

INT. KITCHEN - DAY TIME

Jack still wears his dirty football uniform. Helmet in hand he swings over to the side of the counter where his mother prepares dinner. He kisses her on the cheek.

JACK

Mom's famous chicken for dinner tonight?

Kathy has some big chicken breasts on a cutting board. She looks through a drawer pulling out a metal tenderizer.

KATHY

Mhmmm. Your favorite.

JACK

What's the occasion?

KATHY

Well you scored a touch down didn't you?

JACK

Right.

(beat)

And that's all?

KATHY

What else has there to be?

Jack takes a look over his mother, taking a few steps back.

JACK

Right ok. Well, thank you.

Jack begins to walk out of the kitchen and out of view.

KATHY

Course you know now they're giving out scholarships to college schools for athletes.

Jack slowly makes his way back into the kitchen. His face has not changed.

JACK

What's that?

KATHY

You could get free admittance to a college, a good one, with a football program.

JACK

They'd pay me?

KATHY

No they'd pay for your school.

JACK

Ahhh! I see.

(beat)

So the chicken isn't the only thing getting buttered up tonight then?

As if on cue, Kathy shakes her head and starts hammering away at her chicken.

JACK (CONT'D)

Ma, I told you. I want to start making some money. I want to do something with my life now.

Kathy starts to hammer a little harder ignoring Jack completely. Jack stares at her. He takes in a big breath.

JACK (CONT'D)
I've been thinking about it a lot.
This may be a bad time to tell you.

Kathy is swinging faster now trying to drown out his words.

JACK (CONT'D)
I'M GOING TO ENLIST

Kathy stops at these words. She glares back at Jack.

JACK (CONT'D)
I want to serve, in the Army.

KATHY
Why on earth?
(beat)
The war is over! Thank God. It's been over.

JACK
I still want to serve my country.

KATHY
I thought we were over this years ago.
You're not doing this.

JACK
It's not up to you any more. I'm an adult now.

KATHY
Please just look at some of the schools you could get into first just apply to them. Just humor me.

JACK
Will you let me apply to schools across the country?

KATHY
Well don't be silly

Jack cracks a smile.

JACK
I start basic training soon Ma.

Kathy swirls around and throws the hammer in the sink.

Kathy bites her lip in front of us. Jack stands behind her.

JACK (CONT'D)

I love you mom. But this is what I
want to do.

Jack walks away again. Kathy's eyes begin to water.

EXT. ARMY BARRACKS - AFTERNOON

Jack trains with the new recruits. Push ups are pushed. Obstacles are navigated and drill sergeants are drilling. One particular SERGEANT, 50s with a scar on his lip, drills into Jack hard.

A moment later Jack and a group of cadets walk back to their barracks. Jack begins to mock the sergeant with the other privates as they all laugh. Off to the side, the sergeant notices Jack but doesn't engage.

RICHY and ANDY two other privates hit Jack on the back. They both have brown hair but Andy is considerably taller, and Richy is more stocky.

RICHY

Can't keep up with the rest of us huh
Croon.

JACK

Everyone can keep up with you Rich.

ANDY

Think the sarge really likes you.

JACK

Yeah, I've noticed.

RICHY

Rather you and not me.

The group continues walking.

INT. DAVE'S CAR - AFTERNOON

Jack's father DAVE, 40s, leathery skinned, grey haired man, is driving his Oldsmobile.

JACK

It doesn't matter where I'm being
(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)
stationed sir.

DAVE
To hell it doesn't

JACK
Why does it matter so much? I'm going
to serve my country, that's all that
should count, sir.

DAVE
Where are you going to be stationed?
(beat)
It's Germany isn't it?

There's no response from Jack. Dave shakes his head. He slams
his hand on the steering wheel.

DAVE (CONT'D)
Gosh Damn it! Those sons of bitches.
Why does it have to be over there.

JACK
Mom said it herself sir, the war is
over you don't have to worry.

DAVE
The people who sympathized with those
bastards aren't over. You will still
weed some out in the aftermath I'm
sure.

JACK
I can take care of my own sir.

DAVE
I know you can. I know you can. Just
remember Nazi sympathizers don't need
any sympathy from us. Who did they
take away from us son? Tell me. Say
their names.

JACK
Sir.

DAVE
Tell me.

JACK
Alex our neighbors son. Conor my
(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)
cousin. Brendan your coworkers son.
Alice and Justin.

DAVE
And those are just the ones in are
community son. Don't you forget that.
There's no need to make any friends
with the enemy.

JACK
I wasn't planning on it sir.

DAVE
Don't you forget what they've taken
away from us.

JACK
Yes sir.

Jack stairs out the window as the car drives on a residential street.

EXT. ARMY TRAINING COURSE - AFTERNOON

Jack and the other privates are standing in a row facing the sergeant that was yelling a Jack earlier. The sergeant has his back to a barricade made out of sandbags. In his hand he holds a grenade.

SERGEANT
These are not duds privates. These are
Army issued live Grenades. Now that
you have gotten down the throwing
techniques we are going to do it with
the real deal. Give you a little
stress test. Mistakes are fatal in
these exercises and will not be
tolerated in my platoon. Is that
clear?

PRIVATES
YES SIR!

SERGEANT
Private Glenn you will start.

Richy walks over with sergeant into the barricade taking the grenade from him.

SERGEANT (CONT'D)
Fire away soldier.

Richy braces the wall with his left side. He takes out the pin while squeezing on to the handle of the grenade.

RICHY
Fire in the hole!

Richy hooks the grenade over the barricade and safely to the other side. Both the sergeant and Richy crouch down and brace for the explosion.

BOOM!

Some dirt flies over from above.

One by one all of the privates go through the same exercise. Jack and Andy both get their turns and do fine. They try to crack a smile without the sergeant seeing.

One lanky PRIVATE RUSSO, approaches the sergeant for his turn. His hands are sweaty.

SERGEANT
Remember your training. Approach the wall private.

The private timidly approaches the wall and looks down at the grenade his hand shaking a bit.

SERGEANT (CONT'D)
Private Russo, throw your grenade!

The private summons the courage and pulls the pin. He throws it in a panic. In his haste he doesn't clear the wall. The grenade hits the top of the barricade and falls back down by the sergeant and Privates feet.

In the blink of an eye the Sergeant hoists the private up and carries the both of them over the barricade wall.

BOOM!

The grenade goes off just as they clear the wall.

The rest of the group comes running over to aide the two men. They are coughing and a little shook up, but not injured. The sergeant gets to his feet.

SERGEANT (CONT'D)
Private Russo. You are dismissed.

Private Russo hangs his head. He salutes the sergeant and walks off screen. The sergeant looks over the others.

SERGEANT (CONT'D)
Let this be a lesson to all of you. If you don't think on your feet at all times then it can be costly. Always be aware of your surroundings.
(beat)
Dismissed.

The privates have lost their smiles. They look at the smoking hole in the barricade as they head back to the barracks.

SERGEANT (CONT'D)
Not you Private.

The sergeant puts up an arm stopping Jack. The other guys look back at him with a smirk.

SERGEANT (CONT'D)
I need a word with you.

JACK
Yes sir.

SERGEANT
What? No impersonations this time?

JACK
Sir?

SERGEANT
Heard you do a pretty good version of me.

JACK
No sir.

SERGEANT
Oh come now, thats not what I hear.

JACK
No sir.

SERGEANT
I want you to remember private. Don't be quick to judge the people you may
(MORE)

SERGEANT (CONT'D)
disagree with. They may have reasons.
Reasons you don't care to see at the
time. But these people can save your
life. I hope that came through to you
today.

JACK
Yes sir.

SERGEANT
Now. Give me 50 push ups.

JACK
Yes sir!

Jack drops down on the ground.

JACK (CONT'D)
(doing push ups)
1. 2. 3. 4.

INT. JACK'S ROOM - NIGHTTIME

We pan around Jack's room. A couple of book shelves and a desk in the corner. Several athletic medals sit on his window sill along with the military cap given to him on his stoop when he was a kid.

