

WAR TIME

Screenplay by Frank White

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SUPERIMPOSITION:

APRIL 15, 1961 -- CUBAN AIR SPACE -- BAY OF PIGS

EXT CLOUD LAYER - NIGHT

The secret invasion has begun. Out of the dark skies we SEE three B-26 bombers in military formation and six A-1 Skyraiders piloted by the Alabama Air National Guard break through the low level clouds. The olive green planes have numbers on their fuselages and no other markings.

INT COCKPIT

WILLIAM "BILLY RAY" WATSON 36, kisses a cross on a chain around his neck. He has the lead as they streak towards a well-lit, Cuban air base; its jets sitting slightly staggered in front of hangars. Strict radio silence has been maintained until now.

WATSON

Buckshot leader, looks like the Cubans are sleeping. Let's wake'em up, boys.

Watson's Skyraider dives towards the air base designated target Alpha. Three others follow. He flips a switch and two steel bombs drop from the wings. When they strike the ground, three jets and a fuel truck are consumed in a long explosion of napalm. Secondary explosions take out the glass in two hangars.

SOUTHERN VOICE

(voice over)

Shit fire! Nice shot Billy Ray.

The other Skyraiders drop more bombs on their targets, demolishing planes and buildings. A single anti-aircraft battery engages BUCKSHOT TWO-FIVE it's 50 caliber tracer rounds snaking extremely close. Watson sees this.

WATSON

Two-Five, look out, Triple-A three o'clock!

Watson dives and strafes the AA-battery. Machine gun bullets in a single pass chew two soldiers up. The B-26's drop a sortie of bombs that explode on the runway leaving giant smoking holes five meters wide. Watson surveys the damage, satisfied.

WATSON

Good job, boys. That dog won't hunt anymore. Is everyone okay?

Two-Five slides in next to Watson's right wing. In front of the plane's numbers, a stitch of bullet holes in the fuselage. The pilot has a big grin.

TWO-FIVE

I think I peed my pants. Does that count?

WATSON

Boy, that ain't so bad. I've done worst than that.

The planes form into a tight formation led by Watson.

WATSON

Buckshot Leader turning two-five-zero, next stop, target Bravo.

EXT AIR BASE - HANGAR - NIGHT

CUBAN COLONEL stands outside the door, portable phone in hand. His intense eyes search the sky.

CUBAN COLONEL

Are they Americans?

Two Russian made MiGs take off down the runway. Two more taxi into position. Soldiers run toward anti-aircraft guns.

CUBAN COLONEL

(voice over)

Yes general, we will be ready for them.

EXT SKIES OVER TARGET BRAVO - NIGHT

Watson sees the Cuban airbase in the distance, this time dark as night. The squadron of B-26's stays in tight. Watson and the Skyraiders position themselves high right behind the bombers.

Two MiGs break out of the clouds descending on the lead bomber. Watson sees them first.

WATSON

MiGs two o'clock!

Three Skyraiders peel off after the MiGs. Watson's group stays to defend the bombers.

EXT AIR BATTLE - NIGHT

The lead bomber holds formation. The twin anti-aircraft guns behind the cockpit open up, blasting away at the MiGs. They come in fast at three-a-clock.

INT MIG PILOT - NIGHT

Fires a steady concentration of bullets at the lead bomber. Tracers rip across the right engine shredding the cowling. The bomber dips as smoke and flames pour out the engine. The second MiG swoops in to finish things, flames flashing from the wing mounted machine guns.

INT BOMBER - COCKPIT - NIGHT

The pilot is killed instantly and the copilot is wounded as the MiG streaks over the shattered cockpit. The bomber dips and rolls upside down. The CAMERA follows it to the ground, ending in a fiery explosion. There are no parachutes.

EXT OTHER BOMBERS - NIGHT

ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUNS fire on the MiGs lighting up the sky with trails of tracers. Three Skyraiders chase the MiGs in high speed turns trying to disrupt a second pass.

EXT SKIES OVER CUBAN AIR BASE - NIGHT

Watson spots two more MiGs diving on the formation. The bombers need only a minute to release their payloads.

WATSON

More fighters, one o'clock! Two-Five on me.

Watson whips his plane into a head-to-head with the MiGs. The MiGs close at 600 knots. Watson checks his gun sights and fires a long burst striking the first MiG and forcing it to break right. Both MiGs blow past his left wing and fire on the B-26's. Tracer bullets snake through the sky. They miss.

WATSON

It worked. Stay on them.

Watson catches a bright flash to his right. A flaming hunk of metal descends toward the ground. It's a Skyraider. There is no sign of a parachute.

The MiGs perform a high-speed loop, coming around.

TWO-FIVE

I'm hit! I'm hit!

Two-Five, in his plane, fights the stick. Smoke fills the cockpit and he starts to choke. His plane wobbles off.

From the SOUNDS of the AIR TRAFFIC everyone has their hands full.

EXT LOW-ALTITUDE BOMBER - NIGHT

Six bombs drop into the night. They disappear into the dark.

EXT AIRFIELD - NIGHT

The Cuban colonel defiantly fires a sub-machine gun into the sky. Bombs are falling on the airfield all around him. He flinches as a building explodes behind him. He curses and continues to rake the skies.

WATSON'S POV

The last bomber is in trouble. Two MiGs gang up on it. He tries to help shooting at the closest MiG.

From the ground intense anti-aircraft fire peppers the bomber. Its bombs release early and fall dumb to the ground. Not even close.

The MiGs keep firing. The bomber climbs for cloud cover. Watson has to decide. Cover the B-26 or strafe the remaining planes at the air base. His decision is made for him.

INT WATSON IN HIS COCKPIT - NIGHT

WATSON is struck with bullets, one appears to have shattered his thigh, blood spraying upward. His engine catches fire sending hot oil, smoke and flames into the cockpit. The smoke and heat is too much. Watson pops his canopy off and struggles with his seat belt harness. It won't release.

Panic sets in as the wind fed fire engulfs his legs and upper body. HE struggles, screams and passes out. We SEE his plane spin out of control until it smashes into the ground.

SUPERIMPOSITION

HOMESTEAD AIR RESERVE BASE, a strategic military base, 25 miles south of Miami.

INT BRIEFING ROOM - DAY

CAPTAIN JOHN SWEENEY is 28, considered one of the best fighter pilots in the Navy, even though he has not seen one day of actual combat. Wearing a green flight suit, he sits tall prepared to absorb the details of the day's mission.

Sitting beside him, his Weapon Systems Officer, LIEUTENANT FRED LACEY. Also in the room: COLONEL SAWYER, MAJOR ADAMS, SERGEANT WHALEN and a civilian, ROBERT HOSS.

SAWYER

Good morning gentlemen. Most of you know me, except I haven't been formally introduced to Mr. Hoss. I am Colonel Sawyer, the commander of the four-eighty-second fighter wing.

(looking at Sweeney)

Today's mission will probably be the most important reconnaissance you'll ever fly in your lifetime so pay close attention.

Lacey 24, short with rounded shoulders, straightens in his seat and glances at Sweeny.

SAWYER

Last night CIA pilots destroyed two of CASTRO'S air bases and degraded his air force's readiness by forty percent. In the last two years the Soviets and Cubans have become real close. Since our foreign policy doesn't allow U.S. intervention in Cuba's civil war, we have been keeping a close eye on their relations. And we don't like what we see.

Sawyer motions to ROBERT HOSS who stands.

SAWYER

This is Robert Hoss with the CIA.

HOSS

President KENNEDY has approved a plan for the counterrevolution of Cuba. Last night's air strikes were carried out to soften Cuba's defenses against a major land attack planned in the next few days.

HOSS pulls out an intelligence report.

HOSS

The strikes were not without costs. We lost four of our guys. Men who will never be recognized for their bravery and dedication to democracy. Cuba's air defense surprised us all and we have no information on damage assessment at one of the air bases. The National Security Advisor needs this intel to pass on a situation report to the President.

Sawyer touches the mission briefing board.

SAWYER

Gentlemen, today's mission is simple. Fly over the target and bring me back photographs. Needless to say, this mission will be recorded as a scheduled training flight and the senate will have no knowledge of your actions if things go south. Do you get me?

Sweeny and Lacey respond simultaneously.

SWEENY AND LACEY

Yes, sir!

Sawyer motions to the weather officer MAJOR ADAMS and SERGEANT WHALEN the man in charge of life-support and survival equipment. Adams breaks out some charts and shows Sweeny and Lacey his weather projections.

ADAMS

Unfortunately today is not the best day for flying. We have severe thunder storms over the Straits of Florida so you'll have to swing east to avoid them. At five-hundred-feet above the deck, you should stay under any clouds.

Sweeny runs a finger along the chart. We SEE the flight path curves through the Bahamas and ends along the eastern tip of Cuba.

SWEENY

Easy enough. See any problems?

He looks at Lacey.

LACEY

No boss. Just another walk in the park.

Sergeant Whalen interrupts. He hands them their side arms and a couple of blue pills. Lacey looks at him questioningly.

LACEY

(taking one)

You're kidding me? Cyanide pills.

Whalen just raises an eyebrow, he has his orders. Sweeny takes the other, places it in his breast pocket.

EXT RUNWAY 5 - DAY

Sweeny and Lacey sit in their F-4 Phantom lined up on the runway. The aircraft is camouflage tan, brown and green. The air wing logo: ZZ 482 on the tail fin.

GROUND CONTROL VOICE

Spad Zero-One, you are clear for take-off. Have a safe flight. Over.

Sweeny salutes and the jet races down the runway. The CAMERA follows the flight and heavy smoke trail as it banks out over the ocean.

INT COCKPIT - DAY

Sweeny scans his checklist, throws a few switches and looks out over the left wing. Puffy clouds fill the sky above them, good visibility ahead.

LACEY

You think when we get back they'll give us a medal.

SWEENEY

For what. A training mission?

Lacey's eyes are locked on his instrument panel.

LACEY

Camera port clear.

(thinking)

You know what I mean. This is the stuff heroes' do and I want to be able to at least tell my folks about it. And what about Laura and Robert? Don't you want him to have his daddy's Medal of Merit so he can impress his friends?

Sweeny pulls out a color photograph from his shirt pocket. His blue pill pops out and falls out of sight. He doesn't notice. We SEE a young attractive woman and a 5 year-old boy.

SWEENEY

Yeah, I remember playing with my dad's medals. I wanted to drive a tank. We would take large cardboard boxes and...

He points. Just visible over the nose of the aircraft a yacht, older but expensive.

SWEENEY

Eleven o'clock. Check the camera pod. Take some pictures of that sailboat.

LACEY

Copy that.

Both pilots crane their necks as they fly by. We SEE two topless women sunning themselves on the rear deck.

LACEY

Yeah baby! Check out the view. Sometimes I wish we were flying a helo.

SWEENEY

Not me, I like flying fast way too much.

EXT REEFS - DAY

The F-4 Phantom blasts past a few off shore fishing boats and heads out to deep water. Sweeny punching buttons, turning dials on the complex instrument panel is all-business now. Behind him Lacey is hard at work.

SWEENEY

Take a look. Weather ahead.

We SEE nasty, dark clouds ahead. Sweeny snaps the auto pilot switch down.

SWEENY
Auto pilot off!

LACEY
Hey! What are you doing?

SWEENY
Water spout dead ahead.

The CAMERA focuses on a giant water funnel that has just touched down. At a mile away, it is an awesome quarter-mile wide.

The sky goes dark. A deadly combination of vertical and horizontal lighting bolts crash through the air.

SWEENY
Breaking right! Dropping to two hundred.

Sweeny sharply dips the stick. The aircraft drops and shudders.

LACEY
Two hundred feet.

The funnel grows larger and changes direction, moving in front of the aircraft. Sweeny only has seconds to decide. The sky appears to bend. Sweeny pulls up, rolls hard left. The dense funnel, now twice the size coils back, as if trying to block their path.

SWEENY
(calm)
No choice. We are going in!

Suddenly they hit a liquid wall and the control stick lurches in Sweeny's hand. The instruments and readouts go haywire as the powerful engines shut down. As if punched in the stomach he tries to speak but words won't come.

EXT STORM

The F-4 Phantom's outer frame distorts, and seems to disappear surrounded by bolts of electrical energy. It fades in, then out. Then it completely disappears.

INT HOMESTEAD TOWER - DAY

RADAR OPERATOR watches the radar screen, in disbelief. His supervisor looks over his shoulder.

We SEE a radar arm sweeping around a blank screen.

RADAR OPERATOR
Sir, we've lost contact with Spad Zero-One. It just disappeared.

SUPERIMPOSITION
FORTY-ONE YEARS LATER
THE YEAR 2002 SKIES ABOVE CUBA

INT PHANTOM'S COCKPIT - DAY

AN EERIE SILENCE. Breaking out of the storm, Sweeny knows something is very wrong. F-4 Phantoms are known for their tremendous roar and vibration even inside the cockpit. Now this machine falls like fifty tons of bricks silently towards the sea.

Sweeny begins to realize the gravity of the situation. He sees a dead instrument panel, not even a single blinking light. At five-hundred feet above the ocean, he sees waves crashing unto a rocky shore. They are FEET WET, pilot terminology for over water. Ahead the ground rapidly approaches at 300 knots. A great internal struggle ensues, but there is no time to think.

Sweeny reaches back for the EJECTION lever and yanks hard.

INT HOMESTEAD TOWER - DAY

Female RADAR OPERATOR watches the radar screen, stunned. Her SUPERVISOR leans over her shoulder. The room is very modern with computer monitors and other traffic control personnel hard at work.

We SEE a complex grid of circles and straight lines on a screen. There is a single blinking contact on the screen.

RADAR OPERATOR

Sir, it just appeared. Altitude five hundred feet, heading one-five-zero. The aircraft climbed then descended below radar into Cuban airspace.

The signal blinks, a beat, then disappears.

RADAR OPERATOR

We lost 'er sir.

SUPERVISOR

What was the I-F-F?

RADAR OPERATOR

It was a friendly, sir. It was one of ours.

INT CIA - COMMAND CENTER - DAY

CAPTAIN STEVE SHEPPARD is a hardened veteran, 32, leader of an elite team of Special Forces and Navy Seals. Heads turn as his sharp uniform and red beret draws attention. Sheppard knows his way around. He works his way through the maze of computer stations to the DCI's office.

INT CIA - DCI OFFICE - DAY

GENERAL BOOKER, 58, is sitting behind a desk. He is over weight, bald and pleasant. Sheppard enters, straightens and salutes.

BOOKER
(saluting)
As you were Captain, welcome back.

The Director of Central Intelligence, RICHARD EGGEN, 50, rounds a corner in shirt and tie carrying a glass of scotch on the rocks. He is pleased and shakes Sheppard's hand.

EGGEN
Welcome to Washington Steve. Now that you're here we've got a lot of work to do.

He hands Booker the drink and walks over to a wide screen monitor. A map of Cuba is projected on the screen.

EGGEN
Here's the situation: Word just came down from National Command. We have official confirmation that at approximately 0900 hours an unidentified U.S. aircraft went down in Cuba.

Eggen touches a spot near the eastern tip of Cuba. The spot starts to blink on the screen.

EGGEN
It crashed in a cane field north of Baracoa. The crew both bailed out before impact and the Cubans picked them up. Our sources say they're being held for interrogation at a small farm near the crash site. Your team will go in and bring them out.

The image behind Eggen changes. We SEE a black and white photo of aircraft wreckage.

EGGEN
Satellite photos show the aircraft is in two sections and heavily guarded. Mind you, if you can plant a demo charge and blow the damn thing up, do so - but don't jeopardize your main mission.

SHEPPARD
You said unidentified aircraft?

BOOKER
Here's the twist. HQ has no missing aircraft. This bird just appeared on the

screen and went down just as sudden. We think he was flying below five hundred, got into trouble and popped up. Radar picked him up entering Cuban airspace.

Sheppard's face twists.

BOOKER

I know what you're thinking, son. But listen to this. A navy carrier, E-2 Hawkeye picked up this transmission.

Booker pushes the 'PLAY' button on a recorder.

VOICE ON TAPE

Mayday! Mayday! Mayday! On guard. This is Spad Zero-One. We are going down! Bull's-eye one-five-two at ten, heading southeast. Punching out! Say again, punching out!

SHEPPARD

What does that mean?

BOOKER

What that means is you've been tapped for search and rescue. Believe it or not, we lost an aircraft over forty years ago. Its call sign, -- Spad Zero-One.

Booker and Eggen share a look.

BOOKER

Well Captain, go to work.

Sheppard stands and looks at Booker, then Eggen. They remain stone-faced. He heads for the door but is interrupted.

BOOKER

And don't forget Captain, watch out for Cuban civilians as well - we want to keep damage to a minimum.

INT NAVY CHOPPER - NIGHT

Sheppard tosses his combat gear into a Blackhawk helicopter filled with team members. Six men suited up for a combat night-drop. He crouches under the rotors and double-times over to an INTEL OFFICER who has just pulled up in a jeep. The officer holds his hat against the downblast of the rotors. He hands Sheppard an 8x10 photograph.

The NOISE of the whopping rotors and the RUSH of air makes it difficult to communicate.

INTEL OFFICER

(yelling)

This is a photograph of Captain John Sweeney the pilot of Spad Zero-One. He should be forty-six now. General Booker thought you could use this. He couldn't find one of Lieutenant Lacy in time.

Sheppard has to hold the flapping photo with both hands. He studies it, folds it and slips it into a shirt pocket.

SHEPPARD
Thanks Lieutenant.

INT BLACKHAWK - NIGHT

THE TEAM seated inside prepare for deployment. The quarters are tight even with the open doorways.

