BOSNIAN HELL

by

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FADE IN:

INT. RAMSHACKLE HOUSE-STUDY-NIGHT

BOSNIAN SURVIVOR, about 60, and his body failing, sits down in the chair. The candlelight illuminates the room. SON, about 18, sits on the chair with the candlelight casting over his young face.

BOSNIAN SURVIVOR

You have turned 18.
Remember that promise I made you son?

SON

Yes, I do.

BOSNIAN SURVIVOR

That when you turned eighteen, and were no longer a boy, you were man, I would tell you.

SON

Yes.

BOSNIAN SURVIVOR

There are some images that will never leave your mind. Are you sure you want to know?

SON

No...but I have too.

Bosnian survivor looks away for a moment. His eyes reflect of a man trying to resurrect memories long since locked away in the deepest recesses of his mind, dragging them forth, feeling the pain, as they come, seemingly giving life to old scars. He takes the glass of wine. He grips it but does not drink it, more having it ready as a precaution, to dull his senses if he cannot bear it. He looked at his son. The son looked afraid, but painfully eager to hear the story. The old man's voice came, as if crossing over the desolate hills, from far away.

BOSNIAN SURVIVOR

Body exhausted, mind loosing the will to continue, the sun had risen in the east and set in the west, ten times since we fled the horror that is Srebrencia.

His eyes faded away, as if seeing within his mind, the memories crystallizing as he spoke, in full visceral reality, the grassy valley, the dark sky, and the bodies littering the once lush grass.

EXT. FLASHBACK-BOSNIA-VALLEY-DAY

The blood covered, stench-ridden bodies, some intact, others with limbs, flesh turn the impact of land mines litter the path. BOSNIAN SURVIVOR, about 48, stumbles along past the bodies, in a group of one hundred and twenty survivors.

BOSNIAN SURVIVOR (V.O.)

The thought of my wife, and children in front, and Serb guns behind keeps myself moving forwards, ambushed by soldiers and attacked by landmines, one by one, we die every day.

The Bosnian woman a little distance ahead, collapses. Her family dive down in fear. She lies stiff. The group keeps moving forwards to afraid to linger, in fear of Serbs. Bosnian Survivor moves past the weeping husband. Bosnian survivor looks pained, tortured by the sight. He looks away, as if he has to keep himself moving forwards.

BOSNIAN SURVIVOR (V.O.)

Once killed, bodies stay were they die, to eventually decompose or be devoured by starving animals, we can not help them now, and we cannot stop.

EXT. FLASHBACK-BOSNIA-HILL

The group of survivors pushes their exhausted bodies up the hill. The group is littered with injuries, pain, blood and tormented faces. There is a look of hopelessness in some eyes, while hope remains in others, all look like there are desperate for this not be a final 'death march.'

BOSNIAN SURVIVOR (V.O.)

Each is a new torture that threatens to destroy us, but we must continue, we must survive, two hundred of us fled Srebernicia, one hundred and twenty remain, we struggle forward in the hope that tomorrow we will not meet out deaths, and that we will once again, reunite with our loved ones.

INT. RAMSHACKLE HOUSE-STUDY

Son, sits as if coldness has enveloped him, his face tense, he can feel his fathers pain. He must listen to this story to honor what his father and relatives endured. Bosnian Survivor, held his glass of wine, holding his strength together to recount his 'moving' tale to his son, he did not need it yet. The old man's eyes are looking away, as if clearly seeing the past now, the memories sharp, as if he is back there again.

BOSNIAN SURVIVOR

The air today is deadly cold, clouds of mist blanket the sky, howling winds sweep the ground.

EXT. FLASHBACK-BOSNIA-FIELD

The dark laced the sky overhead, and the light was dim, foreboding. The survivors weakly pushed forwards over the

dirt ground of the valley. They exchanged worried glances at the threatening clouds above.

BOSNIAN SURVIVOR (V.O.)

And dark clouds above threaten to soften the ground, lengthening our walk through these corridors of hell.

The sound of a truck begins to filter through the air from a distance, moving towards the group.

INT. RAMSHACKLE HOUSE-STUDY

Bosnian Survivor looked into his son's eyes with fear.

BOSNIAN SURVIVOR (V.O.)

The ominous faint sound of engines filters in from the distance, the sound of gunfire ripples through the air, it is the call sign of the Serbs.

EXT. FLASHBACK-BOSNIA-FIELD

The sound of gunfire ripples through the air. The group stops in fear. They looked at each other in terror. Through the clouds of mist, sillouhetes of men, step forwards.

INT. RAMSHACKLE HOUSE-STUDY

The terror reflected in the son's young eyes.

