

ALMOST NEVER AGAIN

written by

Chris Furney

PO Box 161
Alsea, OR 97324
541-487-7224
chrisfurney@yahoo.com

FADE IN:

EXT: EMBASSY - DAY

SUPER: US EMBASSY, DAMASCUS, SYRIA

KIT (Army Weapons Specialist, late 20's) and his team are advancing through a shimmering clear mirage toward the Embassy. The scene is so quiet that KIT can hear himself think.

KIT
(Gas Mask)
Ssssssst... click. Ssssssst...
click...
(audible thought)
No matter how long I work with one
- these damned masks still make me
sound like a sci-fi villian.
(Gas Mask)
Ssssssst... click. Ssssssst...
click...

A body appears through the mist, its arms and legs akimbo, features contorted, its bladder and bowels emptied along with its last chance of life. Then another body, and another... click.

KIT
Ssssssst... click...

EXT. EMBASSY - DAY

Scene morphs to the same sidewalk, several hours previous. A minor demonstration is going on outside the fence.

INT. EMBASSY - DAY

Inside, the Marine guards are toying with a New Guy (FNG). They have taped a sign that says FNG to his back. They have him convinced that the beautiful attache' (Minuet, 27 years old, Ambassador's Attache'/Bodyguard, martial arts and weapons expert, speaks several languages) likes to have sex with all the FNG's. The FNG accosts her, and Minuet knocks the trained six foot Marine down with several businesslike kicks and punches. Finally, MINUET has the Marine in an arm lock and makes a kissing motion at him.

The inexperienced Marine responds, and MINUET lets go, swirls, and kicks him in the face. As the Marine's buddies drag their bleeding friend away, MINUET goes to her office and calls the sergeant in charge of the Marine detachment (GUNNY, 42, Marine Corps Master Gunnery Sergeant, expert with most light, medium, and some heavy weapons of most countries.) to chew his ass.

EXT: EMBASSY EXERCISE YARD - DAY

Gunny is in a field training with the troops, who are in on the gag, when he gets the call. They poorly control their amusement with the whole situation.

GUNNY

(to phone) Yes, Ma'am. No Ma'am.
Oh, no, Ma'am- no. We don't endorse anything like that kind of behavior. Yes Ma'am, I know it keeps happening, I sure know that. Yes, Ma'am- I'll be there ASAP, Ma'am. (hangs up phone, mutters)
Goddamn stupid bunch of half steppin', grab assin', DICKHEADS!

The troops, knowing the joke they've pulled on the FNG, are trying real hard not to laugh.

MARINE #1

Got some kind of problem, GUNNY ?

MARINE #2

Sounds like we're going to have to take care of things this afternoon. Damn and I was really learning a lot in this hot dusty CBR gear. Better go ahead though, GUNNY.

RAMIREZ

Don't worry, GUNNY- we can take care of things, you can trust us.

GUNNY

Ramirez, you know- I DO trust you. You're in charge- and you're responsible for whatever kind of fuckup you grab ass bastards manage to conjure up in the next hour or two.

(MORE)

GUNNY (CONT'D)

I'm going to go see what the hell is going on in there, and I'll be back- nah, I'll prolly take the rest of the day off. See ya tomorrow.

The Marines heckle GUNNY in the background as he walks off.

MARINE #1

Oh sure- must be nice to run your own schedule, huh?

MARINE #2

Nah, GUNNY gon' have some ass missin' the next time we see him.

I/E: EMBASSY - DAY

GUNNY is in full tactical gear and camo paint, hurrying to Minuet's office. He rounds a corner and runs into an Honduran maid, giving her a PTSD flashback with his military appearance and resemblance to some men in her home country. The maid's (and cameras) view morphs from GUNNY into an Hispanic man with a machete, also with camo face paint, and the background morphs into a jungle.

MAID

Madre de Dios!

The maid produces a keychain mace sprayer, and sprays it into GUNNY's face. GUNNY takes it away from her, smiling, and uses it for breath spray.

GUNNY

Civilian shit!

The maid loses her nerve and runs off down the hallway. Gunny almost bumps into the Ambassador at the open door to MINUET's office. MINUET sees the mace sprayer and GUNNY's wet, irritated face. Legacy or no, the help is not supposed to have those inside the Embassy. MINUET puts her hands together in fake prayer to ask GUNNY not to say anything.

AMBASSADOR

What is that stuff on your face, Sergeant?

GUNNY

It's some CS gas that we use to train with the new security system, Ma'am. We train hard!

AMBASSADOR

Well it's a good thing that's not the real stuff- you'd have been dead within seconds.

EXT. SF BAY- DAY

SUPER: SAN FRANCISCO BAY, CALIFORNIA USA

San Francisco Bay. It's a nice, sunshiney day. A Russian ship is a mile or two outside the bay, steaming into port. The camera flies into the water behind the ship, and shows a 80 foot shipping container held to the bottom of the boat with cables. A man in a ship's officer uniform opens a watertight box. He flips a switch, and then pushes an illuminated button. Four small detonations occur, one per each of four cables. The cables part, and the container falls to the ocean floor. The camera flies up to it, and then shows the large torpedo shaped bomb inside (Russian Status-6 UAV). The camera flies back out of the water, up in the air, and homes in on another shipping container, with another torpedo. There are more, in the sea outside most of the major cities on the US west coast. The camera homes in on several, faster and faster. Finally the scene flies back to SF Bay.

EXT: LONG BEACH - DAY

SUPER: LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA, USA

An idyllic ocean scene near Long Beach, CA, USA, View is of a vintage small port, with fuel pumps and a convenience store and a moorage. A Korean trawler is tied up at the moorings of a fuel station. There's a mist coming out of the tubular mast of the trawler. The mist wafts inland, and you can see it wrap around some people and a dog. The heavily affected people start throwing up immediately, then defacating- symptoms of a severe flu. The dog begins to act strangely, backing away from the water, foaming at the mouth and trying to bite people who are walking by, also sickened from the gas. The mist continues to waft eastward, roiling on the air currents. Some of the mist lands on a truck load of hogs. Some of it drops out of the air over a cat lady feeding a dozen cats. She can feel it touch her skin.

She draws her hand slowly thru the dampness on her neck, meditatively, looking out over the moorage. The cats begin to growl and attack each other. The scene flies up to jet airliner height and zooms back in to another such fishing boat in another city, then another, faster and faster.

EXT: US EMBASSY, DAMASCUS, SYRIA - DAY

SUPER: US EMBASSY, DAMASCUS, SYRIA

The demonstration has become larger and more violent. Hundreds of Arabs crowd the gate, chanting anti-American slogans and pushing the gate inward. The Marine guards warn them and push them from the fences and gates. Suddenly, a white Toyota car approaches the Embassy gates.

MARINE

Halt!

The car doesn't stop. The Marine drops into a kneeling firing position. His comrades also take up positions, leaning against the gate and over the sandbag walls of the guardpost.

MARINE

Halt! Halt or I will fire!

The driver suddenly accelerates. The Marines open fire, killing the driver, but the car makes it to the gates and detonates. Pieces of car and driver and bomb whiz through the air. In slow motion, the shrapnel is shown blasting through demonstrators, Marines, and Embassy staff alike. An arm is severed here, a leg there. One luckless man is torn completely in half, and a few had their faces blasted to bloody skulls by the concussion. The surviving guards and staff retreat to a safe room.

INT: SAFE ROOM, US EMBASSY - DAY

Inside the safe room, the Ambassador flips a panel open, watching the carnage outside through a video surveillance system. Then she sees a squad of men with AK47 rifles and RPG's pushing their way through the crowd. The Ambassador is frightened, sure, but resolute. She sees the RPG squad drop their gear and take aim with their rockets at the safe room. The camera makes it appear that it is looking down the barrel (so to speak) of the Russian RPG-7 rocket launchers. The Ambassador flips a switch, and pushes a button.

With that, the embassy grounds and the four blocks surrounding it are enveloped in a shimmering clear mirage of nerve gas, just as three RPG's blow three ragged holes in the safe room. Several inside are killed by the shrapnel and blast. But then, the clear, shimmering mirage wafts through the holes, and the survivors nearest the holes, including the AMBASSADOR, die in horrible convulsions. The only survivors are the Marines who had gas masks in the pouches on their thighs, and staff who got to the emergency gas masks quick enough. They call for any help.

MINUET

This is the Embassy, Actual Two.
This the the US Embassy, Actual
Two. Emergency. Request any US
contact. Emergency, request any US
contact! Over.

INT. EMBASSY/HOTEL

SPLIT TO TWO SCREENS, KIT AND MINUET

The camera is looking out the window past KIT from a high rise hotel several blocks from the embassy. A pillar of black smoke rises from the embassy yard.

KIT

This is US Army Area Support Group,
what is your emergency? Over.

MINUET

We have been attacked with medium
weapons and sustained extremely
high numbers of casualties and
massive damage. The last stand
chemical denial system has been
activated. Over.

Team members in KIT's hotel room who are listening start grabbing bags and gear.

KIT

Can you estimate how long you can
hold out? Over.

MINUET

We already DIDN'T hold out, that's
what I'm saying! I guess no one
will be doing anything until this
gas disperses, though. Over.

KIT

Just stay calm and keep your mask on, Ma'am. We can be there in about 20 minutes. Over.

MINUET

So how is it you guys are that close? Over.

KIT

Well, we're here installing that chemical denial system you mentioned. Staying in a hotel downtown. Over.

MINUET

But, I mean, you guys are soldiers, right? You can get us out of here? Over.

KIT

Oh sure, yes Ma'm, we're soldiers. We have real guns and everything! Over.

KIT points to the receiver and laughs along with the team members.

KIT

OK, our team is leaving now to come and get you. I'm switching to a mobile radio. Over.

MINUET

Please get here as soon as you can. 20 minutes can be a pretty long time. Over.

KIT

Four blocks can be a pretty long way, too. Over.

EXT: LONG BEACH - DAY

SUPER: LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA, USA

Scene opens on the same Korean trawler in Long Beach Harbor. The mist coming out of the mast is strong at first, then dwindles and shuts off completely. A crewman is crouched near the bottom of the mast, holding his belly, and looking very ill.

His face is pasty white, and his eyes rimmed with red. He is drooling some foam from the corner of his mouth. Another crewman goes over to him to offer some sort of comfort. The sick crewman attacks the other crewman, and bites him on the neck. The scene looks past the shoulder of the sick crewman, crouched to attack. An officer climbs up on deck, looking around. He comes close to where the sick crewman is hiding, and the sick crewman's muscles tense because he's just about to attack the officer. The officer draws his pistol and shoots the sick crewman in the head. Then he looks at the bite mark on the other crewman, and shoots him too.

I/E. EMBASSY - DAY

Scene morphs back into the opening scene of the CBR team advancing along the sidewalk approaching the embassy. The CBR team penetrates the embassy. They get to the safe room, finding Minuet, Gunny, two other Embassy staff, and several Marines still alive. The CBR team and the Embassy survivors fight their way to Azraq Air Force Base in Jordan, being whittled down all the way. Nearing Jordan, their JLTV is passing through a village and comes under fire from a .50 caliber sniper rifle.

INT: AHVAZ SNIPER - DAY

SUPER : AHVAZ, KHUVESTAN PROVINCE, IRAN

CLOSEUP: - DAY

A sniper loads a .50 cal round into a huge clip. Camera backs out and shows a dingy room in a masonry building, with windows overlooking a dusty road through the outskirts of town. There is a US ammo can on the table that has the nomenclature for armor piercing incendiary ammunition stenciled in yellow on the green box.

ZOOM OUT: - DAY

The sniper puts the clip into an equally huge Barrett M107A1 rifle. He rests the rifle on a large table just inside one window. The west facing windows are covered with filmy sheer curtains that are taped at the bottom corners to keep them from blowing around in the wind. The view looks over the top of the rifle from the east to the road about 400 yards away, and you can see the road from the north for about a mile, with only a few buildings to get in the way.

Soon, the two vehicles left from the original caravan come into view, both Joint Light Tactical Vehicles (JLTV), their continued functioning a testament to the bulletproof nature of their armor. The sniper lines up his shot, the muzzle of his rifle a foot inside the sheer curtains. He looks through the scope at a decorative bunch of streamers that he put there the day before and sees that there is only an intermittent breeze- nothing to adjust for at these ranges, almost too close for such a rifle. He could easily reach that far with a .30 cal, but breaching the JLTV's armor will be another matter. He puts the crosshairs on the drivers window of the lead vehicle, and follows it as it comes closer, sometimes obscured by a building in between. The JLTV comes as close as it will on this path, just as a small building obscures it. It comes into view again, and the sniper fires, from just past a 90 degree angle.

SNIPER
Allahu Akhbar

The JLTV's side armor might have stood up to even the API's ferocity, but the window will not. The first round goes through the window, forms a cone of flame, and decapitates the driver, then splatters itself and part of the driver in the right front corner of the cab, fortunately only lightly wounding the passenger. Then the sniper makes his first mistake, and fires another round that makes a nasty flash on the rear JLTV's armor. The sheer curtain in front of him, secured so carefully to conceal the sniper without deflecting his rounds, catches fire from the muzzle blast of the huge rifle.

I/E: AHVAZ JLTV - DAY

From inside the vehicle, the second 50 cal round makes a bulge on the inside of the rear JLTV's side armor, only a few inches below the turret opening. Several Tangos open fire with AK47's from behind a parapet wall on the roof of a building next to the street with the JLTV's. GUNNY is on the roof mounted 50 cal M2 machine gun on the rear JLTV, sees the bulge appear in the armor, and sees where the shot came from. The sniper's "lie" is made very obvious by the flames reaching upward in the sheer curtain. GUNNY opens fire with the machine gun. The sniper is butchered, the heavy bullets burning through the masonry wall in front of him, making even more damage than usual because the bullets are deformed from going through the masonry wall.

GUNNY turns his gun over to another Marine, who continues to fire at the Tangos on the roof to his left, and advances on the building with his AA12, firing all the way, the heavy buckshot loads from his automatic shotgun raking the left hand parapet wall that is concealing the Tangos.

GUNNY
Cover Me!

