

HOW SANTA CLAUS CAME TO
ZONE WHISKY-ALPHA-ROMEO (WAR)

A Play in One Act >45:00

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" is at war with her violent brothers, members of an Extreme Brotherhood who are attacking the U.S. Army. Foster battles with Bullen, a cowardly "Velcro PFC".

Enter ALI, a young boy who says: "I'm good! Why doesn't Santa Claus come here?" It is not for love that Bullen starts out to ride as "Santa Bullen" but love is victorious.

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

Cpl BRANDI FOSTER: Leader of the U.S. Army team
Age 30's, deployed to the Akbar Family
African American 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.

Pfc. RICHARD (DICK)
BULLEN: Bullen is a star extreme motocross
Age 20's rider. Following a third conviction
Anglo for motorcycle theft, he has been
sent to the Army on "moral waivers"
as a result of plea-bargaining with
a court and Army Recruiters desire
to have access to his internet fan-
base for recruiting. Bullen is a
"Velcro PFC" whose commitment to
the war, the Army or anything other
than riding his motorcycle, is as
firm as Velcro.

FAWZIA AKBAR: A "Lipstick Revolutionary" freedom
Age 20's fighter. Beautiful, passionate,
Middle-Eastern 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 but not full burka. She
is beautiful and fierce.

ALI AKBAR: Ten year old Akbar-related child.
Age 10 A bright, lively, intelligent boy
Middle-Eastern 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 and "Prophet Rock" from which Foster and Fawzia narrate, all scenes are limbo stage, (pools of light with silhouette movement) with non-specific areas defined by lighting or draped risers. "Prophet Rock" a large, draped riser.

Scene 1	Mud hut Limbo / cycle	Early evening
Scene 2	Limbo / desert road to Army base	Night
Scene 3	Limbo / Army base	Midnight
Scene 4	Limbo / Prophet Rock	Later
Scene 5	Desert	Later
Scene 6	Mud hut	Dawn

SCENE 1

HUT AREA - Sleeping areas are defined by two army-style canvas cots - 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

How'd it go with the motorcycle combat training with the Akbars?

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

BULLEN

Oh, just W-T-F, Whisky-Tango-Foxtrot! Started with a goat beheading! And threatening me with human body parts!

FOSTER

What?

(Bullen pulls off his PFC emblem, affixed with velcro, from his shirt and hands it to Foster.)

BULLEN

So-o-o-o, I'm just gonna hand you my "Velcro PFC" and call my Army contract *done*! Finished. I quit.

FOSTER

Done? Wait! Wait! Wait!

BULLEN

I'm blowed up - Killed In Action by Goofay and Poosay IEDs. I'm history. I'm kinetic. I'm leaving. Don't wait up.

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

FOSTER

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

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

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? So, 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

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 guys here are Islamic fundis - 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 *thugs*. Except Fawzia. Daddy Akbar - he wants to cut off my hands because of Sharia Law. That's why I'm here with you to train his sons in motorcycle combat. And those guys - his sons - Goo-fay and Poo-say...

FOSTER

Uday and Qusay.

BULLEN

Yeah, whatever. They're worse. 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! Then it got worse. I have never seen anyone carve little souvenirs off their victims like these Akbar boys. 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-suki!

(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*. Did you know she rides an antique Soviet Minsk cycle?

FOSTER

Slow down! What's a Minsk?

BULLEN

What's a Minsk? *What's a Minsk?! Soviet made, indestructible cycle! They're like Model-A motorcycles. The Viet Cong battled from the back of Minsk. Wet start. Mullah Akbar was a Minsk fighter against the Soviets. He asked me to come here - wanted me to train his boys. Fawzia 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

She's a free lady and we *did*! She went to school at Southern Cal.

(Bullen demonstrates with his hips.)

BULLEN

Till those idiots *Goofay* and *Poosay* busted in, went ballistic at *Fawzia* and showed her they cut off the bowl maker's ear and his wife's *lips*! Showed me in a handkerchief and smiled and gestured like I was next.

