

FADE IN:

CLOSE UP of the head of a huge, hairy, twitching African Driver ANT, the largest and most predatory ant on the planet (and all of them female). Two long antennas jut from the top of its outsized head above its compound eyes, the long curved mandibles of its jaw like two menacing scimitars. The ant moves on its six long legs across SKIN through a dark forest of HAIRS, pushing them aside. Four immense HUMAN FINGERS swoop through the forest of hairs pressing the ant down heavily. When she comes back up, she's pissed, her head moving back and forth before she jams her mandibles into the skin and pinches them together sharply, drawing a bead of blood...

EXT. AFRICAN COUNTRYSIDE -- NIGHT

A young white SOLDIER, one of eight crouched behind boulders with camouflage on their faces, YELPS as he SLAPS his arm and rubs it. Next to him is twenty-five year-old Captain DAG CORLANDER peering between two boulders through a night vision scope. Dag lowers it and touches the soldier's shoulder and puts a finger to his lips to remind the soldier to be quiet. Then he goes back to looking through the scope.

P.O.V. NIGHT VISION SCOPE -- CONTINUOUS

Crouched on a modest wooden bridge across a sluggish river are five black guerilla soldiers carrying automatic weapons. The leader at the front, twenty-one year-old ZEBI MOSHONGO, has his hand raised and is listening, evidently concerned. After a moment he waves and they begin moving again, the guerilla behind him shrugging off a large knapsack.

EXT. ROCKY GROUND -- CONTINUOUS

Dag carefully lowers himself and indicates to the other soldiers that there are five guerillas. He gestures for three of his men to spread out further up the river, the other three to go the opposite way, he and the soldier next to him to stay in their present position. He points to himself and mimes pulling the trigger on his gun. They all nod that they understand and move off quietly. He checks the guerillas with the night vision scope again.

P.O.V. NIGHT VISION SCOPE -- CONTINUOUS

The guerillas are stopped on the near side middle of the bridge with the four armed men keeping watch as the one who had the knapsack lowers himself over the side to fix explosives to supports. Zebi takes a block of white substance from the knapsack and hands it down to the sapper then appears to hear something, looking right at Dag as he scans the darkness.

EXT. ROCKY GROUND -- CONTINUOUS

Dag lowers the night vision scope and puts it back in its case and raises his gun. The other soldier comes up with his weapon ready. Just as they get in position, however, Zebi begins FIRING, the other guerillas join in, and the white soldiers return fire.

EXT. AFRICAN COUNTRYSIDE -- CONTINUOUS

In the firefight, MUZZLE FLASHES light up the darkness, ROUNDS WHINE as they RICOCHET. The guerillas try to hold their ground while the sapper gets back up but there is little cover for them. The sapper takes a round and drops into the river. The others back up for the far side firing as they go then break for the safety of the countryside, Zebi taking the sapper's knapsack with him as he's the last one off the bridge.

EXT. ROCKY GROUND -- CONTINUOUS

The firing tapers off and the white soldiers wait behind their cover. The lieutenant covers Dag as he puts down his weapon and checks the scene with the night vision scope.

P.O.V. NIGHT VISION SCOPE -- CONTINUOUS

The body of the sapper floats face down in the water, no one else visible.

EXT. AFRICAN COUNTRYSIDE -- CONTINUOUS

Dag comes back down and puts the scope in its case and takes up his weapon.

DAG

It looked like they were trying to put C4 on the supports. I don't want to use the bridge. We'll go up to Chuma Ford and come down the other side, try to intercept them.

(pointing behind)

Round them up and meet us ahead.

The lieutenant nods and moves off in a crouch while Dag heads up towards the other men.

EXT. RIVER -- CONTINUOUS

The body of the guerilla in the water rotates slowly with the current.

EXT. AFRICAN COUNTRYSIDE -- CONTINUOUS

The body of the dead soldier and that of the bitten soldier crushed lies in the dirt guarded by other soldier ants while the smaller worker ants gather, raise it up and carry it away as if in a funeral cortege.

EXT. ROAD -- DAYBREAK

A pickup truck moves along a dusty African road next to neatly cultivated fields.

INT. TRUCK -- CONTINUOUS

Dag, dirty and tired, drives along in a truck, his automatic weapon in a rack on the back window. He looks out at the fields, full with plantings.

P.O.V. DAG -- CONTINUOUS

The plants are lush and ripe.

BACK TO SCENE

The sight of the fields brings a slight smile to his face. But as he looks across them he sees a plume of smoke. He stares at it with concern and speeds up.

EXT. ROAD -- CONTINUOUS

The truck speeds along with dust trailing it, braking hard to turn into the drive between the fields leading towards where the smoke rises.

INT. TRUCK -- MOMENTS LATER

Dag looks frantic as he speeds up to where his ruined farmhouse smolders, a number of trucks, cars and jeeps around the house with armed men standing watching a fire pumper truck hosing down the smoking ruins, nothing left standing. Beyond the house, a barn is also burned to the ground.

EXT. FARMHOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Dag's truck slides to a halt and Dag jumps out distraught. One of the men, BARNEY, moves towards him.

BARNEY

Dag...

DAG

Amanda, Nick...?

BARNEY

Nick is fine. The Shaws have him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAG

Amanda...?

Barney looks into Dag's eyes, the anguish in his own only too apparent. Dag closes his eyes and breaths heavily, holding onto his emotions.

BARNEY

She didn't suffer, it was quick.
She got four of them, Dag. We're
chasing the others. We'll get them.

DAG

(beat)

Where is she?

Barney makes a hesitant gesture towards one of the trucks, Dag starting towards it, cold and rigid.

DAG (CONT'D)

(to himself)

Goddamn war...

FADE TO BLACK

DAG (V.O.) (CONT'D)

...goddamn war.

FADE IN:

EXT. TOWN -- DAY

Dag is twenty years-older as is his twenty-seven year-old son NICK, a strapping young man. They're loading bags of pest control into their battered pickup truck on the dirt street in a dusty, dilapated small town in the African countryside. Strapped on the side of the truck is a large auxiliary gas can.

From up the road a bicycle approaches and they look and stiffen as an older and weathered Zebi Moshongo rides up towing a small empty trailer, stopping at the general store. As he gets off the bike, he glances at Dag and Nick who are ignoring him. He goes in the store.

INT. GENERAL STORE -- CONTINUOUS

The store is filled with items including supplies for the local farmers. Behind the counter is the Indian store owner, RANJI, who greets Zebi without enthusiasm.

RANJI

Mr. Moshongo.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Zebi nods and wanders a bit looking at things and ends up near the counter.

MOSHONGO

I need to put down pest control.

Ranji nods. Zebi gestures at the pile of bags to one side.

ZEBI

Four bags?

RANJI

Fourteen ninety-five a bag.

ZEBI

My problem is I have no cash at the moment...

It's also a problem for Ranji who opens a ledger and checks it as Dag and Nick come in to get more pest control.

RANJI

Seven hundred and thirteen dollars, you owe me, sir. One month ago you paid me twenty-five. Now you want to charge sixty more?

Dag and Nick head out again.

ZEBI

The crop is good this year. When I bring it in, you get everything. But if the bugs eat it, I can pay you nothing.

RANJI

How much of Dag's farm have you cultivated this year?

ZEBI

It's my farm.

RANJI

Oh yes, that's right. The government stole half of it from him and gave it to you. So how much did you actually plant?

ZEBI

You want to be careful who you accuse of stealing. If some in the government heard you speak this way...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RANJI

Redistributed -- I hope that makes you feel better.

ZEBI

It doesn't matter to me, I have my farm, that's what I care about. I'm just saying...they are not all reasonable people there. This is our village, we want peace. I want nothing bad to happen to anyone here. Those times are past. We're all trying to build our lives.

Dag comes back in.

DAG

Twenty-five bags, Ranji.

RANJI

Very good, Dag.

Dag and Zebi look at one another, but neither acknowledges the other. Dag goes out.

RANJI (CONT'D)

(to Zebi)

Take your four bags. But you must pay ten percent on your tab before I let you have more. It is a business I have here.

ZEBI

Thank you.

He goes and gets a bag under each arm and goes out.

INT. TRUCK -- CONTINUOUS

Dag and Nick get in the truck, Dag driving, both watching Zebi load the two bags in his bicycle trailer.

NICK

Bloody tough ride back on a bike.

DAG

(sarcastically)

I feel terrible for him.

He puts the truck in gear and pulls past Zebi who glances at them as he heads back into the store.

EXT. ROAD -- LATER

The truck kicks up a plume of dust as it moves through the countryside, much of the ground rocky and unsuitable for farming, left to the wild.

INT. TRUCK -- CONTINUOUS

A fence line begins beyond which are the fields we saw when he was returning from the firefight twenty years earlier to find his wife dead. The fields are weed-filled and neglected now. Dag looks at them with disgust.

DAG

Look at the waste.

P.O.V. DAG AND NICK -- CONTINUOUS

The scrawny fields.

BACK TO SCENE

NICK

To be fair, he doesn't have a tractor. There's only so much he can do by hand.

DAG

Then he shouldn't have the land -- half our farm.

NICK

They want payback.

DAG

Payback? They took your mother.

Nick's mouth tightens and Dag wishes he hadn't said it.

EXT. DRIVE TO FARM -- CONTINUOUS

The truck turns off the road and goes up the long drive between the fenced fields, the plants on the far side lush, the sides of the neat rows covered with protective plastic. In contrast, the scraggly rows on the other side have no plastic protection and the plants are lower and struggling. Dag looks down a rutted drive leading down to Zebi's home, a small corrugated house with a dilapidated shed near it, a fenced garden to one side fairly flush with various vegetables.

EXT. ZEBI'S HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Zebi's wife, TOLANA, looks at Dag's truck going by as she sits in front of the house grinding something in a large

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

bowl, a small girl, HULANA, peeling something while a little boy, ETANA, scrabbles in the dirt with a stick by a large barrel.

INT. TRUCK -- CONTINUOUS

Dag turns away looking disgusted.

DAG

This used to be a great farm.

NICK

It still is, Dad.

DAG

I just don't know what kind of future you and Allison and Jennifer have here, Nick.

NICK

Nobody knows anything. We'll take it day by day. It'll work out.

Dag isn't convinced.

EXT. FARMHOUSE -- MOMENTS LATER

The truck pulls up to the rebuilt farmhouse, much larger than the original with a porch across the front with a patio table on it, on the far side of the house a new wing under construction. In front of the house an attractive young woman, Nick's wife ALLISON, and their nine-year old daughter, JENNIE, work on a flower bed. Jennie runs to meet the truck which goes past the house to the barn. Beyond the house they go past a dirt airstrip where a small low-winged private plane is tied down.

EXT. BARN -- CONTINUOUS

Nick and Dag get out of the truck and Jennie runs to her father who picks her up and twirls her.

NICK

My princess.

JENNIE

My Daddy!

He sets her down as Allison comes over and kisses her husband. Dag takes a treat from his pocket and holds his hands behind his back.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAG
 (to Jennie)
 Which do you choose?

JENNIE
 The left.

Dag pauses a moment, transferring the treat to that hand, then holds it out opens his fist to reveal the treat.

JENNIE (CONT'D)
 I'm always right. Thank you, Papa.

DAG
 (bending)
 My reward?

She gives him a kiss on the cheek and then opens the wrapper. Nick takes a bag of groceries from the cab of the truck. Dag gets two bags from the truck to carry them into the barn. Against the outside wall of the barn three large drums are stored with a metal-treaded small bulldozer on a trailer a bit further along.

NICK
 (to Allison)
 I couldn't find cumin anywhere. It will have to wait until we fly to the capitol.

ALLISON
 I'll take those. You help your dad.

She takes the groceries.

ALLISON (CONT'D)
 Paprika chicken tonight?

NICK
 Sounds great.

They kiss and she heads in while he grabs a couple of the bags from the truck.

ALLISON
 (to Jennie)
 C'mon darling, we're going to cook.

Jennie trots after her mom, Nick watching after them with obvious affection.

EXT. DAG'S FIELD -- DAY

Dag and Nick wearing protective masks and overalls are walking down the rows of plants, each with a metal canister on his back. A hose from the canister runs to a long metal tube with a nozzle spraying on the plants the pest control now mixed with water. As Dag comes up on the end of the row at the fence next to the drive, he looks across to where Zebi is pulling his bike trailer with a plastic bucket in it holding the liquid pest control, ladling it onto his plants with a cup. Dag is scornful and shakes his head slightly, turning his back to head down the next row away from Zebi.

EXT. ZEBI'S FIELD -- CONTINUOUS

Zebi looks across at Dag and Nick wearing their protective clothing with their power sprayers in their lush fields. He looks at his scrawny plants and tries to scoop out the last of the pest control, taking the bucket and emptying it on the plants, shaking out the last dregs, then dropping the cup in it. He scans his field and looks anxious. He turns and heads towards his corrugated house, the cup rattling in the empty bucket bouncing in the little trailer.

INT. FARMHOUSE -- EVENING

The Corlanders are sitting at the dining table enjoying their paprika chicken. There is a KNOCK at the door. Dag goes to answer it and scowls slightly as he finds Zebi standing outside. Dag looks around to make certain Zebi is alone then steps out and closes the door behind him.

EXT. FARMHOUSE PORCH -- CONTINUOUS

ZEBI

I'm sorry to bother you this late.

DAG

We're having dinner.

Zebi hesitates.

DAG (CONT'D)

Okay, you're here. What do you want?

ZEBI

I'm worried about my crop. You saw at the store I could only get four bags of pest control. I have to leave maybe a third of the plants unprotected. I need all of the harvest.

DAG

Your plants are barely coming in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ZEBI

I didn't have enough fertilizer.

DAG

Farming is a tough business. Maybe it's not for you.

ZEBI

I have nothing else. I have to make this succeed.

He doesn't want to ask, but Dag knows what he wants, not that he's in any rush to fill the silence.

ZEBI (CONT'D)

I understand things aren't good between us...

DAG

You stole half my farm, I wonder why.

Zebi is annoyed - he has a secret - but he controls himself.

ZEBI

Could you loan me some of your pest control? I can pay you back when the crop is sold.

DAG

I don't buy more of anything than I need. I don't have any I can loan you.

ZEBI

You saw that the store would not give me credit.

DAG

Ranji's given you a lot of credit, you haven't paid him. What do you expect?

ZEBI

I understand his position, but I have to take care of my crop. Is there any way you could loan me money to buy the pest control I need?

DAG

If I had my whole farm, I might have enough to do that.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

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DAG (CONT'D)

As it is... No, I don't think so. Your government gives away our farms to people who do little more than subsistence farming, it drags everyone down. There's no surplus. We're all sinking along with this country so it's every man for himself. I can't help you. Is there anything else?

Zebi starts to say something, then thinks better of it.

ZEBI

No, I guess not. I'm sorry I interrupted your meal.

