

"FOR ALL THOSE WHO MAKE THEIR LIVING OUTSIDE THE WIRE..."

FADE IN:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL GYM - DAY

A small group of TEENAGERS in MILITARY-UNIFORM eagerly listen to PRIVATE FIRST CLASS (PFC) KEVIN PECK, 21. They don't know his secret, that he's actually dressed illegally as a SERGEANT in ARMY DRESS BLUES. His all-American good looks, chest of MEDALS and Hollywood-like spiked hair belie the fact that PFC Peck is actually a fucking poser.

PECK

...So, Hollywood High, in conclusion, I'm living proof that military service in the Army can be fulfilling, rewarding, and a hell of a lot of fun. Are there any questions?

Hands go up. Peck points.

PECK

Yes?

An attractive LATINA, 16, stands. She's enamored with Peck.

LATINA CADET

Cadet-Sergeant Gonzalez, Sheik Battalion. What was airborne school like?

PECK

Well... You run a lot!

The JROTC Cadets burst into laughter.

PECK

No, uh... I thought it was fun, kind of a continuation of Basic and A-I-T. Like I said, I'm a Scout, right? A combat arms job - one of many jobs available in the Army, by the way - so I didn't find it any more difficult than Basic.

One thing I did notice, though...

(direct eye contact with  
Gonzales)

(MORE)

PECK (CONT'D)

Airborne females are hotter than other female soldiers. Just saying.

Gonzales blushes as she sits down. The Cadets sense the heat exchange and sound off. Peck smiles knowingly.

PECK

Next?

More hands.

PECK

Yes!

AFRICAN-AMERICAN CADET

Sergeant, Cadet-Lieutenant Turner, Sheik Battalion. I see you have the Combat Action Badge.

Peck glances at the ribbons on his chest.

PECK

Yes, for enemy contact.

CADET TURNER

For fighting the terrorists?

PECK

Yes. The infantry get a Combat Infantryman's Badge. The rest get a C-A-B.

CADET TURNER

Have you ever killed anybody?

The room goes silent. They wait for Peck's answer. Cadet Gonzales, expectant. Peck hesitates. A bead of SWEAT runs from his temple as his smile fades.

EXT. MALIBU BEACH - NIGHT

A beach CAMP FIRE. Moonlit waves break on the shore.

It's a small beach get-together. Three artsy, surfer couples (early 20's), shout in reaction to Peck's story.

LEON, an African-American surfer with a huge afro, tokes on a blunt.

LEON

What'd you tell his ass?

PECK

I gave him some bullshit about operational security and how I couldn't discuss bodycount, yadda-yadda-yadda.

Leon blows a smoke ring.

LEON

Nice.

Peck is dragged under a blanket by female arms. Leon taps his buddy's shoulder.

LEON

Yo, Kev...!

PECK breaks his kiss with his girlfriend, ALICIA BOWDEN (early 20s), an athletic surfer-girl. Peck looks almost civilian out of uniform, his hair free of styling gel. They both sit up, still wrapped in the blanket.

Peck sees the blunt.

PECK

Can't, bro'.

Alicia takes the blunt from Leon.

ALICIA

Hit him up in six months.

They watch her take a huge toke from it.

LEON

Damn, Alicia...! Okay, okay...

Peck laughs as she exhales and hands the blunt back.

PECK

That's why I love you, baby.

Alicia. A lusty gaze at Peck. Leon notices.

LEON

Aw, shit...

She drags Peck away from the fire.

PECK

We're out, homies.

LEON

I heard that!

INT. CAR - BACK SEAT - NIGHT

Peck, on top of Alicia. Sweat and hard breathing. They've just finished doing it. Peck smiles.

ALICIA

What?

He rests his forehead on hers. Part love, part exhaustion.

PECK

Still can't believe. Even after ten years... You're the girl next door.

ALICIA

You just love my tits.

He tries to blow it off with a sexy smirk. But then his eye contact drops to her chest.

ALICIA

Ah-hah...!

PECK

No...!

ALICIA

Fucker!

They both snicker. Peck gets dressed, but his eyes drift.

The UNIFORM he was wearing hangs at the window.

ALICIA sees him pause.

ALICIA

What?

PECK

There was this girl today. All wide-eyed and bedazzled as I lied to her. All of 'em in the palm of my hand.

Alicia pulls a HOODIE over her head then sits back to listen.

PECK

This shit was only supposed to be fourteen days, remember? First, home station recruiting, then a regular unit. It's been three fucking years. And in six months, I'm out already.

ALICIA

They kept you because you're a poster boy for this shit, Kevin. You're perfect!

PECK

I was fucking Airborne, Alicia. I could've gone to Ranger school. Instead, they put me in my supervisor's uniform and make me give speeches about shit I've never done.

ALICIA

I thank God you haven't done those things, Kevin. Serious shit. No P-T-S-D, no traumatic brain injury, all your arms and legs...

Eye lock. An intimate moment.

PECK

I wanted out of here. Fuck SoCal and all these fake-ass bitches! But no. I'm right where I started, a stone's throw from The Hills, in the same town of rich, self-righteous assholes living pointless lives.

And for what? The Army's been a total waste of time. I can't wait to get out.

Alicia studies him as Peck looks away.

PECK

I do love your tits, though.

She smacks the back of his head. Hard.

EXT. RUNNING TRACK - NIGHT

A line of SOLDIERS doing pushups before a line of SERGEANTS.

Sergeants count the repetitions quietly.

SSG BEECH

78, 79, 80, 81...

A huge African-American, COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR (CSM) LIST (40's), counts down a STOP-WATCH.

CSM LIST

5... 4... 3... 2... 1... STOP!

SSG Beech notes the score on a clip board.

SSG BEECH

Eighty-seven in two minutes. Not bad. Next!

Peck steps up. He kneels before SSG Beech. Beech is the same age as Peck, but his brow bears the weight of responsibility.

PECK

Morning, Sar'nt Beech. Your uniform is back in your locker.

SSG BEECH

Outstanding. Thanks--  
You shave this morning, Peck?

PECK

Oh... No, I had an all-nighter last night.

SSG BEECH

C'mon, man. You better fix that shit before Sergeant Major List sees you.

PECK

(embarrassed)  
Roger.

Peck places his hands on the grass.

CSM LIST

Remember! Two minutes! Do as many as you can! Get ready! Get set! Begin!

Peck pushes.

SSG BEECH

1, 2, 3, 4,...

THE STOP WATCH

CSM LIST

Thirty seconds has expired!

Peck pushes.

SSG BEECH  
40, 41, 42--

Peck goes to his knees.

SSG BEECH  
That's it? You still got over a  
minute.

PECK  
Forty-two to pass, right? Why  
stress myself?

SSG BEECH  
Why promote you, for that matter?

PECK  
I don't even know why I'm taking a  
P-T test. I'm out in six months,  
Sar'nt.

SSG BEECH  
(disgusted)  
We went to Basic together. Success  
or failure has always been your  
choice, Peck.

INT. ARMY RECRUITER OFFICE - DAY

In a cubicle, Peck surfs the internet for colleges. UC  
BERKELY is on his monitor.

SSG BEECH (O.S.)  
Peck! Stop what you're doing.

Peck closes the window.

SSG Beech approaches.

SSG BEECH  
You check your A-K-O lately?

PECK  
Negative.

Peck hits a short-cut on his keyboard.

A window pops up: ARMY KNOWLEDGE ONLINE (AKO)

SSG BEECH  
You've got orders, man.

PECK

Finally!

(singing)

Clear-ing pa-pers, bay-beh! Clear-  
ing pa-pers, bay-beh...!

SSG BEECH

No, guy. Deployment orders.

PECK

Yeah, right, Sar'nt.

SSG BEECH

I'm serious. I got 'em right here.

SSG Beech hands Peck the orders. Peck pours over it.

SSG BEECH

Fourth-I-D at Fort Carson for  
training... Then onto Kandahar--

Oof! You're going to the show.

PECK

I don't understand.

SSG BEECH

Stop-loss, man. The Army is  
retaining your services.

PECK

Negative, I'm getting out. This  
some kind of mistake.

SSG BEECH

You been in this recruiting station  
for almost three years. "At the  
needs of the Army..."? Remember  
that contract clause?

You're government property, Peck.  
They can do whatever the fuck they  
want to do.

PECK

This is bull shit! My three years  
are up. I'm going to the house.

SSG BEECH

Negative, Private. They're sending  
your ass to Afghanistan.

INT. AIKIDO DOJO - DAY

TWENTY AIKIDO STUDENTS stretch and warm-up on the MAT. Some practice their rolls, standing, tumbling forward, then standing again.

Through the action, PECK in a MANILA GI tied with a BROWN BELT. He warms up alone. He jumps up and down, shakes out his wrists.

His EYES. Distant. Affected by the news at work.

SENIOR STUDENT (early 30s) joins Peck on the mat.

SENIOR STUDENT  
Now or never, right?

PECK  
More than you know.

SENIOR STUDENT  
One shot, one kill?

PECK. Apprehension.

SENIOR STUDENT  
You'll do fine. We're all rooting  
for you.

PECK  
Thanks.

INT. AIKIDO DOJO/LOCKER ROOM

A line of GYM WALL LOCKERS. Quickly SHUFFLING FEET. LOCKER DOOR is SLAMMED open.

A DECAL on the door. An MMA logo with the tag "HURT".

Peck. Eyes red. Angry. Sweat runs down his face.

He stares bitterly.

TITLE: SIX MONTHS LATER

EXT. AFGHAN AIRSPACE - DAY

Twin chopper blades beat the air. A CH-47 CHINOOK HELICOPTER lumbers over the Hindu-Kush mountains, the western gateway to the Himalayas. Hot engine exhaust deforms the view.

INT. CHINOOK

A TAIL GUNNER, astride an open ramp, keeps watch over the rugged mountain-scape from behind his machine gun.

PECK, in full battle-rattle, sits alone in the chopper next to a pallet of cargo. Apprehension and fear on his face. He bounces his leg nervously.

EXT. FORWARD OPERATING BASE (FOB) CAROL/HELIPAD - DAY

The Chinook lands in front of three other parked Chinooks.

INT. CHINOOK

Peck unbuckles his harness.

EXT. FOB CAROL - CONTINUOUS

Clear of the tarmac, Peck looks around. A forklift removes the pallet of boxes and duffel bags from the bird. Behind the choppers, a wall of giant HESCO BASKETS. The wall, dotted with fortified GUARD TOWERS, encircles the entire FOB.

To the north, the direction they came from, open desert. To the south, two massive mountains towering over the FOB converge, creating a narrow valley.

Peck rubbernecks, taking in the scale of the place. His vulnerability hits him like a ton of bricks. A hand claps him on the shoulder. It's Tail Gunner.

TAIL GUNNER

Hey! You that scout we brought?

Peck nods.

TAIL GUNNER

The pallet's over there. Grab your shit and head over to the command post.

A PORTABLE BUILDING surrounded by TEXAS BARRIERS, 12-foot high reenforced concrete walls. Out front, a small, red and white flag on a wooden staff, a CAVALRY GUIDON.

PECK

That red and white guidon?

TAIL GUNNER

Yeah, that's the C-P. Welcome to  
FOB Carol. Now, move out!

PECK

Roger, sergeant.

Peck rounds the Chinook to the pallet and starts pulling his gear from the pile. CAPTAIN JACK (mid 20's, Asian) approaches across the hot tarmac looking for the Pilot.

Peck sees the officer coming, snaps-to and salutes.

PECK

Morning, sir!

CPT JACK

What the fuck? Drop that sniper  
check!

Peck drops his salute.

PECK

Sir?

CPT JACK

No fuckin' saluting. You trying to  
get me shot? Snipers, man. Enemy  
looks for that shit.

PECK

Sorry sir.

CPT JACK

New trooper, obviously?

PECK

Roger sir. P-F-C Peck.

CPT JACK

Straight from Basic?

PECK

Not quite, sir. Three years, home  
station recruiting.

CPT JACK

Three years? You're still a  
Private?

PECK

Unfortunately, sir.

CPT JACK

We'll have to fix that. You can be who you want to be, here. But it's a choice you have to make.

(changing the subject)

Listen, welcome to Charlie Troop, One-Ten Cav, a-k-a, Crazy Horse. This is the Tenth Cavalry, son. The Buffalo Soldiers? I'm Captain Jack, the C-0.

Peck listens at parade rest.

CPT JACK (CONT'D)

Weapon status is green on the FOB. Do NOT have a negligent discharge on my FOB. Weapons get cleared when you come in the wire, and they stay clear. Capiche?

PECK

Roger, sir.

CPT JACK

Okay, go on in. First Sergeant will hook you up with your platoon. I hope you stayed in shape on recruiting duty.

PECK

I didn't get too soft, sir.

CPT Jack sizes him up for a long moment.

CPT JACK

Gym's over there.

Jack moves on, addressing the Pilot.

CPT JACK

Hey, Paul...!

Peck stares down at the massive array of gear piled around his feet and adjusts his helmet.

PECK

(scoffs)

Fuckin' gym...

INT. GYM - DAY

ESTABLISH: The Gym. A 20'x20' area surrounded by 8-ft tall HESCO BASKET WALLS, covered by a tattered, desert camouflage net. Somewhere, GRUNTING, as someone works the weight pile alone. No spot, no nothing. One massive man... A SOLDIER squats 225.

EXT. FOB CAROL - DAY (INTERCUT)

Peck struggles with the weight of his gear. He's already wearing his OUTER TACTICAL VEST (OTV) with armor plates and ammo, but he also carries two full DUFFLE BAGS, one on his back and front, a MOLLE II RUCK SACK over one shoulder, an M-4 RIFLE over his right, and a smaller ASSAULT PACK atop the rear duffle, it's shoulder strap wrapped around his ADVANCED COMBAT HELMET (ACH) for support. He has difficulty walking under the load.

THE GYM: That same dude, benching now, the same, 225 pounds. Up down, up down, up down. Muscles jump and bulge. He pops sweat, cutting through the ever-present desert grime. Old tattoos, the diffuse blur of aging ink under the skin mark time and history: His left shoulder, a RANGER TAB, inked in faded black and gold. Underneath, SNIPER and AIRBORNE. Mottos from his younger days, "DEATH FROM ABOVE" and "SCOUTS OUT!"

OUTSIDE: Peck struggles toward the CP. He notices the scars of blast marks on some of the jersey barriers. Combat damage on vehicles and buildings. The not-so-distant hills loom like threats. Peck catches a toe and nearly sprawls.

GYM: Pull-ups. Same Soldier. We catch his face, a rictus of concentrated fury as he guts his way through his last set; 100% clench and explosiveness. This is SGT CHRISTOPHER KEEN.

Over his sweaty PT uniform, Keen dons an OTV with plates, ammo, and Camelbak, grabs his M4 CARBINE from a wall rack, and moves outside.

EXT. COMMAND POST - DAY

Peck drops his bags when he reaches the CP, almost falling over with the weight. ANGER. He slams his ACH down on his gear.

The Guidon flutters in the breeze. Red and white field, yellow crossed sabers in the center, a "1" on top, "10" below, and a letter "C" on the side. BATTLE STREAMERS adorn the staff. "OIF 01-02", "OIF 05-06", and others.

Recognition quiets him.

1SG HUNTER (O.S.)

Eh-hem...

An old man with a cigarette, FIRST SERGEANT HUNTER, leans his chair back in the shade of a Jersey barrier. He sets his lighter to the smoke. He's only 38, but looks like he's 50.

1SG HUNTER

You Peck?

PECK

Yes, First Sergeant.

1SG HUNTER

Welcome to Crazy Horse. You're going to first platoon, "The Renegades." Their tent's in back. Drop your shit over there and come on back. We'll get you in-processed.

Peck's expression drops.

INT. RENEGADE RANCH - DAY

KEEN'S SORROWFUL REFLECTION in a scratched STEEL MIRROR. A PHOTO OF KEEN AND A WOMAN juts from behind the mirror.

