

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE

by

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From the book by

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"RUSTAMIYAH, IRAQ. APRIL 28, 2007"

OVER BLACK: the WHISTLE of an incoming round, followed by the PULPY CRUNCH of a 7.62 entering a man's skull. A BESTIAL GRUNT escapes him and the man falls with a THUD. Suddenly, DEAFENING GUNFIRE BANGS in the darkness. VOICES SHOUT ORDERS all around us. Beneath the chaos, A FALLEN MAN GROANS--

INT. STAIRS - BUILDING #20 - RUSTAMIYAH, IRAQ - DAY

Light explodes onto the upper left-corner of the frame. A door to sunlight. A silhouetted soldier staggers through it, carrying the wounded soldier on his back. They descend a cement staircase, one agonizing step at a time, as it winds around and around. A bloody trail splattered behind them--

ADAM SCHUMANN(26) is breathless, his hazel eyes bursting with exertion. His blouse covered in blood. Every cell in his body screaming, folding under the weight of his friend.

ADAM

--hang on, Emory.

MICHAEL EMORY is the 230lb Arkansas whiteboy draped across his shoulders. The gunshot wound has split his skull and he hemorrhages blood thick with brain-matter. His left arm swings lifelessly across Adam's front, crimson blood dribbling across an AMERICAN EAGLE tattoo on his forearm.

EMORY

--hurts.

His blood pulses down Adam's head and neck, soaking his front, creeping across his mouth. Adam purses his lips and cranes his neck to keep it out. A sunlit doorway below--

Last flight of stairs. His legs shaking violently. Emory is slipping off his back. Adam tries to yank him back into place. In doing so, he inhales sharply and sucks down a glob of blood. He chokes on it, choking on his friend.

Adam slips. He falls. He drops Emory.

TO BLACK/TITLE:

INT. DELTA AIRLINES 747 (IN-FLIGHT) - DAY

PULL OUT of ADAM ("SHOE") SCHUMANN'S glazed hazel eyes. He is seated in neat rows with 120 SOLDIERS.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Their ACUs on patterned seats of a commercial plane. They clutch M4s watching A SITCOM on seat-back monitors.

WILL

Why are fat people so funny?

BILLY WALLER ("WILL") is a Philly kid and joker of the group. Too wound up to be all that comical, he needs to be heard.

ADAM

Cause they fuckin gotta be.

WILL

The funniest fuckers that ever lived are all fat motherfuckers.

SOLO

That why you're getting out? To get fat?

TAUSOLO AIETI ("SOLO") is American-Samoan but can pass for black. A big-hearted boy who was raised on the Poly streets.

ADAM

Chappelle isn't fat. Then you got Chris Rock--

WILL

You're doing a black thing.

ADAM

I'm doing a black thing?

SOLO

Black don't count?

WILL

Nice try, SaMo. You're barely black. I seen you naked--

SOLO

I seen your weak shit too. One-and-done and didn't see shit--

WILL

You been one-and-done your whole life.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SOLO

This was my second deployment
dumbfuck--

WILL

And if you had any brains left it'd
be your last.

SOLO

Fuck that, bro. Army saved my life.

WILL

Okay...

Will shakes his head. They fall into silence.

ADAM

When's the bachelor party, Champ?

WILL

I can't have a bachelor party. You
seen me drunk.

SOLO

He'd fuck a blister.

ADAM

So...

WILL

My girl is not into it and I
probably shouldn't fuck this up.

SOLO

So much for balls.

ADAM

The bachelor party is none of her
business, that's ours.

Like it's something sacred between them.

WILL

I do want you guys to meet her
before the wedding.

ADAM

She's all you talked about for 11
months. I feel like I married her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SOLO
--and that video.

He diddles a finger. Will bends it backward.

SOLO (CONT'D)
Chill--

WILL
If she found out you saw that--

ADAM
He's joking. Nobody saw shit. OPSEC.

The flight tracker shows the plane approaching "Kansas".

ADAM (CONT'D)
(pops gum in his mouth)
That was a great video though.

Solo and Adam erupt in laughter.

EXT. AIRPORT - KANSAS - DAY

SOLDIERS file out of the plane under a watercolor sky. Their families are cordoned off at the edge of the tarmac. A dozen kids jump in a BOUNCE-HOUSE there. "Welcome Home" signs sprinkle the crowd, an idyllic coming home.

ADAM
Stay off the streets, Solo.

SOLO
I'm back in the sand in 3 months.

ADAM
That's not what I said.

The traffic of bodies is separating them.

WILL
Where we doing my bachelor party?

ADAM
Atlantic City?

WILL
Atlantic City, baby! Hell yeah.

They push past check-points, signing papers, returning guns.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ADAM

Sergeant Adam Schumann of 2-16.

STAFF SERGEANT

Welcome home, Sergeant Schumann.

Adam hands over his weapon and signs for it, heading for--

HIS FAMILY: his statuesque wife, infant son and flag-waving daughter. He's walking into the perfect homecoming when--

A WOMAN appears before him. "AMANDA DOSTER" is husky with big glassy eyes. TWO YOUNG DAUGHTERS by her side. She grabs him--

AMANDA DOSTER

I'm Sergeant Doster's wife-- I need to know how my husband died.

She brandishes a cell phone with a PHOTO OF "JAMES DOSTER," with flaming-red hair and a round, freckled face.

AMANDA DOSTER (CONT'D)

Were you there when he died. I need you to tell me what happened--

(shakes him)

Tell me how my husband died.

Adam slackens, thousand-yard stare in his eyes.

INT. WAFFLE HOUSE - DAY

ADAM'S FAMILY: SASKIA(28) is a beautiful blonde, operatic and tough. ZOE(4) is cerebral. JAXSON(5mo) is bright-eyed.

SASKIA

You tired?

ADAM

I feel good.

SASKIA

You lost some weight.

ADAM

Did I?

He sips his Coke, smiles, looking past her--

ZOE

Can we get pie?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ADAM

Of course we can--

SASKIA

Eat your dinner first.

Adam points to his eyes, then points to Zoe's, *watching you.*

ADAM

(beat)

You girls look so pretty.

ZOE

What about Jaxy?

ADAM

You too, Jax. That's a tight little jumper there, buddy.

ZOE

Mom tried on four dresses. That's why we were almost late.

SASKIA

Thanks Zoe. I've been eating like a cow and nothing fits.

ADAM

(earnest)

You look great.

She cocks her brow like she can't figure him out.

SASKIA

I can't believe Amanda did that. She ruined everything.

ADAM

No--

SASKIA

We tried to make it nice for you--

ADAM

It is nice.

Adam watches a man in line with his hands in his pockets.

ZOE

Daddy...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SASKIA

It was going to be perfect.

ADAM

It is perfect.

ZOE

Daddy!

ADAM

Yes, honey.

ZOE

Did you know that I have little people living in my stomach?

ADAM

I didn't know that.

ZOE

They tell me what to do and if I don't do it, they punch me.

She makes a terrible face and owns him like daughters do.

ADAM

Do these little people have names?

ZOE

Their names are Potato and Potato. And they're worried about you--

ADAM

They've got nothing to worry about.

ZOE

They think you look skinny and--
(extends sandwich)
They want me to give you a grilled cheese.

SASKIA

Eat your food, or no ice cream.

ZOE

They're still worrrrrried.

Adam smiles and wipes a smear of Ketchup from her lip.

INT. SOLO'S CAR (STOPPED) - JUNCTION CITY - NIGHT

Junction city. They pull to a railroad crossing. SOLO drives. ALEA (22), his wife, has high Samoan cheek bones and ageless eyes. His hand snakes into her lap.

ALEA

You promised me a baby when you got out.

SOLO

You promised me a pizza.

ALEA

I want to have a baby, Sol'.

SOLO

You can't wait till we're home?

The train rips past with a repetitive thunking sound.

SOLO (CONT'D)

(in Samoan)

You're beautiful.

ALEA

You are getting out, right?

SOLO

They'll probably try and get me to reenlist but--

ALEA

Solo.

SOLO

I'm just saying...

The train gone, silence follows.

ALEA

What are you saying?

SOLO

(in Samoan)

Careful or you'll suck the sexy outta me.

ALEA

I really doubt that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Her hand snakes into his lap, triggering a smile.

INT. CAB (MOVING) - KANSAS CITY - DAY

Kansas City. WILL sits in back, looking out the window. The world looks slick and strangely foreign.

TAXI DRIVER

You back from Iraq?

WILL

Yes sir. Eleven months and nineteen days.

TAXI DRIVER

You kick ass over there?

WILL

Oh yeah. Yeah...

The driver likes that. They stop in front of a large honeycomb apartment complex.

INT. HALLWAY - WILL'S APARTMENT - DAY

WILL fishes behind a fire extinguisher, finds a key. He perks to music down the hall thinking it is a coming-home party.

But it's coming from another apartment. He keys into--

INT. WILL'S APARTMENT - DAY

Light spills in. Will stands silhouetted in the doorway.

WILL

Babe?...

He tries the lights. They don't work. Opens the curtains--
The apartment has been cleaned out. There's no furniture.

WILL (CONT'D)

Tracey...

He dials his cell. Checking cabinets. No pots or pans.

TRACEY'S VOICEMAIL (OS)

...This is Tracey, leave a message
and I will try to get back to you.

FINAL NOTICE bills on the counter. A PHOTO of himself, HIS BLONDE FIANCE AND HIS STEP-DAUGHTER(4) in thick glasses.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILL

(beep, into phone)
Tracey, where are you? Where's our furniture? I'm trying not to freak out here but my debit card isn't working and our electricity is off. I need you to call me.

He hangs up. Breath racing. A thought--

INT. BEDROOM - WILL'S APARTMENT - DAY

WILL whips open the closet where his uniforms still hang. *Bad sign.* He reaches in, pulls out A PADLOCKED TRUNK. He thumbs a combo. Inside: dumbbells, prescription bottles and a pistol. He shakes the PILL BOTTLE, dry swallows one. Then another.

WILL

(dials again, into phone)
What the fuck is going on. Call me.

Will hangs up and runs a worried hand through his hair.

INT. ADAM'S CAR (MOVING) - JUNCTION CITY - DAY

The kids asleep. ADAM takes a wrong turn. SASKIA jumps on it.

SASKIA

Where are you going--

ADAM

I want to swing by the old house.

SASKIA

You trying to make yourself crazy?

They pull to a PICTURESQUE HOUSE on a tree-lined street.

ADAM

How're the renters?

SASKIA

I'd like them better if they weren't living in our house.

ADAM

They're not watering the lawn.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SASKIA

They have a forty thousand dollar
car and live like shit.

Up the driveway, a big backyard with an above-ground pool.

SASKIA (CONT'D)

We'd probably still live here if you
hadn't bought that pool.

ADAM

Our kids are gonna learn to swim in
that pool.

SASKIA (OS)

You wanna wait till they're
teenagers to teach them to swim?

He shoots her a look suddenly pulling her close, kissing her--

SASKIA (CONT'D)

Where'd that come from?

ADAM (OS)

We're getting back into this house.

Their brake-lights turn the distant corner.

EXT. ADAM'S RENTAL HOME - EVENING

A smaller home with no pool on a crummy street. They pull
into a garage with a maze of UNPACKED BOXES.

INT. BATHROOM - ADAM'S RENTAL HOME - NIGHT

Adam brushes his teeth with vigor. Spits, rinses, then checks
his smile. Then checks his gums. Then brushes again.

SASKIA (OS)

Am I getting laid or what?

INT. BEDROOM - ADAM'S RENTAL HOME - NIGHT

SASKIA cues a record player on the credenza. Adam emerges
from the bathroom, grabbing her from behind.

ADAM

Oh yeah. You're getting laid.
I'm gonna lay an egg up in here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SASKIA

No more eggs or seeds--

ADAM

You don't want another one?

SASKIA

Let's see how you feel after a weekend alone with them.

ADAM

(swaying with her)

Where you think you're going?

SASKIA

You left three times. Now it's my turn.

ADAM

I'm not leaving again, baby. I'm home for good.

His words devastate her. He pulls her to the bed.

SASKIA

Do you remember who we were before all this.

ADAM

A couple dumb, horny kids.

SASKIA

Pretty much...

ADAM

Still dumb and horny.

SASKIA

With a couple kids.

He kisses her gently, exploring her body; like her skin holds the power to purify him.

CAMERA DRIFTS OUTSIDE

Tall grass sways as their silhouettes make love and the house glows under the mist of pooling streetlights.

INT. KITCHEN - ADAM'S RENTAL HOME - DAWN

The tea-kettle starts to whistle and ADAM snaps it off. He adjusts a spoon beside pancake batter. The kitchen is immaculate and ready to cook. He checks the time, 4:38am.

He's not sure what to do, when a trash truck pulls up outside, clamps their cans and dumps their trash-- FOCUS PULLS to the window, streaked with dirt, warping our view.

SASKIA (PRE-LAP)
How long have you been up?

ADAM
It's already 4pm in Baghdad. You guys hungry for some hot-cakes?

SASKIA ENTERS holding Jaxson. She's shocked to see the sparkling kitchen. Adam works the griddle.

SASKIA
Are you chewing gum? When did you become a gum chewer?

ADAM
Tell me you didn't miss my pancakes.

Zoe scuffles in, takes a seat.

SASKIA
I need you to watch the kids today. Can you handle them for a few hours?

ADAM
Sure. It's you and me today, Zoe.

Zoe plays her Leapfrog, animated voices bark commands.

SASKIA
And Jaxson.

ADAM
Right.

SASKIA
I was thinking my mom could babysit tonight and we could go to speedway?

ADAM
...I like that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A promising sparkle between them.

ADAM (CONT'D)

I'm going to stop by the golf course
and see if they need any greensmen.

SASKIA

Okay...

ADAM

What..?

SASKIA

It just seems like a kid job.

ADAM

Same job I had before.

SASKIA

You were just in charge of a dozen
guys, now you're gonna mow grass?

Zoe's game chirps. Something is burning.

ADAM

Can you turn that off, Zoe.

ZOE

No.

Saskia looks to Adam, warning him off.

ADAM

Here, I made a little smiley face
with chocolate chips.

He flips the pancake onto her plate.

ZOE

I hate chocolate!

ADAM

You do?

ZOE

Yes! Silly bum-bum.

ADAM

Hey.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SASKIA

She doesn't like chocolate.

ADAM

Well, I guess I missed that part.
What else did I miss? Anything else
I should know?

ZOE

I don't take naps.

ADAM

No naps and no chocolate. Got it.

SASKIA

What about you. Anything we missed?

ADAM

I been standing in dirt for three
years-- I'd love to see some grass.

He smiles and makes Zoe another cake, making it right.

INT. BEDROOM - WILL'S APARTMENT - DAY

WILL wakes getting blasted by late-morning sunlight. He checks for his gun, then checks his phone. *No messages--*

EXT. GATE - FORT RILEY - MORNING

A cold sun hangs over the Army base. SOLO, dressed in ACUs, is late. He pulls to the guard gate and flashes his ID. The GUARD gives him the twice-over, then looks in his backseat.

SOLO

Really, man?

The Guard waves him through. Solo speeds past.

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM - FORT RILEY HOSPITAL - MORNING

An ARMY NURSE holds a blood pressure cuff on SOLO. He's concerned by her concern.

ARMY NURSE

Let go of your fist.

SOLO

How is it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ARMY NURSE

The doctor will be right in

She exits and his eyes track to Pyrex jars full of QUICKCLOT GAUZE. PUSH CLOSER: losing ourselves in time until--

ARMY DOCTOR (OC)

What are you taking the Somex for?

An ARMY DOCTOR stands before him, suddenly--somehow.

SOLO

That, uh, was to sleep over there.

ARMY DOCTOR

And what about the Propranolol?

SOLO

I don't think I was taking that--

ARMY DOCTOR

Are you bothered by racing thoughts?

SOLO

No, sir.

ARMY DOCTOR

Reliving past events?

SOLO

Not really.

ARMY DOCTOR

Any lapses in memory?

SOLO

I lose stuff sometimes but--

ARMY DOCTOR

You mean you misplace things?

SOLO

Or things I was gonna do, or trying to remember if I did--

He trails off like he forgot the question.

ARMY DOCTOR

How about mood swings?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SOLO

No.

ARMY DOCTOR

When you were hit by the IED did you experience discharge from the ears?

SOLO

I just want to get back to my unit.

ARMY DOCTOR

The company physician in Rustamiah documented complaints consistent with Traumatic Brain Injury.

SOLO

I feel good. I'm ready to go back.

The doctor nods, scribbling.

EXT. SPEEDWAY - NIGHT

SPOTLIGHTS SHINE down on a rural raceway. Adam and Saskia sit on his tailgate with a bucket of chicken between them.

SASKIA

Do you want a blowjob?

ADAM

(laughs)
Right here?

SASKIA

If it'll make you feel better.

The cars rip around the turn, impossibly loud. A chain link fence is all that separates them from tons of hurtling steel. A plastic bag, caught on the fence, dances on their force.

SASKIA (CONT'D)

Don't underestimate me. I'm tougher than you are so don't spare me the details of what happened cause you think I can't take it.

(the cars past)

I can take anything you can.
Anything but quiet.

He lights a smoke. Crickets chirp in the grass.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ADAM

It was just different this time.

SASKIA

Different how?

A pause.

ADAM

It was just long. And toward the end
it took a turn and got real bad--

She takes stock.

SASKIA

Were you with Doster when he died?

ADAM

(cars approaching)
No, I wasn't there--

He stands and tosses a beer-can in the trash, then walks toward the track. She moves to follow but stops short, plugging her ears, as cars rip toward the corner--

Adam leans against the fence as CARS ROAR PAST, inches away. He is blasted with air and sound and dust but he clings there, vibrating with the dangerous power of the machines. His eyes close as if trying to absorb the energy of it--

But when the cars pass, Adam sags, hanging from the fence like the juice of life has left his body.

INT. BOWLING ALLEY BAR - NIGHT

A bowling ball careens down the slick lane and misses the pins. In a bar above the lanes, neon signage glows on the faces of ADAM, SOLO and WILL, sitting at an aged bar.

ADAM

They lose it when we're gone. You
just gotta give her a minute.

WILL

It's not like she just packed a bag,
dude. She cleaned me out.

SOLO

So this is your bachelor party.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILL

You're a fuckhead, you know that.

ADAM

He's right. Atlantic City. Let's go!

WILL

No man, I gotta figure this out.

SOLO

Can we see that nudie video now?

Will takes a swipe at him.

ADAM

Such a dog.

SOLO

You got any videos, Shoe?

ADAM

I will fuck you up.

SOLO

Promise?

WILL

All you want over there is to get back home but home is fucked.

ADAM

You had a rough landing.

SOLO

Fucking crash landing.

WILL

I gotta make some money.

SOLO

That video, bro...

More laughter.

WILL

Maybe I just redeploy with you, Solo, and stack checks for 9 months.

SOLO

(uneasy)

I love you but you're a bomb-magnet.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

HIGH SCHOOL KIDS celebrate a strike below, young and dewy.

ADAM

You can crash at my house till you figure your shit out.

SOLO

We should get a house, just us.
"Man-Love Thursday" everyday.

WILL

That's supposed to cheer me up--
fagging out with your coco ass?

Solo slugs Will in the kidney and heads for the jukebox.

WILL (CONT'D)

Do you ever think about Emory?

ADAM

Emory's alive man. He's home in Arkansas. He made it home.

WILL

Right. That's right... Maybe we should go visit him.

ADAM

You should drive down there.

WILL

Do you think about Doster?

ADAM

Let it go.

WILL

Did they teach us that in basic.

An 80's SONG plays and holds some special significance for them. Adam and Solo are instantly animated by it; jumping up.

SOLO

Get up bro, it's your song.

Will is pulled into joining them as they tussle and play.

ADAM

Come on, Willy. Sing it for us.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Will relents and belts out the song. The boys laugh and tease and dance as they embrace each other.

ALL
So what is right...
And what is wrong...

TWO REDNECKS look on, confused. The SECURITY GUARD approach but the boys don't care, together they seem invincible.

ALL (CONT'D)
What is love...

INT. LIVING ROOM - ADAM'S RENTAL HOME - 4AM

ADAM and WILL enter, shushing each other. Adam knocks over a coat rack, Will laughs and Adam shushes him louder, pulling blankets down and kicking him to the couch.

WILL
 I'm not staying here man, this place
 is a dump.

ADAM
 What'd you say--

He kicks him onto the couch.

WILL
 --get your foot out my ass.

ADAM
 (retrieves blankets)
 That couch is yours for as long as
 you need it. You hear--?

WILL
 You're a good man, Sar'ent.

ADAM
 I'll see you in the morning, man.

Adam recedes into the dark. Will just lays there.

INT. LIVING ROOM - ADAM'S RENTAL HOME - NEXT MORNING

The blankets are folded-- Will is gone.

INT/EXT. WILL'S TRUCK - SECURITY BANK OF KANSAS - MORNING

Sunflower seeds on floorboards. Keys dangle from ignition.
.45ACP on the seat beside him, WILL stares out at--

TWO TELLERS approach the brick bank. A petite BLONDE FEMALE
and TALL MALE. They use two keys for two locks.

WILL'S EYES-- follow the figures inside, flick to his
mirrors, three roads of egress, then his watch, 0801.

A SECURITY GUARD approaches the doors from inside, and
unlocks them. Open for business.

Will pulls on a ball-cap and steps out, laser-focused. He
tucks the .45 in his waistband and dips across the street--

INT. SECURITY BANK OF KANSAS - MORNING

A homegrown bank. Will enters, moving toward the BLONDE
TELLER-- almost to her window when she gasps, stepping back.

WILL

Why are you doing this?

BLONDE TELLER/TRACEY

Don't Will.

WILL

Don't what?

TRACEY

It's over. I'm sorry but it's over.

WILL

We were getting married-- you
cleaned me out-- you took my
daughter--

TRACEY

She's my daughter. Not yours.

WILL

How can you say that--

TRACEY

You were gone forever.

WILL

That was my job. I enlisted for us.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She looks empathetic but stops short of it.

TRACEY

I can't do this with you.

WILL

Do what? I don't understand. Are you fucking someone? Is that--

MALE TELLER, two windows down, is looking at him.

WILL (CONT'D)

Is it that guy? Is it him?

TRACEY

Don't make me call security.

SECURITY GUARD hears this and starts heading toward them.

All eyes on Will. He looks smaller. Emptied.

TRACEY (CONT'D)

You need to go.

WILL

Where do I go? You took my money and my family. You took everything.

Will pulls the .45 from his belt and before anyone can react--

He points it at his own temple and pulls the trigger.

The hush of death drowns her scream. Will falls in a heap and lays folded there, blood pooling across tiles.

INT/EXT. ADAM'S TRUCK - SECURITY BANK OF KANSAS - DAY

Adam idles outside the bank, Solo sitting shotgun. Their feet tap, their legs pumping, a frantic brand of grief.

ADAM

I told him to stay. Why couldn't he just stay on my fucking couch--

SOLO

He got blown up seven times. He was fucked up. Normal people don't--

ADAM

Normal people don't get robbed blind by their fucking fiancé.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SOLO

--they don't get blown up.

ADAM

If he was so fucked up why didn't he say so.

A man on the CLEANING CREW exits the bank in a paper-suit and lights a cigarette. He checks for blood on his shoe.

SOLO

(low)

Army won't let me redeploy. They're trying to discharge me.

ADAM

For what?

SOLO

What you think? My shits scrambled. I don't belong here.

Adam starts the truck and pulls out, angry and powerless.

EXT. FORT LEAVENWORTH CEMETERY - DAY

Tractors work in the rolling headstones behind ANNA WALLER (44), Will's mother, a wise but hard-living woman.

ANNA WALLER

My boy was hurt. You may not have seen it but he was injured--

SASKIA stands with ADAM and SOLO. A fly buzzes around Solo's head. He swats at it.

SOLO

(looking at Will's photo)

--that doesn't even look like him.

ADAM

Quiet, man--

AMANDA DOSTER stands across from them.

SOLO

Maybe it's not.

Adam and Solo, shoulder to shoulder, watching the tractors.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNA WALLER (OC)
 --if you're hurt like he was, talk
 to somebody. Don't do this. Please.

