baby oil
by jonathan myerson

third draft

cast

throughout
FORBES McEWEN III aide in the NSC
RECRUITING SERGEANT for the US Marines
GEORGE H W BUSH US President living
DICK CHENEY US Secretary of Defense living
THE ADMIRAL Senior Director on the NSC
MILITARY ATTACHÉ from the British Embassy
DRAKE PR Consultant (American)
DIANA PR Consultant (British)

in only one scene
CIA advisor
BARBARA BUSH wife to the President living
'NAYIRAH' volunteer nurse unidentified
SCENE 1. Q8 PETROL STATION. DAY.

THE MAN IS APPROACHING THE PAYMENT COUNTER

CASHIER Number three?

MAN Whatever – thought I’d fill her right up.

CASHIER Twenty-four fifty-eight?

MAN Reckoned you’d be closed up.

CASHIER Sorry.

MAN Where are you getting it all from?

CASHIER It?

MAN Your four-star, your three-star, your unleaded?

CASHIER Sorry?

MAN Your petrol!

CASHIER (WHOLLY UNINTERESTED) Tanker comes Fridays and Tuesdays.

MAN Hasn't it all been cut off, you know?

CASHIER Sorry, mate?

MAN This is a Q8 station – Kuwait’s been invaded.

CASHIER What?

MAN Queue Eight, you’re called. Means this is oil from Kuwait, doesn't it?

CASHIER Does it?
MAN You work for Kuwait.

CASHIER I work for Terry. This is his gaff.

MAN Then Terry works for Kuwait. Except now he works for Saddam Hussain.

CASHIER D'you want to talk to the Manager?

MAN Forget it. I'll have a Ripple too. Twenty-four what?

STRAIGHT INTO:

TITLES

AND THEN INTO:
SCENE 2. WASHINGTON DC: US MARINES RECRUITING OFFICE. DAY.

FORBES, A WELL-EDUCATED BUT NERVOUS MAN IN HIS EARLY TWENTIES, TENTATIVELY APPROACHES THE COUNTER.

BUT BEHIND THE COUNTER, HALF IN THE BACKGROUND, A GAGGLE OF MARINES IS WATCHING THE FIRST NIGHT’S BOMBING OF BAGHDAD, YELLING AS EACH MISSILE STRIKES ['EAT SHIT, SADDAM' AND 'THAT'S OUR LINE IN THE SAND, HOW D'YOU LIKE IT NOW?’ AND AD LIB].

FORBES COUGHS A FEW TIMES TO ATTRACT THEIR ATTENTION. THEN:

FORBES I’d like...

HE REMAINS UNNOTICED

FORBES I’d like.... I’d like to enlist, please.

SERGEANT (FROM THE BACK, STILL WATCHING TV) Sure, kid, everybody wants to get a piece.

FORBES Please, I really need to start filling in the forms. It's very urgent.

SERGEANT (APPROACHING, SEMI-RELUCTANTLY) OK, you want to join the U.S.Marines and go kill you some Iraqis?

FORBES I don’t want to.

SERGEANT You just...

FORBES I said I have to.

SERGEANT No-one's forcing anyone, son. 'Snot a world war.

FORBES It's my fault. That – look, that – (POINTING AT THE TV) – all those bombs, blowing up people, it's all my fault.
SERGEANT  Sorry?

FORBES  This war. It's my fault.

SERGEANT  (OVER SHOULDER, TO COLLEAGUES) Hey, guys, we got Saddam Hussein in here. (BACK TO FORBES) Sorry, we're going to have to detain you, Mister Hussein. For invading Kuwait, for murdering innocent women and children and even babies – did you hear about the babies piled up in – ?

FORBES  (WHO HAS BEEN SAYING 'MY NAME IS' AND 'ACTUALLY, I AM' THROUGHOUT THE SERGEANT'S SPEECH) My name is Forbes McEwen III, in fact, and I am responsible for war in the Gulf.

SERGEANT  OK, Mister Third. I'll roll with it. You started it and you feel you got to enlist, even though you don't really want to?

FORBES  That's right.

SERGEANT  We do full psych evaluations, you know?

FORBES  I am quite aware what you are implying. (BUT:) This is my penance.

SERGEANT  I got to say, kid, you ain't our normal type in here, you know. We don't get a lot of guys in suits. Button-down collars. Hair.

FORBES  I came straight – I came straight from my office.

SERGEANT  Other side of the Beltway, I'm guessing?

FORBES  Um. Yes. In the West – the West Wing.

SERGEANT  Of the White House?

FORBES  Mmm.

SERGEANT  And you screwed up, right? You screwed up with one of your briefings or your analyses and now you think a three-year tour with the Jarheads is just the kind of thing to make
yourself feel better about the way you typed Saddam with one D.

FORBES
No.

SERGEANT
Five-year tour?

FORBES
I didn’t screw up.

SERGEANT
OK, maybe I'm over-exaggerating.

FORBES
I did well. They said I did really well.

SERGEANT
You see? It's not all so bad, is it?

FORBES
The President said.

SERGEANT
You were commended by the President as well?

FORBES
This morning.

SERGEANT
The President of the United States?

FORBES
Shook my hand. This hand.

SERGEANT
This was in the Oval Office, right?

FORBES
In front of the statue of Lincoln. The bust. You know, the bronze thing. With the pointy beard.

SERGEANT
Sure. Know it real well.

FORBES
Now you're making fun of me.

SERGEANT
I'm just trying to form a picture.

FORBES
It's wrong, Sergeant. We lied. We lied to the American people. We lied to the United Nations. That's everyone. We conned the whole world into going to war for Kuwait. I conned them. I lied. This whole damn mess is my fault.
AND SLAM STRAIGHT INTO:

ACTUALITY FROM THE FIRST NIGHT'S BOMBING OF IRAQ

AND THEN INTO:
SCENE 3.  
WASHINGTON DC: US MARINES RECRUITING OFFICE.  
DAY.

BARELY A FEW MINUTES LATER 
FORBES IS EVEN MORE DISTRESSED, MORE URGENT, MORE CONFUSED

FORBES  
I've got to go over there and make sure no-one gets hurt.

SERGEANT  
You realise it's going to be over before you're even through basic training?

FORBES  
We're going to get sucked into Iraq for years, decades, generations.

SERGEANT  
Sixty days max. That's what Norman says. In, bing-bang, smish-smash, and out again. The whole thing'll be sorted.

FORBES  
Dream on.

SERGEANT  
And you'll still be on a training base in Missouri – how's that going to help?

FORBES  
It's symbolic. It's about showing my regard for the due process of –

SERGEANT  
Hold on, hold on here. Let's go back to first base.

FORBES  
(URGENT, ALMOST DESPERATE) There isn't time. Really, there isn't – I can't – there isn't time. (POINTING AT THE TV) Look, we've started bombing Baghdad.

SERGEANT  
(OVER THIS) Kid, kid, kid, work with me here. OK?

FORBES  
Sure.

SERGEANT  
Saddam invaded Kuwait. What could we do about that? Nobody knew he was going to –

FORBES  
Of course, we did! Defense Intelligence said he was massing his forces in order to –
SERGEANT You know this for a fact?

