

Residual Break

By

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EXT. SIBERIAN FOREST. SNOWY.

Thick snow lays a carpet of perfect white over the grass and shrubbery dotted between the thin trees. All is still. The snow comes down gently, reducing visibility slightly.

A family of Roe deers cautiously appear through the wilderness, nuzzling through the snow as they move. The male deer stands tall and proud, watching over his family, his antlers robust and epic. The youngest deer stays close the males side.

As they move amongst the naked thin trees the male quickly turns his head to the distance, ears perked and focused. He maintains this posture for a few seconds and then looks down at the youngest cub who is staring up at him.

Suddenly an eruption of bullets explode through the tree line past the deer family. A stray bullet breaks off one side of the males antler, and another hits his back leg forcing him to the ground. Gunfire can be heard from all sides. The male deer looks around for his family but they are nowhere to be seen. The impact of bullets hitting trees violently splits the wood in all directions.

After a few moments the gunfire stops, and men can be heard in the distance shouting orders in the distance. Footsteps close in as the deer violently scans his surroundings, limited by the thick snow.

AINAK O/S:
(IN RUSSIAN)Advance! They must
be stopped!

Ainak runs up beside the deer, rifle trained towards the trees beyond. Other tribesman with small arms weaponry run past him and the deer and slowly disappear through the snow.

AINAK:
Hm?

Ainak looks down at the deer who sits flustered, staring back at him. He notices the torn antler, bullet wound and splintered wood protruding from his face then takes a heavy breath in despair. He looks back from where he advanced and then back at the deer. He slowly takes out a medical bandage and approaches the deer who is surprisingly docile. Ainak wraps the bandage around his leg as the deer whines in pain.

The deer suddenly springs up with a heavy limp and looks around frantically.

(CONTINUED)

AINAK:
(IN RUSSIAN)What are you
looking for?

The deer limps through the snow and spots the carcasses of his family. He slowly approaches with Ainak in tow. He lowers his face towards the youngest deer who stares into the distance lifeless. The male deer nudges at the dead mother, trying to wake her.

Ainak stares at the tragedy with heavy eyes, lips pursed in shame and anger. He stares back at the advance line, looking directly at a figure on a horse riding towards him.

INT. MAX SECURITY WING. STORMY

3 steel barred doors stand in a row. An immaculately polished floor beams a clear reflection off the single hanging light based in the middle of the corridor, dimly lighting up the dark edges of the area.

The cell on the end shows two arms protruding, one hand with an unlit cigarette, and the other revealing an intricate tattoo of a striped tiger running up the forearm.

A lone guard slowly paces up and down the corridor, whistling casually as he swings his baton. He stops for a moment, looks around at the rear exit and then produces a small flask from under his body armor. He takes a quick swig, winces slightly and then conceals the flask. He then carries on to pace the hall, again whistling.

A large bolt of lighting strikes, instantly bursting light into the hallway. A middle aged man can briefly be seen pressed against the wall of his cell (in the middle) staring blankly at a picture of his son. The light slowly leaves the cell, and as it does the man slides down the wall until he is crouched and lightly brings the picture to his face.

PEARCE:
Excuse me officer, could I trouble
you for a light?

The guard turns with a sigh, and slowly approaches the end cell. As the guard comes within an arms distance, the two arms retract inside the cell and PEARCE reveals his scarred face from the darkness. He runs one hand through his slick back grey hair and the other to produce the cigarette in front of the guard.

GUARD:
You know I can't do that, against
policy.

(CONTINUED)

PEARCE:

Now sir, I hardly believe a man of your position would deny a gentlemen his few luxuries on his final day amongst the living.

The guard thinks for a moment, sighs again and pulls out his lighter. He lights the cigarette and turns to his duties.

PEARCE:

Fine way to exhaust the last few hours wouldn't you say?

MORGAN:

I would rather spend it with my family if its all the same with you.

Morgan stands up and puts his hands through the bars. A picture of his wife and son stare back at him and he smiles, tears running down his cheeks.

MORGAN:

They are waiting for me you know. Before it all ends I just want to see them one last time but they won't give me that. They are going to watch me die and I can't even say goodbye to them.

