

SGT. MEAT

by

Jonny Lewis

As told to Jonny Lewis  
by former U.S. Army medic  
Specialist Sergeant Michael Meath

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SUPER: AUGUST 2003 - IRAQ

MEDIC SGT. MICHAEL MEATH HAS COMPLETED HIS TOUR OF DUTY AND  
BEGINS THE DISCHARGE PROCEDURE.

1 INT. DISCHARGE PROCESSING OFFICE - IRAQ - DAY

Sgt. Meath enters the Discharge Processing Office, and greets the admin officer.

MEATH  
Reporting for PTSD screening. What do I do?

The Admin Officer hands Meath a stack of papers three inches thick.

ADMIN OFFICER  
Fill these out. I'm going to lunch.

Meath looks at his watch: 12:00 noon.

MEATH  
Okay, I'll see you at 1:00.

ADMIN OFFICER  
(chuckles)  
If you don't finish today you can come back tomorrow morning. Then we send you for further processing when you get stateside. Unless you answer "No" to Question Number 4.

MEATH  
What's Question 4?

The Admin points it out on the top sheet.

MEATH (cont'd)  
(reads)  
"While in the field, did you ever fire your weapon?"

Meath laughs out loud.

MEATH (cont'd)  
I was in country for 355 days.

ADMIN OFFICER  
Did you ever fire your weapon?

MEATH

I went on like, I dunno, *dozens* of missions.

ADMIN OFFICER

Did you fire your weapon, Sergeant Meath?

MEATH

Seriously?

The Admin says nothing.

2 INT. RECRUITING OFFICE - DAY

SUPER: "U.S. ARMY RECRUITING OFFICE - MICHIGAN, APRIL 2000"

Recruiter sits at his desk doing paperwork. Meath enters.

MEATH

Hey, Sarge. Good to see you again.

RECRUITER

Meath. Ready to finalize the paperwork?

MEATH

I'm so psyched! Airborne. Special forces. Yeah!

RECRUITER

But your speeding ticket last week--

MEATH

(laughs as he tells  
the story)

Oh yeah, so funny. I'm coming back from my mom's after dinner, and it's downhill, right, and this cop pulls me over, I'm going *one mile* over the speed limit, and he gives me a freakin' ticket.

RECRUITER

Meath, I was really happy when you came in here last month. I think, this guy's a little older, got a college degree, maybe a little smarter. But I didn't make my quota for the month because your speeding ticket delayed the process.

MEATH

But I'm here now, right?

RECRUITER

That means you don't get special forces. You don't get airborne.

MEATH

What? That's half the reason I signed up.

RECRUITER

You'll start as Infantry. They can get you into special forces or airborne down the line, once you get assigned to your unit.

MEATH

Whoa, shit, Sarge. You had me goin' there for a minute. I still get the money, right? The \$20K and \$65 thou off my student loan debt?

RECRUITER

That remains.

MEATH

Alright then, lemme sign.

Recruiter slides the papers over.

3 EXT. FORT SILL - TRAINING GROUNDS - DAY

SUPER: "Fort Sill, Oklahoma - U.S. Army Basic Training - November, 2000"

A MONTAGE OF  
BASIC TRAINING:

- \*\*SOLDIERS RUNNING IN FORMATION\*\*

Boots pound the dirt. A \*\*DRILL SERGEANT\*\* shouts cadence, his voice cutting through the early morning fog.

- \*\*OBSTACLE COURSE\*\*

A recruit \*\*struggles\*\* to climb a rope. Another one \*\*slips in the mud\*\*, face-first, as others \*\*push past\*\* him.

– **\*\*RIFLE DRILLS\*\***

Recruits stand in a straight line, rifles aimed. **\*\*BANG! BANG!\*\*** A few flinch. The **\*\*DRILL SERGEANT\*\*** growls.

– **\*\*MEALTIME IN THE MESS HALL\*\***

Soldiers shovel down food. One recruit dares to **\*\*speak\*\***—immediate regret as a **\*\*SERGEANT\*\*** slams his tray beside him.

– **\*\*LIVE-FIRE EXERCISES\*\***

Gunfire echoes. Soldiers crawl under barbed wire as **\*\*EXPLOSIONS\*\*** shake the ground.

– **\*\*THE FINAL RUCK MARCH\*\***

Exhausted recruits **\*\*trudge forward\*\***, carrying heavy packs. Sweat, mud, and pure willpower.

**END MONTAGE.**

4 **EXT. FIELD - DAY**

The sky is overcast, but with a rainbow, and the men are digging foxholes. Suddenly lightning strikes the ground and scorches it, with a sound like an explosion. Six soldiers are knocked to the ground. Five of them slowly get up, but one, JACKSON, a skinny African American, instantly pops to his feet, as it starts to rain.

JACKSON

God struck me! God struck me, man!

Jackson is running around in circles, looking over his shoulder like he's afraid God is going to strike him again.

JACKSON (cont'd)

I done wrong, and God struck me! We gotta repent! God's watchin'!

SGT TRAVERS

Somebody tackle that asshole!

The stunned soldiers don't move.

SGT TRAVERS (cont'd)  
Go on, knock him down, for  
chrissakes!

One of the soldiers runs at Jackson, and takes him down with a perfect football tackle.

SGT TRAVERS (cont'd)  
Well, what are you standing around  
for? God's not going to strike anyone  
else, but if He does I'll consider  
myself lucky. Get back to digging.

The soldiers get back to digging, now in the pouring rain.

SGT TRAVERS (cont'd)  
Meat! Take Jackson back to barracks  
and get him checked out.

Meath goes, takes Jackson and leads him away.

JACKSON  
(mumbling)  
He struck me, Meat. He struck me.

After a few steps, Jackson stops in his tracks and looks up at the sky.

JACKSON (cont'd)  
(with a big smile)  
He struck me. But He didn't take me.

MEATH  
Yeah, come on, Jackson.

Meath takes Jackson by the arm and they start to move forward again, with Jackson still looking up at the sky, with eyes of wonder.

5 INT. HOSPITAL - EVENING

The soldiers are sitting in chairs in a hallway.

NURSE  
Okay now, everybody's going to get a  
CAT scan, just in case. We'll start  
with the soldier who was actually  
struck by the lightning. Who's that?

Everybody points at Jackson.

JESSUP  
 Nobody. Nobody got struck by  
 lightning.

JACKSON  
 (pleased)  
 I'm the one. God struck me.

JESSUP  
 It struck the ground.

NURSE  
 (to Jackson)  
 Step right this way, soldier.

Jessup and Meath shake their heads.

6 INT. HOSPITAL - EVENING - LATER

The soldiers are sitting in the same chairs, but now four of them have IVs in their arms, each with an IV pole in front of them. Sgt Travers enters the room.

SGT TRAVERS  
 What the holy hell is going on here?

NURSE  
 They said they were feeling dizzy  
 after the lightning.

SGT TRAVERS  
 "Dizzy"? *Nobody* was hit by lightning!  
 Take those IVs out.  
 (to the soldiers)  
 Enough of this shit! Back to the  
 barracks! On the double!  
 (to himself)  
 Jesus!

7 INT./EXT. WHAT HAPPENS BETWEEN HERE AND ASSIGNMENT?

8 INT. BARRACKS - DAY

CPT BLOCH  
 Alright troops, I have your  
 assignments. Put your dicks back in  
 your pants and listen up.

MEATH  
 Where do you think we'll get?

JESSUP

Well, I feel like we're moving up.

MEATH

Yeah?

JESSUP

So, north of Oklahoma, that would be Kansas.

MEATH

Seriously, man. I'm thinking Germany probably, or Italy. Lotta guys end up in Korea. That would be cool. Maybe visit Jin-Hye's family.

Meanwhile, Captain Bloch is reading off the assignments.

CPT BLOCH

Halloran... Germany. Innes... Japan.

MEATH

Oh, score!

CPT BLOCH

Jessup...Kansas.

MEATH

Hahahaha! Kansas! Ha, you unlucky bastard!

JESSUP

Well, you know, Kansas was my dream, so I'm okay with it.

CPT BLOCH

Kiernan... Florida. Laver... California. Meath... Kansas.

MEATH

What the--? What the hell? Is this a joke? We're both going to freaking Kansas?

CPT BLOCH

O'Hara...Georgia. O'Riley...Korea. Park...Kansas.

JESSUP

Oh, great, we hit the trifecta. The three musketeers are all going to Kansas.



MEATH

Well, that's cool. At least I'll get to keep seeing Jin-Hye.

JESSUP

There ya go. Dreams do come true in the Army.

9 INT. BARRACKS - EVENING

The platoon enters the barracks, which are old and shabby. Meath and Jessup throw their duffel bags on bunks next to each other.

MEATH

Will ya look at that peeling paint? That can't be good. Probably has lead in it.

JESSUP

I think asbestos would be the bigger problem. That shit just floats through the air.

MEATH

Where's there asbestos?

JESSUP

In the walls.

MEATH

Which walls?

JESSUP

All of 'em, probably.

MEATH

What?

JESSUP

Yeah. Bad shit. In the civilian world they'd have torn it out by now.

MEATH

What about here, what about us?

JESSUP

Yeah, what about us. Hah! Get some sleep, Meat.

Meath shakes his head, then gets ready for bed.

10 EXT. NTC - DAY

(NTC is the Army National Training Center.)

The Lieutenant is assigning the troops into their respective vehicles.

LT. FARWELL  
Jessup...you're driving Sgt. Meat  
here in "Betty."

JESSUP  
"Betty"?

LT. FARWELL  
The Meat Wagon. That's ironic: Sgt.  
Meat, riding in the Meat Wagon.

MEATH  
It's Meath, sir.

LT. FARWELL  
Right. That's why it's ironic. You do  
understand irony, right, Meat?

JESSUP  
No sir, he doesn't.

LT. FARWELL  
Well, get used to it, Meat. Jessup,  
fire it up, take Sgt. Meat for a  
ride.

JESSUP  
Yes sir.

Jessup and Meath load into the big medic truck. Jessup starts  
it up, shifts into gear, it lurches forward 6 feet and  
immediately dies. Jessup tries to restart it, but it's dead.

MEATH  
Quit screwing around, Jessup. And yes  
I do understand irony.

JESSUP  
That's good, Meat, because I'm not  
screwing around. This big bucket just  
ain't movin'. Eye-ronic, ain't it.

MEATH  
Shit.

11 INT. BARRACKS - AFTERNOON

Meath and Jessup are playing cards. Privates Davis and Lundeman enter.

MEATH

You guys are done? I thought you'd be out all morning.

DAVIS

Nah, we got lucky. Our vehicle crapped out on us. Came back early.

MEATH

Lucky? That's not luck. What if you're out on the battlefield and your rig craps out?

DAVIS

I dunno. What're you guys doin' here already?

MEATH

Where do they get these rigs from, man? A freakin' used car lot?

DAVIS

You guys too?

LUNDEMAN

That's ironic.

MEATH

No, it's not ironic. It's messed up.

JESSUP

Do you know what "ironic" means, Lundeman?

LUNDEMAN

I dunno, it's just kinda the word for the day out there. "Messed up"?

JESSUP

Bingo!

MEATH

Jesus.

12 INT. MESS HALL -EVENING

The soldiers are eating their food. Meath and Jessup are seated. Others are finishing up. Private Aaron passes by Lundeman and Davis as he goes to empty his tray.

AARON PVT

(to Davis and  
Lundeman)

Hear you guys crapped out. Couldn't even make it through your first exercise. Losers!

LUNDEMAN

Hey, Jessup and Meat didn't even get out of the gate. Dumbshits.

JESSUP

Where'd yours fall apart, Lundeman?

LUNDEMAN

We made it clear to the other side of the compound.

JESSUP

That's quite a walk. How far would you say we walked, Meat?

MEATH

About 20 feet.

JESSUP

So who's the dumbshits?

MEATH

Hey, that's ironic, wouldn't you say, Lundeman?

LUNDEMAN

Yeah. You guys get all the luck.

MEATH

No! It's not luck! It's messed up!

LUNDEMAN

Yeah, yeah, ironic, I know.

MEATH

No, it's not ironic, it's messed up!

LUNDEMAN

Jessup said ironic means "messed up."

DAVIS  
He did. I heard him.

Meath is speechless.

JESSUP  
Forget it, Meat. It's not ever gonna  
make sense.

13 EXT. MESS AREA - DAY

A second group of soldiers is passing by the mess area now. These guys look tough. They are Returnees from the Bosnian Peace Action.

MEATH  
Geez, Jessup, look at those guys.

JESSUP  
What?

MEATH  
They don't look like us. They  
look...tough.

JESSUP  
Right, 'cause we're not.

MEATH  
I didn't mean that.

JESSUP  
I did.  
(chuckling)  
We're not. Those guys...those guys  
are what you call "battle-hardened."

MEATH  
That's what I wanna be. I wanna have  
that look. I wanna have gone  
somewhere, done somethin'. Lemme  
catch one of 'em, chat 'em up.

JESSUP  
What're you, in fifth grade?

MEATH  
No, man, if we're gonna be goin'  
someplace, I wanna know what it's  
gonna be like.

(to a Returned)  
Hey! Hey, Sarge!

(MORE)

MEATH (cont'd)  
 (off the Returnee's  
 look)  
 Sergeant, hey, can I ask you some  
 questions?

Returnee #1 stops, looks at him.

MEATH (cont'd)  
 Where're you guys comin' back from?

RETURNEE #1  
 Bosnia.

MEATH  
 Was it cool?

RETURNEE #1  
 (after a moment)  
 Was it cool? What're you, in sixth  
 grade?

