

"THE MISSING LINK"

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. HIGH ABOVE AFRICAN CONTINENT - DAY

The country of Chad in Northern Africa is like an ocean of green in the middle of huge patches of the sand brown Sahara Desert.

Zooming straight down, closer, and closer into Chad the African Continent dissolves away into an arid, sand filled landscape dotted by water holes, lakes and dry, unfertile grasslands.

Closer down there are the sounds of VOICES. A party somewhere in a foreign wilderness.

Closer down, almost to the surface of the earth, a dotted landscape reveals tents, vehicles filled with supplies and dark MEN and WOMEN in traditional dress working at the site of an archeological dig.

EXT. ARCHAEOLOGICAL DIG SITE - DAY

Suddenly the heads of JONATHAN and AMANDA come into focus as he sits on a sandstone boulder and she stands a few meters away, kicking the sand occasionally into the desert wind.

The crew behind them is packing up to go home. White and black men and women work side by side to load the trucks.

A lone, older GENTLEMAN sits in front of his tent with a glass of scotch.

JONATHAN

Why aren't you up there celebrating?

AMANDA

One might ask the same thing of you Doctor.

Jonathan looks straight down at the sand as Amanda walks up to him and sits.

JONATHAN

I know. I should. Its just
. . . I can't explain it
exactly.

Amanda also stares down at the sand. The day is coming to an end as single clouds briefly cover up the sun and then pass.

AMANDA

Empty. You feel empty like
. . .

JONATHAN

I know we were close. Those
bone fragments today . . .
I mean . . . how can we
leave?!!

Amanda pulls her day-bag around to her front and takes out a bottle of water.

Her one inch cleaning brush falls out on the sand.

AMANDA

It wasn't meant to be. Not
today. Water?

She holds out the water, but Jonathan picks up the brush instead.

He moves closer to her and draws in the sand with the brush.

JONATHAN

Look. This is the country
of Chad in the northern part
of Africa. This is where
we are. Over here is the
Toros-Menalla site where
they found Sahelanthropus
tchadensis . . .

AMANDA

I know Jonathan . . . 'Touami'
presently the oldest known
hominoid, six to seven
million years old and only
this far away from us.

She kicks playfully at the sand drawing. She looks at him seductively but he's not looking at her.

Amanda leans across to Jonathan and pulls him down in the side.

Playfully she kisses his forehead, but his head is turned away from her.

Amanda feels a little ruffled as she lets herself follow his gaze.

Right in front of her, at eye level, Amanda sees, just barely poking out of the sand, what appears to be the eye socket of a skull.

Amanda crawls off of Jonathan.

They both instantly get on their stomach's and face the eye socket about two feet away.

AMANDA

Oh God, oh my God . . .
oh my God!!!

Amanda, in a local dialect, yells up at the party going on above them.

AMANDA

(in dialect)

Bring down the ropes, and
the lights. Someone bring
a camera quickly!!

The party stops for a few seconds and then everyone moves on cue. Lights are unloaded from the already loaded trucks, black men, and women in colorful, local dress, stream down to them and begin setting up a perimeter.

A camera takes several pictures.

A rope perimeter is placed around the object.

Lights are set up around the ropes.

The lone scientist by his tent stands up and uses his hand as a shade against the dropping sun.

Jonathan carefully uses Amanda's brush and slowly clears a channel around the eye socket.

More skull becomes exposed.

There are SIGHS and YELLS behind them as real excitement spreads through the crew.

Amanda stands up and waves her hat towards the only man not standing around the find.

The scientist carefully puts down his drink.

He takes his walking stick and begins down the hill.

Wild YELLS and CHEERS come from the crowd as the old gentlemen approaches

The crowd parts as he walks past them.

He stops, drops his walking stick, and gets down on his hands and knees and crawls up to where Jonathan and Amanda are waiting.

He stops and looks in amazement at a skull half uncovered from millions of years of waiting.

Amanda tries to wipe the tears out of her eyes.

Jonathan has his hand over his eyes holding back a flood of emotion.

AMANDA

Well Doctor.

Dr. Ingles takes a large pair of glasses from his coat and puts them on.

He inches closer.

Doctor Ingles takes the brush from Jonathan and removes a little more debris from the nose area exposing more of a skull.

His eyes grow larger and tears begin to form behind the strong lenses allowing him to see.

Jonathan looks up at the Doctor.

JONATHAN

I told you we were close.

Amanda, Dr. Ingles, and Jonathan are side by side, head to head admiring what they hope will change the world forever.

An old, wrinkled hand carefully guides the brush along the boney, broken surface of the skull belonging to some very ancient hominoid.

Slowly, grain by grain the skull is uncovered.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. AMBROSE PUBLISHING OFFICE - DAY

In a super modern, high-rise building in Chicago the offices of Ambrose Publishing are lavishly decorated to show the wealth and prosperity of a National and International Fortune 500 Company.

A meeting in the large, oval Conference Room appears as the skull image slowly dissolves.

At the head of a large, oval wood table stands publishing baron AMILE HOUGHTON AMBROSE speaking about the benefits of a new book venture.

AMILE AMBROSE

This single volume will do more profit making for this company than any book, fiction or non, in the annals of our sales history.

Ambrose picks up a book and waves it over his head.

AMILE AMBROSE

And it's a text book. But not just any text book, it is the book which will give our future generations another, more possible example of what we came from as a species. Another example that is based upon the most powerful piece of literature ever written and placed between two covers and I don't mean "Harry Potter".

Everyone laughs.

AMILE AMBROSE

"The Science of Creationism" will become the largest selling book in history, outselling the Bible and all we have to do is introduce it into one school, which of course we have done and now we are being sued, as we knew we would, so all is going as planned.

When we win the suit, we will have won the war and our only problem from then on will be how to print enough copies fast enough to keep up with sales.

Everyone applauds.

AMILE AMBROSE

I just want to say quickly that according to the Gallup Poll of 2000, twenty seven percent of the people believed in creationism, fifty percent of the public feels that evolution has occurred and accept Darwin's account of natural process and natural selection and fifteen percent believe God chose evolution as the process, eight percent of the people were neutral. Twenty seven percent of us believe in 'intelligent design' as the origin of our species.

There is a MURMUR of approval from the board.

AMILE AMBROSE

These are Creationists!!
 These are our friends!!.
 These are the people we want to be influential in the education of all children who go to school in the greatest country to ever survive its own evils.

The board stands up and gives Emile a standing ovation.

Amile soaks up the attention.

He barely sees his SECRETARY behind a smoked glass window in the wall in front of him. She turns on a light so she becomes visible.

She holds up a telephone in a gesture for Amile to come and answer it.

He shakes his head 'yes'.

Amile leans down to his right hand MAN and whispers in his ear.

AMILE AMBROSE

And now I want to introduce
a face everyone here knows.
Paul Fielder, the genius behind
the cover design, the print,
pretty much everything you
see in my hand and my partner.
Please.

Amile holds up his hands for applause as Paul rises
and takes Amile's place at the head of the table.

The applause continues as Amile steps around the
table and disappears through a secret door to the
area behind the smoked glass.

From the conference room side he is visible as he
puts the receiver to his ear.

INT. COMMUNICATIONS ROOM - DAY

Amile leans over a walnut desk and listens to a
voice in a background of electrical static.

AMILE AMBROSE

Yes. Who? Ingles? When?
Are you positive? There can
be no mistake, are you
positive?!!

Amile slumps down in a dark leather chair as the
receiver falls out of his hand onto the desk top.

His Secretary picks it up and places it back on the
phone base.

SECRETARY

Can I get you something Mr.
Ambrose?

Ambrose does not respond.

He suddenly stands and exits the room through
another door.

INT. AMBROSE PUBLISHING - DAY

Amile Ambrose comes out of the door to the communications room and rapidly walks down a busy hallway.

Amile's face is contorted in anger and frustration. He looks at no one as he passes even when they acknowledge him by name.

Ambrose turns left in a corridor and walks quickly to a doorway. He places his hand on a 'palm scanner'. The door in front of him opens and he walks inside.

INT. MEETING ROOM - DAY

Amile walks into a meeting taking place around a much smaller, wood table, surrounded by men and women in dark suits or dark dress.

The meeting stops.

TEXAS TOM MC GREGOR stands up.

TOM MC GREGOR

Mr. Ambrose, is there something wrong sir?

Amile walks to the table.

Several PEOPLE stand up and offer their seat.

Amile sits. He takes out a linen handkerchief and wipes off his brow.

AMILE AMBROSE

The Ingles dig has just announced
. . . a new find. A skull
and some pelvis bones.

Amile coughs as he looks around the room like a dictator looking for a kill.

AMILE AMBROSE

They are saying it is the
'Missing Link". They made an
announcement just minutes ago.

Ambrose leans across the table menacingly.

AMILE AMBROSE

I don't care if it's the
reincarnation of Christ. All
this could do is ruin every
person in this room so regardless
of what it is . . . it will
never be returned to this or any
other country for examination.
Am I making myself perfectly
clear?

Texas Tom is still standing.

TOM MC GREGOR

Yes sir. Perfectly clear!!

Amile pushes away from the desk and stands.

Everyone immediately stands with him.

He turns and walks to the door.

Amile opens the door and then spins around to the
onlookers behind him.

AMILE AMBROSE

There is no amount of money we
will not spend to make this a
reality.

Amile turns back to the doorway and leaves.

INT. JASON ALLAN'S HOME - NIGHT

Jason and his wife are preparing dinner for themselves
and their fourteen year old son Corey who is watching
television in the living room.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A news feature interrupts Corey's program and begins
talking about a new hominoid fossil found in the country
of Chad by a group led by Dr. Richard Ingles the famous
Australian Archaeologist.

COREY

Oh great.

Corey grabs the remote and is about to change the channel when his dad and mom come in from the kitchen.

JASON

Not yet son, I want to listen to this.

Jason and Colleen sit on either side of Corey on a large sofa.

COREY

Ah dad, come on.

COLLEEN

Shhh.

NEWSCASTER (O.S.)

The find was announced early today in the Country of Chad, located in the upper portion of the African continent and bordered by The Sudan on the East and by Libya to the North.

COREY

Come on dad, this is sooo boring.

JASON

Quiet Corey for just a few minutes.

NEWSCASTER (O.S.)

The group also announced that this is the oldest fossil found to date and that the skull and teeth structure are much more closely aligned to humans than to an ape or chimpanzee. Dr. Ingles went as far as calling it 'the missing link'.

JASON

Oh my God. Holy smoke.

COREY

What does that mean dad?

Jason puts his arm around his son still watching the television.

JASON

It means Corey, that someone may have just found our oldest relative.

COREY

Wow, how old?

Jason can't take his eyes off of the TV set.

JASON

Oh, I don't know, maybe six or seven . . . million years old.

COREY

Million?

COLLEEN

Yes Corey, we go back a very long ways.

COREY

But . . . you mean like with the dinosaurs.

JASON

No big dinosaurs left by six million years ago. Big mammals like the wooly mammoth and whales but no Tyrannosaurus Rex.

COREY

Did they look like us.

COLLEEN

No Corey, they looked like . . .
.

JASON

. . . something between an ape and a chimpanzee. You see Corey. Waaaaay back, six or seven million years, apes, chimpanzees and our human ancestors all shared a common line, that is we all shared a common ancestor. The great ape is considered a pongid along with orangutans and chimpanzees. We are considered hominoids which includes African apes and some gorillas and chimpanzees. So we were all together in one family and then about six million years ago we branched off as humans and became our own species. Somewhere at that branch is our oldest fossil relative.

COLLEEN

And that is called 'evolution'.

COREY

What about God? Didn't God make us?

COLLEEN

Yes Corey, we are God's children.

Colleen looks to her husband for help.

COLLEEN

Isn't that right Jason?

Jason looks at Corey and then at his wife.

Jason takes the remote and turns off the television.

JASON

Corey, if we go back, into your family, there is me and then there is your grandfather and then your great-grandfather and so on and so on until we get as far back as any record shows and with us, that's not very far. But!! Past the recorded history I believe that there was another grand-father and another all the way back, millions of years, to a time when we looked more like a chimpanzee than a human.

