

DEPLOYED

By Nicola Smith and Samantha Lazar

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Characters:

NINA, Air Force veteran, age early 60s, African-American

LIZA, Army veteran, age 57, white

KATE, Army and Navy veteran, age 27, visibly pregnant, white

JANE, Navy veteran, now captain in the reserves, age mid-40s, white

KELLY, Marines veteran, age 30, Latina

JACKIE, Army veteran, age late 50s, white

KATHY, Army nurse during Vietnam, age 69, white

VARIOUS VOICES AND CHARACTERS: Played by various members of the the company who momentarily embody these roles

The women sit in a semi-circle on stage. There is a brief transition between each scene, indicated by lighting and/or sound.

PROJECTED ON WALL:

Women serve in every branch of the United States military.

In a 2016 Service Women's Action Network survey, 74% of respondents said the general public did not recognize their service.

2.2 million female veterans live in the United States and Puerto Rico. They make up 9% of the total Veteran population.

This is projected to increase to nearly 16% by 2040.

More than half of the female veterans served by the VA have a service-connected disability. Approximately 1 in 4 report a history of military sexual trauma (MST).

Vermont is home to 3,800 female veterans. New Hampshire is home to 8,500. Of those, 2,200 seek health care from the White River Junction VA Health Care System.

These are some of their stories.

SCENE 1: SURPRISE!

The women march on stage in formation, singing the cadence "I Left My Home." (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wktDhK5wBx4>)

Drill sgt: Your mother was home when you left. ***Recruits:** You're right.

Your Daddy was home when you left. * You're right.

Your sister was home when you left. *You're right.

Your brother was home when you left. *You're right.

The dog was home when you left. *You're right.

The cat was home when you left. *You're right.

The fish was home when you left. *You're right.

Your Mommy, your Daddy, your brother, your sister

The dog, the cat, the fish was home when you left. * You're right.

And that's the reason you left. *You're right.

Drill sgt. I left my hoome; *I left my hoome.

To join the Army. *To join the Army.

I left my hoome. * To join the Army

The women march to their seats and then march in place for perhaps 10 seconds as they continue chanting "I Left My Home." They stand at attention and then sit.

(JACKIE stands first and introduces herself.) JACKIE PRUITT,
U.S. ARMY, Telecommunications and Supply.

JACKIE: A week ago I had a doctor's appointment up at the VA. Been going to the same VA for years. So I'm in the waiting room.

This tech is calling out,

VOICE: "Mr. Pruitt, Mr. Pruitt, Mr. Pruitt"

JACKIE: They don't even look at the stupid names on the charts.
(Mocks the tech's intonation)

"Mr. Pruitt!"

Finally, I says, "Will you look at the first name on that chart?"

VOICE: "I'm looking for (*realizes mistake*) oh, um, Jacqueline Pruitt."

JACKIE: I says, "That's me."

VOICE: "Why didn't you get up?"

JACKIE; "Do I look like a Mr. to you? Look at the first name on the chart. Last time I checked, Jacqueline's a woman's name.

Pointing to her breasts. "Does this remind you of Mr.?"

Pulling at her long hair. "Does this remind you of Mr.?"

(JANE stands and introduces herself.) JANE NEEDHAM, Captain, Naval Reserves.

JANE: When people hear we're a military family, they always assume that my husband is the vet. He was never in the military. I give him a hard time: "You're my dependent!"

(KELLY stands, introduces herself.) KELLY ROSALES, U.S. MARINE, Administration.

When I first started working at Homeland Security, some coworkers were telling me, "You were a Marine?! You don't act like one."

You don't have room for error in the Marines. Especially if you're female. You can't be a pushover. It's a constant freaking act to play when you're there. When I got out, I didn't have to act anymore.

(NINA stands and introduces herself) NINA MCBRIDE, U.S. AIR FORCE, CAPTAIN. Protocol.

Not long after I moved here, I'd just retired from the service, I went to Kmart. I don't even remember what I bought. But I remember what happened when I went to pay for it.

(NINA hands over to the CASHIER a check to pay for her purchases. The CASHIER looks at the check, looks at NINA with suspicion, looks at the check, then at NINA, as if she were at passport control.)

CASHIER: Capt. United States Air Force, retired. What is this? A joke?

NINA: No joke. Unless you think serving your country for 20 years is a joke.

CASHIER: *(patronizing)* Whatever you say. *(beat)* Hon.

SCENE 2: MY STORY

Each woman stands up, quickly and efficiently, to speak her intro and then sits back down.

KATHY: *(Stated matter-of-factly, by way of introduction)* KATHY PEDERSON, U.S. ARMY nurse, 1st Lieutenant.

(Con conversationally) One morning, a bunch of us Army nurses going to Nam were ushered into this huge room, this lab with about 75 tables. This was at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio. I'd never seen anything like this in my life. You know, we were still teenagers. We look around and each table has a live goat on it. A whole roomful of goats.

KATE: *(Stated matter-of-factly, by way of introduction)* KATE TULLY, U.S. Navy, Postal Clerk.

(Con conversationally) The Navy sent me to Afghanistan. The first base I went to was pretty close to Kabul. I got the billet of postal clerk. I imagined it would be one of the safer jobs.

KATHY: The goats were anesthetized and then they were shot in the flanks. We learned how to trache them, because their long necks are the most like humans, and we learned how to control the bleeding and how to suture their wounds.

KATE: You don't think about the nitty gritty parts of the job until you're there and then you're like, hell, I still have to do convoys where I go outside of the barriers and I still have to worry about bombs and anthrax and everything.

KATHY: I didn't focus on the goats themselves. I was just trying to get out of there as fast as I could. There was one, though. His eye rolled up because he came out of the anesthesia early. It was blue, I remember. And he was looking right up at me. They just put them down afterward.

KATE: The worst part of the job was the Dead Mail Locker.

(Kate acts out opening up a locker and taking out a package.)

I just remember you'd get a package with some guy's name on it, and you would just know he was never going home. Is this from his kids, or his wife, or her husband? Only they don't know yet what's happened.

We'd get messages from the top brass: If you see mail for this person, hold on to it. Don't send it back until we tell you.

(Kate holds onto the package tightly)

And you hold it and there is just something very, very spiritual or something very very emotional about it. And the letters and packages would just sit in the locker. I remember opening it for the first time, and it was full of mail. I just stood there looking at it.

KATHY: The goats were good training, but my God, now I think I'd turn around and go home.

KELLY: *(Conversationally)* I think there were around 80 of us in my all-female unit. We go in there as individuals and everybody is from different areas and different attitudes. It's like they break us all down. Then it gets to a point, and the point is visible, when you see the change in the platoon, when everybody starts working together. Whereas before it was every man for himself.

