# Iraq Homecoming - Chapter 3 Stacy's Story

by Tim Finkbeiner INT MELISSA'S ROOM - MORNING

Inside an upper middle-class home, MELISSA LIDDELL, 6, is getting ready for school. She is looking everywhere for something. A picture of a pretty woman in an army uniform sits on her nightstand.

**MELISSA** 

(yelling)

Hey, I can't find my backpack!

SAMANTHA LIDDELL, her thirteen-year-old sister, comes into Melissa's room. She immediately spots the missing backpack on the closet door knob. She see's her younger sister looking under the bed. She grabs the backpack from the door.

SAMANTHA

Here it is. How did you miss it?

Melissa rises to her feet and shrugs her shoulders.

**MELISSA** 

I don't know. I thought I looked there.

Their father calls.

RICH (O.S.)

You girls ready?

SAMANTHA

We're coming.

The girls walk out of the room.

INT LIDDELL KITCHEN - MORNING

The girls walk into the kitchen to find their father, RICH LIDDELL, 34, making a lunch for Melissa. Rich is a handsome man, dressed in business casual.

RICH

Peanut butter and jelly, chips and an apple?

**MELISSA** 

(hopefully)

Candy bar?

RICH

Granola bar.

MELISSA

I rather have a candy bar.

RICH

I rather not have dentist bills.

He hands her lunch and a five dollar bill to Samantha which she takes no time in taking.

SAMANTHA

Thank you.

Rich pours himself a cup of coffee to go while the radio news broadcasts a story about a car bombing in Iraq.

NEWSREADER

Today in southern Iraq, five U.S. soldiers were kills in a roadside bombing.

The girls have a sick, worried look on their faces as Rich turns off the radio.

RICH

Your mother is fine, she's not even in that area.

SAMANTHA

I'm glad she's coming home soon.

**MELISSA** 

Me too.

INT PLATOON ROOM - MORNING

Somewhere outside of Baghdad, there is a platoon meeting in a small room. Fifteen weary soldiers are listening to their company commander.

The camera closes in on SGT. STACY LIDDELL, 32 and pretty even under her camo and layers of dirt, is a squad leader on this mission.

CAPTAIN SULLIVAN

First the good news; you are going all going home in three weeks.

ALL

Yea, Thank God, etc..

CAPTAIN SULLIVAN

The bad news is that the sit rep is the same as everyday; nobody know anything and those who do don't say.

SPEC. ASHLEY

No matter how much we torture them.

Sgt. Liddell gives him a sharp look.

CAPTAIN SULLIVAN

Bad subject. Don't even joke about that shit. Just be careful and watch everything.

INT SUV - MORNING

Rich, Samantha and Melissa are in the SUV. The girls are going to school and Rich to work. Samantha is listening to her Ipod.

MELISSA

Dad, what's it like there?

RICH

Where is there?

**MELISSA** 

Where mom is.

RICH

Some parts of Iraq are desert. Some parts are cities.

MELISSA

So it's sort of like here?

SAMANTHA

Except for the bombs.

Rich gives her the please-be-quiet look.

RICH

It's similar to here. It gets hotter there. It's closer to the equator.

**MELISSA** 

And they speak like us?

RICH

Most of them speak Arabic, but quite a few speak the same language as we do.

**MELISSA** 

Are there kids there?

RICH

Of course. There are lots of children.

**MELISSA** 

Are they like kids here?

RICH

Of course, just like you. They like to play, to read, candy, everything you like.

**MELISSA** 

They must be scared. I'd be scared if that stuff was happening here.

RICH

I think some are scared, honey.

They arrive at Melissa's school. She opens the back door. Rich stops her.

RICH (CONT'D)

Hey...you forgot something.

She stops and climbs back in and gives him a kiss.

RICH (CONT'D)

I love you.

**MELISSA** 

I love you too.

She's out the door and running to join her friends. Rich and Samantha pull out of the school lot.

RICH

You've been quiet lately. Anything wrong?

MELISSA

No, not really.

RICH

It's something then?

**MELISSA** 

Missing mom I guess.

RICH

We all do, but we've done pretty good with her gone, don't you think?

**MELISSA** 

Yea

EXT ARMY BASE - DAY

Sgt. Stacy Liddell takes her squad out on patrol. The soldiers are all in good moods as they pile in the Humvee. Sgt. Liddell is in the passenger seat, SPECIALIST TOM ASHLEY is the driver, PFC JUDSON, the machine gunner is seated behind the driver and PVT. PHILLIPS, 20, is in the rear passenger seat of the Humvee. They drive out of the base gate and start their mission.

PFC. JUDSON

Sgt. Liddell, what's the first thing you're going to do when you get home?

