

ORDERS

By Sandra Dempsey

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ISBN 1-60003-051-3

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TIME: 1994

PLACE: Rwanda, Africa

CHARACTER: Canadian Army Corporal First Class FRED CRICKLAND,
Age 20.

NOTE: Hutus - pronounced *HOO-toos*
Tutsis - pronounced *TOOT-sees*

(CRICKLAND and his unit have been sent to Rwanda under the auspices of the United Nations to try to bring Peace, order and humanitarian aid to the two warring ethnic groups: Majority Hutus and Minority Tutsis. Men, women and children on both sides are being slaughtered. Nearly one million Rwandans are dying in the unprecedented bloody genocide. CRICKLAND is dressed in standard jungle green fatigues and combat hat - not helmet, tactical vest - not bulletproof/resistant, and carries a standard-issue C7A1 assault rifle.)

CRICKLAND

(quickly taking up a defensive position on the perimeter) We get a report of fightin' an' pretty quick we come up on a Tutsi village with a few actual survivors. Or maybe they're moderate Hutus? Who, too? You, too? *(pauses to survey the horrible scene before him)* Gruesome. Hacked to bits. Not cute bits like some stupid Tweety an' Sylvester thing – bits like chunks of bright pink flesh in brown wrappers – from human beings. *(toneless sing-song; Song: “Toot, Toot, Tootsi, Goodbye”)* Tut, Tut, Tutsi, don't cry; Tut, Tut, Tutsi, don't... *(speaking urgently while HE surveys the surrounding area, checking for the enemy)* Th' interpreter says the ones that're left won't survive their wounds, an' one o' th' families are dyin' of AIDS an' haven't much time left anyway. Captain says we're gonna help 'em – dress their wounds, give 'em the morphine. He says we're gonna make 'em feel better an' stay with 'em to protect 'em in case the butchers come back. 'Says if we can make their last breaths on this earth a little less hellish, that's what

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we're gonna do. That's exactly what we're gonna do. **(falls to one knee, guarding for his unit behind him)** "Multi-National Force" my foot. There's only us Canadians here in Rwanda. That's it. No British. No US. No French. No Germans. They all said they'd be here, as part of the UN Force. But then they decided "no" – 'guess when there's no oil, there's no riches here fer th' taking, when there's no strategic purpose, it just doesn't matter as much. An' I guess when it's this kind of humanity; it doesn't matter as much, either. This colour of humanity, at least. Oh, everybody an' his uncle is there like Jack the Bear in places like th' Balkans – our boys are there, too, and in Croatia, an' even Haiti, too. An' heck, our boys have been deployed in more peacekeeping missions than any other country in the world. But nobody, NO-BOD-EE, no-BODY came to Rwanda – 'just us Canadians. We're it – we're the UN's Multi-National Force. Just us.

(The unit is suddenly fired upon. HE falls to his stomach to take cover, his weapon facing the threat.)

We're takin' fire! Captain puts me to cover our left flank. **(scans the bush ahead of him)** I'm scannin' for the puke that's unloadin' on us. Come on, where are ya, ya dirty puke butcher! Show me your face! **(HE's fired upon)** Ha! I see your smoke! I got ya, now!

(Suddenly, HE rolls almost onto his back – his words are a little shaky.)

God, oh, God. My heart's gonna burst out of my head – I can hear it thumpin' in my ears, I can feel it hittin' my chest – it's right up in my throat... **(struggles to swallow hard, his heart is racing)** God, oh, God. It's a kid. It's a frickin' nine-year-old kid! **(composes himself, checking back towards the enemy)** Some poor sap in A Company got sent back just two weeks or so ago. He just couldn't stop wakin' up screamin' – every night, wakin' up th' whole stinkin' camp. Screechin' bloody fear up into th' sky for everyone t' hear. **(looks back, checking on his fellow soldiers; yells back to unit)** It's a KID!

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