

Christmas

In The

WAR ZONE

A Play in One Act

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In The
War Zone**

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LOG LINE

(100 words)

Christmas Eve at the Akbar Clan compound in an Afghan tribal area. Cpl. BRANDI FOSTER and Pfc. RICHARD (DICK) BULLEN are deployed on a "Peace Keeping" mission but there is no peace, only conflict and violence. FAWZIA AKBAR, a "Lipstick Revolutionary", has sex with Bullen. Her violent brothers, UDAY and QUSAY threaten to kill him. Bullen only wants to flee, even into certain combat.

Enter ALI, a young boy who innocently wonders about Santa Claus and why he, a good boy, has never received gifts.

Santa Bullen takes an extreme motocross ride through the WAR ZONE. Isn't Christmas about miracles?

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

<u>Cpl BRANDI FOSTER:</u> Age 30's, African American	Leader of the U.S. Army team deployed to the Akbar Family compound in tribal Afghanistan. She is commander of Dick Bullen who is assigned to teach the Akbar family motorcycle combat techniques. Foster is formal contact with Akbar clan.
<u>Pfc. RICHARD (DICK) BULLEN:</u> Age 20's Anglo	Bullen is a huge guy, aggressive, tattooed, and disrespectful. He is a star extreme motocross rider. Following a third conviction for motorcycle theft, he was "A or J" (Army or Jail). As a result of plea-bargaining with a judge, Army Recruiters desire to have access to his internet fan-base and offer Bullen to go into action on "moral waivers" (MOWAVE).
<u>FAWZIA AKBAR:</u> Age 20's Middle-Eastern	A "Lipstick Revolutionary" freedom fighter. Beautiful, passionate, well-educated. She is fighting against the Extreme Brotherhood into which her brothers Uday and Qusay have been recruited. Fawzia is all about freedom: social, political and sexual. She wears the hijab. She is beautiful and fierce.
<u>ALI AKBAR:</u> Age 10 Middle-Eastern	Ten year old Akbar-related child. A bright, lively, intelligent boy who works as a goat herd.

SETTING:

A tribal area, Afghanistan. A mud hut.
Blackout / limbo scenes depicting desert

TIME:

Contemporary.

SCENES:

Other than "Mud Hut" area Foster and Fawzia narrate from pools of light on limbo stage, (pools of light with silhouette movement) with non-specific areas defined by lighting or draped risers giving the impression of a desert at night. Dawn lighting effect in last few moments.

Opening and	Mud hut	Early evening
Closing	Limbo / cycle	
scenes		

PROPS / FX:

Military uniforms, fatigues, night gear, pistol, belts, helmet

Velcro PFC badge

Boxer shorts, black long-johns

Power bars

Military cots, kitchen gear

Fawzia motorcycle costume and hijab.

Ali child's Afghani garb

Ali bed roll, Koran,

"Night Before Christmas" card

A picnic table

"Hot Wire" kit

Small mag light

Duct tape

Packet of prop blood

Automatic weapon flashes

FX: various motocross/ motorcycle

Goats, bells tinkling

In Afghani language a man's voice shouting "You son of a Pakistan Used Car Salesman"

Tape ripping

Automatic weapon blasts

HUT AREA ON ONE SIDE OF STAGE- Sleeping areas are defined by two army-style canvas cots ("racks") - for Foster and Bullen. A portable camp/dining table, crude benches, army-style coolers or cooking implements, an open fire and bags or wooden boxes of gear.

(AT RISE)

(Bullen angrily storms into the hut and goes straight for his rack area.)

FOSTER

Bullen? What's up?

(Bullen begins almost ripping off his gear and methodically positioning it on his rack.)

BULLEN

W-T-F! Just Whisky-Tango-Foxtrot.

FOSTER

Akbar boys?

BULLEN

Started with a goat beheading! They said I was next.

FOSTER

What?

BULLEN

So-o-o-o, I'm just gonna hand you my "Velcro PFC" patch

(Bullen pulls off the PFC patch, affixed to his shirt with Velcro and hands it to Foster.)