WIDER. Keen is dressing in front of an open wall locker. He's only wearing a towel and his DOG TAGS.

Peck struggles to enter the tent with his gear. He knocks over a plastic lawn chair just inside the door.

KEEN

--the fuck?

PECK

Sorry.

Peck piles all his gear just inside the door.

KEEN

New guy?

PECK

Roger, uh...

KEEN

Sergeant First Class--  
(corrects himself)  
Sergeant Keen. First squad leader.

Peck adds his vest to the gear pile.

KEEN

Hey. That what you do when a N-C-O  
talks to you?

PECK snaps to parade rest, barely concealing his eye roll.

PECK

Negative, Sergeant.

KEEN

The lieutenant and most of the  
platoon are out on patrol. The rest  
of the squad's doing P-T outside.  
Why don't you join 'em.

PECK

Top said I needed to come back and  
in-process.

KEEN

Even better.

PECK

Can I leave my weapon?

KEEN

(incredulous)

No, guy. Your weapon stays on you  
at all times. Outside the T-  
barriers, it's full battle rattle.  
That's latrines, gym, C-P, D-FAC,  
where ever.

PECK

Roger, Sergeant.

Keen turns back to his locker and hangs his towel while Peck  
remains at parade rest, motionless. Peck can play this game,  
too. Finally--

KEEN

Carry on.

Peck dons his gear - again.

EXT. RENEGADE RANCH - DAY

Peck rounds the corner of the tent.

CASTRO (O.S.)

Ho-lee shit...!

KNIGHT (O.S.)

Damn! Look at what the cat drug in!

SPC CASTRO, SPC KNIGHT, PFC MONROE, and CORPORAL (CPL) BAIRD  
(all, early 20s), just finished a set of push-ups.

PECK

Oh HELL no...!

Handshakes and man-hugs with Castro and Knight.

KNIGHT

Hey, Corporal Baird. This is the  
dude we told you about.

CASTRO

Nobody knew he had mad hand-to-hand  
skills.

KNIGHT

Especially Drill Sergeant  
Weathersby!

CASTRO AND KNIGHT

OHHHH...!!!

Castro and Knight high-five the memory.

BAIRD

This the dude put your Drill  
Sergeant in the hucklebuck?

KNIGHT

It was shock and awe, dude!

PFC MONROE isn't amused.

MONROE

What's your name?

PECK

Peck. Kevin Peck.

KNIGHT

PECKERWOOD--!

CASTRO

(imitating their Drill  
Sergeant)  
Come here, PECKERWOOD!

KNIGHT

Push faster, PECKERWOOD!

MONROE

Yeah? Let's see it. Your skills.

INT. AIKIDO DOJO - FLASHBACK - DAY

Peck, a sweaty, flushed mess, holds a kneeling seiza bow.

BACK TO SCENE

PECK.

MONROE (CONT'D)

Let's go. Right now.

CASTRO

Yeah!

KNIGHT

Fuck yeah. Show him, Peck.

The squad makes sparring room with Monroe and Peck in the middle.

PECK

I've gotta go in-process.

MONROE

Sure you do, Peckerwood.

KEEN (O.S.)

The fuck is this?

EVERYBODY snaps-to PARADE REST as Keen strides into the ring. The tension in the air is thick as Keen eyeballs Peck.

KEEN

Ain't you supposed to be at the fuckin' C-P?

PECK

Roger, Sergeant.

Peck struggles not to squirm under the hard, appraising glare.

KEEN

You trying to get me into character already?

PECK

Negative, Sergeant.

KEEN

When you get back, settle in. Get some rack-time. Un-fuck your shit so's to be useful to me and my squad.

PECK

Roger, Sergeant.

Keen gets close to Peck. Real close. Peck averts his eyes as Keen circles him, a shark on the hunt.

KEEN

Move the fuck out.

MONROE

Pussy-ass...

KEEN

Drop, Monroe!

Monroe drops to the front-leaning rest and knocks out push-ups.

MONROE

One, Sergeant. Two, Sergeant...

KEEN

The rest of you, get ready to roll. We got a mission.

KNIGHT

Where we off to, boss?

KEEN

(checks watch)  
Op-order's in five-mikes. You'll know soon as I do.

KNIGHT

It's going to be bad, isn't it?

KEEN

(to the squad)  
This whole year's gonna be bad, men. Better get used to it.

'Fuck's and low whistles all the way around. Keen claps his hands.

KEEN

Hurry up!  
(then)  
You keep pushing, Monroe.

INT. TROOP CP - NIGHT

Keen squeezes into the small, makeshift office, packed with SENIOR NCOs and LIEUTENANTS.

Sergeant FIRST CLASS (SFC) YANKEE (mid-30s, black) makes eye contact. Keen nods back.

SFC YANKEE  
(to CPT Jack)  
Okay, sir, Red is up.

CPT JACK  
That everybody then? Okay, cut the lights.

The lights go out. A video projector shines a DIGITAL TOPOGRAPHIC MAP on a PROJECTOR SCREEN.

CPT JACK  
Okay. We are here. As y'all know, we are fifty kilometers southwest of Jalalabad, which puts us seventy kilometers west of the Pakistani border, Khyber Pass, and Peshawar. In other words, gentlemen, we are deep in Injun country.

SFC YANKEE  
Don't you mean, deep shit, sir?

The Soldiers chuckle off the tension.

CPT JACK  
Our mission is to screen these mountains along this section of the Af-Pak border to prevent Taliban in-fill into Jalalabad. There's heavy IED activity leading into Jalalabad, turning our supply lines into Swiss cheese.

However, comma, we can't do shit until we secure ourselves. I'm sure y'all noticed the giant fucking mountains surrounding us?

The geniuses up at G-3 placed us in a perfect spot to get rained on from the high ground. Well, that ain't gonna happen on our watch, and here's what we're gonna do about it...

INT. RENEGADE RANCH - NIGHT

Peck lies on a COT, listening to an MP3 PLAYER. His duffel bags remain unpacked in a pile next to a WALL LOCKER.

Castro and Knight notice.

KNIGHT

Peck, what are you doing, man?

CASTRO

Better get that gear squared away.

KNIGHT

Sergeant Keen'll have your ass.

PECK

He told me to rest up.

KNIGHT

Work first, rest later.

PECK

I'm trying to go to Headquarters anyway.

CASTRO

Oh, Sergeant Keen's gonna love you, homes.

KNIGHT

He's gonna be your B-F-F. You thought Drill Sergeant Weathersby was bad?

CASTRO

Ain't got shit on Sergeant Keen, guey. He seen your hair yet?

KNIGHT

Tellin' you, this dude is hard-core. It's like his sixth time here.

CASTRO

Pinche, Rambo, guey. He keeps volunteering. Like, he's got a death wish or some shit.

PECK

I'm not supposed to be here, fellas. My enlistment was only three years. Get it?

KNIGHT

Oh shit. You got stop-lossed?

CASTRO

Damn.

PECK

Damn straight. So, if I play my cards right, Headquarters, here I come.

KNIGHT

Sergeant Keen don't like slackers.

CASTRO

He's crazy hooah, like that.

PECK

All the more reason to keep my ass off the battlefield.

CASTRO

That's fucked up, dude. We're short some homies in this platoon. We could use you.

KNIGHT

Just sayin'. It's best to be all you can be in the Renegades.

CASTRO

Word.

EXT. CRAZY HORSE CP - NIGHT

Keen and Yankee walk together.

SFC YANKEE

You get any rest?

KEEN

Not really.

SFC YANKEE

Heard from The Whiskey?

KEEN

The wife? She's still M-I-A. I think she finally went over the hill. Probably shacked up with that homo by now.

SFC YANKEE

Isn't she due soon?

KEEN

Almost. Last count she was at thirty-three weeks.

SFC YANKEE

Goddamn tough situation, Battle.

Keen nods. Yankee changes the subject.

SFC YANKEE

Negative contact on patrol today.

KEEN

Good action.

SFC YANKEE

They spotted a farm house, way up in the valley. Couldn't get good eyes on before heading back.

KEEN

You met the new guy, yet?

SFC YANKEE

Peck? Top told me about him.

KEEN

What's his deal?

SFC YANKEE

Airborne, "Expert" machine gun and rifle, Combat Lifesaver...

KEEN

Don't mean shit. Any deployments?

SFC YANKEE

Nope. Exactly why you got him. I want him in your hip pocket.

KEEN

We need experience out there. Men who can sling back the shit that's thrown at them.

SFC YANKEE

I know. But we're on, now. It's show time.

KEEN

And you're sending me on stage with an understudy. He ain't trained with us. He don't know how we--

SFC YANKEE

This is your chance to break him in proper. You were in my spot just a little while ago. If not now, when?

KEEN

Mounted patrols first. Get his feet wet--

SFC Yankee cuts him off with a wave of his hand.

SFC YANKEE

I'm not asking. The L-T and the C-O are onboard. I appreciate your point of view, Battle, I do.

I'm sorry about what happened to you, about you losing your platoon. The shit ain't right but, you got to realize this is my platoon, not yours.

(beat to ease the tension)

Bottom line Chris, you're the strongest we got. Peck's the weakest. It's about balance.

Bring him up to speed while you're out there. My hooch in five for graphics.

SFC Yankee leaves Keen staring after him.

INT. RENEGADE RANCH - NIGHT

Keen enters. The tent goes quiet.

KEEN

Baird...

CPL Baird follows Keen.

Keen makes a bee line for Peck's bunk.

Peck lays in his bunk, eyes closed, ear bud wires protruding from a gray, MICRO FLEECE CAP he's wearing.

Keen looks him up and down, evaluating. He already doesn't like him. It's on his face. He kicks the cot. Hard.

PECK

What the--?

Jolted, Peck sees Keen and jumps to his feet, sweeping off the cap and ear buds. His trendy pompadour hair flops in his eyes. He sweeps his hair back and assumes PARADE REST.

Keen glares. Hands on hips. "RANGER" and "SNIPER" TABS bulge from his arm pocket.

Peck is dwarfed by his mass.

KEEN

Airborne, huh?

PECK

Roger, Sergeant.

KEEN

What's with that hair?

PECK

It's regulation, Sergeant.

Keen's jaw clenches. His eyes are chips of ice.

KEEN

"It's regulation..." Where you coming from, Peck?

PECK

Home station recruiting.

KEEN

And where's home?

PECK

Westwood, Califor--

KEEN

--WESTWOOD? U-C-L-A?

PECK

(proudly)  
Roger, Sarn't.

KEEN

Rodeo-Fucking-Drive? Beverly-muther  
fucking-Hills...?

CPL BAIRD

(sotto)  
Man...

Keen leans in close. His nostrils flare in disgust.

KEEN

You still smell like cheeseburgers  
and pussy! What you got in there?  
Pantene? Some V05 or some shit?

Peck looks for words.

KEEN

Oughta burn real nice, you get hit  
with an IED.

Peck is in way over his head.

KEEN

I changed my mind about you, Elvis.  
You're so pretty, I want you close  
to me. You and I are going walk-  
about. Ninja-style.

Keen's face splits into tight, mean grin. He holds that eye contact for a long BEAT, a snake hypnotizing his prey and then he spins to Baird.

KEEN

(to Baird)

I need all his shit laid out. It's  
a three-day mission, but pack for  
five.

CPL Baird writes furiously on a note pad.

KEEN

I'll take my rifle and the Barrett.  
He'll need the LMG with twelve  
hundred rounds. Get twenty rounds,  
SLAP-T, for the Barrett. NODS,  
thermals, daylight, snivel gear...  
The usual.

(eyes Peck)

And find me some fuckin' clippers.

Keen starts for the door. Peck looks scared. Keen talks over his shoulder as he goes.

KEEN (O.S.)

Square him away, Baird.

INT. RENEGADE RANCH - NIGHT

Keen has a MAP and TACTICAL GRAPHICS laid out on a card table. He is surrounded by the squad as he briefs them.

KEEN

So what we're gonna do is break into two-man teams, and set up observation posts, O-Ps, along each ridge.

Our task and purpose is to screen for Taliban movement in order to find and destroy the I-E-D cell working in our sector.

They're blowing big holes in our supply lines, men. I like supplies.

THE SQUAD. Serious attention. It's real now.

KEEN

Our squad's got O-Ps Remington, Springfield, and Winchester.

KNIGHT

For how long?

KEEN

C-O says three days, but pack for five, just in case. We'll rotate out after that.

Peck studies the others as the gravity sinks in.

KEEN

Alright, everybody's shit laid out in five. First Team S-Ps at zero-two! That's a two A-M step-off for you and me, Peck. O-P Winchester.

The squad acknowledges then breaks up to get ready.

KEEN

Your gear laid out?

PECK

Roger, Sergeant, it's-

KEEN

-Fine. I need you to make five copies of these graphics.

Keen drops a pack of MAP MARKERS on the CLEAR ACETATE SHEET affixed to the MAP.

KEEN

Got it?

Peck. Apprehensive nod. Keen walks off.

KEEN (O.S.)  
Hey, Corporal Baird! You find those  
clippers?

CPL BAIRD (O.S.)  
Negative, Sergeant.

Castro and Knight stop next to Peck. Castro curls his lip.

CASTRO  
(in his best Sly Stallone)  
I like supplies...

Knight cackles laughter. He slaps Peck on the back.

KNIGHT  
Have a good one, bro.

INT. RENEGADE RANCH - LATER

Peck and CPL Baird inventory a large display of gear laid out on the floor: M249 PARA LIGHT MACHINE GUN (LMG), an M107 Barrett .50 CALIBER SNIPER RIFLE (Barrett), SIGHTS, SCOPES, AN-PVS 14 NIGHT VISION GOGGLES (NODS), RATIONS, WATER, and AMMUNITION for five days. It's a lot of shit.

Keen walks in and drops his CIVILIAN RUCKSACK.

PECK  
That's not regulation.

KEEN  
G.I. issue? Fuck C-I-F. This unit  
moved past "form over function" a  
long time ago, Peck.

Keen pulls out a nifty RIFLE POUCH from beneath his rucksack. He stuffs the huge Barrett sniper rifle inside it.

Peck. Amazed at the bag.

KEEN  
(to CPL Baird)  
He good? You check his shit?

CPL BAIRD  
Yep.

KEEN  
Alright, Peck, don't just stand  
there. Load up!

EXT. RENEGADE RANCH - NIGHT

Keen is smoking a cigarette with SFC Yankee. Keen, wearing his PACK doesn't appear weighed down.

Peck stumbles out the tent wearing a huge MOLLE II RUCKSACK. Both wear camouflage face paint.

SFC YANKEE

Whoa, take it easy, guy! How much sleep you get today?

PECK

None, Sergeant.

SFC YANKEE

None?

PECK

I was up at zero-four this morning to catch the bird out here.

SFC YANKEE

And what time you land?

PECK

Around fifteen-hundred.

KEEN

So, eleven hours ago.

SFC YANKEE

You gotta get it when you can, guy.

PECK

Roger, Sergeant.

SFC YANKEE

You'll be alright.

(looks at his watch)

Well, curtain time.

SFC Yankee leads the duo to the Entry Control Point (ECP).

Keen keys his radio HEAD SET.

KEEN

Black-six, Red Two. Request permission to S-P.

CPT JACK (FILTERED)

Roger. S-P time now.

KEEN

Roger, break. Crazy Base, Red Two.

CRAZY BASE (FILTERED)

(1SG Hunter)

Crazy Base.

KEEN

Crazy Base, Red Two. S-P FOB Carol.  
Two PAX enroute to O-P Winchester.

CRAZY BASE (FILTERED)

And, roger. Hourly radio checks in  
effect, over.

KEEN

Roger, out.

SFC Yankee shakes Keen's hand.

SFC YANKEE

Break a leg, brother.

Peck steps up. SFC Yankee shakes Peck's hand.

SFC YANKEE

Break a leg.

PECK

Huh?

SFC YANKEE

Have a good one.

PECK

Oh.

