

SALVATION

3rd draft

Written by

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## ACT I

FADE IN:

EXT. DUC HUE. VIETNAM/CAMBODIAN BORDER. CHRISTMAS EVE.  
NINETEEN SEVENTY-FOUR. DAY

Streaks of light fights through the triple canopy jungle.

PARABLE (V.O.)

When it starts, some head to the  
front and some head to the back. In  
the end it is necessary for us all  
to stand together. That is when  
good things happen.

Slender white Staff Sergeant, BRYAN JACKSON, 23, lifts  
camouflage covered head then drops. Recovers with rifle aimed  
in front in tiger stripe uniform, and moves slowly forward in  
a ghostly tactical manner.

Muscular African/American Staff Sergeant, CHRIS TAYLOR, 23,  
shifts from the shadows of the jungle and down a tight path  
drafted out by the benevolence of a unforgiving Southeast  
Asian jungle.

Bryan settles and fingers forward, as four Montagnards move  
slowly forward only to reveal their movement by the slight  
brushes along the path as the water slides down a crown  
flower.

CHUN, 23, SING, 17, both softly step with sandals through the  
dense brush. Settles his point position twenty meters out,  
looks back, then slowly kneels.

Chris waves Mantagnard guerillas forward in place and prepare  
for an ambush. BENNY, 14, tries to move forward with cross  
bow.

Chris shakes his head no.

Bryan squats and taps Benny, who then settles across the path  
behind Bryan.

Bryan turns around and points the direction of CHINH, 17,  
SANG, 16, TIN TIN, 20, ambush positions.

Settle in and become a inanimate mural, lethal within the  
Cambodian jungle.

Sounds within the jungle begin to slow with anticipation.

Bird flies through the streaks of light delivered by the sun through the triple canopy jungle. Settles and sings. Another bird flies around the light, then settles in beside the first bird to join in and sing together.

TWO BIRDS on a tree branch above begin to sing in sublime harmony.

Tin Tin looks back and smiles, then resettles his aim.

Steps from the distance close in. Leaves in the distance bounce. Approach radical. A North Vietnamese Army Regular reveals himself, as he walks out of the brush with rifle at the ready. Loose point.

Benny takes aim with cross bow.

There appears FOUR more behind the formation with rifles slinged. One carries an R.P.K. Machine gun over his shoulder. Casual and unaware.

Two birds sing. Serenity. Rifles fire. Two birds separate, and fly off.

FADE TO:

EXT. A.R.V.N. RANGER BATTALION BRAVO CAMP. LANDING ZONE. DAY

Dust whips up as Men scurry to and from the LZ. Slight panic to those who load onto empty Hueys on the Quad LZ.

Chris, Bryan, and Team One off-load from Huey UH-ONE with their Montagnards.

Staff Sergeant GREG WATERLAND, 27, and Team Two off-load from second Huey.

Intelligence Officer First Lieutenant, WAYLAND, 29, waives Taylor over to headquarters.

WAYLAND (O.S.)

Taylor, over here. Staff Sergeant Taylor, I am sending you to the DAO with a package. Meet at H.Q. in an hour. Be packed, and ready.

Jackson walks up to Waterland.

TAYLOR

Cover for me on the debrief.

Waterland holds his finger up, then turns to PHAM, 23.

## WATERLAND

(Vietnamese)

I will get you out. You just stay close. Stay close, you hear me.

(English)

Not right now, Chris. We will talk back at the hootch.

Sing approaches.

## SING

(Vietnamese)

Pham, you okay? Where is Bay?  
Chuyen?

Pham is confused, then walks off with Waterland.

Taylor shows concern, towards an unmarked Hughes OH-6A Cayuse that sits on the third Landing Zone.

PILOT, 43, and AGENT, 34, both carefully study their Montagnards, as they walk off the tarmac.

## EXT. BRAVO BASE CAMP. DAY

Afternoon rain drips from the personal pavilion. Chris stands under and watches for inbound Huey.

## JACKSON

Chris, are you headed back to Saigon?

## CHRIS

Waiting on the next inbound. Need anything? I should be back by the day after tomorrow.

## JACKSON

Wait one second, let me go get a list. I think they wanted some more things.

## CHRIS

Hurry.

## JACKSON

Waterland and I are going to take care of some business.

Agent stands outside of Operation Center. COLONEL, 42, walks out of Center, as the screen door slams. Agent follows.

COLONEL (O.S.)  
We will handle it.

Cracks from the blades get louder. Huey approaches.

JACKSON  
Here you go. Try not to take so  
damn long. Tell Han I said hey. You  
Okay?.

Rain stops and the sun comes out.

CHRIS  
Keep an eye on them. The agency has  
been hanging around since we got  
back. He came to collect and he  
looks committed.

BRYAN  
(Yelling over the blades)  
Who?

Chris stares Bryan over to the Command. Pilot sits outside  
smoking a cigarette talking to soldiers.

Bryan, and Chris shake and hug. Chris runs to the Huey.

CHRIS  
See you in a few days. Hey, Merry  
Christmas.

BRYAN  
Merry Christmas. It is Christmas?

Huey lifts.

Bryan smiles, yet a commotion in the camp turns his  
attention. Bryan returns to the camp with curiosity.

INT./EXT. UH-1 HUEY. AIR. DAY

Shadow of the Huey floats across the rice paddies. Chris  
looks down on the rice paddies from the air and smiles, as he  
leans out and waves at the village below.

An old village elder looks up, and waves to the Huey.

Village is hard at work in the rice paddies, and at the  
market. Vietnamese Engineers equipment work on a barricade  
over a small river, and around the bridge, while a small  
A.R.V.N Security force pulls security by the bridge entrance.

EXT. TARMAC. SAIGON. DAY

Chris lands on the tarmac, jumps off, walks to the Christmas decorated check-in station.

Radio broadcast of troop draw down from Vietnam to United States plays on a black and white Television.

ARMY RECEPTIONIST

Sign in please. Hey, did you hear, Charlie got some offensive going up north. They got your boys on the run. Maybe, soon we can get the hell out of here.

Chris signs in and turns to watch the broadcast.

CHRIS

Can you call me a cab? I need to get to the embassy before it closes. You got a smoke?

ARMY RECEPTIONIST

Here. You have to smoke out there in the gazebo. They are all headed home. You guys will be the only ones left. I think we should just nuke this fucking place and call it a day.

CHRIS

Yeah.

Chris searches his pockets.

ARMY RECEPTIONIST

I will call you a Cab. Make sure you put that out in the Coffee can.

CHRIS

You have a light?

Receptionist stands from chair and hands Chris a box of Ohio Blue tip matches.

Chris lights his cigarette and walks out the office.

ARMY RECEPTIONIST

Hey you are supposed to light that by the Gazebo, man.

CHRIS

Just call the fucking cab.

Screen door slams.

EXT. BRAVO CAMP. DAY

Waterland nervously smokes a cigarette in the back of the hooch.

Jackson walks past.

JACKSON  
What do you got?

WATERLAND  
Come with me.

Jackson follows.

JACKSON  
What? going on?

WATERLAND  
(Mumbles)  
This is all wrong. This is going  
down. Wrong shit, man.

Jackson turns Waterland, grabs him. Face to face.

JACKSON  
Calm down. What? wrong?

Waterland pulls him behind the hooch, then looks out and around the corner.

WATERLAND  
Do not say shit! This has gone way  
too far.

JACKSON  
Too far? Jackson, make some damn  
sense. What the hell you talking  
about?

WATERLAND  
This shit has gone wrong. I just  
wanted them to get out safe.

JACKSON  
Who?

WATERLAND  
Pham. This is going to go down  
right anytime. Watch my back.

JACKSON  
They will not take it too far.

COLONEL (O.S.)  
Waterland you're needed! Get over here.

WATERLAND  
Look man, watch my back. I am going to try to pull him. Be ready.

Waterland walks back to the Hootch. Jackson stands stunned.

INT. SAIGON. APARTMENT. DAY

Chris steps out of the cab and runs up the stairs, sneaks in the door. HAN, 19, cooks *Christmas Deviled Eggs* and sings to *God Bless our Love*. Chris slides behind her and softly kisses her neck.

CHRIS  
Merry Christmas, baby.

HAN  
Were you been? You are late. Here try this.

Han hands a Christmas Deviled Egg to Chris.

HAN (CONT'D)  
Try.

CHRIS  
Delicious. Wow.

HAN  
That is my American recipe. Help me, I will teach you.

CHRIS  
I have something for you.

Chris pulls out an application from behind his over top and hands it to Han, who takes the papers and reads. Han's face lights up.

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
You ready, baby?

HAN  
I am ready.

CHRIS

We can do anything you want.

HAN

Make love to me.

God Bless our love plays on. The fan turns.

EXT. BRAVO CAMP. NIGHT

Thunder and lightning light the camp.

Helicopter returns as Green Beret returns with just one Montagnard. Exhausted.

A commotion towards the interpreter? hooch draws Bryan to open the hootch screen door. Montagnard men yell at the American from outside the hootch. Colonel pushes an older Montagnard away from door. AGENT, 47, in sterile clothes pulls Pham out of the Hooch. Screen door slams.

Waterland follows. They come to a back open path by the river.

WATERLAND

Hey, Hey! That is my man.  
Your not taking him, sir. Your  
source is Khmer, Pham is not. He is  
one of ours. That asshole is just  
trying to get out.

Agent grabs Pham and looks him in his eyes.

AGENT

You D.A.? I will do it. Give me the  
revolver. I am about to close the  
book on this. We do not need guys  
like you leaving stains back at  
Tran Hung Dao.

WATERLAND

Why don't your agency try reading  
the fucking book before you close  
it. You are just trying amend your  
grand design, because god forbid  
you head back to Washington and  
open another fucking book.

Waterland goes to interfere with Agent, and pulls Pham back.  
Agent Strikes Waterland.

Bryan jumps in grabs, and takes the agent to the ground.

Colonel fires his .45 Pistol in the air and points it at Waterland and Jackson.

COLONEL

This is going down. How do you want this? You, and your guy better part ways. This is how it is, Sergeant.

Agent drags Pham into the brush, as the Colonel stands with pistol drawn on Waterland, and Jackson.

COLONEL (CONT'D)

Waterland, follow.

JACKSON

Sir, If you execute him. Think about it. Long Bin jail, Sir!

Colonel holds .45 pistol to Waterland. Agent drags Pham by the river. Waterland backs away with raised hands.

WATERLAND

I am not going. I can? go.

Colonel follows Agent, and disappears into the jungle.

JACKSON

I will go. I will bring him back. Stay here. They can? kill him. I will handle it.

Bryan breaks through the brush and to an open spot where the Agent and the Colonel stand with Pham.

JACKSON (CONT'D)

Sir, have you lost your mind. If Waterland vouches for him, then he is good.

Four Soldiers come up behind Jackson with the pilot.

COLONEL

What the fuck you know about this? You are here to take orders, now shut the fuck up, Sergeant.

JACKSON

Sir, this is murder. No matter how you look at it, execution is murder. Bobby? Ted, Rick?

Jackson looks eye to eye with each soldier, only for them to look away in guilt with each stare.

PILOT

Put a rifle on him, just in case he tries to do something stupid.

Bobby raises his rifle to Jackson.

BOBBY

Do not be stupid. Orders man.

Pham looks at Jackson.

AGENT

Pham Luc you have been identified to have detained classified information, and delivered it to Dang Luc, your cousin, who was killed last week, while trying to evade arrest by South Vietnamese Intelligence. I have been ordered to follow through by the command of the Peoples of South Vietnam, and its free doctrine in which I must hereby execute.

Rain pours.

Colonel pulls his 38. Revolver and lines it up with Pham? temple.

PHAM

(Vietnamese)

Why?

Agent pulls the trigger.

Jackson watches Pham? body goes limp and drops.

COLONEL

Get rid of it.

AGENT

Stay out of this Jackson, and tell your buddy Waterland. We are watching his ass too. Pham pulled this shit from one of you guys.

Agent throws stapled documents at Jackson.

Jackson catches the documents. Shows confusion as he looks at the documents and Pham? body which lays in the mud, limp, as blood leaks down a puddle.

Colonel and agent walk off. Rain pours down on the limp body, as Bryan stands alone.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT./EXT. APARTMENT. SAIGON. DAY

SPC 5TH CLASS RICHARDS, 21, looks at the mail in his hand.

SPC 5TH CLASS RICHARDS  
Sergeant Taylor, you there? It?  
Specialist fifth class Richards  
from H.Q. You got mail, urgent. You  
there, Staff Sergeant?

Knocks again.

Door opens.

SPC 5TH CLASS RICHARDS, 19, smiles, then hands Chris the letter.

SPC 5TH CLASS RICHARDS (CONT'D)  
Here you go Sergeant. They told me  
to have you pick it up, but since I  
was in the neighborhood, I decided  
to deliver it to you. It is  
important. Good news.

Richards peaks his head around to see Han smile in her robe.

Chris opens the letter and reads.

CHRIS  
Han baby. Get your clothes on. We  
have to go. Let's go, baby.

SPC 5TH CLASS RICHARDS  
Good morning, Mrs. Taylor.

CHRIS  
Hurry, baby.

HAN  
Okay, give me a second.

INT. UNITED STATES EMBASSY. SAIGON. DAY

Chris and Han wait in line. Chris tries to hide his concern from Han. Embassy shows chaotic motion, while soldiers wait in line to clear Vietnam.

HAN

Does it snow in Georgia? I never seen snow before.

RECEPTIONIST (O.S.)

Next, 564. 564.

CHRIS

Come.

RECEPTIONIST

What may I help you for sir?

Chris hands him the application and identification.

CHRIS

Hey can we speed this up? I just got orders back to Bragg and she needs to be on these orders within the next seventy-two hours, before my plane leaves.

Chris hands his orders to the receptionist.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

She is my wife.

Receptionist walks in the back to a cubicle. A Fifty year old Lady types. Smiles, then looks up. Receptionist returns.

RECEPTIONIST

Sir, this is just the first phase. You have to wait ninety days for the next interview.

CHRIS

Ninety days? I don't have ninety days, sir. Is there any way you can help us, Please?

RECEPTIONIST

Look Sergeant. If I helped every soldier, sailor, or Marine who walked in here with a pretty little Yellow girl, I wouldn't be able to do my job.

LADY

Sir, Standard Operating Procedure requires for you to claim and file directly after you receive your marriage license. Did you?

CHRIS

I did not have time. I just got in last night.

LADY

You did not. These are the regulations. I am sorry, Staff Sergeant.