SERGEANT AL 'SARGE' BANKS	TEAM LEADER
CORPORAL JIM 'Q-TIP' TOWNING	RIFLEMAN/SCOUT
CORPORAL SAM 'ZIM' ZIMMERMAN	RIFLEMAN/MEDIC
CORPORAL LARRY 'TEACHER' POWERS	DEMOLITIONS
PFC HECTOR 'NACHO' SANCHEZ	SNIPER
PFC RON 'BUMP' SUTTER	SUPPORT/RADIOMAN
CORPORAL RICK JENSEN	BLACKHAWK PILOT
CORPORAL TIM JACOBS	CO-PILOT

In the red glow of night-lights, Sheppard watches the team inspect their equipment and light weapons. Their hands move with expert ability making last minute adjustments and taping down loose items. CLACK! CLACK!

BUMP, 24, short and bulldog tough, works the action on his MP-5 submachine gun. He snaps a 30-round magazine into place and racks a round in. CLACK! CLACK!

SERGEANT BANKS, 30, black, a combat hardened man, gives him the hairy eyeball.

SARGE
Christ. Did I tell you to lock and load?

TEACHER, 28, with sharp intelligent features, looks up from a small paperback book he is reading. This teacher turned Navy Seal likes blowing things up.

TEACHER
C'mon Sarge, let him alone. He needs to shoot something. Last time out he got so excited he forgot to lock and load.

Everyone cracks up. BUMP laughs louder than the others. It's pretended.

BUMP

That's some funny shit, Teacher. You should be a comedian, 'cause you certainly ain't a Marine.

Q-Tip stops applying camouflage paint to his face. He is young, extremely thin with white-blond hair.

Q-TIP

That's a double negative, ain't it Teach?

TEACHER

(shaking his head)
You are quite correct Q. It's his lack of up bringing.

Bump grabs his crotch and shakes it.

BUMP

I got your double negative right here.

Teacher looks at Sarge and shakes his head again.

TEACHER

You got your work cut out with this one Sarge.

A red light bulb comes on. Jacobs twists around in his pilot's seat and holds up two fingers.

JACOBS

(yells to Sheppard)
Two minutes to drop! Stand by.

Sarge elbows ZIM, 23, a huge teddy bear of a man whose pleasant exterior belies an instinctual killer. He stirs, wakes up, and adjusts the heavy, M-60 machine gun between his legs. With a big yawn he leans forward and looks out over the ocean.

The PILOT surrounded by a display of screens and switches holds a steady stick. The chopper whips over the sea. The moon's reflection makes the black sea bright.

EXT OCEAN - NIGHT

THE BLACKHAWK flares up into position and hovers ten feet above the water. The sea is choppy and the downblast of the thumping rotors churns the water. On a green light, men and equipment drop from the chopper. Sheppard is the last to go.

Jackson now standing at the doorway has a hand on Sheppard's shoulder.

JACOBS

(yelling over the roar)
We'll see you in six hours, sir! Zero
four hundred.

SHEPPARD

Copy that. Just another day in paradise.

Sheppard leaps into the sea with a heavy splash.

EXT FARM LAND - NIGHT

Sheppard and the others look down a slope on a farmhouse and barn. Inside the barn there is light. They look ready to go to work.

SHEPPARD

Spread out, three teams. Secure the
perimeter, neutralize hostiles and report
in.

EXT FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

TWO CUBAN SOLDIERS stand guard on the porch that covers the entrance from the dirt road. Another is silhouetted by a naked light bulb high in a second story hayloft inside the barn.

A distant scream. Sheppard uses a scope, curious. He can't see inside the barn, but shadows move around in the dim light.

EXT HIGHGROUNDS - NIGHT

Nacho and Bump have found a good sniping position. NACHO, 24, intense, surveys the surroundings with his telescopic SCOPE.

The SCOPE tracks the two guards, slides over to the soldier in the hayloft, and then picks up three men crawling in an open field of high grass.

In the grass we SEE its Sheppard, Q-Tip and Teacher. They have the front of farmhouse covered. Teacher spots another soldier near a tractor who has lighted a cigarette.

TEACHER

There.

Sheppard switches to NIGHT VISION.

Seen through NIGHT VISION moonlight turns dull green. Sheppard studies the soldier leaning against the tractor smoking. Sheppard flashes Q-Tip a hand signal indicating neutralize the soldier. Q-Tip signals back, crawls off alone.

Sarge and Zim, low crawl to the rear of the barn, revealing another soldier standing in the darkness, shaded by thick trees.

Aware of every sound and movement, Q-Tip crawls cautiously within twenty feet of his man. He brings out a silenced Berretta and fires a single round into the soldier's head.

At the same time, Sarge has cupped a huge hand over the soldier in the trees mouth and shoves a nasty looking double-edged, combat knife through his ribs. He holds the soldier upright and looks across at Zim who scans the perimeter defensibly, waiting to unleash the awesome firepower of his M-60.

Satisfied, Sarge lowers the body and wipes the bloody knife on the soldiers pant leg.

EXT BARN - NIGHT

Sarge and Zim move to the rear of the barn weapons trained on the open window and door. Sheppard, Teacher and Q-Tip in the front can't get any closer without being spotted by the two guards.

Nacho solves their problem. Through the SCOPE the crosshairs settle on a soldier's chest. Nacho fires, reloads and drops the second soldier without making a sound.

NACHO
(voice over)
Adios amigos.

Sheppard and the others move up and make visual contact with Sarge. They all hear a blood-curtailing SCREAM.

INT BARN - NIGHT

Sweeny and Lacey hang completely naked by their arms from ropes tied to rafters inside the barn. We SEE their backs are bloody from the whippings and torture they have endured.

Lacey's face is beat to a pulp. Sweeny struggles to free himself but can only watch.

A mean looking son-of-a-bitch CUBAN OFFICER, presses a hot branding iron to Lacey's rump. His swollen-shut eyes open in torturous pain as he screams again. Two soldiers standing with rifles seem amused.

We SEE these men dressed in jungle fatigues look more like Cuban guerrillas than professional soldiers.

CUBAN OFFICER
Captain, we can forgo all this if you
only tell me what you are doing here.

He holds the iron close to Sweeny's battered face. Sweeny stares at the iron as if transfixed. His eyes move to the officer who draws a revolver and holds it in his face. He cocks the hammer.

CUBAN OFFICER
(almost smiling)

Last chance.

Sweeny closes his eyes tight and shakes his head. He wishes he had his little blue pill.

The Cuban Officer places the gun to Lacey's head and pulls the trigger.

The EXPLOSION and spray of brain hitting his face is too much. Sweeny screams and fights against the ropes like a man possessed.

EXT BARN - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Sheppard signals Sarge to move in, by pumping his hand three times.

SHEPPARD

Time to go.

The barn door flies open, as Sheppard's team makes entry. The guards react. Sheppard stitches the first with a short burst from his MP-5. The soldier's chest rocks as he falls. Teacher drops the second soldier before he can fire on Sheppard.

Q-Tip bears down on the Cuban Officer who stands frozen with a hot branding in hand, revolver now back in his holster. Sheppard and Teacher sweep the room.

SHEPPARD

Clear!

TEACHER

Clear!

A loud EXPLOSION from a gun and the soldier in the loft hits the ground. SARGE stands near the rear, holding a shortened shotgun. Sarge and Sheppard exchange glances.

Sheppard takes a breath, looks around.

SHEPPARD

(angry)

Zim. Cut 'em down.

Zim moves forward, butt strokes the Cuban Officer out of the way. He hits the ground fear in his eyes. Zim hands Teacher the M-60, draws a combat knife, lifts Sweeny's limp body and slices the rope.

Sarge finds the Captain's clothes, tosses them to Zim and returns to his position of rear guard. They all look at Lacey's body as Zim carefully lowers it. We see burn marks leading down to his genitals.

Q-TIP

(to the Cuban Officer)

You filthy animal. I ought to kill you.

SHEPPARD

No!

He pushes Q-Tips' muzzle down. Zim watches in disgust, eyes welling up with pent up anger.

The Cuban Officer relaxes for a second. Zim stands and takes his M-60 from Teacher. He points it at the officer. Zim fires a long burst into the officer's chest tearing it apart. The SOUND is deafening.

Everyone is startled, except Sheppard who snatches the heavy machine gun from his hands.

SHEPPARD

(infuriated)

GOD DAMMIT, ZIM!

ZIM

(sheepishly)

Sorry sir.

Sheppard looks at the others. Gets no complaints. They all wished they had done it.

SARGE

Looks like an A. D. to me sir.

TEACHER

(agreeable)

Yeah, accidental discharge. Looks like a faulty safety latch to me sir. I'll check it.

Sheppard softens, hands Teacher the M-60. Stares at Zim.

SHEPPARD

(to Zim)

The Captain needs a Medic.

EXT PATH - NIGHT

Nacho and Bump unite with the others. Bump looks the new guy over who is now dressed in a flight suit. Then stares curiously at Zim carrying a body wrapped in a horse blanket. Sheppard signals a short break.

BUMP

(to Sheppard)

What's up sir?

SHEPPARD

I'm not really sure. Sez he's Captain Sweeny.

Sarge joins in, a devilish smile on his face.

SARGE

See that uniform. No name, no insignias,
no nothin'. Remind you of anything.

SHEPPARD

I don't know who he is, but something
stinks.

SARGE

Special Ops?

SHEPPARD

Nobody told me.

Nacho appears suddenly.

NACHO

Sorry to break up this party but twenty
regulars are coming this way blocking our
egress. A truck and a half-track.

His eyes dart from Sarge to Sheppard.

NACHO

Fight or flight?

SHEPPARD

(looks at watch)
No time for detours.

Not waiting, Sarge signals Q-Tip and Bump to set up an ambush. A
pinch point. Teacher leads Sweeny to a safe place and Zim hefts
Lacey's body and follows. Nacho finds high ground.

EXT ROAD - NIGHT

Sheppard hears a NOISE, raises a spotting scope. In the distance
a Cuban half-track rumbles out of drifting ground fog toward
them. A truck with twenty Cuban soldiers follows.

EXT TREELINE - NIGHT

Sheppard nods at Sarge. All are in position, waiting. Teacher
hears the half-track. Louder and louder.

The half-track rounds a bend. The truck follows, lights off.

Teacher raises a AT-4 hand-held rocket launcher. Bump pats
Teacher on the shoulder.

BUMP

Rock and roll.

Teacher fires. The rocket impacts spraying hot metal and flames.
The half-track stops. Two Cubans stumble out.

Bump fires a burst. They drop hitting the ground.

Zim fires the M-60. A long burst kills the driver and passenger in the truck. It swerves off the road spilling Cubans. Lots of them. All running for cover. Firing as they go.

Manning the M-60, Zim realizes they all are shooting at him. He grabs the machine gun and falls back. He ducks into a ravine. Bullets chew up his old position.

Two Cubans take up positions behind the truck. Firing at the ravine pinning Zim down. Sheppard launches a grenade killing them both.

Teacher trips a claymore killing more Cubans.

A Cuban rises to throw a grenade. Nacho calmly picks him off. Three run for the opposite tree line. Q-Tip fires a long burst. Two drop. The other almost makes it. Sarge blasts him.

Q-Tip shoots and moves. Two more drop. He dives behind a rock. Just makes it, trailed by bullets.

Sheppard fires a grenade at the three Cubans shooting at Q-Tip. The explosion rocks them. Two stand up stunned. Sheppard drops them.

Q-Tip gives him a quick look. Signals he's okay.

The third Cuban stays low in some rocks. He starts working his way towards the fog. Nacho sees only a small piece of upper body. Fires. The bullet rips a hole in that spot. The Cuban stops.

The firing stops.

EXT COASTLINE - NIGHT

THE BLACKHAWK skims the waves, makes a radical bank and sets down on the sand. From the open doorway we SEE Sheppard and the others appear from the tree line. Running, Sheppard arrives first, kneels and sweeps the area with his MP-5. Teacher follows, arm hooked around Sweeny

TEACHER

I think we've worn out our welcome here.

Teacher helps Sweeny on board and assists Zim with Lacey's body. Sheppard counts off every man. Makes no sense leaving a man behind. A final glance and he's on board. Total time, 30 seconds.

Sheppard notices the missing co-pilot. Teacher occupies that seat.

SHEPPARD

Where's Jacobs?

JENSEN, 25, lifts his headset microphone out of the way. He signals a downward motion.

JENSEN

Too much weight. Had to drop him off.

He pulls back on the collective. The BLACKHAWK lifts off and swings out over the sea.

INT BLACKHAWK - NIGHT

Sheppard seated behind the cockpit, stares at Sweeny then shifts his eyes to the body of Lacey. Seated next to him, Sarge leans in.

SARGE

(motioning to Sweeny)

This guy's too young. Who do you think he is?

SHEPPARD

I don't know.

He pulls out a penlight and the folded photograph. They lean closer inspecting it.

SARGE

Look at that chin, and nose. The hairline. It's got to be Sweeny or his twin.

Sheppard looks at Sweeny again. He leans against the bulkhead trying to get some sleep. His battered face has become more swollen.

SHEPPARD

You mean his son.

SARGE

(realizing)

Yeah. Our guy has got to be over sixty-five.

(confused)

Just don't make sense.

Sheppard leans back puzzled.

SHEPPARD

Hey! Mission accomplished Sergeant. We've picked up the packages. They can unwrap them at HQ.

EXT OVER THE OCEAN - NIGHT

The Blackhawk heads for home. The moonlight is gone, hidden behind heavy clouds.

INT INSIDE THE COCKPIT - NIGHT

Teacher enjoys the view up front. He wants to grab the controls and take over, but has more sense. He is satisfied wearing the headsets.

TEACHER
(indicating forward)
What's that?

Jensen
(uncomfortable)
Don't know. It just appeared.

EXT OCEAN - NIGHT

LIGHTENING BOLTS flash so rapidly the night becomes day. Dead ahead, we SEE a giant water funnel. It moves in on them with great speed. They hit the wall.

The Blackhawk for an instant disappears. Static charges and electrical bolts make it re-appear. The helicopter's frame fades until it becomes indistinguishable in the surrounding weather.

INT COCKPIT - BLACKHAWK

Jensen fights a dead stick. The powerful turbines have shut down and the instrument panel is completely dark. It's a lost cause and he knows it.

Jensen barks at Teacher.

JENSEN
Everyone out! We're going down.

He auto rotates the chopper to soften the crash. The huge blades bite at the air as the chopper slowly descends.

A hundred feet above the water equipment flies out. A moment later, in quick succession men follow dropping from both doorways.

INT COCKPIT - DAY

Jensen realizes he only has seconds. He lets go of the controls, climbs out to the doorway. The chopper tilts the opposite direction, throwing him backwards out the other door.

The blades slice the water and the chopper lands sideways on top of him. They sink very quickly.

EXT UNDERWATER

Jensen is hooked on a strut as the chopper sinks in the rough seas. He struggles trying to unhook a strap he's caught up on..

He fights desperately as the wreckage drags him deeper and deeper. His chest heaves, his face distorts inside the helmet. He feebly claws for the surface, sinking.

Suddenly a knife blade flashes, cutting the strap freeing Jensen. Teacher, cheeks puffed with air, motions upward and pulls him to the surface.

EXT OCEAN SURFACE - NIGHT

Teacher and Jensen break the black surface. Sheppard holding the side of an inflatable raft sighs in relief. The SOUND of cheers and hollers come from the others.

Inside the four-by-eight foot raft Sweeny lies exhausted amongst wet canvass bags of salvaged equipment. Zim tends to him.

Sheppard swims over to help Teacher.

SHEPPARD
(to Jensen)
You all right?

Jensen sheds his heavy helmet, lets it sink.

JENSEN
Yeah. Thanks.

SHEPPARD
Get out a mayday?

Jensen shakes his head. Blood from a cut above his eye runs down his face.

JENSEN
Negative, everything was dead.
Instruments, radios, everything.

EXT OCEAN - DAY

From high above we SEE the raft floating on calm seas. Three men rest inside, seven hold onto ropes hanging from the sides. Upon closer inspection we SEE they have been a drift for days.

Sheppard takes a sip from a canteen. Hands it to Sarge.

SHEPPARD
This is the last of the water. Better
enjoy it while you can.

The canteen goes around and ends up in Zim's big hand. He hovers over Sweeny, pours a couple of drops past dried lips. Sweeny, completely exhausted with fever, swallows and chokes.

Sheppard hearing the choking swims over to Bump.

SHEPPARD

(resigned)
Want to try that radio one more time?

BUMP
The batteries are dead or waterlogged.
(thinking)
I just don't understand it. There should
be search and rescue looking for us. I
haven't even heard a plane.

SHEPPARD
I know.
(resign)
See what you can do.

BUMP
Yes sir, I'm on it.

Jensen stands up in the raft excited.

JENSEN
(pointing)
A ship! A ship!

Everyone even Sheppard starts screaming and waving their arms.

EXT OPEN SEA - DAY

A SHIP, the size of a speck on the horizon, appears to be moving parallel. The Ship, even if it were moving towards them, would have difficulty finding them unless they were looking.

ZIM
They don't see us!

JENSEN
They'll see us now.

Weakly, Jensen picks up his flare gun, cocks it and fires. The flare arcs high into the sky.

EXT SCHOONER - DAY

The bow of a one hundred and seventeen foot SCHOONER smashes the waves, her sails full of wind. We SEE her hoist her colors, an American flag. The men cheer, rescued!

SHEPPARD
Sergeant, secure the equipment!

SARGE
Yes, sir!

Teacher and Q-Tip help Sarge hide the equipment in canvass bags.

The schooner stops at one hundred yards and lowers a boat. Approximately sixty rough looking men hang over the rails watching. It starts to rain hard.

EXT SHIPS DECK - DUSK

CAPTAIN DANIEL NICHOLSON, 40s, fit and weathered, holds a callused hand to his chin as he studies these newcomers aboard his ship. He wears a faded red vest over a clean calico shirt. Two pistols and knife hang secure in a worn leather belt.