JESSUP  
 Fifth.

The other two ignore this remark.

MEATH  
 Okay, I mean, what was it like?

RETURNEE #1  
 You shoot at people. They shoot at  
 you. Yeah, it was cool.

The Returnee walks away. Meath hits him with one more  
 question.

MEATH  
 Thanks. Hey, Sarge, one...one more  
 question: your vehicles...

At this the Returnee turns to face Meath.

MEATH (cont'd)  
 I can see you're busy, or preoccupied  
 or something.

Returnee gives him a look that says "Sheesh."

MEATH (cont'd)  
 No, it's just that our vehicles here,  
 they're...they're for shit. Always  
 breakin' down.  
 (MORE)

MEATH (cont'd)

And I'm just worried--not worried--  
just concerned, that our vehicles,  
over there, might let us down.

RETURNEE #1

Don't you fret, soldier. They gave us  
brand new vehicles over there. Top  
notch. It was cool. Now if you'll  
excuse me, I gotta go take a shit.

Returnee walks away.

MEATH

Thanks. Have a good one. I mean, not  
a good--

JESSUP

Have a good shit, Sarge!

MEATH

Jessup, you're such a smartass. I  
didn't mean that. Look, hey, I got  
some good info, right? We're gonna  
get brand new vehicles over there. No  
more "Broke Down Betty."

JESSUP

Yeah, right, good intel.

MEATH

I didn't say "intel," I said "info."  
I know it's nothing special, but I  
was worried, weren't you?

JESSUP

I never worry. I just always expect  
the worst. That way I'm not  
disappointed.

MEATH

You're kind of a pessimist, ya know  
that? Why'd you ever join the Army  
anyway?

JESSUP

For the food, Meat, for the food. Now  
if you'll excuse me I gotta go take a  
shit too.

MEATH

Yeah well have a good one. Have a  
truly good shit.

They both laugh.

JESSUP

I'll try my best. And report back.

MEATH

Make sure you do. I need the intel.

14 INT. MAJOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Meath knocks and enters.

MEATH

You wanted to see me, sir?

MAJOR MAXWELL

Yes, Meat. You got married last weekend?

MEATH

Yes sir.

MAJOR MAXWELL

Sorry to hear that. Anyway, I'm going to give you a piece of advice I give all my soldiers. When I was stationed in Germany, I bought my wife a BMW on her birthday.

MEATH

Wow, that's pretty freaking awesome. I like that idea.

MAJOR MAXWELL

Yeah. I've let her down every year since. Do not buy your wife a BMW on her birthday, anniversary, or anything like that. Just buy your wife that because you love her. You'll always be trying to top yourself. All right, go away.

MEATH

Yes sir. Thank you. Uh, can I say something sir?

The Major nods.

MEATH (cont'd)

Well sir...uh...sir, you've been calling me "Meat," and...that's not my name.



MAJOR MAXWELL  
Do you think I'm an idiot, Meat?

MEATH  
What sir? No sir.

MAJOR MAXWELL  
I know what your name is: Meath. But you're a medic, you drive the "Meat Wagon." It's a joke. A major can't have a sense of humor?

MEATH  
Oh. Well, sure. But just the same, do you think you could call me by my real name...sir?

MAJOR MAXWELL  
I like "Meat" better. Dismissed.

Meath salutes and leaves.

15 EXT. ROLLING OUT - DAY

Soldiers are standing by, ready to get into their vehicles.

LT. FARWELL  
Alright, men, you've got your vehicle assignments. Let's go have some fun in the desert!

Meath and the others pile into their respective vehicles. In Meath's case, it's "Betty" again.

MEATH  
Shit! Betty again?

LT. FARWELL  
She's been fixed, Meat. Ready to roll. Can it, and hop in. If you think you can climb up that high, haha!

Meath's driver is already in the vehicle.

MEATH  
I've got a driver? Cool!

DRIVER  
Yñiquez.

MEATH  
Inikkés?

DRIVER  
Close enough.

MEATH  
Meath.

DRIVER  
Meat?

MEATH  
Close enough. Man, I don't know about  
this meat wagon.

DRIVER  
It just came back from the mechanic.  
Those guys know what they're doing.  
Don't sweat it.

Off the convoy rolls into the desert. MONTAGE of vehicles in motion, men inside and outside of the vehicles.

**LATER:** The convoy suddenly comes to a halt.

MEATH  
What's up?

DRIVER  
Dunno. Guy in front of me stopped, so  
I stopped.

MEATH  
So, what do we do?

DRIVER  
When they roll again, we roll again.  
Relax, have a smoke.

MEATH  
I don't smoke.

After a bit there is the sound of engines. The convoy is rolling.

MEATH (cont'd)  
Yeah?

DRIVER  
Yeah. Looks like we're going hard  
right.

Driver starts the vehicle, going hard right. After about 30 seconds it stalls out. He tries to restart, to no avail.

MEATH

Shit! I told you, man.

DRIVER

(on radio)

Yo, LT, we're stalled out back here.  
Can you hold up a sec?

(pause)

No, I've tried.

(pause)

Alright, will do.

MEATH

So?

DRIVER

They'll pick us up in a sec.

MEATH

Shit.

The LT pulls up in his vehicle.

DRIVER

Ok, Meat, let's go.

LT. FARWELL

Ok, Ineeks, come on with us.

Yñiquez and Meath emerge from "Betty" and head toward the LT's vehicle.

LT. FARWELL (cont'd)

Whoa, not you, Meat.

MEATH

What?

LT. FARWELL

That's a \$200,000 vehicle, Meat.  
Can't just leave it in the middle of  
nowhere. You're the TC. You stay.

MEATH

Alright, uh...

LT. FARWELL

Don't worry, we'll send someone back  
for you. You'll be fine.

MEATH  
Alright, Lieutenant.  
(to himself)  
At least it's getting cooler.

16 EXT. DESERT/VEHICLE - DAY

The convoy rolls off, leaving Meath alone in his vehicle.

17 INT./EXT. DESERT/VEHICLE - DUSK

Meath, worried, looks at his watch, tries to reassure himself.

MEATH  
They'll be back. "No man left  
behind." Or is that the Marines?

He pulls out a copy of "A Farewell to Arms" and begins to read.

18 INT./EXT. DESERT/VEHICLE - NIGHTTIME

Meath climbs out and looks at the desert sky, brilliant with a million stars.

MEATH  
Wow.

He smiles, gets back in the vehicle. He starts to use the radio, then changes his mind, settles down, finds a good position to sleep. Smiles and closes his eyes.

19 INT./EXT. DESERT/VEHICLE - MORNING

Meath wakes up. Gets out of the vehicle and takes a pee. Gets back in the vehicle and hits the switch to lower the back hatch. It goes down with a "Rrrr" sound. He tries the radio but it's dead. He checks, and everything is dead.

MEATH  
Shit.

Suddenly two other vehicles come barreling down on him from out of nowhere. The soldiers are very serious and gung-ho. They drive up fast, dismount with guns aimed at Meath.

MEATH (cont'd)

Relax, guys, I'm not a threat. I'm just broke down.

SOLDIER "A"

Area secure! We thought you were some kind of decoy. You know, a trick.

SOLDIER "B"

What do you mean, "broke down"? Where's your LT?

MEATH

Left me here yesterday.

SOLDIER "B"

Yesterday. Man, that's messed up. Want us to call it in?

MEATH

That'd be nice, thanks. And if you've got any water.

Soldier "B" gets a couple bottles.

SOLDIER "A"

Okay, men, saddle up and roll it out!

Soldier "B" tosses two bottles of water toward Meath's vehicle. Meath waves meekly as the soldiers roar off across the desert. He climbs back in his vehicle.

20 INT./EXT. DESERT/VEHICLE - DAY

Meath sits on the outside of the vehicle and stares off into the distance. After a moment he gets inside the vehicle.

21 INT. VEHICLE - DAY

Meath grabs a "A Farewell to Arms" again, gets comfy, and starts reading.

22 INT./EXT. DESERT/VEHICLE - DUSK

It's starting to get dark. The back door of the vehicle is still down. Meath tries to raise it, but there's no power. A coyote howls, and another answers it. Meath twitches at the sound, looks at the open door, then climbs up on top of the vehicle. The coyotes howl again, Meath smiles again at a million stars, and settles down to sleep.

23 INT./EXT. DESERT/VEHICLE - MORNING

Meath wakes up, grabs a bottle of water, and climbs down off the vehicle to take a pee. He jogs in a circle around the vehicle for exercise, stops, gets back in.

INT./EXT. DESERT/VEHICLE - DUSK

Meath leans against the side of the vehicle.

MEATH

Well, now this is getting ridiculous.

He climbs up onto the vehicle again, listens for the coyotes. Nothing. He lays down. Then they start up again.

MEATH (cont'd)

Well at least I'm not alone.

He sleeps.

24 INT./EXT. DESERT/VEHICLE - DAY

Meath, inside the vehicle, hears the sound of an engine outside. He looks. A single small vehicle comes his way. It arrives and a private gets out.

PRIVATE

You need some help?

MEATH

I coulda used some help two days ago. Now I just want a shower.

PRIVATE

Well, hop in.

Meath gets in the vehicle with the private.

MEATH

Thanks. Who sent you: my LT or the other guy?

PRIVATE

"Sent me"? Nobody. I was with my unit a ways over there. I told 'em I thought I saw a vehicle over here. They said "naw," but they let me go check it out.

They roll across the desert toward the private's unit.

25 INT. BARRACKS - DAY

Meath enters. PARSONS, GONZO (Gonzalez) and MURPHY approach him.

PARSONS  
Meat, where the hell were you?

GONZO  
He went AWOL.  
(to Meath)  
Good thing you came back, Meat.

MEAT  
No I didn't.

GONZO  
You're here, aren't ya?

MEAT  
No, I didn't go AWOL.

MURPHY  
He broke down. Dick! He didn't do  
shit for two days.

MEATH  
I broke down.  
(grinning)  
I didn't do shit. For two days.

PARSONS  
What the hell! We were out there  
bustin' our asses day and night.

GONZO  
What the hell did you do all that  
time?

MEATH  
I read a couple books. And I slept a  
lot. It was awesome.

MURPHY  
Asshole slept!

PARSONS  
You suck, Meat!

MEATH  
Not my fault, guys. Betty...she just  
broke down.

PARSONS

Again? What did you do? Did you break something?

MURPHY

You broke something, didn't you, Meat?

MEATH

Guys, no. It was just bad luck.

GONZO

You got the best bad luck I ever seen, man.

Meath shrugs his shoulders, smiles. Gonzo and Murphy start harassing someone else.

PARSONS

You and Suarez, neither you didn't do shit.

MEATH

Suarez, what's up with you, man?

SUAREZ

I'm done, Meat.

MEATH

Whaddya you mean "done." Aren't you about to get your E6?

SUAREZ

Naw, man. I was in Bosnia, right? The shit we saw over there...I'm just done. I don't wanna play Army no more. They can't make me.

MEATH

Can't they throw you in the guardhouse or somethin'?

SUAREZ

Let 'em. I'm done. I got three more months to go, and I ain't gonna do shit. Let the rest of you fools play this game.

PARSONS

Pussy!

MEATH

Didn't your LT give you shit?



SUAREZ

Nah, he don't care. He swears at me a little more than he used to. With him it's easy come easy go. He'll get a new bunch of kids soon, so he don't care. It's just a job to him. What about you, Meat? How long you stayin' in?

MEATH

I don't know. I haven't been overseas yet. Maybe a coupla tours.

SUAREZ

Shit.

Suarez shakes his head and ambles away. Meat goes to check on "Betty" with the mechanics.

26 INT. MECHANIC'S GARAGE - DAY

Meat enters. He spots Betty, and goes to speak to the mechanic working on it.

MEATH

How's it coming?

MECHANIC

All done. Just wiping off the extra grease.

MEATH

What? You've only had it for like an hour.

MECHANIC

Yeah, well, it wasn't anything too serious.

MEATH

Man, how come our guys can't do that?

MECHANIC

I don't know. But must be a reason they hire us civilians here, right?

MEATH

Our guys just swap out the parts, and if they can't figure out which part's broke, then it just takes forever.

MECHANIC

Anyway, she's all yours. She's fixed for now, but I wouldn't trust her in battle.

MEATH

Oh, no worries. We're not taking old "Broke Down Betty" with us. When we go to Iraq, she's stayin' right here.

MECHANIC

Lucky for you, then. You wanna drive her out, or you want us to?

MEATH

Yeah, I'll take her.

Meat gets in the vehicle, revs it a bit, smiles, and roars out of the garage.

MEATH (cont'd)

Yeah! That's what I like to see!

27 INT. BARRACKS - EVENING

Guys are getting dressed up. Meat returns from the mechanics garage.

JESSUP

Hey, Meat! We're goin' out to party tonight? You coming?

MEATH

Uh, I--

JESSUP

It's funeral detail tomorrow. No PT.

MEATH

Oh, then, heck yeah! I'm in!

JESSUP

Hurry it up, we're about to leave.

Meat quickly gets ready. He and Jessup join a group and exit.

PARTY NIGHT NEED STORY FROM MIKE

Maybe include the line "I love it when somebody dies."

28 EXT. CEMETERY - MORNING

FUNERAL DETAIL - ASK MIKE FOR STORY

9/11 HAPPENS □ GET MIKE'S STORY - cut to quickly to the effects: money, better equipment, bullets, what else?

29 GOING OVERSEAS:  
BOARDING  
ARRIVING

30 EXT. DESERT BASE - DAY

The soldiers are assembled for basic training by the LT.

