

DARK SOUL VALLEY

by

Stephen Wells

ukswells@yahoo.co.uk

OVER BLACK:

A communications radio CRACKLES and POPS. Its BUZZING STATIC is broken by --

RADIO VOICE (V.O.)
Bravo Six Alpha, confirm your position,
over.

A young, PANICKED VOICE, obscured by the radio, SCREAMS back amid intense background GUNFIRE.

PANICKED VOICE (V.O.)
You gotta send help, man. The
Lieutenant's dead, we need help out here!

RADIO VOICE (V.O.)
Bravo Six Alpha, we need your location.
Confirm your position, over.

PANICKED VOICE (V.O.)
They won't fucking die! There's too many
of 'em!

RADIO VOICE (V.O.)
Okay, Six Alpha, calm down. We're
sending you a fire mission. We just need
your grid, over.

PANICKED VOICE (V.O.)
Jesus Christ, they're fucking everywhere!

An EXPLOSION distorts the line, ending the transmission.

EXT. JUNGLE - VIETNAM - NIGHT

An AMERICAN SOLDIER runs frenziedly through the dark jungle, frequently turning to open fire on an unseen enemy.

The night air is filled with SHOUTING, GUNFIRE and SCREAMS. Another EXPLOSION lights up the soldier's path as he keeps sprinting, dodging trees, ducking branches.

He turns again to shoot, continuously moving as he sprays bullets. He fires off a few bursts, spins back around, trips, and hits the ground hard.

He lays prone on the jungle floor for a few seconds, pushes himself up on his elbows, groggily shakes his head.

Looking to the side, he sees his M-16 laying in the dirt. He reaches out for it, but is frozen by the sound of a low, rattling GROAN.

Forgetting the rifle, he speedily rolls onto his back. His young eyes widen with terror at what he sees stood over him. He lets out a blood-curdling SCREAM!

CUT TO BLACK.

Silence. A light WHIRRING slowly builds, getting louder and louder, until it reaches a mechanical ROAR.

EXT. SKYLINE - DAY

A U.S. ARMY HELICOPTER glides over the Vietnamese landscape -- Rivers, villages, rice paddies and a sea of lush green tree tops that hide the dangers below.

EXT. U.S. ARMY BASE CAMP - DAY

An AMERICAN SOLDIER stands with an M-16 rifle resting on his shoulder. The HELICOPTER approaches in the distance, the midday sun burning in the sky behind it.

SUPERIMPOSE: SOUTH VIETNAM, 1968

The Soldier looks to the sky and twists his body, eyes trailing the helicopter as it flies overhead. He sets off walking through the camp, following the direction of the chopper.

SOLDIERS go about their everyday activities. Some carry supplies, empty latrines, clean their weapons. Others play football, shave in their helmets, improve their sun tans.

FOUR MEN stand in the baking sun, filling sandbags. They are EDDIE JACKSON, MARTY 'RED' DONNELLY, LUTHER 'JERSEY' CARTER and VINNY PELLAGRINI

Jackson, 17, and Red, 17, are both new recruits. Fresh-faced with regulation clipped hair and innocent eyes, unaffected by the horrors of war.

With his frail build and boyish face, Jackson looks more suited to tenth grade than he does the army. He labors with his shovel, clearly struggling in the heat.

Jersey, 20, black, watches with disdain. He leans his skinny body on his shovel, smoking a cigarette, scowling.

JERSEY

Damn, Jackson. My baby brother Darrell could dig faster than you, and he's only eight.

JACKSON

I can't go any faster. It's too hot out here today.

Red nods in agreement with his fellow rookie.

RED

Didn't think it could get any hotter than it was yesterday, but boy was I wrong.

JERSEY

Shiiit, what do you virgins know about hot? Wait 'til you've spent a coupla days hiking through the brush, dodging Charlie's bullets. Then you'll know what hot is.

Pellagrini, 19, is a brash New Yorker, all greased hair and fake bravado. He stabs his shovel into the ground and wipes the sweat from his forehead.

PELLAGRINI

I'm too short for this, man. Seven months and they've still got me shoveling this shit. It ain't right.

JERSEY

Motherfucker, you ain't gotta tell me. I'm so short I need a step ladder to take a shit!

PELLAGRINI

It's bullshit. You ever seen Duke with a shovel in his hands?

JERSEY

Man, that's 'cos they too scared to ask his crazy white ass to do anything other than kill dinks.

RED

What's with Duke anyway?

JERSEY

You ever heard of the thousand-yard stare?

RED

What's that?

JERSEY

It's the look you get in your eyes when ya been out in the brush too long. When ya seen too much death. Like you had the soul sucked right outta ya... Duke's got the thousand-yard stare, man, but he ain't get it in the 'Nam. He already had that shit before he came out here.

JACKSON

He makes me nervous.

JERSEY

Shit, Duke makes every swingin' dick in Echo Company nervous.

PELLAGRINI

Not me.

JERSEY

I said swingin' dick, Pellagrini, not spaghetti dick.

PELLAGRINI

Fuck you, Jersey.

They all have a good laugh at Pellagrini's expense.

JERSEY

You wanna know the craziest thing about Duke, though? That big sonofabitch volunteered for this shit.

RED

(proud)

I enlisted.

JERSEY

What? What the hell's wrong with you whiteboys? Y'all dumb as shit.

PELLAGRINI

Hey, Donnelly, how'd you get the name "Red"?

RED

On account of my red hair.

PELLAGRINI

(mocking)

No shit?

JERSEY

Shit, kid, you wanna hope you brought the luck of the Irish out here with ya. You gon' need it.

INT. BATTALION CP - BUNKER - DAY

MAJOR EDWARDS, 40s, is a heavysset bulldog of a man whose gruff Southern accent oozes authority. He stands at a desk, a large topographic map laid out in front of him.

SERGEANT HOLDEN, 24, enters the bunker. He walks with the confidence and charisma of a natural leader, yet his face shows the strain of a man who's been at war too long.

HOLDEN
(saluting)
Major Edwards.

MAJOR EDWARDS
Ah, Sergeant Holden, at ease. How's things?

HOLDEN
Oh, you know, Sir. Just trying to keep the two B's from killing me.

MAJOR EDWARDS
The "two B's", Sergeant?

HOLDEN
Bullets and boredom, Sir.

MAJOR EDWARDS
Of course.
(then)
Well, let's get down to business. I didn't ask you here solely for a report on your well being.

HOLDEN
I figured not, Sir.

MAJOR EDWARDS
The reason that you are here, Sergeant, is because we have received reconnaissance that the NVA has a POW camp operating around 40 klicks north of the Dong Nai River. I'm sure I don't have to tell you what kind of monstrosities those yellow bastards are probably putting our boys through.

HOLDEN
No, you don't, Sir.

MAJOR EDWARDS

And that's why we're going to bring them back. Our intel tells us the camp is here.

He uses an unlit cigar to point out an area on the large map.

MAJOR EDWARDS (CONT'D)

Dark Soul Valley. Lieutenant Powers is going to be leading you and your squad, and you'll be accompanied by one of our scouts.

Holden visibly tenses at the mention of the name "Lieutenant Powers".

MAJOR EDWARDS (CONT'D)

You'll be leaving base at oh-five-hundred tomorrow. The choppers will take you to the Dong Nai River, and from there you'll head West. Now, the Western side of the Dong Nai Province is a very hostile area, so you can expect to encounter Charlie more than once, but I'm sure your men are capable of coping with this.

HOLDEN

More than capable, Sir.

MAJOR EDWARDS

Good. You'll have to pass through the Dum Lai villages and make a Northwesterly sweep for around 10 klicks towards the Loc Ninh district. This will take you into the heart of Dark Soul Valley. Now, you can tell your men that when they return they can have a little extended R and R. How does a ten day pass sound?

HOLDEN

Sounds great, Sir. I'm sure they'll appreciate that.

MAJOR EDWARDS

I should hope so.

LIEUTENANT POWERS, 26, enters the bunker. Skinny, stiff and pale, a pair of horn-rimmed glasses frame his stern face.

POWERS

I hope you didn't start without me.

MAJOR EDWARDS

Ah, Lieutenant, good to see you.

As he joins them, Powers eyes Holden. They fix each other with looks of mutual contempt.

POWERS

You too, Sir.

He warmly shakes hands with Major Edwards.

MAJOR EDWARDS

(to Holden)

Well, that's all, Sergeant. If you'll excuse me and the Lieutenant, we have some other matters to discuss.

HOLDEN

Thank you, Major. Lieutenant.

He salutes, turns and leaves the bunker. Edwards watches him leave, waits a few moments before speaking.

MAJOR EDWARDS

I've got another job for you, Lieutenant.

Powers smiles.

INT. BARRACKS - NIGHT

Pellagrini stands drinking a beer. He downs every last drop, lets out a loud BELCH and crushes the empty can on his forehead. Holden looks on, unimpressed.

HOLDEN

Take it easy, Pellagrini, I want you on point tomorrow.

PELLAGRINI

Hey, you know me, Sarge. I could drink twenty of these and I wouldn't feel a thing.

HOLDEN

Well, let's just try to keep it below ten. I don't want Powers riding my ass because you're too hung over to soldier.

Pellagrini cracks open a fresh beer.

PELLAGRINI

I'll try my best.

He takes his beer and sits back down to a card game. He's playing poker with Red, JUSTIN 'FARM BOY' KELL and REGGIE WASHINGTON.

Farm Boy, 19, is a stocky, amiable country bumpkin. He deals out the cards.

FARM BOY

Why the heck we gotta have Powers baby-sitting us again, anyway?

PELLAGRINI

Beats me.

Reggie, 22, black, is the squad's no-bullshit radioman. He takes a look at his cards, angrily slams them back down.

REGGIE

Damn it, Farm Boy, you're gonna have to start giving me some cards I can play with.

FARM BOY

(laughing)

And why would I wanna do that?

RED

Why does everyone hate Lieutenant Powers so much anyway?

FARM BOY

He's lower than a snake's belly in a wagon rut, that's why.

PELLAGRINI

Powers has got a hard-on for the Sarge, and he takes great pleasure in shitting on this squad every chance he gets.

RED

How come?

PELLAGRINI

They were both at boot camp at the same time and there was some kind of beef between them. Don't know what. Sarge won't say. But something definitely happened.

REGGIE

And Powers has held a grudge ever since. He even went out of his way to stop Sarge from being made Lieutenant.

RED

Really? How?

REGGIE

He's all buddy-buddy with Major Edwards,
and Major Edwards is a major asshole.

HOLDEN

Walks over to Jackson, who lies on his cot, sweating,
reading a bible. He sits down on the adjacent cot,
taking note of the book.

HOLDEN

King James or Standard?

JACKSON

King James.

Holden thinks for a moment, searching for something in
the back of his mind, then --

HOLDEN

"Be strong and of a good courage, fear
not, nor be afraid of them: for the Lord
your God, he it is that does go with you;
he will not fail you, nor forsake you".

Jackson looks up, surprised, impressed.

HOLDEN (CONT'D)

Deuteronomy thirty one: six.

JACKSON

You read the good book?

HOLDEN

Never had much choice in it... My
father's a pastor.

JACKSON

Mine too.

(then)

Well, he used to be.

HOLDEN

Used to be? What happened? He didn't
lose his faith in a card game did he?

Jackson doesn't answer. He looks away from Holden,
averting his gaze to --

THE BIBLE

He turns to the inside cover. It bears the inscription:
"Make your father proud."

Holden sees the look of sadness on Jackson's face, instantly regrets his misjudged wisecrack, changes the subject.

HOLDEN
You nervous about tomorrow?

JACKSON
More scared than nervous.

HOLDEN
That's okay, it's good to be scared. It keeps you alert. It could keep you alive. Hell, I was terrified my first time out in the brush.

JACKSON
Really?

HOLDEN
Sure. But there's only one way of getting past those first-time jitters, and that's getting out there and tasting the dirt. You just gotta remember to keep your head low and your ass covered.

JACKSON
You make it sound easy.

Holden gives him a reassuring squeeze on his young shoulder.

HOLDEN
You'll be fine, kid.

Jackson smiles, heartened.

PELLAGRINI (O.S.)
Hey, Sarge...

Holden looks over to the card table, sees Pellagrini sat with an unlit cigarette dangling from his lips.

PELLAGRINI (CONT'D)
Got a light?

Holden takes out a gold Zippo and tosses it to Pellagrini, who lights his smoke, then pockets the lighter. Holden laughs.

HOLDEN

I'll be having that back, thank you very much.

Pellagrini begrudgingly returns the stolen lighter.

PELLAGRINI

One of these days, Sarge, one of these days.

HOLDEN

Not on your life.

EXT. JUNGLE - NIGHT

Two bare feet pound along the jungle floor, hard and fast, as a middle aged VIETNAMESE FARMER races desperately through the brush.

Behind him, in the near distance, a large fire blazes uncontrollably. SCREAMS ring out.

The Farmer runs haphazardly, zigzagging a random path away from the distant fire. In his mad dash, one of his feet triggers a trip wire.

Instantly, a large mud ball fixed with bamboo spikes swings from the darkness and hits him in the chest.

Stopped in his tracks, the Farmer stands impaled on a Vietcong deadfall trap. Blood trickles from his mouth as he exhales a deep, painful breath.

Nearby, there is a prolonged RUSTLING, followed by an ominous GROAN.

Immense fear registers on the farmer's face. He frenziedly starts trying to free himself from the trap.

CRYING out in pain and coughing on blood, he manages to slowly slide the spikes out of his chest, millimeter by excruciating millimeter.

With his body almost free from the trap, TWO GROTESQUE HANDS suddenly wrap around his face from behind. Hideous fingers lodge in his eyes and mouth. They start to tear his flesh.

The Farmer SCREAMS an agonized howl of pain and terror.

INT. BARRACKS - NIGHT

Jersey dances and SINGS along to a tape deck that plays Motown.

