

STORIES MY FATHER NEVER TOLD ME

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Based on a true story

BLACK SCREEN

SUPER: During World War II, 500,000 American Jews, about half of all Jewish males in the US between 18 and 50, enlisted in the armed services.

SUPER: Many never spoke of the things they saw, or did. My father was one of those. The following is what I've been able to piece together.

FADE IN

EXT. NEW GUINEA - MORNING

SUPER: 1944

The clear blue water of the Pacific Ocean, miles of white sandy beaches, then jungle. Mile after mile of ancient, towering trees and foliage packed together so dense even light has trouble penetrating its canopy.

The forest covers the side of the mountain, climbing nearly fourteen thousand feet, before slowly descending. Miles of a dense green canopy of trees sloping down toward the crystal blue water of the bay, then the seemingly endless ocean.

At the base of the mountain a clearing's been carved out of the jungle, in the center a military base's been built.

There are tents for barracks, the Mess Hall, and showers. The only buildings are two hastily built shacks: the infirmary and the communications building; the latrines out back, and a solidly constructed munitions depot.

A path leads from the depot down to the wooden dock that juts into the bay, acting as a port.

EXT. MILITARY BASE, COMMUNICATIONS SHACK - MORNING

JACOB SPECTER, 27, Caucasian, athletic, attractive, a silver Star of David hangs around his neck, steps out, lights a cigarette, then pulls a worn letter out of his pocket, and reads it again.

RUTH (V.O.)

I've been spending a lot of time with Mary. We had dinner with your parents last night. You owe me big time, buster.

Despite having read that before, Jacob chuckles.

RUTH (V.O.)
 Tonight Mary's taking me to a
 formal at her church, so I finally
 get to wear that red dress again.
 Is it appropriate to wear red in
 church? I don't care. I love the
 dress, and some handsome Army
 lieutenant said I looked like a
 bombshell in it.

Jacob stares off. A bittersweet smile as he remembers.

EXT. COUNTRY CLUB - NIGHT

SUPER: 1942

RUTH GOLDMAN, early 20's, Caucasian, looking breathtaking in
 a formal red dress, stands beneath a street lamp, looking
 radiant in it's glow.

Jacob, wearing his dress uniform, stares at Ruth, completely
 enamored with her.

RUTH
 What?

JACOB
 How did I get so lucky as to end up
 with a girl that looks like you?

NATE WASHINGTON, 27, African American, lean, athletic,
 wearing his dress uniform stands beside Jacob.

Behind them are the men in his command, all African American
 and early 20s: CARTER, hulking with a baby face, HARRIS,
 short and muscular, BROWN, fit and handsome, YOUNG, gangly
 with an unfortunate face, and ALLEN, small and bespectacled.

Brown steps forward.

BROWN
 Must've been temporary blindness.
 (to Ruth)
 You're way too pretty for him.

RUTH
 Why thank you.

JACOB
Easy, private.
(smiles at Ruth)
This bombshell's spoken for.

He smiles at Ruth, then offers her his arm.

Ruth takes it, and he walks her toward the impressive entrance of an elite country club. The SOUND of a big band orchestra wafts out. Two uniformed soldiers stand by the ornate doors.

CARTER
I've never been inside a country club before. Never even been outside one.

HARRIS
There's a shocker.

RUTH
(to Carter)
I've never been in one either. It's kind of exciting.

As they approach, MAJOR, mid 50s, Caucasian, tall, formidable, with an unpleasant face, and DRILL SERGEANT, early 30s, short, muscular, an angry little man, both wearing their dress uniforms, step out.

Jacob walks Ruth up to them.

JACOB
Major, Drill Sergeant, I'd like to introduce you to--

MAJOR
Specter, just what in the hell are you and these--

He looks at Nate and the others with disdain.

MAJOR (CONT'D)
Men doing here?

Ruth is bewildered. The men try to hide how hurt, and humiliated, they are.

JACOB
Major, I, well, we--

MAJOR
Spit it out, boy. I promised the Mrs. the next dance.

JACOB

That's why we're here, sir. My girl
came all the way in from--

Major gives Ruth a large, faux apologetic smile.

MAJOR

Now, I do apologize that you came
all this way for nothing, but,
well, these fine folks offered to
host this splendid event, a send
off for the boys.

RUTH

Are Jacob and his men not also
going overseas?

Jacob's nervous.

JACOB

Ruth--

MAJOR

It's fine, Specter. I appreciate
speaking to someone who actually
has a spine.

(to Ruth)

Now, as for these, ah, soldiers,
you can't compare them with, well,
real soldiers.

RUTH

They're all real soldiers, Major,
yet you chose to host this event
at, what I can only assume, is a
restricted club.

MAJOR

All country clubs are restricted,
for obvious reasons. Now--

He gestures to the golf course.

MAJOR (CONT'D)

They've set up a tent for the
coloreds. I'm sure they'd welcome--

RUTH

Yes, I'm sure they would. It was a
pleasure meeting you, Major. You're
everything your men said you were.

She leads an impressed, but humiliated, Jacob off. The men follow her, through the golf course, down toward the tent. They can hear Major and Drill Sergeant's mocking LAUGH.

EXT. MILITARY BASE, COMMUNICATIONS SHACK - MORNING

Super: 1944

Jacob stands on the porch, smoking his cigarette, letter in hand, staring off.

CARTER (O.S.)
Lieutenant?

Jacob looks up. Carter, holding a football, has walked over, and is giving him a concerned look.

CARTER (CONT'D)
You alright?

Jacob nods, slips the letter back into his pocket, takes the last drag off his cigarette, then grinds it out on his boot.

CARTER (CONT'D)
Few of us going play a game.

He holds up the football.

CARTER (CONT'D)
You want in?

JACOB
You're kidding, right? It's already
ninety degrees.

Carter grins.

CARTER
Shoot, you don't know hot till you
spent August in Louisiana. Got so
bad, Grammy'd turn her washtub over
and fry eggs on it.

JACOB
Sounds appetizing.

Carter grins, then hurries off to join the others. There are thirty soldiers, all early 20's, African American. Some play football with Carter, others play volleyball, listen to the radio, read, or just hang out. Bored and miserably hot.

Nate opens the Communications Building's door, and pokes his head out.

NATE
Lieutenant, you got a second?

JACOB
Everything OK?

Not sure, Nate shrugs.

INT. COMMUNICATIONS SHACK - MORNING

Small, plain. A desk with the radio equipment and a table with a map of the island and surrounding ocean.

Jacob, Nate, and FIRST SERGEANT O'CONNOR, mid 20's, Caucasian, a thin yet ripped redhead, stand around the table, staring down at the map.

JACOB
How reliable's the intel?

O'CONNOR
About as fucking reliable as it was the last time we dragged our asses around the goddamn jungle looking for imaginary Japs.

NATE
Probably said the same thing at Port Moresby.

O'CONNOR
That was two fucking years ago.

JACOB
O'Connor, do you have to cuss so much?

O'CONNOR
Aye.

Jacob grins.

O'CONNOR (CONT'D)
With all due respect, Lieutenant, we haven't seen action here, well, ever. Unless you count last month's outbreak of Montezuma's revenge.

JACOB
Still--

O'CONNOR
We should check it out. Fine, if
you want to takeover the--

JACOB
I'll take the men.

O'CONNOR
I couldn't ask you to do that, but
can I get you your hat?

NATE
Joking aside, Lieutenant--

JACOB
O'Connor's ankle hasn't fully
healed.

O'CONNOR
Aye, and the pain's unbearable.

Nate gives him a stern look.

O'CONNOR (CONT'D)
Well, it does still ache a wee bit.

JACOB
I'll take a few men, do a sweep.

NATE
Lieutenant, Jacob, no. If something
happens out there.

JACOB
O'Connor's right. Nothing's ever
happened here, and there's no
reason to think they'd be
interested in us.

NATE
I don't know, taking out a stocked
Munitions Depot--

JACOB
All the more reason to do a sweep.
(to O'Connor)
Put extra men on patrol.
(to Nate)
Gather a few men, we leave in five.

EXT. MILITARY BASE - MORNING

Jacob and Nate lead Carter, Harris, Brown, Young, and Allen across the base.

Each man holds a rifle, and has a sidearm, as well as a grenade, on their belt. They walk beside each other, then spread out as they enter the dense jungle.

JUNGLE

Allen quietly makes his way through the woods. The ground begins to slope upwards, becoming steeper and steeper.

Sweating, winded, Allen trudges on. Climbing up land so steep he has to grab hold of plants and pull himself up at times.

Exhausted and covered with dirt, he finally makes it to the top, and looks around.

The trees thin, then, beyond that, an open field.

Allen catches his breath, then, rifle held ready, he creeps to the treeline, and stares out. Surveying the area.

To the right, the grassy field slopes up, leading into the dense jungle.

To the left, a ledge that looks out over the valley, and mountains beyond.

Allen's eyes scan the area. Seeing nothing, he cups his hand to his mouth, and lets out a BIRDCALL.

JUNGLE

Harris has climbed to the top of a tree so tall it looks out over the canopy of treetops. Letting him see for miles.

He hears Allen's call, and answers with his own BIRDCALL.

JUNGLE

Carter sits on the ledge of a cliff. His feet dangling over the ten thousand foot drop off, he calmly eats his lunch. Staring off, enjoying the view.

A waterfall, trees, a few clearings, more trees. Mountains covered in trees and dense green foliage.

He hears Harris's BIRDCALL, takes a sip from his canteen, to wash down his food, then answers with his BIRDCALL.

JUNGLE

Brown makes his way through the thick underbrush, which's so dense he can't see more than a few inches.

He shoves a palm frond aside, and sees a small clearing.

Brown stands still, surveying the clearing and surrounding jungle, then, sure it's safe, he steps into the clearing, rifle held ready, and looks around.

Sure it's safe, he pulls out his canteen, and takes a sip of water as his eyes scan the area.

The small clearing is surround by jungle so dense even light has trouble penetrating its canopy.

Hearing Carter's BIRDCALL, Brown cups his hand over his mouth, and answers with his BIRDCALL.

JUNGLE

Young follows a stream that cuts through the dense forest, leading to a pond.

He stops. His eyes scan the area, making sure it's safe, then he walks over to the edge of the pond, squats down, and splashes cool water all over his face and head.

Young hears Brown's BIRDCALL, and answers with his own BIRDCALL.

JUNGLE

Nate stands at the treeline, staring down the grassy hill, which leads to more jungle further down.

He can see across the valley, and the over the treetops beyond. Nothing moves. No signs of the enemy.

Nate hears Young's BIRDCALL, cups his hand over his mouth, and answers with his own BIRDCALL.

JUNGLE

Jacob stands at the edge of a small clearing, listening to the BIRDCALLS. He hears Nate's BIRDCALL, and answers with his BIRDCALL.

Rifle held ready, he starts to step into the woods, but hears MOVEMENT behind him.

Jacob spins around as a Japanese soldier FIRES his rifle.

Jacob dives to the ground. The bullet STRIKES the tree behind him. He rolls onto his stomach, aims, and opens FIRE.

Before the Japanese soldier has time to aim his rifle, bullets tear through his body. Killing him.

Jacob leaps up, rifle ready, eyes scanning the treeline, watching for more soldiers, but everything's quiet. Still.

He stands there, listening, then, off in the distance, bursts of GUNFIRE.

JACOB

Shit.

He listens, trying to figure out where it's coming from, but it seems to be coming from all over. Blasts of GUNFIRE. Sounds of a FIREFIGHT. Then a soldier CRIES out. He sounds young, afraid, and hurt.

SOLDIER (O.S.)

I'm hit. Someone. Help me. Please.

Jacob, rifle held ready, listens, trying to pinpoint the sound, then he cautiously hurries through the dense foliage. Eyes and ears alert. Shoving branches and palm fronds out of his way.

SOLDIER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Please. I'm bleeding real bad.

He sounds close. Jacob creeps forward, pushes a leafy branch aside, and peers ahead.

A soldier, wearing a Japanese uniform, but speaking perfect English, crouches behind a tree, his rifle held ready.

Confused, Jacob watches the man a moment.

SOLDIER (CONT'D)

Please. Someone.

Jacob steps closer.

JACOB
Who are you?

The Japanese soldier leaps up, and spins around, but, before he can aim his rifle, Jacob FIRES twice.

Both bullets hit the soldier in the chest. The impact throws him backwards.

Jacob steps towards the soldier, then hears something. A twig snapping. Before he has time to react, a gun FIRES.

He dives to the ground, rolls onto his stomach, then sees another Japanese soldier, a bullet wound in his head, lying on the ground just a few feet away.

Nate, holding his smoking rifle, steps over.

NATE
They usually travel in pairs.

He offers Jacob his hand, and helps him to his feet.

JACOB
Thanks.

A GURGLING sound. The first soldier, near death. Jacob and Nate walk over.

Jacob kneels beside the soldier, who grins up at Jacob and, in perfect English, says;

SOLDIER
You got me.

He takes his last breath, then goes still.

NATE
He spoke English?

Jacob stands.

JACOB
Better than some of our guys.

In the distance, more GUNFIRE, followed by another soldier calling out.

JAPANESE SOLDIER 2 (O.S.)
I've been hit.

JACOB
We've got to warn them.

NATE

We also got to be careful, we don't know how long they've been here.

JACOB

Watch your step, buddy.

Nate nods, then races into the jungle.

Jacob watches him go, then heads off in another direction. Rifle held ready, eyes studying the ground ahead, as well as the thick foliage and trees.

GUNFIRE in the distance. The other Soldier calls out for help, their English perfect.

JAPANESE SOLDIER 2 (O.S.)

Someone, please. I need help.

Jacob slowly, cautiously, creeps towards the sound.