A flag is placed in her quivering hands. Orders are given for the 21-GUN SALUTE. Gunmetal clatters. Adam braces himself--

INT. VFW CLUBHOUSE - DAY

Dusty WWII VETERANS greet mourners. At the bar, ADAM and SOLO drink themselves calm. They glance over at SASKIA and AMANDA.

SOLO
 When did she become friends with
 James Doster's wife?

ADAM
 When Doster took over our platoon.

SOLO
 Fuck man. Does she know he took your
 place--

Adam shoots him a darkened look. Solo starts fidgeting.

SOLO (CONT'D)
 Let's go, bro. Can we go?

ADAM
 I thought you were on Klonopin?

SOLO
 It don't work. None of it works.

ADAM
 Then get a drink down. Our boy is
 gone. We gotta be here--

ANNA WALLER (OC)
 Adam Schumann?

Adam turns to see ANNA WALLER standing there beside him.

ADAM
 Yes, ma'am. I'm sorry I was going to
 come and introduce myself...

ANNA WALLER
 I just wanted to thank you for
 looking after my son.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ADAM

He was my brother. We looked after each other.

ANNA WALLER

You don't have to be humble with me. He said you saved his life over there--

ADAM

I couldn't save it here--
(ashamed, then)
He loved that girl. I can't imagine coming home to that.

ANNA WALLER

Home is here--
(hand to chest)
And she didn't take that from him. The war did.

ADAM

But she--

ANNA WALLER

He was struggling over there for months.

Adam holds his breath to keep his chest from leaping--

SOLO

He watches AN AMPUTEE SOLDIER get praise from a SGT. MAJOR who identifies him as a hero by his missing arm.

ANNA WALLER (OC) (CONT'D)

We planned ahead and found a treatment facility in California--

ADAM / MS. WALLER

Adam looks past her to-- (**POV ADAM**) A WALL MOUNT TV plays footage of a CONVOY moving out of Baghdad.

ADAM

Why didn't he tell us.

(**POV ADAM**) a vibration ripples across his drink. He looks back to the TV, watching the CONVOY RUMBLE CLOSER--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANNA WALLER

The guy who runs it was a soldier.
He's been doing this for 30 years.
(grabs Adam's hand)
If you know anyone who needs it--

She puts a POST-IT with a number in Adam's hand.

ANNA WALLER (CONT'D)

I'm glad you're here.

Adam inspects the number as she walks away.

EXT. ADAM'S RENTAL HOME - NIGHT

Adam emerges from the garage with a shotgun and a AR-15.
Saskia is hugging her bathrobe, concerned--

ADAM

Will liked to hunt, so we're going
hunting.

SASKIA

Just be careful.

ADAM

(kisses her)
I'm Captain Careful.

He hops in the truck, speeding off.

INT. ADAM'S TRUCK (MOVING) - NIGHT

Headlights on a dirt road. Solo pounds Crown Royal. The
"PATHWAY HOME" POST-IT from Will's mom, folded in a cup-
holder, reads: "-WAY HOME".

SOLO

Nobody knows you fought unless you
got a fucking arm blown off. I'd
take it. I'd rather be a hero with
my ass blown off than this shit. I
don't even feel like me anymore.
(turns on Adam)
I guess you don't know what I mean.
You don't got stress, you're good.

ADAM

I doubt that boy lost his arm
picking flowers.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SOLO

What the fuck's that mean?

ADAM

It means you don't know shit about him.

(beat; softens)

How about a leg? You rather lose a leg than this?

SOLO

Below the knee?

ADAM

Above the knee.

SOLO

Fuck it I'll take it.

ADAM

How about an ear?

SOLO

Can I still hear?

ADAM

You can still finger-fuck it and hear out your other ear.

SOLO

(lights a joint)

But I won't look like no war hero, just some freak with no ear.

ADAM

Remember that Bravo got his lips shot off?

SOLO

Pussy Face--

ADAM

Pussy face. You want that?

SOLO

Hell no--

They're rolling now, cornfields rushing by.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ADAM

You remember what you said to me the day Doster died?

The road ends, turning to dirt.

ADAM (CONT'D)

When we were dragging him inside--

SOLO

I remember his skin was so burnt-- it was falling off and--

ADAM

You don't remember what you said?

SOLO

No bro. My memory is shot-- I can't remember shit-- What'd I say?

ADAM

You said none of it would've happened if I had been there.

He brakes hard and they're swallowed by dusty silence.

ADAM (CONT'D)

That was a fucked thing to say.

Adam hops out of the truck, vibrating with anger.

EXT. TRUCK - CIMARRON RIVER - NIGHT

ADAM and SOLO stand over the bed of the pickup, readying weapons. Hands move by rote to a metallic snap and slide. Adam has a SHOTGUN and NV-GOGGLES. Solo with an AR-15.

ADAM

I'll scare em toward the water and you push up from that bend.

He marches off and the wind howls after him. Solo is left alone, feeling the weight of his weapon.

ADAM - ENTERS THE WOODS

Headlights dwindling behind him, Adam steps into the darkening woods. The solitude seems to calm him. He powers up the goggles to a whirring hum and pulls them on--

ADAM POV (NV GOGGLES)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IN GREEN GLOW, trees whip against dark sky. Adam's quickening heartbeat can be heard as he slips deeper into the brush.

EXT. RIVER - WOODS - NIGHT

ADAM POV (NV GOGGLES)

The hum of goggles. Adam's breath races. The wind howls and the woods come to life. A branch breaks nearby--

Adam pulls the goggles off, collecting himself-- but he can't see shit. He's waiting for his eyes to adjust when he hears/feels a presence nearby. He pulls the goggles back on.

ADAM POV (NV GOGGLES)

Thick branches on a nearby tree cloak an UPRIGHT SHADOW leaning against a tree.

ADAM

What the--

THE SHADOW DROPS out of view and slips between trees. Adam falls silent. A shadow shifts along his periphery. He whips his head around, not sure what he's seeing.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Solo--?

His heartbeat throbbing. A BRANCH BREAKS to his left and Adam whirls that way. Wind whips branches to and fro.

Adams pushes forward, gun ready. The woods alive with movement. Shadows grow on distant trees. He's running now, trees and branches slapping past his goggles, when he spots--

AN ARMED MAN is lurking between trees, then he's gone.

Adam's heart banging like a hammer, vision tunneling, wind howling. THE ARMED MAN steps from behind a tree, gun up.

Adam ducks behind a tree, ripping the GOGGLES OFF. A branch breaks behind him. The shooter closing. Training kicks in--

He peels out from behind the tree, goggles on, and-- nothing. The woods are still. Adam is clenched, chasing his breath.

EXT. ADAM'S TRUCK

Adam storms toward the truck. Solo sits on the tailgate, drinking a beer.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ADAM

What the hell is wrong with you!
You trying to get shot?

SOLO

What?

ADAM

What the fuck you doing out there?

SOLO

I wasn't out there.

ADAM

I saw you--

SOLO

I didn't even make it out there. It
was too dark. I got no goggles.

Adam reacts, like his breath has been sucked out of him.

SOLO (CONT'D)

You alright?

ADAM

No. I'm not alright, man. Fuck--

Adam hurls the NV-goggles into the bed of the truck.

ADAM (CONT'D)

(searches woods)

I carried Emory down those stairs
and I can still taste his blood.

The night grows still around them.

ADAM (CONT'D)

I can still taste it.

SOLO

What do we do?

ADAM

I don't know--

He drops his head and lays down his shotgun.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Get help, I guess.

EXT./INT. LIVING ROOM - ADAM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Light glows through mist outside their window. PUSH INSIDE to Adam on the couch. His muddy boots, lit by television. A shadow emerges from the hallway. SASKIA stands watching him.

SASKIA

Are you coming to bed?

ADAM

I think I'm gonna head out early and try and find a job.

SASKIA

Okay...

(reaches for him)

You alright?

ADAM

Yeah.

SASKIA

It's late. Come to bed.

He nods and she slips away. But he remains there.

EXT. TOPEKA VETERANS HOSPITAL - DAY

A listless flag hangs in front of a blocky building.

INT. SERVICE LOBBY - TOPEKA VETERANS HOSPITAL - DAY

ADAM and SOLO look over row after row of chairs facing service windows. The room packed with veterans; young and old; some visibly wounded, some not. A tapestry of despair.

SERIES OF SHOTS

CAMERA TRACKS across faces of war. A VETERAN ties the shoe on his prosthetic leg. A YOUNG VET in coat-and-tie checks his watch. WWII VET empties his piss-bag into a Big Gulp cup.

SOLO

Alea is pregnant.

ADAM

Buddy-- that's great. You'll do great. Kids change everything.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SOLO

I am gonna name him after me so I
don't forget his name.

Adam laughs. The digital counter: '231'. His stub says '309'.

ANGLE - COUNTER

The RECEPTIONIST looks out at Solo from behind thick glass.

FEMALE RECEPTIONIST

Can I have your VA card.

SOLO

(confused)

My VA card?

FEMALE RECEPTIONIST

If you don't have your VA card, you
need to go up to the second floor.

She points to a line that snakes down the hall.

INT. 2ND FLOOR HALLWAY - TOPEKA VETERANS HOSPITAL - DAY

Adam on his haunches, Solo standing, both of them bouncing
off the walls.

SOLO

This special forces guy was telling
me Ecstasy cures all this shit.

ADAM

Then what the hell we doing here?

They're laughing when Solo suddenly snaps to attention.

"COLONEL PLYMOUTH" is West Point prototype; the model of
tomorrow's leadership. He's led by a cadre of VA OFFICIALS.

COLONEL PLYMOUTH

Sergeant Schumann? That you?

ADAM

Yes, sir. Nice to see you.

COLONEL PLYMOUTH

Didn't recognize you in civvies.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ADAM

Yes sir, I don't recognize me either sometimes. Got out a few months back.

COLONEL PLYMOUTH

Why'd you go and do that for?

ADAM

The wife, sir. I was downrange three times with two kids.

COLONEL PLYMOUTH

Roger that. I've been there. Hard to fight when things aren't right at home. What's this line you're in?

ADAM

(low)

We're applying for service connection.

COLONEL PLYMOUTH

Shoe, you were my hammer out there.

ADAM

Yes sir.

COLONEL PLYMOUTH

We need that leadership here. Don't let these young guys see you fold like this. It's bad for morale. Bad for big Army.

He rolls on. Adam stands, clenching--

SOLO

You cool, bro?

INT/EXT. ADAM'S TRUCK (MOVING) - PROSPECT AVE. - DUSK/DAY

Adam and Solo roll into poverty ravaged portion of the city.

ADAM

That shiny medal motherfucker-- he didn't do our war--

They pull to a stoplight. Shoes hang from telephone wires.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ADAM (CONT'D)

He wasn't kicking in doors. He spent his war on a fucking computer.

TEENS ON BIKES serpentine through the streets behind them.

EXT. ADAM'S RANCH HOUSE - NIGHT

ADAM stands in front of the house he was forced to rent out. His longing turns to upset, inspecting the dead grass. A few lights on inside, he rings the bell. No answer.

ADAM

Anyone home--
(cups hands to window)
Fuck em.

He walks up the side of the house and emerges with the HOSE SPRINKLER. He places it on the lawn, lights a second cigarette off the first, and watches it water his lawn.

INT. LOBBY - TOPEKA VETERANS HOSPITAL - DAY

ADAM and SOLO are seated among the many.

ADAM

Will's mom gave me the number for this treatment facility out west.

SOLO

Out west?

ADAM

California.

SOLO

Fuck.

ADAM

This shit could give me PTSD.

They both start laughing.

INT. FRONT DESK - TOPEKA VETERANS HOSPITAL - DAY

A MALE RECEPTIONIST returns Adam's VA card and slides a thick-packet across the counter.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MALE RECEPTIONIST

This is our "Care Package". Fill it out then, on review, you'll be directed to a primary care physician and psychiatrist.

ADAM

How long will that take?

MALE RECEPTIONIST

Normally, 12 weeks but we're in arrears so--

ADAM

Arrears?

MALE RECEPTIONIST

We're backed up. It could be 6 to 9 months.

ADAM

You think these guys can wait that long--

MALE RECEPTIONIST

Excuse me--

ADAM

How many guys in this room you think will make it?

