

BEYOND THE THRALL

Written by

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EXT. BEACH CEMETERY - DAY

Hundreds of WHITE WOODEN CROSSES stand tall in the golden sands of a sunny beach.

The cemetery stretches for miles across the HAITIAN shore.

The waves CRASH onto the bank, one by one, edging closer and closer toward the crosses, devouring the sand.

A seagull lands on one of the crosses, turns its skinny body, and flies away into the sun.

EXT. FOREST TRAIL - DAY

The same sun soars high above the mountainous region, nourishing the peninsula with its golden rays, embalming the cliff in a glorious light.

MELVIN, mid 20s, walks through a thick trail of bushes, carrying two large backpacks, one hanging off his shoulder, the other in his arms.

The African-American youth pastor's thin body strains from the weight, but he carries on. His thin-rimmed glasses are foggy; his simple black shirt and jeans dirty and worn out.

Sweat saturates on his forehead as thorns prick into his clothes.

He stops for a moment, and looks around the trees. Finds the one he is looking for, and sets the bags down.

He unzips one of them, and takes out a couple of boxes of pills - Aspirin and pain-killers.

He stuffs his hand deep inside until he pulls out a box of bandages.

Suddenly, a strong, hard wind SHATTERS through the trees and WHEEZES past him, almost knocking him off his feet.

It's gone as soon as it appeared, leaving a trail of leaves fluttering in the air.

The leaves settle down in the perfect stillness of the forest.

Melvin's chest HEAVES up and down. His eyes flicker at the bushes and the trees and the tiny birds peeking out behind the branches.

He rolls up one of his trousers to reveal a long KNIFE strapped to his shin - but then reconsiders, and rolls it back down.

The pastor stuffs the bandages into his pocket, and zips up the bag.

He hides them in the bushes and makes sure they blend in nicely with the vegetation.

Melvin takes one more look at the tree, memorizes its position, and walks on up the trail.

EXT. EDGE OF CLIFF - DAY

Melvin walks through the bushes until he finds a weaving trail that stretches to the very edge of the cliff, standing tall above the mountainous region.

The bright blue ocean spreads out below, though the sound of the waves can not reach this high up.

The pastor's eyes fix on something straight ahead.

A gust of wind SHIMMERS past him, racing to the edge of the cliff...

Where he beholds the figure of a man sitting on top a large boulder, his back turned to the pastor.

The man appears to be a Haitian native, with long dreadlocks flowing past his shoulders, wearing a bright blue T-shirt with an image of drums. His wrists showcase colorful bracelets.

The 30-something man absorbs that very wind - it seeps into his body, giving him a glowing WHITE aura. He is the SPIRIT.

Melvin allows himself only one step at a time as he approaches this strange figure.

The glowing Spirit has a gentle smile on his face. He knows Melvin is there, but still does not turn around.

The pastor blinks heavily a few times, shakes his head, and just as he starts turning back to the forest...he stops mid-turn and faces up to the Spirit.

MELVIN

Who are you?

The Spirit turns around with a wide, toothy smile.

He THROWS Melvin a mango - which the pastor barely catches on time.

SPIRIT

Komon ou ye, pastor? Thanks for giving me the time of day! Not many do.

Melvin looks at the fruit in his hand, which seems just as unreal as the man sitting on the boulder.

The Spirit jumps down, landing on his bare feet.

SPIRIT (CONT'D)

I know, I know. I'm not 'real.' You Westerners really love this whole 'real or not real' deal.

MELVIN

..I saw you. Before. Earlier today. You...walked through the trees.

The Spirit smiles and looks up at the sky, closing his eyes and lifting his arms.

Another breeze passes through his body, REKINDLING the white radiance.

SPIRIT

I know why you're here, pastor. I may be confined to this beautiful little island, tragic as it is, but your thoughts carry a weight from a distant land. A very heavy weight.

Melvin's face darkens. He tosses the mango to the ground.

SPIRIT (CONT'D)

Oh it's alright. I'm not gonna blab on about the past. We must always look to the future, no? Every day brings new life.

The pastor allows himself a couple of steps forward. He glances at the nearby trees - the colorful birds are perched up in the branches, watching them.

MELVIN

Are you a ghost? Are you one of the "spirits" the people talk about?

The glowing figure performs a short little JIGGLE with his shoulders, and spins around.

SPIRIT

(bows)

At your service! Well not really, I like my freedom. But you can call me anything you like. I'm here to help.

Melvin backs away.

MELVIN

...or, I've been going a bit hard on the mango juice. Whatever, I ain't crazy enough to stand here and keep talking to some ghost. See ya.

The pastor turns to leave, and the Spirit quiets down.

The strange being looks down at the ocean, which shimmers quietly beneath the sun.

The coastal region in the distance reveals miles of erosion; the sea-front having eaten away extensive sections of the beach.

SPIRIT

Many would agree with you. This island has been through hell itself, pastor. Earthquakes, floods, diseases, starvation, corruption, death...and worse. It has lost too many sons, too many daughters, and brothers, and sisters, and mothers and fathers and wives and husbands. The people have been drowned, they have been buried - improperly I might add, and they have been forgotten by most of the world. Where oh where is Haiti's spirit, the people ask? Why has God above allowed all this to happen?

MELVIN

Whatever you are, you're not God.

(pause)

Right?

The Spirit's face is softer now, gentle, even somber.

SPIRIT

And where was God, pastor? Why did He not save the children from the floods?

(MORE)

SPIRIT (CONT'D)

Or from the collapsing roofs
falling on their heads? What sins
were they paying for?

MELVIN

You're talking to the wrong guy,
buddy. A crazy guy it seems.

SPIRIT

You're not crazy, pastor. In fact,
you're stronger than you give
yourself credit for. You'll see
what I mean.

MELVIN

What do you want from me?

SPIRIT

(gazing down)

I want you to take heart. I want
you to not get discouraged. I know
that you feel like you're hanging
from a cliff right now.

(smirks)

Hate is coming, pastor; and only
thing can rise above it.

With that, the Spirit steps back, stretches his arms high
above his head, and JUMPS off the cliff, leaving a glowing
trail in his wake.

Melvin stands there for a moment, then stumbles to the edge
and looks down.

He finds no trace of the Spirit...but he can now spot the
large TENT VILLAGE in the valley below, made up of hundreds
of make-shift tents dotting the rural landscape.

High above the mountains, the sun starts going down, turning
blood red...

INT. SMALL COURTROOM - DAY

Inside a small courtroom, an elderly Haitian JUDGE, wearing a
black robe, sits behind the elevated central desk, reading
over some documents.

Two security guards stand on opposite sides of the desk,
looking out at the benches, where half a dozen people are
sitting.

The judge KNOCKS his gavel against the sounding block.

JUDGE

Adjourned. A new hearing will be set four months from now.

The DEFENDANT and his lawyer, standing before the judge, smile and shake hands - when the courtroom doors BURST open.

A group of five Haitian REBELS (ELIZIER, IZARD, MICELO, WESTER, PATRICE) rush into the wooden room, fully armed in BULLET-PROOF VESTS, and point up their AK-47 ASSAULT RIFLES at the alarmed people on the benches.

One of the rebels - 30 year-old ELIZIER, in his mid 30s, tall, strong and fierce, in an army camouflage uniform, SHOOTS the security guards in one go as he marches toward the front desk.

ELIZIER

Run and you die!

He is the clear leader of this rebel gang.

The people SCREAM as the other four rebels round them up, and force them down on their hands and knees.

The rebels spread out a large banner across the wall. It's a BLACK flag with RED STRIPES running through diagonally- and the word JUSTISE SAN (BLOOD JUSTICE) written in red in the center.

DEFENDANT

What--

Elizier SHOOTS the confused man in the head as he walks by him. The lawyer plants his face to the ground and spreads his arms across in total surrender.

18 year-old MICELO, the youngest of the gang, keeps his AK-47 on the hostages, as the other gangsters ransack through their clothes, taking wallets and watches.

The young man is the only one that looks unsettled - his hands shaking, his gaze glued at the wooden floor.

One of the rebels next to him, the war-hardened, grey-haired IZARD, JABS him in the chest.

IZARD

On them! Keep it on them!

Micelo promptly steadies the barrel of his gun back on the hostages.

One other rebel - OMNI, also in his 30s, with a clean shaven bold head, walks into the courtroom, stopping at the entrance, keeping an eye on things outside.

Elizier looks at him, and Omni nods.

The rebel leader steps in front of the main desk, where the judge has not moved from his seat.

The black-robed government servant stares at the rebels through his glasses.

Elizier JUMPS up on the desk, and KICKS the judge right in the face, knocking him off his chair and onto the ground.

ELIZIER

Eat it, you dog, eat it!

The judge COUGHS UP blood, which drips down his robe.

JUDGE

You are terrorists. You will win nothing. They will find you and hang you all by your necks.

Elizier turns to the hostages on the benches.

ELIZIER

You are here to witness the final offer of peace we make to this corrupt government! They will stop lying to us, and they will stop ignoring us.

JUDGE

Peace?

Behind them, the lawyer next to the dead defendant seizes his chance and scurries over to the other hostages.

ELIZIER

Oh, this is peace. You do not know the hell that is coming. You will pay for everything that you have done. We are the real justice of the land, not you. We are Justise San.

Elizier KICKS the helpless judge in the stomach. Then he points out Micelo and motions him over.

ELIZIER (CONT'D)

Micelo! Learn.

Micelo looks up at his older cousin.

Elizier raises his gun at the judge, who is trying to squirm away.

JUDGE

No no please please wait I will
talk to people for you I'm sorry
please I will bring---

Elizier BLOWS the man's brains out without a second thought. Micelo looks away.

The hostages SCREAM and RUN to the back of the courtroom.

Omni, still at the door, gestures at the others.

Then he takes out a DVD disk from his pocket and places it on the ground next to the rebel's flag. The other gang-members rush out the courtroom one by one.

OMNI

Elizier! They're coming.

Elizier reloads his gun, taking his time as he walks toward the cowering hostages.

ELIZIER

We are not the enemy. But you need
to stop being their slaves. More
will die, until you wake up from
their spells.

He is the last rebel to walk out the room.

The judge's blood DRIPS down the short wooden steps, not far from the lifeless bodies of the two guards and the defendant.

INT. CONCERT STAGE - NIGHT

Colorful lights TWIRL around a concert stage as a crowd of young people CLAP their hands to a COUNTRY-ROCK beat, JUMPING up and down.

CHEERING explodes when JAMIE REDFORD, 30 years-old country rock star, clean-shaven with a boyish look for his age, dressed sharply in sleek black jeans, a hip red shirt and white shoes, RUSHES out on the stage.

His band, composed of one other guitarist, a drummer and a keyboard player, kick up the beat, as Jamie SMILES at the audience and tunes up his guitar.

JAMIE
Fort Wayne - you ready for this?

The crowd CHEER even louder.

JAMIE (CONT'D)
We gonna bring it all together
tonight. This is a special one, I
tell ya - I feel it. You with me?
C'mon!

Jamie JUMPS, and his guitar joins the flow.

INT. AIRPORT WAITING AREA - NIGHT

Twenty-eight year old PAM HUMME sits at an empty row of seats at an airport waiting area, a clear night sky spread out behind through the large windows.

An airplane is taking off in the distance, the flashing lights illuminating the runway.

Pam is scribbling something in a notebook - a DRAWING of a large metropolitan city, earphones plugged into her ears.

When Jamie, dressed in a simpler get-up of jeans and a grey buttoned-down shirt, walks into the waiting room area.

Jamie leans against a vending machine, holding a tall cup of coffee in his ring-studded hand.

He watches Pam silently for a couple of moments, as she continues her drawing. Then puts down his carry-on bag on the floor.

JAMIE
Hey Pam.

She glances up at him, and takes out her earphones.

PAM
Jamie.

JAMIE
I, um...I think you're gonna like
this. It's some French brew, it's
really good.

She forces a smile.

PAM
Nah...I'm dandy. But thanks.

JAMIE

Dang. You saying no to coffee?

She smiles.

Jamie picks up his bag and goes to sit down - seven seats away from her.

Pam tries to continue with her drawing, while he fiddles around with the cup.

Then she closes the notebook, and puts it away in her bag underneath the seat.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

You know, I was half thinking you weren't gonna show.

PAM

Why? We already talked about this. I thought we made it pretty clear--

JAMIE

Yeah, yeah, I know. But it was, you know, a couple of weeks ago, and people change their minds.

PAM

When have you ever known me to change my mind on something like this, Jamie?

JAMIE

I just wish we didn't have to...I mean, look, if this is something that you are forcing yourself to do just to prove to me that--

PAM

Don't finish that sentence. I'm gonna let you off with a warning right there.

Jamie looks back at the coffee. She looks out the window.

AIRPORT ANNOUNCER

DELTA AIR FLIGHT 42B MIAMI NOW BOARDING.

Pam pulls up her bag. Digs inside for a bit.

PAM

Make sure you put those forms they had us fill out in the carry-on bag. I don't even know who we're supposed to look for when we get there.

JAMIE

You heard what's happening, right? In the capital.

PAM

You mean the shooting?

JAMIE

Terrorist attacks day by day now. I don't know, Pam.

PAM

Meaning what?

JAMIE

I'm just saying. When we signed up for this five months ago, the stuff that's on the news now wasn't there. You know. Wasn't part of the package.

PAM

I'm still waiting for the point, Jamie. Are we going for a nice safe vacation, or are we going to help people in need? Or should I ask, what are you going for?

JAMIE

Don't be like that. I'm just saying. Half our team already quit and God knows who's even down there. We got one car and one contact, and if something goes wrong...it's a dangerous place, and we're not exactly trained by Rambo.

Pam picks up her bag, stands up, and swings it over her shoulder.

PAM

You don't have to come if you're afraid. No one will hold it against you.

JAMIE

It's one of the most dangerous places in the world, Pam! You know that I'm coming, and I'm ready for anything, but ain't nothing gonna change the fact that I was the one who signed us up for this. Before we...you know.

PAM

And nothing's gonna change the fact that I chose to do this. On my own.

JAMIE

Well. After you then.

Pam starts forward, not needing a second invitation. Jamie deliberates for a few moments, then follows.

EXT. HAITIAN COAST - DAY

The great Haitian sky expands over the coast, the dense forests embellishing the mountain range with a dark green hue.

There in the distance looms a deviously tall summit, the exposed grey rock at the top sticking out like a fist aimed at the heavens.

Thick, grey smoke PUFFS out from something at the top, which remains hidden behind the trees.

EXT. TENT VILLAGE - DAY

Melvin, carrying the heavy bookbags in his arms, and sweating profusely, walks down the sole dirt road, which weaves through the hundred or so make-shift tents set up around the coastal village.

Little children in torn clothing chase each other around the tents; women sit around logs attending to cooking fires, tossing peppers, carrots and garlic inside the pots.

The scrawny men, women and children Melvin walks by stand in stark contrast to the luscious mountain region in which the settlement lies in.

A narrow stream runs through the camp, providing villagers with their drinking water - and only washing space.

One villager stands next to the stream behind four big buckets of water, watching Melvin from the corner of his eye.

A number of tents are filled with elderly sick people, their MOANS passing by Melvin's ears as he finally reaches the large tent furthest down the road.

A Haitian man in his 50s, with a neatly trimmed goatee and a white shirt, comes out as he spots Melvin.

THIERRY is tall, lean, with a seasoned look - but the scars running across his face and arms serve as reminders of a troubled past.

He stands there cleaning his BLOODIED hands with a washing cloth.

Melvin lays the heavy bags at Thierry's feet and sits down.

MELVIN

I got those packaged soups that people just need to boil...some bread...bandages, aspirin, that syrup you talked about. Just basic stuff. I should have asked more people yesterday what they need, I probably forgot stuff.

THIERRY

The basics are fine. You are in great shape, Melvin, what sport you play?

MELVIN

B-ball. Basketball. Am kinda alright at it, suck at everything else. Now if you'll excuse me I need to die for a few minutes.

Melvin lies down on his back in the dirt road, basking in the sun.

THIERRY

Rest, yes, but do it in the shade, unless you're a fan of cancer. But I am grateful, my back was starting to really hate me going up and down this mountain so many times.

MELVIN

Moving the supplies into one of the tents never crossed your mind?

THIERRY

Oh, we learned our lesson on that one. The hard, lose-everything-we-had way.

A MOAN escapes from the large tent behind them.

The leader of this camp swings the washing cloth over his shoulder. He spots a couple of men (RENE, SYLVO) carrying heavy buckets of water from the river - and gestures to them.

THIERRY (CONT'D)

Sylvo! Make sure they are boiled fully this time! No more excuses! We can't afford any one else getting sick!

Sylvo stops, and nods at Thierry.

THIERRY (CONT'D)

Tell everyone we will have a discussion after the ceremony tonight. We will be moving soon.

SYLVO

Where?

THIERRY

The water first, Sylvo, take care of the water. And make sure you separate the buckets like we talked about.

Thierry turns and spreads open the tent where the moaning is coming from.

INT. SICK TENT - CONTINUOUS

Thierry steps inside the tent and regards GENE, an elderly man with a bandaged, bloody shoulder lying on a bed of blankets.

Thierry sits down next to him. He begins undressing the bloodied bandages, as Melvin tears open one of the fresh packages.

THIERRY

Gene, stay still. It hurts, I know, but you're a brave man.

The elderly man's eyes water up; he looks like he can't stand much more of the pain.

Thierry places a hand on his forehead.

GENE

Should have...should have let me
die...Thierry...others need
you...my friend..oh God...

Thierry dresses the deep red gash with a new bandage,
reassuring the man with a 'SHHH,' while Melvin looks on.

THIERRY

It will pass. You can trust me. We
will stop the infection - we have
the medicine now.

GENE

The women? Did he take them? Where
are they?

THIERRY

God is with us all, my friend. We
will help everyone. Rest now.
Sleep.

MELVIN

What women?

The village leader places another bandage on the wounded
man's shoulder. Melvin steps out of the tent.

