

OASIS
by
Roman Skaskiw

Roman Skaskiw
rskaskiw@gmail.com

INT. DARK CORRIDOR

A heavy metal door at the end of a dimly lit corridor bears a federal seal: a superimposed maple leaf, eagle, eyeball, and dollar sign. It reads "The People's Free and Equal Federation of Canada founded 2137."

A bench lines one side of the corridor. Dozens of Men with cropped hair, too-small undershirts, shorts, sneakers, and socks pulled up to their calves crowd the bench, except for the ten feet closest to the door.

The door SCREECHES open. A FEDERAL GUARD, black SWAT-like uniform, gloves, helmet, pouches, gas-mask, steps into the corridor. All the men look toward him nervously.

The man closest to the door is TUTTLE, 30s, balding, hesitant, thin.

The Federal Guard raises his index finger, meaning, "One" --
He gestures "follow me."

Tuttle looks to the other men, then to the guard. Tuttle stands, gathers himself, and steps through the door. The guard follows, shutting the door with a CLANG...

INT. DARK CHAMBER

Darkness. A spotlight. A heavy door OPENS. FOOTSTEPS ECHO in the chamber.

Federal Guard walks Tuttle to the edge of the spotlight and shoves him in.

Federal Guard walks away. The door SLAMS shut.

Tuttle squints and shades his eyes. He stands in the center of a round room, surrounded by semi-circular tiers, from which rows TELESCREENS, large black flat-screen televisions with webcams, frown down at him.

Every Telescreen has a Federal Guard standing behind it at parade-rest (chest out, chin in, feet shoulder-width apart, hands clasped in the small of the back).

SENATORS appears on the screens. They broadcast from various locations reflective of the upper-upper class.

BIG ENDER, male, 60s, wears a white sailor outfit complete with cap and shoulder boards, and a pretentious silk scarf, broadcasts from the deck of a yacht.

BIG ENDER

Stand at attention, boy. This isn't a cotillion at your aunt Suzie's.

Tuttle snaps to the position of attention. His demeanor becomes more soldierly. He clears his throat.

TUTTLE

Yes sir.

LITTLE ENDER, female, 50s, wears woman-power clothing: a boldly-colored blazer, a pearl necklace, pearl-drop earrings that flutter whenever Little Ender trembles with anger, a hat with a mini-veil, and a large brooch of herself. She broadcasts from a grandiose library and holds a small, well-groomed, ribboned dog on her lap.

LITTLE ENDER

(whispering) Is he fit?

SENATOR2, fat, white suit, hat, broadcasts from the white-washed furniture of a vast lawn, reclining behind a lavish meal. He sucks a chicken bone clean.

SENATOR2

Of course he's fit. Look at that body.

SENATOR1, receding hairline, hair slicked back, dark expensive suit, raincoat, broadcasts from inside a limousine.

SENATOR1

And he's young too.

SENATOR2

Oh, I think he'll do nicely.

LITTLE ENDER

Do the side-straddle-hop boy.

Tuttle performs jumping jacks.

SENATOR2

Tell us, why would you like to become an officer?

Tuttle returns to the position of attention.

TUTTLE

To serve . . .

LITTLE ENDER

(interrupting)

Nobody told you to stop boy.

Tuttle resumes the jumping jacks.

SENATOR2

Answer my question now, Mr. . . .
um . . .

Senator2's Federal Guard raises a clip board up to his telescreen for Senator2 to read.

SENATOR2

Tuttle.

Little Ender cuddles her dog.

LITTLE ENDER

Yes boy, do answer my colleague's question.

TUTTLE

I want to become an officer to serve the People's Free and Equal Federation of Canada sir, I mean, ma'am.

BIG ENDER

Now let me see you do the mountain climber boy.

Tuttle stops performing jumping jacks and lowers himself to the ground, panting as he transitions.

He assumes a sprinter's stance, with one leg forward and one back, then, keeping both hands on the floor, he hops repeatedly, switching the position of his feet with each hop. Dog tags dangle in front of his face.

SENATOR2

(impressed) Oooo, he's a stallion.

BIG ENDER

Oh, shut up you cream puff!

LITTLE ENDER

Senator Big Ender!

BIG ENDER

(laughs)

You can shut up to you, you . . .
ffffffucker.

Little Ender gasps. The SHOUTS of many senators rise and die down as Little Ender speaks.

LITTLE ENDER

That is completely uncalled for
Senator. . . Never in my career have I

~~been so disrespectful to a colleague~~
~~on this floor~~

~~Little Ender's dog BARKS.~~

BIG ENDER
 (sarcastic)
 000ooo.

Senator2's feelings have been hurt. He consoles himself by eating a cupcake.

LITTLE ENDER
 (as her telescreen is
 adjusted by the guard)
 Enough is enough Senator Big Ender.
 (to the senate)
 I propose that the distinguished
 Senator Big Ender deliver a formal
 public apology for cursing on the
 Senate floor.

Big Ender laughs. Little Ender looks resolute.

Tuttle sweats as he continues performing the mountain climber. He looks up, and back at the floor.

Guard adjusts Senator1's Telescreen.

SENATOR1
 You can propose all you want
 senator, but I will support the
 distinguished Senator Big Ender.
 There'll be no public apology.

SENATOR2
 (eating) Well then you should at
 least apologize to me, you big fat
 goon. There's no reason to hurt
 people's feeling.

Tuttle continues to exercise.

BIG ENDER
 Alright, alright. Lets get back to
 stuffing this turkey. Uhhhh, let's
 see here. Where were we. Oh yes.
 (to Tuttle)
 Get up boy, you're an officer now.
 (to guard)
 Bring in the next candidate.

Tuttle rises. A Federal Guard grabs him by the upper arm and escorts him out the chamber.

EXT. CONFERENCE HALL -- DAY

Grey skies. The inscription above a marble-columned legislative building reads "God and soldier we adore at time of war and not before."

INT. CONFERENCE HALL

A large, semicircular chamber with wrap-around desks on concentric tiers, reminiscent of the US Senate. The room is oppressively dark and shadowy, a place of important secrets.

Federal Guards carry Telescreens into the chamber, place them on the desks, adjust the angle, plug them in to outlet boxes, set up name plates, turn on the telescreens, and assume a position of parade-rest.

This political machinery runs by teleconference.

As the screens are turned on, they reveal Senators engaged in private conversations. Several eat like pigs, SUCKING and SMACKING with their greasy mouths.

A chorus of private conversations fills the chamber as telescreens are turned on.

Big Ender faces sideways on the telescreen when it is turned on. He broadcasts from the deck of a yacht.

BIG ENDER

We've all got a lot at stake here,
that's why I asked you to come
sailing with me on the magnificent
Hurly Burly. I think it'll be
fine, so long as the media
cooperates. The only news I want
to see is good news.

Senator1's telescreen is turned on.

SENATOR1

I'll go along with it, but it's
dangerous business. Bad press can
ruin us. Make sure they know who
they're dealing with.

Little Ender's telescreen is turned on.

LITTLE ENDER

Will we go along? I don't think we
have a choice. But they'll slip up
sooner or later. It's inevitable.
They'll be completely discredited
before this is over, I promise you.

SENATOR2's telescreen is turned on.

SENATOR2

And they had these delightful
chocolate strudels with whipped
cream, drizzled with maple syrup.

More telescreens are turned on.

Big Ender laughs. He pulls a cigar from his teeth.

CUT TO:

EXT. DECK OF A YACHT -- DAY

Beautiful sunny day. A luxurious yacht named "The Hurly Burly." Big Ender sits in a recliner.

He snubs out a cigar, still facing sideways and laughing.

A dark-skinned servant in a tuxedo pours lemonade and exits.

Two large men in dark business suits sit upright. FAT CAT1 and FAT CAT2. They are the pale night flowers of special interests. One wears sunglasses and holds a briefcase, the other wears a visor and squints uncomfortably. He applies sunblock. Their thin hair is slicked back. They've been laughing together.

BIG ENDER
(to businessmen)
Excuse me for just one minute
gentlemen.

Big Ender faces forward.

CUT TO:

INT. CONFERENCE HALL

Same. Big Ender faces forward on the telescreen. The din dies down as Big Ender speaks.

BIG ENDER
(with playful familiarity)
Alright, my distinguished
colleagues, I, Senator Big Ender,
chair of the Big Ender party,
hereby declare congressional
session number . . . eh . . .

Federal Guard holds a clip board in front of the screen. Big Ender squints at it.

BIG ENDER (CONT'D)
One zero seven stroke R, now in
session.

Federal Guard picks up a gavel from beside the telescreen and STRIKES a block.

SENATOR2
We have urgent business Senator.

SENATOR1
We need to act before the battle is
lost and won.

Federal Guard adjusts the angle of Big Ender's telescreen so
that he can speak across the room.

BIG ENDER
Agreed. I was just, eh, consulting
on the matter.
(glances at Fat Cats)

Federal Guard adjusts Little Ender's telescreen.

LITTLE ENDER
I know I can speak for the entire
Little Ender party when I say that
we are ready to do whatever it
takes.

Federal Guard adjusts Big Ender's telescreen.

BIG ENDER
Well it's about time you, you . . .

LITTLE ENDER
Are you going to curse at me again?

BIG ENDER
I will if you deserve it.

LITTLE ENDER
You're impossible!

SENATOR1
Senators please.

LITTLE ENDER
I'll have you know that the Little
Ender party has a long proud
history of getting tough during
tough times.

Big Ender leans forward and gives a big sloppy RASPBERRY.
Spit lands on the camera, blurring his image.

BIG ENDER
(Calling to someone off
screen)
Rudy!

On Big Ender's telescreen, the tuxedoed servant arrives and
wipes the spit off the camera with a handkerchief while Big
Ender snickers.

INT. CONFERENCE HALL

Same. Servant finishes wiping telescreen.

SENATOR2

Colleagues, there is no need for this. I think we are all agreed.

SENATOR1

When shall we make the announcement?

INT. PRESS CONFERENCE ROOM

A mass of reporters sit before an official-looking stage with white curtains and bunting.

Big Ender's telescreen rests on a podium. The Federal Guard adjusts the microphone. Cameras FLASH.

BIG ENDER

(with intensity)

The blue skies of freedom will shine again! My Fellow citizens the time has come. The time has come to take a stand against the dark clouds of tyranny. This was not an easy decision. That's why I spent a lot of time making it, because it wasn't an easy . . . It was hard.

(returns to reading

teleprompter)

But the time has come to embark upon a crusade of compassion to fight an enemy who is corrupting the values that make us who we are. The road is not easy, and the burden not light, but liberty is the birth right of every soul. The blue skies of freedom will shine again. And that is why I will ask for 30 billion dollars . . .

INT. SECOND PRESS CONFERENCE ROOM

Similar setup. Purple curtain. Little Ender's telescreen on the podium.

LITTLE ENDER

. . . and 40 billion dollars has already been asked for in a bill introduced by myself and my colleagues in the Little Ender party. The Little Enders will not let down the brave young men and women of the Federation.

HARVEY MILES, 40, reporter, delicate gold-rimmed glasses, scribbles in a note pad. He stops, thinks. He leaves suddenly, Little Ender still speaking behind him.

INT. FEDERAL HALLWAY -- DAY

Marble floor. People in suits waiting or walking.

Harvey Miles speaks into a cellphone.

HARVEY MILES

Hey, Harvey Miles here. I think it's time to run that story.

(pause)

What do you mean what story? THE story. War in the desert.

(pause)

Yes, I'm sure.

(pause)

Good. We'll talk later. Bye.

He re-enters the press conference.

LITTLE ENDER (O.S.)

. . . in light of recent developments, the Little Ender Party, which has always been tough on tyranny, has no choice but to support a war in the desert . . .

INT. APARTMENT -- DINING AREA -- MORNING

Cheap, pre-fabricated, colorful, suburban apartment. Smallish. Tuttle sits at a table reading a newspaper headlined: "War in the Desert."

He wears a woodland-camouflage uniform -- boots, pants, belt, T-shirt. His blouse is folded over the back of the adjacent chair. His uniform is small enough on him to hint at awkwardness.

Plastic yellow-polka-dot-on-white curtains. Two places are set on the table -- colorful dishes. Two packed duffel bags lean against the wall. A sketch of planet Earth hangs crookedly on the wall beside an M.C. Escher drawing -- people walking up stairs.

HELEN (O.S.)
Almost ready!

Tuttle notices the sketch and stands to straighten it.

HELEN (O.S.)
Close your eyes.

Tuttle sits, closes his eyes. He opens one, makes an adjustment to the place settings, and closes it again.

HELEN wears a boxy yellow pull-over dress. It is plain and crudely cut. The gaudy color of the dress, as well as her not-subtle makeup aspire toward class, but remain tacky. Her nails are chipped and chewed. Her manner is melodramatic. She's a sappy romantic who likes attracting attention.

She enters carrying a breakfast tray. There is a dish of toast, a bowl of three hard boiled eggs, a carton of generic orange juice, and a tub of margarine -- half used and full of bread crumbs.

HELEN
Surprise!

Tuttle opens his eyes.

TUTTLE
Mmmm. Looks delicious.

HELEN
I cooked it to celebrate our last breakfast.

Helen hugs Tuttle and kisses the side of his face.

TUTTLE
You're an angel.

Tuttle picks up a piece of toast and pulls the tub of margarine to himself. He searches for a knife, but can't find one.

Helen pulls her chair close to Tuttle and sits looking at him with sad eyes.

Tuttle uses a spoon to butter the toast. He bites the toasts and gives Helen a big approving smile.

HELEN
I wish you didn't have to go.

Helen looks distraught. Tuttle pours two glasses of orange juice, and puts a piece of toast on her plate.

TUTTLE
Here. Eat something.

HELEN
You're supposed to tell me how much
you're going to miss me.

TUTTLE
(with a mouthful of toast)
I'm going to miss you . . . a lot.

HELEN
(romantically) Really? I just
wish you didn't have to go.

TUTTLE
You know I have to, it's my job.

HELEN
Don't tell me it's your job. Tell
me . . .
(thinks)
. . . like, tell me how beautiful I
am.

TUTTLE
(swallows) You're beautiful.

HELEN
Forget it.

They eat. Tuttle meticulously removes an eggshell.

HELEN
Do you ever think about the future?

Tuttle hesitates. He senses a trap.

TUTTLE
Ummm.

HELEN
Do you ever dream about running
away with me?

HELEN
I could sell our belongings and
travel all over the world. You
could do odd jobs, and I could sing
in bars . . . It'd be romantic.

Tuttle's lap, fully interfering with his

Helen slips in
breakfast.

HELEN

We could see the mountains, and the ocean, and we could go skinny dipping together during the day, and make love under the stars at night. But we would have to keep hiding, because you'd be a fugitive from justice for deserting the Army. We'd be just like Bonnie and Clyde. And we would have to run away somewhere. Somewhere where even if we get caught, they won't send us back. A non-extradition place, like . . . Brazil. I hear it's beautiful. Everyone should see Brazil. Don't you think it'd be romantic?

Tuttle kisses her forehead, frees himself from her affections, and carries the dishes to the sink.

INT. KITCHEN -- MORNING

Tuttle washes dishes. Helen pulls him away from his work, and kisses him.

He checks his watch as they kiss. Helen sees him and stops. She is angry.

TUTTLE

I want to pumpkin, but I can't be late.

Helen stomps off.

TUTTLE

Pumpkin?

INT. LIVING ROOM

Helen sobs on a sofa. Tuttle sits beside her and takes her hand. She turns away from him.

HELEN

It's like you don't want anything from me. I'm trying so hard to make you happy, and you don't care.

TUTTLE

I care. . . Of course I care.

Tuttle wonders how to cheer her up.

TUTTLE

Maybe you can sing me a song?

Helen looks at him.

TUTTLE
I love your voice.

Helen sniffs.

HELEN
Really?

TUTTLE
I always have. You've got a
beautiful voice.

She touches his cheek and lowers his head onto her lap.

HELEN
Awww. Come here . . .
(singing)
Sunshine. You are my sunshine.
You make me happy, when skies are
grey.

FADE TO:

INT. KITCHEN

Tuttle rinses the last dish and puts it in the dish tray. He
shuts off the water.

HELEN (O.S. CONT'D)
(singing) You'll never know dear,

FADE TO:

INT. APARTMENT -- DINING AREA

Tuttle buttons the blouse of his uniform. He swings one
of his legs onto the bench, and looks up at the ceiling.

HELEN (O.S. CONT'D)
(singing) Now much I love you
Please don't take my

Tuttle straightens the sketch of planet Earth.

FADE TO:

INT. APARTMENT -- ENTRANCEWAY

Tuttle and Helen face each other. The door is open.

HELEN (V.O. CONT'D)
(singing) . . . sunshine away.

I've always fantasized about say
goodbye to a lover who has to go
and him not wanting to go, and
finally telling me how much he
loves me before he does.

He begins to . . .

Tuttle remains uncomfortable with romance.
laugh, then doesn't.

TUTTLE :
Will you write to me?

Helen nods, not looking at him.

s. She is alone.

Tuttle kisses her on the forehead and exits.

INT. TRAILER HOME -- MORNING

ills. A stained,
d on the windows.
nk.

A trailer home in disarray. Wood panel wa
shaggy carpet. Blinds are bent and crooke
Laundry scattered. Dirty dishes in the si

he kitchen table
on its side. Milk
rest by the door.

Broken dishes and breakfast cereal cover t
and linoleum floor. A carton of milk lies
drips onto the floor. Two packed duffels

d, wearing a
across the kitchen
st cereal and

CRUSTY, 40, wrinkled, weather beaten, jade
uniform, SLAMS a drawer closed and strides
area, his boots CRUNCHING over the breakfa
broken dishes.

NG WATER is heard

He walks to the shut bathroom door. RUNNI
from within. He POUNDS the door.

CRUSTY
(angry)
Woman! . . .
(pause)
Woman, is my beret in there?

underneath the bed.

No Answer. Crusty searches for his beret

CRUSTY
(mumbling) Last fucking thing I
need.

ake up, wears a
of thin brown hair
ce is red and
ens the bathroom
.

MRS. CRUSTY, 40, a tall, stout woman, no m
pink bathrobe and fuzzy slippers. Strands
hang from the curlers on her head. Her fa
congested from crying and yelling. She op
door and takes several steps toward Crusty

MRS. CRUSTY
 (shrieking)
 Find your own fucking beret you
 liar!!! And if it is in here I'm
 cutting it to pieces with a fucking
 razor!!!

She stomps back into the bathroom and SLAMS the door as
 Crusty turns and shouts back.

CRUSTY
 Just shoot me in the head and
 finish it you crazy bitch! It'll be
 quicker that way.

Crusty searches through the bedding. He looks through a
 column of dresser draws, pulling out clothes and tossing them
 onto the floor as he searches.

He pauses with a sigh, then hears something behind him.

Mrs. Crusty jumps onto Crusty's back.

MRS. CRUSTY
 You no good lair!!!

They topple forward and SMASH the dresser mirror. Then
 topple back against a wall. Mrs. Crusty lets go. Her
 husband falls to the floor.

He rolls over with a moan, his collar twisted and upturned.

CRUSTY
 They ain't payin me enough for this
 shit.

MRS. CRUSTY
 (shrieking)
 I ain't gonna be here when you get
 back you fucking lair!!! Fucking
 piece of shit liar!!!
 (she kicks him with a
 fuzzy slipper)
 You told me last time there'd be no
 more!!! You said it was the last
 one!!! You fucking liar!!!

As she yells, Crusty notices his beret on the floor next to
 him. He picks it up, examines it.

MRS. CRUSTY
 (panting hard) You lied to me.
 I'm gonna sell all your shit. And
 I'm goin home to my momma.

Crusty stands slowly, dusting himself.

CRUSTY
This is the last one.

Mrs. Crusty sobs, then cries in earnest.

MRS. CRUSTY
Promise?

Crusty dons his beret. He puffs his chest, and assumes a soldierly demeanor, despite the upturned collar.

CRUSTY
I promise.

Mrs. Crusty cries.

Crusty sweeps pieces of cereal and puddled milk from the kitchen table into his hand. He puts it into his mouth, steps to his duffel bags, and swings one onto his back.

Mrs. Crusty approaches him. She straightens his collar. They hug. Crusty exits and Mrs. Crusty is alone in the trashed kitchen.

INT. CHEAP MOTEL ROOM -- MORNING

SERGEANT BALLS, 21, confident, cropped hair.

CHARLOTTE, 40, long-faded beauty, provocative clothing.

Sergeant Balls smokes while putting on his uniform. Charlotte sits on the bed smoking and fastening the buckles on her high heels.

SERGEANT BALLS
(joking)
What do you mean there's no hero's discount?

CHARLOTTE
(laughs) Sorry sugar.

SERGEANT BALLS
I may not come back.

Charlotte looks at him. He hands her a small roll of money, which she counts.

SERGEANT BALLS
I may be laying down my life to protect your freedom.

She kisses his cheek and tucks the money away.

CHARLOTTE
Thank you.

EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT -- MORNING

Sergeant Balls tosses a duffel bags into the trunk of his beat-up Mustang. He SLAMS the trunk shut.

Tuttle's shiny compact car drives past.

EXT. MILITARY BASE -- STREET -- MORNING

Establishing.

Tuttle drives his shiny compact on a military base. He passes uniform looking homes, and large unimaginative office buildings. Some have tanks, helicopters, or artillery pieces on display in front of them.

Tuttle stops at a cross walk. Two soldiers with duffel bags cross the street.

Tuttle turns into a parking lot. He parks his compact between a mud-splattered jeep with lift kit installed, and behemoth SUV, both of which encroach on his parking spot.

Tuttle squeezes past with his duffels, muddying the front of his uniform.

Unnoticed by Tuttle, BIG6 reclines with his seat back in the SUV. He is fit and very short with a crisp look. His hair is closely cropped. Creases are visible on his starched T-shirt. He wears sunglasses.

Big6 leans forward and looks after Tuttle. He removes a cigar from his teeth.

Tuttle wipes the mud stain with his hand, unsuccessfully.

EXT. PARADE GROUND -- DAY

A field circled by a track. Military exercise structures -- chin up bars and a rope-climb. Unimaginative barracks building stand in the background.

Crusty faces a formation of soldiers. They stand casually in four uneven rows, clumping together to chat with each other. All wear woodland-camouflage uniform and maroon berets.

There is a small platform behind Crusty -- the type from which paratroopers practice their landing.

Sergeant Balls, the first man in the first row, chats with MARTINEZ, 21, brown skinned, who stands next to him.

AWKWARD, 20, pimply, birth-control glasses, stands next to them.

SQUAD LEADER2, 28, black, tall, lanky, the first man in the second row, turns to the man behind, SQUAD LEADER3, 32, heavy set, to light his cigarette.

In the back row, Radio Man, 22, goggle-glasses, an attentive, silent young man, listens as MACHINE GUNNER, 23, talks excitedly. SUPPLY, 26, wiry, black, and PING, 22, Asian, bashful, also listen.

Crusty watches one soldier, ASSISTANT GUNNER, running in and taking the formation.

CRUSTY
Hey! Here! You're late.

Crusty nods at Squad Leader3 who drops his cigarette and steps on it. Crusty assumes the position of

CRUSTY
Fall in!

The formation comes to the position of attention.

CRUSTY
Dress Right! Dress!

All the soldiers obey as one. They straighten. Crusty studies them critically.

CRUSTY
Ready, Front!

The formation obeys.

Crusty does an about face as Tuttle arrives behind him. Crusty salutes.

CRUSTY
All accounted for, sir.

Tuttle salutes and they both drop their salute. Tuttle circles to the formation's right and walks to

TUTTLE:
Parade, Rest!

The formation goes to parade-rest.

Tuttle does an about face then goes to parade-rest.

They all now face the platform where two Federal Guards carry a telescreen up its steps.

They turn on the telescreen.

Little Ender sits in a library with her dog.

LITTLE ENDER
Hello. I am honored to be here,
visiting the brave young warriors
of the Federation before you go off
to the desert.

The telescreen flashes TV STATIC. Big Ender appears on the
telescreen.

BIG ENDER
. . . makes me glad to be here
with you heroes. This war, this
war is really about peace. That's
what this war is about. My wife
and I are grateful for your
selfless service, honor, integrity,

Another flash of TV STATIC. One appears each time the image
on the telescreen changes.

LITTLE ENDER
. . . hold your heads up high,
because this great Federation is
indebted to you.

BIG ENDER
We have called upon you to embark
upon this crusade for liberty. We
have asked, who will go for us, and
once again the brave young warriors
of the Federation replied: send me.

LITTLE ENDER
You are heroic.

BIG ENDER
gallant

LITTLE ENDER
commendable

BIG ENDER
and courageous!

LITTLE ENDER
I thank you for your service, and
remind you that the Little Ender
Party will not let you down.

BIG ENDER
You've been charged with the higher
purpose of saving the world, one
mind at a time, and one soul at a
time. You can count on the Big
Ender Party to never let you down.

Last flash of TV STATIC.

EXT. PARADE GROUND -- NIGHT.

Same. Federal Guards turns off Telescreen and carry it away.

Crusty circles to the front of the formation. He and Tuttle exchange salutes. Tuttle exits. Crusty does an about-face.

CRUSTY

Fall-out!

Soldiers relax -- bending over and putting their hands on their knees, slouching, a few sit down. Everyone sighs in relief.

SERGEANT BALLS

(to Martinez. teasing)

Ya here that Martinez? We're goin on a crusade. We're gonna see your folks over in the desert.

MARTINEZ

Goddammit. I keep telling you, I'm Chicano.

Crusty reclines against the big pile of duffel bags, outstretching his legs.

CRUSTY

Listen up.

Everyone turns toward him.

CRUSTY

I hope you've all said goodbye to momma.

(checks watch)

The cattle cars will be here in an hour. If you got to pee go pee. If you need water get water. If you need anything else I don't want to know about it, and if you wake me, it had better be the end of the world.

(to Tuttle)

You got anything to add sir?

Everyone turns toward Tuttle. He looks at the stain on his uniform and crosses his arms over it. Tuttle eyes his soldiers.

TUTTLE

Just that we're all in this together.

(MORE)

TUTTLE (cont'd)
Have faith in all the training
we've done. And lets hope there
are no parades in the desert.

Tuttle smiles appealingly. Soldiers drift off.

EXT. DREAM -- DAY

Dream #1. Tuttle and Helen stand in the darkness, kissing passionately. Tuttle wears his uniform. Helen wears a plain red dress. One of her legs wraps around Tuttle's waist. They look at one another.

Her voice is ECHOEY.

HELEN
I wish you didn't have to go
Lieutenant Tuttle.

Tuttle moves to kiss her again. She stops him.

HELEN
I have something for you.

He loosens his embrace. She looks down, then stands on her tiptoes and kisses him tenderly on the lips. As she does so, she slips the end of a red silk ribbon into his hand.

Tuttle opens his eyes from the kiss and looks at the ribbon.

Helen's lips whisper.

HELEN
Be safe.

Tuttle pulls on the ribbon. Slack runs through Helen's hand. Tuttle turns and walks.

Tuttle sadly walks down a road in a flat prairie. The sky is grey and the horizon distant.

He looks back, sees Helen in the distance on the other end of the ribbon, smiles weakly, then turns and continues.

He holds the ribbon in front of him and studies it as he walks. Dark clouds gather in the distance. THUNDER sounds.

The end of the ribbon slips from Tuttle's hand. He turns and chases it in the wind. When he picks it up, he stands in the desert. There is no road. The other end of the ribbon flaps in the breeze.

TUTTLE
Helen!?

He drops the ribbon. It blows away. He turns around one and a half times searching.

Tuttle stands alone in the wide flat desert with storm clouds gathering on the horizon.

EXT. MILITARY OUTPOST -- DAY

Tuttle wakes. He's been sleeping in a white plastic lawn chair reclining on its back legs against the mud-brick wall of the command shack. The ply-wood door SLAPS the door frame as it blows in the wind. It has a knotted piece of 5-50 cord for a door knob. An antenna rises alone the wall.

Tuttle wears his uniform trousers, a T-shirt. His rifle hangs from his neck. He walks through the outpost.

Establishing.

Desert. A dust storm causes orange light. Triple-strand concertina wire stretches around a cluster of tents. The tents have sand bags build up along their sides. A flag with the letter "I" FLAPS over the camp on a crooked flag pole. There are two shacks, a dumpster, a port-a-john, a piss tube, and a gate.

The gate consists of a break in the triple-strand concertina wire, two wooden posts with a beam across them marking the entrance way, and a sandbagged bunker. A single strand of wire blocks the gate.

Tuttle urinates in a piss tube next to the port-a-john and looks toward the gate.

Martinez leans against the bunker. He wears full battle-rattle, including goggles. His equipment is well-worn (as is all the equipment of Tuttle's men).

Martinez looks at a NATIVE KID, 11, smock, sandals, brown skin, black hair, who stands with his head cocked sideways just outside the single strand of wire. They look at each other dully, as if they've been doing so for a long time.

NATIVE KID
Meester, give me candy.

Martinez watches.

Tuttle walks back and enters the command shack.

INT. COMMAND SHACK -- DAY

A small, windowless room with maps and charts on the walls. A map covers the table. Beside it lie a notebook and several map markers.

Against the back wall, there is an impressive assortment of coffee/cappuccino machines, and coffee beans on hammered-together shelves.

There is a laptop, printer and military radio in the corner.

There are a few white plastic lawn chairs, and one beaten-up love seat with wings. Supply slouches in the love seat scribbling intently in a storm-safe pocket notebook. He looks up when Tuttle enters. Ping sits in a lawn chair.

SUPPLY

(animated) I get no respect sir.
Ya'll have lost your mind, thinkin
you can treat your supply sergeant
this way. You haven't even filled
out your twenty sixty two. Now
what sort of foolishness is that?

Supply jumps to his feet, paces and gestures wildly as he continues, speaking as much to himself as to Tuttle.

SUPPLY

This is a mockery of justice.
You're trying to get me thrown in
prison, aren't you sir? You're
trying to keep a man oppressed.

TUTTLE

All I asked for were eggs.

SUPPLY

It ain't so easy sir. You think
its that easy? You think that Ping
and I can just go over to the port-
a-john and shit some eggs for
everybody. Well we can't do that,
can we Ping?

Ping smiles and bows his head.

SUPPLY

Nobody appreciates how hard we
work.

Tuttle lifts his mug from the table and fills it at the Cappuccino machine.

SUPPLY

Ping and I work our fingers to the bone, and all we get is a hard time where ever we go. Nobody gives us any love until they need a thing or two. It's a travesty to treat a man in such a way.

TUTTLE

So can you get us some eggs? You didn't have any trouble with all this coffee.

SUPPLY

(glancing upward) You know my pain, somebody's gotta know my pain. I'll get some eggs. I'll get so many eggs you'll think I'm the freakin Easter Bunny, and as soon as we get back home I'm callin my Congressman with a complaint, so don't say I didn't warn you. Common Ping, lets go find someone who appreciates the workin man. This Easter Bunny has taken all he can take.

As Supply and Ping exit, Radio Man enters. Radio Man carries a rucksack from which the cord of the handmic stretches. He give the handmic to Tuttle.

RADIO MAN

Big6 is on the line.

EXT. MILITARY OUTPOST -- DAY

Martinez pulls the strand of concertina wire from the gate.

Native Kid watches.

Supply straddles a dirt bike. Ping sits on the back seat and clings to Supply, who lowers goggles over his eyes, STROMPS the starter twice, and SPEEDS off into the desert.

Martinez pulls the strand of concertina wire back, blocking the gate.

Native Kid watches.

INT. COMMAND SHACK -- DAY

Same. Radio Man watches Tuttle listen to the handmic.

TUTTLE

We've got a mission.

EXT. VILLAGE1 OUTSKIRTS -- DAY

All soldiers wear full battle-rattle. Squad Leader3 and his men walk in a wedge in front of Tuttle, weapons at the ready. They approach a small cluster of mud-brick buildings.

Squad Leader3 turns around every several steps to monitor the formation.

Tuttle walks with Radio Man. Tuttle holds a global positioning system (GPS) in one hand, and the handmic of Radio Man's radio in the other. The GPS, like all his equipment, is dummy-corded to his body armor.

Sergeant Balls, Martinez, and Awkward trail in a wedge approximately fifty meters behind Tuttle, with Sergeant Balls in the team leader position.

TUTTLE
(into handmic)
Victor, Echo, tree, fife, zero,
fife.
(listens)

They walk past FARMER, skinny, native, wearing rags, turns soils with a hoe in a small (10' x 10') plot marked off by stones. Two sickly plans are propped up with sticks. Farmer sees the soldiers and continues working.

TUTTLE
(into handmic)
Roger Big6.

Tuttle listens and crams the GPS in one of his pouches. He pulls a hand radio from another.

TUTTLE
(into handmic)
Roger.

Tuttle drops the handmic, and sinks to a knee. Radio Man immediately pulls the handmic up by the cord, and kneels beside Tuttle. He holds the handmic to his ear (as always).

Squad Leader3 sees them and raises his palm, signaling a halt. He and his men all take a knee.

TUTTLE
(into hand radio)
Alright, listen up. We've got some
new intel. Apparently, we're
looking for a guy with no tongue. .
. . (MORE)

EXT. VILLAGE1 OUTSKIRTS -- HILL -- DAY

Same village. Hill overlooking it.

Crusty walks up a hill with Machine Gunner and Assistant Gunner stumbling along in front of him. Machine Gunner carries a machine gun, Assistant Gunner a tripod. The two are beyond exhaustion. Crusty is tired too.

TUTTLE (O.S. THROUGH CRUSTY'S RADIO)
The guy's a local bandit . . .
(MORE)

EXT. VILLAGE1 OUTSKIRTS -- ROCKS -- DAY

Same village, different angle. Rocks.

Squad Leader2 and his men lie in the prone, watching the others advance toward the village.

TUTTLE (O.S. THROUGH RADIO)
And he has no tongue. . . . (MORE)

EXT. VILLAGE1 OUTSKIRTS -- DAY

Sergeant Balls, Martinez and Awkward kneel in formation adjacent to Farmer. Sergeant Balls buries his ear against his hand radio.

Awkward nervously aims his rifle at Farmer.

Farmer, leans on his hoe and looks toward them. He wipes the sweat from his brow.

TUTTLE (O.S. THROUGH RADIO)
He's very dangerous, so be on your
toes. . . . (MORE)

INTERCUT

TUTTLE (CONT'D)
(into radio) Everybody got that?

SERGEANT BALLS
(into radio) This is Dread One,
roger.

SQUAD LEADER2
(into radio) This is Dread Two,
roger.

SQUAD LEADER3
(into radio) This is Dread Three,
roger.

CRUSTY
(into radio, panting) Dread Seven,
Roger.

END INTERCUT

EXT. VILLAGE1 OUTSKIRTS -- DAY

Martinez puts bubble gum into his mouth and throws the wrapper into the breeze.

SERGEANT BALLS
No tongue? Goddamn. I thought I
had problems.

MARTINEZ
So, if he doesn't have a tongue,
how do you suppose he eat? I mean,
how does he talk?

SERGEANT BALLS
Forget talking. How does he eat
pussy?

Sergeant Balls and Martinez watch Tuttle's formation
advancing slowly.

SERGEANT BALLS
My girlfriend would be mighty
pissed if I lost my tongue.

MARTINEZ
Maybe that's why this guy's all
pissed off.

SERGEANT BALLS
Because he can't eat pussy?

MARTINEZ
Wouldn't that do it for you?

SERGEANT BALLS
(proudly) I wouldn't know. . . ask
Awkward.

MARTINEZ
Hey Awkward. Are you so high
strung all the time because you
never eat pussy.

Awkward trembles behind his weapon.

Sergeant Balls sees him.

 AWKWARD
Awkward. Hey Awkward!!

Awkward turns.

 SERGEANT BALLS
Listen to me. Are you listening?

 AWKWARD
Yeah.

 SERGEANT BALLS
Look, if he starts swinging that
shovel at you, you can shoot him.
Otherwise, chill the fuck out.
Okay?

Awkward giggles.

 AWKWARD
Okay.

 SERGEANT BALLS
I love you brother. We'll get you
laid as soon as we get back home.
That'll be the squad project.

 MARTINEZ
That's a pretty big project.

EXT. VILLAGE1 OUTSKIRTS -- HILL -- DAY

Same. Crusty, Machine Gunner and Assistant Gunner continue
up a hill.

 CRUSTY
Keep walking Hero!

 ASSISTANT GUNNER
(crying out) . . . I can't make it.

 CRUSTY
(panting)
If I hear another whimper out of
you, I'm gonna shove this bayonet
up your ass. Do you want to be a
soldier or do you want to go home
and eat milk and cookies with your
mommy?

 (watches Assistant Gunner)

 (MORE)

CRUSTY (cont'd)
 Say it! Tell me you want to eat
 milk and cookies with mommy!

The two soldiers COLLAPSE on top of the hill. Crusty SITS straight down, leaning against his pack.

Assistant Gunner rolls out of his pack, panting. He unhooks the tripod, puts both hands on one tripod leg and both feet on the other, and spreads the rear tripod legs.

He finds the strength to lift the tripod over his head, and SLAMS it down with a GRUNT, planting the legs in the hard ground.

Crusty, still sitting in his pack, peers through binoculars.

Machine Gunner attaches the machine gun to the tripod. Both soldiers lie panting behind the gun.

Crusty speaks without turning away from the bins.

CRUSTY
 What do you say now?

MACHINE GUNNER
 Gun up!

CRUSTY
 We got a long way to go kid.
 (into radio)
 Hey L.T. this is Dread Seven.
 We're all set.

TUTTLE (O.S. CRUSTY'S RADIO)
 Okay. Same plan as we rehearsed. .
 . . (MORE)

EXT. VILLAGE1 OUTSKIRTS -- DAY

TUTTLE (CONT'D)
 Dread One, I'm following you into
 the breach. Dread Three, stay
 close behind. Time now. Execute.

Sergeant Balls, Martinez and Awkward rise, and jog toward the village in formation. Awkward takes his first few steps backwards, keeping an eye on Farmer.

Tuttle and Radio Man fall in behind them. They pass through Squad Leader3's men.

EXT. VILLAGE1 OUTSKIRTS -- HILL -- DAY

Same. Machine Gunner overwatches the maneuver. Crusty watches through his bins.

EXT. VILLAGE1 SCHOOLHOUSE -- DAY

As they near closest building, Awkward lags behind.

Sergeant Balls and Martinez reach the wall adjacent to the door and lean against it, waiting for Awkward.

Awkward SMASHES himself through the door, knocking it off its hinges and falling on top of it. Sergeant Balls and Martinez enter immediately behind Awkward, weapons raised. One breaks left, the other right.

INT. VILLAGE1 -- SCHOOLHOUSE -- DAY

Approximately a dozen dirty school children and TEACHER, female, mid-thirties, native dress.

The children sit at rickety desks. The walls are bare except for the cracks and a slab of chalkboard.

All the children turn toward the soldiers. The furthest ones craning their necks. They are excited, not at all fearful.

Sergeant Balls and Martinez lower their weapons slowly. Awkward stands heavily and looks confused.

CHILD

What your name meesta?

The other children laugh. Some stand and step toward the soldiers, waving hello.

CHILD

Gimme candy.

SERGEANT BALLS

(shouting) All clear.

Tuttle and Radio Man enter. Tuttle surveys the room and points to a narrow door.

TUTTLE

(to Sergeant Balls) Check that door.

Sergeant Balls and Martinez cross toward the door, slapping away the curious hands of the children.

Teacher is horrified. She struggles to shepherd the children into a far corner of the room.

Martinez aims his weapon at the door. Sergeant Balls kicks the door once. He kicks again. It splinters, revealing a shallow, empty closet.

MARTINEZ

Clear!

SERGEANT BALLS

(to Tuttle) Nothing sir.

Tuttle looks confused.

SQUAD LEADER3 (O.S. THROUGH RADIO)

Six this is three. Do you need any help in there.

TUTTLE

(into hand radio) Um . . . negative. Everything's fine. It's a . . . it's just a school.

A child spins around while looking through a pair of binos.

SERGEANT BALLS

Hey! I need those.

TUTTLE

(into hand radio) Um . . . Charlie Mike. Continue Mission. Dread Three, go ahead and search building bravo one two.

EXT. VILLAGE1 SCHOOLHOUSE -- DAY

Sergeant Balls, Martinez and Awkward exit. Sergeant Balls leads them to the next building.

Tuttle exits with Radio Man. Teacher follows them out, yelling at them in a foreign language and gesturing toward the smashed door.

Squad Leader3 and his men jog by.

Tuttle lifts the door and leans it awkwardly against the door frame. Teacher continues yelling.

BREAKING GLASS and a woman's SCREAM is heard from the direction of Squad Leader3.

Teacher throws up her hands in disgust and enter the school.

EXT. VILLAGE1 -- DAY

Tuttle walks with Radio Man. He sees a mother pull a child inside. A ball bounces toward Tuttle.

Tuttle hears FOOTSTEPS approaching. He pulls out his 9mm Beretta, and whirls around pointing the handgun.

A native boy, who'd been carrying a yoke with two water buckets, startles. The yoke and buckets fall. Water spills.

Tuttle immediately lowers his weapon, and gasps.

The boy run off. Tuttle watches.

EXT. VILLAGE1 OUTSKIRTS -- HILL -- DAY

Crusty sleeps with his mouth open, still sitting in his ruck sack. Binos dangle from his neck.

Assistant Gunner notices and alerts Machine Gunner. They look from Crusty to one another.

MACHINE GUNNER
(hushed) Personally, I wouldn't
mind some milk and cookies.

Assistant Gunner suppresses a giggle. They both stare at Crusty.

Crusty speaks without opening his eyes or moving.

CRUSTY
Stop looking at me, and keep an eye
on your goddamn sector.

