

Dan Rather Reports

Episode Number: 509

Episode Title: The Price of an Afghan Bride

Description: One of Afghanistan's few women scholars, a young writer and poet, is about to be unwillingly sold for marriage. Also, waiting for reinforcements in Kandahar.

AFGHAN WOMEN:

DAN RATHER (ON CAMERA)

GOOD EVENING FROM KABUL, AFGHANISTAN. TODAY, AFGHANISTAN IS A COUNTRY WITH AN ELECTED GOVERNMENT, AND BILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN AID EVERY YEAR. BUT FOR HALF THE COUNTRY'S POPULATION, LIFE AND DEATH STILL LOOK VERY MUCH THE SAME. I'M SPEAKING ABOUT AFGHAN WOMEN.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

I'VE BEEN TO AFGHANISTAN ELEVEN TIMES, BUT THE STORY OF LIFE FOR WOMEN HERE WOULD BE ALL BUT IMPOSSIBLE FOR ME TO REPORT. THE WORLD OF WOMEN IS LARGELY HIDDEN IN THIS MALE-DOMINATED SOCIETY. AND TONIGHT WE'LL TAKE YOU PLACES THAT CANNOT BE ACCESSED BY MEN; PRODUCER/REPORTER JENNY NORDBERG DOCUMENTED THIS STORY, WHICH LARGELY GOES UNTOLD.

DR. KAMILA, MAIDAN SHAR HOSPITAL, WARDAK PROVINCE, AFGHANISTAN
It's a girl. Yes, it's a girl.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

SHE'S ONLY A FEW HOURS OLD, AND SHE DOESN'T EVEN HAVE A NAME YET. BUT SHE'S BEEN GIVEN THE TRADITIONAL MARK OF BEAUTY ON HER FOREHEAD. SHE IS AN AFGHAN GIRL, AND SHE IS ONE OF FEW CHILDREN HERE TO BE BORN IN A HOSPITAL, WITH THE HELP OF A DOCTOR. AND, ACCORDING TO THE UNITED NATIONS, SHE'S JUST ARRIVED IN THE MOST DANGEROUS PLACE ON EARTH FOR CHILDREN TO BE BORN.

THAT'S BECAUSE A QUARTER OF ALL THE CHILDREN BORN HERE NEVER REACH THE AGE OF FIVE.

FOR THOSE WHO SURVIVE, LIFE SOON BECOMES MUCH DIFFERENT FOR BOYS AND GIRLS. ONLY ONE IN THREE CHILDREN WILL LEARN HOW TO READ AND WRITE, AND BOYS COME FIRST. 88 PERCENT OF WOMEN ARE ILLITERATE HERE, AND A TEENAGE GIRL IS MORE LIKELY TO BE A WIFE THAN A STUDENT. IN THIS VAST AND RUGGED COUNTRY, WHERE TRIBAL LAWS AND CUSTOMS RULE, A WOMAN'S LIFE WILL LAST ON AVERAGE 44 YEARS. MANY ARE NOMADS, AND THEY HAVE SURVIVED INVADERS AND OCCUPIERS THROUGH THE CENTURIES. IT'S A PLACE WHERE MEN RULE, AND WHERE LOYALTY IS

NOT WITH THE GOVERNMENT -- BUT WITH A TRIBE, WHOSE TRADITIONS HAVE STAYED THE SAME FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS.

BUT IN THE CITIES -- LIKE KABUL -- SOME THINGS HAVE CHANGED SINCE THE FALL OF THE TALIBAN. WOMEN ARE ABLE TO WALK THE STREETS WITHOUT COVERING THEIR FACES WITH BURKAS, AND GIRLS CAN GO TO SCHOOL AGAIN. BUT FEW WOMEN ARE ABLE TO MOVE ON TO HIGHER EDUCATION. THIS CITY OF THREE MILLION STILL HAS ONLY A FEW THOUSAND FEMALE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS. THEY ARE WOMEN WHO GO AGAINST OLD TRADITIONS, TRYING TO BEAT ALL THE ODDS -- MANY TIMES RISKING THEIR LIVES TO DO IT. MARIAM IS ONE OF THEM.

MARIAM

When I was a child I was dreaming that one day the people will call me a doctor or a professor or, for example, a teacher.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

MARIAM IS 23 YEARS OLD AND ABOUT TO GRADUATE FROM KABUL UNIVERSITY. BUT MARIAM IS NOT HER REAL NAME, AND SHE DOESN'T WANT US TO SHOW HER FACE. HER FAMILY CAN'T KNOW THAT SHE'S SPEAKING TO US. BUT SHE'S DECIDED TO TELL HER STORY. SHE'S NOT A TRADITIONAL AFGHAN WOMAN -- DUE TO HER UNUSUAL FATHER. UNLIKE MANY, HE ALWAYS WANTED MARIAM TO GO TO SCHOOL.

MARIAM

He was always calling me "my scholar daughter." I think that-- traditions lost its meaning for my father, and he knew everything and he saw the world, what's going on. And when I see some of my success in my life I think that that is all the result of my father. That he was encouraging me all the time.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

BUT AFTER HER FATHER DIED SEVERAL YEARS AGO HER TWO YOUNGER BROTHERS BECAME THE LEADERS OF THE FAMILY, AND THEY HAVE MUCH MORE TRADITIONAL IDEAS OF WHAT A WOMAN'S ROLE SHOULD BE.

MARIAM

My brother's are-- trying to be under the ceiling of -- traditions, like Taliban.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

THEY'VE ALLOWED MARIAM TO FINISH HER EDUCATION -- ON CONDITION THAT SHE WORKS PART-TIME, AS THEY'RE BOTH UNEMPLOYED. BUT THE BROTHERS TRY TO RESTRICT ALL HER MOVEMENTS, AND SHE'S NOT

ALLOWED TO SPEAK TO STRANGERS. OUR FIELD REPORTER MEETS WITH HER AT A TIME WHEN HER BROTHERS THINK SHE'S STILL AT WORK. SHE TELLS US THAT HER REAL PASSION IS WRITING. HER TEACHERS RECOGNIZED HER TALENT EARLY ON, AND SHE'S ALREADY PUBLISHED SOME OF HER POEMS AND SHORT STORIES -- ALL ANONYMOUSLY.

MARIAM

For a young girl at my age it is very difficult to tolerate all these things happening at home. I cannot convince my family that I am a writer – they will stop me. So, when I am writing I am not thinking about my family. When I am with my family, I lose my writings.

PRODUCER

So they don't even know that you write?

MARIAM

No, no never.

PRODUCER

What do they think you do?

MARIAM

Just a simple language teacher.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

SO SHE LEADS A DOUBLE LIFE. THROUGH HER WORK SHE ALSO FOUND A SECRET REFUGE WHERE SHE COMES TO WRITE. IT'S A SMALL SCHOOL CALLED SOLA, WHERE TALENTED AFGHAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ARE INVITED TO LEARN ENGLISH.

MARIAM

Hello.

TED ACHILLES

Hello Mariam. Welcome, welcome, welcome.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

IT'S RUN BY AMERICAN TED ACHILLES, WHO'S A FORMER STATE LEGISLATOR FROM OREGON.

ACHLLES

I flunked retirement. In 19 -- in 2000 -- 2001, I retired; got very uptight very very quickly, um and 9/11 happened, and within a very short time after that I found myself here.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

THE SCHOOL BECAME HIS OWN, PERSONAL PEACE MISSION.