JAPANESE SOLDIER 2 (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I've lost a lot of blood. I, I'm getting cold.

The sound's coming from just ahead. Behind a large bush. Jacob steps closer, eases a branch aside, and peers through.

The Japanese soldier's hiding behind a tree, his back to Jacob, trying to lure Americans. His English is perfect.

JAPANESE SOLDIER 2 (CONT'D)

Help. Please.

Jacob aims his gun at the soldier, then spins around, aims at the treetops, and FIRES.

Bullets hit the Japanese soldier, who's tethered high up in one of the trees. His rifle falls to the ground, his dead body dangles from his rope.

Jacob spins around, but the other soldier's gone.

His eyes, and gun, scan the area, but nothing moves. He stands still, listening.

Slowly, cautiously, Jacob creeps forward. Making his way through the jungle, hunting for the other soldier.

MOVEMENT. Someone coming up from behind.

Jacob spins around, rifle ready, and nearly shoots Nate.

He lowers his gun as Nate steps over.

NATE
Heard gunfire, thought you might
need--

A blast of GUNFIRE. Bullets hit, and ricochet, off the trees behind them.

Nate shoves Jacob aside, spins around, and opens FIRE.

Bullets shred the Japanese soldier behind them.

Nate watches the soldier fall, then stares at him to make sure he's dead, before turning to check on Jacob.

He lies on the ground. Trying not to scream in agony. His t-shirt and one pant leg are drenched in blood.

Nate hurries over, and kneels beside Jacob, who seems out of it. On the verge of passing out.

JACOB
Nate.

Nate takes Jacob's hand.

NATE
I'm here.

JACOB
Is someone cooking? I swear, I
smell Mom's knishes.

NATE
Jacob, I need to check your--

JACOB
Remember when they invited you for
dinner?

Nate pulls up Jacob's t-shirt to inspect his wound.

JACOB (CONT'D)
I miss them. I miss home. It seems
like only yesterday I was having my
Bar Mitzvah, we were playing ball,
and our biggest worry was what our
parents would think.

INT. TEMPLE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

SUPER: 1930

JACOB, 13, stands before the congregation, reading from the Torah, as an ancient Rabbi looks on.

Jacob's proud parents, CHAVA and SAMUEL, both late 30's, Caucasian, and hard looking, sit in the front row of the packed temple; everyone's Caucasian and nicely dressed.

INT. THE SPECTER'S BAR - LATER

A warm neighborhood type place. A buffet's been set up along the bar, and everyone from temple has gathered to celebrate.

Samuel walks Jacob away from the crowd.

Chava, who stands with a group of women, proudly watches.

SAMUEL

Your Mother and I, what I mean to say is, you did well today.

JACOB, 13

Thank you, Father.

SAMUEL

You're a man now.

Jacob smiles.

SAMUEL (CONT'D)

This marks the end of your childhood. Time to put foolishness aside, concentrate on your future.

JACOB, 13

Yes, Father.

SAMUEL

I know you think we're harsh.

JACOB, 13

You only want what's best for me.

Samuel smiles.

SAMUEL

I want you to have the opportunities I didn't.

He hands Jacob the Star of David necklace.

JACOB, 13

Thank you.

He slips it on.

SAMUEL
To remind you.

JACOB, 13
Of you and Mother?

SAMUEL
Of yourself. You have a tremendous
sense of right and wrong, Jacob. Of
fair play. I don't want you to ever
lose that.

Jacob smiles proudly.

SAMUEL (CONT'D)
Stand up for what you know is
right, no matter what others might
think or say. Now--

He nods at a group of 13 year old boys.

SAMUEL (CONT'D)
Go, have fun.

Jacob hurries to his friends, all Jewish boys.

Samuel looks over at Chava, and they share a proud smile.

A FEW DAYS LATER

The bar's empty. Chava's wiping down the tables when Jacob,
carrying his school books, walks in.

CHAVA
How was school?

JACOB, 13
Fine.

CHAVA
Snack's on the bar, then your
father has a list of chores.

Jacob walks to the bar, and sits down, his snack and a glass
of milk wait.

JACOB, 13
I made a new friend today.

Chava gives him a surprised look.

CHAVA
I didn't know there was a new
family in Shule?

Jacob doesn't look up from his snack.

JACOB, 13
Didn't meet him at school.

CHAVA
Is he Jewish?

Jacob shrugs.

JACOB, 13
Not sure. I don't think so.

Concerned, Chava walks over.

CHAVA
Who is this boy? Where did you meet
him?

JACOB, 13
His name's Nate, and I met him in
the park. He's really smart, and
talented. He taught me how to
double dribble.

CHAVA
Sounds messy.

Jacob laughs.

CHAVA (CONT'D)
I'd like to meet this boy.

Jacob smiles.

CHAVA (CONT'D)
Don't forget your chores.

She walks off, and resumes cleaning the tables.

INT. SPECTER RESIDENCE, KITCHEN - LATE AFTERNOON

A small, but clean and decently furnished apartment above the
bar. The kitchen's cramped. Chava, wearing an apron over her
dress, is slicing the brisket when Samuel steps in.

SAMUEL
What can I do?

CHAVA

I hope his people eat brisket. He's not Jewish, maybe I should fry some chicken, just in case.

SAMUEL

It's fine, Chava. Jews aren't the only ones who eat brisket, besides--

He gestures to all the food on the counter.

SAMUEL (CONT'D)

I think you made enough side dishes to feed the old country, should they show up.

CHAVA

I just want everything to be perfect. Jacob doesn't make friends easily, and this boy seems special.

The doorbell RINGS.

CHAVA (CONT'D)

So, best behavior.

She takes off her apron, smooths her dress, then leads Samuel into the living room.

LIVING ROOM

Chava and Samuel, smiles on their faces, walk into the living room, then stop dead in their tracks, and, shocked and confused, gape ahead.

Jacob stands beside NATE, 13, nicely dressed, holding a bouquet of flowers.

JACOB, 13

Mom, Dad, this is my friend, Nate.

Chava and Samuel are too stunned to answer.

NATE, 13

Mr. and Mrs. Specter, I want to thank you for inviting me into your home. These are for you.

He offers Chava the flowers, but she just glares at him.

CHAVA

Did anyone see you come in?

NATE, 13
Excuse me?

JACOB, 13
Mom, what--

CHAVA
(sharply, to Nate)
Did anyone see you come in!?

NATE, 13
N, no, ma'am.

CHAVA
Get out.

JACOB, 13
What!? Mom--

CHAVA
(to Samuel)
The back way. Quickly, before
someone sees.

JACOB, 13
Mom! Stop, please. Nate's--

Chava's furious glare cuts him off.

NATE, 13
I'm sorry, whatever I did, I
apologize.

CHAVA
It's not you. My son should know
better than to bring one of your
kind into our home.

Nate's so hurt, and embarrassed, he fights back tears as
Samuel ushers him out the back door, and down the steps.

Jacob, hurt and angry, glares at Chava.

JACOB, 13
How could you treat him like that?

CHAVA
How could you bring a Schvartze
into my house!? What if people saw?
We have a business to think of.

Samuel steps back in, then closes, and locks, the door.

SAMUEL

Probably going to come back here
with a bunch of his thug friends,
and rob us blind.

JACOB, 13

Don't talk about Nate like that.

SAMUEL

They're not like us, Jacob.

JACOB, 13

Some people say that about us.

CHAVA

That's not the same and you know
it.

JACOB, 13

Why?

SAMUEL

Don't talk back to your Mother.

JACOB, 13

Dad--

SAMUEL

Look, Jacob, I know you think this
Nate boy's your friend, but he's
not. They're, well, different. They
won't be there for you, not like
your own kind will.

JACOB, 13

Nate is my kind. We're friends.

CHAVA

Go to your room! Now!

Furious, hurt, Jacob storms out of the room, into his
bedroom, and SLAMS the door behind him.

JACOB'S BEDROOM

Fighting back tears, Jacob stands in front of the mirror, the
Star of David clenched in his hand. He hears his father's
voice;

SAMUEL (V.O.)

Stand up for what you know is
right, no matter what others might
think or say.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

SUPER: 1944

Jacob sits on the ground, his t-shirt off. The bullet only grazed his chest, leaving a burned/bloody line.

Nate kneels beside him. He's cut open Jacob's pant leg, and is inspecting Jacob's leg, which has a compound fracture, the bone's broken through the skin.

JACOB

Well?

NATE

I'm no doctor, but I'm pretty sure the bone should be on the inside.

JACOB

Leave me.

NATE

We have to set this.

GUNFIRE in the distance.

JACOB

Nate, you have to warn them.

NATE

If this gets infected out here.

JACOB

What are you going to do? Sterilize it? With what?

Nate pulls out his canteen, and pours water over his hands, then Jacob's leg, making him wince in pain.

JACOB (CONT'D)

Corporal, I'm ordering you--

NATE

Don't. You owe me, Jacob.

EXT. PARK - DAY (FLASHBACK)

SUPER: 1930

A sullen Nate, 13, stands on the basketball court, shooting hoops. Dribbling the ball up to the post, leaping up, dunking the ball into the basket, then dribbling back to the center, and doing the whole thing over and over.

Jacob, 13, walks over and watches Nate, who sees him but keeps playing.

JACOB, 13
You ever going to talk to me again?

Nate stops playing. He holds the ball, and, with tears in his eyes, faces Jacob.

JACOB, 13 (CONT'D)
I don't know what to say. I'm sorry. She, well, I don't know. There's no excuse. Especially from them. They know what it's like to be hated. Persecuted. They fled Russia to get away from it.

NATE, 13
That's probably why. It makes them feel safer, not being the one that's hated.

JACOB, 13
You're really smart. Insightful.

NATE, 13
Dad says, in today's world, that's a curse. Dumb people are too stupid to know how bad some people are.

JACOB, 13
My mom's not a bad person. She's just, well, she's my mom.

Nate, ball in hand, just stares at him.

JACOB, 13 (CONT'D)
Can we still be friends?

Nate holds up the ball.

NATE, 13
I'll play you for it.

Tears fill a dejected Jacob's eyes. He turns to walk away.

NATE, 13 (CONT'D)
Where you going?

JACOB, 13
I'll never win.

Nate smiles.

NATE, 13
I didn't say what we were playing
for. If I win, we're friends, but
you owe me.

Jacob grins.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

SUPER: 1944

Nate kneels beside Jacob.

NATE
You let me do this, we're finally
even, deal?

Jacob reluctantly nods.

JACOB
Just make it quick.

Nate tears Jacob's t-shirt into strips, wraps a piece around
his broken shin, then looks at Jacob.

NATE
This is going hurt. A lot.

Jacob bites down, refusing to scream as Nate shoves the
broken bone back into Jacob's shin, then wraps a strip of
cloth around it, holding the bone in place.

JUNGLE

Carter slowly makes his way through the dense foliage toward
the sound of an injured soldier.

JAPANESE SOLDIER 3 (O.S.)
I don't think I can hold on much
longer. I've lost a lot of blood.

Carter heads toward the sound. He stops, peering ahead.

Through the trees he can see a Japanese soldier, hiding
behind a tree.

JAPANESE SOLDIER 3 (CONT'D)
Please. I can hear you. Help me.

Carter sees Allen racing through the woods, coming towards
them from the other direction.

ALLEN
Hold on, soldier. I'm--

CARTER
No!

He sprints toward the Japanese soldier, and opens FIRE.

Bullets tear into the Japanese soldier. Killing him. His body crumbles onto the ground.

Allen grins.

ALLEN
Thanks, Carter, you really saved--

A burst of GUNFIRE. Bullets tear into Allen. Killing him. His body jerks about from the impact of the bullets, before falling to the ground.

CARTER
No!!

He aims up at the treetops, and opens FIRE. Moving his rifle back and forth, spraying the trees with bullets.

The Japanese soldier, who's hiding in the tree, is ripped to shreds. His bloody, bullet ridden body dangles from the rope.

Harris, Brown, and Young come racing over.

HARRIS
Carter?

Carter nods over at Allen's corpse.

CARTER
Allen's dead.

HARRIS
Damn it.

CARTER
And the Japs talk English.

HARRIS
They what?

CARTER
Better than me.

BROWN
How the hell did they learn--

GUNFIRE, all around them. Bullets hit the trees and dirt around them. One rips through Brown's back, and bursts out of his chest. The impact tosses him forward. He lands face first in the dirt.

Harris and Young return FIRE. Carter scoops up Brown, and carries him behind a massive log.

BEHIND LOG

The log's fallen beside a cluster of trees, providing a safe place to hide.

Carter sets Brown on the ground, rips open his shirt, and inspects the wound.

Harris and Young leap behind the log. They take their positions, one on either side of Carter.

Using the log and trees as cover, Harris and Young trade POTSHOTS with the Japanese soldiers who have them surrounded. Holding them off as Carter desperately tries to save Brown.

JUNGLE

Jacob, grimacing in pain, his broken leg in a make-shift splint, leans on Nate, who helps him through the forest.

They hear the GUNFIRE. It sounds close. They move a little closer, then see them.

Harris, Young, and the others are pinned down. Hiding behind a log that's fallen in front of a cluster of trees, trading SHOTS with the three groups of Japanese soldiers, who have them surrounded.

NATE

I count six.

JACOB

Rushing them's out.

NATE

Got any ideas?

Jacob thinks a moment.

JACOB

Yeah, but you won't like it.

BEHIND LOG

Carter kneels beside Brown, tending to his wound, while Harris SHOOTs at the Japanese soldiers.

Afraid, Carter looks up at Harris.

CARTER

He's bad, Corporal. Real bad.

Harris doesn't know what to say, so he turns back, staring out, trying to get one of the Japanese soldiers in his rifle's scope.

CARTER (CONT'D)

He needs a doctor, Harris. He ain't going to make it if we don't--

HARRIS

What do you want me to do!? Ask the damn Japs for a break?

