

SEIZED
The Series: Pilot - "The Successful Failure"

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(Based on, in part on "real events" of a U.S. Navy Sailor)

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BLACK CARD:

"A hero is someone who has given his or her life to something bigger than oneself." - Joseph Campbell

ACT I - 1992: The Birth

EXT. COLUMBIA DRUG MANUFACTURING COMPOUND - DAY

SUPER: 1991

HECTOR VALENZULA, 30s, is in charge of the proper packing of their product; cocaine. He ensures their affiliate stamp of a "Bull" goes on each packet to identify who is sending it.

He stamps the very first brick of cocaine.

EXT. INDIAN OCEAN - DAY

SUPER: 1992 - Indian Ocean

Glass-flat waters. A school of dolphins arcs beside a massive Navy amphibious ship; USS Comstock (LSD-45), cutting a clean wake.

A calm, measured VOICE - documentary in tone, but personal.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The U.S. Navy was established for war on the high seas. But war has cousins. Smuggling. Trafficking. Piracy. Crimes that hide in open waters.

The USS Comstock keeps steaming ahead.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The Navy SEALs are known for their elite training and dangerous life-threatening mission. They were responsible for a side duty called VBSS (Visiting Board Search & Seizure). But as their duties grew, they needed to offload the side duty to focus on more dire missions.

CUT TO:

EXT. CIVILIAN CONTAINER SHIP - NIGHT

A tight, silent SEAL BOARDING ELEMENT moves like ghosts across steel.

Two SEALs (30s), pause, irritated.

SEAL #1

This is for the birds. It's an insult to the mission of the Teams.

SEAL #2

We're clearing crates while the read bad guys move.

They exchange looks.

SEAL #1

We need to hand this shit off. Permanently.

SEAL #2

Will someone else do it?

SEAL #1

Someone always does.

They disappear in the dark.

The ship EXPLODES, leaving a white cloudy dust bloom.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. COLUMBIA DRUG MANUFACTURING COMPOUND - AFTERNOON

A HENCHMAN (40s) whispers into Hector's ear.

Hector with a very disdained look on his face.

HECTOR

I really hate the American Navy.

His men set fire to an American flag.

INT. PENTAGON - SECDEF CONFERENCE OFFICE - DAY

A plain, no-nonsense room with a few Navy Posters. Flags. Coffee brewing. Tension you can cut with a butter knife.

A small group: Senior Navy brass and a civilian Leader.

SECDEF (Secretary of Defense) (50s) studies a folder like it personally offended him.

SECDEF
I'm being told the SEALS want to
unload a mission set. Is that
correct?

A NAVY ADMIRAL (50s), in dress uniform, graying hair with glasses, replies.

NAVY ADMIRAL
Not unload, Sir. Reallocate. We
need to centralize our efforts and
allocate our resources towards
more critical missions. We can't
keep spreading ourselves too thin.

SECDEF
I see...
(To SEAL Commander)
... What say you, Commander?

The SEAL COMMANDER (40s), sharp, in daily Khaki uniform with his gold trident proudly displayed top of his left breast, chimes in.

SEAL COMMANDER
With respect - VBSS is manpower
heavy. Not strategic. Not scalable
for the SEALS.

SECDEF
Then who?

A beat. Another NAVAL ADMIRAL (50s), a little more portly, replies instead.

NAVAL ADMIRAL
Volunteers. Sailors. Any rating. A
per ship-level unit--

SEAL COMMANDER
--Properly trained of course.

The SECDEF reads the headline type: VBSS (Visiting Board Search and Seizure).

SECDEF
Visiting...Board...Search...and
Seizure. It's catchy.

NAVY ADMIRAL
Experimental phase. If it succeeds, we expand. If it fails--

The Navy Admiral stops himself. The room knows the end of that sentence without actually saying it.

SECDEF
If it fails... it disappears. And with everyone involved with it.

The SEAL Commander nods, blunt.

SEAL COMMANDER
Find me the right ship and Captain. We'll find the right volunteers.

SECDEF
I might just have that ship... it's Captain is gunning for full bird. He just forgot about the N.A.V.Y. acronym.

NAVAL ADMIRAL
Never Again Volunteer Yourself!

They all share a hearty chuckle.

The SEAL Commander nods, exits the room.

I/E. USS COMSTOCK - SHIP'S DRY CLEANING PLANT - DAY

SUPER: USS Comstock (LSD-45) Forward Deployed - Indian Ocean

CHAD LATOUR (mid 20s), handsome in a European sort of way, average height, wears his ship's ball cap backwards, meticulously presses an officer's khaki shirt, lining with precision for "military creases".

A FELLOW SHIPMATE (20s) enters at his half door entrance, half-amused, half-serious.

SHIPMATE
SH2, you hear about the new Navy team forming? My cousin works in the Pentagon.

Chad doesn't look up at first.

CHAD
Depends. Is it useless?
Meaningless?

SHIPMATE
Nope. It's like real SEAL-like
work... without 'Hell Week'.

That gets Chad's attention. He turns quickly.

CHAD
Like the SEALs?! No kidding?

SHIPMATE
They're taking "Volunteers". Any
rate. Any job. You always saying
you want more than pressing zero's
uniforms. And cutting their lion's
manes. This could be it.

Chad nods slowly. That lands.

CHAD
Where do I sign?

SHIPMATE
Well-deck. Tonight. A REAL SEAL
Commander will be there
personally.

Chad goes back to pressing... but his hands move faster
now to complete his daily quota, so he can be free for
tonight's recruitment.

SUPER: HOURS LATER...

1MC ANNOUNCEMENT chimes throughout the ship.

1MC ANNOUNCEMENT (V.O.)
Set condition 1-A... incoming
helo. I repeat... set condition 1-
A!

Chad, done with his daily quota was relaxing, pops up,
runs out of his shop.

I/E. FLIGHT TOWER - CONTINUOUS

SUPER: CONDITION 1-A

Chad arrives to the Helo Tower, dons his phone-talking
headphones.

His DIVO (30s) arrives as the helo control officer.

It's a collateral duty for both of them.

DIVO
SH2.

CHAD
Sir.

DIVO
Know who we got landing?

CHAD
Yup. Some SEAL Commander from the
Pentagon.

DIVO
Yup. I can only assume you'll want
to meet him. Tonight in the well-
deck?

