



Letter from the movie "Act of Valor" Before my father died, he said the worst thing about growing old was that other men stop seeing you as dangerous... I've always remember that how being dangerous was sacred, a badge of honor. You live your life by a code. An ethos, every man does. It's your shoreline. It's what guides you home and trust me, you're always trying to get home.

Your father was a reader, Churchill of course, but also Faulkner and books about Tecumseh. He loved artists who painted people with bodies that looked like boxes. I'd give him hell about that. He'd just say you gotta look harder. Look harder, your father would say, I always knew he wasn't just talking about those boxy abstract paintings.

There's threats everywhere in a world that's draped in camouflage. Your father's grandfather gave up his life flying a B24 in World War II. He kept the liberator aloft just long enough for everyone to jump, and then he went down with the plane. That's the blood coursing in your veins. Your father was my boss and I was his chief. What we knew about each other's traits and our bond as operators. There's a brotherhood between us and we depended on each other more than a family. Tecumseh said although a single twig may break, a bundle of twigs is strong.

Our platoon was headed downrange. We had Weimy, our sniper, he grew up in the middle of the Mojave desert, most excitement he had as a kid was bowling frozen turkeys down the aisle at the grocery store.

Ray, our comms guy, our radio man. He grew up in east LA gangland. He had a silver star for pulling a wounded teammate out of a freight.

Sonny, he was made of granite, this guy didn't even do push ups because he was afraid his chest was gonna get too big.

Ajay joined the teams late in his 30's. He had been a Muay Thai fighter all his life, before that he grew up dirt poor in Trinidad.

Mikey had 20 years in the teams, as humble as he was. You never even know him. He kept a picture of his wife in his helmet, and a lock of her hair in his pocket, quiet as the breeze.

And finally, senior chief Miller. Couldn't really tell you much about him other than I'd rather take a knife to a gun fight than have to be interrogated by him.

That last night at home you think about how you coulda been a better dad, a

better husband, that bedtime story you shoulda read or that anniversary you forgot. You don't expect your family to understand what your doing, You just hope they accept it. When you get home, you hope you can pickup right where you left off.

War is a country of will, there's no room for sympathy. If you're not willing to give up everything... You've already lost.

Your father was a good man. Growing up without him is going be hard. It's going to hurt. You'll feel alone, out to sea with no shore in sight. You'll wonder why me, why him. Remember you have warrior's blood in your veins, the code that made your father who he was is the same code that'll make you a man he would admire, respect. Put your pain in a box. Lock it down, like those people in the paintings your father liked. We are men made up of boxes, chambers of loss, triumph, of hurt and hope and love. No one is stronger or more dangerous than a man who can harness his emotions, his past. Use it as fuel, as ammunition, as ink to write the most important letter of YOUR life. Before your father died, he asked me to give you this poem by Tecumseh, I told him I'd fold it into a paper aeroplane, and in a way...I guess that's what I'm doing, sailing it from him to you.

So live your life that the fear of death can never enter your heart. Trouble no one about their religion; respect others in their view, and demand that they respect yours. Love your life, perfect your life, beautify all things in your life. Seek to make your life long and its purpose in the service of your people. Prepare a noble death song for the day when you go over the great divide.

Always give a word or a sign of salute when meeting or passing a friend, even a stranger, when in a lonely place. Show respect to all people and grovel to none.

When you arise in the morning, give thanks for the food and for the joy of living. If you see no reason for giving thanks, the fault lies only in yourself. Abuse no one and no thing, for abuse turns the wise ones to fools and robs the spirit of its vision.

When it comes your time to die, be not like those whose hearts are filled with the fear of death, so that when their time comes they weep and pray for a little more time to live their lives over again in a different way. Sing your death song and die like a hero going home.

~From the movie "Act of Valor"