Shock and Awe

By Joey Hartstone
Continuing today's hearing on future VA funding...
the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs...
is called back to order.

**CHAIRMAN:**
next witness.
Will you please stand and raise your right hand?
My apologies.
Please raise your right hand.
Do you swear that the testimony you're about to give... this committee will be the truth, the whole truth... and nothing but the truth, so help you God? I do.
Please state your name.
Private First Class Adam Green, United States Army, retired.
Mr. Green, I understand you've prepared a statement?
I have, sir.
You may enter it into the record at this time.
Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee...
I want to thank you for the opportunity... to speak with you today.
I served in the military...
I'm sorry, if I could just... Sure, go ahead.
Thank you, sir.
I've always liked numbers.
Whenever I have a hard time wrapping my head around... something, I find that numbers make things clearer for me.
They help me understand
decisions that are made... and the impacts of those decisions.
So, if it's all right... I'd like the start with the number 1.4 million.
That's the number of men and women who are currently serving in our military.

555... that's how many days passed before we invaded one country... after having been attacked by another.

19... is how old I was when I enlisted.
Three is the number of hours that passed from the time I arrived in Iraq to the time our transport... was destroyed by an I.E.D.
And then there's six.
That's the number of inches the piece of shrapnel was... that severed my spinal cord.

The only problems with numbers is they can be impersonal.
A decision you made had a life-changing impact on me... and a lot of soldiers like me.

Now, I'm not a military expert. I don't know a whole lot about geopolitical affairs.
I'm just an ordinary American. And I understand that you've asked me here... because you all have some questions for me, but if it's all right, I'd like to ask all of you a question. How the hell did this happen?

BUSH:
at this hour...
American and coalition forces
are in the early stages...
of military operations
to disarm Iraq, to free...
its people and to defend
the world from grave danger.

BLITZER:
campaign called Shock and Awe.

BROKAW:

- RATHER:

- MAN:

REPORTER #1:
are going off in Baghdad...

REPORTER #2:
military operation...
to topple Saddam Hussein
is now in effect.

REPORTER #3:
Firing 600 Cruise missiles...
and every type of war plane
in the American arsenal.

BROKAW:
of American military might.

REPORTER #4:
The scale of this attack...
is considerably higher than
anything we've seen before.

REPORTER #5:
whole buildings...
with these Cruise missiles.

RATHER:
U.S. war planes unleashed...
to promise massive bombardment of Baghdad.

BLITZER: Cruise missiles... satellite-guided precision bombs, laser-guided bombs.

REPORTER #6: citizens of Baghdad know... exactly what the Pentagon means by Shock and Awe.

REPORTER #7: Kuwait-Iraq border... we watched as columns of troops moved into the country.

RATHER: way to Baghdad. They have met resistance.

WOMAN: television... every tank, every helicopter... is that my son?

REPORTER #8: within striking distance... just a few short miles away... as U.S. troops make their final push forward. We want to slaughter them all... those invaders, their tombs will be here in Iraq.

REPORTER #9: is alive, he is quote... "Not in control of his military and of his government."

BUSH: of what will be a broad...
and concerted campaign. Could be longer and more difficult than some predict. And helping Iraqis achieve a united, stable... and free country will require our sustained commitment. And you can know that our forces will be coming home... as soon as their work is done. Keep moving! Keep moving!

Let's go!

- Where are they taking us?
- Shut up. Head down.

Keep your mouth shut or I'll blow your fucking head off.

- All right, all right.
- Are you a soldier?
- Journalist.
- Who do you work for?
- Knight Ridder.
- Never heard of it.

You should read more.

What is your name?
Jonathan Landay.
Goodbye, Jonathan Landay.

(TRIGGER CLICKS)
Exercise complete.

What you have just engaged in is called The Gray Man Exercise. And what you have just witnessed... is a colossal failure of that exercise.

- If a journalist is captured...
- (PHONE RINGING)
terrorists may keep you alive... in hopes of getting information or exchanging you for a ransom. But if you give them a reason to kill you, they will.

The purpose of this exercise is to teach you... how to avoid drawing the
attention of your captors.
Hence the name, Gray Man.
Can you untie me?
This could save your life one
day, you understand?
I do, I've been in 11 war zones,
I've been shot at...
I've been held captive, I take
this very seriously.
But if you don't untie me right
now, I may lose my job.
And I'm fairly certain that
none of this training...
is going to be very useful...
when I'm mopping the floor
at Staples.

REPORTER:
Both of the twin towers...
the World Trade Center in New
York's lower Manhattan...
have been struck by planes this
morning within 20 minutes.
First, it was the North Tower
that was struck...
with a gaping hole left in two
sides of that building.
Good God.
20 minutes later, the second
building...
the second tower in that World
Trade Center complex...
I think we should keep Elizabeth
in school.
Yeah, no, I think that's
a good idea.
Why freak her out, huh?
And I'll call Ali and Jennifer
as soon as the phones open up.
- I love you.
- I love you.
Okay.

REPORTER:
We should tell you that...
we have gotten calls from
people...
who live and work around the
Pentagon who have told us...
that they have seen
something...
that they have described
as an explosion.
This is information we have not
been able to confirm.
Get up.
Sorry, Dad.
Monday Night Football went long.
Let's clean this place up.

**COMMENTATOR:**
here in New York...
have been hit by airplanes.
In Washington, there is a large
fire at the Pentagon.
The Pentagon has been
evacuated.
And there is, you can see,
perhaps, the second tower...
the front tower, the top
portion of which is collapsing.
Good Lord.
Lot of people going to need
a drink tonight.
Soldiers drink free.

**REPORTER:**
There are no words.
All federal office buildings
now...
all federal office buildings
in Washington, D.C.
are being evacuated as we speak
to you now.
We are in the middle of an
extraordinary catastrophe.
The most important things to
tell you if you just joined...
in is that what has all the
makings of an extraordinarily...
well-planned terrorist attack
on both Washington and New York
has taken place this morning.
The Trade Centers here
in New York...
the two World Trade Center
towers have collapsed...
after being hit by planes.
Yeah, this is John Walcott
from Knight Ridder.
Is he there?
Yeah, okay, well, tell him
I'll try him back later.
Thank you.
I just spoke with my wife.
She and the kids are
afraid to leave the house.
What are they doing over there?
They're watching the White
House.
To see if it gets hit?
Yes.
Oh, Jesus. All right, go home
to your family.
And tell your colleagues that
maybe they want to stay away...
from the windows, okay?
- Thanks, John.
- Yeah.
Okay. All right. Okay.
Their working thesis is that
this is overseas terrorism...
not domestic.
Attention will quickly turn to
the bin Laden group...
because it has long
tentacles.
There are very few others that
could have pulled this off.
Are we sending somebody
to New York?
Ken Moore at Suvu was already up
there covering Wall Street.
What's going on over at State?
Powell's in Peru.
They're working on getting
him home as soon as possible.
All right, what we need to do
is track the President.
Track his top people
and find out...
who's responsible for all this.
We need as many sources
at as many agencies...
to go on the record and tell us
all what we know has to be true.
Al Qaeda! Al Qaeda!
It's Al Qaeda.
It's definitely Al Qaeda.
What the hell are you wearing?
Well, the wifey wanted
to evacuate...
but she locked the cat
and the keys in the cars.
So, I biked in.
We need to know how
they pulled this off.
Anybody needs to go home
to their family...
feel free to do so.
Just came from the family.
Let's get to work.
It's Walcott.
Today, our fellow citizens,
our way of life...
our very freedom, came under
attack in a series...
of deliberate and deadly
terrorist acts.
Adam, hand me the
Jameson, please.
Yes, sir. Here you go.
Thank you, son.
It's on the house, gentlemen.
Thanks.
Dad's saying we're staying open
as late as they want.