KIT raises up from the hatch in the front JLTV and shoots seven "Tangos" on another rooftop to his right with seven rounds in under a second. All of them are shot before the first one hits the ground. The gunner in the rear JLTV has turned the parapet wall he was shooting at into a rubble pile. All the gunfire ceases. GUNNY looks at KIT in surprise.

GUNNY
Cease fire! Cease... fire?

KIT
You SAID cover me, didn't you?

GUNNY
Well yeah, sure, but I kinda figured, well, this hi-tech specialized army guy...

KIT
I didn't say I couldn't shoot...
geez the Marines have weapons specialists, too, right?

EXT: AIRBASE, AZRAQ, JORDAN - DAY

SUPER: MUWAFFAQ SALTI AIRBASE, AZRAQ, JORDAN

By the time they get to the airport, only MINUET, GUNNY, and KIT remain alive. MINUET is carrying a FN P90, GUNNY an AA12 auto shotgun, and KIT has an M4 with a red dot sight. They have a good selection of pistols and knives. KIT has a fondness for making gadgets that blow up. The unit commandeers the only plane available- a C5 cargo plane, one of the biggest planes made. MINUET uses a diplomatic priority code to get them to release it. KIT is impressed that she can do that. GUNNY is surprised that KIT can fly the thing.

GUNNY

So, you can fly this huge cargo plane?

KIT

I'm pretty sure, anyhow. I've flown several that were like this one, just not, er.. as big.

GUNNY

I believe you, it's just, well...

KIT

I didn't SAY I didn't know how to fly a plane...

KIT starts flipping switches and pushing buttons.

KIT

Yeah, this I recognize, just more of them, HMMMM. Yeah yeah, I think this is gonna work.

KIT smiles at GUNNY, who is obviously worried that his pilot is not up to par. KIT mimics a WW1 airplane startup and twirls his finger in the air.

KIT

Contact!

The huge engines start, one by one. Some techs remove the chocks on the wheels, and the giant plane lumbers toward the runway. You can see it taking off in the windows of the airfield office.

EXT: AIRFIELD OFFICE - DAY

GROUND CREW #1

You let that woman take that plane?

GROUND CREW #2

She had the right authorization. Priority code, straight from the Diplomatic Corps. Trumps anything we got going, that's for sure.

GROUND CREW #1

Those Israeli farmers are sure gonna be mad.

INT: CHINESE SPY SHIP - DAY

SUPER: CHINESE SPY SHIP, BLACK SEA

A tech hands a message to an officer, who hurries to the conference room with several Chinese officers inside. Chinese Woman #1 lays several packs of maps and diagrams and memos on the table in front of her.

CHINESE WOMAN #1

We have proven beyond doubt that the North Koreans have created this doomsday virus, this hydrophobic influenza, in an attempt to possess a weapon to change the balance of power between developed nations and backward nations such as they. Americans sometimes refer to this as a "poor man's nuke". Our scientists assure me that the concept is frighteningly simple. They used CRISPR technology to splice together two readily available viruses- hydrophobia and influenza. The monster they created is what is called a "slate cleaner" virus by the military. It is very contagious, and very deadly- it kills almost 100% of those infected. Victims develop symptoms of the flu, and they go insane- and very violent- from hydrophobia. They try to bite people to spread the disease. But this disease is worse, because it is airborne and can also be spread by breathing, like influenza. It can also be contracted by almost any mammal, like hydrophobia- but not birds or fish or plants. The only mercy in this disease is that it has been designed to die off rather quickly, so that opposing troops can take over their victims in two weeks or a month.

CHINESE MAN #1

And you are certain that it was the North Koreans who have done this?

CHINESE WOMAN #1

Absolutely certain, Sir. Our strike team took control of the entire lab complex where they developed it, intact.

INT: NORTH KOREAN BIOWEAPONS LAB - DAY

SUPER: NORTH KOREAN BIOWEAPONS LAB , PYONGYANG, NORTH KOREA

Several Chinese helicopters simultaneously "fast rope" assault troops onto the roof. It is obvious that they are very well trained. They are wearing full chemical gear- gas masks, plastic suits, and the like. But in the lab, almost all the techs are dead from the plague, and several of the Infecteds that haven't died are in cages. The Chinese are completely ruthless and businesslike. They kill everything that's alive, and then start taking pictures and packing up hard drives. One tech sets up a tripod with a box on top and turns it on. A 360 degree multicolored laser photographs the room in 3d in a few seconds. When the laser shuts off, the tech turns the box off and puts it back in its black hard plastic case. Their helicopters return and hover just off the roof of the building as the strike team climbs aboard with their baggage.

INT: CHINESE SPY SHIP - DAY

CHINESE WOMAN #1

Our scientists have had several days to study their data and methods. The Korean's failure was in that some of the pathogen escaped, and infected a large swath of land in China as well, which still has to be dealt with. But the Koreans did their job well enough that it appears to be escaping our control as well. It is said to be loose in the north of Korea generally. It is of the utmost importance that this virus not be allowed to propagate into China.

EXT: NORTH KOREA - NIGHT

SUPER: PYONGYANG, NORTH KOREA

Scene flies into Pyongyang and surveys total chaos on the streets, the fires burning replacing the lights that have failed days ago. There are humans attacking other humans in an hydrophobic rage. Packs of animals roam and kill anything they can manage to overwhelm.

INT: CHINESE SPY SHIP - DAY

CHINESE MAN #1

Is the virus showing up anywhere else?

CHINESE WOMAN #1

They have modified fishing boats to release it covertly several days ago- at multiple locations along the United States West Coast. This has resulted in a massive wave of the plague, starting at the US West Coast and traveling eastward on the prevailing winds and on vehicles traveling eastward with mammilian livestock. Additionally, we request permission to go ahead with plans for a large scale sterilization of Korea if we must keep them from destroying us along with themselves.

Everyone in the conference room looks very grim.

EXT: OAKLAND, CA, USA - NIGHT

SUPER: OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA, USA,

It's night time. It's no time to be in this neighborhood. A poorly lit street leads to the waterfront in the distance. A wino staggers along, clutching his brown paper bagged bottle. He's sick and coughing blood out into his hand. He curses "The damned flu." A a small, sick looking dog scurries away to avoid a kick, while the bum curses and staggers on. Soon, a large malemute dog, sick, unsteady, and drooling foam from its mouth, growls at the wino from a few feet away. The wino throws a handful of rocks at the dog and it attacks him, killing him quickly. Some hookers are hanging out on a street corner, and some sick looking guys cruise by, leering at them with a lust even more unnatural than usual.

They pass, and the hookers are relieved- and then they get attacked by cats. The cats attack from above, landing on their heads and tearing through their hair and into their scalps.

EXT: MICROSCOPIC

The scene zooms in to microscopic and shows the virus replicating and traveling through the bloodstream of a hooker.

I/E: IRANIAN SUBMARINE, CHESAPEAKE BAY - DAY

SUPER: CHESAPEAKE BAY , USA

CREWMAN

(Arabic, with English subtitles.)
I never thought that it would come to this.

RADIO

Our plan is proceeding. Execute your orders.

CAPTAIN

It is time, then.

The Captain pushes a lighted red button. Scene changes to the outside of the sub. A cruise missile extends from the bottom, and launches. The view draws back from the launch, showing the missile breaking the surface, and continues to draw back until the scene shows that the missile was launched from Chesapeake Bay.

INT: C5 CARGO PLANE - DAY

SUPER: CARGO PLANE, ATLANTIC OCEAN

GUNNY, KIT, and MINUET see the cruise missile streak by.

MINUET

What the hell was that?

KIT

I'm pretty sure that was an Iranian Soumar cruise missile.

GUNNY

Yes, and...?

KIT

Yes, and it CAN carry a nuclear warhead. But at this point in time, I don't understand why it would be headed east. If it were one of ours, it wouldn't be Iranian and it wouldn't be headed east.

GUNNY

Damned if I'd know.

MINUET

Nothing came through the diplomatic channels that I saw, either.

KIT

So, never mind where the missile is going. Where is the C5- including us- going?

MINUET

Why not go to Washington and I can simply report in?

KIT

If this is heating up the way it looks like, well, maybe Washington isn't going to be there when we get there. DC just HAS to be on the top of somebody's target list. Besides, there has to be almost two miles of runway to lift this thing off, especially loaded. It would be nice to land where they normally fly C5's out of so they have all the special tools and gadgets we need to fly one.

GUNNY

They flew us to Germany once on a C5 for REFORGER. We flew out of Charleston AFB, South Carolina. I bet they'd have anything we need.

KIT

Suits.

MINUET

Suits me too. Charleston it is.

EXT: TARTUS NAVAL FACILITY - DAY

SUPER: TARTUS NAVAL FACILITY, TARTUS, SYRIA

The same cruise missile that went by the C5 streaks past the camera. It gets to 2000 feet above the base, and detonates.

EXT: LOOKING UP

From below, some Russian crewmen are working on a ship. They see the warhead detonate, and they are, in slow motion, burned to dust. The ship they are on melts, and the scene turns to a brilliant white. A huge mushroom cloud, with large pieces of glowing metal flying, envelops the vessels below.

EXT: SYRIAN COAST

SUPER: SYRIAN COAST

Looking out over an American fleet- a mid-sized aircraft carrier, with appropriate destroyers and support ships. The view draws back, revealing an area of tan camouflage netting. The netting is drawn back to reveal the ends of an Iranian truck mounted Noor missile system that has been dug into the hillside for most of its length. The launcher activates, and the ends of the missile tubes lift slightly. A black clad Muslim looks out with binoculars. He looks grim. He goes to the firing panel, looking at his equally grim associate. The associate nods.

MUSLIM
Allahu Akhbar!

He pushes both red-lit buttons. The scene changes to the outside camera as the missiles streak away toward the American ships, only 800 or 900 yards away. The missiles impact- and a blinding flash erupts from the nearby ships, and envelops the camera in a second. The camera goes dead.

INT: RUSSIAN HQ - DAY

SUPER: RUSSIAN HQ, THE KREMLIN, MOSCOW

RUSSIAN GENERAL #1
(Russian with English subtitles)
First, the Americans use chemical
weapons at their embassy in Iran.
(MORE)

RUSSIAN GENERAL #1 (CONT'D)

And now the unprovoked attack on our shipyard in Syria. The Americans have finally lost their minds!

RUSSIAN GENERAL #2

The Embassy is bad enough, but there has to be some sort of response to the destruction of our ships. We must protect our interests, both in Mother Russia and our bases abroad.

RUSSIAN GENERAL #3

We should not escalate this problem beyond what either we or the Americans can ignore. We should try to slap them to their senses, but not play into an all out war. I suggest a limited response. I suggest that we destroy their airbase at Azraq, Jordan in retaliation for Tartus.

RUSSIAN GENERAL #1

And what if they manage to use NATO to attack us further? We should deploy even more forces to the Ukraine and our other borders.

EXT. NORTHERN BORDER, UKRAINE - DAY

SUPER: NORTHERN BORDER, UKRAINE

NATO mobilizes against the tanks massing on the Ukranian border. A Russian tank fires a shot, and the NATO forces fire back. Russia launches a full-on attack into the Ukraine. NATO forces are obliterated by thousands of tank and mortar rounds as the Russians advance, destroying everything in their path.

EXT: RUSSIAN JETS - DAY

View is from the cockpit of a Russian Sukhoi S57 fighter jet. It is in a formation of three planes. They are flying nap of the earth with Terrain Following Radar (TFR). The computer is jostling the pilot with just as much g forces as he can stand- even with his g suit.

The pilot's display shows the location of a NATO missile base that they are approaching, about 80 miles away, and they're flying almost half a mile per second.

INT: PATRIOT BATTERY - DAY

View is from behind the operator of a PATRIOT operator's console. The phased array radar makes several sweeps, showing nothing.

EXT: RUSSIAN JETS - DAY

The radar finds the signal from the missile battery. The display highlights the missile battery as a threat. The jet pilots scream toward their meeting with their target, the ride a rollercoaster series of jolts and bumps as their planes fly at Mach 2, only a few feet above the ground, to within 70 miles of the PATRIOT battery.

INT: PATRIOT BATTERY - DAY

The view changes a little faster. It is of the same firing console. Still nothing, although the jets are well inside its range. They are flying so low that the radar can't distinguish them from the ground clutter.

EXT: RUSSIAN JETS - DAY

The pilot arms his KH-58 antiradiation missiles and gets a confirmation from his console screen. They fly over a ridge with a hard climb and stomach turning drop, and suddenly come into the view of the PATRIOT battery's radars.

INT: PATRIOT BATTERY - DAY

View goes back to the console, and zooms in on the screen. Three dots appear on the screen, well inside the edge. The operator shouts.

PATRIOT OPERATOR

Wild Weasel! Wild Weasel, Sir!
Azimuth 2860, range 75 clicks,
angels... zero, Sir.

The Officer queries the target and orders the console to fire.

PATRIOT OFFICER

Negative IFF, I repeat negative
IFF. Targets are hostile. Fire,
fire.

The Operator fires the missile at 12km out, and its dot begins to separate from the battery at the bottom of the screen and move toward the targets. The Officer designates the second target.

PATRIOT OFFICER

Fire, fire.

The Operator complies. As another dot moves outward, the three incoming dots grow closer, fast. The Officer designates the third target.

PATRIOT OFFICER

Fire, fire.

The Operator complies, and another dot leaves its nest at the battery.

EXT: RUSSIAN JETS - DAY

A missile launch warning lights up the cockpit of the jet. The pilot shouts

RUSSIAN PILOT

Missile launch! Missile launch!
Three missiles inbound.

Russian Pilot drops chaff, a metal confetti that's designed to confuse enemy radar. The first missile is confused, and flies past the planes, following the larger signature of the chaff to a harmless detonation. The second missile is wiser, though. It follows the zig zag flight paths adopted by planes. The missile impacts one of the rearward planes directly, blasting it to a fiery cloud of bits.

RUSSIAN PILOT

Damn!

Their planes console shouts out more missile warnings, as several more dots are calved from the threat indicator for the missile battery, The PATRIOT missile battery comes into view. In seconds, they are on the missile site. The two remaining planes fire everything they have, and the missiles streak away from the planes in a tight salvo.

Near the target, the missiles scatter and impact on each piece of equipment, destroying it. After destroying NATO air defenses, Russian jets destroy land based targets with impunity. Scene after scene shows NATO tanks being destroyed, bombs falling on command posts, and troops being strafed with the Sukhoi's 30mm cannons. Those unlucky enough to be directly hit simply explode. There is soon only one option to avert complete destruction.