His first mate TALBOT leans on a wicked broad sword as if it were a cane. He cautiously watches the men.

The tough looking crew stand guard, some holding muskets, crude battle-axes and chains.

NICHOLSON

I am Captain Nicholson. Welcome aboard my ship, the 'LIBERTY'. Who amongst you is in charge?

Sheppard steps forward from the group. They lock eyes for a moment and shake hands.

SHEPPARD

I am U.S. Marine Captain Steve Sheppard. I want to thank you for rescuing my men and me.

Nicholson seems intrigued by this information. He has not seen such a group of marines dressed in outfits like these. Bump shoots Teacher a glance, who also sees a splatter of dried blood that hasn't been cleaned up.

NICHOLSON

Where do you hail from?

Sheppard is tired but will play.

SHEPPARD

(sighing)

We are American forces and that's all you get.

Sheppard motions to Sweeny, held up by Zim and Teacher and his exhausted men.

SHEPPARD

My men are injured and hungry. Will you help them?

NICHOLSON

Of course Captain.

He cocks a head.

NICHOLSON
Mister Talbot.

TALBOT
(barking to crew)
You men, find them food, quarters and dry
clothes.

INT GALLEY - NIGHT

Sheppard and Sarge confer in a darkened corner. The rest tend to Sweeny and dress the cut over Jensen's eye. Bump stows the equipment and checks the radio one more time.

SARGE
How do you want to handle this? We--

BUMP
Radio's B.O. GPS is out also.

Bump shakes the portable and shoves it in with the other equipment.

Sheppard motions to Q-Tip and Nacho.

SHEPPARD
Q, Nacho! Take a look around. See what you can find out. These guys are playing this charade a little too serious. Report in fifteen minutes.

Teacher joins Sheppard and Sarge. Motions aft. Nacho listens in.

TEACHER
This is no Disney cruise. Take a look.

Among the food stores they see twelve huge turtles tied down and stacked on their backs.

SARGE
That's inhumane.

TEACHER
It's also illegal. Sailors did that in the eighteenth century to reserve fresh meat. The turtles stay alive and are butchered when needed.

SARGE
Sheeeit.

TEACHER
And take a good whiff. This ship stinks of death.

Nacho and Q-Tip head out.

NACHO

Roger that, we're on the move.

INT LIBERTY - NIGHT

Sheppard grabs a stack of dry clothes, rummages through them. He selects a red shirt, black pantaloons and measures a boot against his foot. Satisfied he throws Sarge the bundle. Sarge catches it and groans.

SHEPPARD

Get dressed Sergeant. Might as well be comfortable.

Sarge mouths a couple of curse words, laughs. He sizes up a large black leather vest. The others pick through garments dressed in their skivvies.

Q-Tip and Nacho return dressed down like tough guys. Everyone gathers to hear the Sitrep.

NACHO

Captain, these guys aren't playin' Pirates of the Caribbean. They are well armed, muskets, shot, cannons that actually work and then there's these men sir...

SHEPPARD

What men?

NACHO

There are wounded in sick bay. Some serious. One guy's missing a leg. And some sawbones is working on him with dirty bandages and hot knives.

Zim can't help himself.

ZIM

C'mon Nacho stop the head-trip.
(laughing)
Hot knives.

Q-Tip pats Zim on the shoulder.

Q-TIP

It's authent' big guy. Every word of it.

Zim is stunned. Everyone suddenly has a sense of confusion.

SARGE

What do you want to do Cap?

Sheppard scans the galley.

SHEPPARD

Nacho, Q, take first watch. Cover the stairs and the hatch. I'll talk to Captain Nicholson in the morning. The rest of you get some sleep.

EXT LIBERTY - BRIDGE - DAY

Sheppard climbs out a hatch, looks up, sees Nicholson and Talbot on the main deck. The skies are clear and seas calm. The view is panoramic. No land.

SHEPPARD

Need to talk to you Captain.

Nicholson, without turning.

NICHOLSON

Fine day, Captain Sheppard.

SHEPPARD

I need to talk to you right now.
(motioning to Talbot)
In private

NICHOLSON

Mister Talbot, tend the ship.

Talbot glares at Sheppard, leaves. Nicholson allows himself a smile, turns to Sheppard.

NICHOLSON

Now what's so damned important?

SHEPPARD

My men and I are on an important mission. I need to get word to Washington. Do you have a radio or cell...

NICHOLSON

Washington? Washington? I'm afraid sir, there is no more Washington. The British have burned Washington, D.C. The president had to flee the White House. They burned that as well, those bastards.

Sheppard has had enough. He grabs Nicholson by the shirt pressing him against the rail.

SHEPPARD

I don't have time for games...
(sarcastic)
Captain!

Nicholson, quite adept and very strong spins Sheppard around and now has the advantage.

Talbot sees the struggle and moves toward them. Nicholson motions him off.

NICHOLSON

I assure you Captain; we are NOT playing games here.

(motioning downward)

I have lost three crewmen and have four wounded. We left Washington Naval Yard eighteen days ago, had a scrape with the frigate Britannia and I promise you the Executive Mansion is in ruins.

Nicholson feels Sheppard relax a little, lets him go. Sheppard hands Nicholson his knife back, which he had pointed at his gut.

Nicholson takes the knife, slips it back into his belt. They acknowledge; new respect for each other.

A horn sounds from the crow's nest, a lookout pointing frantically.

Nicholson sees a massive ship bearing down on them. He scowls, leans over the bridge and barks orders to Talbot.

EXT HIGH SEAS - DAY

BRITISH SHIP CLANCY, a 36 gun frigate, with its three masts full of sail approaches at flank speed.

NICHOLSON

Captain, gather your men we may have to fight.

Nicholson jumps the rail to a lower deck. MURPHYS LAW. Sheppard senses the danger. Follows Nicholson. On the run.

SHEPPARD

Can we out run them?

NICHOLSON

Not on the open seas. We will sail as if we didn't see 'er. Maybe she'll give up.

SHEPPARD

Can we fight?

NICHOLSON

Not wise. We left the yard in a hurry. We are ported for 26 guns, we have seven. And half a crew.

Sheppard slides down a rope and ducks into a hatch.

SHEPPARD

All men on deck. Follow my lead. That's an order.

SARGE
What's happening?

SHEPPARD
(breathing hard)
A ship is bearing down on us. We're not
sure who they are. Got to trust
Nicholson.

EXT LIBERTY - STERN TOP DECK - DAY

THE MEN watch the CLANCY close in. The crew of the LIBERTY
crouch behind gun-walls equipped with muskets and short hand
cannons.

The CLANCY raises a large British flag and fires a shot, they see
smoke first, then the cannon ball whistles over the main mast and
strikes the water.

The NOISE is eerier as it roars over them.

BUMP and the others flinch.

BUMP
Hoooly Sheeeit! I ain't never heard
anything like that before.

Q-TIP
There he goes with those double negatives
again.

Sarge more serious and ready to go to work.

SARGE
Captain?

SHEPPARD
Stand down, Sergeant. Let's see how this
plays out.

Sheppard watches Nicholson who is deep in thought.

NICHOLSON
Mister Talbot! Bring down the sails.

Suddenly Nicholson's crew makes themselves busy, loosening
rigging, climbing ropes and hiding weapons.

EXT TWO SHIPS - DAY

The CLANCY towers over the smaller ship. She comes along side,
cannon ports open, ready to deliver a deadly barrage of firepower
in case the smaller ship wants to resist.

Three rowboats are deployed, twelve British soldiers in each.
One of them a Captain, wearing a black coat, black hat and a gold
sash.

The oars move in unison, powerful strokes. There is something forbidding about these men. It becomes apparent when these veterans board and take up positions fore and aft.

British GUARDIANS. The finest sea marines in His Majesties Navy. Tall, tuff men. Excellent marksmen. Single-minded fanatics committed to three things. Following orders, pain and punishment.

They are heavily armed. Each poses a threat in his own way. Most carry muskets with bayonets, cross drawn pistols and short rapiers. One carries a lance; the flag emblazoned with the ship's BLACK BATTLE AXES. They can't wait to carry out any order given by their leader who is known as "The Executioner".

CAPTAIN SILAS DUDLEY, early 40s, a self-proclaimed blue blood, man-hunter and profiteer. Highly decorated. A seemingly even temperament betrays a short fuse.

The GUARDIANS board first and take up defensive positions. A soldier boards and rolls out a red carpet just in time. Dudley swings over the rail and lands on it. He wipes his wet boots. The soldier backs away, avoiding eye contact.

DUDLEY

Who is the Captain of this boat?

Nicholson steps out of the group.

NICHOLSON

That would be me, Captain Daniel Nicholson.

DUDLEY

Do you and your men surrender?

NICHOLSON

(friendly)

Surrender? Why we are just sea going sailors who...

Dudley backhands Nicholson across the face. A pinky ring cuts his cheek.

Three Guardians move closer pointing bayonets.

Dudley cocks his head waiting for the right response.

NICHOLSON

Yes, sir. We surrender.

DUDLEY

Good Captain.

Dudley looks up.

DUDLEY
What flag do you fly?

NICHOLSON
We are merchants.

Dudley surveys the ship, turns to SERGEANT MAJOR ELLIOTT, barrel-chested, handlebar moustache, lots of medals.

DUDLEY
(amused)
Sergeant, search the ship.
(serious)
Bring every man topside.

Dudley cuffs NICHOLSON'S elbow, drags him away from ear shot of his men.

DUDLEY
There are American Privateers who are raiding His Majesties Navy ships and stealing his precious cargos. They even have the audacity of killing his loyal subjects.

Dudley looks at Nicholson's crew.

DUDLEY
Have you seen any of these men?

NICHOLSON
No, sir.

DUDLEY
I hear that some captains are even harboring British deserters on board their ships.
(staring)
You wouldn't know of any of these men?

NICHOLSON
No, sir.

DUDLEY
Okay Captain. The King appreciates your loyalty.

Heads turn toward a commotion at mid-ship. Elliott and his men drag wounded and screaming men on deck. Sweeny is the only one able to stand.

ELLIOTT
We found these men hiding in the hold.

Dudley sighs, walks over to them. He pulls a handkerchief from his pocket, covers his nose.

DUDLEY

Disgusting lot, wouldn't you say Sergeant Major?

ELLIOTT

Yes, sir. Quite disgusting.

The men lay in pain and agony. One reaches up.

DUDLEY

Throw them overboard, they foul the air.

Nicholson quickly steps in front of Elliott.

NICHOLSON

Captain, they are wounded.

Dudley motions Elliott. Elliott rifle butts Nicholson under the chin knocking him to the deck. Elliott wants to kill him, instead steps over him.

Sheppard is shocked, signals his men to stay put. Twelve Guardians watch them.

Three Guardians throw a wounded man over the starboard side so the crew on the Clancy can watch. Then the rest go over, screaming until they hit the water. Nicholson lays stunned and helpless, his men frozen. A Guardian shoves Sweeny towards the rail.

Dudley sees the bloody shirt, marks from the whipping.

DUDLEY

Wait! That man, bring him to me.

Sheppard relaxes. His men wait. The Guardians holding them at bay turn to their Captain.

DUDLEY

This man is a deserter.

He points out four healthy men in the group.

DUDLEY

Take them, they are also traitors.

Elliott grabs one by the scruff of the neck. He breaks free and runs.

DUDLEY

(tiredly)
Shoot him!

SHEPPARD

(to the running man)
Nooo! Don't run!

The three Guardians closest to Dudley instantly level their muskets. Without second thought they fire simultaneously, blowing three holes in the man's back. They reload like robots.

Other Guardians shift into defensive positions just waiting for someone to get brave.

Dudley's attention is drawn to Sheppard. He draws two pistols.

DUDLEY
(to his men)
Did anyone ask this filthy dog to open
his yap?

Sheppard slumps his shoulder, looks down at Dudley's boots. He knows when to hold them and when to fold them.

Dudley looks Sheppard up and down, then dismisses a thought. Not worth the price of shot.

He turns to the dead man.

DUDLEY
(to Elliott)
Obviously a traitor. Throw him
overboard. Bring the rest to be hung
before the King's Court.

DUDLEY motions for his men to lead him off this wretched ship. They peel off one-by-one, disappearing over the side. Hands bound, Sweeny follows without turning.

EXT ABOARD THE CLANCY - DAY

LIEUTENANT MALLORY, 24, handsome and impeccable, lowers a brass telescope in disgust, having watched Captain Dudley's shocking performance.

He pulls out a small notebook and makes an entry. He turns to the chief mate.

MALLORY
Chief have the men, prepare for the
Captain's return.

EXT ABOARD THE LIBERTY - DAY

Sheppard breaks for the starboard rail the second Dudley and his goons touch the water. The wounded men are floating, dead.

SHEPPARD
(icy)
Sergeant! Recover the package.

Talbot helps Nicholson to his feet. The crew stands waiting for orders. Nicholson rubs his bruised chin, makes a painful decision.

NICHOLSON
(resolute)
Mr. Talbot, get on the way.

Sheppard steps onto the bridge. There's a coldness and confidence Nicholson can't quite comprehend.

Sheppard stares at the Clancy just setting there, waiting for the Liberty set sails.

SHEPPARD
Captain, I need six hours to recover my man.

Nicholson stares at Sheppard in utter disbelief. Sheppard stares back. Nicholson bites his lip, gives in. He is interested.

NICHOLSON
Very well Captain, you've got my attention. What's your plan?

SHEPPARD
Leave me and my men in the water and come back in six hours. You will see our signal.

NICHOLSON
That's your plan? Leave you in the water?

Sheppard smiles.

SHEPPARD
That's it.

NICHOLSON
Okay Captain. See you in six hours.

Sheppard takes off on the double. Nicholson turns to Talbot shaking his head.

NICHOLSON
Mister Talbot, assist the captain and his men.
(shaking head)
I've got to stick around to see this.

Sheppard slams into the galley. Sarge and the others are already suited up. Sarge unzips a bag, tosses Sheppard his combat gear. Sheppard pulls his shirt over his head.

SHEPPARD
Sarge, meet me on deck in five. Have the men fall in.

EXT CLANCY - NIGHT

TWO SENTRIES cross paths holding muskets. Below, men in black rubber suits swim up to the anchor line. On Sheppard's signal Nacho climbs the rope with ease.

The sentries cross again. This time Sheppard and Nacho suddenly appear. Sheppard covers a sentry's mouth, pulls him close, plunging a knife blade between the ribs. Silently, Nacho twists his man's neck and does the same.

Sarge and the others slip on board. Sheppard low crawls to a stack of crates. He stops, studying the top deck. On the other side of the crates a sentry steps out. He sees Sheppard, raises his rifle and falters. He drops to his knees and face plants.

Sheppard sees Sarge's combat knife sticking out of his back. He nods, Sarge nods back. Sheppard signals the men to fan out in two teams. Sarge pulls his knife out.

Underwater, Teacher presses a shape charge on the ship's rudder. He sets a small timer. Swims away.

Nacho and Bump slip past a squad of sleeping soldiers. Redcoat Infantry, wearing dirty, ill-fitting uniforms like they were in a recent battle. No sign of Guardians.

EXT CLANCY - MID DECK

Sheppard and Sarge slip past twenty more Redcoats. One stirs, the others snore in deep sleep. Sheppard signal's Sarge. They move forward along the side.

The Redcoat stirs again, opens his eyes, sees Sarge. He rises, reaching for his pistol. Q-Tip suddenly appears over the man, there is a flash of cold steel driving downward. A lung is punctured, followed by instant death. Zim watches to see if any others wake.

EXT CLANCY - BRIDGE - DAY

Nacho and Bump move into position. Two men, a helmsman dozing against the wheel. The other, a Redcoat Lieutenant writes in a log. He hears a NOISE to his side. Turning to see, the butt end of Bump's pistol smashes him off his seat. Nacho drops the Helmsman with a single karate chop.

Teacher quick peeks over a side rail. He carefully checks the ship. Zim sets up his M-60, while Q-Tip places two frag grenades in front of him. He spots Sheppard crouched behind a cargo box barely visible, signaling 'all clear'.

Teacher signals back, five fingers, the fireworks begin in five minutes. Nacho sweeps the area with his SCOPE. No movement, all is quiet. Everyone waits.

INT CLANCY -- NIGHT

Captain Dudley sits in his quarters, extravagant and ridiculous with a gallery of art treasures. He studies the intricate blade of a jewel-studded dagger, a trophy, trying to decide if it is worthy of his collection. Outside the stern window the moon reflects on a calm sea. No wind, no sails. His thoughts are interrupted by someone's approach.

Dudley coils like a snake and slaps a tray of food out of the hands of a young man. Fine wine and a delicate assortment of food splatter everywhere. The cabin attendant, TAYLOR, 20, pale and slight is stunned. He drops to his knees and bows.

DUDLEY

You're late!

Dudley looks at the mess.

DUDLEY

Clean up this mess boy!

Taylor crawls on his knees.

DUDLEY

I ought to feed you to the sharks.

Dudley boots him.

TAYLOR

AAAAAAA!

Elliott, relaxing on a couch nearby, watches. He laughs.

EXT CLANCY

THE RUDDER is blown a part in an incredible underwater EXPLOSION. The gallery window glass is blown inward as a wall of churning water rises above it. The ship shudders from bow to stern. Dudley grabs a post to keep from falling. Elliott rolls off the couch and snatches his musket.

Sheppard jumps to his feet, firing his M-203 into the air. A short burst left and one right. Sarge tosses a grenade on deck blowing two wooden crates to pieces.

A Redcoat Sergeant raises his rifle and is blown through the air by Nacho.

SHEPPARD

No body moves and you won't be harmed.

The Redcoats stay put, in shock and awe.

Like demons, two Guardians storm out of a deck hatch. They open fire on Sheppard. Sarge sees them first.

SARGE

(shouting)

Take cover!

