

Heart of the Beast

By

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EXT. DEEP ALASKAN WILDERNESS - DAY

Soaring over the top of a rugged forest.

On the horizon, snow capped mountains tower into the heavens.

No electric lines.

No cell towers.

No roads.

No houses.

True untamed wild -- brutal and pure...

The last untamed American frontier.

A small AMPHIBIOUS AIRCRAFT comes into view.

The plane banks left and starts heading up a river.

INT. PLANE - DAY

At the helm of the aircraft is --

JAMES STERLING (late 30s) a beast of a man:

Sturdy muscular frame.

Quiet fury in the eyes.

Overgrown beard.

Burn marks on his neck.

Two missing fingers starting at the knuckle on his left hand.

Scar that runs down his forehead, splits his eyebrow, and partially blinds one eye in a milky haze.

NAVY SEAL tattoo on his Bicep that's been damaged by what looks to be two different bullet holes.

... And the look of someone who *never* wants to see another fucking human again for the rest of his god damn life.

In the passenger seat --

A pair of contemplative and intelligent eyes study the landscape as it zips by. James' only companion in this lonely world:

ODIN -- a black, hefty, and imposing German Shepard.

Even at casual glance, it's clear he's not your everyday pet. Odin is a highly trained retired **COMBAT DOG**.

The animal has the same war torn look as James:

Missing an ear.

Half of his front right leg/paw is a **prosthetic**.

A glint of silver shines from his mouth -- his fangs and several adjacent teeth on his left side have been replaced with terrifying TITANIUM implants.

On the center dash of the plane is a picture:

James and Odin, both decked out in full military gear, standing together in the beautiful god forsaken land of Afghanistan's Korengal Valley.

From the look of the photo, quite a few years have passed.

Odin is now in the early winter of his life, a patchy sea of grey fur is slowly winning the battle against his once jet black coat...

James reaches over and gives Odin a pat, dips the plane down.

EXT. RIVER - DAY

The plane slowly descends --

Lands into a serene body of water.

James navigates the aircraft out of the water and drives it onto a sandbank.

The plane door swings OPEN. Odin hops out.

Instantly searches the immediate parimeter for threats.

Seems safe...

The dog takes a wizz, then sits at the rear of the plane, guarding James' flank.

Despite having a tranquil and calm demeanor, Odin never seems truly relaxed.

Always alert.

Always watching.

Always ready.

James lugs out a bulky water proof plastic tub from the plane and sets it down on the sand.

He pops it open --

INSIDE is everything you'd ever need to survive:
 sleeping bag, tent, food, fishing pole, assault rifle...
 And most importantly a hefty 24 pack of double IPA beers.

Odin stares at James, eagerly waiting for a command.

JAMES

Guard.

Odin trots to a higher position on the sandbank and peers out to the forest.

James begins setting up camp.

EXT. RIVER CAMP - DAY

QUICK SHOTS:

- James sets up his tent.
- Hoists a bag of food in the air from a tree using a small rope (bear protection).
- Grabs a few pieces of wood.
- Assembles rocks for the base of a fire. Sets a small mesh grill wiring over it...

James stands up. Work is done. Camp is all set.

JAMES

Odin come.

Odin dashes over, James fits a **tactical dog vest** onto him, stuffs a water canteen and pack of jerky inside.

JAMES

Your mission today is to carry
 snacks. Very important.

James stares at a hill with an overlook a few miles out.

JAMES

Heel.

James picks up his assault rifle and tromps up to a grassy knoll leading towards the wooded hill. Odin follows.

INT. FOREST - DAY

James and Odin carefully trek through dense brush.

There's no enemies here, but both move like predators...
 Old instincts never die.

INT. FOREST OVERLOOK - DAY

James and Odin reach the hill summit.

They wander toward a jagged cliff line and look out at a view of the forest and mountain range.

From their vantage point, the plane and river camp are just small dots.

James pulls out a Sherlock long stem tobacco pipe.
Lights it up.

JAMES

Not a bad view.

LATER:

James sits atop a boulder directly on the hill-cliff edge.

His eyes are closed in a meditative trance.

The peaceful sounds of nature soak into his ears:

Wrestling of trees in the wind.
Distant sound of running water.
Chirping of birds.

A warning GROWL disturbs the moment --

James opens his eyes, turns to look at Odin who is fixed on something behind them.

He pulls out his rifle and follows Odin's line of sight --

Looking through the scope, he searches the tree line --

Nothing there...

Wait --

FAR off in the woods, a lone **deer** forages.

James grins at Odin.

JAMES

Good boy. That sucker is far off.
Still got it, bud.

James spots two pine cones.

JAMES

You wanna show off, I'll serve it
right back. What do you think, two?

He grabs another pine cone.

JAMES

We'll do three. Watch this.

James walks to the cliff line, THROWS all of the pine cones simultaneously, AIMS his rifle --

BLASTS each one out of the sky with perfect precision.

James turns around, pleased with himself -- Odin is sniffing something in the opposite direction.

JAMES

You weren't even watching.
Unbelievable.

James grabs some Jerky from Odin's vest. Chews on a piece. Tosses one to the dog.

EXT. RIVER CAMP - DAY

Fishing pole in hand, James stands at the river edge, starrng off in a daze puffing on his pipe.

The line bobs around the shore. No bites yet...

Odin SPLASHES in the water shallows, periodically spotting fish, but scares them off before he can make a catch.

James REELS in his line --

CASTS it out again.

Odin LUNGES into the water -- HEAD FIRST.

POPS OUT with a GIANT SALMON.

JAMES

How in the shit did you catch a
fish before me?

Odin SPRINTS out of the water, triumphantly carrying the delicious prize in his mouth.

He does a victory lap around the camp.

In the midst of the dog's celebration, the fish escapes, FLOPS around on the sand.

Odin stares at it playfully, unsure what to do with it.

JAMES

If I don't catch anything, you're
sharing. You hear me --

JAMES

-- Whoa --

James' line unwinds -- he's got a bite.

JAMES

Now we're talkin'! Scratch that.
Big meals for everybody tonight
Oddie.

EXT. RIVER CAMP - NIGHT

Two behemoth salmon sizzle on small mesh grill over the campfire. Odin squirms out an impatient WHINE.

JAMES

Trust me, you're going to like it more this way. No bones, nice grill, earthy wood smoke. This is a full flavor situation.

James finishes up the last moments of cooking. Takes a bite --

JAMES

Aw yeah. It's good.

The dog fidgets around.

Ready for food. Ready now. Ready!

JAMES

Okay, you gotta appreciate it though -- You gonna appreciate it?

Yes. Definitely will appreciate.

James stabs a salmon, places it onto a large rock for Odin. He SCARFS the fish --

JAMES

You can't just swallow the damn thing, you gotta savor it!

James gives a hearty chuckle, guzzles one of his beers down till its empty -- sets the bottle next to four other dead bottles on the ground.

Odin stares at him:

Ready for more Salmon.

James tosses another cut of fish onto the grill.

JAMES

You're lucky I share.

INT. TENT - NIGHT

James zips up the tent. Crawls into a sleeping bag.

A dim lantern sits in the corner.

He reaches to turn it off, but is interrupted:

Odin PLOPS over --

Rubs his head on James' neck playfully.

James makes a half hearted effort to stop the antics...
The more James fights back, the more fun Odin seems to have.

JAMES

What are you doin'? --

Pushes his snout on his face.

JAMES

Okay, okay --

Licks his mouth.

JAMES

Gross! Lay down Odin.

Odin does as he's told. Gives James a mischievous dog grin.

JAMES

(quiet grumble)

You fuckin' dumb dumb.

Gives the dog some good pets.

Turns the light off.

EXT. RIVER CAMP - NIGHT

Gentle gusts of wind.
Ancient trees swaying.
Moonlight ripples across the water.
Faint outline of the plane and tent.
Embers glow in the fire pit.

Feels like a a modern take on 18th century American pioneer
landscape paintings.

INT. TENT - NIGHT

Odin sleeps close by James' side.

The dog whimpers --

Feet twitch, at first subtle, but increasingly more frantic.

The whimpers turn to eerie GROWLS --

Out of nowhere Odin LEAPS to his feet with a vicious SNARL and BARKS with a rabid bone chilling rage --

James startles awake and GASPS for air is instantly thrown into a full blown PTSD panic attack:

THE SOUNDS OF HELICOPTER BLADES WHIRLING

GUNFIRE -- SCREAMING -- CHAOS

James SMACKS the lantern on.

Odin BARKS an ear shattering ROAR --
RACES around the tent like a hellish banshee --

The situation is frightening, Odin is frothing and completely out of control. Despite the emotional terror ripping through his adrenal glands, James knows *exactly* what to do.

A COMMANDING voice BOOMS --

JAMES

Odin - Stay!

Odin instantly ceases movement --
Belts out a few more MONSTROUS BARKS --

JAMES

Quiet --

Odin silences himself; the sounds of war stop.

Uneasy stillness...

The hair on the dog's back remains up, teeth snarled --
ready for attack at any moments notice.

JAMES

Sit.

Odin blinks several times, seems to come to his senses...

No one escapes the memories of war. Not even dogs.

JAMES

It's OK.

James gives him a stern pat.

JAMES

It's OK, Oddie.

The dog spins in a circle, checking his surroundings in a deep anxiety and then gives the saddest and most confused whimper you've ever heard.

JAMES

I know. I know.

Odin licks James' face.

James lays down.

Odin collapses onto James chest, WHINES again...

JAMES

Just a bad dream, bud...

It was all a bad dream.

He grabs Odin's scruff affectionately.

JAMES

We're not there anymore.

Odin HUFFS out a big exhausted breath.

EXT. RIVER CAMP - MORNING

A mellow fire sizzles a couple bacon in a cast iron.

James sits in a lawn chair, sipping at a coffee.

He reads from an ultra-used paperback of STARSHIP TROOPERS, maybe on its 20th read.

Eyes the bacon -- tosses Odin one.

LATER:

James places his dead beer bottles into a container.

Odin stares at him. Waiting for orders. Bored.

James notices. Thinks for a second.

JAMES

Should we cause some trouble?

Odin's tail wags.

James nods at the dog.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

James finishes attaching a bite-suit arm to a thick tree branch five feet off the ground.

He wraps a jacket around the tree --

It doesn't look human whatsoever, but it'll do the job...

MOMENTS LATER:

James crouches down beside the dog.
Points at the bite suit target --

JAMES

Bite!

Odin sprints with all his might!
KICKS dirt and leaves up behind him.

LEAPS off the ground --

SNAPS his jaws around the bite-suit and --

RIPS the entire branch clean off the tree...

FURIOUSLY shakes the bite-suit branch.

James jogs up to the dog.

JAMES

Release.

Odin drops it.

JAMES

Good boy! Yeah! That's a real good
boy. Get the scruffs!

James grabs Odin's scruff. Rough-houses the dog a bit.

Odin eyes the bite-suit arm, pushes the arm at James' feet.

More.

James laughs.

JAMES

Alright. Let's step it up.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

James walks on a field of tall grass with Odin.

JAMES

Okay. Real deal. *Stay.*

James runs off into the tree line. He zips up his hood,
attaches the bite-suit arm to himself...

He takes a big breath --

JAMES
 (behind tree)
Odin, bite!

James races out from the tree and begins incoherently YELLING like some drunken lunatic.

Odin TAKES OFF --

JAMES
 RWARRRGH!!

Odin FLIES into the air --

SAVAGELY chomps the bite-suit arm --

And completely **TACKLES JAMES OFF THE GROUND.**

Even at a towering 6'+ height and 200+lbs, James is no match for Odin's epic strength.

James lands HARD onto the dirt.

WIND knocked out of him --

JAMES
 (laughing)
 Uogh --- God --
Release.

Odin stops.

JAMES
 Sonuvabitch.

The dog happily stares at James and pants --

JAMES
 Too god damn strong.

Odin eagerly paws at the bite-suit arm.

More.

JAMES
 Yeah, OK, only one more. I'm
 gettin' too old for this.

James is full of shit -- and Odin knows it:
The Master isn't too old. He loves this.

James stands up. Odin's tail wags.

QUICK CLIPS --

James continuously resets his position and runs out with the Bite-Suit arm for Odin, **15+ attempts**. Each time James tries new tactics, progressively getting more ridiculous:

Standing still.
 Waving his arms wildly.
 Running away.
 Running at Odin.
 Violently yelling Metallica guitar riffs.
 Gibberish Islamic Fundamentalist threats --

JAMES
 (broken Afghani Pashto)
*I will institute and make Sharia
 Law on all bad dog!*

WWF style announcer narration --

JAMES
 OH HE'Z COMIN' UP THAT GRASS PATCH,
 FIXIN FOR A STONE COLD STUNNER --
 UNDERDOG CHAMPION --
 FLYIN' THROUGH THE AIR --

Bird noises while effeminately skipping --

JAMES
 (extremely authentic bird
 calls)

Despite James' futile admirable attempts to stay on his feet, Odin beats the shit out of him and easily BASHES him to the ground with NFL level force every time.

EXT. FIELD - SUNSET

James throws a ball for Odin while he smokes his pipe and stretches his sore arm.

JAMES
 You got me pretty good.

EXT. RIVER CAMP - NIGHT

James lays on a slanted sand bank leading up to grass, gazing up at the stars. Odin sits beside him.

A SHOOTING STAR tears through the sky.

JAMES

We're on the space rock Odin.
Blasting through the universe.
You and me.

James gulps a beer (not the first of the night...).

JAMES

Each of those stars up there have a
bunch of planets orbiting around
them. There's trillions of these
things. Some of them probably have
some creatures kinda like us too.