There is a silence which is filled by another strike of lightning. Moments pass and Pearce just stands there in the darkness thinking. He suddenly turns to his bed and starts fiddling with the mattress.

PEARCE:

Let me tell you a story James. I understand you were once employed by the military, am I correct?

MORGAN:

That is one way of putting it yeah.

PEARCE:

I too, was once in a similar institution. I was hired with a small team to track and kill Bengal Tigers situated amongst the Siberian Taiga in Eastern Russia. Now primarily the majority of these tigers are populated in the suburban regions of India but these tigers were.....versatile.

As Pearce talks Morgan steps back from the bars and lies on his bed, hands above his heads. He closes his eyes.

EXT. SIBERIAN FOREST. MORNING

Pearce (young) slowly maneuvers through the trees as the fog lays down a thick carpet, concealing anything past 50 meters. He brings up his Kalashnikov rifle to his shoulder in an alert stance. He slowly scans the area. He raises his right hand and gestures a wave forward.

3 other men reveal themselves and move forward, each equipped with personal body armor and light weaponry.

PEARCE V/O:

They were cunning, these tigers, worked amazingly within teams. They knew the land better than us. They were natural predators, experts of camouflage.

The squad of mercenaries move through the jungle cautiously until the man on the flank heard a rustling in the bushes just outside his field of vision.

INT. MAX SECURITY WING. STORMY

The guard slowly turns round, intrigued by the convicts story. He turns and faces Morgan's cell and sees him with his eyes closed. He then proceeds to slowly walk towards Pearce's cell, clear line of sight blocked by the side of the wall and the darkness.

Pearce pulls out what looks like wire from the lining of his mattress and then turns to his sink. He crouches and then pulls out a makeshift blade derived from a toothbrush and tucks it in his bright orange trousers. As he is moving through his cell he carries on his story...

EXT. SIBERIAN FOREST. MORNING

The man on the flank raises his weapon towards the sound of the rustling. He darts his eyes left towards Pearce who gestures him to press forward.

All of a sudden a short sharp scream can be heard from the other flank and all heads turn and face. The man on the end is gone.

PEARCE V/O:

They were around us, amongst us. So fast you would not believe.

(CONTINUED)

The bushes start erupting with motion from all sides, growls and screams suddenly fill the silence.

PEARCE(YOUNG):

Fire!!!

INT. MAX SECURITY WING. STORMY.

Pearce falls silent as he presses his back against the back wall of the cell. The guard comes into view and squints to look for him in the darkness.

MORGAN O/S:

How did you survive?

PEARCE:

If our inebriated friend here gives us a last shot of Daniels finest I will divulge the climatic tale.

The guard looks unimpressed but takes the flask from the inside of his vest. He edges it over through the bars. As a flash of lightning strikes Pearce suddenly lunges forward and uses the wire to snare the guards arm so he can't escape.

GUARD:

What are you....?!?

Pearce reveals the shiv and splices the guards throat several times with terrifying precision. The guard grips onto the folds of his throat desperately with his free hand as Pearce rifles through his pockets for the keys.

Morgan leaps from his bed and wedges his head into the bars, eyes bulging to the commotion to see what is going on.

MORGAN:

What are you doing?!

Pearce looks around at the camera in the top corner whilst unlocking the door and shoving the lifeless guard out of the way. He grabs the baton from the guard and leaps at the camera, smashing it to pieces.

He turns his face towards Morgan's cell with rage in his eyes and saliva dripping slightly from his clenched teeth, his once calm and collective demeanor completely absent.

MORGAN:

Jesus. No wonder they have you on death row.

(CONTINUED)

Pearce walks calmly towards Morgan's cell, he wipes the blood from his hands and cleans off the tiger tattoo on his forearm. Then taking a deep breath he runs his hands through his hair regaining his composure.

PEARCE:

We retreated.

Morgan edges back from the bars to keep the distance between them, chest pumping adrenaline through him.

MORGAN:

What are you talking about?

Pearce starts thrusting the keys into the lock one by one.

PEARCE:

That's how we survived the tiger onslaught. Hindsight provided me with the tools to overcome that tricky situation. That is for later however, for now we must get you to your family.

Morgan looks down at the picture of his family still gripped firmly in his hand. He back into his cell a little more.