COREY

And . . . before that?

JASON

More monkeys, smaller and smaller animals until . . . we were . . .

COLLEEN

. . . microscopic bugs. Your dad thinks we evolved from micro organisms.

COREY

And you mom, what do you say?

COLLEEN

I say my little man, that there is God somewhere in that trail backwards. Somewhere, way back, God stepped in.

COREY

That's not what they teach in biology.

JASON

They can't talk about God, Corey, in your school, its illegal. Its called the separation of church and state.

COREY

So how does God get in there?

COLLEEN

Through us, your mom and dad. In your house, not in your school.

COREY

Dad?

JASON

That's enough for tonight son. Brush your teeth, go to bed.

Corey hugs his dad and then his mom.

He lumbers out of the living room and heads for his bedroom.

COLLEEN

What about it?

JASON

Yes Colleen, I believe God does get in there somehow. Okay?!!

They walk back to the kitchen playfully now trying to smooth everything over.

She pinches his butt, he runs away.

COLLEEN

Coward!!

They both laugh.

EXT. ARCHAEOLOGICAL DIG SITE - NIGHT

The skull and pelvis bone fragments from the fossil are carefully placed in a steel lined, wooden box by a pair of gloved hands.

The hands carefully place Styrofoam chips around the fossils.

The crate is screwed closed by battery operated guns.

Several black hands reach in and pick up the crate and hand it along a daisy-chain of hands until it arrives at an old, army two and a half ton truck.

The crate is pushed up to waiting hands and carefully tied against the wood side of the truck.

Dr. Ingles is helped up into the back of the truck.

The Chad DRIVER leans into the back to speak with DR. Ingles.

DRIVER

Are you sure you want to do this
Doctor?

DR. INGLES

Yes, yes, yes!! Lets get along
now shall we?

The driver helps pull the green canvas canopy down to the wood siding and secure the ropes down.

The caravan of trucks and jeeps starts out across an arid, shapeless, wasteland on the edge of the Sahara desert.

The caravan moves along a flat sandy surface road barely visible from the air.

INT. TWO AND A HALF TON TRUCK - DAY

Dr. Ingles bounces with the road, always holding onto the crate which sits on old blankets for protection.

The sweat drips off his face as he wipes himself down with a filthy handkerchief.

INT. CAB OF LEAD TRUCK - DAY

Jonathan is driving and Amanda is following a National Geographic contour map.

The windows are rolled up and the wipers are going to keep the dust off the windshield.

AMANDA

We should be coming close to
the main road in . . .

The truck begins to slow down.

AMANDA

What's the matter?

JONATHAN

Look!!

Amanda looks up from the map and sees that in front
of them there is some kind of check point.

Armed men in dark uniforms are checking all travelers
on the road. There is now a line of camels, cars,
people just walking and carts pulled by oxen waiting
to get past the guards.

EXT. ARCHAEOLOGICAL CARAVAN - DAY

The driver of Dr. Ingles truck unties the back canopy.

Dr. Ingles sticks his head out and looks around.

The driver helps him crawl out the back.

Dr. Ingles focuses his vision until he sees the
check point clearly.

He examines the men's weapons as Jonathan and Amanda
walk back towards him.

AMANDA

How are you doing back there?

DR. INGLES

Good but there's no time for that
right now.

JONATHAN

What is it Doctor?

DR. INGLES

It's not what it seems.

Jonathan reaches into the back of Dr. Ingles truck and removes a pair of field glasses.

He focuses on the men and what they are doing to each person waiting in line.

DR. INGLES

What do you see Jonathan?

JONATHAN

They're looking for something and its too large to carry on your person.

Jonathan puts the glasses down. The three look at each other but they know instinctually something is wrong.

DR. INGLES

Turn the trucks around!!

AMANDA

They'll notice.

Dr. Ingles is hand signaling the caravan to turn around.

DR. INGLES

There's nothing we can do about that now. Turn them around!! Around!!

The driver helps Ingles back into the truck.

His nervous hands quickly tie the canopy back down.

Jonathan and Amanda jump into the cab of the lead truck.

The truck turns out of line and then turns going in the opposite direction.

The rest of the archaeological caravan follows.

One of the GUARDS at the check point turns just in time to see the trucks disappear in the opposite direction.

He turns and signals to his MEN.

The men all turn and watch for a moment.

Two of them leave the check point and run to a parked Land Rover.

The Land Rover peels out on the sandy roadway and races down the road in the direction of the caravan.

INT. TRUCK CAB - DAY

Jonathan sees in the rearview mirror the Land Rover gaining on the last truck.

He tries to make his truck go faster.

JONATHAN

Come on!! Come on you turkey!!

Suddenly, in a small dip in the road there is a herd of Long horn cattle with Nomadic shepherds herding them.

INT. CAB OF LEAD TRUCK - DAY

Jonathan yanks the wheel to one side.

The truck swerves to one side and almost turns over.

The jeep just behind the lead truck swerves successfully and pulls up close to the back of Jonathan and Amanda.

The other vehicles have more time and perform the maneuver in better style.

EXT. REAR OF TRUCK - DAY

The canopy on Dr. Ingles truck is cut by a knife from the inside.

Dr. Ingles pulls the canopy around him so he can see.

The Land Rover is just about to meet the herd of cattle.

Ingles throws the canopy down and lets it flap.

A moment later he emerges with a red can of gas with a piece of fabric tied to it's open lid.

EXT. LAND ROVER - DAY

The Land Rover just misses the cattle.

The car goes up on two wheels and then slams back down on the sandy road.

A hand comes out the passenger window holding an automatic weapon.

The hand and arm fire the weapon.

Bullets ricochet off the steel back of Dr. Ingles truck.

Dr. Ingles ignites the fabric with a Zippo lighter and drops the can in the roadway.

The gas spills out and burns a trail as the can bounces along.

Just as the Land Rover reaches the can it explodes.

The Land Rover emerges from the flames with the front end on fire.

The car speeds forwards towards Ingle's truck.

Dr. Ingles lifts the canopy and sees the approaching flames.

DR. INGLES

Shit!! Now what?!!

The tires on the Land Rover catch on fire.

The passenger window opens all the way and a man in dark clothing leans out and looks at the tire burning.

The Land Rover moves closer and closer to Ingles.

Dr. Ingles appears at the back of the truck.

He reaches down below him and pulls up a coiled chain.

The old man's hands gather the shiny steel into a ball.

Ingles raises the ball over his head and throws it into the windshield of the Land Rover.

INT. LAND ROVER - DAY

Through a fiery front end a chain crashes through the glass.

Flying glass hits the driver and he lets go of the wheel.

The chain smashes into the forehead of the passenger who reaches over and grabs the wheel.

The passenger keeps one hand on his head to stop the bleeding and the other hand on the wheel.

He steers blindly through a raging fire.

The front tires blow up and the front end drops striking the soft sand.

The rear end of the car comes up as the front end buries itself.

The Land Rover turns over completely and slides forward on the rooftop.

The passenger grabs the driver and throws him out the drivers door.

The passenger dives out the door and the Land Rover turns on its side and blows up.

EXT. INGLES TRUCK - DAY

Dr. Ingles sees the flames and black smoke rise from the turned over Land Rover.

He keeps watching as the caravan speeds away from the burning car.

EXT. BURNING CAR - DAY

Behind the burning car lay two men in dark uniforms.

The driver is completely unconscious.

The passenger holds his forehead and waves his other arm for help.

The caravan moves further and further away from the men and the burning car.

The line of trucks and vehicles finally disappears into the dusty haze of the endless Sahara.

INT. AMBROSE PUBLISHING - AFTERNOON

In Amile Ambrose's office the view across the city is spectacular. Amile sits at his antique desk surrounded by antique furnishings.

He speaks softly on his cell phone.

AMILE AMBROSE

Yes. I know that already.
Yes. Of course I am taking every precaution. I understand that so please don't talk to me like I was an idiot. The only question is, where are they?

Amile lays the tiny cellphone down on his desk.

With one hand he tries to make the migraine headache go away.

The communication center on his desk lights up.

AMILE AMBROSE

Yes Cynthia?

CYNTHIA

There is more news coming in on channel 4 sir.

Amile picks up the remote and turns on a television across the room.

A news station is talking about the missing expedition.

NEWSCASTER (O.S.)

This is now day two and still no communication from the archaeological dig in Chad which announced two days ago a discovery so new the fossil is only referred to as 'The Missing Link'.

There are now reports coming out of Chad documenting an illegal check point where a firefight of some kind appears to have left several dead along with a burned out vehicle.

It is still not known if this firefight had anything to do with the missing expedition.

AMILE AMBROSE

Amateurs. They hired amateurs!!

NEWSCASTER (O.S.)

The United States Government through the office of the Attorney General has stated that they will do everything necessary to find

. . .

The television goes off.

Amile carefully places the remote back in its place.

Amile opens his desk drawer and removes a pill bottle with a prescription glued onto the side.

He takes the pill followed by a glass of water from the tray on his desk.

AMILE AMBROSE

What . . . if they have
nothing? We must make sure
we're not chasing another hoax.

He turns the television back on.

The news station now shows the end of a local
education board meeting. The participants are just
coming out of the school room.

Jason is among the teachers leaving the meeting.

A CAMERAMAN pushes a microphone in front of Jason's
face.

EXT. SCHOOL BOARD MEETING - AFTERNOON

Jason is cornered by the cameraman and speaks to
as the participants pass him by.

CAMERAMAN

Sir, sir, can you tell us what
happened in there.

JASON

Well, what really happened is
that an outside organization has
put a recommendation forth to the
Board of Education to introduce
the subject of 'intelligent
creation' to the Biology
curriculum. Biology is what I
teach in the local high school.

CAMERAMAN

And do you agree, I'm sorry,
what's your name sir.

JASON

My name is Jason and . . .
I can understand what the
concern is from this
organization but I believe in
the end that 'intelligent
creation' will not be taught
in our Biology classes
because it breaks down the
separation of Church and State.
That's all I can say.

Jason walks quickly away from the cameraman as
news casters gather around other people coming out.

INT. JASON ALLAN'S HOME - NIGHT

Jason comes through the front door of his house.
He is late.

Colleen and Corey wait for him in the living room.

Colleen stands up and meets Jason in the entry hall.

COLLEEN

Where have you been?

JASON

I'm so sorry, there was never
a place where I could call you.

Jason hands her an envelope marked on the outside as
United States Secret Service.

COLLEEN

What is it?

JASON

The Government wants me to join
a team to find the missing people
from the Ingles dig in Chad,
Africa.

COLLEEN

No!!

Corey comes running in to his dad.

COREY

Dad, do you get to go because you were that special thing in the Army.

JASON

Marines, Corey, and that 's right, because I was in a secret division called Intelligence.

COLLEEN

No, this is not right! You just can't give up your job at the High School.

JASON

It's already done Colleen. They're not asking me to go. Corey, come here son. You can not tell anyone any of this. Your dad is gone on a business trip and that's all, do you understand?!!

COREY

Yes sir.

JASON

Run along son so your mom and I can talk.

COLLEEN

And what about me? I don't get a say in any of this?

JASON

Say it now and then I have to pack, plus there is a lot of information I have to leave you. A lot. Colleen, I have orders from the President of the United States.

COLLEEN

Could you be in trouble?

JASON

We're just going to find Dr. Ingles group and help them bring back . . . 'the missing link'.

COLLEEN

Is it dangerous?!!

Jason starts back towards his bedroom.

JASON

Can we go back here and talk about it, please.

Colleen follows him back reluctantly.

Corey sneaks out from an adjoining hallway and follows his mom.

EXT. ARCHAEOLOGICAL CARAVAN - NIGHT

The vehicles have made a circle with all the occupants in the middle around a small fire.

Men and women are covered in old blankets trying to eat a meal.

Dr. Ingles, Jonathan, Amanda, and Ingle's driver all huddle together drinking coffee and tea.

DR. INGLES

We're in a very bad situation here. I don't really have an answer except . . . except that we must do everything in our power to return these fossils to

AMANDA

America.