Instead of just Jane standing up, all the women quickly stand up together, freeze for a moment, and then all but Jane sit back down.

JANE: *(Conversationally)* In the early 90s I was billeted to a destroyer that had never had women on board. It was in drydock at the time, retrofitting it for women.

I was a gunnery officer supervising gunner's mates and fire control. They were all males.

As before, all the women quickly stand up together, freeze for a moment, and then all but Kelly sit back down.

KELLY: I talked to my sister, who'd been in the Marines, and she explained it: it's not about you, it's about the team.

JANE: One of the first things I said to the men was, I'm new and I need your help. I think they were surprised I took that approach. I just said, hey, I'm counting on you guys to show me the way. I think they respected that.

As before, all the women quickly stand up together, freeze for a moment, and then all but Liza sit back down.

LIZA: *(Stated matter-of-factly, by way of introduction)* LIZA HAWKINS, U.S. Army, Sergeant. Supply. I was in New York on 9/11. I saw the second tower fall. What really got me was the businessmen coming out of the high rise buildings where they worked. They were standing by the side of the road with their briefcases, bent over and friggng crying. I'm old-fashioned, men are supposed to be the strong ones, I was raised like that, you know what I mean?

NINA: *((Conversationally))* I go to the big Yankee Candle store in Massachusetts from time to time. So I was there once and I noticed that they were selling a line of "Homefront Girl" candles.

"Support Our Troops." "Give Thanks for Heroes that Never Stop Giving."

My favorite was the "Love My Hero" Coconut Kisses candle. "This delicious blend of coconut and caramel is a hint of what awaits when your hero comes home."

(Beat)

I didn't see any "Homefront Boy" candles.

KELLY: I always like the sense of being part of something bigger than myself and when you march in formation you really feel that you're part of a movement, you're all moving the same but you're still an individual.

It's like that cartoon about a guy in an orchestra whose job is to do one single cymbal clash, that's all he does, night after night, but without him the music would be different.

Without me, that parade unit would have been different, without the woman next to me, it would have been different, without the woman next to her, it would have been different. We were one.

SCENE 3: ENLISTMENT

KATE: My biological Dad left home when I was three. Essentially he really, really wanted a boy. And I was not a boy.

KELLY: My siblings always saw me as a sissy, the one who can't handle anything and the thing was, I was only like that with them. To me their opinions were the only ones that mattered. So of course they saw the sensitive side.

KATE: I was a tomboy. I hung out mainly with boys, I didn't play with Barbies, I dug for earthworms and went fishing, climbed trees. [beat] And I went to war.

JANE: I grew up in New Mexico and I got good grades and I was an athlete. I wanted to go to college but my family didn't have much money. And the Navy provided a way for me to do that. They paid for me to go to the Naval Academy. I thought it was a great opportunity. Plus, I'd never seen the ocean before.

KELLY: Where we're from in L.A., the military is pretty much the only ticket out. It's one of those areas where if you don't leave you're going to be stuck there. I told myself, I'm gonna leave and never come back.

KATE: I figured there's nothing more manly than going to war. It's what men do. Men go to war, and they protect the home. I can go to war, and prove myself to my father.

KATHY: My father was a 30-year man. He came from San Antonio, during the Depression, when you had to do anything to save pennies for your family.

JACKIE: I grew up in Vermont. My mom worked in a nursing home. The Air Force was my father's main career. I wanted to follow in my Dad's footsteps, I wanted him to be proud of me. I felt very strongly that I wanted to serve my country. I wanted to get away from home, too.

KATHY: The Navy turned a poor little boy from Texas into someone who was well-dressed and a gentleman, and that couldn't be a bad thing.

KELLY: My Dad, he's dead now, he didn't really want us going into the military. He wanted me to be a professional boxer. He said I was good at it and he used to be a boxing coach when he was younger. And my uncle, he offered, if I'd go live with him, he'd pay for my college and I wouldn't have to worry about it. But I just wanted to be a Marine.

KATHY: I wanted to be a doctor but at the time women weren't encouraged to be doctors.

KATE: Most of my family has been in the military. We would drive by the big flag waving and my mom would just get all teary and my uncles would salute it --

All the women except Kate jump to attention and salute, then sit back down in unison.

-- and I'd be like it's just a flag, it's just an object.

JACKIE: I was bullied in high school, I was told I was never going to make nothing of myself. But I was brave enough to do the military when they weren't.

LIZA: I had a hard growing up. My Mom was not the best mother. We got abused quite a bit, physically. I moved to New Hampshire with my Dad my last year of high school and at 45 he died of a massive heart attack. He was a smoker. Lucky Strikes.

KATHY: There were four other girls in high school that wanted to be nurses and we all went up together on the train from San Diego to LA to take the entrance exam. This was 1965.

LIZA: So I moved in with my aunt and uncle for a little while. And one day my aunt wrote me a letter and said I had to get responsible and start paying her rent. She worked at AT&T her

whole life. As soon as she said that, I knew I had to get my shit together. And there was nobody to help me do it. I had to do it on my own.

NINA: We lived in Queens. I had an uncle who was a lieutenant colonel in the Air Force. He wasn't one of the Tuskegee Airmen, but he went to Tuskegee and he was an airman. I was away at a Catholic boarding school and I had come home my senior year for Christmas and I told him I wasn't interested in going to college right away, that I basically wanted to be on my own and travel.

It was 1973. Everybody was going to Smith, Columbia or Vassar; they weren't going into the Air Force.

JACKIE: I didn't get into the Air Force but I got into the Army. I enlisted when I was a junior in high school.

NINA: I remember the first time I took a bicycle and rode downtown to go see a recruiter. The nuns thought, Nina and her schemes again. Yeah, right, go back to study hall.

KATHY: I was sent to Camp Zama in Japan, not far from Tokyo, and I was put on the burn ward.

Sound of helicopters approaching.

You'd hear the alarm bells going off in the middle of the night and you'd hear the choppers and you knew there were incoming wounded. I was 19.

NINA: I was 17. I thought, "I don't see the downside of this." I know I'm not going to Vietnam. I'm like, "Gee, free medical, free dental, a place to live, training, salary, and going overseas? What's the bad part of this?" I just wanted to travel.

KATE: My mom would try and explain to me the idea of the metaphor behind the flag. It's not just an object, it's what it represents. I didn't get it, I was just a kid.

LIZA: My brother was in the military and he's like three years younger than me, and I said, well, shit, if he can do that I can do that. It's the only way I'm going to get out of here. So I did. That was the first time I enlisted.

JACKIE: *(Stated matter-of-factly, by way of introduction)*

(Con conversationally) It was so intense. We're trying to compete with the guys and stay up there with them and do everything that they did. We're going to push it, we're going to fight, we're going to show them we can do this.