Beside him is HOLLYWOOD, 20, a bronzed, athletic, Californian surf dude. He sits on his cot, rolling a joint.

HOLLYWOOD

I gotta say, this place could be the closest thing to hell on earth, but God damn do those little bastards know how to grow some good weed.

JERSEY

Man, I can't wait for that R and R. I'm gonna get me some sweet gook pussy and just lay around, gettin' high all day and fuckin' all night.

HOLLYWOOD

Sounds like a plan to me, brother.

JERSEY

Shit, we should get us a gang o' bitches.

HOLLYWOOD

Now that's what I'm talking about. Beaucoup pussy, man. Beaucoup pussy.

JERSEY

Ten days of weed and fucking. Shit, I'm gettin' a hard-on already.

Hollywood finishes rolling the joint, points it in Jersey's direction.

HOLLYWOOD

Wanna get a little practice in?

JERSEY

Hell yes.

They head for the barracks doors, walking past the poker game.

HOLLYWOOD

Hey, Pellagrini, you smoking?

PELLAGRINI

Nah, I'm gonna stick with my beer.

JERSEY

Pussy.

Pellagrini flips Jersey the bird.

As the two smokers head outside to enjoy their joint, their path is blocked by an IMPOSING FIGURE stood in the barracks doorway --

DUKE, 23, a tall, muscular, bear of a man. His shaved head displays a large shrapnel scar that curves from the temple all the way round to the base of his skull.

HOLLYWOOD

(nervous)

Hey, Duke.

Jersey and Hollywood part like the Red Sea as Duke walks through them without even acknowledging their existence. They give each other a look of relief and exit fast.

AT THE CARD TABLE

They watch as Duke walks in and drops his considerable bulk down onto his cot.

PELLAGRINI

Well, this room just got a whole lot crazier.

FARM BOY

(under his breath)

Keep it down, fella, he'll hear you.

PELLAGRINI

Pfft, I ain't scared of him.

Pellagrini stands from the table, downs his beer and lets out another loud BELCH.

Holden turns around and is met with the sight of Pellagrini crushing the empty can on his forehead.

HOLDEN

Why do I even bother saying anything?

PELLAGRINI

What? I'm fine.

INT. COMMAND CHOPPER - DAY - TRAVELING

Pellagrini dry heaves and puffs out his cheeks, trying to stop himself from vomiting.

He sits next to the open door of a UH-1 Huey as it glides through the morning sky. He is joined in the chopper by Holden, Powers, Farm Boy, Reggie and MINH.

Minh, 20s, is the squad's South Vietnamese scout. Quiet, focussed and always eerily calm.

Pellagrini heaves again, and this time is unable to hold back. He SPEWS a stream of last night's beer out the side of the helicopter.

Powers shakes his head in disgust. He SHOUTS to make himself heard over the loud WHOP-WHOPPING of the helicopter's rotor blades.

POWERS

For God's sake, Holden, can't you keep your men under control?

Holden shoots Pellagrini an angry look. He sheepishly glances back, wiping vomit from his mouth.

HOLDEN

Farm Boy...

FARM BOY

Sarge?

HOLDEN

You're point man today, okay?

FARM BOY

Yes, Sir.

PELLAGRINI

(pathetic)

Sorry.

INT. SECOND CHOPPER - DAY - TRAVELING

The rest of the squad ride in the second Huey. Duke sits opposite Jackson and Red, staring at them, his menacing gaze clearly making them uncomfortable.

DUKE

I don't want either of you fucking cherries anywhere near me when we hit the ground. If you so much as take a piss within ten feet of me I'll waste you myself.

HOLLYWOOD

C'mon, Duke, chill out, man. Give 'em a break.

DUKE

Fuck a break. If you want to take your chances with these pissants when the shit hits the fan you can be my guest, but I ain't getting my ass wasted 'cos some fucking greenhorn don't know how to use the safety on his rifle.

RED

(under his breath)
I'm not scared of you.

DUKE

The fuck you just say?

HOLLYWOOD

Hey, he don't mean nothing by it, Duke. He's just nervous is all.

DUKE

You better watch your fucking step out here boy, or the 'Nam might just eat you alive.

The tension and hostility is too much for Jackson. He gazes out of the chopper, the once innocent look in his eyes now replaced by one of fear and desperation.

The ROAR of the helicopter's rotor blades gets louder and louder, reaching a rushing, almost unbearably intense BLAST.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

THWACK! A large blade chops at the overgrown brush.

Farm Boy cuts a path for the rest of the squad, his machete hacking through the thick undergrowth.

The line of soldiers snakes behind, endeavoring to make their way through the darkened jungle. Thin rays of light struggle to peek through the dense tree top canopy.

Jackson slaps at the back of his neck, trying to beat away the mosquitos. Soaked in sweat and breathing hard, he struggles with his heavy rucksack.

RED

You okay, Jackson?

JACKSON
No. I'm hot as hell, and this pack is
killing me.

Red hands Jackson his canteen.

RED
Here, have a drink. You need to keep
yourself hydrated.

He takes a big gulp of water, passes the canteen back.

JACKSON
Thanks, buddy.

RED
Hey, us new guys gotta look out for each
other.

Jersey approaches from behind, angrily interrupting.

JERSEY
Come on, get fucking moving. You're
holding up the line.

The young soldiers press on.

JERSEY (CONT'D)
You can jerk each other off when we get
back to base.

EXT. JUNGLE - LATER

A GECKO relaxes on the jungle floor, cooling in the
shade. Startled by a RUSTLING, its orange eyes dart
around, scanning for danger.

The RUSTLING gets closer, louder. The scared Gecko
scrambles off into the undergrowth and an ARMY BOOT lands
in it's place.

The squad struggle through a dense, resistant bamboo
thicket, Farm Boy still cutting point.

The sound of their exerted grunting and the SNAP of
bamboo is suddenly drowned out by a BLAST of concentrated
gunfire.

HOLDEN
CONTACT!

The men all hit the ground in unison as red tracers fly
through the darkened jungle like laser beams.

They scramble into a skirmish line, taking up positions behind trees and exotic greenery.

Holden and Farm Boy Throw grenades in the direction of the enemy gunfire. BLA-BLAM! Two explosions send dirt and vegetation airborne.

The squad returns fire.

DUKE

Crouches on one knee, calmly firing off short bursts. Maniacally grinning, his face is a picture of unbridled joy.

DUKE

C'mon you gook mother fuckers!

HOLLYWOOD

Lays down cover fire as Pellagrini and Jersey sweep forward past his position, shooting as they move.

BLAM! The blast from an enemy grenade has them diving for cover.

Pellagrini gets back up, resumes shooting. Jersey remains grounded, both hands holding the helmet on his head.

PELLAGRINI

Jesus, Jersey, get working.

JERSEY

Fuck this shit, man.

JACKSON

Sits with his back against a tree, rifle pressed to his chest, terrified of the hell breaking loose around him.

RED

Fearlessly lays out a stream of fire. He sees his bullets rip into an ENEMY SOLDIER and turns to Jackson.

RED

I got one! I got one!

His celebrations are cut short as a bullet tears into his neck. He reels back, hitting the ground SCREAMING.

REGGIE

Turns to see him writhing on the floor.

REGGIE
Oh shit! MEDIC! MEDIC!

He moves over to the fallen boy, checks the extent of the injury, recoils at the sight of the wound.

REGGIE (CONT'D)
MEDIC! Hollywood get your ass over here
NOW!

HOLLYWOOD

Ducks and weaves as bullets hit the trees around him. He runs over to his comrades, low and fast, medical kit in hand.

REGGIE (CONT'D)
They got him in the neck.

Hollywood sees the blood spurting from the wound in Red's throat, puts his hand over it, attempting to stop the flow. A stream of blood runs through his fingers.

HOLLYWOOD
Get on the horn, Reggie, we need a
medivac asap!

Jackson looks on, his face white as a ghost, as Hollywood works feverishly on the wounded soldier.

Red tries to speak, but is only capable of making a deathly GURGLE.

HOLLYWOOD (CONT'D)
Damn it, Red, stay with me buddy.

Red grips Hollywood's sleeve and holds it tight. His eyes are wide, terrified.

HOLLYWOOD (CONT'D)
Just hang in there, kid. We're calling
in a chopper, you're gonna be fine.

His grip loosens and the gurgling stops. The stunned look in his eyes has now become vacant. He's dead.

HOLLYWOOD (CONT'D)
God damn it!

Reggie goes berserk, spraying bullets out into the jungle.

REGGIE
YOU SONS OF BITCHES!

Jackson drops his rifle and covers his face with his hands, trying to block out the madness.

POWERS

Throws out another grenade, the EXPLOSION sending a VIETNAMESE SOLDIER hurtling into a tree.

HOLDEN, FARM BOY AND DUKE

Charge forward as the Vietcong begin to retreat, laying a curtain of fire in their direction.

Two of the FLEEING ENEMY are peppered in the back and crumple to the floor.

The intense gunfire begins to die down.

POWERS
CEASE FIRE! CEASE FIRE!

The men all stop firing, except Duke who continues to empty his magazine into the trees.

The battle ends just as quickly as it started.

EXT. JUNGLE - LATER

Holden walks over to the scene of Red's demise. Hollywood and Reggie stand beside the dead soldier.

HOLDEN
What happened?

HOLLYWOOD
He took one in the throat. Nothing I could do.

HOLDEN
Damn it.

HOLLYWOOD
It was over pretty fast.

REGGIE
Seventeen years old, man. Shit, he ain't been out here more than a month.

Holden walks over to Jackson, who remains by the tree, head buried in his folded arms. He crouches beside him.

HOLDEN
You okay, kid?

Jackson lifts his head, revealing his red, tear-filled eyes. His lips quiver as he opens his mouth. He tries to speak, but nothing comes out.

HOLDEN (CONT'D)

Look, I hate to sound cold-hearted, but you gotta forget about Red. He's gone, and that's that. Nothing anyone can say or do is gonna change it. It was his time, and when your number's up, your number's up.

He gives Jackson an almost congratulatory pat on the shoulder.

HOLDEN (CONT'D)

(upbeat)

But hey, you're still here though. You made it through your first fire-fight.

Jackson manages a thin smile.

HOLDEN (CONT'D)

(serious)

But you're gonna have to get your head straight, and fast. If you want to still be alive after the next skirmish, and trust me there will be a next skirmish, you need to snap out of this. If your mind ain't right and totally focussed, you've got no chance out here. Okay?

Jackson nods and wipes his eyes.

HOLDEN (CONT'D)

Now, when we head back out I want you up front with me. Stay close, stay focussed, and you'll be fine.

JACKSON

Okay, Sarge.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Pellagrini walks over to a motionless VIETCONG SOLDIER laying face down on the jungle floor. He uses his boot to roll the body over.

PELLAGRINI

Jesus!

Half of the soldier's face has been blown off. Pellagrini covers his mouth, turns away, sickened.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Jersey crouches next to a dead ENEMY SOLDIER, rifling through his pockets, taking anything of value. He removes a watch and straps it to his wrist.

JERSEY

Ain't gonna be needing this no more,
Poppa-san.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Duke approaches a downed VIETCONG SOLDIER, who although shot in the stomach, is still alive. He kicks the wounded soldier's rifle away.

DUKE

Need a little help there?

Unsheathing his bayonet, he kneels over the wounded man, straddling his chest. He places one hand over the soldier's mouth and runs the bayonet across his throat, cutting it open.

The soldier's body jerks violently as his life slips away. A satisfied sneer spreads across Duke's face.

EXT. JUNGLE - LATER

Powers stands with Minh, examining a field map. He folds it away and approaches the rest of the squad, all stood somberly around Red's body.

POWERS

Alright, we need to get moving. Bag him up, call it in and let's move out.

HOLDEN

We're not just leaving him here.

POWERS

Yes we are, Sergeant. We haven't got time to request a dust off, and carrying him's gonna slow us down too much.

HOLDEN

You heartless son of a bitch.

POWERS

Damn it, Holden, this is my operation and you'll do as I say! I have direct orders that any man K.I.A is to be bagged up and left behind.

(MORE)

POWERS (CONT'D)

We've only got maybe four more hours of daylight, and standing here arguing is killing valuable time. Bag him up, call it in and move out!

Powers turns and walks away. Holden stands seething.

HOLDEN

Alright, you heard the bastard. Gather your kit and get ready to move out. Reggie, call it in. Hollywood, you give me a hand bagging him up.

HOLLYWOOD

(affirmative)

Sarge.

The men start gathering their equipment. Jackson and Jersey look down on Red's body.

JERSEY

Guess he didn't have the luck of the Irish after all.

Tears well in Jackson's eyes.

EXT. JUNGLE - JACKSON & FARM BOY'S POSITION - NIGHT

Rain falls on Jackson as he sits cross-legged on the jungle floor, poncho hood up over his head. Farm Boy sleeps a few feet away.

He stares out into the trees, teeth chattering from the cold. Cradling his rifle in his arms, he runs his index finger over the trigger.

The jungle is alive with NOISE -- Animals moving through the undergrowth, water dripping from branches and leaves, the rain beating a hypnotic rhythm on the dirt floor.

Jackson checks his wrist watch, leans over and nudges Farm Boy.

JACKSON

(hushed)

Farm Boy. Hey, Farm Boy.

Nothing. Jackson shakes him harder, and the sleeping soldier reluctantly opens his eyes.

JACKSON (CONT'D)

It's your shift, buddy.

FARM BOY
 (groggy)
 Okay... I'm awake.

EXT. JUNGLE - PELLAGRINI & JERSEY'S POSITION - NIGHT

Jersey and Pellagrini both lie on the floor, sound asleep. An entire NVA division could walk past them undetected. Pellagrini SNORES loudly.

EXT. JUNGLE - JACKSON & FARM BOY'S POSITION - NIGHT

Farm Boy rubs his tired eyes, leans back his head, lets some of the night's rain fall on his face.