He stares at Odin, really trying to convey the magnitude of
the words.

JAMES

Weird huh?

Odin listens intently.

*Master smells of alcohol. Babbles nonsense noises.
Must remain alert until the morning.*

JAMES

Don't give me that look...
I'm telling you the truth.

James coughs. Stretches his arm, massages on his chest --
still aching from the rough-housing earlier.

EXT. HILL / GRASS PLATEAU - DAY

James sits on a grass patch, observing a giant 7 foot tall
bull moose, massive antlers, quarter mile away.

He sketches the animal and landscape in a notebook --
his drawing is excellent.

Odin eyes the creature -- curious, and maybe fixing for a
fight against the oversized beast. James notices the
intensity, gets a kick out of it.

JAMES

You kidding me? No way. That thing
would rock you.

Odin isn't convinced by that.

James SNAPS his finger, points behind him --

JAMES

Guard.

Odin jogs thirty feet behind James and goes into sentry mode.

JAMES

Good boy.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

James leans on a rock, aiming his rifle at a bird --

His finger isn't on the trigger though, he's just watching through the scope.

He glances down at a ALASKAN BIRD BOOK, flips through the pages. Searches for what he's found.

JAMES

(mumbling)

Northern Goshawk?

Back in the scope --

JAMES

Northern Goshawk.

James puts a check mark on the page: another bird spotted.

ODIN GROWLS; TWIGS snap --

SPOOKED James WHIRLS around like a tornado.

AIMS gun at --

WATKINS

Hello there!

WATKINS (late 50s) -- a real kook, well intentioned though. Huge ZZ top style beard. Slender. Eccentric nature/survival enthusiast. Looks about as feral as the Yukon forest.

He's 0% phased by a gun being pointed at him...

Just your average day in Alaska!

WATKINS

Sorry -- didn't mean to sneak up on you there. Saw your plane, thought I'd wander around and see if I could find ya!

James lowers his weapon.

Odin is STIFF as a board, GROWLS --

JAMES

Odin sit.

Odin does as he's told.

WATKINS

Wow -- that's some critter you got there!

He marvels at the dog's obedience.

WATKINS

Watkins is the name!

JAMES

... James.

EXT. FOREST - SUNSET

James, Odin, and Watkins walk through the forest.

WATKINS

I've Kayaked down the river about 150 miles, got about 60 more to go. Done the full trip five times now. You're the first person I've ever seen out here in all my time doing this. This region is the heart of the beast -- most don't care for it too much and never make it out this far. I say they don't know what they're missing though -- nothing better than the quiet of nature. Whole world to yourself. Know what I mean?

JAMES

... Yep.

WATKINS

Hope you don't mind, already set up my tent next to your camp.

God damn it.

WATKINS

Don't worry though, I'm looking to get outta here before sunrise.

EXT. RIVER CAMP - DAY

Watkins, James, and Odin sit around a CAMPFIRE.

WATKINS

You planning on sticking around tomorrow?

JAMES

Maybe.

WATKINS

Well, if you do be careful. There's weather hitting in the afternoon.

JAMES

I know.

WATKINS

I have to say, I always enjoy a hard nosed Spring storm. Makes you appreciate the sun more.

James hands Watkins a beer -- less of a courtesy and more of a strategic move to shut him up.

WATKINS

Oh, thank you!

Watkins takes a big swig.

WATKINS

Wow. That's something. Normally I'm not a big alcohol drinker. What kinda beer is this?

JAMES

Double IPA.

WATKINS

"Double IPA" huh... It's got -- some sorta -- herbal taste! Burly. This is a fine beverage.

Watkins enthusiastically drinks the entire bottle.

WATKINS

I'll have to start getting a couple of those every now and then.

James pulls out another beer, offers it silently --

WATKINS

Oh, sure! I won't turn it down.

Watkins leans back, makes himself comfy.

WATKINS

What kind of line of work are you in James?

JAMES

Was in the Navy SEALS. 10 years.

WATKINS

Yeah, I figured you were military. You have that quiet stern look about you. How long you been out?

JAMES

Almost two years.

WATKINS

Now you're up here.

James nods.

WATKINS

Living the simple life... Me too. I've been retired for a bit over four years now. In my working days I did just about every odd job you could think of as a youngster. In my twenties did some ranching. That was okay. Then when I was about your age I started my own gold mining operation -- that ended up being the bulk of my life's work.

JAMES

Ah -- I figured you were a gold miner. You have that wild and hopeful look about you.

Watkins chuckles, enjoys James' chiding. Gives a hearty grin of crooked teeth.

WATKINS

Heh heh -- I suppose I do have that look! You're a man of wit! I appreciate that.

James enjoys the compliment -- warms up a *tiny* bit.

JAMES

You ever miss mining?

WATKINS

You ever miss fighting?

James smiles.

WATKINS

I was damn good at the mining! In the early days, there was nothing better. Was in love with it. As time went on though, my feelings on it changed... It's a god damn dirty business.

WATKINS

Many nefarious characters! The digging tears up the land something fierce too, that part I liked the least. One day I decided I was done with it all. Sold everything. Now that it's all over, I actually find myself missing that miserable pursuit from time to time... However -- I'm much happier to be free of it, despite those odd yearnings of the past. Funny how that works.

James nods. Knows *exactly* what Watkins is talking about.

Watkins notices the dog's shining teeth --

WATKINS

That *silver* in his mouth?

JAMES

Titanium.

WATKINS

Titanium -- well I'll be. Huh. Never seen that. What's the story there?

JAMES

Odin was a combat scouting dog. He went for a target. Target hit him in the mouth with a brick. Knocked his teeth out, so they had to be replaced.

WATKINS

Knocked his teeth out... What kind of a rotten sonuvabitch would do such a thing?

Watkins doesn't like that at all.

Thinks on it hard.

Slams a big mean swig of beer.

WATKINS

I hope you gave that fella a piece of your mind.

JAMES

I shot him in the head.

WATKINS

Heh. Heh.. Heh... --

Watkins rumbles a slow plodding laugh -- it takes him a second to wind up, but once he gets going he can't stop... And once he gets going, he becomes increasingly animated.

James smirks -- gives a bit of a laugh himself.

This fuckin' goofball...

WATKINS

I'd have popped him one in the knees too! No one treats Watkins' dog like that!

Watkins air-fires an imaginary target with his fingers.

WATKINS

Bap! Bap!

Watkins CACKLES fiendishly like some wizard straight out of Middle Earth.

James laughs both with and at Watkins.

WATKINS

That asshole get his paw as well?

JAMES

Different asshole.

WATKINS

Well, I hope you shot him too!

JAMES

I did... After that we retired.

WATKINS

Wise choice.

The two are quiet for a moment.

JAMES

You're not so bad Watkins.

WATKINS

I know! You're not so bad yourself. The dog outshines you by a substantial margin though.

James cracks up --

WATKINS

I'm well aware you thought of me as some sort of obnoxious nitwit when we met -- which is a fairly accurate assessment, but us old fogies have some interesting things to say from time to time.

JAMES

Yeah, seems like you have a story or two in you.

WATKINS

I have a few more than one or two! I could keep you here all damn night.

JAMES

Well, tell me one.

WATKINS

The most recent is how my fourth ex-wife and I parted ways.

JAMES

You've had four ex-wives?

WATKINS

I said I as good at the minin'. Never said I was good at romance.

The two laugh.

FAR OFF

The campfire glows in the distance. Distant echoes of conversation carry over.

INT. TENT - NIGHT

James sleeps heavily. Odin slumbers next to him.

Odin's one ear perk up, eyes open --

The sounds of WATKINS quietly moving around the camp...

EXT. RIVER CAMP - DAWN

Stars are still out. The first glimpses of the purple dawn creep over the horizon.

Watkins WRITES something in a BOOK and places it on James' fold out chair by the glowing embers of the campfire.

Wanders over to the nearby cooler, takes a beer out and puts it into his pocket.

Takes a deep breath of cold air.
Feels good in the lungs.
Exhales a plume of hot mist.

Watkins does a few *odd* stretches... gives a casual military SALUTE to James' tent. Heads toward his KAYAK --

Quietly LAUNCHES it into the river, PADDLES OUT.

EXT. RIVER CAMP - MORNING

James wanders out of his tent with the stiffness of the morning. RUBS his chest/shoulder area -- still sore.

No sign of Watkins or his kayak.

He sees a BOOK sitting on his chair --
MARK TWAIN QUOTES AND ESSAYS

OPENS the book -- a hand written note on the page:

WATKINS (V.O.)

*Thank you for the "Double IPAS"
hope you don't mind, I have taken
another from the cooler...
In return, please enjoy this book.
I think you will like it.
On 22 -- there is a fitting quote
for you and mighty Odin.
-Watkins*

James flips to the page earmarked at page 22.
Reads it, smirks. Glances over to Odin --

JAMES

*"It's not the size of the dog in
the fight, It's the size of the
fight in the dog."*
What do you think Odin? Pretty good
huh?

Odin stares at James, ready to begin the day.

EXT. RIVER CAMP - DAY

James eats a SNACK BAR and reads the MARK TWAIN book.

BOOMING THUNDER far off in the mountain range.
James scans the dark clouds, miles off.

No big deal... Probably should head out though.

QUICK SHOTS:

- Rolling the sleeping bag and mat.
- Washing cooking pots in the river.
- Taking tent apart.
- Unhooking suspended food bag from tree.
- Zips his rifle into a tactical bag, leans it on the interior plane passenger side wall.
- Loading supply bin into the plane.

For how capable James is, he does all these tasks much slower than when he put them all up, clearly not eager to leave.

He looks around the camp -- all packed out.

James finds a flat rock on the ground, SKIPS it across the river. It's a good throw... bounces off the water 20+ times.

His face grimaces --

ARM -- still sore... Seems to confuse James.

The fuck is up with this arm?

JAMES

Okay Odin. I guess that's everything. Out we go.

James heads to the plane.

Odin HOPS IN.

PLANE ENGINE STARTS --

James navigates the plane off the shore bank and into the water. Centers it down the river...

SPEEDS up...

FASTER...

LIFTS off --

EXT. SKY - DAY

The plane climbs to an appropriate height.

The aircraft turns away from the river and heads deep into the forest.

LATER:

The plane glides out of a mountain range. The landscape below is rough, heavily forested, and vacant of civilization.

INT. PLANE - DAY

On the horizon, dark and majestic storm clouds are brewing -- but the view is lost on James who keeps shuffling around in his seat... Can't seem to get comfortable.

Odin WHINES --

JAMESR STERLING

Quiet.

Odin continues his whimpering --

JAMES

I said Quiet Oddie.

Odin stops.

JAMES

Good boy.

James massages his back shoulder. His face stirs with a vexed strain. He rearranges himself in the seat...

Piece of shit plane is uncomfortable.

Odin paws James' leg --

JAMES

You wanna give me a massage? Go ahead.

Odin paws again, more aggressive --

James gives the dog a funny look: *what's up with you?*

JAMES

That's enough.

Odin paws again --

James face turns a bit red...

He stretches his arm --
hurts.

JAMES

God damn.

Grits his teeth.
Hurts real fuckin' bad.

Odin starts WHINING again -- ALARMED

James calls out to his dog, but this time he's not giving a command, he's calling for help --

JAMES
(stuttering)
Oddie -- oddie.

James SPITS out a GASP --

JAMES IS HAVING A MASSIVE HEART ATTACK

James tries to BREATH through it --

Can't get enough air --

Can't get enough --

Drowning --

GASPING --

WHINING from Odin --

JAMES
(unintelligible noises)

No one is controlling the aircraft

James attempts to move his arms --

FIGHTS hard --

STRUGGLES --

Can't move...

Odin gives a WARNING BARK --

JAMES
I'mmm Tryn --
(unintelligible)

James' EYES ROLL BACK IN HIS HEAD --

Passes out from lack of oxygen to his brain...

JAMES SLUMPS OVER ONTO THE CONTROLS --

The plane starts to descend....

Odin PAWS James --

Nothing.

Odin WHINES --

Master needs help. How do I help?

Odin SHOVES his snout on his neck --

LICKS his face --

Wake up.

PUSHES on James' arm --

Wake up.

For a SPLIT SECOND James regains consciousness -- but he's not *really* there.

JAMES

(drooling)

Odde.

(incoherent slurring)

Itsargoby -- I ne --

DEATH RIPS into JAMES' heart again --

HORRIBLE PAIN

He passes out -- SLUMPS back onto the control...

The plane descends quicker --

ODIN BARKS --

PLANE IS NOW ONLY 20 FEET ABOVE THE TREELINE --

Odin frantically continues everything he can to solve the situation... RACES around; BARKS --

Nothing working.

TEN FEET --

Odin BITES james' arm --

Wake up.

Nothing.

FIVE FEET --

The dog glances out the window...

THREE FEET --

Odin looks back to the Master --

ONE FOOT --

All sounds fade away

Surreal.

Odin gives one last whimper --

Something very bad is about to happen, but I cannot stop it.

The plane DIPS **UNDER THE FOREST LINE** --

Trees are spaced out, but get thicker up ahead --

Plane EVADES two trees --

narrowly centering between them --

SCRAPPING THE SIDE EDGES of both wings on the branches.

TIME SLOWS

Odin BLINKS...

Eerie calm...

ANOTHER TREE --

500 year old Pine. Unavoidable. Directly ahead.

PLANE IMPACTS --

EAR SHATTERING NOISE --

The entire right wing is RIPPED off

PLANE FLIPS IN MID AIR --

ODIN IS THROWN OUT OF THE PLANE --

The dog disappears into the thick tree branches.