DR. INGLES

I can't imagine who they are and yet they could be any number of groups, kidnappers, ransom takers

JONATHAN

The whole world must be looking
for us since our announcement
and then sudden disappearance.

DR. INGLES

Yes Jonathan and that is exactly
the point. If the whole world
can find us so can they.

DRIVER

Not far from here, maybe 80
klicks there is a small town
close to an old dig site.

AMANDA

And then what?

DRIVER

We have to lose some of this
baggage. Too many trucks.

Dr. Ingles looks at the vehicles pulled into a circle.

He sees the precious equipment in all of them.

Ingles also sees the fear in the faces of everyone
working for him.

JONATHAN

We could give most of the trucks
and equipment to the locals who
worked for us. Let them drive
back to their villages.

AMANDA

Give up the equipment?!!

DRIVER

We can take the bones in one
Land Rover, stack the sides with
gas cans.

Amanda has to shake Dr. Ingles to get his attention.

AMANDA

Dr. Ingles?! DR. Ingles?!!

DR. INGLES

Yes!! Give them the trucks.

Thank them. Tell them . . .

The Driver is already moving away.

DRIVER

They know Doctor. Believe me
they know.

MONTAGE

- A) The local hires are gathering their things and loading them into the vehicles.
- B) Ingles, Amanda, and Jonathan shake the hands of their passing friends.
- C) The driver, Jonathan and Amanda load the fossil boxes in the back of the Rover.
- D) Ingles watches the fading lights of his whole career as the vehicles vanish in the night.
- E) The lone Land Rover drives across a barren, flat desert as the sun just begins to rise.

INT. TELEVISION STATION - DAY

A busy television station is hosting an announcement by Amile Ambrose to be broadcast Nationally.

Amile sits in a makeup chair just off a makeshift set.

An AIDE stands beside him and reads Amile his speech.

Amile gives the aide hand signals when to go on and when to stop.

The STAGE MANAGER comes over to Amile.

STAGE MANAGER

Okay Mr. Ambrose, if you'll
follow me sir. Right this way.

The Stage Manager leads Amile to a desk which he sits
behind in a large leather appointed dark, swivel chair.

His speech lies on the desk along with a carafe of
water and a glass on a silver tray.

The Stage Manager stands in front of the desk and
points his fingers at Amile.

STAGE MANAGER

Mr. Ambrose, on my cue please,
Five, four, three . . .

The Stage Managers fingers keep counting but he does
not speak the last two digits.

On number one the Stage Managers gives Amile the go
signal and steps away from the desk.

A camera-screen is focused on Amile from his head
to the desk level.

AMILE

(on screen)

Good afternoon to you the
viewing public. I am Amile
Ambrose, President, and CEO of
Ambrose Publishing. I have
made arrangements today for
five million dollars from our
company to be deposited in an
account to be used solely for
the search and rescue of Dr.
Miles Ingle, Paleontologist
Dr. Jonathan Spears, Archaeologist
Dr. Amanda Blake and their entire
team. We are offering this
money in the spirit of recovery
and we are adding an additional
five million dollar reward for
any information concerning the
whereabouts of the team and .
. . . their equipment.

The Camera on Amile dollies back as the broadcast is returned to a local news station.

LOCAL NEWSCASTER

And that was Amile Ambrose of Ambrose Publishing making a huge donation to the search efforts of a lost archeological dig team missing now in the country of Chad for three days. In addition Ambrose Publishing is pledging a five million dollar reward for

. . .

The screen goes blank.

INT. FORT BRAGG WEST VIRGINIA - DAY

Inside a secure area a two star GENERAL has just turned off the television announcement by Amile Ambrose.

General Straithand walks to a small podium and speaks to his team.

GENERAL STRAITHAND

And now it seems that we won't be the only ones looking for these fossils. I'm sure you all realize that what is at stake here is possession and protection of the most valuable fossil ever found on this planet. Our teams found it and we will be the ones to bring it home. It shall not be held in any foreign country by any foreign agent. You have your briefing, you have your assignments. We will support you in any arena at anytime to make this mission successful. Good luck and God's speed. I return this briefing back to Texas Tom Mc Gregor.

The General walks away from the podium and leaves the conference room.

TOM MC GREGOR

I just want to add to what the General stated. We all have a personal interest in these fossils and that is why each one of you was picked. We know what they are, how to take care of them, how to transport them safely and finally how to protect ourselves doing it. We are the perfect team, lets go find 'the missing link'.

Everyone stands up and collects their gear.

TOM MC GREGOR

Listen up. We're spending the night here in a secure barracks. Guys and gals alike, I hope none of you are shy. We leave at 0400 hours on a long flight so get as much sleep as possible. You are dismissed.

INT. VILLAGE HOME - NIGHT

In a small town village the Ingles team is eating at the table of one of the wealthier villagers.

The interior of the house is poor with some good furniture. The walls are whitewashed and the rooms are dark from the use of lanterns and candles for light.

There is a fire in the fireplace in the kitchen which is also used to cook in.

Dr. Ingles, Jonathan and Amanda sit at the table alone.

AMANDA

I thought the driver was only going away for a few minutes.

DR. INGLES

Yes, I was thinking the same thing and that's not all. How did he know about this village? There is nothing out here and its not on a map. And . . . what is this we're eating anyway?

The driver steps out of the darkness into the room.

He is followed by several VILLAGERS and the OWNER of the house.

DRIVER

Its beef!! Just like you get in America only we prepare it different. Don't get up please.

OWNER

So my friends, you are famous from American television. All over every station, the search for the team, except, the team is right here. Eating a meal in my house. My guests.

The men with the owner suddenly step up to the table and grab onto Jonathan, Ingles, and Amanda.

DR. INGLES

What are you doing? Are you crazy?

The men are both gagged with old rags tied around their mouths and tied to their chairs.

OWNER

There are rare things in my country. Rare as gems and stranded gold. One of those is . . . white, creamy women.

Amanda struggles to free herself from the man who is holding her.

OWNER

They are prized for their skin
and their hair.

The owner goes up to Amanda and caresses her hair.
He passes his hands over her breasts and down between
her legs.

OWNER

The other rare thing in my
country is in a box, outside
in your Land Rover and now,
its worth five million American
dollars to anyone who has it.

The two men are shifting their weight, trying to get
free of the ropes wrapped around them.

Dr. Ingles glares at his driver.

DRIVER

Pay me now so I can leave.

OWNER

Certainly my friend. Here.
Here is more money than you will
ever have in your life. Take it
and get out. Remember . . .

The owner moves towards the driver menacingly.

OWNER

If you tell anyone we will tear
off your skin and feed it to our
dogs. Get out!!

The driver picks up his gear and leaves the house.

OWNER

Now! Since we can do nothing
until the morning I'm going to
have this white, American bitch,
over and over until she begs for
me to stop. Take her in that
room and wait for me.

Two men pull Amanda up, screaming from the table.

The owner walks to her and slaps her till she stops.

OWNER

That's better.

Jonathan is making his chair jump trying to get loose.

The owner walks to him and beats him in the face till he stops moving.

OWNER

I think he wants to watch it.
Take him in there, chair and
all. We'll let him get real
close so he can see everything.

Two more men pick up Jonathan, unconscious, in his chair and they carry him out.

The owner leaves Dr. Ingles alone and walks to the doorway of the next room.

He drops his robe on the floor and disappears into the room.

From the room Amanda begins SCREAMING. Again the owner SLAPS her until she stops.

Dr. Ingles HEARS every slap and every MOAN Amanda makes as he struggles to work himself free.

His hands are old and sweaty, but his fingers are nimble. He slowly opens one knot.

There is LAUGHTER from the adjoining room.

Another SCREAM from Amanda.

Dr. Ingle's hands are free.

More laughter from the other room.

Some CONVERSATION in a local dialect about the size of her breasts and the color of her pubic hair..

Ingles pulls the rope off of himself.

He stands slowly and looks quickly around.

A large cutting knife hangs from the fireplace.

He grabs it.

He sees a hand gun in one of the men's packs.

He takes it.

Amanda SCREAMS.

The men LAUGH.

Ingles enters the room.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Amanda is held down on the bed by two men holding her arms.

Her pants are pulled down to her knees and another man holds open one of her legs.

The owner is standing between her legs holding her other leg open.

Jonathan is in a chair, next to the bed but he is unconscious.

The two men holding her arms see Ingles and shout.

Dr. Ingles shoots them both in the face.

They fall away from the bed.

The man holding her leg lets it go and pulls a long, ugly sword but Ingles also shoots him in the face.

He falls away from the bed.

The owner turns around with his pants down.

Dr. Ingles slashes him across his stomach.

He falls to the floor.

Amanda instantly stands and pulls her pants up.

She grabs the large knife from Ingles and stabs the owner through his upper chest.

He falls to the floor in a growing pool of blood.

Jonathan opens his eyes slowly as one of the men on the floor stands up.

His face is covered in blood.

He takes his knife and puts it to Jonathan's throat.

AMANDA

Nooooo!!

Dr. Ingles fires four times into the man's head.

The man falls straight back, and his knife drops to the floor.

DR. INGLES

Get Jonathan quickly.

Amanda picks up the knife and cuts Jonathan loose.

She helps him into the kitchen following Ingles.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Dr. Ingles looks out the windows on all sides of the house.

DR. INGLES.

Lets go now!!

Ingles picks up a pack off the floor and then helps Amanda carried Jonathan to the door.

They open the door and Ingles slowly steps out.

There are SOUNDS of VOICES coming up the dark roadway.

EXT. VILLAGE HOME - NIGHT

Ingles and Amanda drag Jonathan into a barn next to the house.

The SOUND of the villagers gets closer.

Suddenly there are a half dozen MEN with pitch forks, knives and guns just running up to the house.

The Land Rover charges out of the barn and slides through the middle of the villagers before it turns onto a roadway.

Several of the villagers fire weapons at the moving car.

INT. LAND ROVER - NIGHT

Dr. Ingles drives like a crazy man.

Amanda sits in the back holding onto Jonathan.

Bullets pass through the cab breaking the rear window and several of the side windows.

DR. INGLES

Get down!! Get him down!!!

EXT. LAND ROVER - NIGHT

The rover quickly disappears into the dark, African night.

The villagers continue to fire into the darkness. All that can be seen are the twinkling stars and the muzzle fire from each gun.

INT. INTERNATIONAL HOTEL - DAY

One of Chicago's finest hotels is hosting an International Textbook Convention. Signs and placards show individual rooms where sessions take place by a timed agenda.

Men and women from many nations walk through the lobbies, drink at the bars and network on tiny couches in small and private reception areas.

In a larger ballroom Amile Ambrose is addressing a group of buyers at a private luncheon.

He stands under spotlights at a Plexiglas podium and reads partially from a TV rolling cue monitor.

AMILE AMBROSE

I would first like to thank the many clients here who have already purchased an order for "The Science of Creationism". I also wanted to tell those of you who I have been unable to contact that there is good news coming from our first court challenge.

There is a polite applause.

AMILE AMBROSE

The good news is that we hear from reliable sources that several persons on the original board who filed against us in the case in Alabama, have since changed their minds. How this will play out is anybody's guess but we are sure that most of you understand that it is movement forward in the minds of intelligent people that we should share a larger view of 'where we all came from' than is presently taught in our schools.

A big applause.

AMILE AMBROSE

We would also like to remind you that you can still donate to the private fund we have established to help discover the whereabouts of the Archeological Team, now missing in Chad for almost a week. We pray, daily, for their safe return.

EXT. DESERTED AIRPORT - NIGHT

Deep in the Sahara desert an abandoned airstrip decays in the night wind.

A large helicopter is being loaded by the team Jason is assigned to.

Jason, Texas Tom Mc Gregor, and several AFRICAN MEN push supplies into the hands of the rest of the team already aboard the craft.

TOM MC GREGOR

(yells in the wind)

Okay Jason, lets get on board.

Jason give Tom the thumbs up and the two men scramble on board.

The African men move away from the blades as they wind up for take off.

The wind literally lifts the helicopter into the air.

The whole ship seems to wrack to the left and then the right as the pilot tries to get the helicopter under control.

Finally the ship straightens out and flies out over the windy Sahara desert.

