

Dictator For "Life"

by

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FADE IN:

BLACK SCREEN:

SUPER: BAGHDAD, IRAQ, NOVEMBER 2003

EXT. BAGHDAD STREET - DAY

A palm tree lined street.

INT. HUMVEE - DAY

SERGEANT GORDON COOPERMAN leads his squad on patrol in their Humvee just outside the base. SPECIALIST JAMES MADRID drives the Humvee.

SPECIALIST MADRID
Coop, what's the story?

SPC Madrid just turned twenty-one years old. James hails from Moriarty, New Mexico. His dark features could pass for Arabic; five feet six inches and one hundred forty pounds, he is the talkative type.

SERGEANT COOPERMAN
Man, why do you always ask so many questions?

SPC MADRID
I'm just curious, Magnum. Why do they call you Magnum anyway?

The Humvee slowly rolls through the street with the rest of its convoy mates.

SGT COOPERMAN
It's need to know, only.

SPC MADRID
Which one? Why they call you Magnum or what the mission is?

SGT COOPERMAN
Both.

SPC MADRID
Shut up!

SGT COOPERMANN
(laughing)
Just drive, Madrid.

SERGEANT GORDON COOPERMANN, twenty-five years old from Lakewood, Colorado, is a rising star in Alpha Company, part of the 4th Infantry out of Fort Carson Colorado. Coopermann is six feet one inch and solid; the clean cut all conference high school football flanker.

SGT COOPERMANN
I'll let you know when we get a
little closer. Just keep drivin'.

SPC MADRID
(shaking his head)
God, I hate these secret missions.

SGT Coopermann looks at his street map.

SGT COOPERMANN
Ok, two more blocks then hang a
left.

SPC MADRID
Roger that, Sergeant.

The convoy passes through the relatively busy streets. The Humvees turn and slow down to wait for kids playing soccer in the street to clear. Yelling and children's laughter can be heard.

SGT COOPERMANN
Stop at the second building on
the right.

SPC MADRID
Gotcha.

The convoy stops. SGT Coopermann bolts from the vehicle into the building and returns carrying a basket.

SGT COOPERMANN
(entering vehicle)
Let's roll! Step on it.

The vehicle lurches forward and the convoy follows.

SPC MADRID

A fucking picnic basket! That's
what our secret mission was?
Jesus H. Christ! This shit again?

SGT COOPERMANN

Just drive, Madrid. Get us back
to camp. Whip a left up here go
around the block and back the same
way we came.

The convoy gets turned back towards base.

SPC MADRID

Colonel Higgins wants tabouli and
goat, so we have to go on a
"patrol."

(makes finger quotes)

When did the army become a bunch
of take out delivery boys?

SGT COOPERMANN

(shakes head)

Just get us back.

EXT. STREET - DAY

A soccer ball sits alone in the eerily deserted street.

INT. HUMVEE - DAY

SGT COOPERMANN

Uh-oh.

SPC MADRID

What do you mean uh-oh? Oh shit.

SGT COOPERMANN

(grabbing radio)

Get ready. Step on it hard!

SGT COOPERMANN

(into the radio)

Golden Coyote to Wolf Pack.
Stranger danger, stay frosty.
Something's going down.

RADIO

Roger, Golden Coyote, we got your
six.

Small arms fire erupts to the rear of the convoy.
Something moves on the rooftops as enemy combatants
position themselves to launch a rocket propelled grenade.

SGT COOPERMANN

Woolly, do you see 'em at the top
of the roof? It's an RPG!

PRIVATE WOOLFORD, an eighteen year old, fresh out of
basic training recruit mans the turret gun.

PVT WOOLFORD

Yes, Sergeant.

SGT COOPERMANN

Give 'em what for, Wooly.

PVT Woolford fires one shot, and his .50 caliber jams.

PVT WOOLFORD

I have a jam! I have a jam!

SGT COOPERMANN

God damn it! Get us the hell out
of here!

Sgt Coopermann hangs out the door with his M-16.

SPC MADRID

I'm trying!

Sgt Coopermann fires a three shot burst at the
combatants' rooftop position. The RPG fires wildly,
straight up in the air.

SPC MADRID

(Screaming)

Woo! Hoo! You got em!

Small arms fire from windows and rooftops rain down on
Madrid, Coopermann, and Woolford.

SGT COOPERMANN

Go! Go!

Bullets rip through the Humvee.

SPC MADRID

Owww! Ahhh! I'm hit. Damn it!
It burns!

SGT COOPERMANN

Where? Where are you hit?

SPC MADRID

My leg! It's my leg; I can feel
the blood pouring down my leg!
It's burning!

SGT Coopermann inspects SPC Madrid's leg and begins to laugh.

SPC MADRID

What? What's going on? What's so
funny?

SGT COOPERMANN

You. You are hilarious. A bullet
hit the picnic basket and some hot
goat brisket juices got on your
leg. You haven't been shot.

SGT Coopermann smiles and holds up his gloved finger covered with the basting mixture. He licks his finger.

SGT COOPERMANN

Mmm. Tasty.

SPEC Madrid smiles as the tension is broken. A drop of blood hits SGT Coopermann's gloved hand he is still holding up showing off to Madrid. They both look up.

SGT COOPERMANN

Woolly!

PVT WOOLFORD

(with labored breathing)
Sergeant, I'm hit.

SGT Coopermann scrambles to pull PVT Woolford from the turret into the Humvee as they still bounce down the street.

SGT COOPERMANN
Hang in there Woolly! Where are you hit?

PVT WOOLFORD
It's my arm. I can't move it.

SGT COOPERMANN
David! Get your bandage out and get it on his arm.

PRIVATE FIRST CLASS TERRENCE CHRISTOPHER DAVID, T.C. most of the time, finally snaps to reality.

PFC DAVID
I'm on it Coop.

PFC David, nineteen years old, African American, from Chicago escaped the South Side to make a "peaceful" life in the military. He efficiently bandages PVT Woolford's arm. PFC David is no slouch of a soldier. He looks back to SGT Coopermann and nods.

PFC DAVID
You hit, Sarge?

SGT COOPERMANN
What? No.

SGT Coopermann's sleeve is bloody and torn. Coopermann inspects his arm.

SGT COOPERMANN
Huh. Must've got grazed. What's our ETA to camp, Madman?

SPC MADRID
Less than five minutes, Sergeant.

SGT COOPERMANN
(with radio)
Golden Coyote to Cave, we have
taken fire. Return ETA under
five. We have casualties.

RADIO
Roger, GC. Medics on standby at
the gate.

SGT Coopermann stows radio.

SGT COOPERMANN
(glancing at each troop)
Good work men. You hangin' in
there, Woolly?

PVT WOOLFORD
(labored)
Yeah, Sergeant.

The convoy pulls through the gate of the base camp.

EXT. ARMY BASE - DAY

SGT Coopermann escorts PVT Woolford from the Humvee to
the waiting ambulance.

SGT COOPERMANN
T.C. get with Lieutenant Simms and
Sergeant Henry for the debrief.
Oh yeah, make sure Colonel Higgins
and Captain Milsap get their
picnic lunch.

SGT Coopermann rides away to the hospital with PVT
Woolford.

SGT COOPERMANN
(yelling)
I'll be back in less than ten.

PFC David and SPC Madrid are left at the Humvee scraping
the picnic basket contents back together and watching the
ambulance pull away.

SPC MADRID

Coop better get a medal for this one.

PFC DAVID

Don't hold your breath. You forget about the bureaucracy we're dealing with? This is the U.S. Army, son.

SPEC Madrid shakes his head.

SPC MADRID

Get in. Let's go find the Lieutenant and make sure he gets the report correct. Maybe we can get Coop a medal.

PVT DAVID

Ric's not going to like the way we're returning our rental vehicle.

SPC MADRID

She'll get over it.

INT. HOSPITAL TENT - DAY

PVT Woolford is ushered to surgery. A medic, SPECIALIST THOMAS, looks at SGT Coopermann's arm.

SPC THOMAS

You're gonna need a couple stitches. I'll get a doc over here.

SGT COOPERMANN

What about Woolford? Is he going to be OK?

SPC THOMAS

He'll probably lose his arm.

SGT COOPERMANN

Damn it.

SPC Thomas leaves, and a doctor comes to stitch the wound. The Doctor finishes up.

DOCTOR

You're a lucky guy. Through and through, in the fleshy part of your bicep. If you're going to take a bullet, that's the place.

SGT COOPERMANN

I guess.

DOCTOR

We'll get you a bandage, some antibiotics, and your Purple Heart will be on its way.

SGT COOPERMANN

Hmmph. Purple Heart? Wow, I guess I didn't think about that.

DOCTOR

Well, you should. I can release you back to your unit in a few minutes. Any questions?

SGT COOPERMANN

Nope.

DOCTOR

All right. I'll send Specialist Thomas over to put on a bandage and get you some antibiotics and some ibuprofen.

SGT COOPERMANN

Thanks, Doc.

DOCTOR

No problem.

The Doctor leaves, and SPC Thomas returns with a bandage and medication.

EXT. HOSPITAL TENT - DAY

Sergeant Coopermann walks back to his tent through the dust.

INT. SGT COOPERMANN'S TENT - DAY

Sergeant Coopermann enters his squad's tent.

SPC MADRID

Coop, you're back. How's the arm?

Sergeant Coopermann removes his shirt and tosses it to Specialist Madrid.

SGT COOPERMANN

Fine. Four stitches. Can you do me a favor? Wash that BDU and sew those holes? I'm crippled... for the moment.

SPC MADRID

Sure thing, boss. What about Woolly?

SGT COOPERMANN

Surgery. Wait and see I guess. How did the debriefing go? Did you deliver the goods?

PFC DAVID

Yeah, yeah. Lunch was delivered and we talked the Lieutenant into giving you a medal. You saved our asses back there.

SPC MADRID

Specialist Moss was here.

SPC RICCI MOSS is the squadron's primary mechanic. She is a twenty year old farm girl from Groton, South Dakota. She spends way too much time hanging with the squad.

SGT COOPERMANN

What did Ric want? Did you tell her I was fine?

SPC MADRID

I don't think she cared about that. She said we were going to have to get a different Humvee; too many holes in the old one.

SGT COOPERMANN

Whatever. I'm going to lie down for a while. Go talk to the LT and tell him we'll probably head over to see Woolly tonight unless they fly him out. Oh yeah, we're going to need a new gunner too.

SPC MADRID

Moss said the new Humvee doesn't have a turret.

SGT COOPERMANN

Fine, we're a man down now anyway.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING OF VANESSA JENSEN - DAY

VANESSA JENSEN is the long-time girlfriend of Sergeant Gordon Coopermann. She attends the University of Colorado in Boulder and getting ready to go to law school. The beautiful Vanessa is probably out of Gordon's league. She's tall and wiry with beautiful black hair and blue eyes.