FORBES I was in the room!

SERGEANT You were in the Pentagon with Mister Cheney, right? Or was this back in the Oval Office again?

FORBES Oval Office. But Mister Cheney was there. As well.

SERGEANT (OVER HIS SHOULDER) Guys, you got to hear this dude.

FORBES I work for a Senior Director on the National Security Council. Well, till now.

SERGEANT You’re working for the NSC. How do you get to be the guy going to meetings in the Oval Office?

FORBES I graduated...

SERGEANT Harvard?

FORBES Yale. Summa cum you know.

SERGEANT And Dad donated a bit to the Bush campaign?

FORBES How did you –?

SERGEANT Four figures? Five?

FORBES Six.

SERGEANT You're one of the golden ones.

FORBES And I blew it.

SERGEANT Just get back in there. It's where you belong, kiddo.

FORBES We ignored all the signs. We said Saddam wouldn't invade.

SERGEANT Whatever you did wrong, get Pop to make another donation.
FORBES  It was so obvious the invasion was coming.

SERGEANT  You’re exaggerating it up again.

FORBES  This was like late June, July. Well over a month before we’d ever heard of Kuwait. Revolution Day in Iraq. Saddam made a speech. A big speech. But the CIA thought it was just noise.

AND CROSS-MIX INTO:
SCENE 4.  WASHINGTON DC: WHITE HOUSE: OVAL OFFICE: DAY.

THE MAN FROM THE CIA HAS COME TO DELIVER A BRIEFING TO THE PRESIDENT.

CIA  Mister President, the CIA firmly believes that this speech – it's merely an indication of Hussein's own nervousness. He is clearly a friend of the West.

CHENEY  (DISAGREEING) He has accused his fellow Arabs of pushing a poisoned dagger into his back.

OVER:

SERGEANT  Dick Cheney, right?

FORBES  You're sharp.

SERGEANT  Identify, isolate, eliminate.

CONTINUING MEANWHILE:

CIA  He actually said: into Iraq's back.

CHENEY  You think he makes the distinction?

BUSH  What exactly is this dagger?

CIA  Mister President, it's the oil price currently set by OPEC. Saddam believes it is being kept low specifically to harm Iraqi interests.

CHENEY  He prices his losses at fourteen billion dollars and counting. OPEC owes him.

CIA  Which is preposterous.

BUSH  Is it? Admiral?
THE ADMIRAL: The country has huge debts, run up in the war against Iran, he needs the highest possible price if he's ever going to pay them off.

SERGEANT: That your boss?

FORBES: The Vice Admiral – the President brought him over from Georgetown. Made him a Special Director.

SERGEANT: They flew together in the war?

FORBES: Something like that.

SERGEANT: It's not who you know, it's who you kill with.

BUSH: Does he intend to settle those bills?

THE ADMIRAL: He is accusing Kuwait of placing forward operating bases inside Iraqi territory.

BUSH: Why the hell would they –?

CIA: It's a customs post, sir. Not a military installation. We've got full satellite if you would like to –

THE ADMIRAL: Nobody knows the hell where the border is anyway.

BUSH: Customs? Why are they suddenly doing that?

THE ADMIRAL: They're not!

CIA: His second accusation is that Kuwait is siphoning oil from the Rumailah oilfield which belongs to Iraq.

CHENEY: He slaps a 2.4 billion price-ticket on this chunk of oil. Calls it slant drilling.

THE ADMIRAL: The field straddles the border. The same border which can't quite be found.
According to this speech of his, Kuwait and UAE have joined the Imperialist-Zionist plot against a brother Arab nation.

He's calling the Kuwaitis 'Zionists'?

He's calling us 'Imperialists'?

The whole thing smells like, looks like and farts like a pretext to invade. But our revered Central Intelligence Agency -

Mister President. It's an Arab family thing. They will settle it between themselves. He's sabre rattling. Brother Mubarak and Brother King Hussein will talk to him, smooth it all out.

'Imperialist-Zionist' is pretty loud rattling.

It's the noise he has to make if he wants OPEC to cut production. This is his bargaining move.

Not war? You're saying to me No War?

It is the CIA's considered opinion that he has absolutely no intention of any military engagement.

What about you? In the corner?

(SHOCK) Me, sir?

You've been sitting there. Listening. Making your notes. Are the Kuwaiti oil fields in danger?

Sir, I – I am only here to...I don't feel I am adequately...
SCENE 5.  WASHINGTON DC: US MARINES RECRUITING OFFICE.  
DAY.

SERGEANT  Is that what this fuss is all about? Teacher asked a question, you flunked the answer.

FORBES  It was the CIA. They flunked it.

SERGEANT  First thing you learn in the Marines, kid: only trust your own intel. We know how to watch those ragheads.

FORBES  Sergeant!

SERGEANT  You want to join up, you’re going to have to learn to use some language.

FORBES  It's obligatory.

SERGEANT  That and the other thing you just learned.

FORBES  What?

SERGEANT  Never trust the CIA.

FORBES  It was our fault. We didn’t challenge Saddam. We could have called him on it. We said nothing. Worse. We kept telling him it was OK. Just carry on.

SERGEANT  We what?

FORBES  We sent Saddam signals. All summer.

MIX INTO:
SCENE 6.  
WASHINGTON DC: WHITE HOUSE: OVAL OFFICE: DAY.

THINGS ARE ALREADY AT A LEVEL OF EXASPERATION

BUSH  How much, how much have we given this man in credit guarantees?

THE ADMIRAL  Forbes?

FORBES  It's – at the latest estimate – depending on whether to include –

THE ADMIRAL  Something round, Forbes.

FORBES  Two billion U.S.

BUSH  We've let him rack up a bill of two billion dollars. What's he complaining about?

CHENEY  There was that vote in the Senate last week. To ban further loans.

BUSH  And we criticised it. Forcefully. You circulated that, didn't you?

FORBES  We did, sir.

THE ADMIRAL  Not sure it quite had the punch we intended. The whole democratic thing, checks and balances, the Senate says this, we criticise – it doesn't quite press Saddam's buttons.

OVER:

FORBES  See what I mean? Is that a green light or what?

SERGEANT  Kind of ambiguous, sure.
FORBES The President threatened to veto a bill if it included sanctions against Saddam. What Saddam wants, Saddam gets!

CONTINUING:

CHENEY His people do something he doesn’t like, he gets them, gouges their eyes out and sends them back in a bag.

BUSH Please, Dick, we don’t have to – let’s not dwell on that side of things.

THE ADMIRAL Pity our ambassador – she had to show up and listen to the man. His cigars.

CHENEY And did he happen to mention why he’s got two armoured divisions pissing up against the Kuwaiti border?

OVER:

FORBES She told him, our Ambassador told him "We have no opinion on your Arab-Arab conflicts."

SERGEANT So?

FORBES "The Kuwaiti issue is not associated with America." He heard "Do what you want with sorry little Kuwait, take a chunk, we won’t interfere."

MEANWHILE, UNDER:

THE ADMIRAL And Kuwait is refusing to covert its war loans to Iraq into outright grants.

CHENEY Why should they?