EXT. FOB CAROL/ECP - NIGHT

Keen leads Peck out of sight of the ECP. They follow the  
curve of the HESCO basket wall, using the shadows. Suddenly  
Keen spins, grabs Peck, and pins him against the wall.

KEEN

Let me fuckin' tell you something.  
Bringing you with me was NOT my  
idea. You strike me as a fuckin'  
chicken shit from Beverly Hills.  
Can't trust you as far as I can  
throw you. Which means my life is  
in danger. Which means my family is  
in danger. Get me?

Peck nods. Opens his mouth to speak.

KEEN

Don't talk. You wanna prove yourself? You wanna surprise me? Do your fuckin' job. That means stay on my ass, stay alert, and stay quiet.

PECK

Roger, Sergeant.

KEEN

Let's move out.

EXT. MOUNTAIN/FOREST - NIGHT

They use SHADOWS to cross the open area between the FOB and the mountain. Soon they are in the tree line, climbing.

PECK. Heavy breathing. Sweat. He stares at the ground, gauges every heavy footstep. He looks up--

EMPTY FOREST. Keen has vanished.

Peck is alone. Panic.

A whistle on the right. A bird? Another whistle. Keen.

Peck moves toward it. Keen is tucked behind a fallen log.

KEEN

(quietly)

Take five. Orient that way.

Peck joins Keen, orienting the LMG 180 degrees from him. He peers into the night, still wearing his pack.

KEEN

Dude, drop the pack. Drink water.

Peck's movements are loud. He rolls his pack off. Dry timber SNAPS. They both hold still. Even their BREATHING is loud. Finally--

KEEN

We're cool. Drink water.

Peck sucks on the Camelbak tube. When he's done--

KEEN

You good? That's five. Saddle up.

As they don their rucks and weapons:

PECK  
(sotto)  
Five minutes, my ass.

EXT. MOUNTAIN/FOREST - LATER - NIGHT

Keen and Peck emerge into a clearing. The moon is full and bright. They can see the entire FOB from their perch.

Keen takes a knee. He gives a hand and arm signal to orient the LMG. Peck doffs his pack quietly, watches his area, and drinks water.

Keen nods his approval, a little surprised. He pulls a MAP and PROTRACTOR IN A ZIP-LOCK BAG from his thigh pocket.

A BRIGHT FLASH OF LIGHT. BOOM...!

The men hit the dirt.

FOB Carol is under attack. Rocket Propelled Grenades (RPGs) streak toward the FOB from the valley floor.

Heavy MACHINE GUN FIRE opens from the guard towers into the valley floor.

PECK  
Holy shit...!

KEEN  
Calm down.

PECK  
Holy SHIT!

Keen pounces.

KEEN  
CALM THE-FUCK DOWN and scan your sector! There could be more assholes up here.

At FOB Carol it's an all-out attack. RED TRACERS exchange from both sides. The exterior HESCO wall is ablaze. More RPG fire. Direct hit into a guard tower.

KEEN  
Fuck.

PECK  
What?

KEEN  
Blue just took a hit.

PECK  
Blue?

KEEN  
Third platoon. We-- They have the  
towers this week.

Heavy smoke masks the FOB, but the fire fight continues.

Insane RADIO TRAFFIC as the Troop fends off the attack.

Crunching EXPLOSIONS deep inside the FOB.

PECK  
What's that!

KEEN  
Incoming mortar fire.

Suddenly, BA-WOOM! A huge FIRE BALL, LIQUID FIRE. It spreads,  
igniting everything it touches.

PECK  
Oh my god.

KEEN  
The fueler.

The RADIO goes silent. Then a BEATING sound. CHOPPER BLADES.

The radio:

CPT JACK (FILTERED)  
O-P Winchester, O-P Winchester,  
Crazy six.

KEEN  
Crazy-six, O-P Winchester.

CPT Jack from a chopper.

CPT JACK  
(Roger, is your O-P set?)

KEEN  
Negative. Once the attack began, we  
held tight.

The FOB is ablaze. Small-arms fire continues to pour into it  
from the valley floor.

CPT JACK

(Good action, but I need you to push, ASAP, break.

(beat)

We're taking the guidon back to Saber Base. I'm pulling everyone out. I've called for CAS on our position. J-DAMS in effect!)

KEEN

(to Peck)

Saddle up! We gotta go. Now.

(into headset)

Crazy Six, Red Two. Roger. Moving, time now.

Peck. Confusion. Fear--

KEEN

(dons pack)

Close air support's inbound! We gotta get the fuck outta here!

Keen drags Peck to his feet.

THE FOB. FOUR CHINOOKS lift off, their MACHINE GUNS STRAFE the valley floor.

TRACERS FIRE replies as the choppers bug out.

In the valley, FAINT VICTORY CHEERS. The valley glows with the inferno.

Keen and Peck stop behind cover.

KEEN

Gimme the PAS-thirteen out that left pocket.

Peck unzips a large pocket on Keens ruck, removes a BLACK POUCH, hands it to him. Keen removes a large PLASTIC BOX, turns it on.

KEEN

Should be safe here. Fixed wing's inbound with J-DAMS.

PECK

J-DAMS?

KEEN

That's why the choppers left. That was the Troop, bugging out.

PECK

You mean we're out here all alone?

KEEN

Just you and me.

PECK

This is not happening.

Keen peers through the plastic box.

KEEN

You know what a PAS-thirteen is,  
don't you?

PECK

(desperate, self absorbed)  
What...? It's a thermal sight.

KEEN

Here, take a look.

He hands the sight to Peck who looks through it.

THERMAL VIEW: Black and white, high contrast video. Heat shows whiter than the rest. Highly magnified.

Men in MAN-DRESSES, carrying SOVIET WEAPONS, dance near the ECP opening. GROUPS of TALIBAN rush into the FOB.

PECK

They're going inside!

KEEN

Good.

The view scans past the ECP, to the FOB interior. Taliban soldiers pillage the camp.

PECK

What the hell are they doing?

KEEN

Hopefully, trying to take all our  
shit.

Peck pulls back off the sight.

PECK

You hope?

KEEN

Yeah. Haji bait.

Keen's headset crackles as Peck looks through the sight.

RADIO (FILTERED)  
(O-P Winchester, O-P Winchester  
this is Bandit Two-three, your  
push.)

KEEN  
Bandit Two-three, O-P Winchester.  
Go ahead, sir.

BANDIT TWO-THREE  
(Roger, I have a flight of two F-  
fifteen packing four, two-thousand  
pound J-DAMS. Where do you want  
'em, sir?)

KEEN  
Roger, sir. You got eyes on the  
little camp fire we got going on  
down here?

BANDIT TWO-THREE  
(Roger, got it.)

KEEN  
We got about eighty Taliban having  
a post-game tail gate. Request you  
drop off those party favors.

BANDIT TWO-THREE  
(O-P Winchester, Bandit Two-three,  
ROGER! What's your current fix?)

KEEN  
Sir, currently two kilometers  
south. In the clear, over.

BANDIT TWO-THREE  
(Roger. Bandit Two-three comin' in  
hot. You might want to plug your  
ears.)

KEEN  
(to Peck)  
You watching?

PECK  
Ro--

BA-WOOM!!! The first bomb hits. The blast wave--

BA-WOOM!!! BA-WOOM-WOOM!!! The last three J-DAMS hit. Total  
destruction. And yes, the fire is extinguished.

JET ENGINES echo through the valley.

KEEN

Joint Direct Attack Munitions. J-DAMS. Guided bombs.

(to radio)

And, Bandit Two-three, O-P Winchester. Target, target, target. You earned that paycheck tonight, sir! Tango-mike!

BANDIT TWO-THREE

(Roger that. Appreciate the feedback.)

KEEN

Will you be on station for a while?

BANDIT TWO-THREE

(Negative. We've been directed elsewhere.)

KEEN

Sorry to hear that, sir.

BANDIT TWO-THREE

(Crazy Six asked to me to relay. He says, get in touch with Saber X-ray at zero-seven tomorrow.)

KEEN

This is O-P Winchester. Roger, over.

BANDIT TWO-THREE

(Bandit Two-three breaking station.)

The JET ENGINES are already far away. Crickets CHIRP in the night breeze. A quiet moment.

PECK

Now what?

KEEN

Now we keep moving.

PECK

Keep moving? Where to? Isn't that game over!?

KEEN

No. We're only about a click from the O-P.

PECK

The O-P? There is no O-P. There's just us. And we're in the middle of nowhere with no backup, Sarn't.

KEEN

It is just us. And we need some defensible terrain.

PECK

They left us! How're we gonna make it out here, alone?

KEEN

We've got five-days food and water.

PECK

Fuck, man, and then what?

Keen's face changes. Time to get into character.

KEEN

(deadly serious)

First of all, PRIVATE, I'm in charge of this mother-fucker. What I say goes, no questions asked.

You wanna fuckin' roll over and die, that's your business. But at some point, every man has to stand up and grab their balls. Until you decide it's time, you just need to shut the fuck up, and do what the fuck I tell you.

Peck. Just been bitch-slapped by the best.

KEEN

Now, ruck up.

PECK

Roger, Sergeant.

Peck. Hopeless as he dons his pack. Keen sees it. Then from nowhere, resilience:

PECK

(dryly)

Ain't war hell?

Keen snickers.

SGT KEEN

Yeah, it is. You bring a patrol cap?

PECK

Negative.

Keen trades his ACH for a camouflaged, baseball cap-like HAT. He hands Peck a large, OD GREEN CLOTH.

KEEN

Here. Ditch that helmet. Tie this cravat around your melon there, fuckin' Elvis... Elvis Peck-ly.

Peck ties the cravat around his head as they move out.

KEEN

Relax. We'll get home. Just gonna take the scenic route is all.

EXT. MOUNTAIN/FOREST - OP WINCHESTER - LATER - NIGHT

Keen and Peck crouch down as they approach a FALLEN TREE. It looks like it tried to roll down the mountain, but was stopped by two other trees, one on each end.

KEEN

Home sweet home. We'll set up here.

Keen sets up the Barrett sniper rifle to sight down the mountain.

PECK

Didn't we pass this place hours ago?

KEEN

Had to recon the hill top, make sure it was clear.

PECK

For three hours?

KEEN

For however long it fuckin' takes. One thing you need to learn, Peck. Don't half-ass shit. Ever.

We half-ass it out here, we die. You wanna make it outta here?

PECK

Roger.

Keen scans through the thermal sight.

KEEN

So do I. I need to make it out of here in one piece.

THERMAL VIEW: HIGH CONTRAST, TELEPHOTO VIDEO SCANS ACROSS THE VALLEY. A WALLED COMPOUND. A ROAD near the front gate.

KEEN (V.O.)

We can see the valley floor from here. Check it out.

KEEN moves off the Barrett. Peck sights through it.

PECK

Whoa...

Keen removes his pack and reclines on it.

KEEN

You like?

PECK

Awesome.

KEEN

Good. You got first watch.

Peck pulls back from the site.

PECK

Huh?

KEEN

Write down everything you see. Wake me up if anyone comes this way.

PECK

But, Sergeant, I've been up since--

KEEN

What comes around goes around, Peck. You want sleep, and I want my wife to stop fucking everything with a commission and a bar tab. We learn to live with disappointment.

I gotta be on the radio at seven. Wake me up at zero-six-forty-five.

(MORE)

KEEN (CONT'D)

You can hang for another hour can't you?

Keen lays his rifle across his chest and closes his eyes.

PECK. Anger.

EXT. MOUNTAIN/FOREST - OP WINCHESTER - DAY

Peck pulls a thin, GREEN SLEEPING BAG from his rucksack. Keen watches Peck from behind the Barrett. He's not happy.

KEEN

You brought your fart sack?

PECK

You said five days. And it's cold.

KEEN

Ever heard, "travel light, freeze at night"? Where's your bivy sack?

PECK

Uh...

KEEN

You're just gonna lay that in the dirt? What if it precipitates? Your dirt'll be mud.

PECK

I guess I, uh--

KEEN

Yeah. Half-assing shit again. If it does the R-thing, you're fucked.

PECK

So what should I--

KEEN

You're good for now. Okay, it's zero-seven. Shh...

Keen sights through the Barrett. No longer wearing his headset, he uses a HANDMIC.

KEEN

Saber X-ray, Saber X-ray, this is O-P Winchester, over...

(beat)

Saber X-ray, Saber X-ray, this is O-P Winchester, over...

CPT JACK  
(through handmic speaker)  
(O-P Winchester, this is Crazy Six.  
How's it going? Gimme a SITREP.)

KEEN  
It's going, over. Current location,  
X-ray Charlie 6-0-1-2-6, 7-6-3-2-8.  
I say again, 6-0-1-2-6, 7-6-3-2-8,  
oriented east across the valley,  
break...

Have eyes on a lone farm house.  
Could be the same one Red reported  
earlier. Maintaining visual, over.

CPT JACK  
(Roger. Good copy, break...  
(beat)  
A recovery patrol S-P'd Saber Base  
to your location.)

Peck exchanges glances with Keen.

SCOPE VIEW - THE WALLED COMPOUND

TELEPHOTO, DAYLIGHT IMAGE. Adobe and mud. Logs and straw. A  
TWO-STORY HOUSE in the center with a pillared patio.

CPT JACK  
(They were hit two-hours out.  
Catastrophic I-E-D. Red-Four took  
the hit.)

KEEN. Shock.

CPT JACK  
(I know you and Sergeant Yankee  
were close. He's gone, Red-two. I'm  
sorry.)

Peck watches Keen's face twist from grief to anger.

CPT JACK  
(Red-two, Crazy-six. You copy?)

KEEN  
Roger, sir.

CPT JACK  
(Site recovery is still ongoing.  
It's a mess, break...  
(beat)  
(MORE)

CPT JACK (CONT'D)

Bottom line, you're on your own for now. I want you to hold tight. Maintain radio silence. Radio checks every four hours with Saber X-ray. Conserve your radio batteries while we figure out how to get you down from there.)

KEEN

(sotto)

Without killing anymore guys.  
(into handmic)  
Roger, over.

CPT JACK

(I want you to run your O-P. Find these assholes that killed Yankee. This I-E-D cell is working our sector hard. Pinpoint these guys, so we can make an example of 'em later.)

KEEN

Roger. Engagement criteria?

CPT JACK

(Negative, negative! R-O-E is in effect. Defend yourselves of course, but you are not - I say again - not in a position to start a fight. Acknowledge!)

KEEN

Red-two. And roger.

CPT JACK

(No heroics, Red-two. Observe, report, and stay out of sight. S-2 reports some weather coming in. May get bad.)

Keen to Peck, another glance. Told you so.

KEEN

Roger.

CPT JACK

(You come in contact, you get on the horn. Otherwise, report any findings during your radio checks.)

KEEN

Red-two. Roger, we're all over it.

CPT JACK  
(Okay. Crazy-six, out.)

Keen lowers the handmic.

PECK  
They're not coming.

KEEN  
Not today.

PECK  
Goddamn it... When?

KEEN  
Sleep. You're up in six hours.

EXT. MOUNTAIN/FOREST - OP WINCHESTER - LATER - DAY

Keen kicks Peck's sleeping bag.

KEEN  
Peck, you're up. Let's go.

PECK. Wide-eyes at--.

KEEN. Wrapped in a GHILLIE SUIT. Their position dug so they can lay prone to observe under the log. A SPOTTING SCOPE is set up next to the Barrett.

KEEN  
The fuck are you waiting for, room service? Un-ass your fart sack, and get on that scope.

Peck does.

KEEN  
Try to keep up.

DAYLIGHT SCOPE VIEW - HIGH MAGNIFICATION

The view of the compound cuts back and forth between the Barrett day sight and the SPOTTING SCOPE. Each has different AIMING RETICLES. As they speak, the respective RETICLE changes.

KEEN (V.O.)  
Witness your typical Afghan family.  
The geezer here's in charge. We'll call him The Father.

FATHER, tries to start a stalled FARM TRACTOR.

PECK (V.O.)  
Damn, how old is that guy?

KEEN (V.O.)  
Life out here is harder'n you'll  
ever know, there, Westwood. I bet  
if you ask him, though, he don't  
even know.