NINA: My mother was not happy. The last thing she expected was that I'd want to go in the service. They'd spent all this money on private education and boarding school.

Look at all that wasted education, she said. And I pointed out to her that I'm still going to know the same things, no matter what I do.

KATE: You graduate boot camp, and boom, the flag instantly makes you cry, it's ridiculous.

She stands at attention for a beat, facing an imaginary flag.

It all makes sense all of a sudden.

SCENE 4: MAKE-UP

NINA: You're not in the Air Force long before you get sent to San Antonio, at Lackland Air Force Base. I was air traffic control.

We took classes in history, politics, health. OK: those I get.

But we also had to take make-up classes: how to do your hair, how to do your eyebrows.

Everyone but Nina looks in imaginary mirrors and mimes plucking eyebrows with staccato, military motions. Nina looks around at them, bewildered. They stop after a couple of beats.

If you were black you took a class on how to straighten your hair, because that's what you did back then. We had no obstacle course, no shooting range.

I was like, wow, this really wasn't what I was expecting in the military.

JACKIE: We each had a footlocker, which was supposed to contain, no exceptions, a Bible, a box of Kotex -- tampons weren't

allowed -- four blouses, six pairs of panties, which had to be folded just so, and two bras, with the points pointing up. We had to iron all our clothes, even the underwear.

The women organize their imaginary foot lockers.

KELLY: OK, so some things have changed. In week 8 of basic training, one of us recruits got in trouble for make-up. Somehow she managed to get eyeliner and put it on, but you weren't supposed to wear it. So she got IT'd. They pretty much thrash you with exercises.

VOICE: Drop and give me 50!

KELLY: And when she was doing push-ups, everybody started doing them with her.

Everybody decided to take the punishment with her, because her mistake was all of our mistakes.

JACKIE:

You weren't allowed candy in basic training but you were allowed to go to the PX once a week, and if you wanted to eat candy there you could. Some of the girls thought of these intricate ways to sneak candy back into the barracks. But when you came back in to barracks, the drill sergeant would check your purchases.

One of the girls, June, thought she was really clever. She bought a box of Tide and dumped out the soap powder and filled it to the top with peanut M&Ms. Every woman in that unit loved peanut M&Ms.

(Drill Sergeant appears and checks an imaginary box of Tide.)

But that drill sergeant knew something was up because as soon as June comes back she's right there, and she grabs that box of Tide and she opens it and looks in and practically licks her lips. DRILL SERGEANT: "Whaddya know, Peanut M&Ms. My favorite." *(She pulls a few out of the box and begins to eat with great relish in front of the women before whisking the box away. .)*

KATE: We had this one lieutenant on my destroyer: Figueroa.

In the Navy you have to have your hair up, it can never touch your shoulders. I always had a little bit of frizz and she just nitpicked at me because my hair didn't fit her standards.

Well, there's nothing in the rulebook that says you can't have frizzy hair, it just says it can't hit the back of your collar. We would have these division meetings and she'd pull me up in front of the meeting and the whole division and be like,

Someone playing Figueroa stands up, points at KATE, and says...

FIGUEROA: This is how you don't want to look.

KATE: I hated that bitch. I still hate her.

JACKIE: Once you're in, the government owns your body. What you do, where you sleep, what you eat, what you wear, how you act, what you look like, what you can say, what you can't.

SCENE 5: LOVE

NINA: Sometimes I think about the What Ifs. What if the stuff that happened, didn't happen.

LIZA: I kinda got taken advantage of when I was at Ft. Sam. I was 22, and I know people at 22 today that are smart and savvy. But I was really like 16 in my head... as far as anything to do with men or anything to do with anything.

NINA: What if things were different? What if I'd married and had kids?

LIZA: The Lieutenant Colonel in charge, the guy I worked for, put a little note in my hand, which had his address and his home and where he lived.

(Someone surreptitiously slips a note into Liza's hand.)

Said he'd like to talk to me.

NINA: Don't get me wrong, I've met some nice guys, guys who could probably be trusted but I've always been on my guard ever since.

KATHY: One night in Japan this young corpman, a medic, sat down and introduced himself.

(JACK, Kathy's soon-to-be-boyfriend and eventual husband, enters and sits down.)

JACK: Hi, I'm Jack.

(KATHY turns to look at him, remembering him as he was.)

LIZA: So I went over to the lieutenant colonel's place. He just wanted to take advantage of me basically and saw me a couple of times for that, and that only.

KATHY: Jack was a boy-man, you know? Just like I was somewhere between being a girl and a woman, even though I was doing stuff very few others could or would do. He was so interesting and so intelligent and... so curious.

LIZA: And then it got awkward. Of course he didn't want nobody knowing because he could have lost his rank, he could have lost his job because he's my frickin' boss. I think he was worried about it. But I just... *(Trails off)*

(Beat)

VOICE: Did you love him?

(Beat)

LIZA: I dunno. Maybe.

KATHY: We'd have seven days on in a row on the burn ward, and then we'd have seven days off, so we had enough time to travel around the country.

JACK: Hey, let's go to Tokyo for the day.

KATHY: We'd get on the trains and go explore and try the food and walk around.

If it weren't for him I probably would have sat in my room and just listened to music. I'd never even been out of Southern California.

KATE: I think it was six months after I came back that I finally told my family that Tom and I'd eloped. We didn't want to wait. It was one of those things where I could die and in the military, if you're not family, you're not entitled to anything as far as knowing what's going on.

KATHY: It would have taken us three years to learn about each other in a way we did in six weeks in Japan. I thought, I am the luckiest woman to have stumbled into this, to have met this wonderful man.

KATE: I didn't want the big froufy wedding and all that. I had this really nice white silk dress that I got in Thailand. I think we ended up not paying a single dime for our wedding. We got married at the courthouse and we went to Applebee's for our dinner, which Tom's father paid for. His grandparents paid for the hotel. It was exactly what I wanted.

SCENE 6: HARASSMENT

JACKIE: The men felt they were so superior. The Army was for men and we didn't belong there.

KELLY: We were really treated differently. We had to do things that we shouldn't have had to do.

The following is enacted wordlessly:

KELLY enters a room. A MALE OFFICER is waiting for her. OFFICER looks at KELLY.

OFFICER: Rosales, come in. Shut the door.

He indicates that she should close the office door. Silently, he directs her to turn very slowly in front of him. She does this twice, her head down, while he makes suggestive sounds--not so loud that others outside the office might hear him, but loud enough to debase KELLY.

KATE: There was a guy, he was a second class, so he was a rank above me. Apparently he and a friend made a bet that he could get me to sleep with him. This is totally common in the Navy.