RECEPTIONIST

Fill this out and wait for the letter. Thank you have a nice day. 565, next.

HAN

What's wrong baby? We going soon, yes?

CHRIS

Look. This isn't rocket science just make a few adjustments, so I can get my wife on that plane.

LADY (O.S.)

Sir!

RECEPTIONIST

Sir, please step away from the window, our I will call the MP?.

CHRIS

Let? go baby.

Chris and Han walk to the edge of the park, while the chaos and horns of Saigon spin the city into a cry for help.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

How?

HAN

It is okay Chris. If I can?t come with you. I will wait for you.

Han wobbles. Chris catches her and takes her to a bench in a park.

CHRIS

I can not believe this is happening, I can?.

HAN

It? okay.

CHRIS

Han, you baby. Here I got you. Let?  
sit down. I have been running you  
all over Saigon.

Han gently lowers her head on his lap. Chris brushes her hair  
back.

HAN

Just tired. I am happy Chris. Do  
not be so worried, baby. I will  
wait. You will be back.

CHRIS

I will get you home, I promise.  
There has got to be a way. There is  
always a way.

The Horns, and panic fade silently upon Chris concerned  
thoughts.

INT. HOTEL. NIGHT

Han softly helps Chris pack his gear. Hold each other.

EXT. BRAVO CAMP. HOOTCH DECK. NIGHT

Bryan sits on the deck. Montagnards walk by confused and  
angry.

BRYAN

He said you might have given Pham  
some documents.

WATERLAND (O.S.)

We are going to lose them. I cannot  
even look at them anymore.

BRYAN

Did you pass documents?

WATERLAND

What the fuck we doing?

Bryan throws the paperwork at Waterland.

BRYAN

Answer the fucking question.

## WATERLAND

Yes! I gave them some maps we found  
on Charlie. They are running to  
Cambodia, with their families.

Montagnard stands on the hooch steps in Army dress Green  
Uniform, and sandals, while one teen closes in with a light  
cigarette give another a light, as the rain pours stronger,  
and stronger.

## WATERLAND (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Their world is caving in. We are  
going to abandon them aren't we?  
Leave them here to die. We promised  
them.

## JACKSON

It is just a bad dream. That is  
all. I just want to wake up back in  
the Carolinas. Watch the birds  
heading south in the spring.  
Baseball games and beautiful girls  
at the beach. Fishing off the pier.

## WATERLAND (O.S.)

I need to get home.

## JACKSON

Home.

FADE TO:

EXT./INT. NORTH CAROLINA BEACH. DAY

Bryan walks on the beach by the pier, as the seagulls call  
for food on the dock. Walks up to a sign on the docks. "Help  
Wanted". He takes the sign off the wall and heads to the  
building.

Bryan walks into the furniture building. Old man BRETT, 67,  
stands at the front desk.

## BRETT

May I help you, young man.

Bryan hands him the add.

## BRYAN

This says you have work.

BRETT  
You look like a strong man. I could  
use a man like you. No priors? I  
have to protect my shop.

BRYAN  
No, sir.

BRETT  
Here.

Bret hands him an application.

BRET  
Fill this out.

Bryan begins to fill out the application.

CUT TO BLACK:

INT. RED CROSS INTERNATIONAL. NIGHT

JACK, 46, a slightly dressed down in a plaid suit sits at his  
desk across from Chris, who sits anxiously.

JACK  
Bangkok is as close as I can get  
you. When we arrive, we will check  
in at the Embassy. Our liaison is  
running names at the refugee camps,  
so if she is there then we can  
narrow the search down in order to  
save some time and effort. We  
should have an answer, but they  
come trickling in more everyday. If  
there is any hope to find her it  
will have to come very soon. Our  
window of opportunity is closing  
faster everyday.

Jack hands completed Immigration documents back to Chris

JACK (CONT'D)  
Well, I think this is it. I hope we  
find her Chris.

CHRIS  
Yes, sir, I do too, thank you.

Both shake hands as Chris exits the office.

EXT. VILLAGE. DAY

Hut is quiet.

The Cracking of Hueys approach. Han exits hut and begins to walk towards the Helicopters.

HAN

Chris?

Han holds belly as the cracks get closer. Helicopters break over the distant tree line. Helicopters bank away, as Han stands in silent sorrow, then turns and enters her hut.

INT. CUSTOMERS HOUSE. RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA. DAY

Bryan and Brett move a couch through the front door. TOM GILLEY, 54, stands in his doorway, while he watches the television, and the two African-American boys who play next door.

Associated Press RR7522A Vietnam Saigon plays on the television.

TOM GILLEY

Hm. Got that for half price. My little girl got a place at Duke, and decided she would be closer to home if she took the living room furniture with her to school.

TOM, 54, continuously shifts his uneasy attention away from Bryan and Brett, and to the African American boys, who play next door.

TOM GILLEY (CONT'D)

Hey! Ten years ago this was unheard off.

BRETT

Tom, where do you want this?

TOM GILLEY

Over there.

Bryan, and Brett set the new couch in the corner.

BRYAN

Anything else?

TOM GILLEY

That is it. You guys did one hell of a job. I can not remember the last time.

Ball rolls into Tom's yard and across the attention of Tom. Tom steps through Bryan, and Brett.

TOM GILLEY (CONT'D)

Nigger boy get the ball, and get the fuck off my grass.

(Extreme sincerity)

Do that again boy, and I will skin your little coon ass.

BOY

Yes, sir.

TOM GILLEY

Here you go. That should do her.

He hands two twenties for each of them.

BRYAN

Oh, can I use your rest room?

TOM GILLEY

Upstairs on your right. Did you get that window fixed yet? Next Hurricane it would behoove you to board the damn thing up.

Bryan walks upstairs.

Bryan washes his hands. He looks at the Mirror. Young and youthful look. Smiles. Window breaks downstairs. Old Man yells. Walks past the rest room. Furious.

Bryan walks out of rest room. Tom walks out of the bed room and headed towards the stairs with a double Four-Ten Shot gun.

TOM GILLEY (CONT'D)

I told them fucking kids to stay out of my yard!

BRYAN

Sir, no.

Bryan attempts to grab the shotgun from him. Struggle for control. Tom yanks away, loses his grip and balance. Shotgun goes off. Tom falls down the stairs.

BRETT

Bryan, no.

Bryan stands at the top of the stairs with shotgun in hand.

Tom lies limp, while Brett kneels over him.

EXT. VILLAGE. NIGHT

Han runs outside to throw up, as distant rounds fire light and thunder in the distance. Holds swollen belly. She hears a slight commotion. Looks around the corner.

North Vietnamese Army soldiers quietly move on the village from all sides. Villagers walk out surprised and overrun. The village elder raises his hands, then is shot. People are being executed as the attempt to surrender. Han runs to the outside of the village to a hut. Holds swollen belly. Turns around the corner to see a young Viet-Cong female.

Female smiles, then raises her rifle.

EXT. BUS. DAY

Chris stands at the bus stop. Red white and blue balloons pop. Chris turns with horrific fear. Bus arrives. Chris enters.

Chris walks down bus walkway. Sits.

Asian lady and a Black man walk on the bus together. They sit in front of Chris. Asian woman turns and smiles.

Chris reaches in his pocket and pulls out a picture of Han and the letter.

Streets of Atlanta are gowned in red, white, and blue.

Chris reads Embassy documents.

**U.S. Embassy Thailand**

United States of America:

Dear Mr. TAYLOR, Chris

May 12, 1975

Upon a thorough investigation we are unfortunately not able to contact Mrs. Taylor, Han.

Due the lack of access into The peoples Republic of Vietnam, prevents a proper investigation on the whereabouts of your beloved wife Taylor, Han, who may have been drawn up north for re-education. We will stay vigilant and notify you if progress is made. Please be patient and due not try to contact her on your own. This may lead to prosecution that would further complicate this sensitive situation.

United States State Department, Thailand Liaison

*Henderson, Rogers. Signed*

The bus stops and Chris steps off. The wind blows as fireworks go off with antagonizing victory. Chris looks around in silent panic.

INT. TAYLOR HOME. DAY

Chris reads job acceptance letter.

Los Angeles Veteran's Administration

Dear Mr. Chris Taylor,

We are happy to inform you that you have been hired. We welcome you into the Veteran's Administration Los Angeles family. Please be sure to bring all necessary documents when you arrive.

Door knocks. BRITNEY TAYLOR, 54, walks to the door. Opens the door to Jack, who stands with tragic news.

Chris smiles and folds the letter.

BRITNEY (O.S.)

Chris, there is a man here to see you.

Jack stands at the front door.

JACK (O.S.)

I am deeply sorry, Mr. Taylor. Her village was over run.

FADE OUT:

PRISON GUARD (O.S.)

Turn around, open your mouth. Arms up. Bend over. Contraband of any kind? Spread. Stand straight. Go over grab your things. Line up.

Buzz.

FADE IN:

INT./EXT. IN-PROCESSING CENTER. OLD CRAGGY PRISON. NIGHT

Prison doors unlock to the main bey. Men harass new prisoners, as they walk in line down on the prison floor. Bryan walks down the prison bey. Reaches door. Enters room. Bryan lays his things down, and sits on his bunk.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HARTSFIELD/JACKSON ATLANTA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT. DAY

Television of Sandy Gall report of the "Fall of Saigon 1975" plays on the television of a bar. Chris turns away from the Television drunk at the bar counter.

Atlanta to Los Angeles flips over. "On Time" across the flights screen. Chris takes his bags and slowly walks down the terminal.

Sun lowers behind the fence line, as a 727 Southwest passenger jet lifts off.

**END OF ACT I**

ACT II

EXT./INT. UNITED STATES VETERANS CENTER OF SALVATION. LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA. TWO THOUSAND AND EIGHT. DAY

PARABLE, 76, the old homeless cart-man with bible on the baby seat pushes cart down the sidewalk past veteran's homeless shelter with a bare pine tree.

PARABLE

Bare witness, from the past and to his. Man, rises and falls for glory, time and again. There will be pain and anguish to the soul of thee who declares upon the flicker atop the pole, leaving no word but fallen earth from the sky upon settlement and when the dust clears and the eyes dry honest....God let there be one that climbs from the rubble who cries for one more complimentary day. Rise.

PAN UP: SALVATION sign stands around open fields. Large jet plane flies close over head.

Lawn truck pulls up, while Mexican man walks out front of the Salvation sign wiping his hands and studying the electrical problem with the sign overhead. Men lay Christmas decoration boxes around the pine tree under the sign.

Hand writes 11/21/2008 in green SALVATION log book.

CHRIS TAYLOR, now, 58, sits at the front desk with grey hair, and a modest smile, and takes a veteran? log book to the main office counter.

CHRIS

What do you have for me, Mr?

VETERAN

Harris.

MICHAEL RIVERA, 34, a medium muscular built Mexican all-American carries linen into the office.

MICHAEL

Here we go. Seven so far today.  
Hey.

DEBRA (O.S.)

Hey, look. Check this out.

DEBRA HENNINGER, 54, a slender athletic short haired Jewish sweetheart sets out a Linus display from Charlie Brown's Christmas on the front counter. Linus stands left to a poor and bare tree with a tiny star above.

MICHAEL

Where did you get that?

Chris motions the display to the side, as he fills out paperwork.

Debra plugs it in.

DEBRA

Ronnie got it at the Flea Market last week. Look at that.

Michael turns on the switch.

MICHAEL

It does not work.

Debra

He is so cute, though.

MICHAEL

It does not work.

Jet plane brings the office to a slight duck.

EXT. LOS ANGELES EXPRESS AIRPORT TERMINAL. DAY

Jet lands, and the wheels squelch down the LAX Tarmac. Tall Handsome medium built white male DAVID TRESOR, 35, exits from Los Angeles Express terminal. David cuts through the U.S.O. Lounge, and finds a seat and sits down.

HEATHER (O.S.)

May I see your C.A.C. Card, sir?

David lifts his tired head to see United Services Organization representative HEATHER, 35, with name tag.

DAVID

Excuse me?

HEATHER

Your military I.D., sir?

Davis looks around for time.

DAVID

I am sorry, Heather. I do not have one. I am a veteran.

HEATHER

I am sorry, sir. This is for military personal only. Wait.

Uniformed Marines, and Army walk around the facility. Heather leaves and comes back with a cup of coffee and a pamphlet.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

Here you go. This should help you. Take your time sweetheart.

Heather walks away.

FADE TO:

INT. CAR. VISITER PARKING LOT. PELICAN BEY STATE PRISON. DAY

Tall, medium built African-American ALBERT JOHNSON, 56, sits in the car. Cell phone rings.

ALBERT JOHNSON

Sonny, hey. I didn't close out my messages, why, what do you have? Christmas? I have three down and one could not support this venue. Sonny, I or the Los Angeles V.A. do not have the personal to host an event this year. Could you task it out to Anaheim. Roger just opened his new facility. Send it to my personal. I will read it on my phone. Later.

Reads phone. Burdened. Rubs his bald head, then calls and receives voice mail.

ALBERT JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Hey Debra, this is Al. I am sending you the details. Read, please. I will call tomorrow with a tentative plan. L.A. Has been tasked to host a Holiday event. Guess what? Salvation is our only hope this year. OK, talk to you later, bye.

Dark smoothed skin African-American KATRINA JEFFERSON, 48, opens the door and gets in the vehicle.

Katrina looks at Albert.

KATRINA

They moved him to the infirmary. He asked about you. I think its time. I think we need to prepare for this.

Albert starts the car and drives home.

EXT. CENTURY AVENUE. NIGHT

David sits on his luggage and reads pamphlet, then to his hand. David takes a deep breath, rubs his hands together. Picks up his bags and walks down CENTURY BOULEVARD.

INT. GREYHOUND BUS. NIGHT

The reflection of BRYAN JACKSON, 65, drops two quarters in the vending machine. Pulls out chips.

GREYHOUND OFFICE (O.C.)

Grand junction to Los Angeles leaves in five minutes. Please begin to board. Thank for riding Greyhound.

Bryan walks with his cane into the bus. Takes a seat, and leans his head against the window, then closes his eyes.

EXT. VENICE BEACH. NIGHT

David lays on the bench. Skateboarders ride by, as the Pacific Waves crash onto shore.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. VENICE BEACH. DAY

The Sea Gulls call for food, as David sits up on the bench.

Police begin there clean-up. Homeless breakdown their tents. RUIZ, 47, approaches David.

RUIZ

Do you mind? I am Ruiz. You?

Davis scoots over.

DAVID

David.

Ruiz hands box meal to David.

RUIZ  
Here, eat. Where you coming from?