LT MANELLI  
Gentlemen, this is desert weapons training. The real desert weapons training.

The Master Sergeant motions to his AIDE, who hands him a rifle.

LT MANELLI (cont'd)  
This is an AK-47. The weapon of choice of our enemy.

He throws it in the sand, kicks it around, picks it up, throws it in the dirt again, then picks it up. Fires it: □ BAM, BAM, BAM, BAM, BAM, BAM!

LT MANELLI (cont'd)  
And this...

Manelli motions to his AIDE, who hands him a different rifle.

LT MANELLI (cont'd)  
...is an M-16. The finest weapon the U.S. Army has seen fit to provide you with.

The LT throws it in the sand, then picks it up. He attempts to fire it, but it jams.

LT MANELLI (cont'd)  
Keep your weapons out of the dirt, gentlemen. That is all. Dismissed.

The LT departs.

MEATH

Shit. We're all gonna die.

JESSUP

That's just the LT's way of saying  
"Clean your weapon."

MEATH

Yeah. And keep it out of the sand. In  
a desert.

SARGE-IN-CHARGE

Alright, men, line up, let's take a  
few shots, just to get your feet wet,  
get you warmed up for battle.

The men make a line, and begin shooting sporadically out into the desert. A Gun Truck with a bubble turret passes by behind them. The gunner loses control of the turret, and it swings loosely around firing machine-gun rounds all up the line of soldiers. RATATATATATATATATATAT! RATATATATATATATATATAT! RATATATATATATATATATAT! Soldiers hit the ground. Several rounds hit the sand a foot in front of Meath's face. The firing stops as suddenly as it started. The soldiers take a moment before seeing where the bullets came from, then get up one by one.

JESSUP

This is going well.

MEATH

Great! I'm gonna killed before I even  
deploy!

The soldier who lost control of the machine gun has it firm in hand again, as he yells out:

MACHINE GUNNER

Sorry, guys! My bad!

31 EXT. LANDING AREA - DAY

Meath and Jessup approach the landing area of the C-130 that has brought their vehicles. Meath is dismayed when he recognizes "Broke Down Betty."

MEATH

Oh god, it's "Betty"!

JESSUP

Frickin' "Broke Down Betty."

MEATH

I'm not drivin' that thing.

Meath spots the Lieutenant.

MEATH (cont'd)

Sir! Lieutenant. Sir, with respect, sir, I had this vehicle at NTC, and they specifically told me it would not be here.

LIEUTENANT

I don't know why they told you that, Sergeant. We always bring the NTC vehicles into the field. The troops are happy to have vehicles they're familiar with.

MEATH

I'm very familiar with it, sir, and it's a piece of crap.

LIEUTENANT

You're a piece of crap, too, Sergeant, but you're here. And Betty's here, and godfuckit, I'm here. Let's make the best of it, shall we?

MEATH

Yes sir.

LIEUTENANT

You won't be drivin' it right away, though.

MEATH

Sir?

LIEUTENANT

Transport had a little problem getting it off the plane. Some issue with the steering. Might take a few days to fix.

JESSUP

Ha ha!

MEATH

What? There's no "ha ha" here, Jessup. We're in a war zone.

JESSUP  
 (chuckling)  
 "You're a piece of crap too." Ha!

MEATH  
 Whaddya think that makes you, Jessup?

JESSUP  
 Oh, I've got no illusions about it,  
 Meat. Anybody halfway important, they  
 didn't send 'em here. So by  
 definition, if you're here, you're a  
 piece of crap. Don't take it  
 personal.

32 INT. BARRACKS - DAY

Meath and Jessup are WHERE? Barracks? Somewhere more interesting. Kind of ties in with the nickname scene.

JESSUP  
 Meath, you are such a lucky shit.

MEATH  
 What? Why do you say that? Broke Down  
 Betty just followed me all the way  
 from Kansas.

JESSUP  
 You've got this quality. You're...I  
 don't know...  
 (as if it's an  
 insult)  
*likable.*

MEATH  
 What are you talking about?

JESSUP  
 Hey, Sanders. What do you think of  
 Meat?

SANDERS  
 What do you--

JESSUP  
 Do you like him?

SANDERS  
 Yeah, he's alright. I like him a lot  
 better than I like you.

JESSUP

See? You don't necessarily do anything to be likable. You just are, likable. And lucky. Truthfully, it pisses me off sometimes. I love that cute Korean gal, but I don't stand a chance against you.

MEATH

She is cute. But isn't she like 18? She looks really young.

JESSUP

No, she's 32. See? You don't know shit, and yet somehow everything works out for you.

MEATH

Hmm. Thirty-two?

JESSUP

And this war? I don't know about Sanders there, I don't know about me. But you? You'll come out of it just fine. You're freaking blessed, Meat. And you don't even see it. Which makes it, weirdly, all the more magical. Screw you, Meat.

Jessup walks off, pissed. Meath is puzzled for a moment, then picks up a magazine.

WOULD BE EVEN COOLER IF SOMETHING MAGICAL COULD HAPPEN TO MEATH IN THE NEXT INSTANT.

33 INT. CAPTAIN'S TENT - DAY

The Captain is addressing Meath, Jessup, Smitty, and one other soldier.

CAPTAIN

Alright, men, you need to go pick up Schwartz at Intel 6 HQ. Here's the address.

MEATH

Um, sir, we don't have any bullets yet.

CAPTAIN

You'll have 'em soon, sergeant. Any other questions?

No hands go up, no one speaks.

CAPTAIN (cont'd)

Alright then, roll out. Report to me  
as soon as you get back.

The captain leaves. Jessup and the others start to exit.  
Meath lingers.

JESSUP

Meat, come on.

Meath unsticks himself, and they talk on the way to their  
Humvees.

MEATH

What, you guys aren't gonna back me  
up?

SMITTY

Back you up on what?

MEATH

Uh, the "no bullets" thing. Aren't  
bullets kind of standard? Like, a  
requirement? For this whole war thing  
we're doin'?

JESSUP

Relax, Meat.

MEATH

And these freakin' Humvees, look,  
they don't even have doors.

JESSUP

If we really needed bullets, we'd  
have bullets. They'd give us bullets  
if they had bullets.

MEATH

I want bullets!

JESSUP

Yeah, but you don't have bullets.  
Therefore, you don't need bullets.

MEATH

Jessup, you are either the zennest  
guy ever, or you're just freakin'  
nuts.



SMITTY

I think the no doors keeps it cooler.

34 Meath rolls his eyes. They get into their Humvees and take off.

34 EXT. DESERT - KUWAIT - DAY

A higher-ranking sergeant (nicknamed "BIG SARGE," commands the Humvee ahead of him, with Jessup driving. (Big Sarge--or simply B.S.--is named that not because he is large of frame, but because he takes himself very seriously.) Meath is riding shotgun in the second Humvee. They ride for a couple hours. Big Sarge's Humvee stops, and Meath's driver does also.

MEATH

Okay, so what's this about? Does he know where we're going?

Big Sarge gets out of his vehicle and comes back to talk to Meath's driver.

BIG SARGE

How you guys doing back here?

DRIVER

Good. We about there, Big Sarge?

BIG SARGE

Just about. Just wanted to make sure you guys are okay.

MEATH

We're good. How much longer?

But Big Sarge is already on his way back to his Humvee. The two vehicles move out.

MEATH (cont'd)

What's that you called him?

DRIVER

"Big Sarge."

MEATH

He's not that much bigger than you are.

DRIVER

It's more about his ego.

MEATH

He doesn't get pissed?

DRIVER

Nah, he thinks it's a compliment.  
Whole platoon calls him that, right  
to his face. He loves it.

They drive for a couple more hours. Big Sarge's Humvee stops by a road sign in Arabic. Meath's radio speaks. It's Big Sarge.

BIG SARGE

Okay guys, almost there, I think.  
Uh...either of you guys read Arabic?

MEATH

Nope.

DRIVER

No sir.

BIG SARGE

Not even a little?

MEATH

Nope.

DRIVER

Sorry, Big Sarge.

MEATH

Sarge, I think we should've turned left at that last intersection. I'm looking at the map, and I think if we turn left at the next intersection we can double-back and get there.

BIG SARGE

Oh yeah, Meath?

MEATH

I'm just looking at the map, sir.

BIG SARGE

Well, I think we're doing just fine, Meath. Just a little further straight ahead. Follow us, private.

DRIVER

Yes sir.

Big Sarge returns to his Humvee again, and they move forward. They drive for another hour, stop at a crossroads. Big Sarge's Humvee idles for a few minutes, then he comes on the radio.

BIG SARGE  
Private, my intuition tells me go  
left, and I think we're almost there.  
I can see lights. We're going left.

DRIVER  
Copy that, B.S.

BIG SARGE  
What's that, private?

DRIVER  
I said, "Copy that, Big Sarge."

BIG SARGE  
Alright, let's do it!

The vehicles turn left.

MEATH  
B.S.

35 EXT. INTEL-6 HQ - EVENING

It's dusk now, as they arrive at Intel 6 HQ.

DRIVER  
Made it.

MEATH  
I think I'm beginning to understand  
Jessup.

DRIVER  
Who, Sarge?

MEATH  
If you care about any of this shit--  
any of it--it just drives you buggy.  
So you gotta not care.

DRIVER  
Due respect, Sarge, I think that's  
kinda negative.

MEATH  
(trying to convince  
himself)  
No, you're right. I'm fine. It's all  
good.

Big Sarge, Meath, and the two drivers get out of their vehicles.

BIG SARGE  
See, Meath? I got us here. Hah!

DRIVER  
Why does he keep calling you "Meath"?

MEATH  
I don't know.

37 The four enter the HQ.

36 INT. INTEL 6 HQ - EVENING

Meath and Scofield grab a cup of coffee, while Big Sarge and Jessup talk with HQ staff, including KEVIN SCHWARTZ.

BIG SARGE  
Alright, Schwartz, let's go. You'll ride with Meath and his driver.

Big Sarge, Meath, Jessup, and Scofield leave the HQ building, bringing Schwartz with them. As Big Sarge heads toward his Humvee, Jessup pauses to announce to Meath and Scofield:

JESSUP  
(with a huge laugh)  
This is Schwartz!

Meath and Scofield are puzzled as Jessup walks away, still laughing.

SCOFIELD  
Hop in, Lieutenant.

MEATH  
Welcome aboard.

SCHWARTZ  
Uh, no, I'm a corporal. Corporal Kevin Schwartz.

MEATH  
We were supposed to pick up a lieutenant: Lieutenant Jonathan Schwartz.

SCHWARTZ  
No, sorry, I'm Kevin. Kevin Schwartz.

MEATH

Then what...I mean why...?

SCHWARTZ

Oh, yeah, Jonathan's at Intel 6. This is Intel 4. But we both speak Arabic, and your sergeant said he didn't want to come back empty-handed. He says, "Any Schwartz'll do."

(chuckles)

Funny guy, huh?

MEATH

Funny war.

SCHWARTZ

So yeah: "Kevin."

SCOFIELD

"Scofield."

SCHWARTZ

You, Sarge?

MEATH

Me? "Meat." "Sergeant Meat."

SCHWARTZ

Hah!

(chuckles)

That's almost as good as "Any Schwartz'll do."

39 Meath just shakes his head. Scofield puts the Humvee in gear and they follow Big Sarge's Humvee back to base.

37 INT. BARRACKS - NIGHT

The Lieutenant is making an announcement to the troops relaxing in their barracks.

LT LT

Alright, listen up, everyone! We're going to Baghdad, then Ramadi, gonna start this thing up. There are some insurgents in Ramadi raising a ruckus, and we're going to put 'em down.

A general round of cheers goes up among the soldiers. Meath goes back to loading bullets into his weapon.

HOOVER  
 (excited)  
 When do we go, sir?

LT LT  
 Thursday. You've got five days to get  
 your shit in order, say goodbye--uh,  
 I mean hello--to your loved ones, and  
 such-like.

The LT departs. There is an excited buzz of talk among the  
 soldiers.

MEATH  
 Woo-hoo! We finally get to do what we  
 came here for!

JESSUP  
 I figured I'd have to earn that  
 college education at some point. I  
 guess this is it.

The LT returns.

LT LT  
 Almost forgot. The brass wants four  
 soldiers from each outfit to go in  
 early for recon. That'd be...  
 (looks at clipboard)  
 Franklin, Jessup, Meath, and  
 Suchowski. You roll tomorrow morning,  
 Oh Six Hundred. That is all.

Meath accidentally tips the box of bullets, several spilling  
 onto the floor.

MEATH  
 What?! Tomorrow?!

JESSUP  
 I thought you were excited: "Woo-  
 hoo."

MEATH  
 Yeah, no, I am.

JESSUP  
 You not ready?

MEATH  
 Yeah. Yeah, I'm ready. I'm just, not  
 quite..."ready ready." Ya know?

JESSUP

I know. Me too. But we've got nine hours to get "ready ready."

Meath clumsily starts picking up the spilled cartridges. Jessup grabs a laptop and starts typing an email.

MEATH

Oh yeah, crap, email. I gotta email Jin-Hye.

Meath grabs his own laptop. There is a cartridge still on the floor, under the bunk.

JESSUP

Missed one.

Meath leans over to get the bullet and knocks his laptop off his lap, sending it clattering onto the floor.

MEATH

Shit!

38 EXT. DESERT - MIDDAY

On the road to Baghdad and Ramadi. Two vehicles, stopped. Meath and Jessup are starting to fix a flat tire.

MEATH

Freakin' shit! Second time!

JESSUP

Better than those guys.

MEATH

Yeah, they laughed when we had our first one. They've had three now. Who the hell makes these tires?

