

THERE ARE WORSE THINGS OUT THERE

Written by

Kenneth Quinnell

334 19th St NE
Washington, D.C. 20002
850-339-4600
quinnelk@gmail.com

FADE IN.

EXT. JACKSON HOSPITAL - DAY

A V-22 Osprey hovers over a rural hospital surrounded by North Florida forests. The rectangular building is only four stories high. A portion of the roof is crumbling. A sign in front says "Jackson Hospital."

JOHNSON pilots the ship. She's a Black woman in her late 20s.

JOHNSON

No way we can land on the roof.

Next to Johnson sits SGT. COLE, a white man in his late 40s. He is clearly in charge.

SGT. COLE

Land in the parking lot.

Johnson flies the helicopter towards a mostly empty parking lot. The hospital appears to be abandoned. The parking lot is weedy, unkempt and has scattered litter.

The CAMERA flies back to see the remaining crew, all soldiers, all dressed in fatigues.

DIXON is a short, but muscular, Black man in his early 20s, he wears glasses.

MCEWAN is a white woman in her late 20s, she has long-ish brown hair tied up in a bun. She's almost as tall as Dixon.

HALL is an overweight and short white man in his early 20s. He also wears glasses and has brown hair.

JOVANOFSKI is a tall muscular white man in his mid-20s. He has brown hair and a handlebar mustache.

WILLIAMS is a Venezuelan-American man in his mid-20s of average height and build.

WHITE is a Black man of average height and weight in his mid-20s.

DIXON

Why the fuck are we even stopping here? We haven't seen a single one of those things since we left Tyndall. We're wasting our damn time!

Johnson sets the Osprey down on the parking lot. Nothing moves that isn't blown by the propeller.

SGT. COLE

We're stopping because I said we're stopping. We didn't fly all this way not to even take a look.

MCEWAN

Ricky is right, I want to shoot some of those motherfuckers. I've got some payback I want to deliver.

McEwan rubs her face where a red handprint is burned into her right cheek.

SGT. COLE

Shit, McEwan, how many of these things you killed? 75? 100? How much payback you gotta get?

She doesn't respond.

SGT. COLE (CONT'D)

Alright everyone, get the hell out there and sweep the area. If any of those... things... are out there, I want them found.

They start to file out of the Osprey.

EXT. JACKSON HOSPITAL - LATER

SUPER: Ten minutes later

Johnson leans against the helicopter, Sgt. Cole stands nearby.

Dixon, White and McEwan come around one side of the building, weapons ready. Hall, Jovanofski and Williams come around the other.

DIXON

Nothing.

HALL

Clear. I guess we're going to have to go all the way to Tallahassee next.

JOVANOFSKI

That'd be cool.

Sgt. Cole takes a few steps towards the building and stares at the front entrance.

JOVANOFSKI (CONT'D)

I always wanted to see Doak Campbell Stadium. We never played there, but I heard it was one of the best.

DIXON

Dude, it's sweet. I never played there either, but I visited as a recruit.

Sgt. Cole continues to stare at the front entrance. Something moves inside.

SGT. COLE

Pipe down, we need to get the hell out of here and back to Panama City. We will be going to Tallahassee tomorrow morning, so get some rest.

WILLIAMS

Who the hell is that?

McEwan turns and aims her MRAD rifle at a figure coming out of the building. This is TAYLOR. He's a tall, thin white man in his mid-20s wearing fatigues, but of a different color than Sgt. Cole and his crew.

SGT. COLE

Stand down, McEwan, that's not one of those... things... it's a man. And he looks like he's wearing fatigues. Let's find out who the hell this guy is.

Taylor wearily moves from the doorway into the open. He can't believe what he is seeing.

TAYLOR

Hello?

Hesitant, feeling out the armed group staring at him in disbelief.

Sgt. Cole steps forward and offers a salute to Taylor.

In response, Taylor snaps to attention and returns the salute.

SGT. COLE
At ease, lieutenant.

Taylor visibly relaxes.

SGT. COLE (CONT'D)
What's your name, son?