Both soldiers, suddenly serious, face forward.

EXT. VILLAGE1 HOME -- DAY

Exterior of a mud brick structure. A soldier guards two natives, dressed in rags. One of them is BIG NATIVE. 50. Bearded. In contrast to other natives, he is well fed and his clothes are clean.

As Tuttle and Radio Man approach, Squad Leader3 exits carrying a rusty saber.

TUTTLE
Find anything?

SQUAD LEADER3
Oh, hell yeah sir, check it out.
(shows saber, then waves
it toward the two
prisoners)
What's this? Huh? What's this?

Big Native says something back to him in a foreign language. He is ignored.

TUTTLE
Do they have tongues?

SQUAD LEADER3
We checked. They've got tongues.
Unfortunately. Should we bring
them back anyway?

Tuttle shakes his head.

Squad Leader2 and one of his men enter with Farmer in tow.

SQUAD LEADER2
Hey sir. We found him just outside
the village, acting nonchalant.

TUTTLE
Does he have a tongue?

Squad Leader2 shrugs and pushes Farmer to Tuttle.

Tuttle looks at him. Then opens his own mouth.

TUTTLE
Ahhhh.

TUTTLE
Common, open your mouth. Ahhhh.
Ahhhh.

Farmer scratches his neck.

Tuttle attempts to force his mouth open, but the Farmer
remains indifferent to having his face pulled and prodded.

SERGEANT BALLS (O.S. THROUGH RADIO)
Six this is one. We're done
searching the last house.

Tuttle pulls his hand radio from its pouch.

INT. VILLAGE1 LADIES' HOME -- DAY

Sparse home: bundles of rags, a bench, a dresser, woven
baskets.

Sergeant Balls stands by the open entrance, holding the radio
to one ear.

In the background, Martinez searches through the dresser.
Awkward guards two women who sit, clutching each other.

TUTTLE (O.S. THROUGH RADIO)
Did you find anything that looks
suspicious?

Martinez lifts a pair of erotic red panties from the dresser. He looks at them, then to the women, then to Sergeant Balls.

SERGEANT BALLS
Um, that's a negative sir. Nothing suspicious.

TUTTLE (O.S. THROUGH RADIO)
Alright . . . (MORE)

EXT. VILLAGE1 -- HOME DAY

TUTTLE (CONT'D)
(into hand radio) we're finishing up here too. Why don't you exfil if you haven't found anything?

SERGEANT BALLS (O.S. THROUGH RADIO)
Roger.

TUTTLE
(into hand radio) All units, lets regroup at my location. We'll be heading back soon.

Farmer yawns as Tuttle turns back toward him. Tuttle tries, but fail to see whether he has a tongue.

He gestures for the farmer to open his mouth again.

TUTTLE
Open. Open!

Crusty enters.

CRUSTY
What the hell's taking so long?

SQUAD LEADER3
The L.T. is trying to figure out if that old guy has a tongue.

Crusty steps past Tuttle. He forces his fingers into Farmer's mouth and pries it open.

Farmer gags. He holds Crusty's wrists.

CRUSTY
He's got a tongue.

Farmer drops to the ground.

CRUSTY
Let's go.

Soldiers walk through the village in formation.

Tuttle sees the angry villagers looking back at them.

They pass the broken door of the school, and the alley where the yoke and buckets lie.

EXT. DREAM -- DAY

Dream #2. Tuttle stands on a rocky mountain top amid a THUNDER storm. He reacts with surprise at his medieval armor -- chain mail on his arms and legs, a white breast plate with red cross on his chest -- a crusader's armor.

The armor is too big on him. He also wears a sword that is too long. He struggles every time he draws or sheaths it.

HELEN (V.O.)
(slowly, echoey) Lieutenant
Tuttle.

Tuttle looks toward the sky.

A GOBLIN peers over a stone, watching Tuttle from behind. The goblin leaps forward menacingly.

Tuttle faces him, draws his sword and smites the goblin.

GOBLIN
I am slain.

Goblin lies down stiffly and dies.

Tuttle looks over his shoulder and sees that he now has angel wings. He flies up through the storm.

There is daylight above the clouds.

Helen, with a fancier dress and better makeup looks at him lovingly. She hovers with her own pair of angel wings and reaches seductively toward Tuttle with her polished fingernails.

Tuttle smiles and glides toward her.

He notices the goblin on his leg and kicks it until it falls away. He smiles at Helen and glides toward her again.

His progress slows. He notices that he now has the wings of a bat. He tries frantically to reach Helen, but loses altitude.

His hands miss Helen's. He grabs her ankle, slips, and fall.

Tuttle plunges through the clouds, through the storm.
LIGHTNING flashes. The ground gets closer.

INT. TENT -- NIGHT

Assistant Gunner sits on the floor. Martinez sits on a cot.
Each cleans his weapon. Crusty slouches in a foldable
camping chair and sleeps. They wear T-shirts.

MARTINEZ
(hushed enthusiasm)
It was awesome. He just pried his
mouth wide fucking open. The guy
was like . . .

Martinez shuts up as Tuttle enters.

~~Radio Man No Swell. Metal. Tuttle's Crusty's Crusty's head
and Silver on an adjacent cot.~~

TUTTLE
Hey.

Crusty wakes. He glances at Tuttle and sits up.

CRUSTY
What's on your mind L.T.?

TUTTLE
We're using an interpreter next
time.

Crusty packs a can of dip, opens it, and puts a dip in his
lower lip.

CRUSTY
(over his shoulder to
Martinez and Assistant
Gunner)
Get the hell out.

The two soldiers hastily gather their disassembled weapons,
and exit. Radio Man remains, listening to the handmic.

CRUSTY
(sarcastic) A terp? Well gosh
darn, isn't that swell. We came
here to fight sir. I don't know
anything about no terp. Have we
ever trained with one?

TUTTLE
We need to talk to these people.

CRUSTY

Talk? You wanna talk? Listen professor. I love talking, but I speak five five six millimeter. And you know what? Ha. Everybody understands Crusty when he talks.

TUTTLE

We're getting an interpreter.

CRUSTY

This is bullshit sir. We don't need no stinkin terp!

RADIO MAN

(Offering handmic)

Big6 on the line.

Tuttle presses the handmic to his ear and listens.

EXT. VILLAGE2 -- OUTSKIRTS -- ROCKS -- DAY

A cluster boulders. Soldiers rest. Tuttle peers over the boulders toward Village2. He checks his watch.

Crusty nods off.

Tuttle looks to the horizon behind them. Something shimmers on the horizon. It draws closer, trailing a cloud of dust.

The shimmer grows into a jeep. Supply drives too fast for the rugged terrain. Ping stands in back, helmet crooked, struggling to control the heavy machine gun. It swings wildly on its pedestal mount.

There are two additional passengers: Harvey Miles, camera around his neck, holding onto his hat, and TERP1, 55, balding, native, western clothes -- slacks and short-sleeved collared shirt.

The jeep pulls up. A yellow mailbag lies in back. Supply wears several gold rings and a chain.

SUPPLY

What is this foolishness? It's just like you, havin me drive all over the desert, just because the man tells you to do another silly mission. Doesn't anybody respect the fact that we have logistics to run? We've got inventories to get done sir.

The jeeps engine never stops running. Terp1 climbs from the vehicle. Tuttle takes his hand and shakes it.

TUTTLE
You must be the interpreter.

No answer.

SUPPLY
But ya'll gonna do what chu wanna
do. Ain't nobody ever listens to
supply. Ain't that right Ping?

Ping smiles and bows his head.

TUTTLE
(annunciating) Are, you, the,
interpreter?

Harvey Miles's camera FLASHES in Tuttle's face. Tuttle
blinks.

HARVEY MILES
Are you lieutenant Tuttle?

Tuttle wipes his eyes and nods. Harvey Miles offers his
hand.

HARVEY MILES
Harvey Miles, from the Newsy Crier.

TUTTLE
Good to meet you.
(to Terpl)
Are you the interpreter?

Terpl opens his mouth to speak, but is cut off.

HARVEY MILES
Have you had any problems tying
your boots?

TUTTLE
What?

HARVEY MILES
Boot laces getting ragged,
breaking, anything like that?

TUTTLE
No.

Harvey Miles takes a photograph of Tuttle's boots.

HARVEY MILES

You don't mind do you? I'm doing
an expose on faulty boot laces --
it's amazing that the richest
country in the world can't even
provide good boot laces to it's
fighting men and women.

Before Tuttle answers, Harvey Miles notices a soldier off
screen and turns toward him.

HARVEY MILES

Hey soldier, mind if I ask you
something? My name is Harvey Miles
from the Newsy Crier.

Harvey Miles exits.

SUPPLY

Big6 says the reporter belongs to
you. So does the interpreter. Now
can I go and do some real work?
'Cuz if I don't finish the monthly
inventory, you're the one whose ass
is going to jail, not me. I don't
care anymore. I'll tell them I
tried. I'll say look, I worked at
it but the man insisted on wasting
my time. 'Cuz none of ya'll ever
want to listen.

TUTTLE

Go ahead.

SUPPLY

(sarcastic) Thank you.

~~Supply races into the desert with Ping on the machine gun.~~

~~CRUSTY~~

~~(calling after Supply)~~

~~Being is back some eggs you pogie!~~

~~Tuttle looks appraisingly at Terpl and takes a deep breath.~~

TUTTLE

Hi.....

TERP1

(stuttering) I sss-sss-sspeak E-E-
English.

TUTTLE

(focusing on the positive)
Okay. Alright. You speak English.
Good.

CRUSTY
(to Terpl) How do you say "this is
bullshit," in your language?

TUTTLE
(to Terpl) Here is the plan.
You're going to walk with me. I'm
going to knock on a door, like
this.

Tuttle demonstrates.

TUTTLE
Do you understand?

TERP1
Y-Yes.

TUTTLE
Excellent. Today we search just
one house. Here's what you do:
You're gonna say hello. Tell them
who we are, and ask for everyone in
the house to come to the same room.
(MORE)

EXT. VILLAGE2 -- OUTSKIRTS -- DAY

A formation of soldiers moves toward Village2.

Soldiers walk in a column of six wedges with five to ten
meters between each soldier. Tuttle, Terpl and Radio Man
walk together behind the second wedge of soldiers. Terpl
nods as Tuttle speaks.

Crusty, Machine Gunner and Assistant Gunner walk behind the
fourth wedge.

TUTTLE (CONT'D)
That's when the soldiers are going
to search the home. The important
thing is that everyone stays calm.
Ask them if they own any weapons.
(MORE)

EXT. VILLAGE2 -- DAY

chicken barn. A row of cows stand in their stalls and
in the street.

s, Martinez, and Awkward take a defensive
position, separating one house from the other structures.

Awkward does the same with his men.

Two houses and
chickens walk

Sergeant Bail
position 1301

Squad Leader 3

Machine Gunner, and Assistant Gunner set up the machine gun facing back toward the rocks -- covering the rear. Crusty sits with them.

Tuttle, Terpl and Radio Man approach a home.

Soldiers stand at its front corners. Squad Leader2 and two others soldiers lean against the wall adjacent to the door in a three-man-stack.

TUTTLE (CONT'D)
And then thank them. Tell them
that we don't want to bother them,
but we're looking for some bandits.
Tell them to please show us their
tongues. Okay?

Terpl nods.

TUTTLE
Here we go.

Tuttle knocks on the door.

TUTTLE
Hello? Is anyone there?

TERP1
(repeats in own language)

Tuttle nods approvingly at Terpl.

OLD WOMAN, 70, wrinkled and shrunken like a raisin, toothless, opens the door and squints at Tuttle.

TUTTLE
Good morning Ma'am. I'm afraid we
need to search your home.

Terpl speaks with a very angry and threatening tone. Tuttle, surprised, glances at him.

TUTTLE
Please.

Terpl says several more angry words, and ends by PUNCHING the palms of one hand with the other. The woman gasps, putting a hand over her mouth.

TERP1
(to Tuttle) She s-say, is okay.
No weapons, and she is alone.

Tuttle looks at the three-man-stack and points to the door.

TUTTLE

Go.

The three-man-stack rushes in past Old Woman.

SQUAD LEADER2 (O.S.)

Clear!

Glass BREAKS.

SOLDIER (O.S.)

Door left.

SQUAD LEADER2 (O.S.)

Stack on me.

A door is SMASHED open.

SQUAD LEADER2 (O.S.)

Clear!

SQUAD LEADER2 (O.S. THROUGH TUTTLE'S
RADIO)

Dread Six, it's all clear.

Tuttle enters.

INT. VILLAGE2 -- HOME1 -- DAY

A very poor home. There is a bench made of crooked planks. The table is a milk carton with a newspaper for a table cloth. A headline reads: "Run On The War." There is a pile of rags for a bed, a dresser, and several baskets and chests which the soldiers search.

Squad Leader2 and his men search, leaving nothing unturned.

Tuttle, Terpl, Radio Man and Old Woman stand in silence in the middle of the room.

TUTTLE

You have a lovely home.

Terpl shouts angrily, pointing toward the woman. She shrinks and whispers something.

Terpl closes his eyes as he struggles with his English.

TERP1

Sh-She, s-s-say, she is very h-
happy for you to s-s-stay, for tea.

TUTTLE

Tell her . . .

Terpl lifts a finger to interrupt.

TERP1
And, sh-she will k-k-k-kill, she
will kill . . .
(MORE)

Tuttle looks on.

TERP1 (CONT'D)
. . . a ch-ch, a ch-ch-ch-ch, a ch-
chicken, for a f-feast.

TUTTLE
Tell her thank you. I wish I
could, but we have a lot to do
today. Thanks though.

Terpl speaks angrily to Old Woman, raising his hand menacingly as if to strike. She cowers. Terpl finishes and nods at Tuttle as if to say "mission accomplished."

Squad Leader2 kneels, removes his assault pack, pulls an E-Tool from it, and unfolds it, readying it for digging.

TUTTLE
What did you tell her?

TERP1
I say thank you.

TUTTLE
You sounded angry.

Terpl leans close to Tuttle to speak in confidence.

TERP1
Mister Tuttle. This tribe. I know
this tribe. Very stupid people.
(taps his temple)
Very very stupid. They will not
understand if I say nice things
only. You understand? They are
stupid. Believe me this.

TUTTLE
Look, we're trying to create a good
impression. I want you to . . .

Squad Leader2 begins hacking away at the wall with his E-tool, removing large chunks of hard earth.

TUTTLE
What are you doing?

Squad Leader2 continues working. Tuttle grabs his shoulder.

TUTTLE
What are you doing?

SQUAD LEADER2
Huh? Oh, we're searching inside
the walls sir. Just in case.

TUTTLE
I don't think that's a good idea.

SQUAD LEADER2
I guess, we could use some demo if
you want to speed things up. I'll
attach charges here and here.
(pointing)
Should open these walls right up.

TUTTLE
No . . . No, I mean I don't thing
it's necessary. Did you find
anything in the house?

SQUAD LEADER2
Not a thing.

TUTTLE
Okay, good job. We'll leave the
walls alone on this one. Let's
wrap it up.

SQUAD LEADER2
You sure?

TUTTLE
I'm sure. Get ready to go.
(to Terpl)
Tell her thank you for cooperating.
I hope we didn't cause too much
trouble.

Terpl speaks angrily to Old Woman, wagging his finger at her.
They exit.

EXT. VILLAGE2 -- DAY

Same. Crusty sits next to Machine Gunner and Assistant
Gunner. Harvey Miles sits with him, looking distraught.

HARVEY MILES
I don't get it. This makes no
sense at all.

He shakes his head, then photographs Crusty's boots.

HARVEY MILES
 Well how about the resupplies? I
 know you don't need bootlaces now,
 but when you DO need more boot
 laces are you getting enough?

Crusty rolls his head toward Assistant Gunner.

CRUSTY
 Hey hero.

ASSISTANT GUNNER
 Sergeant.

CRUSTY
 Do they still do bayonet training
 in basic?

ASSISTANT GUNNER
 Roger sergeant.

CRUSTY
 If this yuppie scumbag says another
 word to me, ever, about anything,
 give him a butt stroke to the head.
 That's an order.

ASSISTANT GUNNER
 Roger sergeant.

Harvey Miles, taken aback, gathers his dignity and leaves.

HARVEY MILES
 (calling to someone off
 screen)
 Excuse me soldier. You busy?
 Harvey Miles, of the Newsy Crier.

Tuttle enters, dejected, and sits beside Crusty. Radio Man
 kneels beside him, listening, as always, to the handmic.

CRUSTY
 Another dry hole, huh sir.

Tuttle nods. He reaches a hand toward Radio Man, who passes
 him the handmic.

TUTTLE
 (into handmic) Big6, Big6, this is
 Dread Six. Over.
 (pause)
 Finished clearing and searching
 objective Zebra Two. Didn't find
 anything. Preparing to exfil now.
 Over.
 (pause)
 (MORE)

TUTTLE (cont'd)
Roger.

Tuttle returns the handmic to Radio Man.

TUTTLE
He says we've got to search it
again tomorrow. Just to be sure.
(sighs)
I feel like we're wasting our time.

CRUSTY
Ah, don't feel bad. You're just
doing your job. Let me show you
something that'll cheer you up.
(calling)
Martinez!

Martinez lies in the prone with Sergeant Balls and Awkward.
Harvey Miles sits with them, holding his camera.

Martinez stands and walks to Crusty.

CRUSTY
Show the L. T. what you found back
in the first village.

Martinez pull a pair of red lace panties from his breast
pocket. Crusty laughs. Martinez hands Tuttle the panties.

TUTTLE
I guess that is pretty funny.

Harvey Miles focuses his camera toward Tuttle.

TUTTLE
I guess they've got to find someway
to keep themselves entertained.

Camera SHUTTER sounds.

CUT TO:

PHOTOGRAPH

Camera SHUTTER sounds. Black and white. Newspaper quality.
Tuttle grinning at the pair of panties.

INT. CONFERENCE HALL

Same. Federal Guard holds a newspaper in front Big Ender's
Telescreen featuring the photograph of Tuttle. The headline
reads: "Army Officer Steals Woman's Panties."

Side column is headlined: "82nd's All American Parade: Dozens wounded."

Big Ender sits on his Yacht. He angrily eats pretzels, one after another, and shakes his head convulsively.

Senator1, appearing on a telescreen, calmly lights a cigar.

SENATOR1

What are we going to do about this?

Big Ender continues devouring one pretzel after another and shaking his head.

SENATOR1

Senator Big Ender, this is the bad press I warned you about. We need to think of something.

Big Ender pops another pretzel into his mouth and nods.

BIG ENDER

I was just consulting on the matter.

SENATOR1

And what did they tell you?

BIG ENDER

Here's what we're gonna do. Here's what we're gonna do. We'll do something nice. Something really nice. A few bad apples won't spoil the bunch. We'll do something nice and put it all over the news. The headlines will be: "even though some officers steal women's underwear, the majority do . . . they . . . the majority do nice things."

SENATOR1

You have to make an appearance.

Big Ender chokes. He coughs out a pretzel.

INT. PRESS CONFERENCE ROOM

Same. Cameras FLASH. Big Ender's and Little Ender's telescreens side by side.

BIG ENDER
 (full of phlegm) and
 lastly, even in a war zone, the
 stealing of women's underwear is
 wrong. It is inconsistent with the
 moral fiber of the Federation.

LITTLE ENDER
 I would like to add, on a personal
 note, that I am personally
 appalled. I cannot imagine the
 sort of . . .
 (CONT'D)

CUT TO:

EXT. MILITARY OUTPOST -- NIGHT

Same. Tuttle buttons his pants after pissing in the piss
 tube. He wears a T-shirt, slung rifle, and untied boots.

LITTLE ENDER (V.O.)
 . . . vile, despicable human being
 who would allow such a thing to
 occur.

Tuttle walks past the gate where Machine Gunner sits on the
 bunker smoking a cigarette.

TUTTLE
 You doing okay?

MACHINE GUNNER
 Yeah. Just another night in the
 old sandbox.

TUTTLE
 You're doing good work. Keep your
 head in the game, and it'll be over
 before you know it. Have a good
 night.

MACHINE GUNNER
 Goodnight sir.

Tuttle walks to his tent.

INT. TUTTLE'S TENT -- NIGHT

A tent crowded with two cots. Crusty sleeps in one. Gear
 lies on the floor and hangs from a few ropes stretched across
 the tent. An empty yellow mail bag lies on the floor.
 There's a small bundle of letters next to it.

Tuttle enters, moving quietly. He carefully hangs his weapon on a nail and sits on his cot.

TUTTLE
(whispering) Crusty. Hey Crusty.

CRUSTY
(groggy) What's up L.T.?

TUTTLE
Was there a letter for me?

CRUSTY
Nah sir. No mail for you.

Tuttle worries.

EXT. DREAM -- DAY

Dream #3. Tuttle lies motionless in a muddy puddle, his armor beaten and bent. The rain has stopped.

A gentle breeze blows.

The end of a red ribbon snakes in the breeze and tickles Tuttle's finger.

