR.

The boy turns and watches it fly off into the desert -- a big smile on his face.

INT. B-52H (AIRBORNE) - BOMBER HOLD - DAY

It's just as loud inside the aircraft as out. The bomber is loaded with 30 bunker-busting JDAM WARHEADS perched over bomb bay doors. The weapons rattle and shake with the four screaming engines that power this monster bird.

INT. B-52H - UPPER FLIGHT DECK - DAY

PILOT, CO-PILOT, and EWO (Electronic Warfare Officer) ride the upper flight deck, the long expanse of endless Afghan landscape laid out like a great blanket before them.

The pilot shakes his head.

PILOT

This isn't the right mountain range. We're off course.

CO-PILOT

How can you tell? This whole god-forsaken country looks the same. Endless nothing.

PILOT

Spend enough time here and you start to feel it.
(into headset)
Caldwell, you sure of this heading?

INT. B-52H - LOWER FLIGHT DECK - DAY

The NAVIGATOR is scrambling in front of screens that flicker in front of his eyes.

NAVIGATOR

I thought I was, sir, but I'm getting electric interference. I can't get a read on anything at the moment.

PILOT (O.S.)

(from headset)

Electrical? Where's it coming from?

NAVIGATOR

I don't know. It's...let me try and sort it out, sir. Stand by.

The RADAR NAVIGATOR/BOMBARDIER, who sits at a station across from the navigator, kicks his feet up and folds his arms, resting.

BOMBARDIER

Wake me when we find something to bomb.

The navigator touches his screen and receives a nasty shock. He jerks his hand back, rubbing it, staring at the static-filled screen, baffled.

NAVIGATOR

What's going on?

EXT. B-52H - AIRBORNE - DAY

The plane powers toward a jagged mountain range in the distance.

INT. B-52H - UPPER FLIGHT DECK - DAY

The co-pilot's altimeter suddenly drops dead, the arrow pointing to the ground.

CO-PILOT

What the hell?

PILOT

What is it?

CO-PILOT

Altimeter just failed.

The pilot reaches over and taps the dial -- and it springs back to life. He cocks a wry smile.

PILOT

Magic touch. These old birds are full of ticks.

Suddenly, every dial on the control panel FAILS, every light goes dim, and a great moan of electrical failure shutters through the entire ship.

The pilots exchange looks. The co-pilot tips his head toward the panel and says with a touch of panic.

CO-PILOT

Tap it.

The pilot turns back to his dead panel -- what the heck, he taps. Nothing. From his headset crackles the voice of the panicked navigator.

NAVIGATOR (O.S.)

(from headset)

Sir, I've lost all my screens.

PILOT

So have we! Electrical failure. I'm going to initiate an emergency restart.

EXT. B-52H - AIRBORNE - DAY

The hot sun glints off the huge plane as it banks toward a ragged valley in the near distance.

INT. B-52H - UPPER FLIGHT DECK - DAY

The co-pilot watches his wheel turning by itself in front of his eyes.

CO-PILOT

We're banking.

PILOT

Banking? How?

The co-pilot shoots him a look.

CO-PILOT

I don't know.

The pilot fights his own turning wheel as he snaps switches on and off in the hopes that he can regain control.

PILOT

We're caught in some sort of freak weather vortex. I'm going to shut down number four engine and see if I can pull her--

A red warning light suddenly screams in their faces. The EWO spins.

EWO

Ordnance release activated.

CO-PILOT

What!?

INT. B-52H - LOWER FLIGHT DECK - SAME

The bombardier spins from his own screaming station.

BOMBARDIER

What the hell did you do!?

NAVIGATOR

Nothing!

The pilot's voice calls urgently from the headset.

PILOT (O.S.)

Thompson, what's going on down there!?

The bombardier is throwing switches on his board to no avail.

BOMBARDIER

It's not me! It's activating itself!

A blast of light and screaming wind suddenly fill the plane behind him. Both he and the bombardier turn, their stunned faces filled with light.

INT. B-52H - UPPER FLIGHT DECK - DAY

The pilot struggles with the wheel as the plane reacts to what's happening below.

PILOT

What's happening now!?

INT. B-52H - LOWER FLIGHT DECK - SAME

Papers are blowing everywhere, vest buckles are flapping wildly, the navigator calls back...

NAVIGATOR

The bomb bay doors have opened!
She's going to release!

INT. B-52H - UPPER FLIGHT DECK - DAY

The men in the cockpit can't believe what's happening.

CO-PILOT

This is impossible.

PILOT

(into headset)
Thompson, do whatever you can to
secure that payload.

INT. B-52H - LOWER FLIGHT DECK - SAME

The bombardier unbuckles himself and dashes toward the rear of the plane, into the screaming wind.

BOMBARDIER

I'm going to manually disengage the
power to the release mechanism!

The navigator crosses himself.

EXT. B-52H - AIRBORNE - DAY

The huge plane levels toward a jagged canyon, like a deep scar in the Afghan earth.

INT. B-52H - UPPER FLIGHT DECK - DAY

The wheel begins to turn back...

CO-PILOT

She's leveling out, sir.

EWO

It's like we're coming in for a
bombing run.

PILOT

What's below us?

The co-pilot looks down out his window. Then back...

CO-PILOT
Mountains, sir. Just mountains.

EXT. B-52H - AIRBORNE - DAY

The huge plane screams low over our heads.

INT. B-52H - BOMB BAY - DAY

The bombardier hits the lip of the open doors, the bombs hanging over jagged mountains and scorched earth. The mechanism he needs is on the other side of the door. He takes a deep breath, then DASHES ACROSS THE TOPS OF THE BOMBS, leaping safely to the other side.

He throws the lever and...

INT. B-52H - UPPER FLIGHT DECK - DAY

The alerts fall quiet. The electronic release aborted. The pilot breathes a sigh of relief.

PILOT
Nice work, Thompson.

INT. B-52H - BOMB BAY - DAY

The bombardier hops back across the tops of the bombs, crossing back over the open abyss.

Behind him, the switch suddenly throws back into active position.

Red lights blaze. Warning alerts scream.

And the payload releases.

EXT. B-52H - AIRBORNE - DAY

The B-52 drops the screaming bombardier and a carpet of warheads down on top of a jagged mountain range at the far end of the scarlike valley. The bombs punch into the mountains, causing huge fiery explosions to erupt from within.

INT. B-52H - UPPER FLIGHT DECK - DAY

The EWO looks to the pilots with a swallow.

EWO
Bombs are away.

CO-PILOT
Jesus.

PILOT
It's okay. There was nothing down
there to hit.

At that moment the plane's steering column leaps forward, violently nosing the plane down. Engines scream, fail, and pop with flame and fiery oil. It's as if the huge plane were being yanked from the sky by a huge unseen hand.

The men try to fight the wheel back, G-forces pinning them in their seats, the pressure pulls all the scream from their throats as the ground rushes up before their eyes.

EXT. B-52H - DESERT VALLEY - DAY

The huge plane noses up at the last minute and comes in for a spectacular CRASH LANDING. It digs through the earth, shattering one wing and shedding engines. It roars directly for us as we...

SMASH CUT TO:

BLACK SCREEN

And a phantom whisper.

WHISPER
Raktaveej.

FADE UP ON:

EXT. DESERT AIRFIELD - AFGHANISTAN - DAY - ESTABLISHING

SUPER: Operation Enduring Freedom.

U.S. troops, equipment, and heavy ordnance are stretched across the desert. A-10s, Apaches, Chinooks, F-18s, and B-52Hs sit ready to pound the distant snowcapped mountains.

ANOTHER SUPER: Year seven.

VARIOUS SHOTS of men going about the drudgery of daily routine -- taking baths in the open spaces, shaving, reading, gambling, staring blankly at nothing. A wall-of-shame bulletin board is filled with snapshots of unfaithful wives and girlfriends. Soldiers and Afghan civilians fill trays of food at a chow line, eating at segregated tables beneath a weathered American flag.

Through the dusty controlled chaos, we see a TRANSPORT pull up and stop. JAKE GALLOWAY, late 20s, leaps off amid a dozen new recruits. He's dressed in a shirt and tie and looks more than a little lost.

He stops an Afghan aide worker. They converse in Afghan -- the man points across the compound. Galloway thanks him and moves purposely toward a community of tents.

He nears a small tent, where ROY TELLER, 22 -- from Detroit, Special Ops demolitions and a bit of a bully -- sits with an M-16 in one hand and a cup of coffee in the other. Galloway nods in greeting, but as he moves for the entrance, Teller drops his gun into his path.

TELLER

Where're you going, friend?

GALLOWAY

I'm here to see Major Gans.

TELLER

The major's in conference.

That's when we hear a man VOMITING from beyond the doorway. Teller cranes his head toward the door.

TELLER (CONT'D)

You okay, Maj?

GANS (O.S.)

(from inside)

Fuck you.

TELLER

We threw him a little farewell party last night. Got the booze from a local supplier. Major got a bad bottle. Happens.

GALLOWAY

Farewell party?

TELLER

The major's going home.

VANCE KANE, 29, career soldier from San Diego, steps up to the door, rapping on the crossbeam.

KANE

Colonel wants to see you, Major.
Says immediately.

Gans grunts an affirmative. Kane turns to Galloway, looks him up and down.

KANE (CONT'D)

Who's this?

TELLER

He's nobody.

Galloway's mouth opens to speak, but Kane is already gone. He turns back to Teller.

GALLOWAY

Do you know who the new C.O. is?
I'm supposed to ride with this
unit.

TELLER

All I know is what they tell me.
That means I don't know shit.

That's when the door swings open and MAJOR FRANK GANS appears. He's in his late 30s, his face is sunburnt from long days in the desert, his hair is cropped close. He hands Teller a puke-filled helmet.

GANS

Thanks for the helmet.

TELLER

Ah...man.

Gans snatches Teller's coffee and walks quickly across the compound. He swigs the coffee, swishes, and spits, tosses the metal cup aside.

Teller hands the helmet off to fellow soldier, SILO, 19, a dim farm boy from Kansas, who sports a T-shirt that reads "Sith Happens."

TELLER (CONT'D)

Clean that.

Galloway follows Gans, trying to match his step, dodging a football that sails past his head.

GALLOWAY

Major Gans? My name's Galloway.
Jake Galloway. I've been assigned
to your unit.

GANS

I didn't ask for anyone.

GALLOWAY

I'm with the State Department. I'm
a regional warfare analyst.

Gans stops and turns, squinting against the bright sunshine.

GANS

A what?

GALLOWAY

An expert on the history of warfare
in Afghanistan. I'm here to refine
an assessment study. The secretary
feels the best way for me to do
that is to join a unit.

GANS

How long you been on the ground?

GALLOWAY

I just arrived.

GANS

Then you're no expert.

He turns and starts to walk again, Galloway catching up.

GALLOWAY

Well, let's say specialist. I
wrote a report in 2002 about the
historic difficulties faced by
armies who have fought in the
region. I admit it didn't get much
attention at the time, but there's
new interest in my conclusion that
there is an X factor at play.

GANS

A what?

GALLOWAY

An X factor. An unknown. But a
specific and tangible unknown. A
reason each army has failed.

GANS

There is no X factor. Armies fail only when they surrender. The man you want to talk to is Scott Preacher. You're his headache, not mine.

(opening door)

You can't come in here.

Gans marches through the door marked Command and Control, letting it close hard on Galloway.

INT. DESERT AIRFIELD - COMMAND AND CONTROL BUNKER - DAY

COLONEL FOX, 50s, ROTC wet dream, sits at a folding desk. Also in the room is a man in a suit, SADDLER, CIA. In stark contrast to the soldiers, these men looked scrubbed and clean, as if the war had just begun.

Gans steps into the room with a salute.

GANS

Colonel.

He looks at Saddler, offers a nod. It's not returned. Fox opens a dossier and speaks without looking up at Gans.

COLONEL FOX

I understand you've received your papers, Major.

GANS

Yes, sir. I'm going home.

COLONEL FOX

We're delaying those orders.

GANS

What?

Fox looks up at him for the first time.

COLONEL FOX

We have a mission for you.

Gans can't believe what he's hearing.

GANS

With all due respect, Colonel, I've been in this place for six deployments. I earned my ticket home a dozen missions ago -- you've said that yourself.

(MORE)

GANS (CONT'D)

If you've got a mission, give it to Preacher. I'm done.

COLONEL FOX

Scott Preacher was killed in an ambush in Tora Bora. It will take three weeks to requisition a new officer from Iraq, and this can't wait. I'm sorry, Frank. You're on deck.

Gans gives a slow nod, sobered by the news of his replacement's death.

GANS

I'm sorry to hear about Scott. He was a good man. What's the mission?

COLONEL FOX

S.A.R. We lost a fully loaded B-52. We'd rather it not be sitting out in the middle of the desert like a big Christmas present for the Taliban...or worse. Find the plane, rescue any survivors, destroy the unexploded ordnance.

GANS

Straightforward enough. Where'd she go down?

COLONEL FOX

That's where it gets a little less straightforward. This is Agent Saddler from CIA. He'll explain.

He nods to Saddler who steps forward. He clicks on a slide projector, a map image comes up, reflecting full against Gans's face.

CIA SADDLER

The Hindu Kush Mountain range. Uncharted, treacherous -- locals consider it something of an Afghan Bermuda Triangle, won't go near it. Even the Russians won't share intel on the region even though we know they fought there during the war. An automated beacon tells us she went down dead center in this range. We can only assume they were off course.

(MORE)

CIA SADDLER (CONT'D)
How the hell they got that far off
course is anybody's guess.

GANS
Do we have air reconnaissance of
the crash site?

CIA SADDLER
We did a sweep of the area with
both satellite and drone. Photos
came back blank.

GANS
Blank? As in no crash?

CIA SADDLER
As in no picture. Photos were
black. All of them. Completely
black. Tried a half dozen times,
and every time we got the same
result.

COLONEL FOX
That's not information that's to be
shared, Major.

Gans nods.

CIA SADDLER
Satellite reconnaissance isn't
cheap, and the D.O.D. isn't crazy
about spending more time and money
when a team on the ground can get
the job done just as well.

COLONEL FOX
You'll rendezvous with a unit of
Indian Marcos. They have a nose
for the region and will act as
guides.

GANS
Guides? Is that necessary?

CIA SADDLER
I'm afraid so. The region is
politically sensitive. It's ruled
by warlords and, technically, part
of the UN's watch. But make no
mistake. It's our bird. This is a
U.S. mission.

Gans nods.

COLONEL FOX
You leave in an hour. Get your men
ready. Good luck.

Gans salutes, turns to go, then...

CIA SADDLER
Um, Major?

Gans turns to see Saddler waiting expectantly. Gans swallows
some bile, then fires off a hard salute.

Saddler grins and nods.

EXT. DESERT AIRFIELD - COMMAND AND CONTROL - DAY

Galloway is waiting by the door as Gans exits, his jaw tight.

GANS
Looks like you're riding with me
for at least one mission.

GALLOWAY
Yes, sir.

He looks at Galloway critically.

GANS
They give you any combat training?