Vanessa gets her mail and heads to her apartment. She has another letter from Iraq. She opens the letter and pours out its contents into a large planter. A note falls out with the sand. Vanessa grabs the note, blows the dust off, and reads.

SGT COOPERMANN (V.O.)

"Hi Honey, more soil from the Fertile Crescent. Pretty soon you'll have enough for an indoor 'Garden of Eden.' See you soon.
Love, G"

Vanessa holds the note close to her heart and smiles.

EXT. BAGHDAD, SERGEANT COOPERMAN'S TENT - DAY

SUPER: DECEMBER 13, 2003

LT SIMMS and CPT MILSAP are talking to SGT Coopermann.
LT Simms is fresh from ROTC training at Texas Tech. He
is a young, tall and trim, gung-ho soldier.
CPT Milsap is the six-year veteran of group. He is the
"Average Joe" of the Army, but slightly more religious.

LT SIMMS

Coop, Colonel Higgins was very
impressed by the last mission.
How's the arm by the way?

Sergeant Coopermann gyrates his injured arm.

SGT COOPERMAN

Good as new.

LT SIMMS

Good, good. That is great news.
(pause)
Can I tell him, Captain?

CPT MILSAP

Sure, go ahead.

LT SIMMS

We got a mission! Colonel Higgins
was so impressed with your squad
you guys got tapped for a super
secret task.

SGT COOPERMAN

Seriously?

CPT MILSAP

Get your men ready, we're going to
roll in 2 hours. We'll fill you
in on the road.

INT. HUMVEE - NIGHT

The sun sets and darkness creeps in as the convoy rolls
out the gates to the secret destination.

SGT Coopermann drives, LT Simms rides shotgun, while PFC David and SPC Madrid ride in the back of the Humvee.

SPC MADRID

Come on, Lieutenant. Can't you let us in on the big secret?

SGT COOPERMANN

Yeah, LT, I think it's safe to tell us. What's the big mission?

LT SIMMS

All right. Check it out. Y'all are part of world history. We're going to pick up Saddam Hussein.

SPC MADRID

No, shit?!?!

LT SIMMS

I shit you, not.

SGT Coopermann looks at LT Simms and smiles.

LT SIMMS

Now listen up, we are just sort of peripheral support, so don't plan on any big action.

PFC DAVID

That's fine with me. This is cool.

SPC MADRID

I can't believe it. Somebody finally dropped a dime on the old man. Classic. It's funny what a few million dollars will buy nowadays.

The troops surround the area in the dark and the mission kicks in full force. The informant leads the Army Special Forces to the spider-hole Saddam is hidden. The cover of the hole is opened and the concussion grenade is dropped.

The explosion flashes through the dark and the team enters the spider-hole and emerges with Saddam in tow. The soldiers collapse around the prisoner. Saddam is wearing dirty robes and sports a long ragged beard and wild mop of hair.

The Army cameras capture history as Saddam is hauled to the transport vehicle. SGT Coopermann and his squad witness the events as Saddam is marched right past them.

Suddenly, Saddam still reeling from the concussion grenade manages to catch himself ever so slightly as he struggles. He locks eyes with SGT Coopermann and manages to head-butt Coopermann in the chest. As Saddam's captors wrestle him down he spits on Coop and curses at SGT Coopermann.

SADDAM

(in Arabic)

I curse you! I curse you, you
dirty camel! May God punish you!

SGT Coopermann reaches for his chest to deflect the blow of the head-butt; he raises his hand to block the spit of Saddam that sprays across his gloved hand.

Coopermann feels his dog tag chain break and his silver cross and id tags on the chain come free. They fall down across his stomach inside his t-shirt.

SPC MADRID

Holy shit! Are you ok, Coop.

SGT COOPERMANN

(feeling his stomach)

Yeah, I think his head-butt broke
by dog tags' chain though.

SPC MADRID

That was wack!

SGT COOPERMANN

We're part of the history books
now, boys!

An Iraqi soldier approaches SGT Coopermann. The Iraqi soldier looks like he has seen a ghost.

IRAQI SOLDIER
He has cursed you.

SGT COOPERMANN
What?

IRAQI SOLDIER
Saddam. He has placed a curse
on you. Beware my friend.

SGT COOPERMANN
Whatever.

IRAQI SOLDIER
Beware my friend. May Allah
watch over you.

SGT COOPERMANN
Thanks for the warning.

SGT Coopermann reaches under his shirt and removes his
broken chain, dog tags, and cross.

SGT COOPERMANN
Hey, anybody got an extra chain
for dog tags back at camp?

INT. UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO AT BOULDER CAMPUS - DAY

The Monday news headlines of the papers state: "They Got
Him." A large photo accompanies the article showing
Saddam head-butting SGT Coopermann.

Vanessa enjoys a bit of being a minor celebrity thanks to
her boyfriend's national attention. She visits with her
friend STACY KORMAN at the student union.

STACY
I can't believe this!

VANESSA
What? That we're one semester
from graduating!

STACY
No! You're famous!

VANESSA

Pffft. It's fun for a day, but I got to nail this last semester and make sure I get into law school.

STACY

What's this I hear about Gordon getting out of the Army?

VANESSA

Yeah, it's true. He's done with his tour in Iraq this month and his enlistment's up. He wants to get on with his life.

STACY

You are so lucky.

VANESSA

I know. He will be back for my graduation.

BLACK SCREEN:

SUPER: MAY 2004 - FORT CARSON, COLORADO

INT. FORT CARSON OUTPROCESSING - DAY

A few months later former Sergeant Gordon Coopermann, dressed in civilian clothing, is signing his final papers to be discharged from the army. Colonel Higgins is present to see Coop off.

COLONEL HIGGINS

Congratulations Coopermann. We're going to miss you. I'll especially miss taking your poker money.

GORDON

Thank you, Sir. I'm sure you'll survive without me.

COLONEL HIGGINS

I'll soon be joining you in the civilian world. I filed my retirement papers.

GORDON

You don't say? Good for you.

COLONEL HIGGINS

What are you going to do with your life, Coop?

GORDON

I sat for the police officer exams for Denver, so I'm off to the police academy in a few days.

COLONEL HIGGINS

I figured as much; still going to be in a uniformed service. It stays in your blood.

GORDON

I plan on being detective in a couple years, which will get me out of uniform and into some cheap Sears's suits.

Colonel Higgins laughs.

COLONEL HIGGINS

Good luck, son. Hey, did you ever get your medals?

GORDON

No, sir. They said they're still under review.

COLONEL HIGGINS

I'll do some checking for you. It can't hurt to have those medals on your résumé when you compete for detective slots.

GORDON

Thank you, sir.

The two men shake hands. Gordon gathers his papers and returns to his car loaded full of his belongings.

EXT. US HIGHWAY 24 - DAY

It is early morning and Gordon is driving the back roads of the mountains heading to Boulder to attend Vanessa's graduation.

Gordon stops to fill up with gas. He fills the car and pulls into a parking spot to get a cup of coffee.

INT. KWIK STOP - DAY

Gordon fills a large cup full of black coffee. He sips the coffee as he heads up to pay. The store clerk is a long-haired teen.

CLERK

Just the coffee?

GORDON

Yup.

CLERK

That's a buck twenty-five.

Gordon digs some money out of his pocket. The Clerk leans around Gordon to look out the window.

CLERK

Hey, man. Is that your car out there?

GORDON

Yeah, I just filled it. Don't worry; I paid with a credit card at the pump.

The Clerk points out the window.

CLERK

No man. It looks like your car is on fire.

Flames have engulfed the 1987 Caprice Classic as Gordon turns to look

GORDON

Call 911!

EXT. KWIK STOP PARKING LOT - DAY

Gordon runs out of the store, but it's too late. The car is a complete inferno. Gordon puts his hands over his head and drops them as the Clerk walks out of the store to witness the site. Sirens WAIL heard in the distance.

The fire rages as an image eerily similar to the statue of Saddam Hussein, the one in Baghdad torn down by the U.S Army, is etched into the door of the car. The image is a man posed with an arm raised and wearing a beret.

INT. LOCAL POLICE STATION - DAY

Gordon waits at a desk, elbows on the desk, chin in his hands. A young policeman approaches.

POLICEMAN

Hey, how's it going?

GORDON

Not good. Can I use your phone?
I gotta call my family and tell
them I'm going to be late.

POLICEMAN

Sure.

A man in fireman's garb with an unnervingly similar look to Saddam Hussein approaches. Gordon looks back and forth between the young policeman and the fireman.

POLICEMAN

Hey, Chief. What's going on?

FIRE CHIEF

It looks like the fire started at
the cigarette lighter. Did you
have something plugged into it?

GORDON

Yeah, a brand new cellular phone.
It was the latest top of the line
phone.

Gordon picks up the phone.

GORDON
(holds up phone)
I guess I'll stick to a regular
phone for awhile.

The Fire Chief takes his helmet off and Gordon stares at
him. The Fire Chief stares back.

FIRE CHIEF
What?

GORDON
Has anyone ever told you that
you look like someone?

FIRE CHIEF
(laughs)
Saddam Hussein, per chance?

GORDON
Yup, that's who I was thinking
of.

FIRE CHIEF
Don't worry, I'm not him.

GORDON
Good to know...
(pause)
Are you Arabic?

FIRE CHIEF
Dude, I'm originally from the
Rosebud Indian Reservation in
South Dakota.

Gordon points to the phone.

GORDON
I gotta make this call.

The Fire Chief shrugs and walks away to talk to the young
policeman.

Gordon dials.

VANESSA (V.O.)

Hello.

GORDON

Hey, honey it's me.

VANESSA (V.O.)

Hey, hi. Where are you?

GORDON

I'm here in Deckers. My car started on fire.

VANESSA (V.O.)

Oh, no!

GORDON

I was just taking the back roads home, nice and relaxing like, and stopped for some gas. Next thing I know, whoosh, up in flames.

VANESSA (V.O.)

Are you ok?

GORDON

Yeah, I lost everything though.

VANESSA (V.O.)

As long as you're safe.

GORDON

I'm not going to make it to graduation.

VANESSA (V.O.)

That's ok. You just get here. I can't wait to see you.

GORDON

I'll be there soon. I'm going to call my dad. He'll come and get me.

VANESSA (V.O.)

Bye, see you later. Love you.

GORDON

Love you too. I'm very proud of you. Bye.

Gordon hangs up, reaches into his jeans pocket, and removes a diamond ring and inspects it.

GORDON

At least you didn't burn up.

