

THE
DIAMOND
TREE

An original screenplay by
Jack Felson

Jack Felson
email : jack_felson@hotmail.com

© Copyright 2019
This screenplay cannot be used or reproduced
without the express written permission of the author.

FADE IN

EXT. SEA PORT - DUSK

A big cruise boat arrives at Lagos sea port. Soon its passengers walk off it through the walkway.

Among them is a woman, white, well-dressed. CLAIRE HARPER, a British jeweller. Dragging one rolling baggage behind her, and wearing a handbag on one of her shoulders.

She keeps walking with the crowd along a long, large corridor, across the station, then across a market.

INT. MARKET - DUSK

Soon she gets away from the crowd with some other people, and we can see that she's alone, all by herself.

She doesn't want to miss the opportunity to make some shopping. Some of the shops she walks by are jewelleries. She looks at the stones, cheap for the most part.

So she doesn't look interested but she ends up inside...

INT. SHOP

... a bigger shop. The place is not empty. All kinds of valuable stones are exposed, with no prices. The SELLER is a male.

SELLER
(to her)
Anything you want to buy, lady ?

CLAIRE
(turning to him)
Just watching.

SELLER
Did you just get off the boat ?

He laughs.

CLAIRE
Actually, yes. But I'm just passing through.

SELLER
Are you sure about that ?

CLAIRE
Pretty sure. Why ?

SELLER
I always see new faces here. And I see them only one time. Where are you coming from ?

CLAIRE
England.

SELLER
Of course. Holiday ?

CLAIRE
Business.

SELLER
Are you here to meet your partner ?

CLAIRE
Not really.

SELLER
So you're not just passing through.

CLAIRE
I was talking about your shop.

SELLER
You'll be back.

She turns to him.

CLAIRE
We'll see about that.
(pointing)
How much for this one ?

The SELLER gives her the price using the Nigerian national currency, before converting it into British pounds.

CLAIRE
All right. Is there a possible discount ?

SELLER
I don't think so.

CLAIRE
I'll give you the night to think it
over.

SELLER
So I may see you again ?

CLAIRE
Maybe.

SELLER
Good. We'll see what happens.

CLAIRE
Fine.
(walking out)
Good night then.

SELLER
Good night. Enjoy Nigeria.

CLAIRE
I will.

She leaves the shop.

She keeps drifting across the market, then...

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

... she reaches the road and calls for a cab. One of them
stops by her.

There are two people on the back seat.

DRIVER
Where to, miss ?

She hesitates, then gives the driver the name of the place.
Then tries to get in the car. But the DRIVER doesn't let her.

DRIVER (cont'd)
How much ?

CLAIRE
(surprised)
What ?

DRIVER
How much for the ride ?

CLAIRE

Er... you mean the money ?

DRIVER

Of course ! How much ?

CLAIRE

Er...

DRIVER

How much are you ready to give me ?

CLAIRE

Er... is it far ?

DRIVER

(grinning)

Okay, get in.

(as she opens the back door)

You can come front.

CLAIRE

Really ?

DRIVER

Come on.

She gets in the car, taking the passenger's seat, putting her baggage on her thighs.

INT./EXT. TAXI - NIGHT

As the vehicle keeps rolling CLAIRE discovers the city of Lagos. Until the taxi ends up in front of the entrance of a 5-star hotel based downtown.

CLAIRE

Thank you.

She pays the DRIVER, giving him a big sum.

DRIVER

Many thanks ! Are you sure you don't need another ride tonight ?

CLAIRE

(shaking her head)

I'm sure.

She manages to get out of the cab.

INT. HOTEL - NIGHT

She enters the hotel and walks to the desk. The RECEPTIONIST is a woman.

RECEPTIONIST
Good evening.

CLAIRE
Good evening.

RECEPTIONIST
Do you have a booking ?

CLAIRE
Yes. Claire Harper.

RECEPTIONIST
Have you booked online ?

CLAIRE
Yes, I have. For one week.

RECEPTIONIST
Okay...

As she checks, CLAIRE looks around. And sees the kind of shops she likes.

RECEPTIONIST (cont'd)
Miss Harper ?

CLAIRE
(turning back to her)
Sorry.

RECEPTIONIST
May I have an ID please ?

CLAIRE
Sure.

She reaches herself and gives her her passport. Then she looks around again.

RECEPTIONIST
Miss Harper ?

CLAIRE
(turning back to her)
Yes ?

RECEPTIONIST

This is your passport.

(as CLAIRE takes it back)

And your key.

(giving her the key)

Fifth floor.

CLAIRE

Thanks.

RECEPTIONIST

Enjoy your stay.

CLAIRE

I will.

She walks away, towards a...

JEWELRY STORE

It's still open. She gets inside. Jewels, diamonds, sapphirs exposed all across, with this time their prices showed.

Prices that are way higher than they are at the boat station market.

She walks around rather quickly, then she leaves, rolling her bag behind her.

DISSOLVE TO :

INT. HOTEL - NIGHT

CLAIRE walks off an elevator on the fifth floor. She walks along a corridor to her door, using her key to open it.

She enters her room, closing the door behind her.

INT. HOTEL ROOM

After a break, she gets rid of the rolling baggage and takes out her mobile phone as she walks slowly to the windows, looking around, discovering her room. It's quite big and luxurious.

She reaches a window, with the night lights of Lagos before her.

She uses her phone and starts swearing.

CLAIRE

Shit ! Goddamned Africa...

She walks back to the door, leaving the frame empty. The CAMERA stays on the Lagos night lights.

CLAIRE (cont'd)
I hope I will find some WiFi in the lobby.

The CAMERA is still on the window as we can hear the sound of the door opening and closing.

DISSOLVE TO :

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

With the CAMERA still in the same position, showing the same view of Lagos, this time in daylight.

CUT TO :

INT. TAXI - DAY

CLAIRE is inside a taxi rolling across the city, on the back seat, between two black passengers.

INT. MARKET - DAY

She's inside the market, the same one she visited the day before, after getting off the boat. Walking to some specific point. Soon we find her in front of a shop.

INT. SHOP

The same one she visited the day before. The cheap jewelry's. The SELLER she dealt with is there.

He looks up, sees her and smiles.

SELLER
Oh, hello !

CLAIRE
Good morning.

There are a couple of other clients in the shop.

SELLER
So you came back.

CLAIRE
I told you I would.

SELLER

Didn't you find something you love
some place else ?

CLAIRE

No. What about you ? The discount ?

SELLER

I've slept on it. Like a baby.

CLAIRE

I see.

She goes to the stone she wants.

CLAIRE (cont'd)

This is a diamond, right ?

SELLER

Yes. Pure.

CLAIRE

Not forged, right ?

SELLER

Of course not.

CLAIRE

Sorry. I don't mean to hurt your
feelings. But I know forgery is one
major problem in Africa.

SELLER

I know. That's mostly the reason most
people here are convinced the stones
I expose here are imitations.

CLAIRE

Can I ask you a question ?

SELLER

Sure.

CLAIRE

How easy is it to imitate a diamond ?

SELLER

Are you in this business ?

CLAIRE

I'm a jeweller actually.

SELLER

Then you should know it's easy to imitate a diamond. But it's also very easy to recognize an imitation.

CLAIRE

How ?

SELLER

Very simple. Take a full glass of water, drop the stone in it. If it doesn't go straight to the bottom of the glass, it means it's a counterfeit.

CLAIRE

Very simple indeed.

SELLER

You just said you're a jeweller...

CLAIRE

Yes. I'm doing your same job in England.

SELLER

Oh. A fellow dealer.

CLAIRE

But I'm interested in something bigger.

SELLER

Diamonds.

CLAIRE

Yes.

SELLER

If you're looking for a guarantee of diamond purity, you'll have to dig deep.

CLAIRE

That might be what I plan to do.

SELLER

Except if you're lucky.

CLAIRE

What do you mean ?

SELLER
(vaguely)
There's a legend about trees that would
grow such stones.

CLAIRE
Really ?

SELLER
That's just a legend.

CLAIRE
Do you believe in the existence of
such a tree ?

SELLER
I just said, it's just a legend. A joke.
There's no such thing.

CLAIRE
Why did you mention it then ?

SELLER
Finding such a tree would be like
winning the most rigged lottery.
Forget it.

CLAIRE
Okay. So there are such things.

SELLER
Don't get worked up with that. Think
mines instead.

CLAIRE
Right.

SELLER
Diamonds come from the earth.

CLAIRE
I know.

SELLER
They don't grow on trees.

CLAIRE
Okay.

SELLER

And that's why a discount from me is
in your dreams.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

CLAIRE is back in her hotel room. She's seated in front of a table, a glass of water on it. And the stone she bought from the merchant.

She drops the stone in the water... and sees it go down to the bottom of the glass.

Then we find her in bed, awake and thinking.