TAYLOR
Sir, my name is Lieutenant John C.
Taylor.

Sgt. Cole waves towards the hospital.

SGT. COLE
And what are you doing out here,
son?

TAYLOR
Sir, I guess... I'm looking for...
you.

SGT. COLE
Well, you've found us. Where are
you coming from?

Sgt. Cole eyes Taylor's sidearm.

TAYLOR
Sir, I've just been wandering
around looking for... people. I
haven't seen anyone since, well,
since... it happened. Well, I've
seen some of those things...

Hall and Williams exchange a look of fear.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)
Took out quite a few of them before
I ran out of ammo.

SGT. COLE
Those... dead things?

TAYLOR
Sir, yes sir! At first.

Sgt. Cole maintains a straight face. The others grow more
concerned.

SGT. COLE
At first?

TAYLOR
Sir, yes sir! There are worse
things out there.

Beat.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)
Worse things than those dead
things. Sir.

Sgt. Cole looks around at Johnson and the rest of the crew,
uncertain for the first time.

JOHNSON
Sir, we should debrief Taylor on
our way back, we need to get back.

SGT. COLE
Uhhh... right.

He shaken. He gathers himself and takes charge again.

SGT. COLE (CONT'D)
You heard the man. Everyone pack it
up. Taylor? Up front, where I can
talk to you.

Everyone starts moving towards the Osprey.

TAYLOR
Sir, yes sir! Request permission to
fly us... wherever it is we're
going.

Johnson pauses and looks at Sgt. Cole. Cole looks back and
forth between Taylor and Johnson.

SGT. COLE
You can fly?

Taylor nods.

TAYLOR
Sir, yes sir!

SGT. COLE
Okay, good to know we have another
pilot on the team. Johnson, hop in
back. Taylor, let's see what you
can do.

JOHNSON
Yessir.

Johnson doesn't seem to care.

TAYLOR

Sir, yes sir! I haven't flown since it happened. I've started to miss it a bit.

INT. V-22 OSPREY - LATER

Taylor excitedly pilots the Osprey over the forest. The Gulf of Mexico is visible in the distance. Sgt. Cole sits in the co-pilot's seat.

TAYLOR

(loudly)

I call them blights. I'm not sure why, but the phrase popped into my head when I saw the first one and it's pretty much stuck with me ever since.

From the back, Dixon leans forward and yells towards Taylor.

DIXON

Blights?

WILLIAMS

What the hell kind of name is that to call something?

Taylor shrugs.

TAYLOR

Make fun all you want, you won't be laughing when you run into one of these things.

SGT. COLE

Pipe down, back there, I want to hear this.

Sgt. Cole shoots Dixon a look. Dixon shuts his mouth and leans back. Johnson quickly scratches every word Taylor says into a small wire-bound notebook.

TAYLOR

They were hard to describe, but they were all black and leathery and had wings like a bat under their arms.

The crew in the back reacts with disbelief.

WILLIAMS
(under his breath)
Get the fuck out of here.

Jovanofski chuckles.

TAYLOR
(frightened)
They had no eyes, no mouth, no facial features or hair of any kind. They can fly, but not all that well. They don't track you real well, but they know where you are. You can outrun them, but don't run in a straight line.

Even Sgt. Cole is taken aback.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)
I was lucky. I was running from the first one I saw and I tripped and fell. That's the only thing that saved my life. It... it sounded like an explosion, but it had sort of a... metallic sound to it. Kind of like a clang or something. I didn't really see it, but I felt it pass over my head. It was hot and it had a sulfuric smell.

The soldiers are silent with disbelief.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)
God, it stunk to high heaven. I have no idea what it was and I never saw any of these things with weapons. I did see what it hit, though, a car that was right in front of me. The car was sliced in half.

Beat.

MCEWAN
(visibly shaken)
What the hell did you do?

TAYLOR
I got the hell out of there. There wasn't anything else to do but run. I was armed, but I wasn't taking any chances with that fucking thing.

(MORE)

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

Like I said, they don't seem to see very well and it didn't follow me, but I didn't take any chances.

Sgt. Cole thinks for a second.