CHAD
You know I do, Sir. With your
permission, of course.

DIVO
Why would I ever stand in the way
of total insanity?

CHAD
That's why I like you, Sir. No
matter what the rest of division
says about you.

Chad checks in "ready status" in his phone-talking mic.

DIVO
Wait! What are they saying about
me? Never mind, I don't care.
Let's land this bird.

Chad smirks, nods in agreement.

After a moment... the helicopter is on approach.

It lands safely on deck.

Chad and his Divo do a "high-five".

Chad looks out the windows, sees a stocky man in khakis,
with a life-preserver on, step off the helo.

CHAD
It's good to see he prefers safety over bad-ass-ness.

DIVO
We officers have to set the example. Right?

Chad nods in agreement.

LATER...

WELL-DECK - EVENING

The SEAL Commander gathers about 15-20 Volunteers. Chad is there, in the front of the semi-circle.

In the bird's nest above (The railed walkway), Divo watches.

SEAL COMMANDER
Howdy Sailors!

SAILORS
WELCOME SIR!

SEAL COMMANDER
Thank you for that. Okay, some of you more privileged folks might have heard via the grapevine that we're looking for a few solid volunteers for a new team the Navy for forming up. It will known as... V.B.S.S. - That stands for Visiting...Board...Search...and Seizure--

CHAD
Nice.

SEAL COMMANDER
--The team's main responsibility besides its acronym, will be fighting crimes on the high seas. The U.S. is still at war with drugs! We need to control this war with this new team. We will train you for the next three days, the best ten standing, will be selected. Now, to emphasize, this is still a collateral duty. Meaning you'll have to ascertain permission from your divisions and departments.

(MORE)

SEAL COMMANDER (CONT'D)
Once cleared, you will be summons
at a gnat's fart notice!

The small group of Volunteers, snicker and chuckle.

Chad just smirks, nods.

SEAL Commander notices Chad's composure. Nods to him.

MONTAGE - VBSS TEAM TRAINING (OVER NEXT THREE DAYS)

The SEAL Commander watches the now 25 Volunteers train in the well-deck.

Training in calisthenics, weapons training, rope climbing, team unity drills, etc...

Sweat. Bruises. Achy muscles. Pure determination.

Chad breezes through the training.

END MONTAGE.

INT. SHIP'S ARMORY/ RANGE - DAY

Final marksman training on a makeshift target range, each candidate fires for their lives.

Chad fires. Controls recoil. Breathes steady.

SEAL Commander notices him again. Nods.

A target rolls back.

Clean grouping. Center mass.

RANGE QUALIFIER (30s), checks for marksmanship.

RANGE QUALIFIER
Certified marksman... Good job,
Chad!

The SEAL Commander approaches Chad, had extended. They shake.

SEAL COMMANDER
Damn, shipmate! Good grip. Why
didn't you try out for the SEALs?

CHAD
I'm an SH, sir. Rating didn't
warrant it.

(MORE)

CHAD (CONT'D)
But I always thought to myself,
everyone needs a haircut, right?!

SEAL COMMANDER
Ha-ha-ha! Eventually. Or you could
have washed their uniforms in shit
river!

Everyone LAUGHS.

SEAL COMMANDER (CONT'D)
... In all seriousness, you're my
second in command of the new VBSS
Team, SH2 LaTour! Congrats,
Sailor! Your Team leader will be
Chief Hadley!

Chad exhales - proud, but not too showy.

EXT. NICARAGUA - VALENZUELA COMPOUND - DAY

A BULL crest stamped on a wooden crate.

HECTOR VALENZUELA (40s), clean, composed, terrifying in
his calmness, watches men load containers.

His right hand man, PEDRO VASQUEZ (late 30s), militant
type, reports quietly.

PEDRO
(In Spanish Language)
The Americans won't touch this
shipment, boss. Our Captain is
paid off. And the SEALS gave this
portion of their responsibilities.

Hector's eye never leave the crate.

HECTOR
(In Spanish Language)
Nothing goes wrong. Understood?

Pedro nods in agreement.

Hector reaches out... touches the bull crest like it's
sacred.

PEDRO
(In Spanish Language)
Why the bull, boss?

HECTOR
(In Spanish Language)
My father was a matador, once of
the best in all of Spain. It's in
his honor.

Pedro nods.

ACT II

I/E. USS COMSTOCK - WELL DECK - NIGHT

A cluster of VOLUNTEERS (various ages) stand in gear that
doesn't quite fit yet.

Their leader and further Instructor, CHIEF HADLEY (40s),
hard, sharp, competent, speaks to his new team.

CHIEF HADLEY
Welcome to VBSS! Visiting. Board.
Search. And Seizure. Not a movie.
Not a game.

One VOLUNTEER #1 (20s), scared shitless, raises a hand.

VOLUNTEER #1
Chief... Don't you just knock and
open the door?

LAUGHTER ERUPTS. Until Chief Hadley looks at them all
sternly.

He steps right into his space.

CHIEF HADLEY
You keep joking around, I'll
personally mail your dog tags back
to your parents. Move!

Chief Hadley points to a watertight door.

CHIEF HADLEY (CONT'D)
... Four things before entry.
Bodies. Room shape. Step size. And
don't flag your teammate.

Volunteer #1 tries not to smirk. Because Chief Hadley's
looks killed it.

I/E. USS COMSTOCK - MALE BERTHING - EVENING

Chad rests on his bunk.

The MESSENGER OF THE WATCH (20s) comes down into his berthing.

MOOW
Looking for Petty Officer LaTour?

Someone points towards his rack.

MOOW pulls back his curtain.

CHAD
Damn, man, I could be rubbing one off! Gotta a lot nerve--

MOOW
--Sorry, but the captain needs a word with you.

Chad changes his tone real quick. Gets up, gets dressed.

He and the MOOW exit the berthing.

SHIP'S BRIDGE.

Chad enters behind the MOOW. The Captain is sitting in his chair, motions for Chad to come over to him.

SHIP'S CAPTAIN
Sorry to bother your rest. But I have some news from home.

CHAD
Is my family alright?

SHIP'S CAPTAIN
That depends on you. Your wife was caught in the Marine's Male Barracks after hours with a female friend. She's been banned from Miramar. I'm sorry.