MONTAGE AS FIVE YEARS ELAPSE:

- Gordon proposes, Vanessa accepts
- Gordon graduates from the police academy
- Saddam is executed by hanging, December 2006; CNN news video coverage highlights the events.
- Gordon rents a house
- Vanessa moves in with Gordon
- Vanessa graduates from law school

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

SUPER: DECEMBER 12, 2008

Gordon has just started his shift and is ordering coffee at a Starbucks type shop. He gets his coffee and goes out to his cruiser.

INT. GORDON'S POLICE CRUISER - DAY

Gordon sits in his car sipping his coffee. Suddenly his cruiser is bumped by an old Ford Taurus pulling into the parking lot. Coffee spills on Gordon's light blue shirt.

GORDON

What the hell?

Gordon gets out of his cruiser brushing coffee from his shirt and lap.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP PARKING LOT - DAY

An embarrassed teenage girl sits behind the wheel in tears.

GORDON
Are you ok, ma'am?

GIRL
(crying)
I'm so sorry officer.

GORDON
(looking at bumpers)
Don't cry. There's no damage.
Are you hurt?

GIRL
I'm fine. I was just trying to
pull into the parking space and
the steering wheel slipped out of
my hand.

GORDON
Just be more careful. Let this be
a lesson for ya.

GIRL
I just put lotion on my hands...but,
your shirt. I'm so sorry. Can I
at least replace your coffee?

GORDON
Don't worry about it. You have a
nice day, ma'am.

GIRL
Thank you, officer.

The girl pulls into her parking spot and Gordon gets in
his cruiser and pulls onto the street.

INT. GORDON'S POLICE CRUISER - DAY

Gordon drives down Union Boulevard. He radios dispatch
that he will be returning to base to change shirts.

GORDON
(on radio)
Dispatch this is David-Six. I
will be returning to base for
equipment replacement.

DISPATCH (V.O.)

Roger that, David-Six.

As Gordon drives, a black Mercedes speeds through a red light nearly causing a crash.

GORDON

Son of a...

Gordon hits his lights and chases the Mercedes down and pulls the car over. He calls in the traffic stop to Dispatch and exits his cruiser.

EXT. STRIP MALL PARKING LOT - DAY

Officer Coopermann approaches the Mercedes and notes the license plates - "WES." The driver of the car, WESLEY GREGORY, has his window down and hands on the steering wheel.

GORDON

License and registration please.

WESLEY

Hello, officer. I have those items right here. Do you want my proof of insurance, also?

Wesley is in his late twenties, sharply dressed with a leather bomber jacket and expensive sunglasses. He is good looking with dark slicked back hair and dark features.

GORDON

Yes, sir.

Wesley hands the items to Gordon.

WESLEY

Nice day huh?

Gordon looks around and notices that it is particularly nice for December.

GORDON

Yes, sir. It is a nice day. Sir, do you know why I pulled you over?

WESLEY

Ummm. No. Not really.

GORDON

You nearly caused a crash back there when you ran through a red light.

WESLEY

Red light? I'm sorry.

(hits himself on the head)

Driver inattention. It won't happen again.

GORDON

I have to go call this in.

Gordon turns, but Wesley speaks up.

WESLEY

Officer, do you know who I am?

Gordon looks at the driver's license.

GORDON

Yeah, it says here you are Wesley Archibald Gregory.

WESLEY

And...

GORDON

And?

Wesley starts to get out of the car. Gordon puts his hand on his pistol

GORDON

Please stay in the car, sir.

Wesley gets back in the car.

WESLEY

I am Wesley Gregory, you know...of Adam Gregory Conglomerate?

(pause)

You never heard of me?

Wesley heaves a big sigh.

WESLEY

What? Are you a rookie?

GORDON

I'm sorry, no. I'm going to issue a citation for failure to obey the traffic signal. Please stay in the car.

WESLEY

Fine.

Gordon is back to his cruiser and calls in the information and writes the ticket. Wesley stews in his car muttering to himself.

As Gordon walks over to Wesley's car an old brown Ford Pinto pulls up next to Gordon. The OLD MAN, having a striking resemblance to Saddam Hussein, rolls down his window.

OLD MAN

Excuse me officer, can you tell me where the Post Office is?

Gordon hesitates, as he is taken aback by the man's appearance.

GORDON

Uh, sure. Go three blocks straight ahead, then hang a left and go about five blocks. You'll see the big U.S. flag waving out front.

OLD MAN

Thank you, sir.

GORDON

You're welcome.

The man drives off.

Gordon turns his attention back to Wesley.

GORDON

Is it just me, or did that guy
look like Saddam Hussein?

WESLEY

That was pretty creepy. I hope he
isn't going to bomb the Post
Office.

Gordon hands Wesley the license, registration, and
insurance.

GORDON

(handing ticket book)

Please sign here. This is just a
promise to appear or agreement to
pay the fine.

WESLEY

(irritated)

I can't believe you're giving me
this ticket. You're a real piece
of work, buddy.

Wesley shakes his head as he signs the ticket.

WESLEY

(pointing)

You have a big coffee stain all
over your shirt. Did you even
notice that?

GORDON

Yes, sir.

Wesley hands back the ticket book and Gordon rips the
ticket out and gives it Wesley.

GORDON

Have a nice day, sir.

WESLEY

You too, Officer Coopermann. Good
luck with your career.

Wesley pulls out of the parking lot back onto the street;
Gordon gets in his cruiser and heads back to the station.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Gordon walks down the hallway toward the locker rooms, but is stopped by the Duty Sergeant, SGT THAMES

SGT THAMES
Coopermann! Get over here!

Gordon turns and walks over to Sgt Thames.

GORDON
Hey, Sarge. What's going on?

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Sgt Thames grabs Gordon's arm and leads him into the nearest vacant office and closes the door. Gordon looks at the older man's tight grip on his arm with surprise. Surprise at the strength of this old man.

SGT THAMES
What the hell did you do now?

SGT Thames is a head shorter than Gordon. He is a tough as nails older veteran of the military and the police force. His reddening face and head is apparent through his thinning hair.

GORDON
(points to shirt)
Nothing, Sarge. I just spilled coffee on my shirt and I came back to change...

SGT THAMES
Shut up!

SGT Thames lets go of Gordon's arm.

SGT THAMES
I'm talking about a certain traffic stop. I just got a call from the Chief, who just got a call from the Mayor, who just happened to get a phone call from a Mr. Wesley Gregory.

Gordon's posture sinks down a little bit.

SGT THAMES

Mr. Gregory claims you pulled your gun on him.

Sgt Thames paces in the small office.

SGT THAMES

Sound familiar? Listen, I don't like to get calls from the Chief. You hear me?

GORDON

But, Sarge...

SGT THAMES

Don't "but" me. You get your head out of your ass and you get some political savvy. Read a newspaper for Christ's sake.

GORDON

Sorry, Sarge. I'll do better.

SGT THAMES

Damn right you'll do better. I've got a real treat for you.

Sgt Thames opens the office door.

SGT THAMES

You are going to work with Detective Barnes the next couple weeks. His partner blew out her knee playing volleyball. You get to wear civilian clothes and maybe pick up some pointers from Bernie.

GORDON

That sounds awesome!

Sgt Thames gets nose to nose with Gordon.

SGT THAMES

This is not a reward, Coopermann.
You've been nothing but trouble.
You've wrecked two cruisers and
frankly you're a jinx.

Gordon shrugs and backs away.

SGT THAMES

You keep arresting and ticketing
people that you should know better
by now. Councilwoman Vega's
daughter?

GORDON

Sarge, she was drunk, she hit a
tree. I'm just doing my job.
Protect and serve!

SGT THAMES

(puts his hand up)

Uh-uh-uh. I don't want to hear
it. You get with Bernie. And you
listen to him!

Sgt Thames puts his arm around Gordon's shoulder.

SGT THAMES

(calmly)

I know you're not doing this on
purpose. Your partners keep
getting sick or quitting or who
knows what. We need to break this
hard luck streak of yours.

GORDON

I will work twice as hard!

SGT THAMES

All right. Now get the hell out
of here!

INT. GORDON AND VANESSA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Gordon gets into bed as Vanessa reads by the light on the
nightstand.

GORDON

What are you reading? Is it stuff about your up and coming new job? I still can't believe we will be working together.

Gordon flops around in bed trying to get comfortable.

GORDON

I know it's not really together, but the prosecutor's office is the same side of the law as me.

VANESSA

Uh, yeah, about that job...I don't think it's going to happen.

GORDON

What? Why?

VANESSA

I was contacted by Pratt & Schultz and they had a special request from a client that suggested they hire me.

GORDON

I don't understand.

VANESSA

Have you ever heard of AG Conglomerate? It's owned by the Gregory family.

GORDON

Oh brother. I'd never heard of them until today. I pulled over Wesley Gregory and gave him a ticket. The next thing I know, I am being reamed by the Sergeant. Must be some high-falutin' family.

VANESSA

Well, yeah. They are in the oil and gas business. Anyhoo, Adam Gregory spoke to our class way back when.

Vanessa puts her magazine in her lap.

VANNESSA

He's a big philanthropist, and long story short, he wants me to help run his charity fighting breast cancer.

GORDON

I'll bet. He just wants another smart, hotty in his stable of women.

VANESSA

He's married. His wife is dying of breast cancer...

GORDON

See, he's already scoping for a replacement.

VANESSA

You are so rude.

GORDON

Promise me you won't dump me for him. You're the one thing that hasn't gone south on me since I left the Army.

Gordon props himself up on an elbow.

GORDON

It will be better than working for that stupid hippie professor you've had to put up with for the last couple years.

VANESSA

How sweet, you're all jealous. You know I'm all yours.

Vanessa flashes her engagement ring in front of Gordon.

VANESSA

Besides it's a lot more money with
Pratt & Schultz.

Gordon grabs her magazine and tosses it on the floor and
turns out the light as he kisses her.

GORDON

All right then, it's settled.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Gordon gets up and walks to the bathroom wearing only his
boxers.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

He sleepily closes the door and clicks the light on.
Standing in the bathroom is Saddam Hussein dressed in his
familiar military fatigues and beret.

GORDON

(screaming)

Ahhh!

Gordon takes a swing at the strange man in his bathroom
and his fist passes through Saddam's head.

Saddam puts his fingers to his lips.

SADDAM

(in Arabic)

Shhhh. I am just a ghost.

Gordon backs up against the wall.

GORDON

What the? It's just a dream.
It's just a dream.

SADDAM

Sorry, I will use English. I am a
ghost!

VANESSA (V.O.)

Honey? Are you Ok?

GORDON

(to Vanessa)

Uh, yeah. I um, stubbed my toe.

GORDON

(in a whisper)

What is this? Am I dreaming?