So me and him. I was committed to Tom, so I wasn't interested in anybody. But he invited me over to this party and I mean we're playing beer pong and we're having fun and I had a couple of my close friends who were there with me so I wasn't worried about it. At some point in the night I just was trashed. And this guy carried me into a room and into a bed. Then he left, so I didn't think anything of it. But then I woke up and his hand was down my pants.

(KATE imitates waking up the next morning and finding a MAN on top of her with his hand down her pants. Even though she is still half-asleep, she jolts awake, confused and angry.)

KATE: What. The. Fuck. *(The MAN pulls away from her.)* What the hell's wrong with you?

JACKIE: All the guys were tough but there were three of them, though, that were really... *(Shakes head)*

JANE: I don't want to talk about it.

KATE: And he was like, well I put you in my bed, blah blah blah and the bullshit whatever.

And I went out, and one of my friends was sleeping on the couch, passed out. And I woke him up. I'm like, did you know he frigging put me in his bed? And oh man I gave him a ration of shit. Because I was like, "You're my friend, ok? You're supposed to be looking out for me."

KELLY: The officer wanted to bend us over and spank us; he wanted to see us in bikinis.

KATE: A few days later I'm in the control center. A bunch of officers were there. And the guy.

(Other actors mimic a bunch of guys whispering and looking over at KATE.)

GUY: Oh yeah, I tapped that.

(Knowing laughter from other men)

(KATE is enraged. She walks over to the guy.)

KATE: So Newcomb, I heard we had sex. Was it good for you? Cause I don't remember a damn thing. It must have been really fucking horrible sex because I'd think I'd remember something. Maybe it's because your dick is so damn small I didn't even feel it.

(Others laugh at the guy.)

(Guy starts acting embarrassed and sheepish.)

KATE: Hey, you know what? Next time that you want to start telling people that we had sex, make sure it actually happened. Because I'm in love with Tom and everybody fucking knows it.

(KATE turns to address the audience.)

After that I never had a problem.

NINA: After San Antonio I was stationed at Langley Airforce Base in Virginia. There was this guy we worked with. He'd tell you in a heartbeat, "I hate blacks. Don't talk to me."

I remember one night, I was in the men's dorm, we were going out. And my friends, the guys, 18,19, 20, had their music up full speed. And apparently this guy had told them to turn the music down several times.

And we were getting ready to go out, the music was off, we closed the door and we're walking down the hall.

(BIGOT appears behind her with a gun, and it is pointed at NINA and her friends. We hear a gun click.)

BIGOT: "I told you niggers to turn that music off."

NINA: He was pointing a gun at us. There were about five of us. Two of the guys ran.

(NINA turns to face BIGOT, not so much scared as pissed off.)

"Hey, the music's off. This is unreasonable. What's the matter with you?"

(BIGOT is so surprised by her response, he lowers gun.)

NINA: Long story short, me and that guy became friendly. I always want to get to know people. That's the way I was raised. At work I'd sit down and talk to him and ask him, "Why do you feel that way?"

It just evolved. Now don't get me wrong. He didn't like all the people, but he was able to distinguish who he didn't like because of their personality -- not because of their color. And we were working with some jerks.

He said to me,

BIGOT: "I'm going to go home"--

NINA: He was from the South--

BIGOT: "and my family is not going to be happy when I tell them what I know. They probably will never speak to me again."

SCENE 7: THE SKY

LIZA: [Montage of actors pulling up chairs as if watching a fireworks show, pretending they are watching the night sky in Iraq come alive with fire fights.]

We had a lot of firefights at night in Mosul. We'd sit on top of our cans, which was where we lived. They're basically like the trailer on an 18 wheeler. We'd climb ladders to the top of our cans and sit in chairs and watch. Our helicopters would be out there shooting down at them and their guys were firing up. Like fireworks.

KATE: In the middle of the night I'd go topside and look at the stars. (*KATE mimes looking over the railing, out to sea.*)

There's no lights out in the middle of the ocean and there's no pollution and it's beautiful and peaceful. You feel like you're all alone in the universe.

JANE: The lightning storms were unbelievable in the Gulf. We'd be on the bridge of the ship and it'd be dark out but the lightning would be flashing like a disco light. Then you'd have days where the sea was so calm it was like glass.

KATE: During the day, you could go on deck if you had free time to watch the jets take off and land. We called it watching the birds fly.

LIZA: You just deal with the unknown, the uncertainty. What--are you going to live in fear?

KATE: One of the first things I did when I got home was I just laid out on the grass and felt how soft the grass was and just listened to all the birds, looked at the nice blue sky, just watched the clouds go by.

SCENE 8: MOTHERHOOD

JANE: I was in the naval reserves and I volunteered to go to Afghanistan in 2012. I think the job that I had was originally written up for Army intel. The Navy said we can fill those billets. I was doing counter-narcotics, overseeing eradication of the poppy fields.

It was a very tough decision for me. I had other people in the military say,

VOICE: "You shouldn't do that to your kids, you should wait until they're older."

JANE: (*Talking back to VOICE*) "Well, I can't wait until they're older because I'm older and this is my opportunity."

It's not that I wanted to leave my kids. Of course not! **KATE:** When Tom and I were dating, I told him, I never want to have kids.

KELLY: When I got out in 2009, I was going to reenlist and actually switch to a job I wanted to do. I felt my enlistment had been a complete waste. I went in there to deploy. I didn't go in to become Admin. I really wanted to go over there to Iraq or Afghanistan and blow stuff up. But I got pregnant just before I got out.

KATE: We'd been married for seven years. And eventually Tom was kind of getting used to the idea of "I'm not going to have kids," so when this happened (*gestures toward belly*), he was over the moon.

KELLY: It was a choice between my career and my husband. And unfortunately I chose him.

JANE: My husband was extremely supportive. My kids were three and five when I left. I was gone for 15 months so he took care of them all by himself.

KATE: So Tom left it to me as far as whether I wanted to keep the baby or not. And in the end, it just came down to, I felt like if I did decide to not keep the pregnancy, it was almost like I was killing myself in a way, a piece of myself. I couldn't do it.

JANE: I remember people saying,

VOICE: "Can't you just get out of it?"

JANE: If I'd been a man, they would have said, "Oh, look at him, he's going, he's such a hero." And they looked at me going a different way. And why? Why should it be that way?

KELLY: My daughter, she's 8 now, she says she wants to be a Marine and I'm not going to discourage it because I'd be really proud of her. Ninety percent of my friends are Marines. That's all she's ever known. That's what she's used to.

JACKIE: When I got out of the service, regardless of how I felt, regardless of how shitty my life felt, my first priority was being a mother and I kind of pushed everything aside and did that.

JANE: I didn't tell my parents until the day before I got on the plane to go to Afghanistan. My Mom said:

VOICE: "Oh my gosh, how can they do that to you?"