MORGAN:

There is no way I am letting you lead me to my family, you are a mass murderer. They are here to say goodbye today, I can't do that to them. Why would you even do that for me?

PEARCE:

Our lives are inextricably linked my dear James. Before we both depart this world you shall get to say goodbye to your family.

Pearce hands Morgan the baton who still looks at him with slight confusion and they both exit the cell and start running to the end of the corridor leading to heavy double doors. Pearce starts fumbling with the keys to progress further.

PEARCE:

What unfortunate incident were you involved with to end up with such a similar fate to my own?

Morgan looks into the next room through reinforced glass. Other convicts in normal white overalls are socializing in a two floor common room. 3 huge men sit down in a middle table playing cards as several other surround them. Morgan cocks his head as he notices everyone is wearing bed slippers.

A large projector hangs off the ceiling streaming bright footage of flowers and butterflies on a big white screen on the left wall of the common room.

MORGAN:

....I don't remember, all I care about is seeing my family one last time. This is madness. How are we going to get past all these guys and the guards? I don't even know where my family are.

Pearce points at the facility map painted into the wall whilst taking off his bright orange jumper.

PEARCE:

They will be in the visitors bay. We can cut through most of the human traffic after the main double doors beyond this room. Are you ready my dear boy?

MORGAN:

Okay...Ready? 3....2....Wait! Why were you hired to take out them tigers in Siberia?

PEARCE:

Ah...A small village on the edge of the forest were being terrorized by them, tigers aggressively protect their territory which can span 100 square km radius. We were essentially hired to protect the village. Its funny really....

All of a sudden a high pitch alarm starts flooding through the corridor as bright red lights dance throughout the entire complex.

PEARCE:

Very pesky these interruptions aren't they. Unfortunately this means the warden shall be close behind us. Speak to no one and stay close, we shall win this day young man.

INT. PRISON COMMON ROOM. STORMY

The two men burst through the double doors and start making their way down the stairs. A guard tries to restrain Pearce when they get to the bottom but he easily dispatches him.

All the prisoners start running in different directions and act very erratic. One runs to the corner of the room and starts slapping his head. Morgan catches the convict as they run towards the next set of doors and looks slightly puzzled.

WARDEN O/S:

Pearce! Stop right there! Return to your cell immediately!

Both men stop suddenly and look over at the projector which now shows streaming footage of an immaculately dressed gentleman behind a desk. Several qualifications and credentials can be seen hanging on the wall behind him.

PEARCE:

I am sorry about this Warden, but this man needs to see his family, and there is nothing that you can do to stop us.

The warden doesn't even glance over at Morgan, neither does he address him.

WARDEN:

Honestly do we have to go through these charades again? Have you any idea.....

The wardens voice drowns out as Morgan scans the room of prisoners still behaving bizarrely. Through the cracks of frantic bodies Warden catches a brief glimpse of a small boy running. He turns his body completely away from Pearce and starts walking towards the the crowd.

The boy appears once more, clearer this time. Morgan squints to focus his vision and suddenly starts sucking in panicked breaths.

The boy stops and turns towards Morgan, half his skin scorching and burnt, one of his eyes is completely distorted by the melting flesh. He shoots a cold stare at Morgan and opens his arms. Morgan holds back the bile rising in his throat and steps forward to run and grab the boy but Pearce tugs him away from the trance.

(CONTINUED)

PEARCE:

Let's go!

Pearce pulls on Morgan and bursts through the double doors leaving the common room in chaos and screaming.

Morgan pushes Pearce away and leans one hand on a wall while throwing up violently. Pearce looks around and sees a small room on the other side of the corridor. He drags Morgan inside and slams the door behind him.

INT. EMPTY PADDED ROOM.

Pearce looks through the small circular window keeping an eye on activity outside. Morgan crawls to the corner of the room and huddles, head in hands.

MORGAN:

We have to.....We have to go back, there is a boy in there, he's hurt badly!

PEARCE:

Don't worry about the boy, we have your own boy to worry about do we not? One final day to see it through.

MORGAN:

I can't. You didn't see him. My head is splitting. I can barely move!

PEARCE:

Listen to me James. Take a breath and listen to me. Close your eyes.

Morgan looks over at him with clear confusion and distress in his eyes. He takes a breath and follows his instructions.

