

OF HIPPOCRATIC BLOOD

INSERT ON BLACK SCREEN:

"There is a drop of truth at the heart of every myth."

--Dr. Jacobus ben Eisik Duarte (1651 -)

CUT TO:

EXT. AFRICAN REFUGEE CAMP - DAY

MORTAR SHELLS WHINE through blue sky and EXPLODE amid SCREAMS in a tented camp. RAGGED, BAREFOOT PEOPLE flee in every direction.

Through the smoke, a wailing BABY BOY sits naked in the dirt, covered in dust, his cries lost in the chaos. He clings to a plastic bowl and the tattered dress of a lifeless form half buried in the dirt.

EXT. MOVING, OLD JEEP - DAY

A battered Jeep evacuating TWO PASSENGERS HONKS through the rutted camp. The driver, a LOCAL SOLDIER, YELLS IN PORTUGUESE as he dodges refugees.

Wedged between duffle bags in the open Jeep, DR. LAUREL CAPELLI scans the camp, wiping away tears on the sleeves of her *WORLD DOCTORS* T-shirt. Laurel is in her clock-ticking thirties, with a slender body unchanged by motherhood.

Her Husband, DR. PAXTON HILL, holds a *WORLD DOCTORS* med-kit on his lap in the Jeep. He is linebacker-sized, unshaven, with a tiny gold cross around his neck the only hint of his gentleness.

Laurel hears, then sees, the baby boy; she leans toward the driver.

LAUREL
(faint Texas accent)
Ernesto, stop!

She points to the baby.

LAUREL
Pax, a baby!

Ernesto ignores her and keeps driving; Laurel shakes his shoulder.

LAUREL
Stop, Ernesto!

Ernesto shoots her a frantic glance and slams on the brakes. The Jeep skids to a dusty halt.

Laurel climbs out and limps as fast as she can toward the baby. Paxton chases after her with the med-kit.

PROPELLERS ROAR LOW OVERHEAD. Ernesto shields his eyes as a DC-3 with wheels down lumbers toward a landing strip beyond the ridge. GRAY FLAK PEPPERS the sky.

Ernesto HONKS THE HORN.

ERNESTO
(Portuguese accent)
The plane will not wait for us!

Laurel gets down on her knees and wipes tears and dust from the gaunt face of the SCREAMING baby boy.

Paxton brushes loose dirt off the mother's lifeless body and checks her emaciated wrist for a pulse.

ERNESTO
The rebels will rape you to death, Dr.
Capelli!

Paxton looks at Laurel.

PAXTON
(New York City accent)
She's gone.

A shell SCREAMS toward them. Ernesto ducks; Laurel clutches the baby to her chest; Paxton huddles over her. The EXPLOSION throws dirt on them.

ERNESTO
It will take you three days to die!

Paxton brushes dirt off Laurel and the child.

PAXTON
Let's get him out of here.

He helps her up; they rush back to the Jeep with the baby.

ERNESTO
(into radio microphone)
Hold the plane; more doctors are coming!

PILOT (O.S.)
 (from radio)
 There are women and children on the
 runway; we are already full!

Paxton helps Laurel into the Jeep. She pushes aside an AK-47 as he hops in. Ernesto pops the clutch and the vehicle lurches forward.

ERNESTO
 We may have to drive all the way to
 Kinshala, Dr. Hill.

A shell SHRIEKS a trail of white smoke toward the airstrip over the ridge and explodes with greater force; an orange fireball mushrooms into a black cloud.

ERNESTO
 Dio! The airplane!

Laurel tightens her grip on the baby; Paxton crosses himself.

ERNESTO
 (into radio microphone)
 Come in! Come in!

No answer, only static, as the Jeep races past REFUGEES with looted hospital supplies on their heads.

ERNESTO
 Come in! Come in!

He CURSES IN PORTUGUESE.

GUNSHOTS FIRE in the distance.

ERNESTO
 The Children are coming; they will kill
 us all.

Laurel grasps Paxton's wrist.

A MORTAR SHELL EXPLODES in front of them, throwing bodies in their way. Ernesto swerves into the brush then guns the Jeep back on the dirt road.

Laurel grabs Ernesto's shoulder.

LAUREL
 We need to stop; those people are hurt!

ERNESTO
 You cannot save them!

LAUREL

Those people will die without us, Pax!

Paxton takes her hand.

PAXTON

Without us, Laurel, this *baby* will die.

Laurel cuddles the baby tighter and wipes her eyes.

ERNESTO

The plane!

EXT. AIRFIELD - DAY

Flaming rubble litters the dirt airstrip; charcoal clouds billow from a burning fuel tanks. Through the smoke, a Vietnam-era DC-3 with propellers whirring comes into view.

