AND NOW....THE SEASON PREMIER OF NCIS!

Fictitious Season 20, Episode 1 "Survival"

(Scene opens in bullpen, entire team present. Agents sitting, Gibbs standing)

McGee: "Boss, it's not that good... we've got nothing. We lost him after he left Breena's parents' house, all we know is that he decided to take back roads. He's in an area with no cell service, mountains. There's nothing to track! Nothing, boss. Nothing!"

Torres: "Snow is still falling, Gibbs, along with sleet. And man, he's bang up at what he does, but this is not what he does"

Bishop: "I'm scared for him. He's alone, he doesn't know what to do. We can't lose him, Gibbs! But we don't know how to..."

Gibbs: (strongly) "Just do your jobs! He has betrayed his country. He has enough biological waste to infect an entire water supply! You're thinking with your feelings, and that is not your job! You are not looking for a friend, you're looking for a terrorist! Now find him! Do your jobs, people! Now!"

scene fades to black and white

(Scene opens 7 days ago. Autopsy room, Palmer and Ducky talking)

Ducky: "Are you sure it's no trouble, Jimmy?"

Palmer: "No, Doctor Mallard, I don't mind. I'm going to be up there nearby the university, visiting Breena and the baby. She's been with her mother who just had surgery, but she's healing. I'll only spend a few days there, and if I pick up your gift, I'll be back way before a special courier"

Ducky: "My boy, it would be a godsend. That sword was once held by Andrew Fletcher, of Saldoun, Scotland. Did you know, that in 1707, he was one of the greatest politicians and writers of his age, fighting his own war against England and Scotland becoming one country?"

Palmer: "Oh my gosh, Dr. Mallard! He was like a Braveheart?"

Ducky: (chuckling) "Why, yes, yes, I suppose he was a William Wallace of sorts. His pen was just as mighty as Wallace's sword, and I am quite sure his sword was mightier than any pen William Wallace held" (smiling at his own analogy)

Palmer: "I had no idea! I promise, I will take extra special care of the sword"

Ducky: "Yes, please do, Jimmy. It is a gift from an esteemed colleague, left to me in his will. I am doubly honored that he chose to bequeath me with such an extraordinary item of history"

Palmer: "Great story, Dr. Mallard..It really cut to the point!...hahahhhaha!"

(Ducky covers his eyes with his hand, shaking his head)

Palmer: "That was really bad, wasn't it?"

Ducky: "Jimmy, my boy, (Ducky wraps arm over Palmer's shoulders) when you get back, we must talk. But in the meantime, remember, it is a serious piece of weaponry, not a toy "

Palmer: "Oh..Not a toy? Then no sword ...play, I guess?...Hahahahhaa"

Ducky: (sighs) "It will be a rather long talk, Dr. Palmer"

(scene fades to black and white)

3 Days Ago

(scene opens in autopsy, Ducky on phone with Breena)

Ducky: "Yes, dear, please be assured, I will check in with Jimmy often..(Ducky listening to Breena on phone)....No, I did not know that..(Ducky listens)...Oh my...(Ducky listens)..Yes, dear, I promise. I'm sure everything will be fine..."

(Gibbs enters autopsy room. Ducky hangs up phone)

Gibbs: "Duck, everytihing okay?"

Ducky: "Yes, and no, Jethro...our young Dr. Palmer left Breena's parents' house this morning, telling her he was going to take back roads, since the highway was shut down due to a horrible accident"

Gibbs: "Yea? So?"

Ducky: "He is navigating back roads in the Appalachian mountains, Jethro. Those roads are narrow, treacherous, and in the weather..."

Gibbs: "Do you know which roads he was taking? I can have the local LEO's give me a road condition update"

Ducky: "That is the problem, Jethro!. He did not give Breena a route, and there are numerous alternative roads to take that would lead around the accident scene"

Gibbs: "Have you tried to call him?"

Ducky: "I am now...Breena has tried, but the signal strength in the mountains is terrible"

Gibbs: "Hold on, Duck. Let me call McGee. He can ping Jimmy's phone, and it will tell us exactly where he is"

Ducky: "Yes, please, please. In my anxiety, I had forgotten that capability"

(Gibbs calls McGee, gives him instructions)

Gibbs: "Yea, McGee, what are you getting?....okay...keep trying.....yea, I know...call Duck when you find him, will ya?"

(Gibbs snaps phone shut)

Gibbs: "Can't get his signal, Duck. He must be in a dead zone. We'll keep trying. I'll have the team put some calls in to the area"

Ducky: "Please, Jethro, please....I have an awful feeling about this...Dr. Palmer, is not, how do I put it...."

Gibbs: "Yea, Duck, I know"

Scene fades to black and white

(scene opens in Palmer's SUV, Palmer driving, high ledge on one side, sharp drop off on the other, no guardrails. Sleet and snow are making visibility limited)

Palmer: (singing slowly, low) "...weather outside is fightful, inside, it's so....de....frightful"

(Palmer puts hand on wooden case wrapped in heavy quilt, in front passenger seat, holding Ducky's sword)

Palmer: "Well, Jimmy, this may not have been the best idea you've ever had"

(looks at cell phone, no signal showing...suddenly the phone rings)

Palmer: "Breena? Is that...."

Phone: "Hi! We've been trying to reach you because your factory warranty has expired! We're here to help you...." (signal drops.. Palmer places phone on dashboard)

Palmer: "I don't believe those people....they're...Oh no!"

(Palmer sees ice patch directly ahead, puts on brakes)

Palmer: "Stop, stop, no, no, foot off brakes, glide through...."

(car slides slightly, gets through ice patch, tires gain traction again)

Palmer: "Good boy, Jimmy, just keep a better lookout next time"

(Palmer looks to his left, sees the ledge, immense canyon area below him)

Palmer: "How weird, tree tops. Below me. Way below"

(Palmer can see the dropoff as he passes, no guardrail, only a thin wire fence between the road and a steep angle drop off, bare, leading to the thick forest below, the tree tops visible)

Palmer: "Fascinating. I wonder if Dr. Mallard has a story....."

(Palmer looks up just in time to see the deer running across the road in front of his car. Instinct takes over as he slams the brakes, turning the wheel to avoid the deer. There is no screeching of

tires, only the sound of the tires sliding across sleet and snow. Jimmy sees the wire fence approaching the front of his car, sees the hood pierce the fence, cutting through the rust, snapping off the ancient wooden fence post. Through the windshield, he sees nothing, just open sky, then the front of the car drops, and all he can see now is the open grade, rocks, fallen limbs from last season, then the forest beyond)

Palmer: "Oh god no!"

(Palmer presses hard on brakes, but gravity has taken over. The car begins sliding down the grade, trees getting closer. Palmer, in attempting to avoid the first tree, finds he has some steering left. Turning the wheel, he begins navigating between trees, harsh bumps sounding like cannon shots inside the car. The car slams sideways against one tree, shattering the front passenger window. The box with the sword slams against the dashboard, his cell phone slides off the dashboard, out the shattered window. The car continues, the chaos and noise drowning out Palmer screaming Beena's name)

(Scene fades to black and white)

(Scene opens in bullpen, team gathered in front of big screen, watching weather reports from Appalachin area)

Torres: "Man, that's no bueno"

Bishop: "No, it's not. McGee, any hits on Jimmy's phone yet?"