Chad lowers his head, shakes it in frustration.

CHAD
Well, I suppose my suspicions came true about her cheating on me.

SHIP'S CAPTAIN
Yeah, sucks when you get this sort of news while on deployment.

CHAD
Know a good lawyer?

The Captain smirks, nods his head.

TITLE CARD:

"SEIZED"

EXT. OPEN SEA - DAY

SUPER: COUNTER-DRUG OPS - OCTOBER 1992

Mustered in the aft end of the well-deck. Chief Hadley briefs his new team.

CHIEF HADLEY

This is bonafide training mission
on a civilian container ship!

A beat - he watches their faces. Because the truth would send most of them running back to their divisions.

CHAD

Which means, it's real enough to
kill you! Gear up!

Chad steps to Chief Hadley - calm energy, stabilizing force.

Chief Hadley notice him above the rest.

CHIEF HADLEY

(To himself)

Petty Officer LaTour, my second in command. Because he's the only one who looks like he won't faint...

(To Chad)

... Get'em in the boat SH2!

Chad gives him a quick nod.

CHAD

(to his team)

We do it clean. We do it quiet. We come home.

VBSS TEAM

Hoorah!

Once Chief Hadley is aboard the riff, they push out to sea.

Two guys immediately puke over the side of the riff.

CHIEF HADLEY

Damn, green gills already? The ocean is like glass.

CHAD

Probably more nerves, Chief.

Chief Hadley looks at him facetiously.

Chad smirks.

EXT. OCEAN SURFACE

The riff cruises slowly on the ocean's surface.

CHIEF HADLEY

Okay, it's time I confess to you all... this is NO training Op! This is the REAL DEAL! This is what we trained for--

Just then one Team Member jumps off the riff, swims back to the ship.

CHIEF HADLEY (CONT'D)

... Okie Dokie then. True measure of man is... true grit. He only eats grits for breakfast I suppose. We still have enough for the mission. Let's get mentally ready!

The boat closes in on a Panama-flagged container ship.

SUPER: VISITING...

SUPER: BOARD...

They reach the starboard side of the container ship. Two Team Member shoot the line up to the top of the deck. They pull up a rope ladder.

Rope ladder. Steel. Wind. Open Sea.

Chad climbs first - focused, accurate, skilled.

I/E. CONTAINER SHIP - SERIES OF SWEEPS - CONTINUOUS

SUPER: SEARCH...

They form into two-men groups to search the ship. Chad and Chief Hadley make their way towards the bridge.

- Two-man element cracks open a crate: AK-47's.
- Another two-man team unzips a duffle bag: a few kilos of white powdery substance.
- A third two-man team finds ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS hidden in the cargo hold.

Tension rises.

BRIDGE.

Chad and Chief Hadley breach the bridge with precision.

Crew zip-tied. Secured.

SUPER: "SEIZED"

Chief Hadley smirks at Chad. Chad nods back.

CHIEF HADLEY
Having fun yet?

CHAD
Ask me after my heart stops trying
to escape my chest.

A RADIO crackles.

TEAM MEMBER (V.O.)
Chief - we've got illegals in the
cargo hold. Over.

CHIEF HADLEY
Detain. Coast Guard inbound.
Offload contraband first. How
copy... over.

TEAM MEMBER (V.O.)
Copy that. Babysitters a little
short. Over. Out.

Chief Hadley turns to Chad.

CHIEF HADLEY
Why don't you go supervise, Petty
Officer. I got it up here.

Chad nods in agreement.

CHAD
Camp Counselor on his way!

He exits the bridge.

Chief Hadley scoffs.

CHIEF HADLEY
Smart ass.

CHAD (O.S.)
Better than being a dumb one!

Chief Hadley shakes his head, smirks.

ACT III - 1992: THE INCIDENT

A dim, cramped steel cavern.

Three groups of 6-10 Illegals sit, wait to be sent home.

Chad enters the cargo hold. He sees two other of his Teammates watching their own groups. He is in charge of a group of ten.

Chad has a rifle when the others have sidearms, in their holsters.

Chad scans his group, face by face.

He spots one MAN, sitting close to a pile of rice. He's tense, sweating, more than the outside or inside heat would permit. He sits by a WOMAN and a BOY.

The Boy listens to an American Walkman. Reading a comic book. Not paying attention.

Chad's expression tightens. Subtly CLICKS the safety on his rifle to the "OFF" position.

The Man reaches his hand into the pile of rice.

His eyes are locked with Chad's. A long silent, non-trusting stare.

The Wife whispers something in Spanish Language - urgent.

WIFE
(In Spanish Language)
Please. Don't. Think of Juan.

The Man's hand rests inside the pile of rice.

Chad slowly raises his rifle towards the Man's chest.

The Man ignores Chad's warning. A butt end of a pistol surfaces.

Chad recognizes it. He shakes his head no to the Man. The Man sweating even more.

When Chad can clearly see it is a pistol - BANG!!

One shot to the Man's heart. Instantly dead.

The shot alerted everyone in the cargo hold. Other illegal Men go to reach in similar piles, but the other Team Members already drew their firearms, int he ready, safeties off.

The Man collapses to the side he had his hand on the pistol.

His Wife SCREAMS. Then stares Chad down. The Boy still listening to the walkman, reading the comic.

Chad's breath finally catches. A beat where the "Operator" disappears and the human remains.

CHAD
No... no -- no, don't--

A delayed command, still in shock.

He turns away fast, fighting nausea.

CHAD (CONT'D)
--Grubb, you got it! I'll be--

He rushes out of the cargo hold holding his mouth.

He stumbles into--

PASSAGEWAY - CONTINUOUS

--Chad PUKES in a corner underneath a stairwell.

He eventually wipes his chin and mouth with his sleeve like he's ashamed of needing to.

Then he forces himself back into the game.

EXT. CONTAINER SHIP - TRANSFER PIER - LATER

Coast Guard is now back to pick up the Illegals and send them back where they came from.

Controlled chaos as they already heard about the incident.

Chief Hadley finds Chad standing by the edge of the pier, just a blank stare into the deep blue ocean.

CHIEF HADLEY

You okay? A totally justified kill, Petty Officer LaTour. We found a cache of weapons in that hold. We missed them. You saved our asses.

CHAD

They won't be handing me any kind of medals or awards.