They hear Jacob let out a series of BIRDCALLS. Relieved, both men smile.

JUNGLE

Nate climbs to the top of one of the trees, then uses two belts to secure himself to the trunk.

Once fastened into place, he holds up his rifle, peers through the scope, then scans the trees.

He gets them in his sites. Two Japanese soldiers, their backs to Nate, their rifles aimed at the clump of trees where Harris and the others are hiding.

JUNGLE

Jacob crawls into place. He lies on his stomach under a shrub, then lines up his rifle, and peers through the scope.

One Japanese soldier stands behind a shrub, keeping watch as the other Japanese soldier climbs a tree, overlooking the log where Harris and the others are pinned down.

Jacob aims his rifle, lets out a BIRDCALL, then FIRES.

The soldier climbing the tree is hit in the head. His body drops to the jungle floor.

Before the other soldier can get Jacob in his scope, Jacob swings his rifle, and FIRES.

Bullets tear into the other soldier.

TREETOP

Hearing Jacob FIRE, Nate SHOOTs, and kills, both of the soldiers he's watching.

FALLEN LOG

Carter, Harris, and Young leap up, and open FIRE. Emptying their clips.

Bullets shred the bushes, and the last two Japanese soldiers.

BEHIND LOG

Jacob, Nate, Harris, Carter, and Young sit around Brown, who's growing weak.

BROWN

Sorry I let you down, Lieutenant.

JACOB

You didn't, Brown. I'm proud of you, all of you.

Nate realizes something.

NATE

Where's Allen?

YOUNG

Didn't make it.

CARTER

Heard one of them calling for help. Thought you might be hurt.

JACOB

Sounds like him.

HARRIS

Yeah, stupid. All this time, he don't know your voice?

JACOB

I'm going to miss him too, Harris.

Harris, fighting back tears, nods.

CARTER

What now?

YOUNG

Think this was an attack?

HARRIS

No, they came for a friendly visit,
and got pissed we didn't put out a
decent spread.

YOUNG

I meant, was this some kind of
training exercise, or--

NATE

The Munitions Depot.

YOUNG

We did just finish unloading that
shipment.

HARRIS

That'd really fuck up the boys
waiting for it.

NATE

Be a major feather in the Emperor's
cap, too.

BROWN

You guys got to warn the boys at
base.

CARTER

If it ain't too late.

JACOB

(to Nate)

Take the men--

BROWN

No.

JACOB

Private, I'm not leaving you.

BROWN

Sir, I'm already dead. Don't make
it be for nothing. Please.

Tears in his eyes, Jacob nods.

Carter picks Jacob up, his eyes lock with Brown's, a sad look passes between them, then Carter helps Jacob off.

Harris looks down at Brown, wanting to say something, but not knowing what.

Brown hands him his rifle.

BROWN (CONT'D)
Make it count for something.

HARRIS
My word, brother.

He leads the rest of the men off, leaving a gravely wounded Brown, who props himself up against the log, pulls the grenade off his belt, and sits there, fighting to stay conscious as he waits.

INT. ENGINEERING PLANT, JACOB'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

SUPER: December, 1941

The nicely furnished office of a junior executive. Jacob sits behind his desk going over plans. There's a pack of cigarettes, and a nearly full ashtray beside him.

An annoyed Ruth strides in, and sets a file folder down on Jacob's desk, right on top of the plans he was reading.

JACOB
What's this?

RUTH
It's this new thing called a file folder. People use them to put papers in. Keeps them from getting messy and disorganized.

Jacob smiles.

JACOB
I got that part. I meant, what papers are inside?

RUTH
I guess you'll have to open it to find out.

Jacob starts to open the folder, but Ruth pushes it closed, and holds her hand there.

RUTH (CONT'D)
Mr. Hunt needs these signed before
he leaves at four.

Jacob looks at the clock; 3:50.

JACOB
How am I to sign them when I can't
open the folder?

RUTH
You're the brilliant, boy-wonder
engineer, you figure it out.

JACOB
Does this mean you're still upset?

RUTH
Brilliant and perceptive.

JACOB
I introduced you to Nate and Mary.

RUTH
Yes, and they were lovely.

JACOB
And we had a good time.

Ruth gives him a hurt look.

RUTH
Oh.

She removes her hand.

JACOB
That's not what I meant.

RUTH
Is that all I've been to you, fun?

Jacob stands.

JACOB
You know that's not true.

RUTH
Just a good time. Kind of girl you
have a few laughs with.

JACOB
It's more than that, Ruth. You know
how I feel.

RUTH

Then why won't you take me to
Chanukah dinner.

JACOB

Because it's at my parents' house.

RUTH

And you don't want to introduce me
to your parents?

Jacob takes her hand, and lovingly stares into her eyes.

JACOB

Of course I do. I was just hoping I
could put it off for a little bit.
Like, until after our fourth
grandchild's Bar Mitzvah.

RUTH

I'm sure they're lovely people.

Jacob, not sure how to answer, steps back to his desk, and
opens the file.

RUTH (CONT'D)

How bad could they be, right?

INT. SPECTER RESIDENCE, DINNING ROOM - EVENING

Jacob, Ruth, Samuel, and Chava sit at the table, having
dinner. A radio beside the table plays music. Beside that is
a full ashtray and Jacob's cigarettes.

CHAVA

So, your Mother doesn't mind that
you work?

JACOB

Mom.

CHAVA

What? I'm not allowed to ask
questions?

(to Ruth)

I embarrass my son.

JACOB

You're not embarrassing me.

RUTH

It's fine.

(to Chava)

(MORE)

RUTH (CONT'D)

Actually, my Mother works in the plant too. She was the first woman hired as an engineer.

CHAVA

What do you know, it's a new world. In my day, it was a shanda. Only widows and Mieskeits, who couldn't get a husband, had to work.

JACOB

Mom!

SAMUEL

Don't yell at your Mother.

JACOB

But--

CHAVA

What? I was making conversation.

Samuel realizes the music's stopped, and the announcer's speaking. He strains to hear what he's saying.

JACOB

You were insulting--

SAMUEL

Sh.

CHAVA

What insulting? All I said was--

SAMUEL

Quiet.

He turns up the radio as President Roosevelt addresses the nation. They all listen in stunned silence.

ROOSEVELT (V.O.)

Yesterday, December 7, 1941, a date which will live in infamy, the United States of America was suddenly, and deliberately, attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan.

LATER

Dinner cleared, Jacob, Ruth, Samuel, and Chava sit at the table, quietly having coffee and pastry.

RUTH
So, we're going to war?

JACOB
Good.

He shakes a cigarette out of his pack, and lights it.

SAMUEL
War is never a good thing, Jacob.

JACOB
Hitler's killing Jews.

CHAVA
You don't know that!?

JACOB
Everyone knows. Allied soldiers are telling stories--

CHAVA
That's all they are, stories. If people were really being Killed, Roosevelt would've done something.

JACOB
He didn't do anything because it didn't affect us, and he didn't think he could convince Americans to support a another war, but I was over there. I saw it.

Chava, desperate to change the subject, grins at Ruth.

CHAVA
My Jacob was in Berlin. Competed in the 1936 Olympics.

JACOB
I didn't compete.

CHAVA
He was an alternate on the Olympic wrestling team.

JACOB
And I saw the hate there, and the apathy here. Thousands, maybe millions of people being killed, and it took Japan bombing Pearl Harbor for anyone to care.

SAMUEL

Jacob, that's enough.

JACOB

No, Dad, it's not. People are dying. Being murdered.

SAMUEL

And ruining our dinner will help them how?

CHAVA

We've had a lovely evening, Jacob, don't ruin it.

Resigned, Jacob nods.

CHAVA (CONT'D)

Guess who I ran into. Remember that little boy you used to play with, Aaron Schlossberg?

Not caring, Jacob nods.

CHAVA (CONT'D)

Only, he's not so little now. Must be doing very well for himself, although he looks like he's got a bit of the gout.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Jacob walks Ruth down the sidewalk. Only a few cafes and businesses are still open. The street's quiet.

JACOB

Sorry about my parents.

RUTH

They're parents. They're all like that.

JACOB

I just--
(shakes his head)
I don't know.

RUTH

You don't know how people can be so apathetic while others are suffering and dying.

JACOB

Exactly.

RUTH

They should be up in arms.
Fighting. Screaming. Demanding
something be done.

JACOB

Yes.

RUTH

You and Nate are friends.

JACOB

Best friends. Since we were
thirteen.

RUTH

You guys don't do a lot of things
together.

JACOB

We hang out all the time.

RUTH

At all the same places.

JACOB

Yeah, because...

RUTH

There are places he's not allowed?
Or that you two aren't allowed to
go together?

JACOB

I get it, if you start screaming
about injustice you'll never stop.
Still, people are being killed.
Entire families wiped out. Others
put in camps.

RUTH

And most people feel powerless to
do anything, so it's easier to
pretend it's not happening. Look
the other way.

JACOB

What happens when you can't
anymore?

She doesn't have an answer. They stare a moment.

INT. WASHINGTON RESIDENCE, LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

A small, but charmingly decorated apartment. Jacob and Nate are speaking with a livid MARY, mid 20's, African American, attractive, wearing her work/cleaning woman uniform.

JACOB

Mary, I know what it's like.

Nate sees the indignant look on Mary's face and steps aside, out of the line of fire.

MARY

You know what it's like?

Jacob, realizing how it sounded, tries to backpedal.

JACOB

Of course not. I only meant, I know what it's like to be the other.

MARY

How!? You live in a Jewish neighborhood, went to Hebrew schools, date a Jewish girl--

JACOB

But I work--

MARY

As an engineer.

JACOB

They hired me, but I'm not of them. Not really.

MARY

But they interviewed and hired you. Nate's every bit as qualified and they wouldn't even let him apply.

NATE

Mary, just because we have it bad doesn't mean someone else--

Mary holds out her hand to silence him.

MARY

(to Jacob)

How many businesses around here have "No Jews allowed" signs?

(MORE)

MARY (CONT'D)

How many restaurants and businesses, in your own darn neighborhood, straight out tell you, we don't want you here. Your money isn't good enough. Do you have any idea how that feels?

NATE

Mary, please, he'd didn't--

Her angry glare cuts him off. She turns back to Jacob.

MARY

Tell me again, what college did you go to? What colleges would even consider you? How many employers refused to interview you when they found out your race?

JACOB

We're trying to change that.

MARY

How the heck is you two going off to war going to change anything?

(to Nate)

And why would you risk your life for a country that would deny you--

(to Jacob)

Either of you, the same rights as any white, Christian man?

NATE

To show them we're just as good.

MARY

Negros have been fighting along side white men since the Revolutionary war and they see don't see as equals.

NATE

But things are getting better.

MARY

Are they!? You two couldn't even enlist together. You're willing to die for your country, and they make you use the Colored entrance even for that.

A stunned Ruth stands in the open door.

RUTH
What does she mean, enlist?

She gives Mary an apologetic look.

RUTH (CONT'D)
I knocked.

JACOB
Ruth, what are you doing here?

RUTH
Mary called me.

MARY
I was hoping she'd be able to talk
some sense into you, but it's too
late for that.

NATE
Mary, I'm sorry, but this is
something we have to do.

Mary's anger turns to hurt.

MARY
You don't think you should've at
least talked to me first?

She storms into her bedroom, and SLAMS the door.

Nate gives Jacob and Ruth an apologetic look, then goes into
the bedroom to talk to Mary.

Ruth glares at Jacob.

RUTH
What she said.

She storms out.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - AFTERNOON

Ruth hurries out of the building, and over to the bus stop.
Jacob jogs after her.

JACOB
Ruth, please, let me explain.

RUTH

What's to explain? If I were important to you, if I mattered, you would've talked to me before making a life changing decision. You didn't, so, obviously, I don't.

JACOB

That's not true. Look, I didn't go there to enlist. I just, I went with Nate, for moral support.

RUTH

Really?

JACOB

It's what I told myself. I can't look the other way anymore.

RUTH

And joining the Army is going to change things how? You're an engineer, not a fighter.

JACOB

I've known, or at least suspected, what Hitler was doing since thirty-six. I've known how negroes in this country have been treated since, well my entire my life. I can't just do nothing anymore.

RUTH

And how is joining the Army going to change either of those!?

JACOB

Nate and I wanted to join together, to show we were the same. Equal.

RUTH

If you want to change how things are, run for political office. Speak out, write a book, but risking your life--

JACOB

Someone has to, and I need to know I did everything I could.

RUTH

But--

JACOB

Do you agree we need to go to war
to stop Japan and Hitler?

RUTH

Yes. I hate it, I think it's wrong,
but yes. They must be stopped.

JACOB

How can I ask others to do
something I'm not willing to?

Ruth stares at his face a moment.

RUTH

You're a good man, Jacob Specter.
An irritatingly good man.

JACOB

Then you'll wait for me?

He pulls a ring box out of his pocket.

JACOB (CONT'D)

I don't want to ask you to marry
me.

RUTH

You sure know how to sweet-talk a
girl.

JACOB

I mean, I don't want to ask you,
yet. It's not fair, not until the
war's over, and I'm back for good.

RUTH

You are coming back?

Jacob opens the ring box. Inside is a beautiful promise ring.

JACOB

If you promise to wait for me.

Tears fill Ruth's eyes, she nods yes.

Grinning, nervous, Jacob slides the ring on her finger.

JACOB (CONT'D)

I love you, Ruth.

RUTH

I love you, too.

They kiss.

INT. SPECTER RESIDENCE, LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Jacob sits in a chair facing Samuel and Chava, who sit on the sofa. There's coffee and pastry on the table, beside Jacob's cigarettes and ashtray.

