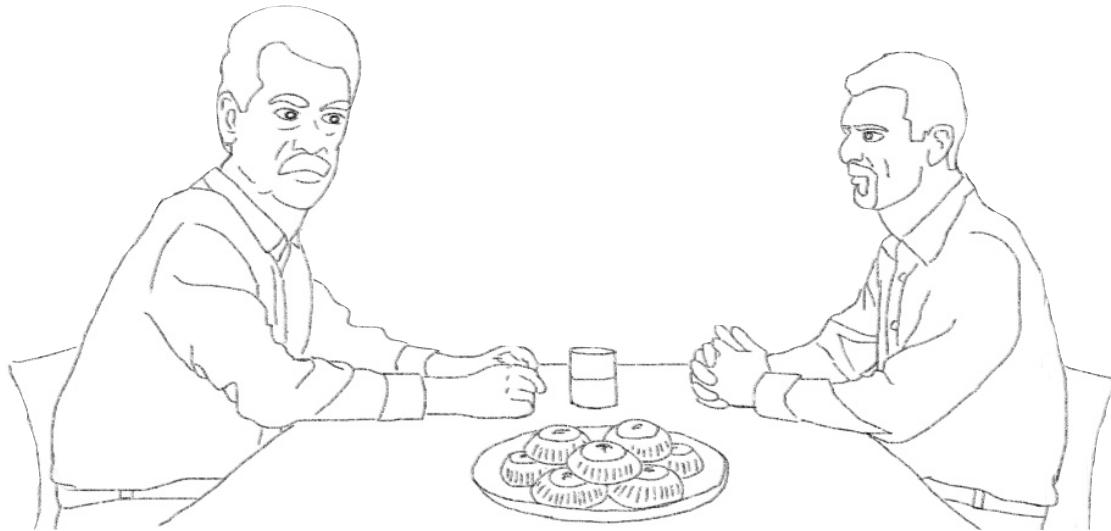


SADDAM & ME

written by

Larry J. Cohen



OVER BLACK.

TITLE CARD: BASED ON DECLASSIFIED FBI FILES. INSPIRED BY
ACTUAL EVENTS. THE FOLLOWING IS A TRUE STORY...

PIRO (V.O.)
But what does true really mean?

FADE IN:

EXT. AD-DWAR/IRAQ - NIGHT

Stars can be seen SHINING brightly in the sky as DARKNESS surrounds the barren landscape with not a soul in sight. A MAN'S VOICE, best described as a NorCal (North California) accent, begins speaking with kindness and authority:

PIRO (V.O.)
My father used to say: You can bend
the truth, but not the facts.

TASK FORCE 121, composed of a dozen elite DELTA FORCE SOLDIERS in army-camo and night vision goggles, move slowly through the scattered tall grass, carrying loaded M4 carbon rifles toward a lone shack off in the distance.

PIRO (V.O.)
He wanted me to understand truth
can be subjective, but facts...
they have to be absolute.

POV THROUGH NIGHT VISION: A small lean-to abuts the shack. A white taxi cab is parked nearby. No other targets visible.

PIRO (V.O.) (CONT'D)
So, I asked him which is more
important: the truth or the facts?

COMMANDER RAISES HIS HAND for the UNIT to ADVANCE, silently searching for signs of life until... a SOLDIER stumbles upon a SEALED BUNKER hidden in the earth. For a brief moment, NO ONE MOVES; questioning if this is a trap or the grand prize.

CHYRON: Operation Red Dawn.

A BEAD OF SWEAT drips from the Soldier, tautly gripping his rifle aimed at the bunker seal being slowly lifted to reveal: AN ARAB MAN (66), disheveled, bearded, waving his hands in the air, unarmed, grasping a Qur'an, weakly muttering.

SADDAM
I am Saddam Hussein. President of
Iraq.

The unkempt Arab Man is quickly pulled from the hole as a LIGHT SHINES to verify the intended target: SADDAM HUSSEIN, once the Butcher of Baghdad, now ex-President of Iraq, surrounded with no way out. His chest puffs up, insisting:

SADDAM (CONT'D)
I am willing to negotiate.

Saddam is immediately restrained against his will by Soldiers pressing his face firmly into the ground without mercy.

PIRO (V.O.)
He told me the truth: Facts alone
are never enough. What matters most
is a compelling argument...

CLOSE ON SADDAM'S TIRED EYES with a strange look of relief, followed by uncertainty for what fate lies ahead.

INT. OPERATION ROOM/CAMP VICTORY/BAGHDAD - NIGHT

A MILITARY ANALYST takes a red magic marker to write: 12-13-03. As he steps back, we see a cork board covered in playing cards with the faces of Arab men printed at the center. The sign above reads: IRAQI MOST WANTED.

PIRO (V.O.)
Whoever can tell the most
convincing story, held together by
enough facts, gets to be the one
who ultimately controls, "the
truth, the whole truth and nothing
but the truth..." so help us God.

At the top of the board is Saddam Hussein's face on the Ace of Clubs. The card is marked: CAPTURED.

TITLE CARD: SADDAM & ME

INT. CLASSROOM/CENTER GROVE SCHOOL - DAY

Special Agent GEORGE PIRO (35), Lebanese-American, goatee, stands mild-mannered, sporting a black suit, white shirt and striped red tie. He is mid-presentation with the chalkboard bearing his name and title behind him.

PIRO
That was the first lesson I learned
when my family immigrated here. I
was a twelve year old refugee, who
couldn't speak a word of English,
trying to escape a civil war in
Lebanon...
(MORE)

PIRO (CONT'D)

The fighting made it impossible for the U.S. to verify all our facts, but we had a compelling argument as honest, hard working people hoping to earn a second chance in America. That was our truth... And that's why I joined the FBI. To repay my debt to this country. To protect the American people, uphold the Constitution of the United States... and have a chance to save the next family, just as this country ended up saving mine.

(beat)

Any questions?

A room filled with THIRD GRADERS at their desks, stare blankly at the nuanced monologue. Piro smiles at his son, LAZAR (8), who is busy checking to see how his Dad's presentation was received. A BOY raises his hand.

BOY #1

Can we see your gun?

PIRO

An Agent only takes out their weapon when absolutely necessary.

Another GIRL raises her hand.

GIRL

Is it true you're going to Iraq?

PIRO

That's right. The FBI is stationed around the world to do our part in the War on Terror --

GIRL

My dad says the Iraq War is a hoax propa... gated by the Bush Administration to steal Arab oil.

Piro grows uncomfortable, trying to move on.

PIRO

Any other questions?

The BOY raises his hands excited. Piro points to call on him:

BOY #1

What about a bullet?

The CLASS gets more engaged. Piro forces one last smile before noticing a FIREFIGHTER waiting his turn; the struggle to make a good impression on his son Lazar becomes real.

EXT. PLAYGROUND/PARK - DAY

Lazar plays on the swings, waving over to his parents: A humbled Piro and MEHRI (35), kind-eyed, warmly bundled up for winter. They both wave back before turning to each other.

MEHRI

The look on your face says career day didn't go so well.

PIRO

I got smoked by a firefighter.

MEHRI

They're only eight, George.

PIRO

Tell that to the little girl grilling me about geo-politics.

MEHRI

War is difficult for kids to process. You of all people know that.

Piro looks again at Lazar, concerned:

PIRO

Has Lazar said anything to you?

MEHRI

Only that he wishes you didn't have to go for so long.

PIRO

And what about you?

Piro wraps his arms around his wife.

MEHRI

All I need is for you to come home.

PIRO

I always do.

MEHRI

Cause you know I'd hunt you down in the next life if you didn't.

Piro grins at her jab, then moves in to kiss his wife until she clears her throat.

MEHRI (CONT'D)
Your friends are here.

Piro pulls back to find: Exec. Asst. Directors JOHN S. PISTOLE (47) and GARY M. BALD (43), two career g-men, seated on a nearby bench. He settles for a kiss on his wife's cheek before walking over to his Superiors.

PIRO
Director Pistole. Bald.

PISTOLE
(hands an envelope)
Your ticket. Visa. And itinerary.

PIRO
Thank you, sir. You didn't have to come all this way...

Mehri watches her husband curious for a moment, then returns to playing with her Son. Bald responds, gruffly:

BALD
We didn't have time to wait for playtime to be over.

PISTOLE
(translating)
Bureau is under a lot of pressure right now, Agent Piro.

BALD
(checks his watch)
From this moment, everything -- the quality of your reports to the color of your stool -- all of it reflects back on us.

PISTOLE
This is a rare opportunity for a junior agent like yourself.

BALD
So don't fuck it up.

PISTOLE
Flight leaves at seven pm tonight.

PIRO
Yes, sir.

Piro notices a black SUV idling behind them.

PISTOLE

Director Mueller would like have to
a brief word.

Piro nods, adjusting his tie as he walks into:

INT. SUV/PARK - DAY

Director ROBERT MUELLER (60), combed salt and pepper hair, the ultimate g-man, sits in the back looking out the window. Piro takes a seat beside him.

MUELLER

It's good to spend time with your family. They'll be one of the few things that keep you grounded over there. How's your wife handling your departure?

PIRO

Mehri understands what's at stake with this assignment, sir.

MUELLER

That doesn't make it any easier...
Go ahead. Open the envelope.

Piro opens to reveal: a classified file on Saddam Hussein, including photos of the Dictator at the height of his power.

MUELLER (CONT'D)

You are going to be alone in a room. Interrogating him. So the government can make their case against Saddam Hussein...

Piro flips to the next page with Saddam's most recent unflattering mug shots.

MUELLER (CONT'D)

CIA has been working him since his capture last month. You're looking at the little they were able to extract...

(Piro looks to Mueller)

Now, I want you to remember one thing when you're sitting across the table: Do not trust a word he says unless you can personally verify it. We're in uncharted territory.

(MORE)

MUELLER (CONT'D)
Politics and national security make
for choppy waters. You understand
me, Agent Piro?

PIRO
Yes, sir.

MUELLER
This is the kind of case that will
either make or break your career.
And for that, I'm sorry... Keep
your head down. Do the work. And we
will do everything on our end to
protect you from the hawks.

Piro exits the vehicle, just as Pistole and Bald enter.

EXT. PLAYGROUND/PARK - DAY

Piro rejoins Mehri and Lazar. As he holds his Wife and Son
close together, watching the SUV drive away.

EXT. DULLES AIRPORT/WASHINGTON D.C. - NIGHT

A post-9/11 airport scattered with SOLDIERS carrying assault
rifles and long lines of TRAVELERS waiting to get through
security. Piro walks up with Mehri, Lazar and a large
suitcase. He is about to say something to his wife, when --

MEHRI
Shut up and kiss me goodbye.

Piro kisses his wife, then holds her close for an extra beat.
Lazar watches, trying to make sense of what this all means.
Finally, Piro lets go and kneels down to his son.

PIRO
And you...

LAZAR
Me?

PIRO
Promise you'll watch over your
mother.

LAZAR
I promise, baba. Will you be able
to call more this time?

PIRO
I had an even better idea...

Piro pulls out a 3rd generation iPod along with a voice recorder added-on.

PIRO (CONT'D)

I want you to record messages to me on here for your mom to send over, so I can hear your voice wherever I am. What do you think?

LAZAR

What kind of messages?

PIRO

Anything you want...

Piro hands the iPod to his son, then hugs him tightly.

PIRO (CONT'D)

Baba loves you very much.

Piro lets go as Lazar takes his Mother's hand.

MEHRI

Tell baba you love him.

LAZAR

We loooooove you, baba.

Piro forces a smile, grips his suitcase tightly walking toward the security line. As Lazar waves goodbye with Mehri, the SOUND OF AN AIRPLANE TAKING OFF BRINGS US TO:

INT. TERMINAL/BAGHDAD INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

The waiting area contains only US SOLDIERS holding assault weapons, paired with IRAQI POLICE carrying handguns. Plainclothes PASSENGERS, here on business, exit the airplane into the Terminal alongside Piro, who hides his lack of sleep with a pair of dark tinted Oakley sunglasses.

COMMANDING VOICE (O.C.)

Special Agent Piro?

Piro turns to spot Army Sgts. LAWRENCE ROKEY (33), strong but kind face, and SHERWOOD BAKER (30), quiet with glasses, holding a handwritten sign with his name. Before he can respond, Roukey and Baker snap their feet together and stiffen their posture to announce:

ROKEY

Sergeants Lawrence Roukey and Sherwood Baker, sir. We will be your escorts into Camp Slayer.

PIRO
I'd love to stop by my hotel --

ROUKEY
Sir, we have been asked to bring
you directly to Camp Slayer.

PIRO
On whose orders?

Roukey checks with Baker, who quietly shakes his head 'no'.

ROUKEY
Best if you just came with us, sir.

PIRO
Relax. You can call me George.

Roukey and Baker both loosen up their posture. Piro offers a handshake to Roukey, who gladly accepts.

ROUKEY
Thank ya, George. We get in trouble
if we don't put on the "show".

Piro extends his hand to Baker, who takes his guest's luggage instead. The Special Agent turns to Roukey, *sotto voce*:

PIRO
Does he talk?

ROUKEY
Baker? Only when he's got something
to say.

As Baker rolls Piro's luggage, the glass door opens out to:

EXT. BAGHDAD INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

Baker loads the luggage into a military Humvee with Roukey taking the driverside. Piro notices a bright hanging banner "Baghdad International Airport", then realizes it's masking the original fading sign for "SADDAM INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT".

Suddenly, a roadside BOMB EXPLODES just outside the Airport, blowing dust in the air. Piro cowers. Soldiers are unmoved.

ROUKEY
Security has been finding new IEDs
on the road every week now.

PIRO
News back home says the war is
supposed to be winding down.

ROUKEY
Don'tcha worry, George. Insurgent
bombs aren't slowing us down.

Baker opens the Humvee door for Piro. As Roukey revs up the engine, they begin driving toward a Palace on the horizon.

INT. HUMVEE/BAGHDAD - DAY

Roukey speeds past the airport barbed wire fence along a rough and tumble dirt road. Baker sits shotgun while Piro looks out the window from the back.

ROUKEY
Rumor is you're here to talk with
Saddama.

PIRO
Saddama?

The Humvee takes a sharp turn as Roukey laughs to himself.

ROUKEY
Well... Osama's still on the loose,
so capturing Sadd-ama is the next
best thing, right?

PIRO
(all business)
You're only to refer to him as Vic,
Sergeant.

ROUKEY
Yes, sir... Can I ask why: Vic?

PIRO
Letters on his cell door. When he learned they stood for "Very Important Captive", 'Vic' demanded that become his moniker...

Piro attempts to open up one of the windows.

PIRO (CONT'D)
...while in confinement.

BAKER
I wouldn't do that, sir.

Piro turns, surprised to see Baker finally talking when SEVERAL ROCKS ARE THROWN AT THE WINDOW, thus proving his point. Roukey lets out a "WOO" and accelerates. On Piro, feeling the insanity of Baghdad starting to creep in.

INT. CAMP SLAYER/VICTORY COMPLEX/BAGHDAD - DAY

Roukey and Baker lead Piro through a palatial space with beautiful tile and a mural of a smiling Saddam in full military attire, wielding a sword. A large banner hangs that reads: "Welcome to Camp Slayer. Another Day in Paradise."

ROUKEY

...And they call this the Perfume Palace 'cause it looks like a perfume bottle from the outside.

PIRO

(patience worn)

Where are you taking me, Sergeant?

ROUKEY

Almost there.

CLOSE ON the mural of Saddam, almost watching over them.

INT. MAIN HALL/CAMP SLAYER/VICTORY COMPLEX/BAGHDAD - DAY

MILITARY STAFF are sorting through stacks of paper across half a dozen folding tables as an excited CHARLES DUELFER (50), thin and mustached, eagerly approaches Piro.

DUELFER

Special Agent Piro.

(shakes his hand)

Charles Duelfer. Head of the Iraq Search Group.

(to Roukey and Baker)

Thank you for retrieving our new friend.

Roukey salutes Duelfer before clicking his heels, turning about face to exit with Baker.

PIRO

Thought David Kay was running ISG.

DUELFER

David was... until he resigned.

(gestures to the room)

Now, I'm the one in charge of cleaning up this mess.

PIRO

So, I take it you're no closer to finding the Iraqi's WMD program...

DUELFER

I've been trying since the nineties
as a UN Inspector. No... This time
I'm just here to find the truth.
What about you, Agent Piro?

PIRO

Bureau wants a lawful conviction.
Truth is above my pay grade.

Duelfer appreciates the joke, then spots something.

DUELFER

Shit.

JOHN BOLTON (54), a pink-faced, fierce neocon with thick
rimmed glasses and a deep silver walrus mustache, marches
toward them both. Duelfer explains:

DUELFER (CONT'D)

John Bolton. Under Secretary of
State for Arms Control and
International Security Affairs.

(off Piro, absorbing)

Bolton was the first to peddle
intel that Iraq was buying yellow
cake uranium in Africa... None of
which has proven true.

Bolton arrives unhappy to see Duelfer with Piro.

BOLTON

I thought we agreed to speak with
Agent Piro together.

DUELFER

He and I were just on our way...

BOLTON

You know Duelfer used to be CIA?
What was your specialty, again?
Arming child soldiers in Chad?

DUELFER

(clearly dodging)

When you get a higher security
clearance, John, I'll be sure to
tell you all about it.

BOLTON

There's a saying we have in State:
too much time in intelligence can
make a man stupid.

Duelfer grimaces as Bolton smiles, leading the men into:

INT. SCIF/CAMP SLAYER/VICTORY COMPLEX/BAGHDAD - DAY

Sensitive Compartmented Information Facility. A windowless conference room with leather chairs and long wooden table. Duelfer and Piro sit as Bolton leans back in his chair.

