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# A War

By Tobias Lindholm

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**A WAR:**

2-5 here, with a sitrep.

Moving forward in single file.

2, 000 south of Adam Khan Kalay.

All is quiet, over.

6-0, this 2-5 Dolly, Dolly, over.

2-5, 6-0 here.

You are Dolly. Over and out.

- He's up here.

- Logstat from 3-5, please.

3-5, 6-0 here, over.

2-5, 2-5, 6-0 here.

Report, please. Over.

2-5, 6-0 here.

- IED!

- Fuck!

Anders is down!

Get a medic over here now!

- Anders!

- Now!

Do you see him?

- Anders is down.

- He's lying on the other side.

- What's up?

- We don't know who. It was a 9-0 call.

- 9-0 about what?

- Contact IED.

9-0, 9-0, 6-0.

Who's in contact? Over.

- Get him...

- Anders?

Jones! Tighten this.

Lasse, if you can, stuff something in  
to stop the bleeding.

- Okay? Gauze, bandage, anything.

- Copy.

6-0, 2-5 here.

Stand by for partial 9-liner.

...1410. Over.

- 3814.

- 6-0. Copy. Out.

- 381410.

- Anders Holm, 1st gunner, 2nd group.  
- I need a complete status.  
- Service number...  
2-5, 6-0 with instructions from Papa.  
We need a complete 9-liner  
and a sitrep.  
Medevac ETA 15.  
- He's stopped breathing.  
- Unresponsive.  
- Very weak breathing.  
- Medevac status?  
Hold on, Anders.  
Easy, try to turn him over.  
- No pulse.  
- Fuck, man!  
- Calm down, Lasse.  
- Hold on, Anders!  
- Where the fuck is that helicopter?  
- Lasse, calm down.  
- We're working on it.  
- No pulse in his wrist.  
Double amputation.  
Charlie is very critical.  
- He's bleeding out.  
- Come on!  
25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30.  
Both breathing and pulse is gone.  
- He's gone.  
- All gone?  
Yes.  
We've terminated CPR.  
We...  
We'll spend the time  
preparing for transport, over.  
6-0, copy, out.  
Are you okay?  
I need you to stay focused.  
As you've probably heard,  
Anders died upon arriving in Bastion.  
- How are the men doing?  
- They're not doing well.  
Particularly not my 2nd gunner, Lasse.  
- What do you say?  
- None of the men are doing well.

We go on patrols like moving targets.  
The boys are powerless. The men  
don't see the purpose of patrolling...  
Easy now.  
Let's see it from their level.  
The boys just lost a good friend.  
No wonder they're frustrated.  
I'm just saying the tasks don't seem  
to make sense, and it's damn hard...  
Let's keep focus: I watched one of  
my 21-year-old boys bleed out today!  
- That doesn't make any sense!  
- Of course not. Go see to the boys.  
What are your thoughts?  
It's been a rough day.  
They need to vent.  
I have to deal with this now.  
I'll join them on patrol from tomorrow.  
I'll brief them myself at 2030 hours.  
Do any of you have doubts about  
why you're here?  
You're here to safeguard and help  
civilians. So they can have a life.  
So they can rebuild their country.  
I know you're doing a lot of patrols,  
and that I'm asking a lot.  
But we have momentum right now  
in winning the civilians over.  
Which is why it's so important  
that we show them our presence.  
Okay, where is he?  
- Where's Julius?  
- Outside. We'll go get him.  
- After we've talked to Birgitte. Hi.  
- Hi, Maria. Good of you to stop by.  
I have to tell you that Julius has been  
in a fight with another boy today.  
- Was it serious?  
- Yes.  
We couldn't calm him down, and he bit  
the other boy in the shoulder.  
You suggested that you and I  
and his teacher talk it through...  
Yes, let's do that. Friday, I get off

work at 3 p.m. I can be here 3:30.

Let me get my calendar.

I'll be right back.

- Hey...

- Julius... Julius bit a boy.

Yes, he did, sweetie.

You shouldn't do that.

When are we going home?

I can see now that it's not easy  
to find time for everything.

I'm pretty busy on Friday...

Julius?

- Hi!

- Hi.

Time to go home.

Come on.

Yes, Julius. Time to go.

Figne's waiting for us.

Come on.

Julius, sweetie?

Julius?

Come on.

Daddy's calling today.

Come on.

Alright!

- What's four plus four?

- That's so easy. Eight!

- You just kissed your date.

- You're so annoying.

- What's twenty plus twenty?

- Forty.

- Your butt is fat and naughty.

- Why are you always such a pain?

Stop it. Turn off the TV and take out  
your glass. Dinner's in five minutes.

Figne. I know he's annoying.

Just leave him alone, okay?

Go and sit down.

Elliot, please go sit at the table.

We'll have dinner now.

- Cut it...

- Shall I cut it for you?

- "Dear Mom, please cut it for me."

- You're not "dear Mom"...

You little rascal.

You can have ketchup if you want.

We'll be done with dinner

in time for Dad's call.

- What time is it?

- 7:

- That's late.

- It sure is, Elliot.

- Why...

- You can go watch TV.

- I want milk.

- So have some.

Easy, easy, easy...

Well done.

I can drink so much...

I can drink so much milk.

I know.

You can drink a whole liter.

That was not good for me...

"Not good for you..."

That's okay, don't worry about it.

How are you?

Who?

How old was he?

Are you okay?

Okay. Good.

We're... we're fine.

We're fine, I mean...