McGee: "No, nothing. I'm looking at cell towers between Breena's parents house and several hundred miles, and there's a gap in the mountain range. The signal's blocked everywhere unless you're on the high side. Once you get lower, no signal can reach"

Torres: "So, how do they get service down there? I mean, everyone has celll phones"

McGee: "Not everyone, and certainly not everywhere. I'm looking at population areas, and there's just no one living on those mountainsides. There are areas that just aren't inhabited."

Bishop: "National Forest. There are some in the Ozarks near my home. People aren't allowed to build houses"

(Gibbs enters bullpen)

Gibbs: "McGee, anything?"

McGee: "No boss, nothing. ...hey, do you think Director Vance...."

Gibbs: "He's making some calls. Bishop, you have some contacts at NSA that might help with some satellite recon?"

Bishop: "I checked. They do have imagery, but the cloud cover from the storm that came in blocks all views of the area. If they get a break in the clouds, they can do a look down, but no go right now"

Gibbs: "Keep on it"

Torres: "Hey Gibbs, your gut say...."

Gibbs: "Just keep looking. Torres, call the local LEO's. See if they've got anything. McGee, call Breena. Ask questions. Try and find out what route he took."

McGee: "On it boss. Anything else I need to ask her?"

(Gibbs goes silent, team waits. He finally speaks)

Gibbs: "Yea, find out what he packed in the car. Ask about water, food, blankets"

Bishop: "Are you thinking...."

Gibbs: "Just call her"

(Gibbs leaves bullpen, runs up stairs to MTAC)

Bishop: "Tim, he's worried, isn't he?"

McGee: "Yea, he is....but let's do our job...Torres, make those calls to LEO's, Bishop, keep on NSA for any updates in the cloud cover. They've got to be able to see one coming. Tell them what we've got going on"

Bishop: "Calling now. I get it. We need some help"

McGee: "Yea...guys, I don't like what I"m feeling. Let's get on it. Hopefully Breena has Jimmy's VIN number. I can track his GPS"

Torres/Bishop: "On it"

Torres: "Hey McGee...insurance card"

McGee: "You need my insurance card?"

Torres: "No. Tell Breena Palmer's VIN is on their insurance card"

McGee: "Thank you. I'm not thinking straight"

Bishop: "None of us are. Focus El, focus"

(scene fades to black and white)

(Scene opens in MTAC, Gibbs and Vance present. Deputy Director of CIA on screen)

CIA: "Director Vance, I'm sorry, but I cannot justify moving a satellite to locate one missing person that has not even been missing for 24 hours. It's just not what we do"

(CIA director nods to someone off screen, screen goes blank)

Vance: "Well, it's not like we've made any friends over there"

Gibbs: "Ya think?"

Vance: "But I do know some friends we have here"

Gibbs: "Leon, unless you have someone that can move a satellite, I'm not sure.."

Vance: "Gibbs, you're limited. Hold on"

(Gibbs stares at Vance, gets a stare back)

Gibbs: "Okay, Leon, what do you have?"

(Vance turns to attendent at the MTAC console)

Vance: "Ms Thomas, please get me Agent Gilroy. Have him come to my office"

Thomas: "Yes sir, and if I may, good call"

Vance: "Thank you, Ms. Thomas, and maybe our impatient Agent Gibbs will agree?"

Gibbs: "Whatever, Leon"

(Vance smiles, walks to exit door, Gibbs follows)

Scene fades to black and white)

(Scene opens in forest, Palmer's car pinned against tree, Palmer sitting in drivers seat, bleeding from head. Airbag is deflated. Palmer begins to regain conciousness, cold wind blowing through shattered windows)

Palmer: "Breena? Dr. Mallard? Daisy? Don't slap me on the head, Gibbs, it hurts"

(Palmer closes his eyes, head nods to one side...in the distance, looking through the trees, a young wolf sniffs the air, smelling blood. He trots off. He has news to deliver to the pack)

(Scene fades to black and white)

(Scene opens in Vance's office, Gibbs, Vance present, knock at door, Vance calls out to enter. Tall man, rangy build, marine buzzcut)

Vance: "Agent Gibbs, this is Agent Martin Gilroy, new to NCIS. His team covers North Korea intel, supports our office in the South Korea port"

(Gibbs extends hand to Gilroy, they shake)

Gibbs: "Yea, I saw you come in last week, Gilroy. How can you help?"

Gilroy: "If Dr. Palmer is in trouble, sir, I may be the only one that can help"

(Gibbs stares, nods)

Gibbs: "Ok, Agent, how?"

Vance: "Agent Gibbs, this is Lt. Martin Gilroy, retired, graduate of the Marine Corp Mountain Training Center in California. Spent 2 tours in Korea. He's also a graduate of Appalachian State University. The man's an expert at mountain warfare and cold weather combat, this Gibbs, and he grew up in that area. I'd listen if I were you"

(Gibbs stares at Vance, not liking the tone)

Vance: "If Palmer's in trouble, Agent Gibbs, there's no time for politeness. Lord knows you know this"

(Gibbs turns to Gilroy)

Gibbs: "Okay, Lt, let me fill you in"

Gilroy: "Your team already did that, sir. I'm briefed. What I need to do is go down there, ask questions, get answers. You ready, Gunny?"

(Gibbs smiles, nods to Vance. Vance nods back)

Gibbs: "On your six, agent. Lead the way"

Scene shifts to bullpen, Gilroy leading discussion in front of big screen)

Gilroy: "Here's the area Dr. Palmer left from. here (tapping screen) is the location of the accident causing the closure. Highway department says it may be a while. These (using laser pointer on screen) are the alternate routes he could have chosen to get around the accident. You can see that each route takes him at least 70 to 80 miles out of the way"

Torres: "Yea, we looked at those. There are a dozen different routes. So, how do we pick the one he's on?"

McGee: "I asked his wife, she didn't know which one. I got his VIN, and tried to track the GPS on his car, but it's not getting a signal"

Gilroy: "Okay, that's your first sign that his battery is either dead or it's disconnectied. I doubt it's dead. So..."

Bishop: "Oh god, does that mean he's been in a wreck?"

Gilroy: "It means we need to work fast"

Gibbs: "Okay, Agent, tell us"

Gilroy: "You can eliminate most of these routes by logging into his GPS server, and check what he would have seen 3 days ago. Half or more of those routes on the screen won't show up as suggested roads to take"

McGee: "He's right! It will give him 2 or 3 suggestions, with estimated times and road closures! I'm loggin onto their server now"

Gilroy: "Agent Torres, call the Appalachian Park Patrol. They'll know more about road closures than the LEOs, trust me...Agent Bishop, Call the Navy Yard distribution center. They have adequate cold weather gear to allocate sailors travelling to cold weather duty stations...Agent Gibbs, can you have Director Vance clear a path for them?"