**MRS. GREEN:**
They must be scared.

**- ADAM:**
- They're boys.
Our military is powerful and it's prepared.
The search is underway for those...
who are behind these evil acts.
I've directed the full resources of our intelligence and law enforcement communities to find those responsible... and to bring them to justice.

**JENNINGS:**
since the terrible... and unprecedented attack on the United States.
There is, as we've said, an enormous search and rescue... operation, and enormous and intense criminal investigation.
And we're just beginning to understand... the extents of the catastrophe.

**OFFICIAL:**
slept in a month.
It's going to be a bunch of zombies running this town.
What do you know about the preliminary plans... to go after bin Laden?
I don't have anything to give you on that yet.
Ok, well, how long before we're on the ground in Afghanistan... and how long do they project we'll be there?
Look, I'm trying to get answers
to the same questions you are. What I can say is, most of the talk this morning... hasn't been about Afghanistan. Well, what's it been about? Iraq? I got it from a source at State who got it from the Pentagon. In connection with the attacks? Crackpot theories from people who don't know... what the hell they're talking about.

It was Rumsfeld. Really?
Yeah, apparently, there's a lot of people over at Defense... that think this had to be State-sponsored.
I mean, not just Rumsfeld, there's also that smug... son of a bitch at the Defense Policy Board... the Prince of Darkness?
- Richard Perle.
- Right. Perle.
And that neo-con over at the Project... for the New American whatever the fuck... New American Century, Bill Kristol.
That giant butthole, Bill Kristol.
And he's got to be creaming his little jammies over this. Yeah, these think-tank boys... have been trying to push out Saddam Hussein since '97. They have this crazy theory that if they can just stick... a Western-style of democracy in the Middle East... it's going to magically
proliferate...
and wind up protecting Israel.
You got to give them credit
for creative thinking.
It's Ivory Tower crap.
I mean, in what world do they
think that Osama bin Laden...
and Saddam Hussein hatched
this thing up together?
Let's find out if these
dickweeds...
are serious about Iraq, okay?
Look, I'm not saying there's
a link to Iraq...
and neither is my boss.
This is just something
we're hearing.
From whom?
Who told me or where is it
coming from?
Take your pick.
Someone at the Pentagon.
In the Vice President's office?
It's just theories.
Are there any Senators talking
to anyone...
saying anything different?
I know Powell's objected...
to going into anywhere other
than Afghanistan.
(DRAMATIC MUSIC PLAYING)
Go away.
One question and I'm gone.
I'm not talking to you
on the record.
Anonymous source, intelligence
community.
You can't use my name.
Never have, never will.
Or my agency.
Pinky swear.
One question.
Are you looking into an Iraqi
connection?
Who's the you in that question?
Are we in the United States?
There are some people.
Are we in my agency?
Not that I'm aware of.
Am I, personally?
No way.
Okay, the second part to the question.
No.
Thank you.
So, no one you work with at the Library of Congress has ever... found a link between Saddam Hussein and Al Qaeda?
No one I work with would expect to find a link.
So, as far as you know...
there's nothing substantial to tie Iraq to bin Laden?
There's nothing even circumstantial.
To lump together a secular leader like Saddam... with an Islamic extremist like bin Laden is simply... to have no understanding of the Muslim world.
It's a bit timid.
No one's actually come out and said anything publicly yet.
Maybe it's just backroom speculation.
Pretty dangerous speculation.
Can't we hit it harder than this?
The attacks were just 10 days ago.
Everyone's trying to play catch-up.
Got to press our reliables.
I'll reach out to The Italian Lady.
You think you can get Loose
Nukes to go on the record?
I'm lucky to get her on deep background.
Well, double down on the Charm Offensive.
Buongiorno, this is Warren Strobel.
I was looking to get your advice on a critical scheduling matter.
If you could contact me at your earliest possible convenience...
I would greatly appreciate it.
Thank you.

LOOSE NUKES:
Yeah, hi, it's Jonathan.

LOOSE NUKES:
anything for you.
No, I know, I know, but I'm doing a story...
on the administration's seeming interest in Iraq.

LOOSE NUKES:
not going to talk about this.
No, I know, I know I'm not talking about this...
because it's off the record, but can you give me some indication?

LOOSE NUKES:
What'd she say?
She sends her love.

ANNOUNCER:
Across the nation...
flags have been flying off the shelves.
A wave of patriotism has been spreading across America.
At times like this, it's what we do in America.
We the People pull together.
They had a discussion in school today...
about why America is so great, right?
Yeah, and what'd you say?
It's a free country.
That's a great answer.
That's Mama's boy.
May I be done now?
Not until I get a big hug.
Okay, after your mom gets a hug.
Oh, whoa!
Proud of you, munchie.
Love you.
They're really pushing this nationalism thing at school.
What do you expect?
Of course, there's going to be patriotism now.
Oh, you want to call it patriotism?
Fine.
It smells a lot like nationalism to me.
That's how it started in Yugoslavia before the war.
Tore my country apart.
You want some help?
No, I'm okay, thank you.
Okay, have a good night.
Good night.
How real is the Iraqi conversation?
There's an argument taking place.
Yeah? Who's winning it?
I couldn't say.
Look, my boss is gonna send me to Afghanistan, and all I want...
to know is should he be buying a roundtrip ticket...
or is Afghanistan just a layover on the way to Baghdad?
I can't tell you anything.
of terrorism... against the U.S. are state-sponsored. So, we asked ourselves, "Who could have been behind... the most massive terrorist assault in human history... "which state?"
I think Iraq is the state that most immediately comes to mind. - This is an idea which in...
- (PHONE RINGING)
is gaining increased credibility.
Knight Ridder, it's Strobel.
THE ITALIAN LADY: Jim Woolsey is going to Europe...
to try to find a link between Saddam...
and the 1993 World Trade Center bombing.
Is he freelancing?
THE ITALIAN LADY: He was sent on an official government jet.
Jesus, who sent him?
THE ITALIAN LADY: The deputy defense secretary.
Can you meet for coffee?
THE ITALIAN LADY: I'll be in touch.
Hi, this is Warren Strobel with Knight Ridder.
I'm working on a story...
about former CIA director James Woolsey traveling to Europe.
Do you know anything about that?

DIPLOMAT:
anything to do with that.
But you're aware that such a trip has taken place?
DIPLOMAT:
source on this.
All right, stay in touch.
Hey, John.
Woolsey was sent to Europe
to look for evidence...
linking Saddam to the World
Trade Center bombing in '93.
Wouldn't be a fool's errand if
they didn't send a fool.
This came from The Italian Lady?
And a diplomat who can
confirm...
the trip was arranged by
Wolfowitz.
What the hell is going on
over at Defense?
Question is, are they trying to
figure out...
if there's any truth to their
theory...
or are they already convinced
their theory is true?
You're sure about
this Woolsey trip?
- Positive.
- You have a third source?
- Yeah.
- Who?
Jim Woolsey.
Hey, it's Walcott,
you up for a field trip?
I figured you'd be calling...
I just didn't think
it would be this soon.
How real is the chatter
about Iraq?
Very.
And it's diverting our attention
from the people who attacked us.
How soon before Iraq becomes
the focus?
We need to blow something up.
Not enough targets in
Afghanistan.
What about bin Laden?
You take out bin Laden...
interest in the war goes right
down the shitter.