Until she gets up.

EXT. SEA PORT - DAY

She walks directly to boat drivers. Asking them if they've heard of a legend about a tree that grows diamonds.

All of them say no. Except one who says it's just a legend.

She finally gives up, walking away.

EXT. RESTAURANT - DAY

CLAIRE has lunch on the outside part of a restaurant close to the port.

As she eats, she sees some people standing in a distance, talking together, looking at her once in a while.

After a moment, one of them walks in her direction. CLAIRE stops chewing, a little bit scared.

She's having her lunch alone at her table and the guy finally has a seat, facing her.

MAN

Don't be afraid. My name is Salim.

CLAIRE says nothing.

SALIM

We know somebody who might tell you
about that legend of yours.

CLAIRE

Really ?

SALIM

Yes. If you're still interested
you'll meet him tonight. He's not here
right now.

CLAIRE

All right...

SALIM

We'll tell him to meet you right here.
Is it good ?

CLAIRE

It is. Thanks.

SALIM

No problem. Try to be back here at
around 7 pm. He'll be here too.

He stands back up and walks away.

CLAIRE stays there, seated, not believing. She waits for the
little group to disperse, then she stands up and leaves in her
turn.

She keeps walking and arrives to a small two-floor hotel close
to the port.

INT. HOTEL - DAY

She gets inside, reaches the reception desk. There's one black
guy behind, dressed like a fisherman. He sees her coming to
him with round eyes. There is also a small woman behind the
desk, sitting and snoring.

CLAIRE

Hello.

RECEPTIONIST

Er... good morning.

CLAIRE

I want a room for one night. If
possible on the top floor, with a
view of the port.

The RECEPTIONIST gives her the price in the Nigerian national currency.

She takes out the sum and gives it to him, he gives her a key. She thanks him and walks away quickly.

She quickly goes upstairs, reaching the second floor. She finds her door and uses her key to get inside her room.

INT. HOTEL ROOM

It's a big, rather dirty cage. The bed has not been done properly, there is no air conditioner. It's very hot but CLAIRE doesn't seem to care.

She walks straight to the window. The port is right in front of her.

She looks discreetly down and sees none of the small group members around. She keeps looking for a little time.

Then she walks to the door, opens it, leaves the room.

INT. HOTEL

She walks the other way to the stairs.

She slowly walks down the stairs and finally, discreetly, checks out the reception desk.

She first sees nobody else than the receptionist. Then somebody comes in. A male. Black.

She watches him discreetly, not recognizing him as a member of the small group.

She slowly walks back upstairs, crossing two people. She reaches the second floor and walks across the small corridor, looking over her shoulder once, seeing nobody following or watching her.

She gets back inside her room.

INT. HOTEL ROOM

She walks back to her window and starts watching again. No suspect activity.

EXT. HOTEL ROOM

CARD -- 6.45 pm

It's getting dark. CLAIRE walks out of her room, sweating a lot. She closes the door, walks away.

EXT. HOTEL - DUSK

She leaves the hotel and walks towards the port.

EXT. RESTAURANT - DUSK

The restaurant front is full... almost. The CAMERA passes from one full table to another until it reaches CLAIRE's, occupied by her only, having dinner alone.

Two people - a couple - show up, about to take seats at her table.

CLAIRE
Sorry... it's occupied.

WOMAN
(upset)
Occupied ?

CLAIRE
I'm waiting for somebody. Sorry.

They leave reluctantly, after a short break.

DISSOLVE TO :

EXT. RESTAURANT - DUSK

CLAIRE looks at her watch. The guy seems to be late.

As she puts something in her mouth, a MAN shows up. Black, tall, not so well dressed.

He takes a seat facing her, not saying a word right away.

MAN
Hello.

CLAIRE
Hello.

A WAITER shows up.

WAITER
(to the newcomer)
What will it be, mister ?

MAN
(shaking his head)
Nothing.

CLAIRE
(showing her meal)
Give him the same thing.

MAN
I'm not hungry.

CLAIRE
I will pay.

WAITER
Very good.

He walks away.

MAN
I'm not hungry.

CLAIRE
I know. Whatever.

The MAN goes silent again.

CLAIRE (cont'd)
Hello ?

The MAN shows a slight smile, still saying nothing.

CLAIRE (cont'd)
Don't you have something to tell me ?

MAN
Sure.

CLAIRE
Your name, at least ?

MAN
I have nothing to tell you actually.

CLAIRE
Sorry ?

MAN
Not before we leave.

CLAIRE

I don't understand.

MAN

You do. There's nothing I can tell you about that thing you want to see.

CLAIRE

Nothing ?

MAN

Nothing. Until I take you there.

CLAIRE

You...

MAN

That's the only way I can trust you.

CLAIRE

You need to trust me ? When you don't know me ?

MAN

That's the point. Your money is not everything. It won't keep your mouth shut.

CLAIRE

I see.

MAN

If I tell you anything now, you will spread it all over the world within the hour.

CLAIRE

Oh. Thank you.

MAN

Trust always needs to go both ways. In any circumstances. I will take you only under that condition.

CLAIRE

That I keep my mouth shut.

MAN

No. That I don't tell you anything you may repeat right away.

He grins a little.

CLAIRE
You'll take me and nobody else.

MAN
Yes, of course. Only the two of us.

CLAIRE
Perfect.

MAN
Be tomorrow on the waterfront. You can
show up any time in the morning, but
the sooner the better.

CLAIRE
Deal.

MAN
See you tomorrow.

He stands back up and walks away.

CLAIRE stays there, seated and chilling a little bit. Until the waiter comes back with the order. He puts the plate on the table.

WAITER
Did he leave ?

CLAIRE
He was not hungry.

She takes the plate for herself.

And she starts eating like crazy.

After a little while she picks up a napkin and spits out the food in it.

EXT. HOTEL - NIGHT

A taxi stops in front of the first-class hotel downtown Lagos. CLAIRE comes out of it after a break.

She slowly walks to the entrance and gets inside.

INT. HOTEL - NIGHT

She goes to a chair, sits down and stays there, chilling, looking at the floor with empty eyes.

She looks up and around for ten seconds.

She takes a deep breath, then she stands back up and walks back to the entrance door. But she stays inside, having a look out.

No suspect activity.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

The door opens, CLAIRE walks in, closes the door, switches on the light and goes straight to the bathroom, closing the door.

She takes a shower.

She gets out of the bathroom in a robe and goes straight to the bed. She has a seat and stays there for a little moment then she switches on a TV set.

She stands back up and leaves the TV set on as she goes to bed.

The CAMERA slowly moves from her lying in bed, to the glass of water on the table, with the stone in its bottom.

DISSOLVE TO :

EXT. WATERFRONT - DAY

The morning after. The MAN is on the waterfront, among other people, standing not far from several little boats.

CLAIRE shows up, her handbag on her shoulder. She looks around, recognizes the right man and walks straight to him.

They shake hands.

CLAIRE

Good morning.

MAN

Good morning.

CLAIRE

Haven't you waited too long ?

MAN

Don't worry about it.

He walks to his boat, she follows.

MAN (cont'd)

What d'you think ?

CLAIRE

Whatever. As long as there's no
hole in the bottom.

He laughs and gets on it first, then he takes her hand and helps her get in the boat. She has a seat while he walks front.

He picks up a big wood stick and uses it to move away.

EXT. SEA - DAY

The boat keeps drifting along the docks. Then it passes the docks and starts drifting along the forest.

It keeps doing it, soon leaving the sea and getting into a large river through an estuary.

EXT. RIVER - DAY

Tireless, the BOAT DRIVER keeps going through the forest, using his thick wood stick on one side of the boat then on the other.

CLAIRE looks around as she just lets herself be driven, not saying a word. She seems to enjoy the ride.

The MAN finally makes a slow, progressive turn, towards a small opening inside the forest. He stops the boat at that level, puts the stick away and nods to CLAIRE who stands up. He takes her hand, helps her out of the boat, and they step on land.

MAN

You're good ?

She only nods a yes as an answer.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

They start walking through the forest that gets always thicker and thicker. With CLAIRE following the MAN the best she can.

She never complains. Just walks, not losing his feet. Once in a while he looks over his shoulder and always finds her close, never weakening.

They walk along a pretty long distance, getting across a small clearing on their way. Until they take a break. It's CLAIRE who makes it short, taking two big mouthfuls of water and pouring some water on her face, before they go.

And they keep walking, covering some long distance. Until they approach some place.

The MAN stops walking, turns to CLAIRE and nods. Then he starts walking again, she follows.

They get closer to the place, a small village. The MAN turns to CLAIRE again.

MAN

Take the money out.

He starts walking again.

As they're about to enter the village he shows her something.

And she sees it.

MAN (cont'd)

Give it to me.

Almost unaware, she gives him the money. Too busy watching.

