

GAME MASTER
DIARIES

Smackdown
Part II

CHRISTOPHER LIVINGSTON

Episode Four

Terror Begins

BRIEFING (READ ALOUD)

As usual, as soon as you are all in your seats, the door to the meeting room is flung open and Colonel Thomas J Masters steps into the room, on time to the second. You all respectfully give him your attention and he immediately begins your mission briefing.

“Gentlemen, it’s good to see you again. Just for the record, the higher-ups were disappointed in the outcome of your last mission so I told them to go to hell. It wasn’t your fault that Al-Meshud wasn’t where we told you he would be. For what it’s worth I think that y’all did a helluva job.

As a side note, our old contact FIREBRAND has been continually feeding us Intel that has led to the capture and violent demise of a number of wanted high level Pakistani Taliban; so I still feel that he is on the up-and-up; but I digress.

For this new mission you guys are going to be shipping out to Mogadishu, Somalia lovingly called “The Mog”. African-Command needs you to surveil a high level player in the Al-Shabaab organization; his name is Abuu Mansour. We believe that he has some serious familial ties with the pirates who have been running rampant in Somalia and that he may be brokering some type of deal between his Al-Qaeda and his pirate friends. Africom has reason to believe that the pirates have been smuggling weapons and supplies to Al-Shabbab for their upcoming offensive against the “government” there. The only reason that the pirates would want to help these 9th Century warriors is that they are being promised some type of sanctuary in the event that Al-Shabbab eventually seizes control of all of Somalia.

For this mission you will insert via local transport and you will be accompanied by two locals working for “a government agency”. You will then proceed on foot to take up positions so that you can both see and hear what transpires at this meeting. You will then await further instructions from African Command about how they will want you to proceed.

There is a slight chance that you will be asked to spot for either a helicopter or an AC-130 gunship strike against them. In the event that this transpires, make sure that you stay outside of the effective range of these weapons. I’d hate to see you all come home in pieces.

Men, this mission is going to be a bit less dangerous than your usual shoot-and scoot variety. However, I want to remind you to keep your guard up and your head down. I know that I do not have to remind you what Al-Qaeda will do to you in the event that you are captured. As a reminder, I have included some recently recovered information about what Al-Qaeda does to those that they capture before taking a sword and beheading them...

As always, good luck, and God speed. If you have no further questions, you are dismissed.”

CAMPAIGN LOG

Episode 4 began with a briefing and update from Delta Force’s Colonel Thomas J Masters. He instructed his Delta team that they would be traveling to Mogadishu to run surveillance and possibly disrupt an anti-ship missile sale between members of Al-Shabbab, their local Somali pirate contacts, and members of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. Masters also passed around copies of the recently discovered AQ torture manual as a reminder about the consequences of allowing a teammate to fall into the hands of terrorists...

Eighteen hours later both teams loaded into the bed of their local contact’s old yet durable Toyota truck stifling the need to pass out as they jostled towards the small trash-strewn hill near the target house. At the hill the team was instructed by their “other agency” contacts that the team would



simply need to use their two-way walkie-talkie to call for extraction after completion of their mission, however, the team was alarmed when they were informed that their extraction had to happen before nightfall; otherwise they were “On their own.” As the truck sped away Lee checked his watch and it displayed that the time was 3:26 p.m.

The Delta operators then split into two groups with the first group comprising Lawrence McHenry (a PC dressed as a woman wearing a traditional hijab), and Master Sergeant Jerry (an African-American NPC dressed in local garb as well). The second group was made up of Lieutenant Lee (a PC posing as a photojournalist) and Trey Nation (a PC acting as Lee’s cameraman equipped with a leather satchel that contained an H&K G36C and grenades, should the group need them).

After the rusty truck drove-off, McHenry and Jerry set off to the building across the street from the target house (listed as “1” on the map) and Nation and Lee went towards a decrepit shanty (labeled as “2” on the map) also across the street from the target. McHenry and Jerry found their ex-hardware store unoccupied and broke out their supplies: Jerry took out his rangefinder, handgun, and communications equipment while McHenry shed his feminine garb to reveal s SAW heavy machine-gun.

