

EXT.- MCDONOGH FARM - DAY

The McDonough farm is in a rural area outside of Seymour Indiana. It is early in the morning during the first week of May 2024. Randall Allen McDonough walks from his white dairy barn to the back of the farmhouse. He enters through the back door. While May, it is still cool.

Randall Andrew McDonough is in his mid-40s and is dressed in a work shirt, worn jeans, work boots, and an old jacket. He is a farmer. He is of average height and size, moderately good-looking with a piercing gaze. He is called Randall by his friends and family. RAM is his nickname.

His wife is Karen, also in her mid-40s with blonde hair and is dressed in jeans and a work shirt.

RAM

Morning.

KAREN

Did you finish?

RAM

I'll finish the herd after breakfast.

KAREN

It's not a herd, three cows, big mac, quarter pounder, and the baconator.

RAM

Careful, they'll hear you and are very sensitive.

KAREN

They are the reason we still get up at 5 am around here.

RAM

They still give milk.

KAREN

Not much and have you not noticed, we don't drink milk anymore.

RAM

Rusty?

KAREN

Drinks coffee in the mornings.

RAM

We could get some more.

KAREN

For what and how could you handle more?

RAM

We could get help.

KAREN

How?

RAM

You could have another kid.

KAREN (LAUGHING)

No, I cannot. They also take 18 years to grow, don't start helping out till 15, are very expensive and what makes you think she will want to be any more of a farmer than the first one?

RAM

She?

Karen laughs and puts food on the table.

Enter from the stairs Randall Allen McDonough Jr., nicknamed Rusty, a strapping kid of 18, full of life and wearing a high school football jacket. He is a good-looking lad with his father's chin and his mother's intelligence. He pours himself a cup of coffee, grabs a piece of toast, and sits down at the table.

RUSTY

Sorry dad, I was up late doing homework.

RAM

You're in your last month of high school. The hardest thing you have to do is write your name.

RUSTY

Can I take the truck, we have a field trip and there's no bus home.

RAM

It's a work truck, no work, no truck.

RUSTY

How am I going to get home?

RAM

You look like you're in good shape,  
how far did you run in practice?

RUSTY

It's six miles! Sure you used to  
walk it both ways uphill in a  
snowstorm.

RAM

You forgot while carrying your  
uncle.

RUSTY

Great, (he gets up), I can't wait  
to leave. (walks out the back  
door).

RAM (LOOKS AT KAREN)

Did he mean leave today, or like  
for good? Field trip? That one?

KAREN

Yes, it's that day.

RAM

Maybe we could cancel it.

KAREN

No, we couldn't.. He needs to know  
about his dad. YOU need him to know  
about his dad.

RAM

He doesn't want to know about his  
dad, his dad's a farmer.

KAREN

Let him see the whole you and then,  
the two of you can have a  
conversation.

Walks up behind her at the sink.

RAM

You know you're pretty smart.

KAREN

Let me sleep in and I'm a lot  
smarter, cowboy.

EXT - MCDONOGH FARM MAILBOX - DAY

Rusty is seen standing by the mailbox as a yellow school bus pulls up, he opens the door and enters. The door closes and the bus pulls away.

INT - SCHOOL BUS - DAY

Rusty walks to the back, between all the kids. Like all school buses the freshmen kids are made to sit at the front, sophomores and juniors next, and the seniors are at the back.

As he walks by them:

FRESHMAN BOY

No work, no truck buddy.

FRESHMAN GIRL

The cows don't milk themselves  
Rusty.

FRESHMAN BOY (MIMICKING AN OLDER MAN)

You're not much of a farmer, eh my  
boy?

Rusty goes to the very back of the bus and sits down on the rear couch next to his friend, Jake. He is also wearing a school football jacket. Jake is huge. Over 6-4 and strong, not fat. You can see they've been friends for a long time. They are comfortable in each other's presence.

RUSTY

Why do we let the freshman on the  
bus?

JAKE

Pard, it's kind of their bus. Why  
are you on it?

RUSTY

Didn't get up.

JAKE

That must be the farmer in you.

RUSTY

So why are you here? Where's your  
car?

JAKE

The sheriff took it.

RUSTY

The sheriff just can't take your car. There has to be a reason, written papers, hearings, that kind of stuff.

JAKE

Yea, I know but he just took it.

RUSTY

I thought he was your uncle?

JAKE

No, I think he's related to my mom somehow.

Rusty just rolls his eyes.

RUSTY

What did your mom say?

JAKE

Don't mess, (all of the kids in the back join in) with Sheriff Tim. But why, he's all of five foot nothing, 100 and nothing pounds. I've never heard of him doing anything.

Nadira is sitting in the seat next to the boys. Also a high school senior she has been raised with the boys. She is a striking beauty from the Mideast.

NADIRA

Everyone indeed says that, my dad says to show him the utmost deference. He also says to treat your dad in the same manner Rusty.

RUSTY

By being nice to me? Why don't we fall in love or at least lust? I ache for you. We could make love right now on the floor of this bus.

(Girls giggle.)

JAKE

It's a very clean floor.

NADIRA

No, he says THE RAM, not just any RAM. My mom wants me to be a doctor and says don't touch boys. My dad says if the little RAM, meaning you, so much as touches me he will;

(she makes a cutting motion with her fingers as scissors).

JAKE

You know buddy the floor would be cold.

RUSTY

Getting chilly.

JAKE

Why is everyone so deferential to your dad?

RUSTY

Got me. I do know that when we go to the co-op with a load of corn, all the other pick-ups waive us to the head of the line. Every time. I asked Dad once and he said I can't get them to stop. I said I didn't know why you'd want them to stop but he never said why. Nadira are you going on the field trip? Can we get a ride?

NADIRA

It's mandatory even if dumb. My dad may give you a ride home if you show the proper respect.

They drive by the General Store. A blonde man is sweeping the sidewalk and he waves vigorously at the bus as it drives by.

JAKE

Nadira, why does your dad employ the village halfwit?

NADIRA

He's very nice and you should not talk bad about him at all.

INT - NATIONAL GUARD ARMORY - DAY **2024**

The seniors, about 10 of them, are waiting in the entranceway of the National Guard armory. An unhappy crowd that includes Rusty, Jake, and Nadira.

Mr. Smith enters. He is in his late 40's. Neatly dressed in a suit with a bow tie. Walks with a cane.

ONE OF THE SENIORS

Is that the mayor?

JAKE

No, but more important, he's the manager of the co-op.

Mr. Smith ushers the kids into a meeting room with about thirty chairs and a raised platform. The front wall of the room is covered from top to bottom in drapes. There are pictures and slogans on all the walls. He takes a chair and places it on the edge of the platform facing the kids. He urges them to take a seat.

JAKE (CONT'D)

I've never been in this room before.

MR. SMITH

Please make yourself comfortable. Get settled in as this may take a while. I seldom give this talk but today I thought it was important.

I have to tell you about a call-up, a mission some 18 years ago. It's part of the history of this town and in fact, part of some of your history.

We keep it pretty quiet but have decided this is the time you should hear the whole story.

BLONDE KID

We're not going to join the National Guard.

MR. SMITH - NOT USED TO BEING INTERRUPTED

I am not recruiting you. You can make your own choices. I just offer a few explanations.

In 2006 we received a notice...

INT - NATIONAL GUARD ARMORY - DAY 2006

Same room, same platform, no drapes in front, and a lighter color paint on the walls. Ten people are in the room. A younger RAM in his 20s is in front of the room behind a podium. Mr. Smith is standing beside him. RAM wears lieutenant's bars and Smith is sporting a sergeant's chevron on his shoulder. They are both in uniform. The audience is not in uniform.

They include:

BUBBA-RAMS's good friend and also huge. Real name Jake.

HAL-A blonde-haired blue-eyed dream boat with a quick wit and bright smile. The ladies' favorite.

BECKA-One of two women dressed in matching waitress uniforms. A 20-something who is often smiling. She has known most of these people her whole life.

STONE-Not her real name she is a slender B/F who gives as good as she gets. Currently a student she is in the National Guard for the GI college benefits.

DEPUTY TIM- In 2006, a diminutive sheriff's deputy. In 2024, the Sheriff.

Three other guardsmen.

BECKA TO STONE  
How's class going?

*Stone remembers her last class. She is in a lecture hall at the local school. Her poly-sci professor is prowling the front of the room looking for victims. He looks at her over his glasses.*

PROFESSOR  
*Ms. Sloan, how would you characterize this country's success at war?*

*He motions her to stand up. She stands up and pulls out some reading glasses which she puts on and then looks at him over the glasses much to the amusement of the class.*

STONE  
*Poorly.*

PROFESSOR  
*Surely now, we have won most of our battles.*

STONE  
*I am talking about the war on poverty, the war on drugs, the battle for equality.*

PROFESSOR  
*I meant the actual battles.*

STONE

*Look, I know a lot more poor kids doing drugs than any Asian people hiding in the jungle half a world away.*

*The class cheers.*

Becka and Stone are sitting in the second row and Bubba comes in and sits next to Stone.

BUBBA

How ya doing, sweetie-pie?

STONE

I am not your sweetie-pie, cutie, or any such colloquialism. Please use my proper name or Amazon Queen if you must. What is your buddy up to, Bubba?

BUBBA

Please use my proper name or "Farmer God" if you must.

BECKA

What's up, Bubba?

Tim comes in and sits on the other side of Bubba.

TIM

Is this a prank Bubba?

BUBBA

Guys stop asking me, I have no idea. Tim, don't you think this is a little elaborate for a prank? Look, Smith's here.

Hey, I heard you had a run-in with Thompson.

*Deputy Tim is sitting in a police cruiser when a pickup truck comes flying down the road swerving side to side with the stereo blasting. Obviously drunk, Tim turns on the lights and siren in an attempt to stop him. The drunk pulls into a club parking lot, the large driver gets out of the truck and waves Tim away. He enters the club.*

*TIM STOPS AND PICKS UP HIS RADIO.*

*Unit 71, I'm at Millers on Sawdust Road. Could I get a back-up?*

*Sheriff Marsh happens to be in the call center next to the dispatcher.*

*SHERIFF*

*Who is it?*

*TIM*

*I think it's one of the Thompsons.*

*SHERIFF*

*Older or younger.*

*TIM*

*Older.*

*SHERIFF*

*Back-up in about 30 minutes.*

*The sheriff turns to the dispatcher and tells her.*

*SHERIFF (CONT'D)*

*You bump him in 10 minutes and see if he's en route with a prisoner. If he doesn't respond, notify me and send an ambulance.*

*Tim looks at his radio with a resigned look on his face. He walks into the business and stops behind Thompson who is leaning on the bar. He is about 6-6, 300 pounds.*

*TIM*

*Sir, I think we need to have a conversation outside.*

*Thompson just waives his hand without even looking. He finally turns around, sees Tim, and starts laughing.*

*THOMPSON*

*YOU!*

*TIM*

*I believe this would be better outside without disturbing the people or the furniture.*

*THOMPSON*

*I ain't going anywhere with you!*

*TIM SLOWLY*

*If your man enough?*

*Thompson seems like he can't believe his ears. He is mumbling while he staggers outside. He stands on the sidewalk ready to fight.*

*Tim walks outside and stands about 15 feet from him. He waives to Thompson to move left. Thompson does not understand but moves left. Tim waives him further left again.*

*TIM*

*You are under arrest for DWI. Would you like to come quietly, sir?*

*THOMPSON*

*You little shit, I'm going to ...*

*He never finishes his sentence. Tim has taken out a taser from a cross-draw holster on his belt and shot Thompson in the chest. Thompson freezes, shakes all over his body, and falls onto a glider behind him.*

*All the patrons of the bar have come out to see the fight. Tim addresses them.*

*TIM*

*We have recently introduced an improved version of the Taser electronic device as part of the county's protective gear. This model shoots two prongs into the subject which forms a circuit and by simply pulling on this trigger completes the circuit.*

*He does and Thompson screams.*

*TIM (CONT'D)*

*Sorry.*

*This version takes a video of every cartridge shot due to the foresight of our Sheriff Marsh...*

*From the back.*

*THOMPSON'S BROTHER*

*What did you do to my brother?*

*A second large drunk man charges down the stairs. He is swearing and threatening Deputy Tim. He runs right up to hit him and..*

*The deputy shoots him with the Taser as well.*

TIM  
... is equipped with multiple cartridges.  
Some people clap.