EXT. TENT VILLAGE - CONTINUOUS

Thierry comes out - and hands Melvin a mango.

THIERRY

Oh go on, will you?

The younger man takes the fruit, and sits down on a log next
to the tent.

THIERRY (CONT'D)

We might be ok to move along soon.
We're really thinking about it now.

MELVIN

What? Really? Where?

THIERRY

We just need to plan our journey
and ration the supplies. We can't
stay here exposed much longer. I
should have known better. We
travelled too far from the city.

MELVIN

City didn't seem to be helping much.

THIERRY

Yes. We waited for so long, but all we got was lie after lie. Mountains of rubble remain, apartments they don't allow us back in - they can't even get the sick into hospitals. At least thieves hit us just once - other camps are raided night after night.

MELVIN

Were the people prepared to leave?

THIERRY

If we didn't we would have been hit by the diseases spreading through the other camps. But the truth is...the people here aren't trained to survive off the land. We are urban folk, we can't keep this up much longer.

Melvin looks around the tents. A few people are gathered around on their knees praying in front of a large, blue tent, which seems to be alight with candles inside.

Christian crosses and prayer beads hang from the poles.

MELVIN

But they're afraid of something else?

THIERRY

Old traditions do not die. Some for good...some for bad. God's mercy has reached many of us here, and for that I am thankful. 'Though outwardly we are wasting away, inwardly we are being renewed day by day.'

Melvin looks back at the praying villagers.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE ROAD - DAY

The six armed rebels, packed inside an old army jeep, drive on down a countryside road.

Omni sits in the driver's seat, Elizier watches out the window beside him.

The other rebels sit over stacks of rifles, guns, ammunition and bottles of alcohol at the back.

OMNI

They ain't coming this far out.
We're good.

ELIZIER

Oh they have people out here.
Plenty of idiots take their money.

The rebels pass by a lonely man on a bike. He tries to steer to the right of the road and distance himself away from them as much as he can.

Izard aims a handgun at him.

IZARD

Poof!

The villager wobbles and falls off his bike, TUMBLING onto the dirt road. The rebels have a LAUGH out of it - except for Micelo.

The youngest of the rebels is huddled at the back, as far away from the others as the space allows.

Elizier watches his cousin from the front-view mirror.

Omni glances down at the open map on his lap.

OMNI

We're near the coast.

Elizier looks out up the road which seems to go on endlessly ahead.

ELIZIER

Then it's time for step two. If
anyone has objections, now is the
time to let yourself out.

The others quiet down.

EXT. TENT VILLAGE - DAY

Melvin and Thierry walk side by side through the camp. The bottom half of their trousers are wet, the water bottles they are carrying freshly filled.

THIERRY

Be patient with it, Melvin. I do not know how it is in America, but here if you ask the government a question, you should not expect an answer. Or a truthful answer.

MELVIN

How long did you work for them?

THIERRY

Long enough to see them pocket money with my own eyes. Oh, I can tell you stories, my friend, many sad, angry stories. But anger isn't going to help us right now. We need the peace of the Lord.

Thierry looks up at the broken-down 1994 Subaru Legacy bumping down the dirt road toward them in the distance.

EXT. TENT VILLAGE - CONTINUOUS

Jamie and Pam get out of the rusty Subaru Legacy, and are quickly surrounded by curious villagers.

They waste no time popping open the trunk of the car, which along with the back seat is full of PACKAGES of food and medical supplies.

Pam is wearing a black T-shirt with the text "Dove Harvest Ministries" in red across the front.

The young missionaries hand out candy bars, cans of beans, snacks, juice boxes and packaged meals to the villagers, who welcome them with CHEERS.

Pam squats down to give the kids toy cars, balls, action figures, books, crayons and chocolate bars, which excite and paint glowing SMILES on their faces.

PAM

My gosh, they're so beautiful!

The young missionary's eyes water-up, as she hugs one of the skinny girls.

EXT. TENT VILLAGE - A BIT LATER

Jamie and Pam wash up at the river, inspecting the murky water.

JAMIE

Well, at least we found it. Charlie owes us a fiver.

PAM

But he's right about the sanitary problem. Not that I'm complaining, mind you.

The missionaries turn around to face Melvin and Thierry. The village elder shakes their hands warmly.

THIERRY

You must be the rest of the missionaries. Welcome - or as much of a welcome as we can give you. Jamie Redford, the rising country star, am I right?

JAMIE

Working on the "star" part, but yeah, we're here to help with what we can. This is Pam. She's...we're part of the group.

PAM

Where are the others? From Dove Harvest Ministries? Charlie said we had a group of eight...

Melvin takes off his glasses, wiping the sweat from his head.

MELVIN

They bailed. Or "postponed" if you'll have it. Apparently they will come back in the fall...when it's "less dangerous."

JAMIE

What? All of them? But I heard only half quit! Why did no one tell us?

PAM

I guess this makes you...Melvin? The pastor from Chicago?

MELVIN

Youth pastor. And yep. I came with the other volunteers, but when they realized how far the camp had moved from the capital and that we barely had a working phone...well, can't blame them actually, was the smart thing to do.

PAM

Why did you stay then?

MELVIN

I have my reasons. And they're probably landing in Miami just now. You guys must have missed the memo.

THIERRY

It is more than understandable if you want to drive back to Port-au-Prince. The supplies you brought us will be enormously helpful. It is true we are in a dangerous place, and must be moving soon. God willing, when you come back in the fall, maybe we can start rebuilding. I would so love to see that church our friend Charlie talked about. When we have found a permanent home, we would love to have you back.

PAM

Now wait a minute. We didn't come all the way down here to put our tails between our legs and go back. We'll help you move and with whatever else you need. And we're not taking "no" for an answer.

Jamie looks at Pam, who avoids returning the glance.

JAMIE

...that's right. I guess.

THIERRY

If you insist, my friends, we will be glad to share your company. But rest first. I know how hard it is driving through Haiti's roads.

The village elder glances back at the car, then smiles.

THIERRY (CONT'D)
And speaking of which..is that a
guitar in the front seat that I
see?

EXT. TENT VILLAGE - NIGHT

As night falls, the villagers have all gathered around in a giant circle, with Thierry a step in front of them.

A shrine of photos of other Haitians surrounded by candles and pictures of Catholic saints sits in the center, BURNING BRIGHT.

Thierry, wearing a fresh white shirt, raises his arms, and the people get down on their knees, closing their eyes, their hands together in prayer.

Thierry lifts his hands high at the sky.

Jamie, Pam and Melvin watch from the sidelines. Pam prays silently, Jamie stands there with eyes closed.

But Melvin gazes at the shrine, at the burning flames, mesmerized.

The darkness of the forests and the mountains around them closes in quietly, respectful of their sorrow.

THIERRY
(whispers)
Amen.

EXT. TENT VILLAGE - A BIT LATER

The villagers are digging into the food packages the Americans brought in, while Jamie and Pam get up on their car.

Jamie tunes up his guitar, while Pam gets up on the roof with her banjo.

She strings together a couple of short tunes, warming it up.

Thierry waves his arms, getting people's attention.

THIERRY
Welcome our friends from America!
They nourished us with food today,
and tonight they will entertain us
with music. A year ago, we lost
everything.
(MORE)

THIERRY (CONT'D)

We lost almost everyone. But even when God seems to have abandoned us, with every morning we are reminded he is still with us. Be thankful to the gifts of God, be thankful for every blessing!

Melvin uses a small knife to open up a set of action figure toys. He hands them out to the children standing beside him.

The kids snatch the action figures from his hands, their eyes gleaming.

MELVIN

The power is yours.

Gene, still wrapped up in bandages, walks up past the tents, and sits next to the pastor on the log.

MELVIN (CONT'D)

Gene, you shouldn't be up.

GENE

I am alive! I am alive and blessed!
What more can I ask but to see another day?

The two men look back at Thierry as the entire camp gathers around the Americans on the car.

MELVIN

These people brought in the food. They are part of the group I came with...or what's left of them.

GENE

May God bless them, whoever they are. Look at the joy on the children's faces. It has been too long since I've seen them smile.

MELVIN

Thierry seems to keep people's hopes up.

GENE

Thierry is our guide, the lamp that led us to the Lord. He kept us together when we had to abandon all and leave the city. He took care of us when we were sick, and when we had no more hope...he shared with us the good news of the Gospel.

(MORE)

GENE (CONT'D)

That is why we are still alive,
still together.

MELVIN

Sounds like a hell of a man. The
only thing I don't get is - before
he worked for the government...he
did something else, didn't he?

Gene goes quiet for a moment.

GENE

We follow old traditions, pastor.
We follow what our fathers told us,
what we hear the trees and the
rivers whisper to us. But I can not
tell you about Thierry's life. It
would not be my place. Besides, the
past is the past. What matters is
now.

Melvin looks back at Thierry once more, who is sharing a joke
with Jamie, Pam and the surrounding villagers.

EXT. TENT VILLAGE - A BIT LATER

Jamie, his shirt unbuttoned, takes in the cool breeze, and
starts PLAYING a short little warm-up melody.

He looks back at his ex-girlfriend. Seems like he wants to
say something, but can only return the smile.

The villagers have now all gathered around the car, every
man, woman and child in the camp.

For the first time in a long while, they are smiling, bobbing
their heads, starting to flow to the music.

The kids chase each other around, fruits and candy bars make
their way around the people, the camp VIBING to the
atmosphere.

Thierry and Melvin stand outside the main circle, closer to
the leader's tent.

THIERRY

Do you know how long it has been
since we have played music? A
Haitian can survive hunger and
thirst, even an earthquake...but
without music and dance? Lord have
mercy.

Melvin looks out into the crowd.

JAMIE

Everyone! You ready! One two three -
and freedom we sing! C'mon!

Jamie and Pam kick up the beat, the banjo complementing the acoustic guitar, creating a lively medley.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Oh-ye Woo-ye-oh! Ooooo ye-oy ye-oh!

VILLAGERS

(chanting)

Ooooo ye-oy ye-oh!

A couple of villagers join in the tune with hand-crafted wooden drums of their own, the tanbou, adding a touch of Haiti to the beat.

JAMIE

And freedom way-ye-oh! In you we
find our freedom way-ye-oh!

The Haitians start dancing, moving to the beat, singing and vibing beneath the setting orange sun...

Jamie and Pam glance at each other, feeling entwined with the music, and the people...

And that's when Melvin notices a bright, ORANGE GLOW weaving through the crowd.

It's the Spirit. He JUMPS up and down, beating on his own tanbou, kicking a soccer ball with the kids...and singing along with the people...

SPIRIT

Oh-ye Woo-ye-oh! Freedom ye-oy ye-oh!

A little boy kicks a ball right at the Spirit, who jiggles it on his knees a few times and passes it back to him.

The people glance at the direction of the spirit, but they do not acknowledge the strange glow around him, or even his presence - he seems a part of the atmosphere, a part of their very heartbeat...

MELVIN

(to Thierry)

Do you see that?

Thierry seems to look straight at the Spirit, but like everyone else, doesn't notice anything strange.

SPIRIT

Freedom we song -ey-ye-ooooh! We-
yeee-ye-ay-ye-ye-oh!

VILLAGERS

Wey-yeeee-ey-ooooh!

One of the middle-aged women comes along and playfully pulls the village elder up, who protests for only a second, before he is swept up by the dance and the music of the missionaries.

Melvin looks on at the party. A hidden sadness in his eyes casts off the infectious joy around him...

EXT. SCHOOL BASKETBALL COURT - DAY - FLASHBACK

Melvin, with shorter hair, shorts and a T-shirt, jumps up with a basketball, but his shot bounces just off the hoop.

Another five guys a bit younger than him are on the basketball court, two teams of three aside playing outside a small high school.

Melvin gets the ball again and looks for an open teammate to pass to. A tall, blonde-haired teenager stands out from the others.

CLIVE

Pastor! Here!

Melvin bounces the ball to high-schooler CLIVE, who dribbles past two players on the opposing team and SLAM DUNKS.

Clive goes over to get a high-five from Melvin, as the other players close off the game.

They all get their gym bags, which are piled up behind one of the baskets.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

Yeah, yeah I know. 'Melvin' on the court.

MELVIN

Call me Kobe if you want. I've taught you well enough.

CLIVE

Right on, Pastor Kobe! Lakers could use some help from the Almighty this season.

MELVIN

I'll let that one slide, only cause I know you're coming to Bible study tomorrow. I just got that feeling, you know, Clive, deep down.

CLIVE

Hah man I promised, didn't I? I'm down for this - hundred percent!

Clive gives Melvin props, and walks off with the other guys.

Melvin watches after them, then picks up the basketball and looks up at the hoop, finding himself alone on the court.

As the red and orange hues of dusk GLIMMER off the metallic surface of Chicago's skyscrapers, the youth pastor prepares for a shot.

Melvin's effort BOUNCES off the rim, and comes backs to him.

He shoots again, and again in the forefront of the setting sun.

Suddenly, a BUZZING comes from his gym bag.

He opens it up, takes out his phone, and presses the green answer button.

MELVIN

'Yellow.

The expression on his face suddenly changes.

MELVIN (CONT'D)

..err, what? Daren, what?

Melvin grabs his gym bag, pulls on a shirt, and starts RUNNING down the court.

INT. MELVIN'S APARTMENT STAIRWELL - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Melvin rushes inside the apartment building, coming out right onto the stairwell.

The youth pastor struggles to catch his breath, his shirt a sweaty mess. He holds the phone to his ear, which is still BEEPING out a BUSY signal.

He takes the shortest of moments to rest against the wall, before RUSHING back up the stairs as fast as he can.

INT. MELVIN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Keys CLINK-CLANK into the door of the apartment, before it finally CLICKS and SWINGS opens.

Melvin rushes inside.

He looks around the living room. It's a modest place, a large sofa next to a TV, a bookshelf to the side, and a long GLASS TABLE taking up almost one fifth of the room across the sofa.

A single WHITE LETTER lies on top of the table.

Melvin swallows hard. Looks up at the closed bedroom door.

He wills his legs forward. His steps are shaky, his head feels dizzy, his heart beats louder and louder through his chest.

He pushes open the bedroom door.

His face awashes with despair.

INT. MELVIN'S APARTMENT - A BIT LATER

Ambulance workers carry out on a stretcher the body of DAREN, Melvin's older brother. His veins are dotted with FRESH NEEDLE HOLES, his eyes wide and lifeless.

The EMT's cover Daren's face as they push him out the front door, past Melvin, who is sitting lifeless on a chair at the glass table.

A couple of police officers SNAP PHOTOS of the bedroom. One of them, SERGEANT JAMES, walks up to the youth pastor.

SERGEANT JAMES

That's his letter, right?

Melvin is holding the piece of paper, his gaze fixed firmly on the table.

SERGEANT JAMES (CONT'D)

You're going to have to give it to me before we go. Evidence for the investigation.

Melvin hands it over right away. Doesn't even look like he's read it.

The sergeant hesitates for a moment, but takes the letter.
Melvin's eyes sink into the icy smoothness of the glass.

EXT. TENT VILLAGE - NIGHT

Night has fallen over the Haitian village when the youth pastor snaps out of his trance.

The villagers are still dancing around, the SPIRIT's orange glow blending in with the giant BONFIRE roaring in the midst of the tents.

Melvin turns to Thierry - who is looking at him intently.

THIERRY

What are you seeing, pastor?

MELVIN

What do you mean?

THIERRY

You asked me a question before. I assume you are seeing something you are unsure about.

Melvin looks down at the ground.

THIERRY (CONT'D)

Here, c'mon. I'll show your something.

Thierry gets up, and turns toward the large blue tent adorned with crosses.

INT. BLUE TENT - CONTINUOUS

Thierry holds up the tent's covering, welcoming Melvin as he comes inside.

The youth pastor beholds an ALTAR of candles, flowers, and portraits of various Haiti spirit-saints set up around a small table.

Thierry gets down on his knees on a cushion in front of the saints, closes his eyes, and utters a short, silent prayer.

THIERRY

How much do you know about Haiti's spirits, pastor?

Melvin kneels down next to him.

MELVIN

Not enough, I'm gonna guess.

Thierry laughs.

THIERRY

We have always believed, pastor. Maybe not always in good things, or the right things, but we have always believed. The Lao, our spirits, they guided us for centuries, and we feared and respected them. They were neither good or bad, they simply were all that there was, what moved every event in our world. This was before we came to Christ.

Thierry points out one of the saints, a monk in a brown robe in a flower field holding a child in his arm. Both have haloes over their heads - the portrait is endowed with a WHITE hue.

THIERRY (CONT'D)

That's Agassou. In the form of a man, but they say he came to be when a leopard mated with a princess. He was sent to Haiti to ease the people's suffering when we were chained as slaves under the French.

Thierry points next to the portrait of a white man with long hair tied next to a tree, looking up as a child angel watches him through the branches. A GREEN color endows the portrait.

THIERRY (CONT'D)

Gan Bwa. He is the Loa of trees, plants, herbs, and wild animals. He knows herbal medicine, and people pray to him for knowledge and guidance in the natural world.

Another portrait that Thierry points to is of a tall, Haitian woman with wild hair holding a serpent around her neck.

THIERRY (CONT'D)

Respect and fear Simbi. She is very powerful, and she is worshipped by sorcerers who work in the dark magic. These are Vodou secrets, that few dare touch.

Melvin then spots a portrait of Jesus Christ in flowing robes, RED in color, with an image of the Savior's heart emanating from his chest.

THIERRY (CONT'D)

Lengensou is not Christ, but he is the heart of the divine. He judges those who are cruel to others, and represents the blood of our people.

The youth pastor's eyes dart through the dozens of other portraits of spirits, saints, and totems.

MELVIN

You believed in these spirits?

Thierry laughs again.

THIERRY

That was the job prerequisite, when I was a priest. A Houngan. I used to talk to these spirits on behalf of the people, present them offerings, pray to them, learn from them. Yes, I did believe.

MELVIN

Not anymore?