...and call my Army contract *done!* Finished. I quit.

FOSTER

Done? Wait! Wait! Wait!

BULLEN

I'm blowed up - K-I-A, Killed In Action by Goofay and Poosay. I'm history. I'm kinetic. I'm leaving. Don't wait up. I'm outta here.

FOSTER

Bullen, absolutely not. You *can't* quit.

(Bullen takes off his belts, pouches, outer gear.)

FOSTER (cont'd)

This is a military operation and you are under my command.

BULLEN

Well. Not me. I'm a MO-WAVE! They sent me here on 'moral waivers', remember? I've got 'moral flexibility issues, remember?

(Bullen slowly strips to boxers and begins digging around in his duffel, taking out night gear.)

FOSTER

You *can't* just quit!

(Foster discreetly turning away when it is apparent Bullen is disrobing.)

BULLEN

Corporal Foster, I appreciate your command. Your order was clear and very precise. However, this is a self-licking ice cream cone and it's FUBAR. And, I quit. These Akbars scare the living tootsie-rolls out of me. You can bust me, but I'm getting out of here while I'm still alive.

(Bullen takes out on black Armor-all long johns.)

FOSTER

(peeking)

Why are you putting on the Ninja Suit? What happened?

BULLEN

Y'know, Foster. I grew up with some bad ass dudes. I mean, when you hang around with bikers, you meet all types. These Akbar boys are religious *fundamentalists*. And they got knives. Big knives. *Scimitars*. The only thing I haven't seen is forks. That would make 'em cannibals. I mean, when I was running with my gang at home I saw people

get carved up in knife fights on a regular basis. What happened today? What happened? The Akbars are God-powered *thugs*. Except Fawzia. Daddy Akbar - he wanted to cut off my hands because of religious Law until he learned I motocross. That's why I'm here with you to train his boys Goo-fay and Poo-say in motorcycle combat.

FOSTER

Uday and Qusay.

BULLEN

Yeah, whatever. They showed me a video of their disgusting national sport, "Buzkashi" (BUZZ-KASHI): which "kicks-off" with horseback riders decapitating a goat! You get more points if your scimitar doesn't splatter blood. And then they use the goat head like a ball. To shoot into a goal! Goofay implied he would do that to me! These Akbar boys are cree-py!

(Bullen pulling on night gear trousers.)

FOSTER

I left you at the garage. What about the motorcycle combat techniques training?

BULLEN

They had a huge shouting match with their sister, Fawzia. That clown Goo-fay - who speaks English by the way - says to me, "You're not in Kansas anymore are you, Toto?" Asshole. Ok-ay. Not Kansas. Where am I? I'm in the *only* place on earth where they play Butt-sucki!

(Bullen pulling on a night-gear long-sleeved shirt.)

FOSTER

Slow down! I can't make any sense of this! Did you do *any* motorcycle combat training?

BULLEN

Unteachable idiots! Can't even *wheelie*! Can you imagine? Even a 2nd grader in the U.S. can wheelie! The only one that has any skill or sense at all is Fawzia! That girl can *ride*. She's nice, too. We were busting slobs in the cycle stable.

FOSTER

Wait a minute. Busting slobs? You were making out? With *Fawzia*?

BULLEN

Yeah. We were busting slobs and getting naked, which is okay because Fawzia's a "Lipstick Revolutionary" - a real women's rights freedom fighter. Like sexual. We may be a "thing" now. I don't know. We came back from the practice area and she led me into an empty stall for some private instruction.

FOSTER

Tell me you *didn't*!

BULLEN

'Course we *did*! She's a "Lipstick Revolutionary". Went to school at Southern Cal.

(Bullen demonstrates with his hips.)

Then those idiots Goofay and Poosay busted in, went ballistic at Fawzia smiled and gestured like they were slitting my throat.

FOSTER

Bul-len!

(Bullen putting on Kelvar vest.)

BULLEN

Pathetic idiots. Can't even wheelie.

FOSTER

Where's Fawzia?