They... sure, they behave

from time to time, you know?

And they're... annoying at times.

It's pretty much as usual.

Yeah, ha-ha for you. Really funny.

You can look forward to coming home

to these little brats.

Elliot just woke up.

Can you call back in two minutes?

Okay.

Okay...

Love you too.

Talk to you soon, okay?

Yes, I will.

Hey, babe. Bye.

Lasse?

What's up?

I want to go home now.

After that morning with Anders...

He wasn't meant to stand there.

He took my place.

And he got blown to pieces.

I can't go through that gate again.

I'm useless.

I can't send you home.

But what I can do is...

...to give you camp duty

for the next two weeks.

Then you won't go through the gate

any time soon.

You'll have time to calm down.

And if you're still not okay after  
a few weeks, we'll have another talk.

Do you have family?

- Siblings and stuff?

- I have a little sister.

- A little sister?

- She's 16.

- What's her name?

- Majida.

She's starting high school...

Fuck, man!

Call home.

I'll be back in 10 minutes

and we'll have coffee.

Hello?

It's me.

Hi.

Hi, boys.

You want to join me?

No?

Go away.

Go away! Go away.

Keep your distance.

EW reports

that the pale-faced are in the area.

- Stoffer.

- Yes?

- Back in formation.

- In front?  
- Rear.  
- Got it.  
- Now!  
- Got it!  
- Don't do that again.  
- Got it.  
- 2-5. 6-0.  
- 2-5, over.  
Stop!  
Get out here! Get out here!  
- Get down!  
- What's happening?  
Sit down! I need an interpreter!  
Sit down! Sit down!  
Calm down.  
We need an interpreter.  
- Calm down. Get the interpreter.  
- Sit down!  
Sit down.  
Tell him to sit down.  
Make him lift that.  
Lift up your shirt.  
He says his daughter is sick.  
He needs help.  
- Shut up when we're talking.  
- Get Rytter under control! Get him out.  
That way!  
His daughter is... "Who shall I tell  
that my daughter's sick?"  
- "Help me, help me."  
- Where is his daughter?  
- Inside the house.  
- Anybody else in there?  
- Tell him to calm down.  
- There are women and children.  
Okay...  
"She has burns here."  
- "Can you help us?"  
- I hear you. You must calm down.  
- Secure door left!  
- Step back, step back!  
- We have our own men behind that door.  
- He says to stop.



- He must get the women out.

- Look away.

Look away, yeah right.

- Anything?

- I have a visual of two women.

- Come on, dammit.

- "Come in."

Step back.

Women behind the right door!

Door straight ahead.

- A donkey over there.

- Copy. You stay put.

Is it in there?

- Yes, that's his house.

- Come over here. Get him over here.

It checks out! There's a mother and two children. The girl is in bandages.

Jones?

Jones, up here. Now.

"Thank you so much for helping.

We're poor people."

- A burn?

- Left forearm.

- Got it.

- "We're not your enemy."

- Tell him he can go inside.

- Send Stoffer in.

It's this little girl.

I'll just put this here.

Could you open this?

Ask if I may have a look at it.

It's stuck to her burn.

He should tell the little girl that this will hurt a bit.

He has to hold her arm.

Yes, it hurts.

It's very infected.

Tell him -

- all I can do is rinse it in water.

"What if she doesn't get better?"

I'll dress it, but he must wash it in soap every day.

"Listen to her crying.

She can't sleep at night."

Tell them to come to the camp  
if it gets worse.  
He knows where the camp is.  
"Thank you."  
There are no Taliban here.  
These are good people.  
They come sometimes, he says,  
but they take off when we arrive.  
- When were they here last?  
- "When you come, they take off."  
If we help them with the well and water,  
will they help us with the mines?  
They just want peace.  
He's ready.  
One second.  
Okay. We're ready.  
Ready? And up.  
Hello, it's me.  
Hello.  
- Hello.  
- Can you hear me?  
- Yes. Hi, baby.  
- Hi. Are you all there?  
- Yeah, it's me and Julius.  
- Where are Elliot and Figne?  
Elliot's asleep. Figne says  
she'll talk to you tomorrow.  
- Okay. Can I talk to Julius, Maria?  
- Yeah, he's here.  
- Dad.  
- How are you?  
- Good.  
- I'm sorry I didn't call the other day.  
- It's okay.  
- You're doing okay?  
Yes.  
- Maria?  
- Julius.  
- Yes?  
- Can I say hi?  
Julius, someone wants to say hi.  
- Hi, Julius.  
- Hi.  
- Are you doing okay?

- Yes.

You owe me a joke, don't you?

Yes.

Would you like to tell it?

Yeah.

- Now or...?

- Yeah, now.

Okay. I'm listening now.

I'm listening.

What?

- Julius, tell it now. He's coming.

- Okay. Hi, Maria.

This boy went

to the public swimming pool.

The lifeguard shouted:

"Don't pee in the water."

**The boy said:**

is peeing in the water."

"Yeah, but not from

the 3 meter diving board."

- But not from the 3 meter diving board?

- Yeah.

That was funny. You win.

It's much funnier than mine.

- Have you got one as well, Najib?

- No, it was his turn to tell one.

I don't wanna take your time.

Take care, Maria. Bye, Julius.

Bye.

It's me again.

I love you.

We miss you, Dad.

Have a good day now.

Run along.

Julius...

Have a good day. Julius,

I don't have time for this. Please.

Stop it.

I don't want to fight with you.

