

LOUIS L'AMOUR'S

HAUNTED MESA

Pilot Episode
V3.2

by
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FADE IN:

EXT. RUINED CITY NEAR MESAS - PYRAMID TOP - DAY

A smart phone begins recording, light flares as the auto exposure adjusts. ERIC HOKART, late fifties, weathered and athletic, stands the phone on something so that it can film him. He steps back. He is wearing a Vietnam era field jacket, a high tech military pack and a dark fedora. Over his shoulder is a well-worn big game rifle.

ERIC

Okay ... day one. The ruins go on for over a mile. This place is amazing. There are examples of art and written language and it's all very, very old. Here ...

He picks up the camera and points it out beyond him, panning slowly. He is high above the ruins which appear to be somewhat like an ancient Aztec or Mayan city. Surrounding it is a desert landscape identical to Monument Valley. Eric is standing on the top of a well preserved central pyramid.

ERIC

Pretty impressive, huh? I'm going to explore for one day, spend the night, then head back. I hope you still know how to access my encrypted server. I'll post this when I get back ... then you can really see what I've been talking about.

So get your ass off that surf board and back to the US of A. We'll go on a *real* adventure.

The recording ends and for a moment a half dozen military app icons are visible on the phone's screen.

DISSOLVE TO:

E/I. MOQUI COUNTY, UTAH - HIGHWAY - DAY

A vintage 4x4 SUV rattles down a highway crossing southern Utah. The tailgate window is covered with sun faded stickers from surf shops around the world.

Inside, Mike Raglan struggles with his cell phone as he drives. Raglan is in his late thirties and well built, his shaggy hair goes with the stickers and the empty racks on the roof of the truck.

The phone menu says "Eric Hokart, Mobile, Work ..." Raglan pokes "Mobile."

Phone

We're sorry but the voice mailbox
for ... Eric Hokart ... is
currently full. Please try again
later.

Raglan

Damn it!

He tosses the phone onto the passenger seat and carefully crosses the center line to miss a rattlesnake in the road.

The truck continues on, past a 1960s era sign stating "Lyman's Corners, Utah, 10 miles. Gateway to Glen Canyon. Clean Rooms. Good Food." The sign has more than a few bullet holes in it.

CUT TO:

EXT. LYMAN'S CORNERS APPROACH - DAY

The highway leads down through a crack between towering red rock cliffs.

Emerging into the sunlight once more, Raglan can see the town in the distance. Beyond ripples of heat distortion it is an outcropping of cottonwood trees and roofs surrounded by a smattering of small farms.

CUT TO:

EXT. LYMAN'S CORNERS - HIGHWAY INTERSECTION - DAY

There isn't really a main street, the most identifiable part of town is the stop light where one state highway dead ends into another. There are a few businesses but they peter out quickly as they get further away from the intersection.

Raglan makes a turn into the gas station and tourist store marked "Gas'n Crafts." He gets out, hangs the unleaded nozzle in his tank and, taking an Auto Club map, goes into the combination office and store.

CUT TO:

INT. LYMAN'S CORNERS - GAS'N CRAFTS - DAY

It's no 7-2-11. The red rock building dates back to the days of the pioneers, it is heavily constructed and dark. There are bars on the few windows and a rumbling swamp cooler on the roof.

Two isles of shelves are weighed down with dusty cans of food and the sort of southwest tchotchkes typical of the 20th century: varnished redwood plaques, copper wrist bands, and Kachina dolls. In back are a couple of aging pop machines and a glass case containing silver and turquoise jewelry marked "Dead Pawn". JACK DAYTON, a thin, hard-bitten man in his 60s, sits on a stool under the vent to the swamp cooler. He is watching a religious TV show on an old tube-type TV.

JACK

Help you?

Raglan puts down a credit card.

RAGLAN

Yeah. Whatever the pump says and maybe some directions.

Raglan opens his map ...

RAGLAN

I'm looking for Clay Hills Crossing Road.

Jack takes an impression of the card on a carbon copy form. Like everything in the store, his method of taking payment is old fashioned.

JACK

Clay Hills! What the heck do you want out there?

RAGLAN

I'm looking for Eric Hokart. You know him?

JACK

Yep. Fulla hisself. Driving that fancy vee-hicle like he was landin' on the moon! Anyone local'd know better than to live out there.

RAGLAN

So you know where his place is?

JACK

Never been there. But I guess I can show you the turn off. Give it here.

Jack draws a couple of heavy lines on the map and hands it back.

JACK

You turn after mile marker 77, then keep taking forks to the right.

I hope you got four wheel drive, Son. Those are actually *sand* hills out there. Were I you, I'd have him meet you here in town.

Mike signs the gas receipt.

MIKE

Thanks.

JACK

(calling after him)

Don't forget I warned you.

As the door closes Jack picks up the telephone. Holding the gas receipt up to the light, he squints at the name on it.

CUT TO:

EXT. LYMAN'S CORNERS OUTSKIRTS - DAY

Mike drives past the Wapiti Diner and a 1960s era Motel. A sign on the highway says, "Don't Forget to Come Back" the "forget to" part is nearly weathered away. Under it two more read, "Lake Powell, 107 miles" and "Shumway Marina, Closed."

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MOQUI COUNTY - HIGHWAY - COMB RIDGE - DAY

Raglan's 4x4 approaches the vast wall of comb ridge. A narrow slot, just big enough for the highway, cuts through the rock.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MOQUI COUNTY - HIGHWAY - MILE MARKER 77 - DAY

Raglan slows and turns off the highway. The pair of ruts that passes for a road dips away from the blacktop and runs off through the scrubby brush. Threading it's way across a desert landscape reminiscent of a John Ford movie, the SUV raises a cloud of dust.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MOQUI COUNTY - DRY WASH - DAY

Mike Raglan pulls to a stop at the bank of a wash. He shifts into four wheel drive, then rolls into the wash and fights his way down the rutted watercourse for several hundred yards before climbing out.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MOQUI COUNTY - HALF TRACK - DAY

Raglan bears right when the trail splits at a broken down, 1940s military half track. He takes it slowly, craning his head out the window to spot rocks and the edge of the trail. Eventually, he drives out onto a narrowing mesa top.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOQUI COUNTY - ERIC'S HOUSE - DAY

Raglan gets out of the truck. To his right Eric's home is a unique collection of glass, steel, and native stone. The house is still under construction. To his left is a large Quonset hut, an antenna array, and photovoltaic panels. Beyond, between the Quonset and the edge of the cliff, is an area of collapsing stone walls, an Indian ruin, and a drooping tent.

The wind blows dust around the house. From the roof of the Quonset a crow caws. Mike knocks on the door to the house.

RAGLAN

Eric?

Nothing. He tries the door handle and knocks again.

RAGLAN

Eric? Eric!

Raglan walks around the house. Closer to the mesa edge there are floor to ceiling windows that meet in a prow pointing out across the huge vista of Glen Canyon and Lake Powell. Mike peers through the dirt streaked glass ...

INSIDE - The room is a combination living room, dining room and kitchen. The dining room table is covered with plans and papers. The kitchen looks like Eric has been eating at a stool at the counter. The couch has been Eric's temporary bed. There are construction materials neatly piled about and unpainted dry wall separates the room from the rest of the house. It doesn't look like anyone has been there in some time.

Raglan goes to the Quonset hut. The door is unlocked. Raglan looks around carefully. The whole place is quiet but it has a sort of creepy vibe. He has the sense of being watched.

CUT TO:

INT. MOQUI COUNTY - ERIC'S HOUSE - QUONSET HUT - DAY

Raglan enters. The space is tall and dimly lit. Wind whistles and when the sun passes behind a cloud the building ticks and clatters as the metal contracts.

There are three vehicles, a newish Ford 4x4 pickup, a small ATV and a military HUMVEE with a specially fitted ambulance back. The HUMVEE has several antennas mounted and a large, flat satellite dish.

Both the pick up and the Hummer have mud clogged tires and traces of dried mud have fallen from their wheels. Raglan picks mud out of the tread of the Hummer and kicks a pile behind the tire of the pick up ... both turn to dust.

RAGLAN

Well, he hasn't driven anywhere since the last time it rained.

On one side of the vehicles is a lathe and drill press and on the other a well equipped work bench. The back of the building is split between a room for both a generator and the batteries for the solar units, and a cleaner, well lit, electronics shop. Circuit boards and rejected components are scattered around. Raglan opens the top of a plastic file box and sees ziplocked circuit boards filed like documents and labeled like software, "v42.2," "v42.3."

Through the window to the garage area Raglan sees something move. There is the sound of a piece of metal impacting something.

RAGLAN

What the hell?

He palms a screwdriver and, holding it like an ice pick, steps to the door.

The garage is empty. Mike moves toward the door, ready for anything. Then the wind blows, the open door bangs metallically, and sand pings on the metal walls. He relaxes a bit.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOQUI COUNTY - ERIC'S HOUSE - DAY

Raglan closes the door and walks toward the sagging tent and low walls near the drop off. It is an Anasazi ruin ... the Native Americans sometimes called the Cliff Dwellers. Staked and grid marked, it shows evidence of having been carefully excavated. The tent protects plastic trays of artifacts.