SGT. LIDDELL

Hug my daughters. You?

SPEC. ASHLEY

He's going to hug the first woman that isn't in uniform.

This brings laughter.

PFC. JUDSON

I'm going to church and thanking God for my safe return.

PVT. PHILIPS

Then going to the strip bar to spend some of your hard earned money.

PFC. Judson smiles at this.

EXT IRAQI STREET - LATER

The convoy moves down desolate war-torn streets. The young victims of war watch the display of America's military might drive past.

POV - YOUNG IRAQI

Pvt. Phillips smiles and waves to the young boy. He's pointing a video camera out the window.

INT HUMVEE - MOMENTS LATER

Pvt. Phillips continues to film the kids and waves. He's a little disturbed by them not waving back.

PVT. PHILIPS

They don't wave back. They never wave to us.

SPEC ASHLEY

Because they don't like us.

PVT. PHILIPS

How can they not like us?

SPEC ASHLEY

Because we are here and they don't like us being here.

PVT. PHILIPS

We freed them, they should appreciate us for getting rid of that dictator.

PFC JUDSON

We didn't free them. We replaced him. And they hate us even more than him.

SGT. LIDDELL

Can't argue with that.

SPEC ASHLEY

How absurd to try and make two men think alike on matters of religion, when I cannot make two timepieces agree.

SGT. LIDDELL

Who said that?

SPEC ASHLEY

Charles the fifth, Holy Roman Emperor

Just then, the Humvee gets hit by a ROADSIDE BOMB and is rolled on its side. A fire rages. The men in the drivers side are killed instantly. Sgt. Liddell and Pvt. Philips are injured and seem to be receiving small arms fire.

Partially disoriented, Sgt. Liddell CRAWLS from the burning wreckage and returns fire. She fires her M-16 wildly at the row of stores that line the road.

Sgt. Liddell's EYES finally focus through the guns sights just after she has fired a three-round burst.

Her FINGER is on the trigger and through the smoke she fires a three-round burst finally seeing her target; a SIX-YEAR-OLD IRAQI GIRL. More smoke obscures her view then clears.

The LITTLE GIRL is down, only the soles of her bare feet are seen. Is she dead?

Military medics arrive. She watches them pull her men out of the Humvee. The camera focuses on Sgt. Liddell's eyes as the realization of her actions.

INT LIDDELL HOME - EVENING

Rich is having a quiet fast-food dinner with the girls. They are all aware of what happened to in Iraq. He is concerned, but upbeat for the girls sake.

**MELISSA** 

Will she be home when she's suppose too?

RICH

Yep, she's fine, just some cuts and bruises. She will be home in three weeks, just like they said.

SAMANTHA

What happened to the other soldiers who were with her?

Rich knows but doesn't want to say.

RICH

I'm not sure honey. They didn't say.

MELISSA

Did you talk to mom?

RICH

No, I talked to her boss there and the doctors.

**MELISSA** 

How do you know she's okay if they didn't tell you?

SAMANTHA

If she was dead, someone would have come over here already.

Rich glares at her.

RTCH

She is going to call sometime soon.

MELISSA

I hope so. I won't be able to sleep without talking to her.

INT ARMY HOSPITAL - EVENING

Laying in a hospital bed, Sgt. Liddell's face is partially bandaged. Her leg is bandaged. She is tired, but thankful to be alive. The army doctor walks in the room. He looks at her chart.

DOCTOR

Everything looks good, you should be out of here tomorrow. Ready to leave?

SGT. LIDDELL

What about the men who were with me?

It's not his job to tell her the truth.

DOCTOR

I'm not sure. Do you remember what happened?

SGT. LIDDELL

(getting pissed)

Of course I remember. We got hit by a goddamn roadside bomb. How could I forget?

DOCTOR

Just checking, that's all.

The doctor leaves quickly as her Captain Sullivan enters the hospital room with the platoon chaplain. Sgt. Liddell looks at them and knows someone in her squad died.

CAPTAIN SULLIVAN

How are you feeling?

SGT. LIDDELL

I've been better. I'm sure I've looked better too.

CAPTAIN SULLIVAN

You look fine. You'll be out soon they tell me.

SGT. LIDDELL

That's what they say.

She looks at both of them.

SGT. LIDDELL (CONT'D)

Who was it?

CAPTAIN SULLIVAN

Private Phillips lost a leg. The others didn't make it.

Sgt. Liddell turns away, trying to hide her grief.

CAPTAIN SULLIVAN

It's not your fault. It happens, it's
just war.

The chaplain comes to her bedside.

CHAPLAIN

Would you like to talk about it? The accident. Your feelings?

SGT. LIDDELL

No.

She starts to cry.