MALE RECEPTIONIST

If you're finished, we--

ADAM

I'm not finished. We need to see somebody and you're feeding me this errors bullshit. My boy here fought his fucking ass off--

(nods to Solo, sitting there embarrassed)

He did his job. Now do yours and--

FEMALE COUNSELOR (OC)

I'll see him.

Behind the receptionist, A FEMALE COUNSELOR(43) witnessed his tirade and peers over reading glasses with weary eyes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FEMALE COUNSELOR (CONT'D)

I have 20 minutes left on my lunch.
He can come around the side.

Adam turns to Solo, rocking there.

ADAM

Look alive. You're up.

SOLO

What about you?

ADAM

You go first.

They clasp hands. Solo lumbers inside.

INT/EXT. ADAM'S TRUCK - PARKING LOT - DAY

SIDE MIRROR- ADAM approaches, heat wobbling around him. He hops in and starts the truck, about to shift into gear when--

He falls still, staring at bags of trash on a curb next to busted sandbags. A gust of wind carries sand across the lot. Adam looks to his center-console, that POST-IT: "--WAY HOME", ink fading. He seems to reach but grabs the gum instead.

INT. COUNSELOR'S OFFICE - TOPEKA VETERANS HOSPITAL - DAY

SOLO sits with COUNSELOR SANDERS who appears exhausted but kindly exaggerates emotions for purposes of clarity. She has 15 minutes to eat her sandwich and fix a broken soldier.

COUNSELOR SANDERS

It says here you may be suffering
from a traumatic brain injury.

SOLO

I don't know.

COUNSELOR SANDERS

Do you have trouble remembering?

SOLO

You have a piece of tuna--

He motions to her lip. She wipes the tuna off.

COUNSELOR SANDERS

Thank you. Can you tell me the date?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SOLO

March? It's March...

COUNSELOR SANDERS

Good. How about the day and date.

SOLO

Um, Thursday?

COUNSELOR SANDERS

Today is Wednesday, March 23rd.

He laughs, anxious. She checks the clock.

COUNSELOR SANDERS (CONT'D)

Are you having any suicidal ideation.

SOLO

I just want to get back to my unit.

COUNSELOR SANDERS

It must be hard to be separated from them like that.

SOLO

Yeah. We're having a baby.

COUNSELOR SANDERS

That's great! You'll have a new unit. Do you remember the date?

SOLO

You said Thursday, March--

COUNSELOR SANDERS

We're having a little trouble with that. Let's try some word association. To me the word Wednesday sounds like wedding day. I always wanted a big wedding. Did you have a wedding?

SOLO

Yes, ma'am.

COUNSELOR SANDERS

So when I ask what day it is I want you to think of your wedding.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Solo nods, confused.

COUNSELOR SANDERS (CONT'D)
Are you still having nightmares?

SOLO
Sometimes I see Doster on fire-- but
mostly I'm awake.

COUNSELOR SANDERS
You see him when you're awake?

SOLO
(nods)
And the smell--

COUNSELOR SANDERS
Do you remember what day it is?

SOLO
Wednesday wedding day.

COUNSELOR SANDERS
Good job. See, that's great. And we
can use that to remember anything.

Solo likes her, lifts the care package.

SOLO
Could you help me fill it out?

COUNSELOR SANDERS
I wish I could-- but I'm booked with
patients during lunch all next week.
Can your wife help?

SOLO
I haven't told her.

COUNSELOR SANDERS
You need to share this with her.

SOLO
(nods, emotional)
We're having a baby.

Sanders checks the clock, overwhelmed.

INT. FOOD COURT - SHOPPING MALL - DAY

People teem past ALEA and SOLO filling out the "Care Package" over Chinese food. A "Baby Depot" bag at their feet.

ALEA

Have you used drugs other than those required for medical reasons?

SOLO

Never.

He smiles, watching shoppers pass.

ALEA

Are you always able to stop using drugs when you want?

SOLO

Mostly?

ALEA

They're drugs. It's a dumb question. Have drugs ever created a problem between you and your spouse?

SOLO

No.

ALEA

You were arrested for possession 4 times. That wasn't a problem?

SOLO

We weren't married.

ALEA

(smiles)

The next part is the "Exposure to Combat Scale". You okay with this?

He nods.

ALEA (CONT'D)

Were you ever under enemy fire?

SOLO

Like right now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALEA

You're doing good. Were you ever pinned down?

SOLO

No.

TWO SOLDIERS in camouflage walk past.

ALEA

How often did you fire rounds at the enemy?

SOLO

I was supposed to count?

ALEA

Choices are: Never. 1-2 times. 3-12 times. 13-50. Or over 50.

SOLO

Over 50.

A chair scuffs floor making a SHARP NOISE. Solo whips around.

ALEA (OC)

How often did you see someone get hit by incoming or outgoing rounds?

(POV SOLO) A GUY IN UNIFORM sets his tray down two tables away and takes a seat. He looks up and it's JAMES DOSTER.

ALEA (OC) (CONT'D)

1-2 times. 3-12. 13-50. Or over 50.

Doster is staring at him when his sleeve catches fire. Flames crawling up his arm when she pulls him back --

ALEA (CONT'D)

--over 50?

Solo refocuses on her, and nods, Doster blurs to background.

INT. GARAGE - ADAM'S RENTAL HOME - DAY

A laundry basket lands on the workbench beside a VETERANS ADMINISTRATION "Care Package". PAN UP to Saskia looking down at it. She opens the booklet to a MULTIPLE-CHOICE SURVEY:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

When I think of things I did in the military I wish I were dead. A) Never True B) Sometimes true C) Frequently True D) Very frequently true. Adam selected (D) **Very frequently true.**

Saskia looks OUT THE WINDOW to the yard where Adam plays with Zoe. He's folded into her playhouse, having a tea party.

Saskia starts racing through the questionnaire, READING:

I feel like I can't go on. C) **Frequently true.**
Lately I feel like killing myself. B) **Sometimes true.**
I don't feel connected to people. D) **Very frequently true.**

Breathless, she replaces it as she found it, looks out at--

OUTSIDE

Zoe is wielding a stick over Adam's legs.

ZOE
 You don't fit.

ADAM
 What if I just fold them in--

ZOE
 We have to cut them off.

She laughs and goes back to sawing.

INT. BATHROOM - ADAM'S RENTAL HOME - NIGHT

SASKIA pulls out a Victoria's Secret bag, hidden in the closet. She slips into a new silk teddy, flushing the price-tag then appraising herself in the mirror--

INT. BEDROOM - ADAM'S RENTAL HOME - NIGHT

Adam stares out sliding doors to the night sky when SASKIA enters, reflected on the glass in new lingerie.

ADAM
 Look at you.

She prowls across the bed and showers him with kisses.

ADAM (CONT'D)
 Where did that come from?

SASKIA
 Don't worry about it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She shushes him, straddling him, but anxiety creeping in, she starts to rush it-- grinding and pulling at him. He's looking up, sensing her distance, as her hair dances over him. He almost says something but she takes him inside her and her fever grows. She's seduced herself and left him behind. The headboard is tapping the wall, building each time--

(POV ADAM) Her hair dancing over him. That headboard banging. Her eyes close - BANG! - her head whips back with gashing GUNSHOT WOUND. Blood spills down her face and hair.

ADAM

Fuck-- Get off!

He shoves her off and rolls away, sliding to the floor. The blood is gone but he's quivering there.

SASKIA

What happened? What did I do--

He's waving her off.

SASKIA (CONT'D)

I don't understand. Tell me what to do--

He starts digging through his jeans, scours his side-table.

ADAM

My gum--

SASKIA

I need you to talk to me, Adam. It's time. I've given you months.

His searching eyes land on her new lingerie.

ADAM

I thought we were broke?

SASKIA

I thought you were *fine*. You are lying to me. I found your VA questionnaire. Everything's a lie--

ADAM

I'm not lying--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SASKIA

You're fucked up. You're not looking for a job. You're sick and--

ADAM

I have to be a sick or I won't get my benefits.

SASKIA

So you don't want to die?

His eyes go blank.

SASKIA (CONT'D)

It was multiple choice and you said you want to die. Was that a lie?

(pause)

Adam?

ADAM

I dunno--

Adam faces the window, warped in reflection.

SASKIA

You have to let me in. I wanna come with you to the VA next time.

He nods, unable to meet her eyes.

INT. OFFICE - TOPEKA VETERANS HOSPITAL - DAY

SOLO sits with COUNSELOR SANDERS who is trying to remain positive for him.

SOLO

I need to go somewhere. For treatment. Doesn't matter where...

COUNSELOR SANDERS

We're still trying to get your paperwork sorted out.

Solo looks at HER FAMILY PHOTO with her HANDICAPPED VETERAN HUSBAND and two young kids. He starts vibrating.

SOLO

We're having a baby.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

COUNSELOR SANDERS

I know honey. You're going to be a great dad. How far along is she?

Solo can't remember so he shows her with his hands.

COUNSELOR SANDERS (CONT'D)

She's getting there.

SOLO

Adam talked about a treatment place in California. Could I go there?

COUNSELOR SANDERS

The problem we're having is the Army doesn't have record of you participating in this incident that caused your TBI, so I can't get you service-connected for your injury.

SOLO

There's no record--

COUNSELOR SANDERS

You didn't report an injury at the time of the incident.

SOLO

Doster was dead. I brought him in--

COUNSELOR SANDERS

They're denying benefits unless we prove you were in the Humvee.

Solo is pacing. This feels like a cruel joke.

COUNSELOR SANDERS (CONT'D)

We need written testimony from your CO's that you were there--

SOLO

They don't believe I was there?

She slides his DD214 across the desk to him.

COUNSELOR SANDERS

You have to go back and ask for proof-

INT. MOZER'S OFFICE - WARRIORS TRANSITION UNIT (WTU) - DAY

SFC. MOZER is a bulldozer of a man. His eyes are glued to his computer studying mail-order beef. SOLO stands before him--

SFC. MOZER

Do you like New Yorks or Ribeyes?

SOLO

I don't--

SFC. MOZER

I love a good porterhouse but if you cook the New York side perfect, you overcook the filet side. Ribeyes are good for barbecuing--

(typing order)

I heard you had made a career change. Why you back over here?

SOLO

I'm, uh, trying to get into treatment but I need proof I was there--

SFC. MOZER

Sounds like you got bad paper.

SOLO

Yes, sir.

SFC. MOZER

I'm glad you're seeking treatment. We got 22 veterans a day killing themselves. I don't get it. Warriors get stress. We know that. But the obsession to end your life? I can't wrap my head around it.

He wants an explanation. Solo looks lost.

SFC. MOZER (CONT'D)

We don't want you to become a statistic.

SOLO

No, sir.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SFC. MOZER

You joined in wartime and you got yourself a war. We were in *the suck*.

SOLO

But they don't think I was there.

SFC. MOZER

Well they're as wrong as two boys fucking in church.

(reaches)

Let me see what's in your file.

Solo hands over the file. Mozer glances at it.

SFC. MOZER (CONT'D)

Ever tried dry-aged beef?

SOLO

I just need a statement that I was driving when Doster was hit.

SFC. MOZER

(nods, then)

American Samoa. Where is that?

SOLO

South pacific, sir, it's a territory.

SFC. MOZER

So does that make you a citizen or--

Solo is trembling, sweat trickles down his face.

SOLO

I was able to apply for citizenship after basic training, sir.

SFC. MOZER

(long silence)

I think I'm gonna go with those New Yorks. What the fuck, right?

Solo can only nod, *what the fuck*.

INT. ADAM'S TRUCK (MOVING) - DAY

A high-revving engine. SASKIA at the wheel, weaving through traffic. ADAM rides shotgun with a bemused grin.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SASKIA
 (talking to other drivers)
 Why are you braking! Why?

She swerves past an OLD LADY DRIVER.

ADAM
 You'd have done great in Iraq, babe.
 We never slowed down, we just ran
 them over.

SASKIA
 (senses an opening)
 Did you drive?

ADAM
 I rode shotgun and looked for IEDs.
 (nods to roadside refuse)
 They'd hide them in trash like that.
 Or cemented them into curbs--

SASKIA
 So when you see trash on the road
 here--

ADAM
 I look.

SASKIA
 That's the first real thing you've
 told me about the war.

ADAM
 ...I feel so much better now.

SASKIA
 Don't be an asshole.

She swerves past a mini-van.

INT. OFFICE - TOPEKA VETERANS HOSPITAL - DAY

A poster reads: "Silence Kills". PATTY WALKER sits beneath
 it, a wholesome young woman with an impossible job.

PATTY WALKER
 --Army achievement medal, two Army
 commendation medals.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SASKIA

You never told me about those.

ADAM sits low in his chair, trying to disappear.

PATTY WALKER

The first step in recovery is identifying our wounds. Is there a specific incident that troubles you?

He starts crunching his Coke can, unaware he's doing it.

PATTY WALKER (CONT'D)

Maybe a name?

ADAM

Emory.

PATTY WALKER

What happened to Emory?

ADAM

I dropped him--

(crunching Coke can)

I was carrying him and I dropped him and they cut two inches of his brain out-- Then Doster happened--

Saskia takes the can but watches his hands still clenching.

PATTY WALKER

What happened to Doster?

ADAM

Fuck--

SASKIA

Why don't you tell us our options?

PATTY WALKER

There is no cure for trauma, but we can learn to manage it. Long term care has the best results but every facility is different, some are 4 weeks, some are 9 months, what works for one person might not work for another-- but all these places are equally hard to get into. The smartest thing to do is apply everywhere and cross our fingers.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SASKIA
Cross our fingers?

PATTY WALKER
There are hundreds of thousands of
men and women seeking help--

SASKIA
But he's a veteran.

PATTY WALKER
That's what I mean-- hundreds of
thousands of veterans seeking help.

The number shocks them.

SASKIA
Will we get priority for places
closest to us?

PATTY WALKER
I'm afraid not.

SASKIA
What do we do in the meantime?

ADAM
But how about a job? If I had a job--

PATTY WALKER
A job is good. It'll be a few more
months before benefits kick in so--

SASKIA
A few more months? Wow. What the
fuck is going on around here?

Adam can't help smiling. Patty buries herself in a JOB LIST.

PATTY WALKER
You were Infantry so... I have a
position at an ordinance range--

SASKIA
He's thinking about killing himself
so you give him a job at a gun
range?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ADAM

It's a tank range. Think I could
kill myself with a tank?

SASKIA

Maybe...

ADAM

It'd take some serious planning.

SASKIA

You're pretty fucking resourceful.

There is laughter in the look between them.

ADAM

I used to be good at that.

SASKIA

At what?

ADAM

Making you laugh.

SASKIA

Was I laughing?

Her teasing smile bends toward tears.

EXT. TOPEKA VETERANS HOSPITAL - DAY

Saskia and Adam walk across the grass, her dress flowing
loosely around her legs.

SASKIA

You should've told me I was married
to a hero.

ADAM

I'm no hero.

SASKIA

Hero enough.

She pulls him close. Sharing it now.

ADAM

I just wanna get back in our house.

SASKIA

We're not that far off.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ADAM

Did you win the Powerball and forget to tell me?

SASKIA

Amanda loaned us some money.

ADAM

Amanda Doster?

SASKIA

Yeah. We were at Will's funeral and she offered.

ADAM

What the fuck--

SASKIA

She offered--

ADAM

Don't you get it-- She has that money because her husband is dead. And he's dead cause of me.

He staggers off leaving her crippled under the flag.

INT/EXT. ADAM'S TRUCK - NIGHT

Adam wrings the steering wheel, looking out at Amanda Doster's house. She is visible in the kitchen. But he can't bring himself to get out of the truck. He drives off.

INT. ADAM'S GARAGE

Adam enters and the garage closes behind him. He slumps down and pulls out that old FOLDED POST-IT: "--WAY HOME" it says. He unfolds it. Now reads: "PATHWAY HOME", (707)287-2969.

Adam dials the number on his cell and listens to it ring.

INT. SOLO'S CAR (MOVING) - PROSPECT AVE. - NIGHT

SOLO drives the streets alone. He eases up to a corner where A YOUNG KID(14) approaches his car.

STREET CORNER KID

What you want. I got nickels, dimes or two finger sacks.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SOLO

What about some ecstasy?

STREET CORNER KID

Get the fuck out--

SOLO

Roll it up. Who I gotta see?

STREET CORNER KID

You a cop? Where's the money.

SOLO

I got some pills--

STREET CORNER KID

I look like a fuckin pawn shop?

SOLO

You look like your balls ain't
dropped. How bout this--

Solo pulls his Glock, maybe for trade, but the Kid retreats, cursing and tossing signs as Solo pulls away.

INT/EXT. SOLO'S CAR (MOVING) - PROSPECT AVE. - NIGHT

SOLO rides deep in his seat, prowling past night-dwellers, vacant lots, derelict homes. A train of brake-lights ahead. Cars pulling into an empty lot. Solo falls in line--

He parks in a dirt lot and cuts the engine. People exit their cars. A tough crowd. They funnel through a hole in the fence--

EXT. BACKYARD - NIGHT

A spotlight pools across a dog-fighting pit. 40 SPECTATORS buy beers from a cooler and drugs off the deck. SOLO steps in, enlivened by it, eyes clocking bulges in jackets and exit routes. He pushes toward the porch where--

DANTE(45) is a mountain of a man with a Kansas City Chiefs hat over a grey-flecked Afro. A cool stick of dynamite.

DANTE

What's up, Big Army. You're all
outta pocket up in here.

SOLO

How'd you know I was military?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DANTE

Those fuckin traps. I stormed that desert in '91 with 24th Infantry.

SOLO

Alright.

DANTE

You get in on waivers? You got that look.

His laugh enlivens the girls like a kicked bucket of snakes.

DANTE (CONT'D)

Recruiters got hungry to go digging up your shit, didn't they?

SOLO

Army saved my life.

DANTE

(passes blunt)

And what're they doing for you now?

HANDLERS USHER TWO PITBULLS into the ring behind them. The SPOTTED DOG snaps at the air, spooked.

SOLO

You know where I can score ecstasy?

DANTE

Ecstasy? You going to a rave?

SOLO

No raves. It's for an injury.

The dogs are turned loose and rip into each other. The sound is vicious, immediate and unbearable.

DANTE

If you're injured docs at Fort Riley will dish you Oxys like it's nothin.

SOLO

(stoned)

It's not that kind of injury-- It's invisible--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DANTE

Right man, you all were in it. You lose some guys? Or are you one of them murdering motherfuckers?

Solo watches the SPOTTED DOG get flung around by his neck.

SOLO

I just need to get back there.

DANTE

I'll get you back.

Solo is looking past the ring to where TWO MEN drag the dying dog into darkness. Solo steps off the porch, following them--

DANTE (OS) (CONT'D)

Did that fool bet the spotted one?

EXT. BACKYARD - ACROSS THE YARD - NIGHT

Solo pushes through the crowd, into the tall grass along the fence. He finds the SPOTTED DOG there, intestines bulge from its gut. It's just alive enough to look up at him, *save me*.

Solo looks back at the house. Smoke drifting through spotlights. Spectators betting another fight.

He kneels and scoops up the dog, headed for the fence.

INT. GARAGE - ADAM'S RENTAL HOME - NIGHT

THE SPOTTED DOG is laid across a work-bench. Adam's MED-KIT out. A saline-drip hangs from the tool rack. Adam stitches and glues the dog's guts. Solo uses pliers as clamps.

ADAM

Get still, man. You're vibrating the whole damn table--

(blood trickles off table)

This dogfight, was it downtown?

SOLO

I can't sit home, bro. The fuckin walls folding in--

ADAM

You can't be down there. You got a kid coming.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SOLO

I'm not like you. I wasn't done.

Adam nods to his beer and Solo tips it to his mouth.

SOLO (CONT'D)

Remember the dogs in Rustamiah?
That runt that went on raids.

ADAM

Little Caesar.

SOLO

He was Emory's dog, wasn't he?

Adam's hands start to tremble.

SOLO (CONT'D)

You ever talk to him? To Emory.

ADAM

No.

SOLO

Do you think he's like us?

ADAM

I just told you I haven't fucking
talked to him.

Solo is petting the dog. Tears falling from his eyes.

SOLO

You remember what that Iraqi cop did
to Caesar? He was barking outside
the chow hall, remember what he did--

ADAM

I wanted to kill that motherfucker.

He steps away, triggered, blood all over them.

SOLO

Two guys in Bravo got back at him.
You hear about that?

ADAM

What'd they do--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SOLO

Same shit he did to Caesar. Held him
down and they snipped his fucking
Achilles with a bolt cutter-

ADAM

Fuck yeah--

They're drowning in the ugliness, clenching and gasping.

SOLO

What are we gonna do?

ADAM

We'll get into a facility,
somewhere.

SOLO

Then what? It just goes away?

Adam doesn't have an answer. The door opens. SASKIA there--

SASKIA (OC)

What is that?

ADAM

It's a dog.

SASKIA

I see that. Why didn't you take it
to a vet?

SOLO

It's a fighting dog. They won't take
a dog like this.

ADAM

He'll be alright.

She's looking at two drunk men, covered in blood--

SASKIA

Were you parked outside Amanda's
house earlier?

ADAM

No.

SASKIA

She said she saw your truck.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ADAM

Well, if you weren't sucking money off her you wouldn't fucking care.

SASKIA

I want it for you, not for her.

The dog's labored breath fills the silence.

SASKIA (CONT'D)

That dog can't stay here. It's a pitbull. We have kids.

She walks out. Adam grabs a hammer, slamming the workbench over and over, then hurls it, putting a hole in the drywall.

SOLO

(beat)

I forgot, my apartment don't allow dogs.

His eyes full of tears, Adam falls into laughter.

ADAM

I guess I got a dog.

TRANSITION TO

NV GOGGLES click-on. That green glow. A GUN TRACKS to a corner where-- A SHAPE MOVES, we fire. Bursts of light shred an INSURGENT TARGET. This is A VIDEO GAME and we are--

INT. SOLO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

SOLO is playing. Behind him, ALEA steps out of the kitchen to take a call. On the stove, chicken starts to burn and SMOKE CRAWLS over the room.

SOLO

Is something burning?

IN GAME- he's pinned down by shooters. Blood splashes the screen as he's shot over-and-over again.

SOLO (CONT'D)

Alea--

FROM BEHIND- smoke creeping over him, the reflection off the TV shows his head in shadow and-- (POV SOLO) JAMES DOSTER stands behind him, engulfed in flames, and reaching for him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Solo launches at the TV, screaming and kicking through it. He ricochets around the apartment, punching through walls.

INT. BACK BEDROOM - SOLO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Alea sees her husband raging toward her. She slams the door, locks it, dials 911. His footsteps approaching--

911 DISPATCH (OS)
This is 911. What's your emergency?

ALEA
Oh my god. My husband is--

WHAM! Solo puts a fist through the door. OFF HER SCREAM:

INT. BEDROOM - ADAM'S RENTAL HOME - NIGHT

ADAM startles awake. SASKIA, burping JAXSON, looks at him--

SASKIA
You were having a nightmare.

ADAM
Was I?

The house silent. Clock reads, 11:11pm.

SASKIA
Could you hold him so I can get some sleep?

ADAM
(sits up, reaching)
Yeah, I got him. Get some sleep.

She watches Adam nuzzle the boy, kissing his crown.

SASKIA
I love you.

ADAM
Love you too.

She rolls over and Adam pats the baby's back. He keeps patting and patting until Jaxson drifts off to sleep.

ADAM (CONT'D)
Shh, good boy. You're a good boy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Adam breathes him in and his eyes close too. Asleep, his arms relax and fall open. Jaxson balances on his chest, riding his breath up and down. The nightmare returns. Adam jerks and--

The baby rolls off the bed like he's rolling off the earth.

A terrible crack. The baby boy screams. Saskia bolts upright and sees Adam's empty arms. She vaults over him.

Adam wakes to screaming. Saskia cradles the baby and won't let him near. He paces the floor, exits the room.

HALLWAY

Adam leans against the wall listening to Saskia soothe Jaxson. The baby's cries subside. Adam turns toward--

INT/EXT. TRUCK - GARAGE - ADAM'S RENTAL HOME - NIGHT

ADAM grabs his shotgun and shells and hops in his truck.

INT. BEDROOM - ADAM'S RENTAL HOME - NIGHT

Jax has stopped crying. Saskia watches the truck speed off.

SASKIA

Adam--

INT/EXT. ADAM'S TRUCK (MOVING) - NIGHT

Adam speeds down a farm road with the shotgun rattling between his legs, pointed up at his chin. He hits a pothole. The shotgun leaps and-- lands hard but doesn't go off.

He brakes the truck. His eyes fill with tears. He jams the barrel in his mouth. CLOSE ON his thumb, trigger marking flesh. He screams down the barrel, stroking the trigger when--

POLICE LIGHTS appear in the distance, coming fast. Caught, he pulls the gun from his mouth, unloads it and sets it aside.

Gumball lights tilt closer and now he can see they're off to his right, on the highway. Adam slumps, chasing his breath.

INT. HALLWAY - SOLO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Solo stands outside the door. Drywall dust covers him.

SOLO

I'm sorry, baby, I'm sorry...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

There's crying from behind the door. He's talking her down when--BAM! The front door comes down. POLICE storm in.

POLICE OFFICER
Show me your hands! What's in his
hand! Let me see your hands--

OFFICER #2 storms him, jamming him to his knees--

EXT. SOLO'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Police lights slowly swirl across neighbors' faces as they watch Solo being escorted out in handcuffs.

INT. LIVING ROOM - ADAM'S RENTAL HOME - MORNING

SASKIA paces the living room in a suit-skirt, PHONE TO EAR, listening to it ring and ring and, finally--

SASKIA
(into phone)
Where are you? I've been calling you
all night.

ADAM
Sorry.

EXT. HIGHWAY - MORNING

Storm clouds squeeze daylight into a sliver of horizon. Adam's truck crosses a distant roadway in silhouette.

INT/EXT. ADAM'S TRUCK (MOVING) - HIGHWAY - MORNING

ADAM is bleary-eyed, half-cocked on energy drinks. The scenery outside is green. We're not in Kansas anymore.

SASKIA (OS)
I have a job interview and our
renters took off.

ADAM
(into phone)
What do you mean?

SASKIA (OS)
Dwayne called. The house is empty
and the tenants are gone.

ADAM
Is Jax okay?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SASKIA (OS)
He's fine. Where are you?

ADAM
Arkansas.

SASKIA
What--

ADAM
I'm going to find Emory.
(then)
I can't live like this.

SASKIA
I'm going to get this job and we're
going to move back into our house.
It will be like we're starting over.

There is a pause.

SASKIA (CONT'D)
Does that sound good?

ADAM
It sounds great.

But his voice sounds unconvincing and they both hear it.

SASKIA
I love you.

ADAM
Love you too.

INT. CENTRAL HOLDING - JUNCTION CITY - DAY

SOLO stands beyond safety glass. A COMPUTER MONITOR (in view) shows SOLO'S YOUNG MUGSHOT and a string of convictions. The GUARD RE-ISSUES: a belt, two dollars and a written testimony from Sgt. Mozer. Solo drops it in the trash, heading out--

EXT. PROSPECT AVE. - DAY

Solo walks like he's mad-dogging the world. He tracks windows and rooftops. A blacked-out TAHOE DRIVES PAST then does a sharp U-turn. Solo keeps walking as they pull alongside him--

DANTE
Where's my dog.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SOLO
Dog's dead.

DANTE
That ain't right. That dog belonged
to me.

Solo halts, clocks the threat, three guys in the car.

DANTE (CONT'D)
You know what-- fuck that mutt. You
still looking for Molly?

SOLO
Who?

DANTE
Ecstasy. Get your ass in the car.

Solo hesitates a moment, then hops inside.

INT. CHEVY TAHOE (MOVING) - DAY

SOLO sits in the second row, surrounded. TWO GUYS up front
and DANTE sprawled out in the third row seat.

DANTE
You some kind of islander?

SOLO
Samoan.

DANTE
Well put your shirt on, Samo, you're
salting up my cowhide.

Solo puts his shirt on. Dante dangles a baggie of pills.

DANTE (CONT'D)
Here's what I need from you-- I will
give you a car and an address. You
just park the goods and walk away.

SOLO
That's it?

DANTE
That's it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SOLO

(nods to men)
Why don't they do it?

DANTE

Cause they're my guys and you're just a grunt no one recognizes. And if shit gets hairy, you Rambo your way out.

SOLO

(beat)
I need shoes.

Dante looks down, sees Solo is barefoot--

DANTE

Yo drive us by Big 5 and get this boy some easy-walkers.

The driver pulls a sharp U-turn.

INT/EXT. ADAM'S TRUCK (MOVING) - ARKANSAS - DAY

The truck drives down a dirt road LITTERED WITH TRASH. Adam eases to a stop at a muddy intersection. His engine idles, his eyes study the Hurricane refuse-- plastic flutters and shimmers, trash litters the fences and hangs from trees.

CLOSE ON ADAM, sweating, wringing the wheel, eyes darting, while FAINT RADIO CHATTER turns militaristic: "--what's the hold up" "--doesn't see the bomb, he feels it."

Adam starts easing toward A TRAILER with a wheelchair ramp. A Dodge Challenger out front has an AMERICAN EAGLE emblem on the window. CLOSE ON: ADAM'S HAZEL EYES bursting with exertion. PULL OUT to find him breathless, bloody, struggling down--

INT. STAIRWELL (IRAQ FLASHBACK) - DAY

ADAM is folding under the weight of MICHAEL EMORY, the big whiteboy draped across his shoulders. Blood pulses from his head-wound and crawls down Adam's face, to his mouth--

ADAM

--hang on, Emory.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Emory's left arm swings lifelessly. Blood seeps across the AMERICAN EAGLE tattoo on his forearm--

SMASHBACK TO:

AMERICAN EAGLE tint on the Dodge window, as seen from--

INT/EXT. ADAM'S TRUCK - DAY/PRESENT

Adam parks next to Emory's car and kills the engine. His breath racing, his eyes electric, he reaches for his gum.

EXT. EMORY'S TRAILER - DAY

ADAM stands on a rickety deck and knocks. Windows rattle and the deck seems ready to splinter underfoot.

ADAM

Emory? It's Adam Schumann...

(knocks again)

Hey, it's Shoe... Sorry to pop in like this--

Door creaks open followed by a wobbly voice:

EMORY

Fuckin-A.

INT. EMORY'S TRAILER - DAY

A table with no chairs rests on cracked linoleum looking out on the estuary. Fishing poles, physical therapy devices and a bed; beside it "MICHAEL EMORY" is slumped in a chair. His bald head scarred and misshapen. His left side paralyzed.

EMORY

You got fat.

ADAM

Did I?

EMORY

Fatter than you were.

ADAM

You got skinny.

EMORY

(situates his leg)

You just fuckin show up, huh?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ADAM

Well, you got no phone what am I--

EMORY

I got a phone. I got internet. What the fuck you talkin' about?

Adam looks over and sees a cell phone next to a laptop.

EMORY (CONT'D)

You think I was living out here eating fuckin alligators?

ADAM

Fuck, maybe.

He expected a laugh, but doesn't get one.

EMORY

You just going to stand there or you gonna help me?

ADAM

You need help?

EMORY

Hell yeah I need help. Look at me.

He's holding a draconian body brace in his working hand.

EMORY (CONT'D)

I gotta get this shit on.

Adam slips the brace over his head and arms. Straps run lengthwise across the back of it.

ADAM

How do you normally get it on?

EMORY

Fucking roll around the floor or wait for my nurse. Put some muscle in it, Shoe. Nice and snug.

Adam is studying the scars on his head. He cinches the strap so tight it expels Emory's breath.

EMORY (CONT'D)

I heard Will shot himself.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ADAM

We had no idea. He didn't say shit.

EMORY

So you come down here to save me?

Adam hesitates, then reaches for another strap--

INT/EXT. DODGE CHALLENGER (MOVING) - ARKANSAS - DAY

Emory's wheel is outfitted with a handle-knob. With one hand, he steers down unkept roads at 90mph. Adam sits shotgun.

ADAM

You drive like my wife.

EMORY

I scared mine off. I'd wake up with my hands around her neck telling her I was gonna kill her--

ADAM

She didn't like that?

(alert)

What's with all the trash?

EMORY

The hurricane wiped our ass with it. You still looking for the bomb?

They're rocketing down the road and Emory looks for an answer. Adam meets his eyes, *confirming it*.

EMORY (CONT'D)

Why didn't you look me up sooner?

ADAM

I-- I dropped my baby boy. My wife asked me to hold him and like a shitbag I fell asleep and--

(fighting it)

I drove out to kill myself but when the gun went in my mouth it was your face I saw. I knew my boy would be alright but I dropped you too and--

EMORY

And I'm not alright?

Emory weaves to the shoulder, ripping to a stop.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EMORY (CONT'D)

Help me piss.

ANGLE - ROADWAY

Adam pulls Emory from the car, head under his arm, carrying him to the side of the road, holding him up as Emory pisses.

EMORY

That fall took out my left side.

Adam grows still, holding his breath.

EMORY (CONT'D)

It wasn't the sniper round they pulled out of my head or the two inches they cut out of my brain-- it was you fucking dropping me.

(beat)

Is that what you think? Is that the shit you told yourself?

He starts laughing. Adam sits breathless.

EMORY (CONT'D)

You didn't drop me off a fucking building.

ADAM

You were alive, then you weren't.

EMORY

Well I'm alive now motherfucker.

His chest pumped with warrior's pride, he zips up.

INT. DANTE'S HOUSE - DAY

SOLO sits in a deep sofa, petting cushions, calm at last. A NAKED GIRL slinks out of the bedroom, glistening with sweat. She peers in the refrigerator and steam coils off her body.

DANTE (OC)

There he is...

Dante stands in the bedroom doorway.

DANTE (CONT'D)

You rolling? How you feel?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SOLO

Good. Feel good. It's gone--

DANTE

What's gone?

SOLO

The noise, that noise--

Dante hovers over him, with messianic empathy.

DANTE

I got you man. I told you I take care of you. I came back like you, to no jobs, no help, nothing. We're out fighting their war for shit we don't got here. But we fighters. We look out for each other. We make do.

SOLO

Yeah...

DANTE

You ready to go again? You straight?

SOLO

I'm good. I'm straight.

DANTE

You better be. This is real right here. You don't be fucking this up.

Solo looks up at the backlit figure standing over him.

EXT. DANTE'S HOUSE - DAY

SOLO steps out under a dark sky and turns his face to the drizzling rain. Still high, he opens his arms to meet each drop. CLOSE ON HIS HAND as a scribbled address there smears.

Finally, he keys into the delivery car, an aging MONTE CARLO.

EXT. DECK - EMORY'S CABIN - LATE AFTERNOON

Adam and Emory are sitting on the rickety deck, drinking. The buzz of insects all around, they peer into shifting darkness.

EMORY

You see where the shot came from?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ADAM

Someone did. Solo did.

EMORY

You couldn't get the bastards?

ADAM

No man, I-- I carried you down.
Fuck, I should've gone after em.

EMORY

Me and you was the tallest ones on
that rooftop.

ADAM

They go for the tall ones.

EMORY

What if I was short? I wonder if I'd
still be like this.

ADAM

No, but you'd be short. You'd live
your life as a short guy.

EMORY

Yeah, I'm tall as fuck! I can't
stand up on my own but I'm tall as
fuck. The girls loved that.

ADAM

Yeah, they do.

Adam grows still. The buzz of insects is overwhelming.

ADAM (CONT'D)

I should've gone after the sniper.

EMORY

Killing is easy. You saved my life.

ADAM

I dropped you--

EMORY

I'm alive because of you.

His misshapen head backlit by moon--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

EMORY (CONT'D)

I know this don't look like much of
a life, but I fought for this-- and
I am grateful to be here.

He takes Adam's hand and grips it tight.

INT/EXT. MONTE CARLO - LATE AFTERNOON

The world outside smeared by rain. Solo is edgy, gritting his
teeth, coming down off the drug. The wipers aren't fast
enough. He's leaning forward to see the road when--

A CAR WEAVES in front of him. He swerves and over-corrects,
unable to find the median, suddenly braking for a RED-LIGHT.

WHAM! A PEDESTRIAN pounds on his hood, cursing him, for
nearly hitting him. Solo is coming unhinged, his windows
fogged blind, he looks to the INK SMEAR on his hand--

The delivery address is unintelligible.