FOSTER

What?! You're kidding!

(Bullen putting on Kelvar vest.)

BULLEN

Pathetic idiots. Can't even wheelie.

FOSTER

Where's *Fawzia*?

BULLEN

She ran out. I left *Goo-fay* and *Poo-say* and ran back here.

FOSTER

Did you see the lips and ear?

BULLEN

Yeah. Disgusting. Only the ear looked like an ear. The lips looked like dried apples.

FOSTER

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

BULLEN

No sex!? 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!*

FOSTER

I saw you trying to hit on the teenage girls.

BULLEN

Those girls are *motocross fans*. Just fans! That's why they're there! I'm a *motocross superstar!* Hitting on fans don't mean anything. It's my job.

(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 no Velcro, badge on or badge off - even if you ride a way, the Army owns your ass. No motocross anymore, *ever*. Maybe firing squad. Or a Taliban will shoot you. Or, cut your head off and play Butt-suki with you.

(Bullen stretching black cover on helmet.)

BULLEN

Yeah, well. I can't take this.

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

FOSTER

Tough tittie. 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" - MO-WAVE.

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 and the Taliban Fans give presents to the bases all across the region! Boom! 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 free-lancing rogue goof like you riding around? Might get captured and held hostage. Or beheaded publically. Or signal to the enemy we're active and make any drone strikes less accurate. RHIP - Rank Hath Its Privileges - meaning *me!* You stay.

BULLEN

I can't stay here - it's not safe here. 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, Pfc. Simpson! This is a war zone, Bullen! Whisky-Alpha- Romeo! W-A-R. *Everybody* is a killer.

BULLEN

Yeah, well, I didn't sign up to be disassembled bit-by-bit by goat kissers. I was supposed to be the motorcycle combat instructor. That recruiter lied to me. C'mon Foster. I'm not cut out for any of this. If I stay here, I'm gonna *die*!. I *am* getting out of here! Bye! Give the Captain my best regards.

(Bullen turns to leave.) 9:50

(ENTER Fawzia with Ali in tow. Ali is carrying a role 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. Fawzia gestures "shhh" don't say anything to Ali.)

ALI

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

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!

FAWZIA

He wants to spend the night with the soldiers and his new friend Pfc. Bullen.

ALI

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

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

(Fawzia and Bullen are unsure, uncomfortable.)

FAWZIA

You look like you're dressed for leaving?

BULLEN

Maybe. I thought I might just take a walk around. I can't ride. I don't have a cycle. Foster wouldn't let me ride it if I had one. Do you know that your brothers are really scary guys?

FAWZIA

They have become the enemy.

BULLEN

That stuff in that rag was REAL! That was a real ear! It creeped me out!

FAWZIA

Oh poor Jasmin and Jamal!

(Fawzia weeps. Bullen steps closer to comfort her.)

BULLEN

I didn't mean...

FAWZIA

I should have known the Extreme Brotherhood would use Uday that way. They butchered Jasmin and Jamal! Probably the most un-political people in the village.

BULLEN

That couple is hurt BAD, aren't they?

FAWZIA

Mutilated! Uday cut off Jamal's ears so he *can't hear* about freedom anymore. They cut off Jasmin's lips so she *can't speak* about freedom anymore. But, they will survive. We all will survive.

BULLEN

Look, I don't pretend to know what *any* of this is about - what you people are fighting over.

FAWZIA

Freedom. Just freedom. Something you Americans take for granted is what we are fighting for. But, you should not worry, you are U.S. Army - my brother will not touch you, unless he gets you alone.

BULLEN

But you?

FAWZIA

I am safe here at the family compound. My father, Mullah Akbar, protects us. My brothers are with the Extreme Brotherhood now. But they will not cross my father, here. Tonight is Christmas Eve, the eve of Christ's birth Peace Be Unto Him. The U.S. base is not safe. Tonight, the Extreme Brotherhood will bring all their killers together to attack the base. They even have a portable missile. I volunteered to be a spotter for a drone attack. You're a soldier, Dick. A motocross superstar! Skilled in motorcycle combat. Won't you help me spot for the drone attack?