CHAVA

Are you Meshuggeneh?

SAMUEL

Chava, please.

CHAVA

What? Our son's lost his mind.

SAMUEL

Let the boy speak.

CHAVA

Speak? What's he going to say?

(to Jacob)

It was that Schvartze, wasn't it?
He talked you into this.

SAMUEL

Chava, enough.

(to Jacob)

Is this what you really want?

CHAVA

You can't support this.

Samuel gives her an annoyed look.

CHAVA (CONT'D)

(under her breath)

They've both gone Meshuggeneh.

JACOB

Dad, do you remember what you said
when you gave me this?

He touches his Star of David.

SAMUEL

I don't know. It's real silver, so
wear it under your shirt when you
go downtown.

JACOB

That too. You said, stand up for
what you know is right, no matter
what others say.

Samuel nods.

SAMUEL

And this, joining the Army, is the
right thing to do?

Jacob nods yes.

SAMUEL (CONT'D)

Very well.

CHAVA

Samuel, no.

SAMUEL

Chava, he's a college graduate, an
engineer, he'll go in as an
officer, not a grunt.

Chava remembers something and smiles.

CHAVA

Tovah Greenberg from temple, her
brother's some bigwig in the Army.

SAMUEL

So's Michael Horowitz's boy. Works
over at the Pentagon.

(smiles at Jacob)

I bet with a few calls we could get
you a nice cushy commission,
stateside.

CHAVA

Probably D.C. You could be home on
weekends.

JACOB

I appreciate that. Really, I do.

CHAVA

Jacob, don't.

JACOB

I want to do this on my own.

SAMUEL

(to Chava)

He is Meshuggeneh.

JACOB
I know you don't understand.

CHAVA
What's to understand? You hate us.

SAMUEL
Chava, don't be so melodramatic.

JACOB
Mom, I don't hate you.

CHAVA
Then why won't you let us help you?
What about Ruth? What does she--

SAMUEL
Enough, Chava. He's made up his
mind.
(to Jacob)
I don't understand why you need to
do this.

JACOB
Because--

Samuel holds up his hand to stop him.

SAMUEL
You're a man. Your reasons are your
own. I am proud of you, Son.

Upset, Chava leaps up, and races out.

CHAVA
Ir zent beyde mshuge.

She runs into the master bedroom and SLAMS the door shut

SAMUEL
Zeyt zikher. Zeyt gezunt. Be safe.
Be healthy.

JACOB
I'll be fine, Dad. Probably won't
even get to see any action.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

SUPER: 1944

A Japanese Commander leads a group of soldiers through the
trees, toward the fallen log.

He stops, then signals for two of his men to check it out.

Rifles ready, they slowly, cautiously approach the log, then leap behind it.

BEHIND LOG

The Japanese soldiers aim their guns at Brown, who's slumped against the log. Eyes closed. Either dead or unconscious.

The soldiers slowly approach Brown, who waits until they're right beside him before opening his eyes, and pulling the pin on his grenade.

JUNGLE

The two soldiers leap over the log as the grenade EXPLODES, tearing their bodies to shreds.

Blood and body parts rain down on the Commander and his surprised men, then, before they can react, Jacob and his men open FIRE.

Bullets tear through them. Blood sprays. A few limbs fly. The Japanese soldiers try to fight back, but within seconds they're mowed down. Their bloody, bullet ridden corpses litter the area.

SHRUB

Jacob signals for his men to stop firing.

He surveys the area, then nods at Nate, who leads Harris and Young around the area. Checking each soldier to make sure they're dead.

Carter squats beside Jacob, and inspects his bandaged leg.

Blood's seeped through the filthy bandage, and the flesh around it is swollen and discolored.

JACOB

It's fine.

CARTER

It ain't.

Nate leads the others back.

NATE
All clear, Lieutenant.
(to Carter)
Everything alright?

JACOB
Yes.

CARTER
No. Lieutenant's in pain, and
smells like his leg's infected.

YOUNG
Quiet.

Everyone listens.

HARRIS
I don't hear...

Then they HEAR them. Moving through the jungle. Groups of Japanese soldiers making their way through the foliage. Coming from all sides. Surrounding them. Slowly moving closer, and closer.

Obviously outnumbered, the men turn to Jacob, whose mind's spinning, trying to think of a plan.

EXT. BUS DEPOT - DAY

SUPER: 1942

There are two buses ready to take soldiers to their bases; one for "Whites", one for "Coloreds".

Wives, girlfriends, a few parents, and some friends have gathered to see their loved ones off. Two groups have formed, one all Caucasian, the other all African American.

Standing between the two groups are Jacob, Nate, Ruth, and Mary, who are trying not to cry as they say their good-byes.

To everyone's surprise, Samuel walks over. Ruth smiles, happy to see him.

SAMUEL
(to Jacob)
Your Mother wanted to come, but,
well...

JACOB
She's in bed with a migraine?

SAMUEL
Give her time. Change doesn't come
easy. For either of us.

An uncomfortable silence.

SAMUEL (CONT'D)
So, you boys all set?

Jacob nods, then notices the buses have started loading.

JACOB
Well, time to go.

Samuel nods.

SAMUEL
(to both Jacob and Nate)
So, watch out for each other.

NATE
They won't let us train at the same
base, Sir.

SAMUEL
I'm sorry, Nate. For everything.

Their eyes meet. Samuel seems genuinely remorseful.

Nate offers Samuel his hand, it takes a moment, but Samuel
finally firmly clasps Nate's hand and shakes it.

SAMUEL (CONT'D)
Take care of yourself.

Nate nods, then hugs Mary tight.

Jacob hugs Samuel.

JACOB
Thank you.

Samuel smiles, then steps aside.

Jacob and Ruth stare a moment, then kiss, and embrace.

They hold each other a moment, then Ruth stands with Samuel
and Mary as they watch Jacob and Nate walk together, then
split, and go to their separate buses.

Samuel notices the hateful looks he's getting from both
Caucasians and African Americans.

INT. GOLDMAN APARTMENT, KITCHEN - DAY

An excited Ruth, clutching an envelope, hurries in, puts the teakettle on the stove, then tears open the envelope, and reads the letter.

JACOB (V.O.)
I miss you.

EXT. FORT DIX - MONTAGE

- DAY - Jacob and the other recruits, wearing heavy rucksacks, run along a dirt road. Drill Sergeant jogs beside them, yelling and insulting them. It's brutally hot. The men are sweaty and exhausted, but force themselves to continue.

JACOB (V.O.)
I can't believe it's only been a few weeks. It feels like years.

- NIGHT - Jacob and the others, their heavy rucksacks on their backs, march along the dirt road. It's pouring. The men are soaked and cold. Drill Sergeant rides in a jeep beside them. Dry and warm, shouting at them through a bullhorn.

JACOB (V.O.)
And you mustn't worry so. Basic training really isn't that bad.

- DAY - A scorching hot day. Drill Sergeant yells and berates the exhausted, sweaty men as they run an obstacle course; race through tires, crawl under razor-wire, climb across a rope bridge, swing over a mud pit, then scale a tall wall.

JACOB (V.O.)
It's like, well, an intense summer camp.

EXT. FORT DIX, GUN RANGE - DAY

As the other men line up, and SHOOT at targets, a smiling Jacob stands off to the side, smoking a cigarette as he reads a letter.

RUTH (V.O.)
I had lunch with Mary yesterday.
All we could talk about was how--

DRILL SERGEANT (O.S.)
Specter!

Jacob looks over to see Drill Sergeant glaring at him.

DRILL SERGEANT (CONT'D)
You waiting for a written
invitation?

Jacob tucks the letter into his pocket, and takes the last
drag off his cigarette.

DRILL SERGEANT (CONT'D)
Today, Specter!

Jacob grinds the cigarette out on his boot, then races over
to the firing line.

INT. GOLDMAN APARTMENT, KITCHEN - DAY

Ruth, another letter in hand, races in, puts the teakettle
on, then tears open the letter, and excitedly reads.

JACOB (V.O.)
I miss you so much. You're all I
think about. When I have time to
think, that is.

INT. FORT DIX, BARRACKS - MORNING

Several hours before dawn. Jacob and the others are asleep.
Drill Sergeant, holding the lids of two metal garbage cans,
quietly walks in, then SLAMS the lids together and screams.

He walks around, BANGING the lids and yelling. The men,
jolted awake, quickly climb out of bed and line up.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - DAY

Drill Sergeant jogs alongside the sweaty, exhausted men, who
carry heavy rucksacks. Jacob jogs alongside PRIVATE ANDERSON,
early 20's, Caucasian, rugged.

JACOB (V.O.)
Drill Sergeant assigned us each a
war buddy today.

EXT. FORT DIX, FIELD - DAY

The recruits are paired up with their buddies for combat
training. Jacob and Anderson trade jabs and kicks as Drill
Sergeant walks around, correcting everyone's form.

INT. FORT DIX, CLASSROOM - DAY

Jacob sits with Anderson in the packed classroom. A uniformed officer stands in front of the class, teaching the seven "Army Core Values," loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity and personal courage (LDRSHIP).

JACOB (V.O.)
The guys are all real nice, but, I
have to admit, it's good to have a
buddy.

INT. FORT DIX, MESS HALL - EVENING

Jacob and Anderson, talking and laughing, grab their metal trays, then get in line.

JACOB (V.O.)
It's nice to have some you know you
can rely. Talk to. I miss you,
Ruthie.

Jacob steps up and the dour looking cook drops a clump of unappetizing grub onto his tray.

JACOB (V.O.)
I really miss your cooking too. I
even miss Mom's cooking, if that
tells you anything.

EXT. FORT DIX - AFTERNOON

Jacob leans against a building, smoking a cigarette as he reads a letter.

RUTH (V.O.)
I miss you, Jacob. I'm counting the
days--

Two privates: HANSEN and DAVIS, both early 20's, Caucasian, buff; walk over.

HANSEN
Letter from your boyfriend?

Jacob slips the letter into his pocket.

JACOB
It's from your mother, Hansen. She
was wondering if you still want to
be a girl.

DAVIS
Speaking of girls.

He nods at the letter in Jacob's pocket.

DAVIS (CONT'D)
That from yours?

Jacob grins.

JACOB
Ruth. She's the prettiest, smartest
girl I ever met.

DAVIS
She's that pretty, she ain't
waiting.

HANSEN
If she's smart she sure ain't.

JACOB
Screw you both. Ruth and me got
something real special.

DAVIS
So special you're here, and she's
there?

JACOB
Shut your mouth.

They all laugh.

HANSEN
So, this Ruth got a sister?

JACOB
Sorry.

HANSEN
Is her mother happily married?

JACOB
You're sick.

Hansen gives him a teasing/longing look.

HANSEN
No, I just want that special thing
you and Ruth got.

He pantomimes humping the air.

HANSEN (CONT'D)
Oh, yeah, that's special.

Jacob jokingly shoves him.

JACOB
Hansen, you're a real jerk, you
know that?

HANSEN
You know we're just ribbing you,
Specter.

Anderson runs over.

ANDERSON
Specter.

Hansen and Davis walk off.

JACOB
Anderson, where you been?

ANDERSON
Major, got a personal errand for us
to run. Seems his kid--
(makes air quotes)
Forgot to pay for some stuff down
at the Mercantile. Needs someone to
take care of it, on the quiet.

JACOB
What about--

Nods at the building.

JACOB (CONT'D)
Jensen's class?

Anderson smirks. They banter, mimicking the voices from
"training films" as they walk toward the parking lot.

ANDERSON
Put a helmet on your privates,
because they're going to see some
action, and prostitutes can be more
deadly than the enemy, Boys.

JACOB
Watch out for booby traps and panty
grenades. Syphilis and Gonorrhea
kill thousands.

Anderson corrects him.

ANDERSON
You mean Cupid's Itch and Venus's
curse.

They both laugh.

EXT. MERCANTILE STORE - AFTERNOON

Anderson parks the jeep in front, then he and Jacob hop out.

Jacob takes the last drag off his cigarette, drops the butt
on the ground, then hurries up the steps after Anderson.

As he walks toward the entrance, Jacob notices a sign, and
stops dead in his tracks. Hurt, embarrassed, he stands there
as Anderson continues to the door.

Anderson realizes Jacob isn't with him, and turns back.

ANDERSON
Aren't you coming in?

JACOB
Can't?

ANDERSON
What? You a vampire? Owner got to
invite you in, or something?

JACOB
I'm not allowed in.

Anderson gives him a bewildered look, so Jacob nods at the
sign by the door.

Hand written "No Niggers, Mexicans, Jews, or Dogs".

Anderson, assuming Jacob's teasing, laughs.

ANDERSON
Good one? What're you? A Mexican or
a dog?

JACOB
I'm a Jew.

Anderson's truly stunned. He just gapes at Jacob.

ANDERSON
But you're name's Specter, that
ain't Jewish.

JACOB
Actually, it is. Ashkenazi.

Anderson gives him a blank look.

JACOB (CONT'D)
Slavic Jews. My parents immigrated
from Russia.

Anderson, assuming it's a joke, starts to laugh.

ANDERSON
You got a heck of a sense of humor,
Specter. You nearly had me going.

Jacob's expression doesn't change.

ANDERSON (CONT'D)
You, you're serious?

Jacob nods yes.

ANDERSON (CONT'D)
What'd you know? All this time I
thought you was a regular American.

JACOB
So did I.

Embarrassed, Anderson tries to think of something to say.

ANDERSON
You're the first Jew I ever met.
Granddaddy said you all had horns.

JACOB
I had mine filed down when they
buzzed my hair.

Anderson gapes at him a moment, believing him, then smiles.

ANDERSON
You're joshing, right?

Jacob, not sure what to say, nods.

JACOB
Yeah.

An awkward silence. They just stare.

