

From Winter's Glen
By Don Zolidis

SAM, 28, a war photographer.

(SAM has returned home to Iowa after spending years photographing horrors around the world. After dealing with his own tragedy, he meets a strange girl at a local bar and brings her home with him. In this monologue, he explains one incident in Africa.)

SAM

I... uh... in Rwanda; I wasn't actually there for most of it, I came later for documentation... When they entered a village, the first thing they did was hamstringing everyone... women, children, everyone... cut their hamstrings so they couldn't move—then, you see, they were low on bullets, and for killing the weak you couldn't waste ammunition, so they would use machetes... to chop off the heads... Sometimes it would take them three days to clear a village. Three days. Of nothing but killing. They would get up at dawn, decapitate children for six hours... stop and eat lunch... They had nowhere to put anyone, so the living were left on the ground in the village, watching them do this. Waiting for their turn. And the killers ate lunch in the middle of them, like workmen... amidst the screams... and when their break was finished they would go back at it in the afternoon until their arms were too tired to move any more, until the machetes were too dull to cut through any more necks, and they would quit for the day... and those left alive would have to wait for the next morning and hope they were early, when the blades were still sharp... and the killers would go back to their tents, and get drunk till they passed out, and they'd wake up the next morning with hang-overs, and go back to work. You know what they thought about? When they did this? They thought: When am I going to need to sharpen the machete again?

(Pause)

And then I would come. And I would see this. The ruins of these people. The whole village smoldering with flies... And I'd take pictures. Afterwards I'd go home, get drunk, and wake up the next day with a hang-over. And you know what I thought about when I was there? I thought about how best to frame it. How to make the best composition. And I was worried about how much film I had left.