

# FOG OF WAR

Written by

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**ENTERTAINMENT 360**

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**BLACK**

Fleetwood Mac's *Landslide* soothes -- OVER...

**FADE IN: HOME OFFICE - WALL - NIGHT**

PHOTOS of WAR ZONES... Devastation. Despair. The vacant stares of Soldiers and Civilians... *Time Magazine* worthy.

**INT. HOME OFFICE - NIGHT**

At a desk, surrounded by cameras and rolls of film -- sits...

MONA WEAVER -- and while *rugged* isn't an adjective you want to hear in your 50s, for Weaver, she carries her ruggedness with poise and grace.

Cigarette dangling from her lips, she wears the tired built up over a lifetime as she stares at a computer monitor...

Scrolling through photos of trees... Tree, after tree, after tree. Hypnotized... It's maddening... Endless -- when...

A peculiar sound from the hallway steals her attention -- a hollowed plastic ROLLING on wood -- and then she SEES...

A FIVE-YEAR OLD BOY -- her son, GAVIN -- rolls into view...

Riding a plastic Army Edition BIG WHEEL TRICYCLE, wearing camouflaged pajamas... He offers a rigid salute...

For us, this is cute... For Weaver, this is TERRIFYING... Made even more unsettling by the calming lull of Stevie Nicks.

In disbelief, she stands... *This can't be...*

WEAVER  
Gavin... Sweetie?

Gavin smiles, too big... His breaths are labored -- WHEEZY...

YOUNG GAVIN  
Am I going to hell?

Horrified, Weaver can't even tremble out an answer -- as...

Her son and the hollowed plastic SPIN down the hall, out of view -- the ROLLING now somehow even more ominous -- when...

The ROLLING stops... The wheels are stuck... Plastic spins against slick wood -- grabbing for traction...

KRAAA-SHA! ... KRAAA-SHA! ... KRAAA-SHA! ...

Somehow *Landslide* gets louder... Uncanny -- as... Weaver inches for the hall, afraid to put image to sound...

KRAAA-SHA! KRAAA-SHA!

She glances in the hall -- and SEES...

Young Gavin's trike is stuck, pedaling against a HORRIFIC ROTTING CORPSE -- Army pants and muddied boots -- a SOLDIER.

We don't make out much more -- because...

#### **WEAVER'S JOLTED AWAKE**

Awoken by turbulence. She orients... She's in a **CARGO PLANE**.

Pale with nausea, Weaver's in a cold sweat... One hand grips her seat, the other a VOMIT BAG... A headphone hangs free... *Landslide* still plays... She collects herself, steadies a hand tremor -- more than just nerves...

The flight's all MEN. Tattooed Westerners. Beards, cargo pants, and ballistic Oakleys -- MILITARY CONTRACTORS -- as... The CONTRACTOR next to her notices the unease...

CONTRACTOR

It's called a corkscrew landing.  
First time in Bagram?

WEAVER

You don't happen to have any  
Johnnie Walker Blue, one rock?

CONTRACTOR

Shit Ma'am, you might have gotten on  
the wrong flight.

Weaver does her best to hold back lunch as the plane continues the corkscrew descent into...

#### **EXT. AFGHANISTAN'S BAGRAM AIRFIELD - TARMAC - DAY**

Weaver's gear is just off the runway -- her LAPTOP sits open on a Pelican case to a series of S.O.S emails -- CALL ME NOW!

Beyond the gear, Weaver paces with a satellite phone, working up the courage to make a call... Finally, she dials.

WEAVER

(sotto)  
... Please don't answer...

TOM (O.S.)

Hello!  
(no response)  
Mona? Mona?

TOM's voice evokes emotion. Weaver manages to mumble out...

WEAVER

Tom...

TOM (O.S.)

Please don't tell me it's true,  
please don't tell me you're in  
Afghanistan...

A BEAT... No response needed...

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

Are you out of your mind? You can't  
do this. It's enough, okay?

WEAVER

It's actually really nice to hear  
your voice...

Weaver fidgets with the wedding ring on her finger as a lifetime of emotion passes through the silence... Tom softens.

TOM (O.S.)

Mona... What you're looking for,  
it's not out there...

WEAVER

It's just business, Tom. A story.

With a serene detachment, Weaver hangs up.

**INT. FOB [FORWARD OPERATING BASE] BRAVO - BARRACKS - DUSK**

FOUR SOLDIERS, all under 25, occupy the cot-laden tented sanctuary -- these MEN make up the majority of MONGOOSE SQUAD.

Racked out on a bunk is a shirtless SPECIALIST LYLE JACQUES, 22 -- grew up just outside of Syracuse and swears he's got *Native blood*, inviting his nickname -- *Chief*...

Above Jaques -- the rest of the SOLDIERS pack their rucks...

SERGEANT LEON GIBBS, 23, from Southern Appalachia goes by *Popcorn* and speaks with an awful backcountry twang -- and...

The medic, PRIVATE NATE CLEMENTE [*Doc*], 20 -- and finally...

The kid of a group of kids, PRIVATE JAMES CHANG, 18. On his first deployment, Chang is a 6'5 man-child constantly being reminded of his likeness to *Lennie* from *Of Mice and Men*.

Chang holds a laptop in contemplation...

CHANG

Should I bring my laptop?

JACQUES  
Gonna be hot as hell. Anything you  
bring be prepared to lose.

GIBBS  
("Mountain Talk" twang)  
Whoah now, Lennie you might want  
that computer, unless you prefer  
jerking off to a nice piece of  
woodgrain that looks like a pussy.

JACQUES  
You mean Appalachian porn?

CLEMENTE  
No one's jerking off to woodgrain.

Gibbs grabs a scrap of plywood, sensually caresses -- as...

GIBBS  
By the end of two months, Doc, I got  
no doubt you'll be pullin' splinters  
outta your pecker.

A KNOCK interrupts... Attention finds WEAVER in the doorway --  
a Nikon D1X digital camera carabinered to her chest -- it  
never leaves her side.

Shocked to see a woman, Gibbs stops objectifying the wood and  
Jacques throws on a shirt -- as...

WEAVER  
I'm looking for Lieutenant Terry Clay.

#### **EXT. FOB BRAVO - DUSK**

Concrete barriers, gates, watchtowers, bunkers, all in a ring  
of barbed wire. The substantial base sticks out like a  
Western sore thumb in the desert terrain of Wardak Province.

Among the bustle of vehicles and SOLDIERS -- we focus on...  
SERGEANT FIRST CLASS [SGT] DAVID THOMPSON, 30s, combat ready,  
a full ruck by his side...

Comparatively an "Old Man," Thompson's seasoned. This is his  
4th deployment. But for being outranked by a LIEUTENANT,  
Thompson is the leader of MONGOOSE SQUAD -- he waits -- as...

The men from the barracks arrive with rucks -- and Weaver in tow.

GIBBS  
Sarge, the lady's looking for L.T.

SGT THOMPSON  
 He'll be here shortly. I'm his  
 Sergeant, Sergeant First Class David  
 Thompson. Anything I can help with?

WEAVER  
 No.

Weaver's cold. Abrupt. Still the only woman we've seen, but she carries herself as if she runs the place... She eyes an AFGHAN Interpreter, named BARIALAI [Bari] 30s, as he approaches with a beaming smile and a double thumbs up.

JACQUES  
 Bari!

BARIALAI  
 Brothers...

Bari exchanges hugs and fist bumps -- he pauses at Chang.

BARIALAI (CONT'D)  
 And who is this giant little boy?  
 Will he be traveling with the men?

Chang gives Bari a playful shove...

The men get rigid as a chisel-jawed SOLDIER arrives. This is SECOND LIEUTENANT [L.T.] TERRY CLAY, 24, their commander -- a poster-child for *Stars and Stripes* -- and with Clay...

This is all of MONGOOSE SQUAD...

LT CLAY  
 Alright fellas... We've got one  
 last update--

WEAVER  
 Lieutenant Clay?

Weaver extends a hand. Clay's astounded by the brashness.

WEAVER (CONT'D)  
 Mona Weaver. I've been assigned to  
 document your time at Outpost Davidson.

Leaving Weaver hanging, Clay turns back to his men.

LT CLAY  
 Gentlemen, we've got one last  
 update, an embed is coming with us.  
 Apparently doing an article for the  
 ever tasteful *Playboy Magazine*.

WEAVER  
 I'm Mona. You can call me Weaver...  
 Or mom...

The joke doesn't land. All eyes stare in disbelief.

JACQUES  
Is this a fuckin' joke?

LT CLAY  
It's not...

WEAVER  
I've seen more combat than all of  
you combined. Chechnya, Kosovo,  
Sierra Leone, Zimbabwe, Sri Lanka,  
Iraq, Afghanistan... You don't have  
to worry about me.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. WOODS - NIGHT - LATER**

BLECHHHH! Weaver vomits behind shrubs...

We're mid-march -- except were not. The Squad's at a  
standstill, waiting on Weaver RETCHING...

Clay's infuriated because his men are exposed. Exhausted.  
Between body armor, ammo, weapons, and rucks, each man  
carries around 100 pounds -- it's brutal...

But now they wait... Annoyed -- as... BLECHHHH!

CLEMENTE  
Who fuckin' signed off on this?

Thompson gives an irritated shrug... Weaver finishes -- as...

WEAVER  
I must have picked up a stomach bug  
in Kyrgyzstan.

Behind an empathetic gaze, Chang hands Weaver a handkerchief.

Clay faces the night... The pace picks up... Relentless...

**EXT. WOODS - DAWN**

The morning sun pries itself over the eastern ridges -- a  
mist lingers. Everyone's dirty. Quiet. Weaver's a ghostly  
pale, trying to keep up -- when...

CHANG  
Ms. Weaver, I could help with a bag.

WEAVER  
I'm fine.

Weaver catches up to Jacques and Gibbs and overhears...

JACQUES

Man, I don't want no fuckin' story  
written about me.

GIBBS

I'm just furious that we got a  
Playboy embed and they sent us Miss  
March, 1971.

Suddenly... A BELLOWED CRY ECHOES in the distance... Halting  
the march... All eyes settle on the sound in the fog...

It's a dreadful panting-like hysteria... As if a demon were  
having an asthma attack or being tickled to death...

Labored, SUCKING INHALES, intercut with crescendoing EXHALES,  
climaxing as SHRIEKS OF AGONY -- human-like... Unsettling...

Weaver unhooks her camera, tracks the men, they're nervous...

PRIVATE CHANG

What the fuck is that?

The trees above shake, something's moving in them -- and  
then... The dreadful sound transforms into familiar HOOTS.

Gibbs smiles, they all do, because they SEE...

GIBBS

Fucking monkeys... Shit, even the  
wildlife don't want us here.

A collective relief as the HOOTING dissipates -- when  
suddenly... From behind the veil of fog... BELLS ring out...

Weaver hones in with a long lens. The men spread into a  
tactical formation -- as... A small HERD OF SHEEP break  
through the fog...

A BEAT passes as the sheep BAA and RING into view -- and...  
As with any herd -- they're followed by a SHEPARD.

Weaver snaps photos -- while... The men tense on their guns.

LT CLAY

Thompson you seeing this?

#### **WEAVER'S CAMERA POV**

The wide-eyed Shepard's face is mangled, burned beyond  
recognition. Barely identifiable as human. Horrors of war --  
and... He isn't blinking. He just wears a frozen, stupefied,  
half-grin -- herding toward the men...

Weaver's in awe -- the Shepard's appearance is that disturbing.



LT CLAY (CONT'D)  
Bari, tell him to stop.

Bari BARKS orders in untranslated PASHTO... None the wiser, the Shepard keeps on -- as...

LT CLAY (CONT'D)  
Hey asshole! Fucking stop!

Finally, the Shepard freezes with terror -- he scans aimlessly -- and then... YELLS in PASHTO.

The scene's bizarre. Weaver snaps photos -- the Shepard looking nowhere, yet everywhere, SCREAMING in all directions -- when...

An AFGHAN BOY, 11, emerges, rushing for the Shepard. The Boy calms him and YELLS toward the men in his native tongue...

BARIALAI  
Sir. The Shepard is blind and doesn't hear well. That is his son. They are scared.

LT CLAY  
Tell them we need to make sure they don't have any weapons.

Bari SHOUTS... The Afghans nod... Soldiers approach -- as... Weaver's tight on their hips... Fearlessly snapping photos... Giving us our first up close glimpse of the BLIND Shepard.

He has no eye lids, but no need, because he has two unnatural GLASS EYES... It's eerie...

Specialist Jacques pats the Afghans down -- as... Weaver circles the scene, stealing angles -- Clay feels her in his peripheral... Feels the camera. They all do.

LT CLAY (CONT'D)  
Any Taliban?

A routine question -- Bari asks... Fields the response...

BARIALAI  
Sir. He says, Taliban don't like it out here...

LT CLAY  
Mountain's pretty fuckin' big, and they just happened to walk into us? Ask him if he's a Taliban scout?

The Blind Shepard speaks an UNKNOWN LANGUAGE.

BARIALAI  
Sir. I don't understand what he said.

WEAVER  
It's Russian. He's telling us to go home.

LT CLAY  
(to Bari)  
Tell him we're not Russian. And we're not leaving until our mission's done... They can go...

The Squad watches the Shepard and his Boy leave -- as...

SGT THOMPSON  
You speak Russian?

WEAVER  
Conversational Russian and Arabic...  
Fluent French and Italian. Basic  
Mandarin and Pashto.

No time to be impressed because Clay notes how unwell she is.

LT CLAY  
Fuck. When we get to the outpost you rest. You can't be a liability.

#### **EXT. WOODS - DAY - LATER**

As the Squad waits, Weaver discretely snaps a few photos of surrounding TREES -- it's peculiar -- as...

In a military tactic used to identify FRIENDLIES approaching a base -- Thompson throws a BLACK SMOKE GRENADE into the fog.

A BEAT -- until... A RED SMOKE GRENADE returns...

Enamored, Weaver and the Squad push through the fog, through the ominous RED and BLACK SMOKE -- and then, she SEES IT...

#### **OUTPOST DAVIDSON**

Weaver beholds the foreboding base in disbelief...

The Outpost is so primitive it nearly defies comprehension -- this can't possibly be a base belonging to one of the most powerful armies in human history.

It looks more like third-world shantytown. A ramshackle village of tin sheds and plywood huts, all encased in sandbags and surrounded by angry, rusty, razor wire.

It's unnatural, doesn't belong -- like a plywood tumor perched on top of a 30-foot-high dirt hill, infecting the landscape. Presiding over a vast nothingness.

WEAVER  
This is it?

Weaver and the Squad climb up the knoll -- as... A BRITISH SOLDIER peels back the crude razor wire entrance -- THE EAST GATE -- inviting the American's onto the base...

CUT TO:

**OPERATION FIRE AVALANCHE: DAY 1**

**EXT. OUTPOST DAVIDSON - INSIDE THE WIRE - DAY**

Four more BRITISH SOLDIERS -- bags packed -- and a DOG wait.

Weaver can't help but notice, the Brits are in horrible condition. Unwell. Spooked. Ready to leave -- as... A BRITISH OFFICER, 30s, approaches Clay...

BRITISH OFFICER  
Welcome to Outpost Davidson. Should we left-seat right-seat this place, then we'll be on our way?

Clay nods, follows the Officer for the handoff tour -- while the American's work on MRES [meals ready to eat] -- and...

Weaver's subdued. Taking in the place, something about it has a hold over her. She might as well be there alone -- when... Thompson breaks her trance by handing over an MRE...

JACQUES  
(to the Brits)  
Does it always smell like this?

BRITISH SOLDIER I  
No one's had a proper shower in months, mate.

JACQUES  
No... Like dead bodies...

The British Soldiers exchange weary, beaten-down, glances.

WEAVER  
Is there a bathroom?

It's now that the middle-aged woman catches them off guard.

BRITISH SOLDIER II  
One of you's bring your auntie?

GIBBS  
Embed.

Soldier II points... Weaver floats away -- and SEES...

The place is an organized chaos, like a junkyard -- stacks of ammunition, weapons and supplies everywhere. Shredded tarps for shade. Endless empty ammo shells crunch under her feet.

She passes the PORTA-SHITTER [outhouse] -- a RICKETY plywood structure hanging on for dear life, with a parachute for a door -- but she's not interested in that -- because...

Something beckons her...

A BARRACKS-LIKE STRUCTURE -- known as a HOOCH -- built into the ground, like an ominous cave made of sandbags.

Weaver stands before it. The dark opening summoning... She runs a hand across the entry sign -- "*SNAKE EATERS WELCOME*".

Anxious. We see it on her face -- something happened here.

She takes a breath. A silent prayer whispers across her lips as she finds the courage to enter the darkness...

#### **INT. SNAKE EATERS' BARRACKS - DAY**

The inside, somehow more unsettling than the outside. Dark. Dank. Scary. She finds a light -- almost wishes she hadn't...

The cramped sleeping quarters houses four plywood bunks, like coffins stacked too high, with filthy mattresses. *How could anyone sleep in here?*

In her hand, she holds a LETTER, but her focus is up, enamored with the rotting plywood walls -- because... They are covered in written messages and drawings, tattooing the place like a dive bar bathroom stall...

Weaver looks closer at the walls -- reading things like...

*"When you're pushed, killing is as easy as breathing."*

She holds a gaze on a DRAWING of... *A stick figure holding a stick pistol to his head, blowing his stick brains out...*

Without uttering a word, the room tells Weaver a deafening story -- men grasping for immortality at the very moment they felt most mortal... She carries its overwhelming weight.

Her attention shifts to a cracked mirror -- *a smiley face*, beneath it -- *"Smile. They'll stop missing sooner or later."*

It gives her the chills -- the whole place does... She stares deep into the void of her eyes... Summoning the strength to finally glance at the LETTER, *his always rushed handwriting...*

And as she does her son GAVIN'S voice echoes in her head...

GAVIN (V.O.)  
 Hey Mom. Just checking in from the newly renovated 5-star resort that is Outpost Cobra. We snuck up here in the middle of the night and basically built this place from scratch...

Weaver lowers the letter, knows it by heart -- V.O. continues -- as... She turns to face the oppressive, sterile space...

GAVIN (V.O.)  
 ... We snuck up here in the middle of the night and basically built this place from scratch. A huge accomplishment for me and the guys and a giant middle finger to the enemy...

Emotional, she touches the plywood walls...

GAVIN (V.O.)  
 ... We were literally taking turns on a 4-inch Gerber saw and recycling used nails from old wood. But we did it. And we're proud of it...

She runs a hand across the plywood bunks, the plywood everything, as if to absorb any remnants of her son's essence...

GAVIN (V.O.)  
 ... Also, can you please send Sharpies? I came up with a cool way for us to leave our mark... That's it for now. Try your best not to worry. I love you.

The sight of a BUNK stops her dead in her tracks... She's horrified by it...

GAVIN (V.O.)  
 PS. The photo's of me on my bunk.

Weavers trembling hand holds up a POLAROID -- the identical space, only Gavin is on the bunk.

She approaches the bunk. Moving toward a hanging black curtain... Shaking... It's all too much...

It takes everything in her to pull back the curtain... To climb in her son's bunk... She curls in the fetal position and SOBS... Uncontrollably -- until she notices...

On the wall next to the bed -- a Sharpie drawn mural in a duct tape frame of THE WOODS beyond the wire... Unsettling...

Not expecting this, Weaver's uneasy. Her hand runs across the art -- ominous, yet beautiful. She stops at the signature...

*Gavin Davidson*

Overcome by emotion, she rushes out of the barracks.

**EXT. OUTPOST DAVIDSON - THE EAST GATE - DAY**

Clay and the Officer arrive back at the East Gate... The Brits really are in shambles. One soldier's leg shakes so violently, Gibbs and Jacques can't help but exchange a grin.

LT CLAY  
We're squared away. Thanks.

BRITISH OFFICER  
Great... Phyllis!

The Officer CLICKS at the dog -- UGLY PHYLLIS.

BRITISH OFFICER (CONT'D)  
This is Ugly Phyllis. She comes with the place. If there's anything outside the wire, she'll be the first to let you know.  
(to British Soldiers)  
That's endex, boys.

Enticing her with MRE scraps, Phyllis rushes to Gibbs -- *from here on out, the two are inseparable* -- as...

The British Soldiers can't file out fast enough... Weaver snaps a photo of a YOUNG BRITISH SOLDIER, 18. He's despondent, vacant -- an awful mix of combat fatigue and fear -- when...

At the base of the knoll, the British Officer turns back...

BRITISH OFFICER (CONT'D)  
One last thing Lieutenant, if you dig something up, I recommend you bury it where you found it.

Weaver's spooked... The U.S. Soldiers exchange glances as the Brits disappear into the woods -- and then...