EXT. AZRAQ AIRBASE, TURKEY - DAY

SUPER: AZRAQ AIRBASE, TURKEY

Scene is of the US airbase at Azraq, Turkey. It's business as usual there, although security has been beefed up in response to the unrest in the region. A tiny vapor trail appears overhead, coming directly down from space to its planned altitude above the airbase. The warhead detonates in slow motion. First the humans at ground zero are vaporized, along with the planes and lighter equipment they were working with. Then the ground under the bomb is melted to glass. The blast wave expands outward further and further, first melting buildings and vehicles and humans, then the blast wave takes over and blows the buildings at the edge of the explosion over, away from the detonation. As the blast wave forms a wall of radioactive dust racing outward from the center, a huge, hydrogen bomb style mushroom cloud boils upward through the atmosphere. Pieces of earth, building, and humans start to fall at the edges of the detonation, the fiery missiles leaving gray plumes of smoke through the air. The fallout becomes smaller and smaller, and turns to dust.

I/E: CHARLESTON AFB - AFTERNOON

SUPER: CHARLESTON AFB, USA

Scene changes to the C5 landing at Charleston AFB, South Carolina. It taxis up to some huge hangars along one side of the runway. MINUET gets out, and meets the tech sergeant running to meet the plane. From the plane, the voices can barely be heard.

MINUET

I need you to gas up the plane and check it over, and get us as many of the things on this list as you can.

TECH SERGEANT

(much hand gesturing and shouting)
I'm not giving you fuel or anything else. You aren't even authorized to land at my airport, or take off, and you need to go to my CO's office to get this straightened out.

MINUET unfolds a paper from her pocket, and pokes Tech Sergeant in the chest so hard that it spins him partway around. She alternates between poking tech sergeant in the chest and placing her hands on her hips.

MINUET

This paper gives me complete command and control over US forces at any time deemed necessary, and you damned sure WILL give me fuel, and you damned sure WILL give me ALL the items on this list, and you'd better be damned quick about it before I go to your CO's office and explain how badly the tech sergeant has FUCKED UP a vital US diplomatic mission. Do you get me SERGEANT!?!?!?

The Tech Sergeant backs up a little and salutes.

TECH SERGEANT

Yes Ma'am.

MINUET returns the salute, and resumes a position of impatiently waiting. Tech Sergeant waves to the service trucks standing by, and in moments, maintenance people are swarming over the C5 and two fuel trucks are moving into place. MINUET is standing by, hands on her hips, and looking critically at the refueling operations.

MINUET

And bring us some food and some coffee!

A tech gives her a thumbs up sign. Two techs are unloading a pickup filled with black fiberglass boxes into the plane. MINUET goes up to the cockpit where the amused KIT and GUNNY are waiting.

KIT

Problems, Dear?

GUNNY

(winces)

MINUET

Nothing I can't handle. Geez, gas stations these days, ya know?

INT: NATO HQ - DAY

SUPER: NATO HQ, BRUSSELS, BELGIUM

The NATO generals are very worried, trying to take stock of the situation.

NATO GENERAL #1

I've heard too many damned reports that say we don't know! What DO we know? (points) You.

NATO GENERAL #2

Well- we know that Russian Tartus and US Azraq bases have been destroyed by nuclear weapons. We know that we didn't nuke Tartus- we don't know who did. Azraq, the Russians did, in misplaced retaliation for Tartus. We know the Russians have invaded Ukraine, in massive force, and we know we're here to determine what to do. We have some reports that our embassy in Damascus was destroyed by a mob, with high loss of life. The reports say there was use of chemical weapons, probably by our side. This happened a couple hours before Tartus got hit.

NATO GENERAL #3

We know we're being overrun at will by the Russian tank force in Ukraine, General. It's pretty much some of the darkest pages of a playbook from the Cold War, I'm afraid. Our air defenses and fighter bases in the area are pretty much wiped out, and our tank and infantry forces are taking massive casualties and are in full retreat.

(MORE)

NATO GENERAL #3 (CONT'D)

Initial reports say that our carrier force in the Black Sea has taken massive damage too, and they aren't able to back us up either. We have to stop them, Sir. Hell, we have legal obligations to stop them.

NATO GENERAL #1

We're making WW2 look like a drive by shooting, and you tell me about "legal". It's a fucked up world. Well- the longer we take, the more of our people die needlessly. I only hope that, with a decisive enough action, that we can stop this from spreading into a much broader war. Give the orders- deploy all weapons, Gentlemen.

INT: RUSSIAN FRONT - DAY

SUPER: RUSSIAN FRONT, UKRAINE

Scene opens on a long line of tanks and accompanying mechanized infantry, disappearing into the dismal gray fog of a kind that only Eastern Europe can provide. It's a normal enough day, for the Russian Front. But then, a string of several flashes of light appears over the tanks, and then takes over the screen almost instantly. The tanks and accompanying infantry and vehicles are shown being blown around, and smoking and bursting into flames.

EXT: BEIJING - DAY

SUPER: BEIJING, CHINA

The scene opens on Tiananmen Square in Beijing. The Chinese honor guards are fighting a running battle with some Infecteds. The guards are doing a great job of killing the attacking Infecteds, but the Infecteds have the advantage of both numbers and of being violently insane. They attack the guards in waves, oblivious to their own safety, their goal to run the guards out of ammo. This starts happening, and the guards are killed, one by one. The scene flies out, revealing more and more Infecteds fighting with anyone that they can bite. View flies up to airplane height, and shows fires and chaos across China. Scene fades to dark.

INT: RUSSIAN HQ

SUPER: RUSSIAN HQ, THE KREMLIN, MOSCOW

RUSSIAN GENERAL #1

Preliminary reports say that the Americans have called our bluff. They say that our forces in the Ukraine have been all but obliterated by several tactical nuclear warheads. It is obvious that NATO has lost all concern for their own safety. We shall show the Americans that we are not the ones to play cards with. Agreed?

RUSSIAN GENERAL #2

(Thoughtful- pokes at his coffee cup.) Da.

RUSSIAN GENERAL #3

The decision of what to do in this circumstance was made long ago, Comrades. I also agree with a nuclear strike, but limited only to those targets with military installations, or to warships.

Several techs give orders in the background. They get their codes entered, and a senior tech punches a transmit button. The scene changes when he hits the button.

INT: RUSSIAN SUB

SUPER: RUSSIAN SUB, AMERICAN EAST COAST.

It has just received the order to launch. Codes are programmed into the missiles. This has a status board that shows it is launching against targets on the southeastern US seaboard, including Charleston. The scene switches to another sub, then another, very quickly. It keeps flying out and shows some truck launched ground based missiles in Europe being warmed up and erected. But the storyboards in the command centers are only showing about a third of their total forces being committed. Scene changes back and forth and shows several launches.

INT: CHINESE COMMAND CENTER, DAY

SUPER: CHINESE COMMAND CENTER, BEIJING, CHINA.

There is a large screen on one wall that is linked to American HQ. A Chinese General addresses the Americans.

CHINESE GENERAL #1

Your intelligence people will by now have reviewed the information packet that we sent to you. It proves beyond doubt that the North Koreans have developed this virus, and that they have deployed it on the US West coast. This, of course, is the plague that you have been experiencing. The Koreans have also allowed the virus to escape from their labs. It is running rampant, especially in larger cities, as we speak. There have been some invasions of this virus into China already.

EXT: DALUZHEN, CHINA - NIGHT

SUPER: DALUZHEN, CHINA, NORTH OF KOREAN BORDER.

Camera flies into one of the screens on the wall. An apocalyptic scene is shown. Infecteds (Those infected with the plague) are extremely ill and attacking everything they see because of their hydrophobia, and are being massacred by the Chinese army, using mostly Type 74 flamethrowers to sterilize the area.

INT: CHINESE COMMAND CENTER, DAY

The camera backs out of the screen and returns to its position in the Chinese Command Center.

AMERICAN GENERAL #1

But I thought that this was a slate cleaner virus. Won't it die out in a few more days?

CHINESE GENERAL #1

It is true that the virus was designed to do its harm and run its course in a couple weeks or a month. But it appears that our Korean neighbors have done as poor a job with it as they do with many things.

(MORE)

CHINESE GENERAL #1 (CONT'D)

The virus is far from perfect, and many victims are living far beyond what is predicted, even though horribly ill and very contagious. Lesser amounts of radiation can also cause the virus to mutate much more rapidly than it would have if not irradiated.

AMERICAN GENERAL #2

And so what is it that you are suggesting?

CHINESE GENERAL #1

China and America should sterilize North Korea, from the DMZ north to China, both in reprisal for their attack on the US and to contain the plague within the country's borders. We propose that a Sino-American task force deploy nuclear weapons on a grid pattern over the country, and sterilize all remnants of the plague from that area. If we strike now, the wind is favorable and will blow the fallout out over the ocean, and not into China. We have informed the Russians of our plan, and they will not take action if they see this happening.

AMERICAN GENERAL #1

I'm sure that you can expect us to do our part, General.

American General #4 waves to some techs who are seated at a console to the side of the room. They send orders to nuclear bomber units.

EXT: BOMBER UNITS- NIGHT

Screen splits, showing an US and a Chinese bomber base. Alarms are going off, and pilots are running to their bombers. They take off into the night. A massive Chinese-American bomber task force, consisting of Xian H-6's and B-52's is sent. View returns to one screen.

EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - DAY

SUPER: REDDING, CA, USA.

A dog, sick and foaming at the mouth, smears shit on a newspaper dispenser in front of a convenience store by trying to scratch its ass. There is another dog, this one dead, in the gravel parking lot on one side of the store. The headline of the newspapers in the dispenser warns of a strange plague, hydrophobic influenza, that has broken out all along the US west coast in the last few days. An obviously sick looking man staggers into the store.

CLERK

Are you ok, man?

SICK MAN #1

Yeah- it'll pass soon I'm sure.

The sick man wanders through a couple of aisles, and clumsily shoplifts some flu medicine and aspirin. He opens the door to the cooler of water, but is strangely repulsed by it. He picks up a candy bar and some chips and puts them on the counter.

SICK MAN #1

How much will that be?

CLERK

Just that, or the stuff you crammed in your pocket, too?

SICK MAN #1

(Devlish smile) Just that.

CLERK

(draws huge nickel revolver and points it at Sick Man #1) Look, I don't want any problem with you. Put it down, and go.

Two panicked women run inside, screaming about the crazy man who just bit them, streaming blood and grabbing paper towels and calling 911. They get even more panicked when they see the clerk behind the counter, holding a huge pistol. Sick Man #1 takes advantage of the distraction and suddenly bites the clerk on the wrist, and the clerk can't get the pistol to bear on Sick man #1's head, though he fires twice trying to.

Sick Man #1's teeth tear loose of the Clerk's wrist, though, and the clerk shoots Sick Man #1 in the face. His head splatters on the wall of the store. The camera walks outside, and points east. The wind blows a half empty party balloon eastward past the sign to Interstate 5.

EXT. NORTH KOREA - NIGHT

SUPER: NORTH KOREA.

As the camera watches, wave after wave of Chinese and American heavy bombers carpet bomb North Korea with 1Mt bombs on a grid pattern. They kill all the mammals - mice, rats, and horses. And humans. The detonations occur about once every twenty miles, on a grid pattern, over the entire country, using 1 megaton devices. Populations centers are awarded more intense bombing. Major urban centers are changed into craters. Several Infecteds are shown in closeup trying to run away and having their flesh burned off by the flash and their skeletons blown away by the blast wave.

INT: C5 CARGO PLANE - EVENING

SUPER: CHARLESTON AFB, SOUTH CAROLINA, USA

KIT is fiddling with the radio. He gets a military channel, which announces that multiple missile launches have been reported in Russia and at sea, and there are multiple inbound warheads approaching the US East Coast at this time. It advises all US military forces to take appropriate precautions because of war.

GUNNY

So, what sort of precautions are we supposed to take?

KIT

I'd say we should take the precaution of getting the hell away from the east coast, and fast! (Notices 3/4 full fuel gauges. Leans out window and yells) Hey! We have enough fuel, OK? You're done! Unhook us, and FAST!

FUEL TECH

It's your call, Sir!

Fuel Tech unhooks the fuel line from the plane and helps it retract into the truck. It is night, well past sundown. Just as the fuel lines clear the plane, KIT starts the engines, and the plane starts moving toward the runway. A flash appears on the southern horizon, and dims into a red glow.

MINUET

Oh, Jesus!

Kit increases the planes throttles. Another flash appears, this time to the north. KIT slaps the throttles forward to make sure they're wide open.

GUNNY

Go, go, GO!

KIT

Hammer's down, Gunny!

They clear the airfield, and just as KIT raises the landing gear, a huge explosion erupts from the airfield behind them. The giant cargo plane is shaken like a toy. It almost flips over, barely clearing the trees as KIT wrestles it back under control. The trees are shaken by the jet exhaust, and then flattened by the explosion's shock wave. As the C5 roars into the night, dozens of missiles streak in and detonate in military bases across the US East Coast.

MINUET

Oh, my GOD. That is what I think it is, isn't it?

KIT

Yes, I'm afraid so. Looks like the Russians have attacked the US East Coast, and with nuclear weapons. That's the only thing that could cause what we're seeing, that I know of.

INT: NORAD WAR ROOM - DAY

SUPER: NORAD WAR ROOM, COLORADO SPRINGS, CO

A light is flashing and an alarm is sounding. Several of the tracks on the US East Coast are dashes of red and have red markers where they have detonated, along with the red markers over Tartus and Azraq. A swarm of tracks has left Russia and is heading toward the US.

TECH #1

We have multiple inbound tracks, sir- multiple inbound tracks. It appears that some have already detonated.

NORAD GENERAL

Jesus! How in the hell did those get that close without us seeing them?

TECH #1

They're showing as originating in the Atlantic Ocean, just off the coast, Sir. Probably sub launched.

NORAD GENERAL

Well it's too late to do anything about those, but we can stop the ones still coming. Give our people the free fire orders.

Several techs busily send orders from their consoles. Norad General picks up the red phone.