INT. VILLAGE - DAY

Totally unaware, she enters the village and keeps walking to the thing while watching.

It's a big tree showing valuable stones all over and across it.

A tree growing diamond stones of all shapes and sizes.

CLAIRE finally gets under it, close to its trunk, and lets herself go, showing nothing but joy. And no sign of fatigue.

She keeps enjoying the tree and its marvels...

... until she wakes up a little bit.

She turns her head and sees people. People she didn't see coming, too busy enjoying with her head up.

She sees six or seven people around her, all black. Except one, a white dude, medium-sized, bearded, looking over 50. All of them are looking straight at her.

CLAIRE doesn't seem to enjoy this situation. But there is nothing she can do. Soon some other people add up. She's surrounded. The boat driver is gone.

One of the black guys take two steps to her, CLAIRE freezes then :

BLACK MAN #1
(to him, in local dialect)
That's close enough.

The other guy stops.

BLACK MAN #1 looks at her then to the WHITE MAN. Who stays silent for a little more time, watching her.

BLACK MAN #1 (cont'd)
(in local dialect)
What is she doing here ?

WHITE MAN
(in local dialect)
We will know, very soon.
(to CLAIRE, in English)
You speak English ?

CLAIRE looks at him, intensely, breathing quickly. Saying nothing right away.

WHITE MAN (cont'd)
I'm saying, do you speak English ?
(as CLAIRE nods)
Good ! The easiest thing to do, a nod.
Nice.

He translates for the others in their dialect.

WHITE MAN (cont'd)
(to CLAIRE, in English)
How did you find this place ?
(as CLAIRE says nothing)
Who brought you here ?

CLAIRE
A guy.

WHITE MAN
Who ?

CLAIRE
I don't know. I don't know his name.

WHITE MAN
You don't know the name of the guy who
brought you all the way down here.

CLAIRE
He never told me, I never asked.

WHITE MAN
(nodding and shrugging)
I see. I can understand that.

He translates for the others in their dialect.

WHITE MAN (cont'd)
Where did both of you leave from ?

CLAIRE
Lagos.

WHITE MAN
Wow. That was a hell of a journey. Can
I ask you how long you've been in
Nigeria ?

CLAIRE
Two days.

WHITE MAN
(amazed)
Two days ? You never waste your time,
do you ?

He translates for the others in their dialect. There's a
murmur.

WHITE MAN (cont'd)

What's your name ?

CLAIRE

Claire. Claire Harper.

WHITE MAN

Where are you from ?

CLAIRE

England.

WHITE MAN

Of course. Why am I not surprised ?

He tells the others in their dialect.

He steps to her, once.

WHITE MAN (cont'd)

So am I.

CLAIRE

(gasping)

Is that true ?

He grins as an answer.

WHITE MAN

Who sent you ?

CLAIRE

(quickly)

Nobody.

WHITE MAN

The guy who brought you here, is he English as well ?

CLAIRE

No.

WHITE MAN

Is he white ?

CLAIRE

No. He's a local.

WHITE MAN

From this place. He has to be.

He translates for the others in their dialect. There is another murmur.

CLAIRE looks up, to the stones. Then down, to those people.

WHITE MAN (cont'd)
What do you want exactly ?

CLAIRE
Nothing.

WHITE MAN
(grinning)
Come on. People like you always show up in places like this for a reason.

CLAIRE says nothing.

WHITE MAN (cont'd)
What's your regular job ?

CLAIRE
(after a break)
I'm a jeweller.

WHITE MAN
(smiling)
Yeah. I thought so.

He translates for the others in their dialect.

A break. He keeps watching CLAIRE, seeming to wonder what to do. Then he looks at BLACK MAN #1. Then back to CLAIRE.

WHITE MAN (cont'd)
My name is Washcroft. And my job is to guard this place. To keep it safe from people like you.

CLAIRE gasps more.

WASHCROFT
It's basically everybody's job here.
(as CLAIRE stays silent)
We are the guardians.

CLAIRE
I don't understand.

WASHCROFT
You'll have plenty of time for that.

CLAIRE

No, I mean... you don't understand.

WASHCROFT

Yes... we don't understand what ?

CLAIRE gets confused, not knowing what to say.

WASHCROFT (cont'd)

Let me guess... what we don't understand, is it about... money ?

CLAIRE stays silent.

WASHCROFT (cont'd)

Go ahead.

CLAIRE looks up again. To the stones. Then back down, to WASHCROFT and the others. Then... the ground.

CLAIRE

How long have you been standing on it ?

WASHCROFT

On what ?

CLAIRE

The mine. There is a mine under our feet, isn't it ?

WASHCROFT

So you showed up here to get fat ?

CLAIRE

Maybe.

WASHCROFT

You won't. Nobody will.

CLAIRE

Why not ?

WASHCROFT

Because the mine belongs to me !

CLAIRE

(amazed)

And... and you're not doing anything ?

WASHCROFT

My father did something. He exploited the mine for 25 years. When he came here, he was exactly like you. One of those Whites from the West with a colonialist mentality, with only one desire, make as much money as possible, and as fast as possible. He did, of course. Until nature got angry. A bit over 30 years ago, there was a big landslide. And tons of mud buried this place and flew into the mine. With my father and plenty of miners in it.

CLAIRE

I'm so sorry...

WASHCROFT

Don't be. I was there when it happened, I saw everything. I was only 19. I was taken away by the mudslide and went missing for some time. I was lucky, I was accounted for. A lot of other people weren't.

CLAIRE

What about your dad ?

WASHCROFT

He's still under our feet.

CLAIRE

Is he officially dead ?

WASHCROFT

For some people, not really. For some others, like me, he is. And that's enough.

CLAIRE

So you won't do anything about this either ?

WASHCROFT

It's better that way. What's your story, lady ?

CLAIRE

I was self-employed in my own London shop. It got robbed ten days ago.

WASHCROFT

Were you on the job when it happened ?

CLAIRE

Yes...

WASHCROFT

I see. So you quit and you came here in Africa to find a new business.

CLAIRE

Yes.

WASHCROFT

In diamonds.

CLAIRE

Yes.

He translates for the others in their dialect.

WASHCROFT

And now you're expecting me to take you as a partner.

CLAIRE

Anybody would do the same thing.

WASHCROFT

That's where you're wrong. Look around you.

CLAIRE

Look, this land has a lot of value. I mean, look at the stones. You need to reconsider...

WASHCROFT

I know about the stones and what they look like. And I need to reconsider nothing. Nobody will turn this land upside down now. It's already enough my father did.

CLAIRE

I really need to talk to you.

WASHCROFT

That would be a waste of time.

CLAIRE

So what do you suggest ?

WASHCROFT

That you say nothing.

CLAIRE

Anything else ?

WASHCROFT

I'm afraid not.

CLAIRE

All right. That's too bad. It was nice talking to you.

She moves to walk away but they stand in her way.

WASHCROFT

Where do you think you're going ?

CLAIRE

Away from here.

WASHCROFT

You're not going anywhere.

CLAIRE

Sorry ?

WASHCROFT

I just suggested that you say nothing. Not here, or anywhere else.

CLAIRE

You don't mean this.

WASHCROFT says something in his local language and somebody seizes CLAIRE from behind.

WASHCROFT

If we let you go you will rabbit everywhere on this place and what you just saw. Nobody here needs that.

CLAIRE

(struggling)

Tell him to let me go !

WASHCROFT

Drop your bag.

As she keeps struggling to break free, CLAIRE manages to open her handbag. She takes something out of it. A gun. She pulls the trigger.

BLAM !

She is released. The guy rushes backwards. So does everybody else around, some of them falling down. She puts the gun to WASHCROFT.

CLAIRE

Don't move.

WASHCROFT (cont'd)

Hey ! You take it easy now, all right ?

CLAIRE

(keeping his gun on him)

Shut up !

WASHCROFT

What are you gonna do ?

CLAIRE

I want to do business !

WASHCROFT

(grinning)

You can't. So again, what are you gonna do ? I suggest you put that away.

A tense break. She keeps the gun on him, looking around, watching her back.

Some other villagers show up, gathering around the scene. Among them, a few white people.

CLAIRE

I'll go then. You'll let me go. And I want somebody to guide me through the forest.

WASHCROFT

Okay then.

CLAIRE

Don't laugh at me. Just give me what
I want.

WASHCROFT nods to a guy who comes to them. CLAIRE watches him so well that from the other side, from behind her, another MAN rushes to her.

CLAIRE hears the steps closing, she turns quickly and fires...

BLAM !

... at the diving guy as he takes her down.

She releases her weapon as she falls and WASHCROFT picks it up, barking something. Everybody falls down on her except the diver who doesn't stand back up.

CLAIRE (cont'd)
(unceasingly)
Let me go ! Let me go !

They don't let her go. They take her away across the village.