TIM TO BUBBA  
Mostly technology.

The meeting starts.

RAM  
We received a notice from the  
Pentagon in the form of a special  
callout activating part of our  
National Guard unit. If you're  
here, you're a part of it.

TIM  
I have not heard of any floods and  
there's no civil unrest I am aware  
of.

RAM  
No, this is a call-up to  
Afghanistan.

Much talk.

BECKA  
Very funny RAM, but I have to get  
back.

MR. SMITH.  
It seems we have the most people  
that are certified to run a  
bulldozer so all of those so  
certified will be sent to  
Afghanistan for a limited mission  
of short duration.

STONE  
I can't go, I have a test on  
Friday.

MR. SMITH  
It is listed as a non-combat  
mission so everyone certified must  
go.

STONE TURNS TO BECKA  
Is this when you had us play with  
those machines last summer?

(MORE)

STONE TURNS TO BECKA (CONT'D)  
 Now we're certified, Becka, how  
 could you?

BECKA  
 Sorry, I thought it'd be fun.

STONE  
 FUN, FUN!

GUARDSMAN  
 How long is the training?

RAM  
 This is a limited callout based on  
 skills. Most of the rules do not  
 apply. I expect the mission to last  
 no more than two weeks and they  
 will skip the six months of  
 training. We are to be in-country  
 in the next week or so.

Utter silence

Take some time to process and I'll  
 answer what individual questions  
 that I can.

Bubba approaches Ram at the front of the room, pulls him  
 aside and says;

BUBBA  
 We need to talk, pard.

INT - SEYMOUR - DAY

Ram is sitting in front of a desk in a bank lobby. An  
 attractive young girl with Karen on her nameplate is behind  
 the desk. It is his wife, 18 years ago.

RAM  
 I have to go away.

Karen notices the ring box in Ram's hand.

KAREN  
 Is this a bribe or a negotiation?

RAM  
 A little of both.

Jake is sitting in a kitchen. He is holding both hands of a girlfriend we subsequently find is named Melissa. No dialogue but we can see the look of concern on her face.

Hal is sitting at a picnic table with four young women.

HAL

You're gonna lose your best lover  
for a while.

GIRL 1

Is Bill leaving too? She gets up.

GIRL 2

Sometimes adequate at best, she  
leaves as well.

GIRL 3

What's your name again? She follows  
the other two.

GIRL 4

I like you, Hal, even if in a sort  
of puppy dog way.

She leaves and Hal gets up to follow them, pleading his case.

Becka is in the diner. She has four weekly schedules up and it trying to explain them to the manager. You can tell by his expression, he's completely lost.

BECKA

The staff will know how to follow  
this but you need to know if  
someone calls in sick or is late.

EXT - FORWARD OPERATING BASE CALYPSO-DAY 2006 AFGHANISTAN

RAM and his troop of guardsmen are escorted to the headquarters of the operating base. They are walked behind the headquarters where they find an older model Caterpillar D3C. It is painted US Army green and is attended to by two army mechanics.

Joining them as they watch the dozer is the base commander, Major Hernandez, a bald H/M who is no-nonsense, and a CAPTAIN Scott, a 35 year old B/M, his adjunct.

MAJOR HERNANDEZ

Which one of you pencil dicks brought women on my forward operating base.

MR. SMITH

The officer who prepared these orders for a noncombat mission, you can see his name here. Someone named Hernandez. If the orders are wrong, you can sign off here and we'll head back.

He wants to say something to Smith, thinks better of it, and turns to Stone. He points at Stone and says:

MAJOR HERNANDEZ

You, show me what you can do.

Stone, who does not like being pointed out, gets on the dozer. She starts the motor and swings it on the right track and back on the left. She drops and raises the blade and points it at the commander.

STONE

Where do you want it?

The major looks at Becka.

MAJOR HERNANDEZ

You, what's a PTO?

BECKA

The power take off. It's the little doohickey on the back of a tractor that's about halfway up that gives power to all your appendages.

She raises her index finger and twirls it around in a somewhat offensive manner.

The major turns around and walks into the command post signaling RAM and Mr. Smith to join him.

Ram looks at Becka and says with some force.

RAM

BECKA!

INT - COMMAND POST - DAY

Major Hernandez, Captain Scott, RAM, Mr. Smith, and several other officers are standing in the middle of the command post looking at a map of the mountains.

MAJOR HERNANDEZ

It's simple really. From this mountain, you can see all the trails in the valley's North, South, and West. The East are plains so from up here we can track most of the Taliban's movements in this sector. There is a 40-yard-wide spot at the top.

We want you to make it 75 yards wide so we can helicopter in a team and remove them on short notice. An observation post.

We have two heavy lift birds coming up tomorrow to take you and the dozer up to the top. I will give you five Rangers for security, and you can take five of your folks to work the dozer. How long will it take you to clear that area?

RAM

Sir, it's not that easy. I would have to know the soil composition, type of rock, slope, and perhaps elevations.

MAJOR HERNANDEZ

And if it's topsoil and loose gravel.

RAM

Well, that would be a fairly quick job, a day or two.

MAJOR HERNANDEZ

And if it's granite?

RAM

You would not move it with a dozer. A series of large-scale demolitions by a skilled crew, not us.

MAJOR HERNANDEZ

Okay, so you go up tomorrow and see if it can be done. Either way, we'll know. Excellent, Captain Scott, please take these troops down to the airfield and get them straightened out.

Lieutenant, leave no equipment behind that the enemy can use and we should return the mountain to its original configurations when finished.

Ram just stares for a moment and leaves with Sgt. Smith. .

MAJOR HERNANDEZ TO AN OFFICER

Headquarters said they could get to it in six months and using these guys, I could be done tomorrow.

EXT - OUTSIDE COMMAND POST - DAY

SGT. SMITH

Who you gonna take?

RAM

Jake and Hal are the best operators. Between the three of us, we can get it done.

SGT. SMITH

Okay, what about the girls?

RAM

They can barely operate; you keep them down here.

SGT. SMITH

You think they're safer down here with the 200 soldiers or up in the mountain with you for a day. Besides, I think Becka's in heat or something.

RAM

One day, no more.

SGT. SMITH

Randall, they're shooting at each other around here. Do you want me to go?

RAM

No, I knew this might happen someday. A test of faith. We're just going to clear some land, not go to war.

EXT-HELICOPTER PAD FOB-DAY

Ram is meeting SGT MARTINEZ by a sled. The sled is a rectangular opened-topped equipment locker that can be transported by helicopter, an open ISU(International Sling Unit.) Sgt Martinez is a young Ranger, lean and lethal. His four other Rangers are checking equipment. The National Guard troops going up the mountain are being fitted with gear on the tarmac.

SGT. MARTINEZ

Lieutenant, Philip Martinez, Ranger Battalion. He shakes his hand.

RAM

Randall McDonough, but you should know they call me RAM.

SGT. MARTINEZ

Yeah, who did that to you?

RAM

My dad, but long before they had the truck brand.

SGT. MARTINEZ

Okay, Lieutenant what you have here is a standard sled with three days' worth of gear. Radio, Medkit, food, and water. Some construction stuff, it looks like some explosives, minimum camp gear.

RAM

All the comforts of home.

SGT. MARTINEZ

Not really, it will be cold at night and the air is thinner. You'll not need oxygen but move slower. Are you bringing them?

RAM

Who?

SGT. MARTINEZ

The women. This mountain can be climbed. You don't need equipment to get to the top and the Taliban are mountain people. If they know you're there, they'll come.

RAM

And you're going to protect us.

SGT MARTINEZ

We'll try but there's only five of us and lightly armed. We can provide security but not fight a major battle.

RAM

With any luck, we'll be done tomorrow.

EXT - FOB LANDING PAD - DAY

Two Chinook 47D land on the pad and we see a series of shots with the engineers from the chinooks showing the National Guard troops and Rangers how to hook up the sled and bulldozer to the lines and hooks.

The Chinooks take off and the 10 members of the mountain force are seen boarding a helicopter.

The troop helicopter catches up to and passes the heavy lift helicopters.

We get the first look at the mountain. It looks like a large hill; the slopes are not too steep, and very little rock is evident. There are surrounding mountains on three sides but lower. One hundred feet from the top is a sort of plateau. Not large enough to land on but close. If not for one corner that is much higher and overhangs the clearing, the helicopter could land. The troop helicopter gets very close to the plateau.

RAM

Let's go.

STONE

Go where?

RAM

We have to jump a couple of feet.

The Rangers jump out and roll. Hal jumps easily as well. Bubba is a little slower.

Becka stands on the skid and is helped down. Stone jumps the three feet followed by RAM.

STONE

Lieutenant, you need to work on your communication skills.

The bulldozer is next and as it hovers over the plateau, the troops grab the guidelines and pull it in for a safe landing. The sled is quickly deposited, and the troops remove all the hooks and connecting cables. Most are winched up to the chinooks and the helicopters are gone. Utter silence.

RAM

Okay, let's see what we got, Hal your first up, see what's beneath us. Bubba you and Stone get out a line measure and see how far we have to go. Becka get out a pad and let's do the math.

BECKA

Taking orders from farmers. It's just like work.

The Rangers search the plateau and the back of the mountain. They walk down the slope a hundred yards and back up again. They report to Sgt. Martinez who reports to Ram.

SGT. MARTINEZ

We're clear.

Everyone works.

Ram meets again with all his troops and the rangers.

BECKA

Assuming you want to leave the peak alone, and not have the helicopter hit it, I figure about six to eight feet down will give us our diameter.

HAL

Mostly soil and gravel nothing bigger than a basketball so far.

RAM

Do half the area at a time 2 feet deep, move the sled, and do the other half. Keep the sled close to the cliff.

TO SGT MARTINEZ

We will keep moving the sled to a cleared area. Keep your troops near it so we know where they are. Hard to see behind you when you're backing up the dozer.

MARTINEZ TO BECKA

How come they're not taking down the part sticking up?

BECKA

Well, it's very pretty, a good visual focus point for the helicopters, a nice windbreak and we have nothing even close to moving that much rock.

Shots of them bulldozing the dirt over the side and lowering/expanding the plateau, moving the sled.

Meeting in the middle next to the bulldozer. A three-foot jagged point of rock is sticking out of the ground.

RAM

Any way a helicopter lands around that?

HAL

It would be a spectacular crash.

RAM

Work around it until we get our width.

Later in the afternoon, they are meeting around the now 7-foot-tall rock.

BECKA

Were wide enough.

BUBBA

With a hitching post for the birds?

RAM

High Explosives.

HAL

Should do it. I will dig around some more and ring the base. We should be able to push whatever's left over the side.

SGT. MARTINEZ

Is this gonna be loud?

BUBBA

Very loud but we'll get behind the dozer.

SGT MARTINEZ

I've never been this close to a blast.

RAM

Learn a new skill.

The dozer is by the cliff, and everyone is behind it. RAM hits a switch, and the boulder explodes and covers them in dust. It is very loud.

People on the FOB stop and look when they hear the explosion and see the dust cloud.

Villagers, Taliban fighters, and a Taliban commander stops and looks towards the mountain.

EXT - MOUNTAIN TOP - NIGHT

The troops are around a campfire, eating or relaxing. It has an almost camping vibe.

RAM

CAN I have your attention? Good work today folks, we're done, and they should be able to land without incident. This part of the world works under VFR, visual flight rules, so they should be able to come get us in the morning. We will hook up the sled and dozer and await retrieval. Questions? Becka, can I talk to you.

He pulls her aside.

RAM (CONT'D)

Listen, I saw you with Sgt Martinez violating his personal space. I am now told we are on a semi-sacred mountain in the middle of a war zone. Do you really think it's a good time to come on to someone like a drunken prom date?

BECKA

She looks at the spectacular mountain view.

Perhaps?

Back at the campsite.

SGT MARTINEZ TALKING TO THE RANGERS.

We'll take two-hour shifts; I'll take the first one. Keep your focus down. Look for movement. If you see anything, even a goat, you come and get me. Lieutenant RAM, keep your people on the inside of the sled and dozer.

RAM

You heard the man, boys on the right, girls on the left.