He wakes, and sees that other end of the ribbon is tied to the post of an entrance to a maze. Its walls are made of red silky fabric and flutter in the breeze.

Helen stands in the gate, looking seductive. Her dress and make up are exaggerated from the previous dream.

Tuttle stands painfully.

TUTTLE
Helen!

Helen vanishes into the maze.

TUTTLE
Let's just stay where we are.

Tuttle walks to the gate.

TUTTLE
Helen! Everything will be alright,
lets just stay where we are.

Tuttle wanders through the maze.

He turns a corner and runs into VIKING, a large man with a battle axe.

Helen is seated on a throne behind Viking and looks to be in a fit of ecstasy.

TUTTLE

Helen!

HELEN

Oh, Lieutenant Tuttle. Give it to

me. Give Tuttle me good.

Viking smiles down at her. He swings his
doagies out on the way.

Tuttle draws his too-long sword and sits to

VIKING

Oh, I am slain.

Viking lies down and dies.

Tuttle sheaths his sword and steps toward
prison-cell-like door CLANGS shut in front

Tuttle SHAKES the bars.

HELEN

Give it to me. Oh Big6. Give
the Big6. Give it to me good.
(MORE)

HELEN (CONT'D)

Big6.

Big6.

CUT TO:

INT. TUTTLE'S TENT -- NIGHT

He is shaken awake by Radio Man

RADIO MAN

Sir. Big6 sir. Big6 for you S

Radio Man gives Tuttle the handmic.

RADIO MAN

Big6 on the line for you.

Tuttle wakes, rotates up on his cot and h
his ear. He's in his underwear.

TUTTLE (INTO RADIO)

This is Dread Six.

BIG6 (V.O. THROUGH RADIO)
 (loud and fast) Tootle! Goddammit
 Tootle! Pull you head from your
 ass and listen to me.
 (MORE)

CUT TO:

INT. LARGE DINING ROOM -- NIGHT

The room is part of a palace. The walls and furniture are sparse, but the few surviving articles suggest luxury: a leather easy chair with ottoman, a large vase.

Big6 sits with his feet up at prominent table with a feast.

He wears highly polished jump boots (he's the only character who does-- other military personnel wear desert boots), a leather belt with a big Texas-long-horn belt buckle, starches and pressed standard issue pants, a T-shirt and sunglasses. His look is crisp.

Supply sits on the easy chair with his feet up, reading a newspaper and smoking a cigar. The newspaper headline is "82nd Airborne Division Kills Kitten."

Two attentive radio operators stand by Big6. They're burdened with their full uniforms, including helmets, weapons, knee and elbow pads, and rucksacks containing radios. Big6 hold one of the handmics.

BIG6 (CONT'D)
 I don't know what kind of cracker
 jack operation you're running out
 there, but it's as wrong as three
 boys in a bath tub eating hot dogs.
 You've given me a big black eye
 Tootle. A big black eye!

INTERCUT

TUTTLE
 Tuttle.

BIG6
 Now look here Johnny high-speed,
 the only reason I'm so disappointed
 is because I know you can do
 better. Just the other day The
 Colonel was telling me: You know
 that Tootle? He said.

TUTTLE
 Tuttle sir.

Big6 jumps out of his chair.

BIG6

Dammit Tootle! How would you know?
You weren't there! Now shut your
cock holster and let me talk.

BIG6 takes a breath, then tells his story while pacing back and forth. His two radio operators follow dutifully, staying within arms reach. (Staying, as Big6 would say: in his hip pocket.) They fear being out of arms reach.

BIG6

We were on the back nine and I
sliced my approach on a par four.
You would not believe the fucking
sand traps they got out here. The
scariest shit I've ever seen. My
heart's pounding just thinking
about it. And right there, The
Colonel put his arm around me and
said: you know that Tootle? He's
a real feather in our cap. You
hear that Tootle? The Colonel
call us you a feather in our cap.
And that's exactly what I need you
to be. Don't be a Black eye
Tootle. Be a feather in our cap.
You understand me?

TUTTLE

You need me to be a

BIG6

(interrupting) So here's what
you're gonna do Champ, you and all
your swinging Richards head back
over to the village and give Fabibi
a big hug or something. I don't
know what exactly, but you
understand my intent. Go do
something nice. Something really
nice. I'm sending the reporter
back with Supply.

TUTTLE

Supply?

Crusty's eyes open. He and Tuttle exchange a glance.

TUTTLE

Did you say Supply sir?

BIG6

Your supply sergeant. Black
feller. About five nine, hundred
sixty pounds, high cheek bones,
skin like a cafe latte.

TUTTLE
I know who he is.

CRUSTY
Tell them to bring us some fucking
eggs.

BIG6
He's a handsome man Tootle, and I'm
not ashamed to admit it. Can you
appreciate another man's beauty
Tootle? Listens to too much of that
hippety hop if you ask me, but I've
always thought he was a handsome
man.

TUTTLE
Eggs sir. Can you make sure he
brings some eggs?

BIG6
Eggs?

TUTTLE
And bread . . . And, um, milk too .
. . if possible. You see, sir, all
we have is coffee.

BIG6
All you have is coffee? Well shit
on a biscuit soldier, why didn't
you speak up. I'll send my own
driver down with a bag of
cappuccino, and a couple gallons of
shelf-stable milk for your lattes,
and we'll see if we can throw in
some quality beans from Costa Rica,
the real good stuff.

TUTTLE
Oh, no sir. We have all that, we
have all those things, I just
thought some eggs would be . . .

BIG6
(interrupting) Are you getting soft
on me Tootle?

TUTTLE
No sir.

BIG6
There were times I would have been
mighty glad to have good quality
caffeinated beverages.

(MORE)

BIG6 (cont'd)
 Caramel Macciano, that's always
 been my favorite, vanilla lattes
 are good too, unless they're stingy
 with the skim milk. I also like
 the . . .

TUTTLE
 We just wanted some food.

BIG6 (CONT'D)
 Dammit Tootle what are you trying
 to tell me? Are you too good for
 the Army's coffee? Is that what
 you're trying to say? You just
 give me a feather in my cap Tootle,
 and I'll see about those goddamn
 eggs. Big6 out!

Without looking, Big6 flings the handmic into the chest of
 his radio operator. Big6 ponders for a moment. Something
 occurs to him. He snaps fingers.

BIG6
 (to himself) Fucking two iron.

Tuttle passes the handmic to Radio Man. He takes a deep
 breath and buries his face in his hands.

END INTERCUT

EXT. DITCH -- DAY

Windblown desert.

A dry ditch with a small bridge over it. The bridge is
 superficial because one could easily walk through the ditch,
 possibly even jump it.

Tuttle, Radio Man, Crusty, three soldiers and TERP2, mid-
 30's, native, western dress, stand on one side of the bridge
 facing it. Harvey Miles is with them.

A cloud of dust appears on the horizon. It grows into a
 form. Big Native rides in a donkey cart. Several skinny
 natives walk beside it.

The party stops by the bridge opposite the soldiers.

Soldiers and natives look at one another.

CRUSTY
 (too loud) Is this the piece of
 shit whose feelings we hurt?

Big Native climbs heavily off the donkey cart. He walks onto
 the bridge.

Tuttle walks onto the bridge with Terp2. Radio Man follows.
 Big Native makes a prolonged, guttural expression of joy.

BIG NATIVE
 Aaaahhhhhhh!

Big Native laughs. He speaks in a guttural language, gesturing broadly across the landscape with his arm.

TERP2
 He say he very happy to see you
 because he knew when he sees you
 that you have a good heart and a
 kind heart and that he is happy and
 generous and thanks god that you
 would see him . . .

As Terp2 speaks, Big Native gives Tuttle a huge hug, dipping him slightly, then he grasps Tuttle's shoulders and kisses each cheek twice.

Crusty rolls his eyes.

Big native moves with open arms toward Radio Man to show similar affection, but Radio Man runs away. Big native hugs and cheek-kisses Terp2, who never stops talking. Radio Man creeps back to Tuttle's side.

TERP2 (CONT'D)
 . . . Because it is good to speak
 because we are good people and want
 to work together and we want to
 help each other because we are good
 generous people. This is what he
 say.

TUTTLE
 Tell him I'd like to know . . .

Big Native interrupts with more guttural speech.

Crusty shifts his weight. He is restless.

Big Native hugs Tuttle again and kisses each cheek. Big Native looks at Radio Man who ducks behind Tuttle.

TERP2
 He say that this a peaceful village
 and you know this now because you
 search it and people were cooperate
 because he tells the people to be
 cooperate . . .

Big Native steps toward Terp2 and hugs and kisses him. Terp2 never stops translating.

TERP2 (CONT'D)
 . . . And as you saw they have no
 guns in the village and no weapons
 because they welcome you and
 support you. This is what he say.

Tuttle raises his hand to interrupt. He wants to get to his agenda.

The instant Terp2 stops talking Big Native begins. He moves to kiss Tuttle a third time. Tuttle stops him.

TUTTLE
 Okay. Okay. Stop. Tell him . . .

TERP2
 (interrupting) He say that you make
 him very happy when . . .

TUTTLE
 (interrupting) Stop. Tell him that
 I need to know if there's anything
 we can do to help his village. We
 want to do something nice.

Terp2 blinks.

TERP2
 But I did not finish telling you
 what he say.

TUTTLE
 I know. Do it anyway. Just tell
 him.

Tuttle glances back toward Crusty.

Terp2 and Big Native exchange lines in the foreign language. Big Native is hard of hearing and favors one ear.

Their conversation picks up. Terp2 laughs and puts his hand on Big Native's shoulder. Tuttle watches. Terp2 and Big Native enjoy their conversation, forgetting about Tuttle.

TUTTLE
 (annoyed) What did he say?

TERP2
 Oh. He say to me about his family.

TUTTLE
 Ask him if his village needs
 anything that we might be able to
 help with.

TERP2
 Ask him?

TUTTLE

Yes.

Terp2 and Big Native exchange words.

TERP2

He say that first must have tea.

Big Native sits cross-legged. Reluctantly, Tuttle joins him.

Radio Man reclines in the ditch. Harvey Miles sits next to him.

HARVEY MILES

(quietly) Hey. I'm desperate for a scoop. I need to know about faulty boot laces, but no one will admit anything. I think its a cover up.

He looks at Radio Man who does not respond, then digs in one of his pockets.

HARVEY MILES

What I have here is a satellite telephone. You can call home with this if you wanted to.

Radio Man sits up suddenly and looks at Harvey Miles. Harvey Miles smiles.

Tuttle, Big Native and Terp2 drink tea.

EXT. DITCH -- EVENING

Same spot. Crusty sleeps. Soldiers sit leisurely, facing outward. One twists, stretching his back.

Radio Man reclines in the ditch, sleeping with the handmic tucked into his chin strap.

Tuttle, Terp2 and Big Native sit cross legged on the bridge around a tray and a tea set. Big Native speaks enthusiastically with many broad gestures of his hand.

Tuttle, bored and discouraged, looks into the empty tea cup.

TERP2

He say that . . .

TUTTLE

(interrupting) I don't care.

Big Native continues to speak. He faces his people, calls, and claps his hands twice. Natives remove the tea set.

Big Native stands with difficulty. Tuttle and Terp2 take this as their cue to rise as well. Tuttle dusts the back of his pants.

Crusty stirs.

The natives pick up the tea set and gather the donkey cart.

Big Native steps very close to Tuttle and puts both his hands around one of Tuttle's.

BIG NATIVE
Mister Tuttle. Build for us a well
to drink water. Eh?

Big Native smiles, showing his bad teeth. Tuttle is stunned.

TUTTLE
You speak English!

BIG NATIVE
A well would be very good.

Big Native kisses each of his cheeks.

Tuttle watches him ride off.

INT. CONVENTION -- DRESSING ROOM

Big Ender licks his greasy fingers. He sits on a sofa facing rich plates of hors d'oeuvres and an ice bucket with a bottle of champagne.

He wears jeans, cowboy boots, a blue button shirt with the top button undone, and a napkin tucked into it. Sauce dirties both his face and the napkin.

The two FAT CATS sit nearby.

A telescreen faces Big Ender.

BIG ENDER
(trembling with anger) I'm getting
pretty darn sick of hearing about
this . . .

Big Ender read a folded newspaper. Side headline: "Run on the War."

BIG ENDER
Tuttle. He may be starting to
effect my chances.

Big Ender takes several bites of a rib. He temper snaps and he yells with his mouth full.

BIG ENDER
I've worked too hard to be
hoodwinked by some young hooligan
who can't control himself in front
of the cameras!
(nods convulsively,
glancing from FAT CATS to
the telescreen.)
We may have to do something about
him. We may have to do something.
This has gone far enough.

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT, woman, 30, blonde, wearing a headset
and hip pouch enters carrying a clipboard.

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
Five minutes mister Big Ender.

She puts down her clip board, takes the napkin from under Big
Ender's chins and wipes his face.

Big Ender, still reclining, lifts his arms, like a baby
reaching to be lifted.

Production Assistant, grabs his hands, plants one foot on the
sofa, and, with effort, lifts Big Ender to his feet.

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
(sing-songy) Up we go.

The two Fat Cats speak as one entity.

FAT CAT1
Remember your lines . . .

FAT CAT2
. . . like we rehearsed.

BIG ENDER
(grinning) Like a well-oiled
machine boys, like a well-oiled
machine.

FAT CAT1
Don't get creative . . .

FAT CAT2
. . . just say your lines.

INT. CONVENTION -- HALLWAY

Big Ender lumbers down the hallway. Production Assistant
scampers along, powdering his face, and preening him.

The ROAR of a cheering crowd is heard.

INT. CONVENTION -- ARENA

Balloons, bunting, confetti, a sea of CHEERING fans -- some in cowboy hats.

The stage has a huge television screen behind it showing a closeup of the events as they unfold.

Big Ender enters from stage right waving to the crowd and pointing at individuals with finger-pistols.

POLITICIAN, tall, proud, muscular, artificial tan, wears a dark \$2000 suit, stands at a podium stage left. He just introduced Big Ender, and stands clapping as Big Ender Enters.

Slim rectangular signs rise from the audience, as the state signs did in either party's national convention. They bear the names Rasheed, Mahmudiyah, Lattufiyah, and Yousafiyah.

POLITICIAN (AMPLIFIED THROUGH SOUND SYSTEM)

This man deserves not only our praise, but our admiration. He is not afraid of a fight.

Big Ender shadow boxes, grinning as the crowd responds.

POLITICIAN

Because the Big Ender party knows the meaning of the word courage.

BIG ENDER

Courage! I looked it up myself.

POLITICIAN

The Big Ender party knows the meaning of the word sacrifice.

BIG ENDER

Sac-a-rac-a-fice-a!

POLITICIAN

Courage and sacrifice.

CUT TO:

EXT. MILITARY OUTPOST -- DAY

A 10" portable black and white TV set with bunny ears and fuzzy picture.

POLITICIAN (V.O. THROUGH TV)
(tinny) Courage and sacrifice . . .

Politician continues his speech. A soldier's hand reaches forward and wipes dust off the screen.

The television screen lies atop the sand-bagged bunker. Machine Gunner leans forward against the bunker and rests his chin on his crossed arms. He is by the outposts's gate.

Machine Gunner notices something inside the outpost.

He stands, puts his helmet on, and pulls away the single strand of concertina wire. Native kid watches. Tuttle, Radio Man, and several soldiers drive out in a jeep, leaving a trail of dust.

NATIVE KID

(to Machine Gunner) Hey meesta!
Gimme water.

Machine Gunner pulls the wire back across the gate.

EXT. VILLAGE2 -- WELL SITE -- DAY

A low-spot in the terrain with patches of tall grass and two palm trees.

A native child stands by a hole in the ground and pulls up a taught string. His hands know the movements well.

Big Native and NATIVE ENGINEER, 50, thin, stern, wearing slacks and a button shirt, watch Tuttle's jeep arrive.

All the soldiers exit. Tuttle greets Big Native. Soldiers form a perimeter around the site.

Tuttle watches the native child reach the end of the string, DUMP the cloth bucket into one of the two tin buckets

and the child backs away, then DUMP the other bucket into the second tin bucket and resume the process.

Big Native confers privately with the Engineer. Native Engineer points to himself doubtful. Big Native nods, then puts a hand on his back, coaxing him toward Tuttle.

Native Engineer clears his throat.

NATIVE ENGINEER

(thick accent) Eh, here is place
for a well.

TUTTLE

Oh, you speak English.

BIG NATIVE
 (big and happy) He like me. Yes?
 Speak English when he want
 something. (laughs)

NATIVE ENGINEER
 There was plan to build here. Eh.
 For years. Now. Plan. But no,
 (shrugs)
 never build for us. They don't
 care.

TUTTLE
 I might be able to help you. I've
 been asked to do something . . .
 nice.

NATIVE ENGINEER
 This would be very good. Very
 good.

BIG NATIVE
 (grinning) People will be very
 happy, if we bring them well.

NATIVE ENGINEER
 You see, mister Tuttle. I am
 irrigation engineer. It is my job
 to bring water, but old system,
 (shrugging and shaking
 head sadly)
 no money for water, to them this
 not important. It makes me very
 sad. Sad not for me, but for these
 people, because they need water.
 But now, if you could help. This
 will be very good. Very very good.

TUTTLE
 I'll try.

Native Engineer puts a hand on his shoulder and looks him in
 the eye.

NATIVE ENGINEER
 This close to my heart. You will
 do good thing for many many people.

Tuttle and Native Engineer notice the native child who
 strains to shoulder his yoke before walking off.

Native Engineer pulls a piece of paper from an envelope and
 unfolds it.

NATIVE ENGINEER

I write here in my language, and in your language. If you bring these things, I can build well.

TUTTLE

Oh, no. You see, I think we have people here who do this sort of work. They'll come in and build the whole thing for you.

NATIVE ENGINEER

This okay. If they come, very good. But I, I can build the well myself. I can build with just these things.

Tuttle looks at the list.

TUTTLE

(reading)

Twenty gallons of diesel fuel. Seventy feet of five inch steel pipe for casting. Seventy feet of two and a half inch fiber glass pipe, and a Malvesti Valve for the broken pumping system.

Native Engineer nods.

TUTTLE

Look, I don't know much about wells, but I doubt it's this simple. I mean don't you need equipment, and like . . .

Big Native speaks in his own language to Native Engineer, who answers. Big Native speaks to him again.

NATIVE ENGINEER

The desert hide many things mister Tuttle. Come. I show you.

INT. NATIVE IRRIGATION MINISTRY -- DAY

The inside of a barn. Chickens dash out of the way as Native Engineer strides toward the back. Tuttle, Radio Man, and Big Native follow. Terp2 trails. Two soldiers stand by the door facing out.

There is a cement mixer against the wall, a make-shift desk, one corner resting on a cinder block, a file cabinet and an office chair. A worker sleeps with his feet on the desk.

Native Engineer claps his hands together twice and shouts something sharply in his own language.

A second worker enters. He is confused and asks something. The Engineer reports snarling.

back and put their hands on a

on.

TICKENS flap. Dust rises.

g, mounted on a pickup truck.

lovingly.

ENGINEER: I

fuel. You can

a some over-stuffed three-ring
GES through a chest of metal
a pump in two pieces, the lever

moves the lever up and down
a true engineer loves his toys.

ENGINEER:
You see?

e envelope and TAPS it.

ENGINEER
i Valve.

tuttle, who removes the paper,
Tuttle shrugs.

ot.

And hugs Tuttle, kissing each
er beams.

IVE
ll to my people.
gineer)
ha. We will have
se of me.

adio Man.

line. Heepid scrambles
as well. The sleeping work
on his own language. Native

The two workers rush to the
tarp covering something lar

Tuttle and Big Native look

They PULL OFF the tarp. CH

Tuttle is surprised.

They've revealed a drill ri

Native engineer touches it.

NATIVE
This is like my c
(sadly)
but no fuel. No
help yes? And

Native Engineer PUSHES aside
binders and excitedly RUMMA
things. He pulls out a hand
detached from the test.

He holds them together and
demonstrating. He smiles

NATIVE
Eh? Like this.

Native Engineer holds up the

NATIVE
Just need Malvist

He hands the envelope to Tu
unfolds it, and studies it.

TUTTLE
I don't see why n

Big Native laughs heartily.
cheek twice. Native Engine

BIG NAT
I will bring a we
(to Native En
I told you. Haha
this well. Becau

Tuttle hands the paper to R

TUTTLE

Get a hold of Supply. See if he
can bring all this stuff down on
his next trip.

Radio Man takes a few steps away and kneels on one knee.

RADIO MAN

Hotel six Romeo, this is Dread Six
Romeo.

EXT. MILITARY OUTPOST -- DAY

Same.

Tuttle looks into a small mirror and shaves meticulously,
checking his shave with his finger tips. The mirror is
cracked and held together with 90 m.p.h. tape.

Tuttle rinses his razor in a canteen-cup of water.

In the background Crusty, wears a T-shirt and rinses T-
shirts, socks, and uniforms in a bucket, wrings them, and
hangs them on ropes tied between the tents.