BULLEN

I don't know. I ran back here.

FOSTER

You left her?

BULLEN

Of course. Those are her brothers, not mine.

FOSTER

You knew you weren't to have any sexual relations... Just teach motorcycle combat.

BULLEN

Why? It's a free country.

FOSTER

No it's not!

BULLEN

No sex!? No way! I'm a *MO-WAVE* - moral waivers! *MO-WAVES* can't help ourselves. You never told me that! That's against international law! Afghani women are *HOT!*

(Bullen putting on utility belt w/holster.)

BULLEN (cont'd)

Anyway, I'm done with this. I did my duty. I tried to teach those snake eaters and they did *nothing* but threaten me. And, I gave you my Velcro PFC merit badge. Amazing how well that Velcro comes apart.

(He checks the load on his pistol clip and snaps it back in place.)

I'm outta here!

FOSTER

Reality check, Bullen. You are *not* outta here! You are *not* getting dressed to go. At this post you are under MY command. I order you *not to leave your post!*

(Bullen picking up helmet.)

BULLEN

You can't tell me what to do!

FOSTER

Oh, yeah? You're a PFC, Velcro or no Velcro, badge on or badge off. Even if you ride a way, the Army owns your ass, dead or alive. Maybe firing squad. Or a Taliban will shoot you. Or, cut your head off and play Butt-sucki with you.

(Bullen stretching black cover on helmet.)

BULLEN

(after a long pause) Yeah, well. I can't take this.

(Bullen takes "Hot Wire Jump Kit" and a mag light from under pillow, checks it and puts into pants outside pocket.)

FOSTER

This *IS* a military operation and *I AM* in command. Yes, you are here on MO-WAVES. I have absolutely no doubt that if you left this post you would not just have a nice ride in the desert - you would never come back. It's that little character flaw you have, Bullen, called "moral flexibility".

BULLEN

It's a gift.

FOSTER

Tonight the desert is not a safe place.

(He grabs some protein bars and puts into another pocket. He sits, resignedly on his rack.)

BULLEN

Oh yeah, what's tonight?

FOSTER

Christmas Eve you idiot and the Taliban Fans give gifts to the U.S. bases all across the region! Like "Ka-Boom" *gifts!* I can't allow you to be out there on the desert because you may foul things up.

(Bullen takes water bottle and checks it. Adds to belt.)

BULLEN

Foul things up?

FOSTER

A rogue goof like you riding around? Might get captured and held hostage. Or be beheaded publically under spotlights at the base. RHIP - Rank Hath Its Privileges, Bullen, - meaning you stay.

BULLEN

I can't stay - it's not safe. C'mon, Foster - I know you're not a Buddy Bagger - you don't intend to put me in a body-bag - but those guys, they're the *enemy!* They're *killers.*

FOSTER

Duhhh! This is a war zone, Bullen! Whisky-Alpha-Romeo! W-A-R. *Everybody* is a killer. You stay.

(Bullen turns to leave.)

(ENTER Fawzia with Ali in tow. Ali is carrying a roll bedding.)

BULLEN

Fawzia!

ALI

Hello, Dick. Corporal Foster.

FOSTER

Miss Akbar. Hi Ali!

BULLEN

Hi Ali. Hey, buddy, what's up?

(Bullen and Ali fist bump.)

ALI

Can I spend the night here? I want to be a soldier - just like you, Pfc. Bullen!

FAWZIA

There is some, uh, disturbance at home.

ALI

Yeah! Lots of shouting.

FAWZIA

What little Akbar is asking is, would it be all right if Ali spends the night in the back room? Be polite, Ali. Say "please."

ALI

Yeah! Please-please-please-please! I won't be any trouble! Ple-ee-ze!

FAWZIA

I thought perhaps we could put down his pallet in the back room.

FOSTER

Sure! Pfc. Bullen can spend the night playing with Ali!

(Taking bedroll and ALI's hand)

Let's go find a place for you to rack out.

ALI

Rack out? What's rack out?