Gibbs: "Yea..ya think? Good stuff, Agent Gilroy. I'm reading your file. I can see why your soldiers followed you"

Gilroy: "Take care of your soldiers, they take care of you"

Gibbs: "Oorah, LT"

(Gibbs leaves to head to Vance's office)

Torres: "You thinking we're going to head out there?"

Gilroy: "Just in case"

McGee: "Bishop, ask about a full med kit. Think accident"

Bishop: "Jesus, Tim, you're scaring me"

McGee: "Just in case, Bishop, just in case"

(Gibbs returns to bullpen, informs team Vance is calling supply center)

Gibbs: "Okay, sit rep?"

McGee: "Boss, it's not that good... we've got nothing. We lost him after he left Breena's parents' house, all we know is that he decided to take back roads. He's in an area with no cell service, mountains. There's nothing to track! Nothing, boss. Nothing!"

Torres: "Snow is still falling, Gibbs, along with sleet. And man, he's bang up at what he does, but this is not what he does"

Bishop: "I'm scared for him. He's alone, he doesn't know what to do. We can't lose him, Gibbs! But we don't know how to..."

Gibbs: (strongly) "Just do your jobs! He has betrayed his country. He has enough biological waste to infect an entire water supply! You're thinking with your feelings, and that is not your job! You are

not looking for a friend, you're looking for a terrorist! Now find him! Do your jobs, people! Now!"

(Team looks at Gibbs, stunned by the statement. No one speaks)

Gibbs: "Rule #10 people! Never get emotionally involved in a case! If this were a terrorist we were tracking, you'd be all over it! Do what you were trained to do, even if you have to pretend, for god's sake! Do your jobs!!"

McGee: "On it..tracking all movements last 2 days....pulling up credit card usage, checking last purchases, maybe he stopped for gas. Can cross reference with the suggested routes"

Bishop: "Checking phone records for any recent calls. Maybe he talked to someone while in the car"

Torres: "McGee, once you have those, I'll update Park Rangers and LEO's...putting BOLO out now to all authorities..uh..without the terrorist part. I mean, you know..."

(Scene fades to black and white)

(Scene opens in Palmer's car, Palmer waking up again. Snow swirling outside car. Palmer has blood on his face, leg twisted at awkward angle. Palmer groans)

Palmer: "Wake up Jimmy. Wake up...you're in trouble"

(Palmer starts to move to exit drivers door, half open, then groans loudly. He places hand on left leg, running fingers over his thigh)

Palmer: "Oh god, I think it's broken. And it's so cold"

(Palmer reaches over to grab corner of quilt covering the sword box. Pulling it towards him, begins covering himself with the quilt. He leans over to try and cover his feet, screams in pain. Scene closes with Palmer losing conciousness, snow from broken windshield blows in, covering his face, his body slumped forward, head resting on deflated air bag covered steering wheel...wind can be heard blowing

(scene fades to black and white)

PART 2 OF 'SURVIVAL'

(scene opens in bullpen)

McGee: "Boss, I think I've got something"

(Gibbs and team scurry to McGee's screen)

Gibbs: "What, McGee?"

McGee: "Palmer stopped at the Point View Gas Station and Grocery, yesterday, at exactly 3:21pm. That store is on County Road 21, but it's also known as Old Scenic Route. It's on one of the three routes his GPS suggested"

Gilroy: "Bad choice. The locals call it "Dead Man's Road". No guardrail in several curves, road has been neglected. I'm surprised it was open"

Gibbs: "You know it?"

Gilroy: "Yea, I know it. It's the road one of my best friends was killed on"

Bishop: "Jesus, don't let that be what's happening"

McGee: "And hold on....Bishop, did you check his phone calls?"

Bishop: "Yea, he received one call, around 4:05pm, but it was a sales call. No conversation"

McGee: "Give me the number Bishop! If Jimmy answered it at all, I can look for all connected calls in the area at that moment, trace the call back to the caller, and possibly get the coordinates where Jimmy was when he answered it"

(Bishop gets McGee the number...McGee begins clicky clacking)

McGee: "Okay, looking, looking, there it is. Crap! He answered it, but did not stay on long enough to get a fix"

Gibbs: "We need a break, people, Find it!"

(Bishop's desk phone rings...she answers it...exclaims 'Thank you so much!" then hangs up)

Gibbs: "What, Bishop?"

Bishop: "My friend at NSA just called. Their satellites show there's a small hole in the clouds about 2 minutes away from that area! If his GPS is working, or phone is on, you might get a signal!"

McGee: "That's our break! (clicky clacking) setting up trace...car's GPS targeted, cell phone number linked...ok, we're ready!"

(They all stand, waiting, nervous, Torres, eyes closed, praying....then...a beep. The entire team leans towards the screen)

McGee: "Got it! Enough of a phone signal got through to activate his phone! No..No...it's gone"

Gibbs: "Can you locate it, McGee?"

McGee: "I'm not taking no for an answer, boss" (McGee furiously clicky clacks on keyboard, mumbling to himself, team red faced in a combination of anticipation and fear. McGee shoots both fists in the air)

McGee: "Got it! He's....right...There!" (McGee points to coordinates on the map)

Gibbs: "Good work, McGee! Okay, Torres, call Park Services with location, Bishop, call LEO's...."

Gilroy: "I'm sorry guys, none of that is going to do any good"

Gibbs: "What?"

Gilroy: "The sleet grounds the choppers, and without them, the only way down is by rapelling down a rocky embakement, covered with ice right now. You need a climbing team"

Gibbs: "Okay, how do I get a climbing team?"

Gilroy: "You won't...not in time, anyway. It'll take 24 hours to locate and assemble them. We're going to have to go ourselves. Drive time is about 4 hours from here, I'll go get my gear and meet you back here in an hour"

Torres: "You? Us? Can we do that?"

Gilroy: "With me you can. And Agent Gibbs...that dog of yours...you willing to take her?"

Gibbs: "Tracking?"

Gilroy: "Yea...(Gilroy points to map)...Palmer's phone is here, about 500 feet off the road, almost straight down. I'll climb down from somewhere on the road. I'll know where when we get there and see where he went off. Down this road, (Gilroy points to map) there is an old logging trail that leads to here (points again to map) where it's relatively flat. You guys will drive there, set up camp, and wait for me to find Palmer. I can take the dog down with me"

Torres: "Daisy? On a rope? Say what?"

Gilroy: "Trained for it. We used dogs in Korea. If she's half as good as I hear, she's our best bet at finding Palmer. I can get her down, put a GPS tracker on her, let her loose, then follow her the best I can"

Gibbs: "Yea. Absolutely. And Gilroy, she's twice as good as you hear...Okay, team, go to supply, get your gear. Gilroy, any ideas on a vehicle that will get us down that logging road? Agency vehicles aren't suited"

Gilroy: (smiling) "Oh yea...mine... Clarence. Meet me outside the evidence bay in one hour. McGee, bring whatever laptop you need for tracking signals. Also, be sure and get coms out of inventory"

Torres: (holding up handful of earpieces and mikes) "Done"

Gilroy: "Good work. Now, let's pray we're in time"

McGee/Bishop: "Clarence?"