CHIEF HADLEY

Probably not. DO you really want one?

Chad shakes his head no.

CHIEF HADLEY (CONT'D)

... Good. That was still a clean shot. He goes for his gun, you stopped him. And others from really hurting some people down there... including two other members of YOUR team...

Chad's eyes say: "I know... and I still hate what I did."

CHIEF HADLEY (CONT'D)

... Give us a hand offloading them. It'll take your mind off of it.

CHAD

Oaky, Chief.

Chad composes himself, nods, joins Chief Hadley in the middle of the steel pier.

One of his Team Members just helped a man down, opening it up for Chad to step up next.

He looks up, sees the Wife of the Man he killed, lowering her son to him.

They both freak out. Let go of the son as he drops in between the ship and the steel pier.

Instant peril. The Wife freaks out, she can't lose another member of her family today.

Chad reacts without hesitation, removing his boots and flat jacket and helmet.

He dives in after the boy.

EXT. WATER - CONTINUOUS

Chad yanks the boy underneath the water, underneath the pier.

I/E. UNDERWATER - CONTINUOUS

Chad holds the boy underneath the steel pier. Barnacles and seaweed sway with the waves. BONG!!

The pier crashes up next to the ship.

That could have been the boy, dead.

After, Chad swims the boy towards the open sea end of the steel pier.

EXT. OCEAN SURFACE - CONTINUOUS

Chad surfaces with the boy, both still alive.

Chief Hadley and one other Team Member throw life buoys to them.

Chad places one over the boy's head to his waist.

Chad hangs on to the other, just with one arm.

Chief Hadley spots danger a few meters away.

CHIEF HADLEY
SHARK!!

The Team pulls them back to the pier, but not fast enough. Chad throws the boy towards the pier as Chief Hadley catches him.

Chad takes out his combat knife, swims towards the danger.

He meets the shark head on, stabbing it in the head, as the shark takes him down underneath the surface.

CHIEF HADLEY (CONT'D)
Fuck me! Who does he think he is -
Jacque Cousteau?

He rubs his head in frustration of who is going to win this other war.

After what seem like an eternity...

Chad surface with the dead shark.

CHAD

Hey Chief? Does shark taste like tuna?!

Chief Hadley sighs a huge sigh of relief. Pulls Chad up onto the steel pier as the shake lies on its side, lifeless, bleeding.

As Chad is back on the pier, an Orca, aka killer whale snatches the shark.

CHAD (CONT'D)

Hey! Well, rules of the sea I suppose.

CHIEF HADLEY

Shark meat really isn't that great.

CHAD

Well, it thought so.

Chief Hadley places a towel around Chad's shoulders. Pats him on the pat.

CHIEF HADLEY

Don't do that heroic shit ever again, got me?!

CHAD

Gotcha.

They see the Wife and Son board the Coast Guard ship. The Wife looks back at Chad, nods once to him, out of respect of saving her son.

Chad nods back.

Chief Hadley exhales, darkly amused at how like pans out.

CHIEF HADLEY

In one afternoon... she hates you for killing her husband... and next she respects for saving her son.

CHAD
Not her husband.

CHIEF HADLEY
What do you mean?

CHAD
No rings, no white circles on
their ring fingers. He was someone
else to her and her son. Maybe his
father. But they weren't married.

Chief nods in agreement and shakes his head.

Chad sees two Team Members toss a black trash bag, with
what looks like a body inside, overboard, like trash.

He eyes harden.

I/E. USS COMSTOCK - WELL DECK

They arrive back to the ship.

Chad stands at the aft end of the well-deck, sees the
Coast Guard ship head back towards land.

Chief Hadley approaches Chad.

CHIEF HADLEY
For reals, listen to me. Some
people are coming to the ship...

Chad hold his gaze, intense like.

CHIEF HADLEY (CONT'D)
... They're going to ask
questions. You're going to answer
the way I tell you. This program -
your career - depends in it.

Chad swallows deeply, but nods reluctantly in agreement.

CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - CONINTUOUS

KNOCK!

SHIP'S CAPTAIN
Come in!

Chief Hadley and Chad enter the Captain's Quarters.

Chief Hadley pops to, so does Chad.

CHIEF HADLEY
Captain, this the team member...
Petty Officer Chad LaTour.

The Ship's Captain looks over Chad. Chad studies him too - and understands the political machine that turns his gears.

SHIP'S CAPTAIN
Petty Officer LaTour. I think you cut my hair a time or two.

CHAD
Yes, Sir. A couple of times.

The Ship's Captain nods his head.

SHIP'S CAPTAIN
I'll cut through the chase. You understand what's at stake, right?

CHAD
Yes, Sir, I do.

SHIP'S CAPTAIN
I mean the overall mission was a huge success!

CHIEF HADLEY
It was, Captain.

SHIP'S CAPTAIN
Minus the little mishap. Not sure how they're going to treat that. But some suits from DC are coming aboard and will want to speak with you. So, we'll have someone else cover your position for 1-A.

CHAD
Yes, Sir.

SHIP'S CAPTAIN
Has the chief briefed you on how to respond, for the betterment of our ship, me and the United States Navy?

CHIEF HADLEY
I was about to, Captain and will before they get here.

SHIP'S CAPTAIN

Very good. Thank you for being a
team player, Petty Officer LaTour.

CHAD

It's my honor, Sir.

SHIP'S CAPTAIN

That'll be all gentlemen. Thank
you.

CHIEF HADLEY

Sir.

They pop tall again, then exit the Captain's Quarters.

I/E. USS COMSTOCK - BRIDGE - NIGHT

A helicopter lands with three MEN in black suits exit the
helo.

SHIP'S CAPTAIN

So it begins.

The helicopter waits on deck, rotors will turning.

After about fifteen minutes...

The Men in black suits exit back on to the flight deck,
board the helo and it takes off.

OBSERVATION DECK.

Chief Hadley and Chad watch the helo take off, fly off
into the moon's reflection on the surface of the night's
dark ocean.

CHIEF HADLEY

If they buy it, they'll keep it...
if it costs them... they're bury
it. For a while anyhow.

Chad nods in agreement.

EXT. HECTOR VALENZUELA COMPOUND - NIGHT

Hector gets a phone call.

SPLIT SCREEN PHONE CONVERSATION

HECTOR

Hola? Come Esta?