ANDERSON
I should take care of this.

He nods at the door.

JACOB

Right.

He turns and walks toward the steps.

ANDERSON

Specter.

Jacob turns back.

ANDERSON (CONT'D)

It don't matter none. You're still
my war buddy, right?

Jacob smiles, nods, then hurries down the steps.

Anderson stares after him a moment, his mind reeling, then he walks inside. The bell RINGS as he opens the door.

INT. FORT DIX, BARRACKS - NIGHT

Perfectly made beds line both walls. The entrance at one end, showers/latrine the other.

Hansen and Davis stand with a group of other privates, huddled together, talking. They seem agitated. Their eyes occasionally glance over at the latrine.

An anxious Anderson sits on the cot closest to the latrine. When Jacob steps out, he leaps up, and hurries over to warn him, but it's too late.

Hansen and Davis, the men behind them, stride over. They all look angry, their hate for Jacob obvious.

HANSEN

Specter. You got something to say
to us?

ANDERSON

Leave him be.

DAVIS

You best stay out of this,
Anderson.

(to Jacob)

So? You got something to tell us?

Jacob, trying to remain calm, stoically stares back.

DAVIS (CONT'D)
Well, you fucking kike!?

Jacob clenches his fist, getting ready to throw a punch.

INT. SPECTER RESIDENCE, JACOB'S BEDROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Jacob, 13, his face bruised and swollen from a fight, sits on his bed with Samuel.

JACOB, 13
What was I supposed to do? Nate's
my friend.

SAMUEL
And you should stand up for your
friends, yourself too.

JACOB, 13
But?

Samuel smiles, then turns serious.

SAMUEL
But you can't fight the whole
world, Jacob.

JACOB, 13
How about just the jerks?

SAMUEL
Jacob, like it or not, when people
see you, or your friend Nate, they
don't just see you as individuals.
They see you as all Jews, or all
negroes. If you fight, they'll say
all Jews are violent. If you walk
away, all Jews are cowards.

JACOB, 13
Then what do I do?

SAMUEL
Always try to be the bigger man.

INT. FORT DIX, BARRACKS - NIGHT (1942)

Jacob forces himself to stay calm.

JACOB
Look, Davis, I--

HANSEN

We thought you was one of us.

ANDERSON

He is.

HANSEN

He's a fucking Jew. They ain't real Americans.

DAVIS

Ain't much better than a Nigger, if you ask me.

JACOB

No one asked you, you illiterate baboon.

HANSEN

I best not go to Europe. I don't mind fighting the Japs, but the Krauts? Hell--

(grins at Jacob)

Least Hitler's killing the right people.

JACOB

Now who sounds un-American?

Hansen's so angry, he rears back his fist to hit Jacob, but a few men grab his arm, and stop him.

HANSEN

Best watch your back, Beanie Boy.

The men walk him and Davis to the other side of the room.

ANDERSON

I swear, I didn't tell them.

JACOB

Not like it was a secret. Heck--
(shouts)

I'm wearing a darn Star of David around my neck.

DAVIS

(shouts back)

Like a real American would know some fucking Hymie symbol.

HANSEN

Yeah! You Kike bastard.

ANDERSON

Ignore them, Specter, they're just
a bunch of ignorant jerks.

Jacob nods.

ANDERSON (CONT'D)

Hey, we're still buddies, right?

Jacob glances over at the other men, a few of whom are
glaring at them.

JACOB

Looks like my only one.

ANDERSON

Don't worry, they'll come around.

INT. FORT DIX, CLASSROOM - DAY

A uniformed officer stands at the front of the room, giving a
lecture on strategy, seemingly oblivious to what's happening.

Jacob and Anderson's desk are beside each other in the center
of the room. All the other desks are at least six feet away.
Some privates shoot spitballs at them, others throw
paperclips and pencils.

A couple pretend to cough, but are really saying, under their
breath;

HANSEN

Christ Killer.

DAVIS

Himey Hooknose.

Jacob and Anderson sit up straight, facing the front, trying
to ignore the taunts, as well as the spitballs and paperclips
that keep hitting them.

EXT. FORT DIX - DAY

Jacob and Anderson walk across base. A group of privates
follow, heckling them.

Other soldiers notice. Some grin or give Jacob dirty looks,
but a couple give him sympathetic looks.

HANSEN

Hey, Anderson, your parents know
you're a Jew lover?

DAVIS

When you going to take him home?
Introduce your Jew to your family?

HANSEN

He your pet, or your lover. You Jew
loving piece of--

Jacob spins around to confront them.

JACOB

Why don't you shut the heck up?

HANSEN

Why don't you come over here and
make me, you Heeb bastard.

Anderson tries to pull Jacob away.

ANDERSON

He's not worth it.

DAVIS

Best listen to your boyfriend, Jew-
boy.

JACOB

What the hell is your problem?

DAVIS

We don't want to serve with Kikes
and Niggers. It ain't natural for
us to mix with your kind.

ANDERSON

Come on.

Jacob allows Anderson to walk him away.

HANSEN

This ain't over, Hymie.

Practically shaking with rage, they watch Jacob and Anderson
walk off.

EXT. FORT DIX - MORNING

Jacob and Anderson run beside each other, the rest of the
privates run ten paces or so behind them.

INT. FORT DIX, BARRACKS - NIGHT

Jacob and Anderson's cots are beside the latrine, all of the others have been moved so the closest is ten feet away, isolating them from the others.

Jacob and Anderson sit on their cots, facing each other, chatting. Everyone else is on the far side of the room, glaring at, and talking about, them.

EXT. FORT DIX, OFFICE - DAY

Anderson steps out of the building.

Hansen and Davis are standing just outside the door. Hansen puts out his leg, and trips Anderson.

He stumbles, falls to the ground, then starts to get up, but Davis kicks him, knocking Anderson back to the ground.

HANSEN

You and the Major have a good chat?

ANDERSON

Wasn't about you? You know I'd never--

DAVIS

You choose a Jew over your own kind, who's to say what you'd do.

ANDERSON

Specter is one--

HANSEN

He's a Jew. They ain't like us.

DAVIS

You can't trust them, Anderson. My Daddy said that, back in the old days, Jews went in the bushes and mated with animals, and that's how Niggers was made.

Anderson gives him an incredulous look.

ANDERSON

What?

HANSEN

Anderson, you're a traitor to your race here, what says you won't be a traitor to your country over there?

ANDERSON

What? Jacob--

Davis hits him in the jaw, knocking him over.

DAVIS

One of the core values of the Army
is loyalty. Best prove you got it.
We make ourselves clear.

He glares menacingly.

ANDERSON

Yeah. I got it.

HANSEN

You best.

They give Anderson threatening looks, then stride off,
leaving him on the ground, thinking about their warning.

INT. FORT DIX, MESS HALL - AFTERNOON

Long tables filled with enlisted men eating. Jacob, Anderson,
and a few other men go down the line filling their trays.

Jacob and Anderson survey the room. There's an empty table in
back, but they have to pass the one where Hansen, Davis, and
the other men sit. There's one empty place at their table.

Eyes ahead, bracing for a confrontation, Jacob and Anderson
walks towards the back.

As they approach, Hansen and David stand, then step in front
of Jacob and Anderson, blocking their way.

Saying nothing, they just stand there, glaring at Anderson,
who tries to stare them down, but withers.

Eyes on the ground, Anderson slips into the empty seat, sets
his tray on the table, and sits there. Eyes cast down.

Shocked, Jacob stares at him, then turns to Hansen and Davis,
who sneer at him.

DAVIS

No one wants you here, Jew.

JACOB

Now I know how you must feel when
your family gets together.

He walks to the table in back, takes a seat with his back to the wall, then sets his tray down.

Jacob sits there, alone, quietly eating his meal.

He looks around the room. Tables filled with men. Sitting together. Talking as they eat. He locks eyes with Hansen, who gives him a gloating smirk.

Jacob looks down at his meal, concentrating on his food. A used handkerchief, tied to a chicken bone, flies through the air, and lands in the middle of his tray.

The room erupts in LAUGHTER. Embarrassed, Jacob gets up, and storms out.

Most of the room is laughing, Anderson sits there, rigid, eyes cast down.

EXT. FORT DIX, WOODS - DAY

Jacob and Anderson run down the dirt trail that cuts through a dense forest. Hansen, Davis, and the rest of the men run several paces ahead.

They run in silence. Anderson feeling uncomfortable, Jacob trying to think of what to say.

JACOB
(staring ahead)
Look, Anderson, if you want to
change War Buddies, I understand.
Actually, I don't. I thought we
were friends. That we had each
other's back. You said--

He turns to Anderson, and realizes he isn't there.

Jacob stops, and looks around. His eyes surveying the path and the surrounding woods.

JACOB (CONT'D)
Anderson!? You stop to take a leak?

As he stares into the trees, he HEARS people running down the path, towards him, and turns around.

Hansen, Davis, and the rest of the men, except Anderson, have surrounded him. They look angry.

Realizing he's in trouble, Jacob gets in boxer's stance, ready to fight.

HANSEN
Ain't that cute. Everybody knows
Jews can't fight. Just a bunch of
lily-livered, Nigger loving--

Jacob hits him with a jab to the face, that splits Hansen's lip, and sends him stumbling backwards.

All of the others come at him. Attacking at once. Jacob lets loose. Throwing punches and kicks.

He lands a few blows, flips one private over his shoulder, and takes out a couple men, but the others knock Jacob to the ground, and attack him with a barrage of punches and kicks.

INT. FORT DIX, MAJOR'S OFFICER - DAY

Beaten and bruised, Jacob sits across from Major.

MAJOR
Specter, seems you've been quite
the divisive presence in your unit.

JACOB
With all due respect, Sir--

MAJOR
Did I ask you to speak?

JACOB
No, Sir.

MAJOR
Then I wouldn't. Men don't want to
serve with you. Even your war Buddy--
-

JACOB
Who deserted me to be jumped by my
own men.

MAJOR
All involved said you threw the
first punch.

JACOB
They had me surrounded.

MAJOR
You were on a group run, Private.
Where should they have been?

JACOB
THEY WERE GOING TO JUMP ME!

MAJOR
You can see into the future? You're
a decent recruit, Specter. Smart,
get good marks across the board.
The officers speak well of you.

JACOB
Thank you, Major.

MAJOR
But, people don't like your kind.
Maybe you could try to hide it
more, you know, make an effort to
blend in.

Jacob's visibly upset.

JACOB
Yes, Sir.

MAJOR
May I be blunt, Specter?

Jacob nods.

MAJOR (CONT'D)
You've got a lot of potential, but
you don't learn to be a more
cohesive member of your unit, and
you're going find yourself with the
shittiest assignment, stationed on
some crap base, deep in the ass of
nowhere. Do I make myself clear?

JACOB
Yes, Sir.

MAJOR
Dismissed.

Jacob stands, and walks out.

HALL

Jacobs steps out, closing the door behind him.

He sees a few enlisted men reading flyers on a bulletin
board. They snicker, then walk away.

Jacob walks over, and scans the board until he finds the flyer; "GREAT OPPORTUNITY! Gain LEADERSHIP experience, leading the only all colored division. Receive combat pay with NO chance of seeing actual COMBAT!"

As he stares at the flyer, he hears;

NATE (V.O.)

They won't let us train at the same base, Sir.

MARY (V.O.)

Why would you want to risk your life for a country that would deny you, either of you, the same rights as any white, Christian man?

With a determined look, Jacob pulls the flyer off the board.

JACOB

Because someone has to.

He carries the flyer down the hall, and into Major's office.

EXT. FORT DIX - DAY

Graduation day. Cheering wives, girlfriends, parents, siblings, and friends pack the bleachers. Enthusiastically watching and applauding.

Drill Sergeant leads Jacob, Anderson, Hansen, Davis, and the other recruits in a marching routine.

The Major and a few uniformed officers watch from the stage.

INT. FORT DIX, OFFICE, HALL - DAY

Jacob waits at the end of the hall as Hansen, Davis, Anderson, and the others check the bulletin board for their rank/assignments.

They trickle out. Talking, laughing, and ignoring Jacob.

Anderson's the last to check his assignment. He walks out without even looking at Jacob.

Jacob walks over to the bulletin board, scans the list for his name, then, furious, glares at it a moment, before storming down the hall, and into Major's office.

MAJOR'S OFFICE

Jacob, struggling to control his temper, sits across from Major, who has a smug look on his face.

JACOB

But Major, my scores, across the board, were--

MAJOR

Exemplary. Second in your class. Something to be proud of.

JACOB

Yet I've been made a Second Lieutenant, while--

MAJOR

The rest of your division, all of whom scored lower, were made First Lieutenants.

JACOB

With all due respect, Sir, it hardly seems fair.

MAJOR

Specter, you're going to be leading the coloreds. Would it be fair to the other men, all of whom will lead real divisions, to give you the same rank, and pay, as them?

JACOB

Sir, the Ninety-Third--

MAJOR

Is a publicity stunt, and nothing more. Negroes aren't fit to serve. Nothing against them, they just aren't smart or brave enough. Don't have it in them.

JACOB

Sir, about my rank, I respectfully request the opportunity--

MAJOR

That'll be all, Specter.

He picks up a file, and starts to read.

JACOB

But, Sir--

Major doesn't look up from his file.

MAJOR
I said dismissed.

JACOB
Yes, Sir.

Resigned, he stands, and walks out.

INT. FORT DIX, BARRACKS - NIGHT

Jacob sits on his bed, quietly shinning his shoes as Hansen, Davis, Anderson, and the rest of the men, wearing their uniforms, laugh and tease each other as they head out.

Feeling a little sad and lonely, Jacob looks around the quiet, empty room.

A KNOCK on the window. Jacob walks over, peaks out, and sees Nate standing outside.