JANE: "What do you mean?"

VOICE: "You're a mother. You have two kids."

JANE: "Yeah. And women have been working for equal rights for many years. And this is an equal opportunity for me to go."

(Beat)

Yes, I missed out on a lot and my kids changed a lot. But I don't think there's ever a great time to do that. And that's what I tell people.

I've been an example for my kids. I've seen my young son get really excited and he finally got an Instagram account and he follows the Naval Academy.

KELLY: I want to make sure my daughter knows what's right and what's not. So what I experienced doesn't happen to her.

JACKIE: My son asked me one time. Mom, what happened to you in the military? I told him I was raped but I didn't want to go any further into detail, and he said, "OK, Mom you don't have to."

JANE: When I came back home from Afghanistan my son was in Kindergarten and he had some sort of musical performance that day. So Robbie brought our daughter and they met me at the airport. After that we went straight to my son's performance, and they had already started and we sat in the audience. And he saw me and he looked and looked to make sure it was me. And then I saw him go like this and lean over to the little kid beside him and I could tell he whispered, "That's my Mom." And afterwards I found him and we just hugged and hugged.

(Jane and a petite actor crouch on the floor, hugging tightly.)

I hadn't seen him in 15 months.

IN SERVICE:

KATHY: Our chief doctor in the burn ward, he was an Adonis, he was so handsome, the girls would walk in and just go, "Oh my God, Yes. Do you need help? I'll be right there!" Big, tall, blonde hair, from the South. Dr. Benson. And young... He had gone into plastic surgery because a lot of burn patients require reconstructive surgery. He was such a hot shot.

NINA: There was an Admiral in Key West. This was the mid-80s. He did not want blacks or gays in his command. During my interview I said, "I understand you don't want to hire me because I'm black."

That put him on notice.

KELLY: Basic training was easier than I expected. Being treated like dirt was really motivating. I was happy that I actually had purpose.

NINA: I knew when I said that, that he couldn't afford not to hire me. But I also knew I'd be under the gun. And they did treat me like the downstairs maid the whole time I was there. But again, these obstacles I could have had in civilian life. Without the travel. That was the life I picked and most of it was good but you've got jerks everywhere.

KELLY: On the first day, everybody's in there crying. They missed home, it was just different. And I was wondering, why are you crying? You knew what you were getting into.

SCENE 10: COMBAT AND INJURIES

LIZA: (*Liza sits as if she is in harness on a C-130 coming in to land*)

When we went into Iraq, before we convoyed in, we did a combat landing at night in a big C-130, to avoid enemy fire. Man, they nose dive into the ground and back up again, and it kept circling around, so that you don't get hit by incoming. It's like being on a roller coaster and inside a washing machine at the same time.

I had a 17-year-old sitting next to me, a brand new recruit.

(GIRL sobs with fear.)

LIZA: (*Trying to convince herself as much as the GIRL*)

It's OK, it's OK. We'll be fine.

(Takes girl's hand and keeps reassuring her.)

They practice this all the time. They'd tell us if there were something wrong, they'd tell us to get ready for an emergency landing or something.

(GIRL vomits on floor. LIZA turns to audience conspiratorially.)

Mind you, I didn't know that for a fact but I was just telling her so she felt better. All of us thought we were going to frickin' die that day.

KATHY: Burns were especially hard. Because you feel it. You FEEL it from the patient. You'd get on duty and I'd go around and find gauzes with fingers and toes and ears and nose tips attached.

There was one patient I always think about. Greg. He was from San Diego and he was a football player. Greg was probably the worst case we ever went through. His chopper had been shot down.

And he'd been handsome, like a Tab Hunter type, blonde, tan, well-built. I'd seen a picture. I would sit with him because he was from home. He was so badly burned. So badly burned. He couldn't talk, he couldn't eat or drink, he couldn't move. So I'd sit and tell him stories, anything to try to take his mind off what he was going through.

Every morning we'd come in and say, is Greg still alive? Hoping that he'd finally passed, and his suffering would be over.

(Beat)

He lived for three months that way. Three months!

KATE: Around the base in Afghanistan people have beat-up junkers, so when you see a nice, clean, shiny car, that's one of the big red flags. Because a suicide bomber thinks whatever vehicle he's driving goes with him.

So one day I saw a cloud of dust up on the mountain. It's far away and I'm like, what is that? It gets closer and it's moving and going fast and I'm like, holy crap, it's a vehicle. And then I realize it's a really shiny truck.

(beat)

There's this ditch that runs the perimeter of the base, filled with barbed wire and stuff. That's the only thing that separates You from Them.

(The cast starts enacting this. Actors move into position so they appear to be looking down on insurgents, with their rifles at the ready.)

So the truck pulls all the way up to the ditch and this guy gets out.

He goes to the back of the truck and he pulls out this plastic bag with something in it, and he takes it and he comes right up to the edge and he throws it toward us, so we all at this point, we all have our weapons on him. He's dead seven ways to Sunday.

We've got probably like 30 guys waiting for him to start it.

[Enacting, actors holding rifles]

I had this wave of nausea come over me because I was like, I might actually have to kill this guy.

But he throws the bag and it falls short. The wind caught it and blew it back. Anyway after five or six throws he gave up and drove off around the base.

We got intel that he was trying to create a diversion so that these other guys could come in through the main gate. But we didn't fall for it. So they gave up, and they went to our sister base which was only about half a mile away. And, unfortunately, they got in.

That was one of the worst nights I ever had in country. The explosions, the gunfire, you could hear the screaming and we sat there on the wall and in the dark because we couldn't turn on any lights and we just listened to it.

LIZA: Oh man, I remember this one time in Mosul there was this giant blast. I just stood there, flabbergasted. It felt like I stood there for minutes but I'm sure I stood there for only 15 or 20 seconds. I could see smoke and dust and stuff.

I just ran towards where the rocket hit, and there was this big container and one whole side of it was blown to bits. And there was like random papers and shit floating and a big hole.

KATE: It's easy to say, Oh, I'll kill that guy. I would have done it, I would have killed him and I probably would have been fine with it, but it's not... (*trails off*)

Something that is simple and something that's easy is not always the same thing.

It could be easy but not simple, and simple but not easy. And that was one of those things. It was simple. Enemy. Friend. But not easy.

KATHY: Greg's mother and father flew over from San Diego to say goodbye, and when they first saw him, his mother fainted. Here's their star child, you know, who they had so many dreams and hopes for, and look what happened to him.

LIZA: I looked into the container and I saw this guy. He was all scratched up and bloody and his frickin' leg was just not completely on anymore. So you just go into mission mode. You're like OK, tourniquet, cuz I'm not going to save this guy's leg. He's in and out, he's in shock.

I don't know how long I was in there but I did the best I could.

I never saw the guy again. I have no idea what happened. I don't even know if I tied the tourniquet right.

KATHY: The men'd come in, in just terrible, terrible shape. They were taught to roll on the ground to put out the flames but when they did that they rolled in dirt containing rat feces. The feces carried a horrible infectious disease called miliadosis (*pronounced mill-ee-a-doh-sis*).

About five days into their healing on the ward you'd do an x-ray and you'd see a white out in their lungs, which meant they were full of miliadosis. These guys could be dead just like that (*Snaps fingers*).

I'll never forget a man who came in with white phosphorus shrapnel in his eye. They had to pull it out carefully and immediately shove it into a bucket of wet sand so it didn't combust. It would just burst into flames as soon as it hit oxygen. It's like having a grenade inside you.

(*Beat*)

It's just crazy what we can do to each other.

SCENE 11: WEAPONS

While seated, everyone mimes a quick synchronized rifle cocking/setting/adjusting motion.

KELLY: In the military, your M16 is part of you, it's your thing. I named mine James, after a boy I liked in high school.

Everyone mimes various loving care or their rifles; cleaning, etc., continues throughout the scene.

KATE: It never leaves your side. You never not have it on you. I literally slept with it on me, I had it under my pillow or next to me so I could just reach out and have it, in case. If you lose your weapon you get in a lot of trouble.

LIZA: When I was discharged I had to give up my M16 and I was really missing it. I lived with that weapon for almost a year. It was like...my pocketbook.

KATE: One of my favorite things to do was to clean my weapon. I'd take it apart and put the oil on it. I had my family send me pipe cleaners, white pipe cleaners and Q Tips. It sounds stupid but it's the equivalent of stroking your cat or your dog.

You are my companion, you are my constant.

LIZA: My friend, my protector.

KELLY: I will take care of you, you will take care of me.

SCENE 12: EXPECTATIONS

KELLY: They told me I couldn't join the Marines. "Oh, because I'm a girl I can't do this?" I like to prove people wrong.

JANE: I remember another naval officer saying, "Do you feel like you're in a fishbowl?" because I was one of the only females.

KATE: I did whatever was harder just to prove I could do it. I gained a lot of respect from the guys I worked with in my division because I wasn't the typical prissy girly girl.

JANE: I'd just spent four years at the Naval Academy being one of not very many, I had many classes where I was the only female. So going to a ship where there were not a lot of females, I was used to it.

KATE: I would go out there and do the dirtiest job on principle, without even being asked. I think a lot of women just get prissy, or prudish, or sniffy, and guys don't really respond to that very well, because then it separates you.

JANE: I took the approach that I was going to do the best job I could and it didn't matter that I was a female.

JANE: Even in the last 5 or 10 years, people would say, "Oh you'll get promoted because you're a female." Or, a guy will say you won't get promoted because of this or that. I think, well, you haven't seen my record so how would you know?

Let's look at your ribbon bar and see whether you've deployed since you have been a reservist. Probably not. Let's look at the jobs you've had and we'll compare them to mine and then you can say I'm getting promoted because I'm a female.

KATE: When I was in Afghanistan I actually emailed my father. I told him, hey, I'm at war. Kind of just looking for that acceptance. (*Beat, then sighs.*) And I didn't get it. That was the first moment I realized that nothing I ever do is going to make my Dad come back.

NINA: At Homestead Air Force Base in Florida, they did a bunch of presentations for the women. Finance comes, personnel comes, do this, do that. And at the end of it, they're like, we have one more class for you. And it was how to keep yourself from getting raped.

Raising her hand, as if she is in the presentation)

"Uh, don't you have the wrong people in here? Shouldn't the guys be in here?"

That's their contingency plan? You can't always defend yourself, you know?

SCENE 13: RAPE

NINA: The first time, I had weekend duty. The commander asked me to come over to his house.

So I'm thinking, I wonder what he needs?

Scene switches to NINA and the COMMANDER in his house.

COMMANDER: Do you want a drink?

NINA: I'm like, "No, sir."

COMMANDER: Do you want to have dinner with me?

NINA: And I'm like "No, sir." Things went from there. He tried to kiss me, dah dah dah. I'm like, "Whoa hold the phone there buddy." And he started telling me --

COMMANDER: My wife left me.

NINA: I'm sorry to hear that. *(beat)* Sir.

We were in the kitchen. He kept trying to kiss me and kiss me and I got him away and he was talking again. I got a knife out of the drawer and I'm like, don't come near me again.

I don't know whether I would have used it or not. I wasn't thinking I would; I just wanted him away from me. Because I know what would have happened had I not.

He had to be in his late 40s, early 50s. I was, what, 19? 20? I looked at him as a fatherly figure. It would have never crossed my mind that was something he was going to do.

VOICE: Platoon, fall in!

The actors begin marching in formation.

LIZA: [CADENCE 1]

I wish that all the ladies
Were bricks in a pile
And I was a mason
I'd lay them all in style.

KELLY: You know cadences? Those chants for when you're marching -- "Left, left, left-right-left"? Well, that's the one civilians know. They have other ones:

[EVERYONE]:

I wish that all the ladies
Were pies on a shelf
And I was a baker
I'd eat 'em all myself.

JACKIE: We were on a field march and the laces had come undone on my boot, and so I figured I could just stop long enough to tie my boot up and catch up with the platoon. Before I knew it one of these three guys grabbed my legs and one was on each arm and they were dragging me off. From there all hell broke loose.

[EVERYONE]:

I wish that all the ladies
Were holes in the road
And I was a dump truck
I'd fill 'em with my load.

JACKIE: All I remember is waking up in the hospital. I didn't know where I was at first. I don't even know how I got there. I remember thinking, Where am I?

JANE: I don't want to talk about it.

NINA: I reported it to the Inspector General. All he said was, "So Floyd's up to his old tricks again."

JACKIE: In my medical records it says "soldier hospitalized for contusions, severe scarring to body." It talks about how I'm beaten but it never once mentions rape.

SOMEONE: [CADENCE 2]

Who can take a chainsaw
Cut the bitch in two
Fuck the bottom half

And give the upper half to you!

JACKIE: I was told when I got out of the hospital by the hospital personnel, my chain of command: You shut your mouth, you go on with your job, you pretend it never happened.

Alma asked me one day:

ALMA: (*approaches JACKIE. Is concerned and curious.*)
"Where did you go? Did they send you on training?"

JACKIE: "No, I had to go to the hospital for a while."

SOMEONE: [CADENCE 3]

Lined a hundred women up against a wall
And on a two dollar bet said he could fuck 'em all.
Well, he fucked 98 till his balls turned blue
Then he backed off, jacked off, and fucked the other two!