DAG

Goodnight.

Dag opens the door and goes back inside, closing the door behind him.

Zebi turns from the closed door and looks around, then goes down the stairs.

EXT. FARMHOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

He starts towards home but at the end of the house he looks towards the barn. All the lights that are on in the house are at the other end. He hesitates a moment then walks towards the barn.

INT. BARN -- MOMENTS LATER

The door opens a crack and Zebi slips in. He closes the door behind him and peers through a crack at the house. He turns back inside the barn and lets his eyes adjust. To one side are the remaining bags of pest control. He hefts one under each arm, then thinks better and sets them down on a third bag, lifting up all three with both arms. It's a heavy load, but he's determined. He stops at the door and looks through the crack again, then pushes open the door and goes out.

EXT. FARMHOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

He pushes the door closed with his foot, worried when it CLACKS. He hurries to the side of the barn, but all is quiet. He sets off across the yard, disappearing into the darkness next to the house.

EXT. ZEBI'S HOUSE -- MORNING

Dag's truck pulls off the main drive and down to Zebi's house, a bit of smoke coming from a barrel to one side. Dag gets out, glances at the smoking barrel, looks at Tolana and Hulana who are working in the garden and don't meet his eye. He goes to Zebi's door, KNOCKS, and Zebi comes out.

DAG

I thought you'd be out in your fields spraying pest control.

ZEBI

My son is ill. He can't stop coughing.

DAG

You know why I'm here.

ZEBI

No, I don't.

DAG

I go in the barn this morning and three bags of pest control are missing.

ZEBI

You think I took it?

DAG

(sarcastically)

No. I'm just wondering if you can suggest any culprits.

ZEBI

Go ahead, look for it.

Dag glances at the smoking barrel.

DAG

Will I find it?

ZEBI

No.

DAG

You used it already.

Zebi says nothing and he doesn't look repentant. The sound of Etana COUGHING comes from inside the house.

ZEBI

I have to attend to my son. If you'll excuse me...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Dag shakes his head.

DAG

Know this -- I find you sneaking
around on my land ever again, I'll
shoot you.

ZEBI

Forewarned is forearmed. We all
have guns. You remember.

DAG

Your people used them on my wife, I
don't forget.

Zebi goes back inside his house. Dag turns and gets back in
his truck, backing out fast, and peeling off down the drive
heading for town.

EXT. VILLAGE STREET -- LATER

Dag's truck pulls up in front of the general store parking
just in front of a Land Rover that looks like something from
Mad Max. He goes inside the store.

INT. GENERAL STORE -- CONTINUOUS

There are four rough looking black men standing around the
freezer area laughing loudly as they taunt one another while
drinking beers, one eating a frozen ice pop. Ranji is eyeing
them warily. Dag glances at the men, then goes to the
counter.

DAG

Morning Ranji.

RANJI

Dag.

One of the men, TENGO SHASHANA, comes over to the counter.

TENGO

(to Ranji)

Hey, give me a Palumbo.

He points to some cigars on a shelf behind the counter.
Ranji gets one of the cigars and hands it to him.

RANJI

Seventy-five cents.

TENGO

I'll settle when we leave.

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CONTINUED:

He takes a step away and gets out some matches to light it.

DAG

(to Ranji)

Moshongo got the extra pest control he wanted. He boosted it right out of my barn last night.

RANJI

Bloody cheek. Get the authorities on him?

DAG

There's no evidence. And the police -- what would they do with their buddy.

Tengo looks over at Dag as he puffs his cigar.

TENGO

(to Dag)

You know Zebi Moshongo?

Dag looks at him.

DAG

Who are you?

TENGO

They call me Tengo. I know Zebi.

DAG

Good for you.

Tengo doesn't like Dag's tone.

TENGO

We killed men together.

Dag isn't intimidated, Ranji moves a step to get closer to something he keeps under the counter. Tengo smiles.

TENGO (CONT'D)

Got shot in the ass, had to go home lie on my face.

He laughs heartily.

TENGO (CONT'D)

You want to see the scar?

DAG

Maybe you can send me a picture.

(CONTINUED)

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Tengo takes a big puff on his cigar and strolls back to join his buddies who have been watching the exchange ready for trouble, relaxing as Tengo rejoins them.

RANJI

(quietly)
London calls.

DAG

I hear that. Put me down for a half dozen more bags. I needed some extra anyway.

RANJI

How does it look this year?

DAG

Best in a long while. It kills me I've got only half the crop I should. And his fields, just a waste. Well, let me get those bags.

RANJI

I'd help you, but...

DAG

I got you.

They glance at the men, Tengo looking back at them. Dag takes up two of the bags and carries them out, Tengo thoughtfully staring after him.

EXT. RIVER -- DAY

Dag and his granddaughter, Jennie, are at Kalnala Rocks fishing, the rocks jutting above the river. Behind the rocks a short way the ground slopes into the dry wash that runs by the road to their farm, only the rocks keeping the river from filling it, an old course of the river having been its source.

JENNIE

The fishes must be taking a nap.

DAG

(beat)
Should we go back now?

JENNIE

Will Mommy and Daddy be home?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAG

I don't think so sweetheart. They should get back around dinnertime.

JENNIE

I hope they have my book.

DAG

If it's anywhere in the city, your mom will find it.

She stands up and begins reeling in her line.

JENNIE

Maybe they'll be early.

Dag smiles and begins reeling in his line.

EXT. ROAD -- LATER

Dag's truck approaches the farm drive.

INT. TRUCK -- CONTINUOUS

As they come up on it, Dag passes Zebi on his bike peddling on the road towards the drive. Zebi glances at the truck as it passes. Dag looks in the rearview mirror.

P.O.V. MIRROR -- CONTINUOUS

Zebi's figure recedes in the cloud of dust.

BACK TO SCENE

Dag looks disgusted and shakes his head slightly.

JENNIE

You're still mad at him for moving onto our farm?

DAG

Yes I am, darling.

JENNIE

It's no fun to be mad.

Dag looks at her thinking 'from the mouth of babes'. He slows to turn in the drive to the farm.

EXT. DRIVE TO FARM -- MOMENTS LATER

Dag's truck passes the drive to Zebi's where his wife is standing out by the road looking worried, Etana in her arms,

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little Hulana holding onto her skirt. She and Dag look at one another as the truck goes past. Jennie waves and she waves back then glances anxiously down the drive for her husband.

INT. TRUCK -- MOMENTS LATER

Dag frowns as he comes up on the farmhouse and sees a battered Land Rover parked in front, the men from Ranji's lounging on the front porch.

DAG
(to himself)
What is this...

He pulls up and the men look at him without moving.

DAG (CONT'D)
(to Jennie)
Stay in the truck, sweetheart.

EXT. FARMHOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Dag gets out and reaches back behind the seat to take out a shotgun that he cradles in the crotch of his arm. He approaches the men, Tengo smiling as he smokes a cigar.

TENGO
Nice to see you again.

DAG
What are you doing here?

TENGO
The question is, what are you doing here?

DAG
I'd like you to leave now.

TENGO
Leave our home? I don't think so. Corlander, right? Lost your wife in the independence struggle, raised your son... That your granddaughter?

DAG
Again, I'd like you to leave. I don't really give a damn what this is.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TENGO

And again, leave our home? Zebi was the commander of our brigade. He got the reward he deserves -- a nice piece of land all his own. Now we get our reward, a nice piece of land for each of us. That may not leave any for you --

(not so amiable)

I don't give a good goddamn. So get in your truck and get out of here while you can.

Suddenly the other men have guns in their hands.

INT. TRUCK -- CONTINUOUS

Jennie is concerned when she sees the guns and rolls down the window, CALLING:

JENNIE

Papa...

EXT. FARMHOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Dag looks at Jennie and gestures for her to stay there.

TENGO

Time to go...

DAG

My son and his wife are flying in soon. I should be here to tell them.

TENGO

We'll tell them. Goodbye.

DAG

You have any papers authorizing this?

TENGO

You have a little girl with you. Go now.

Dag realizes it's no time for a confrontation, especially one he'd lose. Reluctantly, he goes to the truck. He puts the gun behind the seat and gets in.

INT. TRUCK -- CONTINUOUS

JENNIE

I was afraid for you, Papa.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAG

It's all right. We'll go into town,
come back later.

JENNIE

What about mommy and daddy?

DAG

I'll call them on the cell phone.
It will be okay.

JENNIE

Are they taking our farm like that
other man?

Dag doesn't know what to say, starting the truck and swinging around, heading down the drive. He sees Zebi peddling towards them quickly.

EXT. DRIVE TO FARM -- CONTINUOUS

Zebi gets out in the middle of the drive and gestures for Dag to stop.

INT. TRUCK -- CONTINUOUS

Dag wonders what Zebi is doing, but slows and pulls next to him.

EXT. DRIVE TO FARM -- CONTINUOUS

Zebi waits while Dag rolls down his window.

ZEBI

Tolana told me what is happening.

DAG

Did she now.

ZEBI

We have to go talk to them.

DAG

Your government will support them
just like they did for you.

ZEBI

Come with me.

DAG

No. I'm not taking Jennie back up
there.

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CONTINUED:

ZEBI

She can stay with my wife. We must talk to them. I'll put my bike in the back, we'll drop your granddaughter and go back. Tolana will watch her, she can play with Hulana. If you want your farm, I must talk with them.

DAG

About what?

Zebi stares and Dag relents.

DAG (CONT'D)

All right.

Zebi loads his bike in the back and goes around and gets in the passenger side, Jennie sliding over.

INT. TRUCK -- CONTINUOUS

JENNIE

Hello. How are Etana and Hulana?

Zebi smiles at her.

ZEBI

Etana has a bad cold. I don't want you to catch it, you play outside with Hulana.

JENNIE

I'd like that.

Dag looks at him and sees his genuine warmth for Jennie. Life is complicated.

EXT. ZEBI'S HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Tolana, still worried, watches from in front of the house as the truck turns into the drive and pulls up. Zebi gets out and Jennie follows.

ZEBI

(to Tolana)

Jennie is going to stay here until we come back.

TOLANA

Are you sure it's safe?

Zebi kisses her.

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CONTINUED:

ZEBI

She wants to play with Hulana. Don't get her near Etana, I don't want her to catch anything.

Hulana shyly looks at Jennie who smiles at her.

JENNIE

(to Hulana)
We'll have fun.

Hulana smiles a bit. Zebi gets back in the truck.

DAG

(to Jennie)
You do what Tolana tells you now.

JENNIE

Yes, Papa. Be safe.

He backs the truck to the drive and turns for the farmhouse.

INT. TRUCK -- MOMENTS LATER

As they come up on the farmhouse Tengo comes down, the others following.

ZEBI

Don't say anything no matter what I say. It won't help.

EXT. FARMHOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

They get out and Zebi goes up to Tengo, embracing him.

ZEBI

It's been so long.

Tengo steps back, smiling, and salutes.

TENGO

Commander Mosh.

Zebi smiles and salutes back. The others greet Zebi who hugs each of them.

TENGO (CONT'D)

We stopped at your house, but that pretty woman said you were away.

ZEBI

My wife Tolana.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TENGO

You are lucky in every way. How goes the farming life?

ZEBI

It's difficult -- more than you can imagine. I miss the city. There's nothing to do here except work.

TENGO

C'mon, with a woman like that?

Tengo thinks that's funny.

TENGO (CONT'D)

(gesturing at Dag's fields)

Looks like it will be a good harvest.

ZEBI

(nodding)

My tenant is a good farmer, he's teaching me. Someday I'll be a good farmer.

Tengo keeps smiling, but his voice gives him away.

TENGO

Your tenant?

ZEBI

He tells me you think he owns this farm. I own it. He works for me on a percentage basis. You'll have to talk to the authorities in the capitol, find something else.

TENGO

He said it was his farm.

ZEBI

It was his farm. It's my farm now.

TENGO

Why does he live in this big house?

ZEBI

I like cash for the rent more than a big house.

(smiling)

Tengo, I know you too well. You don't want to farm.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ZEBI (CONT'D)

You just thought you could get the crops for an easy payday. But it would be my money you're taking.

Tengo looks as if he'd take Zebi's money if he thought he could get away with it.

ZEBI (CONT'D)

In two months, we'll be harvesting -- you want some work, any of you -- it's good wages.

TENGO

(laughing)

Wages for sweating in a hot field -- I'll be running back for that.

(beat)

Thought this was going to be a sweet takeoff.

ZEBI

Something else will come up for you. Keep your eyes open.

TENGO

Well, it was good to see you anyway.

They shake hands.

TENGO (CONT'D)

Liberation.

ZEBI

Liberation.

They all shake hands with Zebi and then clamber back into the Land Rover. It starts up and they swing around and speed off. Dag looks at Zebi.

DAG

Why did you do that for me, Moshongo? We've never done anything but hate one another.

ZEBI

You know, you've never called me by my first name.

DAG

Zebi. I'm sorry. Please, call me Dag.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ZEBI

Dag -- such an ugly name. So is Zebi.

They both smile.

DAG

I've been bitter about you taking half our land, but this was a huge favor. I owe you one.

(looks down the road)

I hope they don't find out the real situation.

ZEBI

They'd have to look up records and Tengo's too lazy for that. So -- now I get your help growing my plants?

DAG

Whatever you need.

ZEBI

I need to know what you know.

Dag puts out his hand and Zebi shakes it.

EXT. ZEBI'S FIELD -- DAY

Dag and Zebi watch as a large overhead sprinkler moves under its own power down the rows of Zebi's crops.

DAG

With the fertilizer we put down they'll grow like they're trying to reach the sun. Still, with the season so far advanced, they won't be what they could have been, but it will be a lot better.

ZEBI

This is what I wanted. The stone is lifted from my back.

DAG

I was carrying a load myself. I'm glad we both get to set it down.

ZEBI

The lessons of life.

They watch the sprinkler...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANGLE ON

The water spraying downward in the sunlight sparkles like diamonds.

EXT. FARMHOUSE -- MORNING

Dag and Nick are working up on the new construction of the farmhouse as Zebi rides up on his bike. He looks anxious. Dag and Nick climb down to meet him.

DAG

What's up?

ZEBI

My son is getting worse. I'm wondering, would it be possible to borrow your truck to take him to the clinic?

DAG

Of course. You can drive?

ZEBI

I was a cab driver in Jo'burg after the war.

DAG

No kidding, I didn't know that.

ZEBI

It was more dangerous than the war. I hated it. On the other hand, I made more money than I do now.

Nick gets out the keys to the truck and hands them to Zebi.

NICK

You want me to go with you?

ZEBI

No, you're busy. Tolana is coming with Hulana. Thank you for this.

DAG

What's wrong with Etana?

ZEBI

He's keep coughing and he has no energy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NICK

I hope they can do something for him at that clinic. They're not real sharp.

ZEBI

We'll see. I should be back in a couple of hours. Anything you need from town?