Lee and Nation came up behind their house and found that the entrance would make them visible to the RPG wielding gunner, who was perched on top of the target building, so they took a shortcut and kicked in the rear of the structure. As Lee's skinny frame went through the rear of the shack four children ran out the front door and screamed all the way down the street. While Lee was sure that all of the guards at the target house would investigate why the children left the shack screaming, luckily, they did not. After listening to their hearts thud in their chests for a couple of minutes, Nation and Lee also took out their supplies: Lee his silenced Beretta and Nation his H&K G36C.

Lawrence McHenry was the first to notice that there was a small 'technical' parked outside of the target building with a mounted 12.7mm DShK machine gun. However, both the gunner and the driver were busy chewing khat and not paying too much attention to their surroundings. After a quick com-check, both groups readied themselves for their target.

Nearly thirty minutes later, a man in traditional clothing came out of the target building and began to berate all of the doped-up guards. The men readied their weapons and a few even

spit out the qaat that they had been chewing. The teams assumed that this man and the guards were pirates as Al-Shabbab did not tolerate drug use. This theory was reinforced as six large men with Ak-74s wearing all black and with matching black turbans came out of the target house and formed a third-world honor guard with their weapons at attention. "This must be the Al-Shabbab welcoming committee," Lee informed his men over their headsets.

Moments later, a white Toyota truck drove down the street to the roadblock. Within seconds it was waved through and drove up to the target house. Lee thought to himself that their intelligence was on the money so far...for once.

Aman with a long scraggly brown beard exited the passenger side of the truck and two other men hopped out of the bed of the truck. They were all carrying AKs and the leader motioned for the truck to park behind the target building. They were greeted by the Al-Shabbab members in all black and the customary greetings ensued.

Lee radioed back to head quarters that they were viewing the introduction of what appeared to be



AQAP personal with Al-Shabbab members. Lee asked for further instructions and was told to wait one. As the white Toyota's engine turned off there was a loud crack and the lead man collapsed on to the dusty street dead. Milliseconds later a second crack sounded and the RPG gunner on top of the target building dropped lifelessly to the roof.

All hell broke loose as pirates, Al-Shabbab troopers, and the remaining AQAP members fired randomly in all directions. Bullets flew through the shack where Lee and Nation were and they prudently hit the ground. McHenry noticed the DShK gunner rack a round into his large weapon as the pirate swung its long barrel towards him. Without thinking, McHenry placed his SAW's bipod onto a debris-ridden table and opened fire. The gunner never knew what blew him off the back of the truck and the driver cranked his technical into gear and drove down the street attempting to avoid incoming rounds. However, this was not to be, and as another crack rang out, the driver's brains and skull were splattered onto the dash board and his crumpled body drove the technical straight into the roadblock.

At this time a large number of people began swarming into the streets from all directions wielding weapons and firing indiscriminately into buildings. As Lawrence McHenry lay back against the table he was using for cover he noticed that a group of three men ran into a market building on the western side of the street and that as soon as they entered he heard a quick staccato of firing. Seconds later only one of the three men who entered stumbled out of the building bloody for bullet wounds and was struck twice more in the chest and face-planted onto the street.

A group of guards who were stationed at the roadblock by the now sedentary technical rushed up to the same building and stormed in. Again McHenry heard a large exchange of gunfire but this time he saw someone leap out of a third story window onto the roof of the building behind it. As McHenry tried to understand what he was seeing, the group of Somali men who had just stormed in the building came out with a bloodied and beaten man between them. The Somali's drug the captured man to the house behind McHenry and Jerry; Jerry followed the men with his gun and asked McHenry what to do. Lawrence didn't answer because he had no idea what to say.

