

ATLANTIC WALL

by
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INSPIRED BY TRUE EVENTS

All war is civil war...

- Fenelon Bonavides Neto

FADE IN:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - SHENANDOAH VALLEY - WEST VIRGINIA - 1921

A SHAFT OF SUNLIGHT passes through a tapering crack in a dark hospital room curtain, falling across the OPEN HAND of a thirteen-year-old boy named LOWRY SCOTT.

Dressed in his best shirt and trousers, Lowry sits on a wooden chair beside a hospital bed.

The room is silent and sparse. A crucifix hangs on a wall.

Lost in thought, the boy stares at the tiny, airborne dust particles swirling in the shaft of sunlight falling on his hand. Then slowly...

His young eyes drift upward toward HIS MOTHER (30's), lying in bed, sleeping in a numb morphine haze.

Her face is a deep blue swell of bruises.

Her shattered jaw is wired shut.

Lowry watches her chest rise and fall as she sleeps, then reaches out, gently tucking her hair behind her ear.

He glances at her bedside table, where her small ST. CHRISTOPHER NECKLACE lies in the darkness.

Lowry gently picks up the St. Christopher pendant. The delicate necklace chain is broken...

CLOSE ON PENDANT: ENGRAVED IN THE SOFT SILVER, IS THE WORN IMAGE OF A MAN GRIPPING A CHILD IN HIS ARMS AS HE FIGHTS TO CROSS THE CURRENT OF A FURIOUS RIVER...

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

Lowry walks alone down a long empty hospital corridor toward the exit...

EXT. RAILROAD TRACKS - LATER

The late afternoon sunlight shines through the trees as Lowry walks home through the woods on the RAILROAD TRACKS...

EXT. FARMHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Lowry slowly approaches the farmhouse where he lives.

He notes to himself there is no vehicle in the driveway, then walks nervously up onto the porch...

LOWRY
(calling out)
Dad?

There is no answer.

INT. KITCHEN - FARMHOUSE - SECONDS LATER

Lowry walks into the kitchen.

An OVERTURNED DINNER TABLE lies on its side in the corner, abandoned from the previous evening...

Dishes are broken everywhere.

FLIES buzz on the boiled potatoes and cold meat on the kitchen floor.

It looks like a crime scene.

The boy stares at the mess for a moment, then takes off his good white shirt, folds it, and sets it aside.

Shirtless, he reaches into the mud room closet for a BROOM...

CUT TO:

INT. FARMHOUSE - SERIES OF SHOTS - MOMENTS LATER

Bare-chested and thin, Lowry METICULOUSLY CLEANS THE HOUSE...

-INT. KITCHEN - The boy sweeps up fragments of the shattered dinner plates and glassware...

-INT. KITCHEN - On his hands and knees, Lowry SCRUBS HIS MOTHER'S DRIED BLOOD SPATTER off the kitchen floor...

-INT. KITCHEN - Lowry uprights the table on the newly cleaned kitchen floor...

-INT. FOYER - He straightens the shoes and boots by the door into perfect rows...

-INT. BEDROOM - He makes the beds, methodically folding the blankets and sheets tightly beneath the mattress in a practiced Military Fashion...

-INT. LIVING ROOM - He carries in SPLIT WOOD and neatly stacks it beside the fireplace from the outdoor wood pile...

-INT. LIVING ROOM - Lowry carefully dusts a shrine-like DISPLAY CASE of war memorabilia above the fireplace: DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS, a TRENCH-WARFARE GAS MASK, A BAYONET, and a WWI REVOLVER...

-EXT. BACKYARD FIELD - As the sun sinks, Lowry sits in an ABANDONED WOODEN CANOE overgrown with dirt and wildflowers. He picks a fistful of DAISIES from the bow of the canoe.

-INT. KITCHEN - Lowry places the flowers in a vase on the kitchen table...

As night falls, the APPEARANCE OF THE FARMHOUSE IS TRANSFORMED INTO A CLEAN AND WELCOMING HOME, AS IF NOTHING EVER HAPPENED...

EXT. KITCHEN - FARMHOUSE - LATER THAT NIGHT

In the kitchen lit by oil lamps, Lowry, exhausted, sleeps with his head in his arms at the kitchen table.

WE SEE THE SHADOW OF A MAN PASS OVER HIM, then suddenly...

A DOG BARKS.

LOWRY LURCHES UP at the table, as if to attention...

Lowry's father ROBERT SCOTT (late 40's) stands in the kitchen doorway with his WHITE DOG beside him.

Robert's LEFT ARM IS MISSING, AMPUTATED AT THE ELBOW IN AN ARMY FIELD HOSPITAL three years before.

Long-term post trauma SHELL-SHOCK hovers in the vacant darkness behind Robert's eyes.

LOWRY
You hungry, dad? I'll fix you
something...

Robert slowly sits down at the table. He smells like alcohol.

Lowry, clearly nervous, stands and reaches in the ice box, filling a plate with bread and cured meat.

Robert stares vacantly at the spotless kitchen as his white dog rests his muzzle on his thigh...

There's a beat of silence, then he speaks to Lowry without looking at him...

ROBERT
Do you think I'm your enemy?

Lowry hesitates, not knowing how to answer correctly...

LOWRY
No, sir.

Lowry slowly places the food in front of his father.

ROBERT
Are you afraid of me?

Lowry doesn't answer...

Robert SEIZES Lowry's wrist with his good arm.

The boy trembles...

ROBERT (CONT'D)
Are you afraid of me?

LOWRY
Yes. Yes, sir.

ROBERT
What exactly are you afraid of?

LOWRY
I...I don't know...

ROBERT
Yes. You do. You're afraid I'll
kill her...and you'll be left alone
here with just me.

Terrified, Lowry remains silent.

Robert releases Lowry's wrist.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
It's a father's job to teach, so
I'm going to teach...

The boy keeps his eyes to the kitchen floor.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
 People think that war begins on the
 outside...and it works its way
 inside. But they're wrong. All wars
 begin inside. Inside someone.

Robert pauses...

ROBERT (CONT'D)
 This is a war. I am your enemy. And
 you are losing because you're
 afraid...

Robert's dark eyes well with shame...

ROBERT (CONT'D)
 You're afraid to do what you know
 you need to do to win.

Robert's eyes tear as he looks at Lowry.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
 Son, one of these times, I am going
 to kill her. Unless you do
 something about it.

INT. FARMHOUSE - LATER THAT NIGHT

The house is dark except for an oil lamp burning low.

A SPRING-WOUND VICTROLA PHONOGRAPH SPINS IN THE LIVING ROOM
 PLAYING THE SARABANDE MOVEMENT OF J.S. BACH'S CELLO SUITE#1
 IN G MAJOR.

The haunting cello music echoes through the house as...

INT. LOWRY'S BEDROOM - SAME MOMENT

Lowry lies awake in bed in the darkness.

He hears thunder in the distance and the sound of the
 Victrola playing downstairs...

EXT. PORCH - MOMENTS LATER

With a glass of grain alcohol in his hand, Robert sits on the
 farmhouse porch.

With his white dog curled up at his feet, Robert's eyes grow
 heavy and drift.

Distant lightning flickers in the night sky as the sound of the phonograph drifts out onto the porch...

As THUNDER ROLLS in the distance, Robert stirs from sleep.

He stands stiffly from the wooden chair, pats the dog's neck, and walks across the porch toward the door...

As Robert approaches HE SEES LOWRY STANDING IN THE DARKNESS ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE SCREEN DOOR.

Rain begins to fall in the darkness as Robert stares at his young son through the screen...

ROBERT

Do it.

There is a beat of silence.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Please.

Without another word, Lowry raises his father's SERVICE PISTOL FROM THE SHADOWS AND PULLS THE TRIGGER, SHOOTING HIS FATHER THROUGH THE SCREEN...

The WHITE DOG BARKS FURIOUSLY as...

WE HARD CUT TO:

EXT. RAILROAD TRACKS - MOMENTS LATER

Lowry runs through the wet darkness along side a slow moving FREIGHT TRAIN.

The boy pulls himself up onto an EMPTY FLATBED FREIGHT CAR...

EXT. FLATBED TRAIN CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Leaning against his BEDROLL, tears streak from his eyes as Lowry hugs his legs to his chest.

As the dark landscape passes, the boy looks up at the MOON BREAKING OUT OF THE CLOUDS as we...

FADE TO BLACK:

SUPER TITLE: 23 YEARS LATER - SOUTHERN ENGLAND - JUNE 1, 1944

FADE TO:

EXT. THE ENGLISH CHANNEL - JUNE 1, 1944 - NIGHT

The brilliant moon hangs high above the English Channel, reflecting silently on the dark waves below.

Scattered storm clouds drift across the night sky toward occupied Europe. There is no sound but the wind.

It is five days before the execution of Operation Overlord, where the Allies will cross this Channel and invade Nazi occupied Normandy in the largest and deadliest amphibious assault in the history of warfare...

But in this quiet moment, on this peaceful night, it's as if there is no war at all...

EXT. BREAK WALL - PORTSMOUTH, ENGLAND - SAME MOMENT

Alone at the end of a BREAK WALL jutting out into the dark harbor, AMERICAN AIRBORNE CAPTAIN LOWRY SCOTT (a.k.a. Lowry), now a grown man in his 30's, stands in uniform.

Behind him in the distance, ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUN BATTERIES aim at the heavens.

Lost in thought, Capt. Scott stares east out at the dark channel...

CAPT. SCOTT (V.O.)

Dear Lord, we ask you to look down
on us tonight...

CUT TO:

INT. UNDERGROUND PUB - LONDON - LATER THE SAME NIGHT

THE AUDIO REMAINS SILENT - THE ONLY SOUND WE HEAR IS CAPT. SCOTT'S VOICE OVER AS WE MOVE THROUGH...

A dimly-lit, underground pub in wartime.

Cigarette smoke hangs in the air.

The street level windows are BLACKED OUT and fortified with SANDBAGS.

CAPT. SCOTT (V.O.)
 We ask that you see us for what we
 are...

THE CAMERA SILENTLY MOVES PAST: Baby-faced, untested AMERICAN and BRITISH SOLDIERS in the prime of youth, flirting and competing for the attention of THREE PRETTY LONDON GIRLS whose smiles light up the dark pub.

We keep PUSHING to a...

A far back corner, where Capt. Scott sits at the head of a table, surrounded by his ELITE UNIT OF SEVEN 'JEDBURGH' PARATROOPERS (all early 20's).

Their heads are bowed as Capt. Scott says GRACE over their meal...

CAPT. SCOTT
 Bless these men. Because they are
my men...

Several of Capt. Scott's men glance up at him as he speaks, respectfully registering his sentiment.

CAPT. SCOTT (CONT'D)
 Give them courage, and show them
 mercy in the days to come. We thank
 you for the food on this table, and
 for this moment of peace to share
 it. Amen.

SCOTT'S MEN
 (in unison)
 Amen.

CAPT. SCOTT
 Let's eat.

Scott's men fall at ease, eating and drinking informally.

JOLSON, (21), a handsome rifleman from San Angelo, Texas looks at Capt. Scott.

JOLSON
 Sir?

CAPT. SCOTT
 Yeah?

JOLSON
 Can you tell us anything, Sir?

Capt. Scott looks at his men.

It's clear by their expressions that Jolson is speaking for all of them.

CAPT. SCOTT
 (addressing all seven)
 You won't be returning to camp. We
 head to Portsmouth at midnight.
 There's a briefing at Southwick
 house tomorrow at 0900.

The men exchange loaded glances.

CAPT. SCOTT (CONT'D)
 That's all I'm at liberty to tell
 you. You'll learn more at the
 briefing.

Jolson nods.

JOLSON
 Understood, Sir.

There is a beat of silence where Scott's men's attention stay on him.

CAPT. SCOTT
 (off their look)
 Is there something else?

DeROSA, (23) a heavy set, fast talking machine gunner from Bensonhurst speaks up with brash Brooklyn banter...

DEROSA
 (to Capt. Scott)
 Leigh needs your honest opinion on
 something, Cap...

LEIGH, (19) the youngest member of the unit turns sheepishly red, trying to cut DeRosa off...

LEIGH
 (to DeRosa)
 No man, shut up...

DeRosa ignores Leigh's protest.

DEROSA
 (to Capt. Scott)
 In yesterday's post, our young
 comrade received a letter from his
 sweetheart back in...(pauses)...

DeRosa pauses, turning to Leigh...

DEROSA (CONT'D)
 (to Leigh)
 Where you from again?

LEIGH
 Michigan.

DEROSA
 Land of ten thousand lakes...

LEIGH
 That's Minnesota...

DEROSA
 Don't. Fucking. Care.

DeRosa turns, speaking collectively for the group...

DEROSA (CONT'D)
 What we do care about, as your
 brothers-in-arms, is said letter
 from the blue-eyed-girl back in the
 north woods.

LEIGH
 Brown eyes.

The young men around the table are accustomed to enjoying
 this banter.

DeRosa turns to the Capt. Scott...

DEROSA
 (to Capt. Scott)
 Cap, we've all read the letter. We
 have differing opinions of its
 meaning. I personally think she's
 moved on to greener *Michigan*
 pastures. Leigh, understandably,
 was upset by this interpretation
 and would respectfully like your
 opinion, sir.

There is a beat of silence.

Capt. Scott looks at his men.

It's clear by Leigh's vexed expression, he doesn't know what
 to expect.

CAPT. SCOTT
 Give me the letter.

Leigh BREAKS INTO A BOYISH SMILE, and pulls the letter from his pocket. He hands it to Captain Scott at the head of the table.

As Capt. Scott scans the letter, the young men around the table eagerly await his thoughts.

It's clear they love him like a father.

After a moment, Scott carefully folds the hand written letter and places it back in its envelope.

LEIGH

So...what do you think, sir?

Capt. Scott starts to say something...

When suddenly a MASSIVE EXPLOSION OUTSIDE ON THE STREET VIOLENTLY ROCKS THE PUB.

SANDBAGGED WINDOWS SHATTER AS THE LIGHTS ARE KNOCKED OUT...

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE THE PUB - LONDON STREET - SECONDS LATER

An AIR RAID SIREN screams through the dark London night.

Surface to air ANTI-AIRCRAFT FIRE streams into the sky.

The BUILDINGS on the far side of the block are BURNING.

As Capt. Scott and his men rush out into the street, Scott sees one of the PRETTY GIRLS (19) stumbling down the cobblestones. HER BODY IS COMPLETELY ENGULFED IN FLAMES from a GERMAN INCENDIARY BOMB.

Her friends SCREAM FOR HELP, as CAPT. SCOTT PULLS OFF HIS JACKET AND RUNS FOR THE BURNING GIRL...

HE TACKLES HER TO THE GROUND, TRYING TO SMOTHER THE FLAMES WITH HIS UNIFORM.

LYING IN THE STREET, HER BODY SHAKES UNCONTROLLABLY.

THE COLLAR OF HER DRESS IS BURNED INTO THE COOKED SKIN ON HER YOUNG FACE.

SHE CLINGS TO SCOTT, DISORIENTED AND TERRIFIED...

PRETTY LONDON GIRL
What's happening...what's happening
to me...

CUT TO:

EXT. GRAND HOTEL CABOURG, OCCUPIED NORMANDY - SAME MOMENT

The Nazi occupied seaside town of Cabourg, France - 140 kilometers across the English channel.

On the boardwalk facing the sea, crimson and black SWASTIKA BANNERS flutter in the night wind outside the richly lit GRAND HOTEL CABOURG...

GERMAN GUARDS and DRIVERS stand outside as LIVE MUSIC rises from the interior...

INT. BALLROOM - GRAND HOTEL CABOURG - SAME MOMENT

An opulent BALLROOM of the commandeered 19th century luxury hotel.

A STRING QUARTET plays...

The dance floor is full, as high ranking locally-stationed NAZI OFFICERS in uniform waltz with their elegantly dressed WIVES visiting from Germany...

Among the dancing couples is GERMAN ARMY COMMANDER RAINER BUSHNELL, (early 40's). He is handsome, sharp in his dress uniform, but his eyes are weary from years at war with the Allies...

Bushnell waltzes with his wife ELISE (mid-30's), the only daughter of a prominent member of Hitler's political cabinet. ELISE is a beautiful, privileged Aryan woman.

As the couple dances, their movements are precise and practiced, but passionless. They don't look into each other's eyes...

As the song ends Bushnell glances at the ornate CLOCK mounted on the wall above the ballroom entrance...

BUSHNELL
We should go. The car leaves early.

ELISE looks at him.

ELISE
The car will leave whenever we say
it leaves.

CUT TO:

INT. BALLROOM BAR - GRAND HOTEL CABOURG - MOMENTS LATER

Bushnell stands alone at the ballroom bar.

He DOWNS HIS DRINK AND MOTIONS TO THE BARTENDER FOR ANOTHER. He watches ELISE from across the room. She laughs, shakes hands, and flirts...

Bushnell reaches for his fresh drink, drains it in two swallows, sets the empty glass on the bar, and walks toward the door...

As Bushnell exits the ballroom we HEAR THE RISING SOUND OF A GALLOPING HORSE lapse in as we...

HARD CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS TRAIL - AN HOUR LATER

Still in dress uniform from the party, Bushnell GALLOPS AT HIGH SPEED THROUGH THE DARK WOODS ON THE BACK OF A BEAUTIFUL BLACK FRENCH TROTTER RACING HORSE.

EXHILARATED BY THE ALCOHOL IN HIS BLOODSTREAM AND THE RUSH OF ADRENALINE, BUSHNELL CROUCHES LOW IN THE SADDLE AS TREE BRANCHES RACE PAST HIM...

As they clear the edge of a woods into an open field, the horse opens his stride in the darkness, breaking away, and they speed home toward a warmly lit HORSE STABLE in the distance...

EXT. HORSE STABLE - MOMENTS LATER

A horse stable late at night.

Commander Bushnell strokes the face of the MAGNIFICENT BLACK HORSE towering over him...

An elderly FRENCH HORSE BREEDER (late 60's), clearly woken from sleep moments before, stands nervously in background beside TWO OF BUSHNELL'S ELITE GERMAN GUARDS.

Bushnell speaks in French to the trainer...

BUSHNELL
(to the trainer)
How much to purchase this animal?

The elderly man glances at the MP-40 SUBMACHINE GUNS gripped by the two Guards surrounding him...

HORSE BREEDER
Commander, for you, there is no charge.

Bushnell looks at the old man standing in stable boots, trousers, and a night shirt. His thin white hair is still matted from his pillow.

BUSHNELL
It's a gift for my daughter. It should be bought, not stolen. Name me a fair price for the animal, a trailer, and enough feed to transport him back to Germany. My men will fetch him in the morning.

INT. BUSHNELL'S RESIDENCE - HOTEL CABOURG - AN HOUR LATER

Bushnell quietly unlocks the door and steps into the foyer of his residence suite at the commandeered hotel.

He pauses, noticing Elise's bags are packed and waiting by the door.

Bushnell walks silently through the suite and peers into the dark bedroom.

For a beat, he watches ELISE sleeping...

EXT. BALCONY - HOTEL SUITE - MOMENTS LATER

Bushnell steps out onto the balcony. He lights a cigarette and gazes east out at the sea.

As he unbuttons his uniform collar, Bushnell hears his wife's voice behind him...

They speak in their native German...

ELISE
Where were you, Rainer?

Bushnell turns and sees ELISE standing in a white nightgown.

BUSHNELL

I went to buy Ida a birthday present.

She looks at him.

ELISE

You haven't been home to see her since her last birthday, yet you make time to abandon me at a party in order to buy her a present?

Bushnell looks into her blue eyes.

BUSHNELL

I won't be returning to Berlin with you. I'm keeping my command here.

ELISE

What? Don't be...

BUSHNELL

(interrupting)

Elise...you should ask me for a divorce.

Elise pauses, suddenly breathless, blind-sided by the notion...

BUSHNELL (CONT'D)

I'm sure your father could have it facilitated quietly. I'll sign whatever you like.

Her pretty face floods with a hurt expression as she pushes her blonde hair self-consciously behind her ear...