REPORTER:
its sixth day in Tora Bora...
bin Laden's suspected
hideout...
but still no signs of the
world's most wanted man.
U.S. B-52s pounding Al Qaeda
positions from the air...
while anti-Taliban tanks...
and troops meet strong
resistance...
cave to cave,
from Al Qaeda fighters.
With yet more conflicting
reports...
on bin Laden's whereabouts.
What you got there...
is that your State of the
Union piece for tomorrow?
- Yup.
- You got a lunch today?
Not with you.
I got a one-on-one with Looney
Tunes over at State.
There's a dry hole.
Yeah, well, I figured if I just
let him ramble on...
he'll accidentally stumble
into something newsworthy.
Yeah, well, give my best.
I will. Hot off the presses,
Beryl.
Did you use punctuation
this time?
I even threw in a few semicolons
just for you.
I bet you're the pride of the
University of Missouri.
Terrorists who once occupied Afghanistan... now occupy cells at Guantanamo Bay. And terrorist leaders who urged followers to sacrifice... their lives are running' for their own. Now, the administration's top priority apart from our own... security is to ensure freedom for other countries... looking to embrace democracy as a way of life. Now, we... excuse me... we understand that we can't... be the policemen to the world... but we feel we have a responsibility to... Yeah, John Walcott.

DIXIE:
Dixie?

DIXIE:
Yeah, yeah, I can hear you. I got a call from one of our boys downrange today... asking me what the fuck's going on. Are you still in Afghanistan? Yeah, I'm in Afghanistan... but nobody knows what the mission is anymore. How do you bomb a country back into the Stone Age... that's already in the middle of the goddamn Stone Age? Our second goal is to prevent regimes that sponsor terror... from threatening America, or our friends and allies... with weapons of mass destruction.
We believe that Afghanistan is ripe for freedom. Now, this is a country that has been struggling to free itself from the repressive grip of the Taliban for years. We've got bin Laden on the run and they're diverting my assets. We may never get him in our crosshairs again. Whoa, whoa, wait, they're diverting your assets to where? Some of these regimes have been pretty quiet since... September the 11th, but we know their true nature. You know, it's a country in desperate need of the kind... of stability that comes with the rule of law. North Korea, Iran, Iraq... states like these... and their terrorist allies constitute an axis of evil... arming to threaten the peace of the world. You'll have to excuse me... Warren, but I have to prepare a briefing for Secretary Powell. Sure. Anything else you need from me? No, no, thank you. I think you've given me more than enough to chew on. Excellent. And you feel confident that Afghanistan... will accept a Western-style democracy? Oh, absolutely. Just as confident as we are about Iraq. Sounds like the debate on Iraq is getting serious.
Oh, no, no, no, that debate is over.
Saddam's got to go,
the only question is how.
Good talking to you, Warren.
Yeah, you, too, sir.
The president is going to invade Iraq.

WALCOTT:
You got this from Looney Tunes?
Yeah, and confirmed by a diplomat who says he met...
with Bush, and a foreign leader recently who came away with...
"The feeling that a decision has been made to strike Iraq."
Do you think we can get enough to run the story?
Unfortunately, I do.
So much for the ceasefire.
Yeah, well, really nice of us...
to temporarily stop shooting at them, though.
I've been bound up and wound up
Could barely get a sound up
Been cheated mistreated
Don't even want to think of it
What are you up to, Smucker?
You know, I tried to chat with your translator today.
Yeah, how'd that go?
Well, for a guy who gets paid to talk for a living...
he was unusually quiet.
He only talks to me.
Really? And what'd he tell you?
Dollar, I'll let you read all about it.
Let me see it.
bin Laden's gone, isn't he?
They missed him, didn't they?
He was here and they fucking missed him!

REPORTER:
military official...
tells NBC News "Despite the crushing defeat...
"of Al Qaeda forces at Tora Bora...
"it's believed now that Osama bin Laden has slipped...
"across the border into Pakistan, seeking refuge...
"in a lawless no man's land...
"ruled by renegade tribal warlords."
Oh, it's official...
this is the saddest event I've ever attended.
I'm going back to my apartment, drink a bottle of wine...
and put my head in the oven.
Okay, but before you do that...
I really want you to meet the guy I was telling you about.
Oh! He just walked in!
Forget the wine, I'll kill myself now.
No, not him... him.
I'll introduce you.
Pam, please don't.
- Warren! Hey!
- Oh, hi.
Glad you could make it, come on over.
Warren, this is a good friend of mine, Lisa Mayr.
Lisa, this is Warren Strobel, he's a journalist... and I'm gonna get another drink.
Hi, uh, Lisa?
- Yeah.
- Yeah, nice to meet you.
- Hi.
- Uh...
Did you ever make it into your apartment?
Uh, oh, yeah, yeah, yeah, no, no, no, I'm sorry.
- Yeah, I made it in okay.
- Good. Good.
So, you're a journalist?
Yeah, yeah, for Knight Ridder.
Oh, is that a magazine or a newspaper?
It's actually a consortium of 31 newspapers, actually.
Well, my stories go out to all of our newspapers...
and each one has the option to publish or not.
Oh, okay. I've always wondered how that worked.
Yeah.
Hey, I got married when I was 22.
And we're only recently separated, so...
This is a little awkward for me.
It's okay.
I'm a little out of practice.
Why don't you start by asking me a question?
Sure, yeah.
Are you a Republican or a Democrat?
Try again.
Yeah, of course, she wants you to call her.
She gave you her card.
No, maybe she's just trying to gin up business.
At a singles mixer on Valentine's Day?
What? So, call her? I should call her?
What? No, no, no, actually, let her dangle.
There's nothing a woman in her 30s likes more... than a guy who takes his time.
I'm fine, Arthur, I'm fine.
It's just that I'm getting a little tired...
of picking up your paper every morning...
and seeing that you're not running our stories.
I mean, last time I looked...
The Philadelphia Inquirer was a Knight Ridder paper, right?
The point is, there's no point in being a Knight Ridder paper...
if you're not going to run Knight Ridder stories.
John, we've been through this already.
Your stories don't fit...
in with what we're doing over here right now.
Don't fit? Don't fit with what?
The truth?
What's the matter, Arthur...
the truth doesn't sell papers anymore?

**BROKAW:**
first time...
the administration provided...
details for what it has always insisted was a connection...
between Saddam Hussein and Al Qaeda.
How strong is that case?