Both start to eat.

DAVID  
North Carolina. Just flew in last night.

Ruiz stops eating.

RUIZ  
You here to be a movie star?

DAVID  
No.

Ruiz begins to eat, and talk.

RUIZ  
Good. You can talk to my agent, but he won't be out of county, until April. You former military?

DAVID  
Yes.

RUIZ  
Wait here. Watch my plate.

Ruiz lays his plate on the bench, while David pulls out his cell phone, and looks at a picture. The sounds of a couple who joyously run in and out of the water takes David's attention away from his phone.

Ruiz arrives with DOCTOR FITZPATRICK, 46, and Veteran's Administration personal, ANTOINE, 52, GERRY, 57.

RUIZ (CONT'D)  
Doc, this is David. David, this is Doc Fitzpatrick with the Veteran's Administration. Maybe she can help you.

GERRY  
Hello David. Are you a veteran?

Ruiz sits and eats.

DAVID  
Yes.

GERRY  
Discharge, son?

DAVID  
Honorable.

RUIZ  
Goodbye.

ANTOINE  
I will get the van.

Gerry sits down, while Antoine walks to the van.

GERRY  
We come down here everyday to check for homeless veterans. It is part of the National Veteran? initiative program. Keeping you guys off the streets.

DOCTOR FITZPATRICK  
If you would like, come with us, so we can get you a room and a nice honest start here in Los Angeles.

Davis stands, as the van pulls up.

DAVID  
Sure. Thanks, Ruiz.

They shake hands.

RUIZ  
No problem, anytime.

David follows Doc.

RUIZ (CONT'D)  
Hey.

David turns around.

RUIZ D)  
Welcome to L.A.!

David reveals his first sign of hope, as he turns and walks to the van.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD GREYHOUND BUS STATION. DAY

Bryan steps off the bus. Turns to see the sun set down Hollywood Boulevard. Bus driver assists with his bags.

Bryan struggles to carry his bags to the side of the road, while he keeps balance with his cane.

EXT./INT. UNITED STATES VETERANS CENTER OF SALVATION. LOS ANGELES. DAY

Chris hands a veteran a folder, as the veteran exits. One of the workers puts up Thanksgiving decorations.

WORKER

This damn turkey ain't Sticking.

Chris turns to hold the ladder, yet the sound of foot steps turns him to the counter.

David walks in quiet and confused.

CHRIS

May I help you? What do you have for me?

David hands him his Veterans? Administration file.

DAVID

My Name is David Tresor. I need a room. I have this.

David hands the folder to Chris.

Chris gathers papers from the left file holder and gathers papers for the folder, stamps two page and fills out the questionnaire.

CHRIS

Orientation is tomorrow at nine A.M. Sharp. Bring all necessary In-Processing Paperwork. Combat Veteran?

DAVID

Yes. Iraq, 2006. US Army. 82nd Airborne

CHRIS

Any substance abuse issues?

DAVID

No drugs, and occasional beer or two.

CHRIS

Marital status?

David's smile, turns as he looks at his hand and rubs his  
hear back.

DAVID  
Never married.

Chris looks up, the settles as he discovers pain on the face  
of David.

CHRIS  
Hey, I am Chris by the way. Thank  
you for your service.

Chris shakes David's hand.

DAVID  
Thank you.

Chris puts the paperwork back in the folder then hands them  
back to David with a smile.

CHRIS  
Here you go. Tomorrow,  
You are to check in with your  
counselor at nine sharp. Don't miss  
your appointment. You'll love our  
turkey dinner. I am serious. If you  
need anything? Just ask. We are  
here for you, got that. Came just  
in time. We are about all filled  
up. You will love it here, just  
stay busy and push forward. Happy  
Thanksgiving, Airborne.

Chris hands David a BIC Razor and soap.

MICHAEL (O.S.)  
All the way.

CHRIS  
Michael escort this young man to  
his room.

Michael walks in with sheets and sets them on the table.  
Shakes David's hand.

MICHAEL  
Roger that. Have I seen you before?  
Eighty-Second, Bragg? Arms out.

Michael pulls two Lenin, and a pillow with pillow case.  
Places on David's open arms.

Michael notices the burn.

DAVID

Yes.

MICHAEL

Follow me, partner.

They exit. TEDDY, 82, walks in with a folder.

CHRIS

Teddy, your back! I thought you re-enlisted. Hand me that, old man.

Teddy hands the folder to Chris.

Michael and David arrive at the room.

MICHAEL

House rules. No Drugs, curfew is at 11:30 P.M., and make sure you clean your room and make your bed. We don't need critters in the rooms. Need anything, just let me know.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Well here you go.

Michael hands him the key.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Make yourself at home.

Michael walks out. David sits his luggage down and slowly sits down on a chair.

INT. JEFFERSON HOME. BEDROOM. NIGHT

Albert takes his tie off. Sits on the bed. Katrina takes a shower.

KATRINA (O.S.)

Remember that trip we took to the lake? He loved it, maybe we head up there to spread them.

ALBERT

Let's talk about it when it comes.

Albert looks to the family picture of Katrina, LEWIS, 4, and himself, taken in 1984. Albert slams down the picture.

INT. SALVATION. NIGHT

Chris walks in the Cafeteria.

Debra stands on a ladder and tries to make the decorations stick on the ceiling.

CHRIS  
You need a hand?

DEBRA  
Get over here.

Debra loses her grip and the decorations come half way down, then steps down from the ladder frustrated.

DEBRA (CONT'D)  
Dang it. Can you get that? I need to put these up. Hey, there is a message from the top.

Chris grabs it, then hands it to her. Debra steps off the ladder.

CHRIS  
I got it. You know you should ask before you do this. I would have saved you a good three hours.

Chris steps up on the ladder.

David walks in with folder.

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
Hey friend, can you give me a hand?

DEBRA  
You need some coffee?

CHRIS  
That is all I need. Been to the bathroom four times since this morning.

DEBRA  
You sound like me.

DAVID  
Sure.

CHRIS  
Just hold this ladder, while I try to put this Christmas together.

DAVID

I am trying to link up with my  
counselor. Do you know when he will  
be in tomorrow?

CHRIS

Michaels comes in at 9:00 A.M.  
Sharp. Show up ten minutes prior.

Debra walks over into the kitchen.

DEBRA

Young man, do you need anything?  
Coffee, water.

A beautiful Latino-American, MARIA ESPINOZA, 32, with long  
brown hair walks in. Smiles at David, and enters the kitchen.

DAVID

Water please?

David holds the ladder. Chris applies tape to the ceiling.  
David stares up at the ceiling fan.

FADE TO:

EXT. BAJI, IRAQ. DECEMBER. DAY

*Medevac* UH-60 BLACKHAWK Helicopter takes off.

Staff Sergeant TRESOR, 26, is covered in blood with black  
burned stained Army Combat Uniform sits in his Eleven-  
Fourteen Desert Gun truck HUMMV with the Truck Commander's  
door open. David Squeezes hand. Squeals.

CHRIS (V.O.)

Hey bud. You Okay?

David watches the blades rotate on the UH-60. Medic adjust  
his hand and wraps it.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SALVATION. NIGHT

Fan rotates on the ceiling. Chris stares down with concern.  
David's attention turns to Chris.

DAVID

Yeah, sorry.

CHRIS

Hold on tight, son. Its a long way  
down.

Debra walks over with a cup of coffee. Hands it to Chris.

DEBRA

Here you go.

Debra holds the ladder. David takes a sip of his coffee.

CHRIS

Hold it.

DEBRA

Stop wiggling, Chris.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD. GREYHOUND STATION. NIGHT

Bryan gets in a Taxi.

TAXI DRIVER (O.S.)

Where you headed?

BRYAN

Veteran's Affairs, off Wilshire.

TAXI DRIVER (O.S.)

Yes, sir.

Taxi takes off down the road.

EXT./INT. SALVATION. NIGHT

Man pushes cart down sidewalk.

CART MAN

God I repent thy word, and thy  
meaning. Another has come forth and  
bestowed light upon this meaning.  
Let life see it through.

David holds the ladder. MARIA walks out of the kitchen.

MARIA

Hey Chris. Be careful. I will be  
late Friday, have Teddy start  
without me.

David and Maria exchange looks.

DEBRA  
Take over David. David is it?

DAVID  
Yes, ma'am.

CHRIS  
Focus man.

MARIA  
I am Maria, Navy. You are?

DAVID  
David, Army.

MARIA  
Hello.

DAVID  
Hello.

David takes his hands and attention away from the ladder to shake her hand. Ladder wobbles.

CHRIS (O.S.)  
Hey.

Michael enters.

MICHAEL  
Chris! We have a problem. It is Tim again.

CHRIS  
Everyone stay here.

Chris climbs down the ladder.

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
Debra, call security. Tell them to notify I.P.D.

Michael, and Chris go to Tim's room. Debra runs to the office.

DAVID  
What's going on?

MARIA  
Tim has a history. Manic depression, Alcohol, doesn't help. He sometimes gets crazy. Former decorated Marine Captain.

(MORE)

MARIA (CONT'D)

We do not get very many commissioned cases like him, so they tolerate it more than most. It is best to let them handle it. He is a great guy, just fell too hard. One word of advice, David.

DAVID

What is that?

MARIA

Here at Salvation, focus on yours. It can get heavy. Sometimes trying to handle someone else's load, and your own. It can be too much. Okay, remember that, soldier boy. You need anything?

Maria takes David's cup. Walks into the kitchen. Wall locker falls in fourth floor room.

MICHAEL

Every time. Same thing every year at this time.

WALTER, 57, stands outside the room, smokes cigarette.

WALTER

He came in acting silly. Wanted to wrestle in shit, then he got angry. Damn near knocked his ass out. Hey can I get another roommate? You have a light. Hey Denny, come here my man.

Walter walks three doors down. Michael attempts to enter.

CHRIS

We will talk later, Walter. Michael, wait for the police.

MICHAEL

Tim, its Mike and Chris. You Okay in there?

TIM (O.S)

Go away! I didn't need this shit. I never wanted it.

WALTER

What makes this guy go so damn crazy?

EXT. SALVATION. NIGHT

Bryan steps out of the taxi. Looks up at the Neon broken sign. SALVATION behind police car. The police Officer, CHARLIE RIDLEY, 42, walks up to Chris. Stands outside the room.

CHARLIE (POLICE)  
Again? Tim, its Charlie. Inglewood  
P.D. Marine. I am coming in.

Charlie walks in the room.

CHARLIE (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Put your hands were I can see them.  
You Okay, partner?

TIM (O.S.)  
Yeah, I am Okay. You okay?

After a few seconds.

CHARLIE (O.S.)  
Let me see your hands. It is okay.  
You guys can come in now.

Enter Michael, and Chris. Slowly.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)  
I will leave this to you guys. If  
he gets out of hand I will be in  
the Office. I'll just stick around  
for a while; call me if you need  
me. Charlie walks out.

TIM TERRY, 36, collapses in a chair in front of the television. Football.

CHRIS  
Hey, man. It is going to be all  
right. What can we do for you? Tell  
us.

TIM  
(Mumbles)  
Fucking Dallas can't even muster a  
damn defense. I didn't say  
anything, he wouldn't let go. I  
almost passed out. You guys aren't  
here to kick me out?

Michael comes to comfort Tim and hands him water.

MICHAEL  
Drink Marine.

Tim takes the water bottle and drinks. Charlie walks into the Office. Bryan pouring water for himself, while STANLEY, 67, stands in the lobby. Works on Television reception. Bryan wobbles with cane. Carries the water.

Charlie assists, until Bryan is seated.

CHARLIE  
Hey friend. Management will be here in a few. Their handling something right now. You just get in?

BRYAN  
Yes.

CHARLIE  
Where from?

BRYAN  
North Carolina.

CHARLIE  
I spent some time in Lejeune. Where at? If you don't mind me asking?

BRYAN  
Wake Correctional.

CHARLIE  
Oh.

Charlie goes to the back pass the divider with Officer RODRIQUEZ, 26.

Chris, and Michael enter the office.

CHRIS  
Night shift should conduct multiple checks on him. Tell them to keep a good eye on him. We don't need any problems popping up. I need sleep.

MICHAEL  
I will stay late just to make sure things smooth out. Why don't you go home after I return from the gym, and get some rest old man. I will hold it down when I get back.  
Thanks, Charlie.

Charlie pours a cup and walks out with Rodriguez.

CHARLIE

You guys have a good night. Call us  
if you need us.

JENNIFER

Bye, Chris, later Michael.

Chris stands at the desk and begins going through files on  
his desk.

CHRIS

Take care, thanks again. You just  
get in? Come here and fill this  
out.

BRYAN

Chris? Chris Taylor?

Chris breaks from his professionalism.

CHRIS

Bryan Jackson? Oh man, how have you  
been?

BRYAN

I have been okay.

CHRIS

Oh man. How? Where?

Chris puts his hand on Bryan's shoulder.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

It's been a long time.

BRYAN

It's been a real long time Chris.

CHRIS

You need a room? Let's get you  
squared away.

Chris goes to his office and sits at his desk. Bryan follows,  
yet is reluctant to sit.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Sit.

They both sit.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

I got orders. I spent the last days  
in country trying to get her  
paperwork squared away.

(MORE)

CHRIS (CONT'D)

I tried contacting you, but you disappeared in North Carolina. I called your folks, but they had no idea where you went. I am sorry.

BRYAN

Han, are you two still?

CHRIS

She did not get out. I tried. God, I tried.

BRYAN

Where is she?

CHRIS

The village fell after I left. I told her not to go back there. Most were. Collaboration. I have my own way of dealing with it. You, how have you been?

BRYAN

Good. It's all over now. I'm glad to see you, partner.

CHRIS

Lets get you a room.

Chris begins the paperwork.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Discharge?

BRYAN

Honorable.

CHRIS

Felonies?

BRYAN

(Softly)

One.

CHRIS

Sorry.

Chris continues the questionnaire.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

What was the charge??

BRYAN

Murder two, Twenty. I don't regret anything, just in the wrong place, trying to do the right thing, at the wrong time. Saved up some money, and decided to come to L.A.; Good weather, fresh. A good place to watch a sunset.

CHRIS

Yes it is.

Chris Picks up his room roster.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

I got you a bed. I'll let you get settled in. Then I'll come see you tomorrow morning.

Michael walks in the office.

MICHAEL

I have rotating shifts on the fourth floor.

CHRIS

Good. Mike, can you show my old friend here his room?

MICHAEL

Sure. Follow me. I bet you never heard that before.

Chris and Bryan stand.

