SLACKJAW
World War II online video-game. A video-soldier, "Ayres" stealthily searches a French village. Other players' voices heard thru headsets/static seen in the distance. Tense.

Another video-soldier, "Chili", suddenly appears in a puffy 1600's uniform: pointy shoes, big goofy hat, bow and arrows.

AYRES VIDEO SOLDIER'S VOICE
Jesus Christ!! You scared the hell out of me!

CHILI'S VIDEO SOLDIER'S VOICE
Sorry, first-time player.

AYRES VIDEO SOLDIER'S VOICE
(sarcastic)
Oh thank God they finally decided to send us some archers.

CHILI'S VIDEO SOLDIER'S VOICE
What the...? OK was I the only one that found the uniform set-up confusing?

Chili's Soldier makes a series of spastic moves, squats repeatedly, walks face-first into a wall, keeps on striding.

CHILI'S VIDEO SOLDIER'S VOICE (CONT'D)
This game is awesome though. Hey does my voice sound weird to you at all? Echo. Echo. (Nicholson imitation) You WANT me on that wall, you NEED me on that wall.

AYRES VIDEO SOLDIER'S VOICE
Could you stop that, you're inviting sniper fire.

CHILI'S VIDEO SOLDIER'S VOICE
OK. Hey what are you doing? I thought our orders were to blow the bridge?

AYRES VIDEO SOLDIER'S VOICE
Screw our orders. I'm looking for stolen Nazi gold. It's a cheat straight to the 12th level.

CHILI'S VIDEO SOLDIER'S VOICE
What is that like a shortcut?
AYRES VIDEO SOLDIER’S VOICE
Yeah.

CHILI’S VIDEO SOLDIER’S VOICE
In life there are no shortcuts to anyplace worth going.

AYRES VIDEO SOLDIER’S VOICE
Wrong. Level 12 is supposed to be awesome.

Background noise in a headset we hear a ‘ding’. A toaster.

CHILI’S VIDEO SOLDIER’S VOICE
That’s my cheese-toast. Cover me for a sec will ya?

AYRES VIDEO SOLDIER’S VOICE
No I will not cover you.

Chili’s unmanned soldier blocks Ayres’ soldier in the corner.

AYRES VIDEO SOLDIER’S VOICE (CONT’D)
Hey man, hey...you can’t just drop your controller like that! Hello?!

Now a phone rings in the background. Chili’s boss.

CHILI’S VIDEO SOLDIER’S VOICE
Hello? Hey Mr. Manning. Yes sir. I’m in the car as we speak, about to stop in at that very account.

AYRES VIDEO SOLDIER’S VOICE
Dude. Hang up the phone!

CHILI’S VIDEO SOLDIER’S VOICE
OK, yes sir, I know my numbers are down and...OK way down...Yes sir. Today....Got it. 10-4 on that.... Thank you sir.

Chili rejoins the game as Video-Soldier#1 appears suddenly.

CHILI’S VIDEO SOLDIER’S VOICE (CONT’D) VIDEO SOLDIER #1 VOICE
OK how ‘bout you two a-holes get down to the bridge on the double and do your...!

Chili reflexively shoots his arrow! Video-Soldier #1 falls dead. Arrow sticking straight up.
Oops.

Wow, look at his Prestige Ranking. I’d get out of here before he respawns.

It was an accident.

Yeah well that’s definitely gonna drain your Fitness Level.

On cue Chili’s soldier feints flat on his back.

See.

(flat on his back)
Hey, you seem to know your way around a little, you wouldn’t happen to have a driver’s license would ya?

A what?

Or even a learner’s permit?

Yeah I have a driver’s license, why do you...

You want a job?

What?

I’m offering you a job, starting immediately.

Well I guess I could use the...

Done. Welcome aboard.
EXT. SUBURBAN FLORIDA HIGHWAY, PRESENT DAY- NEXT AFTERNOON

A beat-up car motors down the road. The car gradually veers off the road, barrels along the shoulder.

INT. CAR-CONTINUOUS

Inside the car both the Passenger (“CHILI” BEAN, late 30’s, bed-head, flip-flops) and the Driver (JOHN AYRES (“AYRES”), 20, shaggy-hair) are sound asleep as the car hurtles along.

The driver, Ayres, wakes up in time to see the car mow down a speed-limit sign. Swerves back on the road and notices a cop car go past in the opposite direction. In the rear-view he sees the cop car U-turn across the median to pursue them.

AYRES
Oh shit.

Ayres, checking to make Chili keeps sleeping, rolls his window down and throws a baggie of pot and paraphernalia out the window. Chili wakes up, oblivious.

CHILI
I like the way you’re keeping it at 10-and-2 there. Nice technique.

In the rearview, the cop car dips briefly out of view below a rise in the road, giving Ayres his chance.

AYRES
Is this our exit?!

CHILI
Exit 57? No.

Ayres swerves and exits anyway, barrels down the exit ramp and tucks in behind a truck. A beat later the cop car, siren on, blows past them disappearing over the overpass.

CHILI (CONT’D)
Wait, Exit 57? Yeah actually this is our exit.

Chili turns on a “Learn Spanish” tape and starts doing exercises with a big rubber band.
Resistance training. I’m on a personal development program at the moment. Trying to utilize any dead-time in my day.

Chili repeats after the Spanish tape.

Tienes hambre? Si yo tengo hambre?

Ayres pulls out a cigarette.

Mind if I smoke?

Smoky treat huh? The old coffin-nail.

So ‘no’ then?

Well if you really need the crutch. Me I quit ‘em cold.

Ayres lights up. Chili leans into the smoke.

Want me to roll my window down more?

Actually why don’t you go ahead and roll it up.

Up? More?

All the way up. There you go.

Ayres closes the window. Chili enjoys the 2nd-hand smoke.

Hey so can I ask how you got your license suspended? I mean I don’t want to get into your personal business or anything...
CHILI
Not much of a story really. Had a few blender drinks down in the courtyard at my complex. Then everybody was like ‘hey go get a roll of those slice-and-bakes’.

AYRES
The Tollhouse or the Sugar cookies?

CHILI
Well I usually get one of each. I should’ve just walked it, the store is like 50 yards away, but the oven was already pre-heating and people were starting to be like “let’s just make pancakes instead” so then I decide to drive it because screw that. OK, there it is on the right. Just pull in right there.

Over his t-shirt Chili puts on a shirt and pre-tied tie. Grabs a feather-duster. Pops in some gum. Chews aggressively.

CHILI (CONT’D)
Confidence is half the battle in Sales. Gum makes me cocky.

CUT TO:

INT. LIQUOR—MOMENT LATER

Chili, sneaks into the store with a dolly of jug wine, as the owner, MR. SETHPORN PONG, is waving him off.

CHILI
Afternoon to you Mr. Sethpornpong.

MR. SETHPORN PONG
No, no more orders from you.

CHILI (cheerily ignoring him)
Same order as last time sir?
Terrific. How are Mrs. Sethpornpong and the little Sethpornpongs...

Chili pauses, reads the names on his clipboard.

CHILI (CONT’D)
...Apichart and Ngam-Chit?

Chili goes to stock the shelves anyway, dusts the bottles.
MR. SETHPORNPONG
No more orders from you. Never call, never here. We got a new vendor. I’m calling your boss.

CHILI
(under his breath)
Shit.

Plan B. Chili reads from a script. Sethpornpong dials phone.

CHILI (CONT’D)
(reading)
“Mr. Sethpornpong, we at Manning Liquor strive to consistently...

MR. SETHPORNPONG
(on phone)
Speak to Mr. Manning please.

CHILI
Mr. Sethpornpong there’s really no need to (back to reading), ”...deliver professional service to you our valued customer and I would like to state that on this occasion the level...

MR. SETHPORNPONG
We thought you were maybe dead.

CHILI
No sir, I’m very much alive sir, and the truth is, and I’m now opening myself up to you here Mr. Sethpornpong, the truth is that I had my license temporarily suspended last month...I was actually just explaining this very thing to my assistant...

MR. SETHPORNPONG
New vendor now.

CHILI
...did I mention tomorrow’s my 36th birthday sir? I’m not suggesting you owe me anything of course but it would certainly be a nice gesture on your part if...
MR. SETHPORNPONG
(on phone)
Hello Mr. Manning. No more orders from this stupid man.

CUT TO:

EXT. LIQUOR—MOMENT LATER
Chili wheels his dolly to the car. Spits out gum angrily.

CHILI
Gum didn’t work at all.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR—A MOMENT LATER
Ayres driving. Chili on the phone being yelled at.

CHILI
(on phone)
Mr. Manning I can assure you that I...OK, yes sir.
Chili is hung up on.

CHILI (CONT’D)
OK we gotta dig up a cold call to replace the Beer Barn account. You wouldn’t happen to know any stores around that a lot of alcoholics might patronize would you? Specifically like wino neighborhoods?

AYRES
Not really, no.

CHILI
OK, well let’s keep our eyes peeled for convenience stores, preferably sort of the more depressing looking ones.

Chili tries to gin up some enthusiasm, camaraderie.

CHILI (CONT’D)
Alright here we go. Let’s just keep those eyes peeled. You got ‘em peeled?
AYRES
Peeled.

CHILI
Alright.

AYRES
Hey how about that Quickie Stop?

CHILI
OK yeah, that’s good. Pull in there.

A group of punky looking teens hangs out in parking lot.

CHILI (CONT’D)
Don’t run over the delinquents.

They park. Chili changes into shirt and tie. Pops in gum.

CHILI (CONT’D)
You want something?

AYRES
Nah I’m alright.

CHILI
C’mon, you sourced this lead. How about an ice cream? You like ice cream?

AYRES
Alright.

CHILI
What kind do you like?

AYRES
I don’t know, maybe a Dove bar?

CHILI
A Dove bar? Those are like $4 man.

AYRES
Or whatever, I don’t really...

CHILI
No, no, Dove bar it is. It’s a nice lead. Dark chocolate or milk?

AYRES
Milk.

CHILI
Done.
Chili exits. Ayres plays with Chili’s exercise rubber-band.

CUT TO:

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE- MOMENT LATER

Chili enters, reprimands a teenager buying cigarettes.

CHILI
You know there’s like 4000 chemicals in a single cigarette?

Teenager looking warily at Chili, exits.

CHILI (CONT’D)
(to the clerk)
’Scuse me is the manager in at the moment?

MANAGER
I am the manager. No solicitors.

CHILI
Terrific, thanks. What an exclusive, premium looking store you have here.

MANAGER
No cold calls. Please make a purchase or exit the store.

CHILI
Are you interested in saving, 10, 20 even 30% to stock some of the...

MANAGER
Sir. Please stop.

Chili stays on script, half-heartedly now.

CHILI
...premium value-focussed wines on the market today?

MANAGER
Sir.

Chili defeated.

CHILI
You sell Dove Bars?
MANAGER
Dark chocolate or milk?

CHILI
Milk.

Manager nods to freezer case below counter.

MANAGER
Will that be all?

CHILI
(mutters to himself)
Just stay strong Chili honey.

MANAGER
Sir, will there be anything else?

CHILI
(to himself)
Just pay for the ice cream and walk out.

Sir?

Chili caves, starts loading up the counter.

CHILI
OK gimme a pack of “Back Woods”
smokes, six Slim Jims, a jumbo-dog,
two “Money for Nuttin’” scratch-offs, a tin of Skoal bandits and a
Heath bar, make that two Heath bars, and a cherry mini-pie. And a
5-Hour energy drink.

CUT TO:

EXT. SAME CONVENIENCE STORE—CONTINUOUS

Teen “delinquents” hanging out. Chili walks to the car. Hears
his name called by one of the delinquents, FAYE BEAN, 14.

FAYE
Chili.

CHILI
Hey hey sugar.

FAYE
Hi Daddy. What are you doing here?
CHILI
Working baby.

FAYE
You’re coming by tonight, don’t forget.

CHILI
8:00.

Chili has written it on his hand. Shows her. Chili suspiciously scans the group of teens nearby.

CHILI (CONT’D)
That your...posse?

FAYE
Dad.

CHILI
What is that the Chess Club?

FAYE
Dad.

CHILI
I’m just sayin’, learn from my mistakes. Apparently that’s what I was put on this earth for. Your Mom know you’re here?

FAYE
She never knows where I am. I gotta go. Don’t be late tonight. I have a birthday present for you.

CHILI
Well why else would I be coming?

FAYE
Bye Dad.

CHILI
Later.

Chili, concerned, watches Faye leave on a moped with shirtless 15 year old stud.

CUT TO:
INT. CAR- LATE AFTERNOON SAME DAY

Ayres, now driving a girly car, waits in a community college parking lot smoking a joint. Turns on stereo.

    V.O. GODDESS CD IN STEREO
    “Release all indecisiveness and move on with your life. You are a Goddess and as such you know that your goals are attainable and that you can realize your visions...”

Ayres, annoyed, turns the stereo off. Two Marine Recruiters walk among the cars, putting pamphlets on windshields. Ayres slumps down, frantically waves out smoke.

    AYRES
    (to himself)
    Marines can’t arrest people right?

Marine pamphlet appears under Ayres’ wipers. Marines peer down through the glass at Ayres slumped down hiding, busted.

    AYRES (CONT’D)
    How’s it goin’?

Marines nod, exit. Ayres takes the flyer off the windshield.

    AYRES (CONT’D)
    Propaganda.

Crumbles up flyer. Ayres’ girlfriend, KACEY, 20, approaches.

    AYRES (CONT’D)
    There’s my girl.

But PROFESSOR, 30, walks with her. Ayres doesn’t like that. Kacey splits off, gets in, kisses Ayres well. They drive off.

    KACEY
    Hey sweetie.

    AYRES
    Hey. Who was that dude?

    KACEY
    Oh, just one of my Professors.

    AYRES
    Aren’t professors supposed to be, like, older or something?

He offers her one of her own girly cigarettes.
KACEY

Nope. I’m done with ‘em this time.

Ayres lights girly cigarette. Kacey puts on waitress outfit.

KACEY (CONT’D)

OK so can I just tell you, going back to school is amazing! I sit in the front row now. All scholarly.

As Ayres watches her change clothes he swerves, rumbles loudly onto the shoulder of the road (again). Cuts off another car.

KACEY (CONT’D)

Oh I’m sorry, I’m not distracting you over here am I?

AYRES

OK no, you’re not. You’ll recall I’m a professional driver now.

KACEY

Well who could blame you, I’ve barely seen you since I got back from the Goddess retreat. Which, by the way, was amazing. God, I feel so serene, you know?

The female driver Ayres just cut off passes and flips them off. Kacey flips her off back very “un-serenely”.