ELISE

This is about the affair? I stopped seeing him, Rainer. I told you that. It's been months...

BUSHNELL

You shouldn't have, if he made you happy...

Elisa exhales in teary spite...

ELISE

What is wrong with you? You used to fight for me...

Bushnell lets out a surge of contempt...

BUSHNELL

Are you fucking serious?

But immediately he cuts himself off, not allowing his emotions to color what he has to say...

BUSHNELL (CONT'D)

Time is running short. Go back to Berlin. Be happy while you can.

Elise reads his face and the serious undertone of his comment.

ELISE

Why are you doing this?

Bushnell gazes at the sea. HALF-SUBMERGED STEEL ANTI-TANK BARRICADES dot the low tide beach as the first hue of dawn glows on the horizon.

BUSHNELL

(staring at the
barricades)

My place is here. My responsibility is here. And whether your father or the rest of high command want to admit it, we are gravely underestimating the Allies. Rommel is right. We can't let them in. Not one inch. We have to stop them at the Atlantic Wall or all of this is over.

ELISE

So stop them. Dead on the beaches.

BUSHNELL

Hitler's paranoia has tied our hands...

ELISE

You should not speak that way...

BUSHNELL

We need to advance our armored reserves to the beachhead! We need to move the 12th Panzer Divison to Carentan! We need to quit pretending we control the sky because we don't! Not anymore...

Elise looks at the frustration in her husband's eyes.

BUSHNELL (CONT'D)

My job is to lead my men. I say kill and they kill. They put their lives in my hands. But how can I lead them when I do not understand our fundamental objective? What's our endgame? It's undefined. (pause) But I can tell what the Allied objective is, because it's very clear and it's very simple: stop us.

EXT. LONGUES-SUR-MER, NORMANDY COASTLINE - LATER THAT MORNING

The breathtaking Normandy coastline.

The morning sun cuts shafts of light through the low hanging clouds, casting shadows on the heavily FORTIFIED BEACHHEADS and CONCRETE BUNKERS of HITLER'S ATLANTIC WALL...

We PUSH IN FROM AN AERIAL SHOT as we see...

Far below, on the top of the sea cliff, an eleven-year-old FRENCH BOY in a worn cap rides a BICYCLE through a field of yellow wildflowers. This is JASPER.

EXT. SEA CLIFF TRAIL - CONTINUOUS

Jasper pedals quickly through the flowers toward A HILL in the distance.

Mounted on the front of Jasper's bicycle is a large BASKET FULL OF FRENCH CIGARETTES.

After a moment of riding, Jasper slows and glances down at his rear bicycle wheel.

CLOSE UP ON: A SPOOL OF FINE SEWING THREAD HAS BEEN CURIOUSLY ATTACHED TO HIS REAR TIRE ASSEMBLY.

The end of a thread has been tied to a SMALL PIN extending the tire axle beyond the spokes.

As Jasper rides, the thread is peeled off the LARGER SPOOL and collects on the AXLE PIN.

EXT. HIDDEN GERMAN ARTILLERY BATTERY - MOMENTS LATER

As Jasper nears the hill, WE REALIZE IT IS NOT A HILL but a perfectly camouflaged, earth-covered GERMAN ARTILLERY BATTERY overlooking the beachhead below.

Several armed GERMAN SOLDIERS manning the battery, SHOUT as Jasper approaches.

They raise their weapons.

Jasper immediately stops the bike and waves, showing his hands and calls out to them...

JASPER
Cigarettes!

Then he attempts to say it in German...

JASPER (CONT'D)
Zigaretten!

The German soldiers lower their weapons and signal for him to approach.

Jasper smiles again and gets off his bike.

For a moment, Jasper kneels down as if to tie his shoe...

But as he does this, he quickly and discreetly CUTS THE THREAD WITH A POCKET KNIFE, REMOVES THE COLLECTED THREAD FROM THE AXLE PIN, AND STUFFS IT IN HIS TROUSER POCKET.

EXT. HIDDEN GERMAN ARTILLERY BATTERY - MOMENTS LATER

Jasper carries the BASKET OF CIGARETTES.

As a crowd of GERMAN SOLDIERS approach him, Jasper glances at the massive, 152 MM GERMAN NAVAL GUN aimed out at the channel.

Jasper diverts his eyes back to the Soldiers and smiles.

JASPER
(to the Soldiers)
Zigaretten?

EXT. HIDDEN GERMAN ARTILLERY BATTERY - MOMENTS LATER

Jasper quickly sells out of cigarettes and he thanks them...

JASPER
Danke. Danke...

As Jasper turns counting the coins, he sees that a GERMAN BOY-SOLDIER (12), a member of HITLER YOUTH, is RIDING JASPER'S BICYCLE.

The boy is barely a year older than Jasper. His standard-issue German uniform is too big for him. His sleeves are rolled up and his helmet is loose on his head.

Jasper watches as the German boy smiles, riding through the yellow flowers.

As Jasper approaches, the German boy sees him and stops pedaling.

The boy's smile fades as he slowly dismounts the bicycle and picks up his RIFLE.

There is a moment of silence as the two boys stare at each other.

Jasper reaches in his jacket pocket. He pulls out a stick of HARD PEPPERMINT CANDY.

Jasper breaks the stick and offers half to the German Boy Soldier.

Feeling the eyes of the other Soldiers on him, the German boy in the uniform just stares at the candy...

EXT. SOUTHWICK HOUSE, HAMPSHIRE, ENGLAND - SAME MORNING

The morning sun rises on a PICTURESQUE ESTATE in the south England countryside.

At the center of the estate is Southwick House, an early 19th century Georgian style manor which serves as the ALLIED SUPREME COMMAND HEADQUARTERS for Operation Overlord.

INT. UNDERGROUND BRIEFING ROOM, SOUTHWICK HOUSE - SAME MOMENT

Capt. Scott and his seven men encircle a LARGE MAP TABLE detailing the Normandy Coast.

They listen intently as they are briefed by SEVERAL OFFICERS, as well as BRIGADIER GENERAL LANCASTER (50's), a larger-than-life, chain-smoking commanding officer with a heavy West Texas accent...

GENERAL LANCASTER

(addressing them all)

The principle French Resistance leader in the region is a man named Alain. He owns a tobacco store in Caen.

Lancaster motions to the slightly inland French town on the map.

GENERAL LANCASTER (CONT'D)

He and his network have taken considerable risks to compile a report detailing the exact German defensive positions in the Overlord landing areas. It's a map of every fixed gun, bunker, pillbox, and rocket battery dialed-in to the meter. We get that map and we know exactly where and what is waiting for our boys so we can blow it the fuck to hell before Allied boots touch the sand.

Lancaster lights a cigarette...

GENERAL LANCASTER (CONT'D)

Ike and Montgomery are time committed to Overlord. We're on a tight clock. Unfortunately, Alain's radio operator was captured by the Gestapo two days ago. So this has to be hand to hand and it has to happen now. That's where you men come into play.

The General MOTIONS to Capt. Scott...

Capt. Scott steps up to the MAP TABLE. He demonstrates the physical movements of the mission visually on the map as he explains...

CAPT. SCOTT

(addressing his men)

To avoid detection, we're taking a glider in under cover of darkness. We will release tow ten kilometers off the Normandy coast and come in silent. We'll land in these fields west of Caen. Word is Rommel's getting creative with his air landing defensives. There are reports of all sorts of passive obstacles and intentional flooding. The low cloud ceiling won't give us much time to adjust.

Scott motions to the landing area on the map.

CAPT. SCOTT (CONT'D)
 Once on the ground, we hike in,
 establish an O.P. in the woods
 outside Caen and wait until dawn.
 At 09:00 Jolson and myself will
 infiltrate the town, attain the map
 from our French contact, and rally
 back at the O.P.. We hold there
 until nightfall, then hike the 23
 kilometers to our extraction point
 on the coast.

His men listen intently, absorbing the information...

CAPT. SCOTT (CONT'D)
 An additional factor of note:
 Allied bombers will be pounding
 specific targets in that very
 sector in preparation for the
 invasion...

Capt. Scott references a specific RECONNAISSANCE
 PHOTOGRAPH...

CAPT. SCOTT (CONT'D)
 This is one you all need to be
 aware of so no one gets caught in
 the wrong place at the wrong
 time...

CLOSE UP ON PHOTO: Capt. Scott points to an aerial view of a
 MASSIVE RAILROAD BRIDGE spanning over a river near the
 coastline.

CAPT. SCOTT (CONT'D)
 Sixteen German supply trains pass
 over this bridge every day. It's a
 lifeline for their coastal
 defenses.

JOLSON
 It's very close to our extraction
 site, sir...

CAPT. SCOTT
 Correct. Less than a kilometer.
 That's why you need to know about
 it. At 06:00 sharp the day after
 tomorrow the 354th Fighter Group
 are going to level it. That's an
 hour past our pick up window so we
 should be long gone by then.

The men NOD and glance at each other absorbing the information.

CAPT. SCOTT (CONT'D)

You've got ten hours to sleep, eat, and gear up. Glider lifts off at 23:00.

The General interjects.

GENERAL LANCASTER

Men, the success of this operation is absolutely critical to our boys on the beaches. We're talking about saving the lives of thousands of Allied troops. Men just like you. So you think about them when you're over there. They're depending on you. Hell, you think about lives of every poor fucking soul in Poland and France and Holland...you let the lives of those millions drive you. Because make no mistake, this war is going to go one of two ways, and the flag that remains determines the future of this god-given world.

EXT. ENCAMPMENT BASEBALL DIAMOND - MOMENTS LATER

From a distance, Capt. Scott watches HIS MEN blow off steam in a scrimmage baseball game on a MAKESHIFT DIAMOND.

The young men laugh in the overcast morning light.

DeRosa CRACKS A HIT into the infield and the men SCRAMBLE TO MAKE THE PLAY.

Standing on first-base, Jolson notices Captain Scott watching and turns and SALUTES...

CAPT. SCOTT

(to Jolson)

At ease...

Jolson calls out to the Captain...

JOLSON

Cap? You wanna' play?

Captain Scott shakes his head as he takes a quick head count of his men...

CAPT. SCOTT
(to Jolson)
Where's Leigh?

Jolson motions to an OVERGROWN FIELD in the distance...

JOLSON
You know him Cap, he's wandering
around somewhere...

Scott NODS.

CAPT. SCOTT
(to all his men)
Wrap this up. Get some shut-eye
before we roll.

SCOTT'S MEN
(in unison)
Sir. Yes, sir.

EXT. LAVENDER FIELD - SOUTHWICK PROPERTY - MOMENTS LATER

Five hundred yards away from the Allied Headquarters, Capt. Scott approaches the youngest member of his unit, Leigh, standing alone in the middle of an overgrown LAVENDER FIELD.

As if in a trance, Leigh stares out into the vast expanse of small purple flowers.

Leigh turns and sees the Captain approaching and SALUTES.

LEIGH
Hello, sir. I didn't see you
there...

CAPT. SCOTT
What are you doing out here, Leigh?

Leigh looks out at the field of flowers.

Early summer HONEY BEES buzz from blossom to blossom.

The field is full of life.

LEIGH
Well, sir...

Leigh pauses, nervously running his hand across the tops of the flowers.

LEIGH (CONT'D)
We're going in tonight, for real,
right?

CAPT. SCOTT
Yes, we are.

Leigh pauses...

LEIGH
How come nobody else seems scared?

ENGLISH SPARROWS dart through the humid June air.

CAPT. SCOTT
They're all scared, Leigh. That's
why they're playing ball. All
together. And that's exactly where
you should be.

Leigh nods.

LEIGH
Sir, I never killed nobody before.
What...what if it's not in me?

Captain Scott looks at the young man.

CAPT. SCOTT
It's in you. It's in everyone.
Whether you like it or not.
Now go catch up with your unit.
That's an order.

LEIGH
Yes, sir.

Leigh SALUTES and Scott dismisses him.

As Leigh walks away Capt. Scott calls after him...

CAPT. SCOTT
Leigh...

Leigh turns back to the Captain.

LEIGH
Yes, sir?

CAPT. SCOTT
(re: the letter)
It's not a Dear John letter.

LEIGH

It's not?

CAPT. SCOTT

No. She's just afraid you'll forget about her.

Leigh smiles.

LEIGH

Thank you, sir.

Leigh turns and hustles back toward his unit playing baseball.

Alone, the air carries the scent of lavender as Capt. Scott stares out at the vast field of purple flowers.

INT. GENERAL LANCASTER'S QUARTERS - MOMENTS LATER

Capt. Scott is lead into General Lancaster's private quarters by CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER BARTHOLOMEW, a thin man in his 30's.

Capt. Scott SALUTES the General who sits at his desk eating lunch.

The General rises...

GENERAL LANCASTER

At ease, Captain.

The General glances at C.W.O. Bartholomew.

GENERAL LANCASTER (CONT'D)

(to Bartholomew)

Shut that door on your way out.

Bartholomew exits, closing the door behind him.

CAPT. SCOTT

You wanted to see me, sir?

GENERAL LANCASTER

Coffee?

CAPT. SCOTT

I'm fine, sir. Thank you.

The General sits down on the edge of desk and looks at Capt. Scott.

GENERAL LANCASTER

There is another element to your mission I didn't disclose to your men.

CAPT. SCOTT

Another element, sir?

GENERAL LANCASTER

We believe there could be an infiltrator within the French intelligence group in Caen. Someone working their way in. It would explain the loss of the Radio Operator, among other things.

CAPT. SCOTT

I see, sir.

GENERAL LANCASTER

That map is extremely important to the success of Overlord. We cannot afford under any circumstances to allow the Germans to get that intelligence.

CAPT. SCOTT

Yes, sir.

Lancaster looks Capt. Scott in the eyes.

GENERAL LANCASTER

For that reason, once you have acquired the map, you are to personally neutralize any potential intelligence leaks that could compromise the invasion. Without bias.

Scott pauses...

CAPT. SCOTT

Without bias? Does that include the French Operatives who gathered the intelligence for us?

GENERAL LANCASTER

It does. There's simply too much riding on this. We need you to clean the house. Do you understand?

There is a silent beat as Capt. Scott absorbs the gravity of the order...

CAPT. SCOTT
I understand. Is there anything
else?

GENERAL LANCASTER
No. You're dismissed.

Capt. Scott salutes Lancaster.

As Capt. Scott turns for the door Lancaster calls after him.

GENERAL LANCASTER (CONT'D)
Captain?

CAPT. SCOTT
Yes, sir...

GENERAL LANCASTER
Is your head right on this?

CAPT. SCOTT
Yes, sir.

GENERAL LANCASTER
Good. Because your boys are going
to need you over there.

EXT. SIDE STREET - CAEN, OCCUPIED NORMANDY - SAME MOMENT

LOW ANGLE ON: BICYCLE TIRES rattling over centuries old
cobblestone pavers as young Jasper, wearing his cap, pedals
through the narrow streets of Caen...

CROSS CUT TO:

EXT. STREET CAFE - SAME MOMENT

Rain puddles reflect the drifting clouds in front of a French
street cafe.

NAZI SS WAFFEN OFFICER KARL METZGER (30's) wearing a BLACK SS
UNIFORM sits with his legs crossed, drinking espresso and
reading the paper at an outdoor cafe table.

Sitting at the next table near Metzger is regular German Army
Commander Bushnell.

CUT BACK TO:

EXT. CAEN STREET - INTERSECTION - SECONDS LATER

As Jasper rides into a traffic circle, he VEERS his bicycle suddenly to avoid a massive 65 TON GERMAN TIGER TANK RUMBLING THROUGH THE INTERSECTION.

As he turns the handle bars to correct, Jasper's front bike tire accidentally HITS A PUDDLE, SPLASHING SETTLED RAIN WATER IN THE GENERAL DIRECTION OF METZGER, catching his attention.

Metzger YELLS OUT at Jasper.

METZGER
(in German, subtitled)
Boy! Stop! Stop I said!

Hearing the FIERCE VOICE but not understanding the language, Jasper looks over his shoulder as he rides, seeing...

Metzger STANDING AND YELLING from the cafe table.

At first instinct, JASPER PEDALS HARDER, PICKING UP SPEED...

But in the street ahead TWO GERMAN SOLDIERS SHOULDER THEIR RIFLES in response to the SS Officers orders...

With no clear escape, Jasper HITS HIS BRAKES.

The little boy dismounts his bicycle and walks it back to the cafe where Metzger stands waiting.

Jasper removes his cap and tries to straighten his hair in fearful respect.

METZGER (CONT'D)
(in German, subtitled)
Where are you going in such a
hurry, boy?

Jasper SHAKES HIS HEAD and looks down at the ground.

METZGER VIOLENTLY SEIZES JASPER'S FACE IN HIS HAND AND FORCES THE LITTLE BOY TO LOOK IN HIS EYES.

METZGER (CONT'D)
(in German, subtitled)
Look at me when I speak to you.

At the nearby table, Bushnell glances up from his cigarette, watching the exchange between Metzger and the boy.

METZGER (CONT'D)
 (in German, subtitled)
 Do you know what I heard as you
 passed me by so rudely?

Jasper tries to remain calm as Metzger grips his young face..

The TWO GERMAN SOLDIERS flank the boy on either side.

JASPER
 (in French, subtitled)
 I don't understand...

Metzger TOUCHES HIS EAR WITH HIS FREE HAND AND MAKES A
 SOUND...

METZGER
 Ca-chink...ca-chink...ca-chink...

Jasper is terrified.

METZGER (CONT'D)
 (in German, subtitled)
 Money.

Metzger lets go of Jasper's face and TAPS THE SIDES OF
 JASPER'S TROUSERS with his silver SS "DEATH'S DEAD"
 (TOTENKOPFRING) RING.

The COINS inside Jasper's pockets JINGLE.

METZGER (CONT'D)
 (to the Soldiers)
 Search him.

The SOLDIERS search Jasper.

They empty the contents of his pockets out onto a cafe table:
 TWO FISTFULS OF COINS, HALF OF A PEPPERMINT STICK, and a
 LARGE BIRD'S NEST OF MULTICOLORED SEWING THREAD.

Metzger looks at items the items, then back at Jasper.

METZGER (CONT'D)
 (to Jasper, in German)
 Where did you get the money?

Jasper SHAKES HIS HEAD...

JASPER
 (in French, subtitled)
 I'm sorry, sir. I don't
 understand...

Metzger's face grows flush with anger.

At the other cafe table, Bushnell WATCHES SILENTLY AS METZGER'S RIGHT HAND SLIDES TO HIS WALTHER P-38 SIDEARM AND UN-CLIPS THE HOLSTER FLAP...

Suddenly Bushnell INTERJECTS, SPEAKING TO JASPER IN FRENCH...

BUSHNELL

(to Jasper, in French)

Boy, where did you get the money?

Metzger SHOTS BUSHNELL A LOOK, CLEARLY ANGRY AT BEING INTERRUPTED, BUT HE IS OUTRANKED BY COMMANDER BUSHNELL...

JASPER

(to Bushnell in French)

I sell cigarettes and candy from my father's store...to your soldiers.

Metzger stares at Bushnell. THERE IS AN ACUTELY PALPABLE TENSION BETWEEN THE TWO MEN, COMMON BETWEEN OFFICERS IN HIMMLER'S SS AND THE REGULAR GERMAN ARMY.

BUSHNELL

(to Metzger, in German)

He's a delivery boy. Why don't you save the bullet for someone who might shoot back.

INT. TOBACCO SHOP - DAY

A small, family run tobacco shop on a cobblestone backstreet.

Among the memorabilia on the walls is an old black and white PHOTOGRAPH of an OLDER COUPLE kissing outside the shop in the late 1920's.

There are no customers as Jasper's worried father ALAIN (40) wipes his hands on his clerk's apron as his sister VIVIENNE (29) sweeps the shop floor.

Vivienne is a remarkably beautiful young woman who once had a radiant grin and infectious wit that could illuminate the dullest of rooms...

But the killing of her and Alain's parents (the couple in the photograph) during the Battle of France, and the years of occupation since, have stolen her youthful lust for life.