FARM BOY
 Jeez, I can't wait to get outta this damn place.

JACKSON
 How much longer you got?

FARM BOY
 Forty six days... Forty six days and I'm back in the World.

He picks up his rifle, uses the sleeve of his poncho to wipe it down.

Jackson notices his weapon is different from the rest of the squad's standard issue M-16s. It has a thick hardwood stock and a telescopic sight mounted on top -- an XM-21 sniper rifle.

JACKSON
 You must be a pretty good shot.

FARM BOY
 (proudly)
 The best in Monroe County! I've been hunting with my Pa since I was eight years old.

He lifts the rifle to his shoulder and tracks an imaginary prey through the dark jungle.

FARM BOY (CONT'D)
 You ever hunt?

JACKSON
 No. I'd never even held a gun before basic training. It still feels weird.

FARM BOY
You'll get used to it.

JACKSON
(doubting)
Maybe.

He lets out a long, weary yawn.

FARM BOY
You should try and get some more sleep.

JACKSON
I don't know if I can. I've hardly slept
a wink all night.

FARM BOY
You gots to get some sleep though.
Otherwise, tomorrow you'll be jumpy as a
long-tailed cat in a room full of rocking
chairs.

JACKSON
(slightly confused)
I guess.

He takes Farm Boy's advice and reclines to the wet floor,
curling up around his rifle.

He lies there for a moment, the rain beating on his
poncho. His eyelids droop over his tired eyes, then
flutter open.

He tries to fight it, but before long he is sound asleep.

EXT. JUNGLE - JACKSON & FARM BOY'S POSITION - LATER

Complete silence. The rain has stopped and the jungle is
eerily still.

JACKSON'S FACE

Serene. Content. At peace. A picture of tranquility.

The hush is broken by a quiet, muffled THUDDING. Flashes
of brilliant white begin to illuminate Jackson's sleeping
face.

His eyes shoot open, startled. Loud GUNFIRE rings in his
ears. He sees --

FARM BOY

Rifle to his shoulder, scouring the jungle through it's
scope. The shooting dies down.

JACKSON
What's happening?

FARM BOY
Charlie.

JACKSON
Where?

FARM BOY
Don't know... First shots came from
Hollywood and Reggie's position...
Didn't see anyone, though... Just laid
down fire in the same direction.

He lowers his rifle and points out into the darkness.

FARM BOY (CONT'D)
Over there.

Jackson looks out into the brush, sees only shadows.

JACKSON
I don't see anything. Maybe they got
'em.

FARM BOY
Maybe.

A tense silence, then --

HOLLYWOOD (O.S.)
There!

The jungle ERUPTS in more gunfire. Farm Boy pulls his
rifle back to his shoulder searching in the direction of
the bullets.

FARM BOY
I see 'em.

SNIPER SCOPE POV

A SHADOWY FIGURE stands amongst the trees. Its body
jerks as lead rips into it, but it doesn't go down.

It slowly keeps moving forward, as if the bullets are
just bouncing off its body.

FARM BOY (O.S.)
What the heck?

Farm Boy moves his scope's cross-hair onto the figure's
head, holds it for a moment. POP! He fires off a round.

The shadowy figure's head snaps back and it drops to the ground.

FARM BOY (O.S.)

Gotcha.

FARM BOY

Lowers his rifle, beaming with pride, turns to Jackson.

FARM BOY (CONT'D)

Told you I was the best shot in Monroe County!

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

At dawn's first light, Holden, Pellagrini and Duke check the vicinity for enemy bodies. A patchy ground fog covers the area.

Pellagrini casually strolls around, smoking a cigarette and exerting minimal effort.

He walks past a tree, stops, backs up a few paces. He runs his fingers over several bullet holes in the tree trunk.

Scanning the surroundings for bodies, his eyes settle on something that causes all color to instantly drain from his face.

PELLAGRINI

SARGE!

Holden rushes over to see Pellagrini bent over, hands on knees, throwing up.

HOLDEN

What's goin... Jesus Christ!

He sees the cause of Pellagrini's vomiting -- The corpse of a VIETNAMESE SOLDIER, crumpled on the dirt floor.

But he wasn't killed in the previous night's fire fight.

Ripped, dirty clothing. Emaciated features. Decomposing skin. A rotten, maggot infested hole where an eyeball once sat.

This body has been dead for weeks, if not months.

Holden covers his nose and mouth with his hand, the stench of death sickening. Pellagrini straightens up, spits the last of the vomit from his mouth.

PELLAGRINI
(gagging)
How the hell did that happen overnight?

HOLDEN
It didn't. This poor son of a bitch has been here a while.

PELLAGRINI
Then how do you explain that?

He uses his rifle to point out the bullet riddled tree.

PELLAGRINI (CONT'D)
Take a look at his chest and head too.

Holden edges closer to the corpse to get a better look.

Its torso is littered with fresh bullet holes and a single wound has split its forehead open -- Farm Boy's kill shot.

HOLDEN
Could've just been stray shots that hit it. A lot of bullets got fired last night.

PELLAGRINI
Yeah, but Farm Boy said he definitely got a head shot. That's a pretty big coincidence, Sarge.

HOLDEN
But that's all it is, a coincidence. Now come on, let's get back to the others.

Pellagrini takes a last uneasy look at the corpse before walking away.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

The soldiers press on through the uncompromising brush. Hollywood and Jersey walk alongside Pellagrini, who is visibly still troubled by his earlier discovery.

PELLAGRINI
I'm telling you, it was fucked up.

HOLLYWOOD

Come on, man, you've seen a wasted gook before.

PELLAGRINI

Yeah, but this was different. He was really fucking dead.

JERSEY

No shit.

PELLAGRINI

Not just dead. I'm talking dead, dead.

HOLLYWOOD

Dead, dead?

PELLAGRINI

Yeah... Motherfucking dead all over.

Hollywood gives Jersey an "Is this guy for real" look. Jersey rolls his eyes.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

The squad walks along a cart trail that leads into a small village, or what is left of it.

Huts are burned to the ground. Food and belongings are scattered everywhere -- This is the scene of the large fire from several nights previous.

POWERS

What the hell happened here?

HOLDEN

Maybe some of our boys found 'em hiding VC.

POWERS

Doubtful... None of our troops should be in this region.

HOLDEN

Well, someone got here before us.

The soldiers investigate the carnage, kicking around the burnt remains of huts, poking through the ashes with their rifles.

The body of a DEAD PIG lies in the centre of the village. The flesh has been stripped from its charred carcass.

PELLAGRINI

Man, this ain't right.

HOLLYWOOD

You still spooked about that dead dink?

PELLAGRINI

I'm telling you, man, I've got a bad feeling. A really bad fucking feeling. Something's wrong here. I mean, what happened to this place? Where are all the slopes?

JERSEY

Maybe your buddy "The Gook from the Black Lagoon" killed 'em all.

PELLAGRINI

Hey, fuck you. I know what I saw.

JERSEY

Man, you're crazier than a shit house rat.

Pellagrini snaps. Dropping his rifle, he charges Jersey and tackles him to the floor.

The two men roll around, wrestling for top position, both throwing punches, neither landing with much success.

HOLLYWOOD

Hey, pack that shit in.

Some of the squad gather round, SHOUTING instructions to the fighting soldiers. Hearing the commotion, Powers and Holden turn to see the brawl.

POWERS

For the love of God... Get your men under control, Holden!

Holden storms over to the fighting soldiers, throws his rifle to the floor.

Pellagrini manages to get the better of Jersey and lands on top. He socks him square in the mouth.

Holden grabs hold of Pellagrini and yanks him up off of Jersey, who jumps to his feet, and is instantly held back by Hollywood.

HOLDEN

This shit stops right now, damn it!
RIGHT NOW!

JERSEY

That crazy bastard started it! He just fuckin' charged me!

HOLDEN

I don't give a damn who started it, I'm finishing it. Look, you got a problem with each other? You take that shit up back at base, not out here.

PELLAGRINI

Then tell him to get off my back. There's only so much shit I can take.

JERSEY

You're such a fucking pussy, Pellagrini.

HOLDEN

Hey! You wanna fuck around and get yourselves killed out here? Fine by me. But I'll be damned if anyone else is getting wasted 'cos you two idiots are too busy bickering instead of doing your jobs.

Holden's harsh words seem to do the trick, and the two warring soldiers simmer down.

PELLAGRINI

Sorry, Sarge.

JERSEY

Yeah, sorry, Sarge.

HOLDEN

Now shake hands.

Pellagrini and Jersey shift uncomfortably, both hesitating to make the first move.

HOLDEN (CONT'D)

Now, damn it.

They begrudgingly shake hands. Jersey wipes blood away from the corner of his mouth

JERSEY

You know that was a lucky punch, right?

PELLAGRINI

Yeah, lucky it didn't knock you out.

Jersey can't help but smile a little at the wisecrack. Powers marches over, picks up Holden's rifle and hands it to him.

POWERS
Everything taken care of?

HOLDEN
Yes, Sir.

POWERS
Good...
(to Pellagrini & Jersey)
Anymore of this shit from you two and
there'll be no ten day pass when we get
back to base, you'll be getting a first
class ticket out to Khe Sanh.
Understand?

PELLAGRINI & JERSEY
(muttering)
Yes Sir.

POWERS (CONT'D)
I said, DO YOU UNDERSTAND?

PELLAGRINI & JERSEY
YES SIR!

POWERS (CONT'D)
Now pick up your shit and get ready to
move out. We've only got around six
hours of daylight left. I want that camp
secured and our boys on those choppers
before sundown.

Like scolded schoolboys, the soldiers gather up their
equipment.

FARM BOY (O.S.)
Hey! Over there!

Holden and Powers turn to Farm Boy, who points out into
the trees at the edge of the village.

FARM BOY (CONT'D)
Did you see that?

POWERS
No. What?

FARM BOY
I saw something move. I swear I did.

Powers, Holden, Farm Boy and Duke cautiously approach the
tree line, rifles raised.

Within the trees, A FIGURE rises from the undergrowth and
takes off running, away from the soldiers. Duke
immediately opens fire.

POWERS
 CEASE FIRE! CEASE FIRE! I WANT HIM
 ALIVE!

EXT. JUNGLE - CONTINUOUS

An NVA SOLDIER charges through the jungle, running away from the pursuing soldiers. He leaps a fallen log, stumbles, struggles to his feet.

He spins to look behind him, sees Holden closing rapidly, turns back, ducks under a branch and lunges on.

Bursting through a narrow corridor of tangled vines and moss, he slides down the gravel of a rocky slope that leads to a river crossing.

He runs along the river's edge, past a rock wall, round its corner and into --

CRACK!

-- The butt of Duke's rifle.

Duke looms over the downed soldier, rifle barrel right in his face.

DUKE
 Well looky what I caught.

EXT. VILLAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Holden and Duke lead their newly captured prisoner into the village.

Malnourished, shaking, and covered in dirt, he looks like he's been alone in the jungle for quite some time. He stares at the Americans with terrified eyes.

POWERS
 Get him over here.

Powers waves Minh over.

POWERS (CONT'D)
 Find out where his friends are.

Minh grabs the prisoner by his hair and drags him to the dirt floor.

MINH
 (in Vietnamese)
 Where is your squad?

The soldier doesn't respond. Minh paces circles around him.

MINH (CONT'D)
 (in Vietnamese)
 WHERE IS YOUR SQUAD?

Still no response.

POWERS
 Make him talk, damn it!

Minh continues to SHOUT at the prisoner in Vietnamese, slapping him, pushing him, kicking him, but he remains unresponsive.

Holden's seen enough. He steps in.

HOLDEN
 Alright, I don't think we're gonna get anywhere with him.

POWERS
 The hell we aren't.

HOLDEN
 Well, we can stand here like sitting ducks, waiting for him to talk...

Powers thinks it over.

POWERS
 You're right. But he comes with us. And he's your responsibility.
 (addressing the squad)
 Okay, grab your shit. We're moving out.

Holden helps the shaking NVA soldier to his feet. He removes some rope from his backpack, tethers the prisoner's wrists together with one end.

HOLDEN
 Duke...

DUKE
 Sarge?

Holden hands him the other end of the rope.

HOLDEN

Don't let him out of your sight.

Duke gives the terrified prisoner an unhinged smile.

EXT. JUNGLE - MOMENTS LATER

The squad move off the cart trail, out of the village, and head back into the jungle. Duke drags the prisoner along like a pet dog on a leash.

Bringing up the rear are Jersey and Pellagrini, back on friendly terms, united in their hatred of Lieutenant Powers.

JERSEY

(imitating Powers)

I said do you understand?

PELLAGRINI

(imitating Powers)

I'll send you to Khe Sanh if you don't do what I say.

JERSEY

Uptight mother fucker.

PELLAGRINI

They oughta send his ass out to Khe Sanh.

Behind the men, in the distance, an UNIDENTIFIABLE FIGURE staggers from the trees and lurches across the village, unnoticed.

EXT. DENSE UNDERGROWTH - DAY

The squad march down the hillside of a steep valley, dark and foreboding. Duke drags the prisoner behind him.

Upon reaching the base of the hill, Powers gathers the men.

Duke kicks the back of the prisoner's legs, dropping him to his knees, then playfully ruffles his hair.

DUKE

There's a good boy.

Powers and Minh quickly examine a field map.

POWERS

Alright, the camp should be about a klick North of here.

(MORE)

POWERS (CONT'D)

Holden, I want you and Farm Boy on recon.

HOLDEN

Yes, Sir.

POWERS

I want to know numbers and positions.
Don't get too close. If you come across
a lookout, hand to hand only. No
gunfire.

Holden nods in agreement.

POWERS (CONT'D)

And no heroics this time. I don't want
you fucking this operation up.

Ignoring the last comment, Holden turns to Farm Boy.

HOLDEN

You ready?

FARM BOY

Lead the way, Sarge.

EXT. JUNGLE HILLSIDE - DAY

Holden and Farm Boy materialize out of the undergrowth,
weaving stealthily up the hill.

