

# **baby oil**

**by jonathan myerson**

## **third draft**

### **cast**

#### **throughout**

**FORBES McEWEN III  
RECRUITING SERGEANT  
GEORGE H W BUSH  
DICK CHENEY  
THE ADMIRAL  
MILITARY ATTACHÉ  
DRAKE  
DIANA**

**aide in the NSC  
for the US Marines  
US President  
US Secretary of Defense  
Senior Director on the NSC  
from the British Embassy  
PR Consultant (American)  
PR Consultant (British)**

**living  
living**

#### **in only one scene**

**CIA  
BARBARA BUSH  
'NAYIRAH'**

**advisor  
wife to the President  
volunteer nurse**

**living  
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.

CHENEY                    According to this speech of his, Kuwait and UAE have joined the Imperialist-Zionist plot against a brother Arab nation.

BUSH                        He's calling the Kuwaitis 'Zionists'?

THE ADMIRAL            He's calling us 'Imperialists'?

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

CIA                         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.

CHENEY                    'Imperialist-Zionist' is pretty loud rattling.

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

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

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

BUSH                        What about you? In the corner?

FORBES                    (SHOCK) Me, sir?

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

FORBES                    Sir, I – I am only here to...I don't feel I am adequately...

CUT BACK TO:

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?

MERGE INTO:

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.

THE ADMIRAL In the press release, don't call it a palace. Official residence. Government building.

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 Jihad. 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                 Secoded 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?*

*FORBES                 Diana. From Hill and Knowlton. It's British-owned.*

*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.

DRAKE Bumper stickers. T-Shirts. Caps.

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?<sup>1</sup>

MIX TO:

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<sup>1</sup> <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.<sup>2</sup>

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:

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<sup>2</sup> 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 ALL HE '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<sup>3</sup>

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:

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<sup>3</sup> 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=LmfVs3WaEgY>

PLAY THE FIRST 2'20" OF THIS<sup>4</sup>

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.

---

<sup>4</sup> 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...

CHENEY                  Yes?

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

CHENEY                  (JOKEY) Is he always like this?

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

FORBES                   I only meant....

CHENEY                  Yes?

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

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

CHENEY 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!

THE DEBATE IS IN PROGRESS.  
THE FULL SEVEN-HOUR DEBATE at  
<http://www.c-span.org/video/?15665-1/senate-session5>

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.

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<sup>5</sup> 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