**REPORTER:**
Saddam Hussein says...
he does not have any illegal weapons of mass destruction...
and accused the United States of using weapons...
as a pretext to start a war.
Mr. Galloway, how closely did the movie conform to your book? The movie was about 80% accurate and 20% bullshit... which I guess by Hollywood standards is an accomplishment. What inspired you to write the book? Being shot at by the North Vietnamese army. What was the biggest difference between experiencing... the Battle of Ia Drang in person versus watching it in a theater? The popcorn in Ia Drang was saltier. Last question. Can you draw any comparisons between Vietnam... and what's happening today in Afghanistan? It's very different, but I think it is appropriate... that before we start dropping bombs, we think long and hard... about the greatest lesson we got from Vietnam. Which is? When the government fucks up, the soldiers pay the price. To what do I owe this unexpected visit? Well, I was hoping I'd get an autograph... from the world's most famous war correspondent. I hate this part. Reporters are not supposed to be the story. Reporters are not supposed to be awarded the Bronze Star, either. How do you like the job at State? I love working for General Powell...
and I hate working
for Uncle Sam.
You miss reporting?
After 42 years, I thought...
I should take some time
away from it.
So, I went to work at the State
Department on September 10th...
and the next day the biggest
story of my life broke.
I'd say there's a little bit
of a tug.
We're working on something
important, that's why I'm here.
To make me envious?
To make you an offer.

HANNITY:
of mass destruction, Jerry.
What does that mean
for the world?
What does that mean
for the Middle East?
- Can you turn it down?
- I'm trying to watch the news.
Stop calling it that.
Hey, son.
Adam, what's the matter?
I met with a recruiter.

HANNITY:
are gonna die, Jerry.
You know once you sign up...
there's no changing your mind,
right?
I know.
What do you know?
You're just a kid.
Whose country was attacked.
Adam, I know you want to do what
you think is right...
but war is not a video game.
You have no idea what
you're getting into.
I know exactly what
I'm getting into.
Here.
Show me where Afghanistan
is on this map.
Show me.
They're gonna send you halfway
around the world to fight...
people you didn't even know
existed a year ago.
If you know what you're
getting into...
show me where Afghanistan
is on this map.
Did anyone ever shove a map
in Dad's face...
and ask him to find Vietnam?

CHENEY:
Saddam has resumed...
his efforts to acquire
nuclear weapons.
Among other sources, we've
gotten this from firsthand...
testimony from defectors.
Many of us are convinced
that Saddam Hussein...
will acquire nuclear weapons
fairly soon.
Simply stated, there is no
doubt that Saddam Hussein...
now has weapons of mass
destruction.
They're dialing up
the rhetoric on Iraq.
Let's see if we can nail
them down, okay?
Twenty bucks, whoever gets
the best quote.
No, no, no, you're such a child.
You're such a pussy.
I'm not taking your money.
You get all bent out of shape
when you lose.
I don't care. I'm just the same when I win or lose.
I'm not... it's not a bet, all right, fine.
Warren Strobel for Senator Biden, please.
Son of a bitch.
Biden told Bush, "There's a reason your father didn't go... to Baghdad. He knew he would have to stay... for at least five years."
I got Michael O'Hanlon at Brookings saying... "You definitely cannot count on it being a cakewalk."
We gotta hit it harder than that.
All right, well, hang on. I got an official at the U.N... that says, "There's widespread concern... "that this will destabilize the whole Middle East."
Let me see what you have.
Well, wait, I got... I got... Just give it to me, give, give, give.
Okay.
All right.
Let's see here... all right.
You guys are smart.
You know what's unfolding here. Our readers need to know what we've learned.
"In the best case scenario, U.S. troops could be stuck in Iraq... for years trying to teach the inner workings of democracy... to a nation that has never known it. In the worst case... "scenario, an invasion could cause Iraq's fractious ethnic... "groups to break off into their
own mini-states...
"trapping American combat forces
in the middle...
"of a bloody civil war
for decades."
Boss man's got balls.
Yeah.
Shit.
Were those for me?
No. Yes.
But I thought it might be
a little, I don't know...
a little too soon to be giving
each other gifts.
It would've been all right.
Okay.
Well, I think they landed
on my car...
so if you want to grab them
on the way to dinner...
maybe we can do that?
- Great.
- Great.
Okay, so what was the most
embarrassing thing...
you did to prepare for tonight?
All right.
I will admit, that to prepare
for tonight...
I did kind of a cram session
on Iraq...
and the history of the Muslim
world.
Really?
Yes.
Now I know that 1400 years ago,
after the death of Muhammad...
Muslims fought over who was to
be his rightful heir...
and that caused a split
into two factions...
the Sunnis and the Shiites.
And they've been at war
ever since.
Then, at the end of World War I, the British and the French... arbitrarily divided the Arab world into countries... putting the Sunni majority in charge. But the country that became Iraq is made up of only 20% Sunni. So, Saddam Hussein, a Sunni, with an iron fist rules... the majority Shiite population... and the 20% Kurdish population in northern Iraq. But if Saddam Hussein were removed, it could possibly... reignite that 1400-year-old sectarian war. Now, after reading your stories... I know that Iran is the top sponsor of terror, not Iraq. That a man named Ahmed Chalabi seems to be a con artist... who wants to replace Saddam Hussein. That the neo-cons in the Bush Administration... are pushing for an invasion. And you are quickly becoming my favorite writer. Wow. Um... I guess it's my turn. Give it to me. Okay, I will admit that... This is a little embarrassing. I asked my ex-wife to watch my two sons tonight. Why is that embarrassing? Because a babysitter would expect me home... at the end of the evening and... Should we get the check? Tell your boss we're gonna run
it whether he comments or not!
Actually yes, it is a matter of life and death!
We're talking about going to fucking war!
Hello?
I'm guessing that was a no comment?
What are you grinning about?
What? I'm not grinning.
- You're grinning.
- I'm not grinning.
- I'm not...
- What have you got over there?
Relax! Don't worry about it.
Oh my God, she could do my taxes.
- All right, relax.
- (PHONE RINGING)
- Strobel, Knight Ridder.
- Of course.
Okay.
All right, I'll be right there.
Let's go, this could be something.
So, how does this work?
Do you ask me questions or do I just start talking?
Why don't you just begin... and we'll ask the questions when we have them.
If it's off the record, I have to say so, right?
Do you want it to be off the record?
I want people to know what I know, but not who I am.
It'll be background.
You'll be referred to as a U.S. official.
So, whatever you feel comfortable telling us.
I believe your prediction about
what could and will happen...
if we go to war is spot on.
And we're a lot closer
than you think.
How close?
A secret war planning group
with a parallel intelligence...
operation has been set up
to bypass...
the rest of the
intelligence community.
How do you know this?
They meet in the building
where I work.
And which building is that?
The one with the five sides.
But you're not a part
of that unit?
No.
So, how do you know about this?
My desk is across the hall.
What office do you work for?
Near East South Asia division,
but you can't disclose that.
You're an analyst?
Yes... but you can't disclose
that, either.
I'm speaking to you because
I'm an American citizen...
and I don't like what these
people are doing.
Half a dozen men, most of whom
have never served...
in the military are making
decisions...
based on shoddy intelligence,
and those decisions...
will impact our men
and women in uniform.
And as someone who has worn that
uniform, I can't remain silent.
You said shoddy intelligence.
What do you mean by that?
They've designed a process
that doesn't conform...
to any basic tenet
of intelligence gathering.
In what way?
A decision is made,
then the intelligence...
is sought to support
that decision.
How do you know this?
They have no interest
in Arabic speakers.
Israelis come in without
passes...
without even being entered
into a security log.
And for years the government has
been funding a group...
of exiled dissidents called the
Iraqi National Congress.
Led by Ahmad Chalabi, we know.
Who they want to install
as the new leader of Iraq.
Yeah, we've been trying to get
a meeting with him.
Do you know who set up
this operation?
Donald Rumsfeld.
Is there any evidence to
indicate that Iraq...
has attempted to or is willing
to supply terrorists...
with weapons of mass
destruction?
The reports that say that
something hasn't happened...
are always interesting to me
because as we know...
there are known knowns, there
are things we know we know.
We also know there are known
unknowns.
That is to say, we know there
are some things we do not know.
But there are also unknown
unknowns.
The one's we don't know
we don't know.
We're working on a theory that
the administration...
has already decided to go
to war...
and is now focused on how
to justify it.
It's not a theory.
We've also been told by a number
of individuals that...
Rumsfeld's the one spearheading
this intelligence gathering.
I wouldn't exactly
call it intelligence gathering.
It's more like
intelligence cherry picking.
And if they don't find
any cherries...
they just grab a piece
of shit...
and they paint it red, and they
stick it in a Shirley Temple.
You seem irritated.
I'm out there looking for
weapons that might not exist...
to justify a war that might
not be wise.
And have you found any evidence
of WMD?
No, sir.
But Saddam is looking to acquire
nukes, right?
Yeah, and I'm trying to fuck
Jennifer Lopez, but I have...
a sinking feeling that neither
of those things is gonna happen.
So, we won't use your identity,
but can we get a quote?
Sure.
Have you found anything to
support the administration's...
theory that Saddam is close to
or has acquired nuclear weapons?
We've searched every cave...
and looked up every camel's ass
in Iraq.
So, here's your quote,
"no fucking way."
Might have to clean
that up a bit.
Quite colorful, though.

