

The American Way

A Play in six acts

BY

The Class of 2016

ACT ONE: The Turning Point

CHARACTERS

David, Police officer: Domo

Madilu, Mom: Giselle

Adam, Military Officer: Juan

Mike, Friend: Esteban

Arnold, Dad, Randy: Daniel

Start of Scene one:

Narrator:

(David and Madilu walk to center of stage, faces audience, the other actors take their seats in the row of chairs behind them. David stands slouched over, Madilu stands two feet from David, they both open scene.)

DAVID

The end of my Senior year in high school.

MADILU

Everyone started to talk about what they wanted to do after graduation. Everything else in my life was on track, my grades were average and my family was always there for me. I didn't know what I was going to do for the rest of my life, who and what I was going to be.

DAVID

I was the one everyone knew, I went to parties, what can I say I liked to have fun. But, my grades weren't the best, to be honest, they sucked. I know for a fact that I don't wanna go to college, its just not the place for me, I can't see myself in those classrooms let alone in a good college.

MADILU

How am I even going to pay for college, my family doesn't have money. I don't even have many options. I still have to go to college, but what am I going to do? I need to have a better life than my parents.

DAVID

I told my friends that I want to go to the military but they think I'm crazy. The thing is, joining the military is the only way I see myself not becoming poor or going down the wrong path like my friends are starting down. If my friends think I'm crazy, how might my parents take it?

MADILD

I decided to go online and find different ways I could pay for college. I found having a job would help, but then, I saw a website talking about joining the army and that they would pay for my college tuition. That was the best decision for me. I started to think more about it. And that was the only option. the best one for my education.

(Madilu takes seat with David, then Adam and Friend start walking in from the right)

Start of Scene 2

(Adam trips and falls, landing mid-center and yells in pain and holds his ankle, friend continues running off stage)

FRIEND

(sound of friend running off stage) Adam, get up!
Don't let them catch you!

ADAM

(yells after him) Wait, help me!

FRIEND

Sorry man, I can't get arrested again! My mom will kill me. *(fades)*

COP

(David unfreeze being introduced to the scene as the cop) You thought you would get away, didn't you young man?

(Cop continues to arrest Adam they walk around stage, Adam is escorted to what appears to be a door then he is handed to his dad sternly and is seated beside his mother)

DAD

What is this?! Get inside. (beat.) Your mom and I have been talking and we've decided to make you choose.

ADAM

Choose what?

MOM

You'll be working with your uncle in the farm, up north.

ADAM

(stands up) What?! I can't do that!

DAD

Either that, or you'll be joining the military.

ADAM

(hesitates) Guess I'll be joining the military then.

(Light goes off Mom, and Dad remain seated. Adam walks off stage left Mike and Arnold following behind.)

Start of Scene 3 :

(Light moves far left where Mike and his friend, Arnold, are hanging out. They are all gathered around a truck)

MIKE

So thats what we did over the weekend, it was pretty awesome.

ARNOLD

That sounds like it was fun! Shoulda hooked me up bro. Yeah, I could have brought my brother too and we would have had a lot of fun. Besides, its our last week of high school, we gotta do something!

MIKE

Well, I would have but-

(Recruiter walks in from the right of stage toward Mike and friends that are still gathered by the truck on the far left)

RECRUITER

Hello gentlemen, may I have a minute of your time?

MIKE

Yeah sure, what do you need?

RECRUITER

I'm Marcus Hunt, Army recruiter, and we need men to fight. You know that Desert Storm is happening right now?

ARNOLD

Yes sir.

RECRUITER

Well the military needs men, I'm here because I want to recruit you. Would you three be interested in joining the Army?

ARNOLD

Yeah! We could go in together.

MIKE

I don't know, I don't feel too great about this. I had plans to go to college.

RECRUITER

Well thank you for your time, if you need to contact me I will leave you with my card.

(RECRUITER hands the boys his card exits to seat.)

ARNOLD

You gotta do this Mike, It would be an honor to go into the military.

(Mike thinks about it for a moment, and comes to the conclusion he will join.)

MIKE

Okay, I'll join, besides, I figured I'd get out of this small town and be part of something big, something new and beyond myself.

ARNOLD

Come on man lets go, it's friday, we gotta do something.