Edgy and anxious, Alain steps out from the counter and paces.

ALAIN

I want you to leave tonight and
join the others at the Abbey.

Vivienne nods.

VIVIENNE

Alright.

Alain's voice is stern...

ALAIN

They're growing restless. You need
to keep them focused. Do you
understand that?

Vivienne looks at him, not liking his tone.

VIVIENNE

Yes. Of course I understand. You're
my brother, Alain, not my employer.
Don't speak to me that way.

Alain looks at Vivienne for a moment, then gives her an
APOLOGETIC NOD and nervously runs his hand through his hair.

ALAIN

He should be back by now.

Vivienne leans the broom against the wall.

VIVIENNE

He's been late before.

ALAIN

Not like this.

VIVIENNE

He's smart...

ALAIN

He's not as smart as he thinks he
is. I've told him a dozen times to
come straight home and not mess
around...

There is a silent beat, then Vivienne walks across the room
and reaches out, squeezing her older brother's hand.

EXT. TOBACCO SHOP - SAME MOMENT

His heart gripped with fear, Jasper races his bicycle as fast
as he can down the back streets...

INT. TOBACCO SHOP - SECONDS LATER

As Jasper rushes through the door, Alain yells, his voice full of parental fear, but coming across as anger...

ALAIN

Jasper! Where have you been?

Jasper closes the shop door behind him and SLIDES TO THE FLOOR, HOLDING HIS KNEES TO HIS CHEST.

Safe for the moment, Jasper exhales in silence...

Alain and Vivienne rush to him.

ALAIN (CONT'D)

What is it?

Jasper doesn't answer.

Alain and Vivienne look at each other as she strokes her nephew's head.

ALAIN (CONT'D)

What happened, son?

Jasper slowly shakes his head as he stoically forces the raw fear from his young mind...

JASPER

Nothing, Papa. I'm fine. I'm sorry
I was late...

The little boy REACHES IN HIS POCKET AND PULLS OUT THE TANGLED BALL OF SEWING THREAD.

JASPER PUSHES THE THREAD INTO HIS FATHER'S HAND. Alain looks at his son with an expression conveying both paternal pride and guilt.

INT. STORAGE ROOM - TOBACCO SHOP - MOMENTS LATER

A storage room in the rear of the shop, stacked high with loose tobacco bins and a work table.

Jasper watches his father and aunt as they UNTANGLE AND SEPARATE THE DIFFERENT COLORED BALLS OF THREAD.

Using a defined measuring system, Alain TIES an end of a thread section to one of TWO PEGS ON THE WALL.

He winds the thread back and fourth between the pegs, meticulously counting each time, measuring the length of the thread.

On paper, Vivienne takes the thread measurement and plugs it into a mathematical RATIO EQUATION, CORRELATING THE CIRCUMFERENCE OF THE BICYCLE TIRE TO THE CIRCUMFERENCE OF THE AXLE PIN.

The solution of that equation is an ACTUAL DISTANCE.

Alain retrieves a hidden TOPOGRAPHICAL MAP of the Normandy coastline buried deep inside a BIN OF LOOSE TOBACCO.

CLOSE UP ON MAP: Punctuating the map are HAND DRAWN, COLOR-CODED NOTATIONS REVEALING THE POSITIONS OF GERMAN WEAPON BATTERIES dotting the landscape.

Using a SCALE RULER, Alain carefully triangulates the position of the Naval gun battery Jasper visited that morning and carefully DRAWS IT ON THE MAP and...

WE REALIZE THAT JASPER, USING THIS THREAD SYSTEM AND DELIVERY ROUTE, HAS BEEN COLLECTING GERMAN WEAPON LOCATION AND DISTANCE INFORMATION FOR THE FRENCH RESISTANCE.

EXT. BUNK TENT - ALLIED OPERATIONS, PORTSMOUTH - DUSK

Capt. Scott stands in FULL PARATROOPER JUMP GEAR.

He stares into the BLOOD-RED SUN as it sets on the southern English landscape.

The beautiful, fleeting light casts Scott's face in a haunting, almost unearthly glow.

Purple-black storm clouds build on the western horizon, blowing in off the Atlantic.

Capt. Scott eyes the clouds, then turns, heading toward the bunk tent...

INT. BUNK TENT - SAME MOMENT

The interior of the tent is a flurry of focused activity as Scott's men methodically inventory their WEAPONS, AMMUNITION, AND JUMP GEAR, preparing for the impending mission.

As Capt. Scott enters the tent his men pause their activity and immediately STAND AT ATTENTION.

CAPT. SCOTT
 (to all)
 At ease.

His men listen.

CAPT. SCOTT (CONT'D)
 We've got weather coming in. I
 spoke with General Lancaster. We're
 moving the jump window up to 21:00.

The men look at each other, registering the information.

WOODS
 Sir, given the timetable change,
 won't that leave us more vulnerable
 to detection?

Capt. Scott NODS.

CAPT. SCOTT
 It's the only way we get in before
 the storm grounds us.

EXT. ALLIED AIRFIELD - 21:00 HOURS

The wind has increased and rain clouds build, shrouding the moon in the night sky.

On the tarmac of an ALLIED AIRFIELD, the propellers of a C-47 TRANSPORT PLANE SPIN as GROUND CREW TECHNICIANS safety inspect the inch-thick, flexible NYLON TOW CABLE connecting the C-47 tow plane to...

A WACO CG-4 GLIDER positioned behind the C-47 on the runway.

Constructed primarily of military-grade canvas and plywood framing, the lightweight, 48-foot glider is an ENGINE-LESS AIRCRAFT, designed for silent approach and undetected troop and cargo insertion.

IN FULL PARATROOPER JUMP GEAR, WEAPONS, and BACK-UP PARACHUTES, Capt. Scott and his seven man unit shoulder an additional 150 pounds each across the tarmac toward the glider...

EXT. RUNWAY - MOMENTS LATER

As rain begins to fall, the C-47 transport plane takes flight from the end of the runway, towing the glider behind it into the dark sky...

EXT. ABOVE THE ENGLISH CHANNEL - LATER

Lightning flickers in the distance as rain falls harder.

The C-47 flies low through heavy cloud cover over the English Channel, towing the glider 350 feet behind it...

INT. GLIDER - SAME MOMENT

The interior of the glider is lit by RED FILTER JUMP LIGHTS.

Capt. Scott and his men sit in rows in their heavy jump gear.

They are barely able to hear over the DEAFENING DRONE of the multiple 1200 horsepower C-47 engines ahead of them.

Under the red light, Capt. Scott glances at the young faces of his men. It's clear by their controlled breathing and hyper-focused stares that they are anxious.

The GLIDER PILOT, (late 30's) YELLS over his shoulder from the cockpit to the Captain and his men...

GLIDER PILOT
(yelling)
Tow release in ten seconds!

CUT TO:

EXT. ABOVE THE ENGLISH CHANNEL - SECONDS LATER

Nearing the Normandy coastline, the long nylon tow rope RELEASES FROM THE NOSE OF THE GLIDER.

The C-47 transport plane banks up and veers away, disappearing onto the clouds as it returns to England...

CUT BACK TO:

INT. GLIDER - SAME MOMENT

Inside the glider, the sound of C-47 engines fade into the distance...

And what was overwhelmingly loud, now falls into SUDDEN ETHEREAL SILENCE.

The only thing audible is the wind outside on the wings of the aircraft...

CUT TO:

EXT. GLIDER - MOMENTS LATER

Without a sound, masked by clouds, the glider cuts through the darkness above the Normandy coastline and soars east over occupied territory...

CUT BACK TO:

INT. GLIDER - SECONDS LATER

The interior of the glider remains silent.

The Pilot leans over his shoulder...

GLIDER PILOT
(to Scott)
LZ in six minutes...

Capt. Scott makes a silent HAND SIGNAL to his men...

And they all, like clockwork, begin to LOCK AND LOAD their WEAPONS.

Capt. Scott slides a FULLY LOADED MAGAZINE into his THOMPSON SUB-MACHINE GUN, racks the action, and checks the safety.

Then each man checks his SEAT RESTRAINTS in preparation for a hard landing.

Leigh, at the rear of the glider, CANNOT GET HIS SEAT RESTRAINT TO PROPERLY LOCK.

From the front of the glider, Capt. Scott NOTICES HIM STRUGGLING.

LEIGH TRIES IT AGAIN, TRYING TO FORCE THE HARNESS CLIP, BUT IT DOESN'T LOCK INTO PLACE...

Capt. Scott stows his weapon, unlocks his own seat restraint, and makes his way between the row of men to the rear of the glider...

Leigh looks up from his seat as his Captain approaches...

LEIGH
I'm sorry, sir. I can't get this damn thing to...

SUDDENLY THERE IS A MUFFLED THUMPING SOUND...

THEN A SUDDEN BURST OF LIGHT...

AND EVERYTHING COMES APART...

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. GLIDER - SAME MOMENT

AT 800 FEET ABOVE THE FRENCH COUNTRYSIDE, THE GLIDER IS LITERALLY CUT IN HALF BY A GERMAN ANTI-AIRCRAFT SHELL...

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. GLIDER - CONTINUOUS

UNRESTRAINED AND STUNNED BY THE SHELL CONCUSSION, CAPT. SCOTT IS VIOLENTLY SUCKED OUT OF THE SHREDDED FUSELAGE INTO THE NIGHT SKY...

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. MID AIR - CONTINUOUS

CAPT. SCOTT'S P.O.V.: FOR A SPLIT SECOND, AS IF IN SLOW MOTION, CAPT. SCOTT SEES HIS MEN'S FACES GROWING SMALLER, FURTHER AWAY, DESCENDING INSIDE THE BURNING GLIDER AS IT BREAKS APART, PITCHES HARD, AND DIVES TOWARD THE EARTH BELOW...

THEN EVERYTHING ACCELERATES INTO A BLINDING BLUR AS SCOTT'S BODY IS SEIZED IN A UNCONTROLLABLE SPIN, PLUMMETING TOWARD THE EARTH.

SCOTT TRIES TO MAINTAIN HIS FOCUS, BUT CANNOT FIND THE HORIZON.

HE FLATTENS HIS BODY TRYING TO SLOW HIS DESCENT AND CLAWS AT HIS CHEST, TRYING TO LOCATE HIS PARACHUTE D-RING...

THE EARTH RUSHES TOWARD HIM.

AT THE LAST POSSIBLE MOMENT, SCOTT GRIPS THE D-RING AND PULLS THE RIP-CORD.

AT AN ALTITUDE OF ONLY 150 FEET, CAPT. SCOTT'S PARACHUTE DEPLOYS.

HIS BODY IS JERKED UPWARD AND RIGHTED.

HIS DESCENT IS SLOWED, BUT HE'S STILL TOO LOW TO BE FALLING SO FAST...

100 FEET...

HIS MIND RACING, HE LOOKS DOWN, TRYING TO SURVEY HIS LANDING ZONE.

THE LANDSCAPE BELOW IS COMPLETELY SHROUDED IN GROUND FOG...HE'S COMING IN BLIND.

50 FEET...

Suddenly he is enveloped in ghostly white fog.

He can smell the Earth but can't see anything...

He grits his teeth and braces for impact, expecting his legs or spine to be broken...

BUT INSTEAD HE HITS WATER...

HARD CUT TO:

EXT. UNDERWATER - FLOODED HAY FIELD - CONTINUOUS

CAPT. SCOTT SINKS INTO THE SIX FOOT DEEP STANDING WATER OF AN INTENTIONALLY FLOODED HAY FIELD...

SUBMERGED, THE 130 POUNDS OF JUMP GEAR WEIGHS HIS BODY DOWN LIKE AN ANCHOR. HE CAN'T STAND UPRIGHT...

HIS PARACHUTE DESCENDS INTO THE WATER AROUND HIM, TANGLING HIS THRASHING BODY IN WET FABRIC AND PARACHUTE CORDS.

HE CAN'T BREATHE...

CAPT. SCOTT, DESPERATELY RIPS HIS JUMP KNIFE FROM HIS BOOT AND SLASHES OUT, CUTTING FREE HIS EQUIPMENT AND PARACHUTE, FIGHTING FOR HIS LIFE...

CUT TO:

EXT. WATER SURFACE - FLOODED HAY FIELD - SECONDS LATER

Seconds later, Capt. Scott bursts through the surface water of the flooded field.

His chin just above the waterline, he gasps for air, trying to catch his breath...

He looks around trying to take in his surroundings...

Out in the fog, Capt. Scott makes out the FLICKERING ORANGE GLOW OF FLAMES...

Slogging though the flooded field, Capt. Scott rushes toward the distant light of the fire...

EXT. GLIDER CRASH SITE - MOMENTS LATER

Droplets of rain hit the surface of the neck high water as Capt. Scott rushes toward the crash site.

As he nears he sees a BURNING GLIDER WING JUTTING AT A SEVERE ANGLE UPWARD INTO THE FOG.

THE REMAINS OF THE GLIDER FUSELAGE IS ALMOST COMPLETELY SUBMERGED.

Scott rushes forward, TRIPPING ON SOMETHING AT HIS FEET BENEATH THE SURFACE...

He looks down into the water...then GASPS, seeing LEIGH'S LIFELESS BODY, EYES OPEN STARING UPWARD, STILL IN HIS HEAVY JUMP GEAR, HIS PARACHUTE NEVER GETTING THE CHANCE TO OPEN.

CUT TO:

INT. SUBMERGED GLIDER FUSELAGE - SECONDS LATER

Capt. Scott dives beneath the surface.

The burning glider wing eerily illuminates the surreal underwater world...

Holding his breath, Capt. Scott peers into the remains of the fuselage.

HIS MEN ARE ALL DEAD.

SOME ARE STILL TRAPPED IN THEIR SEAT RESTRAINTS.

SOME FLOAT SUSPENDED BENEATH THE WATER, THEIR ARMS SPREAD OPEN AS IF EMBRACING ANGELS ONLY THEY COULD SEE...

EXT. OAK TREE - WOODS - LATER

Rain falls in the foggy woods as Capt. Scott sits at the base of an oak tree holding his knees tightly against his chest.

Now on higher ground, he is filthy and soaked to the bone.

His entire body SHAKES from cold and shock.

His trembling right hand grips his BROWNING .45 HANDGUN.

As Scott stares blankly into the dark woods, TEARS BEGIN TO WELL IN HIS EYES.

He palms the loaded weapon in his hand, touches the muzzle to his forehead, feeling the mortal weight of it.

His mind floods with darkness...

Breaking down, he bites into the index knuckle of his right hand, drawing blood, trying to fight off the overwhelming rush of loss.

WHEN SUDDENLY HE SEES SOMETHING MOVING THROUGH THE TREES IN THE FOG.

SCOTT INSTANTLY RISES TO ONE KNEE.

HIS HEART POUNDING, HE AIMS HIS WEAPON, UNSURE OF THE TARGET...THEN HE SEES IT...

Twenty feet away, a WHITE DOG walks silently out of the fog.

The animal stares at Scott, unafraid.

Capt. Scott's heart races as he keeps his weapon raised.

There is a moment of silent recognition between the two.

Then the DOG'S HEAD TURNS SUDDENLY, HEARING A FAINT RUSTLING SOUND IN THE WOODS INAUDIBLE TO SCOTT.

In a flash, the DOG DARTS AWAY into the fog.

Then Scott FREEZES, REALIZING HE IS SURROUNDED...

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS NEARBY - SAME MOMENT

A SQUAD of armed GERMAN SOLDIERS hunt through the foggy woods for crash survivors...

CUT BACK TO:

EXT. OAK TREE - WOODS - CONTINUOUS

Capt. Scott can see THEIR SILHOUETTES moving through the fog all around him. His mind races...

CUT TO:

EXT. OAK TREE - SECONDS LATER

A GERMAN SOLDIER pauses beneath the oak tree to urinate...

SHIFT ANGLE TO:

EXT. OAK TREE CANOPY - SAME MOMENT

Eleven feet directly above the German Soldier, Capt. Scott braces himself between two tree limbs.

Holding his breath, not making a sound, Scott AIMS HIS PISTOL AT THE TOP OF THE MAN'S HEAD.

SHIFT BACK TO:

EXT. OAK TREE - SECONDS LATER

After a moment, the unaware Soldier zips up his trousers, shoulders his rifle, and continues on into the fog.

EXT. OAK TREE - A MOMENT LATER

Scott eases off the trigger and climbs down from the tree.

He takes a compass reading, then heads toward the treeline, putting distance between himself and the Soldiers...

CUT TO:

INT. BUSHNELL'S RESIDENCE - HOTEL CABOURG - MOMENTS LATER

In his undershirt, Bushnell sits alone at an ornate WRITING DESK in his hotel suite.

With a GLASS OF SCOTCH and a burning CIGARETTE, he writes a letter home to his daughter...

CLOSE UP ON LETTER: AS HE WRITES IN GERMAN...

BUSHNELL (V.O.)

(in German, subtitled)

To my dearest daughter Ida, I am so sorry I will not be able to be with you on your birthday this year. I know that ten will be a wonderful age for you. You will do many new exciting things. And there will be changes as well. Some of them will be difficult...

Bushnell pauses. He drinks deeply from his scotch, trying to articulate his thought, then continues writing...

BUSHNELL (V.O.)

And that will not all be easy to understand. Someday, when you are older, and this war is over, I will try to explain, but for now, please know how very much I love...

Suddenly there is a KNOCK AT THE SUITE DOOR interrupting Bushnell's thoughts.

Bushnell glances at his watch, registering the late hour, then sets down his pen...

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - HOTEL CABOURG - MOMENTS LATER

A GERMAN STAFF OFFICER stands outside the hotel suite door in the richly decorated, red carpeted hallway.

A moment later, the door opens and Bushnell steps out, now in uniform. He is all business.

The Staff Officer SALUTES HIM.

STAFF OFFICER

Heil Hitler.

Bushnell returns the salute.

BUSHNELL

Heil Hitler.

STAFF OFFICER

I'm sorry to disturb you at such a late hour, sir...

BUSHNELL

What is it?

STAFF OFFICER

We've shot down an American glider, sir. Twenty-five kilometers west of Caen...

BUSHNELL

A single glider?

STAFF OFFICER

Yes, sir. Thirteen casualties at present count.

BUSHNELL

Survivors?

STAFF OFFICER

Possibly. One of our units found a single parachute some distance from the crash site. The harness had been cut free.

Bushnell pauses, absorbing the information.

BUSHNELL

Show me on a map.

EXT. HILLSIDE - SAME MOMENT

In the wet darkness, Capt. Scott kneels in the grass at the top of a hillside.

He pulls his jump jacket over his head, creating a tent to block out light-leaks, then strikes a PARATROOPER'S CIGARETTE LIGHTER.

In the orange flame light, Scott locates his position on a small LAMINATED MAP and takes a reading on his COMPASS.

FADE TO:

EXT. NORMANDY LANDSCAPE - DAWN

The first grey light of dawn rises on the wet rural landscape.

EXT. RAILROAD YARD - OUTSKIRTS OF CAEN - MOMENTS LATER

Dense woods back up to a RAIL YARD on the outskirts of Caen.

A murder of CROWS fill the canopies of the dark wet trees.

Concealed at the edge of the woods, Capt. Scott looks down on the quiet rail yard and the small TRAIN DEPOT beyond.

A hundred yards away, a single GERMAN SENTRY walks back and forth guarding the empty train platform.

Armed with only his Pistol and his jump-knife, Scott patiently scans the area for other movement, but the only personnel he sees is the lone Sentry.

Slowly, Scott begins making his way down from the treeline...

EXT. RAIL YARD - SECONDS LATER

Avoiding the Sentry's sight line, Scott quietly makes his way through the rail yard using a LONG ROW OF DORMANT BOXCARS for cover.

As he passes the boxcars he is struck with A HORRIFIC SMELL.

Keeping an eye on the Sentry, Scott GLANCES INSIDE ONE OF THE MANY OPEN BOXCARS...

QUICK CUT TO:

INT. BOXCAR - CONTINUOUS

SCOTT'S P.O.V. INTO THE BOXCAR: Ten-inch air-holes have been rough cut into the sides with barbed wire stretched over the openings.