Grinning, Jacob opens the window.

JACOB
What are you doing here?

NATE
War games. Why aren't you out celebrating? Heard you graduated today.

JACOB
Guys went into town.

NATE
And you're still here because?

Jacob sighs, embarrassed to say it.

JACOB
Well, turns out, I'm not a real American.

NATE
What?

Jacob shakes his head.

JACOB
Nothing.

NATE

If it were nothing, you wouldn't be sitting here while they're out there.

JACOB

I'm not one of them.

Nate gives him a confused look.

JACOB (CONT'D)

Remember when Mary asked how many "No Jews allowed" signs I'd seen. Well, I've seen a whole bunch more. Right here in this room, in fact.

NATE

Well, heck with them. You come out with us.

Feeling depressed, Jacob shakes his head no.

JACOB

Thanks, but I'm not up to it.

NATE

Oh, did that sound like a request? Get your ass out here.

Jacob's about to say no, but then smiles.

INT. BAR/JAZZ CLUB - NIGHT

A band plays while a crowd of mostly soldiers drink, laugh, smoke, and talk loudly. Everyone in the packed club is African American; customers, band, and staff.

All eyes turn, and it becomes noticeably quieter, when Nate walks Jacob, the only Caucasian, in, and over to a table where Carter, Harris, Brown, Young, and Allen sit.

NATE

Look who I found.

YOUNG

What you bringing lost white boys in here for?

NATE

This's my buddy, Jacob.

HARRIS

Our new Commander?

JACOB

In a few weeks. Tonight, I'm just
your friend.

He becomes aware that most of the people in the bar are
staring at him, and none look too friendly.

JACOB (CONT'D)

I hope.

Carter, who's larger than most people there, stands, puts his
arm around Jacob, and addresses the crowd.

CARTER

This man is Lieutenant Jacob--
(to Jacob)
What's your last name?

JACOB

Specter.

CARTER

Lieutenant Specter, who's going to
be in charge of the only all
colored division in the entire
United States Army.

Polite APPLAUSE, a few CHEERS, then everyone turns away.

CARTER (CONT'D)

(smiles at Jacob)
Buy you a beer?

LATER

Jacob, Nate, Carter, Harris, Brown, Young, and Allen drink
beer, do shots, talk, and laugh.

A few locals carry over pitchers of beer. They refill
everyone's glass, then toast Jacob and the men.

EXT. JUNGLE - AFTERNOON

SUPER: 1944

Thirteen Japanese soldiers, rifles held ready, come out of
the woods to inspect the clearing.

The bullet ridden bodies of Japanese soldiers lie in puddles
of their own blood. Severed limbs and signs of an explosion
on the far side, by a fallen log.

The commander nods at two soldiers, who go to check it out.

They cautiously walk over, then step behind the log, where the grenade went off.

BEHIND LOG

Blood, limbs. Part of the log's been blown away, and the explosion left a small crater.

The two soldiers look around, see nothing, then walk back toward the others.

A moment later, movement, then, covered in dirt and blood, Harris and Carter shimmy out from under the log.

They hunch behind the log. Rifles held ready. Waiting.

JUNGLE

Nate's strapped himself to the top of a tree. Rifle slung over his shoulder, he holds onto the tree with one hand, the other clutches a bunch of palm fronds. Holding them in front of him, camouflaging himself.

He peers through the leaves, watching the Japanese soldiers below. Waiting for the signal.

JUNGLE

Jacob, buried under a pile of leaves and bloody clothes, lies on his stomach beneath a large shrub. The ravaged bodies of the two soldiers, who were blown apart by the grenade, lay all around him.

He stares out, watching.

The Japanese soldiers are walking around. Checking each body, and retrieving their weapons. Several are slowly making their way toward Jacob's hiding spot.

Nervous, his rifle on the ground in front of him, Jacob watches, and waits.

JUNGLE

Young's also strapped to the top of a tree, across from Nate. He peers through the palm frond he's holding, watching the soldiers below.

The Japanese soldiers are slowly sweeping the area, checking each body. Moving across the clearing toward the log in back.

Young waits, then, when he's sure, he releases the palm frond, lets out a BIRDCALL, and raises his rifle.

JUNGLE

Hearing the BIRDCALL, the Japanese soldiers realize it's a trap, but it's too late. Nate and young open FIRE. Killing a few of the soldiers.

The others Soldiers aim their rifles up at the trees, but, before they have time to shoot, Harris and Carter leap up from behind the log, and open FIRE.

JUNGLE

Jacob grabs his rifle, takes aim, and FIRES. Picking off Japanese soldiers, who find themselves surrounded.

JUNGLE

Bullets tear through the soldiers, killing more. The others try to fight back, but it's useless. Bullets come from all directions. Killing them within minutes.

Nate and Young climb down. Carter helps Jacob up. Harris joins them, and they inspect the soldiers, checking to make sure each's dead.

They sit down. Jacob winces in pain.

YOUNG

You ain't looking so good.

JACOB

You aren't exactly Jennifer Jones.

YOUNG

I'm serious, Lieutenant.

JACOB

I'll be fine, Young. We've got bigger things to worry about.

NATE

We're not leaving you.

JACOB

You and Harris go ahead.

Nate starts to disagree.

JACOB (CONT'D)
I'm slowing you done, and we don't
know how much time we've got.

Off in the distance, MORTAR FIRE. EXPLOSIONS. Blasts of
GUNFIRE. The Japanese attacking base.

CARTER
Got your answer.

JACOB
Shit.

NATE
They don't need a warning. They
need back up.

YOUNG
And what are the five of us going
to do?

CARTER
I don't know, but ain't nobody else
coming. Closest ship's what, a
thousand miles?

JACOB
Nate, take the men--

CARTER
All due respect, Sir, no matter
what you say, we ain't leaving you.

JACOB
Carter, I can't walk that far. I
won't make it. You guys have to--

CARTER
I'll carry you.

JACOB
Thanks, but--

CARTER
Lieutenant, carried a calf all the
way to town when she was sick, I
can carry you down to base.

JUNGLE

Hot, sweaty, the men trudge on, the sound of GUNFIRE and grenades EXPLODING in the distance, but getting closer.

Harris and Nate lead, Young brings up the rear, Carter carries Jacob. Although the woods are quiet, an occasional bird CHIRPS.

Concerned, Carter stops, sets Jacob on the ground, then stands, and listens.

A bird CHIRPS, then nothing. Everything's quiet.

YOUNG

Man, what the hell? We keep
stopping, we'll never--

Carter dives at Young. Slamming into him, and knocking him to the ground. A split second later, a gun FIRES and a bullet zips over their heads.

Nate and Harris hit the ground. Everyone has their gun held ready, eyes surveying the area, but nothing moves.

They wait. All lying flat on the ground. Listening. Nothing. Harris starts to stand.

A gun FIRES. A bullet whizzes past Harris' face, missing him by an inch.

He dives back to the ground. They all stay there. Waiting.

Jacob looks around. He makes eye contact with Carter, and nods, meaning for him to stand up.

Carter looks at him like he's crazy, and vigorously shakes his head no.

Jacob motions again, but Carter shakes his head again.

Jacob stares so, resigned, Carter slowly starts to stand.

A gun FIRES. Carter drops to the ground.

Seeing where the shot came from, Jacob yanks a grenade off his belt, pulls the pin, throws it at the shooter, then hits the ground.

An EXPLOSION. A SHRIEK of pain. Blood, limbs, and leaves fly high into the air.

Carter grins at Jacob.

CARTER
You got him, Sir.

HARRIS
And alerted every Jap in the area.

CARTER
Oh, yeah.

He picks up Jacob, and they make a mad dash through the jungle. Fighting through the dense foliage. The SOUNDS of enemy soldiers in the distance, getting closer, and closer.

GUNFIRE. Bullets zip past them, hitting the trees and shrubs around them.

Harris, Young, and Nate FIRE back. Spraying the jungle behind them with bullets. Killing anything close.

The trees begin to thin, beyond that, a large open field.

They creep to the edge of the treeline, and peer out.

A field of tall grass slopes down, leading back into a jungle so dense they can't see beyond the treeline.

They stare out, surveying the area.

YOUNG
Think it's safe?

HARRIS
Sure, Japs would never think of hiding in tall grass. Trees, tunnels, fucking bodies, sure, but not grass.

They can HEAR the Japanese soldiers, they sound close.

JACOB
We don't have a choice.

FIELD

Five heavily armed Japanese soldiers step out of the treeline, and survey the tall grass. Watching for movement.

The grass sways with the wind. Rippling across the field, like a wave, then movement. Toward the back, a figure, hunched down, racing through the grass.

The soldiers open FIRE, spraying the field with bullets.

The figure drops into the grass, disappearing. They watch, but nothing moves, just the grass swaying with the wind.

Rifles held ready, the Japanese soldiers spread out, and head into the field. Making their way through the waist tall grass, eyes scouring the ground before and around them. Hunting for the Americans.

GRASS

Jacob crouches down. Listening. He can HEAR a Japanese soldier coming towards him. Getting closer, and closer.

Being as quiet and still as possible, Jacob waits. Then, through the grass, the shadow of the approaching soldier.

FIELD

Jacob leaps up, startling the Japanese soldier.

Before the soldier has time to react, Jacob SHOOTs him in the chest, then drops back down. Disappearing into the grass.

FIELD

The other soldiers turn as the injured soldier falls, disappearing into the tall grass.

They open FIRE. Spraying the area with bullets.

GRASS

Carter, a knife clutched between his teeth, quietly creeps through the tall grass, making his way toward the sound of the soldiers as they FIRE their rifles.

The sound gets louder. Then he sees one. Just a few feet in front of him. Facing the other direction, the soldier SHOOTs at an unseen enemy, unaware Carter's creeping up on him

FIELD

Carter quietly stands up behind the Japanese soldier, reaches around him, and drags his knife across the soldier's throat, slitting it, before dropping back into the grass.

FIELD

The remaining three soldiers turn to see the soldier, blood spurting from the wound in his neck, fall into the grass.

The soldiers open FIRE. Spraying the field with bullets.

TREELINE

Nate, Harris, and Young are at the far end of the field. They leap up, open FIRE, and kill the remaining soldiers.

JUNGLE

Nate and Harris lead, Young brings up the rear. Carter carries Jacob, who's growing worse. All are sweaty, but Jacob looks clammy.

JACOB

I can walk. Carter, put me down.
Private, I said--

Carter hears something.

CARTER

Sh.

JACOB

You hear something?

CARTER

Yeah. You complaining. Sir.

Jacob smirks.

Nate holds up his hand, indicating they should stop.

They others stop beside him. Standing in the treeline, they stare down at Base, or what's left.

BASE

Craters where mortar shells exploded. The Communications Building's been blown up. The Mess Hall and a few of the barracks have been burned down. Blood stains and signs of struggle are everywhere.

The Japanese soldiers have dragged the bodies of the dead American soldiers to the edge of camp, and thrown them in a pile. O'Connor's corpse's splayed on top.

The dock's been destroyed. The remaining pieces still smoldering.

The surviving soldiers have taken refuge in the Munitions Depot. The doors have been blown off, but they've been able to hold off the Japanese.

Makeshift barricades have been set up in front of the Depot, and the Japanese soldiers have taken refuge behind it. Thirty-five heavily armed Japanese soldiers.

A few of them try to sneak up to the entrance of the Munitions Depot, but the Americans SHOOT at them before they can even get close.

TREELINE

Jacob, Nate, Carter, Harris, and Young stare down at the death and destruction.

CARTER

Least they got enough ammunition to hold them off.

HARRIS

Too bad they don't got no food or water in there.

NATE

Japs get tired of waiting, they'll just blow the damn thing up.

YOUNG

Take half the island with it.

JACOB

Nate's right. They aren't leaving emptyhanded. They can't take it, they'll blow it up.

HARRIS

What'd you suggest?

Nate nods at Jacob who's starting to look sick.

NATE

I suggest we get him to the infirmary before it's too late.

They look down at the camp, which's been mostly destroyed. The infirmary's still standing, but there are five Japanese soldiers patrolling the camp and its perimeter.

EXT. NEW GUINEA, BASE - DAY

SUPER: 1943

Another hot, boring day. The dock's empty, and there're no ships on the horizon. Just clear blue water stretching out as far as the eye can see.

Nate and Carter patrol the perimeter as the rest of the men lounge around. Too hot to do much. Some play cards, listen to the radio, or read. Others lay around. Too hot and bored to do anything.

INT. COMMUNICATIONS SHACK - AFTERNOON

Jacob and O'Connor, both looking grim, stand by the radio.

A KNOCK on the door, then Nate pokes his head in.

NATE

Harris and Young just got back. No signs of Japs.

O'CONNOR

No surprise there. Ain't seen one, well ever.

NATE

Men are so bored I think they'd welcome a ship to unload, just for something to do.

O'CONNOR

Careful what you wish for, Corporal.

NATE

Pardon.

JACOB

Thirty-first docks day after tomorrow.

Nate's puzzled by their looks.

NATE

This is good, right? I mean, I know it's hard work, but at least the men will be too tired to squabble amongst themselves. I swear, if I have to listen to Harris and Brown go at it... OK, what gives?

O'CONNOR
You ever hear of the Thirty-first?

Nate shakes his head no.

O'CONNOR (CONT'D)
They call themselves the Dixie
Division. Rumor is a lot of them
are Klan.

JACOB
We were warned they might be
looking for a fight.

O'CONNOR
Got a few nurses onboard. They said
they're going to lynch any nigger
looks cross-eyed at their women.

Nate disgustedly shakes his head.

NATE
Wish for something to do, and we
end up with this shit.

JACOB
Talk to the men. Let them know,
Command doesn't want any problems.

NATE
And they're warning us?

JACOB
You know how many people want to
see us fail?