Have a good day now.

Run along.

No, you didn't!

Why are you doing this? Open the door.

I asked you nicely.  
I don't want Elliot to sit here alone.  
Go on.  
Run along.  
No, you don't!  
Get out.  
Elliot, you'll have to stay here  
on your own for a bit.  
Come on.  
I've got an RC here.  
Fine, no need for further confirmation.  
Pull back.  
Fine.  
Over there.  
You can see it from here.  
You can see the antenna.  
It looks like a 105 mm grenade.  
Good work, boys.  
Get into position.  
- Further back.  
- Got it.  
Just left of the children  
on the road -  
- is a large artillery grenade with  
a phone display. A potential RC.  
I won't inform the TOC  
until we've decided what to do.  
The threat isn't imminent. There's about  
20 meters from the girls to the road.  
As long as they're there,  
nothing will happen.  
- Butcher.  
- What?  
Hotel 1-5, 6-5 here.  
Come to my position.  
- I'll go in front.  
- Got it.  
- Where's your best position?  
- That group of rocks up there.  
That group of rocks?  
- Butcher and I will go with you.  
- Got it.  
6-5 Oscar, this is 6-0.  
We expect to get green light

over this area in 30 mike, over.  
6-5 Oscar, copy.  
We have taken up position  
to monitor IED.  
6-5 Papa has put Hotel 1-5 in position.  
We'll remain until further notice.  
Over.  
6-0, copy that. Out.  
Hear that?  
Yes.  
Engine noise.  
There he is.  
6-5, Hotel 1-5, over.  
6-5 Oscar, over.  
We have visual of one pax  
on a vehicle. Out.  
Distance, 500 meters.  
500 meters, 45 elevation.  
Staying in current shooting path.  
We have PID on a rifle.  
- They're asking for instructions.  
- Wait.  
6-5 Oscar. Papa instructs you to wait  
until he has touched the object.  
Hotel 1-5, copy. Out.  
- What the hell is he doing?  
- He's calling the children over.  
- He's lining them up.  
- Damn!  
And he's digging.  
Yes, hostile intent.  
He's digging up the object.  
They're awaiting instructions.  
Hotel 1-5, 6-5 Papa here.  
Fire at will.  
Hotel 1-5, copy that. Out.  
- Can you get him?  
- Yes.  
- Fuck that... He's taking a boy.  
- He's taking a boy.  
We don't have a clear shot. He's taken  
a child and is driving off, over.  
- Distance?  
- 5.

- 500.  
- 500.  
- He's slowing down... isn't he?  
- Yes.  
Yeah, he stopped.  
- The child is off. Do it.  
- Okay, ready.  
Wait.  
Fire.  
- Hit. Ready to follow up.  
- Ready to follow up.  
67 elevation.  
Five right.  
- Clear to fire.  
- Fire.  
Hit.  
Marius, how are you gonna spell out  
to your son that you shot a bad guy?  
Dunno... B for Bang?  
D for Dead?  
Do you know what this is, Elliot?  
Do you know what this is?  
A shark.  
- And what's this?  
- Motorcycle.  
Yes.  
And this?  
- Uhm... a giraffe.  
- Yes.  
- And what's that?  
- A space rocket.  
- What?  
- A space rocket.  
- Space rocket!  
- Oh... no. It's a space ship.  
- And do you know who that is?  
- Daddy.  
- And what's that?  
- It's a...  
- Cannon.  
- Cannon.  
Figne?  
Will you keep an eye on Elliot?  
- Yeah!

- Thank you.

Hi.

- Are you upset?

- No.

- Did you have a good day in school?

- You don't have to ask about that.

- Why not?

- I'll tell you myself.

I know, you cheeky devil.

I just want to know you're okay.

Ouch. Did you hurt your head?

Come here...

I just want to know you're okay.

- Tell me if something's wrong.

- Yeah.

- When's Dad coming home?

- Is that all you think about?

He'll be home in three months.

It's not that long.

Will I never get a hug?

What does one have to do to get a hug?

- Mommy, Elliot ate something!

- What did he eat?

Mommy!

No! How many did you eat?

Elliot, open your mouth!

Hi. Is this Elliot?

They're ready in no. 6.

Figne, take this and go

to the waiting area.

I'll be back soon.

Watch Julius, okay?

I understood from the call  
that he swallowed some pills?

Yes, I made him vomit, but I don't  
know how many he swallowed...

I'll just put a patch on your chest.

We'll insert a stomach tube  
and monitor him while we're doing that.

And we'll start a NAC drop  
and administer active charcoal.

- I want my Dad.

- He'll come later, sweetie.

- Hi...

- Look, Elliot.  
You'll get this in your mouth.  
It'll be unpleasant for just a moment -  
- but we have to get  
all the pills back out.  
- We'll put this in your tummy.  
- I'll just borrow your comforter.  
It will be a little bit unpleasant,  
but your mommy's right here.  
If you'll go stand over here?  
It's important that you lie really still  
and open your mouth.  
Open. And suction.  
- You're doing super great.  
- And suction.  
There...  
Let's see if we can wake them up.  
Figne?  
Hey, honey... don't cry.  
I wish I were there too.  
Maria... Maria?  
I'll take the fives.  
- Do you need to sleep?  
- No, it's fine.  
- You've got a lot on your plate.  
- Yeah.  
How long will you keep going  
on patrol?  
Full house, 24.  
Look at this.  
- I'll call 3-5.  
- Got it.  
3-5, main gate here. Civilians are  
approaching the main gate. Over.  
Copy.  
- I'll go left.  
- Got it.  
6-0, 3-5 here. The locals are in London,  
cleared. The interpreter is here. Out.  
Lars, close the gate again.  
He says he talked to our commander.  
If they got into trouble  
with the Taliban, he promised to help.  
6-0, 3-5 here.