LANDAY:
Uh, honey, I think someone...
is stealing our New York Times.

VLATKA:
Why would you do that?
It's propaganda.
I need that for my work.
It's packaging press releases
from the White House...
the State Department, and the
Pentagon.
Sorry, that's not a real
newspaper.
How was your day?
Warren and I met with some
gentleman...
from the intelligence community
who confirmed that...
there's no real evidence
to support...
the administration's
claim on WMD.
What have I been telling you?
Well, unfortunately, I can't use
your gut as a reliable source.
You know, this is what they do.
They lie.
Yeah, and we try to hold
them accountable.
I hope I'm wrong. I really,
really do.
But the Bush Administration,
they don't care about the truth.
They don't even respond to your articles. If they want a war, they're gonna get one. And there's nothing that you or the first amendment... is gonna do to stop them. Extra, extra, read all about it. "Over the past 14 months, Iraq has tried to buy thousands... of specially design aluminum tubes, which American... officials believe were intended as components... of centrifuges to enrich uranium." Well, one thing's for sure. What's that? We can't both be right. Who're you calling? Loose Nukes. If she wouldn't talk to you about going into Iraq... what makes you think she's gonna go on the record on WMD? Charm Offensive. Watch and learn, son. Landay. - It's Joe Galloway. - Wow. Man even walks like he has a Bronze Star. LOOSE NUKE'S (OVER PHONE): Hello. Oh, hi, yeah, it's Landay. Hello, Jonathan. Hi. Crazy weather we're having, huh? You're calling me to chat about the weather? No, no, yeah. Actually, I wanted to ask you about WMD. It'll be deep, deep background. Goodbye, Jonathan.
No wait, don't hang up.
That Charm Offensive... that's formidable.
Listen, we need you here. You've developed sources over the years that have access... that Landay and Strobel just can't get.
I'll make it easy on you. I'll give you a column... and your name doesn't have to appear on anything else. Whatever else you want to write on the side, you can... and of course, there won't be any glory, but...
Glory's for young men.
Let me percolate on it.
Let me turn to the issue of Iraq.
You have said that it poses... a mortal threat to the United States.
How? Define "mortal threat."
Well, this'll take some time, but it's important for us... as I mentioned earlier... to remember that the world has changed, that prior to... I'd forgotten the world had changed.
So did I. I'm so happy he mentioned that.
What, specifically, has he obtained that you believe... would enhance his nuclear development program?
Well, in the nuclear weapons arena... you've got specifically aluminum tubes.
There's a story in The New York Times this morning... this is and I want to attribute
to The Times.
I don't want to talk about, obviously...
specific intelligence sources,
but it's now public that...
in fact he has been seeking to
acquire, and we have been...
able to intercept and prevent
him from acquiring...
through this particular
channel...
the kinds of tubes that are
necessary...
to build a centrifuge.
And the centrifuge is required
to take low-grade uranium...
and enhance it into highly
enriched uranium...
which is what you have to have
in order to build a bomb.
Lucky for him, someone leaked
that to The Times.
Avoids the pesky nuisance
of being arrested...
for revealing classified
information.
One can only wonder how Judy
Miller and Michael Gordon...
got that information.
Does it bother you, bug you...
that you have not captured
Osama bin Laden in over a year?
I'd like to see him on
television in handcuffs...
if I can put it
into those terms.
I think all of us would.
But I don't lay awake at night
concerned about that.
There's one school of thought
that says he's already dead.
We haven't heard anything
of him in many months.
RUSSERT:
I don't know, I really
don't know.
I can argue it round or flat.
I didn't know we were still
debating the shape of the earth.
I've got sources on both sides.
But the U.S. military would be
enormously effective...
in this circumstance.
And I don't think it would be
that tough a fight.
That is, I don't think there's
any question...
that we would prevail and we
would achieve our objective.
Landay.
Yeah?
We are right, aren't we?
Everybody, listen up.
We're not NBC.
We're not ABC. We're not CBS.
We're not FOX. We're not CNN.
We're not The New York Times.
We're not The Washington Post.
We are Knight Ridder.
We have readers who live in
towns with military bases.
Fort Benning, Fort Bragg,
Fort Jackson...
and over 40 other military bases
throughout this country.
If every other news organization
wants to be stenographers...
for the Bush administration,
let them.
We don't write for people who
send other people's kids to war.
We write for people
whose kids get sent to war.
So, when the government
says something...
you only have one question
to ask.
Is it true?
I'm through percolating.
Let's get to work.
Administration officials spanned out on the Sunday talk shows...
to make the case for an invasion of Iraq.
Who else is involved in
The Office of Special Planning?
Wolfowitz, Feith, couple others.
Instead of listening to people who have spent their careers...
evaluating threats, they're streaming questionable intel...
from unreliable sources and taking it...
directly to the White House.
George Tenet, Director of Central Intelligence...
told Senators, he could not rule out cooperation...
between Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda.
I've seen the specs on those aluminum tubes.
They're too small to be used for enriching uranium.
What does that mean?
They can't be used for a nuclear bomb.

REPORTER:
of the United States...
said we're not going to permit nations to develop...
weapons of mass destruction...
as they're gonna supply those weapons to a network...
of terrorism that could attack the United States.
Cheney is trying to shut out Powell.
Where'd you get this stuff?
Old friend.
REPORTER:
see a consensus from within...
the administration for the
removal of Saddam Hussein.