INT BUS - AFTERNOON

The soldiers are all returning to their loved ones, but they are quiet, reflective. Some didn't make it home. Sgt. Liddell looks at pictures -

Of her FAMILY -

Of the SOLDIERS KILLED -

A tear runs down her face.

EXT ARMORY - AFTERNOON

At the National Guard Armory a crowd gathers at the base to welcome home the soldiers. Some wear black armbands, signifying that they lost their loved ones. The bus pulls up, and the soldier's families cheer. Rich, Samantha and Melissa are shown in the crowd.

The bus stops and the doors open. Soldiers pour out into the welcoming arms of their loved ones.

Those in black armbands watch the homecoming with tears in their eyes.

Sgt. Liddell finally gets off the bus.

MELISSA

MOMMY!!

She runs to her girls. They embrace for what seems like hours. Tears stream down their faces.

SGT. LIDDELL

I've waited for this day for a whole year.

She kisses Samantha and backs away to look at her.

SGT. LIDDELL

(to Samantha)

Look at you; you're beautiful and so grown up now.

Samantha smiles and hugs her tightly.

SAMANTHA

I missed you mom.

SGT. LIDDELL

I missed you, baby.

They break the hug and she hugs Rich.

SGT. LIDDELL (CONT'D)

You look great.

RICH

You too.

SGT. LIDDELL

I look terrible, but thanks.

They are all standing there, just enjoying the day they thought may not come.

SAMANTHA

Can we go home now?

SGT. LIDDELL

I have to do something, Sam. I'll be right back.

**MELISSA** 

What do you have to do?

SGT. LIDDELL

I have to talk to some people.

She walks over to a woman wearing an armband.

SGT. LIDDELL (CONT'D)

Mrs. Judson?

Mrs. Judson, a slim woman of 53, smiles slightly and looks at Sgt. Liddell's name tag and hugs her tightly.

MRS. JUDSON

Sgt. Liddell, thank you for your letters.

Stacy pulls away.

SGT. LIDDELL

(in tears)

Please call me Stacy. Your son was a good soldier. He was a good person. He didn't deserve what happened to him.

MRS. JUDSON

Nobody does, dear. It just happens.

Stacy cries harder.

STACY

I'm so sorry...

She breaks down and is lead off by her husband.

EXT LIDDELL HOME - EVENING

The SUV pulls up at her house. A sign welcomes her home. There are cars parked all around; it's a welcome home party. Stacy isn't happy about the surprise.

STACY

I wish you would have asked me. I rather spend the night with the three of you, alone.

RICH

I'm sorry; I thought you'd like to see our friends and family.

STACY

I do, just not sure if I'm ready right now.

RICH

They're here now. Do you want me to tell them to go?

STACY

No, don't. Let's just go in.

INT LIDDELL HOME - EVENING

The four of them walk into the house that is decorated with signs ribbons and balloons. Stacy is greeted by friends and family.

PARTY MONTAGE - music plays

Stacy talking with people - holding onto her girls, using them as a buffer.

A balloon pops, which makes her jump.

People looking at her pictures of the sights and people. They are laughing, which makes her sad and angry.

Getting a drink.

People leaving.

INT LIDDELL MASTER BEDROOM - EVENING

Stacy and Rich are getting undressed for bed. Stacy opens her dresser drawer to find her nightgown. She puts it on, but it doesn't feel right. She takes it off and puts on a tee shirt. She joins Rich in bed.

RICH

That feel better?

STACY

Yea, it does.

Rich scoots over and snuggles up to around her.

RICH

Feels nice to hold you again.

He moves his hand to her breast. She freezes up and stops him.

STACY

I'm sorry.

He's hurt, but hides it from her.

RICH

It's ok.

STACY

I don't know why I'm not ready. Everything seems so surreal, like I'm in a dream.

RICH

I know. I still can't believe you are home, laying here in bed with me.

STACY

In a few day, honey.

RICH

Take as long as you need.

He leans over and kisses her.

STACY

I love you.

RICH

I love you too.

INT LIDDELL MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

The clock reads 2:45 and Stacy is wide awake. She quietly slides out of bed.

INT LIDDELL BEDROOM HALLWAY- NIGHT

Stacy is walking down the hall, looking at each picture, touching them to make sure they are real. She opens a door.

MICHELLES ROOM

She smiles and looks at a sleeping Michelle.

She closes the door and walks to another door and opens that door.

SAMANATHAS ROOM

She smiles and looks at a sleeping Samantha.

INT LIDDELL KITCHEN - NIGHT

She pours herself a glass of whiskey and sits at the kitchen table.

She picks up the package of pictures and starts looking through them.