Have I gone insane?

SADDAM

(spreading his arms)

No, my friend. I am here to help you.

Gordon is near hyperventilation.

GORDON

How? By coming into the bathroom and scaring the shit out of me?

SADDAM

Come, come. I have been sent to make amends.

GORDON

Seriously, what the hell is going on? I'm having a nightmare, right. Wake up, Gordo!

SADDAM

I cursed you the day I was captured and now, I am being punished. Now that I am dead, I'm trying to make things right.

Gordon gets his breathing back under control.

SADDAM

Please, my friend, be on the cool. Gordon, you are the only one that can see or hear me. I'm here to help you. Have you had some tough luck the last few years?

GORDON

Yes. Wait, how do you know my name? How do you know English? I'm definitely losing it.

SADDAM

I am a spirit. A ghost. An apparition. All your bad luck, all behind you, now that I'm here.

Saddam makes a sweeping gesture of his hand.

GORDON

I don't understand.

SADDAM

(pointing up)

God. Allah. The big guy. He's making me do reparations. One person at a time. He's got a wicked sense of humor.

GORDON

You mind? I gotta pee.

SADDAM

No problem.

Saddam remains in the room.

GORDON

No. Could you give me some privacy?

SADDAM

Oh!

Saddam moves through the closed door. Gordon relieves himself and opens the door carefully and looks around. Saddam is nowhere to be seen. Gordon heaves a big sigh of relief and goes to bed.

INT. FENMOORE MANSION - NIGHT

A crew of three burglars enters the empty mansion under the cover of darkness. They are dressed completely in black with black masks.

The crew heads to the safe knowing expertly where to drill. They crack the safe extracting high end diamond and platinum jewelry.

BURGLAR1

We good to go, boss?

BURGLAR2

Mr. Fenmoore has some fine watches. I'm going to get them.

Burglar2 disappears into another dark room. A noise is heard from the opposite hall.

BURGLAR3

What the hell was that?

BURGLAR1

Go get Wes. I'll check it out.

Burglar1 moves down the hall.

INT. LAUNDRY ROOM - NIGHT

A light is clicked on revealing a young woman in a maid uniform.

The woman sees the Burglar and screams. Burglar1 rushes to the woman, pulls his knife, and stabs her.

INT. FENMOORE BEDROOM - NIGHT

Burglar2 is stuffing a cloth bag full of expensive watches, when Burglar3 approaches.

BURGLAR3

Boss, we gotta go. There was a noise.

They hear the SCREAM and rush out of the room towards a window they have forced open. Burglar2 and Burglar3 escape out the window. Burglar1 is close on their heels as they move down the mountainside to their black Escalade two blocks away.

INT. ESCALADE - NIGHT

The burglars breathe heavily from the run down the hill. With masks off, Burglar2, the Boss, is recognized as Wesley Gregory.

Burglar3 drives the getaway car casually away from the wealthy neighborhood blending in with the mountainside mansions in their Cadillac.

WESLEY

What the hell happened?! The Fenmoores are out of town!

BURGLAR1

It was a maid, Boss. I took her out. I'm sorry, Boss. I didn't know what to do!

WESLEY

Oh my God! I'm a dead man. Adam is going to kill me!

INT. GORDON'S BEDROOM - DAY

Vanessa is leaving for her teaching job. She kisses Gordon goodbye.

VANESSA

Bye, honey. What time is your shift?

GORDON

It's an 11:00 AM shift.

VANESSA

Be careful. Bye.

GORDON

I will. Have fun with your hippie professor. See you tonight.

VANESSA

I'll be home late. I'm meeting with Mr. Pratt of the law firm. He wants to formally introduce me to Adam Gregory. See ya.

Gordon rolls out of bed to the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

He relieves himself and washes his hands. Gordon flips on the radio to oldies station Rod Stewart's "Do You Think I'm Sexy."

GORDON
(singing)
If you want my body..

He opens the mirrored cabinet for some shaving cream and sprays some into his hand and begins applying the foam to his face. He closes the cabinet door and is startled to see the smiling face of Saddam reflected in the mirror.

GORDON
Holy shit!

Gordon drops the can of shaving cream and turns to face Saddam, then turns back to the mirror. Saddam is today dressed in traditional Arabic robes including head towel with a fancy braid.

SADDAM
Good morning, my friend!

GORDON
Is this still part of my
nightmare? I'm going to ignore
you and maybe you'll go away.

SADDAM
Please, how can I help you? I
have to make amends, my friend.

GORDON
You..
(pause)
Are not my friend, so first off
stop referring to me as "my
friend." Second, you can leave me
alone.

SADDAM

(wagging his finger)

No, no, no. I must help you.
It's part of my sentence in this
eternal damnation.

GORDON

So, I am to believe my bad luck is
because of the curse you put on me
five years ago?

Gordon continues to shave.

SADDAM

Yes. Check the calendar. Today
is the 5th anniversary, December
13.

GORDON

So, my car burns up. My apartment
building burns to the ground two
years ago. My dog gets stolen.
I've crashed two police cruisers.
I lose \$500 on the Patriots in the
Super Bowl...

Gordon pauses as he shaves.

GORDON

...All because of your curse?

SADDAM

Curse, curse, curse, curse,
foolish bet on the Patriots.

Gordon shaves.

GORDON

Are you sure this isn't some sort
of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
from the war? I did see a lot of
combat.

SADDAM

I'm here to help you. I am your
humble servant.

GORDON

All right. I'll play along. Last night you said no one can see or hear you?

SADDAM

That is correct.

GORDON

Wait a minute. When did you show up last night? Did you see Vanessa and...

Gordon points towards himself and then to the bed.

SADDAM

It is one of the perks of being a ghost. But, bravo, your lady friend seemed very pleased.

Saddam claps his hands.

GORDON

Thank you, but you are hereby banished from the bedroom.

SADDAM

Ok. Where I am from we are more into goats and sheep anyway.

GORDON

Gross.

SADDAM

Have you ever tried?

GORDON

Can't say that I have.

SADDAM

Then you cannot judge.

GORDON

Fine.

Gordon finishes shaving.

GORDON

Well, I have to go to work. Are you coming along?

SADDAM

Absolutely.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - DAY

Gordon and Saddam are walking to the police cruiser. Gordon's neighbor MRS. SHERIDAN is walking her dog, a German Shepherd.

GORDON

Good morning, Mrs. Sheridan.

The dog goes crazy barking at Saddam. Mrs. Sheridan can barely hold the dog back.

MRS. SHERIDAN

I don't know what's wrong with Tiny this morning. She loves you.

GORDON

It must be the sports jacket. I'm a junior detective today. She probably doesn't recognize me.

Gordon and Saddam get in the cruiser while the dog barks wildly. They drive off down the street.

INT. POLICE CRUISER - DAY

Gordon and Saddam drive down the street.

SADDAM

Sometimes animals can see me.

GORDON

Really? I guess that explains the dog attack. Anything else you want to tell me?

SADDAM

Sometimes children see me. Oh, and people that smoke pot or do drugs; when they're high, I stick out like a sore thumb to them.

GORDON

That's just great.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Gordon and Saddam enter the station amid a frenzy of activity.

GORDON

Jenkins, what's going on?

OFFICER JENKINS

There was a murder up on Mountainside. Maid apparently walked in on a burglary.

GORDON

No kidding? Hey, you see the Sarge today?

OFFICER JENKINS

Not yet.

Sergeant Thames enters.

GORDON

Hey, Sarge. I'm ready.

SGT THAMES

Hey, Coop. Bad news. Detective Barnes slipped a disc in his back. He's out for a couple weeks.

Gordon throws his arms up in the air and looks at Saddam.

Saddam shrugs and shakes his head.

GORDON

Well, what am I supposed to do now Sarge? You need help on the murder case?

SGT Thames smiles at that remark.

SGT THAMES

That's a good one, Coop. No, I
got something special for you to
play Junior Detective with.

SGT Thames grabs a note from his desk and hands it to
Coopermann.

SGT THAMES

Councilwoman Vega called. Her dog
is missing. I told her I'd get my
best man on it.

GORDON

You cannot be serious!

SGT THAMES

No, really. You are my best
man...for this job. Now go out and
find her dog. Go to motor pool
and get yourself an unmarked. I
can't have a Junior Detective in a
cruiser.

GORDON

Ok, Sarge.

Gordon starts to walk away, but is hailed by the
Sergeant.

SGT THAMES

Coop, you look good in the sports
jacket.

SGT Thames gives Gordon a thumbs up.

GORDON

(smiles)

Thanks, Sarge. I won't let you
down.

INT. GORDON'S UNMARKED CAR - DAY

Gordon drives down the street with Saddam in the passenger seat. Saddam is now dressed in his finest suit.

GORDON

What is with you and the different clothes?

SADDAM

I like variety. I have decided to go with the suit to try to match with you.

GORDON

But, no one can see you. What does it matter what you wear?

SADDAM

Ahhh, but you can see me my friend. I am a spirit and read your thoughts to be able to best fit the image your mind conjures forth.

GORDON

Well, I'm hungry. Did you conjure that? Let's stop and eat something. Do you eat?

SADDAM

I will eat with you.

GORDON

I'm thinking about Burger King.

SADDAM

Sounds wonderful. A Burger King. Very good. Royal.

EXT. BURGER KING PARKING LOT - DAY

Gordon and Saddam stand in line and finally get their turn to order.

GORDON

I'll have a double cheeseburger,
ketchup only. Make it a meal.
And whatever he wants.

CLERK

Whatever who wants?

Gordon is embarrassed.

GORDON

Uh, never mind.

Gordon gets his order and carries the tray to a booth.
Saddam is in tow behind him carrying his own tray.

GORDON

(in a hoarse whisper)

What are you doing? Don't be
carrying that tray around. People
will see me walking next to a
floating tray!

SADDAM

Relax.

GORDON

I mean it. Put the tray down.

Gordon reaches a booth and sets his food down. He
reaches over and knocks the tray to the floor causing a
commotion. Everyone looks in his direction.

GORDON

It's ok everybody. Just dropped a
tray; no problem.

Saddam rolls his eyes.

GORDON

(through clenched teeth)

Sit!

SADDAM

Be cool.

GORDON

Listen, if you are here to help me, don't draw attention to me.

SADDAM

I'm sorry. You are correct; I will assist you as you wish.

GORDON

Good.

Gordon unwraps his burger and eats.

GORDON

Now, where should we start looking for this dog?

SADDAM

How about getting a photo and talking to the woman?

GORDON

See? Now was that so difficult? You being helpful. Nice.

SADDAM

You are very welcome.

Gordon eats his burger.