THIERRY

I've made many mistakes in my life, Melvin. Caused great disappointment. Jesus is the only path I have been able to move forward on. But the old traditions, we still respect.

JAMIE (O.S.)

Last one folks...this is a new bit from the album I'm working on...we hope you like it, it's a special one from me and Pam.

With that, Thierry gets up, and follows Melvin out of the tent.

EXT. TENT VILLAGE - CONTINUOUS

Jamie and Pam slow down the tempo, the music switching from the island beat to a more contemporary country-rock style.

Jamie, standing tall on the car, looks out at the villagers, smiling at the crowd.

He nods to Pam, who starts playing a somber tune on the banjo, which Jamie's energetic guitar takes over.

JAMIE

Everyone!

(singing)

The darkness is turned into light,
hope is brighter than night!
I feel you with me! In every
breath!

(pause)

Forever means nothing at all,
without your voice in our call.
I feel you with me! In every
breath!

The villagers CLAP along, enjoying the song.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

(Singing)

Heaven is calling, your might
overflowing, The Spirit's with me,
Holy--

When GUNSHOTS CRACK through the air.

The villagers SCREAM as an elderly man falls on the ground, a bullet lodged into his chest.

The jeep with the rebels ROARS on the dirt road, bulldozing its way through the camp, trampling over tents.

THIERRY

(shouting)

Get down!

Jamie takes Pam's hand, forcing them both to the ground behind the car.

Thierry rushes toward a group of children and women.

THIERRY (CONT'D)

Away! Away!

Melvin, still at the back of the camp, gets up. His eyes wrestle with a decision, but then steps back into the cover of the trees.

Armed with rifles, hand-guns and machetes, the rebels park right next to the missionaries' car and jump out, spreading quickly through the camp.

ELIZIER
 (to rebels)
 Search through the larger tents.

Omni SHOOTs down two men who try rush at them with sticks and shovels.

The other villagers scatter as far away from the gangsters as they can.

The rebels TEAR their way through the tents, RIPPING them apart, FLIPPING over pots, pans, clothes and sleeping bags.

Thierry, seeing off a group of kids into the bushes, marches straight at the rebels, his arms stretched in the air.

THIERRY
 Stop this! I beg you, stop this!

The six men turn around and point their guns at the village leader as he approaches.

Jamie and Pam, still unnoticed, crawl underneath the car, which is now surrounded by the rebels.

Omni sees them right away, and gestures to Elizier.

The rebel leader grins. He re-loads his AK-47 - and starts FIRING into the side of the car, the bullets DENTING into the steel.

Only then does he look at Thierry.

ELIZIER
 And who are you to tell Justise San what to do?

THIERRY
 I am responsible for these people. Speak with me. Tell me what you need. But leave them be.

The rebels laugh and SPRAY bullets all across the camp, turning tents into shreds, STRIKING DOWN a number of villagers still trying to get away.

ELIZIER
 (at villagers)
 Where are you going to run? Where are the police to save you?

Izard reaches underneath the car and GRABS a hold of Pam's hair. She SCREAMS as he DRAGS her out.

IZARD
Lookey here! A white girl!

Pam KICKS and SWINGS at him as hard as she can, but he won't let go.

Jamie slides from under the car and PUNCHES Izard in the face.

JAMIE
You don't touch her!

The rebels, suddenly aware of the Americans, PUSH a few other villagers next to them and surround the circle of hostages.

OMNI
You tell these Americans to stay out, and what do they do? Come here to play songs!

Patrice the rebel PLAYS crudely on the guitar, then SMASHES it down into the ground.

PATRICE
Party time!

ELIZIER
Oh, but the more the marrier, right fellas?

Thierry walks right in front of Elizier's gun-sight.

THIERRY
I will not let you do this.

The rebel leader stares directly into Thierry's eyes. And then he recognizes him.

THIERRY (CONT'D)
My brother. Please. Listen to me. Talk with me. Whatever you want, whatever you are planning, no one else needs to suffer.

ELIZIER
So I'm your brother now, you government dog?

Thierry tries to say something - but Elizier SHOTS him in the arm.

Thierry GROANS and drops to his knees, holding the wound.

ELIZIER (CONT'D)

This man needs no introduction! For an entire minute I forgot his face! Police Lieutenant Thierry Bosse - the hero who led the charge, busting down doors, throwing our men in jail!

Elizier kneels down at his eye-level.

ELIZIER (CONT'D)

The hero who killed my father. The brave, brave lieutenant. Defending the same government that has all these people living in tents,
(at villagers)
starving like rats out in the forests!

Thierry's eyes swell in pain, but he stares straight back at Elizier.

THIERRY

May God forgive me. May God forgive you too.

ELIZIER

So you're a man of God now? Left the president so you can serve another master with imaginary power?

THIERRY

(straining)

What do you want? These people have done nothing! We own nothing!

Jamie and Pam huddle next the other scared villagers. They look around the camp, but they are firmly in range of the rifles.

JAMIE

(whispers to Pam)

Keep back. We'll get out of this.

Elizier PRESSES the barrel of his gun into the elder's bleeding wound.

ELIZIER

Are you going to play stupid with me now? Did you think we would forget what you did? Have you forgotten about Justice San?

Thierry shakes his head.

THIERRY

We follow the path of the Lord and try to do good by one another. That is all, my brother, we know nothing else.

Elizier looks around the camp, at the faces of the poor and injured villagers hiding among their meager possessions, reluctant to lose what little they have, even in the face of death.

ELIZIER

(to Thierry)

You think you can hide out here, among these miserable animals, and pretend you're one of them? You think your God excuses you? You are innocent now?

THIERRY

No man is innocent, or good. Only God is good.

The rebel leader smirks. Then glances over at the Americans.

ELIZIER

Ah. And these Americans...just tourists, are they? Here to study the trees?

Elizier nods to his men. The rebels take out plastic cuffs and BIND the hands of Jamie and Pam, forcing them on their knees.

IZARD

Now what, you shit?

Izard SMACKS Jamie through the mouth; PUNCHING him another two-three times for good measure.

He then BOOTS him in the stomach, as Jamie SPITS OUT BLOOD.

PAM

No! Leave him alone you---

She gets a KICK in the face by Patrice.

PATRICE

Dumb bitch.

IZARD

Oh look at this. Pretty mouth just got shut. We gonna have lots of fun tonight boys!

Pam grits her teeth, trying to hide the pain.

Jamie PUSHES the rebels with all he's got - but IZARD and Patrice pin him to the ground, SQUEEZING out his lungs.

The missionaries are then dragged through the dirt and tossed onto the back of the jeep.

Elizier keeps his eyes on Thierry.

ELIZIER

Listen up, lieutenant - shaman, priest, whatever you are. Your life might have one more purpose. You will be the final message we deliver to this government. After you, they will know that no matter how much they run, where they hide, how they 'change'... we will find them.

THIERRY

I have no friends there, my brother. I am sorry. I serve only God - I belong to Him alone.

ELIZIER

Well then, you'll give him a message from me too.

Elizier steps aside.

ELIZIER (CONT'D)

Micelo!

The young rebel, hiding behind the other rebels, looks away.

Omni nudges him forward.

OMNI

Go on!

Micelo takes a couple of steps forward.

Elizier YANKS his cousin toward Thierry, and shoves a gun in his hand.

ELIZIER

Show me how much you are ready.

Micelo looks at Thierry. The elder seems composed, resolved.

The villagers WAIL behind the rebels. A couple of women reach their arms toward Thierry, but the armed men SHOVE them aside.

ELIZIER (CONT'D)

(to Micelo)

Show them you are not a coward! And that I am not wasting my time with you.

Micelo's hand is already SHAKING, even before he lifts up the gun at the pastor...

ELIZIER (CONT'D)

(whispers)

Do it...keep steady, and do it!

The young man's finger lingers over the trigger--

But then he turns around.

MICELO

I can't, Elizier! Don't you understand? Don't you see?

Elizier stares down his cousin.

MICELO (CONT'D)

There is dark vodou in this place! There are consequences to all of this!

Micelo hands the gun to his older cousin.

The rebel leader looks at him pitifully. He takes the gun, puts it in his holster, then KICKS Micelo in the groin, sending him to the ground.

ELIZIER

My patience will soon wear thin with your nonsense, cousin. Very soon.

The rebel leader gestures to his men. They come and take Thierry.

ELIZIER (CONT'D)

(to Thierry)

A better time, a better place, lieutenant.

The rebels drag the village elder and toss him next to the Americans in the jeep.

Omni and Izard climb onto the vehicle, while the others continue rummaging through the tents, picking up whatever food and drink they can get their hands on.

Melvin watches all of this from behind a tree, GRIPPING the handle of his knife...

EXT. TENT VILLAGE - LATER

The jeep carrying the rebels finally disappears down the road away from the camp, leaving a trail of destruction behind.

Melvin steps out from behind the tree, as the villagers CRY over the bodies of their dead friends.

A few of the men start putting back up the tents, while the women console the crying children.

Melvin goes up to the bullet-ridden car - but the engine seems shot to pieces, wiring sticking out.

The youth pastor bumps into Gene, who is helping carry a wounded man into the medical tent.

MELVIN

Gene, try to get everyone together.
Tell them to move as far away from
the roads as possible.

Melvin starts toward the forest, throwing a backpack with a few water bottles on his shoulder.

He takes a HANDGUN dropped by one of the rebels half-hidden beneath a tent.

GENE

Where are you going?

MELVIN

There is only one road, right? And
those bastards have to sleep.

GENE

Pastor, what on Earth are you going
to do?

MELVIN

I will bring Thierry back. I will
bring everyone back.

The youth pastor disappears into the trees with a fast step.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROADSIDE - NIGHT

The road stretches up the side of the mountain next to the forest, where the rebel jeep parks near an isolated wooden cabin.

The rebels get out. Omni BANGS on the wheel a couple of times.

OMNI

I told you assholes not to jump around like monkeys! This hunk of crap is almost broken down as it is.

IZARD

Oh shut it, Omni. Who cares? We need some shut-eye, fuck this all day driving. Who we running from anyway?

OMNI

We wouldn't be driving all day if someone with half a brain had built these roads.

The rebels grab Thierry, Jamie and Pam, who are all still unconscious after being knocked out.

When thrown HARD on the ground, Jamie and Pam come back to.

They look at their surroundings, but find themselves at the mercy of the rebels again.

Thierry wakens with a GRUNT.

The village elder gives the Americans a reassuring look, but they are dragged away before they can say anything.

Izard cracks open a beer, and spills it all over himself.

IZARD

Yes baby! Time to bring it on!

ELIZIER

Keep it inside. We only have a few hours. We burn this cabin in the morning, or else they'll trace us right from the village.

The others head toward the cabin - but before Micelo can follow, his cousin GRABS him by the shirt and FLINGS him at the side of the jeep.

MICELO

What?!

Elizier BANGS his fist into the door, narrowly missing Micelo's head.

ELIZIER

You will not embarrass me again, cousin. When I put a gun in your hand - you have one option. You act like a man.

MICELO

I can't kill these people, Elizier! I just can't! I know that you don't believe, but I tell you, these spirits are angry with us...they don't like what we do!

Elizier takes out his handgun and stick it at Micelo's throat.

ELIZIER

Talk to your spirits in your dreams. In the real world, when you lift a gun at a man's head, you better damn well pull the trigger. This life ain't for second-guessers, Micelo. Your father should have taught you that.

Micelo CHOKES from the pressure in his throat.

Elizier lets him drop to the ground.

ELIZIER (CONT'D)

Take your shit and get out of here. Wherever it is, I don't care, just don't show up until you're ready to be a man and a real member of Justise San. We have no room for cowards.

Micelo COUGHS repeatedly, unable to respond.

Elizier watches him for a while, then puts away his gun. He takes out a map from his back-pocket and tosses it at his cousin.

ELIZIER (CONT'D)

Know what you can do? Walk the roads. Find out who is looking for us. Find out what they're planning, and if there are Americans looking for their people. Act like one of those stupid tent-dwellers - you'll fit right in.

Micelo takes the map, and tries to get back on his feet.

Elizier turns his back on his cousin, and starts walking toward the cabin.

Micelo scrunches up the map and shoves it in his pocket.

The young man looks at the trees around him. The wind WHEEZES through the branches, jingling the leaves and bushes, WISPING up the hilly countryside...

An eerie silence fills the air...

INT. REBEL'S CABIN - NIGHT

The rebels LAUGH it up inside the wooden cabin, which appears to be a hideout of some sort.

Beer bottles and ammunition boxes are piled up on the sides; the gunmen gathered around one large table with food, cigarettes and guns.

The black and red Justise San flag is nailed to one of the wooden walls.

Thierry, Jamie and Pam are on their knees, tied up next to each other at the wall, their mouths gagged with torn clothing.

Omni is sitting on a chair, browsing on a laptop.

Patrice PUNCHES the village leader straight into his bullet wound. Thierry leans back as the pain ravages his body, while Jamie and Pam try to shield him.

Izard PULLS Pam by her hair, and brings her closer to his face.

IZARD

You're gonna be a movie star real soon, princess. World is gonna see you take a star role.

Omni smiles at something on his laptop.

OMNI

She already is a star, Izard. Both of them are.

Omni flips the laptop to the others. They see a PHOTO of Jamie and Pam singing live on a rockstage surrounded by fans.

OMNI (CONT'D)

They're musicians. Celebrities, the Americans call them.

The rebels turn to Jamie and Pam like a pack of hyenas.

ELIZIER (O.S.)

Then we will use them all.

Elizier, having walked into the cabin, closes the door behind him. The others make way.

Omni hands him a beer bottle.

OMNI

We can do a small hand-held piece, but if you want the good camera--

ELIZIER

Of course I do. This will be worth it. One of their top former officers and two American celebrities. The name of Justise San will be heard around the world.

The rebels raise their beer bottles, but Elizier remains stern-faced.

He steps up to Thierry, whose head is bowed in prayer.

ELIZIER (CONT'D)

You gonna be a silent martyr for me now? Are you praying for your magic vodou spirits to come save you? Or your magic Jesus? Tell me, Boose. Did your magical friends stop the earthquake? Did they save the thousands who drowned in the waters?

THIERRY

God does not work the way we often want him to.

Elizier gets down on his knees and SLAMS the bottle through Thierry's face, CUTTING his cheek.

The rebel leader squeezes the elder's face.

ELIZIER

Then how exactly does he work, you self-righteous piece of shit? Just like this government, leaving the people to die while paying your paycheck? God was with you then, wasn't he?

The village leader tries to open his mouth, and Elizier loosens his grip just enough to let him speak.

THIERRY

(struggling)

The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me besides still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me on the path of righteousness for his name's sake. And yet though I walk through the valley of the shadow---

Elizier SHOVES Thierry's face into the side of the wall, knocking him out.

He then SPITS on him, and POURS a bottle of beer over his body.

ELIZIER

The valley of party time! Drink, 'brother', drink to your God! Lap it up!

His condescending LAUGH spreads among the rebels as Jamie and Pam watch in horror, trying to back away as far as possible.

Elizier empties the bottle, and KICKS the fallen Thierry once more.

He grabs another beer and toasts his men.

Izard then turns to Pam, but before he can lay hands on her - Elizier pulls him to the side. Motions over to Omni as well.

ELIZIER (CONT'D)

Not now. I want them perfectly scared on tape, afraid of what is coming, not what has happened. I want to see the fear. Keep them down 'till then.

Izard wipes the mocking look from his face. Omni nods.

IZARD

Right.

OMNI

That would work better, yeah.

Izard grabs Jamie and Pam by the shoulders, and THROWS them inside the small CLOSET to the side.

INT. REBEL'S CABIN CLOSET - CONTINUOUS

Jamie and Pam BUMP into the wall of the confined closet space head-first, their hands still tied behind their backs.

The dimly lit storage space, with a single light-bulb hanging from the top, is just large enough for them to sit on opposite sides of each other.

Buckets and bottled water are stored around, and from the grimaces on their faces it's clear that some unpleasant smell saturates the air.

The Americans listen in on the closed door as the rebels continue their rumbustious and intangible bouts of LAUGHTER.

Pam pushes up against the wall, trying to twist her arm into a position to turn the bindings...but she strains herself and slides back down.

INT. REBEL'S CABIN CLOSET - A BIT LATER

Jamie is biting his lip, looking around, but the place is entirely sealed, there are no windows or even cracks in the wooden boards.

JAMIE

Pam...

They look at each other.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry...I don't know. I shouldn't have ever brought us here.

PAM

Don't start with that now. Look for a way out. C'mon. Get up!

JAMIE

Actually right now seems like the perfect time to talk about what a mistake this was. A big ass mistake that I got us into, because I was too damn eager for adventures and didn't think about what really was going on here.

PAM

We were doing fine, Jamie. Neither you, nor me, nor those poor people, nor anyone could have predicted what happened. Now get up!

The rebels' VOICES bounce off the walls, unsettling the Americans.

PAM (CONT'D)

What are they doing to him?

(pause)

You think they're going to kill us?

A fire suddenly explodes in Jamie's eyes. He gets up on his feet.

JAMIE

No. I'm gonna get us out of here. Whatever the hell it takes.

Jamie KICKS the wall Pam is leaning on, but the thick wooden posts won't budge.

He KICKS it again and again, rising the dust.

PAM

You won't do it if you act like an idiot! We have to be quiet.

JAMIE

I don't give a damn! They're not going to touch you! Do you understand! I'll kill them!

Jamie SLUMPS down in defeat, back in his place. She shifts as far away from him as she can, still trying to loosen the ropes.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry Pam.

PAM

Stop it. We both knew the risks.
And you're not responsible for me,
Jamie.

He quiets down.

JAMIE

My dad would have been out of this
mess by now. I should have minded
him more. You remember how he was.

PAM

Not everyone can live out their
life at a farmhouse in Tennessee,
Jamie. Your dad wasn't responsible
for you either. You found your gift
and you moved on.

