

RABBIT SEASON

by

Jeff Baugh

737.703.0500
henry.thefilmist.j0@gmail.com

FADE IN:

BLACK

CODA

From "Our Brilliant Futures: A
Memoir of The Insurrection" by
Arthur Harris.

OLD ARTHUR

(VO)

The revolution finally came in
2028. It came slowly. Texas had
seceded from the union like they'd
always threatened, and it went
about as well as you could expect
given the people who were involved.

As the Man talks, we see various pieces of footage, greyed
out - a building collage, one piece of footage fading into
the next, one upon another. Here, we see pictures of Texas
political demagogues, including Rick Perry and Greg Abbott.
The usual suspects.

OLD ARTHUR

(VO)

It went to hell quicker than anyone
thought. In their haste to prove
the South could survive on its own,
our leaders forgot to worry about
just how possible that actually
was.

Shots of military leaders, politicians celebrating, crew-cut
people with Confederate flags firing guns, fade quickly into
anguish, worry. People fearful in the street.

OLD ARTHUR

(VO)

Without trade, or commerce, and
with no recognizable, real
authority to make sense of
anything. . .the anger came
quickly.

A vast crowd. One MAN in the crowd begins to yell. Then
another, and another. Stores are looted. Fires. One man
shoots another down in the streets.

OLD ARTHUR

(VO)

And so did the rations.

Food lines. Depression era.

OLD ARTHUR

(VO)

And the blame.

Shots of minorities, political prisoners, Muslims in particular, being herded onto buses and into camps. Scandal in the newspapers - "Terrorists Apprehended," etc.

OLD ARTHUR

(VO)

And the violence.

Riot police. A line of them march down the steps of CITY HALL, firing on bystanders.

ARTHUR

(VO)

Thousands disappeared, almost overnight - into secret prisons. They didn't stay secret for very long.

RIOTS. ARAB SPRING. BATTLE OF ALGIERS. NATION OF ISLAM. DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION '68.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE FOREST - SIDE OF THE ROAD - DAY

A country road. A beautiful day. Clouds roll sparsely by. Green grass stretches forever, to the left. To the right - trees, towering up like skyscrapers.

An iron-wrought fence, handmade and broken in several spots, lines the road.

In the middle of the lane, a beat-up old CAR sits skewed sideways, the driver and passenger door open. Smoke comes out from under the hood. We're moving quickly toward it. . .

ARTHUR

(VO)

By the time I turned 22, I was already a member of the guerrilla campaign, out in the country.

(beat)

Whitney, Decatur - the people who lived in these towns had a name for us, seeing us fight in the fields.

We stop, suddenly.

ARTHUR

(VO)

We were called rabbits.

A SHAPE steps into view. A TALL MAN, in grey tactical gear - face and head hidden by helmet and thick visor. All the requisite badass trappings. A BIG GUN. This is the RABBIT KILLER.

He moves toward the car.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

. . .As RK looks inside, inspecting. He taps the side of his head. There's a small FLASH in the visor, every so often.

The passenger seat is reclined. All over, there are spent bullet-shells. A thick flak-jacket.

He opens the glove-box, and pulls out the scattered papers - sifts through them. Flash. Flash.

He turns around, through the papers on the seat.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE FOREST - SIDE OF THE ROAD - CONTINUOUS

. . .and stands there, in the road.

VOICE

(o.s.)

RK, any sign of them?

He looks around, gaze caught by a trail of blood leading into the forest. He starts to walk along it.

RK

Possibly.

(beat)

Will relay location when I'm sure.

His voice is garbled, electronically.

VOICE

(o.s.)

Recieved. Don't kill them, this time. We need them.

RK

We'll see.

VOICE

(o.s.)

As long as they can talk, RK.

RK

Heard. Out.

The trail of blood stretches into the trees. . .under the fence. . .

CUT TO:

INT. THE FOREST - THE PATH - DAY

. . . And right up under the heels of TWO FIGURES a little ahead of us. The bleeding one, a WOMAN, is limping, and has

her arm slung over the shoulder of the other, a YOUNG MAN.
Her right leg is damaged pretty badly. Pant-leg ripped and bloody, boot mutilated.

CUT TO:

From the front now, we can see them clearly. The two of them trudge forward with ragged determination, although the woman looks ready to quit.

The man is ARTHUR. The woman is YVETTE.

Suddenly, he stops. She looks at him, inquiringly. He puts a finger to his lips - turns and raises the SAWED-OFF SHOTTY slung over his shoulder. . .into the forest behind them.