INT. HELICOPTER - NIGHT

The team is strapped into seats and benches. They hold their individual gear.

The helicopter rocks back and forth against an ever increasing wind.

The pilot grabs Tom Mc Gregor' s shoulder and points down.

Tom shakes his head no and points straight ahead.

The pilot throws up is arms in disgust but keeps flying against the wind.

EXT. LAND ROVER - NIGHT

Jonathan sits on an old army blanket on the ground while Amanda tries to patch up his face with a first aid kit.

Dr. Ingles checks all the crates in the back of the Rover.

He gets out and inspects the entire outside of the vehicle.

DR. INGLES

Well, our cargo is okay and the vehicle suffered only minor damage. How is he?

JONATHAN

I'm all right but I wish people would stop talking like I wasn't here.

Dr. Ingles comes over and kneels down in front of Jonathan.

DR. INGLES

Boy, they did a job on you.

AMANDA

I think we can go on now.

Dr. Ingles looks at Amanda's face which is bruised and cut.

AMANDA

I'm all right. Now!!

DR. INGLES

Yes, I would love to go on now.
I'd also love a hot bath and a
soft bed.

JONATHAN

What does that mean exactly

DR. INGLES

It means that I have no idea
where we are so going in some
direction is meaningless.

Amanda goes to the back of the Rover and opens one
of the containers.

She removes a map and brings it over to the men.

Amanda opens the map and lays it in front of everyone.

They examine it with a flashlight.

JONATHAN

Here's the dig site.

AMANDA

We drove to here, turned around
and drove to . . . maybe
here and that's where we parted
with our diggers.

DR. INGLES

Yes, I see all that! We drove
South to the 'village from hell'.
Maybe around here. And then
. . . .

AMANDA

East. I took a star setting in
my mind, I don't know why.

JONATHAN

Okay, then maybe we ended up
somewhere around here, almost to
the Sudan border. Sudan.

DR. INGLES

A major civil war still brewing
right here where we want to enter.

AMANDA

Or we could turn North and try to
find the Libyan border. Wait.
Listen!!

They hear the SOUND of a HELICOPTER.

JONATHAN

Up there!! Eleven o'clock.

They turn off the flashlights.

INT. HELICOPTER - NIGHT

PILOT

Mc Gregor. We've got a radar
lock. We're going to be
fired on.

TOM MC GREGOR.

Impossible, we have signed
permission from the Chad
government.

PILOT

(yells)

It's coming at us from behind.

EXT. LAND ROVER - NIGHT

DR. INGLES

Look at that. A missile is
locked onto the helicopter.

JONATHAN

It's coming from the Sudan side.
The rebels think it's the enemy.

AMANDA

Who is it?

The helicopter explodes in space.

The burning frame of the craft falls limply out of the sky and hits the ground in the far distance burning.

INT. HELICOPTER - NIGHT

Jason and Mc Gregor are hung upside down in their straps.

They both have Fire Extinguishers aimed at the flames which are licking up at them.

Mc Gregor empties his and throws it outside.

He pulls another off the wall below him and starts again on the flames.

Finally both extinguishers are empty.

In the burning background below them the rest of the crew and the pilot lay dead.

The equipment is completely destroyed.

Small fires still burn, and smoke comes off of everything.

TOM MC GREGOR

Can you get out of the straps.

JASON

I'm trying.

They both struggle until they are exhausted.

EXT. LAND ROVER - NIGHT

JONATHAN

What do you think?

DR. INGLES

You mean should we make our way over and see who it is?

AMANDA

They must have crashed on the Sudan side. Rebels will be there any minute.

DR. INGLES

We can't take the chance. Let's head for Libya. I know we have enough gas.

JONATHAN

They could be looking for us.

DR. INGLES

They could be but how could we be sure.

JONATHAN

There is no way. Lets roll!!

Amanda and Dr. Ingles help Jonathan into the back seat.

Dr. Ingles gets into the drivers side and the Rover takes off.

INT. LAND ROVER - DAY

Dr. Ingles drives and Amanda continues to take care of Jonathan.

DR. INGLES

We need some place to hide so Jonathan can rest up.

JONATHAN

Don't worry about me Doctor. Worry about our friend back there in the box.

AMANDA

What about me?

JONATHAN

Its obvious that you can take care of yourself.

DR. INGLES
Hold on there's a bump!!

The Rover goes up and comes down hard.

Amanda looks back at the crate. Its tied into the side and cushioned underneath with old blankets.

AMANDA
(quietly)
God help us.

EXT. LAND ROVER - DAY

The vehicle passes on into the dust of an old dirt road.

Clouds begin to form in the clear sky.

INT. HELICOPTER - LATE DAY

Jason and Tom are still upside down.

Jason has reached a knife tucked into his boot.

His fingers can just touch it.

TOM MC GREGOR
How are you doing?

JASON
Shhh!!!

Sweat drips off his finger tips as Jason forces his body a half an inch forward.

His fingernail on his middle finger catches a rough spot on the hilt and the knife barely begins to move.

TOM MC GREGOR
Anything I can do?

JASON
Shhh!!!

TOM MC GREGOR
Okay. Mum's the word.

The knife slides up Jason's leg as he gets more finger on it and then more fingers.

The knife slides into his whole hand.

JASON

Got it!!!

He cuts two straps and falls to the floor.

TOM MC GREGOR

Thank God

JASON

God had nothing to do with it.
Thank the knife.

Jason cuts through the straps holding Tom and he falls with the help of Jonathan to the ground.

The two men look around as the blood rushes back down into their bodies.

TOM MC GREGOR

Total shame. Total waste.

JASON

Who were they? Men and women,
just like us with some expertise
in something that might have
saved . . . but only if they
had gotten that far.

TOM MC GREGOR

How important do you rate this
discovery?

JASON

Oh, somewhere just after Christ!!
Look, don't get me wrong. Just
because I'm a Biologist doesn't
mean I don't understand who
Australopithecus is. Also known
as . . .

TOM MC GREGOR
. . . the 'southern ape'.
Africa, three million BC.

JASON
Or Homo habilis . . .

TOM MC GREGOR
. . . the 'handyman', used tools,
two million BC.

JASON
Homo Erectus!!

TOM MC GREGOR
The 'stand up people', used fire, one
million BC. Neanderthals, Europe, a
hundred fifty thousand years ago. Homo
Sapiens, the 'wise men', that's us,
one hundred thousand BC and by thirty
three thousand BC we were the ones,
. . .

JASON
. . . the dominant species.
Who do you work for anyway?

TOM MC GREGOR
Oh, I wear a lot of hats but the
one who pays me the most is . . .
. Ambrose Publishing in Chicago.
I'm the head of Security. I know.
How does a publishing security head
end up on a US Intelligence
Mission?

JASON
Yeah!! How?!!

TOM MC GREGOR
I used to work for one of your old
bosses Jason, which is why you're
here. Colonel Weybreg, Virginia
based now working for the Pentagon.

JASON
Whose side are you on?

TOM MC GREGOR

The side that wins.

There is a NOISE in the distance.

TOM MC GREGOR

Shh!!

They both crawl carefully out of the wreck.

EXT. HELICOPTER - LATE DAY

Jason and Tom emerge from the wreck. There are still small fires outside and lots of smoke.

Jason reaches back in and grabs his backpack.

Tom carries a small shoulder bag.

Both men remove side arms from their gear.

They pick their way through the wreckage until they find a game trail which leads up to a rise.

They move together up to the rise.

Off in the distance is a small convoy of trucks with markings on the side.

JASON

Northern Sudan Army. That's no good.

TOM MC GREGOR

Come on.

JASON

Come where? Were in the middle of no where. There's no place to hide.

Tom leads them back to the wreckage.

Tom lifts a piece of the chopper off the scorched ground and quickly digs a shallow hole in the sand with a torn piece of the body shell.

TOM MC GREGOR

Get in!!

JASON

What?

TOM MC GREGOR

No time Jason, get in!!

Jason jumps in the hole.

Tom covers him up except for his face.

He puts the wreckage back over the hole.

Tom returns to the craft.

He reaches in the broken cabin and covers his hands with blood.

He slaps the blood on his face, his nose and mouth.

His bloody hands slap more blood across his chest.

Tom HEARS the convoy pulling up above them.

He crawls under the worst part of the wreckage just as a group of black Northern Sudan Army TROOPS walk down and surround the site.

The men speak in Sudanese as they go in and out of the wreckage removing any thing they can carry away.

Several of the troops examine the outside wreckage.

They stand over the piece hiding Jason and they smoke a cigarette.

One soldier takes Tom Mc Gregor' s hand and pulls on him but his body does not come out from under the torn steel.

The soldier throws his hand and arm back into the pile.

One of the others soldiers kicks at the steel covering Jason as he tells some dirty joke.

Suddenly the radio officer comes running down the game trail.

He hands a field phone to the officer in charge.

The officer in charge listens briefly and then throws the phone back at the soldier.

He orders everyone back up to the convoy.

The men move without hesitation.

In moments the soldiers are gone, and the convoy is moving away from them.

Jason, spitting and coughing, pops out from under the steel wreckage and stands up.

He shakes himself off and then sits in the shade.

Tom Mc Gregor rolls out from under the crash.

He reaches inside the wreckage and pulls out a canteen.

He pours water across his face and tries to remove the blood.

TOM MC GREGOR

Jesus blood stinks!!

JASON

We were so lucky. Where did you learn any of that?

TOM MC GREGOR

Oh, I did my turn for Special Ops., Ranger, Intelligence class, assignments that no one will ever know about.

Jason looks hard at Tom.

Tom continues to clean himself as much as possible.

JASON

I don't suppose that you got any
of what they were

TOM MC GREGOR

. . . . they left because they
received orders to follow a Land
Rover, headed into Northern Sudan.

JASON

How far is that?

TOM MC GREGOR

A long ass way without a boat.

The SOUND of camels comes from the ridge above them.

Jason comes out of the shade to see a nomadic tribesman
with his camel looking down on them.

JASON

How about a camel?

TOM MC GREGOR

Well, that'll be a first. Sure
lets see what we can do.

Tom grabs his shoulder bag from under the wreckage
and two canteens of water.

Jason picks up his bag from the hole and rummages for
an additional canteen.

They start up the ridge together.

EXT. LAND ROVER - NIGHT

Huddled together, Dr. Ingles, Jonathan and Amanda sit
on old Army blankets wrapped up in old blankets and
stare at the skull in front of them.

In the light of flashlights there is a beauty in the
dark, cracked bone with a slight protruding forehead,
an almost normal tooth cavity with large eye sockets
and broad cheek bones.

The skull sits on more blankets just in front of its wooden crate.

Dr. Ingles with latex gloves, uses Amanda's 'clearing brush' as he delicately removes more sand and dirt particles from the ear openings.

DR. INGLES

It's a gem alright. Easily six million years old and look how this teeth cavity is so much smaller than even Sahelanthropus tchadensis.

JONATHAN

Also this brain cavity is large maybe larger than Sahelanthropus. This is definitely

AMANDA

. . . be careful of your words. Many skulls before have been definitely crap.

Amanda shifts closer to Jonathan.

AMANDA

And remember, we have sample collections of the strata above and below the find which will be solid proof of age through 'relative dating'.

JONATHAN

Yes, you're right. the rocks will be essential in establishing its age. What's the matter Doctor?

DR. INGLES

Look!! Down here where the skull meets the blankets.

Amanda and Jonathan lean in and examine the area.

AMANDA

The ride is crushing the bones.

JONATHAN

Jesus, this can't be happening!!
We have to get this crate and
the rocks into an aircraft.

DR. INGLES

Or it's all lost.

AMANDA

No more bumps, no more chasing
around. We have three brilliant
minds here, we have to find a
way to protect the fossil even
if we have to carry it.

INT. AMILE AMBROSE HOME - EVENING

Amile is sitting in his living room on a leather
appointed coach.

He sits across from two MEN who occupy large,
overstuffed chairs matching the sofa.

There is a fire in the large, carved marble
fireplace.

The men are having an after dinner drink.

AMILE AMBROSE

First of all gentlemen I want
to thank you for your concern
and again I would like to say
that we do not fear any
information coming out of the
supposed find, over a week ago
now, in the South Eastern
section of the Sahara in Chad.