JAMIE

Yeah, yeah. The 'gift.' I can play
a guitar. But he knew how to live
off the land. How to rough it out
when times got tough. How to adapt
to challenges - on the farm and
everywhere. And look where I end up
a day into my real-world adventure.

PAM

So you're regretting your life now?
This all it takes?

JAMIE

Well...given that we're about to be
shot by a gang of insane murderers
in the middle of a Haitian
jungle...

PAM

You know what I mean.

JAMIE

I ain't regretting it. It's how I
met you.

She shakes her head and allows herself half a smile.

PAM

Remember that night, before your
concert on campus in Memphis?

JAMIE

Yeah?

PAM

I was just about to leave. Two Advils didn't help my headache, it was a big one. And I needed to study for my art exam the next day, not waste time with some southern pretty boy.

JAMIE

Heh. That's your regret, then? Meeting me?

PAM

I don't regret meeting you, Jamie. And I don't regret coming here. Regretting never solved anything. We have to do the best with what we've got.

Jamie SIGHS, and lets his head hang down.

Then the wooden door SWINGS open. Izard, drunk out of his mind, grins from ear to ear at Pam.

IZARD

(slurred)

Fuuuuck that. We need some fun going. C'mon now, yeah!

Pam tries to TWIST away as far as she can.

Jamie gets up on his feet, defiant and ready to fight...but with hands tied, he can only stare-down the gun-carrying rebel.

And just as Izard gets ready to take a swing...

BANG! BANG! BOOOF!

The rebel turns around.

INT. REBEL'S CABIN - CONTINUOUS

The rebels inside the cabin look straight out the window.

Elizier, who had fallen asleep on the chair, JUMPS up and FLIPS the chair over.

ELIZIER

The jeep! Goddamnit why is no one watching!

The rebels RUSH out the door one by one, staggering in their drunken steps, guns ready.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROADSIDE - CONTINUOUS

The gunmen find two BULLET holes in the hood of their jeep, smoke PUFFING out.

OMNI

Fuck! Well this is great.

ELIZIER

Shoot them! Who did this? Find them!

The rebels spread through the trees around the cabin, covering a wide area.

Izard stays behind at the cabin, looking out as his gang mates disappear into the foliage...

Before Melvin POPS OUT from the side and SLUGS the handle of his gun into the man's forehead, knocking him out.

INT. REBEL'S CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Melvin rushes inside the cabin and DRAGS Izard's body inside.

He looks around - and finds Thierry, still breathing, tied up to a chair next to the wall.

Melvin takes out his knife and CUTS Thierry's ropes.

The elder GROANS, but lifts up his finger and points at the closet at the back.

Melvin opens the door, and Jamie and Pam stumble out.

JAMIE

Melvin! Shit man, where--

Melvin shuts Jamie's mouth with his hand. He cuts the Americans' bindings, and the three help Thierry up on his feet.

Izard starts coming back to as the four walk by him out the door...

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROADSIDE - CONTINUOUS

Melvin leads them out the cabin, Jamie and Pam helping Thierry with his arms over their shoulders.

The rebels, a good number of feet away, are too busy searching behind the trees to notice them -- but just as the captives turn around the corner of the cabin --

ELIZIER
(SHOUTING)
There! Get them!

The rebels OPEN FIRE as soon as they spot the captives make a DASH for the trees.

Thierry, Jamie and Pam fall to the ground as a HAIL of BULLETS rips through the cabin, the lead THUMPING and SPLINTERING the wood.

MELVIN
C'mon! Up!

Melvin tries to pull the Americans back up. Thierry, with a surprising burst of strength, jumps up on his feet.

Together they help Jamie, who's holding on to Pam's hand, lifting her up with him...

When Izard, crawling after them, LUNGES onto her legs.

IZARD
Gotcha, you whore!

JAMIE
Pam!

Jamie and the others try to kick the rebel off her - but he's hanging on tight.

PAM
No!

Pam PUNCHES and SCRATCHES and CLAWS at Izard's face - but he isn't letting go.

JAMIE
Pam! Pam! Get off her!

As the three men do their best to drag Pam away, Melvin and Thierry spot Elizier and the other rebels coming round the corner.

THIERRY

We have to go!

Melvin grabs Jamie and tries to PULL him away - but the latter shrugs him off.

JAMIE

No! Pam! Come on!

PAM

Go! Get out of here!

The rebels' bullets narrowly miss Thierry and the Americans. A bullet GLAZES Jamie's head, knocking him down.

With one final attempt, Thierry and Melvin manage to PULL Jamie up, and the three scurry toward the cover of the trees.

Elizier and the rebels SHOOT after them, but stumble right onto Izard and Pam, who are still wrestling each other on the ground.

Elizier KICKS Pam in the head, knocking her out. He then shoves OMNI toward the trees.

ELIZIER

Are you stupid?! Keep after them!

Izard flips Pam over and PINS her arms on the ground. She stares at the trees, bloody gash forming on her head, the pain rushing through every part of her body...

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Melvin leads Thierry and Jamie deeper into the forest, the three getting CUT and SCRAPED by the branches and bushes they tread through.

The glow from the cabin fades as they go deeper into the woods, pushing forward, not allowing their pace to drop.

EXT. LAKE CLEARING - NIGHT

Thierry, Melvin and Jamie finally reach a clearing, a wide, secluded LAKE hidden beneath the backdrop of the mountains.

The moon shines brightly above. The frogs CHIRP harmoniously. The water invites them with its nice, cool ambiance. The total opposite to their flushed faces, bruised bodies and crushed hopes.

Thierry falls on his knees and dips his head into the water. He begins WHISPERING an inaudible prayer.

Jamie doesn't even want to touch the water. He paces around in his shredded, dirty clothes, feeling up the gash on his head.

He KICKS a rock into the lake.

JAMIE
No...No...Oh God. Pam..

He then GRABS Melvin by the shirt.

JAMIE (CONT'D)
Why didn't you shoot him?! What the hell is wrong with you? You had the gun!

The youth pastor stares at him for a moment, soaking in the rockstar's anger.

Thierry rises from his knees, and puts a hand on Jamie.

THIERRY
We are all hurting, Jamie. But we will go back for Pam. We'll find a way.

JAMIE
Yeah, well what's happening to her right now? Tell me that! Oh God...

Jamie's grip remains fastened to Melvin's shirt.

MELVIN
I think you need to let go, bud.

JAMIE
What do you want from me? C'mon, the men of God, tell me. What is going on? We came here to help some people, and we get shot at and they take her and...
(To Thierry)
Who are these crazy idiots? And you - what did you do to piss them off so much! They're blaming you!

Jamie drops on his knees, suddenly feeling woozy again. Melvin turns to Thierry.

MELVIN

This guy needs to stop screaming or they'll find us out.

Thierry squats down next to Jamie, while fixing up the binding on his wounded arm.

THIERRY

This is not your fault, Jamie. God help me, it is not mine either. The blame lies on the perpetrators, not on the victims or anyone else.

Melvin turns his back at the others, looking out at something at the far end of the lake.

THIERRY (CONT'D)

And God did not arm those men. He did not make anyone kill innocent people. Forgive me, but that is an ancient way of thinking. Pam made the decision to come here and work for what she believes in. So did you. We all make our choices in life, and that is what defines us in the eyes of the Lord.

JAMIE

Great, and what's the reward for that? Death? Torture? I swear to God if they touch her, if they dare...just...

Thierry grinds up a few leaves he collected and puts them on the Jamie's head.

THIERRY

Death is not a reward. Dying for what you believe in just might be. But she is not dead. Do not give up hope.

Jamie tries to get up - but loses his strength immediately and falls back down.

JAMIE

We have to go back...we have to find her.

THIERRY

And we will. Righteousness will prevail, Jamie, one way or another. But regardless of what happens, we can not be afraid.

(MORE)

THIERRY (CONT'D)

'For The LORD is our light and our salvation; whom shall we fear? The LORD is the stronghold of our lives - of whom shall we be afraid?'

Jamie closes his eyes and drifts off as Thierry applies another leaf on the young man's forehead.

THIERRY (CONT'D)

Sleep. We will wake you. These herbs will soothe your head.

(to Melvin)

We must rest up, or else we are good to no one. Melvin, before we head back to the village, we should try to trace--

Thierry looks back, but Melvin has walked far into the trees ahead.

A RADIANT BLUE GLOW reflects in Melvin's eyes as he stares into the lake.

And there he spots the Spirit's dreadlocks BOBBING up above the water. The being is keeping himself afloat, looking back at Melvin.

The Spirit WAVES to the youth pastor, turns, and starts swimming toward the farthest end of the lake.

Melvin glances back at Thierry, then continues walking.

EXT. LAKE CLEARING OPPOSITE END - A BIT LATER

Melvin, having circled round the lake to its opposite end, stops when he reaches a large log sticking out the shore.

He looks around. There is no sign of the Spirit, or anyone. Just the quiet stillness of the trees, lulling all to sleep beneath the Haitian moon.

The pastor sits down on the log, absorbing the scenery.

His eyes fixate on the water, on the cool shimmery surface, disturbed only by the wrinkle of the waves...

INT. SUBWAY CART - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Melvin sits inside a half-crowded subway cart. He's deep in his own thoughts, while the group around him, young professionals in their 20s, guys in suits, girls in revealing short skirts, LAUGH and BLABBER along.

SUBWAY GIRL

...Cause it's just so fun, you know? And he totally was gonna give it to me, right before I called Marly...

He peeks at them from the corner of his eye, but keeps his attention on the book in his lap - 'My Descent Into Death" by Howard Storm.

One of the prettier girls looks at him, which he pretends not to notice. She glances at his book, then goes back to chatting with her friends.

The THUCK-THU-THUCK of the train carries Melvin on.

EXT. NONDENOMINATIONAL CHICAGO CHURCH - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Melvin stands before his destination. A medium-sized non-denominational church, rising tall amid the quiet residential neighbourhood.

The large bronze cross on the roof cuts into the dark clouds shrouding the crescent moon, which glistens behind them.

A simple 'CHURCH OF THE CROSS: ALL ARE WELCOME" sign is propped up outside the church's large wooden doors.

Melvin stands on the stone steps, looking around the residential street, as if afraid to go in.

Then he starts up the stairs.

INT. NONDENOMINATIONAL CHICAGO CHURCH - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Melvin sits at the back of the pews. The church is fairly spacious, with murals of saints painted on the sides.

The congregation is made up of only 20 people are so, as PASTOR JOHN, the Senior Pastor at Church of the Cross, a full-sized man in his 50's grasping on to his last remaining locks of hair, delivers the final blessing of the evening service.

PASTOR JOHN

May the Lord bless you and keep you all, and may you go in peace.

The people shake hands with the pastor as they make their way out.

Clive and an older woman - his mother, walk by Melvin, failing to spot him. The youth pastor steps behind one of the thick stone pillars before they can notice him.

He waits there as the others head out the front door, before taking his seat again.

Soon, it's just Melvin, Pastor John, and a couple of volunteers putting musical instruments away at the front stage.

Pastor John walks up and sits next to Melvin.

MELVIN

John, I didn't come here to whine...I'm just looking for some quiet time.

Pastor John nods, and sits with his younger friend.

The large cross at the front altar with the figure of Christ nailed on it peers back directly at the pastors.

Melvin looks away from the statue's gaze.

PASTOR JOHN

Of all the people who come here to "whine," Melvin, you have a bit more reason than others.

Melvin lets his head hang down on the wooden bench and closes his eyes.

MELVIN

I've failed everything. I'm losing the apartment, I never even bothered to ask my mother how much the rent was going to jump by. And the insurance...ok, I lied, I did come here to whine.

PASTOR JOHN

You know you have the full support of the church in these matters. Of all of us here. Whatever we can do. I know what life is like in this city when you're down, Melvin. I've been there.

MELVIN

You've always told me, John, you've always told me we are bigger than our past mistakes.

(MORE)

MELVIN (CONT'D)

God forgives, God heals, through
God and his Son we can move on.

PASTOR JOHN

Yes. And you have never fully
believed any of that.

MELVIN

After my mother...did what she
did...I knew where Daren was
heading. I saw him with his friends
and their parties. It was getting
worse. But you know what I did?
Nothing. I abandoned him. Wasn't
"my problem." We never spoke much
after mom anyway. "Not my
problem..."

(pauses)

And now this is where I am. I have
no one.

Melvin gets up. Walks up to the wall with a mural of St.
George killing the dragon, and leans against it.

PASTOR JOHN

Daren was older than you, Melvin.
You can't blame yourself for this.
And you were here, with us, with
God, helping the community,
inspiring young people...you didn't
abandon anyone.

MELVIN

I was here, and where was God? Was
He here too? Or was He in that
bedroom, where they both...one
after another...I mean dear God
almighty, the same room...

PASTOR JOHN

Oh Melvin...

MELVIN

I know my family was screwed up,
but how could they...how could
they...and what am I supposed to
do? How am I to give advice to
people, talk to them about God's
plan and nonsense like that?

(can't find his place)

There are so many people worse off,
on the streets, in other
countries...why can't I just get a
grip? This is stupid, all of it.

PASTOR JOHN

You lost your mother and brother to suicide, Melvin. You are human. A young man in great pain dealing with horrific loss. But you are a survivor who will get through this.

MELVIN

I can't. I don't want to. I've tried so hard. But something black has wrapped itself around my hands, my legs, around my thoughts, my dreams. I've seen it, you know? I swear I've seen it. Like this dark veil that slithered up and covered me whole. I can't shake it off, these thoughts, it's like a second skin that is seeping into my flesh...what can I do, John? What's going to help? Prayer? That's a joke.

Pastor John allows Melvin to seethe a few moments longer. Then he gets up and grips the young man's shoulder.

PASTOR JOHN

There is only one certainty, and that is that God loves us, and wants us to keep doing all that we can to serve Him and help our neighbors. Remember in Romans - "for I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Melvin rolls his eyes and looks to turn away.

MELVIN

(pauses)

I'm sorry, John, I just...

PASTOR JOHN

It's alright, Melvin. I know. Trust is the hardest thing in this world. Living each day to the fullest, trusting God, trusting people, doing your best. It sounds so simple, but it is the hardest thing.

(MORE)

PASTOR JOHN (CONT'D)

We don't want to accept when loved ones die, we don't want to move on, we don't want to keep trying. We want to cry, and fight, and demand that things were different. With God we can move mountains...but this life can make us feel like we are nothing.

Melvin keeps his eyes glued to the stone floor.

MELVIN

I don't feel it, John. I don't know.

PASTOR JOHN

Come with me to dinner tomorrow. The event with that group, Dove Harvest, that's flying to Haiti. We'll get your mind off things.

Melvin nods, and the pastor gives him a long embrace.

Melvin watches the senior pastor walk back down the hall, the PLAT-PLAT of his shoes echoing through the empty church.

EXT. LAKE CLEARING OPPOSITE END - NIGHT

A PLOP in the lake startles Melvin, bringing him back to the present surroundings.

The youth pastor spots the BLUE GLOW shining out from the center of the lake again.

The Spirit is swimming toward him, with broad, graceful strokes, at one with the water.

Melvin waits patiently on the log, soothed by the gentle glow, which slowly dims.

SPIRIT

Hello again! Funny bumping into each other like this.

The Spirit, now floating in place a few feet away from the shore, looks at him calmly.

MELVIN

What are you? Who sent you?

SPIRIT

You are asking questions you know
you are not getting answers to,
pastor.

Melvin picks up a rock and FLINGS it at the lake. It PLOPS
not far from the Spirit.

MELVIN

Well quite the useless figment of
my imagination you're turning out
to be, then.

The Spirit drifts closer.

SPIRIT

Ha, is that what I am? All is not
as it seems, you know. You might be
surprised.

Melvin looks back at the forest, suddenly troubled and
confused.

MELVIN

What is wrong with me? Why am I
like this?

(pauses)

Jamie, Pam, who knows what's going
to happen. The people they shot in
the village, all this death around
us, and yet I can't...

SPIRIT

You can't run, pastor.

MELVIN

I'm not running! I'm trying to
forget! I'm trying to move on. I
can't live like this, every day...I
think about them, what they did,
how they did it, their last
thoughts, if they even thought
about...I can't, you understand me?
Nothing works. What haven't I
tried?

SPIRIT

You ARE running, pastor. Running
from your home, thinking that an
exotic mission on a far off island
will change your mind-set. In Haiti
or in Chicago, your past is still
your past. You are here for good
reasons. You are a good man.

(MORE)

SPIRIT (CONT'D)

But you are letting the darkness
define you.

MELVIN

Haven't I tried? What haven't I
tried? Do you know anything? Do you
know what it's like to not be able
to go a single day, a single night,
a single hour without this...hook
in the pit of your stomach, pulling
you down? Who the fuck are you?

The youth pastor picks up the heaviest rock in arms-reach and
THROWS it at the Spirit. It PLOPS near him but misses the
target.

SPIRIT

I know some things. Well, I know
everything, not to be cocky. But I
know more about you than you can
imagine, pastor. I have been around
for quite a while. But maybe I
should come back when you're a
little less...crabby.

Melvin turns his back to the Spirit.

The Spirit smiles at him sadly, then submerges underwater.

The blue glow disappears into the lake, before Melvin can
turn around and find himself alone.

The pastor stares at the shiny surface, the reflection of the
moon bouncing off the ripples.

Then Melvin SPLASHES a handful of water into his face, and
starts back toward the forest.

EXT. LAKE CLEARING - DAWN

Jamie comes back to, GROANS, but sits up.

Thierry is dwindling a second walking stick, using Melvin's
knife, chipping off the stems.

JAMIE

Oh...dammit. What happened?

THIERRY

(turns around)

I'm glad you're awake.

(MORE)

THIERRY (CONT'D)

I was in good shape in my day, but
I could never carry you through
this forest.

JAMIE

Where's Melvin? Let's go! We have
to find Pam...

The country-rock singer spots the youth pastor resting
against a tree nearby.

MELVIN

Howdy.

Thierry gets down in the water again.

THIERRY

Pray with me.

Jamie marches up to him.

JAMIE

What?! This isn't the time for
prayer. We have to go, get up!