Waits.

YVETTE

Is he coming? Do you see him?

Silence, for a beat. Arthur lets the gun drop.

ARTHUR

No. Not yet.

YVETTE

(through hard breath)

Okay. . .come on, put me down for a second.

She sags, a big drop. He pulls her up.

CUT TO:

THE BIG TREE

. . .as YVETTE watches, ARTHUR tears up her pant-leg below the frame. Sounds of ripping.

ARTHUR

Oh, jesus.

As they talk, Arthur pulls off his backpack and plumbs through it, pulling out gauze and a small bottle of isopropyl alcohol.

YVETTE

Bad?

ARTHUR

Ugly.

(beat)

We need to get back to camp - soon.
I can't do much out here, except
clean it a little and wrap you up.

YVETTE

If we make it.

ARTHUR

We will.

YVETTE

Not if the rabbit killer catches us.

ARTHUR

He won't. We're not too far from rendezvous.

(beat)

And if he does -

He looks at her.

ARTHUR

We'll take care of it.

(beat, while he works)

Why do they call him the rabbit killer?

YVETTE

Do you have to ask? Don't be stupid, Art.

He nods, and gets back to work.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE FOREST - LATER - DAY

. . .as Arthur and Yvette walk, in silence.

Then, a small CRACK, far off. And another one. They stop.

Another crack, getting nearer.

Arthur SUDDENLY ducks down, grabbing Yvette with him - another CRACK.

Arthur lugs her with his hands under her arms under a THICK UNDERGROWTH as. . .another CRACK, LOUDER than before. A TREE SPLINTERS!

CUT TO:

EXT. THE FOREST - ELSEWHERE - CONTINUOUS

. . .as RK lowers his gun for a second, and chuckles a little. It's a harsh, electronic sound.

Then he raises it again. He's firing into the open air.

RK

Sing, brother Heckler. . .

CUT TO:

Arthur and Yvette in the UNDERGROWTH, waiting. More POPS.

Yvette tries to lift the gun, and fails. Arthur takes it, poking it through a hole in the bushes. . .watching.

YVETTE

He's playing with us.

Very quietly, Arthur attempts to pump the shotgun. His finger's on the trigger.

YVETTE

Don't. He'll hear you. That's what he wants.

Arthur watches the road. More POPS, CRACKS. Air breaks as bullets whizz by. Arthur and Yvette scramble to another spot in the brush as BULLETS rain down.

OLD ARTHUR

(VO)

In the field, as in life, there are moments of chaos and confusion, and ones of silence and tension, often right next to each other.

YVETTE

We need to go. Now.

OLD ARTHUR

(VO)

For me, in these moments, I'd start to drift back. . .

On Arthur's face, set. . .

MATCH CUT TO:

FLASHBACK

ARTHUR

(VO)

I had a friend, before everything got serious; named Robert. We did everything together, before we got to college.

EXT. THE NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

. . .as Arthur and Robert walk along, clearly drunk. Good old buddies, loud and laughing. From far off, we can't hear the jokes they're telling each other.

The neighborhood looks broken down.

CUT TO:

Closer.

ARTHUR

And then, she looks at me and says,
"you're not ready for me," all
serious -

ROBERT

Oh, she think she's a bad bitch -

ARTHUR

Right, you know how it is -

Their voices go in and out. Good times.

CUT TO:

Elsewhere, later.

ROBERT

So, what you gonna do about baby
mama?

ARTHUR

Man. . .
(beat)
I don't fuckin' know.

ROBERT

Y'all keepin' it?

ARTHUR

She says so. But, I mean - what I
can I do right now?

The mood got tense. Arthur rubs the back of his head
sheepishly.

ARTHUR

I mean, everything sucks. If we had
the kid, I mean - what, how am I
gonna buy him clothes?

ROBERT

Or her. Don't be such a sexist.

ARTHUR

Right. Wages went down, prices went
up, and there's not enough - not
how it's supposed to go, you know?

ROBERT

What about your med school stuff?
You're pretty far in, that's gotta
count for something.

ARTHUR

Yeah, it counts for dick right now, man. Don't you read the fucking news?

ROBERT

Not really, no.

ARTHUR

There's not gonna be a school to go to anymore in a minute, for either of us, or for a kid. I mean, it's like that.

(beat)

The world's getting cold.

Arthur sighs, and kicks a can.