The local Afghan male, 60-65 -  
- claims to know our "commander".  
He must mean CO.

**He says:**

the day, the Taliban come at night."  
They know that we helped his daughter -  
- and now they want him to become  
a warrior, or they'll kill his family.  
Tell him we'll come tomorrow  
and secure the town.  
We'll drive the Taliban out.  
He insists they sleep here tonight.  
We can't do any more.  
I'm sorry, but you have to...  
I'm sorry.  
You have to go home now.  
- Lars, open the gate.  
- Calm down. Put your boy down.  
Put him down.  
Wait... wait.  
I have three children of my own.  
I understand your situation.  
But if we're to help you,  
you have to go home.  
"Your children live in a safe place."  
He says that if they go back,  
they'll get killed.  
"Take care of the children,  
and I'll go."  
They'll kill his children. We're going  
back there tomorrow anyway...  
Stop it.  
- "What am I going to do?"  
- We'll come tomorrow.  
We'll secure the area  
and drive the Taliban out.  
We'll protect you and your family.  
- You have my word.  
- Rytter, stand by to open the gate.  
They can't stay here.  
We've seen a low number of incidents  
in AO recently.  
Our assessment is that they're waiting

to establish our intentions in the area.  
But massive digger activity  
has been observed -  
- and I'm certain  
that they monitor our every move.  
As intelligence officer it's my job  
to play the merchant of death.  
I'm certain  
a counter-reaction is imminent.  
They report that it's very quiet today.  
It could be a combat indicator  
that the locals have left the area.  
- The Taliban may be waiting for us.  
- Then we'll just have to take them out.  
- Risk reports?  
- None.  
We have to get to that family.  
I'll take Lars, Jones,  
Michael, Butcher -  
- Stoffer and Lasse in with me.  
We'll enter Compound 3 first  
and attend to the family.  
You go straight on to the other side  
and cover us from there.  
We'll go together to the well  
and then you go south.  
- Get a visual of Compound 6, 7 and 8.  
- Copy.  
6-0, 6-5 Oscar, over.  
2-5 reports very little activity.  
Over.  
6-0. Copy. We're following you  
on Raven and confirm no activity. Out.  
Tell them we're coming in with weapons  
unless they respond.  
- Room right.  
- Blue door straight ahead.  
Room clear.  
Stack up, blue door.  
Fuck!  
6-0 here.  
We've arrived in the village and have  
localized the family we helped.  
They've all been killed.

The boy is shot in the head.  
The girl is shot two-three times  
in the chest and neck.  
The mother is hit in the face.  
Take Lasse to 2-5.  
He shouldn't be around here.  
We'll join you when we're done here.  
Lasse...  
Look at me.  
Are you okay?  
- 6-0 here.  
- We'll remain for another 05.  
Then we'll leave the village  
and return to London. Confirm. Over.  
6-0. Copy. Out.  
- Take cover, Jones!  
- 6-0, 6-5 Oscar, contact. Over.  
- What's going on? See anything?  
- Nothing.  
- Report from 2-5?  
- 2-5 is in contact.  
- 2-5, 6-5 Oscar here. Any visual?  
- I have no visual.  
- It's coming from the left side.  
- 6 is still closed off.  
- 2-5 has no visual!  
- 2-5 has no visual.  
- The sounds are coming from Compound 6.  
- But it's all closed off.  
- Chief! Lasse's been hit!  
- His position?  
- I'm at the well.  
- He's at the well.  
- 2-5 has no visual.  
- 6-5 Oscar, he's on his way.  
Michael!  
He's been shot in the neck,  
I need assistance!  
- Where is he hit?  
- In the neck. Entry and exit wounds.  
Lasse! Look at me!  
He's here. Get him over here.  
- Michael, cover us.  
- Got it. Go!

- Butcher!  
- Butcher is coming!  
- Jones! Where do you want him?  
- Here.  
- What's happening? Where's he hit?  
- Maintain pressure.  
2-5, 6-5 here.  
Send me a sitrep. Any contact?  
- We need an extra man!  
- 2-5 here.  
Shots fired from all angles.  
I haven't got visual.  
- I've got him.  
- Hold his head.  
Lasse, we're cutting your shirt open  
so Jones can treat you.  
- Lasse, I've got you.  
- Where's the fucking medevac?  
- Michael, where can the bird land?  
- In the clearing north of the village.  
2-5, 6-5 here. Sweep an HLS.  
Execute.  
- Remove it!  
- 2-5, I'm stuck.  
I've got you, Lasse.  
I'm keeping you warm and ready.  
Get the fucking medevac!  
- Take cover!  
- Get him down.  
Michael!  
What the hell was that?  
- Lars! Michael! Are you okay?  
- Yeah. I can't see anything.  
2-5, this is 6-5.  
Are you sweeping that HLS?  
2-5 here.  
I can't give clearance. Out.  
Lasse, look at me.  
Are you there? Look at me.  
- We'll get you home.  
- Lasse, stay with us.  
- Lasse!  
- Lars, Michael, behind you!  
- Visual?