MIKE

Okay..

ARNOLD

Just wait till my parents here about this Mike, (smiling spitefully) there gonna kill me.

(Arnold and Mike take their seats once more remaining frozen)

Start of Scene 4:

(Light comes back on and moves to mid-center stage Randy sitting at desk where there is a guitar leaning on it, doing paperwork.)

RANDY

I don't know if this is for me anymore. I feel like there is more to me than this. I remember being in the military, I was an Army ranger I miss something about it. And I think that something, is the leadership I had while down there. I think it is my duty to go back and help.

(Randy walks across stage to the left, looking up thoughtful)

RANDY

I mean, I love music and all. I really do love to play music. I like to teach kids how to play instruments, and transmit them my passion. But I just feel like there is something missing in my life. I feel like I still have something to accomplish. I don't want to be the typical teacher who should have stopped teaching long ago. I think it is time to go for it.

(Randy and coe form a line, saluting and then exiting stage right ready to serve.)

ACT TWO: Thank you for Sharing

CHARACTERS

Karen: Athena

Jessie: Eugenia

Chris: Brianna

Sammie: Ben

Rain: Ryan

Julio: Brian

Start of Scene one:

Narrator:

(Lights come on to Karen, Jessie, Sammie, Chris, Rain, and Julio sitting in a semi-circle)

KAREN

Alright, everyone comfortable? Good to go? Okay, *(smiles)* let's break the ice by starting off with introductions and how long you've served. *(looks around room)* Do you want to go first?

(gestures to Jessie)

JESSIE

Sure, I'm Jessie, served for 26 years.

(looks down)

CHRIS

(moves around uncomfortably in chair) Alright, I guess I'll go next. I'm Chris, and I served the military for about 5 years, starting on Valentines day of 1994. *(looks to left)*

SAMMIE

My name is Sammie. I joined the service when I was 23, I served in the Military for 9 years. *(looks to his left)*

RAIN

Hi, my name is Rain. I've been serving our
country for 26 years and I'm still sexy.

(chuckles)

JULIO

(raises hand slightly) Julio, I'm a Staff Sergeant and in the
86th LRS Logistics Readiness platoon. I have been serving in the
Air Force for 8 years.

(smiles)

KAREN

Great, *(claps hands together)* I'm really glad you guys can share
with us. *(smiles at everyone)* Um, let's move on to a word game.

I'll say a word and each of you say the first thing that pops
into your head. We'll have Julio go first this time. What do you
think of when you hear the word home?

JULIO

Cooling down.

RAIN

Family.

JESSIE

My children.

CHRIS

Stability.

SAMMIE

Exciting.

KAREN

Good, good. How about regret?

JULIO

None.

RAIN

Killing.

JESSIE

Disappointment.

CHRIS
Many.

SAMMIE
No regrets.

KAREN
And what about war?

JULIO
Defendinging.

RAIN
Gruesome.

JESSIE
Chaotic.

CHRIS
Sacrifice.

SAMMIE
Opportunities.

KAREN
You know, this group's purpose is to share the struggles and different experiences you all have been through. Tell me, what do these words mean to you? What do they remind you of?

CHRIS
They bring back memories of being out at sea. Not knowing what's waiting for you when you get back, IF you get back.

KAREN
Can you all tell me what you remember?

CHRIS
I remember constantly questioning the worth of it all.

RAIN
I remember questioning if I should join the military or not.

JESSIE

(closes eyes) I remember seeing horrible, terrible, awful things.

SAMMIE

(holds shoulder) I remember the pain in my muscles from boot camp.

JULIO

I remember a ceremony. 26 caskets that needed to be loaded on a C-130.

KAREN

(long pause) Please, don't be afraid to share. We all have been through our own personal battles, most of us still are. I want to listen to you, *(smiles)* each of you.

CHRIS

(long pause) *(takes a deep breath)* I'll go first. *(gets up to front of stage)* Being in the middle of the ocean surrounded by only water and constant sea sickness gets you thinking. Thinking about how you contribute to only a small portion of the worlds existence and how you want to make that small contribution you make to be the biggest accomplishment of your life. Thinking about how much you could use an advil at this point. Thinking about how little time you have to have to make that accomplishment, but here you are living it. You're living your biggest accomplishment and everyone can see that. Everyone except yourself. You're here, in the middle of the ocean surrounded by only water and sea sickness wondering if it's all worth it. *(looks back at rest of group)*

KAREN

(smiles at Chris) Thank you for sharing.