ACHILLES

If it's anything that is going to change this country it is education, if it's anything that's going to change, it's a new leadership generation.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

THAT'S WHY "MR. TED," AS HE'S CALLED AROUND HERE, ALSO HELPS HIS STUDENTS TO APPLY FOR SCHOLARSHIPS ABROAD.

ACHILLES

One of our functions is to take exceptionally bright young women who have had a very good strong high school experience, and get them ready for the world's best colleges.

FEMALE VOICE

Oh.

ACHILLES

Surprise, surprise.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

ALL HIS STUDENTS HAVE PARENTS WHO SUPPORT THEIR EDUCATION, EXCEPT FOR ONE. MARIAM DOESN'T ATTEND CLASS HERE, BUT TED ACHILLES HAS COME TO BE HER MENTOR FOR WRITING.

PRODUCER

Mariam, for instance you've taken on although she's here in secret. . . .

ACHILLES

Yes, very much so. She basically is in need of a surrogate father and if I can be helpful to her in that regard by helping her continue her education, I'm most certainly going to do it.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

MARIAM'S GOT TALENT ENOUGH TO WIN A SCHOLARSHIP TO AN IVY LEAGUE SCHOOL IN THE UNITED STATES, HE SAYS. WITH THAT KIND OF EDUCATION,

SHE COULD BE ONE OF THOSE WHO COMES BACK TO HELP CHANGE AFGHANISTAN.

BUT RIGHT NOW, THAT IS HIGHLY UNLIKELY. AT 23, MARIAM IS WAY OVERDUE FOR LIFE'S MAIN EVENT HERE -- ONE ABOUT WHICH WOMEN MOSTLY HAVE NO SAY. SHE'S ABOUT TO BE SOLD FOR MARRIAGE. AN UNCLE HAS OFFERED 20,000 DOLLARS FOR MARIAM, SHE TELLS US. AND HER BROTHERS HAVE ACCEPTED. HER HUSBAND TO BE IS HER FIRST COUSIN; AN ILLITERATE FARMER WHO LIVES IN A TALIBAN-CONTROLLED AREA FAR FROM KABUL. THIS IS HOW THE MAJORITY OF AFGHAN MARRIAGES HAPPEN, AND FOR MARIAM, IT MEANS THAT HER WRITING CAREER IS OVER, EVEN BEFORE IT'S BEGUN.

PRODUCER

Do you think he could accept that you want to be a writer?

MARIAM

No, never, never, never, never. No. It's impossible for them.

PRODUCER

Why not?

MARIAM

You know, they are living in a traditional – with a traditional customs of Afghans and he's a typical Afghan man. He will never understand what writing means. Writing means for them that you are free, of doing anything that you can, and you're free, and you don't have a good behavior, you don't have a good mood, you don't have a good personality.

ACHILLES

Mariam has some difficult decisions to make. If she doesn't leave, she's going to find herself --mom at Logar province, on a farm, and her entire education, all of her dreams; all of her writing skills will have been lost.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

THE ENGAGEMENT IS SET TO TAKE PLACE AS SOON AS SHE GRADUATES. AND THAT'S ONLY A MONTH AWAY. FOR NOW, MARIAM'S DREAMS EXIST ONLY IN HER WRITING. LIKE IN THIS POEM, ABOUT THE AFGHAN MOTHER WHO FIGHTS FOR HER DAUGHTER'S EDUCATION.

MARIAM

"I'm satisfied with hunger; I eat only one time a day. I let poverty be my guest. I borrow clothes from the river. But my daughter, I have golden dreams for you, and my future. I let you; I let you go to school; no matter if you don't have shoes to wear."

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

HERE'S WHAT'S IN STORE FOR MARIAM. IT'S THE REALITY FOR MOST AFGHAN WOMEN. ON AVERAGE, WOMEN HERE HAVE SIX CHILDREN – MORE THAN IN MOST OTHER COUNTRIES. BUT MOST OF DR. FETRAT'S PATIENTS HAVE MANY MORE THAN THAT.

DR. FETRAT

They bring seventeen baby, eleven baby, ten baby, nine baby...

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

DR. FETRAT IS AN OB-GYN WHO HAS FOUR CHILDREN OF HER OWN SO FAR. SHE SEES ALMOST A HUNDRED WOMEN A DAY AT THIS FREE MATERNITY CLINIC, ABOUT 20 MILES OUTSIDE OF KABUL. IT'S FUNDED BY THE SWEDISH COMMITTEE FOR AFGHANISTAN, A NONPROFIT GROUP. THESE PATIENTS COME FROM POOR, CONSERVATIVE, RURAL AREAS; SOME ARE THE WIVES OF TALIBAN, AND THEY NEVER UNVEIL IN PUBLIC.

THE HOSPITAL STAFF ASKED US NOT TO FILM THE HUSBANDS WAITING OUTSIDE -- THEY WARNED IT MAY BE DANGEROUS BOTH TO US AND TO THE PATIENTS. WHEN WE EXPLAINED WHAT WE WERE DOING THROUGH A TRANSLATOR, SOME OF THEM DECIDED TO UNVEIL IN FRONT OF OUR CAMERA, INSIDE THE EXAMINATION ROOM. THESE ARE WOMEN WHOSE VOICES ARE RARELY HEARD; WHO DON'T WORK OUTSIDE THE HOME AND WHO DON'T NORMALLY SPEAK TO STRANGERS.

THEY ARE ALSO PART OF THE WORLD'S DEADLIEST STATISTICS WHEN IT COMES TO CHILDBIRTH. IN THIS COUNTRY, *A WOMAN DIES EVERY 27 MINUTES* FROM PREGNANCY COMPLICATIONS. THE REASONS MAY SURPRISE YOU. THIS WOMAN IS 26 YEARS OLD AND SEVEN MONTHS PREGNANT. SHE HAS TWO CHILDREN AND SHE'S ALSO LOST TWO. SHE'S NERVOUS -- SHE DOESN'T KNOW IF SHE'LL MAKE IT BACK TO THE HOSPITAL WHEN IT'S TIME TO GIVE BIRTH. HUSBAND MAY NOT BE ABLE TO BORROW A CAR, OR FIND ANY GAS FOR THE CAR.

BUT AN EVEN MORE COMMON CAUSE OF DEATH IS THAT HUSBANDS SIMPLY WON'T ALLOW THEIR WIVES TO LEAVE THE HOUSE TO GIVE BIRTH.

DR. KAMILA

When their wives go out from the home and go to the hospital it is shame for the men.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

DR. KAMILA IS OF THE PASHTUN TRIBE, AND SHE'S IN CHARGE HERE. SHE HAS WORKED AS A SURGEON FOR THREE DECADES, UNDER BOTH MUJAHIDEEN AND TALIBAN RULE – SHE'S DELIVERED THOUSANDS OF BABIES.

DR. KAMILA

This facility is for -- for delivery, and also some -- these things are for infection prevention...

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

THE DELIVERY ROOM HERE IS BASIC, BUT IT'S MUCH MORE THAN WHAT A WOMAN HAS WHEN SHE'S ON HER OWN. EVERY MONTH, 150 NEW AFGHANS ARE BORN HERE. BUT FOR WOMEN WHO FEAR THEY WON'T MAKE IT TO THE HOSPITAL FOR DELIVERY, DOCTORS ARE ALSO ABLE TO PROVIDE A SMALL PACKAGE THAT CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE.