THE ADMIRAL Saudi Arabia did it. The Emirates did it.

BUSH What the -?
THE ADMIRAL He has this issue, says there should be a kind of Arab Marshall Plan, to rebuild Iraq. He says he fought the war to save his Arab Brothers from the shit-swilling Iranians. He held the Eastern Gateway, he calls it.

BUSH So he's making noises, to get the Kuwaitis to pay him off?

THE ADMIRAL There's no way Saddam wants all of Kuwait.

BUSH Dick?

CHENEY Maybe he's going to seize the other half of the Rumailah oilfield. Kuwait can suck that up.

BUSH It won’t get them riled?

THE ADMIRAL What are they going to do? They know Saddam’s our man. He keeps the peace – they should be grateful.

CUT TO:
SCENE 7. WASHINGTON DC: US MARINES RECRUITING OFFICE. DAY.

FORBES So many times we could have simply said 'Don't' – we didn't.

SERGEANT That man is one crazy mother. We gave him everything he wanted.

FORBES Saddam kills children. Children of his opponents. Hangs them by their feet, sticks things in them – if you know what I mean – sends the body back to the parents.

SERGEANT OK. Yes. He does do that. But not to Americans. He knows who's in charge – our guns, our oil.

FORBES Right! And we told him he could have some of Kuwait.

SERGEANT So you think we shouldn't go out there, stop him?

FORBES Next thing I know it's five in the morning and we're all standing round –

SERGEANT Let me guess, you're standing round the Bushes' bedroom.

FORBES How did you know?
SCENE 8. THE WHITE HOUSE. PRESIDENTIAL BEDROOM. 5AM.

EMBARRASSMENT MIXED WITH AMPED URGENCY. AND EVERYONE TRYING TO WHISPER.

THE ADMIRAL  Sorry, Mister President, the NSC needs these signed right now. So sorry, Missus Bush.

BUSH  They haven't turned back?

THE ADMIRAL  The Iraqi Army is now in complete control of Kuwait.

BARBARA  Do you have to? Here, now?

BUSH  Sorry, hon, seems like Kuwait has been over-run.

BARBARA BUSH  (HER FACE DEEP UNDERCOVER) I know how they feel.

BUSH  (FUMBLING FOR THEM) My glasses...

THE ADMIRAL  Sir. We need to freeze Iraqi assets in this country. You need to sign here....and here. Thank you. And then we need to make it illegal to trade with Iraq. Forbes, the other order? You got it?

FORBES  (FINDING THE PAPERS) Sorry, sir.

BARBARA BUSH  Him as well?

FORBES  Sorry, Missus First Bush Lady.

BARBARA BUSH HURRUMPHS AND COVERS HERSELF IN PILLOWS.

THE ADMIRAL  (PAPERS) Here, sir.

BUSH  What are we going to do?

THE ADMIRAL  Our options are pretty limited.

CHENEY  All our cruise missiles. Just asking to be fired.
THE ADMIRAL  We can hit his major installations, his command and control. Problem is it won’t shift him one inch out of Kuwait. And it's got to jeopardise the lives of the American citizens stranded over there.

BUSH  How many?

THE ADMIRAL  Forbes?

FORBES  (FINDING THE PAPERWORK) Maybe three hundred in Kuwait, if they've all been detained. Up to four thousand in Iraq.

THE ADMIRAL  Plenty may have got out.

CHENEY  All that matters is, he's a heartbeat from entering Saudi Arabia. If he takes Riyadh, he's got sixty-five percent of the world's oil reserves. Two thirds of all the oil in the world. Let's hurt him before he even thinks about it.

BUSH  He gets that, he'll have the money for every weapon they've ever invented and a few they haven't invented yet. We'll never get him out.

CHENEY  Saddam's never met a weapon he didn't like.

BUSH  We need a plan for if he moves towards Saudi.

CHENEY  I can give you the whole range – from UN sanctions to targeted Cruise missile strikes to carpet bombing Baghdad.

BUSH  Let's not get ahead of ourselves.

CHENEY  We have the bombs, he has the targets.

THE ADMIRAL  Dick, you actually want a full Middle East War? Think what that'll do to oil supplies.

CHENEY  Long-term it'll pay off. It'll all be secure.

BUSH  In the meantime, the economy goes down the tubes.
CHENEY We wait, he'll dig in, a whole puppet government in Kuwait. We have to blow him out. We're the only guys you can trust with this much oil.

BUSH We said we could trust Saddam. "Our man", right?

CHENEY If this isn't worth fighting for, what is? (CHENEY STRIDES OUT, SHOUTING BACK:) I'm going to assemble a task force. You'll thank me.

BARBARA BUSH Now how about the rest of you let me get some sleep?

CUT TO:
SCENE 9.  WASHINGTON DC: US MARINES RECRUITING OFFICE.
DAY.

THE SERGEANT LEANS FORWARD, SOTTO VOCE:

SERGEANT  Like...the President, I've got to ask, what does he wear in
bed? PJs or is it – ?

FORBES  I'm not going to dignify that with an answer.

SERGEANT  Good. That's right. Our Commander in Chief. All hail.

FORBES  Commander of what? Saddam was right. He told
Ambassador Glaspie that "America is a country which cannot
accept ten thousand dead in one battle."

SERGEANT  He can?

FORBES  And not even break sweat.

MIX INTO:
SCENE 10. WHITE HOUSE: SITUATION ROOM. DAY.

IN THE BACKGROUND, CLUSTERS OF PEOPLE ARE WHISPERING, DISCUSSING

BUSH You know what she said to me?

CHENEY Asked you to do the washing up?

BUSH She said "This is no time to go wobbly, George."

THE ADMIRAL Nice.

BUSH Me. The British Prime Minister accused me of wobbling.

THE ADMIRAL She launched a war, beat a tin-pot banana republic and now she thinks she's Winston Churchill.

CHENEY But with more balls.

THE ADMIRAL Three? Four? (THEN:) Five?

BUSH What can we do, Dick? Genuinely do.

CHENEY We go in there and we take him out.

THE ADMIRAL Kuwait is nine thousand miles away and we have no major military base anywhere in the zone.

CHENEY We are the world's only superpower. We are the last man standing. We do what we want.

THE ADMIRAL I've been looking at it all day. We spoke to Schwarzkopf, he says to repel Saddam's invasion force, we'd have to fly in a minimum five divisions, that's about ninety thousand troops, along with armour, weapons and supplies.

CHENEY It won't take half that.
THE ADMIRAL: Even if the Saudis do agree to station our troops, Saddam has one million men. Our entire armed forces, every last man, woman and cook doesn’t top seven hundred thousand.

CHENEY: We spend three hundred billion a year on Defence. You’re saying we can’t shift a few half-assed –

BUSH: He’s saying we can’t do it alone.

THE ADMIRAL: This isn’t going to be just about armies, Dick.

CHENEY: We always do all the fighting, all the planes, all the missiles.

THE ADMIRAL: Sure. But it has to look like everyone’s doing it.

BUSH: Everyone? How the hell do we get everyone?

THE ADMIRAL: Let’s start with the Brits – they love a fight. They can bring the Europeans. The Australians if we have to. Then we need some Arabs. The whole gang. It has to look like their show.