Closer to the mesa rim, the walls are higher and the excavation more complete. Raglan picks his way through to an ancient plaza that ran along the edge. There are a couple of round depressions these are filled in Kivas, Anasazi ceremonial chambers about twenty feet in diameter and eight feet in depth. The Kiva closest to the cliff edge has been excavated ... and it is rather odd.

Old as it must be, it appears unfinished, and in the wall closest to the cliff there is a recess in the masonry about four feet square and four feet deep. The rocks leading into and out of this recess are very worn.

Mike Raglan surveys the lonely location. A small dust devil briefly forms in the corner of the house. He turns and looks off the cliff at a panorama that drops off two thousand feet and looks into the depths of Monument Valley across the river. The crow caws.

RAGLAN

Well, it sure has a view! But what
the hell are you up to, Eric?

ERIC!!!

He hears nothing but echoes.

Mike Raglan walks back to his SUV, turns and starts back to
the highway. In the depths of the ruin a shadow moves,
something big; man sized. On the ground, is a footprint.
Long and narrow, it is almost human but marks indicate claws
at both the toes and the heel. Dust blows and the print
vanishes.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MOQUI COUNTY - HIGHWAY - LAND CRUISER - DAY

Raglan is back on the cell phone.

QC RECEPTIONIST

Quantum Concepts, Seattle. This is
Darla, how can I direct your call.

RAGLAN

I'm trying to get in touch with
Eric Hokart --

QC RECEPTIONIST

I'm sorry Mr. Hokart is on
sabbatical right --

RAGLAN

-- or anyone who knows where he is.
You know me. I've called before.

QC RECEPTIONIST

Is this Mr. Raglan?

RAGLAN

Yes.

QC RECEPTIONIST

Then you know ... you have to speak
to Ms. Dufayel about any matter
pertaining to Dr. Hokart.

RAGLAN

Well, your Ms. Du -- whatever-her-
name-is doesn't call me back.

Look, I believe this is an
emergency ...

There is a click on the line ...

PHONE

You have reached the messaging
system for Amandine Dufayel and the
Quantum Concepts legal department --

RAGLAN

Go f -- ahh, screw you!

He hits "end" and continues driving.

RAGLAN

Guess I'm getting what I deserve
...

FLASH BACK TO:

EXT. SAMOA BEACH - RAGLAN'S TENT - DAY

Mike Raglan, looking even scruffier, is sitting in the shade
checking his email messages on a satellite linked modem.

INCOMING MESSAGE

Subject: Medication

Major Raglan, I must advise you
that PTSD is nothing to take
lightly. Hallucinations.
Irrational rage. Yours is a
serious case. Please take my
advice and resume the medication.

Daniel Lathrop MD
Veterans Administration
Mental/Behavioral Health Dept.
3350 La Jolla Village Drive
San Diego, CA 92161

RAGLAN

Dear Doc. Screw you.

Raglan presses "Delete" and the message vanishes. The next
couple of messages pop up.

INCOMING MESSAGE

Subject: Ready for an Adventure?
From: Eric Hokart
Subject: Hey Mike, get back to me.

From: Eric Hokart
Subject: Seriously, this is
important!
From: Eric Hokart

Raglan lowers the phone, looking defeated ... he highlights the messages.

RAGLAN

Sorry Eric ... enough Afghanistan
for one day. I'll call you when I
get home.

Raglan again presses "Delete." He stands stripping off his shirt ...

MOMENTS LATER - Raglan, on his board, cuts down a huge arch of water ... not a care in the world.

RETURN TO:

EXT. LYMAN'S CORNERS - MOQUI COUNTY COURTHOUSE - AFTERNOON

Raglan pulls up outside. The building has an old but fortified feel, like the Gas'n Crafts. Rock walls and heavy metal shutters on the windows.

The Sheriff's Department is in back through a parking lot with a squad car and two departmental SUVs.

CUT TO:

INT. LYMAN'S CORNERS - SHERIFF'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Raglan enters the Sheriff's Office, walks to the partition counter and waits. On the wall is a photo, "Martin Lyman Sheriff 1978-2011," it is of a tough but distinguished looking older man. He and a young woman are holding a plaque containing a commemorative badge.

An aging deputy rouses himself from the back of the room and comes forward with a file folder in his hand. Chunky but powerful looking, he is BEN GALLAGHER.

GALLAGHER

Just a sec'.

He pulls open a file cabinet and selecting the right spot, drops in the file. Raglan sees a tattoo on his forearm, "Swift. Silent. Deadly."

RAGLAN
Marines?

GALLAGHER
First Force Recon.

Gallagher looks Raglan over carefully.

GALLAGHER
You?

RAGLAN
Special Forces. Afghanistan,
Columbia, places like that.

GALLAGHER
Vietnam. '70, '71.

Can I help you?

RAGLAN
I need to report a missing person.

Gallagher grabs a pen.

GALLAGHER
All right. Who?

RAGLAN
His name is Eric Hokart.

In the office behind Gallagher, a chair squeaks back. Partly obscured by the door, SHERIFF MARSHA BLACK, once the young woman in the photo, peers at Mike.

GALLAGHER
And how do you know he's missing?

RAGLAN
I've been calling for two weeks. E-mails before that. He contacted me on the 17th but I haven't heard from him since.

I just got back from his house.

Sheriff Black has moved to stand in the doorway, she is a tall, spare, woman now in her mid 50s, wearing civilian slacks and a flannel blouse but a heavy belt carrying a old Smith & Wesson revolver, cuffs, and her badge circles her waist.

MARSHA
You went out there?

RAGLAN

Yes, Ma'am.

She walks forward, extending her hand.

MARSHA

Sheriff Marsha Black. This is
Deputy Ben Gallagher.

RAGLAN

Mike Raglan.

MARSHA

Have a seat.

She holds the partition gate open and Raglan sits down across
a desk from Deputy Gallagher.

MARSHA

Not many people can find Eric's
place, Mr. Raglan. You're lucky
the missing person isn't you.

RAGLAN

Do either of you know the last time
it rained? Neither of his vehicles
have been moved since then, at the
very least.

GALLAGHER

A week or so ... maybe.

RAGLAN

So, what do we do now?

MARSHA

Well, you are going to write down
as much contact information as you
can think of. Hokart's friends,
family, and business associates.
The first thing I am going to do is
call them.

Deputy Gallagher will take your
phone number and he will keep you
updated once you get home.

RAGLAN

Ma'am, there's a lot I can do to
help. I have tracking experience.
There's two vehicles out there.
Wherever he is, he's probably on
foot.

MARSHA

Or someone picked him up. From the little I know about him, he could have even have been flown out by helicopter. I know you want to help but--

RAGLAN

I am gonna find Eric. I'm ready to turn over every stone in that damned desert.

Marsha, takes a breath, she's about to insist Raglan stay out of it ...

GALLAGHER

Marsha, if we don't find something on the phone tonight, I'll go out and check the area between Eric's place and the Rez in the morning. Mr. Raglan can ride with me. With luck this will all be over before then anyway.

Marsha looks like she's going to object but doesn't quite know what to say. Gallagher turns to Raglan.

GALLAGHER

Let's get you started on that list.

Gallagher puts a pen and a lined pad on a table. Raglan sits again, and picking up the pen, glances over at Marsha.

MARSHA

So, how is it you know Eric Hokart?

RAGLAN

We worked together.

FLASH BACK TO:

EXT. AFGHANISTAN - DESOLATE VALLEY - NIGHT

In a swirl of dust a Pavehawk helicopter has landed. Parajumpers are stabilizing wounded Special Forces troops.

TITLE: "HELMAND PROVINCE, AFGHANISTAN, 2018.

Tracers streak down from the hillside behind them and, from some distance away, artillery fires back.

FORWARD OBSERVER
Fox. Dog. Charlie. I have
casualties ready to extract.
Report End of Mission.

Mike, covered in compression dressings and already on an I.V.
bag, lays on a stretcher. Eric Hokart kneels beside him.

ERIC
I'm sorry. I don't know what went
wrong.

RAGLAN
Sorry?
(Raglan coughs)
Doctor Hokart. You got us out.
All of us.

FORWARD OBSERVER
End of Fire Mission! Chalk Two you
are clear to Ex Fil.

The helicopter rotors take on a heavy beat ...

RETURN TO:

INT. LYMAN'S CORNERS - SHERIFF'S OFFICE - EVENING

Mike Raglan flips to the end of a computer print out of his
statement and signs. On the desk beside him is his phone and
his open laptop computer. The webpage says, "Eric Hokart
Phd., Chairman and CEO, Quantum Concepts, Seattle, WA" There
is also a photograph and contact information.

Mike puts his head in his hands, tired, frustrated. From the
Sheriff's office there are low voices ...

GALLAGHER
(off)
They served together. I'd feel the
same way.