NORAD GENERAL

Hello, Sir. No, I wish the news was better from here, Sir. We're fighting like hell, but we're losing our ICBM's pretty fast. We need to, well, we need to launch 'em or lose 'em, Sir. If we don't get it out of the ground, there may not be enough bombs left to do the job. (Listens) Yes Sir, we always knew it could come to this. Personally, I never thought it would. But it has. If you gentlemen would input your codes, Sir.

A display shows an obscured set of codes being entered. NORAD General goes through a computer launch sequence with a NORAD Colonel. A display shows all the ICBM sites in the US, with several of the ones on the East Coast and the Midwest covered with orange labels that say they've been destroyed. One by one, they confirm launch. Markers for subs are also showing launch by the red lights on their icons going out and tracks appearing on the screen.

INT: NORAD TACTICAL DISPLAY - DAY

An air battle is fought through the view of NORAD's computers. At first, US air defenses are effective at fighting them off, but soon the air defense screen weakens and some missiles begin to slip through. After the initial submarine barrage, the detonations spread out, seemingly limiting themselves to the missile silos scattered throughout the US midwest. The US East Coast is already largely destroyed. The Midwest missile silos keep taking hits, as well as targets further west in Denver, San Diego, Portland, Long Beach, and Seattle. Whenever a missile gets through the defenses, the scene cuts to a missile streaking in from above and detonating over that city. Some tracks split into as many as eight warheads that spread out and detonate on multiple targets. NORAD begins to show four missile tracks converging on Colorado Springs from different directions. They converge, and detonate one after another. NORAD shakes with each detonation, and the scene changes to the exterior of Cheyenne Mountain in Colorado Springs taking a direct hit. After the fourth detonation, though, the screen goes blank.

I/E: C5 CARGO PLANE - EVENING

SUPER: C5 CARGO PLANE, MIDWEST, USA

The C5 is flying west into the evening sun, over the midwest. One mushroom cloud is apparent- while they are looking at it, another detonation appears some miles away. Several launches appear as ribbons of white smoke, arcing into the sky.

KIT

Damn. I never thought it would come to this. But sure enough, we seem to be getting more missiles launched than are getting destroyed. Sure looks like Mutually Assured Destruction, though- just like they promised us.

MINUET and GUNNY look silently at the scene of destruction and death that is unfolding like a board game across America's heartland in their view from the C5.

EXT: DENVER COURTHOUSE

SUPER: DENVER FEDERAL COURTHOUSE, DENVER, CO, USA

Subjective viewpoint shows a brisk walk on the sidewalk in front of the Denver Federal Courthouse. There are several homeless guys standing on the corner where the steps go up to the Courthouse. They somehow look more malevolent and less benign than the people from the homeless tents usually do. A feeling intentionally vague, a dark sort of aura that usually comes with being the tents closest to the crack dealer.

HOMELESS GUY

Spare Change? Got a dollar?

The Homeless Guy moves forward, using his begging to get far closer than safety allows.

VICTIM

No, man, I haven't got any change.
Hey! Let go of me!

Homeless Guy grabs Victim by the arm and bites him, tearing a chunk out of his neck, and swallowing it.

VICTIM

Screams.

The homeless guys converge on him like the pack of rabid dogs that they are. Victim is torn to pieces in a few moments.

INT: RUSSIAN HQ - DAY

SUPER: RUSSIAN HQ, THE KREMLIN, MOSCOW

Russian General #1 looks at report.

RUSSIAN GENERAL #1

Well, it is total, then. The
Americans have fired everything
that they have- and so must we.
Give the orders quickly,
Comrades- and God Help Us.

Several techs activate launch codes.

RUSSIAN GENERAL #2

Yes, it is done.

Russian General #2 Snaps to attention.

RUSSIAN GENERAL #2
In defense of the Motherla...

The screen goes to white noise because a bomb has destroyed the Kremlin- the American bombs have found their targets. Just in front of the nuclear blast, a signal runs from Moscow to San Francisco Bay. Just behind it, Moscow is enveloped by a huge, blinding flash. The signal bounces off a satellite, zooms underwater a couple miles off the coast, and streaks down and through the wall of the shipping container dropped there weeks before. There is a brief shot of a rounded torpedo nose of a Status-6 torpedo, and then it detonates. The 100 megaton cobalt warhead throws up a 300 foot tall tsunami that races inland and swamps the Golden Gate bridge almost entirely- only the pylons protrude from the water. The bridge deck is some 80 feet underwater. The tsunami destroys almost all of the San Francisco area. Several more tsunami are shown impacting other major cities along the west coast. The camera backs out to space, and giant waves are shown inundating cities all along the US west coast.

INT: C5 CARGO PLANE - EVENING

SUPER: C5 CARGO PLANE, NORTHWEST, USA

The navigation computer shows that they are southeast of Portland, Oregon. The fuel gauges are near zero.

KIT

Good thing Portland isn't very far.
I wish we would have gotten more
fuel in Charleston.

GUNNY

I'm damned glad we DIDN'T! If we'd
have gotten out of there a half a
minute later- poof!

MINUET

I'll be glad to be on the ground.
I'm not used to this long in a
plane, that's for sure.

The east Portland, OR skyline comes into view. The buildings are mangled and leaning, and a ferocious fire rages in a line across the grasslands toward the east. PDX airport, or what used to be PDX, was probably the target of the warhead. But things look surprisingly intact to the southwest of Portland.

MINUET looks from the window and asks GUNNY if he knows of a place to land.

MINUET

You don't know where there's another one of those cargo plane bases, do you?

GUNNY

You know, they sent us to Fort Lewis in Washington one time. It's quite a way, though. You'd be surprised. Besides, if they blew up a civilian airport, that doesn't bode well for an Army base. Besides, the Boeing plant is in Seattle, and that is probably a prime target.

MINUET

(To KIT) How much did you say you needed to take this thing off? Almost 2 miles?

A low fuel warning goes off.

KIT

Well, no way we're making it to Seattle, now. We have about a hundred miles of fuel left. We'd better find someplace to land. We can probably land this thing in a little less than a mile, but it'll never take off from there again.

MINUET looks at a computer screen with a map of the area that has airports marked.

MINUET

Looks like the only thing within a hundred miles of here is the municipal airport in Eugene, OR. It is small enough that maybe it didn't get hit, but it's one of those without enough runway to take off.

KIT

On the way! (He turns the plane to the south.)

I/E: GRADE SCHOOL - DAY

SUPER: BEN FRANKLIN SCHOOL, INDIANA, PA, USA

Scene changes to a dead dog lying next to an elementary school playground. One of several pustules growing on the dog bursts, and the camera follows a droplet upward and into the school air conditioner. It gets chopped up and spread into several of the classrooms below. Scene ends with a boy scratching his neck where the droplets have landed.

I/E: C5 CARGO PLANE - EVENING

SUPER: C5 CARGO PLANE, OREGON, USA

They listen to the radio as they head south.

RADIO

This is KVAL News, with a Special Report. Our information is sketchy, but it appears that the plague that has been spreading on the US West Coast is starting to die out. Experts are surprised that it is dying off as quickly as it is. They say it is almost like someone engineered a weaponized virus and let it loose, somehow. But the plague is increasing toward the east at this time. As well, numerous nuclear detonations have been reported all across the US, especially at military installations of all kinds. Massive nuclear detonations have been reported just off the US West Coast, and the tsunami waves that they caused are at this moment destroying cities all along the US Western Seaboard. If you are in a tsunami prone area, get to higher ground, NOW. If you are in the path of the fallout from the detonation clouds, get out of their way, NOW. Urban areas are likely targets, and people living in the larger cities must evacuate.

(MORE)

RADIO (CONT'D)

Otherwise, please stay in your home, and use plastic and tape to keep any outside air from getting in. More news on this channel as it develops. This is KVAL News, Eugene- signing off for now.

INT: C5 - EVENING

Soon Eugene comes into view. Someone else has had the same idea- there is a large passenger plane crashed and burning in the middle of the runway. There is no other runway even close to long enough to land the C5. Two firemen are holding a hose that is spraying foam onto the crashed airplane. The C5 goes past, seemingly little more than head height.

GUNNY

Damn.

MINUET

What do we do now?

KIT

I saw some farms a little north of here- looked like they had enough room to land, maybe. Does anyone else have any suggestions? (The others remain silent.) Well, then, lets find a place to land this thing.

They fly north, and soon they see a big hayfield. They fly around it. It's a 1 mile by 1 mile section, with no fences or roads in between the perimeter fences. There is a farmhouse at the northeast corner of the field.

KIT

It looks like that's about the best we're going to do.

GUNNY

As long as you're in the same plane!

MINUET

(Taps on fuel gauge) It doesn't look like we've got much choice.

KIT

Here we go!

Kit noses the plane toward the ground, pulling the huge plane into a stall just before it touches the ground. It barely nicks the fence at the edge of the hay field. Soon, it is sliding along the alfalfa, which is helping cushion and lubricate the belly of the plane. They slide to a stop at the north end of the field, turned slightly to the right, huge wing extending out over the hay field. There is a farmhouse about a hundred yards away. Gunny grabs his shotgun.

GUNNY

You guys OK?

MINUET

Yes, I think so.

KIT

Yeah, I'm OK, Gunny. What do you think- has the plague has died out around here?

GUNNY

I'll give that a definite maybe- and keep my shotgun handy. I'm going to go over and see if anybody is home over there. Maybe you guys should see about patching up some of the bigger holes in the plane.

I/E: FARMHOUSE - EVENING

SUPER: FARMHOUSE, SOUTHWEST OF PORTLAND, OR

GUNNY opens the door to the plane, and begins walking across the field to the farmhouse. The C5 is slid up against some small trees. A squirrel jumps out of a tree and lands on GUNNY's helmet, biting and scratching. GUNNY throws it away from him and shoots it just as it lands on the ground. He exclaims "What the hell?" and sees one, and then several dogs, running towards him from the far side of the field. GUNNY runs back to the plane and shuts the door.

GUNNY

Jesus CHRIST! I never saw anything like that!

A dog slams against the plane's door. There is howling and fighting outside the plane. One dog starts to shove its head inside a hole in the plane, and GUNNY shoots it point blank with his shotgun.

KIT

Careful! You can even get infected if you get blood into an open cut, or your eyes, or if you breathe it somehow.

GUNNY

I'll keep them away from us!

MINUET is almost overwhelmed by all this. She backs against a wall, tightening her grip on her P90.

KIT

You doing OK, Girl?

MINUET

About as OK as I can be in this GD house of GD horrors. Don't worry about me, KIT. I'll be there when you need me.

KIT

That's one of the big things I like about you. You can keep it together, when lots of other people wouldn't. Great job!

MINUET

(weak grin) I'm working at it.

They try to relax inside the plane, but more sounds of fighting and dying reverberate from the metal skin. At one point the screaming becomes almost human. They look at each other, but collectively discount the sounds as another animal. The scene fades to black.

I/E: C5 CARGO PLANE - MORNING

SUPER: C5 CARGO PLANE, OREGON, USA

It's a gray, spring Oregon morning. The view is of outside the plane. Pieces of, and whole dead animals lay strewn about. There are streaks of blood on the airplane. At the middle of the fuselage there are two humans, grossly deformed from the last stages of the plague. There are no bite marks on them.

Scene switches to inside the plane. MINUET peeks at the edge of a blanket, looking outside.

MINUET

I think they've gone.

GUNNY

It sounds like it, anyway.

KIT

THEM being gone isn't the important thing. The VIRUS being gone is the important thing. Until it is, if we breathe it, or touch it, or God Forbid get bitten, we'll catch the plague.

They spend a couple minutes looking at each other, but no one asks the question of who is going to go outside and expose himself.

KIT

Here, I'll go outside. If it's a slate cleaner virus, it should be about done by now.

Kit puts on his gloves, poncho, and gas mask.

MINUET

What do you need that for?

KIT

Just in case.

KIT opens the plane door. GUNNY and MINUET are horrified to see the torn up remains of the animals, and the bodies of the humans. KIT steps away from the plane, and removes his mask. The camera looks at each of them in turn. GUNNY looks concerned, but what is in MINUET's eyes might be something a little more. KIT says he'll be right back, and walks downhill to a small stream. He notices the birds flying by and perching in the trees, and he sees some fish in the stream. He sees several dead small animals- mice, a squirrel, a muskrat. It appears that almost all of the plague's potential victims are already dead. And the plants look OK, too. He walks back to the plane.

KIT

Yep, the plague is acting just like the stuff at Pine Bluff Arsenal.

Minuet is shocked that the US might have something like this.

MINUET

You mean...?

KIT

Oh sure- the US, and Russia, and a few other countries to boot, have all different sorts of these bugs. They're only supposed to be in "research quantities". But what is a research quantity when a cup full can wipe out a continent? I very much doubt that this is from natural causes. Someone put it here.

GUNNY

That figures. Damned Army.

KIT

The good news is that, after last night, it should be safe by now, but I want to give it some time and see if I get sick.

I/E: FARMHOUSE - DAY

KIT walks over to the farmhouse. The farmhouse is not far- 30 yards or so. KIT walks through the gate in the white picket fence, closes the gate, and walks over and opens the house's back door. What's left of an elderly couple is in one corner, across from several dead dogs. The man is in front of the woman with a shotgun nearby.

It's apparent that the man was trying to protect the woman from the dogs. KIT looks around the room to the aquarium. The fish look fine. Then KIT's eyes focus on the wall next to the kitchen door. There is a rack with bunches of keys on hooks, with plastic tags and labels attached to them. KIT finds some vehicle keys. He reads the labels aloud- "2020 Superduty", "2022 Bronco", "Ford Tractor", "2019 LTD", and "1978 F250". KIT takes the keys and stuffs them in his pocket, walks outside, and looks around. There is an open front barn across a graveled area from the house. KIT walks over to a blue Bronco, gets inside (no dings or warnings), puts the key in the ignition, and turns it. Nothing happens.

KIT

I thought so.

KIT walks over to the ancient looking Ford backhoe. He puts the key in and turns it one click. The gauges come on. He turns the key one more click and the backhoe starts right up.

INT: C5 PLANE - DAY

MINUET hears the tractor start up.

MINUET

What do you think KIT is doing?

GUNNY

The Specialist surely has good reason. The longer he stays out there, the safer we are. It'll be a while, so just sit tight.