GALLOWAY
I've been through Basic. I
insisted on that. Technically I
hold the rank of private.

GANS
Bet you did just swell on your
written test.

GALLOWAY
I did, in fact.

GANS
Listen, Galloway, I need all my men
on the same page; so here's the
reality. We came and we kicked the
ass of the Taliban and did a hell
of a job. But instead of going
home, we're still over here
swimming in shit. The enemy can be
anyone at anytime, and the only
thing they want to do is kill
Americans.

(MORE)

GANS (CONT'D)

So our primary job as soldiers and men with families back home is to stay alive. That's it. We're not saving the world. Not anymore. Stay alive and get home with all your body parts intact. That's the mission.

He thumps Galloway in the chest with what we see is the stump of a missing finger.

GANS (CONT'D)

Understand?

Galloway nods.

GANS (CONT'D)

Chopper pad, one hour. Make sure your canteen is full. Gets hot as hell out there.

EXT. HINDU KUSH CANYON - DAY

Wide. Empty. Hot as hell. A GOAT, separated from the flock, wanders in the middle of the dry land, foraging for food, nibbling at a few dry sticks that sprout from the hard-packed sand.

The goat looks up suddenly, alerted, ears perked. It stares into the distant Hindu Kush Mountains, where we now hear what it hears...the SCREAMS of a man.

CLOSE

A sharp KNIFE is brought down onto stone, carving a word in the rock as a man SCREAMS in agony O.S.

BACK ON THE GOAT

Who loses interest as the screaming suddenly falls silent. The animal takes another step, dry tongue licking at dust....

Suddenly, the goat VANISHES into the earth with a STARTLED CRY. Move forward to reveal that the animal has fallen into a HOLE in the desert floor. From deep inside the darkness, we hear the SNARL of something savage and the sound of the goat being torn to shreds.

EXT. DESERT AIRFIELD - RUNWAY - DAY

The props of a BLACK HAWK HELICOPTER whine to life, sounding eerily similar to the dying goat. It spits oil and comes on full throttle, thwacking at the hot air.

Gans boards the chopper with his SIX-MAN TEAM, now including Galloway in a crisp clean uniform reflecting his rank.

INT. BLACK HAWK - AIRSTRIP RUNWAY - DAY

The soldiers belt in along the sides of the chopper passenger hold. The noise is deafening. Galloway belts in beside the open door. Teller taps him hard on the shoulder.

TELLER

That's my seat, fresh meat.

GALLOWAY

What?

TELLER

My seat. That's my seat. I need that seat.

MOSES FRANKLIN, 26 -- African-American, a likable guy from Baton Rouge -- shakes his head.

FRANKLIN

Sit your ass down, Teller. Ain't no seat better than the next.

TELLER

I need it.

GALLOWAY

It's fine. No problem.

Galloway unbelted and moves over a seat. Teller plops down and spits a load of chewing tobacco out the door (that's why he needed the seat). He extends the bag to Galloway.

TELLER

Chew?

GALLOWAY

(shakes head)

I had a bag for lunch.

Sitting across from Galloway and Teller is Kane, who frowns.

KANE

You need to kick that weed, Teller.

TELLER

It ain't killin' no one.

He spits toward the door and hits the frame, dripping brown goo.

FRANKLIN

No one likes livin' in a world of secondhand spit.

TELLER

Liberal.

HERNANDEZ, 22 -- Hispanic, from San Antonio, on the short side but makes up for it by being one tough S.O.B. -- leans forward with a grin.

HERNANDEZ

Better hold onto your asses, gents.
This pilot...he's fuckin' nuts!

On the PILOT wearing a feathered cowboy hat, looking fuckin' nuts. He looks at Gans.

PILOT

Thought they were shipping you home, Frank.

Beside him Gans traces a map with the stump of his missing finger into a region largely unmarked. He looks up through the dusty windshield.

GANS

Now why would they do that when I still got nine good fingers left?

EXT. BLACK HAWK - AIRBORNE - DAY

The chopper BLASTS across frame, flying unusually low. A GUNNER sits with SAW ready to return any ground fire.

A SERIES OF HIGH-ENERGY SHOTS alternate between the scenic and the horrific: the rumble of a flattened village, a man collecting water from a dirty stream, charred bodies of Taliban soldiers in the back of a burnt-out pickup truck...

INT. BLACK HAWK - AIRBORNE - CONTINUOUS

The soldiers sit rocking with the chopper. Hernandez sits with gun in hand, his leg drumming the floor nervously.

HERNANDEZ

Think we're gonna see any action?

KANE

Where we're going is so remote, I don't think even the Taliban give a fuck.

FRANKLIN

Just a little vacation then, eh?

KANE

In beautiful Afghanistan.

EXT. AFGHAN LANDSCAPE/BLACK HAWK - CONTINUOUS

The chopper skims over the rubble of a flattened village, where children hunt for bullet casings and cheer the Americans who soar overhead.

Two old men on a ridge bow and pray as the chopper blasts over their backs and jets off into the distance into wide empty desert...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. AFGHAN DESERT - DROP ZONE - DAY

CLOSE on the face of CAPTAIN SINGH, 30s, Indian, handsome with a neatly trimmed black beard and eyes that speak of experience. He carries a "Dang" walking stick -- a five-foot bamboo staff with a heavy silver tip.

Behind him stands his five-man team of MARCOS -- the Indian equivalent of Navy Seals. They are all bearded, black clad -- some have crossbows on their backs. They watch as the Black Hawk comes in and hovers just above the ground several yards away, kicking up a huge dust cloud. The Marcos shield their eyes in unison.

Gans and his men leap from the chopper into the swirling vortex of dust. Gans gives a thumbs-up back to the pilot, who lifts the chopper back into the air, leaving the men behind.

Silence settles over the soldiers. The sun is blazing; the land is wide, dry, and foreboding.

HERNANDEZ

Jesus Mary. Gotta be over a hundred degrees out here.

KANE
(checking instrument)
One-eighteen.

FRANKLIN
Oh, that ain't right.

Teller notices the approaching Marcos.

TELLER
Hey, check out G.I. Jihad.

HERNANDEZ
Those getups ain't exactly what I
call camouflage.

GANS
Button it.

The two sets of soldiers approach each other, meeting against the backdrop of the distant peaks of the Hindu Kush. Singh stands a few inches taller than Gans...or maybe it's just the turban.

SINGH
Captain Singh. 340th Army
Independent Brigade, Marine
Commando Force.

GANS
Gans. Major. 505 from the 5th
Army, Special Forces.

Gans calls back to his men.

GANS (CONT'D)
These men are our guides. Let's
form a...

SINGH
Excuse me, Major. Guides?

GANS
That's what I said.

SINGH
We are not your guides. You are
our support.

GANS
This is a U.S. mission.

SINGH

Sanctioned by the UN. That is us.
This region is outside the U.S.
combat mandate. The weapons aboard
that plane threaten Peshawar and
the Pakistani tribal areas.

GANS

I thought we were all on the same
side, Captain.

SINGH

We are, Major. Just you are not
always the one in charge.

Gans nods, decides not to push it.

Singh gives a crisp nod and turns away, calling orders to his
men in Hindi. Teller steps up to Gans.

TELLER

You gonna let a raghead tell us
what to do, Major?

GANS

Take it easy, Teller. No one's
telling anyone what to do.

He shoulders his weapon and starts to walk. The two sets of
very different soldiers begin marching toward the Kush.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ROCK CANYON - HINDU KUSH - DAY

The men are taking a break in a merciful pocket of shade,
eating from MREs. Gans eats beside Singh. He tips his head
toward Singh's Dang.

GANS

What's with the walking stick?

SINGH

Stick? It's called a Dang. It was
my grandfather's. He used it to
kill lions.

GANS

They've got lions in Pakistan?

SINGH

India, Major. I am Indian.

GANS

Oh. Right. Sorry.

Galloway takes a pull at his water bottle -- reacts strongly -
- looks like he's about to spit.

FRANKLIN

Don't waste it. Swallow.

GALLOWAY

(swallows)

It's boiling hot.

Franklin smiles and nods. Takes a swig of his own water.

GALLOWAY (CONT'D)

So how long have you been out here?

FRANKLIN

I'm on my third tour. We all are.

HERNANDEZ

I got a little girl who was in
diapers when I left, now she's
talking.

FRANKLIN

She'll be knocked up by the time
you get home.

HERNANDEZ

Don't even say that. That's not
even funny.

TELLER

Know why they call it service?
Because we're all gettin' serviced
from behind. Contractors out here
make triple what we make for doing
the same job, and they don't even
need to go through Basic. And you
know what happens if they kill a
civilian? They get a ticket home.
That's punishment. Shit, we kill a
raghead and we get court-martialed.

The largely silent Marcos look up at the expression
"raghead." Then go back to eating.

FRANKLIN

Teller, are you sure you want to go
into recruitment when you get home?

TELLER

Funny.

Silo suddenly lets out a scream and leaps to his feet, drawing all the men into action, clutching their guns.

KANE

What the hell is it?!

Silo is pointing his gun at the ground.

SILO

Scorpion!

ON a large black scorpion trolling the ground for food.

Teller marches over and is about to step on it when ARYAN, Singh's number two, pushes him before he can bring his foot down.

Teller falls hard.

TELLER

What the fuck, man?!

ARYAN

It's looking for food. It should not die for that.

SILO

Those things can kill.

ARYAN

It will not strike a man without reason.

TELLER

Ah, I get it. Reincarnation, right?

(calling to men)

Hey, he thinks it's his grandmother.

He laughs. Hernandez joins in. Franklin and Galloway look somewhat embarrassed. Teller gets to his feet, brushing himself off.

TELLER (CONT'D)

Sorry, Granny.

He bows mockingly and walks away, still laughing. The youngest Marco, SAJIT, shakes his head, looks toward the desert ahead.

SAJIT

Laugh while you can, because there is nothing funny about where we're going.

This draws the men's attention.

FRANKLIN

What do you mean?

SAJIT

I mean we're headed into an area that is not meant for men. They say the Kush is the home of the devil himself.

Singh, listening beside Gans, frowns with disapproval.

SAJIT (CONT'D)

If it were up to me, I would let the wreckage of that plane lie where it fell. If it was pulled from the sky, then it was for a reason.

TELLER

What the hell are you talking about?

SAJIT

We are walking into a trap!

SINGH

Sajit!
(in Hindi)
Enough.

Sajit goes back to his food, chewing hard.

Singh turns to Gans.

SINGH (CONT'D)

I apologize, Major.

GANS

For what?

SINGH

This country is rife with superstition. Spread their myths, and you find yourself shooting at shadows. It is not the way of a soldier.

GANS

We all carry a rabbit's foot from
time to time.

SINGH

Rabbit's foot?

GANS

Something to keep the bad luck
away.

Singh nods.

SINGH

For that I have a gun.

The scorpion scoots off into the desert, having given up on
the hunt for food in this area.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ROCK CANYON LEADING TO CRASH SITE - DAY

The soldiers are again on the march, but they're now passing
through a weird haze, like a fog bank, the burning globe of
the sun giving all a reddish tint. Hernandez scans front and
side.

HERNANDEZ

What is this shit?

SILO

Fog.

ARYAN

There isn't enough moisture out
here to create fog.

TELLER

Thank you, Mr. Science.

Galloway and Franklin walk one behind the other, scanning the
mist. Even the hardened Marcos look a little unsettled.

SINGH

I see something up ahead.

GANS

Weapons hot.

The men slip their safeties off and hold their weapons ready.

EXT. B-52H CRASH SITE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The men move a few steps more and from the mist, like a ghost, emerges the massive hulk of the downed B-52. It's lying at the end of a deep gash in the earth. It's fuselage is intact, but cracked. One wing is long gone; the other is broken and sticking upward like a shark fin. Windows are all blown out. Oil drips like blood from the massive engines.

The men stand in front of the eerie fog-shrouded wreck. Gans steps forward, gun ready.

GANS
Anyone in there!?

Silence. Just a creak of metal in the wind.

INT. B-52H WRECKAGE - DAY

The plane is a tangle of wires and tossed equipment -- much worse inside than out. Gans -- backed by Kane, Franklin, and Hernandez -- steps inside, guns ready. They scan the creaking interior and the dark passage that leads to the flight decks.

GANS
Franklin, hold here while we check
the payload.

Gans turns back to the bomb bay. Hernandez and Kane follow, leaving Franklin alone.

EXT. ROCK CANYON/CRASH SITE - DAY

Outside the plane, the Marcos stand watch as Teller, Silo, and Galloway scout the area. Teller notes...

TELLER
Fog is starting to lift.

INT. B-52H WRECKAGE - BOMB BAY - SAME

Gans, Kane, and Hernandez enter the shattered bomb bay. The bomb bay doors are long gone, a pile of earth now packs against the far wall, caught up in the long landing slide. Couplings that once held the bombs hang empty.

HERNANDEZ
We're too late. Someone cleaned it
out.

GANS

I'm not too sure about that. Look at those couplings. They dropped their load.

KANE

On what, I wonder.

INT. B-52H WRECKAGE - MIDSECTION - SAME

Franklin is alone, scanning the area. A piece of dangling wreckage is suddenly dislodged and falls, drawing his attention.

He steps toward it, curious, tightening his grip on his gun. There's movement behind a shattered control panel -- something is hiding, breathing...

Franklin swallows, sweat dripping from his brow. He takes one more ginger step and...

A creature leaps from behind the wreckage, white fangs and red mouth screeching toward him.

FRANKLIN

SHIT!!!

He falls back, firing his gun as the creature leaps onto his body and launches itself off and toward the open door.

EXT. ROCK CANYON/CRASH SITE - THAT MOMENT

The sound of Franklin's gunfire causes the Marcos to drop and aim their weapons back at the plane, where a terrified WOLF dashes from the doorway and peels off into the desert at lightning speed.

Singh laughs.

INT. B-52H WRECKAGE - MIDSECTION - SAME

Gans, Hernandez, and Kane race into the area, guns ready. They find Franklin on his back.

GANS

What happened!?

Franklin looks up at them, upsidedown, eyes wide with terror.

FRANKLIN

It was the biggest fuckin' rat I've
ever seen in my life!

EXT. ROCK CANYON/CRASH SITE - THAT MOMENT

Singh steps toward the fuselage, calling out.

SINGH

A wolf! It was just a wolf!

INT. B-52H WRECKAGE - MIDSECTION - SAME

Franklin, still on his back, looks embarrassed.

FRANKLIN

Oh. Then I guess it was a pretty
small wolf.

GANS

Ah, huh. Let's check the flight
deck.

Gans steps over him and continues toward the flight decks.
Kane follows. Hernandez smiles and helps Franklin up.

EXT. B-52H CRASH SITE - DAY

Galloway is scouting the area, spotting what appears to be
tracks. He follows them toward the front of the plane, gun
in hand.

INT. B-52H WRECKAGE - UPPER FLIGHT DECK

Gans and Kane emerge onto the flight deck. Both seats are
sitting empty before shattered windows.

KANE

No bodies anywhere. Looks like
they survived the crash, Major.