FOSTER

That's soldier's talk for a sleeping area.

ALI

Rack! And, I brought my Koran! I always put my Koran by my bed for protection.

(Foster and Ali EXIT to the rear of the hut.)

(Bullen takes off helmet and tosses it aside like he's given up.)

FAWZIA

You ran away. You left me there!

BULLEN

Your brothers threatened me.

FAWZIA

They threatened me, too!

BULLEN

For what? Post-ride sex? Danger gets the juices flowing and I honestly have very little whang control.

FAWZIA

Post-ride sex? Juices? I mean *nothing* to you?

BULLEN

That's not what I meant.

FAWZIA

And, you're running away again? Where are you going? You are a soldier, you can't leave. That's desertion.

BULLEN

Look, Fawzia. I'm not really a soldier. I'm a "Velcro PFC". My allegiance is as permanent as Velcro. And, I gave my PFC badge back to Corporal Foster. Being a soldier is for people who believe in a cause, who are *committed* - like you. Or, mean bastards, like your brothers, who like

the violence. Or, people who have a military career, like Foster. All I like to do is motocross. I'm not committed to anything except the motorcycle.

FAWZIA

Then why are you here at all?

BULLEN

Because I stole three motorcycles back home. And I didn't want to go to jail so I plea bargained. I'm making a name for myself in extreme motocross and because I have a *hot* You-Tube motocross video that gets lots of hits and the Army wanted to use my fan-base for recruitment. So, we made a deal. I go into the Army on moral waivers and no jail time, and they said they would help me build up my web hits.

FAWZIA

You're here to build web hits?

BULLEN

I was until I got here and stole Uday's bike and Mullah Akbar got the Army to send me here to train you and your brothers. When you say "web hits" like that, it sounds pathetic.

FAWZIA

(slowly - calculating)

It is pathetic. I get it. You're a G.I. Jerk. Typical American. Just like Iraq. Do "your thang". Stylin'. Ride your cycle. Get web hits. Be a recruiter dream. Be cool. Get into my pants, right? Nothing more?

BULLEN

You want something more?

FAWZIA

Yeah, a future.

BULLEN

Fawzia, I wish I was different. I wish I was a caring, hero type, but I'm not. Like I said when we first met, I'm a gear head. I ride extreme motocross - and I ride it very well. But, I can crash and die quickly. I'm a bike bum - that's *all* I am. I am not a future. Sorry.

(FAWZIA STORMS OUT)

(FOSTER ENTERS WITH ALI.)

FOSTER

We got Ali all settled, didn't we?

ALI
(to FOSTER)

Yeah, on my rack! I want to be a soldier *and* a motocross rider, like you Pfc. Bullen! Did Pfc. Bullen tell you I showed him my *goat motocross*? It's like this... May I?

BULLEN

Go ahead.

(Ali jumps on Bullen's back and makes motorcycle noises as Bullen runs him around the room while Ali laughs wildly.)

BULLEN

Whew! Ali, I gotta take a break! You're wearing me out.

(They collapse on Bullen's rack.)

ALI

I like your rack! Is it fun being a soldier and learning all the cool names for things?

FOSTER

It's an IMPORTANT job, Ali. Helping people. A soldier has to be committed to doing his duty. Right, Pfc. Bullen? *Commitment* and *following orders* are important, aren't they? If you don't follow orders, you might go some place dangerous and get killed!

BULLEN

A good soldier is rewarded by their officers.

ALI

Rewarded?

BULLEN

Yeah. Given gifts. If you follow orders, you get rewarded with something good - like, time off. Or you get to leave the combat zone!

FOSTER

Other times, you just have to do your duty - as ordered. Like me! I have to be here with Private Bullen even though tonight is Christmas Eve and I would rather be at the base visiting my family through the computer.

BULLEN

Big doings on Christmas Eve!

ALI

Christ-mas - this is the night of the birth of Jesus - the Christian Prophet.

FOSTER

That's right. On Christmas Eve is a really big celebration.

BULLEN

At your house, when Santa Claus comes, do all the kids get presents?