DUELFER

You know I always feel bad for the undersecretaries at State. They never give you any windows.

BOLTON

Helps me stay on DC time.

Bolton takes off his glasses to inspect Piro.

BOLTON (CONT'D)

So, you're the one Director Mueller chose for the interrogation...

(glasses back on)

I don't know what you've been told, but it should come as no surprise State considers your presence a hazard to our work in rebuilding Iraq. That said, the powers-that-be need us to be on the same page...

Piro embraces the tactless olive branch:

PIRO

I appreciate that, sir.

BOLTON

The three of us carry a tremendous burden for the future of this war. Which is why I need to know whether you come to help or hinder?

PIRO

All due respect: Neither.

Duelfer turns to Piro, impressed. Bolton leans forward.

BOLTON

This isn't Capitol Hill, son. Staying neutral in Iraq is not an option if you want to survive.

PIRO

I was asked to treat this as a criminal investigation.

(MORE)

PIRO (CONT'D)
Independent of White House and State. I'm sure you understand we can't risk compromising testimony or evidence.

BOLTON
Secretary Powell already presented the evidence to the United Nations. You're here to get a confession out of Saddam.

PIRO
If there are weapons, sir... I can assure you, we will find them.

BOLTON
If?
(leans in)
We're in an election year, son. Voters need to know: Weapons of Mass Destruction are in Iraq. The President needs them to know.

PIRO
Director Mueller --

BOLTON
Has no reach here. You're pissants operating under the good grace of this White House. Cross me and I will personally banish you to the lowest order of existence.

DUELFER
(to Piro)
Suddenly, Iraq feels strikingly similar to Capitol Hill.

PIRO
I'm certain we'll all find a way to work together.

BOLTON
I hope so, Agent Piro... I look forward to your first report.

On Piro and Duelfer, rising to exit as Bolton leans back in his chair again, unsure if the message was received.

EXT. SIDE STREET/GREEN ZONE/BAGHDAD - DAY

A PACK OF STRAY DOGS drink from a lone puddle near a group of IRAQIS gathered outside their storefronts.

They all go SILENT to watch Duelfer and Piro walk past, mid-conversation. Only Piro seems to takes notice of their gaze.

DUELFER

You know half of Americans still support this war? They don't give a shit about your interrogation or whether we find WMD. They just don't want to have to worry...

PIRO

(re: Iraqis)
And what about them?

DUELFER

Majority want us out. One way... or another.

Piro notices several buildings bombed and battered.

PIRO

I can't imagine why.

Out of nowhere, an IRAQI MAN (30) bumps into Piro, causing a moment of confusion. The Man apologizes profusely in Arabic to disarm the situation. As he goes to walk on, Piro GRABS the Man's HAND to reveal his stolen wallet. The two lock eyes, frozen, uncertain how the moment will play out.

Across the way, both men spot US SOLDIERS on their patrol. The Iraqi turns pale with regret. Piro notices the dirt under his fingernails and turns overtly friendly, in Arabic:

PIRO (CONT'D)

My wallet. Thank god... I must've dropped it without noticing.

The Iraqi nods slowly, unsure if he's sincere or full of shit. Piro pulls out some bills and hands them to the Man.

PIRO (CONT'D)

Please, for your troubles...
(adamant)
I insist.

The Iraqi cautiously accepts, then presses his hands together in gratitude before quickly leaving. Duelfer raises an eyebrow, starting to get a read on the Special Agent.

INT. GREEN ZONE CAFE/GREEN ZONE/BAGHDAD - DAY

A red colored tent with red plastic chairs and tables inside. American, Iraqi and British flags are draped across the wall. Piro waits at a table as Duelfer returns with Corona Lights.

DUELFER
Liquor was banned in '94. Now, they
can't ship it quick enough.

The two clink, then drink. Duelfer studies Piro, carefully.

DUELFER (CONT'D)
Generous finders fee for an Iraqi
who almost robbed you.

PIRO
He was an out-of-work laborer
trying to feed his family.
(off Duelfer)
A real thief doesn't have callouses
on their hands and a tan line where
their wedding ring used to be.

DUELFER
I see why Mueller chose you...
You're what? Thirty-five?

PIRO
Almost the same age as Vic's
youngest son would have been.

DUELFER
You seem quite at home for a g-man
still fresh out of Quantico.

PIRO
I grew up in Beirut during the
seventies. I've seen what a war
zone looks like before.

DUELFER
(in Arabic)
*Ah, then you should be able to
curse like a real Arab, too.*

PIRO
Not as well as I used to.

DUELFER
Try me.

PIRO
Alif er eb nos tezak.

DUELFER
What does that mean?

PIRO
A thousand dicks in your ass.

Duelfer smirks, then grows stern:

DUELFER
You'll have to do better than that
to keep up with the number of fucks
Vic gives and shits he takes.

PIRO
I'll see what I can do.

DUELFER
Understand he's going to make this
personal. Dodging every question,
pushing to get inside your head.

PIRO
Now, he sounds like my mother.

DUELFER
I'm not joking... Bolton is right
about one thing: Here in Baghdad,
we're on our own. So, you sure you
have the stomach for this?

PIRO
I have been combing through every
speech, every tape, every report on
him... anything to stay ahead and
keep my gut in check.

DUELFER
It'll help to avoid the food in the
commissary, too... So, when's the
rest of your people arrive?

PIRO
Tomorrow. I wanted to get the lay
of the land first.

DUELFER
Good. Longer this goes on, the more
violent his loyalists will become.

Piro nods, satisfied, then finishes his beer.

PIRO
You think this insurgency is
getting worse?

DUELFER
I know it is.

On Piro, staring at the Iraqi flag on display positioned
opposite the American.

INT. CEMENT HOUSE/SADR CITY/BAGHDAD - NIGHT

A disheveled space with an old television and cracked plastic furniture. ALI (18), a baby faced Iraqi, stirs a pot of biryani (slow cooked rice with meat) while listening to Uncle Cracker's 2002 "Drift Away" on his Discman CD Player. Bobbing his head, he then scoops out two bowls full.

In the corner, another bearded Iraqi Man (30), who we'll call HASSAN, solders wires onto an IED. Ali presents the biryani, which prompts Hassan to put down his work and eat. In Arabic:

HASSAN
(disappointed)
Biryani, again?

Ali pulls off the headphones, but MUSIC can still be heard.

HASSAN (CONT'D)
I said: No more Biryani.

ALI
*I told you I only know how to cook
one thing... When will you let me
do something useful?*

Hassan continues shoveling down the food.

HASSAN
*Soon. The Americans are still
crawling everywhere.*

ALI
The bombs have not deterred them.

HASSAN
*They are only one part of our
campaign. Just as you and I are
soldiers in a much larger army...*

ALI
You keep saying that.

HASSAN
*Because it's true. Because we must
stay focused. Because our President
is counting on us.*

Hassan pats Ali on the shoulder, then hands him the bomb.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF BAGHDAD - NIGHT

Uncle Kracker PLAYS ON. In a barren field, the city twinkles far off behind them.

As Hassan hides behind a large rock for protection, Ali lays the bomb down then sprints back to the rock. Hassan dials a number on his cellphone triggering A LARGE EXPLOSION. Flames dance in Ali's eyes. Hassan rises with a big smile.

ALI
You can detonate remotely?

HASSAN
With enough phones, we can rig them all this way. Now, start the car.

Ali goes to close the trunk of a beat-up nineties sedan.

FROM HIS POV: reveal a stock pile of a DOZEN IEDs waiting to be rigged. As the Trunk shuts...

EXT. GATE/CAMP CROPPER - DAY

A military prison built by US Forces, surrounded by cement walls topped with barbed wire.

Piro and Duelfer wait outside as a Humvee pulls up, followed by a trail of dust. Roukey and Baker emerge to open the door for: TODD IRINAGA, thirty-six, third generation Japanese-American, beaming as he HUGS Piro close like old friends do:

IRINAGA
When you said "special assignment", this wasn't exactly what I had envisioned.

PIRO
You were the one who wanted out of the Modesto field office...

Irinaga releases the hug, playfully jabbing back:

IRINAGA
I thought "sun and sand" meant beach, not a fucking desert war.

Next out of the Humvee, THERESA FELIX (44), a no-bullshit wayward warrior, and CAROL STROUD (40), a whip-smart introvert. Baker stands firmly, in position.

FELIX
At ease...

Baker lowers his shoulders. Felix turns to Piro:

FELIX (CONT'D)
Would've been nice to know we'd be coming straight from the airport.

PIRO
You can thank the White House for
moving up our timeline.

FELIX
Long as you know it makes it harder
for us to our jobs, Agent Piro.

Stroud steps up, kindly clarifying to Piro:

STROUD
Sorry. We didn't get much sleep
working on the plane.

Piro appears proud to have his assembled Team.

PIRO
I want you to meet Charles Duelfer
from ISG. This is: Special Agent
Todd Irinaga and FBI Analysts
Theresa Felix, intelligence, and
Carol Stroud, behavioral. They were
briefed and prepped in DC.

Duelfer nods to acknowledge them, but appears distracted by
their looming assignment.

DUELFER
Shall we?

As Roukey and Baker signal the Guard Post above...

EXT. COURTYARD/CAMP CROPPER - DAY

THE GATE OPENS. Iraqi PRISONERS in yellow uniforms, separated
by another layer of fencing, turn their attention to Roukey
and Baker leading Duelfer, Piro, Irinaga, Stroud and Felix.

ROUKEY
Welcome to Camp Cropper.

IRINAGA
(sotto voce to Piro)
The fuck've you got me into?

Piro doesn't know either. Felix notices the sea of Prisoners
peering through the fence.

STROUD
They're all Iraqi Prisoners of War?

DUELFER

The administration calls them HVDs,
"High Value Detainees", to get
around any legal issues until the
Provisional Authority establishes
proper due process.

PIRO

(to Roukey and Baker)

Next time, take us the back way.

BAKER

This is the back way, Agent Piro.

As Piro observes a range of desperation, anger, fear, hope and resignation in the Prisoners' eyes...

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM/CAMP CROPPER - DAY

LIGHTS FLICKER ON. Piro, Irinaga, Felix and Stroud take in the bleak cement space filled with recording and monitoring equipment, a crumbling old corkboard and a large table.

PIRO

This is home.

FELIX

Charming.

PIRO

Anything else we need, ground forces will provide.

IRINAGA

How about a window?

Piro stares down Irinaga, who shrugs. Felix turns ON MONITOR TO REVEAL: Saddam Hussein -- now down to just a mustache -- sitting back against the wall, waiting. The Team stops everything, absorbing the image. Piro stands arms crossed, sizing up his larger-than-life Subject. Stroud breaks the silence by flipping a switch to prep the recorder:

STROUD

Interview Session #1. February 7th, 2003. Conducted by SSA George Piro.

Everyone resumes work as Felix hands photos and documents to Irinaga, who pins various images of Saddam to the board.

Duelfer enters, plopping down a thick accordion file.

DUELFER

First round of intel reports on WMD
just in case Vic suddenly decides
to 'open up'...

FELIX

What do you mean by 'first round'?

DUELFER

We've been monitoring Iraq for
twenty years. There's enough paper
to fill this room ten times over.

Piro smiles to cut through tension between his Team and
Duelfer's bumpy start.

PIRO

Thank you, Charles. Today is just
about starting a dialogue.

Duelfer leans closer to Piro.

DUELFER

You sure you don't want me to sit
in there with you?

PIRO

Don't take this the wrong way, but
to him: you look like a middle age
white man from Washington...

(off Duelfer)

I need Vic to know I'm in charge.
No one else.

DUELFER

(nods in agreement)

Small piece of advice, then: Don't
smile. It'll make him have to work
harder to win you over.

STROUD

Ready when you are, Agent Piro.

Piro nods to Stroud, who hits RECORD. As he exits, leaving
Duelfer dissatisfied with not being invited inside.

INT. SADDAM'S CELL/CAMP CROPPER - DAY

A LOUD BUZZER SOUNDS. A thick door opens as Piro enters the
prison cell to find a stone cold Saddam, reading Hemingway's
'The Old Man and the Sea' in SILENCE.

PIRO

Salaam Aleikum.

Piro offers to shake hands, but Saddam ignores. In Arabic:

PIRO (CONT'D)
*Mr. Saddam, my name is George. I'm
here on behalf of the United States
Government.*

Saddam puts down the book, then carefully sizes up his interrogator, skeptical:

SADDAM
You work for Bush?

PIRO
Yes. I've been sent to talk --

SADDAM
*You do not look CIA. Nor dress well
enough to be from the White House.
Whatever you are... you are but a
child compared to me.*

PIRO
*As I recall, you were my age when
you became Vice President of Iraq.*

SADDAM
Ah... so, you know your history.

PIRO
*Enough to know you're too shrewd to
underestimate me.*

SADDAM
(switches to English)
Have a seat, Mr. George.

Saddam intentionally smiles, looking up at the camera in the corner on the wall, knowing he's being watched.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM/CAMP CROPPER - DAY

In another room, Duelfer, Felix, Stroud and Irinaga are recording the conversation, anxiously listening in.

IRINAGA
What do you think?

DUELFER
He's doing better than CIA...

ON MONITOR: Piro sits down, nervously smiling back.

DUELFER (CONT'D)
At least he was.

As they turn back to the Monitor to see:

INT. SADDAM'S CELL/CAMP CROPPER - DAY

Saddam loses the pleasant demeanor, unfolding his hands to become more animated. Piro quickly sheds the smile.

SADDAM
So, you are here to find the infamous Weapons of Mass Destruction for Bush to justify his unlawful invasion... Well, your friends at Langley have already tried and failed. Now, so will you.

PIRO
My interests go beyond merely WMD.

SADDAM
For more than ten years America has been obsessed with nothing else. What could possibly be more important?

PIRO
You are an enigma to the West. This is about how history will remember Saddam Hussein.

Saddam raises an eyebrow, intrigued.

SADDAM
Go ahead. You may ask your questions.

PIRO
What would you say has been your biggest accomplishment?

SADDAM
There are too many.

PIRO
And your greatest failure?

SADDAM
I have none.

PIRO
(one last try)
Is there anything you would have
done differently?

Saddam takes a moment, then LAUGHS to himself.

SADDAM
Why would I reveal this to my
enemy?

Piro takes a beat, then tries a different tone:

PIRO
The more openly we talk, the more
freedom you get. I hear you like to
garden. I can arrange for that.

SADDAM
Do you not understand, Mr. George?
This is a game. You do not know the
cards that I hold. And I do not
know yours. Am I full of shit? Or
do I have a winning hand? We play
until one of us suffers defeat.

PIRO
I don't believe that's true.

SADDAM
And that makes you naive... You
want to know how history will
remember me? The book will read:
"the people of Iraq never stopped
fighting against the illegal
occupation of our land."

PIRO
Then why do news report show
celebrations in the streets?

Saddam SLAMS HIS HAND DOWN ON THE TABLE, IN ARABIC:

SADDAM
LIES.

Piro remains calm, unaffected.

PIRO
All the more reason to go on record
with me, so the world can know your
side of the story.

SADDAM
(collects himself)
Earn your captive's trust first,
then extract the intelligence. Is
that your strategy, Mr. George?

PIRO
This usually works better if we can
come to trust each other.

SADDAM
Fine. You want trust? Tell me: When
did your family flee Lebanon?

Piro stays quiet, trying to choose his next words carefully.

SADDAM (CONT'D)
Oh, you may sound American in their
tongue, dressed in your cheap polo
tucked in tight, carefully groomed
like them... But your Arabic still
sounds like an Assyrian dog from
Beirut. So, why did your parents
abandon their country?

PIRO
If they hadn't, I wouldn't be
sitting here today.

SADDAM
And how many do you think died
because of that decision?

PIRO
I don't know... Have you ever asked
yourself the same question?

SADDAM
The sad part is, Mr. George, you've
lost touch with your past and don't
realize you have no future. The
Americans will never let you be one
of them. They blame all Arabs for
the fall of their towers. You will
only ever be a pawn to them...
Nothing more. Only less.

Piro tries to hold his composure, clearly thrown:

PIRO
You don't know what I am.

SADDAM

You are conflicted, so desperate to prove yourself, because deep down you live in fear that they will strip away everything dear to you.

PIRO

So I take it you don't care about Iraq anymore? You'd rather hurl insults at me and my family than help your own people?

SADDAM

(in Arabic)

A man who has no real country cannot insult me. You're not a real Arab. You're now an imitation. Go back to your suburbs, Mr. George... Allah calls to me.

Piro looks to the camera, knowing everyone can see his humiliation.

PIRO

Mr. Saddam --

But Saddam has turned his back and kneels upon his rug. As Saddam begins to pray in Arabic...

INT. BATHROOM/CAMP CROPPER - DAY

Piro BURSTS INSIDE to throw up into one of the stalls. Hugging the bowl, he looks up at the light SHINING IN...

INT. KITCHEN - DAY (FLASHBACK)

CLOSE ON a pair of delicate ADULT HANDS rolling a buttery shortbread dough into a small round ball. LIGHT from outside shines on the flour still floating in the air.

A pair of curious YOUNG EYES watch the process unfold as the hands push into the shortbread ball to create a small well at the center, placing finely chopped wet walnuts inside.

The filled dough is pressed into a beautiful wooden mold that results in a round cookie shape with a spiral pattern.

The hands then pull out a tray of baked cookies from a worn stove. A pair of small YOUNG HANDS reaches for one of them, but is immediately SWATTED AWAY.

REVEAL an eager ten year old boy -- YOUNG GEORGE PIRO -- rubbing his hand as his mother, FRANCIA (30), sifts powdered sugar across her creations. In Arabic:

FRANCIA
Now you can have one, Georgie.