PEARCE:

I had a family once, like you. God they were beautiful. Helped an old chap like myself find a small measure of peace in this world. They lived in the Western woods of the Siberian Taiga.

EXT. SIBERIAN EVENKI CAMP. DAY

Pearce (young) walks through the huts of the Evenki tribes watching the indigenous people go about their day to day routines. Tribesmen were busying themselves by skinning the prey they hunted earlier that day. On the other side of the village women can be seen washing wool clad overalls in the River Ob. He passes Ainak and they eagerly shake hands, smiling at one another.

PEARCE V/O:

The love of my life belonged to a tribe of Evenkis, closely related to Mongolian tribes. A beautiful people. I was sent as a mercenary to dispatch the tigers that were endangering these tribes. It was there that I met her.

Pearce walks towards a particular tent and a beautiful indigenous woman comes out to greet him with a young son in tow.

PEARCE V/O:

She touched my heart James, like you wouldn't believe. Gave me the opportunity to find peace, I spent many years there, among them. Unfortunately the tigers came back. Fierce in strength and number.

EXT. SIBERIAN FOREST. DAY

Pearce fires shots into the bushes and a handful of Evenkis help with the hunt. He is shouting orders at them in rage and frustration.

PEARCE V/O:

A cunning enemy, lethal and patient. I needed to find a way to beat them, turn the tables or change the state of play. I was getting desperate as they were endangering my way of life and the lives of the people I grew to love.

INT. EMPTY PADDED ROOM.

Morgan opens his eyes and looks over at Pearce with sadness. He stands up and walks towards him.

(CONTINUED)

MORGAN:
...What did you do?

PEARCE:
I changed the state of play, my
brothers and I strategically lit
fires across the line of the river,
forcing the enemy towards us. With
a great sacrifice, we rid the
danger on our people.

Pearce looks away from the window and stares blankly into
the middle of the dark room.

PEARCE:
We need to move.

INT. CORRIDIOR. STORMY

Rows of reinforced windows reveal the onslaught of thunder
and lightning. The hammering of rain almost drowns out the
alarms.

Both the men run down the hall quietly, periodically
scanning the surroundings. Another common room can be seen
through the haze of rain, this one with lower security.

PEARCE:
Right, all we have to do is subtly
suggest to these unfortunate souls
to vacate the area. The visiting
room is on the other side. Nearly
there now James my boy.

MORGAN:
How do you suggest we do that?

PEARCE:
Fire. Once these scoundrels and
villains are clear you can simply
waltz on through.

Morgan has a sudden flashback of the burnt boy and stops
dead, grabbing Pearce with him.

MORGAN:
No! There must be another way, they
are not tigers Pearce, it's not
happening.

Pearce suddenly explodes in a rage and grabs Morgan by the
collar, smashing him straight through an exit door.

EXT. EXERCISE YARD. STORMY

Both men burst through the door and fall to the ground. Lightning explodes and thunder roars completely drowning out the distant alarm.

PEARCE:

What would you know!? I have been dragging you all the way through this!

Morgan struggles pointlessly to loosen Pearce's grip but fails. He looks at Pearce for a second and he struggles to widen his eyes against the clashing rain.

MORGAN:

You wasn't hired to hunt tigers at all were you?

Pearce loosens his grip on Morgan and throws him to the ground. Morgan keeps his head faced down to shield from the rain.

MORGAN:

What happened!?

PEARCE:

It was rebels that we were sent to hunt and kill. Some of the rebels were part of the tribes. I infiltrated the tribe to gain more information but in doing so I met my wife!

MORGAN:

So the fires?

PEARCE:

They funneled the enemy just fine, got every last one of them. What I didn't foresee was the fire spreading over the camps. The camps of my family and friends.....I.... I killed my wife and boy.

Pearce drops to his knees and stares at Morgan who raises his head to meet him.

MORGAN:

And now you want to use fire again for the greater good? You're insane.

Morgan pushes past Pearce and runs back inside heading for the second common room. Pearce runs after him.

INT. PRISON MEETING ROOM.

Morgan bursts through the doors and is met by a dark empty room. A single floodlight beams into the middle of the great hall and reveals a single file of figures, all standing straight in a row facing Morgan.