PECK (V.O.)  
Seriously?

KEEN (V.O.)  
These people are so isolated, Peck,  
most don't know what year it is.  
The Taliban likes it that way.

TWO YOUNGER AFGHAN MEN (20s) head to the tractor. One has a  
large WRENCH, the other a TOOL BOX.

KEEN (V.O.)  
Now, these dudes. Probably his  
kids.

PECK (V.O.)  
Kids?

KEEN (V.O.)  
I count four so far. These two look  
the oldest.

PECK (V.O.)  
And the others?

KEEN (V.O.)  
In the main house with the Mother.

PAN from the tractor to the main house. A young Afghan BOY  
(10-12) runs from the house trailing a kite. An apple doll-  
looking woman, the MOTHER, exits the house after him.

KEEN (V.O.)  
Viagra's got nothing on this guy.

PECK (V.O.)  
Guess the Taliban ain't got a  
dental plan, either.

KEEN  
Funny.

Keen pulls off the Barrett, perplexed. Peck sees and--

PECK

What?

Keen flips through a dog-eared PRINT OUT of suspects, thumbnail photos and text.

KEEN

Not sure. He's not on the BOLO list, but something's fishy.

PECK

BOLO list?

KEEN

(indicates print out)  
Be On the Look Out. BO-LO.

PECK

Oh. Why?

KEEN

Notice their haircuts?

PECK

Military?

Keen looks through the--

DAYLIGHT SCOPE: Boy runs around the yard with the kite.

KEEN (V.O.)

I'm thinking Father's important somehow. The cement house is a dead giveaway. Maybe a war lord from back in the day.

Peck looks through the--

SPOTTING SCOPE: Father, Son #1, and Son #2 at the tractor.

PECK (V.O.)

War lord, huh?

KEEN backs off the Barrett.

KEEN

Keep an eye on him. Fucker might've killed Sergeant Yankee. Keep below cover. What can be seen can be hit.

PECK

And what can be hit, can be killed.

Keen passes the ghillie suit to Peck.

KEEN

Gotta clear the hill. Next radio check is in two-hours. Use the man-pack.

PECK

How long you gonna be gone?

KEEN

'Til I'm done. Don't worry. I'll be on the Harris. Put your headset on.

Peck watches Keen head up the mountain.

EXT. MOUNTAIN/FOREST - DAY

Keen in hunter-killer mode. Slow, quiet, movement. Scan, listen, and search. He looks back, down the mountain.

KEEN'S POV - THE OP

Peck behind the log, scanning through the Barrett sight.

BACK TO SCENE

Keen is hunkered near a tree. He pulls the WALL LOCKER PHOTO from a pocket underneath his soft cap. Dirty fingers frame the woman's face.

Keen. Morose eyes. He folds the photo in half, creasing the fold tight.

EXT. MOUNTAIN/FOREST - OP WINCHESTER - LATE DAY

The sun hovers low, behind a mountain.

PECK struggles to stay awake, to focus on the Barrett sight.

A twig SNAPS. Instantly alert, Peck rolls over to man the LMG. He scans the forest.

Nothing but trees.

KEEN

(in Peck's headset)  
(Red-two-alpha, Red-two.)

PECK  
Red-two, red-two-alpha.

KEEN  
(Roger. Coming in.)

Keen comes in behind Peck.

KEEN  
What are you doing?

PECK  
I thought I heard something.

KEEN  
There's nothin' out there. What's  
going on in sector?

Peck goes back to the Barrett.

PECK  
Not much. They go inside. They come  
outside. Life I guess.

KEEN  
Uh-huh. I don't like it.

PECK  
You're reaching, Sergeant. These  
people are just miserable peasants.  
I know you're upset about your  
friend, but-

KEEN  
--You make the fuckin' radio check?

PECK  
Roger. No news.

KEEN  
Squadron's still licking their  
wounds. The troop lost more than  
Sergeant Yankee yesterday.

PECK  
I bet everyone's trigger happy,  
now, too.

KEEN  
You should probably keep your green-  
ass, pie hole shut.

Keen drops an assault pack stuffed with wood.

PECK  
What are those for?

KEEN  
The floor.

PECK  
Sar'nt?

KEEN  
Of the hole we're gonna dig.  
Tonight.

Keen strips off his gear.

PECK  
Without giving away our position?

KEEN  
Work at night, rest and observe  
during the day. We'll rotate  
digging and scanning.

PECK  
You do really like this shit, don't  
you, Sar'nt?

KEEN  
Careful, Peck.

PECK  
The guys said you were crazy-hooah  
like that. Just saying.

KEEN  
Keep your sayings to yourself,  
Private. I ain't got the mother-  
fuckin' time to fight the enemy and  
some know-nothing smart-ass.

We both know who's got the skills  
here. You wanna walk your ass back  
to Jalalabad right now? Be my  
guest. Save me having to baby sit.

PECK  
You don't know me. Or my skills.

KEEN  
Keep pushing, Peck. I will break  
your ass in half.

PECK

The bigger they are, Sar'nt. The bigger they are...

Keen. A steely smile. It's TWILIGHT now.

KEEN

That's it, dude. You wanna go? Stand up. Stand the fuck up. It's dark enough. They can't see us.

PECK. Anger revealed. He strips off his IOTV.

KEEN. Eye of the tiger. He attacks, but Peck is fast. Peck uses Keen's mass. An Aikido throw and--

Keen lands hard, but is instantly on his feet. They square off and--

PECK. Aloof. Confident.

KEEN. Determined.

He attacks Peck's legs and they go to ground. A Jujitsu/MMA fight. Peck quickly pins Keen until Keen pulls a reversal. He captures Peck in a choke hold. Peck can't breathe.

KEEN

If you're gonna start something, you sure as shit better be able to finish it.

PECK. Panic in Keen's muscular squeeze until he passes out.

EXT. MOUNTAIN/FOREST - OP WINCHESTER - NIGHT

Peck wakes on his back, blanketed in the sleeping bag.

KEEN

Good. Bring your ass over here, Hucklebuck. It's your shift.

Peck mans the Barrett.

KEEN

(muttering)

Fuckin' new Soldiers... Goddamn Generation Y, Millennials. "Why we gotta do this, Sarge?" "Why we gotta do that, Sarge?" Because, I fucking told you to, that's why.

Keen stacks the wood behind the log.

KEEN

You guys are all so damn selfish.

PECK

Enlisting during a war is selfish?

KEEN

It's more than signing a paper,  
Peck. It's a commitment to always  
do your best.

PECK.

KEEN

I mean, why'd you really join, huh?  
Lemme guess... Running from mommy  
and daddy?

Character is action, Peck, and  
you're full of inaction. Three  
years and still a Private? You  
should be a Sergeant by now.

A real Airborne trooper would've  
fought tooth and nail to get out of  
recruiting. But not you. Oh no!

You got comfortable. Right? Office  
gig? Air conditioning? Big titted  
girlfriend back home?

PECK. A sideways glance at that last one.

PECK

No! I mean, it wasn't like that.  
They didn't give me a choice. You  
don't know. You don't know what  
I've had to do.

KEEN

Oh, I'm sure it was terrible.

PECK. Emotional.

PECK

They gave me a chest of medals to  
wear while I spoke to high school  
kids about my "great experience" in  
the Army. They pimped me out like  
some war hero to get these kids to  
sign up. They made me lie to them.

Then I see the casualties on the  
news. This is serving my country?

(MORE)

PECK (CONT'D)

It's all bullshit. Just like this  
shit, here.

(eye contact)

My three-year contract with the  
Army expired last Wednesday. I  
shouldn't even be here.

KEEN

(belly laughs)

They stop-lossed your ass to send  
you out here? Army irony like a  
mother-fucker!

PECK

Irony my ass! Seems pretty  
consistent to me. Army's full of  
shit, just like those mother-  
fuckers in Beverly Hills I tried to  
leave behind. Just like you and  
your stand-at-parade-rest-when-I-  
talk-to-you chicken shit.

You're all lying to each other  
about how great you are and how  
awesome this life is. This sure is  
fuckin' awesome, Sergeant.

(facetious)

Hell yeah. Hooah.

KEEN

(still chuckling)

You're like that dude in the hotel  
commercial.

"I'm not a real Soldier, but I did  
stay at a Holiday Inn Express last  
night..."

PECK

Didn't you hear a word I said?

KEEN

(back in character)

This situation is nothing. What is  
so hard about this? Nothing.  
We're just sitting here. For  
someone who's spent time in the  
field, this is light duty. But not  
you, there, office pogue. You  
ain't ready for this.

Who's responsible for your  
readiness, Peck? Who?

Peck. Sober guilt.

KEEN

Case in point. Case in mother-fucking point. You choose to half-ass your way through life.

He looks Peck in the eye.

KEEN

Not anymore.

Keen strips down to his t-shirt and deploys a folding shovel (e-tool).

KEEN

Move the Barrett. I'm gonna start.

As soon as Peck is out of the way, Keen digs.

EXT. MOUNTAIN/FOREST - DAYLIGHT SCOPE VIEW - DAY

Boy runs around in the yard playing with a DOG. Mother hangs wet LAUNDRY from a BASKET. Son #3 and Son #4 walk in the field where Son #1 tills it with the tractor.

The only sound is a rhythmical, quiet, SCRAPING SOUND.

PECK

Weird how there's no sound.

KEEN

That's a good thing. Believe me.

PECK pulls back from the scope. The OP is now armpit deep.

KEEN planes bark from a six-foot branch with a HUGE BLACK BOWIE KNIFE. He sees Peck looking at him.

KEEN

What?

PECK

What's with that thing?

KEEN

The knife? Survival, Peck.

PECK

How do you survive a gun fight with a knife?

KEEN

When the M-R-Es run out, then what?  
You gonna eat pine cones?

PECK

They're picking us up soon, right  
Sar'nt?

KEEN

And if they don't? What if they  
don't? You ever hunt, there,  
Westwood?

PECK

No.

KEEN

No shit. Lemme tell you something.  
Gunfire will break that sound  
barrier between here and there.  
You want every swingin' dick with  
an A-K, rushing up the hill?

Keen concentrates on planing again.

PECK

So, what, a spear then?

KEEN

Just watch the sector, smart ass.  
Don't worry about what I'm doing.

Peck turns to the Barrett.

EXT. MOUNTAIN/FOREST - OP WINCHESTER - NIGHT

Keen sights through the THERMAL SIGHT on the Barrett.

THERMAL VIEW. PAN across the compound. A DOG sniffs around  
the yard. No other sign of life.

KEEN (V.O.)

Looks like it's mimi time...

PAN the opposite way. Beyond the far wall, a MINIVAN  
approaches. It stops outside the compound gate. Three  
SECURITY GUARDS wearing sport coats and AK-47 RIFLES exit the  
van.

KEEN (V.O.)

(German accent)

Oh! Hello there...!

WHIP PAN to the main house. Father and Sons #1 and #2 hurry to the van. When they exit the compound, a Security Guard opens the van's sliding door.

Another Afghan exits, the VISITOR. BEARDED AND TURBANED, he extends his hand to Father, who respectfully shakes it.

Visitor is someone of power.

The party enters the compound for the main house, surrounded by the security detachment.

KEEN (V.O.)

Who the fuck is this, now?

Keen kicks Peck.

KEEN

Peck. Get up. Get on your weapon.

PECK

Already?

KEEN

You need to see this. Get on your weapon.

Peck moves to the LMG fitted with another thermal sight.

PECK

What is it?

KEEN

Check these assholes out. I knew it.

THERMAL VIEW. Father and Visitor enter the house. Security Guards have gained look-out positions along the walls. DRIVER, another armed guard, stands outside the house.

PECK (V.O.)

Who are all these guys?

KEEN (V.O.)

Exactly. Get your boots on.

Peck pulls off the LMG and gives Keen a scowl.

KEEN

At-ease your pie-hole, Elvis. It's still my shift. But I don't know how this night's gonna go. Just do what I say. God damn...

EXT. MOUNTAIN/FOREST - OP WINCHESTER - NIGHT

Peck scans with the LMG, boots on.

PECK

When are they coming out of there?

KEEN

Told you hours ago, I got this.  
You shoulda gone back to sleep.

PECK

I couldn't sleep now, if I tried.

KEEN

Alright, if you crash on your  
shift, you're done. Understand?

PECK

Someone's coming out.

THERMAL VIEW: Father exits the house with Visitor. Father's family follows at a respectful distance. Visitor walks Father to the back of the minivan.

Driver lifts the back hatch, hands Father a LARGE SACK from inside.

Father hands the sack to Son #3.

KEEN

What the hell is that...?

Visitor drives from the farm compound. Four Security Guards are left behind. Father, family, and Security Guards reenter the house.

PECK. Disappointment.

PECK

That's it? That's what I stayed up  
for?

KEEN

I told you. You should have slept.

PECK

I'm on in less than ten minutes  
after zero sleep. What the fuck.

KEEN

What was in the bag?

PECK

Fuck...!

KEEN

Dude, quit your bitching. You made a choice. Live with it. You wanna take over now?

PECK

(sarcastic)

Might as well.

KEEN

Listen, if my hunch is correct, if anyone comes out the house tonight--

PECK

I'll get you up.

KEEN

I'm serious.

PECK

Roger. I gotcha, Sar'nt. Nighty-night.

Peck takes over the Barrett.

EXT. MOUNTAIN/FOREST - OP WINCHESTER - LATER - NIGHT

Peck can barely keep his eyes open. He blinks away the fatigue, then sights through.

THERMAL VIEW: SLOW PAN. IN AND OUT OF FOCUS.

PECK blinks wide, yawns, sights again.

THERMAL VIEW. THE FARMHOUSE. SON #3 exits the front door carrying THE SACK.

PECK. Recognition

PECK

Holy shit. Sar'nt. Sar'nt Keen...!

Keen immediately sits up. He rolls over to man the LMG.

KEEN

What do we got?

PECK

Looks like one of the Sons, heading out with that bag.

KEEN

Sons of bitches... Okay, got him.

THERMAL VIEW: Son #3 heads for the front gate

KEEN (V.O.)

Where the fuck are you going, so late at night, asshole?

PECK (V.O.)

What's he doing?

KEEN (V.O.)

I know exactly what he's doing.

Son #3 scoops up a long-handled SHOVEL on his way out the front gate.

KEEN (V.O.)

Fuckin' bingo.

PECK

What? What's going on?

KEEN

This mother fucker is about to plant an I-E-D.

PECK

What?

KEEN

An I-E-D is going in, right now.

PECK

Holy shit.

Keen strips his gear off except for his field knife.

PECK

What are you doing?

KEEN

Gimme my NOD bag.

Peck does. Keen pulls a head harness out, dons it.

PECK

What are you doing?

KEEN

What's it look like? Where's he at?

Peck looks through the thermals.

THERMAL VIEW: Son #3 is outside the gate, walking the road, toward the OP.

PECK

He's on the road. Heading this way.

KEEN

My luck is on point, man.

PECK

You're not going after him. The C-O said no heroics.

KEEN

I'm not gonna sit here and watch another one of our guys get blown-the-fuck up.

PECK

You won't make it. It's too far.

KEEN

Watch me.

Keen adjusts his NODs, and moves out.

Peck. Back on the Barrett and--

THERMAL VIEW: Son #3 continues to walk with the bag and shovel.

PECK scans the forest for Keen.

THERMAL VIEW: Trees. No hot spots and--

PECK. Miffed. He reorients the Barrett.

THERMAL VIEW: The road. Son #3 walks.

EXT. MOUNTAIN/FOREST - NIGHT

KEEN slips through the woods like a wraith.

EXT. MOUNTAIN/FOREST - THERMAL VIEW - LATER

SON #3. Looks around before he moves to the side of the road. He sets the bag down and begins digging with the shovel.

PECK (V.O.)

Here he goes, Sarge. Where are you?

THERMAL VIEW: Son #3 digs under the road from the gutter.