- That direction plus 200.  
2-5, 6-5, I need a clear enemy report.  
Come on! Over.  
We have no clear enemy report.  
They're westwards.  
Westwards?  
Where the fuck are they?  
- Lars! I'm behind you.  
- I can't see them.  
- Visual?  
- Negative.  
- Michael, visual?  
- Negative.  
RPG!  
I'm okay!  
- Michael?  
- Okay.  
- Butcher, he's critical!  
- We need air support.  
6-0, 6-5 Oscar.  
We need air support.  
His pulse is faint!  
He's getting critical!  
Verify coordinates  
for Compound 6.  
- Compound 6?  
- Yes.  
Got it, got it, got it.  
- Lasse! Lasse!  
- What's happening with him, Jones?  
- Lasse, look up!  
- Lasse, look at us!  
6-0 Oscar, out. No air support unless  
we have PID. The TOC wants verification.  
- We need to get Lasse out now.  
- 7-5 wants to know who's in there.  
- I don't care who's in there.  
- Tell that to 7-5!  
Then tell him I know who's in there!  
We have to get out of here!  
We have PID on Compound 6.

**I repeat:**

Come on, damn it!

- 02 mike!  
- 02 mike to air support!  
Jones!  
- Come on. Lasse, look at me.  
- 1, 2, 3... there.  
- Look at me. There you are!  
- You're back!  
Danger close in 15 Sierra!  
Danger close in 15 Sierra!  
- Lasse, hang on!  
- Easy now!  
- Lasse!  
- Put him down. Nice and easy.  
- Put him down.  
- Hold his head.  
Have you got a helicopter for Lasse now?  
Take it easy.  
Step away.  
- Breathe.  
- Jones, hold the stretcher.  
- Hang on, Lasse!  
- Sit down. Calm down.  
Loosen your helmet.  
You need some air.  
It's okay.  
It's perfectly okay.  
Well done.  
He's gonna make it.  
It's okay to be upset.  
Okay? We're all upset.  
It's okay.  
Everything's going to be fine.  
Everything's going to be fine.  
- Out of the car.  
- Get out.  
- There may be something...  
- I'll take the other side.  
- A guy locked himself in the car.  
- I see him through the windshield.  
- Out! Out!  
- Out of the car. Now.  
Get out.  
- Lie down. Down.  
- I have him covered.

Lie still, buddy.

Lie still!

Nice and easy.

- 50% on the vehicle.

- Got it.

- Butcher, 50% searched.

- Got it.

Lie still.

- Michael, we have a cell phone.

- Got it.

Good job, guys. Now,

Michael will send in the last intel.

When we're done, get them in the vehicle  
and send them off north.

Got it.

You do as I tell you.

Don't mess with me, do you hear me?

- Raven will monitor them north.

- Kerim... Kerim.

The cell phone was clean.

Will disengage in 02.

Got it.

Please stand up. Get up.

You know what that means. Come.

Copy that.

We are disengaging,

so if you could monitor their trail...

As you know, Lasse took a bullet

to the neck and was flown to Bastion.

He was then flown to the UK,

where they've stitched him up.

**HEY BOYS:**

**MISS YOU:**

NOT!

CANNOT EA BUT THEN THE FOOD'S

CRAP!

**THANKS:**

**CHIEF:**

I UNDERSTAND THAT YOU

**SAVED MY LIFE:**

TAKE CARE OF EACH OTHER

- There's more...
- A mudpie?
- More mudpies for you.
- One more.

That makes it 1,000.

Thanks a lot. Here you go.

I'll hang on to it.

- Is he coming home for Christmas?
- Yes.
- Oops, back up.
- It's amazing how you hold up.

That's just...

That's just how it is.

The only thing is

that Julius is reacting a bit to it.

How so?

- He gets into trouble in school.
  - Well, he just needs to adjust.
- I don't know.

He's reached an age

where he understands more of it.

Or... I don't know.

He expresses it more or something.

There now...

Did you hear

that my boys paid the locals a visit?

They bought a goat

and are calling it Preben.

- Where did they put it?
- In a little enclosure next to my bunk.
- There's more meat in a stock cube.
- Claus.
- Got a minute?
- Now?
- Yes.
- Ten minutes.

What's up?

The commander is waiting in your office  
with two judge advocates.

What's up?

I don't know.

Okay, thanks.



- Hi, Claus.

- Sir.

Claus.

What is this all about?

We want to interrogate you in connection with some civilian deaths.

I have to inform you that you have the right to remain silent -

- and we can't guarantee that we won't press charges against you later.

What charges?

Does that mean you're willing to be deposed?

Yes.

What do you want to know?

Please confirm

that you and your men were present -

- in Adam Khan Kalay

on 21 September at 0930 hours.

I can confirm that.

We have been told that you ordered the attack on Compound 6.

- Is that also correct?

- Yes.

- We were in contact with the enemy.

- Was this enemy in Compound 6?

Yes. That's why

we requested the attack on them.

I have to inform you that you're charged with bombing a civilian target -

- resulting in the deaths

of 11 civilians.

- What does that mean?

- It means you're going home, Claus.

There he is.

I want to hug him first.

- Take the bag, Figne.

- No, I've got it. I'm a real man.

- I can handle it on my own.

- Sure?

- I thought you were a man.

- I was.

- What's in it anyway?

- Let me take it.

Now we take the grey one  
and put a white one on either side.

Thanks.

There you go.

Now which one goes there?

There.

We need those ones.

- Is he asleep?

- Yes.

Now we need an orange one  
there and there.