Morgan sees them and steps back, bumping into Pearce who doesn't react.

MORGAN:

What is going on? Who are these people?

Pearce sighs and gestures Morgan to follow him. They both walk to the middle of the room, adjacent to the darkened figures, as they close in the strangers faces start to light up. The indigenous people of East Siberia stare with hollowed out eyes back at the two men.

MORGAN:

Why am I seeing this?

Morgan starts to panic as the pack of lifeless husks stare at him. He looks at Pearce.

MORGAN:

Why am I looking at your past?

PEARCE:

Are you being funny dear boy?
Remember what I said to you before
I broke you out. I wanted to tell
you a story. It isn't my story
James.....but yours.

Morgan suddenly grips his chest, trying to fight the panic attack rising. He looks straight back at Morgan then closes his eyes.

EXT. SIBERIAN FOREST. DAY.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

Morgan walks through the indigenous camp of the Evenki tribes, greeting people as they pass. He walks up to his own hut where his wife and son meet him and embrace.

CUT TO

(CONTINUED)

Morgan fights side by side with tribesman to rid the rebels of the forests, taking cover by trees and shooting into the distance at enemies.

CUT TO

Morgan is on horseback with tribesman squad, he orders them to take the torches to strategic points of the forest.

CUT TO

Morgan funnels the enemy into a corner, and the tribesman slaughter the rebels one by one. It continues until only the leader of the rebels is left. Morgan and Ainak jump off their horses and approaches the rebel leader, the fire reveals his face and he looks exactly like Pearce. Morgan takes out a pistol and shoots him between the eyes.

CUT TO

Morgan and his tribesman race back frantically over the hill to where his families camp lies, but as he approaches he hears the screams of his loved ones. The fire he started spread too far across and destroyed his home. He rides past a small boy who is running out of the camp in flames. He stares at the boy for a moment, horrified Morgan points at the tribesman to help him.

He gallops furiously into the camp. Ainak follows behind him. They both jump off their horses. The mean run up through the camp and spot Morgans wife and son, lying dead and scorched, skin still bubbling from the heat. Morgan tries to save them but Ainak holds him back, they struggle for a moment. Morgan gives up and drops to his knees. He screams out in anguish.

END FLASHBACK

INT. PRISON MEETING ROOM. STORMY

Morgan takes his hands away from his eyes and looks up with tears streaming down his face.

MORGAN:

No.....This cant be! My family
are waiting for me in the next
room, I need to see them.

He looks back at Pearce who has changed, instead of his witty smile, he stares dead ahead with no emotion, eyes hollowed out like the others. He proceeds to walk calmly at the end of the line and turns and faces, as if in military formation. Morgan stares at all of them for a moment, rubbing his hands together and rocking.

(CONTINUED)

MORGAN:

I refuse to believe this! I need to see my family.

Morgan pushes through the husks and bursts the doors of the visiting room open, where he is greeted by the same boy and mother from his past.

Morgan pulls out the picture from his pocket and the faces resemble the people who stand in front of him. He looks back, Morgans wife smiles at him and his son waves.

Morgan looks back at the Evenki casualties and they are all gone. He turns back with a smile but it soon degrades into a sob with bright light illuminating off his face.

His wife and son stand still as they burn horrifically, staring through the flames at Morgan.

MORGAN:

Please make it stop! It was an accident. I'm so sorry!

INT. TRAUMA CLINIC.DAY

Morgan opens his eyes with a startle. He looks at the ceiling and sighs with relief. He looks down at his forearm and sees an old tattoo of a glorious tiger on his forearm. He starts welling up and puts his hands to his eyes.

DOCTOR:

James, how are you feeling?

Morgans eyes dart from his hands to the doctor sitting a few feet away from his bed. The reflection from the sun through the doctors glasses irritates Morgans eyes and he turns away.

DOCTOR:

Oh, sorry about that.

The doctor proceeds to take off the glasses and Morgan looks back to come face to face with the Warden from the projector.

DOCTOR:

We need to have a little chat James. It seems you made an amazing breakthrough during our session.

Morgan looks down at his forearm to see an intricate tattoo of a tiger, and tears start welling up in his eyes.