Finally, she hands her son a cookie. As Young Piro is about to gleefully bite in...

INT. BATHROOM/CAMP CROPPER - DAY

Irinaga walks in, staying back as Piro remains in the stall.

IRINAGA
 You okay in there?

PIRO
 I'm fine. Just give me a minute.

IRINAGA
 Helluva first impression...

PIRO
 (not really)
 Thanks.

IRINAGA
 That's not what I'm talking about.

Piro rises from the bowl, curious:

IRINAGA (CONT'D)
 Soon as you left, Saddam slipped
 one of the guards something from
 his notebook then went back to
 praying...

Piro appears from the stall wiping his mouth, curious.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM/CAMP CROPPER - DAY

Irinaga returns to sit with Duelfer, Stroud and Felix. Piro studies the note written in Arabic, then reads:

PIRO
 "Unbind your soul. It is my soul
 mate and you are my soul's
 beloved... No house could have
 sheltered my heart as you have...
 If I were that house, you would be
 its dew... You are the soothing
 breeze... My soul is made fresh by
 you... And our Baath Party blossoms
 like a branch turns green. The
 medicine does not cure the ailing
 but the white rose does."

IRINAGA
Robert Frost, he is not.

STROUD
Guard said Vic wants his poem
published in the New York Times.

DUELFER
This doesn't leave here until my
people have time to analyze the
text for any coded messaging.

Piro quietly recites the last part of the poem back.

PIRO
I already know: He's talking about
Iraq and WMD.

Piro thumbs through a file. Everyone else looks at him like
he's speaking another language.

PIRO (CONT'D)
Charles, wasn't there a farm you
inspected with the UN for weapons
back in 96?

DUELFER
The 'Chicken Farm' was a front for
producing chemical weapons.

Piro pulls out a map of Iraq out on the table.

PIRO
Where "our Baath Party blossoms
like a branch turns green... The
medicine does not cure the ailing
but the white rose does."

IRINAGA
What is he talking about?

PIRO
His party blossoms with weapons,
hidden where green can grow... the
farm. The medicine does not cure
the ailing...

STROUD
...Chemical Weapons?

PIRO
Exactly.

Irinaga finds the structure on the map.

IRINAGA
Looks like the farm is still there,
but there's only one building left.

FELIX
And how do we know it's not a trap?
This is the same guy who killed off
his in-laws and still expected his
wife and daughter to love him...
What's stopping him from trying to
get rid of us?

The room goes quiet. All eyes turn to Piro.

PIRO
He said this is a game. We can't
win unless we are willing to play.

DUELFER
I'll have ISG look into the site.

PIRO
No, we're coming with you.

Piro pats Irinaga on the shoulder to sign them both up.

FELIX
You two want to go play in the
sandbox? Be our guest.

DUELFER
I'll get you both cleared.

Stroud cuts in to ask:

STROUD
How do you want to handle the daily
reports to Washington?

Piro is fixated as he watches on the Monitor: Saddam praying.

STROUD (CONT'D)
Agent Piro?

PIRO
(snaps out of it)
Sorry, what was that?

STROUD
The reports.

PIRO
Right... Everything goes through me
before leaving this office.

On Piro, returning back to study Saddam's every move.

EXT. THE CHICKEN FARM/OUTSKIRTS OF BAGHDAD - DAY

Chyron: Operation Iron Promise.

Two Army Humvees pull up to an old rusted building in the middle of nowhere. Out of the vehicles emerge Roukey and Baker with several other SOLDIERS followed by Duelfer, Irinaga and Piro, wearing bulletproof vests and helmets. Duelfer uses a GPS device to confirm the coordinates.

DUELFER
Hazmats on.

Roukey and Baker pull out a protective suit along with gas masks. The other Soldiers secure the perimeter.

DUELFER (CONT'D)
(into walkie)
Sandman, this is Observer. Radio
check, over.

ROUKEY
(into his mic)
Lima Charlie, Observer. Papa Team
is ready to open sesame.

DUELFER
(into walkie)
Remember: Don't touch anything
unless I tell you otherwise.

ROUKEY
(into mic)
Roger, wilco.

Roukey nods before heading toward the Building.

IRINAGA
They know what they're doing?

DUELFER
First time since the invasion
anyone has encountered the real
possibility of chemical weapons.

As Roukey and Baker open the door and enter... INTERCUT WITH:

INT. THE CHICKEN FARM/OUTSKIRTS OF BAGHDAD - DAY

Rows of flowering plants are set up on long tables. Papers scattered along the floor. Roukey and Baker have their weapons drawn when they hear a CLICK.

They aim their weapons in the direction of the sound revealing the IRRIGATION SYSTEM WATERING the plants. Roukey speaks into his comm.

ROUKEY
No sign of Ali Baba.

DUELFER
What about the facility?

ROUKEY
Papers scattered everywhere.
(scans the room)
And at least a dozen plants on some kind of timer.

Baker gets closer to find piles of large black and yellow seeds near a mortar and pestle filled with powdery substance.

DUELFER
Anything else?

ROUKEY
Looks like they've been grinding the seeds down to a white powder.

DUELFER
Listen to me very closely Sandman.
You're looking at purified ricin.
Even a few grains could kill you.
So I need you to back out. Slowly.

Roukey starts to move back until nearly stumbling over something in his path. Baker turns to see an IRAQI MAN, barely breathing, covered in burns and blisters with yellow fluid -- on the ground.

DUELFER (CONT'D)
Sandman, report.

BAKER
Observer, we have a breather.

On Roukey, frozen in place.

TIME CUT TO:

EXT. LABORATORY/THE CHICKEN FARM/OUTSKIRTS OF BAGHDAD - DAY

Roukey and Baker immediately pull off their masks, revealing how sweaty and out of breath they are. MEDICS IN HAZMAT SUITS haul out the Man on a stretcher. Duelfer approaches Piro.

DUELFER
They stabilized him, but no
guarantee he'll be able to talk.

IRINAGA
I still don't get why Vic would
want us to find his secret stash?

Duelfer notices above the door a sign that reads: Al Abud.

DUELFER
To show he has a strong hand. If
there's an "Al Abud" network of
Iraqi insurgents capable of
producing chemical weapons: How
many are there? How well-financed
are they? This is why I fucking
hate incomplete data.

Piro half-listening, lost-in-thought, chimes in:

PIRO
But at least we know Vic may have
something tangible to bargain with.

Irinaga and Duefler raise an eyebrow, unconvinced as the
other Soldiers continue to keep watch.

In the distance, reveal: Hassan with Ali, stealthily watching
unnoticed from behind a hill. Hassan quickly zips up his
backpack with gas masks and cellphones rigged as remote
detonators. As they flee into the desert, unnoticed...

INT. LOBBY/HOTEL/GREEN ZONE/BAGHDAD - NIGHT

A Western-friendly hotel that makes you almost forget this is
Baghdad. Piro and Irinaga walk through the automated sliding
glass doors, feeling a cool blast of AC.

IRINAGA
Come on.
(points to dining room)
I think we've earned a round.

PIRO
I need a rain check.

IRINAGA
We're in the desert, Piro. How do
you expect me to cash a rain check?

PIRO
We'll find an oasis. I promise.

Irinaga nods, patting his friend on the back, sincere:

IRINAGA
Fine, but you better not be going
upstairs to work.

As Piro rides up the elevator, Irinaga walks to:

INT. DINING ROOM/HOTEL/GREEN ZONE/BAGHDAD - NIGHT

A sparse after-dinner CROWD. Felix and Stroud sit at a small round table with wine when Irinaga joins them.

STROUD
No Agent Piro?

IRINAGA
Rain check.

FELIX
But we're in a desert --

IRINAGA
You don't have to tell me.
(signals waiter)
A beer, please. Any will do.

FELIX
Look, I know he's your friend,
Todd, but I'm worried how long the
guy is going to last out here.

IRINAGA
Don't let the Boy Scout facade fool
you. Piro can be cutthroat.

STROUD
I think Theresa and I are just
concerned over his...

FELIX
Experience.

IRINAGA
Look, I've known him since we were
both local PD. He takes his time in
the box, but always gets the other
side talking.

Waiter returns with a beer that Irinaga immediately down.

FELIX
That may have worked in...

IRINAGA
Ceres, California.

FELIX
Ceres, right. I'm telling you right
now it's not going to cut it with--
(quietly)
A deposed dictator accused of
possible war crimes.

STROUD
He did get us to the Chicken Farm.

FELIX
He found a trail of breadcrumbs,
where it leads is another story...
Besides, I heard the Bureau only
chose him because they wanted a
native Arabic speaker and we only
have twelve in the field.

IRINAGA
The reality is -- we don't
understand this place the way Piro
does. Shallow pond means he gets to
be our big fucking fish.

Duelfer approaches as the Group gets quiet.

DUELFER
Mind if I join?

Irinaga gestures for Duelfer to pull up a chair.

IRINAGA
I thought you were staying across
town at the Victory Complex.

DUELFER
I was hoping we could discuss Agent
Piro's current strategy...

As Irinaga, Stroud and Felix's face all say 'yes'...

INT. PIRO'S ROOM/HOTEL/GREEN ZONE/BAGHDAD - NIGHT

Piro opens the door to find a package on his bed, which he opens to find his iPod inside. Piro powers on the iPod, now filled with music and voice memos. He puts on the classic white ear buds, then presses play.

MEHRI (V.O.)
Lazar and I loaded some music and
recordings to keep you company. Now
hurry up and get home. Love You...

Reaching deeper, Piro pulls out a pocket size photo of
LAZAR'S SCHOOL PORTRAIT.

LAZAR (V.O.)
Hi baba, mama helped me make this
for you...

Piro can't help but smile until he notices at the bottom of
the box is a crayon drawing of Saddam signed by Lazar.

LAZAR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
We went to the library every day
after school to make a special
report on Saddam Hussein for you. I
learned many things about him. My
favorite fact so far is...

On the recording, Lazar clears his throat and speaks as if
he's giving a class presentation:

LAZAR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Did you know that Saddam penned a
best-selling romance novel?

Piro pauses, then fast-forwards.

LAZAR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Saddam fact number 32: Baba, did
you know that Saddam commissioned a
Qur'an written in his own blood?

Piro pulls off the earbuds, then takes out his satellite
phone, dialing.

MEHRI (O.C.)
Hello?

PIRO
Why is my son sending me drawings
and recorded messages about Saddam?

MEHRI (O.C.)
Oh, I didn't expect the package to
get there so quickly.

PIRO
Mehri, answer the question.

MEHRI (O.C.)
Lazar wanted to know more about
what his father was doing over in
Iraq, so I assigned a kind of book
report for him.

PIRO
You don't think he's too young to
learn about a murdering dictator?

MEHRI (O.C.)
I'm not going to lie to him for
you, George.

PIRO
For me?

MEHRI (O.C.)
I think it's therapeutic. He needs
to see the world for what it is.

PIRO
And what? I don't get a say?

MEHRI (O.C.)
Of course you do... but you never
want to talk about this stuff. You
always skirt over anything about
the Middle East, your time in
Beirut --

PIRO
You want to talk about it? Fine.
Let's talk.

MEHRI (O.C.)
Okay. Let me put Lazar on.

PIRO
No.
(sighs)
I miss you, *habibata*.

MEHRI (O.C.)
(genuinely worried)
Did something happen?

Piro is silent, leaning Lazar's photo on his desk.

MEHRI (O.C.) (CONT'D)
You gotta give me something,
George.

Another beat, then Piro conjures a faux answer:

PIRO

Baghdad has made realize how much I
truly hate shoveling snow...

(Mehri sighs)

I mean if I think about how many
hours I've spent lifting frozen
water from one spot to another --
Makes you really wonder if we
should consider a warmer climate.

MEHRI (O.C.)

I'm serious, George.

PIRO

Be glad you're not here. That's all
you need to know. Trust me, Mehri.

MEHRI (O.C.)

And I wish you would trust me.

Out his window, Piro sees Baghdad at night, then confesses:

PIRO

It feels just like the summer
before I came to the States. Beirut
was like a pressure cooker. Now,
Baghdad is waiting to erupt. Except
these people have no way out.

MEHRI (O.C.)

You're doing everything you can.

Piro looks at the photo of Lazar one last time.

PIRO

Tell Lazar I love him, okay? I'll
call you again as soon as I can.

MEHRI (O.C.)

George...

Piro hangs up the phone, then turns back to the cartoon
drawing of Saddam, crumpling his son's work in the trash can.

EXT. STREET/GREEN ZONE/BAGHDAD - DAY

Piro, in shorts and tee, runs in the early morning, listening
to Kanye West's "Jesus Walks". Moving to the rhythm of the
beat, he starts to see IRAQIS staring at him as an outsider.

Rounding a corner, he catches his breath, spotting an IRAQI
MOTHER, FATHER and SON eating a familiar powdered sugar
cookie. The child locks eyes with Piro until U.S. Army Spc.
DON CLARY (21) presses Piro against a wall, ENDING THE MUSIC.

CLARY
Hands where I can see him.

PIRO
(in Arabic, to the Family)
Get out of here.

Clary pushes Piro harder against the coarse wall, scratching Piro's hand in the process. The Iraqi Family moves on.

CLARY
Wait to be spoken to.

PIRO
I'm an American.

Army Staff Sgt. CLINT WISDOM (39) steps in to assess:

WISDOM
Then why are you running around the Green Zone without ID?

PIRO
I didn't realize --

WISDOM
Case you haven't noticed, we're in the middle of a war zone with people blowing themselves up.

Clary is about to cuff Piro's bleeding hand, when --

DUELFER (O.C.)
Let him go.

Wisdom and Clary turn around to see Duelfer standing with Roukey and Baker by their Humvee.

DUELFER
Unless you want your superior to know you tried to arrest an FBI Agent.

Clary sighs, then immediately releases Piro, who holds his bloody hand defensively.

WISDOM
We've been on high alert after yesterday's IED. Two of our friends got caught in the blast.

CLARY
(hands back his iPod)
I love Kanye, by the way.

PIRO
Thanks...

WISDOM
Keep that ID on you, okay?

Clary and Wisdom tip their helmets goodbye. Piro, rattled, turns paranoid toward Duelfer.

PIRO
You following me, Charles?

DUELFER
You're no good to me dead.

On Piro, unhappy and unnerved, climbing into the Humvee.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM/CAMP CROPPER - DAY

Duelfer, Irinaga, Felix and Stroud are all gathered around the table with the map of Iraq still laid out. A dour Piro -- showered, changed and hand bandaged -- enters quietly.

IRINAGA
Good morning, sunshine.

Piro shoots a 'fuck you' at Irinaga, then turns to Stroud:

PIRO
Is the map prepped for Vic?

STROUD
We wanted to talk to you about that...

Stroud carefully gathers the right words as Piro furrows his brow at her overly cautious tone. Felix jumps in --

FELIX
We're concerned by how easily Vic decided to cooperate...

PIRO
(annoyed)
And what do you expect me to do with that concern, Felix?

STROUD
Right now, he doesn't know you went to the Farm. The more you withhold, the better we'll be able to sift through what's real and what's not.

Piro jabs his finger at Saddam waiting on the Monitor.

PIRO

I'm moments away from going back in and you want to toss out the script along with our only lead? Are you out of your mind? Vic is trying to negotiate with us.

FELIX

He openly suggested he might be "full of shit". We have to consider this could be his way to bluff his way to freedom.

PIRO

You think you know more about Vic than I do?

FELIX

(restraining herself)
I think its best to tread lightly,
Agent Piro.

PIRO

Last I checked, I'm the one who uncovered the lab; who sits across the table from him; who was chosen to lead this interrogation. Not you. Or anyone else in this room.

(stares at Felix)
We understand each other?

Felix begrudgingly rolls up the map, handing it over.

FELIX

Perfectly, sir.

Duelfer watches Piro take the map, then head into:

INT. SADDAM'S CELL/CAMP CROPPER - DAY

Guards open the door to let Piro inside. Saddam sits, wearing glasses, writing while eating Doritos from a family size bag.

SADDAM

One moment.

Piro takes a seat, masking any emotion that he was forced to wait. Saddam finishes, closing his notebook and removing glasses. He wipes his Dorito fingers with baby wipes.

SADDAM (CONT'D)

Another poem... Did you enjoy my last one?

PIRO
So much that I came to discuss its
meaning.

Saddam studies Piro closely.

SADDAM
You look like you've been getting
some sun, Mr. George. Have you
gotten out to see the sights?
(bitterly)
It's been almost a year since I've
seen my beloved Baghdad.

PIRO
You wanted me to find the Chicken
Farm hidden in your poem. Why?

Saddam offers Piro a baby wipe.

SADDAM
You're bleeding.

Piro realizes his cut has reopened, accepting the baby wipe
to clot the opening.

PIRO
It's nothing.

SADDAM
So, you are a literary scholar now?
What did you find at this 'Chicken
Farm'? The U.N. inspected that site
in 1996, destroying everything.

PIRO
Then why is ricin being grown by
insurgents loyal to you?

SADDAM
You tell me, Mr. George. I thought
you said the Americans fully
controlled Iraq and my people have
abandoned me? Unless perhaps, not
everything you say is so true.

Piro lays out the map with the Chicken Farm marked.

PIRO
Neither of us want to see any more
Iraqis die. If you show me the
remaining labs, we can make sure
this doesn't escalate any further.

Saddam looks at the map, then back to Piro.

SADDAM
I can tell you're not a Muslim or
you would understand the Qur'an
teaches to not fear death.

The sanctimonious comment triggers Piro to blurt out:

PIRO
You gassed your own people at
Halabja... so don't suddenly claim
you're a religious martyr.