NICK

Allison, Jennie and I went in yesterday. We're set.

DAG

Don't rush. We're not finishing here anytime soon.

ZEBI

Well, thank you.

NICK

Good luck.

Zebi loads his bike in the back of the truck, gets in and takes off fast, waving from the window. They watch him speed down the drive.

NICK (CONT'D)

He drives fast.

DAG

We gave our truck to a cab driver.

NICK

I've got to say -- he's a nice enough guy.

DAG

I kind of wish he'd kept being a cab driver but... Considering what could have happened, I guess it's worked out all right.

NICK

I told you it would, remember?

Dag remembers, but he's still not convinced.

EXT. FARMHOUSE PORCH -- LATER

The family is having lunch at the patio table on the porch. A gleaming Mercedes comes up the drive.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NICK

Maybe Zebi traded in the truck.

DAG

Have to be a hell of a trader.

The Mercedes pulls up and stops, the tinted windows keeping them from seeing who's inside. The driver's door opens and a well-dressed skinny black man gets out and comes around the SUV.

DAG (CONT'D)

Can we help you?

The man says nothing and opens the passenger door. A large, heavy black man in an expensive suit, GEORGE FUMILO, climbs out, the skinny guy closing the door.

EXT. FARMHOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Dag comes down to meet him.

DAG

Can we help you?

FUMILO

Yes, yes you can. I'm looking for Zebi Moshongo.

DAG

You passed his place on the way in, on the other side.

FUMILO

That hovel? Why would Mr. Moshongo be living there?

DAG

That's his house.

FUMILO

Whose house is this?

DAG

This is my house -- our house. I'm Dag Corlander.

FUMILO

The former owner -- and you still live in the house?

DAG

Who are you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He snaps his fingers and his assistant thrusts a card at Dag who takes it and reads:

P.O.V. DAG -- CONTINUOUS

DR. GEORGE FUMILO, J.D.
INVESTMENTS

BACK TO SCENE

DAG

Pithy.

He tries to give it back to Fumilo who waves it away, Dag sticking it in his pocket.

FUMILO

(to his assistant)

Give him one with my cell number.

The assistant takes another card from the case and writes on it.

FUMILO (CONT'D)

Would you be so kind as to give that to Mr. Moshongo when he returns -- tell him I would appreciate if he'd contact me.

The assistant hands Dag the card he wrote on, Dag putting it in his pocket with the other.

DAG

Can I tell him what it's about?

FUMILO

I'm interested in the farm.

DAG

To do what with it?

FUMILO

Purchase it.

DAG

I don't think he wants to sell.

FUMILO

No? Perhaps not. Some of the soldiers who get farms do work them. But many find it's not for them.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FUMILO (CONT'D)

From the papers, Mr. Moshongo got one of the larger ones, but I'm sure you know that. Keeping you on, he apparently can't handle it by himself so... I'm amazed about the house though. I've never seen that. At any rate, if you'll be so kind as to pass along my card.

DAG

Did you learn about this farm from Tengo... I can't recall his last name.

FUMILO

Tengo Shashana. He does odd jobs for me.

DAG

So he told you Moshongo owns this whole farm and I rent the house?

FUMILO

He told me about the farm. And I checked the papers on file in the capitol. In any case, if you'll give my card to Mr. Moshongo... Good day.

He turns back to his Mercedes, the flunky hurrying to open the door. He disappears inside and the flunky trots around and gets in, the car turns and heads back out. Dag goes back to the others.

EXT. FARMHOUSE PORCH -- CONTINUOUS

DAG

Guy wants to buy the farm.

NICK

We heard.

DAG

He thinks Zebi owns it all, including our house.

NICK

That's good. Zebi tells him he doesn't want to sell, he goes away. If he knew we own it, he makes a deal with some other ex-soldier and uses him to grab it all.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAG

Zebi didn't like Tengo because he was a scam artist -- grab the crops, sell the land. This guy is an investor and looks like he's got money.

NICK

Well, Zebi can't sell our land. Maybe he'll sell his own.

DAG

That Tengo character turned him on to us. But he said he checked the papers on file in the capitol, too.

Dag appears pensive.

DAG (CONT'D)

I think I'll fly down there this afternoon and look at those papers myself.

NICK

You want me to grade that rough spot before you take off?

DAG

No, a little dip helps me get in the air.

ALLISON

Would you have time to pick up a few things? I've got a shopping list a mile long.

DAG

Of course.

JENNIE

Can I get my book this time?

DAG

I'll look for it, darling. And if I can't find it, I'll bring you a surprise.

JENNIE

What?

DAG

If I told you that, it wouldn't be a surprise, would it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JENNIE
 (exasperated)
 Oh Papa.

They all look at her with amusement and obvious love.

EXT. AIR -- AFTERNOON

Dag is at the controls of the plane flying over the African countryside. He looks down at the view with a smile on his face, not noticing in the distance...

EXT. AFRICAN COUNTRYSIDE -- CONTINUOUS

The bustling front of a line of driver ants disappears both directions into the distance. The line is made up of thousands of individual rivers of ants that advance in a strange motion, some of the ants at the front going ahead a short ways, then reversing course to rejoin the group while others come out and extend the advance slightly before running back. On the edges of each stream are the guarding giant soldier ants with their menacing heads. All around the column birds dart down grabbing the insects fleeing for their lives from the ants.

EXT. SWARM -- CONTINUOUS

One river overtakes a large CATERPILLAR and envelops the poor bug. In a moment it stops moving and the ants start butchering it with their fierce cutting mandibles, the pieces being carried back towards the dense center of the colony.

EXT. AFRICAN COUNTRYSIDE -- CONTINUOUS

The long front of the column continues its advance. One of the birds grabs an insect on the wing and heads upward where above it...

ANGLE ON

Dag's plane disappears into the distance.

EXT. STREET IN THE CAPITOL -- LATER

ESTABLISHING SHOT of a busy avenue of government buildings in the capitol city.

INT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING -- CONTINUOUS

DAG is at a counter reading a large, official book. With a grim expression, he slams it shut. The clerk comes over.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLERK

Get what you wanted?

DAG

Exactly the opposite.

CLERK

You be finished with the book?

Dag slides the book towards him and heads out, the clerk looking after him.

EXT. FARMHOUSE -- LATER

The plane comes in low over the farm fields and then over the farmhouse. Nick is grading the runway in the bulldozer, the truck with the trailer attached pulled up to one side. Dag buzzes him and swings around for another run. Nick waves and heads off the strip, driving the bulldozer up onto the trailer as Dag lands the plane.

EXT. LANDING STRIP -- MOMENTS LATER

The plane taxis to a stop and Nick pulls up in the truck, getting out as Dag emerges.

NICK

How's that runway feel?

Nick notes his father's grim expression.

NICK (CONT'D)

What is it?

DAG

They gave him the whole farm. He's owns everything.

NICK

What?

DAG

It's all his.

NICK

Then why didn't he take it? What is he doing?

Dag shakes his head. He looks at the truck.

DAG

So Moshongo made it back in one piece.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He goes back in the plane and gets out a box with groceries and other things, putting it in the back of the truck.

NICK

What are we going to do?

DAG

I don't know.

Dag takes out a flight case from the plane, then begins tying down the plane.

NICK

What is Zebi up to? Why didn't he tell us? He's been in the shack for a year when he could have had our house?

DAG

Maybe he's just waiting until the crop is ready and then he'll take it.

NICK

You think he'd do that?

DAG

The point is he can and there's not a thing we can do about it. We've lost everything -- twenty-five years.

NICK

Should we go talk to him?

Dag picks up the flight case and heads for the truck.

DAG

Let's think things through a bit. There's no rush now. But I'll tell you this -- I'll burn down everything and salt the fields before I'll let him have it.

They climb in the truck.

INT. TRUCK -- CONTINUOUS

NICK

Did you get Jennie's book? She's been going on about it all afternoon.

DAG

At least one of us will be happy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Neither of them are happy.

EXT. ZEBI'S HOUSE -- DAY

Zebi is pulling weeds in the garden by his house when he sees Dag walk into his drive. He goes to greet him.

ZEBI

Hello.

Dag nods.

ZEBI (CONT'D)

I hope there's nothing wrong with your truck.

DAG

No, I just felt like getting some exercise.

ZEBI

Good. I'd hate to think I broke it in some way.

DAG

How's Etana?

ZEBI

They gave him some medicine, but there's no improvement yet. They said it would take some time. It was good to get him to the clinic though, so thank you.

Dag takes from his pocket the card Fumilo gave him.

DAG

A man came by yesterday and gave me this to give to you.

Zebi looks at the card.

ZEBI

What did he want, did he say?

DAG

He wants to buy your farm -- all of it.

Zebi puts the card in his pocket.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAG (CONT'D)

He said a lot of the soldiers who had been given farms find they don't really like farming.

ZEBI

Farming is hard. I'd imagine he's finding a lot of sellers.

DAG

You don't have any interest in finding out what he'd pay?

ZEBI

It's pointless. Even if I wanted to sell, the prices are low now. With the redistribution a lot of people think they're going to get land for free. In a few years, when things settle down, the prices will rise.

Dag wonders if that's what his game is.

DAG

You know, Moshongo -- you're a lot sharper than I took you for at first.

Zebi isn't sure if that's a compliment or something else, especially as he's noticed that Dag is calling him by his last name again.

DAG (CONT'D)

This Fumilo character talked to your ex-guerilla buddy, so he thought the whole farm was yours. He couldn't believe you weren't living in our house.

Zebi tries to appear impassive, but he's a bit nervous.

ZEBI

He thinks it's my farm, it's understandable.

DAG

He seemed too professional to take the word of someone like Tengo.

ZEBI

Tengo can be very persuasive. He's rough looking but he's not dumb.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAG

He bought your story without checking
any of the papers.

ZEBI

He is lazy.

DAG

(beat)

So you think prices will be higher
in a few years.

ZEBI

It's like they say -- the one thing
they're not making more of is land.

Etana can be heard coughing from inside the house, Zebi
looking concerned.

ZEBI (CONT'D)

I need to see to Etana. Would you
like some lunch?

DAG

No, no thanks. I'll be getting on
home -- or what I call home.

ZEBI

Okay. Thanks for passing on the
message. I guess I'll have to call
him and tell him to look elsewhere.

DAG

Not interested in selling your land?

ZEBI

No. With your help, it's going much
better. Thank you again. And thanks
for the truck.

DAG

Anytime. What's mine is yours.

Zebi smiles and goes inside while Dag turns and heads back
up the drive, kicking a rock out of his way with more violence
than is necessary.

EXT. FARMHOUSE -- MOMENTS LATER

Dag stops and looks at the farmhouse as he walks up to it.

DAG

I won't lose it Amanda. I just won't.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He goes inside.

INT. FARMHOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Dag sits down with Nick in the living room.

NICK
So what did he say?

DAG
He's keeping up the charade.

NICK
You didn't tell him you know?

DAG
No, not until we figure something out. I think I know what he's doing though. He went on about how the prices are low now because of the redistribution program, but will go up in a couple of years. He let's us keep up the place, then...

NICK
You really think he's that sneaky?

DAG
I'm afraid we're going to find out.

They sit lost in thought.

EXT. FARMHOUSE -- NIGHT

ESTABLISHING SHOT of the farmhouse in the darkness, all the lights off.

INT. DAG'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Dag is awakened by a loud POUNDING at the front door. He gets up and puts on a robe and goes out.

INT. FARMHOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Nick joins him in the hallway, Jennie coming out rubbing sleep from her eyes. Allison goes to her.

ALLISON
(to Jennie)
C'mon darling, back to bed.

She takes her into her bedroom. Nick and Dag head for the door.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NICK

I guess if it were trouble they
wouldn't be knocking.

DAG

Those days are over -- I think.

They go to the door and open it to find Zebi holding his son
in his arms, the boy appearing unconscious.

ZEBI

I think he's dying. I can't wake
him. I need to borrow your truck to
get him to the clinic.

NICK

The clinic isn't even open at night.
He needs to get to the hospital.

ZEBI

The clinic is better than nothing.

Nick looks at his father.

NICK

I've got to fly them.

DAG

You stay with Allison and Jennie,
I'll take them. Go and get the plane
ready while I get dressed.

(to Zebi)

Take Etana out to the plane with
Nick. I'll be there in a few minutes.

ZEBI

Thank you, thank you.

Nick and Zebi head for the plane while Dag goes back to his
bedroom.

INT. DAG'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Dag opens a laptop computer connected to a printer. He starts
it booting up then throws on some clothes. He goes back to
the computer and types a moment, reads the screen, then prints
out two copies of what he's typed, puts them in his flight
case and heads out.

EXT. LANDING STRIP -- MOMENTS LATER

Nick gets out of the idling plane as Dag arrives.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NICK
You're all set pop. Good luck.

DAG
This may work out.

Nick doesn't know what he means, but Dag is climbing into the plane.

INT. PLANE -- CONTINUOUS

Etana is strapped in the back seat with Zebi in the passenger seat.

ZEBI
It's very dark.

DAG
I've taken off from here so often I
could do it with my eyes closed.

He checks the various controls.

DAG (CONT'D)
Looks good.

He takes his flight control bag and gets out the two sheets of paper.

DAG (CONT'D)
Before we go...

He hands them to Zebi who looks puzzled, then reads one, looks at the other, then at Dag.

DAG (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, but that's the way it's
got to be. I do a favor for you,
you do one for me.

ZEBI
How do you know I own it all?

DAG
I saw the papers in the capitol. I
don't know why you didn't tell us,
but I don't intend to lose my entire
farm.

ZEBI
So I sign this or you let my son
die...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Dag doesn't respond.

ZEBI (CONT'D)

Give me a pen.

Dag hands him a pen and Zebi signs the papers. Dag looks at them and puts them in his flight case and stores it away. He takes out his wallet and extracts a dollar that he extends to Zebi.

DAG

Take it.

Reluctantly, Zebi takes the bill.

DAG (CONT'D)

Now it's legal. Put on your seatbelt.

Zebi stuffs the bill in a pocket, checks his son, and puts on his seatbelt. Dag revs the engines and the plane begins moving down the runway.

EXT. LANDING STRIP -- CONTINUOUS

Nick watches as the plane moves faster and faster down the strip in the darkness until just the lights on it are visible. It rises into the air and climbs away. Nick heads for the truck.

EXT. HOSPITAL -- LATER

A taxi pulls up to the emergency room at the hospital. Dag gets out of the front passenger seat and opens the back door, Zebi holding his son's head stretched out on the back seat.

DAG

You get him inside. I'll take care of the cab.

Zebi gently lowers his son's head and gets out, reaching in and lifting his son out, then hurrying inside. Dag pays the DRIVER.

DRIVER

I hope the boy is all right.

DAG

Thank you.

Dag goes inside.