(CONTINUED)

MORGAN:

I killed all them people didn't I?
It was an accident, I was only
doing my job. Why was I put on
death row for that?

DOCTOR:

James I have to be frank with you.
You volunteered yourself for my
program. My area of expertise is
dealing and treating Post Traumatic
Stress Disorder associated
particularly with Military
Veterans. You still seem to be a
little disorientated from our
session here today.

The doctor stands up from besides the couch on which Morgan is lying on. He walks back to his desk and sits calmly. Certificates of education and medical practice cover the wall behind him.

DOCTOR:

Tell me, why are you here?

Morgan stares at the doctor, then proceeds to get up out of the couch. He folds his arms as if cold and shakes slightly. He sits down on the opposite side of the desk, with the glaring sun on his back.

MORGAN:

My name is James Morgan, former
Corporal in the Army Rangers Corp.
I hired myself out to Paramilitary
Companies, tasked with specialist
roles in foreign countries. I left
the PMC because I started a family
and fell in love with another
culture. I turned my back on my
duty and tried to defend my family
against local mercenaries.

DOCTOR:

Hm...Walk with me.

Both men proceed out of the door in the corner of the room.

INT. COMMUNITY ROOM. DAY

The projector beams images of nature and wildlife onto the entirety of the yellow wall at one end of the room. Morgan looks at the rest of the room to see patients congregating in small groups, busying themselves with their own activities e.g. playing cards or socializing.

He notices that they are all wearing slippers, then looks down at his own feet and realizes he has slippers on as well.

DOCTOR:

James we have been talking about that particular incident on the river in Siberia for a long time now. This is the first time you have admitted that it was actually you.....

I created this program to help people like you James, veterans so far gone that they need radical therapy to confront their demons. You are not on death row James, but you have nearly died on a number of occasions by your own hand.

Morgan looks down in shame. He walks into the common room and a few of the other patients look at him cautiously.

MORGAN:

I need your help. What should I do?

DOCTOR:

Stay here with me, it will take time but I can help you get through this. I can help you address the guilt and forgive yourself.

Morgan stares through the reinforced glass towards the dark clouds looming overhead. The sound of rain hits the windows until it is nearly deafening.

Morgans walks through the community and over to his bunk which lies on the other side of the room. The doctor follows. Morgan opens his personal drawer and takes the photo of his wife and child out. He strokes the photograph for a moment and looks at the doctor.

MORGAN:

I remember their faces.

EXT. SIBERIAN EVENKI CAMP. NIGHT.

A younger version of Morgan stares out at the dim forest in the distance. His beautiful wife comes up behind him with a baby covered in a fur blanket. He turns to face and smiles, kissing her passionately while stroking the babies head.

INT. COMMUNITY ROOM. DAY

Morgan maintains eye contact with the doctor while sitting on his bunk. The doctors looks at the other patients.

MORGAN:

I'm ready to start healing....

EXT. EDGE OF RIVER BO. DAY

10 YEARS LATER...

Morgan pulls up his woolly overcoat up past his neck to fight out the cold, his face greatly weathered with age and guilt. The steam from his breath lingers. He climbs down from his horse and takes it by the reigns and walks down to the same spot that he started a family all those years ago. He looks at two unmarked graves, and then stares up at the trees. In the distance he sees an Evenki camp and approaches on foot.

As he nears an old man approaches him. They get between touching distance of each other when the old man lowers his scarf. Ainak stares at Morgan and they hug with sincerity. Ainak smiles at Morgan, slapping him playfully on the shoulders.

AINAK:

Welcome home brother.

Morgan looks passed Ainak, notices that the tribe is young but still alive, a handful of families working and living together peacefully, without violence and tyranny. A few of the older members of the tribe recognize him and wave.

Morgan and Ainak look over to the other side of the river. A deer is staring back at them, grand in size and tough with age. The scars on the deers face glisten slightly from the sunlight. One of his antlers is deformed and awkward. He stares back fiercely at the two men from the distance.

From the shrubbery appear a younger female deer and two baby deers in tow. The deer looks down at his female and his eyes soften. He stares back at the two men for a moment, and then the deer family stroll off casually through the trees and out of sight.

(CONTINUED)

Morgan and Ainak look towards the trees over the river with tired eyes. Morgan smiles slightly.

THE END