THIERRY

Now is precisely the time for
prayer, dear Jamie.

JAMIE

Listen, you can sit here meditating
and talking to yourself 'till the
sun comes up, but I have to go do
something.

Jamie picks up one of the stick and turns to leave, but
Thierry remains on his knees.

THIERRY

The night before Christ our Lord
was crucified - before He was
beaten, tortured, mocked, and
nailed to the cross - do you
remember what he did?

Jamie puts his hands on his hips. Melvin walks up to join
them.

THIERRY (CONT'D)

Before the most painful experience
a human being could possibly
endure, he knelt down at the Mount
of Olives and he prayed.

(MORE)

THIERRY (CONT'D)

He knew what was coming, he knew he faced the agony of the whips and the blood of the nails the following day. "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death," he said to his disciples.

(pause)

Yet still, He surrendered himself to the peacefulness of the night, beneath a bright moon, much like the one last night, and on his knees he prayed to the Father - not for mercy, not for power, but for faith.

"My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will," our Lord asked.

Thierry looks up at Melvin.

THIERRY (CONT'D)

Pray for us, pastor?

Melvin looks taken aback.

MELVIN

Oh, umm, I think you got a better handle at this. I don't know what to say.

ELIZIER (O.S.)

A pastor who can't pray! My, what is this world coming to?

The three turn around to find themselves surrounded. Elizier, Omni, Patrice and Wester have their guns fixed on them, stepping out of the bushes.

ELIZIER (CONT'D)

How far did you think you could run - two Americans and an old police dog? This is Haiti. This is our country.

JAMIE

Where is Pam? What have you done?

Jamie starts forward, but Melvin holds him back.

ELIZIER

She will be useful to us. And so will you.

THIERRY

What is it that you expect starving villagers and missionaries can do for you, my brothers? Why do you pursue us?

ELIZIER

You think we're some kind of wild animals, don't you, lieutenant? Or the holy man of God you are now. Well I got news for you. When you were a shaman jumping around with your vodou spirits, that never did shit for us. Or for anyone. When you were busting down doors and locking people up for this government, you actually made things worse. And now with your crosses and your virgin Marys and your saints and your prayers - what is that gonna do? You expect us to forget what you did? You expect Haiti to forget?

Omni looks back at the forest.

OMNI

We gonna do this, or talk them to death?

Elizier SPITS on the ground.

ELIZIER

(to the rebels)

Get our movie stars ready for the camera.

(to Melvin)

And who's this 'pastor' anyway? You the dumb shit that shot down our jeep?

MELVIN

I'm just a guy. But I'm wondering who are you? Some kind of backwards 'liberation army' shooting down people for 'your country?' Real heroes you are.

Elizier LAUGHS at him.

ELIZIER

Well, pastor guy, I hope you're not gonna miss your life too much, cause it ends right here.

Melvin and Thierry seem defiant, ready to meet their fate. Jamie LUNGES at the rebels, but Patrice and Wester KNOCK him down and drag him away.

JAMIE

What do you want from us?!

ELIZIER

Google says you're a "rising star," Americano. So you're worth something to them. Careful with those nice jeans though, you're getting them dirty.

Elizier nods to the others. They lift up their guns at Melvin, as they DRAG Thierry away as well.

Melvin tries to steady his shoulders, staring down at the barrels, his breath getting faster--

But just then, Micelo BURSTS out of the trees behind them, stumbling onto the clearance.

OMNI

The hell?

The rebels swing round to find the teenager PANTING on the ground, his clothes torn and dirty, bloody SCRATCHES running through his chest and shoulders.

MICELO

Elizier! I found you! He's here, he's here...oh God, I told you - what he did to them!

Elizier motions to the others to lower their weapons.

ELIZIER

What are you doing here, Micelo?

MICELO

He's here! He killed them all! He buried them alive! Oh God, they were alive, I swear it...their eyes...and the dirt went over them!

The sheer panic and fear in Micelo's trembling voice visibly unsettles the rebels.

Elizier marches up toward him.

ELIZIER

I told you not to come back here! What are you talking about? Who--

But Micelo jumps up and GRABS Elizier by the shirt.

MICELO
The shaman! From the mountain! He's
here! And he's come for us all!

Elizier PUNCHES his cousin straight in the jaw, knocking him
down.

Micelo takes a few moments to recover from the blow.

MICELO (CONT'D)
Come with me. I'll show you.

Micelo points to the trees behind them.

MICELO (CONT'D)
It's right across. I followed your
voices. But it's there. You'll see.
Come and you'll see.

The rebels look at Elizier, waiting for orders.

OMNI
See what?

MICELO
The graves of the living! The
living dead. The undead.

The other rebels don't know whether to laugh or look at their
deranged partner in pity.

MICELO (CONT'D)
Oh God...what did he do to them..

ELIZIER
Enough. Show me, whatever this is.

The rebel leader motions to his men, who grab a hold of
Melvin, Jamie and Thierry.

The rebels and the captives start after Elizier, who follows
his half-crazed cousin through the bushes.

EXT. FOREST BUSHES - DAY

The eight men tread through the dense bushes, the crowns of
the trees hiding the risen sun.

They keep a slow pace, careful not to CRUNCH through the
foliage.

The dread intensifies on Micelo's face with each step; the suspicion rises on Elizier's...

And then Micelo stops. He looks out into a muddy valley beyond the trees, adjacent to a narrow man-made trail leading through the woods.

A TALL DARK FIGURE of a man with his back to the rebels looms in the thicket only a few feet away.

MICELO

Do you see?! Do you see?!

Elizier, Omni, and the two other rebels point their rifles at the figure - when the tall man takes a step forward.

Then another, and another. His movements are slow, lethargic, as if he just woke from a coma...

ELIZIER

Stop! Justise San demands you to stop!

But the man COLLAPSES beyond the bushes into the valley.

EXT. MUDDY FOREST VALLEY - CONTINUOUS

The men push their way through the bushes and come out on top of the muddy valley, next to the road.

They happen right upon the tall Haitian man, partially buried inside the dirt, lying beneath them in the basin.

The man's arms and legs are STRETCHED OUT in a contorted position, as if he had just suffered a seizure.

OMNI

What exactly is this?

Omni notices a human body part lying in the dirt. It's a HUMAN HAND, with a wooden STAKE driven through the palm.

The jeep driver points out the body part. The rebels look back down to see the man in the ditch is missing a hand.

Elizier nods to the others.

Patrice and Wester walk into the surrounding bushes, shoulder to shoulder, glancing at each other every other step.

Omni keeps a watchful eye on the three captives, whose hands are bound.

OMNI (CONT'D)
Who is this man, Micelo?

The rebel leader turns to his cousin, who is eerily quiet, staring into the basin.

ELIZIER
Micelo! What did you see?

MICELO
It was the shaman. He killed them.
And took the women...

ELIZIER
Shaman? And what women?

THIERRY
Pregnant, all of them?

MICELO
Yes, they are pregnant..how did you know?

Thierry walks up to the edge of the basin, and stares down at the dead figure.

ELIZIER
(to Thierry)
This shaman...a friend of yours?

THIERRY
He lived in the mountains. At the summit. I thought he had long gone.

Jamie allows himself to speak up.

JAMIE
Wait, is this like, vodou stuff?

Thierry kneels down in the dirt. He pulls out the wooden stake from the severed hand, then tosses it away.

THIERRY
I was a priest of the Loa, the spirits, as my brother here has pointed out. The natural forces that swayed our lives and dictated our every step and ultimate fate. That was before I opened my eyes to light of the Lord, and realized we alone pave our destiny here on Earth.

ELIZIER

Enough with your fairy God crap,
lieutenant! Get on with it! Who is
this shaman in the mountains?

THIERRY

He was a priest from the village we
grew up in. But he was not like me.
He was a bokor, practised the dark
arts. Black magic, curses, poisons.
I collected herbs and prayed to the
Loa to heal people, he made money
from desperate souls, harming
others and conjuring ills. And
then...he started soiling his hands
with human blood. He crossed every
line that our priests warned
against.

ELIZIER

Black magic? Like what, that stupid
zombie nonsense they talk about?

Micelo WHIMPERS at the word.

MICELO

They were crawling out of their
graves, I swear it, I saw it with
my own eyes. I swear they were
dead, the shaman cut their throats
and threw them inside...they were
dead, Oh God, the were dead...

Thierry looks back down at the deformed body in the dirt.

THIERRY

No they were not. He uses a powder.
A white blend, a concoction of
various herbs. They are very hard
to find, grow only in the
mountains. But this powder
paralyzes the body, it puts the
heart, the brain, the pulse into a
deep sleep. For hours the body
cannot move, breathe, or show any
signs of life. The man seems dead,
and the bokor will call him dead,
and bury him inside a shallow grave
for others to see. When the man
regain consciousness...he will be
confused, scared, terrified. Those
who can't claw their way out in
time suffocate and die.

(MORE)

THIERRY (CONT'D)

Those that get out...they are deranged, sold under the bokor's delusions, they are never the same again.

The rebels look at the half-buried face inside the dirt with renewed dread.

ELIZIER

Why is this bokor doing this? What does he want?

Thierry turns to Micelo.

THIERRY

You are sure the women he had with him were pregnant?

MICELO

They were holding their bellies, he was doing something...

THIERRY

Then this madman is carrying out the darkest of his plans.

ELIZIER

The hell does that mean?

And then they hear the THUD of a something heavy fall in the foliage next to the trail.

The rebels kneel down, ready to fire.

Elizier stares at Micelo, whose body begins visibly TREMBLING.

ELIZIER (CONT'D)

Is this another one of them?

And then the rebels hear a DEATHLY MOANING from the bushes.

PATRICE

You gotta be shitting me.

Elizier pushes Thierry ahead of everyone.

ELIZIER

Lead the way, God man.

Thierry starts toward the trees, the others following behind.

EXT. FOREST TRAIL - CONTINUOUS

Step by step, Thierry, with arms raised, leads the men into the thicket.

An imposing stillness follows their every breath. The rebels glance at every bush, at every tree, at every movement. Jamie and Melvin keep close to each other, equally as unnerved.

And then they find him (DERANGED MAN). A second Haitian lying in a pile of leaves, covered in dirt. His arms and legs are still TINGLING, his eyes open - he is not fully dead.

Thierry slowly walks over and kneels down beside him.

Elizier is the only one brave enough to follow.

The man on the ground GASPS for air - his pupils wide open, his black hair and beard disheveled, his clothes torn...he seems more like a dying animal than a person.

ELIZIER

One of your 'zombies'?

THIERRY

This poor man is in shock. The paralysis must have warn off not too long ago. If we can carry him back to the camp, give him some food and water, maybe he can talk to--

The man suddenly JUMPS UP SCREAMING and SHOVES Thierry down, SCRATCHING Elizier's face.

DERANGED MAN

Rete! Rete! Ede Mwen!
(Stop! Stop! Help me!)

The crazed man runs straight at the rebels - but Omni SHOTS him down three steps in.

The man falls on the ground, the bullet holes riddled through his torn white shirt.

His body CONTORTS and turns stiff, his eyes still wild and open. Dark blood GUSHES out of his wounds.

ELIZIER

Well, we helped him alright.

Thierry makes the sign of the cross.

The rebel leader turns back to his men - to see Micelo scrambling back on the ground.

MICELO

What did you do? You fools! You idiots! Do you not know he is watching?!

They all look back at him. Jamie and Melvin step away. Even Elizier doesn't know what to say.

The terrified youngster DASHES back through the trees as fast as his feet can carry him.

Omni walks up to Elizier.

OMNI

No offense Elizier, but I think your cousin is kind of batshit insane. Like, of the extra batshitty kind.

Elizier spits, reloads his gun, and turns back to his men.

ELIZIER

He is not my concern anymore.

He looks up at the sky above them. His men look too worn out to continue.

ELIZIER (CONT'D)

We'll catch a few hours of sleep. Burn these bodies.

The rebels look back at the corpses.

EXT. FOREST TRAIL - DAY

Jamie, Melvin and Thierry are tied together in the center of a circle comprised of the four rebels, next to a large CRACKLING bonfire.

Elizier sits alone on the center log, right across Thierry.

The rebels feast on mangoes and bananas. Their leader TOSSES a half-eaten mango at the former lieutenant.

ELIZIER

Eat it.

THIERRY

I am not hungry, my brother. But you are in need of spiritual food.

Elizier forces a sarcastic smile as he continues chewing his food.

ELIZIER

What is this bokor going to do with the women?

Jamie and Melvin listen up.

THIERRY

(pauses)

He spoke about it sometimes. His plan. Even after they banished him from the village, even after I tried telling him how wrong the rituals he was practising were. But I never thought he would actually start down this demonic path.

ELIZIER

Well you know how it is, a little chicken blood here, a little bashing of a baby's head with a rock there...vodou magic.

Thierry makes a point not to react.

THIERRY

It is the children inside their wombs that he wants. He took three women from another camp, one of our own was with them during the attack. He is taking them to the mountain, to his cabin, where he will drug them, make them drink blood, consume bones...wretchedness and foolishness. He believes it is making the children inside them stronger, giving them powers. Molding them as his servants. When the time is right, in the light of a full moon...he will carve the babies out of their mothers, and kill the women. He wants the children to belong to him forever, as it will be his knife to bring them out into the world...

The rebels and captives both look disturbed by the story.

OMNI

Super zombies then?

ELIZIER

He is insane, like you, and all the religious nutjobs in this world. But unless he crosses our path, he is not our business.

Melvin, sitting quietly next to Jamie, stares at the fire.

MELVIN

Help us find them.

ELIZIER

What?

Melvin looks up at the exposed mountain summit in the distance.

MELVIN

It is not far. A day, two, at most? No one else is going to help those women and their children.

The rebels LAUGH.

PATRICE

The Americano has lost his damn mind!

ELIZIER

Help you?

MELVIN

Help them. And their children. Why would you allow this to happen? What about all this 'for Haiti' talk?

JAMIE

Damn straight.

ELIZIER

What? Do you want me to shoot you in the fucking head right now? Who are you to tell me what to do?

THIERRY

God gives many chances, Elizier. Christ said to give people not seven, but seventy chances. This is yours. Stop these senseless killings and save the innocent.

Omni, Wester and Patrice seem to take it as a joke, but Elizier's face darkens.

He squats down right next to Thierry and Melvin.

ELIZIER

I don't give a damn about these women. Or about saving anyone. Maybe when the cancer that is this government is gone, maybe then we can start life again. Not before.

THIERRY

I know that thinking, brother. But it can not work. It can never work. The world is fallen, we all know that. But that doesn't give us a right to "help it along," or to do nothing. A single act of compassion can offer a new path for every sinner. For me, for you, and for all of Haiti. Through God everything can be forgiven. Through God all things are possible.

Elizier takes out his gun and sticks it at Thierry's throat.

ELIZIER

Everything. Absolutely everything? Even if I were to shoot your chicken brains out, right now? Your God is gonna forgive me?

Jamie and Melvin tense up, but Thierry stares right back at him.

THIERRY

He will. If you make the choice to change. God wants us to keep trying, no matter how black it gets. You can take life, but God's light can never be extinguished. And believe me, brother, I have seen the darkest of times. Been responsible for some of them. I do not blame you for wanting me dead.

WESTER

Shoot him Elizier! And let's get out of this damn forest.

ELIZIER

(turns back)
Shut the fuck up!

The others go silent.

ELIZIER (CONT'D)

(to Thierry)

You will die on my time, holy shaman, not before.

Melvin sees Elizier's trigger finger tense up.

JAME

Hey man c'mon!

MELVIN

Why don't you lay off, finally? Whatever he's done, it's in the past. Are you going to shoot every person that's done you wrong in life?

ELIZIER

I think you should mind your own business, pastor. Though I've been wondering when you're gonna sprinkle in some Scripture to save us poor heathens? You're lagging behind your Jesus buddy here.

MELVIN

Scripture is not to be mocked by people like you. Who seem to think it's ok to shoot up a camp of disaster victims.

ELIZIER

Is that the card you're gonna play with me, pastor? Too uptight to even bash my head with a Bible? Well that's alright, cause I got a couple of awesome verses memorized that I'm just dying to share with ya.

Elizier KICKS Melvin in the stomach, forcing him to lean over.

The rebel leader pretends to search through his pockets.

ELIZIER (CONT'D)

Ah, damnit. I forgot my trusty Bible with me. Was gonna share some really awesome parts, like all that stuff about killing newborn babies to punish their parents...or that one about killing thousands of people just for looking at the Ark with the Ten Commandments.

(MORE)

ELIZIER (CONT'D)

Or wait, even better - how about that part in Genesis where he drowns all of creation - cause people just weren't cool enough for him no more?

Thierry stares at Elizier sadly. Melvin sits back up.

ELIZIER (CONT'D)

But yeah, Justice San, we're the bad guys. Or maybe we're God's angels - here to clean up the mess, the only way the Bible tells us how?

WESTER

Angels, like the sound of that, let me crap out my wings!

The rebels crack open some beers.

MELVIN

Well you sure sound like you know your Bible. Sure you don't want me to look for a pastor's opening for you?

THIERRY

Forgive me, Melvin, but he knows nothing. This man might have read, and he might have heard, but he can not think, and he can not understand.

ELIZIER

If you two start quoting Jesus-y shit about loving and forgiveness with "not knowing God's ways" I'm gonna have to run get a couple of bibles just to shove them up your asses.

THIERRY

If you're at least talking with us, it means there is a part of you that wants to try to reason. But our theological discussion, as charming as I'm sure it will continue to be, doesn't matter. The only thing that matters right now is helping those women in that cabin.

Elizier glares down at Thierry. Then he looks up at the mountain summit far off in the horizon.

OMNI

Elizier?

THIERRY

The moon is turning. It will be brightest three nights from now.

The other rebels dare not speak as their leader seems to consider things.

ELIZIER

Three nights is good. By tomorrow, you all will have served your purpose. Then your police friends will have plenty of time to get up there and stop that freak. Happy?