INT. HOSPITAL -- LATER

Dag and Zebi sit in the waiting room, a couple of seats between them. The DOCTOR comes out from the emergency room.

DOCTOR
Mr. Moshongo?

Zebi stands up, Dag following.

ZEBI
Yes.

DOCTOR
Your son -- Etana?

Zebi nods. He's scared.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
Etana has a fairly advanced case of pneumonia. We've started him on an IV drip with antibiotics and we're going to admit him. I'd guess he'd be here a week or so to knock it out. He doesn't appear to be in any immediate danger and I wouldn't worry about him unduly. He seems in good health otherwise and though I can't make any promises of course, I expect him to respond fairly quickly.

ZEBI
So that's good news then?

DOCTOR
I think so. It's a dangerous disease, there's no doubt. It was good you got him here when you did. But I'm pretty certain it was in time.

ZEBI
(with relief)
Oh... Thank you so much, doctor.

DOCTOR
You're welcome. He'll be down here until the morning when we move him to a room. If you'd like to stay with him, you're welcome to. We might even find you a cot.

ZEBI
Yes, I'd like that, thank you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The doctor smiles and pats him on the shoulder and leaves. Zebi and Dag stand awkwardly for a second.

DAG

So, I'll wait with you.

ZEBI

No, I'm not going back while he's in the hospital. Tolana's brother lives here, I'll stay with him.

DAG

All right. When Etana gets better, you call me, I'll fly in and pick you up. If you need me for anything in between...

ZEBI

Thank you for getting us here.

Dag nods. They drift from the waiting room to the lobby, a lonely reception desk with a light on to one side, no one at it. Zebi looks to it.

DAG

(beat)

About the agreement... I would have brought you no matter what. I wasn't going to leave you and Etana back there. I could never do something like that.

Zebi nods.

DAG (CONT'D)

Look -- Tolana and Hulana will want to come in to see Etana, I'll bring them tomorrow.

ZEBI

That would be very nice of you.

DAG

Okay. Tolana knows her brother's number, where he lives if you're not here?

ZEBI

Yes.

DAG

Look, this is fair. You have to understand my position.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ZEBI

I understand.

They stand awkwardly for a moment.

DAG

All right, I'm going to go. I'll be
back tomorrow with Tolana and Hulana.

Zebi nods and slowly walks back towards the waiting room.
Dag stares after him a moment, then goes out the doors.
They close and the lobby is empty.

EXT. DAG'S FIELD -- DAY

The sun shines on Dag's fields, the wind stirring the plants.
A distant plume of dust appears on the road. Fumilo's
Mercedes followed by a less pristine Suburban appear raising
the dust. They slow and turn into the drive.

EXT. FARMHOUSE -- MOMENTS LATER

The two vehicles stop in front of the farmhouse. The flunky
alights and runs around and opens the door for his boss,
Fumilo descending. Three surveyors have gotten out of the
Suburban and are getting out surveying equipment from the
rear. Dag and Nick come out of the house onto the porch and
then down into the yard.

DAG

(to Fumilo)

What is this?

FUMILO

Ah, Mr. Corlander. How goes it?

DAG

What's with this surveying?

FUMILO

I have to be certain of the size of
the property, boundary lines, that
sort of thing.

Fumilo smiles -- a cat with a mouse.

FUMILO (CONT'D)

Zebi showed me the letter you forced
him to sign.

DAG

I didn't force him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FUMILO

No? Sign this or no plane ride to the hospital for your dying son?

DAG

I never said that.

FUMILO

Contracts signed under coercion are invalid. Trust me, I'm a lawyer.

DAG

(emphasizing each word))

I-never-said-that.

FUMILO

The threat was implied. Your piece of paper wouldn't stand up in court even if I didn't know the people I do know. It's null and void, dead as... Well, there are lots of dead things in this world now, aren't there?

NICK

That sounds like an implied threat.

FUMILO

You see, that's why you need an education in the law for this kind of thing. There's no threat because I'm not trying to get anything from you.

DAG

Except our farm.

FUMILO

It was ironic. When I first talked with Zebi, he told me he would never sell. I asked him why you were in his house and he told me that regardless of what the law said, it wasn't his house. Imagine that. Then, you make him sign that pathetic 'agreement' when he's concerned about his son's life...and here we are. What is it Shakespeare wrote, 'hoist by your own petard'? Whatever is a petard?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAG

I'm going to go inside and get my gun, and if you're not gone by the time...

FUMILO

Don't be ridiculous. It won't give you your farm back, just take away your freedom. That's not something you want to throw away lightly, considering your circumstances.

Dag starts up the stairs, but Nick stops him.

NICK

Dad, no. We'll fight it in the courts.

DAG

There's no such thing here.

NICK

There are police. Guns won't help us.

FUMILO

Sensible.

NICK

(to Fumilo)
Shut your bloody mouth.

FUMILO

Fine with me.
(to the surveyors)
Send your report to my office. If they give you any trouble, ring me. I'll have the authorities here with dispatch.

One of the surveyors nods and they begin carrying their equipment towards the fields. Fumilo gestures with his head and the flunky opens the door of the Mercedes and Fumilo disappears inside, the flunky heading for the driver's side. The window rolls down and a grinning Fumilo says:

FUMILO (CONT'D)

By the way, you're not going to get your dollar back either.

The car starts, Fumilo rolls his window back up and the car starts off.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAG

Son of a bitch. This isn't going to happen.

NICK

We'll take the agreement to court.

Dag shakes his head.

DAG

I have to persuade Moshongo.

NICK

Dad -- I want you to know, whatever happens, it's all right. We had a good run here. If it disappears, we'll be okay. There are lots of other things to do in the world.

Dag puts his hand on Nick's shoulder.

NICK (CONT'D)

You won't do anything foolish? Promise me.

DAG

No, nothing foolish. The trouble is I don't know what's sensible either.

They start walking towards the plane.

EXT. HOSPITAL -- LATER

ESTABLISHING SHOT of the hospital.

INT. HOSPITAL -- CONTINUOUS

Dag is sitting in the lobby, waiting. The RECEPTIONIST comes back in to her desk.

RECEPTIONIST

Are you sure you want to keep waiting? I can tell Mr. Moshongo you were here.

Dag smiles and shakes his head.

DAG

No, thank you. I've waited this long, no sense bailing out now.

She nods and sits down behind the high desk. Dag gets up and paces a bit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The doors open and Zebi comes in with Tolana carrying Hulana. He looks at Dag and speaks to Tolana who goes with her daughter through the lobby towards the elevators, nodding shyly and smiling at Dag. Zebi comes over to him.

ZEBI

We have a ride back with Tolana's brother.

DAG

Fumilo came to the farm with surveyors. They're surveying my fields.

(beat)

I told you I would have brought you and Etana even if you didn't sign it. There was no coercion.

ZEBI

Then it was an odd moment to give that to me.

DAG

You've been lying the whole time. You let me think I owned the farm so I'd work it, bring in a good crop. Were you going to throw me off just after the harvest, take it for yourself?

Zebi shakes his head.

DAG (CONT'D)

What is your game then?

ZEBI

Do you know how much it costs for a week's stay in this hospital, the medicine?

DAG

I'll pay the bill.

ZEBI

That's not the point.

DAG

No? Then what is the point?

ZEBI

I've had nothing my entire life.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ZEBI (CONT'D)

When I was by myself, that was one thing. Now -- I can't take care of my family. We have to beg rides, accept charity when we're sick, crowd with a relative in a single room, let him feed us... This is what I fought for?

DAG

That's what the farm is for -- so you can take care of your family. That's what my farm is for -- so I can take care of my family -- my son, his wife, my granddaughter. My wife gave her life for that farm. I've spent my life on it.

ZEBI

You've made a lot from that farm.

DAG

No. I've invested a lot in that farm.

ZEBI

My son was facing death and I had to beg for help. I will never let that happen again.

DAG

Your son is fine.

ZEBI

Because of what others gave me. But if they didn't give...

DAG

Mosh...Zebi, we all depend on others.

ZEBI

Nice words, but so are these -- God bless the child that has his own.

Zebi looks at Dag harshly, then turns and goes to the elevators. Dag follows as Zebi gets into a car. The door closes with Zebi and Dag staring at one another.

INT. TRUCK -- MORNING

Dag and Nick drive in the truck towards town.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAG

I've got to wonder if it's worth building onto the house now.

NICK

Begin at the beginning and go on till you come to the end; then stop.

DAG

Through the Looking-Glass. Your mom used to read you that.

NICK

I've never forgotten.

Dag is silent a moment, remembering.

DAG

You know, I've been thinking -- after the harvest you and Allison and Jennie might get away for awhile. Maybe visit her parents in Auckland.

NICK

Sounds good. And you'll come with us?

DAG

No.

NICK

Dad, if anyone needs to get away it's you with all that's been going on. Auckland is a beautiful place.

DAG

Beautiful enough to live there?

Nick shrugs.

DAG (CONT'D)

Out of Africa.

Suddenly, Dag swerves then slams on the brakes as there is an apparition in the road -- a human form waving its arms, enveloped in a shimmering blackness from head to toe.

DAG (CONT'D)

What in god's name...

EXT. ROAD -- CONTINUOUS

The writhing human form falls flat as Dag and Nick leap from the truck and run to it.

As they look down, they see it's a woman, ANN BERING, covered in driver ants. Nick rips off his shirt and begins flailing at them as Dag runs back to the truck and yanks off the auxiliary gas can strapped on the side. He opens it as he runs back to the woman and Nick, pouring the gasoline over her body, careful not to get it in her face. Nick bends and uses his shirt to clear her face. She brushes frantically to help them. Dag takes her hand and pulls her up. They move away from the pile of ants, Dag continuing to splash them off her body as she rubs, Nick wiping her head clear. She's a middle-aged woman in very good shape, attractive.

ANN

My friend -- we've got to save him.

DAG

Where?

She points into the countryside.

ANN

That way. He carried me. He made me run. We've got to get to him.

She grimaces and pulls off her blouse and slips out of her shorts leaving her in her underwear, lots of ants scurrying around, her body a mass of red spots from the bites. But quickly they get her almost ant free and Nick grabs her clothes and flails them against the ground, turning the pockets of the shorts inside out. Ann heads for the other side of the truck starting to unhook her bra, disappearing behind the truck for some privacy.

DAG

Can you tell us what happened?

ANN (O.S.)

We were on holiday trekking. We woke up with them all over us. We ran but went the wrong way, right into the swarm. Paul tried to carry me. It was too much. We kept falling. He made me run.

DAG

How far did you come?

ANN (O.S.)

It seemed forever. It's a long ways.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 But he may have gotten out himself.
 We've got to hurry to get to him.

She reappears and Nick hands her the cleaned clothes that she quickly puts on.

ANN (CONT'D)
 I was hoping to find water, but that creek was dry. You've saved my life.

DAG
 You were lucky, we were headed to town. There's nothing else out here.

She's dressed and Dag heads for the truck, she and Nick following.

DAG (CONT'D)
 You tell us which way to go.

ANN
 (pointing)
 That way. They're impossible to miss. It's the most horrific thing I've ever seen.

They climb in the truck.

INT. TRUCK -- CONTINUOUS

Dag drives, she's in the middle.

ANN
 Please go as fast as you can. Every second may count.

Dag downshifts and accelerates.

EXT. ROAD -- CONTINUOUS

The truck roars off the road into the countryside.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE -- MOMENTS LATER

The truck slows as it goes down into the dry wash, bouncing across and struggling up the other side where Dag accelerates once again heading into hilly country.

INT. TRUCK -- MOMENTS LATER

As the truck slowly climbs a rise, another rise behind them, Dag has to dodge a flow of animals coming towards them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAG
Fleeing from the ants.

ANN
We should be close.

As the truck crests the rise, Dag is shocked as he stares ahead, stopping the truck. Nick is as stunned as his father, Ann staring with a tortured look on her face.

P.O.V. DAG, NICK AND ANN -- CONTINUOUS

Below in the valley and up and over the far hill, and to either side as far as they can see, is a solid black mass of driver ants, tens of millions of them, the swarm seething and shimmering in the sun, eating everything in its path. All along the line of advance, birds are diving in and out to catch the insects being driven before the horde as they try to escape certain death.

BACK TO SCENE

NICK
That can't be.

ANN
He's down there. Please.

Dag starts the truck down the hillside

EXT. HILLSIDE -- MOMENTS LATER

They pull up just yards from the front of the swarm that stretches into the distance on both sides of them and as far as they can see ahead. The ants cover every bit of the scattered vegetation that they've reached, cutting it up and carrying it back into the swarm, along with the bugs they've overtaken and killed. Flies dart in and out catching other bugs, their BUZZING adding to the din of the ants as they cut and move the vegetation they cover, STACCATO SOUNDS of other jumping insects trying to get away.

ANGLE ON

The ragged front is an in-and-out motion of the ants, the general line advancing at a rate of a foot a minute, the crush so dense that the ants run over one another in a thick mass. Some tumble from the top off to the sides of the different lines, rushing to get back in the scramble. The ones not running forward have their heads raised threatening the world with their moving antennae and fierce mandibles.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BACK TO SCENE

NICK
What a weird smell.

DAG
(to Ann)
Where is he?

She looks, then points at a small hillock.

ANN
There. On the other side. He fell
going up. They're are so many more
already.

Dag puts the truck in gear.

NICK
You're going to drive in?

Dag shrugs and takes off into the ants.

EXT. ANT SWARM -- CONTINUOUS

The truck leaves tracks of crushed ants as it moves forward, the other ants filling in quickly, oblivious to the mayhem. The tires throw up a spray of ants that begin to cover the front of the truck.

INT. TRUCK -- CONTINUOUS

Ants are on the hood and then begin to blow and crawl up on the windshield so that Dag puts on the wipers.

NICK
This is getting hairy.

Dag skirts the hillock and comes around to where a human form covered totally in ants lies on the hillside above them. Ann's husband is not just dead but already being stripped to the bone. She bends and sobs as Nick tries to comfort her, both he and Dag staring in horror.

DAG
I'm sorry, there's nothing we can
do. We have to get out of here.

He starts forward, heading back the way they came.

EXT. SWARM -- CONTINUOUS

The body of Ann's boyfriend lies on the ground grinning in death with half his lower face eaten away, the ants leaving the glistening bone to gnaw on the remaining flesh.

INT. TRUCK -- CONTINUOUS

The truck begins to buck as the engine sputters, Dag fighting to keep it moving forward.

DAG

They're getting in the carburetor or something.

NICK

Don't let us get stuck in here.

Ann is oblivious, her crying having subsided as she covers her eyes and breaths heavily. Dag and Nick are intent on their own plight. Dag puts the truck in neutral and revs the engine to try to clear it out a bit, putting it back in gear and accelerating, the edge of the swarm ahead of them.

NICK (CONT'D)

We could probably run from here, thank god.

DAG

I think we'll make it.
(beat, looks at Nick)
They're heading right for the farm.

