

Scars (A Soldier s Story)

By

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TITLE SCREEN

SGT MAC (V.O)

Many people think that when a soldier returns home from war, that the scars they carry are simple. Bullet wounds, shrapnel fragments, and maybe even a lost limb. But I'm here to tell you that some scars run deeper than the skin.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

In a quiet suburban neighborhood, Sgt Mac and his wife peacefully sleep in bed next to each other.

Clock on bedside table reads 1:13 a.m

Sgt. Mac (30's) is laying in bed next to his wife (Chloe 30's). Both are sleeping peacefully until Mac starts to stir in his sleep. Moans of pain and distorted words escape his mouth.

FADE TO

EXT. STREETS OF IRAQ - DAY

The bright sun beats down on desert city in Iraq. Shopkeepers are calling out trying to sell their merchandise while local men and women pass by. A group of children are playing soccer in a dusty field across a group of shops.

Down the street a squad of 7 soldiers, lead by Sgt Mac, are patrolling the deadly streets of Baghdad. Sgt Mac turns around in mid-stride to talk to his soldiers while local children hide away from the foreign military force.

SGT. MAC

Keep your eyes open and scan those rooftops boys.

He points to his eyes and then up towards the rooftops.

SOLDIER #1

Come on Sarge this isn't our first time outside the wire.

SGT. MAC

Alright, you got me there. I just don't want to get sniped when we only have a few months left.

(CONTINUED)

SPECIALIST JAMES
3 Months, 2 weeks, and a wake-up
Sarge.

Mac turns around quickly looking at the specialist's remark.

SGT. MAC
Still counting down the days I see
James.

SPECIALIST JAMES
Why wouldn't I? I've been dreaming
about going home since the moment
my boots touched the ground. I'm
ready to get out of this hell hole
and see my baby.

James pulls out a photo of his wife holding their baby and
motions for his squad mates to pass it forward to the Sarge.
Each squad member looks at the photo for a second before
passing it along.

SGT. MAC
You deployed just before she was
born right? How old is she now?

SPECIALIST JAMES
She's turning 9 months old in 3
weeks.

SOLDIER #1
Man, she's going to be crawling
around by then and going to keep
you on your toes, I guarantee.

Sgt Mac gets the photo and looks down at it.

SGT MAC
That's hard to imagine, Spc. James,
the guy who use to be the company
screw up...is gonna be a father.

SOLDIER #1
(sarcastically)
Almost brings a tear to your eyes,
doesn't it.

The squad of men chuckle at the joke.

SOLDIER #2
Hey Sarge, Are you married or have
kids?

SGT. MAC

Me? Hell no, if I had to choose between marriage and war, I'd always choose war.

SOLDIER #3

Why's that?

SPC JAMES

That's because Ole Sarge here is a soldier through and through. He is married to the Army and we...

Spc. James spreads his arms out to his side and turns around motioning to all the other soldiers.

SPC JAMES

Well, we are his kids.

SGT. MAC

It's because, here, I know what to do, how to do it, and I do it effectively. Marriage is a battleground unto itself. No married man ever knows what he is doing. If they say they do, they're lying.

SOLDIER #3

No truer words have ever been spoken.

SGT MAC

In truth, I always wanted to have a child of my own. But I've known nothing but the military. I wouldn't even know how to change a diaper even if my life depended on it. Plus, what kind of life could a child have with their father being deployed all the time?

SPECIALIST JAMES

Awww come on, marriage isn't all that bad. My last day home, the wife surprised me by coming into the bedroom wearing nothing but...

SFX: incoming mortars

SGT. MAC

MORTARS!!! GET DOWN!!

SFX: Explosions

(CONTINUED)

FLASH CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

The clock on the bedside table reads 1:30 a.m

Sgt Mac startles awake, sitting up in his bed shaking, backpedaling towards the headboard. Sweat is pouring from his face as he is looking around trying to gain his bearings and figure out where he is.

He sits on the edge of the bed and pulls a medicine bottle out of the bed side table. "Ambien" He opens the bottle and takes one of the pills and lays back down.

Time on the clock begins to speed up. Time lapse till morning.

FADE

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Panning up from highly shined dress shoes, past green dress pants, and up Sgt. Mac's shirtless back, 22 various scars from a battle long ago riddle his back.

As Sgt. Mac shaves, he nicks his neck and drops of blood fall into the sink. After staring at the blood for a few seconds, he looks into the mirror. The nick on his neck starts to turn into an open neck wound. Images of Iraq flash on the screen rapidly. As the images are flashing, Sgt Macs starts to panic and grasp at his neck to stop the imaginary bleeding. As images become more frequent, Mac's speed increases.

SFX: intro ears ringing

Everything stops and Mac look straight into the mirror. In the mirror, James is lying on the ground in Iraq bleeding out. As Mac slowly raises his hand and puts it to the mirror, his hand goes through and lays on Jame's body.

SFX: intro gun fire

MORPH CUT TO:

EXT. STREETS OF IRAQ - DAY

SFX: Ears Ringing

SFX: gun fire

SFX: Muffled Talking

Smoke fills the air while debris litters the ground.

Most of the local shopkeepers and shoppers are frantically running for their lives, screaming while trying to find a place to hide. Some of the locals are on the ground, dead or crying out in pain. The children have abandoned the dusty field while the soccer ball they were playing with sits alone in the field.

SPC. James has been fatally injured by incoming motor fire and shrapnel fragments. He is laying on ground, blood pooling around him. Shrapnel fragments have pierced his chest and lungs. He is crying out in pain and struggling to breath and talk. Sgt Mac and the squad medic are around James, comforting him and trying to stop the bleeding while the other soldiers are guarding the area.

SGT MAC

Where the hell is that Medivac?!

SOLDIER #3

Working on it, the bird is in the air. ETA is 15 minutes.

SGT MAC

HE DOESN'T HAVE 15 MINUTES DAMNIT!

Sgt Mac lets out a scream of pain and hits the ground with a balled up fist.

JUMP CUT TO:

INT BATHROOM - DAY

(Zoom out of Macs eyes through the mirror)

Sgt Mac hits the mirror with a balled up fist, shattering it. He wipes the tears from his eyes. Small shards of glass become embedded in his knuckles with small trails of blood trickling down his hand.

He reaches up into the medicine cabinet that is lined with several medicine bottles. With shaky hands and grabs a few of the different bottles that are labeled for PTSD, Anxiety, and Depression.

(CONTINUED)

Mac looks into the bottle of his anxiety meds and sees only one pill left. As he turns the bottle over to drop the pill into his hand, it misses and lands into the sink. He frantically grabs for the pill as it falls down the drain.

SGT MAC

Shit...No No No. Not today, Not on this day.

INT LIVING ROOM - DAY

Sgt Mac walks out of the bathroom while putting on his white shirt. Camera follows from the bathroom through the living room to the kitchen, Sgt Mac passes by a wall covered with military decorations, awards, and flags.

Exit Sgt Mac

Camera pauses for a moment on a picture of Sgt Mac and his squad posing in all their gear while in Iraq.

Slow zoom in

SFX: Tea Kettle Whistle

JUMP CUT TO:

INT KITCHEN - DAY

Sgt Mac take the kettle off the stove and pours the hot water into a "Big Red 1" cup and begins to stare out the kitchen window into the backyard, lost in thought, while the instant coffee seeps.

Enter Chloe

Chloe walks up behind her husband and puts her arms around his waist and leans her head on his back. She breaths in deeply and exhales after a few seconds before she talks.

CHLOE

You weren't in bed when I woke up.
Another nightmare?

Slightly startled, Mac looks over his shoulder at her.

SGT MAC

Yeah, it was nothing. Just a bad dream.

(CONTINUED)

CHLOE

They are getting worse Hun, I really wish you would talk to someone about it.

Chloe takes her hands from around him and grabs some pamphlets out of her back pockets and tosses them on the counter pointing at them.

CHLOE

There are many organizations that can help you. Wounded Warriors, TAPS, the VA...

SGT MAC

(angry)

Chloe!

Mac sets the coffee cup down with a bit of anger, breaking the cup on the counter and spilling the hot coffee onto his hand and all over the counter. Turning around, he is instantly regretful.

SGT MAC

(softer voice)

I've told you several times, those programs are for soldiers who need it. I'm not going to waste their time over some bad dreams.

Chloe grabs a wash cloth and wraps it around Mac's hands to dry them, she pulls him closer and almost forces him to look into her pleading eyes.

CHLOE

Look, I'm not going to force you to go. But, It's not just the dreams. It's the anxiety, depression, anger outbursts. I'm...I'm just worried about you, that's all.

(beat)

Your knuckles...what happened?

SGT MAC

Nothing, the mirror in the bathroom fell and landed on my hand. That's what I get for buying cheap foreign crap.

Chloe looks skeptical, she knows he is lying but wont press the issue.

(CONTINUED)

CHLOE

Well, it doesn't look like you'll need stitches. At least put something on it. OK?

Chloe walks away grabbing her car keys and other belongings for the day.

Exit Chloe

CHLOE(O.S)

Don't forget, I'm pulling a double shift tonight. You're not going to get to bored by yourself are you?

SGT MAC

Nah, Don't worry about me. I have a few errands to run, get the lawn mowed, and go visit James.

Enter Chloe

CHLOE

I love what you are doing for James and his family, but please, don't forget to take some time out for yourself. Relax a bit and clear your head.

Chloe picks up her purse and starts to head out the door

CHLOE

At least look the pamphlets over and TRY to get some rest. Why don't you order a pizza or something for dinner? I gotta go, Love You.

Sgt Mac zones out thumbing over the pamphlets and shakes his head as he come to.

SGT MAC

Love you too.

But its to late as Chloe has already left. Sgt Mac goes back to staring at the pamphlets.

SFX: incoming helicopter

SPC. JAMES (V.O)

I'm not going to make it home to see my daughter am I sarge?

CROSS FADE TO:

EXT. STREETS OF IRAQ - DAY

Mac is leaning over SPC James, replacing the bloody bandage on his chest with a fresh one. The squad medic is pushing the needle of a syringe into his leg.

MEDIC

This will help take some of the pain down. You should feel it quickly.

Sgt Mac leans closer to James.

SGT. MAC

Don't you talk like that. We're going to get you out of here. You're going to be there for her first steps, her graduation, and to walk her down the aisle.

Sgt Mac looks over and yells to the Comms Soldier who is frantically talking on the radio.

SGT MAC

Where the hell is that bird?!

A bloody hand reached up and grabs the arm of Sgt Mac.

SPC JAMES

(fading)

Sorry Sarge, I don't think I'm going to make it out of this one. Promise me...

SGT MAC

No, I'm not promising anything because you're not going to die.

SPC JAMES

promise me you will walk her down the aisle.

Spc. James's hand falls lifelessly to the ground, leaving a smear of blood on the flag patch of Mac's uniform.

SFX: Helicopter Approaching

SGT MAC

James? JAMES!

SFX: intro Bugle playing TAPS

FADE TO:

EXT CEMETERY - DAY

SFX: TAPS playing on bugle

SFX: 21 gun Salute

Sgt Mac is walking up a hill to a gravestone. He is dressed in full Class A's wearing a Beret. His chest is adorned with several medals and awards including the Purple Heart. As he approaches he stares at the inscription carved on the front.

James Williams

SPC. US Army

Iraq

1984-2012

Loving Husband, Father, and Brother.

He slowly kisses and then sets a military challenge coin reading "All gave some, Some gave all" on top of the grave stone.

SGT MAC

Hey Bro, Sorry I haven't stopped by lately. But...

Sgt Mac sits down and lays his back against the Grave Stone.

SGT MAC

Well, you know why.

After a brief pause and a long exhale.

SGT MAC

So, Chloe finished getting her certification to be an EMT. She has been extremely busy ever since she got hired. She keeps bugging me to go talk to someone, like a councilor or psychologist. Thinks it will help.

I don't know though, I never put much stock into all that psychological babble. Never understood the point of paying someone to listen to me bitch and moan about my problems. That, and all they'll do is throw medicine at you. Funny thing is, the medicine

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SGT MAC (cont'd)
seems to have a more side effects
than what it's suppose to cure.

Mac stares off watching a child play with a ball in the distance.

CROSS FADE TO:

EXT HOUSE - EVENING

The same child is playing ball in front of a suburban house as a car pulls into the driveway of the house across the street. An American flag is flying outside and a small banner with a blue star on it hangs from one of the front windows.

SGT MAC (V.O)
I went by to check on Jackie the other day. She is doing a little better. Ashley's walking now. I wish you could see her. She is a beautiful little girl. Thankfully she got her looks from her mother.

Sgt Mac, dressed in his Class A's uniform, slowly walks to the front door of the house holding a folded flag at his side.

He pauses at the door for a moment before knocking. After knocking, Jackie comes to the door. Upon seeing Sgt Mac, she starts to shake her head no as Sgt Mac starts talking. (silent dialog) Jackie falls to the floor, Mac kneels down and places his hand on her shoulder.

FADE OUT

INT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

SGT MAC (V.O)
It's not easy. I don't know how people can do it. Transition to the civilian world after all we have done, all we have seen. Civilians? ...they just don't understand.

Sgt Mac is sitting on the couch. On the coffee table is a cell phone, a bottle of liquor, pamphlets, a bottle of pain pills, and a gun.

(CONTINUED)

Mac reaches down and pours the bottle of pain pills in his hands and grabs the liquor bottle, a few seconds later the bottle is placed back and the gun is picked up.

SGT MAC (V.O)

All the hate, the violence, the death...It starts to weigh on you. Every time i close my eyes, I see their faces. The faces of the lives we lost...and the ones we took.

His cell phone starts to vibrate then rings. It goes unanswered.

Chloe's picture appears on the phone along with a text message.

"Babe, call me"

SGT MAC (V.O)

I love my family and I know they love me. But, the pain, it's to much. I'm tired of hurting, tired of the sleepless nights, tired of hurting the ones I love.

Sgt Mac places the barrel of the pistol to his chin. His hands shake a little.

He cocks the hammer back and places his finger on the trigger,

Focus on phone sitting on the coffee table as it vibrates once more.

A text message appears on the phone.
"I'm Pregnant!"

SFX: gun hits the floor

Sgt Mac's hand reaches out and grabs the phone and stares at the message.

A tear drops rolls from his eye and hits the phone's screen.

SGT MAC

As I said, I love my family and I'm tired of hurting the ones I love.

Sgt Mac grabs the pamphlets off the table and heads towards the door.

FADE TO BLACK

(CONTINUED)

SGT MAC (V.O)

Some scars run deeper than the surface of the skin. Everyday 22 veterans give their lives to suicide. Organizations like TAPS, Wounded Warrior, the VA, and others are willing to help. Together, we can help these veterans receive the help they need in order to not become another statistic.

(credits)

ALTERNATIVE ENDING - INT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

SGT MAC (V.O)

I don't know how people can do it. Transition to the civilian world after all that we have done, all that we have seen. Civilians...they just don't understand.

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Mac reaches down and pours the bottle of pain pills in his hands and grabs the liquor bottle, a few seconds later the bottle is placed back and the gun is picked up.

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Sgt Mac places the barrel of the pistol to his chin. His hands shake a little.

(CONTINUED)

He cocks the hammer back and places his finger on the trigger,

SFX: gun shot

SFX: gun hitting the floor.

Focus on phone sitting on the coffee table as it vibrates once more.

A text message appears on the phone.

"I'm Pregnant."

FADE TO BLACK

SGT MAC (V.O)

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(credits)