CHRIS

Airborne!

BRYAN

Airborne.

MICHAEL

All the way, lets get you situated.

Michael leads Bryan to his room.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

I was in the Eighty-Second, O.I.F.

Michael leads Bryan to his room.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Special Forces. I saw those guys in Iraq. Horse Soldiers!

(MORE)

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Here you go partner. Remember, curfew is at Eleven Thirty P.M., No Smoking, drugs, clean up after yourself, and dinner is at five thirty.

Michael comes to the room, turns around and faces David.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Check the front board if you have any further questions, it may save you some time. Meet your roommate. David. Bryan, Bryan, David. I have to get to the gym. You two take care.

Michael heads back to the office.

BRYAN

Hey. Which locker is mine?

DAVID

Where you coming from?

BRYAN

North Carolina.

DAVID

Really? Me too. Fayetteville, you?

BRYAN

You have any spare hangers?

DAVID

Yes, sir.

David reaches into his locker again, takes a hanger from a clean shirt. Hands hanger to Bryan.

Bryan begins to organize his locker. Chris sits at his desk. E-mail from Albert Jefferson:

SUBJECT: Holiday Dinner with the troops. MESSAGE: Read attachment. Get back with me A.S.A.P.

Chris sits back discomfort by the e-mail.

EXT. FLASHBACK. HAN'S VILLAGE. NINETEEN SEVENTY THREE. DAY

Chris and Bryan are on patrol through the Market area with their Operational Detachment Alpha Team, Fifth Special Forces Group.

Market is set up across the main road. Path leads back to a large and active Village.

Chris calls for a halt. Jeep pulls up. The senior Medical Sargeant DOC DREW ROGERS, 34, settles the Team across from the market.

CHRIS  
Is this the village?

DOC ROGERS  
Yes it is.

Chris motions CHARLIE, 26, who takes farm tools from the back of the jeep and walks to the rice paddies.

Doc begins to unload his medical supplies from Medical bag.

DOC ROGERS (CONT'D)  
Bring them in.

Green berets walk into the village.

Charlie shows new tools to an old villager, then hands tool to him. Villager inspects tool.

Senior Villager leads children to the jeep. Chris smiles, then turns to HAN, 21, Standing at a table with the local children. Han hands them Mangos and brushes them away.

Chris is reluctant to walk up to her stand. Eye contact draws. The quiet professional draws confidence.

CHRIS  
You speak English?

HAN  
Better than you speak Vietnamese.

CHRIS  
Three Mangos. Here you go.

Han hands Chris coins.

HAN  
I see you walking through here. We are happy you guys are here. Since Special Forces showed up. There has been no Vietcong. It is peaceful here now. Here you go. I?l see you again?

Han hands Chris a sack of Mangos. Jackson walks up.

JACKSON

Where is doc? There are some  
villagers who need medical  
attention. They can not make it to  
the jeep.

CHRIS

Well I better get going. It's been  
a pleasure?

HAN

Han.

CHRIS

Han is it? I will see you again,  
soon I hope.

HAN

Bye Sergeant.

Their eye contact, as draws Bryan's attention. Chris turns  
and walks to the Jeep.

BRYAN

That was something.

Encounter catches the O.D.A.s attention. All smile. Doc  
Rogers walks out of a hut. Worried.

DOC

Hey Chris, can you help me with  
this patient, I have nor seen an  
infection this far, I may need to  
make a second run.

Chris heads over to assist with urgency.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SALVATION. NIGHT

Linus display on counter. Michael walks into the office.

MICHAEL

I am headed out. I will be back  
later to watch over Tim and the  
boys. You need anything?

CHRIS

No, no. Just get back before eight.  
Bryan get settled?

MICHAEL

Yeah. He is with the new guy. They should get along just fine.

CHRIS

Have a good workout, and leave those ladies alone. I'm beginning to believe that's the only reason you go.

MICHAEL

Not the only reason. I'm single, what do you expect? Anyway, look who's talking.

CHRIS

Bad history.

Michael walks out with his gym bag.

MICHAEL (O.S.)

I will be back soon enough. Hold'er down partner.

EXT. FLASHBACK. TAMPA, ROUTE ONE. IRAQ. DAY

David breaths in panic, as he runs toward a burning HUMMV Gun truck in front of him.

TRISHA (V.O.)

David!

INT. GYM. DAY

Michael walks out to the exit of the gym. Gym is social, as men and women mingle. Michael walks to the card reader. He pulls his gym card out; there is a picture of his Squad. He stops to reflect. Pretty girl, BETHANY, 32, walks around him and swipes in.

BETHANY

Excuse me. You work at Salvation?  
You are a veteran.

MICHAEL

Combat Veteran, yeah.

BETHANY

Where at, may I ask?

MICHAEL

Iraq.

Michael takes his name tag off his shirt.

BETHANY

I had a brother in Afghanistan. He  
stayed at Salvation for awhile.  
Bethany, by the way.

Michael shakes her hand.

MICHAEL

Michael.

BETHANY

I will see you later, Michael.

Michael notices her interest. Puts his picture in his wallet,  
swipes his card, then puts his Salvation name tag on and  
walks out with a smile.

INT. SALVATION. NIGHT

David wakes up sweaty. Sits up. Looks over. Bryan sits across  
from him. Up. Reads book.

BRYAN

Bad one, huh.

Bryan throws David a towel. David wipes the sweat from his  
neck and head.

DAVID

I tried drinking them away. It  
didn't matter how much I drank, I  
was always sober in the dream.

BRYAN

Take your time, friend.

DAVID

Thank you.

David stands. Walks to the dark rest room.

INT. JEFFERSON HOME. NIGHT

Phone rings.

Katrina turns on the light, then answers the phone.

KATRINA

Jefferson residence.

PELICAN BEY WARDEN (O.C.)  
 Mrs. Jefferson, your son went into cardiac arrest. Fortunately we were able to revive him. We will be moving him to State Correctional infirmary tomorrow. Mrs. Jefferson, you may want to prepare for his.

Katrina puts her hand over the phone.

KATRINA  
 I will discuss it with his father.  
 Yes. I will. We will be there.

Albert leans against the headboard and feels the moment.

EXT. SALVATION. NIGHT

Michael conducts in-room inspections, yet no Tim in Bed.

Tim sits alone outside on the balcony, as Michael approaches.

MICHAEL  
 Hey buddy. How are you?

TIM  
 I did nothing wrong. Why do I feel this way? Why does it not go away?

MICHAEL  
 Tim, you have to put it to rest. It will eat you alive if you don't.

Tim pulls out a pack of cigarettes and offers one to Michael. Michael waives him off.

TIM  
 Hey, you got a light?

Tim tries to light his cigarette, then pauses.

TIM (CONT'D)  
 I graduated from Penn with honors. Captain Tim Terry, United States Marine Corps. Nowadays I can not even sit down for more than two minutes. Sempir Fi, I Can almost pull it together, now here I am.

MICHAEL  
 Get some sleep. I will walk you to your room.

(MORE)

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Eggs and Bacon tomorrow, partner.  
You don't want to miss it. I will  
cook them myself.

TIM

I thought you said I do not want to  
miss it. Knock, knock.

MICHAEL

No more jokes.

TIM

You don't want to hear this one?

Tim enters room, as Michael walks to the next room.

MICHAEL

Get sleep, Marine.

Tim wrestles pillow, then lays down.

TIM

Goodnight, Mr. Airborne.

MICHAEL

Goodnite, Marine.

Door closes.

EXT. LOS ANGELES. DAY

Sun rises over the pier.

INT. SALVATION. DAY

Men at yard work. Chris walks into Bryan and David's room.

David cleans room. Bryan brushes teeth.

CHRIS

Lets go. Let us get some breakfast.

Bryan and David get up and get dressed. Chris looks over, and  
sees Bryan's beret.

DAVID

I have to brush my teeth.

Chris picks up Green Beret.

CHRIS

Hurry up. I lost this ages ago. I have no idea where it went. Man, you miss it?

BRYAN

No. I need to go to the Veteran's Hospital today. What time does the Clinic open up?

CHRIS

Nine. No need. I'll take you. We have some catching up to do.

BRYAN

Thanks Chris.

DAVID

Let's go.

David leads out of the room.

Chris, Bryan walk with plates to their table. David turns off to Tim and Michael's table.

Maria walks up and gives Bryan a cup of coffee. Then looks across to David. Eye contact. Chris and Bryan notice.

BRYAN

What time does the Clinic open today?

Chris and Bryan stand and take their trays to the wash center. They pass the Michael's table.

CHRIS

Mike, can you hold it down until we return.

MICHAEL

Sure. There are some things I have to take care of around the facility. Damn gardener hasn't showed up in over a week. I need to pull some weeds and the tulips, their dead. Here at Salvation everyone has to chip in.

DAVID

I will help.

CHRIS

Just do not pull the tulips. I spent three weeks getting them back to health. Damn drought, maybe we will get rain soon.

Chris walks to the wash center.

MICHAEL

It is L.A. Who knows? David, you like tulips?

DAVID

No.

MICHAEL

Good, after we get back from Home Depot, you can pluck them.

INT./EXT. CAR. DAY

Distant whistle echoes from The Ballad of the Green Beret as Chris' car drives down the road.

David, and Bryan. Quit.

CHRIS

What happened?

BRYAN

What do you mean?

CHRIS

After Nam. What went down? How did you get, you know?

BRYAN

I didn't kill him. I had a lot of time to work on it. Time.

Bryan's smile shifts out of the car window.

INT. VETERANS' AFFAIRS HOSPITAL. DAY

Chris sits in the waiting room. Albert comes over and hands him a flyer, then sits beside Chris.

ALBERT

I know this is awkward. Every year I do this, and every year you deny it.

(MORE)

ALBERT (CONT'D)

There is a whole big technological world out there, that can help you. They even have recovery teams.

CHRIS

Hey, hey.

Albert hands an American Red Cross pamphlet.

"Vietnam - Reconnecting".

CHRIS (CONT'D)

I deal with it in my own little world, Al, what do have for me?

Al hands folder to Chris.

ALBERT

Go see, Chris. Find out. You need closure. I will see you at the ranch this afternoon. Have Debra call me, I have a surprise for you. Good day, partner.

Albert stands, then pats Chris on the back. Chris looks at the Flyer. Albert walks down the hallway. Chris opens folder. Too much. Bryan walks out with his prescriptions. Doctor pats Bryan on the back, and shakes his hand. Chris and Bryan walk out.

INT. CAR. DAY

Chris drives while Bryan is deep in thought.

CHRIS

How long?

BRYAN

One year, maybe. Pancreatic. It spread too fast, I guess. Didn't really care after I got out, now It's here.

CHRIS

So am I.

Chris and Bryan park and get out of the car.

Tim, and a few other gentlemen waiting for the bus.

Michael pulls up with the bus.

MICHAEL  
Everybody on. Let's go.

Bryan walks on. Chris stops by the bus.

CHRIS  
You doing okay, Tim?

TIM  
I am always okay. I need the air.  
Dr. Bob, here I come.

Tim walks on the bus.

TIM (CONT'D)  
Do not kill us Army.

MICHAEL  
Back of the bus Marine!

Chris looks at Michael.

CHRIS  
Take care of them.

Michael pulls the door handle, doors close. Bus drives off.

INT. BUS. BACK SEAT. DAY

Tim sits in the back of the bus, and leans his head against the window.

FADE TO:

INT. CHRISTMAS DINNER. 2003. NIGHT

LARRY JOHNSON, 38, stands at the end of the table. The group talk to one another. Larry stands and taps the wine glass.

COLONEL JOHNSON  
I would like to make a toast. Next month we will set off to Iraq, and far away from the comforts of loved ones who stand here with us tonight. God bless your souls for what may endure, while we are gone. Here is a toast to the hearts we leave behind.

All Marines stand with their spouses.

## MARINES

Hoorah!

Tim looks to CARRIE, 34, and smiles as they drink to the occasion.

EXT. FALLUJAH, IRAQ. 2004. DAY

Blood drops from the bodies of the contractors, that hang on the bridge. Dry blood builds up and releases from the rail of the bridge. THIRD Marine Expeditionary Force. First Infantry Division personal. Staged outside the city in M1/A2 Abrams and M-2 Bradleys. Colonel Johnson stands in a huddle at the front, and turns out to the bridge in the distance. Captain TIM TERRY, 27, squats in the huddle.

COLONEL JOHNSON

Look at them! Look at them. I want it to sink in.

Captain Tim Terry takes his Kevlar Helmet off.

TIM

Should we cut them down?

COLONEL JOHNSON

No. The Engineers will cut them down. Let them see it. They need to know why we're going in. Why we are here. Do you smell it? In there, out here. This whole city must explode, and we have to do it. Get them ready. Have your N.C.O? conduct Pre-Mission checks before we line up. Move out.

They salute and go back to their troops. Tanks are revving up. Marine Chaplain reads to group of Marines. Hold hands.

MARINE CHAPLAIN

Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not;

Marine draws back his M2 Machine Gun. Mounted on Abrams Tank. Engines start. Gunner spits out chew.

MARINE CHAPLAIN (V.O.)

But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully;

(MORE)

MARINE CHAPLAIN (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
but by manifestation of the truth  
commending ourselves to every man's  
conscience in the sight of God.

First Infantry Division Soldiers kneel in a circle and hold hands.

ARMY CHAPLAIN (V.O.)  
But if our gospel be hid, it is hid  
to them that are lost:

Engineers climbs up bridge.

ARMY CHAPLAIN (V.O.)  
In whom the god of this world hath  
blinded the minds of them which  
believe not.

IRAQI insurgent closes door, then peals back to the second room, while another cocks back his Russian P.K. Machine gun from above in the rafters.

MARINE CHAPLAIN (V.O.)  
Should shine unto them.

Engineers check bridge for traps.

Marine raises his head. Nervous.

MARINE  
Amen.

The Engineers cut down the Contractors.

ENGINEER SERGEANT  
All Clear! Go!

Colonel signals the Invasion.

COLONEL JOHNSON  
Move out.

TANKS and MARINES cross bridge.

FADE TO:

EXT. FALLUJAH. CENTER OF CITY. COMPOUND. DAY

A hardtop 1114 HUMMV pulls up to a compound.

HENLEY  
Slow down.

Colonel Johnson gets off the S.I.N.G.A.R.S radio.

COLONEL JOHNSON

Okay, This is it. Terry, grab the charge. You guys come with me. This should be quick. Four man stack, keep it tight, Gregg your front, Terry, you call it. Right up here. Slow down, slow down. Okay three doors up, lets go.