U.S. CAST GUARD SAILOR
Hector, it's me. They seized your
shipment. The Navy formed a new
team.

HECTOR
Is that so? Where is my product
now?

U.S. CAST GUARD SAILOR
In U.S. Customs seizure center,
Panama. I'll keep tabs on it until
you can come collect it.

HECTOR
Very well. Thank you for the
unfortunate news.

He hangs up the phone. Then he tosses it against a brick
wall and smashes it into several pieces.

HARD ACT BREAK...

SUPER: Six years later...

SUPER: 1998 - VBSS Program reactivated.

INT. PENTAGON - SECDEF CONFERENCE OFFICE - DAY

A Navy Admiral convinces the NEW SECDEF (50s) to
reinstate the VBSS Teams.

NAVY ADMIRAL
The VBSS program was under review
for the past six years. We have
made the necessary changes and
upgrades to ensure the safety and
effectiveness of the teams.

NEW SECDEF
But If my predecessor briefed me,
and my memory serves me correctly,
that mission back in 1992 was an
actual success. Was it not? Why
did we shut it down?

NAVY ADMIRAL
Because of the incident, Sir. The
man killed.

NEW SECDEF
Admiral, you of all people
understand the risk of casualties
of war. This is a war on drugs!
One I take very seriously.

NAVY ADMIRAL
It wasn't just an ordinary man
that was killed, Sir. It was who
he was... or more to the point,
who he was the brother of...

The New SECDEF nods in agreement.

NAVY ADMIRAL (CONT'D)
... There was just too much heat
on it. We had to make it look like
we shut the program down. Did you
hear about Admiral Boorda, Sir?

NEW SECDEF
Yes. I was one of the first to be
privy. Sad set of events. But like
any loss, we must forge ahead.

The New SECDEF signs the order to reinstate the VBSS
Teams Navy wide.

ACT IV - 1998: The Reckoning

BEGIN FLASHBACK...

EXT. SAN DIEGO, CA - GAZEBO - DAY

SUPER: June 1990

Chad (24) married LIZZIE (mid 30s) Hispanic, attractive,
petite, at a quaint gazebo near the water in San Diego.
His shipmates are in attendance.

The Groom kisses the bride.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. CHAD'S HOME - NIGHT

SUPER: 1998

TV News in the background. Chad (now mid 30s) with
Lizzie, but distance between them.

NEWCASTER (V.O.)
Breaking news - the Chief of Naval
Operations has died...

Chad's jaw tightens. Lizzy reads him.

LIZZY
You okay?

CHAD
Yeah...
(Under his breath)
... Fuckin' coward...
(Back to Lizzy)
Just... Navy business. We forge
on... without him.

LIZZY
I'm so sorry.

CHAD
What, he took the coward's way
out. No biggie.

LIZZY
I meant what I did to us.

CHAD
I obtained a lawyer. You might
want to as well.

Lizzy hangs her head. Weeps slightly. Tries to hold his
hand, he pulls way, walks into the kitchen.

I/E. USS BOXER (LHD-4) - S-3 OFFICE - DAY

Chad checks in with his new division with a new rank, E-
6. More responsibility as the new LPO.

S-3 CHIEF and NEW DIVO greet him.

S-3 CHIEF
Welcome aboard, Petty Officer
LATour. Don't get comfortable,
looks like you won't be staying
with us for very long.

Chas, surprised, pauses.

CHAD
Why is that, Chief?

His New DIVO smirks, like she knows a secret.

NEW DIVO

Because the Skipper wants you to resurrect a familiar program you know.

CHAD

Ah, you got to be kidding me.

NEW DIVO

Nope. You're the new Petty Officer in charge of the VBSS Team onboard the Boxer. The Captain remembers you. Was the one who changed your orders to come here.

CHAD

Really? How about that... Ma'am...

She nods in agreement. Hands him his new shipboard assignment.

CHAD (CONT'D)

... What about my duties here?

S-3 CHIEF

We'll be meritoriously advancing one of our second classes to first to take your position. It's fine.

He peaks into the folder, like pinching himself to see if this is real.

CHAD

And it's back. Great.

S-3 CHIEF

Not officially. But it's regaining traction again. From what I'm told. By your new Chief. Senior Chief Hadley. I presume you know him?

CHAD

Yes. We go way back. To the last time this program failed.

NEW DIVO

That's not totally accurate. My brother, your previous DIVO told me it was a huge success.

CHAD

It's a matter perspective, Ma'am.

S-3 Chief and the New DIVO both shrug their shoulders.

EXT. HECTOR VALENZUELA COMPOUND - NIGHT

Hector overseas personally, a new shipment of product on a pallet being loaded onto a flatbed truck.

Pedro now walks with a cane - consequences of failure.

PEDRO

My source says the Americans ended their program. No more team to interfere, boss.

HECTOR

We'll see about that... last time they took everything.

Pedro nods.

PEDRO

This time... they won't.

HECTOR

If you're wrong...

Pedro swallows hard.

HECTOR (CONT'D)

... It won't be your knee cap. Do I make myself clear?

PEDRO

Crystal.

Hector's smile is a sharp blade.

Pedro leaves him.

Just then, the supposed Wife of the Man Chad killed, CAMILLA (30s) walks out with the boy, JUAN (16) now a teenager.

She kisses Hector on the cheek.

HECTOR

I miss my brother.

CAMILLA

I know... we do too.

He rubs Juan's head, who still has a walkman headphones on. His coping mechanism.

HECTOR
He's a good boy.

CAMILLA
Sorry about the headphones all the time. It's his way of dealing with what happened.

HECTOR
So what really happened on my ship back then?

CAMILLA
Like I told you, Manny got impatient and acted stupidly. He paid the price. But the same man who shot him, saved my Juan from being crushed in the ocean.

HECTOR
So, enemy to hero, in one swoop. How did that make you feel?

CAMILLA
Confused. But relieved my boy is still alive. Everyday.

Hector nods in agreement. Watches the truck pull out of his long paved driveway.

I/E. USS BOXER (LHD-4) - WELL-DECK - DAY

Chad faces NEW VOLUNTEERS - nervous, eager, young.

KARINA JERGENSEN (later 20s), Petty Officer Third Class, cute, professional, cool and calm, stands tall.