Lee and Nation could not see the action with the snipers but were uninterested since they had problems of their own. After the initial shots had been exchanged and the lead Arab lay dead, the Al-Shabbab members began to run towards the house where Lee and Nation were holed up. Nation handed Lee his G36 and tossed a fragmentation grenade into the mass of black-robed Al-Shabbab members. The grenade went off with a loud bang and when Lee peered out of the makeshift window with the G36 ready to fire he saw the damage that the grenade had caused. All six of the Al-Shabbab members were down and Lee did not see any movement from them. He instead engaged one of the men who was taking cover behind some sandbags near the entrance to the target house. The two men exchanged fire as Trey Nation took the silenced pistol and went out of the back of the shack to make sure that they

were not flanked. Nation leaned against a dumpster and awaited targets of opportunity with his new silenced handgun.

Finally, Lee dropped the attacker with a 5.56 round to his skull and called on his walkie-talkie for their contact to come and extract them. They were told in no uncertain terms that they were on their own from now on as apparently the entire city of Mogadishu was now a war-zone. Their “other agency” contacts even informed them that they had seen African Union tanks and other heavy armor engaging targets and moving in their direction. Then, there was no response from the contacts via the walkie-talkie...

Lee then used his head-set and in between firing at Somali targets told McHenry to raise headquarters and to get them a secondary extraction plan as soon as possible. McHenry radioed in to their superiors and were told that AF-Command could scramble some Black Hawks but that they would be at least twenty to thirty minutes out. McHenry was also informed that the group would somehow have to find an extraction point that wasn't full of angry hostiles.

While McHenry was informing Lee of what headquarters had told him, Jerry informed him that there was a man across the street and was motioning that he was going to come to them. Lawrence McHenry couldn't believe his ears but as he looked out his window a white man with an unshaved face, a Dragunov sniper rifle slung over his shoulder and a .45 Barak pistol in his hands, ran through the streets full of angry and armed Somalis towards them. The man was almost shot by a Somali who was running by but Jerry dropped the hostile with a shot to the man's throat. The unknown runner burst through the door just as AK rounds sprayed against the outside of the hardware store and McHenry raised his weapon up and dropped three more hostiles who were firing in their direction. Jerry slammed the door on its broken hinges closed and Lawrence pointed his SAW at the mystery man and asked him who the hell he was. The man said that his name was Yasabi (a PC from the first three missions who is now an NPC); he works for Mossad, and had been attached to an F.B.I. team who had recently taken down a Somali terror cell in Minneapolis. (He is referencing the first three missions in the campaign) Yasabi told the men that he and his partner were tasked with ensuring that there was not an exchange with AQAP today and that his spotter had been captured. He asked if the two American Delta Force operators would help him get his man back in exchange for a ride out of town courtesy of some African Union tanks.

McHenry and Jerry were incredulous but the story was so insane that they felt that it had to be true. Also, they needed that ride out. McHenry radioed Lee who was still dropping attackers at the target house and told them of their new plan. Lee grunted his approval and continued firing. Trey Nation, who was crouched next to the dumpster behind Lee, saw a group armed Solamis approaching the group from their rear near the trash hill. He controlled his breathing and shot the first target square in the chest. As the man fell from sight Trey began to worry for the first time that day that they may not make it out alive.

In the ex-hardware store, Jerry had decided that he and Yasabi would go and try to rescue the spotter while McHenry provided covering fire with his SAW. The two men exited the building through a broken window on the northern side of the house, crawled underneath a trash truck that probably had not been used in over a decade, and stood outside of the opening of the house that contained the captured Israeli. Jerry could see that there were three men in the room with the captured spotter and that one man was wearing a black armband. Jerry assumed that this meant that the man was a member of Al-Shabbab. The Al-Shabbab man was forcing a metal prod into the shoulder wound of the Israeli captive and that is when Jerry struck.

Jerry went into the aging structure and put a bullet into the head of the Al-Shabbab interrogator while Yasabi put two rounds into the chest of the nearest man. As Jerry advanced on the remaining Somali the man grabbed a bloody piece of metal that had been used on the spotter. Jerry quickly reached the Somali and struggled with the would-be assailant until the Somali managed to stick the rusty metal into Jerry's right arm. As Jerry stumbled back from the penetrating blow, Yasabi put three shots into the Somali's torso and chest.