JOHNSON, 46, MASTER SERGEANT DAVIS, 38, MAJOR ROGERS, 47, all in MARPAC DESERT exit Gun Truck.

Tim heads around the back to grab the detonation Cord and a trigger. Spits his chew out. They Line up and slowly move in on the door. Tim places the charge on the door. Four man Stack.

Detonates the charge. Door blows. First man in gets sprayed, fire from the rafters inside the compound from an Russian P.K. Machine Gun. Kills first three instantly. Colonel Johnson hesitates at the fatal funnel. He is hit in the throat and high thigh, which turns him around stunned, walks back, leg collapses, then drops. Machine gun rips across his body. Tim hesitantly comes from the side hugging the wall. Tries to pull the bodies to safety. Rounds crack around the entry point.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

Tim.

INT. BUS. HORSE GETAWAY. DAY

Michael stands over Tim, who shakes. Assists Tim out of the bus.

MICHAEL

Let us go. It is going to be okay?

INT. HORSE STABLES. DAY

Michael and Tim walk into the stables. Tim settles upon the site of a a horse.

TIM

Hey there.

Tim walks over to the horse and pets its main of the horse.

EXT. HORSE TRAIL. DAY

Tim rides up front, while other veterans are trail him. Tim smiles looks to the beautiful scenery up the trail.

EXT. FLASHBACK. TIM? HOME. NIGHT

Police have cuffed Tim in his Marine uniform with no top. Bloodied green shirt. Faced down in front of the hood of the police vehicle. Put him in the Police car.

Police walk Carrie out of the house. She is covered. Takes jacket from over her head. Walks to his window. Face bruised and battered.

EXT. HORSE TRAIL. TOP MOUNTAIN. DAY

The horse moves up to the peak, as Tim looks away with a hateful regret. Michael leads Tim's horse up the mountain as Tim stares away.

FADE TO:

INT. CAFETERIA HALL. VETERANS AFFAIRS RANCH. DAY

Albert Johnson walks across the stage looking up.

ALBERT JOHNSON (V.O.)

Many of you have been conditioned for an opposition, an enemy. To close in and defeat them. Your enemy is no longer The Vietcong, Al Quade, or the Taliban. Your greatest enemy is you. We are losing you! Twenty-two a day, to be exact. Your second greatest enemy is alcohol, and drugs. You mix those two, and you are outnumbered. Your defeat will come in time, guaranteed. For many of you the war will never be over. Everyday repeats itself. The only way to victory. Is coming to terms with the events in your life, and doing with a sound mind, body, and soul. You are warriors. Find you, and you shall find the truth. Sometimes sobriety comes with self hatred. Let it go.

Chris walks in whispers to Debra as she comforts LOUIS, 69, who shakes back and forth.

ALBERT JOHNSON

It's there. You can't hear it, see it, taste it, smell it, touch it, yet you feel it. It's inside your soul. Why else would you go to war. Souls feel other souls in distress, and there for they must act. Many of you have watched over us, while we slept safe and sound in our beds. Now it's our turn. Let us help you.

The meeting is over. Veterans are hugging, while some exit.

INT. RANCH CONFERENCE ROOM. DAY

Room is full.

Albert sits at his desk. Hands Debra and Chris sit across. Hold files with a flyer.

ALBERT JOHNSON

Get ready. This is the hardest time of the year for them, which means it will be the hardest time of the year for us, as well. Double up on tests, and keep a good eye on them. For every one who becomes disconnected, there is a potential for disaster. The V.A. Budget Committee will be arriving to oversee our activities which puts us under the light, so we need to be walking on water. That? it. Chris, I need to see you and Debra after this. The rest of you are free to leave. Don't forget. Happy holidays.

Everyone exits except Chris, and Debra.

ALBERT JOHNSON (CONT'D)

I know you are over worked but the other two have scheduled construction projects, which means you two will have your hands full. Check your e-mails.

(MORE)

ALBERT JOHNSON (CONT'D)  
 Good Luck, oh We added a little more to your budget, so you are not stretched thin for this event. I and my staff will be there to see it through.

CHRIS  
 I will have an outline of events prepared for you buy Friday.

DEBRA  
 We get to have a Christmas party.

ALBERT JOHNSON  
 Holiday party, we can not say that anymore.

DEBRA  
 That is not what our flyers is going to say.

Chris, and Debra smile, and exit the office.

INT. LOS ANGELES EXPRESS AIRPORT OFFICE. DAY

David stands, while a heavy African American, ANITTA, 54, tags a bag.

ANITTA  
 After it is tagged, then take the bags and lay them gently on the conveyer. Gently, some of our customers are very important people, like actors, like Denzal. He has not come through my station, but who knows. Everyone uses this Terminal, so look out, especially if you see Denzal. Got it.

DAVID  
 Yes, ma'am.

David takes the bag and puts the luggage on the conveyer.

INT. ROOM. NIGHT

David opens his locker and puts his new uniform in the locker. Smiles at the uniform.

EXT. BLACK.

Sound of a man running and breathing in panic.

TRISHA (V.O.)

David!

INT. DAVID'S ROOM. NIGHT

Bottle breaks from Tim's room.

David sits up fast. He sweats. He looks over. Bryan is asleep, then awakens to commotion. Commotion comes from Tim's room.

EXT. FOURTH FLOOR. NIGHT

Bryan and David step outside to see what is going on. Michael, and a security guard are headed to the room.

MICHAEL

Stay back. We will handle it.

Michael walks into the room.

Tim is sitting in a chair facing the wall. Tim has a pint of liquor in his hand.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Tim, it is Michael. What? going on buddy? You can? keep doing this.

TIM

Fuck! Leave it. Let it go!

Bottle drops out of his hand, leans over and falls off the chair. Michael and the security help him to his bed.

MICHAEL

Do not report this, okay. I will stay with him tonight, and keep an eye on him.

SECURITY GUARD

Okay. Call if you need me.

MICHAEL

Thanks for your help.

Michael sits in a chair beside Tim, while he sleeps. Everyone sleeps in their beds. Elderly veteran sleeps beside walker. Bryan is in the rest room. Bryan looks in the mirror.

INT. SALVATION. CAFETERIA. DAY

David, Debra, Michael help Veterans with decorations in the Cafeteria. Maria places drinks on a tray from the kitchen.

Tim is dances by the window. Decorations wrapped around him. Dancing like a nutcracker.

TIM

What do you think?

MICHAEL

Knock it off. Help me with this, Tim.

TIM

Let me show you how to do this. Have you found a lady friend yet?

MICHAEL

Here.

Michael hands two stickems to Tim.

TIM

It takes two to make it stick.

MIGUEL, 6, looks up at Maria. Maria wipes his face. Miguel turns and runs off. Maria walks beside David.

*"The Virgin With Angels," painted by William-Adolphe Bouguereau, 1900, is displayed on the wall in front.*

MARIA

Father Juan Crespi, a Franciscan priest arrived here in 1769. He was given this tiny chapel. Saint Mary of the Angels at the Little Portion". Nuestra Senora de los Angeles de la Porciuncula. I have been working at Salvation since Miguel's father left us five years ago. Chipping away a little piece at a time. Trying to secure a future for my little boy, and I. Most who go big, go home. I want a man who can understand that.

DAVID

I am not trying to rush anything.

MARIA

(Mumbles)

When are you going to ask me out?

DAVID  
This weekend.

MARIA  
Pick me up at three sharp, Friday.  
Do not be late.

MICHAEL  
Hey, help me hold this ladder  
before Stanley falls on his ass.

STANLEY  
Then hold it steady.

MICHAEL  
David, I intrust you understand  
what it is we do here. We break  
ourselves to catch the fallen as  
they cope with never ending  
conflict of trauma, as it distances  
its self from the war within their  
souls, no matter what. Got that,  
Troop.

DAVID  
Yes, sir.

MICHAEL  
Good. Hurt her and I will kill you.

DEBRA (O.S.)  
Don't forget. Christmas tree  
decorating party Saturday night.

Maria walks into the kitchen.

MARIA  
Ice cream, at the Pier.

David turns his attention to the ladder, then Michael. Life.

INT./EXT. 1152 GUN TRUCKS. CONVOY. MOSUL, IRAQ. DAY

Michael sits in the Truck Commander seat. Drive under Sante  
Fe bridge. Lead Vehicle.

MICHAEL (O.C.)  
Bridge is clear. Keep your spacing.

INT. GUN TRUCK II

Four troops, and their interpreter. Note: Radios VIC-7s headphones. Michael rides TC.

TC SGT RICHARDS

This will not take long. I have homework tonight. Who plays tomorrow morning?

SPC THOMAS

Philly and Dallas, Sergeant. I got Dallas.

RAQEEB TERP (O.C.)

You guys suck. Philly going to win. McNabb getting his fucking ring this year.

SPC THOMAS (TURRET GUNNER) (O.C.)

Whats Philly have Chicago aint, Raqeeb. Urlacher and the Chicago Defense.

RAQEEB TERP (O.C.)

To hell with Chicago. Shit, my kid like Chicago.

SPC THOMAS (O.C.)

Really? Good kid.

RAQEEB TERP

Yeah, that's why I beat him.

MICHAEL

Slow. Covet ahead.

THREE TWO (O.C.)

Do you want to check it, over?

MICHAEL

We'll just push over it.

INT. GUN TRUCK I

Gun truck clears covet. Gunner swivels turret to the right. A massive HME IED Explodes up. Truck three-two disappears. Dust falls.

Michael steps out and looks behind in shock. Dust covers the road.

MICHAEL RIVERA

Oh god.

DRIVER (O.C.)

Was that Three-two?

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MORALE WELFARE AND RECREATION TENT. NIGHT

MYSFACE PIC: Jenny with her new boyfriend. Michael puts his finger over the guys face. Slides down then turns closes Myspace.

SOLDIER (O.S.)

(Low tone)

Hey, get your mother on the phone.  
Katie, Get your mother on the  
phone. I don't care if she doesn't  
want to talk. Get her on the phone.

Michael begins to sense something wrong, as the soldiers voice begins to raise.

SOLDIER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Michelle, why. Why! I couldn't call  
you for three days. There was a  
blackout. It wasn't my fault. Who  
is that? Who is that? He with you?  
Oh, god, bitch. I don't care if you  
don't want to hear it. You don't  
want to hear it.

Michael slowly peaks his head around the corner.

Soldier sits at the booth with his loaded rifle leaned beside. Morale Welfare and Recreation worker walks in the PHONE ROOM to see the disturbance. Michael holds his finger up.

MICHAEL

(Whispers)

MP's.

Soldier in phone booth flips his rifle. Puts barrel in his mouth.

SOLDIER

Okay, listen to this.

MICHAEL

Hey! No. You don't want to do that.  
Don't do it. It's okay.

(MORE)

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Come on brother. It's okay. You  
don't want to do this. Not today.  
Not tonight.

Tears pour from the Soldiers face. Mouth over barrel.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

It's going to be okay. Don't do it.  
Not this way, not now. Give her to  
me. Come, brother.

Michael reaches out. Soldier slowly takes rifle from his  
mouth. Hands Michael rifle.

Michael slowly takes his rifle away and lays it away. MP's  
charges in, taking him to the ground. Flexy cuffs him.  
Michael sits down.

EXT. MOSUL. NIGHT

Troops patrol the Mosul streets. Soldier points to the night  
sky.

FADE TO:

INT. THE OFFICE. NIGHT

Michael stands at the counter and tries to get the LINUS  
display to turn on, then gives up.

Debra walks out of her office and closes the door.

DEBRA

Well, I am off. You have a good  
night.

MICHAEL

You need to get this thing fixed.

DEBRA

It is Forty two years old, what do  
you expect?

Looks up at the mistletoe on the door. Turns off light. Runs  
Venice beach strip. Runs fast. Faster. Gasses. Puts hands on  
knees. Looks at the Christmas decorations aligned down the  
strip. Turns around. Frustrated.

FADE TO:

INT. GYM. NIGHT

Michael sits on the bench. Looks around. Gym socially festive.

GYM GUY  
Need a spot?

MICHAEL  
What?

GYM GUY  
You need a spot?

MICHAEL  
No.

Michael lays on the bench and presses barbell.

EXT. SALVATION. DAY

Yard work starts on Pine tree. Christmas Manicure. Salvation light flickers and goes out. Mexican man walks out shrugs and walks back into Cafeteria.

David walks into the office, while rubbing his hear. Confused.

CHRIS  
Who cut your hair?

DAVID  
Bryan, why?

CHRIS  
He used to give me haircuts too,  
Look.

Chris points to the mirror. Tim comes walking in. Rubs head. David looks in the mirror. Horror.

TIM  
This don't feel right.

CHRIS  
There is a Barber around the  
corner. I highly recommend it.

Tim look in the office mirror.

TIM  
Oh shit. Let's go.

DAVID

Oh my. Oh! I can not go to work  
like this.

David runs out.

CHRIS

David, wait?

David walks back in.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

This came in for you.

Chris hands David a letter.

DAVID

Thank you.

Chris walks out of the office. Enters in Bryan's room.  
Bryan's Jumpmaster wings lie on a towel freshly shined. Hums,  
while walking into restroom. The Green Berets.

CHRIS

Do you want to go to lunch?

BRYAN

Sure.

CHRIS

I have just the place. You will  
like it.

EXT. DINER. DAY

David and Chris sit and wait for their order.

BRYAN

Did you try getting in contact with  
her recently? You know they have  
programs.

CHRIS

It's better that I don't know.

BRYAN

Why? She was your wife. I saw you  
two. I know Chris.

CHRIS

What if she is? I, I couldn't bare  
the thought. After the village  
fell.

(MORE)

CHRIS (CONT'D)

I was too afraid for the answer. I spent three years trying to find her. In my heart she's still alive. I have found comfort with it, Bryan.

BRYAN

Don't take that to your grave.

INT. BARBER SHOP. DAY

David gets his haircut. Tim is reading a magazine.

On the news he sees an update of the Marines at war. He tosses the magazine onto the table. Leans his head back.

INT. FLASHBACK. CHAPEL. SAIGON. NIGHT

Han turns the corner and walks in with a white French dress with Blue flowers.

Bryan taps Chris. Both turn in full dress Uniform. Green Berets dawned. Becomes disarmed with love, and slowly takes his beret off.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FLASHBACK. TANJERES BAR. NIGHT

Han dances with Chris on the dance floor. An explosion goes off from down the road. MP enters club.

MP

Is everyone okay? Stay put.

Chris sits down with Han on his lap. Knock at the door.

INT. SALVATION. DAY

Knock at the open door. African/American Staff Sergeant JONES, 29, stands at the entrance.