Sheppard dives behind a barrel and rolls. Wood chips and splinters fly behind him. Sarge spins and lets them have it with three quick rounds from his shotgun.

Suddenly three race out a rear doorway and five more fire on Sarge from the front cabin door. Bump and Nacho kill the three and Zim kills all five with two sweeps of the M-60. The pile of dead bodies nearly seals the doorway.

Sheppard rolls up to one knee, searching for more Guardians. The shooting has stopped. He signals the men to cover the top deck and hold their positions.

After a long quiet, Teacher brings Lieutenant Mallory over to Sheppard and Sarge.

TEACHER

Sez he knows the Captain will surrender
if you promise not to kill him.

SHEPPARD

We don't owe him any favors.

SARGE

Sweeny's down there.

SHEPPARD

Tell your captain if all his men
surrender, I will let them live.

Mallory nods. Teacher pushes him toward the main hatch.

EXT CLANCY - TOP DECK

Dudley and Mallory step onto the bridge. Dudley studies the weapon Sheppard holds and looks up, recognizes him. Sheppard looks Dudley up and down.

SHEPPARD

Where are the prisoners?

DUDLEY

In the hold. Are you the in charge?

Sheppard jerks his head for Sarge to get them. Sarge takes Teacher.

DUDLEY

(his temper slipping)
Who am I speaking to sir?

SHEPPARD

Let's just say I am the man confiscating
your ship.

DUDLEY
(surprised)
You can't do that sir. This is His
Majesty's property.

Sheppard gets in Dudley's face.

SHEPPARD
I guess you better start practicing
kissing the King's ass.

EXT SEA - ROW BOAT - NIGHT

Dudley sits holding the side of the boat. His few Guardians and loyal men overload three boats. The wind blows as waves rise and fall almost swamping them.

DUDLEY
(yelling)
This is not over. You and all your men
will hang.

Sheppard has heard enough. He aims his M-203 and fires. A bullet punches a hole in the bottom of the boat between Dudley's feet. A stream of water squirts in.

Dudley sits stunned. His men row faster, going nowhere into the dark.

Shaking his head, Sheppard turns to Sarge.

SHEPPARD
I broke a promise. When he threw those
men overboard, I swore I would kill him.

SARGE
(grinning)
You may have.

SHEPPARD
Yeah, if I'm lucky.
(thinking)
Better send Captain Nicholson that signal.

EXT CLANCY - DAY

Sheppard and Nicholson survey the crew. A strange assortment of one hundred and eighty-six men: riggers, deck hands, mariners and militia, some in uniform. Nicholson needs a full crew. He walks among them, inspecting each man nodding at some and disapproving others.

Sheppard is drawn toward ten powerful looking black men. Slaves. Sarge at his side is seething.

Sarge

We took them from the forward hold. They were locked up with Captain Sweeny and the others. The place was filthy, crawling with rats.

SHEPPARD
(bewildered)
I don't understand. What is going on here?

NICHOLSON
What is there to understand? Dudley was selling slaves. He transports them from the Caribbean to New Orleans.

SHEPPARD
What I mean is, slavery was outlawed over a hundred...

NICHOLSON
I assure you men like Dudley have their own laws. It is well known that the British are the cruelest men on God's green Earth.

Sheppard gives up trying to make sense with Nicholson. They move on.

Nicholson notices a young man with a dirty face. It is Taylor.

NICHOLSON
Who are you mate?

TAYLOR
(eager)
I am the ships cook, sir. I make an excellent stew.

NICHOLSON
(laughing)
Well son I could use a good cook.

TAYLOR
Thank you sir, your belly will thank me.

Nicholson notes a well-dressed gentleman. MARION SNODGRASS, 60, long gray hair in a ponytail. He watches with intelligent eyes.

NICHOLSON
And who might you be sir?

SNODGRASS
I am your humble servant, Marion Snodgrass, master ship-builder. I am an honest man and the proud builder of over fifty of the finest and safest ships.

NICHOLSON
Glad to meet you sir.

Nicholson addresses the men who stand awaiting their future.

NICHOLSON
You all have crewed under the iron hand
of Captain Dudley. Since you are still
here I assume you want a better life.

Nicholson pauses and looks over the men.

NICHOLSON
You work for me and I promise more food
and better wages for everyone.

The ship erupts in cheers and laughter. Nicholson holds up two
hands requesting silence.

NICHOLSON
Men! Get some breakfast. Repair the
rudder. We sail in four hours.

Nicholson signals Sheppard and they head back to the LIBERTY.

INT LIBERTY - GALLEY - DAY

Sheppard stares into the faces of his men. He sighs and suddenly
looks tired. Sarge briefs Sheppard.

SARGE
Cap we're all running out of time and
patience. Sweeny needs a Doc and these
psychos have taken this reenactment crap
way beyond fun and games.

TEACHER
Believe it or not these guys are not
reenacting. For whatever reason, they
are caught up in the early eighteen
hundreds and we better get on board with
that.

BUMP
No Shit. It's like we've been dumped back in time.

Sheppard sighs again, nods at Jensen

SHEPPARD
How are you holding up?

JENSEN
Good as can be expected, sir.

Sheppard and Sarge share a look of worry.

SHEPPARD

Okay men. We will straighten this out when we get on land. In the mean time do what we do best. Improvise!

EVERYONE

Hooyah!

EXT LIBERTY - FROM THE BRIDGE - DAY

Sheppard and Nicholson see sailing ships moored row-by-row in a great harbor. On land a fishing town. Untamed. Colonial. Docks teem with immigrant workers, unloading other ships.

Along the high grounds, emplacements with ancient cannons overlooking the water. Beyond that tall maple and spruce trees. Thick and as far as the eye can see.

SHEPPARD

Where are we?

NICHOLSON

The Port of New Orleans. Haven't been here in two years and she still looks the same. Quite a town.

SHEPPARD

I can't believe this.

NICHOLSON

(smiling)

You better believe it. Every sailor who first lays eyes on her, sez the same thing.

Nicholson has no idea what Sheppard means.

NICHOLSON

Since this is obviously your first time here, let me give you a word of...

Sheppard walks away ignoring him.

NICHOLSON

(shrugs)

...suit yourself.

EXT NEW ORLEANS - DOCK - DAY

Sheppard and the others just beyond the docks turn and look in different directions. Amazed at the town's activity and re-creation.

We SEE along the boardwalk, fish markets and stands, farmer's carts pulled by horses, merchants of all kinds weighing fruits and vegetables.

Young girls help their parents and boys chase each other with sticks, one almost runs into Sarge.

SARGE

(impressed)

This is a great movie set.

TEACHER

This is not a movie set. Wherever we are, these people are NOT acting.

Sheppard moves along the dirt road into a town full of small shops, a hotel and a saloon. He spots small groups of British and French soldiers dressed in civilian clothes all so busy eyeing each other they don't notice anything else.

American militias patrol the streets eyeing the Brits and the French but ignore them because no one is causing any trouble. There is an air of neutrality, yet everyone is tense an armed with muskets and pistols.

SHEPPARD

(looking around)

Sarge, see if you can find a doctor.
Nacho recon. Stay in teams.

The men casually pass these groups. Taking it all in. They carry Sig 9mm automatic handguns under their clothing.

Sheppard sees an old church and an out-building being repaired from a recent fire. Stacks of food, supplies and furniture salvaged from the fire dry in the sun. Workers saw wood and hammer planks.

SHEPPARD

We'll meet you inside the church in thirty. Move out.

Sarge and Bump see a general store. Q-Tip and Nacho head for a livery stable and blacksmith. Zim helps Sweeny into the church and Jensen follows.

One of the workers notices them. Nudges the others.

INT CHURCH - DAY

Sheppard watches Zim get Sweeny settled in a rear pew. Teacher is drawn to several plaques with scriptures written on the walls.

A huge worker dressed in coveralls steps in from a rear door. He is Catholic priest, FARTHER SEAN MAGEE, 50, kindly and powerful. Educated. Determined yet patient.

MAGEE

May I help you gentlemen, I am Father MaGee?

Sheppard reaches out a hand.

SHEPPARD

I am Captain Steve Sheppard, U.S. Marines. I have a man here who needs medical treatment. Can you help us find a doctor?

MAGEE

The Lord has brought you here. I will care for him and with Gods guidance, bring him to good health.

MaGee checks Sweeny's pale face and eyes. He peeks under the bandages and shrugs.

MAGEE

Your man has a slight fever and infection. This field dressing is very good. Usually I see much worse.

(to Sheppard)

Your man can stay here. I have some antibiotics and salves for his wounds.

SHEPPARD

Thanks Father.

He reaches into a pants pocket, pulls out some gold coins.

SHEPPARD

We can pay.

MaGee shoots up a hand. Don't you even dare. Sheppard relaxes. Signals the rest to do the same. Teacher continues to look around absorbing everything.

MONTAGE

Sarge and Bump walk through shops, the hotel lobby, pass a whorehouse; Sarge reads and pulls a sheet of paper off a billboard. Q-Tip and Nacho inquire about a horse, buy a drink in the saloon and listen in on private conversations.

INT CHURCH - DAY

Sarge and Bump return five minutes late. Q-Tip and Nacho are already back. Sarge removes a paper from his vest pocket.

SARGE

Sorry we are late but I thought you would want to see this.

He hands Sheppard an advertisement from the New Orleans newspaper recruiting crewmen for the privateer Monte. We SEE:

SHEPPARD

(voice over)

An Invitation to all brave Mariners and Seamen, who have an inclination to serve their Country and make their Fortunes.

The grand Privateer Schooner MONTE, commanded by Francisco Blanco, Esq; and prov'd to be a very capitol Captaine, will Saile on a Cruise against the Enemies of the United States of America, by the Third Monday, this month. The MONTE mounts Thirty Four Gunnes, and is excellently well combined for Attacks, Defense and Chase---This therefore is an invite to all those Brave Follows, who love their country, and want to make their fortunes at one Stroke. Rendezvous at his Governor's Wharf, Pier Number 5 and be entertained and greeted with a hearty Welcome by a Number of Brave Seamen there assembled, and let flie your colours and set your Compasse. Good health to you all fore and aft. God saue the Captaine and all ye crew.

Sheppard folds the paper, pieces of a puzzle coming together.

SHEPPARD

Sarge, go get Father MaGee. I have a couple of questions.

They return. MaGee looks interested in answering any questions. Sheppard moves in close to MaGee, face to face, eyes saying tell me the truth. His men watch. They all know this look.

SHEPPARD

Father. What is today's date?

MAGEE

Why it is the fifteenth of September.

SHEPPARD

(almost afraid to ask)
What year Father?

MAGEE

Eighteen fourteen.

Everyone begins to jabber at once. Sheppard is disappointed at this information. These people are crazy. Even MaGee.

SHEPPARD

(slow and deliberate)
Father... you believe the year is eighteen...

TEACHER

(interrupting)

Makes sense Captain. Think about it, the British attacking us, the report of the White House destroyed, a harbor full of ancient ships, the town thriving with life.

(laughing)

These people really believe they live in the eighteen hundreds. And no matter what we think, there's not a damn thing we can do about it.

(apologizing)

Excuse my French father.

MAGEE

That's okay my Son. You men are not from around here. But, God strike me dead, if I am not telling you the truth.

(remembering)

In fact. Where is my Journal? I can prove what I am telling you is true.

MaGee goes outside and searches through the rubble. He pulls out a thick journal partially scorched along the edges. He goes into his office and pulls out a new journal from underneath a shelf.

He hands Sheppard the burnt one.

MAGEE

My old journal.

(hefting it)

The new one. Take a look Captain.

Sheppard sets the journal on a table, flips through it. Teacher leans in, extremely interested.

We SEE pages and pages of old entries in handwriting script. Each entry dated. The same with the new journal, the last entry being yesterday's fire on the fourteenth of September.

TEACHER

(convinced)

No doubt about it. This town, these people are all living in the year eighteen fourteen. And until we get the hell out of here, so are we.

(cringing)

Sorry father.

INT LIBERTY - CAPTAINS QUARTERS - NIGHT

Nicholson enjoys a cigar and pours some wine. He ponders over a bill of lading. Sheppard knocks, enters. Nicholson looks up.

NICHOLSON

Captain.

SHEPPARD

What year is this?

NICHOLSON
(without thought)
Eighteen fourteen.

Nicholson detects a bit of confusion, which he shares. He is also interested in these men he plucked from the sea.

NICHOLSON
I saw what you and your men did to the Clancy and Dudley's men. I have never seen such weapons. Would you show me them and how they work?

Sheppard, guarded, takes a seat.

SHEPPARD
Yeah sure. But I have some more questions first.

Nicholson nods his head, knowingly.

NICHOLSON
Tell you what. Let's take turns asking questions. After I saved your life and you saved my ship we should be able to trust each other.

Sheppard chews on this.

SHEPPARD
I will answer any of your questions under two conditions. If it doesn't jeopardize my mission and nothing leaves these quarters.

NICHOLSON
Agreed Captain. A few answers, is all I desire.

He pours another glass of wine, refills his own. They tap glasses.

NICHOLSON
A toast... honor among men. Let our word be our bond, this wine our blood. Here, here to a new friendship.

SHEPPARD
Salute!

NICHOLSON
Okay, friend. You can go first.

SHEPPARD
(serious)

What is today's date?

NICHOLSON

(thinking)

Aaaah mid September, September fifteenth,
eighteen fourteen.

(quickly)

Why, what is today's date?

SHEPPARD

(hesitant)

Where I'm from, the year is two thousand two.

EXT LOADING DOCKS - DAY

The Liberty is being loaded with supplies, workers repair the sails and shrouds and carpenters hang over the sides plugging holes.

The cannons of the Clancy are being hauled and hoisted onto the Liberty, filling the empty ports.

Nicholson and Sheppard stare at a cannon dangling from a maze of pulleys, the rescued black slave named TEE guiding it into place.

SHEPPARD

You have picked a good crew, Captain.

NICHOLSON

We sail tomorrow day. Will you be joining us?

SHEPPARD

From what you've told me, you will need all the help you can get.

Nicholson laughs and slaps Sheppard on the back. He hefts a sack of gold coins and tosses them to Sheppard.

NICHOLSON

Here's your share of the bounty, partner.
A couple more of these and you'll have your own ship and crew.

EXT LIBERTY - DAY

A strong breeze billows the forward sails and the ship slowly pulls out from the harbor. Sheppard and Nicholson grasp the rail, a mixture of excitement and adventure in their faces.

Nicholson looks down at the compass.

NICHOLSON

Well we're off. We'll head east and stay three to five miles out in the shipping lanes.

Sheppard half salutes.

SHEPPARD

Aye aye captain. Sounds good to me.

Down below, Sarge watches the team store away the last part of the equipment. Sweeny helps but still shows signs of the beating; healing bruises and scars.

EXT LIBERTY - HIGH SEAS - DAY

A MAN OF WAR probably a 36 to 54 gun British frigate, three masts full of sail appears on the horizon.

Everyone sees it as it turns towards them. They all turn to Nicholson, waiting for orders.

NICHOLSON

Prepare to fight!

The crew, throw up their arms and cheer. A furious burst of energy; making preparations. Gunners load and set their cannon. Boatswains drop the main and set the fighting sails stripping away the larger cumbersome ones that can fall or get in the way.

Sheppard can only watch, completely out of his element. He signals his men, Nicholson is in charge for now. They prepare their own weapons.

Nicholson stares at the approach of the ship. Sheppard appears beside him. Nicholson feels him but remains vigilant.

The ship draws near and Nicholson sees what he's been waiting for. A British Man of War, flag being raised.

NICHOLSON

Raise the flag, Mister Talbot. Turn into the wind.

SHEPPARD

How many guns do you count?

NICHOLSON

She carries 54.

(to Talbot)

Give him a volley of long shot.

From bow to stern, twelve cannon fire. Half of them hit the larger ship.

NICHOLSON

Load again. And tack about.

Talbot turns the big wheel hard coming about. The other twelve cannon fire with more effective results. A fore sail mast snaps in half dropping on several crewmen.

Another shot explodes near a container of ordnance, killing many gunners.

Sheppard sees the tactic. The faster ship staying in front exposing both her broadsides for only a short time.

The Man of War fires a 20 cannon broadside at the Liberty's smaller profile. Shot whistle over the top punching holes in the sail. One eighteen pounder kills a rigger, striking him in the hip.

Sheppard watches in awe, understanding the tactics of close quarter naval warfare.

NICHOLSON

Bring her round!

He sees the Liberty begin to come round to the port side, setting up for a close broadside. The bows pass within twenty yards. The English gunners frantically reloading having just fired. Some men fire muskets hoping to hit something.

Too late, the Liberty fires a broadside from fore to aft. Sheppard watches the shot decimate the ship. English gunners fly backwards as explosions rip the cannons from their mounts. Another man is crushed as a heavy barrel separates and falls on him.

A fire starts inside the ship threatening to reach the hatch, flames moving in two directions. Men abandon their guns; some run in panic and others frantically fight the fire.

The Man of War has six smaller decks guns. Sheppard watches as the Captain orders them to fire.

SHEPPARD

(yells)

Take cover!

His men duck behind boxes and coils of ropes. Five feet from Sarge, a twelve pound shot splinters a box and tears through the opposite gun wall before dropping into the sea.

The Liberty takes several more hits the cannon fire being much more accurate. Musket fire intensifies. A man screams in pain. Sheppard sees one of the black slaves they rescued has lost a leg. His friend Tee and two others hold him down to stop the bleeding.

The ships pass now stern to stern.

NICHOLSON

Stern cannons FIRE!

Four cannons specially mounted in the rear fire blasting a hole through the bridge. The English Captain is stuck in the neck by

a metal fragment. His first mate, not so lucky is torn in half. Blood sprays all over the Captain.

NICHOLSON

Bring the starboard cannons to bare!