James **rifle** is sucked out, falls into an abyss of wilderness.

The aircraft SPEEDS ONWARD, now just a twisted hunk of metal, hurling toward earth --

Unstoppable --

CLIPS another tree --

AIRCRAFT LANDS VIOLENTLY IN THE CENTER OF A SMALL **LAKE** --

JAMES body JOLTS HARD from the collision --

BLACK OUT.

No visuals.

Catastrophic noises cease.

Sounds of nature return.

Peaceful...

Labored uneven breathing...

H A Z Y FADE IN --

World blurry --

James returns to consciousness...
Life slowly comes into clarity.

He blinks --

Where am I?

It's cold...

What is going on?

James is covered in blood from an explosion of glass...

WATER FLOODS INTO THE PLANE

Navy SEAL training KICKS into high gear:

Get out.

James unhooks himself as FREEZING WATER pours into the cabin.

He looks back --

Frantic --

Where is Odin?

JAMES

ODDIE. ODDIE --

Dog isn't here.

James doesn't get out in time...

PLANE SUBMERGES --

UNDERWATER

James SWIMS OUT the torn off plane wing --

In the depths of the lake it's beautiful, crystal clear.

James moves like a graceful Olympic swimmer, moving his body like a wave to propel him to the --

SURFACE

James breathes for a moment...

*Important things are still in that plane:
all my survival gear.*

James DIVES UNDER again --

Watches the plane hit the lake bed...

*It's not going anywhere --
come back later...*

RESURFACES.

Highest priority:

JAMES

(fierce)

ODIN.

(primal)

ODIN COME.

James looks around -- does some mental math, tries to make sense of the situation:

*Plane is down below --
Trees damaged that direction --*

JAMES

Odin!

James makes it to shore --

JAMES

Odin --

JOGS down the lake shore --

Nothing.

Where is he?

Continues scanning --

James RUNS faster.

JAMES

Odin -- come on boy.

Suddenly he COLLAPSES onto his knees.

CLUTCHES his chest.

HORRENDOUS PAIN.

Another heart attack?

JAMES

Okay, okay -- breathe.

Vision starts to get HAZY again --

CALMS himself; controlled breathing.

Field of vision returns to CLARITY --

He slowly rises to his feet.

Proceeds onward, more cautious towards his health this time --

The edges of the lake have no sign of the dog.

Maybe in the forest...

JAMES

Odin.

James makes his way toward the broken trees --

Through the brush --

Sees something far off... Stops.

It's Odin -- not moving.

JAMES

Odin!

No response. The dog's lifeless body remains still.

James looks up at the trees --

Did he fall out of the plane?

... That would be a nearly 20+ foot fall...

JAMES

Oh, no, no, no.

Alone in the wilderness, massive heart attack, plane crash --
These are all things easily handled by James...

But the sight of Odin not moving truly **destroys** him.

James' entire face contorts in some horrendous distress.

Hands trembling.

Tears.

Hyper ventilating.

Panic.

Can't lose the dog. Can't lose the dog.

Barely above a whisper --

JAMES

(fragile, weak)

Oddie come here buddy.

James STAGGERS toward the dog --

JAMES

ODDIE --

No movement from Odin at all. It looks bad.

JAMES

Come on now.

He makes it to about 10 feet of the dog.

James STUMBLES to the ground.

JAMES

Fuck.

CLUTCHES his chest -- hard to move.

It all hits him at once:

Heart attack

Body injuries

War

PTSD

Odin -- the one thing holding this man together...

Full emotional break down

From the look of it, this is likely the first time since early childhood he's cried...

Men like him simply don't do this sort of thing -- the sadness of life is locked away in some dark, nebulous, and impenetrable cavern of the heart, never to be opened.

James soul seems to crack and splinter away...

In this moment, he is less a man and more of a wild animal -- alone and lost in this ruthless and unforgiving world.

Odin is not moving.

JAMES

Can't. You can't.

I should just fuckin' die here.

Should die.

Want to die.

JAMES

You come here Oddie.

James DRAGS himself over to Odin.

BLOOD oozes out the dog's ear...

Not moving at all.

He hovers a hand close to the dog --

But can't get closer to check the vitals -- he's afraid...

All James can do is cry.

Pain in his heart.

Pain in his stomach.

Can't breathe...

A minute goes by, but James is still frozen in pure physical and emotional terror.

He reaches out --

Touches the dog's chest -- dog doesn't respond.
James INSTANTLY recoils.

JAMES

Odin.

Clenches his fist.

JAMES

God damn it.

James hides his face.

*Want to disappear.
No reason for anything anymore.*

JAMES

Come on Oddie.

OUT OF NOWHERE --

James SCREAMS and PUNCHES his own head REPEATEDLY --

Full UFC level aggression. Again and again he strikes himself, holding nothing back. It's a horrible sight that makes you sick to your stomach.

JAMES

AGH.

Through the violence he gains some sort of momentary emotional strength.

GRITS his teeth.

Touches the dog again, this time keeps his hand on his chest.

Heart beat?

...

HEART BEAT.

James puts his hand in front of the dog's nose --

Double checks Odin's vitals.
Triple checks.

FAINT BREATHING.

JAMES LAUGHS OUT A FEW MORE TEARS --

JAMES

You tough sonuvabitch.
Okay -- Okay! We're not done yet.

Celebration is short lived though...

Blood out the dog's ears... Concussion.

JAMES

Let's see --

James feels down the dog's spine...
Checks legs, paws, movement all good...
Prosthetic dog paw still attached...
Doesn't seem like there's any broken bones.

Tears are now stopped --

James is now in full mission mode:
Whatever it takes to save this dog.

He looks around at the forest and broken tree tops --

Spots his rifle.

The bag strap has hooked perfectly around the top branch of a tree... Nearly impossible to get down.

Gotta be fucking kidding me -- deal with that later.

What do I do now?

Need to get warm.
Need shelter.
Need my supplies.

James reaches down and LIFTS Odin off the ground as gently as he can -- CARRIES the massive dog through the forest.

He makes his way back to the --

LAKE SHORE

Lays Odin down on a patch of grass, underneath a small tree.

JAMES

Gonna be alright Oddie. I'll be
right back, I promise.

He pets the dog anxiously and heads to the lake --

Keep it together soldier.

James eyes the lake in the spot where the plane went under.

Prepares himself to go back in the water to retrieve his bin of supplies. Stops at the edge.

It's freezing -- and getting colder by the second.

DARK STORM CLOUDS a few miles off...

Not much time until the rain hits.

If he doesn't play his cards right, he's going to die.

James feels in his vest for something -- pulls out his PIPE TOBACCO and MATCHES...

He's soaking wet -- but that's no matter, matches are water proof.

James starts collecting twigs and dried brush.

Returns to Odin's location.

Assembles the kindling nearby the dog.

SPARKS the match; LIGHTS a few dried leaves --

BLOWS --

Smoke --

Fire.

Adds twigs. Flames grow larger -- tosses in small branches.

James goes back to the forest, gets a collection of more substantial wood pieces. Quickly returns with enough wood to last several hours. He tosses a few more pieces on --

BLOWS hard --

Fire is going pretty good now.

James REMOVES his wet clothing until he's **fully naked.**

JAMES

Agh.

So cold.

Body is full of scars and hardened with muscular lines -- beautiful, savage, and raw.

Wants to stay by the fire, but he can't --

No time to waste.

James approaches the water.

Takes a few good measured breaths, decisively enters --
Swims to the approximate location of the plane.

The lake is perfectly still and about two hundred feet
across.

James DIPS his head

UNDERWATER --

Spots the plane.

Lake floor isn't too deep. Fifteen feet, maybe a bit more.

SURFACES --

Puffs out his cheeks... Freezing.

Have to keep moving.

Takes several enormous breaths to oxygenate his blood.

SUBMERGES --

James moves with determination toward the sunken aircraft.

With the icy temperature, injuries, and current health
condition, the task is nearly impossible. This is the type of
thing that would decimate a normal man and bring a strong one
to utter ruin...

But James isn't a normal man, nor is he just strong.
He's a SEAL -- and *impossible* is the baseline of his
training.

His naked body is barely illuminated from light above --

James' hand touches the roof of the plane.

Made it.

But he's close to being out of breath...

He navigates his way INSIDE

THE PLANE CABIN

DARK -- and BLURRY.

Hard to figure out what needs to be done --
Sight isn't much help here.
James FEELS his way around with his hands.

Air running out, getting critical... need to surface or --

James finds a tiny AIR-POCKET at the back roof of the plane, approx 1X3 feet.

He catches his breath in the dim cabin.

Only the faint outline of his feet can be seen... While still in the air-pocket, he starts KICKING around --

TAPS something --

It's the bin of supplies. James' teeth chatter --

Have to keep moving.

Goes UNDER, picks up the bin -- About 80 lbs of stuff inside. Not light enough to float. Too heavy to swim up with.

Gonna have to trek it to shore...

James begins his slow motion march across the lake floor --

His naked shadowed body looks like some sort of modern day statue of a greek god.

He makes it a about ten feet --
quarter of the way there.
Has to let go of the bin.

SURFACES

GASPS...

If James pushes himself too hard, he could have another heart attack... But if he doesn't keep moving, he's going to get hypothermia and die.

He HUFFS out a few times --

DUCKS down again...

UNDERWATER

Makes it to the bin, picks up where he left off. Quickly walks across the lake bottom --

Further -- FURTHER -- pushing himself too hard.

60% there.

STOPS.

DROPS THE BIN -- awkwardly heads up --

SURFACES

Clutches his chest.

JAMES

Eggghh --

He SNORTS out water. FLOATS on his back. His hand covers his heart -- trembling from the cold.

Take it easy.

But he can't take it easy -- he's freezing to death.

In a few minutes, his hands wont be able to grip and if that happens he's done for.

DIVES AGAIN --

Not so deep now...

James continues TROMPING along floor, KICKING UP SAND.

One step at a time soldier.

75%

Keep going.

85%

Chest pain returns, but he continues onward.

An impressionistic landscape is above, a dream like wave of trees and sky, muddled by the shifting water surface...

So close now --

95%

He leans his head up, lips reaching for the heavens --

GASPS for air! Salvation.

SHIVERING HARD.

He hunches over the tub, rests in the shallows for 20 seconds then LIFTS the bin --

James' entire body SHAKES as he walks to the FIRE.

FALLS down halfway there --

He COUGHS, exhausted -- TREMBLING

Naked body covered in sand...

Bin is far enough, have to get warm, just for a moment --

James staggers to the FIRE --

JAMES
(Incoherent noise)

He's so close that the fire is probably burning his skin off, but it doesn't matter -- he can't feel a damn thing.

Looks at Odin -- still knocked out.

WIND picks up... Storm clouds are closer now.

Have to get clothes.

James forces himself away from the flames and back to the bin. He makes one last haggard effort to get his supplies to the fire -- STRUGGLES, but successfully transports the load.

He PULLS off the bin top.

No water inside.

FRANTICLY THROWS items out --

Fishing pole. Trash. Tent gear.

CLOTHING BAG -- *there it is.*

James hastily puts on as many layers as he can.

Shirts.
Thermals.
Leggings.
Pants.
Jacket.
Beanie.
Socks.

Lastly he reaches into the bin and gets out a bottle of ASPRIN, CHEWS UP five of them.

Washes it down with some canteen water.

EXT. LAKE CAMP - SUNSET (CONTINUOUS)

James squats down next to the fire. Rocks back and forth.

Feels the spitting burn of the flames on his face as he shivers uncontrollably.

JAMES

I did it Ode.

He shakes so violently and COLLAPSES in frozen weariness.

James closes his eyes.

Just for a moment. Until I'm warm...

Close on the warrior's face, utterly wasted with exhaustion.

THUNDER BOOMS.

Light drops of rain hit James' face, startling him **awake.**

Can't sleep yet.

James gets up, glances at the dog. Still no movement.
Feels near his muzzle... warm air hits his hand.

Still alive.

GUSTS of wind challenge the diminishing fire's supremacy.
James arranges more wood, keeps it going.

Bits of rain SIZZLE in the embers, but the tree branch above
mostly protects it from the moisture.

James rushes to put up the TENT.

He tries to move quickly, but his hands are frozen stiff and
nearly useless.

After several frustrating attempts at propping up the wiring,
James manages to build his shelter.

He sets the entrance close to the fire then tosses in his
ground mat and sleeping bag.

James picks Odin up, sets him inside the tent.

INT. TENT - SUNSET (CONTINUOUS)

James rummages around his supply bin for the LANTERN and
FLASHLIGHT headlamp -- then tears open a HEALTH BAR.
SCARFS it down.

He takes a moment and just stares...

What a day.

Hands shaking, James unfolds a giant MAP of Alaska.
It's highly detailed and indicates highways, cities, small
roads, tiny settlements, and popular hiking trails.

He pulls out a pen, but it's too hard to grip -- body still suffering from the cold.

JAMES

Fuck.

Tosses the map and pen aside...

Rubs his chest again, GRITS his teeth.
LAYS DOWN -- attempts to catch his breath.

Gotta relax. Slow down.

He closes his eyes... And just like that he's **out**.

EXT. ALASKA WILDERNESS - NIGHT

HEAVY RAIN and HOWLING WIND batters the trees.
The tall giants sway and creak.

James' fire is just smoldering embers...

INT. TENT - NIGHT

Brutal GUSTS OF WIND shake the tent.

The thin framing bends back and forth -- James stares at the wiring, unsure if it will hold through the night.

He wraps his arm around Odin and shuts his eyes, hoping to sleep through the fury of the weather.

INT. TENT - MORNING

Gentle beads of rain hit the tent roof... No wind.
The worst is over.