Suddenly, the forest behind Son #3 comes alive. KEEN attacks. He drags Son #3 into the forest.

PECK (V.O.)  
Shit! He got him! Mother-fucking  
Rambo!

EXT. MOUNTAIN/FOREST - OP WINCHESTER - NIGHT

Keen drops Son #3 next to the log. Frightened, bound and gagged, he scrambles back against the log.

PECK  
What the hell?

Keen searches through the sack.

KEEN  
We saved lives today. Good action.

PECK  
But, why'd you bring him here?

Keen pulls out a WIRE SPOOL, CUTTERS, CELL PHONE PARTS, TAPE, and finally a SOVIET 155MM ARTILLERY SHELL.

KEEN  
Whoa.

PECK  
Sergeant Keen. What are we doing  
with this guy? We can't guard him  
and run the O-P. We can't even feed  
him.

Keen forces the IED BAG over Son #3's head.

KEEN  
I know.

PECK  
Then what--

Keen pulls that knife. That big, mother-fucker of a knife and effortlessly spins it around his fingers to present it, hilt first, to Peck.

KEEN  
He's here for you.

Peck stares. Bug-eye terrified.

KEEN (CONT'D)

You're right. We can't guard him or feed him. But I sure as shit wasn't gonna kill him down there where I'd leave sign.

Peck looks up from the knife hilt. A thousand arguments come and go in his eyes. The answers glint along the sharp edge of the blade.

KEEN

I need to trust you, Peck. The squad needs to know you'll do what it takes when the time comes. And that time is time-now.

Peck reaches out, shaking fingers, and takes it. He stares down at the kid. He lifts the knife and swallows hard. The blade-tip bobs and weaves.

Peck straddles the bound prisoner's back.

KEEN

That's it. Right in the base of the skull.

PECK hold's the hooded kid's head to the ground. The knife hovers just above.

KEEN

Real fast.

Peck sweats freely. The knife tip inches closer. Finally-

PECK

I can't. It's murder. I can't.

He drops the blade. Keen pounces. He knocks Peck off the Afghan and gets in his face.

KEEN

Murder? This is fuckin' war. You can't wait til you feel like it.

Keen rips the hood from Son #3. Peck. Face-to-face with terror.

KEEN

You think he doesn't know what he was doing? He was going to kill Americans. With that fucking bomb.

PECK

You want payback for Sergeant Yankee. I get it. But we don't know he did it.

KEEN

The fuck? This has nothing to do with that!

PECK

Bullshit, Sarn't. He's a prisoner, man. This is murder!

KEEN

This is business, Peck. Nothing more.

PECK

He stopped being a combatant--

KEEN

--Fuck!

Keen rolls over onto Son #3.

Peck. Still eye-to-eye with him and--

Keen grabs Son's head and snaps his neck.

SON #3. Dead eyes stare back at--

PECK. Sick. Utter disbelief.

Keen snatches Peck up. Nose-to-nose.

KEEN

You want regulations? How's about Article-99: Misbehavior Before the Enemy. Fucking cowardice, Peck.

It don't matter if we kill him up here or down there. Dead is dead. What matters is, you are a fucking fail.

Keen shoves the E-TOOL in Peck's hands.

KEEN

Bury him. And while you do, you just better figure out what the fuck you're doing here.

PECK drags the body away from the fighting position. He collapses. He openly weeps, but tries to contain it.

KEEN mans the Barrett. PECK'S SNIVELLING is audible. Keen pulls back from the THERMAL SIGHT. The light from the eyepiece betrays Keen's tears. He wipes his eyes then sights back through the sight.

EXT. MOUNTAIN/FOREST - NIGHT

Peck drops Son #3's body. He's away from the OP. He kneels next to the body, configures the e-tool, then starts to dig.

ASIAN VOICE (V.O.)  
Why are you here...?

INT. AIKIDO DOJO - FLASHBACK - DAY

Peck sits in seiza, Japanese kneeling position, back straight. Sweat runs from his hair.

He faces an old, Japanese SENSEI (late 50s).

Peck is flanked on each side by ten AIKIDOKA black belts, senior students, all dressed as Sensei, in traditional white GI with black, HAKAMA pants.

SENSEI  
(heavy Japanese accent)  
Why are you here? Is it simply to pass exam? To earn black colored belt? Or is something deeper?

Peck breathes deeply, eyes closed, calming his heart rate.

SENSEI  
You have demonstrated flawless technique in one-on-one exercise, but true test of worth is actual combat.

Sensei claps his palm with a folded FAN. Instantly, three Aikidoka form a kneeling line behind Peck, three abreast.

Sensei spreads open the fan, points it at Peck, face down.

SENSEI  
We will now begin randori phase of exam. Multiple enemy, improvised, practical application of technique.

Sensei closes the fan in his palm with a slap.

The three Aikidoka rush forward to attack Peck.

Peck remains kneeling, eyes closed. Thumping, running feet. Suddenly, Peck rolls backward through the line of attackers. They leap to avoid him.

Peck is on his feet and--

The line of Aikidoka face him, try to flank him, but Peck is moving and--

They try to grab him, to strike, but Peck is too fast. One by one each Aikidoka is tossed out until finally he's face-to-face with--

SENIOR STUDENT armed with a wooden BOKKEN, a practice sword.

Sensei. Grim study.

PECK. Winded. Surprised by the weapon.

SENIOR STUDENT. Eye of the tiger. He attacks--

Peck gets inside, disarms Senior Student, but relaxes, thinking it's over.

Senior Student is on him. It becomes a ground fight. He gets a choke hold on Peck and-

Peck struggles to breathe. He sees-

Sensei. Disapproval. He allows it to continue.

Peck is powerless, choking, defeated and-

Sensei slaps his fan. Senior Student releases Peck and returns to his position on the mat.

Peck coughs, unable to get up, his Gi torn open.

SENSEI

Leave us!

The Aikidoka bow, then file off the mat.

Sensei retrieves the discarded KEN as Peck manages a seiza bow, supported by his hands on the mat, eyes downcast.

SENSEI

Why have you come all this way only to fail? You know technique. There is always a way.

PECK

Hi, Sensei. I... I couldn't--

SENSEI

In combat, you must be prepared to go all way. As Soldier, you should know this. Have you no self worth?

Peck's tears burst. He holds them back.

Sensei sees he's hit the truth by accident.

SENSEI

Greatest battle a warrior must face, Peck-san, is battle within.

EXT. OP WINCHESTER - LATER - NIGHT

Peck slides into the hole, sweaty and dirty.

KEEN

You square him away?

PECK

Roger, Sergeant.

Awkward silence. Eye contact. Keen moves from the Barrett. Peck takes his place.

Keen studies Peck. Peck feels the eyes but doesn't want to give him the satisfaction. Keen carves at the same long stick he was planing before.

KEEN

Y'know, Peck. This is day-four. In a year-long deployment. We get out of this, there's the rest of the year to look forward to.

PECK

I know, Sergeant.

KEEN

See? There you go, man. No, you don't know. You don't know about the I-E-Ds. You don't know about the ambushes or the long foot patrols. The cold. The wet. The heat.

You don't know that plastic and diesel fuel smell after your friend's truck's been blown up.

(MORE)

KEEN (CONT'D)

You don't know shit about any of this. But you're so defensive, so self-ish, that your response is automatic.

You ever experience death? In your face death?

PECK

My dad died when I was young. But, no. Nothing like tonight.

KEEN

I wonder what he'd think about you now, your father, of what you've become.

PECK

You have no right to talk about my family. You don't know me.

KEEN

What'd your mom think when you joined?

PECK

She was too preoccupied to care. Believe me.

KEEN

With what?

PECK

(exasperation)  
Her entertainment career.

KEEN

Your mom's an entertainer?

PECK

An agent. She represents A-list actors. Not that any of that matters. Like I said, Sergeant, you don't know me at all.

KEEN

I know you run from conflict. How're you gonna make it if you refuse to do what it takes?

Did you not see "Private Ryan" before you signed up?

(MORE)

KEEN (CONT'D)

What do you think we're doing out here? You think our mission is actually about Al Qaeda or the Taliban?

PECK

It isn't?

KEEN

That's higher's fucking mission.

PECK

Then what is our mission?

KEEN

To survive this shit. Our mission is to come back in one piece, both mind and body. That's it.

You do that by taking care of your buddy, by paying attention to detail. That means knowing your job well and doing your part. Team work. There is no 'Army of One.'

Combat survival requires balls of steel. You know why? Because you gotta be a strong mother fucker to put others' needs in front of your own.

It's too easy to be selfish out here. Especially when the shit goes down.

Keen snaps out of preacher-mode.

KEEN

Just make it home, Peck. Once that sinks in, a switch flips in your head. Then nothing will stand in your way. Least of all your state-side ideals and self-manufactured guilty conscience.

The BAG of IED material.

PECK

Can I ask you a question, Sergeant?

KEEN

What.

PECK

How many people have you killed?

KEEN. Caught off guard. He deflates a little.

KEEN

Including this guy?

(beat)

Three. Confirmed.

PECK

That's it?

KEEN

Oh, I've shot at plenty. You will too, before the year's up. A blood count ain't something to brag home to mama about. Those that do are either lying, or they're seriously fucked up inside.

PECK

The squad thinks you have a death wish. That you've lost it.

KEEN

What do you think?

PECK

Volunteering for six deployments?

KEEN

Not true. I'm in units that deploy, a victim of circumstance.

PECK

What about that charge down the hill right now? That was pretty insane, Sar'nt.

KEEN

It was necessary. Everyone has problems, Peck. That ain't license to call them crazy. Your half-ass attitude out here is fuckin' nuts from where I sit.

PECK

Okay, so, I'm a rich kid... looking for validation, running away from my parents, or whatever. What's your issue?

KEEN

We're not going there, Peck. It ain't ever gonna be like that with you and me.

PECK

C'mon, Sar'nt. It's just us.

KEEN

Keep your eye on the fuckin' sector.

Peck. Conversation over. He sights through the Barrett.

KEEN (O.S.)

It's my wife.

Peck listens respectfully.

KEEN

My pregnant wife. She's shackled up with Jody back home.

Keen opens the flood gates.

KEEN

From an orphanage to thirteen years in the Army. Never marrying. Always moving from place to place. A company man.

Then I meet my wife. Pregnant right away. I'm stoked, right, but what happens?

PECK waits.

KEEN

Sergeant First Class Keen, back in the show, again.

PECK

Sergeant First Class?

KEEN

They didn't tell you? I was Blue-four. Third Platoon Sergeant.

Peck. It's all making sense, now.

KEEN

Got busted for striking an officer.

PECK

And that's not insanity?

KEEN

It was that prick my wife was stepping out with.

PECK

Oh.

KEEN

He lost his commission, got kicked out but, I lost my platoon, my rank, and my wife.

PECK

Damn, Sar'nt...

KEEN

Now, I can't see how any of this plays out when I get back. When you're state raised...

(suppressing emotion)

Having your own family becomes real important, y'know...?

They say the Army's a family. Yeah, but not really. A real family trumps Army any fuckin' day of the week.

All my peers are married, making it happen. So I figure, start from scratch. Build my own...

But now, I'm deployed again. And when this year's over, where will they send me? Fuckin' Alaska? Texas? Korea?

How can I be a father if I'm always on the other side of the planet? My child won't even know me. He'll be living a lie with that dip shit, and I'll be...Pff!

(singing cadence)

I'll be airborne, the rest of my life...

Peck. New respect.

PECK

Just find someone else?

KEEN

It took thirteen years to find that one. Nah, I'm done with marriage. I'll just go back to crushing.

Only good thing about this deployment: If I die this time, my kid gets the life insurance, my G.I. Bill...

Peck. Alarm. Keen sees and--

KEEN

Hah! Look, dude, every deployment, a fuck-load of G.I.s shoot themselves over Dear John letters.

Fuck that pussy-ass shit, man. I ain't gone through all this shit, come all this way, just to end it over a who'e.

Nope, if Sergeant Keen goes down, it'll be epic, not over some triflin'-ass bitch.

They both snicker. Keen lays back.

KEEN

Still. You never think it's gonna happen to you. But life goes on, Peck. You gotta choose how it's gonna be. For you.

Anyway, that's why I gotta make it out of here. I'm gonna be a daddy. Something I never had. Okay, sun's almost up. Gimme a six-forty-five wake up call.

PECK

Roger that.

EXT. MOUNTAIN/FOREST - OP WINCHESTER - DAWN

Peck is asleep on the Barrett. His WRISTWATCH reads 06:06.

WE MOVE INTO - THERMAL VIEW

SIX ARMED MEN. The group includes FOUR SECURITY GUARDS, SON #2, SON #4, and BOY arrive at the IED dig site. One Security Guard carries an RPG WITH SPARE ROCKETS.

They look around, prodding the site. Body language suggests they find signs of the struggle. They look up at the mountain, toward the OP. They huddle for quick plan.

Finally, they leave in single file for the mountain. Boy trails the adults. Soon, they're out of view.

BACK TO SCENE

Peck jolts awake. He checks his watch, then the sight. No reaction. Nothing to see.

He swaps the thermals for the daylight scope.

EXT. MOUNTAIN/FOREST - OP WINCHESTER - DAY

SGT Keen quietly loads a magazine into the Barrett. He eases the bolt forward.

KEEN

No movement at all?

PECK

Not since I took over. Gotta drop a gut snake.

KEEN

Full battle rattle. Take my rifle. And do us both a favor... Bury it.

PECK

And... roger.

EXT. MOUNTAIN/FOREST - DAY

Peck finds a level spot on the mountain side, near a tree. He sets his gear down, digs a hole, hangs TOILET PAPER on a branch, drops trou', squats to handle business and--

It starts RAINING. Fat RAIN DROPS soak the toilet paper. Peck reaches for it, but it's too far. He stretches, finally gets a finger on it and--

THE ROLL pops off the branch, rolls down the hill, spooling out paper the whole way. It stops on another bush.

Rain deluge destroys the toilet paper.

Peck is livid. He holds up what paper he's saved. A gooey wad infested with leaf litter. He looks again at the spool down the hill--

MOVEMENT. Far past the toilet paper bush, the ENEMY PATROL consisting of the Sons, Boy, and Security Guards. They climb toward Peck.

PECK. His pants around his ankles. He considers the wet wad, painfully wipes his ass, then pulls his pants up.

Peck scans with the rifle and--

RIFLE OPTIC: Enemy patrol moves right to left. SCAN LEFT. OP Winchester. SGT Keen, the GHILLEY SUIT behind the log. SCAN RIGHT. Enemy moves straight to the OP. Keen's a sitting duck.

PECK. FUCK. He slips on his vest and helmet. He psychs himself. Determined fear. He's going to attack and--

A HAND wraps around his mouth. Yanks him downward. IT'S KEEN!

Hand and arm signal for "shut-the-fuck-up."

KEEN  
(whispers)  
Follow me.

EXT. MOUNTAIN/FOREST - ALTERNATE OP - RAINING - DAY

Keen and Peck slide into a muddy hole. Both the Barrett and the LMG are already set up. 300 meters beneath them is OP Winchester with clear fields of fire. Keen talks quickly.

KEEN  
Saw these assholes right after you left. I baited the OP with the Ghillie suit and a spare barrel. It's wired with their I-E-D. Once it goes off, open up with the L-M-G.

PECK  
Roger.

KEEN  
I'm gonna rush the OP, from right to left, once you get their heads down.

PECK  
Roger.

KEEN  
For this to work, you have to shift your fire to the left, so you don't shoot me by accident.

Peck nods.

KEEN

You don't wanna shoot me, do you  
Peck?

PECK

No.

KEEN

Good. The signal to shift will be  
white smoke. I'm gonna toss two  
frag grenades, then white smoke. So  
boom, boom, white. Say it.

PECK

Boom, Boom, White...

KEEN

You see white, you shift past the  
left tree. Got it?

PECK

Past the left tree. Got it.

KEEN

Cap any squirters coming out the O-  
P. Thermals see through smoke. The  
Barrett's for anything long range.  
Questions?

