In The Valley Of Elah

OVER BLACK

a man's voice, small, filtered by great distance:

MIKE (O.S.)
Dad?... Dad?

HANK (O.S.)
I can hardly hear you.

INT. DEERFIELD HOME - HANK AND JOAN'S BEDROOM -- MORNING

Start very close on a phone and Hank's ear.

CORPORAL VASQUEZ (O.S.)
(phone filter)
I said your son has gone AWOL.

HANK
(confused)
My son is in Iraq.

Widen to see HANK DEERFIELD cradling the phone, sitting on the edge of his bed. You don't have to ask if Hank has seen war, he speaks with the confidence of someone who has been to hell and mapped the terrain. He keeps himself in shape and is not a man who is often caught off guard, which makes his confusion that much more troubling.

CORPORAL VASQUEZ (O.S.)
Your son was in Iraq, sir. His unit arrived stateside four days ago.

HANK
Soldier, if my son was back I would sure as hell know about it.

JOAN DEERFIELD, Hank's wife, enters to check what's going on. Joan's a good looking woman, younger than Hank.

CORPORAL VASQUEZ (O.S.)
Sir, Sergeant Carnelli asked me to tell you your son has until Sunday to get back to the base, or he'll be listed as absent. I'm sorry, I have another call.

CLICK. Hank hangs up.

JOAN
Who was that?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

HANK
Some horse's ass. Did Mike email you?

JOAN
Why on earth would he do that? He knows I can't read the darn things.

HANK
(exiting)
You really should have someone show you sometime.

JOAN
(calling after him)
Sarcasm is not your most endearing quality, Hank.

INT. HANK'S ATTIC OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

Hank's desk sits in the corner of an unfinished attic room. Hank checks his answering machine, no messages. He taps the older model laptop computer on his desk; the black screen disappears, revealing his email program: one message -- someone looking for a missing weigh bill. Hank picks up the phone and presses an autodial number.

MIKE (V.O.)
This is Mike, leave a message and if I ever get a signal I'll call you back.

Beep.

HANK
Hey, Mike, it's your old man. Heard you're back. Give me a ring when you get a chance.

Hank hangs up, considers.

EXT. DEERFIELD HOME -- MORNING

Their is a modest two bedroom home lying a front-yard's distance off the highway. An ancient but well maintained dump truck sits at the back of a long gravel drive, front end jacked up. The truck door reads Deerfield Hauling.

Hank slides out from under the truck with a tie rod and wrench in his hand. He drops the rod into the box of his 1989 Ford F150 pickup, puts his wrench in the tool chest and pulls off his coveralls.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

As the pickup pulls out of the drive we widen to see the rows of identical houses lining the highway, most of them proudly displaying American flags. Welcome to the town of Munroe, Tennessee.

INT. TRUCK PARTS STORE -- MORNING

Hank waits, the busted tie rod on the counter. A TV in the corner plays a press conference about the state of the war. STU, the 60ish salesman, returns with a new rod.

STU
There you go.

HANK
You're sure this one will fit.

STU
You gotta trust somebody sometime, Hank.

(re: TV)
Bet Mike will have some stories to tell, won't he? Course now they can see at night and shoot through concrete walls, almost makes you sorry for the ragheads. Big difference from our day.

HANK
What day was that?

STU
...What do you mean?

HANK
Stu, unless I'm mistaken, the only action you saw was Kent State. Shot a school boy, didn't you?

STU
...That was a riot, and I didn't kill anybody.

HANK
Yeah. That's what I heard.

Hank takes the tie rod and leaves.

EXT. STREETS OF MUNROE, TENNESSEE -- MORNING

Hank steps out of the PARTS STORE and gets into his pickup. He slows as he passes the local high school, noticing...

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

HIS POV - THE HIGH SCHOOL & FLAG POLE

Kids entering don't notice the American flag flying upside down.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - SCHOOL OFFICES -- MORNING

Hank enters to be greeted by LENORE, the cheerful receptionist. The flag is clearly visible from the window.

HANK

Hi.

LENORE

Why hello there.

HANK

I'm Hank Deerfield.

LENORE

Mike's dad, I know that. You know we are all just so proud of Mike and our other boys serving their country...and girls...did you know Cheri Michaels is flying a helicopter? Flunked Drivers Ed and they let her fly a whirlybird.

HANK

Miss...

LENORE

Lenore.

HANK

Lenore. Have you looked out your window this morning?

LENORE

This window right here?

HANK

This window right here. Do you see anything odd? The flag?...

(nothing)

See how it's flying upside down?

LENORE

Oh, gosh, I didn't notice that. Oh dear. Well don't you worry, I will have that put right first thing in the morning.
CONTINUED:

    HANK
It is the morning.

    LENORE
We just get so busy here.

    HANK
Lenore, do you happen to know what it means, a flag flying upside down?

    LENORE
That someone's died?

No--

    LENORE
--See, I always get that wrong.

    HANK
--That's flying at half mast.

    LENORE
Could mean that the person putting it up wasn't paying a lot of attention.

She laughs at her own joke, as she often does.

    HANK
Yeah, it could. But it doesn't. Who raises the flag every morning, the principal?

    LENORE
Oh, good gosh no, he comes running in about one minute before nine; no it's Juan, our janitor.

    HANK
    (this is getting worse by the second)
The janitor raises the flag. Who takes it down at night?

    LENORE
Juan.

    HANK
Right. So, why don't we ask Juan to fix it right now?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

LENORE
Oh, I couldn't do that. He has so much to do; you know they laid off all the other janitorial staff, with cutbacks and such, he can hardly keep up as it is.

HANK
Fine. Then I'll do it.

LENORE
Oh, I'm afraid I can't let you handle school property; it's an insurance issue.

HANK
A flag is not school property. All flags are property of the US government, who loan them to us under the promise that we treat them with respect.

LENORE
No, I'm pretty sure we bought that one. I know because I had to order it when we threw the old one in the trash.

HANK
In the trash. Listen, before I get myself in a lot trouble, why don't you just tell me where to find Juan?

INT. BOYS' RESTROOM -- MORNING

Flooded, Hank stands in an inch of brown water. JUAN drops his pipe wrench back into his toolkit on the sink. Juan has a Mayan face and speaks with the accent of an immigrant.

JUAN
Now?

Hank slips him a ten dollar bill.

HANK
I'd really appreciate it.

Juan shrugs and heads out, wiping his hands. Hank takes a long look at the mess before exiting.
EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - FLAG POLE -- MORNING

Juan reattaches the flag. Hank snags the tip just before it hits the grass.

    HANK
    You don't let it touch the ground.

    JUAN
    Okay.

    HANK
    Where are you from?

    JUAN
    El Salvador.

    HANK
    What's your flag look like?

    JUAN
    A flag.

    HANK
    You know what it means when a flag is hung upside down?
        (he doesn't)
    It's an international distress signal.

    JUAN
    No shit.

    HANK
    No shit. It means we are in a whole lot of trouble, so come save our ass, cause we haven't got a prayer in hell of saving ourselves.

    JUAN
    It says a lot.

    HANK
    Yes, it does. So, you know how to do it now?

    JUAN
    Oh, yes.

    HANK
    Good.

Juan looks up at the flag flying. Hank walks to his truck.
EXT. DEERFIELD HOME -- DUSK

Joan watches from the kitchen window. Out in the drive, Hank lies under his dump truck, smacking the rod with a mallet. He curses it and rises.

INT. DEERFIELD HOME -- DUSK

HANK
(passing the kitchen)
Anyone call?

JOAN
No.

Joan watches him tread upstairs.

INT. HANK'S ATTIC OFFICE -- NIGHT

The phone rings in Hank's ear, until:

OPERATOR (O.S.)
Fort Rudd, how may I direct your call?

HANK
First Sgt. Arnold Bickman, Criminal Investigations Division.

OPERATOR (O.S.)
...I'm sorry, sir, I have no one by that name on base.

HANK
Thank you.

Hank hangs up, swivels in his chair and sees Joan standing in the open doorway.

JOAN
You going to tell me?

INT. DEERFIELD HOME - HANK & JOAN'S BEDROOM

Hank opens his top drawer, removes three neatly folded pairs of underwear, socks, three white undershirts. He tucks them into a small zip bag and opens his second drawer, removes three starched white cotton shirts and a shoe shine kit.

JOAN
I want to go with you.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

HANK
If he's holed up somewhere celebrating, the last thing he needs is his mother walking in on him. I'll call you when I get there tomorrow night.

JOAN
It's a two day drive.

HANK
For some people.

He kisses her on the forehead, puts his laptop under his arm and exits.

INT. DEERFIELD HOME - MIKE'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Copies of Soldier of Fortune share the shelves with sports memorabilia and snapshots of Mike and his buddies in Bosnia (circa 2001) and Iraq (2003). Hank fingers an autographed football, puts it back and slips a photo of Mike in his dress uniform out of the frame. He pockets it and heads out, flicking off the light.

EXT. INTERSTATE -- NIGHT

The pickup speeds along, passing a car or two.

INT./EXT. HANK'S PICKUP - TWO LANE BLACKTOP -- NIGHT

Hank does what he does best, drive. An oncoming big rig blinds him with its high beams. Hank squints.

FADE TO WHITE

MIKE (V.O.)
Dad? Dad?

YOUNG BOY'S VOICE
Dad!

INT. HANK'S PICKUP - REST STOP -- EARLY MORNING

Hank WAKES with a start. He hears tapping. Hank looks to his driver's side window and is surprised to see...

A FIERCE-LOOKING CHOLO

standing at the open window, chewing gum. Tattoos, scarred face, someone you would cross the street to avoid. Hank tries not to react.

(Continued)
CONTINUED:

CHOLO
How ya doin'? 

HANK
Good. You?

CHOLO
Very good. You got a light?

Hank pushes in his cigarette lighter and they wait. Tense. It pops out. Hank hands it to him and the Cholo lights his smoke.

CHOLO (CONT'D)
Thanks.

And he walks back to his junker car, where Hank sees evidence of someone else sleeping in the back seat. A small American flag flies clipped to the window.

Several other vehicles are parked in this REST STOP off the interstate, mostly trucks and campers.

Out in the patch of grass a young boy kicks a soccer ball around while his parents sleep.

YOUNG BOY'S VOICE
Dad?.... Dad!

Hank smiles to himself, grabs his bag and opens his door.

INT. REST STOP RESTROOM - MORNING

Hank puts away his shaving kit, buttons the cuffs of his newly pressed cotton shirt.

EXT. FT. RUDD MILITARY BASE - ENTRANCE -- AFTERNOON

The pickup drifts up to the guard kiosk and Hank hands the GUARD his ID - RETIRED MILITARY.

INT. FT. RUDD MILITARY BASE - OFFICE CORRIDOR

Hank waits. SERGEANT FIRST CLASS DAN CARNELLI steps out.

SGT. CARNELLI
Sgt. Deerfield?

HANK
Hank. Thanks for seeing me, I know you're busy.
CONTINUED:

SGT. CARNELLI
(walking him in)
You should have let me know you were
coming; I would have cleared some
time. Bet the base has changed a
lot since your day.

INT. FT. RUDD - SGT. CARNELLI'S SHARED OFFICE -- LATER

Hank and Sgt. Carnelli sit. A corporal brings in coffee.

HANK
What about his buddies?

SGT. CARNELLI
We asked, of course.
(re: coffee)
Thanks.
(to Hank)
A lot of men are just coming back
today from a 72. I don't want you
to think I'm not concerned, but where
these boys have been, it's a miracle
more of them don't blow outta here
for a few days. For the last eighteen
months they couldn't drink, couldn't
even flirt with a woman. They touch
down, the first thing they do is
find a bar and a girl. I expect
your son will come stumbling in
looking for a shot of penicillin.

HANK
...You mind if I had a look at his
quarters?

INT. BARRACKS CORRIDORS -- AFTERNOON

Men come and go in their Green BDUs. Sgt. Carnelli and Hank
weave through the men. Carnelli spots CORPORAL STEVE PENNING,
22, calls to him:

SGT. CARNELLI
Penning.

PENNING
Yes, Sergeant.

SGT. CARNELLI
This is Specialist Deerfield's father.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

**PENNING**
Steve Penning, good to meet you, sir. Have you heard from Mike?

**HANK**
No.

**SGT. CARNELLI**
Mr. Deerfield wants to take a look at his son's quarters.

**PENNING**
(to Hank)
Certainly, sir. Shortcut is through here.
(leads them)
Mike and I go back to Bosnia, he sure told me enough stories about you. He hasn't called or anything?

**HANK**
You find that surprising?

**PENNING**
You'd know better than me, sir, but I recall Mike showing up for roll call with a collarbone sticking through his skin.

Penning spots two soldiers ahead watching a foosball game. Calls to them:

**PENNING (CONT'D)**
Long, Ortiez. This is Doc's dad.

Meet SPECIALIST ENNIS LONG, 22 and PRIVATE ROBERT ORTIEZ, Mexican American, same age.

**LONG**
Honor to meet you, sir.

**ORTIEZ**
Good to meet you.

**HANK**
Doc?

**PENNING**
A nickname we gave him, made no sense.
(points to door ahead)
That's Mike's room there.
CONTINUED:
Carnelli goes ahead and knocks, then reaches for his ring of keys. Hank hangs back with Ortiez and Long.

HANK
You boys have any idea where Mike could be?

LONG
Sorry.

ORTIEZ
Must be one hell of a woman.

Something makes Hank take a beat before responding. For some reason he doesn't like Ortiez.

HANK
Yeah.

LONG
Good meeting you, sir.

Suddenly Mike's door opens from inside, revealing SPECIALIST GORDON BONNER, bare-chested. He just stares at them.

BONNER
Sergeant?

SGT. CARNELLI
(taken aback)
This is Specialist Deerfield's dad, we've come to look at his bunk.

BONNER
(stepping back)
Then you don't need a key. Somebody took a boot to it yesterday.

Carnelli checks the cracked door frame as Hank steps in.

SGT. CARNELLI
You report this to the CQ?

BONNER
Yes, Sergeant. Sorry, thought you were somebody trying to steal stuff.

INT. BARRACKS - MIKE'S ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Bonner retreats into the adjoining bathroom. Through it, Hank sees a bedroom beyond.
CONTINUED:

HANK
Your room?

BONNER
Yeah.
(re: bed near the wall)
That's Mike's bunk there.

Bonner goes back to his room to finish dressing. Hank looks around Mike's small room: two single beds, small desks, bedside tables and lamps.

HANK
(re: second bed)
Who is this?

SGT. CARNELLI
We lost a man.

Hank nods. He opens the closet; all his son's clothes are still there. He searches the top shelf, then pulls a duffel bag out of the bottom; checks the contents.

SGT. CARNELLI (CONT'D)
That's your duffel, right?

HANK
Yes.

SGT. CARNELLI
Tried to convince him to use the one he was issued, it was like talking to a wall.

Hank walks to the small bureau, opens it, sees the very neatly folded, neatly pressed t-shirts and shirts squared away in the drawer. Hank suddenly stops and looks around the room, just now noticing something by its absence.

HANK
There are no photographs.

SGT. CARNELLI
Sorry?

HANK
Mike's always taking pictures, emailing them to me. I don't see any photographs. Or a camera.

SGT. CARNELLI
You saw the door.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

SGT. CARNELLI (CONT'D)
Property theft is a real problem. I guess that hasn't changed since your stint.

HANK
No.

Hank steps to Mike's bedside table. He fingers open the Bible lying on it. The inside leaf is stamped: Courtesy of Chaplain Services. He pulls open the drawer and notices a battered cell phone hiding amongst the junk.