As she's taken away CLAIRE sees the small group of people looking down on something lying on the ground.

CLAIRE (cont'd)
Oh God...

She keeps looking over her shoulder as she's taken away.

CLAIRE (cont'd)
(starting sobbing)
I'm sorry...

INT. HUT - DAY

A wooden door opens and CLAIRE is thrown inside a small, dark, empty house, actually a hut. The door is closed, the voices fade away.

CLAIRE drags herself on the clay ground to the wall and stays there, out of breath.

Then she sobs, uncontrollably.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN

INT. HUT - DAY

CLAIRE reaches one of the two openings used as windows, and takes a look. Right, then left.

There seems to be no movement outside.

She gets away from the opening and gets straight back to the wall, the only solid thing she can feel inside that hut. And she stays there, not moving, head down.

Until the door opens.

It's WASHCROFT, coming in but staying by the door.

WASHCROFT

Hello.

CLAIRE

Where's everybody ?

WASHCROFT

What do you think ? There is a meeting at the chiefdom house. About what to do with you. Everybody's supposed to attend but I managed to walk away.

CLAIRE

What about the guy ? Is he okay ?

WASHCROFT looks around the hut.

WASHCROFT

They put you in here...

CLAIRE

What ?

WASHCROFT

(shaking his head)

Nothing.

CLAIRE

The guy, how is he ? Tell me !

WASHCROFT

He's dead.

CLAIRE
You're lying !

WASHCROFT
Why would I do that ?

CLAIRE
I want to see him.

WASHCROFT
You can't. There's nothing you can
do here, all right ?

CLAIRE breaks down, sobs again.

CLAIRE
It's your fault.

WASHCROFT
Did I tell you to pull out that gun ?

CLAIRE
You made me.

WASHCROFT
Did I tell you to use it ? Look, I
gotta go back. You stay in here.
Just in case they try to burn down
that hut, there we go.

He brings in two buckets, both full of water. He puts them
down on the floor.

WASHCROFT (cont'd)
Just in case you see any fire.

CLAIRE
Fire ?

WASHCROFT
Of course. They know you're inside
here and they're pretty angry right
now. I'll be back.

He leaves.

CLAIRE crawls to the buckets and sprays her face.

Then she puts some water in her mouth, checks it... and spits
it out.

DISSOLVE TO :

INT. HUT - DAY

The door opens again and WASHCROFT comes back with another MAN, black and quite old.

OLD MAN
(in local dialect)
It's her ?

WASHCROFT nods.

OLD MAN (cont'd)
(in local dialect)
What about the buckets ?

WASHCROFT
(in local dialect)
I put them here.

OLD MAN
(in local dialect)
Do you know her ?

WASHCROFT
(in local dialect)
I told you before, no.

OLD MAN
(in local dialect)
So why did you put those water buckets
in here ?

WASHCROFT
(in local dialect)
For her safety.

OLD MAN
(in local dialect)
Her safety ? She killed somebody and
you're telling me about her safety ?

WASHCROFT
(in local dialect)
We have to think about it.

The OLD MAN has some gesture.

CLAIRE
What is he saying ?

WASHCROFT

Shhh.

OLD MAN

(in local dialect)

What did she just say ?

WASHCROFT

(in local dialect)

Nothing.

OLD MAN

(in local dialect)

Tell her about me.

WASHCROFT

(to CLAIRE)

He's our chief.

CLAIRE nods to the chief.

CLAIRE

Please tell him that...

OLD CHIEF

(interrupting, in local
dialect)

Tell her not to speak.

WASHCROFT

(to CLAIRE)

Don't say anything.

CLAIRE

But he needs to know...

WASHCROFT

Shhh.

OLD CHIEF

(in local dialect)

It's always dangerous when a white
person shows up from nowhere and starts
to speak. She comes here and right
away, somebody dies.

A break.

OLD CHIEF (cont'd)

(in local dialect)

What are you waiting for ? Tell her that.

WASHCROFT translates, a bit embarrassed. CLAIRE looks down.

OLD CHIEF (cont'd)
(in local dialect)
She's English, like you ?

WASHCROFT
(in local dialect)
Yes, but... look, she's very sorry. She
didn't mean to do what she did.

OLD CHIEF
(in local dialect)
She did it and she has to pay. We still
have to decide what to do with her.

WASHCROFT
(in local dialect)
Very well.

OLD CHIEF
(in local dialect)
Tell her that she has to stay in here
until we make our decision. You will
tell her about it. Don't give her
anything. No food, no clean water,
nothing.

The OLD CHIEF leaves the hut.

EXT. HUT - DAY

He walks away, followed and surrounded by a procession.

INT. HUT - DAY

CLAIRE
So ? What was it ?

WASHCROFT
You have to stay in here until they
decide about what to do with you.

CLAIRE
How long can that take ?

WASHCROFT
I don't know. Twenty-four hours maximum
I guess.

CLAIRE

Can it take longer ?

WASHCROFT

Yes, of course. It can take longer as it can take shorter.

CLAIRE

Do they know where I'm from ?

WASHCROFT

I told them. And that's what triggered a division.

CLAIRE

What do you mean ?

WASHCROFT

The village is cut in two. Those who want you dead and...

CLAIRE

Wait. Sorry. Is that old man part of them ?

WASHCROFT

I'm afraid so.

CLAIRE

What about you ?

WASHCROFT

I'm part of those who want to protect the village.

CLAIRE

(nodding)

Those who want me dead, included.

WASHCROFT

They're not aware of the risk.

CLAIRE

(smiling slightly)

Thank you.

WASHCROFT

(nodding)

The part that includes me is a minority.

A break.

CLAIRE
I didn't tell anyone.

WASHCROFT
About what ?

CLAIRE
Before I got on that boat... I didn't tell anybody about my trip here.

WASHCROFT
Nobody ?

CLAIRE
That's right. But I did something. The guy who brought me here, I paid him to do that, to make that 'legend' real to me. And to do something else.

WASHCROFT
What ?

CLAIRE
As soon as he gets back to Lagos, he would contact the British Army and tell them about me being here.

WASHCROFT
That's it ?

CLAIRE
No. He also would tell them to show up here in two days from today, if they don't hear from me before that.

WASHCROFT
I see.

CLAIRE
You should go tell them that.

WASHCROFT
Do you trust the guy ?

CLAIRE
He brought me here, he led me to the tree. And before we left, he lectured me about trust. So yes, I trust him.

WASHCROFT
Does he know your name ?

CLAIRE
I told him on the way.

WASHCROFT
Okay. I will tell them.

CLAIRE
Another thing.

WASHCROFT
What ?

CLAIRE
The man who died... did he have a
family ?

WASHCROFT
Only a little boy.

CLAIRE
You mean the boy's an orphan now ?

WASHCROFT
Not really. His mother left the village
some time ago.

CLAIRE
I want to see him.

WASHCROFT
That won't be possible.

CLAIRE
Why shouldn't it be ? Go tell him to
come here.

A break.

CLAIRE (cont'd)
Please.

WASHCROFT
All right. As you wish.

He leaves the hut.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

WASHCROFT walks to the chiefdom and enters the house.

INT. CHIEFDOM HOUSE - DAY

There are many people and much noise inside the building, standing or sitting in front of the OLD CHIEF. Almost all of them are men. WASHCROFT keeps walking and winds up in front, not far from the OLD CHIEF. Looking at something away from the chief.

The people in front of the OLD CHIEF are all adults, arguing in their dialect about what happened.

WASHCROFT raises an arm. And the OLD CHIEF allows him to talk, making gestures to ask for silence.

WASHCROFT
(in local dialect)
I won't be long. Before you come to a decision, you need to know that if you decide to make her disappear, the British Army will be here in two days.

There's an explosion of voices and the OLD CHIEF needs to ask for silence.

OLD CHIEF
(to WASHCROFT, in local dialect)
Did she tell you that ?

WASHCROFT
(in local dialect)
Yes.

OLD CHIEF
(in local dialect)
That might be a lie.

WASHCROFT
(in local dialect)
There's no reason we have to believe that. She wouldn't have come over here without warning anybody first.

He turns his head to somebody else.

To the person behind the OLD CHIEF. To the only kid inside the room. The young orphan.

WASHCROFT (cont'd)
(in local dialect)
I need to talk to the kid.

He beckons the kid over.

INT. HUT - DAY

The door opens, and CLAIRE sees the kid in the doorway. The boy doesn't move, says nothing.

CLAIRE

Hey...

She comes to him, half-crawling. He still doesn't say anything, not moving, just watching her coming to him.

CLAIRE (cont'd)

What's your name, boy ?

The boy says nothing.

CLAIRE (cont'd)

(chuckling a little)

I don't even know if you understand me.

(looking up)

You're a sweet-looking kid.

A break. The boy keeps looking at her, not moving, not saying anything.