Peck shakes his head.

KEEN

What's the signal to shift?

PECK

Boom, boom, white.

KEEN

Boom, boom, white.  
(sniffing)  
You shit yourself?

Bewildered look from Peck.

KEEN

Okay--!

Keen takes the M-4 RIFLE and disappears into the forest.

Peck sets up behind the LMG, arranging the SPARE AMMUNITION.  
Fear. He scans and waits. RAIN off the LMG gets in his eye.

He sniffs the air. His nose crinkles. He readjusts the back of his pants.

BOOM! An explosion at the OP.

Peck aims. Waiting. Breathing. He takes the LMG off Safe.

POV: GREY SMOKE clears.

Peck peeps around the thermal sight.

Rain pours as the enemy patrol lamely assaults the OP online. They lower their weapons and guard once they discover the hole isn't manned.

Two Security Guards and Son #4 poke around the hole, entering it. Son #4 probes the Ghilley suit. He stoops to pick it up and--

WHAM! THE 155MM SHELL! The three men are blown apart.

Peck fires the LMG.

Keen, on their flank, sees and--

Remaining enemy take cover. Boy is out of sight.

Keen immediately cooks and tosses two FRAG GRENADES. BOOM, BOOM, followed by the SMOKE.

Peck's fire tears into the log at the OP. The Taliban are pinned down. WHITE SMOKE drifts into the engagement area.

Peck shifts his fire left of the tree.

Son #2 makes a break for it. He runs left into Peck's fire.

THERMAL VIEW: Spraying liquid heat. LMG FIRE cuts him down.

BOY hides behind a tree. Son #2's GUTS SPRAY all over Boy.

The last two Security Guards take cover from the crossfire.

KEEN rushes the position.

PECK. Out of ammo. He works to reload. SAFE. OPEN FEED TRAY COVER and--

1ST SECURITY GUARD has an RPG and BANDOLEER OF MISSILES. He sees Peck's position. He aims the RPG and--

2ND SECURITY GUARD. His chest rips open.

KEEN. Smoking RIFLE and--

RPG SIGHT VIEW: Peck stretches a new AMMO BELT across the--

KEEN (O.S.)

HEY!

1st Security Guard spins, gets a chest full of led from Keen.

THERMAL VIEW: KEEN, over 1st Security Guard, shoots him in the head, point blank. He checks the other bodies with a bullet to the head.

KEEN

PECK! Status!

PECK

Good!

KEEN

Sweep the woods in thermal! Confirm with daylight!

Peck executes.

THERMAL VIEW: Scan the forest. A MOVING HEAT SIGNATURE.

PECK moves to the Barrett.

DAYLIGHT SCOPE VIEW: Boy runs down the mountain.

PECK. Too late for a shot. Boy escapes.

EXT. MOUNTAIN/FOREST - MOVING - DAY

No rain. Keen and Peck are on the move, still soaking wet.

KEEN. WALKING STICK in one hand, HANDMIC in the other.

KEEN

--Roger, Saber X-ray. Six enemy K-I-A. One escaped. The boy from the farm, break...

(beat)

O-P Winchester is compromised. Currently conducting recon for new O-P site. Request immediate extraction, over.

Peck strains to hear Saber X-ray's response as they trek.

KEEN

Roger, over... Crazy Red-two, roger out.

(MORE)

KEEN (CONT'D)  
(sotto)  
Fuck.

Short halt. Keen points to a position for Peck, who takes a knee there. They breathe hard.

PECK  
No recovery?

KEEN  
No recovery, no supplies, no nothing. They got no plan.

PECK  
How're we gonna get outta here?

KEEN  
We need to check our shit. See how much we got left. Let's go.

EXT. MOUNTAIN/FOREST - SUBSEQUENT OP - NIGHT

Keen tries to drink from a canteen. He tips it higher and higher, finally removing his mouth. Nothing's coming out.

KEEN  
Well that's that! Day-five in one hour.

Peck is on the Barrett, observing the farm.

PECK  
I still have a full canteen.

KEEN  
Save it. So I can beat you in the face with it next time you fall asleep on watch.

Peck looks at him.

KEEN  
How else did that patrol get up here? You know they're from the farm. You could've killed us today.

Peck swallows down his guilt.

KEEN  
Cut the thermals off when you're not scanning. That's the last battery.

Peck does.

PECK

Can't they just air drop us more  
shit?

KEEN

They may, now that our cover's  
blown. But since every swingin'  
dick in the valley knows we're  
here...

PECK

They won't risk the choppers.

KEEN

Not for two dudes. And you better  
believe every asshole with an RPG  
is looking to bag a bird.

PECK

(down beat)  
Fuckin' hooah.

KEEN

Exactly.

Peck stares off. Bothered by something.

KEEN

What's up?

PECK

I keep... seeing it.

THERMAL VIEW - SLOW-MOTION

Son #2 gets torn apart by LMG bullets. Spraying liquid heat.

Peck rocks the LMG. Falling rain. No hesitation.

KEEN (V.O.)

The fire fight?

PECK (V.O.)

Keeps playing in my head.

KEEN (V.O.)

It'll fade. But it'll always be  
there.

EXT. OP WINCHESTER/FIRE FIGHT AFTERMATH - SLOW-MO

THE OP. Keen, knee deep in blood and guts. He searches a headless, armless BODY.

PECK. Appalled at--

Security Guard's death stare. He looks like a wax sculpture.

PECK (V.O.)  
They looked fake.

KEEN (V.O.)  
The dead guys?

BACK TO SCENE

PECK  
Yeah.

KEEN  
When you die, the soul leaves the body. That's death.

PECK  
How do I--

KEEN  
First. It's okay to think about it. But don't obsess on it. Rationalize it, then let it go. Second thing. Never personalize it. Remember, it's just business.

PECK  
How can I not personalize it? They were trying to kill me.

KEEN  
No. No, they weren't. They don't know you, Elvis Peckly, from Westwood.

Keen grabs Peck's shirt sleeve.

KEEN  
This is what they were shooting at.  
(grabs the U.S. Flag patch)  
At what it represents. And that's the real horror of war, Peck. It's random. Impersonal. Meaningless.

(MORE)

KEEN (CONT'D)

They don't who we are. That all we want is for them to stop killing us and each other, so we can go home. Instead, they're set trying to kill us because all they have in their Biblical existence is their religion and some fucked up notion that this is another Christian crusade.

Peck let's it sink in.

KEEN

Despite your fuck up, that was still good action today. You did what you had to do. You chose to stay in the fight, and we won. There may be hope for you yet as a Renegade.

Eye contact. Awkward moment.

PECK

So, resupply?

KEEN

Yeah. Let me find out. Twenty-three hundred radio check.

Keen crawls to a nearby tree where the radio is set up.

Peck turns the thermals on, sights through it. His STOMACH GRUMBLES. Peck scowls.

THERMAL VIEW: SCANNING THE COMPOUND. CHICKENS IN THE YARD. A DOG CLEANS HIMSELF.

PECK (O.S.)

(sotto)

Man, this place got all the joints.  
K-F-C... Hotdog on a Stick...

View switches to WIDE VIEW. The whole compound plus most of the valley beyond. A small HOT SPOT moves across the top. The VIEW centers and tracks it.

NARROW VIEW. The same MINIVAN as before speeds toward the farm compound.

PECK (O.S.)

Oh, HELL no...

Peck backs off the sight.

PECK  
Sergeant Keen!

Keen has taken a knee by the tree with the radio. He raises a hand to pause Peck as he finishes with Saber X-ray.

KEEN  
...Crazy Red-two. Roger, out.

Keen moves to Peck.

KEEN  
I've got some--

PECK  
--Wait. Check this out.

Peck offers the Barrett to Keen, who sights through it.

THERMAL VIEW: The minivan stops at the compound gate.

PECK  
Guess who's coming to dinner?

KEEN  
Muther-fucker...

PECK  
(agreeing)  
And, roger.

More SECURITY GUARDS exit and secure the van. Father meets Visitor outside the compound gate, then Father ushers Visitor out of line-of-sight.

KEEN  
Who the hell is this guy?

Three Security Guards from the van enter the compound with WEAPONS and PARCELS. They follow Son #1 to the house.

PECK  
Looks like Visitor dude's leaving  
security dudes with Father dude.

Father and Visitor exit front gate. Father gestures toward the mountain. Visitor listens, then gestures calmly. Father shakes Visitor's hand, then closes himself inside the gate.

Visitor pauses, faces the mountain, then leaves in the minivan.

KEEN switches off the thermals.

KEEN  
They're gone.

Keen. Processing what he's seen.

KEEN (CONT'D)  
I've got good news and bad news.

PECK  
Bad news.

KEEN  
The radio just died. Can't talk to  
Saber X-ray anymore.

PECK  
Ain't war hell.

KEEN  
Here's the real bad news. Wheeled  
extraction's a no-go due to the I-E-  
D threat.

PECK  
Choppers?

KEEN  
The birds don't have sling lifts.

PECK  
Fuck.

KEEN  
They have to land. The only place  
to do that... is down there.

PECK  
Hell no.

KEEN  
We've been ordered to take and hold  
the compound until the extraction  
force arrives at zero-eight-  
hundred, tomorrow morning.

PECK  
Holy shit. Is there any good news?

KEEN  
Yeah. If we live through this, the  
mess hall in Jalalabad will still  
be open for breakfast.

Peck smiles lamely.

KEEN

No, the good news is, we still have most of our ammo, including a Claymore mine. Wish we could've packed those R-P-Gs.

PECK

We'll never make it. It's eleven-fifteen right now, and it's a kay-and-a-half straight down.

KEEN

With all our shit, in zero viz.

PECK

Guess we better... saddle up?

EXT. MOUNTAIN/FOREST - NIGHT

Sound of FLOWING WATER. Keen leads Peck to a ROCK OUTCROPPING that overlooks the compound. Keen gestures for Peck's LMG. Peck gives it to him.

Keen raises the LMG and--

THERMAL VIEW: Scan across the compound. Nearest to them, the back gate. A SECURITY GUARD is exposed above the wall, carelessly smoking.

VIEW REFOCUSES. Past him, the front gate. Another Guard stands on a platform, exposed over the wall.

THEY move out again.

EXT. MOUNTAIN/CREEK BED - NIGHT

Keen leads Peck across a shallow CREEK BED, to a dense TREE LINE along the tall creek bank.

Keen motions Peck online with him. They ascend the bank together. At the top, the OUTER WALL OF THE COMPOUND.

Keen goes to ground. Peck follows his lead.

The MUD PLASTER WALL is ten feet high. They're near the BACK GATE. A SECURITY GUARD flicks a cigarette over the wall, then disappears behind it.

Keen motions for them to back down.

Once below the steep bank, Keen doffs his pack. Peck does likewise. The BUSY CREEK masks their noise.

KEEN

Time check.

PECK

Six-forty-two.

KEEN

Break out that Claymore. I want the C-four inside if it. And put your Kevlar back on.

Peck digs the CLAYMORE MINE from his pack.

PECK

How we gonna get close to that gate without raising the alarm?

Keen pulls the carved WALKING STICK from his pack.

KEEN

That's a damn good question, Elvis.

EXT. FARM COMPOUND/OUTSIDE REAR WALL - NIGHT

Security Guard appears again. He scans the wood line.

KEEN. Against the wall, underneath Security Guard.

PECK gives him a thumbs-up.

KEEN steps away from the wall, raises and draws the PARA-CORD-STRUNG WALKING STICK. It's now a BOW!

SECURITY GUARD'S HEAD is pierced from jaw through top of head, by a crude, 3-FOOT ARROW. He falls noiselessly into a STRAW BALE inside the wall.

EXT. FARM COMPOUND/FRONT WALL - NIGHT

2ND SECURITY GUARD takes an ARROW to the back of his head. He pitches forward, over the wall's edge.

Keen hurries back.

KEEN

And THAT'S what you can do with a knife, there, Elvis. Perimeter guards clear. En-route back.

PECK

(Roger. I'm almost done.)

EXT. FARM COMPOUND/OUTSIDE REAR GATE - NIGHT

Peck runs wire back to the firing position.

Keen rounds the corner, past the gate WIRED WITH C-4. He takes a knee with Peck.

KEEN

Here, gimme that.

Keen takes the CLAYMORE CLACKER. Tests it. Plugs the wire into the clacker.

KEEN

Got your earplugs in?

PECK

Roger.

KEEN

Ready?

PECK

Fuck it.

KEEN

Fire in the hole.

The gate is blown from its hinges.

Keen pushes Peck toward the open gate.

KEEN

Let's go. Double-time!

INT. FARM HOUSE/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Father jumps from bed. Boy runs into the room. Father gives Boy an AKSU, a shortened version of an AK-47, and pushes him into a drape-covered closet, near the stair landing.

EXT. FARM HOUSE - NIGHT

Peck takes a knee inside the gate. Base of fire. Keen goes left and--

PECK'S GREEN NOD VIEW: SON #1 and a SECURITY GUARD, run around the front corner of the house towards Peck. They're armed and--

PECK opens up on them. The IR LASER from the LMG draws a line of BULLET HITS ACROSS THE TWO MEN.

KEEN  
(Alpha, SITREP?)

PECK  
Uh, contact. Two enemy K-I-A.  
Sector clear.

KEEN  
(Roger, good action. Now, get your  
ass up here.)

The view PANS to the back door. Keen waves him over and--

PECK hurries to Keen's position and--

KEEN  
Knock it down!

Peck charges the door, throwing his full weight against it.

INT. FARM HOUSE/KITCHEN

PECK smashes through the door and goes sprawling across the floor. Keen's right behind him. Stairs lead up from the dining room.

FARM HOUSE/BEDROOM

Father hangs up his CELL PHONE. He hands Mother his AK-47. He's wearing an explosive SUICIDE VEST. He heads downstairs.

FARM HOUSE/LIVING ROOM

Keen and Peck have swept and cleared the first floor.

FATHER (O.S.)  
Allah Akbar...!

Father runs into the room. PECK AND KEEN OPEN FIRE as they drop behind furniture.

BULLET HITS spin Father as he blows the vest.

Windows and walls blow out. Keen and Peck fly.

FARM HOUSE/BEDROOM

Mother sobs, the AK on her lap.

EXT. FARM HOUSE - NIGHT

DUST AND DEBRIS. Peck comes-to outside, next to a blown window. He picks himself up.

Suddenly, HANDS grab Peck. It's a SECURITY GUARD. He's got Peck by the throat. Arms wrap around his neck and--

PECK. Caught by surprise. Spins and--

Arms squeezing his neck. He's got a choke hold and--

Peck's frightened eyes. He's going to die and--

FLASHBACK: SENSEI'S look of disapproval and--

FLASHBACK: PECK cries on the dojo mat and--

FLASHBACK: KEEN SEARCHES A HEADLESS BODY and--

PECK in Security Guard's choke hold. Eyes go berserk and--

He grasps the arm around his neck, bows forward, and throws Security Guard over him and--

Peck has him in a REVERSE GUILLOTINE. Peck falls back. He's on the ground now, legs wrapped around Security Guards waist and--

Security Guard's arms flail, his head caught under Peck's armpit and--

PECK. Arms pull. Legs push. EYES wild. Back arching and--

SNAP! Security Guard goes limp.

Peck, on his feet. Adrenaline pumps. He paces around the body and--

He grabs his ACH and the LMG.

SECURITY GUARD. Like a wax sculpture. One eye open in alarm. The other, unnaturally half-closed.

PECK. Back to work.

INT. FARM HOUSE

Peck finds Keen pinned under FURNITURE and RUBBLE.

PECK  
You alright?

KEEN  
(embarrassed)  
Yeah. Where you been?

PECK  
Got held up.

Keen scoops his NODS from the debris. They're destroyed.

KEEN  
Shit, man. Go white light.

They turn on WEAPON-MOUNTED FLASHLIGHTS and AIMING LASERS.

KEEN  
Top floor. Let's go.

Keen leads, back into the kitchen.