The two men move in tandem, barely visible amongst the
heavy foliage. As they near the top, they lower to a
crawl.

Moving on their bellies, they cautiously clear the brow
of the hill and get their first view of the camp below.

HOLDEN

(hushed)

Hand me the glasses.

Farm Boy passes Holden a pair of binoculars. He raises
them to his eyes and scans the camp.

BINOCULARS POV

A large thatched hut stands near the centre of the
expansive camp, with several smaller huts and bamboo
prisons scattered around the perimeter.

HOLDEN (O.S.)

What the hell?

No soldiers. No Prisoners. No sign of human life at all.

HOLDEN (O.S) (CONT'D)
Something's wrong with this picture.

HOLDEN

Lowers the binoculars, confused, hands them back to Farm Boy.

POWERS (PRE-LAP)
What do you mean "It's empty"?

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Powers stands in front of Holden and Farm Boy, hands on hips, lips pursed in anger.

HOLDEN
I mean it's empty... No lookouts, no guards, no prisoners. Nothing.

The squad exchange bewildered looks.

POWERS
That can't be right.

HOLDEN
Well it is.

FARM BOY
He's telling it like it is, Sir.

POWERS
I'll believe it when I see it.

HOLDEN
(angered)
What's the point? We've wasted our
Fucking time out here.
(to Reggie)
Get on the radio to base. Tell 'em we
won't be needing those extra choppers.

REGGIE
I'm on it.

POWERS
Now wait a God damned minute! I'm in
charge of this operation!

Holden squares up to Powers. He's had enough.

HOLDEN
 What operation, huh? What operation?
 There's nothing there. There is no
 operation, you dumb bastard!

POWERS
 Stand down, Sergeant.

HOLDEN
 Fuck you, you sanctimonious son of a
 bitch!

POWERS
 Sergeant, if you don't stand down this
 second I'll have your ass court-marshaled
 the second we return to base.

Holden fights to restrain his rage.

POWERS (CONT'D)
 STAND DOWN, SERGEANT!

The two men glare at each other, the mutual hatred
 momentarily boiling over.

Holden manages to regain his composure and turns his back
 before doing something he'll regret. He reluctantly
 walks away, throwing his helmet to the floor in disgust.

POWERS (CONT'D)
 (addressing the squad)
 Alright, forget what you just heard. We
 stick to the plan.
 (to Minh)
 You wait here with the prisoner. We
 don't want him giving us away.

Minh nods his agreement.

POWERS (CONT'D)
 Okay gentlemen, lock and load and prepare
 for a full assault.

EXT. CAMP - DAY

The squad enters the camp cautiously, rifles raised,
 ready to open fire.

A SNAKE, startled by the intruders' presence, slithers
 quickly across the squad's path and into the nearby long
 grass.

Powers flashes hand signals and the men spread out,
 jogging to different huts. Bamboo doors are kicked in as
 they search the camp.

INT. HUT #1 - DAY

The hut door EXPLODES open. Duke enters and scans the hut with his rifle. The only occupants are a large stack of filled sacks.

He takes out his bayonet and stabs it into one of the sacks. Holding out his hand, he catches a fist full of uncooked rice that streams from the hole.

INT. HUT #2 - DAY

Holden struggles to open a wooden crate with his bayonet. Pushing down and twisting the weapon, the crate lid pries open in a SNAP of splintered wood.

He rips the lid off, revealing a cache of explosives -- C-4, dynamite, grenades.

EXT. CAMP - DAY

Jackson approaches the doorway to the large main hut in the centre of camp. About to enter, he is stopped by Powers.

POWERS

I'll take this one, Private. You check that hootch over there.

JACKSON

Yes, Sir.

Jackson sprints over to another hut. Powers uses his rifle to tentatively push open one of the main hut's double doors.

EXT. HUT #2 - DAY

Holden exits the hut and looks across the camp. He sees Powers suspiciously looking around before walking into --

INT. MAIN HUT - CONTINUOUS

The large, dimly lit room is split into two distinct sections.

Powers stands in what appears to be a makeshift surgery, complete with outdated medical tools and crude bamboo cots, fixed with leather restraints.

The rest of the place is a clandestine chemistry laboratory, crammed with arcane equipment. Workbenches are cluttered with test tubes, microscopes, syringes and glass jars.

He lays his rifle on one of the barbarous cots and starts to quickly search the room.

INT. CANTEEN HUT - DAY

Hollywood stands in the hut doorway, eyes scanning the trashed room. The floor is covered with overturned tables and benches, and by the far wall are three large, poorly constructed wood cabinets.

HOLLYWOOD

Well, they were right... Not a fucking thing.

He leans his rifle against the wall, removes a joint from his chest pocket and lights it.

HOLLYWOOD (CONT'D)

One big waste of god-dam time.

INT. MAIN HUT - DAY

Powers continues to search the hut, tossing things aside and becoming increasingly agitated. He desperately looks around the large room, sees a small overturned cabinet he hasn't checked.

He rushes over, lifts it upright, slides its drawer open. A smile spreads across his face.

POWERS

Bingo.

INT. CANTEEN HUT - DAY

Hollywood stands in the doorway, smoking his joint, looking out onto the deserted camp.

A light THUD, followed by a CREAKING from within the hut startles him. He spins around, grabs his rifle, sees that one of the cabinets' doors is slightly ajar.

HOLLYWOOD

Shit.

He cautiously crosses the room, weaving through the overturned benches and tables, and approaches the cabinets.

Stopping in front of the first cabinet, he aims his rifle, braces himself, nervously reaches out for the ajar door, swings it open to reveal --

Nothing.

He exhales a SIGH of relief, sidesteps to the next cabinet. Again, he trains his rifle on the door, reaches out for it, swings it open --

And again, nothing inside.

He slides over to the last of the cabinets, now even more nervous. Will third time be a charm or curse?

Taking a deep breath, he steadies himself, aims his rifle, slowly reaches out for the final door, about to open it, when A GRUESOME FIGURE suddenly rises from behind an overturned table and dives on him!

INT. MAIN HUT - DAY

Powers frantically stuffs papers and files into his backpack.

HOLDEN (O.S.)
Find anything?

Powers spins around, startled, looking guilty as hell.

POWERS
(flustered)
I, err... Well... Maybe these... I
don't know.

Holden knows he's lying and glares accusingly. Powers is frozen, doesn't know what to do or say.

The sound of GUNFIRE tears through the camp. Holden forgets Powers and rushes away. Powers exhales a huge SIGH of relief.

EXT. CANTEEN - DAY

Hollywood staggers out of the hut, clutching the side of his neck. Blood runs through his fingers and down onto his fatigues.

Holden and Reggie are first on the scene, followed quickly by the rest of the squad.

REGGIE
You okay?

HOLLYWOOD
No, it fucking hurts, man.

HOLDEN
What happened?

HOLLYWOOD
Some fucking gook came out of nowhere and bit my neck. He looked fucking insane.

HOLDEN
Where is he?

HOLLYWOOD
Inside. I filled the bastard full of lead... Jesus Christ, it hurts.

HOLDEN
Let me see.

Hollywood lifts his hand to reveal a gaping wound on the side of his neck.

HOLDEN (CONT'D)
Looks nasty.

HOLLYWOOD
Hurts like hell, too.

HOLDEN
Well, we'll get you shot full of morphine, that should take care of the pain.

HOLLYWOOD
Cool.

HOLDEN
But you're gonna have to tell one of us how to clean it up.

HOLLYWOOD
Sure.

JERSEY (O.S)
Oh shit!

They turn to see HOLLYWOOD'S ATTACKER staggering out of the hut. Wearing a filthy NVA uniform, his skin is pale grey, eyes dark and his face caked in blood.

The squad opens fire, spraying him with bullets. His body slams against the hut and slides to the ground.

Hollywood is flabbergasted.

HOLLYWOOD
What the fuck? I unloaded on him!

FARM BOY
(panicked)
He's still moving!

The men watch in shock, as the bullet riddled NVA soldier starts eerily rising from the floor.

JERSEY
This shit ain't right, man. He ain't real!

Duke barges past the gawking soldiers.

DUKE
Get outta my fucking way.

He stands a few feet away from the creature and aims his rifle to its head. It opens its mouth wide, GROANING hungrily.

DUKE (CONT'D)
Bite this, mother fucker!

He grits his teeth and fires off a short BLAST of lead. The creature's head explodes under the hail of bullets and it slumps to the floor, finally dead.

Pellagrini looks over to Jersey, validated.

PELLAGRINI
I told you something wasn't right out here.

EXT. CAMP - LATER

The squad are gathered in the centre of camp, shell-shocked. Hollywood sits on the floor as Pellagrini wraps a bandage around his neck.

HOLDEN
(addressing the squad)
Alright, I don't want any more surprises. I need to know, did everyone check these hootches thoroughly? Anyone see anything?

The men all look to each other, shaking their heads.

REGGIE

Not a damn thing, Sarge.

HOLDEN

Okay, did anyone find anything?

FARM BOY

Some rifles and ammunition.

DUKE

I found a shit load of rice and a whole lot of nuthin' fuckin' much.

Holden looks over to Powers, who remains conspicuous in his silence.

HOLDEN

What about you, Lieutenant? You find anything?

POWERS

Not really, no.

HOLDEN

What about all those papers I saw you stuffing in your backpack?

Powers hesitates, struggling to think of a believable lie.

HOLDEN (CONT'D)

What's the matter, Powers... Cat got your tongue?

POWERS

No, not at all. I... I don't know what they are. I just thought they might be interesting to some people back at base.

Holden walks towards him, purposefully.

HOLDEN

You know what I think, Lieutenant? I think you're full of shit. I think we were never meant to find any POWs here. I think we were sent here for a whole other reason, and you're gonna tell us what it is.

POWERS

This is preposterous.

HOLDEN

Why are we here, Lieutenant? What are you hiding in your pack?

POWERS

I'm not gonna stand here listening to this. I don't have to answer to you.

HOLDEN

WHY ARE WE HERE, LIEUTENANT?

POWERS

Stand down, Sergeant.

Holden tries to grab Powers' backpack and is pushed away.

POWERS (CONT'D)

I SAID STAND DOWN, SERGEANT!

Holden punches Powers square in the jaw, knocking him flat on his back. He picks up the Lieutenant's rifle and turns it on him.

HOLDEN

You've got thirty seconds to give me some answers.

Powers lies on the floor, holding his face, stunned.

POWERS

You son of a bitch! That's it, you've done it now! I'm gonna have you court-marshaled for this, Holden.

HOLDEN

Court-marshaled? Court-marshaled? You'll be lucky if you make it back to base, you sorry son of a bitch!

(then)

Twenty seconds.

JERSEY

Yeah, kill that cracker!

DUKE

Frag that piece of shit!

POWERS

(panicking)

You won't get away with this.

HOLDEN

Ten seconds.

Powers tenses, begins to breathe rapidly. The rest of the squad are all anxious, pumped up, exchanging wide-eyed looks -- Is he really going to waste him?

HOLDEN (CONT'D)

Five... Four... Three... Two...

POWERS

Okay, okay, okay! I'll tell you what I know.

Holden lowers the rifle. Some of the squad look a little disappointed at the anti-climax.

HOLDEN

I'm all ears.

POWERS

Look, as far as I knew, there were supposed to be POWs here. This was being used as some kind of testing camp.

HOLDEN

Testing camp?

POWERS

Yeah.

HOLDEN

Testing what?

POWERS

We don't know for sure. Our sources said that Charlie had been manufacturing some kind of chemical weaponry and using POWs as guinea pigs. That's the real reason we're out here. We were supposed to be freeing our boys, but the main objective was to find out if this was a testing camp, shut it down and gather as much intel as possible on what they've been developing. That's what's in my backpack.

HOLDEN

And why wasn't I told about this?

POWERS

It's the way Edwards wanted it. He said it was on a need to know basis, and you didn't need to know.

Holden seethes at this piece of information. He flips Powers' rifle around, hands it back to him.

HOLDEN

So, that old bastard though it was okay to put my squad's lives at risk and not tell us why?

POWERS

We're not the first to come for this either. Another squad came out here a few weeks ago.

HOLDEN

I thought we didn't have any troops in this region.

POWERS

We don't. They lost contact a couple of days in. Base thinks they were hit by an ambush.

Minh enters the camp, dragging the prisoner, leading him over to Holden and Powers.

HOLDEN

Maybe now's the time to get some answers?
(to Minh)
Ask him what happened here.

Minh kicks the prisoner's legs out from under him, dropping him to the floor.

MINH

(in Vietnamese)
What happened here? Where are the prisoners?

The prisoner remains silent. Minh SLAPS him across the face several times.

MINH (CONT'D)

(in Vietnamese)
Where are your colleagues? Where have the prisoners been moved to?

No response. Minh removes a Tokarev pistol, sticks it in the prisoner's face.

MINH (CONT'D)

(in Vietnamese)
Talk damn it, or I'll kill you right here! I'll shoot you dead!

Still, nothing comes back from the prisoner. He shows no fear of dying. Holden interjects.

HOLDEN

Okay, he's not gonna say anything. Don't waste any more time on him.

Minh backs off.

FARM BOY

What about the POWs?

HOLDEN

We don't even know if they're still alive. And if they are, they're certainly not here.

(points to Powers)

That piece of shit has got his research documents so I don't see any reason to stick around here any longer than we have to.

PELLAGRINI

Sounds like a plan to me.

The NVA prisoner looks around the camp, weighing up the easiest route of escape. He sees the dead body of Hollywood's attacker.

The gruesome sight seems to trigger something in his memory, sending him into a wild panic. He begins SHOUTING frantically.

NVA PRISONER

(in Vietnamese)

We must leave! We must leave!

All eyes turn to him.

HOLDEN

What'd he say?

MINH

He says that we have to leave this place.

HOLDEN

Ask him why.