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

FAWZIA

Then why are you here at all?

BULLEN

Because I stole another motorcycle back home. The third one. And I didn't want to go to jail so I plea bargained; 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. I'm making a name for myself in extreme motocross on You-Tube. So, we made a deal. I go into the Army on MO-WAVES - "moral waivers" and no jail time, and they said they would help me build up my web hits.

FAWZIA

This is all about web hits?

BULLEN

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

I came here thinking that you would help me because you are in the US Army, and would be *loyal* to the U.S. Army mission, or you would have a conscience and want *justice* for Jasmin and Jamal because they were *mutilated* for freedom - for something you Americans say you hold precious!

BULLEN

Well...

FAWZIA

Or because you were a *real man* and wanted revenge against Uday. Or, maybe, because you were *passionate* about me like you were this afternoon! But, no! You're a *coward*! You only care about your superstar motocross web hits?!

BULLEN

You don't do the jumps I've done and be a *coward*! This war, this combat, you and your brothers is too *complicated* for me. 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 a motorcycle - and I ride it very well. But, that's *all* I am. A bike bum - not a "Save The World" guy. Sorry. No hero.

FAWZIA

(slowly - calculating)

I get it. G.I. Jerk. Typical American. Just like Iraq. Do "your thang". Stylin'. Hero? Not you! Ride your cycle. Web hits. Recruiter dream. Be cool. Screw Jamal. So, I guess there's no way to get you to come to Prophet Rock, huh?

BULLEN

I don't know what Prophet rock is. Is that the really big rock between here and the base?

FAWZIA

Yeah. Really big.

BULLEN

Prophet Rock, huh? I saw it when I came here. Man! I was thinking that I sure would love to have a helmet-cam video of me riding up and down that baby! *That* would generate web hits!

FAWZIA

Bullen, if you come to Prophet Rock, I can help you get that ride you want and keep you from being shot later as a deserter.

BULLEN

Oh yeah? Foster says "no way." How could you do that?

FAWZIA

I volunteered to the Captain at the base to be the spotter for drone strikes tonight. Come to Prophet Rock and help me call in drones.

BULLEN

You'll be toast.

FAWZIA

Maybe not if you help me.

BULLEN

Then I'll be the *jelly*. Foster told me not to go out because of the Christmas Eve attack.

FAWZIA

If you tell Foster YOU will work with me as a spotter for the drone attack, and that you will use your special motorcycle skills, I think she will let you ride. There will be *lots* of explosions for your video. Biug ones. Prophet Rock won't be "a ride at the mall", Dick. But, it'll boost your web hits.

BULLEN

Like, *big* explosions? I'm thinking of this will be the most *extreme* motocross action I've ever done - *anyone* has ever done! Never on You-Tube!. Lots of explosions. Lots of smoke and sounds! Combat! Drone attack, huh?

FAWZIA

BIG explosions - the *biggest* - when that drone drops out of the sky and hits the missile launcher.

BULLEN

K-BOOM!

FAWZIA

How many teeny-boppers will want to see *that*?

BULLEN

Wow. Missile launcher, huh? "*Motocross Combat*"! Or, better yet - "*Live Fire Motocross*"... with Dick Bullen!

FAWZIA

You got a helmet cam?

BULLEN

Yeah! I've got the helmet-cam in my gear.

FAWZIA

Dick Bullen: "*Motocross, Star War Hero*".

BULLEN

When will you be there?

FAWZIA

Two hours. Tell Foster that Fawzia asked you to come. She'll let you go.

(There is some "chemistry" between them. Fawzia moves closer to Bullen, but he is clearly distracted.)

FAWZIA

Come be with me, Dick.

(Fawzia leans into him and kisses him on the cheek.)

BULLEN

Yeah, maybe.

FAWZIA

Don't forget. Two hours. I'll be there.