Desperate REFUGEES crowd the plane's fold-down stairs, some ransacking a pile of baggage. A SOLDIER in the doorway throws out a med-kit and YELLS IN PORTUGUESE at them.

The Jeep SKIDS to a halt behind the wing. Laurel slings her shoulder bag across her chest and Paxton helps her down.

Ernesto grabs his AK-47.

ERNESTO

Leave everything!

An ARMY OF CHILDREN FIRING GUNS crest a distant hill. Laurel and Paxton duck and run to the plane.

A bullet hits the Jeep. Ernesto fires back as Paxton wedges through the clamoring refugees.

The Soldier blocks the stairs, eyeing the baby.

SOLDIER

Doctors only; the plane is too heavy!

Paxton puts his arm around Laurel.

PAXTON

The baby is ours; we're adopting him.

Refugees surge forward.

REFUGEES

Take my child! Adopt my baby!

The soldier FIRES into the air and hurries Laurel and Paxton up the steps. Ernesto cocks his AK-47 at the refugees and follows the doctors up into the plane.

INT. AIRPLANE CABIN - DAY

The cabin is in CHAOS: PASSENGERS empty overhead bins and fire-brigade baggage down the aisle, as the soldier tosses it out the door.

In the last row, a pale, silver-haired man (DR. JACOB DUARTE) draws with pencil and pad in the shadows, his window shade closed. He has a hearing aid in the truncated stump of one ear and wears the wrap-around sunglasses of a cataract patient.

SOLDIER

Come on, peoples, everything!

Ernesto grabs a RED CROSS box from the bin above Duarte. The box is labeled: *HUMAN BLOOD-PERISHABLE*,.

DUARTE

(New York/Dutch accent)

Take your hands off that box, young man!

Pencil sketches fall to the floor as Duarte jumps from his seat and grapples with Ernesto for the box.

ERNESTO

There is plenty of blood in Kinshala!

Duarte grips him by the neck and puts a scalpel to his throat.

DUARTE

There is plenty of blood in your throat!

The other soldier cocks a gun to Duarte's head; he raises his hands.

SOLDIER

We have no room for organ traffickers!
You can get off the plane and keep your
damn box!

BULLETS TEAR THROUGH THE CABIN; PEOPLE SCREAM as the soldier takes one in the head and drops.

The ENGINE ROARS; the plane lurches forward with the stair door open; Laurel and Paxton tumble back against a cargo web.

Pencil sketches fly around the cabin as the plane PICKS UP SPEED. Paxton crawls to the open hatch, tries to crank up the door, but can't.

Ernesto drags the dead soldier to the doorway and throws him out. The body tumbles away. Then he helps Paxton with the crank: The ground races past as they struggle to raise the door and seal it closed, MUFFLING THE ROAR.

EXT. AIRPLANE - DAY

Riddled with bullet holes, the plane races down the rutted runway and rises into the air.

INT. AIRPLANE CABIN - DAY

Laurel crawls behind the cargo web with the baby and sits on the floor. Paxton joins her, CATCHING HIS BREATH. Ernesto sits in front of the web, rubbing his throat.

Laurel tries to take away the child's bowl, but his little fists won't let go. She takes a water bottle from her bag and feeds him sips. Then she unties her bandanna and washes his face. The boy finally drops his bowl and tugs at the *WORLD DOCTORS* logo on her chest. She and Paxton exchange a smile.

PAXTON

Any fever?

LAUREL

No, just dehydrated and malnourished; A week of Pedialyte and he should be fine.

Paxton plays with the boy's fingers.

LAUREL

Did you mean what you said out there?

She rocks the baby nervously on her lap.

PAXTON

About adopting this little guy?

Laurel nods. Paxton takes her hand.

PAXTON

Only if he's not HIV positive, Laurel, like we agreed.

She hugs the baby.

LAUREL

Even a child with a death sentence should
have parents who love him.

An ALARM STARTS BEEPING from the open cockpit; A MAN standing
in the aisle points out a window.

A MAN

The engine's been hit!

EXT. AIRPLANE WING - DAY

A black trail of oil spews from a bullet hole in the ROARING
engine. Then flames erupt from the cowling.

INT. AIRPLANE CABIN - DAY

PANIC in the cabin. Paxton puts his arm around Laurel and
pulls her close.

PAXTON

Don't worry, we can land with one engine.

EXT. AIRPLANE WING - DAY

The engine EXPLODES into pieces.

INT. AIRPLANE CABIN - DAY

The plane noses down; PASSENGERS CRY OUT IN TERROR and cover
their heads. A WOMAN SOBS. A MAN PRAYS ALOUD:

A MAN

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is
with thee...

PASSENGERS

...Blessed art thou among women...

The PRAYING CONTINUES...