KACEY (CONT’D)

Hey up yours Sunshine! (then to Ayres) So not a Goddess. Did I tell you I was the only one who made Level 1 by the end of the retreat?

AYRES

Sweet. Level One down. Done.

KACEY

I’m freaking so excited! I feel like I’m getting a total Do-Over you know!? Oh! They have ‘em for Gods too! Did I tell you that?

AYRES

No, no you did not mention that.

KACEY

Isn’t that cool?!
AYRES
(lying)
So cool.

CUT TO:

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX- SAME EVENING

Chili at his apartment door. Party going on in the courtyard. Chili enters, goes through mail, listens to voice-mail.

ANSWERING MACHINE MESSAGE
Beep. Chili Bean this is “Ace Glass and Window” again, our final call. Either come down and pay your outstanding window-repair bill at our offices by 5:00 today or don’t bother coming at all.

Chili checks the clock. It’s after 5:00.

CHILI
OK well I guess I won’t then.

We then hear Chili’s back window breaking and a rock rolling through it. Through the window an Ace Glass van speeds away.

CHILI (CONT’D)
Son of a bitch.

Flips through his mail, stopping at one he likes.

CHILI (CONT’D)
(reading)
“Chili Bean, you are Pre-approved”.

Voice message from Mr. Manning.

MR. MANNING MESSAGE
Chili, this is Jeff Manning calling. It’s 6:15 on Tuesday evening. We’ve thought about it a bit more and I just wanted to let you know that unfortunately we’ve decided to terminate you effective immediately. I’m gonna need you to drop off any wine stock you may still have in your possession, along with the hand-truck and feather-duster at your earliest convenience. You have a nice day.

Manning laughs with co-workers, thinks speaker-phone is off.
MR. MANNING MESSAGE (CONT’D)

“Hit the bricks” Chili. If you can’t
sell shit you are shit. Guy was
100% worthless am I right? Oh shit
is the speakerphone still...BEEP.

CHILI
Terminated? I’m terminated? I’ve
only been there, what, 11 months?
That’s well within the standard
grace period. You guys ever hear of
a grace period? No? Not supposed to
fire a guy during the grace period.
Dangit. OK, alright, Chili this is
just a minor setback. That’s all
this is. Let’s just, let’s just
work the problem. First, quick
workout. Everything always seems
more manageable after a workout.
This is where the old personal
discipline kicks into high gear.

Then, like a siren’s song, we hear a blender mixing drinks at
the party downstairs.

CUT TO:

INT. AYRES’S AND KACEY’S APARTMENT- LATER SAME EVENING

Kacey and Ayres alone in her apartment.

KACEY
Terminated!? And you were doing so
well too. You sourced that lead and
everything.

AYRES
I know.

KACEY
Well that sucks. No, no, “the
difference between stumbling blocks
and stepping stones is how you use
them”. And on that note, I want to
show you something that just might
get you majorly fired-up again.

Kacey slaps a document on the table.

AYRES
It looks like a contract.
KACEY
It is. That’s exactly what it is, it’s a contract...with yourself. Its actually a God and Goddess contract. We’re both supposed to sign it.

AYRES
We are?

KACEY
We are. And that’s an excellent question, I can tell you’re already curious about this. See, if I’m committing myself to this new path, which I am, then as my significant other you pretty much need to be on the path with me. See?

AYRES
Sounds sort of cool I guess. Wait, do I have to do something?

KACEY
You have to...yes you have to do something, you have start your own journey, John’s Personal Journey. Step 1 is the men’s beginner’s workshop weekend.

She slides him a pamphlet.

AYRES
No thank you.

KACEY
C’mon John at least read the pamphlet. Might want to take a look at the section on Achieving Maximum Spiritual and Physical Intimacy. It’s about how we need to be simultaneously “present” and “giving” to each other.

AYRES
What is that, what you mean like “69”?

KACEY
OK, no. Better, it means we can make love spiritually, with our minds. Like Sting.
AYRES
With our minds? Kacey you know how ADD I am, I could never, it’s like a three ring circus in there. You know what though, actually I will sign it ‘cause I know you, you’ll crack first on the sex part.

KACEY
No, you have to mean it. I need you to be fully committed to this.

AYRES
I’m committed to you. OK. You’re the only girl I’ve ever slept with, which is still, you know, not for public consumption, like we talked about. Fully committed to you, OK, but not to spending a weekend in the woods with a bunch of hard-up dudes and then coming home to a snuggle. You could say I’m fully uncommitted to that.

KACEY
John if you don’t sign this then you’re just, sort of technically in the way of my Do-Over.

AYRES
Oh am I? Why is the answer always that the guys are in the way? Is that what you ladies came up with out there? “Oh I know, it’s the guys, they’re in the way again, it’s a break-through!”

KACEY
No we were out there getting unstuck that’s what, which is exactly what you need to be doing too, like in a big way!

AYRES
OK, right now, the way you’re acting, I’m not altogether sure I want to be on the same path with you, at all!

KACEY
Oh is that right?

AYRES
Yes I think maybe so.
KACEY
Then I think maybe I need some ‘me time’!

AYRES
Fine! I’m going to meet Brit anyway. And for all I care you can just sit around here and work on your “Make-Over” all by yourself?!

KACEY
“Do-Over”! And fine! Go!

AYRES
Whatever! I will!

Ayres starts to exit. Then stops, turns back sheepishly.

AYRES (CONT’D)
Umm, you wouldn’t happen to have like five bucks I could borrow would you? I’m totally on “E”?

Kacey slams the door on him.

CUT TO:

APARTMENT COMPLEX COURTYARD- CONTINUOUS

Chili at the party, drunk, sweaty, talking loudly with JUDINAY, 25, male grad student.

CHILI
Drink up everybody, the wine tonight was provided courtesy of our good friends down at Manning Liquor! 100% worthless? OK that’s a BS assessment right there, I’m definitely like a way lower percentage worthless than that.

JUDINAY
Definitely.

CHILI
OK, what I should have said maybe was how ‘bout I come down there and kick 100% of your ass...Jeff. And they can kiss their hand-truck goodbye too. The feather-duster is mine, I bought that with my own money.
Chili attempts to light the filter of his backward cigarette.

CHILI (CONT’D)
(re: cigarette)
I think this thing is wet or something. Judinay, I’m not gonna lie to you, I had a shit day today but I tell you what, I’m turning over a new leaf starting right now...first thing tomorrow. I got it figured out this time. All I need to do is cut out these two little moves. Just these two moves right here...

Chili demonstrates “the moves”: 1) lifts his arm to drink and 2) lifts his arm to smoke (first cigarette then weed).

CHILI (CONT’D)
Just keep it real simple. Break it down into those two little moves, you know?

Judinay’s wristwatch suddenly says the time of day.

ROBOTIC WRISTWATCH VOICE
"8:30 PM".

CHILI
Is it really 8:30?

JUDINAY
Yes this is an atomic watch, it’s automatically set to the nuclear clock in Greenwich, Engla...

Chili exits running.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROADSIDE- SAME NIGHT

Ayres searches through the grass alongside the highway while BRIT (skateboarder, 20), who wears a shirt that says “Show Us Your Tits”, helps him search.

BRIT
What is that, like “69”?

AYRES
...no but that’s the first thing I asked too. The sign said Exit 57 right? Found it!
Ayres retrieves from the grass the joint and baggie he threw out of Chili’s car earlier today.

CUT TO:

INT. AYRES’S CAR- MOMENT LATER

Ayres and Brit driving. Brit rolls a joint.

BRIT
Hey man you better watch all that “Do-Over” shit. She just might decide to “do you over” too man.

Ayres scoffs, then seems unsure. Windows down, windy. Temporary license plate inside back windshield blows off.

AYRES
Tape that back on will ya’?

Brit climbs in the backseat to re-tape the license plate.

BRIT
Hey this is like 8 months expired.

Brit tapes it up but stays in backseat.

BRIT (CONT’D)
I’d like to have a do-over. I’d start taking guitar lessons when I was 2 like those little Asian kids do with the violin.

Brit air-guitars to the song. Stays in backseat.

AYRES
You can’t stay back there.

BRIT
Why not?

AYRES
‘Cause it’s unnatural.

BRIT
Hey look man, hookers.

A few hookers (maybe dudes in drag) clustered on the corner.

BRIT (CONT’D)
Roll your window down.
AYRES
Forget it.

BRIT
Hookers don’t make you sign a contract.

Ayres stops at the red-light. Brit yells out the window.

BRIT (CONT’D)
Hey, tomorrow’s my buddies birthday, you ladies sell gift certificates?

AYRES
Shit they’re coming over.

Three hookers lean in the window. Start to feel up Ayres. He is ticklish, tries to push them away while laughing.

HOOKER 1
He fine. I’ll blow out his candle right now.

HOOKER 2
C’mon baby. Momma has a present for you.

Ayres then sees a hooker backing away with his wallet.

AYRES
Hey that’s my wallet!

HOOKER 2
Not anymore it’s not.


CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE FAYE’S HOUSE- SAME NIGHT

Chili, sweaty, pedals his bike, his shoelace torques into the sprocket. Tumbles into Faye’s yard. Chili’s ex CATHY and her cheesy boyfriend RON back out. Dolled up slutty, half drunk.

RON
You OK there chief?

CATHY
Faye already left.
CHILI
Damnit. You know where she went?

CATHY
I never know where the hell she goes anymore Chili. Somewhere with that punky little boyfriend of her’s. She’s going to be 18 soon though, so it’ll all be out of my hands soon enough.

CHILI
Well yeah in four more years.

CATHY
God childhood just flies by doesn’t it? Blink and you’ll miss it. Oh she asked me to give you this.

Faye’s gift is a birthday collage made of magazine clippings.

CATHY (CONT’D)
Chili, Faye needs braces. I was thinking that since you’re working now, maybe you could pay for them? Would be a way for you to, you know, catch up.

RON
Babe like I told you, just say the word and I can cut you a check for that. Not a problem.

CHILI

RON
C’mon Cath, we gots to ‘vamoos’. Happy Hour’s over in 50 ‘minutos’.

Ron starts to back out. Chili tugs at his stuck shoe.

RON (CONT’D)
Looks like you got a little problemo there sport.

Chili straining but unable to pull the shoe out.
CHILI

Nope, no *problemo*. I think I can just...if I could maybe...damnit, I just bought those.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION- LATER SAME NIGHT

Ayres on the pay phone, handcuffed. Cop standing next to him. INTERCUT with Kacey’s apartment. Kacey on the phone.

KACEY

I can't come get you.

AYRES

Why not?

KACEY

Because this would be the 6th time I’ve bailed you out in 4 years and because people only change when they hit rock bottom.

AYRES

Funny you would say that ‘cause I’m actually standing on rock-bottom as we speak.

KACEY

Don't you see, this could actually be the beginning of your own Do-Over. Maybe it could help with your, you know, with your "quitting things" problem.

AYRES

OK I don't have a quitting things problem. We talked about this, I have a "too many aptitudes problem" which makes it hard to zero in on the best thing for me is all. You never had a problem with the old me until that stupid retreat.

KACEY

Sweetie I love the old you. I’ve loved the old you since we were 16.

AYRES

Then come get me! They said I could get 6 months in here, maybe more.
KACEY
John “all you get from sitting on the Pity Pot is a big red ring around your butt.”

AYRES
Kacey!

COP
OK, time’s up.

AYRES
Kacey? Are you coming or not? If you don’t come down here then we’re broken up! For good, I mean it. I’m taking off our ring right now, here I go, OK well, it’s stuck but...

COP
Time’s up. Let’s go. Now.

As the Cop hangs up the phone, we still hear Kacey’s voice.

KACEY
“Today is a gift” baby, “that’s why they call it the present.”

CUT TO:

EXT. RON’S TRUCK- SAME EVENING

Chili and his bike in the bed of Ron’s truck. Ron jerks the wheel back and forth to mess with Chili. They drive past Faye and friends at Quickie Stop. Faye watches them pass.

TEENAGE GIRL
Hey isn’t that your Dad?

TEENAGE BOY SKATEBOARDER
It’s a shame to throw away a perfectly good Dad like that.

He laughs at his own stupid joke.

FAYE
Shut up dickhead!

CUT TO:

INT. COURT ROOM IN POLICE STATION

Ayres sitting in the benches with lawyer, waiting his turn.
LAWYER
Goddess Retreat huh? Yeah I’ve been seeing a lot of that lately. Well maybe your buddy will come get you out? They already let him go.

AYRES
They did!?

LAWYER
Wasn’t sitting in the front seat according to the report. So technically he’s not complicit in any of this. Hey I bet he’s halfway to getting you out already.

QUICK CUT TO:

INT. ROCK CONCERT- SAME MOMENT

Brit at a concert. Stands on a chair. Pulls up his “Show Us Your Tits” t-shirt to show his to the band then pukes all over 3 guys in front of him who turn and start to pummel him.

CUT TO:

INT. COURT ROOM IN POLICE STATION- MINUTES LATER

Judge studies Ayres’ paperwork disdainfully.

JUDGE
Let’s see what we’ve got here; John Ayres, yes of course, we meet again. OK well half this stuff appears to be the same violations as before. Possession of marijuana. Driving an unregistered vehicle. Driving an uninsured vehicle. Expired license plate. $3K in outstanding traffic tickets. No, wait, solicitation of a prostitute is a fun new wrinkle. That’s just grand. This is your 1, 2, 3...6th time in front of me in the last 4 years. Right, so we’re going to try a little something new this go-round OK? Here are your options Mr. Ayres. Option 1: A minimum of 6 months in the Apalachee State Correctional Facility in Sneads, Florida.

(MORE)
JUDGE (CONT'D)
Option 2: As of tomorrow morning, you enlist in the United States Marine Corps and go through basic training at the Parris Island Recruit Depot, South Carolina. I will be notified if you wash out of that program and you will be arrested and prosecuted for the crimes listed herein. Before you decide, you can spend the night in jail upstairs to see how 6 months would suit you. Now get the hell out of here. Bailiff, bring in the next one.

CUT TO:

INT. CHILI’S APARTMENT - LATE SAME NIGHT

Chili sleepily drops frozen corn-dogs into a vat of hot oil. Selects a self-help book from an extensive collection and goes over and lies down on his couch. Reads drowsily.

CUT TO:

INT. JAIL- MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

Ayres in jail. An old African-American man is drunk, yelling.

   DRUNK CELLMATE
   Occifer! Occifer!

Twins argue in Spanish. Half-eaten jail-food attracts flies. Ayres’s gut makes a hideous gurgling. Cell-mates look at him, then at the exposed toilet, then back at Ayres, miserable.

CUT TO:

INT. CHILI’S APARTMENT - LATER SAME NIGHT

Chili asleep on couch. Two fires start: 1) Rain blows thru newly broken window on stereo. 2) Pot of oil/corn-dogs plumes flames! Chili sits up, invisible from his waist up in smoke.

   CHILI
   What the...
EXT. CHILI’S APARTMENT- LATER

From the parking lot Chili and Judinay stare at the burning apartment. Chili clutches his birthday collage.

ROBOTIC WRISTWATCH VOICE
“12 midnight”.

JUDINAY
Happy birthday Chili.

Chili, miserable, reaches over and grabs a Marine recruiting pamphlet off a car windshield, studies it.

CUT TO:

INT. BIG BLACK SUV- EARLY MORNING DAYS LATER

DONNIE KUBIAK, 20’s, buzz-cut, KUBIAK’S DAD, KUBIAK’S GRANDFATHER in black SUV. All three are big men. Little rat dog (“CHUCK NORRIS”) in the backseat with Kubiak.

KUBIAK’S DAD
The Corps was harder back in our day son. For one thing, the drill instructors today can’t come up and just punch you right in the face.

KUBIAK’S GRANDFATHER
No?

KUBIAK’S DAD
I for one think that’s horse-shit.

KUBIAK’S GRANDFATHER
(indignant)
Well it is horse-shit.

Driver of the car in front of them is slow to turn (it’s coincidentally Mr. Sethpornpong). Kubiak’s Dad yells at him.

KUBIAK’S DAD
Today Wang!

Sethpornpong flips them off.

KUBIAK’S GRANDFATHER
(re: the driver)
You gotta watch the Japs, they’re sneaky little bastards.
KUBIAK’S DAD
(quizzing Kubiak)
Section 2, Paragraph 16 of Uniform
Regulation Manual??! Go!!

Kubiak’s Dad and Granddad yell and pressure Kubiak while he
recites Marine manual, intentionally trying to rattle him.

KUBIAK
Section 2, paragraph 16
states that all Marine
recruits must adhere to
posted standards of
appearance and hygiene at all
times during the basic
training period Sir!

KUBIAK’S DAD & GRANDDAD
Do it!! Do it! You’re under
duress!!! Dat dat dat is that
an AK-47?! What the hell’s
going on!! Gooks in the
wire!!

KUBIAK’S DAD (CONT’D)
Good.

Kubiak’s Dad then speaks over his shoulder to the little rat
dog standing on the backseat next to Kubiak.

KUBIAK’S DAD (CONT’D)
“Chuck Norris”, would you rather be
in the Army or be dead?

Dog rolls over and “plays dead”.

ALL THREE KUBIAKS
Hoo-rah!!

CUT TO:

INT. AYRES’S CAR- CONTINUOUS

Ayres and Brit in parked car. Marine bus there. The Kubiaks’
car parks, with bumper sticker: “How About a Nice Hot Mug of
Shut the Hell Up”. Ayres scans the parking lot.

BRIT
You should’ve called her if you
wanted her to be here man.

AYRES
We’re broken up.

BRIT
Seriously? For good?

AYRES
Yes man, for good.
BRIT
You mind if I give it a shot then?

AYRES
Yes I freakin’ mind!

BRIT
OK OK. Can’t blame you I guess. She’s definitely the best you’re ever gonna get, that’s for damn sure. Everybody always knew she was way out of your league.

AYRES
They did?

BRIT
Way out. So what do want me to do with your car?

AYRES
Just park it at your place.

BRIT
Can I have the stereo?

AYRES
No you cannot have the stereo. It’s not like I’m dying or anything.

BRIT
Well you know actually, you might.

CUT TO:

EXT. SAME PARKING LOT- CONTINUOUS

Chili pedals up on his bike with luggage and pillow. Not sure what to do with his bike. Homeless guy is nearby.

CHILI
Hey man, you want a bike?

HOMELESS GUY
You steal it?

CHILI
No. I didn’t steal it.

HOMELESS GUY
Were you just gonna ditch it then?
CHILI
I guess I didn't really think this whole drop-off thing through. Look I was just trying to make a nice gesture.

HOMELESS GUY
You had any trouble with it?

CHILI
Never mind.

CUT TO:

INT. BUS- FEW MINUTES LATER


AYRES
Chili?

CHILI
Ayres? What the hell are you doing here? Jesus man this isn’t 'cause I fired you is it?

AYRES
Not even close.

CHILI
Good, 'cause I'm sure that must have been a blow.

We hear a horn beeping. Out the window Chili sees Faye riding on a moped with the same shirtless punk 15 year old driving. They pass the homeless guy pedaling wobbly on Chili's bike.

CHILI (CONT‘D)
That's my daughter!

Chili runs to an open window toward the back of the bus.

CHILI (CONT‘D)
Hey! Hey sweetheart! Tell your Mom they said I can put you on the Marine dental plan OK?

FAYE
OK!

Faye holds the driver by his naked waist. Chili disapproves.
CHILI
Isn’t there somewhere else...some other way you can hold on there?

FAYE
What?

CHILI
Never mind. Just put on a helmet.

FAYE
I will. Bye Dad!

CHILI
I’ll see you in 91 days!

Faye salutes. Chili salutes back, heads to seat muttering.

CHILI (CONT’D)
(re: shirtless kid)
Does that kid not own a shirt?

Kubiak whistles, cat calls as the moped recedes.

KUBIAK
Damn, not bad old man. (re: Faye)
Who’s your Daddy?

Kubiak looks for validation. STUPID RECRUIT chimes in.

STUPID RECRUIT
(earnestly re: Chili)
She just said he was.

KUBIAK
You’re about a retard aren’t you?

AYRES
Why don’t you lighten up a little man. It’s the guy’s kid.

KUBIAK
How ‘bout a nice hot mug of shut the hell up?!

AYRES
Isn’t that what your bumper sticker says?

Kubiak stumped, pissed.

KUBIAK
Hippie.
Ayres slumps in his seat. Chili sits back down.

**CHILI**
Damn Ayres I cannot believe this.

Chili offers Ayres a snack.

**CHILI (CONT’D)**
Powdered mini-donut? They’re super-fresh. The guy was actually stocking the shelf when I got these.

Ayres takes one. Looks miserable.

**CHILI (CONT’D)**
Hey man, cheer up, this is the first day of the rest of your life right here. Welcome to the beginning of your personal journey.

**AYRES**
That’s exactly what Kacey... Chili I have to ask? Why on earth would you join the Marines exactly? I mean, this is going to suck, really bad, and not to be rude or whatever but you're kind of on the old side for this aren’t you?

**CHILI**
Probably hard for you to believe since you only know me from a professional setting but I've been an industrial-strength screw-up pretty much my entire life. But how, uh, exactly how bad is this gonna suck do you figure?

**AYRES**
So you just joined voluntarily?

**CHILI**
Yeah. I mean it kind of seemed like a better idea at the time, but I got a 15 year old daughter who could use at least one actual parent about now...wait, what do you mean did I join voluntarily...didn’t you?

**AYRES**
Uhh no, was either this or six months in jail.
CHILI
What? They still do that? Well what the hell did you do?

AYRES
Did it all man, well the minor infractions anyway. But I did ‘em a lot.

CHILI
You failed to mention that in your job interview. But you're lucky, maybe the Marine Corps can nip your shit in the bud, while you’re young.

AYRES
I just want my old life back.

CHILI
Yeah well I just want my old life gone.


CUT TO:

INT. BUS— MUCH LATER, 2:00 AM

Clock reads 2:00 AM. Recruits asleep. Chili awake.

CHILI
(whispering to himself)
What the hell were you thinking?
The Coast Guard would’ve been... would’ve totally done the trick.

Bus parked. Driver re-boards with coffee from a store with huge neon sign: a fisherman catching a fish.

BUS DRIVER
We’re 5 minutes out boys so smoke ‘em if you got ‘em. Last chance for 3 months.


CHILI
Oh man.

BECKETT
Now! Now! Right God-damned now!

Recruits confused. Beckett throws luggage/recruits off bus.

CUT TO:

EXT. BUS IN FRONT OF MARINE PROCESSING BUILDING- CONTINUOUS

Recruits see a formation of painted yellow footprints.

BECKETT
Form up on the footprints! Now!

No personal space, ass-to-crotch with the guy in front of them. Ayres behind Chili. Stupid Recruit behind Kubiak.

KUBIAK
(to Stupid Recruit)
Hey Gomer would you mind moving your crotch the hell away from my ass-area please.

Stupid Recruit angles his pelvis toward the guy behind him setting off a chain reaction bending through the ranks. Chili chews gum like a maniac, hoping to get cocky.

BECKETT
If you have anything in your mouths swallow it now!

Chili chokes down gum. In front of recruits stands ED WALLS ("DI"), Drill Instructor, 40, bantam-weight, iron-tough. Platoon mascot, a bulldog, "CORPORAL WINSTON" by his side.

WALLS
You are now aboard the Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island, South Carolina! For the next 13 weeks you people are at attention! Until now your lives have been slumped, slack and completely useless. But you will now live at attention!! Standing at attention means heels are touching, feet at 45˚, thumbs along the trouser seam, palms rolled inboard, fingers in their natural curl, head up, eyes open, mouth shut and mind focussed.

Beckett startles a recruit taking his own photo with cam-phone, who fumbles camera onto the asphalt.
BECKETT
You’re not in high-school anymore
turd but if you were I’d be voted
Most Likely to Kick Your Ass!

WALLS
As of this minute the old you is
dead. He no longer exists. Your
platoon number is 1934 which is now
more important than your name. We
do not use the word “I” on this
island, we do not use the word “Me”
on this island. For the next 13
weeks you will refer to yourself as
“Recruit”. You will refer to your
Drill Instructor as “Sir”. For
example: “Sir this Recruit believes
he sees the entire Chinese army
pouring over the causeway Sir!”
There is only one way off my
island, the causeway. Do not try to
swim it. There are sharks and tides
and you will die and since you are
now government property that would
be stealing. We will make every
effort to train you even after you
have given up on yourselves which
you will all do many times during
the next 13 weeks. You are
recruits, not Marines. That title
is earned, not given.

Walls notices Chili is holding his pillow.

WALLS (CONT’D)
Recruit what the hell is that?

CHILI
It’s my pillow from home sir.
Sorry, I mean “Sir this Recruit has
a hard time getting comfortable and
for some reason this particular
pillow is perfect for...

WALLS
Shut it Recruit! Those of you who
are too weak, too fat or too salty
will be gone. We have a Pork Chop
Platoon for all you fat asses and a
Motivation Platoon for any bad-
asses. Everything you’ve done in
your life up to now has been wrong.
(MORE)
WALLS (CONT'D)
So as of right now, we're starting over. From scratch. Do you understand?!

PLATOON
Sir yes sir!!

WALLS
In times of adversity we are introduced to ourselves. Let's go say hello.

BECKETT
Inside! Now! Go, go go!

Platoon scrambles inside.

CUT TO:

INT. PROCESSING BUILDING- MOMENTS LATER

In civilian clothes, recruits herd through processing, in two parallel lines. Ayres and Chili side-by-side.

WALLS
You will now have one last chance to unburden yourselves of any wrongdoing that you may have failed to disclose to your Recruit Officer. These are Navy chaplains in here, so they may treat you like human beings, but lie to them and you will serve non-trivial time in the brig. Remember, God may have your soul, but your ass belongs to me. Before you go in you will purge any and all contraband from your person. Tobacco, pornography, drugs, pills, rubbers, No-Doze, gum, candy, lottery tickets, matches, lighters, subversive material of any kind. You no longer have a need for any of that trash!

Into the bins, Ayres and Chili drop cigarettes, snacks, etc. Both look longingly at all the contraband inside.

CUT TO:

INT. PRIVATE CONFESSION ROOM- MOMENT LATER

Sequence of INTERCUTS with several interviewees.
Navy chaplain sits at a table. Chili seated across from him.

CHILI
OK, wow, where to begin.

Shot of Stupid Recruit at the table, answering Chaplain.

CHAPLAIN
Nationality?

STUPID RECRUIT
Sir “Caucasian” sir.

INTERVIEWER
No, your nationality Recruit, you’re not from “Caucasia”.

Shot of Chili at the table.

CHILI
Should I have returned it? Yes. What do I really need a hand-truck for anyway? But to be honest my feelings had been hurt and I have a tendency to...

Shot of Kubiak.

KUBIAK
So I had a fake ID made up, to enlist early you know, to get in the shit. But then my Dad was like “the Corps isn’t going anywhere Jarhead, might ought to wait ‘til you’re legal.” That’s kind of his pet name for me, “Jarhead”. He was always like, “come here you little “Jarhead”.

Shot of ACEVEDO, tiny Latino with big gold front-tooth.

ACEVEDO
My nationality? Sir Proud Latino Man sir.

CHAPLAIN
No your country, where you’re a citizen...nevermind. You’re gonna want to keep that gold tooth out of sight where possible OK?

Shot of Ayres, just shrugging, nothing to say.

Shot of Stupid Recruit
STUPID RECRUIT
I don’t really know what to... is this supposed to be like a confession booth sort of? ‘Cause I guess, like, I’ve touched myself in an unclean manner or whatever.

Shot of Ayres.

AYRES
Why did I join the Marines?

Shot of Chili.

CHILI
Why did I join the Marines?

Shot of Ayres.

AYRES
Because I had to.

Shot of Chili.

CHILI
Because I had to, you know? Oh and also sorta for the dental plan.

CUT TO:

INT. PROCESSING BUILDING- MOMENTS LATER

Ayres and Chili in parallel lines move as “mirror images” through processing. Heads shaved. Wearing only underwear. Chili sees Stupid Recruit with a very large and odd tattoo.

CHILI
Nice tattoo.

STUPID RECRUIT
They got a three tattoo limit so I had to get these two connected.

CHILI
Smart.

The lines approach two doctors.

WALLS
When the Doc grabs your wedding tackle turn to the left and cough.
KUBIAK
(quietly to Ayres)
Don’t Ask Don’t Tell.

AYRES
What? Screw you man I’m not...

KUBIAK
(plugs his ears, smirking)
...don’t tell, don’t tell.

WALLS
Let’s go turd nobody’s looking at your bony ass!

Ayres/Chili turn their heads, cough in sync. Next, eye-test.

EYE DOCTOR 1
Ayres 20-20

EYE DOCTOR 2
Bean 20-40.

Chili gets hideous Marine glasses. Amazed how well he sees.

CHILI
Wow!!

Then sees (clearly) his own naked body in a mirror, repulsed.

CHILI (CONT’D)
Wow.

Chili and Ayres’ waists measured.

MARINE 1
Bean. 38.

MARINE 2
Ayres. 30.

KUBIAK
That your waist size or your age Granddad?

Kubiak looks around for laughs, validation.

WALLS
Shut your mouth Turd! Assume the position!

KUBIAK
Sir yes sir!
Kubiak panics, spread eagles on the wall like a criminal.

WALLS
I am not a Cop dummy! Don’t spread eagle. Jesus Christ what did they send me a bunch of God damn criminals?!) Push up position Recruit! I want push ups now!

Kubiak is furious with himself for flubbing that.

KUBIAK
Sir yes sir!

CUT TO:

EXT. BASE— LATER SAME NIGHT

Platoon, with new gear, moves in the darkness toward lit barracks. Corporal Winston chases a raccoon into the dark.

WALLS
(quietly to Beckett)
These guys just got picked clean. It’s already 0300 so can you take Firewatch duty tonight please? Tomorrow night we’ll start putting the recruits on Firewatch detail.

BECKETT
Yes sir.

WALLS
Any nervous breakdowns or freak-outs just come and get me?

BECKETT
Yes sir. OK, let’s go. One turd to a rack. We’re up at sparrow-fart tomorrow so get your racks squared away. Move!

CUT TO:

INT. BARRACKS— MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

Ayres, on bottom bunk, stares up at the top-bunk springs bulging as Chili tosses and turns above. Chili peers down.

CHILI
You awake?
AYRES
More than I’ve ever been in my entire life.

CHILI
Sorry man. Well they took my good pillow.

AYRES
Try to get some sleep.

CHILI
It feels like I’m having some palpitations or something. Which is probably normal wouldn’t you think, what with the circumstances and all?

Chili tries to get comfy but then his head reappears.

CHILI (CONT’D)
My problem is I get all fired up you know, all signed up and rarin’ to go. Then the old follow-through sort of just...

AYRES
Look I don’t know what time sparrow-fart is but I’m gonna guess it’s kind of early.

CHILI
Yeah, OK.

Chili disappears and then reappears again.

CHILI (CONT’D)
Starting to think maybe this wasn’t the best idea...If you had to guess how hard, physically I mean, would you say this is gonna be exac...

Then Walls and Beckett suddenly blast into the squadbay!

WALLS
Let’s go! Rise and shine! Another day to serve my Marine Corps! That’s too slow! If this were combat you’d all be dead already!

Recruits scramble, line up. Walls inspects ACEVEDO’s nostrils.
WALLS (CONT’D)
(re: Acevedo’s nose)
Unacceptable Acevedo! I want that mowed out in there!

ACEVEDO
Sir yes sir!

WALLS
Let’s see who memorized their Marine knowledge before arriving at basic! Recruit Bean, can you state the acronym for the five most common types of field-wounds?

Chili gets nervous, blank with stage-fright.

CHILI
Sir I can’t believe this but I’ve temporarily forgotten what an acronym is sir?

WALLS
Jesus Christ Recruit! MIA? DOA? No? Nothing? How about a BLT maybe, or some KFC perhaps? Push ups now!

Chili does pushups. Remembers while he does push-ups.

CHILI
Sir I actually totally know what you’re talking about now Sir!

WALLS
Shut it Bean! You people have 30 minutes to shit, shower and shave! All shitting will happen between the hours of 0500 and 0530 every morning so get yourselves regulated to that schedule. Since many of you have been living like animals up to now, you don’t even know how to hygiene properly. You will shower everyday, especially your ass and wedding tackle to avoid swamp-crack and monkey-dick. You will wash your hands after every head call even if you do not piss or shit directly onto them. The Corps owns you now so any deviation from these rules will be considered defacement of government property!

Walls walks out but calls to Beckett as he does.
WALLS (CONT’D)
Roll call please Sergeant Beckett.
Make sure no one tried to become a civilian overnight.

Chili suppresses a laugh. Ayres tries to figure out why.

AYRES
“Swamp crack”?

Chili shakes his head, trying not to laugh.

CHILI
“Monkey dick”.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTDOOR EXERCISE AREA- 30 MINUTES LATER


WALLS
Pull! Jesus Christ you are a shot-rig Bean!! Any recruit who is not able to meet the minimum physical requirements will either be washed out or sent to limbo in the Pork Chop Platoon.

Chili drops. Ayres keeps going easily.

WALLS (CONT’D)
That was pathetic Bean! What do you have to say for yourself?!

CHILI
Sir I have a bad strength to weight ratio sir!

WALLS
You’ve got a big fat ass is what you’ve got Bean! Next two!

Acevedo and another tiny recruit are next.

WALLS (CONT’D)
How did you two pass the height requirement? What do you have to be now, 5 feet?! Jesus Christ somebody lift ‘em up there!

Struggling, Acevedo grimaces and shows his gold tooth.
BECKETT
Stow that gold tooth Acevedo! It’s an affront to the Corps!

ACEVEDO
(lips over tooth)
Sir yes sir!

CUT TO:

MOMENT LATER

Chili and Ayres doing pushups. Chili straining. Ayres fine.

WALLS
Oh get your knees off the damn deck Bean! We don’t do ‘em like the girls!

CHILI
Sir yes sir!

WALLS
What the...Jesus Bean did you just break wind?!

CHILI
Sir this recruit was over-straining sir and...yes accidentally sir!

WALLS
Well mix in a salad next time Bean! Next two!

Kubiak runs up eagerly starts pushups.

WALLS (CONT’D)
Aww Christ what now, do you got a hard-on Kubiak?!

KUBIAK
Sir this recruit did not budget his time properly to allow for a urination this morning sir!

WALLS
Well pound it into the asphalt! I want it gone!

KUBIAK
Sir yes sir!

Kubiak pounds pushups into the ground.
EXT. BASE– LATER SAME DAY

Platoon runs through woods, backpacks on. Chili struggling, getting passed by Ayres, Kubiak and others.

KUBIAK
C’mon you bastards! You wanna live forever.

CHILI
(off Kubiak)
Umm, isn’t this just a drill?

AYRES
You doing alright Chili?

CHILI
Peachy. Go ahead, pass me.

AYRES
For the next 13 weeks I’m gonna lay low, slide by and get the hell back to the real world.

KUBIAK
Oh that’s the attitude Ayres. I know one thing, I wouldn’t want you as my wing-man.

STUPID RECRUIT
Isn’t ‘wing-man’ Air Force?

KUBIAK
OK, I wouldn’t want him in my foxhole then.

STUPID RECRUIT
Walls said foxholes are for pussies remember? He said Marines call ’em “fighting holes”.

KUBIAK
Whatever asshole.

STUPID RECRUIT
Well that’s what he said.

Walls comes alongside, the finish line still 100 yards off.
WALLS
Let’s go! Terrorists are living in caves right now eating bugs and sticks while you’ve been eating pizza with "cheese baked right into the crust"! Those guys are tougher than you and they’re gonna come over here and mate with your women and screw your generation right out of existence!!

CHILI
Sir this Recruit believes he may be experiencing a small stroke-like attack or possibly a low blood-sugar type situation sir.

WALLS
Try and act like you got a pair Bean! You’ll pass out long before you die. Drink water now.

Walls grabs Chili’s canteen for him. Chili drinks.

WALLS (CONT’D)
Let’s go Platoon! Max effort! I want to see who the fastest man in 1934 is! Show me!

Kubiak takes off sprinting. Then Ayres takes off.

AYRES
Screw that.

Ayres flies past Kubiak, wins easily.

WALLS
Congratulations Ayres. You just got tapped as “Hatch Body” for 1934. As such you will sprint ahead of the platoon in every hump, hike and march we take in order to secure the squadbay or field-camp in advance of the platoon’s arrival. Are we clear?

AYRES
Sir yes sir!

WALLS
The “Hatch Body” is the most visible man in the platoon Ayres!
AYRES
Sir yes sir!

WALLS
Recruit Bean!

CHILI
Sir yes sir!

WALLS
Bean I honestly do not see you surviving Basic Training. You avoided making Pork Chop Platoon but you have most definitely earned yourself a “Fat Tray” at every chow. And if you don’t start getting into warrior-shape right quick I’ll bounce your ass the hell out of this program.

CHILI
Sir Yes Sir!

Marine starts handing out meal trays off back of truck.

WALLS
Drop your packs. 10 minutes to eat.

Chili reaches for his tray.

WALLS (CONT’D)
“Fat Tray” for Bean.

Chili gets a meager “Fat Tray”. He eyes Ayres’s tray.

CHILI
What’s that in the little cup there, what is that, pudding?

AYRES
Mashed potatoes, you want it?

Chili struggles, fights off the urge.

CHILI
No. Not warrior food. Hey man what’d you win that race for? I thought you wee gonna lay low and slide by?

AYRES
Yeah I don’t know what that was.

Then Chili snatches a ketchup packet off Ayres’ tray.
AYRES (CONT’D)
That’s a ketchup packet.

CHILI
I know what the hell it is.

Chili gulps it quickly.

CUT TO:

INT. BARRACKS- EVENING DAYS LATER

Mail Call. Platoon on their bunks writing letters.

WALLS
Bean, Acevedo, Jackson.

Chili, exhausted, limps to his bunk with a letter. Attempts to climb to top bunk, can’t. Eyes Ayres on bottom bunk.

CHILI
OK either we swap bunks or we break the one-turd-to-a-rack rule because no way I’m making it up there.

AYRES
One-turd-to-a-rack is the only sensible rule in this place.

CHILI
Writing to my daughter. Trying to write her everyday I’m here. Gonna freak her out. You need some paper?

AYRES
Sure don’t.

CHILI
Oh will you just write to your girlfriend already man.

AYRES
Don’t have a girlfriend.

CHILI
Oh you don’t huh?

AYRES
Not anymore I don’t.

Chili hears Acevedo crying quietly, reading a letter.
CHILI
Hey what’s the matter big man?

ACEVEDO
My girlfriend has left me, for my cousin Anselmo. I knew it.

Chili looks at Ayres who notices this "Dear John" situation.

CHILI
Hey man, she’s making a big mistake alright? It’ll be OK though little buddy.

ACEVEDO
No, I am leaving, tonight. I must go to her. And then I will shoot my cousin in the face.

CHILI
See now that’s a bad decision. You want to know why?

ACEVEDO
Why?

CHILI
‘Cause you get caught going AWOL and you’re done, OK? Washed out. But if you graduate, every woman who sees you in those dress greens is gonna want to hit the rack with you, right then and there.

ACEVEDO
Really?

CHILI
Yes man.

ACEVEDO
You think so?

CHILI
I know so.

ACEVEDO
Catholic girls as well?

CHILI
Especially Catholic girls.
ACEVEDO
OK. I will stay. Thank you Chili. I owe you a debt of gratitude.

CHILI
Let’s just hang in there OK. (to Ayres) You gettin’ all this Romeo?

AYRES
Doesn’t apply to me.

CHILI
Oh will you please just stop it.

AYRES
She left me to rot in jail Chili.

CHILI
Sounds like a keeper to me.

AYRES
Did I mention that I shared a commode with Pedrito, Pepito and Cornell all night!? Then I get sent to this hell hole.

CHILI
I wish I’d had a girlfriend who loved me enough to do that. ‘Cause look at me now. The oldest recruit in the history of the Marine Corps eating a Fat Tray three times a day with a daughter I don’t get to see except Wednesdays and every other weekend.

Walls still calling out Mail Call.

WALLS
Kubiak, Eckelman, Truett.

Walls reads something on the outside of Kubiak’s letter.

WALLS (CONT’D)
“Be All That You Can Be”. Well, now that would be the Army’s slogan Kubiak. Looks like someone out there is either a high-grade moron or just wants to make sure you’re getting plenty of extra exercise.

KUBIAK
Sir I don't have any idea who...
CUT to Kubiak’s Dad/Grandfather writing letters, giggling.

KUBIAK’S GRANDFATHER
Wait, wait, I got one, I got one.
“Is that drill instructor of yours
really as big a pussy as you say?”

They both burst out laughing. Rat dog “Chuck Norris” barks.

QUICK CUT back to Mail Call.

WALLS
Push ups Kubiak.

KUBIAK
Sir yes sir!

WALLS
One minute! Every recruit will produce a letter. That means you Ayres!

Ayres starts to write quickly. Walls exits.

CHILI
And don’t be an idiot, write it to your woman, before some other joker steps in.

AYRES
“Dear Brit, How are you, this place sucks…”

CUT TO:

INT. COMMUNITY COLLEGE CLASSROOM- EVENING

PROFESSOR
Times up. Pencils down.

Class exits. Professor singles out Kacey with a question.

PROFESSOR (CONT’D)
So how’d we do? Too hard, too easy? I appreciate any and all feedback.

KACEY
It was fine. I think I did OK.
PROFESSOR
Terrific. Well, I should mention, I'm putting together a little evening study group at my house if you're interested.

KACEY
Well I work most nights.

PROFESSOR
Working your way through school. That’s fabulous.

KACEY
Actually it pretty much sucks. No, no, “the difference between stumbling blocks and stepping stones is how you use them”.

PROFESSOR
Great quote. Who said that? What is that, Proust?

KACEY
Oh, no I’m on this Goddess path right now which, oh whatever, I’m kind of driving everyone nuts with it I think. My boyfriend sort of got the worst of...

PROFESSOR
Boyfriend?

KACEY
Oh. Yeah, well actually “ex” I guess, I don’t really know what’s...haven’t talked to him in...

PROFESSOR
Fascinating. You know what, would you like to have coffee with me sometime? I would love to hear your thoughts on the course thus far. Heck we could talk about your Goddess thing...

KACEY
“Path”.

PROFESSOR
Right.
KACEY
OK, well I guess we could meet where I work if you want.

PROFESSOR
Fantastic. Got your number right here in the class list.

KACEY
Yeah, OK. I better get going.

PROFESSOR
OK, see ya later.

She exits. Professor snaps a cam-phone photo of her ass.

CUT TO:

INT. BARRACKS- MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

Ayres gets down from his bunk, middle of the night.

CHILI
Where you going?

AYRES
To the head.

CHILI
It’s off limits right now.

AYRES
Thank you, yes I know that but I can’t really do the big-job in front of other people.

Barracks are dark. Ayres walks to the toilets, sits.

AYRES (CONT’D)
(quietly mimicking Walls)
“All shitting will happen between the hours of 0500 and 0530 every morning so get yourselves regulated to...” yeah OK whatever.


AYRES (CONT’D)
OK now, no bark Corporal Winston.
No bark. OK? Be a good boy.

**AYRES (CONT'D)**
Stop that Corporal Winston. Down.
Bad dog. Seriously, that's gross.

Corporal Winston, stares at Ayres, pissed, then BARKS!! Ayres panics, lights instantly go on. Kubiak is there, loves this.

**KUBIAK**
Oh this is awesome.

**AYRES**
Hey man, just be cool, there's no need to be a dick here.

**KUBIAK**
Somebody get the DI!


**WALLS**
What in the hell is going on in here!??

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. EXERCISE SAND PIT- DAWN**

Ayres, exercising solo, covered in sweat and sand. Walls is there with Corporal Winston by his side.

**AYRES**
Sir I am a shitbird and my heart pumps pink wine cooler Sir. Sir I am a shitbird and my heart pumps pink wine cooler...." 

**WALLS**
There's 150 years of sweat, blood and puke in that box from jokers like you Ayres! You will either do it the right way or you'll be gone! You just made my personal shit list and that is a very bad place to be!! Are we clear??

**AYRES**
Sir yes sir!
WALLS
And if you ever leave an
unauthorized money-tail in my
latrine again I will personally put
it back where it came from!

CUT TO:

EXT. RIFLE RANGE- LATER SAME DAY
Walls lectures Platoon at the rifle range.

WALLS
The Marine rifleman leads from the
front, behind him lies the vast
array of the US armed forces. In
front of him lies only the enemy.
Now, a few things to remember.
First, never point your weapon at
anything you don't intend to kill.
Second, 90% of marksmanship is just
learning to breath and relax.

Kubiak raises his hand from his mat.

WALLS (CONT'D)
Recruit Kubiak?

KUBIAK
Sir, what's the other 10% sir?

WALLS
The other 10% of what Kubiak?

KUBIAK
Sir if 90% of marksmanship is
learning to relax what's the other
10% and how can this recruit make
sure and learn it sir?

STUPID RECRUIT
(earnestly to Kubiak)
Good question.

WALLS
The other 10 perc...? It's good
training you idiot. The other 10
percent is good training which the
entire platoon would be getting
right now if you'd shut your damn
crumb catcher!
KUBIAK
Sir yes sir!

CUT TO:

MOMENTS LATER

Platoon shooting. Ayres misses. A red flag raised down range.

WALLS
Ayres! More recruits wash out right here on this range than anywhere else on the island. So either learn how to hit a pancake-sized target at 1/4 mile, or you’re done. End of story.

AYRES
Sir yes sir.

Chili, nearby, winks at Ayres, then fires, green flag (hit).

WALLS
Good job Recruit Bean. Excellent.

CUT TO:

EXT. RIFLE RANGE- LATER SAME AFTERNOON

Recruits wait in line to “check out” of the rifle range.

STUPID RECRUIT
Walls says I’m gonna wash out if I can’t memorize my Marine Knowledge.

CHILI
You’re using your acronyms right?

STUPID RECRUIT
My what? Oh like, with the KFC and that?

CHILI
Yeah, OK so what are you trying to remember?

STUPID RECRUIT
Vulnerable Parts of the Body.
KUBIAK
(interrupting)
Easy: Groin, Temple, Eyes, Throat,
Ears, Knees, Nose.

CHILI
So, just make a word out of the
first letters. That’d be,
what...GTETEKN?

STUPID RECRUIT
GTE...um, GTKE, I’ll get it. Thanks
Chili.

CHILI
You’ll get it.

AYRES
OK how the hell are you shooting
like that?

CHILI
‘Cause I already know all about
deep breathing and slowing down my
heart rate.

AYRES
OK and how do you know that?

CHILI
Because activities requiring slow
breathing and lying down are like a
personal specialty of mine. And
because I own every self-help book
ever published.

AYRES
So that’s it then? Just the
breathing and the relaxing?

CHILI
Yeah, well...not for you probably.

AYRES
What do you mean not for me?

CHILI
You wouldn’t understand. “When the
student is ready the teacher will
appear.” Buddha.

AYRES
Look man, I didn’t hit a single
target.

(MORE)
AYRES (CONT'D)
I can't afford to wash out OK?
Seriously, even this place is
better than 6 months in jail.

CHILI
Alright then. It's cause you're all
out of sync and you don't even know
it. You're a screw up. Face facts.
This is where you need to be. Your
gears are grinding against each
other and you know what, it's not
healthy to walk around like that.
You're gonna grow a tumor. Watch.

AYRES
OK whatever.

CHILI
Fine. Ignore Chili at your own
peril. But trust me, I'm 15 years
ahead of you down this road.

WALLS
(to platoon)
Listen up! If you did not need all
15 rounds you were issued today in
order to make your targets you will
return them now. I cannot stress
this more strongly! No brass leaves
this range, ever! You must make
your required targets with the
exact same amount of rounds
allotted to each individual Marine.

KUBIAK
(under his breath)
Section 4, Paragraph 19a, uniform
military code of ethics.

AYRES
You memorized the whole manual?

KUBIAK
Damn straight. You're looking at
the real deal. Not like you two
jokers. Definitely not fit to be in
my Marine Corps.

CHILI
His Marine Corps? I thought it was
Walls' Marine Corps?

Kubiak steps up to the check-out table.
KUBIAK
"Sir this recruit has no brass, trash or saved rounds to report at this time, SIR!"

Chili then steps up.

CHILI
"Sir this recruit did not need all his rounds to make his required targets, SIR!"

Chili puts excess rounds on table, gives Ayres a superior look.

CUT TO:

INT. DRUGSTORE- LATE AFTERNOON

Brit at a magazine rack looking at magazines.

STORE MANAGER
Are you going to buy one or just crinkle them all up so that no one else will?

BRIT
I’m making up my mind.

Kacey enters, heads to “Family Planning” aisle. Brit spies on her, then skateboards over to her.

BRIT (CONT’D)
Hello Kacey.

KACEY
Oh Jesus Christ Brit!! What the hell!?

BRIT
Oh I’m sorry did I startle you?

KACEY
I freaking hate being startled!

BRIT
What brings you here? ‘Family Planning’?

KACEY
Nothing. Just girl stuff. I’d really love to stay and chat but I’m late, so...gotta go.
BRIT
Heard from our boy at all?

KACEY
No, nothing. Wait, have you?

BRIT
Got a couple letters from him.

KACEY
You did? Really?

BRIT
Yep.

KACEY
Well, how is he? I mean, how did he seem?

BRIT
Seemed pretty much miserable.

KACEY
Oh, yeah, OK. Well I gotta go. Bye.

Kacey turns to go. But then turns back.

KACEY (CONT’D)
Brit..actually never mind. See ya’.

Kacey exits. Brit scans where she was shopping: “Family Planning”; rubbers, pregnancy tests. Odd. Then Brit sees her meet at Professor’s car. Shocked, chooses bikini postcard.

BRIT
I’d like to buy this please. Um, you got a pen I can borrow?

Brit quickly writes a letter on the postcard.

CUT TO:

INT. PX (BASE PHARMACY/STORE)- LATER SAME DAY

Platoon walks toward the base’s PX/pharmacy.

STUPID RECRUIT
(quietly to Kubiak)
Well how ‘bout mine could be “Goose” and yours could be “Iceman”? 
KUBIAK
No, I don’t know...OK maybe.

WALLS
Hygiene supplies. Got 5 minutes.

Platoon enters the store. Walls stays behind.

CHILI
5 minutes? I have no concept of time anymore. There’s not a clock on the entire island, it’s like a casino. Seriously, does anyone have any idea what day this even is?

AYRES
Feels like I’ve been here my whole life.

KUBIAK
Alls I know is after I graduate I’m gonna get drunk and get laid, and not necessarily in that order.

CHILI
More like exactly in that order.

They arrive at the toothpaste aisle. Chili stares.

CHILI (CONT’D)
Here it is boys. The only sugar on the island. Mint, Citrus. Oh Lemon Ice! OK I’m done.

Chili checks out. Stupid Recruit pays next.

STUPID RECRUIT
I think you gave me extra change?

CASHIER
So I did.

Chili, nearby. Ayres approaches the counter. Checks out.

AYRES
You gave me too much change.

CASHIER
So I did.

Chili takes note of this wrong-change happening twice. Then sees Beckett, out of the way, watching. Kubiak walks by.
KUBIAK
Damn! I thought they’d at least get
Ayres with that one.

CUT TO:

INT. BARRACKS—MIDDLE OF THE SAME NIGHT

Chili, dressed for FireWatch wakes up Ayres, not easily.

CHILI
C’mon man. Firewatch. Gotta get up.

MOMENT LATER

Ayres on Firewatch walks through squadbay. A recruit is
completely hidden under his blanket obviously jacking off.

AYRES
You do realize that everyone in
here can hear you doin’ that?

The blankets simply stop moving. Motionless. Then we hear
Kubiak’s muffled voice from under the blanket.

KUBIAK
Hippie.

Ayres exits the barracks.

CUT TO:

EXT. BASE GROUNDS—CONTINUOUS

Camp is quiet. A lit window. Inside Ayres sees Walls working.
Walls pours water from his glass into a small plant, the only
non-essential item in the room. Ayres walks on.

Cpl. Winston joins Ayres, then chases a raccoon in the
garbage area. Ayres sees torn open trash bag revealing all
manner of “contraband” from an earlier recruit processing.

AYRES
Oh man.

Ayres grabs cigarettes, then grabs entire bag. Finds a
secluded spot near the water, hides, lights cigarette.
Smokes, ecstasy. Full moon shines on a sandbar stretching
across the water toward town. Ayres ponders it. Then thinks
he’s having a “moment” with Cpl. Winston.
AYRES (CONT’D)
Who found me a pack of cigarettes?
Who did that? You’re a good boy.

Reaches down to pet him, Cpl. Winston bites him.

AYRES (CONT’D)
Ow! God damnit!

CHILI’S POV- SAME TIME

Chili, sees Ayres at a distance smoking and being bitten. Approaches. Shines his flashlight on him. Ayres startled.

AYRES
Jesus Christ Chili!!! I freaking hate being startled.

CHILI
Where the hell did you get that?!

AYRES
In the garbage. Corporal Winston found ‘em.

CHILI
Man put that out right now. Walls is gonna bust you. You can see that ember like a mile off. You know there’s over 4000 chemicals in a single cigarette? They’re more addictive than heroin.

AYRES
I can quit anytime I want. I been quittin’ things all my life.

CHILI
Yeah well school and like sports and jobs don’t really count.

AYRES
OK I set you up for that ‘cause I accidentally worded it funny.

Ayres takes a long drag, lowers his voice down to a whisper.

AYRES (CONT’D)
And screw Walls anyway. The hell with him.
CHILI
Walls is not the problem. Maybe it’s the man in the mirror. Might want to start with him. Ask him to change his ways.

AYRES
What?

CHILI
You never heard that? It’s an expression. It’s you, you’re the man in the mirror...

AYRES
...I know what it means. It’s just annoying is all.

Ayres pulls out/eats some round mini-cracker sandwiches.

AYRES (CONT’D)
Hungry?

CHILI
Nope, sure am not, OK? At all.

AYRES
Suit yourself.

CHILI
Are those the peanut butter or the cheese kind?

AYRES
Peanut butter.

CHILI
What’s the “Sell By” Date on there?

Ayres smells Chili’s weakness now.

AYRES
They’re super-fresh.

CHILI
Good for you then.

AYRES
Yeah. I think I might have seen a mini-pie in there too.

Chili, defenseless, on the very edge of cracking.
CHILI
(weakly)
Was it cherry?

MOMENT LATER

Chili and Ayres having a contraband-orgy! Contents of the bag spread out like post-Halloween inventory. Chili smokes a cigar, eats, drinks soda like a locker-room celebration.

CHILI
The spirit is willing but the flesh is so weak!

AYRES
One’s too many and a hundred ain’t enough!

From out of the reeds appears Kubiak, with a flashlight.

CHILI
Jesus Christ Kubiak! I freaking hate being startled!!

And then Walls appears from behind Kubiak.

WALLS
Then boo.

CUT TO:

EXT. BASE GROUNDS- DAWN

Walls runs alongside Ayres and Chili, exhausted, full packs.

WALLS
Out in the field if the Firewatch decides he’s gonnna screw off for 30 minutes, a single bad guy with an AK-47 walks in and all your buddies are dead in their fart sacks! Last night you two made the decision to quit on your platoon!!

AYRES AND CHILI
Sir yes sir!

WALLS
I’ve been doing this long enough to know that you two jokers have been rounding off corners your whole God damn lives!

(MORE)
WALLS (CONT'D)
Well my job is to kill the old you dead! The world’s got enough halfasses like you walking around in it already! We’re all full up! I’m in the business of hero-training and right now you two are wasting my God damn time! So either start walking the line or I will break you across my bow! Are you gettin’ all this?!

AYRES AND CHILI
Sir yes sir!

WALLS
And starting today you’re going on sugar-free toothpaste Bean!

CHILI
Sir they have that sir?

WALLS
Hell yes they have that and I ask the questions around here!!

CHILI
Sir yes sir!

WALLS
5 miles out, and 5 miles back should start cleaning out your polluted systems! Report to my hatch immediately after you’re done!

AYRES AND CHILI
Sir yes sir!

WALLS
Now move it!

Walls exits. Chili and Ayres keep running.

CUT TO:

EXT. BASE GROUNDS- NOON

Sun is high, hot. Ayres is OK but Chili is exhausted. Chili vomits but keeps running.

CHILI
It’s the Slim Jims, I think my body is revolting.
AYRES
It’s not revolting man, you’re actually looking a lot slimmer lately. Don’t tear yourself down like that.

CHILI
No I mean its rebelling against the junk food. You really think I’m looking slimmer though?

Chili vomits again. Struggling badly. Disoriented.

AYRES
Seriously, are you OK man?

CHILI
Yeah. Just got the chills or something. At least we’re getting some cloud cover.

Ayres looks up, clear blue sky, hot sun. Chili loopy.

AYRES
Hey man how come you’re not sweating at all?

CHILI
Did Walls say you left a “monkey-tail” in the latrine? That guy sure has a way with...

Chili’s eyes roll back and he collapses, hitting his head hard as he falls, unconscious.

AYRES
Jesus! Chili! Chili! Shit!

Ayres tries to rouse Chili, cannot. Panicked.

AYRES (CONT’D)
Hey! Chili! Chili can you hear me buddy!? Can anybody hear me?!

Ayres hoists Chili onto his back. Carries him up the trail.

CUT TO:

EXT. BACK OF MOPED/STREET- NIGHT OF THE SAME DAY

Faye, lost in thought, rides on the back of her boyfriend’s moped at night, streetlights flash by. Teenage recklessness.
INT. KACEY’S CAR—SAME TIME

Through Kacey’s windshield we see Faye on the moped. Kacey too, in deep thought, passes her going opposite direction.

EXT. BRIT’S APARTMENT—MOMENT LATER

Kacey knocks on Brit’s door. We hear very loud music, voices. Kacey knocks again. Music is turned off, we hear people scurrying, whispering, lights go off. Kacey knocks again.

KACEY
Brit I can hear you in there.

Door opens a crack. Brit peaks out. Smoke plumes out.

BRIT
Good evening Kacey. One moment please.

Brit, re-closes the door, whispers to those inside.

BRIT (CONT’D)
It’s cool, it’s cool.

Door chain is undone. Brit steps outside, collects himself.

BRIT (CONT’D)
To what do I owe the pleasure?

KACEY
Sorry to come over but I tried to call and they said...

BRIT
...the phone is disconnected yes I am aware.

KACEY
So listen, I wanted to say when I saw you the other day...if you hear anything at all from John can you please just...do you know how to get in touch with him or anything?

BRIT
I had an address around here for awhile but, yeah, I’m pretty positive I will not be able to lay my hands on it again.
KACEY
Well if you find it, or if you hear
anything from him will you please
call me? I just, I really need to
talk to him.

Brit now sees Kacey is very emotional. He’s compassionate.

BRIT
Yeah, OK. Sure.

KACEY
OK well, thanks. See ya.

BRIT
You wanna come in. I have some
people over but if... not sure it’s
your scene exactly but...

KACEY
I’m just not really...              BRIT
Nah, right, no, of course.

KACEY
OK then, g’night.

Kacey blinks away tears, quickly kisses his cheek. Exits.

CUT TO:

INT. BARRACKS- LATER THAT NIGHT

Platoon on their bunks reading mail. Chili, scuffed up, a
little weak, glasses taped, is brought in by a Medic.

ACEVEDO
Hey hey Chili.

STUPID RECRUIT
Welcome back Chili. “GTETEKN”.

CHILI
(re: Stupid Recruit’s
acronym)
See there. Hey fellas.

BECKETT
Quiet down.

Chili lays down on his bunk wearily.

AYRES
How you feelin’?
CHILI
Oh, about like I look.

AYRES
So what’d the doctor say it was?

CHILI
Had a heat stroke. And a concussion.

AYRES
Feeling better though right?

CHILI
Just sort of worn down I guess.

AYRES
Look, you just need a good night’s sleep is all. It’s ‘cause they took your good pillow is what it is, and those tiny little Fat Trays.

CHILI
Yeah I don’t know.

AYRES
What?

CHILI
The doctor said maybe I ought to think about going home. Thought maybe I should quit.

AYRES
Well what’d you say?

CHILI
I said no.

AYRES
Good.

CHILI
But then I started thinking maybe they’re right, you know? Maybe I am a shot rig.

AYRES
No you’re not. Alright?
CHILI
I don’t know, maybe this isn’t my last shot after all, you know? Maybe I already took my last shot and I didn’t even know it, and now it’s too late. Maybe I’m just one of those guys.

AYRES
You’re not one of those guys.

CHILI
Not so sure anymore.

AYRES
Look, without you here, I mean, it wouldn’t really be...I probably would’ve washed out already, so...

CHILI
No you wouldn’t have man.

AYRES
Chili, I would have, OK. And I’m not the only one either.

CHILI
You Fireman-Carried me two and half miles yesterday. You’re the most able recruit in here right now and you don’t even know it.

Ayres is clearly moved by Chili’s assessment.

AYRES
What?

CHILI
Except you can’t shoot straight.

AYRES
Yeah OK. Here, this came for you, we had a mail call.

Chili opens his mail. A collage from Faye. Picture of her smiling with braces, “My Hero” written on it.

INTERCUT Faye hanging out with her punk friends. Smoking. Drinking. She’s a girl flirting with jeopardy.

INTERCUT Kacey in her apartment, sitting on her bed, schoolbooks all around, sad, clearly thinking about Ayres.
INTERCUT Ayres and Chili in their bunks. Taps is playing. A voice outside in the distance counts down from 5, 4,...

INTERCUT The lights of Faye’s convenience store turn off for the night. Faye and her friends still hanging out.

INTERCUT Kacey turn out her bedside light as she stares out the window at the same moonlight.

INTERCUT Ayres and Chili in bunks. Chili un-sticks a candy heart from Faye’s collage. Eats it. Finds a bit of resolve. The countdown ends... 2, 1...lights on the island go out.

    CHILI
    G’night buddy.

    AYRES
    Yeah good night.

CUT TO:

EXT. RIFLE RANGE- NEXT DAY

A hard blowing rain, ominous sky. Platoon shooting. Walls, in poncho, stands behind Ayres who gets a red flag.

    WALLS
    Ayres in this weather you may be able to see the bullet’s path a little. So adjust to that as needed. After today you’ve only got one more session to up your hit percentage to Basic Marksman level or you wash out.

    AYRES
    Sir yes sir.

    WALLS
    And that was an above average effort yesterday, hauling Recruit Bean in.

    AYRES
    Sir thank you sir.

Walls exits. Ayres seems proud, affected by Wall’s praise. Focusses intently on the targets down range. Red flag.
20 MINUTES LATER

AYRES
(to himself)
C’mon, man, last shot. Set Cross-hairs to the midpoint. Then slowly squeeze off your shot.

Fires. A red flag is raised down-range.

AYRES (CONT’D)
Damnit!

Chili, done, passes by. Drops his helmet rain-cover, kneels to get it. As Chili gets up, Ayres notices that a clip of 5 rounds have appeared on his mat, Chili subtly nods. Exits.

WALLS
Last shots. 1 minute!


AYRES
Yes.


MOMENTS LATER

Recruits in line at firing range, checkout with Beckett.

ACEVEDO
Sir this recruit has no brass, trash or saved rounds to report at this time, sir!

BECKETT
Next!

CHILI
"Sir this recruit has no brass, trash or saved rounds to report at this time, sir!

BECKETT
Next!
AYRES
Sir this recruit has no brass,
trash or saved rounds to report at
this time, sir!

Kubiak steps up to the table, interrupting.

KUBIAK
Sir this Recruit counted Recruit
Ayres firing two extra rounds today
sir.

BECKETT
You counted the amount of rounds
Recruit Ayres fired?

KUBIAK
Yes sir! I always do sir! And today
he fired two more than his allotted
rounds sir.

BECKETT
Empty your pockets Recruit Ayres.

AYRES
Sir?

BECKETT
Empty the contents of your pockets
onto the table, now Recruit!

Walls approaches. Ayres turns white. Chili looks back,
realizes something’s gone wrong. Kubiak is thrilled.

CUT TO:

EXT. PITS- LATER SAME DAY

Instead of screaming Walls is simply talking, dead-eyed, calm
as Ayres exercises in pits, drenched in sweat, exhausted.

WALLS
When a few bits of spare change are
at stake you’re a regular boy scout
aren’t you Ayres? But when a little
pressure is applied, you’ll cheat
and you’ll lie and then you’ll
quit. What the hell right? Walk off
with a few extra rounds. No big
deal, that it?

AYRES
Sir...
WALLS
Shut it! You think basic is just about making your targets? Getting through another hump, making it through another day? Think that’s why we put you through all this? We do this to prepare you for when you really come up against it, against real adversity and pain and trial. How you’ll be. When you’ll quit. How early, how easy. If at all. Where’d you get the extra rounds recruit?

AYRES
Sir I’ve been saving them from other sessions Sir.

WALLS
Bullshit! The only reason you’re not heading home right now is because we don’t wash you out. You wash yourselves out. Ever wondered where your limits really are Ayres? Well we are well and truly about to find out. Report to my hatch tomorrow morning at 0400. We’re gonna smoke you ‘til your heart pops. And my bet is you’ll quit by sun up. Now get the hell out of my sight!

AYRES
Sir yes sir!

Ayres exits running.

WALLS
God damnit!

CUT TO:

EXT. BASE GROUNDS- MINUTES LATER SAME MORNING

Beckett leading Platoon 1934 on a hump. Ayres, beyond exhausted, limps up and joins the platoon next to Chili.

CHILI
Jesus, you alright? I’m sorry buddy, I was just trying to help. Look, just tell him you got the extra rounds from me, it’s OK.
AYRES
He didn’t ask.

CHILI
Really? Doesn’t sound like Walls.

AYRES
Yeah, really.

Chili mouths “yes!”. Pulls out the bikini-postcard Brit sent.

CHILI
Here. We just had mail call. Maybe this isn’t the best time to...

Ayres takes the postcard, reads it. Devastated.

AYRES
You read it?

CHILI
No. OK yes, but it’s just a postcard what was I supposed to do? Plus it’s a man’s handwriting. Look buddy, I’m sure you’re friend Brit there was mistaken.

AYRES
You think so?

CHILI
Yes, definitely. Well OK maybe, I mean....oh what am I saying, God no man! I been begging you to write the girl since we got here! Now she’s in the Family Planning aisle buying rubbers!

Beckett yells from the front.

BECKETT
Hatchbody!! Barracks, now!

CHILI
(under his breath)
Jesus give the guy a break man.

AYRES
You know what, to hell with all this shit man. Just to hell with it.
Ayres takes off in a dead sprint toward the barracks.

CUT TO:

EXT. BARRACKS- MOMENT LATER

Ayres sprints down the road, through the barracks’ front door, out the back door, across the lawn to a pay-phone.

MOMENT LATER

Platoon comes down the road. Between buildings Chili sees Ayres hang up the phone and sprint back to the barracks.

INT. BARRACKS- MOMENT LATER

Walls walks into his office as he does he calls out.

WALLS
Ayres and Truett on 1st Firewatch.
Ayres and Acevedo on 2nd! Be aware, we got a Cat 2 hurricane coming up the coast. Its still out at sea but I want FireWatch on alert. Lights out in 2 minutes!

Chili walks over to Acevedo.

CHILI
Hey big man, mind if I take your Fire Watch tonight?

ACEVEDO
Chili man.

CHILI
Look I’ll take the heat. I wouldn’t ask if it wasn’t important.

ACEVEDO
I do still owe you a debt of gratitude.

CHILI
Let’s just call it even then.

Taps starts playing and every one hurries to their bunks.

CUT TO:
INT. BARRACKS- MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

Chili is awakened by Truett, the earlier Firewatch.

CHILI
You see Ayres?

TRUETT
Maybe 30 minutes ago. Section 4.

EXT. BASE- MOMENTS LATER

Storm winds. Chili nears the shoreline. Cpl. Winston is there. Then Chili sees Ayres’ helmet/gear in the bushes. Then sees the sandbar and the town-lights across the water.

CHILI
Oh shit.

CUT TO:

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE IN TOWN- CONTINUOUS

Ayres enters. Clerk is duct-taping windows. TV on.

CLERK
You lost there Recruit?

Ayres is surprised that he’s so obviously seen as a soldier.

AYRES
I was just wondering where the Dairy Queen is in this town?

CLERK
Right up this road here ‘bout a half-mile. But they’ll be closed this time of night.

AYRES
Yeah I know, thanks.

Ayres exits to the sound of the TV.

TV
Hurricane Beatrice gaining strength, just within the hour it was reclassified as a Category 3, should make landfall somewhere south of Hilton Head, South Carolina by daybreak.
Ayres jogs off into the darkness. Trees blow, wind picks up.

EXT. DIARY QUEEN PARKING LOT– MOMENTS LATER

Ayres sees The Dairy Queen, Kacey leaning against her car.

KACEY
Oh my God your hair. You look...

AYRES
...like an asshole, yeah I know.

KACEY
No. You look great.

AYRES
Well, you look above average.

KACEY
OK honey look, I know you’re furious with me. And I’m sorry, OK. I didn’t know it would lead to all this.

AYRES
So you admit it!? Just like that?! Jesus Kacey. I'm not really sure "sorry" quite gets it then! (to himself) Can’t believe Brit was actually right for once.

KACEY
OK, well, actually, I’m sorry you’re miserable but to be completely honest if the situation ever comes up I’d do it again.

AYRES
You'd do it again?!

KACEY
Yeah, I would. Definitely.

AYRES
Well I guess that’s it then! You didn’t need to drive all the way up here to tell me that. We were already broken up anyway! So, so why don’t you just go on back home!

KACEY
I will! But I still say not bailing you out was the right thing to do!

(MORE)
KACEY (CONT'D)
And I’m not leaving ‘til I say what
I came here to say!

AYRES
Bailing me out? Wait, you’re
talking about bailing me out?

KACEY
Yeah, what are you talking about?

AYRES
I’m talking about your new
boyfriend that’s what.

KACEY
My new boyfriend?

AYRES
Yeah, Brit wrote me. He saw you OK.

Ayres pulls out and waves the postcard.

KACEY
He saw me?

AYRES
Yeah, he saw you, at the pharmacy.
That ring a bell?

KACEY
The pharmacy? I wasn’t with anyone
at the...wait, are you talking
about my professor?

AYRES
The Professor!? Oooh I knew it!

KACEY
You think I’m dating my... Brit
told you I’m dating my professor?

AYRES
Yeah, that’s right. He told me.

KACEY
He just took me to coffee, to talk
about class. He did actually turn
out to be sort of a pig really
but...there's nothing going on!
John, nothing.

AYRES
Oh really?
KACEY
Yes, really. Is that what this was all about? Sweetheart I could never, ever be with anyone but you. OK. Never.

AYRES
So no professor?

KACEY
No. No professor. You. You're the only one. You've always been the only one. Don't you know that?

This sinks in, Ayres softens.

KACEY (CONT'D)
So that's what this was all about? Baby I'm so sorry. Although I have to admit seeing you all jealous like that, with the uniform and the hair..is like super hot actually. So you still mad at me for not bailing you out?

Ayres is faux angry now.

AYRES
Oh that. Yes I think maybe I am?

Ayres sees that Kacey has desire in her eyes now.

KACEY
Just how mad...exactly.

AYRES
Well, more...I guess more miffed really.

KACEY
You want to come in my car and talk about it?

AYRES
Yeah, that might help. Wait, we're not gonna do it with our minds are we?

KACEY
Absolutely not.

She's almost whispering in his ear now. They get in the car.
KACEY (CONT’D)
But we need to do it really slowly though OK? Really slowly.

AYRES
(nodding, in a trance)
Slowly.

KACEY
Yeah, I have something to tell you, but it can wait.

Then suddenly, Bam! Chili’s face appears at the window. Out of breath, soaking wet, covered in sand.

CHILI
Ayres!!

AYRES
KACEY
Ahhhhhhhh!

AYRES
Chili?! What the hell are you doing here?!

CHILI
Well I’m sure you can imagine I asked myself that same question all the way over here.

KACEY
What’s going on?!

AYRES
Nothing.

