

In The Valley Of Elah

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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

Theirs 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)

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?

HANK
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'?

Good. You? HANK

Very good. CHOLO
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)

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, Ortiz. 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)

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)

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.
(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)

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)

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)

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)

CONTINUED:

HANK

Yeah.

ARNOLD BICKMAN

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

HANK

He died. On maneuvers at Fort Bragg. Helicopter crash. Ten years ago.

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)

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
(sees 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)

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

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

CAPTAIN OSHER
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)

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 an 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)

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)

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!

(CONTINUED)

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)

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 dooper.

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)

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)

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)

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 scrapes 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)

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)

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
assholes 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)

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)

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 Ortiz, 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 Ortiz 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)

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 Ortiz'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 Ortiz can scramble to his feet. Ortiz's knife appears out of nowhere, but Hank catches him with a kick to the gut that puts him back down. Still reeling, Ortiz lunges, but Hank catches him square in the jaw with the flashlight. Ortiz 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 Ortiz'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 Ortiz.

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 Ortiz 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. Ortiz 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)

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 Ortiz.

MIKE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Leave him alone!

ORTIEZ sitting beside Mike, LAUGHING, shaking his head.

MIKE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
(to Ortiz)
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)

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)

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 Ortiz's room?

INT. ORTIEZ'S ROOM

Hank appears at the open door, sees Ortiz inside packing up
his belongings. Ortiz 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)

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 Ortiz 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.

ANGLE ON THE STREET

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 tug closed the door.

BACK WITH HANK

The images are too much to bear. He pulls his door closed.

INT. COFFEE SHOP -- DAY

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.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP -- DAY

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