(scene fades to black and white)

(Scene opens in Evidence Garage...team assembled, duffel bags full, Daisy prowling in anticipation)

Torres: "Okay, where is mountain boy?"

(Ducky walks into garage, carrying handful of dirty laundry)

Ducky: "Jethro. here! Give these to Daisy. It's Palmer's scrubs from last week. They haven't been picked up by laundry yet"

Gibbs: "Good thinking Duck, thanks...Someone bag these and take 'em! We'll let Daisy get Palmer's scent"

Ducky: "Jethro, please..."

Gibbs: "We'll find him, Duck. I promise"

Ducky: "I know you will. I have to know it"

(Ducky interrupted by rumbling sound heard, they turn to the open garage door area, and watch an older, tan, large Humvee, obviously 4 wheel drive, jacked up, very large tires, brush guard, spotlights, winch mounted on front)

Torres: "Oh...my....god"

McGee: "Somehow I expected something different"

(Gibbs smiles)

Torres: "Gibbs, you're smiling"

Gibbs: "Yea...somehow Gilroy got hold of a military issue Humvee. Torres, it's a tank. It's perfect"

McGee: "I think I need to get some back up batteries. That old, it won't have the USB ports for charging"

(Gilroy stops, exits vehicle)

Gilroy: "Ladies, gents, meet Clarence. Get your stuff loaded in back, McGee, come with me"

(McGee shows fearful look, but follows Gilroy to vehicle. Gilroy opens front and rear passenger door)

Gilroy: "Two alternators, one specifically for powering laptops and tech. Two truck batteries under hood.. Two 10 inch monitors with HMI connections built into back of front seats, one 20 inch in the rear. One Yeti 400 watt backup battery with 3 110 volt outlets, plus 3 USB plugs, is installed on the sidewall in the rear. It's wired into the electircal system. There are surge protectors built into the internal wirings, plus foam boxes to hold the tech in case of rough conditions. We'll be picking up two big ass generators and a 10 gallon gas can, on the way out. One of my buddies is meeting us just outside the Navy Yard gates"

Torres: "Dude, why? I mean, like,...why?"

Gilroy: (smiling) "I like to hunt, but mainly, you know...because I can. Hey, I'm a guy, sue me"

Torres: "I wanna be you when I grow up"

(McGee is in awe, looking at the built in tech. He turns to Gibbs)

McGee: "I want one"

(scene fades to black and white)

(scene opens in Palmer's car. Palmer awake, assessing injuries. Has surgical pad on head, white tape circling his head, holding it on. Open First Aid box on passenger seat)

Palmer: "Leg fractured, not broken. Head laceration bandaged. Cuts on arm, unimportant. But I've got to splint this leg if I'm going to move. In the dark. Great, Palmer. Great timing"

(Palmer closes his eyes...bows his head)

Palmer: "For them. For Breena, for Victoria. Keep me strong, because I'm scared. Actually, I'm terrified. But you know that. Amen"

(Palmer looks in back seat, sees his case of water he brought for travel, opens center console, finds bottle of Ibuprofen)

Palmer: "Breena, I never thought I'd be grateful for your headaches, but right now, I need these"

(Palmer opens bottle of tablets, takes out 4, downs them with water. He sees the sword box, cracked from the impact)

Palmer: "Dr. Mallard, I'm truly sorry...."

(Palmer pulls box up from floor, groaning in pain from the exertion. one side panel of the wooden box is partially torn loose. Palmer strains, rips the panel, approximately 6 inches by 4ft long. The sword falls out of the open side area)

Palmer: "It is a beautiful sword, Dr. Mallard. I hope I don't have to use it. I'm sorry about your box, though"

(Palmer proceeds to slide his seat back, straighten his leg, wincing, then place wood board along his leg, and tape it, wrap elastic bandage around it, moaning as he tightens it.. In the darkenss, several sets of yellow eyes are watching)

(Scene fades to black and white)

(Scene opens to Gilroy, Gibbs and team parked, Torres and Bishop leaving the Point View grocery store)

Bishop: "He was here, yesterday"

Gibbs: "You sure?"

Bishop: "Yea, the owner described a city boy, tall, lean, told a really really bad joke"

Gibbs: "Oh yea, that's Palmer"

Gilroy: "There are some of the worst curves up ahead, about 5 miles. The 4 wheel drive won't help us on ice, but it will in the snow"

Torres: "Hey man, I hate to ask, but your buddy. Did he go off near here?"

Gilroy: "Yea. My gut tells me Palmer may have gone off on the same place. Conditions were almost identical, and the ice builds up quick on a certain run of this road. You believe in gut instincts, Agent Gibbs?"

Gibbs: "Oh yea"

(Gilroy drives, come across the ice spot. Slows, navigates safely across it)

Gilroy: "That's the spot. No way to fix it, just a low spot in the road where water collects and freezes"

Gibbs: "Okay, Gilroy, slow down. Can you shine the spotlight on the fence line?"

Gilroy: "I can do better than that"

(Gilroy flips two switches on console. Multiple spotlights come on, placed on roof rack, front bumper, and luggage rack. The night suddenly becomes amazingly bright)

McGee: "Holy crap, Gilroy! You can power those?"

Gilroy: "Yea, and more"

Gibbs: "LT, thank you"

Gilroy: "We take care of our own, sir...Oorah"

Gibbs: "Oh yea, Oorah, LT"

(Vehicle slowly moves forward, Gibbs sees something)

Gibbs: "Stop. Look at the fence"

(They can see the torn fence, Gibbs exits vehicle, walks to the opening, leans over, brushes snow off a small area)

Gibbs: "This has to be it. Look at the hole. You can see fresh dirt where something was torn out of the ground"

Gilroy: "Good eyes. The post likely went with the wire"

Torres: "This is where your buddy went off? I'm sorry man, but I'm guessing if it is, you've been here and know the area"

(Gilroy points ahead about 50 ft..older wooden cross stuck in ground)

Gilroy: "The cross is where he went off. Yea, I know it. And I know you gotta ask. No worries"

(Gibbs stands on edge of the ledge, looking down, hand held spotlight piercing the darkness below)

Gibbs: "McGee, can you tell us how far down the phone pinged?"

McGee: "It's not exact, boss, but at least a thousand feet. I'm sorry"

Gibbs: "Yea, I know"

(Gilroy climbs ladder on rear of vehicle, begins throwing two duffel bags off roof..climbs down)

Gilroy: "I'm about to get geared up. McGee, you have the GPS coordinates to where you're going?"

McGee: "Yea, but it's not like it's going to tell me which tree to dodge"

Bishop: "I'll drive"

Torres: "Oh hell no"

Bishop: "Gilroy, I'm from Oklahoma, grew up near the Ozarks, went 4 wheeling all my life. Don't let the glamour fool ya...I'm certified country red neck"

Torres: "Glamour?"