BUBBA

RAM, will you read me a story?

General laughter.

TWO hours later Becka gets up from her sleeping bag and approaches Sgt Martinez who is on the rim. He hears her coming.

BECKA

The stars are beautiful.

SGT. MARTINEZ

Miss. You should not be out here. Your silhouetted against the sky.

BECKA

You didn't even look up.

SGT. MARTINEZ

No, it ruins my night vision. You should go back.

BECKA

Are you done with guard duty?

SGT. MARTINEZ

Not for a few minutes.

BECKA

I think I'll go over here and watch the stars.

After a few minutes, another figure relieves Sgt. Martinez, and he follows Becka to the rear corner of the escarpment.

We can hear indistinct sounds and movements, but it is too far and dark to make out what is happening.

Back at the campsite, Stone notices that Becka is gone, and she sits up looking for her. She hears something from the corner, but it's pitch black. She picks up a pair of night vision goggles and looks in the direction of the sounds.

Immediately we see the scene in the pale green light of night vision goggles. Becka is almost to the edge of the plateau lying on her back with her uniform shirt unbuttoned and bra pulled up. Sgt. Martinez has his head buried between her breasts. In a rather frenzied fashion, he pulls off first her pants and then his pants. His body blocks most of the view but his actions are unmistakable.

Back at the campsite, we see Stone watching with her hand over her mouth. Three more people sit up and put on night vision goggles.

The screen is split into four quadrants showing the same scene from slightly different angles. Becka and Sgt. Martinez are getting louder. Apparently, they finish, and we hear Ram say:

RAM

What is this, the scouts? Go to sleep.

On the screen, we see the four-night vision views and then the one in the lower left has a green light come on and we see the letters "REC." They all wink out shortly.

BUBBA

Good night John Boy.

UNKNOWN RANGER

Can I be on guard duty next?

Muffled laughter.

EXT - MOUNTAIN TOP-DAY 2

STONE TO BECKA

What are you doing?

BECKA

What do you mean?

STONE

Are you trying to insult every woman in uniform or get Martinez court-martialed?

BECKA

It's not like that. It's all I can do.

STONE

That's such bull..

RAM INTERRUPTING

EVERYBODY UP.

They wander from behind the bulldozer where they've slept to see Ram standing next to the guard. The entire plateau has fog on it. They walk to the edge and can see about 15 feet down into the air. Some mountain tops are visible in the distance, but they cannot see the top of the mountain that sticks out on one side, and they know that's less than 100 feet.

RAM

Is this normal?

SGT MARTINEZ

I have no idea.

HAL

You cannot fly in this.

RANGER

You cannot defend if an enemy can walk up to you unnoticed.

They all look around, the rangers at a glance from Martinez move to cover the edge from 4 locations.

MARTINEZ TO RAM

Lieutenant, how many of you are proficient with your weapons?

RAM

Myself, Hal, and surprisingly Stone.

MARTINEZ

What about the big guy?

RAM

A bear up close but has lousy vision, nearsighted. Becka can barely hold a rifle. Sgt. We've never shot at a person.

SGT. MARTINEZ

Learn a new skill.

RAM

I'm going to make a call.

Ranger Reginald walks up to Stone. He is a slender B/M in his twenties clean cut and full of the confidence given to him by his service.

RANGER REGINALD

You know the atmospheric conditions remind us of the futility of walking through this situation alone and without the available warmth of a like-minded individual.

STONE

Say what? Can you even repeat that? Child, how long did it take you to come up with that sentence? Bubba, come see this Ranger Rick..

REGINALD

Reginald

STONE

Trying to get into my pants with his diction.

BUBBA

Stone, give him a break.

STONE

Are you not my friend? Would you throw him off the mountain if I asked?

Bubba walks up to Reginald, picks him up bodily, and walks over to the edge where he drops him. Reginald startled, drops about four feet due to the gentle slope, and the top half of his body is still visible. After a few seconds, Bubba extends his hand and pulls him back up.

BUBBA

Is that what you're looking for?

STONE

You're all in it together, black, white, big, small. She walks off mumbling. All are laughing except Reginald.

INT- COMMAND POST-DAY 2

Major Hernandez, the adjunct, and several officers are looking at the central map. Sgt. Smith is in the background.

MAJOR HERNANDEZ  
How long will this last?

METEOROLOGIST OFFICER  
No way to determine, a few days to a week.

MAJOR HERNANDEZ TO CAPTAIN SCOTT  
Are they equipped for that long?

CAPTAIN SCOTT  
No, but we can try a re-supply tonight.

SGT. SMITH  
At night?

UNKNOWN OFFICER TO SGT. SMITH  
Birds do not fly in this fog. They can locate them at night by the GPS in their radio but it's very dangerous to do a drop. We also do not want large targets like a bird hovering stationary in enemy territory.

EXT - MOUNTAIN TOP -NIGHT

A helicopter is over the mountain with a sling of supplies beneath it. It is pitch black and the troops are motioning with flashlights. The scene is seen in green night vision goggles.

Inside the helicopter cockpit, the pilot and co-pilot cannot see much. They cannot see the sling below them, so they are trying to get closer to the flashlights while flying blind.

On the ground Hal, meaning to help, fires off a flare at the helicopter to give them more light.

It almost hits the helicopter; they have to swerve violently not to get struck.

The sling below the bird hits the side of the mountain very hard and the diesel fuel barrel pops open. All of the contents of the sling fall on the mountain.

## HELICOPTER PILOT

Damn, "Command Post, abort, abort, mission a no-go, I say again no-go." We're outa here!

The flare gently drifts down into the spilled contents of the diesel fuel. It sputters for a few moments then ignites all the fuel leaking down the mountainside. It becomes a 55-gallon fire.

The personnel on the base stop and watch the fire, the Afghan villagers do as well. A Taliban commander looks at the fire and picks up a cell phone with an external battery.

## EXT - MOUNTAIN TOP- DAY 3

Several hours have passed. The National Guard troops and rangers are all spread out looking over the edge of the landing pad. Several shots are heard, and a ranger goes down. Everyone but some of the Rangers rush to his side. Two rangers try to administer first aid and Becka tries to help, unable to do anything. It looks very bad.

One of the Rangers looks over the side and to Sgt. Martinez longingly.

## SGT. MARTINEZ

No stay up here, we do not give up the high ground. Make sure they are not exposed.

The bulldozer starts up in the background. Ram is in the seat. He drops the blade and pushes a load of dirt to and then over the edge. They have to pull the wounded ranger out of the way. He backs up and pushes another load over the side from a different angle. He turns off the machine and they hear a rockslide and muffled human noises below them.

## INT - COMMAND POST - DAY 3

## CAPTAIN SCOTT

They've had a KIA on the mountain. Enemy fire from below.

## MAJOR HERNANDEZ

How many hostiles? Sit-rep?

## CAPTAIN SCOTT

So far the one shooter but they cannot see to ascertain.

(MORE)

CAPTAIN SCOTT (CONT'D)  
Obviously, the mountain is  
climbable, but we do not know how  
many have or will go up.

SGT. SMITH  
WHO?

Everyone turns and looks at him. He has breached an unwritten  
rule of decorum.

CAPTAIN HERNANDEZ  
It was Sgt. Martinez on the radio.  
It sounded like one of his.

SGT. SMITH  
What are you going to do?

MAJOR HERNANDEZ  
We will proceed as planned.

SGT. SMITH  
BULL. That's not good enough.

MAJOR HERNANDEZ  
Restrain yourself.

SGT. SMITH  
WHAT. You sent them up there on  
this non-combat mission. How are  
you going to get them down?

MAJOR HERNANDEZ  
No practical way to do that at this  
particular time. It's war, people  
get injured. You have a better way,  
go for it.

Sgt. Smith glares at him; and looks like he's going to take a  
swing.

MAJOR HERNANDEZ (CONT'D)  
Guards.

Two military policemen appear at his side.

MAJOR HERNANDEZ (CONT'D)  
Escort Sgt. Smith from the command  
post. If he tries to reenter, have  
him restrained.

EXT- OUTSIDE OF COMMAND POST- DAY 3

Sgt. Smith is meeting with his four guardsmen.

TIM

What's up?

SGT SMITH

One of them has been killed.

GUARDSMAN

Who?

SGT. SMITH

We don't know but they think it's a Ranger.

2ND GUARDSMAN

What are they doing?

SGT. SMITH

NOTHING. Look it's up to us. We can't just sit here. Tim, go to the helipad and get in with the pilots. See what can be done, what they would do if it was one of theirs. He looks at the other guardsmen.

You take the artillery, you the Marines, find out what's practical.

GUARDSMAN

They're not going to let us do anything.

SGT. SMITH

That's my worry. Go.

He turns to the last guardsman.

You have a special job. You will be living at the command post, unobserved. This is what I need...

EXT MOUNTAIN TOP -DAY 3

RAM is addressing the troops. The fog is still present.

RAM

Look, folks, I think we need to act. We still have fog, we will run out of food and water today and Sgt Martinez assures me that last night's fire will attract unwanted attention.

BUBBA

What do you want to do Lieutenant?

RAM

I think we take the dozer and cut a trail down the mountain until we're low enough to get rescued. Out of the fog. We circumvent the mountain and stop on the backside at night. We should have enough fuel. Questions?

Everyone talks at once.

STONE

Didn't they tell us to stay here? Shouldn't we stay here?

RAM

I don't think they considered this option, but we cannot wait for the fog to lift. Sgt. Martinez.

SGT. MARTINEZ.

We are under VFR. They cannot get to us until they can see us. We're holding the high ground but that advantage is negated by their use of the fog to advance.

I do not know if this is a good option, but we cannot hold this position in the face of a sustained attack.

STONE

Can't we just walk down?

RAM

The Rangers could.

STONE

Oh.

HAL

How long?

RAM

Becka.

BECKA

If my math is right,

BUBBA

You've been overcharging me for my eggs for years.

BECKA

No, you've been paying the secret, "big and tall man" price.

It will take us about 20 hours. If you can go for 12 hours a day for two days we may reach the valley floor. We should get out of the fog this afternoon or tomorrow morning.

HAL

What grade?

BECKA

20 percent.

HAL

You mean you want us to slide down the mountain.

RAM

We pull the sled behind us on a long cable. Put a tiedown on the outside corner so we can keep it from swinging out and everyone walks behind it but the operator.

BUBBA

This sounds a little crazy. Trapped up here and we're road building.

RAM

No, a one-time trail. Get ready we leave in an hour. We stop when we lose the light. Should be a cakewalk.

BUBBA

The Kandahar Parks and Recreation Division. They'll want us putting in bathrooms next.

Sgt. Martinez pulls Becka aside.

SGT. MARTINEZ

Will this work?

BECKA

It should.

SGT. MARTINEZ  
Becka, what's a cakewalk?

BECKA  
Laughing, you know at the PTA fair.  
When you walk around in a circle to  
music, stepping on numbers on the  
floor. When the music stops they  
call out a number and if you're  
standing on it, you win a cake.

SGT. MARTINEZ (INCREDULOUS FOR A  
MOMENT)  
Um Okay, say Becka, what's a PTA?

BECKA  
Laughing again, where did you grow  
up? We need to have several  
discussions.

SGT MARTINEZ  
I grew up in the barrio!

BECKA  
What state is that in?

EXT - VALLEY FLOOR TRAIL - DAY 3

A group of 8 younger Taliban fighters are standing in the trail checking equipment. The mountain is in the background with fog surrounding its top. An older Taliban is talking to the soldiers and pointing up to the mountain.

INT - COMMAND POST- DAY 3

The officers are again standing in the middle of the room.

MAJOR HERNANDEZ  
Will it work?

ANOTHER OFFICER  
Theoretically, I'm not sure if they  
have enough fuel. If they run into  
rock face, their done.

MAJOR HERNANDEZ  
Explain?

OFFICER  
Lots of the mountain has loose soil  
or gravel over granite or similar  
rock.

(MORE)

OFFICER (CONT'D)

In many places, it's just the rockface jutting out. They can go above it or below it but can't go through it.

They have to get below the fog to be hoisted out by a PAVE HAWK or get to a flat spot.

MAJOR HERNANDEZ TO CAPTAIN SCOTT

Are they waiting for our approval?

CAPTAIN SCOTT

I think they were just advising us of their plans.