BUSH: What about the Americans, our people?

CHENEY: What?

BUSH: The hole in the road is this royal family.

THE ADMIRAL: The Al-Sabahs. They’re not so bad.

BUSH: We fought a war to get rid of the one ruling this country.

CHENEY: That was a while back, sir.

BUSH: But how do I send soldiers into battle to put kings back on their throne? (REALISING:) Where are these people now?

THE ADMIRAL: Somewhere in....Forbes?

FORBES: The Royal Family? The Sheraton Hotel. In Taif. (IN RESPONSE TO WONDERING LOOKS) It’s in Saudi Arabia, sir.

BUSH: They all got out?
FORBES: All but one.

THE ADMIRAL: The King's brother or nephew or...Forbes!

FORBES: Fahad Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

BUSH: Saddam's got him?

CHENEY: Missed the last bus out of town. Shot to ribbons. Right, Forbes?

FORBES: On the steps of the Dasman Palace, sir.


BUSH: Did none of them fight back?

THE ADMIRAL: On the whole Kuwaitis don’t do their own fighting, sir. They tend to hire Pakistanis to do it for them.

CHENEY: They hire people to do everything. It's amazing they breathe on their own.

BUSH: How do we tell the American people to go to war to liberate a country they can’t find on a map because the people there won’t fight for it themselves.

THE ADMIRAL: And once Saddam's got the money, he'll probably start up the war against Iran again.

BUSH: Which'll look pretty damn straight to most real Americans.

THE ADMIRAL: We cannot get sucked into another Vietnam.

CHENEY: Who here's talking Vietnam?

THE ADMIRAL: Saddam's got the most battle-hardened army in the region, with the newest weapons. They sound a whole lot like Vietcong to me.

FORBES: (ALMOST SPLURTING OUT) We could go further back.
THE ADMIRAL Forbes?

FORBES We jump right over Vietnam. Backwards, I mean. Jump backwards, I mean. I know you can't but – maybe if you turned around and –

THE ADMIRAL Forbes.

FORBES Kuwait is Czechoslovakia.

THE ADMIRAL Sorry?

BUSH Your boy here's right. If we'd stopped Hitler in '38, that war would have been a whole lot smaller. Or the Rhineland the year before. That's what this is.

THE ADMIRAL ('WRITING') Czechoslovakia. Stand up for the underdog. The tiny nation, we will defend its sovereignty like our own.

BUSH Good.

THE ADMIRAL This will not stand, this aggression against tiny, poor, defenceless Kuwait.

BUSH Good, keep it away from Emirs.

CHENEY Away from oil.

BUSH We need to get someone to promote the issues. Someone who can sell this whole thing.

THE ADMIRAL You mean the Brits?

BUSH Get them in, we'll play this like 1939. Standing up to the tyrant. The Allies together, fighting the jackboot. That whole kind of thing.

CUT TO:
SCENE 11.  

WASHINGTON DC: US MARINES RECRUITING OFFICE. DAY.

SERGEANT  
See? Poor little Kuwait.

FORBES  
Poor!? It's one giant oil well.

SERGEANT  
I know they're rich.

FORBES  
It only exists to pump oil.

SERGEANT  
I meant defenceless, 'poor little', like Orphan Annie.

FORBES  
Annie gets up and fights. Shows chutzpah. The Kuwaiti Royal family ran straight out of town. Didn't stop to fight back. Just got in their limos and drove.

SERGEANT  
Hold up there, hold up, what about that one – Fahad al Jahad. There he is on the parliament steps –

FORBES  
Palace.

SERGEANT  
(CONTINUING) – drawing his revolver, going down in a hail of gunfire –

FORBES  
Running for his car.

SERGEANT  
(APPROACHING) – fighting to the last, the Custer of Kuwait.

FORBES  
We may have massaged those facts slightly.

SERGEANT  
You're a talented guy.

FORBES  
We had some PR guys in as well.

SERGEANT  
You hired an advertising agency?

FORBES  
It was the Brits' idea.

SERGEANT  
They get to choose?
FORBES  They’ve got a whole lot of money over there – British Petroleum is big in Kuwait.

SERGEANT  They paid, I hope.

FORBES  Citizens for a Free Kuwait settled that bill.

SERGEANT  Who are they?

FORBES  They’re our first lie.

SERGEANT  Sound like straight-up guys to me.

CUT TO: 
SCENE 12. WASHINGTON DC: HILL AND KNOWLTON: OFFICES.
DAY.

THE PR CAMPAIGN IS NOW UNDERWAY.
PAPERS LITTER THE TABLES.
DRAKE (AMERICAN) AND DIANA (BRITISH) ARE THE TWO CONSULTANTS
NOMINATED TO HANDLE THE ACCOUNT: THEY ARE SMOOTH, CAPABLE,
UNFLAPPABLE.

DRAKE The problem we have identified – it's basically a feudal
monarchy who run the place like it's their personal
possession.

FORBES They're not the worst.

MILITARY ATTACHÉ Let's be frank, that's only because most of their
neighbours have rewritten the Tyrant’s Book of
Favourite Tortures.

SERGEANT That's the Brit?

FORBES Seconded from their Embassy. Military Attaché.

DIANA We think we can promote it as one of the most progressive
countries in the region.

SERGEANT What, is it all Brits?


SERGEANT Are they all called Diana over there?

DIANA They have an assembly. They have elections.

FORBES Women don't get to vote. If you can't prove Kuwaiti
nationality since the Twenties, you don’t vote. So out of
about two million inhabitants that leaves sixty-five thousand
men with a vote. They get to elect half the representatives
and the Emir dissolved the assembly in '86 anyway.
M/ATTACHÉ  Does anybody actually complain? I mean really...?

FORBES  The Bedoons. The dispossessed. The women. And the half a million immigrant workers – Kuwaitis have a nasty habit of taking away their passports and using them as slave labour.

DRAKE  Best not to frontload that either. Americans like hard workers.

M/ATTACHÉ  If we might possibly... Number Ten is very keen to hear your strategic overview.

DIANA  OK....We're talking an Information Day, maybe first week of September, on as many college campuses as we can. There will be print packs for that, we're allowing four hundred k for printing. A week or so later, we reckoned a National Day of Prayer for Kuwait, as many churches as we can. We'll also be lobbying state governors for a nationwide Free Kuwait Day.


DIANA  We have six hundred k allocated for video production. And a further million dollars for research.

FORBES  Sounds great. I have just one issue....if I can just clarify...maybe I'm misunderstanding.

DIANA  Go right ahead.

FORBES  'Citizens for a Free Kuwait'. I've seen the latest donation lists.

DRAKE  Patriotic guys, right?

FORBES  Who have donated a total of $16,342 dollars.

DIANA  I don’t have the figures in front of me right now.

FORBES  So where do we get the 2.1 million dollars so far itemised?

DIANA  We have...someone willing to underwrite costs.

A MOMENT THEN:
FORBES     The State of Kuwait, yes?

DIANA      They have donated on behalf of their citizens.