SGT. COLE

You saw more than one of these things?

Taylor veers the Osprey towards the Gulf.

TAYLOR

Yes sir. I've seen about a half dozen of them since I left Ft. Benning. Mostly, they were solo, but one time, I ran across three of them. They didn't see me. I got a brief glimpse of what one of them could do and, well...

Everyone is quiet.

SGT. COLE

Blights you say?

TAYLOR

Yes sir. Luckily, I've been able to stay out of their sight lines... or echolocation or whatever it is they do. They haven't seen me. But I've sure as hell seen them. And I've stayed out of sight as much as possible. I figured if there was no one at any of the bases down here, at least I'd be close to the water.

Hall leans forward, yelling to be heard over the Osprey.

HALL

And you walked the whole way?

TAYLOR

Sure, what the hell else was I going to do? I high-tailed it because there wasn't anything else to do and I'm the kind that gets real bored by myself, so I hoofed it. Hell, I'd still be walking if I hadn't heard this baby.

Taylor pats his hand on the Osprey's instrument panel.

MCEWAN

Why didn't you just fly a chopper,
you obviously can fly one?

Taylor lowers the Osprey's altitude as they fly towards the Gulf.

TAYLOR

Only places I've been around with
any birds have been the same places
that have the blights. I don't know
if it's a coincidence or what, but
wherever there were military bases,
I saw those things.

Dixon starts checking his M4, making sure it's ready.

DIXON

Great, we're headed back to Tyndall
now. Maybe we'll get to see one of
these jokers up close. I haven't
added a blight to my collection
yet.

He and Jovanofski high five.

TAYLOR

Keep laughing. I won't be laughing
with you.

White finally speaks up. He's a jumpy guy.

WHITE

You know why these things are at
the military bases, don't you?

HALL

White finally joins the convo.

Laughter.

WILLIAMS

Enlighten us, White. This ought to
be entertaining.

WHITE

Why do you think they're there? The
government made these things.

DIXON

Sure, the government made blights.
Where'd they do it, Area 51.

Dixon and Jovanofski laugh loudly.

WHITE

No, you moron. Area 51 is where they test secret military aircraft, these things were made in Atlanta.

MCEWAN

What the fuck are you talking about?

WHITE

The CDC. Don't you people know anything. These things and those dead things, they've all gotta be part of some messed-up biological experiment out of the Centers for Disease Control.

Everyone is skeptical.

WHITE (CONT'D)

They've been taking instructions from the U.N. for decades and experimenting on Americans in order to find the perfect weapon. Originally, it was for the Commies, but these days, I'm sure they focused it on the rag-heads. Why else would they do such a thing?

DIXON

White, were you dropped on your head as a kid? Your momma have butterfingers?

Most of the crew laughs.

WHITE

Fuck you, Dixon. And fuck the rest of you. I've known about this shit for years. Just because your heads are in the sand doesn't mean mine is. You can't fool me, I know who did this shit. We tried to warn them. All of them. Now they're all dead and gone. Literally.

Sgt. Cole turns around and looks White directly in the eyes.

SGT. COLE

I've been a part of that government for 37 years, White. You saying that I'm in on this one?

(MORE)

SGT. COLE (CONT'D)

You saying that the Army that I've fought and bled for, the country I love and have killed to defend, the flag that I still pledge allegiance to every morning, you saying that I'm in on this?

White looks down and away.

SGT. COLE (CONT'D)

Then shut the fuck up.

Dixon and Jovanofski laugh again.

DIXON

Stupid motherfucker. Hey Sarge, we gotta keep this retard with us?

White looks up.

Sgt. Cole looks him in the eye again.

White turns away and looks out the window.

SGT. COLE

We're approaching the base. Everybody pipe down. Taylor, take us toward the north end of the base, you'll see the helipad. Right over there.

Sgt. Cole points towards a helipad set a little bit away from the buildings of the military base.

TAYLOR

Sir, yes sir. I see it.

Beat.

SGT. COLE

What the hell am I seeing here?

Everyone cranes to see out the windows.