The National Guard spy is seen slipping out of the command post.

EXT - COMMAND POST - DAY

Smith and Franks, (his man in the command post) are huddled outside.

FRANKS

They need to resupply now. Food and water, diesel and they say ammo. The resupply cannot be done at night and it is very risky to have a bird hover over them to lower anything down or anyone up.

SGT SMITH

Are they under fire?

FRANK

I don't think so. Everyone acts like the critical time is when they drop below the fog.

SGT SMITH

Get back in, I'll see what I can do.

EXT - MOUNTAIN TOP -DAY 3

The parade begins. The bulldozer is slowly cutting a path down the mountain. It is a steep path but the slope of the mountain is gentle, so he is making progress. Hal is driving and has to back up and dig in again when he hits a boulder or big rock. Most of the earth is riding off the blade wings onto the mountainside.

He has a yellow music player tied to the dozer and a speaker barely heard over the engine.

Behind a long steel cable is the sled with the supplies and one body wrapped in a tarp. Behind the sled RAM and Bubba are holding one of the guidelines/ straps/strop tied to the outer rear corner of the sled. When the front of the sled hits a rock or digs into the hillside, they hold the rope until Hal straightens it out again.

Behind RAM and Bubba are Stone and Becka. It is a very steep angle to walk so they are going slow hanging to the inside wall as much as possible.

STONE

Becka, who do we know whose really smart?

BECKA

I thought we weren't talking.

STONE

Just answer the question.

BECKA

Well, Ram is smart.

STONE

Ram is a good person but we'll see how smart. Who else?

BECKA

Most people don't know but Jake is real smart.

STONE

Bubba?

BECKA

He reads. More than anyone I know.

STONE

Okay, how about someone we both know or can agree on

BECKA

You.

STONE

Not me.

BECKA

How about Mr. Smith?

STONE

Okay I'll go with him. He always appears smart because he's good with people. Now how many orders can you take without using your pad.

BECKA

What?

STONE

How many orders can you take at the diner, give it to the cook and distribute the food to the right people, all without writing it down.

BECKA

I tell everyone to write it down.

STONE

BECKA!

BECKA

Okay, maybe 10 if we're not busy.

STONE

Could Mr. Smith do that?

BECKA

If I trained him.

STONE

You trained me and I can't do that.

That's what you call short term memory. The teachers tell you stuff Monday through Thursday, you take notes and answer the question about it on Friday. After a while you think up your own questions. Girl, you have the skills.

Stone moves further down the trail and leaves Becka to ponder.

About 20 yards behind them is Sgt. Martinez and the three other Rangers are strung out behind him.

They are passing through a burnt spot which means they must have circumvented the mountain at least one time already.

The second view shows Bubba operating and eventually RAM when the sun is much lower. They have come several hundred feet down the mountain and are about to come out of the fog.

On the backside of the mountain, where there are no opposite hills, RAM levels out and cuts into the hillside to make an alcove to spend the night.

RAM

We stay the night and leave first thing in the morning. Supplies?

STONE

The last of the water and what the US military calls energy bars, Performance Readiness Bars, HOOAH Bars, and some of the gross Rip It drinks. Diesel for another day, no more.

RAM

Sgt. Martinez

SGT. MARTINEZ

Well, we're out of the fog tomorrow. By noon we'll be below the tops of the surrounding mountains on three sides. After the explosion and fire, (he looks at Hal), we have to assume they are waiting for us. They can shoot at us from the front, from below, from across the valley. If they get on our track, they can attack from behind and above.

RAM

Shielding?

SGT. MARTINEZ

I've been thinking about that. If we take the plywood from the inside of the sled and double it up on the outside, it just might stop a bullet.

RAM

And the dozer?

BUBBA

You know that dozer will carry about anything.

(MORE)

BUBBA (CONT'D)

If we can hang a sling or bags from the roof and fill them with rocks, it may stop a bullet.

RAM

Let's do whatever we can tonight. Bubba, you're with me.

Bubba and RAM get packs and head past the guard back up the track.

Becka and Stone are sitting behind the dozer.

STONE

Becka, what kind of math are you doing for Ram?

BECKA

Oh, that's just figuring out the slope, it's 7th-grade algebra.

STONE

Not in my school. Then why are you doing it, not one of the farm boys? Who schedules the help at the diner?

BECKA

I do but there's only ten.

STONE

And who hires and fires them, who trains them, and who orders all the supplies and plans all the menus?

BECKA

I guess Chester's' not so much of a manager.

STONE

No kidding. Becka you run one of the bigger businesses in town, joined the National Guard, do Ram's algebra, and all you think your good for is fucking some guy?

BECKA SLOWLY

I'm not smart like you.

STONE

Damn, we both KNOW that's not true. If we ever get off this mountain girl, I hope you'll figure out who's holding you back.

Becka sits up looking out at the mountains.

EXT-MOUNTAIN-DAY 4

They start again and are out of the fog in the daylight. The cab is covered with bags of rocks and sand to block the bullets. Everyone is riding in the sled except the rangers.

When they go round the mountain they can be seen about halfway down. They draw fire. First a few shots but soon a fairly steady barrage. The bullets bounce off the dozer or are buried in the plywood of the sled. An empty fuel barrel is put in the back to block gunfire. The dead ranger's body has been left respectfully in the alcove where they spent the night.

Hal is driving and there is no music today. Occasionally you hear bullets striking the bags next to him.

The rangers are spread out low to the ground looking for targets. They will shoot back when they see one, but the distance is still great for both sides. One of the rangers has a scoped rifle and does most of the shooting.

After another shot, the dozer stops. Ram runs to the cab and Hal is slumped over. Ram and Bubba pull him from the cab and carry him to the sled. There is blood all over his head. Becka tries to wipe it away but there is so much blood.

BECKA

He has a gash in his head.

SGT MARTINEZ

The bullet did that. We're going to start an IV.

BECKA

I don't know how.

SGT. MARTINEZ

Now, you learn a new skill.

Bubba climbs into the cab, there is renewed shooting, and they're off again. Ram is in the back on the radio, the three rangers are searching for the Taliban. Everyone else is working on Hal.

EXT - OUTSIDE COMMAND POST -DAY 4

Franks is meeting with Sgt. Smith and the other National Guard troops.

FRANKS

Somebody's been hit. Ram was on the radio, and he was using a masculine pronoun.

SGT SMITH

Bubba or Hal. What are they doing?

FRANKS

Nothing, they say way too exposed to enemy gunfire.

SGT. SMITH

Bull!

ANOTHER GUARDSMAN

You know there is a British artillery unit here for training. They have two guns they seldom ever get to fire. They are outside the chain of command.

SGT. SMITH

Distance?

GUARDSMAN

Too far from here but there is a village field within maybe a mile of the mountain.

SGT SMITH

Let's go.

EXT - FOB BRITISH BARRACKS - DAY

Sgt. Smith and his trooper meet SERGEANT GUIDRY. He is in a British army uniform and we can see two howitzers in the area next to the barracks.

SGT. GUIDRY

Welcome gov. I take it your with those blokes on the mountain. Sorry about that, I wish them well. Everything all right.

SGT SMITH

Not really, they're taking heavy fire. Two been shot and the rest are in jeopardy.

SGT. GUIDRY

Sorry to hear that, How can I help you.

SGT SMITH

I was about to ask the same thing?

SGT. GUIDRY

Look, I'm here with my mates and two of our L118's. Were here to cross train in your M119's but they're very similar weapons. We cannot reach the mountain from this base. To hit the backside of a mountain you have to elevate the barrel so you have to be very close.

SGT SMITH

How close?

SGT. GUIDRY

Within in a few kilometers and a level enough field to set up the guns.

Smith unfolds a map to show it to Sgt. Guidry.

SGT SMITH

This close?

SGT. GUIDRY

Aye, but the CO would not let you go and the villagers would have to approve.

SGT SMITH

But if I could and they did, would you be up for a bit of action?

SGT GUIDRY

We gunners are proud to serve any needy yanks.

EXT - AFGHAN VILLAGE DAY 4

A helicopter has landed in a field next to a small mountain village. Sgt Smith is talking to a villager, assuming he's the village elder. Sgt. Smith is pointing at the very close mountain.

The elder walks away into his home. He speaks to his wife. The Elder is FIRASH. His wife is ZAHAR. They have a very small baby daughter, (Nadira).

Firash is the only man of his age in the small village. Zahar is an atypical Afghani woman.

She is highly opinionated and speaks out to both her husband and others. Firash knows they can barely make a living in the mountain village, but The Taliban will punish his wife for her mannerisms in the lowlands. He likes that he gets her opinion but fears for her life.

**(While Firash knows some English most of the conversations are held in Farsi with English subtitles).**

FIRASH

He wants to use our field to put guns on it to shoot the Taliban on the mountain.

ZAHAR

You know they will come and kill everyone here if you allow this.

FIRASH

He say they will take us to America.

ZAHAR

All.

FIRASH

The whole village.

ZAHAR

And the sheep?

FIRASH SMILES

I did not ask about the sheep.

ZAHAR

Our daughter could go to school. She would be a doctor. Do you believe him?

FIRASH

I believe he believes, but I do not know if he could do it. He is in a great hurry; we must decide for all.

ZAHAR

Is there a choice?

FIRASH

Yes, I think there is.

EXT - MOUNTAIN -DAY 4

Bubba is driving and making slow progress. Still being shot at and the rest are in the sled while the Rangers are on the track. They are around Hal, and he appears to still be alive. Sgt. Martinez is on the radio while looking at a folded map.

Suddenly artillery shells burst on the two other mountains facing them. Four about halfway up. Two more on the lower part of the mountain that they are on. The Taliban run for their lives. Sgt Martinez is reporting back to someone.

(The British sergeant in charge of the gun crew is seen talking on the radio at the same time).

(The artillery fire can be seen and heard at the FOB)

EXT - AFGHAN VILLAGE - DAY 4

Two British howitzers are firing from the field next to the village. Their barrels are pointed almost vertically. They are attended by the British gun crews, Sgt. Smith, and the National Guard trooper assigned to the artillery.

A helicopter lands and Major Hernandez and Captain Scott get out and walk to Sgt. Smith and the British sergeant major.

MAJOR HERNANDEZ

What are you doing?

SGT. SMITH

I'm supporting the troops on the mountain. As you suggested.

MAJOR HERNANDEZ

I did not authorize any such action; you'll be court-martialed.

SGT. SMITH

You said If I could find a better way, to go for it.

Major Hernandez and Sgt Smith just glare at each other.

MAJOR HERNANDEZ

Just what is your rank soldier?

SGT. SMITH

I am the assistant manager at the Jackson County Co-op.

Major Hernandez starts to speak and abruptly turns on his heel to leave.

MAJOR HERNANDEZ  
If that's the assistant manager,  
what's the manager like?

CAPTAIN SCOTT  
Well, you know it's usually the  
second in charge that gets  
everything done.

Major Hernandez reaches the helicopter, gets in, and puts his hand on the door while turning back to Captain Scott.

MAJOR HERNANDEZ  
Perhaps the second in charge can  
find his own way back.

He leaves him. Captain Scott goes back to the two sergeants at the guns and raises his hands in the eternal resignation gesture.

SGT. GUIDRY  
The second gun could use a number  
5, ammunition carrier.

EXT - MOUNTAIN -DAY 4

One of the rangers runs up to the sled and gets Sgt Martinez out. He points up above him and says:

RANGER  
I'm sure, unknown how many.

SGT. MARTINEZ  
Damn.

He goes to the sled and motions to Ram to follow him.

SGT. MARTINEZ (CONT'D)  
They're on the track above us so  
it's just a matter of time before  
they're behind us. Come with me.

EXT -AFGHAN VILLAGE - DAY4

There is a rock wall on the other side of the village. The elder is sitting with his back to the wall next to a hole where a couple of rocks have fallen out of the wall.

Hidden on the other side of the wall is an armed Taliban fighter.

FIRASH

What could I do? We are few, they  
have many guns.

TALIBAN

You could have said no, many of our  
brethren are dying.

FIRASH

What do you want me to do?

TALIBAN

Nothing. I will be back tonight  
with help. Come to me here when  
they are all at the guns.