HANK (CONT'D)
(re: Bible)
Mind if I take this? His mother gave it to him. I left mine at home.

As he picks up the Bible with his right hand he smoothly palms the cell phone with his left and slips it into his pocket. He looks to the bathroom door and notices Bonner, looking away, tucking in his shirt. Did he see him palm the cell phone?

SGT. CARNELLI
I'd like to, but I can't let you remove anything.

HANK
I understand.

He puts the Bible back on the bedside table.

INT. BARRACKS ENTRANCE -- DAY

Hank signs out and walks off toward the exit.

PENNING
Sergeant Deerfield?

Hank turns to see Penning trotting up behind him.

HANK
Hank.

PENNING
Yes, sir. Before he left for Iraq, Mike was seeing a girl: her name was Jennifer Lopez. We teased him about dating J Lo.

HANK
You know where I could find her?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

PENNING
Sorry. I'll ask around.

HANK
Thank you.

Hank turns and walks off.

INT. CELLULAR PHONE STORE -- AFTERNOON

A young SALESPERSON replaces the battery in Mike's phone.

SALESPERSON
This thing's been around some intense heat.

HANK
It's been in Iraq.

SALESPERSON
That could do it.
 треи (tries power, nothing)
Sorry, it's dead. But I can give you a new phone with more features with a two year contract.

EXT. CELL PHONE STORE PARKING LOT -- EARLY EVENING

Hank stands next to the open door of a panel van. Inside GABRIEL, a cell phone technician sits at a bench with a computer and equipment. He plugs the phone in under:

HANK
I need any phone numbers in memory.

Garbled information comes up on the computer screen.

GABRIEL
This is seriously fried.
(searching)
Address book. You got numbers for Barracks, Burgers, Chicken, Jenn--

HANK
Give me that one.

The technician points to the screen. Hank points to the guy's cell phone.

HANK (CONT'D)
May I?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

GABRIEL
Sure.

Hank picks it up and dials the number as the technician continues to work. Hank hears:

RECORDED MESSAGE
The number you have dialed is no longer --

Hank snaps it closed.

HANK
Anything else?

GABRIEL
Mom, Pizza, TD's and Ted.

HANK
TD's?

GABRIEL
Local joint. Coulda been more but that's all that's left.

HANK
Thanks. How much?

Hank digs for his wallet. The technician studies the screen.

GABRIEL
You want the media?

This catches Hank off guard – what media?

ANGLE ON SCREEN – TIME CUT

The phone tech clicks on an icon and a VIDEO CLIP PLAYS. There's electronic drop out and only sporadic sound, but it's Mike's squad -- BONNER, PENNING, LONG, ORTIEZ, driving on the road to Baghdad, singing a marching song we only hear bits of.

The camera pans to the windshield, where we see the convoy of assault vehicles. Smoldering carcasses and Iraqi tanks, trucks and civilian automobiles line their route.

Mike pushes the camera out the window and gets a shot of the large FLAG mounted on a pole fixed to the High Back Humvee, flapping in the wind. He pulls the camera back in and the image freezes on a shot of Mike.
CONTINUED:

GABRIEL (CONT'D)
That your son?

HANK
That's Mike.

GABRIEL
Sure as hell glad they didn't get me.

HANK
That feeling is probably mutual. Any more?

GABRIEL
(taps more keys)
Yeah, but they're real corrupted. If you want 'em I got a program at home that might be able to pull them off, but it's real slow. Charge you a hundred flat?

HANK
(digs out wallet)
Can you email them to me?

GABRIEL
Sure.

HANK
(handing him $100)
Where's TD's?

INT. TD'S -- CONTINUOUS

Naked women twirl on poles to unbearably loud RAP MUSIC. The place is jammed with off duty soldiers. The BOUNCER points to the bar. Hank squeezes through the crowd and finds the BARTENDER. He pulls out Mike's photo and shouts to be heard:

HANK
I'm looking for my son!

The bartender nods towards the crowd: "good luck." Hank steps deeper into the club, scans the faces. He's quickly overwhelmed.

EXT. TD'S -- NIGHT

As he leaves, Hank glances over to a small group of men standing between two cars.
CONTINUED:

Three are Hispanic gangbanger types, two are soldiers out of uniform that look to be scoring some drugs. The most dangerous-looking gangbanger eyeballs Hank until he reaches his pickup.

EXT. IMPERIAL MOTEL -- NIGHT

The sign boasts FREE INTERNET.

INT. IMPERIAL MOTEL RECEPTION -- CONTINUOUS

Hank checks in.

MOTEL CLERK
You need a wake up call?

HANK
I've been waking up without an alarm every morning at four a.m. for the past forty years; I think I'll be okay.

MOTEL CLERK
You want to make the wake up calls?

Hank smiles and heads for his room.

INT. HANK'S MOTEL ROOM - MONTAGE -- NIGHT

- Hank checks his email. His In Box is empty.
- Hank runs his fingers down the crease of his pants and lays them flat between his mattress and box spring.
- He polishes his shoes and squares them beside the bed.
- He calls his wife. As he speaks, Hank clicks through a folder of photos his son emailed from Iraq, shots of him and his buddies.

JOAN (O.S.)
But why would he leave without telling us?

HANK
I'll ask him when I see him.

INT. DEERFIELD HOME - HANK & JOAN'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Joan sits on the edge of the bed; speaks into the phone.

JOAN
Hank?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

HANK (O.S.)
I'll find him.

JOAN
...Okay.

INT. HANK'S MOTEL ROOM -- CONTINUOUS
Hank hangs up. Hank stops on a photo that seems to trouble him, we don't see it.

EXT. COPY PLACE -- NIGHT
Quiet this time of night.

INT. COPY PLACE -- CONTINUOUS
Hank stands at the self-serve color printer as Mike's photos spit out. Most of them are just snaps of him and his buddies. One of them is different -- Hank picks it up.

It's a photo of what might be a BODY LYING ON THE SHOULDER OF A ROAD, taken from a distance. The image is chilling.

FADE TO BLACK

MIKE (V.O.)
You gotta get me out of here, Dad.

INT. HANK'S MOTEL ROOM -- NIGHT (EARLY MORNING)
Hank wakes in darkness, disoriented. The clock reads 3:58 AM. He switches on the lamp.

MONTAGE
- Hank snaps open the curtains.
- He pulls his bed sheets so tight you could bounce a coin off them, and folds an impossibly sharp corner.
- A maid pushes her cart along the walkway. Through his bedroom window, Hank's computer comes to life. Hank checks his email: no new messages.
- He pulls a crisp cotton shirt from his overnight bag.
- He takes the local phone book from the drawer.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP -- EARLY MORNING
The first rays hit the Imperial Motel sign. Hank steps into the coffee shop next door carrying the phone book.
INT. COFFEE SHOP -- CONTINUOUS

He leafs through the phone book; several pages of LOPEZes, and a large number of Jennifers or initial "J."

INT. COFFEE SHOP - HOURS LATER -- DAY

Hank at the payphone, the phone book propped on the shelf, lots of pen lines scratching off highlighted numbers. CNN's coverage of last night's presidential press conference plays on the TV in the background.

HANK
Morning, is this Jennifer Lopez? Do you speak English?...
(hangs up, tries next)
Hello, I'm looking for Jennifer Lopez.
(beat)
Beverly Hills, thanks very much.

Hank hangs up. Considers. Flips through the book until he finds a listing for ARNOLD BICKMAN. He dials.

ARNOLD BICKMAN (O.S.)
Hello?

HANK
Arnold Bickman?

INT. COFFEE SHOP -- DAY

Looking out through the glass, we see a man who looks like he'd be an ARNOLD BICKMAN get out of his camper and limp towards the restaurant like a man who needs a new hip. He's Hank's age, but looks ten years older. Unlike Hank, Arnold is no longer "fighting trim." Hank waves him over from his booth. They shake hands heartily.

ARNOLD BICKMAN
My God. Hank Deerfield.

HANK
What the hell you doing at home?

ARNOLD BICKMAN
You just caught us. We're taking off in the camper to visit the grandkids.

HANK
I called you at the base --

(CONTINUED)
ARNOLD BICKMAN
The base? Christ, Hank, I retired fourteen years ago.

HANK
You did not.

ARNOLD BICKMAN
Almost fifteen. How the hell are you?

HANK
Fine. You want coffee or a piece of pie?

ARNOLD BICKMAN
No, I can't. Helen's waiting in the camper.

HANK
(looking)
That her? She looks as old as you do.

Arnold has to laugh.

ARNOLD BICKMAN
You are still the meanest man I ever met. So, what did you do, break an axle and call me for a tow?

HANK
No, I was hoping you were still at CID; I wanted a friendly face.

ARNOLD BICKMAN
Neither of your boys in trouble, I hope.

HANK
No.

ARNOLD BICKMAN
What was the oldest boy's name, Darren?

HANK
David.

ARNOLD BICKMAN
That's right, joined the 82nd Airborne, didn't he?
CONTINUED:

HANK
Yeah.

ARNOLD BICKMAN
Tough sons of bitches. How's he liking it?

HANK

ARNOLD BICKMAN
I'm very sorry to hear that, Hank. Very sorry. The young one?

HANK
Mike. He's regular Army, like his dad. He's in Iraq, doing real well.
(beat)
I'm just doing a favor for a neighbor; her boy got in a little trouble. Anybody we know still there?

ARNOLD BICKMAN
No. All gone. How many times did I call you and say we should get together?

Helen HONKS THE HORN. Arnold looks.

HANK
She keeps you on a schedule.

ARNOLD BICKMAN
The kids are expecting us.

They slide out of the booth.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - AT FRONT DOOR

They step up to the door, through which we see Arnold's RV.

ARNOLD BICKMAN
You sure there's nothing I can do?

HANK
It was just good to see your old sad bones.

ARNOLD BICKMAN
I'm gonna call you when we get back.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

HANK
That'd be great.
(looking at Helen)
Your wife, just how old is she?

Arnold laughs and walks off. Hank waves.

EXT. BAR -- NIGHT
Hank comes out of a bar, looks around.

INT. HANK'S MOTEL ROOM -- NIGHT
Hank sits silhouetted by the motel signs outside his window as he downloads a video file sent to him by Gabriel, aka "PhoneGuy@Earthlink.Net."

ANGLE ON SCREEN

Mike plays to the camera, readies to toss a football to a young, ragged Iraqi kid in a Baghdad street.

MIKE
(into camera)
Historic moment, first time this kid has ever caught a real American football. Here we go.

He hands the camera phone to GORDON BONNER. Mike throws the ball. The street kid catches it and he and his buddies run away.

MIKE (CONT'D)
No, you run this way! This way!
(realizes)
Hey, that's my ball you little fucker!

We can hear GORDON BONNER laughing. Mike grabs for the phone.

MIKE (CONT'D)
(pissed but laughing)
Gimme that back.

And the screen freezes, end of clip. Hank laughs.

EXT. TOWN OF BRADFORD POLICE STATION -- MORNING
Hank enters.

INT. TOWN OF BRADFORD POLICE STATION -- MOMENTS LATER
Hank returns a form to JODIE, the civilian worker wearing a headset behind the desk. She gives it a quick glance.

(CONTINUED)
JODIE
Hold please.
(to Hank)
Your son is in the Army.

HANK
Yes, ma'am.

JODIE
(handing it back)
Then you need to see the Military Police.

HANK
They're pretty busy with the war and everything, so I'm trying to check things out myself.

JODIE
All you can do is file a missing person's report --

HANK
Fine.

JODIE
-- in which case you'll need to see the Military Police.

HANK
How about you let me talk to someone who does more than answer phones?

INT. POLICE STATION - CORRIDOR & DETECTIVE SQUAD -- DAY

Hank waits as Detectives come and go. He rises and STEPS INTO THE OFFICE, where he eyes DET. EMILY SANDERS listening impatiently to a young white woman we will call ANGIE.

ANGIE
I don't think you understand. He loved that dog.

SANDERS
I'm sure he did, ma'am. But the dog bit him.

ANGIE
A dog bites you, what do you do?

SANDERS
I really don't know.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Hank tries to get a male detective's attention; gets the brush-off. He and another detective (HODGE and WAYNE) are having too much fun watching Angie deal with her doggie crime.

ANGIE
You tie it up, you give it away, you might even shoot it, but you sure as hell don't pick it up by the throat, wrestle it into the bathroom and drown it in the tub! You don't think there's something seriously wrong with that?!

SANDERS
Perhaps he thought it was more humane.

ANGIE
More humane?! It's a Doberman! And he's drowning it right in front of our son, and it's biting him, and I'm screaming for him to stop. Does all this sound humane to you?!

Hank tries another passing detective, same result.

SANDERS
Did your husband threaten you or your child with violence?

ANGIE
He'd never hurt us, he just needs help.

SANDERS
Then you should ask the VA about counseling.

ANGIE
You don't think I've been there? He won't go, and he's going to hurt himself, I know it!

SANDERS
I would like to do something --

ANGIE
Really? Cause I would say you don't give a crap.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

SANDERS  
(now pissed and nasty)  
In fact I do, but crimes against  
dogs are particularly hard to  
prosecute. Now I have someone  
waiting.

ANGIE  
Fuck you, lady.

And she storms out. Hank takes that as his cue to approach  
and hand Detective Sanders the missing person's form.

HANK  
That kind of morning, huh?

SANDERS  
(glancing at form)  
You have to take this to the Military  
Police.

HANK  
Yeah, but I'm trying to keep my son  
out of more trouble. Listen, I know  
you're busy, but all I need you to  
do is make a call to his bank, see  
if he's withdrawn any funds or used  
his credit card in the last week.

SANDERS  
Retired cop or just watch a lot of  
TV?

HANK  
Military Police, retired.

SANDERS  
Then you know that the Army has  
jurisdiction over its personnel.  
I'm sorry, I hope you find your son.

HANK  
Listen, I don't know what you think  
your job is. If it is anything like  
mine, it was to roll up the drunks,  
twiddle my thumbs and not ask too  
many questions. But my son just  
spent eighteen months bringing  
democracy to a shithole and serving  
his country. He deserves better  
than this.

He drops the form and walks out.
EXT. HANK'S MOTEL ROOM -- NIGHT

Looking in through the window we see Hank on the phone. His computer screen shows an on-line banking form.

    JOAN (O.S.)
    I found his old checkbook.

    HANK
    Is there anything written on it? I need a password.

EXT. DEERFIELD HOME - MIKE'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Through the bedroom window we see Joan at Mike's desk with his checkbook, cradling the phone.

    JOAN
    There's nothing on it.

    HANK
    Are you sure?

Hank hears the sound of email arriving. He minimizes the bank webpage to reveal his email account and an email from PHONEGUY. He downloads the attachment.

    JOAN
    Which do you think it is, Hank: I'm blind or I just don't feel like telling you?

Silence. Hank would apologize if he could. Joan knows him well enough to understand that, and not require it.

    JOAN (CONT'D)
    I'm worried, Hank. I'm really worried.

    HANK
    He's a good boy. He'll have a reason.

CLOSE ON THE COMPUTER SCREEN

The image quality is terrible, chunks of video are missing, sometimes half the screen is just garbage. But nonetheless, we see what Mike saw as his High Back Humvee patrolled the streets of Baghdad in convoy.

FLASHES - out the driver's side window, no more friendly faces. People toss jeers, others scurry out of the way. NOW ON SCREEN: The convoy ahead. Spot sheep herded on the side of the road ahead.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

MIKE (O.S.)
Bonner, look, there's your family.

Bonner presents his middle finger to the camera.

JOAN
...Hank?

Hank pauses the video.

HANK
I'll find him. I'll talk to you tomorrow.

And he hangs up and hits play.

BONNER
Stop screwing around.