James opens his eyes.

At his feet starring at him is ODIN -- **awake**.

James slowly sits up, scoots over to the dog...

Besides some dried blood on one of his ears, Odin looks totally fine. It's as if nothing ever happened.

He looks the dog straight in the eyes.
It's a quiet and intense moment for the two.

James grabs the dogs jowls affectionately.
Puts his head on the dog's forehead.

Odin licks him.

EXT. LAKE CAMP - MORNING

James hobbles around the camp, surveying the area.

He doesn't look good.

The heart attack has left him damaged and exhausted.
He heaves out a ferocious dry COUGH --

Stumbles over to his supply bin -- sits on top of it,
struggles to catch his breath.

Odin sits in front of him, aware of James' fragile state.

Master is weak.

JAMES

No good Odin.

James rubs his left arm and chest.

Goes to the tent, returns with a MAP OF ALASKA...

After studying it for several minutes he marks his
approximate spot --

Middle of nowhere.

Not a lot of options:

North and **South** have nothing.

East -- Two rural settlements Ukuk and Helmsworth.

West -- Kelog Road

James begins measuring the distance to two rural settlements,
using the pen against the legend to determine mileage.

He writes the following on the map:

UKUK: 75+ miles

HELMSWORTH: 60+ miles

KELOG ROAD: 50 miles

All destinations have no trail to follow...
Untamed Alaskan wilderness.

James DOTS the map, marking his own route through the
wilderness, avoiding streams and mountain ranges where he can
until he hits the Kelog Road.

JAMES

No one is coming for us bud. We're
gonna have to do this on our own.
Just like old times, scouting in
Korengal.

ODIN GROWLS --

James turns his attention away from the map.

A hundred feet away in a small patch of open field
TWO BLACK BEAR CUBS...

JAMES

Shit.

Instantly goes to look for his RIFLE -- eyes the wounded
treeline, remembers his gun is still stuck on the branch.

JAMES

Great...

The black bear cubs wrestle around in the field...

James digs around in his bin, pulls out a long combat knife --
about a foot in length.

MAMA BLACK BEAR approaches her cubs.

JAMES

Odin still.

James and Odin watch carefully...

Mama Bear spots them.

JAMES

You keep moving.

She stares at them for about thirty seconds...
Doesn't like what she sees.

JAMES

Keep moving.

The bear continues on her way with the cubs.
Vanishes back into the forest.

JAMES

Good.

EXT. FOREST - BROKEN TREES - DAY

James eyes his rifle stuck high above on a tree that's
impossible to climb.

To make matters worse the gun bag strap landed on a branch
that angles upward about 20 degrees toward the sky.

A *look* appears on James' face: he has an idea.

EXT. LAKE CAMP - DAY

James gets out his fishing rod from the supply bin.

EXT. FOREST - BROKEN TREES - DAY

James holds his fishing rod and gazes into the top of the trees. The dog stares curiously at him.

JAMES

Let's see...

James carefully aims out with his fishing line --

CASTS it hard into the trees!

Total fucking miss.

Not even close.

James makes several more attempts, casting out wide and reeling back in...

The dog seems confused at what's going on.

Each time James gets a little closer to the branch, which is just enough motivation for him to continue on... But the process is hard on him, especially for his heart.

James starts to get angry.
Quickly realizes he can't do that bullshit --
Pain in his chest appears.

He sits on a log, tired, defeated.

Takes a moment...

Pulls out an ASPIRIN bottle from his pocket.
CHEWS two of them.
Shakes the bottle around.
Eyes the inside --

About 10-15 left... Running low. Okay for now though.

Finally catches his breath.

Picks up the fishing rod once more.
Winds it.
Lines up the angle.

CASTS it -- the line SAILS through the trees

CATCHES on the branch directly by the rifle bag.

JAMES

There we go!

James very carefully wiggles the line and REELS it --

The hook CATCHES and PIERCES through the bag lining.

JAMES

That's it!

James looks excitedly at Odin; Odin reciprocates, wags his tail enthusiastically.

James LOCKS his reel and attempts to WHIP the line to toss the rifle bag off the branch.

At first James is gentle, but after several minutes he's belligerently SHAKING the pole around.

JAMES

Come on --

Every time the bag slides a little farther up the branch, but gravity always sends it sailing right back to its original position -- James can't break it free.

James pulls HARD -- the gun bag gets about half way off...

Then slides back...

A little harder.

James tries again, YANKS too hard and SNAPS the fishing line.

JAMES

Shit.

He stares at the bag for a moment...
There's no way it is coming off the tree.

James glances at Odin.

JAMES

Well, no gun for us.

EXT. LAKE CAMP - DAY

James DUCT TAPES his COMBAT KNIFE onto his walking stick.

Once he's done he taps it on the ground a few times.

It's a sturdy, intimidating weapon -- and certainly threatening enough to ward off any potential animals.

EXT. LAKE CAMP - DAY

QUICK SHOTS:

- Breaking down the tent.
- Emptying the supply bin.
- Sorting supply bin items into two primary piles:
 1. Stuff that's going: tent, sleeping gear, snack bars, jerky, head lamp flashlight, water canteen, water purification tube, matches, lighter, compass, duct tape roll, flare gun with one shot, etc.
 2. Stuff that's staying behind: fishing rod, pillow, rifle ammo, dog toys, beer, cooking pans, books, tobacco, etc.
- Purifying water from the lake, putting it into canteens.
- Loading up his backpack with important gear.
- Putting Odin's tactical vest on.

EXT. LAKE CAMP - DAY

Everything is ready to go...

James lifts up his backpack.

Heavy.

Normally the weight wouldn't be much -- but right now, just walking is tough for James.

Reality hits him hard:

This is gonna be tough.

He drops the backpack, takes out a few items and loads them into Odin's tactical vest.

JAMES

Gonna have to help me out.

James unscrews his Aspirin bottle and swallows one.

Picks up his bag, rises to his feet.

James studies his map.

It's folded up so only his dotted path is visible.

He gazes up to the horizon.

JAMES
Fifty miles. No trail...

Odin's tail wags.

James grins, but a swell of anxiety churns in his eyes. He picks up his combat walking stick and starts on the journey.

JAMES
Okay Ode, let's go.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Rays of sunshine burst through the canopy.

Odin leads the way, James follows behind.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - DAY

James sits on the ground.
Panting; exhausted; sweating.
Eyes closed.
Chest burning.

COUGHING SPASMS.

Odin approaches.
Sniffs James' ear.

James swallows a few Aspirin, drinks some water -- then pours a small bit for Odin in a collapsible dog bowl.

Odin trots into the forest ready to continue.
Glances back at James.

James takes a deep breath and gets onto his feet.

EXT. FOREST - SUNSET

Leaning heavily on his combat walking stick, James comes to a lightly wooded hillside.

The sun disappears over the mountain range.

James unclips his bag -- the pack FALLS onto the ground.

*Hard day.
Not done yet...*

He opens the bag and gets out the tent.

INT. TENT - NIGHT

James looks at his map. Puts an X on his path as their current location.

Odin stares at him.

JAMES

Only four miles today. We need to be doing ten to fifteen.

James folds up the map. Lays down.

JAMES

Tomorrow I'm building a sled and you're going to pull me the rest of the way. That's how they used to do it out here -- Mush Dogs. You already have a mush brain, might as well be a Mush Dog.

Odin plops down next to the sleeping bag.

James turns off the flashlight.

EXT. FOREST CAMP - MORNING

James stands about a hundred feet away from his tent, taking down a bag of food strung up on a tree.

MOMENTS LATER

James opens his food bag.

Inside: one bag of chips, half bag of jerky, 6 power bars, and a quarter bag of dog food.

James pours Odin a bit of food.
The dog instantly finishes, wants more --

JAMES

Nope. We gotta make it last. You're lucky you have as much food as you do. In fact, I'll probably be eating kibble if we keep up this slow ass pace.

He peers above --

Sky is cloudy. James frowns.

EXT. HILL FIELD - DAY

A light rain pours on James and Odin. Despite a full nights rest, James still isn't looking too well.

The two ascend a wooded hill.

Only a few scattered trees here and there.

Small streams of water gush down.

It's tough hiking.

As James walks he JABS the base of his combat walking stick into the ground to make sure he has firm footing.

They comes to a section of the hill thick with mud.

James steps awkwardly in tired exhaustion, gets his foot STUCK in the sludge --

PULLS up with too much force, loses control --

SLIPS

Goes down HARD.

ROLLS twice, comes to a rough stop.

Odin runs over to him, gets in his face.

JAMES

I'm okay, bud.

But James continues to lay on his back.

Not moving.

Eyes closed.

Heart beating fast.

... Just need a minute.

Beads of rain hit him in the face.

A MECHANICAL GRUMBLE bellows through the sky.

At first James can't hear it -- too tired.

Odin locates the source, makes a quiet whine.

James' eyes open, notices Odin locked onto a SMALL BI-PLANE zipping across the air.

JAMES

Good boy Odin! Good boy!

The dog's tail wags.

James FLIPS his backpack over --
TEARS it open --
SEARCHES --

Pulls out a FLARE GUN.

Carefully aims --

The plane is far off, but has *just* started to head away from James so in theory the flare would show up on the far side of the pilot's view...

James FIRES.

The flare BURSTS into the sky.

EXPLODES.

...

...

...

The plane continues on the same path.
Now definitively heading away from James.

...

...

JAMES

Look behind you. Come on.

CLOSE on James' face -- slowly sinking in the realization that the pilot is not going to stop.

The plane disappears over a mountain range.

James stares at the ground, lost in existential dread.

Sensing a defeated shift in energy, Odin barges over and repeatedly hits James' hand with his muzzle in a dumb abrasive enthusiasm.

JAMES

Too far away Odin. Was worth a shot though. We'll just have to keep doing things the hard way.

Encouraged by the dog's behavior James picks up his combat walking stick and starts onward once more.

EXT. GRASS VALLEY - DAY

Odin and James pop out of a tree line and into a small windswept grass valley. HELPLESS CRIES echo toward them...

Half mile away a pack of **wolves** have encircled a female MOOSE and her CALF.

The mother does the best she can to defend her young, CHARGING at the predators...

But the sly wolves evade her advances --

A large wolf flanks; RUSHES IN --
Successfully separates the mother and calf.

The calf TAKES off RUNNING for its life...
But the effort is futile --

Wolves descend on the small creature, ripping it apart.

James eyes in the opposite direction of the predators --
A forest line, several miles across the valley.

Glances at his MAP.

On course.

Now he has a choice, two dotted paths are sketched out, both leading to a river area:

1. A long flat route through the valley
2. A harder short cut with elevation through the forest

JAMES

I was thinking about taking the long easy route through the valley and around, but these friendly killer wolves are making me think the forest short cut is probably a better option.

James assesses the sun position --
still a few hours of daylight left.

With a mouth full of blood, one of the wolves looks toward James and Odin's direction. It gives a brooding stare then returns to devouring its kill.

JAMES

Yeah, that's not happening. Come on Odin.

The duo move onward toward the forest line.

EXT. FOREST STREAM - DAY

James looks at a forest stream -- ten or so feet across. Maybe a foot and a half deep.

Not too bad.

LATER:

James shoes/socks are tied around his neck, pants rolled up above the knee, walking stick in one hand, Odin's vest in the other.

The dog sits nearby, waiting patiently...

JAMES

Okay, go ahead --

James motions with his hand to go.

Odin THUNDERS across the stream.

James walks after him.

JAMES

Show off.

Odin RACES back across the stream playfully, JOGS around James in a circle, SPLASHING him in the process --

JAMES

Get outta here you jerk.

INT. TENT - NIGHT

James plays with Odin --

GRABS at his paws, then hides his hands behind his back.

JAMES

How you gonna get my hands when I got your paws?

Odin GROWLS -- periodically catches a hand and GNAWS on it.

JAMES

You already lost one paw, you don't have any feet to spare Ode! You better watch out or I'll have to roll you home like a fat lard --

Odin gives a SNARLING WHINE.

JAMES

Don't whine about it. Just keep
your paws on. Not that hard.

James feints for the LEFT PAW --
Then moves in for the RIGHT --
Squeezes a back paw!

Odin BARKS; GNAWS on James hand.

JAMES

Atta boy.

EXT. HEAVY FOREST - DAY

James stares at a COMPASS and his map, trying to orient
himself in incredibly dense brush.

The terrain is brutal --

It's the type of tremendously overgrown wild where you can't
even see the floor because the bushes are so thick.

James figures out the direction he needs to go.

Begins SHOVING and HACKING away branches with his combat
stick to clear a path. It's miserable, tedious work.

JAMES

Maybe we should have gone down that
wolf valley.

EXT. FOREST STREAM - DAY

James pushes water through a small filtration device into a
canteen. Slogs down a few sips.

Odin drinks straight from the stream.

Once refilling is done, James pulls out his Aspirin bottle.
8 left... Thinks about taking one, but screws the cap back on
instead.

James picks up his bag.

The two travel down the stream gully.

Bushes cover both hillsides, but their current route is
easier trekking than the morning.

James steps over a large fallen branch.
Odin trots behind him.

STRANGE NOISE up ahead on the HILLSIDE...

James and Odin both stop.

Odin gives a low warning GROWL --
James puts up his hand to silence the dog.

JAMES

I heard it.

Odin remains ALERT -- stiff tail, rigid posture, staring into the dense hillside shrubs.

MORE NOISE -- animal of some kind...

Large --

Moving closer --

Probably a bear.

JAMES

Fuck. *Odin heel* --
(gentle calling out)
Down here. Don't want to surprise
or spook you. Down here by the
stream. Don't mean any harm.