THE FILTHY FLOOR IS STAINED WITH DRIED BLOOD AND FECES.

THE INTERIOR WOODEN WALLS SURROUNDING THE WINDOWS AND DOOR, ARE SCRAPED AND RAGGED, AS THOUGH THEY HAVE BEEN CLAWED AT BY COUNTLESS SMALL HANDS.

A wave of suffocating dread floods Capt. Scott's expression...

EXT. RAIL YARD - SECONDS LATER

With his .45 drawn, Scott moves discreetly, stepping over rows of steel tracks.

He approaches the train platform from the German Sentry's blind side...

EXT. TRAIN PLATFORM - SECONDS LATER

Scott advances quickly along a brick wall.

He reaches the end of the wall and peers around the corner.

From his vantage point he can see into the TRAIN DEPOT itself, where TWO ADDITIONAL GERMAN SOLDIERS have ducked out of the rain and are preoccupied drinking coffee.

Scott holsters his .45 and draws the KNIFE from his boot.

Scott's heart pounds as he calculates the ten meters of open platform before the Sentry's position...

Scott palms the knife grip, exhales for an instant trying to remain calm, and then ADVANCES ON HIM...

Scott crosses the open concrete platform quickly...

As he nears, the Sentry hears something and turns...

Capt. Scott sees his face. The young German soldier is barely seventeen.

He looks at Scott with a curious, almost friendly look, NOT UNDERSTANDING WHAT IS ABOUT TO HAPPEN...

IN TWO FIERCE MOTIONS, SCOTT DRIVES HIS KNIFE INTO THE SENTRY'S NECK, TURNS THE BLADE INSIDE THE WOUND, AND CUTS A DIAGONAL LINE THROUGH THE YOUNG MAN'S VOICE BOX, EXTINGUISHING ANY SOUND HE MIGHT HAVE MADE.

THE SOLDIER'S EYES REGISTER FEAR AS HIS PANICKED HANDS FUMBLE FOR HIS RIFLE, BUT CAPT. SCOTT SEIZES HIM, GRIPPING HIS BODY IN A FIERCE EMBRACE UNTIL THE YOUNG MAN'S LIFE SLIPS FROM HIM...

Scott glances back at the train depot...

The other Soldiers continue drinking their coffee, having not heard a thing...

INT. BOXCAR - MOMENTS LATER

Hidden inside one of the nightmarish boxcars, Capt. Scott's hands tremble from adrenaline as he strips off the young Sentry's clothes.

Capt. Scott drags the dead naked body into a corner, then inspects the Sentry's uniform.

One side of the Sentry's COAT COLLAR is stained with blood.

With his jump knife, Capt. Scott carefully cuts away the stained collar material away, then cuts the other side of the collar to make it look symmetrical.

He begins putting on the German uniform over his own...

EXT. STREET - CAEN - AN HOUR LATER

Dressed in the German Uniform, Scott walks down a busy morning street in the occupied town of Caen.

His eyes drift to the cobblestones as he is passed by a CONVOY OF GERMAN ARMORED VEHICLES and PERSONNEL CARRIERS loaded with GERMAN INFANTRY.

Scott veers and ducks down a quiet side street...

INT. TOBACCO SHOP - MOMENTS LATER

A door bell RINGS as Capt. Scott steps through the door into the empty tobacco shop.

Capt. Scott glances around the quiet shop. There is no one behind the counter.

As Scott steps forward toward the counter he hears A VOICE call out...

ALAIN (O.S.)

Bonjour.

Capt. Scott turns and sees Alain enter wearing a clerk's apron from a back hallway. He is carrying a large stack of BURLAP TOBACCO SACKS.

Alain eyes the man standing the German sentry's uniform...

ALAIN (CONT'D)

Guten Tag.

Scott doesn't answer.

ALAIN (CONT'D)

Zigaretten?

It's clear Capt. Scott's silence is making Alain nervous.

CAPT. SCOTT

(in German)

I've come to buy an applewood pipe.

Alain looks at Capt. Scott...

ALAIN

(in English)

You are the American?

Capt. Scott NODS.

Alain removes a HIDDEN STEN SUBMACHINE GUN FROM BENEATH THE BURLAP SACKS HE'S BEEN AIMING AT SCOTT AND STOWS IT BENEATH THE SHOP COUNTER.

Alain extends his hand.

ALAIN (CONT'D)
My name is Alain.

CAPT. SCOTT
Captain Lowry Scott, 82nd Airborne,
Special Operations Unit.

As Alain shakes his hand he steps out from the counter, LOCKS THE SHOP DOOR, AND TURNS THE SIGN OVER TO 'CLOSED'.

ALAIN
Follow me.

INT. STORAGE ROOM - BACK OF TOBACCO SHOP - SECONDS LATER

The same windowless storeroom we saw earlier.

From inside a storage bin of tobacco, Alain pulls the INTELLIGENCE MAP, detailing the hidden German defenses.

Alain sits down at his desk.

Capt. Scott looks over Alain's shoulder as he unrolls the map.

CLOSE ON INTELLIGENCE MAP: Capt. Scott stares at the wealth of information.

CAPT. SCOTT
It's not encrypted.

Alain shakes his head.

ALAIN
They pulled our encryptor from her home last week. When they were done with her, they tied her naked body on the front of a Panzer and drove her through the streets.

Scott absorbs the story, then looks back at the meticulously rendered map...

CAPT. SCOTT
(re: the map)
This details the defenses in these specific five beachheads only.
(MORE)

CAPT. SCOTT (CONT'D)
 You realize if the Germans find
 this, they'll be able to deduce the
 exact location of the Allied
 landing...

ALAIN
 Yes. So don't let them find it.

Alain begins to fold the map...

ALAIN (CONT'D)
 I was concerned you weren't
 coming...

As Alain speaks we SHIFT ANGLES TO REVEAL:

POSITIONED BEHIND HIM, UNSEEN BY ALAIN, CAPT. SCOTT SILENTLY
 DRAWS HIS JUMP KNIFE FROM THE BACK OF HIS JACKET...

ALAIN (CONT'D)
 German Soldiers in the shop this
 morning talked of an allied
 aircraft shot down during the
 night...

SCOTT SILENTLY OPENS THE KNIFE BLADE BEHIND HIS BACK.

ALAIN (CONT'D)
 I sent the rest of my people ahead.

Scott's HEART RACES as his gaze fixes on a KILL POINT in
 Alain's exposed neck...

As Alain slides the folded map into a small waterproof
 sleeve, CAPT. SCOTT REACHES FORWARD TO EXECUTE ALAIN WHEN...

SUDDENLY A CHILD'S VOICE CRIES OUT FROM THE MAIN INTERIOR OF
 THE TOBACCO SHOP, SHATTERING THE TENSION...

JASPER
 (from the shop)
 PAPA!

In a flash, SCOTT HIDES THE KNIFE as Alain looks to the door.

ALAIN
 (to Capt. Scott)
 That's my son...

Capt. Scott's expression shifts...

CAPT. SCOTT
 Your son?

ALAIN
Wait here...

Alain shoves the folded map in his apron pocket and rushes out of the storeroom...

INT. BACK HALLWAY/TOBACCO SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Alain hurries down the back hallway toward the front of the shop, calling to Jasper...

ALAIN
(calling out)
Jasper?

As Alain enters the front room he STOPS...

Standing in the tobacco shop is SS Commander Karl Metzger, (the SS Officer from the cafe), and TWO OTHER SS OFFICERS.

Metzger GRIPS JASPER FIRMLY BY THE BACK OF HIS SMALL NECK.

Alain eyes Metzger, wanting to intercede, but weighing his words carefully...

ALAIN (CONT'D)
(to Metzger)
Can I help you, commander.

Metzger looks Alain up and down.

METZGER
This is your store, yes?

ALAIN
Yes.

METZGER
You own it with your
sister...Vivienne? Is that correct?

Alain nods. It's clear the SS has done their research.

ALAIN
That's correct.

METZGER
And is this your child?

ALAIN
Yes. Has he done something?

METZGER

I'm afraid he has...

METZGER KICKS THE BACK OF JASPER'S LEGS, SENDING THE BOY TO THE FLOOR.

ALAIN, UNABLE TO STOP HIMSELF, INSTINCTIVELY LURCHES FORWARD TO PROTECT HIS SON...

BUT THE INSTANT ALAIN MOVES THE OTHER TWO SS OFFICERS DRAW THEIR PISTOLS.

Alain FREEZES in his tracks.

ALAIN

Please...he is just a thoughtless boy. If he has done something, please let me have an opportunity to fix it...

Metzger pauses.

METZGER

I don't think your boy is thoughtless. On the contrary, I think your boy's head is quite full of thoughts...

ALAIN

I'm sorry. I'm not sure I understand, sir.

Metzger nods.

METZGER

An unusual thing happened yesterday. Your son rudely rode his bicycle past me and made a mess of my boot.

ALAIN

And for that I am genuinely sorry.

METZGER

I'm sure you are. That's not why I've come. I've come because your son did the strangest thing when he left the cafe.

Alain remains silent, unsure of what to say.

METZGER (CONT'D)

I had him empty the contents of his pockets onto the table.

(MORE)

METZGER (CONT'D)

He had some money, which I presume was yours. He had some candy, which I imagine is rare for most children in wartime. And he had some knotted up balls of sewing thread.

Alain listens.

METZGER (CONT'D)

And do you know what he did? When he ran off, he left the candy and money behind.

ALAIN

I can only assume he was frightened, sir.

Metzger nods.

METZGER

Yes. That would be the logical conclusion.

Metzger forcefully GRIPS the top of Jaspers hair.

METZGER (CONT'D)

But you know *what he did* make a point to take with him? The thread.

Alain's face grows tight.

METZGER (CONT'D)

Now why would he do that? Leave the money and candy, but take those worthless balls of colored thread.

ALAIN

I don't know, commander.

METZGER

I don't know either. And that's why I've come to your shop. I want the answer...

Suddenly they hear the sound of APPROACHING BOOT STEPS from the hallway behind Alain.

Metzger and the two other SS Officers redirect their attention, as Capt. Scott, unarmed in his German Sentry uniform enters the room.

Metzger looks at Scott's appearance.

METZGER (CONT'D)
Soldier, what are you doing in
here?

Without a word, Capt. Scott, holds up TWO FISTFULS OF BALLED
UP LOOSE THREAD.

He walks slowly behind the shop counter and DROPS THREAD ON
THE COUNTER TOP.

Metzger releases Jasper's hair and walks over.

He looks down at the thread.

METZGER (CONT'D)
(to Scott)
Explain yourself...

SUDDENLY A DEAFENING BURST OF FULLY AUTOMATIC GUNFIRE RIPS
THROUGH THE FACE OF THE WOODEN COUNTER, PUNCHING A HALF DOZEN
ROUNDS INTO METZGER'S THIGHS AND ABDOMEN.

METZGER, BADLY WOUNDED, STAGGERS BACKWARD AND HITS THE FLOOR.

THE OTHER TWO SS OFFICERS TURN, SWINGING THEIR WEAPONS TO
AIM...

AS SCOTT RAISES ALAIN'S STEN SUBMACHINE GUN ABOVE THE COUNTER
AND OPENS FIRE AGAIN IN A VICIOUS BARRAGE...

STRIKING A SECOND SS OFFICER IN THE NECK AND HEAD, KILLING
HIM INSTANTLY...

WRITHING ON THE FLOOR, METZGER DRAWS THE PISTOL FROM HIS
HOLSTER...

ALAIN GRABS JASPER, PULLING HIM TOWARD THE HALLWAY TO PROTECT
HIM...

METZGER FIRES.

HIS BULLET STRIKES ALAIN FROM A LOW ANGLE, TRAVELING UNDER
HIS RIBS, SPIRALING UP THROUGH HIS CHEST CAVITY, PUNCTURING
BOTH HIS LUNGS.

STUNNED BY THE BULLET, ALAIN WRAPS JASPER IN HIS ARMS,
SHELTERING HIM WITH HIS BODY...

CAPT. SCOTT FIRES ANOTHER BRUTAL BURST INTO METZGER,
FINISHING HIM.

THE REMAINING SS OFFICER RUNS FOR THE FRONT DOOR.

SCOTT SWINGS THE STEN AND PULLS THE TRIGGER TO FIRE, BUT THE WEAPON'S ACTION CLICKS EMPTY.

AS THE SS OFFICER FLEES OUT OF THE TOBACCO SHOP, SCOTT PITCHES THE SUB MACHINE GUN ASIDE AND DRAWS HIS .45 FROM BENEATH HIS JACKET...

EXT. TOBACCO SHOP - CONTINUOUS

SCOTT FALLS OUT INTO THE BACKSTREET AFTER THE FLEEING SS OFFICER.

HE TAKES AIM, BUT HE'S TOO LATE. HE CAN'T GET A BEAD ON THE OFFICER BEFORE HE DISAPPEARS AROUND A CORNER.

Scott pauses, his heart pounding, fighting the tunnel vision, trying to keep his head.

He lowers his pistol and looks up and down the street.

An OLDER FRENCH COUPLE peers down at him from a window above the street.

A STREET SWEEPER cowers in a doorway.

Scott knows the gunfire was heard by the entire block...

INT. TOBACCO SHOP - SECONDS LATER

Scott hurries back inside the tobacco shop.

What was an intimate family store is now a nightmarish display of violence.

Blood spatters the walls and pools on the floor.

He glances at the contorted dead bodies of Metzger and the other SS Officer.

Capt. Scott steps through the empty shell casings into the hallway, where Alain leans against a wall on the floor holding Jasper in his arms.

Unable to move, Alain wheezes horribly, his lungs filling with fluid.

CAPT. SCOTT KNEELS AND RETRIEVES THE INTELLIGENCE MAP OUT OF ALAIN'S APRON AND POCKETS IT.

Slowly, SCOTT RAISES HIS BROWNING .45 AT THE ELEVEN-YEAR-OLD'S HEAD...

Jasper STARES AT THE MUZZLE OF SCOTT'S LOADED HANDGUN.

There is deafening beat of silence as Scott's mind floods with emotional torment...

BUT CAPT. SCOTT DOESN'T PULL THE TRIGGER...

Alain, unable to move, speaks with a thin whisper.

ALAIN
(whispering)
If you're not going to kill him...

Scott looks at Alain.

ALAIN (CONT'D)
...then take him with you.

There is another silent beat as...

Scott shakes his head, staring down his weapon site as he tries to reason through his thoughts...

Alain swallows, painfully taking in tiny sips of air as the life slips from his body.

ALAIN (CONT'D)
Do you know what the Gestapo will
do to him?

Scott looks at the boy.

ALAIN (CONT'D)
His aunt is hiding at an Abbey west
of here...it's on your way...

CAPT. SCOTT
(to Alain)
Shut your mouth.

ALAIN
He's just a boy...

Frustration floods Scott as he tries to sort through the knots inside his mind...

ALAIN (CONT'D)
Take him...

CAPT. SCOTT
I can't fucking take him!

Scott's finger HOVERS ON THE PISTOL TRIGGER, BUT HE SIMPLY CANNOT FIRE THE WEAPON...

Alain's gaze darts around the room as the corners of his vision are encroached by darkness.

Scott can see death slowly unlocking Alain's expression. He sees the mortal fear in his eyes as the man is forced to surrender all he knows as certain, all the defining moments of his life, and all that he loves.

Alain fights to stay conscious, to keep some control on what will become, desperately needing to know that his child will be safe...

Capt. Scott LOWERS THE PISTOL.

For an instant, Alain's focus returns, finding Scott's face. He looks into Capt. Scott's eyes...

CUT TO:

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - MOMENTS LATER

Keeping his eyes to the ground, Scott quickly pulls Jasper down the sidewalk trying to hide the blood spatter on his stolen German uniform.

In shock, Jasper stares blankly ahead, following as GERMAN MILITARY VEHICLES race past toward the scene of the shooting.

CAPT. SCOTT
(to Jasper)
Don't speak a word...

Ahead in the town SQUARE, SCORES OF GERMAN SOLDIERS swarm the area, coming their way.

They'll be on them any second...

Scott scans the block ahead and eyes an unattended GERMAN MEDICAL CORE TRUCK parked outside a building.

Scott motions to the truck...

CAPT. SCOTT (CONT'D)
(to Jasper)
Get in the back.

Jasper looks up at him.

CAPT. SCOTT (CONT'D)
Right now.

INT. BACK OF MEDICAL TRUCK - MOMENTS LATER

The interior walls of the insulated medical truck are lined with BLOCK ICE AND SAWDUST.

Their breath is visible in the cold as Scott and Jasper HIDE THEMSELVES behind a stack of LARGE CYLINDRICAL CANNISTERS.

They hear a DRIVER open up the cab of the truck and get inside.

Seconds later, the ENGINE STARTS and the vehicle begins to drive away with Scott and Jasper hidden inside.

In the darkness, Scott looks at the boy.

His young eyes are distant. His teeth chatter in the cold.

Scott keeps his voice low but deathly firm...

CAPT. SCOTT

Do exactly what I say, exactly when I say it. You stop when I say to stop. You run when I say to run. If you fall behind, I will kill you.

Jasper looks at him. Trauma haunts the boy's eyes just beneath the surface.

CAPT. SCOTT (CONT'D)

Any questions?

There is a beat as the truck rumbles down the street.

Jasper looks at the RED GERMANIC LABELS on the metal canisters.

JASPER

(re: the canisters)

What is it?

Scott glances around the truck.

CAPT. SCOTT

Blood.

Jasper looks around, realizing they are surrounded by thousands of gallons of surplus human blood.

CAPT. SCOTT (CONT'D)

They're preparing for the invasion...

CUT TO:

EXT. SERIES OF SHOTS - ALLIED STAGING AREA - SOUTHERN ENGLAND

A SERIES OF HUMBLING SHOTS of the ALLIED FORCES RESTRICTED AREA in their final preparations for Operation Overlord...

-A vast shot of Portsmouth Bay filled with hundreds of Naval BATTLESHIPS, MINESWEEPERS, and PERSONNEL TRANSPORTS LOADED WITH HIGGINS LANDING CRAFT...

-MASSIVE ALLIED MILITARY ENCAMPMENTS of TENS OF THOUSANDS of ALLIED SOLDIERS hidden in the woods from German aerial reconnaissance...

-SEEMINGLY ENDLESS waves of SHERMAN TANKS and other ALLIED ARMORED VEHICLES...

-ST. MARY'S HOSPITAL surrounded with tented triage centers constructed for incoming wounded...

-GROUND CREWS preparing HUNDREDS OF MILITARY AIRCRAFT for action...

CUT TO:

INT. GENERAL LANCASTER'S OFFICE - ALLIED OPS CENTER - SAME

General Lancaster stares intensely at a large WALL MAP OF NORMANDY as...

Chief Warrant Officer Bartholomew enters and SALUTES Lancaster...

C.W.O. BARTHOLOMEW

You wanted to see me, sir?

GENERAL LANCASTER

What the fuck is the status of Captain Scott and his unit?

C.W.O. BARTHOLOMEW

Unfortunately, there isn't anything new to report, sir. Just the initial distress signal from the glider pilot. Then nothing. They were supposed to have sent a radio ping when they reached their O.P., but that window passed a little over twelve hours ago, sir.

GENERAL LANCASTER

Well I need something more than that.

(MORE)

GENERAL LANCASTER (CONT'D)
 I'm briefing supreme Allied command
 at 07:00 and if I give them that
 weak shit they'll scrub the pick-
 up.

Bartholomew gives the General a look...

C.W.O. BARTHOLOMEW
 Scrub the pick-up, sir?

GENERAL LANCASTER
 They were on the fence with this
 high of a risk mission in the first
 place. They don't want any
 unnecessary attention drawn to the
 Overlord landing zones. If we don't
 have some credible evidence that
 Scott's mission is progressing,
 they'll cancel the extraction team.

C.W.O. BARTHOLOMEW
 But they could be alive. We could
 have just lost contact is all...

GENERAL LANCASTER
 Then you dig deep and you figure
 out a way to prove it...