Tuttle watches a shiny SUV enter the gate. Sergeant Balls
holds the wire open. The SUV has spinning rims, tinted
windows, and Hip Hop kicking on the stereo. The SUV pulls a
trailer containing military-style fuel cans and two types of
pipe bundled with the cans.

The SUV stops with its driver's side near Tuttle. The power
window lowers several inches. Supply and Ping sit inside
wearing golden chains and rings.

SUPPLY

What up sir?

Ping opens the passenger side door and stands leaning over
the top of the SUV.

PING

(rapping to the music with
his thick accent.)
How I could just kill a man, yeah.

TUTTLE

(to Supply, shouting over
the bass)
Did you get everything we need?

SUPPLY

What?

TUTTLE

Did you get everything we need?

Supply points to his ear and shakes his head. Tuttle opens the door, reaches inside and shuts off the stereo.

SUPPLY

Hey, sir, what's up with that?

TUTTLE

Get out here.

Supply steps out, crosses his arms, and looks skeptically at Tuttle.

TUTTLE

Did you get everything we need?

SUPPLY

Need? You've done lost your mind if you think you NEED this stuff. Since when do infantrymen need diesel fuel and all this pipe? Huh? Do you know what I had to go through to get this stuff? And for what? What's this foolishness I hear you're doing, building some sort of well?

TUTTLE

I don't want to hear it. Tell me if you got the stuff or not.

Supply points toward the trailer with his thumb.

SUPPLY

Yeah. Everything but the Malvesti thingy.

TUTTLE

The Malvesti Valve.

CRUSTY

How about them eggs?

SUPPLY

No eggs.

Crusty kicks over the laundry bucket.

SUPPLY

But I got some mail for you all.

CRUSTY

Well, that's something.

Crusty lifts a yellow mail bag from the back seat of the SUV.

TUTTLE

So you got the pipes and the fuel?

Tuttle walks over and studies the load on the trailer.

SUPPLY

Yeah.

TUTTLE

Excellent. This can get us started. You did good.

SUPPLY

I know I done good. You ain't got to tell me. I always do good, but does anyone appreciate my work? Hell no. Not until something goes wrong. Then everybody blames me.

TUTTLE

Did you ask about the professional well builders?

SUPPLY

uh-huh.

TUTTLE

What'd they tell you?

Supply sighs.

SUPPLY

Long story.

TUTTLE

I have time. Explain.

SUPPLY

(sighs) Well, there's something called the Future of the Desert Project, you see . . . (MORE)

CUT TO:

INT. COMMAND SHACK

Same. Tuttle, Supply and Ping. Tuttle sits at the table with his notebook out, jotting down things as Supply speaks. Supply makes himself a cappuccino. Ping sits by the wall, leaning back in his chair.

SUPPLY (CONT'D)

It's in a part of the Airport called Green City, and they're the ones supposed to be handling all this nonsense. Not me. I don't know why I'm working so hard on this. They build wells. I run logistics. But you never want to listen to me.

TUTTLE

How do I get them to come down here and build us this well?

SUPPLY

I asked them that. They said they need a guarantee that the tongueless bandits won't be drinking any of the water.

TUTTLE

What sort of guarantee?

SUPPLY

I'm just the messenger. Everybody tells me to stop thinking so much and do my job, so that's what I'm doing. All they said was they need a guarantee.

TUTTLE

A guarantee. I'll write a letter. I'm a commissioned officer. The guarantee will be my word of honor. I'll type out the letter right now.

Tuttle sees the laptop computer is missing from the work station.

EXT. MILITARY OUTPOST -- DAY

Tuttle leans out the door of the command shack.

TUTTLE

Radio!

After a few seconds, Radio Man exits the porta john, he hold the open laptop in one hand, and a roll of toilet paper in the other.

He walks to the command shack. Tuttle takes the laptop.

INT. COMMAND POST

Tuttle plugs the laptop in. He clicks the mouse. He types.

TUTTLE

What were those guys called again?
The ones who build wells?

SUPPLY

The Future of the Desert Project.

TUTTLE

(as he types) Dear Future of
Desert Project representative, my
name is Rudolph B. Tuttle. I am a
commissioned officer in the Army of
the People's Free and Equal
Federation of Canada, serving in
sector Panther Three. After
several months of operations, and
lengthy discussions with local
leaders, I believe . . .

Tuttle backspaces.

Supply packs cigarettes. He lights one for himself, offers
them to Ping, who takes one and tucks it behind his ear. He
offers them to Tuttle who waves them away and keeps typing.

TUTTLE

We believe, that the construction
of a fresh water well, would
firstly, solidify our reputation as
the liberators of the desert people
and promoters of their civic
welfare, and secondly provide much
needed assistant to people in need.
It is my understanding that you
want a guarantee that no tongueless
bandits will make use of the well.
You have my word of honor, as a
commissioned officer in the Army of
the People's Free and Equal
Federation of Canada, that this
will not occur. Please come and
build a well. Respectfully,
Rudolph B. Tuttle, first
lieutenant, infantry.

Tuttle prints the letter. He signs it.

TUTTLE

How about the Malvesti Valve? The
locals say they can build it
themselves if we find them one.

SUPPLY

We didn't get that far.

TUTTLE

Why not?

SUPPLY

Look sir, by the time I found the place, by the time I convinced them that I had business being there, which I don't, because it's not my job or yours to worry about all this foolishness, and by the time I found out about the Future of the Desert Project, most of the guys already left for their bowling tournament. And I wasn't about to stop them! You're gonna get me thrown into prison if you keep me on these wild goose chases. Now I've done told you all I know.

Tuttle studies the letter. He folds it carefully. Supply lifts the back of his blouse and pulls out his notebook. Tuttle hands him the letter and he puts it into his notebook.

TUTTLE

You're going to take that to the Future of the Desert Project.

SUPPLY

(bitter) Roger.

TUTTLE

. . . which is in the Green City?

Supply blows smoke slowly. It hangs in the air.

SUPPLY

It is a very good, but very mysterious place, the Green City.

TUTTLE

(to himself)

It might work. It might work. I think it can work.

(to Radio Man)

What do you say? Is it worth a shot?

Radio Man startles at being asked a question. He hesitates then buries his head against the handmic and turns away.

SUPPLY

Common Ping. Let's bounce before I go crazy like everybody else.

Supply and Ping exit. Crusty enters, takes his mug from a peg and fills it at a coffee machine.

TUTTLE

Hey.

CRUSTY
Sorry L.T. No mail for you.

EXT. DREAM -- DAY

Dream #4. A red silken corridor. Tuttle SHAKES the bars of a prison-cell gate.

TUTTLE
Helen!

Tuttle draws his too-long sword and SLASHES through the bars. Sparks fly, and the bars CLANG to the ground. He sheaths his sword and enters. Helen is gone from her throne. There is only a pair of red panties in her place.

Tuttle examines them. He feel trapped. He draws his sword and cuts through one wall, it TEARS easily, then through the next.

Big flaps of silk fluttering as the maze is cut free. Tuttle continues to slash until the maze has blown away.

Tuttle stands in the wide desert, under the starry night. A shooting star flashes by.

TUTTLE
Helen.

He looks around and sees he is alone. THUNDER sounds.

EXT. VILLAGE2 -- WELL SITE -- DAY

Same. A native child stands by the hole and POURS water from the cloth sack into the last of his two buckets. He looks at the nearby construction.

Workers file past Sergeant Balls, Martinez and Awkward. Each opens his mouth and shows his tongue to Martinez.

Tuttle and Big Native watch.

Inside the fenced area, wooded boards mark off a box on the ground -- a mold. There are piles of boards and Supply's pipes, a cement mixer, sacks of cement, and natives, barefoot and in rags, working happily. Their hands and feet are caked with mud. Some shovel sand and gravel into the cement mixer.

Tuttle notices something away from the construction site and walks toward it. Radio Man follows.

Native Engineer, his workers, and several natives labor to push the pickup with the drill rig to the construction site.

TUTTLE
What are you doing?

NATIVE ENGINEER
(panting) We are building a well.

TUTTLE
What happened to all the fuel I
gave you?

NATIVE ENGINEER
Lazy Canadian. Fuel no for
driving. Fuel just enough for
drilling. Aye?

Tuttle helps push the drill toward the construction site.
Radio Man joins, pushing with one hand, and holding the
handmic to his ear with the other.

When they near site, Native Engineer shouts a command. They
stop pushing. Tuttle wipes his brow.

RADIO MAN
Big6 on the line for you.

Tuttle hesitates. Slowly, reluctantly he takes the handmic
and lifts it to his ear.

BIG6 (V.O. THROUGH RADIO)
Tootle! Hello? Tootle! Where the
hell are you? Are you there?

TUTTLE
Roger. This is Dread Six.

CUT TO:

EXT. PALACE COURTYARD -- DAY

A golf cart SPEEDS along the mud-brick wall of a palace
courtyard, bag of golf clubs in back.

Big6, in the passenger seat, bellows into a handmic tethered
to the radio operator who sits in back.

Big6's other radio operator drives. As always, the radio
operators wear full battle-rattle. Gravel and dust rise in
the golf cart's wake.

INTERCUT

BIG6
Stop everything! I don't know what
you've got going on, and I don't
care. Stop. Cease all operations.

Tuttle is shocked.

The golf cart turns sharply through the gate, and comes to a hard STOP alongside a second golf cart. The palace has broad stone stairs leading to a porch with pillars.

BIG6 (CONT'D)
 You've started one super sized shit storm Tootle. Ha-ha! I don't know who you pissed off, but you did it like a champ. They're dropping atom bombs all over the place.

Big6 exits the cart and walks toward the steps of the palace. He never stops talking.

The radio operator tethered to Big6's handmic SCRAMBLES over the front seat to avoid getting tangled. The second radio operator exits from the driver's side and sprints around the front of the cart to remain arms-distance from Big6.

BIG6 (CONT'D)
 Battalion is jumping through its ass trying to play damage control. Hell, they're calling for you by name all the way up at Division! How the hell they even know your name, I've got no idea. They don't even know my name. Ha-ha!

Big6 climbs the stairs, walks to the edge of the porch and looks toward the horizon.

BIG6 (CONT'D)
 So here's what you're gonna do: Cease all operations. Drop everything you're doing and get your candy flower ass up here to the Airport. You got that?

Tuttle hesitates. Then, in a fit of frustration, he POUNDS the handmic against Radio Man's rucksack.

Natives stop what they are doing to look at Tuttle.

TUTTLE (CONT'D)
 (Into handmic. Wincing.)
 Roger sir.

BIG6
 Good. Don't fuck this up Tootle. Leave tonight. I expect to see you here in the morning.

TUTTLE
 Uhh, what's that sir?

BIG6 (V.O. THROUGH RADIO)
I said leave tonight. Leave as
soon as . . .

TUTTLE
(interrupting) I think you're
breaking up. Say again all after
don't fuck this up.

BIG6
Leave tonight Tootle!

TUTTLE
Uhh, yeah roger sir, I think I've
lost you. I'll head on up there in
a few days when Supply makes his
next run.

BIG6
Tootle, you listen to me! Hey!
Tonight Tottle. Leave Tonight!
Leave ASAP! This is a big fucking
deal.

TUTTLE
All the way sir. See you in a few
days. Oh, and, uhh, if Supply is
there, make sure he knows we still
need some eggs. Thanks a lot.
Dread Six out.

END INTERCUT

Tuttle takes a deep breath.

Native Engineer puts a hand on his shoulder and gesture
toward the construction.

NATIVE ENGINEER
Beautiful, yes? I am very happy.
You bring for me Malvesti Valve, we
finish in two days.

He shows two fingers.

Tuttle nods and looks at the workers. A few of them tilt the
cement mixer to pour cement into the mold.

CUT TO:

INT. GRANDIOSE LIBRARY -- NIGHT

Little Ender spits and sprays champagne, her drink
interrupted by surprising news.

Marble columns. Shelves of gold-trimmed books. Little Ender sits behind her desk. Her dog stands on the desk eating from crystal plate. A feast with grapes, bread, and Cornish hens is laid out, along with a bottle of champagne in a bucket of ice.

The newspaper headlined "Army Officer Steals Woman's Panties" lies on her desk.

Little Ender draws in a raspy breath then bellows.

LITTLE ENDER

What do you mean you haven't found him yet!?

She takes a big bite of food as she listens to a reply, then resumes talking with her mouth full.

LITTLE ENDER

He's rotten! The whole situation is rotten! The Big Enders are all rotten! And this is our chance to expose them. We're not going to let them brush this on under the rug. (CONT'D)

CUT TO:

INT. TELESCREEN CLOSE-UP

Same.

Little Ender on her telescreen.

LITTLE ENDER (CONT'D)

So find him! I don't care what you have to do, just find him!

CUT TO:

INT. PALACE OFFICE -- DAY

Big6 stands at the position of attention, puffing his chest. No sunglasses. He faces an imposing desk. There are maps on the walls, and a conference table behind Big6.

The COLONEL sits behind the desk, a broad-shouldered bear of a man. He is only seen from behind (like Mr. Big from Rocky & Bullwinkle, or Steinbrener from Seinfeld).

THE COLONEL

Find him! I don't care what you have to do, just find him!

BIG6
Sir, I will personally make sure
this mission is accom . . .

THE COLONEL
(interrupting) Mission smission. I
got a million and one things to do,
and the last thing I need right now
is Division lighting a fire under
my ass over some misbehaving junior
officer.

BIG6
Sir, I completely understand where
you're coming from and I will
personally make sure that nothing
like this ever happens . . .

THE COLONEL
(interrupting) I don't give a shit
if you understand or not. Go grab
this Army of one, and bring him
here. Do you understand me?

BIG6
Sir, I understand complete . . .

THE COLONEL
(interrupting) Go!

Big6 gathers himself and raises his hand in a wide, dramatic
arc to salute.

BIG6
All the way and then some sir!

The Colonel, not buying the enthusiasm, returns a hasty
salute.

THE COLONEL
Go!

Big6 snaps his arm back down to his side, performs a sharp
about-face, and attempts to stride out of the room. His
stride is cut short by the conference table.

He is momentarily disgusted by the unforeseen obstacle.

Determined to keep up appearances, Big6 does a right-face,
strides to the end of the table and comes to the position of
attention, STOMPING one foot as it meets the other. He does
a left-face, marches to the end of the table in a similar
manner, does a left-face, marches to the halfway point of the
table, does a right-face and marches out of the room.

INT. PALACE HALLWAY -- DAY

A bench. A night stand. Big6's two radio operators relax on the bench and floor. A small "R" marks a door.

Big6 bursts from the door, and strides down the hall. The radio operators scramble to their feet and catch up to Big6.

He stops. The radio operators struggle to keep from running into him. Big6 draws his breath in slowly and holds it for a moment. He exhales and proceeds down the hallway.

EXT. MILITARY OUTPOST -- GATE -- DAY

Same. Awkward on guard. He hears something and looks toward a swell of ground behind native kid, who stands with his ankles crossed, head cocked, looking at Awkward and biting his finger. Native Kid hears something too and turns to look.

A yellow and black convertible comes over the hill, hopping on its suspension system, music blaring, fuzzy dice swinging from the rearview mirror.

Supply drives. He wears gold rings, one with a big letter "A," and other excessive jewelry.

Ping, similarly bedizened, kneels in the back seat, facing backward and holding his rifle. BARBIE, female, 45, Asian, too much makeup, barber shirt, sits in the passenger seat.

Awkward moves to open the wire.

EXT. MILITARY OUTPOST -- DAY

Tuttle and Native Engineer repair the command shack door. Native Engineer wears a tool belt and protective eye goggles. The operates a DRILL plugged into a gas-powered generator.

The convertible lurches to a stop, then hops on its suspension system before coming to rest. A "Pimp My Ride" logo is visible.

Tuttle walks to the convertible. Ping smiles, revealing a full set of gold teeth. Supply bobs his head to the rhythm. Tuttle reaches in and shuts off the radio.

TUTTLE

What the hell is this?

SUPPLY

What sir? You don't want your resupply?

TUTTLE
(gesturing to the vehicle) What the hell is this?

SUPPLY
You ought to be thankin me for scrapin this together. Didn't anybody tell you there's a theater wide shortage of trans assets? This was the only thing available.

Tuttle stares at him, then looks at Barbie. Supply notices and leans toward Tuttle to speak to him in confidence.

SUPPLY
You ain't got to worry bout her. She don't speak English too good. She's a barber at the airport, and if you quit ruinin my flava, she might give me the extra special haircut.

Crusty open the convertible's trunk. He holds up a bag of coffee, drops it in disgust and walks away.

TUTTLE
(deliberate) Tell me about the well.

SUPPLY
Alright, look sir.

Supply exits the vehicle and sits on the hood to speak with Tuttle. Soldiers gather, and help Ping carry the heavy bags of coffee into the command shack.

SUPPLY
I know what you're gonna say. But I tried. I really did sir. Okay?

TUTTLE
What happened?

Native Engineer, with goggles on his forehead, leans against the convertible and listens.

SUPPLY
So I took your letter to the Future of the Desert Project, and goddamn sir, they almost had me bending over to make sure I didn't have a gun up my ass. See how hard I work for you?

TUTTLE
What happened?

SERGEANT BALLS

They said they needed to review it, so I went looking for your Malvesti thingy. It ain't no piece of Army equipment, so it doesn't have an N.S.N. number or anything.

TUTTLE

And then,

SUPPLY

So I figured out through my secret supply connection who was in charge of their equipment. They asked me what it was for, and I told them about your little well.

Tuttle looks at Native Engineer then back at Supply.

SUPPLY

And they said: why the hell is the Army trying to build a well, when the Future of the Desert Project is planning on building one in the same spot? It's like I said sir. This foolishness isn't any of our business.

TUTTLE

So, are they planning on building one in the same spot?

SUPPLY

That's the thing sir. I figured the request went through, so I went back and they said your guarantee about the tongueless bandits not drinking the water ain't enough?

TUTTLE

Ain't enough? What do they want?

SUPPLY

The guy suggested names and photographs of everybody who's going to be drinking.

TUTTLE

That's insane.

Tuttle and Native Engineer exchange concerned glances.

SUPPLY

Don't kill the messenger sir. I told you how hard I tried, but nobody in the Green City wants to listen to no little sergeant.

(MORE)

SUPPLY (cont'd)
Maybe if you promoted me I could
throw my weight around a little
more.

Tuttle thinks. Barbie sighs and rolls her eyes with boredom.

TUTTLE
Maybe I could go to the Green City
and throw my weight around. Big6
called me up to the airport anyway.

Tuttle hurries off into his tent. Supply calls after him.

SUPPLY
You can promote me anyway sir. You
know how hard I work for you.

EXT. ROAD -- DAY

Tuttle, Radio Man, Supply, Ping and Barbie ride through the desert in the convertible, Supply driving, Tuttle in the passenger seat, Ping, Radio Man and Barbie in back.

Ping kneels on his seat, facing backwards, holding his rifle and looking alertly into the distance.

Barbie looks seductively at Radio Man, who notices and smiles. He nods at her, flirting.

The road forks around a steep hill. The convertible takes the right road and vanishes into a cloud of dust.

A golf car appears heading toward the fork from the left road.

Big6 rides in the passenger seat. One radio operator drives, the other sits in back holding his rifle.

Big6's face and sunglasses are caked with dust. He holds a long cigar in his mouth and speaks into a handmic tethered to the radio operator in the back seat.

BIG6
Dread Six, Dread Six, this is Big6.
Dread Six, Dread Six, this is Big6.

He listens for a response, then pulls the cigar from his mouth.

BIG6
Goddammit Tootle, answer me. Your
ass is grass Tootle.

He leans over the handmic and screams down into it.

BIG6
 Tooooootle!!! Answer me Tootle!!!
 Big6 is coming to get you Tootle!!!
 Do you hear me? Big6 is coming to
 get you!!!

The golf cart heads in the direction from which Tuttle just came.

EXT. AIRPORT BASE -- GATES -- DAY

A ditch with oily water and reeds (a moat?) runs parallel to a tall wall. Triple-strand concertina wire runs along the ditch on the wall side.

Giant windmills spin slowly in the distance.

Garbage floats in the moat and stirs in the breeze where it hangs, tangled, from the wire. A pair of truck tires lie in the moat.

There is a break in the wire where a flat bridge crosses the ditch. A single strand of concertina wire and a speed bump made of tank tread block the bridge. There are numerous Road Block / Checkpoint signs.

On the wall-side of the moat, there is a sandbagged bunker with the long rusty barrel of a machine gun pointing out the aperture.

Atop the bunker, AIRPORT GUARD sits in a beach chair, shaded by a beach umbrella. 20, Unshaven, long sideburns, pink sunglasses, PT shorts, and brown T-shirt, flip flops, woven friendship bracelets on his wrists, well-bathed.

He clips his nails and mouthes the words to the tune playing on his Ipod. His helmet lies on top of a clip board of papers beside the lawn chair. Next to it is a cooler of ice with several sodas and an open bag of Doritos.