SOLO

Fuck.

HEADLIGHTS approach and pull up behind him. He squints,
stopped at a green light, the car waits patiently behind him.

He pulls away. The headlights follow. He turns, they turn.
Solo slows and stares into his rear-view mirror but can't see
shit. He tucks the 9mm under his thigh, jumpy as hell.

His PHONE BUZZES. He assumes it's Dante, and answers--

SOLO (CONT'D)

(into phone)

You following my ass?--

FEMALE VOICE (OS)

Is this Tausolo Aieti?

SOLO

Who is this?

Solo takes another turn. The headlights follow.

FEMALE VOICE(OS)

I'm calling from Geary Community.
Your wife's in labor.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FEMALE VOICE(OS) (CONT'D)
 She arrived by ambulance and there
 are some complications. We're
 rushing her into surgery.

SOLO
 The baby? Is the baby--

NURSE/FEMALE VOICE
 She asked you to get here right
 away.

He's blinking away tears, speeding faster--

SOLO
 Where?

NURSE
 Geary Community hospital.

SOLO
 But where is it?

NURSE
 We're off Horne Street.

SOLO
 Horn street. Like a car horn--

NURSE
 That's right.

SOLO
 Is she okay?

NURSE
 Try to get here soon as you can.

He hangs up. The car still trailing him, he stomps on the
 gas, ENGINE GROWLING as he picks up speed. Zero visibility
 ahead, the headlights behind, he cranks a desperate turn.

The car seems to rise up, hydroplaning. The world comes
 undone, spinning around him. He's fighting the drift--

The tires bite and the car rips up the flooded street. Solo
 checks his mirrors, no headlights. He turns again and sees--

A break in the storm. Heaven shines through the clouds.

INT. MATERNITY WARD - NIGHT

SOLO ENTERS breathless with worry. ALEA lays in bed with their BABY BOY in her arms.

SOLO
What happened? Are you okay--

ALEA
Come meet your boy.

SOLO
I thought you were--

ALEA
It's okay. Come here.

Solo approaches, wounded by the child's innocence. She hands over her newborn, an act of forgiveness.

SOLO
Talofa little Solo...
(whispering Samoan)
Ua ou fiafia ua ta feiloa'i.

The boy's eyes open to the language of his father.

SOLO (CONT'D)
Talofa, little man.

INT/EXT. ADAM'S TRUCK - GAS STATION - NIGHT

The lights of the highway blur behind bleary-eyed ADAM, standing at his truck pumping gas. His phone rings.

ADAM
(into phone)
Hello?

The frank voice on the other end is FRED GUSMAN.

FRED
Hey Adam, this is Fred from Pathway Home in California. I've got your DD214 here. In your message you said you're looking to get into a facility as soon as possible--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ADAM
(wells with tears)
Yes, sir.

FRED
Then let's get you on a flight out.

Adam is nodding before he can utter his answer.

INT. HALLWAY - MATERNITY WARD - DAY

A thick window looks in on NEWBORNS. ADAM and SOLO stand peering in on Solo's boy, watching him sleep.

SOLO
Does he know who I am?

ADAM
He will soon.

SOLO
(beat)
Did you tell Emory you dropped him.

ADAM
Yeah.

SOLO
Is he like us?

ADAM
He's tough as hell, man. I wish you could've seen him.

Solo's cell buzzes. He silences it. Distracted.

ADAM (CONT'D)
I brought you up to my guy at the treatment center in California.

SOLO
But I got bad paper.

ADAM
This is private. He's said he's going to try to get you a bed.

SOLO
They got a bed for me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ADAM

As soon as one opens up--

SOLO

(beat)

So you're leaving.

ADAM

I leave tomorrow.

SOLO

They're gonna ask you about Doster.
You gonna tell them how fucked it
was that you weren't there?

It feels cruel.

ADAM

What's wrong with you?

SOLO

You want to know *fucked*? The Humvee was burning and I got all the guys out and we were huddled in the ditch but-- I forgot Doster. I forgot he was riding with us. Only for a second, but by the time I got back--

ADAM

How come you never told me that.

SOLO

You never asked.

Adam's head falls.

SOLO (CONT'D)

None of it woulda happened if you were there. You would've seen it-- you don't forget--

Solo's cell buzzes. He silences it again.

ADAM

Why aren't you answering it?

SOLO

Look how perfect he is. I can't name him after me. He's too perfect-

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ADAM

Name him what you want. You're his
dad and he's gonna love your ass.

Together they look through the glass.

INT/EXT. MONTE CARLO - PARKING GARAGE, HOSPITAL - DAY

Ceiling lights pass overhead. Solo approaches the Monte Carlo with a baby carseat in his hand. He stops in his tracks, staring at the car. Now he approaches the car with purpose, looks over his shoulder then pops the trunk. Inside--

A trunk is full of M-16's. His face drops and he just stares--

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - NIGHT

In darkness, SOLO stands by the window, PHONE RINGING in his hand; same damn number, HE ANSWERS:

SOLO

(into phone)

Tell me where to drop this shit.

DANTE (OS)

(through phone)

You fucked up, Samo. You think we
don't know where you're at--

Bladed light from the shutters slices across his face.

SOLO

I'm gonna drop it and be done.

DANTE (OS)

Yeah, you be done. There's a taco
shop on Pinkerton. Park in the lot
next door. Leave the keys.

(hangs up)

SOLO

Tacos on Pinkerton. Tacos on
Pinkerton. Pink tacos.

He repeats it to himself, desperate to remember.

INT. ZOE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Adam stands at the door with a duffle over his shoulder, watching Zoe play with her doll.

ADAM
 (sits beside her)
 I love you, Zoe. I'll be back soon.

She pets the doll's hair, not looking up.

ZOE
 What if she gets scared?

ADAM
 You tell her it'll be alright.

ZOE
 But that doesn't work, dad.

HIS PHONE RINGS, SOLO CALLING:

ADAM
 (into phone, steps to window)
 What's going on, man?

SOLO (OS)
 (through phone)
 They have a bed open up for me yet?

ADAM
 I'm just leaving now-- but I'll ask as soon as I get there.

SOLO
 But I can go anyplace, right?
 They're all the same?

There's urgency in Solo's voice.

ADAM
 I think so. You alright?

SOLO (OS)
 Yeah, I'm okay-- I got into some shit but I--

ADAM
 What kind of shit?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SOLO (OS)
I got some guys that-- I got
something that belongs to them.

ADAM
Where are you?

The reflection on the window reveals Saskia behind Adam.

INTERCUT WITH SOLO:

The Monte Carlo passes under the bridge, entering Prospect.

ADAM (CONT'D)
Tell me where you are--

SOLO
--under that bridge.

ADAM
Wait there for me. I'm on my way.

Solo hangs up, but keeps driving.

BACK TO ADAM:

He turns from window to Saskia in the doorway.

SASKIA
Is everything okay?

ADAM
(hesitates)
I'll call you from the bus.

He kisses her and grabs his duffle, rushing out.

INT/EXT. MONTE CARLO (MOVING) - PINKERTON STREET - NIGHT

The Monte Carlo eases past the taco shop. A used-car lot
flanks it. Solo is peering out, doing recon.

INT. ADAM'S TRUCK (MOVING) - NIGHT

ADAM exits the freeway, DIALING:

ADAM
(waiting, waiting)
C'mon, pick up the fucking phone.

INT/EXT. MONTE CARLO (MOVING) - DIRT LOT - NIGHT

SOLO kills the headlights and eases into the fenced lot. Neon from the taco shop smears windshields of a dozen used cars. He scans the shadows for movement and cuts the engine.

Keys in ignition, he grabs his gun and hops out. A second later, his CELL PHONE STARTS RINGING on the floorboard.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Solo is jogging toward the street when HEADLIGHTS HIT him. The Tahoe speeds into the lot, a gun juts out, squeezing off shots. Solo dives for cover as-- the Tahoe rolls past, GUNFIRE popping. Bullets pierce steel above his head. Solo rolls beneath the car, crawling the opposite direction.

Gunfire goes quiet. DISTANT VOICES react to the skirmish. Brake-lights glow. Wheels crunch to a stop in dirt.

The Tahoe shifts into reverse, coming back again.

INT. ADAM'S TRUCK - UNDER THE BRIDGE - SAME

Adam idles under the bridge, waiting. Windows rolled down, listening. Every second lasts forever. He's coming unglued.

ADAM

C'mon, Solo. Come on--

His body trembling. He checks the mirrors.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

SOLO squats behind a car, watching in a mirror as the Tahoe reverses to a stop twenty feet from him.

DANTE (OS)

--get the fuck out and check.

The men slowly approach Solo's position, guns drawn. Their approach seen only in shadow as we STAY ON SOLO. Something about him looks surrendered, ready for it all to be over.

The men are coming up both sides of the car he hides behind when-- POLICE SIRENS sound in the distance.

DANTE (OS) (CONT'D)

--cops coming, let's go.

A regretful calm settles on Solo's face. The men retreat.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - NIGHT

Solo sprints down a street past derelict houses. Police lights fill the distant night. He cuts through a yard--

INT/EXT. ADAM'S TRUCK (MOVING) - RESIDENTIAL STREET - NIGHT

Adam is clenched, powerlessness. Suddenly, Solo emerges from the darkness under the bridge. Adam throws open the door--

ADAM

You alright? Are you hurt?

SOLO

(checks himself)

No, no, I'm good, I--

ADAM

Tell me what happened.

SOLO

I fucked up, man. I fucked up--

A POLICE CAR ramps past them, sirens blaring.

ADAM

I'm taking you to the bus station.
We're gonna get you out of here.

EXT. BUS DEPOT - NIGHT

Fifty buses parked across wet blacktop. ADAM and SOLO keep watch over each other's shoulder.

ADAM

We're swapping spots, man. That's all this is.

SOLO

But what about you?

ADAM

Don't worry about me. When a bed opens up, I'll be out.

SOLO

But my wife and boy--

ADAM

I'll take care of them. You gotta go.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SOLO
But I can't leave--

ADAM
You're getting on that bus.

An order.

SOLO
You're always saving me, or maybe
you just too afraid to go.

ADAM
Maybe.

SOLO
I can't leave you behind.

ADAM
We're not downrange, Solo, you take
what comes here.

SOLO
(wounded by that)
But I'm gonna go get better, while
you sit here broken.

ADAM
I'll figure it out.

Solo hears him promise, and reaches out a hand.

SOLO
I hope so, bro.

They clasp hands and hug it out. Solo steps onto the bus--

SOLO (CONT'D)
We had some bad days-- but maybe
that's what they were, just bad
days.
(beat)
We had some good days too.

He disappears inside. Adam looks staggered.

EXT. BUS DEPOT

Adam watches Solo take a seat in the back. The bus pulls out
and disappears into the dawn.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The depot is empty, he takes a seat on the bench. PUSH ON ADAM coming to terms with his sacrifice. He's stuck here, stuck carrying the same shit.

He dials a number, it rings:

ADAM

Hey Fred, it's Adam. Hey, I sent someone in my place. Can you give him my bed?

His voice weak with emotion.

FRED (OS)

I'm sorry to hear that.

ADAM

He got into some trouble here and-- he needs to be there.

FRED (OS)

That's real generous of you. How do you feel about it?

ADAM

(thrown)

I don't know what you mean.

FRED (OS)

You were all set to get help and you gave it away. How do you feel?

He looks hopeless in the violet glow of dawn.

ADAM

(low)

I feel-- alone. Y'know? They're gone. They're all gone and I'm still here.

PUSH IN as the pain simmers to the surface.

FRED (OS)

Look, talking about this isn't going to cure you but it can buy you some relief.

(gently)

You gotta open this up. You gotta share it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Adam is vulnerable. And he believes this man.

INT/EXT. ADAM'S TRUCK (MOVING) - HIGHWAY - DAWN

Wind rakes the window, drying tears to Adam's cheeks. Fields roll across the distance behind him.

EXT. AMANDA DOSTER'S HOUSE - DAY

PUSH ON ADAM turned away, staring into the pine woods. REVERSE TO see Amanda padding through the house, with her girls. She opens the sliding door ask them to stay behind.

AMANDA DOSTER
(approaching)
Adam? Is everything okay?

ADAM turns to her, crippled by emotion. He meets her eyes, the woods towering behind him...