Bonner slaps the camera out of Mike's hand. It tumbles to the floor and we see Mike askew.

MIKE
You coulda broke it!

BONNER
Stuff it up your ass.

MIKE
Gimme back my goddamn--

BONNER
(see something)
Son of a bitch.

Mike's head snaps to the windshield:

MIKE
Fuck!

BONNER
Don't stop! Don't fucking stop!

MIKE
What do I do?!

BONNER
Speed up!

Mike stomps on the accelerator and a second later we hear a small thud as something hits the grill and then rolls under the vehicle's undercarriage. They drive on in silence. Bonner's hand reaches down and turns off the camera phone.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

The screen goes BLACK. The SILENCE is punctured by the sound of a sharp inhale as...

INT. HANK'S MOTEL ROOM -- NIGHT

Hank wakes, startled. He must have fallen asleep, but he can't recall. He checks his watch: 7 PM. He sits up.

INT. POLICE STATION - CORRIDOR & SQUAD ROOM -- NIGHT

Sanders returns from an interview. Several detectives hustle past her, including Hodge and Wayne. She calls after them.

SANDERS
What's going on?

DETECTIVE HODGE
Don't you worry. If it's an animal-related crime we will call you in.

She enters the DETECTIVE SQUAD ROOM. It's empty, just a ringing phone. She walks to her desk as DETECTIVE NUGENT comes out of the men's room, zipping his fly and pulling on his coat.

SANDERS
What's up?

DETECTIVE NUGENT
They found body parts out on Mesa Luna Road.
   (off her sick feeling)
Don't think the parts are actually on the road.

SANDERS
That's comforting, Nugent.

INT. IMPERIAL MOTEL RECEPTION -- NIGHT

Hank enters. The motel clerk is watching TV; war coverage.

HANK
Do you have an iron?

MOTEL CLERK
People keep stealing them. World's gone crazy.

HANK
You have a good hardcover book?
EXT. MESA LUNA ROAD -- NIGHT

Police vehicles sit on the shoulder, lights flashing. Flashlights sweep the acres of tumbleweed and scrub brush as a couple of dozen men search for evidence. Sanders steps up to a small clearing, the remains of a fire. Evidence flags mark spots where bones remain. Sanders kneels to inspect a charred bone; notes where it was shattered. Behind her, Wayne addresses a uniformed cop.

DETECTIVE WAYNE
I need more evidence markers.

COP
You got all that we have.

SANDERS
Straighten out some coat hangers and buy Dixie cups to stick on the end of them.
(hands cop a bill)
And get a receipt.

DETECTIVE WAYNE
(trudging off)
Coyotes had a field day with this one; bones are scattered half a mile.

Sanders nods and moves off. Approaching headlights get her attention -- a Military Police vehicle pulls up and parks. Two officers step out and survey the scene.

INT. HANK'S MOTEL ROOM -- NIGHT

Hank washes his cotton shirt in the sink.

EXT. MESA LUNA ROAD - FIELD -- NIGHT

Sanders notices something hidden in the brush. Motions for a CSI Tech to hand her a coat hanger and a Dixie Cup. Plants it next to:

CLOSE ON A SEVERED WRIST AND HAND

blackened, the fingers and much of the flesh burned away. too.

ANGLE ON SANDERS

SANDERS
Sean?

The photographer joins her.
INT. HANK'S MOTEL ROOM

Hank stretches the wet shirt flat over the bureau.

EXT. MESA LUNA ROAD - FIELD -- NIGHT

Glancing back to the road, Sanders sees her immediate senior, Lt. Burke, standing with CHIEF OF POLICE SIMON BUCHWALD, who leans on his car. He doesn't look happy to be here.

An unmarked CID sedan drifts to a stop and two plain clothes Army investigators step out. By his bearing, LT. KIRKLANDER is clearly the one in charge. They join the uniformed MPs already on scene, who are standing with Detective Hodge. Sanders has seen this before and knows what is happening.

Lt. Kirklander hands a hundred foot tape measure to the MPs.

SANDERS

heads toward the police chief and her lieutenant.

    CHIEF BUCHWALD
    (to Sanders)
    Anyone else from the office coming? I could swear we have a couple of secretaries who haven't shown up yet.

Detective Hodge grins as he returns from his tete-a-tete with the MPs. In the background the two MPs stretch the measuring tape from the center of the road into the field.

    LT. BURKE
    Tell me good news, Hodge.

    DETECTIVE HODGE
    Looks as if the victim was killed by that fire site, then his body was chopped up and burned. Animals scattered the parts.

    CHIEF BUCHWALD
    And you're smiling like an idiot because?

    DETECTIVE HODGE
    The base bought this field from the city two months ago. City property only extends fifty feet from the center line of the road. Don't think it's our body, Chief.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

They look to the field, where one of the MPs is driving a surveyor's stake into the ground at the fifty foot mark. The burn site is well past that mark.

CHIEF BUCHWALD
Hallelujah, let's go home.

The Chief gets in his car and drives off. Lt. Burke calls in the troops as more Military Police vehicles arrive.

LT. BURKE
Wrap it up, fellas, the boys with the shiny buttons are coming in!

Sanders notices Lt. Kirklander playfully flip Burke the finger. Burke smiles as he walks off -- it's obvious these two are buddies. Burke passes Sanders and Kirklander notices her watching. She turns away, Kirklander goes to work.

INT. HANK'S MOTEL ROOM -- NIGHT

Hank picks up the hardcover book and runs the sharp edge along the wet shirt to press out the wrinkles.

EXT. MESA LUNA ROAD -- NIGHT

Sanders watches the police move out and the military take over. She gets in her car and drives off.

INT. HANK'S MOTEL ROOM -- NIGHT

Hank hangs the shirt up on the shower rod and turns off the light.

INT. HANK'S MOTEL ROOM -- EARLY MORNING

Hank swings his legs over the edge of the bed. It's still dark. The clock glows 6:17 AM. He looks at it oddly, checks his watch to make sure it's right.

INT. HANK'S MOTEL ROOM - BATHROOM -- EARLY MORNING

Hank lathers with soap and shaves. Sees that he's nicked himself. Hates that. He sticks a dab of paper on the cut.

INT. HANK'S MOTEL ROOM -- EARLY MORNING

The sheers glow with the early light as Hank makes his bed.

EXT. IMPERIAL MOTEL -- EARLY MORNING

The sheers are open now as Hank steps out and into the path of the MATRONLY ASIAN HOUSEKEEPER with her cart.
CONTINUED:

She looks into Hank's room, then turns and repeatedly bows her thanks to him.

INT. COFFEE SHOP -- MORNING

Hank eats his usual breakfast, watching the war news on CNN, as he adds items to the list on his neatly written pad. He notices blood smeared on his hand and white cuff and realizes his neck is bleeding again.

EXT. IMPERIAL MOTEL -- MORNING

Hank returns to the motel. As he gets to his door, he hears a car door close, sees an army officer in full dress uniform approaching. Call him CAPTAIN OSHER.

    CAPTAIN OSHER
    Mr. Deerfield? Jim Osher, can I have a word?

    HANK
    Come in, I'll just be a minute.

Hank steps into...

INT. HANK'S MOTEL ROOM - BATHROOM -- CONTINUOUS

He grabs a wad of toilet paper and holds it to the cut, putting pressure on it for a moment. He tries to focus on that small task and block out the man in the other room.

INT. HANK'S MOTEL ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Hank opens the bathroom door and stops, as he sees: Captain Osher standing at attention, holding a salute. Hank awkwardly returns it.

    CAPTAIN OSHER
    Sir, I regret to inform you a body was found last night. Upon investigation we believe it to be the remains of your son, Specialist Michael Deerfield.

The officer drops his salute.

    HANK
    Right. They'll need me to identify him.

    CAPTAIN OSHER
    ...No, sir.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

CAPTAIN OSTER (CONT'D)
They've determined identity in other ways. I believe partial fingerprints.

HANK
What do you mean, partial? What happened to him?

CAPTAIN OSTER
I'm not at liberty to say, sir, but someone from--

HANK
I want to see his body. Now.

INT. POLICE STATION -- DAY

Det. Sanders sits restlessly at her desk, unable to keep her mind on the work before her. She stands and steps away.

INT. FT. RUDD - HOSPITAL - ARMY M.E.'S OFFICES -- DAY

Hank rounds the corridor with Lt. Kirklander, who tries one last time.

LT. KIRKLANDER
Sgt. Deerfield, this isn't necessary and it's not the way you want to remember your son.

HANK
Maybe not, but it's the way he left this earth, so I don't see as I have a choice.

Kirklander sees Hank won't be dissuaded. An Army MEDICAL EXAMINER in a lab coat approaches. Kirklander nods to him.

INT. POLICE STATION -- DAY

Sanders hovers in the doorway of a small cubicle, where the police photographer's printer spits out the evening's crime scene photos.

Sanders is drawn into the cubicle, mesmerized by the gruesome color pictures. We intercut Sanders watching these images come out of the printer with the following scene:

INT. FT. RUDD - HOSPITAL - ARMY M.E.'S LAB -- DAY

Hank and Kirklander stand on one side of a large stainless steel table, the Army Medical Examiner on the other. Between them lie the charred remains. Kirklander watches Hank under:
CONTINUED:

MEDICAL EXAMINER
Working backwards: the carbon patterns show that the body was dismembered before it was burnt. It appears a knife or similar tool was used; but the blade was dull, many of the joints are shattered rather than severed. The burn patterns tell us the dismembered parts were stacked and doused with an accelerant in an attempt to incinerate the body; ridiculous because you need an oven to approach an effective temperature. Which means most of the tissue would have been left intact, so the damage is largely a result of scavengers stripping the bones.
(we see the teeth marks)
Cause of death is going to take more time to determine, but there's evidence of multiple stab wounds.

HANK
How many?

MEDICAL EXAMINER
I'm sorry?

HANK
How many wounds?

MEDICAL EXAMINER
With most of the flesh missing we can only count the blows that made impact with a bone.

HANK
How many of those are there?

Only now does the medical examiner begin to understand the obvious, that he's telling all this to the corpse's father. He checks his pad, looks up.

MEDICAL EXAMINER
...Forty-two.

HANK
(beat)
One knife or several?

MEDICAL EXAMINER
...One.
INT. POLICE STATION -- DAY

The police photographer returns to his cubicle, not particularly surprised to see Sanders standing there.

SANDERS
You gonna turn these over to the Army?

POLICE PHOTOGRAPHER
Tried to. Said they took their own photos. They didn't say it in a nice way.

He drops them into a file and puts them in a drawer.

INT. FT. RUDD - HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR NEAR M.E.'S -- DAY

Kirklander and Hank round the corner from the M.E.'s office.

LT. KIRKLANDER
If it's all right, I'd like to give you a call tomorrow, before you go home, I have a few questions that--

HANK
Ask them now.

LT. KIRKLANDER
...I can check with records and answer some of these things -- I take it your son didn't own a green car?

HANK
Mike doesn't own a car.

LT. KIRKLANDER
A motorist reported seeing a green sedan parked on the shoulder near the field Saturday night. One theory is that this was a car-jacking or robbery gone wrong. There's been a real uptick in gang activity lately.

HANK
I'd like to see where he died.

LT. KIRKLANDER
I'm sorry, it's still an active crime scene. I'll let you know as soon as you can.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

HANK
Okay.
(silence)
What else you want to ask?

LT. KIRKLANDER
A lot of the deaths we've seen like this have been drug related.

HANK
(walks off)
Are you asking if Mike was a drug dealer or just an addict?

LT. KIRKLANDER
I don't want to be asking anything.

HANK
You know the Army does regular drug tests.

LT. KIRKLANDER
Not while they're in Iraq.
(produces a small hash pipe in a plastic bag)
We found this under your son's mattress. It won't go on my report, but why I ask... last month we arrested three soldiers trying to smuggle heroin in from Kuwait. They'd arranged to sell it to a local Mexican gang. I understand Mike spoke some Spanish.

HANK
You think my son could have been a drug mule because he spoke Spanish?

LT. KIRKLANDER
No, because somebody cut off his hands and his head.

Hank turns and walks off. Kirklander watches, sizing him up.

INT. POLICE STATION -- EVENING

Sanders pulls on her jacket and heads out. Turning into the hall, she spots Hank on the long wooden bench.

SANDERS
I am so sorry about your son.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

HANK
Show me.

SANDERS
...I'm sorry?

HANK
I need to see where he died.

SANDERS
It's not our case, the murder occurred on military property.

HANK
But you know where it is.

SANDERS
There is nothing to see.

HANK
Then there shouldn't be a problem with me seeing it.

Sanders sees how hard Hank is trying to hide his pain.

EXT. MESA LUNA ROAD - KILLING FIELD -- NIGHT

Sanders leans against her blue Ford Taurus in the sickly yellow wash of the streetlight, her car parked the wrong way on the gravel shoulder, high beams failing to illuminate much of the field where Hank stands. Finally:

HANK
You people sure as hell know how to trample a crime scene, I'll give you that.

Hank squats where the body was burned and pivots, shining his flashlight at the tumbleweeds and scrub brush.

HANK (CONT'D)
Suppose you figured it was a good idea to have everyone you ever met park on this shoulder.
(beat)
If your crime scene boys had known where to dig, they'd have found traces of blood in the gravel here. It's where he was killed.

SANDERS
So, you don't see blood, but you know it's there.
CONTINUED:

HANK
Yes, miss. Just like I see how his
body was dragged from here to there.

SANDERS
That's remarkable. That ground is
rock hard, but you see drag marks.

HANK
You go to all the trouble of burning
a body, you don't think you'd try
and cover your path?

Hank hands her the flashlight and walks off across the road
toward the parking lot and the gun store on the far side.

HANK (CONT'D)
Going to use the restroom.

Curious now, Sanders takes her flashlight and steps into the
field. Hank struts across the road. Without looking back:

HANK (CONT'D)
You might find it easier to drive
around the field. You couldn't do
more damage.

She throws a look, then shines her flashlight on the ground,
finally spots a broken base of a tumbleweed -- lifts it and
places it aside. She takes another step toward the fire
site and finds another broken weed and puts it aside.

EXT. D & G GUNS - PARKING LOT -- CONTINUOUS

Hank crosses the parking lot and opens the front door.

EXT. MESA LUNA ROAD - FIELD -- NIGHT

Sanders lifts a last tumbleweed out of the way and stops at
the fire site. She turns and sees the clear, trampled path
of where the body was dragged.

INT. D & G GUNS -- NIGHT

Hank waits. JO ANNE steps up to the counter. She's dressed
like she's looking for a man to take her away from here.

HANK
Hi. I suppose the MPs have been in
asking you questions about what
happened over in that field.
CONTINUED:

JO ANNE
Yes, they have. Terrible thing.

HANK
I'm checking it out for the family.
You mind if I ask you if you saw
anything going on over there?

Her jealous husband, RANDY, approaches to check out Hank.

JO ANNE
Wished we had, we would've liked to
help. We didn't even know what it
was when we smelled it, did we, honey?

Hank doesn't show that his heart just stopped beating.

HANK
...How's that?

JO ANNE
That Sunday morning, when we drove
into the parking lot. We just thought
somebody'd been barbecuing.

RANDY
(agreeing)
Smelled like burned meat.

HANK
Thanks. Mind if I use your restroom?

JO ANNE
Through that door. Show him, honey.

INT. D & G GUNS - MEN'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Hank squats on the floor beside the toilet and lets the horror
of his son's body being burned overwhelm him.

EXT. MESA LUNA ROAD -- NIGHT

Returning to the shoulder, Sanders turns and spots a dog in
the field, chewing on something. Her stomach tells her what
that something is. She curses silently as she throws a look
across the road; sees Hank coming from the parking lot.