(Bishop punches Torres in arm, Torres yelps)

Bishop: "Yea, A-hole. I can glam up anytime I want"

Torres: "But you never wanted to. Ever. Right?"

(Bishop punches Torres again. Torres winces)

Gilroy: "Ok, Glamneck, She's all yours"

(Gilroy tosses Bishop the keys. She catches them perfectly)

Gibbs: "Bishop, do you actually know what you're doing?"

Bishop: "Oh yea, Gibbs. Hell yea. I'm a Glamneck"

(scene fades to black and white)

(Scene opens on side of road, Gilroy on rappelling rope, tied to pin driven into rock. Has helmet, ice cleats, com mike headset attached. Gibbs is leading Daisy to Gilroy, getting ready to strap her to him)

Gibbs: "LT, it's solid ice all the way down. That's maybe 500 feet. You good?"

Gilroy: (smiles) "It's what the Marines trained me to do, Gunny"

(Gibbs nods, then turns to Daisy)

Gibbs: (To Daisy) "Ok, girl, we need you" (Daisy yips).."Here, girl, smell these" (Gibbs lets Daisy smell Palmer's scrubs, Daisy looks up at Gibbs and whines)

Gibbss: "That's right. Jimmy's hurt, girl. He's somewhere down there" (Gibbs points down ledge...Daisy peers downward, barks) "Now, you may not like this, and it might be scary, but trust me, Agent Gilroy is going to...."

(Daisy trots along edge, looking down, begins sniffing the air. She trots over to Gilroy, sits beside him. She barks at Gibbs)

Gilroy: "Jesus, Gibbs, I swear, she understands you"

Gibbs: "Yea"

Gilroy: "And she seems eager"

Gibbs: "Oh yea"

(Gilroy looks at Gibbs with questioning eyes)

Gibbs: "She's special"

(Daisy yips, begins dancing on front paws, nudging Gilroy)

Gilroy: "Okay, girl, you're right, let's get this show on the road"

(scene fades to black and white)

(Scene opens with Palmer standing by wreckage of car, leaning on it, trying to use long branch with 'Y' at end for a crutch)

Palmer: "Too long. I can't go looking for another. Hurt too much"

(Palmer reaches through shattered window, picks up Ducky's sword)

Palmer: "I'm so sorry Dr. Mallard, but I don't have a choice"

(Palmer lays branch on car hood, raises the sword, and brings it down on the branch, screaming with the pain. The branch does not cut all the way through)

Palmer: "Oh geez, this hurts"

(Palmer strikes the branch again, the end of it slices away)

Palmer: "Oh god, thank you..nice sword, Dr. Mallard. Sharp..sorry I'm ruining it"

(Sweat pouring off his brow, head swimming, Palmer places the makeshift crutch under his arm, and tries to walk...after several attempts, he begins to be able to use if for some steps)

Palmer: "Fire. Need to build a fire. Plenty of wood, but how do I start it? Never got the hang of rubbing sticks together. Never tried, actually. But spark. What can I use for a spark?"

(Palmer looks around, trying to identify which kind of rock acts like flint. He realilzes he doesn't know. They he spots his car battery, torn away from the car after the front end was demolished, laying on the ground, both cables still attached to it)

Palmer: "Okay, yea. Sparks. Now I need tinder. Everything's wet. Crap"

(Palmer looks in the car, lifts tissues out of the console. Grabs splinters from Ducky's box, then the rest of the box, tucking it under his arm. He staggers to a place directly in front of the car, within reach of the battery cables)

Palmer: "Remember when you were a Boy Scout? No, me neither. But you start a fire small. Spark on the tissue"

(Palmer pulls the cables towards the circle of small rocks he shoved into place, puts one tissue in the circle, then hits the cable together. The ensuing spark scares Palmer, he drops the cables)

Palmer: "You coward!"

(Angry with himself, Palmer picks the cables up again, and hold them together, determined to not let go, but instead of a spark, he sees the bare, shredded, copper wire tips begin to glow red. He places the red hot metal to the tissue, and watches it flare up)

Palmer: "Yes! No! Don't burn out! Here, here's more to eat!"

(Palmer tosses more tissue on the small flame, watches the tissue flare up, then places small wood splinters on the flame. The wood, hundreds of years old, is dry, catching fire quickly. Palmer adds larger pieces, then finally some small branches...He has a fire)

Palmer: "Oh that feels good. Finally, some warmth"

(It's at that time, Palmer sees the wolf approaching, head hung low, wary of the fire, it prowls to the side, eyeing Palmer. Trembling, Palmer reaches to the hood of the car, wraps his hand around the handle of the sword)

Palmer: "No..please go away! Get! Get away! Shoo! Shoo!"

(the wolf stops, senses the human's fear, knowing it's an easy kill..It takes one step, then starts again faster, faster still, then begins to leap at Palmer. Palmer screams)

(Scene fades to black and white)

(Scene opens to Gilroy reaching bottom of ledge, ground is level enough to stand. He releases Daisy, then releases the hook on the rope)

Gilroy: (into mike) "Gibbs, you copy?"

Gibbs: (on earpiece) "Copy Gilroy. We reached your camp area. Bishop got us here okay"

Gilroy: "Go to secondary"

(Gibbs, understanding the lingo, switches to secondary channel on radio. Evidently, Gilroy wants this private. Gibbs's stomach sinks)

Gibbs: "Go, Gilroy. What do you see?
Gilroy: "I found the phone. Thrown out of the car during descent. I can see gouges in the dirt, trees pretty scarred up. But the car is no where. The trees are pretty well spaced here, so he could have steered through them"

Gibbs: "That's not good?"

Gilroy: "No...if he got much further, and it looks like he did, he's landed directly in the thick, and that's where the wolves are. They're bad here, Gibbs"

Gibbs: "Okay, got it. What's Daisy doing?"

Gilroy: "Hell, Gibbs, the moment I put her down, she sniffed the ground then took off down the hill"

Gibbs: "Yea. That's her. Can you follow her?"

Gilroy: "No, but I can follow the damage the car did. I'm assuming it will lead us to the same place"

Gibbs: "Copy that"

Gilroy: "By the way, I brought you a surprise. It's in the back of the truck"

Gibbs: "Found it, LT. My brand, good ammo. Thanks. What's it sighted to?"

Gilroy: "600 yards, Gunny. Spot on"

Gibbs: "Copy that, LT. And I found the shotguns too. For snakes?"

Gilroy: "Affirmative"

Gibbs: "Got it. I'll contact you as soon as camp completely set up and McGee is tracking Daisy. We can guide you in"

Gilroy: "Copy. Out"

(scene fades to black and white)

(Scene opens with Palmer facing wolf, realizing it is about to attack)

Palmer: (thoughts) "Don't run. Fight. Remember the neck, the jugular. Oh god I'm scared.."

(Trembling, Palmer draws the sword to his right, the shaking blade facing the wolf. He sees the animal start to crouch, meaning it's going to leap. Palmer screams in fear as the wolf leaps, swinging the sword toward the throat, refusing to close his eyes)

Palmer: (screaming) "I have a family!"