TAYLOR

I think I've seen this type of thing before. If it... or they... are still here, everybody better reload and be ready. We're in a world of shit.

Taylor sets the helicopter set down amongst what is best described as devastation. Buildings are broken and battered, dead bodies and body parts lay everywhere.

WHITE

Wait... why are we landing?

SGT. COLE

Because I fucking said we're landing. Set it down.

Taylor does.

Nothing moves on the ground. Nothing makes a sound other than the Osprey.

The team unloads from the Osprey, weapons ready.

SGT. COLE (CONT'D)

Keep it down, I don't want to hear any chatter. Check the people on the ground, see if anyone's alive.

WHITE

Nobody's even still in one piece, much less alive.

White picks up a severed foot and examines it for a second. Sgt. Cole glares at him. White tosses the foot aside.

SGT. COLE

Keep quiet. Check the bodies. Slowly make your way toward the command center, but keep your eyes open as you move. If this was the work of those "blights," we need to be ready.

The team fans out, picking among the bodies and parts on the ground. But nobody else touches anything.

They carefully make their way towards the entrance of a barracks building. The door is split diagonally in half. Whatever did it scorched the walls on either side of the door, too.

Jovanofski, Williams and Hall move debris out of the way. The others cover them.

SGT. COLE (CONT'D)

Careful. We're obviously dealing with some serious shit here. Keep your eyes peeled and your weapons ready.

Dixon steps through the doorway first.

He's met with a volley of bullets that barely miss his head. He drops backwards and smacks his head on the blacktop as he falls.

McEwan and Sgt. Cole return fire. Williams and Hall pull Dixon out of the way.

From inside, they hear screaming.

PRITSKY (O.S.)
Cease fire! Cease fire! Stop
shooting you idiots, it's me,
Pritsky!

Sgt. Cole holds up a fist.

SGT. COLE
Hold your fire!

PRITSKY peeks around the side of the door, AR-15 at the ready. He's a white man in his early 30s. His hair is somewhere in the realm of white to blonde.

Once the soldiers see his face, they relax.

DIXON
What the fuck are you doing,
shooting at me like that! You
almost killed me!

Pritsky rushes forward, nervous, eyes darting around at everything.

PRITSKY
Is it here? Have you seen it?

DIXON
What the fuck is wrong with you?

Dixon walks up and gets into Pritsky's face.

DIXON (CONT'D)
I said you almost killed me!

PRITSKY
Sorry. Now if you don't get out of
my face and get the hell out of
here, something else is going to
kill you.

MCEWAN
Seriously, did you say "it"? You
mean that ONE thing is responsible
for all this destruction?

McEwan waves her arms at the scattered bodies.

PRITSKY

Yes. There was just one of them. I saw it not even a half an hour ago. I can't believe you didn't see it. It was all over the place. It was unstoppable.

HALL

You alone?

Pritsky nods.

PRITSKY

We tried to shoot it down, but we couldn't hit it or if we did, we didn't hurt it. It just started throwing some kind of... energy or something. It ripped people in half. And buildings.

He gestures to the broken building behind him.

SGT. COLE

Calm down, Pritsky, what's the situation? How many dead? How many living? What about the... dead things... are they still locked up?

Pritsky rests a hand on Cole's shoulder. The sergeant lets him.

PRITSKY

Cole, everyone is dead. I'm the only one who survived. It killed every last man, woman and child. They're all dead. They've all been totally wiped out.

SGT. COLE

Dammit, Pritsky, what about those... things?

PRITSKY

It ate them.

SGT. COLE

What the fuck are you talking about! Taylor, I thought you said these things had no mouths, no facial features!

TAYLOR

I did.

He doesn't offer anything else. He's scared shitless.

PRITSKY

It didn't eat them with a mouth. It sort of... sucked them in through its whole face. It just sort of sucked them in.

No one believes him. Except Taylor.

SGT. COLE

It didn't do the same to the people?

PRITSKY

No, Cole, it just killed them. It killed them all.

DIXON

And ate the dead things. That's just some fucked up shit!

He starts waving his AR-15 around at everything.