JESSUP

I don't know, but I'm still winning the bet.

MEATH

What bet?

JESSUP

After our first one, I bet Suchowski they'd have more than us.

MEATH

Wha?

JESSUP

'Cause you're lucky, Meat. So if you're having bad luck, someone else has gotta have worse luck.

MEATH

You astound me, Jessup. How many extra tires do we have, anyway?

JESSUP

Enough. I think.

LATER

43 Tire fixed, they get back into their vehicle and both vehicles drive off.

39 EXT. THE "BURN SHITTERS" - DAY

There are three soldiers sitting nearby in the shade of the compound wall, smoking and playing cards.

Meath goes into the shitter shack. He stares at the wall, reading the graffiti, doing his business. Suddenly there is a whoosh and a THUD outside! Meath shudders, then opens the door and sees an unexploded mortar round in the sand ten feet from the shitter.

PRIVATE #1

Hey, Sergeant Meat, I bet that one scared the shit out of you!

They all laugh.

MEATH

Fuh!

They laugh some more. Meath closes the door and finishes up. The guys return to their game. Meath exits the shitter.

MEATH (cont'd)

(looking at the mortar)

Shit!

SOLDIER #1

I'll bet you did!

Meath, mesmerized by the mortar, doesn't hear them.



SOLDIER #2

There's your big war story to tell  
your grandkids, Sarge.

(in a "Grandpa  
voice")

Well, kids, I was sitting in the  
shitter...

45 Meath slowly walks away, still thinking about the dud mortar  
in the sand.

40 INT. BARRACKS - JUST BEFORE DUSK

Quick Reaction Force (QRF) soldiers are sleeping in their  
uniforms and boots when suddenly they hear the lieutenant  
screaming ON THE RADIO:

LT LT

Red-direct! Red-direct! Red-direct!  
Red-direct! Now! Red-direct!

The men bolt out of their beds and run to their vehicles.

Meath sits in the back of the vehicle as they cross the  
Euphrates River. Shortly, the soldiers up top let loose with  
the 50-caliber machine guns: Pota-pota-pota-pota-pota-pow!  
Pota-pota-pota-pota-pota-pow!

LT LT (cont'd)

Dismount! Dismount! Get the fuck out!

Meath and the others inside jump out of the vehicles, ready  
for action.

SOLDIER #5

Medic! Medic! Medic, now! Man down!

Meath, adrenaline pumping, runs full-tilt toward the voice,  
grabbing his medical kit as he runs.

MEATH

Oh shit, oh shit, oh shit!

Meath hears a godawful, inhuman moan coming from just past  
where the beckoning soldier stands, at the edge of a ditch.

MEATH (cont'd)

Oh my God! Oh my God!

The soldier frantically waves him over.

SOLDIER #5  
Down there, Sarge! Quick!

Meath jumps into the ditch to see that the "casualty" is a dying, skinny, bullet-riddled COW, moaning pathetically.

SOLDIER #5 (cont'd)  
Think you can save him, Sarge?

SOLDIER #6  
C'mon, you can do it, you're a trained chiropratter.

SOLDIER #5  
Crack his back, Sarge!

The soldiers all laugh at Meath.

MEATH  
You assholes.

47 Meath puts his medical kit back over his shoulder. They all walk back to their vehicles, Meath cursing under his breath. He is about to get back into his vehicle when he spots the beautiful sunset along the Euphrates River. He takes it in. The other soldiers pile into their vehicles, not noticing the sunrise. Meath is the last to climb inside. They roll out.

41 INT. BARRACKS - DAY

Sgt. Maj. Taggart enters.

SGT MJR TAGGART  
Okay, everyone, it's "Hearts and Minds Day." Let's go, up and out there!

MEATH  
(to Jessup)  
"Hearts and Minds"?

JESSUP  
Yeah, it was on the schedule. Didn't you see it?

MEATH  
Yeah, but what is it?

JESSUP  
Hey, Sgt. Major, isn't "hearts and minds" what helped us win in Vietnam?

SGT MJR TAGGART

Kiss my ass, Jessup. There's a big box of soccer balls outside. Everybody take one, and then mount your vehicle as per usual.

42 INT. VEHICLE - DAY

Jessup is driving. Meath is in back.

MEATH

So, we're gonna give these kids soccer balls and then they're gonna stop shooting at us?

JESSUP

If you were a kid and someone invaded your country, wouldn't you be happier if they gave you soccer balls?

MEATH

I'd prefer a football, but yeah, that would do it.

43 INT. VILLAGE - DAY

The convoy arrives. Curious kids pop out to watch. A soldier tosses out a soccer ball. Other soldiers hold up their soccer balls. Several kids run up to get one. A GIRL starts to cross the road to approach them, but a BOY pushes her down. Meath moves as if he is going to go help the girl.

MEATH

What the--

JESSUP

Be cool, Meath. This is Iraq, the sexes are separate here.

Meath settles back. Suddenly, the GUNNER atop another vehicle jerks the 50-caliber machine gun out of the way, stands up, takes off her helmet and whips around her blonde hair. She leaps from the vehicle, strides over to the boy, who says something in Arabic. She picks him up and holds him over her head like barbells for a second, then throws him into the water ditch.

The little girl is sitting on the ground like she just saw Wonder Woman. The other soldiers are in awe.

MEATH

Wow! I didn't know there were  
freakin' women here.

JESSUP

National Guard. She's an MP, Mike.

MEATH

What?

JESSUP

Women can be MPs in combat now.

The Gunner goes and hands a soccer ball to the Girl, who is standing now, beaming.

44 EXT. DESERT - DAY

Suddenly sniper fire hits the dirt near one of the vehicles. Sgt Major Taggert appears out of nowhere.

SGT MJR TAGGERT

Okay, let's go charge it! This way!

Taggert charges toward the direction of the sniper fire.

SCOUT RECON #1

Meat, go with him. Make sure he  
doesn't hurt himself.

MEATH

What? Why me?

SCOUT RECON #1

'Cause you're the freakin' medic,  
Meat. Just go!

Taggert, Meath, and a couple other soldiers trot 30 yards, then stop. There's no more sniper fire, and they give up and walk back to their vehicles.

MEATH

Why always me? It's not fair, man!

JESSUP

You shoulda checked the box on your enlistment papers that said, "Only send me to places where things are fair."

Meath glares at him.

JESSUP (cont'd)  
 Sorry. Yeah, you've had your share of  
 shit lately.

Meath raises an angry eyebrow at him.

JESSUP (cont'd)  
 No, hey, I wasn't referring to the  
 shitter incident. Really, you had  
 your share of bad stuff.

MEATH  
 (firmly)  
 I'm *fine*

45 INT. COMPOUND - EVENING

Ramadi Command Outpost.

JESSUP  
 You ready for the 2-mile PT test on  
 the 15th?

MEATH  
 No, I've just been lifting weights.  
 You?

JESSUP  
 I can do four miles easy, right now.

MEATH  
 Why do we have to keep doing physical  
 training all the time? Can't they  
 just let us focus on fighting the  
 damn war?

JESSUP  
 Like you're real busy with that. We  
 spent the whole afternoon yesterday  
 with binoculars pointed at the girls'  
 college across the street.

MEATH  
 I don't know why, with all the  
 clothes they got on.

JESSUP  
 How far can you do?

MEATH  
 Probably a mile.

JESSUP  
You oughta get practicing, my friend.

MEATH  
Here?

JESSUP  
Other guys are doing it.

MEATH  
Yeah, alright. School's closed today,  
anyway.

Meath gets ready, leaves the room.

46 EXT. COMPOUND - STREET - EVENING

Meath starts his run. After about fifty yards:

MEATH  
(to himself)  
This feels kinda good. I can do this.

Suddenly a grenade explodes behind him, sending dirt and shrapnel flying forward out in front of him.

MEATH (cont'd)  
SHIT!!

He runs faster for the next twenty yards, then quickly finds a spot to turn back toward the compound, still running fast.

47 INT. COMPOUND - EVENING

Meath enters in a fluster, plastered with dirt.

MEATH  
Thanks for the shitty advice, Jessup!

JESSUP  
You're all dirty.

MEATH  
Some fucker threw a grenade at me!

JESSUP  
You were in the street?

MEATH

Yeah. You said I should practice. "Other guys are doing it," you said.

JESSUP

I meant other guys are getting in shape for it. Jumping rope, mostly. Christ, nobody's dumb enough to go jogging around here.

MEATH

You should be *specific*, Jessup! Be freaking specific in what you're advising.

Jessup shrugs his shoulders.

JESSUP

Maybe I'll just stop giving advice.

MEATH

Yeah, there's an idea. I'm gonna go clean up.

JESSUP

Wait, lemme get a picture. You can send it to Ginny, show her how heroic you are.

MEATH

(ironic)  
Right.

JESSUP

No, serious, it looks good, like you just survived some badass battle or something.

MEATH

Yeah, because I did.

Jessup takes a polaroid. They admire it together.

JESSUP

Nice.

MEATH

(smiles)  
Yeah. Heroic.

They break up laughing.

48 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

A sniper behind a mound has their platoon pinned down. Shots are hitting within inches of them. A soldier up front gets hit in the shoulder. Meath is stuck in the back and can't help him. Suddenly Private Perez jumps up and runs directly at the mound, firing bursts toward it. He takes a hit, then another, but keeps charging. Finally, ten feet from the mound, one of his bursts silences the sniper. Perez falls. Meath and Jessup rush to aid Perez.

Meath quickly opens his kit and begins checking to see where Perez was hit.

JESSUP  
That was fucking brave.

MEATH  
Put pressure on his thigh, right there.

JESSUP  
With what?

MEATH  
Use your hands, while I apply a tourniquet.

JESSUP  
Got it.

A third soldier arrives.

THOMPSON  
Damn. Is he gonna be okay?

Meath just keeps working on Perez.

THOMPSON (cont'd)  
He opened it up for us. Now we can move ahead.

JESSUP  
Yeah.

THOMPSON  
I woulda never done that.

Jessup gives Thompson a look.

THOMPSON (cont'd)  
Nah, it's great, of course. I'm just sayin', not me, man.



Thompson goes and joins the other soldiers, who are moving ahead to take forward ground.

49 INT. BARRACKS - LATER

THOMPSON

I heard Perez had diabetes. Is that true?

MEATH

I don't know.

THOMPSON

Would you have treated him different?

MEATH

What?

THOMPSON

You didn't know? That he had diabetes?

MEATH

It wouldn't have made any difference. It was fucking bullet wounds. He just bled out.

THOMPSON

My uncle had diabetes. I remember his blood was different or something.

MEATH

It was fucking bullets, Thompson! I couldn't do anything! Alright?!

Jessup grabs Thompson by the arm and leads him away.

MEATH (cont'd)

(softly, to himself)

I couldn't.

50 INT. BARRACKS - EARLY MORNING

Meath suddenly wakes up, grabs his rifle, points it around the barracks, then realizes where he is, drops it.

JESSUP

Meat, buddy, are you okay?

MEATH

Wha? Yeah, sure, I'm okay. Is it lights out already?

JESSUP

It's morning, Meat. I don't think you're okay.

MEATH

No, screw you, I'm fine. I just need some sleep.

JESSUP

It's morning, Meat.

MEATH

Oh. Morning? You sure?

JESSUP

Yeah.

MEATH

Then, what are we doing?

JESSUP

I'll be right back. Stay here, don't move.

(to Johnson)

Johnson, watch Meat for a sec, will ya?

JOHNSON

What for?

JESSUP

Just watch him. Christ, look at him.

JOHNSON

He looks like Death. "Doctor Death."

JESSUP

I'll be two minutes. You let him go anywhere and I'll smash ya.

JOHNSON

Alright already.

Jessup leaves. Johnson stares at Meath, who falls back onto his bed. Jessup returns with the LT, who kneels down next to Meath.

LT

Meath, what day is it?

MEATH

July.

LT

What *day*, Meath? What day?

MEATH

My birthday? Is it my birthday?

LT

Meath...

(points to Jessup)  
who's this?

MEATH

(doesn't know)

Uhhh...

JESSUP

LT?

LT

Meath, we're going to give you a rest today. You're off the line for a while.

MEATH

Uh, okay. Can I go back to sleep then?

LT

(to Jessup)

Take him to the medical tent.

JESSUP

You got it.

(to Meath)

Meath, we're gonna let you rest in a spot all to yourself.

MEATH

Because it's my birthday?

JESSUP

Yeah, because it's your birthday, Meat.

Jessup helps Meath off his cot and out the door.

**FOLLOWING ARE SCENES I KNOW WILL BE IN THE FILM**

59 **BUT I WILL FIND THEIR EXACT LOCATION LATER.**

51 INT. GYM - DAY

Meath is in the gym, lifting dumbbells. Captain Perkins walks in ready to work out. Meath moves to a dumbbell bench.

MEATH

Hey, captain, spot me?

CAPTAIN PERKINS

Sure. And hey, Meath, we're in the gym. You don't have to call me Captain here.

MEATH

Okay, what do I call you, "Perkins"?

CAPTAIN PERKINS

Just call me Dave.

MEATH

Okay, cool. "Dave."

Captain Perkins goes over to spot Meath.

CAPTAIN PERKINS

These bars don't mean anything, really. I'm no better than you. Just a little luckier, maybe.

Meath starts doing bench presses, as Perkins stands over him, spotting.

MEATH

Thanks.

CAPTAIN PERKINS

It's good to have a workout buddy. Keeps you going.

Meath does several reps.

MEATH

Wanna switch now?

CAPTAIN PERKINS

Sure.