BOSNIAN SURVIVOR Dressed in black military boots, green camouflaged uniforms. Carrying the instruments of deaths that have become a permanent extension of their bodies.

EXT. FLASHBACK-BOSNIA-FIELD

The black machine guns extending from their arms, with ease, naturalness, it was hard to tell where the machine guns began and their hands ended.

EXT. FLASHBACK-MILITARY TRUCKS

The Serbs herd the group forcibly into the backs of the trucks, as people huddle, and cry.

BOSNIAN SURVIVOR (V.O.)

They begin herding us onto trucks.

The Bosnian Survivor is pushed to the back of the truck. He hears the scuffle. He turns to see the young strong man, pushes the soldier away, and tries to grab his machine gun. It is a desperate and hopeless moment.

BOSNIAN SURVIVOR (V.O.)

Some resist.

The rifle from a fellow soldier slams into the back of the young man's head. He falls down with a weak whimper, stunned.

EXT. FLASHBACK-BOSNIA-FIELD

The young man stands with six other men that resisted, in a line, on their knees. The soldiers stand behind them, and lift their machine guns. The line of men close their eyes and purse their lips for the inevitable hoping it doesn't hurt to much, that it is quick.

BOSNIAN SURVIVOR

They are lined up on their knees, ordered to put their hands behind their heads and delivered a single bullet to back of their skulls.

The soldiers shout. The men place their hands behind their heads. The fire is quick, seemingly over before it starts. The men fall down onto the ground, stiff, lifeless.

EXT. FLASHBACK-MILITARY TRUCKS

Bosnian survivor drops his head in pain. The rest of the group goes quiet, not even crying from fear, they move obediently onto the back of the trucks.

INT. RAMSHACKLE HOUSE-STUDY

Son looks shell shocked, like he is wishing he had not had his father tell the story, must endure to the end, as his father had endured his trial. If his father could endure his trial then the son thought he too could also endure this smaller trail. Bosnian survivor takes a sip of wine. His face quivers slightly, and then he composes himself again.

BOSNIAN SURVIVOR
The rest move onto the
trucks without incident.

INT. FLASHBACK-TRUCKS-NIGHT

The survivors sit in the back of the truck. They say not a word, heads down, afraid to catch the attention of the two soldiers. They rock in the back of the truck as it rocks along the road. The soldiers laugh amongst themselves. The survivors do not react, pretending they did not hear. Then the sound of the truck engine, the only sound that fills the night.

BOSNIAN SURVIVOR (V.O.)

The silence is eerie, only the laughs of the Serbs and the continuous sound of engines interrupts the silence, fifty minutes pass until the noise from the engines cease, the front door clicks open and slams shut.

The survivors jolt slightly as the truck stops. They hear the click as the door of the front cabin opens and then slams shut. They look up again, fearfully, eyes racing, wondering where they are, what is gong to happen to them. Bosnian survivor hears the Serbs voice break the air. He appears at the back the truck. He shouts.

SERB SOLDIER
Get out, move, MOVE scum.

They piled, stumbling nervously from the back of the truck. They are trying to move exactly where the soldiers want them too, afraid, the soldiers are shouting, wildly, the survivors are confused. They congregate to the left of the truck. The soldiers look angry. Waving their rifles, making the survivor's shudder every time the barrel swings towards them.

SERB SOLDIER Stand their, not there, THERE.

Bosnian survivor shuffles to the right again, with the survivors, he jerks his head strangely.

BOSNIAN SURVIVOR (V.O.)

The sickening feeling of sliding, thick, water begins to slide down my forehead, I move my hands upward to wipe it clean.

The butt of the rifles swings viciously, into his face.

BOSNIAN SURVIVOR (V.O.)

A sudden sharp pain drives through the left side my face, from the force of a swinging rifle, colliding with my now broken cheekbone.

INT. RAMSHACKLE HOUSE-STUDY

The son flinches in horror. Bosnian survivor face looks numb as if his body was feeling the way it did those years ago, his body revisiting the pain it felt, as he regresses.

EXT. FLASHBACK-BOSNIA-TRUCKS

Bosnian survivor lays slumped on the ground. He touches his face, stunned, and feels the weird shape of the side of his cheek, his eyes flash in fear that it is broken. The soldier's hand reaches down, grabs him and pulls him to his feet. Bosnian survivor touching the saliva spit on his neck to wipe the rest off.

SERB SOLDIER Don't touch that, that is what you are.

Bosnian survivor jolts forwards, as if pushed by something sharp.

BOSNIAN SURVIVOR (V.O.)

A sharp object is jabbed into my back.

Serb Soldier points his rifle forcefully into the distance, away from the group and trucks.