She comes across the picture of her squad in front of their Humvee. The men are all smiling, in spite of the fact that they are in a war zone so far from home. She cries.

INT LIDDELL KITCHEN - MORNING

Rich is pouring coffee when Stacy enters the kitchen. Rich is surprised to see her up. She sits in a chair.

RICH

You should go back to bed. I know you were up in the middle of the night.

STACY

Not use to the time change, I guess.

RICH

Well relax; I'll get you a cup of coffee.

STACY

I need to get back into the routine. Start being mommy and wife again. You can go out in the living and relax while I make the kids lunches and breakfast.

She starts pulling out pans.

RICH

Hon, the girls ate already.

She puts the pan back.

STACY

Okay, I'll make them lunch.

RICH

Samantha buys her lunch and Melissa likes peanut butter and jelly with chips and a cut up apple.

STACY

I can do that.

Stacy starts getting the stuff out when a little voice calls out.

MELISSA (O.S.)

Dad!!!!

STACY

(to Rich)

I'll get her. You sit.

Stacy leaves the kitchen.

INT LIDDELL BATHROOM - MORNING

Melissa is in the bathroom trying to comb her hair. Stacy comes in.

**MELISSA** 

Where's Dad?

Stacy is hurt a little by this.

STACY

He's downstairs. Can I help?

Melissa shows her a snarl.

MELISSA

I can't get this snarl out.

Stacy grabs the brush and starts brushing Melissa's hair rather hard.

**MELISSA** 

Ouch!!

Stacy brushes a little softer.

STACY

You need to get this hair cut, it's a mess.

Melissa is a little sad at this.

**MELISSA** 

I'm sorry mommy.

Stacy stops and hugs her.

STACY

I was wrong to say that. I'm sorry baby.

INT LIDDELL KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Stacy is back making lunch when Melissa walks into the kitchen. She looks the lunch her mother is making for her.

MELISSA

Mom, Dad always cuts my -

Stacy quickly turns on her.

STACY

I'm making your lunch, not Dad!

Melissa starts crying as Rich enters the room. He looks at Stacy and then crouches to comfort Melissa.

STACY

Stop babying her. She's too old to be crying like that.

Samantha enters the kitchen and notices her little sister crying.

SAMANTHA

What's wrong with her?

RICH

Your mother -

He gets a cold look from Stacy.

STACY

Nothing.

Stacy leaves the kitchen.

INT SUV - MORNING

Rich, Samantha and Melissa are in the SUV. The girls are going to school and Rich to work.

MELISSA

Dad, what's wrong with Mom?

RICH

She's just not use to being home. She was away for a long time. She's just not herself.

MELISSA

I miss the old mom.

Rich signs. He does too.

EXT IRAQI STREET - DAY - DREAM SEQUENCE

Sgt. Liddell CRAWLS from the burning wreckage and returns fire. She fires her M-16 wildly at the row of stores that line the road.

Sgt. Liddell's EYES finally focus through the guns sights just after she has fired a three-round burst.

Her FINGER is on the trigger and through the smoke she fires a three-round burst finally seeing her target; a SIX-YEAR-OLD IRAQI GIRL. More smoke obscures her view then clears.

The LITTLE GIRL is down, only the soles of her bare feet are seen. Sgt Liddell gets up and walks over to the dead girl. The smoke clears and she sees that it's her daughter, Melissa.

INT LIDDELL MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

A screaming Stacy wakes up and looks around. She's in her own room. It was a dream. Rich reaches over to comfort her. She starts crying.

INT ARMORY - AFTERNOON

Stacy is at the armory, getting more paperwork squared away. Captain Sullivan comes up to her.

CAPTAIN SULLIVAN

Sgt. Liddell, how are you doing? Girls enjoying you being home?

STACY

Yes, sir.

CAPTAIN SULLIVAN

How are you doing?

STACY

I'm okay, adjusting to being home.

CAPTAIN SULLIVAN

Have you been to see the doctor at VA center yet?

STACY

No, not yet. I'm going to make an appointment soon. I've only been home a week. Things are getting better.

CAPTAIN SULLIVAN

After everything you've been through, it would be a good idea to see him.

STACY

I was going to go there and see Phillips today.

CAPTAIN SULLIVAN

Go see the doc, it's an order.

STACY

But I'm on leave.

CAPTAIN SULLIVAN

I know, I'm asking as a friend.

INT VETERANS HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Stacy is sitting in the small, dirty waiting room with five men. The paint is peeling.

RECEPTIONIST

(to Stacy)

Stacy Liddell, you can go in now. Stacy gets up and walks into the small office.

INT DOCTOR ELSPETHS OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Doctor Elspeth, a young 27 year old, is looking at a file that sits on his messy desk then looks up at Stacy.