Minuet is ruffled, but goes over and sits on a cot that has fallen out of the plane's cargo. Gunny walks over and gets a glass of water from a spigot on a stainless bar behind the cockpit.

GUNNY

We'll be good enough as long as the crew's water and food hold out. Don't worry, you can bet the Specialist has thought of this. Him being our human guinea pig, and all. (Grins).

I/E: THE BARN- DAY.

While the backhoe warms up, KIT looks over the rest of the cars. KIT lifts one cover- it's the 2019 LTD. He puts the key in the ignition- nothing.

KIT

(to car) Too bad you didn't make it through the EMP. Here, let's check that superduty.

KIT pulls the cover off the pickup, revealing not the 2020 Superduty on the key tag KIT has out, but the black 1978 F250 Ranger 4x4, complete with roll bar and 40 inch tires, that the key marked "1978 F250" matches. KIT smiles, and opens the door to reveal a perfect stock interior.

KIT

(To pickup) Yep- you're a real old cruiser, aren't you? Not too much of that computer stuff either, I'll bet. (KIT pats the top of the bed a couple of times.)

KIT gets in, puts the key in the ignition, and pumps the gas pedal three times, smiling because he has to pump the gas to prime the carburetor, where the newer cars have fuel injection that has been burned out by the EMP from the bombs. They would have started by just turning the key. He turns the key in the F250, and the engine starts immediately. KIT lets it warm up enough to assure that the gauges are reading properly, and then shuts off the pickup and walks over to the backhoe. He drives it around the side of the house and through the edge of the hayfield toward the plane. KIT waves to GUNNY and MINUET and flashes them an OK sign. He drives to the side of the yard and digs four graves, and one larger rectangular hole.

INT: C5 CARGO PLANE

MINUET throws her hands in the air.

MINUET

Oh, and of course that guy can run a backhoe. I just have never seen one person with so many different talents!

GUNNY

I have to say, that guy is pretty dang broad even for a guy with his job. What I really like is that he's a trick shot. Did you see how he handled those Tangos? I've taught thousands of guys to shoot and I have never seen anything like that guy. He's like the guy Remington had that shot 100,000 hand thrown wooden blocks and missed about six. They'd send you a block if you asked them to, for quite a while. You hear stories about some of the Old West gunfighters. I'd say he's on par with the best. Just our sort of boy.

MINUET smiles.

EXT: DRONE VIEW US

SUPER: DRONE VIEW, US

The camera flies across the US from the west. It assesses battle damage. It stops in LA, Denver, Omaha- all are severely damaged from nuclear weapons. Lots of bodies are on top of the rubble, looking out of place because they aren't burned and charcoaled. Further east, some mammal life is seen, furtive glimpses of what still survived. Even further east, more life is seen, but with scenes of wolves attacking livestock, then humans attacking humans. And then the camera gets to the hell that is the east coast, very heavily damaged, very radioactive, and with the plague raging at its peak and Infecteds roaming everywhere.

EXT: FARMHOUSE - DAY

SUPER: FARMHOUSE, OREGON, USA

KIT has filled in the holes with the farmer and the wife of the place they were staying, and the bodies out near the plane. The piece of flesh in one of their teeth told KIT that the human had died while still attacking one of the dogs. KIT stands up near the farmer's grave, and says Ashes to ashes, dust to dust. And thank you. Then he drives the backhoe over by the plane, and loads the animal bodies in the bucket.

MINUET

(From inside plane) Are you OK?

KIT

So far, so good. It's showing signs of extremely fast progression. Let's give it til morning and see how it goes, ok? I'll make sure to try some of the local food and water, too.

GUNNY

(shouts) Great plan, Specialist!

KIT

I have a few more things to do, GUNNY. You take care of the lady, OK?

GUNNY

Roger, Army! (to MINUET) I never thought I'd come to appreciate a god damned dogface.

MINUET

I may be coming to, er, "appreciate" the specialist, myself.

GUNNY

(smiles) We got things to do.

MINUET

Sticks out tongue.

KIT drives the animal bodies over to the larger hole, dumps them in, and covers them up.

INT: C5 CARGO PLANE - DAY

GUNNY and MINUET are going through the contents of the plane.

GUNNY

(holds up package) We have enough food for a while, that's for sure. About a dozen of these pallets are MRE's!

MINUET

Well and look over here- here's what looks to be a whole farm-seeds, irrigation system, pumps, tractor. So that's why those guys were shouting kibbutz kibbutz at us.

GUNNY

Could be. Should I ask what's in those black crates you had them load?

MINUET

Should be a couple more P90's, two M4's, some Mac10's, lots of ammo for everything... I ordered some breacher rounds for your shotgun. Oh and about two dozen grenades, several pounds of C4, some detonators....

(MORE)

MINUET (CONT'D)

KIT said he "likes to blow shit up".

EXT: FARMHOUSE - DAY

KIT has driven the backhoe around and parked it, and shuts it off. KIT puts the keys in his pocket, and walks into the front of the house and into the attached garage. Sure enough, there's a muddy 2020 Ford Superduty, obviously the farmer's usual rig. KIT opens the overhead style door, and tries to start the Superduty. Nothing happens. "Sure enough" Kit says to himself. So KIT takes a chain from the garage wall and hooks it to the hitch on the superduty. He hooks the 1978 F250 to the Superduty. The powerful sounding engine fires right up, and pulls the superduty forward and left. Then KIT unhooks the chain, and pushes the superduty out of the way in the circular driveway. KIT parks the F250 in the attached garage. He uses some scrap plywood and a screw gun he found to repair a broken window. KIT goes to the kitchen and pours himself a glass of water from a pitcher in the refrigerator. He looks at it studiously, and then gulps most of it down, refreshed. KIT gets some bread and sliced chicken and condiments from the refrigerator and makes a sandwich. He's careful to put the leftovers away. He thinks to himself that it might be a while before they get any more mayonnaise. While eating his sandwich, KIT looks around the living room. He stops in surprise when he sees a vintage picture of a young woman who looks very much like MINUET. KIT wonders to himself "Or does she only look like that to ME?" There are several more pictures of the woman on the mantle, with her family, engaged in various activities. KIT shrugs and continues his search. He goes to the finished basement and finds a man cave with a reloading bench and a rather large cache of weapons and ammo. KIT fills one ammo box each with 5.56 and 9mm ammo and 12 gauge shells, and carried them up the stairs. He puts his haul of ammo into the F250, pulls it outside the garage door and shuts it, and drives over and parks several feet behind the C5's crumpled nose.

GUNNY

(through plane window) Nice Pickup!

KIT shows GUNNY a full water bottle and an ammo box.

KIT

It IS pretty, ain't it?

GUNNY

(to MINUET) He's OK, he's OK! And he's got extra ammo, and water, and food- and a dang nice truck, looks like.

MINUET

(looks through window) That IS a pretty truck, isn't it? (Whispers) And I'll see YOU in the morning....

KIT pulls some bedding and a pillow around to make a bed in the front of the truck, and shuts the door to get some sleep. Scene fades to a quiet Oregon night.

In the morning, scene opens to a bright, sunny day. KIT wakes up, gets out of the truck, and walks over and knocks on the door of the plane. GUNNY opens the door, his pistol aimed at KIT's chest.

GUNNY

You're OK, aren't you?

KIT

Yes, I'm pretty sure I'm OK.

GUNNY

(uncocks pistol) I'm damned glad to hear that.

MINUET

(comes from further back in the plane) I really hope that you never have to do that to me again!

KIT

We should go over to the house and make some breakfast. The power appears to be solar, so the electricity is working. Chickens are in good shape, too, although I hope you don't like pork or beef very much.

KIT and MINUET get into the front of the pickup, and GUNNY jumps in the back with his auto shotgun. They drive across to the yard of the house, park, and go inside. GUNNY is especially careful, and sweeps most rooms with his shotgun. MINUET looks around the kitchen, and finds some pans. She tests the stove. It's propane, fueled from a large tank in the yard.

MINUET

This will do just fine.

KIT

Don't forget to call when breakfast is ready!

The scene changes to the front of the house. The two men walk out the front- both are armed. GUNNY is suspicious- the place gives him the creeps. They walk directly out from the house for a hundred yards, then turn and walk in a circle, stealthily. They meet at the far side of the house.

GUNNY

Something about this place gives me the creeps.

KIT

That's strange. I'm just not getting that. Feels like-well- feels like home, almost. Nice place, nice farm, nice woma- ha forget I said that haha. Not that I ever had much of a home to compare to.

GUNNY

Yeah. If you don't mind the damned bodies.

INT: FARMHOUSE - DAY

MINUET

(from house) Come and get it!

KIT notices how remarkably beautiful that MINUET looks, standing on the old farmhouse porch, cheeks flushed from her cooking. KIT and GUNNY go inside. MINUET has done a great job. She has bacon and eggs and pancakes in platters on the table.

GUNNY

This will do just fine.

KIT

(sits down at table) You did great, MINUET!

MINUET

Well the food has been taking the same chance of being exposed to the virus that KIT has, so (looks at KIT) once I WASHED IT AND COOKED IT THOROUGHLY, I figure its safe.

GUNNY

(laughs)

MINUET

And coffee, too!

MINUET pours GUNNY a cup from a large old enameled coffeepot.

MINUET

So- why did you big strong men assume that I can cook? (both men reddened.)

KIT

We can trade jobs sometimes if you want. I'm a pretty GOOD cook, as long as it isn't fancy.

MINUET

No, you don't. I saw you guys preparing to fight these Infecteds a while ago, and you know what? I LIKE housework, I decided.

GUNNY

Don't ask me. I could probably figure something out, but I always pretty much had The Corps do my cooking for me.

The men eat hearty, and thank MINUET profusely for her breakfast.

KIT

(Under breath to GUNNY) As long as we don't die.

MINUET

I heard that! (raps KIT across knuckles with a wooden kitchen spoon.)

EXT: FARMHOUSE - DAY

The men go outside, and begin looking at a map that KIT is spreading out on a picnic table in the yard. KIT is looking through a spotting scope, at the highway north of there into downtown Portland.

GUNNY

I never really thought that The Big One would ever happen.

KIT

We've been more than a little lucky so far.

GUNNY

Well, some of us have been. Hey, do you remember seeing the south side of Portland looking pretty much OK?

KIT

Yeah, I remember that. Looks like someone missed, or something. I've read where they'll use a MIRV- a warhead that breaks apart- and detonate two smaller nukes instead of one big one. Sort of makes a hammer and an anvil when the blast waves meet. I think one of the warheads that were designated to hit Portland missed, or didn't go off.

GUNNY

Didn't go off?

KIT

Oh sure- the more complicated you make something, the less likely it is that it will work. Surprises me they have the reliability that they do. The big problem here is that some of the bombs didn't kill the large majority of the population like they were supposed to. And that leaves us with a whole lot of Infecteds that don't seem to be dying in two or three days like they're supposed to.

(MORE)

KIT (CONT'D)

You probably noticed, but we're not all that far from Portland. It's a good thing the wind usually blows east or where we're at would have gotten coated with fallout, too.

GUNNY

I'd like to find someplace to report to.

KIT

I'm not so sure that there is a Marine Corps to report to at this point. There is Army Nat Guard armory in Salem, but I think Ft Lewis is about the closest major base, and you already figured how that would probably go.

The men walk back inside, just as MINUET is finishing with washing the dishes. They sit down at the table.

KIT

We should take a drive north and see if there are any government offices still working in Portland.

MINUET

What the hell for? I'm happy right here! And beside it didn't look like there was a lot left on our way here.

GUNNY

Portland only looked a little singed. Maybe there's a place up there.

KIT

The onshore winds should have blown the fallout toward the east.

KIT shows MINUET a map with fallout predictions penciled in on it.

KIT

GUNNY and I will leave in the morning-

MINUET

No WAY are you leaving me here by myself, no WAY!

The men leave the matter alone and say nothing.

EXT: FARMHOUSE - EVENING

KIT and GUNNY turn off the downstairs lights, and, with Kit holding an oil lamp, walk upstairs to the bedrooms. Minuet is standing in the doorway of the master bedroom, wearing a vintage nightgown that she got from the bedroom closet. There is another oil lamp on the nightstand behind her. MINUET is the same woman in the antique picture that KIT was looking at earlier.

MINUET

I'm sleeping HERE (points at the master bedroom) and you're sleeping THERE. (points at the two beds in the room across the hall).

KIT

Shouldn't that be "there and there"?

GUNNY

I wanted to sleep "there".

KIT

Or maybe "over here".

MINUET

(embarrassed) As long as we know who's sleeping with who, and where.

GUNNY

I'm married to The Corps, don't worry about it. The Warrior Monk ethos, all that. Heck, lots of cultures believe that, well- they believe that women are trouble. Drain the life essence, and all.

KIT

I'll take my chances.

MINUET

(softly to KIT) We'll see about that later. After we don't die.

KIT

It's a date.

They retire to their respective rooms, and blow out the oil lamps. Scene goes dark.

INT: FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

MINUET turns an electric lamp on in the middle of the night. She bangs on the men's door and opens it.

MINUET

I HEARD something!

GUNNY is in his skivvies, but holding his pistol, and puts on his pants. KIT appears, also half clad, out of the darkness, holding his M4, with the laser sight turned on. Completely quiet, GUNNY skulks over and picks up his shotgun. KIT peeks around the doorway, and sees a faint shimmer of eyes from 2 or 3 yards away. KIT suddenly shoves his rifle around the door case, and the laser settles between the eyes, which get a lot brighter when the laser hits between them.

GUNNY

Light. (Turns on flashlight)

Framed by the flashlight and the window, a huge owl sits just outside in a tree.

KIT

It's just an owl. Remember? The plague doesn't hurt birds. He's probably wondering where all the mice went.

MINUET

DAMN it. Just... DAMN it.

Minuet is angry with herself for her false alarm. She walks back to her room. But she leaves the door open this time.

KIT

(to GUNNY) Good spot, though, huh?
That owl didn't have a prayer.

GUNNY smiles in the dark.

GUNNY

That owl upset her a bit though,
huh?

KIT

Nah, I think she's doing damned
well, for, geez- for having to
fight goddam world war three, for
Christ's Sake.