DR. KAMILA

This is for clamping the cord and also it is for cutting the cord. And this soap for washing their -- their hands and also after that for washing the baby.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

ONE OF DR. KAMILA'S PATIENTS HAS JUST LOST A BABY. SHE'S FORTY YEARS OLD, AND SHE'S RECOVERING FOR A FEW HOURS BEFORE RETURNING HOME. BUT DR. KAMILA CAN STILL MAKE HER LAUGH, WHEN SHE REMINDS HER THAT SHE'S GOT TEN CHILDREN ALREADY. AND THAT MAY BE ENOUGH FOR NOW, SAYS DR. KAMILA. IT'S ANOTHER REASON WHY MISCARRIAGES AND STILLBIRTHS ARE VERY COMMON HERE, DOCTORS SAY. WOMEN GET PREGNANT TOO MANY TIMES, AND TOO QUICKLY AFTER GIVING BIRTH.

DR. FETRAT

She is 25 years old. She doesn't have any alive children...

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

SHE'S GIVEN BIRTH THREE TIMES, BUT ALL THREE CHILDREN DIED. THAT'S WHY HER HUSBAND LEFT HER. HER FAMILY ARRANGED FOR A NEW MARRIAGE; THIS TIME TO HER OWN NEPHEW, AS HIS SECOND WIFE. NOW SHE'S PREGNANT AGAIN. IT'S A WOMAN'S RESPONSIBILITY TO HAVE HEALTHY BABIES, AND SHE'S LEFT WITH THE BLAME IF THEY DIE.

CAROL LE DUC

A reproductive role is-- the expectation of Afghan society for both men and women. It's the same for men as well. But men have more freedoms.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

CAROL LE DUC IS AN ANTHROPOLOGIST FROM OXFORD UNIVERSITY, WHO'S DEDICATED HER LIFE TO AFGHANISTAN. SHE LIVES IN A TWO-STORY HOUSE IN CENTRAL KABUL AND WORKS AS A CONSULTANT ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS TO

THE KARZAI GOVERNMENT. SHE FIRST ARRIVED HERE MORE THAN TWENTY YEARS AGO, AND SINCE THEN, SHE'S TRAVELED ALL OVER THE COUNTRY, AND MET THOUSANDS OF WOMEN. SHE'S SEEN FIRSTHAND HOW THEY LIVE.

LE DUC

For a woman the choice of her husband may not be her own. Marriage may come far too soon. Sometimes far too soon. It could be as young as nine. Occasionally even seven. But certainly 15, 16.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

THE PURPOSE OF MARRIAGE IS MANY TIMES TO KEEP LAND, OR MONEY, WITHIN THE FAMILY. THAT'S WHY IT'S BOTH LEGAL AND COMMON FOR FIRST COUSINS TO MARRY EACH OTHER HERE. AFTER THE WEDDING, THE BRIDE IS EXPECTED TO GET PREGNANT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE -- AND THAT'S WHEN SHE FACES THE FIRST GREAT RISK TO HER LIFE. CHILDBIRTH IS WITHOUT A DOUBT THE SINGLE BIGGEST KILLER OF WOMEN IN AFGHANISTAN, SAYS CAROL LE DUC. BUT BEING A WOMAN CAN BE VERY DANGEROUS IN OTHER WAYS TOO.

LE DUC

I think the other big risk to women in Afghan society is their social reputation, and that can be a very simple problem of woman in the public area, particularly working women, who has a discussion with a man, which can be misconstrued. Which will, maybe, deliberately be misconstrued by some observer to her family, to discredit her for whatever reason. Prejudice- - revenge, whatever else.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

IN AFGHANISTAN, WOMEN ARE NOT EVEN SUPPOSED TO LOOK MEN IN THE EYES. IT CAN BE VERY DANGEROUS TO ATTRACT ATTENTION FOR A WOMAN. ANY KIND OF ATTENTION.

LE DUC

When a woman who attracts improper attention to herself, is inevitably a whore. And no man in this country wants to be associated with a whore. And if that person is in his own family, that-- soil of the family honor probably has to be purged. And that moves us right into violence against women in traditions where we hear of women-- honor killings of women. Women who are believed to have sullied family honor. So the punishments can be extreme.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

JUST THE SUSPICION THAT AN AFGHAN WOMAN IS SPEAKING TO A STRANGE MAN COULD DAMAGE HER FAMILY'S HONOR. MARIAM JUST WROTE A SHORT STORY ABOUT WHAT'S KNOWN HERE AS AN HONOR KILLING. IT HAPPENED TO A FRIEND OF HERS, NAMED ZETHARA. MARIAM ONLY BEGAN TO FIND OUT WHEN HER FRIEND DIDN'T SHOW UP FOR CLASS ONE DAY.

MARIAM

Zethara was the most intelligent girl in the school. The most top girl. The father was always always angry; why is Zethara going to school? And they were always fighting she might not go to school. The father was thinking that if Zethara is going to school she will make relations with boys and the mother was telling that if you think like this then I will be the guard for her.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

ZETHARA'S MOTHER KEPT BRINGING HER DAUGHTER TO CLASSES AGAINST HER HUSBANDS WILL. FINALLY, THE FATHER SET BOTH HIS WIFE AND HIS DAUGHTER ON FIRE. WHEN MARIAM HEARD ABOUT IT, SHE SECRETLY WENT TO THE HOSPITAL TO VISIT.

MARIAM

One woman was just -- her eyes were also burned, but all the face and all the body all over were, with bandage, with white bandage, and she was just like this. And like this. I—I—I didn't dare to look at the other patients. I am sure they all had the same problem with family violence.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

THE MOTHER SURVIVED, BUT NOT MARIAM'S FRIEND. SHE DIED, IN PURSUIT OF AN EDUCATION. FOR MARIAM, EVERY DAY IS A GAMBLE TOO, AND THERE'S A LOT HER BROTHERS DON'T KNOW ABOUT. THE FACT THAT SHE HAS A CELL PHONE, FOR INSTANCE. SHE TURNS IT OFF AND HIDES IT WHENEVER SHE GETS HOME. SHE KNOWS IT WOULD MAKE THEM ANGRY. THEY WOULD SUSPECT THAT SHE'S TALKING TO STRANGERS -- OR IN PARTICULAR -- BOYS. THEN SHE WOULDN'T BE ALLOWED OUT AT ALL.

MARIAM

Always. I always live with fear.

PRODUCER

For instance, what can happen?

MARIAM

For example today if I will be late that will be a disaster, if -- if I do anything wrong. If--if for example if I lose my job, or if I can't work, or what will happen next in my life for example. If I marry someone, or if I marry my cousin; what will happen?

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

IT WAS BROAD DAYLIGHT WHEN THE MEN BROKE INTO THEIR HOUSE. IT HAPPENED SO QUICKLY; SHE WASN'T EVEN SURE HOW MANY THEY WERE, BUT THEY SAID THEY HAD COME TO SEEK REVENGE IN A CONFLICT ABOUT MONEY WITH HER HUSBAND. THEY LOCKED HER IN THE BATHROOM. THEN THEY RAPED HER DAUGHTER.

TODAY, THIS DESPERATE FAMILY HAS COME TO SEE MALALAI JOYA, A CONTROVERSIAL AFGHAN WOMEN'S ACTIVIST. SHE MEETS WITH THE FAMILY AT AN EMPTY HOUSE ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF KABUL, WHERE ARMED GUARDS WATCH THE ENTRANCE. THE FAMILY HAS COME TO ASK FOR HELP -- THEY SAY THEY HAVE NOWHERE ELSE TO TURN. MORE THAN ANYTHING, THEY WANT THEIR DAUGHTER'S STORY TO BE HEARD. AND ONE OF THE FEW PEOPLE LISTENING IN AFGHANISTAN IS MALALAI JOYA.