Sanders picks up a hand full of pebbles and tosses them toward
the dog, who balks but quickly returns. She throws a look
in Hank's direction, gauges that he hasn't noticed and tosses
another handful in the dog's direction. It barely even looks
up this time. Hank arrives and steps to the Taurus.

(Continued)
CONTINUED:

HANK
You can tell your MP friends they should be looking for a blue car, not a green one.

SANDERS
Why's that?

HANK
Because a blue car under a yellow light looks green, doesn't it?

Hank gets in and Sanders looks at her car -- which looks green in this light. Almost angry at herself for not seeing the obvious, she opens her door and gets in.

She does a U-TURN and DRIVES OFF. HANK watches the dog in the field.

EXT. IMPERIAL MOTEL -- NIGHT

Sanders drops him off.

HANK
Thanks.

SANDERS
It was the least I could do.

HANK
I'd say that's accurate.

And he walks away, leaving her wondering why she even tried to be nice.

EXT. SANDERS HOME -- NIGHT

A modest bungalow on the outskirts of town. Sanders enters as her sitter, LEE ANNE, leaves.

SANDERS
Thanks, Lee Anne.

INT. DEERFIELD HOME - KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Having just been told the news, Joan opens her mouth to cry out...but no sound escapes. Her knees won't hold her weight, so she slides down the wall to land gracelessly on the floor.

INT. HANK'S MOTEL ROOM -- NIGHT

Hank sits on the bed, his back to us, the phone to his ear, caught in the glow of the passing headlights.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

   JOAN (O.S.)
   Why? Who would do this? He was
   just a boy. And he was almost home.

   HANK
   I'm going to find out.

INT. DEERFIELD HOME - HALLWAY -- NIGHT

Joan on the hall phone by the stairs.

   JOAN
   I'll get a plane ticket.

   HANK
   No.

   JOAN
   What do you mean "no"?

   HANK
   I'll bring him home soon as I can.

   JOAN
   I need to see him, Hank. I need to
   be with Michael.

   HANK
   He is gone, Joan.

   JOAN
   I need to be with my boy, Hank.

   HANK
   There is nothing left.

   JOAN
   What the hell does that mean?

   HANK
   Joan, for once in your life can you
   just take my word for something?

   JOAN
   -- For once? For once?! I seem to
   remember me being the one saying
   "no" and you saying "it will be good
   for his character!" Who won that
   argument, Hank?!

   HANK
   Mike was the one wanted to join, I
   sure as hell didn't encourage it!

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JOAN
Like he could ever have felt like a
man if he hadn't gone. Both my boys,
Hank. You could have left me one.

And with that she finally weeps, the sound so piercing and
full of pain that it goes right through Hank.

HANK
Joan?... Joan, please.
(finally)
Joan, I can't listen to you cry.

JOAN
Then don't.

She hangs up and sits there, alone on the floor.

INT. SANDERS HOME - DAVID'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Sanders lies in bed holding her sleeping son, DAVID. Looking
at her boy, she can't help but imagine what Hank must feel.

INT. HANK'S MOTEL ROOM -- NIGHT

Hank sits on his bed, reading the motel's Bible, hoping to
find comfort. His head turns as he hears the SOUND of an
email arriving.

INT. SANDERS HOME - DAVID'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Sanders tiptoes out and eases the door closed.

DAVID (O.S.)
Door.

She eases it back open and looks in, his eyes are still
closed. She moves off.

INT. HANK'S MOTEL ROOM -- NIGHT

The distorted video images appear on the screen.

AN AERIAL ATTACK -- NIGHT

Mike's buddies huddle beside a building, light playing on
their faces.

PENNING
Better hang up, Saddaam could be
calling. "Mike, Mike, I give up."

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Mike pans to show the explosions that light up the night sky.

ON PATROL - IN THE TOWN -- NIGHT

The squad moves through an alley, checking doorways. Mike and a buddy enter a house. Inside, bodies lie incinerated where they fell.

MIKE (O.S.)
-- really weird, Dad.

Their clothing is melted into them, as if heat from the bodies did the damage. Mike zooms in on a hand with a book, flips through the pages, not even singed. Mike frames the dead man's blackened face. He looks young. Mike presses a brightly colored SKATEBOARD STICKER onto the man's forehead.
No explanation. The screen FREEZES on that image.

INT. POLICE STATION - DETECTIVE BUREAU -- AFTERNOON

A uniformed cop guides a young handcuffed redneck punk named MILLARD, 18, into the chair beside Sanders' desk. Sanders sits in her chair reading a report. She glances up from it, eyes the punk, then throws a look to the coffee area, where Lieutenant Burke stands with Detectives Hodge and Wayne; all three pretending not to laugh or look in her direction. Sanders finishes reading the report, stands...

SANDERS
Stay there.
(marches over to Burke)
Excuse me, Lieutenant, but I was wondering how I came to be assigned this case.

LT. BURKE
...Which case?

Hodge and Wayne choke back their laughter.

SANDERS
(re: report)
Jacob Ronald Millard, slaughterhouse employee, arrested for torturing chickens.

MILLARD
(calling across the room)
It's no big deal, everybody does it!

(continuing)
CONTINUED:

SANDERS
Everybody doesn't poke out their eyes, asshole!

MILLARD
Sure they do.

SANDERS
Shut up.

MILLARD
My boss just doesn't want me humping his daughter!

SANDERS
(to Millard)
Now we are shocked beyond words.

LT. BURKE
You see the way you can draw information out of people? People just like you, Emily. That's how you got promoted from traffic to the detective squad, am I right?

SANDERS
...I'm sorry??

LT. BURKE
Oh, don't be. If Wayne and Hodge could have fucked their way into the squad, they would have, too.

DETECTIVE HODGE
Wayne would have. One of us needs to know what they're doing.

SANDERS
Ah. See, that's what concerns me. Having fucked my way into this job, I may not be qualified to piece together this complex of a crime. I mean, take the murder site; I would have never come to the conclusion that that soldier had been killed on Army property. I would have been fooled by the signs of struggle on the shoulder of the road. And that trail of broken brush leading from there to where he was burned would have made me think he was killed in our jurisdiction and moved because

(MORE)
CONTINUED:

SANDERS (CONT'D)
the killers didn't think it smart to
chop him up right under a bright
streetlight. I would have totally
misread the crime scene.

Silence. Nugent, sitting nearby, appreciates the moment.

INT. POLICE STATION - POLICE CHIEF'S OFFICE -- AFTERNOON
Sanders stands in front of Chief's desk.

CHIEF BUCHWALD
No, it's good work. We needed another
homicide. I mean, we solved three
out of the last ten, another unsolved
murder will really cement my standing
with the Mayor. You got some problem
with your fellow detectives? Feel
the need to show them up, that it?

SANDERS
No, sir.

CHIEF BUCHWALD
So, it's the Military Police. You
think they're a bunch of boobs and
are gonna bungle the investigation.

SANDERS
No, sir. But let's not pretend we
don't know the Army's real motives
for wanting this case.

CHIEF BUCHWALD
When did you discover you had these
psychic powers, Detective?

SANDERS
So, you don't believe the Army's
primary concern will be how this
incident reflects on the Army?

CHIEF BUCHWALD
And you see this as a career move,
is that it?

SANDERS
I don't have a career, sir, I have a
job, I take care of my son and I do
what I am told. But this boy died
in a ditch beside one of our streets.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

SANDERS (CONT'D)
Someone burned him like a cord of wood, leaving the animals to chew on his remains. With respect, if that was your son just back from Iraq, I think you wouldn't be quite as happy about chucking the case off onto someone else so you would look better come election time.

CHIEF BUCHWALD
That was with respect?

SANDERS
That was my intent, sir.

CHIEF BUCHWALD
Fine. I'll think about it and let you know.

SANDERS
Sir, every moment we lose in this investigation is--

CHIEF BUCHWALD
Didn't you just say you would do whatever you were told?

SANDERS
I sometimes exaggerate for effect.

CHIEF BUCHWALD
...How's David?

SANDERS
I'm sorry?

CHIEF BUCHWALD
Your son.

SANDERS
He's doing fine, thank you for asking.

CHIEF BUCHWALD
That deadbeat ex of yours ever show up for any of his games?

SANDERS
Luckily David is pretty pathetic at every sport he attempts, so he wants as few people witnessing it as possible.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

CHIEF BUCHWALD
That's a shame.

SANDERS
It's not like he's the boy's father.

That moment hangs there a beat longer than it should.

SANDERS (CONT'D)
And the way I see it, it's the oddballs and misfits who go on to do interesting things with their lives. How many former high school quarterbacks do we roll into the drunk tank every Saturday night? A little misery in school is a good thing.

CHIEF BUCHWALD
I was first string quarterback at my high school.

SANDERS
I seem to recall you showing me photographs of such, sir.

CHIEF BUCHWALD
...You are gonna keep after me about this Deerfield boy, aren't you?

SANDERS
I think you know what the right thing to do is, sir.

CHIEF BUCHWALD
...Jesus H. Christ.
(picks up phone)
Hilary, get me Captain Fenderman at the base.

He tosses Sanders a withering look. She tries not to smile.

INT. HANK'S MOTEL ROOM -- DAY

There's a knock on the door. Hank opens it to reveal GORDON BONNER, Mike's squad mate. He seems nervous and overly polite.

BONNER
Mr. Deerfield?

HANK
...Hi.

(Continued)
CONTINUED:

BONNER
I overheard you asking if you could have Mike's Bible. I thought it might bring you some comfort.

He hands the Bible to Hank, turns to step away.

HANK
Anybody know you took this?

BONNER
No, sir. I asked at the visitor center where you were staying and they told me.

HANK
(beat)
Can I buy you a coffee?

BONNER
I really should get back.

HANK
How about a drink?

Bonner considers, softens.

EXT. LIQUOR STORE -- DAY

Hank returns to the pickup with a brown paper bag. He sits and pulls out the fifth of whisky and two Dixie cups, pours.

BONNER
To Mike.

Hank clinks and drinks.

HANK
I need to ask you something. I'd like the truth. Was Mike doing drugs?

BONNER
Doc? I guess.

HANK
Christ.

BONNER
No more than other guys. He wasn't like a heavy doper.

Hank nods, he doesn't like it but he can understand it.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

HANK
You ever see him hanging out with anyone off the base, maybe Mexicans?

BONNER
No, sir.

HANK
(beat)
How you adjusting?

BONNER
Being back? It hasn't been that long.

HANK
You called your parents?

BONNER
My mom. My dad and I aren't close.
(beat)
Did you two talk much?

HANK
Sure.
(beat)
We could have talked more.
(beat)
Did he ever say anything to you I should know?

BONNER
No, sir. I mean, you see a lot of stuff over there; you don't want to talk about it, even with your buddies.

HANK
(knows this is true)
Yeah. But he did okay, Mike?

BONNER
He was a first class soldier. You know Mike, loved the Army; he couldn't wait to get over there, save the good guys and hurt the bad guys.
(Hank smiles)
They shouldn't send heroes to places like Iraq. Everything there is fucked-up.
(beat)
Before I went, I would never say this; but ask me now?

(MORE)
CONTINUED:

BONNER (CONT'D)
They should just nuke it and watch
it all turn back to dust.

INT. IMPERIAL MOTEL -- DAY

Through the window we see Hank get out of his pickup and
head for his door. The camera circles until it finds the
phone, its message light blinking. Hank's hand picks it up
and punches the 0 and waits.

EXT. BRADFORD AIRPORT - WHITE ZONE -- DAY

As Hank approaches he can see there is only one person waiting
on the sidewalk: Joan, sitting on her suitcase. She stands
as the truck slows. She opens the door and gets in. Hank
drives off without saying a word.

INT. FT. RUDD - HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR BY M.E.'S -- DAY

Joan and Hank stand with Kirklander in the corridor outside
the ME's lab, by a viewing window. She nods to Kirklander.
He raps on the window, the curtain opens. We don't see what
they see, but we see Joan's face. She could never have
prepared herself for this.

LT. KIRKLANDER
Would you like to sit down, ma'am?

JOAN
No, no, it's okay.

(beat)
Is that everything? Is that all of
him?

LT. KIRKLANDER
Yes, ma'am.

JOAN
Thank you. They must have to keep
that room cold.

Kirklander knows better than to question the non sequitur.
He raps on the window for them to close the curtains.

LT. KIRKLANDER
Yes, ma'am.

JOAN
It looks cold.

Hank nods his thanks to Kirklander.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

LT. KIRKLANDER
My deepest sympathies, ma'am.

Hank walks her away down the long corridor.

EXT. BRADFORD AIRPORT - WHITE ZONE -- NIGHT

The pickup pulls to the curb. Other cars drop off passengers. Hank looks to her, unsure of what to say. There isn't anything. Joan leans over, gives him a cursory kiss, opens the door and walks away.

INT. HANK'S MOTEL ROOM -- NIGHT

Silhouetted against the window, Hank watches the fragmented images of war -- searching their frames for meaning, finding none.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP -- NIGHT

Hank walks from the motel to the coffee shop next door, as he has done every day since he's been here. This time he's surprised to find the door locked. The JANITOR inside speaks through the glass.

JANITOR
Closed. It's Sunday.

HANK
...It is?
(beat)
Is there someplace close to get something simple?

The janitor nods toward the dive across the street. The Checker Box.

JANITOR
Checker Box.

INT. THE CHECKER BOX -- NIGHT

The bar is almost empty, it's way too early for crowds. Hank enters, walks to the bar, gets the male BARTENDER's attention. He looks like a former military type.

BARTENDER
What can I do you for?

HANK
Can I get a hamburger?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

BARTENDER
Just cold sandwiches. Chicken or chicken.

HANK
Then chicken.

BARTENDER
(calling into back)
Evie, chicken sandwich.
(to Hank)
Anything else?

Hank slips a photo of Mike out of his jacket.

HANK
You happen to see this soldier in here last weekend?

BARTENDER
Sorry. Something to drink?

HANK
Beer, I guess. Whatever you're pushing.

The bartender pulls a glass of beer, gives it to Hank and moves off. Hank drinks like a man who hasn't allowed himself many pleasures. Before he expects it, EVIE, the waitress, shows up behind the bar with his sandwich on a plate. It's pre-made, still in its plastic wrapper. Evie is mid-forties, maybe fifty, and topless. Hank freezes.

EVIE
You want mustard or ketchup?

HANK
No, thanks, ma'am.

EVIE
Woman stands topless in front of you, "ma'am" could be taken as an insult.
(sees photo)
This your son?

HANK
Yes, ma'am.

EVIE
(smiles at his discomfort)
Handsome boy.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

HANK
I'm asking if anyone saw him; it would have been last Saturday.

EVIE
Sorry. All I recognize is the uniform.

HANK
Thanks.

Evie puts the bill down and moves off. Hank pays, takes the sandwich packet and leaves.

INT. HANK'S MOTEL ROOM -- NIGHT

Hank picks up his son's Bible and flips through it, stopping at an underlined passage. He reads. Flips to another page, finds more underlined passages.

INT. SANDERS HOME - DAVID'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Sanders tucks her son into bed.

ANGLE FROM HALL

She steps out, leaving David's door open and the hall light on.

INT. SANDERS HOME - DINING ROOM -- NIGHT

Sanders slips the gruesome photos of Mike's dismembered body parts from the file and studies them with a magnifying glass, the brightly colored kind that kids use to inspect insects.

EXT. IMPERIAL MOTEL -- MORNING

Sanders knocks on Hank's door; no response. She steps back, looks at his truck and wonders where he's gone. She steps out into the parking lot, looks across the street.