The dog aggressively creeps forward in a protective stance in front of James.

JAMES

No -- back.

James SNAPS his fingers behind him.
Odin goes to his side.

JAMES

Eyes Odin.

Odin keeps starring at the bushes.

James pokes out his middle and index finger in a peace sign and then holds his hand up to his eyes.

JAMES

Eyes!

Odin reluctantly takes his piercing gaze off the hill and looks directly at James.

JAMES

Good.
(gentle calling out)
It's a fine day. Weather isn't too
bad.

WRESTLING BUSHES and SNAPPING BRANCHES --
 deep EXHALES of a beast...

Whatever is out there is coming at them fast.

James firmly plants his feet and grips his bladed walking stick as hard as he can.

A MASSIVE 600 pound male **GRIZZLY BEAR** appears --

The hefty creature CHARGES down the hillside in a full sprint and comes to a abrupt HALT 20 yards away...

It instantly spots James and Odin --

Odin flashes his FANGS -- GROWLS --

JAMES
No -- Eyes. Eyes.

The dog looks back to James, denying every instinctual impulse he has to intimidate the monstrous foe.

James and Odin stare at each other.

JAMES
Eyes. Good.

James voice is powerful and commanding:
You need to trust me right now.

JAMES
Eyes. Keep 'em here -- you stare at it and it'll think you're challenging it.

The bear STANDS on its hind legs and ROARS in a majestic display of fury.

James keeps his primary focus on Odin --

Periodically glances over at the general direction of the gigantic bear, but avoids direct eye contact --

JAMES
Easy bear. Easy...

The beast DROPS back to all fours.

James is so close that he can feel the creature's behemoth weight shake the ground as it crashes down.

JAMES
Easy bear.

The bear starts to approach with a slow and menacing gait...

JAMES

That's far enough.

The 20 yard distance quickly turns to 15...

JAMES

Might have to fight this one out
buddy... You wait for me to give
you the signal.

(firm)

Hold.

The bear ROARS again --

James continues to stare at Odin --

JAMES

Hold.

10 yards...

James re-grips his hands on the bladed stick.
Sweat drips off his forehead.
Odin barely breathes.

JAMES

Hold.

Odin is LOCKED onto James, ready to blitz at the massive
beast in pure unhinged fury --

JAMES

Hold.

The bear stops less than **15 feet away**...

Gives a SNIFF in their direction.

JAMES

Easy bear.

James remains in position -- still as a photograph.

Heart PUMPING.
Adrenaline FLOWING.
Fight or Flight time.

Can't outrun this...

Only one option --

Suddenly the bear DROPS to the ground and begins ROLLING in
the dopiest manner possible, FLOPPING around like a fish --

As the bear tumbles, leaves and dirt fling into the air.

Odin and James remain frozen.

The bear returns to its feet goes to the nearest tree --

POPS up on his hind-legs and begins SCRATCHING his back against the bark.

The tree SWAYS back and forth.

... James can't believe what's going on...
Gives a bewildered and terrified EXHALE of relief.
Starts to QUIETLY LAUGH...

The sight before him is pretty amusing.

The bear belches out a non threatening MOAN as it vigorously attempts to satiate the itch.

For now the cold-hearted killing machine is no more than a dumb and gentle giant...

Sensing an opportunity to sneak away --

JAMES

(quiet)
Odin, heel.

Without turning his back to the bear, James slowly retreats away from the creature.

The bear pays no attention to James and Odin as they slip into the dense forest coverage.

As soon as the Bear is out of sight --

James spins around, breaks into a fast walk, gains some distance... Fast walk turns into a stealthy jog.

James points up the hillside --

JAMES

(quiet)
Go!

Odin RUNS farther --

James lags behind, tries to hold pace, but can't.

Odin turns and waits for James --

JAMES

Keep going. I'll catch up.

EXT. HILL TOP - DAY

James LEANS against a tree, backpack on the ground.
SWALLOWS two Aspirin. 6 left...

BREATHES -- heart still racing.
Sits down on a boulder.
Drinks some water.

Finally starts to relax.
Stares at Odin and shakes his head in disbelief.

JAMES

Let's hope we don't run into one of
those again.

EXT. ROCKY CAMP - SUNSET

James sets up camp nearby a group of FOREST BOULDERS.

MOMENTS LATER:

James stands by his suspended bag of food.
In the distance is the tent.

He looks over his map.

Takes his pen and fills in the dotted line, marks an X at
their current spot...

JAMES

Almost halfway, not too bad.

Odin finishes his dog chow.
James finishes his power bar.

JAMES

Tomorrow is gonna be a big day,
need to hit at least 14 miles.

The two stand awkwardly for a moment, unsatisfied.

JAMES

What are your thoughts on double
portions?

Odin's tail wags, unsure what's being said -- but the tone
sounds positive...

JAMES

Just tonight though.

James scoops out more kibble, drops it into Odin's bowl, gets
out a bag of chips for himself.

INT. TENT - NIGHT

James wiggles around in his sleeping bag.

A WOLF HOWL echoes into the night.
Soon a chorus of wolves HOWL BACK.
Not too far away...

Odin listens very intently. Seems uneasy.
James rubs the dog's head.

JAMES

Yeah... I don't like it either.

Flips off the flash light.

EXT. ROCKY CAMP - MORNING

James walks out to the suspended food bag area.
Finds it TORN OPEN.
Food wrappers on the ground.
Branch ripped off the tree.

JAMES

Great.

Gives an exasperated sigh. Untangles the rope from the branch, coils it up.

No more food.

Odin SNIFFS his empty bag of dog chow.

JAMES

Well, we still have water. That's what's important. Vet said you needed to lose weight anyway...

James walks back to the tent.

JAMES

Come on.

Distraught, Odin lingers by his food bag, sniffs for some morsel of food. Finds nothing.

Eventually trots after James.

JAMES

At least we got double portions yesterday.

EXT. FOREST MEADOW - DAY

Blooming spring flowers.
 Scattered trees.
 Snow capped mountains in the distance.

James finally seems like he's re-gained a bit of his strength. Odin strides alone at his side.

JAMES
 (pointing at mountains)
 See that up there? That's where
 we're going.

James picks up a pinecone, THROWS it --

Odin chases after it.

JAMES
 Good boy. Go get it.

EXT. MOUNTAIN BASE - DAY

Odin and James walk around the base of a formidable ice capped mountain.

LATER:

The duo make it around the mountain bend and cross into a field leading to more forest.

EXT. RIVER - DAY

James and Odin come out of the woods towards a rapid.

Thirty feet across.
 Fast flowing.
 Above-head depth.

Odin jogs ahead and stops at the water's edge.

James thinks quietly to himself.

*Too far to throw the pack.
 Pack is too heavy to swim across with.
 Water is too cold.
 Flow is too dangerous.*

The dog walks up the bank, aimlessly sniffs.

JAMES
 Gonna have to find some other way
 across. What do you think, should
 we try our luck North or South?

James turns, notices Odin staring into a small pool fed by the run off of the river.

He walks over --

A small **salmon** swims in a circle, unable to escape the run off pond.

JAMES

You just couldn't handle no breakfast huh?

James sets his pack down.

Flips the combat walking stick...

SPEARS the water -- SKEWERS the fish.

MOMENTS LATER:

James pulls out a small knife from his ankle. Makes quick work of gutting and de-boning the fish.

Splits the fish into two filets.

Gives one to Odin, eats the other one.
The two chew up their meal...

JAMES

Good find. I still like it grilled better, but this isn't too bad.

James rinses his hands in the water, looks up the river...

JAMES

Okay, let's figure out how to get across this sonuvabitch.

EXT. RIVER CANYON ENTRANCE - DAY

James and Odin climb up a canyon incline.

James leans against a rock for a minute.

He wipes sweat from his brow and keeps moving.

EXT. RIVER CANYON - DAY

The soft sandbanks are now replaced hard stone, boulders, and imposing rocks.

River is a thinner width up here, but faster, and no longer at level height, but at a 15 foot drop below.

Odin and James wind around a small bend.

A hundred feet away they spot --

A FALLEN TREE

Bridging the twenty-five foot gap of the canyon river.

EXT. CANYON RIVER TREE BRIDGE - DAY

The two stare at the massive rotting tree bridge.

The bottom is overgrown with moss, fed by the mist of the churning rapid below. On the top all the bark has decayed off, leaving only a slippery wood surface.

The circumference of the tree is substantial -- would take 2-3 men to wrap their arms around the mid point.

James KICKS the side of the tree.

Sturdy.

The log path is wide and there are no obstacles ahead, except for two problematic thick branches facing the sky about halfway across -- effectively splitting the walkway into a treacherously thin strips on both sides for several feet.

JAMES

I think this is the best we're gonna get. You wanna go first?

The dog stares absentmindedly at him.

JAMES

Yeah, okay. I'll lead the way.

James THROWS his combat walking stick across like a spear.

It lands on the opposite side.

James HOPS onto the log.
Walks a few feet.
Boots are barely holding traction.

Stops.

*More slippery than I thought.
Gonna have to go slow.*

He looks to Odin -- points to the beginning of the bridge before the canyon drop.

JAMES

Up.

Odin jumps onto the log -- doesn't like it up here.

The dog spins around in a circle, wants to get off.

JAMES

Sit. Stay.

Odin does as he's told, watches the Master carefully...

James exhales.

Steadies his nerves.

Cautiously begins walking.

One step at a time soldier.

The distance isn't long, nor is the height -- but the backpack is throwing his balance off... and falling into the cold water with his pack equals more hypothermia exposure.

He makes it about a quarter of the way across --

Catches his foot on a broken tree stub --

SLIPS --

STUMBLES FORWARD --

NEARLY GOES OVER THE EDGE...

But manages to find his balance in the nick of time.

Odin BARKS nervously -- doesn't like what James is doing.

JAMES

It's okay Ode.

James squats down and straddles the tree.

Better safe than sorry.

Once his position is settled he starts scooting across.

Reaches the HALFWAY POINT.

The first branch is so large that James can't even wrap his arms around it, but he manages to find a deep indentation for a solid hold.

James LEANS his body perilously close to the edge --

Quickly wraps himself around the first branch and moves ahead...

There's a one foot space between the first and second branch, just big enough for James to stand for a split second.

Second branch is smaller...

He gets a good hold on it with both hands...

SLIDES over the dangerously thin path.

James breathes out in relief having successfully cleared the two branches.

Glances at Odin --

JAMES

Not so bad.

James stays on his feet, carefully balances across the remaining portion of the log.

Drops his bag by his walking stick, then returns across the bridge until he once again reaches the middle.

Now the hard part.

James eyes the two branches splitting the bridge:

They're challenging obstacles for a human -- and impossible for a dog. The path is too thin on both sides, slippery, and curved downward toward the rapids.

Odin is all but guaranteed to fall -- especially given that he only has 3 functioning legs...

Without the bulky backpack, James easily squeezes his way by the two branches then sits down on the middle section.

Odin sits at the beginning of the bridge, waiting for a command.

JAMES

Odin, come.

The dog rises to his feet.
Takes a few nervous steps.
Stops.

Odin does not like the height or the river below.

JAMES

It's okay Odin, *come*.

Odin anxiously heads forward --

JAMES

Good boy, that's it.

As he moves his paws SLIP on the slick wooden surface, but the path is just wide to keep him on.

JAMES

That's it Ode.

The dog makes it to him.

James gives him some pets and then unzips the tactical vest. Pulls out a small coil of thin rope.

TIES A KNOT on Odin's tactical vest handle on his back.

JAMES

Stay.

James takes the rope and crosses the treacherous branches, uncoiling rope slack as he goes.

He makes it passed both, sits down, then WRAPS the remaining rope around the second tree branch.

JAMES

You're not gonna like this, but we don't have a choice.

James gets firm STRADDLE on the bridge...
Checks the rope -- locked good -- perfect length...
Breathes...

JAMES

Okay Odin, *come*.

Odin is well aware of his limitations and knows he cannot continue without slipping off; BARKS in protest --

JAMES

I know.

James grips a small broken tree limb for support with one hand and reaches out with the other.

When he stretches out, his arm is long enough to reach about two thirds of the way through the two branches toward Odin...

JAMES

It's okay. You jump to me, I'll catch you. If not, rope is there.

The dog whines.

JAMES

Come on...

Odin steps to the side of the first branch...

Only a few feet away from James arm --

JAMES

Odin, come.

Odin locks eyes with James.

JAMES

I got you.

Odin PRESSES on --

HUGS the branch as close as he can.

JAMES

That's it!

But the wood is too slippery --

Odin's outside legs lose their grip simultaneously --

The dog **FALLS** off the edge --

But he's *just* close enough for James to GRAB the vest handle at the last possible second --

The dog's 80 lbs of deadweight JERKS James arm damn near out of it's socket --

ODIN HANGS COMPLETELY OFF THE BRIDGE --

only supported by James' strength, rope slacked out -- not carrying any weight.

BREATHING FIERCELY --

James SCREAMS --

LIFTS the dog with one arm all the way up to the bridge.

Odin LICKS James face upon being hoisted up.

JAMES

Okay -- okay. *Sit.*

James leans on the branch for support, struggles to catch his breath...

He unties the rope handle knots.

Coils up the rope.

Zips it back into the tactical vest.

James POINTS across the bridge --

JAMES

Go on.

Odin finds his footing, walks slowly at first, speeds up as he gets closer to the end.

Upon crossing Odin turns around and stares at James, who remains on the log, not moving.

JAMES

Good boy. I'll be there in a second. Just... Just a
(trailing off)
minute, I'll --

Light headed.
Back against the branch.
Labored breathing.
Massages his chest.