Chad approaches her.

CHAD
And what's your story, PO3? You look cool as a cucumber. Why is that?

KARINA
Just ready to serve in any manner I can, Petty Officer LaTour.

He looks at her like he's looking at his younger self, when he volunteered over 6 years ago.

CHAD

VBSS was an experiment, six years ago. Something went wrong. They shut it down...

He looks at his Motley Crew.

CHAD (CONT'D)

... Now they want it back. Because ultimately it worked...

A beat.

CHAD (CONT'D)

... And here we are. Here YOU all are. Take a good look at one another. One day you'll have to make a split decision choice, to save them--

The New Team all look at one another.

KARINA

--Is that what happened back then, Team Leader?

Just then Senior Chief Hadley walks up to them.

SENIOR CHIEF HADLEY

Pretty much.

Chad turns to see him. They shake hands.

SENIOR CHIEF HADLEY (CONT'D)

... This man is a hero! But he never got properly awarded nor recognized by his superiors. Except me. But listen to everything see says. It can literally save your life someday!
(To Chad)
... Gotta a minute?

Chad nods.

CHAD

Petty Officer Jergensen, take the team on a few laps in the well deck.

KARINA

Awe! You heard him, let's go for a jog team!

The Team takes off jogging.

SENIOR CHIEF HADLEY
Bet you didn't expect to see my
sorry old ass anymore.

CHAD
Was actually counting on that
wouldn't ever happen... but yet,
here you are. Here I am.

SENIOR CHIEF HADLEY
Yup, here we are.

CHAD
Did you put a bug in the Captain's
ear about me?

SENIOR CHIEF HADLEY
I might have. Mad about that?

CHAD
Nah. I'll just kick your ass
later.

SENIOR CHIEF HADLEY
Why wait?

Senior Chief Hadley takes off his ball cap and shirt.

Chad smirks, scoffs at him, but does the same.

CHAD
Gather around, everyone! A lesson -
demonstration actually of hand to
hand combat!

Karina steers them back to them, circles Chad and Senior
Chief Hadley.

Senior Chief Hadley and Chad mix it up, Chad makes sure
to show some moves they'll need to know and practice.

Eventually, Chad takes down Senior Chief Hadley.

SENIOR CHIEF HADLEY
You're right. I'm too told for
this shit...

Chad helps him up to his feet.

Senior Chief Hadley dusts himself off, puts his shirt and
ball cap back on.

SENIOR CHIEF HADLEY (CONT'D)
... He may not be an officer...
but he's the best gentleman! May
attention to what he teaches you.

TEAM MEMBERS
Yes, Senior Chief!

Senior Chief Hadley pats Chad on the back, then limps
towards a watertight door.

Chad smirks, shakes his head.

CHAD
We go way back. Dismissed for now!

TEAM MEMBERS
Hoorah!

They fall out.

ACT IV - THE PAST BLEEDS THROUGH

I/E. TRAINING SPACE - A FEW DAYS LATER

CQB drills. Takedowns vis HTHC. Sweat. Tears. A little
blood.

Karina flips a larger MALE TEAM MEMBER easily and hard.

THUD!

Chad can't help but grin and nod.

CHAD
That's a solid impact, Jergensen.

KARINA
Thank you, team leader...

She steps closer to Chad, eyes his old time pistol.

KARINA (CONT'D)
... They still make those?

CHAD
Nope. That's why I keep it. It was
my Grandfather's. If you treat
something well enough, it will
last for a very long time...

Karina clocks: he's old-school. Serious.

Later...

Chad speaks with Karina privately.

CHAD (CONT'D)
... I need an assistant team leader. You're the most senior under me - and you've got the instincts and strength. Jonesy sure felt it.

Karina doesn't even hesitate.

KARINA
I'm in. I mean I'll take it. My cousin died from what those assholes sell and push. I want payback - the legal kind. I was going to join the DEA, but they're a bunch of chauvinistic butt kissers.

Chad smirks, nods.

CHAD
Okay then. Because last time... people got hurt.

That lands.

KARINA
Well, if we're being frank, Petty Officer... I think the bad guys got it more.

Chad nods in agreement.

INT. NALVAL HOSPITAL - PSYCHOLOGICAL OFFICES - DAY

Chad attends mandatory counseling for PTSD as he sits cross from DR. AMBER SCHWARTMAN (40s), smart, sort of attractive, straight forward, professional. Calm. Underneath sharp.

AMBER
Leading another VBSS team? Thinks that's wise or therapeutic?

Chad nods.

CHAD
Don't know yet. Feels like correcting a mistake in the past.

AMBER
I see... any more flashbacks?

CHAD
Nope.

A beat.

AMBER
Any recognizant dreams?

CHAD
Nope.

Amber studies him.

AMBER
Then we reduce your appointments
and meds. Once every three months.
Meds, take half dosage.

Chad nods - relieved.

EXT. STREETS OF SAN DIEGO - DAY

Chad drives. Normal traffic.

He glances right - sees a HISPANIC WOMAN and a TEENAGED BOY walking across a crosswalk.

Something about them. Familiar.

Chad's breathing changes. Shallow. Panicky.

FLASHBACK - CONTAINER SHIP - CARGO HOLD

SUPER: 1992

The bull crest tattoo.

The pistol.

The Wife's eyes.

The Boy's walkman.

BANG!!

I/E. CHAD'S TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Chad's eyes widen.

He looks forward--

He's hit from behind and crashes into the car in front of his.

Airbag does not deploy.

His head hits the windshield.

Blood drips down his forehead, into his eye.

Silence.

Chad stares through the cracked windshield. Stunned.

Like the ocean never ended.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. LOCAL VA HOSPITAL

SUPER: November 1998

Chad recovers from his minor injuries. A VA DOCTOR tells him his prognosis.

VA DOCTOR

So, Mr. LaTour, you suffered a blow to the head. We reset your broken nose. And you have a slight concussion. So, 15 days light duty, if you experience anymore complications or if your nose doesn't feel right in a few days, come back to see us. Okie Dokie?!

CHAD

Gotcha Doc, thanks...

He gets up from the exam table, a Nurse waits with his chariot, aka a wheelchair.

CHAD (CONT'D)

... Is this really necessary?

VA DOCTOR

Hospital policy, unfortunate for you macho types. Suck it up, Sailor. Enjoy the ride.