INT. BACK OF MEDICAL TRUCK - OCCUPIED NORMANDY - LATER

With Capt. Scott and Jasper hidden behind the cargo, suddenly
 the medical truck LURCHES TO A STOP.

Capt. Scott puts his finger to his mouth signaling Jasper to
 remain silent.

Scott listens intently...

They hear VOICES speaking German in the far distance outside
 the truck.

Scott draws his .45 from his coat and whispers to Jasper...

CAPT. SCOTT
 Stay right behind me.

EXT. ROAD - SECONDS LATER

Rain falls on a rural dirt road on the outskirts of Caen.

A column of CIVILIAN AND MILITARY VEHICLES slow to a halt at
 an ARMED CHECKPOINT AHEAD.

The last vehicle in the column, Scott and Jasper climb out of the back of the truck.

Hiding from view, Scott peers around the back of the truck and sees the checkpoint several hundred yards up the road.

He watches as GERMAN SOLDIERS search through a DELIVERY TRUCK as they hold a FRENCH FARMER at gunpoint...

Open hay fields spread out in both directions.

There is nowhere to run without being seen.

The column of vehicles starts moving again, advancing toward the checkpoint.

Their position will be exposed in seconds.

Scott's mind races, looking for a solution.

Scott quickly motions to the ditch...

CAPT. SCOTT

Move.

EXT. DITCH - CONTINUOUS

Scott and Jasper dart across the road and down into the muddy, half-flooded ditch.

Slogging through shin-deep brown water, Scott sees the opening of a narrow DRAINAGE PIPE running beneath the road.

EXT/INT. DRAINAGE PIPE - SECONDS LATER

Scott pulls the overgrown weeds away from the opening, then in single file, with barely room to breathe, they both pull themselves into the 24" diameter pipe.

With Jasper in front, they slowly inch their way forward into the pipe until they disappear from view.

Soaking wet, Jasper shivers in the darkness.

Scott listens.

It's clear by the silence no one has seen them.

Scott whispers to Jasper...

CAPT. SCOTT

The Abbey where your aunt is, how far is it?

JASPER

Fifteen kilometers west of here.

CAPT. SCOTT

You're certain of that number?

JASPER

Yes. I'm good with distances. I've rode my bicycle there many times.

Scott pauses, thinking...

CAPT. SCOTT

We'll hold our position here. Sleep until dark...

JASPER

I'm not tired.

CAPT. SCOTT

I don't care if you're tired or not. You'll need energy to walk all night. Now shut your mouth, close your eyes, and go to sleep.

Jasper's small cramped body shivers in the darkness. He tilts his head and watches the rain fall in the small circle of daylight at the pipe opening.

CUT TO:

INT. TOBACCO SHOP - LATE AFTERNOON

Bushnell stands over Metzger's bloody body.

Several other OFFICERS mill about in the background as well as the SS Officer who fled the shooting.

Bushnell takes a few steps down the back hallway and kneels, examining Alain's body.

He turns to the surviving SS Officer who paces the floor anxiously...

BUSHNELL

(in German, subtitled)

Metzger shot this man?

SS OFFICER

Yes. He's the owner, along with the sister. We are looking for her now, questioning anyone who might know her whereabouts.

Bushnell notices Jasper's SMALL HANDPRINT in dried blood on his father's cheek where he held him for the last time.

BUSHNELL

And the boy?

SS OFFICER

I don't know.

BUSHNELL

I see. Perhaps you had already fled at that point.

SS OFFICER

I did not flee. I was in a tactically disadvantageous position and I chose to reposition myself.

BUSHNELL

Three armed men against one. How much tactical advantage do you require?

The SS Officer remains silent.

Bushnell chooses to change the topic.

BUSHNELL (CONT'D)

The American...what direction did he come from?

The SS Officer points down the back hallway.

CUT TO:

INT. STORAGE ROOM - BACK OF TOBACCO SHOP - MOMENTS LATER

Bushnell stands alone in the storage room, taking it in...

Killed before he had the chance to destroy the evidence, the INSTRUMENTS of Alain's insurgency remain behind.

Bushnell gazes at the THREAD WRAPPED AROUND THE MEASURING PEGS ON THE WALL.

He looks at the MATHEMATICAL CIRCUMFERENCE SOLUTIONS WORKED OUT ON PAPER.

He looks at the SCALE RULER and the COLORED PENCILS used for notating the map.

The only thing missing is the map, and it's clear by his expression that Bushnell is comprehending the magnitude of his discovery...

CUT TO:

INT. BRIEFING ROOM - GERMAN 352ND HEADQUARTERS - LATER

A German military briefing room inside the headquarters of the German 352nd.

With a backdrop of red and black SWASTIKAS, Bushnell, dressed in his combat uniform, addresses TWO UNITS OF HIS ELITE GERMAN COMMANDOS. These men are not boyish recruits for the Fatherland, these are seasoned specialists.

Their hardened faces look as if they are carved into the side of a mountain as they stand at attention, listening to Bushnell.

BUSHNELL

(in German, Subtitled)

We know he came in an American glider last night. We know he met with a resistance leader in Caen this morning. We know he has killed at least two officers, and possibly a third soldier at the train station. And we now believe this man carries with him vital military intelligence, and is attempting to escape Normandy.

Bushnell looks directly into the eyes of his men.

BUSHNELL (CONT'D)

But he's not going to escape. Because you and I, are not going to let him out. We will hunt from the land and we will hunt from the sky, and we will find him. I want the information he carries in my fist by this time tomorrow. That is not a best case scenario, that is an absolute order. Am I clear?

The men answer in unison...

BUSHNELL'S MEN

Yes, sir!

CUT TO:

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Rain falls on the dark rural landscape.

Lightning illuminates the distant sky as an armored GERMAN HALF-TRACK TRANSPORT VEHICLE rumbles down the muddy road toward Caen.

As the heavy vehicle passes over the road above we PAN DOWN into the drainage pipe in the ditch below...

CUT TO:

INT. DRAINAGE PIPE - SAME MOMENT

We hear the rumbling sound of the passing Half-Track on the road above...

Suddenly JASPER LURCHES VIOLENTLY AWAKE OUT OF A NIGHTMARE.

In the darkness, the suffocating reality of the death of his father comes back to him.

His teeth chatter as he tilts his head to look toward the pipe opening, realizing it is now dark outside.

Then he hears Scott's voice...

CAPT. SCOTT

Get up. It's time.

EXT. DITCH - MOMENTS LATER

As thunder rumbles in the distance, Scott waits as Jasper URINATES in the ditch.

CAPT. SCOTT

You can't slow me down. You understand?

Jasper doesn't answer.

JASPER

Why don't you just leave.

CAPT. SCOTT
What did you say?

Jasper looks at Scott.

JASPER
I don't need you. I'll make my own way.

CAPT. SCOTT
The only way I leave you here is with a bullet in your head. I made your father a promise. Now shut your mouth and walk.

CUT TO:

EXT. SERIES OF SHOTS - HOURS LATER - PASSAGE OF TIME

-Silhouetted against a landscape of flickering lightning, Scott and Jasper hike through the darkness on the high ground, navigating the flooded fields...

-Scott hikes through the dark wet woods with Jasper TRAILING BEHIND HIM, trying to keep up. Scott turns and silently motions for Jasper to speed up.

-Scott trudges through shin deep mud as an exhausted Jasper grows further in the distance. It's clear by his angry expression that Capt. Scott is growing more impatient with Jasper's progress...

CUT TO:

EXT. TREELINE - AN HOUR LATER

Capt. Scott walks west following a tree line.

After a moment he pauses and looks back over his shoulder.

Despite his efforts, Jasper, soaked to the bone, has fallen far behind.

Scott checks his watch, then impatiently looks at the early morning sky...

As Jasper nears, Scott glares at the boy with anger. It's clear that the events of the last 36 hours have pushed him to his wits end...

CAPT. SCOTT
What did I tell you?

The boy pauses, trying to catch his breath.

JASPER
I'm sorry, I'm trying to move
faster but...

Scott cuts Jasper off...

CAPT. SCOTT
I don't care if you're *trying* and I
sure as hell don't care if you're
sorry. What I care about is in half
an hour the sun is going to rise
and we have still have five
kilometers of open ground to
cross...

JASPER
Four.

CAPT. SCOTT
Excuse me?

Jasper barks back at Scott defiantly...

JASPER
You said five. We have four
kilometers to go! I know the way
better than you do! Now why don't
you just leave me the fuck alone!

CAPT. SCOTT VIOLENTLY SEIZES THE LITTLE BOY BY THE COLLAR OF
HIS JACKET, NEARLY KNOCKING HIM OUT OF HIS SHOES...

Jaspers FACE RECOILS IN FEAR, WINCING, PREPARING TO BE HIT...

Capt. Scott SUDDENLY STOPS HIMSELF. HE STARES AT THE SCARED
CHILD HE GRIPS BY THE THROAT.

SLOWLY, A LOOK OF SELF-REALIZATION rises in Scott's
expression, as if he was suddenly seeing himself from an
outside perspective: A HARDENED COMBAT SOLDIER ABOUT TO BEAT
A CHILD.

Scott, SHAMED BY HIS OWN ACTIONS, gently sets Jasper down and
lets go of his jacket.

The boy crawls backward away from Capt. Scott, then gets to
his feet...

CAPT. SCOTT

Wait...

Jasper begins to back away, preparing to run...

CAPT. SCOTT (CONT'D)

Please...

As Jasper takes another step, THEY BOTH HEAR AN AUDIBLE 'CLICKING' SOUND FROM THE GROUND BENEATH JASPER'S RIGHT FOOT...

CAPT. SCOTT (CONT'D)

STOP!

Jasper FREEZES.

CAPT. SCOTT (CONT'D)

Don't move. Not one step. Don't even shift your weight.

Jasper stares at him.

JASPER

What is it?

Scott approaches slowly, peering down at the muddy ground.

Buried in the mud, Scott can see the CURVED METAL EDGE of a live GERMAN TELLER MINE beneath Jasper's right foot.

JASPER (CONT'D)

What's happening?

CAPT. SCOTT

Just don't move...

He looks Jasper in the eyes. He can see the panic building inside the boy.

Capt. Scott slowly drops to one knee, getting on the same eye level as Jasper.

CAPT. SCOTT (CONT'D)

Look at me. You're going to be okay...

Jasper's whole body is trembling.

JASPER

I don't believe you. You're going to leave and let me die...

Scott looks at the crumbing child.

CAPT. SCOTT
You're standing on an anti-tank
mine. If you die, I die.

Jasper looks at him...

JASPER
So...if I lift up my foot, I could
kill you right now.

Scott absorbs the boy's comment, and for the first time,
SCOTT OFFERS JASPER A HINT OF A SMILE...

CAPT. SCOTT
That's correct. (pause) We're in
the same boat. I will make you a
promise. I will not hurt you and I
will not leave you. But you have to
stop shaking.

JASPER
I can't...

Jasper's trembling worsens and his panic grows.

JASPER (CONT'D)
I want to run...

Scott shakes his head.

CAPT. SCOTT
No. You cannot run.

The boy squeezes his eyes shut.

CAPT. SCOTT (CONT'D)
You need to calm down.

Jasper is trembling so badly his entire leg is starting to
shake.

JASPER
I can't!

CAPT. SCOTT
Then help me calm you down...

Scott's mind races...

CAPT. SCOTT (CONT'D)
What would your dad do? If he was
here...right now, what would he do?

JASPER
He'd tell me a story...

CAPT. SCOTT
Okay...a story about what?

Jasper trembles, taking a breath.

JASPER
About something fun he did when he
was my age...

CAPT. SCOTT
Okay...I'll tell you a story. But
you can't move, okay?

Jasper nods...

Scott runs his hand through his hair and exhales...

CAPT. SCOTT (CONT'D)
Okay...okay....when I was nine
years old, my dad and I built a
wooden canoe. It took all summer,
bending the ribs, planing the wood.
I remember that smell of cedar and
varnish...

As he speaks, SCOTT DRAWS HIS JUMP KNIFE FROM HIS BOOT AND
SLOWLY BEGINS TO DIG OUT THE MUDDY SOIL SURROUNDING JASPER'S
SMALL LEATHER SHOE.

CAPT. SCOTT (CONT'D)
And in the fall, when it was done,
he took me on a canoe trip...

The boy's building panic is interrupted by a glimpse of
curiosity.

JASPER
Just the two of you?

CAPT. SCOTT
Yeah.

JASPER
Where?

CAPT. SCOTT
The Shenandoah River...

Capt. Scott pauses and looks at Jasper. The boy has grown
calmer, listening.

WITH HIS BARE HANDS, PAINSTAKINGLY CAREFUL NOT TO DESTABILIZE THE DEVICE, SCOTT SLOWLY RUNS HIS FINGERS ALONG THE CIRCULAR EDGE OF THE MINE, LOCATING THE FUSE WELL...

CAPT. SCOTT (CONT'D)

We drove upstream to Virginia,
started in Luray on the south fork,
and drifted our way back down...

JASPER

For how long?

CAPT. SCOTT

Three days...

UNABLE TO SEE PROPERLY, SCOTT REMOVES THE WATERPROOF CAP FROM HIS PARATROOPER LIGHTER.

CAPT. SCOTT (CONT'D)

It was October. All trees on the
mountain sides were bright yellow
and red...

SCOTT STRIKES THE LIGHTER FLINT AND THE FLAME COMES TO LIFE, ILLUMINATING THE MUDDY DISC-SHAPED DEVICE IN FRONT OF HIM.

Scott pauses for an instant remembering...

CAPT. SCOTT (CONT'D)

He taught me a lot of things those
three days. How to steer through
the white water...

SCOTT METICULOUSLY BRUSHES THE GRIT FROM THE FUSE HEAD, THEN INSERTS THE TIP OF THE KNIFE INTO THE GROOVE ON THE MINE'S FUSE PLUG.

CAPT. SCOTT (CONT'D)

He taught me how to build a fire
when everything is wet...

SCOTT EXHALES, THEN GENTLY ATTEMPTS TO TURN THE FUSE PLUG COUNTER-CLOCKWISE.

CAPT. SCOTT (CONT'D)

How to catch fish without bait...

THE MINE'S DETONATOR FUSE DOESN'T BUDGE.

SCOTT WIPES THE MOISTURE FROM HIS FOREHEAD AND TAKES A BREATH.

THE INTENSE MEMORY OF HIS FATHER HANGS IN THE TREMOR OF SCOTT'S VOICE.

CAPT. SCOTT (CONT'D)
He used to say: *it's a father's job*
to teach...

Unseen by Jasper, Capt. Scott fights back the emotion welling in his eyes...

CAPT. SCOTT (CONT'D)
But I liked it more when he just talked to me about stuff. Stuff he cared about. Stuff he was worried about.

THEN TRIES THE FUSE PLUG AGAIN, AND SLOWLY IT EASES FREE AND BEGINS TO MOVE...

CAPT. SCOTT (CONT'D)
I remember every minute of those three days...

UNSEEN BY JASPER, A TEAR SILENTLY FALLS ONTO THE BLADE OF SCOTT'S COMBAT KNIFE.

CAPT. SCOTT (CONT'D)
And when we pulled the canoe out of that river, he turned to me and said I was his best friend.

SCOTT CAREFULLY THREADS THE FUSE CYLINDER OUT OF THE SIDE OF THE MINE, THEN SLOWLY WITH STEADY HANDS, REMOVES THE DETONATOR FUSE...

CAPT. SCOTT (CONT'D)
That was October, 1917. His AEF unit deployed to France one week later.

JASPER
He fought here?

CAPT. SCOTT
Yes he did. On this same soil.

JASPER
Did he make it back?

As the first light of day rises on the dark land, Scott looks at Jasper.

CAPT. SCOTT
No. Not really.

Jasper recognizes the loss in Scott's face.

CAPT. SCOTT (CONT'D)
Lift up your foot, son...

Jasper lifts his foot.

NOTHING HAPPENS. THE MINE IS DISARMED.

Capt. Scott smiles...

WITHOUT WARNING, JASPER THROWS HIMSELF AT SCOTT, WRAPPING HIS ARMS AROUND HIM.

SCOTT, EXHAUSTED AND OVERWHELMED, CLOSSES HIS EYES AND HUGS HIM TIGHTLY AS THE LITTLE BOY BURIES HIS FACE IN HIS CHEST AND BREAKS DOWN...

Despite all that's happened to Jasper, this is the first time we've seen him cry, and like a broken levee, it all rushes out...

JASPER
(crying)
It's my fault...it's all my
fault...

Capt. Scott holds him...

JASPER (CONT'D)
He's dead because of me! They were
looking for me!

Jasper cries inconsolably...

JASPER (CONT'D)
I killed him...I killed my dad.

Embracing the boy, trying to fight back his own emotions, Capt. Scott stares across the dark landscape toward the first hue of daybreak on the grey horizon...

CAPT. SCOTT
No. Don't you believe that. Not for
one minute. It was war that killed
him. That's just what it does.

EXT. VERANDA - ALLIED OPS CENTER - PORTSMOUTH, ENGLAND - DAWN

Having not slept, General Lancaster drinks coffee on a veranda outside the Allied Operations Center as the red sun rises.

Below in the harbor, seemingly endless NAVAL CREWS AND COMBAT ENGINEERS work non-stop, preparing the Allied War Machine for the largest amphibious combat operation in the history of warfare.

C.W.O. Bartholomew approaches with a FILE FOLDER under his arm and salutes...

GENERAL LANCASTER

Tell me you have something...

C.W.O. BARTHOLOMEW

I've been in the radio room all night. I have something, but it's unconfirmed, sir...

GENERAL LANCASTER

The briefing is in twelve minutes, so anything is something at this point...

C.W.O. BARTHOLOMEW

We intercepted a German radio transmission about an hour ago, indicating there could be a manhunt on for an American caught behind enemy lines. But it was vague...

GENERAL LANCASTER

Why would they say that openly? It doesn't make sense...

C.W.O. BARTHOLOMEW

That's what we thought. And it was unusual, because it was a French civilian radio, calling on a German military frequency.

GENERAL LANCASTER

What did it say exactly?

C.W.O. BARTHOLOMEW

The broadcaster gave coordinates for a location. He said that *the American* may be headed there.

Lancaster pauses, absorbing the information...

GENERAL LANCASTER

You think it could be the leak in the French intelligence unit?

C.W.O. BARTHOLOMEW
Possible, sir. But if nothing else,
it proves at least one of our men
is still alive...

EXT. CLOISTERED ABBEY - EARLY MORNING

The rain has eased.

Shafts of morning sun break through the clouds, casting a mosaic of shadow and light on the Normandy landscape.

In the distance, A CHURCH BELL RINGS.

Far below, past a winding RIVER, the BAROQUE SPIRES of a beautiful 17TH CENTURY ABBEY rise above the tree tops.

The Abbey's ornately faceted stone walls and bell tower are exquisite.

CLOISTERED NUNS in robes work quietly on the grounds, picking up storm debris from the garden flower beds.

INT. CORRIDOR - ABBEY - SAME MOMENT

We hear footsteps as we follow a NUN (60's) carrying a covered BASKET down a long stone corridor.

The Nun reaches a private door to the rectory and knocks quietly.

There is a brief pause, then the door opens revealing Jasper's Aunt Vivienne.

Vivienne's long hair is pulled up and pinned. She wears a cotton blouse, skirt, and leather boots. A GERMAN SUBMACHINE GUN is slung on a strap over her shoulder. She is beautiful.

The Nun hands Vivienne the basket.

VIVIENNE
(in French)
Thank you.

Remaining silent, the Nun nods and quietly turns, walking back down the hall.

INT. RECTORY - SECONDS LATER

Vivienne closes the door and walks with the basket into the rectory where 20 MORE MEMBERS OF THE FRENCH RESISTANCE have made camp in a single room.

THE WALLS ARE LINED WITH AN ARSENAL OF WEAPONS: CARBINE RIFLES, MACHINE GUNS, GRENADES, AND OTHER VARIOUS LIGHT ARMS.