Perkins does reps as Meath spots him.

MEATH

Yeah, a buddy would help. Strangely enough, the oppressive boredom isn't quite enough of a motivator.

CAPTAIN PERKINS

Yeah, you'd think it would be. You've got all damn day, there's a gym right here.

MEATH

So you know you can, and you know you should.

CAPTAIN PERKINS

But somehow it feels kinda pointless.

MEATH

Right.

CAPTAIN PERKINS

Whaddya say you and me, we do this three days a week?

MEATH

Yeah, cool.

CAPTAIN PERKINS

Monday, Wednesday, Friday, 1600 hours.

MEATH

You got it. Dave.

61 Perkins smiles. He gets up, they move to another weight setup and continue working out.

52 INT. GYM - DAY

Meath and Captain Dave Perkins working out in the gym. Perkins holds his neck.

MEATH

Problem with your neck, sir? I mean, Dave.

CAPTAIN PERKINS

Yeah, lately it's been kind of stiff, and I don't seem to have the range of motion I normally do.

Meath motions to a bench.

MEATH

Step into my office.

CAPTAIN PERKINS

Oh, that's right, you're a chiropractor.

MEATH

Not yet. But yeah, I studied it. Just need to get certified. Have a seat.

Perkins sits on the bench and Meath gives him a chiropractic adjustment.

CAPTAIN PERKINS

Wow, yeah, that's better. Way better. Thanks, Meath. Or do you go by Michael, or what?

MEATH

Well, most of these jugheads call me "Meat." Back home, it's "Mike."

CAPTAIN PERKINS

When do you do your certification?

MEATH

Well, there's one every three months, but I'm gonna have to wait until September, because I won't be out until then.

CAPTAIN PERKINS

When do you get out?

MEATH

Mid October.

CAPTAIN PERKINS

Hell, I think we can speed that up a bit. Get you back for the September certification.

MEATH

Really?

CAPTAIN PERKINS

Sure, why not? A couple weeks won't make any difference in the greater scheme of things.

MEATH

Wow, thanks...Dave. That's great!

CAPTAIN PERKINS

Sure. Just remind me when we're about a month away and I'll do the paperwork on it.

53 EXT. BASE - DAY

Mortar rounds are landing, and shrapnel is going through some of the porta-johns. Other mortar rounds start landing in the area between the porta-johns and the building.

65 Half a dozen soldiers pop out of the porta-johns. Two have been hit.

54 EXT. THE SHITTERS - DAY

JESSUP

Triage! How you doing there, Meat?

MEATH

This guy's a yellow tag. Hit in the nose, but just a scratch. What've you got?

JESSUP

Graze to the shoulder. He'll be okay.

SOLDIER "A"

Hey, where's Phillips? Wasn't he in one of those things?

They ponder a moment, then Phillips emerges from a porta-john, one hand holding a porn magazine, the other staunching blood flowing from a leg wound.

SOLDIER "A" (cont'd)

Phillips, you okay? Shit, you were jerking off in there?

PHILLIPS

Yup!

(pause)

Got hit in the leg. But I was almost there with it, so I'm like, might aw well finish.

67 Everybody laughs. Suddenly there is a shout from the building.

55 INT. CAPTAIN PERKINS'S OFFICE - DAY

SOLDIER "B"  
Medic! Captain's been hit!

They rush to the building and enter. Jessup gets there first. The window is broken. Perkins is slumped over on his desk, with blood all over. A blood-spattered document on his desk reads "Early Discharge," and the name filled out near the top says "Meath, Michael." Soldier "B" looks at the computer screen and reads the open email:

SOLDIER "B" (cont'd)  
"Dearest Judy." Is that his wife?

Jessup starts working on him. A chunk of the front corner of Perkins' head is gone. Meath shudders from the sight. Out of the corner of his eye, Jessup notices.

JESSUP  
I got it, Meat. Step outside.

SOLDIER "B"  
Shit. Is he gonna make it?

Meath steps outside, takes a deep breath. Other soldiers aid Jessup.

JESSUP  
He's alive now. Are the Chinooks coming?

SOLDIER "B"  
They're on their way.

Another soldier stands outside near Meath. He sees how shook up Meath is, and offers a feeble condolence.

SOLDIER "D"  
Helluva war.

Meath looks at the soldier with a mixture of hurt and anger.

CUT TO:

69 Putting Perkins into a Chinook helicopter for medivac.

56 EXT. BARRACKS - DAY

SOLDIER C  
More casualties! Infirmary!



Meath and Jessup run to the infirmary.

57 INT. INFIRMARY - DAY

Meath and Jessup start working on wounded soldiers. Meath gets assigned to a big black guy with his guts hanging out, who is crying loudly.

MEATH

You're gonna be fine, buddy.

BBG

I'm going to die.

MEATH

You're going to be fine. It's okay.

BBG

No, I'm gonna die.

The soldier starts crying again. Meath does his best to patch him up.

MEATH

Can we get some morphine for this guy?!

58 INT. BARRACKS - DAY

Meath and Jessup return to the barracks, and barely have a chance to sit down when some soldiers arrive telling a story as they walk.

PRIVATE L

So some SeaBees are pinned down and Sanchez and LT are running over there to help them, but there's concertina wire. So Sanchez, he just grabs this plywood and slams it over the top of the concertina wire and over they go!

PRIVATE M

You should've seen Sanchez, man. He was fucking epic. He knew what to do.

PRIVATE L

Well, yeah. He's Mexican. He knows how to jump the border mud!

74 The storytellers and their companions, including Sanchez, burst out laughing. Meath and Jessup laugh too, but not with quite the same level of enthusiasm.

59 EXT. BASE - DAY

Meath, Jessup, and several other soldiers are putting up walls of sandbags around the building where Perkins worked. It's hot, and it's hard work.

MEATH

We shoulda had these up before. Why didn't we put these up before?

JESSUP

Nothing we can do, Meat.

MEATH

What, were we freakin' stupid, or lazy? What?

JESSUP

I dunno, Meat.

A soldier stops working.

SOLDIER #1

Man, this is bullshit. We gotta sandbag this whole place just because the captain got killed?

At this, Meath dashes over and starts pummeling the guy so fast and hard the soldier is on the ground in an instant, putting his arms in front of his face to protect himself.

SOLDIER #1 (cont'd)

Whoa, fuck, stop it, man! Stop it!

Jessup and two other soldiers grab Meath and pull him off.

SOLDIER #1 (cont'd)

What are you, nuts? Jeezus!

MEATH

Don't fucking talk about the captain like he didn't fucking matter. Got it?!

SOLDIER #1

Yeah, yeah, alright.

JESSUP  
 (to the group)  
 Me and Meat are gonna go take a  
 break. You guys carry on. Finish it.

The soldiers nod, and get back to work. Jessup walks Meath off to the sideline.

JESSUP (cont'd)  
 You gonna be alright?

MEATH  
 Fucking sandbags. Just, fucking  
 sandbags.

JESSUP  
 Yeah. C'mon, let's go to the  
 barracks.

76 They walk off.

60 EXT. BARRACKS - DAY

LT. COLONEL  
 I have word from some local  
 informants that there is a weapons  
 cache out in Sector 8. Could even be  
 WMDs. Meath, we'll be taking you and  
 your 5-ton, and four other vehicles.  
 Fall out, load up!

MEATH  
 Lieutenant Colonel's going to look  
 good after this one.

JESSUP  
 If it turns out.

They load up into the vehicles and roll out into the desert.  
 The Lieutenant Colonel's vehicle stops, and the others stop  
 behind it.

LT. COLONEL  
 My information says it's here.

MAJOR DANIELS  
 Sir, it's just graves.

LT. COLONEL  
 A good place to hide weapons, Major.  
 Have the men start digging.

MAJOR DANIELS

Yessir.

The soldiers are digging up graves and finding nothing. Suddenly they start taking sniper fire. Meath dives into a shallow grave. A soldier next to him stays above.

MEATH

Get down here, man. Don't be a hero!

SOLDIER "S"

I got a bad back. It would screw it up worse if I went down there.

An enemy soldier starts running across not far from them. A private sitting next to the grave raises his rifle and calmly takes aim, like he was shooting a deer. POW!

PRIVATE

Got 'im.

LT. COLONEL

That's a hell of a shot, son. Damn good shot.

PRIVATE

Just like shootin' deer.

There is a lot of shooting going on now. A soldier 40 yards away yells out:

SOLDIER "T"

Medic!

SOLDIER "S"

I'm not runnin' over there. I got a bad back.

MEATH

Fuck.

Meath gets out of the grave and starts running. Bullets are flipping past his ears: "Zzzt! Zzzt!" He speeds up until he reaches a wounded Iraqi lying unconscious on the ground. The man has many wounds, large and gaping.

MEATH (cont'd)

What the fuck? You called me over for this? This guy's hamburger.

SOLDIER "U"

Well, at least practice. You're a medic. Keep your skills up.

MEATH

Shit.

SOLDIER "U"

Stick a IV in him or something.

Meath searches for an undamaged spot for a minute, finally inserting an IV in the man's lower leg.

By now the shooting has died down. The soldier notices something about the unconscious Iraqi. He takes something off the man and holds it up.

SOLDIER "U" (cont'd)

Hey, Major! Check this out!

The Major strides over.

SOLDIER "U" (cont'd)

A clicker.

MAJOR DANIELS

Could be a whole daisy chain of IEDs here. Didn't go off when we drove by, so he panicked and started running. Did we shoot him or did they?

MEATH

Daisy chain?

SOLDIER "U"

Don't know, sir. Didn't see it.

MAJOR DANIELS

So much for "informants and a weapons cache." The Lieutenant Colonel will be disappointed. But gentlemen, I'd say this is our lucky day.

61 EXT. BARRACKS - DAY

A convoy pulls out from the barracks: four Bradleys and a little crappy non-Army vehicle in front. Sanchez drives that vehicle; Meath sits in back.

SANCHEZ

You get what's going on here, right?

MEATH

What do you mean?

SANCHEZ

Us, in this little piss-ass vehicle, Sector 8? They tell us to go out ahead? We're the decoy.

MEATH

Nah, I dunno.

The radio comes on.

RADIO

Alright, boys, hold 'er right there. Pop out and get some fresh air.

SANCHEZ

Uh, we're good, sir. We're good right inside here.

RADIO

I said "Get some fresh air," private. That's a direct order.

SANCHEZ

(to Meath)

Man, this is fucked up. Why do they keep volunteering us for this shit?

MEATH

Hey what else we gonna do? Get some medals, man. This is what life's about.

SANCHEZ

No. I'm stickin'.

MEATH

Alright, well, then I'm with you.

After a moment: exterior vehicle: Sanchez climbs out of the vehicle.

SANCHEZ

(under his breath)

Fuck this shit.

Meath follows him out.

SANCHEZ (cont'd)

I didn't sign up to be a fucking decoy.

Sanchez lights up a cigarette. Suddenly ten Iraqi National Guards pop up out of nowhere.

Sanchez drops his SAW [machine gun], hits the dirt, and rolls under the vehicle for cover. Meath grabs the SAW, tries to fire it at the Iraqis, but the ammo chain breaks and pops out of the gun.

MEATH

Oh wait, that's Iraqi National Guard.  
Sanchez, forget it, that's our guys.

The LT yells from across the way.

LT

What's going on over there, Medic?!

MEATH

Nothing, sir!

SANCHEZ

Right, "nothing." Just a bunch of  
Iraqi Nationals you just about  
killed.

MEATH

Shit, you hit the dirt.

SANCHEZ

Hell, yeah, it's Sector 8. Bad shit  
happens here.

Meath fiddles with the ammo chain for a moment, then gives up.

MEATH

Ah, screw it.

Meath stands up, as does Sanchez. Meath greets the Iraqi INGS (Iraqi National Guardsmen).

MEATH (cont'd)

Salaam!

They smile and wave.

ING #1

Have cigarette?

MEATH

No smoke.

ING #1

Cigarette, please?

MEATH  
 (points to Sanchez)  
 He smokes.

The Guards approach Sanchez.

SANCHEZ  
 Fuck, Meat. I gotta give away my  
 fuckin' cigs, too?

MEATH  
 (chuckling)  
 Sorry, man. Wasn't thinking.

SANCHEZ  
 (to the INGS)  
 Okay, just five. Five cigarettes  
 only. Okay?

ING #1  
 We are ten men.

ING #2  
 Cigarettes, please.

Sanchez gives up, tosses them the pack. Walks back to the  
 vehicle and joins Meath.

SANCHEZ  
 I give up. Just shoot me. Just shoot  
 me now.

Meath gives Sanchez a pat on the shoulder.

62 INT. COMPOUND - NIGHT

A building whose former beauty can still be seen, though it  
 is heavily marked by the ravages of war. Meath wakes up.

MEATH  
 (to himself)  
 Shit.

He gets out of his cot, puts on his boots, and starts to walk  
 to the porta-johns. Sudden sniper fire makes him dive and  
 then scurry back to his bunk area.

MEATH (cont'd)  
 Jones. Jones, wake up.

JONES  
 Huh?



MEATH

I gotta go take a deuce, but they're sniping at me.

JONES

Oh, okay, yeah, I gotcha, Sarge. Hold on a sec.

Jones grabs his M-16, aims it at the building across the street.

JONES (cont'd)

Just yell when you're done and I'll cover you on the way back.

Jones lays down a barrage of covering fire, and Meath rushes off to the shitter.

MEATH

(in the shitter,  
heard from outside)

Ahhhhhhh.

63 EXT. SHITTERS - DAY

People are coming and going, in and out, and just passing near the area. The Major comes out of a shitter, violently slamming a door as he exits.