(The blade slices throught the wolf's throat, severing it cleanly, deeply, the momentum carries the wolf into Palmer, knocking him down, covering him in blood. Palmer screams in both pain and fear, shoulder burning, pushing the wolf aside with the handle of the sword)

Palmer (screaming): "Get off! Get off! Get off!"

(Finally, a gurgle, and the wolf stops breathing. Palmer pushes himsefl along the ground, frantically looking around for other wolves. Seeing none, he leans back against the car, sees the wolf, dead, and realizes how close he came to dying a horrible death. He feels the burn on his shoulder, looking, he can see where the wolf had its mouth, tearing into his flesh. He's bleeding. He begins to weep)

(scene fades to black and white)

(Scene opens in forest, still dark, Daisy following the scent of the car's gasoline. She stops, looks ahead, sees two yellow eyes approaching. She begins to growl...the wolf appears, large, scarred, obviously the pack leader. They face each other, then the wolf begins to sniff the air. They lock eyes. No sounds are made, but they talk, each understanding the other)

Wolf: "I see you, dog, I hear you, but there is no scent"

Daisy: "I have no time, begone, lupine"

Wolf: "It is my forest, you will make time"

Daisy: "Is this the day you wish to die? Move"

Wolf: "What are you?"

Daisy: "Other"

Wolf: "Ah...Other...and it is your choice?"

Daisy: "Yes. I have one I love to find. Now move"

Wolf: "I know. We know. We are there"

Daisy: "Then I will kill them all"

Wolf: "You know of us"

Daisy: "Yes, I know"

Wolf: "You were one of us?"

Daisy: "Once"

Wolf: "Then, you are..."

Daisy: "Other"

Wolf: "Then pass, Other one. I wish no trouble with you"

(The wolf steps to one side, Daisy runs past it, focused on finding Palmer. The wolf trots off in another direction. From the high rock, Gilroy has witnessed this)

Gilroy: "My god, they were talking. No words, but they were talking. What is that dog?"

(scene fades to black and white)

(Scene opens at base camp, Gibbs, McGee, Bishop finishing hookups and begin to power up tech equipment. Gibbs is loading the rifle, lays shotguns and shells on hood of vehicle)

McGee: "I'm up, boss, Daisy's signal is coming in clear. She was stopped, then started moving again. Gilroy is about 100 yards behind her"

Gibbs: "How far out?

McGee: "About one mile, boss. pretty level ground, so, if you ask me..."

Gibbs: "Yea, I'll go..Torres?"

Torres: "I know, going with you.. Give me a shotgun, I'll load the backpack"

(Gibbs nods, watches Torres get ready)

Bishop: "I can get us closer"

Gibbs: "Rough terrain, Bishop"

Bishop: "I can get us closer"

Gibbs: "Your call Bishop....Torres! Saddle up! Glamneck says she can get us closer!"

Torres: "It's safer walking"

Bishop: "Snakes out here, Torres"

Torres: "Getting in truck now"

Bishop: "Thought so"

(All get in truck, Bishop starts to move forward, slowly, navigating rocks, furrows, trees, downed limbs)

Gibbs: "This was not in your file, Bishop"

Bishop: "Shoulda been"

Gibbs: "Yea..Ya think?"

Torres: "It's glamorous"

(Bishop swings backwards, catching Torres on the shoulder again. Torres winces)

Gibbs: "You guys are killin' me"

McGee: "Just don't kill the equipment! Easy on the bumps, Bishop!"

Bishop: "Copy that, McBumpy"

McGee: "Are you serious?"

(Slowly, the truck makes its way through the woods, bright spotlights turn night to day)

(Scene fades to black and white)

(Scene opens to Palmer sitting on hood of vehicle, eating peanut butter crackers from package, drinking from water bottle. He takes more Ibuprofen out, downs 3 more. He has ripped his shirt open, exposing the wound from the wolf. He has taken a bottle of alcohol out of the First Aid kit, and begins pouring it over the wound...He screams as it burns the open flesh)

(scene shifts to Daisy, trotting through forest, nose close to ground. She had sensed Gilroy behind her, friend, has allowed him to join her)

Gilroy: "Hey girl...you're one hell of a dog"

(Dasiy nuzzles Gilroy's hand. Gilroy takes a bottle of water out, take his helmet off, pours some in it for her to drink. She laps it gratefully)

Gilroy: "Lap it up, girl, you've earned it"

(Daisy holds her head up, ears perked, eyes bright....a scream. The love she searches for screams)

Gilroy: "What girl? I don't hear anything"

(Daisy whines, clamps on Gilroy's sleeve, pulls)

Gilroy: "Ok, I get it...On your six...or whatever..."

(Gilroy speaks into mike)

Gilroy: "Gibbs, you copy?"

Gibbs: "Yea, go"

Gilroy: "I think we're getting closer. Daisy heard something and took off. And by the way, this dog freaks me out"

Gibbs: "Yea, copy that. Did me too at first"

Gilroy: "Special, right?"

Gibbs: "Oh yea"

Gilroy: "I hear the engine...You on the move? "

Gibbs: "Affirmative"

Gilroy: "Copy that. Be careful. Clarence will get you there if you talk to him nice"

Bishop: "Clarence is just fine, Gilroy, he and I have bonded"

Gilroy: "Copy that Glamneck"

Torres: "Bonded..yea..Beauty and the Beast"

Bishop: "Which one am I, butthead?"

(Scene fades to black and white)

(Scene opens to Palmer, leaning against car, crutch under one arm, still groaning from pain in leg. The wound on his shoulder is bleeding again. The compress not completely stemming the flow)

Palmer: "You're alive Jimmy, that's all that matters. Now, find some more crackers, get some more firewood...then...oh god no"

(Palmer sees 3 more wolves, attracted by blood and screams. They are on the other side of the fire, approximately 50 ft away, slowly walking toward him)

(Scene fades to black and white)

(Scene opens in truck, Bishop driving slowly around rocks. Her cell phone rings)

Torres: "Bishop, your phone!"

McGee: "Look out the window, the sky has cleared. We're in an open area"

Gibbs: "Bishop stop here. We need the signal"

(Bishop stops pulls phone out of pocket, sees NSA friend calling. She answers it)

Bishop: "Yea. What do you have?....No way!....No way!....Oh god, thank you..text me the satellite frequency quick!" (hangs up phone)

Gibbs: "Bishop?"

Bishop: "NSA, Gibbs. The sky has cleared, their satillite is looking down, and they've put a drone up! It's over Jimmy! They've got infrared on him! He's alive!"

Gibbs: "Thank god"

(Bishop's phone signals text message..it's the link for the drone camera. She hands phone to McGee, he begins furiously clicky clacking)

McGee: "Thank you satellite link"

(Screen comes to life showing Palmer, outlined in a red glow and the brighter glow of the fire. The camera also shows several other glowing figures, slowly approaching Palmer's area)

McGee: "Jesus, is that what I think it is?"