MALALAI JOYA

In front of them not good to cry. I'm trying to give them courage, but she had been brutally raped by a group of men. They kidnap her and now after she became released, her father--they put her father in the jail, because her father made a case to defense her.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

THE GIRL'S FATHER DID AN UNUSUAL THING -- HE REPORTED THE RAPE TO THE POLICE, HER BROTHERS SAY. BUT THE RAPISTS, WHO THE FAMILY SAYS HAVE POWER AND CONNECTIONS, RESPONDED BY ACCUSING THE FATHER OF STEALING. SO NOW HE'S IN JAIL, WHILE THE RAPISTS WALK FREE. THE DAUGHTER FEELS GUILTY AND ASHAMED -- SHE IS NO LONGER A VIRGIN, AND THAT MEANS NO MAN WILL WANT TO MARRY HER, SHE SAYS. THE RAPE HAS BROUGHT DISHONOR TO HER FAMILY, AND SHE TELLS MALALAI THAT SHE WANTS TO END HER LIFE.

JOYA

Her brother said that, she's shamed from the rest of the family, because now everybody knows that she has been raped, because we made case -- that's why she wants to kill herself. Then I said no, those who raped you they must be shamed -- not you.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

ACCORDING TO THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSIONER, RAPE IS WIDE-SPREAD ALL ACROSS AFGHAN SOCIETY, AND IMPUNITY RULES. RAPE IS NOT ONLY ABOUT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN HERE. IT'S COMMONLY USED FOR REVENGE, OR IN DISPUTES, TO DESTROY THE HONOR OF AN ENTIRE FAMILY. MALALAI JOYA CANNOT OFFER JUSTICE, BUT SHE TRIES TO TALK THE GIRL OUT OF SUICIDE.

JOYA

Then I tried to give her hope and I said examples of the women around the world, I said that in other countries, those women, girls who get raped, they do not kill themselves. They stand

up to resistance. Raise their voice. And I said you did good job. Be courage. Be strong. I'm with you. You are not alone.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

WORDS LIKE THOSE ARE RARELY SAID OUT LOUD HERE, AND ESPECIALLY NOT BY WOMEN. MALALAI JOYA GREW UP UNDER THE SOVIET OCCUPATION AND HER FATHER FOUGHT WITH THE MUJAHIDEEN. SHE SPENT MUCH OF HER CHILDHOOD AS A REFUGEE IN PAKISTAN, WHERE SHE GOT HER EDUCATION. SHE'S BECOME FAMOUS FOR SPEAKING HER MIND -- ESPECIALLY ABOUT THE POWERFUL MEN WHO RUN AFGHANISTAN. THAT'S WHAT SHE DID AT THE AFGHAN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY IN 2003.

CHAIRMAN (TRANSLATED FROM DARI)

One sister says she has travelled far. She says we haven't given enough the young members enough speaking time. You have three minutes. Please.

JOYA (TRANSLATED FROM DARI)

My name is Malalai Joya from the Farah Province. With the permission of those present, in the name of God and the martyrs, I would like to speak. I am critical of my compatriots -- why are you allowing criminals to be present at this Loya Jirga? They are responsible of making our country a center of national and international war. They were the most anti-women people in our society. They are responsible for the actual situation in our country.

CHAIRMAN (TRANSLATED FROM DARI)

This sister has crossed the line. She is banished and cannot return.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

MALALAI JOYA WAS THROWN OUT FROM THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, WHERE TRIBAL LEADERS HAD GATHERED TO ADOPT AFGHANISTAN'S NEW CONSTITUTION. BUT SHE DIDN'T CHANGE HER STYLE -- AND SHE WAS ELECTED TO PARLIAMENT IN 2005. IT TOOK ONLY A FEW MONTHS BEFORE HER FELLOW POLITICIANS HAD HAD ENOUGH. THEY TOOK A VOTE TO SUSPEND HER, AND BY 2007, SHE WAS NO LONGER ALLOWED INTO THE PARLIAMENT. TODAY, SHE'S TRYING TO BUILD A RADICAL MOVEMENT OF HER OWN, OUTSIDE THE SYSTEM, WITH NO SUPPORT FROM EITHER HER OWN GOVERNMENT OR THE ESTABLISHMENT. SHE CONSTANTLY RECEIVES THREATS, AND NEVER STAYS IN THE SAME PLACE FOR MORE THAN A FEW HOURS. SHE BRINGS HER GUARDS WHEREVER SHE GOES, AND THEY SEARCH ANYONE WHO WANTS TO GET CLOSE TO HER. SHE MEETS WITH STUDENTS, WHO HAVE LOST FAITH IN THE COUNTRY'S POLITICAL SYSTEM. AND WITH POLITICIANS, WHO WANT HER TO FORM A NEW PARTY. AND WITH WOMEN, WHO CHEER HER.

JOYA

Let me start my speech about the catastrophic situation of the women in my country.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

SHE ALSO SPEAKS A LANGUAGE WESTERN WOMEN CAN UNDERSTAND, LIKE WHEN SHE TOURED THE UNITED STATES LAST YEAR TO PROMOTE A BOOK ABOUT HER LIFE. HER ACTIVITIES ARE FUNDED BY PRIVATE DONATIONS FROM AROUND THE WORLD AND HER BOOK SALES. WE ASKED WHAT SHE CAN DO FOR AFGHAN WOMEN NOW, THAT SHE NO LONGER HAS ANY FORMAL POWER.

JOYA

When I was in the parliament I didn't have any power, because majority of these seats belongs to these warlords, drug lords, these misogynist people. Even one member of parliament is talib. So many insulted me, even inside of parliament they threatened me to rape. How about the parliament? That should be an example.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

HER TASK IS TO KEEP SPEAKING OUT, SHE SAYS. RAPE IS SELDOM PROSECUTED OR PUNISHED IN AFGHANISTAN. ESPECIALLY NOT IN RURAL PROVINCES. MANY DON'T EVEN CONSIDER IT A CRIME. BUT WOMEN WHO COME TO SEE HER BRING THEIR STORIES EVERY DAY.

JOYA

This woman tells me, Malalai. I'll take you to so many houses where their little girls, their young girls has been raped. But nobody listen to their voice. They kill themselves and tolerate this tortured life.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

HER MESSAGE IS SIMPLE BUT RADICAL: ALL FOREIGN TROOPS SHOULD LEAVE AFGHANISTAN IMMEDIATELY, SINCE THEIR MAIN OBJECTIVE, ACCORDING TO MALALAI, IS TO HOLD AFGHAN'S CURRENT GOVERNMENT IN PLACE. THE FOREIGN TROOPS HAVEN'T DONE MUCH FOR AFGHANISTAN ANYWAY, SHE SAYS. OR FOR WOMEN.

JOYA

Let my people to ask them, what is your achievements in Afghanistan? Day by day rape cases, acid attacks, domestic violence's, killing of woman increasing rapidly. All of this is happening under the name of democracy. Is this democracy?

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

AT THE END OF A LONG DAY OF SEEING THOSE WHO SEEK HER HELP AND MEETING WITH SUPPORTERS, SHE COVERS UP TO MOVE ON. SHE HAS SURVIVED FIVE ASSASSINATION ATTEMPTS SO FAR, AND SHE NEVER SHOWS

HER FACE IN PUBLIC IN AFGHANISTAN. MALALAI JOYA MAY BE ONE OF THE FEW WOMEN WHO HAS A VOICE HERE. BUT SHE'S PAYING A HIGH PRICE.