LT CLAY  
Gentlemen. We're not looking like that when we fuckin' leave here.  
Understood?

**EXT. OUTPOST DAVIDSON - INSIDE THE WIRE - DAY**

Smoking, Weaver's uncomfortable... She watches -- as...

With shovels and pickaxes, the men dig deeper trenches inside the perimeter walls. They've just broken topsoil. Everything in Afghanistan's hard -- dirt's practically rock.

Thompson finds his way to Weaver -- registers her unease...

SGT THOMPSON

I noticed your stuff in the Snake Eaters' hooch. We got more space in the Command Center. Better mattresses too.

WEAVER

I like the bunk I'm in.

Thompson nods, joins the dig -- while... Clay paces -- as...

LT CLAY

I know that we've heard this outpost is the most boring fuckin' place in all of Afghanistan, but we're not up here to fuck off. We're in the middle of nowhere for 60 days to show these assholes that the US Army is everywhere. We're gonna up-armor this place and make it better for the guys that follow.

The ground around Chang's shovel collapses into a pocket.

CHANG

Hey, I got something here.

A few feet deep, Chang hangs his head in, aims a flashlight -- the hole tunnels under the perimeter walls [Hesco barriers].

CHANG (CONT'D)

It looks like a tunnel.

GIBBS

Prolly is. Before OP Davidson, this knoll was a Taliban cave system. That is until we dropped about 2,500 pounds of explosive freedom on their heads. Hooah.

CHANG

Looks like there's some pottery in here. Shit looks old..

BARIALAI

Many empires have fought and died on this very land, some even say Alexander the Great...

JACQUES  
 Sir, you might wanna look at this. I  
 think it's human. Maybe a femur.

Jacques presides over an excavated bone... Unsettled glances  
 are exchanged.

LT CLAY  
 Dig around it.

The digging continues in the relentless heat -- until...

**LATER**

Sweat-soaked, all stand among half-excavated trenches. It  
 looks like an archaeological dig site -- because...

**SKELETAL REMAINS ARE EVERYWHERE.**

Weaver's camera is focused on a skull, still wearing glasses.

GIBBS  
 Now we know why the Brits didn't  
 dig deeper trenches.

JACQUES  
 Cuz we're on a fucking graveyard.

LT CLAY  
 As nicely as possible, we're gonna  
 move the bones and put them into the  
 pocket that Private Chang found.

JACQUES  
 Seriously? ... .. Sir?

LT CLAY  
 Unless you want to end up like  
 these bodies, we need the trenches.

**EXT. OUTPOST DAVIDSON - DAY - LATER**

The base's perimeter walls -- Hesco barriers -- are  
 essentially glorified [5 ft x 5 ft] sandbags on steroids...

And right now, Jacques is on top of them, being handed ammo  
 cans full of dirt to pour into the barriers -- while...

Clay, Chang, Bari, Thompson, and Gibbs move the bones into  
 the pocket... A hip bone. A ribcage. It feels wrong. Somber  
 and silent, no one wants a part of this...

Weaver photographs Thompson as he carries a spine to the hole  
 -- now a grave. She lowers her camera in and snaps photos...



She eyes the photo -- the tunnel under the Hescos, depths of shadowed darkness -- *where does it lead?* -- when...

KA-SHAAA! The distinct sound of a rubber band slapping plastic SNAPS over Weaver's head. Her eyes widen. She knows exactly what it was. She's on her feet just in time to SEE...

Phyllis BARKS wildly -- as... A TRACER round SNAPS by Jacques' head -- and then... Thompson rips Jacques off the Hescos right as... A BURST of gunfire comes in tight, right where Jacques was.

The 50 CALIBER MACHINE GUN, manned by Clemente, erupts from the Guardpost and between bursts we hear...

CLEMENTE (O.S.)

In the draw!

A seasoned correspondent, Weaver's attention is gone from the hole. This isn't her first firefight -- not even close.

Entranced, her world practically moves in slow motion. She casually snaps photos of the Soldiers as gouts of dirt, incoming rounds, erupt from the ground around her -- while...

Workmanlike, Gibbs hammers the 240 MACHINE GUN... Thompson pours fire over the Hescos... Bari, unfazed, sits and smokes -- and... Clay and Jacques methodically drum their M4s -- while...

Weaver's on Chang, taking photos of the wide-eyed Private -- his head swiveling like a berserk robot that can't compute...

SGT THOMPSON

Chang! Get a mortar in the draw!

Chang scrambles for the mortar... Thompson grabs Clay.

SGT THOMPSON (CONT'D)

Sir! Should we radio higher?

Clay nods, disappears into the COMMAND CENTER BARRACKS.

Staring at the mortar, Chang's blank -- the weapon's components are totally foreign to him, his cortical network shut off...

#### **INT. COMMAND CENTER BARRACKS - DAY**

The same four bunk layout -- sans writing on the walls -- with a COMMAND CENTER DESK -- stacked radios, a laptop, and maps -- where Clay shouts into a handset...

LT CLAY

Gulf main. This is OP Davidson.  
Troops in contact. Requesting I.S.R.

GULF MAIN ON RADIO (O.S.)  
 Roger that. Tracking troops in  
 contact. Sending I.S.R. now--

Suddenly the signal drops. Replaced by STATIC -- and then...

A PAINED GUTTURAL BREATHING. MOAN-LIKE. WET and WHEEZY...  
 Like someone's CHOKING ON BREATH, like a death rattle...

Disturbed, Clay listens -- *is that someone dying* -- when...

GULF MAIN ON RADIO (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 ... E.T.A four mikes.

And just like that, all is normal. *Probably just interference.*

**EXT. OUTPOST DAVIDSON - INSIDE THE WIRE - DAY**

Back to the firefight -- Chang and the mortar.

SGT THOMPSON  
 Chang! That fuckin' mortar!

Finally... His brain switches on. He plants the mortar tube,  
 angles it, drops a shell in -- and... *SHTOOMP!* An underwhelming  
 and hallowed BLAST -- before... BOOM! It explodes.

The gunfire dies down. All in all, two minutes tops. Eyes  
 remain vigilant outside the wire -- as...

GIBBS  
 Holy fuck, Chang! Sounds like the  
 mortar got em! Fuck yeah! ... That  
 all you got you motherfuckers!

JACQUES  
 Hell yeah, Lennie!

Weaver's camera is on Chang, immortalizing the horrific  
 moment -- an 18 y/o kid processing his first kill -- he's  
 distraught, the adrenaline dump has made him numb, his legs  
 wobble, his lip quivers -- as...

CHANG  
 I got em?

JACQUES  
 You ain't cherry no more boy!

Weaver tracks the incredibleness that follows... In an  
 instant, Chang suppresses all emotion -- goes from visibly  
 upset... To blank... To happy and elated...

SGT THOMPSON  
 Everyone good? Check yourselves. Bari?

Bari offers his signature smile and double thumbs up. Wired, Clay rushes from the Command Center.

LT CLAY  
I knew we couldn't trust that fuckin' Shepard!

GIBBS  
Y'all see the set of nuts on Weaver? Holy shit, Ma'am. How are you so agile with balls that big?

Weaver fights an embarrassed smile -- when...

LT CLAY  
No! We do not glorify that cowboy shit. Do you know how fuckin' unprofessional it is to get killed by not taking cover?

Caught off guard, Weaver listens... Disbelief... Intrigue.

LT CLAY (CONT'D)  
You get wounded. You get killed. You come out here with a fuckin' stomach bug, it endangers all of us!

WEAVER  
I'm here to document, Lieutenant.

Weaver's defiant. Doesn't back down. The tension's palpable.

LT CLAY  
Thompson and Jacques, lets get a battlefield damage assessment.

As they move for the East Gate, Weaver follows -- and...

LT CLAY (CONT'D)  
No fuckin' way. This is my outpost, no one leaves without my permission.

Weaver seethes... Clay, Thompson, and Jacques file out.

**EXT. OUTPOST DAVIDSON - INSIDE THE WIRE - DAY**

Gibbs, Chang, and Clemente provide overwatch as Thompson, Clay, and Jacques disappear into the woods...

Glancing over the Hescos, Weaver takes photos of more trees.

GIBBS  
You can't be up there.

Weaver climbs down... Gibbs pets Phyllis and spits dip...

WEAVER  
I've got a job to do.

GIBBS  
So, you have a rough night last night?

WEAVER  
... It's a stomach bug...

Grinning ear-to-ear, Gibbs holds eye contact, calling her BS -  
- until... Weaver looks away, caught. He pushes past her...

**EXT. WOODS - DAY**

On a knee, Jacques sneaks a glance behind him -- where...  
Clay and Thompson are by two DEAD TEENAGE BOYS (maybe 14-16),  
bloodied with shrapnel -- blood staining the creek water red.

SGT THOMPSON  
This was definitely the claymore...

LT CLAY  
Chang?

Thompson nods -- he's dismantling the AK-47s...

LT CLAY (CONT'D)  
Fuck. These aren't even fighters.  
Barely teens. Insurgents probably  
paid a handful of them to empty  
magazines on us.

SGT THOMPSON  
They fired first.

Thompson moves on to finger prints, iris scans, and photos.

LT CLAY  
What do you think, leave 'em?

SGT THOMPSON  
Give the night for locals to  
collect. If they ain't gone  
tomorrow, we call it in.

Clay leans in -- out of earshot of Jacques...

LT CLAY  
Let's tell the guys we found military-  
aged males. Not a word of this to Chang.

**INT. SNAKE EATERS' BARRACKS - DAY**

Weaver's on her bunk -- headphones in -- listening to a SCREAM-O HEAVY METAL SONG, while she scrolls photos on her laptop.

ALL OF THE RECENT PHOTOS ARE OF TREES...

Tree after tree -- because... She's comparing them to...

A POLAROID PHOTO of GAVIN DAVIDSON -- full combat attire -- standing by an peculiar looking KNOTTED HOLLY TREE.

Stubble on his face, in this POLAROID Gavin's exhausted, wearing a vacant thousand yard stare -- far from the lively persona captured in the bunk photo.

Written on the POLAROID's film frame reads -- *The tree with the mark, we made in the bark, houses our treasure below.*

Finally, this makes it clear that... Weaver is trying to find the knotted tree from the Polaroid.

She X's through a small section of map where the photos were taken... A needle in a haystack... Frustration consumes...

**ON THE LAPTOP SCREEN**

Weaver opens a blank document -- and types... *ARTICLE NOTES...*

**ON WEAVER**

Typing... Venting frustration the only way she knows how.

WEAVER (V.O.)

So, here I am, alone, at a fort in the woods, with kids. A primitive Lord of the Flies circus, except this one involves terrible weapons, dedicated to canceling out the other kids across the valley...

**EXT. OUTPOST DAVIDSON - OUTSIDE THE WIRE - DAY**

Just beyond the knoll, Gibbs installs trip-wire booby-traps around the perimeter -- while... Clay and Jacques watch his back with guns downrange.

WEAVER (V.O.)

... It's all so surreal, so oppressive, leaving little time to question whether any of this is necessary at all... I mean it has to be, right? Someone had to have asked that question, right? ...

Closer to the base, Chang installs claymore mines.

**EXT. OUTPOST DAVIDSON - INSIDE THE WIRE - DAY**

Thompson lays a PLYWOOD BOARD over the hole of bones...

WEAVER (V.O.)

... Look at all the human energy, the life that has gone into protecting the plywood in the woods...

**INT. SNAKE EATERS' BARRACKS - DAY**

Weaver, gritted teeth, angrily typing...

WEAVER (V.O.)

... I can only hope, pray, that someone somewhere, had to have asked that question, right?

She slams the laptop shut.

**EXT. OUTPOST DAVIDSON - INSIDE THE WIRE - NIGHT**

The Squad's like a family winding down for the day...

Wrapped in a blanket, Weaver's doing nothing but sweating and trying not to puke -- while...

Chang reads *Harry Potter* -- and... Bari lounges, reading a *Men's Health* magazine -- and... Jacques and Gibbs push through a grueling workout -- while...

Gibbs mumbles out the soundtrack for the evening -- a rhythmic MILITARY CADENCE (what soldiers jog/march too).

GIBBS

*I hear the choppers coming. They're hovering overhead. They've come to get the wounded. They've come to get the dead. A-i-r-b-o-r-n-e...*

Weaver takes note of Chang... He's removed. Can't focus. Tears in his eyes, fighting not to let anyone see -- as...

Clemente approaches with a handful of pills.

CLEMENTE

It's a Mefloquine Monday.

JACQUES

Ah, fuck.

Hands cupped, Gibbs accepts his Malaria medication like it's communion and Clemente is his priest -- as...

GIBBS

Amen...

Clemente hands a out pills, settling over Weaver...

CLEMENTE

Assuming you've taken Malaria medication?

(Weaver nods)

So you know what to expect?  
Depression, paranoia, aggression,  
nightmares, insomnia...

Again, she nods...

GIBBS

Also happen to be the same side effects of war. Hooah.

Weaver swallows the pill and sneaks away to smoke.

**EXT. OUTPOST DAVIDSON - THE WEST WALL - NIGHT**

Halfway into her first drag -- Clay spots her.

LT CLAY

Can't smoke at night on my outpost.

Clay marches past...

WEAVER

(sotto)

Asshole...

Weaver sneaks in a few last drags as Thompson approaches -- he flashes a tin of dip.

SGT THOMPSON

Seems like tobacco is the only thing bringing you joy out here...

Relieved, Weaver packs a lip...

WEAVER

Believe it or not, I didn't start smoking until about two years ago, so, making up for lost time.

SGT THOMPSON

What makes someone do that?

WEAVER

... Retirement...

SGT THOMPSON

You came out of retirement for this?

Weaver doesn't answer.

SGT THOMPSON (CONT'D)  
They say one of the most traumatic things about combat is giving it up.

Thompson hands Weaver a photo of his daughter -- VIVIAN, 3.

SGT THOMPSON (CONT'D)  
I got a three year old baby girl. And to be here, with something like that at home, you gotta be-- shit, you gotta be something, right?

WEAVER  
She's beautiful...

SGT THOMPSON  
Yeah... You got any kids?

WEAVER  
A son. Grown... So, I'm guessing no one expected to be at a remote outpost with a middle-aged woman.

SGT THOMPSON  
Middle-aged?

Weaver finds the strength for a smile.

SGT THOMPSON (CONT'D)  
They just wanna know that they can trust you. That you ain't out here to do some anti-soldier hit piece or something... You're not right?

WEAVER  
I'm just here for the truth.

**INT. SNAKE EATERS' BARRACKS - NIGHT**

Weaver's on her bunk, behind her computer with headphones in, she sneaks a glance at Gibbs, Chang, and Jacques -- unpacking.

A BEAT of revelation... She discretely, but intentionally, pulls the headphone wire out of her computer.

BLASTING SCREAM-O HEAVY METAL MUSIC...

Weaver pretends to fumble with her headphones -- as...

WEAVER  
Sorry... Sorry...

But it's too late, they've seen the video on her monitor -- a compilation of SOLDIERS' HELMET CAM FOOTAGE...



JACQUES  
Is that a post-deployment video?

WEAVER  
My son made it after his first  
deployment.

CHANG  
You got a son in the Army, Ms.  
Weaver?

WEAVER  
Infantry. 173rd...

GIBBS  
No shit?

This changes the demeanor of the soldiers... This is exactly  
what Weaver wanted...

They gather and watch -- helmet cam footage from a deployment  
-- a mix of foot patrols, dramatic firefights, big vehicles,  
and big explosions.

GIBBS (CONT'D)  
This shit oozes America.

WEAVER  
You actually like it?

GIBBS  
Any red blooded American does.

WEAVER  
It looks like someone jerked off a  
can of Red Bull.

They LAUGH...

JACQUES  
What! Nah, post deployment videos  
get you hyped.

WEAVER  
It's machismo BS. Soldiers are  
people. Where's the heart? The  
human element? This is the opposite  
of good reporting... And don't even  
get me started on the music.

GIBBS  
What's wrong with the music?

Weaver offers a wide-eyed -- *you can't be serious.*

GIBBS (CONT'D)  
What type of music would you have?

WEAVER  
Not this crap. Stevie Nicks or something...

CHANG  
Stevie Nicks, who's he?

WEAVER  
That's what my son said!

They LAUGH. The moment's honest. Sincere.

**LATER**

Readying for bed, Weaver downs ibuprofen to quell her never ending headache. She unlaces her boots and removes a discrete NECKLACE KNIFE [neck knife] hanging under her shirt.

As she hangs it by her bed, Gibbs grabs it and unsheathes the three inch blade with a pink finish -- he LAUGHS.

GIBBS  
You gonna poke someone's eye out with this?

WEAVER  
When my son was 15 he found out journalists don't carry weapons. So he stole my passport, told me he wouldn't give it back unless I swore to never take this off... It's great for opening boxes.

GIBBS  
This thing's useless. Take this.

Gibbs offers a pistol... She declines.

WEAVER  
The moment I carry a weapon, I become a combatant, not an observer, and then I lose any kind of objectivity.

GIBBS  
I'm pretty sure the enemy don't give two shits about your objectivity.

JACQUES  
That knife ain't useless.

Jacques grabs the knife... Blade down, he dances for the door.

JACQUES (CONT'D)  
Y'all know the Apaches train the Marines in knife fighting?

GIBBS  
 Ah, Jesus, Chief, a couple-a weeks  
 ago you was Comanche...

JACQUES  
 Any motherfucker breaches the wire,  
 you post by the door, get low, and  
 shank their torso like a pin cushion.

Squatting by the entrance, he stabs at the air -- as...

Gibbs CLICKS at Ugly Phyllis. She hops on his bed...

GIBBS  
 (flashes the PISTOL)  
 Me an' Ugly Phyllis, like to do our  
 killin' from the comfort of our  
 bed. Ain't that right girl?

Jacques cringes...

**INT. GUARDPOST - NIGHT**

Behind the 50-cal, Chang's on watch. He scans with a night vision scope... There's something about the WOODS. A foreboding dread. Too still. Too silent...

**NIGHT VISION SCOPE POV [GREEN LIGHT]**

He scans -- and... Stops... Backtracks... Holds on foliage -- because he SEES...

What appears to be a MAN blending against the brush. The contrast of night vision makes it hard to make out. It appears to be a SOLDIER, but from a different era -- maybe the BRITISH EMPIRE, early 1900s?

Chang's horrified -- *Is he really seeing this?* He grabs the...

**PAS-13 THERMAL SCOPE POV [INFRARED]**

The world according to heat signatures. Right now, there's none. He lowers the PAS-13 and raises the...

**NIGHT VISION SCOPE POV [GREEN LIGHT]**

He jolts with horror -- because...

The Soldier's closed an impossible distance -- 100 meters or so -- now just outside the Guardpost... Chang holds -- too terrified to move...

The Soldier's facial expression is blank. An unfocused gaze, emotionally detached, disassociated -- and... The THOUSAND-YARD STARE SOLDIER is staring right at Chang...

So close, Chang should be able to see him with his naked eye. He lowers the night vision and flips on a flashlight...

There's nothing there... He brings the night vision back to his eye... Nothing... He checks with the thermal scope...

Nothing... Rattled, Chang lowers the optics -- when... An unintelligible, otherworldly INCANTATION WHISPERS in the ether -- as if someone were in the Guardpost.

Chang jumps out of his skin, wildly shines the flashlight in all the dark nooks and crannies... Nothing...

**INT. SNAKE EATERS' BARRACKS - NIGHT**

Lights out. All occupants asleep. Except Weaver -- because...

A blinking light from charging radio batteries intermittently illuminates her son's drawing on the wall behind her bunk. The ominous woods -- watching over her. Unnerving -- when...

She hears an unusual snore-like GURGLING NOISE...

She pokes her head from behind the curtain... A hellish glow of red spills from the curtain of the adjacent bunk...

And impossibly... The bunk and curtain look identical to hers, as if her side of the room were duplicated in some twisted reality... Suddenly...

A discarded MORPHINE INJECTOR rolls from behind the bunk's curtain to Weaver's feet... Followed by another. And another.

Horrified, Weaver inches forward -- as...

The sound behind the curtain gets louder -- *it sounds similar to what Clay heard on the radio* -- like an out of pitch DEATH RATTLE... Someone choking on final breaths...

Weaver pulls back the curtain to SEE...

A pale, Gavin Davidson, OVERDOSING... Blue in the face... Mouth foaming... Body convulsing... HE REACHES FOR HER...

It's horrible... Terrified, Weaver stumbles back -- and...

**CUT TO:**

**INT. SNAKE EATERS' BARRACKS - NIGHT [END DREAM SEQUENCE]**

Weaver's eyes explode open, suddenly awake -- when...