Chili politely turns to Kacey.

CHILI
Kacey right? Hey, I'm Chili Bean, his former boss and current bunk-mate. He’s totally crazy about you by the way.

Chili quickly turns back to Ayres.

CHILI (CONT’D)
Clearly you two have made up, so c’mon, if we go back right now we might be able to slip back in before anyone notices. Let’s go.
KACEY
Slip back in? What about your AWOL Pass?

CHILI
His "AWOL Pass"?

KACEY
Yeah he won one for being voted Best Marine. So it's fine.

CHILI
Did he now? (to Ayres re: clarifying this lie) Why don't you take that one.

AYRES
I was gonna tell you. But I'm not planning on going back in, OK, not ever. I'm done.

CHILI  KACEY
What?!  What?!!

AYRES (CONT’D)
Walls is gonna smoke me 'til I quit anyway so...

CHILI
Wait, you were just gonna leave me in there by myself?

AYRES
Sorry.

CHILI
The MPs will catch you in a day. OK? Shit Walls will catch you himself by breakfast. You'll spend 6 months in a Marine brig, dishonorable discharge!? No dress greens?!

KACEY
Brit said that Judge was gonna put you in jail if you didn’t finish.

CHILI
Oh yeah! Jesus man! Let’s go!

AYRES
I'm not going back in there and I'm not going to jail either.
(MORE)
AYRES (CONT'D)
I just want to, I don't know what, maybe head out west. Maybe just get a job on a ranch or something.

CHILI
What, like a cowboy?

AYRES
I don't know, whatever, or work on a fishing boat maybe.

CHILI
No, no, a cowboy is the better plan. I had no idea you already had this thing all worked out.

AYRES
Come with me baby. It’ll be awesome. Live off the grid, you know, cash only, I’ll use a fake name if I have to.

CHILI
“John” is a pretty boring name actually. Should go for something cool, like Willie...or Andre.

KACEY
OK John. Look at me. You have to go back in there and finish. There’s no getting out of it this time. There’s not. You can’t quit this one.

CHILI
Well he’s good at it though. Apparently he’s been “quitting things all his life”.

AYRES
Hey I told you I just worded that funny.

KACEY
I wish you’d mailed me your address here. Baby there’s something I have to tell you and I uhh...I...

AYRES
What? You what?

KACEY
Well that’s just it, there is no more just “me”.
Chili bursts in with a guess.

    CHILI
    You’re pregnant!

    AYRES
    Don’t be stupid.

Kacey gives Ayres the “yes” look.

    CHILI
    I knew it! Wow you look great! How far along are you? (to Ayres) Oh! Hey, the bikini postcard...you can buy pregnancy tests in the Family Planning aisle too.

    KACEY
    What?

    CHILI
    Oh God you two, best thing that can ever happen to you. I remember when Cathy was pregnant with Faye, she looked so beautiful. Sort of peaked right there but...

    AYRES
    Chili. Stop talking.

    CHILI
    Sorry.

    KACEY
    There’s more.

    CHILI
    Twins! You’re having twins right??! Am I right?!

Kacey nods at Ayres.

    CHILI (CONT’D)
    Oh man!! I hope one of them is a girl. I still have some of Faye’s baby clothes around you guys can have. Are you gonna put ’em in the same crib at first? There's really two schools of thought on that. You want them to have their own identity but...

    AYRES
    Chili!
CHILI

Sorry.

Kacey waits in tears. Ayres goes to her, kisses her gently.

KACEY

I didn't know what you were gonna think. I'm a little...I'm really...

AYRES

Yeah, I know.

Ayres snaps out of his reverie suddenly.

AYRES (CONT’D)

I gotta go back in there! We gotta go back in there! Chili we gotta get back in there.

CHILI

Isn’t that what we’ve been trying to tell him?

AYRES

What time is it?

KACEY

3:15.

CHILI

Shit. We gotta go! The whole camp is gonna be awake in 45 minutes!

AYRES

Baby, I love you, but we gotta go.

KACEY

Go.

Ayres kisses Kacey. She smiles through her tears now.

CHILI

Hey it was really nice meeting you and again congratulations with everything and, my gosh what a magical journey you're about to...

AYRES

Chili!

They run but Ayres stops, calls back to Kacey.
AYRES (CONT’D)
Hey what about this hurricane? You shouldn’t be out driving around.

KACEY
It’s fine, going to my Mom’s. Go!

They run off into the darkness.

CUT TO:

EXT. PORT ROYAL- MOMENTS LATER

Chili and Ayres run through town.

CHILI
Honestly, until she said she was pregnant you had me half-sold on that cowboy idea.

AYRES
Are you limping?

CHILI
I twisted my damn ankle crossing over that sandbar. I’m starting to think maybe I’m accident prone or something.

They reach the sandbar, mostly underwater now. Storm is coming fast. They hesitate before entering the water.

CHILI (CONT’D)
It’s way deeper than when I came across it the first time.

They run across the shallows of the sandbar then quickly get up to their waists, their chests, and then they are floating.

CHILI (CONT’D)
I can’t swim it!

They swim back. Flop exhausted back onto the bank.

CHILI (CONT’D)
Sorry man. I have negative buoyancy. You know how some guys can float on their backs like that, I could never do that.

AYRES
Would’ve been crazy to try it. What now?
CHILI
I don’t know.

Despondent. Then they see a neon sign; the same neon sign they saw just before entering Parris on Day 1 (a fisherman catching a fish). Pulling in and parking is the same bus from Day 1. Same driver heads in for his coffee. Chili and Ayres suddenly take off running across the field toward the bus.

CUT TO:

INT. BUS- A FEW MINUTES LATER

Driver climbs aboard. Bus moves out. Among the sleeping new recruits Ayres and Chili awake in their fatigues and shaved heads. One recruit is awake and looks at them suspiciously.

CHILI
You eyeballin’ me recruit?

Recruit looks away. They giggle, steal jackets to blend in.

BUS DRIVER
5 minutes out, so smoke ‘em if you got ‘em. Last chance for 3 months.

Everyone wakes up. Ayres wordlessly bums a smoke from a recruit, starts to light it but Chili snatches it from him.

CHILI
Stop that. You’re gonna be a father. You ever hear of second hand smoke?

The bus crosses the causeway, passes the “Welcome to Parris Island” sign. Terror in the recruits eyes. Bus pulls in. Like before, a DI (not Walls) comes exploding onto the bus.

MARINE SERGEANT
Now! Now! Right God-damned now!

Recruits hesitate. But Chili and Ayres fly out the door. Start to head to the barracks then meet a 2nd Marine.

2ND MARINE
On the yellow footprints! Now! Right now!!

They stand on the footprints. 2nd Marine steps onto the bus.

2ND MARINE (CONT’D)
Let’s go! Leave your gear on the bus. You’re not staying here long!
More recruits pour out. But Chili and Ayres are now gone.

CUT TO:

EXT. BACK PATHS ON BASE– SECONDS LATER

Chili and Ayres run the back paths. Smiling. Success! Then a growl and scrambling startles the hell out of them.

CHILI AND AYRES
Corporal Winston!!

Corporal Winston hustles alongside them, pissed, barking.

CHILI
He’s gonna wake up the whole camp!
No bark, Corporal Winston, no bark!

Corporal Winston then veers off after a raccoon. Success!

AYRES
Yes!

CHILI
Hey I wonder why they told those new recruits that they’re “not staying here long”?

They find out as they round the last curve. Instead of a sleeping camp, the entire base is alive with hurricane evacuation! Everyone sees the AWOL recruits. Including Walls.

CUT TO:

INT. MARINE BUS– FEW MINUTES LATER

Platoon 1934’s crosses the Parris Island Causeway. Chili and Ayres are standing in the back. Walls is screaming at them.

WALLS
You have got to be the two stupidest jarheads who ever walked do you know that! The entire camp has been churning since 0-dark-hundred, there’s a Cat 4 hurricane bearing down on our position. We had 5 inbound phone calls from civilians in Port Royal reporting two morons with shaved heads and fatigues running all over town in the middle of the God damn night! Hell we pay ‘em $50 per phone call!

(MORE)
I don’t know what was more stupid, walking out of here or walking back in! Well guess what, you two all-stars are now officially under arrest!! If we weren’t evacuating off the island I’d haul your asses to the brig right now. But until then you will remain under field-arrest!! Now sit the hell down!

Chili and Ayres sit, take off their stolen civilian jackets.

Hell no! Leave ‘em on! You earned those nasty civilian clothes!

Walls walks to the front of the bus talking as he goes.

Until this storm blows through we’re gonna bivouac a few clicks onto the mainland at Field Camp 2. Keep your heads squared and your eyes forward. I don’t want to see a turd so much as look at a God damn billboard. We’re not buying what they’re selling! Questions of you to me?

Sir no sir!!

Don't say no sir if you don't have a question you idiots! With you two sounding off like that how the hell am I supposed to hear the one recruit who might actually have a question?! If you don’t have a question just sit there and keep your dick-holsters shut!

Walls exits. Kubiak angry at himself for messing up.

That's actually a good point.

Shut up.

Bus exits the Parris Island Causeway as waves crest over it.
30 MINUTES LATER

Bus travels on the mainland now. We then see road-flares ahead. Cop flags them down. A bridge is flooded, water/debris rush over it. Walls speaks to the Cop. Gets back on the bus.

WALLS
Secure the bus. 1934 we are now on foot.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAIN TRESTLE- 10 MINUTES LATER

The platoon is crossing a train trestle. Down river we see the bridge-from-before wash away. Platoon scurries across.

CUT TO:

EXT. TOWN MAIN STREET- 30 MINUTES LATER

Rain howling. The platoon marches double-time into a small town. Civilians stack sandbags; general chaos. Water rushes over yet another bridge nearby.

CIVILIAN 1
Hey! They sent the Marines!

KUBIAK
Damn right.

Acevedo smiles proudly, his gold tooth flashes.

BECKETT
Stow that tooth Acevedo!

Up ahead Walls talks to some cops. Returns to the platoon.

WALLS
Listen up! We got a live situation here. Emergency crews are delayed up and down the seaboard. So we’re going to provide assistance wherever we can. Stay sharp and follow my orders. Let’s move out.

Ayres and Chili stopped by Walls.

WALLS (CONT'D)

(MORE)
Walls (Cont'd)
And make sure that all vehicles
stay clear of this bridge.

Kubiax
Sir yes sir!!

Platoon 1934 march into action. Kubiax stands guard, puffed-up with power. Chili and Ayres, miserable, rain-soaked.

Ayres
Listen, I...

Chili cuts him off.

Chili
Can we just not talk about it right
now? OK? Would that be alright?

Ayres
OK. Yeah, alright. I was just gonna
say I’m...

Kubiax
Quiet over there!

Chili
Shut up dick-head.

Kubiax
Well it’s your own fault for going
AWOL. You two turds were never
meant to be Marines anyway.

Ayres
Who are you calling a turd?! You’re
not a DI you jackass!

Kubiax
Who are you calling a jackass
turd?!

Ayres
You know what, how about we save
the conversation and I just go
ahead and kick your ass!

Kubiax
Bring it on!

They start fighting, end up wrestling hard on the concrete. Ayres winning. Suddenly a short-bus passes them, flattens the orange cones and heads out onto the flooded bridge.
CHILI
Jesus!

The bus hisses into the rushing water, is picked up and immediately pinned against the bridge-railing. Ayres instantly sprints with “hatch-body speed” past Kubiak.

KUBIAK
You’re under field-arrest!

Chili too limps (ankle) to the bridge. Kubiak alongside.

KUBIAK (CONT’D)
You’re both still under field-arrest!

CHILI
The manual say anything about this?! C’mon man, act like a Marine for once would ya’!

This gives Kubiak pause. He looks confused.

KUBIAK
Walls said to stand my post.

CHILI
You wanna live forever?! C’mon, let’s go “get in the shit”.

Kubiak now completely converted, takes off after Chili.

KUBIAK
OK!

Ayres wades in, stops. Chili joins him. The water is rushing hard. This is deadly. Ayres heads in but Chili stops him.

CHILI
Forget it you got twins on the way man. I’ll go.

AYRES
You got negative buoyancy remember!?

Kubiak just shakes his head, too scared.

AYRES (CONT’D)
I’ll be alright. I can make it.

Ayres wades in but is immediately swept against the bridge-railing, almost flips over it, pinned. Fights along the railing, reaches the bus.
Grabs a branch from a clot of debris and bashes in a window. Climbs inside, disappears. Chili, with Kubiak, has now worked himself partly onto the bridge. A beat, then Ayres emerges from the car with an elderly black man. Ayres tries to carry the man to safety, but the rushing water is too strong now and it takes all of Ayres strength simply to keep the elderly man from washing away. Ayres stops, barely able to hold his position, unable to move. Chili and Kubiak can’t reach him.

**AYRES (CONT’D)**
There are 3 more in there!

Suddenly Walls and the Platoon appear on the shore behind Chili and Kubiak. Walls starts to organize them.

**WALLS**
OK. Link arms! We’re gonna form a chain to reach them. Let’s go 1934! Now! Right now!

Walls wades out against the railing first, Beckett anchors the chain from the back. Each Recruit links arms to form a 43 man chain until Walls reaches Kubiak, Chili, then Ayres. Person-to-person they pass the elderly man into the shore.

**AYRES**
I gotta go back in!

Ayres separates from the chain to go the last 10 feet alone. Ayres reaches the bus again, climbs in. As he does, the rushing water forces the bus up onto its side, about to flip over the railing. After a long beat, a window is bashed out from inside and Ayres emerges with an elderly woman. Now cops and others have added to the human-chain so that Walls and Chili can reach all the way to the bus. Ayres passes the woman to Walls then repeatedly goes back in twice more, passing them out. Finally Ayres emerges with a cat and dog.

**AYRES (CONT’D)**
OK that’s it!

Ayres hands the panicked cat to Chili.

**CHILI**
Why do I have to be the one who takes the cat?!

As the platoon slowly backs out of the water, the soaked, freaked out cat clutches, claws and scratches the hell out of Chili’s head. The railing suddenly fails and the car cascades over the side of the bridge to the rushing water below. They give the man his pets as cops and paramedics now take over.
ELDERLY BLACK MAN
Thank you so much. Oh thank you all so much. Thank you.

Ayres, Chili, Kubiak and the Platoon are exhausted.

CUT TO:

EXT. TOWN MAIN STREET- FEW MINUTES LATER

1934 marches out of town. Walls stays behind with the cops and fire crews now taking over.

BECKETT
Double-time! We got 15 miles to Camp 2. We’re going all night if we have to!

KUBIAK
Awesome! Was that awesome or what?!