THIERRY

Whatever you plan to do to us, Elizier, you know as well as I do that no one is going to go searching for those women based on what you tell them. They will let them die.

ELIZIER

What do I care what they do? These women are villagers, useless wastes of air. Justice San has a mission, and our mission is more important than some stupid vodou ritual.

MELVIN

Then you are a scared little man who hides behind a gun and talks out of his ass.

Elizier KNEES Melvin in the head, almost knocking him out.

ELIZIER

Careful. You're gonna make me kill you before I want to.

MELVIN

(coughs)
Gee, I didn't see that one coming.

PATRICE

Fuck, just pop him now.

ELIZIER

I'm gonna pop him when I want to.
And stop fucking telling me what to
do. All of you.

Thierry WHISPERS something in Melvin's ear. Jamie looks on with concern.

JAMIE

Look man, what are you going to do
to us? What is this sick game? Is
this about money?

ELIZIER

Patience, Americano, soon it will
get interesting.
(to rebels)
Keep watch, Patrice.

With that, Elizier slumps down on the log, puts his rifle on the ground, and closes his eyes.

Patrice gets up with his gun, while the others settle down to rest.

Melvin, Jamie and Thierry try to keep their eyes open, but the exhaustion creeps up on their eyelids.

INT. REBEL'S JEEP - DAY

With the mountains now in the distance, the rebels' jeep RUMBLES on a dirt road stretching along a field. DUCK TAPE holds together the bullet holes on the side.

Melvin, at the back of the jeep, wakes and finds himself tied next to Jamie and Thierry.

Patrice and Wester doze off, sitting in front of them, while Omni operates the wheel at the front.

Elizier, warming himself up with a cigarette, stares right at Melvin, propped up on the side.

ELIZIER

You remind me of someone.

Melvin feels the red gash on his head where Elizier kneed him earlier that morning.

MELVIN

Someone you don't like very much,
I'm guessing.

Elizier teases Melvin with a cigarette, but then just puts it in his own mouth.

ELIZIER

Where your parents from?

MELVIN

I'll skip the small-talk, thanks.

ELIZIER

That ain't a pastorly attitude. I'm just curious.

MELVIN

Well, since you're so friendly. My mother was from Chicago. My father did not stick around long enough so I can ask him.

ELIZIER

There we go! So you're family's in Chicago. I'll note that down.

Melvin turns away from the smoke blowing into his face.

MELVIN

I got no one left. And you're welcome to Chicago whenever you want, I think you'll feel right at home. We got a lot of gun-fights to keep you on your toes.

ELIZIER

Ah, so we're both bastard children then! See pastor, you can relate to the poor sinners in Haiti!

MELVIN

How long have you been doing this for? This...revolution of yours.

ELIZIER

Mmm. Probably since the cops knocked on the door and told my sick mother they were kicking us out. Ya know, after they had shot my father in the face right in front of me a couple months back. The lieutenant's friends, didn't gave a damn that the virus was eating her body, that she was coughing up blood, that she had kids to take care of who had no one else.

(MORE)

ELIZIER (CONT'D)

(pause)

That's kinda when I started getting it. The only way to deal with these people.

Melvin nods.

ELIZIER (CONT'D)

Oh, naah!

(Punches Melvin in the shoulder.)
Don't feel sorry for me now. I'm just giving you a little taste of the real Haiti. It ain't like the postcards!

MELVIN

Chicago ain't all fun and games either. Saw a teenage boy shot right in front of me last year, on the church steps. Drive-by shooting. Part of some "revolution" too I'm sure.

ELIZIER

Well then, pastor, I'm glad you still made time out of your busy life to come all the way out here and solve Haiti's problems. Bet your church sent you out as a hero. The savior missionary!

MELVIN

Nope, they don't even know I'm here. I sneaked in, I lied to John, our pastor...I signed up for this mission behind his back. He would have never let me go in the condition I was in. But I had to. I had to get away, you see. I wanted something else.

Elizier looks out at the mid-day sun, rising high above the horizon.

ELIZIER

Well, you came to quite the place, pastor. Haiti is special, despite it at all. The earthquake, the government...pick your poison. We carry on. How many other countries have such a spirit?

MELVIN
I thought you didn't believe in
spirits?

ELIZIER
Do you?

The two look at each other.

Thierry and Jamie stir, coming back to.

Elizier FLINGS his cigarette at Melvin, and jumps up in the
passenger's seat.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF CITY - DAY

The sun is already setting when the rebel jeep parks close to
a small burned-down stone church in the outskirts of what
appears to be a large city.

The rebels get up, and start dragging the captives toward the
church.

They see another old car parked by the side of the road - but
there's not a single person in sight.

JAMIE
Where are we? C'mon finally!

WESTER
Just shut up.

Patrice grips Jamie tighter and pushes him and the others
inside.

INT. BURNED-DOWN CHURCH BASEMENT - DAY

Forced down a narrow set of stairs, the captives find
themselves beneath the church in a stone basement.

They are greeted by grey, bleak walls.

Izard stands leaning against the stone, listening to a RADIO,
while Pam is kneeling on the floor, her hands and feet bound
together.

JAMIE
Pam!

She strains to look up at him - revealing a SWOLLEN face.

Omni holds Jamie firm, but Elizier nods. The rebel lets the rockstar go.

The American rushes up to his former girlfriend, and cradles her head in his lap.

JAMIE (CONT'D)
What did they...oh God, Pam...

PAM
(fighting sobs)
I'm ok.

The rebels laugh. Omni opens a closet in the back and brings out a TRIPOD, a CAMERA, and a couple of film REELS.

IZARD
You won't be ok for long!

Melvin notices that the rebels are holding onto their guns. Patriece and Wester pin up the large Justise San flag against the wall.

Thierry remains quiet this entire time. He is looking at the ceiling, in silent prayer.

ELIZIER
So, who's ready to bring down a government? Any volunteers?

The rebel leader steps up between Melvin, Thierry, Jamie and Pam, while Omni and Wester set up the tripod.

ELIZIER (CONT'D)
Here's the movie scene. Our precious and white American rockstars cry and huddle in the corner, begging for their lives. Here we have the loving couple, about to get shot down by the big bad terrorists. Except that we are not terrorists, we are justice for the people. And we come with terms and conditions that the government is going to have to follow very carefully, unless they want an international scandal on their hands.

The rebel leader motions to the others. They grab a hold of Jamie and Pam, then FORCE them on their knees in front of the camera.

ELIZIER (CONT'D)

Tears on!

Jamie tries to fight back, but another KNOCK by a rifle to the head sets him back down.

The rebels line up behind them, rifles ready.

JAMIE

(to Pam)

About ready to reconsider this trip now?

Pam FORCES a smile through her strained, grimy face.

PAM

God is looking down, Jamie. Never forget.

Omni gives Elizier a thumbs up. The others quiet down. Camera starts ROLLING.

Elizier steps right behind the couple, his rifle at Pam's head.

ELIZIER

Americans! These are Jamie Redford and Pam Humme. Your rockstars from the radio shows. They came here with permission from the Haiti government. They belong to us now. When you receive this video, you will have a choice. Help Justise San take down this corrupt government, or watch by as they die.

Omni gestures again and turns off the camera. The rebels DRAG the couple back.

Elizier turns his head to Melvin and Thierry. GRINS widely.

ELIZIER (CONT'D)

And I was gonna think of a respectable reason to do this, but honestly, I just want to shoot your brains out in front of the camera. Ask God for a nice spicy plate of forgiveness for me?

The rebels LAUGH their heads off. Melvin looks troubled. Thierry seems calm.

MELVIN

What?

ELIZIER

Now's a good time to keep quiet,
pastor, unless you want to
volunteer instead.

JAMIE

Woah, woah...hold on a minute.

THIERRY

It's alright.

MELVIN

What? Wait! You can't do this! He's
done nothing wrong!

ELIZIER

'It's alright.' My my, he has no
fear! What a brave, wise, faithful
man of God. Awe-inspiring, isn't he
fellas?

Patrice and Wester PUSH Thierry to the center of the room.

Melvin tries to protest, but Izard PUNCHES him in the
stomach, and Elizier SHOVES him back down.

MELVIN

Thierry! No! What are you doing?!

JAMIE

Hey man c'mon, don't do this, this
shit's enough, we can talk--

Thierry looks back at Melvin.

THIERRY

As the Lord wills it.

MELVIN

The Lord?! This psychopath is not
the Lord!

THIERRY

If my brother needs to kill me to
spare your lives, let it be so. My
brother wishes me dead, but he does
not understand that I have long
since left this world and given
myself to Christ.

MELVIN

No! Listen to me. These people are crazy! They won't stop no matter what.

Patrice and Wester hold up the black flag behind Elizier and Thierry. Omni gets up behind the camera mounted on the tripod, adjusting the angle.

ELIZIER

Not gonna call on your spirits? Or your Jesus? No more miracles, lieutenant?

THIERRY

The miracle has already happened, my brother. Because a sinner like me has seen God's grace. "In this world, you will suffer; but be courageous, for I have overcome the world," said the Lord our God.

ELIZIER

My, how many books about you will they write! What a journey, what a life! Martyred in the name of your holy Christ! Right here, right on this very island where he sat on his ass and watched 300,000 thousand of his "children" drown.

The camera CLICKS on, and starts rolling. Omni nods to Elizier.

MELVIN

No! Dammit! Fight him! Godamn you!

THIERRY

(to Melvin)

I have failed my precious Savior every single day of my life, Melvin. I have let Him down with the anger in my heart, and I have betrayed Him with the doubts and unclean thoughts in my mind. I have turned my back on Him and I have rebelled against Him more often than I can share, even after I pledged my life to His kingdom forever.

(to Elizier)

But not today. I will not abandon our Father today.

Elizier GRINS and KICKS Thierry in the shin.

The village elder takes out his cross necklace, and starts MUMBLING a silent prayer.

Elizier looks straight into the camera.

ELIZIER

The world will see this tape,
Sargent Omgono. Governor Kebal.
They will see what you have allowed
to happen to your former soldiers
and leaders. They will see what
awaits the Americans, and they will
know it is up to you whether their
lives will be spared or not.
Justise San has spilled blood, and
more blood is to be spilled unless
you leave our cities. This man -
your former lieutenant Bosse - he
is your final warning.

Elizier points his rifle right at Thierry's face.

Jamie closes his eyes and looks away. Pam's eyes water up,
but she forces herself to look.

MELVIN

Please. No.

Thierry glances up at the ceiling, then SMILES warmly at
Elizier.

THIERRY

May the Lord bless you, and keep
you; may the LORD make His face
shine on you, and be gracious to
you; may the LORD lift up--

-- BANG!

Pam CRIES OUT. Jamie WINCES. Melvin suppresses a shout,
GRITTING his teeth.

Elizier watches Thierry's body SLUMP down to the ground.

And then - the basement goes DARK. The camera FLICKERS out as
well.

OMNI

Shit!

Thunder BURSTS through the sky above. The rebels stare up at
the stone ceiling, which TREMBLES from the vibration.

Izard flips on and off the light-switch, to no effect.

IZARD

The hell just happened?

Elizier DRAGS Thierry's lifeless body to the side. Reaches for his gun.

ELIZIER

A storm, what do you think? The wiring in this piece of crap church must be made out of straw.

He starts up the stairs, PUSHING Melvin ahead.

Izard follows, leaving Omni, Patrice and Wester to keep guard on Jamie and Pam.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF CITY - DAY

Elizier, Izard and Melvin walk out the half-burned church.

The sky has changed dramatically in the short while they have been inside. Grey clouds SWIRL in strange patterns directly above, high winds BLOW right past them.

A flash of lightning ILLUMINATES the grey clouds.

IZARD

The hell is this storm? The sky was clear half an hour ago. And what is this lightning?

ELIZIER

Are you a retard, Izard? I am not a weather man. Stop with your stupid questions.

Izard points to the mountains in the far distance. Strokes of lightning BLAST through the summit one by one, as if being conducted by a metal rod.

ELIZIER (CONT'D)

Oh.

The rebel leader GRABS Melvin by the arm, and drags him away.

EXT. BURNED-DOWN CHURCH GRAVEYARD - CONTINUOUS

The burned-down church's graveyard behind the main building is barely standing - the surrounding gate has been knocked down; only a handful of CROSSES are planted over the small plot of graves.

Elizier SHOVES Melvin into one of the large stone crosses in the center.

ELIZIER

Are you people playing tricks with me?

He RELOADS his gun and puts a bullet inside.

MELVIN

Tricks? What on Earth are you talking about?

ELIZIER

Don't make a fool out of me! I've seen things in these forests. Things that should not be there. Things that..

MELVIN

...are not real?

ELIZIER

What have you seen?

MELVIN

Oh, I've not only seen - I've talked and held a conversation or two. You still sure you don't believe in spirits?

Melvin glances up the mountains in the distance.

The sky over the fist-shaped summit is SWIRLING into another strange cloud formation.

ELIZIER

Your vodou shaman. What did he tell you? Was he casting something? Were you putting curses on us?

MELVIN

...it's just a freakin' storm, man.

Elizier relaxes his grip.

ELIZIER

What?

MELVIN

I'm just curios. Why, any of this? You really think killing villagers and people who are here to help is going to force your government to leave you the keys? Do you seriously know how these things work?

ELIZIER

Lecture me, then! Tell me how these things work! Tell me to turn to the Lord! I just killed your friend - it's still not too late for a slice of that forgiveness pie, right?

MELVIN

What happens when you run out of bullets?

ELIZIER

Oh, pastor. The first man I killed - well, he was a pastor. Like you. It was after a nice Sunday service before his entire congregation. I don't know what kind of man he was, I didn't really care. But he was a necessary sacrifice. So that the others would know what awaits them. You had to see the look on their faces when they saw his brains spill out on the ground.

The rebel leader gets right into the pastor's face.

ELIZIER (CONT'D)

I haven't run out of bullets since.

MELVIN

Well I'm not gonna talk you out of this. You already murdered a man much better than me. Do what you gotta do.

ELIZIER

You know, that pastor I killed - he showed no fear. He died in prayer. Telling me how much his God loves me. Just like your lieutenant.

(MORE)

ELIZIER (CONT'D)

They were both brave men...but unlike you, I don't think they actually wanted to die.

Melvin can only stare at him.

ELIZIER (CONT'D)

Why do you want to die, pastor? Are you so eager to meet your God? Or do you just not want to live anymore?

Melvin looks down.

The rebel leader grins. Sticks the barrel of the gun right at Melvin's chin.

ELIZIER (CONT'D)

You have to tell me why. I must know. Why does a young, healthy-looking pastor like yourself want to bite the bullet?

Melvin looks up at Elizier with determined eyes.

Elizier's SMILE widens, turning into a GRIN--

Before a SCREAM cuts through the air.

Elizier listens up. A GUNSHOT follows.

The rebel leader grabs his prisoner and RUSHES out the courtyard.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF CITY - CONTINUOUS

Elizier and Melvin come out to see Izard lying on the ground in front of the church, blood rushing out of his neck.

ELIZIER

The fuck is this?!

Elizier stops for a moment to check the rebel's pulse, but Izard is dead.

The rebel leader and Melvin RUN down into the church.

INT. BURNED-DOWN CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

Elizier and Melvin skip down the basement steps - to find Jamie and Omni the only ones alive in the midst of a slaughter-scene.

Patrice and Wester are lying on the ground, their throats cut, a pool of BLOOD soaking into the stone floor.

ELIZIER

What the fuck, what the fuck...

Jamie, his hands still bound, is pushing himself against the wall. Omni, knocked out, is coming back to. Pam is nowhere to be found.

Melvin SHAKES his fellow American, untying his bandages.

JAMIE

They took her...they took her...the priest...his men...shit!

ELIZIER

The bokor? That motherfucking priest?! How did he do this?! How did they just - where did they come from? How did they follow us?

Jamie gets up on his feet and stares right at Elizier.

JAMIE

I'm going up there. That sick monster isn't touching her, whatever he's planning. I don't care. I'm going. Shoot me if you want.

Elizier gets right up in his face.

ELIZIER

You're gonna sit down and shut up.

JAMIE

Move.

Elizier SLUGS Jamie in the face, knocking him off his feet.

The rockstar stumbles and SWINGS back, landing a soft punch into the rebel leader's chest - who takes it in his stride and SMASHES him through the face.

Melvin tries to get in between the two.

MELVIN

Enough have died! Stop this!

Omni gets up silently, stares at the others, then MARCHES up the stairs.

Elizier PUSHES Melvin away. He picks up his rifle, and heads straight up after Omni.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF CITY - DUSK

Omni loads his gun on the small car parked next to the church.

Elizier comes out and walks right after him.

ELIZIER
What the hell are you doing?!

OMNI
I'm out, Elizier. I'm sorry. I'm leaving.

ELIZIER
You're what?!

OMNI
This isn't for me. Whatever the fuck is going on. Cops we can shoot, we can outrun, but these mountain priests, these demons...I'm not staying here. I'm gone.

ELIZIER
I don't remember saying you could leave?

OMNI
I'll let them know. I have a contact.

Omni gets in the car, and starts the engine.

He backs up the vehicle, and switches gears. Elizier PUTS UP his rifle...

But watches his last remaining soldier drive onto the dusty road and roll on out of there.

The rebel leader menaces after him for a while.

Melvin helps Jamie out of the church, the latter HOBBLING from the blows.

The rebel leader goes up to them. Jamie, with a busted lip, puts up his fists and gets ready for round two..

But Elizier stops right before him, in front of Izard's body.

The two glare at each other.

MELVIN

Elizier, you heard Thierry, that lunatic is going to carve the women open. You want to blow his brains out? We're coming with you.

Jamie looks out into the city in the distance.

JAMIE

What if we get to the city? Someone will help us there? We can call someone?

ELIZIER

I have been waiting for 'someone' to help me all my life, Americano. That 'someone' ain't coming. Not here.

Melvin studies the mountains and the skies.

MELVIN

Thierry said the full moon is in three days. Can we get up there before that?