ROBERT

Hey, look - you know you've got me. It'll be alright.

He bro-hugs him. Robert's the bigger brother to the impetuous sibling here, clearly.

ARTHUR

Yeah. Yeah. . .

They walk off.

ARTHUR

(VO)

I thought about him a lot. I missed him.

(beat)

We parted ways amiably, when my life path showed itself. I still wonder where he is now, after all this chaos. If he's happy.

BACK TO OUR REGULARLY SCHEDULED PROGRAMMING. . .

EXT. THE FOREST - MIDDAY/DUSK

. . .as RK stands below the tree, holding the discarded boot. He rubs his gloved finger through a dark red patch in the mud.

He looks up, into the trees farther on, and presses a button on the side of his helmet -

CUT TO:

POV SHOT

. . .as the forest is displayed in monochromatic infrared. Nothing, in the immediate sense.

Then, far. . .far. . .far off through the trees. Bright red and orange movement.

CUT TO:

The Rabbit Killer breathes hard. He looks down, opens up his GUN - LOADS IT from the ammunition supply around his waist.

There's an electronic humming.

RK

Target sighted.

(beat; sing-song)

I'mma find me a bunny. . .
make me some stew. . .

CUT TO:

EXT. THE FOREST - ELSEWHERE - CONTINUOUS

. . .As Arthur and Yvette tredge along. Yvette is piggy-backing on Arthur, clutched tightly around his shoulders. She's only got the one boot, and looks sickly pale and sweaty.

Her head lolls.

ARTHUR

Hey, come on. Stay awake. Nearly there.

She blinks hard, trying to stay conscious.

ARTHUR

How long do we have till they get here?

She checks her watch.

YVETTE

About two hours.

ARTHUR

That's good. So we've just got to stay alive till then. Be happy.

CUT TO:

The two of them scramble haphazardly into another OVERGROWTH.

EXT. THE FOREST - GROWTH - NIGHT

. . .as Arthur and Yvette wait, uncomfortably. Arthur holds the gun, trained on the opening into the forest.

She smokes, lazily.

YVETTE
How many bullets do we have left?

ARTHUR
Not enough.

YVETTE
Figures.
(beat; delirious)
I used to be a ballerina, you know?

ARTHUR
I could believe that.

YVETTE
How did we end up here, Art?

OLD ARTHUR
(VO)
I didn't answer her then. After we
got married, she'd ask me that
again, periodically.
(beat)
I don't think I've ever given a
straight answer.

FADE TO:

FLASHBACK

(this riot is stock footage by the way, as are the other
examples given in this script, compiled from a myriad of
examples Mad Max 2 style)

. . .a riot in the streets. Hundreds of people. Tear-gas,
everywhere. Many of the rioters are wearing masks. There's a
chant rising heavy on the air:

VOICES
No more secrets! No more secrets!
(beat)
We remember the dead!

One of the RIOTERS grabs a tear-gas canister and lobs it
back at the riot police. . .

CUT TO:

EXT. DALLAS - ALLEYWAY - DAY

. . .as one of the RIOTERS runs for dear life down the
alley, whips around the corner and comes to a sudden CROUCH,
pulling off the SKULL MASK and hoodie from his face. It's
ARTHUR.

There's a dab of blood on his forehead. He touches it, looks
at his fingers.

He looks shocked, dazed. . .exhilerated.

EXT. THE NEIGHBORHOOD - OVERPASS - DAY

Arthur and Robert, on the bridge. Arguing. Robert's hair is buzzed, and he's wearing pair of army fatigue pants.

ROBERT

. . .listen, man. You know I've got family in the middle of that shit, right now. We're police, we always have been. I will be too, pretty soon. Those fucking rioters are just causing a lot of trouble - you watch, man. Someone's gonna get killed.

Arthur grabs him by the lapels.

ARTHUR

A LOT OF PEOPLE ALREADY HAVE, YOU DENSE MOTHERFUCKER.

(beat)

Goddamn it. . .

ROBERT

Hey, why don't you go home and take care of your pregnant girlfriend instead of trying to plan ways to blow up buildings with the other fucking terrorists?

ARTHUR

Yeah, how about you go fuck yourself, you fascist prick?

ROBERT

What? What'd you say?

Robert moves toward him, chest out -

From far away, the two of them squabble. . .but it's hard to tell if they're fighting or embracing.

Over this:

OLD ARTHUR

(VO)

I always meant to look Robert up, check in on him after everything settled. Size up how things had turned out, maybe over a conspiratorial cigar - I always figured he'd find his way into sports. An athlete, maybe.