BULLEN

Important question.

FAWZIA

What's that?

BULLEN

Can I ride Mullah Akbar's Minsk cycle from the barn?

FAWZIA

My brothers locked the cycle barn down tight.

BULLEN

Oh.

FAWZIA

There's one last thing I want YOU to know.

BULLEN

What's that?

(Fawzia embraces and nuzzles him.)

FAWZIA

You know how much trouble we had with my sports bra?

BULLEN

Yeah...

FAWZIA

If you come to Prophet Rock, I won't be wearing any underwear beneath my leathers.

Fawzia smiles coyly and exits. 18:44

BULLEN

All righty then! We got creepy brothers. No cycle. Meet me in two hours. Explosions. Drone strike. Web hits. Prophet Rock might really be something! And, no underwear. Where's my helmet cam?

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

Ali and Foster ENTER

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 or her 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 - 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.

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 kid, so why hasn't Santa ever 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 zone? Maybe Santa doesn't come to war zones.

ALI

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

BULLEN

Sure I do! Right. Sure.

ALI

Maybe he can't find me? 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

Well, my husband Carl and his family are just over-the-top for Santa Claus. My kids put big, red, felt stockings over the mantle piece on our fireplace.

ALI

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

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 mantle 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

We say God is good - *Allao Akbar!*

BULLEN

Akbar? Your name is Akbar and that means "good"?

ALI

Yes! And so I do the good - at least I try. Is Saint Nicholas like an *Immam*? My *Immam* gives us treats.

BULLEN

I guess Santa Claus would be like an *Immam* - kinda. He gives gifts.

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, 24:36

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*? Fat fart!? Let's see - what *exactly* did you say? *Everybody knows* the fat fart brings presents to good children *all over the world*!? Private Bullen will protect Santa Claus? And, when Santa comes all the children get presents! Smooth-move, Ex-lax!

BULLEN

Aw... it's what everybody says!

FOSTER

At home, maybe! Not in a WAR zone! Intelligence is *not* required at your pay grade!

BULLEN

Ouch.

FOSTER

Wow! Somebody sure likes you! Ali thinks you're the greatest.

BULLEN

Yeah, well, like I said, I'm outta here. I'm gonna get me a motorcycle and ride the desert tonight.

FOSTER

You're NOT riding away. The desert is deadly tonight.

BULLEN

But, Fawzia wants me to go and meet her on Prophet Rock and help call in drone strikes. She said you'd let me go!

FOSTER

I wish I thought you *would* help Fawzia call in drone strikes! But, I don't think you would do anything *other than* exactly what you always have said - all you want to do is *run away*.

BULLEN

Well, I could ride to the base and get toys! *Be Santa Bullen* for Ali!

FOSTER

Too dangerous. 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? And, this is all too bad because Fawzia will probably get killed without some back-up. 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!

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

BULLEN

I didn't have Santa when I grew up, so I made up Christmas Eve games - I could teach those to Ali. They're fun.

FOSTER

Like what?

BULLEN

"Fire-ball" - the traditional Christmas Eve game my friend Pat used to play every Christmas Eve.

FOSTER

"Fire ball"?

BULLEN

A tennis ball soaked in kerosene, set it on fire and play "catch".

FOSTER

Weren't you afraid of getting burned?

BULLEN

Sure! That's what made it fun. You don't hold on to it for long. What was MORE fun was a game we called "Screech".

FOSTER

Screech?

BULLEN

At night we'd each steal a bicycle and ride full-speed through the red-lights into traffic across major intersections.

Ali might like that... but there's no traffic. No intersections.

(After a long beat)

FOSTER

That was your Christmas?

BULLEN

I always wanted to have Santa Claus... but none ever showed up!

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

(He rummages around in his duffle until he comes up with a HELMET-CAM HARNESS and CAMERA. He attaches these to his helmet.)

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.

FOSTER

Apparently you got just what you wanted - yourself!