FORBES     Thing is, you see, we have a law in this country, maybe you didn't know. The Foreign Agents Registration Act.

DRAKE      We are all aware of it.

FORBES     Enacted when it was found that the Nazi Party was paying lobbying firms.

DRAKE      Public Relations has a strict code of ethics.

FORBES     If you are working for a foreign government, you have to register this with the Justice Department. It's the law.

DIANA      We are working for Citizens for a Free Kuwait.

M/ATTACHÉ  Her Majesty's Government sees CFK is a grass-roots pressure group, entirely staffed by ex-pat Kuwaitis.

DRAKE      Operating out of...(PAPERS)...They're on Upper Connecticut Avenue. A strip mall.

FORBES     You'll register CFK under the Foreign Agents Act?

M/ATTACHÉ  If you insist. Maybe Mrs T can have a quick word with the President.

FORBES     Why would she – ?

M/ATTACHÉ  Don't want the waters muddied. I'm sure we can get your Department of Justice to take a view. I can hear her now – "no reason for this kind of pedantry".

FORBES     It's hardly pe –

M/ATTACHÉ  Onto the next item. Yes?

CUT BACK TO:
SCENE 13. WASHINGTON DC: US MARINES RECRUITING OFFICE. DAY.

SERGEANT You just can't leave it alone, can you?

FORBES 'Swhat my Mom always said.

SERGEANT Pick, pick, pick.

FORBES That's exactly what she said. That's weird. (BUT HE GETS NO CHANCE TO GO FURTHER WITH THIS:)

SERGEANT The guy goes round gassing his people and you're bothering about whether some advertising agency is registered with the stuffed shirts at Justice?

FORBES When he gassed the Kurds. What did we say then?

SERGEANT We....we...I don't know, what did we say?

FORBES Nothing. Amoco, Mobil, they wrote to the President, they said sanctions would have 'the opposite effect'. We did nothing. He was Our Man.

SERGEANT He killed a whole bunch of Iranians for us.

FORBES So why were we getting anti-war protests?

MIX TO:

1 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1uMXkqL5XUY at 1'22"57"
SCENE 14.  

WASHINGTON DC: NSC: OFFICE. DAY.

THE ADMIRAL  'The hell is this, Forbes?

FORBES  Admiral?

THE ADMIRAL  You like working here?

FORBES  I serve at the pleasure of the – [President]

THE ADMIRAL  What if the Germans read this stuff? They just signed up to the coalition – two billion they're coming on with and more – what if Chancellor Kohl reads this crapola?

FORBES  That's the Military Family Support Network guy, right?

THE ADMIRAL  (PAPERS) From his interview on CNN: (READING THE TRANSCRIPT) "The army has been deployed in the desert and The Emir of Kuwait is not worth a drop of American blood. He is a Middle East autocrat with a record of human rights abuses as long as my arm." If our own Americans won't die for it, how do we talk the Italians into it, the Swedes, the goddamn Bangladeshis?

FORBES  I do believe Citizens for a Free Kuwait is making genuine headway.

THE ADMIRAL  (READING MORE) "Our troops took an oath to defend our country and uphold the Constitution. But they didn't take an oath to keep gasoline at one dollar twenty-nine a gallon."

FORBES  I think they're a pretty small outfit. Madison, Wisconsin.

THE ADMIRAL  Do they really think that's what it's about, the price of gas?

FORBES  Hill and Knowlton are putting the best stuff out there. The tide is turning.

THE ADMIRAL  Kuwait is ours. It isn't Russia's, it isn't China's and it sure as hell isn't Saddam's.
FORBES  (TENTATIVE) The National Prayer Day was supported by over three hundred churches nationwide.

THE ADMIRAL  Point is, Forbes, we're the only guys that can be trusted with the stuff.

FORBES  We've got media packs going out almost every day. It's our news inserts playing on ABC, CNN, NB -

THE ADMIRAL  (PAPER) "Bush has aligned himself with the Emir of Kuwait against his own people."

FORBES  We've got Wirthlin focus-grouping responses to our TV spots. We're doing serious work on the Kuwaiti Ambassador's moustache.

THE ADMIRAL  "Is the American 'way of life' that you say my son is risking his life for the continued 'right' of Americans to consume a quarter of the world's oil?"

FORBES  We did an interview with Kuwaiti Resistance Fighters on ABC.

THE ADMIRAL  We need something that genuinely grabs, Forbes. Something that swings the world behind this coalition.

FORBES  We're going to work harder. A lot harder.

THE ADMIRAL  Hill and Knowlton say they're the best. Tell them it's time to prove it.

FORBES  Sir.

THE ADMIRAL  Something splashy. Something....something like the Belgian babies.

FORBES  Sir?

THE ADMIRAL  Germans storming through Belgium. Babies on bayonets.

FORBES  I thought the Germans – promising two billion?
THE ADMIRAL (CONTINUING) Nurses shot and raped and mutilated. Babies at their mothers' skirts, their hands chopped off, the tiny fingers left gripping the wool.

FORBES Is that anatomically possible?

THE ADMIRAL That's what swung the Brits behind the First World War.

FORBES Fifty-three percent of Americans can now find Kuwait on a map.

THE ADMIRAL See what you can come up with, Forbes. Forget the maps, get me some dead babies.

CUT TO:
SCENE 15.  
WASHINGTON DC: US MARINES RECRUITING OFFICE.  
DAY.

SERGEANT  
Shit, those Nazis, sub-human.

FORBES  
That was the Germans.

SERGEANT  
Nazis.

FORBES  
World War One – that was twenty years before the Nazi Party.

SERGEANT  
Like I said, pernickety.

CUT TO:
SCENE 16. WASHINGTON DC: HILL AND KNOWLTON OFFICES. CLIPPINGS ROOM. DAY.

FORBES IS BURIED IN CLIPPINGS, BUT EXCITED BY HIS FINDS. DRAKE AND MILITARY ATTACHÉ ENTER:

M/ATTACHÉ Alright, there, Forbes?

FORBES Mister Secretary. I'm – I'm going through the clippings.

DRAKE Our little beaver, aren't you?

FORBES I found this. What do you think? Sir, from your Daily Telegraph newspaper. The Kuwaiti Housing Minister – so he's trustworthy, right? "Babies in the premature unit in one hospital had been removed from their incubators so that these too could be carried off."

M/ATTACHÉ Absolute pigs, aren't they?

FORBES My boss, he says the National Security Council wants us to get interested in babies.

DRAKE Sounds like you need to get yourself a girl, Forbes.

FORBES Dead ones. In the news. In Kuwait. And then I found this, L.A.Times: This woman from San Francisco, Cindy, she's just been evacuated from Kuwait. "Iraqis are beating people – taking hospital equipment, babies out of incubators – the Iraqis are beating Kuwaitis...cutting their ears off if they are caught resisting."

M/ATTACHÉ I like it. Ears are always good.

FORBES No, the babies bit. The incubators. I think we should pursue that.

DRAKE You got a plan?

FORBES Isn't that your specialty?
M/ATTACHÉ: Surely this is a job for human rights, yes?

FORBES: 'Human rights', could be a bit dangerous, you know, the Emir, the half a million slave workers.