INT. COIN OP LAUNDROMAT -- MORNING

Through the plate glass window we see Sanders step up. Hank sits at the back in his white T-shirt, waiting for his clothes to dry. He sees her approaching and opens the still-spinning dryer, pulls out a cotton shirt and puts it on.

SANDERS
Morning. I was wondering if I could ask you a few questions about your son.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

HANK
I thought it wasn't your case.

SANDERS
Well, it sort of fell back to me.

HANK
Isn't that our good fortune.

SANDERS
I was wondering if you knew if your son had any enemies.

HANK
You mean other than the thousands of Iraqi and foreign fighters who were trying to kill him up until a couple weeks ago?

SANDERS
Yeah.
(beat)
That shirt looks like it's still wet.

HANK
It's dry enough.

It obviously isn't, but Hank keeps buttoning and tucking.

SANDERS
Anything bothering him, that you know about?

HANK
No. You following up the gang connection?

SANDERS
Do you have a reason to think your son was involved in drugs or gangs?

HANK
No.

SANDERS
When did you last speak to your son?

HANK
Why?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

SANDERS  
(shows him)  
Capital One faxed me a summary of  
his recent credit card charges. The  
day after he returned he bought some  
tube socks --

HANK  
I told him a dozen times those are  
the worst socks you can buy. No  
heel, they wear right through.

SANDERS  
...And then that Saturday he bought  
some chicken.

HANK  
Does it say what time?

SANDERS  
No. No more charges. We're assuming  
he was killed sometime Saturday night  
or Sunday morning. We still haven't  
found his wallet, but if it was stolen  
we'd see a lot more charges on it.  
Stereos, computers, what have you.

HANK  
You been to the chicken place yet?

Sanders looks at him, knows what he is asking, knows she  
shouldn't do this.

INT. CHICKEN SHACK -- DAY

A local chain, full of enlisted men. Sanders waits at the  
counter for CHUCK the manager, who approaches through the  
open kitchen. Hank waits behind her, uncomfortable in his  
damp shirt.

CHUCK  
How can I help you?

SANDERS  
(showing her badge)  
We're making inquiries about a soldier  
who was in here a week ago.

Sanders shows him a photograph of Mike (not Hank's).

CHUCK  
You're kidding me, right?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

CHUCK (CONT'D)  
(indicates the soldiers)  
We're a block from the base.

HANK  
Can you tell from a statement what time he was here?

CHUCK  
It's the last four digits...  
(she hands him receipt)  
1:03 AM Sunday morning. We bill that as Saturday. Anything else?

SANDERS  
Can you tell us what he bought?

CHUCK  
Not without the actual receipt.

SANDERS  
Okay. Thanks.

Sanders takes the receipt and turns to leave. Hank stays there, staring at the menu display.

HANK  
Your four piece dinner is $6.79. That what most people order?

CHUCK  
That or the three piece.

HANK  
(re: credit card printout)  
So, with tax, $21.77 would be around three dinners. Three people.

CHUCK  
Four if it's the three piece. Or one really hungry soldier.

Hank nods and exits. Sanders follows, secretly kicking herself for not asking such an obvious question.

EXT. CHICKEN SHACK -- DAY

On leaving, Hank spies two Mexican gangbangers hanging out at the adjacent liquor store, drinking beer with a couple of young, white toughs. Hank watches them as he strides toward Sanders' vehicle, drawing their looks. Sanders catches up to him at the car, having noticed.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

SANDERS
You know those guys?

HANK
No.

They climb into the car.

HANK (CONT'D)
So, where did he go from here?

SANDERS
Maybe he met someone.

HANK
Yeah, maybe.

As Sanders backs out, Hank throws another look to the Hispanic men in the shadow of the building.

EXT. CENTRAL AVE - INTERSECTION -- DAY

Sanders' vehicle approaches an intersection and suddenly brakes hard as a CONVERTIBLE runs the opposing red light and swerves onto the avenue, five men with buzzed hair and bottles of beer whooping as they go. Hank waits for her to react as their light turns red.

HANK
You haven't got a flashing red light?

SANDERS
Got a nice one in the glove compartment.

HANK
You're not going to do anything about that?

SANDERS
And you're going to tell me you never worked a military town.

Hank shakes his head and looks out the window. Their light turns green and she drives on.

EXT. IMPERIAL MOTEL -- AFTERNOON

Sanders' Ford pulls up, Hank steps out without saying a word.
INT. HANK'S MOTEL ROOM -- AFTERNOON

Hank sits at his computer, Googling "Mexican" and "drugs." He clicks on various articles with headlines about extremely violent crimes, a photo of a beheaded corpse, and another of four smiling Mexican gangsters brandishing machetes.

INT. POLICE STATION - CORRIDOR -- AFTERNOON

Sanders heads back toward her office. Slows as she sees Lt. Bud Kirklander stepping out of the detective bureau.

    LT. KIRKLANDER
    There you are. I just dropped something off for you.

    SANDERS
    You did.

    LT. KIRKLANDER
    We took statements from the men in Mike's squad, thought you'd want them.

    SANDERS
    (thrown but covering)
    That's great, thanks; I was just about to call you to arrange interviews.

    LT. KIRKLANDER
    Saved you the trouble.

    SANDERS
    How so?

    LT. KIRKLANDER
    The sworn statements? On your desk?

    SANDERS
    You didn't think I'd want to interview them myself?

    LT. KIRKLANDER
    Listen, I was just trying to give you a leg up.

    SANDERS
    Thanks, but I sort of like to do my own detective work. So, this afternoon good for you?

    LT. KIRKLANDER
    I'm free for lunch.

(Continued)
CONTINUED:

SANDERS
I try not to eat with married men
who are obstructing an investigation.

LT. KIRKLANDER
(laughs)
Is that what I'm doing? Listen,
read the statements; if you still
want to question them, I will be
glad to take the request to my CO.

SANDERS
Perhaps you misunderstood me, Smiley;
this isn't a request. I want a list
of the men in his unit--

LT. KIRKLANDER
On your desk.

SANDERS
-- and I want to interview them this
afternoon.

LT. KIRKLANDER
You're gonna have to take that up
with my CO.

SANDERS
My chief already spoke with him--

LT. KIRKLANDER
Well, this one is a bit of a
jurisdictional mess.

SANDERS
There is no mess. The murder was
committed in our jurisdiction.

LT. KIRKLANDER
That's where it gets murky.
(moving off)
You read those, gimme a ring, glad
to put in the request.

INT. POLICE STATION - LT. BURKE'S OFFICE -- AFTERNOON

LT. BURKE
You don't have the sworn statements,
is that what you are saying?

SANDERS
Yes, I have the statements--
CONTINUED:

LT. BURKE
Then they're cooperating, I don't see the problem.

SANDERS
Lieutenant, I have a right to interview potential witnesses!

LT. BURKE
Has the Army said you can't?

SANDERS
They said they'd consider my request.

LT. BURKE
And that was a full ten minutes ago?

SANDERS
-- And I would like to talk to these men before they've been coached so --

LT. BURKE
-- "coached"??

SANDERS
-- "debriefed" so often that any inconsistencies in their stories will have long disappeared. Being a former military man, I'm sure you've seen that happen. Perhaps when you served with Lt. Kirklander.

LT. BURKE
Tell you what, skip upstairs and cry to your boyfriend, because I'm just not in the mood to give a shit.

Burke dismisses her; she exits past smirking Hodge and Wayne.

EXT. MESA LUNA ROAD - CRIME SCENE -- LATE DAY

Sanders stands at her car, staring at the field, crime scene tape fluttering in the wind. She starts to feel guilty for what she said to Hank.

EXT. IMPERIAL MOTEL -- LATE DAY

Sanders pulls into the motel parking lot, sees Hank's pickup truck in its usual spot. She sits in her car, considering.

INT. COFFEE SHOP -- CONTINUOUS

Sanders approaches Hank's table. He looks up from the menu.
CONTINUED:

SANDERS
You ordered yet?

INT. SANDERS HOME -- EVENING

Sanders cooks, watching out her kitchen window.

EXT. FIELD NEXT DOOR - SANDER'S P.O.V.

Hank casts a long shadow as he walks David out into the big field that abuts her yard. David isn't happy.

DAVID
I've seen everything out here.

HANK
So, you know everything about this field.

DAVID
Yes.

HANK
You been out here at night?

DAVID
Yes.

HANK
When it's pitch black?

DAVID
Yes.

HANK
So, if you were out here, in the pitch black, not a moon in the sky or a light in the house, you could find your way home.

DAVID
(points)
It's right over there!

HANK
Okay.

Hank pulls a hanky out from his pocket, ties it around the boy's eyes.
IN HER KITCHEN - SANDERS

Can't take her eyes off them. She turns off the pot that's boiling over.

OUT IN THE FIELD - HANK

Turns David around, blindfolded. Stops him.

    HANK
    So, where is it now?

David points in the opposite direction. Hank lifts the blindfold, shows him. David swings and points to the house as if he always knew where it was.

SANDERS

Smiles at her son's stubbornness.

BACK WITH HANK AND DAVID

    HANK
    Close your eyes, feel the wind on your face.

    DAVID
    There is no wind.

    HANK
    You'd be surprised. And you want to know a secret? This time of night, when it's calm like this, the wind is almost always moving the same way. Close your eyes.
    (beat)
    Can you feel it?

David touches his cheek.

    HANK (CONT'D)
    Open your eyes. Look at your house.
    (David turns to face it)
    Close your eyes again. Which way is the wind coming from now?

David touches the back of his neck.

    HANK (CONT'D)
    There you go.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

He pulls the handkerchief down over the boy's eyes, spins him around, forwards and backwards, much more than the first time.

HANK (CONT'D)
Okay. Find your way home.

David slowly turns until he can feel the slight breeze on his neck, then starts walking directly toward the house. Hank stays squatted, watching.

FROM HER WINDOW
Sanders watches, moved.

INT. SANDERS HOME - DINING ROOM -- NIGHT
Hank and David in their seats. Sanders puts the food on the table and joins them.

SANDERS
Okay, men, dig in.

Hank closes his eyes, clasps his hands and says grace silently. David watches him closely, closes his eyes and mimics him. Sanders watches. Hank opens his eyes and reaches for the platter to serve.

HANK
May I?

SANDERS
Please.

INT. SANDERS HOME - KITCHEN -- NIGHT
Hank scrapples his plate. David fills up the sink to wash the dishes. Sanders steps in.

SANDERS
(to David)
No. Out. Go get ready for bed.

DAVID
I can do it.

SANDERS
Yeah, and you can also get your butt in bed.
(to Hank)
You want to do me a big favor, read him some of his book?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Hank gives her a look which says he'd much rather do dishes.

INT. DAVID'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

As viewed from the kitchen, through the open door. David is in bed, Hank sits on the edge, silently reading The Chronicles of Narnia.

DAVID
...You're supposed to read it to me.

HANK
I can't understand a word of it.

DAVID
Do you know any stories?

HANK
I'm not much of a storyteller.

DAVID
Then read the book.

Hank considers, thinks of something.

HANK
You know where your name comes from?

DAVID
My mother.

HANK
Before that. You're named after King David. Your mother never tell you that?
(David shakes his head)
Yeah, that figures.

SANDERS
listening from the kitchen reacts, but chooses not to interrupt.

IN DAVID'S BEDROOM

HANK (CONT'D)
There were two armies assembled, the Israelites and the Philistines; they were both on hills, with the Valley of Elah between them. That's a place in Palestine. You know where that is?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

David shakes his head.

HANK (CONT'D)
It doesn't matter. Anyway, the Philistines had a champion, a giant named Goliath.

DAVID
There's a robot named Goliath.

HANK
This wasn't him. Anyway, every day for 40 days, Goliath strode out into the field and challenged somebody from the other side to fight him, and nobody would. The strongest and bravest warriors that the king had were all too scared.

DAVID
Why didn't they just shoot him?

HANK
They didn't have guns.

(beat)
They had arrows, but there are rules to combat. You don't shoot somebody who is challenging you to fight with a sword. So, this kid, not much older than you, he comes delivering bread. And he says to the king, "I'll fight Goliath."

DAVID
No way.

HANK
True story. So, the king dressed David in his own armor, but it was much too big and heavy. So, David takes it off. He looks around and finds five smooth stones, about yay big. He steps into the field, with his slingshot in his hand. And Goliath comes running, yelling, this horrible scream. And David lets fly the stone. And hits him in the forehead. Cracks his skull. And Goliath falls down, dead.

DAVID
So, he shot him.
CONTINUED:

HANK
With a rock, that's not the same thing. You know how he was able to beat him?

David shakes his head, enthralled.

HANK (CONT'D)
First thing David had to fight was his own fear. He beat that, he beat Goliath. Cause when Goliath charged, David just planted his feet, took aim, and waited. You know how much nerve that took? A few more steps and Goliath would have crushed him. And then he threw the rock. That's how you fight monsters. Lure 'em close to you, look 'em in the eye and smack 'em down.

DAVID
You fight a lot of monsters?

HANK
Sure.

DAVID
...You win?

HANK
If I didn't, I would have been crushed, right?

David sees the logic. Nods.

HANK (CONT'D)
Okay then. You go to sleep.

He turns off the light and leaves, closing the door behind him, casting the room into darkness.

IN THE KITCHEN AND HALL

SANDERS
He likes to sleep with that door open.

HANK
He'll be okay.

Hank continues on into the dining room. Sanders looks at David's bedroom door, expecting her son to call for her to open it.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

When he doesn't, she goes back into the kitchen and picks up the coffee pot. As she's passing through the hall again, she hears his small voice.

    DAVID (O.S.)
    Door.

She steps to it, eases it open.

    DAVID (CONT'D)
    Not that much.

    SANDERS
    Okay.

That's something. She eases it almost closed and heads off to

THE DINING ROOM

where she pours them both a cup, deciding not to mention the bedroom door.

    SANDERS (CONT'D)
    You know that story isn't true.

    HANK
    Of course it's true. It's even in the Koran.

She decides not to argue.

    HANK (CONT'D)
    Can I read the men's statements?

    SANDERS
    No. And there's nothing in them that'll help. The last time any of the men saw Mike was Saturday afternoon, before he left base.

Hank takes this in, looks out the window, trying to put this all together. After a moment:

    SANDERS (CONT'D)
    You're a good father. You don't have to prove you loved him, I'm sure he knew.

INT. HANK'S MOTEL ROOM -- NIGHT

Hank checks his email - no messages. He notices the corner of the bed is slightly untucked.
CONTINUED:

He strips the bed and starts to remake it. His PHONE RINGS. He picks it up.

    JOAN
    Hi. You okay?

    HANK
    Yeah, just about to call you.

INT. DEERFIELD HOME - KITCHEN -- NIGHT

She looks to the counter, where a parcel sits wrapped in wrinkled brown paper.

    JOAN
    A package came from Mike.

    HANK
    (suddenly interested)
    What kind of package?

    JOAN
    I don't know, Hank, a package. He addressed it to himself. I thought I should open it.

Pictures of cocaine run through his head.

    HANK
    No.

    JOAN
    Why not?

    HANK
    Does it look like it's been opened by customs or the military?

    JOAN
    How would I know? No. Why shouldn't I open it?

    HANK
    Just don't. Wait. (an excuse)
    We'll open it when I get home. (beat)
    Please. Put it someplace safe.

    JOAN
    Okay, Hank. Good night.

She hangs up.
INT. HANK'S MOTEL ROOM -- NIGHT

Hank watches another video, images of Mike's platoon on patrol as they come across a burnt bus, the inhabitants just cinders.

    MIKE (V.O.)
    Dad? You there dad?
    (beat)
    Something happened, Dad.