THUD! Her attention startles to the door -- where... Chang scurries in, shaken. Under WHISPERS, he wakes Gibbs.

CHANG  
Uh. Popcorn, your turn for watch.

GIBBS  
You're early.

CHANG  
Yeah, ah. I was dozing off. So I figured it was safest to get you.

Gibbs kicks outta bed...

GIBBS  
Fuck. Never leave post unmanned.

CHANG  
I can go back out... Sorry...

Gibbs rushes out.

Chang climbs into bed, finds solace in *Harry Potter*.  
Illuminated by a reading light, he's deeply disturbed.

**INT. SNAKE EATERS' BARRACKS - NIGHT - LATER**

A high-pitched alarm radiates, BEEP! BEEP! BEEP! Followed by an automated voice alerting, INCOMING! INCOMING! INCOMING!

Weaver startles awake... Jacques sits up, confused... Chang scrambles out of bed, drops, and covers.

JACQUES  
We don't have a fuckin' incoming alarm out here...

Clay storms in, turns on the light -- he's casual...

LT CLAY  
We've got stand to in ten. That means 100 percent security...

Clay's gone. Jacques stares at Chang dumfounded...

JACQUES  
Is this a fuckin' joke?

As Weaver gets out of bed she notices a box of ELECTROLYTES and DRAMAMINE left for her.

**EXT. OUTPOST DAVIDSON - INSIDE THE WIRE - NIGHT**

Clay and Thompson wait as battle ready Soldiers file out of hooches. The *Incoming Alarm* has been wired through speakers.

LT CLAY

The enemy doesn't attack when you expect them to, that's what makes it an attack!

Through the curtained mist they scramble to battle stations.

**NIGHT TRANSITIONS TO MID-MORNING**

In the shade, Weaver welcomes the morning with cigarettes and electrolytes -- when finally... The dog-tired, sweat-soaked, men are pulled off the line...

LT CLAY (CONT'D)

Grab an MRE. Hydrate. Get outta the sun.

**INT. SNAKE EATERS' BARRACKS - DAY**

Chugging water, the men are agitated. Gibbs pours water for Phyllis. Chang, withdrawn, goes right to *Harry Potter*...

GIBBS

Whats wrong with you, Lennie?

CLEMENTE

He was hearing voices last night.

Betrayed, Chang eyes Clemente.

CLEMENTE (CONT'D)

Said it sounded like some Russians were standing guard with him...

Weaver perks up... Intrigued...

CHANG

Fuck you, Doc.

GIBBS

Relax, Chang, post is hell. You just had yourself an encounter with the shadow people. We've all been there. Trees turn into the enemy, bushes look like they're gonna attack.

Sergeant Thompson pokes his head in...

SGT THOMPSON

BDA's going out. Same as yesterday.

The men file out... Weaver pulls Chang aside...

WEAVER

Private, can I talk with you about what you experienced last night?

CHANG  
Popcorn's right, I was just tired.

Chang pushes past -- as...

WEAVER  
Lennie, I'm here to talk, okay? I  
won't tell anyone.

He hurries out of the hooch.

**EXT. OUTPOST DAVIDSON - INSIDE THE WIRE - DAY**

Soldiers hold positions, while Clay, Thompson, and Jacques start down the knoll -- Weaver follows...

LT CLAY  
No way...

Stopped dead in her tracks, Weaver's dejected. She takes out her camera to snap photos of trees -- when...

GIBBS  
Weaver. Can you get behind the  
Hescos, please? It really is  
dangerous out there...

Irritated, she walks the inside perimeter of the outpost -- a covert reckon of sorts, studying shorter sections of perimeter wall, taking photos -- looking for...

WEAVER  
Hey Doc, does the outpost have any  
weaknesses?

Clemente smiles, eyes Weaver with her camera and notepad.

CLEMENTE  
You planning to attack us, ma'am?  
(he SMILES)  
Shit... Well, if I were gonna take  
Davidson, check this out, we got a bit  
of a blindspot, see the West Wall?

He points to THE WEST WALL -- THE BLINDSPOT.

CLEMENTE (CONT'D)  
The gaurdpost don't have a great  
sightline to it. So, I might see if I  
can't have a few of my haji spiders  
scale the cliff and try to cut the  
claymores. Then I'd make it rain RPGs,  
rake the gunports, and send successive  
waves up the draw. By the third or  
fourth wave, my guess is we'd have  
haji in the wire.

WEAVER  
That's really scary...

CLEMENTE  
Nah. It ain't gonna happen out here.  
And knowing weaknesses is an asset.

**EXT. THE WEST WALL - DAY**

Weaver stares at The West Wall -- the blindspot -- consisting of 8-foot-high Hesco barriers, encased in a wire mesh.

She studies the mesh -- makes sure no one's looking -- and uses the mesh wiring to climb halfway up the Hesco wall. For good measure, she even waves back at the Guardpost.

No one notices a thing... She jumps back down...

**EXT. WOODS - DAY**

Clay and Thompson stand above where the TEENAGE BODIES were, they're gone, leaving matted dirt and bloodstains...

LT CLAY  
Everyone's been wrong. There are combatants out here. We've gotta stay on these guys. For all 60 days. I know I can be an asshole but we can't drop our guard.

**INT. THE COMMAND CENTER BARRACKS - DAY**

Clay sits behind a laptop... There's a KNOCK at the door.

LT CLAY  
Yeah?

Weaver pushes in...

WEAVER  
Lieutenant, I was hoping to get a word.  
(Clay nods: Listening)  
I think we got off on the wrong foot. I'm out here because I'm trying to get an accurate portrayal of what it's like to be a US soldier in combat. That requires foot patrols.

LT CLAY  
Weaver, full disclosure, I don't give a shit about your story. I'm still at a complete loss as to how or why you're out here.

(MORE)



LT CLAY (CONT'D)

My concern is my guys, and bringing extra people off the wire, especially someone that's been dragging ass, puts us all at risk.

WEAVER

Lieutenant, I have to get off the base to do my job!

Clay's unmoved by the outburst.

LT CLAY

If you want, I can radio higher and get you a helicopter back to Bravo just in time for a hot meal.

Weaver storms out.

**EXT. THE WEST WALL - DUSK**

Watching the Guardpost, Weaver smokes... Gibbs approaches...

GIBBS

You're lookin' better...

Weaver doesn't engage. Gibbs lights a cigarette.

GIBBS (CONT'D)

Dramamine and electrolytes always helped my mom... She was a drunk.

WEAVER

It's a stomach bug, Sergeant.

Annoyed, Gibbs pushes past, he pauses -- as...

GIBBS

Hey, you know what I found helped my ma the most? To stop being such a stubborn asshole when people tried to help...

Gibbs starts walking -- when...

WEAVER

I'm not a drunk. I just got a little carried away. And when you turn 50, hangovers last a fuckin' eternity.

\*

They share a LAUGH...

**INT. SNAKE EATERS' BARRACKS - NIGHT**

The hooch is asleep... Rhythmic slow BREATHS lull... Peaceful... Yet in this place, somehow unsettling...

Wide awake, Weaver stares at a plywood slat under the bunk above her, an unattributed quote -- *maybe Gavin wrote it...*

*"We the unwilling. Led by the unknowing. All doing the impossible. For the ungrateful."*

Finally... She glances out of her bunk... Stillness and slow BREATHS... She creeps past a sleeping Chang and Jacques...

**EXT. SNAKE EATERS' BARRACKS - NIGHT**

She eyes The West Wall, the blindspot, then the Guardpost...

**INT. GUARDPOST - NIGHT**

Cloudy and vacant eyes -- Gibbs watches the terrain beyond the wire -- illuminated by moonlight. He rips open an instant coffee and swallows the powder, dry -- chasing it with water.

**EXT. OUTPOST DAVIDSON - THE WEST WALL - NIGHT**

She paces before the eight-foot-high Hesco wall... Nervous as hell. Unsure about what's next...

She strikes her lighter and waves it, trying to see if it gets Gibbs' attention in the Guardpost... Nothing...

She climbs halfway up the Hesco and waves... Nothing... She climbs down, more pacing... Again eyes the wall -- and...

Utilizing the wiring encasing, she climbs the Hesco wall, this time all the way... UP AND OVER IT -- as...

**IN THE GUARDPOST**

Gibbs is about to glance toward The West Wall -- when... Orbing lights streak through the woods in the distance...

Bizarre... High, then low -- impossible heights, impossible speeds -- Gibbs is transfixed -- and then...

A SCREECH emanates -- Ugly Phyllis perks up... GROWLS... Right as -- Gibbs SEES...

A HIDEOUS MONKEY starring back at him... The primate is deformed from fighting. Exposed skull, snubbed nose...

And then... As if it's only for Gibbs, the hideous monkey spews out another hateful SCREECH -- while...

**AT THE WEST WALL**

Weaver hears it, she holds for a beat -- before...

Her attention turns to the sea of rusty razor wire -- woefully underprepared to navigate it -- but determined...

She throws her jacket onto the mess of wire and steps out -- walking the plank of cloth... It's not long before she...

Slips...

Cuts a hand... Then a leg... And then...

She tangles in the wire -- as...

#### **BACK IN THE GUARDPOST**

Gibbs calms Phyllis... Amused, he watches the hideous monkey scurry away, disappearing into the trees -- when suddenly...

The trees above erupt with SCREAMING and HOOTING monkeys... It sounds like a hundred -- deafening... All around branches convulse, as if the forest were shivering -- and...

Most unsettling -- the SCREAMING has human-like qualities.

#### **AT THE WEST WALL**

Caught in the wire, terrified by the HOOTING, Weaver stops trying to get to the woods. Now, she wants back on the base.

#### **EXT. OUTPOST DAVIDSON - INSIDE THE WIRE - NIGHT**

Half-asleep soldiers file out of hooches, eying the trees -- the surreal HOOTING -- when suddenly... It stops, leaving an uncanny silence... Soldiers exchange glances -- while...

#### **IN THE GUARDPOST**

In disbelief, Gibbs is enamored -- when suddenly...

As if dropped from the heavens, a monkey falls from the trees... THUD! It slams the dirt in front of the Gaurdpost...

It writhes to life -- BELLOWING humanistic GROANS of AGONY... Ugly Phyllis matches the groans with BARKS...

#### **EXT. OUTPOST DAVIDSON - INSIDE THE WIRE - NIGHT**

The Soldiers rush to the East Gate -- while...

#### **WEAVER**

Panics... Legs in a tangled mess of razor wire... Gritted teeth, she's trying like hell not to scream.

**BACK AT THE EAST GATE**

The men watch -- as... A TROOP of monkeys descend from the trees, surrounding the incapacitated monkey -- and then...

They ATTACK. It's violent. Brutal. They BEAT the monkey to death. And when it's done, they all stare up at the outpost.

GIBBS

Y'all fuckin' seeing this? It's like some fuckin' monkey coup d'etat.

Gibbs smiles ear-to-ear as monkeys retreat into the woods.

**EXT. THE WEST WALL - NIGHT**

Weaver spills back over the Hesco wall -- as... WHAM! She lands -- a bloody heap in the dirt -- and looks up to find...

Thompson's gun in her face, as Thompson and Bari stare at her in utter disbelief...

WEAVER

Don't shoot! Don't shoot!

SGT THOMPSON

Weaver? What the fuck are you doing?

WEAVER

I was ah, taking photos...

Her arms and legs are bloodied with lacerations... Alarmed, Thompson and Bari grab her and guide her toward the hooches.

WEAVER (CONT'D)

Wait. Sergeant. Please. They'll send me home... Please...

(Thompson's unfazed)

David, my son was killed out here!

Thompson stops -- holds for a WIDE-EYED BEAT.

SGT THOMPSON

What?

WEAVER

His name was Gavin Davidson, he built this place with the 173rd. The outpost is named after him because he died out here.

Clay appears in the distance -- marching toward them...

WEAVER (CONT'D)  
 I couldn't protect him, Sergeant...  
 Imagine if something happened to  
 your little girl...

Arriving, Clay SEES the blood on Weaver...

LT CLAY  
 What the hell happened to you?

Weaver and Thompson hold a look -- until...

SGT THOMPSON  
 She fell into the c-wire behind the  
 porta-shitter. I'm taking her to Doc.

LT CLAY  
 Christ, you're a fuckin' mess. Get  
 her to Doc, then get the guys to bed.

**EXT. OUTPOST DAVIDSON - INSIDE THE WIRE - NIGHT - LATER**

Weaver sits with Clemente and Bari... Clemente examines her.

CLEMENTE  
 You might need stitches.

WEAVER  
 No. Nothing that could get me sent  
 out of here... How about Dermabond  
 and I'll keep it wrapped?

CLEMENTE  
 You a doctor or something?

WEAVER  
 Seen my share of field injuries.

Clemente grabs Dermabond skin glue and goes to work...

**LATER**

Clemente packs his kit... Thompson approaches...

SGT THOMPSON  
 Doc. Get some rest. We got stand to  
 in a few hours.

Clemente leaves. Thompson stands over Weaver and Bari...

SGT THOMPSON (CONT'D)  
 Right now, I can't think of a  
 single reason to not send you home.  
 So you better start talking.

WEAVER

Two years ago, my son was supposed to be here for 60 days, just like us. He made it 57. Based on his letters, everything started out fine. Until it wasn't. Letters got cryptic. Dark. He started to say that he didn't feel like himself. That something wasn't right about this place. He even speculated that he might have a TBI or PTSD from a past deployment. I tried to contact the Army, to get him out of here, it was useless. This was his final letter home.

Weaver hands Thompson a LETTER...

*Mom,*

*I don't like it here.*

*It feels like something has a hold of...*

Four pages, front and back, the incomplete sentence repeated -  
- with each page Thompson gets more and more unsettled.

*It feels like something has a hold of...*

*It feels like something has a hold of...*

But every time Gavin tries end the sentence, his handwriting scribbles as if he's unable to write --

*It feels like something has a hold of ME...*

Finally... The last sentence...

AM I GOING TO HELL?

THOMPSON's concerned, trying to make sense of the letter, he catches Bari, clearly disturbed, almost frightened...

WEAVER (CONT'D)

When he died it took weeks to release an official COD.

SGT THOMPSON

Which was?

WEAVER

(looks away: Hesitates)  
Shrapnel, from indirect... But it doesn't add up. All official reports are so redacted, they're unreadable.

(MORE)

WEAVER (CONT'D)

I worked every angle at home. None of his guys would talk. Coming out here was my only option.

SGT THOMPSON

You think there was foul play or something?

WEAVER

I don't know...

SGT THOMPSON

Jesus... What's the end goal? Any evidence is two years old. What could you possibly find out here?

Weaver shows the Polaroid of Gavin by the knotted tree...

WEAVER

When he was a boy, we buried a time capsule under a tree. We used a Polaroid just like this to mark the spot. I think he was trying to send me a message. I don't know what, but I need to find this tree.

Thompson hands the Polaroid to Bari...

SGT THOMPSON

Does this tree look familiar?

Detached, uneasy, Bari shakes his head.

SGT THOMPSON (CONT'D)

We're surrounded by trees, Weaver...

WEAVER

I don't have a choice... I know it's crazy, but even just being out here, experiencing what he felt on his final days, is healing. Please, don't send me home, David.

Thompson chews on all this -- until...

SGT THOMPSON

You're telling me everything?

Weaver again hesitates before -- a faint nod...

SGT THOMPSON (CONT'D)

I don't care if you go after the Army. But if I get any sense that you're lying or any of this could come back on my guys, it's done...

WEAVER

I'm here for me. It has nothing to do with them.

SGT THOMPSON

No more rogue shit... You feel me?  
(she nods)  
Go get some rest.

Weaver heads to the Snake Eaters' Hooch.

SGT THOMPSON (CONT'D)

Let's keep this between us.

BARIALAI

Sure, brother...

Thompson registers Bari looks like he's seen a ghost.

SGT THOMPSON

What's wrong?

BARIALAI

I don't like the look of that tree.

SGT THOMPSON

It's just a tree, Bari.

BARIALAI

I come from a very superstitious culture.

(BEAT)

We believe in ghosts.

**CUT TO:**

**OPERATION FIRE AVALANCHE: DAY 11**

**EXT. OUTPOST DAVIDSON - INSIDE THE WIRE - NIGHT**

Weaver watches as the INCOMING ALARM summons sleep deprived Soldiers to battle positions in the predawn darkness -- as...

**NIGHT TRANSITIONS TO MID-MORNING**

The heat is brutal... Weaver smokes... When finally... The irritated men are pulled off the line...

LT CLAY

Grab an MRE... Get some rest.

**INT. SNAKE EATERS' BARRACKS - DAY**

Weaver opens her laptop -- out falls A NOTE...



*Ms. Weaver, I have guard duty tonight. Can we talk then?*

She catches a gaze from Chang and offers a discrete nod.

**INT. GUARDPOST - NIGHT**

Chang's behind the 50-cal when Weaver climbs in.

WEAVER

Hey Lennie...

He's quiet... A conflicting mix of shame and relief.

CHANG

My name's James...

(off Weaver's confusion)

The Army's big on nicknames. Popcorn's named after his moonshiner Uncle.

Chief swears he's got Native American ancestry but no idea where from. And they call me Lennie, after the fuckin' dumbass from *Of Mice and Men*.

Weaver registers she talking to an 18 y/o kid.

WEAVER

I'll call you James.

CHANG

Oh shit, is this like off the record?

WEAVER

I'm here as a friend.

CHANG

Cool... It's nice to have a friend out here, Ms. Weaver. Cause I'm pretty sure none of the guys like me.

WEAVER

They seemed impressed with you during the firefight.

Chang fights tears...

WEAVER (CONT'D)

That was really hard on you, huh?

(no response needed...)

Hey James, what you're doing out here is really difficult. It's okay to be scared.

CHANG

No it ain't. Not in the Army. Not in front of other soldiers.

WEAVER

Well, I'm not a solider...

This comforts Chang...

CHANG

I don't like this place. Don't feel like myself out here. The other night, it just-- I'm tired, you know?

WEAVER

What happened the other night?

CHANG

It's not just me, okay. Doc heard voices too. And he said Chief also experienced some shit. All on post. But everyone's too afraid to talk about it.

Chang's deeply unsettled.

CHANG (CONT'D)

Will you stay out here with me?

Weaver nods, positions next to him -- putting him at ease...

They both stare into the peaceful, yet ominous, woods...

**CUT TO:**

**OPERATION FIRE AVALANCHE: DAY 16**

**EXT. OUTPOST DAVIDSON - INSIDE THE WIRE - DAY**

CLEMENTE SCREAMS OUT IN AGONY -- pure chaos -- as... Weaver, Bari, Chang, and Thompson struggle to pin down his flailing limbs -- and then... Clemente grabs Chang...

CLEMENTE

Oh my God, am I gonna die? Oh god!

A deer in headlights, Chang freezes... Terrified, Clemente wraps a hand around Chang's collar... Chang catches Weaver's eyes -- she gives him a stern nod. He pushes Clementine back down on the stretcher.

CHANG

Nate! Look at me. You're gonna be fine. I swear it! We're getting you to the medevac and you're going home.

Chang's confident and competent. Clemente calms -- as... Jacques tightens a tourniquet around his thigh -- and...

JACQUES

Tourniquet's secure!

SGT THOMPSON  
Get him to the LZ...

Weaver, Bari, Clay, and Jacques lift the stretcher and rush Clemente to the East Gate... Serene, Clay watches -- as...

LT CLAY  
The few seconds we have to control the bleeding are life-saving. Everyone has a role in a casualty event.

There's no blood because this is a MEDEVAC SIMULATION.

Breathless and drenched in sweat -- Weaver, Bari, Chang, and Jacques lower Clemente...

Watching from the Guardpost, Gibbs pets Phyllis and glances at his watch... 105 DEGREES FAHRENHEIT. He contains a giggle of disbelief...

LT CLAY (CONT'D)  
Nice work. Everyone get a lot of water and stay out of the sun.

Clay finds his way over to Chang.

LT CLAY (CONT'D)  
Hey Private Chang, great fuckin' job... That A.A.R is on my desk, I need your sworn statement.

Chang exchanges a smile with Weaver before he ducks inside the Command Center -- while... Jacques finds his way inside the...

#### **GUARDPOST**

He's furious... Between chugs of water...

JACQUES  
Is this fuckin' guy serious? The incoming alarm everyday before dawn, and now a fuckin' medevac drill on the hottest day of the year? Shit's so fuckin' amateur and this asshole's never even seen combat.

Gibbs is amused... Through the door, Jacques seethes at Clay.

#### **INT. COMMAND CENTER BARRACKS - DAY**

Riding a high, Chang removes his sweat-soaked helmet and posts up behind the laptop on the desk...

He examines the open *After Action Report*... Staring at...