Minh grabs hold of the terrified prisoner.

MINH

(in Vietnamese)

Why? Why do we have have to leave?

NVA PRISONER
 (in Vietnamese)
 It is not safe here! This place has been
 cursed! We will all die!

MINH
 He says that this camp has been cursed
 and that we are all going to die here.

Jersey and Pellagrini give each other a look of "What the
 fuck now?"

HOLDEN
 Ask him what curse he's talking about.

MINH
 (in Vietnamese)
 What is this curse?

NVA PRISONER
 (in Vietnamese)
 The curse of the dead! Their evil souls
 cannot rest until they have devoured all
 humans who step on this cursed soil.

Minh looks confused, struggling to understand.

HOLDEN
 What? What did he say?

NVA PRISONER
 (in Vietnamese)
 If we stay in this place, the dead will
 return and kill us all!

MINH
 He says this place is cursed by evil,
 that the dead cannot rest here, and they
 will kill us all if we do not leave.

HOLDEN
 Is this some kind of ancient Vietnamese
 superstition?

MINH
 Nothing that I have ever heard of.

HOLDEN
 Well, tell him that if he doesn't tell us
 what happened here, what happened to the
 prisoners, we're going to leave him tied
 up in the centre of camp, at the mercy of
 his "evil spirits".

MINH
 (in Vietnamese)
 You will tell us what the purpose of this
 camp was, and where the prisoners are.

The prisoner shakes his head at the demand.

MINH (CONT'D)
 (in Vietnamese)
 If you do not comply, we will leave you
 bound in this cursed place, awaiting the
 return of the dead souls!

The prisoner shakes uncontrollably, begins to cry.

NVA PRISONER
 (in Vietnamese)
 No, no, no, no, no! Please don't leave
 me here! I'll talk! I'll talk! I'll
 tell you anything!

Minh SLAPS him hard across the face.

MINH
 (in Vietnamese)
 Then talk!

The prisoner closes his eyes, tears streaming down his
 cheeks. He grimaces, pained, tortured by his own
 memories.

NVA PRISONER
 (in Vietnamese)
 We did terrible things here. Such
 terrible things...

HOLDEN
 What's he saying?

As the prisoner continues to recount events in
 Vietnamese, Minh turns to Holden, a grave look on his
 face.

FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

INT. MAIN HUT - FLASHBACK

An aging VIETNAMESE SCIENTIST, complete with requisite
 lab coat, stands in the main hut.

He dips a syringe needle into a lab jar and pulls back
 the plunger, filling it with a lime green liquid.

Lifting the syringe, he flicks the needle and glances over to the bamboo cots where an AMERICAN POW is strapped down.

MINH (V.O.)

It seems the NVA had been at this camp for quite a while, experimenting on American POWs. They were not creating a chemical weapon, though.

The POW begs to be released as The Scientist stands over him, syringe in hand.

He sticks the needle into the frail prisoner's neck and pushes down the plunger, pumping the abhorrent compound into his veins.

MINH (V.O.) (CONT'D)

They were working on some kind of genetic mutation. A drug that would allow a soldier's body to absorb an unnatural amount of pain. So that he could be shot and still carry on fighting.

The Scientist watches the POW, who's body convulses and jerks, veins bulging. His eyes are distended and his mouth gaping. A picture of absolute agony.

His entire body tenses to the point of almost bursting and then relaxes, limp, like a popped balloon. His head rolls to one side, lifeless.

The Scientist fills another syringe, this time with a muddy red liquid.

He injects another AMERICAN POW and the events unfold as previous -- Body convulsing, face contorting, agonizing death.

MINH (V.O.) (CONT'D)

After many failed experiments, the NVA scientists recently made a breakthrough in their testing.

AN NVA SOLDIER loosens the restraints that hold the dead POW. He unfastens the neck strap, then the wrist restraints.

Unexpectedly, the dead POW's eyes shoot open and he rises fast, grabbing the soldier and biting his face.

The Vietnamese soldier falls backwards SCREAMING, a huge bloody hole in his cheek. The Scientist watches on, astonished.

The wounded soldier pulls out a pistol and BLASTS three shots into the chest of the reanimated POW.

The bullets slam the POW back against the cot, but within seconds he is back up, flailing his arms in the direction of the soldier.

A malevolent smile creeps across the face of The Scientist.

EXT. CAMP - FLASHBACK

Two NVA SOLDIERS drag the infected POW across the camp by his feet. He WAILS a deathly moan.

MINH (V.O.) (CONT'D)
The breakthrough wasn't a complete success, though. The test subject was uncontrollable and showed no signs of intelligence, just uncontrollable aggression.

A GUARD opens up the door to one of the bamboo prisons. They drag the infected POW inside and quickly exit, padlocking the door closed behind them.

INT. PRISON HUT #1 - FLASHBACK

Half a dozen malnourished AMERICAN POWs gather in a corner, horrified at what lays on the floor before them.

MINH (V.O.) (CONT'D)
This wasn't limited to just his captors either. He even attacked his fellow prisoners.

The infected POW slowly rises, sways from side to side, then lunges towards his countrymen.

EXT. PRISON HUT #1 - FLASHBACK

The NVA soldiers and The Scientist look on as the infected POW attacks his former allies, who SCREAM and beg for release.

One of the soldiers inspects a bite mark on his arm.

MINH (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Then things got worse. The test subject seemed to be spreading some kind of virus.

EXT. CAMP - FLASHBACK

Two INFECTED VIETNAMESE GUARDS lumber towards a panicked NVA SOLDIER who backs away, rifle raised, SHOUTING warnings.

Another INFECTED GUARD approaches him from behind, unseen.

MINH (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Many men became ill and degenerated into the same uncontrollable state as the test subject.

The soldier opens fire, spraying the infected guards with bullets, but they keep closing in on him.

He keeps retreating and shooting, until he backs into the unseen guard, who chomps down on his ear. He SCREAMS and fires skywards as his ear is bitten clean off.

EXT. PRISON HUT #1 - FLASHBACK

The American POWs, now all infected, are pressed against the bamboo bars of their prison.

They MOAN a grave chorus of death, their cadaverous arms stretching out through the bars, grabbing at thin air. The bamboo prison starts to splinter and crack under their force.

MINH (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 A lot of the soldiers deserted the camp, and those who stayed struggled to control the infected.

EXT. CAMP - FLASHBACK

Two INFECTED NVA SOLDIERS gorge on the body of a recently deceased compatriot.

One holds a severed arm, stripping flesh from bone with its ravenous teeth. The second chomps away on the dead soldiers' already half eaten face.

MINH (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 The camp became overrun and the infected began killing and eating the healthy.

INT. PRISON HUT #2 - FLASHBACK

Petrified AMERICAN POWs are huddled in the centre of their prison, holding on to each other.

They are surrounded by an INFECTED HORDE, who are desperately reaching through the bars, hungrily clawing towards them.

MINH (V.O.) (CONT'D)
The prisoner believes that the camp had been cursed, that it was a punishment from God.

The bamboo begins to break and give way. Some of the POWs start sobbing. They know their fate.

INT. MAIN HUT - FLASHBACK

The scientist is sat at a workbench writing furiously. Sweat rolls down his beleaguered face.

MINH (V.O.) (CONT'D)
He says the scientists were trying to create some kind of antidote or vaccine, but he doesn't know if they were successful. He deserted the camp before he too became infected.

Over his shoulder, a GHASTLY FIGURE appears in the doorway. The Scientist stops writing and ominously looks up from his notes.

He doesn't turn around. He already knows what's behind him.

EXT. CAMP - PRESENT

The squad are all dumbfounded, stood in stunned silence, exchanging looks of bewilderment. Holden takes in everything he's just heard.

HOLDEN
So, you're telling me that these sick bastards have been experimenting on our boys and accidentally created some kind of half alive, half dead, half human monsters that can't be killed?

MINH
It would seem so, yes.

POWERS
This is ridiculous.

HOLDEN

Well, you saw the fucker that attacked Hollywood. You're telling me he looked normal to you?

POWERS

No, I guess not.

HOLDEN

Reggie, get on the horn and get those choppers out here asap. We're getting the fuck outta dodge.

JERSEY

Amen to that.

REGGIE

I'm on it, Sarge.

HOLLYWOOD

(weak)

Hey, Sarge... You don't think... I'm infected do you?

Holden walks over to Hollywood, crouches beside him. His usually bronzed skin has turned a sickly grey and he's sweating profusely.

HOLDEN

I don't know. Either way, you don't look to great.

HOLLYWOOD

I feel like shit. I'm really cold. My whole body aches, too.

HOLDEN

I think we better get you laid down 'til the choppers arrive.

He opens his canteen and passes it to Hollywood.

HOLDEN (CONT'D)

Here, take a drink.

HOLLYWOOD

Thanks.

(then)

What if I am infected though? Am I gonna go crazy like that gook who attacked me?

HOLDEN

Don't worry about it. It's not gonna come to that. We'll get you back to base and get you taken care of.

(MORE)

HOLDEN (CONT'D)

Those birds will be here before you know it.

REGGIE (O.S)

We got a problem, Sarge.

Holden turns, sees Reggie shaking his head solemnly.

HOLDEN

What now?

REGGIE

They're sayin' there ain't no choppers coming for us today.

HOLDEN

What the hell?

He marches over and takes the handset from Reggie.

HOLDEN (CONT'D)

(into radio)

Bravo Three, this is Echo Ten Ten, do you read, over.

RADIO VOICE (V.O.)

Echo Ten Ten, reading you loud and clear, over.

HOLDEN

Bravo Three, this is Five, my radioman tells me there's a problem with my choppers, over.

RADIO VOICE (V.O.)

That's affirmative Echo Ten Ten. Victor Charlie has launched a major offensive from the West and all birds are currently engaged. We won't be able to touch down with you until tomorrow in the a.m., over.

HOLDEN

That's gonna be too late, Bravo Three. We've got a man in need of medical attention and we need to get out of here today, over.

RADIO VOICE (V.O.)

Sorry, Echo Ten Ten, that's the best we can do. You're just gonna have to hold tight 'til the morning, over.

Holden throws the handset down, frustrated.

HOLDEN

Damn it!

The squad become agitated, start to panic.

PELLAGRINI

What are we gonna do now?

The prisoner, scared, distrusting of his captors, watches with interest. Minh has his back turned, the rest of the squad ARGUE amongst themselves -- this is his chance to escape.

He grabs Minh's pistol from its holster, fires two shots into the scout's back and makes a break for it.

The squad all turn, taken completely by surprise.

JERSEY

What the fuck?!

Several men unload with their M-16s, spraying bullets into the fleeing prisoner, killing him instantly.

Holden rushes over to Minh, who briefly SPLUTTERS on his own blood before expiring.

HOLDEN

Shit!

Holden fights to maintain his composure as the rest of the squad begin to lose theirs.

HOLDEN (CONT'D)

Alright, everybody, try to stay calm.

It's too late for that. Most of the men have already lost it, RANTING at each other, gesturing wildly, panicked.

HOLDEN (CONT'D)

EVERYBODY COOL IT!

Holden's command is met with immediate silence by the squad. They all turn to their Sergeant, looking for guidance.

Holden looks around the camp, thinks the situation over.

HOLDEN

Alright... We know we're stuck here for the night, so we need to get organized. Pellagrini, help Hollywood into the big hootch.

(MORE)

HOLDEN (CONT'D)

Lay him down on one of the cots, try to make him comfortable.

JERSEY

What about those fucking things? What if the gook was telling the truth?

HOLDEN

We'll worry about that if it happens.

PELLAGRINI

But what if he was right? What if they can't be killed?

Holden points to the body of Hollywood's attacker.

HOLDEN

Well, he looks pretty dead to me. It might have taken a lot of bullets, but I don't think he's gonna be getting back up.

DUKE

Yeah, just take their fuckin' heads off. Ain't nobody getting up after that.

With some of their fears alleviated, the men relax a little.

HOLDEN

Right, Farm Boy, gather up all those rifles you found, any ammo there is too.

FARM BOY

(affirmative)

Sarge.

HOLDEN

(pointing to hut #2)

Reggie, Jersey, there's a crate of explosives in there. Bring it over to the big hootch. And be careful with it.

REGGIE

No problem, Sarge.

HOLDEN

Duke, I want you to sweep the perimeter. If you find any more of those things... You know what to do.

Duke locks and loads.

DUKE

I'm on it.

POWERS

What do you want me to do?

HOLDEN

Stay out of the way.

A look of hurt sweeps across Powers' bloodied face -- A realization that any authority or respect he may have commanded before, is now gone forever.

INT. MAIN HUT - DAY

Hollywood is lay on one of the cots, his health visibly deteriorating.

Holden, Farm Boy, Pellagrini, Jackson and Powers prep and load some AK-47 rifles.

PELLAGRINI

You think there's gonna be more of those things out there?

HOLDEN

I don't know. I'm more worried about Charlie wandering back through here and finding us. If those things lack intelligence, they won't be too hard to outsmart, but Charlie... He's a different kettle of fish.

Powers speaks up, totally stripped of any illusions of being in charge.

POWERS

We should probably set up a perimeter line.

HOLDEN

Definitely. We need to be fast too, we've only got an hour of so of daylight left.

Pellagrini takes out a cigarette.

PELLAGRINI

Got a light, Sarge?

Holden hands him his gold Zippo. Reggie and Jersey enter the hut, carrying the crate of explosives.

REGGIE
Where do you want this, Sarge?

HOLDEN
Anywhere out of the way... Just don't drop it.

Pellagrini lights his cigarette and slyly pockets the lighter, unnoticed. He smiles triumphantly.

Reggie and Jersey set the crate down at the back of the hut as Duke rejoins the squad.

DUKE
Perimeter's clear.

HOLDEN
Good.

JACKSON
What are we gonna do then, Sarge?

Holden grabs a sheet of paper and pencil from one of the workbenches, quickly draws a crude diagram of the camp.

