

Scene from Hotel Rwanda

Based on real-life events of the Rwandan civil war between the Hutu and Tutsi ethnic groups, *Hotel Rwanda* dramatizes the heroic actions of Paul Rusesabagina, who is credited with hiding and saving over 1,000 people at the hotel he managed in the Rwandan capital of Kigali. In this excerpt from Keir Pearson and Terry George's screenplay, civil war has erupted, and the situation at Hotel Mille Collines is dangerous and chaotic.

Read

FADE IN:

INT. SABENA OFFICES -BELGIUM -TILLENS' OFFICE -DAY

The Sabena President and three VPs have an early morning meeting. The intercom buzzes.

TILLENS

Yes?

SECRETARY

(thru speaker phone)

Sorry, sir, but I have a call from Paul in Kigali. He says it's urgent.

The President hits the speaker button.

TILLENS

Paul. Are you all right?

PAUL

(thru speaker phone)

We have a big problem, sir.

TILLENS

What?

PAUL

(thru speaker phone)

The Hutu ⁱ Army have come. They've ordered us -all of us -out of the hotel.

TILLENS

Why are they doing this?

PAUL

(thru speaker phone)

I think they will kill us all.

TILLENS

(stunned)

Kill? What do you mean ...all? How many?

PAUL

(thru speaker phone)

We have one hundred staff, and now more than eight hundred guests.

Tillens can barely form words to reply

TILLENS

Eight hundred!

PAUL

(thru speaker phone)

Yes, sir. There are now eight hundred Tutsi ⁱ and Hutu **refugees**. I do not have much time left, sir. I want to thank you for everything you have done for me and my family, and please thank all of my friends at Sabena.

The President considers this.

TILLENS

Paul, wait. I'm gonna put you on hold. Stay by the phone.

He hits the hold button, looks to the other executives. They are stunned to silence by Paul's **profound** farewell.

INT. HOTEL MILLE COLLINES -MANAGER'S OFFICE -DAY

Paul sits in the office, his hand over the mouthpiece. From the lobby come soldiers' angry voices.

SOLDIER (O.S.)

Where are your papers?

INT. SABENA OFFICES -BELGIUM -TILLEN'S OFFICE -DAY

The President gets everyone working on the phone.

TILLENS

Louis, get on to the UN. Tell them what's happening.
Mary, call the Prime Minister's office. Tell them I
must speak with him now.

The President lifts the telephone receiver and hits a button.

TILLENS

Paul, are you there?

PAUL

(thru speaker phone)

Yes, sir.

TILLENS

Who can I call to stop this?

Paul thinks.

PAUL

(thru speaker phone)

The French -they supply the Hutu Army.

TILLENS

Do everything you can to bide time. I'll call you
right back.

Paul hurries from the room.

INT. HOTEL MILLE COLLINES -LOBBY -DAY

Dube is at the computer, printing something. Paul walks quickly to him.

PAUL

What are you doing, Dube?

DUBE

The Lieutenant, sir. He wants to see the guest list.

Paul nervously glances at the soldiers.

PAUL

Go and get these boys some more beer.

Dube walks to the bar to get the beer, and Paul is on the computer, typing. A receptionist looks at the screen.

RECEPTIONIST

Sir, that guest list is from two weeks ago.

PAUL

Shh.

Paul hits the print button. The printer clicks to life.

INT. HOTEL MILLE COLLINES -ENTRANCE -DAY

Paul emerges with the printed **registry**. The Lieutenant marches up to Paul.

HUTU LIEUTENANT

Where's the guest list?

Paul hands him the print out. The Lieutenant studies it.

HUTU LIEUTENANT

Anderson, Arthurs, Boulrier... What is this?

PAUL

It is the guest list, sir.

HUTU LIEUTENANT

Are you trying to make a fool out of me?

PAUL

No. We stopped taking names after the President was murdered. This is the only guest list, sir.

HUTU LIEUTENANT

There are no Europeans left. Get me the names of all the cockroaches in there, now.

PAUL

That will take time.

HUTU LIEUTENANT

You don't have time. If I don't have the names so that I can pick out the traitors, then I'll kill everyone in there. Starting with you.

The Lieutenant's radio comes to life and he turns to answer it. He listens for a moment

HUTU LIEUTENANT

(intro radio)

Yes, sir?

He angrily turns to Paul and grabs him.

HUTU LIEUTENANT

Who did you call?

PAUL

Who did I call?

HUTU LIEUTENANT

Don't lie to me! What is your name?