It's happening again --

JAMES

Egh --

HEART ATTACK HITS him like a freight train.

JAMES

(incoherent noises)
Gah --

James attempts to GRIP onto surface
nothing to latch onto...

PASSES OUT --

Odin watches helplessly.

James' body SLUMPS to the side and hangs precariously on the log bridge for a moment.

Odin JUMPS back on to the bridge, ALARMED at James condition:

Something isn't right --

James **FALLS**

FLIPS in the air --

Body PLUNGES head first diagonally into the violent RAPID...

UNDERWATER

His arm SMASHES into a ROCK a foot below the surface.
Impact is excruciating and horrific --

Ulna and Radius bones in the left arm BREAK.

BACK ON LAND

Odin PANICS -- immediately SPRINGS into action and begins TRACKING James' body as its carried down the ferocious rapid.

The dog stays no more than a foot or two away from the canyon edge, never taking his eyes off James, who floats face down like a rag doll.

The Master is everything, cannot lose the Master.

The river moves FAST, Odin has to SPRINT just to keep pace.

IN THE WATER

James is SUCKED into a whirlpool vortex --

Body FLIPS onto his back --

He regains consciousness, hazy vision, confused.

On the left: JAGGED rocks stick out --

On the right: a clear flow --

James tries to navigate his way toward the safer path, but he has no strength and the vortex SPITS him out toward danger --

He braces himself as he's sent HURLING toward the rocks...

Broken arm HITS the hard surface --

JAMES SCREAMS

BACK ON LAND

Upon hearing James' cry, the dog stops for a second --

Considers JUMPING off the canyon cliff into the water, but decides to keep running instead as the body is already too far away.

Odin LEAPS over ditches and various small obstacles --

Must move faster. Must get to the Master.

IN THE WATER

The rapid enters an even ROUGHER section:

Rocks lined up like rows of teeth.

Surging water.

Powerful undercurrents.

JAMES tumbles through the chaotic flow, barely able to keep his head above water.

His forehead HITS a rock --

BLOOD gushes into the river.

James' back SLAMS into a boulder, KNOCKING THE WIND out of him -- GULPS down a breath of water.

LUNGS SPASM --

BACK ON LAND

The canyon descends.

Odin CHARGES AHEAD with full force until he's back on level ground.

Cannot lose the Master.

For a split second the dog is AHEAD of James --

The two approach a section of the rapid that's calm for about fifty feet, then ends in a catastrophic section of endless rocks and small waterfall drops.

James is close to the shore, but now drowning and too delirious to make it to safety.

ODIN LEAPS into the water --

SWIMS to JAMES

Current is strong -- not much time till they hit the rocks...

Odin BITES James' jacket
TURNS to the shore
FURIOUSLY paddles

Odin SQUINTS as water droplets LASH into his eyes from his frenzied swimming --

With all his might, the dog FIGHTS the monstrous current --

TUGS James back to land.

The two SPIT out water.

COUGHING and GASPING.

James ROLLS to his back.

Odin SHAKES dry, SNIFFS around his Master.

James looks at his limp left arm, the break is bad.

It's bent about 10 degrees off where it should be.
Hand is already swollen and discolored.

JAMES

No, no, no...

James clutches his arm and rests his head back onto the sand.
He stares up at the blue sky, feels the sun hit his face.

JAMES

God damn it.

Odin sits beside him.

James gives the dog a pat. Sits himself up, finds a nearby
tree and leans against it.

He digs into his pocket, grabs his Aspirin bottle.
SWALLOWS three.

BLOOD drip from James' forehead into his eyes.

He WIPES it off --

Gets BLOOD all over his hand --

JAMES

Okay... Okay....

Glances back at his arm. The break is three inches above the
base of his palm. Shakes his head --
knows what he has to do:

James unzips a pouch on Odin's tactical vest...
Pulls out a FIRST AID box.

No water inside, good.

Grabs GAUZE bandages and a temporary SPLINT ROLL, places them
onto a nearby rock...

He delicately touches the broken area --

WINCES with MIND NUMBING PAIN.

JAMES

Gah, fuck.

Grabs a stick, BITES it...
Braces the broken arm against a nearby flat rock...
Breathes, mustering mental energy and

SHIFTS the Radius and Ulna bones back into place --

JAMES
(screaming)
ARGGHH -- Fuck!
(incomprehensible)

Vision BLURS.

James GAGS -- THROWS UP more water...

ODIN stares at him -- alarmed -- unsure what to do --

JAMES
It's okay Ode.

He collects himself, gives the dog a half crazed grin --

Despite the excruciating momentary pain, shifting the bone back brings significant relief.

James places his arm onto the insta-form splint roll material. Gets the fit snug. Wraps the gauze around it.

Gets out the KNIFE from his ankle holder.

CUTS away bits of his long sleeve shirt...
Re-purposes it into a SLING with remarkable speed --
not the first time he's done this.

The sun SLIPS under the treeline.

The solid warm light hitting James is now a dancing shadow of branches and leaves.

James looks at Odin --

Wraps his arm around the dog.
Grabs the dog's fat jowls affectionately.

JAMES
You did good...

The dog and the man stare at each other.

JAMES
We're not gonna die out here.

James eyes up to the river canyon...

Have to get back to the supplies.

James struggles to his feet, starts walking.

Odin follows.

EXT. RIVER CANYON CAMP - SUNSET

James reaches his backpack and walking stick.

QUICK SHOTS:

- Gathering firewood
- Sparking a fire
- Propping up wet clothes by the flames
- Struggling to fit the tent cables through the slots. With only one good hand, James has to use his knees as a second source to grip materials.

EXT. RIVER CANYON CAMP - NIGHT

A small fire burns.

Odin lays by the warmth.

James looks at his map, fills in the distance traveled today. Looks equally concerned and determined --

JAMES

Early wake up tomorrow. We're going all day slow and steady until we hit that road. That's the mission.

Odin suddenly STANDS UP.

Prowls over to the campfire light edge. Alert.

James grabs the combat walking stick.
Goes to Odin's side.
Listens...

Silence.

Odin gazes into the darkness.
James FLIPS on his head lamp --
Shines the LIGHT through the trees.

Nothing.

James eyes the dog, trusts his instincts.
After a few moments Odin sits back down.

JAMES

Bed time.

James walks to the tent.

Odin continues to peer into the woods...

James gets an uneasy feeling.

Odin turns around and enters the tent.

INT. TENT - NIGHT

BEEP -- BEEP

James hits the alarm on his watch OFF.
Time is **3 AM**.

He hits the flashlight.

Spots Odin, already up, sitting by the entrance, ear shifting around, listening.

JAMES

You been up the whole night?

EXT. RIVER CANYON CAMP - NIGHT

Pitch black except for EMBERS GLOWING from the fire.

Tent unzips.

Odin immediately exits and peers out to the forest.

James follows, shines his headlight around the camp.
Still nothing out there.

MOMENTS LATER:

Tent is broken down.

James **SHOVES** his sleeping bag into his pack -- with only one arm, it's a slow and challenging process.

He finishes his arranging his supply bag.

Very carefully lifts the backpack up...

Slides his good arm into a strap...

Slowly maneuvers himself to get into the second loop --
Bag barely hits his arm --

MIND ERASING PAIN --

JAMES

AGH.

He tries again -- wiggles his shoulder in successfully, situates his arm and the sling, **CLIPS** the bag straps across his chest.

James studies his map and compass.
Aims himself in the right direction.

JAMES

15 miles Odin. Let's knock it out.

He flips a setting on his head lamp to widen the light focus.

James stuffs the map back into his jacket, picks up his walking stick and starts on the last leg of the journey.

EXT. OLD GROWTH FOREST - NIGHT

Darkness.

Faint outlines of ancient trees glow in the full moonlight.

In the distance a single ray of light suddenly pops through the forest -- James' head lamp.

Two tiny figures gradually navigate their way.

A SHADOWED figure walks into frame and blocks our view...

CLOSE ON JAMES & ODIN

James quietly moves along the damp soil.
Odin is close beside.

The dog pauses for a moment, peers into the woods:

Listens with intensity.
Senses something out there...

James continues on, Odin remains still until he's out of James' light range.

The dog's ear shifts around like a satellites, trying to pick up sounds to confirm his suspicions.

Nothing.

Odin runs after James.

EXT. OLD GROWTH FOREST - NIGHT

James walks toward a tree, stops, shines his head light around the immediate area:

Nothing near by...

Sets his combat stick against the tree.

JAMES
Keep watch Oddie.

James pees.

Looks off to his side into the forest...

Finishes up.
Stares at his broken arm --
coloring in his hand looks even worse.

JAMES
Odin, come.

James pulls out a canteen from Odin's tactical vest.
Drinks some water, swallows the remaining Aspirin.

James pours a sip into Odin's collapsible bowl.

JAMES
Drink.

Odin seems focused on the darkness behind them.

JAMES
Drink up -- you need water.

Odin reluctantly drops his head down and takes a single
SLURP.

JAMES
That's it? Okay fine.

James turns his head, the flashlight whips through the trees.

GLOWING EYES flash for a split second.

JAMES
(firm)
Hey!

James stands up and attempts to focus back in the area --

Odin follows James lead, trots out ahead of him.

JAMES
Something tracking us Ode --
You see it?

James holds the light in front of them...

Nothing but trees.

JAMES
Fuck.

The two survey the area. No sign of life emerges...
Just the silent darkness.

JAMES
Keep your eyes out.

James starts walking again.

EXT. FOREST - DAWN

First moments of Civil Twilight.

Ghastly blankets of HEAVY FOG drift through the forest.

In the tree tops --

A Great Horned Owl searches for prey from its perch and
bellows out deep resonating HOOTS.

BELOW

James and Odin peer up at the creature, both on high alert.

Hard to see much of anything, darkness still rules this
morning. The meager faint blue light that manages to pierce
through the forest is choked out by the FOG.

James looks at his watch:

5:30 AM

More omniscient HOOTS echo through the area.

Odin is ahead by a few paces.

Trees CREAK and shift around --
James turns his attention toward every sound.

A fog blanket ROLLS IN and then WASHES AWAY in front of Odin.

A silhouette of a **WOLF** appears 40 feet into the forest.

Odin GROWLS --

James looks ahead --

Sees a pair of LEGS dart into the bushes.
FOG rolls back in, concealing the view.

James rushes to Odin's side --

JAMES
I saw it. *Heel.*

The two wait, frozen like statues, eyes focused ahead...

Fog washes out again for a moment.

James looks around the area --
thick bushes, trees, mud.
Silence.

No sign of the elusive stalker...

A light patter of FOOTSTEPS at their SIDE --

Odin and James turn --

30 feet away:
The wolf stares back at them.
Slips behind a tree.

JAMES

It's tracking us Oddie, gotta spook
him off --

James puffs his chest out:

JAMES

(yelling)
GET OUTTA HERE.
(to Odin)
Odin Bark.

Odin rumbles out several intimidating BARKS.

Sounds of MOVEMENT on their other side...

The two shift their vision --

The WOLF stares at them...
*No -- color is different -- this is **another** wolf.*

JAMES

Shit.

Fog blanket rolls in, hiding the predator.

James SPINS around --

TWO MORE WOLVES appear behind them --

Sinking feeling hits James' stomach:

... We're being surrounded ...

JAMES

Louder Oddie -- BARK.

Odin's restrained GROWLS turn into VICIOUS rage filled HOWLS.

JAMES
GET OUTTA HERE!

Odin spins around James to watch their flank --

The two continue their BARRAGE of sound --

JAMES
(louder)
GET OUTTA HERE
(SCREAMING)
ARGGH! GO ON!

Each time one of them LOCKS onto a wolf to call out,
it retreats behind the trees --

JAMES
That's it Odin, *BARK!*
(More SCREAMING)
This is OUR AREA --

At first it seems as if the effort might be working...

But after a few seconds the wolves just reemerge...
and as they reappear they seem to be getting **closer**.

They're not scared -- they're playing with us.

James attempts to simultaneously keep track of all of the
wolves as they creep in and out of view.

Two behind
One left side -- turns into **three**.
One right side -- turns to **two**

And directly in front of them a --

MASSIVE 150 lbs ALPHA WOLF

A beautiful monstrous gray beast in the prime of its life:
Powerful muscles.
Thick coat.
Pettrifying yellow eyes.
Savage commanding energy.

James locks eyes with the Alpha.

8 WOLVES in total...

Only one way out of this.

Exhales.
Something in his eyes shifts --
Violence. Fury. War.
Not a man scared to die.

James UNCLIPS his BACKPACK
DROPS it to the ground...

JAMES
Stay close Odin.

Odin is directly at James' side, glaring at the trio of
wolves behind him, flashing his silver fangs.

The wolves stop retreating to the bushes.
All take firm positions, about **20 feet away**.

No one moves...

The beasts exhale warm breaths into the cold air.
Fog floats by the creaking trees.
The owl above continues its strange calls of the dawn.

Then --

The Alpha takes a step toward them --

Instead of backing off, James takes a challenging STEP right
back and STOMPS toward the Alpha.

As James does this, Odin moves with James in perfect unison,
staying 6 inches from his thigh at all times.

Alpha FREEZES, takes one step back.

An unhinged wildness erupts in James.

James takes ANOTHER STEP toward the Alpha.

JAMES
We're not afraid of you.

ALPHA HOLDS ITS GROUND.

James PICKS UP the pace!

STARTS CLOSING THE GAP -- ODIN HUGS HIS THIGH, all while
remaining backward, focused on the flank --

James GRIPS his combat walking stick --

RAISES it ABOVE HIS HEAD --

Gets within STRIKING distance --

ALPHA REMAINS -- FLASHES its teeth.