INT. HANK'S MOTEL ROOM -- MORNING

Hank wakes and bolts upright, panting, sweating. He checks the clock: 8:06, but the room is dark.

ANGLE ON CURTAINS

He rips open the blackout curtains and is blinded by light.

INT. COFFEE SHOP -- DAY

Hank ignores his food and sifts through the photos he printed at the copy place: proud warriors striking poses, squad mates goofing around. Iraqis -- groups of blurred civilians, shot from the moving High Back Humvee; detainees, lined up facing a wall, hog-tied on the ground, squatting with hands on heads. Always in groups, the camera never singling out one person. That is, except for the photo of the body on the side of the road. Hank stares at it, trying to figure out why it bothers him.

    EVIE (O.S.)
    Hi.

Hank looks up to see Evie, the topless waitress. He stares, obviously not recognizing her dressed like a regular person.

    EVIE (CONT'D)
    Evie, from the bar. "Ma'am"?
    HANK
    Oh, hello, sorry.

He slips the photo of the body under the stack of others. An awkward moment.

    EVIE
    I saw the picture of your son in the newspaper. When you came in, I thought he was just missing. I'm sorry.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

HANK
Thank you.

She notices the top 8x10 photo, the posing warriors.

EVIE
That him?

HANK
Yeah.

EVIE
May I?

She swivels the photo to look at it.

EVIE (CONT'D)
Nice eyes. Takes after his father.

She looks at the next, and the next. Hank becomes concerned that she'll see the photos of the bodies. Evie stops on a photo of Mike and Steve Penning, arms around shoulders.

EVIE (CONT'D)
Him, I remember.

Hank looks. Then to her.

EVIE (CONT'D)
I work at another club on weekends. He was there. Would have been Saturday night.

HANK
You remember who he was with?

EVIE
You only remember the ones that tip.

HANK
What's the name of the club?

INT. PUSSY'S -- EVENING

Hank places a photo of Mike and Penning atop something that reads "Pussy's."

BOUNCER (O.S.)
They were here.

WIDEN to see the club, too early to be busy. The security monitor beside them flashes from one view to another.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

HANK
Both of them? Saturday night.

BOUNCER
Them and their buddies. We had to throw them out.
(nods to photo)
That one was harassing one of the dancers. Real asshole.

HANK
(pointing out Penning)
This guy?

BOUNCER
The other one. You get a lot of asses in here but he was going for the prize, yelling all kinds of obscenities at the dancers.

HANK
I think you have the wrong man.

BOUNCER
You want me to ID a guy, and then you tell me I'm wrong. You two related?

HANK
What time did they leave?

BOUNCER
Christ if I remember, but they weren't happy about it. Two of them started going at each other in the parking lot. Thought I'd have to break it up myself.

Hank turns for the door.

CLOSE ON THE COUNTER - AN HOUR LATER

Sanders slaps six photos down on the counter beside the monitors. Four of the photos we recognize. The bouncer jabs the photos of Penning, Long and Bonner.

ANGLE ON SANDERS, THE BOUNCER AND NUGENT

She scoops them up, puts them in the paper bag that passes as her briefcase and slaps a form and a pen onto the bar.
CONTINUED:

SANDERS
Detective Nugent will wait while you write out your statement.

Nugent thinks about grumbling. Sanders calls back as she storms out past Hank, who waits by the door.

SANDERS (CONT'D)
I want the pen back, Nugent.

EXT. PUSSY'S -- NIGHT

Hank steps out after her and she turns on him.

SANDERS
This is not Saigon, this is not 1967, you do not question witnesses.

HANK
I figured somebody should.

SANDERS
It must be frustrating for you, being such a damn good investigator surrounded by incompetent fools. Remind me, what is it you do back in Munroe?

HANK
I haul gravel.

SANDERS
Now that's a shame. Think of how many crimes would have been solved over the last 30 years if you'd been on the job.
(points to front door)
When this goes to trial, the defense is going to say you poisoned the well!

HANK
It's not going to trial.

SANDERS
--What?

HANK
It wasn't them.

SANDERS
I'm sorry??

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

HANK
I don't know why they lied in their statements about not being with him, but they didn't do it.

SANDERS
They were fighting in the parking lot--!

HANK
--That was blowing off steam. You haven't been to war, so you wouldn't understand this. But you don't fight beside a man and then do something like that to him.

SANDERS
That's quite the world you live in.

HANK
(walking off)
Ask them why they lied. There will be a reason.

Sanders watches him get into his pickup, stunned by his arrogance.

EXT. FT. RUDD MILITARY BASE - ENTRANCE -- NIGHT

Sanders fumes as she waits. Traffic goes in and out. The guard hands her back her ID and waves her on.

INT. USACID OFFICE - INTERVIEW ROOM -- NIGHT

Sanders and Kirklander sit across from Penning.

SANDERS
So, you were there.

PENNING
Yeah.

SANDERS
So, why did you lie?

PENNING
It's complicated.

SANDERS
Why don't you just tell me what happened?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

PENNING
It was no big deal. We'd been drinking, and Mike had been acting really weird. Getting really angry. And he's not saying why. But he starts insulting this stripper, I mean, it was dumb, he made some crack, she cracked back and he starts talking trash. So they toss us out. And we're getting in the car and Bonner is all pissed and saying Mike can walk. Mike grabs him, they start going at each other. But it was just the kind of stuff they did all the time -- the whole macho warrior crap. Nobody got hurt. We got in the car, drove around for a while, then went to the chicken shack, across from the base. Mike bought, for getting us kicked out.

SANDERS
What time was that?

PENNING
I don't know, around one. Then we came back here.

Upon hearing this Kirklander stands and leaves the room. This doesn't go unnoticed.

SANDERS
All of you?

PENNING
...No, just the three of us.

SANDERS
Why did you leave him there?

INT. USACID OFFICES - INTERVIEW ROOM -- NIGHT
Specialist Long has replaced Penning.

LONG
Why?

SANDERS
That was the question.

Kirklander enters with a thin manilla envelope, sits and puts it on the table in front of him face down. Long eyes him and considers before answering.
CONTINUED:

LONG
We were wasted, we had enough, but Mike wanted to find some meth.

SANDERS
He wanted to buy drugs.

LONG
Yeah. Like he needed to be more fucked up, pardon my language, ma'am.

SANDERS
And you think that's what happened to him. He went looking for drugs and ran into the wrong people?

LONG
Who knows? Mike always had "secrets." Over there he was always sneaking off somewhere, by himself. He didn't really get along well with people.

SANDERS
So, you were thrown out of the strip club at eleven, you show up at the chicken shack at one. What did you do for two hours?

LONG
Drove around. Looking for a party or women, like they were going to hold up a sign.

SANDERS
You stop anywhere?

LONG
Yes, ma'am.

SANDERS
...Now you want me to guess.

LONG
We found a hooker on 10 Mile Road and she blew all four of us.

SANDERS
Do you remember her name?

He stares at her, the question being ridiculous.

LONG
No, ma'am.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

SANDERS
So, why didn't you say this when you were questioned?

INT. USACID OFFICE - INTERVIEW ROOM -- NIGHT
We realize she addressed that question to Gordon Bonner.

BONNER
Because we didn't think Mike would want his parents to know.

SANDERS
...You didn't want his father to know he got a blow job?

BONNER
And was buying drugs. I wouldn't want somebody telling my parents.

SANDERS
So, what was the fight about?

BONNER
Mike was in some dark mood, I don't know why. Then he started saying nasty things to that stripper.

SANDERS
Like what?

BONNER
Just stuff I'm not going to repeat. The woman's a stripper, not something on your shoe.

SANDERS
Out in the parking lot, Penning said Mike came at you swinging.

BONNER
Might have, don't recall. We thought finding him some sort of sex would calm him down. But not Mike.

SANDERS
You didn't like him much, did you? You got in a lot of fights.

BONNER
There were people I liked better.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

SANDERS
So, what was different about that night? Was it just that you had a knife?

BONNER
I want to kill someone, I don't need a knife, ma'am.

SANDERS
So, you never killed anyone with a knife.

BONNER
Don't believe I said that.

SANDERS
But I guess in Iraq things were different. Someone makes you mad, you could deal with it.

BONNER
You lost me.

SANDERS
It's a different world. You have power.

BONNER
You've obviously never been in the Army.

SANDERS
You have weapons, authority; you put men face down in the dirt, step on their backs, kick in their doors. Someone comes running at you, you kill him. You have to, right? Guy could have a bomb or a gun, you kill him first.

BONNER
You make the call.

SANDERS
Woman walks toward you screaming, won't stop, does she have a bomb? Not a lot of time to think. You react or die. Ever have to stab someone?

BONNER
If I did it wouldn't be your business.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Kirklander switches off the tape recorder.

SANDERS
You're there one day, here the next; somebody comes charging at me, I'd be reaching for a weapon.

LT. KIRKLANDER
(to Sanders)
Did you notice the interview was over?
(to Bonner)
Let's go.

Sanders continues as she walks them out into:

THE ADJOINING HALL

SANDERS
Yeah, I'm finished. I'm just glad none of that stuff bothered you. Because, I tell you, I saw my father come home with things he did that he couldn't live with. It pretty much destroyed him.

BONNER
Your father? What was he in, Panama? You have no idea what we did over there. And we did it for you.

SANDERS
For me??

BONNER
So, if I were you, I'd just say "thanks," leave it at that and kiss my ass.

And he walks off. Kirklander stays with Sanders.

LT. KIRKLANDER
You happy, or do you want to convene a war crimes tribunal?

Sanders turns on her heels and storms back into --

THE INTERVIEW ROOM

-- and gathers up her stuff.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

SANDERS
I want the clothes they were wearing
and I want to take full body
photographs for cuts and bruises.

She heads for the door.

LT. KIRKLANDER
You can have the clothes. But you
may want to glance at this.

He hands her the manilla envelope. The way he said it makes
her look at it with curiosity. She opens it and slides an
8x10 photo out -- black and white, a frame from a surveillance
camera posted at the guard gate: Bonner's car, Bonner driving,
Penning and Long the passengers. The time and date are
stamped large, among other information. 1:26 AM. She
understands the significance.

LT. KIRKLANDER (CONT'D)
Still want them?

SANDERS
(refuses to admit defeat)
Yeah.

INT. HANK'S MOTEL ROOM -- NIGHT

He clicks on the computer and plays a video clip again --
sporadic images, mostly black.

A prisoner on the floor of a humvee. A Scream. Mike is
saying something we can't make out. Another Scream.

MIKE (V.O.)
Leave him alone!

It ends frozen on Ortiez, who stares hatefully at the camera.
The phone rings, startling him.

HANK
Hello?

JENNIFER (O.S.)
(phone filter)
Mr. Deerfield? My names is Jennifer
Lopez. I heard you were looking for
me.

INT. FT. RUDD - HOSPITAL -- NURSE'S STATION -- MORNING

Hank waits uneasily at a nurses' station. A moment later a
nurse steps in from the adjoining ward.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

NURSE
Mr. Deerfield?

INT. FT. RUDD - HOSPITAL -- CONTINUOUS

The nurse leads Hank through the HALL and into a double room, where JENNIFER LOPEZ sits sideways on her bed, her back to Hank and the nurse. A MEDICAL TECHNICIAN is helping Ms. Lopez with something we can't see.

NURSE
Here's your guest.

JENNIFER
I'll be two secs.

The nurse exits. Hank realizes the technician is fitting Jennifer with a prosthetic arm.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
I think it just needs to be tighter.

The technician nods and moves off with the arm.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
(nods toward the chair)
Please, sit.

Jennifer throws her leg back onto the bed and Hank sees that her other leg is missing. Hank tries not to look.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
You left a message on my Uncle Jay's voicemail. I guess you found out how many Lopezes there are in the phone book.

HANK
Yeah.

JENNIFER
I read what happened to Mike. I'm really sorry. He was a great guy.

HANK
Did you serve together?

JENNIFER
No. I'm a reservist. And I don't think you can call what I did "serving." This happened my first day in Iraq.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
We had no doors on our vehicle, driver pulled to the shoulder, IED exploded. Thank God I had my face turned away from it.

HANK
Yes.

JENNIFER
Mike and I met two years ago, (smiles) --at a bar. I'd had a little too much to drink and Mike saw this guy pawing me and just laid him out. Bam. He took me home in a cab, didn't even try to kiss me good night. (smiles again)
After that, we went out all the time, until he left. He was very sweet. (beat) He called me when he got back.

HANK (now interested)
He did.

JENNIFER
Yeah, he came to see me that Friday.

She lets that hang.

HANK
Did he say anything? You know, anything that could help me find out who did this to him?

JENNIFER
No. I don't think so.

HANK
How did he seem?

JENNIFER
...I'm not sure what I should say. I mean, he was a great guy. And I want to remember him...I want you to remember him that way.

She pauses. Hank knows not to say anything -- an old investigator's trick. She finally continues.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
He wasn't.... There was something in him I'd never seen before. I don't think I should be telling you this.

HANK
Please.

JENNIFER
When he saw me. He laughed. I mean, at first I thought, "great" -- I mean, I am so sick of the sympathetic looks, laughing was sort of refreshing. So I laughed, too. Then he said...not to worry; the parts he was interested in still worked. I didn't know what to say.

Hank takes this in. Jennifer tries to undo the damage.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
I'm sure it was just...I don't know what it was.
(beat)
He talked about you a lot, you know. Before he left. He was really worried he'd let you down. What you thought of him was everything.
(beat)
I'm sorry I said those things.

Hank is overwhelmed. He wants to reach out and touch her hand, but can't.

HANK
I want to apologize on his behalf.

JENNIFER
You don't have to, I'm sure he didn't mean it.

HANK
I appreciate the sacrifice you made for our country.

She nods. Hank steps INTO THE HALL. His way is blocked by an approaching gurney, another amputee. He takes another route through the ward. He can't help glancing into the rooms, seeing all the young wounded and limbless patients.
EXT. FT. RUDD - HOSPITAL PARKING LOT -- MORNING

Hank searches for his pickup in the parking lot, but can't seem to recall where he left it. The camera rises to reveal Hank lost in a sea of cars.

INT. POLICE STATION - DETECTIVE BUREAU -- DAY

Sanders sits studying the files that Kirklander gave her, finding nothing. She looks up and sees Hank sitting quietly in the waiting area. Gone is his earlier arrogance, he appears almost broken. She stands and approaches.

SANDERS
You want to come in?

He stands and follows her to her desk, where they sit.

SANDERS (CONT'D)
You were right, they couldn't have done it. They were with Mike at the chicken shack at one.

She hands him the folded page that Kirklander gave her.

SANDERS (CONT'D)
Bonner, Penning and Long arrived back at base twenty minutes later.

He looks at the page: a black and white frame from a security camera at the Ft. Rudd guard gate -- Penning, Long and Bonner in a car returning to the base. The time stamp reads 01:26.

SANDERS (CONT'D)
The field where we found Mike's remains is a half hour away. They couldn't have even driven there in time, never mind anything else.

HANK
They left him there alone, at the chicken shack?

SANDERS
...They say Mike wanted to buy drugs.

HANK
That's why they lied?

SANDERS
And they say they were with a prostitute earlier, Mike included.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

HANK
They didn't think I'd seen soldiers using prostitutes?
(Sanders shrugs)
They have no idea where Mike went when they left him, who he met?

SANDERS
No.
(re: files on her desk)
I have statements from every other man in his squad....

HANK
May I see them?

She hands them over, he leafs through them.

SANDERS
If they're to be believed, no one else saw him after dinner time.

Nugent approaches with two evidence bags, stuffed full of clothes.