DOCTOR ELSPETH

Please, have a seat...Lieutenant Gordon?

STACY

No, Sgt. Liddell.

Stacy sits.

Doctor Elspeth looks through the stack of files. He finds her file then takes a moment to look through it for a moment.

DOCTOR ELSPETH

When did you get back?

STACY

I don't know, a week ago.

DOCTOR ELSPETH

How long were you there?

STACY

About a year.

He looks at a checklist.

DOCTOR ELSPETH

Trouble sleeping?

STACY

Yes.

DOCTOR ELSPETH

Keep to a regular bedtime schedule. Avoid strenuous exercise within a few hours of going to bed. Avoid using your sleeping area for anything other than sleeping or sexual intimacies. Avoid alcohol, tobacco, and caffeine. These can affect your ability to sleep. Don't lay in bed thinking or worrying about things. Get up and enjoy something pleasant; reading a calming book, drink a glass of warm milk, do a quiet hobby. Do you have unusual irritability, rage or anger?

STACY

Yes, a little.

DOCTOR ELSPETH

Take some time to cool off or to think things over. Walk away from whatever situation you're in. Exercise daily. Exercise reduces body tension and helps get the anger out. Anger actually increases your stress and can cause health problems. You may want to take classes in "anger management. Any sudden feelings of anxiety or panic ?

STACY

No. Yes. Sometimes.

DOCTOR ELSPETH

Feeling like the trauma is happening again? Flashbacks?

STACY

Yes.

DOCTOR ELSPETH

Keep your eyes open. Look around you and notice where you are. Talk to yourself. Remind yourself where you are, what year you're in, and that you are safe.

STACY

Okay...

DOCTOR ELSPETH

Trauma-related dreams and nightmares?

STACY

Yes.

DOCTOR ELSPETH

Using drugs and alcohol as ways to reduce anxiety or relax, stop thinking about war experiences, or go to sleep?

STACY

Yes, sometimes.

DOCTOR ELSPETH

These are a common part of traumatic stress reactions. I'm going to prescribe you some medication that will help you.

STACY

That's it?

DOCTOR ELSPETH

Yes, for now. I'll see you again in a few weeks.

STACY

Do you want to ask me anything about my experiences there? About how I'm feeling?

DOCTOR ELSPETH

Do you want to tell me about your experiences there?

She's getting pissed.

STACY

How long have you been a doctor?

He takes offense to this question.

DOCTOR ELSPETH

This isn't about my age or credentials; it's about your mental health.

STACY

You're just reading from some list. You don't want to know, you just want to get me out of here as quickly as possible.

DOCTOR ELSPETH

I'm sorry; I have many soldiers to help.

EXT STREET - LATER

She's driving holding the prescription and looking for a pharmacy. She sees a bar and decides a drink would be a better idea at this moment.

INT BAR - MOMENTS LATER

She walks into the dark bar. The few regulars in the mostly empty bar look up at her and then back to their drinks. She sits at the bar. The bartender comes up to her.

BARTENDER

What can I get you?

STACY

Jack on the rocks.

He walks away while she glances up at the television. It's a story about the war. She grimaces when they mention more soldiers killed.

WILLIAM (O.S.)

Doesn't make too much sense, does it?

William is a 55 year old man sitting a seat away from her. He has nothing better to do than be there. She looks at him.

STACY

No, not really. And I should know.

WILLIAM

Family member there?

STACY

Yea, me.

WILLIAM

Then I should buy you a drink to thank you for your service to our country.

STACY

That's not necessary, but thank you.

The bartender brings her drink and another beer for William.

BARTENDER

That's three and a quarter.

She reaches for her purse.

WILLIAM

I'll get that one. The lady is a vet.

The bartender smiles.

BARTENDER

In that case, it's on the house.

Stacy actually smiles.

BARTENDER

(to William)

But you have to pay for yours.

WILLIAM

(mock protest)

But I'm a vet.

BARTENDER

Yea, 35 years ago.

The bartender walks away.

STACY

35 years ago?

She does the math.

WILLIAM

Yep. Viet Nam.

STACY

How long were you there?

WILLIAM

Little over three years.

STACY

Why so long? Thought the tours were only a year?

WILLIAM

My first time away from home. I liked the freedom.

STACY

Army?

WILLIAM

Yep.

STACY

Me too. How did you feel when you came home?

WILLIAM

Like I didn't belong. People my age hated me because I'd been there. Called me baby killer, murderer, anything they could think of. How do you feel?

STACY

Lost. Tired.

She takes a long drink.

WILLIAM

Sometimes it gets better.

STACY

I hope so. Did you do anything you regretted over there?

WILLIAM

Of course.