COMMENTATOR:
administration has pointed...
to a secret meeting in Prague
between Iraqi intelligence...
and 9/11 hijacker,
Mohamed Atta.
Bush administration is pressing
the United Nations...
Security Council for
a resolution...
to put pressure on Iraq.
President Bush will address
the United Nations today...
in hopes of putting together
a multi-national coalition...
to disarm Saddam Hussein.
The White House is lobbying
Congress to authorize...
the use of force in Iraq.
The minute these guys get
their hands on anything...
remotely resembling evidence...
they leak it to
Now, I understand the position
you're in...
but please don't hang up on me.

LOOSE NUKES:
Okay, the vice president
of the United States...
went to the V.F.W. and said that
Saddam Hussein...
is on the threshold of
developing a nuclear weapon.
Then he goes on national
television...
and says the same thing.
Your question?
Ask the question.
What I want to know is,
is Dick Cheney ignoring...
good intelligence that
contradicts his assumptions...
or is he just getting bad
intelligence?
The vice president is lying.
Thank you, thank you so much.
What? What, what, what?
What'd she say?
He's lying.
- He's lying.
- Cheney is lying.
- Cheney's lying!
- Cheney's lying!
- He's lying! John!
- He's lying!
John!
Where the hell is he?
Here we go. Here we go.
- He's lying.
- He's lying.
Cheney's lying.
Where did this come from?
Loose Nukes.
Okay.
Now, we know what's being talk
about, we got to get inside...
those meetings and find out if
there's a dissenting opinion.
I may have a guy.
Anybody we know?
The Usual Suspect.
You didn't want to do
this in a parking garage?
If there was one that served
Pad Thai, I would.
How's civilian life?
My retirement lasted about
four hours.
You're with Knight Ridder?
I don't even have a desk yet.
How the hell do you know that?
I have my ways.
You been following what we're doing over there?
Yes, I have.
And?
You two may be singlehandedly saving...
the Fourth Estate from extinction.
Mainstream media hasn't picked up a thing we been running.
Should be all the confirmation you need...
that you're onto something.
What can I do for you?
We need some help with the higher ups.
How high?
High as you can get us.
You've been around a long time, Joe.
I doubt there's anything there that'll surprise you.
I was married one time to a woman who thought...
New Hampshire was the capital of Massachusetts.
There's always something you don't see coming.
What do you want to know?
Everything the administration doesn't want us to know.
You and I are going to be eating a lot of Pad Thai.
What kind of time frame are we looking at?
Next month, Congress is scheduled to vote...
on whether or not to give the president...
the authorization to go to war.
Are the votes there?
The administration thinks so.
Mr. President, 38 years ago, 
I, Robert C. Byrd... 
voted on the Tonkin Gulf 
Resolution.
The resolution that authorized 
the president to use military... 
force to repel armed attacks... 
and to prevent further communist 
aggression in Southeast Asia. 
A joint resolution to authorize 
the use of United States... 
armed forces against Iraq should 
be brought to a close. 
The clerk will call the roll.

CLERK: 
Mrs. Clinton, aye. 
It was this resolution that 
provided the basis... 
for American involvement 
in the war in Vietnam. 
Mr. Kerry, aye. 
Mr. Lieberman, aye. 
Mr. Lott, aye. 
It was this resolution... 
that lead to the deaths 
of 58,000 Americans. 
Mr. McCain, aye. 
Mr. McConnell, aye. 
After all that carnage, we began 
to learn that in voting... 
for the Tonkin Gulf 
resolution... 
we were basing our votes 
on bad information. 
And history is repeating itself. 
Mr. Santorum, aye. 
I urge senators to go down 
on the Capital Mall... 
and look at the Vietnam 
Memorial. 
Nearly every day, you will find 
someone at that wall... 
weeping for a loved one.
Mr. Sessions, aye.
I will always remember the words of Senator Wayne Morse.
Mr. Specter, aye.
He stated, "The resolution will pass and senators...
"who vote for it will live to regret it."
We got K-10, we got Dixie, we don't need another source.
You know we got this.
Look, when you're accusing the secretary of defense...
of running a shadow intelligence unit...
out of the Pentagon, it's nice to have a little insurance.
That's all I'm saying.
All right, let's share it with the rest of the class.
You want to tell them?
Earlier today, I was summoned to the Pentagon.
By whom?
Rumsfeld, Ol' Limp Dick sent a message saying...
"All your sources are retired generals."
And I said, "All due respect, sir..." 
"80% of my sources are active military."
"Some of them are working in this building...
"and some of them are actually working on your staff."
"And hell, one or two of them might even be in this room."
Did you actually have sources in the room?
No, but it was fun watching him sweat like whores in church.
How close are we to getting something we can run with
on the Office of Special Plans?
Well, we already got...
No, we're just gonna check
with a couple more sources.
What's wrong with the sources
you have?
Well, we just want to be
certain.
You know, you sit on a story
like this, the dam bursts.
Let's just move on this,
okay, boys?
When are you gonna be finished?
Just a few more minutes, baby.
I can't sleep with the computer
light on.
Actually, I'm done.
So, what are you working on?
Rumsfeld has a secret Intel
group that's going...
around the CIA to manufacture
a case for war.
What the fuck, Jonathan?
What?
Have you been talking about this
on the phone?
Yeah, of course.
So, what?
- They will hear you.
- Vlatka.
You're writing about infighting
between spy agencies.
So?
They're spy agencies, Jonathan.
They listen to your calls,
they read your emails.
They probably bugged this house.
You're being paranoid.
You're being naive.
This isn't Yugoslavia,
this is America.
America has changed.
War is big business for them.
You get in their way,
they're gonna kill you.
Honey, you are being ridiculous.
All right? Come on.
Don't you get it?
You know what these people are capable of?
You have a family!
Vlatka. Vlatka!
Oh, somebody's struggling.
What's the matter?
Oh, Vlatka kept me up all night.
All right!
No, not that like that. It was conspiracy theories.
About what?
Oh... she thinks the government is monitoring us.
I mean, it's ridiculous.
Check your email.
John, you got to see this.
Oh, hold on a second.
Arthur, I really don't want to have this conversation again.
He hung up. What is it?
What do we do?
- You're such a wuss.
- You're a wuss.
You're a much bigger wuss.
Shut up, will you stop it, you're being a child.
- You're being a...
- Shut up!

REPORTER:
Council resolution...
can be boiled down to four words, the clock is ticking.
Iraq's only alternative to full compliance, President Bush...
made clear today, is of military confrontation.