MARSHA
(off)
Well, this isn't 'Band of
Brothers.' We don't need any
trouble ... you know that as well
as I do.

Raglan closes the laptop. Ben Gallagher appears in the
office doorway.

GALLAGHER

You ready to check into the motel?

CUT TO:

EXT. LYMAN'S CORNERS - CLIFF DWELLER INN - NIGHT

The big metal sign is lit up with neon. There are very few cars in the lot.

CUT TO:

INT. LYMAN'S CORNERS - CLIFF DWELLER INN - NIGHT

Raglan is settling in. The TV is playing a 24 hr. news service. He has a small duffle bag and an old backpack.

Mike locks the door using the bolt and the chain. He has stripped the sheets, blankets and pillows from the bed and arranged a nest for himself against the wall just inside the door. He shakes out his sleeping bag.

From his pack he pulls a .45 Automatic. He takes it from it's holster, slips in a magazine, racks the slide, flips on the safety and places it under his pillow. He sits on the sleeping bag, lit only by the glow of the T.V.

FLASH BACK TO:

EXT. AFGHANISTAN - ABANDONED VILLAGE - NIGHT

A Striker APC is parked, and in the dim light from its interior, Special Forces Major Mike Raglan and his six man ODA team are unloading their equipment. A civilian comes jogging up. He is Peter Fordyce.

FORDYCE

Major Raglan? Pete Fordyce. Good to meet you.

RAGLAN

Likewise, long as you can tell me what we're doing up here.

FORDYCE

Well. Uh ...

Fordyce draws Raglan away from the vehicle, over to a broken wall of mud bricks near a large dilapidated compound.

RAGLAN

Come on buddy, speak up. You pulled us out of our bunks and brought us out to crap-knows-where for some reason ... right?

FORDYCE

I don't have the clearance.

Fordyce hands Raglan a clipboard. He points to the compound gate which is guarded by a heavily armed pair of civilian contractors. A tall, unkempt, and very fat young man leans against the door frame smoking a cigarette.

FORDYCE

Once you sign, you can find out for yourself. Do you understand?

RAGLAN

Not really. But the situation ain't gonna change 'less I get on with it.

Raglan signs. His men are gathering behind him. They are HAROLD FRANKLIN, Chief Warrant Officer; Sergeants VINCE BRACCO and MARCUS KAZARIAN, Operations and Intel; STEVEN ARENDT, Engineer; DON MCCLELLAN, Medic; and DICK SCHAFFER, Communications. They all sign the forms.

The fat man has sauntered forward. He flicks his butt into the night. He is GENE WASSERMAN.

Wasserman

You ready?

CUT TO:

INT. AFGHANISTAN - ERIC'S COMPOUND - NIGHT

Gene leads the six soldiers into a room lit by a dozen brass lamps. Fine carpets cover the floor. Antique weapons hang on the walls. And sitting at a low table, a man in traditional Afghan clothing is playing backgammon with a native child.

WASSERMAN

Boss. Here's the men they sent us.

The exotically dressed man turns toward them, with his trimmed gray beard and dark eyes he could almost pass for a Pashtun tribesman but he is an American ... Eric Hokart.

ERIC

Ahh! Welcome ...

He turns to the child.

ERIC

I must take care of our guests.
Run along and help your mother.

Eric turns back to Mike and the others.

ERIC

My housekeeper's son. I'm amazed
they haven't made him sign his life
away, just like you did.

RAGLAN

My ODB team will be on it's way
tomorrow with the rest of the gear.

ERIC

Well, let's not keep you gentlemen
waiting. The best thing about
secrets ... is the telling!

He leads them down a hall to a room sealed behind a steel door that must be unlocked with a punch code.

ERIC

Come along ...

Several stairs lead up into the room. Within are two work stations, each surrounded by hexagons of monitor screens showing a 360 degree view. The views are cycling through several different locations: The interior of a huge cave. A pair of poor Afghans sleeping with their children and goats. The mess hall at the nearby base. And the room they are standing in ... viewed from a spot just above Mike Raglan's left shoulder.

Mike turns to look. There is nothing there but a mud brick wall. Mike glances back at the screen ... he raises his hand to block part of the 360 degree display. As Mike moves his hand closer to the wall it becomes visible again on the screens on the other side of the installation. It isn't an invisible camera ... the receptor simply isn't there!

ERIC

Captain Raglan ... it seems that you have seen straight to the heart of the matter. Meet Griffin. Our Invisible Observer.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LYMAN'S CORNERS - CLIFF DWELLER INN - NIGHT

Mike is asleep in his sleeping bag. Light flickers from the TV.

On the TV are pictures of destroyed buildings and burning cars. A caption CARTEL WAR HEATS UP IN JUAREZ, crawls across the screen. A REPORTER speaks from in front of a cluster of downtown office buildings.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. JUAREZ VILLA - NIGHT

A distant view of the downtown Juarez office buildings. PAN TO INCLUDE a well lit compound on a hillside outside of town. The house is enclosed by a guarded cinder-block wall, its top capped with broken glass and razor wire. Inside the perimeter are a dozen expensive cars and a pair of outlaw Harleys.

A party is in full swing. GUESTS are dancing, others are using the swimming pool. On a mezzanine overlooking the pool area a more ELITE GROUP is configured around a poker table and a small bar.

At the table sits ADAN "LUPILLO" LOAIZA, son of Marco Loaiza, capo of 'the little border.' Others include: a rough looking Mexican biker JORGE BAQUERO. BAQUERO's leather vest reads, 'Los Presidentes Muertos.' NATALIA ALBARRAN, also in biker duds, ruffles BAQUERO's hair and wanders over to the bar. Her vest reads, 'The Dead Presidents.'

LOAIZA

There. She will bring you luck.

BAQUERO

Nah, a tease. A bitch from our chapter in Las Cruces.

LOAIZA

My father can always use connections in the north. Maybe your Norteño brothers ... *and sisters* can be as useful as you have been.

They both pause to watch a remarkably sexy woman in a white dress and long gloves turn away from the balcony. Her hair is arranged behind her head with a fancy silver spike. She is TAK-SHAN 'AA. The woman looks across at the two men.

LOAIZA

Look at this one! I have not seen her before, I wonder who she came with.

BAQUERO

If you want, I could find him and take him for a ride in the desert ...

Loaiza smirks, folds his cards, and gets up. His BODYGUARDS, two hulking men with short barreled AKS-74s slung across their backs, close ranks.

LOAIZA

I don't believe she will be a problem. But when the time comes, perhaps my father will call on you himself. There is a lot of fighting in Durango and Sinaloa. There are new players in our business.

BAQUERO

The Army of Cibola. You have been very lucky.

Suddenly, Loaiza bends down, his breath on BAQUERO's neck.

LOAIZA

Lucky? If they come for us we will rape every one of their soldiers and gut this lunatic who pretends to be a Mayan god.

Loaiza adjusts his cuffs.

LOAIZA

Power is better than luck, my greasy friend. Let me demonstrate.

Loaiza walks to the rail near the woman in white. His bodyguards follow. Natalia joins BAQUERO, she hands him a beer.

BAQUERO

Watch closely, he will show us his skill with the ladies.

Over by the rail Loaiza drifts an arm around the woman in white's waist, half putting his hand on her butt.

NATALIA

(under her breath)

What an asshole.

CUT TO:

EXT. JUAREZ VILLA - MEZZANINE RAILING - NIGHT

Beyond the railing and beyond the walls of the compound, the view overlooks a vista of Ciudad Juarez.

LOAIZA

Such a beautiful girl. Why have I not seen you before?

TAK-SHAN 'AA

Perhaps we come from different worlds.

LOAIZA

Oh? Then, you must be from some very exotic land.

TAK-SHAN 'AA

Yes. Very.

He smells her hair.

LOAIZA

What brings you here? Are you lost?

She touches a gloved finger to his lips.

TAK-SHAN 'AA

I have come for the fireworks.

LOAIZA

Ah, you mean romance, passion ...

TAK-SHAN 'AA
Conquest. Submission.

He reaches for her face but she pushes his hand away, amused.
He frowns ...

LOAIZA
Why are you laughing?

Beyond them, off among the buildings of Juarez, a gigantic
fireball suddenly silhouettes the city.

Guests look up. A window pane cracks. A MAN AT TABLE near
the pool stands, overturning a glass of wine. Others are
suddenly on their cell phones, calling for or receiving
information. A GUARD near the pool pushes away the girl who
is hanging on to him, he reaches for his assault rifle.

Natalia and BAQUERO glance at one and other in alarm.

THE VIEW - Tracer fire stitches the dark sky. Sirens moan.
Explosions light the spaces between the buildings.

Loaiza gapes, the light of the explosions illuminating his
face. Beside him Tak-shan 'aa pulls the long hair pin from
behind her head and shakes out her hair ...

TAK-SHAN 'AA
You see? Fireworks.