STACY

Me too.

WILLIAM

Are you blaming yourself?

STACY

Some.

WILLIAM

You can't, you'll eat yourself up inside. This, I know.

STACY

Who do I blame?

WILLIAM

Religion. Politics. Not that there's much of a difference between them.

He takes a sip of beer.

WILLIAM

Susan B. Anthony said "I distrust those people who know so well what God wants them to do because I notice it always coincides with their own

desires."

STACY

Not a religious man?

WILLIAM

Napoleon Bonaparte had a couple handy quotes about religion. He said "Religion is excellent stuff for keeping common people quiet."

STACY

And the other?

WILLIAM

Religion is what keeps the poor from murdering the rich.

Stacy takes it all in.

STACY

What do you say?

WILLIAM

I say religion has killed millions more people than medicine has saved. But most people just can't handle the fact that this life is it. After we die, that's it. Nothing. Darkness. Forever and ever.

INT LIDDELL HOME - EVENING

A drunken Stacy stumbles into the kitchen while Rich and the girls are eating dinner. She leans on the counter so she won't fall. They all look at her.

RICH

Are you okay?

STACY

Yes, I'm fine.

The girls look at their drunken mother.

RICH

Girls, go to your room.

**MELISSA** 

Okay, Daddy.

SAMANTHA

(to Rich)
Is she okay?

STACY

I'm right here! You can ask me if I'm alright!

Samantha doesn't know quite to do so she looks to Rich who nods for her to leave. She leaves, still looking at her mother.

STACY

You turned them against me. I know you did. And I know you weren't faithful, you bastard.

RICH

I was completely faithful. Did you go to the doctor?

STACY

Yes.

RICH

What did he say?

She pulls out the bottle of pills.

STACY

He said to take these pills and I would be fine.

RICH

How many did you take?

STACY

Just one. But I chased it with some whiskey.

RICH

A lot of whiskey.

STACY

Don't tell me how much I can or can't drink. You don't know what I'm feeling.

RICH

You won't tell me, how could I try and help?

She starts walking out of the kitchen.

STACY

Just leave me alone.

RICH

Please talk to me.

STACY

Okay, how about fuck off and leave me alone? That enough talk? Like some more talk?

Rich can't say anything as she walks out of the kitchen.

INT LIDDELL MASTER BEDROOM - MORNING

Rich is getting ready for work. Stacy wakes up and sees him leaving the room.

STACY

Is everything okay?

RICH

Do you think it should be after that performance last night?

Stacy searches her brain for what happened.

STACY

I don't remember.

RICH

Get help. You really need it. Please.

He closes the door.

INT VETERANS HOSPITAL - AFTERNOON

In the doctors office the doctor wants to talk more, but is too busy with other vets. She's left outside the office crying.

STACY

These pills aren't working, I need to see him.

RECEPTIONIST

I'm sorry, he's with a patient right now. If you want to wait, he will see you later today if someone cancels or doesn't show up.

STACY

These pills aren't working.

RECEPTIONIST

You'll have to see the doctor.

STACY

Great, you've been a lot of help.

The receptionist gives her a dirty look.

INT VETERANS HOSPITAL - AFTERNOON

Stacy walks into Phillips room. His leg is bandaged above the knee and his eyes are closed. He senses a presence and opens his eyes. Stacy is choked up at the sight of him.

STACY

Hey.

PVT. PHILIPS

Hey Sarg.

STACY

How you doing?

She winces at this question.

STACY

That was a stupid question.

PVT. PHILIPS

It's okay, everyone asks.

STACY

I'm sorry.

PVT. PHILIPS

You got nothing to be sorry for. I'm doing good. Missing a leg, but I'm good. Doctor said I'll get a prosthetic one and be walking like I use to. Plus the government's giving me about eight hundred a month.

She starts crying and walking around the room. She will continue to walk around the room during the scene.

STACY

Does it hurt?

PVT. PHILIPS

Not really, I'm on some good painkillers. Sometimes the part of my leg that's gone hurts. Docs call it phantom pain. They say it will go away some day.

STACY

Can I do anything? You need anything? Books?

PVT. PHILIPS

No, just tell everyone there that I'm good.

STACY

I will.

PVT. PHILIPS

Sarg, can I ask you something?

STACY

Sure. Anything

PVT. PHILIPS

Should we be there? They don't want us there, why stay? Just seems senseless sometimes. We bomb them, we shoot them, they bomb and shoot us. Nothing seems

to work.

STACY

I'm afraid I don't know the answer.

PVT. PHILIPS

Guess we know what the answer isn't, don't we?

Stacy stops walking a looks at him.