EXT - MOUNTAIN - DAY 4

Four Taliban fighters are seen walking gingerly along the track. The bulldozer can be seen half the mountain ahead of them. Sgt. Martinez and Ram are seen hiding behind a bend in the trail about 40 yards in front of the Taliban.

As they pass on the trail we see the camera linger below where they passed. We see a foot come out on the side of the mountain just below the trail. We see the three rangers emerge from under their ponchos which were covered with dirt and rock. They were hidden underneath the ponchos and below the Taliban fighter's sightlines. They quickly and quietly climb onto the trail a mere 20 yards behind the four Taliban.

At a signal, all three fire as does Sgt. Martinez. They go down quickly.

The Rangers check the bodies and begin to collect the weapons. Sgt Martinez comes around the corner.

We can see the other four Taliban approaching on the mountain trail behind the Rangers. The Rangers have no idea.

As the Taliban round the curve, they all fire. The Rangers try to return fire but all are out in the open and go down hard.

Sgt. Martinez fires his weapon and is pulled back around the corner by Ram.

Heavy firing between Sgt. Martinez and the four remaining Taliban.

SGT. MARTINEZ

Damn!

RAM  
Any chance?

SGT. MARTINEZ  
They're gone.

A stray shot hits a large rock shoulder-high and sprays shards into Sgt. Martinez's face. He grabs his face and tries to rub it. Ram holds his hands apart.

RAM  
Let me see. You have a number of cuts, small and large. Your eyes look okay.

SGT. MARTINEZ  
I can't see.

RAM  
Your face will swell with the trauma and your eyes water. It will come back.

SGT MARTINEZ  
I can't shoot. You have to take them out.

RAM  
I've never shot at a person.

SGT. MARTINEZ  
LEARN A NEW SKILL! We're all that stand between them and the dozer crew.

RAM looks perplexed. He waits for a few moments then switches his rifle to his left hand. He leans out past the sergeant till he can see past the mountainside and shoots four times.

RAM  
Okay.

SGT. MARTINEZ  
What?

RAM  
They're down.

SGT. MARTINEZ  
In four shots?

RAM  
I know how to shoot.

Sgt. Martinez peaks around the corner, and mumbles;

SGT. MARTINEZ  
"Daniel Boone?"

The four Taliban are down, two are still moving.

SGT. MARTINEZ (CONT'D)  
Finish it.

RAM  
We don't do that.

Sgt. Martinez walks to the Taliban and shoots all four again. He stoops and gathers the dog tags of his men and stops and bows his head for a moment.

Ram helps Sgt. Martinez back down the track to the dozer. He helps Martinez into the sled and gives Bubba the kill/ turn off the dozer signal. It is eerily quiet on the mountain.

STONE  
Where's the rest of them?

RAM  
They're gone.

STONE  
What do you mean they're gone,  
where'd they go?

RAM  
They died in a battle with the  
Taliban. The Taliban got behind us  
and we do not know if more of their  
fighters are behind us on the  
track.

STONE  
Reginald?

RAM  
Bubba, we need to get to the back  
of the mountain and dig us a hole  
to hide in.

Bubba heads up to the dozer and we hear it start up. Becca is picking shards out of Martinez's face and putting bandages on. Ram walks up the track and then walks back down. Stone is just sitting there.

RAM (CONT'D)  
Yes, it's ruff. Take 20 minutes to  
grieve and get back into the game.  
(MORE)

RAM (CONT'D)  
Be your name, we'll need everyone  
now.

EXT - AFGHAN VILLAGE - DAY 4

Several hours later the Elder is back at the wall. The Taliban fighter is on the other side, and you get a glimpse of many, 10-12, other fighters behind him.

TALIBAN  
Are they all at the guns?

FIRASH  
Yes.

TALIBAN  
Keep them there until my men are in  
position.

FIRASH  
Tell me, friend, why cannot my  
daughter go to school?

TALIBAN  
This is not the time for  
discussions.

FIRASH  
I must know to tell my wife.

TALIBAN  
Your daughter will be proud to be a  
wife to one of my men someday. They  
will long celebrate this battle  
over the Americans.

The camera pulls back to see Zahar facing him. She is on the same side of the wall as Firash but on the other side of the talking hole. She looks at him and shakes her head in vigorous disagreement. The camera pulls back, and we see they both have weapons. The camera pulls back further, and we see Captain Scott and three British soldiers crouching behind Zahar and an armed Sgt. Smith and the other National guardsman behind Firash.

Zahar rises and puts her weapon on the wall pointing at the other side. Everyone in unison follows her lead. They all fire at once and the military weapons empty out a clip.

As the smoke clears they change magazines and move off to the right. One British soldier hands his rifle to another, pulls his pistol, and climbs over the low wall.

Back at the guns one of the British soldiers.

SOLDIER

Sir, we're almost out of ammunition.

BRITISH SERGEANT TO SGT. SMITH

Afraid that's it, sir. All we have left is smoke cannisters.

FIRASH

No, that is good.

BRITISH SERGEANT

It's only smoke. They'll know right away.

FIRASH

This is Afghanistan. Before you it were the Russians, whose favorite was the poison, the poison gas. The smoke will work.

Back on the mountain several smoke canisters land and smoke billows across the valley and halfway up the hills. Every Taliban in the area can be seen running downhill or across a ridge to escape it.

RAM

What the hell? Their using gas?

SGT MARTINEZ

Settle down, it's just smoke, working, eh senior.

INT - COMMAND POST- NIGHT DAY 4

Captain Scott enters. He is covered in dirt and grime.

MAJOR HERNANDEZ

Had a good day.

CAPTAIN SCOTT

Exceptional. What's happening around here?

MAJOR HERNANDEZ

They've lost four and have two wounded. They are out of food and water and have enough diesel for a few hours at most. About fifty rounds of ammo left. They're taking massive fire when exposed.

(MORE)

MAJOR HERNANDEZ (CONT'D)  
Sgt Martinez suspects 100 plus  
enemy combatants.

ANOTHER OFFICER  
It's just too many Taliban on the  
mountain.

MAJOR HERNANDEZ  
They need a diversion.

CAPTAIN SCOTT  
What would get them off the  
mountain?

MAJOR HERNANDEZ  
Get the interpreter, the Marine  
Lieutenant, and the air boss.

MAJOR HERNANDEZ TO AFGHAN INTERPRETER  
What village is this here west on  
the map?

He points to a large village West of the mountain.

INTERPRETER  
That is Tag Rami-Bagram. Many  
Taliban there.

MAJOR HERNANDEZ  
Excellent. Please contact the  
village Elder and ask him to  
evacuate the ENTIRE village. I will  
take it by force tomorrow AT 8:00  
AM. ANYONE REMAINING WILL BE  
SUBJECT TO THE BATTLE.

Everyone looks at the commander, but he has a sly smile on  
his face and is not talking.

EXT - MOUNTAIN - NIGHT OF DAY 4

They have leveled out for the night. Bubba cut an alcove with  
the dozer, and they are all between the dozer/sled and the  
mountain. Hal is in the back of the SLED sleeping. Ram has  
his rifle and is looking back up the track. Stone and Bubba  
are sitting quietly and Sgt. Martinez limps over to Becka.  
His face is covered with bandages and swollen.

BECKA  
Why are you limping?

SGT. MARTINEZ

It's nothing I got a rock in my shoe.

BECKA

Sit down and we'll take a look at it.

SGT. MARTINEZ

It's nothing.

BECKA

Lieutenant.

RAM

Take off your boot sergeant.

He does it slowly as it hurts. Becka pulls off his sock and the foot is covered in blood. She holds up his foot and he has a bullet wound on the bottom and a hole is seen in the boot.

Ram picks up the boot and examines it.

RAM (CONT'D)

Must of been a hell of a round.

He shakes the boot and hears something rattle, takes out a spent bullet, and tosses it to Sgt. Martinez.

RAM (CONT'D)

A souvenir of your mountain trip.

Becka starts bandaging his foot while Ram goes back to guard duty.

STONE TO BUBBA

He can't be dead. He's not supposed to be here. I'm supposed to be in Poly SCI fighting with my professor.

BUBBA

He seemed like a nice guy and I'm sorry he's gone, but we hardly knew him.

STONE

We could have dated and had kids.

BUBBA

You didn't know him.

STONE

I could have.

BUBBA

What's his last name?

Stone cries harder and Bubba holds her while looking uncomfortable and resigned.

Becka approaches Ram

RAM

How's the Sergeant?

BECKA

Stubborn but I'm giving him a little unwanted morphine nap. He'll sleep till morning. Ram, they, we all need water, bad. Everyone's dehydrated.

RAM

I've put in the emergency request. I think they are still worried about losing a hovering bird.

BECKA

We won't last another day. How are you doing?

RAM

I'm fine except I may be damned. I have killed my fellow man, repeatedly.

BECKA

I know you're a religious man. Perhaps you're not dammed, but a warrior for God. A Joshua or something like that. Would that work?

Looks like he is thinking for a moment.

RAM

I'm not sure how it works but thanks, it's a good thought. How are you doing?

BECKA

I don't know how to do anything I'm doing. The doctors on the radio tell me everything.

RAM

Yet Rebecca, you're the one doing it. A hell of a job, keep up the good work.

EXT - MOUNTAIN VALLEY - NIGHT

We see the valley floor with the mountain behind. Taliban fighters are walking down the trail West towards the town. We see a shot from the mountain and Taliban troops are walking down the other trails to join the troops walking West. It looks like everyone is leaving the area.

INT - HELICOPTER - DAY 5

Captain Scott is sitting in a jump seat in the rear of a helicopter. It is heading West over the plains in route to Tag Rami-Bagram.

There are five helicopters behind them filled with Marines. They are in formation and deliberately circle the city in that manner as they come in to land East of the city.

The city now has the Taliban commander and 50-100 fighters preparing for the assault. They have barricaded the wall and are rushing more supplies to the East wall.

The Americans land to the East in full view and run West occupying a small hill, they spread out along 50 yards of the crest of the hill.

The Taliban across from them are spread out three times in length.

Their commander shouts something and all the Taliban fire on the Americans.

In the middle of the American line, Captain Scott ensures that he has an adequate signal from his radio and that the automatic signal from the GPS is on.

The Americans fire back.

Captain Scott and the marine lieutenant meet with all the marine sergeants.

LIEUTENANT

Listen we are going to have a cease-fire.

(MORE)

LIEUTENANT (CONT'D)

When I signal you, we will have your troops withdraw in stages.

SERGEANTS

What the hell, Lew, we can take these guys straight up.

LIEUTENANT

I agree but we are a diversion. We are to make the enemy believe they are over-powering and can win this battle. We will lose this battle for a short time. Prepare your troops and report back to me when they're ready.

THE SERGEANTS GIVE A WEAK

Yes sir.

The sergeants report the troops are ready but confused. The captain calls for a cease-fire.

MARINE LIEUTENANT TO TWO SERGEANTS.

Now you are going to get on the top of this hill, out of gunfire range, and have an argument.

The sergeants just stare at him.

MARINE LIEUTENANT

I need the enemy to believe our chain of command is broken and we have lost the ability to lead.

The sergeants reluctantly comply. They start out making comments about each other's squad. Everyone on both sides can see them if not hear them clearly. They get filthy in there language.

Suddenly one sergeant drops his rifle and physically attacks the other. They start rolling around on the top of the hill.

The Lieutenant and the Marines withdraw to the East and set up new firing positions. In a few minutes, all of The Americans have fallen back from the original line. The lieutenant sends two soldiers to collect the still-fighting sergeants.

Once the Americans are out of sight, the Taliban start cheering. The commander sends a scout team to check and see if they have left. The scout team reports the Americans have gotten on their helicopters and are flying away.

The Taliban occupy the American's position on the hill and continue celebrating. Their commander watches from behind the wall.

One Taliban fighter notices a small box half buried in the sand with a yellow light blinking.

Inside the lead helicopter, the Marine Lieutenant is speaking to his two sergeants.

LIEUTENANT

Have you ever played football and tried to draw the other team offsides?

CAPTAIN SCOTT SPEAKING ON THE RADIO TO  
A B-52 PILOT.

It's a go on the signal.

Inside the cockpit of the B52 is a female pilot with the name FREYA on her flight suit.

CAPTAIN FREYA

Rodger, make sure you're away, this will be loud.