JOYA

And now to another supporter house to stay at night there, because this house has been exposed. Half of a day I was here and now not good to be in this house.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

SHE NEVER SLEEPS IN THE SAME HOUSE FOR MORE THAN ONE NIGHT, AND SHE'S HAD TO CHOOSE A LIFE WITHOUT A FAMILY.

JOYA

I try my best to be alive, that they do not kill me because you know, I am young and I have energy and I now I become a small hope, my voice become a small hope for these voiceless people.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

SINCE 2002, THE UNITED STATES, THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE UNITED NATIONS HAVE SPENT AT LEAST 1.6 BILLION DOLLARS, SPECIFICALLY DIRECTED AT EMPOWERING WOMEN IN AFGHANISTAN. AND MALALAI JOYA MAY BE A SIGN OF SOME SMALL PROGRESS, SAYS CAROL LE DUC.

LE DUC

I think what we have achieved-- post 2001 is a living women's movement. As well as we've got women in parliament, but we have got women activists. We have got women fighting for their rights through a wide spectrum of opinions. It will take decades. It took decades in the western world.

And women haven't got all of their rights and freedoms anywhere in Europe yet. It will take them a long time. But the important thing is that they've started. And they started questioning, "Who are we and what is it we want? Who do we represent? How can we get it?" This is a good beginning.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

BUT NOT EVERY WOMAN CAN CARRY BOTH A BURKA AND A BULLHORN. THE REAL HEROINES IN AFGHANISTAN ARE NOT THE ONES WITH THE LOUDEST VOICES, SAYS CAROL LE DUC. IT'S THE WOMEN WHO STRUGGLE EVERY DAY, TO SURVIVE. THEY ARE THE MAJORITY OF AFGHAN WOMEN, AND DESPITE ALL THE MONEY AND AMBITIONS FROM THE OUTSIDE WORLD, THEIR CIRCUMSTANCES REMAIN VERY MUCH THE SAME.

LE DUC

I don't think they've changed at all over the last 20 years for the average Afghan woman. I think they can look forward to a life of extreme hardship. They can look forward to-- and they probably do look forward many of them to a marriage. They will have aspirations that it will be to someone that they like. The majority of them probably if in their more saner moments will recognize it will not be their decision.

And they will then go on to motherhood whether they want to or not. And they will enter the reproductive cycle for which they have been groomed for from birth. And they will do their best to fulfill that reproductive role.

MARIAM

"My heart beats for someone, someone who is always one step away. My heart beats for someone, coming straight to me. I'm waiting, always waiting."

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

EVEN THOUGH HER LIFE IS ABOUT TO CHANGE VERY SOON, MARIAM IS STILL A DREAMER, WRITING ABOUT THE MOST FORBIDDEN THING OF ALL: LOVE. BEING IN LOVE IS EXACTLY THE TYPE OF CRIME A WRITER COULD BE SUSPECTED OF – ONE THAT COULD DISQUALIFY HER FROM MARRIAGE AND BRING DISHONOR TO HER FAMILY. IF HER BROTHERS KNEW SHE EVEN THOUGHT ABOUT A MAN, SHE SAYS, THEY COULD BRAND HER AS A PROSTITUTE.

PRODUCER

Why would they think it's bad for a woman to be a writer?

MARIAM

Well all the people thinks like this. A young lady who's writing a poem or something, a novel, or anything, by any reason, she might be in love with someone, and might be broken in love.

PRODUCER

And what does that mean, if someone was in love?

MARIAM

So that's a big fault and this is not the right of a woman to be in love. And I am sorry that I-- the love cause me to write always.

PRODUCER

Have you been in love?

MARIAM

Yeah.

PRODUCER

With a boy?

MARIAM

Yes.

PRODUCER

What happened?

MARIAM

But it was very long ago when I was an adult. It's a saddest story to have and I am not going to tell you. (Laughs)

PRODUCER

Have you written about this?

MARIAM

No, I will try to write about it.

PRODUCER

Do you hope to be in love again?

MARIAM

No, no no.

PRODUCER

Why not?

MARIAM

Because I was broken, for the first time. First love.

PRODUCER

So you're, you're done with love?

MARIAM

Yes, but still I think that it is love that I'm writing and I'm living. Without that I cannot live.

PRODUCER

Because you know the feeling?

MARIAM

Yeah, I know the feeling, yeah. I think that no one could be a writer or a poet without the feelings of love.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

FOR NOW, LOVE IS THE LEAST OF HER CONCERNS. SHE SEES NO WAY OUT OTHER THAN TO GO ALONG WITH THE MARRIAGE. RUNNING AWAY IS NOT AN OPTION, SHE SAYS -- KABUL IS NOT A PLACE WHERE A YOUNG WOMAN CAN LIVE BY HERSELF. BESIDES, SHE CAN'T LEAVE HER MOTHER BEHIND. BUT SOMETIMES, SHE SAYS, DARK THOUGHTS OVERCOME HER.

MARIAM

The only reason that I am suffering everything is I -- I -- I didn't decide to -- to --to run away or escape. If I could do that it would be easy for me, but -- but it is also not possible because where should I go? And with whom should I live? If I go through with this marriage, I don't think that I could continue. Sometime they will come and there won't be a sign of mine or I might kill myself. This is the only way that I think.

CHARLIE COMPANY:

RATHER (ON CAMERA)

WELCOME BACK TO NEW YORK. AND NOW, THE WAR IN AFGHANISTAN. AMERICAN COMMANDERS ARE NOW FOCUSING ON WHERE THEY BELIEVE THE MOST DIFFICULT FIGHT IN THE COUNTRY WILL COME. AND THAT'S KANDAHAR. IT'S THE HOME OF THE TALIBAN AND KEY TO THE COUNTRY'S SOUTH. THERE CAN BE NO VICTORY IN AFGHANISTAN UNTIL AND UNLESS KANDAHAR CAN BE WRESTED FROM THE INSURGENCY, PLANS ARE UNDERWAY TO LAUNCH A MAJOR OFFENSIVE ON THE CITY THAT'S SURE TO EXACT A HIGH PRICE.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

BUT BEFORE NATO FORCES CAN SECURE THE CITY, THEY MUST CLEAR THE ENEMY FROM HUNDREDS OF SQUARE MILES OF FARM FIELDS AND DUSTY VILLAGES SURROUNDING IT. THIS WAS ONCE A PROSPEROUS FARMING REGION. NOT ANYMORE. THE MUD VILLAGES ARE CRUMBLING. THE PEASANT FARMERS AND THEIR FAMILIES FLEEING. THEY'RE NOWHERE TO BE

SEEN BUT EVERYONE KNOWS THE TALIBAN RULES HERE.

THE PENTAGON WANTS TO CHANGE THAT. SOON THOUSANDS OF U.S. TROOPS FROM PRESIDENT OBAMA'S AFGHAN SURGE WILL JOIN OTHER FORCES MASSING IN THE REGION. A MAJOR CONFRONTATION IS LOOMING. THE U.S. IS MAKING NO SECRET OF ITS GROWING PRESENCE.

THE TROOPS YOU ARE ABOUT TO MEET TONIGHT ARE TASKED WITH HOLDING THE LINE UNTIL REINFORCEMENTS ARRIVE. OUR PRODUCER/REPORTER LUCIAN READ SPENT TWO WEEKS WITH THE UNIT DOCUMENTING THE DIFFICULTIES FACING THESE G-I'S.