DRAKE: The trick with Mademoiselle Human Rights is to pin her down and secure her tightly, whether she wants it or not.

M/ATTACHÉ: So find us your little friend Cindy, why don't you?

DRAKE: And then we'll get her on Live TV.

M/ATTACHÉ: And I think I might set a few things in train myself.

SMASH CUT TO:
SCENE 17. WASHINGTON DC: US MARINES RECRUITING OFFICE. DAY.

SERGEANT What did she say?

FORBES Couldn’t find her. I did start to wonder if any of this...

SERGEANT This other guy, the Kuwaiti Minister?

FORBES He hadn’t actually seen it. Just heard about somebody who said they’d heard from someone who said.....

SERGEANT Bummer.

CUT TO:
SCENE 18. WASHINGTON DC: HILL AND KNOWLTON OFFICES.
DAY.

FORBES AND DRAKE AND DIANA ARE BURIED UNDER MORE PAPERWORK

FORBES
OK, OK, what about this guy, Doctor Ali Al-Hawil says he personally buried fifty bodies.

DIANA
Babies?

FORBES
"Between sixty and seventy babies died in Kuwait City Maternity Hospital after Iraqi soldiers dismantled the premature baby unit." He goes on... he and his colleagues dug the graves and interred fifty babies on August Twentieth.

DRAKE
OK, can we get him here?

FORBES
He's in Kuwait. We can get a statement.

DRAKE
'Sgot to be a live witness, my little wunderkind. Testimony before the Congressional Caucus. Broadcast coast-to-coast.

FORBES
OK, there's this. The Al-Addan Hospital. (FORBES HANDS HER THE PAPERS)

DRAKE
Read it to us.

DIANA
(READING AND SUMMARISING) The Iraqi soldiers detained two employees... one a records clerk, the other a sanitation –

DRAKE
We don't need to know their jobs.

DIANA
Detained two employees and five young volunteers, took them outside, lined them up, shot them.

DRAKE
How old were the volunteers?

DIANA
Young, it says.
DRAKE Not babies?
DIANA Almost certainly not babies.
DRAKE You're the one who said the Admiral wants babies.
FORBES Alright. Babies. I'm trying.

DURING THIS, MILITARY ATTACHÉ KNOCKS ON THE DOOR AND TENTATIVELY OPENS IT.

M/ATTACHÉ Excuse me, may I....?
DRAKE Sure. Come on in.
M/ATTACHÉ Didn't know if I was interrupting...
FORBES (WHO IS NONPLussed BY THE MILITARY ATTACHÉ’S SUDDEN POLITENESS) Just beavering away....
M/ATTACHÉ I wanted to introduce you to someone. (TO SOMEONE OUTSIDE) Come on, come in.

THEY WAIT.

M/ATTACHÉ Ladies and Gentlemen, may I introduce Nurse Nayirah?
NAYIRAH (TIMID) Hello.
DRAKE Hello.
M/ATTACHÉ Until recently, Nayirah was working at a hospital in Kuwait.
FORBES You’re a nurse?
M/ATTACHÉ We were lucky enough to pull her from the jaws of the Iraqi Hitler.
FORBES This is amazing. (TO NAYIRAH) How did you get out?
NAYIRAH Of the hospital?
FORBES  Kuwait.

NAYIRAH  I...

M/ATTACHÉ  We – this is highly confidential, all part of the Kuwaiti underground resistance.

FORBES  Forgive me. Sorry. Yes.

DIANA  Yes, we don’t need to know about any of that.

M/ATTACHÉ  In fact, 'Nayirah' is an assumed name.

FORBES  Oh? Oh. Right.

M/ATTACHÉ  Her family are in constant danger. If her identity ever became public...

DIANA  That's fine. We don’t need to know.

FORBES  If the intention is for her to testify before the Congressional Caucus...?

DRAKE  We can sort that. The Senator won't have trouble with an alias, I’ll square it.

FORBES  (TO M/ATTACHÉ) Is that the plan?

DIANA  Nayirah is a nurse. That’s what matters.

FORBES  You look – how old are you, Nayirah?

NAYIRAH  I....

DRAKE  She was a volunteer, weren't you? Nursing assistant?

NAYIRAH  That's right.

DIANA  They have volunteers at the Al-Addan Hospital. (SEMI-PROMPTING) Is that where you were?

NAYIRAH  That's right.
M/ATTACHÉ  That is where she saw the Iraqis taking incubators?

NAYIRAH  (PARROTISH) They threw the babies on the ground.

FORBES  And you could do nothing.

NAYIRAH  We....they all died.

FORBES  Couldn't you pick them up, keep them warm some other way?

NAYIRAH  (OFF-SCRIPT!) I...we...

M/ATTACHÉ  (RESCUING HER) You'd dare do that? With Iraqi killers standing around?

FORBES  It was the incubators they wanted, yes?

M/ATTACHÉ  They're pillaging the entire country. Shipping everything back to Iraq. What does it matter to them if a few hundred babies die?

FORBES  Is that right, Nayirah?

NAYIRAH  That's right. I saw it. All of it.

CUT TO:
SCENE 19.  

WASHINGTON DC: WHITE HOUSE: PRESS CONFERENCE.²

BUSH  

I have just met Sheik Jabbar al Ahmed al Sabah. The Emir told me that Iraqis have been "going into hospitals, taking babies out of incubators and people off life-support machines to send the equipment back to Iraq." Iraqi aggression has ransacked and pillaged a once peaceful and secure country, its population assaulted, incarcerated, intimidated, and even murdered. Iraq’s leaders are trying to wipe an internationally recognized sovereign state, a member of the Arab League and the United Nations, off the face of the map.

CUT TO:

² the actuality if possible
SCENE 20.  WASHINGTON DC: US MARINES RECRUITING OFFICE.  DAY.

SERGEANT  Those Brits. They've always known how to play the Arab game.

FORBES  Sorry?

SERGEANT  Do you know why Kuwait exists?

FORBES  (BAFFLED) "Why"?

SERGEANT  Because we told them it did. I been doing my own research, my own intel work.

FORBES  (MILDLY MYSTIFIED) You have?

SERGEANT  There was Ibn Saud, first King of So-Called Saudi, strutting around the desert, saying it was all his. We called him in –

FORBES  We? (THIS IS FIRST HINT THAT THE SERGEANT IS NOT 'APPEARS' TO BE)

SERGEANT  Sir Percy Cox. Stupid name, that same stupid British accent but he knew how to play the cards. He knew what all that oil under the sand meant. He told that Ibn Saud, Sheikh Ibn Saud, told him where the frontier was going to be. Had him standing there like a naughty schoolboy. You know what this Sheikh said?

FORBES  I don't get it, how do you know?

SERGEANT  He said to Sir Percy – Jesus, just to think about it gets me hard – said that Sir Percy was his father and his brother and he alone had raised him to greatness. He owed the man his everything. It was a sorry sad sight. But it got the job done. That's when the West got want it wanted. With Saudi oil in our pockets, we do what we want.
FORBES       How do you know all this?

SERGEANT    Why shouldn't I know as much as you?

FORBES       Because you're – because –

SERGEANT    Maybe we're not so different you and me.