FOSTER

Of course. My husband Carl makes a big deal out of Santa Claus. Wasn't it that way at your house?

BULLEN

Naw. I never had Santa Claus.

FOSTER

Really?

BULLEN

Yeah. My mom died when I was young.

ALI

Who is Santa Claus?

FOSTER

Actually a Saint - Saint Nicholas who wears a bright red suit. I've got it here in this card.

(Foster holds up bright greeting card.)

It's called "*A Visit From Saint Nicholas*" by Clement Clark Moore.

(Foster hands card to Ali.)

BULLEN

A fat fart in a sleigh pulled by tiny reindeer brings presents to good children all over the world on Christmas Eve.

FOSTER

Bullen!

BULLEN

Ooops. Sorry

ALI

I'm a good boy, but Santa has never brought me a present.

(Bullen realizing he has stepped into morally flexible zone and tries to back-track.)

BULLEN

Maybe it's because of the war? Maybe Santa doesn't come to war zones.

ALI

American soldiers have Christmas. I've seen the decorations at the base! That's a WAR zone. Besides, I'm with you, Pfc. Bullen - and you will protect Santa Claus! Won't you Pfc. Bullen? You protect Santa Claus, right?

BULLEN

Sure I do! Right. Sure.

ALI

How does the fat fart find YOUR children, Corporal Foster?

FOSTER

Ali! Don't call Santa Claus or anybody else a fat fart. It's disrespectful.

ALI

Pfc. Bullen said it.

FOSTER

Bullen...?

BULLEN

I was wrong. Don't ever say fat fart.

ALI

(hahaha) You said it again!

FOSTER

Bullen!

ALI

How does Santa Claus find your children, Pfc. Bullen?

BULLEN

I don't have children. How does Santa Claus find your kids, Foster?

FOSTER

My kids put big, red, felt stockings over the mantel piece on our fireplace.

ALI

What's a mantel piece? We cook over an open fire.

BULLEN

It's over the chimney.

ALI

Chimney?

BULLEN

Yeah, Santa Claus slides down the chimney.

ALI

I don't have a chimney! Or a mantel piece. Or stockings! Is that why Santa Claus doesn't come?

FOSTER

You really don't need decorations for Santa. It's how you are as a person *inside*. When you are a good person, Santa Claus brings you gifts.

BULLEN

Santa Claus is all about gifts and giving to good people.

ALI

I am good! I say my prayers! I study my Koran! I go to school when I can! I am respectful of my elders! I am an excellent goat herd! And, I want to be just like my friend Bullen! So, since tonight is your Christmas Eve, and you are soldiers - and soldiers get Santa Claus to come to them - and my friend Pfc. Bullen will protect Santa Claus, then tonight Santa will come into the WAR Zone and give gifts!

(Ali yawns.)

ALI

Well, I've got some things to do to get ready for Santa...
And bed. Good night!

FOSTER & BULLEN

(ad-lib) Good-night.

(Ali exits skipping happily back to bed - anticipating gifts from Santa Claus.)

(Ali's unsought affection and trust - and the conversation about Santa - has deeply touched Bullen.)

(Foster and Bullen's conflict deepens.)

FOSTER

What were you thinking? When Santa is all about gifts and giving to good people. All the children get presents! Smooth-move, Ex-lax! Now Ali expects presents and we have none!

BULLEN

How about I ride to the base and get toys! Be Santa Bullen for Ali!

FOSTER

Like I say, I *wish* I could trust you! You came in here a few minutes ago and handed me your Pfc. Velcro badge and said *adios*! Remember? The only thing I *can* trust is that you will do what you first said and *just ride away*. You think the world is just about you, Bullen! You're not the first MO-WAVE I've had.

BULLEN

Don't go all *suck face*! I'm tryin' here!

FOSTER

Yeah, right.

(They fall into a silent FUNK. Bullen picks up the Clement Moore "Night Before Christmas" card.)