CARL WATERSON, puts his drink down on a side table
and walks to the fire.

CARL

Amile, I've been your attorney
since we both left graduate
school. You were my first and
now oldest client and I'm not
speaking about your age.

Amile and WINSTON KENNEDY give Carl a polite laugh.

CARL

We've done some crazy things
Amile and this one is certainly
not crazy but what we have to
lose here is everything we've
made since graduate school.

Carl turns to Amile to make a point.

CARL

And that . . . is substantial.
Winston, anything?

WINSTON

You know me Amile, I trust you
explicitly except with my wife.

Everyone laughs again to help break the ice.

WINSTON

I don't want to leave this dear
earth with nothing.

Winston coughs unexpectedly and has to wipe his
mouth with his handkerchief.

WINSTON

I have too much to lose so we
just need an assurance that
whatever Ingles has, wherever
the old boy is, will do nothing
against the sale of this book
we all are invested in it so deeply.

AMILE

Certainly Winston, I understand
your concern. Can you give me
until tomorrow . . . so I
can draft something formally .
. . ?

WINSTON

It doesn't have to be formal!!
You can just say it, right here
between the three of us.

CARL

I agree there is no need for a document.

AMILE

All right. I . . . assure you, as share holders in this venture, that we have nothing to fear from . . . anything concerning the book.

WINSTON

Well said. Now lets go shoot some pool in your magnificent pool room. Help ease the tension from that great meal.

Amile stands gracefully and makes a gesture with his arm towards the pool room.

AMILE

Gentlemen, you know where you're going, I'll join you in just a moment.

Carl and Winston leave the room, side by side, sharing the newest dirty joke.

Amile stands alone in his magnificent living room.

He walks quickly to an adjoining room and steps in.

INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

Amile steps through the doors of his library.

He turns and locks them.

His flawlessly polished shoes walk across a high quality Berber carper and stop in front of a desk against the wall.

Rising from the floor up Amile wears a hand made Italian suit finished with a hand made Italian shirt fitted with gold and diamond cufflinks.

His immaculately cared for hands reach into the FAX machine and he removes a note.

AMILE AMBROSE

(reading)

High winds and poor visibility caused the crash of the search helicopter somewhere in the region of the western part of Sudan. There . . . appear to be . . . no survivors.

Amile walks to his desk and pushes a button under the desk top.

A SERVANT enters the room.

SERVANT

Yes sir.

AMILE

Make my apologies to our guests.
Make sure they want for nothing.

SERVANT

Shall I call for your car?

AMILE

Yes. And Christian, if they ask you to play again, don't win so obviously.

The servant looks down at the rug and smiles.

SERVANT

Certainly sir.

The servant turns and leaves.

A BEEPING SOUND comes from a wooden box on top of the desk.

AMILE

There is a God and he finds me
flailing in my faith once again.

Amile hurries to the box.

He removes a cellphone and puts it to his ear.

AMILE

Tell me it's you?

EXT. SUDANESE VILLAGE - NIGHT

In a Sudanese town close to the border of Chad, Jason and Texas Tom Mc Gregor are sitting at an outside serving area of a restaurant/bar.

Tom just finished talking on a cell phone. He turns to Jason and hands him the phone.

TOM MC GREGOR

Go ahead. Call your family. I told the guy inside we'd make two calls. Remember its yesterday in the states.

JASON

Did you get a hold of your family?

TOM MC GREGOR

The only one that counts. I'm gonna try and take a piss in this restroom. If I'm not out in five minutes, run like hell.

Jason takes the phone.

JASON

Thanks.

Tom leaves the table.

A hooded man stands back in a dark alley between shops and watches Jason and Tom.

Many dark men and women shop in stalls in the cooler hours of the evening. There is a lot of activity.

Jason is very animated talking on the telephone.

A MAN comes out of the building and leaves a drink on Jason's table.

Tom Mc Gregor comes around the dark corner of the building and stops just in front of Jason.

Tom turns and looks directly at the hooded man.

Jason turns and sees the hooded man.

The man steps deeper into the alley and disappears.

JASON

I think we have guests.

Jason reaches down and opens his bag. A nine millimeter hand gun is on top.

Tom sits down and turns towards the alley.

TOM MC GREGOR

He's gone.

Jason puts his bag down.

JASON

Who do you think it is? No one knows we're even here!!

TOM MC GREGOR

First of all we're Americans and in this world that's all it takes to become a target. Two, we're alone, no one to back us up so we could seem easy targets to

. . .

GUN FIRE comes from all around them.

They both dive to the ground and low crawl into the building.

Bullets are ricocheting off stone walls, windows are shattered.

INT. RESTAURANT/BAR - NIGHT

Jason and Tom crawl into the first room, almost on top of each other.

JASON

Fuck!! Fuck this!!

Jason scrambles to get his hand gun.

He pulls the weapon out and puts his hand and arm out the door.

The OWNER of the restaurant/bar comes down a stone staircase.

ABASI

I wouldn't do that!!

Jason draws the gun back into the room.

TOM MC GREGOR

Who are you?

ABASI

My name is Abasi. I am the owner. No one shoots at you. We are in a civil war. Like the rain, this happens most days.

TOM MC GREGOR

Swell!!

Jason and Tom quickly put away their weapons.

ABASI

And you, gentlemen, who are you and why are you armed?

JASON

We're . . . Americans . . .

TOM MC GREGOR

Texas Tom Mc Gregor, sir, and my . . . friend Jason Allan . . .

JASON

. . . and we're armed . . .
for protection.

Abasi looks at them for a moment and then motions them to follow him up.

Abasi ascends the stairs as Tom and Jason look around trying to determine if it's a trap.

TOM MC GREGOR

(whispers)

What do you think?

There is more SHOOTING outside in the night.

JASON

Couldn't be worse than this?
Could it?

Tom shakes his head yes as both men walk up the stairs.

INT. ABASI'S HOME - NIGHT

Tom and Jason come into a brightly lit room with dark curtained windows.

Abasi is sitting on a large cushion in front of a large tea set.

The men put their bags down and sit on cushions on either side of Abasi who pours tea.

A black woman in bright color dress gives each man a tea cup and saucer.

There is more SHOOTING outside.

Abasi and the servant don't even hear it.

ABASI

So, here we are in my country
where we have terrible civil war
and famine and yet, two Americans
come here, unassisted, to find
. . . .?

Neither man says anything.

ABASI

. . . other Americans
perhaps?!!

Tom turns and looks Abasi square in the face.

TOM MC GREGOR

Well Mr. Abasi, I guess you
found us out. And that's
correct, we are looking for
. . . other Americans.

ABASI

. . . and the skull?

Tom and Jason are totally shocked but hide it like
professionals.

JASON

Who are you again? I mean, I
know you're Abasi but, how do you
know all this.

ABASI

They were here, just like you.

Tom puts his cup down on the floor.

TOM MC GREGOR

Are you saying that Dr. Ingles,
and his associates were here with
the . . . with fossils?

ABASI

Yes. Who are you now?

JASON

I'm Jason Allan, a Biologist from
the United States on a seek and
find mission for these people.

TOM MC GREGOR

To help and assist in their
return to our country, safely,
along with . . . their
equipment.

ABASI

They have gone!!

TOM MC GREGOR

Where?

ABASI

To Khartoum.

JASON

Khartoum? In a vehicle?

ABASI

No, no, no. They were flown in
a small, private craft. My
personal friends. Do you need
to go also?

TOM MC GREGOR

Yes! We have important
information that must be passed
on.

Abasi lights a cigarette and thinks.

There is more SHOOTING outside. Much closer now.

ABASI

The aircraft will not come back
for days. The fastest way now
would be the train. Very
dangerous. Never be alone, ever.

Abasi' s servant runs in and speaks quickly in
Swahili.

Abasi stands up awkwardly and with some pain.

ABASI

Quick, follow her. The
fighting is too close.
Quickly.

The servant runs out a small door.

Tom and Jason are right behind her.

Abasi just makes it to the door when the downstairs
door is forced open.

Abasi draws a curtain over the door and then closes
it.

GUN FIRE rings out from downstairs.

EXT. KHARTOUM HILTON HOTEL - DAY

In the very busy section of down town a taxi/van drives
up to the front of the Hilton.

The STAFF open the doors.

Dr. Ingles, Jonathan and Amanda are helped out
of the vehicle.

They look like refugees from a foreign war, not
to far away.

A crowd begins to stop on the side walk as onlookers
watch the three carefully remove a few wooden crates
from the back of the van.

The Hotel Staff help carry the bags and some of the
crates.

Jonathan and Dr. Ingles carry the fossils.

INT. KHARTOUM HILTON - DAY

From a distance in the lobby the three travelers look
so out of place that guests stop and stare and then
move on.

The Hotel Staff behind the desk keep looking at the
wooden crate with great suspicion.

The three are led to a bank of elevators.

Several onlookers watch them carefully maneuver the crate into the elevator.

INT. KHARTOUM HILTON HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Dr. Ingles digs for the last money on his person.

He pays the steward well and the steward leaves counting his money.

Amanda sits slowly on the bed and immediately starts crying.

Jonathan comes and sits next to her.

Ingles takes his bags into the next bedroom.

AMANDA

It's all right. I just haven't
sat on a bed in so long, I know
its totally silly. . .

Dr. Ingles comes back out and in his hand is a bottle of champagne and three glasses.

DOCTOR INGLES.

I believe this is on the house.

Ingles sits on the bed opposite and pours the glasses full.

He passes them out one by one.

DOCTOR INGLES

To . . . to . . .

AMANDA

. . . home. To going home.

ALL THREE

Home!!

JONATHAN

May it still be there when we arrive.

AMANDA

And to our keepsake.

She turns to the wooden crate on the carpet.

AMANDA

To this 'link' in our family tree.

DOCTOR INGLES

Here, here!!

JONATHAN

To the 'missing link'.

They all finish their glasses.

AMANDA

Wow! That goes straight to the source wouldn't you say?!!

JONATHAN

Yes. Straight!!

Dr. Ingles fills the glasses again.

He walks casually to the front door and locks the inside locks.

He walks through the entire rest of the suite checking windows, checking doors and looking out across the ancient city of Khartoum.

Jonathan collapses on the bed spilling some of the champagne on his shirt.

JONATHAN

Uh ho, there goes the neighborhood.

Amanda laughs and falls next to him and giggles.

AMANDA

Great, I'm immediately drunk.
I'll never enjoy the city like
this.

Ingles walks into his room.

The sound of the television comes onto a news
station in English.

The newscaster is saying that a huge publishing
deal has tentatively been announced by Ambrose
Publishing saying they have . . .

INT. KHARTOUM HILTON HOTEL BEDROOM - NIGHT

Amanda and Jonathan come and stand in the doorway
and watch the television newscast.

NEWSCASTER ONE

. . . secured a tentative
agreement with the largest seller
of text books in the World to
distribute the controversial new
text, "The Science of Creationism".

AMANDA

Don't they know that we've got
the goods.

JONATHAN

Obviously not.

DOCTOR Ingles

No Doctor, contraire, they must
know what we have so they're
sticking their publishing neck
out there, knowing it won't get
chopped off.

AMANDA

How do you mean knowing?

DR. INGLES

Amanda, Ambrose Publishing and Amile Ambrose have made sure that these fossils won't ever come home.

JONATHAN

It just hasn't happened yet, is that what you're saying?

DR. INGLES

Yes Jonathan, that's exactly what I'm saying. So, the question is not 'will it happened' but 'why hasn't it happened'?

AMANDA

They don't know where we are!!

DOCTOR INGLES

Possibly. Or . . . ?

JONATHAN

They haven't found the right time.

DOCTOR INGLES

Or both. Probably both and if that's true then it must happen here in Khartoum before we board any aircraft.

AMANDA

How does that help us.

DR. INGLES

Its simple my lovely Amanda, as you pointed out, somewhere back there, here we are with three brilliant minds, we must be able to find a way safely back home between us. Here's to that.

Dr. Ingles raises his glass and drains it.

Jonathan and Amanda both start laughing, they are drunk.