MAJOR CARSON

You mother fuckers! There's shit all the way up to my ass in there! Finding that fucking Iraqi shitter truck and get that shit sucked outta there!

HANSEN

Sir, we haven't seen the shitter truck guy lately.

MAJOR CARSON

That's my goddamn point, private! Go find him! Send a street recon team. NOW!

The Major points to Meath and Private Kenworth.

MAJOR CARSON (cont'd)

You, and you, take this sad fuck here and whoever else you can get, and go find the shitter truck guy.

(MORE)

MAJOR CARSON (cont'd)

If I have to take one more shit where it's up to my ass, your heads are all going in there. Do I make myself clear?

MEATH  
Yessir!

KENWORTH  
Right away, sir!

Private Hanson introduces himself to Meath and Kenworth.

HANSEN

Hanson. Guess I'm riding with you guys.

KENWORTH

Hop in. There's plenty of room in the back.

64 EXT. RAMADI - STREETS - DAY

Two Bradleys and Meath's 5-ton are cruising the streets of Ramadi looking for the shitter truck.

MEATH

Where the hell is that guy? We've been cruising for four hours.

KENWORTH

No idea, Sarge. Should we head back?

MEATH

You want your head dipped in a shitter?

KENWORTH

Forward ho!

The radio crackles. Kenworth answers.

KENWORTH (cont'd)

Meat Wagon, Private Kenworth at your service.

Kenworth listens to the caller.

KENWORTH (cont'd)

Roger. Be there in ten.

(to Meath)

Sorry, Sarge. They need us at a checkpoint, main area.

MEATH  
Shit. Alright.

65 EXT. RAMADI - CHECKPOINT - DAY

Meath and Kenworth and the guys who came with them are hanging out at a checkpoint. A car comes through, the soldiers look inside, ask a couple of questions, then wave them on. Same with the next car.

A truck approaches the checkpoint. A SERGEANT with a SAW opens up on the truck for no apparent reason. Da-da-daa-daa-daa-daa-daa-daa-daa-daa-daa-daa-da-da-da-dow!

SAW SARGE  
Who's got the 5-ton?

MEATH  
That would be us.

The "SAW Sarge" opens the door of the truck. A body falls partially out, dangles.

SAW SARGE  
Load 'em up, Sarge.

MEATH  
Can I ask why you--

SAW SARGE  
It's my checkpoint, Sergeant. Load 'em up.

Meath shakes his head in wonder, but he and Kenworth dig into the truck, grab the bodies, put them in body bags, and load them into the Meat Wagon.

SAW SARGE (cont'd)  
On your way!

MEATH  
(to Kenworth)  
Back to searching for Shit Man.

They get back in the Meat Wagon, as does Hanson, who is a little uncomfortable now that half the space is taken up by bodies.

66 INT. VEHICLE - DAY

KENWORTH

So, Sarge, we going to the morgue, or we still looking for the shitter truck?

MEATH

Hmmm...

Before Meath can answer, they are ambushed by some enemy soldiers behind some porticos. The two 50-cal gunners on the Bradleys take out the Iraqis pretty quickly.

BRADLEY GUNNER

Clean that up for us, will ya, Meat?

MEATH

Sure. That's what we're here for. Bagging bodies and looking for the shitter truck. War stories to tell the grandkids.

KENWORTH

Hey, I'm havin' fun. Beats sitting in the barracks all day.

Once again they bag the bodies and load them up. Kenworth gets behind the wheel. As Meath is about to close the door, he hears sounds in the back of the truck.

MEATH

Oops. I think not everybody's dead here. Hanson, help me out. We gotta unzip a couple of these bags.

HANSEN

(uncomfortable)

Uh, okay. How do we tell which ones?

MEATH

Good question.

Meath shakes a body bag. It emits a moan.

MEATH (cont'd)

Shake 'em. If it moans, open it up-- just at the top, for air.

Meath and Hanson start shaking the body bags to check. Three of them emit moans.

MEATH (cont'd)  
 Okay, that's five alive, six dead, I  
 think. Izzat your count, Hanson?

Hanson looks pale.

HANSEN  
 I'm gonna trust you on that one,  
 Sarge.

Meath starts to get in the Meat Wagon. Hanson stays put.

HANSEN (cont'd)  
 Sarge, there's no place for me to sit  
 now. Maybe I could ride in one of the  
 Bradleys?

MEATH  
 We need you to pull security back  
 there, Hanson. Sorry.  
 (to Kenworth)  
 Definitely morgue now.

HANSEN  
 And hospital.

MEATH  
 Right, hospital first.

Kenworth starts singing, soft and slow at first, to see if  
 Meath will pick up on it.

KENWORTH  
 I see a little silhouette of a man.

MEATH  
 Scaramouche, Scaramouche, will you do  
 the Fandango?

KENWORTH  
 Galileo!

MEATH  
 Galileo!

KENWORTH  
 Galileo!

MEATH  
 Galileo!

KENWORTH  
 Galileo Figaro!

MEATH

Magnifico!

BOTH

Thunderbolt and lightning, very, very  
frightening...me!

In the back, Hanson throws up.

67 EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

The Meat Wagon is pulling up to the compound. Hanson is in the back talking to the live or dead bodies, or both.

HANSEN

Es tut ihr leid. Es war nicht meine  
Schuld. Vergeben mir bitte.

MEATH

What the hell's wrong with Hanson?  
What's he speaking?

KENWORTH

It's German.

MEATH

What's he saying?

HANSEN

Vergeben mir. Vergeben uns, bitte. Es  
tut mir so leid.

KENWORTH

I dunno, I just know it's German.

MEATH

That's messed up.

KENWORTH

Yeah, I think we need to drop him off  
at the hospital too.

They pull up to the camp hospital. An attendant comes out.

MEATH

Hey, man. I got a few back here.

The attendant shines a flashlight in the back, sees all the body bags.

ATTENDANT

Whoa, dude, dude, dude. We only take live ones.

MEATH

No, man. I got a couple live ones up there.

KENWORTH

Plus Hanson.

MEATH

Yeah, plus Hanson. You got a spot for Hanson?

ATTENDANT

Lemme see what you got here.

The attendant opens the door, Hanson tumbles out, hits the ground and doesn't get up.

HANSEN

Mein Gott, verzeih uns, bitte.

ATTENDANT

Yeah, I'll walk this guy in. You bring the rest.

By now a small group of soldiers has come out to help.

SOLDIER

Holy shit! These all Iraqis?

MEATH

Yeah.

SOLDIER

How do you know who's alive?

MEATH

We had five alive when we started, but do the shake test.

SOLDIER

Oh yeah, if they moan...got it.

They start shaking the body bags and listening for moans. Then they drag the live ones through mud puddles toward the hospital. Meath and Kenworth get back in and drive to the command post. Meath gets out, goes inside, and talks to the commander.

MEATH

Sir, I got all these bodies...

COMMANDER

Fucking take them to the morgue.

MEATH

All right. Where the fuck is the morgue?

COMMANDER

I don't know. It's over there. Just get them. Just take them over there.

MEATH

Over where, sir?

COMMANDER

To the fucking morgue, Sergeant Meath!

MEATH

But...alright sir, yes sir.

Meath leaves the office, goes outside, and gets back into the Meat Wagon.

KENWORTH

So? Whaddya we do?

MEATH

Take 'em to the morgue.

KENWORTH

Where's the morgue?

MEATH

(confused, not  
indicating a  
direction)

Over there?

KENWORTH

Dude, you got to go back to your unit, man. Have you seen your eyes? You're fucked up.

MEATH

Nah, I'm okay. We need to find the morgue.



KENWORTH  
 Let's go back to the hospital.  
 They'll know.

68 EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Kenworth drives them back to the hospital. The attendant comes out again.

ATTENDANT  
 More already?

KENWORTH  
 No, we just need to know where the morgue is.

ATTENDANT  
 Here's a map. By the way, when's the last time you got any sleep?

MEATH  
 Is today Tuesday?

ATTENDANT  
 Thursday.

MEATH  
 Then it's been a while.

ATTENDANT  
 Get some sleep. You got that thing, that look, in your eyes.

KENWORTH  
 See, I told you you looked like shit.

MEATH  
 He's talking about *you*, buttwipe.

KENWORTH  
 (to Attendant)  
 Thanks. See ya.

ATTENDANT  
 Hope not soon. Night, guys.

69 EXT. MORGUE - NIGHT

Meath and Kenworth arrive at the morgue, which has signs in both Arabic and English. There is a slight decline from the road to the building.

They get out and open the rear door of the Meat Wagon. They struggle to get the first body bag out. They drag it to a position directly in front of the morgue entrance, which is 15 feet away down the incline.

KENWORTH

Drag or throw?

MEATH

What?

KENWORTH

It's too far to carry. Think it'll be better to drag him or throw him?

MEATH

Uhh--

KENWORTH

I say throw. I'll take the feet, you take the head.

They each take an end.

KENWORTH (cont'd)

Okay, we'll swing him back and forth, and on "three" we toss. Got it?

Meath nods. They start swinging the body.

KENWORTH (cont'd)

One...two...three!

They swing the heavy body, and on the third swing, as it leaves their grasp, there is an audible CRACK!

MEATH

Ooof!

KENWORTH (cont'd)

Oooo!

The body lands and then rolls down the incline, ending up on the doorstep of the morgue.

KENWORTH (cont'd)

What the hell was that?

MEATH

I'm pretty sure it was his neck.

KENWORTH

Yeah, thought it might be.

MEATH

It was.

KENWORTH

Well, you're the chiropractor.

MEATH

Don't think I can fix that one, though. Let's just drag the rest of 'em, okay?

KENWORTH

You're the doctor.

They drag the rest of the bodies to the road's edge, giving each one a push that rolls it down the incline. Six bodies at the doorstep. Then they descend the steps and drag each body through the door. Two morgue attendants come up to meet them.

MEATH

Shit, we shoulda had these guys do it.

KENWORTH

And miss all the fun?

Meath addresses the morgue attendants.

MEATH

All yours.

The attendants start moving the bodies to a side room. Meath and Kenworth leave, and get in the Meat Wagon.

MEATH (cont'd)

God, I'm tired.

KENWORTH

Let's report to El Comandante and then get some sleep.

MEATH

Yeah.

92 They drive off.

70 INT. COMMANDER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

MEATH

Okay, live ones are at the hospital, dead ones are at the morgue. Sir.

COMMANDER

Did you search them?

MEATH  
But, they're dead.

COMMANDER  
(pointing to  
Kenworth)  
You look like shit. Go get some  
sleep.

MEATH  
Don't I look like shit too?

KENWORTH  
He definitely does.

COMMANDER  
(to Meath)  
You're the NCO in charge. Go search  
the fucking bodies.

MEATH  
Yessir.

They exit.

71 EXT. COMMANDER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

KENWORTH  
Haha! I get to go sleep!

MEATH  
Fuck you.

KENWORTH  
Naw, hey. I'll drive you back there.  
I'll sleep when I'm dead. Yee-hah!

72 EXT. MORGUE - NIGHT

Meath and Kenworth pull up at the morgue.

MEATH  
I'll go in and search. You stay with  
the vehicle.

KENWORTH  
Have fun.

73 INT. MORGUE - NIGHT

Meath enters the morgue and goes into the side room where the bodies are. He starts searching them. He finds IDs, photos, and the like. Then, on the fourth body, he finds money--\$100 bills, lots of them. Bundles. He moves to the fifth body: same, bundles of 100s. Sixth body: same. More money than he's ever had in his life. Enough to buy a house--a really nice house. He is awestruck.

Meath takes off his jacket, lays it on the floor, and starts putting the money on top of it, so he can bundle it up. He's just about finished when the two large Iraqi morgue attendants appear at the doorway. They see the money. Meath reflexively pulls out his 9-millimeter pistol.

MEATH

Get the fuck back!

The two Iraqis have fear in their eyes. Meath rubs his eyes, shakes his head to clear it. He uses his jacket like a slingshot to fling the cash into a far corner. The two Iraqis move uncertainly toward it. With the doorway clear, Meath holsters his 9-mil, puts on his jacket, and leaves.

Back in the Meat Wagon:

KENWORTH

Any booty?

MEATH

Nah, just some IDs, probably fake.

They drive off.

MEATH (cont'd)

Hey Ken, what would you a done, if you were searching them, and you found money? But the Iraqi morgue guys wanted it.

KENWORTH

Little or a lot?

MEATH

Bundles.

KENWORTH

Oh, I'd a shot 'em and took the money.

(after a moment)

Wait, there was money? Them dead bastards have money, Meat?

MEATH

No, just a hypothetical.

KENWORTH

Ha-ha, Meat. You're such a fuckin' dreamer.

MEATH

Speaking of which, I'm beat. It's really hitting me now.

KENWORTH

Yeah? I just got my second wind.

MEATH

Yeah, well, you're a monster.

KENWORTH

Aaargh!

74 PARTS AND BITS

75 INT. BARRACKS - MORNING

Meath lays down to finally get some sleep. Kenworth grabs his iPod and lays down on his cot, the music loud enough that Meath can hear it. Meat falls asleep.

MOMENTS LATER:

Jessup wakes Meath up.

JESSUP

Meat, what the fuck!

MEATH

(groggy)

Whah? Jessup?

JESSUP

What the fuck, Meath. It's my turn with the Meat Wagon, and I get in and there's fucking ear parts and bits of bodies and shit in the back. You can't leave a vehicle in that condition after a shift, Meat.

MEATH

Aw, man.

JESSUP  
Yeah, you got to go clean that shit  
up, hose it down.