O'CONNOR
They'll do anything to make us look
bad. Even rile up a bunch of
ignorant southern crackers.

He winks at Nate, who grins.

EXT. BASE - LATE MORNING

A ship's moored to the dock, which has piles of boxes and
crates, filled with guns and ammunitions. An entire ship's
worth of cargo.

Nate, Carter, Harris, Brown, Allen, Young, and the other
African American soldiers labor under the scorching sun.
Sweating, straining under the weight of the boxes as they
make repeated trips. Back and forth to the Munitions Depot.

Nate and Carter, each carrying a heavy box of shells, walk beside each other. Each becoming aware of the men watching.

Thirty men from the ship sit, watching Nate and the others work. They're all early 20's, Caucasian, rough looking, redneck types. Angry, they sneer and whisper as they glare at the 30 African American soldiers laboring under the hot sun.

CARTER

You see them?

NATE

Yeah, just ignore them, OK?

CARTER

Those boys looking for a reason.

NATE

Let's not give them one.

Carter glances over at the Caucasian men. His eyes lock with an angry tattooed man.

The man sneers at Carter, then spits in his direction.

CARTER

Easier said than done.

EARLY AFTERNOON

About half the dock's been unloaded. Nate, Carter, and the others pick up more boxes, and carry them down the path, toward the Munitions Depot, and right past the group of Caucasian soldiers.

Behind the soldiers, sitting in the shade of a tree, four NURSES, all late 20's and Caucasian, are sitting on a blanket, having a picnic.

Nate and the others stare ahead, trying to ignore the men as they walk past, but the Caucasian soldiers have grown agitated. Hot, sweaty. Bored. Ready for action.

CAUCASIAN SOLDIER 1

Yeah, you Niggers best keep your eyes forward.

CAUCASIAN SOLDIER 2

And don't you boys get no ideas neither. We know how your kind ain't nothing but a bunch animals can't control themselves around decent white women.

NURSE (O.S.)
Why don't you leave them alone?

CAUCASIAN SOLDIER 1
Just trying to keep you safe from
these damn monkeys.

CAUCASIAN SOLDIER 2
That's all y'all are, bunch apes.

CAUCASIAN SOLDIER 1
Sure as fuck smell like apes.

The Caucasian soldiers make MONKEY SOUNDS, taunting the African American soldiers as they carry the boxes toward the Munitions Depot.

MID AFTERNOON

The Caucasian soldiers, growing restless, watch as Nate, Carter, and the others walk back to the dock, and start picking up another load.

Further down, the nurses are heading back to the ship, when one of them slips.

Her legs fly out from beneath her. She lets out a CHIRP of fear and surprise, then falls to the ground, and SCREAMS in pain as her ankle snaps.

Nate, Carter, and the others stop what they're doing, and look over.

GRASS

The Caucasian soldiers see the African American soldiers staring at the nurses.

CAUCASIAN SOLDIER 1
They're looking at our women!

They see a concerned Carter race to help the injured nurse, which enrages them.

CAUCASIAN SOLDIER 2
That one's going to rape them!

The Caucasian soldiers leap up, and, ready to fight, race toward Nate and the others.

END OF DOCK

One of the nurses sees the crowd of Caucasian soldiers racing towards the African American ones.

Terrified, she leaps to her feet, and calls out.

NURSE

No! Don't.

Two Caucasian soldiers show up. One picks up the injured nurse, and carries her to the ship, the other nurses follow.

The other soldier, CAPTAIN, early 30's, Caucasian, burly, mean looking, grabs Nurse's arm.

CAPTAIN

You need to get on the ship.

NURSE

But they're--

CAPTAIN

Now. It's not safe.

NURSE

We have to stop them.

He looks down the dock.

Mayhem as an all out brawl breaks out. The Caucasian soldiers attack the African American soldiers, who fight back.

Captain grins.

CAPTAIN

Proves Niggers is just animals
waiting to attack.

He tries to pull her toward the ship, but she refuses.

NURSE

Our men started it.

Captain flashes her a cruel grin.

CAPTAIN

According to my report, Niggers
started it.

He gives her a threatening look, then twists her arm, until she cries out.

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)
Make sure yours backs me up.

She looks back down the dock.

Caucasian and African American soldiers fight it out. Fists, blood, and a few teeth fly. Evenly numbered and skilled, they beat each other senseless.

Captain yanks Nurse's arm to get her attention.

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)
Got it, Lieutenant?

Afraid, but trying not to show it, she nods.

NURSE
Understood, Captain.

She yanks her arm free, then strides toward the ship.

COMMUNICATIONS SHACK

Jacob and O'Connell step onto the porch to have a cigarette.

As Jacob shakes two cigarettes out of his pack, O'Connor looks across base, to the dock, where the fight rages on.

O'CONNOR
Fuck!

Jacob looks over, and sees it.

He drops the cigarettes, then he and O'Connor race across base toward the dock.

DOCK

All of the men are bruised and bloody. Most have torn shirts and bloodied knuckles. Their faces look like raw hamburger, and a few have missing teeth, but they battle on. Venting their rage and frustration. Beating each other senseless.

Nate and Carter stand with their backs to each other, fighting off the Caucasian soldiers who have them surrounded. They manage to block most of the punches, while landing quite a few.

Allen's the smallest, but Harris, Brown, and Young stand with him. Protecting him as they fight off the Caucasian soldiers attacking them.

WHISTLES BLOW. Jacob, O'Connor, and a group of Caucasian Officers race in to break up the fight.

JACOB

Enough!

CAUCASIAN OFFICER

Break it up. Now!

They pry the men apart, trying to separate the two divisions, but most of the men are so wound up, they keep fighting.

As the Caucasian officers pull off their soldiers, they start calling out;

CAUCASIAN SOLDIER 1

Niggers started it.

CAUCASIAN SOLDIER 2

One of them tried to rape Becky.

Jacob and O'Connor glare at their men, demanding they stay silent.

CAPTAIN

Sir, I saw the whole thing. Niggers started it.

He nods at Carter.

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

Giant ape over there tried to have his way with Becky.

CARTER

That's a damned lie.

Jacob glares at him.

CAPTAIN

Other nurses will back me up, Sir.

Caucasian Officer grins at Jacob.

JACOB

Sir, I know my men.

CAUCASIAN OFFICER

Men? This group of misfits are nothing but monkeys in uniform. Animals taught to do tricks.

JACOB

My men are trained soldiers, and it is an honor and privilege to serve with them.

CAUCASIAN OFFICER

Serve? Why do you think they put you in the ass-end of the Pacific? Niggers ain't fit to serve any more than Kikes are fit to lead. This proves my case. I'll have you dishonorably discharged by the end of the week.

JACOB

I demand a full investigation.

Caucasian Officer smiles.

CAUCASIAN OFFICER

Don't worry, you Kike bastard, I'll make sure a full, thorough, and fair investigation is conducted, before you and your Niggers are found guilty. Now--

He nods at the remaining boxes.

CAUCASIAN OFFICER (CONT'D)

I expect the rest of these boxes to be put away, ASAP. Got it?

Jacob looks at his men, all of whom are badly beaten.

JACOB

With all due respect, Sir, my men--

CAUCASIAN OFFICER

I don't want to hear excuses, or shall I add dereliction of duty to the list of charges you and your Niggers face?

JACOB

No, Sir.

Caucasian Officer gives him a gloating smirk, then follows his men onto the ship.

Jacob faces his men, who wearily walk back to the boxes.

JACOB (CONT'D)

Stop.

CARTER
But, Sir, he said--

JACOB
He didn't say who had to do it. You
all go on. Take care of those cuts
before they get infected.

O'CONNOR
Yeah, Lieutenant and I got this. To
tell you the truth, you all always
do a lousy job anyway.

He winks, then he and Jacob pickup one of the large, heavy
crates, and carry it toward the Munitions Depot.

Beaten and bloody, Nate, Carter, and the others get back to
work. Lugging the heavy boxes down the path.

EXT. BASE INFIRMARY - LATE AFTERNOON

Nate, Carter, Harris, Brown, Young, and Allen, bloodied and
bruised, sit outside.

Jacob and O'Connor stride over.

JACOB
Why aren't you inside, being
treated?

CARTER
Full, Sir.

JACOB
Anything serious?

NATE
A few stitches, some broken
fingers, nothing major.

Jacob nods.

HARRIS
You talk to the investigator yet,
Sir?

JACOB
They've already concluded their
investigation.

NATE
They what!?

ALLEN

But, Sir, we didn't get to tell our side of things.

YOUNG

Like anybody gives a shit about what really happened. They've just been itching for a reason to kick us out.

JACOB

This could've done it too.

NATE

Could've?

O'CONNOR

You boys are some lucky sons of bitches, I'll tell you that.

The men look confused.

JACOB

Head nurse said their crew members started it. The other nurses backed her up.

The men smile in relief.

O'CONNOR

We nearly had our asses cooked.

JACOB

We won't be so lucky next time.

CARTER

What're we supposed to do, Sir? Next time they come at us, just stand there? Let them beat us?

Jacob doesn't have an answer.

EXT. BASE - AFTERNOON

SUPER: 1944

Smoke still rises from the ruined dock. The American soldiers trapped in the Munitions Depot trade SHOTS with the Japanese soldiers stationed out front.

Five armed Japanese soldiers patrol the camp and perimeter.

INT. BASE INFIRMARY - AFTERNOON

A small building. The entrance's at one end, supply closet the other. A few beds between. A hole's been cut in the side wall, the piece propped back in place.

Harris and Young stand guard by the door, while Nate and Carter help Jacob onto one of the cots.

Carter inspects the wound on Jacob's leg, then leans close, and sniffs it.

CARTER

Don't smell so good. Infection's setting in.

JACOB

It's fine, really.

CARTER

We don't treat this, you going to lose the leg. Maybe worse. It turns septic, you--

JACOB

We don't have time. The men--

NATE

Have enough ammo in there to hold them off for a month.

CARTER

And them going a day or two without Army food ain't no punishment, believe me.

Jacob relaxes. Carter walks to the cabinet to get supplies while Nate removes the make-shift splint from Jacob's leg, then takes off the bandage.

JACOB

I'd kill for a cigarette.

NATE

Jap soldiers patrolling out front, now might be a good time to quit.

JACOB

You should've let me die in the jungle.

Nate smirks.

LATER

Jacob, his leg freshly bandaged with a new splint, sits on the cot.

Harris crawls in through the hole in the wall, then Nate and Carter put the piece back, and brace it into place.

They gather around Jacob.

HARRIS
I counted forty.

YOUNG
Shoot, didn't know you could count that high.

JACOB
Young, not the time.

YOUNG
Sorry. I joke when we're hopelessly out numbered and about to die.

HARRIS
Pull yourself together. I ain't dying on this shit-hole island.

JACOB
What's our weapon situation?

NATE
Five grenades, five handguns, five rifles, but only a handful of magazines.

HARRIS
How much do we need? We've got the element of surprise. I say we lob a few grenades and--
(pantomimes firing a rifle)
Come out guns blazing.

CARTER
Heck, yeah. Kick us some Jap ass.

JACOB
Don't underestimate the enemy. They underestimated us. Said we weren't fit. That negroes can't fight and Jew can't lead. That we don't have it in us.

CARTER
That's bullshit, Sir.

JACOB
They judged us because we were
different, don't make their
mistake. Never underestimate the
enemy.

NATE
What do you suggest?

JACOB
Harris was partly right. We need to
take them by surprise.

YOUNG
How?

Jacob smiles.

JACOB
Remember when General MacArthur
visited camp?

The men groan.

EXT. COMMUNICATIONS SHACK - AFTERNOON

SUPER: 1943

A miserably hot, boring day. Most of the men are lying in the
shade, listening to the radio. A few read, or play cards.

Jacob and O'Connor step out of the shack. O'Connor WHISTLES
to get everyone's attention, while Jacob lights a cigarette.

O'CONNOR
Listen up! Lieutenant's got an
announcement.

He WHISTLES again, and everyone gathers around.

JACOB
I've got some news, boys.

BROWN
War's over, and we're going home?

YOUNG
Rita Hayworth's doing a USO tour?

CARTER

I wouldn't mind meeting Lena Horne.

ALLEN

Who cares, as long as it's something to do. I'm so bored I'd look forward to unloading a ship.

JACOB

Then you're probably going to be disappointed. I mean, this is only a visit from General MacArthur.

The men GASP then CHEER.

JACOB (CONT'D)

That's right. General Douglas MacArthur is coming here, to inspect the only all colored division in the entire United States Army!

They men APPLAUD and CHEER

LATER

The men go around camp cleaning up. Removing any debris. Repainting signs. Doing minor repairs to the buildings. Getting everything in tiptop shape.

The latrines are several paces away from camp. A couple men are repainting them while several others dig a pit for a new VIP latrine.

LATER

The hole dug, the men set about building the latrine. Sawing and hammering. Sweating under the hot sun.

LATER

Finally finished, the men gather around to admire the new, freshly painted, VIP latrine.

BASE

Jacob and O'Connor give GENERAL DOUGLAS MACARTHUR, 63, and his AIDES, all Caucasian men, late 20's to 30's, a tour of the camp and his troops, who've lined up for inspection.

Though he says nothing, MacArthur, smoking his signature pipe, does nod approvingly every now and then.

Jacob and O'Connor lead MacArthur toward the latrines.

JACOB

General, the men wanted to show their appreciation, to show much your visit means to them.

MacArthur nods as he sucks on his pipe.

JACOB (CONT'D)

So they built you a VIP latrine. I know it's not much, but--

MacArthur nods at the VIP latrine.

MACARTHUR

Your men built this?

JACOB

Yes, Sir. For you.