Saddam simmers at mention of the infamous attack, then changes tack:

SADDAM
Which side of the civil war in
Lebanon did your good Christian
family fight on?

PIRO
I don't see how my family's past is
going to end this war.

SADDAM
You said you wanted to earn my
trust? You give, I give. You try to
take? You get nothing.

Piro looks into Saddam's eyes, then accepts the bargain.

PIRO
They came to America before having
to choose a side.

SADDAM
How did you feel knowing your
parents abandoned your homeland?

PIRO
(reluctant)
A car bomb in our neighborhood left
them with no other choice.

SADDAM
There is always a choice.

PIRO
I was young. I didn't understand.

SADDAM
A child understands more than a parent realizes.

PIRO
...I was angry at them.

SADDAM
For what?

PIRO
For never giving me a choice.

SADDAM
So, what did the angry boy do?

Piro swallows at the painful memory, then turns back to Saddam:

PIRO
I think it's your turn, Mr. Saddam.

SADDAM
I want you to see why the insurgency grows every day -- because America provides no alternative. My people will not stop. They will not cower. They will not flee. Until you help me gain my freedom to guide them otherwise.

Piro feels outplayed by Saddam, speaking in Arabic:

PIRO
What are the insurgents planning to do with the chemical weapons?

SADDAM
(in English)
I wonder how many more Americans have to die before you realize you have no choice but to release me...

Saddam smiles again, then goes back to eating Doritos.

EXT. SOUK/BAGHDAD - DAY

An outdoor market filled with spices, meats and nuts. Hassan loads a backpack into the trunk of a car, quickly closing it and walking away. He gets a few blocks away to join Ali at a nearby STREET VENDOR to order in Arabic:

HASSAN
Two shish kebab.

Vendor hands the kebab to Hassan, who hands one to Ali.

HASSAN (CONT'D)
*This is what you should be making
from now on.*

ALI
*He has a proper grill. Our stove
barely works.*

HASSAN
Shut up and eat.

As they bite into the stick meat, Hassan dials. Ali watches an American Humvee drive past the car with the backpack triggering an EXPLOSION, sending the area into CHAOS. As the two continue eating, walking away as if nothing happened.

INT. BATHROOM/CAMP CROPPER - DAY

Piro hurls into one of the stalls, again.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM/CAMP CROPPER - DAY

A weakened Piro returns only to find only Duelfer remaining.

PIRO
Where is everyone?

DUELFER
Getting some air... I thought you
and I could talk.

The concern on Duelfer's face prompts Piro to realize:

PIRO
What is this, Charles? A coup?

DUELFER
We are only trying to help you.

PIRO
So, you're the one who turned them
against me...

DUELFER
They feel the same way I do: We
need to be more careful with him.

Piro and Duelfer turn to Saddam on the monitor.

PIRO
Is this because I didn't let you
sit in on the interrogation?

DUELFER
Vic didn't hold Iraq together for
thirty years by offering olive
branches. He did so by taking out
his enemies. The only way he's ever
going to cooperate is if we can
gain leverage over him. Not the
other way around.

Accepting the criticism, Piro relaxes his body language.

PIRO
You didn't tell them about what
happened on my run this morning ?

DUELFER
(reassuring)
What run?

Piro nods in appreciation, then Duelfer solemnly reports:

DUELFER (CONT'D)
George... You should know there was
another IED that went off in the
Green Zone.

On Duelfer and Piro, staring at their captive writing his
poetry and consuming more Doritos.

INT. BREAK ROOM/CAMP CROPPER - DAY

Irinaga starts loading quarters into a soda machine,
realizing he's short. Piro provides the remaining quarter.

IRINAGA
We're at war and they're still
collecting fucking quarters.

PIRO
How long have we been friends?

Irinaga loads the quarters in, pressing his choice.

IRINAGA
Fifteen years.

PIRO
Then you should know by now you can
tell me when I fuck up.

Irinaga collects his soda, then cracks it open.

IRINAGA
The fact that you know you're
fucking up is a good start.

PIRO
What about Felix and Stroud?

IRINAGA
With the breather from the Farm...
They're already looking for a way
to transfer.

PIRO
I'll talk to them. What about you?

IRINAGA
I'm here to the bitter end...
(half-joking)
Unless you pull that I-know-better-
than-you shit with me.

Piro looks to his friend, knows he's being dead serious.

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM/CAMP SLAYER - DAY

The Iraqi Man, covered in blisters and burns, wears a breathing mask with an EKG monitor and IV drip. Felix and Stroud are in OR scrubs. Stroud photographs his body while Felix goes through a file, dictating into a recorder:

FELIX
Toxicology report show traces of
ricin in his blood stream.

Stroud SNAPS ANOTHER PHOTO.

FELIX (CONT'D)
Burns and blisters appear to be
from heavy exposure to Mustard Gas.

Stroud SNAPS ANOTHER. Felix pauses recorder.

STROUD
Looks agonizing.

FELIX
(re: file)
He's lucky to be alive.

Felix hits record again.

FELIX (CONT'D)
Abrasions on his wrist indicate a
struggle prior to exposure.

The Iraqi's hand GRABS Stroud by the arm, YELLING IN ARABIC.

STROUD
Call the nurse.

The Iraqi SCREAMS LOUDER as SOLDIERS, wearing rubber gloves, enter to RESTRAIN HIM as the EKG goes off the charts.

FELIX
Careful... He's in shock.

The Iraqi keeps flailing as his body starts to SEIZURE OUT OF CONTROL until finally the EKG FLATLINES. Felix stands frozen, horrified. Tears stream from Stroud...

TIME CUT TO:

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM/CAMP SLAYER - DAY

Piro arrives with Irinaga to find Stroud, wrapped in a blanket being comforted by Felix. Piro offers them both tea as a peace offering, genuinely concerned:

PIRO
What happened...

Stroud quietly sips the tea, still in shock. Felix recaps, still emotional.

FELIX
He woke up, shouting. Angry.

PIRO
He didn't hurt you?

STROUD
No. He was trying to tell us something.

Piro sits down, notices the recorder and kindly asks:

PIRO
Can you play it for me?

Felix turns on the recording as Piro carefully listens to the Iraqi REPEATING HIMSELF.

PIRO (CONT'D)
Play it again.

Piro listens even more closely this time.

PIRO (CONT'D)
"God forgive me... I had no choice.
Please understand... I had no
choice... God forgive me... The
chemicals were only to protect...
Please God... He lied. He's a
Butcher. He is Iblis"... the Devil
incarnate.

The tape ends. SILENCE. Piro turns to Stroud.

PIRO (CONT'D)
Where is he now?

STROUD
Dead.

Irinaga tries to restrain his anger, sighing:

IRINAGA
When are we going to catch a
fucking break?

Piro masks his reaction with his hand over his mouth, then notices how affected Stroud and Felix are.

PIRO
Look, I want to apologize about
lashing out before, about starting
off on the wrong foot, but --

FELIX
You were doing so well.

PIRO
If you leave now, there's no way
I'm going to get him to talk.

Stroud puts down the tea.

STROUD
If we wanted to be punching bags,
Theresa and I would've stayed in
DC.

PIRO
Stay and I promise things will be
different.

FELIX

You have any idea how hard it is to
be two women in this testosterone
dust bowl?

PIRO

(genuine)

I don't.

FELIX

Then don't promise something that
you can't back up with a single
concrete fact.

PIRO

I read your report on proposed
interrogation methods for Vic...

Felix looks surprised.

STROUD

...They're not "enhanced" like the
ones the CIA has been using.

PIRO

True, but doesn't mean we can't
still fuck with him.

On the Team, gathering around to listen as a SEQUENCE BEGINS
TO UNFOLD as a deconstructed version of Mary J. Blige's
"Family Affair" subtly begins to play...

INT. GUARD POST/CAMP CROPPER - DAY

Two GUARDS stand at the ready outside of Saddam's cell, when
another set of Hispanic GUARDS relieve their post.

PIRO (V.O.)

He's gotten comfortable, so let's
start stripping that away...

HISPANIC GUARD #1

¿Qué envió tu esposa esta semana?

INT. SADDAM'S CELL/CAMP CROPPER - DAY

Saddam listens to the Guards speak, but clearly doesn't
understand what is being spoken. MUSIC CONTINUES.

HISPANIC GUARD #2 (O.C.)

*Más calcetines. Tengo hoyos de pie
todo el día.*

The GUARDS then enter to do an inspection of the cell.

PIRO (V.O.)
Then we make him lose track of day
and night.

One Guard removes the clock on the wall. The other takes the copy of 'The Old Man and the Sea, then promptly exit to:

INT. GUARD POST/CAMP CROPPER - DAY

The Guards close the door, handing over clock and book along with their watches to Felix and Stroud. MUSIC CONTINUES.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM/CAMP CROPPER - DAY

Piro, Irinaga, Stroud and Felix continue their conversation around the table with a bag of Doritos and Froot Loops.

FELIX
He's obsessed with processed foods.
I've seen him eat a family size bag
of Doritos in under ten minutes.

PIRO
What doesn't he like?

STROUD
(checks her notes)
Hates Froot Loops with a passion.

IRINAGA
Guy has spent so many years afraid
of being poisoned, Vacuum seal must
give him peace of mind.

PIRO
Then we take that away, too.

On Piro, adding Froot Loops to his list. MUSIC CONTINUES.

INT. SADDAM'S CELL/CAMP CROPPER - DAY

Food slot opens as a Guard slide in individual sized box of Froot Loops, already opened. Saddam turns furious, BANGING ON THE DOOR.

SADDAM
(in Arabic)
Open the door.

No response. Saddam BANGS HARDER. Again, in Arabic:

SADDAM (CONT'D)
*I will fuck your mother and make
you watch her scream.*

As Saddam continues to BANG. TIME CUT TO:

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM/CAMP CROPPER - DAY

Piro, Irinaga, Felix and Stroud watch ON THE MONITOR: a sullen Saddam turning the radio dial until stopping to hear the full version of "Family Affair" on the radio. He starts to drum his fingers on the table to the beat.

IRINAGA

Do you know he was a fan?

STROUD

Yeah. He strangely loves Mary J. Blige.

PIRO

Cut the music.

With the flip of a switch, Stroud ENDS THE MUSIC. Felix hands Piro a laptop. The SILENCE is sobering for everyone.

FELIX

The clip you asked for is cued and ready to play.

As Piro takes the laptop into:

INT. SADDAM'S CELL/CAMP CROPPER - DAY

Saddam sits with his arms folded in protest. Piro enters placing the laptop on the table.

SADDAM

I know what you're doing.

Piro shrugs, playing dumb.

PIRO

I'm sorry?

SADDAM

You cannot break me. Men far stronger than you have tried.

PIRO

Is there a problem with your cell?

SADDAM

(takes a beat)

The problem lies with my interrogator.

Piro sets up the laptop, while Saddam continues:

SADDAM (CONT'D)
You know I had to leave my country
when I was young. Earned a law
degree in Egypt. All before I could
return.

PIRO
You were in exile because you
failed to assassinate a political
opponent.

SADDAM
We all channel anger in different
ways, Mr. George. What did you do
with all your rage?

PIRO
I watched cartoons...

Saddam glares at Piro with contempt, who then hits play.

On the MONITOR: a clip from South Park: Bigger, Longer and
Uncut PLAYS as Saddam shakes his head in disagreement.

SADDAM
This is what Bush cares to show me?
Cartoons for children?

PIRO
Children aren't allowed to watch
this, but it did make eighty
million at the box office.

ON MONITOR: A Cartoon Version of Satan folds his arms and
looks at the floor, pissed.

SATAN [ON MONITOR]
Do you wanna know what I did today?

ON MONITOR: A Cartoon Version of Saddam lets out a sigh.

SADDAM HUSSEIN [ON MONITOR]
What did you do today, Satan?

SATAN [ON MONITOR]
You don't care.

SADDAM HUSSEIN [ON MONITOR]
Hey fellas. Relax. This whole
armageddon thing has got you all
stressed out. Let's make love.

SATAN [ON MONITOR]
Do you remember when you first got
here? We used to talk all night
long. Until the sun came up... We
would just lie in bed and TALK.

SADDAM HUSSEIN [ON MONITOR]
That's because I wanted to fuck
you, dumbass! Now hows aboot you
get those pants down!

SATAN [ON MONITOR]
Don't call me dumb.

SADDAM HUSSEIN [ON MONITOR]
I mean cute dumb. Now bend over.

SATAN [ON MONITOR]
How come you always want to make
love to me from behind? Is it
because you want to pretend I'm
somebody else?

SADDAM HUSSEIN [ON MONITOR]
Satan, your ass is gigantic and
red, who am I gonna pretend you
are? Helen Reddy?

Piro hits PAUSE. Saddam grimaces with his arms crossed.

SADDAM
Bullshit western propaganda.

PIRO
There's hundreds of hours more.
I've seen it all. And soon Iraqis
will, too. One way or another. What
you say here could be the last
chance to define your legacy before
it spirals out of control.

SADDAM
You have children, Mr. George?
(off Piro, stiff)
I know you wouldn't insult me with
a lie.

PIRO
A boy.

SADDAM
Poor child... I bet his father has
never taken him to see Beirut. To
be surrounded by his own people.

PIRO

Perhaps after this is over, it will
be safe there again, too.

SADDAM

That's right. It'd be a shame to
have your son brutally murdered by
enemy forces as mine were.

PIRO

I was told your sons were given the
chance to surrender.

SADDAM

Then they would be cowards like you
and your family.

PIRO

I was also told you did not resist
being taken by US forces.

Saddam turns arch toward his Captor, raising his voice:

SADDAM

Like Nebuchadnezzar and the ancient
kings that birthed the modern
world, history will never forget I
ruled over the divided factions of
Iraq when no other man could.

(stands)

I alone stood against the Bushes in
America, Khomeini in Iran and the
entire United Nations. Only Saddam.
President of Iraq.

PIRO

But you're no longer president.

Saddam grumbles, then SLAMS HIS HAND DOWN ON THE TABLE.

SADDAM

Enough. I'm done playing your
games. Now, you play mine.

Saddam takes the Froot Loops, pouring the box onto the table.

INT. DINING ROOM/HOTEL/BAGHDAD - DAY

Irinaga carries a plate full from the buffet to join Piro,
Felix and Stroud eating breakfast. TV plays above the bar.

IRINAGA

Six days. Still no food.

FELIX
He's testing our resolve.

On TV: George W. Bush, wearing a tux, jokes from a podium at the White House Correspondence Dinner.

BUSH [ON TV]
Those weapons of mass destruction
have got to be somewhere...

The AUDIENCE LAUGHS, so does Irinaga.

STROUD
You don't joke about war.

Irinaga regrets his pleasure.

IRINAGA
We found one lab. We'll find the
rest. Then this will all start to
make sense again.

STROUD
They said the same thing about
Vietnam.

Piro sees the tension growing as Duelfer appears.

DUELFER
Bolton wants a word.

PIRO
(to his Team)
Let's not let Washington get
between us, okay?

As Piro rises, he signs the bill for his Team.

INT. BOLTON'S OFFICE/US EMBASSY/GREEN ZONE - DAY

A stately, but unpersonalized office space with windows.

DUELFER
So, they finally gave you windows.

Bolton is reviewing a document, glancing at Duelfer and Piro sitting together across the desk.

BOLTON
General Dayton said it was safer to
work out of the Green Zone until
the insurgency was under control.

Bolton goes back reviewing the document. Piro waits anxiously for a response until finally Bolton closes the folder grasping his hands together.

BOLTON (CONT'D)
Six weeks and all you've learned is
that Saddam likes eating Cheetos?

PIRO
Doritos, sir.

BOLTON
I don't care if he jerks off to
Little Debbie. Where's the WMD?

PIRO
We've found that --

DUELFER
-- Our investigation is going to
take more time than we thought.

BOLTON
There is no time. Only polls that
don't like our President... The war
hangs in the balance while you two
sit there letting Saddam go off on
a fucking hunger strike.

PIRO
We're not at the point yet where he
can be force fed. The Geneva
Conventions --

BOLTON
You think the jihadists give a shit
about the Conventions?
(leans in)
I don't care if you have to stick a
feeding tube up his asshole to keep
him conscious long enough to tell
us where the chemical and
biological weapons are hidden.

Duelfer nods to Piro, who reluctantly pulls out of his jacket pocket the iPod recording the conversation. Bolton loses some of his swagger.

BOLTON (CONT'D)
Very clever, Agent Piro. Fine. Keep
your recording. And I'll keep my
eye on both of you. Those
conversations with your wife Mehri
will be watched extra closely.

PIRO
Are we done?

BOLTON
We'll be done when you deliver the WMD that our government knows are buried in this godforsaken land.

As Piro and Duelfer rise to exit to:

INT. HALLWAY/US EMBASSY/GREEN ZONE - DAY

Piro closes the door, walking with Duelfer, checking to make sure they are, in fact, alone.

PIRO
Why didn't you tell him about the ricin and mustard gas from Al Abud?

DUELFER
We need allies first or our intelligence could be used as political propaganda...
(off Piro, surprised)
Oh, don't act so innocent. This is a messaging war whether we like it or not. And frankly, our side is losing.

PIRO
Which side is that?

DUELFER
(dodges)
I'm going back to DC for a few days. The Deputy Director at Langley is a friend. I think he'll be able to buy us more time.

PIRO
I thought we were going to look at the latest IED blast?

DUELFER
You are. I have a plane to catch...
Just keep me posted and Vic breathing until I get back.

On Piro, taken aback, watching Duelfer walk out the door.

EXT. SOUK/BAGHDAD - DAY

The site of the IED explosion where the detonated car remains charred to a crisp.