MEATH  
Yeah, yeah.

Meath falls back into the bed. Jessup picks him up, helps him  
to his feet.

MEATH (cont'd)  
Thanks.

JESSUP  
Yeah, well, I got you to your feet.  
The cleanup's all on you.

Meath shuffles out the door.

76 INT. MEAT WAGON - MORNING

Meath is hosing out the Meat Wagon. In the light of day he  
realizes just how much blood there is. And small body parts.  
Jessup waits outside to take over the vehicle. One bit, half  
of an ear, is stuck in a spot where the hose can't wash it  
out, and Meath has to grab it and pull it out by hand.

JESSUP  
You coulda used a glove for that.

MEATH  
Oh, yeah. Wasn't thinking.

JESSUP  
Go the fuck back to bed, Meat. I'll  
finish. You got the parts, the rest  
is just blood.

Jessup puts on some gloves, grabs the hose from Meath.

MEATH  
Thanks, man.

JESSUP  
Fuckin' Meat.

Meath leaves.

77 WHERE'S THE MONEY, MEAT?

78 INT. COMMANDER'S OFFICE - MORNING

Meath is asleep on his cot. A soldier comes and wakes him.

SOLDIER

Meat! Meat!

MEATH

Wha? Again?

SOLDIER

Major wants to see you right away.

MEATH

God, I only slept an hour.

SOLDIER

It's been more like three.

MEATH

Feels like three minutes. The major?

SOLDIER

Yeah, right away.

MEATH

About what?

SOLDIER

Didn't say. Wasn't in a good mood, though.

MEATH

Yeah, okay, I'm gonna shower real quick and be right there.

79 INT. MAJOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Meath enters. The Major is behind his desk, and the LT is standing a few steps to the side.

MEATH

You wanted to see me, sir?

MAJOR

Where's the money, Meath?

MEATH

Sir?



MAJOR

Where's, the, money? And don't tell me there's no fucking money. You brought in some bodies last night, right?

MEATH

Yeah, bodies. And the commander, he said, Don't sleep, Meat, go search the fucking bodies, and we went to the hospital, but no, that was before...and then we went to the morgue and there were bodies...there were bodies we took--Kenworth and me, took to the morgue. And then the neck snapped, so we dragged the rest, and the bodies rolled down, and then the commander said--no wait, I said that part. Yeah, the commander said You can't sleep, you got to go search the fucking bodies, so I went back and Kenworth said he'd just shoot 'em, I knew he would, because there was money, right, you asked about money, and there was, and the Iraqis thought I was gonna shoot 'em, and I....I dunno. The money, I just left it. I'm just a fucking medic, man, I mean, sir, sirs.

The Major and the LT share a look.

LT

You're off the line, Meath. Go get some sleep, get some rest.

MEATH

I keep tryin', LT, sir, and they keep wakin' me up. And then there's fuckin' parts, and bits, of bodies, and I can't get the ear out, and--. Can I really? Can I really just sleep for a while?

MAJOR

Yes, sergeant, you can.

(to the LT)

Lieutenant, make sure this man gets some sleep, undisturbed. In a day or two, give him a new assignment. Something easy.

LT

Yessir.

MAJOR

Dismissed, Meath.

MEATH

Thank you sir, sirs. Thank you.

The LT escorts Meath out of the Major's office.

80 THE RUMOR

81 INT. GYM - DAY

Meath is on a weight bench, doing chest presses. A new guy, ROGERS, comes in.

ROGERS

You're not doing much weight there.  
Want me to spot you, push it up a  
little?

Meath considers.

MEATH

Yeah. Okay, thanks.

ROGERS

I'm Rogers, Private. New in, a couple  
days ago.

MEATH

Meat. I mean, Meath.

Meath lifts a set, with Rogers spotting.

MEATH (cont'd)

You want me to spot you now?

ROGERS

No, I'm just doing aerobic today.

Rogers steps onto a stairmaster and starts his workout. Meath starts a bicep workout.

ROGERS (cont'd)

Hey, is it true about the shitters?

MEATH

Oh fuck! I was supposed to find the shitter sucker guy!

ROGERS

What?

MEATH

Why hasn't the Major dunked my head in the shitter?

ROGERS

They did tell me you were a little nutty. They sucked out the shitters yesterday. Some new guy came and did it. I was wondering, though, is it true about the guy that used to do it?

MEATH

Is what true?

ROGERS

They said he was gonna plant bombs in 'em. Some fat guy from Turkey was bringing money to pay him to do it. But some sergeant with a SAW shot him up at a checkpoint. Is that true?

MEATH

Bombs in the shitters? Whoa, fuck me. I dunno.

ROGERS

They say you had all that money, at the morgue, but you just let it go.

MEATH

I dunno, man. I'm just a medic.

ROGERS

I heard about some guys copping some relics, some artifacts, from museums.

MEATH

That was Iraqis.

ROGERS

That shit's hard to transport. But man, if I found some *cash* like that, I'd sure as heck stuff my pants with it.

MEATH

Well, I'm done. Catch you later.

ROGERS

Yeah. Nice to meet ya--Meat.

82 IRAQI TRAINING #1

83 EXT. COURTYARD - EVENING

Meath arrives at a bombed-out building with a courtyard. There are American medics, and a bunch of Iraqis, ages 12 to 40. He approaches the sergeant who seems to be in charge, KOSTAS.

MEATH

Hey Sarge, I was ordered here to do some medic training.

KOSTAS

Right. Meath? Follow me.

They walk over toward some supply boxes and a group of men nearby.

MEATH

Aren't some of those guys a bit young to be doing medical training?

KOSTAS

They're getting paid in a month what they'd normally make in a year...of hard labor. So everybody and his brother shows up.

MEATH

And his kid, apparently.

There is a second group of men in another section of the courtyard, but Meath is not focused on them. An adult Iraqi hands an M-16 to a 12-year-old boy. The boy holds the weapon tentatively, slips his finger toward the trigger.

KOSTAS

Oh, and they're not just training medical.

MEATH

What else besides medical?

The rifle in the boy's hands flies wildly as he accidentally hits the trigger. BLATA-BLATA-BLATA-BLATA-BLAM! Everyone in the courtyard hits the dirt, including Meath and the sergeant.

KOSTAS  
(still on the ground)  
Weapons training.

Kostas and Meath stand up, dust themselves off.

MEATH  
Oh. That's uh...that's good. Good idea.

KOSTAS  
(motioning)  
Over here.

MEATH  
Could we maybe do the medical training over there, behind that wall?

KOSTAS  
Hmm. Excellent idea, Meath. I wished you'd a been here yesterday.

MEATH  
Why? What happened yesterday?

Kostas ignores the question, instead addressing his men.

KOSTAS  
Men, let's move those boxes over behind this wall. Yeah, everyone over here behind the wall.

84 EXT. FIELD - NIGHT

Meath and Bjornson are doing night guard duty with about 20 Iraqi National Guardsmen, in the middle of a field. There is a fire going in a half barrel for warmth.

BJORNSON  
This your first time on night guard duty, Sarge?

MEATH  
Yeah. You done it before?

BJORNSON

Plenty. First rule is: Give 'em their M-16s, but don't give 'em their magazines.

MEATH

Huh?

BJORNSON

No, serious. No bullets. They don't really handle weapons very well.

MEATH

Yeah, I kinda saw that yesterday.

BJORNSON

Right. So, load your magazine, and if there's some conflict--but there never is, don't worry--then give 'em their magazines.

MEATH

Got it.

BJORNSON

Sarge, I'm kinda tired, can I take first snooze?

MEATH

Yeah, sure. I just had some coffee, so... But in four hours I'm waking your ass up.

BJORNSON

Sure thing, Sarge.

Bjornsen lays down, gets comfortable. Meath hands out M-16s to the Iraqis. He sits at the edge of the group of Iraqis. He drinks a coffee, then another. An Iraqi approaches him.

IRAQI #1

Mister, mister. Closer. Fire warm.

MEATH

Thanks.

Not quite trusting, Meath edges a little closer.

IRAQI #1

You...too much coffee.

MEATH

Yeah, well I gotta stay awake, watch you guys, so you don't shoot me.

IRAQI #1

You like some chai tea?  
(points to the fire)  
Make chai tea.

The Iraqis are making chai tea over the fire.

MEATH

No, man. I'm drinking coffee.

IRAQI #1

Good American coffee?

MEATH

This stuff? No, this American coffee is shit.

Meath dumps his coffee on the ground.

MEATH (cont'd)

Yeah, okay, give me some chai tea.

The Iraqi smiles and pours Meath some chai tea. A second Iraqi approaches him.

IRAQI #2

Sugar, sugar. You like sugar, yes?

MEATH

No, I don't usually, no sugar, no thanks.

IRAQI #2

Good sugar, sugar good.

He pours sugar into Meath's coffee from a brown paper bag. And pours. And pours. Finally the bag is empty.

IRAQI #2 (cont'd)

No sugar.

MEATH

That's okay. I think I have enough.

Iraqi #2 smiles and leaves. Iraqi #1 stays, quietly enjoying Meath's company.

IRAQI #1  
 (smiling)  
 Sugar.

Meath smiles back, not quite as excited about the sugar as the Iraqis seem to be.

LATER:

Bjornson is still asleep. Meath is stepping sideways back and forth, wired on coffee, chai tea, and the extra load of sugar. The Iraqis are chatting calmly amongst themselves. Suddenly bullets start strafing the sand around them: "CH-CH-CH-CH-CH." There's no bang of gunfire, but these are definitely bullet hits.

MEATH  
 SHIT! Bjornson, wake up! Help me give these guys their ammo!

Meath starts handing out magazines to the Guardsmen, who accept them, calmly.

MEATH (cont'd)  
 Bullets, bullets, here!  
 (to Bjornson)  
 Bjornson, wake up!

BJORNSON  
 Sarge, what, huh?

MEATH  
 Help me out here, dammit!  
 (to the Guardsmen)  
 Bullets, bullets!

Bjornson gets to his feet, looks around, sees the bullets hitting.

BJORNSON  
 No, Sarge, we're not being attacked. That's just "wedding rain."

MEATH  
 "Wedding ring"?

BJORNSON  
 "Wedding RAIN." You've seen these people at their weddings, right? Shooting off their AKs up in the air?

MEATH  
 Yeah.



BJORNSON

Well, what goes up, must come down.  
But it could be a mile or two away,  
so that's why you don't hear the  
gunfire. You didn't hear any gunfire,  
right?

Meath thinks. No, he didn't.

BJORNSON (cont'd)

Magazines, bullets, give me the  
magazines back! Give the bullets!

MEATH

Right. Give the magazines! Give the  
bullets!

Meath and Bjornson collect the magazines from the Iraqis.

MEATH (cont'd)

Is that everyone? Did everyone give  
their magazine back?

BJORNSON

I think so. Sarge, you're wired. You  
need to relax. Why don't you sleep  
for a while?

MEATH

Shit, I wish I could. I'm all wired  
up on sugar.

BJORNSON

(laughs knowingly)

Yeah. Well, okay, my good luck then.  
'Night, Sarge.

Bjornson lies down again. Meath paces until the Relief  
Sergeant arrives.

MEATH

Bjornson, wake up. Our relief is  
here.

BJORNSON

(groggy)

Oh, wow, that was the best I've slept  
in days. Thanks, Meat!

RELIEF SERGEANT

How'd it go, men?

MEATH

Ok, I guess. We had some...do you really call it "wedding rain"?

BJORNSON

(chuckling)

Yeah, Meat here gave 'em their ammo.

RELIEF SERGEANT

What?! You gave them their goddam ammo?!

MEATH

I thought we were under attack.

RELIEF SERGEANT

These are goddam Iraqis, sergeant! It was goddam wedding rain, it happens every goddam weekend, don't you know that? You gave them bullets?!

MEATH

Dude, I thought I was under attack. Shit, I don't know. I'm a freaking medic, man.

Bjornson is laughing.

RELIEF SERGEANT

It's not funny, private.

BJORNSON

No sir.

RELIEF SERGEANT

(to Meath)

And you: Don't you ever give ammo to these people. They're the goddam reason why we're here. You can't trust these goddam people. Do, not, give, these, god, damn, people, bullets!

MEATH

Yes sir.

RELIEF SERGEANT

Dismissed.

As Meath and Bjornson walk away, Bjornson chuckles again.

MEATH

What?

BJORNSON  
You shoulda known, Meat.

MEATH  
Jesus, I'm tired.

85 INCOMMUNICADO

86 INT. BARRACKS - DAY

**MISC: Insert where appropriate.**

Meath is studying for his chiropractic exam, while some of the other guys finish up watching a porn movie. We hear the huffing and puffing, some orgasm screams, and the closing music.

WALTERS  
That was a good movie! I'm gonna go call my wife.

MEATH  
Uh, no, you can't. Jimmy didn't make it. No calls out for 24 hours.

WALTERS  
Shit. I really wanted to call Caroline.

CARSON  
Dammit. I was gonna webcam with my girlfriend. This is fucked.

MEATH  
Hey, if it was you got killed, you wouldn't want it leaked by some numbskull before your wife heard it through proper channels.

CARSON  
Yeah, but it wasn't me. It was Jimmy.

HERNANDEZ  
What, wait. Jimmy? Jimmy bought it? Aw, man, that sucks.

WALTERS  
Meat's right. We can wait.

MEATH  
Well, anyway, you've got to.

HERNANDEZ

Jimmy was cool, man. Me and him was gonna get together when we got out. He's from L.A. too.

CARSON

But I won't be able to call tomorrow night. I'll be out in the field. Shit.