BULLEN

I always wanted to have Santa Claus... but none ever showed up! Believe me - I wish somebody would have showed up and been Santa Claus for me when I was Ali's age, I might have wound up believing in something.

(Bullen stands, stretches and crosses to his bunk.)

FOSTER

Apparently you got just what you wanted - yourself!

BULLEN

Ali thinks I'm okay.

FOSTER

He's a good kid. He likes you because he thinks you're a real soldier.

BULLEN

Yeah, so did Fawzia. (musing) I may never get another chance to BE Santa!

FOSTER

You can't be Santa if you always ride away. Santa *brings* toys. New concept for you - you have to come back.

BULLEN

Look, I'm trying here! Okay. No bullshit. How about this? I can ride to the base, be there in half an hour. I'll avoid the bad guys. They're stupid. I'll get some toys. Then ride back. When I get here, I'll Santa for Ali. How's that? Otherwise, I just sit here and get suck face. I need some action. Get the juices moving. It's just a ride over and back - on a bad guy's cycle.

FOSTER

Now we're honest - it's all about you and motocross.

BULLEN

It's my gift, okay! What do you want? I'm choosing to be Santa Bullen.

FOSTER

I just hope your morals don't waiver. Hope you make it.

(Bullen pulls on gear.)

One final thing...(beat) Y-O-Y-O - you're on your own.

BULLEN

Got it. I've always been on my own. Santa is always on his own, right?

FOSTER

When they stuff your sorry kiester into a body bag, it wasn't my fault. I told you no but you deserted.

BULLEN

(Brightly as he puts on his gear.)

See how things turn out for the best, Foster? When I first arrived, I stole Uday Akbar's cycle - which was a bad thing. And Mullah Akbar wanted to cut off my hands - a bad thing. But, he found out I was a motorcycle guy and he had me sent here - a good thing. To train his sons, a bad thing. But I met Fawzia, a good thing. And, Ali, a good thing. And I get to be Santa! A good thing! But, to be Santa, I have to steal a cycle - a bad thing. But, I am gonna *be* Santa which is another *good* thing! It's *moral flexibility*, Foster! And, that's a good thing! It's why the Army wanted me! It's a gift!

FOSTER

Are you religious?

BULLEN

Me? No.

FOSTER

This is gonna take a miracle for you to get back by dawn.

(Foster crosses to a box and takes out munitions.)

BULLEN

Miracle? Isn't that what Christmas is all about?

(Bullen turns to exit.)

FOSTER

I'll wait up for you.

BULLEN

That's what I like about you, Foster you've got that *motherly* touch!

(Bullen opens the door and steps out into the darkness.)

(Lights out on hut.)

(Lights up on Fawzia as she narrates
in a pool of light.)

(Bullen creeps upon stage. Silhouettes
and pools of light and limbo. Bullen
runs from light pool to light pool.)

FAWZIA

Bullen stepped into the darkness and quickly moved around
the mud huts until he came to a lean-to cattle stall where
a motorcycle rear wheel was visible. He stepped in close.

BULLEN

W-T-F is this?

(Bullen bends down, looking at the
cycle.)

BULLEN

Minsk! Two ancient Soviet made Minsk cycles. Which one?

FAWZIA

He thumped the gas tanks and backed out the one with the
most gas. He checked the tire treads.

BULLEN

Santa's sleigh!

FAWZIA

He reached into his pocket and took out his special "Hot
Wire Jump Kit" and a mag light and looked around to see if
anyone was watching.

He stood, swung a leg over the saddle.

BULLEN

Minsk - wet start. Key off.

FAWZIA

Bullen pumped starter once, flipped the toggle, pumped
again and started the Minsk with a roar.

(FX: Cycle motor roars to life)

FAWZIA

A Taliban with a Kalashnikov stepped from the shadows!
Bullen popped a wheelie and knocked him down. He hip-
hopped over him and roared into the desert night!

BULLEN
(yelling)

Hi-Yo Santa... Away-y-y-y-y!