Tak-shan 'aa slips forward and, with incredible speed,
thrusts the spike upward through one Bodyguard's jaw and into
his brain. As the other man starts to turn toward her she
withdraws the skewer and, reversing her grip, pushes the
other Bodyguard's head aside with her left forearm and
plunges it in between his shoulder and neck. She turns to
see Loaiza pointing a gun at her. She smiles.

TAK-SHAN 'AA
Poor boy.

She grasps the gun with her left hand, pirouettes in, her
back to him. She stabs the spike through his wrist with her
right, the gun falls away.

LOAIZA
Ah, ah AH! AHHHHHAGH!

For a moment she runs her left hand up his neck and musses
his hair while playfully grinding her buttocks into his
crotch ... then she shifts her grip and bends forward,
throwing him over her shoulder to land on his back.

Straddling him, she grabs up the AKS of one of the Bodyguards and uses it to drive the spike holding Loaiza's hand into the wood of the deck.

TAK-SHAN 'AA

Don't move.

Tak-shan 'aa calmly reaches under her dress, pulling out a tube just a bit longer than a lipstick. It is a tiny single-shot flare gun. The flare arches upward and explodes.

BAQUERO and Natalia are sheltering behind the poker table.

BAQUERO

(in Spanish)

We'd better get out of here!

BAQUERO takes Natalia's arm and steers her toward an interior staircase.

CUT TO:

EXT. JUAREZ VILLA - GROUND LEVEL - NIGHT

BLACK CLAD FIGURES rush from the shadows outside the wall and, using furniture pads to cover the wire and broken glass, roll over the top. They spread out covering the guests with suppressor equipped pistols, killing any who run.

CUT TO:

EXT. JUAREZ VILLA - STAIRWAY - NIGHT

Natalia and BAQUERO rush down the stairs.

NATALIA

(in Spanish)

Wait!

She steers him into a closet full of towels and robes for the pool. Natalia rips a transmitter and microphone from under her t-shirt. BAQUERO does the same. Natalia speaks quickly into the mic.

NATALIA

(in Spanish)

Lieutenant! Agents BAQUERO and Albarran discarding equipment and attempting to leave the compound!

BAQUERO dumps their 'wires' into a hamper. They move to the door cautiously looking out at the hallway.

CUT TO:

EXT. JUAREZ VILLA - GATES - NIGHT

A massive Kenworth semi-tractor, clad in sheets of steel, crashes through the compound gates. From a jury rigged turret behind the cab a .50 caliber machine gun shreds the house, heavy bullets punching through layer upon layer of walls. The lights go out.

More trucks pull through the gates, some are set up as 'technicals' with machine guns or recoilless rifles in the back, others carry BLACK CLAD FIGHTERS on running boards who fan out into the crowd with military precision.

Tak-shan 'aa walks calmly out to greet them.

The door to a pickup trucks opens and a man steps down. He is tall and dressed for battle in a plate carrier and shoulder holster. He carries a radio. He has fair skin and long black hair with an oddly Asian fold around his eyes ... and his cheeks are tattooed as if his mouth were the mouth of fanged animal's. Some of the party guests and remaining guards react ...

Guest

Cabrakan!

Guard

Madre de Dios! And the White Lady!

CABRAKAN and Tak-shan 'aa touch hands briefly before he signals to his soldiers.

CABRAKAN

Bring them all. Kill anyone who cannot walk.

CUT TO:

INT. JUAREZ VILLA - DINING ROOM DOORWAY - NIGHT

BAQUERO and Natalia are under cover near a French door that looks out onto the patio and pool area. BAQUERO is peering around the edge of the door while Natalia keeps an eye on the darkened interior of the house.

BAQUERO

The goddam Army of Cibola has just
invaded Ciudad Juarez.

There is a rush of feet and Agents Albarran and BAQUERO are pinned in the light of laser sighted pistols. Three of the black clad assassins have them covered.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LYMAN'S CORNERS - CLIFF DWELLER INN - DAWN

Ben Gallagher climbs the stairs. His Sheriff's Dept. SUV sits in the parking lot. He knocks on Raglan's door. A bleary eyed Mike Raglan answers.

RAGLAN

Yeah?

GALLAGHER

I'm heading out as soon as you're ready.

RAGLAN

Ten minutes?

GALLAGHER

I'll be at the Wapiti.

RAGLAN

What?

Gallagher points. Raglan leans out the door to see the lighted windows of the Wapiti Diner. As he does, Gallagher gets a look into the room. Stripped bed, camp set up on the floor.

RAGLAN

Okay.

CUT TO:

INT. LYMAN'S CORNERS - WAPITI DINER - DAWN

They sit at the counter, a plate of bacon, eggs and toast in front of each of them. There are no other customers. EMILY BROTT, graying and somewhat butch, hands Gallagher a set of salt and pepper shakers. Her partner, ELLEN who could be described the same way, works the kitchen.

EMILY

Salt's no good for your heart, Ben.

GALLAGHER

Neither's the bacon and eggs but if we all ordered cottage cheese, you'd be out of business.

ELLEN

Egg whites! Any time you want them you can have egg whites!

Gallagher good-naturedly waves their comments away and sits next to Mike. After a moment he asks a question ...

GALLAGHER

So, do you sleep against the wall so you'll be behind anyone who comes in?

Raglan looks at him ...

RAGLAN

You saw that.

GALLAGHER

I am a 'trained investigator.' I have a piece of paper to prove it.

I also lived in the bush for two years after I got back from 'Nam. Nobody knew how to deal with it back then.

I'm in the phone book if you ever need to talk.

RAGLAN

Thanks.

GALLAGHER

Finish up. We got a long way to drive.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOQUI COUNTY - HIGHWAY - MORNING

The Sheriff's Department 4X4 speeds past a vista where bits of Lake Powell and Monument Valley can be seen in the background.

GALLAGHER

Hokart's house is on B.L.M. land.
He must have some serious pull with
the Feds. They gave it to him on a
ninety-nine year lease.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOQUI COUNTY - HIGHWAY - MILE MARKER 77 - MORNING

The truck turns off the road, already kicking up a trail of
dust.

GALLAGHER

Monument Valley and the land on the
far side of the San Juan River,
that's all part of the Navajo
Nation.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOQUI COUNTY - DRY WASH - MORNING

Gallagher drives aggressively, fish-tailing through the loose
sand of the wash.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOQUI COUNTY - HALF TRACK - MORNING

When they come to the ruined half-track they turn down the
left fork. Mike notices a hole in the flank of the rusting
vehicle, a spatter of melted metal surrounding it.

RAGLAN

Was there a military base out here?

GALLAGHER

No. It's rough country. Uranium
prospectors used those things to
get around back in the 1950s.

RAGLAN

Hope they didn't pay much for it.
Looks like Rommel used it for
target practice.

They disappear down the dusty road.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOQUI COUNTY - SANDSTONE CANYON - MORNING

The SUV drives down the center of a dry canyon. In the wind hollowed cliffs are the crumbling walls and towers of a small Cliff Dwelling. Raglan gestures with his thumb out the window.

RAGLAN

Amazing.

GALLAGHER

Yep. Almost a thousand years old. Ancestral Puebloans. That's what we're supposed to call them. But *I* like the original name. Anasazi. Got some mystery to it. It means 'ancient enemy' in Navajo.

RAGLAN

Well, they must have had a few enemies of their own. You don't build like that unless you're scared of something.

CUT TO:

INT. MOQUI COUNTY - GREYMOUNTAIN CAMP - DAY

They turn off the road toward a traditional six-sided log hogan with a roof of packed mud. There's a brush arbor to one side and a row of plastic trash cans holding drinking water.

GALLAGHER

This guy, Jacob Greymountain, he's Navajo. His family's been grazing sheep around here since back when they were hiding out from Kit Carson.

It's over ten miles as the crow flies but he's the closest thing Hokart has to a neighbor.

JACOB stands in the doorway, a leathery old man surrounded by a pack of three dogs.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOQUI COUNTY - GREYMOUNTAIN CAMP - DAY

Raglan and Gallagher sit. Jacob pours coffee from a battered enameled pot. The dogs stretch out in the sun.

JACOB
Erik Hokart? Yeah, I seen him.

GALLAGHER
Recently?

JACOB
I was with my Grandson. Three weeks, maybe.

RAGLAN
Three weeks!

GALLAGHER
Where was this? Around here?

Jacob tosses a scrap of bacon to one of the dogs.

JACOB
No. He was up to Tanner Mesa workin' on that big radio.

Jacob gestures, just a twitch of his lips to indicate the direction.

RAGLAN
A radio? What did it look like?

JACOB
Big. You know, them radios today're mostly kinda small.

RAGLAN
(to Gallagher)
You know where this place is?

GALLAGHER
Close enough. I got topos in the truck.
(to Jacob)
Is there anything else? You notice anything odd going on?

JACOB

Skinwalkers. They scared the dogs.
Killed some of Nettie Begay's
sheep.

RAGLAN

Skinwalkers?

Gallagher motions to Raglan 'shut up.' Jacob sits for a
minute, not speaking.