SOLDIER

Hey get your other team over here with 'em now. Go! Go!

SOLDIER

Watch it! Take your 203 down to that other side.

CAPTAIN DUKE REIM/COMMANDER CHARLIE COMPANY 1ST BATTALION, 12TH INFANTRY

Hey, we can see the RPG trail over here and then we got guys popping their heads up over here. They came -- they were, like, just a little bit to the north of where we were at...

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

CAPTAIN DUKE REIM IS COMMANDER OF CHARLIE COMPANY 1ST BATTALION 12TH INFANTRY REGIMENT - OUT OF FT. CARSON, COLORADO.

REIM (IN THE FIELD)

We took another sporadic fire and they're watching our exfil.

REIM

The way Kandahar goes is the way the country goes. It's-- it's always been that since the early days of fighting.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

CAPTAIN REIM AND HIS COMPANY ARRIVED LAST MAY AND THEY KNEW IT WOULD BE A TOUGH FIGHT AGAINST AN ENTRENCHED ENEMY WITH MUCH LOCAL SUPPORT. IF THERE IS A FRONT LINE IN AFGHANISTAN... THIS IS IT.

SOLDIER

So that dude with a weapon just hopped a wall and nothin' was fuckin' done.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

DESPITE MONTHS OF PATROLS, FIGHTING MORE OFTEN THAN NOT - THE MEN OF CHARLIE COMPANY KNOW THAT THEIR EFFORTS ALONE WON'T BE ENOUGH.

SOLDIER

Go! Move!!

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

AFGHAN FIGHTERS IN KANDAHAR HAVE A LONG HISTORY OF REPELLING FOREIGN FORCES. THE CANADIANS WHO ARRIVED HERE IN 2006 WERE NEVER ABLE TO CONSOLIDATE CONTROL OF THE AREA.

SGT RYAN BENDA

No way! No way!

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

BEFORE THE CANADIANS, AN ENTIRE SOVIET ARMY WAS FOUGHT TO A DRAW BY THE MUJAHIDEEN, SOME OF WHOM ARE NOW IN THE TALIBAN.

REIM

With this being you know-- quote unquote the birthplace of the Taliban, where you know-- Mullah Omar started, it's a very daunting task. The Russians used to call this place the heart of darkness, the green hell. The-- the grape fields offer them great cover and concealment. It's harder for us to move. They have the tactical advantage when it comes to, you know, the terrain. They know it so much better. It is a daunting task, but it's also something that-- that we wanted. This is where the war on terrorism started, was in Afghanistan.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

AND THIS IS A PART OF AFGHANISTAN THAT THERE IS NO QUESTION THE TALIBAN STILL CONTROLS... MORE THAN EIGHT YEARS AFTER THE WAR BEGAN.

WAGNON

Hey, give me a hand. Search the shit out of this fucker.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

ANYONE AROUND HERE TODAY IS SUSPICIOUS.

LT. NATHAN WAGNON

We're not gonna hurt you unless you're doing something bad. Are you guys doing anything bad? So the Taliban never come into their village

INTERPRETER

No.

LT. NATHAN WAGNON

Yeah. He's lyin. Tell him -- tell him -- tell him he lives -- you live in that village and you've never seen any Taliban. We don't live in that village and we've seen Taliban. OK. Tell him he needs to stand with these guys. We need to put him into our security system.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

LT. NATHAN WAGNON ARRIVED HERE LAST FALL - REPLACING AN OFFICER WOUNDED IN AN IED STRIKE.

WAGNON

When we finally got to Kandahar, I mean, literally, like the first thing I thought when I stepped off the plane was, "It smells like crap here." (LAUGHS) 'Cause I think, like, the op-- in Kandahar, there's like an open-- open sewage system. And then it's just dusty everywhere, you know. I mean, like right now, kind of in the rainy season, it sprinkle rains every once in a while, but when the sun is out, you know, it's like moon dust. You, like, step in it. And it just, like, comes up in your face and you breathe it in. It's nasty.

LT MARK MORRISON (TALKING TO LOCALS)

If I can find them I can kill them...I can get rid of them. We're very, very good at that. What I need your help in is finding them...

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

UNLIKE THEIR COMRADES, ELSEWHERE IN AFGHANISTAN, THE MEN OF CHARLIE COMPANY MAKE FEW FRIENDS.

MORRISON (TALKING TO LOCALS)

I understand that you're scared, what I'm saying is that if the bad guys come, tell them that we made you talk to us that we pulled you into the compound and you told them nothing...

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

LIEUTENANT MARK MORRISON THINKS MOST OF THE PEOPLE THEY MEET ARE EITHER TALIBAN, SYMPATHETIC TO THE TALIBAN OR SCARED TO DEATH, CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE.

MORRISON (TALKING TO LOCALS)

Right now, I'm sure all of us look the same to each other. All of my soldiers in uniform - don't they look the same? Just like all of you with the beards, everybody looks the same to me but you know each other. But I know that this is Jun and this is Olds. I know them. So if I can tell you who doesn't belong in my platoon, you need to tell me who doesn't belong with you.

MORRISON

It's hard to beat the fear that they instill in them with kindness. Because I might come into village, drop off some food for them. And the next day, the Taliban comes in and kills them for accepting the food from us. So, they-- which--which are they gonna gravitate more towards? Accepting the food or keeping themselves and their-- their family alive?

REIM

It's gonna take -- it's gonna take trust. It's trust and confidence. It's not hearts and minds. I don't think we'll ever win their hearts and minds. But I think that we can win their trust and confidence. I think that's how -- it's gonna take time, it's a slow process, but it's well worth it.

WAGNON

Is he cold right now?

INTERPRETER

No.

WAGNON

Why is he shaking? He's shaking like you're nervous. You're shaking like you're nervous.

INTERPRETER

No.

WAGNON

He's scared of me? There's no reas- tell him there's no reason to be scared if he's not bad.

WAGNON

I mean to them, obviously, we're just – we're just foreigners. I mean granted like -- if somebody rolled up to my house with a bunch of guns and they were from a different country, I'd be scared too but that's part of the trust thing. Like being familiar enough to 'em where they don't freak out if we come in their house. If they see a tangible difference that we're makin', I think they'll cooperate a lot more. The difficulty is to even get to the point where you can start to make a tangible difference. You've gotta -- that's a process in itself. So, I think a lot of 'em don't even like -- a lot of them don't even -- can't even conceive of -- a different, better life. You know? So, they just don't know it.

WAGNON

Tell him that we're coming into his area to help provide security for his village. And we're documenting the locals that live here.

REIM

You know, I talk to a lot of locals, and all they wanna do is farm their lands and-- and live till they die, is what one-- one man told me. They have no desire for some of the things that we're trying to offer 'em. And I think that's what we need to look at, is what our expectational goals are coming out of this. I mean, I don't think it's gonna be a Seven-Eleven on every street corner. And-- and I don't even know if it's gonna be democracy. I think-- what we do offer these people is the chance to-- to live a peaceful life.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

BUT OFFERING THE LOCALS A MORE PEACEFUL LIFE IS VERY CHALLENGING WHEN THE MAJORITY OF THE POPULATION IN THIS AREA HAS FLED.