KANE (CONT'D)

But why leave the plane?

Gans moves forward and examines the seat. He digs under it
and finds a canteen, gives it a shake. The slosh of water.

GANS

And why leave without this?

EXT. B-52H CRASH SITE - OPPOSITE SIDE OF PLANE - DAY

Galloway rounds the plane and comes to a sudden halt at what he sees. His face goes pale, and he starts to back away, frightened...

EXT. ROCK CAYNON/CRASH SITE - DAY

Gans, Kane, Hernandez, and Franklin emerge from the wreckage.

SINGH

Well?

GANS

It's empty. No men. No payload.
It's just a shell.

GALLOWAY (O.S.)

Major!

They turn to see Galloway sprinting around the front of the aircraft...pointing from where he just came. He falls and retches.

Gans and the men sprint around the plane toward where Galloway is pointing. Franklin rushes up to Galloway.

FRANKLIN

What is it?

Galloway looks up at him, grim.

GALLOWAY

The crew. I found the crew.

ANGLE - THE B-52 CREWMEN

They've been slaughtered and impaled on long spikes, displayed like scarecrows. Their faces have been carved into gruesome clownish expressions. Their pants have been removed, and their genitals are thick with blood from mutilations.

GANS

What in holy hell...

Even the Marcos are shocked by this.

SINGH

This is barbarism. It is not like the Taliban to make such a display.

GANS

Al-Qaeda?

SINGH

Maybe. But I don't understand the purpose. The message.

GANS

The message is clear enough to me. And my answer is going to be just as clear.

He cocks his weapon. But Aryan is scanning the area; he alone seems to have noticed something unusual.

ARYAN

Why are there only four? Isn't the normal contingent of a B-52 five men?

TELLER

Hey, he's right, Major. One man is missing.

Gans looks back, a measure of hope on his face.

GANS

Son of a bitch. Means one of our boys could still be out there.

SINGH

Or he died in the crash.

GANS

We would have found a body or a grave if that were the case. Silo, scout around for a patch of fresh earth where we can bury these boys. Then we'll mount a search for the fifth man.

SINGH

A search?

GANS

That's right.

SINGH

Major, our mission has been accomplished. We have all the information that is required. A search for a man who is most likely dead is pointless.

GANS

I don't leave a man behind.

Singh has had it. He lets loose with his real feelings.

SINGH

There are hundreds of dead men in these sands. The world is awash in death and suffering; yet you expect the world to stop and grieve only when the dead are Americans. We'll grieve for our own, thank you.

GANS

These men were soldiers. They are our own. Or do you only grieve for soldiers who tie their hair in towels?

Singh stiffens, deeply insulted, as was Gans's intent.

SINGH

The turban is sacred, Major. I'd appreciate it if you wouldn't insult it.

SILO (O.C.)

Hey, Major?

Gans turns to see Silo standing along the rock base, looking down at the ground.

SILO (CONT'D)

Something here.

Gans gives Singh a look, then turns and walks down the rock toward Silo. As he steps up, Silo points at the rock at his feet.

SILO (CONT'D)

Check it out, Major.

ON a word carved crudely in the rock: RAKTAVEEJ.

Gans looks up at Galloway.

GANS

Hey, genius, come over here and tell us what this means.

Galloway moves over to him. Gans points at the stone. Galloway looks at the word for a beat, then shakes his head.

GALLOWAY

I don't know. It's not a word. I mean, it's not an Afghan word. It's not Dari... My guess is it's a name.

Singh steps up.

SINGH

Major?

GANS

Any idea what this means, Captain?

He nods to the carved name. Singh looks at it.

SINGH

It's nothing.

Hernandez is scanning the ground.

HERNANDEZ

There are tracks here, Major. Leading into that caynon.

GANS

Good. We have something to follow.

SINGH

So you are still determined to save your man?

GANS

Or kill the motherfuckers who did this. I'll take either.

Singh stares into Gans's hard face. Gans steps close, his tone conciliatory, soldier to soldier.

GANS (CONT'D)

Come on, Captain. Let's stop being errand boys and go do what soldiers do. This act can't go unanswered. You know that as well as I.

Gans turns and walks back to his men. Singh looks to Aryan, who shakes his head.

ARYAN

They are reckless.

Singh nods. Then looks to the gruesome dead men.

SINGH
But not entirely wrong.

DISSOLVE TO:

THE SUN

Beginning to angle toward the horizon. MOVE DOWN to...

EXT. END OF VALLEY/CAVE OPENING - DAY

The soldiers walk slowly through an open area at the end of the valley that is scarred black and pockmarked with signs of the B-52s bombs that have been unloaded across a section of the mountain before them. The opening to a CAVE sits amid the shattered rocks.

FRANKLIN
Looks like we found the missing
payload.

KANE
They bull's-eyed that cave system.
Maybe not such a failed mission
after all.

GANS
They had no mission out here. HQ
said they were off course.

GALLOWAY
They might have released their
payload when they knew they were
going down. I'd imagine it's a lot
safer to crash land with an empty
belly.

The men look at Galloway with a measure of surprise.

GANS
That almost makes sense, Galloway.

Galloway can't help but looked pleased.

TELLER
I was thinkin' the same thing.

FRANKLIN
Sure you were, Teller.

HERNANDEZ

Tracks lead up into that cave,
Major.

Suddenly, a SCREAM sounds from the mountain before them. A strange disembodied scream -- hard to tell if it's human or animal, but it's clearly coming from inside the cave opening before them.

SILO

What the hell was that?

KANE

Could have been a man.

ARYAN

Being tortured?

GANS

I'm going in. Kane, Hernandez, you're with me. Teller, Franklin, take up sentry positions on each side of the valley and watch our backs. Silo, take a read on that cave, and radio the coordinates to HQ. Galloway...help Silo. Check his math.

SINGH

You're going in three men strong?

GANS

Lean and mean.

Singh smirks.

SINGH

Have you ever flushed a cave before, Major?

GANS

Not from the inside, no.

SINGH

These caves can run for miles and they are designed to confuse. It's necessary to post a man every fifty yards or you'll never find your way back out. It also protects from an ambush.

Gans nods.

SINGH (CONT'D)

I know these systems. I know how
to get in and how to get out.
We'll go with you.

GANS

It's not necessary. I have enough
men to--

SINGH

This needs to be done fast, and it
needs to be done right. With us,
it will be. Let's move. We're
wasting daylight.

He and his Marcos shoulder weapons and start to march toward
the cave. Gans, Kane, and Hernandez follow.

Teller watches them go, shaking his head.

TELLER

Show-offs.

INT. CAVE ENTRANCE - DAY

An American flag laid before the cave entrance like a
doormat. As the soldiers hit the lip, Hernandez stops,
sensing something.

GANS

You afraid of the dark, Hernandez?
Move it.

Hernandez swallows and heads inside with the men.

INT. CAVE - ENTRANCE/NARROW PASSAGE - DAY

The men push through the jagged opening to find it opens into
a larger breezeway. Long ago burnt-out lights are strung
along the wall. A fine layer of dust hangs in the air,
illuminated in the shaft of light from the open. Ahead,
darkness.

Using only hand signals, the soldiers moves forward silently,
guns held ready.

EXT. HINDU KUSH CANYON - DAY

Galloway notices Franklin knocking at his compass.

GALLOWAY

What's wrong?

FRANKLIN

I don't know. Compass is going haywire. Turns one way and then it turns the other like it can't find north.

He snaps it shut and shakes his head.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

Army issue.

INT. CAVE - ENTRANCE/JUNCTION/NARROW PASSAGE - DAY

The soldiers continue down the rocky cavern, aiming their guns at every shadow that could conceal a man, their breath visible in a wave of sudden cold.

Singh nods to a Marco, who stops and holds position at the first 50 yard point.

The cave grows dark as they round the corner carefully. Singh cracks on a glow stick, illuminating the men and cave in green light.

Singh nods off to the young Sajit, who stops and stands sentry at the next 50-yard point. He scans the darkness on each side, looking somewhat nervous.

They find a section of cave that looks like it's taken a large amount of bombing damage. They have to slip past shards of newly fallen rock. Singh says quietly...

SINGH

This cave suffered too much damage to still be useful.

GANS

Something's here. I can feel it.

They round a corner and come to a sudden halt at the sight of what blocks their path.

KANE

Oh, shit.

REVEAL an unexploded 500-lb. JDAM MISSILE precariously lodged in a pinch of rocks above a narrow chasm.

BACK ON THE FIRST MARCO SENTRY

The string of cave lights -- seemingly long dead -- suddenly snap, spark, and illuminate. The Marco raises his gun, startled at first, then puzzled as he looks at the string of old lights blazing. What is powering them?

BACK ON GANS, SINGH, AND THE MEN

facing the unexploded bomb.

SINGH

This could be just one of several unexploded warheads, any one of which could bring this entire cave down on top of us. We need to abort. Now.

That's when a low RUMBLE begins to sound.

HERNANDEZ

What's that?

BACK AT THE FIRST MARCO SENTRY

He steps forward in the new light and sees a vortex of air whirling at the cave entrance, seeming to take on a phantom shape.

FIRST MARCO SENTRY

Captain!

BACK ON GANS, SINGH, AND THE MEN

The rumble grows louder and the dirt below their feet seems to suck forward into the blackness beyond the warhead. Rocks begin to shift and creak, causing the bomb to shift. It's going to fall.

GANS

Let's get the hell out of here!

The men take off running as the mysterious vortex of air seems to rush down the cave, holding them back.

Behind them the warhead dislodges and the tail flops to the other side of the shelf, its tip now aimed into a shaft of darkness below.

THE MARCO AT THE CAVE ENTRANCE

He's running forward, trying to escape, but the mysterious wind is holding him in place, pulling him back.

It finally pulls him off his feet and sends him sailing into a rock wall hard.

EXT. VALLEY OUTSIDE CAVE - DAY

It's quiet and still. The men outside are oblivious to what is happening inside the cave.

INT. CAVE - DAY

The fleeing men pick up Sajit at his position and turn down a dark tunnel. But Gans stops, uncertain of their direction.

GANS

That's the wrong way! It's this way!

Behind them the warhead dislodges and DROPS into the darkness. As it does, the shaking and the wind stops.

A moment of terrible silence in which we see the men running in SLOW MOTION, then...

A tremendous explosion RIPS from the black abyss, lighting up the entire cave and, for just a split second, illuminating a DEVILISH CREATURE standing in the cavern beyond the weapon.

The explosion catches up to the running men and blows them off their feet.

Rock and dirt rain down as the cave collapses.

EXT. VALLEY/CAVE ENTRANCE - DAY

The men watch in horror as the mountain around what was the cave entrance SINKS amid explosive plumes of dirt and dust, sealing the cave and the men inside.

FRANKLIN

Come on!

The men dash for the cave-in site.

INT. CAVE - DEEPER PASSAGE - DAY

Rock and rubble have plugged the entry. All is darkness and choking dust. Somewhere, a man is SCREAMING in pain.

Gans pulls himself free of the rubble and spills out beside Hernandez, who lies holding his leg, gashed and bleeding.

GANS

You okay?

Hernandez nods, grimacing.

HERNANDEZ

It's not broken.

GANS

Where's Kane?

Kane crawls forward from a pile of rock and rubble.

KANE

Here. I'm okay. I think.

GANS

Who's screaming?

HERNANDEZ

Gotta be one of the Marcos.

EXT. CAVE-IN SITE - DAY

Galloway, Franklin, Silo, and Teller arrive on the scene, searching for any sign of the men or a way into the collapsed cavern.

GALLOWAY

What happened?

FRANKLIN

There was an explosion. Might have been booby-trapped.

TELLER

Those men at the plane. The tracks leading us here. This whole thing is starting to feel like a trap if you ask me.

FRANKLIN

Well, I didn't. Get on the blower and let's get an S.A.R. in here.

INT. CAVE - NARROW CAVE-IN TO OPEN AREA - DAY

Gans, Kane, and Hernandez crawl under low fallen rock, following the sound of the screaming man.

They emerge into an open area, where Singh and the Marcos are gathered around one of their own, injured and screaming.

Singh jabs the man with a morphine pack. Then another. Another. He finally stops screaming and settles back.

GANS

Is he okay?

SINGH

He is now. His liver was lacerated. It was a slow death. I made it quick.

HERNANDEZ

Jesus.

SINGH

If that's a prayer, save it. What's it look like back there?

KANE

Sealed. We're not getting out the way we came, that's for sure.

Suddenly, an ear-splitting SHRIEK sounds from somewhere in the cavern.

HERNANDEZ

What the hell was that?

SINGH

There's an animal in here.

KANE

What kind of an animal makes a sound like that?

Gans holds up his gun.

GANS

One that's gonna be dead if it fucks with us.

Singh stands, cracking a fresh glow stick.

SINGH

There will be another way out. Come on.

He marches forward, his men following. Gans and Kane follow. Hernandez takes up the rear, grimacing with each step.

WE REMAIN on the dead Marco, lying peacefully as the soldiers and their light disappear down the cave. Suddenly, he is YANKED violently out of frame by an unseen hand.

EXT. CAVE-IN SITE - DAY

Teller is on the radio as the men continue to search the area of collapse in the b.g.

TELLER
(into radio)
Affirmative. Over and out.

He clicks off.

FRANKLIN
You got through?

Teller nods. Loads a pinch of chewing tobacco in his mouth.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)
Well?

TELLER
They said hold and wait for extraction.

FRANKLIN
How long?

TELLER
Didn't say.

FRANKLIN
They gonna send in an S.A.R. for the major?

TELLER
Didn't say.

FRANKLIN
Well, what the hell did they say?!

TELLER
Hold and wait! That's it. Those are our orders.

INT. CAVE - LOWER PASSAGE/THREE-WAY FORK - DAY

The soldiers climb down a jagged series of rock faces and drop one by one down into a relatively undamaged section of cave that forks into three passages. Hernandez is the last man; he lets loose a small cry as he lands on his injured leg and falls against a rock.

GANS
You sure that leg is okay?

HERNANDEZ

It's fine, Major.

He forces himself to stand, choking back the pain.

Singh takes out a match, lights it. He holds the flame up to each tunnel entrance.

CLOSE as the flame gently sucks toward the tunnel on the right.

Singh blows out the match and starts down that tunnel. Behind him Aryan explains to Kane...

ARYAN

Follow the flow of the air. Like a river, it will lead to an outlet.

The men file into the narrow tunnel, the wounded Hernandez taking up the rear.

But after they have taken a few steps, something blasts from a passage behind them and PICKS OFF Hernandez with an ear-splitting SHRIEK.

The men spin. Hernandez is gone. But his dissipating SCREAM can be heard traveling down a long smaller cavern.

GANS

Come on!

The men break into a hard run, racing down a smaller cavern, following the sound of the screaming soldier. Gans leads the way, running ahead of the light, charging into pitch blackness.

The men round a corner, where the cavern opens wider. Gans stops and holds, trying to listen. But Hernandez's screams have now stopped.

KANE

Major.