(F: MOTOR FADES OUT)

FAWZIA

Santa Bullen did his "signature wheelie" away from the
village. And plunged into the dark, riding by moonlight
across crude roads and desert. He tested the bike's
capacities to jump and fly. He rode to the top of a small
hill.

(Light up on Bullen as stops. Looks
around. He spreads his arm

FAWZIA

Bullen felt the freedom - a sensation he has not felt so
strongly in weeks, maybe months. He spread his arms wide
to embrace his freedom.

BULLEN

The entire mid-east lies before you, Dickie boy!

FAWZIA

He slowly turned and faced points of the compass.

BULLEN

Over there is Iran. Down there Pakistan. (HE TURNS) A
tiny corner of Tibet. Then Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.

FAWZIA

Bullen took in the beauty of night desert and moonlight
illumination. He listened deeply to the silence of desert.

BULLEN

Some other time, Dickie. Some other time. Tonight Santa
Bullen is going to have to bust-tail to get back to
Whisky-Alpha-Romeo by dawn! Otherwise you're S-O-L and get
a dirt sleep.

FAWZIA

Bullen returns to the motorcycle.

BULLEN

Let's roll, Rudolph!

(FX: motorcycle)

(LIGHTS DOWN on Fawzia.)

(Bullen in and out of pools of light.)

(LIGHTS UP, away from hut set on Foster as she narrates.)

FOSTER

Bullen was off and into the desert and playing "chicken" with gullies.

BULLEN

On Dasher!

FOSTER

He navigated by moonlight, youthful bravado, quick reactions and luck.

BULLEN

On Dancer!

FOSTER

A coyote skittered across the road.

BULLEN

On Prancer! Hey!

FOSTER

... he called and spooked himself with his own shadow.

BULLEN

On Comet!

FOSTER

He swerved around a burnt-out car.

BULLEN

On Cupid!

FOSTER

He hit a choppily rutted wash and nearly lost it!

BULLEN

On St-u-pid! Yow!

FOSTER

A ravine emerged out of shadow and he had to jump it with a massively powerful yank, a well-timed throttle and brilliant rearrangement of weight.

BULLEN

Yonder, Don-der!

FOSTER

He landed in a deep sand ravine bottom but rooster-tailed out on one wheel!

BULLEN

On Blitzen!

FOSTER

As he flew out of the ravine and went airborne, a camel caravan emerged in front of him ...

BULLEN

Shitzen!

FOSTER

... like a shadowy undulating shape.

BULLEN

Look out!

FOSTER

The camel driver called him a "Son of a Pakistani Used Car Salesman". (A BEAT) Then, just ahead, the barbed wire fence and spotlights of the Army Base appeared.

BULLEN

To the top of the roof, to the top of the wall, now dash-away, dash-away, dash-away all!

(In blackout at Army Base Bullen tapes baggie of toys to his chest and adds blood.)

FOSTER

With that, Bullen roared up to the camp shouting the password: "Jingle Bells! Jingle Bells!"

A cluster of men gathered. There were murmurings of concern.

There was a hurried explanation. The sound of boots running on sand as the men turned to their work.

One returned with a kazoo. Another brought a few peppermint candies. A baseball card. A tiny plastic Ninja Turtle. A "My Little Pony" sticker. All quickly sealed into a zip-lock baggie.

A Sergeant laughingly duct taped the baggie to Bullen's chest... not forgetting to press the tape onto his nipples!

(Lights up on Bullen.)

BULLEN

Hey! Watch the nipples, Sarge!

(Lights out on Bullen.)

FOSTER

The only shots were of good whiskey. Toasts were made.

And, laying a finger beside his nose...

(Bullen in a pool of light.)

(FX Motorcycle)

... a wheelie arose, and they heard him exclaim 'ere he rooster tailed out of sight!

BULLEN

Merry Christmas to all... and to all a good night!

(Lights down on Foster.)

(Bullen runs through pools of light / silhouette)

(Lights up on Fawzia.)

FAWZIA

His ride back to the village was a reverse of his trip to the base: gullies, washes, startled coyotes and burned out vehicles.