Nearby VENDORS gather their belongings to recover. Piro arrives, wearing a bullet proof vest, to find Wisdom and Clary leading the SOLDIERS securing the area.

PIRO
Sgt. Wisdom... Special Agent Piro.

WISDOM
(shakes hand)
Duelfer said you'd be coming.

PIRO
(re: bombing)
Can you tell me what happened?

CLARY
My buddy would still be alive if we had better armor on our Humvees.
That's what fucking happened.

PIRO
How many caught in the blast?

WISDOM
Four of ours. Half a dozen of theirs. Fifteen more hit by shrapnel. Insurgents are getting better at building explosives. This one had a remote trigger.

Widsom tosses Piro what's left of the remote.

PIRO
What about witnesses to ID the bomber?

WISDOM
No one is talking to us, Agent Piro.

CLARY
I thought we'd be getting a hero's welcome for liberating them...

Piro refrains from responding, instead handing back the remote to Clary.

WISDOM
You're more than welcome to look around.

Piro nods, walking into the heart of the blast zone. As he notices IRAQIS carrying out BODIES from under the rubble, Piro stands watching as the IMAGE TURNS INTO...

EXT. SOUK/BEIRUT - DAY (FLASHBACK)

FROM THE POV OF SOMEONE RUNNING FAST DOWN THE STREET.

Reveal an emotional Young Piro, grasping a one lira note, sprinting ahead of his Father, who calls out with concern:

LAZAR SR.
(in Arabic)
Slow down.

Suddenly, a LOUD BOOM RINGS OUT followed by PEOPLE fleeing in panic toward the other direction. Instead of turning away, Young Piro pushes on, desperate to know what happened.

LAZAR SR. (CONT'D)
Georgie, come back here.

Turning a corner, he finds the Market has been wiped out by an explosion. PEOPLE carry out bloody AMPUTEES while the charred BODIES lay untouched. The Young Piro is frozen, watching black smoke rising from the rubble. CUT TO BLACK.

INT. OFFICE/MAIN HALL/CAMP SLAYER/VICTORY COMPLEX - NIGHT

A bare bureaucratic space, lit only by fluorescents. Piro stares frozen, like a child, observing on the MONITOR: a 2003 CBS pre-War Dan Rather interview with Saddam.

RATHER [ON TV]
You are suggesting, you're urging a debate with President Bush? On television?

SADDAM'S TRANSLATOR [ON TV]
Yes. That's my proposal.

RATHER [ON TV]
Well, that's an interesting...

SADDAM'S TRANSLATOR [ON TV]
The American people, as we see on films -- are great. On films, we see that the Americans, when they are challenged for a duel, they will not -- decline the -- the offer. As the Arabs would... We are not asking for a duel. But...

(MORE)

SADDAM'S TRANSLATOR [ON TV] (CONT'D)
We are proposing that we should support the Americans, and -- We are asking for an opportunity to be seen by the Americans, the Iraqis, and all of the people in the world in a debate that is shown on television, between myself and Mr. Bush, directly, to be watched.

RATHER [ON TV]
This is not a joke.

SADDAM'S TRANSLATOR [ON TV]
No, this is something proposed in earnest.

Piro pauses the tape on Saddam, staring at his face until...

IRINAGA
You keep staring at that mustache and you're going to go blind.

In the doorway, Irinaga cracks a smile at his own joke.

PIRO
Did you know Saddam challenged Bush to a debate over WMD before we took Baghdad?

IRINAGA
Debate? No, that'd be more like a bar brawl. And we'd still end in the same place.

PIRO
I don't know... More time I spend with him. The more skeptical I am.

IRINAGA
That's cause you've been sitting at that desk without a square meal.

PIRO
Where are Stroud and Felix?

IRINAGA
I sent them back to the hotel... Come on, cafeteria just opened.

As Irinaga leads Piro to:

INT. CAFETERIA/VICTORY COMPLEX - NIGHT

Piro sits quietly, lost in thought, while Irinaga consumes his military issued dinner and trying to make conversation by sliding a small wooden bird across the table.

IRINAGA
It's called a Chukar Partridge. I
got one to bring home from this old
wood carver in the Green Zone.

Piro studies the detail on the wooden bird.

IRINAGA (CONT'D)
You think Lazar would want one?

PIRO
I don't want Lazar to have anything
to do with this place.

As Irinaga takes back the wooden bird, Roukey and Baker approach with their trays.

ROUKEY
Mind if we join ya, fellas?

IRINAGA
It's a free country...
(stops himself)
Well, almost.

ROUKEY
Baker and I are throwing a little
get together tonight, thought we'd
extend an invite.

Baker nods in agreement.

PIRO
Sorry. We'll be working late.

Piro shoots Irinaga a look to gain his complicity.

ROUKEY
Can I say something out of turn?

PIRO
...Sure.

ROUKEY
Baker and I have been watching you
since you got here. You're a good
man, George, but you're too...
(MORE)

ROUKEY (CONT'D)
(searching for words)
Fucking nice for Iraq. Am I right,
Baker?

Baker nods kindly to confirm the truth.

ROUKEY (CONT'D)
The world don't need nice. We need
kind, generous, thoughtful, but not
nice. Nice is bullshit.

PIRO
Maybe you don't know me as well as
you think you do.

ROUKEY
I know you're polite. But in war,
only thing that matters is doing
what's right.

IRINAGA
And what's that platitude supposed
to mean?

ROUKEY
Means you're drinking with us
tonight. Baker is DJing.

PIRO
I wish we could --

ROUKEY
See? More of that nice shit again.
So, I'm not going to be so nice.
You two are coming with us.

On Piro, looking to Irinaga with no other option.

INT. MESS HALL/CAMP VICTORY - NIGHT

Baker is on a laptop connected to two speakers, pretending to scratch a record and motioning for the Soldiers to the dance floor. "DJ" Baker is now an extrovert as Outkast's "Bombs Over Baghdad" revs up. Irinaga and Piro stand with drinks in the corner, watching Roukey jump up and down in the CROWD.

IRINAGA
No keeping up with infantry.

PIRO
(unable to hear)
What?

IRINAGA
Never mind.

PIRO
I'm going to tell Roukey we're
calling it.

IRINAGA
You go back out there, you're not
coming back.

Piro dismisses the warning as Irinaga playfully waves goodbye. On the dance floor, Roukey clutches a bottle of whiskey while dancing. The MUSIC PLAYS EVEN LOUDER.

PIRO
Thanks for getting us out tonight,
but we're about to head out.

Roukey motions for Piro to repeat himself:

PIRO (CONT'D)
I said: Thanks for --

Roukey puts his arm around Piro, handing him the bottle.

ROUKEY
You're not going anywhere brother
until you drink your medicine.

Piro tries to find Irinaga, but he's long gone. Roukey elevates the bottle for Piro to down. Once Piro accepts, Roukey starts break dancing terribly without a care in the world. Piro gathers enough liquid courage to jump up and down, letting go for the first time since arriving in Iraq.

EXT. POOL/CAMP VICTORY - NIGHT

Outside of the Mess Hall, Piro, Roukey, Baker and the other Soldiers gather, stripped down to their underwear, in the swimming pool. All clearly drunk and still drinking.

ROUKEY
Tell us one thing.

PIRO
I can't.

ROUKEY
Come on. What are you going to tell
your kid one day when he asks about
all this?

BAKER

(genuine)

I want my boy to know I served with honor in this impossible chaos, trying to help as many as I could.

ROUKEY

Now spill the beans, Agent Piro...

Piro looks around to make sure they are alone.

PIRO

Okay... He's a clean freak.

The Soldiers LAUGH.

PIRO (CONT'D)

No, I mean he loves using baby wipes to clean his cell, wipe down all his food. Obsessive Compulsive.

ROUKEY

You're fucking with us.

Piro raises his hands and shrugs his shoulder. One of the Soldiers offers Piro a pill, which he waives off.

BAKER

They say too much hygiene can weaken the immune system.

Everyone nods in agreement. Baker then turns serious.

BAKER (CONT'D)

What's gonna happen to him?

PIRO

I honestly don't know.

When Piro is not looking, the same Soldier decides to slips the pill into Piro's beer. Roukey raises his drink.

ROUKEY

To the great unknown...

All the MEN cheers. As Piro drinks up, then leans back and closes his eyes for a moment, BLACKING OUT until...

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - UNKNOWN

Piro awakens in a suit and tie loosened sitting across from Saddam, also suit and tie loosened, as though they are two men on a business trip. SNOW falls outside in the background.

Slowly fading up, they both hear Fat Boy Slim's "Weapon of Choice". Saddam stands up, walks forward, then without warning begins DANCING TO THE MUSIC. Piro looks confused, but then suddenly starts DANCING against his own will, in perfect step with Saddam.

Yes, this is Piro's dream choreographed as an homage to the 2002 Spike Jonze music video with Christopher Walken.

Saddam and Piro jump onto one of the tables to tap dance together, then Saddam leaps off as Piro dance-chases him in separate elevators upstairs.

Piro tries to stop Saddam from jumping off the second balcony into the lobby. But Saddam pulls Piro with him as they both end up taking flight. Now, they are almost dance-fighting in the air.

SNOW STARTS FALLING ON THEIR HEADS. Piro tastes the flakes to realize the snow is really powdered sugar. He then looks down to see WMD WAR HEADS with long female legs in high heels appear dancing like synchronized swimmers.

The image distracts Piro long enough that Saddam is able to KICK PIRO SO HARD HE FALLS DOWN THROUGH THE GROUND PAST THE WMD DANCERS, GOING DEEPER INTO THE DARKNESS UNTIL...

INT. PIRO'S ROOM/HOTEL/GREEN ZONE/BAGHDAD - DAY

KNOCK AT THE DOOR. A hungover Piro, still wearing the same clothes from last night, leaps out of bed to collect himself before opening the door. Irinaga stands waiting.

IRINAGA
I tried to warn you about infantry.

Piro rubs his temples, feeling a splitting headache.

PIRO
Don't gloat. It's unbecoming.

Irinaga tosses Piro a bottle of ibuprofen.

IRINAGA
You're going to want to turn on
your TV.

Piro downs the ibuprofen like M&Ms as he powers on the television to see a breaking report on ABC NEWS. IMAGES OF FOUR DEAD AMERICANS strung up, hanging from a bridge.

IRINAGA (CONT'D)
Fallujah just turned into hot zone.

Piro looks away from the startling image, then turns back toward to Irinaga with a fearful question.

PIRO
Was it chemical --

IRINAGA
No. Insurgents blew up a Blackwater Humvee, then hung the bodies.

On TV: Iraqis celebrate, chanting in Arabic. Irinaga looks to Piro for a translation.

IRINAGA (CONT'D)
Do you know what they are saying?

PIRO
"We are from Fallujah. This is our work... Fallujah is the cemetery for America."

IRINAGA
Christ.

Piro pockets the photo of Lazar on his desk, then gathers his weapon and sunglasses.

PIRO
I need to call Mehri.

IRINAGA
What's wrong with your phone?

PIRO
Bolton said they're monitoring me... I'll meet you at Cropper.

As Piro heads out to:

EXT. STREET/GREEN ZONE/BAGHDAD - DAY

Piro walks carefully, checking to make sure no one followed him before picking up a payphone and dialing.

MEHRI (O.C.)
(clearly, upset)
George?

PIRO
Are you crying?

MEHRI (O.C.)
(pushes back)
You'd be bawling too if you thought
your husband could end up strung up
and burnt alive.

PIRO
Baghdad is much safer than
Fallujah.

MEHRI (O.C.)
That's not what the news says.
Stores are selling video tapes of
the killings in the Green Zone.

PIRO
You don't have to worry.

MEHRI (O.C.)
Then help me not worry. Tell me
something good.

Piro looks around, trying to satisfy her request and spots an ad for "Burger King: Coming Soon to Baghdad Airport".

PIRO
Looks like they're getting a Burger
King here soon.

MEHRI (O.C.)
That's not funny.

PIRO (O.C.)
It's a little funny. And true.

There is a beat between them until:

MEHRI (O.C.)
Your mom wants to talk to you.

PIRO
You don't have to --

FRANCIA (O.C.)
(dramatic)
Oh, Georgie.

PIRO
(stoic)
Hi, mama.

FRANCIA (O.C.)
Whatever you're doing: Finish up
and come home.

PIRO
As soon as I can. How's dad?
(another beat)
Still not talking with me?

FRANCIA (O.C.)
You know what he thinks about this
foolishness... We left Lebanon to
escape the war, not to have you run
back toward it.

PIRO
We've been over this: There is
nowhere left to run. The Towers.
The Pentagon. The airlines. The
world's problems are our problems.

FRANCIA (O.C.)
But why does it have to be you?

PIRO
Because there is no one else. They
need me --

FRANCIA (O.C.)
So does your family. Georgie, stop
trying to be a hero. Just be a
father. Be a husband. Be a son.

PIRO
I'm doing this for Lazar, mama.

FRANCIA (O.C.)
All Lazar needs is to know when he
will see his father again.

There is a pause before Piro poses an honest question:

PIRO
Do you ever think: what would have
happened if we stayed in Beirut?

FRANCIA (O.C.)
Never. We did what we had to in
order to protect our family.

PIRO
So am I.

FRANCIA (O.C.)
To'oborni, Georgie.

PIRO
Please put Mehri back on.

FRANCIA (O.C.)
To'oborni: "You bury us."

PIRO
I can't do this right now.

FRANCIA (O.C.)
Not the other way around.

PIRO
I have to go.

Piro hangs up, eyes glassy. He quickly wipes his face, checking again to see if anyone is watching. After letting out a sigh, Piro puts on his iPod, listening to his Son:

LAZAR (V.O.)
Baba, did you know that Saddam's name means "the one who confronts"?

On Piro, summoning enough strength to go.

INT. SADDAM'S CELL/CAMP CROPPER - DAY

A thinner version of Saddam, beard growing, sits muttering quietly to himself. Piro enters as Saddam collects himself.

SADDAM
Good afternoon, George.

Piro slides a bag of Doritos across the table.

PIRO
Thought you might be hungry.

SADDAM
How thoughtful...
(slides back the bag)
But fasting has brought me peace.

Piro opens the bag and starts eating them. Saddam nods, detecting something off about him.

SADDAM (CONT'D)
Shame about the Americans in Fallujah.

PIRO
(off guard)
Where did you hear that?

SADDAM
Absolutely brutal. Showing those images in the news. I hope your son is not allowed to see such savagery, but then again, maybe he'd understand what must be done for Arab sovereignty.

PIRO
I'm not going to ask, again.

SADDAM
(reveals)
I don't need to speak Spanish to figure out what your guards are talking about...

Piro looks toward the door where the Guards stand, realizing Saddam has been gathering information from them. Piro rises.

SADDAM (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

PIRO
Letting you return to your "peace".

SADDAM
That was your plan, George? Win me over with a bag of Doritos? You must be really desperate. Is Bush sending you home already?

Piro stops moving.

SADDAM (CONT'D)
Remember: while you stand there the insurgents keep getting stronger and all those supposed WMDs remain unaccounted for.

PIRO
I almost forgot. I brought you pictures of Baghdad.

Piro reaches into his pocket and starts laying out photos on the table. The images show: Soldiers and Iraqis toppling over a giant statue of Saddam Hussein, then Iraqis surround the fallen bronze Saddam in celebration. Piro sits back down.

PIRO (CONT'D)
This was shortly after the Coalition Forces took the city.

Saddam studies the photo, then tosses them disinterested.

SADDAM
Pathetic. Clearly, staged for the
camera with these paid actors.

PIRO
What makes you so sure?

SADDAM
Because that's exactly what I would
do if I were Bush. More propaganda.

PIRO
Or maybe you know your support is
gone, Mr. Saddam...
(collects the photos)
You didn't respond before when I
mentioned the Halabja chemical
attack in '88. Perhaps your people
were tired of living in fear that
they might be gassed again?

Piro offers the photos to Saddam, who does not accept.

SADDAM
You're not in a position to accuse
me of anything, George.

PIRO
I believe you were trying to tell
me the truth about WMD before. If
you cooperate --

SADDAM
You don't need me. You have your
tanks and your soldiers to decide
whatever "truth" you desire.

PIRO
You were the President of Iraq for
thirty years. Nothing happened
without your say so. The Chicken
Farm was a dead end. Tell me what
I'm missing?

SADDAM
I've had time to read the classics.
You are familiar with Tolstoy:
"Truth, like gold, is to be
obtained not by its growth, but by
washing away from it all that is
not gold." What else has the farm
been linked to?

PIRO
Insurgents. Part of the Al Abud
Network...

SADDAM
No. Al Abud is de minimis.

PIRO
The farm had no other connection to
you, your family or the government.

SADDAM
Wash away the dirt. Why would the
insurgents use that location?

PIRO
A personal connection? Or maybe a
way to hide --

SADDAM
Insurgents are hiding in plain
sight. They chose the farm for its
significance.

PIRO
Significant to who --

SADDAM
No. Now, it's your turn, George. I
can't be swayed with snacks or
privileges. You said after the car
bomb, your parents were ready to
abandon their lives in Beirut. Why
-- ?

Piro sits in silence.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM/CAMP CROPPER - DAY

Felix and Stroud turn from the MONITOR to each other.

FELIX
...He's toying with him.

IRINAGA
Give him space.

INT. SADDAM'S CELL/CAMP CROPPER - DAY

Piro looks off to find the painful memory.

SADDAM
Tell me. I tell you. That was our
arrangement.

PIRO

The bomb destroyed a spice market
where we'd go for things like
walnuts, sugar. They didn't feel it
was safe for me, anymore.

SADDAM

What were those ingredients for?

PIRO

Ma'moul. Cookies my mother used to
make all the time.