Vivienne sets the basket on a long wooden table and removes the cloth cover revealing EGGS, TWO QUARTS OF MILK, AND A DOZEN LOAVES OF FRESHLY BAKED BREAD.

Vivienne glances at JEAN, (21) a young French man daydreaming by the window in the morning sun.

VIVIENNE
(in French)
Jean...

The young man looks over at her.

VIVIENNE (CONT'D)
Set the table.

Jean stands up from the window and stretches, then lazily walks over.

With apathy, he retrieves a loaf of bread from the basket, rips off the end, and takes a bite.

JEAN
(in French)
What's the point in that?

Without hesitation, Vivienne RIPS THE BREAD OUT OF HIS FIST and SHOVES A STACK OF TIN PLATES into his hands.

VIVIENNE
There are people across this continent who only wish to God they could sit down to share a meal together. So grow up and set the table.

CUT TO:

INT. ABBEY CHURCH - LATER

Vivienne enters the abbey church.

The morning sunlight defuses through the massive stained glass windows, bathing the interior in an ETHEREAL VIOLET LIGHT, befitting a house of God on Earth.

The carved oak pews, thirty-foot vaulted ceilings, and towering Baroque columns are a humbling testament to the beauty mankind is capable of creating.

Vivienne's boot steps echo through the empty church as she walks alone down the aisle with her submachine gun slung over her shoulder.

As she reaches the sanctuary, Vivienne kneels in the aisle.

She looks up at the crucified body of Christ rendered in stained glass high above the altar.

She lowers her head in prayer...

When suddenly the door at the rear of the church opens and HENRI, (40's) another Resistance member calls to her...

HENRI

Vivienne, your nephew is here...

INT. RECTORY - MOMENTS LATER

Vivienne rushes into the rectory.

The instant Jasper sees his aunt, he rushes into her arms.

Vivienne hugs him, smoothing the hair on his head.

Then her eyes fall on Capt. Scott standing nearby.

Scott is filthy. His clothes are torn and caked in mud. His eyes and body are exhausted...yet it's clear as Vivienne looks at him for the first time, something SPARKS inside her.

VIVIENNE

(to Scott in English)

Who are you?

CAPT. SCOTT

Captain Lowry Scott.

VIVIENNE

You're the contact Alain was waiting for...

Vivienne glances around the room.

There is a palpable silence.

All of the Resistance members have their eyes to the floor, avoiding Vivienne's gaze.

VIVIENNE (CONT'D)
Where is Alain?

Scott is the only one who will look Vivienne in the eye.

VIVIENNE (CONT'D)
My brother? Where is he?

Scott slowly SHAKES HIS HEAD.

Looking in her eyes, he sees the WAVE OF LOSS HIT HER.

Unflinching, she fights back the crushing feeling inside her, swallowing it.

Vivienne glances down at Jasper in her arms.

VIVIENNE (CONT'D)
You must be hungry.

She looks at Scott.

VIVIENNE (CONT'D)
Both of you.

Scott NODS, recognizing her strength.

VIVIENNE (CONT'D)
(to both)
Go wash your hands.

CUT TO:

INT. RECTORY - ABBEY - MOMENTS LATER

Capt. Scott sits across the wooden table from Jasper.

They both lean over plates eating voraciously.

Lost in thought, Vivienne stands by the window looking out at the treeline in the distance.

After a moment, she turns and gazes at Scott and Jasper hunched over the table eating.

VIVIENNE
We have more bread.

She picks up the last loaf of bread and brings it to the table.

She tears it in half, splitting it between them.

Vivienne sits down next to Jasper and leans affectionately against him.

Jasper shovels the food into his mouth.

VIVIENNE (CONT'D)
Slow down. Chew your food.

She sets a hard candy peppermint stick on the table in front of Jasper.

VIVIENNE (CONT'D)
(re: the candy)
Not until you're done.

Jasper lets out a small smile...

CUT TO:

INT. SLEEPING ROOM - ABBEY - MOMENTS LATER

Lead by Vivienne, Capt. Scott carries Jasper fast asleep in his arms into a makeshift sleeping room in the back of the Abbey.

Scott lays the boy gently down on the bed as Vivienne removes his shoes and pulls a wool blanket up under his chin.

For a moment, Vivienne and Scott watch in silence as Jasper's small chest rises and falls with each breath.

Vivienne glances up at Scott, seeing in his eyes the connection he feels toward Jasper...

CUT TO:

EXT. COURTYARD - ABBEY - MOMENTS LATER

Vivienne and Capt. Scott sit alone in the Abbey courtyard...

VIVIENNE
My god he's exhausted...

Scott nods.

CAPT. SCOTT
It was a long night for him.

There is a beat of silence as Vivienne looks at the late afternoon sky.

Her voice tremors with emotion as she speaks...

VIVIENNE
Did you see my brother killed?

Scott nods.

CAPT. SCOTT
Yes.

There is a beat.

VIVIENNE
Did Jasper?

CAPT. SCOTT
He did.

Vivienne pauses to breathe, trying to fight back the suffocating sensation inside her.

She looks at the late afternoon sky, trying to redirect her thoughts...

VIVIENNE
It will be dusk soon. Do you have time to sleep?

Scott shakes his head NO.

CAPT. SCOTT
I should go.

Vivienne nods.

VIVIENNE
What do you have for a weapon?

CAPT. SCOTT
A Browning .45 with one magazine.

VIVIENNE
Take a rifle. As many rounds as you like. And I'll pack you something to eat.

Scott nods a THANK YOU.

Capt. Scott looks at Vivienne.

Her face is beautiful. He sees the strain of the tears she fights back in her eyes.

Scott starts to speak...

VIVIENNE (CONT'D)
 (cutting him off)
 Please don't ask me if I'm alright.

Scott gives her a compassionate nod.

EXT/INT. TOOL SHED - ABBEY - SAME MOMENT

Unseen by others, Jean, the young Frenchman, slips through a wooden door into the darkness of the Gardener's shed at the rear of the Abbey grounds.

Alone in the darkness, Jean quickly uncovers A PORTABLE RADIO TRANSMITTER carefully hidden beneath a stack of crates and garden tools.

Quietly, he turns on the radio and begins to TRANSMIT IN GERMAN...

CUT TO:

EXT. ABBEY - MOMENTS LATER

Outside the abbey the afternoon sun sinks on the horizon.

With a BACKPACK and a RIFLE over his shoulder, Capt. Scott prepares to leave.

On the steps of the abbey, Vivienne looks at him.

Jasper is not present.

CAPT. SCOTT
 You'll tell him goodbye for me?

VIVIENNE
 I feel like I should wake him.
 He'll be upset.

CAPT. SCOTT
 It's better he rest.

VIVIENNE
 I don't know why you risked it, but
 thank you for bringing him here.

Vivienne looks in Scott's eyes, holding a moment too long, glimpsing the broken man beneath the uniform.

There is something so fierce yet disarming about her gaze, and inside himself, he cannot help but feel attracted to her.

CAPT. SCOTT

I...

He stops himself, then glances at the sun sinking in the western sky.

CAPT. SCOTT (CONT'D)

I should go.

She nods.

As he turns to walk away she calls to him...

VIVIENNE

Captain?

CAPT. SCOTT

Yes?

Scott looks at her.

VIVIENNE

His father died for that map. You get it where it needs to go.

INT. SLEEPING ROOM - ABBEY - SAME MOMENT

With the windows covered, Jasper sleeps on the makeshift bed in a dark room.

Vivienne sits nearby on a bench watching him sleep.

Holding back the sadness inside her, Vivienne studies Jasper's young face: his mouth open slightly ajar, his eyes closed and dreaming of a more peaceful place.

As Jasper sleeps, Vivienne stands and parts the curtains covering a small window...

VIVIENNE'S P.O.V. THROUGH WINDOW: Vivienne peers out through the small leaded glass window at the gardens in the rear of the abbey. WHITE BLOSSOMS flutter off the fruit trees in the afternoon breeze...

As Vivienne starts to close the curtain she SUDDENLY NOTICES JEAN emerge out of the Abbey Garden shed.

Unaware he has been seen, Jean quickly shuts the shed door behind him, and cuts across the grounds and out of sight...

CUT TO:

EXT. GARDEN TOOL SHED - MOMENTS LATER

Alone, Vivienne opens the wooden door to the garden shed.

Her eyes scan the interior, noticing nothing out of the ordinary...

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS - MOMENTS LATER

The wind has picked up, blowing out of the west.

Moving toward the sinking sun, Capt. Scott hikes alone through the woods, paralleling a dirt road in the distance...

CUT TO:

INT. RECTORY - ABBEY - MOMENTS LATER

Using CIGARETTES as currency, Jean sits across the wooden table from THREE OTHER YOUNG FRENCH FIGHTERS engrossed in a game of POKER as...

In the background, Vivienne enters the rectory carrying SOMETHING UNSEEN and silently approaches the table from the blind side...

Seated at the table, Jean grins as he wins...

But as he slides his hand forward to retrieve the CIGARETTES he just won, the BLADE TIP OF A FRENCH BAYONET IS VIOLENTLY DRIVEN THROUGH THE TOP OF JEAN'S OUTSTRETCHED HAND, PINNING IT TO THE SURFACE OF THE WOODEN TABLE...

Jean SHRIEKS as VIVIENNE PLANTS HER KNEE HARD IN THE CENTER OF JEAN'S BACK, WRAPS THE TRANSMITTER CORD FROM THE HIDDEN GERMAN RADIO AROUND JEAN'S NECK, AND PULLS TIGHT...

Shocked, the THREE OTHER MEN BACK OFF as Vivienne chokes Jean from behind...

VIVIENNE
(in French)
You fucking traitor!

Jean's face floods deep red as blood pools around his hand pinned to the table...

VIVIENNE (CONT'D)
How much time do we have!

Jean tries to resist, but Vivienne pulls the cord harder...

VIVIENNE (CONT'D)
How much time!

HARD CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS - SAME MOMENT

Thirty yards off the dirt road, Scott leans his rifle against a tree and stops to take a COMPASS READING.

Red afternoon sunlight filters through the blowing leaves and dances on the forest floor all around him.

He notes the direction, then checks his watch.

WHEN SUDDENLY SCOTT HEARS SOMETHING...

A LOW, RUMBLING SOUND RISES IN THE DISTANCE, GROWING LOUDER AND LOUDER...

THE RUMBLING GROWS LOUDER, APPROACHING...

Scott falls to one knee and camouflages himself in the underbrush...

Suddenly through the trees, Scott sees THREE GERMAN TIGER TANKS ROARING UP THE DIRT ROAD.

The tanks are immediately followed by TWO ARMORED TRANSPORT VEHICLES carrying 30 HEAVILY-ARMED GERMAN COMMANDOS.

THEY ARE MOVING FAST, HEADED DIRECTLY FOR THE ABBEY...

CUT TO:

EXT. VEGETABLE GARDEN - ABBEY - MOMENTS LATER

In the Abbey's vegetable garden, an elderly NUN (70's) kneels in her robes, tending a row of young tomato plants in silence.

Her aged hands move thoughtfully, pulling weed sprouts and dead-heading dry blossoms...

WHEN SUDDENLY, THE SOIL AROUND HER HANDS BEGINS TO VIBRATE.

SHE LOOKS UP, HEARING THE HEAVY RUMBLE OF THE TANKS IN THE DISTANCE...

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. RECTORY - ABBEY - SECONDS LATER

VIVIENNE and the other RESISTANCE MEMBERS SCRAMBLE TO GATHER WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION...

They LOCK AND LOAD as Vivienne, now in command since her brother's death, orders the fighters...

VIVIENNE

(in French)

You know your positions. Two grenades per person. We hold them until we get the rest out the tunnel...

CUT TO:

EXT. LEAD TIGER TANK - MOMENTS LATER

In his combat uniform, Commander Bushnell stands in the open hatch of the lead Tiger Tank advancing on the Abbey.

As they clear the woods, Bushnell ORDERS THE TANK TO STOP.

The massive war machines halt on a dime, leaving a swell of dust drifting around them.

Bushnell raises a pair of BINOCULARS to his eyes...

QUICK CUT TO:

POV SHOT THROUGH BINOCULARS:

Bushnell takes in the Abbey.

He sees a DOZEN ROBED NUNS scattering throughout the grounds...

Bushnell SHIFTS HIS VIEW and sees a GROUP OF THREE ARMED MEN moving in formation across the court yard.

Bushnell calls out to the TANK COMMANDERS as he peers through the field glasses...

BUSHNELL

(calling out, in German)

Three man rifle team on the left flank! Two hundred meters out behind the wall...

BUSHNELL SHIFTS HIS VIEW TO THE BELL TOWER, WHERE HE SEES A FLASH OF MOVEMENT...

BUSHNELL ADJUSTS THE FOCAL RING ON THE BINOCULARS AND SEES TWO MEN IN THE TOP BELL TOWER, SCRAMBLING TO READY A MACHINE GUN POSITION...

BUSHNELL (CONT'D)
 (calling out, in German)
 Light machine gun in the tower...

CUT TO:

INT. SLEEPING ROOM - ABBEY - SECONDS LATER

Vivienne bursts through the door into the dark room where Jasper lies fast asleep.

VIVIENNE
 Jasper! Wake up! Wake up!

Jasper wakes, startled by her urgency ...

VIVIENNE (CONT'D)
 Put on your shoes! We have to move
 right now...

IN THAT INSTANT, VIVIENNE'S VOICE IS DROWNED OUT BY THE HOWL OF INCOMING ROUNDS...

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. BELL TOWER - SAME MOMENT

THREE 88MM EXPLOSIVE SHELLS MOVING AT A 1000 METERS PER SECOND PUNCH THROUGH THE MAGNIFICENT BAROQUE BELL TOWER.

EXPLODING ON IMPACT, THE ROUNDS RIP APART THE TOP SECTION OF THE SPIRE...

THE FRENCH MACHINE GUNNERS IN THE TOWER ARE KILLED INSTANTLY.

CUT TO:

EXT. ABBEY WALL - SECONDS LATER

Using the five-foot-high perimeter wall for cover, HALF A DOZEN FRENCH FIGHTERS OPEN FIRE on the GERMAN POSITION...

CUT BACK TO:

EXT. TIGER TANK - SAME MOMENT

As rounds hum past, TWO HUNTER TEAMS OF GERMAN COMMANDOS WAIT SAFELY IN THE WINGS BEHIND THE TIGERS as...

Bushnell yells again to the Tank Commanders...

BUSHNELL
Adjust targets...

THE TANKS ADJUST THEIR MAIN GUNS...

In a deafening barrage, ALL THREE TIGERS FIRE THEIR CANNONS IN UNISON, DECIMATING THE SECTION OF PERIMETER WALL THE FRENCH FIGHTERS HIDE BEHIND...

The Fighters fall back to alternative positions as Bushnell SIGNALS TO HIS MEN.

TWO HUNTER GROUPS OF GERMAN COMMANDOS FAN OUT AND ADVANCE ON THE ABBEY.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR - SAME MOMENT

Holding Jasper's hand, with a submachine gun slung over her shoulder, Vivienne follows SIX OTHER YOUNG FRENCH FIGHTERS down a corridor into the Abbey church...

CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

VIVIENNE AND THE OTHERS HURRY DOWN THE CENTER AISLE OF THE CHURCH WHEN SUDDENLY...

A TANK SHELL STRIKES THE VAULTED CEILING AND EXPLODES.

THE BLAST CONCUSSION SHATTERS THE 300-YEAR-OLD STAINED GLASS WINDOWS...

VIVIENNE SCREAMS AND COVERS JASPER'S BODY AS FRAGMENTS OF GLASS AND STONE SHOWER DOWN ON THE FLOOR.

Vivienne calls out to the fighters further ahead...

VIVIENNE
(yelling to the others)
Get to the tunnel!

Drowning out her voice, ANOTHER EXPLOSIVE SHELL RIPS THROUGH THE WALL OF THE CHURCH.

There is a MOMENT OF BLACKNESS...

Vivienne's EARS RING horribly.

STUNNED BY THE BLAST, VIVIENNE STRAINS TO GET HER BEARINGS AS DUST CLOUDS THE INTERIOR OF THE CHURCH.

Jasper coughs and Vivienne covers his mouth with her neck scarf, allowing him to breathe.

As the dust begins to settle, she sees daylight drifting in through a gaping hole in the church wall.

THE BLOODY BODIES OF HER OTHER COMRADES LAY STREWN ACROSS THE CHURCH PEWS AHEAD OF THEM.

MANY OF THEIR LIMBS HAVE BEEN HORRIFICALLY SEVERED BY THE IMPACT OF THE BLAST.

THEIR DEAD FACES ARE CAKED GREY WITH DUST.

ALL SIX ARE DEAD...

VIVIENNE (CONT'D)
(to herself)
My god...

SUDDENLY VIVIENNE SEES SOMETHING MOVE FROM THE CORNER OF HER EYE...

THREE ARMED GERMAN COMMANDOS CLIMB THROUGH THE HOLE IN THE WALL ENTERING THE CHURCH.

WITHOUT HESITATION, VIVIENNE SHOVES JASPER DOWN BETWEEN TWO PEWS, RAISES HER SUBMACHINE GUN, AND OPENS FIRE ON THE COMMANDOS...

IN A MERCILESS STREAM OF FULLY AUTOMATIC ROUNDS, VIVIENNE CUTS DOWN ALL THREE GERMANS, FIRING UNTIL HER WEAPON BREAKS EMPTY.

WITHOUT MISSING A BEAT, SHE PULLS THE SPENT MAGAZINE FROM HER WEAPON, PITCHES IT ASIDE, AND INSERTS A FULLY LOADED ONE FROM HER SHOULDER BAG.

SHE RACKS HER WEAPON ACTION, STEPS FORWARD AND FIRES MORE ROUNDS INTO THE WOUNDED BODIES OF THE GERMANS, MAKING SURE THEY ARE DEAD.

Then she calls to Jasper...

VIVIENNE (CONT'D)
(to Jasper)
Come on! Now!

INT. CHURCH SACRISTY - MOMENTS LATER

Vivienne and Jasper run into the Sacristy room at the back of the church and shut the door.

The RELIGIOUS VESTMENTS hang in a wardrobe.

ARTICLES OF THE SACRAMENT lay out on preparation counters nearby.

Vivienne GRABS AN EDGE OF THE HEAVY 8X10 RUG on the floor...

VIVIENNE
(to Jasper)
Help me...

Jasper grabs another edge of the thick rug and they roll it back.

Beneath the rug is a SMALL WOODEN TRAP DOOR IN THE FLOOR.

VIVIENNE LIFTS THE TRAP DOOR REVEALING A LADDER LEADING DOWN TO A TUNNEL SPACE BENEATH THE CHURCH...

CUT TO:

EXT. ABBEY - SECONDS LATER

THE TIGER TANKS ROLL THROUGH THE GATES OF THE ABBEY.

THE TANKS SEPARATE AND SURROUND THE ABBEY GROUNDS, DRIVING OVER THE GARDENS, DESTROYING FLOWER BEDS, STATUES, AND FOUNTAINS IN THEIR VIOLENT PATH.

TWO FLEEING FRENCH FIGHTERS, CUT OFF FROM THE ESCAPE ROUTE, FIRE THEIR WEAPONS IN VAIN AS THEY ARE CRUSHED BENEATH THE TREADS OF THE MASSIVE MACHINES...

INT. TUNNEL - SECONDS LATER

On their hands and knees, Vivienne and Jasper crawl through the narrow underground tunnel...

CUT TO:

INT. RECTORY - MOMENTS LATER

Bushnell, flanked by several German Commandos, enters the rectory.

He peers around at the abandoned weapons and supplies.

Bushnell steps to the window, picking up a woman's HAIRBRUSH Vivienne left behind.

He looks at Vivienne's long hair held in the bristles. He raises the brush to his nose, smelling perfume.

A RANKING GERMAN COMMANDO enters the rectory and SALUTES HIM.

BUSHNELL

What is your report?

RANKING GERMAN COMMANDO

(in German)

We've secured the perimeter, sir.

BUSHNELL

And the American?

RANKING GERMAN COMMANDO

We haven't found him yet, sir. But we're still clearing the last building now.