INT STACYS CAR - AFTERNOON

Stacy is parked at schoolyard watching her youngest daughter, Melissa playing on the playground. She smiles for the first time that day.

She sees her daughter running and a young boy points a stick at her while they play "army". He daughter falls down playing "dead."

EXT SCHOOLYARD - AFTERNOON

Stacy runs to her "dead" daughter screaming incoherently.

BOY

I got you, you're dead.

Melissa sits up when she hears a hysterical Stacy running at her. Stacy reaches her.

**MELISSA** 

I'm okay mommy, we are just playing army.

Stacy breaks down, cries.

STACY

I'm sorry baby.

MELISSA

Are you okay mommy?

Stacy gets up and looks at her daughter.

STACY

I love you baby.

And walks away, leaving her daughter sitting on the ground, bewildered.

INT CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Stacy is in her car driving around looking for something. She sees what she's looking for.

EXT STREET - LATER

Stacy is in her car, looking at the building. Tears streaming down her face, she walks inside. It's a mosque.

INT MOSQUE - LATER

She walks toward the mosque entrance. A man stops her.

IMAM OAZWINI

The Holy Qur'an says "It is not for such as join gods with Allah, to visit or maintain the mosques of Allah while they witness against their own souls to infidelity. The works of such bear no fruit: In Fire shall they dwell."

STACY

What does that mean?

IMAM QAZWINI

It means that those who worship multiple Gods are not welcome. What do you believe?

STACY

I'm not sure.

She wipes a tear away.

IMAM QAZWINI

Do you need to talk to someone?

STACY

Yes.

IMAM QAZWINI

Would you feel uncomfortable wearing a hijib? It is required that non-Muslim female visitors wear a scarf to cover the head. Stacy hesitates a moment.

IMAM QAZWINI (CONT'D)

We can talk outside if wearing one makes you uncomfortable.

STACY

Maybe that would be better.

IMAM QAZWINI

I'm Imam Qazwini.

He extends his hand and she takes it. They walk to a bench and have a seat.

STACY

Are a priest?

IMAM QAZWINI

We prefer Imam. It's very similar.

STACY

I'm not very familiar with your faith.

IMAM QAZWINI

What is your faith?

STACY

I'm not sure. Christian I guess.

IMAM QAZWINI

Did you know that the Islamic faith also believes in Jesus? Sura 29:46 says that Muslims are told by Allah, not to question the authority of the scriptures of the Christians, saying, "And dispute ye not with the People of the Book, but say, "We believe in the revelation which has come down to us and in that which came down to you; Our Allah and your God are one.

STACY

I had no idea.

IMAM QAZWINI

Did you know that Islam is the only non-Christian faith that prescribes faith in Jesus? No Muslim is a Muslim if he does not believe in Jesus. We believe that he was one of the mightiest Messengers of Allah. We believe that he was born miraculously without any male intervention, which many modern day Christians do not believe. We believe that He gave life to the dead with God's permission. We believe that He healed those born blind, and the lepers with God's permission.

#### STACY

If both religions love and respect Jesus, why fight?

#### IMAM QAZWINI

The major difference between Islam and Christianity is the Christians' insist on the divinity of Jesus. Christian scriptures reveal that Jesus never claimed divinity. The Bible contains statements attributed to Jesus in which he preached quite the contrary.

#### STACY

Then why do Muslins want to kill Christians?

# IMAM QAZWINI

The Holy Qur'an says "Whoever works evil must be punished. They counter aggression with an equivalent response. However, those who pardon and conciliate receive a better reward from God. They counter evil with good."

# STACY

That doesn't explain the fanaticism.

IMAM QAZWINI

Do you know who said? "All who die by the way, whether by land or by sea, or in battle against the pagans, shall have immediate remission of sins." The same person also said "If you must have blood, bathe in the blood of the infidels".

STACY

I have no idea.

IMAM QAZWINI

Urban II, pope of the first crusade.

EXT STREET - LATER

She leaves and drives again before stopping at a light. She sees a church. She pulls into the parking lot and walks inside.

INT CHURCH - LATER

Stacy walks into a church and into the confessional.

STACY

Hello.

FATHER TOM

Good afternoon.

STACY

I'm not sure what to do.

FATHER TOM

Let's start with why you are here.

STACY

I need to talk, I need some answers.

FATHER TOM

You can ask me, I will try to answer them the best I can.

STACY

I killed someone. I mean I think I killed someone. A child. But it was an accident.

FATHER TOM

When did this happen?

STACY

A month ago. In Iraq. I shot her.

FATHER TOM

Have you ask for forgiveness?

STACY

A million times.

FATHER TOM

And you have lingering doubts about being forgiven?

STACY

I have lingering doubts about everything.

FATHER TOM

Your faith?