INT. LAW OFFICE OF CHARLES PRATT - DAY

Vanessa is meeting with her new law firm. The Downtown offices of Pratt & Schultz befit the top law firm in Denver.

CHARLES

Welcome, Ms. Jensen.

Charles Pratt is the white-haired, high bred stock of the East Coast. His expensive dark suit detracts from his likeness of Ben Franklin.

VANESSA

My pleasure. Please call me Vanessa.

Vanessa shakes Charles' hand. Vanessa looks stunning in her best black business suit while staying elegant with her hair up.

CHARLES

I'm so glad you accepted our offer. Mr. Gregory is a very important client. When he asked for you, I was afraid it might be the first time I had failed his request.

Vanessa and Charles look toward a knock on the door and Adam Gregory enters. Adam is a distinguished 45-year old man that looks like he stepped away from a GQ photo shoot. His expensive suit is pristine. The salt and pepper hair gives him the look of knowledge.

ADAM

Ms. Jensen, I'm so glad you reconsidered and came on board with Pratt & Schultz.

Adam hugs Vanessa. Adam looks to Charles.

ADAM

I knew you could do it Charles.

CHARLES

I know everyone is busy, but I thought we could spend an hour going over the work plan for Ms. Jensen.

ADAM

Sounds good. Shall we sit?

The group sits and papers are handed out as they discuss the AG Foundation.

EXT. GORDON'S DRIVEWAY - DAY

It is late afternoon. Gordon has knocked off early after unsuccessfully trying to track down Councilwoman Vega. Gordon and Saddam exit the vehicle and walk to the house.

GORDON

Where do you think this woman could be? It's like she doesn't want my help.

SADDAM

Women should not be allowed to leave the house without the company of a male.

GORDON

Yeah, that works. We see how well that works for you Arab guys.

INT. GORDON'S KITCHEN - DAY

Saddam settles at the kitchen table. Gordon opens the fridge.

GORDON

Well, I'm going to celebrate my first day as a junior detective with a cold beer.

Gordon grabs a beer, opens it, and takes a swig.

GORDON

Ahhh, that hits the spot. So what's the game plan for tomorrow?

SADDAM

You tell me. You are the detective.

GORDON

Good point. We'll hit her house first thing tomorrow, then if she's not there, we camp at her office.

Gordon drinks more of his beer. He pulls out a chair and sets one foot on it and looms over Saddam. He points his finger with his hand holding the beer at Saddam.

GORDON

Listen, about tonight, when
Vanessa gets home. I don't want
you around. You understand me.

Vanessa has come home early and walks into the kitchen.
Gordon turns and drops his beer, frightened and
embarrassed.

VANESSA

Understand what? Who are you
talking to?

GORDON

Uh-uh, nobody. I'm just
practicing my interrogation
skills. Guess who is playing
junior detective this week?

VANESSA

This is a tough one. Is it you?

Vanessa sets her purse and briefcase down.

GORDON

Yup. There was a murder slash
heist up on Mountainside and all
the muckity-mucks are in a fit.

VANESSA

I heard. Some maid was killed in
a burglary?

GORDON

Yeah, I was supposed to be with
Bernie all week and probably
working that case, but his back
went out. I caught a different
case though.

VANESSA

Really? What kind of case?

GORDON

Possible dognapping.

Vanessa laughs and snorts.

VANESSA

Wow. Good luck.

GORDON

It's Councilwoman Vega's dog.

VANESSA

That crackpot? I wish you really good luck.

Saddam is nowhere to be seen as Gordon looks around.

VANESSA

Are you ok? I thought I heard you carrying on a conversation last night in the bathroom?

GORDON

That was when I stubbed my toe.

Vanessa cocks here head and looks suspiciously at Gordon.

VANESSA

I'm going to change clothes.

Vanessa kisses Gordon and leaves the room. Gordon drinks his beer.

VANESSA (V.O.)

Honey? Can you come here?

GORDON

Sure.

Gordon walks to the bedroom.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Gordon enters the bedroom to see Vanessa with one hand on her hip and one hand holding a black beret.

GORDON

What's with the beret?

VANESSA

My sentiments exactly.

GORDON

I have no idea where that thing
came from.

(pause)

Are you messing with me?

VANESSA

We are not going through this
again. You need to get some
counseling. Post traumatic stress
disorder is not a joke!

GORDON

I don't have PTSD!

VANESSA

Gordon, I am going to count to
three and when I get to three, I
want the truth. One...

GORDON

Honey, I'm...

VANESSA

Two...

GORDON

I don't know what to say...

VANESSA

Three...OK, I'm leaving.

GORDON

(sighs)

Vanessa, wait. Here's the deal.

(pause)

The ghost of Saddam Hussein is
haunting me. There I said it.
Are you happy now?

VANESSA

(offended)

Oh my God. Are you mocking me?

Vanessa takes a seat on the bed.

GORDON

No!

Gordon begins pacing across the room. Vanessa watches him.

GORDON

Last night when I got up and said I stubbed my toe. Saddam was in the bathroom. Today is the five year anniversary of his capture.

Gordon stops pacing.

GORDON

Did I ever tell you the whole story of his capture? He put a curse on me. The newspaper photo was of him head-butting me in the chest.

Gordon begins pacing again.

GORDON

Then he spit on me and cursed me. An Iraqi soldier told me he heard Saddam curse me.

Vanessa sits on the bed shaking her head "no."

GORDON

Now it's five years later and Saddam shows up at midnight and tells me he is here to make amends.

VANESSA

Oh, dear Lord.

Vanessa puts her head in her hands.

VANESSA

Is he here in this room? Do you see him right now?

Gordon looks around.

GORDON

No...But, that's what you heard in the kitchen when you came in. I was telling him when you got home..

(pause)

He had to stay away 'til you were out of the house.

Vanessa stands.

VANESSA

That's it! If you don't promise me right now that we are going to the VA tomorrow. I am leaving.

GORDON

Saddam is helping me solve the missing dog case. All the bad luck I've had: my apartment and car burning up, I crash two police cars. That's from the curse!

Vanessa throws up her hands and moves to the closet. She grabs a suitcase.

VANESSA

I'm going to my parents for a couple days. When you want to get some help, call me.

Vanessa packs her bag and leaves.

EXT. DRIVE WAY - DAY

Gordon watches Vanessa pull out of the driveway from the front step. Gordon steps back into the house.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Gordon turns around and sees Saddam standing in his military fatigues without his beret.

GORDON

You are a jerk! What is with the beret?

SADDAM

Women. You laughed about goats,
but they are less trouble.

GORDON

What the hell am I going to do
now?

SADDAM

Relax. She will be cooled down by
morning.

(pause)

Dude, you have my beret?

Gordon shakes his head.

INT. VANESSA'S BEDROOM AT HER PARENT'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Vanessa gets into bed and clicks off the light on her
nightstand. The room fades to pitch black and remains
for a moment. A blinding spot light flashes on and
illuminates a bloodied and battered Gordon in his
military uniform on the ground.

Vanessa looks on in horror as Gordon is barely able to
hold his head up. The blinding spotlight is from a
vehicle. A second spotlight illuminates an armored tank
directly in front of Gordon. Saddam Hussein emerges from
the tank reminiscent of the Michael Dukakis Presidential
commercial in 1988.

Vanessa looks on in terror.

Saddam laughs manically as the barrel of the tank lowers
into position in front of Gordon. The point of view is
from Gordon looking up directly into the barrel.

Vanessa screams. The tank fires its gun. Vanessa bolts
upright in bed from a nightmare. Vanessa looks around;
the room is lit by only the street light through the
closed curtain and light from the clock that reads 2:06
AM.

Vanessa dials Gordon's number on her cell phone.
Gordon's voicemail picks up, but Vanessa just closes her
phone.

EXT. GORDON'S FRONT YARD - DAY

It is morning and Gordon is leaves for work. A loud horn and air brakes draws his attention before he shuts the front door. He steps out onto the front porch and sees a large motor home at his curb. Saddam sidles up to him.

SADDAM

Who might this be?

GORDON

I have no idea.

The motor home side door opens and an older man marches out the door.

GORDON

Colonel Higgins?

COL HIGGINS

Magnum!

GORDON

Hello, sir.

Colonel Higgins, Gordon's Battalion Commander in Iraq steps forward and pumps Gordon's hand.

COL HIGGINS

Good to see ya, Coop.

GORDON

Colonel, how are you? What brings you by?

COL HIGGINS

Retirement. I'm just heading south for the winter; down to Phoenix with my traveling companions.

COL Higgins whistles and his two miniature pinschers bound from the camper door for the Colonel's side.

COL HIGGINS

Apollo, Zeus come!

As they get closer they slam on the brakes and bark furiously at Saddam. Saddam flinches towards the dogs and they turn tail and scamper back to the motor home.

COL HIGGINS

What the heck has gotten into them?

COL Higgins shrugs.

COL HIGGINS

Hey, do mind if I park in front of your house for a day or so?

GORDON

That's fine. I'm just on my way to work. Maybe we can have a couple beers when I get home.

COL HIGGINS

Don't let me keep you. I'll see you after work.

Gordon moves towards his car.

GORDON

Where's the wife?

COL HIGGINS

She's out East for a spell with her sister. She's flying out in a couple weeks.

GORDON

All right, I'll see you after work.

Gordon gets in the car; Saddam is already sitting in the passenger side, smiling at Gordon.

EXT. OUTSIDE COUNCILWOMAN VEGA'S HOME - DAY

It is the morning; Gordon and Saddam are waiting at the step of the Councilwoman. Gordon rings the bell and Ms. Vega answers the door.

GORDON

Good morning, Ma'am. I'm Officer Coopermann. I'm investigating your missing dog.

MS. VEGA

Good, finally some attention for Mitsy.

Ms. Vega is a short lady approaching sixty years old. She is dressed sharply with short, straight, white hair. Her dark rimmed glasses dangle from a chain around her neck.

GORDON

Do you have a picture of Mitsy?

MS. VEGA

Sure.

Ms. Vega quickly retrieves a photo of a Shih Tzu.

GORDON

Oh, very nice. When was the last time you saw him?

MS. VEGA

I let her out every morning to potty. She never wanders away. I thought I heard a small yelp when I was fixing coffee, and I came to the door to let her back inside, but she was gone.

GORDON

Word is out to animal control I presume.

MS. VEGA

Yes. Mitsy has a chip implant for identification. She also was wearing a green collar with her tags.

Gordon gets his notebook and pen out and continues questions and note taking.

GORDON

(writing)

So the dog was taken right from the yard. Tell me, was there any ransom note or contact from somebody that might be holding her?

MS. VEGA

(arching an eyebrow)

No, sir, but I'll be sure to let you know if that happens.

GORDON

Are there any distinguishing marks on the dog?