BUSHNELL

Casualties?

RANKING GERMAN COMMANDO

Sixteen dead insurgents.

BUSHNELL

And ours?

The Commando pauses, then answers...

RANKING GERMAN COMMANDO

We have three casualties, sir.

Bushnell's face tightens...

BUSHNELL

Who?

RANKING GERMAN COMMANDO

(confused)

Who, sir?...

BUSHNELL
 Yes...*who*. Which of my men have
 been killed?

RANKING GERMAN COMMANDO
 Adler, Holzmann, and Oelberg,
 sir...

There is a beat as Bushnell's face grows distant, picturing
 the three young men in his mind.

BUSHNELL
 What about the woman leader and her
 nephew?

RANKING GERMAN COMMANDO
 We haven't found her either, sir.
 As you ordered, fire team two is
 sweeping the woods as we speak.
 But...perhaps she was never here...

Bushnell tosses the HAIR BRUSH onto the table.

BUSHNELL
 (re: the brush,
 rhetorical)
 Then who the fuck does that belong
 to?

The Commando remains silent...

BUSHNELL (CONT'D)
 They're here and they're looking
 for a way out. Find them.

CUT TO:

INT. TUNNEL - MOMENTS LATER

Breathing hard, Vivienne and Jasper crawl through the
 darkness.

As they reach the end, the tunnel turns upward.

Vivienne climbs up several wooden steps, then pushes at the
 underside of a HATCH DOOR above her head...

CUT TO:

EXT. ABBEY - SAME MOMENT

A cloud of black smoke climbs into the sky as the majestic, 300 hundred-year-old Abbey burns in the late morning sun.

The bell tower has collapsed.

The gardens are decimated.

DEAD BODIES are strewn on the grounds.

What was moments before a sanctuary of faith and refuge, is now a place of death.

EXT. NEARBY WOODS - SAME MOMENT

Damp wind blows through the woods as the Abbey burns in the distance.

Thirty yards into the trees, a PATCH OF LEAVES COVERING THE FOREST FLOOR LIFTS UPWARD, REVEALING A CAMOUFLAGED TRAP DOOR IN THE GROUND.

Vivienne emerges from the tunnel opening.

She is filthy and her knees are raw and bloody from crawling.

Vivienne lays her weapon on the ground and crouches on her knees, reaching down into the tunnel for Jasper's hand.

She grips her nephew's wrist and pulls him up into the daylight.

But as she turns back, SHE REALIZES HER WEAPON IS NO LONGER ON THE GROUND BESIDE HER.

VIVIENNE LOOKS UP JUST AS A GERMAN BOOT KICKS HER HARD IN THE RIBS, KNOCKING THE WIND OUT OF HER...

Letting go of his wrist, Jasper slides back down into the tunnel opening...

VIVIENNE
(to Jasper)
Run!

But another GERMAN COMMANDO seizes Jasper by the back of his coat and pulls him out of the hole.

VIVIENNE (CONT'D)
Don't you touch him!

VIVIENNE IS POUNDED BY ANOTHER BOOT TO THE STOMACH, SILENCING HER.

HER BODY FOLDS UP ON THE GROUND, GAGGING AND GASPING FOR BREATH.

A moment passes as she tries to take in air.

She is surrounded by FOUR GERMAN COMMANDOS.

A stocky BLOND COMMANDO grips Jasper by his hair.

All four men stare down at Vivienne's hiked skirt, her underwear and bare thighs.

There is a beat of charged silence.

BLOND COMMANDO
(to the others)
Turn her over...face down. Hold her
arms...

Suddenly A SHOT RINGS OUT in the distance...

A BULLET STRIKES THE BLOND COMMANDO IN THE TEETH, EXITING OUT THE BASE OF HIS SKULL, KILLING HIM INSTANTLY.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. POPLAR GROVE - SIXTY METERS AWAY - SAME MOMENT

KNEELING IN A GROVE OF POPLARS USING A TREE STUMP AS A GUN REST, CAPT. SCOTT RACKS THE BOLT ACTION ON HIS RIFLE, AIMS AND FIRES AGAIN...

CUT BACK TO:

EXT. WOODS - LESS THAN A SECOND LATER

A SECOND GERMAN COMMANDO IS STRUCK WITH A RIFLE ROUND DEAD IN THE STERNUM, DROPPING HIM TO THE GROUND.

THE REMAINING TWO COMMANDOS RAISE THEIR WEAPONS AND SCAN THE TREES, TRYING TO FIND THEIR TARGET...

QUICK CUT TO:

EXT. ABBEY - SAME MOMENT

Bushnell, standing outside the burning Abbey, HEARS THE RIFLE SHOTS in the woods nearby...

He yells to his men...

BUSHNELL
The woods! Go! Go!

CUT TO:

EXT. POPLAR GROVE - SECONDS LATER

As Scott squeezes the rifle trigger again we QUICK CUT TO:

A POV SHOT THROUGH CAPT. SCOTT'S RIFLE SCOPE: WE SEE THE
THIRD COMMANDO'S NECK OPEN UP AND FLARE WITH BLOOD...

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS - LESS THAN A SECOND LATER

UNABLE TO LOCATE THE SHOOTER, THE LAST GERMAN COMMANDO
ATTEMPTS TO FALL BACK AND FIND COVER, ONLY TO TURN AND SEE
VIVIENNE, HOLDING ONE OF THE DEAD COMMANDO'S PISTOLS.

SHE FIRES FIVE QUICK SHOTS AT CLOSE RANGE INTO THE GERMAN'S
CHEST AND HEAD, DROPPING HIM.

Vivienne and Jasper see Capt. Scott emerge from the trees
ahead.

She GRABS JASPER'S HAND AND RUNS toward him...

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS - MOMENTS LATER

Capt. Scott, Vivienne, and Jasper race through the woods,
trying to put distance between them and Bushnell's men at the
Abbey...

BEGIN CROSS TO:

EXT. TIGER TANK - SECONDS LATER

A Tiger Tank crushes a path through a field of small trees as
it races through the forest landscape.

Bushnell braces himself in the open tank hatch.

Like a juggernaut, the huge machine drives over everything in
its path...

After a moment the TANK HALTS.

Bushnell scans the forest ahead, raising his BINOCULARS to his eyes...

QUICK CUT TO:

POV SHOT THROUGH BINOCULARS: half a mile ahead, Bushnell sees a glimpse of Capt. Scott, Vivienne, and Jasper running down a wooded embankment toward a rushing river in the distance...

CUT TO:

EXT. EMBANKMENT - SECONDS LATER

Vivienne and Capt. Scott help Jasper down the steep embankment, when suddenly they hear the THUMP in the distance of a TANK CANNON, and less than a second later the HOWL OF AN INCOMING ROUND...

CAPT. SCOTT
(to Vivienne and Jasper)
Get down!

All three of them hit the ground as a SHELL RIPS THROUGH THE TREES ABOVE THEM AND VIOLENTLY EXPLODES, SHREDDING TREES AS IF THEY WERE MATCHSTICKS...

CAPT. SCOTT (CONT'D)
Run for the river!

CROSS CUT TO:

EXT. TIGER TANK - SECONDS LATER

From the hatch, with his binoculars to his eyes, Bushnell yells down to the Tank Commander...

BUSHNELL
(in German)
Fire!

CROSS CUT TO:

EXT. WOODED VALLEY - SECONDS LATER

Scott, Vivienne, and Jasper run through a marshy valley toward the RIVER in the distance.

They hear the howl of another INCOMING TANK ROUND...and take cover as the shell hits the ground near them, showering them with muddy debris...

CROSS CUT TO:

EXT. TIGER TANK - SECONDS LATER

A pale-eyed TANK COMMANDER, (40's) stands in the secondary tank hatch, peering out in the far distance.

They watch Capt. Scott, Vivienne, and Jasper run for the river.

The Tank Commander addresses Bushnell...

TANK COMMANDER
(to Bushnell, in German)
The Tiger is too heavy to take into that marsh. And even if we could, the river is too deep in that location for us to cross.

Bushnell doesn't respond.

TANK COMMANDER (CONT'D)
(to Bushnell, in German)
Sir, if they make the river, we will lose them.

Bushnell shakes his head.

BUSHNELL
If the water is too deep for a tank, then the water is too deep for a little boy.

Bushnell calls down into the tank...

BUSHNELL (CONT'D)
Hand up my rifle!

CROSS CUT TO:

EXT. OPEN FIELD - SECONDS LATER

Capt. Scott, Vivienne, and Jasper run across a stretch of open wet ground toward the river's edge...

CROSS CUT TO:

EXT. TIGER TANK - SAME MOMENT

Bushnell rests the barrel of his modified K98 MAUSER RIFLE on the edge of the tank hatch.

The Tank Commander looks at him...

TANK COMMANDER
That's nearly a thousand meters,
sir...

Bushnell pauses, noting the light, left-to-right cross wind rustling in the tree leaves.

BUSHNELL
Stop talking.

Bushnell squints his left eye and peers through the TELESCOPIC SCOPE with his right...

CROSS CUT TO:

EXT. RIVER'S EDGE - SECONDS LATER

Capt. Scott, Vivienne, and Jasper reach the river's edge.

A hardwood forest lies on the other side.

The river is only twenty yards across, but the water is dark and moves quickly.

Vivienne eyes the rushing water.

VIVIENNE
It's too deep.

CAPT. SCOTT
We don't have a choice. Come on...

Capt. Scott grabs Jasper's hand.

CAPT. SCOTT (CONT'D)
Hold my hand.

Jasper grabs his hand and the three wade into the cold river...

QUICK CROSS CUT
TO:

EXT. TIGER TANK - SAME MOMENT

Bushnell peers down his rifle scope, breathing slowly...

CROSS CUT TO:

EXT. RIVER - SECONDS LATER

Within steps, the rushing water has already reached Jasper's chest.

CAPT. SCOTT
 (to Jasper)
 You're going to have to get on my
 back!

Jasper NODS, struggling to keep his balance.

Scott reaches for him, about to lift Jasper onto his back,
 WHEN SOMETHING CATCHES CAPT. SCOTT'S EYE AT THE EDGE OF THE
 WOODS ACROSS THE RIVER.

For a split second, Scott pauses...

At the far treeline he sees A WHITE DOG.

The lone animal stands motionless, ghostlike, watching them
 struggle in the river...

CAPT. SCOTT (CONT'D)
 (to himself)
 What...

SUDDENLY A HIGH VELOCITY BULLET PUNCHES INTO CAPT. SCOTT'S
 STOMACH AND EXITS OUT HIS SIDE BENEATH HIS RIBS...

Time seems to slow for an instant as a look of disbelief
 fills Scott's face.

Bullet impact rushes through his body, but Scott's gaze stays
 on the White Dog across the river...

THE ANIMAL'S EXPRESSION IS COMPLETELY UNMOVED, NOT EVEN
 FLINCHING AS...

CAPT. SCOTT LOSES HIS BALANCE AND IS SWEEPED AWAY BY THE
 POWERFUL CURRENT, UNINTENTIONALLY DRAGGING JASPER AND
 VIVIENNE WITH HIM.

CROSS CUT TO:

EXT. TIGER TANK - SECONDS LATER

Bushnell RACKS THE EMPTY CARTRIDGE out of his rifle as Capt. Scott and the others are swept down river in the distance, disappearing from view.

Bushnell turns to the Tank Commander beside him.

TANK COMMANDER

About a kilometer downstream the river forks in several directions.

Bushnell Nods.

BUSHNELL

One way or another, they all end at the sea. I want them found.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. RIVER - UNDERWATER - SECONDS LATER

UNDERWATER, Capt. Scott fights for the surface as he's dragged through the river current.

He hears the MUFFLED SCREAM of Vivienne somewhere out of his vision...

CUT TO:

EXT. RIVER SURFACE - CONTINUOUS

Scott breaks the river surface and GASPS for air.

He frantically scans his surroundings as the rushing water pulls him downstream.

The river is surrounded by deep forest on all sides.

He hears Vivienne's screaming...

VIVIENNE

Jasper! Jasper!

Scott turns and sees Vivienne upstream of him.

She shrieks with fear, unable to locate her nephew.

Wounded, Capt. Scott takes a deep breath and dives beneath the surface...

CUT TO:

EXT. RIVER - UNDERWATER - CONTINUOUS

Scott dives beneath the surface.

He peers around, but the moving water is so dense with sediment from the rain, he can only see a few feet in front of his face.

Scott kick his legs, swimming deeper as roots and leaves float by him.

Out of air, he turns for the surface...

Then Scott sees a glimpse of SMALL LEATHER SHOE drifting past at the edge of his vision.

Scott stretches out, reaching into the darkness, grasping...

His hand finds the shoe, he feels the weight of the boy, and pulls with all his strength until...

CUT TO:

EXT. RIVER SURFACE - SECONDS LATER

Scott breaks through the surface with Jasper in his arms.

Jasper COUGHS, SPITTING UP WATER from his stomach.

As a trained paratrooper would, Scott cradles Jasper's head in his arms from behind, holding the boy's chin above water as they float downstream.

CUT TO:

EXT. RIVER BANK - DOWNSTREAM - AN HOUR LATER

Dark clouds overtake the sky as the red sun sinks into the horizon.

Several kilometers downstream, Capt. Scott, Vivienne, and Jasper drag themselves up a muddy river embankment.

They hide themselves from view under a canopy of willow trees.

In the distance, they can hear GERMAN SEARCH PLANES crisscrossing the sky.

Leaning against the tree trunk, Capt. Scott winces in pain as he pulls the SMALL MEDICAL PACK from the shoulder pocket of his jump jacket.

He struggles to unsnap his jacket and check his wound...

Vivienne kneels in the moss beside him.

VIVIENNE

Let me.

Vivienne gently pulls up his shirt and examines the entry wound in the lower left side of his stomach.

She is methodical. It's clear she has done this before.

VIVIENNE (CONT'D)

Turn on your side.

Scott turns his body and Vivienne feels his lower back, locating the exit wound.

She unzips the small medical pack and rips open a SULFANILAMIDE ENVELOPE.

Jasper watches from a few feet away as Vivienne sprinkles the WHITE SULPHUROUS POWDER on both sides of Scott's wound.

VIVIENNE (CONT'D)

Can you sit up?

Scott nods and slowly sits up.

Vivienne tears open a packaged FIELD DRESSING and begins wrapping his wound.

They hear A SEARCH PLANE passing in the distance.

CAPT. SCOTT

Jasper, how far are we from the coast?

JASPER

Ten...maybe eleven kilometers...

Scott's expression is serious and he absorbs the information.

Capt. Scott can feel Jasper's scared gaze as he watches him.

CAPT. SCOTT

I can walk that.

Vivienne ties off the bandage and looks Scott in the eye.

VIVIENNE

No. You can't and you know it.

Scott returns her look.

CAPT. SCOTT
I have to keep moving. My
extraction window is from 0400-0600
tomorrow morning.

VIVIENNE
They're combing the area. We can't
go anywhere until dark.

Suddenly, a DISTANT SOUND echoes through the woods. They stop talking and listen.

It sounds like a CELLO...

CUT TO:

EXT. RIVER COTTAGE - MOMENTS LATER

As twilight falls in the woods.

Following the sound of the music, Scott, Vivienne, and Jasper walk silently through the woods downstream.

Scott moves slowly holding his wounded side.

As they reach a clearing, they see a SMALL COTTAGE at the river's edge.

On the PORCH...A SPRING-WOUND PHONOGRAPH PLAYS THE SARABANDE MOVEMENT OF J.S. BACH'S CELLO SUITE#1 IN G MAJOR.

The haunting cello music echoes through the woods.

An ELDERLY FRENCH COUPLE, both in their eighties, DANCE TOGETHER IN THE OVERGROWN YARD.

The WHITE-HAIRED WOMAN moves slowly in her husband's frail arms.

The short, thin OLD MAN touches his forehead to his wife's as they sway together, safe in the melody of another time and place.

As the music ends, the old man kisses her.

Hiding in the darkening woods, Jasper touches Capt. Scott and points at something...

Scott and Vivienne follow Jasper's sight line to a small WOODEN ROW BOAT, tied up in the reeds at the river's edge.

Scott motions to Vivienne and Jasper, and slowly the three step back into the darkening woods, never noticed by the elderly couple.

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODEN ROW BOAT - SEVERAL HOURS LATER - NIGHT

Clouds pass over the moon.

In the small wooden boat, Scott, Vivienne, and Jasper drift silently down stream through the darkness.

It has grown cold and Jasper sleeps curled up in the bottom of the boat under Scott's jump jacket.

Capt. Scott shivers in the wooden seat.

Vivienne sits beside him.

VIVIENNE

I can smell the salt in air. We are to the sea.

She looks at Scott's pale face.

VIVIENNE (CONT'D)

You've lost a lot of blood.

Scott nods, gritting his teeth to keep them from chattering.

Vivienne puts her arm around him, pulling him close.

Scott closes his eyes, feeling the warmth of her...

Vivienne offers a distant smile.

VIVIENNE (CONT'D)

You know...you remind me of a crush I once had. A young man from Caen. I'd pass him in the afternoons on Rue Saint-Sauveur when I was finished at the shop. Sometimes I would follow him. His hands were always in his pockets and he needed a haircut, but he was beautiful like you. I would watch from across the street as he entered his building and wonder which window was his. I imagined a life for us together. Conversations we'd someday have. The countries we'd see.

(MORE)

VIVIENNE (CONT'D)

The sound of children that would
fill the rooms of a house that
would never exist.

Scott watches Vivienne's face in the darkness as she speaks.

VIVIENNE (CONT'D)

He was killed in the spring
bombings of 1940. (pause) I never
spoke a word to him. I never kissed
him.

She rests her forehead against his neck.

VIVIENNE (CONT'D)

I used to think that God watched
over us. That he believed in us as
we believed in him. That we were
his children and he loved us...

There's a beat of silence as they both look down at the
little boy sleeping at their feet.

CAPT. SCOTT

Now what do you think?

VIVIENNE

I think he's angry, because we've
broken his heart.

CUT TO:

EXT. NIGHT SKY - MOMENTS LATER

The heavens above are illuminated with millions of bright
stars, as far below a tiny boat drifts down a dark river with
a man, woman, and child...

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODEN ROW BOAT - LATER

With Jasper curled up at their feet, Capt. Scott and Vivienne
sleep in each others arms...

WHEN SUDDENLY THE NIGHT SKY ABOVE THEM POPS WITH FOUR SMALL
RED EXPLOSIONS.

Shadows shift over the landscape as BURNING MAGNESIUM
PARACHUTE FLARES DRIFT ACROSS THE SKY ILLUMINATING THE RIVER
LANDSCAPE IN VIBRANT RED...

They have drifted into a GERMAN POSITION...

CAPT. SCOTT
Get out! Now!

ALL THREE BAIL OUT OF THE BOAT and swim for the river bank as...

A GERMAN MG34 MACHINE GUN NEST OPENS FIRE from the far side of the river, arcing a stream of TRACER ROUNDS across the dark water.

CUT TO:

EXT. RIVERBANK - SECONDS LATER

Scott, Vivienne, and Jasper scramble up the river bank and over the first rise, out of the reach of the machine gun nest on the other side of the river.

The parachute flares in the sky burn-out and instantaneously the landscape falls into darkness.

Close enough to hear the sea in the distance, the topography has changed from forest to coastal poplar trees and dunes.

Capt. Scott's mind races as he grips his wound.

Blood soaks his wet jacket...

They can hear the voices of German Soldiers shouting from the far side of the river.

Wincing in pain, Scott checks his compass, then he checks his watch.

He points westward into the dark dunes.

CAPT. SCOTT
(to Vivienne and Jasper)
The pick-up boat is two kilometers over those dunes. The countersign challenge is "BLUE". The response is "MOON". You've got thirty one minutes.

Vivienne looks Scott in the eye, understanding...

Capt. Scott HANDS THE WATERPROOF INTELLIGENCE MAP to Vivienne.

CAPT. SCOTT (CONT'D)
If it comes to it, the Germans
cannot lay eyes on that map.