CLAIRE holds out both arms and seizes his hands. Then she looks at him.

CLAIRE (cont'd)

I didn't mean to do what I did. I'm so sorry.

The kid keeps quiet.

CLAIRE (cont'd)

I didn't come here to hurt anybody.

Everything happened so quickly...

(as the boy says nothing)

I'd be furious if I were you. Aren't you furious, baby ?

Silence.

CLAIRE (cont'd)

I'm sure you understand how I feel, even if you don't understand what I'm saying.

She releases his hands.

CLAIRE (cont'd)
I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry for your
father. Please try to forgive me, even
if you don't know me. I didn't mean it.

She moves to his face and softly kisses one of his cheeks. He
wipes it off and she smiles.

CLAIRE (cont'd)
(pointing at herself)
Claire. I'm Claire.
(pointing at him)
I'd love to know your name, baby.

Silence.

CLAIRE (cont'd)
(pointing at herself)
Me, Claire.
(pointing at him)
You ?

BOY
Ubu.

CLAIRE
(amazed, looking happy)
Ubu ! Great.
(laughing up her sleeve)
So you can speak !

As she looks ecstatic, his look doesn't change. She is so
ecstatic that she doesn't know what to say. She starts getting
really emotional as she finds this :

CLAIRE (cont'd)
I love Ubu.

She takes his hands again.

CLAIRE (cont'd)
Can I ask you a favour, baby ?

She makes the gesture of eating.

CLAIRE (cont'd)
Please. I'm starving. Bring me something
to eat. Anything.

The kid seems to understand. But he says nothing.

CLAIRE (cont'd)
I know how you can feel. You don't have
to do it.

Silence.

CLAIRE (cont'd)
Please.
(joining both hands)
I'm begging you.

A short break.

Then, saying nothing, UBU turns, leaves the hut and walks
away.

CLAIRE watches him walking away. Unaware of herself walking
off the hut.

EXT. HUT

She stops moving as she looks away from the walking kid. And
as she sees people standing in a distance, on all sides,
looking straight at her, saying nothing.

CLAIRE looks down and gets back inside the hut.

INT. HUT - DAY

CLAIRE is asleep, lying on the bare ground. Her sleep is
uncomfortable, even disturbed.

At a moment she starts to breath abnormally in her sleep. Like
she's about to choke a bit. Her breath turns into a grimace
and she wakes up.

The heat is stronger, and there is something else to it. A
smell. She blows her nose and looks up.

Fire in the hut !

CLAIRE gasps, not losing all her composure. She goes to the
buckets, who are still quite full.

She sprays her face then her body. Then she takes one of the
buckets and sprays the side of the wall that is on fire. After
a couple of sprays the fire is gone. But the smoke invades the
inside and the windows are not big enough to let it all out.

She goes to the door and can't open it. It's blocked !

Starting to cough, one hand on her nose, she goes to the window opposite to the smoke source.

EXT. HUT - DAY

CLAIRE manages to get her head through... and gets attacked from the outside.

She gets hit on the head two times before protecting it with her arms which take the rest of the blows.

WASHCROFT

Hey ! Hey !

He runs to the scene, and sees CLAIRE getting thrown back inside the smoking hut.

INT. HUT - DAY

CLAIRE lands abruptly on the ground and stays down.

WASHCROFT comes in, picks her up and takes her out.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN

INT. HOUSE - DAY

CLAIRE opens her eyes, weakly. She's lying down, this time on a bed.

She has a grimace and as she holds her painful head, she sits up on the bed, her feet on the ground.

She looks around and discovers a house, with daylight fully coming in.

She's busy checking her arms when WASHCROFT comes in.

WASHCROFT

Hey. Do you feel better ?

CLAIRE doesn't say anything right away. He comes to her with a glass.

WASHCROFT (cont'd)
Here. Take some water.

CLAIRE
(taking the glass)
Is it clean ?

WASHCROFT
Check for yourself.

She puts the glass up to her mouth but doesn't drink.

WASHCROFT (cont'd)
(shaking his head)
It's rain water that I boiled myself
afterwards. And rain water is basically
very clean here already. So is the air.

CLAIRE drinks.

CLAIRE
Was that it ?

WASHCROFT
What ?

CLAIRE
What happened at the hut, was that
it ?

WASHCROFT
Oh, no.

CLAIRE
No ?

WASHCROFT
No. Those who did it were not happy
with the decision.

CLAIRE
(stunningly)
They've already come to it ?

WASHCROFT
Yes.

CLAIRE
And ? What is it ?

WASHCROFT

What do you think ? Not to kill you.

CLAIRE

Oh...

WASHCROFT

They've condemned you. In another way.

CLAIRE

What do you mean ?

WASHCROFT

Haven't you noticed that after what you did, you've never been tied up ? And the door of that hut was always open. You've always been free to go.

CLAIRE

I thought you didn't want me to go.

WASHCROFT

That was before. And when I said that, it was still possible for you to catch up with the guy who brought you here. You can't now.

CLAIRE

You mean...

WASHCROFT

The guy you killed had no papers, no jurisdictional existence. Even if the police show up, they won't be able to do anything against you. They don't do much anyway. But that's not important. You can go. But nobody will help you through the forest.

A break.

CLAIRE

They did condemn me.

WASHCROFT

They don't want you here. And frankly, me neither.

CLAIRE

They want me to die in the forest.

WASHCROFT

They want you far away from here and they don't want nobody from here going with you.

CLAIRE

What about the British Army ?

WASHCROFT

They're not much of a problem. We can move away. There are other villages.

CLAIRE

But it's still better for you if they find me alive, right ?

WASHCROFT

Right. So they don't hunt us down.

CLAIRE

So just let me leave safely !

WASHCROFT

We won't and you know why.

CLAIRE

Will you take the risk ?

WASHCROFT

It's a minimum risk and we'll take it.

CLAIRE

You know what I think ?

WASHCROFT

What ?

CLAIRE

I think you guys don't believe the Army will come. And that you won't leave. Why would you ? Only because of a single white female who was stupid enough to show up here all by herself ?

WASHCROFT

You know, since I made the decision to live my life here, and it was a long time ago, I've wondered many times when somebody like you would show up. I have feared that moment like a plague. That

(MORE)

WASHCROFT (cont'd)

moment has come today and everything changed. Somebody died and the whole place now faces possible destruction. Why wouldn't we believe the Army will Come here to rescue you ? Of course They will. That's their job. You think we'll still be here when they show up ? You've seen too many westerns. We're not like Indians waiting to get shot. We value life. You understand ?

CLAIRE nods.

WASHCROFT (cont'd)

You need to understand something else, in two days we'll very probably have to move, and nothing will be left behind. The village will be emptied. You'll probably take the opportunity to come back here after that. But you're not a villager. You won't last long, especially all by yourself. So if you end up in that situation, just pray that your Army friends show up.

A pause. CLAIRE doesn't react.

WASHCROFT (cont'd)

One last thing, don't forget that the mine is my property. And it will still be, even if I have to leave this place.

A break.

CLAIRE

Very well. Let me ask you a question.

WASHCROFT stays quiet.

CLAIRE (cont'd)

I can't stay here, right ? And I'm 'free to go', but in fact I can't leave. So tell me, what do I have to do exactly ?

WASHCROFT

You have to leave this village and manage on your own.

CLAIRE
I have a better idea.

WASHCROFT looks at her, frowning. CLAIRE gives him her empty glass.

CLAIRE (cont'd)
Can I have some more water ?

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

CLAIRE is under the diamond tree, looking up at the stones.

Then she looks away, down at a villager who gives her a shovel and a pickaxe.

The CAMERA pulls back and shows CLAIRE at the center of a circle of villagers, with WASHCROFT part of it. So is the OLD CHIEF.

WASHCROFT
(grinning)
You won't get rich playing that game.

CLAIRE
Very funny.

WASHCROFT
That's actually a good idea. Digging
your own hole under that.

CLAIRE says nothing.

WASHCROFT (cont'd)
Because if you plan to find the mine,
you'll have to dig very deep.

CLAIRE
Not necessarily.

WASHCROFT
I guarantee that.
(shrugging)
Well, whatever. As you wish.
(in local dialect)
Keep watching her. She is not to get off
the hole.

OLD CHIEF
(in local dialect)
Don't give her any food and water.

He turns and leaves, surrounded and followed by his procession.

CLAIRE
What was that ?

WASHCROFT
Don't think about it. Good luck.

CLAIRE drops the shovel, and handles the pickaxe.

CLAIRE
Try to find me a pair of thick gloves.
I might need that.

WASHCROFT
I'll try to get you some good towels.

CLAIRE
Get me both if possible.

He walks away, leaving a half dozen villagers around her. She turns her head and sees UBU standing in a short distance, within what's left of the circle, looking straight at her.

She freezes, staring back at him for five seconds, saying nothing.