JACKIE: I couldn't even tell her what happened. I didn't want her to have to deal with the trauma of knowing what I'd been through.

[EVERYONE]:

I wish that all the ladies
Were statues of venus
And I was a sculptor
I'd break them with my--

JANE: (*A little exasperated, taking exception*) You know, not everyone gets raped in the military. Yes, a lot of men have this attitude. And I'm not saying it's right. But not every woman gets victimized. And it's not about race or even rank.
(*Beat*) It's about class. People just sense it. It's not right, but it's real.

SCENE 14: PTSD

JACKIE: I'll find myself tightening up and freezing because of all those old things in my head. It's like an old tape recorder playing over and over. Something bad's going to happen, something bad's going to happen, something bad's going to happen, don't let him touch you. Don't let him touch you, don't let him touch you.

KATE: PTSD is the constant inability to become complacent. It's the inability to just let things happen.

LIZA: I don't like the smell of anything burning: kerosene, lighter fluid, burning plastic. Or hair. Those kinds of things, they immediately set me off. I just remember that guy in the container had long hair and his hair was singed.

KATE: It was hard when I came back because Tom just didn't understand what the big deal was. All this overstimulation, everything was louder, everything was brighter, there was all this movement and I couldn't track it all.

To him it was we're just driving down the road, we're just walking through the store, we're just sitting here watching TV.

KATHY: Do you remember when the Marine Barracks were blown up in 1983? Jack was in med school, and he came home from studying in the library and I was watching the news on TV.

(JACK finds KATHY in floods of tears, gasping for air, unable to speak. He goes to her immediately.)

JACK: What's wrong? What's happened?

KATHY: I can't stop I can't stop I can't stop.

JACK: *(Trying to comfort her)* It's OK, it's OK.

(They hold each other as tight as they can.)

JANE: When you're in the US you might hear about an attack on Kabul today, or so many people died. But when you're in Afghanistan you are hearing about everything: all of the IEDs, all of the attacks. You can't get away from it. It's all around you. It happens everyday.

The Boston Marathon bombing happened a few days after I got home, and I kept thinking, Why is there so much hype about this?

KATHY: When I hear choppers, I remember. When you're close to choppers you can feel 'em in your chest. *(She thumps her chest and makes low thudding sound.)*

LIZA: You come back with that high strung kind of a thing and you don't sleep at night. And you hear, like, vehicles. You know how vehicles backfire, stuff like that. (*Stomps, imitating the sound of backfire.*) I came home and got four weapons, four rifles because I didn't feel safe unless I had a rifle.

KATE: (*KATE positions herself in such a way that she is continually checking out everything around her.*) It's not necessarily bad to always check your vehicle before you drive out because there could be something under it. It's not a bad thing to check bridges as you go under because you know what? There could be something shady going on under that bridge. When you're in a restaurant, it's not a bad idea to sit in a corner with your back to the wall, with your eye on the door. Because you never know who's coming through it

LIZA: When I got home me and my girlfriend, she's a member of the Sioux Nation, we lived on the rez in North Dakota. We had a lot of land and some people were coming on the property hunting and they weren't supposed to.

(*LIZA acts out pulling out a rifle and pointing it at them*) So I pulled out my weapon a few times and asked them, What the fuck are you doing here?

Probably stuff I shouldn't have done.

JANE: It was hard to remember that OK, yes, I'm back home now, and things are different. We have that expectation that that's not going to happen here.

LIZA: I've been through treatment, learned coping mechanisms. I've gotten a whole lot better.

(*Beat*)

But I still see certain people, especially at airports, and I really look. Not like I used to, like I'd really eyeball, "Don't mess with me, don't try to go on that plane and do whatever." I've gotten better, way better. I still look though; I'm trying not to do that.

KATE: Tom changed a lot during that separation, that everyday not knowing. I did my best to let him know what was going on but

there were long periods of time when he just didn't hear anything. He didn't know if he was going to get the guy on the doorstep saying, Hey, the reason you haven't heard from your wife in a week...

SCENE 15: ME TOO

JACKIE: The men who raped me weren't punished at all. I had to work around them. I avoided them as much as possible, but you have to work with your team members, you can't get away from them all the time.

Once I got back to the unit the head just said, OK, you're back, get back to work, do your job. I know he was notified of my hospitalization. But he didn't call me into his office, he didn't say, I want to know what went down, can you tell me what's going on, we'll look into this. Nothing.

NINA: I was raped in the military. One attempt and one rape. And I watched out for myself. And what happened? I got transferred!

KELLY: I really don't agree with the MeToo movement because that emphasizes the victim mentality that I don't agree with. I think you could say Not Any More or That's Not Going to Happen Again.

VOICE: Suck it up, you joined the Army.

KELLY: I know it's gotten better, the procedures are better now. But when I was in, we couldn't say anything. We knew it would ruin us. It was already bad enough as it was. We didn't want them to have any reason to go after us.

JACKIE: Their line is, If you can't handle it you can always get out. We can give you a dishonorable discharge and you can get out.

KELLY: It happens to men, too. But it's so much harder for them to come forward.

KATE: Some women would be like, "I'm going to go to HR, report you." It's going to be this big mess, it's going to go up the chain, the captain's going to get involved, there's going to be

this big inquiry. They're going to have to start asking people about what happened and then they're going to be like,

VOICE: "Why were you at a coed drinking event? That's fraternization."

KATE: Not everyone's like me, I don't expect every woman to have my personality and they might not know any better. But honestly I feel like certain things, there's a way to handle it and there's a way not to handle it.

KELLY: I remember somebody approached me at a party, and he made a really inappropriate comment, whore this, pussy that, whatever.

You know how Marines yell at each other? When they yell at you with the hand in your face? (*Enacts hand gesture.*) They call it the knife hand, or pointing the finger. Don't you fucking talk to me like that.

I don't usually get angry to that point but I did that day. I got up in his face with the knife hand. The guy never talked to me again after that.

NINA: I hear the guys say,

VOICE: "If it happened 10 years ago, why is she bringing it up now?"

NINA: (*Responding to VOICE*) "Well, that's something you'll never understand."

VOICE: "They're ruining this guy's life."

NINA: (*To VOICE*) "What do you think he did to hers? What do you think he did to *me*."

JACKIE: The mindset still is, it was just a fuck. No big deal. In *their* minds.

NINA: It's not about money. I'm looking for somebody to recognize me and to realize that this was real and this was a terrible thing that happened to me. I want to be treated with respect.

JACKIE: They don't understand the damage that was done by not having permission. And that was the same thinking I took on after it happened. No big deal. No big deal.

SCENE 16: PSYCH

KATHY: The hardest thing for me was identifying with the mental anguish that the men--kids, really--were going through.