Laurel reaches for Paxton's hand and finds his fist clenched
around his rosary. Their eyes meet.

PAXTON

I love you.

He presses his lips into hers with a last kiss.

The baby reaches up and touches Laurel's face.

EXT. MOVING, AIRPLANE - DAY

The landing gear shears off as the DC-3 hits the ground hard and fast.

INT. AIRPLANE CABIN - DAY

The plane rebounds up and down, tossing SCREAMING PASSENGERS into the air. Paxton and Laurel cling to the cargo web, and the plane settles into a SCREECHING SLIDE.

A WOMAN

We made it! We're down!

Passengers CRY OUT IN CHEERS AND RELIEF; Paxton crosses himself; Laurel kisses the baby.

EXT. MOVING, AIRPLANE - DAY

The plane skids toward an open ravine and sails over the edge.

INT. AIRPLANE CABIN - DAY

The SCREECHING and MOTION SUDDENLY STOP. People HUSH.

MAN LOOKING OUT THE WINDOW

We're flying again!

EXT. MOVING, AIRPLANE - DAY

Airborne for a moment, the plane dives into the ravine.

The fuselage EXPLODES ON IMPACT as the tail section breaks off and tumbles to a dusty halt.

DESOLATE WIND and FAINT CRACKLING FLAMES are the only sounds.

CUT TO:

I/E. AIRPLANE, TRUNCATED TAIL SECTION - DAY

POV looking out: A shred of camouflage clothing FLAPS IN THE WIND over Duarte's empty seat.

Beyond is nothing but blue sky and circling vultures. Laurel and Paxton lie tangled in the cargo web: alone, motionless and coated with dust.

Paxton COUGHS and struggles to raise his head.

PAXTON

Laurel?

He reaches out and nudges her shoulder. She MOANS.

PAXTON

(coughing)

Laurel, are you okay?

She struggles to sit up, spitting dry dirt from her mouth.

LAUREL

Pax, the baby!

She crawls under the web toward blue sky and climbs over the edge of the wreckage. Paxton follows, but pauses at the sight.

PAXTON

Oh, Jesus.

CRACKLING FLAMES consume the fuselage. The cockpit is disintegrated. Laurel hobbles off, frantically searching through debris.

A MAN CRIES OUT; Paxton looks and quickly climbs down.

Laurel searches under pieces of wreckage. She steps on something soft and recoils: it's Ernesto's severed arm, still gripping his AK-47.

In the background, Paxton kneels down beside Ernesto, who CRIES OUT, writhing with a severed elbow. Laurel picks up the rifle and pulls off his arm.

A VULTURE lands halfway between her and Paxton. It hops toward a small dusty body in the dirt. Laurel drops the arm. Another vulture lands. Then another.

She shoulders the rifle and runs toward the vultures. The scavengers totter backward, flapping four-foot wings.

She drops to her knees beside the child and searches for a pulse in his limp neck. His face is again covered in dust.

One vulture steps forward as if to share the carcass with her. It cocks its head, scanning Laurel with a twitching eye.

Laurel jumps to her feet and COCKS the rifle. The vulture hops in retreat with wings raised as if to surrender.

She FIRES: BULLETS SHATTER the bird in a frenzy of blood and feathers. The other vultures try to fly away. Laurel FIRES. None escape. Then she raises the gun at an empty sky and KEEPS SHOOTING at an unseen enemy.

LAUREL

(punctuating shouts with
gunfire)

Drought! Famine! Aids! That's not enough
death? You need to make war? You need to
kill everyone?

THE GUN CLICKS, its thirty rounds spent. Laurel flings the weapon as far as she can.

A FOOTSTEP startles her; she reels around; Paxton offers outstretched arms. She backs away, shaking her head, then turns and hobbles off into the tall grass.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CAMPSITE, SAVANNA - NIGHT

The tail wreckage looms over a CRACKLING CAMPFIRE. Laurel and Paxton sit in mangled airplane seats surrounded by tall grass. Ernesto shivers in sweat near the fire, his bloody stump bandaged with rags. At the edge of the firelight is a small mound marked with a cross of battered aluminum.

Paxton cuts up a food bar with a pocket knife and offers it to Laurel, breaking her trance. She shakes her head.

(O.S.) HYENAS YELP. Paxton looks around.

ERNESTO

(moaning)

Agua...agua.

Paxton pulls a penlight and water bottle from Laurel's bag and goes to him. He puts the half-empty bottle to Ernesto's lips and the soldier drinks greedily.

PAXTON

Just a sip, Ernesto. We have to make it
last.

He pulls away the bottle. Ernesto WHIMPERS DELIRIOUSLY IN PORTUGUESE. Paxton wipes the soldier's brow then returns to Laurel.

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For the complete script (for production or representation consideration only)
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