Dr. Ingles sits on his bed smiling.

He just falls back onto the pillow and closes his eyes.

AMANDA

Dr. Ingles?

Jonathan walks over to the doctor and checks his heart and breath rate.

JONATHAN

I think the good Doctor is exhausted. How about you?

AMANDA

How about you??!

Jonathan walks to her.

He switches off the television with the remote.

Amanda turns out his lights.

They close the door.

EXT. SUDAN DESERT - NIGHT

The train to Khartoum winds through an endlessly flat desert dotted by small farms, larger ranches, towns and villages.

Off, far in the distance, the lights in Khartoum seem like some distant treasure sparkling under the moon light.

The ancient train puffs and smokes its way, like a black snake on the desert floor, ever closer to the huge capitol city, Khartoum.

INT. TRAIN CABIN - NIGHT

Tom sits on one seat with his shoes off and his feet up while Jason lies across a top bunk trying to look at the pictures in a Sudanese magazine.

Tom cleans his hand gun.

JASON

Ever been here before?

TOM MC GREGOR

Only in the movies.

Jason looks down from the bunk.

TOM MC GREGOR

The movie "Khartoum", Charlton Heston, huge battle scenes. 1880's about the Brits trying to get their folk out of Khartoum before the invasion of The Mahdi.

JASON

Yeah, I think I saw it. But it doesn't do Khartoum justice. I was here. American Intelligence thought there was a big heroin lab here so we were sent in to check it out. Proved to be true so the US secretly came over here one night and bombed the son-of-a-bitch. Unfortunately it also flattened a bunch of residential homes. Needless to say we had to leave fast and it took some time and diplomacy before was safe for American tourists to come back.

Jason sits up a little and props up his pillow.

JASON

As a Biologist though, Khartoum is the fountain of ancient humanity. Stuck right at the apex of the Blue Nile and the White Nile Rivers this is a modern day city built on the ancient ruins of the cradle of civilization. Except now it's a city in civil war, under the microscope of the United Nations and the whole world, everything evil is being exposed to the light of CNN and Fox News.

TOM MC GREGOR

Yeah, I heard it was a gathering spot for every kind of drug you could ever want.

JASON

Plus a modern day hiding place for terrorists, expats, guns for hire, guns, and ammunition for sale. And lets not forget the huge market for slavery that thrives here and always has.

TOM MC GREGOR

Just our kind of place don't you think Jason?

JASON

What I was thinking is that it's no place for Ingles and what's left of his group. If anyone figures out that they're carrying a six million year old fossil with them . . . they're history.

Tom just looks at Jason and shakes his head yes.

TOM MC GREGOR

You know, I must have missed the part where they already did some radioisotope test for fossil dating.

JASON

You didn't miss any test. The rock strata they were in was the late, upper Miocene. The Miocene Epoch was in the Neogene Period 5.32 million to 23.8 million years ago. The associated fauna dates the fossils to between six and seven MYA.

TOM MC GREGOR

You know, I thought you were a Biologist. How come you're so darn interested in evolution.

JASON

A very intelligent man named Theodosius Dobzhansky in 1973 said "nothing in biology makes any sense except in the light of evolution".

TOM MC GREGOR

And you believe all that happy horse shit!!

Jason looks at Tom differently for the first time.

TOM MC GREGOR

Listen, when they found Piltdown Man in 1912 in the Piltdown Quarries it was a huge advancement in the number of fossils that were extant. But in 1953, forty one, years later, they proved it was a hoax, a forgery using an elephant molar a canine tooth from a pre-historic chimpanzee, an ancient hippo's tooth, a jawbone different than the skull and a skull which was proven to be only six hundred and twenty years old. Now here is a group, Jason, who are dying to make evolution a fact and they go to the point of sitting in laboratories, painting teeth with acid and other chemicals, imbedding iron into the skull using infusion techniques, very sophisticated techniques because these men were some of the best scientists of the day. And they lied!!

JASON

Whose side are you on?!!

TOM MC GREGOR

I thought we already went through that.

The train stops suddenly so hard Tom is thrown off of his seat.

The car rocks back and forth as the train comes SCREECHING to a halt.

Jason jumps off his bunk and looks out the window.

The lights of Khartoum are only a few miles away.

MEN on horses, armed and in a desert camouflage uniform ride towards the train and dismount.

JASON

We have company.

Tom steps quickly up to the window.

TOM MC GREGOR

No good for us. We're out of here!!

Tom gathers his things and heads for the door.

Jason grabs his bag and removes his hand gun.

He pushes it into his belt and follows Tom into the hallway.

INT. TRAIN CAR - NIGHT

Tom and Jason look either way and then step into the hallway and start walking fast.

JASON

Who do you think they are?

TOM MC GREGOR

Unwanted guests. Some private army owned by an anonymous Sheik.

JASON

Why would they stop the train.

TOM MC GREGOR

They're looking for something
and we can't take the chance its
us.

They come to the door outside.

Tom opens it and looks out into the night.

He steps out.

Jason steps out behind him.

EXT. TRAIN - NIGHT

Tom and Jason stand on the step between two cars.

Tom looks out one side in both directions as Jason
looks out the other.

The armed guards move through the train checking
tickets and passports.

TOM MC GREGOR

(whispers)

Know how to ride a horse?

JASON

Yeah.

TOM MC GREGOR

Good. I'm starting to like you.

Jason looks at him and shakes his head, yes.

They lean down and run next to the tracks towards
the horses.

The two men duck between cars and kneel down.

They are twenty feet from the horses and two GUARDS.

Jason crawls to the other side of the train and
moves forward toward the horses.

Tom gets as far under the train as he can and moves
slowly toward the guards.

The two guards are smoking cigarettes but are alert holding their weapons.

Jason's hands suddenly come out from between the cars and grabs one of the guards.

The other guard drops his cigarette and instantly raises his weapon.

A knife slices through the air and strikes the guard in the neck.

He drops gagging.

The other guard drops on top of him with his throat cut.

The horses spook a little and pull at their tie-ups.

A guard inside the car sees the horses.

He looks out the window down at where the guards were killed but they are gone.

He looks back at the horses and just beyond them in the distance are two men riding toward Khartoum.

He YELLS orders inside the car.

Guards pour out of the train cars and find their horses.

The two dead guards are neatly stacked under the train.

The guard inside the car rushes out but stops when he sees his dead men.

He looks towards the riders who are raising a dust trail away from the train.

The guard runs to his horse and jumps on the mount.

He whips the animal and races away toward Tom and Jason.

His guards, slightly confused leave two men to take care of the dead. The others ride off behind the leader.

High above the Sudan a lone train sits waiting outside the huge and ancient city of Khartoum.

Less than a mile from the train are two riders leaving a dust trail towards the city.

Behind them are some twenty men leaving an even larger dust trail towards Khartoum.

The city of Khartoum is alive with business and commerce in the cooler part of the evening.

INT. KHARTOUM HILTON HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Dr. Ingles is in a deep sleep, spread out all over his bed in his room.

From Dr. Ingles room into the next bedroom is a trail of Amanda's clothes.

Amanda, half naked, is also spread out on the bed she shared with Jonathan, but Jonathan was gone.

There is a loud BANGING on the room door.

Amanda slowly pulls herself up out of deep sleep.

She sits up and realizes someone is KNOCKING.

Her hand reaches over but Jonathan is not there.

Amanda pulls the sheet around and wobbles to the door.

Dr. Ingles comes to his doorway just as Amanda opens the door with the chain still locked.

Jonathan is outside and panicked.

JONATHAN

Its me, I forgot my lock card.
Open the door!!

Amanda struggles with the chain but finally gets the door open.

Jonathan rushes in.

JONATHAN

Get dressed, everyone get
dressed, now.

Jonathan is rapidly collecting his things.

DR. INGLES.

What are you going on about?

Jonathan stops for a moment.

JONATHAN

I was down having some coffee when
a gang of men came in and checked
in. Remember our host, Abasi.
He's here with a bunch of ugly
looking Arabs.

DR. INGLES

That is very odd. How did he
know we were here.

AMANDA

Does he know?

JONATHAN

The coffee steward told me,
thank God, that they were
looking for Americans carrying
a wooden crate with their luggage.

The three are frozen for a moment, thinking about all
of the implications.

Dr. Ingles turns instantly into his room.

Amanda gathers her things and throws them into a bag.

Jonathan goes to the door and carefully opens it.

He looks out.

Ingles and Amanda, carrying their things, pick up the
crate.

Jonathan comes back in and gets his bag.

They leave immediately.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - NIGHT

The elevator at the end of the hallway shows an elevator coming up.

Jonathan, Amanda, and Doctor Ingles turn the other way and move quickly to the stairs.

They open the stair door and rush in.

The door is closing as the elevator doors open.

Abasi and several thugs step into the hallway.

They move quickly to the room door and KNOCK loudly.

INT. HOTEL STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Doctor Ingles and Amanda are struggling down the stairs and Jonathan finally takes over for Amanda holding one end of the crate.

They keep moving down now as Amanda checks each stair platform.

JONATHAN

I hope someone takes this much care of me six million years from now.

DOCTOR INGLES

I doubt that. You're just a semi-famous Paleontologist. This skull in here belongs to the mother or father of us all, chimpanzee, ape and man, this is 'the missing link' I'd be willing to bet on it.

AMANDA

We are. Our lives!

A door opens far above them into the stairwell.

DR. INGLES

Shhh!

Loud STEPS begin to descend towards them.

The three hurry down three more platforms where they reach a cross hallway to the parking garage or to the lobby.

After propping the door open to the parking garage they exit into the Lobby.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

Jonathan and Doctor Ingles come rushing into the Lobby carrying the fossils.

Amanda comes in right behind them.

They rush towards the front door.

The Lobby is filled with activity, but it all stops as onlookers wonder what is going on.

Amanda pushes the front doors open as Jonathan and Ingles rushed through.

EXT. KHARTOUM HILTON - NIGHT

Ingles, Jonathan, and Amanda run to the street and start trying to wave down a taxi.

The front doors of the Hotel open and several guests come out to see what the three are up to.

The crowd is suddenly parted by Abasi and his men.

Amanda is now SCREAMING for a cab.

Jonathan finally just steps into the street forcing a cab driver to come screeching to a halt.

Abasi and his men have cleared through the crowd and now approach Ingles and his crew.

Dr. Ingles rushes into the back seat.

Jonathan hands him the crate and then steps in and closes the door.

Amanda just gets in the front seat when the first of Abasi' s men arrives.

She locks her door just as the man grabs onto the handle

Jonathan locks his door as the man reaches back and tries that handle.

DOCTOR INGLES

Get out of here!!

The cab suddenly burns rubber away from the sidewalk dragging one of the men whose coat sleeve is caught in the handle.

The man finally rolls away from the speeding taxi.

Abasi comes up to the curb waving his hands and arms trying to get their attention.

The taxi disappears in traffic.

INT. KHARTOUM BAR - NIGHT

Tom and Jason are sitting at a crowded bar trying to have a quiet drink.

They are dusty and dirty and obviously different from everyone else in the bar.

The local WOMEN give them strange, taunting looks.

The local MEN just glare at them.

JASON

Friendly sort of place.

TOM MC GREGOR

Yeah, a bunch of men with little dicks and a heavy religious burden. Which then, naturally, leads to a bunch of horny women.

JASON

Is that the way you see it.

TOM MC GREGOR

Jason, that's the way it is.

The television above them is showing a soccer game.

The game is suddenly interrupted to show the scene in front of the Khartoum Hilton.

The men and women in the bar boo at the television set.

The bartender reaches up to find another station.

JASON

No!! Don't touch that!!

Jason gets up and stands closer to the television.

The men in the bar yell and jeer at the American.

The station shows amateur footage of Ingles, Amanda and Jonathan running out of the Hotel and waving down a taxi.

JASON

(to Tom)

It's them. They're only blocks away from us.

An Arab man comes up behind Jason and turns him around forcefully.

Jason turns around and knocks the man out.

The entire bar goes into an uproar until Tom fires a gun.

Everyone drops to the floor including the bartender.

Tom and Jason both jump away from the bar and weave their way out between the patrons who are on the ground screaming.