STACY

I'm not sure I have any faith left.

FATHER TOM

You must have faith. God forgives, you just have to ask.

STACY

I was in a mosque earlier today.

FATHER TOM

You are a Muslim?

STACY

No.

FATHER TOM

Then why were you there?

STACY

I don't know. I found out that Islam and Christianity are similar.

## FATHER TOM

They are not similar. The Qur'an says "Kill the unbelievers wherever you find them, capture and besiege them and prepare for them every kind of ambush." Does that sound like "Thou shall not kill?"

## QUICK CUTS BETWEEN THE IMAM AND THE PRIEST

These quotes get said faster and faster until they are almost unintelligible.

## IMAM QAZWINI

The Bible says "If your very own brother, or your son or daughter, or the wife you love, or your closest friend secretly entices you, saying, "Let us go and worship other gods", do not yield to him or listen to him. Show him no pity. Do not spare him or shield him. You must certainly put him to death." "He that sacrificeth unto any god, save unto the Lord only, he shall be utterly destroyed."

## FATHER TOM

Muhammad is the Apostle of Allah. Those who follow him are merciful to one another, but ruthless to unbelievers.

## IMAM QAZWINI

And he that blasphemes the name of the Lord, he shall surely be put to death.

## FATHER TOM

Fight and slay the pagans wherever ye find them, and seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them.

# IMAM QAZWINI

Anyone arrogant enough to reject the verdict of the judge or of the priest

who represents the LORD your God must be put to death.

## FATHER TOM

Enmity and hatred will reign between us until ye believe in Allah alone.

# IMAM QAZWINI

Whoever sacrifices to any god, except the Lord alone, shall be doomed.

#### FATHER TOM

Make war on them until idolatry does not exist any longer and Allah's religion reigns universally.

#### IMAM QAZWINI

They entered into a covenant to seek the Lord, the God of their fathers, with all their heart and soul; and everyone who would not seek the Lord, the God of Israel, was to be put to death, whether small or great, whether man or woman.

# FATHER TOM

Fight the unbelievers in your surroundings, and let them find harshness in you.

## IMAM QAZWINI

Because the LORD considers it a holy day, anyone who works on the Sabbath must be put to death.

# SLAM!!!!

# INT BAR - LATER

The sound was a shot glass hitting the bar. Stacy is in the bar and just finished a shot. William is sitting next to her. He is drinking a beer.

#### WILLIAM

Religion is used to control social behavior in human societies. Up till now, human beings have been struggling to find a way of living their lives. All man-made religions, Christianity, Judaism, Islam have all failed. So what is going to fill this abyss in human society? Technology? Science? Star Wars?

Stacy drinks another shot.

STACY

Today, alcohol is replacing it.

WILLIAM

The Bible and Qur'an are filled with contradictions. Whoever chooses the quotes usually tell us more about the person who picks the quote than the quote itself.

STACY

I learned that today. They both say to have mercy on people; some quotes say to kill non-believers. And they know each other's Holy book.

WILLIAM

When you are competing for souls, it's nice to have the other guys' playbook.

Stacy smiles.

WILLIAM

Freud said "A religion, even if it calls itself a religion of love, must be hard and unloving to those who do not belong to it."

STACY

Why is there religion anyway?

WILLIAM

To give people hope.

STACY

What do you say about religion?

WILLIAM

Religion is the best and the worst of humankind.

Silence.

STACY

Have you ever thought about suicide?

WILLIAM

Every day for the past 35 years.

He picks up his beer and tips it to her.

WILLIAM

I'm just doing it slowly.
Nietzsche said "The thought of suicide is a great consolation: by means of it one gets successfully through many a bad night."

A quite moment between them.

STACY

I killed someone there.

WILLIAM

I know. Me too.

STACY

A little girl.

WILLIAM

I'm sorry. Do you want to talk about it?

STACY

No.

WILLIAM

Are you tired?

STACY

Yes.

WILLIAM

Go rest.

She looks in his eyes and gets off her stool.

She starts walking out the door.

INT CAR - LATER

She gets inside her car and pulls something out of her purse. The camera pulls back from her face showing the pistol she has pointed at her head.

The screen goes black and the fatal gunshot is heard.

EXT IRAQ STREET - AFTERNOON

It's a replay of the car bombing from the first scenes.

The little girl is walking down an alley.

A terrific explosion is heard. She walks toward the sound, scared but curious.

The scene goes back to the non-existent firefight in Iraq. She looks around the corner and sees the Humvee burning. Shots are being fired.

Suddenly she is pulled backward and to the ground by her older brother who shields her, then pulls her away until they are safe. The unhurt little girl gets up and runs away.

FADE OUT -