CHRIS

Yes?

STAFF SERGEANT JONES

Sir, Staff Sergeant Jones. I am the liaison from the greater Los Angeles Recruiting Command.

(MORE)

STAFF SERGEANT JONES (CONT'D)  
I am here to touch basis with you.  
The dinner on the 25th, sir.

CHRIS  
Oh yes. Come in, Sergeant.

Jones hands him a list, then plays with Linus display. Chris takes the roster to his desk.

STAFF SERGEANT JONES  
That is the roster of the personal who will be attending the dinner. They will all have a plus one. If you have any questions you can contact me at 813-555-8726 or My Commander at 813-555-7811.

CHRIS  
Let us put this in the file.

STAFF SERGEANT JONES  
We look forward to it. See you at the Christmas dinner.

CHRIS  
Holiday Diner, Sergeant.

Jones is frustrated and checks electrical cord, then taps Linus on the head.

STAFF SERGEANT JONES  
Roger, sir. Have a good day, sir.

CHRIS  
You do the same.

Jones walks out.

EXT. FLASHBACK. CAMP SUMMERAL. HERSHEY BYPASS. BAJI, IRAQ

David sits on his HUMMV 1114, at the refuel stop in Camp Summerall.

DAVID  
For the game.

David throws a Crush Rip-It in the trash can. Makes shot.

FULLMAN  
La-BRAHN....

DAVID  
 No dear child, I am a Spurs fan,  
 and we have the broom.

Driver SPECIALIST FULLMAN, 19, fills the 1114 HUMMV with gas from the refueler truck.

TRISHA (O.C.)  
 Panther 35, this is Whiskey Tango  
 35, you copy, over?

David drops off the hood and into the truck. Grabs the headphone from the S.I.N.G.A.R.S. Radio.

DAVID  
 Wagon Three-Five, this Panther two-  
 two. Roger, over.

TRISHA (O.C.)  
 I am coming in with eleven PAX and  
 four trucks for a refuel on our way  
 up route 1/Tampa to Q-west, on a  
 BSB resupply. Are you in the area,  
 over?

DAVID  
 Refuel depot. Roger that, over.

TRISHA  
 I'll see you there, out.

Convoy pulls up.

Tall beautiful blond female Staff Sergeant, TRISHA MILLER, 27, steps out of the vehicle. Guides her convoy to line up and refuel. Platoon begins to refuel. Trisha walks behind the HESCO barrier.

David follows. Trisha and David stand face to face to face.

TRISHA (CONT'D)  
 When you getting back to Speicher?  
 I've been thinking. When we return,  
 do you want to get a place outside  
 Fayetteville, and a baby?

DAVID  
 Are you?

Trisha kisses David.

TRISHA  
 When are you getting back to  
 Speicher?

DAVID

As soon as the city is cleared.  
Maybe a day or two.

LIEUTENANT BRADLEY (O.S.)

Let's go. Round up. Where is my  
Squad Leader?

TRISHA

Are you headed out?

DAVID

Yeah. Going out the northern gate,  
right on Tampa and then through the  
city.

TRISHA

Escort us out to the bridge?

DAVID

I guess we could do that.

David dawns his kit. Looks over.

Trisha adjust her VIC-7, then motions her convoy into their  
vehicles. Looks over to David. Winks. Enters Truck Commanders  
seat. Vehicles lineup and head towards the gate. They stop at  
the gate. The front vehicle shows the trip ticket.

TRISHA

Thirteen PAX, and whatever the  
Grunts have. You might want to stop  
and check his vehicle. I think he  
has contraband. Porn Mags. The ones  
you guys like.

Gate Guard laughs and waves them ahead.

GUN TRUCK 1158:

David convoy follows.

SPC CHRISTOPHER (O.C.)

You got porn Mags Sergeant?

DAVID

No.

TRISHA (O.C.)

Moving. Hit it Boys.

Gate lifts. Trisha vehicle out the gate.

All vehicles follow.

Brad Paisleys (We Danced) plays through the VIC?7's. David puts his hand on ear piece.

DAVID (O.C.)  
Am I hearing this?

African/All-American Gunner Sergeant JOHNSON, 24, slides in a dip then, begins to sing with the song.

TRISHA (O.C.)  
This remind you of anything, over?

Second verse: Convoy rides down the Iraqi Desert road.

SGT. JOHNSON  
Okay boys, bring'er home.

The convoy begins to sing for the two of them. Song fades.

TRISHA  
I need my answer, Staff Sergeant.

DAVID  
All the way, Staff Sergeant.

TRISHA (O.C.)  
All they way. See you back at the F.O.B.

DAVID (O.C.)  
Our turn is coming up. We part here. You guys coming back today, over?

TRISHA(O.C.)  
Yes. With luck, it will be just a turn and burn. Should be back late this evening. Take care Panther. God speed, over.

DAVID  
You do the same, over.

David taps the Blue force Tracker.

TRISHA (O.C.)  
Whiskey Tango, out. Pick it up. See you tomorrow.

They turn the corner.

DAVID (O.C.)  
When we hit the city, take a left,  
then.

An funnel explosion sends devastating hot copper projectiles through the left side of the gun truck and out of the right passenger side.

EXT. SALVATION. DAY

David cries on the roof. Golden California Sunset. Crumbled letter in hand. Yard work is halfway done with Christmas tree.

INT. VONS. DAY

Tim stands in line with a fifth of Jack. Looks around. Smiles.

TIM  
What you got for Christmas?

Stranger. Uncomfortable.

VONS STRANGER  
Oh I don't know. Hang with the kids. Maybe wash the car. My old lady sleeps most of the day.

TIM  
Take her out. Women love a surprise. Look at that.

He married her.

VONS STRANGER  
Tom got 'er.

Tim lays whisky on the counter. Rides forward.

CASHIER  
23.45, sir.

Tim swipes card. Declined. swipes card again.

VONS STRANGER  
Hurry, buddy.

CASHIER  
Do you have cash?

Tim looks back. Takes bottle and runs out. Cashier runs after him.

INT. MICHAEL'S OFFICE. SAME

Michaels sits in chair. Fiddles with his pencil. Gets frustrated and puts Tim's folder in his files.

INT. SALVATION MEETING ROOM. SAME

Progress meeting. Chris enters. Debra walks in and stands at the podium. Voices in the Audience.

CHRIS  
Listen up. Listen up.

DEBRA  
Stanley.

Debra points at Stanley.

CHRIS  
Is everyone here? Tim.

MICHAEL  
Tim's not here.

CHRIS  
Go see if Tim is in his room.

MICHAEL  
Roger that.

Michael walks out of the cafeteria.

CHRIS  
We will be hosting a Holiday Dinner on the 25th. I expect for all of you to attend. Now for some of you, you will have family in town, so bring them. The U.S. Army recruiting command of Los Angeles will be accompanying us. For some of them, they to, are taking time away from their families to attend these festivities.

DEBRA  
So be on your best behavior.

Chris stands on the podium.

CHRIS

We need volunteers. Not everyone  
volunteer at once. You guys.

Hands begin to raise.

DEBRA

That is better. After the meeting,  
just come up here and sign your  
name on the sheets of paper. Each  
sheet represents a task and  
preparation required for our dinner  
party.

Debra holds up the sheets, and then sets them on the table.

DEBRA (CONT'D)

That is all. Thank You. God bless  
you all.

Group cheers.

MICHAEL

Tims in his room. He slept in.

Michaels give Michael a scorned look. Michael shrugs him off.

INT./EXT. SALVATION. OFFICE. NIGHT

Michael walks in.

MICHAEL

Well, Im off boss. I need some  
rest.

CHRIS

No Gym?

MICHAEL

Oh, well of course, but after I get  
some rest. I have a double. BJJ at  
four, and then off to the gym.

CHRIS

Michael, this weekend I am going to  
need you. It is the holidays. So  
get ready for long weekends. They  
are going to need us.

MICHAEL

Yes, I understand. See you later.

CHRIS  
Bright and early tomorrow. Meeting  
at eight, sharp.

MICHAEL  
Sharp! Nobodys sharper.

Debra walks in and takes off her medical gloves.

DEBRA  
I told them to fill their damn cups  
halfway up. Now I have piss all  
over my hands. Halfway! Barbarians.

CHRIS  
That? why I have you do it.

David enters the restroom, while Bryan with tags around his  
neck pours pain pills into his hand.

DAVID  
That is a little too much.

Bryan turns with a unrecognizable look.

BRYAN  
If I fucking wanted your opinion,  
then I will ask it. Go fuck  
yourself, kid.

Debra stands at the door with urine bottles in a box.

DEBRA  
Yeah. Oh, by the way. The Army  
Senior Liaison called, he needs for  
you to call him.

Chris looks for the card. Calls the number.

CAPTAIN TAYLOR (O.C.)  
US Army Recruiting Command office.  
May I help you sir, Or ma'am?

CHRIS  
This is the Director at The  
Veterans home of salvation. You  
called?

David walks into the office, and fills a cup of water and  
sits down in a chair. Chris looks over with concern.

CAPTAIN TAYLOR (O.C.)  
Yes sir. I am just following up on  
the Christmas dinner event.

CHRIS  
 Holiday Diner.

CAPTAIN TAYLOR (O.C.)  
 I wanted to touch basis with you. I know Staff Sergeant Jones had spoken with you about it?

CHRIS  
 We are in preparations right now. Have your guys begin showing around Seven. Dinner will be served at Seven-thirty.

CAPTAIN TAYLOR (O.C.)  
 Sounds good, sir. My troops at the station, and I look forward to attending.

CHRIS  
 We are looking forward to having you. Have a good day, Sergeant Major.

CAPTAIN TAYLOR (O.C.)  
 You too. Take care, sir.

CHRIS  
 Where is he?

DAVID  
 Restroom.

Chris stands and walks out of the office.

INT. SALVATION. NIGHT

Bryan takes out the pill bottle and looks into the mirror. Opens the pill bottle. Seven pills drop into his hand. Attempts to put pills into his mouth. Stalls.

CHRIS (O.S.)  
 Remember that last run at jump school. Hell, they had been running us for days. That last two miles I wanted to quit so bad. Drop out. You grabbed me. What did you say?

Bryan stands at the restroom doorway with flashlight and Clipboard in hand.

BRYAN  
 They are not taking your tags.

CHRIS

They are not taking your tags. You got me through it. I would have never made it. From then on out we made a promise to each other. Never quit. Never quit. I am not taking your tags.

Chris walks out.

Bryan looks at the mirror, then slides the pills back into the bottle.

Chris walks up to Tim's room. The door is open, but Tim is gone. Chris shakes his head and closes the door.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD. TENT. NIGHT

Feet sit outside the tent.

CHARLIE JONES (O.S.)

You want to hit this cap?

TIM (O.S.)

Give it to me, Roger.

Tim? leg slides down and extends.

ROGER (O.S.)

Wow, got you, got you now.

Relaxes leg.

INT. SALVATION. DAY

Empty bed. Tim? bed.

DEBRA (O.S.)

Female on the floor!

Door opens. Sends light to the empty bed.

FADE TO:

INT. CAFETERIA. DAY.

Debra puts up a Christmas tree decoration. Chris walks in.

CHRIS

Tim is gone.

DEBRA  
 (Worried)  
 He will be back. God bless his  
 soul. He? struggling.

CHRIS  
 I think I need to have a talk with  
 him.

DEBRA  
 Hey, come here. Push it.

Debra points to the button on the Linus display.

CHRIS  
 It isn't going to piss on me, is it?  
 Where did get this?

DEBRA  
 My husband. Try it.

CHRIS  
 Hey, do you have that Red Cross  
 pamphlet?

DEBRA  
 It is in my desk, get it yourself.

Chris taps the Linus display. Does not work.

CHRIS  
 Oh well, where did you put it?

Walks into back office, while Debra smiles at Linus.

EXT./INT. TENT. HOLLYWOOD.

Tim thrusts into the tent.

TIM (O.S.)  
 You fucking did. You fucking killed  
 me. You I can not go back.

Tim grabs the collar of Charlie Jones.

TIM (CONT'D)  
 I can never go back.

Homeless grab Tim out of the tent. Tim is thrown to the  
 ground.

HOMELESS  
 Get the fuck out of here, man.

CHARLIE JONES (O.S.)  
 You knew, mother fucker. You knew.  
 Fuck you.

Tim stands and stumbles off.

INT. MICHAEL? OFFICE. DAY

Michael walks into his office. Chris is seated across the desk.

MICHAELS  
 I am pulling file. He is out.

Takes Tim? file from the cabinet. Sits on his desk.

CHRIS  
 Give him some time.

MICHAELS  
 He is a danger to himself and others. I have to turn him loose. I will send this up to the V.A. With my professional opinion that he should be no longer eligible fore this care. He? gone, Chris.

Attempts open folder. Puts his hand over the folder.

CHRIS  
 Give him time trust me.

Michaels settles.

INT. VA HOSPITAL. DOCTOR? OFFICE. DAY

Bryan gets checkup. Sits in a gown. The doctor comes in.

DOCTOR  
 Well, Mr. Jackson. There is some improvement, but unfortunately right now, were just buying time. I have recommended a series of Chemotherapy treatments, and they should be approved. With a little luck we can get ahead of it, and buy some time. Maybe even win. What do you say?

BRYAN  
 Yeah, but after the holidays. I don?

(MORE)

BRYAN (CONT'D)  
 want to go through the holidays  
 feeling like shit, you know.

DOCTOR  
 Sounds fair enough. Well that? it.  
 You can get dressed, and you are  
 free to leave.

BRYAN  
 Thanks, Doc.

DOCTOR  
 No Bryan, Thank you. Thank you.

Both deep smile.

INT. LOS ANGELES EXPRESS AIRPORT. DAY

David sets the luggage on the Conveyer belt.

ANITTA (O.S.)  
 Destination? Oh, my goodness.

ACTOR (O.S.)  
 New York.

Anitta takes the passport and tickets.

ANITTA  
 New York.

Anitta pulls tags and raps them around luggage.

ANITTA (CONT'D)  
 Enjoy?

ACTOR  
 You have a good day, Anitta.

Actor smiles and walks away.

DAVID  
 Do you know who that was?

David smiles and shrugs against Anitta. Anitta lays her head  
 on David? shoulder.

EXT. PAWN SHOP. NIGHT

Tim walks down Hollywood Blvd. Stops. Neon light flickers.  
 Enters.

EXT. HOUSING FACILITY. NIGHT

Decorations around the facility. Rooms, hallways. Maria smiles and turns off the lights. David? door is closed. Maria locks the Cafeteria door.