Elizier considers. Then he walks up to the jeep and picks up another one of the rifles.

ELIZIER

The better question, pastor, is are you ready to kill people? Are you ready to take life?

It's Melvin's turn to consider. Jamie, however, opens his hands.

JAMIE

Give me the goddamn gun.

Elizier laughs.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

You think I don't know how to shoot? Been practising on the gun range ever since I was a kid.

ELIZIER

Get back in line, Americano. Unless you want another beating.

JAMIE

Listen, man! I'm the one who got her involved in this. Whatever else happens - I'm responsible for her. I ain't getting in your way for anything else - I just want to find her, and get the hell out of this country. Let me do that.

ELIZIER

Oh, and you're not gonna write a few songs about your adventures in Haiti? Material not good enough for a new CD?

Melvin reaches for the gun.

MELVIN

I don't want to kill people. But if there's no one else that can help, I will do what needs to be done.

Elizier flips over the rifle.

ELIZIER

You can carry the guns, but the bullets stay with me. And if you're going to be clever with me, I will put one each in both your heads.

Jamie nods.

MELVIN

Ok.

The rebel leader SHOVES the rifle in Melvin's hands and walks back to the jeep.

Nights falls upon the Haitian sky.

EXT. REBEL'S JEEP - DAY

Jamie, in the driver's seat next to Melvin, keeps both hands on the wheel.

Elizier sits behind them, watching closely.

The jeep drives through the vast Haitian countryside, down the winding dirt road, heading directly for the mountains.

As they reach the edges of the forest, the road diverts into two.

Jamie slows down the vehicle, and turns his head.

ELIZIER

Left.

Jamie makes the left turn, and they continue into the trees, leaving the outskirts of the city in the distance.

EXT. MOUNTAIN TRAIL UPHILL - DAY

With the jeep parked in the bushes below, Elizier, Jamie and Melvin push up the steep uphill trail.

The sun SWELTERS high above, punishing their sweaty bodies on the exposed rocks, but they hang in there.

Each man carries a rifle across his back, and a bag of water bottles over his shoulder.

Elizier follows behind Jamie and Melvin, keeping an eye on the Americans, who seem tired but determined to keep up the pace.

Melvin stops for a breather.

The thick forest below glimmers like a great green ocean, the leaves RIPPLING like waves from the light breeze.

The birds CHIRP from branch to branch and FLUTTER right by the climbers.

Elizier sends Melvin a warning look.

Rest time over, the pastor takes a SIP from a water bottle, then continues on up.

EXT. MOUNTAIN TRAIL CAMPFIRE - NIGHT

Melvin puts together the last few sticks of a makeshift campfire, as Jamie drags two logs together.

The Americans find themselves on the side of a mountain trail. Elizier stands next to a tree a number of feet away, PUFFING his cigarette.

The pile of rifles sits right next to the rebel leader.

JAMIE

(quietly)

I don't like any of this.

(MORE)

JAMIE (CONT'D)

He's gonna shoot us the moment he thinks he ain't got any use for us anymore.

MELVIN

Probably.

Melvin finishes putting together the base stone support for the campfire. Then he LIGHTS it up with a match.

JAMIE

(glances back)

You think we can get those guns?
Maybe--

MELVIN

Not gonna happen, Jamie. Plus, if there's a fight coming, we kind of need him. However many men that bokor has, it's more than us.

JAMIE

I just don't know who's our bigger enemy at this point. If we do find Pam - what, is he really gonna let us go?

Elizier TOSSES them a rope.

ELIZIER

Tie each other to a tree. I'm going to sleep. Remember - any one of you starts being funny, it's over.

JAMIE

What for? Where would we go?

ELIZIER

Just in case you decide to be a Hollywood action hero and go rescue your pregnant girlfriend on your own.

JAMIE

She's not my...and she's not pregnant.

ELIZIER

Of course she is. Why do you think the bokor took her?

Jamie swallows.

JAMIE

No, she can't be pregnant. When we were together we were gonna wait for...I mean we promised each other that...

It suddenly dawns on him. Elizier SMIRKS.

ELIZIER

Preeeety sure she's pregnant, rockstar. She even had a little bit of a belly forming, no? Pastor, what do you think?

The country-star stares at the ground.

JAMIE

It doesn't change a thing. We need to get her out of there.

ELIZIER

Nighty-night, fellas.

Melvin takes the rope and points to the closest tree.

Jamie, reluctantly, gets up and goes to sit next to it.

The youth pastor WRAPS the rope around the country singer as Elizier watches on.

Melvin fastens the rope tighter, and tighter. Jamie grimaces. But Melvin PULLS it again, and again, and again...

INT. MELVIN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Melvin sits in complete silence in his lonely apartment, head in his hands, hunched over the large glass table.

A bunch of paper bills stacked on top of each other wait for his attention. 'BILLING NOTICE' reads at the top of the first one.

The bedroom door at the end of the room is painted over in WHITE. A few chairs and a bookshelf have been moved around.

Melvin sits there, staring at the bills.

A small HANDGUN lies on his lap.

The TV blares RANDOM IMAGES of NEWS STORIES in the background, but Melvin's head is completely shut in, not a single sound registering in his mind.

An old brown BIBLE lies thrown at the back of the room, a couple of torn pages swept aside on the wooden floor.

The pastor's eyes are wide. Numb. Sinking into the glass.

He looks at the gun. Picks it up.

He runs his hand through the grip, the hammer, the barrel...and the trigger.

He hesitates for a moment, and pushes open the magazine. Two BULLETS stare back at him.

He puts the magazine back in. The gun CLICKS.

Melvin swallows hard. A cold, deathly SHADOW creeps over his face. He turns the barrel toward his head, his hand SHAKING...

His pupils FLICKER like crazy, his mind RACING through battlefields.

Sweat BREAKS OUT on his forehead, his chest POUNDING beneath his shirt.

Inch by inch, the barrel DIGS into the side of his head, nestling into his short black hair.

Melvin GRITS his teeth. Breath QUICKENS. His finger BRUSHES the trigger...PRESSING deeper...

NEWS REPORTER (O.S.)

...that has already caused thousands of deaths. The devastation has been described by the prime minister as 'unimaginable.'

Melvin looks up at the TV screen. The sound suddenly floods back in.

The TV is showing images of the 2010 Haiti earthquake - coastlines washed away, buildings destroyed, smoke engulfing entire cities, people running and SCREAMING out on the streets.

NEWS REPORTER (CONT'D)

The 7.0 - magnitude earthquake that struck yesterday has reduced to rubble countless of buildings in Port-au-Prince, the capital, which was near the epicenter.

(MORE)

NEWS REPORTER (CONT'D)

Emergency rescue workers are trying to save thousands of people buried under the wreckage, with the death toll rising by the minute - some fear it will climb into a scale of hundreds of thousands.

Dazed by the images of destruction FLASHING before his eyes, Melvin puts back down the gun.

EXT. MOUNTAIN TRAIL CAMPFIRE - NIGHT

Elizier, embracing a rifle, sleeps next to a tree close to the campfire.

Jamie, tied up to the tree a few feet away, is doing everything he can not to drift off, but his red eyes are too heavy...

The fire CRACKLES quietly in the stillness of the night.

Melvin, tied to another tree besides Jamie, rests with his head down.

When suddenly a WISPING NOISE blows through his ear.

The youth pastor BULGES at the ropes binding his body. He catches his mouth before he wakes up the others.

Melvin's eyes freeze when he notices a YELLOW GLOW move through the trees behind the campfire.

He peers into the foliage...and sees two human shapes. One seems to be a man, the other a woman - but they never come close enough for him to make out their faces...

He WIGGLES his shoulders - and the rope drops onto his lap after just a few pulls, as if someone had unfastened it.

Melvin sits there for a few moments. He studies the sleeping Jamie and Elizier.

Then he gets up on his feet, and quietly makes his way through the bushes, away from the campfire.

EXT. MOUNTAIN TRAIL - NIGHT

Melvin follows the yellow glow SHINING through the thicket before him.

The lights hovers in a circle - and finally he can make up the frame of a man. With dreadlocks. It's the Spirit.

The pastor stands there as the Spirit peeks out from beneath a branch.

MELVIN

Why are you following me? Why can't you bother the others?

SPIRIT

Why do you assume I don't?

Melvin glares at his Cheshire cat-like face. Then glances back at the campfire, where he can see the outlines of Elizier and Jamie still sleeping.

SPIRIT (CONT'D)

I talk to whoever I please, whenever I please. I am a free spirit, pastor. Though sometimes when I speak, no one will listen.

MELVIN

Oh really? So you had a word with that mass-murdering rebel psychopath back there? How did that go?

SPIRIT

Some people, in certain stages of their lives, do not want to be reached. They refuse to open their hearts and minds, no matter what you tell them.

(pause)

No matter how much you warn, and no matter how much you beg.

MELVIN

Where were you?

SPIRIT

Hmmm?

MELVIN

Where were you when it mattered?

(pause)

MELVIN (CONT'D)

For Jamie, I mean. And Pam. And Thierry.

SPIRIT

And what about everyone that the rebels shot at the camp?

(MORE)

SPIRIT (CONT'D)

And all those people that died in the earthquake? Or all the death and suffering that mounts day by day in this world? How could the heavens allow such a thing?

MELVIN

Who are you?

The Spirit smiles.

MELVIN (CONT'D)

Are you a ghost? A demon? Did the bokor summon you? Are you the devil?

The youth pastor looks back down at the ground.

MELVIN (CONT'D)

I'm insane.

The Spirit walks right up to the pastor. SNAPS his fingers in his face.

Melvin looks up. The Spirit puts his hands on his shoulder.

SPIRIT

You wanna see them?

MELVIN

See who?

With that, the ghost turns and walks back into the thicket, WAVING to the young man to follow.

Melvin looks up at the Haitian moonlight seeping through the heavy crowns of the trees.

And then he follows.

EXT. MOUNTAIN FOREST TRAIL - NIGHT

The Spirit moves too fast for Melvin to catch up. The youth pastor TRUDGES through the foliage, helpless to prevent the SCRAPES and CUTS that the shrubs bestow.

The campfire has long disappeared; the only light he is following now is the Spirit's yellow haze.

The Spirit slips further and further away, until Melvin can barely see him.

The forest menaces with a forboding silence. The further he walks, the darker it gets.

But then he feels the glow appear again - behind him.

He turns to find the two figures he spotted lurking around the campfire. The man and the woman. Daren and SEVILLE, Melvin's 50 year old mother.

Melvin can not believe his eyes. He can't even breathe.

The youth pastor makes a step toward the figures -- when a dog's BARKING startles him.

Melvin turns to see a mutt - beige in color, thin and scrawny - peek out from the bushes. The dog looks at him for a moment, then DARTS back into the forest.

Sure enough, the apparitions are gone when Melvin turns back.

EXT. MOUNTAIN FOREST VALLEY - NIGHT

The youth pastor follows the dog's BARKS, the only thing guiding him through the darkness.

He TRIPS over a rock and rolls down the trail - TUMBLING over dirt and rocks - and stops at the edges of a valley in the bosom of the forest.

There lies a tent and a humble campfire that a middle-aged Haitian man and his wife are trying to keep alive by feeding it sticks.

A young boy comes out of the tent - and CLAPS his hands when he spots the dog running up to them.

The man and his son embrace their canine companion, HUGGING and patting him on the head, as the mother smiles.

The small family look like they are barely getting by out here, a couple of small fruit baskets seemingly their only food next to the cooking pot of soup.

The man and his wife share a kiss while their son wrestles with the pooch.

SPIRIT (O.S.)

All is not doom and gloom on this island, Melvin. Haiti is not a land of misery and death. There is life, there is family, there is joy here - that many would envy.

Melvin turns around at the Spirit.

MELVIN

You show me my dead brother, and my dead mother, who slit their wrists and overdosed on heroin because they did not want this family, or this life...and then you show me this?

SPIRIT

I did not "show you" anything, Melvin. You see what you want to see.

MELVIN

I don't want to see this. Good for them. I hope they will be happy, forever. And?

The youth pastor makes his way past the ghost, but the Spirit turns after him.

SPIRIT

This is it, pastor. This is the spirit of Haiti. This is God's grace. This is His love for the world. This is what you came to fight for, to rebuild and restore. This is hope.

Melvin stops.

SPIRIT (CONT'D)

You have asked me so many questions. This is the only answer that matters. The only one you need.

The yellow glow REKINDLES around the Spirit. He grins with a toothy smile, and steps back.

SPIRIT (CONT'D)

And freedom we sing!

The Spirit tips back and DROPS down the valley, his arms STRETCHED out like a cross.

When Melvin looks down, he finds no trace of the glowing spectre.

Instead, the light at the campfire seems to have grown BIGGER and BRIGHTER.

A full FIRE is raging now, shadows DANCING on the smiling faces and glowing hearts of the family and their dog.

Melvin watches them, the tension draining out his face.

EXT. MOUNTAIN TRAIL CAMPFIRE - LATER

Melvin walks out of the bushes back onto the site of the mountain trail campfire - but as he looks up, he finds Elizier's RIFLE in his face.

MELVIN
(holding hands up)
Hold on now.

Elizier glares straight at him, as the fire behind CRACKLES. Jamie is still asleep next to the tree.

ELIZIER
I think you're gonna have to die.

MELVIN
I took a walk. And I came back.
Gonna shoot me for that?

Elizier moves his finger toward the trigger.

MELVIN (CONT'D)
I talked to him.

Elizier tilts his head.

MELVIN (CONT'D)
Nevermind.

ELIZIER
You talked to who? What is this
shit?

Melvin shakes his head.

MELVIN
I'm just gonna sit back down. No
harm done. We're good.

ELIZIER
Have you started talking to
yourself, Americano?

Melvin walks back to Jamie, and wraps the rope around himself.

Elizier stares at him, equally annoyed as confused.

EXT. MOUNTAIN TRAIL UPHILL - DAY

Melvin, Jamie and Elizier push up the steep rocks on the side of the mountain.

The sun GLARES high above, the path leading up to the summit now clear and straight-forward.

They climb up using the exposed rocks, shrubs and roots poking out from the dry patches.

Melvin leads the way, with Jamie and Elizier below.

Jamie's hands are BLEEDING RED from the many scrapes, but still he pushes on.

The rebel leader below him steps on an unstable root, which gives way and he SLIPS --

- but before he rolls down the side of the mountain, Jamie CLASPS his wrist, and hangs on.

The American PULLS the Haitian up, using every last bit of strength, and Elizier regains his footing.

The two exchange a silent glance.

EXT. MOUNTAIN SUMMIT TRAIL - DAY

The trio find their way on a natural trail leading into the cover of the tree-line at the top.

As Jamie and Melvin walk into the bushes, Elizier stops.

The rebel leader sets down a couple of packs of bullets on the ground. Wipes the sweat from his forehead.

The Americans wait.

ELIZIER

Well? Take them.

Jamie and Melvin look at each other, then walk up to the bullets.

ELIZIER (CONT'D)

Give me one sign, just one, and I am shooting both of you in the head. No questions asked. Do you understand?

MELVIN

We got it the first 10 times you
said it.

Jamie swings down the empty rifle from his back, and picks up
one of the packs.

JAMIE

I'm here for Pam. Nothing else.

Elizier smirks.

ELIZIER

How did your first commandment go,
pastor? Something about not killing
people?

Melvin kneels down and grabs the second pack of bullets.

MELVIN

There's a time for peace, and
there's a time for war.

ELIZIER

Just one sign, pastor, remember.

Melvin walks up to Jamie, and the two head into the tree-
line, their backs to the rebel leader.

EXT. VODOU HUT GROUNDS - DAY

Jamie, Melvin and Elizier stop in their tracks as they come
out to the edges of a clearing at the summit.

A small, heptagon-shaped wooden hut stands about 20 feet
before a dramatic cliff leading down the mountain.

Thick, black smoke PUFFS out from the chimney. There are no
windows, or doors that they can see.

The grass around the hut has been dug up - four open graves
lie waiting. Large burned-out RED CANDLES surround each one.

A large stone table, STAINED WITH DRIED BLOOD, lies stationed
before the graves.

A number of BONES of various shapes and sizes line up across
the table, spread around the graves.

JAMIE

Those human or animal bones?

Even Elizier seems a bit disturbed.

ELIZIER

Both.

Jamie makes the sign of the cross. Melvin tenses the grip on his rifle.

Elizier suddenly PULLS the others back into the cover of the bushes.

ELIZIER (CONT'D)

(whispers)

They're coming out!

The trio behold four women - including Pam, walk out of the hut, where a round door blended into the wall SLIDES open.

The women are dressed in long white robes, their feet bare, each with a deep RED CUT through their foreheads.

They walk out onto the grass, and sit down on the long stone table in front of the graves.

JAMIE

Pam!

Jamie DASHES out of the bushes before the other two can stop him.

He runs right up to Pam, but like the other women, her sunken eyes are distant, drugged and unresponsive.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Pam! It's me, Jamie! Are you ok?
What did they do to you?

Melvin and Elizier rush out after him, straight for the hut.

Pam TREMBLES as Jamie tries to snap her out of it, but it's to little effect.

The other women, all visibly pregnant, are in the same state, staring blankly at the graves ahead of them.

Elizier studies the hut, ready for anything. It stares back at him with a gravely silence.

Melvin helps Jamie as they try to get Pam and the other women up on their feet.

PAM

Jamie..?

JAMIE
I'm here, Pam, I'm here! We're
getting you out of here!

Just then, a HAND from one of graves GRABS Jamie by the foot.

JAMIE (CONT'D)
What--

The hand PULLS Jamie's foot to the side, forcing him down.

Three NAKED MEN, brandishing long KNIVES, JUMP out from the graves. WHITE CEREMONIAL PAINT covers their faces.

Elizier SHOOTs one right through the head. Another jumps on top of Jamie, STABBING the American in the arm.

Melvin raises his rifle at the third naked men in front of him - but the crazed attacker SWATS the gun away, and LUNGES at the youth pastor.