He directs Gans's attention to the floor, where a TRAIL OF BLOOD leads into the darkness ahead.

Gans readies his gun and follows the blood trail; the others follow. As they walk, the trail grows thicker. Amid the blood, we see what appears to be small, semi-cloven footprints.

The blood trail leads the men to the opening of a small cave in the rock wall. From inside they hear movement.

Using hand signals, Gans motions two Marcos on watch and for Kane, Singh, and Aryan to move forward with him.

The men raise their weapons and get into formation. Gans gives a nod. They move in fast...

INT. CAVE - SMALL CAVERN - CONTINUOUS

The soldiers enter quickly and flower into an attack formation, guns aimed. But they are stunned in horror at the sight before them...

REVEAL -- RAKTAVEEJ

What's left of Hernandez lies torn open on the ground in front of a small demonic creature with translucent skin, huge blinking eyes, and razor-sharp white teeth. Puffs of wiry black hair dot his otherwise bare body. In his oily hands, he holds chunks of human flesh.

The demon looks up at them, grinning past teeth flecked with blood and flesh. It begins to quiver with an excited, trembling chuckle...

Singh looks to Gans, who nods. The two men have found common ground in a common enemy.

The men take aim at the chuckling devil. As they do, the creature opens its black hole of a mouth in a taunting SCREAM.

GANS

Fire.

A hail of gunfire tears into the monster, shredding it into a thousand pieces. The soldiers don't let up, shooting until their clips run empty.

When they stop shooting, nothing is left of the demon except blood and flesh that drip from the walls and ceiling.

KANE

What was that thing, Major?

GANS

Doesn't matter now. It's in Hell.

EXT. CAVE-IN SITE - DAY

The soldiers sit waiting for extraction that hasn't come. Silo is perched on a large boulder, scanning the horizon with binoculars.

SILO
Someone's coming.

They look up at Silo.

FRANKLIN
Rescue?

Silo looks down at them grimly.

SILO
Ragheads.

Teller leaps up and snatches the binoculars from Silo, having a look for himself.

ANGLE THROUGH BINOCULARS

An eight-man patrol of Taliban, armed to the teeth, is heading directly for the area of destruction.

TELLER
Taliban. Shit! What should we do?

Franklin hoists his gun...

FRANKLIN
We engage.

TELLER
Fuck that! I can see from here that they're packing RPGs.

FRANKLIN
What would you rather do, surrender?

TELLER
I say we find cover and let them pass. There's nothing out here to fight for. Staying alive is all that matters. Isn't that what the major always says?

SILO
Fuckin'-a.

TELLER
You chumps do what you want, I'm taking cover.

INT. CAVE - INDOOR OASIS - DAY

Gans, Singh, Kane, Aryan, and the two Marcos emerge from a side passage into a dramatic open cavern. Pools of water fill natural basins in the rocky formations made smooth from erosion.

Singh bends down and scoops a handful of water from a basin. He smells it, tastes it.

SINGH

It's fresh.

He scoops a larger handful and drinks while the other men kneel and do the same.

Gans scans the area -- there are several dark tunnels that break off from the main cavern. He walks to one of the passages and peers into the darkness.

GANS

Let's not stay here long.

Gans turns and steps to a pool of fresh water, reflecting him like a mirror from below. He kneels and washes his hands, bringing the water up to his face.

But as the ripples fall still, they reflect the image of someone standing directly behind him.

Gans catches the image, snatches his gun and spins to face the snout of a Kalashnikov rifle, held by a CLOAKED AFGHAN.

The other soldiers spring into action, but they also find themselves surrounded by several ARMED AFGHANS, who have silently appeared from the dark passageways like ghosts.

Gans grins into the covered face of his captor.

GANS (CONT'D)

Climb deep enough into a hole and you'll find a rat.

His captor holds the gun steady, unblinking.

GANS (CONT'D)

Killing a man face-to-face is a little different than strapping a bomb onto your eleven-year-old niece and sending her into a market. Sure you got the balls?

That's when the "terrorist" takes off her covering to reveal a woman -- ZAHARA ALI, 22, Afghan, pretty, but hardened by life and war. She speaks in fluent but accented English.

ZAHARA

We are not terrorists. We are not Taliban. And what we are doing here has nothing to do with your war.

(in Afghan to her men)

Lower your weapons.

Her men do, somewhat reluctantly, especially FAZIL, Zahara's number two, and judging from his appearance, the most fanatical of the group.

Zahara looks toward Singh and his men.

ZAHARA (CONT'D)

What are Marcos doing here?

GANS

Why don't you tell us what you're doing here first.

Zahara looks back at Gans with a small smile.

ZAHARA

Americans. Always setting the conditions. Even when you lack the upper hand.

GANS

We're funny like that.

ZAHARA

My name is Zahara Ali. We are Pashtun. This is our land. We have come to deal with a cave dweller, something you would not understand or believe even if I explained it.

GANS

Cave dweller, eh?

Gans looks to Singh, then back to Zahara, somewhat proud.

GANS (CONT'D)

If it's that creature you're talking about, it's been dealt with. It's dead.

ZAHARA
Dead? How?

GANS
It killed one of my men. We blew
it into a million pieces.

Zahara is stunned...and now suddenly very frightened.

ZAHARA
You fool. You have no idea what
you've done.

EXT. CAVE-IN SITE - DAY

The Taliban patrol arrives on the scene of the cave-in. No sign of the men. Their COMMANDER sports a thick black beard and gold-rimmed sunglasses. He looks over the area, barks an order.

Two men stand guard as the others begin to scour the area like rats at a dump. One of the Taliban sets down his rifle and starts to take a leak. Another pulls down his pants beside a rock.

UP THE INCLINE

The Americans are spread out and hiding behind individual boulders. They're within sight of one another but not the Taliban moving around below.

Teller appears to be the most nervous, especially as a young TALIBAN SOLDIER slowly makes his way up toward his position.

Galloway shoots a look to Franklin, calling his attention to Teller. Franklin holds his finger to his lips.

Teller is breathing heavily as the Taliban soldier gets nearer. He grips his gun, fingers sweaty...

Below, the Taliban commander looks over the area, eyeballing the ground, where he spots a pile of fresh tobacco spittle.

Teller is starting to hyperventilate as the Taliban soldier nears, the sounds of his steps growing closer.

Franklin grips his gun, ready for what looks like inevitable action. Then...

TALIBAN COMMANDER
(in Afghan; subtitled)
We go!

The Taliban soldier stops within three feet of Teller's position.

But Teller's panic is at a zenith, and as the man turns, Teller swings out and SHOOTs him in the back.

Both the Taliban and Americans are forced into fast, bloody action.

The Taliban relieving themselves go down before they can get their pants up or guns aimed. The commander is hit and falls. The sentries return fire, but Silo coolly takes them out. He is a dead-aim shot.

It's chaotic and ugly with men screaming amid gunfire and plumes of bloody dirt. During the battle Galloway waves his gun in every direction as bullets impact around him. But he cannot get a shot off. He finally finds a charging Taliban in his sights, but he hesitates...

The man goes down, shot in the chest. Galloway turns to see Franklin has taken the shot for him. Franklin gives a quick nod.

Teller screams as he mows the area indiscriminately, still firing long after all the Taliban lie dead.

FRANKLIN

Cease fire!

The shooting stops. Teller tumbles down the hill in a cloud of dust, swinging his weapon, panicked. He then whoops in joy when he sees all the Taliban are dead.

TELLER

Yeah! YEAH! Fuckin'-a!

Franklin kicks the weapons away from the dead men, just in case.

FRANKLIN

What happened to hide and let them pass?

TELLER

He was on top of me, man. I did what I had to do.

Galloway hears a voice behind him. He turns and sees the injured commander on his stomach, calling out urgently into a walkie-talkie.

Galloway raises his weapon...

GALLOWAY
(in Afghan; subtitled)
Put it down!

The commander looks up at him through his shattered sunglasses, then goes back to the radio, speaking quickly, getting as much out as he can.

Galloway rushes over and kicks the walkie-talkie from his hand. The commander rolls onto his back and goes for something in his jacket...

Galloway FIRES into the man's chest, point-blank.

A fountain of blood gurgles up from the man's mouth as he dies, staring up at Galloway, who can't take his eyes off him. It's his first kill.

Franklin steps up, looks to Galloway, then kneels down and searches for what the man was going for -- a wicked knife. He shoves it into the ground beside the dead man's head.

FRANKLIN
Nice work.

GALLOWAY
He called in his position.

Teller turns, his joy instantly replaced with fresh panic.

TELLER
He what?!

FRANKLIN
He called in his position. That means we can expect more company.

TELLER
Then let's get the hell out of here!

FRANKLIN
This is our extraction point. Our orders are to wait and hold.

TELLER
How do we know they'll even come and get us?

Teller starts gathering up equipment, including the radio.

FRANKLIN
You're not taking our radio, Teller.

TELLER

Blow me.

Franklin draws his sidearm.

FRANKLIN

Put it down, soldier!

Teller draws his gun and aims at Franklin, his eyes wild.

TELLER

You wanna go, let's go!

SILO

Jesus, guys.

They hold, tense. Finally, Teller lets the radio fall.

TELLER

Fine. No radio. But I'm still getting the hell out of here.

FRANKLIN

Do what you want.

Teller looks to Silo.

TELLER

You wanna die with these dumbshits, or you want a fighting chance?

Silo just looks from man to man, unable to make up his mind.

TELLER (CONT'D)

Just get your pack and come with me, retard.

GALLOWAY

Don't do this, Teller. We're safer if we stick together.

TELLER

Uh-huh. Like the men at the plane. They were together.

He slings his pack over his shoulder, turns, and marches off into the desert, Silo following.

INT. CAVE SYSTEM - NATURAL CAVERN - DAY

Zahara shoulders her weapon, her eyes wide and full of fear.

ZAHARA

We must go now.

GANS

Hold up, sister. We're not moving an inch until you tell us what the hell you're talking about

ZAHARA

We don't have time! They'll be here soon!

GANS

Who?

Just then, from a passage high above, a creature leaps from the darkness with a SCREECH. But this is not the same small devil we saw before. This demon is larger, "younger," with long arms and muscular legs and a mouth full of fangs and a hungry blood-red tongue.

Gans FIRES at the creature in midair. The demon is sheared in mid-flight, its blood splattering over Kane.

But then ANOTHER DEMON charges at Gans from a side cavern. He whirls and UNLOADS into it. ANOTHER charges from another passage...and ANOTHER...

Suddenly, the cavern RAINS DEMONS from all the passages.

The Americans and Marcos open fire, BLASTING away at the creatures as Zahara screams over the gunfire...

ZAHARA

Stop! Stop shooting!

But the men continue to unload into the demons, who appear to be offering themselves up as easy targets.

Singh shoulders his gun and pulls out his Dang. Wielding it like a martial artist, he takes out demons with perfectly timed strikes to their heads and bodies.

But during the shooting, Kane stops firing and starts gagging, as if he's swallowed something.

Finally, the creatures stop coming. The men cease fire. Carnage is everywhere.

Gans whirls on Zahara and the Afghans, who stand with their weapons shouldered.

GANS

You got bullets in those guns or what?!

ZAHARA

You don't understand. They WANT to be slaughtered. It's how they increase their numbers!

GANS

What?

Singh, staring out across the slaughter, taps Gans on the shoulder.

SINGH

Major.

Gans turns and beholds a sight that makes his blood run cold.

From every drop of blood, from every piece of torn flesh, a new demon is growing. Bigger, badder, meaner, and hell-bent on waging pure WAR. These are the BLOODSPAWN!

Gans turns to Kane...but Kane -- having been splattered with demon blood -- is *also* being transformed. The living blood is tearing into his body, where new demonic limbs are sprouting amid his contortions and screams.

Zahara steps forward and pulls a cave light from her cloak. She shines it directly into the still-forming eyes of the bloodspawn, causing them to recoil.

In the light, we see the collection of demons is diverse. While the majority have grown into perfect bloodspawn, those that have grown from bone or a fingernail are gruesomely mutated and flop on the ground helplessly.

ZAHARA

Follow my men! RUN!

Gans, Singh, the Marcos, and the Afghans turn into a passage and run like hell. Zahara stays behind and holds off the bloodspawn. But the creatures slowly shake off the effects of the blinding light and start to advance.

Having held them off as long as she can, Zahara turns and runs into the cavern.

The bloodspawn surge after her, ruthlessly trampling their mutated cousins.

INT. CAVE - VARIOUS PASSAGES OFF INDOOR OASIS - CONTINUOUS

The soldiers and Afghans run through the twisting narrow tunnels with the screeching bloodspawn in close pursuit. One of the Afghans makes the mistake of looking back. He runs into a solid rock wall.

Fazil shoves one of his fellow Afghans out of the way, causing the man to fall. Creatures swarm over him, ripping him to shreds.

Gans stops, turns, facing a wall of demons looming up from the darkness. He FIRES into the pack, his weapon loud in the confined space, the shots giving the passage action a STROBE effect.

One of the Marcos falls, impaling himself on his own crossbow. He cries out. Singh dashes back to the injured man and tries to pull him up, but several bloodspawn are already there, tugging the soldier the other way.

Gans fires along the top of the cave, causing rock to fall down atop the bloodspawn, buying a few precious minutes. He turns and runs.

The downed Marco screams in agony as the bloodspawn tear into his waist wound, lapping at his blood with long tongues. Singh holds tight, but the man tears in half.

Singh throws off the half-corpse in time to see a small "pygmy" bloodspawn leapfrog over the feeding pack, screeching toward him, its blood-red mouth open.

Singh swats its head clean off with his Dang.

SINGH

Saala iblis! (Fucking devil!)

One of the Afghans makes the mistake of heading down a wrong passage. He reaches a dead end. He turns to the darkness, the sound of a dozen bloodspawn nearing.

He presses his back against the wall and starts to pray. As the creatures emerge from the darkness, his prayers turn to SCREAMS.

INT. CAVE - BUNKER - CONTINUOUS

Gans, Zahara, Aryan, Fazil, Sajit, and two surviving Afghans tumble into this man-made bunker with cots, a stove, and supplies.

Zahara quickly unchains a heavy door of rock mesh. The door is on a slant and SLIDES down a wooden rider...

GANS

Wait!

At the last moment, Singh, with an army of bloodspawn in close pursuit, dives through the door and spills into the room.

The door slides into place at the base of the chute with a heavy THUMP. The Afghans secure it by attaching the chain to eye hooks on the far wall as bloodspawn pile up against it on the other side, tearing at the rock with their claws and screaming in protest.

GANS (CONT'D)

There are still men out there.

ZAHARA

They are dead. We are alive. Be thankful for that.

GANS

What the hell are those things?

ZAHARA

Bloodspawn.

CLOSE as a drop of blood drips from Singh's Dang onto the ground.

GANS

What?

ZAHARA

From every drop of blood, a new one grows.

GANS

Impossible.

ZAHARA

Can you deny what you have seen with your own eyes?

Behind Singh we see a bloodspawn growing from the drop of blood. Fazil turns and spots the demon just in time...