#### FARM HOUSE/BEDROOM

FOOT STEPS on the stairs. MOTHER'S eyes say defeat, surrender. She looks at the AK-47 on her lap. Tears run. She approaches the door, intending to surrender.

MOTHER  
(Pashto. No subs)  
Here! Here! I give up! Take this  
weapon...!

#### FARM HOUSE/SECOND FLOOR LANDING

Keen and Peck see Mother screaming, waving an AK. Keen shoots her, PA-POP! She drops.

BOY SEES! He charges from the closet, AKSU BLASTING.

Keen goes down.

Peck shreds Boy with LMG fire, knocking him back, into closet. Splinters and dust.

Peck clears the rest of the rooms, then tends to Keen.

KEEN  
Get me the-fuck outta here.

#### EXT. FARM HOUSE - DAWN

Peck lays Keen on the grass yard.

The DOG BARKS at them frantically.

Keen. BLEEDING from HOLES under his left arm and leg. His breathing wheezes.

PECK  
Your lung's collapsed.

Keen quickly gets worse. He coughs blood. Struggles to breathe.

Peck works to quick disconnect Keens vest. Keen grabs Peck, pulls him close in his struggle to breathe, making it harder.

The dog's barking and--

PECK  
Need to drop your vest...! Get the fuck off me!

Peck surges strength, knocks Keen back on the grass.

Keen blinks at him.

PECK  
Trust me, I got this!

Keen lays passive now as Peck works quickly. Training kicks in. With one move, Peck tears Keens vest off.

PECK  
Okay I'm gonna... Fuck it.

Peck leans forward and tears Keens COMBAT SHIRT open, from the neck seam down, baring his massive chest. Blood ebbs from the hole under his arm pit.

Peck rolls Keen over, searching, then--

PECK  
No exit wound. Bullet's still inside...

Peck scrambles for the FIRST AID KIT. Keen, wheezes and--

Peck's fingers feel between Keen's collar bone and nipple.

PECK  
Can't feel your ribs with all this fuckin' muscle, Sar'nt...

He presses in hard, agitating Keen. Keen coughs up more blood. That damn dog and--

PECK  
I know, I know! Okay, I got it!

Peck places the needle tip of a large catheter.

PECK  
Here we go...!

He holds Keen down then jabs the catheter into his upper chest.

PECK  
Hold on, hold on! I gotta feel the  
pop...

BLOOD wells around the entry point. The catheter sinks deeper. KEEN MOANS and--

PECK  
Gotta be past the bone now. I  
think we're good. Just need the  
pop.

The catheter stops.

PECK  
One last push...

Peck jabs the end down. Keen jolts at the pain.

Blood squirts from the catheter. Peck pulls the catheter, leaving the PLASTIC STENT embedded in Keens chest. Blood blasts out under pressure, but stops quickly.

KEEN takes a deep breath, and it's not wheezy. He breathes easier, but that goddamn dog and--

Peck tapes the catheter in place.

KEEN  
(weakly)  
Fuckin' hooah.

PECK  
Can't tell me I ain't a Combat Life  
Saver!

KEEN  
(in pain)  
Shut your pie-hole.

THE DOG is near them, BARKING non-stop.

KEEN

Dude. Shut that fucking dog--

Peck fires a burst from the LMG. Silence.

He looks at Keen. Keen smiles, then laughs. Peck chuckles.

KEEN

Plug these holes, will you?

PECK

I'm all over it.

Peck opens a field dressing and works to dress Keen's wounds.

KEEN

You got any of that water?

PECK

Hell yeah. Right here, Sar'nt.

Peck gives Keen the canteen.

PECK

(epiphany)

You hungry, Sar'nt? I'm fuckin' hungry.

KEEN

I'm telling you, man... Chow hall's open til nine. I'mma get me some pancakes, bro--

Keen coughs up blood.

PECK

Take it easy, Sarge.

KEEN

Time check.

PECK

Seven-forty.

KEEN

You just bust ass?

PECK

No.

KEEN

You feel that?

Peck puts a hand on the ground.

PECK  
Yeah. I do.

Keen nods to the GUARD PLATFORM near the front wall.

KEEN  
Let's get up there so we can see  
over.

EXT. FARM COMPOUND/FRONT WALL GUARD PLATFORM - DAY

Keen uses the SPOTTING SCOPE to peer over the wall.

KEEN  
Damn.

PECK  
What?

KEEN  
(calmly)  
Tanks.

PECK  
What!

KEEN  
(resigned)  
Three tanks... Here.

Keen gives Peck the spotting scope.

SPOTTING SCOPE VIEW: Three ratty, rusted T-55 RUSSIAN TANKS with 50-70 TALIBAN FOOT SOLDIERS, mounted in a formation of 1980's vintage TOYOTA PICK-UP TRUCKS, approach from deep in the valley.

VISITOR, a bearded warlord, rides atop the middle tank.

PECK lowers the scope.

PECK  
I don't think we're gonna make  
chow.

KEEN  
Here's what I want you to do. Go  
back and get the Barrett.

PECK  
What the hell you gonna do with a  
sniper rifle?

KEEN

Not me. You.

PECK

No fuckin' way...!

KEEN

LISTEN! Follow the river south, up the draw. Set an ambush. You can penetrate tank armor with that SLAP-T ammo.

PECK

What about you?

Keen pulls Peck's LMG close to him.

KEEN

I'll stay. Draw their fire.

Peck shakes his head. He knows it's suicide.

KEEN

Peck. Squadron's already airborne. They'll be here in fifteen minutes, and we have no way to warn 'em. The birds don't stand a chance against those tanks. You know how many dudes fit in a Blackhawk?

That Barrett can take those tanks out. But it's your choice, Peck.

Peck nods. Affirmative, but unsure.

PECK

I'll go. I'll do it.

KEEN

Okay. Leave me your ammo. Just swap vests. Take my rifle, too.

Peck leaves his IOTV on the platform with Keen. He hesitates. Eye contact.

Keen. Grim nod.

We FOLLOW Peck as he runs to the yard to scoop up Keen's vest and rifle. He neglects his helmet.

Out the back gate, into the wood line, down the steep bank, to the creek bed.

The PACKS are under a bush. Peck dons Keen's pack with the Barrett, and concealed by the tall bank, follows the creek up the valley.

EXT. VALLEY FLOOR - DAY

The enemy formation draws closer.

EXT. VALLEY FLOOR/CREEK BED - DAY

Peck keeps low. He peers over the lip of the bank. He's on the enemy flank, in a tree line. The farm compound to his left, the enemy formation approaching on his right.

PECK

Red-two. Red-two-alpha. Radio check.

KEEN (FILTERED)

(Roger, Alpha. Lima-Charlie.)

PECK

Okay, I'm way in front of you now, past the wall and the road.

KEEN

(Set up wherever, as long as you can fire.)

PECK

Roger. Standby...

Peck doffs the gear, sets up the Barrett, then moves further up the creek where he sets up the M-4 rifle. He drops Keen's RIFLE MAGAZINES there, then goes back to the Barrett.

KEEN

(Hurry the-fuck up, Peck!)

PECK dumps the Barrett magazines from KEEN'S PACK, stuffs a RED SMOKE GRENADE in his pocket, then gets behind the Barrett.

PECK

Okay. REDCON one.

KEEN

(Roger. Okay, wait til I start firing. Target the rear tank first. The main body won't notice til it's too late.)

Peck shifts his aim, right.

A T-55 maneuvers through tall grass. On top, a TALIBAN RIDER lounges next to the TANK COMMANDER, his leg draped over the turret.

PECK  
Whenever you're ready.

LMG FIRE erupts from the compound wall.

KEEN. Rocking the LMG, annihilates a PICKUP TRUCK full of DISMOUNTS, killing all TEN MEN plus the DRIVER.

THE TALIBAN FORMATION stops.

Keen reloads behind the top of the wall.

KEEN  
Surprise, mother-fuckers!

Another Taliban TRUCK pulls up. DISMOUNTS jump out to investigate. They don't believe where the fire came from.

Keen crawls right, to another firing point he's built.

KEEN  
(his best Tony Montana)  
Say hello to my little friend.

He opens up with the LMG again. He concentrates on the truck. The driver, the engine hood. SWISS CHEESE and--

BOOM! Flame and shrapnel shred the dismounts.

Keen ducks to reload. Sporadic RETURN FIRE gets increasingly heavy as they pinpoint him.

KEEN  
Okay, Alpha, any fucking time now!

PECK. Aims at the rear tank. The turret has traversed to focus on the action ahead, flanking itself.

Peck fires.

PLINK! A SPARK FLASH on the turret. RIDER'S LEG IS SEVERED below the knee. TANK COMMANDER drops inside. RIDER SCREAMS on top of the turret, holding his BLOOD-SPURTING LEG.

PECK  
I hit it, but nothing happened.

KEEN

(Did you hit the hull, dumb-ass?  
That's where the ammo magazine's  
at. Aim between the road wheels.)

PECK

Okay, standby...

Peck aims at the stopped tank.

The TANK DRIVER is out of his hatch reacting to Rider's screams.

PECK

I can't see the hull. The grass is  
masking it.

KEEN

(That don't mean it's not there,  
fuck-nuts!)

PECK

(concentrating)  
Okay, standby...

KEEN. Taking HEAVY FIRE now. WALL FRAGMENTS rain on him.

KEEN

Yeah, standby my ASS!

An RPG hits the wall nearby. The concussion causes a 55-  
GALLON DRUM on the platform to topple. The lid falls away.

Inside: RPGs and a launcher.

KEEN

(thank you Jesus)  
Fuckin' hooah!

PECK Aims at the lone tank.

THROUGH THE SCOPE: Driver tries to help bleeding Rider. TILT  
DOWN. Grass.

POW! PLINK!

Driver looks around. FLAMES BLAST from the turret hatches,  
incinerating Driver and Rider. The tank turret becomes a lid  
on a pot of boiling lava.

PECK

TARGET!

KEEN. Fires an RPG at a TRUCK full of Taliban troops. Some jump off in time. Most don't. Direct hit. It's blown in half.

A TANK maneuvers to get a shot at the compound.

Keen ducks to reload the RPG.

KEEN

A little help over here!

PECK. Sees the tank and--

He struggles to pivot the Barrett as the tank levels its main gun at the compound wall.

THROUGH THE SCOPE: The tank stops suddenly.

PECK refines his aim but, too late.

BOOM! The tank fires.

PECK checks the compound wall. SMOKE AND DUST. A huge chunk missing from the wall. Taliban CHEERS.

PECK

Red-two... Red-two!

No answer. Pay back time. Peck sights through the Barrett.

THROUGH THE SCOPE: Reticle level, centered below the turret.

PECK

(sotto)

Mother fuckers--

POW! Plink!

The TURRET pops off in a VOLCANO OF FLAME. SECONDARY EXPLOSIONS as tank ammunition cooks off.

Peck backs off the Barrett, scans the field.

The entire Taliban force is looking at him.

The remaining tank, commanded by Visitor, traverses its cannon toward Peck.

Peck drops down behind the bank, drags the Barrett out of sight, then runs for it as HEAVY MACHINE GUN FIRE rips into the position.

At the M-4, he fires rapidly at the approaching dismounts--

The tank turret traverses and--

RPGs LAUNCH as well as TANK MACHINE GUN FIRE.

RPGs hit, knocking Peck off his feet. He's peppered with SHRAPNEL. Dazed, he stumbles back to his primary position to sight through the Barrett.

Peck winces when his cheek touches the Barrett stock.

He brushes at his cheek, dislodging a large SHRAPNEL SLIVER.

BLOOD runs from the SLICE IN HIS FACE, but he's oblivious.

THROUGH THE SCOPE: Visitor's BIG tank cannon points directly at him. They have the drop on him.

TALIBAN DISMOUNTS rush Peck, but block the tank cannon.

BACK TO SCENE

Taliban dismounts close. Peck looks for Keen--

SMOLDERING COMPOUND RUINS

PECK stands. Hands up. Taliban fighters approach.

PECK'S WATCH ALARM goes off.

THE WATCH: 08:00.

VISITOR shouts orders in a HAND-HELD RADIO and--

VISITOR VAPORIZES as 30MM CANNON FIRE punch holes in the turret

ABOVE THE COMPOUND

An AH-64 APACHE LONGBOW HELICOPTER fires a HELLFIRE MISSILE from its hover behind the farm house.

BACK TO SCENE

The tank opens like a steel flower. The SHOCK WAVE knocks Peck off his feet.

INT. BLACKHAWK - IN FLIGHT - DAY

CPT JACK

Great shot Longbow Five-two! Go ahead and clean house.

EXT. APACHE - IN FLIGHT

Apache's nose dips as it glides forward, going to work.

                  LONGBOW 52  
                  (filtered)  
                  (Copy that, Crazy-six.)

EXT. VALLEY FLOOR

ATTACK HELICOPTERS move in, strafing the Taliban force.

They scatter.

                  CPT JACK (O.S.)  
                  (White-one, Crazy-six. Assault,  
                  assault, assault!)

                  WHITE 1 (O.S.)  
                  (Crazy-six, White-one. Roger. White  
                  moving in, time now.)

It's an all-out AIR ASSAULT LANDING, reminiscent of  
Apocalypse Now. BLACKHAWK HELICOPTERS dust-off, dropping  
TROOPS in the tilled field beyond the compound walls.

Once the birds take off, the farthest squad bounds on-line to  
the blasted compound door.

PECK

Groggily stumbles toward the compound.

EXT. FARM COMPOUND/FRONT WALL GUARD PLATFORM RUBBLE

Peck picks his way through smoke and debris.

An ARM juts through wreckage. Peck sees and immediately pulls  
pin and tosses the RED SMOKE GRENADE. He rushes over and  
uncovers--

KEEN. Torn. Shattered. Dead.

Peck kneels by his side.

                  PECK  
                  Sar'nt Keen...!

Keen's eyes struggle open, but he's done.

PECK

Bird's here, Sar'nt Keen.

Keen can't turn his head, but his one good eye looks. His mouth moves, but no sound. Peck leans over him, to hear.

KEEN

Good action, little brother. You did it. I wish I could tell your mom.

Peck fumbles with his FIRST AID KIT. Keen stops him.

KEEN

Don't... Better this way.

Peck. Tears.

PECK

No, Sergeant...

KEEN

Chris... My name's Chris.

Keen sees Peck wearing his IOTV with THE KNIFE.

Peck. Raw emotion.

Keen suddenly pulls Peck close. Eye contact through the gore.

KEEN

(great effort)

No more half-assing, Peck. Follow through with this. Renegades need leaders. Choose to lead!

Lead, goddammit! Lead!

Keen releases Peck and dies.

Peck weeps over Keen's body. He's kneeling in SEIZA. Then, he too, falls over, unconscious.

BLACKHAWK WHEELS TOUCH DOWN

Peck comes-to on a LITTER borne by CPT JACK, 1SG HUNTER, CASTRO, and KNIGHT. He's in tears.

PROPELLER WASH blows the CRAVAT from Peck's head, releasing his hair. CHOPPER BLADES thunder.

PECK  
(delirious)  
Going to the mess hall, Sar'nt  
Keen!

INT. FARM HOUSE/SECOND FLOOR LANDING - DAWN

EXTREME SLOW-MO. BOY'S EYE, small BLOOD DROP underneath it,  
flies back into shadow. THE EYE stares accusingly--

INT. AIRLINER - DAY

PECK jolts awake. Soldiers prepare to disembark the plane.  
Peck blinks away the dream and puts his boots on.

INT. AIRPORT CAUSEWAY - DAY

Peck in a sea of SOLDIERS, MARINES, and AIRMEN.

At the end of the causeway, a line of USO GREETERS, old  
veterans, some from World War II and Korea. They shake hands  
and hug the returning men and women.

Peck tries to by-pass but, an OLD GREETER (late 70s)  
intercepts him. He extends his hand to Peck.

Peck. Tragic. Weary.

Old Greeter. Recognition. Sympathy.

OLD GREETER  
Welcome home, young man.