OMITTED

OMITTED

EXT. IRAQ STREET, RUSTAMIYAH - DAY

A CONVOY OF HUMVEES speed down a dirty road. Buildings climb both sides of the street like canyons, only interrupted by empty lots of trash; more trash than you've ever seen. It shimmers against a dying sun and if you didn't know it was garbage it'd be the most beautiful sight you've ever seen.

EXT./INT. HUMVEE, RUSTAMIYAH

ADAM'S EYES stare bloodshot out a passenger window caked in moondust. The reflection of passing buildings and trash-strewn streets of Iraq, dance across his face.

ADAM (VO)
*I don't know how much James talked
about the guys in our platoon-- but
I can't tell you what happened to
your husband without telling you
about Emory.*
(beat)
*You don't see the bomb unless they
want you to. You sense it. You just
know--*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A COUPLE KIDS, playing in a passing field of trash, stop and pick up the ball. One kid watches, as the others flee.

ADAM (CONT'D)
Stop the rig.

A sudden halt. In side mirror, THREE HUMVEES halt behind it.

INSIDE HUMVEE

SOLO drives, WILL and EMORY in back. The engine idles over silence. A lucky horseshoe swings from the headliner as all four men watch wind blow trash across a tight street.

SOLO
 What you got?

RADIO SQUAKS (OS)
 1-1? What's the hold up.

Adam doesn't reply, just stares out at the street--

WILL
 (spits sunflower seed)
 I don't see nothing.

EMORY
 Shoe don't see it, he feels it.

POV ADAM: A stretch of curbside ahead appears new.

ADAM
 (slowly, keys mike)
 This is 1-1. Alternate route. We'll
 hang a left here onto Dead Girl
 road.

His order lingers there. Solo makes the turn.

EMORY
 Who named this street?

WILL
 We did. Don't you remember her?

A pack of dogs tear at something in empty lot, as the convoy passes. Adam eyes the road, his guts still churning--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ADAM (VO)

*I avoided the bomb that day but led
us right into an ambush. That's how
Emory happened.*

ECU ON ADAM watching pigeons erupt from a rooftop in a cloud of dust. The fly across the sun. That's when he hears--

The hiss of an incoming RPG. ECU ON ADAM as it hits the engine block. The front of the rig launches up and bangs down. They're swallowed by dust and smoke. GUNFIRE PINGS off them as VOICES CALL: "Engine down", "Fight through it"--

ADAM (OS) (CONT'D)

Building #20. Building #20. Rooftop--

SLOW PUSH through the rig as they bail out. Their shadows VANISH INTO DUST as a shot spiders the windshield.

INT. STAIRWAY TO ROOF - BUILDING #20 - DAY

DUST FLOATS across light falling through window grills ONTO ADAM, SOLO, WILL and EMORY ascending a naked staircase, covering angles. GUNFIRE from the street is met with gunfire from the rooftop above them. They crouch there--

CLOSE ON ADAM: veins pulsing in his neck, cracked lips and salty gear. The eyes of his men are all looking to him.

ADAM

Two more floors. Move--

Moving again. Tension building on their quickening breath. The stairs climb past a landing covered with the ash of books and a pyre of desk-chairs. Step by step the GUNFIRE CLOSER.

He signals them to stop. Last flight of stairs above-- a door there leads to the rooftop. Light seeps around its frame. GUNFIRE BANGS outside it. Our boys share a ready-look.

EMORY

Stairway to heaven.

The moment stretches into silence. The gunfire has stopped. Adam flashes a countdown with his hand and they bang outside--

EXT. ROOFTOP - BUILDING #20 - DAY

Sunlight blinds us, their shadows fanning out across the flare into light so bright they seem to float over the city.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ADAM

Clear.

SOLO

Clear!

The enemy is gone.

EMORY

Where the hell--

WILL

(finds ladder)

I got an Iraqi fire escape here.

ECU: Adam is squinting, surveying surrounding rooftops.

ADAM

(keys mike)

This is 1-1. Rooftop #20 is clear.

We are green on rooftop #20.

DOSTER (OS)

Copy. Set security and take over-
watch. QRF is five minutes out,
over.

WILL

This is fucking Charlie Foxtrot.

SOLO

I gotta get juicy.

EMORY

That's why you don't eat Indian food
in--

PHWAAAP! A round zips past Adam and ruptures Emory's helmet.
Blood spits out, a vibrant splash across a dusty rooftop.

ADAM

(dives to cover him)

Man down, man down--

SOLO (OC)

Muzzle flash, eleven o'clock! fifth
floor window--

ADAM

Light it up!--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Solo and Will bang rounds into a distant building. CLOSE ON EMORY, on his back, head split, brains bulging.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Hold on, Emory, I got you.

EMORY

My head--

Adam, backlit by sun, crouches to lift him. Emory's helmet still wobbles there, brain bits rolling around inside.

INT. STAIRWAY - BUILDING #20 - DAY

Light explodes onto the upper left-corner of the frame. Adam staggers through it, carrying Emory on his back. They descend a cement staircase, one agonizing step at a time, as it winds around and around. A bloody trail splattered behind them--

Adam is breathless, his hazel eyes bursting with exertion. His blouse covered in blood. Every cell in his body screaming, folding under the weight of his friend.

ADAM

--hang on, Emory.

Emory hemorrhages blood thick with brain-matter. It pulses down Adam's head and neck, creeping across his mouth. He purses his lips and cranes his neck to keep it out.

A sunlit doorway below. Last flight of stairs. His legs are shaking violently. Emory slipping off his back. Adam tries to yank him into place and inhales sharply-- he sucks down a glob of blood and chokes on it. Adam slips. He falls. He drops Emory and watches him tumble down the steps.

His head clips the stairs with a thud and Emory's lifeless body lays knotted below, eyes staring vacantly up at Adam.

INTO BLACK:

INT. HOOKAH BAR - FOB RUSTAMIYAH - NIGHT

A HAND SLAPS the naked belly of BIRTHDAY BOY as SOLDIERS hold him down. Behind them, SOLDIER IN LEOTARD sings Karaoke under a neon glow as TVs play the Golf Channel. Parachute fabric flutters along the wall where we FIND SOLO and ADAM.

ADAM

I can't stop looking at it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Adam spits on his boot, trying to wipe blood stains off.

SGT. 1st CLASS JAMES DOSTER ENTERS. The rowdy sucked from the room as boys snap-to. *"Good evening, Sergeant Doster."*

JAMES DOSTER
How you boys holding up?

He stands over Adam and Solo. They nod and mumble, not good.

ADAM
Any update on Emory, Sergeant?

JAMES DOSTER
Emory has a tough road ahead but there's a good chance they get him home with a heartbeat.

ADAM
Then what?

JAMES DOSTER
You wanna give us a minute, Solo.

Solo staggers out. ECU on the name-tape on Doster's uniform.

JAMES DOSTER (CONT'D)
As leaders we make decisions--

ADAM
I made the wrong call.

JAMES DOSTER
These small choices that seem to add up to something, don't. You changed the route. It was another engagement--

-

The fun behind them escalates into a brawl. Adam's knee is pumping, hookah rattling on table.

JAMES DOSTER (CONT'D)
You have to trust your instincts.

ADAM
My instincts were wrong.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JAMES DOSTER

Listen, I'm signed up for a video link-up tomorrow morning with my wife but I want you to take my call and I am going to take your spot on patrol.

Their eyes meet and Adam suddenly feels tomorrow is the day.

ADAM

I can't let you do that.

JAMES DOSTER

Sure you can.

ADAM

That's my patrol, it--

JAMES DOSTER

Take the day off--

ADAM

I'm sorry but--

JAMES DOSTER

(an order)

You're sitting this one out, son. Call your wife and get right.

ADAM

What about your wife?

JAMES DOSTER

She'll survive.

Then he's gone.

EXT. VIDEO CONFERENCE TRAILER - NEXT DAY

A dark room. Computer monitors light faces of SOLDIERS ON SKYPE. Adam sees the effort behind their smiles, slips out...

EXT. DIRT ROAD - FOB RUSTAMIYAH - DAY

Adam walks beneath camo netting, dappled in light, looking toward the STRESS TENT. A distant horn blares. Growing louder. A HUMVEE ROARS PAST. SOLO driving, covered in soot.

EXT. EMERGENCY MEDICAL UNIT - DAY

The Humvee stopped. Rear hatch open. Adam runs up, joining SOLO and TWO SOLDIERS.

SOLO
Help me! Fuck. Medic--

Blood dribbles out the back, blackening the dust.

SOLO (CONT'D)
They got us. We got hit.

ADAM
Who--

They're looking over A BURNT SOLDIER, face and body mummified by fire. One leg is gone. Unrecognizable.

ADAM (CONT'D)
--who is it.

SOLO
It's Doster. He was in your seat.

ADAM
No, oh fuck--

They're trying to pull Doster out but he slides off the board. Adam hooks his armpits, fluid dribbling off--

SOLO
Where were you? Fuck--

MEDICS and NURSES bound from the medical unit with a stretcher, wheeling it beneath the body. HURRYING INSIDE--

SOLO (CONT'D)
None of this shit would've happened
if you were there.

CLOSE ON ADAM, as he battles down the dark hallway following the remains of the soldier who took his seat.

EXT. FLIGHT PAD - DAY

SPEAKERS BLAST TAPS as 40 SOLDIERS stand in formation, doing roll call. The boots, helmet and gun of Doster stand before them, his dog tags glistening in the light.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

1ST SERGEANT WACHTER
Specialist Aeti.

FIND SOLO, eyes brimming with emotion--

SOLO
Here, First Sergeant.

1ST SERGEANT WACHTER
Sergeant White.

1ST SERGEANT WACHTER (CONT'D)
Private Waller.

FIND WILL, staring straight ahead--

WILL
Here, First Sergeant.

1ST SERGEANT WACHTER
Sergeant Schumann.

FIND ADAM, holding it all in--

ADAM
Here First Sergeant.

1ST SERGEANT WACHTER
Sergeant Doster.

STILL ON ADAM, the weight of it landing on him...

1ST SEGEANT WACHTER
Sergeant James Doster.
(long beat)
Sergeant James D. Doster.
(then)
Ten-hut.

The men snap to attention. TAPS is played from a battery
powered bugle. CLOSE ON DOSTER'S dog tags, shimmering--

CUT BACK TO:

EXT. AMANDA DOSTER'S HOUSE - DAY

The trees sway above them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ADAM

Amanda...he took my seat that was supposed to be me.

AMANDA DOSTER

But it wasn't you. You're still here. James wouldn't want that for you. He wouldn't want you holding on like this. He would want you to live. You live. That's how you honor him.

A breeze kicks up. Her face softens and she nods and turns for inside-- leaving Adam there in the dappled light.

EXT. BACKYARD - ADAM'S RANCH HOUSE - DAY

This is the house they own. IN THE BACKYARD: in the middle of the dead grass is an above-ground pool. Saskia throws empty moving boxes out the back door, PUSH INTO--

INT. BACKROOM - ADAM'S RANCH HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A maze of moving boxes. ZOE colors on them. JAXSON plays in his pack-n-play. The dog they adopted is asleep between them.

ZOE

Say it Jaxy, *Donald Duck* picked his butt, all the way to *Pizza Hut*.

SASKIA

(enters)
Enough, Zoe.

SASKIA fiddles with the washing machine. The dog hears a car pull up-- he gets up and walks out of the room

INT/EXT. ADAM'S TRUCK (MOVING) - ADAM'S RANCH HOUSE - DUSK

Adam pulls to a stop in front of the ranch house. He parks and starts up the walkway and with his rucksack over his shoulder it's almost like he's coming home all over again.

He opens the door and the house feels alive inside. The dog greets him at the door and the children can be heard inside.

ADAM

I'm home.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Small feet come running and the door closes. CAMERA PULLS back to find small blades of grass sprouting on the lawn. Green and moist, they hold promise. STAY ON the home.

CUT TO:

CARD #1: Adam Schumann graduated Pathway Home in 2011 and most days he feels like he made it home.

CARD #2: Tausolo Aieti and his wife live in Las Vegas where he attends Junior College. They have four kids.

CARD #3: Adam Michael Emory lives near his daughter in Texas. He enjoys skydiving and likes to drive fast.

TO BLACK.