SERB SOLDIER

Move, that way.

INT. RAMSHACKLE HOUSE-STUDY

The white-knuckle fear fills the sons eyes. He watches as his father's hand begins to shake on the wineglass. The young son fears what was about to happen next to his father.

EXT. FLASHBACK-BOSNIA-FIELD

The small group of men is led across the field by a group of Serb soldiers, towards a large mound of dirt on the unusually formed hill.

BOSNIAN SURVIVOR (V.O.)

As we approach, a strange, yet familiar smell begins to emanate from beyond the mound, I recognize the smell, I know it well, it is the smell of death, the smell of decomposing bodies.

The small group of survivors stops at the mass grave, the dead, decomposing bodies piled onto top of one another. The sickening look entraps the men, their bodies go limp, as hope is gone, and sudden horror of their ends stikes them. The acceptance falls in each of their eyes.

BOSNIAN SURVIVOR (V.O.)

The Serbs have taken us here to shake the hand of death.

The soldiers shout. The men turn their backs to the mass grave. They stare into the rifles lined up before them.

BOSNIAN SURVIVOR (V.O.)

With our backs turned from the mountain of bodies, we are lined up and with a sudden burst.

The rifles explodes, in a line, the muzzles flash, and the bullets explode, the rifles swinging side to side.

BOSNIAN SURVIVOR (V.O.)

Swinging side to side, a wave of bullets pierce through the air towards us.

The men's heads snaps backwards, then forwards, shoulders swing violently, chests lift upwards and then bodies falls suddenly to the ground.

INT. RAMSHACKLE HOUSE-STUDY

The son's face is white. His eyes are full of horror that has never touched his soul. His father looks at his son.

BOSNIAN SURVIVOR Simultaneously my left shoulder blade is sliced from the force of a bullet and I'm knocked by the force of a falling body.

EXT. FLASHBACK-MASS GRAVE

Bosnian survivor lies in the grave with the dead body of one of the other men directly on top of him. Bosnian survivor shoulder is bleeding hard, and his eyes flicker in horror at the faces of dead men all around him, pushing up against his face, arms and legs.

BOSNIAN SURVIVOR (V.O.)

Lying directly upon mine, it conceals myself from the view of the murderous Serb soldiers.

The sound of rifle fire dies. The flickers of Serb Soldiers through the cracks between the dead bodies, moving on the top of the mass grave. Bosnian Survivors eyes flashing at their movement in terror. The sounds of boots striking the ground moves forwards towards the bodies where Bosnian survivor lies underneath. There is a frightening silence for ninety seconds. A voice cuts through the air.

SERB SOLDIER (O.S.)

Those maggots are dead, let's go back to get some more.

The sound of the boots striking the ground, moving away. Then the sound of turning wheels on gravel and the sound of an engine grows fainter. Bosnian Survivor forces the body out from on top of him, struggles to his feet, rips the cloth from his shirt and wraps it tightly around his bleeding shoulder.

EXT. FLASHBACK-BOSNIA-WOODS

Bosnian survivor struggles forward through the woods.

BOSNIAN SURVIVOR (V.O.)

I struggle forward with all the strength I can muster, but after two days, dehydrated, starving, and with my will to continue diminishing sharply, I drop to my knees in exhaustion.

Bosnian survivor drops to his knees, as if all strength in mind and body have been beaten from him. The sound of a tank filters through the woods. It draws closer to him. Bosnian Serb looks weakly, dazed, with a look in his eyes, as if ready to die, the pain is too great to endure any longer.

BOSNIAN SURVIVOR (V.O.)

I hear the faint sound of an engine, I pray it is the Serbs, so they can end my misery.

The sound of the engine cuts out. The voices call out.

UNITED NATIONS SOLDIER (O.S.)

You are in a United Nations declared Security Zone, we are British Peacekeepers, are you in need of assistance?

Bosnian Survivor eyes narrow, shocked.

BOSNIAN SURVIVOR (V.O.)

I don not recognize the voices, they are not Bosnian Serb. I look past them and see the color of blue and white, not camouflage green.

Bosnian Serb looks confused past the peacekeeper and sees the United Nations tank. The British Peacekeeper lowers his hand. Bosnian Serb looks at the hand as if salvation. He grasps it tightly. Their hands meet wrapped around one another. It means life. It means hope.

INT. RAMSHACKLE HOUSE-STUDY

The candle flickers across the awestruck son's face. The old man still with his hand grasping the nearly empty glass of wine, looks at his son. He says quietly.

BOSNIAN SURVIVOR I hand reached out my hand willing for the hand of death to grab, but instead it was grasped by the hand of life.

FADE OUT.

THE END.