BULLEN

Yeah your past makes you who you are. All I had was me. Pity-party, right? I will probably never have a kid. For some reason, Ali looks up to me! I like being looked up. That's nice. It's a gift from him. He *likes* me and I want to repay that.

FOSTER

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

BULLEN

Yeah, so did Fawzia.

FOSTER

You don't want to hurt them, do you? That would just make them not like you.

BULLEN

I may never get another chance to BE Santa! And, you're right - Fawzia really needs the back up calling in drone strikes.

FOSTER

Don't YOU *pretend* to go all suck face! I'm sorry to say this Bullen, but I don't believe that you're gonna have a change of heart - that you really care for Ali, or Fawzia. You just want to ride away.

BULLEN

Look, I'm trying here! Okay. No bullshit. How about this? I can ride to the base, and be at the base in half an hour. I'll avoid the bad guys. They're stupid. I'll get some toys and then head to Prophet Rock. I've got my helmet-cam. I'm gonna put that on and ride up that Prophet Rock. Meet Fawzia. Bust some slobs. Ride down. Call in drone strikes. Lots of explosions for my video. When I get home, I'll Santa for Ali - you can shoot video of that - I'll put Prophet Rock and Drone Strikes on YouTube and it will go *viral* and I'll be a bigger *Superstar* than I am today! Lots of web hits! *Dick Bullen - Motocross Super Soldier!* And, Fawia and Ali are better because you let me go. How's that?

FOSTER

A bit more honest because it's all about *you* and motocross.

BULLEN

It's my gift, okay! What do you want?

FOSTER

Do you *really* choose to work on the drone attack and not just ride away?

BULLEN

Yes! Yeah, I think I really do. Maybe. Kinda. Yes. Is that a deal maker?

FOSTER

From the U.S. Army's point of view, it's the *only* deal. I won't let you go unless you agree.

BULLEN

Well, okay, then. I choose motorcycle combat with Fawzia to call in drone strikes. How's that?

FOSTER

Great.

BULLEN

And, I'm choosing to be Super Motocross Soldier Bullen, too.

And, I'm choosing to be Santa Bullen, too.

FOSTER

Then, you can go. I just hope your morals don't waiver. Fawzia has volunteered to be the drone spotter to protect the base. She is putting her life on the line. If Fawzia wants you there, you **MUST** go. And soon. How are you going to get there? Borrow one of the Akbar cycles?

(Bullen pulls on gear.) 30:52

BULLEN

Oh, no. The brothers Poosay and Goofay have the motorcycle barn on lock-down. Me and my little "Hot Wire Jump Kit" saw a couple of bad-guy bikes in a lean-to a couple of alleys away. I'll borrow something.

FOSTER

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.

BULLEN

(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. But Akbar means "good". 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 do that, I have to steal a cycle - a bad thing. But, I'm gonna be Santa which is a 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?

FOSTER

Yes, but you'd better take 3 or 4 extra magazines for your pistol.

(Bullen puts the bullet clip into his jacket pocket. He gets out cell phone.)

FOSTER

You're not TEXTING somebody are you?

BULLEN

One last viewing of that YouTube video of that super star motocross rider, Dick Bullen, to remind me why I'm kind of a big deal. (beat) Booo! The bad guys took down the network! Oh well.

(Bullen puts phone into a pocket. He 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.)

FAWZIA NARRATES FROM PROPHET ROCK

(Lights up on Fawzia as she narrates from Prophet Rock set and pool of light.)

(Bullen creeps upon stage. Silhouettes and pools of light and limbo.)

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 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 Kalishnikov 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!

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.

SCENE 2 - LIMBO ROAD TO ARMY BASE

(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 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. 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! Oh yeah, and don't forget the drone strikes. Otherwise you're S-O-L and no web hits!

FAWZIA

Bullen returns to the motorcycle.

BULLEN

Let's roll, Rudolph!

(FX: motorcycle)

(LIGHTS DOWN on Fawzia / Prophet Rock set.)

(Bullen in and out of pools of light.)