SADDAM

A boy does not lose his innocence
over cookies.

PIRO

Where are the remaining labs?

SADDAM

Finish the story, first.

PIRO

I will, after --

SADDAM

No. Time is not your friend,
anymore... You will finish now.

Piro takes a breath before recounting the painful memory:

PIRO

My father was running late. He was
always late.

SADDAM

(pushing)

That made you angry...

PIRO

I was furious. I yelled every
obscenity I knew, vowed never to
speak with him again.

SADDAM

What did you do to get even?

PIRO

I decided to sprint ahead. To get
away. To do the opposite of
everything he said. I didn't notice
the loud booming sound until I saw
all the bodies being pulled out.

SADDAM
What did you do?

PIRO
Nothing at first. I couldn't move, watching the dead, the injured. But when I saw my father coming, I ran toward the market to do something. Moving the rubble. My heart was pounding. But I had to --

SADDAM
And what did you find?

PIRO
Another boy. Just like me. Dead. A few minutes earlier and it would've been me, not him, on the ground.

SADDAM
What happened to the boy?

PIRO
It wasn't the blast that killed him. It was the building collapsing. I tried to pull him out. I tried so hard to lift the heavy wall. But I couldn't --

SADDAM
Until your father showed up.

PIRO
He had to pull me away. I couldn't understand why he wouldn't help.

SADDAM
Do you know what ever became of the boy's family?

(Piro is silent)
You think if you can find these weapons you'll have saved another market? Another family? Another boy from the rubble?

PIRO
(of course)
Why do you think I am here?

SADDAM
I want to hear you say it.

Piro responds, defiant and emotional:

PIRO
Tell me where the labs are, Mr.
Saddam.

SADDAM
You want to know?

Saddam stands, equally defiant, about to speak... when suddenly he grabs his own chest, collapsing to the ground.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM/CAMP CROPPER - DAY

Irinaga, Stroud and Felix eyes go wide, in shock. ON THE MONITOR: Saddam lies on the floor.

IRINAGA
Shit, shit, shit.

On Irinaga, scrambling for the phone.

INT. SADDAM'S CELL/CAMP CROPPER - DAY

Piro rushes over to make sure he still breathing.

PIRO
Get a medic.

As the Guards rush to unlock the door to assist...

EXT. STREET/WASHINGTON DC - DAY

Capitol Hill lurks in the background. Duelfer, suit and tie, carries a briefcase, exiting a nondescript government building on his phone. INTERCUT WITH:

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM/CAMP CROPPER - DAY

Phone RINGS. Several times. Until Stroud finally answers.

STROUD
Hello?

DUELFER
I have only a few minutes between meetings, but wanted to see how things are going over there?

On Stroud, not looking forward to answering the question.

DUELFER (CONT'D)
Carol? Are you there?

On Duefler, waiting for a response. End of Intercut.

EXT. HELIPAD/CAMP CROPPER - DAY

Saddam is taken out on a stretcher and loaded into a medevac helicopter by FIRST RESPONDERS. Piro climbs aboard.

INT. HALLWAY/SADDAM GENERAL/BAGHDAD - DAY

A mural of Saddam can be seen as DOCTORS surround Saddam being wheeled on a stretcher into the ER for resuscitation. Piro trails until a NURSE holds him back.

On the wall, Piro notices a map of Iraq, realizing...

TIME CUT TO:

EXT. SHACK/OUTSIDE OF BAGHDAD - DAY

Chyron: Operation Rio Grande.

Roukey and Baker, armed with M-4 carbon rifles, lean up against their Humvee for cover facing the Shack.

ROUKEY
Who called this in?

BAKER
Agent Piro got the idea for us to search through every UN inspection site from the nineties.

Three other SOLDIERS are standing armed and ready as Baker looks through binoculars.

ROUKEY
Any sign of Hajis?

BAKER
Target is clear.

ROUKEY
(to other Soldiers)
Remember: we do not touch a fucking thing.

The Unit puts on their hazmat suits, followed by their masks. Roukey raises his arm, giving the signal to move in. Two of the Soldiers point their assault rifles forward as THEY RACE TOWARD THE SHACK. Roukey KNOCKS DOWN THE DOOR.

ROUKEY (CONT'D)
Clear.

Baker remains at the Humvee as the rest enter into:

INT. SHACK/OUTSIDE OF BAGHDAD - DAY

The windows are blacked out. Roukey and the other Soldiers shine the flashlights atop their weapons to secure the space.

ROUKEY
(into walkie)
Deep Dish, this is Sandman. Site is secure. Over.

BAKER (O.C.)
Roger, Sandman. Over.

Roukey shines his light on a crude laboratory setup that surrounds a crude artillery shell covered in loose wires.

ROUKEY
(into mic)
Uh, Deep Dish... I think we just hit another jackpot.

On Roukey, his eyes growing wide at the setup.

EXT. SHACK/OUTSIDE OF BAGHDAD - DAY

Baker keeps a watchful eye for any enemy combatants.

ROUKEY (O.C.)
We need to call Duelfer.

Baker reaches for the satellite phone, realizing he left the comm inside the Humvee. As he goes to open the door...

SHIFT TO POV THROUGH THE SNIPER SCOPE: The Humvee door blocks the line of sight to fire on Baker.

We reveal Hassan watching through the scope attached to a military grade rifle as Ali keeps watch. Hassan pulls back, breaking down the weapon. The two flee again unnoticed.

INT. WAITING ROOM/ER/SADDAM GENERAL/BAGHDAD - NIGHT

Piro, arms crossed, sleeping in his chair when the Nurse wakes him with a nudge:

NURSE
You can see him now.

Piro, exhausted, collects himself, then follows the Nurse down the hallway.

INT. SADDAM'S ROOM/SADDAM GENERAL/BAGHDAD - NIGHT

The Nurse takes Saddam's vitals while the ex-Dictator clearly enjoys the female company. Piro stands in the doorway.

PIRO
You look better than I was
expecting.

The Nurse leaves with his chart.

SADDAM
Seeing a full bodied woman always
breathes life into me.

Piro is in awe of Saddam's unbreakable spirit.

SADDAM (CONT'D)
Oh come on, George. You're telling
me you would not fuck her?

PIRO
I'm going to be honest, I never
thought we'd have a conversation
about who I'd sleep with.

SADDAM
You can tell a lot about a man by
who he wants to put his cock in...

Piro doesn't know how to respond. Saddam continues, enjoying his temporary freedom.

SADDAM (CONT'D)
Have I ever told you the story
about my eight body doubles?

PIRO
You told CIA the doubles were a
myth.

SADDAM
Listen... One day I had my deputy
prime minister Tariq Aziz call them
in for an urgent meeting. He says,
"I have some good news and bad
news." So naturally they ask for
the good news first. Aziz tells
them, "The good news is that there
was assassination attempt on our
President, but Saddam is alive so
you all still have jobs."

(MORE)

SADDAM (CONT'D)

The men are relieved by the news and ask, "So, what is the bad news?" Aziz replies, "Our leader has lost an arm."

Saddam laughs at his own joke. Piro can't help but smile.

SADDAM (CONT'D)

So, will we be driving back through Baghdad this time?

Piro shifts back to being more restrained.

PIRO

Don't push your luck.

As Piro exits, GUARDS enter to keep watch on Saddam.

INT. HELICOPTER/BAGHDAD - NIGHT

Piro sits next to Saddam, who is restrained and wearing a blindfold, as they fly over the city at night. Piro looks at his Captive with a moment of empathy, deciding to reach forward and remove the blindfold. Saddam locks eyes with Piro, who gestures for the ex-dictator to look down.

From SADDAM'S POV: Baghdad is illuminated brightly by street lights and car traffic flowing across the city.

As Saddam's face grows emotional to see Baghdad alive and well without his leadership.

INT. SADDAM'S CELL/CAMP CROPPER - NIGHT

The door opens. Saddam is brought inside. Guards remove his chains as Piro stands over his Captive.

SADDAM

I have decided to start eating again... for your sake.

Piro doesn't quite know how to respond.

SADDAM (CONT'D)

There's no more for either of us to say on this matter.

PIRO

Goodnight.

As Piro holds out a copy of Hemingway's 'The Old Man and the Sea,' Saddam gladly accepts.

INT. BASKETBALL COURT/CAMP VICTORY - NIGHT

Piro dribbles against Irinaga on the lone court at the base. Military planes fly by overhead. Irinaga easily outplays Piro, gaining a lay up. Both men are out of breath.

IRINAGA
You would think I'd get bored
beating you and --

Irinaga tosses Piro the ball.

PIRO
Okay. HORSE?

IRINAGA
Honor is all yours.

Piro shoots a successful three pointer.

PIRO
Easier when I don't have you
grinding up against me.

Irinaga matches the three pointer.

IRINAGA
Have you heard the one about the
Jap and an Ay-rab playing
basketball under the same flag in
the middle of a war zone?

Piro fails to land a successful lay up.

PIRO
The American Dream, right?

Irinaga takes the ball to swish another three pointer. Piro takes back possession.

IRINAGA
Yeah, don't think my parents could
ever dream I'd be in the Middle
East.
(Piro misses)
That's an H for you.

PIRO
If it's any consolation -- neither
did mine.

IRINAGA
How's Mehri holding up through all
this? Debbie is a wreck.

PIRO
Really? I thought your wife would
enjoy the vacation.

Irinaga swishes a three pointer, wiping away Piro's smirk.

PIRO (CONT'D)
Hard to tell how Mehri is doing
over the phone.

IRINAGA
Have you told her about anything on
the ground here?

Piro tries the same shot, but misses.

PIRO
No, it'd only upset her more.

IRINAGA
That's H-O.
(swishes another)
Don't know about you, but if I were
talking to a mass murderer every
day I'd need to talk to someone.

Piro misses yet again, ignoring the question.

IRINAGA (CONT'D)
Fine. Maybe you can tell me how you
knew where to send Roukey and Baker
to find the second chemical lab...

PIRO
How do you think?

IRINAGA
You put a lot of faith in Vic.

PIRO
I know he may seem difficult, but
he is helping... in his own way.

Irinaga misses his shot, caught off guard by Piro's comment.

IRINAGA
You actually like him or is that
just part of the act?

PIRO
I'm not going to dignify that with
a response. That's H.

IRINAGA
Don't bullshit me, Piro.

Piro looks around to make sure they are alone.

PIRO
The truth is when I look at him, I think if I didn't end up in the States, I could have ended up on the other side of this war.

IRINAGA
What are you talking about?

PIRO
You heard what I said about Beirut. What if I hadn't left? I might have been a soldier, a trafficker... an insurgent. People can do anything when they need to survive.

As Piro bounces the ball, then shoots to score.

INT. SCIF/CAMP SLAYER - DAY

Duelfer stands furious, pacing back and forth before stopping to SIGH in frustration. Roukey and Baker sit across at the table. Piro watches off to the side, waiting his turn.

DUELFER
What did I ask you to do while I was away?
(beat)
Monitor new sites, not break down doors for search and seizure.

ROUKEY
Agent Piro asked us --

DUELFER
You two are supposed to be my scalpels, not mindless jackhammers. That's why we coordinate... If the Al Abud Network didn't know we were onto them, they certainly do now.

BAKER
What can we do?

DUELFER
We're moving up the next round of site sweeps. Get the other units ready for another haul. And pray Al Abud won't be waiting for us.

Roukey and Baker rise, salute and exit. Duelfer takes a seat to face Piro, who eats a bag of Doritos.

DUELFER (CONT'D)
And you. What the hell happened to keeping me up-to-date?

PIRO
I'm sorry. Things got... heated. I take it Washington did not go well.

DUELFER
Patience is wearing thin. Pressure is building high. And I hear you and Saddam have become pals.

PIRO
I wouldn't say we're watching the Giants home opener.

DUELFER
Then why aren't you pressing him?

PIRO
We found another lab, Charles.

DUELFER
No, you found scraps he's feeding us. We have no definitive proof of a WMD stockpile.

PIRO
I'm sorry, are you suddenly on Bolton's side?

DUELFER
I like you, George. But you have to understand what we're facing back home: Everything we do here can be used against us. Washington doesn't want to find out that you've been laughing at Vic's jokes... Bolton isn't the only one watching.

PIRO
Let them.

Piro gets up to leave. Duelfer is put off by the bravado:

DUELFER
You've the FBI thinking you're an Arab. The Arabs think you're FBI. You've got everyone fooled. Don't start fooling yourself, George.

As Piro exits, Duelfer stands uncertain...

TIME CUT TO:

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM/CAMP CROPPER - DAY

Stroud turns on the Monitor to reveal Saddam outside gardening. Duelfer enters, looks to them, alarmed:

DUELFER
You gave him a garden?

STROUD
Doctor said the hunger strike put him at risk for heart failure, so we were told to find a way to lower stress and up his cardio.

FELIX
Piro's idea.

Duefler spots Piro approaching Saddam on the Monitor.

EXT. SADDAM'S GARDEN/CAMP CROPPER - DAY

Saddam finishes packing the dirt around his plant and looks up at Piro standing over him.

SADDAM
If the spring brings enough rain, licorice should be ready in a few weeks to make tea.

PIRO
You were right. The Chicken Farm led us to another UN inspected site. I brought a map with new sites to review with you.

SADDAM
Perhaps you could convince your superiors to let me have a bee hive. I would share the honey harvest with you and the guards.

PIRO
I can look into that.

Piro sits, laying out a map of Baghdad with several markers. Saddam looks disinterested.

SADDAM
I thought we were past patronizing, George. I thought we were friends.

PIRO
A friend would understand I am
short on time.

Piro taps the map, which Saddam glances over.

SADDAM
You have been a busy...

PIRO
This is coming from high up.

SADDAM
Bush sent this?

Piro nods, lying. Saddam gets closer to review the map locations, nodding almost pleased to himself.

SADDAM (CONT'D)
What do you think the goals of the
insurgents are?

PIRO
They fight as loyalists to you.

SADDAM
Even more than that...

PIRO
They're afraid of losing Iraq's
sovereignty.

SADDAM
Correct. The insurgents you call Al
Abud are scared and frightened. You
would do well to have Iraqi
leadership engage with them before
there is more bloodshed.

PIRO
Perhaps, but that won't stop the
raids scheduled for tomorrow.

SADDAM
You're wasting your time.

PIRO
Why is that?

Saddam takes on a grim tone.

SADDAM
Listen to me: You will find only
death and destruction out there.

Piro tries to get a read on Saddam's face, struggling to decipher his message.

SADDAM (CONT'D)
I realized that I became President of Iraq in the same year your family left behind Lebanon. What month was that?

PIRO
December.

SADDAM
I took office in June. You see Lebanon became a proxy war for Iraq's fight with the Iranians. I funded weapons, soldiers and explosives. I may have even been the one to blow up your market. I may have been the one to save others. You and I understand the nature of conflict... No good will come from your search tomorrow.

PIRO
What are you so afraid we'll find?

SADDAM
Maybe you were lucky to escape the Middle East when you did, George.

PIRO
Tell me what you meant when you said 'death and destruction'?

SADDAM
Turn off the recording devices.

PIRO
You know I can't do that.

Saddam appears genuinely concerned for Piro.

SADDAM
You would be making a mistake to continue this search for WMD. Go home to your son, George. There is nothing for you here.

PIRO
If you really wanted to stop the bloodshed -- you'd work with me.

SADDAM
 That's exactly what I'm trying to
 do. You simply do not see it yet.

Saddam pours himself some tea from his pot just as Piro rises, fed up, signaling to the Guards.

PIRO
 I think that's enough time outside
 for today.

As the Guards move in, Saddam is ushered back inside past a stoic Piro.

EXT. CAMP VICTORY/BAGHDAD - DAWN

Piro jogs through the secured base pushing himself further than previously seen until he stops to watch Coalition SOLDIERS line up around their COMMANDING OFFICER. They stand before the Australian and New Zealand Flags at half mast.

COMMANDING OFFICER
 "They shall grow no old... as we
 that are left grow old: Age shall
 not weary them... nor the years
 condemn them. We will remember
 them. Lest we forget."

ALL SOLDIERS
 Lest we forget.

COMMANDING
 "For all fallen brothers and
 sisters on the battle field..."

As a Soldier trumpets "The Last Post", Piro continues his run past their pain and memorial.

INT. CAFETERIA/CAMP VICTORY - DAY

Still too early for breakfast. Irinaga waits for coffee from a machine as Piro, cleaned up and dressed, approaches snacking on Doritos.

IRINAGA
 Since when do you eat Doritos?

Piro chews, offering to Irinaga, who declines.

PIRO
 Duelfer was wrong to keep us
 behind the monitors.

IRINAGA
(raises an eyebrow)
After everything we've seen, you
still want to be on the frontlines?

PIRO
Roukey, Baker, the other ISG
units... They don't understand this
insurgency.

IRINAGA
Might want to check with your wife
before throwing yourself in the
crosshairs.

PIRO
What's that supposed to mean?

IRINAGA
You asked me to tell you when
you're fucking up? Well, Mehri
called me last night...

Piro trashes the Doritos, thrown and defensive.

IRINAGA (CONT'D)
She's worried about you. You're not
returning her calls.

PIRO
That's not really any of your
business, is it?

IRINAGA
She called me, Piro.

PIRO
Do me favor: I'll stay out of your
marriage, if you stay the fuck out
of mine.

As Piro heads off past Irinaga, leaving his friend to stew.

INT. CENTRAL COMMAND/CAMP VICTORY - DAY

Piro and Duelfer stand over an ARMY TECH manning a console
connected to FOUR LARGE MONITORS displaying satellite imagery
of different Humvees units in motion. An unhappy Irinaga
enters to join Felix, Stroud in the corner. Duelfer debriefs:

DUELFER

Four teams.