Peck sees Old Greeter's understanding. He shakes his hand.

OLD GREETER  
Thank you for your service. God  
bless you, son.

Old Greeter embraces him. When Peck pulls back, Old  
Greeter's eyes are moist. Peck is moved.

PECK  
Thank you, sir.

INT. AIRPORT TERMINAL/LOBBY - DAY

ALICIA looks anxiously about the lobby. Seated next to her, Peck's mother, MRS. PECK (late 40's), a high-power agent equipped with cell phone, mini-Poodle, and her assistant, Amy (mid-20's).

MRS. PECK

(on the phone)

...At the airport right now. He's home on convalescent leave!

(dramatic)

The bastards shot my son...

(beat)

No, he's fine. But if there's any scarring...

(beat)

Well he had to. He was stop-lossed.

(beat)

I heard the President was going to lift it soon.

(beat)

Oh, I hope so, too... Did you hear what happened at the Costners'?

Peck wades through the crowd, wearing his assault pack.

Alicia races from the bench and leaps into his arms.

The soul kiss ensues. The kiss breaks. Deep eye contact.

PECK

Hey, babe.

ALICIA

Hey.

MRS. PECK (O.S.)

DAR-LING...!

Mrs. Peck and Amy approach.

PECK

Hi, mom. Hi, Amy.

MRS. PECK

Oh my gawd! What have they done to your face! Amy, schedule Doctor Singii.

Amy whips out her Iphone.

PECK

Mom, I'm fine.

MRS. PECK  
Doctor Singii is the best plastic--

PECK  
It'll be alright. Can we just get  
the fu--  
(catching himself)  
I need to get outta here.

MRS. PECK  
Of course, darling. Are you  
hungry? I made reservations at  
Benihana's...

EXT. AIRPORT

A STRETCHED HUMMER LIMOUSINE waits. It's too much for Peck.

PECK  
(to Alicia)  
Did you drive?

She nods.

PECK  
Actually, if you don't mind, mom,  
Alicia's gonna swing me by In & Out  
real quick.

MRS. PECK  
In & Out? You want a hamburger?  
It's Benihana's. Your favorite.

PECK  
I know. I'm sorry. I'm not up for  
crowds just yet.

Mrs. Peck is hurt.

MRS. PECK  
Suit yourself. We'll be at the  
beach house. C'mon, Amy.

Mrs. Peck and Amy board the limousine.

PECK  
(to Alicia)  
Can we hit a store, too? My civies  
are in storage.

ALICIA  
C'mon...

INT. ALICIA'S VAN - NIGHT

Peck stares out the window at city lights drifting by.

PECK

This country is truly amazing.

ALICIA

It's disgusting.

PECK

It's paradise, Alicia. There are people right now, this minute, still living like it's Biblical times.

Alicia. A look at his strange tone.

EXT. MALL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Peck and Alicia approach her van, BAGS in hand. Peck now matches Alicia's surfer look with baggy jeans and a hoodie.

A CART ATTENDANT (20s) is playing fuck-around while gathering shopping carts. A cart slams into Alicia's van.

PECK

Hey, dude! Shouldn't you watch what you're doing?

CART ATTENDANT

Shouldn't you eat a dick?

PECK

What? What did you say?

CART ATTENDANT

Go. Eat. A dick.

PECK

Watch your mouth before I punch you in the throat.

Cart Attendant moves closer to Peck.

CART ATTENDANT

Just get in your poser van, faggot, before I take your bitch and put her to work.

In an instant, Peck has Cart Attendant pinned to the ground.

ALICIA

Kevin!

PECK

You have no idea who the fuck  
you're talking to, asshole.

ALICIA

Oh my god Kevin, STOP!

PECK

I don't expect you to know I just  
got off the plane from fucking  
Afghanistan, but even a turd like  
you should show respect your fellow  
man. No matter who it is.

Peck twists Cart Attendant's wrist. He screams. Alicia  
starts the van.

PECK

I refuse to be dissed by anyone  
when we sacrifice so much for the  
very freedom you have to work your  
shitty little job, without fear of  
getting blown up.

CART ATTENDANT

I-- I--

Tires SCREECH as the van charges out of the parking space.

ALICIA

Kevin, get in the fucking van!

CART ATTENDANT

I'm sorry, man...! I APOLOGIZE!

PECK

Have a nice day, asshole.

Peck releases him. His anger not satiated, he rams the  
shopping cart into Cart Attendant as he lays on the asphalt  
clutching his shoulder.

ALICIA

Let's go!

INT. VAN

They drive away. Peck seethes. A tear escapes his eye as he  
stares out the window. He wipes it away.

ALICIA  
What the fuck was that shit!

EXT. FARM HOUSE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Peck has SECURITY GUARD in a REVERSE GUILLOTINE.

Peck. Arms pull. Legs push. EYES wild. Back arching and--  
SNAP! Security Guard goes limp.

BACK TO SCENE

Peck looks sick.

PECK  
Pull over! PULL OVER!!!

EXT. CITY STREET - CONTINUOUS

The van lurches to a stop. Peck is already out the door.  
Vomit explodes from him. Alicia rushes to him with napkins.

PECK  
We're dying over there, Alicia.  
Good people are dying for assholes  
like that, so all y'all don't get  
blown up at work anymore.

It's unacceptable. "Thank you for  
your service?" Gimme a fucking  
break.

Alicia. Quiet guilt.

INT. BEACH HOUSE - NIGHT

Peck and Alicia enter the front door with IN & OUT DRINKS and  
SHOPPING BAGS. The house is dark.

PECK  
Guess my mom's still--

House lights slam on.

GROUP (O.S.)  
SURPRISE!!!!

Everyone's there, young and old, entertainment industry  
types, friends of Mrs. Peck, Peck's buddies and girlfriends.

MRS. PECK  
Welcome home, baby. I invited  
everybody over while you were out.  
(to the DJ)  
HIT IT!

A DJ starts the MUSIC. Peck makes his way in, greeting people. He trades glances with Alicia. She looks concerned.

I/E. BEACH HOUSE - LATER - NIGHT

Alicia pick's her way through the party to Mrs. Peck.

ALICIA  
Have you seen Kevin?

MRS. PECK  
I think he's outside, sweetie.

Alicia grabs a blanket from the couch as she goes outside. She surveys the jacuzzi, full of wasted TWENTY-SOMETHINGS, including Leon.

PECK gazes at the--

FULL MOON

Hovers over the ocean. PULL BACK. Only now, it's OP Winchester. Surrounded by trees, Peck looks at the moon, wearing the cravat and camouflage face paint.

ALICIA (O.S.)  
Hey, you...

BACK TO SCENE

Peck starts. He looks at Alicia. They're standing above the beach at Peck's house.

PECK  
It wasn't even a week ago.

ALICIA  
What?

Peck shakes his head.

Alicia opens a GATE to a STAIRCASE down to the beach.

ALICIA  
Come with me.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Crashing, moonlit surf. Peck and Alice kiss passionately next to a CAMP FIRE. Alicia forces Peck flat on his back.

She breaks the kiss, sits up, doffs her flannel, revealing a string bikini. Confidently, she bares her large bosoms.

Alicia leans forward, smothers him in flesh. She nibbles his neck and ears, turning him to face the fire.

Flames. Pounding surf. Big flickering flames--

INT. FARM HOUSE/SECOND FLOOR LANDING - DAWN

Huge LMG blast envelope. Peck, at the top of the landing, firing into the closet. Splinters and dust.

EXTREME SLOW-MO. Boy's EYE, a small blood drop underneath, falling backward into shadow. POUNDING SURF.

The EYE. Falling backward and--

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Peck sits up.

ALICIA

Are you okay?

(covering up)

You've never turned down my charms before.

PECK

I know. Sorry.

ALICIA

You want to talk about it?

PECK

This is too surreal right now. I need some time.

He rests his head on her chest. She strokes his hair.

ALICIA

I'm here if you need me.

PECK

Going running tomorrow. You down?

ALICIA  
You? Running? Since when?

PECK  
Since I need to.

ALICIA  
I'll try not to leave you behind.

EXT. MALIBU NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Peck and Alicia jog, sweat soaked. Alicia points to a house.

ALICIA  
That's me. You want to shower at  
my place? I still have some of your  
clothes.

PECK  
Dude, are you horn-dogging me?

Alicia smiles.

PECK  
You really want the D, don't you?  
Don't you?

ALICIA  
(laughing)  
Yes, mother fucker!

PECK  
Lead on, then!

He follows her as she peels off the road.

INT. AIKIDO DOJO/OFFICE - DAY

Sensei works at a desk. O.S., A DOOR CHIME jingles. Sensei  
investigates.

PECK, at the entrance, stares at the empty training mat.

SENSEI  
Peck-san!

Peck bows. Sensei returns it.

PECK  
On leave. Just wanted to stop by.

Sensei sees something is wrong.

SENSEI

You wish to retake black belt exam?

PECK

No, I... I no longer need to test myself in combat.

Sensei. Grim understanding. He produces a folded BLACK BELT from inside his GI.

SENSEI

Tell me, Peck-san. Why you think this symbol of honor and maturity is black, color of Death?

Peck. Off guard.

SENSEI

True test of worth is actual combat. Result of which is death of innocence... for which we mourn rest of life.

Sensei bows, making a formal presentation of the belt.

Peck bows, surprised. Humbled. He accepts it.

SENSEI

Congratulations, Peck Sensei. You honor me as our newest instructor.

Peck recovers from his bow, deeply moved.

SENSEI

You, above all others, are worthy to wear this symbol of experience.

FADE TO:

INT. KANDAHAR AIR BASE/DINING FACILITY - DAY

A MULTICAM UNIFORM: PECK, PFC, U.S. ARMY. A TRAY OF FOOD slides to a stop on a table. PANCAKES.

Sound of CHOPPER BLADES...

EXT. FOB CAROL HELIPAD - DAY

BEATING CHINOOK BLADES. PECK. FULL BATTLE RATTLE, a single DUFFEL BAG, and a MANILA ENVELOPE. He sees--

THE CAVALRY GUIDON.

CPT JACK (V.O.)

You can be who you want to be,  
here, but it's a choice you have to  
make...

KEEN (V.O.)

No more half-assing, now, Peck.  
Follow through...

INT. TROOP CP - DAY

Peck enters. He looks bigger. 1SG HUNTER looks up from his  
computer.

1SG HUNTER

Well, well...

Peck removes his ACH. THE HAIRCUT. Hard core. Tactical  
Mohawk.

1SG HUNTER

Whoa... Welcome back, Peck.

PECK

First Sergeant.

CPT JACK (O.S.)

What? Did I hear that right?

CPT Jack leans from his office door.

CPT JACK

Peck! Damn. You're looking fit.

Peck fiddles with a NEW WEDDING BAND on his finger.

PECK

Yes, sir.

1SG HUNTER

We've got a slot for you in  
headquarters, Peck. Don't know if  
you heard but, stop-loss was lifted  
last week. After all you've been  
through--

PECK

--Actually, Top. I'd like to get  
back to the Renegades as soon as  
possible. I, uh... I reenlisted in  
Jalalabad. Here's the paperwork.

Peck hands 1SG Hunter the manila envelope.

1SG HUNTER takes it. He eyes Peck with a quiet pride.

PECK (CONT'D)

I figure with Sergeant Yankee and Sergeant Keen gone, the platoon could use a little help.

CPT JACK

Fuckin' hooah!

1SG HUNTER

We'll take all we can, son. All we can.

EXT. FOB CAROL - ENROUTE TO TENT AREA - DAY

Peck follows 1SG Hunter through the maze of JERSEY BARRIERS. 1SG Hunter produces CORPORAL RANK, hands it to Peck.

1SG HUNTER

Here. C-O wants you to have these.

PECK

Corporal stripes?

1SG HUNTER

You got a problem with that? C-O's got a hard on for you, Peck. You took out two fucking tanks with a sniper rifle. That takes huge fuckin' balls, son.

Volunteering to go back to the Renegades, after what you went through, sealed the deal. Troop needs men like you. To lead.

PECK

I'm not all that, Top. I just think I can help these guys make it back home. If my actions inspire the guys to step up their game, then okay. I figure we'll all be better off. Sergeant Keen would've wanted it that way.

1SG HUNTER

I got something else for you.

INT. 1SG HUNTER'S TENT

PECK follows 1SG Hunter in, but stops in his tracks. 1SG Hunter sees Peck staring--

Keen's ARMORED VEST. Torn. Burnt. Keen's name still on it.

1SG HUNTER  
Been meaning to turn that in. The plates are shattered. It's useless, now.

PECK  
It saved my life.

1SG Hunter produces a box filled with personal affects.

1SG HUNTER  
We're sending all his stuff to his family.

Peck lifts the TRAIL MASTER KNIFE from the box, the sheath and hilt still dirty from combat. He draws the black blade, worn with use, but the edge, bright silver.

1SG HUNTER  
Everyone knows whose knife that was. You put that on your kit, you better live up to it.

PECK  
I'm ready this time, Top. I made my choice. I won't let him down.

1SG HUNTER  
Good. Start with inspections. Gear, weapons, uniforms. We begin by assessing. Find problems and fix 'em.

PECK  
Roger, First Sergeant.

1SG HUNTER  
Well, Corporal, don't let me stop you.

INT. RENEGADE RANCH - DAY

Peck enters. SGT Baird's cot is near the entrance. Peck confers with him silently. SGT Baird gives him a thumbs up. Peck turns to the tent.

PECK  
Alright, listen up! My name is  
Corporal Peck. I'm the Bravo Team  
Leader. I want Bravo outside with  
all their shit in thirty seconds.  
We're having a layout.

Two Privates jump from their cots. PVT SMITH and PVT WESSON.

TOGETHER  
Roger Sergea-- CORPORAL!

PECK  
Hold on. Your name is Smith... and  
you're, Wesson?

TOGETHER  
Yes, Sergea-- uh, Corporal!

PECK  
Unbelievable. Well, carry on.

They gather their gear.

MONROE is kicking back in a chair at the card table with  
CASTRO and KNIGHT.

PECK  
You're in Bravo, ain't you, Monroe?

MONROE  
(sotto)  
This fuckin' guy...  
(to Peck)  
Oh, uh... My shit's good, Corpse.

PECK  
You know, you shouldn't tip your  
chair like that. It ain't safe.

Peck sweeps the chair leg with his foot, causing Monroe to  
crash to the floor.

SGT BAIRD rolls up from his cot. Castro and Knight are on  
their feet.

Peck already has Monroe pinned and in pain.

PECK  
Let me fuckin' tell you something.  
What I say goes for everyone on my  
team.

(MORE)

PECK (CONT'D)

I ain't got the mother-fucking time to fight the Taliban and a smart-ass E-three like yourself, been passed up for promotion.

Challenge me again, and I'll put you in the hucklebuck faster'n you can say, Chuck Norris. You feel me?

MONROE

Roger, Corporal.

PECK

Now, you get your shit outside, and maybe you can help me square these two numb-skulls away before they get our asses killed.

MONROE

Roger Sergea - I mean - Corporal!

Peck releases Monroe who scrambles his gear outside.

Castro. Knight. SGT Baird. Mouths agape at Peck's audacity.

Peck pauses on his way out.

PECK

You guys have a good one, huh?

EXT. FOB CAROL/ECP - SLOW-MOTION - DAWN

A gritty line of GUN TRUCKS parked in the mud. MONROE mans the GUN TURRET in the lead truck.

A SOLDIER outside the lead Humvee's open, RIGHT DOOR, his back toward us. He gives a HAND-AND-ARM SIGNAL for, "Are you ready?" to the line of M-RAPS behind.

Each M-RAP MACHINE GUNNER raises their right hands in return.

The Soldier gives a thumbs up, then turns. It's PECK, KEEN'S TRAIL MASTER KNIFE attached, upside down, to his VEST. He has become The Warrior.

He closes himself inside his UP-ARMORED HUMVEE, then motions his driver, PVT WESSON, to move out.

Peck leads the formation out of the ECP.

FADE OUT.