The Liberty brings her re-loaded cannons around. The firing from the English ship has diminished. Nicholson looks over the ship. Smoke and small fires threaten to take the entire ship. He prepares for another broadside.

NICHOLSON

Mister Talbot, get ready to fire.

Suddenly a white flag is raised, the English have had enough. Both ships cease-fire. Sheppard looks over the Liberty and her crew, quite impressed.

INT LIBERTY - NIGHT

Nicholson once again in the captain's quarters pours Sheppard a glass of wine. He ponders over his ship's log making one last entry. It brings a smile.

NICHOLSON

We have done well Captain. Three ships captured in five days. Two didn't even fight. We return with enough bounty for you to build your own ship.

Nicholson checks his figures.

NICHOLSON

We are rich men.

SHEPPARD

I want to build a special ship with my money. Who would I see?

NICHOLSON

You're in luck Captain, you already know him.

INT NEW ORLEANS - NAVY YARD - NIGHT

Snodgrass stands over a large drafting table, two lamps light the room. He peeks over his eyeglasses at Sheppard, Sarge and Teacher who have just arrived.

SNODGRASS

Good evening Captain Sheppard.

He stops what he is doing and shakes their hands.

SNODGRASS

Sarge, Teacher.
(pause)

Are you an educator?

TEACHER

I taught history before enlisting in the military. The nickname kind of stuck.

Snodgrass smiles and adjusts his glasses. They look down at a detailed draft of a sailing ship. The ship is drawn in three different views each view showing attention to detail.

SHEPPARD

Wow this is excellent work. Did you draft this?

SNODGRASS

I am a shipbuilder not an artist. Young Taylor is the true artist. He can draw anything.

Sheppard thinks for a second. Can't make the connection.

SNODGRASS

The cook. Taylor is our cook.

SHEPPARD

Yeah! Yeah! I remember.

Snodgrass runs a finger along the draft.

SNODGRASS

The keel is 117 feet in length and 34 feet in beam. Armament consists of thirty six guns and ten 18-pounder long guns.

(pointing)

Six fore and four aft.

SNODGRASS

These were unusual requests, Captain. I would have never thought of placing cannon here, here and here.

(pleased)

I like it. A tiered effect. Increasing the forward firepower.

TEACHER

What about the hull?

SNODGRASS

The hull is five inch white oak plank. Thin bottoms tends to risk the loss of a ship. There are iron knees under every beam of the lower and middle decks from the fore-mast to the mizzen-mast.

Teacher shakes his head. Snodgrass understands.

SNODGRASS

The ship is strong and fast. She will do
25 knots under full sail.

SHEPPARD

How much? And how long to build her?

SNODGRASS

\$200,000 dollars, 1000 trees. We can
build her in twenty-one days.

Sheppard motions to Sarge who drops two saddle bags on the table.
He unbuckles one bag. Gold coins spill out.

SHEPPARD

Here is \$100,000 dollars in gold. The
other half upon delivery.

EXT TRAINING GROUND - FIELD - DAY

Sarge stands in front of a loose assembly, over five hundred men,
all looking to be recruited as Privateers under a new captain and
his first officers.

Word got around that a special Man of War ship was under
construction and would need a crew. They would be called U.S.
Marines. And only the best need apply.

Teacher, holding a sign up sheet, joins Sarge.

SARGE

I am Sergeant Banks. I am a workingman
so you will address me, as Sarge or Sir,
doesn't matter. Starting now everything
you do or say will be evaluated and
written down.

Sarge picks up a cane and walks in front of the men, staring into
the many blank faces.

SARGE

The problem with you ladies is that none
of you are good enough right now.

This statement creates a stir. SMILEY, a huge rigger with
missing front teeth is suddenly offended. He says something
Sarge can't quite hear. Sarge stops in front of him. Leans in.

SARGE

Sir, I didn't quite hear you.
(leans closer)
Please talk into my good ear.

SMILEY

(laughing)
I said you look more like a lady to me.

Sarge suddenly backhands Smiley hard between the legs. He sags to his knees grabbing his groin, then, rolls to the ground.

SARGE
My mistake, Smiley. By your reaction you undoubtedly ARE a man.

Sarge moves on.

SARGE
Only one in four will make it through this training. For those who do, wages are good and a sizable bonus will be given to each crewman after each voyage.

Sarge pokes a skinny guy in the ribs with the cane and moves on.

SARGE
(deliberate)
Size does not matter. The color of your skin... does not matter, where you come from... does not matter... what matters is following orders.

Sarge taps the side of his head.

SARGE
If we have to depend on what you numb nuts think... we are all dead men. You will obey the Captain and officers at all times or I will personally kick the living shit out of you.

Sarge snaps the cane in half over one knee.

SARGE
I am not your friend. I am not your mother. You will hate me some days and that is your problem. My problem? I have three weeks to train you, weed out the slackers and shitheads and put together the best damn fighting men the British have ever seen.

Hearing this, a few men cheer. Sarge rolls his eyes.

SARGE
(shouting)
We are wasting daylight ladies. Line up in five lines. Let's get started.

EXT TRAINING FIELD - DAY

WHAM! Sarge throws a black man to the ground with a perfectly executed judo throw. The man slaps the ground, frustrated. He stands, a half head taller than Sarge. We SEE it is Tee.

SARGE

Choke me!

Tee hesitates.

SARGE

Choke me! You big, dumb piece of horse
dung.

A second invite is not necessary. Tee charges in and grabs Sarge's neck with powerful hands. Sarge tenses his thick neck, arms at his sides.

SARGE

(gagging slightly)
I said choke me you pussy!

Tee tightens his grip, giving it everything he's got. The other men watch in awe. Like a snake, Sarge strikes Tee in the center of the throat. Tee lets go. A stiff palm under the chin drops him again.

SARGE

(to the men)
Find the weak spot. Then finish him!

Sarge softens. Helps Tee to his feet.

EXT GUN RANGE - DAY

Nacho snatches a musket from one of men, the rest stand at attention port arms. He inspects it running his hand along the barrel and working the trigger and flintlock.

NACHO

Replace the flint. Clean the bowl.

Nacho returns the weapon. Moves along the first row.

NACHO

(pointing)
Rust on the barrel, clean it!

To another.

NACHO

Bent rod. Replace it!

Nacho stops in front of a Creole Indian. Snatches his musket, inspects it rolling it over from front sight to stock. Satisfied, he hands it back.

NACHO

What is your name sir?

KOLL, 30, has thick black hair in two braids. A leather pouch hangs around his neck.

KOLL
Je m'appelle Koll.
(struggling)
Koll. I... em Koll.

He has a deep French accent.

NACHO
Très bien! Monsieur.

Nacho stares at the others

NACHO
Finally, someone who knows how to clean a
rifle.

EXT FIRING RANGE - DAY

Bump and Zim instruct another group of eighteen riflemen. Fifty feet away we SEE wooden, man-size targets painted black. Six men step up to the firing line.

BUMP
Ready... aim... fire!

The explosion of rifles and smoke fill the air. A young rifleman starts to look down his rifle's muzzle because his didn't fire. Bump yanks it away a second before it discharges into the air.

The rifleman is dumfounded.

BUMP
You dumbshit! Are you trying to kill
yourself?

Bump kicks him in the rear.

BUMP
Get off my range.

EXT PT FIELD - DAY

Teacher and Q-Tip scan a group of fifty men dressed in short pants, no shirts. Teacher holds up a gold coin.

TEACHER
I'll give this gold coin to any man who
can out run my partner in a foot race. A
month's wages.

All fifty are excited, willing to try. Some strip down even more, others take off their shoes. Teacher points out a tall tree on a hill about a mile away.

TEACHER
(to Q-Tip)

You ran cross-country at USC right?

Q-TIP

(stretching his muscles)

Yeah, but I never said I was any good.

Teacher frowns. Q-Tip laughs.

Q-TIP

Don't worry, I'm good.

EXT TREES - BY A STREAM - DAY

Sheppard sits on a log, uses a stick to scratch the dirt. Walking along the stream bed Sweeny looking fit, approaches him.

SWEENY

Sarge said I would find you here. What are you doing?

SHEPPARD

I come here to think. Join me. Sometimes two heads are better than one.

SWEENY

I know the feeling. We've got ourselves in quite a situation here. What do you think has happened?

Sheppard laughs and throws the stick into the stream.

SHEPPARD

This is one screwed up mission we're on.

SWEENY

I know. I would say my mission was pretty screwed too.

Sheppard shakes his head.

SHEPPARD

Your mission happened more than forty years ago my time and then again, won't happen for another hundred and forty seven years from now.

EXT PT FIELD - NOON

Q-Tip barely edges out a wiry runner at the finish line. Other runners are close behind trying to out hustle each other to the finish, then collapsing one-by-one on the dirt.

EXT STREAM - DAY

Sheppard and Sweeny are distracted as forty to fifty fully clothed and naked men jump into the water splashing with horseplay.

Down stream, Taylor keeps his distance from the raucous only wading out to his knees.

INT SNODGRASS CABIN - NIGHT

Taylor is asleep on a mat in the corner. Snodgrass pours Sheppard a beer, who is looking at five or six sketches Taylor has drawn.

Sheppard pauses, a little surprised. The last sketch is a charcoal portrait of himself.

SNODGRASS

You will be pleased to know sir; your ship will be completed in one week. You might want to start thinking about food and supplies.

SHEPPARD

Three months here, and I still can't figure out what has happened to me and my men.

Snodgrass, not wanting to hear anymore about this unusual event, has more pressing concerns on his mind.

SNODGRASS

What ever happens captain, do me one favor.

Sheppard keys into his seriousness.

SHEPPARD

Yeah sure. What is it Marion?

SNODGRASS

Take Taylor with you and promise me you will watch out for him. Teach him. He is different from the others. His personality is more along the lines of arts and crafts. As you can see God has decided to make him frail.

Snodgrass looks over at the sleeping Taylor.

SNODGRASS

Since I took him in three years ago I have tried. But, I fear he will never make a good mariner. Soon you will raise sail and I am afraid I won't be seeing him again.

SHEPPARD

Why not?

SNODGRASS

Because I am dying.

EXT FIRING RANGE - DAY

Sheppard carries two muskets with Taylor in tow.

TAYLOR

Are you going to teach me to shoot?

Sheppard looks back at the young man thinking this might be hopeless.

SHEPPARD

No, I am going to shoot and you are going to learn how to load and clean my rifles.

Disappointed, Taylor stops a second, has to run to catch up.

Sheppard aims a rifle and pulls the trigger. Taylor holds his ears as Sheppard fires.

The ball strikes a wooden silhouette center chest. Taylor hands him the other loaded rifle.

Snodgrass watches, from a distance, pleased.

EXT FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

Sarge standing on the sidelines coaches a team of muddy shirtless players. He grabs a gruff Sweaty Player by the back of the neck and holds him still as he speaks slowly and clearly into a bloody ear.

SARGE

Left five two. Left five two.

The Sweaty Player, snarling nods his understanding and Sarge pushes him onto the field. He sprints to the middle of the field where ten thrashed players wait for the next play.

We SEE the situation clearly now. A makeshift football field, quite real looking with sidelines and yard markers appearing very accurate, outlined in white chalk.

On the other side of the field Teacher coaches his team of ruffians all wearing shirts. Shirts verses skins.

Taylor sits Indian style on the roof of a shed being used as a scoreboard. Painted on the side, two team names. "BEARS" and "LIONS". The score shows Lions 36 positioned over Bears 33. He is fascinated and excited as the tension builds for most likely the last two plays of the game.

The Sweaty Player at full sprint skids into the huddle, stopped only by Tee's big forearm.

FRENCHY, the quarterback repeats the play number in the huddle.

FRENCHY

Okay mates we need this. Five two left.

He makes sure not to look at Tee who will be carrying the football through the number 2 slot of the front line.

FRENCHY

On two, on two.

They break the huddle and line up in crude fashion. Teachers ill-tempered Lions read the offense and position themselves accordingly.

Toll in the position of linebacker snarls at Frenchy and watches Tee carefully.

Teacher spots weakness in his defense and tries to yell in a defense change. Too late. The ball is hiked and Tee rumbles left dragging bodies before falling 25 yards short of the goal line.

Zim, a referee, sees a Lion player biting a mutton-chopped Bears player's ear in the pile up.

ZIM

Personal foul. Biting. Fifteen Yards.

He moves the football 15 yards towards the goal line. Teacher throws his play chart down in frustration. Sarge sends in the next play. Sheppard looks at the time clock.

SHEPPARRD

(yelling)

Last play! Last play!

Sarge changes the play call. Holds up eight fingers, flashing them twice. Beaten and battered Frenchy acknowledges the play call. He crouches in the huddle this time looking at Tee.

FRENCHY

Eight, eight. On three. Last play.

Each man lines up digging in for the final violent confrontation. Koll pushes a confused defenseman into place and stands ready for Tee. The ball is hiked.

A furious knot of formless, shapeless bodies crash into each other. Frenchy pitches Tee the ball. Tee runs right, cradling the ball like a sack of gold. Koll knocks two human lumps down trying to block him out. He reaches Tee with brutal impact. The football flies forward, thrown at the last second. Frenchy snatches it out of the air in the end zone for a touchdown. Zim throws up his arms.

ZIM

Touch down! Bears win!

The Bears' sidelines explodes running out onto the field. Koll shaking his head reaches out to help Tee up who is still on the ground. All we SEE is a face of mud, dried blood and grinning white teeth as Tee is pull to his feet.

On top of the shed Taylor flips down the final score: "39-36". Sarge shakes Teacher's hand in the middle of the field.

SARGE
(with glee)
Chicago Bears.

EXT USS AVENGER - DAY

DRY DOCK. Sheppard admires the malevolent sailing ship, brutish and bold, with a stock-pile of cannons. The crew work hard as finishing touches take place.

INT SNODGRASS CABIN - DAY

Sheppard plops down the final payment of gold coin on a table where Snodgrass is reading. At a smaller table Taylor looks up from a charcoal sketch. We can SEE the portrait, a likeness of Sheppard.

SHEPPARD
Contract complete. Payment in full.

EXT FIRING RANGE - DAY

Taylor aims the rifle at a close target and fires. He is pleased as the bullet strikes the silhouette's shoulder. Sheppard hands him a second musket. Looking pass the smudges of gunpowder, he studies Taylor's smooth young face and small hands.

SHEPPARD
How old are you?

Taylor still aiming.

TAYLOR
I am twenty-two and a half sir.

SHEPPARD
Where is your family?

TAYLOR
Both my parents are gone. My pa died in a cabin fire trying to save my ma. I was sixteen.

Taylor fires, this time hitting the other shoulder. He is quite pleased. Sheppard isn't.

SHEPPARD
(still reloading)

Not bad, not bad. Now move back to fifty feet. Taylor looks back at a fifty foot marker more than twice the distance away. Hesitates. Sheppard takes the empty musket, hands him the loaded one.

Sheppard motions and moves to the marker. Head down, Taylor follows.

SHEPPARD
Now concentrate.

Taylor aims the rifle.

SHEPPARD
Now find the front sight. Put the front sight in the middle of the V in the rear sight. Don't focus on the rear sight, only the front.

Taylor makes a slight adjustment.

SHEPPARD
Do you have it?

The front sight sways all around until we SEE a much smaller silhouette.

SHEPPARD (o.s.)
Take a breath and slowly let it out. Steady. Steady. Focus on the front sight.

The sight steadies on the target.

SHEPPARD
Now slowly squeeze the trigger.

Taylor fires, and loses sight of the target. The smoke clears and we SEE a hole in the middle of the silhouette's groin.

SHEPPARD
Nice shot.

They both laugh.

EXT USS AVENGER - DAY

Sheppard breaks a bottle of wine on the hull of the ship. At the same time Snodgrass chops a rope with a machete. A chain reaction - as beams splinter and boards crack the ship rolls sideways and slides down a ramp into the water.

EXT USS AVENGER - DAY

Sarge salutes Sheppard as he comes aboard.

SARGE
Welcome aboard sir.

Sheppard returns the salute. On deck the entire crew cheers.

EXT HARBOR AND SHIPS - DAWN

A hard rain is falling. Hundreds of sailors, workers and merchants work feverishly loading supplies trying to keep them dry.

EXT THE MAN OF WAR - CLEAVER - DAY

Dudley in a meticulously tailored uniform stands on the prow amongst the activity. A Guardian holds a large umbrella over his head. He stares down at someone on deck. A long face: pale complexion with dark hair and eyes. This is FIRST LIEUTENANT DAGGART 25, and he is dynamically shouting orders.

An OBSERVER, one of the King's men, standing on the dock, ignores the drenching rain. He looks up, makes eye contact. Dudley smiles in appreciation for being given a second chance. No response, the man turns and disappears in the crowd.

EXT CLEAVER - DAY

Dudley and Daggart leaning on a rail watch ropes fore and aft being cast off. A large fleet of ships slowly move out into the harbor. Families young and old wave and shout to their loved ones. A boy holds his dog's paw and waves it.

Some of the crew wave back.

EXT SHIP AT SEA - COAST OF ENGLAND - DAY

We SEE fifty or more sailing ship of all sizes and shapes. It is still raining hard and the sea is rough. Twenty or more larger VESSELS are fully complimented warships, transporting militia and escorting pioneers to America.

The CLEAVER crew, in a wide range of uniforms, watch the English mainland disappear.

DAGGART
Westward ho admiral. May God watch over
and protect us.

Dudley stares out to sea.

DUDLEY
Lieutenant, God does not want witness.

EXT STREAM - DAY

Sheppard moves along a wooded forest. We HEAR the serene sound of water rushing over rocks. The CAMERA moves slowly along the stream, patches of intermittent sunlight, are evidence of the day; a warm afternoon. Now a grotto is in sight, under the waterfalls a youngish naked body.