The convertible pulls up with Tuttle, Supply, Ping, Radio Man, and Barbie. They are all dusty. The convertible stops before the bridge, and hops hard on it's suspension system.

Tuttle, Supply, Ping, Radio Man, and Barbie.

Supply, Ping, Radio Man, and Barbie.

Supply, Ping, Radio Man, and Barbie.

Supply, Ping, Radio Man, and Barbie.

Supply, Ping, Radio Man, and Barbie.

Supply, Ping, Radio Man, and Barbie.

Supply, Ping, Radio Man, and Barbie.

Supply, Ping, Radio Man, and Barbie.

Supply, Ping, Radio Man, and Barbie.

Supply, Ping, Radio Man, and Barbie.

Supply, Ping, Radio Man, and Barbie.

Supply, Ping, Radio Man, and Barbie.

Supply, Ping, Radio Man, and Barbie.

Supply, Ping, Radio Man, and Barbie.

Supply, Ping, Radio Man, and Barbie.

Supply, Ping, Radio Man, and Barbie.

Supply, Ping, Radio Man, and Barbie.

Supply, Ping, Radio Man, and Barbie.

Supply, Ping, Radio Man, and Barbie.

Supply, Ping, Radio Man, and Barbie.

SUPPLY

Hey sir, I got some logistics to get on with, if you know what I mean.

(gestures toward Barbie)

Barbie climbs into the passenger seat. Tuttle nods indifferently and turns toward Airport Guard.

TUTTLE

Hey!

No reaction. Convertible drives off with Ping, on guard from the back seat, struggling to remain upright.

TUTTLE

Hey!

phones.

Airport Guard notices, and pulls out one of his head

AIRPORT GUARD

What's up dude?

TUTTLE

We need to get to the Future of the Desert Project.

ose.

Airport Guard lowers his shades to the tip of his nose.

AIRPORT GUARD

God damn. You guys look like shit.

TUTTLE

I know. We've been driving all night. We need to get to the Future of the Desert Project. I'm told it's in a part of the base called Green City.

AIRPORT GUARD

(shrugs) I don't know. Might be behind the bowling alley. I don't really deal with that stuff.

TUTTLE

How about letting us in?

AIRPORT GUARD

Yeah sure man.

the single

Airport Guard doesn't move. Tuttle looks down at the strand of concertina and back at the guard.

AIRPORT GUARD

Help yourself.

Tuttle pulls aside the wire and enters. Radio Man follows.

AIRPORT GUARD
Can I see your gun?

Tuttle looks at him.

AIRPORT GUARD
You line dogs get all the cool
shit.

Tuttle nods at Radio Man, who then hands his rifle to Airport Guard.

AIRPORT GUARD
Nice dude.

Airport Guard lifts the rifle and peers through the optics. He aims between Radio Man and Tuttle, then turns the weapon out over the wire, flagging Tuttle. Tuttle bends backwards, as if dodging a punch.

AIRPORT GUARD
Niiiiiiiice!

TUTTLE
Jesus fucking Christ! Have you
lost your mind?

Tuttle snatches the rifle and hands it back to Radio Man.

AIRPORT GUARD
What?

TUTTLE
You got be kidding me.

AIRPORT GUARD
What dude?

TUTTLE
I'm not a dude. I'm an officer.

AIRPORT GUARD
Oh. Sorry sir.
(pause)
You're mad cause I'm out of
uniform, aren't you?

He picks up his helmet and puts it on his head. The chin strap hangs open. A big spade is magic-marked into the helmet. He pats his helmet.

AIRPORT GUARD
There. Hey, you want a Fresca or
something?

Radio Man's face lights up. He licks his lips.

TUTTLE

No, I don't want a fucking Fresca.
Either tell me where the Future of
the Desert Project is, or shut the
hell up and let me find it myself.

AIRPORT GUARD

Um, they got some dessert places in
the mall. You can check there.

Tuttle turns in disgust and walks through the gate. Radio Man follows. Airport guard watches, then faces forward again and puts in his Ipod headphone. He pops a Dorito into his mouth. He notices the wire.

AIRPORT GUARD

Hey, you left the wire open!

He gets no reply and his feelings are hurt.

AIRPORT GUARD

(tearfully) I'm sick of this
fucking place.

EXT. AIRPORT BASE -- IN FRONT OF MALL -- DAY

Tuttle and Radio Man walk along a road past mud-brick complexes converted to a military installations.

They pass an open connex from which soldiers in half-uniform remove cases of beer. Music blares from a boom box. Radio Man listens to his handmic and looks around distractedly, spinning like a tourist.

Two pretty girls jog past them, boobs bouncing, chirping to each other about a hot guy one of them met. Radio Man turns to watch as they pass. He walks backwards for several paces.

There is much traffic. Golf carts and people wearing uniforms, partial uniforms, Hawaiian shirts & sunglasses, or other civilian clothes move in both direction. Tuttle and Radio Man are the only ones in full battle-rattle.

They near a tall stone structure with a prominent archway through which people flow in both directions. The plastic sign reads "Storemart Mall." It contrasts with the ancient stone facade it has been hammered. Some people leave carrying stuffed shopping bags.

Just outside the archway along the wall, a native vendor sells eggs from a modest stand.

A mascot dressed as a giant "Licky-Chewy" candy bar steps in front of the vendor, passing out fliers.

MALL SECURITYGUARD1 and MALL SECURITYGUARD2 chat quietly with one another. Mall-guard uniforms. Tuttle approaches.

TUTTLE

Hey, I'm looking for the Future of the Desert Project. Specifically, the Office of Rebuilding.

Mall Securityguard1 shakes his head, and turns back to his conversation.

TUTTLE

How about a section of the base called the Green City?

MALL SECURITYGUARD1

Nah, sorry man.

He looks Tuttle and Radio Man up and down.

MALL SECURITYGUARD1

Yeah, you could get a good one. I'll plan to load up on the next one.

He turns back to his conversation.

RADIO MAN

Offering handmic. Big on the line for you.

Tuttle considers, then pushes the handmic away. Radio Man, stunned by the breach in protocol, doesn't know what to do.

TUTTLE

Just listen. Listen and tell me what he's saying.

Radio Man nods confusedly, obeys. He listens. His speech comes in crisp clear sentences.

RADIO MAN

He's calling for Dread Six.

(listens)

Answer me, Tuttle.

(listens)

You piece of shit.

(listens)

Big6 is coming to get you, Tuttle.

(listens)

Big6 is coming to get you.

(listens)

When I find you.

(listens)

I'm going to.

TUTTLE

(interrupting) Give me the mic.

Tuttle attempts to yank the cord from the handmic. He can't. He steps on the cord, and yanks up violently several times. The cord BREAKS. Multi-colored wires fray from the handmic. Tuttle gives it back to Radio Man.

Radio Man stares at it, confused. Again, he is in uncharted territory and doesn't know how to act.

TUTTLE

Come on.

Tuttle walks into the archway. Radio Man stares at the mic in his hand. He puts it to his ear and follows Tuttle.

EXT. AIRPORT BASE -- GATES -- DAY

Same.

Big6, dusty, tired, holds the handmic in his fist. He slowly looks up toward Airport Guard.

BIG6

Son, if you don't get yer ass down here and open the wire, I'm going to get medieval on your hippie ass.

Airport Guard gawks, climbs down and opens the wire.

Big6's tired head rocks back as the golf cart lurches forward. They enter the gate.

Airport Guard flings the wire closed, and climbs back toward his beach chair.

EXT. AIRPORT BASE -- MALL -- DAY

A fat soldier with dog tags and a bad high-and-tight haircut SPRINGS off a diving board, flails in the air, and splashes into the pool in no particular position.

The swimming pool is the centerpiece of a huge open-air courtyard in the middle of the structure. Western-style stores line the interior.

Tuttle and Radio Man look around, amazed. People move about casually. They'd never guess there's a war going on.

A man in sunglasses, flip-flops and swimming trunks holds two beer bottles up with one hand toward a female sunbather who gets up and wraps her arms around his neck.

Pretty women behind ceiling-to-floor windows sweat on stair climbers, and elliptical machines while listening to head phones. Radio Man stares.

Two BUREAUCRATS are the only ones in suits, navy, white shirt, red tie, sunglasses. Each has a white button that reads "loyalty." Tuttle watches them sit at Starbucks.

They finish and leave, approaching Tuttle. He ducks behind a column, pulling Radio Man with him. He peers around it watching them exit under the archway.

TUTTLE

Come on.

He and Radio Man follow.

EXT. AIRPORT BASE -- ROAD -- DAY

The two Bureaucrats walk toward a large palace-like structure. They are further from the mall and the traffic is lighter. A single golf cart passes.

Tuttle and Radio Man follow, a few hundred meters behind.

Radio Man listens to the damaged handmic. The cable dangles from his ruck sack and swats his leg with every other step.

Suddenly, Tuttle grabs Radio Man and pulls him into the ditch beside the road.

Big6's golf cart drives down the road toward them. Big6 looks numb with fatigue.

BIG6

(half asleep)

Tootle. Come in Tootle. God dammit. Big6, Big6 is coming to get you. I said . . .

(zones out)

. . . I said, Come in Tootle.

His cigar falls from his mouth as he speaks.

Tuttle and Radio Man peer from the ditch as the golf cart passes. Big6's cigar falls in the dirt in front of them.

Tuttle watches them disappear down the road. Then he and Radio Man climb out and continue their journey.

TUTTLE

There's the Green . . .

(CONT'D)

ANGLE FROM TUTTLE AND RADIOMAN TO THE DISTANT GREEN CITY.

TUTTLE (CONT'D)
City. At last! It's beautiful,
isn't it? The Future of Desert
Project must really be wonderful to
live in a place like that.

Radio Man yawn.

TUTTLE
Oh, you can't rest now. We're
nearly there. Come on, let's
hurry.

EXT. GREEN CITY GATES -- DAY

Tall, thick walls and a huge gate loom over Tuttle and Radio Man. Concertina wire, three deep and two high, lines the base of the wall.

Tuttle glances back doubtfully. He notices a small plaque.

TUTTLE
(reading) Bell out of order.
Please knock.

Tuttle KNOCKS the knocker on the door, and steps back.

The door UNLOCKS and swings open outward. BIG GUY, resembles Viking, stands in the doorway, smiling down at Tuttle.

Big Guy's equipment is gleaming and new. It's clearly superior to that of the soldiers. It includes: an XM8 next generation assault rifle, an MP9 with close combat optic strapped to his thigh, a light-weight skate-boarder-like helmet with chin strap, visor, and built-in radio and microphone, a desert-colored body armor system with all the pieces that the soldiers don't have (neck, throat and shoulder protectors), synthetic fiber gauntlets with index finger tips professionally removed, black shinguard/knee pad systems, and a full rack of ammunition magazines strapped to the chest of his body armor. He also has a button (like a campaign button) that reads "Loyalty."

Tuttle steps backwards, intimidated.

TUTTLE
Hello. Um, how are you?

BIG GUY
I'm doing great little feller.
Welcome to the Green City. Please
state your business.

He continues smiling down at them.

TUTTLE
Well, we, um, we want to see the
Future of the Desert Project.

BIG GUY
Ooooh! The Future of the Desert
Project? But nobody can see that.
Nobody's ever seen that. I've
never even seen it.

TUTTLE
Well, then, how do you know it
exists?

Big Guy thinks for a moment.

BIG GUY
Are you wasting my time?

TUTTLE
We're trying to build a well.

BIG GUY
Prove it.

Tuttle can't find an answer. Big Guy turns to leave.

TUTTLE
Wait wait wait wait wait. Um,

Tuttle thinks, glancing at Radio Man.

TUTTLE
Really, we came because we need,
(leans toward Big Guy and
whispers)
bootlaces. We need new bootlaces
for our boots.

BIG GUY
Well bust my buttons! I just heard
about that on the evening news.
That's a horse of a different
color. Come on in!

INT. GREEN CITY -- DAY

Big Guy slides a gigantic bolt closed on the gate, then leans
his XM8 against the stone wall.

BIG GUY
Make yourselves at home.

He sits under an umbrella at a wrought iron lawn table, and sips a glass of lemonade.

Tuttle and Radio Man look around in amazement.

Green grass, tall shady trees. A large stone fountain. A flock of white geese waddle by.

A tuxedoed man moving about with a pitcher of lemonade and glasses on a tray. An Ivy-covered brick building. Several trailers lined up neatly off to the side.

The two businessmen speak quietly to one another on a well-crafted bench under a tree. Another exits the brick building. A gardener in blue overalls waters the grass with a hose.

Tuttle tries to decide which way to go. There's a low KNOCK at the gate.

Big Guy picks up his weapon and rises.

EXT. GREEN CITY GATES -- DAY

Big6, flanked by his radio operators, stands before the gate. His golf cart is parked behind him.

The gate opens. Big6 looks up at Big Guy, tilts down his sun glasses, and takes a step back. He puts his sun glasses back up and snaps his fingers at his radio operators.

One of them goes onto his hands and knees in front of Big6. Big6 steps onto his back to speak face to face with Big Guy.

BIG6

Now look here soldier . . .

INT. GREEN CITY -- DAY

Tuttle peaks through the crack of the open door, then darts

at the Radio Man with the gun. He sees the Radio Man's face and

he walks off quickly. Cragg, the Radio Man, follows him.

The gardener watering the grass and up to the iron door of the brick building.

Same. Loyalty button, comb marks visible in his hair as Tuttle hears the door. They run into

of the view of himself again.

He sees Big6 and

They hurry past several steps.

BUREAUCRAT, 4 slick hairy ex each other.

TUTTLE
Oops. Excuse me.

BUREAUCRAT1
No harm.

He looks them up and down, then extends his hand to Tuttle, with his palm over pronated toward the ground -- a sign of dominance.

BUREAUCRAT1
Visitors, Aye?

Tuttle looks at his hand, then leans sideways to grasp it. Bureaucrat1 shakes his hand firmly, and holds it a little too long. Tuttle pulls his hand away.

TUTTLE
Yes. We're looking for the Future
of the Desert Project.

Bureaucrat1 puts an arm around Tuttle.

BUREAUCRAT1
Well, brother, you've come to the
right place. This is it. Everyone
can find what they need here.
(whispering)
but,
(he looks at Tuttle's
dirty worn clothing and
equipment)
you may want to use the back
entrance.

He taps his nose and nods.

TUTTLE
Thank you.

BUREAUCRAT1
May I ask what business you have.

TUTTLE
We're trying to build a well.

BUREAUCRAT1
Ha!

He shakes his head and chuckles to himself.

TUTTLE
What?

BUREAUCRAT1
Son, real men don't build wells.
Real men fight.

He strikes a boxer's pose, then gives Tuttle a firm SLAP on the back and walks off.

BUREAUCRAT1

Good luck to ya.

(muttering)

A well. Ha!

Tuttle and Radio Man hurry around the building.

They pass a heli-pad, where a tiny helicopter with bubble-like pilot compartment sits with a disproportionately large gatling gun mounted to its front. The helicopter doesn't look powerful enough to lift the massive weight of the gun.

A Bureaucrat, same, nods with interest as HELICOPTER GUY, 40, baseball cap with company logo, hiking boots, slacks, belt, and tucked-in flannel shirt, speaks with the raspy, forceful voice of an old soldier turned salesman.

HELICOPTER GUY

At that price I can have a half
dozen of these puppies for you by
the end of the fiscal year.

Tuttle and Radio Man continue around the building.

EXT. GREEN CITY -- BACK OF BUILDING -- DAY

Dumpster. Leaky bags of garbage. A very simple door.

Tuttle looks for a more prominent door, doesn't see one, then opens the simple one.

INT. GREEN CITY ---COFFEE BREAK ROOM

Windowless.—Table.—Candy machine.—Soda-Machine. Coffee—
machine.—Couch.—A small potted tree.—

Two Bureaucrats sit on the same side of the table, each reading a newspaper. They don't look up when Tuttle and Radio Man enter.—They turn the page of their newspapers in perfect unison.

TUTTLE:

Excuse me.

for their mugs of coffee, sip, and put
looking up.

In unison, they reach
then back down. never

TUTTLE:
Excuse me.

(Louder) Excuse me.

ally.

They look up skeptica

TUTTLE
Where can I find the Future of the
Desert Project?

They shake their heads in unison. Radio Man listens to the
handmic.

Tuttle leaves with Radio Man. The bureaucrats return to
their papers.

INT. GREEN CITY -- HALLWAY -- DAY

Big. Clean. Empty. Shut doors on both sides. Stairs going
up and down.

Tuttle wanders down the hall with Radio Man. MIDDLE MANAGER,
same look as bureaucrats, stands facing a window adjacent to
the main entrance, his hands calmly clasped behind his back.

He turns around as Tuttle approaches. He clasps his hands
together in front of him.

MIDDLE MANAGER
Hello friends.

He extends his hand in the same manner as Bureaucrat1 did,
palm down. Tuttle leans sideways to grasp it.

TUTTLE
Hello.

Tuttle retrieves his hand from Middle Manager's firm grip.

TUTTLE
Do you know where the . . .

Middle Manager raises a finger to interrupt.

MIDDLE MANAGER
Uh, uh, uh. I can help you. If,
you're ready to be helped.

Tuttle begins speaking, but is interrupted.

MIDDLE MANAGER
Many people want to know what to do
to be successful, but the change,
the change comes from within.
Hmmm? First you BE the type of
person that's successful, then what
you do will follow naturally.

He taps his temple.

MIDDLE MANAGER
First you be, then you do. Be,
then do. You see?

Tuttle nods.

MIDDLE MANAGER
There's a lot I can teach you.
Come.

He puts his arm around Tuttle's shoulders.

INT. GREEN CITY -- CONFERENCE ROOM -- DAY

A half dozen bureaucrats are seated around a conference table. Each has a crisp, clean yellow legal pad and #2 pencil identically positioned in front of him. There are three empty seats at the head of the table.

The walls have old-money paintings of stately hunting hounds and eagles.

The Bureaucrats rise when Middle Manager enters.

MIDDLE MANAGER
Be seated gentlemen. We have a
visitor today. Mister . . .

TUTTLE
Tuttle.

MIDDLE MANAGER
Tuttle.

BUREAUCRATS
(in unison) Hello Mister Tuttle.

Tuttle nods hello.

MIDDLE MANAGER
(to himself) Tuttle, Tuttle. Where
have I heard that?

He shrugs.

Middle Manager sits at the head seat, with Tuttle and Radio Man to one side.

All the bureaucrats join hands and bow their heads with shut eyes.

MIDDLE MANAGER
(quietly to Tuttle)
We like to begin with a sort of
benediction.

Tuttle and Radio Man join the circle of held hands. Middle Manager drops his head, and shuts his eyes. Tuttle and Radio Man look at one another.

MIDDLE MANAGER

I hope we have a good meeting, a productive meeting, and a fun meeting. We are thankful for the responsibilities bestowed on us, difficult though they are. We have the instructions to go and find the way to the desert, including the freedom to wear a son of a bitch in each thirty word of the heathens. Our thoughts also turn back toward our native country, where there are two judges. They happen to be Little Enders, also, they happen to be elderly.

(suddenly furious)

We hope, that you may smite them. Strike them down! Strike down the Little Enders! Strike them down!

(calm again)

So that we may better fulfill your will.

Everyone opens their eyes and let go their hands.

BUREAUCRATS

(Out of sync. Mumbling.)

Here, here.

The bureaucrats all neatly interlock their fingers in front of them. They look around casually, and occasionally give one another a quick grin or nod. No one says anything.

Tuttle watches. Middle Manager notices Tuttle's restlessness.

MIDDLE MANAGER

Uuuuuuuuum,

Everyone looks at Middle Manager.

MIDDLE MANAGER

Maybe we can redraw the boundaries of the desert provinces.

The bureaucrats all nod in enthusiastic agreement.

A BEAUROCRAT

yes.

A BEAUROCRAT

Good idea.

Again everyone falls silent. Middle Manager notices Tuttle shifting uncomfortably.

MIDDLE MANAGER
Punch! Would you like some punch?

BUREAUCRATS
Mmmmmmm. Punch.

Radio Man looks up eagerly. He is thirsty.

TUTTLE
No thank you, really we're hoping
to talk to someone about . . .

Middle Manager interrupts with a wave of his hand. He raises his index finger, preparing to point. He surveys the Bureaucrats. They avoid eye contact.

MIDDLE MANAGER
Uuuuuuuuuuuuuuhm. You.

One of the Bureaucrats looks up, petrified.

MIDDLE MANAGER
No. You.

Another is implicated.

MIDDLE MANAGER
Get us . . .

Middle Manager smiles sidelong at Tuttle. He is showing off.

MIDDLE MANAGER
. . . some punch.

The implicated Bureaucrat is stunned. He stands as if he'd just been sentenced to death, and exits the room.

Middle Manager smiles at Tuttle again and taps his temple.

TUTTLE
We're looking for the Future of the
Desert Project.

All the Bureaucrats look at Middle Manager. He simmers for a few seconds then explodes.