JOVANOFSKI

No fucking kidding!

They hear an explosion that has a metallic clang to it.

Pritsky and Taylor drop to the ground at the familiar sound. Sgt. Cole's crew quickly follows.

WHITE

(under his breath)
Shit. Shit. Shit.

White starts indiscriminately firing, hitting nothing.

SGT. COLE

Cut the shit, White! Everyone get into the defensive formation we practiced.

The team scrambles from the ground and spread out, weapons ready.

The barracks building behind them has taken another hit from... something. It starts to crumble.

Then they all see IT coming out of the forest.

The BLIGHT looks just like Taylor described it, black and leathery with giant bat-wings. With no facial features.

It leaps into the air and flies ten feet closer to them.

When it lands, it keeps its arms and wings spread. A flash of light emanates from the wings and flies forward in a wave. It is loud and has a metallic clang.

They all quickly fall to the ground and the wave of light flies over their heads. It hits the barracks building and the rest of it crashes to the ground.

SGT. COLE (CONT'D)

Fire!

Everyone opens fire on the Blight. They all hit it. Repeatedly.

None of the rounds even makes the creature flinch.

It sends another blast wave of energy at them, missing them. It smashes into another building.

SGT. COLE (CONT'D)

Stop firing! Stop firing! Don't waste the ammo. It's useless.

The firing stops.

HALL

(trembling)

Sir, what should we do?

TAYLOR

We need to get outta here, these things can't be hurt.

WHITE

I'm not ready to die yet, especially not at the hands of some blind demon-bat thing. Let's get in the helicopter and jet!

Sgt. Cole looks from Taylor to the Blight.

SGT. COLE

Calm down, calm down. If we run now, we'll have to run again. The thing is blind and slow. We need to find a way to kill these things or they're going to come back and kick us in the ass.

(MORE)

SGT. COLE (CONT'D)
White, get over to the helicopter
and grab the grenade launcher.

WHITE
Fuck that, I'm not moving!

He doesn't.

SGT. COLE
You're the closest and we need to
get that launcher before that thing
gets any closer. Now get the fuck
over there and grab it.

Reluctantly, White moves toward the Osprey. He climbs inside.
He doesn't come back.

MCEWAN
Fucking White, where the fuck is
he?

Sgt. Cole looks towards the Osprey.

SGT. COLE
Don't worry, McEwan, I'll get him.
White, get your ass out here!

The blight turns in their direction and leaps 10 feet closer.
White sticks his head out of the Osprey.

WHITE
I just found it. The damn thing was
hidden.

He steps out of the Osprey, holding the grenade launcher.

SGT. COLE
Shut the fuck up and shoot, you
idiot!

WHITE
Fuck that, I can't use one of these
things! Here, you take it!

He hurls the grenade launcher toward Sgt. Cole.

JOHNSON
I got it, sir!

Johnson is closer and he catches it.

Another loud clang and an energy wave takes off Johnson's head.

The Blight leaps 10 feet closer. It's now less than 15 feet from the first of the squad. Hall and Williams start shooting at it again, to no avail.

McEwan scrambles and picks up the launcher.

She fires both rounds at the Blight.

Both hit the thing's left wing, exploding and make it disappear. It lets out a high-pitched screech, the sound making everyone hold their heads. Several fall to the ground in agony. Williams, Hall and Jovanofski, closest to the Blight, have blood running from their ears.

It leaps backwards, nearly falling over.

It turns and bounds away, screeching from some unknown place inside as it goes.

Gradually, the intense sound dies down.

The team starts to recover.

Sgt. Cole stands up. He walks over to White. He pulls out his sidearm and shoots White in the head.

The body falls to the ground.

Nobody says anything.

Sgt. Cole puts the sidearm away.

SGT. COLE

Taylor, it looks like you are our new pilot. Get us the fuck out of here! Take us to Tallahassee. Let's see if the governor is home. I contributed a whole hell of a lot of money to his campaign, he owes me one. Or two.

TAYLOR

Sir, yes sir!

They start to load into the Osprey.

FADE OUT.