Chad smirks at the pretty Nurse. He hops in his chariot and she whisks him away.

INT. NICARAGUA - HACIENDA - CURRENT DAY

Some Nicaraguan Aides help pack up a Hector's hacienda, as he escorts his Wife and two Children into a waiting black SUV.

Once his family is in the SUV, he talks to his number one, Pedro Vasquez.

HECTOR

These US Navy pukes cost me big time. I want names, locations, relatives, whatever you can get me!

PEDRO

You got it boss. Just try to enjoy your ride, you know what Doc said about your blood pressure.

HECTOR

I'll lower it, when I see results and retribution! Take care of it. We'll see you in a few days at our Costa Rica villa.

PEDRO

We'll take care of it. See you then Boss.

Hector gets into the SUV with his family.

Pedro gathers his Men.

PEDRO (CONT'D)

Amigos, were going to the United States.

They all nod in agreement

EXT. U.S. BORDER - DOUGLAS, AZ - LATE NIGHT

Pedro and his SUV filled with HENCHMEN cross into the U.S. Via the Douglas, AZ border crossing, where only two Border Agents are posted.

Pedro pulls up to the Guard Shack with one draw-arm to enter the U.S. He hands him his passport only with some American currencies tucked inside.

He nods to the Border Agent, who takes the cash, hands him back the passports and nods to his partner to lift the arm.

I/E. SUV

Pedro drives into the United States.

Later...

They drive along a quiet US 191 till it merges with I-10, heading West.

He hands a picture of Chief Hadley to his Men.

INT. LOCAL SAN DIEGO BAR - LATE NIGHT

Senior Chief Hadley drinks his sorrows away at a local watering hole.

Karina walks in with some friends, one of those friends being TANK, a 6'6" Viking looking dude.

KARINA

Look over there, isn't that--

TANK

--I believe it is.

KARINA

I'm gonna go over and say hey.

TANK

Got your back from here.

She sees no one is listening to her, so she walks over to a sauced Senior Chief Hadley.

She sits beside him. He takes one look at her.

SENIOR CHIEF HADLEY

Sorry sweetie, I can't afford you.
Just drinking alone tonight.

Seaman Jergensen's eye widen at his thought of her being a hooker.

KARINA

Um, Chief, I'm not that kinda girl.

SENIOR CHIEF HADLEY
Oh, then I REALLY can't afford
ya. What are ya doing here, saw ya
come in with a hoard of friends.

KARINA
They'll get drunk without me. I
was just tagging alone. I'm more a
loner, kinda like you. I'm seaman
Amanda Jergensen, of Naval
Intelligence--

SENIOR CHIEF HADLEY
--Shit! Another inquisition?!
Great.

KARINA
No. I don't interrogate people. I
just help gather intel. Like your
mission on that cargo ship last
month.

Chief looks up at her with content but intrigue.

SENIOR CHIEF HADLEY
I see. So you work n Intel, you
know what happened, what else is
there to know?

KARINA
Did you pull the trigger or did
one of your team members. In the
report you take full
responsibility, but that's just
being a good Chief.

SENIOR CHIEF HADLEY
Is this chat off the books?

KARINA
Yes, just me asking. Doesn't leave
this bar. I actually wanted to
join the VBSS Team ,before is go
temporarily shut down.

SENIOR CHIEF HADLEY
I see, okay. Well, we left our
ship to supposedly go train on a
cargo ship. Would have been REAL
time training for my guys. But it
wasn't a training op, but instead
the REAL deal.

KARINA

I got all that from the report,
who was the REAL trigger man? That
was left out.

She motions for the BARTENDER to pour Chief another beer.

SENIOR CHIEF HADLEY

Okay, okay...

The Bartender slides Chief another cold one.

SENIOR CHIEF HADLEY (CONT'D)

... Thanks. To protect the
innocent, I took the heat. He was
a good man in an unfortunate
circumstance. He was on the bridge
with me initially as we first
boarded the cargo ship. But once
we secure the cache of weapons and
drugs, I had him go down the
babysit the unwanted Guests.
That's when it happened.

KARINA

Name?

He nods as he takes a big gulp of his beer.

SENIOR CHIEF HADLEY

So, as he watched a small group
himself, one of the Men in that
group went to reach for a pistol
in a pule of rice. He reacted
appropriately, giving the Man
every chance to stand down. He had
to do what he did, which protected
a lot of lives that day.

She nods in agreement.

KARINA

Name?

SENIOR CHIEF HADLEY

Did you know later, he saves the
Man's son?

KARINA

No, that wasn't in the report. Go
on.

SENIOR CHIEF HADLEY

We left it out. Anyway, he was helping unload the unwanted Guests when he inadvertently went to help the Wife and Son, as the Wife was lowering her son to him, she saw who it was she was handing her son off to, tried to pull him back, lost her grip and he fell into the ocean between the steel pier and the cargo ship.

KARINA

Holy Mackerel.

SENIOR CHIEF HADLEY

Yeah, dumb luck. So without even thinking he jumped in after the boy. We thought they were goners as the steel pier SLAMMED against the ship. But no blood in the water.

KARINA

Whoa, what did HE do?

SENIOR CHIEF HADLEY

Swam deeper taking the boy with him to a safe distance under the pier. Then he resurfaced on the other side, between the two ships. Both okay. He sure is one heroic son-of-a-bitch!

KARINA

And who is HE exactly?

Senior Chief Hadley whispers his name into her ear, she smirks, nods.

EXT. LOCAL SAN DIEGO BAR - EARLY MORNING

Senior Chief Hadley stumbles out of the Bar after closing. No taxis in sight. He goes to order an LYFT ride, drops his phone.

As he stands back upright, a black hood is placed over his head and he's whisked away, placed into a black SUV.

I/E. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE

Senior Chief Hadley, still hooded, is now tied up by his arms to where they're fully extended like a "Y" wishbone inverted.

Pedro makes a call.

PEDRO
Boss, we got him.

HECTOR VALENZUELA (V.O.)
Good. Good work Petey.

PEDRO
What do you want us to do with
him?

HECTOR VALENZUELA (V.O.)
Kill him, of course. Make it
gruesome, so the US Navy and
others get the message.

PEDRO
You got it boss.