JACOB

It's going to be a dry year. You
can tell because the sky is dark
blue, and you can see a long way.

Gallagher idly plays with his car keys on the table, Jacob's
not going to say any more.

CUT TO:

INT. MOQUI COUNTY - SANDSTONE CANYON - MORNING

The two men ride silently as the SUV bounces and bangs over
the road out of the Greymountain camp.

RAGLAN

What was that weirdness all about?
Skin-something.

GALLAGHER

Skinwalkers. Navajo witches.

It can mean anything, really.
Sometimes it's one Indian calling
another a son-of-a-bitch.
Sometimes they really think someone
has evil powers, or it's a monster
or something. Might just be
coyotes. With traditionals like
Jacob? There's no way to tell.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOQUI COUNTY - WATER HOLE - DAY

Dry pasture, nearly desert. In silhouette a pick up truck is
pulled up headed in one direction.

An OLD RANCHER is leaning against the hood, the butt of a hunting rifle balanced on his hip. Marsha Black rolls up in her aging Jeep. She gets out. Flies buzz. A lot of flies.

Near the spring there are a pair of dead sheep. The animals are carefully butchered, like a cattle mutilation. The best hunks of meat trimmed away.

OLD RANCHER

See there.

He squats and points at the soft earth near the water.

Pressed into the mud is a strange footprint. Human but long and heavily callused. Off the point of each toe is the mark from a claw, another is visible off the back of the heel.

MARSHA

Crap. Not a good time for this.

She shakes her head, a bit overwhelmed. She takes out her cell phone and shoots a picture.

OLD RANCHER

It's happening again.

She stands.

MARSHA

No. It's not.

We're going to find it. We're going to kill it. Then we're going to burn it, and bury it in the desert, and go on with our lives.

The rancher spits ...

CUT TO:

EXT. TANNER MESA - ROAD - DAY

The Sheriff's SUV grinds up a steep and rutted road, then turns out onto the relatively flat and treeless mesa top. Gallagher and Raglan drive closer to a strange contraption.

Mounted on a carefully leveled trailer are a series of sealed boxes. Deployed on one side of the trailer is a solar array and a telescoping mast supporting a set of antennas.

The men step out of the truck. Raglan walks over to the unit which is whirring softly through a cooling vent.

One of the cases has a slanted front containing a read out. Raglan blows the dust away, punches a set of heavily weatherproofed rubber buttons, looks at a display and, taking out a pen, makes a note on the back of his hand.

GALLAGHER

Let me guess. You've see one of these before.

FLASH BACK TO:

EXT. AFGHANISTAN, HELMAND PROVINCE - MOUNTAIN TOP - DAY

Eric, dressed a bit like Indiana Jones, leads Raglan and his ODA team uphill from a HEAVILY ARMED CHECK POINT. They pass through a padlocked gate then up another ten feet or so to the flattened mountain top.

GENE

(breathing hard)

The soldiers ... working security
... never come through this gate.
And they can't see the unit's
position from outside the fence.

They walk to a Griffin Project sub station (the same thing Raglan and Gallagher were looking at).

ERIC

The sub stations can be positioned
up to 380 kilometers apart. They
must form an exact square. Exact.
The position is calibrated with
both M-Code GPS and this laser
target.

(points to a receptor)

Once the computers at the base
station are calibrated, the system
can render up to twelve images a
second depending on the field of
view.

Eric spreads a topographic map on the top of the machine. A large area is delineated in red marker.

ERIC

It can see anywhere within this
grid. Day or night. Inside
structures. Underground. And,
with current technology, it cannot
be detected.

Mike and his men look at each other. Mike raises two fingers to attract Eric's attention.

RAGLAN

Doctor Hokart? Could this have medical applications?

ERIC

That, my boy, is the question of the century. Yes. Medical, mining, traditional optics. Possibly even mapping the subatomic realm. Griffin is going to change the world as we know it.

First thing though; it's going to help us catch bad guys.

RETURN TO:

EXT. TANNER MESA - DAY

Gallagher is peering at Raglan.

GALLAGHER

So, what is it?

RAGLAN

Something that shouldn't be here.

Gallagher folds his arms and gives Mike his best 'don't fuck with me' glare. Raglan gives in ... a bit.

RAGLAN

Let me put it this way: the technology in that solar array is classified at a level that would cause heart attacks in Washington if they knew you'd seen it. That's just the power supply.

GALLAGHER

Well, what the heck is it doing here?

RAGLAN

I don't know -- doesn't matter. We need to spread out and search for Eric.

CUT TO:

EXT. LYMAN'S CORNERS - SHERIFF'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Raglan waits, leaning on the department SUV, in the foreground Marsha and Gallagher stop to talk privately. Nearby a WILDERNESS SEARCH AND RESCUE TEAM is rendezvousing.

MARSHA

Skinwalkers? More than one?

GALLAGHER

Jacob said Skinwalkers. You know, it could be anything.

MARSHA

I saw the tracks. Two kills. That's a lot of meat.

She shakes her head. She doesn't want to say what comes next.

GALLAGHER

That trailer Raglan won't tell me about ... he says there's three more of them. I don't know if they are government property, but they are classified.

Marsha bites back a comment.

MARSHA

I'll be cussin' like a truck driver if this goes on much longer.

Gallagher chuckles.

MARSHA

This is not 1950. If we have to create a media circus for our own protection, so be it. But for now, no outsiders. That means your "friend" there goes home tomorrow ... or we'll have to find some other way to deal with him.

Raglan, tired waiting for them, walks over.

MARSHA

Mr. Raglan. Our Search and Rescue team is arriving and I'm currently waiting on a warrant for Eric's property.

RAGLAN

That equipment ... I wrote down the coordinates, if you get me a map I can show you where we can find the other--

MARSHA

Deputy Gallagher told me. --And I'll be happy to take that information. But there is no "we." You've done your part. It's time to go home to San Diego.

RAGLAN

Sheriff, Eric could have taken a fall -- a bad one -- not a hundred yards from one of those stations!

MARSHA

Possibly, but If Eric Hokart is truly missing we are going to do this by the book.

RAGLAN

Truly missing? Are you F-ing kidding me?

MARSHA

Look. You have opened an official investigation. I am not going to have you interfering with it!

RAGLAN

Well, I seriously doubt you can stop me.

He turns away, toward the motel.

MARSHA

(Raising her voice to get his attention)

If you're headed out of town, Raglan, you'd better go West. Any other direction and I'll have you arrested!

CUT TO:

INT. LYMAN'S CORNERS - CLIFF DWELLER INN - AFTERNOON

Mike tries his phone but it says, "battery low." He picks up the motel room phone, dials.

QC Receptionist
Quantum Concepts, Seattle. This is
Darla, how can I direct your call.

Just as Mike is about to speak he hears a "click" on the phone line. He peers at the phone handset then hangs up. He picks up the phone again, pushes one button to silence the dial tone, and waits. The "click" comes again ...

Mike hangs up and paces. He peers out the window. Then he goes to the bathroom, slides open the window and climbs out.

CUT TO:

EXT. LYMAN'S CORNERS - CLIFF DWELLER INN - AFTERNOON

Mike drops to a first floor roof then into the lot behind the motel. He walks to his 4X4, and pulls out.

Looking down the street he can see the Gas'n Crafts. A SHERIFF'S CAR is sitting near the pumps.

Mike pulls around on a side street and, out of sight of the officer, takes the gas can from the rack on his truck and tops off his tank.

CUT TO:

EXT. LYMAN'S CORNERS OUTSKIRTS - AFTERNOON

Mike drives past the sign that very nearly says "Don't come back". Mike is headed to Eric's

CUT TO:

EXT. OJINAGO MEXICO - BULL RING - ARENA - DAY

TWO OUT OF SHAPE MEN fight with knives in their underwear.

The bull ring is long abandoned, many of the seats have been ripped out of the bleachers and weeds are growing in cracks in the concrete. A group of ARMY OF CIBOLA SOLDIERS watch as the prisoners fight like gladiators in the ring, there are blood stains on the sand ... a lot of blood.

CUT TO:

EXT. OJINAGO, MEXICO - CARGO CONTAINER - AFTERNOON

The door is pulled open and a pair of AOC SOLDIERS sort through the PRISONERS inside. They pull out a SOBBING YOUNG WOMAN and Luis. The woman tries to break free but she is thrown to the floor and kicked. Natalia tries to protect her.

NATALIA
(in Spanish)
Stop it! What are you going to do
with us?

The Soldier punches her in the stomach, he grins. Then pulls her out, taking her in place of the sobbing girl.

SOLDIER
You? You are the entertainment.

CUT TO:

EXT. OJINAGO, MEXICO - BULL RING - AFTERNOON

A room with pools of light. Cabrakan interrogates Loaiza.

CABRAKAN
Something tells me your contacts
are more ... extensive. Two more
names. You want to tell me. You
know you do.

Out of the darkness Tak-shan 'aa appears. She slides to her knees, the image of seduction. Loaiza recoils in horror. Instead of his earlier attraction, he is now weeping, confused and terrified.