(LIGHTS UP 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!

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 Stupid!

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, Donder!

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...

BULLEN

Shitzen!

FOSTER

... a camel caravan emerged in front of him like a shadowy undulating shape.

BULLEN

Look out!

FOSTER

The camel driver called him a "Son of a Pakistani Used Car Salesman". 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!

SCENE 3 - ARMY BASE

FOSTER

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

A cluster of men gathered. There were murmurers 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 cover his nipples!

BULLEN

Hey Sarge!

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!

(Light up on Prophet Rock scene)

33:12

SCENE 4 - PROPHET ROCK - DRAPED RISERS

(Bullen In a pool of light. He reaches up and switches on the helmet-cam and holds it away to take a selfie.

BULLEN

This is Motocross Superstar Dick Bullen in combat! I'm approaching Prophet Rock where there is considerable enemy activity even in the middle of the night. Moonlight and starlight to guide this run. I wish us luck.

FOSTER

Bullen looked overhead and saw Moon, bright stars of the constellations.

BULLEN

There is a vehicle - *several vehicles* - on the desert which I will try not to engage. Prophet Rock. Up we go.

FOSTER

Bullen hip-hopped up the rock, nearly becoming involved in fatal falls. At the top, he looked around.

FAWZIA

Dick!

(Bullen spins around and Fawzia steps into the moonlight. She steps to Bullen. She is in full battle dress: Hijab, Uzi, hand grenades)

BULLEN

Fawzia!

(Bullen crosses to Fawzia and gives her a passionate kiss.)

BULLEN

What is going on down there? This is like a rock concert parking lot on Saturday night - they're moving vehicles everywhere.

(Fawzia takes Dick to look over edge (of light pool).)

FAWZIA

That means the drones can't be so easily targeted. More risky.

BULLEN

How do we do this drone thing?

(Fawzia takes out two GPS homing devices.)

FAWZIA

These are magnetic, GPS homing signals.

(She hands two to Bullen.)

BULLEN

Magnetic GPS homing signals...

FAWZIA

Right. They send a GPS tracking signal out and the drone follows it back.
They work like this: Stick It - Click It - Punch Their Ticket. Say that.

BULLEN

Stick It - Click It - Punch Their Ticket.

FAWZIA

Right. It's magnetic so it sticks to anything metallic - like a tank, or a gun, or a rocket launcher. Carry one in your pocket. Stick the second on the cycle's gas tank for use later.

BULLEN

Stick it.

FAWZIA

When you want to arm one, you "Click It" - means you push this button and it turns the signal on.

BULLEN

Click it.

FAWZIA

Drone command detects the signal and after exactly two minutes, a Drone drops out of the sky and "Punches Their Ticket".

BULLEN

Punch their ticket.

FAWZIA

Exactly two minutes after you've pushed the button. So, don't click it until you can get away.

BULLEN

So, I'll do all kinds of riding tricks down the rock, shoot some bad guys and stick it - click it one of these on the missile launcher?

FAWZIA

That's the idea. I'll go one direction - you go the other. We'll have a better chance of survival.

BULLEN

It was not fair for you to say and do what you did before we parted... about wearing no underwear.

FAWZIA

I wanted you to come help me.

BULLEN

Well, here I am! You want me, you got me.

(Bullen takes her into his arms and they kiss passionately.)

BULLEN

You invited me to this party. Now that I'm here, what are you going to do with me?

FAWZIA

Let's sit away from the edge so the bad guys don't shoot at us.

(They sit on the ground.)

(Bullen passionately kisses Fawzia.)

FAWZIA

Do you see the stars up there?

BULLEN

Stars-schmars. I only want to see you.

FAWZIA

Dick. Our lives are on the line here. I'm trying to tell you that this has deep meaning and significance. Look up, Dick. Look at the stars. Don't get distracted?

BULLEN

Distracted? You're the main attracted! I want to see the no underwear.

FAWZIA

Look, in our culture, we believe that the stars still play an active role in what goes on down here on earth.