Vivienne nods, understanding...

CAPT. SCOTT (CONT'D)
I'll buy you as much time as I can.

Vivienne hands Scott her shoulder satchel.

VIVIENNE
There are two grenades and a
Walther...

Jasper senses what is going on...

JASPER
(to Capt. Scott)
No...wait...we're not going without
you.

Scott kneels and looks at Jasper.

CAPT. SCOTT
Jasper, I'll never make it there in
time. The window is closing.
They'll take you and your aunt on
to England.

Capt. Scott pauses, then reaches into his shirt collar and
PULLS A SMALL CHAIN FROM AROUND HIS NECK. ON THE END OF THE
CHAIN IS A SMALL WORN SILVER PENDANT.

He hands it to Jasper.

Jasper looks at the ST. CHRISTOPHER PENDANT.

CAPT. SCOTT (CONT'D)
I've had that for a long time. Now
it's yours.

Jasper looks at him.

Tears well in his young eyes.

JASPER
You're going to die.

Scott nods.

CAPT. SCOTT
Yes. I am.

Scott offers a pained smile.

CAPT. SCOTT (CONT'D)
But you're going to live.

Vivienne tears up as she and Scott lock gazes...

THERE IS A MOMENT OF SILENT RECOGNITION BETWEEN THEM.

A SECOND SORTIE OF PARACHUTE FLARES LAUNCH INTO THE SKY,
ILLUMINATING THE DARK LANDSCAPE ONCE AGAIN IN A BURNING RED
GLOW...

For an instant, Vivienne touches Capt. Scott's arm...

CAPT. SCOTT (CONT'D)
Go.

Without another word, Vivienne GRABS JASPER'S HAND AND THEY
RUN TOWARD THE SEA.

There is a beat as Scott WATCHES THEM DISAPPEAR OVER THE SAND
DUNE, THEN...

Scott slowly LIFTS HIS SHIRT. HIS FIELD DRESSING HAS SLIPPED
OFF REVEALING THE BULLET HOLE IN HIS ABDOMEN.

As a wave of pain induced nausea rushes through his body,
Scott fights to remain focused.

With his index finger, Scott pushes A BLOODY PIECE OF THE WET
FIELD BANDAGE INTO THE WOUND HOLE LIKE A PLUG.

In the distance he hears VOICES YELLING IN GERMAN, closing in
on his position.

Suddenly up river, he hears the SOUND OF A MILITARY FREIGHT
TRAIN approaching in the distance.

He turns and looks toward the sound.

As the airborne flares drift westward, Capt. Scott sees...

A massive RAILROAD BRIDGE spanning high over the water 300
meters down river.

It's clear by his expression that Capt. Scott RECOGNIZES THE
DISTINCT ARCHED STONE PYLON STRUCTURE OF THE BRIDGE FROM THE
AERIAL RECONNAISSANCE PHOTOS FROM THE BRIEFING IN ENGLAND.

The freight train races over the bridge sixty-feet above the
river, and continues up the coastline.

Scott rises, his mind is racing...

He draws the WALTHER PISTOL from Vivienne's satchel and FIRES THREE SHOTS INTO THE SKY, intentionally revealing his position to the nearby soldiers, then he runs for the bridge.

CUT TO:

INT. MILITARY CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Headlights cut through the early morning dark as Bushnell, races in a convoy of several GERMAN MILIARY VEHICLES toward Capt. Scott's location.

BUSHNELL
(to the driver)
Faster. Drive!

A STAFF OFFICER briefs Bushnell as they ride...

STAFF OFFICER
(to Bushnell)
Sir, we're pushing him into a
bottle. He has nowhere to go...

CUT TO:

EXT. RAILROAD BRIDGE EMBANKMENT - MOMENTS LATER

In numbing pain, Scott fights his way up the blind side of the overgrown railroad embankment toward the elevated bridge.

In the distance he can hear GERMAN SHEPHERDS BARKING, picking up his scent...

As Scott reaches the top of the embankment, he drags himself on his hands and knees toward a lighted GUARD HUT at the entrance to the bridge.

QUICK CUT TO:

INT. GUARD HUT - BRIDGE - SAME MOMENT

Inside the guard hut, TWO ARMED GERMAN SENTRIES listen to their commanding officer's orders over a military radio headset...

CUT TO:

EXT. GUARD HUT - BRIDGE - SECONDS LATER

Fifteen meters away in the darkness, Capt. Scott lies on his stomach, UNSCREWING THE HANDLE CAPS OFF THE TWO 'POTATO-MASHER' GRENADES from Vivienne's satchel...

CUT TO:

EXT. RIVER ROAD STAGING AREA - SECONDS LATER

The convoy of military vehicles reaches the German staging area near the river.

Bushnell gets out the lead vehicle as DOZENS of his ELITE GERMAN COMMANDOS climb down from transport trucks and assemble in their hunter teams.

A heavy set RANKING OFFICER on the scene approaches Bushnell and salutes...

RANKING OFFICER
Heil Hitler...

Bushnell cuts him off...

BUSHNELL
Where is he?

The Ranking Officer is slightly taken aback, but continues talking...

RANKING OFFICER
The perimeter is sealed off. It's only a matter of time...

Suddenly A VIOLENT EXPLOSION DETONATES in the far background of the frame.

EVERYONE TURNS AS THEY SEE THE BRIDGE GUARD HUT GO UP IN FLAMES IN THE DISTANCE...

A GERMAN COMMANDO yells from a distance...

GERMAN COMMANDO
(from a distance)
The bridge! He's on the Bridge...

BUSHNELL
(to the Ranking Officer)
Listen to me. That man is carrying vital intelligence. Close the bridge off from both sides. Trap him. But do not kill him.

EXT. RAILROAD BRIDGE - MOMENTS LATER

The first light of dawn glows on the horizon.

Capt. Scott, barely able to stand, limps his way along the steel tracks toward the middle of the railroad bridge viaduct.

Fifty feet above the river, he reaches the center of the bridge and SITS DOWN.

Letting his feet hang over the edge, he holds pressure on his stomach wound as he looks out over the beautiful landscape.

Down below he can see GERMAN FORCES SWARMING ON THE RIVER BANKS.

He peers left and right, noting Bushnell's COMMANDOS closing off his exits on both ends of the bridge.

Advancing from both directions with their weapons raised, TWO TEAMS OF 30 GERMAN COMMANDOS slowly make their way toward Capt. Scott at the center of the bridge.

Behind the infantry, TIGER TANKS pull into position on the railroad embankments.

There is no way out.

The glow on the horizon grows as he checks his watch.

Capt. Scott ejects the magazine from the Walther handgun and checks for remaining ammunition.

He confirms what he already knows. The magazine is empty.

Scott is unarmed.

Scott pauses for a moment, then TOSSES THE PISTOL OFF THE BRIDGE, WATCHING IT FALL FIFTY FEET INTO THE RIVER BELOW.

CUT TO:

EXT. RAILROAD EMBANKMENT - SAME INSTANT

Standing next to a tank at the top of the railroad embankment, Bushnell watches Capt. Scott out on the bridge through his BINOCULARS.

He SEES SCOTT DROP HIS WEAPON off the edge.

Bushnell lowers his binoculars, thinking, CONSIDERING SOMETHING IN REACTION TO WHAT HE HAS SEEN...

CUT BACK TO:

EXT. RAILROAD BRIDGE - SECONDS LATER

At thirty meters out onto the bridge, both German hunter teams SUDDENLY HALT and HOLD THEIR POSITIONS.

Looking at the first glimpse of the rising sun, Capt. Scott's eyes begin to grow heavy with blood loss...

SUDDENLY HE HEARS BOOT STEPS approaching from down the tracks.

Capt. Scott lifts his head and sees Commander Bushnell walking toward him on the bridge.

Bushnell is alone.

He rests his hand cautiously on his holstered LUGER PISTOL as he approaches Scott.

QUICK CUT TO:

EXT. MULTIPLE SNIPER POSITIONS - SAME MOMENT

Multiple GERMAN SNIPERS in various positions have Capt. Scott dead-to-rights if he makes one wrong move...

CUT BACK TO:

EXT. RAILROAD BRIDGE - SECONDS LATER

As he nears, Bushnell calls out to Scott in English...

BUSHNELL

Hello...

Capt. Scott looks at the German Officer.

BUSHNELL (CONT'D)

I would like to talk with you, but I have to ask you to keep your hands visible, so my snipers don't cut our conversation short...

Scott's face is slicked with cold sweat. He's in bad shape.

BUSHNELL (CONT'D)
What is your rank?

CAPT. SCOTT
Captain.

BUSHNELL
U.S. Airborne. Correct?

CAPT. SCOTT
Yes.

More than A HUNDRED GERMAN SOLDIERS, SNIPERS, TANK CREWS, AND OFFICERS watch from a distance as...

BUSHNELL SITS DOWN ON THE EDGE OF THE BRIDGE A FEW FEET FROM CAPT. SCOTT.

They face the RISING SUN.

Looking at them from afar, in another time and place, they could be two childhood friends tossing stones off a bridge.

Bushnell glances at Scott's blood soaked uniform as he holds pressure on his belly.

BUSHNELL
(re: the wound)
I thought I got a piece of you. I wasn't sure. It was a long shot.

Scott looks at Bushnell's face.

CAPT. SCOTT
I don't have what you want. It's lost in the river.

Bushnell examines his face.

BUSHNELL
I imagined as much.

QUICK CUT TO:

EXT. SECLUDED BEACH - SAME MOMENT

As the first light of day rises, Vivienne and Jasper run down the last sand dune and look out at the sea.

The water is shrouded in marine layer fog.

The waves lap gently on the beach...

Holding Jasper's hand, Vivienne peers up the beach in both directions, looking at the bluffs and landmarks, verifying their position.

There is a moment of doubt, where it appears as though no one has come for them, then...

SUDDENLY, FIFTY METERS OFF SHORE, JASPER SEES A FLASH OF SIGNAL LIGHT...

As he points, showing his aunt, we hear Bushnell's voice lapse in...

BUSHNELL (V.O.)
Or the woman, perhaps she has it?

CUT BACK TO

EXT. VIADUCT RAILROAD BRIDGE - CENTER - SAME MOMENT

Bushnell sits beside Capt. Scott at the center of the massive bridge.

CAPT. SCOTT
I lost her in the river, too.

Bushnell smiles and FISHES A PACK OF CIGARETTES out of his uniform pocket.

He offers one to Scott.

Scott shakes his head.

CAPT. SCOTT (CONT'D)
I quit when I went to jump school.

Bushnell smiles.

BUSHNELL
That's good. Very smart. I'd say you'll live longer than me, but that might be a bit of a reach.

Bushnell looks at the sunrise and lights a cigarette for himself.

BUSHNELL (CONT'D)
It's the fifth of June. It's my daughter's birthday today.

CAPT. SCOTT
How old?

BUSHNELL

Ten. She's ten years old. I haven't see her in a year. (pause) And you? Do you have children?

Scott looks at the river, reflecting the red sunrise as it winds through the landscape at dawn.

CAPT. SCOTT

I have a boy.

Bushnell nods...

BUSHNELL

What's that like? Being the father of boy...

Scott stares into the rising sun.

CAPT. SCOTT

You have to learn as much as you teach.

Bushnell is about to say something, when Scott interrupts him...

CAPT. SCOTT (CONT'D)

Do you happen to know what time it is?

Bushnell checks his watch.

BUSHNELL

Five minutes after six.

Bushnell knocks the ash off the tip of his cigarette.

He glances at the HUNDREDS OF GERMAN SOLDIERS and firepower surrounding them...

BUSHNELL (CONT'D)

Do you have a pending engagement?

QUICK CUT TO:

EXT. EXTRACTION RAFT - SAME MOMENT

Disappearing into the fog, Vivienne and Jasper sit in the center seat of a small Zodiac-like EXTRACTION RAFT, flanked by SIX AMERICAN COMMANDOS, HEADED OUT SAFELY TO A SHIP AT SEA...

CUT BACK TO:

EXT. VIADUCT RAILROAD BRIDGE - CENTER - A SECOND LATER

Bushnell is awaiting a response as Scott stares up the river valley.

IN THE FAR DISTANCE, BACKLIT BY THE RISING RED SUN, THREE SHAPES APPEAR, FLYING JUST ABOVE THE WATER, GROWING LARGER BY THE SECOND, COMING IN FAST...

CAPT. SCOTT

Yeah. I do.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. RIVER VALLEY - SAME MOMENT

RACING AT ATTACK SPEED ONLY 50 METERS ABOVE THE WATER, THREE P-51 MUSTANGS LOADED WITH TWO 1000lb POUND BOMBS EACH, FLY IN TIGHT FORMATION...

CUT TO:

INT. P-51 COCKPIT - LEAD FIGHTER - A SECOND LATER

As they approach, the PILOT of the lead fighter sees the unexpected GERMAN INFANTRY and ARMOR PRESENCE on the bridge.

Flying close enough to see each other's facial expressions, the LEAD MUSTANG PILOT MAKES A FIST WITH HIS HAND and signals to the other two PILOTS positioned just off his wing tips...

CROSS CUT TO:

EXT. VIADUCT RAILROAD BRIDGE - CENTER - SAME MOMENT

BUSHNELL SEES THE MUSTANGS COMING IN LOW AND SEPARATE INTO AN AIR TO SURFACE ATTACK FORMATION.

ALL THREE MUSTANGS OPEN FIRE IN UNISON, BENDING RELENTLESS STREAMS OF .50 CALIBER CANNON FIRE ACROSS THE TOP OF THE BRIDGE...

CUT TO:

EXT. VIADUCT RAILROAD BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

EXPOSED, BUSHNELL'S SOLDIERS HAVE NOWHERE TO HIDE. THEY'RE CUT TO RIBBONS BY THE MUSTANG'S BRUTAL CANNON FIRE.

CHAOS SHREDS THEIR RANKS AS BUSHNELL'S MEN ARE DECIMATED BY THE LETHAL PRECISION OF THE PILOTS.

OVERTAKEN WITH PANIC, THE SOLDIERS RUN FOR THE EMBANKMENTS ON EITHER SIDE OF THE BRIDGE, TRAMPLING THEIR DEAD AS THEY RETREAT.

THE PLANES SEPARATE, RISE, AND VECTOR IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS.

THE LEAD MUSTANG BANKS HARD AND RISES, RELEASING A ONE-THOUSAND POUND BOMB ABOVE THE WESTERN BRIDGE EMBANKMENT.

AS THE MUSTANGS CLIMB, THE BOMB STRIKES A TIGER TANK ON THE EMBANKMENT, EXPLODING WITH INCREDIBLE FORCE, INCINERATING THE TANK AND A SQUAD OF GERMAN SOLDIERS.

CUT TO:

EXT. VIADUCT RAILROAD BRIDGE - CENTER - SAME MOMENT

Bushnell, draws his weapons and raises it at Captain Scott...

But before Bushnell can fire, Scott, staring into the rising sun, JUMPS FROM THE BRIDGE...

CUT TO:

EXT. SKY ABOVE THE BRIDGE - SAME MOMENT

THE MUSTANGS LOOP AT HIGH ALTITUDE, TURN, AND DIVE...

THE THREE FIGHTERS OPEN UP AGAIN WITH THEIR .50 CALIBER CANNONS, STRAFING THE SCATTERED GERMAN POSITIONS ALONG THE RIVERBANKS.

THEN ALL THREE MUSTANGS CLIMB AND SEPARATE, PARCELLING OFF THE BRIDGE...

AS ALL THREE AIRCRAFT RELEASE THEIR BOMBS...

THE SCENE AUDIO COMPLETELY DROPS OUT.

AS THE BOMBS FALL, ALL WE HEAR IN THE FOLLOWING SEQUENCE IS THE BEATING OF A HUMAN HEART.

AS THE WEAPONS DETONATE, SECTIONS OF THE BRIDGE VIOLENTLY EXPLODE, BENDING STEEL, SHATTERING STONE, SENDING A POWERFUL SHOCK WAVE ROCKING THE ENTIRE STRUCTURE...

CUT TO:

EXT. MID AIR - SAME MOMENT

THE AUDIO HEARTBEAT CONTINUES AS...

SCOTT'S BODY, IN SLOW MOTION, TUMBLES DOWNWARD AS THE BRIDGE COLLAPSES IN FLAMES ALL AROUND HIM.

AN INSTANT BEFORE CAPT. SCOTT HITS THE RIVER SURFACE...

THE SOUND OF THE HEARTBEAT STOPS...

AND WE SEE HIS BODY SILENTLY HIT THE WATER.

CUT TO:

EXT. BUSHNELL'S COUNTRY HOME - GERMANY - VERY SAME MOMENT

THE AUDIO REMAINS COMPLETELY SILENT AS WE SEE...

A YOUNG GERMAN SOLDIER in uniform leads a BEAUTIFUL BLACK HORSE down out of the transport trailer and walks the animal toward...

IDA (10), Bushnell's daughter in a white birthday dress...

THOUGH WE CANNOT HEAR THE JOYOUS SOUNDS IDA MAKES, WE SEE HER SCREAMING WITH EXCITEMENT, EYES WIDE, GRINNING IN THE MORNING SUNLIGHT AS SHE ACCEPTS THE REINS OF THE HORSE FROM THE SOLDIER...

FADE TO BLACK.

There is a long beat of silent blackness, then...

SLOWLY, WE HEAR THE AUDIO RETURNING WITH THE RISING SOUND OF THOUSANDS OF HUMAN VOICES, CHEERING IN CELEBRATION.

SUPER TITLE: MAY 8, 1945 - VICTORY IN EUROPE DAY

FADE TO:

EXT. LONDON - MAY 8, 1945 - DAY

A LONDON SQUARE is filled with THOUSANDS OF CHEERING CIVILIANS...

GRINNING CHILDREN pile onto STATUES for a better view as...

CROWDS line the streets waving VICTORY FLAGS, yelling out their gratitude as...

PARADES OF ALLIED SOLDIERS in uniform march through the streets, laughing and smiling at...

PRETTY LONDON GIRLS riding on the front of SHERMAN TANKS, drinking champagne with the morning sun on their faces.

There is an overwhelming, collective sense of life...

CUT TO:

EXT. VIVIENNE'S TOBACCO AND CANDY - SAME MOMENT

A SMALL LONDON TOBACCO AND CANDY SHOP.

A PAINTED SIGN above the door reads:

VIVIENNE'S TOBACCO AND CANDY

CUT TO:

INT. VIVIENNE'S TOBACCO AND CANDY - SAME MOMENT

The cheering crowds pass by outside the shop as...

A SINGLE SHAFT OF SUNLIGHT passes through tapering crack in the shop window curtain, falling across the OPEN HAND of Jasper, sitting alone behind the counter of his Aunt Vivienne's shop.

Lost in thought, Jasper stares at the silver St. Christopher pendant in his open hand...

CLOSE ON PENDANT: ENGRAVED IN THE SOFT SILVER, IS THE WORN IMAGE OF A MAN GRIPPING A CHILD IN HIS ARMS AS HE FIGHTS TO CROSS THE CURRENT OF A FURIOUS RIVER...

Suddenly Jasper hears a man's VOICE...

CAPT. SCOTT (O.S.)
Hey kid, do you sell peppermint
candy here?

Jasper looks up and sees Capt. Scott, STANDING OUTSIDE THE SCREEN DOOR OF THE SHOP.

Scott wears a BACK BRACE and holds a CANE. The left breast of his DRESS UNIFORM is DECORATED WITH COMBAT RIBBONS AND A MEDAL OF VALOR.

Jasper cannot speak, as if he's not sure if Scott is real or imagined.

At that moment, Vivienne enters the room in a spring dress from the back hallway.

As Vivienne sees Capt. Scott, she stops suddenly, the breath stolen from her body.

Their gazes lock...

There is a beat of silence, then without speaking a word, SHE MOTIONS FOR HIM TO ENTER...

We hear the creaking sound of the screen door as Scott steps inside.

And as the world outside celebrates the raw joy of being alive...

Vivienne, never breaking Scott's gaze, rushes forward and KISSES HIM.

CUT TO BLACK.