JAMES SMASHES the combat staff DOWN --

Alpha DODGES --

Retreats to his outer wolf circle, the other predators all remain 20 feet away.

Alpha starts TROTting around James and Odin ...

Odin BARKS --

This time the ALPHA responds in a domineering GROWL.

The pack ALL begin to join in ferocious cacophony: gnashing teeth, howling, snarling, growling. The bone chilling chorus grows louder.

The other wolves begin MOVING around with the Alpha...

Like a snake suffocating prey, the WOLF CIRCLE begins to **constrict** around James and Odin with a slow, deliberate pace.

James keeps his body facing the Alpha; Odin continues to move with James as a single unit.

The wolves trot FASTER, 20 feet turns to

15 feet...

James abruptly SWEEPS behind him with the staff, momentarily creating a little space.

But the wolves in front are now **10 feet away...**

James SWEEPS the staff 180 degrees in front of him then BOLDLY STOMPS FORWARD --

JAMES

AWAY! --

Odin carries on BARKING; James SWINGS the staff... But the wolves are unfazed and continue circling -- SNAPPING their jaws, frothy saliva dripping from their mouths.

The wolves' advance is slow at first, but they begin to speed up and soon James is barely able to hold them back --

Again and again they test James, taking ONE step too close, then leaping away from the staff -- but none are bold enough to press a real attack...

ON THE LEFT a wolf gets within critical striking distance. It moves in and CHALLENGES Odin head on -- James JABS the staff toward the animal --

The Alpha takes the opportunity to LUNGE at the opening in front of James -- BITES onto the top portion of the staff, just below the blade.

With the Alpha's fearless unceasing attack --

ALL WOLVES DESCEND UPON THEM...

THREE wolves ATTACK ODIN:

Odin meets one HEAD ON

SINKS his Titanium fangs into its neck;

TWO WOLVES, one on each side BITE at Odin's ribs.

The beasts are twice his size, but the thick tactical vest acts as defensive armor, keeping him temporarily safe.

ALPHA WOLF refuses to relinquish control of James' staff --

Now immobilized, two other wolves go after James:

One wolf BITES James' thigh --

Another LEAPS up, goes for his NECK --

James is forced to block the attack with his **broken arm** --

James is **KNOCKED to the ground.**

One wolf GNAWS James leg, RIPPING into his flesh

The other wolf BITES into James' sling --

CRUNCHES its teeth straight through his muscles --

VIOLENTLY THRASHES its head back and forth

RAVAGING his broken arm and

SHATTERING James' fragile bones.

James WALLS out a horrifying CRY --

It's not the sound of a man in distress, it's the sound of a dying animal being overwhelmed and **consumed.**

James' frantic death rattle STABS into Odin's HEART --

fills the dog with anxiety, rage, and power.

Odin SPINS like a TORNADO --

KNOCKS his attackers back --

SPRINTS to James

BITES the neck of the wolf locked onto James' arm --

The wolf LETS GO of James as its TACKLED by Odin.

ALPHA drops James' staff and charges over to Odin.

James repeatedly KICKS the wolf gnawing on his calf directly in the head with brutal force, sending it STUMBLING back in disoriented confusion.

Another wolf leaps at James --
 James tries to ROLL AWAY
 Wolf catches James' jacket --
 CHOMPS until his teeth dig into James' SIDE STOMACH.

James reaches into his boot, PULLS OUT HIS KNIFE

PLUNGES it directly into the wolf's back three times --
 The WOLF HOWLS --
 James goes for ANOTHER STAB --
 MISSES as the wolf escapes into the safety of the forest.

James flips over -- SPOTS

4 WOLVES including the Alpha ATTACKING Odin.

Filled with wrath, Odin defends himself with everything he's got -- but the dog STRUGGLES to stay on his feet as the Alpha SNAPS at his face and the others are LOCKED onto his vest.

On the ground and over 10 feet away James reacts instantly with intimidating military precision --

THROWS HIS KNIFE -- it ZIPS through the air and pierces directly into the hip of one of Odin's foes --

Odin uses the moment to his advantage --
 creates some distance between himself and the wolves.

On the edge of the circle, two wolves eye James and RUSH in to attack --

With a SPLIT SECOND to react James GRABS his combat staff off the ground and gets back on his feet.

James SWINGS the combat staff --

One wolf evades, the other is too far ahead and catches a horizontal slash across it's shoulder, sending it YELPING into the forest.

Alpha hears the cry from the pack member --
 sets his sights on JAMES.

ODIN keeps up his onslaught of FEROCIOUS COMBAT with the remaining wolves -- barely keeping them back.

4 uninjured wolves remain:

3 on Odin; Alpha on James.

Alpha GLARES at James...
 Razor teeth yearning for death --

James returns a grim thousand yard stare back --

Alpha CHARGES in a FULL SPRINT.

James holds his ground and BRACES himself:
lowers his center of gravity
grips his staff at the midpoint
tucks the base under his arm pit for extra support --

Alpha LEAPS at James --

While the wolf is in mid air, James THRUSTS the combat staff
at exactly the right moment --

HITS the Alpha in the center of its throat
the blade pierces the spinal cord --
shoots out the back of the Alpha's neck.

Several feet away --

ODIN YOWLS in pain, the trio of wolves are only moments away
into leveraging themselves into a kill bite.

Raw primal energy RIPPING through James' body, utterly
consumed by the warpath, he now acts on pure instinct:

ALPHA hangs on the spear --
James SLAMS the body to the ground.
RIPS the staff out --

THROWS his spear down.

Sticks his fingers into the wound in the Alpha's throat...
GRIPS with all his might
DRAGS the dead body and
STORMS toward the remaining trio of wolves.

No sense of self; no fear; no hesitation:

James fills his lungs with a giant breath of dawn air --

LIFTS the dead Alpha with one hand above his head and

BELTS out a devastatingly brutal **SCREAM**: eardrum shattering,
disturbingly inhuman, and so profoundly savage the trio of
wolves **instantly** cease their attack on Odin --

WHIRL around and see James:
eyes blazing with madness
holding the dead Alpha high in the foggy air --

BLOOD gushes down James' arm and rains onto his hair.

I am the beast lord of this forest.

The wolves stare at the terrifying giant in front of them, frozen in dread filled awe and **ruinous fear...**

Even Odin cowers at the sight.

James THROWS the vanquished Alpha at the wolf pack.

The body HITS the ground -- the wolves SCATTER WILDLY into the forest, sprinting away as fast as they can.

The last remnants of air bleed out of James' lungs. His wretched scream finally diminishes.

Silence.

James stands -- injured, mud-stained, blood-soaked, and mentally **blacked out...**

James DROPS to his knees, quietly hyperventilates.

Odin carefully walks to James' side.

James stares lifelessly forward in a trance, lost in some distant ether...

The dog gently puts his head on James' shoulder. Gives a sweet whine.

James BLINKS...

Slowly comes to.

Hands shaking, he pets his companion.

Takes a moment.

Looks the dog over for injuries --

Odin has a substantial bite on his neck, a few superficial cuts, and the tactical vest is ripped all over -- but overall the dog is in surprisingly good shape.

James takes notice of his own health...

He's in **appalling** condition.

- Sling torn, but still on. Puncture wounds all along the arm break area, now far beyond any sort of redemption.

- Torso bleeding.

- Multiple lacerations on the right leg, heavy bleeding on the thigh, calf, and ankle areas.

Need to stop the bleeding...

UNZIPS Odin's tactical vest pouch...

Finds the FIRST AID KIT and DUCT TAPE --

CUTS parts of his torn pants off with small scissors.
Ties tourniquets over the most critical areas on his leg.

Checks out his stomach, several 1 inch punctures --
Places a large bandage over the wound.

Instantly bleeds through -- he DUCT TAPES over it.

Last, the arm -- break is in worse condition...
Nothing he can do about this one.
He re-adjusts the sling, WINCES.

Still in a complete daze --

James looks around his surroundings, spots his backpack.
Using the combat stick as a support, he staggers to his feet
and haphazardly wanders to his bag.

He tries to pick the bag up --

FALLS to the ground.

Adrenaline still overriding all pain receptors, James feels
nothing and attempts to

LIFT again --

Leg gives out and he TUMBLES to the dirt.

James eyes the bag --

Weight is too much. Can't take this with me...

Climbs to his feet once more.
Stares at Odin.

JAMES

We can still do this.

With an awkward heavy footed stagger, James starts walking --
relying heavily on the staff to take the weight off his leg.

Odin sniffs at the backpack on the ground...
Heads after James.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Rays of sunlight splinter through the forest and glimmer down
on Odin and James.

The duo's pace is slow but determined.

Without the backpack moving around is much easier -- but James' injuries are so severe that he can barely walk.

In order to keep moving forward he puts nearly all of his weight onto the staff.

One step at a time soldier.

In the full exposure of the daylight James is a grisly sight:

Forehead slashed, face swollen, leg bandages bleeding through, stomach bandage dripping with blood under the duct tape, left hand blue and bruised, superficial cuts everywhere.

James sets the walking staff against a fallen tree.
Sits down. Pulls out his map --

Checks the compass.

Still on course.

JAMES

Just a few more miles in here Ode.
Then we hit the field, easy walking
until the hill range. Once we climb
that sucker it's a straight shot to
the road.

James closes his eyes, wrecked with exhaustion.
Odin loafs over and puts his head on James' hand.

Pet me.

Breathing heavy, eyes still closed, James smiles.
Lightly tugs on the dog's ear.

James glances at his broken arm --

JAMES

I don't think my arm is doing so
good. They'll probably cut it off
and I'll end up like you. Pretty
cool huh?

James face suddenly GRIMACES --
Stabbing chest pain... But it quickly passes.

Odin WHINES.

JAMES

It's okay -- I'm all right.

James breathes. Pats the dog a few times.
Grabs his staff and moves on.

EXT. FOREST EDGE - DAY

Odin stays right by James' side and studies his every move.

Master is weak.

JAMES

What's that down there?

The terrain is sloped downward -- ahead it looks as if the forest ends...

The dog races down the incline, then runs back up in to wait for James.

JAMES

I think we did it. That should be the field...

A bit of excitement and hope hit him -- James turtle paced hobble speeds up.

James makes it out of the trees and enters --

EXT. BOREAL SWAMP - DAY

An expanse of wretched land lays before James.

Unavoidable, murky, thick marshes -- stretching for two miles and ending at a large hill range.

All hope vanishes from James' face as he studies the grueling landscape: dense long grass, sludgy mud, and massive pockets of stagnant knee deep water.

James leans his forehead onto his staff.

Keep going.

JAMES

This was supposed to be a field...

He looks around -- searching for another route...

There's no other option.

JAMES

No rest for the weary Odin.

James hops forward until he hits the mud --

JABS his staff on the terrain, testing it out. The staff base SINKS with almost no downward pressure.

When he lifts it up a tiny hole of WATER appears.

James LAUGHS in exasperated weariness.

Odin trots around, his prosthetic paw keeps getting CAUGHT in the sludge.

JAMES

Odin come. Lay down.

Odin does as he's told. James UNSCREWS the prosthetic paw, zips it into Odin's vest.

JAMES

We're just gonna have to do our best. Slow and steady, okay?

The two look at each other, searching for encouragement.

EXT. BOREAL SWAMP - DAY

James' staff erratically SMASHES into **knee deep bog water**, BARELY keeping him upright as he completely loses balance.

He SCREAMS in pain as his weight JOLTS into his bad leg...

Shifting his balance to his good leg, he repositions himself and looks ahead to the hills --

Halfway there...

James bandages are soaking wet with foul murky water.

Odin STRUGGLES to move --
stomach completely submerged in the swamp
paws constantly slipping into the soft mud bed.

Every step the two take results in an a punishing battle:

The sticky mud SWALLOWS their legs deep into the earth.

In order to free themselves, they have to PULL upward with considerable force -- which decimates their nonexistent energy reserves and throws off their balance.

ODIN BARKS --

James looks to his companion who can't seem to move --

JAMES

I got you. Hold on.

He TRUDGES over --

STICKS his staff into the mud to hold it still...

Balancing primarily on one foot, he GRABS the tactical vest handle, PULLS up with his good hand and successfully releases Odin from the mud.

JAMES

Good boy. You're doing good.

The two STOMP forward, awkwardly navigating their way through the treacherous watery hell.

James steps into an extra deep water ditch, unprepared for the elevation drop --

James FALLS into the swamp.

Head to toe drenched...

With a bad leg, shattered arm, and fatigue levels off the chart, the mistake is potentially lethal.

James head POPS out of the water --

Locates his staff, but can't seem to get up...

James STRUGGLES -- but even with the staff he doesn't have the leverage, balance, or strength to get out.

Odin THUNDERS over to his aid --
Places himself directly at James' side.

James LEANS into Odin and the staff -- the extra stability from the dog is just enough to get him on his feet.

James HUFFS -- really starting to lose his spirit.

Glances at his broken, bite ridden arm.

Only a few hours before these wounds go septic...

James and the dog continue on.

EXT. BOREAL SWAMP / HILL BASE - DAY

James and Odin manage to take their last steps in the mud --

They make it on to dry land.

Ahead lays a hundred feet of grass followed by a mid size wooded hill, a few hundred feet in elevation.

In severe pain and soaking wet -- James slowly lowers himself and lays on his back in a daze.

Heavy breathing.

Bandages are bleeding through with fresh blood...

*No way to sugar coat it --
I'm dying.*

Silent tears fall down his mud stained cheeks.

Odin approaches --

LICKS his face.