MS. VEGA

She has a little waddle. She was born with only two toes on each of her back feet.

GORDON

(writing)

A little hitch in her giddy up.

MS. VEGA

(smiles)

Yes, that's one way to say it.

GORDON

People love these dogs. I see them all over the place. I feel pretty confident we'll find her.

MS. VEGA

I like your confidence. Listen, I have to get going, so please keep me up to date. Let me get you my card with phone numbers.

Ms. Vega is pleased that this young officer is taking this so seriously. She grabs her purse and digs through to find a card.

MS. VEGA
(handing over card)
There you go. Thank you Officer.
Have a good day.

GORDON
You have a nice day, ma'am.

Gordon turns and walks to his unmarked car and gets inside with Saddam beside him.

INT. UNMARKED CAR - DAY

Gordon sighs as he sits for a moment looking at his notes.

GORDON
That went well.

SADDAM
(in Arabic)
Yes, very professional.

GORDON
Huh? Dude, English please.

Saddam reverts back to English.

SADDAM
A thousand and one pardons. My mind was elsewhere. You were very professional with the woman.

GORDON
What's on your mind?

SADDAM
I was just thinking that I am causing you even more problems with your lady friend, Vanessa.

GORDON
Don't worry about it. We always work it out.

SADDAM

I promise I will work extra hard
to reverse my curse.

Gordon starts the car and they begin to drive.

GORDON

I know it's only nine-thirty in
the morning, but I think we earned
an ice cream cone. I saw a Dairy
Queen just down the road.

They drive a few miles down the road to the Dairy Queen,
exit the car, and walk into the diner.

INT. DAIRY QUEEN - DAY

Gordon and Saddam walk to the front of the counter in the
near deserted restaurant.

CLERK

May I take your order?

GORDON

I'll have a small dipped cone.

Gordon gets his cone and has a seat in a back booth. He
pulls out his notebook and photo of the missing dog.
Saddam sits down across from him.

GORDON

You're awfully quiet today.

SADDAM

I have a question for you.

Saddam sweeps his hand over the table.

SADDAM

What is America's fixation on
royalty? You had a revolution
against a king, yet you worship
royalty in food; today Dairy Queen
yesterday Burger King.

Gordon works on his cone.

GORDON

Now that is an interesting question.

SADDAM

I am especially puzzled by the U.S. tolerance of my Saudi Arabian brothers and sister ruled by a King.

GORDON

I've never tried to understand your part of the world.

Gordon chomps on the waffle cone.

GORDON

Yeah, I fought in the war over there, I'm sure it was partially about oil, but more importantly, I think it's about world stability and progress. I'm not going to apologize for America.

Gordon finishes the cone and wipes his mouth.

GORDON

This is the greatest country to ever exist. Yes, we have faults, but nothing is perfect.

SADDAM

(reflectively)

What about the U.S. imperialism; exploitation of everything you touch.

GORDON

I beg to differ. Look at our history, we've come into wars to help fight dictators, then we've tried to rebuild all war torn countries in our image.

SADDAM

You argue well.

GORDON

Don't get me wrong; look at a few
of our mistakes, Native Americans
in this country, Vietnam.

The clerk walks by and stops to look at Gordon talking to
himself. Gordon blushes, very self-conscious. Gordon
grabs his badge and flashes it to the clerk.

GORDON

Police business, miss.

The clerk shrugs and moves along.

GORDON

What do you think? Should we go
canvas the neighborhoods?

Gordon shoves the photo of the dog towards Saddam.
Saddam looks at the photo; looks out the window and
points.

SADDAM

How about we go talk to that
little girl?

A little girl with a familiar looking dog with a waddle
passes by the window just outside their booth.

EXT. DAIRY QUEEN PARKING LOT - DAY

Gordon and Saddam step outside to talk to the little
girl, PAULA FIELDS. Paula is eight years old, small with
dark eyes and dark hair. Saddam hangs back a bit as not
to frighten the dog.

GORDON

(holding badge)

Excuse me little girl, I'm with
the police. Can I take a look at
your dog?

PAULA

Why?

GORDON

Well, we are looking for a missing dog. When did you get this little fella?

PAULA

I'm not supposed to talk to strangers...and this is Molly. She's a girl not a fella. My dad just got her for me this week.

GORDON

Oh. How about this, you let me hold the dog for a minute, and I will let you hold my police badge.

Paula thinks for a second.

PAULA

Okay.

Gordon hands over his badge and scoops up the dog to inspect its back feet. He flips the dog over and sees right away the dog is missing toes as described by Ms. Vega.

GORDON

What's your name little girl?

PAULA

Paula Fields.

GORDON

Paula, can we, I mean, can I walk you home?

PAULA

I don't care.

GORDON

Lead the way.

Gordon and Saddam follow Paula as she holds the leash for Molly. They walk a few blocks chatting as they take in the warm December day. They reach a small house with large trees. Paula opens the door and goes in. Gordon waits at the front step.

PAULA
(yelling)
Mom! The police are here!

SHAUNA FIELDS, Paula's mother, comes running from the back.

SHAUNA
(flustered)
Police? What's wrong?

Shauna grabs Paula.

SHAUNA
What happened? What's wrong?

Gordon stands in the doorway holding his badge.

GORDON
It's ok, ma'am. We, I, am just here about the dog. I think it is a dog that was reported missing early this week.

Gordon puts his badge away and grabs his notebook and writes down the address of the house.

GORDON
Ms. Fields?

A two year old little girl, TINA, treads the tile over to her mother's leg.

SHAUNA
(picking up Tina)
Yes, I am Shauna Fields.

Gordon takes notes.

GORDON
What do you know about this dog?

SHAUNA
My stupid husband, Larry, gave it to Paula when he had the kids last week. I didn't want it, but what am I supposed to do.

GORDON

Is your husband here?

SHAUNA

We've been separated for about a year. He doesn't live here.

GORDON

Can you tell me where I can find him?

SHAUNA

He works for AG Conglomerate. He's a truck driver.

GORDON

Can you give me his address and phone number?

Shauna writes the information in Gordon's notebook. Tina eyes Saddam.

TINA

(whispering and pointing)

Who's that man?

SHAUNA

He's a policeman, honey.

Tina buries her head into her mother and points.

TINA

No, the other man?

Saddam waves at the little girl and smiles. Gordon looks at Saddam and then back to Tina.

SHAUNA

There's only one man, baby.

GORDON

Ma'am, I'll be back later. When I come back, I'm going to have to take the dog to the vet to confirm its identity. It has a chip implant.

Gordon moves toward the door.

SHAUNA
Sure, I understand.

GORDON
Have a good day, Ma'am.

Gordon leaves with Saddam. They walk back towards the Dairy Queen and their car.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Gordon and Saddam walk toward the car.

SADDAM
Pretty good day.

GORDON
Not bad.

Saddam holds up his hand.

SADDAM
High five!

GORDON
(scoffing)
What? Nobody high fives.

SADDAM
This is America, everyone high fives.

GORDON
Maybe on TV people high five, not real people.

SADDAM
Come on. For me? Please?

Gordon stops walking. Saddam stops.

GORDON
All right.

Gordon rears back to really tag Saddam's hand. He swings and his hand passes right through Saddam's hand. Anticipating the contact with Saddam, but finding none, Gordon stumbles and nearly falls.

Saddam doubles over in laughter; laughing much like "The Count" from Sesame Street.

SADDAM

I am a ghost! You cannot slap me
five!

Saddam laughs manically.

Gordon continues to stumble into the street. An oncoming car watching the scene play out sees a man swing wildly at nothing and then stumble into the street. The DRIVER has to slam on his brakes and swerve to avoid Gordon.

DRIVER

(yelling)
Watch it buddy!

Gordon catches himself and waves to the driver.

GORDON

Sorry!

They continue their walk back to the car.

INT. AG CONGLOMERATE - DAY

Vanessa is meeting at the office of Adam Gregory to discuss more details of his foundation.

ADAM

I'm glad you could start so
quickly on this project. My wife,
Rita, is not doing well, and I
wanted her to witness the kickoff
of this important work.

VANESSA

It's no problem. I need the
distraction and I was tired of the
college theoretical scene.

ADAM

Oh? A distraction? What's wrong?
I see your ring, is it your
husband?

VANESSA

It's my fiancé. We have an on-
going disagreement.

ADAM

I'm sorry to hear that.

VANESSA

Thanks.

The discussion is interrupted by Wesley Gregory barging
in the door. Wesley is hyper and agitated, possibly
high.

ADAM

(irate, but contained)
Wesley, we've had this discussion
before. I don't want to see you
unannounced. This is not
acceptable.

Wesley passes by Vanessa directly to Adam; he gives
Vanessa a nod as he moves by.

ADAM

Vanessa, this is my brother,
Wesley. Wesley, this is Vanessa
Jensen, she is the lawyer for my
foundation.

Wesley shakes her hand.

WESLEY

How ya doing?

VANESSA

Good, pleased to meet you.

Wesley turns to Adam.

WESLEY

I need to talk to you, in private.

Adam looks to Vanessa.

ADAM
Could you excuse us for a moment?

VANESSA
Sure.

Vanessa excuses herself and closes the door behind her.

INT. OUTSIDE ADAM'S OFFICE - DAY

Outside Adam's office, Vanessa can hear raised voices escalating to an all out shouting match. Vanessa moves uncomfortably away past the receptionist, who looks up and smiles.

RECEPTIONIST
This happens more than you might think.

VANESSA
I know. Family demands are tough.

INT. ADAM'S OFFICE - DAY

Adam is in Wesley's face over the interruption and now behind closed doors.

ADAM
Who do you think you are?

WESLEY
Chill, bro. It's me, Wes.

ADAM
(yelling)
How many times have I told you that you can't come barging in here whenever you want!

WESLEY
I need your help!

ADAM
You always need my help!

Wesley wipes his face with his hand.

WESLEY

I'm in big trouble, bro. There was an incident last night.

ADAM

Another DUI?

Wesley starts to shake.

WESLEY

I'm in big trouble, Adam. The fellas and me...

Adam holds his hand up to stop Wesley.

ADAM

I'm going to assume this has to do with Mountainside.

WESLEY

(with tears in eyes)

I swear, Adam. Nobody was supposed to be home...

(pause)

It was Taylor, he's so fucking jumpy.

ADAM

(empathetically)

Wes, what do you want me to do? You don't have many options.

Wesley collapses into a chair.

WESLEY

You're my brother. You got to help me!

ADAM

Rehab? Exile? Disappear? Jail? What do you suggest?

WESLEY

I just don't know what to do?

ADAM

I know you get bored, Wes. And don't I always help you?

Wes looks up at Adam and shakes his head up and down.