FAZIL

Look out!

Singh dives out of the way as Gans raises his gun, but Zahara slaps it down.

ZAHARA

No! Don't shed its blood!

Singh leaps forward and grabs the still-forming creature by the throat. He locks his hands around it as it continues to grow, lifting him off his feet.

SINGH

Help me.

Gans, Aryan, and Sajit leap forward and hold the thrashing demon as Zahara snatches Singh's Dang. She quickly wipes it clean of blood, then throws the rag onto a gas hot plate.

The rag begins to quiver and shake as the blood comes to life. Zahara turns on the gas flame and burns the rag.

The men struggle to restrain the now fully-grown bloodspawn. Singh is eye-to-eye with the monster, which spits in his face, trying to shake free of Singh's grasp.

It takes several tense minutes, but the creature finally suffocates in Singh's hands and falls limp, never even having tasted air.

The creature and men fall to the ground. An exhausted Singh looks over the corpse at Gans, nods.

SINGH (CONT'D)

Thank you.

Fazil moves to Zahara at the stove. He speaks quietly but firmly to her in Afghan...

FAZIL

(in Afghan; subtitled)
We should kill these men now.

ZAHARA

(in Afghan; subtitled)
Kill them?

FAZIL

(in Afghan; subtitled)
*They can only prevent us from
accomplishing what we have come
here to do.*

Fazil's hand goes to his weapon.

FAZIL (CONT'D)

(in Afghan; subtitled)
*I will do it if you lack the
courage.*

ZAHARA
 (in Afghan; subtitled)
*These men will share our fate.
 That is enough. And don't ever
 question my courage.*

EXT. AFGHAN DESERT - DUSK

Teller and Silo march through the darkness of the endless desert. Even with night falling and the desert cooling, they perspire. Teller stops, looks around, shaking his head.

TELLER
 Doesn't make sense.

He looks at the compass.

TELLER (CONT'D)
 It just keeps turning. Like
 nothing out here makes sense! How
 are you supposed to find your way
 in a country that doesn't make
 sense?!

Silo takes a seat on a boulder.

SILO
 Maybe we should go back.

TELLER
 And get a spike up my ass? No,
 thanks. Besides...
 (looking around)
 I don't even know which direction
 we came from.

That's when something seems to whiz past him, a phantom voice that makes him spin and Silo spring to his feet.

TELLER (CONT'D)
 What the fuck was that?

Silo shakes his head. Teller scans the darkness. Then a sound -- a VOICE -- calling to them mockingly.

Teller FIRES his gun at nothing.

TELLER (CONT'D)
 You're fuckin' with the United
 States of America here!

The desert doesn't look impressed. Silo backs up, frightened. Suddenly, a dozen cloaked figures SPRING from beneath sand-covered blankets, knives gleaming.

A flash of BLOOD, as we...

CUT TO:

EXT. CAVE-IN SITE - DUSK

A strange sight -- the dead Taliban soldiers are propped up in foxholes several feet apart, holding their guns, aimed at the now darkening desert.

Franklin props up the dead Taliban commander, completing a bogus defensive line, making the dead men appear to be Northern Alliance fighters.

He drops into a trench beside Galloway, who's scanning the desert with binoculars.

FRANKLIN

That's it. A little morbid, I know, but at least we'll look like an army.

A buzzard lands on one of the dead men. Franklin waves his arm at it.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

Get out of here!

The buzzard looks at him. Franklin points his gun at the bird.

The bird just screeches back at him, not budging. Franklin withdraws his weapon, shaking his head.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

Even the birds around here are assholes.

Galloway looks at the Taliban commander, the man he killed.

The commander turns his dead face toward Galloway, smiling.

Galloway blinks away the vision, looks away. Franklin catches his expression.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

You did what you had to do. Don't let it get to you.

GALLOWAY

It's not. That's the thing.
What's bothering me is that it...it
isn't bothering me. I killed a
man, and all I can think about
is...

FRANKLIN

What?

GALLOWAY

How I could do it again.

Franklin nods. Takes the binoculars from him.

FRANKLIN

You need some rest. I'll take the
first watch. You can --

He cuts off when he sees Galloway looking past his shoulder.
Franklin turns, seeing what Galloway sees: a wake trail of
dust rising from the desert.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

Shit.

He raises the binoculars to his eyes.

P.O.V. THROUGH BINOCULARS

It's a unit of Taliban in vehicles, moving quickly toward the
area, waving guns.

INT. CAVE - TUNNEL OUTSIDE OF BUNKER - CONTINUOUS

The horde of bloodspawn claw at the soft rock around the
bunker door, attempting to dig their way inside. Among the
pack is the transformed Kane -- half-man, half-bloodspawn --
an eerie evolution.

INT. CAVE - BUNKER - CONTINUOUS

Gans is searching the room, pulling back curtains and cots.
Fazil is watching him closely, hand on his gun, ready to
spring.

GANS

This is a man-made bunker. There's
gotta be more than one way out.

ZAHARA

Of course. There was. But your air strike destroyed it. That's why we had to enter from the valley.

GANS

That strike was an accident.

ZAHARA

No, Major. It was no accident.

Just then, Gans pulls back a curtain and finds a chemical weapon lying on a cot. Markings indicate it's Russian. It's rigged with a harness and hand trigger -- a suicide WMD.

Fazil is on his feet, but Gans whirls on him, his gun aimed.

GANS

You say you are not terrorists, then what's this?

ZAHARA

We stole it from the Taliban. At great cost, I might add.

GANS

Why?

ZAHARA

I told you. We're here to deal with a cave dweller. Raktaveej. A demon whose blood can spring the army of Hell. He drew your bomber here to free him from the bowels of the earth, and now your bullets have unleashed his army.

Zahara points to the WMD on the cot and continues.

ZAHARA (CONT'D)

This was the solution. A chemical weapon. A way to kill without bloodshed. But we thought we only had to deal with one creature. Now, thanks to you, we face hundreds, maybe thousands.

SINGH

Why's it rigged with a hand trigger and body harness?

ZAHARA

Because the only way to be certain of your target is to be staring it in the eye when the deathblow is delivered.

GANS

Are you telling us you're going to hand-detonate that thing down here?

ZAHARA

Yes.

She turns and walks back across the room.

GANS

That's a suicide mission.

ZAHARA

Sometimes defeating an enemy requires the ultimate sacrifice. I'm sorry you are here, but that was your choice. And now, I'm afraid, it is also your fate.

EXT. CAVE-IN SITE - NIGHT

The dark night is illuminated with the EXPLOSIONS from a firefight as Galloway and Franklin battle the Taliban unit below. They move in trenches dug between foxholes and fire from the positions of each dead man, completing the illusion that the Taliban are up against a larger force.

Franklin flops down beside Galloway. They are both sweaty, dirty, and exhausted.

FRANKLIN

I've only got one more clip.

GALLOWAY

Then you got one more than me.

They fire together, then drop back as fire is returned, sending geysers of dirt above their heads.

FRANKLIN

I say we pull back over this ridge while we still can. We'll go out on separate flanks. I'll cover you. Go.

Galloway breaks to the left flank, keeping down behind the dead soldiers as the Taliban unleash a fresh volley of fire from below.

Franklin fires down at the Taliban until his gun runs dry. He then breaks for the right. But an RPG missile sails at him from below.

The missile blows Franklin from the foxhole. He rolls down the hill in a cloud of dust toward the Taliban line.

Galloway sees the injured Franklin lying exposed. He leaps out of the trench and slides back down to his friend, kicking up a trail of dust. Below we hear the shouts of the Taliban and see the men advancing.

Galloway reaches Franklin, who lies bleeding and injured. He struggles to speak while pushing Galloway away.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

Go.

The advancing Taliban shout at Galloway in Afghan to drop his weapon.

GALLOWAY

Hang in there, my friend.

Galloway tosses down his gun and raises his hands. The Taliban arrive, eyes wild, still screaming at Galloway.

The COMMANDER pushes past his men and sees the "army" they've been fighting are dead Taliban. He laughs. As do his men.

GALLOWAY (CONT'D)

(in Afghan; subtitled)

This man is injured. He needs help.

The laughing stops. The Taliban commander looks at him, surprised to see an American speaking their tongue.

GALLOWAY (CONT'D)

(in Afghan; subtitled)

For the sake of his mother.

The Taliban commander nods, then turns his pistol on Franklin and SHOOTS him in the head.

Galloway lunges for him in a rage, but the Taliban soldiers are on him in a flash, holding him back by the hair.

The Taliban commander steps up and plants his gun against Galloway's temple.

TALIBAN COMMANDER
(in Afghan; subtitled)
Allah will bring you to justice.

Galloway closes his eyes.

A GUNSHOT rings out!

Galloway flinches. But his eyes flash open in time to see blood running from a bullet hole in the center of the Taliban commander's forehead.

The man falls straight back and hits the ground, dead.

Then from each side of the mountain, WARRIORS ON HORSEBACK emerge wielding swords and high-tech machine guns. They attack and slaughter the remaining Taliban with savagery and skill, slicing off heads and limbs, showing no mercy.

Galloway can hardly believe his eyes. It's as if the medieval past has suddenly burst from the darkness. He grabs his gun and remains crouched amid the dust of the charging horses.

When the slaughter ceases, all the Taliban lie dead except for one man who begs for his life on his knees. He gets a boot in the face for his prayers.

The mysterious men scavenge for weapons as a large black stallion steps up to Galloway.

Galloway looks up to find himself facing a ferocious WARLORD. His chest is crisscrossed with two bandoliers, RPG on his back, jeweled sword in hand.

WARLORD
(in Afghan; subtitled)
Bring him!

Two of the warlord's men grab Galloway and force him on a horse. Galloway turns and sees the captured Taliban is also being forced to mount a horse.

WARLORD (CONT'D)
(in Afghan; subtitled)
We go!

The warlord gallops away. His men follow. Galloway is carried away with the men, who disappear back into the night as quickly and mysteriously as they had appeared.

INT. CAVE - BUNKER - CONTINUOUS

Zahara and the Afghans are saying a prayer, preparing for their mission, as Gans frantically searches the room -- the walls -- running his hand along what appears to be an artificial seam in the rock.

He pulls his knife and digs loose rock from the seam. Singh steps up to him.

SINGH

What have you found?

GANS

I think there was once a passage here.

Singh pulls out his own knife and helps Gans dig at the seam.

The Afghans complete their prayer. Fazil stands and slings on the WMD. Gans sees this and steps quickly toward them.

GANS (CONT'D)

Wait! We found something. There used to be a passage there.

ZAHARA

What of it?

GANS

It might be a way out.

Singh's knife punches through the seam and slides freely. He peeks through the hole. He then takes his Dang and shoves it in -- it slides all the way in.

SINGH

It's a tunnel!

GANS

You hear that?

ZAHARA

Our task is not to get out. It is to destroy the creatures. And that is what we are going to do.

Fazil steps to the door, finger on the trigger of the WMD, as another Afghan begins to unhook the chain that secures it.

Gans draws his gun and points it at Zahara and the men.

GANS

I can't let you do that.

ZAHARA

A bullet can't stop us. We are already prepared to die.

GANS

Listen, you said it yourself. You came to kill one creature; now there are hundreds, maybe thousands. How can you be certain the poison from the bomb will reach them all? If just one survives, you will have sacrificed yourself for nothing.

ZAHARA

This weapon can destroy an army.

Singh appears, looking to Zahara.

SINGH

You're wrong. I was part of a team that decommission Russian ordinance after the Cold War. I know these weapons. It is only a tactical device. The major is right. If you detonate it, you will only succeed in killing us and a handful of the creatures at best.

FAZIL

He's lying.

He moves to the door.

ZAHARA

Wait.

She looks back at Gans. It's clear that she'd rather not die but...

ZAHARA (CONT'D)

I made a promise to my people that I would rid them of this threat.

GANS

And you will, with our help. If we escape, we can warn our people about what is in this cave and have a better chance of dealing with these creatures. ALL of them.

FAZIL
(in Afghan; subtitled)
*They are cowards, Zahara. Do not
listen to them.*

During this exchange, we see Sajit moving quietly around the back of Fazil. Zahara shakes her head.

ZAHARA
I was a young girl when the Russians invaded our country. They said they would build us schools and dig wells if we would help them battle the mujahideen. They did nothing but ravage the land with bombs and kill our people. And then the CIA offered to help us if we rose against the Russians. Constant promises, yet my whole life I have watched friends and family die from diseases that I know in the West can be cured with a pill.

GANS
Forget governments. This is a personal promise from me to you. I will get you out of here and find a way to destroy these creatures.

Sajit suddenly grabs Fazil from behind. Singh leaps forward and cuts the wires of the WMD with his knife, separating the hand trigger and bomb.

Singh steps back with the trigger in his hand.

SINGH
Now, it is settled.

GANS
You didn't need to do that.

SINGH
Didn't I?

He shoots a look at Fazil, then pockets the trigger and turns back to the rock wall. Gans looks back at Zahara. She just shakes her head.

ZAHARA
You ask us to trust you, but you do not trust us.

Off Gans somewhat guilty look, we...

CUT TO:

EXT. AFGHAN DESERT - NIGHT

The warlord's caravan crosses the dark desert. Galloway spots something ahead -- two mutilated men on spikes, displayed up like scarecrows -- Teller and Silo.

The warlord suddenly speaks to Galloway in English.

WARLORD

It's not what you think. In this region, a very different war rages.

The captive Taliban, riding behind them, whimpers and prays as they pass the dead men.

INT. CAVE - BUNKER - SAME TIME

The men dig at the bunker wall while bloodspawn dig at the other side of the door, the sound of them growing louder. Fazil sits on a cot with arms folded, refusing to help. A chunk of bunker wall falls inward into the passage. Aryan cracks on a fresh glow stick and looks inside.

ARYAN

Damn.

SINGH

What is it?

ARYAN

It's not a tunnel. Looks more like a ventilation shaft.

Gans has a look -- the cave is a narrow crawlspace, only big enough for one person at a time.

GANS

It will still lead somewhere.

SAJIT

What's that smell?

FAZIL (O.S.)

Death.

They look to Fazil, who sits smirking.

FAZIL (CONT'D)

You have opened a tomb. A grave.

Gans looks back into the dark passage, choked with cobwebs and dust.

GANS

We'll just be trading one grave for another.

He climbs into the passage and crawls on his belly, using elbows and knees. The others line up to follow. Zahara looks to Fazil.

ZAHARA

(in Afghan; subtitled)
Are you coming?

FAZIL

(in Afghan; subtitled)
No.

ZAHARA

(in Afghan; subtitled)
But you will die if you stay here.

FAZIL

(in Afghan; subtitled)
At least I will not die as an American pet.

EXT. WARLORD COMPOUND - NIGHT - ESTABLISHING

A heavily-fortified desert compound dating back to Alexander the Great. Satellite dishes sprout from the ancient turrets, machine gun nests rim the ramparts. A collection of Rolls Royces with Saudi plates sits in the courtyard beside camels, mangy dogs, and horses.