Sheppard, standing near a fallen tree, watches. He is privy to a private moment—it is a firm body with young breasts and short cropped blonde hair. A beat. The falls spray her, top-to-bottom, so we can't see her face. Just glimpses.

FROM BEHIND SHEPPARD.

She turns. We get a good look, it's Taylor.

And for some reason she crouches down and covers up. A noise or possibly a sense of being watched.

BACK TO THE TREE.

Sheppard is gone.

EXT GULF OF NEW ORLEANS - BLUE SEAS - DAY

Twenty-nine American ships sail in formation anticipating the British attack. On board the USS CHARGER, the only Man-of-War class ship, ADMARAL FORTIER, early 60's, leads the way. Six or seven schooners follow including the LIBERTY and the USS Avenger and scattered about, numerous smaller GUN BOATS.

SHEPPARD AND OTHERS, stand on the deck of the USS Avenger searching the horizon, waiting. Half way up the main mast, Teacher spots a speck floating in the distance.

TEACHER
(yelling down)
I've got visual.
(pointing)
Two o'clock.

All eyes shift. A few crew men run starboard for a better view. The men become quiet as they realize the unavoidable battle. Taylor has to elbow his way to the front of the crowd, his mouth drops.

We SEE small dots become giant ships. They keep appearing, more than fifty of them, spreading across the horizon and heading straight for us. The number and awesome size of ships is frightening.

The Charger turns sharply into the wind, the others follow tacking full sails ahead. With colors flying high on their masts, there is no doubt. The British are coming

EXT THE USS AVENGER

Teacher climbs down the mast, joins Sheppard and Sarge.

TEACHER

Well we've found what we were looking for. And am afraid things are going to get ugly. Very ugly.

Sheppard shoots Sarge a worried look.

SHEPPARD

Sarge, break out the equipment. We can't stop them, but we can do a lot of damage.

EXT THE LIBERTY

Nicholson is standing behind the helm, coordinating and preparing for battle. Using a spyglass he sees a heavy, black oak, Man-of-War flying a large flag with BLACK BATTLE AXES on the main mast.

EXT THE CLEAVER - REVERSE ANGLE

Dudley, standing on the main-deck, lowers and closes his brass telescope, eyes intense with revenge. He gives the orders.

DUDLEY

Prepare the short sails.

BACK ON THE LIBERTY

NICHOLSON

(yelling)

Fighting sails!

The crew starts to scramble. Six BOATSWAIN struggle up the mizzen-mast, dropping all the rear sails. Others hang from ropes securing the top-sail on the fore-mast.

NICHOLSON

Swabbers sand the decks! Gunners sponge your ordnance.

YOUNG BOYS throw sand on the decks that may become slick with blood. On the gun-decks, ports pop open and MEN pull ropes on pulleys, inching cannon barrels forward. Cannon balls are stacked like small pyramids on brass monkeys.

EXT THE USS AVENGER

Equipped for a prolonged battle, Sheppard and team take up strategic positions.

Nacho opens a long case, revealing a sniper rifle. He barricades himself behind a gun-wall on the bow. Behind some crates, Sarge loads six into a shotgun, slings it over his shoulder and picks up a M-16 machinegun.

On the upper-deck, Zim tosses Teacher a spare frag grenade. He sets it next to two others.

Bump and Q-Tip carrying heavy machine guns, check on Sweeny and Jensen. They wait behind two stern-chase guns.

BUMP

You guys ready for the fireworks?

Sweeny racks a round into a .45 automatic, he has two of them.

SWEENY

I qualified as a sharp shooter, I'll be alright.

Jensen looks sea-sick, sitting against a wooden barrel. He holds his government issued revolver.

Bump gives Q-Tip a stupid look, nods towards the barrel.

Q-Tip

Guys, you might want to move this barrel.

On the opposite side We SEE the barrel is labeled GUNPOWDER. Sweeny breaks out into a, are you shitting me, laugh. Jensen can't help it; he shakes his head and cracks a smile -- then, very serious.

JENSEN

I hate boats.

EXT THE LIBERTY

A HUGE SPLASH of water, as a wave crashes into the bow. Nicholson holds the rail behind the helmsmen. His eyes transfixed on something. He seems unaware of things around him as men, seemingly in slow motion, run pass him.

He motions to the helmsmen, takes the steering wheel, and makes a minor coarse correction aiming at the black ship.

Nicholson stares ahead. The distance now allows him to see on deck; THREE BRITISH OFFICERS, in the middle Captain Dudley.

EXT THE USS AVENGER

The MAIN DECK is packed. Sheppard stands among the CREWMEN. Holding a musket Taylor approaches, stands close enough to touch Sheppard. He suddenly spots Taylor, grabs a thin arm.

SHEPPARD

GO BELOW! And stay there.

Taylor looks at Sheppard in surprise.

Sheppard softens.

SHEPPARD

Help out in sick bay.

Before Taylor can say anything, Teacher ushers him off the deck. Sheppard watches. Taylor looks back at Sheppard before ducking into a doorway. The look between them tells all.

THUNDEROUS BOOMS: The CAMERA snaps over to the Cleaver, striking the first blow, black smoke whooshing from its black bowels. A salvo of cannonballs and shot pepper the Liberty splintering wood, and snapping off one tackle but having little effect.

Sarge races up, grabs Sheppard.

SARGE
What's he doing?

SHEPPARD
Going after Dudley. Let's cover his six.

Sarge nods. Yells to Teacher at the helm.

SARGE
Cover Nicholson.

Teacher nods. Spins the wheel. We SEE the USS Avenger respond and close in on the Liberty.

EXT THE LIBERTY - MAIN DECK

Nicholson, both hands on the rail, resolute. A low rumble of a dozen cannons fire on the Liberty. It's the British schooner H.M.S. DOVER, cutting across port. Cannonballs rain down, this time dropping a top-sail and rigging on two crew men.

NICHOLSON
All hands! Come about!

The ROAR of the wind snaps the canvas on the main-sails. The ship leans into the wind.

More BOOMS as the Cleaver fires another broadside. Some good luck, because the sudden turn saves the LIBERTY from an intense downpour of shot. Cannonballs punch holes in the sails and splash harmlessly in the sea.

The H.M.S. Dover exposes her side.

NICHOLSON
Gunnery crew, Fire!

A close range strafing of well aimed cannon hammers the H.M.S. Dover. The main-mast topples. A fire ignites, and races through the mid-decks rendering her impotent. Her crew members waste no time jumping ship.

THE FLAGSHIP USS CHARGER

Fortier unleashes on the schooner H.M.S. FAITHFUL cannonballs tearing apart the helm and half its gun crew. With the rudder line severed, the ship limps off.

EXT THE BRITISH FLAGSHIP - DAY

The CONFIDANT looms into view. It is a fifty-four gun dreadnought dwarfing the schooners and gun-boats surrounding it.

COMMODORE GREGORY, his Majesty's Navy to the core and MAJOR GENERAL SIR EDWARD PAKENHAM, late thirties grasp the rail of the main-deck.

PAKENHAM, the brother-in-law to The Duke of Wellington has spent his entire life in the military. Thoughtful and battle-hardened himself, he appreciates the strategies of the unfolding sea battle. But right now his main purpose is to be united with his troops.

The air is filled with distant BOOMS and MASSIVE EXPLOSIONS. A full naval battle is apparent as ships engage each other.

ON THE MIDDLE DECK

Crewmen load huge MORTARS, with thousand pound cannon balls.

GREGORY

Your orders, General?

PAKENHAM

Deal with this riff raff and get me to my troops.

GREGORY

Yes, General. By all means.

(to the steersmen)

Come about! Strike the sails.

The Confidant tacks into battle, cutting a deep, white wake. Dead ahead, the flagship USS Charger.

EXT THE USS AVENGER - MAIN DECK

Sheppard follows the Liberty passing the sinking H.M.S. Dover. They fire a salvo at a gun-boat sneaking up on the Liberty's flank. The boat explodes and breaks in half.

SHEPPARD

(to himself)

Damn, that was easy.

This action attracts the Cleaver's gunnery crew. There are BOOMS and cannonballs seek the USS Avenger.

SHEPPARD

Incoming!

The whistle of hot metal flies overhead. One incoming ball strikes the crate near Sarge, shattering it into a thousand pieces.

SARGE

Jesus Christ!

Pissed off, he pops up and fires a machinegun burst at crewmen reloading a twelve pound rear-chaser. One is struck by bullets and falls over the rail into the water.

EXT THE CONFIDANT

From the starboard side, two dozen cannon spew FLAMES and SMOKE in rapid succession. On the USS Charger, cannonballs rain down fragmenting and pulverizing everything in their path.

SHOUT AND CRIES of pain as crewmen lay scattered in the lower decks.

All around Fortier, EXPLOSIONS and FIRES break out from bow to stern.

ON THE CONFIDANT

Ten MORTARS angled at forty-five degrees light off in succession. Enormous iron balls ark into the air.

Admiral Fortier hears the DEEP RUMBLE of mortars. He stops shouting orders. Towers of water from mortar rounds stitch their way toward the ship.

There is a look of resignation on his face, as his eyes track the path of last mortar round.

FROM BEHIND THE ROUND we follow the ball down to the deck. The USS Charger EXPLODES in a TREMENDOUS FIRE BALL. Nothing remains but smoldering planks and floating debris.

EXT THE USS AVENGER

SHEPPARD AND SARGE see the USS Charger destroyed. Not much time to mourn, the Cleaver FIRES on the USS Avenger.

More accurate this time, cannon balls take out two starboard gun positions. Two CANNON BALLS smash completely through the ship, exiting the port side.

Zim is hit, falls back on his butt. Stunned, a large splinter of wood sticks out his right arm. Teacher see ZIM. Runs over, pulls out the wood, slaps a 4 x 4 pad over the wound. Wraps it.

TEACHER

It's only a flesh wound! Stay put!

Zim regains composure. Levels the heavy machine gun and FIRES A LONG BURST left handed. Two men on the Cleaver drop. Zim smiles at Teacher.

ZIM

Ambidextrous!

Teacher opens up. More men drop.

EXT THE LIBERTY

Starboard guns FIRE on the Cleaver. Cannon balls do their dirty work, forcing Dudley to take cover. Two BRITISH SCHOONERS start working their way toward the Liberty.

Nicholson spots them. Comes about, FIRES the port guns doing some damage, but not enough.

They all close in on the Liberty sensing vulnerability. Cannons now return fire as the two BRITISH SCHOONERS pass swiftly by.

On the Liberty two masts crash down. The stern is blown off. The Liberty is crippled and taking on water. A cannon port explodes mid ship. Panic strikes and men start jumping into the water.

EXT THE CLEAVER

Dudley stands on the bridge, enjoying the sight. Elliott stands with him. The ship hangs back. Mallory approaches Dudley.

MALLORY

Should we follow the others, sir?

Dudley checks the distance of the other ships. The Confidant is a mile ahead, the last ship in the fleet, half that.

DUDLEY

We are here to destroy the American's, aren't we lieutenant?

MALLORY

But sir, the Commodore's orders.

Dudley backhands Mallory across the face. Mallory staggers back, stunned. Dudley stares him down.

DUDLEY

Don't you ever question my decision.

(glaring)

If you are not willing to fight for the King, I will be happy to put you in the brig as a traitor.

MALLORY

It won't happen again, sir.

That settled, Dudley orders the Cleaver along side Nicholson's sinking ship.

ON THE LIBERTY

Nicholson sees the Cleaver's gunnery crew quickly reloading.

NICHOLSON
Abandon ship! Abandon ship!

Everyone begins jumping in. A moment later.

DUDLEY
Fire!

The Cleaver's cannon tear apart the Liberty. It quickly sinks. NICHOLSON AND CREW hang on to anything that floats. A capsized long boat supports the wounded, others tread water. Dudley looks over the gun-rail, signals his GUARDIANS.

DUDLEY
Kill every last one of them.

The GUARDIANS fire, trying to pick off NICHOLSON first. He dives underwater. We SEE trails of musket balls snaking through the water.

Dudley laughs at Nicholson's feeble attempt to elude him. He checks on the FLEET, now a mile away. Everyone's attention is on the turkey shoot.

The GUARDIANS finish reloading as Nicholson begins to surface. He has to take a breath. He is greeted with the sight of twenty men sighted in on him.

Dudley leaning over the rail, points.

DUDLEY
Kill him!

A DULL THUMP and A EXPLOSION rips apart half the GUARDIANS. The power of a launched M-203 grenade is surprising. Teacher surveys the damage and switches his weapon to automatic fire. SHEPPARD AND OTHERS send a storm of MACHINE GUN FIRE across the main-deck killing two dozen men instantly.

Dudley won't lose another ship. He aims his pistol at Sheppard. Instantly Sheppard opens up with a volley of machine gun fire. Dudley's chest is RIPPED APART by bullets. He looks down at his chest, surprised at the amount of holes. He looks at Sheppard and tumbles over the rail almost landing on Nicholson.

The crew of the Cleaver wisely lay down their weapons.

A STRONG HAND pulls dripping wet Nicholson on deck. Sheppard smiles. Nicholson looks over the rail at Dudley's floating body. Smiles back.

EXT ANDREW JACKSONS'S CAMP - NIGHT

Tired. Dirty. Sheppard and Nicholson ride up on horseback and dismount in front of a large tent. An armed GUARD recognizes Nicholson then looks at Sheppard in his unusual uniform.

GUARD

Whatda we have here?

SHEPPARD

Captain Steve Sheppard U.S. Special Forces. I have important information about a British attack.

Sheppard hands the Guard some paperwork. The Guard who can't read looks it over briefly, nods.

GUARD

Never heard of Special Forces.

The Guard reaches over to touch Sheppard's holstered .45 automatic.

GUARD

What kinda contraption is this here..

Sheppard shifts back, knocks the Guard's hand away, retaining the weapon. The Guard surprised and angered steps toward Sheppard.

Nicholson blocks his way.

NICHOLSON

(threatening)

I don't think you want to delay the Captain's message to the Major General any longer.

Unhappy, the Guard backs off and waves them through.

INT HEADQUARTERS - JACKSON'S TENT

Jackson sits at a table in the spacious tent. The ultimate commander, he looks up at his guests. Gaunt and hawk-faced, we SEE a knife scar on his cheek. Compliments of a British officer; when at age thirteen he refused to shine the officer's boots.

Jackson studies Sheppard's uniform slightly intrigued, sizing him up like someone from another world.

SHEPPARD

I am Captain Steve Sheppard U.S. Special Forces. A British armada has attacked the American fleet at Lake Borgne. Fifty ships, maybe more. Admiral Fortier was killed.

(disgusted)

Didn't stand a chance.

They have his complete attention, his intensity charismatic. Sheppard hands Jackson a dispatch.

SHEPPARD

A dispatch from the acting commander of
the American fleet.

Jackson reads the dispatch; the report stuns him. He sets it
down.

Sheppard gives his own report.

SHEPPARD

There were too many of them, sir. We
lost twenty schooners; some of the
smaller gunboats were able to scatter.
Admiral Fortier died when his ship took a
direct hit in its powder magazine.

Jackson stews. Balls up the report.

SHEPPARD

Something very serious is going on, sir.
Their numbers surprised us. Our fleet
fought well once we got going. But we
only slowed them down, sir.

Sheppard motions to Captain Nicholson.

SHEPPARD

Between our two ships we captured a Man-
of-War, sunk three schooners and crippled
their flagship.

JACKSON

Where was it headed?

SHEPPARD

New Orleans, sir.

Jackson looks over at Nicholson, then Sheppard.

JACKSON

Would you gentlemen care for a drink?
Scotch. Brandy.
(resolved)
I certainly need one.

SHEPPARD

No thank you, sir. We're fine.

Jackson's eyes wonder. More intrigue. He is looking at the 9mm.

JACKSON

In that case gentlemen, it looks like
I've got a lot of work ahead of me. I
thank you for you patriotism.

NICHOLSON

It would my privilege to place all of our men and resources at your service, sir.

Jackson stands up, stares down at the crumpled report.

JACKSON

Looks like we'll need every man who can hold a rifle, young and old if we're going to stop those bloody British.

EXT JACKSONS'S CAMP - DAY

Teacher pours Sarge two cups of hot coffee, dumps the rest over a campfire.

SARGE

Time to rouse the Cap'n.

Sarge heads off balancing the cups. Only a few men are moving around camp, guards and cooks.

TEACHER

Hey, let me know what happened with Jackson last night.

SARGE

(turning)
When I know, you'll know.

INT SHEPPARDS'S TENT - DAWN

Sarge brushes open the flap and steps in. Sitting up in the faint light is Sheppard.

SHEPPARD

Right on time.

Sarge kneels to hand him a cup.

SARGE

How'd it go last night?

SHEPPARD

Not good. Jackson looks stressed. He doesn't have enough men and they're spread out.

SARGE

Word around camp is he's already sent riders out to summons more troops.

SHEPPARD

From where?

SARGE

Tennessee, Kentucky, Georgia Louisiana, you name it. He's got the Choctaw

Indians who hate the British. Gave five-hundred blacks money and sixty acres.
(shaking head)
Even smugglers and pirates have been filtering in each day.

SHEPPARD
Pirates?

SARGE
Yep, Jackson cut a deal with Jean Lafitte. Gave him and his men amnesty if they joined fight.
(laughing)
Lafitte asks Jackson, 'can I still plunder Spanish ships?'

This gets a reaction from Sheppard.

SHEPPARD
What the hell have we got ourselves into Sargeant?

Teacher pokes his head in.

TEACHER
General Jackson requests our presence right away sir.

INT JACKSON'S TENT - DAY

Jackson stares out the tent flap stone-faced, turns around and we SEE Sheppard, Nicholson, Teacher and six American OFFICERS, one a MAJOR.

They gather around a map on a table. Jackson points to a spot on the outskirts of New Orleans.