Chili gives Kubiak an “attaboy” cuff on the head. Kubiak clearly pleased by Chili’s praise. Platoon leaves the paved road and heads off down a dirt fire road.

HOURS PASS

Platoon exhausted, jogs through the dark and rain. Chili’s face still scuffed, glasses taped up, face covered in claw marks, limping, wearing civilian jacket from the bus.

KUBIAK
Not that it’s why we did it or whatever but that seemed maybe sort of medal-worthy.

AYRES
All I care about right now is whether we’re kicked out or not?

CHILI
I don’t want to talk about it.

KUBIAK
I thought you guys...I thought you already knew.

AYRES
Knew what?
KUBIAK
Well, Walls has to wash you out. Both of you.

AYRES
What? Are you sure?

KUBIAK
Yeah. Positive. Unauthorized Absence during the basic training period...that’s Section 22, paragraph 4, line 6...it’s 6 months brig time and then a dishonorable discharge. They don’t give the DIs any latitude with that one.

Chili and Ayres are devastated. Kubiak is sympathetic.

KUBIAK (CONT’D)
Sorry. I thought you already knew.

LATER, MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT
Ayres and Chili, run a little behind the platoon. Chili limping terribly. Dark, wind/rain howling. Has to yell.

AYRES
Can I say something?

CHILI
If you’re gonna apologize, just don’t, OK?

AYRES
OK.

CHILI
You were about to apologize though weren’t you?

AYRES
Yeah.

CHILI
OK. Look I didn’t have to come get you, alright. It was my choice. So let’s just leave it at that.

They run along silently for a beat.

AYRES
Chili?
CHILI
Yeah?

AYRES
Why’d you do it?

CHILI
Come get you?

AYRES
Yeah.

CHILI
Because I’m an idiot, that’s why. And because you happen to be an idiot too so... I thought maybe I could save you some trouble, down the road. Plus I owed you one. Mainly I was sort of hoping I wouldn’t get caught.

AYRES
How’s your ankle?

CHILI
Very much like a big eggplant.

AYRES
Well I guess we could quit running now if we wanted to. No real reason to keep... we don’t really have to keep going anymore.

CHILI
Yeah I guess not.

Chili slightly behind Ayres. Pitch black, can’t see a thing.

AYRES
Chili? You there?

CHILI
Yeah.

AYRES
Oh. I was just checking to see if you stopped running.

CHILI
Nope.

AYRES
Why didn’t you?
CHILI
Not sure exactly.

AYRES
Chili, I was thinking, let’s just not stop, until they officially
kick us out OK?

No response from Chili.

AYRES (CONT’D)
Chili?

We hear a thump, backpack hits the ground back in the dark.

AYRES (CONT’D)
Chili? Oh shit not again!

Ayres runs back, trips/falls over something. Feels around in
the dark, seems to find Chili’s body.

AYRES (CONT’D)
Hey are you alright? Chili? Shit! Can you hear me buddy?! Chili?!

Chili appears out of the darkness/rain, scaring Ayres!

CHILI
What the hell are you doing?

AYRES
(startled)
Jesus Christ man!!

CHILI
Were you just talking to my backpack?

AYRES
What are you doing!? I thought you had another heat stroke or
something! Why’d you stop?

CHILI
’Cause you said let’s stop!

AYRES
No, I said let’s not stop.

CHILI
Oh, well all I heard was “stop”. This poncho-hood makes like a super
loud rustling. Well do you see ‘em anywhere?
AYRES
I can't see a thing. But they gotta be straight up ahead right?

They hustle down the fire road but instantly come to a crossroads. No idea which way to turn. They stop. Lost.

CHILI
Well I guess we've stopped now.

AYRES
Yeah. I guess I was just thinking that until they kick us out we don’t quit, you know? Just seems like maybe that’d be something. Know what I mean?

CHILI
Yeah, yeah I do know what you mean. I know exactly what you mean. And you know what would’ve have just been really swell?! If you’d had this little epiphany before you decided to go AWOL in the first place and ruin what was left of our already pathetic lives!! I don’t have 15 more years to waste OK?! I don’t! I already used mine up!

AYRES
I’m sorry. I didn’t...

Ayres is too embarrassed and hurt to fight back. Chili sees this. Chili and Ayres sit on their backpacks. Defeated.

AYRES (CONT’D)
What now?

CHILI
I don’t know. Morning can’t be too far off. MPs will find us. We’re probably fugitives now too. I didn’t really think the whole stopping thing all the way through.

AYRES
So what do you think you’re gonna do after they, you know, whenever you get back home?

CHILI
I don’t really...I don’t know. Find a place to live I guess.

(MORE)
Ayres sees all the life go out of Chili.

**AYRES (CONT’D)**
Hey if you ever need a ride or... over to Faye’s or whatever, just, you know...

**CHILI**
Yeah, thanks. Kacey seems real nice. You guys can still have that box of Faye’s old baby clothes... actually I think the fire may have...

Chili’s voice just trails off.

**AYRES**
I’m gonna still be in the brig when the babies come.

They fall silent for awhile. Then **suddenly out of the darkness and rain burst Kubiak, Acevedo and Stupid Recruit.**

**KUBIAK**
Hey what the hell are you guys doing?!

**CHILI AND AYRES**
Jesus Christ Kubiak!!

**KUBIAK**
We saw that you guys weren’t back there anymore.

**STUPID RECRUIT**
No actually I saw that you guys weren’t back there anymore.

**ACEVEDO**
Let’s go back before they notice.

**CHILI**
Where’s the platoon?

**KUBIAK**
Just resting right up here, like 50 yards away. Let’s go!
They all help Chili up. Ayres carries Chili’s backpack too now. The five of them run together.

CHILI
You know what, I was gonna tell you
I think you’re right.

AYRES
About what?

CHILI
About not stopping.

AYRES
Don’t you think maybe?

CHILI
Yeah. But man I wanted those dress
greens so bad…I think I wouldn’t
have looked too shabby you know,
now that I dropped a few, got an OK
tan going. But yeah, until they
officially kick us out we keep
humping it. No matter what.

AYRES
No matter what. We don’t quit.

CHILI
We don’t quit.

AN HOUR LATER- PRE-DAWN

CHILI
Let’s quit!! OK?! No, seriously.

Rain, chaos. Platoon is waist deep in a creek, miserable. Ayres almost carries limping Chili up the bank.

HOUR LATER- DAWN

Platoon slogs along mile after mile. They enter a clearing and onto a path snaking up a steep hill. Ayres carrying Chili’s pack. Ayres and Chili trying hard, but fall behind.

BECKETT
Let’s go! Get that man up this hill
Ayres! Get him up this hill! Catch
up to the platoon!

Ayres and Chili pick up the pace, somehow catch up and as soon as they do Beckett ups the stakes.
BECKETT (CONT’D)
Now “Hatchbody”!

Ayres looks at Beckett, as in “what about Chili?”.

BECKETT (CONT’D)
I said “Hatchbody”!

Beckett, Kubiak, Acevedo and Stupid Recruit move in to support Chili. Ayres sprints up the hill. At the top Ayres stops. Sees Walls, two MPs, jeeps. The platoon arrives. Walls nods and the MPs go stand on either side of Chili and Ayres. Wind howling and dark clouds overhead as dawn breaks.

WALLS
Platoon 1934.

PLATOON
Sir yes sir!

WALLS
13 weeks ago to the day, you boarded Parris Island as new Recruits and members of Platoon 1934. As of this moment, it is my privilege to announce to you all: Marines you now are, and Marines you will always be.

CHILI
(whispering to Ayres)
One day?! You decide to go AWOL with one day to go!?

WALLS
A few days from now at graduation, the band will play “The Marine Hymn”. You have heard it many times before, but this time it will be played for you.

Beckett has been handing Marine pins to each recruit. All except Ayres and Chili. Walls now faces them.

WALLS (CONT’D)
Private Ayres, Private Bean, you two are to be taken immediately to the Marine Corps brig on Parris Island to be processed for unauthorized absence in direct violation of the Marine Corps’ code of behavior, Section 22, paragraph 4. Do you understand what you have just heard?
CHILI AND AYRES

Yes sir.

WALLS

However, Corps regulations grant the DI complete authority and latitude in the ultimate dispensation of his recruits.

Chili and Ayres glance at Kubiak who is pissed at himself for flubbing it; shrugs “sorry”.

WALLS (CONT’D)

Therefore Private Bean, you will, by my authority serve 10 days in the brig, but you will do so after graduation and as a basically trained, mentally sane Marine. Sergeant Beckett.

Beckett hands Chili the Marine pin, shakes his hand.

WALLS (CONT’D)

Moreover, and this is a first, for achieving the Corps’s highest possible marksmanship ranking, for your leadership and for your embodiment of the central Marine code: No Marine Left Behind, Sergeant Beckett and I present you with the Blue Award as the recruit-most-deserving in Platoon 1934.

Chili emotional, speechless platoon silently elated.

WALLS (CONT’D)

Recruit Ayres. You will not be serving your brig time as a Marine. That title is earned, not given.

Ayres can barely nod. Chili clearly feels sick for him.

WALLS (CONT’D)

But, as you are aware, recruits wash themselves out. Do they not Sergeant Beckett?

BECKETT

Yes sir, they do.
WALLS
Therefore Recruit Ayres, Sergeant Beckett and myself will communicate to the Regiment CO that instead of washing out of this program, you have, in our estimation, earned the option of recycling back into basic training with a fresh 13 weeks and a new incoming platoon. My new platoon. Questions of you to me?

AYRES
No sir.

WALLS
Recruit Ayres do you accept this option as it has been offered to you?

Ayres looks at Chili. The whole platoon watches expectantly.

AYRES
Sir yes sir. Sir I just want to say..

WALLS
We do not use the word ‘I’ on this island Recruit. We do not use the word ‘me’ on this island. These words no longer exist. Good to go?

AYRES
Yes sir.

Walls reveals the slightest emotion, turns to the platoon.

WALLS
My only advice to you all is this, for as long as you are lucky enough to live, 2, 3, 60 years, stay squared away. And take care of each other. And don’t embarrass me. Platoon 1934, with your gear, and at your leisure, you are dismissed.

Walls exits as 1934 erupts in celebration! Ayres looks over at Chili, both are misty-eyed. Chili is wiping his eyes.

CHILI
Oh try and act like you got a pair would ya’.
The rest of the platoon comes over to celebrate.

CUT TO:

PARISS ISLAND PARADE DECK- 13 WEEKS LATER

"13 Weeks Later": A cheer goes up. 43 hats go flying into the air. Then, from a distance we see an entire Marine platoon crossing the parade tarmac toward the pack of families who are also walking toward the new Marines. As the two groups approach each other we see a visibly pregnant Kacey break from the pack and run toward the Marine group at which point Ayres emerges running from out of the pack of Marines, a solitary figure moving toward her but holding up both hands imploring her to stop. She stops, holds her stomach. He keeps running until they meet. They kiss and embrace unabashedly.

PARISS ISLAND PARADE DECK BLEACHERS- SAME MOMENT

Chili, wearing his dress green uniform, holding two pink stuffed bears is standing next to Faye. She looks him over.

FAYE

Not too shabby.

They both watch Ayres and Kacey embrace. Chili is like a mother at a wedding until he sees Kacey grab Ayres’ ass lustily. He looks at Faye who is delighted. Chili covers her eyes protectively. Chili then sees a teenage boy who is having a look at Faye. The boy notices that Chili, with his new Marine stature, has busted him and he immediately snaps back into facing forward. As he does, the teen’s Mom (gorgeous) is revealed and she notices Chili with interest. Chili smiles and changes gears into his sexy demeanor.

CUT TO:

INSIDE THE PLATOON BARRACKS- FEW MOMENTS LATER

Families mingling with new Marines. Chili, Faye, Ayres, Kacey standing, talking. Chili pulls out a fire-charred paperback.

CHILI

Oh! I managed to dig out my old baby owner’s manual. It’s a little charred. I put some sticky notes on the really important parts.

Hands the book to Ayres. Ayres has two unopened beers. Nearby, Walls talks to families/recruits. An array of beers have been laid at his feet by new recruits; a tradition.
AYRES
Let’s go give these to the man.

They both look nervous, still intimidated by Walls.

CHILI
OK but let’s just drop ‘em and run.

AYRES
C’mon man. We’re all Marines now. 
Act like you got a pair.

As they walk Chili wiggles his foot and shoe.

CHILI
I’ve lost so much weight my shoes
don’t even fit anymore.

They walk up behind Walls who is talking with a family. Ayres walks confidently but then he quickly places his beer among the others and hurries off. Chili, slower, does too but Walls turns and sees him trying to slip away.

WALLS
Bean! Ayres!

Both of them freeze, snap to attention.

WALLS (CONT’D)
Just wanted to say congratulations to you both.

CHILI AND AYRES
Thank you sir.

WALLS
Two Blue Award winners. Who would’ve thought that huh? 
Outstanding.

Chili seems comfortable now, too comfortable. He reaches down and picks up the two beers they left for Walls and starts to suggest to Walls, ceremoniously, that they drink them together. Ayres wincing, shakes his head “no”.

CHILI
Sir would you do me the honor of...

Walls doesn’t notice Chili’s request cutting him off as he turns to talk with another family that has stepped up.

WALLS
Stay squared away.
Chili falls all over himself recoiling, as Walls turns away.

CHILI
Yes sir.

EXT. PARISS GROUNDS—MOMENTS LATER

Ayres, duffel bag over his shoulder walks away from the barracks with Chili. Kacey and Faye gabbing up ahead.

CHILI
Of course I’m glad that you won it too. I’m just saying it makes the fact that I won it sort of seem like less of a big deal is all.

Beckett passes by, marching alongside a new platoon calling out cadence. He nods to them, still hard as a coffin-nail. They salute back. They look down and see that they are standing on the yellow painted footprints where they first set foot on Parris. Then they see Corporal Winston sniffing nearby. The dog comes up to Ayres, tail wagging. Ayres smiles, reaches down to pet him and... Corporal Winston bites the hell out of his hand!

AYRES
Son of a bi...

THE END

CREDITS ROLL on Kubiak and his family watching and rewinding Kubiak’s graduation video. Kubiak’s Dad and Granddad crying. “Chuck Norris” their dog is happily sitting in Stupid Recruit’s lap who fawns all over the little dog.

Kacey at graduation in a mortarboard and gown while Ayres in his dress greens handles two identical twin girls.

Brit is on the Marine Recruit bus, wearing an “I'm Going Commando” t-shirt as the bus hisses to a stop at the yellow-footprints, Brit looking sick and terrified, stares out the window with big bug eyes. We hear the sound of the bus doors swinging open.