I'm almost done.

Can I see yours?

- We're almost done.

- You're so naughty.

Silly.

Tell me why you came home.

I'm cold.

I've received the case files including  
depositions from your men, Claus.

A video clip from a helmet cam in which  
you order the bombing of Compound 6.

- And some photos.

- Photos?

We won't look at them now. As a matter  
of fact, I doubt their authenticity.

I will try to have them struck

because we don't know who took them -

- nor if they were taken

at the alleged scene.

They claim you ordered the bombing  
of a civilian target without having PID.

- What's PID?

- If I'd seen the enemy in there.

Right. You're charged with breaking the  
code of military justice, section 36.2.

What does that mean precisely?

It means that you stand accused  
of killing civilians.

What is the maximum sentence?

If the case comes before a lay assessor,  
the maximum sentence is four years.

- But let's not get ahead of ourselves.

- So now what?

The key question is -  
- whether Compound 6 was  
a military or a civilian target.  
That is the case.  
Did you have PID, Claus?  
I had a strong assumption  
that the Taliban was present...  
Stop right there, Claus.  
Did you have PID?  
- I had a strong assumption...  
- I'm going to stop you again.  
As the case is right now,  
Compound 6 is a civilian target.  
People live there.  
Somebody's home was bombed.  
The judge advocates  
have gathered depositions -  
- and none of them corroborate  
the fact that you had PID.  
So what? His men are bleeding.  
It's his duty to save his men.  
I see what you mean -  
- but you must understand that  
to everyone else Claus is a soldier -  
- who killed 11 people.  
Okay, let me be frank with you.  
My business is securing acquittals.  
Moral and ethics is not my department.  
The prosecution will claim that  
this is a case about 11 civilian deaths.  
If you're unsure of whether you had PID,  
they'll do everything to nail you.  
If you can tell me without a doubt now  
that you did have PID -  
- we have a good chance  
of getting you acquitted.  
That's the lay of the land.  
I can't sit there and lie.  
I didn't know  
who was in that house, Maria.  
It was my responsibility, and I'll just  
have to suffer the consequences.  
You'll have to suffer  
the consequences?

What about the children?

What about me?

We need you at home.

You've been gone

for a very long time.

- Julius is struggling with it.

- What should I have done?

Huh?

The issue is not what you should  
have done, but what you do now.

Will four years in prison help you?

Will that make you feel better?

Will the children feel better?

We need you at home.

The children need you!

I dropped that bomb.

It was my decision.

- I can't put the blame on the men.

- No, so just do as he says.

Say you had the fucking PID. Say  
you don't remember who gave it to you.

You may have killed eight children,  
but you have three living ones at home.

Sorry...

Claus, you come with me.

Maria, sit here.

- Hi, chief. Good to see you.

- Hi.

Hi.

- Let me take your coat.

- Thanks.

Sit there, Claus.

You can hang your coat.

- Thanks.

- Sit down.

Remember our agreement.

When it gets tough -

- look at me and breathe.

You'll do fine, okay?

Good.

Claus, stand up.

Good morning.

Please sit down.

Thank you.

Very well.

Today marks the start of the proceedings against Claus Michael Pedersen.

- Claus Michael Pedersen, is that you?

- Yes.

- Date of birth?

- 1980-04-02.

Correct. We'll proceed with the opening statements.

Excuse me.

Let me point out that the judge advocate will present photos as exhibit 35.

I doubt the authenticity of these photos -

- and move to have them struck.

- I see. Any comments?

- I don't understand the motion.

I'll explain how we obtained the photos.

The MP vouches for them, and the court is free to consider the evidence.

- Any further comments on your behalf?

- No.

We're to establish if Claus Michael Pedersen had the necessary grounds -

- to give his command.

Was Compound 6 a military target?

Private 1st Class Lars Holm's helmet cam clip is the prosecution's key evidence.

Exhibit 27.

In the prosecution's opinion, this video illustrates -

- Claus Michael Pedersen's basis of decision or lack thereof.

I will proceed to play the video.

6-0 Oscar, out.

No air support unless we have PID.

The TOC wants verification.

- We need to get Lasse out now.

- 7-5 wants to know who's in there.

- I don't care who's in there.

- Tell that to 7-5!

Then tell him I know who's in there!

We have to get out of here!

We have PID on Compound 6.

**I repeat:**

Thank you.

I will round off

with the photo material -

- handed over to the British MP  
at Task Force Helmand, Lashkar Gah.

They subsequently handed over  
the material to the Danish MP.

Six photos in all.

I must warn you

of the strong nature of these photos.

Go ahead.

Photo 1.

And photo 2.

Photo no. 3.

No. 4.

No. 5.

And photo no. 6.

Thank you.

- Has the defense got anything to add?

- No.

Let's proceed

with the cross-examination.

Jones is screaming.

Lasse is in a critical state -

- so we call in a medevac,  
a rescue helicopter, to get him out.

Immediately afterwards

we're hit by another grenade.

I try in vain to get a visual,

so I take cover by this wall -

- at the south-western corner  
of Compound 3 with Butcher...

- Butcher aka Kenneth Jensen, signalman?

- Yes, Kenneth Jensen.

There I am informed

that the Taliban is in Compound 6.

Claus, precisely when

during these events -

- are you made aware of the fact  
that the enemy is in Compound 6?

- I don't remember exactly.

- No?

But you do remember identifying  
Compound 6 as a military target?

Yes.

Okay.

You may sit down.