(re: Monitors)

Four separate raids on possible WMD sites with possible connections to Al Abud... Then we'll know just how much Vic has been withholding.

PIRO

He didn't want us to go out on these raids today.

DUELFER

We're about to find out why.

On MONITOR #4: Two Military Humvees come to a halt.

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. ABANDONED PAINT FACTORY/OUTSKIRTS OF BAGHDAD - DAY

Chyron: Operation Hull

An old rusted warehouse lurks in the distance. From the Humvees, Roukey and Baker emerge with half a dozen SOLDIERS and one WAR PHOTOGRAPHER. Roukey speaks into his mic:

ROUKEY

Observer, this is Sandman. Papa Team has arrived at target.

DUELFER

Roger, Sandman. Observer has eyes from the sky.

Baker pulls out his binoculars to see the structure.

BAKER

Observer, this is Deep Dish. We're clear on the ground, over.

DUELFER

Copy, Deep Dish. You have clearance from the sky.

Roukey turns to other Soldiers, gripping their weapons.

ROUKEY

Hold the line. No one comes in or out until we get back... especially the civilian.

Soldiers stay on alert, holding the building perimeter. The Photographer captures Baker and Roukey putting on hazmats.

ROUKEY (CONT'D)
Observer, wish us luck.

Duelfer lowers his voice, hoping to not jinx the mission:

DUELFER
Good luck, Papa Team.

Roukey directs the SOLDIERS to surround the facility, raising his arm to remain in position. As Baker opens the door to enter into:

INT. ABANDONED PAINT FACTORY/OUTSKIRTS OF BAGHDAD - DAY

The windows are blacked out. Roukey and Baker switch on the flashlights attached to their weapons. Their beams of light converge to reveal the mother lode: the largest lab to date, beaker after beaker filled to the brim.

ROUKEY
Observer, we have eyes on vials of yellow powder.

DUELFER
Raw sulfur for mustard gas.

The SOUND OF A BEAKER falling in the corner. Baker finds the shattered glass with his LIGHT. Roukey speaks *sotto voce*:

ROUKEY
Observer, we're not alone.

Baker then shines the LIGHT ON HASSAN AND ALI IN GAS MASKS ESCAPING through an underground tunnel within the facility.

DUELFER
Sandman, report.

Baker runs towards to Hassan, but the exit is sealed shut.

DUELFER (CONT'D)
Sandman. Report in.

Piro watches the Monitor, then realizes something that no one else seems to... stepping up to Duelfer:

PIRO
You need to get them out of there.

DUELFER
Sandman, this is Observer. Report now.

PIRO
They knew we were coming.

Roukey shines his light to find a wired IED in the building.

ROUKEY
Observer, we have a situation with
a wired explosive.

Duelfer looks at Piro, then commands into the Mic:

DUELFER
Observer to Papa Team. Abort
mission. I repeat: Abort.

Baker goes to inspect the IED, carefully tracing the wires connected to a cellphone.

BAKER
Motherfuck --

INT. CENTRAL COMMAND/CAMP VICTORY - DAY

ON MONITOR #4: A birds eye view of a tiny explosion that wipes out the entire building. Piro winces, horrified. Duelfer picks up the phone, frantic:

DUELFER
How soon can we get air support?

CONTINUING THE INTERCUT:

EXT. ABANDONED PAINT FACTORY/OUTSKIRTS OF BAGHDAD - DAY

THE LARGE EXPLOSION CONSUMES THE BUILDING. Some Soldiers are badly burned, leaning on each other as they race back to their vehicles when one of the Humvees EXPLODES. A DOZEN ARMED IRAQIS sprint toward them.

Soldiers quickly load into the remaining Humvee. The War Photographer continues taking photos of the Iraqis, carrying baseball bats and rifles. Camera keeps going as one of the Iraqis climbs on top the burning military vehicle clutching a baseball bat, letting out a primal cry:

IRAQI MAN
AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH.

His SCREAM ECHOES as the Paint Factory continue to burn. As one of the Soldiers throws the War Photographer into the remaining Humvee...

INT. CENTRAL COMMAND/CAMP VICTORY - DAY

Duelfer puts down the line, then SLAMS THE PHONE DOWN AGAIN AND AGAIN AND AGAIN UNTIL FINALLY BREAKING THE RECEIVER. Piro puts his hands on Duelfer's shoulder for comfort. Duelfer immediately HUGS PIRO CLOSE, BAWLING HIS EYES OUT.

Everyone watches as Piro doesn't know what to do other than accept Duelfer's embrace. Piro locks eyes with Irinaga, knowing he was wrong to snap at him before. Duelfer pulls back to collect himself.

DUELFER
Get back to work.

Everyone returns their tasks. As Piro turns to the Monitor, watching a BLACK PLUME OF SMOKE RISING from the building.

INT. BOLTON'S OFFICE/US EMBASSY/GREEN ZONE - DAY

Bolton paces back and forth, looking out the window until he finally turns to Piro and Duelfer sitting before him.

BOLTON
You're done. Both of you.

PIRO
Sir.

BOLTON
Two soldiers killed-in-action. Six others in the hospital. We're past the fucking point of pleasantries.

PIRO
And what about the insurgency? If you want to put a stop to the bombs, I need more time in the room with Vic --

BOLTON
That ship has sailed. This is a matter for State and Defense now.

Piro is about to respond when Duelfer gets their first.

DUELFER
We'll do whatever you think is best, John.

BOLTON
Very simple: FBI's interrogation is over.

(MORE)

BOLTON (CONT'D)
All ISG operations will be placed
under review. The White House will
find out in the morning.

Piro sits totally powerless.

DUELFER
I'd like to be involved in telling
Roukey and Baker's families.

BOLTON
You'll have to talk with DOD after
you figure out how to dig yourself
out of the six foot hole full of
shit I'm going to bury you under.

As Duelfer and Piro exit, defeated.

INT. HALLWAY/US EMBASSY/GREEN ZONE - DAY

Duelfer lets the door close behind them as Piro shoots a
furious look to his former colleague.

PIRO
You let him walk all over us.

DUELFER
He represents the White House,
George. We don't.

PIRO
You didn't even try to defend what
we've been doing here.

DUELFER
(sullen)
John's right. We have to face the
consequences for our actions.

PIRO
Do you honestly think stepping
aside will make any of this better?

Duelfer doesn't respond, knowing his answer will upset Piro.

DUELFER
Listen to yourself: Vic sent us up
to fail. Plain and simple. We were
all blind to it. Now, we have blood
on our hands.

As Piro storms out of the Embassy to:

EXT. LOBBY/US EMBASSY/GREEN ZONE/BAGHDAD - DAY

Piro pulls out a satellite phone, pulls up the contact for his wife "MEHRI". He turns to checks the clock on the wall -- 12:30pm Baghdad and 5:30am D.C. The time difference prompts Piro to lower his phone, instead approaching a MILITARY GUARD behind the desk.

PIRO
I need transport to Camp Cropper.

As the Guard picks up the phone, Piro cracks his knuckles.

INT. SADDAM'S CELL/CAMP CROPPER - NIGHT

Saddam reads quietly in his bed. The red light on the camera in the corner turns off. A LOUD BUZZER SOUNDS. Piro opens the door, then leans a chair to block any further entrance.

PIRO
Get up.

Saddam slowly puts down the book and rises. Piro tosses his bed, then goes through his notebooks.

PIRO (CONT'D)
How did you tip off Al Abud
insurgents to our raid --

SADDAM
Al Abud? I've been here writing
poetry...

Saddam offers his book to Piro, who takes it and throws it across the room.

PIRO
I'm tired of your chickenshit
riddles. Two men are dead.

SADDAM
Calm yourself.

PIRO
I want answers.

Piro grabs Saddam by the shirt collar, who responds calmly:

SADDAM
How could I mastermind such a plan
sitting inside this desolate cell
surrounded by your guards?

Piro squeezes tighter. Saddam looks up at the camera.

PIRO
Cameras are off. No more lies.

SADDAM
I've been many things in my life --
a hero, a villain, a martyr -- but
I'm not responsible for the death
of your men.

PIRO
There's something you're not
telling me.

BANG at the door with muffled VOICES, "OPEN THE DOOR,
GEORGE".

SADDAM
They're coming for you.

PIRO
I don't care.

SADDAM
(surprised)
What about your son?

PIRO
I'm not leaving without the truth.

Saddam sees the desperation in Piro's eyes.

SADDAM
I want something in return.

PIRO
What?

SADDAM
(in Arabic)
*I know I will never be free from
this cell. If this is my end... my
son deserves a different fate.*

PIRO
Your sons are dead.

SADDAM
(in Arabic)
*There is a third. Ali. From my
second wife. Not yet a man. He has
a right to his own future.*

Saddam offers a letter to Piro. In Arabic:

SADDAM (CONT'D)
Get this to him. Tell him there's nothing left for him in Iraq. Tell him to get out before it's too late.

(switches to English)
Then, I will give what you want.

Piro reluctantly pockets the note. The DOOR BURSTS OPEN WITH GUARDS THAT PULL HIM AWAY.

SADDAM (CONT'D)
I know you're a good man, George...
I trust you will do the right thing.

On Saddam, watching Piro forcibly removed from the room.

INT. HUMVEE/BAGHDAD - NIGHT

Piro sits in the backseat in SILENCE, being driven back by two SOLDIERS upfront. Staring out the window, Piro sees the poorly lit empty streets, spotting IRAQI WORKERS closing up their carts for the day. Once again, he spots the same IRAQI PARENTS from earlier, this time TUGGING THEIR YOUNG BOY, who drops his BACKPACK as he locks eyes with Piro. The IMAGE FLASHBACKS BACK TO:

EXT. STREET/BEIRUT - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Young Piro is being forced to go with his PARENTS as he witnesses Lebanese Soldiers start to take over the block. THE CAMERA BEGINS TO SHAKE HEAVILY UNTIL...

INT. HUMVEE/BAGHDAD - NIGHT

Piro is thrown by a BUMP, snapping him out of the vision.

EXT. HOTEL/GREEN ZONE/BAGHDAD - NIGHT

Piro exits the vehicle, standing before the air-conditioned lobby of his hotel. He waits for the Humvee to ride off before deciding to turn back toward his traveled route.

EXT. STREET/GREEN ZONE/BAGHDAD - NIGHT

Walking alongside IRAQIS returning to their homes, Piro searches for a set of familiar faces. Many of the buildings are crumbling or damaged from repeated bombings. On the ground, Piro picks up the Young Boy's BACKPACK still intact, finding a tag with an address.

INT. LIVING ROOM/HOUSE/GREEN ZONE/BAGHDAD - NIGHT

The Young Boy sits by the window doing homework, when there's a KNOCK AT THE DOOR. The Father looks uncertain who would be knocking at this hour. KNOCK AGAIN. The Father opens the door to find Piro standing with the backpack in hand. In Arabic:

PIRO
Salaam Aleikum.

FATHER
 (nervous)
Alkeikum Salaam.

PIRO
Your son dropped his bag.

The Father accepts the backpack, surprised by the gesture.

FATHER
Thank you for bringing it back.

Piro hovers longer, looking inside their home. The Father notices Piro's FBI Badge, peaking through his jacket.

MOTHER (O.C.)
Dinner is ready. Will your friend be joining us?

As the two men look to each other, knowing the answer will undoubtedly be 'yes'.

TIME CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN/HOUSE/GREEN ZONE/BAGHDAD - NIGHT

Piro sits around the table with the Father and the Young Boy staring at him. The Mother brings food to the table.

YOUNG BOY
Where are you from?

FATHER
 (stern)
Do not be rude...

PIRO
It's okay...
 (to the Young Boy)
I'm from Beirut, but live in America now with my family.

The Boy notices the badge, which Piro offers him to study.

PIRO (CONT'D)
My name is George. What's yours?

FATHER
*Forgive me. This is my son Mustafa,
 my wife Nadima...*

The Father looks to his Wife, who encourages him to share:

FATHER (CONT'D)
And I am Saddam Hussein.

Piro stops eating, uncertain if he heard the name correctly.

SADDAM #2
 (shyly)
*At the time, my parents thought it
 was an honor, but my namesake has
 always been a curse.*

Saddam #2 hands Piro his employee I.D. to prove his claim.

PIRO
Can't you change it?

MINA
*There are hundreds of other Saddams
 in Iraq, but no government to
 revise our names.*

PIRO
*You work for the Ministry of
 Electricity as an engineer?*

SADDAM #2
For now at least.

Mina passes some rice to Piro, sparking a question:

PIRO
*What if I said I could help you and
 your family start over in the West?
 Under a new name.*

0Saddam #2 wipes his face, then puts down his napkin.

SADDAM #2
*Home matters more than a name. We
 will remain for as long as we can.*

MINA
*Not everyone in Iraq is as
 fortunate as we are.*

Saddam #2 puts his hands over Mina's, squeezing tight.

PIRO

*Before I found your son's bag, I
was looking for another Iraqi boy
without such good fortune.*

MINA

Is this child in trouble?

PIRO

He will be if I don't find him.

MINA

*And then your government can
protect him?*

PIRO

*No. They can't ever know about
this.*

Mina nudges her husband, who then offers:

SADDAM #2

How can we help?

On Piro, moved by the offer.

INT. GARAGE/HOUSE/GREEN ZONE/BAGHDAD - NIGHT

Saddam #2 pulls the cover off an old car that dates back to the eighties, covered in dust. In Arabic:

SADDAM #2

*We haven't used it since the
invasion. Roads haven't been safe.*

PIRO

I can't accept this, Saddam.

SADDAM #2

*Sadr city is the most dangerous
part of Baghdad right now. Your
Arabic is good, but you will need
this...*

Saddam #2 tosses Piro a red and white keffiyeh (headscarf).

SADDAM #2 (CONT'D)

*To blend in. If the car doesn't
make it back, I will assume you
were successful.*

As Piro realizes he's never worn one before...

INT. CAR/BAGHDAD - DAWN

The sun rises on a new day. Piro drives, wearing clothes from Saddam #2 and his new keffiyeh on his head. The letter from Saddam sits on the passenger side as he listens to his iPod.

LAZAR (O.C.)

Did you know that Saddam was raised by a single mother after his father went missing one day. She sent him to live with his uncle in Baghdad so he became a Bathhhh... Bathhis... Ba'athist until returning home to Iraq once the Bathh... Ba'athists took power.

As Piro looks to the open road, focused on what lies ahead.

INT. CEMENT HOUSE/SADR CITY/BAGHDAD - DAY

Four MASKED MEN, wearing keffiyeh to mask their faces, pose with old Soviet kalashnikovs (AK-47s), standing on a beautiful Persian rug as a CAMERA FLASHES. The Men hold the position, gripping their guns, trying to look more menacing.

ANOTHER FLASH. Opposite the Men is a point and shoot digital camera on a tripod. The masks come off, revealing Hassan as the insurgent leader.

HASSAN

Did we get it?

Ali, also part of the group, goes to check the camera. Out of Hassan's line of sight, Ali checks his phone.

HASSAN (CONT'D)

Ali?

Ali reads a new text message (*content hidden to us*), then quickly pockets his phone away.

ALI

Yes. Very good.

Ali pulls out the memory card, then grabs a large envelope.

HASSAN

Where are you going?

ALI

Bringing these to print in tomorrow's paper with our demands.

Hassan rubs his head:

HASSAN
*We will put the Americans on notice
 and recruit more brothers.*

As Ali nods, masking the real reason for his departure.

EXT. CEMENT HOUSE/SADR CITY/BAGHDAD - DAY

Ali exits, checking to make sure its safe to proceed. From the corner, Piro spies Ali walking on, then starts to trail.

EXT. SOUK/SADR CITY/BAGHDAD - DAY

A CROWDED market. IRAQI WOMEN in full burqas balance folded clothes on their head. Piro blends in as he follows Ali walking with package-in-hand. Piro tries to keep his distance, struggling to keep eyes on his target. Ali rounds the corner, bringing Piro to push ahead to find Ali nowhere in sight. Piro steps back, scanning in the Crowd UNTIL...

THE SOUND OF A GUN COCKS, then the barrel presses to the back of Piro's back. In Arabic:

ALI
Step slowly back.

As Piro enters into:

EXT. ALLEY/SADR CITY/BAGHDAD - DAY

Concealed from the street traffic, Ali holds a gun to Piro's head. In Arabic:

ALI
Stay there.

PIRO
Ali Shahbandar?

Ali is thrown by the mention of his name by a stranger.

ALI
Stay where you are.

Piro stays still. Ali holds out his phone.

ALI (CONT'D)
Who gave you this number?

PIRO
I was asked to deliver a message.

Piro starts to reach slowly into his jacket.

ALI
Stop. Or I will shoot you.

Ali hands keep shaking, holding the weapon. Piro carefully pulls out an envelope from Saddam.

PIRO
From your father.

Ali's eyes glaze over as he wields the gun.

ALI
That's not possible.

PIRO
See for yourself.

Piro offers the envelope again, showing Saddam's handwriting on the outside. Ali sees the authenticity, but refuses.

ALI
I will not abandon him.

PIRO
(calmly)
And he will not let you die for him.

Moved by the thought, Ali finally lowers the weapon, accepting the letter.

ALI
It doesn't matter. There is no escape.

Piro tosses Ali the car keys.

PIRO
It's parked on the other side of the market.

Ali grips the keys and letter, shaking his head. In English:

ALI
 How do I know this isn't an American trick?

Piro lifts up his shirt.

PIRO
 No wires.
(points up)
 No snipers... No one can ever know I was here.

Piro slowly slides his gun over to Ali.

ALI
Why would you risk such a thing for
me?