NICK

They'll keep coming?

DAG

It depends on how long they've been on the move. They start when the queen begins laying new larvae and go for a couple of weeks. We need to find out where they started from, then we can estimate where they're likely to stop. We can get the plane and fly over them, follow their trail backwards.

NICK

They reach the crops, they're gone.

DAG

Completely.

The truck sputters again and Dag again puts it in neutral and revs it up, then puts it back in gear.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ann looks up, steeling herself.

ANN

Thank you for trying.

DAG

I'm so sorry we couldn't get him at least. We'll get his remains after they've passed.

ANN

He died to save me.

They're all quiet as the truck finally breaks free of the ants.

NICK

Oh, thank you lord.

EXT. HILLSIDE -- CONTINUOUS

Dag drives up the hillside a short ways then stops. He and Nick get out, Dag getting out the gas can again. Nick uses his shirt still to flail away at the ants covering the front of the truck, then quickly opens the hood.

P.O.V. DAG AND NICK -- CONTINUOUS

The inside of the engine is a seething mass of ants.

BACK TO SCENE

NICK

They're everywhere.

Dag splashes the gasoline over the engine, washing away the ants. Nick goes back to the cab and sweeps out the ones that have gotten up in there, having to brush and slap ants that get on him. Ann is lost in her own thoughts, sitting disconsolately. Dag comes back and stands with Nick.

DAG

(to Ann)

We should get you to the clinic in town. Is there someone you can call?

She nods.

ANN

Paul's brother. He'll come. I'll be fine. He died to save me. He was a good man.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAG
Your husband?

ANN
No, we were friends. I'm a widow
and we both love -- loved -- trekking.
He was wonderful.

She looks as if she's going to cry again and Dag and Nick are moved.

DAG
Let's get you to the clinic.

Then climb in the truck and it departs, disappearing over the top of the hill.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HILLSIDE -- LATER

The ant swarm ripples with movement as they head up the hill past where Dag stopped the truck earlier. Suddenly the plane comes over the top of the hillside just where the truck departed.

INT. PLANE -- CONTINUOUS

Dag and Nick look down at the ants spread out below them.

NICK
They've made progress.

DAG
And they'll keep on making progress.
They're relentless.

The fly for a few moments with the ants as thick as ever, finally beginning to thin out and then they end. The land behind them is completely bare, everything eaten. In just a few moments, however, the land returns to the normal countryside, the vegetation unharmed.

DAG (CONT'D)
Bad news. This is where they'd been nesting. They've just started out.

NICK
And right on line for the farm.

Dag begins to bank the plane.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE -- CONTINUOUS

The plane turns and heads back over the ants again.

INT. PLANE -- CONTINUOUS

The plane passes the end of the ants at the top of the hill. There's another valley and then another hill beyond.

DAG

We'll have to get them to go some other way.

NICK

How?

They come up on the second hill.

DAG

Maybe the pest control would work. We spread it on a diagonal on the far side of this hill here, they turn to avoid it and start in a different direction.

NICK

It's going to take a huge amount.

DAG

Hopefully it won't take a wide line -- they'll start dying as soon as they get into it -- but it will have to be as long as the front of their advance so they can't get around it.

They pass over the top of the hill.

DAG (CONT'D)

We use the hill and gravity will help us. We spread it on the far side here on an angle that goes with the slope and they may shear off to take the easiest path.

NICK

How much time do you think we have before they get over the hill?

DAG

They don't have any set raiding pattern, day or night. If they keep coming, they'll easily reach the top of that hill sometime tomorrow afternoon.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NICK

This is going to be a fun day.

DAG

Just part of a fun life.

EXT. HILLSIDE -- CONTINUOUS

The plane goes on heading for the farm.

EXT. GENERAL STORE -- LATER

Dag and Nick pull up to the general store in town. They get out and go inside.

INT. GENERAL STORE -- CONTINUOUS

RANJI

Hey, I hear about that woman's husband and the ants. It's awful

DAG

Yes it was -- it is. Ranji, we're going to need a lot of pest control.

RANJI

To kill them?

NICK

If you'd seen them, you'd know how ridiculous that is.

DAG

We're going to try to divert them -- get them going in a different direction, away from the farm.

RANJI

Ah. I've got maybe thirty bags.

DAG

We'll take all those and we're going to need more.

RANJI

More than that? Goodness. I may be able to have it put in the delivery tomorrow. How much more would you want?

DAG

Another fifty bags.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RANJI

Fifty? Are you certain?

DAG

I'm just hoping it's enough.

RANJI

That's more than a thousand dollars worth.

DAG

If they reach the farm, there'll be no crop. It's worth it.

RANJI

I'll give you a volume discount.

DAG

That's good of you. We'll load up what you have.

RANJI

I'll call in the order.

Dag and Nick go to the stack and heft two bags each and head out.

EXT. GENERAL STORE -- MOMENTS LATER

The truck is stuffed with bags, Dag and Nick coming out to load more. A car pulls to a stop behind them driven by Tolana's brother. Zebi and his family get out. Dag sees Etana.

DAG

Hey, there he is.
(to Tolana)
He's feeling better?

TOLANA

Fine, thank you.

DAG

Glad to hear it.

Zebi looks at Dag but says nothing, going inside with the others. Dag and Nick follow them in to get the last bags.

INT. GENERAL STORE -- CONTINUOUS

Tolana and her brother begin shopping, the children looking at the ice cream, while Zebi stands to one side. Ranji is just finishing up on the phone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ZEBI

(to Dag)

I see you have more pest control. I thought that was finished.

DAG

It's not for the plants. We've got a crisis -- driver ants.

ZEBI

Siafu are at the farm?

DAG

If they were at the farm, there'd be no crisis -- we'd be finished. But they're headed right at us.

RANJI

(to Zebi)

They're buying a thousand dollars of pest control to try to divert them.

NICK

Don't suppose you'd be interested in chipping in?

Zebi says nothing, having no money.

RANJI

(to Dag)

They'll have another fifty bags here by tomorrow afternoon.

DAG

Good.

ZEBI

Fifty more bags?

NICK

You'd understand if you saw these ants.

ZEBI

Where are they?

DAG

In the countryside out beyond the dry wash.

ZEBI

And you think you can kill them with the poison?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAG

Not a chance. We're just hoping to turn them onto a different track. You know, we could use help putting it down.

ZEBI

Just let me get home and change.

DAG

No, we're doing it tomorrow morning.

ZEBI

You'll pick me up?

DAG

See you tomorrow.

Zebi nods as his brother-in-law gets out money to pay for the groceries they've bought, Zebi looking grim with embarrassment. Dag and Nick go out.

EXT. GENERAL STORE -- CONTINUOUS

DAG

You know, we may just be saving the crops for Moshongo to grab.

NICK

You really think he'd do that?

DAG

Nothing he's done yet makes me trust him.

They get in the truck and it drives away slowly with its heavy load.

EXT. AFRICAN COUNTRYSIDE -- NIGHT

The worker ants around the queen are in a frenzy, running back and forth. Suddenly, the queen appears moving along on her own with the workers all around her, some running up over her, the queen having to walk over others.

Ahead of her, ants up on a log above the ground begin to link legs and mandibles and stretch down towards the ground, forming a living bridge of tens of thousands of ants. The queen arrives and uses the living bridge to climb up under the log where she finds a niche and settles in, surrounded by her loyal attendants.

INT. FARMHOUSE -- MORNING

The Corlanders are around the dining room table finishing breakfast.

JENNIE

Can I see the ants?

NICK

Not this time. I would like you to see them though. Maybe we'll go after Papa and I make it so they don't come to our farm and eat everything.

JENNIE

Promise?

NICK

Of course.

JENNIE

All right. I'll bring food so they're not so hungry.

DAG

(to Nick)

Ready?

Nick gets up, kisses his wife and daughter, and he and Dag head out with Allison and Jennie seeing them to the door.

EXT. FARMHOUSE PORCH -- CONTINUOUS

ALLISON

Be careful.

NICK

Nothing to it.

JENNIE

Bye Daddy -- Bye Papa.

Dag gets a kiss on the cheek from Jennie.

DAG

That's my princess.

ALLISON

(to Nick, joking)

Do what your dad says now.

Nick kisses her again and he and Dag head for the truck loaded with the bags, Nick driving.

EXT. ZEBI'S HOUSE -- MOMENTS LATER

They pull up at Zebi's who's in his vegetable garden looking at the plants. He heads for the truck and Dag gets out to let him slide into the center.

ZEBI
I'll ride in back.

DAG
There's no room. C'mon, hop in.

Zebi looks reluctant, but he gets in and Dag follows, closing the door.

INT. TRUCK -- CONTINUOUS

NICK
Morning.

ZEBI
Good morning.

Nick starts off and the silence is awkward.

DAG
I'm glad Etana is better.

Zebi nods and smiles.

ZEBI
Thank you for taking us. I...

He doesn't finish the thought. The silence is still awkward.

EXT. HILLSIDE -- LATER

The truck labors up the hillside farther along than where Dag and Nick went up the day before, getting close to the top.

INT. TRUCK -- CONTINUOUS

As the truck crests the hill so they can see down the other side, Zebi is as shocked as Dag and Nick were the day before. Nick stops.

ZEBI
This is the work of the devil.

NICK
All god's creatures.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAG

They're closer than I thought they'd be. Take us up along the ridgeline.

Nick starts the truck and heads up looking for the end of the ants.

ZEBI

I'd heard about the Nkran but this is beyond anything I imagined.

NICK

Nkran?

ZEBI

That's what the driver ants are called in our language. I don't know where it comes from. I was never very good at speaking it.

NICK

Where did you grow up?

ZEBI

Mulbatha. My mother sold vegetables in the market.

NICK

Any brothers or sisters?

ZEBI

I had a small family, one older sister. She died when I was twelve.

NICK

Sorry to hear it.

DAG

Tough break.

ZEBI

A long time ago... But I still miss her.

DAG

I know the feeling.

They ride in silence for a moment.

EXT. RIDGELINE -- MOMENTS LATER

The ragged edge of the ants appears ahead of them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ZEBI

It's good to know they don't go on forever.

DAG

We'll start right on top and lay down a shallow diagonal on the downslope. They hit the line and turn to avoid it, we're safe. Pull over, Nick. Moshongo and I will get in the back.

NICK

Let me do that, pop. You can drive.

DAG

Forget it.

NICK

You just have to pretend you're not old and decrepit, don't you?

DAG

Just like I pretend you're competent.

They smile at one another and Nick stops the truck.

NICK

All right, old man, knock yourself out.

Dag gets out, Zebi following.

EXT. AFRICAN COUNTRYSIDE -- CONTINUOUS

Dag lowers the tailgate, pulls a bag onto it and sits on it, getting out a pocket knife.

DAG

You feed me the bags, I'll lay down the line.

Zebi climbs up on the sacks in the back. Nick looks back, Dag gives him a thumbs-up and Nick starts driving, going past the where the ants end and swinging around to start back, slowing down. Dag cuts the first bag and starts letting it flow onto the ground. Zebi gets another bag ready. Dag is having trouble getting a consistent width to the line.

DAG (CONT'D)

(calling to Nick)

Slow down...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Nick keeps going at the same speed, not able to hear over the noise of the truck.

DAG (CONT'D)

Knock on the window and tell him to slow down.

Zebi climbs over the bags and taps on the rear window and gestures to slow down. Nick slows the truck and Zebi climbs back to the tailgate.

ZEBI

Give me the knife.

Dag hands him the pocket knife and Zebi cuts the top and positions it for Dag. The first bag runs out and Zebi gives Dag the next one.

ZEBI (CONT'D)

You have a nice relationship with your son. You're very close, like friends.

DAG

Well, it was just the two of us out here for a long time.

ZEBI

I hope it works out as well for Etana and me. Maybe he'll be a farmer for his life.

Zebi gets another bag prepared.

ZEBI (CONT'D)

What would you do if your son and his family didn't want to farm any longer and moved away?

DAG

Nick does want to farm. It wasn't just my wife that gave her life for that farm -- it was his mother. This is our home.

Zebi hands Dag the next bag.

ZEBI

I think people put too much importance on the accident of place. If we'd been born somewhere else, that place would seem the most important to us.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAG

You and your buddies put up a pretty good fight for 'the accident of place'.

ZEBI

It was more than that. We wanted to be treated like people -- people who mattered, who were as good as anyone else.

DAG

But you did end up with the land.

ZEBI

Some of it -- for economic opportunity.

DAG

Strange how that works out, isn't it?

They ride in silence for a moment, Zebi handing him another bag.

DAG (CONT'D)

Let's keep our minds on what we're doing.

He spreads the poison.

EXT. GENERAL STORE -- LATER

The truck pulls up to Ranji's with the three of them in the cab, all of them getting out and heading inside.

RANJI

The truck dropped your delivery a half hour ago. How are you doing out there?

DAG

We put down about half the line. They haven't reached it yet. I think it looks good.

RANJI

Good. The new bags are out back.

DAG

Let's get at them. Nick, bring the truck around to the alley.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He heads out.

RANJI

And this can't kill them?

ZEBI

(to Ranji)

Have you ever seen driver ants? I never could have imagined it.

RANJI

If it's that exciting, maybe I'll have a look-see for myself.

DAG

Just make sure you don't get too close or it will be more than exciting.

(to Zebi)

Let's get the bags.

He heads out through the back door, Zebi following.

EXT. HILLSIDE -- LATER

The heavily loaded truck struggles up the hillside to where the line of poison ends.

INT. TRUCK -- CONTINUOUS

DAG

Let's take a run up and see how close they are.

They head up the hillside paralleling the line of poison.

EXT. HILLSIDE -- MOMENTS LATER

The ants are already at the line at the top and the truck stops and they get out.

They walk close to the line and look.

ANGLE ON

The far side of the line is covered with ants, the living running right over a dead mat of ants covering the poison. The living ones continue their advance, running into the poison to be coated, then retreating carrying it with them. Thousands are dying each moment, struggling with paralysis, moving jerkily, then curling up in a fetal position and dying. Other's run over them oblivious of the danger. The poison is not going to stop them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Dead ants are going to cover it completely, form a bridge of dead bodies so the millions behind them will cross never knowing it's even there.

BACK TO SCENE

NICK

Why is it so obvious now that this was hopeless?

ZEBI

What do we do?

No one knows.

EXT. TRUCK -- LATER

The truck still loaded with the unused pest control is heading across the countryside for the road.

INT. TRUCK -- CONTINUOUS

NICK

Maybe we can get some help.

DAG

I thought it was an advantage for us to have the only farm in the area, the old river flood plain. But now the ants don't threaten anyone else, we're going to have to do it on our own.

ZEBI

Do what?

Nick slows the truck to go down into the dry wash and up the other side.

DAG

Stop.

They look at him.

DAG (CONT'D)

Pull over, stop.