I think we have a clear picture  
of the circumstances.

Thank you.

Okay.

I'd like to quote exhibit 27a:

"I don't care who's in there.

We have to get Lasse out." And then:

"Tell them I know who's in there.

We have to get out of here."

Doesn't that contradict your claim  
that you were sure who was in there?

- No?

- No.

Please elaborate.

You need to understand something.

When I'm denied an air strike,  
and I know it's our only rescue -

- and I also know

that the air strike is justified -

- I'm obligated to get it

no matter what words I use.

- Who told you where the enemy was?

- I don't remember.

- You don't remember that either.

- No, because we were under heavy fire!

I don't remember.

I have 2-5 on the radio.

Two men are fighting the enemy. Jones  
and Stoffer are trying to save Lasse.

Oscar's in contact with the TOC at home,  
so I don't remember who says what.

- But you know who's in Compound 6?

- I receive a report about it and react.

Do you also know

there are women and children inside?

No, I didn't.

Thank you.

No further questions.

Does the defense have

any questions for the witness?

Yes, I have a few things.

Claus, when we hear you say -

- in the helmet cam clip -

- "tell them I know who's in there" -

- what does it mean?

Does it mean you're lying?

"Lie and tell them

I know who's in there."

Or "tell them I know it" as in

"confirm that I know who's in there".

What does it mean, Claus?

It means that I had PID.

And I didn't see any reason

to waste precious time discussing it -

- neither with my men

on the ground or those at the TOC.

- No further questions.

- The accused may go back to his seat.

- Let's write it there.

- There.

He buys two boxes of plastic figures.

The box of five costs 10

so that is... what?

- 20?

- 2 times 10 is 20.

- 48.

- 48 plus 20 plus 18.

Plus 20 plus 18.

What is 24 plus 18?

8, 9, 10, 11, 12...

There.

Precisely. 42.

- Tired?

- No.

You do know what Mom

and I are up to these days, don't you?

To see if you're going to prison.

Lie down.

Dad?

Is it true that you've killed children?

Did you at any time observe

hostile activity from Compound 6?

No.



So I assume you didn't make Claus Michael Pedersen aware of that compound?

That's correct.

Did you observe hostile activity from Compound 6?

No, I didn't.

In that case I take it -

- you didn't make Claus Michael Pedersen aware of that compound either?

- That's correct.

- Thank you.

- No further questions.

- Does the defense have any questions?

Can you utterly reject that the enemy might have been in Compound 6?

- Absolutely not.

- Thank you.

I'd like to call my next witness.

Najib Bisma.

Welcome.

You can sit down over there.

Please sit down.

Do all commanders go out on patrol as much as Claus Michael Pedersen did?

Thus putting himself in the line of fire?

I think most commanders go out on a few patrols, but...

Claus likes to go first and lead the way -

- and he often did

during his last month there.

- Did you find that appropriate?

- Yes and no.

You called it to the accused's attention, correct?

I mentioned it to Claus, but mostly for his own sake.

What do you mean?

Were you worried about his judgment in the period prior to the incident?

No, worried...

According to your approved and signed deposition -

- you questioned his judgment.

**I quote:**

"He found it hard to prioritize important tasks." Those are your words. Claus is my friend. We went to the academy together. I know his family. Yes, I was worried about Claus. On a personal level, not as my commander. But he was your company commander. Your commander shows, according to you -

- signs of poor judgment, he can't prioritize tasks in the mission area -  
- he winds up in a serious firefight with several casualties.

He proceeds to order the bombing of a village compound.

Don't you as his second-in-command -  
- ever consider that something went terribly wrong out there?

That's a hard question because...

You can't imagine what it's like out there.

Claus is the best soldier I know.

And at the end of the day it's our job to get the men back home in one piece. That's why we're there.

But he should never have been out there. We should have been back at the camp keeping track of the operation.

No further questions.

Thank you.

Hey.

I had to do something, Maria.

I had to do something.

Hey, come here.

There, there...

Hey... Hey, Claus.

We need you. Hey?

Kenneth Jensen or Butcher -

- as we've mostly heard you referred to.  
- Most people call me Butcher.

- It's your nickname?

- Yes.

- Where did you get it?

It's a long story, but my dad was a butcher, and I have two brothers.

- So that's what we were called.

- Butcher and Butcher.

- Little, Medium and Big Butcher.

- Okay then.

We've played the audio of a video clip in which you pass on -

- the accused's order to bomb

Compound 6 to the TOC.

Were you aware of

the grounds for the order?

Yes.

I told Claus about the muzzle flash from Compound 6.

Spectators must refrain from commenting.

Please repeat that.

I told Claus about the muzzle flash from Compound 6.

This is news to me.

How could you give the accused that information -

- from your position behind the wall?

Even the accused himself says everything was chaos -

- and that you and he had taken cover behind the wall -

- and that you were under heavy fire.

We were, but at one point the chief got up -

- to get a visual of the compounds from which shots were fired -

- and I kneeled behind him.

I saw muzzle flash from the area around Compound 6, and I told him.

When we got back down again, under cover -

- he asked me to verify the coordinates for Compound 6, which I did.

That was my basis

for requesting air support.

Kenneth, the audio from Lars Holm's helmet cam contains nothing -  
- which indicates that you or the accused did what you just claimed.

I wasn't near Lars.

I remained behind the chief.

So I can't really comment on what that clip contains.

No.

But all I'm saying is that it doesn't tally with what you just said -

- whereas it tallies with your deposition...