PAUL

Rusesabagina. Paul Rusesabagina.

HUTU LIEUTENANT

I'll remember you.

He prods Paul's chest.

HUTU LIEUTENANT

I'll remember you.

He turns to his soldiers, gestures.

HUTU LIEUTENANT

Let's go.

They drive off.

INT. HOTEL MILLE COLLINES -ROOF -DAY

Paul emerges onto the roof. He looks around for his family, sees Tatiana, his children and the neighbors sitting huddled together.

PAUL

They've gone.

TATIANA

Oh.

Tatiana grabs him.

TATIANA

I was so afraid for you.

Dube appears.

DUBE

Sir, the President of Sabena is on the phone for you.

Paul strokes Tatiana's face.

PAUL

I must talk with this man.

INT. HOTEL MILLE COLLINES -MANAGER'S OFFICE -DAY

Paul hits the button and lifts the telephone receiver.

PAUL

Mr. Tillens.

TILLENS

(thru phone)

Paul, what's going on?

Paul shakes his head in disbelief.

PAUL

They left. Thank you, sir. What did you do?

INT. SABENA OFFICES -BELGIUM -TILLEN'S OFFICE -DAY

The Sabena President is at his desk.

TILLENS

I got through to the French President's office.

PAUL

(thru speaker phone)

Well, thank you. You have saved our lives.

TILLENS

I pleaded with the French and the Belgians to go back and get you all. I'm afraid this is not going to happen.

Silence, Tillens is ashamed, angry.

TILLENS

They're cowards, Paul. Rwanda is not -worth a single vote to any of them. The French, the British, the Americans. I am sorry, Paul.

INT. HOTEL MILLE COLLINES -MANAGER'S OFFICE -DAY

Paul is stunned.

PAUL

Thank you.

INT. HOTEL MILLE COLLINES -FUNCTION ROOM -DAY

The refugees are gathered, Paul addresses them.

PAUL

There will be no rescue. No **intervention** force. We can only save ourselves. Many of you know influential people abroad. You must call these people.

INT. HOTEL MILLE COLLINES -MANAGER'S OFFICE -DAY

MONTAGE of influential refugees. Odette, Benedict, Xavier call, plead, write and send faxes.

Odette sits at the desk, on the phone.

PAUL

You must tell them what will happen to us.

Other refugees are on the phones.

PAUL

Say goodbye. But when you say goodbye, say it as though you are reaching through the phone and holding their hand. Let them know that if they let go of that hand... you will die. We must shame them into sending help. Most importantly, this can not be a refugee camp. The Interahamwe believe that the Mille Collines is a four-star Sabena hotel. That is the only thing keeping us alive.

INT. HOTEL MILLE COLLINES -LOBBY -DAY

Paul on the move, organizing, walks to the receptionist at the front desk.

PAUL

Have you printed the bills?

She hands him a stack of envelopes.

PAUL

Now please erase the registry.

RECEPTIONIST

Erase it?

PAUL

Yes. I want no names to appear there.

Dube joins him.

DUBE

Boss, the carpenters are ready.

PAUL

Tell them to remove all of the numbers from the doors.

DUBE

And put what?

PAUL

And put nothing.

INT. HOTEL MILLE COLLINES -HALLWAY -DAY

Paul goes door to door, knocking. The rooms are all packed with Tutsi refugees. A door opens. He hands an envelope to the refugee.

PAUL

Good day. Here is your bill for the last week. If you cannot pay, or think you will not be able to pay, please go to the banquet room and Dube will take care of you. Thank you.

INT. HOTEL MILLE COLLINES -GROUNDS -NIGHT

Refugees are clustered on the ground, in tents, as the radio voice plays over a reporter's interview of a State Department Officer.

AMERICAN REPORTER

(thru radio)

Does the State Department have a view as to whether or not what is happening -could be genocide?

STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICER

(thru radio)

We have every reason to believe that acts of genocide have occurred.

Inside his office Paul and the others listen.

BRITISH REPORTER

(thru radio)

How many acts of genocide does it take to make
genocide?

STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICER

(thru radio)

Alan, that's not a question that I'm in a position to
answer.

BRITISH REPORTER

(thru radio)

Is it true that you have specific guidance not to use
the word genocide in isolation, but always to preface
it with this word, "acts of"?

STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICER

(thru radio)

I have guidance which I try to use as best I can.
There are formulations that we are using that we are
trying to be consistent in our use of.

Paul is listening to all of this. Benedict turns off the radio in disgust.