Nick stops and Dag gets out and turns to look into the dry wash, the others following wondering what's going on.

EXT. DRY WASH -- CONTINUOUS

NICK

What is it?

DAG

This -- the dry wash. If we could flood it, we'd have a moat. We keep the water flowing, the ants that go in will be washed downstream. The others start along the bank, they're headed away from the farm.

NICK

There hasn't been water in here since I was a kid.

DAG

We'd have to make a channel from the river, but the new course goes right past Kalnala rocks. There's no way to divert it.

NICK

How about the pump? We could use it to get the water over the rocks.

DAG

Five hundred gallons a minute. That's not going to do it.

ZEBI

We can blow up the rocks.

DAG

We'd need explosives. By the time we convinced the government to give us a permit we'd be fighting the ant's great-grandchildren.

ZEBI

I know where we can get explosives.
(beat)
We've got to find Tengo. He buried our C-4 after the war. He'll know how to blow the rocks, too.

DAG

C-4. You didn't see much of that in the war. I remember we found some on the bridge the night before...

Dag is quiet remembering the short battle before he returned to find his wife dead.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ZEBI

The bridge below Chuma ford?

DAG

That's right. There was a firefight, we drove off some guerillas trying to blow it. The C-4 we took off the supports was the first I'd seen in the war.

Zebi stares at him.

ZEBI

In the firefight, one of the guerillas was killed and fell in the river?

Dag looks at Zebi and realizes what's being said.

DAG

I was leading the platoon.

ZEBI

So was I.

They look at one another lost in remembrances of a time both want to forget.

DAG

I'm glad that's behind us. I don't ever want to see anything like it again.

Zebi nods in agreement.

ZEBI

No, not good.

NICK

(beat)

So we blow the rocks and flood the dry wash. It's not very wide. Will it really stop them?

DAG

It's all we've got, we may as well find out.

(to Zebi)

Where do we find Tengo?

ZEBI

Good question.

They head back for the truck.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAG

Fumilo. That guy Fumilo said that Tengo does odd jobs for him. He may know where to find him. Do you have his card?

ZEBI

I know where to get in touch with him.

DAG

How long will it take Tengo to get the explosives?

ZEBI

I don't know. I don't where he buried them.

DAG

It's got to be quick.

They get in the truck and it pulls away.

INT. GENERAL STORE -- LATER

Nick is picking out some groceries while Dag talks to Ranji and Zebi is on the phone.

RANJI

You've got to hand it to the little buggers. Shows you what organization can do.

DAG

I wish I could appreciate it more.

RANJI

Blowing up Kalnala rocks. That's not going to be easy. Don't let the authorities catch you, either.

DAG

They're the least of my worries at this point.

RANJI

Don't worry about the pest control. I'll just store the bags. It keeps.

DAG

Thanks.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ZEBI
 (to Ranji)
 What is the number here?

RANJI
 One zero eight, four four two.

ZEBI
 (into the phone)
 One zero eight, four four two.
 (beat)
 All right, good.

Zebi hangs up the phone and comes over.

ZEBI (CONT'D)
 Dr. Fumilo's going to have Tengo
 call me here.
 (to Ranji)
 That's all right?

RANJI
 Yeah, it's fine. Just don't be
 directing your police buddies to me
 if this little plot thickens.

ZEBI
 I don't have any police buddies.

RANJI
 They are all your buddies.

ZEBI
 You'd be surprised, believe me.

The phone RINGS and Ranji answers it. He holds it out towards Zebi.

RANJI
 Surprisingly prompt.

Zebi takes the phone.

ZEBI
 Tengo --

EXT. RIVER -- MORNING

The truck comes up on Tengo's Land Rover, Tengo lounging against it smoking a cigar. He straightens as Nick pulls to a stop. The three in the truck get out. Tengo throws away his cigar and hugs Zebi.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TENGO

Commander.

ZEBI

Good to see you again, Tengo. You look things over? You know how to blow it?

TENGO

I can do it.
(to Dag)
You brought the money?

DAG

I've got it.

TENGO

Let me have it.

DAG

When the job is done.

TENGO

Now.

DAG

When the job is done.

ZEBI

Tengo, it's all right. We have the money.

(to Dag)

Show it to him.

Dag is reluctant, but he goes to the truck and takes a athletic bag from the floor and reaches inside. He shows Tengo a stack of bills.

DAG

A thousand dollars. It's a lot of money.

TENGO

If I'd wanted to, I could have gotten a lot more for C-4. But I'm a nice guy. I didn't want to put it in the wrong hands.

DAG

Yeah, I'm sure you're a prince. Let's get started.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TENGO

I have to say, I don't like you much. You're very sarcastic. You're lucky you're working for Commander Mosh -- though I hear you won't be much longer. Maybe you can get a job picking crops for whoever Doc Fumilo puts in there. It's good wages I hear.

Dag and Nick aren't amused.

NICK

(to Tengo)

It ain't over till it's over.

Zebi looks uncomfortable.

ZEBI

So how do we do this?

Tengo reaches in the Land Rover and pulls out a canvas satchel that he hands to Nick.

DAG

The C-4?

TENGO

Tools for drilling. This is the C-4.

He reaches in his Land Rover and brings out a meter long length of large-diameter dirty PC pipe with caps on both ends, more pipes in the vehicle.

TENGO (CONT'D)

Best thing for burying stuff. Keeps it perfectly dry, no bugs, doesn't show up on metal detectors. Put a cellphone detonator on it, you've got a nice terrorist weapon. Ready for some fun?

Nick hands the bag to Zebi.

NICK

Enjoy yourself. I'm going to clear out the wash and dig a channel below the rocks.

He heads for the bulldozer on the trailer. The others set off for the rocks.

EXT. AFRICAN COUNTRYSIDE -- LATER

ESTABLISHING SHOT of the truck and bulldozer and the Land Rover pulled back a good ways from the river, a cord running to the far side of the truck from the rocks. Nick has excavated a deep channel from the rocks into the wash.

EXT. VEHICLES -- CONTINUOUS

The men are hunkered down behind the truck, Tengo with the detonator in his lap.

TENGO

Fire in the hole. You know where that comes from? The old cannons when they were putting the brand to the firing hole.

He lifts the safety cap on the red detonator switch and looks at everyone with a smile on his face.

TENGO (CONT'D)

Fire in our hole.

EXT. RIVER -- CONTINUOUS

The rocks sit for a moment, then there's a tremendous blast and they're obscured by smoke and flames with chunks of rock flying up out of the cloud to splash in the river and bounce on the shore, the cloud slowly subsiding.

EXT. VEHICLES -- CONTINUOUS

The men get up and head for the river, carrying the tools.

EXT. RIVER -- MOMENTS LATER

The rocks are decimated, but still not low enough to let the river down into the wash.

ZEBI

That looks like a good start.

DAG

These rocks are tough. I hope we get through before the drills go dead.

TENGO

Or the police show up.

Dag climbs down into the water, Zebi joining him, and they examine the rocks for a place to drill.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TENGO (CONT'D)

Look for the fractures.

They look.

NICK

This is going to ruin the fishing.

They both begin drilling, Tengo getting out another cigar as he relaxes.

EXT. OTHER SIDE OF THE RIVER -- LATE AFTERNOON

All is quiet, no one visible, the cord running from the rocks up and away towards the vehicles in the distance. Suddenly, there is another explosion and this time as it quiets the river has a second channel, water gushing down into the dry wash.

EXT. VEHICLES -- CONTINUOUS

The men emerge from behind the vehicles and walk quickly, then begin running for the edge of the dry wash by the river.

EXT. RIVER -- CONTINUOUS

They come running up to the edge of the dry wash and look happily at the water filling the wash and running away.

NICK

All right!

He claps Zebi on the back as Zebi smiles broadly and puts his arm around Nick.

DAG

Just beautiful.

TENGO

Now I get my money?

DAG

You've got it. This may save us.

EXT. DRY WASH -- LATER

The front line of ants are in the dry wash not yet having crossed. A bend in the wash obscures what's coming, but the SOUND OF WATER can be heard. Suddenly, around the bend comes the wall of the flood, hitting the far side of the bank and going up to sweep away the ants high up before turning and rushing onward.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

All the ants in the dry wash are inundated by the swirling waters to be washed away downstream, the water rising to fill the gully.

The front line of the ants becomes more confused, some ants running down to be caught by the water and carried away, others stopping just short to run sideways and then back.

EXT. ROAD -- CONTINUOUS

The truck speeds down the road and comes up on the beginning of the farm, Tengo following in his Land Rover. Nick slows and heads off the road for the dry wash, Tengo keeping behind them.

EXT. DRY WASH -- MOMENTS LATER

The vehicles pull up on the far bank and everyone gets out. Dag, Nick and Zebi are ecstatic to see the ants stopped by the water flowing past. Tengo stares at the incredible mass stretching away into the distance.

ZEBI

We did it. Look at that!

Dag and Nick walk with their arms around one another, big grins on their faces. They all stop on the top of the bank.

TENGO

That's the most frightening thing I've ever seen.

ZEBI

Nkran.

TENGO

You hear the stories but there's no way to understand without seeing.

They all watch for a moment. The front line of the ants is still confused but the others are pressing in behind them.

NICK

You think they'll turn and go along the bank?

DAG

It might take them awhile until they get the message.

But even as they watch, masses of ants begin going out into the water where they drown but are held in place by the linking of legs and mandibles with ants behind them, just as

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

they did to form the bridge for the queen to cross. Some of the groups get hit by debris and are cut off to go swirling downstream. But right behind them a new mass heads into the water to take their place and here and there they begin to extend out into the water.

DAG (CONT'D)

It's not going to work. They're going to cross.

ZEBI

Maybe we could dam the river, get more water to go this way.

DAG

It would raise the level, but it doesn't matter how high it is, they're coming across the top.

TENGO

There's not enough C-4 in this country to make a dent in that horde.

NICK

Horrible as it is, you've got to hand it to them. They're magnificent.

DAG

Magnificently destructive.

ZEBI

They're going to strip everything on my farm.

Dag looks at him, noting his choice of words.

NICK

You know, raising the level might not stop them, but if we could get it flowing faster, put more force against them, it might break up their bridges, carry them downstream.

DAG

It's worth a try. We use the pump, keep it moving up and down the wash, try to break up any getting too close.

TENGO

If you're going to do it, you'd better get on it. They're moving faster than a whore on a rich drunk.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They all start climbing in the truck, Tengo throwing a rock into the river to splash away some ants.

TENGO (CONT'D)

Take that, little bastards.

He heads for his Land Rover.

EXT. DRY WASH -- LATER

The truck pulls up at the edge of the dry wash where the ants crossing the water taper off. In the back Zebi and Tengo hold the pump steady. Dag and Nick hop out and the four of them carry the pump to the water's edge, putting the intake hose into the water, then pull-starting the engine, the pump beginning to spit water from the output hose. Nick grabs it to direct it downstream, the water in the river beginning to swirl. Nick aims it on a diagonal across the river and the plan appears to work. The clumps of ants are knocked apart and sent spinning downstream.

DAG

That looks promising. Two of us will move the pump, the third will run the hose.

He looks at Zebi and Tengo.

DAG (CONT'D)

Are you guys up for this?

ZEBI

Of course.

TENGO

I fight Nkran for you, I want another thousand.

DAG

Take off. We'll do it ourselves.

TENGO

Five hundred then.

DAG

Two fifty.

TENGO

Three fifty.

DAG

Three.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TENGO
Back to a thousand.

DAG
Back to take off.

TENGO
I'll take the three.

The two of them smile at their exchange and shake hands.

DAG
I'm going back up to the house to
bring down more gasoline. I'll take
my turn when I get back.

He jogs up to the truck and leaves while Nick and the others
keep working the river.

EXT. FARMHOUSE -- MOMENTS LATER

Allison and Jennie are tending the flowers in front of the
porch as Dag drives up, waving as he goes around the back
towards the barn, passing Tengo's parked Land Rover. Jennie
runs ahead of her mother to greet him.

EXT. BARN -- CONTINUOUS

Dag stops and gets out, heading towards the side of the barn
where the three large drums of gasoline are stored. Jennie
runs up as Dag rolls the drum towards the truck.

JENNIE
Did you kill them, Papa?

DAG
You can't kill them, sweetheart.
There are too many of them.

JENNIE
I really want to go see.

Allison arrives.

ALLISON
Everything all right?

DAG
I wouldn't go that far, but the pump
seems to be keeping them from getting
across. I'm bringing down more gas.
We're probably going to have to be
there all night.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He puts down a board ramp up into the back of the truck and rolls the heavy drum up into it.

JENNIE

Papa, I want to go see the ants.

Dag looks at Allison to see what she thinks.

ALLISON

Is it dangerous?

DAG

Not if you don't end up in the middle of them. It is something she should see.

JENNIE

Mom, you come too.

DAG

You should see this too. Come down with us and then I'll run the two of you back.

ALLISON

I don't like bugs.

DAG

You'll like them less after seeing this, but you shouldn't miss it.

JENNIE

Mom...

ALLISON

All right, we'll go.

Jennie starts running towards the truck.

ALLISON (CONT'D)

Wait a minute, honey.

(to Dag)

If you're going to be working down there all night, let me make up a cooler of sandwiches and drinks.

DAG

That sounds like something we'll need. I'll help.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALLISON

(to Jennie)

C'mon Jen, we're going to make sandwiches for everyone.

JENNIE

Can I have peanut butter?

ALLISON

You ate just a little while ago.

JENNIE

But I want one.

ALLISON

No jam.

JENNIE

But they're so sticky without it.

Dag picks her up and carries her towards the house.

DAG

(to Jennie)

Will you make me one, too?

JENNIE

With jam?

DAG

I think I will.

JENNIE

You don't have to ask -- you're lucky.

DAG

No, I'm old. You're the lucky one.

She hugs her grandpa.

EXT. RIVER -- LATER

The truck approaches the river.

INT. TRUCK -- CONTINUOUS

Dag can see that the men are further downstream frantically swirling the water. The clumps of ants grow bigger as the water carries them into one another further downstream, the line well out in the water. Maybe worse, further upstream the ants already have regained their position out into the water at least as far as they were when Nick washed them away earlier.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JENNIE
Mommy, look at all the ants!

ALLISON
Oh, ick ick ick. I never dreamed
anything like this.

JENNIE
It's wonderful.

DAG
This doesn't look good.

Allison looks at him with some alarm.

EXT. RIVER -- CONTINUOUS

Dag pulls up at the top of the wash by the men and they all
get out of the truck and go down the bank.

DAG
What do you think?

NICK
It looked good for awhile, but as we
wash them downstream they're catching
on the lines already out in the stream
and just adding to them.

DAG
They're rebuilding behind us, too.

TENGO
And look how many more there are.
If they all took a sip, they could
drink this stream.

JENNIE
(calling to the ants)
Shoo! Go back, go away!