ADAM

But, listen to me. You're not a gangster. This little "Crew" of yours; you're all in big trouble.

(pause)

I'll help you.

WESLEY

Thanks, Adam. I swear; I'll get my life together. I mean it.

ADAM

I know you do.

Adam leans over his brother and kisses Wesley's head.

ADAM

I told Mom and Dad I would take care of you. And that's what I'll always do.

INT. GORDON'S BEDROOM - DAY

Gordon dons his sport coat as the sun rises. Saddam materializes from out of the closet wearing full pads of a football uniform; including helmet and cleats.

GORDON

What the Hell are you doing?

SADDAM

I thought this might make you more comfortable to be around me. You Americans love sport, no?

GORDON

Are you kidding me? I can't...

(pause)

I can't be looking at you all day when you're dressed like this!

SADDAM

Fine.

Saddam turns and disappears through the closet door. He re-emerges wearing a baseball uniform holding a bat.

GORDON

Would you knock it off with these stupid outfits!

SADDAM

This is baseball uniform. There is nothing more American! It is the American pastime.

Saddam takes an awkward practice swing. Gordon ducks out of the way.

GORDON

I'm leaving. You catch up with me when you are back to normal.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

The office bustles in morning shift change, and Gordon, wearing his leather sports jacket, is on the phone with Ms. Fields.

GORDON

Ok, Ms. Fields, I'll be there in a half hour.

Gordon walks by the Sergeant's desk on his way out.

GORDON

Mornin' Sarge. Gotta lead on the missing dog case. I'm out to sniff it out.

SERGEANT THAMES

Thatta boy. We'll make a detective out of you yet.

Sergeant Thames hands Gordon a flyer.

SERGEANT THAMES

Take this on your way out. It's a list and photos of the stolen jewelry from the other night. If you get some time, check some pawn shops.

Gordon exits the building carrying the flyer and a small pet crate.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Gordon walks to his car and gets in.

INT. GORDON'S UNMARKED CAR - DAY

Saddam is sitting in his green military fatigues waiting.

GORDON

Good, I see your clothes are back to normal. We're going to pick up that dog and take it for a vet scan.

SADDAM

Arresting the dog; excellent.

Saddam buckles his seat belt and Gordon looks at him.

GORDON

Really? You need to buckle your seat belt?

SADDAM

It is a good habit. It is the law, also.

GORDON

(shakes his head)
Are you mocking me?

SADDAM

I'm sorry. No mock.

Gordon buckles his seatbelt.

GORDON

That's ok. It is an excellent habit. And, by the way, we're not arresting the dog!

EXT. OUTSIDE THE FIELDS' HOME - DAY

Gordon with the carrier and Saddam wait at the door. Ms. Fields answers. Tina and the dog are at the feet of Shauna Fields.

GORDON

Good morning!

SHAUNA

Good morning, Officer.

The dog starts BARKING at Saddam and Tina points at Saddam. Gordon tries to expedite loading up the dog.

GORDON

Ma'am, depending on the results of the scan, you might not get the dog back.

SHAUNA

I understand. Paula is at school, so it's a little easier.

GORDON

I'll give you a call as soon as I find out. Either way.

Gordon scoops up the still BARKING dog and gets it in the carrier. He waves goodbye and heads to the car.

INT. VETERINARIAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Gordon is with the vet in the exam room with the chip detector hooked up to the computer. The dog is held by Gordon, as the vet examines the dog's neck.

VET

Hey, puppy, let's remove this collar. It seems a little tight.

The vet removes the collar hidden by the fur. It is a very shiny diamond clad collar.

GORDON

Whoa! I didn't even see that. Is it real?

VET

I'm no jeweler, but it looks real. Whose dog is this, a millionaire's?

GORDON

I don't know? That's what I'm here to find out.

Gordon pockets the collar. The vet scans the dog's neck and the computer reports the owner as a Ms. Vega. The Vet and Gordon observe the computer screen report and look at each other.

VET

Looks like your case is solved detective.

GORDON

I think I have to start another case with that collar.

Gordon gets the dog loaded up in the carrier.

GORDON

Thanks, Doc. Make sure you send the bill to the Station.

VET

Sure thing, Gordon. Let me know how things work out.

Gordon heads out the door.

EXT. GORDON'S UNMARKED CAR - DAY

Saddam is in the front seat of the car waiting. Gordon opens the back door and sets the pet carrier on the back seat. He slams the back door and opens the driver's door and gets in.

SADDAM

Any good news?

Gordon digs through the papers in the console and pulls out the list of missing items from the jewel heist.

GORDON

I think I just caught a huge break.

Gordon reaches into his pocket and pulls out the diamond collar and shows Saddam the paper and the necklace.

INT. ADAM'S OFFICE - DAY

Wesley has retired to the restroom for a moment. Adam decides to buzz the receptionist to send Vanessa back in.

ADAM

Ms. Fitz, can you send Vanessa into my office, please.

Vanessa returns to Adam's office.

INT. ADAM'S EXECUTIVE WASHROOM - DAY

Wesley gets a fix of cocaine as he looks at his wristwatch. He stares at the extravagant time piece. He emerges from the restroom with his hand and eyes on the watch.

INT. ADAM'S OFFICE - DAY

Vanessa has returned to Adam's office.

ADAM

I'm sorry, Vanessa. Something has come up that I must take care of. I'm going to have to excuse myself from the rest of the day.

VANESSA

I understand.

Wesley enters Adam's office from the restroom oblivious to Vanessa's presence.

WESLEY
(fondling his watch)
Hey, bro. Fenmoore had some cool
watches. Check it out...

ADAM
Wesley!

Wesley looks up to see Vanessa standing at Adam's desk.
A panicked look crosses his face. Vanessa looks puzzled.

WESELY
What? Why is she still here?

ADAM
It's fine. She's my lawyer, our
lawyer. Vanessa, thanks for
coming by. I will see you in a
couple days to continue our
discussion.

Vanessa leaves Adam's office very puzzled.

INT. MS. SHAUNA FIELDS' HOUSE - DAY

Gordon reclines in a chair in the living room with Shauna
and her two daughters along with the dog, Molly/Mitsy, on
the couch across from him.

GORDON
I am sorry to have to tell you
this, but Molly belongs to someone
else and they miss her very much.

PAULA
I understand.

Gordon removes the diamond collar from his pocket and
places it on the coffee table in front of him.

GORDON
Can anybody tell me about this
collar Molly was wearing?

SHAUNA
Are those real diamonds?

GORDON

Yes, they are ma'am.

SHAUNA

Paula, do you know anything about this?

PAULA

It was on Dad's dresser and Molly didn't have a collar when Dad gave her to me, so I grabbed it.

GORDON

I'm going to need to speak to your husband. I will leave Molly here tonight, but she has to return to her owner tomorrow.

INT. WESLEY'S MERCEDES - DAY

Wesley is on his mobile phone.

WESLEY

Larry, I need you here to help with a loose end from the other night.

Pause to listen.

WESLEY

I'm here in Lakewood; 2789 Dakota Avenue. I'll wait.

EXT. COTTONWOOD ESTATES TRAILER PARK - DAY

Gordon and Saddam have made it to the trailer park of Lawrence Fields, but as they approach trailer 209, they see a truck pull away in a hurry.

INT. GORDON'S UNMARKED CAR - DAY

SADDAM

There! That's the truck Shauna described as her husband's. It is taking off in a pretty big hurry.

GORDON
I'll just follow him.

SADDAM
Don't get too close. We don't
want to spook him.

GORDON
(gives Saddam the eye)
Thank you, Columbo. One of us is
an actual policeman, and I'm
pretty sure it isn't you.

SADDAM
Sorry. Who is this Columbo?

GORDON
Columbo was a TV police detective
in the 1970's...
(pause)
Never mind.

The slow, undercover chase proceeds south, from northern
Denver to Lakewood. They pass a small park.

GORDON
Wait a minute; this is the
neighborhood where Vanessa's
parents live. I recognize that
park.

SADDAM
He is driving so slowly. Is he
looking for a house number?

GORDON
That's Vanessa's car up there in
her parent's driveway.

Gordon pulls his unmarked car to the curb a full block
away. They observe Lawrence stop his truck and exit.
Lawrence returns to his truck as he and another man walks
toward the house.

EXT. VANESSA'S PARENTS HOUSE - DAY

Wesley rings the doorbell and waits. Vanessa answers the door.

VANESSA
Wesley, what are you...

Vanessa is cut off as Wesley shows her a gun under his jacket.

WESLEY
Get your car keys. We're going
for a ride.

Vanessa grabs her keys and walks with Wesley to her silver Chevy Impala. Vanessa gets in the driver's seat and Wesley gets in beside her

INT. VANESSA'S CAR - DAY

Vanessa is calm, but confused trying to understand.

WESLEY
You know where AG Conglomerate
Industrial Park is?

VANESSA
Yes.

WESLEY
Start driving.

VANESSA
I don't understand; what do you
want with me.

WESLEY
You heard too much at Adam's
office. I can't risk it.

Vanessa drives with Wesley's gun in her ribs. Lawrence follows in the pickup.

INT. GORDON'S UNMARKED CAR - DAY

Gordon pulls out behind Lawrence and follows a safe distance behind.

GORDON

What the Hell do you think is going on? Who did Vanessa get in that car with and why in the world would Lawrence be following them?

SADDAM

How do I know? Like you said; I'm not this Columbo person you referred to.

Two blocks away Gordon and Saddam pass a black Mercedes parked in the neighborhood with a personalized license plate - "WES". Gordon sees the car and plate.

GORDON

Well, I think I know who we're dealing with, Wesley Gregory.

The caravan travels several miles finally coming to an Industrial Park area with only one street in and out of the complex. Gordon pulls off the street into a driveway with a locked gate.

SADDAM

Are you going to call for backup?

GORDON

What do I tell them? My girlfriend is with another man? Yeah, that'd go over well.

SADDAM

Right.

GORDON

This is the only way in or out of the area. Let me just think for a minute.

EXT. INDUSTRIAL PARK COMPLEX GUARD SHACK - DAY

Evening is approaching. Vanessa pulls up to the guard shack. A guard approaches the vehicle bends down and looks into the car and sees Wesley.

GUARD

Wes...uh, I mean Mr. Gregory; what brings you out so late in the day?

WESLEY

You know Adam. He wanted me to check on something. What the boss wants, the boss gets.

The guard winks at Vanessa as she remains silent.

WESLEY

Larry's right behind me there; he's helping me out tonight.

GUARD

Yes, sir. Have a good night.

The guard opens the gate and the two vehicles proceed inside.

INT. GORDON'S UNMARKED CAR - DAY

Gordon and Saddam observe the two vehicles pass the guard gate from a half mile away.