The bombs are seen dropping and the area where the Taliban are celebrating is completely obliterated by the blasts.

Two Apache helicopters appear over the town and head East along the trail through the mountains shooting at anyone on the path.

Back on the helicopter, all the troops are in awe of the finality of the blast. The Marine Lieutenant turns to the one Sergeant who started the fight and holds his hands up as if asking for an explanation.

SERGEANT

He talked very badly about my wife.

The captain and lieutenant just shake their heads.

EXT - MOUNTAIN - DAY 5

They're up and at it. They have made another near revolution with Bubba driving. Ram is watching with the scoped rifle and everyone else is in the sled. Bubba is pushing hard and you can see he knows what he is doing. He stops before he makes the back side and cover. Ram goes to the dozer.

BUBBA

Pard, I may need a break.

RAM  
Can do, are you hit?

BUBBA  
Think so.

Ram climbs up to the chair and finds that Bubba is bleeding from multiple bullet wounds.

RAM  
Damn Bubba, why didn't you say something?

BUBBA  
And do what Randall? You drive and I shoot? Have one of the girls operate? We've never get down. A few bandages and I'll be right as rain.

RAM  
BECKA, STONE, I need help with Bubba.

Ram carefully helps him out of the seat and over to the side. Ram climbs down and helps Bubba climb/ fall down. Stone and Becka try to help but Bubba is so big. They get him into the sled. Becka tries to count the wounds.

BUBBA  
Pard, I didn't stop for this, were almost out of fuel. Enough to dig a hole but not make the back side.

RAM  
Jake just take a break, I'll get this.

Ram climbs into the seat and cuts a wide spot in the mountain so that they can hide behind.

INT - COMMAND POST- DAY 5

RADIO OPERATOR TO MAJOR HERNANDEZ  
It appears four of the rangers are gone and the sergeant is wounded as are two of the National Guard troops. They are still under fire but say it's been greatly reduced.

MAJOR HERNANDEZ  
Are they still moving?

The radio operator points to the drawing on the board which shows a crude diagram of the mountain and X marks to follow the dozer's progress down the side.

RADIO OPERATOR

No sir, they report out of diesel and everything else.

A pilot in the back of the room says "damn" and gets up and leaves.

EXT - FOB LANDING PAD -DAY 5

LIEUTENANT LANDRY is the pilot who spoke up. He is walking to his helicopter and motions to an E-3.

LIEUTENANT LANDRY

Herbert, get us a sling with a barrel of diesel, a med kit, ammunition, food, and water. Tie it to the hook so we can drop it from the door. We leave as soon as it's done.

He walks up to his Co-pilot, door gunners, and Tim.

CO-PILOT

What's up, Lew?

LIEUTENANT

Quick daytime run.

CO-PILOT

To the mountain? Hover while being shot at?

LIEUTENANT

Not you boys, you stay here. I need to go light and fast this run.

They argue but within minutes he is powering up and then gone.

GUNNER

What the hell? After all this time he just throws us out like passengers. And then he goes and takes Herbert. To be fast?

CO-PILOT

Come with me boys. That's not why he grounded us.

GUNNER

Why?

CO-PILOT

Because were married. National  
Guard, can you shoot?

TIM

Sure.

CO-PILOT

Then you come to.

EXT - MOUNTAIN TOP -DAY 5

The dozer is stopped a little more than halfway down the mountain. It is level and the sled is pulled up close to it. Everyone is in the sled seeking cover. Ram and Martinez are exchanging shots with the remaining Taliban. Becka and Stone are working on Bubba. He has been shot multiple times and they are having a hard time stopping the bleeding.

A helicopter appears over the valley floor. They are lowering a sling with a big barrel in it and additional packages. They appear to be in a great hurry. All the remaining Taliban shift their fire to the helicopter. It is so close and large that they cannot miss.

Inside the helicopter, Herbert is working the winch while Lieutenant Landry is trying to keep it centered on the track behind the dozer. Bullets are pinging off or going through the fuselage.

ON THE RADIO

MM1, MM1 to re-supply. If you 50  
plus vertical, we can help clear  
out some of the vermin.

There is rock music playing in the background.

LANDRY ON RADIO

M-M-1, M-M-1 Identify yourself.

CO-PILOT

Yes, sir, this is the married-man-1  
coming in hot.

We can now see the second ship, a gunship with two machine guns on each side. It flies below the supply helicopter and circles to the left and then to the right guns blazing. Several Taliban go down under the onslaught. Inside the gunship is pure bedlam with four machine guns firing. Tim can barely hold on to his door-mounted weapon.

The supply helicopter lowers again, and Herbert drops the sling. Ram runs out to get it, wrestles the barrel out, and leaves all the supplies on the ground. He signals Herbert to wait.

LANDRY  
Are they done?

HERBERT  
He says to wait.

A shot hits the windshield from the left just missing Landry. He swears.

LANDRY ON RADIO  
MM1, MM1 We've still got a shooter  
on our East at about our height. He  
looks to be in a cave or something.

CO-PILOT  
I think I've got him. Be back  
around.

On the ground, Ram is carrying Hal out of the sled and over to the sling. He is staggering under the weight and exhaustion. He places Hal in the sling and motions for Herbert to bring him up. Hal heads up.

MM1 Is trying to see the Taliban in the cave who starts to shoot at Hal. The gunners aim but all have fired their ammunition.

COPILOT  
Doesn't anyone have any rounds  
left?

The older gunner, (Art), is wearing a pistol. He pulls the pistol and steps into the door but can only see the end of the Taliban's rifle. They are right above him but cannot shoot him. In frustration, he tells the copilot to go lower on the Taliban.

He walks over to the side of the helicopter, takes a rope off the side, and ties it to his vest, the other end to the helicopter, pulls his pistol, and leaps out of the door onto the mountain above the Taliban. He slides for a few feet and stops himself.

His fellow crewmen are transfixed not believing his audacity, bravery, or foolishness.

Tim recovers first. He takes another rope, ties it to the helicopter, and his vest, pulls his knife, and heads to the door. The other crewmen recover, tackling Tim and holding him to the floor as they watch the drama below.

GUNNER TO TIM

No way buddy, with a freakin knife?

Art slides down to the level where the Taliban is in his cave. The enemy fighter hears him, crawls out of the cave, and surrenders. Drops his rifle and says.

TALIBAN SNIPER

"I am prisoner of the United States".

Art is surprised, dumbfounded and you can see in his face that he thinks he should shoot him anyway. Instead, he holsters his pistol and jumps on the Taliban. He wraps his arms and legs around his torso and then puts his right thumb in the air.

They are jerked off the ledge and are swinging out over the valley.

The Taliban fighter is screaming. Art is hanging on for his life. The crew is struggling to pull the two bodies up. Soon a sniper is shooting at Art. As they are swinging wildly they get very close to the other mountain, Art is shot. He quickly loses all abilities in his arms and legs dropping the Taliban to the valley below. Art is pulled back into the helicopter.

Hal is winched into the re-supply helicopter, and they head back to the FOB.

EXT - FOB LANDING PAD - DAY 5

The two helicopters make it back to the base. The supply helicopter lands first and medics rush to it, taking Hal away on a gurney. Lieutenant Landry waits for the gunship to land.

It does and we see Art lying on a folding stretcher with a tarp over him. The copilot gets out and he and Lieutenant Landry each take one handle on the front of the stretcher.

The other gunner and Tim each take another handle. It is a solemn procession and heavy. Tim has to use both hands when they go over rough spots, but you know he will not drop it.

CO-PILOT

National Guard, what do you do back in the world?

TIM

I'm a deputy sheriff.

CO-PILOT

Boys, don't mess with Sheriff Tim.

They walk slowly towards the medical tent.

EXT - MOUNTAIN - DAY 5

The entire crew is in the sled. They have all eaten and taken water. They are much more awake. Bubba is awake but has several bullet wounds.

Martinez says he can see better but his boot is off, and his foot is heavily bandaged.

They are still being shot at, but it is random and most rounds are coming from below them not across. If they stay close to the mountain, the bullets pass over them.

BECKA TALKING TO RAM

Any way we can get Bubba airlifted out of here? I took his blood pressure, and the doctors say it's not good.

RAM

I don't see how. The one helicopter got shot up pretty bad so I'm not sure they'll try it again.

BECKA URGENT

Then we need to get down very soon. I know he's joking around but he's seriously hurt Randall.

Ram walks over to Stone who is talking to Bubba.

RAM

It's your time. You can either shoot or drive.

STONE

I know. I can't shoot worth a damn, not at these distances. I just cut into the side of the mountain and keep going down.

RAM

The soil is loose and should break up. I will be on top of the roof.

(MORE)

RAM (CONT'D)

If we hit a rock or obstruction,  
I'll take over.

Stone goes over to the dozer and climbs into the seat. She is mumbling to herself.

Special OE, eggs over easy,  
waffles, maple syrup, toast

Other items from the breakfast menu in waitress speak.

Ram climbs on the roof with the scoped rifle. He ties a strap around the front of the roof and another around the back. In the prone position, he puts his legs under the back strap and the front strap over his shoulders. As Stone starts the dozer, it is barely enough to stay on the roof, but he should be able to shoot when the dozer stops.

They start again. Stone is doing well.

After three hours a lone Taliban shoots at them from across the valley. The dozer stops and Ram takes aim and shoots the fighter.

STONE

This is not good.

Ram looks at Stone and can already see blood seeping through her shirt on her right side.

He climbs down and lifts Stone out of the seat and onto the side of the dozer as he climbs down. He then picks her up and carries her back to the sled.

RAM

Becka, Stone's been hit.

He lays her in the sled next to Bubba, Becka and Sgt. Martinez go to work on her.

Ram climbs back into the dozer seat and changing the angle of the blade he pulls forward, so the dozer and sled are both level.

He goes and stands at the back of the sled with his ever-present rifle.

BUBBA

Is it bad?

SGT. MARTINEZ

It's not good, she's got a bleeder.

Becka is holding a compress on Stone's side. Stone is groggy.

STONE

It doesn't hurt bad.

BUBBA

Mine neither and I got shot way more times.

STONE

It's not the quantity, but the quality.

Stone and Bubba both laugh, weak laughs. Sgt Martinez is on the radio, presumably to the medics back at the FOB. We cannot hear what's being said.

SGT MARTINEZ TO BECKA

You have to start an IV. We have some saline in the med kit. The doctors will walk you through it.

BECKA

Can't you do it?

SGT. MARTINEZ

I do not see well enough and still feel the morphine from last night. Has to be done.

BECKA

Oh, all right.

We see Becka and Sgt. Martinez working on Stone. They both talk on the radio. We see Becka starting an IV and finding a vein on the third try. They give Stone shots and add things to her IV bag. Sgt. Martinez takes her blood pressure several times.

Ram is looking over the side and across the valley. He stops and takes a shot occasionally. You get the impression the enemy fighters are laying low to avoid his gunfire.

Becka comes out of the sled after a half hour. Ram looks at her.

BECKA (CONT'D)

She's still alive but barely. Bubba is fading.

RAM

What does fading mean?

BECKA  
Ram, he's dying. We'll run out of liquid soon and we'll lose Stone too. They need real medical help.

RAM  
Can I give her a transfusion?

BECKA  
Do you know her blood type?

BUBBA FROM THE SLED.  
O Positive, same as mine.

Ram and Becka both look at him.

BECKA  
Ram, he'll die.

BUBBA  
Will anyway.

He motions Ram to come closer. He is weak.

BUBBA (CONT'D)  
Randall, I'm not going to make it. Nothing you can do. Let me do something good.

RAM  
You can't ask me to choose.

BUBBA  
I chose, maybe your God chooses. I'm asking you to not get in the way of my choice. I had a good run. Die with my boots on, he chuckles.

RAM TO BECKA  
If it comes to that, let him choose.

He leaves to the front of the dozer.

BUBBA LOOKS AT STONE  
Maybe you'll get some farmer in you after all.

Stone smiles.

An indeterminate length of time passes.

Becka checks her, she's out.

Stone is passed out and Becka checks the blood pressure cuff on her wrist.

SGT. MARTINEZ

If we're going to do this, it's now.

BUBBA

Let's go.