Downstream, the wash is already looking narrower as the mat
of ants on the water stretch out further and further. Dag
steps over and shuts off the pump. The others all look at
him.

DAG
This isn't going to work, we're
wasting time, we should be doing
something else.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ZEBI

Maybe we could harvest the crops
before they get there.

Dag just shakes his head.

NICK

So what do we do?

TENGO

Let's try some of the C-4, at least
take some of the little buggers with
us.

DAG

Poison didn't work, water didn't
work, but they can't walk through
fire.

NICK

We set the bush on fire it will just
burn out in a few minutes. There's
not enough of it.

DAG

But we've got enough gasoline to
make a good start and we can bring
in more. We get the sprinkler piping
and set it up along the road by the
fields and pump the gasoline through
it. When it starts spraying, we
ignite it.

NICK

PVC?

DAG

The pressure of the spray coming out
will keep the flame away from it.

NICK

I don't know.

ALLISON

Desperate measures for desperate
times.

DAG

Let's get at it. We've got a lot of
work to do.

Tengo and Zebi hoist the pump, Nick holding the hose as they
start towards the truck.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JENNIE

We have sandwiches and drinks for everyone. I made peanut butter and strawberry jam.

TENGO

That sounds delicious.

ZEBI

(to Dag)

I'd like to get Tolana and the children.

DAG

Yes, we'll bring them up to the house.

JENNIE

(to Zebi)

Does Hulana like peanut butter and jam?

ZEBI

I'm don't know if she's ever had it. I think she would.

JENNIE

I'm sure she'll like it.

The men put the pump in the back of the truck and hop in with it to let Allison and Jennie ride with Dag.

JENNIE (CONT'D)

(to the ants)

Goodbye ants. You'd better go somewhere else or you're going to get burned up.

ALLISON

C'mon, darling.

She puts Jennie in the truck and gets in behind her.

NICK

It will be a miracle if we can burn all those.

TENGO

It will be fun trying even if we lose.

ZEBI

You can say that because you have nothing to lose.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TENGO

I have nothing to win, either. So
who's in the better position?

Dag starts the truck.

ZEBI

I don't know.

TENGO

Really? Want to trade with me?

The truck starts away.

ZEBI

(beat)

True enough.

EXT. ROAD -- MORNING

Pipe stretches along the far side of the road. The line of ants are within twenty yards of the pipe. Nick and Tengo are by the pump well back from the pipe out beyond the ragged edge of the line of ants. The intake hose is fitted to one of the large drums, others lined up next to it. Down the road, the truck drives towards them, pulling up with Dag and Zebi getting out.

DAG

The booster pump is up and running.

NICK

We're ready?

Dag nods and Nick pulls the starter on the main pump which begins to WHINE, deepening as the gasoline starts down the pipe, beginning to spray out the tiny holes to arc through the air and land just in front of the line of ants.

DAG

All right, let's go.

They all get in the truck, Tengo and Nick in the back, Zebi and Dag in the cab.

INT. TRUCK -- CONTINUOUS

ZEBI

Think this will work?

DAG

It better.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He starts the truck and swings around.

EXT. ROAD -- MOMENTS LATER

The truck pulls up opposite the middle of the swarm, well back from the pipe spitting out the spray of gasoline which is stronger on the other side of the booster pump. Everyone gets out, Dag carrying a pop bottle with a rag stuffed in the top.

DAG

There's liable to be an explosion from the gas cloud. I want everyone down behind the truck.

They take cover behind the truck and Dag takes a lighter from his pocket and lights the rag, twisting the bottle to get the rag burning well. He judges the distance to a rocky outcropping where the pipe runs, and heaves the bottle. They all crouch as it arcs through the air, but no one ducks, everyone curious to see what happens which is spectacular.

ANGLE ON

The bottle hits and breaks and instantly the spray of gasoline opposite it erupts in a huge fireball much bigger than the spray, the fumes flashing high into the sky, the eruption running both ways along the piping into the distance.

BACK TO SCENE

They're all shocked and duck quickly as the heated air rushes over them, the truck actually rocked by the blast. There is a loud and constant WHOOSING noise and they rise to see the incredible sight of flaming gasoline arcing through the air to splash and splatter on the ground by the ants. They all stare for a moment, looking pleased.

DAG (CONT'D)

I think we have them this time.

ZEBI

They can't get through that.

DAG

We keep it going an hour or two they've got to turn.

NICK

We're going to need more gas. I'm going into town.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TENGO

It's pretty.

DAG

And...

He's interrupted by a deep RUMBLE from the end of the line of pipe and they all look to see a FIREBALL erupting in the sky followed by another from the next pipe, then another and another...

DAG (CONT'D)

Get down!

The jump behind the truck

ANGLE ON

Down the line of the pipes comes the eruptions, the pipe near them exploding in a fireball that sends up pieces of hot melting PVC.

BACK TO SCENE

Everyone is covering up as one of the flaming melted pieces comes down right on Tengo's back and sticks. He screams trying to reach behind him to get it off, but he can't reach it. Nick grabs the burning mass with both hands and pulls it off and flings it away. Tengo rolls on his back grimacing while Nick shakes his burned hands also in pain.

NICK

Ahhh! Damn!

Tengo arches his burned back.

TENGO

Oh man, that stings.

Dag checks Nick's hands, then turns to Tengo.

DAG

Roll over, let me see.

Tengo rolls over and his shirt has a hole in it, the skin beneath it burned with dirt sticking to it, the area not large.

DAG (CONT'D)

Doesn't look too bad.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TENGO
 (to Nick)
 Thanks for that.

Nick nods, smiling ruefully. From up the line of piping, the last of the pipes with the gas drums explodes in a grand finale.

DAG
 We've got to get you guys to the clinic.

NICK
 I'll be all right.

DAG
 Don't be ridiculous, we're going to the clinic,

ZEBI
 What about the ants?

DAG
 They've won.

ZEBI
 If I lose that crop I have nothing.

Dag looks at him thinking of what he does have, the farm, but says nothing.

ZEBI (CONT'D)
 I'm going to harvest our vegetable garden so at least we have some food.
 (to Tingo)
 Can I use your Land Rover?

TENGO
 I may never need it again.

DAG
 (to Zebi)
 Can you walk up and tell Allison where we're going?

Zebi nods. Dag, Nick and Tingo head for the truck. The fire is subsiding as the gasoline is burned away, the sparse countryside running out of fuel.

NICK
 We fought the good fight. It just wasn't meant to be.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Dag is grim, not ready to give up but without a clue what to do next.

EXT. ROAD -- LATER

The truck comes back towards the farm. Tengo, a bandage under his tattered shirt, stands in the back leaning backwards against the cab to get the breeze on his burn.

INT. TRUCK -- CONTINUOUS

Dag drives, Nick's hands wrapped in thick bandages. As they approach the farm drive, the ants are right at the far edge of the road.

DAG

We should go see about the pump while we can still get there. It might have survived.

Dag goes past the drive to the farm. He looks over at their crops. He shakes his head.

DAG (CONT'D)

With his crop gone, Mushongo is bound to sell our land to Fumilo. Wherever we end up, we're going to be starting over with very little. I'm sorry.

NICK

We'll have everything that's important. We'll do fine. With any kind of luck, the ants will nest right in the fields.

DAG

Sweet revenge -- if only...
(musing)
Nest in the fields...

Nick looks at him, wondering what he's thinking.

DAG (CONT'D)

Driver ants swarm when the queen begins laying new eggs -- some kind of scent that keeps them going. When she's done, they go to nest. If we can kill the queen...

NICK

They'll stop.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAG

It could break them up completely.
We try to identify where she is and
drop C-4 from the plane.

They look at one another and Dag slows to turn the truck
around.

EXT. ROAD -- CONTINUOUS

The truck swings around to head towards the farm and
accelerates.

EXT. ZEBI'S HOUSE -- MOMENTS LATER

Tengo's land rover is stuffed with Zebi's vegetables, Zebi,
Tolana and Hulana working to put in the last bunch. They
look up as the truck speeds in and stops. Zebi approaches.

ZEBI

How did it go?

NICK

Fine, just first degree, surface
stuff.

TENGO

First degree pain, I'll tell you.

DAG

(to Tengo)

We're going to make some bombs from
the C-4 and drop them from the plane.
If we can kill the queen, it may
stop the swarm.

(to Tengo)

You mentioned using cellphones for
detonators. Can you do that?

TENGO

Yes, I can. How many phones do we
have?

DAG

We can get more in town from Ranji
though we may have to take the back
way. The ants are right at the road.

ZEBI

Then no time to waste.

He heads for the Land Rover as Dag begins turning his truck.

EXT. LANDING STRIP -- LATER

Everyone is standing around the plane on the strip. Dag finishes up taking off the passenger door and lays it on the ground. Zebi transfers four bombs from the truck to the plane, each covered in thick layers of bubble wrap to protect the cell phone attached to it. Dag starts his outside check of the plane.

TOLANA

(to Zebi)

You make sure you keep yourself strapped in.

Zebi nods looking apprehensive but resolute. He kisses her and his children and climbs up across the wing to the passenger seat.

NICK

(to Zebi)

You've got the list of numbers?

Zebi takes a note from his pocket and then puts it back. He checks the phone in his pant's pocket.

ZEBI

Someone calls this number it's not going to set anything off?

TENGO

No. Just make certain you don't turn on any cell phone on a bomb until you're ready to drop it.

Dag finishes his check of the plane.

NICK

(to Dag)

I wish I were going.

DAG

We'll get the job done.

JENNIE

Be careful, Papa.

DAG

I will, sweetheart.

He climbs up, opens his door and gets in the pilot's seat.

INT. PLANE -- CONTINUOUS

Dag makes sure everyone is well clear, then starts the engine. Zebi tightens his seat belt and makes sure the bombs are

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

secure. Dag looks at him, he nods, Dag revs the engine and the plane begins moving.

EXT. LANDING STRIP -- CONTINUOUS

The others watch as the plane speeds down the runway and lifts off, Zebi waving his hand out the open door.

NICK

Godspeed.

The others agree and begin moving as a group towards the vehicles by the farmhouse.

INT. PLANE -- CONTINUOUS

The noise in the plane is loud with the door off. Dag banks and heads the plane towards the ants who are right at the edge of the fields. Zebi is leaning out the door trying to determine where the queen might be. Dag flies a pattern over the ants that keeps Zebi's open door facing inward towards the swarm.

EXT. ROAD -- CONTINUOUS

The truck with everyone in it comes down the farm drive and stops back from the road. Everyone gets out to watch the plane as it flies over the ants.

TOLANA

They're flying so low. I wish they'd go higher.

NICK

They have to go low if they're going to find that queen.

Allison takes Tolana's hand and they comfort one another.

INT. PLANE -- CONTINUOUS

Zebi peers downward and then his eyes fix on a point, looking back as they pass.

ZEBI

(loudly over the engine)
I think that might be it, by that line of bushes.

He points and Dag banks to get them back over it even lower. Zebi watches closely.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ZEBI (CONT'D)

The swarm looks different there --
thicker.

DAG

I think you're right.

EXT. ROAD -- CONTINUOUS

They all watch as the plane almost disappears before banking and coming in really low right down the centerline of the swarm.

INT. PLANE -- CONTINUOUS

Zebi holds the first bomb and turns on the phone through the bubble wrap. He carefully leans out as far as possible holding it as he looks ahead. Just before they reach the target, he flips the bomb back behind the wing.

EXT. SWARM -- CONTINUOUS

The bomb falls as the plane passes low overhead. It hits and bounces to a stop in the midst of the ants who immediately begin to climb over it, see if it's edible.

INT. PLANE -- CONTINUOUS

Zebi gets out the list of phone numbers and the cell phone while Dag climbs the plane and banks to where they'll be able to see the explosion. Zebi punches in the number then looks at Dag who nods. They both look at the package and Zebi puts his finger on the send button.

EXT. ROAD -- CONTINUOUS

JENNIE

Is the bomb...

They all jump slightly as an orange flash goes off followed by a huge LOUD EXPLOSION with debris and dust rising in the air.

JENNIE (CONT'D)

I'll bet the ants didn't like that.

INT. PLANE -- CONTINUOUS

Dag and Zebi stare at the spot where the scorched countryside is blown clear of any ants. Dag banks to come in over it. They look as they pass over it and Dag begins banking again to return.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ZEBI

I want to drop the second beyond
that one, right on top of that log.

Dag turns to look and...

ANGLE ON

In front of the plane, a large bird rushes up on the
windshield ...

BACK TO SCENE

Dag catches a glimpse of it and starts to turn his head a
fraction of a second before THE WINDSHIELD SHATTERS from the
impact with the bird. Dag is knocked backwards violently,
then falls unconscious against the controls, the plane diving
towards the ground. Zebi grabs the controls, having to pull
Dag's weight leaning on the yolk to get the plane's nose up
as the hill rushes at them.

EXT. ROAD -- CONTINUOUS

TOLANA

Oh no! Oh god, no!

She turns away, unable to look. Allison puts her arms around
her, also shocked and scared. Nick looks frantic, trotting
forward as if he can stop the imminent crash.

NICK

Pull up! Pull up!

The plane does pull up a bit and impacts just on the summit
of the hill. It plows across and disappears down the other
side. Nick straggles to a halt and they all stare.

EXT. SWARM -- CONTINUOUS

The plane is floating down the hillside like a ski jumper
about to land. It hits the ground and slides down the far
side losing momentum and staying intact, plowing ants before
it.

INT. PLANE -- CONTINUOUS

A tree appears before them and the plane just misses it to
the left though the tree shears off the right wing and starts
the plane spinning wildly as it keeps going forward.

EXT. CRASH SITE -- CONTINUOUS

The spinning plane finally grinds to a halt tipped over on its good wing. No one moves inside it. Behind by the tree, fuel from the broken wing has caught fire and burns furiously in a patch that sends up a smoke cloud.

EXT. ROAD -- CONTINUOUS

They all stare at the distant hill obscuring the crash, thick smoke rising.

NICK

We've got to get over there now!

ALLISON

You said you almost got stuck driving in them.

NICK

I don't care, I'm going.

He tries to open the door to the truck, but with his bandages he can't manage it.

NICK (CONT'D)

Allison...

She doesn't want her husband driving off to his death.

ALLISON

Nick, I...

NICK

I have to go.

She hesitates.

NICK (CONT'D)

Jennie, open the door for me.

Allison opens the door and Nick gets in.

NICK (CONT'D)

Start it.

She turns the key and it starts up.

JENNIE

(worried)

Daddy, do you have to go through the ants?

NICK

Yes, honey.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He turns to Allison.

NICK (CONT'D)

I'll be all right. Try to understand.

He puts his hand through the open window to shut the door, but Allison stops him.

ALLISON

Wait. I have an idea.

She starts to get in the driver's seat, pushing Nick to move over.

ALLISON (CONT'D)

Let me drive.