DETECTIVE NUGENT
Lab says no traces of blood on the clothes or their belongings.

SANDERS
Did you look at those clothes? One of the shirts still has crease marks where it came off the shelf.

HANK
(still reading reports)
Clothes are cheap on the base. First thing you do when you get back is toss every stitch you took with you. There are nine men in an infantry squad.

Sanders tries to comprehend the apparent non-sequitur.

SANDERS
...Yes?

HANK
They lost one man in Iraq, there should still be seven statements. There are only six.

He hands the files to Nugent.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

DETECTIVE NUGENT
So, one of them is on leave.

HANK
The day I arrived the Sergeant told me all his men were back from liberty.

A beat, then Sanders pulls out the list Kirklander gave her.

SANDERS
(to Nugent)
Read the names.

INT. POLICE STATION - DETECTIVE BUREAU -- CONTINUOUS

At NUGENT'S DESK, Nugent on the phone.

DETECTIVE NUGENT
This is Fred Gainley at the Buxton Sheriff's office. You missing a man? Because I have Robert Ortiez here on a Drunk and Disorderly who says he's one of yours.

INT. SGT. CARNELLI'S OFFICE

SGT. CARNELLI
Thanks, I'll send someone over to get him.

INT. POLICE STATION - DETECTIVE BUREAU

Nugent hangs up, turns to Sanders and Hank.

DETECTIVE NUGENT
He's AWOL.

SANDERS
Check for priors and warrants. And see if he owns a car.

Nugent types. ROBERT ORTIEZ' criminal record appears on the screen, his arrest photo has villain written all over it.

INT. POLICE STATION - NARCOTICS & GANG DIVISION

Sanders speaks with detective Manny NUNEZ, narcotics and gang division. Hank waits at a distance, listening.

DETECTIVE NUNEZ
Local boy.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

DETECTIVE NUNEZ (CONT'D)
I first arrested Bobby Ortiez when he was fourteen for drug trafficking. He got bail and the witness disappeared. Couple of misdemeanors after that, then a year and a half ago we liked him for drug smuggling. Suddenly he gets patriotic and joins up.

SANDERS
How the hell did they let him in the Army?

Detective Nugent enters with a sheet of paper, passing Hank.

DETECTIVE NUNEZ
No felony convictions. And they've been lowering the standards every month since this thing started.

DETECTIVE NUGENT
He has a 1999 Chevrolet Malibu registered in his name.

SANDERS
What color?

DETECTIVE NUGENT
(checks)
Blue.

Sanders shares a look with Hank.

SANDERS
Not enough for a warrant.

HANK
He's AWOL.

SANDERS
Army can go after him, we can't.

DETECTIVE NUGENT
(reading)
Four unpaid parking tickets?

SANDERS
Try Judge Osorio.

Nugent leaves to do so.
CONTINUED:

SANDERS (CONT'D)
(to Nunez)
Any idea where he'd go to ground?

DETECTIVE NUNEZ
(grabbing his jacket)
Finding Bobby was never the problem.

ANGLE ON DOOR
Hank waits as they head out with shotguns, pulling on vests. Sanders pauses briefly.

SANDERS
Go to your motel. I will call you.

EXT. POLICE STATION -- MOMENTS LATER
Nunez's unmarked car pulls out of the parking lot, Sanders and Nugent right behind them. As they disappear down the street, Hank's pickup pulls out and follows.

EXT. BARRIO - ORTIEZ'S GIRLFRIEND'S HOUSE -- DAY
Nugent assumes backup position at his vehicle. Sanders takes the side door. She notes Ortiez's blue Chevy in the covered carpark. Nunez and his partner creep up the front steps.

WITH HANK - A BLOCK AWAY
His pickup cruises up in time to see:

NUNEZ AND HIS PARTNER
-- bang on the front door.

DETECTIVE NUNEZ
Police Department, open the door!

They take the door down with a ram. Nunez rushes past Cholos smoking dope, as his partner holds them at gunpoint.

HANK
-- is the first to see...

ORTIEZ ON THE ROOF
-- bursting out from a trap door and running along the ridge toward the attached garage.
AT THE SIDE OF THE HOUSE

Sanders hears feet clattering on the roof, spots Ortiez just as he jumps off into the alley and disappears. Sanders bolts for the back yard, clambering over junk and climbing the back fence.

Nunez slams open the back door and gives chase.

FROM A BLOCK AWAY

Hank watches the game unfold, sees Nugent run back to his vehicle, wills him to do the smart thing:

HANK
Take the street, take the street --

Nugent wheels into the alley.

HANK (CONT'D)

Christ.

Hank drops the truck into gear and rolls down the street, turning the corner and paralleling the alley.

IN THE BACK ALLEY

We can see why catching Ortiez isn't easy -- this kid runs and climbs fences like a goat on steroids. He bounds a fence and jumps into a backyard.

Sanders scrambles after him, but stays in the alley.

Nugent swerves through the twisting dirt alley, swerving right before breaking hard at a dead end.

Nunez comes around the corner. Sanders screams that he's "in the yards." Nunez jumps the fence and pursues as...

Ortiez leaps from one yard to the next.

Nunez tries a fence and misses, slamming back onto his ass.

Sanders keeps running...but she can see Ortiez is getting away.

OUT ON THE STREET

Hank cruises, scanning the houses and side yards until he glimpses Ortiez. Hank sees where Ortiez is going to cut into the open. He stomps on the accelerator. Ortiez bursts out onto the street. Hank catches up to him and swings open his driver's door, slamming Ortiez to the pavement.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Hank grabs his metal trucker's flashlight and leaps out before Ortiez can scramble to his feet. Ortiez's knife appears out of nowhere, but Hank catches him with a kick to the gut that puts him back down. Still reeling, Ortiez lunges, but Hank catches him square in the jaw with the flashlight. Ortiez hits the pavement and Hank pummels him viciously.

HANK
Fucking wetbacks; it's always knives, isn't it? You enjoy cutting him up? Did you?

Sanders arrives and tries to pull him off. Reacting instinctively, Hank elbows her in the face, breaking her nose and sending her sprawling. He doesn't even glance back, he just keeps releasing his fury on Ortiez's bloody face. Nunez arrives a heartbeat later, aiming his weapon.

DETECTIVE NUNEZ
Let him go! Stop!

But he doesn't. Nugent runs up and pulls Hank off, rolling him to the ground; Hank struggles with Nugent, trying to get back at Ortiez.

DETECTIVE NUGENT
Hey! HEY! What the hell are you doing?!

Hank comes to his senses and stops struggling. Sanders struggles to her feet, holding her spurting nose.

INT. POLICE STATION - HOLDING AREA -- EVENING

Hank opens his eyes. He sits cuffed to a wooden bench. He looks down at his hands, cut and swollen.

He glances through the open door and sees Ortiez being released from a holding cell, into the custody of two burly MPs. They head for the exit, meaning they're going to have to pass Hank. Hank tugs on the chain that binds him as they near.

HANK
What was it? You wanted him to carry drugs for you and he wouldn't do it? You afraid he was going to tell on you? That it, Chico?

That did it. Ortiez jerks to a stop, face to face with Hank, leans in close to his ear and whispers:

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

ORTIEZ
Wouldn't it be funny if the devil
looked just like you?

The MPs get him moving again. Hank calls after him:

HANK
Come back here, you wetback prick,
I'll show you what the devil looks
like.

ORTIEZ
(laughs him off)
Fuck you, man.

Ortiez disappears around the corner with his guards. He
turns and sees Sanders approaching, her nose swollen, a band-
aid over the cut.

HANK
I see you cracked him wide open.

SANDERS
Hold out your hands.

HANK
I didn't mean to hit you.

SANDERS
That what passes for an apology in
your world?
    (as she uncuffs him)
He isn't pressing charges. You're
damn lucky I feel pity for you or
I'd be doing it myself.

HANK
I'm sorry.

SANDERS
Keep it.

HANK
Is anyone going to question him?

SANDERS
I questioned him, they questioned
him, we searched his house, there is
no evidence that he had anything to
do with it!

Hank doesn't know what to say. Sanders turns on her heel
and walks off.
INT. HANK'S MOTEL ROOM -- NIGHT

Hank lies awake in his soiled white T-shirt, staring at the ceiling. The sheets are half off the bed. The room is unrecognizably messy.

INT. HANK'S MOTEL ROOM -- MORNING

The alarm clock reads 10:18 AM. Hank wakes to a knock on the door. He opens it to Sanders.

SANDERS
Something's happened.

INT. FT. RUDD - ARMY M.E.'S LAB -- DAY

Sanders and Lt. Kirklander stand over the gurney.

LT. KIRKLANDER
We found him hanging in his room.

A morgue technician pulls back the sheet to reveal Gordon Bonner's horribly discolored face, his neck scarred and raw.

SANDERS
Did he leave a note?

LT. KIRKLANDER
No.

INT. USACID OFFICE -- DAY

Kirklander opens a small manilla envelope and tips the contents into Hank's hand. It's a watch, circa 1950.

HANK
My father gave it to me when I went to Vietnam. I gave it to Mike.

LT. KIRKLANDER
It was in Bonner's pants pocket.

The thought strikes Hank as amazing.

HANK
...He was carrying it? He didn't leave a note -- he just put it in his pocket and then hung himself?

LT. KIRKLANDER
I'm afraid it's as close as we're going to get to a confession.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

HANK
Confession.

Hank exits, disgusted.

SANDERS
Bonner's car; what color is it?

LT. KIRKLANDER
Blue. Why?

EXT. FT. RUDD - PARKING LOT -- DAY

Hank follows Sanders to her vehicle.

HANK
You don't kill someone for no reason. That watch isn't proof of anything.

SANDERS
You think your son would have given it to him?

HANK
It could have been planted on his body!

SANDERS
So, why did he kill himself, Hank?

HANK
I don't know! But tell me how he killed Mike! He had an alibi, he was back at the base! When did he do it? Why did he do it?

SANDERS
...I don't know, Hank. I'm sorry.

She climbs into her Taurus, exhausted. Hank shakes his head and walks off to his pickup. Sanders' cell phone rings. She answers it.

SANDERS (CONT'D)
Yes?

INT. POLICE STATION - DETECTIVE BUREAU -- DAY

Nugent on the other end of the phone. He doesn't want to have this conversation.
CONTINUED:

DETECTIVE NUGENT
...Remember the woman with the dead dog?

EXT. MOBILE HOME PARK -- NIGHT

Sanders comes around the corner and steps out onto the street of identical mobile homes, lit by flashers from police vehicles. Hastily dressed neighbors stand across the street from a home that lies at the eye of the storm.

As she walks toward it, she notices a muscular man in his late 20s, close cropped hair, sitting cuffed in the back seat of a squad car. Several officers stand by it, smoking and talking. Everyone shows up for a murder.

Sanders lifts the crime scene tape and walks through the open front door, which boasts an Army service sticker.

INT. MOBILE HOME -- NIGHT

Sanders weaves through the milling officers. Detective Wayne catches her eye -- it's the first sympathetic look he's ever given her.

She keeps moving, finding Hodge in the hallway outside the bathroom. There's water all over the bathroom floor. Small feet poke over the edge of the bathtub. He speaks kindly.

DETECTIVE HODGE
We drained it.

Sanders steps forward until she can see Angie, the woman who complained about her husband drowning her dog, lying in the tub, her clothes clinging to her.

Sanders squats beside the tub for fear of falling. She asks the question she doesn't want answered.

SANDERS
Where's the boy?

DETECTIVE HODGE
He wasn't home, thank God. He's at his grandparents'.

SANDERS
That's good.

She touches Angie's hand.

SANDERS (CONT'D)
That's good.
INT. HANK'S MOTEL ROOM -- NIGHT

Hank sits on the bare, stained mattress, phone to his ear.

INT. DEERFIELD HOME -- NIGHT

Joan sits in the kitchen, staring out the back door. She makes no move to answer the ringing phone.

INT. POLICE STATION - DETECTIVE BUREAU -- DAY

The room is busy and yet remarkably quiet. Sanders sits at her desk, going through her phone log and losing herself in the minutiae of her job. The civilian worker from the front desk drops off a Fed Ex envelope and offers Sanders a sympathetic smile. Sanders opens it and goes through the contents with little interest. It's a credit card statement with hard receipts attached -- various purchases Mike made, including the tube socks and the chicken. She flips through them and then tosses them in her out basket.

INT. FT. RUDD - MORGUE OFFICES -- DAY

Hank sits slumped in a chair in the corridor, waiting. An OFFICER steps out of one of the cubicles. Hank stands as he approaches, hands him a clipboard to sign.

OFFICER
The remains will be shipped this afternoon, if you'd please just check the address of the funeral home.

HANK
It's correct.

OFFICER
And, I'm afraid we have to keep the skull. Until the case is officially closed. I'm sorry.
(hands him carbon receipt)
If I can be of any other help, please let me know.

Hank watches the young officer walk off.

EXT. FT. RUDD - PARKING LOT -- DAY

Hank closes the driver door and cranks the key. The battery is dead. He sees he's left his headlights on, stabs the switch back in place and gets out.
INT. FT. RUDD - BARRACKS -- DAY

Hank walks along the corridor, no one around. He stops at an open door, looks in. It's Penning. Hank thinks about walking away, but then Penning turns.

   PENNING
   ...Sir?

   HANK
   ...You got jumper cables?

EXT. FT. RUDD - PARKING LOT

Penning opens the hood of his brown Nissan and attaches the leads. Hank hits the ignition and the truck comes to life. Penning walks to the driver's window.

   PENNING
   I wanted to say how sorry I am, what happened to Mike. And I need to apologize, for lying, about not seeing him that night. I just thought that, if I were Mike, I wouldn't want my parents to know.

Hank nods.

   HANK
   You have a cigarette?

Penning pops out one and Hank accepts it. They light up.

   HANK (CONT'D)
   Do you think Bonner killed him?

   PENNING
   No. I don't know. I don't understand any of this.

   HANK
   What would he have against my boy?

   PENNING
   Nothing. I'm sorry.
   (a moment)
   Mike tell you much about Bosnia?

   HANK
   Some.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

PENNING
We seemed to always pull sentry duty, freezing our asses off. He used to try and convince me of the craziest things.

HANK
Try to get you to wear pantyhose?

PENNING
Did he tell you??

HANK
I told him. Cuts the cold like nothing else.

PENNING
So he wasn't lying??

HANK
You just gotta make sure you aren't shot while wearing a pair, or you'll never live it down.

Penning has to laugh. Hank smiles for the first time in many days. Then his thoughts drift back to his dead son.

PENNING
It's fucked up, isn't it?

HANK
Yeah, it is.

And then a thought strikes Hank, and he looks at Penning. It is clear from his expression that Hank now knows something we don't; something terrible.

INT. HANK'S MOTEL ROOM -- NIGHT

Hank downloads a video and plays it. Black punctuated by the occasional flash of an image; the audio comes in and out. Someone is whimpering, pleading in Arabic. We see a flash of his face: a bound IRAQI PRISONER with a bag over his head, lying on the floor of the moving High Back Humvee between the feet of the men in Mike's squad. Mike is just off screen, sitting over him, apparently holding the camera. Screen goes BLACK.

MIKE (V.O.)

Where does it hurt?

A SCREAM.

(Continued)
CONTINUED:

MIKE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Hey, asshole!
(to prisoner)
It's okay, I'll help you. He's not going to hurt you again.

FRAGMENTED IMAGES - Mike jabs his boot into the prisoner's wound. The prisoner SCREAMS. Mike pretends it was Ortiez.

MIKE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Leave him alone!

ORTIEZ sitting beside Mike, LAUGHING, shaking his head.