Becka takes a needle and a rubber tourniquet out of the med kit and wraps it around Bubba's arm. A huge artery pops up immediately. She puts the needle into it getting it on the first try. She attaches the hose from the needle to the port on Stone's IV.

SGT. MARTINEZ

Put his arm across his chest and lace his fingers onto his harness. The arm has to be higher.

BUBBA

With my blood she'll just want to fight, fuck, and farm.

Becka smiles

BECKA

Not too far from where she's at already, cept the farming part.

BUBBA

Becka, Melissa's pregnant.

Becka stares at him looking like she didn't hear right.

BUBBA (CONT'D)

It's a boy, be born in the spring. Becka looks stunned.

BECKA

I'll help out.

BUBBA

No, you tell Stone, and she can help out. You keep an eye on Randall.

BECKA

Ram?

BUBBA

You know he's not like this,  
religious and all. Help Karen with  
him.

BECKA

Where's the big farm boy who used  
to tease all the girls?

Bubba does not answer.

SGT MARTINEZ

Leave the IV in as long as it  
flows.

They sit there in silence. Ram comes back to the sled.

Becka looks at Ram.

BECKA

I think he's gone.  
He was thinking of others.

Did you know that Melissa's  
pregnant?

RAM

Yes, they were married last week.

BECKA

How do you know?

RAM

I was there. I married Karen. For  
the benefits, she can have a church  
wedding later.

Becka looks exasperated.

BECKA

Ram, just go away. I've got things  
to do and can't take anymore. Keep  
it to yourself.

RAM

Sorry Becka, just one more thing.  
You have to drive.

He leaves.

Becka works on Stone taking her blood pressure and removing  
the transfusion line from her IV port.

SGT. MARTINEZ

Becka, could you tie me sitting up.

She goes over to him.

She props him up next to the side.

SGT. MARTINEZ (CONT'D)

Under my arms to the top rail.

Good, now please get my rifle.  
Clip it to my vest, there so I can  
swing it around.

She hands him the rifle and helps him clip it to his harness.

That package, there the box, One..  
no, two clips of ammo.

"Chica", there's a lot of talk  
about marriage around here.

BECKA

Listen, buddy, you're on drugs, not  
near as pretty as before. With your  
foot shot up, you probably lose  
your job and be unemployed. So  
maybe you should shut up and keep  
your "Chicas" to yourself.

SGT. MARTINEZ

Could you move the barrel so I can  
shoot out the back?

She complies and moves the barrel. Sgt. Martinez is sitting  
up facing the back with his rifle and a clear field of fire.  
He hands Becka a pistol.

SGT. MARTINEZ (CONT'D)

One more thing dear, and I hope  
this is the only time I ever ask  
you this. Could you drive?

Becka scowls, checks on Stone climbs out of the sled. Kisses  
Martinez on the cheek, puts the pistol behind her back, and  
heads for the dozer. Ram is already strapped into his  
shooting spot on the roof.

Becka is the operator now. She heads downhill but not at a  
severe angle as the previous drivers. She is unfamiliar with  
the controls and has to move the blade to empty it. The  
progress is slow.

Another Taliban shooter fires several rounds into the cab. Becka swears and knows this will never work. She pulls back hard on the right joystick. The left track moves forward while the right track stays still. The dozer turns and goes over the side of the mountain at a steep angle.

Ram yells and has to fight to stay atop the roof. He slides to the back of the roof to stay aboard.

The sled slides down until it is between the tracks right up against the rear of the dozer.

Sgt. Martinez and Stone are bouncing all around the sled. He could not shoot at all from within the sled.

A Taliban steps from behind a rock and shoots. Becka aims the dozer at him. Landslides are starting everywhere. Ram yells at her to go straight.

INT - COMMAND POST - DAY 5

RADIO OPERATOR

COMMANDER!

They've changed course. Their now going straight down the mountain. See the map.

On the map instead of seeing the little X marks going around the mountain, we see them going straight down.

MAJOR HERNANDEZ TURNS TO AN OFFICER

Can they do that?

OFFICER

Sure, as long as they go straight down. If they cross the slope face, they'd might not make it. A track could sink and they'd flip.

(Mountain)

Ram is yelling at Becka to go straight.

MAJOR HERNANDEZ TO CAPTAIN SCOTT

Take whatever you need and go get them. Take that National Guard sergeant.

At the landing pad, we see five helicopters lift off. Two are Apache gunships. Captain Scott and Sgt. Smith are in the lead helicopter. Sgt. Smith has a rifle.

On the mountain, Becka is making good progress. The Taliban are running towards the dozer, but Ram gets off a shot whenever they show themselves.

They have about 200 yards to the valley floor. The dozer stops, and Becka has caught a bullet in her left knee, she is writhing in pain clutching her knee. Ram is still on the roof shooting at anyone who shows themselves.

Stone appears on the right side of the dozer. She pulls herself up gingerly, one step at a time. When she gains the operator's seat area she pushes the right joystick forward moving the dozer forward again.

As they pass a large boulder, a Taliban fighter comes from behind it, never showing himself to Ram. Stone sees him out of the corner of her eye. She takes Becka's pistol from the back of Becka's waistband and turns in towards the fighter. As he runs up to the dozer she shoots him right between his eyes.

As they move forward, an Apache helicopter flies overhead looking for prey. A second Apache flies over and joins the first in shooting at any rock large enough to hide behind.

Three transport/ support helicopters land in the valley floor and personnel rush out to aid the troops. You can see Sgt. Smith and Captain Hernandez trying not to get in the way.

Becka is put into a helicopter, and they immediately start working on her knee. She notices the co-pilot is female.

BECKA SHOUTING

I thought you could not have  
females in combat.

THE HELICOPTER CO-PILOT WITHOUT EVEN  
LOOKING BACK

Every day in the military is combat  
for a woman.

EXT - FOB LANDING PAD -2006 DAY 6

It is the evening of the next day after the mountain rescue. Ram and Sgt. Smith are at the edge of the landing pad looking up at the mountain. Ram has his rifle.

Captain Scott joins them.

CAPTAIN SCOTT

You men did a hell of a job. I'm just not sure if anyone will ever hear about it.

SGT. SMITH

Why's that?

CAPTAIN SCOTT

We lost six good men to a poorly planned op not blessed by command. People were put at risk that should have never been put at risk. We destroyed the enemy out of desperation, not intention. Some people will not want this reviewed.

*TOP OF MOUNTAIN*

*The Taliban commander and about two dozen fighters have climbed the track and are on the landing pad celebrating. An Indiana National Guard flag is twenty feet up on the part of the mountain jutting out over the clearing. The flag is attached to a branch. Two of the Taliban are throwing a piece of wood with a cloth rope to bring it down.*

*The commander turns in alarm to stop them, but it is too late. The branch with the flag is knocked loose and a string tied to the branch lets go.*

*A daisy chain series of explosions race across the inner part of the peak. A second daisy chain higher up explodes on the outer face. The top 50 feet of the peak breaks off and slides onto the landing pad burying all that were there.*

The explosion has all the base outside looking at the mountain.

CAPTAIN SCOTT

They'll see that on satellite.

Ram walks up to Major Hernandez.

RAM

Spare equipment destroyed, mountain returned to its original configuration, sir.

EXT- AIR FORCE BASE DAY

The National Guard troops are in a hangar at the Air Force base awaiting transport. There are two parallel yellow lines painted on the floor where the troops line up to enter a plane.

The first in line is a military coffin with Bubba's body. Behind him is Hal on a gurney and Stone. Sgt Martinez and Becka are both next in wheelchairs.

The surviving National Guard soldiers are behind them. Then the villagers that were evacuated from the mountain when their village was used for the howitzers.

It is a somber group, but the excitement of the villagers is infectious as is the prospect of returning home.

Major Hernandez and Captain Scott enter.

MAJOR HERNANDEZ TO RAM AND SGT SMITH  
Gentlemen, I commend your efforts,  
but I cannot authorize all this.  
He points to the villagers.

SGT. SMITH  
It's all been arranged. The City of  
Seymour is sponsoring them.

Just then they are drowned out by the sound of jet engines. A jet transport pulls up. It has Indiana Air National Guard painted on its nose. The rear ramp comes down and six airmen in matching jumpsuits carrying older style M16's come out and three take positions on each side of the yellow lines.

They and the base airmen begin to load everyone.

Major Hernandez begins to object.

One of the Air National Guard comes over.

AIR NATIONAL GUARD  
Sir, could you step back?

MAJOR HERNANDEZ  
I'm a major.

AIR NATIONAL GUARD  
Major, could you please step back?

Firash and Zahar are in line holding Nadira. They are both trying to pronounce "Hoosiers" but having a terrible time of it.

Sgt. Smith is called to the front. An airman is confronting Ram who is still holding his rifle.

AIRMAN

Sir, he cannot board the plane with a loaded weapon. We are classified as medical transport.

SGT. SMITH

Let me handle it.

Turning to Ram speaking softly:

SGT. SMITH

Randall buddy, were going home. You were very courageous but now we are going to be caring and compassionate. You're going to see Karen and have all your friends around you. Your needed on your Dad's farm.

He continues to speak to Ram softly.

Within 10 minutes they are all loaded and are taxing away.

Major Hernandez and Captain Scott are watching them go, (still outside the yellow lines).

Ram's rifle is seen leaning in the corner.

INT - NATIONAL GUARD ARMORY - DAY 2024

The kids sit quietly for a moment, seemingly stunned. Everyone starts to talk, making comments and asking questions.

MR. SMITH

Let's try one at a time.

BLONDE BOY

How could all this stuff happen, and we've not heard of it for all these years? Why would they keep it quiet? Why would they want to? Why keep it secret?

MR. SMITH

We just blew up the top of a semi-scared mountain in Afghanistan. The Army did not want that well known.

(MORE)

MR. SMITH (CONT'D)  
Nadira's parents and villagers were under a death threat by the Taliban. We still do not want their location well known.

Some of your parents did not want their kids to grow up under the shadow of their actions.

I think that was the right decision.

BLONDE GIRL  
Where is it documented? Written down?

MR. SMITH  
Do you mean proof?

He has a remote control in his pocket. He presses the button and the curtains at the front of the room part, and we see a dozen pictures in frames and portraits above them. Five of the portraits are framed in black.

Mr. Smith motions the kids forward.

RUSTY LOOKING AT THE CENTER PORTRAIT.  
Jake, is that your dad?

JAKE  
Yes. I've seen pictures of him before.

ONE OF THE GIRLS  
This must be Stone. Nadira, look at your parents and all the others.

BOY  
Who is this SECT DEF?

RUSTY  
That's the secretary of defense.

BOY  
He's giving out medals in what looks like this room.

JAKE  
Rusty come here. That's your dad with a medal but no SECT DEF.

MR. SMITH

Rusty's dad did not get his medal here. It was awarded at the White House. He was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

JAKE

You didn't know?

RUSTY

He doesn't even like guns.

NADIRA

Mr. Smith, who was Becka?

MR. SMITH

When Becka came back she had a thirst for, well everything. Education, people, travel, all of it. She's still here but goes by her full name. Rebecca.

BLONDE GIRL

Oh No! Rebecca Martinez.

NADIRA

The school principal?

MR. SMITH

I do believe so, DR. Rebecca Martinez is your school principal. I would not mention night vision goggles to her if you want to graduate.

The kids ask other questions.

MR. SMITH (CONT'D)

Look, folks, you have lots of time to ask questions and several other people who can answer them for you. It's time for my dinner and you need to catch the bus back to school before it leaves you.

They file out slowly past the pictures. Rusty and Jake hang back.

JAKE

Is my dad's body buried in the cemetery?

MR. SMITH- GENTLY

Yes, Jake, his body was recovered along with the bodies of the four rangers. They are all buried in our little cemetery at their family's request.

JAKE

And Stone?

MR. SMITH

Talk to your mom, Jake. She'll be waiting for you.

RUSTY

And you Mr. Smith. What happened with you?

MR. SMITH (LONG PAUSE)

Boys, supporting your fathers on the mountain was the greatest honor of my life.

Not being up there with them was my biggest disappointment. Time heals most things. Now you guys get along.

They shuffle out and Smith is seen staring at the wall. He steadies himself on a podium.

INT - GENERAL STORE- DAY

Nadira is walking to the general store that afternoon. Inside we find her parents, Hal, and the remaining villagers lined inside the store in front of the counter.