MACARTHUR

Am I to understand that you expect me, the Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces of the entire Southwest Pacific region, and his loyal aids, to shit in a latrine built by Niggers!?

Jacob and his men are shocked, and insulted.

JACOB

Sir, they meant no disrespect--

MACARTHUR

No disrespect!? You want my ass to touch something a Nigger's had his hands all over!? Lord knows what diseases we'd get. You trying to kill me?

JACOB

No, Sir.

MacArthur shakes his head in disgust.

MACARTHUR

(to Aide)

Kikes and Niggers. I warned Roosevelt what this would lead to.

He storms off. All but the one Aide follows.

The remaining Aide gives Jacob a look of disdain.

AIDE

The general requests you, only you
and Sergeant O'Connor, tear this
down, burn the wood, then rebuild a
proper latrine.

A disgusted look at the men.

AIDE (CONT'D)

One actually fit for the general to
shit in. The General likes to
evacuate his bowels before dinner,
so I suggest you two get busy.

He folds his arms across his chest, and watches as Jacob and O'Connor tear down the latrine. The dejected men watch for a moment, then turn, and walk back to camp.

EXT. BASE - AFTERNOON

SUPER: 1944

35 Japanese soldiers are stationed outside the Munitions Depot. Another five are walking the perimeter, keeping guard.

INT. BASE INFIRMARY - AFTERNOON

Jacob's by the door. Standing as still as a statue, silently peering out through a crack in the wood. Nate, Carter, and Young wait by the cut-out in the wall.

Jacob turns to Nate and nods.

EXT. BASE INFIRMARY - AFTERNOON

A Japanese Soldier, on patrol, walks past the infirmary. He looks over, checking the side of the building.

Movement. Someone carefully removing the cut-out in the wall.

The soldier raises his rifle, takes aim, and waits.

Carter starts to stick his head out. The soldier's finger is on the trigger, but, before he can fire;

Harris sneaks up behind the Japanese Soldier. He covers the soldier's mouth with one hand as the other hand drags his combat knife across the soldier's throat, slitting it.

As Harris lays the dead soldier on the ground, Nate, helping Jacob, Carter, and Young hurry over.

JACOB
That leaves four.

NATE
They stagger their rounds. I timed
it. One comes by every two minutes.

Young looks at his watch.

YOUNG
Gives us about fifty seconds.

SECONDS LATER

Another Japanese Soldier on patrol walks past the infirmary, then glances down the side.

Carter sits on the ground near the back of the building, sipping from his canteen. Carter sees the soldier. He gives him a big grin and waves.

The soldier starts to raise his rifle when;

Harris leaps out from behind the building, and hurls his knife through the hair.

As the soldier raises his rifle, the knife flies through the air, and into his eye with so much force it's driven in to the hilt. Killing him. His body crumbles to the ground.

Nate, Carter, and Young walk over.

NATE
That leaves three.

CARTER
We can take them out, Corporal.

HARRIS
Where's the Lieutenant?

NATE
He's fine. He and I can take out
the guard on the East side, but you
guys have to get the other two, and-

-

HARRIS

Do it silently. We lose the element
of surprise and we're all fucked.

YOUNG

We got this, Corporal.

EXT. MILITARY BASE - AFTERNOON

A Japanese Soldier on patrol walks past the burned and destroyed barracks. A dead soldier's legs are sticking out from a pile of rubble.

The soldier stares a moment, then walks over, and looks around, before bending over, grabbing the dead soldier's legs, and dragging his dead body out from under the pile.

He pulls out Young. Eyes closed. Blood smeared on his chest and face.

The Japanese Soldier stares at Young, who suddenly opens his eyes, and waves at the soldier.

Surprised, terrified, the Japanese Soldier stumbles backward, right into Carter's waiting arms.

Carter grabs the soldier by the head and twists as hard as he can. The soldier's neck SNAPS, killing him.

Carter drops the man's body beside Young, who gapes in awe.

YOUNG

Jeepers, you're strong.

Carter grins, then offers Young his hand, and helps him to his feet.

EXT. COMMUNICATIONS SHACK - AFTERNOON

Jacob lies down on the ground, and creates a "hide site" in the wreckage of the building, while Nate drags the dead body of another Japanese Soldier into the trees.

He hurries back and crouches beside Jacob.

NATE

You good?

Jacob nods.

JACOB

Yeah.

Nate stares at him.

JACOB (CONT'D)
I'm fine. Go. You got two minutes
to get in place.

Nate nods, then hurries off.

INT. MUNITIONS DEPOT - AFTERNOON

A warehouse type building. Boxes and crates of weapons and ammunitions fill most of the room.

The front doors are in pieces on the floor. Crates of munitions have been placed around the entrance. Five African American soldiers stand guard. Trading SHOTS with the Japanese soldiers out front.

Behind them, two frustrated African American soldiers try to tend to six badly wounded soldiers, with only a first aid kit and a few hand towels.

SOLDIER IN DEPOT
This is bullshit! If we don't get
some frigging supplies, at least
some goddamn bandages--

Through the open door, a sound. A BIRDCALL. Recognizing Nate's call, the other soldier grins at him.

EXT. MILITARY BASE - AFTERNOON

As Harris drags the bloody corpse of the last Japanese Soldier on patrol into the woods, he hears Jacob's BIRDCALL.

He wipes the blood on his hands off on his pants, then cups his hands to his mouth.

EXT. BASE - AFTERNOON

The Japanese soldiers guarding the Munitions depot hear Harris's BIRDCALL.

Rifles ready, the Japanese soldiers look around. Eyes scouring the camp and surrounding jungle, but nothing moves.

They stand still, listening. Everything's quiet, then a series of BIRDCALLS, coming from the infirmary.

The soldiers turn, aiming their weapons at the infirmary, eyes scouring the area. Ready to fire.

Another BIRDCALL, coming from the other side of base. As they turn to look, a grenade EXPLODES.

The latrine is blown apart, sending chunks of wood and fecal matter flying high into the air.

The Commanding Officer nods at one of his men, who takes three others.

Eyes and ears alert, they quickly, but cautiously, hurry across camp.

LATRINE

As they approach the site, they slow, their guns ready to fire, eyes scouring the area.

The latrine built for MacArthur has been removed, and covered with plywood, which's partially buried beneath the sand.

The other latrine's been blown apart. Nothing's left, but a crater filled with broken and burned wood.

The Japanese soldiers slowly approach the crater. Guns held ready, they brace themselves, waiting for someone to leap up.

No one does. They cautiously lean over, and stare down into the crater.

Harris and Young have been hiding in the other pit. They slide the plywood aside, leap up, and open FIRE.

Bullets cut through the four Japanese soldiers, killing them.

As their bodies fall into the crater, Harris and Young drop back into the pit.

BASE

Hearing the GUNFIRE, the Japanese Commander signals for ten of his men to check it out.

Rifles ready, eyes alert, the men cautiously make their way through camp, toward the ruined latrines.

As they approach the Infirmary, Nate leaps out from behind it, throws a grenade, then dives back behind the building.

The soldiers try to run, but the grenade lands in the center of the group, and EXPLODES.

A few soldiers are ripped apart. Their blood and limbs fly through the air. Others are tossed aside.

Before the Commander and the others can react, Carter comes racing out of the jungle, and hurls a grenade.

It flies through the air, then lands beside the Commander, and EXPLODES. Blowing him and the men around him apart.

The men in the Munitions Depot burst out. Weapons BLAZING. Spraying the area with bullets.

Carter, Nate, Harris, and Young come running from all directions. They FIRE their rifles as they approach.

COMMUNICATIONS SHACK

Jacob lies in the wreckage of the Communications shack. Rifle held ready.

As Nate and the others try to encircle the Japanese soldiers, a few make a break for it.

Jacob easily gets them in his rifle's scope, and SHOOTs. Picking them off one by one.

BASE

Nate, Carter, and the others manage to corral the surviving Japanese soldiers. Surrounding them.

Realizing it's over, the Japanese soldiers toss their weapons to the ground, and raise their hands in the air.

Nate waits to make sure Harris, Young, and Carter have everything under control, then he jogs over toward the ruined Communications shack.

He sees Jacob's slumped on the ground, passed out beside his rifle, and breaks into a run.

LATER

A ship's moored to the dock. MP's are leading the surviving Japanese soldiers away in handcuffs.

Medics tend to the wounded, while crewmembers, from the ship, gather the dead.

Jacob, still unconscious, lies on a stretcher, being carried toward the boat by two medics. Nate, Harris, Carter, and Young walk beside him.

INT. MILITARY HOSPITAL - DAY

A big, open room lined with cots, which are filled with injured soldiers.

Nate sits beside Jacob who's propped up in bed, smoking a cigarette. His leg in a cast.

NATE

They going to be able to save the leg?

JACOB

Thanks to you.

NATE

Hey, no big deal. You would've done the same for me, right?

Jacob nods. Both are quiet. Trying to think of what to say.

NATE (CONT'D)

This mean you going home?

Jacob nods.

NATE (CONT'D)

Bet Ruth's glad.

Jacob nods.

NATE (CONT'D)

Parents must be relieved.

Jacob nods again.

NATE (CONT'D)

Don't seem all that happy about it.

Jacob shrugs.

JACOB

I don't know. I should be. I want to be. I love Ruth. I was looking forward to our future. To having a family, a home.

NATE

Now?

JACOB
I don't know, it's just, everything
feels different somehow.

Nate gives him a knowing look.

NATE
Your eyes have been opened.

JACOB
You mean I woke?

NATE
When we enlisted, when you and Mary
got into it, you, well--

JACOB
Saw prejudice as something you guys
faced. I knew there was anti-
Semitism, I knew about Hitler and
all that--

NATE
But you never really lived it.

JACOB
I had to go to war for my country
to learn I wasn't part of it.

NATE
Welcome to my world.

JACOB
Did we change anything? Did any of
this matter? Or did we go through
all of this just to fool ourselves
into thinking we belonged?

Nate doesn't have an answer. He just stares back.

Jacob takes his Star of David necklace off, and holds it out
to Nate.

JACOB (CONT'D)
I want you to have this.

NATE
I couldn't, that's your, um. Well,
the necklace your father gave you.

Jacob nods.

JACOB

The Star of David. He was Israel's second king. As a boy he defeated Goliath, as an adult he beat the Philistines so bad they never bothered the Israelites again.

Nate nods.

JACOB (CONT'D)

It symbolizes heroism. Nate, you're the bravest man I've ever met. You saved my ass more times than I can count, and we both know the Army won't recognize Negroes. I just--

NATE

Hey.

He slips the necklace over his head.

NATE (CONT'D)

This means more than any ole medal. Thank you.

He offers Jacob his hand. Jacob clasps it.

BLACK SCREEN

SUPER: During WW2 Approximately 26,000 Jewish men and women in uniform received citations for valor and merit. Their number of awards totaled 49,315.

SUPER: While 1.2 million African Americans bravely served in WW2, and were honored with thousand of medals, they received no official recognition for their incredible contributions.

SUPER: In 1992, The U.S. Dept. of Defense found that systematic racial discrimination had been present in the criteria for awarding medals during the war, resulting in far fewer African American servicemen being recognized for their bravery and valor than should have been.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

SUPER: 1993

Ruth, mid 70's, well dressed, using a cane, walks over to Jacob's headstone; it reads "Jacob Specter. Beloved husband, father, and friend. 1917 - 1983".

She reaches into her pocket, pulls out a stone, and sets it on Jacob's headstone.

Nate, 75, wearing the Star of David necklace, steps over, stands beside Ruth, and sets his own stone on the headstone.

Ruth gives him a weak smile.

RUTH

I had a feeling you'd be here.

NATE

Can't believe it's been ten years.

He looks down at Jacob's grave, and shakes his head.

NATE (CONT'D)

Who would've thought? He survived two years on New Guinea, half a dozen battles, getting shot, four surgeries, and, in the end, it was the cigarettes that killed him.

RUTH

He did love his smokes.

NATE

That he did. You doing alright?

RUTH

Never gets easier. You spend so many years of your life with someone, you take for granted they'll always be there.

NATE

I know.

RUTH

How's Mary?

NATE

Most days she doesn't even know who I am.

RUTH

I'm sorry.

Nate nods.

RUTH (CONT'D)

We've certainly been through a lot.

Nate sadly nods.

NATE
That we have.

Ruth stares at Jacob's grave.

RUTH
You know what he'd always ask? What kept him up at night?

NATE
Did it make a difference? All that we went through. The discrimination. The hate. Getting sent to that god forsaken island. Being shot.

RUTH
Did it change anything? I mean, sure, it made Jacob bitter, angry, and distant, but did it make a difference? Or did we all sacrifice our lives for nothing?

NATE
Carter married a nice Jewish girl. They were both active in the civil rights movement. Young became an attorney. Married a doctor.

RUTH
What about Harris? Jacob would never talk about, well, anything. He kept it all bottled up.

NATE
He wanted to protect you.

RUTH
He locked me out instead.

Nate, unsure what to say, nods.

ROOSEVELT
Anyway, Harris?

Nate looks pained.

NATE
He passed a few years ago. Cirrhosis.

RUTH
I'm sorry.

NATE

Another casualty of the war. Point is, it mattered. It showed people, them and us, we were just as good, just as brave, and we helped pave the way. Mary and I marched for civil rights and the ERA. I marched with my grandson in a gay pride parade. I'd like to think that, in some small way, our sacrifices made those possible.

Mary smiles.

RUTH

Jacob would've like that.

Nate offers her his arm. She takes it, and he walks her back towards the road, where her adult son waits by the car.

SUPER: Despite the treatment of Japanese Americans during the war, 33,000 Japanese Americans bravely served in the armed forces, and were awarded 18,000 individual decorations, including eight Presidential Unit Citations, the nation's top award for combat units.

FADE OUT.

THE END