EXT. KHARTOUM BAR. - NIGHT

The bar door bursts open as Tom and Jason jump out onto the sidewalk.

Tom puts his hand gun into a shoulder holster and they both walk quickly down the street.

JASON

Did you notice it on the television?

TOM MC GREGOR

Our friend Abasi and his crew?
Yeah I caught that. Christ, how many people know?!!

JASON

The whole world I'm thinking thanks to CNN and Fox. So, where could they go.

TOM MC GREGOR

The Airport or the Embassy. Those would be my choices given the circumstances.

Tom takes a coin out of his pocket and flips it in the air.

He catches it with his other hand and closes his fist.

TOM MC GREGOR

Call it.

JASON

Airport heads, Embassy tails.

Tom opens his fist and its tails.

They look at each other. Without pausing,

TOGETHER

Airport!!

Tom turns instantly and steps into the street right in front of a car.

An angry MAN screeches to a stop.

As he is yelling Tom opens his door and pulls the man out.

Jason gets in the passenger's side.

Tom pulls his gun and the man turns pale and runs away SCREAMING.

Tom dives into the drivers side and drives away.

INT. STOLEN CAR - NIGHT

JASON

Where'd you learn that?

TOM MC GREGOR

Oh some fucking movie. Just about any movie actually.

Tom floors it and races through the traffic.

EXT. STOLEN CAR - NIGHT

The stolen car weaves in and out of traffic following signs to the International Airport in Khartoum.

EXT. ABOVE KHARTOUM CITY - NIGHT

Further behind the taxi are Police Cars now racing towards the airport.

INT. TAXI - NIGHT

Amanda in the front seat is trying to explain who they are to the DRIVER.

The driver HEARS the Police sirens and keeps looking in his rear view mirror to see if they are behind him.

DR. INGLES

I don't suppose any of us has any money to pay this man?

The driver looks back at Ingles with concern.

Jonathan goes through his bag.

Amanda goes through her bag when the driver suddenly pulls over.

AMANDA

What are you doing?

DRIVER

You . . . are the Americans
yes? You are on the television
yes?

JONATHAN

Yes, that's us.

DRIVER

You . . . have some great
discovery, yes, in the box?

DR. INGLES

A very great discovery, maybe
the greatest.

The SOUNDS of sirens are getting closer.

DRIVER

I can see it yes, take a picture?

The driver holds up a small, digital camera.

DRIVER

You . . . no pay me. Let
me look only. Take picture.

The SOUND of the sirens are dangerously close.

Dr. Ingles carefully but quickly opens the top of
the box and removes some towels and Styrofoam
packing.

The skull sits like a dark jewel waiting to be mounted.

The driver leans over, his eyes are as big as quarters.

His left arm reaches over, shaking and he takes two
pictures.

Ingles hurriedly closes the box as the driver turns, gleaming, and holds the camera in front of Amanda.

Amanda hurriedly shakes her head as the driver puts down the camera and speeds off.

EXT. TAXI - NIGHT

The taxi weaves in and out of traffic until it reaches the road into the airport.

INT. TAXI - NIGHT

The driver looks for ways to get around cars and people crossing the street with their luggage.

EXT. AIRPORT ROAD - NIGHT

The Police Cars enter the road to the airport and are only a few miles behind the taxi.

The stolen car with Jason and Tom weaves in and out of the same traffic but they have already arrived at the Departure Terminal.

EXT. DEPARTURE TERMINAL - NIGHT

Tom pulls the car over to the curb.

Both men get their things and get out.

An AIRPORT OFFICER just down from them signals for them to leave.

Tom and Jason quickly move away from the car and enter the airport.

The Airport Officer comes running towards the abandoned car.

He yells into a Walkie-Talkie as he runs.

INT. KHARTOUM INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - NIGHT

Tom and Jason quickly come through the door at the Departure Terminal.

They slow down and try to blend in with the crowd.

Both men walk and search as they walk, looking at seated patrons and those walking through the terminal.

They HEAR the sirens approaching the Terminal building.

Jason stops and looks out through the glass to the street.

The taxi rushes by carrying Ingles and his crew.

Jason grabs Tom's arm and pulls him forward down the crowded concourse.

JASON

Perfect timing.

Tom looks out and sees the Police Cars just behind the cab.

TOM MC GREGOR

I don't know about that? This all is starting to seem pretty hopeless.

Airport guards come into the Terminal from outside.

Tom and Jason turn around and see them.

The Airport Guards see them at the same time.

TOM MC GREGOR

I think we've got our own problems.

The two men start walking faster and faster through the crowd.

INT. TAXI - NIGHT

The taxi is driving now in a restricted area.

The driver keeps looking through the fence onto the tarmac.

A large, brown UPS plane is just finishing being loaded.

AMANDA

(to driver)

Where are we?

DRIVER

I know. I know.

JONATHAN

He knows. I'm glad someone knows something because we're very close here to going to jail.

DRIVER

No jail. Don't worry!!

DR. INGLES

What's he up to?

Suddenly the driver turns the taxi off the roadway and towards the landing strip.

JONATHAN

Holy shit!!

The driver drives right through a chain-link fence and then bumps onto the landing strip.

Amanda screams.

Dr. Ingles holds tightly onto the crate.

The taxi drives straight towards the UPS Plane.

DOCTOR INGLES

What can Brown do for you?

JONATHAN

I haven't the faintest idea of what you're thinking.

AMANDA

We're going to hijack an American owned company plane?!!

JONATHAN

We'll be in an Arab prison for
life!!

DOCTOR INGLES

Probably longer.

Staff personnel on the UPS Plane come out the side door and stand on the rolling stair platform and watch as the taxi rushes towards them.

The Police cars break through the same fence and drive up on the tarmac.

INT. KHARTOUM INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - NIGHT

Tom and Jason are almost running in the Terminal.

Tom taps Jason's shoulder and points out the window to the taxi on the tarmac.

JASON

What are they doing?

TOM MC GREGOR

Look what they're heading for.

JASON

UPS? Oh yeah, America here
we come.

The two men turn and rush through a door where PASSENGERS are loading another plane.

The STAFF yell at them and try and stop them.

The airline PERSONNEL call airport security.

An emergency bell SOUNDS at the door they went in.

EXT. KHARTOUM AIRPORT TARMAC - NIGHT

Tom and Jason come down the outside stairs of the rolling staircase they entered.

Airport personnel stand at the top of the stairs and shout at them in a foreign language.

Tom pulls his gun on a LUGGAGE DRIVER and kicks him out of his Luggage Cart.

Jason unhooks the loaded cars behind them and hops in.

Tom takes the wheel and they speed off towards the UPS Airplane.

EXT. UPS AIRPLANE - NIGHT

The taxi screeches to a stop just below the rolling stair unit.

Ingles and Jonathan struggle to get out quickly with the crate.

Amanda gives the driver a big hug and then jumps out.

The driver holds up his camera and takes one more picture of Amanda, Jonathan, and Doctor Ingles as they struggle up the outside stair unit.

The Police SIRENS are loud as they are only seconds behind.

The taxi races away from the plane and the police.

Tom and Jason pull the luggage cart up next to the plane and get out.

Doctor Ingles stops and looks at them for a moment.

The CAPTAIN of the plane comes out on the top platform.

CAPTAIN

What are you people doing here?

JASON

Get in the cockpit Captain
and gives this bird legs.

CAPTAIN

I'm sorry but you have no .
. . .

Tom pulls out his gun and aims it at the Captain.

TOM MC GREGOR
In the name of United States
Security get in the cockpit
and turn her on.

The Captain slowly steps back into the plane.

Tom and Jason are already halfway up the rolling
stair unit.

Amanda is at the top and disappears into the plane.

Tom and Jason catch up with Ingles and Jonathan
and help them get up the rest of the way.

DOCTOR INGLES
Who are you?

JASON
We're the Calvary Dr. Ingles!!

JONATHAN
What took you so long?!!

TOM MC GREGOR
No time now, get in the plane.

The Police cars come to a SCREECHING halt.

The Police pour out of the doors of the cars.

Tom reaches down and disconnects the rolling stairs
from the plane.

He steps inside and closes the doors.

INT. UPS AIRPLANE - NIGHT

Tom and Jason move past Jonathan, Amanda, and Ingles,
past the crew until they get to the door of the Pilot's
cabin.

It's locked.

TOM MC GREGOR

Open the door Captain or we'll
blow it open.

Nothing happens.

Jason takes out his hand gun and aims it at the door
lock.

He and Tom fire a half a dozen rounds into the door
lock and the door opens.

Tom sticks his head into the cockpit.

INT. UPS AIRPLANE COCKPIT - NIGHT

Tom faces the Captain who has turned around.

TOM MC GREGOR

I'm only going to say this one
more time. Turn it on and take
off or I blow your fucking
brains out do you understand?!!

The Captain turns around and lights up the plane.

He turns off the communication to the tower and
begins to back up.

EXT. UPS AIRPLANE - NIGHT

The huge brown painted craft with the UPS logo on the
side, knocks over the rolling stair unit.

The police scatter to get away from the falling stairs.

The plane pulls forward and taxis past the police
onto the runway.

People in the tower are waving their hands trying to
get the pilots attention.

The plane pulls around the other waiting aircraft.

When it reaches the front of the line the plane hits
the after burners and speeds down the runway.

The UPS plane just barely misses a plane which has just touched down on a cross-runway.

The brown aircraft reaches the end of the runway and lifts up into the night sky over ancient Khartoum City.

The plane climbs and climbs and levels off and finally disappears into the blackness.

INT. UPS AIRPLANE - NIGHT

The crew stands or leans against the boxes and packages being shipped all around the world.

They are scared.

Doctor Ingles, Jonathan, and Amanda sit on the floor next to the crate.

Tom and Jason sit on large boxes with the hand guns sitting next to them.

The Captain enters from the cockpit and stands with his crew.

TOM MC GREGOR

(stands)

First of all, Captain, I would like to apologize for threatening your life and endangering the lives of your crew. I believe introductions all around will be helpful to start. I'm Texas Tom Mc Gregor and my partner here, Jason Allan, High School Biologist and ex Intelligence Officer, are all that's left of a mission to save . . .

Tom turns and extends his hand out towards Doctor Ingles.

TOM MC GREGOR

Dr. Miles Ingles, famed team leader along with Archeologist Dr. Jonathan Spears and Paleontologist Dr. Amanda Blake, who have all been missing now for three weeks from an archeology dig in Chad, Africa where they supposedly uncovered 'the missing link'.

Dr. Ingles carefully opens the crate and removes the top packing materials.

The crew and Captain, in awe of the situation, come across the plane and look into the box.

DR. INGLES

What you see is very possibly a six million year old fossil which was alive at one time and may bear the responsibility for everyone one of us being here today.

The Captain steps away with some of his crew and they talk amongst themselves.

The Captain turns and faces the group.

CAPTAIN

First, I am Captain Louis Mc Nemara and myself and this crew call San Diego, California our home. We now understand, Dr. Ingles, why you boarded our plane in the manner you did. We must now understand what your intent is with this crew and our craft along with also understanding, regardless of the circumstances, that you have broken Federal Aviation Law.

DOCTOR INGLES

Our intent Captain is simple. To get back to the United States and we do understand the situation we're in.

CAPTAIN

And you Mr. Mc Gregor along with your partner?

TOM MC GREGOR

The same Captain, I assure you.

CAPTAIN

Then you gentlemen won't mind handing over your guns.

Tom looks at the Captain carefully and then at Jason.

Jason looks at the Captain and the crew and finally at Ingles and his group.

Jason reaches down and lifts up his gun and hands it to the Captain.

Tom thinks a few more seconds and does the same.

The Captain collects the guns.

CO PILOT (O.S.)

Captain Mc Nemarra you better come in here sir.

The Captain takes the guns and enters the cockpit.

INT. UPS AIRPLANE COCKPIT - NIGHT

The Captain comes into the cockpit and places the guns in a cabinet and locks the cabinet.

CO PILOT

Sir, put on your head phones.

The Captain sits in his seat and puts on his headgear.

Tom, Jason, and Jonathan stick their heads in the cockpit to see what is happening.