JACKIE: We've all been through one thing or another and we all feel like we're on a teeter totter.

KATHY: They'd say, "Can I sit and talk to you, are you real busy right now?" And they'd ask me, "What's my family going to think of me? What's my girlfriend going to think of these scars and burns? We were supposed to get married, she's not going to want me now. I don't have my fingers, how am I going to support a family?"

KATE: Something about being confined, it's cruel. I remember when I was working a night shift on the carrier I got more and more depressed, and one day somebody looked at me:

VOICE: "When's the last time you saw the sun?"

KATE: *(Thinking for a moment)* "I don't know."

Later I looked at a calendar and it had been over a month.

JACKIE: I was getting to the point where I was being sick to my stomach all the time, I was having migraines, rashes.

JANE: I always looked forward to deployment. It was tough, but being able to get through it was something that I got a lot from.

KATE: I just wanted off the ship. *(KATE leans over a railing and looks into the dark abyss of the ocean.)* I tried to jump off. I remember leaning over the rail and I couldn't quite do it. My idea was I'll lean over far enough so I'll lose my balance and I won't have a choice.

JACKIE: The first time I went into the psychologist's office, it was kind of funny/not funny in a funny way. (*Jackie curls up tight.*)

She sat across from me and I sat on a leather couch in a ball, curled up in a ball so tight. We're very talkative nowadays, but in that hour session all I said was, Yes, No, Maybe.

KATE: Someone just happened to see me, and he grabbed me. It was like one of those movie stunt things where they reach out and pull you back.

(*Actor pulls KATE backwards.*)

(*Beat*)

Not my proudest moment, but when you're done, you're done.

KELLY: I lost all my motivation. I just stopped caring. I did my job. But as far as holding up that ideal of what a Marine was, I was pretty much disillusioned.

KATHY: I came home on a commercial plane, but everybody was all Navy, Airforce, Army. And when we landed at the airport in San Francisco, they were having continuous demonstrations. It was the middle of the night, and it was amazing how many people had shown up so they could spit on us. It was like running a gantlet.

KELLY: You're taught from the moment you step foot in basic training that you're now going to be part of a team. You're now going to be part of a unit where each one depends on the other one to watch the other's back. And that was betrayed.

SCENE 18: ENDING

KATHY: People would ask me: Kathy, how could you work there? How could you do it? How could I not do it? I gave it everything I was and everything I had.

JACKIE: Even with what happened to me I don't regret serving my country, I don't regret that at all. I'm very very proud of my

military service. I'd go back in a heartbeat if my country needed me.

LIZA: The military gave me self-esteem, which I never had. For that I'm grateful. They did a lot of things for me that I'm grateful for, you know?

KATE: What better thing could you do than be in charge of delivering the mail, the morale, for the guys?

KELLY: I miss the camaraderie, I miss the purpose. Nobody is ever offended. You can say or do whatever, it doesn't matter. No one takes anything personally. And it's like you kind of have the same humor. We understand each other.

JANE: I was always very shy in high school and even through college. But you mature quickly. I was put in a position where I'm supposed to be telling people what to do and supervising them and making good sound decisions. I had to come out of my shell for sure.

KELLY: The Marines taught me that life is not about me, not everything's going to be perfect, the world is actually really freaking ugly and it's up to us to try to keep our values. I may have hated some of it when I was there but I never regretted it.

JANE: When I got home I saw that Robbie had put two signs out front. "Welcome USN Commander: 388 Days Afghanistan Boots on the Ground" and "Springfield to Afghanistan and Back Again." They're still out in the barn.

I cried, of course.

NINA: Without the military I could have never traveled the way I did; I would never have understood other cultures. You learn the culture, the way they dress, the way they think, what they eat, what they believe, all the little nuances that you're not going to get on a one-week vacation in Bermuda.

LIZA: When I came back I wasn't going to take no shit from nobody because I took shit for so long that I'm not taking shit no more.

KATE: That's something I really miss about the military. It wasn't even that I felt like I was a badass; I *knew* that I was a badass.

JACKIE: My faith has always been very strong, very important. I can't say that I actually forgive those men, but I can accept that not forgiving them doesn't make me less of a Christian.

If I ever faced them, I would never say, "I pardon you for what you did." But I can go on, and I can say, OK, it happened. God, come into their lives and show them your good will.

LIZA: I went for treatment for PTSD to a VA in California. They had all kinds of group therapy, including music therapy group. We all had to sit in there and sing together. At first we're rolling our eyes. We're not kids, you know? This isn't "Wheels on the Bus" time.

But something about singing together makes you feel like you're part of a unit again.

I remember one song the therapist wanted us to sing. At first we're like looking at each other, thinking, OK, this is weird. I mean, OK, we are in California. But. Really? Still, we all know it by heart.

ALL (*Liza begins, then each person joins in at a different place, until all the voices are together by the end.*)

Welcome to the Hotel California
 Such a lovely place (such a lovely place)
 Such a lovely face.
 They livin' it up at the Hotel California
 What a nice surprise (what a nice surprise), bring your
 alibis
 Mirrors on the ceiling,
 The pink champagne on ice
 And she said, "We are all just prisoners here, of our own
 device"
 Last thing I remember, I was
 Running for the door
 I had to find the passage back to the place I was before
 'Relax' said the night man,

'We are programmed to receive.
You can check out any time you like,
But you can never leave!

(Beat.)

(Beat.)

(Beat.)

JANE: I volunteer to represent the Navy at funerals at a military cemetery. An honor guard comes. We play Taps. A real Taps, with a live bugler, not a tape. The flag's on the casket and when the service is over we fold it up the way you're supposed to.

And then we give it to the family, and I'm always struck by how that moves them, and how they hold it close. At that moment the flag does stand for something greater, you can see it.

I remember presiding over one service for a woman who was 94. She was a WWII Navy nurse in California. She had no family left to claim her. The only person there was a neighbor.

The neighbor said the vet'd had a tough life when she came home. Her husband died in a logging accident and she had to raise their son. So she worked as a chambermaid the rest of her days. And then her son, her one child, was killed in Vietnam.

But she kept going because that's what she'd been taught. Don't complain, don't feel sorry for yourself, just get on with it. She lived alone in a trailer into her 90s, with one cat to keep her company.

Who is going to speak for this woman, who did what she was asked, and asked for nothing in return? So I spoke to her, and for her.

I told her that she meant something to the world, that she mattered. Maybe she saved some young guy's life back then, just by being careful and competent and doing her job. And she went on with her life, never knowing what became of him, not knowing that he would have a family and grandchildren, and that she'd made that possible.

I thanked her for all that she'd done. I honor you, we honor you, we remember you. We remember.

(Actors all together mime folding a flag in the military way with appropriate solemnity, then place it on the casket.)

END