Back in the ex-hardware store, Lawrence McHenry was also beginning to worry. He had shot a half-dozen armed Somalis who had gotten too close, but as he reloaded the SAW with his last box magazine, he too began to wonder if they would make it out alive. He chambered a round, popped up, and plugged a Somali who was literally inches away from him in the southern window. Seconds later, hearing onrushing sounds, Lawrence McHenry turned towards the broken door just as it was kicked in. A toothless Somali wearing only cut-off shorts, sandals, a doped-up frown, and wielding an AK-47 came in the room. McHenry held in the trigger of his weapon while aiming at the man but nothing happened. As the Somali's face turned from a sinister frown to a sinister smirk, the man raised his weapon to fire. Instinctively, McHenry threw the SAW directly into the man's face and pounced on top of the man. McHenry thumbed in the man's right eye as he pummeled him with blows to his face and throat. As Lawrence McHenry began to feel the Somali's life drain away from him another Somali stuck his weapon in the southern window of the hardware store and let loose an entire magazine from his AK. Lawrence McHenry collapsed on top of the Somali with six wounds to his chest and with two to his cranium. Lawrence McHenry never even saw the man who killed him.

As Lawrence McHenry lay lifeless on a Somali hardware store floor, the rumble of approaching African Union tanks could be felt by Trey Nation. Even though he was engaging targets with his handgun, he felt that something was wrong and asked Lawrence to check in. After asking several times, Lee interrupted by ordering Lawrence to give a sit-rep. None was forthcoming and Lee told Trey that he was coming out the back of the house to assess the situation.

As Lee came out the back of the shanty, Jerry, Yasabi and his battered but breathing spotter found the corpse of Lawrence McHenry with a Somali looting his effects. Jerry closed the

distance between them, emptied his handgun into the man's back, and immediately checked for any signs of life from his beloved comrade. There were none.

Jerry informed Trey and Lee about McHenry's demise. Lee ordered Jerry to gather together McHenry's corpse, weapon, and personal effects and to meet up with him. While Jerry followed his unwelcome orders, Trey and Lee began concentrating fire on the Somali's near the trash hill where Lee believed they should meet up with the African Union troops. Using the cover that was available and using their new-found sense of anger, the two Delta operators pushed back any signs of resistance and made their way methodically towards the hill. Bodies dotted the area all around the trash-strewn area; most of them with a single hole in their heads.

When the two operators reached the trash hill Lee radioed Jerry that he and his Israeli friends should carefully relocate back to trash hill where the mission essentially began. All of the operators were running low on ammunition and were now all carrying discarded Somali AKs. Moments later, Jerry and his Israelis met up with Lee and Trey. Jerry's anguish was plastered on his face and Lee had no words to console him with.

The five of them were perched in a tight circle with AK barrels pointed in all directions like a hedgehog. Yasabi thanked them all for assisting him and his partner and asked if he could borrow their communications to try to get a hold of the African Union troops. Lee simply handed the man his headset and Yasabi chatted with his contacts to let them know where they were and that they should expect to make space for two more bodies.

With trash circling around them and with small-arms fire dying down around them, Trey spotted the snouts of the African Union tanks and APCs coming down the road towards them. Yasabi cautiously got on his knees and waved his arms frantically to get their attention while the rest of the group scanned for any signs of trouble. There was no trouble to be had and ten minutes later the three living Delta operators, the one Delta corpse, and two Israelis were tucked safely away inside of an aging M113 armored personal vehicle heading for the African Union's base. Lee informed his superiors that he was en route to base with three Delta operators and one corpse. The voice on the other end of the line simply said, "Affirmative. One KIA. We'll see you back at base. Over and out."

That was the last time that Lawrence McHenry was ever mentioned over a communications net ever again. And for what?