(McGee points to a grey image on ground, near Palmer)

McGee: "Is that a wolf? A dead wolf?"

Gibbs: "Yea, it is...Palmer killed a wolf? How?"

McGee: "Boss, this is not good"

Gibbs: "What?"

McGee: "Look"

(Gibbs sees the screen, the other glows easily recognizable)

Gibbs: "Wolves. 5 or 6... How far out is he? How far, McGee?"

(McGee clicky clacks, brings up drone coordinates, compares them to theirs)

McGee: "About 900 yards out, boss"

(Torres opens door to truck gets out, taking off heavy coat. Begins shoveling shotgun shells into his vest and pants pockets, loads up shotgun, grabs Bishops extra 9mm clip, slides it into other vest pocket)

Gibbs: "Torres, what are you doing?"

Torres: "I'm going after him. I can get there faster than any of you"

Gibbs: "Yea, go Torres, be careful"

Torres: "No. No way. Careful won't cut it"

Bishop: "Torres, please"

Torres: "Hey, Bish, only one of us can be glamorous, right?"

(Bishop gets out, runs to Torres, hugs him)

Bishop: "Be careful for me. Is that enough?"

(Torres looks at her, she stares back, eyes saying what she won't speak.. Torres nods to her, then turns to Gibbs)

Torres: "Gibbs, look at your map. There's a ledge 300 yards ahead, overlooking Jimmy's camp. That puts you 600 yrds out, and the sun is coming up"

(Gibbs stares at Torres, nods to him)

Gibbs: "Copy that Torres. Go"

(Torres heads out, almost at a dead run. Gibbs begins a slower, methodical trot towards the ledge Torres spoke of. McGee watches the screen, willing the wolves to stop, or move elsewhere. The wolves evidently didn't hear him)

McGee: "Bishop, the wolves have started towards Jimmy, one from the front, one on the side. My god, they're flanking him. We're not going to make it in time"

(Scene fades to black and white)

NOW, THE CONCLUSION OF, "SURVIVAL" !

(Scene opens with Palmer, standing on his forest-made crutch, holding Ducky's sword. He sees the wolves, 5, 6, maybe 7, maybe more. Some in front, some on the sides, he knows he's going to die)

Palmer: "I'm sorry Breena. I'm sorry Victoria. I love you both so much"

(Scene shifts to Gibbs, he's made the ledge, he quickly lays down, scopes the scene, too many trees, too many limbs blocking his sight. He can see Palmer, in a clearing, visible in his scope, see's his lips moving)

Gibbs: "Come on, Jimmy. stay strong. We're coming"

(Scene shifts to Torres, running at breakneck speed, leaping over fallen limbs, avoiding rocks, branches slashing his face, ignores the pain, taking shotgun off shoulder strap, chambering a round on the run. He knows he's near. He feels it)

(Scene shifts to Gilroy, running, pulls 9mm out of holster, slides top back, still on the run, smelling smoke from Palmer's fire)

Gilroy: "Where are you, Daisy....Palmer, where are you?"

(McGee hears Gilroy in headset, answers)

Palmer: "Gilroy, 30 yards, head to your 1 o'clock. He's in trouble. Please hurry"

Gilroy: "Copy that, McGee...forgot I could ask...on my way"

(Gilroy veers slightly to his right, ends his trot, begins running)

(Scene shifts to McGee and Bishop in truck, watching drone footage. Bishop on phone with NSA)

Bishop: "There's enough daylight. They're switching off infrared"

McGee: "Got it, Daylight image coming up now"

(screen flickers, then reappears, clear)

Bishop/McGee: "Oh my god!"

(Image shows Palmer standing several feet in front of wrecked vehicle, body of dead wolf laying in front of him, sword in right hand, facing the wolves. The predators are in clear sight now, moving slowly forward, towards Palmer, all in step with each other as if in some primevial dance)

(Scene shifts to Gibbs, scope picks up first wolf entering the clear area)

Gibbs: "There you are. Now die"

(Gibbs slowly tracks walking wolf, slowly squeezes, fires)

(Scene shifts to Palmer, standing, trembling. He looks at the wolves, and makes his decision)

Palmer: (loudly) "You see this hand? (Palmer lifts sword with right hand)...And now you see this one?..(Palmer raises his left arm, steadying himself best he can, and makes a fist) "You see this one?"...(Palmer slowly unfurls his middle finger from the fist, making the universal gesture..he screams, voice shaking, at the wolves) "This is what I have for you! Come and get it!"

(Scene shifts to McGee and Bishop)

McGee: "Palmer just shot the wolves the bird!"

Bishop: "He knows he's going to die. He doesn't care anymore...oh god, no"

(On the screen, the head of one wolf explodes in a spray of red)

McGee: "Gibbs!"

(Torres sees the clearing, two wolves in front of him, both facing Palmer, ignoring him. Seeing Palmer raise his finger in defiance, awe strikes him. Torres stops, aims, fires. Chambers another shell. Fires again. Two wolves scream, drop....dying)

(Another wolf, hanging to the side, surveys scene, hears loud noises, sees brothers, sisters, fall. He locks his eyes on the human, grief, rage, all felt, it begins to run towards the human, fast, faster, killing feeling rising, leaping)

(Gilroy running towards opening, sees Palmer's back, sees the one wolf to the side, running at Palmer. Fires shots while running, both miss)

(Palmer senses something, he turns to see the wolf at his side, running at him, he knows it's time to die. He sees it leap at him. Before he can close his eyes,he sees the wolf snatched out of the air, blood spraying, horrible snarls fill the air....Daisy. Beautiful Daisy)

Gilroy: "Oh Jesus! What the....?"

(Gilroy and Palmer, Torres, witness Daisy tear the wolf's throat out, see Daisy flinging her head to one side, spitting out large chunks of fur, sinew, and blood. She turns to another wolf, does not hesitate, charges...)

(Gibbs sights another wolf that has entered the clearing, now a killing zone...he sights, lets out a breath, holds it, fires. The wolf's head explodes in his scope)

(One wolf has stayed under tree cover, waiting. Now...it's time...the wolf charges quickly, straight at Palmer, head on. The sounds of Daisy tearing apart the other wolf are loud, but all Palmer can hear is his pounding heart)

(Scene shifts to McGee and Bishop)

McGee: "Bishop, turn away"

(Bishop refuses, tears streaming down her face)

(Scene shifts back to Palmer. He lowers the sword. The wolf sees the weapon coming down...good..the human has given up. Kill now)

(Palmer takes two steps back, falls backwards, sees the wolf leap, sees it coming down on him. He thrusts the sword up, pushes with everything he has, screams.., then darkness)

(scene fades to black and white)

(scene opens, Gilroy at Palmer's side, holding Palmer's head up)

Gilroy: (slapping Palmer's face) "Palmer! Palmer! Come on! God, he's bleeding everywhere"

(Daisy approaches, whining, runs to Palmer..sniffs...yips twice, whines, licks Palmer's hand...Gilroy is joined by Torres)

Torres: "Gilroy! Is he...is he dead?(Torres drops to knees by Palmer) Please Palmer, wake up!"