James GRABS the back of the dog's neck, lifts himself up to a sitting position. Afternoon sun beats down upon the two.

JAMES
Sun feels good huh?

Eyes the hill.

JAMES
We're close.

James UNZIPS Odin's vest --

JAMES
Down Ode...

Reattaches Odin's prosthetic paw.

James feels on the ground for his staff...

STANDS up...

WOBBLES around --
against all odds stays on his feet.

JAMES
(broken conviction)
This will be easy... We'll do it no
problem.

James smiles at the dog -- but Odin intuitively feels how serious the situation is:

*Master is in trouble.
Must stay close.
Must help him.*

The **WOODED HILL** ahead isn't an impossible ascent, but in James' condition he might as well be climbing Mt. Everest.

The man wanders forward.
The dog follows.

EXT. FOREST HILLSIDE - AFTERNOON

In a lifeless zombie like state, James climbs the incline.

Odin is right by James' side and won't take his eyes off of him as they walk together.

JAMES

(weak)

That's it Odin. You're doing good.

Despite his slow lumbering determination, James begins to fall apart and crumble to the ground.

Again and again he rises
takes several hobbling lurches
CRASHES to the dirt.

At first James is able to recover somewhat quickly from each tumble -- but as the day wears on he becomes increasingly delirious and crushed pain.

With each tumble, Odin rushes over, shoves his wet snout on James' neck, gets in his face, stares at him -- desperate to lift the Master's morale.

You can do this.

Get up.

Get up.

Teeth clenched and bone tired -- James fights through each catastrophic stumble.

JAMES

Almost there.

EXT. FOREST HILLSIDE PEAK - SUNSET

A figure emerges at the hill plateau, exhaling pained moans.

James SURGES forward in anguished and wildly uncontrolled steps. Through the trees he spots a clearing of rocks that sits atop a

VANTAGE POINT --

James can't believe it, gives a quiet desperate LAUGH...
Odin stays close by James.

JAMES

This way.

The two make it to the overlook...

James soaks in the view:

A gentle hill descent leading to a lush forest valley. A few miles away, cutting through the trees is the **ROAD...**

There it is.

It's an overwhelming sight.

Face covered in blood and dirt,
he huffs, gives a drunken smile...
Stands for a moment, proud
STUMBLES back against a tree and
COLLAPSES...

Odin instantly is at his side --

James rubs his chest --
DAGGERS in his heart beat into him like waves in a storm.
Sweat pours off his forehead, the stabbing pain recedes.

James pets the dog.

Looks at the blood dripping from his wet leg bandages.

Odin waits for James to rise...

James makes an effort to move, but can't... He's completely wasted beyond redemption.

Heavy coughs. Dizzy. Aching.

The reality sets in: *this is it.*

JAMES

Almost did it.

James UNZIPS Odin's vest. Pours the dog a bowl of water.
Takes a small sip for himself.

Gets out a tiny SURVIVAL MANUEL...

He opens it up and flips to the back blank cover pages.

TEARS them out and

Starts **WRITING.**

Odin STANDS UP -- ALERT

The tiny speck of a VEHICLE travels down the road...

JAMES

Look at that. You're gonna be all
right bud.

James FINISHES writing...
Removes his wallet from his pocket.
Shoves the torn pages and wallet inside Odin's vest.
Zips it closed.

Odin stares at James, ready to move on.

James gives the dog a heavy pet.

JAMES
You got one last thing to do.
Go to the road.

James points at the road; Odin observes the location --
knows *exactly* what he's talking about.

JAMES
You understand me?

James keeps pointing until he's sure Odin knows the
destination.

JAMES
I wish I could go with you but I
can't. I'm all done. You always
were a lot tougher than me...

He grabs the dogs scruff.

JAMES
On the road you'll find a new
master. Things will be all right.

The sun slips behind the MOUNTAINS...

JAMES
You should go.

The dog sits in front of him, not going anywhere.
Shoves his snout on James' arm for more pets.

James laughs.

Voice getting weaker --

JAMES
Okay, you can stay... Once I'm gone
you gotta leave though.

James slides his body from a sitting position on the tree to
laying down -- using the roots as a pillow.

Odin plops down beside him, puts his body underneath James'
good arm, and rests his head on his shoulder.

JAMES

Agh -- you oaf.

With his head tilted up, James has a spectacular view of the valley, mountains, and sky.

Beautiful place to die.

James hugs the dog with his arm.

JAMES

I love you so god damn much.
You know that right?

EXT. FOREST HILLSIDE PEAK - NIGHT

An infinite blanket of stars shine against a full moon.

James gazes at the truly marvelous sight, slowly blinks as he wheezes out shallow breaths of cold air.

Odin rests under his arm -- hasn't moved an inch.

James stops breathing.

EXT. FOREST HILLSIDE PEAK - DAWN

Odin remains beside James, still cradled under his arm.

The first rays of the sun creep over the valley...

The dog rises to his feet.

Peers down at James, whose eyes are frozen open, still lost in the infinite wonder of last nights' stars.

The Master is gone.

Odin SNIFFS James body.

Cold coagulated blood...

The unmistakable scent of **death**.

Odin gives a small whimper, but he's not confused -- this isn't the first dead human he's seen...

Good Master sleeps forever now.

Quietly devastated, the dog stares at James for a long time.

*Master gave location orders.
Must continue my mission.*

Odin looks at the road in the far off in the distance.
Takes a few steps in the direction...

Stops.

Not ready to go. Not yet...

Odin returns to James.

Rubs his head on James' neck playfully.
Pushes his snout on his face.
Licks blood from his forehead.
Heaves out a HEAVY breath.

Gives one last final look:

reverent, reflective, appreciative, solemn.

Goodbye Master.

Dashes away, down the hill.

EXT. FOREST HILLSIDE SLOPE - DAY

Odin roams through the forest with a decisive jogging pace,
winding his way through trees and bushes with ease.

As he trots down, he carefully observes his surroundings.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

A patch of light beams down ahead --

A BREAK in the trees. Odin races forward and comes to --

EXT. THE ROAD - DAY

Odin wanders to the lonely desolate road...

The dog looks at the horizon --

Fierce mountains. Endless trees. Empty road.

What do I do now?

What is the mission?

Odin begins trotting up the road.

EXT. THE ROAD - DAY

Odin stops at an abandoned tire. SNIFFS.

*Ancient scents of humanity and civilization...
Could this be my destination?*

Something catches his attention --

Heading toward him is a PICK UP TRUCK, decades old, beat to hell and back twice over, bumping down the road...

Odin stands by the tire, unsure what to do.

INT. TRUCK - DAY

AMBER PITKA (30s) Alaskan Koyukon native, long braided hair, handcrafted earrings, beautiful, somber, has the look of someone whose life has been hard -- drives down the road.

UP AHEAD -- a curious sight.

Wolf?

She stares at Odin as she drives by --

Stops soon after...

REARVIEW MIRROR:

That's a dog... And what's that thing it's wearing? A vest?

She ponders for a moment.

Grabs her rifle from the passenger seat -- just in case.

Hops out.

Takes a few cautious steps toward the dog.

Leaves about twenty feet of space between her and Odin.

AMBER

You friendly? What are you doing out here? Hmm?

Doesn't seem dangerous.

Leans her rifle against the truck.

AMBER

Where's your people?

She looks up and down the road, no sign of anyone.

AMBER

(calling out)
Hello? Anyone out there?

Nothing.

Amber walks to Odin, squats down when she's ten feet away.

AMBER
You're a handsome old fellow.

Motions with her hand --

AMBER
Come here.

Odin trots over and sits in front of her.
She gives him some pets.

AMBER
Pretty smart aren't you. Where's
your owner, huh? You lost out here?

She sees bits of blood on Odin's coat...

AMBER
Looks like you need a vet.

Amber stands up. Climbs into the bed of her truck, searches
deep into the horizon in all directions --

AMBER
(calling out)
HELLO? ANYBODY OUT THERE?
(beat)
HELLO?

Not a soul in the world... Just this dog -- who can't seem to
take his eyes off her.

Amber pours some water from a plastic bottle into her hand --
Odin SLURPS IT down fast.

AMBER
Wow. Thirsty.

She eyes Odin's tactical vest.

AMBER
What's this thing you got going on
here?

Unzips the main compartment.

FINDS JAMES' NOTE:

JAMES (V.O.)
Dear stranger,
My name is James Sterling. If
you're reading this, I am dead.

The severity of the words captures her attention instantly.
She straightens out the letter and continues reading --

JAMES (V.O.)

Consider this document my final letter and will:

Several days ago, I suffered a near catastrophic heart attack. Soon after my plane crashed approximately fifty miles north west of this location. I attempted to make it back, but this land got the better of me.

Amber sits down on the bed of her truck.

SURREAL GLIMPSES OF ODIN AND JAMES' LIFE FLASH BEFORE US...

Time is slowed down so that each image is like a barely moving photograph:

1. A young Odin in mid air, RUNNING through a field with a class of other dogs and a squad of TRAINERS.

JAMES (V.O.)

In front of you here is Odin. He is a highly trained NAVY SEAL combat dog.

2. A TRAINER stands with James as he works with Odin for the first time on a military base.

JAMES (V.O.)

Please care for him, or if you are unable: find a suitable home for my dear friend.

3. James repels off a Black Hawk helicopter, Odin strapped to his chest. The two are nearly frozen, time moving so slowly we can see the individual helicopter blades cutting through the air.

JAMES (V.O.)

On the back of this note you will find a list of various commands he knows. You'll find them to be self explanatory -- I urge you not to issue the bite command unless in a situation of extreme danger.

4. James, face covered in dirt, in the midst of an active war zone, carries an unconscious Odin to safety as blood gushes out of the dog's snout.

JAMES (V.O.)

Odin has seen war and ferocious hardships beyond what any living being should ever experience...

5. James covers Odin's ears as a massive EXPLOSION goes off. Time is so slow that we can see the shock wave ripple through the ground.

JAMES (V.O.)

But the heart of this beast is strong and I truly believe him to be undefeatable.

6. A hostile target flanks James, Odin spots the enemy and takes him down. The enemy shoots Odin in the leg during the struggle -- but Odin refuses to let go of his bite. James FIRES several rifle rounds into the target.

JAMES (V.O.)

Occasionally Odin suffers from PTSD induced nightmares. They are frightening and will surely startle you, but if you speak calmly, he will settle.

7. James stands in a room, reaching out to Odin as he BARKS, hair standing straight up -- lost in a frenzied nightmare.

JAMES (V.O.)

There is no doubt some degree of responsibility and difficulty comes with Odin -- but should you rise to the occasion, you will discover an incredibly loyal, intelligent, and loving companion. With my last breath, I can say with the upmost sincerity he was the greatest joy of my entire life.

8. Perched high atop the mountains of Afghanistan, James and Odin look down a rugged valley at sunset.

JAMES (V.O.)

I have no family, except this playful beast. Attached is my ID, personal information, and bank accounts. In them you will find two hundred and forty seven thousand dollars. All of it is to go to whomever watches over Odin. I only ask that you take care of him to the best of your ability.

9. James, rifle in hand and a thousand yard stare in his eyes, stands in the darkness of some wretched third world land, only lit by fire as a house burns to the ground. Close on his eyes, the blazing chaos reflecting in his gaze.

JAMES (V.O.)

Should you betray this simple bargain and administer some ignorant carelessness, or malicious cruelty upon my dog, I will inflict such unimaginable wrath upon you in the afterlife, that it will make gods cower and tremble in horror... I have great faith no one will seek such an unnecessary fate.

10. James and Odin outside a cabin in Alaska. James plays Tug-Of-War with Odin. James has a deep glowing smile on his face, Odin reciprocates in his enthusiasm... The best of friends -- forever living in this moment.

JAMES (V.O.)

Odin has deep affinities for things typical of a dog, especially buffalo jerky, pets, scruff grabs, and fetch. See to it that he receives these simple joys in inappropriate abundance.

Close on Odin's face, lost in simple happiness with James...
The master is the entire world.

The dog **BLINKS** --

When Odin's eyes open we're **BACK IN THE PRESENT MOMENT...**

JAMES (V.O.)

Lastly:

Do not mourn or search for me.
My body is at peace in the wild.

With deep appreciation and gratitude,

James Sterling.

Silent tears roll down Amber's face.
The letter is a lot for her to take in.

She kneels on the ground beside Odin and pets his head.

The dog stares at her with a stoic peaceful gaze.

Amber rises to her feet.
Opens the passenger door.

AMBER

Odin...

The dog glances at her, then stares at the mountain range.

CLOSE ON THE DOG -- lost in primal reflection.

Sleeping Master is up there.

Amber walks to Odin.

Stares at the mountains with the dog.

The two both share the same wounded look in their eyes -- creatures who have lost something...

But perhaps together they can find something new.

Odin abruptly turns around and jumps into the truck.

Amber follows Odin's lead.

Walks to the passenger door.

Removes Odin's vest, tosses it in the truck bed.

Amber scratches Odin's fur.

AMBER

More comfy, eh?

She enters the truck.

Smiles at her new companion.

Starts the engine.

Heads down the road.

Odin sits in the passenger seat.

Nose pressed against the window.

AMBER

Wanna look out outside?

Amber reaches across him and hand cranks the window down.

Odin sticks his head out, feels the breeze on his face, closes his eyes. He looks behind him, back down the road -- toward the hillside, now far off in the distance...

Odin turns around toward Amber, lays down on the seat and puts his head on her lap. Amber pets his ears.

New Master is gentle and soft...

New Master is good.

The dog huffs out a tired comforted breath.

Falls fast asleep.

The truck disappears down the long Alaskan road.

The End.