SENIOR CHIEF HADLEY
C'mon fellas! At least buy me
dinner before you fuck me! No
hablo?! Shit man. Puntos!

He motions for his henchmen to begin the process of Senior Chief Hadley's gruesome death. He SCREAMS an unbearable echo.

Later...

What's left of Chief Hadley is discovered by a HOMELESS MAN. He pukes from the gruesome sight.

HOMELESS MAN
Oh dear God. I thought I've seen
everything on the streets. Man.

He does the Crucifix. Then pulls out his flip phone that he stole earlier, dials 9-1-1.

After a few moments...

POLICE, HOMICIDE DETECTIVES and the CORONER are there.

CORONER
Jesus, I'm gonna need a shovel for
this one.

HOMICIDE DETECTIVE #1
Show a little human compassion,
Bill. Would ya? He was a fellow
human being, sort of. Damn.

The POLICE PHOTOGRAPHER takes pictures.

POLICE PHOTOGRAPHER
What do you want to do with these
pictures?

The Homicide Detective #1's shrugs his shoulders as his phone RINGS. He places his right index finger to hold the Police Photographer up for a moment.

HOMICIDE DETECTIVE #1
Yeah... Yeah... really? Okay...
sure... can do.

He hangs up.

HOMICIDE DETECTIVE #1 (CONT'D)
Give me the roll, are there
anymore, I'll need all of them...
(to his constituents)
... Everyone clear out, thank you!

The Police Photographer hands him three roles of film.

POLICE PHOTOGRAPHER
Just became that kind of case, eh?

HOMICIDE DETECTIVE #1
Yup, sure did. A hush-hush
"Military" type of case.

The Police Photographer nods in agreement, exits the crime scene.

The Homicide Detective #1 scratches his head.

INT. CHAD'S HOME - DEN

Chad types in Chief Hadley's name to do a search on a new search engine platform; Google.

Only his Military info shows up, nothing afterwards.

CHAD
Where are ya Chief?

He ends his search after a few moments, shuts off his computer.

EXT. CHAD'S HOME - DRIVEWAY

Chad pulls out of the driveway in his truck.

INT. VBSS CLASSROOM

Chad gets there to set up for class.

Shortly after, Karina enters the room first and early.

CHAD

You're early.

KARINA

Early bird gets the worm.

CHAD

Are we fishing now?

KARINA

Old saying from my Grandpa, and
yes he loved fishing actually.

CHAD

Gotcha...

He sees her sit and get out her notebook and training manual.

CHAD (CONT'D)

... Say, you said you saw Senior
Chief at a bar and he told you our
story of the very first VBSS
Mission.

KARINA

Yeah, that's right.

CHAD

Did you see him leave that night?

KARINA

Well sort of. He was outside
fumbling around, not going to
drive cause I took his keys from
him. But we offered him a ride, he
refused to be a 'party pooper'.

CHAD

So, you left while he was still
there. K.

KARINA

I know, I should have forced him
in our car--

CHAD

--No, not at all. He refused. I
just tried a search of him on my
computer at home, nothing after
his naval service.

KARINA

Maybe he married a Filipino gal
moved to PI and opened his own
bar. Heard that happen a lot with
you sailor boys.

CHAD

Haha... what about you sailor
girls? Oh wait, you liked Thailand
better, especially those benny-
boys, huh?

KARINA

Haha... very funny. They were
mighty pretty though. But I did
actually like Thailand better, for
the beaches. Not The tits with
dicks.

CHAD

Only messing with ya. You're
probably right about the Chief.
It's just he used to check in on
me from time to time, then the
calls just stopped.

KARINA

Sorry. Wish I could tell ya
more...

Chad sets up for the class.

KARINA (CONT'D)

... Wait! There was one more thing
he talked about briefly. Why he
kept your name off the report--

CHAD

--Go on.

KARINA

He said because of possible Cartel
retaliations.

CHAD

Shit. Then I highly doubt he's in
PI drinking himself out of
business.

KARINA

You think? I mean is that real
shit?

CHAD

Who's drugs do you think they are?

KARINA

Shit. Now I feel REAL bad not
forcing him to ride with us. Damn.

CHAD

Don't fret, he was a big boy. He's
actually more lucid drunk than
sober. His mother was Irish. They
could handle their alcohol.

KARINA

He was very lucid in our
conversation.

Chad approaches her.

CHAD

Now, I'm gonna ask you once and
only once--

KARINA

--No, I NEVER mentioned your name
past that evening. I swear. Also
mainly because he asked me not to.
Chief was not only a legend in the
Seal community, but he was heading
up the very first VBSS team,
splintered from the Seals.

CHAD

Right, yes he was. Just had to
make sure. If the Cartel got to
him, then I just want to make sure
they didn't know of me, then try
to hurt my family.

KARINA

No, for sure.

Just then the rest of the Class enters the classroom.

CHAD
Alright everyone, take you seats,
lots to cover today.

Chad looks at Karina, nods once to confirm their last conversation. She nods once back.

EXT. U.S. NAVY GUN RANGE

After the classroom, the VBSS Team takes some target practice and real time maneuver drills.

Karina shoots a perfect target session.

Chad looks at her target sheet, looks at her with amazement.

KARINA
My grandpa liked to hunt as well.

Chad just nods to confirm.

She motions with her head to see if Chad will let her use his weapon once on the range.

He hands it to her.

CHAD
It's gotta little more kick than a
45.

She nods, aims, pops of a clip.

KARINA
I like it. Crisp but smooth.

Chad nods in agreement, takes his weapon back.

MOCK SHIP SPACES.

Karina maneuvers with her team in some mock set ups, entering, surveying, searching, seizing, etc...

She beats the previous record on the Search and Seizure drills.

CHAD
Beat my time, great job Team!

He looks at Karina, smirks and nods to her.

Chad gets a phone call.

He listens, then hangs his head.

Karina stops mid-training.

KARINA

No way.

Chad looks over at her, nods to confirm the worst.

EXT. LOCAL CEMETERY - DAY

Chad, Karina, the rest of the VBSS Team, all in dress uniform attend Senior Chief Hadley's funeral.

Seven RIFLEMEN pop off three shots each - the 21 gun salute.

The empty casket is lowered into the ground.

Chad renders a hand salute.

FADE OUT.

UNITL NEXT EPISODE...