EXT. DREAM SEQUENCE. DAY

Gets out of his 1114 HUMMV and runs to Trisha? 1114 HUMMV.

TRISHA (O.S.)

David!

He goes to the vehicle and tries to open it. It is locked.

Driver brings an extinguisher. They climb up to the turret where the Gunner is lying dead. They pull the Gunner clear, then try to pull her out.

David pulls his hand out, and squeals, then steps down to the Commander? door, and turns the handle, as hard as he can. The door opens and Trisha turns to him with frightened eyes, as she bleed from her abdomen.

TRISHA (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I am hurt, baby.

Davis cuts the seat belt, and cradle carries her out of the truck, and back fifty meters.

Trisha begins to cry, then fades, and dies as David drops to his knees with her in his arms.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SANTA MONICA PIER. DAY

David and Maria are at the Santa Monica Pier eating ice cream. Maria turns David to her.

MARIA

What are you holding on to?

DAVID

I don? know?

MARIA

Well, when you are ready, let me know.

Maria struts off the pier and to the beach.

David hesitates, then tosses his ice cream into the trash can, and follows. Chases behind. Maria runs to scatter the birds. David stops. Sunset to the right catches his eye. The wind is blowing in his face. He begins to break down, then collapses to the sand.

She turns around. David sits in tears.

Maria walks back.

David begins to feel release, yet he cries. Maria sits beside him and holds him. He interlocks his burnt hand with her hand.

Maria tilts her head onto his shoulder. Both stair out on to the Santa Monica sunset.

**END OF ACT II**

ACT III

INT. SAIGON APARTMENT. CHRISTMAS NIGHT. NINETEEN SEVENTY-FOUR. NIGHT

Han wears her Santa hat, while she rubs Chris's bare chest in bed.

HAN

I will bring my cousin to Saigon.  
You just get back here, and I will  
be ready.

CHRIS

I will get us out of here. I  
promise, baby.

Chris stares at the stocking on the wall.

INT. SALVATION. DAY

Chris dials the phone. Phone rings. Chris is overcome with guilty panic, then hangs up the phone. Puts the pamphlet into the desk drawer.

INT. HAWTHORNE HOUSE. DAY

David rolls paint down the wall. Miguel drops the paint bucket down beside David.

DAVID

Gracias, Miguel. Hand me the ruler.

Maria walks around the corner. Smiles.

MARIA

Clean up. We are going to be late.

INT. THE CAR. PARKING LOT. PELICAN BEY STATE PRISON. NIGHT

Katrina gets out of the car, then turns to Albert.

ALBERT

I am staying.

KATRINA

Are you going to be a father?

Albert does not respond.

KATRINA (CONT'D)

He is your son for Christ sakes.

ALBERT

He is a criminal. He killed a man.

KATRINA

Every time I go to see him, he asks about you. He needs you, Albert. He needs his father. Can you give that to him? Okay, then you live with it.

Katrina gets out of the vehicle and walks off to the Prison.

Albert tries to open the door, yet pounds his hand on the dash, then settles.

INT. SALVATION. NIGHT

Debra smiles as she puts her hand on the light switch. Christmas lights are displayed around cafeteria. Off.

MIGUEL (O.S.)

I want to do it.

Debra frowns, then looks over to David and Maria, who stand confidently in love.

DEBRA

Okay. Here, little man.

Miguel climbs the ladder, plugs the light in. Cafeteria lights up. Every one cheers. Cheering stops. All turn around. Tim stands out in the rain with a sports bag in his hand, drunk and wet.

MICHAEL

I will take care of him.

Everyone continues festivities.

EXT./INT. TIM? ROOM. NIGHT

Michael, and Tim arrive at Tims room.

MICHAEL

Where have you been?

TIM

Hey, I have been thinking.

MICHAEL

Here.

Michael throws Tim a towel.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Hurry, we don't want to miss the ceremony and egg nog.

TIM

Hey Mike, thanks.

Stands outside, then turns to Tim.

MICHAEL

For what?

Tim gives him a hug, then sits on his bed.

TIM

The angels, they came to me, crying. I had nothing to give. The mother, the son. It was all real. I am just going to go lay down. Is it okay if I lay down?

MICHAEL

You get some rest, buddy.

TIM

(Disappointed)  
Yeah. I am tired.

Tim slowly lies his head on the pillow. Michael goes back to the cafeteria.

The group sings the first Noel together. Michael walks in and shrugs to Chris.

Decorations are hung. Debra looks back at the cafeteria. She gives a warm smile.

Lights turn off.

EXT./INT. VETERANS HOUSING OFFICE. NIGHT

Michael and Chris are in the office. Michael stands from his desk.

MICHAEL

You stay here and hold down the fort. I am going to do my rounds.  
(MORE)

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
 You need anything from the vending  
 machine?

CHRIS  
 No.

Light flickers on the stairwell, as Michael scurries down the stairs.

A gun shot echoes through the facility.

Chris runs out of the office. Michael runs down the stairwell. Chris stands at the stairwell.

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
 It came from the fourth floor.

The make eye contact. Both rush to the fourth floor. Lights turn on. People begin to step out of their rooms. Michael rushes in the doorway. Walks out, leans against the wall, then slides down. With his hands over his head. sadness, and Shock.

Chris reluctantly walks in the room. Tim lies on his chair with a gunshot wound to his head. Chris backs up and looks to the pistol on the floor. He sits on the couch. Kicks the pistol away. Tears fall from emotional pain and failure.

INT. THE CAR. PARKING LOT. PELICAN BEY STATE PRISON. NIGHT

Albert sleeps in car. Phone rings. Answers. Bad news.

ALBERT  
 I will be there soon. I'm sorry,  
 Chris.

Hangs up phone. Looks to the prison. Frustrated.

EXT./INT. VETERANS HOUSING OFFICE. NIGHT

Red and blue lights twist around Salvation. Ambulance is parked under the sign. People stand around, as paramedics dolly a covered gurney to the ambulance from entrance.

PAN RIGHT:

Spot light shines down on Parable, who stands with *King James Bible* in hand at the Corner of Salvation. Pleas out to the onlookers.

## PARABLE

We have seen the details in his nature and have awoken to find no fault in his good, but in this hour one must fall into the truth of heartache bound by law carried by faith, yet upon this dedicated national all the free must bring him home, so help us all.

Police officer walks out of the office.

Michael sits alone in the office, begins to cry, then knocks Linus of the counter. Debra restrains him as he cries.

## DEBRA

I have you baby. I got you.

Chris sits back in his chair. Salvation flickers. Goes out.

Bryan leans against the wall outside.

INT. ALBERT? OFFICE. DAY

Albert sits on the phone.

## ALBERT

My name is Albert Jefferson of the Veteran? Administration. I have a Deceased male, and I am trying to Get a hold his of his next of Kin. Tim Terry, Yes. Well if you find something, or someone, please give a call, thank you.

Albert hangs up the phone.

## ALBERT (CONT?) (CONT'D)

Nobody.

Michaels sits across from Albert.

## MICHAELS

Nobody?

## ALBERT

No next of kin.

Secretary walks in.

## SECRETARY

There here.

Three individuals from the Veteran's Administration budget committee walk in.

ALBERT

Come in.

Albert takes Tim's folder and puts in the drawer.

EXT./INT. OFFICE. DAY

Debra approaches the office surprised. Turns to knob and the door is locked. Takes key and unlocks the door.

Office is empty.

DEBRA

Oh, Chris.

Dials cell phone.

INT. ALBERTS OFFICE. SAME

Albert picks up the phone and dials.

INT. CHRIS APARTMENT. SAME

Chris sits in dress alone. Phone vibrates on the desk.

FADE TO:

EXT. HILL. CEMETERY. DAY

Flags on graves wave in the lonely wind. World War I. World War II. Korean War. Vietnam War. Gulf War.

Michael, and the pallbearers bring Tim's casket up the hill to his grave. Flag draped over the casket. Preacher reads *King James Bible* at the head of the hole.

PREACHER JOHN

Let your light so shine before men,  
that they may see your good works,  
and glorify your Father which is in  
heaven. Think not that I am come to  
destroy the law, or the prophets: I  
am not come to destroy, but to  
fulfill.

Casket draped with a few flowers lower in the hole. The crowd returns to their cars. Chris breaks from behind the tree.

Evasive back to his car. Debra sees Chris and approaches aggressively. Bryan sees Chris, and slides out tactfully. Debra closes in. Bryan cuts off Chris?retreat. Waves Debra off. Debra walks away.

BRYAN  
It is like that.

CHRIS  
Like what?

BRYAN  
Your just going to run away again.

CHRIS  
I didnt you run away! I am not running.

BRYAN  
This has nothing to do with him, or them.

CHRIS  
What do you know? Why do you carry them around your neck, those tags. The wings? What are you holding on to?

BRYAN  
There was a time when it meant something. I meant something. That is how I would like to be remembered. You are going to wait, wait for what!? Her?

CHRIS  
I can not carry them anymore.

BRYAN  
It? not them you cannot carry. You! It is you, Chris!

CHRIS  
They come to me, not You. They bring their problems, and expect me to fix them. I can?! For over thirty years they have been coming to me with problems I cannot fix.

BRYAN  
You have spent a lifetime carrying a burden, not hem. You cannot carry yourself. Let her go. She is dead!

CHRIS  
No.....!

Loses control of his emotion. Tremble.

BRYAN  
If she were still on this earth,  
she would want for you to let it go  
and carry on. Let it go, Or not.

Bryan walks away.

EXT. CHRIS APARTMENT. NIGHT

Chris carries a bag of groceries to his apartment. Debra stands by his door, and holds his Resignation. David unlocks his door and enters with door open. Debra enters.

CHRIS  
It? time.

DEBRA  
Heavens no. Do not even think about  
it.

CHRIS  
Close the damn door.

DEBRA  
Don? change the subject. You?e  
going to leave us? You?e just going  
to run away. I have been with the  
Veteran? Administration for over 24  
years, Chris. No one does it like  
you, better than you. It? hard, I  
know. God, I feel it every day I  
walk through that door. These men,  
and women go to war and they ask  
for nothing and give everything.

CHRIS  
Don?. I am Tired. It has become too  
personal. Every time we lose one of  
them, I lose a piece of me. I don?  
have much left. I? going to take  
what I have left, and carry on. I  
want to get back to Georgia. It?  
time for me to go.

DEBRA  
Don? leave us. Not now!

She gets up and walks out.

CHRIS

Then when? When I am empty. When there is someone who steps in and tries to pick the pieces I left behind, because I am too broken to pick them up myself. You know I can not let that happen.

DEBRA

They are not your problem children you can no longer solve. They served just as you did.

CHRIS

Who pulls them in when the world throws them away? Who pulls them together, and when they quit, who buries them. For what?!

DEBRA

Some do not make it home, and some do not make it when they get home, and god I pray one day they find an answer, but until then we have to be there for them, all of us.

Chris looks away.

DEBRA (CONT'D)

You want to quit. Go ahead, leave us. You picked a helluva time. Merry Fucking Christmas.

Debra tosses the paper at Chris, and walks out.

INT. EXT./INT. CAR. SALVATION PARKING LOT. DAY

Debra pulls into her parking spot. Text phone, sends then throws the phone on the dashboard. Breaks down crying.

INT. ALBERT'S OFFICE. DAY

Albert stands and gives a projected future of all three housing facilities.

ALBERT

Next years outlook must consider the growth of Veterans which has grown considerably during the past seven years.

Budget analyst raises his hand.

BUDGET ANALYST

I understand your concern. We have come to a very hard decision.

ALBERT

I recommend we expand the number of beds in each room to accommodate the future.

BUDGET ANALYST

We are going to shut her down.

MICHAELS

Look, those men and women need serious treatment, daily. You close down Salvation half will not get the treatment they need.

BUDGET ANALYST

You have to except the fact that there are veterans that come home from war who may fall out of our society?

MICHAELS

They do not just fall out, they die! I hope your budget committee can analyze that.

Michaels walks out of the meeting room.

ALBERT

No, but there is a risk and we need to prepare for it. I understand your concern but the reconstruction on two facilities right puts a strain on our budget.

BUDGET ANALYST

Mr. Jefferson, we have gone over the analysis and it in the Veteran? Administration's best interest.

ALBERT

I can assure you that we can make our budget requirements.

BUDGET ANALYST

We are shutting it down. After the New Year we will slowly down size Salvation and by the start of the Summer quarter.

ALBERT

Where will they go?

BUDGET ANALYST

It is up to them. Maybe the other two can accommodate. The suicide incident had no bearing on our decision. We should have told you earlier. You will receive our full report by Monday. We have invested too much of our already thin budget on the other two. I am sorry, Mr. Jefferson, but we have to shut her down.

Albert stands in shock. Text from Debra.

EXT. SALVATION LAWN. DAY

Yard workers finishes tree work. Men pack up tools and put them in the back of the truck, then stand back and look at the Christmas tree. Proud. Salvation light flickers, then goes out. Evasive. Men get in truck. Mexican man walks out, then shrugs. Goes back to the Cafeteria. Truck beeps horn and drives off.

Sun sets on the west.

INT. OFFICE SALVATION. NIGHT

Michael sits with glue and pieces the Linus display together, then turns and walks to the desk and sits. Looks around. Grabs his bag and leaves.

EXT. JEFFERSON? FRONT PORCH. NIGHT

Albert sits on the front porch. Christmas lights on.

INT. GYM. NIGHT

Michael walks out to the counter.

MICHAEL

Protein and....This.

Grabs a plastic cup, then hands the receptionist three twenties.

BETHANY (O.S.)

What are you doing tonight?

Michael turns surprised.

BETHANY (CONT'D)  
Would you like to have dinner?

MICHAEL  
Yeah..I would, but I have an  
engagement, work.

Bethany smiles. Trainer walks by.

TRAINER  
See you Monday, Beth.

Bethany evades trainer and leans against the counter.

MICHAEL  
Would you like to come?

BETHANY  
Yes.

MICHAEL  
Come and see.

Hands Beth his card and leaves. Military proud.

EXT./INT. JEFFERSON HOME. DAY

Katrina walks to the door to turn off the Christmas lights,  
only to see Albert sitting on the front porch.

Albert with his hands folded under his chin.

KATRINA (O.S.)  
He has always been a handful.....

Sits down beside him.

KATRINA (CONT'D)  
Remember when he ran away. Slipped  
right out the back door. I looked  
all over before I called you. He  
wasn't about two. I had the whole  
neighborhood out looking for him. I  
was so afraid, baby. Hey, we did  
your best, baby. Go, do your best.