Then she looks away from the kid and starts digging, using the pickaxe.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

She keeps digging, using the pickaxe then the shovel, alternatively.

One foot deep. Two feet. Three. Four.

As she takes a break, breathing quickly, she has a look around and sees her own gun in the hands of a villager.

CUT TO :

INT. JEWELRY STORE - DAY

CLAIRE is standing inside a desk. A gun is put on her head.

HOODED MAN
Don't move !

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

As CLAIRE remembers, WASHCROFT shows up with three empty buckets tied together with a long rope.

WASHCROFT
You're all right ?

She nods, saying nothing.

WASHCROFT (cont'd)
Use these.

He puts the buckets down in the hole, leaving the end of the rope up.

WASHCROFT (cont'd)
Just fill them up and they will pull them up and empty them for you.

CLAIRE
All right.

He turns and leaves.

She finds a small bottle of water inside one of the buckets, she takes it.

She keeps digging, filling up the buckets. Five feet deep. Six. Seven.

INT. WASHCROFT'S HOUSE - DAY

WASHCROFT is inside his house, sitting on a wooden chair, when the OLD CHIEF shows up, followed and surrounded by his procession, which stays out while the old man comes in.

WASHCROFT stands up and lets the OLD CHIEF take his place in the chair. He sits on a small table.

The whole conversation is in their dialect.

OLD CHIEF
Thank you.

WASHCROFT nods.

OLD CHIEF (cont'd)
You've been here for a long time.

WASHCROFT
Yes.

OLD CHIEF
But you were not born here. You were
born where that lady came from.

WASHCROFT
Yes.

OLD CHIEF
Did you expect her to come ?

WASHCROFT
Absolutely not. I don't know her at all.

OLD CHIEF
But you're aware that whatever happens
to her, she might kill us all ?

WASHCROFT
I am. She came straight in Africa to try
to make a quick and easy fortune. Like
all the people from the West do.
Nothing and nobody will stop her.

OLD CHIEF
Nobody... including you ?

WASHCROFT
That's right. She came here with a gun
and she used it. She put it on me
first.

OLD CHIEF
(stunned)
You ?

WASHCROFT
Yes.

OLD CHIEF
Why didn't you tell us before ?

WASHCROFT
She didn't want to shoot me. She wanted
me to take her as a business partner.
I refused, so she wanted to leave.

OLD CHIEF

Why didn't you let her go ?

WASHCROFT

She'd just seen the tree, and I'd just told us about the mine and about what my dad did with it. If I had let her go right away, she'd have brought everybody down here.

OLD CHIEF

What makes you so sure ?

WASHCROFT

As you said, I was born where she came from. I know these people. They have no respect for natives, no respect for property and borders. They show up wherever they please and do whatever they want. And Africa has always been their playground. How do you think slavery started ? And all the wars ?

OLD CHIEF

(with a gesture)

Oh... okay then. I understand.

A break.

OLD CHIEF (cont'd)

Do you believe she sees you as a native ?

WASHCROFT

Yes. More or less.

OLD CHIEF

Do you see yourself as a native ?

WASHCROFT

Yes. More or less.

A break.

OLD CHIEF

Why is she digging that hole ?

WASHCROFT

(shaking his head)

I don't know. To stay alive probably.

(MORE)

WASHCROFT (cont'd)

She told me that she wouldn't last an hour alone in the forest.

OLD CHIEF

She told you nothing else ?

WASHCROFT

No.

OLD CHIEF

You know that our fate is depending on her right now ?

WASHCROFT

Sort of, yes. On what she could do or not do. That's why I believe she has to stay alive, so the Army finds her that way.

OLD CHIEF

So what can you suggest ?

WASHCROFT

Nothing. Just allow her to have some water. So she doesn't die in that hole.

A break. Then :

OLD CHIEF

(nodding)

You're right. And... if she finds the mine, what are we supposed to do ?

WASHCROFT

(shrugging)

Nothing. We'll tell the Army that she's inside, we'll show them the hole and they will deal with it.

EXT. VILLAGE (HOLE) - DAY

CARD -- 90 MINUTES LATER

Under the tree, by the hole. There are three male VILLAGERS, one of them with CLAIRE's gun in his hand. The two others deal with the buckets.

They pull off the full buckets then they empty them, one time, then two.

The third time, they pull off full buckets... but with the pickaxe on top of them.

They all look at each other, perplexed.

Their conversation is in their dialect.

VILLAGER #1

What is this ?

He has a look down the hole, and puts the empty buckets back down.

The buckets reach the bottom. After about ten seconds, from the bottom, the rope is pulled. They pull the rope and bring the buckets back up.

The buckets are half full... with the shovel on top.

They look down the hole again.

VILLAGER WITH GUN

What the hell is she doing ?

VILLAGER #2

(shaking his head)

No idea.

VILLAGER #1

I don't see her. Where is she ?

The hole is deep and dark, they see nothing and nobody.

VILLAGER WITH GUN

(to VILLAGER #2)

Go to the chiefdom house, tell them about this.

VILLAGER #2

All right.

He runs away.

VILLAGER WITH GUN

(to VILLAGER #1)

I'm going down.

VILLAGER #1

What ?

VILLAGER WITH GUN

We have to know what she's up to.

VILLAGER #1

Are you crazy ?

VILLAGER WITH GUN

No. I have a gun.

(crouching by the hole)

Don't worry. Get me down.

VILLAGER #1

No ! Let's wait for the others !

VILLAGER WITH GUN

Do it.

VILLAGER #1 finally gets the guy down the hole, slowly.

INT. HOLE - DAY

VILLAGER WITH GUN gets down.

EXT. CHIEFDOM HOUSE - DAY

VILLAGER #2 enters the house. The OLD CHIEF is in his chair.

Their conversation is in their dialect.

VILLAGER #2

Sorry... we have a problem with the white woman.

OLD CHIEF

What ?

VILLAGER #2

She stopped digging. She doesn't fill up the buckets any more.

OLD CHIEF

Go get Dylan.

INT. HOLE - DAY

VILLAGER WITH GUN reaches the bottom of the hole. It's like a very small cage but it's light enough so he can notice something.

A small side opening. Like an open door.

VILLAGER #1
Is she down there ?

VILLAGER WITH GUN doesn't have the time to give an answer. As he checks the opening, he's hit in the face by a big pile of dust. He yells, blinded, and drops the gun.

CLAIRE rushes out of the opening, picks up the gun and grabs the VILLAGER who still covers his eyes, yelling. She uses him as cover.

INT./EXT. HOLE - DAY

WASHCROFT and VILLAGER #2 run towards the tree, and stop by the hole. They look down... and see CLAIRE holding the VILLAGER against her, looking up straight at them.

WASHCROFT
(annoyed, to VILLAGER #1,
in local dialect)
What the hell is he doing down there ?

VILLAGER #1
(in local dialect)
I had to let him down.

WASHCROFT
(in local dialect)
You did that ? Why ?

VILLAGER #1
(in local dialect)
He had the gun.

WASHCROFT sighs, looking back down.

WASHCROFT
(to CLAIRE)
And now you have it.

CLAIRE
I have what ?

WASHCROFT

You have the gun.

CLAIRE

Yes. I have the gun.

WASHCROFT

Okay, what do you want ?

A break.

CLAIRE

I want my telephone. And a fully loaded flashlight. And more water. Only that.

WASHCROFT

You don't want out of this hole ?

CLAIRE

Of course I do. I want out of this hole, then out of the village. With somebody to guide me through the forest.

WASHCROFT

That's pretty much.

CLAIRE

I knew you would say something like that. That's why I need those things first. I want you to give them to me now.

WASHCROFT

As you wish.

CLAIRE

Don't think I'm enjoying this situation. I hate it. I hate being down here. And I didn't mean to kill that man, you know it.

WASHCROFT

Yes, I know it.

CLAIRE

You must be thinking otherwise now.

WASHCROFT

I'm not.

CLAIRE pushes the VILLAGER aside, still holding the gun. The guy starts to struggle with the dust in his eyes.

WASHCROFT (cont'd)
I'll be back.

CLAIRE
I need ten full bottles. Ten.

WASHCROFT
All right.

He walks away.

DISSOLVE TO :

INT./EXT. HOLE - DAY

There are about ten people around the hole - among them, the OLD CHIEF - when WASHCROFT comes back with a bag. He takes a smartphone, ten bottles of water and a flashlight out of it, and he puts them in the three buckets.

Then he puts the buckets down the hole.

CLAIRE sees them coming down to her, and as she watches the VILLAGER who's still busy with his eyes, she checks the buckets.

She grabs the rope.

CLAIRE
Okay, that's good. Pull me up now.

WASHCROFT grabs the rope and pulls it to him, hauling CLAIRE up.

He's halfway when he releases the rope. CLAIRE falls back down, straight on the VILLAGER who gets knocked out.

CLAIRE stays down for a moment. A short moment. She has a look up and sees the empty brightness.

She sees the buckets going back up, she quickly puts herself together and grabs them, holding them down as WASHCROFT pulls. The gun is on the ground so she uses her body as weight on the buckets to get to it.

She manages to pick up the gun, puts it on the rope and fires. WASHCROFT and some help are thrown backwards as the rope gets cut.

CLAIRE quickly picks up the bottles, the flashlight and her smartphone, she puts them in the buckets along with the gun and disappears through the small opening.

When WASHCROFT gets back to the hole and looks down, CLAIRE is already gone.

WASHCROFT
(surprised)
Where is she ?

Then, after a break... he understands and falls down on his knees.

WASHCROFT (cont'd)
God. She's inside.

He sees the other VILLAGER at the bottom, still unconscious.

WASHCROFT (cont'd)
(in local dialect)
Hey, you fool ! Wake up !

The VILLAGER doesn't react.

WASHCROFT (cont'd)
(to the others,
in local dialect)
Get me down. I'll go for him.

OLD CHIEF
(in local dialect)
No.

WASHCROFT
(in local dialect)
I'll be all right.

OLD CHIEF
(in local dialect)
No ! He doesn't need your help. Go get
some water instead.

VILLAGER #1
(in local dialect)
I'll go. I live closer.

INT./EXT. HOLE - DAY

VILLAGER WITH NO MORE GUN gets his face sprayed from above. He moves a bit.

The whole dialog is in their dialect.

WASHCROFT

Wake up !

OLD CHIEF

On your feet, you idiot !

VILLAGER WITH NO MORE GUN keeps moving, shaking his head. He finally wakes up, holding his head, struggling with his eyes.

OLD CHIEF (cont'd)

On your feet, hurry up !

VILLAGER WITH NO MORE GUN looks up, blinking.

WASHCROFT

Grab the rope. We'll bring you up.

VILLAGER WITH NO MORE GUN sees the rope. He stands up, grabs it with both hands and lets himself be hauled up.

VILLAGER WITH NO MORE GUN

She stopped filling up the buckets,
and we couldn't see her any more. I
had to go down to check this out.

WASHCROFT

You had to go down with the gun ?

VILLAGER WITH NO MORE GUN

She killed my brother with it.

WASHCROFT

Half brother.

OLD CHIEF

And she set you up.

WASHCROFT

(to the OLD CHIEF)

She's inside. With a loaded gun, a
telephone, a flashlight and enough
water for the night.

OLD CHIEF
Only for the night ?

WASHCROFT
She'll have to find a way out quickly.
Tonight, or tomorrow morning.

OLD CHIEF
There are three exits, right ?

WASHCROFT
Yes.

OLD CHIEF
Do you believe she can find one ?

WASHCROFT
She's clever enough to achieve that.

OLD CHIEF
She's very clever.

WASHCROFT
She is clever. And lucky, too. What
are we doing now ?

A short break.

OLD CHIEF
We'll have our funeral here. The
hole is already dug.

WASHCROFT
It's too deep.

OLD CHIEF
I know. We'll work on that now.

WASHCROFT
Very well. I'll check the mine exits.

He walks away. Passing by VILLAGER WITH NO MORE GUN.

OLD CHIEF
(to him)
Pick up the shovel.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

WASHCROFT reaches one of the mine exits. It's like a cave entrance.

He comes closer and passes his head inside. He sees only the dark. No movement, no noise.

He gets his head out and walks away.

DISSOLVE TO :

EXT. VILLAGE (DIAMOND TREE) - DUSK/NIGHT

The funeral is on. It's a ceremony attended by everyone in the village. In honour of the deceased MAN whose body is lying on the ground, close to the hole.

There are some tables with some local food on it. At the center of the tables, there are a few people dancing and singing. Among the villagers, some are in tears.

The wake goes on through the evening.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN

EXT. FOREST - DAY

The day after. Afternoon.

Two men are waiting in front of a cave entrance, actually a mine exit. Two other men are in front of another one. Two other ones in front of a third one.

From their faces and clothes, they've all been there for some time. They look really tired.

Suddenly, two of the guys hear some noise from the cave entrance they keep watching.

Then they see something crawling very slowly on the ground, off the entrance. It's a human body.

It's CLAIRE. She's stained all over with dry mud.

The two MEN don't know what to do first. CLAIRE keeps crawling, slowly. Then she looks up at them. Her face is blackened by mud.

She holds out a hand, begging for help.

MAN #1
(in local dialect)
Go get the others !

MAN #2 hesitates.

MAN #1 (cont'd)
(in local dialect)
Go now ! Come back quickly !

MAN #2 leaves, running.

MAN #1 doesn't go to the held out hand. He just keeps watching CLAIRE struggling on the ground, when he doesn't look away, waiting for back-up.

Until she changes position in order to crouch.

Again she looks up at him but in the same time she pulls out her gun from under her stained clothes, and puts it on him.

MAN #1 freezes in surprise as she slowly stands up.

CLAIRE
(weakly)
Sorry.

She moves to him, her gun pointed. He steps backwards, she stops.

CLAIRE (cont'd)
Don't move !

She moves to him again, he stands still.

She hits him on the head. Then she grabs him, keeping him from falling straight down on the ground.

She slowly lets him down. She checks his head. No bloody wound.

CLAIRE (cont'd)
You'll be okay. You'll get away with
a big bump.

She looks around, and sees a small bag with food in it. She grabs it, then she returns to the mine exit, picks up her phone and runs away.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

She keeps running, as fast as she can.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

MAN #2 comes back to the scene with WASHCROFT and some other villagers.

They see MAN #1 lying unconscious on the ground.

WASHCROFT
(in local dialect)
Holy shit !

They rush, WASHCROFT checks the MAN. He has a deep breath of relief.

WASHCROFT (cont'd)
(in local dialect)
He's alive. Only knocked out.

Then he looks all around. He doesn't see CLAIRE.

WASHCROFT (cont'd)
(in English)
Dammit.

MAN #2
(in local dialect)
She took our food.

WASHCROFT
(in local dialect)
Of course she did, what did you expect ?

MAN #2
(in local dialect)
There was some water in the bag.

WASHCROFT
(sighing, in local dialect)
That's great.

They have to shake the VILLAGER so he can regain consciousness.

WASHCROFT (cont'd)
(in local dialect)
We have to hurry.

As the VILLAGER holds his painful head, they get him back on his feet.

Then they walk back to the village.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

CLAIRE has stopped running. She tries to work on her phone. The battery is 33%.

She uses the water to clean her muddy hands. Then she dials a number.

EXT. LONDON STREET - DAY

A GUY takes out his own cell phone and is surprised to see a number from Nigeria, starting with 00 234. He takes the call, uncertain.

GUY

Hello ?

CLAIRE (v.o.)

Hello, Jay ? It's me, Claire !

JAY

(stunned)

Claire ? Is that you ?

CLAIRE (v.o.)

Yeah. Are you free to do something ?
It's really important.

JAY

Where are you ?

EXT. FOREST

CLAIRE

I don't have time. I need you to do something now !

JAY (v.o.)

Yes, what ?

CLAIRE

Contact the British Army in Lagos. Tell them about me and give them my phone number.

JAY (v.o.)
You're in Lagos ?

CLAIRE
I told you I needed some time off.

EXT. LONDON STREET

JAY
You told no one you'd go to Africa !
What the hell are you doing down
there ?

CLAIRE (v.o.)
Can you help me or not ?

JAY
Okay, sure.

EXT. FOREST

CLAIRE
Give them my local number. The one
I'm using now. So they can call me if
necessary. You understand ?

JAY (v.o.)
Okay. But...

CLAIRE
Hey ! No time for chat. Not now.
I need you to do it right away.
Don't let me down. Don't wait. Thank
you.

She cuts.

She keeps walking through the forest as she waits for the Army
to call.

Her phone finally rings.

CLAIRE
Hello ?

MALE VOICE (v.o.)
Is this Claire Harper ?

CLAIRE
Yes !

INT. ARMY OFFICE - DAY

LIEUTENANT

I'm Lieutenant Harris, from the British Army. We were all worried about you, you know. Are you all right ?

We alternate between the office and the forest.

CLAIRE

I'm okay. Who told you about me ?

LIEUTENANT

We just got a phone call from London. And yesterday we were contacted by some boat man, here in Lagos.

CLAIRE

What did he say ?

LIEUTENANT

That he led you to some village ?

CLAIRE

That's right.

LIEUTENANT

Are you still there ?

CLAIRE

No. Something bad happened. I need your help.

LIEUTENANT

No problem. With your phone you'll be easy to spot.

CLAIRE

Thank you.

LIEUTENANT

We'll send you a chopper.

CLAIRE

A vehicle will be fine.

LIEUTENANT

A jeep will take much longer to reach you.

CLAIRE

Thank you, but I hate flying.

LIEUTENANT

All right. You'll have to allow over an hour.

CLAIRE

I'll try.

LIEUTENANT

From your position, there is a road not far. Try to reach it.

CLAIRE

Thank you so much, Lieutenant.

LIEUTENANT

Try to head west. I'll see you soon.

She cuts. And collapses. Relief, exhaustion...

After a short time she stands back up and starts walking again, getting always deeper in the forest.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

CARD -- TWO HOURS LATER

An Army vehicle, a Jeep, rolls quickly along a small road through the forest. Inside, three SOLDIERS, all male. Looking for Claire.

RADIO VOICE

You're closing. Four hundred yards.

They keep rolling, and :

DRIVER (SOLDIER #1)

We can see her.

They see a body lying on one side of the road. They stop near it.

It's CLAIRE. Unconscious.

SOLDIERS #2 and #3 get off the jeep and get to her.

RADIO VOICE

Is she all right ?

SOLDIER #1
(in the radio)
She doesn't look good. Lying
unconscious on the side of the road.
We're checking her.

SOLDIER #2 checks her pulse.

SOLDIER #2
She's alive.

SOLDIER #1
(in the radio)
She's alive.

They shake her a little bit, she comes back to consciousness
and sees them.

SOLDIER #3
Miss Harper ?

CLAIRE
(nodding)
Yes...

Her face and clothes are spoiled, blackened with dry dirt and
mud.

SOLDIER #2 opens his canteen.

SOLDIER #2
Take some. Not too much.

She takes three quick mouthfuls of water and coughs roughly.
Then she takes deep breaths and sprays her face, which gets
much whiter.

SOLDIER #3
Better, Miss ?

She nods. They get her back on her feet.

SOLDIER #1
(in the radio)
She's all right. We're on our way
back.

CLAIRE
(shaking her head)
Not now.

SOLDIER #1
Sorry ?

CLAIRE
I need to go back.

The SOLDIERS look at her.

SOLDIER #1
Go back where ?

CLAIRE
The village.

SOLDIER #2
What for ?

CLAIRE
Take me back there. Something I need
to check.

SOLDIER #1 is about to talk in the radio.

CLAIRE (cont'd)
You don't have to tell him.

SOLDIER #1
I have to report everything.
(in the radio)
She wants to stop at the village.

RADIO VOICE
Let her do what she needs to do. Just
stay close and make sure she takes
the way back along with you.

SOLDIER #1
(in the radio)
Roger that.
(to CLAIRE)
I hope you got this.

CLAIRE only nods a yes.

They all get in the jeep, the SOLDIERS helping CLAIRE take her
seat.

Then they ride again.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

They leave the road and take a smaller path through the thick forest.

After one or two miles, they reach the village.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

They're rather surprised to see it empty. All, except CLAIRE who expected it but she still looks taken aback, as she actually discovers the village.

They roll slowly across the place, until :

CLAIRE
Please stop.

They're near the diamond tree. Or what used to be it.

CLAIRE gets off the jeep and moves to the tree, looking up. There are no more stones to be seen and found on it. She's flabbergasted.

She gets under the tree, still looking up. The view is radically different than before.

She looks down. The hole is no more there. It's been closed. A grave with no mark.

She looks up again. Totally dismayed.

CLAIRE (cont'd)
(for herself)
They took them all away...

A short break, as she tries to understand.

CLAIRE (cont'd)
(for herself)
They took them all away... and then...

SOLDIER #1
(from behind)
What was that ?

She turns abruptly to him. He's carrying his Army firearm.

SOLDIER #1 (cont'd)

Excuse me, but... what's so special about that tree ?

CLAIRE

Oh. Nothing.

She walks away from the tree. And from him. Walking across the empty village, looking in all directions, the empty diamond tree included, and seeing nothing and nobody. With the jeep following slowly.

SOLDIER #1 catches up.

SOLDIER #1

Can I ask you a question ?

CLAIRE

Sure.

SOLDIER #1

Why did you come here in the first place ?

CLAIRE

Why are you asking ?

SOLDIER #1

Just curious. This place shouldn't be empty. What happened ?

CLAIRE

I don't know.

SOLDIER #1

All right. But I believe you know this, this place used to be a huge diamond mine.

She stops walking, staring at him.

SOLDIER #1 (cont'd)

Really. It was crazy here, over three decades ago. The whole area was just one big hole. Please don't tell me that you came straight over here to play tourist or only by the grace of the Holy Spirit. You came here because you saw a business opportunity.

She starts walking again, saying nothing. He walks along.

SOLDIER #1 (cont'd)
But it didn't go well, right ?

A break.

CLAIRE
No.

SOLDIER #1
I figured. Just like it didn't go well
with the mine.

CLAIRE
I know about the landslide.

SOLDIER #1
You do ? Who told you ?

CLAIRE
(looking at him)
Washcroft.

SOLDIER #1
Washcroft ? Dylan Washcroft ? You met
him ?

CLAIRE
He didn't tell me his first name, but
yes. He's a nice man.

SOLDIER #1
Did you expect to run into him ?

CLAIRE
No.

SOLDIER #1
Okay. That's what happened. A conflict
of interests between you two. Sorry to
bother you like this but I'm just trying
to understand why this place is empty.
Only because of the two of you.

CLAIRE
No. Only because of me.

SOLDIER #1
Oh...

CLAIRE

As soon as I came, something went wrong. They banned me then they left, to avoid reprisal from your side.

SOLDIER #1

I see.

CLAIRE

Okay. Can you stop now ?

SOLDIER #1

Sure. Sorry.

She keeps walking, and reaches the hut she was detained in. Partly destroyed by fire.

She walks quickly to it...

INT. HUT

... and passes her head inside, through the small doorway.

CLAIRE

Ubu... ?

She sees nobody inside and takes her head out.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

She starts walking again and further ahead she recognizes Washcroft's house. She goes straight to it, walking faster.

INT. VILLAGE (WASHCROFT'S HOUSE) - DAY

She enters the house and finds it empty. Nothing much left. And no Washcroft.

She closes her eyes, shakes her head.

CLAIRE

I can't believe it.

SOLDIER #1 shows up. He stays in the doorway.

CLAIRE walks around. Finds a pencil. She goes to the opposite wall, up to some side table. She finds a piece of paper and writes those words :

I'M SO SORRY FOR
 EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENED
 I WISH YOU NO HARM
 I WISH NOBODY NO HARM
 I HOPE YOU ALL COME BACK HOME
 I NEED TO TALK WITH YOU
 CALL ME ANY TIME
 (phone number)

CL.

Discreetly she takes out her gun, puts it on top of the piece of paper and turns to the SOLDIER, walking to him.

They leave the house.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

They reach the end of the village. The chiefdom house. Empty.

SOLDIER #1
 What are you looking for exactly ?

CLAIRE doesn't answer. She enters the big, empty house.

INT. VILLAGE (CHIEFDOM HOUSE) - DAY

As she keeps walking in, she calls, one time, louder than before :

CLAIRE
 Ubu ?

She reaches the chiefdom platform.

And she sees something in the back. She recognizes the thing and rushes to it.

It's her handbag.

She grabs it, opens it. And sees her purse and all her papers inside.

SOLDIER #1
 What is it ?

More astounded than ever, she turns and runs out.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

CLAIRE
(showing it to him)
Can you believe it ? My bag !

She doesn't sound happy or relieved. Just highly surprised.

SOLDIER #1
With everything in it ?

CLAIRE
Yes.

SOLDIER #1
They banned you but they didn't give
you this ?

CLAIRE
They should have, in your opinion ?

The SOLDIER finds nothing to say.

She keeps walking, taking the same way back, he follows. And she calls again :

CLAIRE (cont'd)
Ubu ?

She gets past the jeep. The DRIVER (now SOLDIER #3) has to follow as well.

CLAIRE (cont'd)
(keeping calling)
UBU !

Both SOLDIERS inside the jeep look at each other.

She keeps calling the young orphan's name, unsuccessfully, all along the way back. On the way she enters some empty houses and huts, calling.

No Ubu anywhere.

CLAIRE gives up, in tears.

SOLDIER #1 doesn't ask anything about this Ubu thing, neither do the two others.

They stop the jeep by her.

SOLDIER #1 gets inside, she finally imitates him.

SOLDIER #3 starts the jeep and CLAIRE has a last look back as they definitely leave the empty village.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY/DUSK

Some time later. The village is still empty. The weather is awful - rainy, very windy. A storm. One of those storms able to trigger a landslide.

The diamond tree is shaken all over.

From the top of it, something small and solid falls down, bounces on branches and hits the ground. It's a stone but from another kind.

A diamond. Raw, uncut.

CUT TO BLACK.

END