*WHAT HAPPENED? PRIVATE JAMES CHANG'S ACCOUNT..*

But... Before he types anything, he spots a folder on the computer's desktop -- *TIC Materials...*

Curious, he opens -- and... Immediately regrets it because... It's PHOTOS... The horrific aftermath of his mortar...

The two DEAD TEENAGE BOYS (14-16), bloodied with shrapnel.

An awful stare-off ensues with one of the Teens who's lifeless eyes are wide open... Chang's catatonic, can't look away, forgets to blink as the images sear into his brain...

Horrified, he slams the laptop shut...

**EXT. SNAKE EATERS' BARRACKS - NIGHT [DREAM SEQUENCE]**

An ETHEREAL LOW HUM -- spews a looming dread -- as...

Moonlight bleeds through the mesh concealment netting creating a bewitching aurora borealis-like effect on the dirt. Surreal dancing waves of light come to life with each breeze.

We float toward the barracks -- where... A crimson light spills out, unnatural -- as if illuminated by a neon sign.

**INSIDE THE SNAKE EATERS' BARRACKS [DREAM SEQUENCE CONT'D]**

The red light's unexplainable, as if we've entered a submarine... Or worse... Hell...

THE ENTIRE SQUAD sits on the bunks -- but something's off, they're too rigid, too catatonic -- and...

They are all covered in blood -- the whole hooch is...

Unblinking faces of shock and horror -- the whites of eyes pop against blood soaked skin, making them all look insane.

The horrendous scene could pass for a Hieronymus Bosch painting -- when suddenly -- all the faces turn toward US...

Because... WE'RE IN AN UNKNOWN POV -- looking at a set of bloodied hands, holding a knife -- and...

DEMONIC VOICE  
(faint whisper)  
Kill them all...

**INT. SNAKE EATERS' BARRACKS - NIGHT [END DREAM SEQUENCE]**

Chang explodes awake -- gasping for air as if he were drowning in his sleep... MOANING with a primal terror...

The rest of the hooch startles awake. Lights flip on to SEE...  
Wide-eyed, Chang's absolutely petrified, rendered motionless.

JACQUES  
Lennie, you okay?

His body's clenched, a rigor mortis of fear... Despondent...  
Weaver approaches... Gently touches his shoulder -- as...

WEAVER  
James...

Somehow the life returns to Chang's face. He looks around,  
child-like, almost embarrassed.

CHANG  
I had a bad dream... Sorry.

WEAVER  
It's okay, James. I've been having  
bad dreams too.

Jacques perks up...

JACQUES  
Me too... Horrible nightmares.

GIBBS  
Mefloquine Monday...

JACQUES  
No. This is different.

GIBBS  
Stress, heat, dehydration, lack of  
sleep... war. Shit, if you were  
sleeping like a baby, then I'd be  
really concerned.

JACQUES  
I think we shouldn't have moved  
those bones.

GIBBS  
Not this shit again... Chief, say the  
place is haunted like you say, so,  
the fuck, what? Nothing's hurtin'  
you. Are you really gonna go to Clay  
and tell him you're hearing voices?  
Havin' bad dreams? Bro, they will  
kick your ass out of the Army so fast  
you won't even have time to say bye  
to your favorite Vicenzan hooker.

Jacques hops out of bed and gears up -- as...

GIBBS (CONT'D)  
 You going to weave us a couple  
 dreamcatchers?

JACQUES  
 I got post in 30, asshole, I ain't  
 falling back asleep.

Jacques pushes out of the hooch.

**EXT. OUTPOST DAVIDSON - INSIDE THE WIRE - THE NEXT DAY**

Standing guard, the men are in their slow motion heat trance.  
 Shaken, Jacques stares out of the Guardpost into THE WOODS.

LT CLAY  
 Alright. Grab an MRE. Hydrate. Get  
 outta the sun and get some rest.

**EXT. OUTPOST DAVIDSON - INSIDE THE WIRE - DAY - LATER**

Weaver's laptop is tethered to her satellite phone -- limited  
 internet access... Sucking on a cigarette, she stares at...

**THE MONITOR**

Her article -- now way more substantial -- A FORT, ALONE, IN  
 THE WOODS, WITH KIDS -- sits in the body of an email...

Her finger hovers over the ENTER key -- when... She deletes  
 the article from the email and types...

*Need more time. Sorry...*

She clicks SEND and opens the post-deployment video -- the  
 HEAVY METAL MUSIC blasts in her headphones...

Emotions dance across her face. Something about this video  
 gets to her... Momentarily lost in it -- until...

She notices Thompson above her. He hands her a cigarette...

SGT THOMPSON  
 For someone that hates that video,  
 you sure do watch it a lot...

A BEAT.

WEAVER  
 I've thought about it, Sergeant. I  
 think knowing when to retire is  
 something you feel in the moment, and  
 all you can do is pray you recognize  
 when it comes.

(MORE)

WEAVER (CONT'D)

I was in Syria when my time came. Gavin was four and I had just lost a close colleague. In my heart I was done, I knew it. But whatever compulsion we have, it kept me in. I stayed long past my expiration. And I'm not sure I'll ever forgive myself for it. So my advice, listen to your heart. But I can see it in your eyes, your done.

Thompson nods, chews on this... He spots Weaver's wedding band.

SGT THOMPSON

So how's your husband feel about all this?

WEAVER

I'm divorced...

They share a smile -- when suddenly...

A BLOOD CURDLING SCREAM EMANATES OUTSIDE THE WIRE...

It echos a little too long -- deep and raspy -- conveying pure, undiluted horror -- somehow, undeniably human -- as...

Ugly Phyllis erupts -- while men rush to tactical positions. Bari eyes where Phyllis is BARKING -- and... SEES NOTHING.

**INT. GUARDPOST - DAY**

Clay and Thompson file in next to Chang.

LT CLAY

What the fuck was that?

CHANG

I dunno. I'm not seeing anything!

LT CLAY

I'm gonna radio for a U.A.V...

**EXT. OUTPOST DAVIDSON - INSIDE THE WIRE - DAY - LATER**

On edge, the men hold positions, exhausted to the bone... Clay finally emerges from the Command Center Barracks.

LT CLAY

Higher's not seeing shit. Jacques, Gibbs -- me, you and Thompson are gonna check it out.

SGT THOMPSON

Weaver, grab your camera.

Weaver springs to life. Clay eyes Thompson...

SGT THOMPSON (CONT'D)  
The camera could be an asset.

Clay nods.

**EXT. OUTPOST DAVIDSON - OUTSIDE THE WIRE - DAY**

Clay, Thompson, Jacques, and Gibbs study the unmoved dirt and a still intact trip flare -- while... Weaver fires off "investigative" photos and photos of trees.

GIBBS  
No sign of anything, not even an animal.

JACQUES  
So someone risked coming out here, somehow navigated all the tripwire, to what? Yell? To scare us?

GIBBS  
It was another monkey, Chief...

This doesn't sit well with Jacques -- as... Weaver zooms in on a knotted tree... Is that THE TREE? Sure looks like it...

LT CLAY  
Okay... Let's go.

She CLICKS a final burst.

**INT. SNAKE EATERS' BARRACKS - DAY**

Weaver can't upload the pictures fast enough to her laptop... Her momentum stops when she notices the photos ruined by...

A HORRIBLE DIGITIZED STATIC... Unnerving... She scans...

WEAVER  
(clicking through photos)  
Seriously? No... No... No... No.

All recent photos are destroyed by digital noise... *How?*

She approaches the mirror, SNAPS a photo of herself -- and SEES... A normal picture, no digital noise.

She sits back in her bunk -- and as she does her hair catches the duct-tape frame on her son's mural of the woods. Pulling hair free, she notices the frame is peeling.



She pulls the tape -- revealing... More drawing... A SCRIBBLED SHAPE above the woods -- an obscure ELONGATED FIGURE... Too hard to make out more, but still unsettling.

A bug bite snaps Weaver back to reality. She itches -- as...

WHAM! The door slams open, scaring the shit out of her. Gibbs and Jacques storm in. Jacques hurries to his bunk, furious...

JACQUES  
Oh fuck, I knew it! They're fuckin'  
everywhere, Popcorn!

Weaver looks down -- her bed is covered in fleas...

**EXT. OUTPOST DAVIDSON - INSIDE THE WIRE - DAY**

The Squad stands above the bedding from The Snake Eaters' Barracks as Gibbs douses all of it with bug spray -- until...

LT CLAY  
The dog's gotta go.

GIBBS  
We'll keep her outta the hooches,  
Sir. Tie her up.

LT CLAY  
No fucking way. She goes. Now.

GIBBS  
She could die out there, Sir.

LT CLAY  
It's a fuckin' dog, Gibbs. She'll  
figure it out... That's an order.

Gibbs holds a betrayed gaze... He throws down the bug spray.

**EXT. OUTPOST DAVIDSON - OUTSIDE THE WIRE - DAY**

Somber, Gibbs walks Ugly Phyllis down the hill.

GIBBS  
Alright girl. Run along now...

He turns back for the base. His loyal companion follows.

GIBBS (CONT'D)  
Don't you fuckin' follow me, girl.  
You go. Go Phyllis. Go.

She doesn't listen. Gibbs pushes her away and runs back INSIDE THE WIRE, closing it behind him. Phyllis WHIMPERS... BARKS... Trying to get back on the base.

GIBBS (CONT'D)  
Bad dog! Go! Now, Phyllis!

She tries to snake through the wire... Gibbs throws a rock at her... She's startled by the betrayal... He throws another.

GIBBS (CONT'D)  
Get the fuck outta here! Go!

**BEHIND THE HESCO BARRIERS**

Weaver, Thompson, Bari, and Jacques watch the heartbreaking scene -- a hardened Soldier, crying, throwing rocks at a dog he loves...

JACQUES  
His roommate was killed by a roadside bomb last May. Left him his dog...

A rock makes contact and Phyllis YELPS into the woods...

**EXT. OUTPOST DAVIDSON - INSIDE THE WIRE - DAY**

Gibbs shambles into the Snake Eaters' Barracks -- as... Clay emerges from the Command Center Barracks...

LT CLAY  
Alright... So, ah, I just got word from higher. For now, they're moving drone support to as needed. Which means no more foot patrols. They don't want us breaking up the squad without air support.

CLEMENTE  
We're stuck inside the wire?

Clay nods... Distraught looks are exchanged.

JACQUES  
So then what the fuck are we doing out here, Sir?

LT CLAY  
Mission's the same. Hold our ground for 60 days, watch for anything headed to the FOB.

Clay marches for the Command Center -- Weaver follows...

WEAVER  
Lieutenant, we're not leaving the outpost anymore?

LT CLAY  
 You wanted to know what it's like  
 to be a soldier in the United  
 States Army? Here you go.

At a loss, Weaver fights for composure -- they all do.

**EXT. WOODS - NIGHT [DREAM SEQUENCE]**

An ominous mist rolls around like breath, we're practically  
 gliding on it -- moving through the woods.

AN ETHEREAL HUM trembles as we float... The pace is uneasy...

Looming trees shutter with the breeze as we pass, like  
 shadows of ominous old people reaching out to grab us.

These woods are unsettling... Foreboding... ALIVE...

SOMETHING IS COMING...

A flock of crows startles -- and we...

**CUT TO:**

**INT. COMMAND CENTER BARRACKS - NIGHT [END DREAM SEQUENCE]**

In the predawn darkness, Clay sits up -- deeply disturbed...

**CUT TO:**

**OPERATION FIRE AVALANCHE: DAY 31**

**EXT. OUTPOST DAVIDSON - INSIDE THE WIRE - DAY**

The time-jump has been vicious to the Squad -- changes in  
 appearance are drastic -- alarming.

We catch them mid-day -- brutal heat -- in their slow motion  
 heat trance of absolute boredom. Skirting the edge of sanity.

Disheveled, Weaver looks like she's choked down a thousand  
 Marlboros and replaced makeup with caked on dust and dirt.

She's scrolling through photos of trees on her laptop.

The repetition of the ENTER KEY is maddening... CLICK! CLICK!  
 CLICK! A hypnotic decent so beguiling she forgets to blink, or  
 maybe she can't because the bags under her eyes are that heavy.

Filthy Soldiers have forgone thick fatigues for comfort from  
 the heat -- the only uniform requirements appear to be body  
 armor and helmets... What's underneath is fair game...

Men are half-naked under combat gear. Some shirtless. Some in  
 shorts, some in boxers, some even wear homemade flip-flops.

A stubbled Chang stares out of a gunport, enamored by the woods -- he's completely worn down -- while... Bari reads a *MAXIM* magazine -- and...

Faces covered with bandanas, Gibbs and Jacques drag a half-barrel -- cut from an oil drum -- out of the outhouse.

The smell of human waste is strong -- as... Sweating profusely, they slide the fly infested barrel, careful not to splash...

When it's in position, they pour kerosene and drop a match... The burn-barrel erupts... POPPING and CRACKLING to life...

Now with a mohawk, Jaques is entranced by rings of dirty black smoke rising against the soft blue sky... His stomach GURGLES.

JACQUES

What I'd give for a fuckin' cheeseburger.

Gibbs removes his bandana -- he has a beard on half of his face to go with his half-shaved head, and his half-crazed look...

GIBBS

Please God, let today be the day we get into a firefight...

#### INT. PORTA-SHITTER - DAY

We find Clemente -- dripping with sweat -- desperately trying to masturbate to a crusty and abused *Maxim Magazine* he's seen a thousand times... Frustrated... It's not working -- when...

His gaze locks on the wall -- THE WOODGRAIN -- which, if you imagine hard enough, might slightly resemble the female anatomy -- and *imagine hard enough*, he does... His pace intensifies.

#### INT. COMMAND CENTER BARRACKS - DAY

As put together as a guy can be while simultaneously looking like he hasn't slept in weeks, Thompson sits on his bunk, fighting emotion, lost in the photo of his daughter, Vivian.

Weaver enters -- he wipes away any signs of feeling...

WEAVER

How you holding up, Dave?

SGT THOMPSON

This place sure does test you, huh?

Weaver studies Thompson for a beat -- *is he losing it?* Proceeding with caution, she unfolds a topographic map -- the area surrounding the outpost has endless X's through it.

WEAVER

I've ruled out all trees in sight of the outpost and the few places we've patrolled... There was this one spot where I might have seen it but the photos didn't process. I'd really like to get back there...

SGT THOMPSON

I know, but we can't leave the wire right now, we've got orders.

WEAVER

From who? Some Colonel on the other side of the world?

SGT THOMPSON

My priority is my men. That was always the agreement... I know you're in pain, but we have to--

WEAVER

You have no fucking idea, Sergeant! You have no idea what it's like to lose a child protecting some plywood in the woods, all because he was following orders...

Thompson holds a stern gaze -- when, from outside...

CLEMENTE (O.S.)

I can't fucking do this anymore!

**EXT. OUTPOST DAVIDSON - INSIDE THE WIRE - DAY**

Thompson and Weaver emerge -- to SEE... Clemente's frantic... The hellish burn-barrel flames in the b.g.

CLEMENTE

I don't give a fuck if I get arrested! I'm fuckin' done! I'm done! I just wanna go home...

Jacques, Bari, and Gibbs tackle him... Broken, he rocks back and forth -- the Soldier's hold him.

The scene's surreal. Feces burning behind grown men crying, embracing in filth and insane haircuts. It's impossible not to see the lunacy. And somehow the love... All the while...

**INT. GUARDPOST - DAY**

Clay's behind the 50-cal -- somehow looking refreshed... He hears the commotion but his attention is stolen by ridgeline movement -- he scans with binoculars -- when...

A FROLICKING GOAT EMERGES -- full gallop, running straight toward the base -- so surreal it's beautiful.

And with one last graceful leap, the goat tosses itself into the razor wire...

Clay can't believe his eyes -- as... The goat writhes, tightening wire around itself until it's STUCK -- and then... It spews horrible BLEATS of agony...

GRAAAAAAAHHH! GRAAAAAAAHHH! GRAAAAAAAHHH! GRAAAAAAAHHH!

**EXT. OUTPOST DAVIDSON - OUTSIDE THE WIRE - DAY**

In disbelief, Weaver and the beaten down men stare at the exhausted and bloodied goat, BLEATING final pleas -- when...

Thompson aims his service pistol... BANG! He ends the misery.

A BEAT OF SHOCKED SILENCE -- until...

SGT THOMPSON  
When's the last time y'all had Barbecue?

GIBBS  
I can have that summabitch  
butchered and ready to eat in less  
than an hour.

Eyes-widen... Smiles consume... Attention turns to Clay...

LT CLAY  
Abso-fuckin-lutely...

For the first time the heaviness lifts...

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. OUTPOST DAVIDSON - INSIDE THE WIRE - DAY**

The field dressed goat hangs from a tree. Splayed open, vacant cavity exposed, organs and entrails in a neat pile below -- while...

A *Lord of the Flies* circus ensues -- shirtless and excited men salivate over charring meat spinning on a makeshift spit.

Weaver takes in the moment -- she's happy. They all are...

Chunks of blackened meat are passed out -- bayonets used as utensils... Everyone savagely savoring. Weaver tears into a hunk of skewered meat -- it's delicious.

A zest has returned to the Squad -- while peculiarly...

Chang's removed -- nibbling on meat alone, staring at the dressed goat... Intrigued by the butcher's work... Smiling...

**INT. GUARDPOST - DAY**

Clay's back behind the 50-cal when Thompson enters with meat.

SGT THOMPSON  
After the char and smoke, this is  
no shit one of the most delicious  
things I've ever eaten.

LT CLAY  
Are the guys enjoying it?

Thompson nods. A smile consumes Clay -- maybe his first ever.

**BACK AROUND THE SPICK**

This is exactly what they needed, belly's full, they lounge around the fire -- faces smeared with goat grease and charcoal.

GIBBS  
I killed my first deer when I was  
ten. Pops made me dress it and take  
a bite outta it's warm heart..

JACQUES  
And you been a fucked up lunatic  
ever since...

Gibbs winks... They all LAUGH... Weaver takes the occasion to snap candid photos... The men smile. Playfully pose -- when suddenly... Gibbs throws a hunk of meat into the woods...

JACQUES (CONT'D)  
Yo! That was good meat, bro!

GIBBS  
It's for Phyllis... Just in case.

Gibbs and Jaques exchange loving nods. Short lived, because Clay approaches, he saw the throw... Everyone tightens, uneasy.

GIBBS (CONT'D)  
Ah, sorry, Sir...

LT CLAY  
No. You're good... As you were  
fellas.

Clay looms for an uncomfortable BEAT... Tense -- until...

LT CLAY (CONT'D)  
Look, I know I can be an asshole...  
And, ah-- well...  
(MORE)

LT CLAY (CONT'D)

You all ever hear about OP Arlington,  
a 20 man outpost in the Korengal  
overrun by 80 Taliban?

(off nods)

Well, ah-- I know you all saw some  
shit last summer, and I was supposed  
to be there, but the reason I wasn't  
was because, my big brother was in  
charge at Arlington. He and his men  
were killed on his watch.

The men exchange looks of shock...

LT CLAY (CONT'D)

The Army was worried about my mental  
health, even tried to push me out. I  
wouldn't have it. So, yeah-- I guess,  
now you all know why the little  
things really matter to me out here.

Clay throws a piece of meat into the woods... Nods at Wells.

WEAVER

Terry. There was nothing your  
brother could have done.

Clay fights emotion. They all do.

LT CLAY

Gentlemen... Weaver... There's no  
way we are not finishing our  
mission out here. Okay?

A communal nod...

#### **INT. GUARDPOST - NIGHT**

Weaver climbs in with Thompson... The sound of a thousand  
insects buzzing entices gazes deep into the foreign land...

SGT THOMPSON

Do you really think your son died  
for some plywood?

WEAVER

Do you want my answer as a mother  
or a pragmatic journalist?

SGT THOMPSON

Whichever one suits you best...

WEAVER

The last time I saw my son in  
person we fought. Over that stupid  
deployment video. Cause I hated it.

(MORE)



WEAVER (CONT'D)

So I told him I didn't recognize  
the person that made it.

Weaver forces out a LAUGH to keep from crying...

WEAVER (CONT'D)

As a mother when a child decides to go  
to war it feels personal... So yeah, I  
can't help but wonder what I did to  
contribute to my child dying scared and  
alone, for plywood in the woods.

SGT THOMPSON

In war, you have to be able to grab  
onto something that's going to  
suppress all of this, and for us,  
that's each other. It's something  
even a mother can't understand --  
the bond of soldiers. So, no matter  
how your son died he wasn't scared  
and he wasn't alone. He was  
surrounded by his brothers, that he  
gladly gave his life for...

WEAVER

Yeah, well, you're up against  
decades' worth of cynicism here.