GUNNY

I'll tell you- I've seen a lot of
them, since the Corps went co-ed.
A lot of them are wannabe tough,
and a lot of them want to prove
they're a man. But some women,
inside there somewhere is a hard
iron core. You tell MINUET to sweep
the house, and she'll grab an M4
with a light on it. I like the way
she'll take orders if she needs to,
too- even if she outranks everyone
around here. Or wow everyone at an
Embassy function, no doubt. She'd
be a good one for you to keep.
Even if all the others WEREN'T
dead.

KIT

You have to say- the odds are good.
G'nite, GUNNY.

GUNNY

Night, Kit.

The view goes black.

INT: FARMHOUSE - DAY

Scene opens on the kitchen in the morning. KIT has
coffee and pancakes and eggs ready when MINUET walks in.

GUNNY

Good Morning!

MINUET inspects the food.

MINUET

I could get used to this, you know.
(smiles groggily.)

They eat, and GUNNY rinses his dishes and excuses himself. He goes downstairs. MINUET and KIT wash the dishes, eyeing and elbowing each other.

MINUET

You know, you may just get lucky yet.

KIT

Oh yeah like I'm feeling real lucky lately, geez. So many wonderful things have happened.

MINUET

But hey, I was just thinking about how maybe I WOULD go out with you.

KIT

Wow, I feel so lucky all of the sudden.

MINUET

Well yeah. If things get a little bit worse, maybe I would.

KIT

You mean, things would have to get WORSE?

MINUET

Yeah. I mean, ALL the other men, besides you, would have to die...

MINUET sticks her tongue out at KIT.

KIT

Or get real sick...

They pack for their trip. They put a case of MRE's on the kitchen table. Then they put a black duffel bag on the table, and put various weapons in it. An M4, a P90, and a pump shotgun. Lots of mags and shotgun ammo.

MINUET

I sure like this little gun. But don't think she doesn't have a bite. The bullets are just a bit bigger than Mr. M4 there, and they go almost as fast. Plus, well hey, they come with 50 round mags, stock.

(MORE)

MINUET (CONT'D)

Lots of firepower- real high rate of fire. (MINUET puts a leather case that fits six magazines on the table.)

KIT

That IS nice. Me, I'm damaged, what can I say. I've been shooting an M16 since I was in high school ROTC. And we never had any damned school shootings, either. But yeah this is the same gun I won the 2023 National Service Rifle Championships with. I put on his red dot sight though- only standard iron sights are allowed for Service Rifle. Seems to be doing pretty good so far. (KIT puts two cloth magazine bandoliers on the table.) What can I say- I'm just a dogface. (blushes.)

MINUET

(calls) GUNNY!

GUNNY

(from downstairs) I'll be right there!

GUNNY walks into the kitchen with two black duffel bags. He puts the smaller one on the table.

KIT

What's this?

GUNNY

Shotgun. (GUNNY unzips the bag and fondles the AA12, almost sexually. He puts the larger bag on the table.)

KIT

What's that?

GUNNY

Ammo.

KIT

You think you need all of that?

GUNNY

Makes me feel better. I tell ya,
this setup gives me the creeps.
(Hands KIT a square foam box)

KIT

What's that?

GUNNY

Hand grenades. Courtesy of The
Little Woman, there. (MINUET
curtsies, daintily.) Thoughtful of
her.

KIT

Close counts, I always say.

EXT: THE ROAD NORTH

KIT walks out of the farmhouse door carrying a black bag. There is a horseshoe nailed above the door, prongs sticking up to catch the luck. They load the bags into the back of the pickup. GUNNY jumps in the back with his AA12. KIT opens the camper window and puts his M4 in the gun rack. MINUET climbs into the passenger seat and closes the door.

KIT

This DOES have all the comforts of
home, doesn't it?

MINUET gives KIT a dirty look.

KIT

I meant the gun rack, not the seat
cover!

MINUET sticks her tongue out at KIT. KIT taps on the
dash.

KIT

No AC.

KIT opens the wing window. MINUET takes a better grip on
her P90 in her lap.

MINUET

I'm keeping mine handy.

They pull out of the farm and onto the paved road. Immediately they see animal corpses dotting the landscape. Vultures are flying here and there, confused because they can't decide which carrion to eat. Further north on I5, there are cars here and there. Once they see a pack of dogs. Some cars have bodies hanging out of them, stripped to bloody wrecks by the vultures and dogs. Some cars are closed, with corpses inside showing only the marks of having been bitten.

EXT: REST STOP

SUPER: REST STOP, SOUTH OF PORTLAND, OREGON.

They pull into a rest stop on the outskirts of Portland where KIT has seen something of interest. GUNNY looks suspiciously around with his shotgun. MINUET looks apprehensive. There are several mutilated corpses in scattered pockets where they'd tried to defend themselves. The guns in the gory piles are mute testament to the bloody last stand that was fought here. GUNNY pushes on a restroom door lock with his shotgun muzzle, and then fires a door breaching charge into the lock. The door swings open. Several corpses are inside, but once again, they appear to have died from the disease rather than being murdered by Infecteds. KIT uses binoculars to look to the north. He sees a long furrow cut into the meadow, and a gleam from the end of it. KIT marks the position on his map.

KIT

I think I found why the south end of Portland is relatively undamaged. The Russians sent probably a RS-28 Sarmat missile to Portland. You see, the thing splits into three or even more warheads. Instead of one big black mark, they get a much broader area of destruction with the same missile. Plus, if the blast waves from two of them intersect in, say, a downtown, there would be an area of a hammer and anvil effect. Much more efficient.

MINUET

(horrified) Efficient... yeah, right.

KIT

Sorry, Minuet. You work with this stuff all the time, and you become a little callous. I'm sorry if I didn't show the proper respect.

MINUET

It's just a little creepy, is all.

GUNNY

Well, we can all mind our manners- AFTER we survive this thing. You figure these Infecteds come out more after dark?

KIT

There don't seem to be many right now. I don't know.

They get back in the truck and drive north on I5. GUNNY is still riding in back, watching their progress over the rollbar, with occasional looks over the tailgate. GUNNY shouts in the camper window as he points to his shotgun.

GUNNY

Not enough range!

GUNNY opens a foam lined black plastic hard case and removes an M249 machine gun and two ammo cans. He puts his AA12 shotgun into the foam lined case and closes it. He inserts a magazine into the gun and chambers a round.

GUNNY

(Points to his machine gun.) Much better!

GUNNY puts two hand grenades into pouches on his web gear.

KIT

Very stylish!

MINUET looks cool in the big black truck with her matching shades and P90. KIT's M4 is in the redneck style gun rack.

(Possible movie poster here.)

They continue north seeing more and more cars and bodies and dead animals, always accompanied by the vultures evenly around.

It's hard to pick out movement because of them. But suddenly KIT slows sharply. GUNNY tenses in his impromptu position leaning over the roof of the truck.

KIT

I saw something! About a thousand yards! There, off to the right.

GUNNY

(muzzle swings slightly to the right.) Roger!

MINUET

Oh, shit. So these are the ones that the plague and the bombs didn't kill? So what do they want from us?

MINUET sticks the muzzle of her P90 out of the pickup window and points it forward.

KIT

They want... us. I didn't say the plague didn't screw them up really bad. But yeah, these guys could live for years.

Another small speck walks into view near the first one. Then several more walk out, and two SUV's and several motorcycles. KIT stops and leans out of the truck, steadying himself on the door, with his M4 resting on the door frame. The specks begin to come toward the F250, slowly at first, then faster and faster at the maniacal urgings of their leader. They close to about 500 yards, and GUNNY opens up with the machine gun from over the top of the Ford. KIT methodically fires his M4, changing 30 round magazines in a twinkling. MINUET appears to concentrate her fire on the ones that are trying to get away, unleashing a swarm of lethal metal bees each time one tries it. It becomes quickly apparent that the gang wasn't expecting the sort of firepower they are encountering. They go into full retreat, but it does them no good, and the ones who try to hold their ground are only annihilated all the faster. Soon, no movement other than the birds finding fresh food is observed.

EXT: SOUTH PORTLAND

Moving on, they turn off the Interstate and continue north on the back roads, warily. Several times they see groups of Infecteds, but manage to pass them by.

One group rolls a car down a grade to try to stop the F250. KIT locks up the brakes and throws the F250 into a right skid.

KIT

Oh, SHIT!

MINUET

Oh no oh no oh on oh no....

The F250 rolls partway, onto two wheels. The big 40 inch tires chirp a few times as the suspension bends and then snaps back. KIT brings the right side down and straightens the F250 out just as he runs into a gang of Infecteds. The winch bumper on front mows them down, and the big offroad tires run them over as KIT floors the throttle. One, then two more Infecteds are thrown from the front bumper off to the side of the truck. Finally, the roadway ahead looks clear. Several more Infecteds appear as they continue northward. KIT continues to take them out with his winch bumper or run them down with the F250's 40 inch tires. GUNNY does a great job as gunner, machine gunning anything that moves with crisp three round bursts from his M249. Soon, they top out on a hill that overlooks south Portland.

EXT: PORTLAND

The scene is literally apocalyptic. All the bridges are lying in tatters. Fires burn unchecked in parts of town, trailing off into the bomb destroyed and blackened north side. Acres of makeshift shelters dot the landscape, looking new and like they've been put there after the bomb. Thousands of Infecteds loiter about. But they notice when the F250 tops the ridge, miles away. As if on cue, a human wave starts closest to the F250, and spreads, with Infecteds all turning toward the south and walking toward the F250. The truck does a Rockford turn around on the gravel road, and speeds south.

MINUET

Those things are going to get to where we're at before long. I don't intend to spend my entire family years looking over my shoulder for those thi...
(blushes) things. Never mind.

KIT

That reminded me of a bar I went to in DC once!

GUNNY

Everybody noticed you, huh?

KIT

No- everybody turned around and
LOOKED at me.

GUNNY

I bet they weren't hungry, though.
(grins) Well, we don't have THAT
much ammo.

KIT

Funny you should mention that. What
say we stop by and pick up about a
million tons worth of ammo?

MINUET gets a wide eyed stare, while GUNNY shakes his
head. KIT takes a side road. He drives a short way, and
soon runs out into a field. He stops beside a gleaming
metal cone just barely sticking out of the dust.

EXT: THE BOMB - DAY

GUNNY

So unless I'm mistaken, that's the
bomb from Portland that didn't go
off?

KIT

Yes, that's what that is, alright.

GUNNY

You're giving me the creeps again.

KIT

Well the good news is that this is
a warhead, and not a bomb. If it
were a bomb, it would likely have
some sort of booby trap that a
warhead wouldn't have. The bad
news, is that the thing didn't go
off for some reason, so maybe it
will decide to fix itself for no
particular reason. You know how
electronics stuff does sometimes.

MINUET

Yeah- we KNOW.

KIT

But this didn't even partially go off. Most likely it's a bad card or something. The first thing I'll do, though, is disconnect the trigger. Should be no problem- no worse than living in Hanford Washington in the 50's.

MINUET

Yeah, great. I never wanted to live in Hanford, either.

KIT

Well let's see if I can make sure this thing won't go off without us telling it to.

KIT takes a toolbag over to the warhead. GUNNY keeps a sharp eye out while KIT removes a plate from the rear of the warhead. KIT reaches in with a pair of pliers and removes a circuit card from the area inside the plate.

KIT

Here we go. Gimme a hand with this, will you, GUNNY?

GUNNY walks over and puts his gun in the back of the truck. GUNNY and KIT lift the warhead into the back of the truck, and strap it down.

GUNNY

Anything special I should know about this thing?

KIT

Well, first off is, its darned near impossible to detonate one of these things unless you mean to. Doubly so with that card removed. It's going to be a stretch for me to figure out some sort of a trigger for it. But it's still a shitload of C4, so yes, a bullet could possibly make that detonate, even though it wouldn't have anything like a nuclear yield. Still make a heck of a mess out of my new truck, though, and splatter radioactive crap everywhere.

GUNNY

So, it's not radioactive?

KIT

Not much, in its present state- a few chest xrays, at worst.

KIT takes a small plastic box gieger counter out of his toolbag and pushes a red button on it. He holds it a foot away from the warhead and gets an elevation in clicks, but not much. Then he holds the box touching GUNNY's wristwatch, and the count is a lot higher. GUNNY is visibly relieved.

GUNNY

Just worried about the Ol' Nards.

MINUET

At least you replace yours once a month! I get one set, and that's all! (GUNNY blushes)

KIT

Well, not EVERY month...

EXT: I5 SOUTH

They drive back to the farm. MINUET falls asleep and has a nightmare about when the bombs hit Portland and Salem. She sees many people get immolated, and buildings being blown over and burning. Then she sees a demonic wave of Infecteds crawling out of the city like so many ants. Although in her dream Minuet does her best to kill all of the Infecteds, they get closer and closer. Just as one of them is about to bite her, the truck hits a bump, and she wakes up.

EXT: THE FARM

Back at the farm, MINUET does a great job of not appearing shaken. She goes inside, and the men carry the bomb into the attached garage. They place it on a workbench, and gather tools and wire and things to rig a warhead with.

KIT

This bomb is going to be one hell of an IED.

GUNNY

I thought you said it was a warhead.

KIT

But now it doesn't have anything to make it go off at an altitude or whatever, or any way to steer it. Much dumber.

They walk inside. Minuet has lemonade and egg sandwiches waiting for them.

MINUET

The cows and pigs and the horse are long gone, but the chickens are doing great.

KIT

The insects seem to be OK too, along with birds. Plenty for the birds to eat. And you don't have to worry about a mammal getting the chickens.

They sit down and begin to eat breakfast.

INT: THE PLAN - DAY

MINUET

OK, I haven't asked what you guys want a nuclear warhead for. Now I'm asking.

KIT

(to Gunny) You want to tell her, or should I?

GUNNY

You go ahead.

KIT

Best as I can figure, Portland was supposed to get two warheads. But, obviously, the southern warhead malfunctioned. That's what's in the garage.