Al goes to the car.

KATRINA (CONT'D)  
I will be waiting.

Albert smiles and drives off.

EXT./INT. CHRIS HOME. DAY

Morning sun rises and breaks over the Mountains. Chris' door is slightly open. Albert walks to the door and knocks. Chris comes to the door.

CHRIS  
Come, come in, Al.

Albert walks in to see Chris things packed and standing at the door. Chris sits down.

ALBERT  
I have read the letter. I know this hard for you. I just need for you to cover down until I resolve a family issue. I need your help more than ever.

CHRIS  
Sorry Al, Debra will take over.

ALBERT  
I know this is inconvenient, but I need you to cover down. You can not leave us, not now.

CHRIS  
(Interrupts)  
I have given the Administration everything, and all that is left will be on that plane tonight.

ALBERT  
Debra will handle the budget Committee. I need you. Please, Chris.

Chris looks at the flight itinerary, then to Albert.

INT. SALVATION. DAY

Bryan looks in the mirror. Opens a chemotherapy pamphlet. David packs his clothes in the room.

DAVID  
Thank you.

BRYAN  
Hey kid, God bless you.

David smiles. Yes. David walks out with his suitcase, stops, and gazes out at the sunset.

EXT./INT. OFFICE. DAY

David knocks at the office door. Office empty. David slowly exits.

CHRIS (O.S.)  
Come in. So, your leaving us.

Chris walks around the corner.

DAVID  
Yeah, we got a place in Hawthorne. I would like for you to know, that when I first walked in this door. I had nothing. You guys may not know how important you are, but don't stop doing it. Don't give up. Thank you.

CHRIS  
Take Care of yourself, David.

DAVID  
Thank you, sir.

David exits. Chris sits back and looks to a blank sheet of paper. Debra enters with the Budget committee.

DEBRA  
Is everyone ready. Big night.

Debra grabs her clip board and exits.

DEBRA (CONT'D)  
Ladies and gentlemen, please follow.

BUDGET ANALYST  
Gentlemen, We would like to extend our sympathies upon your loss last week. Look, I am a former Marine and I know what you go through. No matter what happens to this facility just know you did your best. No one could have done it better. Thank you and Merry Christmas.

Debra walks in slowly with a modest smile, then leads the budget committee out the office. Bumps into Michaels he enters.

Chris turns of the television. Attempts to sit and write a letter. Michaels sits on his desk.

MICHAELS

I am going to miss this place. This was their home, our home. A place they could come to and depend on. I wondered what it was like when the three shepherds journeyed to Bethlehem. Did they really know what they where going to find?

FADE TO:

EXT. VIETNAM. NINETEEN SIXTY-SEVEN. NIGHT

G.I. Stops. Looks up.

MICHAELS (V.O.)

What did they see in him?

PAN UP:

Star in the sky.

EXT. IRAQ. NIGHT

Patrol stops. One Marine points to the star in sky.

MICHAELS (V.O.)

Would this child live up to expectations.

EXT. AFGHANISTAN. NIGHT

Squad sit on the mountain side.

MICHAELS (V.O.)

Could one person make a difference?  
Every night I lay my children to bed, I think....

PAN UP:

Star in the sky.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. OFFICE. SAME

Michaels walks to the door. Turns.

MICHAELS

Yes, I say, yes. You ready?  
You coming?

CHRIS

Just give me a second. I want to  
say goodbye.

Michaels leaves.

INT. JEFFERSON HOME. BEDROOM. NIGHT

Albert puts on his tie, yet begins to struggle.

ALBERT

(Deathly afraid)  
I can't get this right.

Katrina turns Albert around, and ties his tie for him with  
luring confidence.

KATRINA

As I was saying before. I was so  
afraid, baby.

KATRINA (CONT'D)

I called you I stood out on that  
porch all day.

FADE TO:

EXT. FLASHBACK. HOME. DAY

KATRINA, 24, stands on the porch.

LEWIS, 2, plays in a mud puddle in the middle of the road,  
turns, then looks up with guilt. Young commander Albert  
Jefferson in Navel dress stands center.

KATRINA

I could hear the neighborhood yell  
for our baby boy all day, then you  
came down the street. My boys.

Alberts walks with a proud smile a muddy Lewis on his  
shoulders down the road.

DISSOLVE TO

INT. JEFFERSON HOME. BEDROOM. NIGHT

Albert stands with regretful anxiety. Breaks down and cries.

KATRINA

Look at me. Look at me.

Katrina gazes in Alberts watery eyes.

KATRINA (CONT'D)

Lets bring our boy home.

INT. SALVATION. NIGHT

PARABLE (O.S.)

Divinity and Closure. Two sworn  
enemies upon an unfinished life god  
has so granted. May they come  
together in peace this holy night  
and bring comfort to the light that  
shines above.

Abrupt window shuts from Above. Parable startled and humored  
by the audience. Grabs his things and settles for a good  
seat. Chris settles, and takes a heartfelt breath of hope.  
Writes the letter: with a *Montage of Memory*.

CHRIS (V.O.)

Han,

I am writing a letter that my  
heart must deliver a path forward  
without the answer I could never  
brave. I feel you, till this day, I  
feel our love. For every side, loss  
or victory, I knew in my heart that  
you and I were right. Right to find  
each other in war. Our victory was  
love, but I have to carry on, baby,  
and honor it. So I will in good  
memory. Faith and love always,  
Chris.

INT. SALVATION. NIGHT

Chris holds letter. Folds letter, and takes a deep breath of  
release. Cancels his plane flight. Turns off Computer. Walks  
to the light switch, turns to LINUS.

CHRIS

Hold it down little buddy, Merry  
Christmas.

Turns off the office lights. Exits. Locks door.

INT. ORANGE COUNTY JAIL INFIRMARY. NIGHT

LEWIS THOMAS JEFFERSON, 35, lies tired and frail. Hand slides up and grabs his hand.

Lewis and gasps then opens his tired eyes. Albert and Katrina stand beside Lewis, as his struggle fades to a smile and a tear. Lewis squeezes his father's hand for life forgiveness.

INT./EXT. SALVATION. NIGHT

Debra flips the light switch.

DEBRA (O.S.)  
All hands on deck.

Lights in the Cafeteria light up, as VIRGIN OF THE ANGELS stands front and center. Salvation sign flickers, struggles, then burns bright.

Stanley opens the Cafeteria door, as Michael approaches.

MICHAEL  
Keep the door open, Stanley,  
because tonight we are going to  
bring'm in.

Stanley looks over Michael's shoulder with heavenly glory.

STANLEY  
Yes, sir.

Army recruiting Command bus pulls up. Staff Sergeant Jones steps out and stands in a crisp Army Combat Uniform in front of the Salvation Center cafeteria. Soldiers follow out the bus, and line in formation front of the Salvation sign.

INT/EXT. OFFICE. SAME

Main Office is dark, quiet, and empty.

LINUS (V.O.)  
Lights, please.

The star on the bare tree lights up in the office.

Light shines on the letter in the office. Hand, half open.

LINUS (V.O.)

And there were in the same country  
shepherds. Abiding in the field,  
keeping watch over their flock by  
night.

Linus stands front and center with wooby.

LINUS (V.O.)

And, lo, the angel of the Lord came  
upon them, and the glory of the  
Lord shone round about them: and  
they were so afraid.

Mini Van (TMP) pulls up with a Los Angeles Army recruiting  
sticker. United States Army issued Desert tan boots step out  
of Van, and walk over to the front of the formation.

LINUS (V.O.)

And the angel said unto them, Fear  
not: for, behold, I bring you good  
tidings of great joy, which shall  
be to all people. For unto you is  
born this day in the city of David  
a Saviour, which is Christ the  
Lord.

Jones salutes the officer in front of him.

LINUS (V.O.)

And this shall be a sign unto you;  
Ye shall find the babe wrapped in  
swaddling clothes, lying in a  
manger. And suddenly there was with  
the angel a multitude of the  
heavenly host praising God, and  
saying....

Soldiers stand in formation. Tree angels shines.

LINUS (V.O.)

Glory to God in the highest, and on  
earth peace, good will toward men.

Neon Salvation sign flickers, then roars bright. CAPTAIN  
(OBVIOUS) TAYLOR, 38, about faces in front the formation.

CAPTAIN TAYLOR

Fall in.

Group goes to attention.

CAPTAIN TAYLOR (CONT'D)

Left face.

Group turns to their left.

CAPTAIN TAYLOR (CONT'D)  
File from the right, column right,  
march.

Soldiers file from the right into the cafeteria. People begin to enter the Cafeteria.

DEBRA  
Okay, everyone listen up. Our  
guests are here. Be on your best  
behavior. Here we go.

Debra smiles for salvation. Michael walks in the side entrance with his new date, Bethany.

DEBRA (CONT'D)  
Are you going to introduce us?

MICHAEL  
Ladies and gentlemen, this is  
Bethany. Bethany this is Debbie,  
her husband Ronnie.

BETHANY  
It is an honor to meet you.

Bethany lies here head on Michael's shoulder. Bryan struggles to get up with his cane, yet Chris leans his hand.

CHRIS  
Look. I am sorry. I'll work on it.

BRYAN  
Let us start Chemotherapy in two  
weeks. The doctor tells me it may  
give me a chance. Anyway I'm going  
to need all the help I can get.

CHRIS  
I am in. I will be there for you. I  
will not leave you behind. We are  
in this together. Those tags stay.

Michael stands with Bethany's head on his shoulder.

MICHAEL  
All the way.

Captain Taylor walks in. Bryan walks up with young Taylor.

Michael gently breaks from Bethany.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

I have to get to work. You okay?

BETHANY

Yes. Hey, thank you.

Michael smiles, and heads to the kitchen. Soldiers, and Veterans introduce themselves. Chris Senior heads into the kitchen.

Chris Junior comes up to Bryan to shake his hand.

BRYAN

Bryan Jackson nice to meet you.

CAPTAIN TAYLOR

Captain Major Chris Taylor, Los Angeles Recruiting Command. Call me Chris.

Chris walks in to the table beside Bryan, and Captain Taylor with a tray of Christmas Deviled Eggs and lays them down on the table.

CHRIS

(Unaware)

Try these, I got the recipe in Seventy Four.

Chris Taylor stand side by side. Chris Senior admires the eggs.

Bryan and wobbles. Taylor II turns and lends Bryan a hand. Bryan whispers and points Chris Junior to Chris.

BRYAN

I need to sit down.

Captain Taylor turns around, then turns to Chris.

Chris unwraps deviled eggs.

CHRIS

This should be good.

Chris walks into the kitchen.

CHRIS TAYLOR (O.S.)

Sargaent Jones, cover down for me. I will be right back, sir. I will be right back.

MICHAELS

Do you need an ambulance.

Michaels and Staff surround Bryan. Waves them away.

BRYAN  
Go away. Shooh.

Group walks away. Bryan laughs and stomps for joy.

Festivities carry on.

Debra walks in from the kitchen. Debra puts her hands in the air. Snaps fingers.

DEBRA  
Okay, everyone, listen up. Filter  
outside and upstairs. I have a  
special something for you.

All get out of their seats and follow. Debra runs up the stairs. The choir begin to sing. WALTER, 69, gets to the top of the stairs and pauses with his mouth open.

Debra puts her arm around Walter as the group walks up amazed and passed them. Choir of children are outside prepared for Christmas carols. Everyone gathers together on the top deck. Bethany and Michael arrive up the stairs.

BETHANY  
Oh my.

Choir begins "Oh holy night". Taylor, pulls up, and gets out of the vehicle.

CHRIS  
Hurry, Momma.

HAN (O.S.)  
I'm coming, I am Coming.

Chris grabs a hand and leads it into the party. Everyone faces the Choir, as the Choir performs. Debra puts here hand on Chris' shoulder.

CAPTAIN TAYLOR (O.S.)  
Mr. Taylor, Mr. Christopher Taylor.  
Staff Sergeant Taylor!

Small Vietnamese hand goes up to pause him.

HAN (O.S.)  
Chris?

Chris turns around. HAN, 54, stands beside Captain Taylor and Bryan. Debra braces Chris.

HAN (CONT'D)  
 Chris, this is your son,  
 Christopher. Christopher, your  
 father.

CAPTAIN TAYLOR  
 Sir.

CHRIS  
 They said. I was so afraid.

HAN  
 We both were.

Chris and Han embrace.

EXT./INT. SALVATION. SAME

Michaels sits out side with the budget analyst. They smoke a  
 cigarette.

BUDGET ANALYST  
 Did that just happen?

MICHAELS  
 Merry Christmas.

Michaels pats Budget analyst on the shoulder. Smiles and  
 walks inside. Budget analyst shrugs, tosses files in the air.

BUDGET ANALYST  
 Merry Christmas.

Walks inside.

BRET (O.S.)  
 (Tender)  
 Merry Christmas.

Analyst holds the door for a stranger in the cafeteria. Both  
 enter.

The choir continues.

On the big screen in the Cafeteria. News on the Military,  
 holidays, deployments.

Speech from PRESIDENT.

Han sits next to Chris, who sits next Bryan.

She puts her hand over his. They look at each other. She puts  
 her head on his shoulder.

The group separates, while Bryan sits in a chair next to Chris' left side, and Han to the left.

Bryan smiles' while Chris turns to Bryan.

Bryan, Chris, and Han hold hands.

Captain Taylor stands behind his mother, and father, proud in uniform.

CAPTAIN TAYLOR (V.O.)

We gave our time, our hearts.

Pictures of the Fallen Veterans that year on a decorated modest dinner table.

PARABLE (V.O.)

Freedom has a price.

Georgie Johnson: Navy/Vietnam (67),

Tim Terry: Marines/Operation Iraqi Freedom (36)

Daniel Hobson: Army/Vietnam (71)

David and Maria dance in front of the Christmas tree.

PARABLE (V.O.)

Only to hope for a little love and  
blessing to bring us home safe.  
We love, we live, we serve, and  
when it is paid in full.

Young man in Desert Camouflaged Uniform jacket, BRET, 32, walks in the empty cafeteria with luggage in hand. Turns and looks up at the VIRGIN OF THE ANGELS picture. Smiles, and drops his luggage.

PARABLE (V.O.)

It is then he covers down and that  
is when good things happen, so the  
angels sing.

Parable the cartman pushes cart under the Salvation sign.

PARABLE

Amen.

Salvation sign shines bright. Flickers. American flag waves above Salvation.

**ABOVE:** TWO BIRDS sit together on a tree branch that shines over Los Angeles.

FADE OUT: