Iraq Homecoming by Tim Finkbeiner timf248@yahoo.com

EXT IRAQ STREET - AFTERNOON

STACY L., 34, mother and soldier is in the middle of an intense firefight in Iraq.

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?

INT CAR – DAY

STACY, 34, mother, and former soldier is in her car driving around looking for something. She sees what she's looking for.

EXT STREET – LATER

Dressed in her Army fatigues, Stacy is 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 QAZWINI
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.

(CONTINUED)
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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?

(MORE)
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.

Stacy take this all in.

IMAM QAZWINI (CONT’D)
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 Muslims 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.

(CONTINUED)
IMAM QAZWINI
Anyone arrogant enough to reject the verdict of the judge or of the priest 38
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 pretty much 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 (CONT'D)
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 (CONT'D)
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

The little girl is walking down an alley.

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

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 an unseen figure, then pulls her away. The unhurt little girl gets up and runs away.

FADE OUT -