MIKE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
(to Ortiez)
You fucking pervert.

ORTIEZ
(laughing)
Fuck you, man.

The CAMERA SWINGS BACK to the man on the floor as Mike jabs his boot into the prisoner's wound. The prisoner SCREAMS, the pain searing. Mike keeps probing, torturing the prisoner out of sport. The camera tilting up to Mike's face for the first time as he turns off the camera and the image freezes.

HANK sits there, horrified.

INT. POLICE STATION - DETECTIVE BUREAU -- NIGHT

Sanders drops a file in her out basket, puts her jacket on to leave, sits and picks up her purse from under her desk. But she can't seem to stand. She looks around the room, then at her brimming out basket. Something makes her reconsider a document in there. She slides out the credit card statement and flips through it, wondering what bothered her about it.

She stops at the chicken receipt and then looks back at the tube sock and other receipts -- the signature for the chicken is different than the others.

She moves quickly to the file cabinet and jerks it open, finds the original statements that the men made about their whereabouts. She checks the signatures, Bonner, Long and Penning.

INT. HANK'S MOTEL ROOM -- NIGHT

Hank packs his bag.
INT. POLICE STATION - DETECTIVE BUREAU -- NIGHT

Sanders slaps Penning's statement down on the desk, under a bright lamp, beside the receipt. She compares the signatures. Key letters in both are exactly the same.

INT. HANK'S MOTEL ROOM -- NIGHT

Banging. Hank opens the door. Sanders has to stop herself from commenting on how awful he looks.

She hands him a file folder with a credit card receipt clipped to the cover.

SANDERS
Tell me that's your son's signature on his credit card receipt.

HANK
It's not.

SANDERS
We just assumed Mike was there. It's Penning's signature. Three meals: Penning, Long and Bonner.

INT. SANDERS' VEHICLE - MOVING -- NIGHT

They drive toward the base in silence. Sanders glances at Hank, tries to read him; can't.

EXT. FT. RUDD MILITARY BASE - ENTRANCE -- NIGHT

Her Taurus idles in a parking space near the guard gate. Sanders waits impatiently beside the car, staring at the guards in the kiosk, one reading a comic book.

SANDERS
Son of a bitch.

She looks to Hank, stone-faced in the passenger seat. She would have expected rage, not fatalism. She gets it.

SANDERS (CONT'D)
You knew. How?

Hank doesn't answer. The phone in the guard booth rings, the guard answers it, hangs up and approaches. He hands her back the warrants.

GUARD
Sorry to keep you waiting.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

SANDERS
Yeah, I'm sure.

Sanders races onto the base, ignoring the speed bumps.

INT. USACID OFFICES -- NIGHT

Hank waits in the hall as Sanders steps into Kirklander's office and drops the two warrants on his desk.

SANDERS
Penning and Long. I want them now.

The door closes behind her.

LT. KIRKLANDER
I can't give them to you.

SANDERS
Damn right you can and you will.

LT. KIRKLANDER
They're under arrest. Corporal Penning's come forward. He's implicated Specialists Long and Bonner.

SANDERS
(gets it)
You son of a bitch. You went to him with a deal. Didn't you?

LT. KIRKLANDER
He'll do serious time.

SANDERS
How much?.... HOW MUCH TIME?!

LT. KIRKLANDER
...As much as I could get.

SANDERS
Well, luckily that means nothing to me. These are warrants, we have jurisdiction and you are compelled to produce these men. I want them now.

LT. KIRKLANDER
I'm not the only one who made a deal.

Sanders gets a bad feeling.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

LT. KIRKLANDER (CONT'D)
My CO talked to yours. One less headache. It's out of our hands.
(beat)
I'm sorry.

Sanders takes this in, looks back to Hank, waiting in the outer office.

SANDERS
I want to hear the confession.

LT. KIRKLANDER
Long isn't speaking, I'll get you Penning's statement.

SANDERS
No, I want to hear it from his lips. (nodding toward Hank)
And I want him present.

LT. KIRKLANDER
That's not going to happen.

SANDERS
How many soldiers leave the base every night to visit a bar, have a drink or two?

LT. KIRKLANDER
I know you're feeling burned....

SANDERS
What would you guess? On a weekend, what, seven or eight thousand soldiers? I tell you what I can do.
I can sit in my car outside of any of your entrances, pull over every vehicle returning to base and arrest every soldier whose blood alcohol is one one thousandths over the legal limit. How many men do you think that would be? And how many do you think would have a little weed stashed under their seat?

LT. KIRKLANDER
And how long do you think it would be until you're fired?
CONTINUED:

SANDERS
Well, I'd be doing it on my own time, and we have a pretty good union, so I'd say four or five weeks. How many DUI cases do you think I can make in a month? You want to find out?

Silence. Kirklander finally picks up the phone.

INT. USACID OFFICES - INTERVIEW ROOM -- NIGHT

Hank and Sanders sit on one side of the table, Penning and a JAG attorney sit on the other. Kirklander stands in the background.

PENNING
We leave the strip club and we think that Mike and Bonner have cooled down. I mean they could be like that, laughing one minute and fighting the next. Anyway, we're in the car and Mike's all pissy. And Bonner starts needling him. Saying shit.

SANDERS
Like what?

PENNING
I don't know, like what a good driver Mike is, stuff that makes no sense. Bonner has enough and pulls over and they go at each other again. Long is yelling for them to cut it out so we can go home and Mike starts cursing him, too, and I look down and I'm stabbing him.

SANDERS
You are.

She throws a look to Kirklander, who can't hold her glance.

PENNING
Yeah. I mean, he always had to push things too far, you know? What's making me madder is that he is just standing there, not fighting back, like some sort of weird macho thing.

SANDERS
Your friends didn't try and stop you?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

PENNING
I think they were sort of stunned. They're yelling. And then Mike falls down. And he's dead. And Long says, "Christ, what do we do now?" It was Bonner's idea to chop him up. He used to work in a butcher shop; knew how to work the knife around the joints; made it easier.

(beat)
We were going to bury the parts, but it was getting late. And we hadn't eaten.

SANDERS
You were hungry?

PENNING
Starving. So, we stopped at the chicken shack.

Sanders tries not to react.

PENNING (CONT'D)
You ask me why, I don't know. I liked Mike, we all did.

(beat)
But on another night? That could have been Mike with the knife and me in the field. I think Mike was the smart one. I think he could see.

Penning starts to be overcome by his emotions. To Hank:

PENNING (CONT'D)
I am truly sorry, sir. I'm sorry for your loss.

Hank fights the urge to leap across the table and strangle him.

HANK
I saw a video Mike shot, him in the back of a Humvee. It looked like he was torturing a prisoner.

PENNING
(has to smile)
We arrested some hajji, he's wounded. We're riding along and Mike pretends he's a medic, sticks his hand in the guy's wound, asks "Does that hurt?"

(MORE)
CONTINUED:

PENNING (CONT'D)
The Hajji screams "yeah-yeah-yeah."
Mike says "How about here?"
(laughs despite himself)
It was pretty funny. It became a
thing with him. That's how he got
the name "Doc." It was just a way
to cope. We all did stupid things.

EXT. FT. RUDD - USACID UNIT -- NIGHT

Hank steps out into the night air, trying not to show that
his world is crumbling around him.

BEHIND HIM -- BACK IN THE CORRIDOR

Kirklander steps up to Sanders.

LT. KIRKLANDER
When I made the deal, I didn't know
it was Penning who did the stabbing.
I read it wrong.

She nods, understanding; she would have been fooled, too.
She glances toward Hank, dreading having to talk to him.
Kirklander heads back to his office and Sanders has no choice
but to walk to the exit and join Hank.

SANDERS
I'll get the car.

EXT. SANDERS' HOUSE -- NIGHT

Lights are on. Sanders pulls up, confused to see another
car in the drive. Buchwald steps out, envelope in hand.

CHIEF BUCHWALD
Hi.

SANDERS
...Hi.

CHIEF BUCHWALD
I wanted to drop these by. I was
going to knock, but I didn't want to
spook your sitter.

SANDERS
And you thought a stranger sitting
out here staring at the house would
make her feel more secure.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

CHIEF BUCHWALD
They're for a Lobos game. That's football. Good game, Lobos against the Utah Utes.

SANDERS
No kidding. The Utes.

CHIEF BUCHWALD
Thought it was worth a shot, before you turn the boy against the game forever.

SANDERS
Thanks.

CHIEF BUCHWALD
You did good police work.

SANDERS
Figured that's what they were for.

Sanders exits into the house. Buchwald backs out.

EXT. IMPERIAL MOTEL -- EARLY MORNING

The parking lot lies quiet, one car departing.

INT. HANK'S MOTEL ROOM -- MORNING

Hank packs up the laptop and Mike's photos.

INT. FT. RUDD - BARRACKS -- DAY

An NCO waits as Hank packs Mike's few articles into his duffel. He hands it off to the NCO as a NEW RECRUIT, in his Class A's, steps in, carrying his duffel and paperwork.

NEW RECRUIT
Excuse me, sir.

Hank takes this in, then looks down the corridor.

HANK
Which is Private Ortiez's room?

INT. ORTIEZ'S ROOM

Hank appears at the open door, sees Ortiez inside packing up his belongings. Ortiez notices Hank standing there.

HANK
You have a minute?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Ortiez isn't quite sure how to answer.

    HANK (CONT'D)
    I need to apologize to you.

    ORTIEZ
    Damn straight you do.

    HANK
    I'm sorry.

    ORTIEZ
    You got some serious issues, man.

    HANK
    Yeah. That's true.

A moment. Hank holds up a fresh fifth of whisky.

EXT. FT. RUDD - BARRACKS -- DAY

Ortiez drinks from the bottle and passes it to Hank. He and Hank sit on the low wall under the overhang at the barracks, watching a sergeant drill his recruits in the field.

    ORTIEZ
    I got an honorable discharge, if you can believe it.

    HANK
    It's the Army, I'd believe anything.

    ORTIEZ
    (watching troops)
    I hated it over there. Sleep in fucking tents, no toilets, no showers, no toilet paper, gotta use your hand -- and you never know where the bullet is coming from. I couldn't wait to get out. And after two weeks here, all I want to do is go back, cause somehow that makes sense. How fucked is that?

They sit there a moment. Hank hands Ortiez one of Mike's photos: the body on the side of the road.

    HANK
    You know what this is?
    (no answer)
    Mike took it and emailed it to me. Why would he do that?
CONTINUED:

ORTIEZ

(beat)
I don't know what anybody told you.
(Hank waits him out)
There were standing orders. You're
driving in convoy, someone or
something gets in front of your
vehicle, you do not stop. You stop,
shitheads pop up with RPGs and kill
you all dead.
(beat)
First week in Iraq, we're driving
down range, six of us in back, you
can't see squat back there. Doc
hits something. We hear it thump
around underneath. He stops, gets
out; drives on. Not a word. Later,
some guys said we hit a kid, I don't
believe it. You ask me, it was a
dog. We killed a dog.

And Hank can see how hard Ortiez wants to believe that.

ORTIEZ (CONT'D)
I don't know what that is. No fucking
idea.

EXT. FT. RUDD - PARKING LOT -- DAY

Hank opens his driver's door and throws the duffel in before
him, slides in and starts the engine before he closes the
truck door. He stares out through the windshield and sees:

BAGHDAD STREET - THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD OF A MOVING HUMVEE

A kid runs into the middle of the street, between vehicles,
picks up a soccer ball and turns to look toward the camera.

INSIDE THE MOVING HIGH BACK HUMVEE

Mike panics, Bonner urges him to speed up, Mike steps on the
accelerator.

THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD

The Humvee hits the boy with the ball. The only sound we
hear is the thud, and then the body tumbling under the
vehicle's undercarriage.

INSIDE THE HIGH BACK HUMVEE

Mike drives on a moment, betraying no emotion. Then brakes.
Mike steps out and walks back toward the small body that lies on the side of the road. Bonner gets out and yells at him. Mike stops. He sees people running toward the body, from a nearby house.

Ortiez parts the tarp and peers out from the back.

Mike lifts his phone, composes the shot, and takes a picture of the body.

Mike turns and walks back. Bonner hesitates, obviously unnerved by the sight of the body. They return to the vehicle, step in and tugs closed the door.

The images are too much to bear. He pulls his door closed.

Sanders sits with Hank.

   SANDERS
   So, my son has been driving me crazy ever since you came over. He wants a slingshot.

Hank smiles.

   SANDERS (CONT'D)
   Guess it could be worse, could be a bee-bee gun.

   HANK
   It was Mike's favorite story, too.

He tries not to show her the pain that is threatening to overwhelm him.

Sanders walks Hank to his pickup. He gets in, looks up at her.

   HANK
   Thank you.

She nods. Hank drives off without looking back.
EXT. DEERFIELD HOME -- DUSK

Hank carries his overnight case toward the dark house.

INT. DEERFIELD HOME - KITCHEN -- NIGHT

The room is dark. Hank turns on the light above the stove. Mike's package sits on the counter, opened. He peels back the paper to reveal a tightly folded flag. An envelope sits atop addressed to "Dad." Hank finds a photo inside, Mike and his squad mates stretching the flag, jerry-rigged to a pole over their humvee, smiling broadly. Hank turns the photo over. It is inscribed: "For Dad, love Mike." Hank turns and walks away.

INT. DEERFIELD HOME - HANK & JOAN'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Hank sits on the edge of the bed, the phone to his ear. Joan sleeps on her side.

MIKE (O.S.)
Something happened, Dad. Something bad.

And then we hear Mike start to cry. Hank is mortified.

HANK
Oh for Christ's sake.
(beat)
Is there anyone there with you?

MIKE (O.S.)
No, I'm alone.

HANK
That's good.

IN BAGHDAD -- BARRACKS

Mike on the payphone, trying to keep it together.

MIKE
Okay, Dad, I gotta go.

HANK (O.S.)
You be safe, son. Stay safe.

MIKE
You too, Dad.

Mike hangs up and walks away to join his unit outside.
BACK IN THE BEDROOM

Hank hangs up. We cut to the doorway and see

HANK

standing there, fully dressed. And now he weeps, knowing he let his son down when the boy needed him.

HIS POV

the dark room and the neatly made bed.

JOAN

steps up behind him, rubs his shoulders.

HANK

He asked for my help. I didn't even listen.

He wants to say more, but doesn't know what to say.

INT. DEERFIELD HOME - MIKE'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Hank picks up an empty frame and slips Mike's photograph back into it -- him in his dress uniform, now considerably worn. He replaces it on the shelf.

INT. SANDERS HOME - DAVID'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Sanders sits on the bed with her son, telling him a story.

SANDERS

Every day Goliath would walk out into the valley and challenge someone, anyone, to fight him. No one would. Until David showed up and said, "I'll fight him." So, the king dressed David in his own armor, but it was too big and heavy.

DAVID

Why would the king let him fight a giant? He was just a boy.

SANDERS

I don't know, sweetie.

DAVID

You think he was scared?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

SANDERS
David? Yeah, I think he would have been really scared.

INT. DEERFIELD HOME - KITCHEN -- EARLY MORNING

Hank picks up the opened parcel from the counter.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - FLAG POLE -- MORNING

Hank attaches the flag. Juan watches Hank raise it.

JUAN
Just like that?

HANK
Just like that.

JUAN
(re: flag)
Looks really old.

HANK
It's been well used.

Hank duct tapes the line firmly to the pole.

JUAN
And I shouldn't take it down at night?

Hank hands Juan all the bills in his wallet.

HANK
No, you leave it just like that.

JUAN
That's much easier.

Hank nods and walks off, and now we see the tattered battle flag flapping in the wind atop the pole. Upside down.

The End