SGT THOMPSON

Fair enough... Just so you know, I  
asked Clay to put a request in to  
get us outside the wire tomorrow. I  
think everyone needs it.

Weaver nods with thanks...

**EXT. OUTPOST DAVIDSON - INSIDE THE WIRE - NIGHT**

Weaver moves toward the Barracks -- when she spots Chang...

Face still covered in grease and charcoal, child-like, he  
stares out a gunport -- not on guard -- motionless, enamored  
by THE WOODS with an unsettling smile... It's odd...

WEAVER

Everything okay, James?

CHANG

Hey, do you think soldiers-- do you  
think they go to hell when they kill?

WEAVER

What?

The smile widens -- as if taunting when he asks...

CHANG  
When soldiers kill in war, they  
still go to hell, right?

WEAVER  
No... No, James I don't think they do.

He shuffles from the surreal encounter.

**EXT. OUTPOST DAVIDSON - INSIDE THE WIRE - THE NEXT DAY**

Keeping overwatch, Gibbs watches Clay, Thompson, Clemente, Bari, and Weaver disappear into the woods on patrol.

He takes the moment to unwrap a PowerBar and throws it into the woods... Followed by a few CLICKS and faint calls for...

GIBBS  
Phyllis! Here girl! Phyllis!

**EXT. THE WOODS - DAY**

Clemente has point as the men creep through the forest...

Weaver trails -- head on a swivel, taking in tree after tree. When suddenly... There it is...

THE TREE... GAVIN'S TREE...

As anti-climactic as you'd expect finding a knotted tree in the woods... This is what she's been looking for... A subdued shock, she's so happy, it takes every ounce of her not to erupt with emotion.

Thinking quick, she holds to tie her shoe as the men unknowingly push ahead -- until she's alone...

Enamored... It's real. She's not insane...

The TREE's undoubtably peculiar... Maybe ten feet tall. Somehow creepy... Bare limbs almost alive with movement.

She runs a hand over initials GPD -- and finally... Starts digging with her hands -- clawing at the dirt -- when...

CRACK! A stick breaks... Startled, she spins to SEE...

THE BLIND SHEPARD -- and behind him... TWO ELDERS -- old men, beards dyed orange, eyes like small black holes...

WEAVER  
(untranslated Pashto)  
Journalist...

A FROZEN BEAT -- until...

Thompson emerges, rushing between Weaver and the Afghans...

SGT THOMPSON  
Hands! Hands!

The Elders surrender hands... Weaver starts digging again...

WEAVER  
Dave, the tree!

SGT THOMPSON  
Not now!

Infuriated, Thompson holds aim on the Elders as he struggles to pull Weaver from the tree... It's cumbersome... Awkward...

WEAVER  
What are you doing? This is Gavin's tree!

SGT THOMPSON  
I had one fuckin' rule!

She clings to the trunk... He gives one last yank -- they both topple to the ground... They tussle. Weaver's scrappy... The Elders watch, frozen with disbelief...

WEAVER  
Let me go! I know he's here!  
Gavin's here! He's right here!

Weaver lands a kick to Thompson's jaw. Scrambles back for the tree... Thompson's had enough... He pounces on Weaver... He rips her back -- TOO HARD -- and puts her in a chokehold...

SGT THOMPSON  
(through gritted teeth)  
Not fuckin' now! Clay sees this,  
you're done!

Weaver pushes out a faint nod... Tears well... Thompson releases her -- right as...

Clay and Clemente come up the draw... Thompson hops to his feet -- guns are drawn and orders are barked at the Elders...

Bari talks with the Afghans -- as... Weaver wipes away tears, summoning all strength not to dig, not to breakdown crying...

BARIALAI  
Sir. It's about the goat.

**EXT. OUTPOST DAVIDSON - OUTSIDE THE WIRE - DAY**

The Squad and The Locals approach the base -- the Soldiers file onto the knoll... Weaver turns back and watches -- as...

The Blind Shepard grabs the Elders, stopping them just before the hill -- he's unsettled... TALLER ELDER mutters to Bari...

BARIALAI

Sir. They don't want to go on base.

Taller Elder gets more animated...

LT CLAY

Why not? What's he saying?

BARIALAI

They'd prefer to negotiate here.

LT CLAY

You tell them, I don't do negotiations just outside my base.

Bari and Taller converse. Bari reluctantly translates.

BARIALAI

Sir. They say the hill is sacred to them... And, they believe it's cursed. They are afraid to come on the hill of bones.

LT CLAY

Tell them it's on the base or it's fuckin' nowhere.

A frantic deliberation ensues between the Blind Shepard and the Taller Elder. The Shepard's afraid, he doesn't want to go onto the outpost... The Elders practically drag him on...

**EXT. OUTPOST DAVIDSON - INSIDE THE WIRE - DAY**

The mood is awkward. Tense... Weaver snaps photos of it all.

The Americans are by far the dirtiest men here. The Locals sit, nervous and fidgety, especially the Blind Shepard.

Clay stands removed with a radio to his ear -- while... Taller Elder is getting more heated with Bari.

BARIALAI

(to Thompson)

He says it is illegal to kill a goat.

SGT THOMPSON

Tell them again, we're sorry about the goat. It was stuck in the concertina wire.

BARIALAI

The owner of the goat is a poor person... Can we pay him?

SGT THOMPSON  
That's what we're waiting on.

Clay approaches, crouches, eye level with the Locals.

LT CLAY  
I've been instructed by my  
commander, no payment for the goat.

Bari simultaneously translates -- as...

LT CLAY (CONT'D)  
I can give them the weight of the  
goat in humanitarian aid... Beans,  
rice, flour, blankets, but they  
have to go down to Bravo to get it.

BARIALAI  
Sir. They want money.

Weaver eyes the Shepard, rocking with a disturbing urgency.

LT CLAY  
No. Not for the fucking goat.

Suddenly... The Blind Shepard freezes. A muted fear consumes his face... Trembling... He opens his mouth, a SCREAM climbs in his throat, but never makes it out -- instead...

His body clenches. Lets out an EPILEPTIC CRY -- because... He's having a seizure... Convulsing. Foaming. Emitting jarring GRUNTS and SNORTS.

CLEMENTE  
He's having a seizure! Keep them  
back... Bari. Calmly tell him he's  
having a seizure and it'll pass.

Soldier's keep the Elders at bay... Clemente and Bari kneel over the Shepard. Bari calmly speaking PASHTO -- until...

The Shepard stops convulsing... Calms... Bari puts a comforting hand on him, offers soothing words -- when...

The Blind Shepard explodes back to life -- lunging for Bari, gripping his shirt... Somehow THEY LOCK EYES...

The Shepard is rabid. SPITS FLYING. SPEWING HATEFUL WORDS. Bari can't pull away. Clemente gets in the mix...

CLEMENTE (CONT'D)  
Let him go! Let him go!

Weaver doesn't need to be fluent in Pashto to know what the Shepard's YELLING is some type of warning... And Bari's face let's her know it's awful -- when finally...

The Blind Shepard relents... Regains his faculties... But the damage is done. Bari backs away, shaken to his core. The Elders rush to the Blind Shepard and carry him -- as...

CLEMENTE (CONT'D)  
He needs to rest!

LT CLAY  
Let them go.

Weaver and the shocked Soldiers watch as the Elders carry the Blind Shepard off the base and disappear into the woods...

**EXT. OUTPOST DAVIDSON - INSIDE THE WIRE - DAY - LATER**

Weaver comforts Bari -- unnerved, he brings a trembling bottle of water to chapped lips -- while rest of the Soldiers are hectic, filling in security...

LT CLAY  
I didn't like that. Stay fuckin' vigilant!

WEAVER  
Bari, did he say shaitan? Doesn't that mean the devil?

Horrified, Bari nods... Clay approaches.

LT CLAY  
Hey Bar, are they planning something?

BARIALAI  
No. They are terrified of this place.

LT CLAY  
Bullshit!

Uneasy looks are exchanged -- when... Erratic BARKING erupts from the draw... Gibbs lights up, runs to the Hesco walls, WHISTLING with excitement...

GIBBS  
Holy shit, she came back! Come on Phyllis! Come on girl! ... Sir, the fleas are gone. Let's get her home!

LT CLAY  
Absolutely not!

Phyllis' BARKS persist...

GIBBS  
She's right in the draw, Sir.

LT CLAY  
 No! No one's leaving the fuckin' wire  
 for a dog! They're planning something.  
 We're not letting our guard down now!

The BARKS continue as Gibbs eyes Clay with palpable hate.

**EXT. OUTPOST DAVIDSON - INSIDE THE WIRE - DUSK**

Smoking, waiting, Weaver circles the TREE'S LOCATION on her map -- when... Thompson exits the Guardpost... She follows...

WEAVER  
 Dave... We gotta go back... Please.

Thompson confronts with a contained rage...

SGT THOMPSON  
 I had one fuckin' rule, no rogue  
 shit!

He storms into Command Center Barracks.

**INT. SNAKE EATERS' BARRACKS - NIGHT**

Flustered and tired, Weaver finds Chang shirtless, drawing an ANCIENT SYMBOL -- a double cross, out of the infinity symbol - prominently on the wall... It's peculiar... UNNERVING...



WEAVER  
 What is that, James?

Chang turns -- a faint smile. Disturbing. Somehow detached...

CHANG  
 I dunno... Feels like the perfect  
 insignia for this place...

Chang returns to his work. Weaver sits in her bunk, opens her laptop and studies the earlier photos of the Locals. She focuses on the Blind Shepard -- he really is that unsettling.

She scrolls to the next photo -- when she SEES...

It's out of focus -- and somehow one of the subjects appears stretched, blurred, into a horrible silhouette that resembles the ELONGATED FIGURE on the wall... Weaver stares in awe...

CHANG (CONT'D)

Do you think it's real, Ms.  
Weaver... The thing in the woods?

Chang points to the drawing behind her -- the dark ominous, ELONGATED FIGURE lurking over the woods...

WEAVER

Ah, no. No, James I don't...

CHANG

I do...

A hopeful smile pushes across his face... Beyond unsettling.

**INT. GUARDPOST - NIGHT**

Jacques and Gibbs are in the cramped space... The night is oppressive. Total silence -- but for...

The BARKING... WOOF... WOOF... WOOF...

Behind the 50-cal machine gun, Gibbs' gaze is locked on the draw, where the BARKING impossibly continues...

WOOF... WOOF... WOOF... WOOF... WOOF... WOOF... WOOF...

Like a sadistic metronome, each BARK taunts, pulling Gibbs deeper into despair... WOOF... WOOF... WOOF...

JACQUES

Hey... What if this thing hasn't  
been trying to scare us, what if  
it's trying to wear us down?

GIBBS

Chief. I don't believe any of your  
god damn Native shit. And even if I  
did, I'm sittin' behind a weapon  
that can shoot a thousand rounds  
per minute.

UNKNOWN VOICE

(whispers)  
Chief! Popcorn!

The men startle -- when... Bari climbs in...

JACQUES

Jesus, Bari. What's up, man?



BARIALAI  
Brothers...

Timid, Bari sits, makes himself small in the corner.

BARIALAI (CONT'D)  
You are guests in my country. It is my  
duty to protect you. I thought you  
should know, I feel that something dark  
is here and the time to go is now...

Jacques is subdued... Gibbs clenches his jaw -- as... Bari  
offers a consoling arm on their stunned shoulders...

BARIALAI (CONT'D)  
You are forever my brothers. Go  
with God...

One last signature smile and double thumbs up and Bari walks  
out of the Guardpost -- and... He keeps walking... Pushing  
through the East Gate... Off the outpost...

GIBBS  
Is he fuckin' leaving? Bari! Bari!

Disbelief as they watch Bari walk into the WOODS -- GONE.

**EXT. OUTPOST DAVIDSON - INSIDE THE WIRE - NIGHT**

We're mid-stride with Clay, Thompson, and Jacques...

LT CLAY  
What do you mean he left?

JACQUES  
He just walked off, Sir.

LT CLAY  
And you didn't stop him?

JACQUES  
How, Sir, he's a terp?

LT CLAY  
Fuckin' arrest him. Detain him.  
It's dereliction of duty. No one  
leaves without my permission.

They land next to the Guardpost and look out to the woods --  
but for the never-ending BARKING, no signs of life...

GIBBS  
We can still get to him if we hurry.

LT CLAY  
No.

GIBBS

What? Sir, he's unarmed. This ain't a dog. It's Bari.

LT CLAY

We don't have the resources. I'll radio higher. Get everyone up. This wouldn't be the first time A.N.A left before a fuckin' attack.

JACQUES

Sir. Bari, ain't workin' with the fuckin' Taliban.

LT CLAY

He just abandoned us, Specialist.

**EXT. OUTPOST DAVIDSON - INSIDE THE WIRE - NIGHT**

Thompson bangs on the doors of the barracks...

SGT THOMPSON

Everybody up. 100 percent security.

Everyone trods out, half-naked in the gray light.

**NIGHT TRANSITIONS TO MID-MORNING**

Bringing with it bone tired Soldiers and a dreary day. Overcast. Ominous. A fog permeates -- and...

THE BARKING STILL HASN'T STOPPED...

Bleary-eyed, with a cigarette down to the filter, Weaver's entranced by the BARKING... They all are. It's undeniably wrong.

LT CLAY

Alright fellas, pull back. Sergeant and I will take over watch. Grab an MRE. Hydrate. Get some rest.

Jacques approaches Clemente, lost in the BARKING...

CLEMENTE

What the fuck is out there?

JACQUES

No dog can bark like that...

**INT. SNAKE EATERS' BARRACKS - DAY**

Gibbs, Jacques, Chang, and Clemente eat MREs -- when... Clemente opens Weaver's computer, wired to a satellite phone.

CHANG

Hey, that's Ms. Weaver's.

CLEMENTE

Lennie, if I don't have contact with the outside world I'm gonna blow my fuckin' brains out.

He scrolls through open windows... His eyes widen when he SEES Weaver's article...

A FORT, ALONE, IN THE WOODS, WITH KIDS

**EXT. OUTPOST DAVIDSON - INSIDE THE WIRE - DAY**

Thompson leans on sandbags. Gun outward. Exhausted. He stares at the draw, at the impossible BARKING...

Weaver approaches -- sits... Forces a preemptive smile to quell the overflow of emotion now manifesting as she hands Thompson a FAMILY PHOTO...

Happier times... Weaver, her husband TOM, and Gavin.

WEAVER

On the night of Gavin's death, my husband and I vowed we'd make it through this together... Tom tried, he really did... But every time I saw his face, all I could see was Gavin. All I could see was my dead baby... 28 years of marriage obliterated. Stained by a single moment, by our greatest tragedy... When Gavin died. There was no room for anyone else's grief, and I've been too afraid to stop and feel any of mine.

Thompson stares back, earnestly moved...

WEAVER (CONT'D)

Sergeant, your trust is the last thing I wanna betray, but this tree is the reason I'm here, and by here I don't just mean the outpost... I need to get to it.

Weaver holds an asking gaze -- until...

SGT THOMPSON

You mean like right now?

Weaver nods. Thompson scoffs with disbelief.

SGT THOMPSON (CONT'D)  
 Are you really that selfish? Look  
 around, look at the faces of the sons  
 you're risking because you lost yours.

The reply packs a punch, catches Weaver off guard -- when...

The BARKING suddenly ends with a YELP! And...

A foreboding swell of HOOTING MONKEYS erupts in the trees.

Weaver and Thompson hold an anxious look...

Soldiers float out of hooches... All mesmerized by the  
 shaking trees -- as if it were the woods now having a  
 seizure... But fog suffocates a clear view of anything...

The HOOTING crescendos... DEAFENING... All encompassing --  
 when suddenly... As if dropped from the heavens...

Ugly Phyllis -- or at least what's left of her -- lands with  
 a grotesque THUD of blood and guts, heaped between the men.

Everyone's horrified because her body's ravaged to shreds...

The HOOTING reaches a fever pitch -- and then... IT STOPS...  
 Replaced by a DREADFUL silence, equally DEAFENING...

Everyone's in awe. At a complete loss... Dumfounded, Jacques  
 looks around, trying to make sense of what just happened...

Clenched fists, Gibbs trembles with rage, starring at Phyllis.

Weaver steps toward him, wanting to console -- Thompson grabs  
 her, shakes her off... All are on edge, watching Gibbs,  
 waiting for him to respond, waiting for him to lose it...

But he doesn't... He calmly kneels over Phyllis' and pets  
 her... Lovingly... He's broken, no fight left...

GIBBS  
 Permission to bury her, Sir.

A SURREAL BEAT...

LT CLAY  
 Ah... Yeah... Okay...

JACQUES  
 Really... Are we just gonna act like  
 that was fuckin' normal? Huh? How  
 the fuck does an 80 pound dog just  
 fall from the sky!?

Jacques pleads for sanity...

JACQUES (CONT'D)  
 We need to fuckin' leave! Bari was  
 warning us! Something's here!

Gibbs, enraged, springs up and grabs Jacques.

GIBBS  
 Shut your fuckin' wagon burning  
 mouth! It was the fuckin' monkeys!

Clay and Thompson pull them apart...

JACQUES  
 Oh, so that's how it is you fuckin'  
 hillbilly, white boy...

SGT THOMPSON  
 (to Gibbs)  
 Cool off, Sergeant...

JACQUES  
 Yeah. Go bury your dog, bitch boy!

LT CLAY  
 Specialist, that's enough! You got  
 Bari's cot tonight...  
 (to the group)  
 Bury the dog and then everyone get  
 some fuckin' rest.

**EXT. WEST WALL - DUSK**

Weaver's on the satellite phone -- mid-call -- she nervously  
 fidgets with her wedding ring... Relieved when...

ANSWERING MACHINE (O.S.)  
 Hey, this is Tom Davidson. Thanks  
 for reaching out. I'm busy at the  
 moment, but if you leave a message,  
 I'll get back to you.

BEEP...

WEAVER  
 ... I just wanted to say that I'm  
 sorry... ... And that I've  
 never stopped loving you.

She hangs up... An empty catharsis washes over her...

**INT. SNAKE EATERS' BARRACKS - NIGHT - LATER**

Carrying a handful of bedding, Weaver discretely slinks past  
 sleeping SOLDIERS...

**EXT. OUTPOST DAVIDSON - INSIDE THE WIRE - NIGHT**

She tracks Clemente -- he's on guard in the distance, laying against sandbags, focused on the woods.

She picks up a 2.5LBS BARBELL PLATE from the gym equipment and stealthily scurries for...

**INT. PORTA-SHITTER - NIGHT**

Weaver steps out of the outhouse and throws the barbell plate over the wall, away from Clemente. The RUSTLING of it landing grabs his attention. He goes to investigate -- and then...

Weaver makes a dash for The West Wall...

She throws the bedding over the perimeter wall and in a flash, CLIMBS UP the Hesco's mesh wiring -- and...

Drops down on the outside of the perimeter wall...

Now starring down the sea of razor wire... She tosses the bedding, making a bridge, and crosses, sprinting into the woods -- unseen -- as... Clemente returns to the gunport.

**EXT. THE WOODS - NIGHT**

A FULL MOON. Illume's 100 percent... She doesn't need it, but Weaver uses a faint keychain flashlight because the woods are profoundly unsettling...

Terrified and alone, Weaver slinks forward. Until finally...

She SEES it... THE TREE...

At night it's even more ominous, even more alive...

She runs the final steps, hugging the trunk, running her fingers over her son's carved initials -- GPD...

She unfolds a military shovel and digs... It's not long before she hits something soft...

She pulls up a poncho wrapped backpack... Smells it. Hugs it. Opens it to find -- wrapped in plastic...

A cracked TABLET COMPUTER -- with no charge -- and JOURNALS.

She skims pages, a mix of sketches and jotted thoughts -- artistic -- a visual journal...

All of the drawings tell a story. Weaver SEES sketches of...

*The outpost. The hooches. The woods. Other soldiers...*

And then the drawings get darker... A descent into madness...

*A SOLDIER pulling his hair out -- and...*

Pages and pages of the *ANCIENT SYMBOL* that Chang was drawing -  
- the double cross, out of the infinity symbol -- and...

*A SOLDIER standing over a pile of dead Soldiers and behind him, the outline of the same ominous ELONGATED FIGURE from the mural on the wall...*

So engrossed and disturbed, it takes a moment for Weaver to register... Faint GUTTURAL CHOCKING and CLICKING above her...

She glances up -- and in the distance she SEES...

The SILHOUETTE of the ELONGATED FIGURE from the page -- maybe ten feet tall -- backlit by the moon. Just standing there...

Weaver holds up her keychain flashlight -- it's too faint...