BULLEN

Which one is the foreplay star?

FAWZIA

That one. *Capricorn*, a constellation - the Sea Goat. Goats are capable of independent action. We are all about freedom.

BULLEN

Fawzia, I don't understand any of this.

FAWZIA

I'm trying to tell you why I'm doing this. Capricorn guides the Akbar Clan. We are goats. Goats are different from sheep. Sheep will die as a flock - afraid to leave the family. Not goats. We choose to be all about human freedom. Women's rights. The Lipstick Revolution. Calling in drone strikes on the sheep.

BULLEN

Women's rights? The Lipstick Revolution?

FAWZIA

My brothers have chosen to be sheep - *kharoof*. They believe that if they cut off Jamal's ears he would not hear about human rights and freedom, but they are wrong. They thought if they cut off Jasmin's lips she would not speak about freedom - but she will be *shouting*. I will be shouting for her.

BULLEN

Does freedom include no underwear?

(Bullen reaches to embrace Fawzia.)

FAWZIA

At times. Not now.

(Fawzia stops his hand.)

FAWZIA

That's enough.

BULLEN

Enough? Enough freedom! You can't turn freedom off and on! You said no underwear.

(Fawzia sits up.)

FAWZIA

Drone strike then... then whatever you like.

BULLEN

Oooh! A freedom-tease, eh? How about stick it - click it...?

FAWZIA

Don't make me punch your ticket! I was worried you wouldn't come to Prophet Rock without a little tease,. now I'm just worried!

(Fawzia moves to the edge.) 33:12

(Bullen looks over the edge.)

First, fight for freedom, Dick. Call in drones. When we get out of the combat zone... tomorrow I'll thank you properly.

BULLEN

Or improperly?

Tomorrow? (sigh) Okay. Tonight? Riding my way, the *fun* way to play with gravity. There are some amazing trails down this rock.

FAWZIA

You don't seem as doubtful as you were.

BULLEN

If I can stay focused on being Santa Bullen, I'll make it back before dawn.

FAWZIA

Santa Bullen? Where did that come from?

BULLEN

Where did that come from? It's Christmas Eve! I'm Santa Claus for Ali.

FAWZIA

Right. Santa Bullen for Ali. Dick! Are you really doing things for other people? Does, the MO-WAVE has a heart of gold!

BULLEN

Well, maybe not really. It's all the same thing. Santa Bullen, with his helmet-cam, riding Prophet Rock to boost web hits, calling drone strikes on missile-launchers with big ka-booms! Motocross Combat. Web posts. It's all rock'n'roll to Dick.

FAWZIA

Where's your pack and reindeer?

BULLEN

I've got toys duct-taped on my chest. Here, wanna see?

FAWZIA

No undressing now. I need you to focus on Stick it and Click it.

BULLEN

And Punch their Ticket. No problem. Dick Bullen Super Motocross Soldier!

FAWZIA

I'm counting on you, Dick.

(Fawzia and Bullen kiss passionately and slowly go their separate ways.)

FAWZIA

I'll see you tomorrow?

BULLEN

Of course!

(Fawzia EXITS.)

(Bullen holds his helmet-cam and does a selfie.)

BULLEN

This is *motocross superstar* Dick Bullen in combat. I'll put on this helmet cam and you'll ride with me down Prophet Rock into the midst of a *nighttime* firefight! I'm gonna stick this homing device on an enemy missile launcher, click the signal button and call in a *drone strike*. We're going to *punch their ticket* and ride through enemy gunfire. This is something that nobody else has ever done! Here we go!

(Bullen puts on helmet cam.)

(LIGHTS DOWN ON PROPHET ROCK.) 35:08

SCENE 5 - PROPHET ROCK TO LIMBO DESERT

(LIGHTS UP ON FOSTER TO ONE SIDE OF STAGE NEAR HUT AREA.)

FOSTER

Bullen put on his helmet-cam and rode down Prophet Rock by moonlight.