SADDAM

Any thoughts?

Gordon sees a forklift parked just on the other side of the driveway they are parked. The driveway is blocked by a chain link fence gate bound by a heavy duty chain with padlock.

GORDON

I have an idea.

Gordon starts the car and begins to drive slowly through the gate. The chain tightens and holds the vehicle back. Gordon presses on the gas.

SADDAM

Stop!

Gordon is frightened.

GORDON

What?

Saddam points to the lock.

SADDAM

The lock and chain, it is not even
clasped!

Gordon laughs, exits the vehicle, removes the chain, and
opens the gate.

GORDON

Good eyes, boss.

Saddam smiles, pleased with himself.

EXT. NEXT TO THE FORKLIFT - DAY

Inside the gate is a light industrial complex that
manufactures plastic jugs. Large barrels of poly-pellets
are stacked about. The fork lift is used to transport
the barrels of pellets to the heat-vacuum jug mold.

GORDON

We can use the forklift.

Gordon finds a pair of dirty coveralls and hard hat on
the floor of the forklift. He removes his jacket and
starts to put on the coveralls.

SADDAM

Do you know how to operate this
machine?

GORDON

Yeah.

Gordon finishes with the coveralls, digs a pair of safety
glasses out of the hard hat, puts the helmet on, and dons
the safety glasses.

SADDAM

I like the costume, but what are we going to do. Just drive the forklift past the guard.

GORDON

That's about the gist of my plan.

Gordon hops on the forklift, starts it up, and takes off down the street toward the guard. Saddam jumps on the side of the forklift and hangs on.

SADDAM

I have an idea when we get to the guard shack.

GORDON

Oh yeah? What do you got?

Gordon cruises down the road as fast as the forklift will go.

SADDAM

Just repeat what I say. It will be in Arabic.

GORDON

What? Why?

SADDAM

Trust me. If he hears you screaming in Arabic over and over again, believe me; he won't want to mess with a "terrorist."

GORDON

What do you want me to say?

SADDAM

It doesn't really matter, just as long as it's in Arabic. Trust me. Oh yeah, wave your arms and point like a crazy man.

Gordon and Saddam approach the Guard shack on the forklift and stop. The Guard comes to the forklift.

GUARD

Hello, sir. What can I do for you?

SADDAM

(in Arabic with subtitles)

I am a forklift.

GORDON

(in his best Arabic)

I am a forklift.

Gordon points back and forth to the forklift and to the warehouse.

SADDAM

Just keep repeating it, but say it louder and louder. Flail your arms.

GORDON

(in Arabic)

I am a forklift.

Saddam climbs down from the forklift and begins to pass the guard shack. A large German shepherd perks up and starts to BARK. The dog follows Saddam.

SADDAM

(in Arabic with subtitles)

I am a forklift!

GORDON

(in Arabic)

I am a forklift! I am forklift!

GUARD

Calm down, sir.

The guard, distracted by the barking dog, begins to back towards the dog. He looks toward the dog.

GORDON

(in Arabic)

I am a forklift!

The guard is overwhelmed by the yelling and barking. He opens the gate. He waves Gordon through and begins to chase the barking dog after closing the gate.

GUARD
(running toward dog)
Rusty! Come here boy!

Gordon proceeds through the complex on the forklift looking for Vanessa's car. The BARKING fades in the distance and stops. Gordon smiles as he looks back.

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Wesley is holding Vanessa at gunpoint in a warehouse stacked to the ceiling with thousands of 55-gallon drums. Wesley is visibly coked up. He wipes his nose as he shakily holds the gun.

VANESSA
I still don't understand. What do you want with me?

WESLEY
Nothing, just for you to disappear. Larry, get her in the barrel.

Larry, also visibly high, pops the top of a 55 gallon drum.

WESLEY
Stick her in there.

Larry grabs Vanessa, but she fights back. ENGINE NOISE from outside momentarily distracts everyone. Vanessa makes a run for it, but Wesley draws a stun gun and drops her with just a touch.

WESLEY
Get her in there, seal it back up, and put it in line with all the others. Hurry up!

Larry gets the barrel sealed up and rolled back in line with the rest of the barrels.

They hear the ENGINE shut off and a door on the far end of the warehouse CREAKS open and CLANKS closed as they exit the warehouse.

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Gordon moves through the dimly lit warehouse with his 9mm drawn. He hears an ENGINE fire up outside the warehouse and sprints to the door.

EXT. WAREHOUSE LOT - NIGHT

Larry and Wesley are in Larry's pickup tearing through the lot.

EXT. JUST OUTSIDE WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Gordon looks across the industrial complex and can see the headlights moving rapidly and the ROAR of the truck engine.

INT. LARRY'S TRUCK - NIGHT

Larry and Wesley escape toward the guard shack, the only exit.

Headlights flash as they bounce over a curb. In their path materializes a man. Illuminated by the headlights of the truck, Larry and Wesley, both in a drug stupor, recognize the man as Saddam Hussein.

LARRY

What the Hell!

Larry swerves and slams into a parked semi-trailer at a loading dock. The truck is wrecked and Larry and Wesley are badly injured.

EXT. JUST OUTSIDE WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

From a distance, Gordon hears a CRASH of metal on metal and a SPUTTERING engine.

EXT. LOADING DOCK - NIGHT

Saddam moves to the wrecked truck and observes.

SADDAM
Should have buckled up.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Gordon grabs his cell phone and dials 911.

GORDON
(on phone)
This is Officer Coopermann, badge
number 566223. Officer needs
assistance at the AG Conglomerate
Industrial Park. Send an
ambulance.

Gordon turns and Saddam is standing in front of him.
Gordon jumps, drops his phone, and raises his gun.

GORDON
Holy God! Don't sneak up on me
like that!

SADDAM
(motions with his hand)
Come.

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Gordon follows Saddam to the wall of barrels. Saddam
wanders through the maze of barrels for a moment.

SADDAM
Here, this barrel. Open it.

GORDON
Vanessa? Are you sure.

SADDAM
Yes. I am ghost, I have powers.

Gordon pulls out a Leatherman-like multi-tool and loosens
the screw holding the band on the barrel cover.

INT. BARREL - NIGHT

Vanessa is groggy and the light blinds her as the barrel cover is removed. She sees two men and hears voices, one with an accent.

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

SADDAM

Is she ok?

GORDON

She's alive!

SIRENS in the distance approach.

SADDAM

I would say my work here is done.

GORDON

The curse is over?

SADDAM

Your curse, maybe over. Mine is forever. I am "Dictator For Life" in my own Hell.

GORDON

(shrugs)

Well, thanks. Good luck.

Saddam holds up his hand.

SADDAM

High five?

Gordon begins to raise his hand but stops. He points at Saddam.

GORDON

Ehh, you almost got me.

SADDAM

Farewell, my friend.

Saddam fades away as Vanessa regains a semblance of consciousness.

GORDON
You're ok, honey. I got you.

VANESSA
Is it really you?

GORDON
I'm here.

VANESSA
Is he here?

GORDON
Who?

VANESSA
Saddam. I just saw him. He was
right there talking to you.

GORDON
You saw him?

VANESSA
Yes, he was right there? I can't
believe it. I'm sorry I didn't
believe you.

GORDON
He's gone. He told me the curse
is lifted.

A patrol car pulls up to the building and police rush
into the warehouse.

GORDON
Get the paramedics!

VANESSA
I'm fine. Wesley used a stun gun
on me. It knocked me flat.

GORDON
We'll get the medics and doctors
to check you over. I'm not taking
any chances on losing you.

The paramedics arrive. Gordon leaves Vanessa as he spots Sergeant Thames in the flood of police officers.

GORDON
(shouting)
Sarge!

Gordon moves to meet the Sergeant. As he gets closer he reaches in his pocket and removes the diamond collar. He holds it eye level to the Sergeant and smiles. The Sergeant smiles back.

MONTAGE AS A FEW MONTHS GO BY:

- Wesley and Lawrence are hospitalized, arrested, and handcuffed to their hospital beds.
- Taylor struggles as the police arrest him at his home for the murder of the maid.
- Gordon returns the missing dog to Ms. Vega.
- Gordon receives his promotion to Detective and receives his new badge, a gold shield.
- A small cactus blooms in the pot labeled "Garden of Eden" as the Gordon and Vanessa look on.
- The postman brings a package from the U.S. Army. Gordon opens it and finds his medals for valor and his purple heart.
- Vanessa celebrates a "find" at the wedding dress store as Gordon looks on.

EXT. SOFTBALL FIELD - DAY

In the dugout Gordon is wearing number twenty-five on the back of his uniform and "MAGNUM" lettered above the number. Vanessa arrives and sits down in the bleachers.

VANESSA
(yelling)
Hey there number twenty-five,
don't strike out.

Gordon turns and smiles.

GORDON
Not likely with my skillz. Glad
you made it.

VANESSA

When you're the special assistant to the District Attorney, you can set your own hours. Turn around. What is it with this "Magnum" on your shirt anyway?

The batter knocks a base hit to the outfield and Gordon steps to the on deck circle. Gordon stands on deck taking some practice swings.

GORDON

You've never heard this story?

VANESSA

No.

GORDON

It's a nickname from my poker crew in Iraq. There was a Colonel Higgins; we had a Ric, and a T.C.

VANESSA

Ah, so you were Magnum, P.I.!

GORDON

Bingo!

(points to hat)

That's why I have the Detroit Tigers baseball cap.

A base hit up the middle RINGS out by the batter, and Gordon steps to the plate.

VANESSA

Woo-hoo! Go Magnum!

The pitcher sets and lobs the floating softball into Gordon. Gordon connects and hits a grounder deep between the shortstop and third baseman

The crowd cheers.

The shortstop makes a great play and fires to first base off target. The first baseman is pulled off the base into the path of the hustling Gordon and collides with him.

A hush falls over the crowd. Vanessa stands as Gordon lays motionless for a moment.

VANESSA
(shouting)

Nooo!

Saddam materializes over Gordon as he lays flat on his back stunned with eyes blinking. Saddam gives him the double thumbs up and Gordon bounces to his feet.

GORDON
I'm all right everybody! I'm
fine.

Gordon looks over into the parking lot as he jogs back to first base and gives a small wave to Saddam as he walks away already to the parking lot.

The man in the parking lot waves.

Vanessa sees the wave and looks toward the parking lot. Her eyes widen as she sees a man in a beret walking through the parked cars.

VANESSA
(softly to herself)
The curse is really over.

Gordon pulls his chain adorned with a cross and dog tags from out of his shirt and everything is intact. He tucks the chain back into his shirt and gets ready for the next batter and next pitch.

THE END.