PIRO
Because you shouldn't have to pay
for the sins of your father.

Ali picks up the gun, adding in Arabic:

ALI
*Even when he is selfless, my father
is a selfish prick. Promise me you
will tell him I said that?*

PIRO
(nods)
Is that all?

ALI
...And I love him.

A look of sadness fills Ali's eyes.

PIRO
Are you going to be okay?

ALI
What other choice do I have?

Ali takes one last look at Piro, before turning away. As Ali disappear into the Crowd once again, Piro uses his keffiyeh to cover his face for the walk back to the green zone.

INT. PIRO'S ROOM/HOTEL/GREEN ZONE - DAY

Piro enters, covered in sand and exhaustion, closing the blinds to cut the light. He slips off his shoes, sore from the journey, collapsing onto the bed when the PHONE RINGS. Searching for his phone, Piro answers from the bed.

PIRO
Hello?

DUELFER (O.C.)
Where have you been? I've been
calling you all morning.

PIRO
Took an early run.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. MAIN HALL/CAMP SLAYER/VICTORY COMPLEX - DAY

Duelfer sits at his desk, phone against his ear.

DUELFER

So, you don't know, do you?

PIRO

Know what?

DUELFER

Abu Graib. Sixty Minutes broke the story about American troops torturing Iraqi detainees...

Duelfer watches on the TV: SHOCKING PHOTOS OF A MAN WEARING A BLACK HOOD AND ROBE, HANDS RAISED, WITH ELECTRODES ATTACHED TO HIS BODY at Abu Ghraib Prison.

DUELFER (CONT'D)

Bolton was recalled to Washington. And your friends from the Bureau just arrived.

(beat)

You were right to hold out, George... We're not dead yet.

On Duelfer, glued to the horrific images on the TV.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM/US EMBASSY/GREEN ZONE/BAGHDAD - DAY

Piro, cleaned up, enters to find his superiors PISTOLE and BALD seated at a long conference table.

PISTOLE

Have a seat, Agent Piro.

Piro takes a seat, unable to get a read on them.

PISTOLE (CONT'D)

How are you holding up?

PIRO

Did you really travel all this way to ask me 'how I'm holding up'?

BALD

No. We didn't.

PISTOLE

It should come as no surprise that the White House is frustrated. They believe Vic is selling a bill of goods that you keep buying into.

PIRO
And what do you think?

BALD
You've surprised us a few times...
But no one cares what we think.

PISTOLE
The administration considers the
approach too soft -- the garden,
the poetry... the Doritos -- for an
accused war criminal.

BALD
Then there's the growing concern
your background is keeping you from
extracting intel from your subject.

PIRO
What do you mean "my background"?

PISTOLE
You were pitched as a young Arab.
Someone Vic could relate to. But
this White House feels your
background --

PIRO
I've spent six months locked in a
room with him. I've been away from
my wife and child. In a war zone.
In service to my country. So
forgive me, if I refuse to sit here
and be reduced to an immigrant in
conflict. Last time I checked, I
graduated Quantico same as you.

BALD
We agree.

PIRO
(raises an eyebrow)
Then, what are we talking about?

PISTOLE
The new Iraqi government takes
custody of Vic in a week. Wrap
things up, then you come home.

BALD
Use the time wisely, Agent Piro.

Piro nods, a bit shocked, exiting the room. A TRUMPET can be
heard playing The Last Post again.

EXT. CAMP VICTORY - DAY

COALITION FORCES stand in formation facing the Flags again at half-mast. At the base of the flag pole, boots hold up the rifles and helmets of Sergeants Baker and Roukey.

Piro joins Duelfer, Irinaga, Felix and Stroud standing as the TRUMPETER finishes playing. All Soldiers SALUTE. The Mourners dissipate. Piro stares at the makeshift memorial. Irinaga puts his hand on Piro's shoulder, who searches for words.

IRINAGA
You don't have to say anything.

On the Team, lingering a moment longer at the memorial.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM/CAMP CROPPER - DAY

CLOSE ON Stroud starting the recorder. Irinaga flipping the switch on the Monitor. Felix pulling a document from a file.

Piro reviews transcripts, glancing up AT THE MONITOR TO SEE: Saddam waiting in the Garden.

FELIX
I found the speech you were asking
about...
(hands over)
It was a regional address from June
2000 on WMD.

PIRO
Thanks.

Piro quickly reviews the document, then rises with a mysterious metal tin in his hands.

FELIX
You going to tell us what this is
all for?

PIRO
You trust me, Theresa?

FELIX
Enough to let you hang yourself if
this doesn't work.

PIRO
(smirks)
Good enough.

The work continues as Piro exits. Duelfer watches from the corner, putting on headphones to listen in.

INT. SADDAM'S GARDEN/CAMP CROPPER - DAY

Saddam stares at his garden, lost deep in thought. Piro appears, standing over him with a metal tin.

PIRO
Kol Sana Wa Enta Salem...

SADDAM
(looks up)
I was not sure if we would see each other again.

PIRO
And miss your birthday?

SADDAM
I do not need to be reminded I'm old. I have the mirror for that.

Piro hands Saddam the metal tin.

SADDAM (CONT'D)
What is this?

Saddam opens the tin and pulls off the napkin, immediately thrown off by the sight of the traditional Lebanese cookies covered in powder sugar.

PIRO
A gift from my mother.

SADDAM
The famous Ma'amoul?

PIRO
She's been waiting twenty years for me to ask her to make them again.

SADDAM
How did you get such a package delivered here so quickly?

PIRO
She knew how important they were... And in turn, I let her know just how important she is to me.

SADDAM
I regret not sharing that sentiment with my family that more often.

As Piro starts rubbing the napkin from the tin against the nearby hidden microphone to disrupt the signal...

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM/CAMP CROPPER - DAY

On the Monitor: Saddam can be seen with only the back of Piro's head. As the Team listens in their headphones, only the SOUND OF DISTORTION CAN BE HEARD.

DUELFER
What is that?

STROUD
I don't know. Everything is muffled.

DUELFER
Do we have a back up mic?

IRINAGA
There wasn't room in the garden.

On Irinaga, working to fix the problem.

EXT. SADDAM'S GARDEN/CAMP CROPPER - DAY

Piro continues rubbing the napkin, eyes focused on Saddam.

PIRO
Nod as I talk. They're still watching.

Saddam nods, finishing his cookie.

PIRO (CONT'D)
Your message was delivered.

Saddam wipes his mouth, hiding his lips for a moment.

SADDAM
How can I be certain?

PIRO
Ali told me to tell you...
(in Arabic)
Even when you are selfless, you are a selfish prick. But despite that... he loves you.

Saddam turns emotional, moved by Piro's message.

PIRO (CONT'D)
Now it's your turn.

Piro hands Saddam the napkin, no longer distorting the mic...

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM/CAMP CROPPER - DAY

The SOUND RETURNS TO NORMAL, calming Irinaga and the rest of the room down. The Team goes back to listening in:

PIRO (O.C.)
-- I wanted to ask you about a June 2000 speech you gave.

SADDAM (O.C.)
You would ruin my birthday with talk of politics?

PIRO (O.C.)
(ignores him)
You said Iraq would not disarm until others in the region did. 'A rifle for a rifle, a stick for a stick, a stone for a stone,' about weapons of mass destruction.

SADDAM (O.C.)
I was there. I know what I said.

As Irinaga shrugs off the temporary glitch.

EXT. SADDAM'S GARDEN/CAMP CROPPER - DAY

Saddam starts to shift from emotional to defensive.

PIRO
I can tell you wrote this address yourself.

SADDAM
How can you know? I have many speechwriters.

PIRO
I've read your poetry, listened to you speak. Your voice is distinct.
(off Saddam)
The world had thought you disarmed at this point, but here you are declaring more weapons...

SADDAM
If you're the great authority on my words, George, you should know.

PIRO
Your words on this subject carry far more weight than mine.

SADDAM
What do you want me to say?

Piro leans in to press him:

PIRO
Are there WMD in Iraq?

As Piro tries to hold his poker face, Saddam remains stoic.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM/CAMP CROPPER - DAY

Duelfer, Irinaga, Felix and Stroud listen and watch at the edge of their seats for a response to the question.

EXT. SADDAM'S GARDEN/CAMP CROPPER - DAY

Saddam takes a long pause to gather his thoughts. It feels like an eternity. Piro doesn't blink as Saddam looks up with a straight face:

SADDAM
No. It was all a bluff.

Piro drops his jaw at the revelation, dumbfounded.

PIRO
You're telling me you lied to the world about the weapons?

SADDAM
U.N. inspectors destroyed them in the nineties. And those not destroyed by the inspectors were unilaterally destroyed by Iraq.

PIRO
You put your nation, your presidency, your life at risk with just a bluff.

SADDAM
You have to project strength, George. That was what kept me in power. Fear of that capability kept the Iranians from invading Iraq.

PIRO
(confused)
Wait. Iraq was more afraid of the Iranians than the Americans?

SADDAM

Iraq could not survive without the perception that I had weapons of mass destruction. The truth is: after 9/11, I thought the United States would need our help to fight terrorism...

PIRO

What about everything we've found? The ricin, the mustard gas --

SADDAM

All created after the invasion. Small batches to deter your government in the event of invasion.

Piro processes the revelation as Saddam eyes the cookies:

SADDAM (CONT'D)

May I have another?

PIRO

You can keep 'em.

As Saddam enjoys another sweet, CLOSE ON Piro visibly shaken.

INT. HALLWAY/CAMP CROPPER - DAY

Walking down the hallway, Piro is greeted by an elated Stroud, Felix and Irinaga trying to catch up with him.

FELIX

You realize what he just said?

PIRO

Yes...

STROUD

Do you want to review the tape?

PIRO

No...

Piro walks past them ALL.

IRINAGA

Where are you going, Piro?

PIRO

To call my wife.

Duelfer emerges to see Piro round the corner out of sight.

INT. BATHROOM/CAMP CROPPER - DAY

Piro checks under the stalls to make sure he's alone, then pulls out his satellite phone, dialing.

MEHRI (O.C.)
(waking up)
Hello?

PIRO
I'm done. I'm coming home.

MEHRI (O.C.)
(groggy, half-listening)
George? It's four in the morning.

PIRO
I'm sorry. For everything I put you through these past few months. I --

MEHRI (O.C.)
I love you, too.

They both take a moment to let that reminder sink in, then:

PIRO
I want to speak to Lazar.

MEHRI (O.C.)
He's asleep.

PIRO
Wake him.

MEHRI
He won't go back to bed.

PIRO
Please?

MEHRI (O.C.)
Hold on...

Mehri brings the phone over to a sleepy Lazar.

LAZAR (O.C.)
Baba?

Tears stream down Piro's face, listening to his Son's voice.

LAZAR (O.C.) (CONT'D)
Baba, are you there?

Piro collects himself, struggling.

PIRO
Of course, I am.

LAZAR (O.C.)
I thought you forgot about me.

PIRO
Forgot about you? I listen to your recordings every day.

LAZAR (O.C.)
I have more facts if you need.

PIRO
No. I've a new project for you.

LAZAR (O.C.)
Oh?

PIRO
I want you to start making a list of all the things you want to do with me. As soon as I am back we will start checking off the list.

LAZAR (O.C.)
How long can it be?

PIRO
As long as you can imagine.

LAZAR (O.C.)
Really?

PIRO
Put your mother back on.

Lazar hands the phone back to Mehri.

MEHRI (O.C.)
You shouldn't make promises you can't keep.

PIRO
Another week. You have my word.

MEHRI (O.C.)
(yawns)
Then we're going to try getting some more sleep...

PIRO
Goodnight, *habibata*.

As Piro notices his reflection in the mirror, past the bags under his eyes, seeing himself in a different light.

EXT. GREEN ZONE CAFE/BAGHDAD - SUNSET

The TEAM drinks *cervezas* as Piro watches the American Flag be taken down from a nearby building and replaced by the redesigned Iraqi Flag. Irinaga, Felix and Stroud smile, drinking. Duelfer sidles up to Piro, *sotto voce*:

DUELFER

I know you broke in to see him.

Piro plays dumb.

DUELFER (CONT'D)

That you cut the audio and video...

Piro stands silent, waiting for Duelfer.

DUELFER (CONT'D)

I just need to know his confession was real.

PIRO

I don't know what real means, anymore.

DUELFER

Are you willing to bet your career on what he said as fact?

PIRO

We'll never know all the facts, Charles. About him. About WMD. But I believe it's the honest truth.

DUELFER

Then say it.

PIRO

There are no weapons in Iraq.

Duelfer nods, then finishes his beer.

DUELFER

Now, I need you to come with me.

Piro raises an eyebrow, uncertain.

DUELFER (CONT'D)

You and I need another round.

As Piro follows Duelfer to the bar, the new Iraqi flag waves.

INT. CHECK POINT/IRAQ - NIGHT

A cold desert night. Ali stands, carrying a bag over his shoulder, in line with other IRAQIS heated only by a row of barrel fires. U.S. Soldiers Wisdom and Clary are checking passports. Inside Ali's inner jacket pocket, we briefly see Saddam's letter on his person.

SADDAM (V.O.)

My son... As father to our nation,
I know you have suffered as a
martyr for me and all of your
people. But the time has finally
come to free you of that burden.
You must lower your weapon and go
to your mother in Lebanon. Keep
each other safe in my absence...

As Ali moves up at the line...

INT. KITCHEN/CEMENT HOUSE/OUTSKIRTS OF BAGHDAD - NIGHT

Hassan and three other IRAQI MEN sit eating biryani, until the DOOR BURSTS OPEN WITH US SOLDIERS STORMING INSIDE.

SADDAM (V.O.)

War has consumed my entire life.
The fighting has destroyed the
lives of almost everyone around me.
I cannot let that same tragedy
befall you, too. The occupiers may
never win, but neither shall the
insurgency.

On Hassan and the other Men, surrendering, begrudgingly.

INT. CHECK POINT/BAGHDAD - NIGHT

Ali presents his passport to Wisdom, who carefully checks the authenticity of the fake name and forged documents.

SADDAM (V.O.)

Your future is the only legacy that
matters now. Be fruitful and
multiply. Be more righteous than I,
so your children may live better
than both of us. As long as you
carry this letter, I will be with
you always. Love... Baba.

Wisdom hands back the passport, ushering Ali toward a bus with a sign that reads: "BEIRUT". Before he boards, Ali tosses his father's letter into the fire to burn...

EXT. SADDAM'S GARDEN/CAMP CROPPER - DAY

Piro sits across from Saddam, now with a full trimmed beard, who is watering his licorice plants and enjoying the sun.

SADDAM

You see... things do grow in the desert. You have to harvest after I'm gone. Bring it to your son.

Piro cuts the end off a cohiba, then hands the cigar to Saddam, who feels the cohiba in his hand, then lets Piro light the cigar, then his own.

SADDAM (CONT'D)

The future is in God's hands now, George.

PIRO

I think God has more important things to do than worrying about us...

Saddam nods in agreement, puffing his cigar.

SADDAM

You've come to know me better than my own children.... And I feel I know you as a son, so indulge me as I act the part of a father... If there were more men in this world like you, perhaps there wouldn't be a need for men like me. Never change who you are.

Piro puffs his cigar, listening.

SADDAM (CONT'D)

They will try to make you forget. To strip you of your past. But I promise you, that is the very thing that makes you exceptional...

Saddam begins to weep, giving Piro a traditional Arab kiss with three kisses on each cheek. Saddam then wipes his eyes, turning more playful:

SADDAM (CONT'D)

You know if I can shake these charges, we can start a consulting firm together.

PIRO
If you can shake these charges,
I'll certainly think about it.

The Iraqi POLICE appear at the door. Saddam stands buttoning his jacket to appear as a leader, not as a prisoner.

EXT. CAMP CROPPER - DAY

Piro, Duelfer, Irinaga, Felix and Strouss watch the Iraqi POLICE take Saddam away to face trial. Accepting his fate, Saddam nods goodbye to Piro one last time... FADING TO:

INT. KITCHEN/PIRO'S HOME - NIGHT

Chyron: December 31st, 2006.

Piro, no goatee, prepares a set of appetizers as Irinaga, sporting a Christmas sweater, pours himself licorice tea.

IRINAGA
Still no word on Miami Bureau?

PIRO
They keep dangling it over my head.
Would you consider rejoining if I
got it?

IRINAGA
Private sector is good, Piro. You
should be the one considering a
career change.

Mehri comes in from the Living Room, gently mentioning:

MEHRI
They are about to broadcast.

PIRO
You go. I'll check on the kids.

Piro pats Irinaga on the shoulder, then kisses Mehri before taking a plate of the Ma'amoul cookies, heading upstairs.

INT. LIVING ROOM/PIRO'S HOME - NIGHT

The Christmas tree is decorated. Mehri and Irinaga enter to join Irinaga's WIFE watching on TV: Saddam surrounded by MEN WEARING FACE MASKS putting the noose around his neck.

As Mehri and Irinaga's Wife look away, Irinaga can't...

INT. LAZAR'S BEDROOM/PIRO HOME - NIGHT

Piro opens the door to find Lazar and Kira, Irinaga's daughter, playing "SoulCalibur II" on Nintendo GameCube.

LAZAR
Sorry, baba. Did you want us to
come down?

PIRO
No, it's okay.

Lazar immediately grabs a ma'amoul cookie, biting into it while playing. Kira looks, uncertain.

LAZAR
Try one. They're good.

Kira eats one, impressed.

LAZAR (CONT'D)
Told you.

KIRA
Where are they from?

LAZAR
I don't know, my grandma always
makes them... Do you know the story
with these cookies, baba?

As Lazar looks to his Father, Piro smiles, finally ready to share with his Son.

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END