Jack sits on the edge of his bed with his girlfriend, ANNE older teenage short brown-haired girl, with sharp facial features and beautiful blue eyes.

JACK
I don't know why every one's so
worried. I don't want any part of that
lot that started the war in the first
place.

ANNE
I think the fact that you're going to
where it all started makes it
unnerving.

JACK
It's not the same any more.

ANNE
Some people don't change. Look at our
parents.

Jack takes a long look at Anne then looks away.

JACK

Yeah.

(beat)

People act like I'm gonna be brain washed. If I find any sympathizers over there that's all I need to know to never talk to them again. I don't care for any of them. I'm looking out for me and my brothers. That's all that matters.

ANNE

I know hun.

(beat)

I just wish you didn't have to go at all.

Jack turns back to her and smiles and grabs her hands.

JACK

I'll be fine. The wars over. Won't be much action at all.

ANNE

Yes and I'm sure you're thrilled about that.

Jack chuckles. Then leans in for a kiss.

JACK

I've got enough trouble with you already.

They hear a distant yell downstairs from Kathy.

JACK (CONT'D)

Better get down there before my mother gets even more upset with me.

ANNE

Just. Be careful Jack. Please.

They finally kiss for a moment before he hoists her up and out of the room.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHTTIME

The family sits around a large oval table. There's a tall china cabinet on one side and a table holding a large radio

on the other side. Around the radio are various framed photos of Jack's family and older relatives.

Jack's family and friends have eaten their way through dinner and now level off with some coffee and drinks. There's a banner up behind Jack that reads: GOOD LUCK!

Jack's friends say their goodbyes and crack a few more jokes. His girlfriend gives him one more kiss before she too leaves. His father and mother are the only ones left. The radio plays in the background. Jack looks at his mom.

JACK

Ma, don't worry. I'll be back soon.

She sighs deeply and raises her coffee to her lips. "Dear Ole Donegal" by Bing Crosby comes on the radio and immediately she perks up.

DAVE

There it is. Your favorite song. Sure as that, a good sign as any.

Jack too begins to smile as his mother begins to mumble the words. He looks back at the radio and stands up. The song has gone into its chorus. Jack waits till the chorus is done and then turns off the radio abruptly.

CLICK!

Kathy immediately stands up looking irate. She struts over and smacks Jack across the face. Dave looks on with a glare that matches the sting of his mother's hand. The room goes deafly quiet.

Jack takes a deep breath and then begins to sing.

JACK

(singing)

Well, they'll give a party when I come home and they'll come from near and far, and the line roads for miles and miles with Irish jaunting cars. And the whiskey will flow like butter milk to fill our hearts with joy and the piper will play an Irish reel to greet the yankee boy.

(beat)

So tomorrow off to church I'll go and wedded I will be, to my pretty little Colleen sweet biddy McGee. For biddy

(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)

was true and faithful to her barney or the sea, and will join the harp and shamrocks for the stars of liberty.

(big breath)

There came Branigan, Fannigan, Milligan, Gilligan, Duffy, McCuffy, Malachy, Mahone, Rafferty, Lafferty, Donnelly, Connelly, Dooley, O'Hooley, Muldowney, Malone, Madigan, Cadigan, Lanihan, Flanihan, Fagan, O'Hagan, O'Hoolihan, Flynn, Shanihan, Manihan, Fogarty, Hogarty, Kelly, O'Kelly, McGuinness, McGuinn

(beat)

Shake hands with your Uncle Mike my boy and sure here's your sister Kate. And sure here's the girl you use to swing down by the garden gate. Shake hands with all neighbors and kiss the Colleens all. You're as welcome as the flowers of may, in dear ole Donegal.

Jack lets the last note ring out echoing throughout the dinning room. He looks at his mother. She's emotionless.

JACK (CONT'D)

I learned it. For you ma.

Kathy exits the room and runs down the hallway. A door slams the distance. We hear the faint muffles of sobbing. Jack looks back at his father.

JACK (CONT'D)

Did I make it worse sir?

Dave makes his way over to Jack and puts his arm on his shoulder.

DAVE

No son. Trust me. You did good.

(beat)

That meant everything.

CUT TO BLACK