HOLDEN
We need to split into two-man teams.

He marks out specific areas on the diagram with an 'X'.

HOLDEN (CONT'D)
Jersey and Reggie, you're here. Duke and Pellagrini, over here. Jackson, you're with me, here.

Jackson smiles, happy to be partnered with Holden.

HOLDEN (CONT'D)
Farm Boy, you and Powers go here. I want you on the roof of this hootch, Farm Boy. You should have a clear view of the whole camp and around half of the perimeter.

FARM BOY
(excited)
Sounds like I'm gonna gets me a little target practice in.

HOLDEN
Set up trip-flares and claymores. We need to make sure no bastard gets near this camp without us knowing.

(MORE)

HOLDEN (CONT'D)

If any more of those fucking things are out there, wait until they're close enough to take the head shot.

He picks up one of the AK-47s.

HOLDEN (CONT'D)

And everyone take one of these with you. When your M-16 is spent, fall back to this hootch and hold fort out front... Everyone clear?

THE SQUAD

(in unison)

YES, SIR!

EXT. CAMP - NIGHT

The camp looks eerily deserted in the moonlight, nothing moving or making a sound. Heavy rain falls from the night sky.

EXT. CAMP - PELLAGRINI & DUKE'S POSITION - NIGHT

Duke paces, looking out into the tree line, waiting impatiently for something to happen. Pellagrini crouches close by, watching nervously.

PELLAGRINI

Pretty crazy, huh?

Duke spins to face him, staring daggers.

DUKE

The fuck you just say?

PELLAGRINI

(panicking)

The gooks, I meant the gooks... You know, the ones that won't die... Pretty crazy.

DUKE

I don't give a fuck. I'll probably die of boredom waiting for the fuckers to show up.

He paces a little more, then --

DUKE (CONT'D)

In fact, fuck it, I ain't waiting any longer. I'm going in.

PELLAGRINI

But Sarge says we gotta hold our position.

DUKE

Fuck what Sarge says. I say it's about time we started taking the fight to them.

PELLAGRINI

I don't think that's such a good idea.

DUKE

Like i give two shits what you think, you wop fuck. Now, are you gonna grow a pair and come gook hunting with me, or are you gonna sit here waiting like a little pussy?

Pellagrini doesn't respond, but he doesn't have to. The look on his face is answer enough.

DUKE (CONT'D)

Thought so.

Duke grabs a handful of mud, smears it over his face, gives Pellagrini one last disgusted glare through his mask of earthy camouflage and marches off into the jungle.

PELLAGRINI

Hey, don't leave me here alone, man.

DUKE

See ya in hell, faggot.

EXT. CAMP - HOLDEN & JACKSON'S POSITION - NIGHT

The two soldiers crouch in position, ready for action, Holden going over his final instructions with Jackson.

HOLDEN

As soon as the flares light up, open fire. If it's Charlie, keep shooting 'til they're all dead. If it's more of those fucking things, hold your fire and wait 'til they reach the claymores.

JACKSON

Got it.

HOLDEN

You still scared?

JACKSON

Hell yes.

HOLDEN

Good... So am I.

A nearby sound of SNAPPING BRANCHES gets the soldiers' attention. They speedily raise their rifles and train them on the trees.

HOLDEN (CONT'D)

Here we go.

They wait anxiously, seeing only darkness before them. More SOUNDS of movement. A RUSTLE of bush, this time closer, amps up Jackson's angst.

JACKSON

I hear 'em, but I can't see a thing.

HOLDEN

Be patient. Wait for the flares.

He doesn't have to wait long. In a fizzle of blue light, the trip-flares are activated, illuminating the tree line.

The soldiers open fire, then stop almost immediately.

HOLDEN (CONT'D)

Ho-lee shit!

Around thirty WALKING CORPSES stagger through the trees, headed for the men.

All at various stages of decomposition, the approaching horde are as diverse as they are gruesome. American and Vietnamese. Soldiers and villagers. Adults and children.

A decaying army of death.

Jackson panics and starts firing into the undead throng.

HOLDEN (CONT'D)

Hold your fire! Hold your fire!

The young soldier manages to regain a slight semblance of composure and stops shooting.

HOLDEN (CONT'D)

Wait 'til they reach the claymores.
Conserve your ammo.

JACKSON

Sorry, Sarge, I've never seen anything like this before.

HOLDEN

Neither have I, kid. Neither have I.

EXT. CAMP - JERSEY & REGGIE'S POSITION - NIGHT

Alarmed by the sound of GUNFIRE, Jersey and Reggie have turned their backs on the perimeter and are looking back across the camp.

JERSEY

Where ya think that's coming from?

REGGIE

I don't know. If I had to guess, I'd say it's probably Duke.

JERSEY

Shit, man, I hope it's Charlie they shooting at. Don't wanna see no more of those dead fuckers tonight.

REGGIE

Amen to that.

Behind them, their perimeter trip-flares are activated. As they spin around, they are faced with another advancing HORDE OF THE UNDEAD.

JERSEY

Oh fuck!

Panicked, they forget their orders and start firing wildly into the tree-line. Some bullets find their targets, hitting chests and arms, but none are fatal.

REGGIE

The claymores! Blow those fuckers!

Jersey grabs the detonator and squeezes the handles. The mines EXPLODE in a flash of light and smoke, but they've been blown too early.

None of the approaching creatures are affected by the blast, and they continue to lumber forward. Reggie continues to lay out a stream of fire.

JERSEY

Fuck, man! Fuck! Fuck! Fuck!

Jersey picks up his rifle and resumes shooting. He SCREAMS a mixture of aggression and fear as the flashes from his muzzle light up his terrified face.

EXT. CAMP - HOLDEN & JACKSON'S POSITION - NIGHT

The sound of Reggie and Jersey's GUNFIRE has Jackson even more on edge.

Restlessly switching his gaze between the approaching throng and Holden, the anticipation is becoming unbearable for him.

Holden, detonator in hand, calmly bides his time, waiting for the right moment.

HOLDEN
Come on, you sons of bitches, just a little further.

The creatures get closer and closer, almost reaching the camp perimeter.

HOLDEN (CONT'D)
You ready, kid?

JACKSON
As I'll ever be.

Holden squeezes the detonator handles and BLOWS the mines. Three EXPLOSIONS rip out into the night, destroying four of the creatures.

Rotten body parts scatter through the air in a BLAST of smoke and sparks.

HOLDEN
Alright, let's waste those fuckers.

They open up with their M-16's, firing off a salvo of lead.

EXT. JUNGLE - NIGHT

A GROTESQUE CREATURE staggers through the trees, rain beating against its decomposed face. Once an American soldier, it is now a walking slab of rotten flesh.

BLAM-BLAM-BLAM-BLAM-BLAM! Bullets tear into its face and head, sending it to the floor.

DUKE

Storms past the twice dead soldier, BLASTING more rounds.

A finely-honed psychotic killing machine, he rampages through the jungle spraying bullets as he moves.

Body after rotten body falls under his hail of hellish gunfire. He throws out grenades, BLASTING the creatures into numerous pieces.

Although his killing spree is impressive, the sheer number of walking corpses is more than one man can take out, and they are slowly beginning to close in.

Duke raises his rifle to shoot an oncoming creature, pulls the trigger. CLICK, CLICK, CLICK! Out of ammo.

He grabs his last magazine, about slap it into the rifle when his body suddenly jolts. He HOWLS in pain and drops the ammo.

Looking down, he sees the UPPER TORSO OF A CORPSE, legless from a grenade blast, has dragged itself over to him and is biting on his calf.

DUKE
You mother fucker!

He uses his M-16 to beat the creature to the ground.

Letting out a primeval ROAR, he continues to rain down blows with the butt of his rifle, smashing the creature's head into a mush of goo and skull fragments.

A nearby GROAN alerts him to more imminent danger. Quickly straightening up, he spins round to see another APPROACHING GHOUL.

Limping back a few steps, he lifts the rifle behind his head, looking like Babe Ruth about to bat for the World Series.

DUKE (CONT'D)
Fuck you!

CRUNCH! He hits a home run. The M-16 shatters on the creature's skull, blasting its head into multiple chunks.

Duke discards the broken rifle and drops to his knees, exhausted, GASPING for oxygen.

SEVERAL CREATURES have now surrounded him, and are closing in on their prey. They GROAN in unison. A twisted victory cry.

Duke lets out a weary SIGH and rises to his feet.

DUKE (CONT'D)
 Alright you fuckers...

He unsheathes his bayonet.

DUKE (CONT'D)
 Come and get it.

EXT. CAMP - POWERS' POSITION - NIGHT

Powers stands alone, firing his M-16 into a swell of APPROACHING CREATURES. One of the infected is hit in the head and drops to the ground. Then another. And another.

The skillfully aimed bullets aren't coming from Powers' rifle though. They're coming from --

A HUT ROOF

Where Farm Boy is perched, picking off the creatures with his sniper rifle.

Tongue poking out the corner of his mouth and a sure look in his eyes, he is clearly enjoying the target practice.

Peering into his rifle's scope, he readies himself to take another shot when something distracts him.

He looks over his shoulder, sees A DOZEN CREATURES wandering through the centre of the camp.

FARM BOY
 You're sneaky critters, I'll give you that.

Shifting his body, he repositions himself to face the camp and raises his rifle, aiming at --

EXT. MAIN HUT - CONTINUOUS

-- A CREATURE approaching the doorway to the main hut. Drawn by the light inside, it shuffles closer to the entrance.

POP! One of Farm Boy's bullets blasts into the creature's skull, switching off its lights for good.

EXT. HUT ROOF - CONTINUOUS

Farm Boy looks up from his rifle's scope, smirking.

FARM BOY (CONT'D)

But you're gonna have to be a darn sight sneakier than that if you wanna get past me.

Suddenly, FOUR CADAVEROUS HANDS burst through the straw roof of the hut, grabbing hold of Farm Boy's body.

FARM BOY (CONT'D)

What the...

He struggles to break free, but can't escape their grasp. As his body is pulled down through the roof, he grabs two fistfuls of straw. Gritting his teeth, he clings on for dear life.

FARM BOY (CONT'D)

Jesus... Please...

The struggle is futile. His grip loosens and he disappears down into the hut.

His CRIES are those of a man suffering a horrifying assault.

EXT. CAMP - POWERS' POSITION - CONTINUOUS

Hearing Farm Boy's SCREAMS, Powers stops shooting. He looks to the hut roof, sees that his colleague has vanished.

POWERS

Farm Boy? Hey, Farm Boy... You okay?

With no response forthcoming, he cautiously walks over to the hut and makes his way nervously round to its entrance.

Peering into the doorway, his mouth falls agape at the ghastly sight --

INSIDE THE HUT

TWO CREATURES kneel over Farm Boy's body. His stomach has been ripped open, and his insides pulled out.

The SQUELCH of blood and flesh is sickening as the hideous ghouls feast on intestines and guts.

One of the creatures gets a good mouthful of innards and pulls its head back, revealing --

FARM BOY'S FACE

He is still alive! Grimacing in pain and confusion, he SPLUTTERS and COUGHS on his own blood. Pleading with his eyes, he stares directly at --

POWERS

Who begins to back away from the hut, concerned more with self preservation than compassion, but as he does --

-- He backs right into ANOTHER CREATURE!

Letting out a terrified CRY, he spins away from the ghoul and opens up with his rifle.

Bullets tear up the creature's chest, neck and face, sending it to the floor. Panicked, he runs into --

HUT #1

And quickly SLAMS the door shut behind him. He moves over to the corner and hides behind the stack of rice sacks. His rifle shakes in his hands as he aims it at the closed door.

EXT. CAMP - HOLDEN & JACKSON'S POSITION - NIGHT

Under a constant threat, the two men are doing well to hold their own against a tidal wave of the undead. The ground around them is a sea of mud and spent bullet casings.

All of Jackson's earlier nerves and fear have now vanished. Composed and sure, he steadily fires into the tree-line.

He finishes a magazine and pops it out, ready to reload. He sees A CREATURE approaching behind Holden, quickly slaps in a fresh clip & raises his rifle.

JACKSON

Look out!

Holden's eyes widen as he sees Jackson's rifle aimed in his direction. BLAM-BLAM-BLAM! The young soldier expertly dispatches the ghoul.

Holden turns to see the dead creature, then back to Jackson.

HOLDEN

Thanks, kid.

He gives him a grateful wink and resumes shooting.

EXT. CAMP - JERSEY & REGGIE'S POSITION - NIGHT

Lacking any kind of accuracy or composure, Jersey and Reggie are decidedly less successful than their colleagues.

Firing recklessly and without any concern for conserving their ammunition, they only manage head shots when the creatures are right in front of them.

Their position is fast becoming overrun by ghouls.

Jersey finishes off his last magazine, discards the M-16 and picks up an AK-47.

JERSEY

That's it, I'm outta here.

REGGIE

What?

JERSEY

Fuck this shit, man, I'm getting back to the hootch.

REGGIE

Hang on, damn it, you can't just leave me here on my own.

Reggie grabs hold of Jersey's rifle barrel, stopping him from leaving, initiating a tug-of-war between the two men.

JERSEY

Let go, motherfucker!

They struggle with the rifle, and Jersey accidentally fires off a round. Reggie SCREAMS and falls to the floor, clutching his face.

REGGIE

My eyes! Oh, God, my eyes!

JERSEY

Shit! Sorry, Reggie... I didn't...
Shit!

He panics and runs off towards the centre of camp. Reggie rolls around in the mud, WHIMPERING in pain, blinded by Jersey's muzzle flash.

EXT. CAMP - CONTINUOUS

The camp is now full of WANDERING CORPSES. Jersey runs amongst them, firing wildly and struggling to keep his footing in the mud.

JERSEY

Oh-shit-oh-shit-oh-shit!

The sheer number of creatures around him has Jersey panicked. In need of respite, and with no clear path back to the main hut, he charges through the nearest door.