LOAIZA
My father ...

CABRAKAN
Loyalty is commendable.

LOAIZA
... he will kill me.

Tak-shan 'aa looks sideways at Cabrakan, a meaningful, longing glance. Then she leans in and gives Loaiza a lingering kiss on his naked stomach.

Loaiza struggles to get away but he is firmly tied to the chair. As she pulls back, other places where she has kissed him are revealed. They are blistered and reddened.

CABRAKAN

You have noticed that each time you receive a tenderness such as this, the area takes less time to infect. Two hours. Ninety minutes. The toxins accumulate, and you have been kissed many times.

Just think, you could have *slept* with her ...

Cabrakan shrugs, man to man ...

CABRAKAN

But then we all have to die someday, yes?

Don't worry. There is an antidote. Two names. Two names in Tijuana.

Cabrakan pulls on a surgical glove. He reaches out and presses on blisters the shape of lips. Loaiza screams. Tak-shan 'aa gives Cabrakan a secret smile and steps back.

LOAIZA

Tavio Paralta. Nick Duran.

CABRAKAN

Thank you.

Cabrakan twists a ring on the butt of a strange looking device held in his right hand. With a hum, plasma arcs and sparks from a chain of short, linked, cylinders drooping from the other end.

CABRAKAN

Alas, I must apologize ... there is only one cure.

He flicks the electrified chain around Loaiza's neck and, yanking hard on the ring at the base of the handle, severs Loaiza's head from his body. Cabrakan opens the door. Two MEN enter.

CABRAKAN

Send the head to his father. Tell him it is time to retire.

The body is dragged out past a large, austere looking, bald man, TURTAk. Cabrakan stares at him for a moment. Turtak returns his stare, then steps forward. SOLDIER at the door starts to block him from entering. But Turtak just glances over ...

TURTAK

Aside.

Almost involuntarily, the Soldier steps out of the way. Turtak enters the room and closes the door.

TURTAK

There has been an incursion in the North. You are called to explain your failure.

Cabrakan and Tak-shan 'aa look at one and other, whatever this is, it is very serious.

CABRAKAN

I can be ready shortly. Do you have information?

Turtak produces a tube the size of a stubby pencil. Cabrakan tips his head, indicating that Tak-shan 'aa should take it. As she reaches for the tube Turtak holds it so that he will not have to touch her ... for all his commanding presence he scared of this woman, wanting to look but afraid to touch.

CABRAKAN

(to Tak-shan 'aa)

See what you can do about the problem from here. I will contact you as soon as I return.

CUT TO:

EXT. OJINAGO MEXICO - BULL RING - BLEACHERS - AFTERNOON

The prisoners are lead through an entrance tunnel and around the line of bleachers. AOC SOLDIERS are dragging bodies out of the arena.

NATALIA

Madre de dios!

CROWD

(off)

Monstruo! Monstruo!
Monstruo!

ANNOUNCER

(off)

Yes, Muchachos. Next we have
"El Monstruo."

They come to a table where a MEDIC is reading a comic book. On the table is a case filled with bags of syringes. Natalia is forced to her knees and injected. The Soldier rips the shirt off of Luis.

SOLDIER

Good, eh? Look at him.

The Soldier pokes Luis's powerful shoulders. The Medic pulls a syringe out of a different bag. Luis tries to pull away as they start to inject him.

MEDIC

No my friend, you want this. It will dull your pain. Make you strong, and fast, and very angry. You will die like a man.

Luis looks over at Natalia ... are they going to be forced to fight?

MEDIC

No. No. She gets something else. Something to take her far away from here.

The drug is already working, Natalia's vision blurs.

Luis is shoved into the arena, behind him is a rack of blood encrusted weapons.

SOLDIER

Take the spear. Trust me.

CROWD

Monstruo! Monstruo!! MONSTURO!

The gate slams behind him. Luis looks around the arena. He is alone. Across from him another gate slides open but all he can see is darkness, then two glowing eyes, something big, huge, moving toward him. He grabs the spear from the rack.

Natalia is dragged through the cheering crowd. The ground is littered with bottles of booze, discarded syringes, fast food wrappers. The blurring is so bad she almost cannot see where she is going. A scream comes from the arena, piercingly loud, animal-like. Then another, this one human. Through the intermittent slats of the wall and the bodies pressed around her she sees something like her schoolbook drawings of a Saber Toothed Cat tearing Luis Baquero apart.

CUT TO:

INT. OJINAGO MEXICO - BULL RING - STABLES - AFTERNOON

Natalia is plunged into darkness, dragged through a large room filled with cots. On each a NAKED WOMAN is chained. Her captor stops an unoccupied one ... he pushes the soiled sheets aside.

SOLDIER

Here you go ... your little home.

Her chain is padlocked to the bed.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOQUI COUNTY - ERIC'S HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

Mike Raglan stops his old 4X4 some distance away and surveys Eric's compound. A small pick up truck is parked beside the house. Raglan unlocks a battered case, loads and arms his .45. Then he rolls forward.

As he approaches, two people emerge from the area of the Anasazi Ruin. One is a tall red haired girl (ROZ PICKERING) and the other a stout Native American kid with a hair cut that looks imported from a Japanese comic book (ALBERT TSOSI).

When Raglan gets out of his vehicle he slips the .45 into the back of his pants, under his shirt.

ALBERT

Hey. Uh, you work for Eric?

RAGLAN

No. What are you doing here?

ALBERT

Okay, you some kind of narc?

Raglan smiles thinly, stares them down.

ROZ

We're excavating ... well, we were excavating the site.

ALBERT

Eric ... Mr. Hokart hasn't been around. We were hoping he'd come back.

Whatever it is, these two are not part of the problem.

RAGLAN

Mike Raglan. I'm a friend of Eric's. I was hoping the same thing.

When was the last time you saw him?

ALBERT

Over a month ago. There was a lot of stuff, equipment, being delivered.

ROZ

We found something ... odd. He told us to stop our work.

We thought he might not really trust us anymore.

Mike stops, turns to look at them.

RAGLAN

What do you mean, odd?

CUT TO:

EXT. ERIC'S MESA - RUIN - LATE AFTERNOON

In a plastic tub lies a rusted shovel.

RAGLAN

So?

ALBERT

It's a US Military spade from the 1870s.

ROS

We found it at the bottom of the Kiva.

Roz sees that Mike isn't getting it. She leads the way across the small plaza to the strange, unfinished, Kiva.

ROZ

Look. This is a Kiva. It's like a ... family chapel. Usually, there's a roof and you'd go down through a hole in the center.

She points to a pair of nearby depressions, they are round and fifteen to twenty feet across.

ROZ

That's what they look like before excavation. They've been full of dirt and debris for five to eight hundred years.

This one is old, *really old*, but it seems to have been left unfinished. Then it was filled in sometime between 1870, and whenever people stopped using tools made in 1870.

ALBERT

There's also evidence that people lived here until right around that time. But every other Ancestral Puebloan site in this area was abandoned by the late 1300s. They died, or migrated south.

It wasn't Navajos. We don't live in places like this. Chindi ... ghosts.

ROZ

There's also the cave.

She motions Raglan over to where she is standing and points.

ROZ

See.

Through the masonry alcove in the wall of the Kiva it is possible to see a shallow natural grotto even closer the cliff edge. A large white piece of quartz makes up one irregular side.

ROZ

That's odd. Odd geologically and odd to see it incorporated as part of a Kiva.

ALBERT

This site is full of anomalies. When Eric didn't pay us ... It seemed like maybe he'd hired someone else. Someone more experienced.

Mike walks to the edge of the cliff and looks over. The grotto does not go through.

ALBERT

We got the job because I have a theory --

Roz

--We *both* have a theory.

Mike looks at the ruin's relationship to the house, the way walls surround the area of this Kiva, carefully, defensively, isolating it from the rest of the ruin. Albert points at a crumbling round tower.

ALBERT

This was the first in a line of signal towers that stretches across Utah and into Colorado. This is an old site. There's evidence was continuously inhabited since the 11th century, rebuilt many times. I think the towers were a warning system--

ROZ

--But we are not going to get ahead of ourselves.

ALBERT

Right. Right. But a warning system against what? That's the theory, see--

RAGLAN

Did you say Eric didn't pay you?

Albert shrugs. Mike takes off, walking quickly toward the house. Mystified, the two archeologists follow.

ROZ

That's why we came up from Albuquerque. It's been weeks, we have tuition, rent ...

RAGLAN

Eric is a stickler about paying his bills. And if he's not around, he's got twenty people who could handle it for him.

As he approaches Eric's front door, Mike reaches under his loose shirt and pulls out the pistol. Albert and Roz freeze when they see the gun, pulling back. Mike drops the magazine into his pocket, ejects the chambered cartridge into his hand and reversing the pistol, smashes out a pane of glass near the door knob.