Nadira stops, places her right hand over her heart, and gives a short nod with her head.

In unison, the family, Hal, and the villagers also place their right hands over their hearts and bow.

Nadira's mom loses her carefully cultured cool and rushes to her daughter for a big hug. Everyone else gathers around Nadira and pats her on the back with their right hands.

INT - COURTHOUSE- DAY

The county courthouse is in the town square and contains the courts on the second floor and the sheriff's office on the first floor.

Tim, who is now the high Sheriff, is standing next to the front counter talking to a deputy who is behind the counter.

They both notice Jake coming up the steps. He takes them three at a time. He enters the courthouse, sees Tim, and strides across the lobby towards him.

Not knowing what to expect, both Tim and the deputy square up, (face Jake).

Jake walks up and grabs Sheriff Tim. In a hug. Tim is surprised, apprehensive, and confused.

After a second, Tim notices Jake is crying. In fact, Tim notices Jake, much like a child, starts bawling and cannot keep the emotion in.

After a few more seconds, Tim realizes what is happening, he gently turns Jake and says;

TIM

Son, let's go into my office and talk about your dad. I have a few stories your mom may not have told you.

INT - MCDONOGH FARM - DAY

Rusty is seen entering the dairy barn. He drops his backpack by the door and picks up a stool. His dad is sitting by a cow trying to milk it.

Rusty puts the stool by the cow next to his dad. They are seen talking, a little at first but they are engaged in a conversation. Nothing else matters. An education for Rusty, a catharsis for Randall. No dialogue.

INT - SEYMOUR HIGH SCHOOL- DAY

It is the next day after the field trip and all the senior girls who were present are in the principal's reception area talking to the secretary.

NADIRA

We would like to see Principal Martinez.

The secretary does not even ask why but picks up her phone.

SECRETARY

Dr. Martinez. There are some ladies out here to see you. I think yesterday was the field trip.

After a minute, Becka opens the door and steps out. She is wearing a nice business suit and is very poised.

NADIRA

Are you Becka?

BECKA

I once was.

BLOND GIRL

Can we hug you?

Becka smiles.

They rush her, hugging and all talking at once, the tall girl starts confessing she cheated on a test last year. They all have questions and are crying. One asks about her knee. The secretary is overcome with emotion, she comes around her desk and hugs them.

After what seems like a few minutes, Becka gets them back in order and says one at a time.

NADIRA

What happened?

BECKA

I came home and decided I had been given a great gift.

BLONDE GIRL

Martinez?

Becka laughs.

BECKA

No. Well maybe. I mean I lived and felt it was time for more so I went to school. Then I went to school some more and finally, a whole lot more.

I taught for a while and eventually realized my forte, (see I know words now), was in organizational development. Applied Data Analytics to be exact. It transitioned well to an administrative post.

(MORE)

BECKA (CONT'D)  
 I expect I'll end up in a  
 university if we can ever leave  
 Seymour.

BLONDE GIRL  
 And Sgt. Martinez

Becka laughs...

*We are on the plane home. Becka is in a partitioned area of the plane in a wheelchair. Next to her is Sgt. Martinez on a gurney, fast asleep.*

*Stone enters wearing a hospital gown and pulling an IV bag on a stand. She looks weak and sits down.*

STONE  
 You know your Mexican is supposed  
 to be on a plane to Germany.

BECKA  
 Yes, but he wanted to come with us.  
 Stone notices that Becka is wearing  
 a ring.

STONE  
 A new ring.

BECKA  
 Yes, a Ranger ring. I expect you  
 get it when you graduate.

STONE  
 Are you engaged?

BECKA  
 I don't know. There was an awful  
 lot of morphine on both sides.

STONE  
 Is he the one?

BECKA  
 Don't know that either, but he said  
 some pretty great things, some in  
 English, some in Spanish. Enough  
 that I better check it out.

Back in the present.

BECKA (CONT'D)  
 We're still together.

BLOND GIRL

Does he sit at home drinking beer  
in his white T-shirt while you have  
to support the family?

BECKA

She laughs heartily.

No, he's fine. He owns a business  
here in town and got his degree.

NADIRA

And Stone?

BECKA

Ah, Stone, she's doing the most.  
You know Stone was a nickname. Her  
real name is Virginia.

BLACK GIRL

Sloan. She's Virginia Sloan, the  
congresswoman, Congresswoman Sloan,  
she gasps.

Becka smiles.

*2006- we see Stone's Poly-Sci professor sitting down at a  
long table in the college cafeteria. One of his students  
walks up to him.*

*STUDENT*

*Well, professor, I guess you won't  
have to put up with Sloan anymore.*

*PROFESSOR*

*Why's that?*

*STUDENT*

*She had to withdraw.*

*While walking away:*

*She was shot when in Afghanistan  
with the National Guard.*

*The professor is stunned.*

INT- HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY 2006

*Sloan is in a hospital bed with an IV, she is sitting up and looking at a book when there is a soft knock on the door. Her Poly-sci professor pokes his head in the door and says.*

PROFESSOR

CAN I COME IN?

*She motions him forward and he takes a chair and sits by her bed.*

PROFESSOR

*I've been checking up on you and I see you've missed a lot of class, so I thought I better come and present you with an oral exam, to see if you know the material.*

*Sloan Smiles*

PROFESSOR (CONT'D)

*Okay, Question 1. In what country is the United States currently fighting the war on terror?*

*Sloan smiles*

SLOAN

*Afghanistan.*

PROFESSOR

*That's correct, you have passed your final with flying colors.*

*You know Ms. Sloan I have talked to my department head. We could use a teaching assistant next semester.*

*It doesn't pay much, room and board, a small stipend but all your education is free.*

*If you can give up your waitress career, I can pretty much guarantee you get the position.*

SLOAN

*Why?*

*The professor puts his hand on the bed and pulls back his shirt sleeve. You can see the Marine tattoo on his forearm.*

*SLOAN (CONT'D)*

*She reaches her hand out to him.*

*Thank you for your service.*

*PROFESSOR*

*No, thank you for yours.*

*They sit and talk quietly, Sloan is beaming.*

*BECKA*

*She's doing good and is in Washington now but will be home with us soon.*

*INT - CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE ROOM - PRESENT DAY*

*The meeting is about to get started. Staff and members are filing in and all the audience is talking. It's fairly loud.*

*Virginia Sloan enters by a side door. A ranking officer sitting in the front row of the audience notices her. He stands and loudly shouts.*

*ATTENTION!*

*The room is immediately quiet while a dozen military personnel throughout the audience stand at attention.*

*Sloan leans into the nearest microphone.*

*SLOAN*

*At ease gentlemen, please at ease.*

*Everyone sits down and the volume returns to normal. Sloan takes her seat and leans over to her colleague on the right.*

*SLOAN (CONT'D)*

*I can't get them to stop.*

*COLLEAGUE*

*Why would you ever want to?*

INT - ARMORY- PRESENT DAY

Mr. Smith in a Colonel's uniform is on the platform. Facing him are five recruits, also in uniform. They are Rusty, Jake, Nadira, The Blonde Girl, and the Blonde Boy.

THEY ARE ALL REPEATING IN UNISON.

...That I make this obligation  
freely, without any mental  
reservation or purpose of evasion,  
and that I will well and faithfully  
discharge the duties of the office  
of private in the Army National  
Guard of the state of Indiana upon  
which I am about to enter, so help  
me God.

After the oath, the crowd surges forward to congratulate them. Many people are there. Cookies and punch.

We then see a series of photographs taken at the swearing-in ceremony.

1. The five inductees.
2. The five inductees with Mr. Smith.
3. Eight of the 10 guardsmen from the 2006 mission. Only Bubba and one other are missing. This was a year everyone was anticipating.
4. The 2006 mission folks and the inductees.
5. Nadira and her parents
6. Nadira, her parents, Hal, and all the villagers.
7. Ram I and Ram II.
8. Rusty, Randall, and Karen.
9. Jake and Melissa
10. Jake and Sheriff Tim with Tim holding up Jake's car keys.

Melissa and Jake walk over to Representative Sloan where she is standing with her family. Her husband is huge, bigger than Jake with a big beard and horned-rimmed glasses. He looks like an ex-NFL lineman, which he was. They have three children, a 15-year-old boy, a 12-year-old girl, and a six-year-old boy.

MELISSA

Virginia, this is Jake, Bubba's son. You have not seen him in a while.

SLOAN

My, he looks just like Bubba. Jake shakes her hand.

JAKE

Pleased to meet you ma'am. We heard the story about 2006. About the transfusion and everything. Are we related?

SLOAN

Her hand flies to her mouth, She hugs Jake and says.

Yes, Jake, we're forever related.

She calls her husband over, and the tears begin.

SLOAN (CONT'D)

Clarence, this is Jake, Bubba's boy.

CLARENCE

Bubba's boy, your Bubba from the war?

SLOAN NODS, FREELY CRYING NOW.

Clarence wraps Jake up in a bear hug. He knows the story.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

Kids, come meet your cousin Jake.

TEENAGE GIRL

He doesn't look like our cousin.

LITTLE BOY

Jake, Jake, that's my name too.

CLARENCE REACHES DOWN.

It may be because you were both named after the same person.

11. A photograph is seen of the whole family with Jake and Melissa. Big Jake is holding little Jake.

12. The same photo is seen with a different frame that says, "Merry Christmas from the Sloan Family".

EXT - MCDONOGH FARM - NIGHT

The pickup truck is backed up on a small hill, so the rear bed is pointed upwards. The tailgate is down, and Rusty and Randall are sitting on the tailgate. Karen is standing next to them leaning on the side. They all have longneck bottles which they are sipping from.

They are looking at the sky. The stars are out and it's magnificent. You can see the Milky Way and several galaxies. You have a sense this is not the first time they've looked at the night sky.

RUSTY

Dad, what should I do?

RANDALL

What do you mean?

RUSTY

I mean later after school.

RANDALL

Can't tell you that. You have to make your own path. We both know mine and yours are not the same.

KAREN

Finally.

RANDALL

What I will tell you is make a difference.

RUSTY

How?

RANDALL

Don't know, just do something that you can look back on and say I mattered.

RUSTY

Dad, are you proud of what you did in 2006?

RANDALL

No, I'm not ashamed either. I did my job to the best of my ability. He pauses,

RANDALL (CONT'D)

Why don't you ask me what I am proud of?

RUSTY

Okay, what are you proud of?

RANDAL

Our life, my three cows, my wife, not in that order.

KAREN

Jee sech.

RANDALL

And you son, you've turned out to be a fine young man. A sum positive for the world, not a negative. I see great things for you.

They wait in silence.

RANDALL (CONT'D)

Do you want me to tell you about the night you were conceived?

RUSTY

What?

RANDAL

Conceived. Made.

RUSTY

What??

RANDALL

Well, you see when a man has strong feelings for a woman, and she really likes the man and their very married...

RUSTY

STOP!

RANDALL

It was a dark and stormy night.

He holds his hands up and swirls them about.

RANDALL (CONT'D)  
The rain was coming down hard.

RUSTY  
You ruin everything.

RANDALL  
Your mom was in her cheerleader  
outfit.

RUSTY  
I'm outa here.

He gets down and starts to walk back.

RANDALL  
And then the power went out.

KAREN  
Adios, Cowboy.

She catches up with Rusty and they both walk down the hill  
together to the house.

Ram is alone in the back of the pickup. He shouts out.

RAM  
FARMER NEEDS A WIFE!

They keep walking, not even listening anymore.

Ram sits quietly, tilts his beer to the heavens, and says:

Thank you.

**THE END**

PTO is a work of fiction. There are 20 recipients of the Medal of Honor during the war in Afghanistan.

Their stories are below.

List 20 names, pictures, status and stories of recipients with enough screen time to read them.

AFTER CREDIT SCENE

INT - GENERAL STORE - DAY

Jake is sitting in the general store playing checkers. He is wearing a Notre Dame football jacket with JAKE on the back.

He is playing Hal who is also wearing a Notre Dame football jacket with HAL on it. A gift.

The men from the Afghanistan village are sitting next to them smoking pipes and taking a keen interest in the game.

Hal makes a move jumping three of Jake's checkers, Hal bursts out cackling and the Afghan men cheer him on. Jake looks resigned.