INT. HUT #1 - CONTINUOUS

The hut door flies open and a terrified Powers opens up with his M-16.

When the smoke clears, Jersey stands before him, riddled with bullets. Aghast, Powers walks from behind the sacks.

POWERS

I didn't know...

Jersey sinks to his knees. He looks down at the bullet holes in his chest and then back up to Powers.

His face is a picture of stunned confusion, his bulging eyes scream "WHY?"

Slumping face first to the hut floor, Jersey is dead. Powers slowly approaches the body of the soldier he has just killed.

POWERS (CONT'D)

Oh, Jesus Christ. What have I done?

He lifts a trembling hand to his mouth.

EXT. CAMP - REGGIE'S POSITION - NIGHT

Blinded, and crawling around on his hands and knees, Reggie searches the mud for his rifle.

REGGIE

Damn you, Jersey, you son of a bitch!

SEVERAL CREATURES are making their way over to the stranded soldier, and though he can't see them, he knows they're coming.

Frantically grabbing fist fulls of mud, Reggie is literally in a blind panic.

REGGIE (CONT'D)
Please, God, please...

Then, a glimmer of hope -- His hand lands on the rifle! Scooping it to his chest, he quickly gets to his feet.

REGGIE (CONT'D)
Oh, thank you, God. Thank you, Lord. I need your help now more than ever.

Adjusting his hold on the rifle to get a proper grip, Reggie rises and slowly starts to move towards the centre of camp, one unsteady step at a time.

REGGIE (CONT'D)
You are the light of the world. You guide me through the darkness of my life. When darkness of my heart overcame me, when darkness of my sins enveloped me, you were the light that led me out of the darkness. I can follow you, for you guide me so well. Help me Lord. Guide me through this dark world. Show me the light of life...

Unfortunately for Reggie, it appears his prayers haven't been answered. His pathway into the camp is blocked by an encroaching pack of GHOULS.

EXT. HUT #1 - NIGHT

Powers drags Jersey's body out of the hut and into the rain-soaked camp.

Attempting to cover up his murderous mistake, he hauls the body through the mud and dumps it close to a CONGREGATION OF CREATURES.

POWERS
Alright you bastards, it's dinner time.

The ghouls regard Jersey's body, and then turn to Powers. Preferring the prospect of a live meal, they start to move towards him.

POWERS (CONT'D)
No! What are you doing?

Realizing he is unarmed, Powers starts to backpedal.

POWERS (CONT'D)
 (pointing at Jersey's body)
 Not me. Him! HIM!

EXT. CAMP - NIGHT

Reggie has stopped moving. He may not have full vision, but he can still make out the silhouettes of the creatures that now surround him.

REGGIE
 ...I submit to your leading, Lord. You are the gate for the sheep. You are the gate for me. Thank you O Lord, for being my gate into a life eternal.

Letting out a WAR CRY, he starts to fire blindly into the creatures. His un-aimed bullets tear into the ghouls and spray through the camp.

EXT. HUT #1 - CONTINUOUS

Powers moves back towards the hut doorway, as the approaching creatures continue to ignore Jersey's body.

POWERS
 What's wrong with you? Eat him you sons of bitches!

Out of nowhere, two of Reggie's stray bullets rip into Powers' leg and side. YELPING in agony, he spins in the air and falls to the floor.

EXT. CAMP - PELLAGRINI'S POSITION - NIGHT

A rain soaked Pellagrini paces nervously, his rifle trained on the tree-line. The sound of GUNFIRE echoes all around him, yet his position remains eerily quiet.

PELLAGRINI
 Come on... Where the fuck are you?

The answer to his question comes almost instantaneously, as the trip-flares are activated, lighting up the area. He fires off a quick burst of lead, then stops.

PELLAGRINI (CONT'D)
 You've gotta be fucking kidding me.

A large number of CREATURES loom in the blue hue of the flares, advancing on Pellagrini. The terrified soldier turns and runs into the camp.

EXT. HUT #1 - NIGHT

Powers crawls through the mud, dragging his wounded body towards the relative safety of the hut. Just a few inches short of the doorway, he lets out another pained CRY.

A CREATURE has caught up with him and is biting down on his calf. Gritting his teeth through the pain, he flails his wounded leg in an attempt to kick the ghoul away.

He sees his rifle laying in the hut doorway, makes a last desperate reach for it, straining with every inch of his body.

ANOTHER CREATURE grabs hold of his outstretched arm and chomps down on his hand, biting two fingers clean off.

As Powers HOWLS in agony, a rotten hand jams into his mouth, muffling him. Corpse fingers break through the flesh on his cheek, tearing it from the inside out.

EXT. CAMP - NIGHT

Pellagrini charges towards the main hut, trying to avoid the MANY CREATURES that have now converged on the centre of camp.

Slipping in the mud, he sprays bullets as he clumsily passes the ghouls. He loses his balance on the unsteady ground, hits the deck, gets up running, then slips again.

Both feet go airborne as he falls spectacularly onto his back. WHEEZING, he rolls to his side and sees --

REGGIE'S BODY

Torn apart at the midsection and being ravaged by HALF A DOZEN GHOULS. Flesh and guts spill everywhere.

Pellagrini heaves at the sickening sight. Fighting back tears, he lifts himself to his feet.

PELLAGRINI

Oh, you sick bastards!

He fires off a hail of lead into the masticating mass of corpses.

EXT. CAMP - HOLDEN & JACKSON'S POSITION - NIGHT

Jackson fires the last of his M-16 bullets, discards the useless weapon and picks up his AK-47.

JACKSON

I'm out, Sarge.

HOLDEN

Okay, this is my last clip. Two minutes and we'll head back. You got any grenades left?

JACKSON

Just one.

HOLDEN

Hold on to it.

Jackson nods in agreement and resumes shooting.

INT. MAIN HUT - NIGHT

Pellagrini flies through the doorway of the dimly lit hut, collapsing to the floor.

Out of breath, caked in mud and struggling to his feet he sees Hollywood is on his feet, albeit slumped forward on his cot.

PELLAGRINI

Oh Jesus, Hollywood, thank God. I need your help, man. They're fucking everywhere! They got Reggie, man. They tore him to fucking pieces!

He moves back to the doorway and looks out onto the camp.

PELLAGRINI (CONT'D)

You're gonna have to grab your rifle and try to help me, man. There's too many of 'em. I can't do it on my own.

As Pellagrini starts firing his M-16 into the creatures outside, Hollywood pushes himself upright and turns around.

His face is expressionless. His skin a sickening blue-grey. His eyes dead. The infection has fully taken over his body.

Dark saliva drips from his gaping mouth as he stumbles towards the unsuspecting Pellagrini.

EXT. CAMP - HOLDEN & JACKSON'S POSITION - NIGHT

Holden ditches his M-16 and picks up an AK-47.

HOLDEN

Okay, kid, let's fall back. Stay behind me and keep close.

Holden leads Jackson down the side of a hut and back into the camp, where he abruptly stops in his tracks.

HOLDEN (CONT'D)

You've gotta be shitting me!

EXT. CAMP - CONTINUOUS

A MASS OF CREATURES occupy the centre of the camp, blocking the soldiers' path to the main hut.

Some gorge on what is left of Powers, Jersey and Reggie. Others wander aimlessly, looking for their next meal.

JACKSON

How the hell are we gonna get through them?

HOLDEN

We'll get through, kid. We just need a distraction, and we need one fast. The way I figure, we've got about five minutes before those fuckers in the trees catch up with us.

Holden looks around the camp, studying the creatures, watching their movements, thinking.

JACKSON

How are we gonna cause a distraction?

An idea hits Holden.

HOLDEN

We aren't... I am.

JACKSON

What?

HOLDEN

Listen up, we're gonna have to be fast and we're gonna have to get this right first time.

JACKSON

Get what right?

HOLDEN

You still got that grenade?

JACKSON

Yeah.

Jackson passes Holden the explosive.

HOLDEN

(pointing across the camp)
I'll head over there, get on the roof of that nearest hootch. Then I'll make an almighty fucking ruckus, draw as many of 'em over to me as I can. It probably won't bring 'em all, but it should be enough to give you a clearer path.

JACKSON

And how are you gonna get through them?

HOLDEN

When you get close to the main hootch, open up on 'em. Don't go head shots. Aim low. Take out their legs. I'll blast 'em with the grenade, then jump and run.

JACKSON

That's crazy, Sarge.

HOLDEN

Take a look around kid... You see anything else other than crazy right now?

JACKSON

I guess not.

HOLDEN

Now, when I make my jump, I'm gonna need you to cover me.

JACKSON

No problem.

HOLDEN

Okay. Wait for my signal, then head for the main hootch. Don't run too fast though. Take your time. We can move faster than these fuckers, but if you slip in this mud your ass is gonna be next on the menu.

Jackson nods his understanding and the two men shake hands.

HOLDEN (CONT'D)

Good luck, kid.

JACKSON

You too, Sarge.

With that, Holden puts his plan into action. He jogs across the camp, taking out the nearest creatures with his rifle.

Arriving at the hut, he sprays off some more lead before throwing his rifle up onto the roof.

He jumps up, grabs onto the thatched roof, starts pulling himself up. His mud covered boots are making the climb difficult though, slipping on the side of the rain soaked hut.

His struggle allows the creatures to get dangerously close. Now half on the roof, Holden's dangling legs are a tantalizing target.

A GHOUL lunges, grabbing onto one of Holden's boots.

JACKSON

Sees Holden's struggle. Raising his rifle, he aims across the camp, but can't get a clear shot through the creatures.

HOLDEN

Wrestles his foot free, seconds before the ghoul can take a bite. He kicks it hard in the face, knocking it backwards, and hoists himself fully onto the roof.

Quickly getting to his feet, he begins SHOOTING into the creatures and SHOUTING loudly.

HOLDEN

HEY! OVER HERE! COME AND GET ME YOU
BASTARDS! COME ON! OVER HERE!

Attracted by the COMMOTION, the creatures start to converge on his position. Holden smiles. His plan is working.

He carries on SHOUTING and SHOOTING into the throng, taking out some of the creatures. Now surrounded by clawing ghouls, he flashes Jackson a hand signal.

JACKSON

Makes his move. Cautiously jogging along the edge of the huts, he goes virtually unnoticed by the creatures.

HOLDEN

Watches Jackson as he makes his way towards the main hut.

His position on the roof is getting very precarious. The hungry ghouls claw and bash the hut, causing it to shake.

A CREATURE'S HAND breaks up through the roof, grabbing hold of one of Holden's boots. He staggers, wobbles, fights to keep his balance.

Aiming his rifle down, he fires into the ghoul's wrist, giving it a lead amputation.

Flicking out his foot, the severed claw is sent sailing.

JACKSON

Stops a few yards short of the main hut, crouches, opens fire on the pack that surround Holden.

A hail of bullets sprays into the pack, tearing through their legs. Ghouls fall gracelessly to the floor, flailing their rotten arms wildly.

Holden launches his grenade into the undead horde, and moves back from the roof's edge. BLAAAAMM! The BLAST sends festering body parts scattering.

It's now or never. Holden tosses his rifle and takes a running leap from the hut roof.

He touches down amongst the creatures, lands into a forward roll and rises to a sprint. Almost clear of the horde, he is tackled by A GHOUL.

Hitting the ground, soldier and creature struggle with each other, rolling in the mud, Holden landing on the bottom.

The creature snaps its jaws together, biting the air above Holden's face. Black slime drips from its rotten teeth and into Holden's mouth.

HOLDEN

Aargh! You filthy bastard!

Using all his strength, Holden forces the creature upwards away from him, giving Jackson a clear shot.

Bullets blast into the ghoul's head, spraying more goo and blood over Holden's face.

HOLDEN (CONT'D)

Fuck me!

Pushing the corpse away, Holden gets back to his feet, wiping the filth from his face. He heads for the main hut, as Jackson continues to lay down cover fire.

Holden dodges his way through the remaining creatures and rejoins Jackson.

JACKSON

What took you so long?

Holden allows himself a slight smile.

HOLDEN

Let's get inside.

They head into --

THE MAIN HUT

Where they are met with the sight of Pellagrini's headless corpse!

JACKSON

Holy crap!

The mutilated torso lies in a pool of it's own blood. Red smears trail along the hut floor, leading to --

THE HOLLYWOOD CREATURE

Sat in a corner, holding its former friend's severed head, chewing ravenously on the bloody neck wound.

Holden picks up Pellagrini's rifle, takes aim. The Hollywood Creature looks up from its meal. Blood and flesh spill from its mouth as it HISSES a warning to the two soldiers.

BLAM! A bullet punches a hole in the creature's forehead, spraying its infected brains against the hut wall.

Holden approaches The Hollywood Creature, nudges it with his rifle, checks it's dead.

JACKSON

What happened to him?

Holden's face carries a worried expression as he looks at

THE BLOODIED BANDAGE

On The Hollywood Creature's neck.

HOLDEN

We haven't got time to think about that now.

He heads back to the doorway, looks out.

HOLDEN (CONT'D)

Let's waste as many of those fuckers as we can, then get these doors secured.

JACKSON

What about the others?

HOLDEN

I hope I'm wrong, but I don't think anyone else made it. I haven't heard anyone else shooting since we left the perimeter... You?

JACKSON

Nope.

HOLDEN

Alright then, you start putting 'em down and I'll grab some grenades.

Jackson takes up his position outside the hut doors and starts firing.

Holden shoulders his rifle, goes to the crate of explosives, removes the lid, reaches for the grenades, when he sees --

A CRACK IN THE FLOOR

Running underneath the crate.

He uses his hand to wipe away the dirt and dust that covers it.

HOLDEN

Well I'll be.

EXT. MAIN HUT - NIGHT

Jackson, crouched on one knee, fires controlled bursts in all directions. Holden exits the hut cradling half a dozen grenades, sets them down in the mud.

HOLDEN

I think I've found us a way outta here.

JACKSON

Where to?