CUT TO:

INT. ERIC'S HOUSE - GREAT ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Mike lets himself in. There are uncleaned dishes in the sink and spoiled milk in the fridge. Mike flips open a laptop computer on the bar, he impatiently taps a key. The computer powers on but the "2% Low Charge" prompt is visible.

RAGLAN
(to himself)
We have to stop kidding ourselves.
Something bad is happening.

There is a noise behind Mike. Albert and Roz peer in through the door.

He heads down the hallway at the back of the great room. Unfinished bedrooms and a bath are to either side. The last two doors are closed. One yields an unfurnished room partly filled with camping supplies, several backpacks and two long Pelican cases. One is empty, the other holds an all weather custom .375 big game rifle, ammunition, and a target showing the rifle's zero ... three holes, dead center.

The last room is locked and Mike kicks in the door revealing racks and racks of computers and hand built electronic equipment. A work station surrounded by six computer screens. It is the Control Station for Griffin. Mike turns. Albert and Roz have followed him down the hall.

RAGLAN
Out. Move it!

Back in the great room, Mike slaps a piece of paper down on the counter top. He clicks a pen ...

RAGLAN
Name, address, e-mail and telephone
number. I'll see if I can get you
your money.

The students write then walk to the door. Mike shakes hands with them.

RAGLAN
I'll be in touch, but you guys
can't be poking around out here.

ALBERT
What about you, Mr. B and E?

Albert realizes he may be pushing a bit too far, but Mike puts up his hands, "you got me."

RAGLAN

Yeah. I shouldn't be either.

Roz and Albert walk toward their truck.

RAGLAN

(to himself)

But I'm the one who didn't come
when he called.

The truck disappears in a cloud of dust.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ERIC'S HOUSE - GREAT ROOM - EVENING

Mike plugs in Eric's computer. He starts trying to open files on the desk top. One after another is encrypted. Finally he discovers the only two that are not. A download of data from SOHO, the Solar and Heliospheric Observatory satellite, and Eric's photo management file.

Mike opens "Last 12 Months" looking at the pictures. There are photos of the mesa with just the unexcavated ruin. The construction of the Quonset hut; Roz and Albert excavating the ruin; Eric and Gene out in the desert with the Humvee; Eric posing with the old spade, the Kiva and its odd cave in the background.

Then, photos of the Northern Lights, the empty compound, and a twilight shot from inside the great room out toward the ruin, beautifully and oddly backlit with a sort of strange blue glow.

Mike rubs his eyes. Evening has become night. He closes the damaged front door, turns on some lights. Back at the computer he brings up photos of Afghanistan. Eric and Gene dressed up like Mujahideen, toking on water pipes; Eric and Mike, arms around one another's shoulders smiling in front of a helicopter; Eric sitting on a wounded Mike's bed in Landstuhl Medical Center, ready to show him something on a laptop computer.

FLASH BACK TO:

INT. AFGHANISTAN CAVE COMPLEX - NIGHT

CLOSE - Outfitted with night vision glasses and dark uniforms, Raglan and his TEAM are running up a long passage in a cave.

With them are two Afghan civilians, a man, OMAR AHADY and a AFGHAN WOMAN with a bandaged face. Sergeant Kazarian is wounded, his shoulder bleeding and his face torn. The last man, Sergeant Bracco, kneels and fires a suppressed MP-5.

Behind them, sixty or seventy yards down the dim passage, a crowd of TALIBAN FIGHTERS pursues them with flashlights. The leading Fighter fires his AK from the hip, tracers flying wild up the passage. A couple of the men following him clutch their ears at the sound.

CUT TO:

INT. AFGHANISTAN - ERIC'S COMPOUND - CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

On his 360 degree array Eric is tracking the pursuing Taliban. Spinning a track ball, he moves along the tunnel with them.

GENE

Tiger Zero Seven. This is Griffin Two. Hold left for the main cavern. Twenty-five, correction, twenty meters.

Gene spins his chair, looking at all his screens. He is running a second node, scouting ahead of the team.

CUT TO:

INT. AFGHANISTAN - CAVE COMPLEX - NIGHT

The Team barrels into a cavern so huge the walls and ceiling go out of sight. Stalagmites and broken rock litter the sloping floor.

RAGLAN

Bracco ...

Raglan motions to the right and the two of them take cover behind rocks and stalagmites.

RAGLAN

Kazarian, Arendt, up there and cover.

Kazarian, Arendt and the others keep moving.

ERIC
(on headset)
Tiger Zero Seven. Griffin One.
Hostiles at tunnel bend. Now!

Bracco and Raglan fire single shots. The first two Taliban drop.

KAZARIAN
Covering Fire!

He and Arendt pour fully automatic bursts at the tunnel mouth as Bracco and Raglan retreat. Thunderous, AK-47s return fire from the tunnel, tracers arc and bounce crazily. Farther up the cavern, Omar drops, a ricochet leaving a tear across his thigh. McClellan grabs him by the arm.

Omar
(in Pashto)
No. No. Keep going!

Omar stumbles along under his own power.

CUT TO:

INT. AFGHANISTAN - ERIC'S COMPOUND - CONTROL ROOM

Gene moves his sensor up the sloping cavern until he can see a much narrower fissure at the top of the space.

GENE
Tiger Zero Seven. Griffin Two.
Keep coming. Keep coming. I'm
checking the back door now.

He spins his track ball and his screen view moves up the fissure.

Eric's view is situated between the tunnel mouth and a couple of Taliban who have just arrived and are taking cover in the rocks, they are wearing night vision goggles.

ERIC
Time to get out of there. The new
guys have night vision.

One of the Fighters locks a fresh magazine into place and gets ready to shoot.

CUT TO:

INT. AFGHANISTAN - CAVE COMPLEX

Leapfrogging and firing, Raglan and Bracco cover Arendt and Kazarian as they retreat.

ERIC
(on headset)
Raglan. Far left!

Raglan sees motion from behind a stalagmite and fires. The Fighter leans out with his weapon and Raglan shoots him.

CUT TO:

INT. AFGHANISTAN - ERIC'S COMPOUND - CONTROL ROOM

Gene is moving his viewing node up the fissure toward the surface.

GENE
Clear. Clear. Almost at the
extraction point.

His display flashes through A GROUP OF BEARDED MEN IN ROBES with torches. It's a moment before he can bring the node to a stop ...

GENE
Tiger Zero Seven. Hold! Men in
upper cave. A lot of them!

CUT TO:

INT. AFGHANISTAN - CAVE COMPLEX - NIGHT

Raglan and his Team are piling up in the rocks by the fissure waiting for Gene to announce it clear.

GENE
(on headset)
Hold! Hold! Just saw twenty plus
men in tunnel. But -- where'd they
go?

Rechecking ...

Tracers fly back and forth. Schaffer discards a magazine but his vest is empty. McClellan hands him one.

RAGLAN

Griffin Two! What's the status of
the damn tunnel. Hostiles or not?

CUT TO:

INT. AFGHANISTAN - ERIC'S COMPOUND - CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

Gene is frantically scrolling and whirling around in his chair to see in all directions. All that is on his screens is night and an empty tunnel mouth. He zips his node back in. The Men In Robes are gone.

GENE

I can't find them again. Oh hell--
(into headset)
Tiger Zero Seven. Griffin Two.
Correction. Main tunnel open to Ex
Fil point. But move *cautiously!*

Gene rotates in his seat, bending to frown under the bank of monitors at Eric.

GENE

Jesus what was that? Eric, what
the hell was that?

ERIC

Grenade!

CUT TO:

INT. AFGHANISTAN - CAVE COMPLEX - NIGHT

One of the Fighters stands and hurls a grenade. Raglan's people are slipping into the fissure.

RAGLAN

Go! Go!

The grenade clatters to the floor just below them. Most are already in the tunnel but Franklin pushes the Woman down sheltering her with his body. The grenade explodes, rock shatters, Raglan is thrown from his feet. Back up, he lifts Franklin who is cut and bleeding from a dozen wounds.

RAGLAN

You walk?

Franklin nods. Arendt turns from returning fire and slips one of Franklin's arms over his shoulders.

RAGLAN
I'll cover you --

Raglan fires then pulls a grenade from his own vest.

RAGLAN
-- give them a taste of their own
medicine.

Supported by the Bandaged Woman and Arendt, Franklin staggers into the fissure. Mike pulls the pin and is about to throw his own grenade when another Taliban grenade hit's the rocks about ten feet below him. His grenade drops in the same area. The two explosions go off one right after the other. Stalactites crash from the ceiling. Raglan is thrown back and his night vision goggles are smashed from his face.

Black. Deafness ringing in his ears. From far away ...

ERIC
(on headset)
Mike? Mike? If you can hear me do
not speak. Move your fingers.

CUT TO:

INT. AFGHANISTAN - ERIC'S COMPOUND - CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

On Eric's monitor Raglan's fingers twitch. His shattered Night Vision unit is dangling from his helmet. Dust chokes the air.

ERIC
(on headset)
Your N.V. goggles are broken.
Enemy right on top of you. Can you
get up? Can you draw your handgun?