JACKSON
Major, we're moving out to protect the city. We will declare martial law and lock down the city. I want you to enlist every able body and defend the city.

MAJOR
Yes, sir.

JACKSON
The British will not take New Orleans, I'll burn it to the ground first.

Teacher gives Sheppard a worried look. Sheppard reads him like a book. He leans over and whispers something in Sheppard's ear. It becomes vital they must change Jackson's mind.

SHEPPARD
(firm)

Excuse me General; I'm afraid that tactic won't work.
(looking at Teacher)
My military analyst has strong concerns.

A glare from Teacher. A harder glare from Jackson. He is about to chew Teacher up and spit him out, but he calms himself.

The OFFICER'S eyes are on Jackson and Sheppard. This is not how Jackson's command works.

JACKSON
What does your man have to say?

SHEPPARD
He sez, we're screwed.

From the look on Jackson's face, he clearly doesn't understand the slang. He looks at Teacher, slightly annoyed, but still patient.

JACKSON
Make yourself clear, man. No time to waste.

Teacher leans over the map.

Teacher
Sir, I have another idea.

EXT JACKSON'S CAMP - EVENING

Small campfires burn throughout the camp. Darkness has just settled in. Sheppard signals his heavily-armed assault team to saddle up and take lead. Jackson's men, a motley group of fifteen hundred, will follow and make the main assault.

Jackson is there to brief Sheppard's team. He points to a canal.

JACKSON
Along the canal, for about sixty yards,
there's a crossing. Leads into a field.
Take that to the woods and stay close to
the river.
(to Sheppard)
See you there.

They share a nod. Sheppard turns.

SHEPPARD
Move out!

Sheppard and his team head out toward the canal. Jackson and his men watch them disappear into the darkness.

Q-Tip takes point, then Nacho; followed by Sheppard and others. Sarge covers the rear. Teacher eases up alongside Sheppard.

TEACHER

(quietly)
I had to open my big mouth.

SHEPPARD
Glad you did. I'm no historian, but I do remember the Battle of New Orleans was not fought house-house.

TEACHER
Sure hope my plan works.
(chuckling)
American history was not my specialty.

EXT WOODS - NIGHT

Q-Tip moves quietly through the field, disappears in to the woods. Nacho signals the team to follow.

Deeper in the woods. Something; a SOUND. Q-Tip halts. Looks back and gives Nacho a sign. Carefully and quietly Schaffer joins Q-Tip.

SHEPPARD
Whatcha got?

Q-Tip
Probably a British outpost, thirty yards.

SHEPPARD
Go ahead, see what you can find out.

EXT BRITISH OUTPOST - NIGHT

The dark woods open up into brush on his right. Q-Tip crawls, his eyes staring intently into the darkness. He is swallowed up in thick growth and the SOUND of the rushing Mississippi.

A CRACK of a stick. Two sentries standing guard. A rifle leans against a tree as one turns his back to take a leak.

Q-Tip brings his silenced 9mm pistol to bear. Twenty yards; easy shot. POP. POP. The first sentry drops, dead. The second runs for his rifle. POP. POP. It's all over, very quickly.

Q-Tip moves quickly to the outpost. Examines the bodies, confirms no others. Q-Tip looks out over the field. His face drops in amazement.

EXT BRITISH CAMP - NIGHT

Hundreds of campfires and worst; thousands and thousands of British troops litter the countryside.

There is early dew and a stiff breeze. The night is going to turn cold. The REDCOATS huddle around large fires, cooking and eating.

Q-Tip motions to Nacho, four, five thousand British soldiers. A moment later, Sheppard and the team join Q-Tip. Watching.

Sheppard speaks quietly to Nacho.

SHEPPARD

Go back and tell General Jackson the British won't be sleeping on American soil tonight.

Nacho looks at Sheppard confused.

SHEPPARD

Just give him the message. He'll know what it means.

EXT BRITISH CAMP - NIGHT

Jackson stares at the camp, now seen to be even more relaxed, rifles stacked like tee-pees, men covered in horse blankets. The officers rest on cots in large tents shielded from the wind.

Cannon are attached to supply wagons. Their horses and live stock graze on hay in makeshift pens.

Jackson and his men sneak up carefully.

Sheppard signals Jackson his assault team is ready. They close in from different directions. For a long moment, nothing happens.

Jackson sees his men can't get any closer. He waves his hand.

JACKSON

Fire!

SUDDENLY. All hell breaks loose.

TREMENDOUS FIRE POWER. SHATTERS THE NIGHT.

Jackson's men fire at anything that moves. Then at things that don't. The BRITISH respond gallantly. There is no panic as men in various stages of dress grab their rifles and fight back.

Musket rounds SCREAM over head and kick up dirt all around. A BRITISH OFFICER runs through camp, marshalling his men. Rounds smash into the ground all around him.

Nacho picks him up in his telescope and drops him, dead.

Sheppard, Sarge fire and take cover. The volume of fire increases from both sides. The British response is remarkable.

They begin to gain the advantage, by sheer numbers.

Zim, Teacher, Bump and Q-Tip pour it on, firing, fast and furious, with long bursts of machinegun fire.

REDCOATS are every where. They are overrunning Jackson's men. Some Americans are so close they battle hand-to-hand, thrusting bayonets and swinging rifle butts.

Unexpected BOOMS turns heads toward the river.

Ten REDCOATS are blown off their feet.

Sheppard sees a small schooner coming around a bend.

SHEPPARD
Son-of-a-bitch, Nicholson!

EXT SCHOONER CAROLINA - NIGHT

We SEE Nicholson on the main-deck. Only twelve cannon and a small crew reload and prepare to fire grapeshot.

NICHOLSON
(yelling)
Haul 'em up boys. Train left. Fire!

THE TWELVE CANNON FIRE. Grapeshot sprays the red swam. Men go down in streams. Men scream in agony.

BRITISH CANNON FIRE at the Carolina. More cannon join in, firing. Shot rains down on the Carolina.

British and Americans are dropping like flies. Jackson orders a retreat.

Sheppard running low on ammo, signals his team. Slow, methodical retreat.

SHEPPARD
Zim, Bump cover!

EDGE OF THE WOODS

Jackson's men carry wounded and fire behind them. Jackson, one of the last, stumbles in to the woods. Scrambles behind a tree. Rounds tear up bark around him. He retreats deeper in the woods.

Some brave REDCOATS rush in after him. Zim pops up, fires a long burst. Heavy bullets take down five of them. The rest stop. Zim backs into the woods. Satisfied, he turns and sprints to catch up.

ABOARD THE CAROLINA

The land attack repelled, everyone fires at the Carolina. Nicholson takes cover from a hail storm of shot and cannon balls.

He loses his helmsman. Others are hit. Down stream, the ship runs aground. The crew jump ship and disappear in the dark.

BACK AT JACKSON'S CAMP

Men stumble into camp licking their wounds. Sheppard and team reload their equipment and packs.

SHEPPARD
Anyone see Nicholson?

Heads shake.

SARGE
No sign.

Sheppard makes a decision. Slams in a fresh clip into his machinegun.

SHEPPARD
We're going back.

The team look at each other. Nacho touches his shoulder.

NACHCO
Sir.

Sheppard locks eyes with Nacho.

SHEPPARD
What private?

Nacho motions to the edge of the woods. A tired Nicholson leads his men into camp.

INT SHEPPARD'S TENT - NIGHT

The tent flap opens and Taylor's head pokes through, fresh and clean faced. Sheppard dresses a small wound on his forearm.

Taylor slips in, balancing a tray of hot chow and drink. She sees Sheppard struggling to tie a knot with his one hand and teeth. She puts down the tray.

TAYLOR
Let me.

She squats, rests his arm on her knee, and pulls the knot tight. She smiles. Her hand continues to hold his arm.

SHEPPARD
Thanks. That should hold.

Taylor looks at him, uncomfortable. Sheppard breaks the ice.

SHEPPARD
I know what you're thinking.

Taylor flushes, red. Suddenly she is a charming and attractive young lady. Sheppard likes what he sees.

TAYLOR
(shyly)
What?
(cute)
What am I thinking?

Sheppard makes her suffer a bit.

SHEPPARD
You're thinking that if I get killed, who
will teach you how to shoot.

TAYLOR
(defensive)
I know how to shoot.

Taylor punches his bad shoulder. Sheppard feints pain at his
wound. She reacts, believing him.

TAYLOR
Ohhhh, I'm so sorry.

Sheppard takes her face in both hands.

SHEPPARD
Have you ever kissed a man?

Taylor lowers her eyes. She knows, he knows.

SHEPPARD
(smiling)
Looks like I've got more to teach you.

TAYLOR
(closing her eyes)
I'm a good student.

Sheppard leans over and kisses her full on the lips. They pause,
look into each others eyes. He kisses her again.

She opens her mouth and French kisses him back. Sheppard moves
his hand to her breast.

INT SHEPPARD'S TENT - DAWN

Sarge flips open the tent flap, sticks his big head in, holding
coffee.

SARGE
Cap'n, General Jackson requests your
presence.

Sheppard stirs. Rises. Taylor's head pops up from under the
blanket.

Sarge eyes almost pop out his head. He snaps upright, spilling
coffee, hardly able to believe what he just saw.

SARGE

Whooooa!
(walking away)
The modern Navy.

Sheppard and Taylor share a look. Then break out laughing. Sheppard pulls the covers over their heads.

EXT JACKSON'S TENT - DAWN

Teacher points to a map and Jackson studies the spot. They look up.

JACKSON

Good morning Captain. Corporal Powers has convinced me to retreat to this point.

Sheppard shoots Teacher a look. He shrugs sheepishly. Jackson points to the map. Sheppard leans over, nods.

SHEPPARD

Looks good to me, general. I trust him with my life.

This boost Jackson's confidence.

JACKSON

Settled! Tell my men to make preparations.

A MOMENT LATER

Sheppard and Teacher meet up with Sarge.

SHEPPARD

How did you convince him to pull back and fortify that line?

Teacher pulls out a twenty dollar bill. Hands it to Sarge.

TEACHER

Sarge, here's the twenty bucks I borrowed.

Sheppard shakes his head and laughs.

EXT VILLERE - BRITISH LAND FORCE CAMP - NIGHT

GENERAL PAKENHAM has finally caught up with his troops.

THE OFFICERS AROUND HIM bring him up to date. A young aggressive LIEUTENANT COLONEL begins. His name is WILLIAM THORNTON.

THORNTON

General, two nights ago the Americans launched a surprise attack by land and river. The men fought well and rallied

to repulse the attack. The Americans are uncoordinated and confused and we should attack without delay.

PAKENHAM

How many casualties did they suffer?

THORNTON

Sir, approximately two-hundred.

Pakenham nods very pleased.

PAKENHAM

And how did our lads do?

Thornton hesitates. MAJOR GENERAL SAMUEL GIBBS arrogant and alert takes this opportunity to voice his opinion.

GIBBS

We suffered two-hundred-seventy-seven casualties, including forty-six killed. Frankly General, our moral is a bit battered. I recommend we assemble our entire force before launching any attack.

Pakenham does the math. He is visibly stunned.

PAKENHAM

Thank you general. I will take your recommendation under advisement.

THORNTON

But General Pakenham, we can...

A sharp raise of the hand cuts him short.

INT SHEPPARD'S TENT - NIGHT

Sarge takes a swig of whisky from a jug. Offers Sheppard a drink. He shakes his head.

SARGE

Damn it's cold.

Sarge motions to a binder.

SARGE

What's that?

SHEPPARD

Taylor drew some sketches. Wanted me to have them.

Sarge picks it up.

SARGE

May I?

SHEPPARD

Sure. She is quite an artist.

Sarge looks surprised.

SARGE

She!! Taylor is a woman?

SHEPPARD

Well hell yeah, she's a woman. Why what did you think she was?

Sarge shrugs his shoulders and spreads his arms in apology. He's enjoying the moment.

SARGE

Hell I didn't know.

(thinking)

You know.

SHEPPARD

Know what?

SARGE

(gay voice)

Don't ask, don't tell.

Sheppard shoves Sarge hard knocking him and the jug over.

SHEPPARD

Get the hell outta my tent Banks.

Sarge rolls out the tent, laughing.

INT JACKSON'S TENT - NIGHT

Jackson looking even more thin-faced suffers from a cold, no sleep and dysentery. The THUNDEROUS SOUNDS of explosions from hundreds of British fireworks light up the sky.

An officer hands Jackson his hat and sword. A moment later they walk the battle line, now a formidable defensive work of packed dirt, cotton bale barricades and pickets.

A rocket whistles overhead and explodes with a thunderous clap. A YOUNG KENTUCKIAN, maybe eighteen cowers in the flash.

Jackson sees the young man. Another explosion, even closer.

YOUNG KENTUCKIAN

We're going to die.

JACKSON

Don't mind those rockets; they are toys
to amuse children.

Jackson grips him by the arm and forces him upright, hands him his squirrel gun. They lock eyes. Jackson smiles and winks. The young man takes a deep breath, steels himself. Smiles back.

Two of Lafitte's BARATARIANS crouching over a small fire, cooking beans laugh and mock the young man.

BARATARIAN
(thick French accent)
We're gonna die...

EXT NEW ORLEANS - CHALMETTE - PRE-DAWN

MAJOR PHILLIPS and one thousand REDCOATS quietly board THREE NAVY BOATS along the east bank in an attempt to cross the Mississippi. They launch in the dewy mist. Immediately, they have to fight the strong current. Against all their efforts the current carries them downstream.

Exhausted oarsmen lose ground, reaching the west bank a mile down river and way behind schedule.

SUPERIMPOSITION:
CHALMETTE BATTLEGROUND
January 8, 1815 6:00 am

EXT NEW ORLEANS - CHALMETTE - DAWN

Thick fog blankets the battlefield, a Cypress swamp on one side and the Mississippi on the other. The SOUND of men marching and equipment being hauled in the mist are heard.

The CAMERA moves forever past columns of red and white British uniforms, equipment and supplies. Some struggle pushing cannon and wagons wheels in ankle deep mud.

We SENSE thousands of troops are moving into tight formations for the main assault.

Stretched along the JACKSON LINE, five-hundred yards wide, THREE-THOUSAND MEN stand tense and ready. There is no conversation, as every man listens and imagines what he is not seeing.

EXT CHALMETTE BATTLEGROUND

From behind his battlements, Jackson watches a breeze slowly blow the fog away. We SEE the massive attack force. Thousands of British, TEN COLUMNS, each containing 400 REDCOATS, marching forward.

One hundred yards away, three more columns marching along the east bank of the Mississippi. Behind them three lines of reserves; one hundred across and five deep.

Another five hundred scurry in the BACKGROUND positioning artillery and carrying supplies.

The CAMERA moves along the front ranks; battle-harden veterans noted for their action under the Iron Duke of Wellington. Trained fighting machines staring the enemy down.

Pakenham, flanked by COLONEL BLEDSOE and a dozen senior officers, signalmen, and runners, uses a spyglass to scan the battlefield. Behind them flag holders, drummers and aides steadying the officer's horses wait.

At five hundred yards Pakenham signals his GENERALS, Gibbs, Keane and Lambert. Like toy soldiers the British columns stops.

Pakenham and Bledsoe enjoy the silence. He suspects any minute now the American artillery positions will be over run.

PAKENHAM
(to the Bledsoe)
Where is Major Phillips?

BLEDSOE
Major Phillips is a good man, I'm sure he
won't let you down, sir.

EXT MISSISSIPPI - WEST BANK - DAY

Phillips and REDCOATS move quickly along the bank, slowed by trees, thick brush, and briars. It is essential they overwhelm Jackson's artillery before the main assault moves out.

The CAMERA moves along the same bank, way ahead, we SEE the redcoat's mission.

NINE ARTILLARY POSITIONS, each contain twenty men, preparing eighteen pound cannon balls and grape-shot rounds.

EXT BACK ACROSS THE MISSISSIPPI

Pakenham can wait no longer. He signals the attack.

The SOUND of bagpipes and drums start up. We SEE regimental banners of the Royal North Fusiliers, the Old Fighting Third, the Royal Scottish Highlanders, the First and Fifth West India Regiments, and one thousand black soldiers from Jamaica and the Bahamas.

EXT CHALMETTE - DAY

Sheppard and Nicholson stare down across the field. Sarge and six-hundred others in a loose assembly wait behind them.

We SEE familiar faces of Sheppard's Special Forces and the two crews of the USS Avenger and the Liberty. Reserves to shore up any weak points or breaks in the Jackson line.

We SEE the British troops, thousands and thousands in tight formations marching across the field.

In the ditch facing them, standing four-deep, the Jackson line looks quite thin. The Americans are out numbered four-to-one.

PAKENHAM AND OTHER OFFICERS now ride powerful horses back and forth in front of the regiments. We see Pakenham rise up in his saddle, grim at the fact the artillery is still standing.

To his east Thornton heads a cavalry of fifty Green Dragoons, some carry regimental flags. All excellent horsemen. He spins his mount in tight circles HORSE HOOVES kicking up mud and clumps of grass. The others hold their mounts steady.

NICHOLSON

Damn Brits. They really think they are better than us.

SHEPPARD

Well they sure as hell out number us. Looks like a two-column main assault to our east. They'll try to scale the breastworks. Better send some men over to reinforce that position.

Nicholson motions to a large group of men. Koll and Tee lead them off.

SHEPPARD

He has something else up his sleeve.
(pointing)
See that column on the west bank. And the one on the wing? Why would he expose those men to our artillery.
(thinking)

Unless.

SHEPPARD

Damn! I've got to warn Jackson.

He motions Sarge.

SHEPPARD

Sarge, you're in charge. Stay together. Teacher, come with me on the double.

Sheppard and Teacher run toward Jackson.

SHEPPARD

What if they over run our artillery on the west bank and out flank us?

TEACHER

They could turn the cannon on us.
(concern)

They'll roll us up and we would be cut to pieces.