He headed directly toward the missile launcher. Enemy technicians are prepping for the first launch.

He looked to one side and saw Fawzia bounding downhill, too.

Bullen saw that the missile tubes were steaming as if getting ready to launch.

He timed his leaps and bounded downhill off boulders like a pin-ball caroming off the bumpers.

Bullen reached for GPS Homing Beacon on his utility belt and recalled the mnemonic:

BULLEN (O.S.)

Stick It, Click It? No can do!

FOSTER

He can't get close enough to the launcher because of the way it is positioned between two boulders. Instead, Bullen had to fly over the missile tubes. As he was airborne overhead, he clicked the switch and dropped the beacon onto the tractor trailer where the magnet locked fast.

The soldier at his monitor station in the Drone Command HQ saw a blip appear on his screen begin flashing and launched the Drone.

Bullen shot at man on an ATV.

He rounded a rock and stopped.

BULLEN

This is Dick Bullen and we're just about to hear the sound of a drone blowing up the enemy missile launcher which we've just targeted.

(FX thunderous explosion)

BULLEN

A little gift from me to you! Santa's gotta get back on the trail!

FOSTER

Then Dick was dodging machine gun fire with all sorts of motocross techniques: steps ups, steps downs, jumps, hops, fish-tails and soon he was in the dark of the desert.

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.) 37:14

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

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

Before he left the bike, he pressed the Click It button. 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.)

(FX: Explosion of drone hit.)

(LIGHTS UP ON FAWZIA AS SHE NARRATES)

FAWZIA:

On the first Christmas Eve, long, long ago it was the Archangel Gabriel who announced the birth of the Great Shepherd to simple shepherds as they slept in fields with their flocks. With a band of Angels Gabriel said, "Fear not!"

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

(FX: goats bleating, bells tinkling)

FAWZIA

On this night, with the Constellation Capricorn, the Goat - the birth sign of fame, fortune, ambition, ego and freedom; wheeling high overhead. Now it is the Archangel Micha-el, with a flaming sword, standing atop The Dragon of Evil who holds up his scales to judge the morality of the Human Heart; who says to Bullen, and us all, "Choose!"

Capricorn, the constellation of the Akbars - the Good - sent a herd of goats to awaken the fearless, or was it fool-hardy, Dick Bullen by chewing on his pants leg. Bullen sat up. There was a ringing in his ears. He was dizzy. Had he heard a voice? Were the stars speaking to him?

(Bullen sits and looks around
frightened.)

BULLEN

(with fear) Ahh! Don't eat me!

FAWZIA

His feeling memory flickered to a moment when he was held in the safe, warm lap of the mother he had lost 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?" As his head cleared, Bullen said . . .

BULLEN

(with great agony) C'mon Rudolph, let's roll. (Bullen caked with blood, one arm useless, slowly stands and staggers toward HUT SCENE)

SCENE 6 - HUT SCENE

(LIGHTS SLOWLY UP ON HUT SCENE)

(Foster lies asleep.)

FAWZIA

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

(Bullen stops at "doorway".)

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

(Foster is asleep. Bullen slowly ENTERS.)

BULLEN:
(whispering)

Foster...? Foster!

(Foster awakens, rises and steps to Bullen.)

FOSTER:

Oh, Dick.

BULLEN

Santa made it by dawn.

FOSTER

Geezus, Dick!

BULLEN

I got toys! Sit me down easy.

(Foster catches Bullen and lowers him.) 40:33

BULLEN:

Stupid goats tried to EAT me!

FOSTER:

Lemme get the medic kit!

BULLEN:

No time! The toys are 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!

(Foster rips baggie off.)

BULLEN:

Ahhhh!

That's what I like about you, Foster! The woman's touch!

Get the toys!

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

BULLEN:

Put 'em... put 'em on the kid's Koran. Tell him... tell him
Santy Claus was here.

Oh, Foster... hold me.

(Bullen leans into Foster.)

(SLOW FADE TO BLACKOUT.) 43:35