FORBES       But I –

SERGEANT    Go on, kid, you've nailed this perfect witness but there's something wrong with her, right?

FORBES       Of course there was.

SERGEANT    Some people, just never happy.

CUT TO:
SCENE 21. WASHINGTON DC: NSC OFFICES. DAY.

FORBES IS TRYING TO EXPLAIN THE PROBLEM TO HIS BOSS

FORBES  It's the girl, sir. She's the problem.

THE ADMIRAL  (DONE THIS BEFORE) We cannot reveal her actual name.

FORBES  I'm good with that. It's something else.

THE ADMIRAL  She's cute, right?

FORBES  Yes, I think she'll make an impact.

THE ADMIRAL  She'll cry?

FORBES  We've been rehearsing a bit.

THE ADMIRAL  So what's the panic?

FORBES  It's just her story. It keeps fluctuating.

A MOMENT, THEN:

THE ADMIRAL  You been in a car crash ever, Forbes?

FORBES  Not to speak of. Touched fenders once. Maybe.

THE ADMIRAL  You put four people in a car, put them in a crash, serious, but nobody gets killed or anything, and let me tell you, they're going to come out and there all going to say something different. They will all contradict each other.

FORBES  But she's contradicting herself.

THE ADMIRAL  That happens too. First you remember it one way and then you remember it the other. It's natural.

FORBES  And the way she keeps looking at the Kuwaiti Ambassador.
THE ADMIRAL  He's the boss.

FORBES  It feels – I don't know – more than that. Like they know each other somehow.

THE ADMIRAL  Tomorrow's Congressional Caucus meeting, you've got all the press lined up?

FORBES  C-Span put it out live. Nine networks are ready to pick it up.

THE ADMIRAL  Worldwide?

FORBES  BBC, ZDF, RTL, RAI, TF1 –

THE ADMIRAL  This girl, she's going to cry?

FORBES  We'll rehearse her harder.

THE ADMIRAL  I want tears.

FORBES  (WRITING IT DOWN) Tears. Right.

THE ADMIRAL  The President wants something shocking.

FORBES  He asked for that?

THE ADMIRAL  He doesn't have to ask, it's our job to know what he wants.

FORBES  Tears. Tissues. Unable to go on. But she can.

THE ADMIRAL  Good man. I'm going to go tell him.

FORBES  The President?

THE ADMIRAL  And I'm going to remind him of your name. You're going places, Forbes.

CUT TO:
SCENE 22. WHITE HOUSE: PRESS ROOM.

A PRESS CONFERENCE

BUSH  I thought the Admiral put it very well after the Emir left here. And I am very much concerned, not just about the physical dismantling but of the brutality that has now been written on by Amnesty International confirming some of the tales told us by the Emir of brutality. It's just unbelievable, some of the things at least he reflected. I mean, people on a dialysis machine cut off, the machine sent to Baghdad; babies in incubators heaved out of the incubators and the incubators themselves sent to Baghdad. Now, I don't know how many of these tales can be authenticated, but I do know that when the Emir was here he was speaking from the heart. And it's sickening.

CUT TO:

3 actuality if possible
SCENE 23. WASHINGTON DC: NSC OFFICES. AFTERNOON.

FORBES AND THE ADMIRAL AND CHENEY ARE WATCHING THE CONGRESSIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS CAUCUS ON C-SPAN
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LmfVs3WaE9Y
PLAY THE FIRST 2’20” OF THIS:
OVER WHICH, SPORADICALLY:

CUED BY "MY NAME IS NAYIRAH AND I JUST CAME OUT OF KUWAIT":

CHENEY She looks very young.

THE ADMIRAL We’ve got that covered.

CHENEY I’ve almost got Morocco, three thousand troops.

THE ADMIRAL She going to close the deal for us, Forbes?

FORBES I hope so, sir.

THE ADMIRAL How we going for oil states?

CHENEY UAE, Bahrain, Saudi...all the big ones.

THE ADMIRAL Qatar?

CHENEY Any day now.

CUED BY "WHAT I SAW HAPPEN TO THE CHILDREN OF KUWAIT":

THE ADMIRAL That’s it, honey, get those tears out. Don’t hold them back.

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4 THIS IS THE MEAT OF WHAT SHE SAYS:
"The second week after the invasion, I volunteered at the Al-Addan hospital in Kuwait City, with 12 other women at the hospital who wanted to help. I was the youngest volunteer. The others were 20–30 years old. While I was there, I saw the Iraqi soldiers coming into the hospital with guns, and go into the room where 15 babies were in incubators. They took the babies out of the incubators, took the incubators and left the babies on the cold floor to die. It was horrifying. I could not help but think of my nephew, who if born premature, might have died that day as well."
CUED BY "TOOK THE BABIES OUT OF THE INCUBATORS":

CHENEY Nice, nice.

CUED BY "LEFT THE CHILDREN TO DIE ON THE COLD FLOOR":

FORBES Why didn’t they pick them up?

THE ADMIRAL No need to quibble, Forbes.

FORBES I mean, sir, let’s hope no-one asks her that.

THE ADMIRAL You prepped an answer?

FORBES I think...

NAYIRAH IS NOW CRYING

CHENEY (BELIEVING IT) Nice tears, McEwing. Very nice. Qatar’s got play ball now. Where did you find her?

FORBES She...the Brits – and the Kuwaiti Ambassador...

CHENEY He said he’d help out. That’s great.

UNDER THIS TO SKIP FORWARDS TO 3’50" "I AM GLAD I AM FIFTEEN..." AND CARRY STRAIGHT ON INTO PORTER’S SUMMING-UP:

PORTER ....about human rights abuses throughout the world....we have never heard in all this time, in all circumstances, a record of inhumanity and brutality and sadism as the ones that the witnesses have given us today...

OVER WHICH:

CHENEY OK, we’ve got live testimony that he’s a baby killer.

THE ADMIRAL Given under oath to a Congressional Committee.

CHENEY We need to get this out to ABC, NBC –
FORBES Strictly speaking, sir...

CHENGY Yes?

FORBES This – it's not a committee of Congress.

CHENGY (JOKEY) Is he always like this?

THE ADMIRAL Sometimes it's useful. (TO FORBES) Just not now, Forbes.

FORBES I only meant....

CHENGY Yes?

FORBES She wasn't under oath. It's an informal cauc –

CHENGY I'm going to go back, get the President to watch this. He's going to like this. This could be a game changer.

CHENGY GOES

THE ADMIRAL Good work, Forbes.

FORBES But Admiral –

THE ADMIRAL Don't spoil it now. Just don't.

CUT TO:
SCENE 24.  WASHINGTON DC: US MARINES RECRUITING OFFICE. DAY.

SERGEANT  It worked?

FORBES  More than your wildest. The President mentioned it, time and again. Like this:

BUSH USING THE STORY IN A SPEECH (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vdjsT1oDrss at 1'49'')

FORBES  And this:

ANOTHER USE BY BUSH (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vdjsT1oDrss at 1'57'' or https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vu8CCJTJCQk at 0'23').

SERGEANT  Man, that Saddam, he deserves everything’s coming to him.