HOLDEN

We'll worry about that later.

He launches a grenade into the creatures, the EXPLOSION destroying three of the stalking pack.

The rest of the explosives shortly follow, BLASTING body parts in every direction.

Out of grenades, Holden un-shoulders his rifle and joins fire with Jackson. Creature after creature is taken out, but for every one that falls, another takes its place.

HOLDEN (CONT'D)

Alright, fall back.

Still shooting, they retreat back into --

THE MAIN HUT

Holden closes the hut's double doors and slides his rifle into the doors' brackets, securing them.

JACKSON

You think that'll hold 'em out 'til the morning?

HOLDEN

I don't know... I doubt it.

The creatures outside start to BEAT against the hut's doors and walls.

JACKSON

What are we gonna do?

HOLDEN

Help me move this crate.

They lift the crate of explosives and move it. Holden sweeps the floor with his foot, revealing --

A TRAP DOOR

Using his bayonet to open it, Holden carefully checks for booby traps. He shines a flashlight into the dark tunnel below.

JACKSON

Where do you think it leads?

HOLDEN

Anywhere other than this camp would pretty fucking fine by me.

(MORE)

HOLDEN (CONT'D)

Pass me your rifle.

Taking the AK-47, he lowers himself down into the tunnel.

HOLDEN (CONT'D)

Grab Hollywood's M-16, there should be near on a full clip left. Take all those explosives out of the crate and spread 'em around the hut. There's a shitload of C-4, but no detonators, so make sure you leave a stick of dynamite with each block. When you've placed it all run the fuse wires back to this tunnel.

JACKSON

Got it.

HOLDEN

Alright, let's see where this thing goes.

INT. TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

The shaft-way is barely big enough to fit Holden's strapping frame. He crawls on his hands and knees, flashlight leading the way.

Ten yards in, a separate tunnel veers off to the side. Holden shines the flashlight down it, sees only darkness, continues ahead.

INT. MAIN HUT - NIGHT

Jackson carefully lays out the explosives. The entire hut vibrates from the BANGING of the creatures outside.

EXT. MAIN HUT - NIGHT

Over a hundred CREATURES have now surrounded the hut, BEATING and clawing against its walls. Fiercely trying to get inside, their hungry GROANS echo in grotesque harmony.

INT. TUNNEL - NIGHT

Holden fearlessly crawls deeper and deeper into the tunnel. Scanning the darkness with his flashlight, he sees something up ahead.

Crawling on for a few more yards, he stops, raises his flashlight to --

ANOTHER TRAP DOOR

He pushes up on it... Nothing. He tries again, giving it everything he's got. It starts to give a little.

IN HUT #1 - CONTINUOUS

The stack of rice sacks shift and wobble.

INT. TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

Holden stops pushing on the trap door, catches his breath.

HOLDEN
(determined)
Right!

In a burst of furious aggression he gives one last almighty thrust upwards.

INT. HUT #1 - CONTINUOUS

The sacks tumble in all directions as a trap door below them flies open. Holden's head slowly rises from the hole, eyes scanning the hut.

INT. MAIN HUT - NIGHT

The hut's double doors start to give way under the creatures' barrage, the wood beginning to break and splinter.

A panicked Jackson SHOUTS down into the tunnel.

JACKSON
SARGE! SARGE! YOU BETTER GET BACK HERE!

Ravenous creatures reach through the splintered holes in the doors, desperately clawing towards the soldier.

An AK-47 emerges from the tunnel, followed by a filthied Holden.

HOLDEN
Well, it's a tight fit, but I found us a way out.

JACKSON
Great, 'cos those doors aren't gonna keep 'em out much longer.

Holden sees the creatures beginning to break into the hut.

HOLDEN
Alright, let's work out what we're gonna do.

He reaches down through the trap door, grabs the flashlight.

INT. TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

As the flashlight is lifted upwards, its beam shines down the tunnel, briefly illuminating A HAND that reaches out from the side tunnel.

INT. MAIN HUT - CONTINUOUS

Holden hands the flashlight to Jackson.

HOLDEN
Here, you'll be needing this.

JACKSON
Why will I be needing it? You're coming too, right?

HOLDEN
Afraid not, kid.

JACKSON
(distressed)
What do you mean?

Holden lifts his sleeve to reveal a bite mark on his arm.

HOLDEN
Turns out my great plan wasn't so great after all.

JACKSON
I don't get it.

HOLDEN
I'm infected, kid. When that sucker bit me he gave me whatever the fuck it is that he's got.

JACKSON
You don't know that for sure.

HOLDEN

You saw what happened to Hollywood. One of those things bit him, and within a couple of hours he was eating Pellagrini's head. I'm not letting that happen to me. It's like I told you the other day: "When your number's up, your number's up." And my number is definitely up.

Tears well in Jackson's eyes. He's speechless.

HOLDEN (CONT'D)

But at least I get to go out on my terms. I didn't get tagged by a damn sniper out in the jungle and I didn't walk onto no fucking booby trap. I'm ending things my way. And when I go, I'm taking as many of those sons of bitches with me as I can.

He puts his hand on Jackson's shoulder, gives it a firm squeeze.

HOLDEN (CONT'D)

I need you to focus now though, kid. I'm gonna get you out of here alive if it's the last thing I do... And it pretty much will be the last thing I do.

Jackson cracks a rueful smile.

HOLDEN (CONT'D)

Can you focus for me?

JACKSON

Yes, Sir.

More splinters of door give way under the force of the marauding creatures.

HOLDEN

Alright, we haven't got long, here's the plan: We open those doors and give them a clear path in here.

JACKSON

What? Why?

HOLDEN

I want to get as many of those bastards as possible in here when I blow this place sky high. We let them in. Hell, we roll out the red fucking carpet.

(MORE)

HOLDEN (CONT'D)

When they're in here, we take out as many as we can. When I'm out of ammo, you get your ass in that tunnel and you don't look back. Got it?

JACKSON

Got it.

HOLDEN

Now, when you get in the tunnel, keep going straight down for around forty yards. There's a trap door that'll take you up into another hut. When you get there, sit tight. There's some rice sacks in the hut, so stack them behind the door and wait 'til morning when the choppers get here.

Holden removes his dog tags.

HOLDEN (CONT'D)

Now, I want you to do one last thing... When you get back to the World, I want you to give these to my folks. Can you do that for me?

JACKSON

It'd be my honor, Sarge.

Jackson takes the dog tags, puts them around his neck.

HOLDEN

Alright. Let's do this.

Holden takes aim and fires off a quick BLAST of lead. The bullets CRASH into the rifle that sits in the doors' brackets, shattering it.

The doors burst open as masses of CREATURES spill into the hut, falling to the floor, clambering over each other to get to the soldiers.

At the front of the horde is the intimidatingly gruesome sight of The Creature Formerly Known As Duke. It GROANS fiercely.

HOLDEN (CONT'D)

Sorry, Duke.

He BLASTS a fatal round into its forehead.

The soldiers once again begin to expertly dispatch the approaching ghouls. Bullets pierce foreheads, shatter eye sockets and shred decomposed faces.

Wave after wave of creatures steadily stream into the hut, edging ever closer to the men.

HOLDEN (CONT'D)
Okay, kid, time to get the hell outta here.

JACKSON
But you've still got some ammo left.

HOLDEN
They're coming in too fast. I want you safely in that hut when I blow this place.

JACKSON
But, Sarge...

HOLDEN
Now, Private! That's an order!

JACKSON
(rueful)
Yes, Sir.

He moves to the trap door, lowers himself down.

HOLDEN
See ya on the other side, kid.

The young soldier gives his Sergeant a final salute, then disappears from sight.

INT. TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

Jackson switches the flashlight on and starts crawling through the tunnel. His young body smaller than Holden's, he is able to move down the narrow shaft-way with ease.

As he passes the side tunnel, A CREATURE springs out, landing on his legs.

He YELLS out in shock. Pressed face down, he desperately struggles, tries to kick, roll free, but can't.

IN THE MAIN HUT

Holden continues to shoot the creatures down, but they still press forward, now almost within spitting distance.

CLICK, CLICK, CLICK -- His last bullet has been fired. It's time to blow the place.

Backing up to the trap door, he reaches into his pocket, comes up with nothing. He frantically starts patting down his fatigues, checking every pocket, then it hits him --

HOLDEN
Pellagrini...

He looks across to the corner of the hut. A wall of walking death stands between him and Pellagrini's body.

Pulling out his bayonet, he ROARS a WAR CRY and charges into the creatures.

IN THE TUNNEL

Jackson lashes backwards with his rifle, repeatedly hitting the creature that lies on his lower half, managing to beat it away.

He hurriedly scurries forward, putting space between himself and the creature.

Turning back to face his attacker, he spins his rifle, ready to shoot. His dropped flashlight gives him a clear look at the creature.

Flaps of rotten flesh hang from its maimed face, and it wears a tattered filthy white lab coat -- The Scientist.

Its hungry, dead eyes stare into Jackson's. It lets out a sickening GROAN.

Jackson unloads with his machine gun. The volley of fire hits The Scientist Creature dead on, blowing the top of its evil head clean off.

IN THE MAIN HUT

Stabbing, punching, kicking and elbowing, Holden beats his way through the undead throng.

Hands claw and teeth SNAP, taking chunks of his flesh, but the adrenaline drives him on.

He fights his way to the corner of the hut where a creature is gorging on Pellagrini's body. Dropping to his knees, he drives his bayonet down into the ghoul's skull.

As he searches the dead soldier's pockets, the creatures continue their attack, biting down on his body.

CRYING out in extreme pain, he finds what he was looking for -- the gold Zippo!

IN THE TUNNEL

Jackson is back on the move, crawling deeper into the tunnel. He sees the trap door up ahead.

IN THE MAIN HUT

Holden, back on his feet, bravely tries to fight his way back through the throng.

Wounded, bloodied, and totally exhausted, he is easily overpowered by the creatures and collapses in the centre of the hut.

He tries to crawl away, but the ghouls are instantly on him, ravaging his body. Devoid of any fight, he is on the verge of blacking out, when he sees --

THE FUSE WIRES

Running across the floor, a few feet away.

With his last ounce of strength he flips open the Zippo, thumbs its flint wheel, igniting the flame, and tosses the lighter.

FSSSSSSSSSSSSSS! The wires burn off in all directions.

INT. HUT #1 - NIGHT

An exhausted and filthied Jackson tosses his rifle up into the hut and climbs out of the tunnel.

INT. MAIN HUT - NIGHT

HOLDEN'S FACE

Spattered with his own blood and contorted in agony. He smiles.

EXT. CAMP - NIGHT

A huge EXPLOSION obliterates the main hut and everything within a forty foot radius, sending fragments of wood, bamboo and bodies spraying.

A magnificent fireball scorches a hundred feet in the air, screaming towards the heavens.

INT. HUT #1 - NIGHT

Jackson gets to his feet as the hut is hit by the BLAST, causing it to collapse in on him.

EXT. CAMP - NIGHT

A CREATURE'S HEAD lies in the mud, burning.

Frozen for eternity in a ghoulish scream, its face looks like a hideous Jack-o'-lantern as it blazes in midst of an orange flame.

EXT. SKYLINE - DAY

The dawn sun burns blood orange in the new day's sky. Silhouettes of TWO HELICOPTERS rise into view.

EXT. CAMP - DAY

Smoke bellows from the decimated remains of the camp. Shattered debris and burnt body parts are scattered amongst the smoldering ash.

The site has been completely devastated by the blast.

THE HELICOPTERS

Break in low over the treetops, preparing to land. As they descend, the prop-wash creates a vortex of smoke, dust and ash.

EXT. CAMP - LATER

AMERICAN SOLDIERS search through the remnants of the camp, moving debris, curiously examining the scorched bodies.

EXT. HELICOPTER - DAY

An important looking OFFICER stands by the helicopter door, holding a headset to his ear.

OFFICER

(into headset)

No, Sir. There's no sign of anyone. The whole camp has been leveled... I don't know, Sir. It looks like someone dropped a whole load of napalm on this place...

(MORE)

OFFICER (CONT'D)

Will do, Sir...

SOLDIER (O.S.)

OVER HERE! I FOUND ONE! I THINK HE'S ALIVE!

OFFICER

(into headset)

Hang on, Sir. We may have found one of our men... Yes, Sir. I'll keep you updated.

EXT. CAMP - CONTINUOUS

SOLDIERS carefully move the chunks of charred bamboo and wood that cover --

JACKSON

Burnt, bloodied, unconscious. A MEDIC quickly checks him over.

MEDIC

I've got a pulse. It's faint, but it's there. We need to get him back to base asap.

OFFICER

Alright, let's get him on the chopper.

Two SOLDIERS run over, carrying a stretcher.

INT. HELICOPTER - DAY - TRAVELING

Still unconscious, Jackson is laid out on the floor of the airborne chopper as the medic works on him.

The Officer sits next to the PILOT, observing, relaying proceedings back to base.

OFFICER

(into headset)

He's in a bad way, Sir. There's possible head trauma and he's been pretty badly burnt... No, Sir, there are no bullet wounds, but several chunks of flesh have been taken from from his legs, and he's lost a considerable amount of blood.

MEDIC

I'm losing him!

The medic starts to perform CPR on Jackson.

MEDIC (CONT'D)
Come on, kid, hang in there.

He frantically beats on the young soldier's chest.

OFFICER
(into headset)
He's gone into cardiac arrest, Sir.

The medic continues his desperate attempt to revive Jackson for a few moments longer, checks his pulse, looks to the Officer, solemnly shakes his head.

OFFICER (CONT'D)
(into headset)
I'm sorry, Sir. We've lost him.

JACKSON'S FACE

Dirty, bloodied, burnt, yet strangely serene. Once again, he looks at peace.

OFFICER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Yes, Sir. We should be back at base shortly... Roger that, Sir.

JACKSON'S EYES

Shoot open!

CUT TO BLACK.