(calling to the others)

Everyone get in the back.

Nick hesitates, but Allison pushes in next to him and he slides over.

NICK

What is this? There's no time to waste.

ALLISON

Trust me.

She looks to make certain everyone is safe in the back, then starts turning the truck around.

INT. PLANE -- CONTINUOUS

Zebi comes back to consciousness wincing in pain when he tries to move. He turns to Dag who is groggily returning to his senses.

ZEBI

Dag! Dag!

Dag looks over at him with confusion.

DAG

What happened?

ZEBI

We crashed. Something hit the windshield.

Dag nods and then switches off the power. He sees the wing on Zebi's side is gone and then looks out the door at the broken wing on his side and the fire subsiding behind them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAG

We've got to get away from the plane.
The leaking fuel could catch fire.

Zebi reaches down and feels his leg.

ZEBI

My right leg is broken.

DAG

Are you sure?

Zebi nods.

ZEBI

I don't think I can walk.

DAG

We've got to get away from here no
matter what.

ZEBI

Where?

DAG

The burned patch behind us. It's
clear of ants.

ZEBI

For how long?

DAG

Better than being burned alive.

Dag grabs the three remaining bombs and stuffs them in his
shirt to carry them.

DAG (CONT'D)

Can you turn towards me?

ZEBI winces as he turns his body and straightens his leg,
using his hands to hold it as much as possible. While he
does that, Dag reaches into the back and gets a tool box
from behind the rear seat, taking out a roll of duck tape
that he puts in with the bombs. He then takes Zebi under
the arms and slowly pulls him across the seat as he moves
backward out his doorless side onto the wing.

EXT. PLANE -- CONTINUOUS

DAG gets Zebi out as gently as possible though Zebi is close
to fainting from the jolts to his broken leg.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Once on the wing, Dag lays Zebi down to rest while he plots the next move. The ground between the plane and the burned spot is thick with ants.

ZEBI
So damned stupid. Why are they
climbing on metal?

DAG
Maybe they smell a meal.

Dag reaches down and helps Zebi up

ZEBI
I'll try to keep moving...

DAG
I've got a better idea.

He lifts Zebi and gets him over his shoulder and staggers down the wing to right in front of the line of ants. He takes a breath then steps off into them.

EXT. SWARM -- CONTINUOUS

He hurries as fast as possible through the mass of ants towards the burned spot, ants covering his boots and the bottom of his pants. He sets Zebi down in the center of the bare spot, takes out the bombs and tape from his shirt and drops them, then moves quickly to the edge of the bare spot to swat off the ants on his shoes and legs, having to clear them off his hands as they stick and bite.

DAG
Damn, they've got sharp little bites.

Cleaned of ants, he goes to the wing up against the tree and starts bending back and forth a piece of the ragged metal until it comes free. As he heads back, he bends the metal into a U-shape and picks up the roll of duck tape. He kneels at Zebi's feet.

DAG (CONT'D)
I'm going to slide this under your
leg.

Zebi lifts his leg slightly with his hand, Dag gently helping with one hand as he slides the piece of metal under the leg. Zebi lays it down on the metal. Dag bends the metal further around the leg, then takes the tape and sticks the end to the metal.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAG (CONT'D)

Can you lift your leg again?

Zebi picks it up and Dag quickly wraps the tape around the metal, squeezing it together as much as possible without causing Zebi too much pain. He rips the end of the roll and Zebi lowers the leg again. They look out at the ants who have already shrunk the bare patch. Dag looks up over the hill to the side of the direction of the swarm.

DAG (CONT'D)

The shortest way out is over there.

ZEBI

It's too far.

DAG

We don't have much choice. We can't stay here very long.

ZEBI

Dag, you need to listen to me. I've got a broken leg. You can't carry me and move fast enough to have a chance.

DAG

You'd be surprised what I can do.

ZEBI

We've both been in war. This is a war we're in now. You can save yourself, but you can't save both of us. Tough choices have to be made.

DAG

We were enemies. Now we're on the same side. I'm not leaving you here.

ZEBI

Dag...

DAG

If you fight me, I'll knock you out and carry you. So there's no use arguing about it.

ZEBI

Damn stubborn settlers. I think we won only because there were more of us.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They both smile. Dag takes the roll of tape and begins covering the tops of his boots and bottom of his pants.

DAG

We can use the bombs to clear three patches ahead of us. That should get us to the top of the hill.

ZEBI

Then what?

DAG

From there, we'll see.

Dag goes to the tree and breaks off a leafy branch, stripping it to make a clear post with branches and leaves only at the end, a huge brush. He tests it on the burned brush.

ZEBI

You can't do everything. Put me over your shoulder from the back and I'll sweep the branch.

Dag hands him the branch. He then gets two of the bombs and the tape and puts them in his shirt again, buttoning it up to keep them secure. He takes the third bomb and checks the number. He turns on the cell phone detonator attached to it, checks where he wants it to land, rears back and flings it into the midst of the ants towards the side of the hill. He gets Zebi up and helps him move back so that the tree is between them and the bomb. They're closer to the edge of the ants, but he sets Zebi down again. He takes the cell phone from his pocket, turns it on and dials the number.

DAG

I have become the destroyer of worlds.

ZEBI

Some little part of it anyway.

Dag crouches to shield Zebi and pushes the send button, the bomb erupting, dirt and debris with bits of ants landing all around them. Dag helps Zebi up, turns and lifts him onto his back and gets him over his shoulder, Zebi trying to balance and hold the leafy branch out in front of them. As Dag advances into the swarm, Zebi furiously brushes the branch back and forth through the ants, not very effectively clearing a path as Dag scrunches through them heading for the newly cleared patch. Reaching it, he repeats what he did at the first patch, leaving Zebi in the center while he cleans off at the edge then rejoins Zebi.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAG

There's no cover here, I'll try to get the next one down in that depression right at the base of the rise, and then the third one near the top of the hill. From there we'll just have to sprint to the edge.

ZEBI

(sounding dubious)
Sprint with me on your back.

DAG

You're light as a feather.

He picks up another bomb and gets up as close to the edge of the ants as possible before heaving it down into the depression, pleased to watch it disappear where he aimed.

DAG (CONT'D)

That was a beautiful throw if I say so myself. All those years on the cricket pitch.

ZEBI

Soccer's my sport. I played semi-pro down in Jo'burg.

DAG

How long did you live there?

ZEBI

Twelve years after the war.

DAG

How come you went down there?

ZEBI

I wanted to forget.

DAG

I know what you mean.

ZEBI

I found there is no forgetting.

DAG

I know what you mean about that, too.

Dag has the cell phone ready to dial, but realizes he forgot to check which number it was.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He looks at the remaining bomb.

DAG (CONT'D)
Okay, that's the other one.

He checks the paper with the numbers, dials it and checks Zebi.

DAG (CONT'D)
Ready?

ZEBI
Not much I can do about it one way
or the other.

Dag gets between him and the bomb and presses the send button. Instantly, there's another explosion, this time with more rocks thrown up, a number of which land near them.

DAG
We're going to have to be careful
with the one on the hill. It will
blow everything right down towards
us.

Dag gets Zebi up on his back with the branch, takes a couple of breaths and plunges into the ants again, Zebi trying to clear the way as best as possible. Dag's moving slower, but they reach the edge of the next cleared spot. Dag stumbles on one of the rocks as they go down the shallow incline into the depression that has been scorched and cleared. With the blast confined in the shallow bowl, the area isn't as large as the others. Dag again sets Zebi down and goes to the edge to clear the ants off him. He grimaces as he's bitten, but doesn't bother complaining.

DAG (CONT'D)
Once more and then the marathon.

He gets out the last bomb.

ZEBI
There are less rocks to the right.

Dag nods. He juggles the bomb in his hand to get a good grip. He crouches like a shotputter and uses his whole body to make the throw, the bomb getting a long ways up the hill.

ZEBI (CONT'D)
That's Olympic distance.

DAG
Amazing what fear can do for you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He checks the number, dials it and looks at Zebi again who nods, ready to cover his head for the debris. Dag presses the send button, but nothing happens. He checks the piece of paper again, redials the number and presses the send button, but still nothing. He and Zebi look at one another.

ZEBI

You're sure?

Dag redials and tries it a couple of more times.

DAG

Could be the batteries or maybe the connection is out. Nothing we can do about it now.

He helps Zebi get up.

DAG (CONT'D)

How's the leg?

ZEBI

It feels like the sun is burning inside it.

Dag looks up the hill.

DAG

I'm going to stay to the left. It's rougher, but that thing could still go off.

Dag gets Zebi over his back again, Zebi ready with the branch. Dag starts out up the hill, straining to make the climb. Going more slowly, the ants gather on him thicker than ever. With the ants covering the ground Dag can't see the rocks. The going up the hill is taking more out of him than he expected and he tries to adjust his hold on Zebi. Two-thirds of the way to the top, Dag loses his footing, tries to recover, his feet go out from under him and they fall face-forward into the ants, picking up even more ants on them as they slide downwards.

Dag comes up gagging as the ants crawl in his mouth and nose. He spits and pulls them out, brushing them from his face. Zebi has rolled on his back and is sweeping them off his face. Both their bodies are covered with ants. Dag reaches down and pulls Zebi up onto his good leg, brushing Zebi head to foot with his hands that he has to clap to try to clear from his hands.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ZEBI

Go! Get going! Run, you can get clear.

Dag ignores him and goes to pick him up onto his back again, but Zebi resists.

ZEBI (CONT'D)

You'll never make it with me. Get going! Your family needs you.

DAG

You're family needs you more.

Zebi struggles as Dag tries to get him onto his back.

DAG (CONT'D)

The longer it takes, the more time we waste.

Zebi relents and allows himself to be lifted up. Dag starts up again, throwing caution to the wind, moving as fast as possible recharged by the crisis. The ants are all over both of them and Dag tries to wipe them from his face, stumbling again but refusing to fall. Zebi is slipping and Dag tries to adjust but loses his footing, having to stop and stumble backwards to keep on his feet.

ZEBI

Leave me. It's over.

Resolutely, Dag moves upwards again, but it's clear he's about finished. He has to stop and catch his breath, trying to get Zebi repositioned again. Zebi purposefully slips himself backwards off of Dag to sit on the ground.

ZEBI (CONT'D)

Just help my family. Go! Go!

Dag stands a moment, then reaches down and grabs Zebi.

DAG

Forget it. We make it together or not at all.

As he tries to pick up Zebi, the ants swarming on them, they hear an odd noise, a deep mechanical rumble and a scraping from the other side of the summit above them. The noise grows louder and then the blade of the bulldozer crests the hill, tips and starts down, scraping the ants before it.

Tengo is at the controls with Nick standing over him telling him what lever to pull and when.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

At the rear, Allison and Tolana are facing backwards as they spray pest control on the treads as they come up, the canisters on their backs, the two of them dressed in the protective masks and clothing used for spraying the poison. Dag pulls Zebi onto his good leg as Tengo heads down, pulling up next to them. Tengo with Tolana trying to help reaches down and lifts Zebi up onto the dozer, setting him down with his leg stretched out. Dag clambers up with Allison helping him. Tengo immediately gets the dozer underway again, turning to head back up over the hill. Tolana and Allison sweep ants from Dag and Zebi and then Allison hands them a couple of masks.

ALLISON

Put these on. We'll spray you.

As the dozer goes over the hill and starts downward, the line the bulldozer made through the ants is visible, the edge a good distance away.

Dag and Zebi put on the masks and Allison sprays Dag's lower body while Tolana goes over her husband, both using their hands to knock off the last remaining ants as the dozer plows back the way it came. Allison and Tolana go back to spraying the treads. Dag and Zebi look out at the swarm of ants that stretches away into the distance.

DAG

(to Zebi)

We would have never made it.

ZEBI

I wouldn't have made it except for you.

He puts up his hand -- they don't so much shake as squeeze one another's hand. They look again at the vast ocean of ants.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FARMHOUSE -- DAY

Dag's truck, Tengo's Land Rover and a hearse are pulled up in front of the farm house. All the adults and children, Zebi with his leg in a cast, stand by the hearse where Ann, looking more attractive than ever, is shaking their hands.

ANN

Thank you so much for all you did.

ALLISON

We're so sorry for your loss.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ann nods and gives a tight smile.

ANN

You had your own loss. I'm sorry
for that.

ANGLE ON

The fields are ravaged, every plant shorn.

BACK TO SCENE

DAG

We'll see you at the funeral.

She takes his hand and they smile at one another staring in
each other's eyes.

ANN

You were wonderful, thank you.

They hug warmly, clearly comfortable with one another.
Sometime in the future...

She gets in the hearse which pulls away down the drive. As
it goes, Fumilo's Mercedes passes it coming in.

As he pulls up, they all stand watching. His nattily dressed
flunky jumps out to open his boss's door. Fumilo emerges
and looks back at the departing hearse, a cloud of dust on
the road.

FUMILO

Who died?

DAG

No one you know or care about. What
do you want?

He looks across the fields.

FUMILO

The indifference of nature can be
positively cruel. My sympathies.

He reaches into the inside pocket of his jacket and brings
out an envelope, giving it to Zebi.

FUMILO (CONT'D)

Your check. That should carry you
for a number of years even if you do
no farming. Your worries are over.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Zebi takes the envelope, opens it and looks at the check. He rips the check in half and gives the pieces and envelope back to Fumilo who takes them with a worried and puzzled expression. Zebi turns to Dag.

ZEBI
Give me a dollar.

Dag is puzzled.

ZEBI (CONT'D)
Give me a dollar.

Dag takes out his wallet, opens it and extracts a dollar, holding it hesitantly. Zebi reaches over and takes it from his hand.

ZEBI (CONT'D)
Now it's legal. You just bought
half the farm.

No one can believe it, Fumilo scowling darkly while the others slowly smile, then grin.

FUMILO
Why would you do such a thing?

ZEBI
They're my neighbors -- and...

He looks at Dag...

ZEBI (CONT'D)
...my friends.

FUMILO
You're a fool. You have no money
and no credit. You'll lose your
farm anyway.

DAG
No he won't.

Dag smiles at Zebi.

DAG (CONT'D)
He has neighbors -- and friends.

Zebi and Dag embrace while Fumilo can only shake his head in disgust. Then they all hug, ignoring Fumilo and his flunky who angrily get back in their car.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ZEBI'S HOUSE -- DAY

AERIAL SHOT across the fields where small new green buds are sprouting as Zebi's house approaches, his new house, a real house already framed with everyone, Tengo included, working on it happily. THE CAMERA passes the house, skimming the fields, moving into the countryside...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. AFRICAN COUNTRYSIDE -- DAY

THE CAMERA slows, ZOOM IN to the ants busily building their new home, going in and out of the holes in the ground...

ANGLE ON

CLOSE UP of the head of a huge, hairy, twitching African soldier driver ANT.

FADE TO BLACK:

THE END