FORBES  It got mentioned seven times in the Senate debate. Seven different senators referred to this nonsense!


SERGEANT  Someone was bound to mention it.

FORBES  The Senate only voted for war by five votes. Fifty-two to forty-seven! If that silly little girl swung just three votes...

SERGEANT  If Saddam hangs onto Kuwait, the man’s got twenty-two percent of OPEC production and sixty-five percent of entire world reserves.

---

5 FOR SPEECH IN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES WHICH MENTIONS BABIES: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yaR1YBR5g6U at 7'13"
FORBES (WEIRD) How do you know all this? Those figures?

SERGEANT And when he starts selling that Kuwaiti oil, he gets to be the richest psychopath in the world. He's already the world's biggest arms purchaser and that was when he couldn't pay for it.

FORBES All those other countries, the coalition, they were listening to this stuff. They were believing it.

SERGEANT Why shouldn't they believe it?

FORBES We even had Syria, Japan, Poland!

SERGEANT Little old Czechoslovakia?

FORBES Of course.

SERGEANT Wise up, kid. Your little nurse and her stacks of dead babies. She didn't change any minds, she was cover. They couldn't say 'We've got to fight to protect our oil. We've got to fight to stop him having the oil.' This way they get to say 'We're protecting the little babies.'

FORBES Stop, you don't know all this kind of thing.

SERGEANT If you knew this was all a lie, why didn't you do anything?

FORBES I did. I did!

CUT TO:
SCENE 25.      NEW YORK: UN BUILDING: JUST OUTSIDE THE SECURITY COUNCIL CHAMBER. DAY.

THEY ARE SETTING UP THE EXHIBITION OUTSIDE THE ASSEMBLY CHAMBER.

DRAKE     You just cover that board with the satellite photos. Got pins?

FORBES    We've got permission for this, right?

DIANA     We'll square it with the Chair.

FORBES    I mean, I've never seen this before, a complete exhibition, a full audio-visual presentation right outside the Security Council Chamber.

DRAKE     This is the big vote. The mandate to invade. You want to lose it?

FORBES    I mean, it's just –

THE ADMIRAL  (APPROACHING)   How's it going?

FORBES    Admiral. Good. Yes. It's –

M/ATTACHÉ  Gosh, this is all rather hi-tech, isn't it? Screens and tapes and stuff.

DRAKE     Citizens for Free Kuwait need us to give this one last big push. Resolution 678 is the Category Killer.

THE ADMIRAL All looking very good I must say. (OF THE TV SCREEN ACROSS) That's our little girl, isn't it?

NAYIRAH'S 'TESTIMONY' IS NOW PLAYING ON THE TV THEY HAVE SET UP.

DRAKE     We've got her on loop. She cries every four minutes thirty-three.
M/ATTACHÉ: That's frightfully good.

FORBES: It's just....

THE ADMIRAL: Yes, Forbes?

FORBES FINALLY LETS IT ALL GO:

FORBES: She's the Daughter of the Ambassador. She isn't Nayirah the Nurse. She's Najirah al-Sabah. This is all a fabrication!

THE ADMIRAL: (SO HE DOESN'T GET TOO LOUD) It's OK, Forbes, it really is.

FORBES: How can it be!?

THE ADMIRAL: We concealed Nayirah's identity at the request of her father – they have to protect her family and her friends.

FORBES: She wasn't there. She didn't see what she says she saw.

THE ADMIRAL: We have no basis for assuming that her story is not true.

FORBES: She wasn't even in Kuwait at the time of the Iraqi invasion. Is that enough basis for you?

M/ATTACHÉ: Personally, I'd say the fact that Nayirah is the daughter of the Ambassador of Kuwait makes her a more reliable witness.

THE ADMIRAL: It enhances her credibility.

FORBES: What the hell was she doing working at the hospital? An Al-Sabah!

M/ATTACHÉ: She worked there under a different name! Come on, she's not an idiot.

FORBES: (SHOUTING, DISBELIEVING) She's a member of the royal family. Saddam's secret police are hunting everywhere, just to get one of them.
THE ADMIRAL Hide in plain sight.

FORBES And her family let a fifteen year-old girl walk through I-don't-know-how-many checkpoints to get to the hospital?

THE ADMIRAL She's a brave girl. We should have made more of that.

M/ATTACHÉ (AGREEING) We could have.

FORBES They're saying three hundred were thrown out of incubators. Right now, there wouldn't be that many babies in incubators on the whole Eastern seaboard, let alone in Kuwait City, during the holiday season!

THE ADMIRAL I think maybe –

FORBES Please, I can't do this anymore. Just let me enlist? Please? Sergeant?

THE ADMIRAL/SERGEANT (FOR THEY ARE ONE AND THE SAME) You still don't get it, do you, Forbes?

FORBES I am not insane. I'm just disappointed. I lied to the American people. And now I've got to do something about it.

M/ATTACHÉ A few little semi-truths – so what?

FORBES So what?

THE ADMIRAL/SERGEANT It's what we asked you to do for us, son.

FORBES When can it ever be right to –?

M/ATTACHÉ We all knew it's about oil.

FORBES Then we should have told the American people. Should have levelled with them.
SERGEANT (NOW THOROUGHLY BACK IN SERGEANT PERSONA)
They wouldn't have fought for it, kiddo. It isn’t about 1.29 a gallon. I wouldn't fight to keep it at 1.29 a gallon.

FORBES So it isn't about oil?

SERGEANT It's about making sure that a madman doesn’t get all the oil. We want it, sure, but one thing’s for certain, we can't let him have it.

FORBES So that's what we should have said. If we wanted UN Resolution 678 so bad, we should have said why.

SERGEANT My all-time favourite resolution. Member states get to kick Iraqi ass out of Kuwait.

FORBES Everyone called it 'testimony', called them 'witnesses'. But what they were saying – it wasn't true.

SERGEANT The girl. The girl saw it happen. What do you want? You want the actual bodies? The little babies' bodies, you want them there, in the United Nations? Will that make you believe?

FORBES If there had been bodies. There aren't any!

SERGEANT Listen to me, kid –

FORBES Sergeant, please stop calling me kid. My name is Forbes McEwen the –

THE SERGEANT SLAPS HIM ACROSS THE FACE.

FORBES No. You can't hit me.

SERGEANT Time to wake up, kid.

HE SLAPS HIM AGAIN

FORBES Get off me.
WE ARE NOW BACK IN THE WHITE HOUSE SITUATION ROOM.

THE ADMIRAL     Wake up, Forbes. Come on.

FORBES          Sorry. Get off me.

THE ADMIRAL     I'm sorry?

FORBES          (SHOCK) Admiral.

THE ADMIRAL     Yes.

FORBES          Sorry, did I...?

THE ADMIRAL     It's been a long day, long night, now we got to get back to work.

FORBES          Where am I?

THE ADMIRAL     Still in the Situation Room. We need to get back.

FORBES          But I want to enlist.

THE ADMIRAL     Good man. Once I'm finished with you.

FORBES          Oh God. Oh God. Oh God.

THE ADMIRAL     Come on, Forbes, we've got a war to fight.

END