CUT TO:

ARTHUR walks away, his face cut and bruised.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT

. . .as Arthur sits back, a bandage over his right eye, listening to the other people. There's about ten or fifteen of them, listening to one guy in the center. He's a real Orson Welles type - a true showman, always rubbing his hands.

HAIRY

. . .So, that's what we're proposing - a dedicated guerrilla campaign. Bring this thing right to their doorstep, and with the eventual aim of launching a full assault and liberation of the Supermax prison. If you're interested, and we can use you, stick around, please.

CUT TO:

Later, by the door, Arthur and the hairy man talk. Conspiratorial. Mid conversation.

ARTHUR

You have guns? A support system?

HAIRY

We have enough.

(beat)

These underground meetings feel so clandestine. Revolutions don't ever change very much, you know?

ARTHUR

No sir, I suppose not.

HAIRY

You don't have to call me sir. So, medical school, huh? Very nice. We could definitely use someone like you.

(beat)

You have anyone who'll miss you?

Arthur puffs on his cigarette.

ARTHUR

No. No, I don't think so.

MATCH CUT TO:

AND ONCE AGAIN, FLYING THROUGH TIIIIIIIME.. . . .

EXT. THE FOREST - GROWTH - NIGHT

Back in the brush, Yvette hears a noise. She looks up dazed, as ARTHUR gets up. He puts his finger to his his lips, and disappears -

She tries to raise her head, but she can't. There's a Hiss, suddenly - Arthur, behind a tree just across the way.

He motions to her. Points to his gun, and her. Then off into the brush.

She looks back. Off in the dark, faintly - through the trees. A pin-prick of red light, flashing through the dark.

Slowly, Yvette cocks her gun. Its slippery.

Arthur raises his rifle - aims. POP!

. . .but, he wasn't on point. He misses. Hits a tree -

- the RETURN FIRE is IMMEDIATE. A BARRAGE. Arthur rolls to his side in the underbrush.

ARTHUR

Shit!

He rolls onto his stomach, takes aim again. He THINKS. POP POP!

YVETTE

(whispering)

Stop shooting! What're you doing?
He'll find us! We have to -

ARTHUR

I know. Be ready.

A more brief barrage - one hits close to Arthur, but he doesn't flinch.

Arthur checks - he's got two left. He waits.

Silence.

A rustling in the trees. A SHAPE. RK. He AIMS. Off into the trees.

POP!

NOTHING.

RK is reloading.

Arthur RUNS - holding his gun up. Reloading as he walks. Gun trained on the vague shape of RK.

ARTHUR

Put down the gun. We have eyes on you.

(beat)

Get up.

Silence again. RK gets up from his crouch in the brush - emerges, hands held up to his chest. Arthur has his gun held up to RK's head. Won't take his eyes off him.

ARTHUR

Step out into the light. Quickly.

RK takes a few steps forward. Then he cocks his head.

RK

Arthur?

ARTHUR

That's what they call me.

RK motions - pulls up his face mask. Arthur takes another step back.

It's Robert. Older, but definitely him.

A mix of emotions wash over Arthur's face. Guilt. Anger. Happiness. All in a second. Shock.

He's about to say something, when -

VOICE

(OS)

RK, any sign of them? We're approaching your signal location.

(beat)

Press your Com Unit to confirm, RK.

Arthur looks at him.

VOICE

(OS)

RK, please confirm.

RK stares at him, a similar wash of emotions - but his hand inches lower and lower. . .to the COM UNIT on his belt.

BUT THEN:

BANG BANG! To the chest and neck. . .and RK falls.

Between Arthur's legs, Yvette waits with her smoking gun drawn. Eyes wide. Then she collapses.

CUT TO:

Arthur kneels down beside RK, on his knees. RK stares back up at him, implying. The light goes out of his eyes.

Yvette sees him from the ground. . .as he runs his hand through his hair. He's there a long time.

Arthur gets up and comes to her. Pulls her up. He wets a rag from the small canteen at his side, holds it to her forehead. Her eyes clear a little.

ARTHUR

We made it.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE FOREST - THE ROAD - NIGHT

Arthur and Yvette hike toward the road, carrying the body of RK inbetween them, Yvette limping.

Bright lights crest the road, growing brighter. The sound of heavy vehicles approaching.

OLD ARTHUR

(VO)

I haven't seen my friend in a long time.

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END.