MIDDLE MANAGER
(screaming)
There is no Future of the Desert .
. .
(he runs out of air.
Draws his breath in)
. . . Project!

Middle Manager strikes the table.

MIDDLE MANAGER
And I'm sick of hearing about it!

He pushes back a bit of hair that fell into his face.

TUTTLE
I'm sorry, I thought that's where
we could find out about building a
well.

Everyone stares at Tuttle.

The silence breaks as the Bureaucrats begin whispering to one another. Their whispers are heated, and all of them lean in toward one another to participate. Eventually, the Bureaucrat next to Middle Manager whispers into his ear.

Middle Manager lifts his hand and silences everyone.

MIDDLE MANAGER
Those offices, are . . .

His eyes move side to side, scanning his audience.

MIDDLE MANAGER
. . . in the basement.

All the Bureaucrats nod enthusiastically toward him and each other. Middle Manager smiles at Tuttle again.

MIDDLE MANAGER
I've got some of my best men on the
job there.

TUTTLE
Thank you sir. If you'll excuse
me.

Tuttle and Radio Man get up to leave.

MIDDLE MANAGER
But, but the punch!

TUTTLE
Next time.

MIDDLE MANAGER
(shouting) Mister Tuttle.

Tuttle stops.

Middle Manager points at him as he speaks.

MIDDLE MANAGER
You, can accomplish anything, if
you be, then do.

Tuttle nods respectfully and exits.

INT. GREEN CITY -- HALLWAY

Tuttle and Radio Man walk downstairs. Big6 enters and strides through the hallway past the stairs.

INT. GREEN CITY -- BASEMENT

No windows. Florescent lights. A mop bucket and a pair of mops in the corner.

Two side-by-side doors in a corridor so narrow that the doors won't open completely without banging into the opposite wall. The hinges of each door are between the doors (i.e. each opens away from the other). The corridor dead ends.

BUREAUCRAT2, same but younger -- 25, meticulously polishes the brass sign next to the farther door.

He startles when Tuttle approaches with Radio Man, spinning around and hiding his handkerchief behind his back.

TUTTLE
Is this the Future of the Desert
Project?

Bureaucrat2 nods appeasingly.

BUREAUCRAT2
Oh yes sir. It sure it.
(pointing to the sign)
It is the Office of Rebuilding.
Right here.

Tuttle looks at the sign by the other door.

BUREAUCRAT2
That's the Office of
Reconstruction.
(in confidence)
There's a little bureaucratic. We
can take care of you here.

He opens the door to enter. The door blocks the corridor. Tuttle and Radio Man can't squeeze past. Bureaucrat2 enters halfway and closes the door on himself. Tuttle and Radio Man squeeze past. They all enter.

INT. GREEN CITY -- REBUILDING/RECONSTRUCTION OFFICE

A small room divided in two by a cubicle wall. The other door leads to the other half of the room. BUREAUCRAT3, same look as Bureaucrat2, is barely visible over the wall.

The desk is crowded with file folders, papers and office supplies. There's a flat screen monitor, key board, mouse, telephone and numerous post-it notes.

Bureaucrat2 sits in the chair. Tuttle and Radio Man stand.

BUREAUCRAT2

Well, you don't look like you work here. You must be with the press. As you can see, we here at the Office of Rebuilding are working very hard to . . .

TUTTLE

(interrupting) No, no. We're not with the press. We're with the military.

Bureaucrat2 looks confused.

TUTTLE

We're trying to build a well.

BUREAUCRAT2

Oh! That's great!
(Shouting toward
Bureaucrat3)
I'll be happy to help you build a well, here at the Office of Rebuilding.

MUSIC blares from over the cubical wall. Bureaucrat2 startles. He scowls.

TUTTLE

(speaking over the music)
We're almost finished actually. Really the only we need is a Malvesti Valve. But if you want to send your engineers down, we can find plenty of work for them.

Bureaucrat2 holds the pads of his finger tips together and considers.

TUTTLE

It's a chance to help a lot of people.

BUREAUCRAT2
No.

TUTTLE
What?

BUREAUCRAT2
No.

TUTTLE
(shouting) What the hell do you
mean no?

BUREAUCRAT2
Okay, yes.

Tuttle is surprised. He begins to speak. Stops.

TUTTLE
Well, when can I get it?

BUREAUCRAT2
Get what?

TUTTLE
A Malvesti Valve.

BUREAUCRAT2
When can you get a Malvesti Valve?
Well. It's, it's not that simple.
You can't just go digging wells,
all Willie Nillie without some sort
of plan.

TUTTLE
We just need to get. . .

BUREAUCRAT2
(interrupting) What you need is
some control. I mean, you haven't
even filed the paperwork, your
essay, we need to know who's going
to be drinking. It isn't such a
simple thing. It's hard.

TUTTLE
I did the paperwork. My supply
sergeant brought it here weeks ago.

BUREAUCRAT2
I'm sorry we don't handle paperwork
here.
(shouting toward
Bureaucrat3)
That's the Office of
Reconstruction's job!

Tuttle looks at him, then exits.

INT. GREEN CITY -- HALLWAY

Tuttle and Radio Man exit one door, and enter the other, squeezing around it when it blocks the hallway.

INT. GREEN CITY -- REBUILDING/RECONSTRUCTION OFFICE

Bureaucrat3 shuts off his stereo, and swivels around in his chair as they enter. He smiles.

His office is completely bare except for the small stereo on his desk.

BUREAUCRAT3
What can I do for you gentlemen?

TUTTLE
We put in some paperwork to build a well.

BUREAUCRAT3
Ahhh. Yes. A well. Mmm. And what did you say your name was?

TUTTLE
Tuttle.

BUREAUCRAT3
Lets see here. Tuttle. Tuttle.

He checks the empty drawers and shelves around his desk.

BUREAUCRAT3
I can't seem to find anything.
But, I'm sure we can help you at the Office of Reconstruction.
Building wells is after all an important part of what we do.

BUREAUCRAT2 (O.S.)
(faking a sneeze)
Lhiar! Lhiar!

BUREAUCRAT3
Now, what did you say your name . .
.

A crumpled paper ball from across the cubicle wall hits him.

Bureaucrat3 smiles at Tuttle, saving face, as he picks up the ball of paper and throws it back over the wall.

Immediately, it comes back and hits him again. He throws it back a second time, still smiling politely at Tuttle.

BUREAUCRAT3

Where were we?

A telephone flies over the wall and HITS him. The cord stretches back over the wall. He falls over in his chair.

He springs to his feet, reaches over the wall and pulls Bureaucrat2 up by his collar. They attempt to slap each other.

BEAUROCRAT3

Imbecile.

BEAUROCRAT2

Moron.

BUREAUCRAT2

Why don't you grow up?

BUREAUCRAT3

Why don't YOU grow up?

BEAUROCRAT2

You're such a Moron.

TUTTLE

Enough.

BUREAUCRAT3

You threw a phone at me.

BUREAUCRAT2

Did not.

BUREAUCRAT3

Did too.

BUREAUCRAT2

Did you see me throw it?

BUREAUCRAT3

I don't need to see you.

TUTTLE

Enough!!!

The two bureaucrats look toward Tuttle.

TUTTLE

Who's in charge here? I want to talk to whoever's in charge.

~~Two bureaucrats look to each other and shake their heads.~~
~~reads "TUTTLE POINTS the desk."~~

TUTTLE

Tell me who's in charge.

BUREAUCRAT3

(whispering) M-Mister Whiskey.

TUTTLE
Where is he? Huh?

BUREAUCRAT2
(whispering) Upstairs. F-First
door on the left.

TUTTLE
(to Radio Man) Come on.

He and Radio Man exit.

INT. GREEN CITY -- MR. WHISKEYS OFFICE -- DAY

MR. WHISKEY, a fit old man, cavalier, square jawed, suit, sits behind his large desk in a tall black leather chair. There are two windows on the wall behind his desk. He writes in a leather-bound ledger.

There's a BANG on door. Mr. Whiskey looks up.

The door flies open with a second BANG. Tuttle stands in the doorway.

He strides up to the desk. Radio Man follows.

TUTTLE
Mr. Whiskey, I'm building a well.
I don't need much help, but I need
a little bit, and I'm not leaving
until I get it.

A smile spreads across Mr. Whiskey's face. He twists his pen closed and shuts his ledger. He leans back in his chair.

MR. WHISKEY
Well Henny Penny the sky is
falling. This young man wants to
build a well.

TUTTLE
I sent up all the paperwork weeks
ago. I don't see why I can't get
any help.

MR. WHISKEY
Look, we've built all the wells
that we've been asked to build.
Your allegation is completely
false. There may have been some
internal memo within my offices,
but I can tell you that nothing has
crossed my desk, so any suggestion
that we're not being cooperative is
wildly off the mark.

TUTTLE
 (courage fading)
 Then help me now. Either send us
 some engineers, or give me a
 Malvesti Valve. That's all I need.

MR. WHISKEY
 It's not a matter of us not wanting
 to build the well, it's a matter of
 physics, we don't have . . .

Big6 peaks through the doorway. Mr. Whiskey watches him
 stride into his office.

MR. WHISKEY
 . . . we don't physically have the
 paperwork.

BIG6
 Tootle!

Tuttle's eyes widen. He sees Big6 and stands at attention.

BIG6
 Dammit Tootle, where in the goddamn
 hell has your sorry ass been
 hiding?

Big6 gets in Tuttle's face and takes off his sunglasses.
 Tuttle wants to shout back but holds it in.

BIG6
 I've had diarrhea more reliable
 than you. Do you know that Tootle?
 Do you have any idea how hard the
 shit's gonna hit the fan for you?
 You're through! You're finished
 Tootle! Finished.

TUTTLE
 (screaming) Tuttle!

Mr. Whiskey suddenly looks at Tuttle.

TUTTLE
 (screaming) Sir, my name is Tuttle!
 Not Tootle! Tuttle! My name is
 Tuttle!

Mr. Whiskey SLAMS his desk with both palms as he stands.
 Radio Man startles. Mr. Whiskey points at Tuttle.

MR. WHISKEY
 You! You're Tuttle!?

Big6 notices Mr. Whiskey for the first time.

BIG6
Who the hell are you?

MR. WHISKEY
Name's Mr. Whiskey.

BIG6
Mr. Whiskey!

Big6 snaps to the position of attention alongside Tuttle.
Tuttle looks at him, confused.

BIG6
Mr. Whiskey. I, uh, sorry sir. I
didn't, um, recognize you, your
excellency.

MR. WHISKEY
Is this your Lieutenant?

Big6 takes a deep breath, preparing to take one on the chin.

BIG6
Yes sir. Yes sir, he is my
Lieutenant.

MR. WHISKEY
(into the intercom)
Sheila, send me a couple guards.
(to Tuttle)
Son, you've pissed off all the
wrong people.

Tuttle stares. Mr. Whiskey considers for a moment.

MR. WHISKEY
We're gonna put you on a flight
back to Capitol City ASAP. You're
in for a day of reckoning.

Two Federal Guards enter and stand at parade-rest just inside
the door. Tuttle sees them, swallows.

Mr. Whiskey picks up his phone and dials.

BIG6
Sir. If I may, I would like to say
goodbye to young
(carefully pronouncing)
Tuttle. He is after all, still my
soldier.

Mr. Whiskey nods.

Big6 faces Tuttle and draws his breath in, taking his time.
He loves to give speeches.

BIG6

You're a damn fine soldier, Tuttle.
A little sweet in the shorts maybe,
but a damn fine soldier.

He places a hand on Tuttle's shoulder.

BIG6

This is bigger than both of us. I
just want to say, that no matter
what happens, always remember the
immortal words of General Gruber:
"When all else fails, move to the
sound of the guns and kill everyone
who's not dressed like you."
Always remember that. Tuttle, I
salute you.
(salutes)

Unsatisfied with the salute, Big6 hugs Tuttle. He steps back
and wipes away tears, does an about face, and marches from
the room. The Federal Guards step aside as Big6 exits.

MR. WHISKEY

It's time Mr. Tuttle.

The Federal Guards grab Tuttle by his upper arms and walk him
toward the office door. They notice Radio Man following.

One guard drops Tuttle and holds Radio Man back.

TUTTLE

No! You can't!

Tuttle and Radio Man grab hands. Their grip is broken.

INT. CIVILIAN AIRPORT TERMINAL

Tuttle follows a Federal Guard out of the jetway. He wears a
cheap, wrinkled suit and carries his two duffel bags. He
pauses in the jetway to look at civilization, and proceeds.

Two more Federal Guards wait by the jetway entrance. They
fall in behind Tuttle.

Tuttle's senses are heighten. He notices every sound and
movement. The things he notices come faster and faster, and
the background buzz builds throughout.

A heavy set man eats french fries.

LITTLE GIRL, high heels, dangling earrings and fake nails
throws a tantrum.

LITTLE GIRL

I don't want sodee, I want a licky
chewy!!!

A cash register RINGS.

A beautiful woman licks her finger to turn the page of a novel.

Tuttle starts. ~~Another SLAMMING sound, and a janitor in a uniform~~ ~~opens the door of a broom closet. He pushes an old~~ ~~wheel bucket of water and mop.~~

They pass a fat guy whose luggage and lunch are sprawled over several seats. He talks cheerfully into a cell phone.

FAT GUY

oh, nothing. What are you doing?
You're doing nothing too? Then
we're both doing nothing.

Tuttle adjusts the weight of his duffel bags.

A boy licks icecream by his mother's side. He wears designer sneakers and a baseball cap with price tags attached.

His mother yells at the lady behind the counter.

MOTHER

I don't care if you're overbooked,
we have a birthday party to go to!

The heavy set man licks his fingers then washes down the french fries with some soda, SLURPING loudly.

The cash register RINGS again.

Another SLAM. Tuttle startles. The janitor takes a slippery-when-wet sign from a closet. Tuttle grinds his teeth.

Tuttle sees a chubby woman approaching in gaudy flip-flops. She is stuffed into a tight T-shirt with the word "SLUT" written across her breasts. She holds a cup of coffee with an insulating sleeve, and her purse dangles from her forearm.

Tuttle stares at her cleavage. He faints.

The Federal Guards look at him for a moment. One slings Tuttle over his shoulder, each of the others pick up a duffel bag. They proceed through the airport.

EXT. DREAM -- NIGHT "

Tuttle stands in the desert, his tattered armor, sword in hand. He is exhausted.

Helen stands on the roof on an expansive rectangular building (like a Walmart Supercenter). She looks more seductive than ever. The sky behind her black and stormy.

HELEN
Lieutenant Tuttle.

SPEARWOMAN, a hefty black woman in Moorish armor makes a screaming charge toward Tuttle.

He pivots away and strikes her shield with his sword.

She turns, charges again. Tuttle pivots and strikes her again. Tuttle's sword EXPLODES.

Tuttle is staggered. Spearwoman falls.

Tuttle studies the hilt of his broken sword and tosses it away. He stumbles toward Helen, pulling off pieces of his armor as he goes.

Tuttle sees Spearwoman rise. He begins to run, still removing his armor.

He runs naked, except for a brown T-shirt and dirty tidy whities, glancing up toward Helen and back at Spearwoman, who is now in pursuit.

A swatch of red silk blows smack into Tuttle's face. He stumbles, pulls it off, and sees Spearwoman closing toward him, spear raised. She SCREAMS.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. CONFERENCE HALL

Same.

BIG ENDER
. . . despicable, loathsome,
revolting, shameful, and I would
add: cowardly.

Tuttle sits at a table before the looming concentric tiers of telescreens. He's still in his wrinkled suit. Two Federal Guards stand behind him.

LITTLE ENDER
On this issue senator, we are in
agreement. I find this to be
simply disgusting. You should be
ashamed . . .

SENATOR1

(FADE TO)

. . . ashamed of yourself for this sort of behavior. It is contrary to all the values which the People's Free and Equal Federation of Canada stands for.

SENATOR2

(FADE TO)

. . . and what I don't understand, is where is your sense of decency in all this. Where is that little voice inside of you that tells you when . . .

BIG ENDER

(FADE TO)

You should be ashamed.

SENATOR1

(CUT TO)

reprehensible,

LITTLE ENDER

(CUT TO)

unforgivable,

SENATOR2

(CUT TO)

disgusting,

BIG ENDER

(CUT TO)

and cowardly! Do you have anything to say for yourself boy?

Tuttle stares. He shakes his head. A CAMERA flash goes off from the darkness.

BIG ENDER

I thought not!

~~Big Ender gestures with his hand and two federal guards are standing behind Tuttle. Grab him by his upper arms and escort him out the chamber.~~

INT. CONFERENCE HALL -- HALLWAY

An open area with elevators. A large, elevated desk sits at one end, beside a prominent door. GATEKEEPER, male, 35, polished suit, manicured hands, expensive hair, tightly shut lizard lips, sits at the desk with calm dignity.

Two Federal Guards hold Tuttle by his upper arms, and walk him toward the elevators.

URGENT GUY, 50, haggard, paranoid and jumpy, a cheap wool suit, blue-collar look, carries a brief case and an armload of papers.

Federal Guards ignore him, walk Tuttle to the elevators, and press the button.

Tuttle notices Urgent Guy standing at the desk, and pleading with Gatekeeper. Gatekeeper apologizes in a hushed voice while Urgent Guy pleads.

<p>URGENT GUY</p> <p>This is important. It needs to be seen right way. There must be some way, if you'd just let me in so I could talk to somebody.</p> <p>(escalating)</p> <p>Why won't anybody listen to me?</p>	<p>GATEKEEPER</p> <p>I'm sorry. There's nothing I can do. Mmm. Sorry.</p>
--	---

GATEKEEPER

Alright, now there's no need to raise your voice. I would help if I could, but I simply cannot let you in . . .

URGENT GUY

(interrupting)

I was told I could come back today and present this report. This can't wait much longer . . .

(FADE OUT)

Tuttle watches, then looks at the first Federal Guard.

TUTTLE

Where are you taking me?

Tuttle glances from one guard to the other.

TUTTLE

What's going to happen to me?

The elevator opens, and they enter.

INT. CONFERENCE HALL -- ELEVATOR

A nice elevator -- as in an corporate headquarters.

The second Federal Guard pushes two floor buttons, a high floor, and the lobby. The door shuts. The elevator goes up.

Tuttle jerks his arms to no avail.

TUTTLE
 Why can't you tell me where you're
 taking me!?

The Federal Guards look at each other, then face forward.

TUTTLE
 For the love of God, just tell me
 what's going to happen.

Again, the guards look at each other. The second shrugs.

FEDERAL GUARD1 pulls his mask up to the top of his head. He has a mustache and a rapid, twitchy manner.

FEDERAL GUARD1
 Listen, stop asking me, because I'm
 not even supposed to talk to you.
 I have a good job, and don't need
 you ruining everything. I've got a
 family to feed you know. How about
 thinking about someone other than
 yourself?

TUTTLE
 What's going to happen to me?

Federal Guard1 notices the elevator approaching their destination. The second guard lets go of Tuttle, pulls an apron from his kit and puts it on.

FEDERAL GUARD1
 Nothing. Nothing you have to worry
 about. Just, just shut up. Okay?
 I'm trying to do my job.

Federal Guard1 quickly lowers his mask, and stands up straight.

The elevator door opens. A man SCREAMS repeatedly and begs for mercy, and a machine BUZZES while ELEVATOR MUSIC plays.

A sweaty, DISTRESSED MAN in a hospital gown, 50, corporate worm look, runs into the elevator chased by a third Federal Guard who wears an apron. He appeals to Tuttle.

DISTRESSED MAN
 Help me! Please. Help me. Get me
 out of here. I want to see my
 wife.

The Federal Guard chasing him grabs him by the collar of his hospital gown and flings him from the elevator.

He turns to the other guards and shrugs as if to say "oops."

The second Federal Guard waves goodbye to the first, and exits.

The doors closes and the elevator begins descending.

TUTTLE

Oh God.

Tuttle looks to Federal Guard1.

TUTTLE

You don't understand. I don't
deserve this. It was all a
mistake.

Federal Guard1 pulls up his mask and looks exacerbad. He drops Tuttle's arm, and presses a button on the elevator. The lights blink as the elevators stops.

FEDERAL GUARD1

Alright, listen. The only reason I'm talking to you is because I'm a veteran like you. You'd better not tell anyone. I can get in big trouble for being nice to you. I have a good job, and I'm not about to lose it. Understand?

Tuttle nods.

FEDERAL GUARD1

Nothing's going to happen to you. You'll be fine. So keep your dignity.

They exchange looks.

FEDERAL GUARD1

They got what they wanted. Happens all the time. They find a fall guy, give him a scolding in front of the cameras, and it's a done deal.

TUTTLE

What happens now?

FEDERAL GUARD1

Nothing happens. Just lay low for a while. Keep your face off the evening news and you'll be peachy.

TUTTLE

I'm going to be alright?

FEDERAL GUARD1
 You're going to be more than
 alright.

Federal Guard1 pulls a clip board filled with papers from one of his pouches. He flips back and forth through the papers before finding the relevant page.