The Captain suddenly removes part of his headgear and looks out the window.

He turns back to the men standing in the doorway.

CAPTAIN

Khartoum airport has alerted the North Sudanese Army about us. The Army has scrambled two jets which will be here any second. The tower is telling us to turn around.

TOM MC GREGOR

Tell them to go fuck themselves.

CAPTAIN

I'm sure you understand Mr. Mc Gregor that we can't do that even if we were in Texas.

JASON

Tell them there's a bomb on board and we'll destroy the aircraft.

CAPTAIN

I don't really think that means that much to the Sudanese Army.

JONATHAN

Tell them it's a nuclear device. It will destroy Khartoum.

No one says anything.

Two jet planes can be seen out the window of the cockpit.

Doctor Ingles joins the men. He sees the jets outside.

DOCTOR INGLES

It didn't take them very long.

The Captain puts back on his communication device and speaks quietly to the tower.

The Captain removes his communication device from one ear.

CAPTAIN

They're diverting us to an abandoned air field in Chad near the Sudan border.

TOM MC GREGOR

Probably the one we took off from.

DOCTOR INGLES

Call the U.S. for help. Call your headquarters in San Diego and tell them the situation. Stall the tower.

Mc Gregor and Jason both look at Dr. Ingles with a new understanding.

CAPTAIN

(to co pilot)

Call San Diego on the restricted frequency, I'll stay with the tower.

Both men speak into their microphones.

The pilots in the accompanying jets are making hand signals for the plane to go down and turn around.

TOM MC GREGOR

They won't stand for this to much longer and they'll shoot us down.

JASON

I don't think so. This plane is American not from Eritrea. They know if they shoot down this plane the whole American Air force will be in Khartoum.

The Captain takes his earpiece off one ear.

CAPTAIN

They say if we don't divert to
a new heading they will have no
choice but to fire on us.

The Captain looks out the window.

CAPTAIN

The jets are behind us now.
I have a bad feeling about
this.

TOM MC GREGOR

Maybe we should talk about this
once more.

CO PILOT

Headquarters is contacting the
President.

JASON

There's a U.S. Air Force base not
far from here. Top Secret.

JONATHAN

How do you know that?

JASON

I used to work out of it on
recon for the Khartoum area.
Very secret, nobody knows.

Tracer rounds are fired passed the UPS plane.

TOM MC GREGOR

Holy shit these assholes are
firing at us.

Everyone sees the glowing rounds pass the windows.

JONATHAN

They're not very good shots.

DOCTOR INGLES

That's because they're not shooting
at us, they're shooting around us.
They're trying to scare us.

CO PILOT

Its working.

Suddenly a series of bullets tear through the airplane.

Amanda and others members of the crew SCREAM from
behind the cockpit.

The men leave the cockpit doorway to check on the crew.

CAPTAIN

Is anyone hurt? Damage report.

Doctor Ingles steps back into the doorway.

DOCTOR INGLES

No one was hurt. We can see a lot
of moonlight though.

Another set of bullets rips through more of the plane.

EXT. UPS AIRPLANE - NIGHT

One of the wing engines explodes on fire.

INT. UPS AIRPLANE COCKPIT - NIGHT

The Co-Pilots window is blown out and the Co Pilot is
struck by a bullet.

CAPTAIN

(yelling)

Help. Someone back there help
us in here.

Tom and Jason pop into the cockpit.

They see the Co-Pilot and take him out of his seat.

Jason carries him out of the cockpit.

CAPTAIN

We have to make this abandoned
airfield in Chad or we're dead
meat.

Tom sits down in the Co-Pilot's seat.

He stuffs books and manuals into the hole of the
broken window.

The Pilot struggles to keep the plane in the air.

TOM MC GREGOR

We're dropping.

CAPTAIN

We have to. We're losing fuel.

TOM MC GREGOR

How far from the airstrip?

CAPTAIN

Maybe ten minutes. Less!!

An American jet flies right past them in the other
direction.

Tom puts on the Co-Pilot's head set.

EXT. UPS PLANE - NIGHT

Two American F-16's fly towards the Sudanese air Force
Jets.

The American planes fire.

The Sudanese planes pull up and turn away.

The American Jets chase them into the black cloudless
sky.

INT. UPS AIRPLANE - NIGHT

Doctor Ingles is in the back of the plane holding
onto Amanda and the crate.

Jason and some of the crew members are taking care of the Co-Pilot.

Jonathan is standing at the door of the cockpit.

JONATHAN

What's happening?

TOM MC GREGOR

The Air Calvary showed up and chased the bad boys away.

JONATHAN

What are we doing?

TOM MC GREGOR

We have to land in the abandon air strip. US forces will be there to take us out. . . . if we make it.

JONATHAN

How's the plane.

Tom points out the window.

Jonathan comes into the cockpit a little further and looks out.

JONATHAN

Holy shit!!

CAPTAIN

Get everyone back to the back door. As soon as you hear the wheels touch down, hit the emergency switch and pop the door open. A slide will come down to the ground. Everyone on the slide as soon as we stop. Stay away from the plane.

Jonathan disappears into the back.

Tom looks at the pilot and the pilot looks back at Tom.

TOM MC GREGOR
Ever done this before?

CAPTAIN
Nope.

TOM MC GREGOR
Me either.

The pilot holds up his hand and crosses his fingers.

The plane wracks to the left and then the right.

The Pilot's hands sweat as he pulls the power down.

He reaches over and turns the switch for the landing gear.

A SOUND like broken machinery comes up from below.

TOM MC GREGOR
What the hell was that?

The Captain turns the switch again and again.

CAPTAIN
The landing gear is stuck. It
must have taken a strike.
Tell everyone to hold on,
we're going in on our stomach.

Tom gets out of the seat and weaves out of the cockpit.

The crew are all back by the rear door with Jonathan, Amanda and Jason.

Dr. Ingles is trying to get the straps off of the crate.

TOM MC GREGOR
(to Ingles)
Leave it Doctor, its not
worth dying over.

DOCTOR INGLES

Don't tell me what its worth
God damn it!!

Tom goes over and tries to get the Doctor to move down toward the back door.

The plane suddenly wracks again to the right and then suddenly back to the left.

Dr. Ingles falls and knocks his head against the steel siding.

Tom falls.

He stands and makes his way over to the Doctor.

He tries to lift him up.

Jonathan is suddenly right next to him and they lift Dr. Ingles together.

TOM MC GREGOR

I've got him. Help the
pilot.

Tom carries Dr. Ingles back to the rear door.

Jonathan reaches down and collects his back pack.

He moves to the cockpit and starts to enter the door.

The plane comes down hard on an old runway.

The SOUND of metal tearing away from metal fills the inside.

Jonathan falls straight down.

He sees through holes in the frame sparks flying off the runway in huge waves.

EXT. UPS PLANE - NIGHT

The aircraft hits the runway with one engine on fire.

The nose of the plane grinds down the runway in a spray of sparks and molten metal.

The plane slides to the left and then to the right and finally starts to spin as it slows down in a burning fury.

The back door opens as the plane is moving and a huge slide explodes off the side.

As the plane almost comes to a stop the crew of the UPS plane slide down with the Co-Pilot strapped into a litter.

Right behind them comes Tom, Jason, and Amanda with Doctor Ingles between them unconscious.

The first wave of the crew climbs off the slide and carry the Co-Pilot away from the plane.

The front end of the craft explodes into a fiery ball.

Amanda, Jason, and Tom lift Doctor Ingles off the slide and carry him away from the burning plane.

More of the front end explodes into fire.

Finally Jonathan appears at the back door.

He wears his back pack and he's carrying the Pilot.

Jonathan wrestles the Pilot onto the slide and slides down with him.

Tom meets them at the bottom and helps Jonathan carry Doctor Ingles away.

Everyone keeps moving further and further off into a field of stubble, grass, and rocks.

The plane blows completely up blowing packages and mail and cartons and boxes in every direction like burning fireballs from some huge ancient war machine.

The crew with Jason, Amanda, Tom, and Jonathan form a circle of protection around the Co-Pilot, the Pilot and Doctor Ingles.

The plane burns until it is a huge pile of smoldering, smoking metal and burnt mail.

In the distance the SOUND of helicopters turns everyone around.

JASON

They're ours.

A yell of freedom comes from the crew.

The huge choppers come in until they see the downed crew.

The big birds land between the crew and the burning plane.

U.S. Marines jump out of the birds and form a perimeter.

Other men and Officers jump out and run to the crew of the UPS Plane.

Doctor Ingles is placed on a stretcher and carried to the waiting birds.

The Co-Pilot, Pilot and their crew are placed on the second of the two craft.

After Doctor Ingles is boarded, Amanda is helped up followed by Jason, Tom and finally Jonathan.

The doors close and the helicopters take off in unison.

The pair reach cruising height and take off for home.

INT. U.S. HELICOPTER - NIGHT

Dr. Ingles is strapped into a bunk.

Beside him are Jonathan and Amanda.

Across from them are Tom and Jason belted into seats.

Dr. Ingles has just come to.

TOM MC GREGOR

Seems a shame in many ways.
I mean you can't prove what
you don't have but there is
a certain amount of justice in
that, whatever it was is buried
in the land that spawned it.

JASON

I hope this doesn't sound to
weird but . . . I'm a huge
fan of all three of you and
your work. I'm a high school
Biology teacher so, I know
what I'm talking about. I'm
sorry that you lost the . . .

Doctor Ingles moves his head.

AMANDA

Careful Doctor, you took a
nasty fall.

DOCTOR INGLES

Where are we?

JONATHAN

We're aboard a U.S. Helicopter.
The UPS Plane . . . crashed
on the airstrip.

DOCTOR INGLES

What . . . what about . . .

AMANDA

Not now Doctor, you should just
rest.

TOM MC GREGOR

It was burned Doctor along with
a lot of personal mail and
packages.

Ingles turns his head and glares at Tom.

JASON

Hey, why don't you leave the old guy alone.

TOM MC GREGOR

Sure. Sorry. I wasn't making a stand for 'creationism'. I was just thinking how sad the 'evolution' community must be that their prime suspect is again buried in the Sahara desert, maybe for another six million years.

Jonathan wipes the sweat off his brow.

JONATHAN

Well Mr. Mc Gregor, I guess we all know now where you're really coming from. So.

Jonathan reaches down and opens the top of his back pack.

JONATHAN

Maybe it wasn't a rescue mission for you in the first place. Maybe this is what you wanted the whole time.

Tom turns his head away and closes his eyes.

Jason looks at Tom and then back to Jonathan.

Jonathan pulls away the flap cover and looks down in his pack.

He looks over at Doctor Ingles and then looks down again into the pack.

Dr. Ingles finally follows his gaze as does Amanda.

Down in the pack, nestled in an old army blanket is the fossil skull.

Dr. Ingles looks up at Jonathan and a tear forms in his old eyes.

Amanda looks up at Jonathan and a huge smile grows across her face.

JONATHAN

(whispers)

No rocks to prove its age, no
fauna to help support that age
but we've got it.

Jonathan closes the back pack.

JONATHAN

It'll be harder but we know
what its worth.

Amanda's hand comes over and rests on Jonathan's
shoulder.

Dr. Ingles smiles and closes his eyes.

DOCTOR INGLES

I may have to give you a raise.

JONATHAN

Ha!! That'll be the day!!

They all laugh quietly.

Tom opens his eyes and turns his head towards them.

Jonathan looks up and catches Tom's gaze.

JONATHAN

Who did you say you worked for?

TOM MC GREGOR

The winner and we now know who
that is.

JONATHAN

Yes sir we do. We certainly do.

Tom turns back and closes his eyes again.

Jason looks over at Jonathan and then down at the
back pack and then back to Jonathan.

Jonathan smiles.

Jason smiles. He slowly moves his head up and down to signify yes.

EXT. U.S. HELICOPTER - EARLY MORNING

The sun is just coming up over the vast Sahara desert as the helicopter flies over an archeological dig.

The diggers come out and wave at the helicopter.

The helicopter disappears into the bars of sunlight as it bathes the desert with its warmth, some four and a half billion years old.

FADE OUT.

THE END