REIM

It is hard to focus on the population when there's not much there. You know, it's really-- it's really sad to see, you know, the Taliban use the-- the little bit of locals that I do have and-- and manipulate them, and-- and-- and put fear into 'em. And we watch kids climb up on the roof with cell phones reporting our troop formations and-- and calling back to-- to-- Taliban-- you know. Just because there are so few in our area -- the precious few-- we try and-- and bolster that relationship we do have with them, and at the same time still fight the Taliban. It-- it's a-- it's a tough middle ground to find.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

ANOTHER TOUGH PROBLEM -- KEEPING ALL OF THE ABANDONED COMPOUNDS FROM BECOMING TALIBAN STOREHOUSES. JUST TWO WEEKS AGO, CHARLIE COMPANY CHECKED OUT THIS DESERTED AREA AND FOUND IT CLEAN. TODAY, THEY FOUND MILLIONS IN PAPER NOTES.

SPC CHRISTOPHER CANTRELL

Maybe I'll get a cut of it.

LT. TRAN

A cut??

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

UNFORTUNATELY IT'S IN CURRENCY FROM THE TIME OF THE TALIBAN RULE...NOW WORTH ABOUT THE SAME AS MONOPOLY MONEY. BUT THEY ALSO FOUND SOMETHING ELSE, SOMETHING THAT WASN'T HERE ON THEIR LAST VISIT -- A CACHE OF MORTARS AND DISCARDED SHELLS. THE TALIBAN USES ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING THEY RETRIEVE FROM THE BATTLEFIELD TO MAKE WEAPONS, ESPECIALLY ROADSIDE BOMBS.

SOLDIER

It's murky.

SOLDIER

Yeah, this was clear water.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

THEN THEY DISCOVER AMMONIUM NITRATE, A HIGHLY EXPLOSIVE FERTILIZER... WHICH THE SOLDIERS MAKE SURE WON'T BE USED.

MORRISON

Expect contact either in route, on the way back or on the objective itself. It's highly likely given their activity recently.

SGT RYAN BENDA

Here we go...

PFC BRENT BART

We're all gonna die.

SGT STREVA

Morphine!

SPC BRYAN GLIDDEN

Nurse! Nurse!

CPL MOSHER

It's only a flesh wound. I don't care...

PFC JUSTIN JUN

Borderline traces is copies. 2-9-7-2-0 Break.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

PATROL AFTER PATROL IS SHOT AT FROM SOMEWHERE OUT THERE. THEY RETURN FIRE IN THE GENERAL DIRECTION... BUT SOMETIMES, OFTEN TIMES --

SGT THOMAS COMPTON

Davis, let's go! What the fuck?

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

THEY CAN'T TELL WHERE THE ENEMY IS.

MORRISON

OK, roger, OK, good, if you're linked up with 2-1, just hold... (BANG) Fuck, what was that. Hey what the fuck are they doing?

SOLDIER SGT STREVA

Hey was that the A-10's?

MORRISON

Get fuckin' smoke! Mark our...

SENIOR AIRMAN JONATHAN OLDS

Get down! Get down!!

MORRISON

Call flight platoon, tell em to...

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

AIR SUPPORT IS CRUCIAL.

SOLDIER

Jesus!!

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

THE EYES ON THE BATTLEFIELD COME NOT FROM THE GROUND BUT IN THE AIR.

MORRISON

Mark our goddamn position!!

OLDS

They know where we're at, they're hitting that. It's just that they're coming in low. It looks like they're aiming at us.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

ONE SOLDIER'S JOB IS TO NOT ONLY HELP THE PLANES AND HELICOPTERS LOCATE THE ENEMY BUT TO MAKE SURE THOSE DROPPING BOMBS DON'T HIT THE WRONG TARGET.

OLDS

Those A-10's came in close and we thought they were coming for us. Stop shooting for the time being. Just stand down.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

THE MEN IN THIS OUTFIT SAY THE AREA IS TOO DENSE AND TOO INFESTED WITH ENEMY FIGHTERS FOR SO FEW AMERICAN SOLDIERS. SERGEANT SAMUEL FRANTZ.

SERGEANT SAMUEL FRANTZ

I would say it's no more than five miles, about five miles. But, with that being said-- the-- the grape fields, the terrain, what it is, it would take us all day to walk from one side of that to the other side. Then you have to climb every wall. You can't go through a crack in the wall. If you go through a crack in the wall, there's a possibility you'll step on a dismounted IED. So you have to go over every single wall. Every ten feet, there's another wall. Every wall is another hurdle, another obstacle.

REIM

The area that we have is small but very complex. It-- it might seem that, you know, we could cover our area, you know, very easily in a day. But gettin' in and really gettin' with the human terrain, the locals, and we try and stop, and talk to-- to everyone that we come in contact with, ask 'em what their key concerns are, ask 'em if they've seen anything. A lot of times we've-- talked to people and-- come to find out later that they were actually Taliban.

SERGEANT STANTON

Tell em all to shut up. Tell em to face the wall! We got information.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

INTELLIGENCE IS KEY. THERE'S SO MANY TALIBAN HERE THAT FINDING ANYONE WHO WILL COOPERATE IS CONSIDERED A COUP. THE ARMY COMPANY WANTS TO HOLD A MEETING OF ELDERS FROM THE LOCAL VILLAGES... IT'S CALLED A SHURA AND IT'S BEEN AN EFFECTIVE WAY TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE LOCALS ALL OVER AFGHANISTAN.

WAGNON

Shura 101

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

LIEUTENANT WAGNON HOPES IT WORKS HERE.

WAGNON

We've got some tea for him and we can sit down and talk with him if he'd like to come in.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

AFTER A WHILE, IT BECOMES APPARENT THIS MAN WILL BE THE ONLY ONE COMING. FEAR HAS KEPT OTHERS AWAY.

WAGNON

I know it's -- you know scary for him to come here knowing that he might be seen, but we appreciate his courage and -- appreciate any help that you -- that you'll give us in the future.

INTERPRETER

He says our concern is about the helicopters dropping bombs on...

WAGNON

Yeah, the -- helicopters-- the helicopters fly in this area for security reasons. I can understand the people around here would be afraid of 'em but you need to understand that they're only

going to attack people who are doing bad things - planting mines in the road or shooting at 'em even. Just regular farmers don't need to be worried.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

THE TURNOUT WAS A DISAPPOINTMENT, ESPECIALLY SINCE THE U.S. AND NATO MILITARY IN THIS HEAVILY TALIBAN AREA NEEDS ALL THE HELP IT CAN GET.

WAGNON

If you see the Taliban come by at a certain time during the day or if you recognize patterns -- intelligence that's accurate enough for us to come do something about it, then we'll pay him. We'll pay him money... For this guy, I mean, going back to his village on a consistent basis is gonna be pretty crucial for us, especially if he actually calls up with some actionable intelligence. And I stress actionable...

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

BUT PAYING THE LOCALS FOR INFORMATION IN THIS PART OF AFGHANISTAN OFTEN ISN'T ENOUGH. THERE ARE TOO MANY TALIBAN AND TOO MANY WEAPONS. CAPTAIN REIM, THE UNIT'S COMMANDER, HAS LOCATED ANOTHER STASH. AND THIS ONE IS MUCH MORE DANGEROUS THAN THE LAST ONE.

REIM

We just gotta find out where they're fuckin' cookin' it.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

THE SEARCH OF THIS ABANDONED COMPOUND HAS UNCOVERED A MAKESHIFT TALIBAN FACTORY FOR PRODUCING IED COMPONENTS AND HOMEMADE EXPLOSIVES - HME.

REIM

Well this is actually, this is HME. It's already been mixed.

FRANTZ

What did you find, sir?