FEDERAL GUARD1
 You're going to be turned into a
 hero.
 (pats Tuttle's back)
 You will be:
 (reads)
 Absolved for dishonoring the party,
 because of patriotic service to the
 People's Free and Equal Federation
 of Canada.
 (speaks)
 These guys love posing with the
 veterans. How'd you think I got
 myself this job?

TUTTLE
 They love veterans.

FEDERAL GUARD
 Sure they do. They'll do
 everything but shlob your knob for
 you. Rumor has it that you're
 going to be invited to a party.
 One of 'em wants to take pictures
 with you.

Tuttle's mind races. His thoughts return to the well.

FEDERAL GUARD
 Hope you got your uniform. There's
 no point if you don't.

Federal Guard presses a button and the elevator resumes moving down. He reaches toward his mask to lower it.

TUTTLE
 I was trying to build a well. We
 were almost finished,

FEDERAL GUARD
 Listen,

TUTTLE
 . . . and all we needed to do was
 get a Malvesti Valve,

FEDERAL GUARD
 Listen to me,

TUTTLE

There's got to be a way to send
then one. Through the Future of
the Desert maybe. They . . .

FEDERAL GUARD

(shaking his head)
Listen to me. Listen.

TUTTLE

(fading into a mumble)
. . . do that sort of thing. In
the Green City.

FEDERAL GUARD

If you're thinking about the
desert, don't. Think of your trip
to the desert as a dream from which
you've just woken up. It's all
gone now. Play your cards right
and you might end up with a good
job like me.

He puts a hand on his mask to lower it, and pauses.

FEDERAL GUARD

Now shut up and play along. That's
all you have to do.

He lowers his mask and grabs Tuttle by the upper arm again.
The elevator comes to a stop and the door opens.

INT. CONFERENCE HALL -- LOBBY

Fancy government/corporate lobby.

Federal Guard walks Tuttle to a revolving door, stops just
short of it and releases Tuttle.

Tuttle looks at him, and walks backward into the revolving
door. He passes through it looking over his shoulder.

EXT. CONFERENCE HALL -- STEPS -- DAY

Many wide steps lead to a pillared government building. They
sky is overcast. Distant THUNDER sounds.

From atop the steps, Tuttle squints at the hazy light.

GLORIA, very attractive, very well-preened corporate
secretary, surprises Tuttle. Her mannerisms are excessively
diplomatic and flattering to the point of condescension.

GLORIA
Hi, you must be Mr. Tuttle.

She smiles hugely and shakes Tuttle's limp hand.

GLORIA
Are you Mr. Tuttle?

Tuttle nods dumbly.

GLORIA
Fantastic then. My name is Gloria,
assistant to the deputy aide for
senator Big Ender. Senator Big
Ender would like you to be a guest
of honor at his annual Spring
cotillion.

She puts her arm around him and guides him down the steps to
a waiting limousine, the chauffeur standing by the open door.
Papers and plastic bags blow through the air.

GLORIA
Fantastic then. As a strong
supporter of our veterans, Senator
Big Ender would like to personally
recognize your heroic service to
the Federation. You'll have to
wear your uniform of course.

She looks to Tuttle whose thoughts are somewhere else. They
continue descending the steps.

GLORIA
Oh, I'm sure you'll have a
wonderful time. They'll be serving
baby lamb fricassee with artichokes
-- delicious, and roast duckling a
l'orange. Do you have a
preference? I recommend the lamb.
And for an appetizer I believe it
is avocado salad with Parmesan
flakes.

Gloria struggles with her hair against the wind. They reach
the bottom of the steps.

GLORIA
They have an excellent strawberry
pistachio cheese cake.

The coupon section of a newspaper BLOWS into Tuttle's face.
He peels it from his face and looks at it. Tuttle stops.

GLORIA
Or if you'd prefer, a creme brulee?

Gloria tightens her arm around Tuttle to lead him the last remaining steps toward the limousine.

He remains focused on the coupon page. There's a special on Malvesti Valves at Storemart!

Gloria holds her ledger under an elbow and tugs on Tuttle's arm with both hands. Tuttle lifts his eyes from the paper with new resolve.

TUTTLE
I need to go.

GLORIA
Don't be ridiculous Mr. Tuttle.

Tuttle tears away from Gloria. The ledger falls. Papers fly into the wind.

GLORIA
(shouting) Just tell me what you'll
want for dessert.

Tuttle backs away for several steps then turns and runs.

GLORIA
(shrieking) Stop!!! You're
ruining everything!!! Get back
here!!! Guards!!! Guards!!!

Debris blows past Gloria and limousine as she looks from Tuttle to the building and back.

GLORIA
shit.

EXT. GIANT RETAIL STORE - FRONT

Tuttle stands before the looming retail store -- an enormous thing reminiscent of the building in Dream #5.

Debris blows in the wind. Lighting flashes and THUNDER cracks. A length of red ribbon blowing in the breeze wraps around Tuttle and snakes away. Tuttle doesn't notice.

He looks at the coupon page in his hands, then back at the retail store.

Tuttle runs toward the store. A tumble weed blows by.

INT. GIANT RETAIL STORE - NEAR ENTRANCE

DICK, 40s, fat, baseball cap, wide-rimmed eye glasses, an old olive army jacket, stands next to a table of books titled: The Bootlace Scandal. Sign over table reads: "Buy My Book."

Dick bites a big sloppy burger, chews noisily, and washes it down with a Slurpee.

The DING and SLIDE of a automatic door sounds as Tuttle bursts in, eager and out-of-breath. He runs past Dick and stops. He looks toward the aisles, searching excitedly.

Dick watches.

The retail store is enormous. Clean. Bright. Wide, Orderly Aisles. It is also empty of shoppers and employees.

DICK
Faulty bootlaces are plaguing our
troops. Don't you think they
deserve better? Buy my book and
read about it.

Tuttle looks at the coupon page in his hands.

DICK
And Dickson Enterprises over
charged taxpayers in a no-bid
contract.

Tuttle moves past checkout counters and down an aisle lined with boxes that read: "Malvesti Valve."

He stops. This is too good to be true. He stares in amazement. The coupon page falls from his hand.

ANNOUNCEMENT
(very pleasant, begins
with a chime)
Thank you for making Storemart your
number one choice for an unbeatable
shopping experience, because at
Storemart the customer is number
one with us.

Tuttle lifts one box, then several. He laughs in disbelief and hugs the boxes close to himself. Signs read: "Malvesti Valves on Sale," "Malvesti Valves \$8.99/dozen," "Buy 2 Malvesti Valves Get 1 Free," and "Malvesti Valve Special Today."

Tuttle gathers an armload and goes to the cash registers. He sees no one. Everything is still, empty, quiet.

Tuttle searches for a cashier/worker. Something is wrong.

Dick crosses his arm disapprovingly.

Tuttle walks the length of the store peering down aisles, hoping to find a clerk.

The sound of his FOOTSTEPS grows more distinct. Tuttle's mannerisms grow increasingly cautious and frightened. He turns quickly, as if he saw something.

TUTTLE

Hello?

Tuttle walks down the suspect aisle, still cradling an armload of Malvesti Valves.

He sees a children's ball bouncing. A goblin-like figure in a blue apron scampers across the aisle behind Tuttle.

ANNOUNCEMENT

(Same)

Tuttle turns. He sees nothing. He looks at the ball again, then behind him. He advances toward where the figure ran.

Tuttle stops and listens to an hushed, angry mumbling.

A plump hand with chipped red nail polish grasps a roll of toilet paper on the corner-display. The figure peers down the aisle at Tuttle, revealing the words "HOW MAY I HELP YOU?" on back of its apron.

Tuttle turns slowly and the figure vanishes. Tuttle proceeds determinedly in that direction.

He turns a corner just in time to see the figure scamper away. She is CLERK1. Ugly, short, plump. She wears white sneakers and an apron similar to those typically worn at Walmart. She avoids eye contact at all costs.

TUTTLE

Excuse me.

Clerk1 mumbles to herself incoherently. She runs away. More of her is revealed at every turn.

Tuttle runs after her and rounds another corner.

TUTTLE

Hey!

CLERK1

(mumbling)

Clerk1 scampers away.

Tuttle chases, losing Malvesti Valves as he goes.

Tuttle rounds a corner and loses her. He becomes annoyed.

He walk down an aisle and stops. He hears something. He listens. BOOM!

Tuttle startles, losing all his Malvesti Valves, and throwing a momentary fit before composing himself.

He BREATHES hard and looks back and forth, adrenaline pumping.

BOOM! BOOM! Tuttle hits the deck in a panic.

He rises. Crouching like a World War I soldier, Tuttle gathers a single arm load of Valves, and advances, half-crouching, down the aisle. BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

He find CLERK2 in the dairy section. She is a hefty black woman with too much make up, too much jewelry, and long plastic finger nails. She wears an apron like Clerk1's featuring the words: "HOW MAY I HELP YOU?"

The cartons of milk on the shelf are in disarray. Some lie smashed at her feet. Milk trickles to the floor, drips from her hands, and speckles her face and hair. She squeezes a price labeling gun in one hand.

Tuttle advances to Clerk2, wincing. He stands next to her crouching slightly, as if taking cover.

BOOM! BOOM! She massacres another milk with her label gun. She is panting and smiling fiendishly.

TUTTLE
(yelling as if they were
in a loud place)
There's nobody at the registers.

BOOM! BOOM! She looks at him, SNARLS, and turns back to her work.

BOOM! BOOM! A spray of milk strikes Tuttle's face. He startles. He touches it, then takes a long look at his hand. He thinks he may be wounded. He leans very close to Clerk2.

TUTTLE
(yelling) There's nobody at the
registers!

Clerk2 fully faces him, her work interrupted.

TUTTLE
(Yelling way too loud, way
too close to her face)
I said, there's nobody at the
registers!

CLERK2

I'm having a really fucked up day.

She turns back to her work. BOOM! He grabs her shoulder.

TUTTLE

HEY!

Clerk2 violently pulls free.

They stare at one another, sizing one another up. She hold the label gun up and back slightly, poised to strike.

Tuttle shifts his weight, a natural movement, and Clerk2 reacts by further cocking her arm, preparing to strike. They square off, Tuttle holds his ground, confused but determined. Clerk2 is poised to defend her turf. She stares down her flaring nostrils at Tuttle.

Tuttle glances at a demolished milk cartons. He decides not to pursue this, and backs away slowly, as one might from a dangerous animal.

Clerk2, turns back to her work, giving him a sidelong snarl.

Tuttle turns away. He looks over his shoulder, as Clerk1 rounds the corner, speeding toward him.

Clerk1 never stops mumbling. She crashes into him, KNOCKING him over and SCATTERING the remaining Malvesti Valves, then turns and walks just as briskly the other way.

Tuttle picks up a few boxes, and chases her.

He catches up and puts a hand on her shoulder. She tears away and hastens her step. She mumbles more urgently, as one might recite the rosary when facing death.

TUTTLE

I need to buy this.

Clerk1 runs.

Tuttle runs.

Tuttle closes with the Clerk1. He DROPS the remaining Malvesti Valves. With a flying TACKLE, he bring her down into a giant toilet-paper display.

Tuttle lies on top of the Clerk1 and struggles to control her flailing arms. She screams.

She is panicked and STRIKES his chest and shoulders.

TUTTLE

I need a Malvesti Valve.

Clerk1 breaks free, rolls awkwardly onto her front, and with much effort and difficulty, stands up.

Tuttle looks at the floor as he speaks, and raises his head as he finishes.

TUTTLE

Ma'am. I just need to buy . . .

Clerk1 SPRAYS pepper spray into Tuttle's face. He falls back onto the toilet paper in pain.

Clerk1 pulls out an orange WHISTLE and blows one long blow at Tuttle, her face red and congested, her cheeks puffed.

Clerk1 turns and runs away blowing long WHISTLES, "HOW MAY I HELP YOU?" visible as she goes.

ANNOUNCEMENT

(Same)

Tuttle recovers slowly.

He manages to open his eyes. The Malvesti Valves he dropped for the flying tackle come into focus. He stares at them, wondering whether or not to steal.

Tuttle composes himself, his eyes red, and his face streaked with tears.

He stands, walks a few steps and picks up a single Malvesti Valve. He checks that the coast is clear and tucks it beneath his jacket.

Tuttle walks toward the registers. He angrily KICKS the children's ball as he passes it.

Dick eyes Tuttle as he approaches. He SLURPS his Slurpee.

Tuttle holds his jacket and its contents tightly against his body. He nears the entrance where Dick is standing.

ALARMS go off. Tuttle looks to either side.

Federal Guards, pour toward him with batons drawn.

Tuttle dashes toward the door.

Dick drops the Slurpee to TACKLE Tuttle.

As the Slurpee hits the floor, so does Tuttle's body, with the full bodyweight of Dick on top of him.

Bright blue slush SPILLS from the Slurpee.

Dick stand up with great effort, and Federal Guards PUMMEL a lifeless Tuttle with their batons.

DICK
(panting) Stay tuned for my next book about veterans turning to crime because they're not getting the help they need.

Dick nods for emphasis.

DICK
They deserve better.

Federal Guards drag Tuttle away.

The Malvesti Valve box is smashed.

ANNOUNCEMENT
(Same)

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM

A tray of meager hospital food is set by the bed where Tuttle lies, battered and bandaged.

Tuttle's eyes open halfway. He rolls his head toward the door.

Little Ender's voice grows louder as she approaches from the other side of the door.

LITTLE ENDER (O.S.)
(quick. decisive. FADE IN)
Fine. You can do the hero shpeel as long as I get to feed him. And stay the hell out of the way long enough for me to get a few good photos.

A crowd bursts in the moment Little Ender finishes.

Little Ender carries a bouquet of daisies and a teddy bear. She is flanked by her well-groomed male secretary. Big Ender also races in, not wanting to arrive behind his rival. He is flanked by Gloria.

They are followed by Harvey Miles, with his camera, another reporter with a notepad, and a camera crew with boom operator.

LITTLE ENDER
(baby talking) There's my little hero. I brought you something.

She holds the daisies and Teddy bear out toward Tuttle and glances toward Harvey Miles as they prepare themselves. Harvey Miles takes a photo.

She slams the bouquet into her secretary's chest.

LITTLE ENDER
(whispering, sharply)
Get the fucking vase, now.
(to Tuttle)
So how are we doing?

Without pausing for an answer, she tucks the Teddy bear next to Tuttle and touches Tuttle's face with her sharp fingernails. She kisses his forehead.

LITTLE ENDER
MMMMmmmmwah! You're a her . . .

BIG ENDER
(interrupting) You're a hero.
Tuttle.

Little Ender is upset by the interruption. Big Ender walks over to the side of the bed opposite Little Ender and puts a hand on Tuttle's shoulder.

Big Ender mugs for the camera and Harvey miles takes another photo.

BIG ENDER
And to show our appreciation.

He gestures to Gloria who puts a bed tray over Tuttle with an impressive feast on it.

As Big Ender speaks, Little Ender's secretary adds a vase of daisies, then Gloria puts an ice bucket of champagne on the bed. Little Ender's secretary adds a large fruit basket.

BIG ENDER
To show our appreciation, we have
Absolved you for dishonoring the
party, because of your patriotic
service to the People's Free and
Equal Federation of Canada. So you
can forget whatever nasty stuff
happened over in the desert. Here
is a small gift as a token because
we have appreciation for your
heroic, uh, heroics.

He smile broadly.

Gloria pours champagne into a tall, slender glass.

LITTLE ENDER
Who's my big brave hero?

She feeds him a spoonful of food.

Tuttle, debilitated by his injuries, attempts to chew, but half the food dribbles down his chin. The sounds of his CHEWING are as loud and sloppy as those of Dick in the previous scene, or of the senators earlier.

LITTLE ENDER
That's my big brave hero.

She mugs for a PHOTO. Tuttle smiles awkwardly through his bandages.

Big Ender pulls a silk polka-dot handkerchief from his breast pocket to wipe Tuttle's chin.

BIG ENDER
Let me get that for you champ.
There we go.

After wiping Tuttle's chin, he gives a mock punch to Tuttle's cheek, pausing and mugging for the camera. Harvey Miles continues taking PHOTOS.

LITTLE ENDER
Here comes the choo-choo train.

She feeds him. Tuttle half CHEWS, half drools.

BIG ENDER
How's your pillow son?

He fluffs it.

LITTLE ENDER
We have another surprise for you.

BIG ENDER
Somebody very special wants to see you.

LITTLE ENDER
Lets bring her in.

Little Ender's secretary opens the door, and gestures for someone to come here. The small crowd of reporters makes room. They angle themselves toward the door.

Helen creeps in, head down, arms tight against her body.

Her appearance, which had grown progressively more exotic in the dreams is plain again. Her boxy yellow dress is dirty.

There is something deeply wrong. She looks frightened and humiliated -- as though she's been violated.

BIG ENDER

Come on.

Helen creeps toward the corner of the bed, trembling.

Little Ender nods smiling.

Helen stands in silence.

Big Ender holds up his chin and gestures, like encouraging a child to take its first steps.

Little Ender's smile grows tired and strained.

Big Ender's his lips tighten. He shakes his head menacingly at Helen.

Helen swallows.

HELEN

(singing) Sunshine. You are my
sunshine. My only sunshine when
skies are grey.

Big Ender puts a hand on Tuttle's shoulder and joins in.

BIG ENDER & HELEN

(singing) You'll never know dear,
how much I love you.

Little Ender tenderly lays her hands on Tuttle and also joins, then her secretary and Gloria join, followed by Harvey Miles. They look lovingly toward Tuttle and each other.

Harvey Miles takes a photo and continues singing.

EVERYBODY

(singing) Please don't take my
sunshine away. I'll always love
you and make you happy, if you will
only say the same. But if you
leave me and love another . . .

EXT. VILLAGE2 -- WELL SITE -- DAY

The full cast of characters who appeared in the desert, plus Mrs. Crusty. They have their arms around one another and rock back and forth as they sing.

EVERYBODY

You'll regret it all some day:
You are my sunshine, my only
sunshine.

(MORE)

EVERYBODY (cont'd)
 You make me happy, when skies are
 grey. You'll never know dear, how
 much I love you . . .

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM

Same. The two senators still have their hands on Tuttle, but only Helen sings.

HELEN
 Please don't take my sunshine away.

Tuttle smiles awkwardly through his bandages. He nods his head to the melody, and continues nodding after Helen finishes singing.

He looks toward Little Ender and opens his mouth, while still nodding. She feed him a grape. He CHEWS loudly and sloppily.

FADE IN:

EXT. VILLAGE2 -- WELL SITE -- DAY

A wind blows in the empty desert. Signs of the construction have almost faded.

A boy stands over the hole in the ground and pulls up a rope, hand under hand. He DUMPS the water into one of his own buckets, DROPS the cloth bucket it in the hole again and beings pulling up another load.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. TELEVISION NEWS DESK

A deadly serious and affected ANCHORMAN sits behind a desk and speaks to the camera. Most dramatic cuts and angles.

ANCHORMAN
 As they return home, our veterans
 are encountering another threat,
 not quite as deadly, but just as
 terrifying:

Cuts to a side camera. Anchorman turns his head toward it.

ANCHORMAN
 Bats that get tangled in your hair.
 Our very own Harvey Miles is on the
 scene.

Anchorman continues looking at the camera which doesn't cut off as quickly as it should. He blinks. He blinks again.

EXT. TRAILER PARK -- DAY

Harvey Miles, grey streaks in his hair, interviews VETERAN, 35, chubby, almost bald, wearing Walmart-formal clothes. He sits on a lawn mower.

They both stare at the camera. Veteran is fidgety. He glances at Harvey and back.

HARVEY MILES
(all of a sudden) Good Evening,
this is Harvey Miles reporting.
I'm here with.

He looks toward Veteran who stretches his neck toward the microphone when he speaks.

VETERAN
Mike.

HARVEY MILES
Mike, who has just recently
returned for service in the desert,
only to have a bat get tangled in
his hair. Can you tell us about it
Mike?

VETERAN
Well it sorta just came outta
nowhere at me, flappin, and flying,
and flappin.

HARVEY MILES
Was it horrible?

VETERAN
Yeah it was pretty horrible.

HARVEY MILES
Were you terrified?

VETERAN
I was. Uh-huh.

HARVEY MILES
You just got back from serving your
country in the desert, from putting
your life on the line to defend our
freedom, and as soon as you
returned home, you had a bat get
tangled in your hair. How did that
make you feel?

VETERAN
Pretty bad. I guess. Pretty bad.

HARVEY MILES

Do you have any advice to offer to
other veterans getting ready to
return home?

VETERAN

Well, I suppose, um. I know it
might sound crazy, but honestly,
(pause)
don't come home. Don't come home.
Or if yew got to, then don't go
outside. It was pretty bad.

INT. TELEVISION NEWS DESK

Anchorman, watching an off-screen monitor, tightens his lips
an shakes his head in sympathy.

ANCHORMAN

Mmm.

He faces the camera.

ANCHORMAN

This has been evening news.
Goodnight everybody.

A flash of TV STATIC.

THE END