

EXT. INFANTRY CAMP - NIGHT

SUPER: North Africa - November 1942

An Army PRIVATE (19) hurries past rows of tents. There aren't many lights, but the moon washes the sand with a bright glow. A few men are outside, smoking cigarettes and talking quietly, but we see through the open flaps that most of the soldiers are asleep. Artillery goes off in the background, each impact making the private flinch, even though it's much too far off to be any danger.

The tents end, and a few yards away, a small house stands alone. Calling it a house is pretty generous, it's much closer to being a hut with its broken stucco walls and thatched roof. The private is nervous as he looks at the house, his hands clutching what we now see to be a folder bearing the US Army insignia.

He slows down as he approaches the door. We hear the faint sound of someone moving around inside. He breathes deeply and knocks on the door.

PRIVATE
Colonel Mason.

The sound of movement stops.

PRIVATE (CONT'D)
Colonel Mason. I have the updated
field report from General Wilcox.

No answer. The private kneels down and begins sliding the envelope under the door.

PRIVATE (CONT'D)
I'll just leave it under the door
like last time, sir.

The private begins to walk away, and sees the envelope disappear from view. He shakes his head and walks back to the tented area.

INT. COLONEL MASON'S QUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

The lights are off, but we can see the outline of a man smoking a cigarette. He walks to the desk and sets the envelope down. A knife appears and slices it open. He pulls out the information and reads it using the light from the window.

He walks back to the desk, sets down the envelope and puts his cigarette out in the ashtray.

We hear him sigh as he sets his glasses on the desk and opens a drawer...pulling out a Colt M1911 handgun.

A single gunshot. Silence.

We see a limp arm dangling from a chair. Blood drips down the hand to the floor.

Close in on the spectacles, shining in the moonlight. Until a hand picks them up. We now realize that there were two men in the room. The man with the glasses, and the man in the chair he just shot.

We see the gun placed directly beneath the limp hand. We hold on the hand as the silhouetted killer makes his way in the background to the door. And out of the house.

EXT. SKY - MORNING

A British A.W. 41 transport plane roars through the sky. Its markings denote that it belongs to the Royal Air Force. An ocean of sand rushes by beneath it.

INT. TRANSPORT PLANE - CONTINUOUS

A few dozen soldiers sit in rows facing each other. There's a wide array of hard looking men who have clearly seen action and the young, beardless faces of those who probably just became old enough for service. They all share one thing in common. Silence.

At the back of the plane a man sits apart from the group. He's not an infantryman like the rest of these. He's an officer. He's also less nervous, something we can tell by the fact that he's currently leaned back and sleeping.

This isn't a comfort flight. The plane shakes and rattles with the turbulence. A particularly hard gust jostles the plane and the officer wakes up. He looks around, pulls out a flask, and takes a heavy pull from it.

Some of the men look at him strangely, but he merely stares back at them with a look of "What do you want from me?"

Up at the front, the cockpit door opens up, and the British CO-PILOT (27) steps out.

CO-PILOT

All right, you lot. We're twenty minutes, give or take a tick, from the base, so be prepared to get out and unload sharpish. We've got to keep the runway clear.

The co-pilot reenters the cockpit and shuts the door. This message apparently translates to more nap time for the officer, as he finishes off his flask and leans back, pulling his hat over his eyes.

EXT. RUNWAY - TWENTY MINUTES, GIVE OR TAKE A TICK LATER

The plane touches down and taxis to a halt. The men inside file down the staircase and unload their cargo from the rear.

The British officer, MAJOR JACK SHERMAN (36) comes out last, looks around, and sees a pudgy American Military Police officer, MAJOR RICHARDS (41), standing on the runway.

Jack nods to the Major and lackadaisically moves down the stairs to meet him.

MAJOR RICHARDS

Major Sherman, I'm Major Richards. I'm the head Military Police officer here at the base. Welcome to Algeria.

Jack surveys his surroundings, taking in the city breaking up the desert landscape, and the mass of tents surrounding it.

MAJOR RICHARDS (CONT'D)

Given how quickly you were flown out here, I'm sure you're wondering what the situation is.

JACK

Y'all have a dead colonel on your hands and you need me to confirm how it happened.

Major Richards is stunned. Not only is this British officer completely right, but his Texas accent contrasts directly with his uniform.

MAJOR RICHARDS

Oh, so you've been briefed.

JACK

No.