(MORE)

KIT (CONT'D)

I'm pretty sure that the radiation from the northern bomb, while not enough to kill the people and animals quickly, was enough to cause the plague virus to mutate quickly. Throw in a strong dose of Korean manufacturing, and voila. You still get all the symptoms- the urge to bite (makes apostrophes in the air) "other animals", foaming at the mouth, fear of water, total madness- and because they used the flu to make it spread airborne, vomiting and diarrhea too. They have all these nasty effects, except, in these cases- death. And they're escaping downtown Portland by the hundreds. You saw them- they'll be down here before too long. We can hold them off down here- but not forever. Not if they keep getting reinforcements. The classic way to stop an enemy from getting reinforcements, is to destroy the reinforcements.

MINUET

You mean...

KIT

Yes. We're going to set that bomb off, as close to the center of the reinforcements as we can.

MINUET

And you really think that you can fix a damned nuclear damned warhea... (Trails off. Looks at KIT, throws her hands in the air.) Of course you can fix a nuclear warhead. Why shouldn't I expect that?

KIT

(grins)

GUNNY

Well, time's a wastin'. The longer we wait, the more of those things that are going to be left to kill.

INT: FIXING THE BOMB

The men walk out to the garage. GUNNY hands KIT tools as he carefully takes apart the housing to reveal the bomb inside. KIT unwraps the circuit board that he pulled from the warhead earlier and examines it under a magnifying glass. Scene changes to a heavily magnified image of a circuit board. As it moves, a mangled component comes into view.

KIT

There it is- that's why it didn't go off. It looks like someone dropped this or something and put a ding right through a circuit.

GUNNY

So now what do we do?

KIT

Well this trigger, I'm sure, is "locked up". They become useless after being activated for so many hours. If not, I'm sure it would lock up long before I guessed the password to work on it. I doubt "Admin" will work on this one. So that says we have to go far enough down the firing circuits that we can graft another trigger on to this bomb. A cellphone trigger would probably work- if we had any cellphone service. I think I can graft together a few things and make one work.

KIT grabs a toy boat and puts it next to a ham radio that's on the bench. He looks in a rack behind the radio and pulls out a receiver, and an auto adapter.

KIT

Let's see- this, and this, and hmmm... oh yeah, this here... Yeah. I think I can use the ham radios to amplify the signal from the boat so it will be long enough distance to stay out of the blast. Use the signals from the boat to detonate the warhead. Should be halfway safe.

GUNNY

Halfway?

KIT

Nah- it'll work. At least, if it doesn't work, my last words will be me saying I sure thought that would work.

View backs out through the garage window. The light stays on while outside becomes light again. The view flies back in and shows a haggard KIT and GUNNY put the finishing touches on their trigger. KIT flips a switch on a box that has a toy boat remote control inside of it. A red light comes on on the top of it, complimenting the red light across the room on another box

Kit works the remote control for the boat.

KIT

Forward forward back right left left.

A series of lights turns on on the further box, one for each direction Kit pushes on the boat control. When all the lights are lit, a bigger green light appears.

KIT

Forward.

Kit pushes the speed control forward, and the green light on the box across the room turns red with a click.

KIT

Yep, seems to work OK. Now I need to test the thing at a lot longer distance.

EXT: TESTING THE TRIGGER

They put the trigger and radio and a battery into the back of the truck.

KIT

I'm going to drive about 15 miles south and call you on the radio. Then these lights should come on in sequence, and finally the green light will turn red, and make a click.

(MORE)

KIT (CONT'D)

That's the power going to the firing circuit.

Kit walks out to the F250, gets in, and drives down the gravel country road, making a turn onto an asphalt road that borders a creek.

INT: THE KITCHEN

MINUET and GUNNY in the kitchen, with the improvised firing box on the table between them.

MINUET

You think that's going to work? I mean, he isn't going to kill all of us, is he?

GUNNY

(reassuringly) If KIT can't do this, nobody can. That's what he's driving around for. To make sure it works, and doesn't work, too, so to speak. That's why KIT took the bomb with him. Just in case the thing should happen to go off. Should have about a 5 mile blast zone. But if I got into any kind of nuclear or biological, or chemical, for that matter-problems, I'd be lucky to have a weapons specialist handy. That's why they sent KIT to relieve the embassy in the first place.

MINUET looks out the window, over the tranquil farm landscape, and sighs. She waves her hand at the window.

MINUET

I've always dreamed of living in a place like this. (jokingly) I thought I was going to have to wait until I retired, though.

GUNNY

Well, the place has what you need, I'd say. It has farmland and water, for starters. But it looks like those old folks that we buried had converted the place entirely to off-grid. A

(MORE)

GUNNY (CONT'D)

nd with the drinking water spring uphill in the back, that works by itself. Even a nice man-thing. Damned lucky place to crash a plane.

MINUET

Only one nice man-thing? What about you?

GUNNY

Eh, like I said, MINUET. I'm married to The Marine Corps. I don't have a lot of place in my life for a woman. First thing is I'd be gone for half the time, and the constant moving around, and the worry over whether I've been killed, or wounded... it all kindof stacks up and not only is it hard on both partners, it's unfair to the woman, and maybe the man will get killed because he's worrying about his home life. Throw in a few kids, and it gets far worse. No way could I give 100% to The Corps when I already gave part to someone else. Besides- it's obvious that you're interested in KIT, with the way you tease him. KIT is an extremely rare man, MINUET. They closed the factory where they made guys like that after Desert Storm. There are only a very few people on this planet with the range of abilities he has. And you can go ahead and count that for double, with the crap that's been happening lately. You're going to need someone who can farm, and fix almost anything, and hunt, and fish...

MINUET

Oh, hell. Do you think it's that obvious?

GUNNY

Well, maybe not THAT obvious. KIT might just have managed to miss it, I suppose. He's really good with any kind of a weapon, it appears, but I'm not so sure about how he does with women.

MINUET

We'll see about that.

The radio crackles.

KIT

Farmhouse, are you receiving me? Over.

I/E: SPLIT TO TWO SCREENS, KIT AND GUNNY

GUNNY

Reading you great. Go ahead. Over.

KIT

That green light hasn't turned red, has it? Over.

GUNNY

(concerned) No, it hasn't. Is it supposed to? Over.

KIT

No, not supposed to yet. I've been bouncing it around in the truck a little, though- on purpose. Well, here goes. Over.

The sequential lights on the trigger box turn on one after the other, in sequence. There is a short pause, and the green light turns red, with a click. Gunny winces.

GUNNY

Yes, there it turned red. Over.

KIT

Well, that should work, then. I'm about fifteen miles away, that should be enough standoff. Although I wouldn't dawdle after I triggered it. Over.

GUNNY

What's next? Over.

KIT

Let's put the trigger on the bomb, and go deliver it. As you pointed out, everybody in the blast area is either dead- or worse. The sooner we set it off, the fewer escape to spread the disease. Over.

GUNNY

Roger. Wilco. Over.

KIT

Headed your way. Over and out.

View changes to single screen, at farmhouse.

MINUET

So, we're going to go deliver that thing, huh?

GUNNY

Whattaya mean, "we're"? We don't need to risk you on this.

MINUET

Oh, the HELL you're not. I am NOT going to sit here and wonder whether you guys are dead- or WORSE! I've won shooting contests since high school. I have no problem pulling a trigger. And besides- I outRANK you, Sergeant! Not risk me, inDEED. What gives me the creeps is that thing might go off early.

GUNNY

Well, we could get the bomb ready to work on.

They open the garage door and put the trigger on a cart, along with some tools. They roll the cart next to the door just as KIT backs the F250 into the garage.

KIT

You read my mind. Let's put this thing together and send it.

Kit attaches the black trigger box to the bomb. He leaves the wires unhooked.

KIT

One hell of an IED, huh?

MINUET

As long as that damned thing doesn't go off before its time!

KIT

Nah. Made it, tested it- should be good. I'd say the worst risk would be another garage door opener being activated very close to the bomb, or a celphone tower, or maybe a drone or something, pushing a false signal past the gate.

KIT looks at the perplexed and worried expression on MINUET's face.

KIT

That was a lot worse possibility when we all had celphones and drones and garage doors. Here's the remote for the other door-watch!

KIT picks up the garage door remote and triggers it. The garage door starts to rise, but the light on the bomb stays green. KIT moves the remote closer to the bomb and triggers it. The door starts to lower, but the light on the bomb stays green. KIT moves the remote until it's almost touching the bomb, and triggers it again. The door rises- and the light on the bomb turns red. The door rises completely.

KIT

There ya go. The opener overrode the scrambler and pushed a false signal past the gate. But it had to be right next to the trigger to do it.

MINUET

(hesitantly) Right.

KIT

That means it will be no problem, unless we're attacked by garage door openers. But I won't turn the thing on until we get it up there.

MINUET

Up there?

KIT

Well, yeah. Up there. They usually detonate these things a couple thousand feet in the air. It maximizes the blast radius and keeps the fallout to a minimum. This will be close, if we want to keep the farm, and I wish I had a weather report. Usually the winds blow to the east in Portland. But still we don't want any more fallout than we have to have. So, we put the bomb on the roof of the tallest building that we can get it to. That way, it will only vaporize the top of a building, instead of irradiating all the dirt from a big nasty crater in the earth if we detonated it on the ground. (To GUNNY) So when you and I get it to Portland...

MINUET

What do you mean, you and him?
What am I doing?

KIT

We don't need to risk you on this.

MINUET

Oh the HELL you're not "risking me"! I am NOT going to sit here and wonder whether you guys are dead- or WORSE!

MINUET puts a magazine into her P90, and puts it on the table on top of her black web gear that holds many more mags and two frag grenades, and tops it with her MAC-11 and stick mags in a waist belt.

MINUET

You and Mister Ma-rine carry the bomb. I'll keep those things off our ass.

MINUET brings her face close to KIT's

MINUET

You read me, Specialist?

KIT

(Looks amused.) Yes, Ma'am. Loud and clear, Ma'am.

MINUET

(growls) Don't MAKE me pull RANK on you.

They throw some gear into the truck, and drive out toward Portland. The rest stop south of Portland looks deserted. Still the same ruined cars, and bodies of humans and dogs strewn about.

MINUET

Couldn't we just drop the damned thing off here?

KIT

This is a pretty big bomb- 1 megaton- but it still only leaves a crater 4 or 5 miles wide. Plus the fallout would be a lot worse, being closer to the farm.

MINUET

I guess not.

GUNNY watches the scene carefully through the sights on his machine gun. As they get into the Portland suburbs, they start seeing some movement, and smoke from the fires.

MINUET

You said this thing will vaporize out to ten miles?

KIT

No- I said I want to be at least 10 miles away when I trigger it, assuming a favorable wind.

(MORE)

KIT (CONT'D)

The warhead looks to be part of a Russian RS-28 Sarmat ICBM. Not one of the biggest ones, or no way could we carry it. This is a MIRV, one of several smaller warheads that the thing breaks up into. But that's still around one megaton of TNT's worth. Yes, that's one million, and tons. Actually, I'd say pretty much total destruction within 4 miles. And stay out of the fallout downwind.

Minuet points at a group of Infecteds.

MINUET

Oh shit- there goes another group of them.

They pull off the freeway into downtown Portland. Movement in the buildings lining the road is obvious. Kit points to a tall building on the south edge of downtown. Once proud, most of its mirror glass has been blown out, its supports blackened and crumpled in spots.

KIT

There our target is. Much the worse for wear, looks like.

KIT turns on his mini gieger counter. It is a little more noisy, but not much.

GUNNY

The fallout from the others seems to have gone east, Thank God. A good north wind and this whole area would be uninhabitable for a hundred years. See those dark moving things? (He points to some shadows slipping back into the darker places.) They don't seem to like sunlight, though.

KIT

Almost there!

I/E: DOWNTOWN PORTLAND - DAY

SUPER: PORTLAND, OREGON

They pull into the parking lot at the center of the building. They pick their way through, pushing aside some of the wrecks with the F250. A few flitting movements can be seen in the windows a few floors above.

GUNNY

It's a damned good thing you can kill these.

GUNNY chambers a round in his AA12, and puts his M249 in the toolbox in the back of the truck.

KIT

What?

GUNNY

Yeah, if these monsters were like the ones in the movies, you couldn't kill them.

KIT

These are more leftovers from the plague and the fallout, or the fallout mutating the plague, or the plague and the fallout acting independently. Or... you get the idea.

GUNNY

They're violently insane, yeah, but- shoot em somewhere vital and they die just like a human, Thank God.

INT: THE STAIRWELL - DAY

KIT and GUNNY pick the bomb up by its handles and carry it into the building, with MINUET covering front and back. She opens the door to the stairwell and peeks inside. MINUET sees nothing, and motions KIT and GUNNY to come. MINUET begins the long climb ahead of the men, checking every corner and blind spot. A couple times she thought she saw a shadow, or heard a noise, but, still, nothing.

MINUET

(whispers) No news is good news.

KIT flashes a thumbs up. They climb a couple more flights of stairs. MINUET is taken aback when she sees a corpse- she almost shoots it. Little of it is left. It's not decomposed- it's more like the muscle has been cut off.

GUNNY

(Nods toward corpse) Butchered.
Like- to eat.

KIT nods, grimly. Just then, MINUET screams, and at the same time there is a long continuous burst from her P90. The men sit the warhead down on a landing as a bullet riddled corpse slides over the edge of a landing a floor up and bounces into the dark nothingness of the stairwell.

MINUET

(Face appears over railing.) Damn,
that was loud.

KIT

You OK? Lot of ammo to use on one
target, isn't it?

MINUET

(pokes upward with her rifle muzzle
and another corpse slides partway
down the stairs.) Never better!

They resume climbing the stairwell of the building. As they climb toward the top, it seems that there are more and more attacks. They agree that there is beginning to be a method to the violent madness of the plague victims. They're trying to attack from two sides, from ahead and behind- but still with the bottom line of biting the uninfected so as to spread the lethal plague. Or the goal of simply eating them, becoming more common as the time spent after the bombs increases and starvation sets in. As they near the top of the building, KIT starts to dart into offices, looking around in closets and bathrooms. MINUET motions for KIT to ascend one more floor by pointing to a sign on the door that says "Film Archive". KIT smiles and nods. GUNNY points his shotgun at the door and fires a breaching round into the lock. The door jumps free from the concussion of the blast. KIT and GUNNY carry the bomb into the room- an open office with an obscured glass wall dividing one side completely.

INT: THE ARCHIVE - DAY

KIT opens the door through the obscured partition with his M4 muzzle. He looks inside to another open office, filled with cubicles and storage racks. There is a climate controlled vault door on one wall, with a small screen on it with a green light on top.