Sheppard spots Jackson atop a powerful and perfectly disciplined white horse. Holding his sword, he is an imposing American General.

Rockets whistle overhead, hissing and exploding; more attempts to unnerve Jackson's forces. The men hold steady.

JACKSON
(to his men)
They're only rockets! Keep your heads low and they don't part your hair.

SHEPPARD
General! Our artillery pieces can be outflanked and turn against our line.

JACKSON
It makes no difference now.

Sheppard looks at him disappointed.

JACKSON
It's too late.

Jackson looks across the field.

The inevitable has begun. Pakenham signals his artillery to attack.

PAKENHAM
Begin bombardment!

A TREMENDOUS EXPLOSION of fifty cannons all firing at once. The shot fly over the columns of men and fall short of Jackson's line.

Some of the balls skip across the sodden ground and plow into mud buttresses.

General Gibbs waves his main column forward. General Keane's regiment starts up the east bank. General Lambert's reserves and Dragoons under Thornton draw their sabers ready to throw their weight where ever needed.

JACKSON
I'll muster up some men to cross the river. They'll just have to hold out.
(to Sheppard)
Pleasure to have met you Captain Sheppard. Thanks for all your help.

Jackson spurs his horse, raises his saber. It is time for war.

JACKSON

Damn those British. I will smash them so
help me god!

Sheppard shakes his head and watches Jackson gallop toward his
lines.

EXT THE JACKSON LINE - DAY

Jackson reins in his horse front and center. He speaks loud and
clear trotting back and forth.

He gestures to the British in front of him. Now four hundred
yards away.

JACKSON

These are the King's best troops. Since
we kicked them off our land thirty years
ago they have manhandled the people of
France, Spain and now they're back on
American soil. They have razed
Washington, DC, chased our president from
the White House and raided our towns
without punishment.

Jackson sees the dread on his men's faces, but they
listen intently.

JACKSON

Today is a day of reckoning. I say we
stop these damn British right here, right
now. Make them bleed for every man,
woman and child they have harmed. Let
them know Americans won't tolerate this
impudence and we are here to stay.

British artillery fire again. A large explosion fifty yards away
doesn't even distract Jackson. He waves his sword.

JACKSON

Let's give it to them boys!

We HEAR cheers of men along the line as men raise their muskets
and swing their hats.

BEHIND THE JACKSON LINE

On a slope, Taylor, dressed like a nurse, watches the cannon
crews push in closer. The two battle fronts are awe inspiring,
only three hundred yards apart. She holds up her fingers as if
boxing in a painting. It fills the screen.

The drums beat louder and louder.

Through the spyglass, Pakenham gives one last look at the
artillery positions across the river. Still standing and aimed
at his army.

Pakenham and Bledsoe share a look, their faces grim.

PAKENHAM

We can't wait any longer for Phillips.
Signal full advance.

The SOUND as snare drums beat faster and bagpipes wail.

Two center columns shift east, still maintaining tight formation.

Sheppard and Nicholson watch the maneuver.

SHEPPARD

Take your men and try to cross the river.
Reinforce the artillery.

Taylor spots Sheppard and his men sprinting toward the thin, eastern line. Nicholson and his crew race west to the river.

At two hundred yards General Gibbs orders his main force into full attack. The tempo of drums increases and the troops begin to quickstep.

General Lambert's reserves continue to throw their weight east. General Keane continues advancing along the bank.

Pakenham spots a serious problem when men in front start running to the back. He is infuriated. He lashes out at Bledsoe.

PAKENHAM

Colonel! What in god's name are those men doing?

BLED SOE

It appears they have forgotten their scaling ladders, sir.

Their heads turn toward the American battery as THUNDEROUS EXPLOSIONS AND CANNON SHOT fill the air. The Americans have struck first.

Rounds begin to land on Keane's regiment. A few of his men are blown apart.

EXT MISSISSIPPI - WEST BANK - DAY

Phillips rushes to the SOUND of cannon fire, his men behind him. The American cannon open fire again.

ON THE BATTLEFIELD

More of Keane's men are blown apart. At a steady march men shift to fill the gaps.

The British army draws closer. The CAMERA moves along the faces of Jackson and his men. He is angry Americans will be dying.

Sheppard, Sarge, and others join up with Koll and Tee behind the pickets. All watch motionless.

SHEPPARD

(in awe)

I got to hand it to them they are disciplined sons-of-bitches.

Sarge racks his shotgun.

SARGE

There are more of them than we have bullets.

SHEPPARD

Then make everyone count, cause here they come.

The SOUND of clamor, marching boots and equipment clanging intensifies. Gibbs on horseback follows his columns at double time relentlessly advancing.

The main attack is in musket range. The first six columns SUDDENLY stop. British soldiers duck into three tiers; muskets aimed from prone, kneeling and standing positions.

Gibbs raises his sword. Swings it down.

GIBBS

Shoot!

Instantly, the British fire. Thousands of musketballs pepper the barricades. Only one man, struck in the shoulder, cries out.

Plumes of smoke cloud Gibbs and his men.

Pakenham turns his attention to General Keane's progress. The cannon have decimated over a hundred British troops.

Jackson's men having survived the first barrage watch the REDCOATS reload.

Two reserve columns swing east, as the front two charge the American flank. The British cavalry led by Thornton, backing up the reserves, wait for the line to buckle.

The second barrage pours in dropping three more Americans; one, grazed in the head by a ricochet, stands back up.

Jackson stands motionless for all to see. Although everyman is anxious even Sheppard, he waits.

JACKSON

Steady boys. Hold your fire. Hold your fire. Take aim.

Sheppard looks at the charging troops. Looks down the line.

Three thousand soldiers, having leveled their muskets, squirrel guns and automatic weapons, fingers pressed against triggers, wait.

Jackson lingers an unbearably long beat.

JACKSON

Fire!

A murderous VOLLY of musketballs tear the front ranks to bits. Many REDCOATS fall all across the field. The ranks falter, but men keep advancing, filling in holes and stepping over their fallen comrades.

Funnels of white clouds blind both armies as the sunlight plays tricks with the billowing smoke.

Marksmen grab loaded rifles from behind, others begin to reload.

Sheppard takes aim on ghostly shapes picking them off one-by-one. Grabs his last clip, slaps it in.

SHEPPARD

Reloading!

SARGE AND BUMP see a British officer take aim on Sheppard. They both fire, Sarge first by a half-second.

The shocked officer is ripped apart by 12 gauge buckshot and MP-5 bullets.

The British line continues to the ditch. American firepower sweeps the center columns. The 44th is nearly decimated. A banner falls and is trampled.

Sheppard and TEAM fire on targets of opportunity. Sheppard dumps his weapon.

SHEPPARD

I'm out.

Sarge tosses him his M-203. Racks his shotgun with his other hand.

By now sporadic fire is being exchanged from both sides.

ACROSS THE MISSISSIPPI

Major Phillips makes a run on the artillery positions. CAPTAIN PATTERSON, 40, signals his sharpshooters to fire. Turns back to his gunnery crews.

PATTERSON

Shoot low boys. Shoot low. Rake 'em!

All nine cannon THUNDER. Grapeshot bombards Keane's men.

Phillips and REDCOATS storm the artillery emplacements.
Patterson turns half his cannon toward the attackers.

PATTERSON

Load and be ready boys!

Pakenham watches the Major's assault. He looks over to see
Colonel Bledsoe smiling.

SMACK! Bledsoe is blown off his horse. A 50 cal. bullet hole in
his chest. Pakenham spurs his horse, races forward.

Nacho lowers his scope, looks for another officer.

The 44th Starts to bunch up at the ditch. PANIC and CONFUSION
erupts as there are no ladders. A VOLLEY of musket fire fuels
the CHAOS. SCREAMS of PAIN and YELLS from wounded are HEARD.

Keane orders full scale attack on the west flank. His men trot
to the ditch. Ladders are lifted and men British militia swarm
over them. MUSKET FIRE picks off many of them.

The musket firing SUDDENLY increases from behind the Jackson
line.

Nicholson and his men are firing. Drop several more British.
KEANE encourages his troops. Riding amongst them.

The swarm continues, to the barricades. British rush the front
line.

Nicholson leads, pulls his pistols, shoots the first man over.
Dodges a bayonet, cracks that soldier in the head with the empty
pistol. Shoots and drops another.

Frenchy shoots a soldier, charging Nicholson from behind.
Nicholson's men fill the gaps shooting point blank and fighting
like possessed.

Keane is struck in the gut. Rolls off his horse.

ACROSS THE RIVER

Phillip's REDCOATS overrun the first two artillery batteries.

Patterson sees them coming.

PATTERSON

Fall back boys! Spike the guns!

Crouching soldiers retreat. The last soldier from each
emplacement lights a trail of gunpowder leading to each cannon.
British muskets continue firing.

Patterson is wounded in the shoulder, makes it to the last emplacement.

SUDDENLY, the EXPLOSIONS cause REDCOATS to hit the dirt. They rise and continue the rush.

PATTERSON
Commence firing boys! Make 'em count!

Cannons fire but can't reload and fire fast enough. Patterson orders full retreat.

THE EAST FLANK

The east flank is over run. British troops start pouring in. Thornton's GREEN DRAGOON cavalry storms right in, sabers flashing. Some dismount slashing and skewering everything in their path.

Gibbs rides forward to rally his troops.

Sheppard, Sarge, Teacher, Q-Tip fire like madmen.

A TREMENDOUS BARRAGE of bullets temporarily seals the hole. The British who made it though fight POINT BLANK and HAND-TO-HAND.

Koll picks up a REDCOAT and throws him on a pointed picket. Tee swings a chain around another's neck and yanks.

Two DRAGOONS rush Tee. He tackles the first. Koll throws a knife, kills the other.

The assault troops falter and back off confused at how quickly their comrades were mowed down.

ON THE SLOPE

Taylor loses sight of Sheppard and his TEAM, their black uniforms disappearing in the smoke and dust. She sprints toward the battle.

Sheppard fires his last M-203 round killing a DRAGOON. He throws the weapon at two riders bearing down on him.

Sheppard dives to the ground in front of the horse. The first rider slashes and misses as the horse instinctively leaps.

Sheppard is easy prey for the second rider who aims his sword. Sarge dispatches him with a BLAST from his shotgun.

Sheppard thanks him with a quick nod. Sarge holds up two fingers.

SARGE
That's twice!

The first rider wheels his mount and charges. Sheppard drops him with his 9mm sidearm.

SUDDENLY a hell bent on killing, Thornton thrust his saber through Sheppard's arm. Sheppard drops to a knee and shoots him in the head.

Sarge runs to his side, it looks bad. He smiles, only a flesh wound through the bicep. He pulls the blade out.

Gibbs signals for more troops. A reserve column moves in front.

SHEPPARD

Here comes some more!

A wave of British advance, shooting at the scattered Americans.

Sheppard, Sarge, Teacher and Q-Tip take cover. MUSKETBALLS whiz by, thump into dirt mounds, and splinter wood everywhere. Two American's drop.

Sheppard and OTHERS return fire running low on ammunition. Nacho picks off a British officer, then another.

The troops reach the barricades. Slowed only by stepping over bodies.

Zim, Bump, Sweeny and Jean Lafitte, surrounded by BARATARIANS, who have been hidden in the swamp SUDDENLY fire on the BRITISH FLANK.

Zim fires the heavy machinegun in arcs. Teacher and Q-Tip fire until they run out of ammo. Bump rolls from behind a tree firing. Sweeny sticks out his sidearm and fires into the crowd. They all fire as fast as they can.

A bullet hits Gibbs. He is killed. The entire British main force, battered, falters throwing the British off balance.

The tide turns and Jackson takes advantage. He climbs down, encouraged.

JACKSON

Keep shooting boys

Jackson's men cheer, their muskets firing faster than ever, beat back the British.

ALONG THE BRITISH LINE

Fighting has slowed. Keane is carried off in a stretcher, severely wounded.

Pakenham watches as REDCOATS retreat stumbling over dead and wounded. He activates his last column.

Pakenham calls up a RUNNER.

PAKENHAM

Order General Lambert to press the attack.

RUNNER

Yes, sir!

The runner races to the front lines past retreating troops, finds Lambert.

RUNNER

Major General Pakenham orders you to press the attack.

Lambert looks over the battlefield, littered with Britain's finest. Reluctantly, he gathers men. He signals Keane's officers his intent.

Pakenham takes lead of the column, ignoring personal safety. A YOUNG COLONEL rides up beside him.

YOUNG COLONEL

(surprised)

Sir, what are you doing?

PAKENHAM

I'm taking over.

Snare drums CRACK, igniting new spirit amongst the battered infantry. Seeing no one but General Jackson, Pakenham draws his saber, signals the advance.

Keane's men, quick step across the field diagonally to the center. Men, who were retreating, see Pakenham. They collect themselves and join the rows of infantry.

The Americans finish reloading and wait. No one is cheering now.

That is because we SEE what they see; eight hundred REDCOATS advancing toward them.

Jackson is joined by Sheppard, Sarge, Teacher and others. They are holding muskets now.

SHEPPARD

What the hell is he doing?

JACKSON

He's doing what I would do. He's going to settle this damn war, once and for all.

Pakenham, grim faced raises his saber, BARKS his final orders.

At two hundred yards the entire British line, with Pakenham in the lead, charge, BLASTING at the center barricade.

JACKSON

Okay boys, let's show them who we are.
Fire!

The Americans return fire. Sheppard and others open up.

The front rows of British, at least one hundred of them, fall. A FLOOD of REDCOATS rush over the casualties.

Pakenham takes a grazing shot and his horse is cut down. He rolls to his feet holding his arm.

Reinforcements, pushing cannons into range, move up now that the American battery has been overrun. Nacho picks a few off.

An officer races to Pakenham. Gives up his horse and helps him mount.

Across the field, Keene's men are being cut down unmercifully.

Jackson watches Pakenham with no remorse. His losing effort, driving forward. A battle plan, gone terribly wrong.

JACKSON
Keep firing boys!
(watching Pakenham)
Keep firing! Stop every last one of
them.

The Americans keep shooting and REDCOATS are dropping.

Pakenham bears down. He is shot in the leg and slumps. Rises. Another SHOT and his saber goes flying. Finally a SHOT to the chest and he falls to the ground dead.

Sheppard is torn, stops firing. Watches transfixed, with grim admiration.

The advance continues, pitiful and haphazard. The American riflemen spray the British, infantry dropping like flies.

On the frontline, a BEARDED RIFLEMAN is disgusted at the senseless killing.

BEARDED RIFLEMAN
Why don't they stop!

The attack falters as bodies pile up. Confused men only yards from the Jackson line continue to advance.

Lambert, slightly wounded, exhausted, makes a decision. SIGNALS retreat.

It seems to take forever, but Redcoats start to retreat.

Jackson just watches in contempt. Sheppard sees this.

SHEPPARD

Stop firing! Cease fire!

The shooting stops, as Jackson's men watch a slow and orderly withdrawal.

EXT CHALMETTE - DAY

It's over. The British have retreated leaving their dead and wounded.

Jackson's militia wait behind their ramparts, still stunned over the savage and mindless killing.

Sheppard's team and some regular infantrymen move among the carnage; bodies, dropped weapons and banners.

SUDDENLY moans are HEARD. Arms and legs MOVE.

Jackson steps out. He looks over the battlefield for a long moment, his hatred waning. He turns to his men.

JACKSON

We have defied the odds and won! We are here to stay!

The young Kentuckian who we saw earlier carries an American flag to Jackson. He waves it with pride. The Americans cheer.

Taylor running sees Sheppard and Sarge standing close. She dashes between them and hugs them both. Sheppard lifts her off the ground, spins her. They kiss.

Sarge grins at Sheppard. The others see the new Taylor, and shake their heads in disbelief.

Men start filtering out to check for British survivors.

Suddenly Sheppard, Sarge, Taylor and OTHERS are surrounded familiar weary faces; including a bloodied Tee and battered Koll. Sheppard, worried, looks around for one more.

Out of the crowd Nicholson appears, tired, his crew in tow. He nods.

EXT CHALMETTE - DAY

Sheppard, arm around Taylor's waist and his TEAM walk toward the American defenses. Wounded are being attended. Bodies are lined up and covered.

Sarge reflects for a moment. Turns to Sheppard.

SARGE

Do you think we'll ever make it back home?

SHEPPARD

Sarge. I think we are home.

Taylor sees Jackson mounting his horse. She squares her fingers in a picture frame.

TAYLOR

Can you guys do me a favor?

SUPERIMPOSITION:

OCTOBER 8, 2002

EXT NEW ORLEANS - DIRT ROAD - DAY

A huge house stands on beautiful, peaceful farmland. The CAMERA follows a black, Ford Crown Victoria to the driveway.

A Navy Lieutenant, 46, wearing dress uniform; shirt and tie, exits and stretches after a long drive. He opens the trunk, removes a painting in a gold frame, and slides it under his arm.

We SEE 'R.L. SWEENEY' on his nametag.

He rings the door bell. Waits.

The front door opens. A woman, mid eighties, looks at him, smiles.

R.L. SWEENEY

Good morning madam, my name is Lieutenant Robert Sweeney. Are you Mrs. Margaret Sheppard?

MARGARET

Yes I am. May I help you?

He shows her the painting.

R.L. SWEENEY

I understand you donated this painting to the Jean Lafitte Historical Museum. Can you tell me anything about it?

We get a long, CLOSE LOOK at the painting; lifelike color as clear as a photograph.

GENERAL ANDREW JACKSON stands next to a captured British cannon, flanked by CAPTAIN SHEPPARD, CAPTAIN SWEENEY and the U.S. SPECIAL FORCES TEAM, holding muskets. The name TAYLOR signed in the lower right corner.

Margaret smiles and opens the door wider.

MARGARET

Come on in young man.

(sighing)

It's a long story.