BUSH:
weapons of mass destruction...
by Iraq will occur. 
The only question for the Iraqi regime is to decide how. 
Son of a bitch. 
They beat us. 
But they missed the whole point of why the unit was set up. 
It doesn't matter, they got the scoop. 
With what? 
There's nothing about cherry picking intelligence. 
There's nothing about bypassing other agencies. 
We can still run ours. 
John, no one's gonna pay attention... 
to a second story explaining all that. 
We had it. 
Goddamn it, Walcott's gonna be pissed. 
Maybe he hadn't seen it yet. 
How is it possible he hasn't talked to us all day? 
He's giving us the silent treatment. 
Oh, shit, here he comes. 
Oh, Jesus. 
You had the story. 
Don't ever forget how it feels to get beat. 
The only information Congress is getting... 
is coming directly from the administration. 
Iraq is a huge country about the size of France... 
if they want to hide their weapons of mass destruction... 
they're going to be able to do so. 
They're not going to rethink their positions...
unless they are provided with independent intel.
No one who's supported the authorization for war...
in Congress, in Iraq, not the president...
I am sure would go to war just because he wants to go to war. Rumsfeld's been trying to sell this idea that an Iraqi... intelligence officer offered bin Laden safe haven in '99.
Yeah.
Well, if that offer actually had happened...
bin Laden would have told Saddam to go fuck himself.
What do you make of the statement made...
by the Iraqi government that Iraq has no weapons...
of mass destruction and is not developing? They're lying.
Next.
Your daughter is lovely.
Well, I wish I could take credit.
She gets it from her mother.
Dad, can I get you anything?
- Oh, no, thanks, sweetie.
- Mr. Strobel?
- I'm fine.
- All right.
Just real casual.
Tom and I were just talking about your latest article.
Oh, yeah?
Seems like you don't trust politicians.
Well, that's a pretty solid rule of journalism.
Even when they're talking
about war?
Especially when they're talking about war.
You really believe there's no WMD?
Our names are on the article.
They don't say that there's no WMD.
They just said that the administration...
hasn't offered any proof of WMD.
And you don't think they'll find any?
No, I don't.
You don't know that.
No, we don't.
But before we send our kids to their possible deaths...
don't you think the administration...
has an obligation to provide proof of their rationale?
What if that proof comes in the form of a mushroom cloud?
Okay, you've been watching Fox News again?
Rice, Cheney, and President Bush have all said the same thing.
Oh, well, then it must be true.
You kids are too young to remember...
how close we came to nuclear war in '62.
Hell, Warren, you were born the very day...
President Kennedy ordered the blockade against Cuba.
The most powerful enemy we knew was gonna put nuclear weapons...
90 miles off our coast.
The president had to demonstrate strength.
And the next day, Kennedy sent Adlai Stevenson to the U.N...
to offer proof that the missiles existed.
It's not just Fox News.
It's the Washington Post.
Hell, proof is coming from every major media outlet...
in the country, except yours.
Okay.
Uh, I think I forgot the hamburger buns, excuse me.
I'm going to grab a beer.
Jesus, Dad.
Are you okay, bro?
Yeah.
Are we good reporters?
What?
I mean, are we doing anything...
other than practicing good journalism?
No, we're doing exactly what we're supposed...
Then, why the fuck are we the only ones...
running these fucking stories?!
He just wanted you to see all sides to him...
before you take it to the next level.
Almost three months ago, the United Nations...
Security Council gave Saddam Hussein...
his final chance to disarm.
Our intelligence officials estimate...
that Saddam Hussein had the materials to produce...
What's the point of having U.N. weapons inspections...
if Bush and Cheney are just going to ignore the results?
Well, when you're creating your own reality...
it's pretty easy to ignore
the facts.
And so what? Due diligence is
too inconvenient...
for the mainstream media
at this point?
When news is a profit center...
Access becomes currency.
Exactly.
I'm proud of you, John.
Why?
For not wavering.
It's got to be tough.
It's not that tough.
I know who their sources are and
I know who our sources are.
"Iraqi Dissidents Reassured
in a Talk with Bush...
"About the Post-Hussein Era."
By Judith Miller.
She'd quote a carnival
fortune teller...
if he was willing to say
Iraq had WMD.
We gotta dig into the
declassified...
national intelligence
estimate...
and find out if there are any
gems in there.
Yeah, I'd love to see...
what they redacted from the
classified version.

WALCOTT:
on with Chalabi?
We're on it.
I'm gonna keep an eye
on my old boss.
- I got a feeling.
- Yeah...
Colin may be the last person
standing between peace and war.
Yeah.
Goddamn it!
Fuck!

ARTHUR:
set a date...
for the fundraiser yet?
Hey, Arthur, I was totally wrong.
Your head isn't literally up your ass.
It's always a pleasure to see you, John...
but would you please wait outside?
You know, it's bad enough you're ignoring all our work...
but the fact that you're running these bullshit...
Judy Miller pieces is unconscionable.
Not in here, John.
Okay, please?
Let's take it in my office.
Excuse me.
Jesus.
Look, as painful as this might seem...
I don't answer to you, John.
Yes, as evidenced by the fact that you still have a job.
You know what, my responsibility is to my readers.
They're citizens who are patriots...
they're citizens who support our troops.
And how do you do that, Arthur?
By going down on The New York Times?
I don't have time for this.
No, you don't have time.
You don't have time.
You know, one day,
The New York Times...
is going to apologize to its readers. And when that day comes, are you gonna write your own apology? Or are you just going to run theirs?

Have a nice day, John. It is beginning to look more and more as though... war with Iraq is inevitable. The Showdown with Iraq and the countdown to a speech... by Secretary of State Colin Powell... that could move the world closer to war. There's not much left for the soldiers to do but wait... for orders to attack, Ryan Chillcoat reports... That's so frustrating. I don't know that I could do what you do. You know, I once got it in my head... that I should hike the Appalachian Trail. Thought that it would just be a good challenge for myself. Then I look at it on a map and it's like 2200 miles. I realized... That it would take a lifetime? Yeah. Or we could walk it together. I'm gonna hold you to that.

REPORTER: is mounting... against America's military intervention into Iraq. From US cities to Europe and the Middle East... demonstrators have taken to the
streets in opposition... to the United States' threat to invade Iraq. Mr. Strobel, Mr. Landay, how do you do? - Hello. - I'm Entifadh Qanbar. - Hi. - Now, please, follow me. Who's this dude? Guy who used to deliver pizzas. I'm not kidding. Minister Chalabi, Mr. Jonathan Landay... and Warren Strobel from Knight Ridder News. Gentlemen, welcome. Hey. Thank you for finally agreeing to meet with us. I've been very busy. Talking to our competitors. I speak with whomever wishes to speak with me. After all, I have nothing to hide... which is more than I can say for Saddam. Okay, well, since you brought him up... I thought we might talk about what... you know about his weapons and how he might be hiding them. He has WMD and he's hiding them, that I know. Right, and you know that how? I know everything that's happening in my country. Even though Iraq hasn't been your country for over a decade? I may be an exile, but I'm still an Iraqi. Well, I think the point my colleague is trying to make...
is how would you, an enemy
of Saddam, in exile...
have access to such valuable
information?
I maintain close
relationships...
with dissident intelligence
sources.
Is there a way we can
verify that?
No.
See, that's kind of a problem
for us...
because we can't write a story...
I want what America wants,
a free and democratic Iraq.
With you as its leader?
If the people of Iraq wish
for me to return, yes.
I want the opportunity to help
rebuild my country...
the way Mandela did
in South Africa.
But Mandela didn't ask the U.S.
to invade his country.
He wasn't fighting terrorists.
With all due respect, that's
where the red flags...
start to go up for us.
Are you implying that I've
created a false narrative...
for my own pursuits?
Is there another reason why
you'd create a false narrative?
I don't lie!
Saddam Hussein has mobile
chemical...
and biological weapons labs.
He has a nuclear program.
He has ties to terrorists.
And if you don't believe me,
just ask the many other...
defectors and hear
what they say.
They will all tell 
you the same thing. 
Don't they all get their 
information from you? 
If you were wondering why 
it took so long for me... 
to meet with you, it's this 
smug attitude. 
You have no intention of 
reporting anything I've said. 
Do you want us to just be your 
cheerleaders? 
All right, I think we 
should go. 
Thank you for your time. 
Now I see why no one reads 
anything you write. 
I am an advocate for the removal 
of a vicious dictator... 
for a free Iraq, an Iraq that 
will one day be a close ally... 
to your country, to Israel, and 
to all of the Western world. 
And exactly how will this happen 
after Saddam Hussein is gone? 
All right, come on, Landay. 
No, no, no, he says the world 
will be better off... 
but he doesn't say how. 
How would the removal 
of Saddam Hussein... 
not plunge Iraq into a bloody 
civil war? 
Tell us something that makes 
sense... 
anything that makes sense, and 
we'll write that story today. 
You can't! 
Because you have no 
idea what happens next. 
- And neither does anyone else. 
- John. John! 
I would rather go back and write 
for my high school paper...
than to be used by you...
to sell the American public
your bullshit.
All right.
By the way, it's Knight Ridder.
Secretary of State Colin Powell
will make the case...
against Iraq in a nationally
televised address...
to the UN Security Council.
Looks like they're bringing
in the closer.