INT. WARLORD COMPOUND - HALLS/ROOM - NIGHT

Galloway, stripped of his equipment, is escorted by two armed men through the halls filled with stockpiles of weapons and consumer goods. He passes a room where armed Afghans watch *The Sopranos* on a big screen plasma TV.

In the room beside it, the TALIBAN who was captured alongside Galloway is being stripped and hooked up to electrodes. The man looks up at Galloway as he passes, his eyes filled with fear.

Galloway is shoved forward.

INT. WARLORD COMPOUND - FEASTING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The warlord and his men sit on pillows and boil meat in steaming bowls of water along a series of low interconnecting tables. A heavy door is opened, and Galloway is shoved in.

Conversation falls quiet. The men eyeball him critically. At the head of the table, the warlord barks...

WARLORD
(in Afghan; subtitled)
Leave him.

The armed men back away. The warlord, sucking on a lamb chop, waves Galloway forward with a greasy hand.

Galloway walks past the seated men, who chuckle as he passes. He steps up to the warlord, who spits a load of fat onto the floor.

WARLORD (CONT'D)
(subtitled in English;
Peace be with you)
Salaam aleikum.

GALLOWAY
(subtitled in English; And
unto you be peace)
Waleikum a-salaam.

The warlord nods, then extends his hand to a pillow across from him.

WARLORD
Sit. Eat. Speak English to me.
And in English, tell me what the
Americans are doing in the Kush.

Galloway sits, looking at the warlord through a steaming water bowl.

GALLOWAY
We came to recon a downed plane.
Search for survivors.

WARLORD
And you found them dead like those
men in the desert.

GALLOWAY
Do you know what happened to them?

The warlord just sucks the marrow from a bone, seeming to ignore the question. He throws down the bone and looks at Galloway.

WARLORD

Do you know how old I am? Huh? I am 200 years old.

His men chuckle. Galloway looks at the men, who watch him, expectantly.

WARLORD (CONT'D)

Do you believe me? That I am 200 years old?

GALLOWAY

Does it matter what I believe?

The men fall silent. The warlord's face falls. That was the wrong answer. Galloway shifts in his seat.

GALLOWAY (CONT'D)

Okay. No. No, I don't believe you.

WARLORD

And this is something you feel in your heart is true. A true fact.

GALLOWAY

It's impossible.

WARLORD

Would you stake your life on it?

His men smile. Galloway squirms, doesn't like where this is going.

GALLOWAY

Stake my life on the fact that you are not 200 years old?

The warlord nods.

GALLOWAY (CONT'D)

If I had to, yes.

WARLORD

But what if we in Afghanistan measure our years differently from you? What if we use the cycle of the stars instead of the sun? What if our "year" is only three months by your calendar?

GALLOWAY
You didn't say that.

WARLORD
It is not for me to say! This is my home. My country. You should have known it before you challenged me!

The men fall quiet. The warlord looks at Galloway menacingly.

WARLORD (CONT'D)
Especially as you have staked your life on it.

GALLOWAY
Well, I assumed we were speaking hypothetically.

He gives a laugh, looks to the men. No one else is laughing.

Galloway stifles his laughter and looks back at the warlord, pretty nervous now.

GALLOWAY (CONT'D)
You're right. It was foolish of me to assume. I apologize.

WARLORD
(with disgust)
A soldier never apologizes. At least not to the enemy.

GALLOWAY
Are you my enemy?

The warlord looks at him and smiles for the first time.

WARLORD
I am no one's enemy. I am no one's friend. I am Afghanistan.

INT. CAVE - "DEATH" CAVE - SAME TIME

With fading glow stick, Gans crawls from the narrow rock shaft and drops into a sealed room, his feet crunching into something unseen.

As the others emerge, Gans cracks on a new glow stick.

The stick illuminates a sea of skeletons and partially mummified remains filling the passage.

SINGH

He was right. It is a tomb.

Gans squats, shifting through the remains, examining them. He shakes his head.

GANS

No. This isn't a burial. These men died here. It's a massacre.

ZAHARA

Who were they?

Gans finds a small lapel pin -- a hammer and sickle.

GANS

Russian.

SINGH

These men are wearing the clothes of mujahideen.

ZAHARA

They killed each other.

GANS

I don't think so. These men were fighting side by side. Against a common enemy.

ZAHARA

Russians and Afghans fighting together?

Gans picks up a leg bone -- shredded by teeth.

GANS

We're not the first army to encounter these creatures.

Sajit pulls away at wooden slats and finds a crawlspace into a new tunnel passage.

SAJIT

There's a way out here.

INT. WARLORD COMPOUND - FEASTING ROOM - SAME TIME

Galloway picks up a piece of strange meat, looks it over, takes a small bite. Chews.

GALLOWAY

Not bad. What is it?

WARLORD
Asshole of goat.

Galloway stops chewing.

The warlord is talking to the man we saw wiring up the Taliban prisoner in the torture chamber. He appears to be giving instructions on how to behead the man -- holding his own hair and running his hand along his own neck, showing where to cut.

Galloway reaches for a piece of fruit.

GALLOWAY
You have a lot of modern equipment around here.

WARLORD
Gifts from your government. Do you know I have my own satellite? Up in outer space. Given to me by your CIA to help find bin Laden. I believe it costs your taxpayers a million dollars a year.
(laughs)
We use it to watch football.

GALLOWAY
Tell me, do you have any idea what Raktaveej means?

The men instantly stop eating and look to Galloway with fear in their eyes.

The warlord nods slowly. He then wipes his face and barks a command. Galloway watches as the men all get up and quickly leave. The door closes, leaving Galloway and the warlord alone.

WARLORD
When one of my men says that name out loud -- I remove his tongue.

GALLOWAY
So it is a name?

WARLORD
A most foul name. Raktaveej is an ancient warrior of hell, who laid siege on the Gods with a plague of demon warriors.
(MORE)

WARLORD (CONT'D)

So destructive was Raktaveej, that the Gods called forth the even more powerful warrior Goddess, Kali, who defeated the demon army by lapping them up with her tongue, forever imprisoning Raktaveej in her belly - that which today we call the Hindu Kush.

GALLOWAY

These mountains?

The warlord nods.

WARLORD

But Raktaveej remains a living force in these hills, shaping the minds and motives of men, baiting them to commit evil deeds and acts of war.

GALLOWAY

But this is mythology.

WARLORD

All history becomes mythology given time. The truth is this war has freed Raktaveej in his most virulent form. Those dead men you found were killed by the tribes who live in the Kush as an appeasement to Raktaveej, and strung up as a warning to stay away from his lair. For you see, Raktaveej will try to draw you in, tempting you with fear and hate and tricks. But should you shed his blood, even a drop, his warriors will grow. And from their blood will spring more and more until an unstoppable army of hell overruns the earth.

He leans close, the charcoal firelight of the serving table reflecting off his face.

WARLORD (CONT'D)

And if that happens, not even the gods can save us.

INT. CAVE - BUNKER - SAME TIME

Fazil is on his knees, praying. Behind him we see the walls flaking away and bloodspawn starting to break through.

INT. CAVE - AMMO DEPOT PASSAGE - CONTINUOUS

The soldiers move into a new tunnel, as if moving back in time, they emerge in an area that is lined with dusty ammunition crates emblazoned with CCCP.

SAJIT

What is this?

SINGH

It's an ammunition depot.

ZAHARA

The mujahideen hid stolen weapons throughout these mountains. Most were recovered by the Taliban or al-Qaeda. Looks like they never found these.

Gans rips open a box that contains several heavy-yield MORTARS.

GANS

Lucky for us. Now we can get re-armed.

The others start opening crates, finding ammunition, guns, even canned food. Gans rips open a long box to find it contains a never-used FLAMETHROWER with a full tank.

Just then, a SOUND from deep inside the darkness. All turn. Zahara looks back with a hard swallow.

ZAHARA

They're coming.

INT. CAVE - BUNKER - SAME TIME

Fazil prays fervently as the walls starts to collapse. He leaps to his feet and tries to hold back the stone, but the claws of bloodspawn break through.

Fazil makes a dash for the crawlspace and climbs inside, giving in to his fear.

INT. CAVE - AMMO DEPOT PASSAGE - CONTINUOUS

The soldiers grab what's left of the arms, tossing the crates aside. That's when an idea strikes Gans.

GANS

Wait. Pile up the crates!

He starts piling the empty boxes, one on top of the other in the center of the passage.

ZAHARA
Major, we don't have time!

GANS
Just help me!

INT. CAVE - CRAWLSPACE - SAME TIME

Fazil crawls, terrified, whimpering, as ravenous bloodspawn flood through the crawlspace after him. Soon they are on him. He falls back and scissor kicks at them, but they overwhelm him. As he is covered, his screams become a choked gurgle of blood.

INT. CAVE GRAVE - SAME

The bloodspawn spit from the crawl space, trampling the skeletal remains and blasting down the dark tunnel...

INT. CAVE - AMMO DEPOT PASSAGE - CONTINUOUS

Gans and the men continue to pile up the crates, the stack now reaching the ceiling.

GANS
That's it. Move back.

ZAHARA
That isn't going to stop them.

GANS
I'm not done yet.

Gans pulls the flamethrower from the case, attaches the fuel tank nozzle, and aims it at the barricade. He pulls the trigger, and nothing happens. Tries again. Nothing.

GANS (CONT'D)
Shit!

SINGH
What's wrong?

Gans drops and digs in the crate.

SINGH (CONT'D)
What are you looking for?

GANS
Instructions.

ZAHARA
Good God.

ON THE BLOODSPAWN

Passing in and out of the pools of light, led by the half-man, half-bloodspawn Kane.

BACK TO SCENE

Gans pulls the instructions from the crate, looks at them, frowns.

GANS
They're in Russian.

ZAHARA
I read Russian.

Gans hands over the paperwork. Just then, bloodspawn reach the other side of the barricade and begin tearing through, hungry for the men on the other side...

Zahara throws aside the instructions, disconnects the hose from the canister, and quickly reverses it.

ZAHARA (CONT'D)
We learned as children that Russian
weapons are just like American,
only everything is in reverse.
(stepping back)
Go now!

Gans aims at the barricade, pulls the trigger...and still nothing.

GANS
Negative.

ZAHARA
I don't understand. It should
work.

That's when Singh spots the fuel line switch. If everything is reversed, then... He reaches over and flips the switch.

The flamethrower takes Gans by surprise as it comes to life, SPITTING FLAMES into the boxes, tearing through and igniting the Kane-spawn on the other side.

The other bloodspawn shrink back, shielding their eyes from the bright fire.

Gans sprays the stream of flaming fuel over the boxes until every inch is alight.

GANS

That'll hold 'em. Let's go.

They turn and run into the tunnel, leaving the enraged bloodspawn trapped on the other side of the fire.

INT. CAVE - TUNNEL TO CHASM/CHASM - CONTINUOUS

Gans, Zahara, Singh, Aryan, Sajit, and the two surviving Afghans run down the passage, the flames of the bonfire and the sounds of the enraged bloodspawn behind them.

They near an area that opens into a larger cave, but when they hit the lip, they have to stop fast.

REVEAL - THE CHASM

It's a huge void that appears to be the remains of an indoor landslide. Cavities of sheer rock fall 400 feet into darkness. Across the void is the continuation of the cave passage, but it is only accessible via a twisting series of four rope extensions that look to have been strung up during the time of the Russians.

Singh shakes his head.

SINGH

These ropes are at least 20 years old. How do we know they'll hold?

Gans fingers the rope of the first extension -- it's frayed and dusty, coming apart in his fingers. He continues flaking it away until he reaches a core that appears solid. He gives it a tug and it holds, for now.

GANS

I'll go first.

ZAHARA

Major? I'm lighter. Shouldn't I go first?

GANS

If they hold me, they'll hold everyone.

Gans turns and steps out onto the rope. Each extension is made up of three ropes -- a single rope to balance while gripping two higher guide lines. Gans walks out gingerly, his boot causing the rope to strain and flake, but it holds.

It's a tense tightrope walk to the first tower of rock, where the first extension ends. Gans steps onto the rock to the relief of all.

GANS (CONT'D)

It's safe. Come on.

Singh lets Zahara go next. She crosses out onto the rope carefully as Gans starts to cross the next, this one much longer and sagging over the center of a seemingly bottomless pit.

INT. CAVE - AMMO DEPOT PASSAGE - CONTINUOUS

The creatures tear away at the burning wood, roasting their hands, but determined to break through. Enough of the barricade has burned away so the "wall of fire" effect is gone, and the bloodspawn can see through the glowing embers at the tunnel in the distance.

INT. CAVE - CHASM - CONTINUOUS

Gans steps onto a second rock peak as Zahara starts across the sagging extension and Singh now crosses the first.

The way the ropes angle from peak to peak gives us a view of all three of them at the same time as well as the nervous men still waiting for their turn to cross.

BACK ON THE BLOODSPAWN

They have the bulk of the flaming barricade dismantled. Some lie dead and burning. That's when a bloodspawn from the back charges forward and SMASHES through the final timbers, breaking open a passage for all.

BACK TO CHASM

Gans arrives at the second-to-last peak. One more rope extension to go. Aryan is now crossing the first. Zahara is dead center of the sagging rope when a SHRIEK suddenly fills the chasm.

Sajit, on the ledge, turns and yells...

SAJIT

Here they come!!!

All start to cross the ropes more quickly. Zahara makes it to one peak and out across another extension as Singh now rushes out onto the sagging rope, Aryan close behind him.

Sajit lets the two Afghans go ahead of him as he aims his gun at the darkness, waiting for the bloodspawn.

Singh loses his footing and dangles for a tense moment but recovers.

Zahara reaches the peak where Gans stands. He lets her pass and start across the final extension as he kneels and aims the flamethrower across the chasm at the doorway of the cave.

Sajit watches the darkness, where bloodspawn suddenly appear, eyes and teeth gleaming.

He FIRES. The bloodspawn hit the wall of bullets and are shredded. More and more pile out, one from behind the other.

Sajit holds the trigger so tightly his finger bleeds as he empties his clip into the creatures in a blood-soaked last stand.

On the sagging rope, one of the Afghans loses his balance and falls with a scream into the darkness. The other, carrying the WMD, dashes out in his place.

Sajit runs out of bullets. He looks up as the bloodspawn burst from the tunnel and hit him like a freight train.

That's when Gans opens up with the flamethrower.

The flame spits across the chasm and ignites bloodspawn, who spiral off into the chasm and land on lower outcrops of rock, their burning corpses illuminating the scene with pockets of flame, making it look even more like the ramparts of Hell.

The flamethrower starts to run dry as some of the bloodspawn slip past and leap to the ropes and rocks.

A bloodspawn is closing on the Afghan with the WMD. Zahara, the only one so far to have made it to the other side, calls out.

ZAHARA

The weapon! Throw us the weapon!!!

The Afghan takes off the WMD and relays it to Singh, who barely catches it. The Afghan spins to fight, but the bloodspawn are on him, killing him horribly.

Aryan joins Singh on the rock peak. Singh cuts the rope, severing the long-sagging connection between the two high peaks and sending two bloodspawn into the abyss. He then begins crossing the second-to-last bridge, carrying the WMD.