(Gilroy and Torres pull the wolf off Palmer, they can see the sword now, impaled in the chest of the animal, fully up to the hilt, Palmer's hands locked around the handle. Torres and Gilroy look at the blade, then at each other, awe, amazement. They undo Palmer's hands from the hilt then pull the sword out of the wolf)

Torres:: "Hey buddy...come on...it's over..You're officially a badass. C'mon, man...You won"

(Palmer slowly opens his eyes, sees Gilroy, Daisy, Torres)

Palmer: "We're all in heaven? How'd you guys die?"

(Palmer closes his eyes again, groans)

Palmer: "I hurt. Guess I'm not dead"

Torres: "No, buddy, close, but no bueno...you're going to have to put up with us for a while longer"

Palmer: "Okay. But Dr. Mallard's going to be really mad...I think I ruined his sword. I don't suppose you have anything for pain?"

(scene fades to black and white)

(Scene opens in clearing, Gibbs, McGee, Bishop, Torres, Gilroy, Daisy, all present. Torres and Bishop are seen bandaging Palmer, while Palmer sits, leaning against front of wrecked vehicle. Gilroy is seen pulling the pin on a smoke grenade, red smoke rising up through tree limbs)

Gibbs: "Palmer, I don't know what to say"

Palmer: "Hello is good"

Gibbs: "Yea, hey Palmer"

Palmer: "Hey Agent Gibbs"

(Gibbs kneels down by Palmer, carefully embraces him, whispers in his ear)

Gibbs: "Bravest thing I've ever seen, pal"

Palmer: "I didn't feel brave"

Gibbs: "I know. That's what makes it brave"

(Thumping of helicopter blades can be heard. Sounds get closer, then stay in position directly overhead. Evac cot seen lowering through tree limbs)

McGee: "Hey buddy...they're about to take you up and out of here. They've set up a triage at the ranger HQ. They'll patch you up, then they'll be flying you to Walter Reed. It's going to be okay. You made it"

(Palmer nods, grasps McGee's hand and squeezes it)

Palmer: (weakly) "Breena. Can someone call Breena and tell her why I'm late getting home? I don't want her to worry"

McGee:(smiling) "Sorry pal, she's been at the Ranger station since early this morning. She's been watching this on the big screen. Everyone has"

Palmer: "Everyone? It's been on TV?"

McGee: "Yea...this has been a 3 day movie, Jimmy.... Breena was flown in by Vance, and he's there too. Has been for two days. He's been coordinating the medical chopper, NSA drone and transport. NSA people are there too."

Palmer: "I caused a lot of trouble. Tell them I'm sorry, and thank you"

Gibbs:(smiling) "Tell them yourself, soldier. Time to get you on the bird"

(Daisy stands watch, joyful one she loves is alive. She senses something, turns to the forest edge. She sees him, the leader, lingering. They lock eyes)

Wolf: "It would seem, Other, you have chosen well"

Daisy: "Some of yours did not"

Wolf: "Some defied me. So be it"

Daisy: "Some?"

Wolf: "Many obeyed"

(Daisy can sense them now, dozens more, also lingering on the clearing edge)

Daisy: "I see"

Wolf: "My gift, from one to another. Fare thee well, dog"

(scene fades to black and white)

(Scene opens at Ranger HQ, Palmer being carried out of helicopter to waiting triage doctor. He is carried inside, into a room, placed on a rolling hospital bed, Doctor and nurses attend quickly, efficiently, fluids begin to enter his body through tubes, wounds cleaned. Someone is waiting outside the door)

Breena: "Director Vance....please..my husband...can I?"

(Vance opens door to room, signals for Breena to wait one moment. She nods, seeing Jimmy in the bed, she begins trembling)

Vance: "Ladies, gentlemen, could you give Dr. Palmer and his wife one moment of privacy please?"

(The doctor nods to his staff, they exit, all nodding at Breena, quick mentions of praise for Palmer. Palmer has head turned away, groggy from pain medication, not realizing Breena is in the doorway. Vance nods to Breena, she enters the room, Vance closes the door and stands guard....The sounds of a weeping wife, the same from the husband, can be heard)

(scene fades to black and white)

(Scene opens in Walter Reed Hospital, Palmer in room, Breena sitting next to his bed, Gibbs and Ducky enter)

Ducky: "My boy...I do not have the words...you, you were magnificent!"

Palmer: "Dr. Mallard, I ruined your sword, and burned the box. I am so sorry"

Ducky: "Dr. Palmer, a finer day's work that sword has never seen. There are no need for apologies, I assure you"

(Gibbs walks over to Breena, kneels down to be at face level)

Gibbs: "Hey Breena. You holding up okay?"

(Breena nods, then tears start falling...Gibbs hugs her, allows her to cry, again, on his shoulder)

Gibbs: "I know, Breena, I know. It's okay now. Everything's okay"

(Gibbs feels Breena's head nod against his chest)

Palmer: (slow words) "Agent Gibbs. Thank you for everything. I'm getting bits and pieces, but I know...(Palmer takes a breath), you were at the center of it. I'm probably alive because of you"

Gibbs: "No Palmer, not me. You."

Palmer: "Sir, I don't think so. I wasn't like you..Uh, can we... (Palmer looks at Breena, she nods, understands, gets up from her chair)

Breena: "Agent Gibbs, I think Jimmy wants to have a private word with you"

(Gibbs looks at her, then at Jimmy, but nods his head 'no')

Gibbs: "I think I know what he wants to say. Breena, come here please"

(Breena steps to Gibbs's side, next to Palmer, hesitant)

Gibbs: "You were about to say you were scared"

(Palmer looks away from Gibbs, away from Breena, nods his head)

Gibbs: "Palmer, what do you think courage is?"

Palmer: "Being fearless, I guess. Like you"

Gibbs: "Jimmy, that's more wrong than you'll ever know...Courage is not the lack of fear. Courage is being afraid, but doing what you have to do anyway...(Gibbs pauses, thinks, then continues)...Courage is born when Fear is faced. That's what you did"

(Gibbs turns to Breena)

Gibbs: "I've seen brave men, I've seen cowards. Your husband...your husband, Breena, is one of the bravest men I've ever known. I'd go to war with him anytime"

(Gibbs kisses Breena on top of her head, she looks up, tearfully, in gratitude)

Breena: "Yes, he is. Thank you for telling him that, sir. It means so much to him"

Gibbs: "I know, Breena...Now, Palmer?"

Palmer: "Yes, sir?"

Gibbs: "Get well. Mend the head....I want it fixed so I can slap it"

Palmer: (smile) "Yes sir...(groggily) Hey, did you know I'm so hungry I might wolf my food down...(weak haha)"

(Gibbs rolls his eyes, as does Ducky, both shaking their heads as they leave room. Ducky mentions something about a talk with Palmer.... Palmer closes his eyes, the feeling of respect and affirmation filling him. His wife holds his hand....proudly. He hurts, but he's a happy man. He peacefully sleeps)

THE END