

THE OCTOBER KILLINGS - SOUTH AFRICAN/LESOTHO BORDER

21 OCTOBER 1985

TEASER

EXT. TWO WHEEL TRACK - NIGHT

Quarter moon. Meandering sand track in a narrow valley between low hills. Four large ghostly square shapes snake their way into view. NO MUSIC, only the eerie DRONING OF DIESEL ENGINES.

The droning crescendos and army troop carriers explode onto the screen.

INT. LEADING CARRIER - NIGHT

In the back white soldiers in camouflage fill four rows of seats, two on the sides, facing in, two back to back in the middle.

LEON LOURENS, 19, conscript rookie soldier, broad innocent face on the side at the back. Next to him, Captain VAN JAARSVELD, 38, grim, narrow rat face, their leadern.

EXT. TROOP CARRIERS - NIGHT

They grind to a stop on a small rise that overlooks a scattering of a dozen houses. Distant barking.

LEADING CARRIER: From the roof hatch a soldier with night glasses scans the houses.

SEEN THROUGH THE NIGHT GLASSES a house, (the target), a little away from the others is in darkness. The unkempt garden with bush around it. A sudden movement on the edge of the bush.

The night glasses freeze on a man with the shape of a dog next to him.

The soldier drops the night glasses, scrunches up his eyes in the direction of the figure, leans down into the carrier.

SOLDIER
(loud whisper)
Movement on the side.

Van Jaarsveld, shoves him aside and grabs the night classes.

VAN JAARSVELD
Where? Where?

SOLDIER
Left side, a man and a dog.

BINOCULAR'S P.O.V. A man seems to stare in their direction.

EXT. SIDE OF TARGET HOUSE - NIGHT

MICHAEL BISHOP, 25, squints at the carriers, next to him, CAPTAIN, the pale shape of a dog. It is too dark for more detail.

BISHOP'S P.O.V. Ghostly, large square shapes on top of the rise overlooking the houses.

Captain gives two soft warning barks, unsure what he is looking at.

FADES INTO

INT. FRONT CARRIER - NIGHT

Van Jaarsveld drops back inside.

VAN JAARSVELD
(mutters)
Shit, we've been spotted, that's
fucking all we need.

INT. TARGET HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

The view moves through a door leading from the kitchen into a very small narrow room (ex-pantry). ABIGAIL, 14, sleeps peacefully on a single bed. A mosquito on her exposed arm. We move to the...

DINING ROOM: A large table with left-over food and dirty dishes, everything quiet.

LOUNGE: Four people on the floor asleep on blankets.

BEDROOMS: Four crowded bedrooms, people sleeping on beds and on the floor.

EXT. CLUSTER OF HOUSES - NIGHT

Bishop next to a small black Toyota combi, parked a little distance from the target house. On the side indistinct white writing.

A last glance at the carriers, Bishop jumps in, Captain on the passenger seat.

The engine starts, in the light from the dash board, large ears, pinkish transparent, stand away from Bishop's head.

INT. TARGET HOUSE - NIGHT

A man staggers out of a door, yawns, tucks at the front of his shorts and disappears through another door.

EXT. CARRIERS - NIGHT

The carriers stop close to the kitchen door. Shadowy figures pile out and line up at the back of the carriers.

VAN JAARSVELD

(whispers)

You all know the drill. Catch them off guard, shoot before you get shot.

A soldier picks the back door lock, others move to cover windows and front door.

INT. TARGET HOUSE - NIGHT

Soldiers quietly steal into the kitchen, rifles ready, move through to the dining room, Abigail's pantry room unnoticed.

A toilet flushes, soldiers freeze.

A door half way down the passage opens, yawning sleepily, the man in the shorts comes out, pulling up his fly zip. He spots the soldiers.

MAN IN SHORTS

(hysterical)

Oh, my God! Oh my God! They gonna kill us.

Bang, bang, he falls face down in his own blood.

Excited shouting explodes, bedroom doors fly open, confused faces peep out, one of the doors slam closed again, pandemonium.

INT. ABIGAILS'S ROOM - NIGHT

The door crashes open, a soldier, gun pointing, barges in.

Unmade, empty bed.

He retreats leaving the door ajar.

Abigail, squashed between the wall and the bed, bites her fist. Slowly her traumatized eyes peep over the edge of the bed.

She stumbles to the door.

A deafening bang, blood trickles from her shoulder and stains her pajama top, she falls onto the kitchen floor.

ABIGAIL
(groans)
Daddy! Daddy! Daddy!

Leon Lourens looks down at her, bewildered sympathy. Van Jaarsveld charges in, hits Abigail with his rifle.

VAN JAARVELD
(shouts)
Shut the fuck up, commie bitch!

He points his gun at her head, figure tenses around the trigger.

END OF TEASER

ON SCREEN - PRETORIA, SOUTH AFRICA

TWENTY YEARS LATER 15 OCTOBER 2005

EXT. ABIGAIL'S OFFICE BUILDING - RECEPTION - DAY

Busy street noise, someone talks on a cell phone, a horn shrills, brakes squeal.

Seen through large plate glass doors ABIGAIL, 29, darts across the street, dodging cars and rummages through her bag.

She charges through the door, waving her access card at the security guard.

INT. ABIGAIL'S OFFICE BUILDING - CORRIDOR - DAY

Abigail dashes towards an open door where JOHANNA, 20, her excitable PA waits.

ABIGAIL
Johanna, am I late?

JOHANNA
Yes... No... not really. You look like you've been running?

ABIGAIL
My car broke down.

JOHANNA
The meeting hasn't started, Michael Bishop's not here yet.

ABIGAIL
I'll just wait here till it starts.

Johanna takes her arm and firmly drags her into the room.

JOHANNA
No-o-o, you can't. The minister's already asked for you.

ABIGAIL
What did you tell him?