87 THE GARDEN OF EDEN

MISC: Insert where appropriate.

88 EXT. EUPHRATES RIVER - AFTERNOON

Meath is reading the Bible, and Jessup is reading TIME Magazine.

MEATH

Check this out. I just read the part in Psalms with "The Lord is my Shepard," and look, right over there's the freakin' shepard.

JESSUP

"The Lord works in mysterious ways."

MEATH

No shit.

JESSUP

"His wonders to perform."

Jessup gestures with his magazine at the river and the landscape.

JESSUP (cont'd)

Some scholars think this place we're at--the Euphrates--is the actual site of the Garden of Eden.

MEATH

Whoa. I'm sitting here reading my Bible and this is like a holy land.

JESSUP

Others think it's in Jerusalem. The Mormons think it's in Jackson County, Missouri.

MEATH

Jessup, you're so full of shit.

JESSUP

If this was the Garden of Eden, it sure as hell isn't anymore.

MEATH

I'm gonna tell Ginnie about this.  
"The Lord is my Shepard."

89 WOUNDED SOLDIER COMING THROUGH!

MISC: Insert where appropriate.

90 EXT. RAMADI - DAY

Meath and his driver, Danny, are driving along a street with a wounded soldier in the back.

SOLDIER

Am I gonna be okay?

MEATH

Yeah, you'll be fine.

SOLDIER

How much longer to the base?

MEATH

Ten minutes, tops.

DRIVER DANNY

Sarge, we're coming up on traffic!

Traffic has suddenly slowed down just ahead of them. It doesn't look good. Meath takes a look at the situation. There's one car very much in their way, and it's somewhat clearer up ahead.

MEATH

Ram 'em!

DRIVER DANNY

You got it, Sarge!

The occupants of the vehicle they're heading for see them coming. Scared, they put their baby up in the rear window to show they have children in the car. Danny sees it, but he's got momentum now, and there's no stopping. He changes his angle a little bit so as not to hit them perpendicularly.

BAM! Danny puts the Meat Wagon in low gear, pushes the blocked car out of the way, and moves past it with a roar.

91 MEDALS 1 OF 5

The following will be interspersed in the script.

92 EXT. BARRACKS - DAY

The minute they arrive in the theater:

MEATH

Hey, LT. We can wear our combat patches now, right?

LT

Yeah, we're in the theater. You can wear your combat patches.

MEATH

Medals is what I'm really after. A buddy of mine who just came back, he got a Bronze Star, with Valor. I want one of those.

LT

I like your attitude, Meath.

93 MEDALS 2 OF 5

AFTER THE FIRST FIGHTING

94 EXT. BARRACKS - DAY

LT

Meath, great work out there yesterday. You should get a medal.

MEATH

Haha, that's funny, LT.

LT

But you're not gonna.

MEATH

Okay, now that's not funny.

LT  
 Sorry. The Admin shops aren't set up yet. Can't process the paperwork.

MEATH  
 That blows. I treated somebody in combat, and that warrants a medal.

LT  
 It does. There'll be other opportunities, Meath.

Meath walks away disappointed.

95 MEDALS 3 OF 5

AFTER THE NEXT ENGAGEMENT

96 INT. CAPTAIN'S OFFICE - DAY

MEATH  
 You wanted to see me, sir?

LT  
 Great work out there yesterday, Meath!

MEATH  
 Yeah, I think I deserve a medal, haha!

LT  
 You certainly do.

MEATH  
 Man, I was treating those guys that were down, and the freaking enemy was shooting at me!

LT  
 You looked a little shook up when it was over.

MEATH  
 Well, hell yeah. I can't shoot back because I'm trying to fix up our guys, and we keep taking fire, and-- yeah, it was a little scary. But at least I'll be getting a medal for it.

No response from the LT.

MEATH (cont'd)  
 LT? No! Admin still not set up?

LT  
 Sorry, Meath. But still, I wanted to say great job. Maybe next time.

MEATH  
 Shit.

Meath storms out.

97 MEDALS 4 OF 5

AFTER THE NEXT ENGAGEMENT

98 EXT. BARRACKS - DAY

MEATH  
 Whoa, LT, did you see me out there today?!

LT  
 No, but I heard about it.

MEATH  
 Man, I worked on like six guys--no, seven--I started taking fire, and I said, fuggit, and I picked up my M-16 and shot right back! Then I finished fixing the guy up. Three times that happened: I'm getting shot at, I shoot back, I keep right on doing the medic thing.

LT  
 Very impressive, Meath. Shame.

MEATH  
 "Shame"? No, still no Admin?!

LT  
 No, but very impressive work, Meath.

MEATH  
 (dejected)  
 Yeah, thanks.

99 MEDALS 5 OF 5



AFTER A REALLY BIG BATTLE

100 INT. BARRACKS - DAY

JESSUP

Helluva battle out there today. LT said they finally got the Admin shops up. Everybody's gonna get a medal for this one.

MEATH

(disappointed)

Yeah.

JESSUP

You sound disappointed.

MEATH

Well, shit, I shoulda had at least three medals by now. And now everybody's gonna get one. It just doesn't seem that special now.

JESSUP

War is so unfair sometimes.

MEATH

Yeah.

101 MECHANIC'S FOOT SCRATCH

102 INT. MOTOR POOL - DAY

Meath is sitting around with Jessup, HARRIS (a mechanic), and some other guys playing cards.

MEATH

Jeezus, play a card, will ya, Harris?

HARRIS

Fuck you, Meat. You grunts are always in a goddamn hurry. Addicted to adrenalin.

MEATH

"Grunts"? We're the same level as you, Harris.

HARRIS

Yeah, but I'm a mechanic. I've got a skill.

JESSUP

Yeah, too bad we medics don't have a skill, right Meat?

HARRIS

Shit, anybody can be a medic.  
Mechanics keep the Army rolling.  
Without us, nobody goes nowhere.

Suddenly a mortar round hits twenty yards from them. Harris falls down on the ground and starts writhing around. Meath and Jessup quickly attend to him.

MEATH

Where're you hit?

HARRIS

My foot! Ahh, my foot!

JESSUP

Get his boot off.

Meath takes off Harris's boot and sock. No apparent damage.

MEATH

I don't see anything, Harris.

HARRIS

I was hit, dammit!

Jessup turns Harris's foot the other way, revealing a one-inch cut on the side.

JESSUP

It's barely a scratch.

HARRIS

I can't see, is it bleeding?

JESSUP

A little.

HARRIS

So I get a Purple Heart, right?

MEATH

Jesus H.--How many times have we been bounced around by IEDs, and this guy who never even leaves the motor pool...

JESSUP

Yeah, technically, you do.

HARRIS

Yes! Yes! Yes!

MEATH

Shit, shit, shit. Jessup, can you find a band-aid for this idiot?

JESSUP

Yeah.

Meath leaves in disgust.

103 EXT. AIRFIELD - NIGHT

Meath is waiting on the tarmac with a bunch of other soldiers: Admin guys. Meath and one other guy are off separate from the group, standing near a windsock. He looks up at the big, beautiful full moon in appreciation.

MEATH

Beautiful.

ADMIN GUY

Yeah, they got one back home just like it.

MEATH

You must be an Admin guy.

ADMIN GUY

How'd you know?

MEATH

Lucky guess. Seems like you guys are the last to arrive and the first to leave.

ADMIN GUY

We like it that way. How'd you get on the early plane out?

MEATH

I'm a chiropractor. Colonel had neck pain. Now he doesn't.

ADMIN GUY

Oh hey, yeah, do you think you could do something with my shoulder?

MEATH

Okay, but step over here a sec. If people see me do it, I'll be busy the whole plane ride back.

They walk to a spot ten yards away. Meath adjusts the guy's shoulder, and as soon as he finishes the mortars start raining down. One sends shrapnel right through the windsock where they had been standing. It's a brief attack, ending shortly.

ADMIN GUY

Thanks.

MEATH

(pointing at the torn windsock)

No, thank you!

ADMIN GUY

Yeah, I think I just kinda maybe saved your life. And mine.

MEATH

I guess that makes up for the medals you cost me.

ADMIN GUY

Huh?

SGT

Okay, load up, everyone!

They all board the C130. It takes off with a whoosh! Gone. Done with Iraq.

104 EXT. KANSAS - TRAINING FIELD - DAY

A gathering of soldiers:

MQ: Mike, what was the context of this gathering?

SOLDIER #1

Hey, Meat!

Meath turns to see who it is.

SOLDIER #1 (cont'd)

Meat, good to see you, man! Hey, I didn't get a chance to say this over there, because I was kinda unconscious at the time. But thanks, man. Thanks for saving my life.

MEATH

(remembering)

Gut wound?

SOLDIER #1

Yeah, hurt like hell. You fixed me up and gave me some painkiller. Got me back here early, 'cause I was not in good shape.

MEATH

Yeah, I remember. Glad you're okay.

Meath sees a soldier facing away from him, talking to another soldier.

MEATH (cont'd)

I recognize that voice. Is that Thompson over there?

SOLDIER #1

Yeah. He got half his face blown off. You weren't there for that one.  
(laughs)  
Didn't make him any prettier.

Meath recoils a bit at the crudeness of the remark.

SOLDIER #1 (cont'd)

Hey, that's what he says about it. I'm just repeating. They're gonna do reconstruction, though.

Meath sort of tries to sneak a peek from the side, but gets interrupted.

SOLDIER #2

Meat! Hey, bro, thanks for dragging me off that battlefield after I got shot. Very heroic.

MEATH

Not heroic enough for a medal. But hey, it was all part of the fun.

SOLDIER #2

You didn't get a medal for that?

MEATH

Nah. If this guy did it [gesturing to Soldier #1, he'd a probably got one. But I'm a medic, so it's just my job.

SOLDIER #2

Well, you did your job good. I appreciate it, brother.

MEATH

You're welcome.

Four other soldiers come up to Meath and shake his hand or give him the "sideways man hug." As Meath walks finally walks away from the group, his eyes are filled with what just might be tears. He spots one last soldier, with several scars on his face, neck, and arms.

MEATH (cont'd)

Dude, what happened to you?

SOLDIER #3

Oh, man. You didn't hear? When I went on leave, my wife stabbed me--fifty times.

MEATH

Oh. That's why you didn't come back. Oh. Okay. Well, good luck with that.

Soldier #3 smiles, waves, and walks away.

105 MEAT'S BROTHER

This scene will go right after a rough battle.

106 EXT. VEHICLE - DAY

Another medic comes up to Meath.

MEDIC

Damn. Rough day today. Lotta blood. Couple guys didn't make it.

MEATH

Yeah.

MEDIC

It doesn't seem to affect you that much.

MEATH

Nah, it does. It affects me. It's just that...

MEDIC

What?

MEATH

When I was 16, my older brother died. Massive heart attack, right in front of me.

MEDIC

Whoa, shit. Sorry, man.

MEATH

Yeah, thanks. But ya know, that was like ten years ago. So, what I'm saying is, I had that loss, and I kinda had time to process it. We come in, we go out. Everybody dies, so just try to appreciate life while you got it.

MEDIC

Wow. A medic and a philosopher.

MEATH

That's just what I got from it.

MEDIC

Hmm. Guess you're right, really.

LT

Alright, men, back to camp!  
Shitstorm's over!

The soldiers start moving to their respective vehicles.

107 SAVAGE JOY

This scene comes after a scene [not yet written] where they were breaking down doors and inspecting homes of Iraqi civilians.

108 INT. BARRACKS - EVENING

Meath lays on his bunk, thinking.

JESSUP

You okay, Meat?

MEATH

Yeah, I was just thinkin'.

JESSUP

About?

MEATH

Breaking down all those doors and  
shit. It's just...it was pretty  
intense. When I think about what I--  
what we did--I don't really feel like  
it was right, ya know?

JESSUP

But it's your job.

MEATH

Yeah, yeah. But not just that. When  
we were doing it--when I was doing it--  
-it was cool. It was like, fun.  
Really fun. It's kinda confusing.

JESSUP

"Savage joy."

MEATH

Yeah, exactly. But, "savage joy,"  
that's weird.

JESSUP

I read it in a book somewhere. Just  
the joy of, like you would love to  
break that window right now. Just  
smash it. You'd feel amazing. But  
then you got to fix it. War...you  
break it...you just move on.

MEATH

Yeah, that's it.

JESSUP

Just move on, Meat.

MEATH

Yeah.



109 PTSD QUESTION #4

110 INT. DISCHARGE PROCESSING OFFICE - DAY

MEATH

Reporting for my PTSD screening. What do I do?

Admin guy hands Meath a stack of papers.

ADMIN GUY

Fill these out. I'm going to lunch. I'll be back in a few hours to look them over.

MEATH

It'll take that long?

ADMIN GUY

Probably. Then we'll send you for further processing when you get stateside. Unless you answer "No" to question number 4.

MEATH

What's question 4?

The Admin points it out on the top sheet.

MEATH (cont'd)

(reads)

"While in the field, did you ever fire your weapon?"

Meath laughs out loud.

MEATH (cont'd)

I was in country for 355 days.

ADMIN GUY

Did you ever fire your weapon?

MEATH

I went on like, I dunno, dozens of missions.

ADMIN GUY

Did you fire your weapon, Sergeant Meath?

MEATH

Seriously?

The Admin says nothing.

MEATH (cont'd)

Okay then. No, I did not fire my  
weapon. I was just a medic.

ADMIN GUY

Write it on the form. Sign at the  
bottom.

Meath writes on the form, then signs. The Admin stamps the  
form.

ADMIN GUY (cont'd)

Okay, you're done. Now we can both go  
to lunch.

MEATH

Huh.