REIM

First they boil the ammonium nitrate and then they mix the aluminum paint with it and that's when --- that's how they make the HME.

FRANTZ

Well, we're gonna rip it up. We're goin' down.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

THEY ALSO FIND UNDERGROUND IRRIGATION CANALS WHICH REQUIRE PERSONAL INSPECTION...

REIM

Hey, is now a good time to tell you I can't swim?

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

AND A WELL... WHERE THEY DUMP MOST OF THE IED MATERIALS...AND DESTROY THEM.

(boom-grenade)

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

BEFORE THEY CAN DECLARE VICTORY AND GO HOME FOR THE NIGHT, CONTACT WITH THE ENEMY.

REIM

Rooftop. Grape hut. Movement. One guy.

MORRISON

Get us air, right now.

OLDS

Are you en route to our position right now?

SOLDIER

Go go go go go!

MORRISON

There's movement at the grape hut dead ahead of us!

REIM

If you see anything, then shoot, if you don't see, don't shoot.

SOLDIER

I don't see anything...

REIM

You guys, cover our movement, we'll get set...

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

A NEW ARRIVAL HAS HIS FIRST TASTE OF COMBAT.

SOLDIER

My first firefight...

LUCIAN READ

Wha'dya think?

SOLDIER

Wow.

CANTRELL

Keep on talking to him, Missy, I don't care what it is...

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

THE ONLY CASUALTY IN THIS CONFRONTATION, A YOUNG AFGHAN

SUFFERING FROM A CONCUSSION.

VICTORIES HAVE BEEN RARE FOR CHARLIE COMPANY, BUT IT DOES HAPPEN.

MORRISON

Hey, track that guy...

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

ON A RECENT NIGHT SEVERAL UNIDENTIFIED MEN ARE OBSERVED GATHERING ON A COMPOUND NEAR THE BASE.

FRANTZ

Hey, see if they all go back in the next building. Stay on. About eleven guys went in this building and then half of 'em took off runnin'.

MORRISON

Yeah, this is definitely the four guys we saw comin' from the compound.

FRANTZ

The big compound right there. They're on the trail right beside it.

MORRISON

They're digging...

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

TO LIEUTENANT MORRISON AND HIS MEN DIGGING ALONG A ROAD MEANS ONE THING -- ROADSIDE BOMB.

OLDS

Sir?

MORRISON

Yeah.

OLDS

If they are digging, what do you want to do.

MORRISON

If they're digging on that road, they fucking get killed.

OLDS

I can give you strafe 'em. So I'll set up a nine line right now.

MORRISON

You see any reason why I can't say, "Go ahead and strafe 'em?" It's on our exfil route, right? They're digging next to the road?

FRANTZ

Yeah, are they -- did they confirm that?

MORRISON

They're digging next to the -- I'm gonna have 'em killed.

MOSER

Yes!

MORRISON

Hey Shamus 7 -5 Charlie...

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

ALL THE EVIDENCE THEY NEED TO CALL IN AN AIRSTRIKE.

OLDS

I could pass a nine line right now and have them fuckin' ... Oh, there we go!

MOSER

There's body parts fallin! That's awesome.

FRANTZ

Hey, that was a direct hit.

SOLDIER

Oh, there's one movin'!!

FRANTZ

Hey, tell 'em there's one still alive, he's movin' through the field now.

PILOT

I'm sorry, I'm seeing this guy getting' blown around.

SOLDIER

He's still movin'

MOSER

He's squirtin'.

FRANTZ

Hey, that's a dead guy right there.

SOLDIER

Oh, the A-10's are gonna get him. Shit.

SOLDIER

Oh my God!

MOSER

Yes!

PILOT

Calm down up there...

MOSER

Yes...

FRANTZ

We can go out there a hundred times and never see the enemy. Or else, we can go out there and be engaged by the enemy, you know, 100 times and still maybe never even see them. You know, it's all hit and run tactics. But when it's a cold-cut case like that, and you see them doing what they're doing-- it's very satisfying to eliminate that threat.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

FOR CHARLIE COMPANY, THEIR TIME IN KANDAHAR WILL BE UP IN MAY. THEY WON'T GO HOME WITH EVERYONE WHO CAME HERE. FIVE OF THEIR COMRADES DIED IN ACTION. MORE WERE WOUNDED. AND JUST ABOUT THE TIME THEY LEAVE, THOUSANDS OF U.S. TROOPS ARE EXPECTED IN THE AREA - - PART OF PRESIDENT OBAMA'S SURGE.

MORRISON

Until President Obama put out that we were goin' to increase troop strength, my personal opinion and the opinion of a lotta those around me is that we were kinda hung out to dry for a bit, that we were tryin' to fight a fight without the numbers of the troops necessary to do it, and that our country wasn't behind us, that we weren't truly committed to this fight. And I know it'll be difficult on the families of the soldiers that will see another deployment, but I really think it's necessary to – to win the fight and I think the sacrifices that were made would have been in vain if we don't commit to the place. So I – I absolutely support the decision and I do think it will make a difference in this country.

RATHER (ON CAMERA)

AND NOW FINALLY TONIGHT, A SOBERING UPDATE...

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

LAST NOVEMBER WHEN I REPORTED FROM EASTERN AFGHANISTAN, WE ATTENDED A RE-ENLISTMENT CEREMONY FOR STAFF SGT. MICHAEL CARDENAZ.

STAFF SERGEANT MICHAEL CARDENAZ

Michael David Cardenaz.

CAPTAIN KEVIN HUTCHESON

Do solemnly swear.

CARDENAZ

Do solemnly swear.

HUTCHESON

That I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States.

CARDENAZ

That I will support and defend the Constitution...

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

THE SERGEANT WAS CAREER MILITARY. TWO TOURS OF BOSNIA, TWO TOURS OF IRAQ AND THEN AFGHANISTAN SINCE LAST JUNE. IT'S THE ENLISTED MEN LIKE CARDENAZ WHO ARE THE HEART AND SOUL OF THE ARMY.

RATHER

Congratulations.

CARDENAZ

Thank you very much, sir.

RATHER

We're really proud of you.

CARDENAZ

Well, do you mind if we do the – half thing?

RATHER

No, I'd be happy to. There we are.

CARDENAZ

I love everything about this job and I'm not ready to let it go yet.

SOLDIER

Hoo-ah!

CARDENAZ

So I'm just glad the army decided to keep me. And I'll keep doin' it until the Army tells me it's time to go home. Hoo-ah!

SOLDIERS

Hoo-ah!

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

WE REGRET TO REPORT THAT SERGEANT CARDENAZ WAS KILLED FEBRUARY 20TH WHEN HIS POSITION CAME UNDER ROCKET ATTACK IN EASTERN AFGHANISTAN.

RATHER (ON CAMERA)

HIS COMMANDER, LIEUTENANT COLONEL BRIAN PEARL SAID OF SGT. CARDENEZ – QUOTE - HE WAS ONE OF OUR GREAT NON COMMISSIONED OFFICERS THAT SELFLESSLY GAVE TO OUR ARMY AND OUR NATION UP UNTIL THE END.

SERGEANT CARDENEZ WAS FROM CORONA CALIFORNIA... HE WAS 29-YEARS OLD. HE LEAVES BEHIND A WIFE AND FIVE CHILDREN. LEST WE FORGET.

THAT'S OUR PROGRAM FOR TONIGHT. FROM NEW YORK, FOR HD NET, DAN RATHER REPORTING. GOOD NIGHT.