Twitch again. Eric moves the node up. Several Taliban are moving in close. One is nearly between Raglan and the fissure leading out. Two of them have night vision units but they keep having to wipe the dust off.

ERIC
(on headset)
When I tell you, get up and extend
your weapon all the way. I'm right
above you. Go for ten o'clock.

Now!

CUT TO:

INT. AFGHANISTAN - CAVE COMPLEX - night

Mike lunges to his knees. He rotates left with his long silenced pistol extended.

ERIC

Shoot!

Mike fires twice.

CUT TO:

INT. AFGHANISTAN - ERIC'S COMPOUND - CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

On Eric's screen the Taliban Fighter topples.

ERIC

Two! Two o'clock!

Another Fighter is turning raising his gun. Mike shoots, misses, but the man raises his hand as if to ward off the sudden gunfire.

ERIC

Lower!

Mike fires again and the fighter screams, his AK firing into the ceiling.

CUT TO:

INT. AFGHANISTAN - CAVE COMPLEX - NIGHT

In the strobing muzzle flash of the AK Mike can see the last man. He fires again. The fighter disappears. Tracers lance up from below. More Taliban are cautiously moving up.

CUT TO:

INT. AFGHANISTAN - ERIC'S COMPOUND - CONTROL ROOM - night

Mike stumbles for the fissure. In the dark he runs smack into the rock wall.

ERIC

(on headset)

Go left, left. There. Forward, forward. Stick out your hands. I'm right here with you. Left again.

A few tracers come rattling up the fissure. Mike stumbles out into the wider area where Gene saw the Bearded Men.

GENE

(on headset)

Chalk two. Chalk two. LZ is secure. This is your one minute warning. We have three wounded two by Cat B, one by Cat A. This is your one minute warning.

Out of the dark comes Don McClellan carrying a wired satchel charge.

CUT TO:

I/E. AFGHANISTAN - CAVE COMPLEX - NIGHT

McClellan drops the explosive to the floor. He snaps on a red flashlight.

MCCLELLAN

Mike! Mike! Don't shoot!

He steps forward to grab Raglan just as a round rips up the fissure and smacks Raglan in the leg. Raglan starts to go down but McClellan catches him. The world spins. The cave. The red flashlight. Ripped pants and a ripped leg. Staggering out. Blood. Then white lights. Chopper blades. Distant artillery strikes.

ARENDR

Fire in the hole!

The cave mouth vomits dust.

FORWARD OBSERVER

Fox. Dog. Charlie. I have casualties ready for Ex Fil. Report End of Mission.

ERIC
(on headset - slightly
different from his
earlier memory)
Mike, I'm sorry. I don't know what
went wrong.

RAGLAN
No 's okay ...

Mike partly immobilized on a stretcher shakes his head. From the cockpit of the Pave Hawk Helicopter a petite Female Helo Pilot glances back.

FEMALE PARAJUMPER PILOT
Hey handsome. Ready to have some
green feet tattooed on your ass?

The world swings away as the helicopters lift off.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. GERMANY, LANDSTUHL MEDICAL CENTER - HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

The shot we saw of Eric sitting on Raglan's bed except now it's the real thing. There is a flash and both men look up to see Gene taking a photo of them. Gene sits close by and indicates Mike's bandaged leg.

GENE
I'm real sorry, Mike. I just--

ERIC
You are *not* responsible.
(to Raglan)
Wait 'til I show you what happened
...

Eric fiddles with his computer for a moment.

ERIC
There's only three frames, then
they are gone. Here ...

Raglan peers at the screen. The Griffin Node moves quickly through the fissure and out into the wider area. Suddenly it passes through a group of Bearded Men in Robes with torches in their hands. They look sort of odd.

RAGLAN
What the hell ...?

Eric scans back slowly. The picture is blurred and obscured with video noise. The men are not Taliban. Heavy featured and powerfully muscled they appear to be Neanderthals ...

ERIC

Yes indeed. That is exactly what we said!

RETURN TO:

INT. ERIC'S HOUSE - DAWN

Raglan is looking at the still that Gene shot in the hospital. He closes up Eric's lap top, looks out the big front windows at the sunrise beginning to touch the mesas of Monument valley then walks toward the back of the house.

In the Griffin control room, Raglan fires up the power and boots the system. The node is set to a 180 degree field of view and it's running considerably faster than the 12 frames a second it did in Afghanistan, almost like HD video. Raglan can see the same view as is outside Eric's house. He pivots in his chair to see the screens behind him, but just sees a blank mesa top.

RAGLAN

Where the hell's the house?

He moves the node forward, looking off the edge of the cliff. At the cliff base a ruined city is visible ... ruins much like an ancient Aztec or Mayan city! Raglan stands, tipping over his chair. He stares at the screen.

Numbly, he walks through the house, goes out the door, walks to the spot where the node was parked, looking off at the view. Desert, Monument Valley, Lake Powell. No ruins.

He is standing there, staring out at what Griffin *ought* to be seeing, when Sheriff Black and an SUV of Deputies drive up an a cloud of dust. The men fan out and Marsha approaches Raglan, cuffs in her hand.

MARSHA

Michael Raglan, I am arresting you for interference with a police investigation. You have the right to remain silent ...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. XILBALBA APARTMENT - GREAT ROOM - DAWN

An exotic set of rooms in a semi alien world. The apartment is spacious and was, at one time, elegant. Now it's aging, its furnishings mended and faded. TWO TALL BALD MEN in robes sit in an entertaining area facing a FRIGHTENED LOOKING COUPLE in late middle age. The conversation is in Xibalban with English Subtitles.

XIAN-MER 'AL

It is a great honor to have a daughter chosen. The Oracle of the Voice speaks for the future, leads our leaders, delivers the guidance of the gods.

VALTANA

We thought it was forgotten, that we were part of the seven families.

Valtana straightens in her seat, pride stiffening her spine.

XIAN-MER 'AL

Never forgotten, my lady. Yet your line has been out of favor and so you were passed over. Perhaps needing a new candidate is a fortunate event for us all.

VALTANIK

Yes. Kawasi is still of age. But years ... so many years have passed. Almost three centuries. None have survived the initiation.

On a mezzanine looking out over the main room, a young woman (KAWASI) spies on the conversation. She is in her mid twenties and lovely in a haunting and exotic way.

XIAN-MER 'AL

It would not be so great an honor if the process was easy. The formulas put great stress on the body and the mind ... and perhaps some of our people are not as strong, as resolute, as they were in the dark days of the past. Perhaps their commitment is in question.

VALTANIK

We have survived ... we have all --

THE FOUR OF THEM TOGETHER
-- All Survived Cold and Privation.
This is the Gift and Wisdom of the
Gods.

VALTANA
It is a great honor for our family
to be considered. It is a great
honor to be remembered by the Lords
of Xibalba.

The two visitors rise.

XIAN-MER 'AL
It is an honor that can be given to
others just as quickly. You can
now choose, honor and a return to
your place in society, or continue
as you are.

Should you accept, a demonstration
of your appreciation will be
required. The Sun Will Call Simka,
your youngest daughter. She will
join the ranks of Those Who Have
Saved Us.

Kawasi, reacts in shock, stifling a gasp that might have been
heard below, except --

THE FOUR OF THEM TOGETHER
(Valtanik tries to control
his horror as he repeats)
The Sun that has Saved Us From Cold
and Privation. The Sun Must Be
Paid.

The Bald Men leave. Kawasi presses forward to listen as her
parents wait for the door to close before they speak ...

VALTANIK
No! I do not understand. I was
sure they were no longer calling
candidates for The Voice. Kawasi,
Simka, they would take both our
daughters.

VALTANA
Prestige ...

She lays her hand on Valtanik's sleeve. The hand tightens
into a fist.

VALTANA

They would leave us with sons and
prestige. With that we could
rebuild ... our family could be
great again.

Kawasi silently pulls back from the railing. Quick as
lightning, she steadies a pot that nearly falls from a table
she has bumped, then she runs from the room.

CUT TO:

INT. XILBALBA APARTMENT - BED ROOM - DAWN

Kawasi rouses her sister SIMKA from sleep. Simka is eight or
ten years younger than Kawasi, a girl on the verge of
adolescence.

SIMKA

What? Oh, what is it?

Kawasi is pulling down clothes from racks on the wall, heavy
shoes, sturdy garb of various sorts.

KAWASI

We have to go. We must be quiet
... and we must be brave.

CUT TO:

EXT. XILBALBA APARTMENT - GRAND STAIRCASE - DAWN

Kawasi and Simka make their way out into a silent city, huge
pyramids or ziggurats break the skyline, crews with strange
electric carts remove garbage, smoke stacks cause a red haze
of air pollution hangs over everything. The street along the
base of a huge stepped pyramid is fronted with wooden racks
three stories tall. In each square hangs a rotting corpse.
The two girls pass a painted Bas Relief, a maze of
unimaginable complexity and in it's center a woman's face, a
face that looks remarkably like and older version of Kawasi
...

FADE OUT ...