Frozen with fear, she stares at the dark, the SILHOUETTE, the awful WHEEZE and SHALLOW inhale -- until...

With her camera, she snaps a photo. The FLASH illuminates...

GAVIN, 19 -- in combat attire...

Visible for only a second with the flash -- then he's gone...

WEAVER  
Gavin? ... Is that you?

Weaver's stunned, *this can't be* -- but it's not a dream...

She stares at the awful SILHOUETTE, the awful WHEEZE...

Another FLASH illuminates -- Gavin, still there, uncanny.

WEAVER (CONT'D)  
Gav. It's me... It's mom...

A few more FLASHES illuminate Gavin... Standing... WHEEZING...

And then... The ELONGATED SILHOUETTE moves toward her -- almost floating... FLASH! She SEES Gavin moving toward her...

Terrified, Weaver crabs backward -- when suddenly... The SILHOUETTE CHARGES -- and...

FLASH! For a barely perceptible frame, Weaver sees what can only be described as a scorched skinned avatar of the devil.

So close she jumps back, drops the camera -- and...

SCREAMS A BLOOD CURDLING SCREAM!

Then it's GONE with the darkness... So quick Weaver's unsure what she even saw... HORRIFIED, she looks wildly in all directions -- but SEES NOTHING...

She picks up the backpack and runs...

**INT. OUTPOST DAVIDSON - INSIDE THE WIRE - NIGHT**

In response to the SCREAMS, Soldiers rush to security posts.

**INT. GUARDPOST - NIGHT**

Clay rushes in to meet Chang and Jacques...

LT CLAY  
What the fuck was that?

JACQUES  
Sounded like screams.

LT CLAY  
You get a PID, you fuckin' engage.

Attention's on the woods... Ready to unleash hell -- when... From beyond the draw... RED SMOKE RISES -- followed by...

WEAVER (O.S.)  
James! Chief! Doc! It's Weaver!

The men in the Guardpost exchange looks -- as...

WEAVER (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Sergeant Thompson. Private James Chang. Private Clemente. Sergeant Gibbs. Specialist Jacques. Lieutenant Terry Clay. It's me. Mona Weaver! It's Mona Weaver!

LT CLAY  
Weaver? What the fuck is going on?

WEAVER  
I can explain. I'm coming out. Don't shoot!

With hands first, Weaver steps into sight...

LT CLAY  
What was the screaming?

WEAVER  
I saw something in the woods.

LT CLAY  
What'd you see?



WEAVER

I-- I don't know... Maybe a ghost.

Clay SCOFFS with disbelief.

LT CLAY

A fuckin' ghost? Weaver, I'm seriously questioning your mental capacity to be out here.

Weaver eyes her camera's LED... Astonished to SEE... Recent PHOTOS are just shots of the woods illuminated by a flash... Nothing's there... Jacques scans past Weaver with infrared...

JACQUES

Sir. There's nothing else out there.

WEAVER

Can I please come back to the base?

LT CLAY

What's in the backpack?

WEAVER

Stuff that belonged to my son.

LT CLAY

Your son? What the fuck does that mean?

WEAVER

Dave knows...

Thompson reluctantly nods toward Clay.

LT CLAY

Drop the bag. Backup toward us, get on your knees and interlace your fingers.

As Weaver does this, Thompson, furious, storms toward her, he grabs the backpack and dumps out the contents...

WEAVER

I'm sorry David. I'm so sorry... But I saw something out there...

SGT THOMPSON

Notebooks and a tablet.

Clay nods. Thompson grabs the bag and guides Weaver...

### **INSIDE THE WIRE**

Where...

LT CLAY

Sergeant, what the fuck is going on?

SGT THOMPSON

Sir. OP Davidson is named after Gavin Davidson, her son. He was with the 173rd that built the place. And he was killed out here. Weaver came to get fuckin' closure or something.

LT CLAY

Bullshit Sergeant, there's never been an American K.I.A out here.

SGT THOMPSON

What?

LT CLAY

She's out of her fuckin' mind... Before us, there was only one death in the region. And it was an E.K.I.A.

SGT THOMPSON

Did you fuckin' lie to me?

All eyes go to Weaver...

WEAVER

It's not like that.

SGT THOMPSON

So what's it fuckin' like?

WEAVER

They didn't report it...

SGT THOMPSON

I didn't fuckin' hear you!

WEAVER

They didn't report it... because my son killed himself. He overdosed on morphine...

SGT THOMPSON

Jesus Christ...

WEAVER

But I think whatever's out there had something to do with his death.

CHANG

Sir. How do we know she isn't some Jihad Jane. Who knows what the fuck she's been doing out there?

Shocked, Weaver eyes Chang. He holds eye contact...

CHANG (CONT'D)

She's been writing an anti-military article. We found it on her computer. Made us sound pathetic. Called us kids.

WEAVER

No. No. I never sent that. When I first got out here I was so angry--

LT CLAY

You're gone, first thing tomorrow.

WEAVER

You're not listening! I saw something out there. Look! Somehow that insignia Private Chang drew is in these journals. How?

Private Chang grins.

CHANG

Ms. Weaver, what I drew is drawn all over the inside of my bunk. It's been there since day one.

Weaver's confused. Betrayed... Thompson scans the journals.

LT CLAY

What is that shit?

SGT THOMPSON

Looks psychotic. The tablet's dead.

LT CLAY

Does it have an SD or something?

Thompson pops out an MICRO-SD MEMORY CARD. Hands it to Clay.

WEAVER

That belongs to my son.

LT CLAY

Your son was in the United States Army. It belongs to us.

WEAVER

Terry. Please. I'll leave first thing tomorrow. I won't cause anymore problems. Just let me have his things.

Unmoved, Clay pockets the SD CARD and packs the backpack...

WEAVER (CONT'D)

Guys, please. That's my son. That's what's left of my baby.

All the men, betrayed, stare stone-faced -- as... Clay moves for the Command Center -- and then... In a flash...

Weaver lunges for the service pistol on Chang's kit!

She has it trained on Clay before anyone can react with anything but shock and hands up...

SGT THOMPSON  
Whoah! Whoah! Weaver. Put it down.

WEAVER  
I just want my son's things. Okay?

SGT THOMPSON  
Weaver. This can't end well.

WEAVER  
I need my baby's things...

Keeping the men at bay with the pistol, Weaver inches toward Clay -- he's more annoyed than anything -- and...

WEAVER (CONT'D)  
Give me the bag, Lieutenant.

Clay hands over the backpack...

WEAVER (CONT'D)  
And the memory card...

LT CLAY  
In my pocket...

WEAVER  
Give it to me...

LT CLAY  
Gonna have to grab it yourself...

He calls her bluff... With no choice... She inches for his pocket and pulls out the SD card -- right as...

In one swift motion -- Clay grabs Weaver's wrist, DISARMS HER and has her face down in the dirt with a knee in her back...

LT CLAY (CONT'D)  
Are you fucking serious! Aiming a fucking gun at me? At my men!

As she bucks and kicks, Clay rolls Weaver to her back and zip-ties her hands together -- as... He points to Chang's gun.

LT CLAY (CONT'D)  
That's your fucking service pistol, Private! Holster it and start doing up-downs. And don't you fuckin' stop!

CHANG

Yes, Sir!

Chang drops and starts doing BURPEES -- up, down, up, down...

With Clay preoccupied, Weaver shoves the SD CARD in her mouth.

SGT THOMPSON

No. No. No... Shit! She put the SD card in her mouth.

LT CLAY

Spit it out...

Weaver opens her mouth showing she swallowed the SD CARD... Nothing to be done... Right? ... Clay stands, eerily calm.

LT CLAY (CONT'D)

You've got one chance. Throw it up.

Weaver SCOFFS -- *he can't be serious...* Her defiant grin indicates now she's willing to call his bluff...

LT CLAY (CONT'D)

Doc... How's this gonna work?

CLEMENTE

What?

LT CLAY

I'm not sifting through her shit, so, how do we make her throw it up?

CLEMENTE

Ah... finger in the throat?

LT CLAY

Okay... Sergeants...

Everyone isn't fully sure how to act...

SGT THOMPSON

Sir?

LT CLAY

Get it the fuck out of her... That's an order.

So, this is happening... Thompson, Gibbs, and Clemente descend on Weaver -- she flails -- **CLENCHES HER JAW SHUT...**

In the b.g., Chang's too scared to stop the burpees -- as...

Thompson kneels over Weaver and puts knees on either side of her head -- pinning it -- and...

SGT THOMPSON  
Weaver. Don't make us do this.

Mouth shut, jaw locked -- defiant -- until...

SGT THOMPSON (CONT'D)  
Okay...

A final clench, ready to have her jaw pried at -- and...

The opposite happens... Thompson presses a hand to her mouth, and holds her nose shut. Effectively suffocating her.

Shock gives way to a muted panicked -- her eyes dart around for relief... There's none...

The nonchalant, stolid-faced, Thompson holds -- as...

Weaver grunts. Her body reflexes, clenching for air...

Calm, Thompson stares deep into Weaver's soul -- as...

SGT THOMPSON (CONT'D)  
Look at me, Weaver... Look at me...

Finally, she relents, giving eye contact...

SGT THOMPSON (CONT'D)  
Mona, what happened to your son,  
was not your fault... No matter how  
he died. He was a hero...

Tears pour out of Weaver...

SGT THOMPSON (CONT'D)  
No matter what happened to your  
boy, he was a hero.

Finally... Thompson releases -- and... Weaver's mouth blasts open for air, and the second it does...

Thompson pries her jaw open like an alligator wrangler...

He rolls her to her side -- when... Clemente shoves a gloved finger down her throat -- and... Weaver vomits...

Thompson holds her hair -- until finally...

The SD CARD lands in the dirt in a puddle of bile... Clay grabs it and storms into the Command Center -- as...

A mess of watery eyes and snot, Weaver stares up at Thompson.

WEAVER  
That's all I have left of him...

Thompson stares back with sorry eyes -- when suddenly...

Clay re-emerges with the backpack... Confused, everyone watches him march for the outhouse...

LT CLAY  
I can't trust that if this bag exists, you won't continue to put us all in danger to get it.

Clay drags out the burn barrel...

WEAVER  
What are you doing? No! No!

He drops the backpack in... Weaver flails. Gibbs restrains.

WEAVER (CONT'D)  
No! No! No! Please! Noooooo!

SGT THOMPSON  
Sir!

LT CLAY  
I won't allow you to put my men at risk any longer!

Weaver lets out a deafening SCREAM as a lit match floats toward the barrel -- and...

It ERUPTS...

It might as well be Weaver in the barrel, in the flames... She collapses in absolute agony...

Everyone watches the conflagration, mesmerized -- it feels wrong, they all know it -- but there's nothing to be done.

LT CLAY (CONT'D)  
Gibbs. She's now a detainee, restrain her and if she keeps screaming, gag her. Private, you've got post with me for being a fuckin' moron! Everyone else, get some rest.

Officially unhinged, Clay storms into the Command Center.

**INT. COMMAND CENTER BARRACKS - NIGHT**

Stressed beyond repair, Clay's broken... He fumbles through wires on the command post table -- as Thompson rushes in...

SGT THOMPSON  
Sir. What the fuck was that?

LT CLAY  
You got a fuckin' charger for this?

Thompson eyes GAVIN'S STUFF on the desk and realizes Clay's trying to find a cable to charge the TABLET -- because...

SGT THOMPSON  
You didn't burn that stuff?

LT CLAY  
Gonna give it to higher, let them decide how to handle it... She pulled a fuckin' gun on us, Dave.

In a fit of exhaustion, Clay shoves everything off the desk.

LT CLAY (CONT'D)  
God-fucking-dammit!

He sits. Reveals a fragility he refuses to show the others.

LT CLAY (CONT'D)  
She can write all the articles she wants about me, but when she comes after my guys-- I won't let her come for my guys...

Thompson hands Clay a charger -- it fits. Clay LAUGHS...

LT CLAY (CONT'D)  
Fuck, Dave. Why didn't you tell me about all this shit?

Ashamed, Thompson doesn't have an answer.

**CUT TO:**

**OPERATION FIRE AVALANCHE: DAY 49**

**INT. GUARDPOST - NIGHT**

Chang's behind the 50-cal, rocking back and forth, his stare is vacant. No one's home. Stress and trauma have taken him.

He grabs a DUFFLE BAG -- something wet inside SATURATES the cloth -- and... He climbs out the front of the Guardpost...

**EXT. OUTPOST DAVIDSON - NIGHT**

With a serene momentum, he navigates past the WIRE, weaponless, carrying just the SOAKED DUFFLE -- floating into...

**THE WOODS**

Chang hangs the duffle on a tree, it's drenched contents, roughly the size of a basketball, DRIP onto the dirt -- as...

CHANG  
It's all for you...



He smiles and leaves...

**INT. SNAKE EATERS' BARRACKS - NIGHT**

Weaver wakes without moving -- eyes suddenly wide open. Disoriented by profound darkness -- somehow peaceful...

Rain pitter-patters on the plywood creating an insulate ambience that's cozy -- womb-like -- when...

She registers she's zip-tied to a top bunk -- not her bunk, Jacques' -- she pulls at the restraints -- when suddenly...

CHANG (O.S.)

Red Dragon! Red Dragon! Red Dragon!

Lights flip on. Frantic, Gibbs bolts for the door -- as...

WEAVER

Leon!

He stops, eyes Weaver's restraints... Leaves anyways...

WEAVER (CONT'D)

Fuck!

**EXT. OUTPOST DAVIDSON - INSIDE THE WIRE - NIGHT**

Gibbs rushes into the rain -- right as... Thompson, Jacques, and Clemente race out of the Command Center Barracks...

ALL STOP DEAD IN THEIR TRACKS -- because...

Chang is losing his shit -- because...

Hanging in front of them is...

The HEADLESS, FIELD-DRESSED BODY of Lieutenant Clay...

Splayed open -- just like the goat -- his vacant body cavity exposed, organs and entrails in a neat pile below.

Aghast looks of horror and shock -- only interrupted by...

A HORRIBLE YELLING behind them... They all turn to SEE...

Emerging from the fog, The Blind Shepard stumbles through the East Gate... He's soaked in blood... Hysterical... Petrified...

All weapons train on him -- and...

JACQUES

Hands! Hands you motherfucker!

**INT. SNAKE EATERS' BARRACKS - NIGHT**

Restrained, Weaver glances around -- the room is empty...

WEAVER

Hey! Hey! What the fuck is going on?  
You can't leave me in here! Heyyy!

And then... Something WET lands on Weaver's face...  
Confused... She searches for the source -- and notices...

DROPS OF BLOOD dripping from the BUZZING overhead BULB...

*What... The... Fuck...*

Horrified, she squirms to avoid the... DRIP! DRIP! DRIP!

The bulb's BUZZING intensifies -- and... POP! It EXPLODES...

But instead of darkness... The bulb's filament flickers,  
rapidly strobing with an awful red glow. Giving barely  
perceptible strobes of sight in the room...

DARKNESS. RED LIGHT! DARKNESS. RED LIGHT! DARKNESS. RED LIGHT!

Pure dread -- and then... CRRRRRRRRRRFFFFFFFFTTTTTT!

Weaver cranes her neck back, an impossible angle, too SEE...

The duct tape frame around the mural on the wall is PEELING  
OFF and then a horrible SNORE-LIKE GURGLING -- because...

Somehow the SILHOUETTE of the ELONGATED FIGURE is climbing  
out of the mural on the wall... Weaver violently flails...

WEAVER (CONT'D)

Help! Help! Somebody help!

**EXT. OUTPOST DAVIDSON - INSIDE THE WIRE - NIGHT**

The Soldiers creep toward the Blind Shepard, hysterically  
SCREAMING in Pashto -- a language no one understands...

GIBBS

Show us hands motherfucker!

The Shepard just SHOUTS... Flailing. Frantic. Inconsolable.

Gibbs has had enough, he charges -- as...

What follows is brutal to watch because the Blind Shepard has  
no idea to brace for the butt stock of the M4 that Gibbs  
SLAMS into his mouth... It's vicious, barbaric -- as...

Gibbs repeatedly SMASHES his gun into the Shepard's face.

GIBBS (CONT'D)  
 You mother-fucking-piece-of-shit!  
 I'll fuckin' kill you!

Unhinged, Gibbs will kill this Shepard -- unless...

SGT THOMPSON  
 Popcorn! Fuckin' stop!

Thompson pulls Gibbs off the Shepard...

But Gibbs isn't done -- he's lost it -- going ballistic, refusing to be restrained... Flailing... Spit flying...

SGT THOMPSON (CONT'D)  
 Calm down, Leon!

GIBBS  
 He fuckin' killed him! He killed  
 Clay! He killed our Lieutenant!

Gibbs slams his head back into Thompson's face -- Thompson's nose explodes with blood, dropping him to a knee... Gibbs charges the Shepard again -- when...

Jacques tackles him -- and... Pretty soon they're rolling in the mud -- exchanging brutal punches -- until...

Jacques gets positioning and strangles Gibbs -- *will he kill him?* -- when suddenly... Clemente tackles Jacques. And now, somehow, Clemente and Jacques scuffle -- allowing for...

Gibbs again goes for the Shepard and Thompson again for Gibbs.

It's absolute madness... Men at their absolute worst...

All the while... Chang serenely subdued, watches.

#### **INT. SNAKE EATERS' BARRACKS - NIGHT**

In the horrible rave from hell -- RED LIGHT! DARKNESS -- Weaver's head is arched back, looking upside down to SEE...

Shuttering through movements -- as if frames are dropped -- the SILHOUETTE of the ELONGATED FIGURE settles in the room...

WEAVER  
 What are you? What do you want?

It's only answer -- the CHOKED GURGLING noise -- because... When the RED LIGHT strobos, Weaver notices...

Her son GAVIN. A horrific walking corpse -- bruised and pocked with MORPHINE INJECTORS... So many... Jabbing in all angles. In dead blackened veins. It's awful.

At impossible speeds, *it* strobes between the horrific ELONGATED FIGURE and horrific OVERDOSED GAVIN...

It stalks toward her... Weaver thrashes...

SCREAMS BLOODY FUCKING MURDER!!!

WEAVER (CONT'D)  
HELLLP! HELLLLLLP ME!

Her sheathed NECK KNIFE slips out from under her shirt...

**EXT. OUTPOST DAVIDSON - INSIDE THE WIRE - NIGHT**

Back to the chaos of the soldiers...

Thompson's just zip-tied Gibbs' hands behind his back...

Enraged, he rips Jacques off Clemente and shoves an AMERICAN FLAG PATCH from his uniform sleeve in all their face -- as...

SGT THOMPSON  
Look at this! I said fuckin' look at it! ... We are soldiers in the 82nd Airborne, we do not fuckin' act like this! No matter how fuckin' bad it gets, we do not act like this!

Glimpses of composure and sanity return -- when...

SGT THOMPSON (CONT'D)  
Private! Radio higher, tell them we need a nine-line, air support, a fuckin' QRF, anything they can send!

Chang's unresponsive, doesn't take off -- until...

SGT THOMPSON (CONT'D)  
Chang! Right-fucking-now!  
(to Clemente)  
Doc! You check him out!

Doc goes to the Shepard -- now motionless, WHEEZING out breaths -- somehow his face is even more fucked up -- as...

GIBBS  
No! No! He killed L.T. And now we're just gonna help him?

JACQUES  
There's no fuckin' way that guy did that to L.T.

SGT THOMPSON  
Shut the fuck up. Both of you.

JACQUES  
Sarge... We gotta go.

SGT THOMPSON  
Help is coming.

JACQUES  
Look what happened to Clay because he  
wouldn't leave!

Furious, Thompson grabs Jacques by the collar...

SGT THOMPSON  
What the fuck was he supposed to  
do, Lyle!? He was having the  
nightmares. I'm having the fuckin'  
nightmares! But in the Army all  
that matters are orders, not  
fuckin' dreams... Clay kept it  
together because he was trying to  
be a good leader, he kept it  
together for you.

Jacques is startled by the outburst and the information.

**INT. SNAKE EATERS' BARRACKS - NIGHT**

The horrific strobing -- where...

So terrified, Weaver's only focus is on the neck knife, now  
in her hand, sawing at the zip-tie on her wrist -- as...

The snore-like GURGLING settles above her...

She can feel the horrid hot breath... So close... She  
glances... Wishes she hadn't -- because... Above her is...

Horrific Gavin, OVERDOSING -- yet somehow serene, reveling in it  
as a terrible mix of fluids convulse out of him onto Weaver.

Foam from the mouth, fluid from lungs, blood from everywhere.

It's grotesque... But he almost wears a diabolical smile. His  
lips practically nibble on her ear lobe -- as he exhales...

**HORRIBLE GAVIN**

Mooooooooooooooooooooo... . . .