Gans throws off his empty flamethrower and steps to the last rope extension to Zahara -- and it breaks!

ZAHARA (CONT'D)

Major!

Gans falls, bouncing off a hard rock, catching hold of a ledge 20 feet below Zahara, where he dangles.

Singh makes it to the peak, but now sees he has no way across. He throws the WMD across the abyss to Zahara. She then holds out her other hand.

ZAHARA (CONT'D)

The trigger.

Singh looks at her, hesitant.

ZAHARA (CONT'D)

Hurry!

Below, Gans pulls himself up onto a ledge where he finds himself hopelessly trapped. A falling bloodspawn catches him by the boot and tries to bite his ankle. Gans kicks the creature in the head with his other boot. It falls into the abyss, screaming at him as it falls.

Singh pulls the trigger from his pocket, a beat, then he goes to lob it over to Zahara. But as he throws, he's nudged from behind by Aryan.

The trigger is thrown wild. Zahara dashes for it, but it hits the lip of the cliff and bounces back into the abyss...

...where it is CAUGHT by Gans on the ledge below.

On the peak, Singh spins on Aryan -- but instead of Aryan, he finds himself facing Aryan transformed into a bloodspawn!

Zahara fires her Kalashnikov and blows away the transformed Aryan. Singh watches his last and best man fall into the abyss. He looks up to see more bloodspawn advancing. Now, he's pissed!

Singh pulls his Dang and fights off a wave of bloodspawn, who leap across the chasm toward him.

Zahara continues shooting, shredding the creatures and the ropes.

Gans has to dodge the splattering blood drops that fill the cavern, some of it springing to life the second it hits hot rock.

Singh bats away the last bloodspawn and turns to Zahara on the ledge. He takes a breath and makes a leap...

Singh flies toward Zahara...and falls short. He snags the harness of the WMD held by Zahara, releasing the grip on his Dang.

The Dang falls past Gans, who looks up and sees Singh dangling over him by the strap of the WMD.

Zahara uses all her strength to pull Singh up. He catches hold of the ledge and pulls himself to safety.

Gans looks at the blood-soaked rocks all around him literally crawling with blood.

Singh looks down over the edge to see Gans trapped below. The walls are smooth with no way for Gans to climb up.

SINGH

Major!

Gans looks up at him, shakes his head.

GANS

Get out of here. You don't have much time.

Singh sees the fresh blood is already beginning to form -- the chasm will soon be filled with thousands of bloodspawn.

SINGH

You forget, Major, I don't take orders from you.

Singh unwraps his turban. Beneath his black hair is long and flowing. He then lowers the length of cloth down to Gans, twirling it into a rope as he does.

Gans shakes his head.

GANS

Crazy bastard.

He grips the turban "rope" and starts to climb.

It's a race against time as the bloodspawn grow and come to life, opening their bug eyes, sprouting teeth -- and finally giving off their horrible war cry.

Zahara helps Singh pull Gans up over the lip. Gans hands Singh back his length of turban and gives a firm nod.

GANS (CONT'D)

Thank you.

The regenerated army of bloodspawn are now so numerous that they are building towers of their bodies, allowing others to reach the far side.

ZAHARA

Let's go!

Singh and Zahara turn to run, but Gans steps forward, facing the chasm.

SINGH

Major!

Gans pulls a Russian MORTAR from his belt.

GANS

I'm sick of running.

He throws the mortar into the mass of bloodspawn. It hits a central outcrop of rock dead center and EXPLODES!

The tremendous explosion blows apart the bloodspawn tower and causes the central rock peak to break and fall like a great obelisk. It crashes against another peak, causing it to shatter, and they both fall, literally bringing down the roof in a spectacular continuation of this indoor landslide.

Gans grins at the destruction as hard rock smashes into the bloodspawn, making them burst with blood and bone. However, the collapse doesn't stop with just the chasm...

GANS (CONT'D)

Oh, shit.

Gans turns and runs as the entire cave starts to collapse behind him. The three survivors run as fast as they can -- but they are unable to outrun the steamrolling destruction.

Zahara holds the WMD against her chest as the floor gives out and she falls among crumbling rock.

Gans and Singh also go down as the mountain seems to flood from above, sucking all down into the depths of the earth in a vortex of dirt and rock.

EXT. WARLORD COMPOUND - DAWN

We are shocked by the sudden SILENCE of the desert at sunrise. PULL BACK to find Galloway standing just outside the compound gates, looking toward the empty horizon, the warlord standing at his back.

GALLOWAY

I don't understand why they never came for us.

WARLORD

No one sends an army to save one man. It is not practical.

Galloway turns and looks at him.

GALLOWAY

I don't believe that.

WARLORD

You should rest. Then my men will take you to the Kotal-e Salang pass. The U.N. use it as an artery into Kabul. You will be able to get transport.

GALLOWAY

You're letting me go?

WARLORD

The Americans won't listen to a man like me. They need to hear it from one of their own. Tell them what I have told you of Raktaveej. Warn them to stay out of the Kush.

GALLOWAY

And you think they would believe me? Hell, I'm not even sure if I believe it myself.

WARLORD

I've done what I can. It is in your hands now.

The warlord turns and marches back into the compound, leaving Galloway standing alone.

INT. SUB CAVE SYSTEM - MOMENTS LATER

Zahara crawls from a pack of dirt, holding the WMD. She checks it for damage. None. Thank goodness.

She stands and looks around. She's fallen into a sub cave system with catacombs of curved rock that look organic and strange. There's no sign of Singh or Gans.

Clutching the WMD, she starts to move down the passage. She hits a dead end. But there is a darkened rock chute above her. A way out maybe?

Zahara shoulders the WMD and starts to climb up the rock wall.

INT. SUB CAVE SYSTEM - ANOTHER CATACOMB - SAME TIME

CLOSE as a hand shoots from the earth, clutching at the air. The stub finger tells us it's Gans. He pulls himself from the rubble and falls painfully to the ground, clutching his arm.

His cry alerts Singh across the catacomb. He comes over to Gans and kneels -- blood flows from a gash on Singh's forehead.

SINGH

You hurt?

GANS

My arm's broken.

Gans makes himself a sling out of his shirt, tying it off with his teeth. Singh can't help but give a nod of admiration.

SINGH

I'll say one thing for you,
American. You don't give up.

GANS

Never. Where's our girl?

SINGH

I can't find her. Or the weapon.

GANS

Who cares about the weapon?

SINGH

I do. The smallest leak could kill
us all.

Gans looks at him.

GANS

I thought you said it wasn't powerful.

SINGH

I would have said anything to stop her from detonating it. The truth is that weapon could kill an entire army. It's extremely powerful.

GANS

Terrific. I kind of liked not knowing that.

He stands, holding the gun in his good arm.

GANS (CONT'D)

Zahara!

BACK ON ZAHARA

She's far up on the rock wall. She turns at the sound of Gans's distant voice, but in doing so, loses her footing. She tumbles down a hard slanting chute and falls on the ground -- which collapses and sends her into...

THE DEATH PIT

Zahara falls into something that cushions her fall and sends up a cloud of dust. She stands, eyes closed, waving away the dust. When she opens her eyes, she finds herself facing a dozen BLOODSPAWN.

She SCREAMS!

SINGH AND GANS

hear Zahara's scream. They dash toward the sound.

BACK IN THE PIT

Zahara fights for her life as bloodspawn seem to swarm her. She punches one hard in the face -- and its head shreds. That's when she realizes these bloodspawn are dead, mummified.

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

Zahara!

ZAHARA

I'm down here!

SINGH AND GANS

are standing above the pit. Gans looks to Singh, taps his head.

GANS
How about it?

Singh gives Gans a frown, then starts to unwrap his turban again.

TIME CUT

Zahara is pulled from the pit via Singh's turban. When she emerges, they are startled to see she's holding a dead, dried bloodspawn. She drops the creature to the ground.

ZAHARA
There's a whole nest of them down there. All dead. These are probably the creatures that killed those Russians we found.

SINGH
But what killed them?

Gans kneels over the body, looking closely at the dead creature. He takes out his knife and stabs it in the dried chest.

ZAHARA
What are you doing?

GANS
An autopsy. Let's find out what makes these things tick.

He rips open the carcass exposing the dusty remains of the chest. He pulls out what looks like a gigantic dried prune and holds it up.

SINGH
The heart?

ZAHARA
It's huge.

GANS
Three times the size of a human heart. The blood flow going through these creatures must be incredible.

SINGH

Seeing them in action, I think
that's obvious.

Gans tosses aside the heart and cuts away at the abdomen. He roots around for a period of time. Then sits back, dusting his hands.

GANS

That's interesting.

ZAHARA

What is it?

GANS

Well, either the stomach is too small to find, or it doesn't have one.

SINGH

No stomach? But we've seen them eat.

GANS

Have we? We've seen them chew flesh, but my guess is they're after the blood. It's blood that fuels these things, and bloodshed is the only way they sustain their numbers. And that tells us how they died.

ZAHARA

They starved.

GANS

Exactly. These creatures are made for one thing and one thing only: War. Blood in, blood out. If they don't get either, they die off. Probably at an accelerated rate. I suspect those Russians we found discovered this. That's why they sealed this cavern from the inside. To hold them here. Keep them from getting to the surface.

ZAHARA

Starve them of war.

They hear the cries of bloodspawn ECHOING in the passages above, as if the entire mountain is now full of them.

SINGH

What do you think would happen if they got to the surface now?

GANS

God help us. There's no shortage of war out there.

EXT. MOUNTAIN PASS - DAY (DREAM)

Galloway is standing alone beside a road in the desert, holding his gun, waiting for his ride. A scorpion moves across the sand, Galloway watches it closely. As he does, two Black Hawk helicopters come in fast and silent. They suddenly scream over his head, causing him to look up.

American soldiers onboard laugh and point at him as they drift away. Galloway just watches without emotion.

Behind Galloway now stands the dead Taliban Commander. The man mumbles something that sounds like backwards gibberish.

Galloway turns, but finds himself facing Raktaveej -- who screams at him with his black mouth and blood-red tongue.

Galloway is running for his life, pulling off his clothes, crying, huffing and puffing as if he's been running for days. He looks back.

And sees himself dressed in a cap and gown, receiving a diploma from Major Gans.

Galloway, shakes his head, and suddenly runs off a huge cliff, the mighty expanse of the Afghan desert opening up like a mouth below him.

INT. WARLORD COMMPOUND - DAY

A loud SOUND makes Galloway's eyes flash open. He's nodded off in a chair in a small room above the compound courtyard. He turns to see one of the warlord's men has dropped his equipment -- gun, radio, Kevlar vest, etc. -- onto the floor.

The man nods and quickly leaves.

INT. SUB CAVE - VARIOUS PASSAGES - SAME TIME

Bloodspawn have regenerated and move in packs through the catacombs of the mountains, searching for their prey.

INT. SUB CAVE - PASSAGE TO TEMPLE - DAY

Singh, Zahara, and Gans push deeper into the sub cave. They round a corner and find themselves standing at the end of a long passage, ribbed like the inside of a giant whale. At the end of the passage is a point of light, burning like a furnace.

ZAHARA

What is it?

GANS

I don't know.

(scanning corridor)

But there's nowhere else to go.

SINGH

The proverbial light at the end of the tunnel, eh, Major?

They move down the passage toward the light. As they walk, ghostly whispers seem to streak past their ears. The walls begin to take on organic, spooky, and strange shapes.

A doorway looms ahead with a peaked top, almost like an entrance to a cathedral. Beyond is the dusty light. They pass through, guns ready, and emerge inside...

INT. SUB CAVE - TEMPLE OF RAKTAVEEJ - CONTINUOUS

It's unlike anything we've yet seen -- the architecture of Hell. Great pointed pillars hold up concave walls. Eerie pictographs are carved into the walls -- the history of the demon warriors going back to the dawn of man and before.

SINGH

What is this place?

Zahara is looking at a pictograph showing a sea of human corpses spread out before a single triumphant demon -- Raktaveej.

ZAHARA

We are in the belly of Kali -- the very lair of Raktaveej himself.

SINGH

You mean we've marched into Hell?

ZAHARA

A version of it. Yes.

Gans looks over the carvings. One appears to be an army of bloodspawn battling dinosaurs. Another shows the armies of Alexander. He says quietly to himself...

GANS

The X factor.

SINGH

What's that, Major?

Gans turns, nods toward an alcove across the chamber.

GANS

The light's coming from in there.

They move toward it, entering the small room through an arch.

There, sitting in a pool of light in the center of this tall cylindrical room, is a huge pile of BONES, remains of men and animals, one on top of the other. Gans looks up the light shaft to see the source is a hole high in the center of the ceiling.

GANS (CONT'D)

That's the sky.

Zahara is looking at the pile of dried carcasses sucked free of blood -- a goat, the most recent.

ZAHARA

The opening is a hole in the desert floor. We're in a food trap.

GANS

There's no way we're climbing up there. But if I'm looking at open sky, that means...

He whips out his GPS and radio -- clicks them on -- they have a signal. Gans smiles.

GANS (CONT'D)

It means we can call for help.

INT. WARLORD COMPOUND - FEASTING ROOM - DAY

The men are gathered around the tables smoking from hookahs, the warlord at the head of the table. The door bursts open, and Galloway enters, shoving past the guards.

GALLOWAY

I need your help. My commanding officer is alive but trapped.

(MORE)

GALLOWAY (CONT'D)
He's in a cave. I have the
coordinates. He said --

He stops himself short.

WARLORD
Said what?

GALLOWAY
That there are creatures down there
that will soon attack.

WARLORD
More than one?

GALLOWAY
Help me.

WARLORD
If they have pierced the belly of
Kali and unleashed the army of
Hell, then it is best to leave them
trapped.

He goes back to smoking, as do his men.

GALLOWAY
(in Afghan; subtitled)
You are a coward.

The warlord's eyes flash up at him. His men can't believe
what they've just heard.

WARLORD
What did you say?

GALLOWAY
You sit here on a mountain of
looted goods and play all sides
against the other...for what? You
know what's really wrong with this
country? Why this land is a
godforsaken desert of poverty and
warring tribes? Because of men
like you. Men who have the ability
to lead it into the modern world
but instead grow fat off its
suffering.

WARLORD
You again challenge me. I wonder
if you completely understand now
what you are doing.

GALLOWAY
 (in Afghan; subtitled)
*I say it again. You are a filthy
 coward.*

The warlord barks a command. His men draw their weapons. But Galloway has his gun out and aimed at the warlord -- who just chews on his hookah.

WARLORD
 I do not believe you have thought
 about your exit strategy.

GALLOWAY
 Tell them to lower their guns.

WARLORD
 Perhaps I will tell them to fire.

GALLOWAY
 They fire and you die.

The warlord looks at Galloway with a mix of puzzlement and admiration.

WARLORD
 I don't understand you. I give you
 your life, I offer you freedom, and
 you risk it all for other men.
 Why?

GALLOWAY
 Because their lives matter.