REPORTER:
are you confident...
you will make your case, sir?
You'll see.
What the hell game have we've
been playing?
All we did is piss into the
wind.
We did our jobs.
I should never have become
a reporter.
Damn that Woodward and
Bernstein.
They took down a president
whose biggest crime...
was trying to cover up some
dirty political tricks.
This president's about to do the
worst thing any president...
could do and he'll probably
get re-elected.
To the democratic experiment.

POWELL:
Thank you, Mr. President.
My colleagues, every statement
I make today...
is backed up by sources,
solid sources.
The gravity of this moment is
matched by the gravity...
of the threat that Iraq's weapons of mass destruction... pose to the world. It was a set up, the whole damn thing was a set up. Tenet sent Powell a stack of files this high... that supported the invasion. Saddam Hussein is determined... to get his hands on a nuclear bomb. Cheney sent Scooter Libby... to push three main arguments in those files.

One:
abuses...
which everybody knew about.

Two:
which Powell...
of course, threw right in the trash.
And the third focused on Iraq's WMD. Leaving Saddam Hussein in possession of weapons... of mass destruction for a few more months or years... is not an option, not in a post-September 11th world. Over a four-day period, Powell made every single CIA officer... defend every so-called piece of evidence in those files. He threw out 80% of them. At the end of the four days... Powell looked Tenet right in the eye and said... "George, can we stand by every word of this?" And Tenet said, "Everything in there is gold, I promise you." To which Powell replied, "Well,
that's good, George.
"I'm glad you feel that way, 'cause you're going to be...
"sitting right behind me when I present this to the world."
We must not fail in our duty and our responsibility...
to the citizens of the countries...
that are represented by this body.
Colin took one for the team.
Always the good soldier.

BUSH:
Has the Iraqi regime fully...
and unconditionally disarmed?
The only acceptable outcome is the one already defined...
by a unanimous vote of the Security Council.
Total disarmament.
Great Britain, Spain and the United States have introduced...
a new resolution stating that Iraq has failed to meet...
the requirements of Resolution 1441.
This is a fact, it cannot be denied.

REPORTER:
would it do to give...
Saddam a final ultimatum?
A two or three day deadline to disarm or face force?
September the 11th changed the strategic thinking...
at least as far as I was concerned...
for how to protect our country.
My job is to protect the American people.
Used to be that we could think
that you could contain...
a person like Saddam Hussein...
that oceans would protect us
from his type of terror.

(PHONE RINGS)
September the 11th should say
to the American people...
Hello?
You need to pack your bags.
Right.
In the hands of a terrorist
organization...
could be deployed here at home.
King, John King. This is a
scripted...
Thank you, Mr. President.
Sir, how would you answer your
critics who say that they...
They think this is somehow
personal?
As Senator Kennedy put it
tonight...
he said your fixation
with Saddam Hussein...
is making the world a more
dangerous place.
And as you prepare the American
people for the possibility...
of military conflict, could you
share with us...
any of the scenarios your
advisors have shared...
with you about worst-case
scenarios?
You make sure the... this country
knows what's going on out there.
- Yeah?
- I will.
I swore to protect and defend
the Constitution.
He has weapons of mass
destruction...
and he has used weapons
of mass destruction.
He has trained and financed... 
al Qaeda-type organizations before. 
I take the threat seriously, 
and I'll deal with the threat. 
I hope it can be done peacefully. 
They hate what we stand for. 
We love freedom, and we're not changing.

REPORTER: 

millions of Americans can... 
recall a time when leaders from both parties set this country... 
on a mission of regime change in Vietnam. 
50,000 Americans died. 
The regime is still there in Hanoi and it hasn't harmed... 
or threatened a single American in 30 years... 
since the war ended. 
What can you say tonight, sir, to the sons and daughters... 
of the Americans who served in Vietnam to assure them that... you will not lead this country down a similar path in Iraq?

BUSH: 

No doubt, there's risks with any military operation. 
I know that. 
It's a good thing he can draw on all that experience he got... 
while not serving in the National Guard. 
But it's very clear what we intend to do. 
And our mission won't change. 
It could last, you know, six days, six weeks... I doubt six months.
There's a lot of money to pay for this... that doesn't have to be U.S. taxpayer money. We're dealing with a country that can really finance... its own reconstruction, and relatively soon. There will always be some uncertainty... about how quickly he can acquire nuclear weapons... but we don't want the smoking gun to be a mushroom cloud.

RUSSERT:
America people... are prepared for a long, costly, and bloody battle... with significant American casualties? I don't think it's likely to unfold that way, Tim... because I really do believe we will be greeted as liberators.

BLITZER:
war had begun, the President... is set to deliver a very carefully worded speech... on a carrier in the Pacific.

BUSH:
major combat operations... in Iraq have ended. In the battle of Iraq, the United States... and our allies have prevailed. (LOUD EXPLOSION) (SOMBER MUSIC PLAYING) I want to go down there. They were the first to die. Were you there? Thank you.
Thank you, son.
(SOMBER MUSIC CONTINUES)
Jonathan, how did it feel, therefore...
to be the lone holdouts in this pursuit of truth and fact?
It was very lonely and what made it actually one...
of the ironies is...
that every time we would write something...
the White House would say nothing, because we realized...
after a while that that would have been the best...
advertising for our stories we could have possibly asked for.
There's a problem with journalism...
in Washington, which is access.
And The New York Times and others had access to the top...
officials who were spinning this line.
We talked to those people, as well...
but most of our reporting, Christiane...
was with intelligence, military...
and diplomatic mid-level...
- Lower level?
- Lower level.
The types journalists don't normally talk to or go after.
Can I just give a little credit, also, to the man...
who was our boss at the time, John Walcott.
Higher levels of civilization...
must depend even more heavily...
on a conscientious respect for
the importance of honesty... and clarity in reporting the facts and out of stubborn... concern for accuracy in determining what the facts are. We need to find some way to cover the world so that... we know what's happening out there... that we know the truth about it... so we can avoid mistakes... mistakes like Iraq. The intelligence was what it was. You know, people like me couldn't make it up.

STEWART:
wasn't what it was... and not everybody got it wrong. Almost everybody did, except for Knight Ridder. (SOFT MUSIC PLAYING)