Petrified, all Weaver can do is slice at the zip-tie on her  
wrist -- until... IT BREAKS... And then...

In one fluid motion, she sits up and swings the knife at...

NOTHING... All is normal... Lights are on... Room's empty...

Breathless with fear, Weaver cuts herself free.

**EXT. OUTPOST DAVIDSON - INSIDE THE WIRE - NIGHT**

Weaver explodes out of the barracks... Processes the insanity, then the nightmare sight that is Lieutenant Clay...

WEAVER

Oh my god!

SGT THOMPSON

Get back in the fuckin' hooch!

WEAVER

We need to leave right now!

SGT THOMPSON

You're a fuckin' detainee get back in the hooch!

WEAVER

Something's here. I saw it.

Thompson's had enough, he aims his pistol at her... Shocked Weaver surrenders hands, backs up -- as...

SGT THOMPSON

All you've done is cause fuckin' trouble, Weaver.

Chang races from the Command Center -- as...

CHANG

Sarge! Radios don't work. Neither does Weaver's sat phone.

SGT THOMPSON

What the fuck does that mean?

CHANG

Like, they work with each other, but nothing's callin' out.

SGT THOMPSON

Fuck. Fuck. Fuck...

At a loss Thompson paces... Thinking what to do next...

WEAVER

Dave, something is here.

JACQUES

She's right, Sarge! We've gotta go!

GIBBS

The Shepard did this!

JACQUES

Open your fuckin' white trash eyes!

Right then, Gibbs spits a bloody loogie in Jacques' face...  
Even with all the chaos, everyone's in shock -- until...

Jacques dives on Gibbs... Gibbs puts up a hell of a fight  
with his legs -- as...

Thompson dives back in to break it up...

And so does Weaver...

And so does Clemente...

A slop of blood, mud, and emotions...

All while Chang watches...

**TIME CUT:**

**EXT. OUTPOST DAVIDSON - INSIDE THE WIRE - NIGHT**

Everyone sits. Broken. Exhausted. Bloodied. Muddied.  
Dumfounded, vacant stares... When finally...

SGT THOMPSON

We need to leave... But we're doing  
it as a Squad... Together...

Thompson's met with nods... He positions behind Gibbs.

SGT THOMPSON (CONT'D)

I need you calm. Your brothers need  
you calm. Can you breakdown the .50  
and the .240 for us?

Gibbs nods. Thompson cuts him free. He goes to the Guardpost.

SGT THOMPSON (CONT'D)

Doc. How's the Shepard?

CLEMENTE

Pretty fucked up. Lacerations all  
over, must have come back through  
the wire, but he's stable.

SGT THOMPSON

Private. Can you do a quick sweep  
and see if you can find the head.

CHANG

What?

SGT THOMPSON

Lieutenant Clay's head...

Chang holds for an astonished BEAT... *Seriously?*

SGT THOMPSON (CONT'D)

Now.

Chang scurries around the outpost... Looking for a head...

SGT THOMPSON (CONT'D)

Chief, Doc. On me.

Jacques and Clemente follow Thompson to Clay. Thompson unrolls a body bag and hands out gloves...

SGT THOMPSON (CONT'D)

Every last piece of him goes home.  
Understood?

Reluctant nods. They delicately put Clay in the body bag.

Chang trots over, almost fighting a smile. *That has to be an awkward discomfort...* Right? He practically chuckles out...

CHANG

Sarge, I just can't seem to find  
the darn thing...

#### INT. GUARDPOST - NIGHT

Among broken down weapons, Gibbs scans the fog and rain with the thermal scope -- no heat signatures... Thompson climbs in.

SGT THOMPSON

Anything out there?  
(Gibbs shakes his head)  
Popcorn, Clay's our brother, our  
priority. We can't carry two casualties  
outta here. You feel me?

Gibbs quivers with rage...

SGT THOMPSON (CONT'D)

We're restraining the Shepard in  
the hooch. He will not get away  
with this.

#### INT. SNAKE EATERS' BARRACKS - NIGHT

Jacques tightens a final zip-tie... The unconscious Shepard is firmly secured to a chair.

#### EXT. OUTPOST DAVIDSON - THE EAST GATE - NIGHT

Everyone's wearing headsets and night vision, ready to leave.



GIBBS  
 Fuck... My night vision just died.  
 I'm grabbing a battery.

Gibbs momentarily disappears into the Snake Eaters' Barracks.

Thompson hands Weaver a PISTOL and a MEDIC BACKPACK...

SGT THOMPSON  
 Clay never burned Gavin's stuff.  
 It's all in the bag...

A wave of shock and emotion, Weaver examines the bag... She hugs Thompson -- not fitting for the moment -- as... Gibbs emerges with working NODs... And with that...

Thompson, Gibbs, Chang, and Jacques grab a corner of the body bag. 200 pounds of sliding dead weight... Slow going -- as...

At point, Clemente pushes open the wire -- and... What's left of Mongoose Squad tactically files off the outpost...

Pausing just beyond the wire to take in Davidson one last time.

CHANG  
 Fuck that place...

A communal nod -- and then... They turn to face the night...

SGT THOMPSON  
 Doc. You're our eyes. NODs can't do  
 shit in this...

Ahead, Clemente scans the night with the PAS-13 thermal scope -- the only optics that can still see in fog and rain...

They make it about 50 meters -- when Chang's section of the body bag slips, unevenly distributing a mess of human slop.

CHANG  
 Fuck. Sorry.

The men redistribute their Lieutenant's body bag -- while...

CLEMENTE  
 Sergeant, I've got a weird heat  
 signature ahead.

#### **CLEMENTE'S PAS-13 SCOPE POV**

An INFRARED HEAT SIGNATURE that can't make up its mind...

It's small, it's big, it's intense, it's faint...

An amorphous orb that moves at impossible speeds. Until it doesn't. Until it's not amorphous -- until...

*It's a person, no an animal, a monkey, no a child, and then THE ELONGATED FIGURE... And suddenly it's amorphous again...*

CLEMENTE (CONT'D)

I got no fuckin' idea what I'm looking at. Maybe an animal or something.

SGT THOMPSON

You get a PID, you engage.

The signature dissipates into a speckled mist -- as...

CLEMENTE

Whatever I was seeing is gone!

Suddenly... Something in the body bag KICKS... They startle.

GIBBS

What the fuck!

And then... The *INCOMING ALARM* erupts from within the fog.

But this version's slightly off, as if it's being played at a carnival in hell... Exchanged gazes of disbelief -- until...

JACQUES

Oh my god...

THE ALARM STOPS... A beat of silent dread -- and then...

Weaver hears that familiar awful DEATH RATTLE -- as if the devil's choking on it's breath... And it finally hits her...

The horrid GURGLED CLICKING sound this thing makes is THE SOUND OF GAVIN OVERDOSING... Taunting and horrific...

CLEMENTE

What the fuck is that?

The breath is taken out of Weaver as she slowly backs up...

WEAVER

We need to get back to the outpost.

Suddenly... The SILHOUETTE of the ELONGATED FIGURE flashes in the fog... Then it's gone -- if you blinked you missed it.

GIBBS

Jesus-fucking-Christ! Something's fucking there!

CLEMENTE

Nothing on infrared!

Somehow it's all around them -- skittering through the fog, the haunting MOAN is omnipresent.

Heads and guns swivel wildly to keep up -- everyone's terrified, except Chang -- he wears an ear pushing smile.

SGT THOMPSON

You fuckin' see it you shoot it!

And then it settles... That awful GUTTURAL MOAN...

Paralyzed with fear, Weaver and the men watch -- as...

Through the mist we see a HEAD, bobbing, as if someone were walking toward them -- but the body's obscured by fog.

Weaver squints because the head looks an awful lot like...

JACQUES

Is that Clay? Is that L.T?

SGT THOMPSON

No fucking way...

LT CLAY

*Alright fellas... Pull back. Grab an MRE. Hydrate. Get outta the sun.*

But something's deeply wrong -- the voice is off, and lips didn't move when he talked -- and then...

LT CLAY (CONT'D)

*Hydrate. Get outta the sunnnnnnn...*

Gravity takes over, because whatever invisible force is holding up the head in no more -- as suddenly...

CLAY'S SEVERED HEAD DROPS FROM THE ETHER, rolling forward.

GIBBS

Holy fuck!

Finally... The ELONGATED FIGURE, ten feet tall, with its GUTTURAL MOAN holds in the shadows just long enough for...

Weaver pulls the trigger on her PISTOL -- and...

CLICK! CLICK! CLICK! CLICK! CLICK!

In disbelief, she watches as the rest of the men slide fingers over triggers -- and...

CLICK!CLICK!CLICK!CLICK!CLICK!CLICK!CLICK!CLICK!CLICK!CLICK!

They unholster sidearms -- CLICK! CLICK! CLICK! CLICK! CLICK!

None of the guns work! And in the melee of aghast CLICKS...

Weaver notices Chang marching forward... Pistol in hand -- SERENE -- he positions right behind Clemente, aims -- and...

WEAVER  
JAMES NOOOOO!

BANG! He fires a shot in Clemente's head, spraying brains in the dirt... The Squad's stunned, in disbelief -- as...

Chang drops to his knees -- surrendering to *whatever's* in the fog... Honoring it... Excitedly muttering...

CHANG  
Take me to hell... Take me to hell... Take me to hell... Take me to hell... Take me to hell...

Suddenly... Monkeys looming in the trees above shake with an unnatural vigor... Like they're about to physically explode with excitement... THUMPING and DRUMMING on tree trunks...

WEAVER  
Run!!!

The Squad runs for the outpost.

The fog somehow follows -- swallowing Chang -- biting at the heels of Weaver and the Soldiers as they gallop under gear.

Gibbs reaches the wire first, pulls it open, the men rush up the muddy hill... Weaver's almost there -- when...

A force trips her -- and... As if there's an invisible rope around her ankle, pulls her back.

SCREAMING, clawing at the mud, she exchanges one last look with Thompson before she disappears into the grey -- as...

Without hesitation, Thompson runs back for her... Vanishing into the mist... A BEAT OF UNKNOWN -- until...

Thompson emerges... Dragging a terrified Weaver by the straps of her ballistic vest, pulling against the force -- as...

WEAVER (CONT'D)  
Something has me!

Jacques and Gibbs slide down the knoll and help, adding just enough strength to counteract the force -- and...

Together they pull Weaver onto the hill -- when suddenly...

The fog stops...

Like there's a forcefield at the hill's threshold...

A breathless slop of mud they all stare into the ominous fog.

JACQUES  
Maybe it can't come up here!

Suddenly... A trip flare erupts from the fog spraying a hellish red flame into the night. Eyes widen -- as...

Another flare goes off... And other... Until all the flares surrounding the outpost are spewing into the night...

For an instant, Weaver wonders if this is hell -- and then...

BANG! A potshot kicks up mud next to them...

BANG! Another shot -- and...

Weaver looks to the fog, Chang emerges -- naked -- crude renditions of the ancient symbology carved all over his body.

He looks insane, marching for them with his pistol.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

They scramble up the hill as potshots dance all around them -- clambering behind the Hesco walls, grabbing any available weapons -- a pickaxe, a shovel, a golf club -- as...

CHANG

Soon you'll see, we are nothing!  
Humanity is nothing!

Deranged, Chang's about to step onto the knoll -- when...

The same force that grabbed Weaver, grabs him.

Confused, Chang turns to the pulling force -- nothing's there, but a faint glimpse of THE FIGURE in the shadows...

Weaver's eyes grow wide, perplexed -- watching as...

Chang FIRES errant rounds as all of his limbs freeze in place -- held by the unseen power...

Something pulls around his neck -- strangling...

He struggles against the nothingness -- when suddenly...

His gun wielding hand is RIPPED OFF... Then, his other arm...

Chang -- a torso and legs -- falls to the mud...

Unbelievably, a smile consumes his face as he erupts in a fucked-up mix of ELATION and AGONY -- and...

CHANG (CONT'D)

We're going to hell! We're going to  
hell! We're going to hell!

Weaver and the Squad are horrified, in disbelief -- as...

Chang sits up... A vacant stare, yet somehow he's loving all of this... He's practically singing...

CHANG (CONT'D)  
We're going to hell! We're going to hell!  
We're going to hell!

And then... The invisible force slowly drags him -- at an unsettling pace -- toward the fog... Leaving a wake of blood and insides, like a human slug.

A helpless meatbag -- Chang smiles at the heavens as his limp head drags over rocks -- almost taunting God when he says...

CHANG (CONT'D)  
We're going to hell... We're going to hell...

He disappears into the grey mist -- and...

The trees ERUPT and SHAKE with a diabolical SWELL of MONKEYS.

It's horrific... The terrified Squad rushes into...

#### INT. GUARDPOST - NIGHT

At a fever pitch, Gibbs and Thompson breakdown weapons and radios -- while... Weaver scans through Gavin's journals...

SGT THOMPSON  
(into radio handset)  
Test... Test...

Test... Test... ECHOES out of another radio handset...

SGT THOMPSON (CONT'D)  
No signal's leaving...

Jacques files in with an assortment of makeshift weapons -- a folding pick shovel, a hammer, a hatchet...

JACQUES  
It's all gone. Besides knives, these are the only things that even slightly resemble a weapon.

Gibbs is utterly exhausted -- unnatural dark circles under his eyes, his hands shake violently...

GIBBS  
Firing pins are gone too. This could have taken days...

JACQUES  
So it was Chang?

WEAVER  
It's whatever the fuck is out there.

GIBBS  
Chief, I'm sorry, man.

JACQUES  
It's all love brother.

Thompson stares at the sinister fog -- as...

SGT THOMPSON  
What's it fucking want from us?

Weaver flips through the journal -- passing DRAWINGS like....  
*A primeval corridor, ROWS of SKULLS decorate the space...  
The ELONGATED SHAPE screaming into a Soldier's open skull...  
A soldier breaking down weapons while other soldiers sleep...  
The familiar ancient symbol. Again, and again, and again...*

WEAVER  
It looks like Gavin knew something was  
taking control of him, telling him to  
kill his fellow soldiers....

All eyes train on Weaver -- she shows the sketches...

WEAVER (CONT'D)  
And that's why he...

SGT THOMPSON  
Sacrificed himself to save his  
brothers.

Weaver fights emotion... She returns to the journals...

#### **DRAWINGS**

*MY FIRST KILL... A cartoon-like boy dressed in oversized  
combat attire, above him, a demented, smiling UNCLE SAM...*

*AND... A caricature of a vacant-stare Soldier above A POEM...*

WEAVER  
Oh my god...  
(reads POEM)  
**KILLING WOUNDS THE SOUL**  
When you've seen what I've seen,  
the heart it aches.  
Because when a person kills,  
something in them breaks.  
Yet it's a man we think it makes.  
(MORE)

WEAVER (CONT'D)

But that's how it gets in, and the  
soul it takes.

WEAVER processes... All eyes intently on her...

WEAVER (CONT'D)

It's when you kill... That's how it  
got to Chang. The other kill out here  
must have been Gavin. And after you  
kill, that's how it gets in.

As Weaver talks, WE PUSH IN ON GIBBS...

He's subdued. Dead behind the eyes, vacantly following  
something in the Guardpost -- but nothing's there -- when...

**FLASH ON**

The Guardpost is blood-soaked... Everyone in it is dead,  
except for Gibbs, holding the pickaxe with a sinister gaze.

**BACK IN THE GUARDPOST [END FLASH ON]**

Gibbs snaps back from his trance... Blinks himself back to  
reality... No one saw the what he just saw...

GIBBS

Fuck it. This is all insane. Chief,  
let's go talk with that fuckin'  
Shepard, he could know something...

Gibbs eyes Thompson -- until...

SGT THOMPSON

Okay... We'll watch the fog.

Holding the pickaxe Gibbs shoves the hatchet into Chief's  
chest. They push out of the Guardpost...

Thompson focuses on the grey... Weaver on pages -- until...

SGT THOMPSON (CONT'D)

So if it can come into you if you  
kill, then how can you stop it?

They both ponder -- until...

SGT THOMPSON (CONT'D)

Hey, neither one of those assholes  
speaks Russian or Pashto.

Weaver nods, slings on the medic backpack with Gavin's stuff.  
Thompson hands her a hammer and radio.

SGT THOMPSON (CONT'D)

I'll be here. Radio if you need  
anything.



**EXT. SNAKE EATERS' BARRACKS - NIGHT**

On high alert -- Jacques and Gibbs shuffle across the outpost, Gibbs pauses right before the door -- when...

GIBBS  
Hey, Chief. Do you think we're going to hell, for what we've done?

There's a vacantness to Gibbs -- he's too cold, too detached.

JACQUES  
What the fuck are you talking about, Popcorn?

Gibbs doesn't dwell on the peculiar question, he pushes open the hooch door to blackness -- reaches for the light switch.

GIBBS  
Fuck. Lights don't work...

Jacques flips on a flashlight -- illuminating the Shepard, motionless in the corner, in the same chair we left him...

**EXT. OUTPOST DAVIDSON - INSIDE THE WIRE - NIGHT**

Oppressive darkness -- Weaver creeps, hammer in hand.

**INT. GUARDPOST - NIGHT**

Staring at the fog, Thompson tries a radio...

SGT THOMPSON  
Gulf main. This is OP Davidson...

STATIC...

Suddenly the fog stirs... And then it parts -- and...

An array of emotions dance across Thompson's face -- because...

A 3-YEAR-OLD GIRL emerges -- this is his DAUGHTER, this is...

SGT THOMPSON (CONT'D)  
Vivian.

Transfixed -- he climbs out of the Guardpost... In total awe.

SGT THOMPSON (CONT'D)  
Viv? Sweetie...

With his folding pick shovel, Thompson floats down the hill.

**INT. SNAKE EATERS' BARRACKS - NIGHT**

Taking point, Jacques inches toward the restrained Shepard...

JACQUES  
Friend... No harm... Friend.

Jacques slowly turns the Shepard -- horrified when he SEES...

The Shepard's lifeless... His head's swollen, bleeding from the mouth, nose, and ears -- because...

There's a zip-tie fastened around his neck -- HE'S DEAD...

JACQUES (CONT'D)  
Fuck... Popcorn, did you do this?

Suddenly... A KNIFE plunges into Jacques' chest!

He spins, totally stunned to see...

Gibbs rears back and plunges the knife again...

Again... And again... AND AGAIN!

The moment's calm -- no fight -- absolute betrayal...

Emotionless, Gibbs lowers Jacques to the ground, stares into frightened eyes and licks the bloodied knife -- as...

GIBBS  
Chief. You're Iroquois brother.  
Gana'dagwëni:io'geh.

NOTE: Gana'dagwëni:io'geh is how Iroquois refer to themselves.

They hold the gaze as the blood and life spills from Jacques.

When suddenly -- THUD!

Weaver clocks Gibbs in the head with the hammer. He goes down -- dazed -- before he springs to life and tackles her.

They tussle in the darkness when Gibbs gains positioning.

Bigger. Stronger. He straddles Weaver and starts choking...

Struggling for air, Weaver kicks and writhes. Her hands claw, it's primal. Blood from the hammer-blow drips on her -- as...

GIBBS (CONT'D)  
I have seen the dark universe yawning  
and if I'm mad, it is his mercy!

**EXT. OUTPOST DAVIDSON - HILL THRESHOLD - NIGHT**

Catatonic, Thompson moves for his daughter...

But it's not her, not even close -- it's a fucked up rendition of a toddler... Thompson doesn't seem to care...

VIVIAN  
Daddy. You left me all alone...

Vivian's voice is haunting -- utterly empty...

Tears pour down Thompson's face... He disarms himself, dropping the pick shovel, unsheathing and dropping his knife -- while...

**INT. SNAKE EATERS' BARRACKS**

Weaver flails -- all but lost the fight -- her hands desperately search the darkness, for anything -- when...

She finds the HAMMER -- and...

WHAM! Smashes Gibbs in the face...

She scrambles for the door -- when... Gibbs grabs her backpack -- Gavin's stuff -- she slithers free from the straps, forced to leave the bag...

**EXT. OUTPOST DAVIDSON - HILL THRESHOLD - NIGHT**

About to step off the knoll -- when...

WEAVER  
DAVE!

Weaver's voice tears through the night, piercing Thompson's trance. He spins to see her frantically rushing from the hooch -- face covered in Gibbs' blood -- as she yells...

WEAVER (CONT'D)  
Dave! It's in Gibbs!

Thompson looks to the fog -- Vivian is gone... He sprints up the knoll, gets to Weaver -- right as...

Gibbs bounds out of the Barracks -- holding the pick axe -- blood spilling -- he looks fucking psychotic.

Weaponless, Thompson and Weaver run for the Command Center.