But, as Bullen approached the village and rounded a rock outcropping, a figure stepped out. Bullen swerved...

An automatic weapon fired.

(FX: automatic weapon flashes and thunderous noise.)

His shoulder shattered. He flew through the air. And tried to roll.

(Lights up as Bullen rolls from O.S. darkness and lies still in a dim pool of light)

A Taliban fighter quickly picked up the still running cycle and rode away into the darkness.

(FX cycle accelerating away)

Bullen heard the bike speed away as he passed out.

(LIGHTS OUT ON HUT SET)

(LONG PAUSE.)

(LIGHTS UP ON FAWZIA AS SHE NARRATES)

(SPOTLIGHT SLOWLY UP ON BARE STAGE where BULLEN lies prone.)

(FX: goats bleating, bells tinkling)

FAWZIA

A herd of goats awakened the fearless, or was it fool-hardy, Pfc. Dick Bullen by chewing on his pants leg. Bullen sat up.

(Bullen sits and looks around frightened.)

BULLEN

(with fear)

Ahh! Don't eat me!

FAWZIA

There was a ringing in his ears. He was dizzy. He heard a voice.

His feeling memory flickered to a moment when he had been held in the safe, warm lap of the mother who had died when he was way too young. He heard her whisper, "Be brave, Dickie. Be a good boy."

The nanny-goat at his feet smiled up at him beatifically and munched his boot lace as if to say, "C'mon hot shot, wasn't there something you were supposed to do?"

BULLEN

(with great agony he stands)

(LIGHTS on stage give DAWN EFFECT. Bullen caked with blood, one arm useless, slowly stands and staggers toward HUT SCENE.)

(singing to the tune "Away In A Manger")

Away in a manger

(LIGHTS SLOWLY UP ON HUT SCENE.)

(Bullen staggers his way to hut)

No crib for a bed

The little Lord Jesus

(He has to stop and catch his breath)

Laid down his sweet head.

The stars in the sky

(Bullen collapses.)

(Bullen rallies and sits up)

(Bullen gathers himself)

(speaking to himself) C'mon, Dick...

(singing) *Looked down where He lay...*

(speaking) Be a good boy, Dick! Yes, mom.

(Bullen staggers toward the hut area
cradling his useless arm.)

FAWZIA

And so it was that as the crimson color of dawn crept its
way into the eastern sky, the bragging, swaggering,
morally and physically wavering American soldier, Pfc.
Richard Bullen...

(Foster lies asleep.)

(Bullen stops at "doorway".)

...Leaned sweating and blood caked against the door of a
mud hut in zone Whiskey-Alpha-Romeo.

(Bullen slowly ENTERS then stumbles
to Foster.)

BULLEN

(singing)...*the little Lord Jesus*...

BULLEN:
(whispering)

Foster...? Foster!

(Foster awakens, rises and turns to
Bullen.)

FOSTER:

Oh, Dick.

BULLEN

Santa returned. I came back!

FOSTER

Geezus, Dick!

BULLEN

I got gifts! Here, on my chest...

(Foster sits with him.)

BULLEN

(laughing in agony)

Stupid goats tried to EAT me!

FOSTER:

Lemme get the medic kit!

BULLEN:

No time! Almost dawn. The toys are here - in a baggie on my chest.

(Foster pulls up Bullen's's shirt revealing his chest *awash with bright red blood.*)

FOSTER:

Oh, Dick... it's bad!

BULLEN:

Get the baggie! Rip it off! But be careful...

(Foster rips baggie off with loud tearing sound.)

BULLEN:

...ahhhhof the nipples!

(moaning) That's what I like about you, Foster! The motherly touch!

Get the toys!

(Foster opens the bag and pulls out the gifts.)

Put the toys... put 'em on the Ali's Koran. And, tell him... tell him *Santa Claus* was here. And tell Fawzia...

Oh, Foster, hold me.

(singing) ...*asleep on the hay.*

(Bullen leans into Foster in a Pieta-like scene.)

(SLOW FADE TO BLACKOUT.)

CURTAIN