Allow me to point out to the court -

- that the deposition isn't signed.

- Is that true?

- Yes. Exhibit 23.

The lack of signature is not suspect.

The witness was going out on patrol -

- when he gave his deposition

which was typed on a laptop in the camp.

- He read it through on the screen.

- That's all I'm pointing out.

- It's duly noted.

- Back to you, Kenneth.

You were deposed in Afghanistan

just a few days after the incident.

You made no mention of muzzle flash, enemies near Compound 6 -

- nor any of this new information.

No, but I wasn't asked specifically about the aforementioned things.

- Had I been, I would have answered.

- You need specific questions?

Not necessarily, but they didn't ask.

As I just said, we'd been engaged in battle two-three days before -

- one man was badly wounded, and

we're heading back into that same area -

- and then I was deposed. Well,

I'm sorry, but I didn't mention it.

I apologize, but...

That's the way it is.

Does the judge advocate have

any further questions?

Your commander's in trouble. He's been facing these charges for six months. This new information you suddenly offer up now would have been -  
- of great importance to this man and his case.

Do you really expect me to believe that it never, not once occurred to you -  
- to share this information with someone? Six months have passed. Yes, six months.

I'm sorry.

- Is that all?

- Yes, that's all. Thank you.

- Does the defense have any questions?

- No, I can't really think of any.

That will be all. You may leave or sit at the back if you so desire.

The law is clear on this: The prohibition against random attacks -  
- is crucial to protecting civilians under International Humanitarian Law. The accused has been unable to explain the grounds for his decision to attack. He maintains that someone in the unit designated Compound 6 an enemy target -  
- but he has failed to say who or clear up the circumstances. The court has heard me examine the soldiers who were near the accused -  
- and thus able to designate Compound 6 a target.

One soldier, Kenneth Butcher Jensen, suddenly revealed to the court -  
- that he observed muzzle flash and reported it to the accused.

I reject this statement, because we have a helmet cam clip -  
- in which we clearly hear the exchange between the accused and Butcher -  
- preceding the command.

"I don't care who's in there."

And when the second-in-command

at the TOC demands PID:

"Then tell them I know who's in there."

I see a clear picture emerging  
of a man who disregards civilians -  
- in order to save his own man, Lasse.  
Is that understandable on a human level?  
Yes.

I'm pretty sure we all understand  
the dilemma facing the accused.  
But despite our sympathy  
for the accused -  
- who seems like a highly competent  
soldier as well as commander -  
- and although we must give our soldiers  
some latitude in extreme situations -  
- no one is above the law. That would  
make the legal system redundant.

If we choose to ignore such a breach  
of international humanitarian law -  
- because of a tough situation,  
we'll wind up where we don't want to be.

Claus Michael Pedersen should  
be found guilty -  
- because there is no reasonable doubt -  
- that he deliberately disregarded  
the elementary rules of engagement.

The maximum sentence according  
to section 36.2 is life imprisonment.

However, we are appearing  
before a court of lay assessors -  
- because the accused  
did not willfully kill civilians.

But their deaths are  
a direct result of his decision.

The maximum sentence in this case  
is four years.

I move for a sentence  
close to that maximum.

And with these remarks

I submit the case to the court.

Let me remind the court -  
- that the burden of proof lies  
with the prosecution.

They must prove

beyond a shadow of a doubt -  
- that my client is guilty.  
The crux of the matter was indeed  
whether my client had PID.  
My client maintains that he did.  
The judge advocate claims he didn't.  
But then we heard Signalman  
Kenneth Jensen aka Butcher say -  
- that he saw muzzle flash  
from Compound 6.  
In other words, he designated  
Compound 6 a military target -  
- and not a civilian target  
as the judge advocate claims.  
My client, Claus Michael Pedersen,  
had PID.  
If Danish soldiers  
who put their lives on the line -  
- can be convicted  
according to military law -  
- on the basis of speculation  
and questionable photos -  
- then we'll wind up  
where we don't want to be.  
And so I plead that my client  
be acquitted on all counts.  
And with these remarks  
I submit the case to the court.  
Thank you. Claus Michael Pedersen,  
you have the last word.  
Have you got anything to add  
that hasn't already been said?  
No.  
In that case we will retire  
to consider the verdict.  
We will pass sentence  
on Thursday at 2 p.m.  
Girls first.  
This one is good.  
Great.  
Two!  
Dad, look at this stone.  
- Did you find a skipping stone?  
- No... It's got a hole in it.

- Hold it like this.
- Like when you throw it.

Can you see me?

How many fingers have I got here?

- Two.
- Yes.

Ready?

- No!
- What?
- That was a girl's throw.
- Yeah, a stupid throw.

The court has reached  
the following verdict:

Claus Michael Pedersen is acquitted.

The state will pay the costs.

Please...

Order in the court.

A reaction is understandable,  
but please refrain.

Sit down, and I'll read  
the grounds for the decision.

Our decision is unanimous.

In other words,

all three of us agree on the verdict.

This is Afghanistan, right?

And this is Denmark, right?

And this is Madagascar,

this is South Africa -

- and this is Brazil,

and this is Italy.

- Or I mean... what was it?

- USA.

- USA.

- Lie down now.

- USA.

- Go to sleep now. USA.

Dad?

- Are you going away again?

- No.

I'm not.

- Are you going to stay home now?

- Yes.

So will you tuck me in tomorrow?

Will you?



You bet I will.

I love you.

- I love you too. Good night.

- Good night.