WARLORD
 Above your own?

GALLOWAY
 It's called civilization. You
 should try it sometime.

EXT. WARLORD COMPOUND - COURTYARD - DAY

Men bring a horse heavy with supplies to a back door. Above, Afghans swarm the ramparts, taking up positions, aiming their guns into the dusty courtyard below.

EXT. WARLORD COMPOUND - COURTYARD - DAY

Galloway and the warlord emerge into the bright light of day and the crown of guns aimed from above.

Galloway looks up at the armed men, then to the warlord, who extends his hand to the horse.

WARLORD

It is what you asked for.

Galloway checks the supplies, then shoulders his gun and mounts the horse. As he does, he notices two armed Afghans on horseback, wielding guns, watching him.

GALLOWAY

Tell them to open the gate.

WARLORD

You speak the language.

GALLOWAY

(in Afghan; subtitled)

Open the gate.

The men do not budge. The horsemen glare. The warlord smiles. He then steps forward.

WARLORD

(subtitled; in Afghan)

Open the gate!

Two men rush forward and open the huge wooden gate to the empty desert.

Galloway gives the horse a light kick and starts to cross the courtyard under the barrels of the many guns.

All is quiet. Angry faces glare at him as he passes. Galloway looks straight ahead as he nears the doorway, feeling the guns on his back.

The men on the ramparts change position, dashing across the roof and now aiming their guns into the desert as Galloway passes through the door.

A gunner on the rampart looks to the warlord, who watches Galloway clear the shadow, then...

WARLORD (CONT'D)

(in Afghan; subtitled)

Let him go.

Galloway kicks the horse into action and gallops away. The warlord frowns, looking truly troubled.

WARLORD (CONT'D)

(in Afghan; subtitled)

There is no escape from fate.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

Galloway blasts across the desert on his horse, looking back. He's not being followed. He checks his GPS, then kicks the horse into faster action.

INT. SUB CAVE - TEMPLE/FEEDING CHAMBER - DAY

A bloodspawn walks into the main room slowly, sniffing the air. Zahara gasps. Singh and Gans spin, raising their weapons.

But, strangely enough, the creature doesn't attack. Instead, it stands across the room, staring at them, its pupils fixing into slits.

GANS

Hold your fire until absolutely necessary.

SINGH

Yes. That much I know by now.

The men hold their weapons on the lone bloodspawn. But instead of rushing them, the creature cranes his head upward and starts to give off a loud honking alert with an almost sonic frequency...

VARIOUS SHOTS

The CRY echoes through the entire mountain and across all the locations we've seen in the film: the remains of the chasm, the Russian ammo depot, the bunker, the indoor oasis, the collapsed breezeway, even out over the dead men with the name Raktaveej carved below them in the stone.

We also see ALL the bloodspawn moving in unison toward the temple in the bowels of the cave, called to battle.

EXT. DESERT ABOVE TEMPLE - DAY

Galloway rides into the area, watching the GPS. He scans the rocky desert but sees nothing. He hops off the horse and searches the area, GPS in hand.

INT. SUB CAVE - TEMPLE/FEEDING CHAMBER - SAME TIME

The bloodspawn are entering the temple, lining up. Singh and Gans back away, guns aimed. Zahara stands behind them, cradling the WMD.

EXT. DESERT ABOVE TEMPLE - DAY

Galloway walks the desert, watching the GPS, perplexed; he's at the spot but...

He suddenly drops out of frame!

INT. SUB CAVE - TEMPLE/FEEDING CHAMBER - SAME

The GPS lands atop the pile of bones, shattering. Gans looks up and sees Galloway dangling from the lip of the hole, his kicking legs causing shadows to dance across the scene.

GANS

Galloway!?

A bloodspawn screams at the soldiers. Gans and Singh turn back, guns ready.

EXT. DESERT ABOVE TEMPLE - DAY

Galloway pulls himself up with great effort. He stands and dashes to the horse, retrieving the heavy rope. He dashes back to the hole and drops the rope through -- feeding it down to Gans.

INT. SUB CAVE - TEMPLE/FEEDING CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

Gans watches the rope snaking down as the temple continues to fill with creatures. He catches it and gives it a tug, then passes it to Zahara.

GANS

Go.

Zahara nods, slings the WMD onto her back, and starts to climb. Seeing her, the bloodspawn shriek and attack.

Gans and Singh open FIRE!

Zahara climbs while Gans and Singh cut back the waves of bloodspawn below her.

EXT. DESERT ABOVE TEMPLE - DAY

Galloway holds the rope taut, trying to help pull Zahara up.

INT. SUB CAVE - TEMPLE/FEEDING CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

Gans and Singh back up against the bone pile, continuing to fire at the bloodspawn. They turn back to back and cut down the demons that now encircle them.

EXT. DESERT ABOVE TEMPLE - DAY

Zahara's hand dances above the lip of the hole. Galloway falls forward and catches it, helping to pull her up.

INT. SUB CAVE - TEMPLE/FEEDING CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

Singh looks up to see Zahara slip through the hole -- safe. But as he's looking up, a bloodspawn leaps for him.

GANS

Captain!

The bloodspawn is in the air as Singh turns. Gans raises his gun and lets loose, blowing apart the creature's skull...

And splattering Singh with its blood.

A frozen moment of horror between Singh and Gans. Nothing to say, they both know the score.

SINGH

GO!!!

Singh turns and walks into the bloodspawn pack, shooting a continuous stream of fire, using his final moments of *human* life to kill as many of the monsters as he can.

Galloway peers down from above.

GALLOWAY

Climb, Major!

Gans looks up, but then turns back to the battle. Why doesn't he climb?

EXT. DESERT ABOVE TEMPLE - DAY

Zahara crawls forward to Galloway.

ZAHARA

He can't. He has a broken arm.

INT. SUB CAVE - TEMPLE/FEEDING CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

Gans's gun suddenly runs dry. No ammo. That's it. He tosses his gun aside, resigned, ready to fight hand to hand.

Singh's own gun drops to the floor. MOVE UP to find it's because he's now undergoing the full torments of transformation.

EXT. DESERT ABOVE TEMPLE - DAY

Galloway racks his brain. There must be a way. That's when the snort of his horse sparks an idea.

He calls down to Gans.

GALLOWAY

Major! Tie the rope around you and hold on tight!

GANS

Forget about me.

GALLOWAY

Just do it, damn it!

Galloway jumps up and loops the rope around the horse.

INT. SUB CAVE - TEMPLE/FEEDING CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

Gans ties the rope around himself, but a scream alerts him.

He looks up to see Singh fully transformed into a bloodspawn warrior, leading the others as they advance.

Gans spits and smiles, ready to die.

GANS

Bring it on you desert rats.

The bloodspawn leap for him as...

EXT. DESERT ABOVE TEMPLE - DAY

Galloway SLAPS the rear of the horse, causing it to BOLT into the desert, trailing the rope...

INT. SUB CAVE - TEMPLE/FEEDING CHAMBER - THAT MOMENT

Gans is whisked UPWARDS, just out of the grasp of the bloodspawn. He sails quickly up toward the hole. The bloodspawn watch him go, screeching in fury.

But as Gans slips through the small opening, his last Russian mortar is dislodged from his belt and FALLS back into the temple.

ON THE MORTAR

as it falls toward the pack of bloodspawn. They look up, screaming at it, welcoming it.

The mortar hits the ground and BLOWS the creatures to bits. But it also shatters the support beams of the temple and causes the walls to begin to collapse.

EXT. DESERT ABOVE TEMPLE - SAME TIME

Gans is dragged into the desert by the still-galloping horse. He pulls his knife and cuts the rope, letting the horse and rope trail off into the desert.

Zahara and Galloway rush to him. Gans gives Galloway a rare smile.

GANS

Nice work.

But then the ground beneath them starts to shake like an earthquake.

ZAHARA

What's happening?

Gans expression tells us he knows exactly what is happening.

GANS

Run!

INT. SUB CAVE - TEMPLE/FEEDING CHAMBER - SAME

Desert sand is now pouring into the room from above as the entire temple collapses in on itself...

EXT. DESERT - CONTINUOUS

Gans, Galloway, and Zahara run as a gigantic SINK HOLE opens up in the desert floor behind them.

GANS

Don't look back! Just keep
running!

The sinkhole grows larger until it becomes a HUGE CRATER.

Gans, Galloway, and Zahara dash up the crater edge as it widens and pulls the sand from beneath their feet.

They hit the top and throw themselves up and over the lip, spilling down over the edge where they hit hard desert earth.

The ground settles. The roar of earth stops. There's a moon-like crater where the Temple of Raktaveej once existed.

Gans, Galloway, and Zahara exchange relieved smiles. Then...

A BLOODSPAWN spits from the soft sand of the crater center, followed by ANOTHER and ANOTHER and ANOTHER! Like ants pouring from an anthill, the bloodspawn emerge from the earth and into the light of day.

Gans stands, watching the crater FILLING with virulent bloodspawn. They form into legions -- becoming a massive army before them.

Galloway can't believe his eyes.

GALLOWAY

What are they, Major?

GANS

You don't know, Galloway? You should.

Galloway looks at him, puzzled. Gans cocks a grin.

GANS (CONT'D)

It's your X factor.

The creatures raise their arms and deliver a war cry.

Suddenly, an EXPLOSION erupts from the center of the bloodspawn army, blowing the creatures high into the air.

An A-10 WARTHOG screams overhead...followed by F-18 HORNETS and AH-64 APACHES. It's the long-overdue extraction force, unloading their massive firepower into the demon army, obliterating dozens with every blast.

A familiar Black Hawk helicopter swoops in behind Gans, hovering just over the ground, kicking up an incredible sandstorm.

A door along the side slides open and a fresh-faced U.S. soldier waves them in...

U.S. SOLDIER

Come on!

The trio dashes for the open helicopter door as the planes and helicopters continue to hammer the bloodspawn army with Hellfire missiles, spreading their blood and body parts far and wide.

Gans, Galloway, and Zahara are pulled up into the Black Hawk. The soldier motions to the pilot -- the same "crazy" pilot who dropped them off -- and the chopper begins to rise.

INT. BLACK HAWK - AIRBORNE - DAY

As they pull up into the air, Zahara looks out over the scene -- seeing the full extent of the bloodspawn slaughter. She shakes her head.

ZAHARA

They'll create millions.

MORE SHOTS

of the bloodspawn being taken out by the American forces. The soldiers whoop and cheer. But from the slaughter are now growing more...

Tens of thousands of bloodspawn. An unstoppable army of Hell lets loose on the earth.

INT. BLACK HAWK - AIRBORNE - DAY

Gans pulls from his pocket the trigger of the WMD. He looks at Zahara, who nods. No words necessary.

GALLOWAY

What is that, Major?

GANS

The only way.

Gans gets up and moves to the pilot.

GANS (CONT'D)

Do you have gas masks aboard this bird?

PILOT

Of course.

GANS

Put 'em on. Everyone. Then fly me
to the center of that soup.

Gans moves back to Zahara and takes from her the WMD. He strips the wires with his teeth and rewires the device.

ZAHARA

But this weapon isn't powerful
enough.

GANS

What Singh told you wasn't true.
This weapon can decimate an army.

Gans shouts to the pilot.

GANS (CONT'D)

Call in the order to pull out.
Everyone. Tell them a chemical
weapon is about to go off.

Gans stands, strapping on the WMD as gas masks are distributed to all the men and the chopper swings toward the action.

ZAHARA

Major.

Gans turns. Zahara looks into his eyes, pain in her face.

ZAHARA (CONT'D)

This was my mission. It is my
fate. Let me do it.

GANS

I made you a promise, remember?
And you didn't create that army
down there. I did. It's my war.

Newly-formed creatures are rising from the bloody sand, shrieking up at the Black Hawk hovering above.

Zahara's eyes are starting to fill with tears. Gans just smiles.

GANS (CONT'D)

Look into the eyes of your enemy,
isn't that how you said it was
done?

Zahara nods. Gans turns. CLOSE as he takes hold of the trigger -- the stump of his finger fitting perfectly atop it, as if it were made for this one task.

Gans LEAPS from the chopper.

Galloway and Zahara move forward and watch as Gans plummets to the earth -- as he is swallowed into the center of the bloodspawn, he detonates the bomb, spreading a ring of chemical death out into the forming army.

GALLOWAY

Go!

They pull on their gas masks as the Black Hawk banks hard away from the scene...

VARIOUS SHOTS

The bloodspawn shiver and die in various states of regeneration. It's an incredibly gruesome mass slaughter.

THE BLACK HAWK

arches out and over the desert, retreating from the scene with the rest of the American forces, leaving behind carnage that blankets the desert floor for miles in all directions.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DESERT AIRFIELD - DAY

We're back at the desert airfield, a sunset burns over the sands.

INT. DESERT AIRFIELD - COMMAND AND CONTROL - DAY

Galloway is sitting in a folding chair, calmly relating the events of the past 48 hours for Colonel Fox and Saddler.

GALLOWAY

That's when our forces came in and opened fire on the creatures. But the destruction only caused them to multiply. So Major Gans used the chemical weapon against them. He sacrificed himself to save us all.

COLONEL FOX

A demon army from Hell?

Galloway just nods.

ON the men looking down at him. Skeptical. To say the least.

OFF IN A CORNER - MINUTES LATER

Saddler and Fox confer out of earshot of Galloway.

COLONEL FOX (CONT'D)

He's obviously suffering from shock and fatigue. The desert can do strange things to a man. One thing is for sure, we cannot allow his report to the State Department to include this fantasy.

CIA SADDLER

But if there's any truth to what he's saying, it may be worth looking into.

Fox gives him a look.

CIA SADDLER (CONT'D)

I'm just saying. The concept of an army that regenerates itself...it's interesting.

Galloway, sitting alone, looks toward the men, who are now engaged in conversation, seeming to forget he's even there.

Galloway swallows, unsure of his future, his fate.

INT. C-130 TRANSPORT - AIRFIELD - DAY

Zahara is loaded into a C-130 full of other Afghans. Many look frightened. Zahara sits down across from a terrified young boy sitting beside his father.

Zahara gives him a warm smile.

ZAHARA

(in Afghan; subtitled)

Don't worry. There's nothing to be afraid of. We're safe now.

The door begins to close, giving off a loud mechanical whine. Zahara takes one last look at the Afghan desert out beyond the airfield as the huge metal door closes out the image and the light with an authoritative CLANK.

On the door is stenciled the plane's destination: GUANTÁNAMO.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. AFGHAN DESERT - DAY

The warlord walks amid the sprawling blanket of death across the desert, his face covered with a veil. He stops and looks down at a corpse in the blackened sand...

THE CORPSE

It's what is left of Major Gans. Charred. His head a blackened skull, his hand still clutching the trigger of the WMD.

ANGLE UP ON THE WARLORD

Looking down at the American. The man who defeated an Army -- in the tradition of the gods.

But then a BLOODSPAWN warrior rises silently behind him. Leering. It raises its arm, aiming at the back of his skull, then brings it slashing forward in a vicious lightning strike.

BLACK.

THE END