Just as the naked man gets ready to strike a blow with his raised knife - Elizier SHOOTs him down through the head as well.

The door of the hut slides open again - and out comes Micelo, naked and tattooed, a savage look on his face.

ELIZIER
Micelo...what--

Before the rebel leader can react, the third naked man jumps on top of him. Micelo THROWS himself at his cousin, wrestling the rifle away.

Elizier fights back, PUNCHING the naked man, who JABS at him with his knife.

His rifle knocked away, the rebel leader pulls out his own knife from his leg-strap, SLAMS and elbow in Micelo's face and SWINGS back at the attacker.

Pam finds herself on her knees, too dazed to act.

Jamie WRITHES on the ground, trying to pull the knife out of his shoulder.

Melvin rushes to help him - but just then, the hut's door SLIDES open a third time.

A tall, dark figure steps out of the shadows.

It's the BOKOR. Adorned in a self-tailored PURPLE SUIT and hat, a bone-necklace hanging from his neck, and black ceremonial tattoos running through his face, exposed arms, and legs.

The dark priest carries a staff in one hand - and a revolver in another.

Elizier STABS the third attacker in the neck - but just as he pulls the knife out and BOOTS Micelo away, the Bokor SHOOTs him in the arm.

Melvin steps in front of the sorcerer before he can shoot the rebel leader again.

The dark priest stares right into the youth pastor's eyes.

Then he FLASHES Melvin a snake-like SMILE, his gold teeth bestowing it a sinister ordinance.

The bokor slides in a circle around Melvin, then grips the handle of the staff.

He knocks it on his palm a couple of times - collecting a handful of WHITE POWDER.

BOKOR
You belong with us.

Melvin stares down at the bokor's hand - but before he can jump away, the dark priest BLOWS the white powder right into the pastor's face.

Melvin staggers back. He COUGHS out the contents, but his vision immediately BLURS.

The world around him starts SPINNING. His legs start WOBBLING.

He spots Jamie TACKLE Micelo, as Elizier crawls on the ground, holding his bleeding shoulder.

And he sees the Bokor, LAUGHING and SHAKING the staff in his face, CHANTING incomprehensible words.

Melvin STRETCHES out his arms, trying to keep his balance, but his feet lead him toward one of the open graves, step by step..

He lifts his head at the sun BLAZING high in the sky, above the tree-line and the mountain peaks in the distance...

...and then he loses his footing and DROPS straight into the grave.

EXT. HAITI OCEANSIDE - VISION

Melvin suddenly finds himself overlooking the great Haitian oceanside, the waves crashing onto the rocky coast.

The clear blue waters shimmer beneath the sun.

The FREEDOM music starts playing from an unseen source.

The Spirit is DANCING in the waters, knee-deep in the sandy shoreline, smiling and laughing and DRUMMING on the tanbou.

SPIRIT

And freedom we sing!

The ghost looks back at the pastor, who seems to be a spirit himself, drifting through the beach, looking up at the fist-shaped summit high above..

EXT. HAITI FORREST - VISION

Melvin sees himself GLIDING through the trees of Haiti's forests like a bird, skimming over the leaves, ducking over and under the branches.

He sways up and down, grazes the ground, goes higher up, above the trees, into the sun, overlooking the great Haiti countryside,

- overlooking the open green fields, the streams,

- overlooking the forests, the ocean...

INT. / EXT. APARTMENT / BALCONY - VISION

A 10 year-old Melvin, in a bathing suit, runs around the living room, being chased by 13 year-old Daren.

Daren TACKLES Melvin on the sofa, and the two WRESTLE each other as they fall on the carpet.

A large inflatable pool full of water SPARKLES in the sunshine on the balcony outside.

Seville, in her 30s, walks out and crosses her arms.

SEVILE

You two! I'm not letting ya'll in
the pool fooling 'round like this!
You'll fall off the darn balcony!

The two boys stop and look at her with innocent faces.

YOUNG MELVIN
We won't mom, we won't!

YOUNG DAREN
Melvin started it!

YOUNG MELVIN
No I didn't! Liar!

Melvin SMACKS Daren's head with a pillow, and squeezes out of his grasp.

He opens up the sliding glass door of the balcony and SPLASHES into the pool as his older brother rushes after him.

SEVILE
Easy, easy! Don't hurt yourselves
now!

The mother can't help but chuckle as the young ones wrestle and SPLASH around in the water.

EXT. HAITIAN TENT VILLAGE - VISION

Melvin and the Spirit find themselves back at the tent village.

The villagers have gathered around a large fire ROARING into the night, rising high above the tents.

SPIRIT
And freedom we sing!

The ghost RUSHES ahead and grabs a few of the women, who form a circle and start DANCING to the beat around the fire as the men PLAY their drums.

A number of villagers and little children join them, and soon the whole camp is in on the dance.

The Spirit leads them on, CLAPPING his hands and CHANTING, their energetic dance reflecting into the flames, RISING higher and higher.

Melvin stands outside the circle. He looks at his hands.

A thin black VEIL slides over them. It wraps itself around his body like a snake.

Then the youth pastor turns around.

His mother and brother stand in the shadows outside the circle, watching the dance.

They huddle back as soon as they notice Melvin is watching them.

MELVIN

What do you want from me?

The pastor's breathing gets heavier.

MELVIN (CONT'D)

What do you want me to do?

Melvin GRABS his brother by the shirt and SHOVES him back.

MELVIN (CONT'D)

Well, tell me! Speak to me!

The figures can only look at him sadly.

Seville reaches a hand toward her son's cheek, but hesitates and stops before she touches him.

TEARS are swelling in Melvin's eyes, who chokes them back.

MELVIN (CONT'D)

You...did what you did, and now you stand here, and you don't speak, and you think I can just---

BANG!

INT/EXT. VODOU GRAVE - DAY

Melvin stares up with wide open eyes, his body still frozen, lying in the grave, when he sees a bullet BLAST through the Bokor's head above.

The shaman goes down on his knees, and falls dead beside the grave.

The pastor's hands and feet TWITCH ever so slightly, but still he cannot move, he cannot break free from the powder-induced coma.

EXT. VODOU HUT GROUND - SAME TIME

Elizier stands a few feet away from the bokor, his gun still aimed at the dead shaman's head.

The four other naked man, including Micelo, lie dead on the ground, bleeding into the dirt.

Pam, breaking out of the daze, crawls toward Jamie.

He tries to get up, but she pushes him back down.

PAM
Don't move.

JAMIE
What?

Pam PULLS the knife out of his arm as he SHOUTS in pain.

She then RIPS a strip of clothing from his shirt and tightens the wound as quickly as she can.

PAM
Lie down or you'll bleed out. Trust me.

As Pam tends to the other three women on the stone table, who are also starting to come out of the daze - she spots Elizier looming above her and Jamie, pointing a gun to her head.

The rebel leader has his finger on the trigger, ready to blow her head off.

But he hesitates. Stares at her.

PAM (CONT'D)
Let me help them.

Elizier's hand drops down.

He looks around the summit. He looks into the vodou hut, at the menacing darkness looming from the open door.

He looks at his dead cousin, lying naked on the ground.

Then the rebel leader turn around, and starts walking, stepping over the naked bodies, the guns, the knives, the bones, the candles and the graves.

As soon as he disappears into the trees, Pam gets up and helps the pregnant women off the table, and sets them down in the grass.

PREGNANT WOMAN
He was going to cut us
tonight...cut our bellies...take
our children...thank you..thank
God..

The helpless mothers embrace Pam, who places a hand on her own belly.

PAM
He's not coming back. It's over.
You're safe.

Jamie, holding his bandaged shoulder, sits down next to them.

For the first time, he glances at Pam's belly, which shows a small but recognizable BABY BUMP.

PAM (CONT'D)
We have to get them help. You too.
It might become infected...

Jamie keeps a straight face, then looks around. He glances at the dead boker, then at the open grave next to him.

JAMIE
Melvin!

EXT. MOUNTAIN FOREST TRAIL / SUMMIT TRAIL - DAY

Elizier walks through the forest trail, and comes out on the opposite side of the summit, on clear open rock with a panoramic view of Haiti.

The sun washes down on his blood-stained vest, the crystal blue sky rising high above the rolling hills and green forests below.

Besides the trail behind him, there is nowhere to go. The rock leads straight down - and it is a long, steep fall.

Suddenly, the PFT-PFT-PFT of a HELICOPTER'S ROTOR fills the air.

HELICOPTER POLICE (O.S.)
Do not move! We have you locked in
target!

Elizier stays rooted in his place.

He looks up at the BLINDING sun, but he can only make out the OUTLINE of the helicopter coming down toward him.

The rebel leader looks at his rifle one more time.

Then he tosses it down the cliff.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY

Jamie and Pam, dressed in fresh clean clothes, lean on opposite walls inside a hospital corridor.

Half a dozen nurses and doctors walk by down the hall, entering rooms and wheeling around handicapped patients.

Pam looks down at the white floor, unwilling to meet Jamie's eyes.

JAMIE

I mean we'll see how things go. Dove's Harvest are doing the right thing by stepping up, at least now authorities will know what's going on down there. Maybe it won't be too bad if we go to that event in--

PAM

Jamie.

He quiets down, and readjusts the large bandage on his shoulder.

PAM (CONT'D)

I'm not taking the flight with you. I'm boarding a day after.

JAMIE

What...why?

She looks down again.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

I know how messed up things got, but we...I mean together, we got through this..I can't imagine what it was like in that hut--

PAM

It doesn't work like that. I'm sorry. The talk we had that night in the hotel, before all this?

Jamie's turn to look down.

PAM (CONT'D)

That's how it is Jamie. I know we went through a lot here. But nothing changes. How could it? I can't be with you. There is nothing that needs fixing, I'm just called to go...on a different path. I can't tour with you, or be with you, I want to go back to school. You can understand that.

JAMIE
So you're pregnant?

PAM
Don't do this to yourself, Jamie.
Just don't. What I do with my life
is up to me now.

JAMIE
When did this even happen? I just
want to know.

PAM
I didn't cheat on you, if that's
what you're asking. It was after.
Please don't start thinking of me
as some kind of monster. I have
always told you the truth.

JAMIE
Things ain't perfectly lining up in
my head, Pam.

Pam walks away, heading to the bathroom.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Melvin, lying in a bed inside the hospital room, wakes up
with a JOLT.

He starts COUGHING severely, as if he's choking out his
lungs.

A middle-aged Haitian NURSE standing next to the monitoring
machine hooked to his body presses him down gently.

NURSE
It's ok, sir. You were in a coma.
You will be alright.

Melvin looks around the white hospital walls. Sunlight
STREAMS in from the half-closed shades.

MELVIN
Where am I?

NURSE
Port-au-Prince, sir. Haiti.
(glances out the door)
You have friends here who have been
at your side for the past few days.

Melvin turns and sees Jamie and Pam walk into the room.

Their faces light up when they see their friend.

PAM

Melvin! Thank God!

JAMIE

Damn man, they weren't sure when you'd wake up again. Good to have you back on line! How you feeling?

MELVIN

I remember...things that I am not sure I want to remember.

JAMIE

Tell me about it! That whacked out shaman - who even imagines stuff like this? I'm starting the book tomorrow - soon as we get out of here.

MELVIN

What happened? With the priest..that bokor..

JAMIE

The nutjob blew these white chemicals in your face - what were they called again? But they made you fall into a coma and shut down your body like you were dead. Good thing the doctor knew what was up. Freaky stuff.

PAM

He drugged me and the women too, it was horrible...but the doctor says you could still see and hear what was going on?

MELVIN

I fell into the grave...I couldn't move.

JAMIE

What did you see?

MELVIN

What did I see?

JAMIE

The doc said the powder causes insane hallucinations, colors, places, people...messes up your head completely. Like the whackiest dream you can have. It's how the shaman gets his "zombie" slaves, he messed with them bad.

Melvin can't help but betray a look of distress.

PAM

Whatever that man did, it's over. The doctor says you'll be perfectly fine Melvin, it's out of your system.

MELVIN

What do you mean "hallucinations?" I didn't see hallucinations. I saw...what I saw...

He shuts up before they get concerned.

MELVIN (CONT'D)

What happened to Elizier?

Jamie sets down a scrunched-up newspaper on the youth pastor's lap.

"TERRORIST ELIZIER DECO CAPTURED, JUSTISE SAN ORGANIZATION DISMANTLED" reads the headline, showing a photo of Elizier, surrounded by a number of armed soldiers, being lead out of the helicopter.

JAMIE

They found him on the mountain just before the bastard could get away. He's gonna pay for what they did to Thierry and everyone else.

PAM

I'm not big on the death penalty, but they have to make sure scum like him are kept behind bars for the rest of their lives. How many people did they kill? For what?

JAMIE

We're going home, man! That's the good news.

(MORE)

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Dove's Harvest wanted to speak to you when you woke up, though, something strange like they couldn't find info about which church sent you over here?

Melvin is staring out the window, at the sunshine PEEKING through the shades.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Melvin?

The pastor looks back at them, and smiles.

MELVIN

I'm glad you guys are safe too.
Thanks for not leaving me there.

He lies back down on his pillow before they can ask further questions.

NURSE

I think we should let him rest a bit longer.

The nurse closes the shades.

Jamie nods, and turns around - but Pam is already walking out the door.

INT. MELVIN'S APARTMENT DOORWAY - NIGHT

Melvin stands at the open door of his apartment, his head down, his cheeks red.

Pastor John looks at him sympathetically, bundled up in a winter coat, his cap in his hands.

PASTOR JOHN

Wish I could do more, Melvin. But you know I'm here for you whenever you need me.

MELVIN

It's fine, John.

PASTOR JOHN

If it was a year ago I could have had more pull, but now with all the changes they are making and the new board members...they just don't like that you went over there without getting approval.

MELVIN

They wouldn't have sent me otherwise.

The two share a moment of silence. Pastor John TAPS on the frame of the door.

PASTOR JOHN

You should really move out of this place, Melvin. When you get another job, which I'm sure will be soon.

Melvin coughs out a single laugh.

MELVIN

Doing what, John? Wanna see my resume?

PASTOR JOHN

You are a bright young man, Melvin. Look at what you survived over there! You helped save an entire village. How many can say that?

MELVIN

I didn't save anyone. I fell into a grave.

The elderly pastor grips the younger man's shoulders.

PASTOR JOHN

Don't lose hope, my boy. You have your entire life ahead of you. 'Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?' Remember who is your Father - you are not alone. Not for one moment.

MELVIN

Sure.

John EMBRACES the former youth pastor, then lets him go, and walks away, looking back a couple of times.

INT. MELVIN'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Melvin closes the door.

The apartment is even more of a mess than before. The chair is knocked down; paper bills, documents, and a couple of unpacked suitcases are sprawled across the ground and on the sofa.

The small stand where the TV used to be in front of the glass table is now empty.

The sky outside the windows is pith black dark.

Melvin walks up toward the glass table. Picks up a half-empty whiskey bottle, and DOWNS it.

Then he turns and looks at the closed bedroom door. His eyes GLOSS OVER with the alcohol.

Melvin stops at the wooden frame. He puts his ear next to the door, as if listening in.

Then he pushes it open, and walks in.

The pastor's FOOTSTEPS move through the room.

They stop for a few moments.

Followed by the sound of a drawer SLIDING OPEN.

Then they start up again, towards the door.

Melvin steps back into the living room, picks up the chair, and sits down next to the glass table.

He takes another SIP of whiskey, then SWIPES off the bills and letters from the table onto the ground.

He places the GUN he just took on top of the glass.

His chest HEAVES up and down through his unbuttoned shirt.

INT. CONCERT STAGE - SAME TIME

Jamie, now sporting a well-trimmed beard, sits on a tall chair in front of a microphone on a concert stage, looking out at the sea of people CHEERING HIS NAME.

Jamie swings down his acoustic guitar, and nods to the drummer behind him.

His fingers start playing a SLOW, MELODIC TUNE.

JAMIE
(singing)
Beyond.

The drums and the bass guitar slowly kick in, complementing Jamie's rhythm.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

(singing)

Beyond this wall we face
The trap that binds us down
And further down and down
And every ache we count and every
breath we force
Beyond the pain and fears, the
tears of all these years

Jamie stares out at the crowd again, as if he's looking for someone.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

(singing)

But when we're giving up
When we've lost it all
When we can't go on
Give us now your song
Lift and raise us up
Give us what we need
For you alone we call
For you alone we cry

The crowd are SWAYING to the music with raised arms.

Jamie's distant gaze lingers on, his lips almost pressed to the steel microphone.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF CITY - SAME TIME

The villagers, having wrapped up their tents, cookery and luggage, come up on a hill on the outskirts of Port-au-Prince.

Gene leads the way, as the children run around their parents, the villagers setting down their belongings.

They spot the rebuilding crews in the distance, putting together new apartment buildings, removing debris.

Gene smiles as the sun peaks out from the clouds above.

INT. MELVIN'S APARTMENT - SAME TIME

Jamie's song plays on as Melvin is bringing the gun toward his head, staring into the dark night.

JAMIE (V.O.)

(singing)

Beyond the pit of doubt
Asking if we'll ever know
(MORE)

JAMIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Any hope or love, any guiding light
And then we call out loud
Grasp that rising kite
And fly

Melvin puts down the gun on the table. His eyes water up.
He fights back a lump in his throat and grits his teeth.
He places his TREMBLING hand on top of the gun.

JAMIE (V.O.)
(singing)
And when we're giving up
When we've lost it all
When the end rings close
Give us now your song
Lift and raise us up
Give us what we need
For you alone we call
For you alone we cry
Beyond..

Melvin clenches his fist, opens it, then clenches it again...then slowly, awkwardly and anxiously, he places one knee on the ground.

Then he forces down the other, and looks out the window.

Melvin brings his hands together, bows his head, closes his eyes, and forms an inaudible "My God" with his lips.

For the first time in a long time, with every doubt and fear still coursing through his veins, the pastor prays for grace, he prays for his salvation.

THE END

(CONT'D)