**INT. COMMAND CENTER - NIGHT**

They slam the door shut -- right as... BANG! BANG! BANG!

Gibbs kicks at the flimsy plywood -- while...

Thompson wedges himself between a bunk and the door, legs off the ground, he's uses all strength to hold it shut -- as...

SGT THOMPSON  
Get a weapon!

Weaver tears through the hooch -- desperately searching...

Suddenly... SILENCE -- somehow worse than the BANGING...

Weaver flashes a bottle of lighter fluid... Thompson nods, reaches in a pocket for his lighter -- when...

SMASH! The pickaxe EXPLODES through the top of the door -- above Thompson's shoulder -- creating a hole just big enough for Gibbs' matter-of-fact face to look in and assess...

GIBBS  
Hey-ah Sarge, next one's gonna hurt... You feel me?

Thompson tosses his lighter to Weaver and braces -- as...

WHAM! The pick explodes back through the door -- this time ripping through Thompson's lung and out his chest...

Sucking all his air, pinning him to the door like a floundering donkey tail. His feet flail for the floor as he helplessly swats at eight inches of steel impaling his chest.

CRASH! An explosion of plywood splinters as Gibbs charges through Thompson and the door.

In a flash -- Gibbs postures with the hatchet -- when he spots a small trashcan fire burning in the corner -- and...

Waiting on the top bunk, Weaver douses Gibbs with lighter fluid and kicks him into the flames...

He erupts into a RAGING INFERNO...

#### **EXT. OUTPOST DAVIDSON - INSIDE THE WIRE - NIGHT**

Weaver drags Thompson from the burning Barracks -- ripping down sandbags to collapse the exit behind her...

As she pulls Thompson to safety, her gaze catches rainwater flowing under the plywood board -- the hole where they buried bones months ago -- now a sewer into hell.

Her focus returns to Thompson -- faint breaths -- blood bubbling from his chest -- when unbelievably, she hears...

The horrible sound of a fire extinguisher inside the Hooch...

Weaver hurries for...

**THE SNAKE EATERS' BARRACKS**

She grabs the medic bag -- with Gavin's stuff and a radio -- she also takes a set of night vision goggles -- and... Rushes out of the hooch -- as...

**EXT. OUTPOST DAVIDSON - INSIDE THE WIRE - DAY**

Impossibly, it's daytime. Everything's the same -- BUT DIFFERENT.

It's a different fort... From a different era... Now occupied by TALIBAN SOLDIERS, circa 1980s... Lounging. Ghostlike...

They're in the process of beheading imprisoned RUSSIAN SOLDIERS. It couldn't be more casual, matter-of-fact -- as...

Weaver takes in the surreal scene... Soldier's just glance at her between drags of cigarettes and ritualistic beheadings.

BANG! Gibbs' arm explodes out of the smoking Hooch stealing her attention -- and...

Just like that, the Soldiers are gone, but it's still daytime.

He focus returns to Thompson...

From the medic bag, she retrieves a four-inch decompression needle and jams it in. Welcoming a faint bubbled HISSSSSS...

Followed by... Weak, wet, agonal breaths -- when...

GIBBS (O.S.)  
I'mma comin' momma!

And then, Weaver hears the most chilling sound in the world.

Gibbs RHYTHMICALLY CHANTS the MILITARY CADENCE -- *Mama, Mama Can't You See*... Answering his own awful call...

GIBBS (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
*Momma, momma, can't you see...*  
*Momma, momma, can't you see. What*  
*the Army's done to me... What the*  
*Army's done to me.*

Weaver drags Thompson to the side of the Command Center and covers him with a tarp... She's done all she can.

She moves for the plywood board. Lifts it. Running water has pushed a clear path to the tunnel under the Hescos...

One last glance outside the wire to SEE the Elongated Silhouette presiding over the fog... Somehow feeding off the horror.

With no way out but down, Weaver starts digging through the muck of human remains, the dog carcass, it's brutal -- as...

GIBBS (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
*They took away my faded jeans...  
 They took away my faded jeans. Now  
 I'm wearing Army greens... Now I'm  
 wearing Army greens.*

Gibbs' torso is birthed from the smoldering Barracks -- and...

Weaver dives into the muddied hole of bones and crawls through the tunnel pulling the bag behind her...

Following a rope snaking down the passageway -- when... Like the water, she starts to slide -- and she drops into...

### **A CAVERN**

Weaver puts on Night Vision Goggles -- like looking through a straw, no peripheral vision -- illuminating the dark space in an unnatural, ominous GREEN -- and SEES...

A stockpile of all the MISSING WEAPONS and PARTS -- and...

What appears to be a SHRINE to the Elongated Figure -- familiar symbology all over the walls and burnt out flares.

Making it clear, Chang was coming down here...

Weaver tears through the missing weapons, uncovering MORTARS.

She shoves a MORTAR TUBE and ROUND in her backpack -- and...

Grabs a knife -- before assessing...

Two tunnels break off from the space... The first is flooded.

Weaver tosses remaining weapons into the water, making them unusable for Gibbs... When from above -- that awful chant...

GIBBS (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
*Whoa, I gotta go. Whoa, I gotta go.*

Weaver crawls into the offshoot

### **TUNNEL**

She pushes through the claustrophobic purgatory -- when suddenly... The ground drops... She falls deeper into...

### **A CORRIDOR**

Ancient, but intact. Reinforced by stone. Higher ceilings.

Able to walk -- she tries the radio as she pushes forward.

WEAVER

If anyone can hear me! OP Davidson  
has been overrun. We need help!

STATIC echoes as she enters a hollowed-out space...

The MUTED GREEN of her NODS make it feel as if the horrible  
underground world weren't real, especially when she SEES...

Walls lined with neatly stacked human bones... ROWS of SKULLS  
decorate the space... It's some type of unsettling, primeval

**CATACOMB**

Familiar -- from Gavin's journals...

**ON GIBBS**

Crawling through the TUNNEL. A flare illuminates his scorched  
face. He looks, well, insane. But he's loving every second...

GIBBS

*Momma, momma, can't you see...  
Momma, momma, can't you see. What  
the Army's done to me...*

**BACK WITH WEAVER [GREEN LIGHT]**

She pushes past the catacomb, into a corridor with connected  
rooms... She glances into a room -- startles when she SEES...

ANCIENT SOLDIERS -- antiquity armor, possibly from the  
MACEDONIAN ARMY -- sit up in cots, squinting in the darkness.

Terrified, she looks away... Only to glimpse Afghan  
MUJAHIDEEN SOLDIERS [1980s], traversing the halls -- when...

Just like that, they're all gone -- the space is again empty,  
eerily silent -- until...

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

*They put me in a barber's chair...  
They put me in a barber's chair.*

Weaver spots the distant glow of Gibbs' flare.

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

*I turned around, I had no hair... I  
turned around, I had no hair.*

She panics... Turns back into the room and searches the old  
living quarters for any help. Rotting cots. Blankets. Pots...

**ON GIBBS**

He enters the corridor -- but... Now when he SINGS...

It's met with a ghostly response from UNSEEN SOLDIERS...

The entire fucking corridor BELLOWS as if a unit from hell were marching toward Weaver...

GIBBS AND UNSEEN SOLDIERS  
*Momma, momma, can't you see...*  
**MOMMA, MOMMA, CAN'T YOU SEE!** *What*  
*the Army's done to me... WHAT THE*  
**ARMY'S DONE TO ME!**

**ON WEAVER [GREEN LIGHT]**

Under the horrible ROAR of CHANTS, Weaver waits terrified, gripping the knife to her chest -- until she remembers...

The MORTAR TUBE.

She pulls it from the backpack, eyes the LOW CEILING. Considers the consequences of firing in the confined space -- when...

The CHANTING stops...

Weaver pokes her head into the hall -- and SEES...

Gibbs, in darkness, slapping his now dead flare.

But he doesn't care... He tosses it aside -- no way of seeing in the dark -- and feels his way along the walls -- BLIND...

He continues his CHANT at an eerie WHISPER...

GIBBS  
*Momma, momma, can't you see... Momma, momma, can't*  
*you see. What the Army's done to me...*

Weaver watches -- Gibbs' in a half-crouch, arms out, gripping his pickaxe and knife, creeping forward -- she realizes...

HE CANNOT SEE HER.

She sets the MORTAR TUBE down and eases into the corridor... Sneaking toward Gibbs...

GIBBS (CONT'D)  
*I used to date a beauty queen... I used to date a*  
*beauty queen. Now I hug my M-16... Now I hug my M-16.*

Mere feet away, Gibbs is oblivious to Weaver's presence...

She flattens herself against the wall, arms spread like a high priestess, knife in hand, breath held -- watching as...

The sadistic Soldier slinks past -- so close, she can feel his hot breath as he inches by...



GIBBS (CONT'D)

*Momma, momma, can't you see...*

And despite all the insanity, Weaver can't help but notice...

THIS IS AN EXQUISITE MOMENT FOR GIBBS -- supreme exhalation...

GIBBS (CONT'D)

*What the Army's done to me...*

Now at his back, Weaver slides off the wall... And just like that, the hunted becomes the hunter... Weaver stalks her prey.

GIBBS (CONT'D)

*Whoa, whoa... Whoa, whoa. Whoa, I gotta go...*

In striking distance, she readies her knife -- when...

The radio in her backpack ERUPTS from the ROOM AHEAD.

Gibbs scurries against the wall, listening -- as...

SGT THOMPSON (O.S.)

Weaver, it's Thompson! He collapsed the tunnel but I'm coming! If you can hear me! Hang on! I'm coming!

Gibbs lights up -- drops the pickaxe -- wants the intimacy...

GIBBS

The strongest emotion of mankind is fear. And yours is rancid, Ms. Weaver.

He moves faster toward the room. Weaver stealthily keeps up... Closing the distance, stalking closer -- when...

GIBBS STOPS...

Something's not right -- and then... In the horrible green glow of Weaver's night vision... Gibbs spins around...

A knife in one hand, a flare in the other -- and...

HE'S SMILING -- because...

He loves this -- and... HE'S STARING AT WEAVER -- because...

HE KNOWS SHE'S THERE.

GIBBS (CONT'D)

Hi mommy!

And with that... Gibbs sparks the flare, SCREAMING a BLINDING LIGHT into Weaver's night vision illuminated world.

She stumbles back, dropping her knife, and by the time her NODS are off, all she can see is Gibbs above her...

He picks her up by the throat -- pinning her to the wall...

Weaver claws at Gibbs... Her feet struggle for footing, while her lungs struggle for air -- and...

He takes a deep inhale of her essence... Her fear is his bliss -- and then...

He plunges a knife into her gut -- sucking the air from her world.

Savoring the moment, he leans in as he licks his blood-soaked fingers -- and... In a voice that could be SATAN HIMSELF...

GIBBS (CONT'D)

You were a bad mother.

While Gibbs revels in the moment, Weaver's flailing hand lands on another flare tucked behind his back...

She grabs it -- and... FWOOOOOOSH! Strikes it... Spewing a stream of screaming flames into his face...

With a demonic SQUEAL, Gibbs skitters away -- as...

Weaver staggers into the ROOM where she left the backpack...

Gibbs readies the pickaxe -- just in time to SEE...

Every bit of fucking badass -- Weaver holds the MORTAR TUBE.

WEAVER

Go back to the hell you came from!

Gibbs scrambles for a room -- right as...

The HOLLOWED THUD precedes the BOOM! And...

BOOOOSHHHHH! THE MORTAR BLASTS THE CEILING ABOVE Gibbs...

The tunnel collapses rubble on him -- as...

Waves of dust and debris exhale onto Weaver...

A LONG BEAT of darkness -- when...

Weaver illuminates the space with a flare -- and SEES...

Any exit is blocked. She's trapped -- when suddenly...

From the debris, a faint glow of red, and with that... Gibbs' smiling face appears in a small gap...

GIBBS

*Momma, momma, can't you see...*

*Momma, momma, can't you see.*

(MORE)

GIBBS (CONT'D)  
*That you fuckin' missed me... That  
 you fuckin' missed me!*

Unbelievably, this thing found refuge in an ADJACENT ROOM...  
 He's got a long dig out -- but he doesn't mind...

And between THUDS of the pickaxe, Gibbs starts the CHANT back  
 up -- like a taunting chain gang from an insane asylum...

Defeated... Weaver can't believe it -- she hobbles -- into...

#### THE FINAL ROOM

She BOLTS the door shut -- barricades it with a cement table.

Leaving her with only SILENCE and the hellish glow of flares.

Suddenly... The switch to Weaver's panic and pain turns on.

Emotional. Physical. It's intense. Her focus shifts to the stab  
 wound... She rummages the medic bag for a PRESSURE DRESSING.

Her shaking, bloodied hands can't open the wrapper. Fear and  
 frustration consume. Finally, she finds a MORPHINE INJECTOR.

She sticks herself... Calms... And packs her wound.

She sits... Not a whole lot left to do but accept her fate.

She takes out Gavin's JOURNALS. Rubs them. Flips through pages.

With context, the drawings are that much harder to look at --  
*her son was being tormented by this thing* -- and then...

Weaver grabs the TABLET... Opens the videos and notices...

A re-edit of the end of deployment compilation -- titled...

MOM -- EDIT

She hits PLAY -- and...

Immediately SMILES because the accompanying music is Stevie  
 Nicks' *LANDSLIDE* -- and then...

Her smile gives way to pure emotion -- because...

The edit is the complete opposite of the heavy-metal-laden,  
 blow-shit-up-machismo, post-deployment video from before.

This has heart... It's authentic... It's human...

She SEES -- under the hauntingly beautiful soundtrack -- a  
 portrayal of the other side of war, of why soldiers fight...

A visual exploration of brotherhood -- of boys -- men -- in the woods, depending on each other...

Joking. Laughing. Wrestling. Dancing. Singing. Crying. Hugging. Bleeding. Saving. Fighting. Dying. Living.

Experiencing the unspeakable -- but doing it TOGETHER...

Enamored. Every emotion dances across Weaver's face -- as...

The video closes with a dirtied and exhausted GAVIN DAVIDSON, 19 -- as the SOLDIER BEHIND THE CAMERA asks...

SOLDIER BEHIND THE CAMERA (O.S.)  
So, Davidson, tell me again, why do we do this shit?

Gavin glances up from sketching -- a light smile -- because every ounce of him believes it when he says...

GAVIN DAVIDSON  
For our brothers...

The video freezes on Gavin's smiling face...

Weaver's tears fall onto the broken screen as she runs her fingers over her son... It's heart wrenching. It's Beautiful.

The closure she needed... But it's shattered by...

THAT AWFUL FUCKING CADENCE spews down the hall.

GIBBS (O.S.)  
*Momma, momma, can't you see...*

Reinvigorated, a feral determination grabs ahold of Weaver...

She unsheathes the pink neck knife...

**INT. HALLWAY - DAY**

A red flare illuminates, Gibbs creeps with the pickaxe...

GIBBS  
*Momma, momma, can't you see...*

He pokes his head in an adjacent room -- empty -- when... The door at the end of the hall swings open...

HEAVY METAL MUSIC from the original deployment video plays.

A grin consumes Gibbs... He readies his knife and stalks toward the door... Exhaling one final sinister...

GIBBS (CONT'D)  
*Momma, momma, can't you see...*

Ready to play -- Gibbs jumps into the doorway...

A confused BEAT -- no sign of Weaver -- because...

She's positioned just off the door with the neck knife pointed downward -- *just like Jacques showed her* -- and...

STAB! STAB! STAB! STAB! STAB! STAB! STAB!

Weaver shanks Gibbs' torso and groin!

ARGHHHHHHHHH! He ROARS with agony and drops -- as...

Rabid, Weaver pounces. Readying the fatal blow -- when...

She realizes... Gibbs is smiling... Enjoying this... Wants her to kill him... It's unsettling... Feels all wrong...

She stops... Scrambles to a corner -- while...

A bloodied Gibbs props himself up, even tosses her his knife.

GIBBS (CONT'D)  
 You wanted to know what it's like  
 to be a soldier in the US Army?  
 Well, go on now. Soldiers kill.

Weaver takes a moment. Eyes the knife, then Gibbs, just staring at her behind a fucked up bloody smile -- and then...

She grabs the radio...

WEAVER  
 Sergeant... Are you there?

SGT THOMPSON (O.S.)  
 Weaver! I'm almost through...

WEAVER  
 Hey, Thompson... There's ah--  
 nothing coming out of here.

SGT THOMPSON  
 Hang on, Weav. I'm coming...

WEAVER  
 Sergeant! Enough! Nothing is coming  
 out of here.

SGT THOMPSON  
 I won't leave a soldier behind.

WEAVER

Good. Cause I'm a journalist. So you listen to me David, it's time for you to stop fighting. You've done your part. It's time to go home. It's time for you to go to your daughter.

Weaver stares right at Gibbs -- as...

WEAVER (CONT'D)

Because nothing is coming out of here. Do you feel me, Dave?

A LONG BEAT OF SILENCE...

We can hear the gratitude on his voice when he says...

SGT THOMPSON (O.S.)

I feel you, Mona. I feel you...

Weaver throws the radio's battery down the hall -- and...

She lights a cigarette, relishes in a drag... Holds an inquisitive gaze on Gibbs -- until...

WEAVER

I can already feel you in me.

Gibbs smiles... She's right... It's only a matter of time...

And then... She smiles back -- as... She opens the medic backpack and grabs... THE MORPHINE AUTO-INJECTORS...

A contemplative BEAT -- and then...

Weaver stabs herself with an INJECTOR... And then another...

JUST LIKE HER SON DID... SACRIFICING HERSELF FOR THOMPSON.

Weaver continues to stab herself -- until suddenly...

GIBBS

Mom! Stop! It's me!

This is Gavin's voice. Pitch perfect... Weaver freezes...

GIBBS/GAVIN

I was in a darkness. But I'm back.

GIBBS/GAVIN studies his body as if were brand new...

GIBBS/GAVIN (CONT'D)

Mom. I can't believe it. You saved me.

Weaver trembles with disbelief -- as...

WEAVER  
Gav?

GIBBS/GAVIN  
Yeah?

WEAVER  
I'm sorry I couldn't protect you.

GIBBS/GAVIN  
It's okay. I'm okay. Let's patch me up. We can leave this hell. Together.

With the medic bag, Weaver staggers toward Gibbs/Gavin...

GIBBS/GAVIN (CONT'D)  
I've missed you, Mom...

She looms for a BEAT... Because it takes everything to say...

WEAVER  
My son is dead.

And with that... Weaver stabs Gibbs/Gavin with a fatal blow.

While the life leaves his body, she sits... Takes out the TABLET -- and plays...

MOM -- EDIT

Face illuminated by the video her son made, Weaver enjoys her last cigarette as Stevie Nicks' *Landslide* soothes -- and...

#### **A SERIES OF MEMORY FLASHES**

*Baby Gavin in Weaver's arms... She's glowing, forever changed. Being embraced by her husband, TOM...*

*Young Gavin smiles without his front teeth...*

*Weaver smashes a birthday cake in Adolescent Gavin's face...*

*Tom teaches Young Gavin to ride a bike...*

*She fixes Gavin's hair before prom, he messes it up again...*

#### **BACK TO SCENE - THE FINAL ROOM**

Weaver's lost in her memories...

Finally at peace... The morphine is doing its job...

#### **A FINAL MEMORY FLASH**

*An unknown time and place... Just Weaver and Gavin, 19...*

*He takes her hand, welcoming her... She fixes his hair, he messes it up again. They share a look of pure adoration...*

*The memory is hauntingly beautiful...*

*Maybe it's not a memory after all...*

**BACK TO SCENE - THE FINAL ROOM**

Weaver's head is slumped... The cigarette dangles limply...  
The tablet falls from her hands...

Like mother...

Like son...

**EXT. WOODS - DAY**

Thompson's outside the wire -- the Outpost in the b.g.

He's in the middle of a radio call -- but he's staring at...

The TEN FOOT ELONGATED SHADOW in the fog...

But as the fog dissipates so does the FIGURE, leaving behind...

An eerie knotted tree... THE KNOTTED TREE. GAVIN'S TREE.

Ten feet tall. Bare limbs somehow alive with movement.

Thompson stares incredulously -- when suddenly...

VOICE ON THE RADIO (O.S.)  
Sergeant. The coordinates you gave  
are right on top of the outpost!

SGT THOMPSON  
We've been overrun... They've  
breached the wire. No one's alive.

WE PULL BACK and SEE...

The desolate fort, isolated in the foreboding woods -- as...

Two Apache helicopters thunder into frame and erupt on the  
outpost with a conflagration of missiles and bombs...

Thompson eyes the PHOTO OF HIS DAUGHTER and walks...

**FADE TO BLACK.**

**THE END**