KIT
Batteries still going, it looks like. EMP hardened, too. And no lock! Not like a bank vault, only lower value stuff in there.

They move the bomb into the vault. KIT tinkers with the black box on top. KIT walks across the room, and keys a series of commands into the toy boat remote control. The lights on the box illuminate in sequence, and the the green light on top turns red and clicks. KIT lets up on the button on the remote control, and the light turns back off.

KIT
There's the last chance we have to check it.

KIT removes the batteries from the remote, and zips the remote and the batteries into a pocket on his vest. He connects the wires between the bomb and the trigger box.

KIT
There you go. It's assembled. Make sure not to open any garage doors or fly a drone near it.

Behind KIT, some shadows start to appear in the frosted glass that makes up one wall of the archive room. MINUET points them out to KIT. His grip on his M4 tightens. KIT takes a lock and a chain off the bomb, and bends over next to the bomb, and crosses himself.

He flips a switch on the trigger. A light on top of the bomb illuminates green. KIT closes the door and turns the wheel of the latch to close the door. Then he chains the wheel to one of the bolts and padlocks it. Only then does he turn around. KIT sees a continuous mass of human, or what used to be human, silhouettes in the frosted glass of the office wall. MINUET and GUNNY are behind some book cases, weapons pointing toward the obscured glass. MINUET's face is not quite frightened, though her eyes are wide as she looks at KIT.

She looks in understanding as KIT shows her slowly changing his safety selector from semi to full. GUNNY's eyes are narrowed, his face a look of distaste for what he knows he's about to do. KIT holds up three fingers. The others nod. KIT drops one finger, and then another- and then all three open fire.

INT: THE STAIRWELL - DAY

The office window disintegrates, and all the things that were in the office go down. But the creatures are gathering like the approaching darkness, coming into the building at ground level from all directions. The third "human" wave almost inundates the team. MINUET barely manages to keep them at arm's length, largely due to the firepower of the 50 round clips in her P90. KIT has his tac vest torn off, and the remote trigger for the bomb is crushed. KIT takes his vest away from the corpse that grabbed it. The remote is crushed, but the key to the vault lock is OK. GUNNY has been extremely effective, emptying the 25 round magazines of his AA12 repeatedly. GUNNY runs out of shotgun shells, and empties three pistols several times, and then uses a variety of exotic hand weapons, knives- what you'd expect from a "warrior monk" at full throttle. Finally, the human wave is beaten off. MINUET and KIT are splattered, but GUNNY is covered with blood. GUNNY says "Damn" repeatedly, and takes off his clothes very quickly and gets into the emergency shower in the film processing center. The spray from the shower slowly washes the blood off, from the top down, lower and lower- and reveals a bite mark on naked GUNNY's neck. MINUET ignores propriety and walks, fully clothed and armed, into the shower, her sisterly-nurse relationship allowing her to look. She uses the shower wand to spray GUNNY off, and puts a gauze pad from the small combat first aid kit on her web gear on Gunny's neck. KIT, not able to see the other two, goes over and unlocks the vault. He removes the chain, while MINUET comes back out of the shower and stands guard, firing an occasional burst down, or up, the stairwell. Several bodies fall down the steps past the archive. KIT opens the door and removes a panel on the bomb.

MINUET

What the hell are you doing?

KIT

The remote is gone. I can still change a few wires and detonate it manually after you guys get far enough away.

MINUET

I'm afraid I have some news for you.

KIT

What?

KIT sees the wet GUNNY, and notices the bite mark on his neck.

KIT

Oh, geez, GUNNY, Are you OK?

GUNNY

Well- not entirely. (Shows KIT the rapidly reddening bite mark.) I'm going to turn into one of those things, right? I mean, for sure, right?

KIT

It's already looking ragged around the edges, and you can see the veins looking inflamed... Go look in a mirror, and you tell me.

INT: BITTEN - DAY

GUNNY goes into the bathroom and looks closely. His wound is obviously becoming inflamed. He straightens up, and says to the mirror "Can't have that." KIT and MINUET are modifying the wires on the trigger. All but two with stripped ends are disconnected. They hook those ends into an illuminated switch on the panel.

KIT

Well, there ya go. About as analog as it gets. (KIT takes a wristwatch off a corpse and wipes the blood off it.)

GUNNY

So I guess we know about who is doing what, huh?

MINUET

I'll draw straws with you, Gunny.

KIT

So will I.

GUNNY

No, that would be a waste. That would be stupid. So- let's get into this. What do I have to do?

KIT

Heck, GUNNY- you might live longer than we do. I'm thinking that we should simply lock you in the safe. You wait a while, and push the button. Meanwhile, MINUET and I get to fight our way back to the ground, and the pickup, and to the highway.

GUNNY slaps KIT on the back.

GUNNY

But well hey- I like your LONG term chances a lot better. (silence) I guess you should lock it from the outside. I don't think I see anything to lock it to on the inside. Besides, (shows KIT the bite mark) it's already a lot worse. I probably only have a couple of reliable hours left.

KIT

We appreciate this, Buddy. (MINUET is fighting back tears.)

GUNNY

Naw, I'm not doing you any favors. The harm came when one of those things got through to me. I sure didn't think there would be that many of them.

KIT

We thinned them out a bunch, that's for sure.

GUNNY

Not as much as we're about to thin those bastards out.

KIT

Give us half an hour.

KIT uses a marker to mark a line on the wristwatch he picked up at 35 minutes from where the minute hand is, and hands the watch to GUNNY. MINUET is crying openly. She's at a loss for words. She grabs GUNNY by the shoulders, and pulls him close to her. She shakes him softly.

MINUET
Damn it, GUNNY. Just DAMN it...

GUNNY gets a fiendish grin and backs into the vault and closes the door. KIT chains the door shut and padlocks it. KIT bangs on the door.

KIT
You got it covered, buddy?

GUNNY
Can't wait for the surprise!

KIT
(to MINUET) I think this is the place where the message tells you not to try this trick at home.

MINUET
(laughs tearfully) This is the place where me and my boyfriends pay those motherfuckers BACK.

KIT
Let's go.

INT: DOWN THE STAIRWELL - DAY

MINUET runs across the room and looks through a small window on the vault door. GUNNY is flashing a thumbs up sign. MINUET slides down the outside of the door. KIT shoots four Infecteds that were sticking their heads up past the landing, in the head, in less than a second, one round each.

KIT
We gotta go- they're getting brave!

MINUET pulls herself together and drops into a tactical crouch, weapon aimed at the stairwell. KIT opens his backpack, lays it on the ground, and reveals 16 hand grenades in a green foam case.

KIT

I've been saving these.

The noise in the stairwell gets louder.

MINUET

(Feigned feminine excitement)
OOOoooo- can I have some?

KIT

Tell ya the plan. We toss a dozen of these into the stairwell as fast as we can, sort of like an artillery shell. We each keep two, besides the two that we have in our vests, for just in case. Suits?

MINUET

Suits.

KIT

But watch out for the ones in the top of the stairwell. We'll have to take them with rifles.

KIT snaps a shot through the head of an Infected that peeked up too much. KIT gives MINUET eight hand grenades. He raises three fingers, and counts down to zero. They pull the pins and toss the grenades into the stairwell as fast as they can. A dozen explosions ring out from the stairwell.

MINUET

(her ears ringing.) Damn, that was loud.

They rush the stairwell. They both immediately look upward, and shoot several Infecteds that were above the grenades. They proceed down the stairs, finishing off an Infected here and there. There's a mass of Infecteds gathering in the lobby that the grenades couldn't get to. KIT pulls the pins on the rest of his grenades with his teeth, two in each hand, but holds onto the spoons. He rolls the grenades around the corner of the stairwell vestibule, and they roll into the group of Infecteds and detonate, throwing pieces of Infected all over the room.

KIT

You fire! I'll move!

MINUET empties a clip her P90 around the corner and into the Infecteds. Kit runs across the lobby and takes a position in the front doorway.

KIT
I'll fire! You move!

KIT empties three magazines from his M4, changing mags in less than a second. Seeing the general rout of the Infecteds, MINUET runs to the front door, upright, and takes up a position looking out the front door. The Infecteds in the lobby have been wiped almost completely out, only the moans of a few wounded belying any life left at all.

MINUET
I'll fire! You move!

MINUET fires another 50 rounds at the Infecteds between them and the F250, as KIT runs to the truck's driver door. KIT opens the door.

KIT
(shouts) I'll fire! You move!

EXT: THE ROAD SOUTH - DAY

MINUET comes toward the pickup at a dead run. As she comes out the door, she tosses two grenades inside the building, and two more at a group of Infecteds that have taken cover outside, between a car and the building wall. Then she empties another clip from her P90 at the movement she sees near them. As the grenades blow the ground floor glass into the building. KIT is shooting Infecteds one at a time, but very, very fast, almost as fast as his M4 will cycle. KIT stops shooting and starts the F250, and MINUET jumps in, rolling down the window and shooting at anything that moves. Several Infecteds seemingly try to bite the F250, but are rewarded only by the hard steel crushing their bodies. Suddenly, they see two cars pushed together to make a roadblock out of the parking lot.

MINUET
Oh, shit!

KIT
Ha. Not a problem.

Kit leans his M4 out the drivers side window and shoots three infecteds with one burst.

MINUET

Oh- full automatic today, Dear?

KIT

Only if I have to shoot left handed.

MINUET

Well just let me know, Dear, and I can take care of things like that.

MINUET triggers three bursts at some Infecteds that are walking toward the truck. They all go down instantly, riddled with 10 and 15 rounds each. KIT slowly nudges the F250's right front tire into the place where the bumpers of the two cars meet. The big offroad tires climb up onto the hoods, and the F250 scrambles nimbly to the tops of the cars, then down and onto the road leading to the highway. MINUET spots some Infecteds on a building to their right and triggers a long burst. The bullets hit the wall every few inches, and then track through the group of Infecteds and onto the wall on their far side.

KIT

We have to average 30 miles an hour. Average.

MINUET looks at KIT silently, knowing what will happen if they aren't quick enough. Or if the wind is wrong.

INT: THE VAULT - DAY

Back at the vault, the Infecteds are trying to get in. First they try with bare hands and teeth. Then one finds a fire axe and starts beating clumsily at the padlock. GUNNY looks at the movement from the door, and looks at the bomb. He looks at his watch, and then back at the door.

EXT: ROADBLOCK - DAY

The duo continues down the highway south of Portland. The F250 speeds southward, dodging stalled cars, almost rolling it when some infecteds push some cars down into the highway to try to stop them.

INT: THE VAULT - DAY

The Infecteds have got the lock almost hacked off. GUNNY looks at the door, and the watch, and the bomb.

EXT: F250 - DAY

KIT and MINUET continue south in the F250, dodging cars and shooting Infecteds.

INT: THE VAULT - DAY

GUNNY has one pistol jammed in the wheel of the door lock. The Infecteds finally make the wheel turn. They begin pushing the door open, despite GUNNY's best efforts to keep it closed. GUNNY looks at his watch, which still says 6 min before the mark that KIT made on it. GUNNY says "assholes" and pushes the fire button on the bomb.

EXT: PAYBACK TIME - DAY

Camera is looking backward through the back window of the F250. KIT and MINUET see the top of the building disappear into a blinding flash.

KIT
Oh SHIT! HOLD ON!!!!

MINUET
Wha- Oh, SHIT!

The blast wave hits the truck hard, enough to stand it nearly on its nose, but it is barely able to land on all four wheels again. They continue to drive south.

MINUET
So now, what? Are we going to die from radiation?

KIT
Heck, no! Or, I don't think so, anyway. As long as we stay out of that cloud...

KIT points to the mushroom cloud growing in the rear view mirror.

KIT
we should be fine. There is nothing much west of here but the Pacific Ocean. No targets there except maybe a sub or a ship.

(MORE)

KIT (CONT'D)

Sure, Korea is a radioactive waste dump these days, but the vast majority of that will fall out into the ocean before it gets here, pretty much the same as the Fukushima disaster. The winds usually blow from west to east around here, so the bombs that got Seattle, and Portland, and San Francisco should fall out to the east. And we're in a nice little pocket that didn't get much harm. Besides the plague. Damn lucky place to crash a plane.

MINUET

Well, we wiped out the majority of the Infecteds problem. Or GUNNY did- and we'll be ready for what's left.

EXT: FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

SUPER: FARMHOUSE, OREGON, USA

The F250 turns off I5 onto the country road that leads to the farm. Camera looks at MINUET, who is looking at KIT with love in her eyes.

MINUET

We made a pretty good team in there, didn't we?

KIT

You sure did good. The rest of us-fair. I wish I hadn't lost the remote.

MINUET

It wouldn't have made any difference. You know that.

The F250 drives into the farm and parks. Scene goes dark.

INT: C5 CARGO PLANE - DAY

MINUET shows KIT the ready made Israeli farm that she and GUNNY found in the C5. MINUET pulls a tarp from some pallets, and holds up an MRE.

MINUET

We should have enough to eat for a year or two, easy.

KIT

One of my specialties is MRE's, you know. We dogfaces can make some pretty tasty things out of those.

MINUET

I'll take you up on that!

MINUET draws back more tarps.

MINUET

And look at all this stuff. There are seeds, and plastic pipe, and pumps, and even a little tractor! Self contained, and ready to go-even some fuel.

KIT

Sounds like it could feed more than two of us.

EXT: THE FARM - EVENING

There is a beautiful sunset. MINUET is leaning against KIT and a post and they're looking west from the back porch of the farmhouse, the C5 in the upper right part of the frame. KIT and MINUET are silhouetted in profile against the sunset, with MINUET's P90 leaning against her leg, and KIT's M4 leaning against a post.

EXT: ENDING - EVENING

SUPER: ONE YEAR LATER

The C5's wing has been converted to a picnic awning. The trampled and dusty hayfield has been replaced with a vegetable plot, with the small new tractor parked next to it. MINUET's P90 and KIT's M4 are still in the same places, and they are still silhouetted against the same beautiful sunset. MINUET snuggles up to KIT, and her profile shows that she is very pregnant. Scene raises and zooms in on the sunset.

SUPER: THE BEGINNING

FADE OUT