(Chris nods and sits down)

SAMMIE

(goes to front of stage) I was headed for Camp Pendleton Marine Corps Military Base, even though we weren't joining the Marines, we were being tested for battle. I had 8 weeks of bootcamp and already felt as though I was dead. 500 push ups and I couldn't feel my arms. Constant screaming and yelling from both the recruits and officers. I was home sick, I wanted to give up, but I knew I couldn't, that I had to keep going.

(Karen gestures for Chris to say it with her)

KAREN

(smiles at Sammie) Thank you for sharing.

CHRIS

Thanks for sharing.

(Sammie sits down)

RAIN

(goes to front of stage) I was in Afghanistan for three months but it seemed like eternity. The heat was hot as hell it was nearly unbearable. My mission wasn't to kill, my mission was to talk to small communities and to try to build a trust with them. But even though we wanted to help the villagers, we were still in the middle of a war. There were shootings daily and death was a normal thing. In war some of the best shots are the ones you don't have to take.

KAREN, CHRIS, AND SAMMIE

Thank you for sharing.

(Rain sits down)

JULIO

(goes to front of stage) After all the caskets were loaded and the ceremony came to an end, O'Connor and I started walking back to our HQ. We talked about what we had just been apart of, I asked him questions about how he felt, how he was coping. He didn't seem the same after, he had changed dramatically. He was nicer, quieter, not as childish. Maybe it wasn't just him, maybe it was me too. Everything changed from that moment on, no one left the same. That smell, I don't know how anyone could have left without, *(pause)* without it burning its sent into your memory.

KAREN, CHRIS, SAMMIE, AND RAIN

Thank you for sharing.

(Julio sits down)

JESSIE

(goes to front of stage, looks around and takes a deep breath)
During the war, I got a call that one of the marines exploded into pieces and another was bombed and lost both his legs. My body was in shock, I didn't know what to do. During the war, I shot a 16 year old boy that had a bomb in his hands. I knew I had to shoot him in order protect others from getting hurt, yet it was still difficult to do. During my deployment in Iraq, I went to a home where a man was shooting his sister. **He had already shot her five times before we got there. He shot her once in the chest, twice in the stomach and twice in the arm.** It was one of the most difficult times I've ever had to go through. During the war, we saved a handful of people. The war affected everyone and everything.

(Everyone looks in shock, Karen smiles and walks up to her, places her hand on Jessie's shoulder)

KAREN

Thank you all for sharing, I'll see you all next week.

(They all exit while KAREN cleans up the stage)

ACT THREE

CHARACTERS

Mack: Justus

Carla, Wife, & Tara: Marysol

Toby: Andres

Adam, & Mr. Fuller: Caesar

Randy, Joe: Roy

Start of Scene one:

Narrator:

(Mack walks in stage: Starts conversation with Carla)

Mack:

Hey honey I've got some bad news

Carla:

what is it?

Mack:

I'm being deployed to Afghanistan

Carla:

What?! Why?!

Mack:

I have orders for me to go

Carla:

How long will you be gone?

Mack:

I'm going to be gone for a year

Carla:
Will you be able to come visit?

Mack:
Sorry honey I dont think thats going to be possible

Carla:
How do I know you'll come back alive?

Mack:
I promise you I'll try as hard as I can to make it back to you
and the kids

Carla:
I don't know how i'm going to make it without you

Mack:
You'll make it trust me, we'll be fine. We've been through
tougher things than this before.

Carla:
Yeah but not for this long...What time do you leave tomorrow?

Mack:
I leave at 7am tomorrow

Carla:
You should start packing then

Mack:
I will

Carla:
You should say bye to the kids before you leave

Mack:
I will honey just let me pack first

(Mack and Carla exit the stage)

Start of Scene two:

Toby:
I'm thinking of going back to Afghanistan.

Adam:
Why?

Toby:
Because I want to go back to protect my men and I can't imagine them without me.

Adam:
What about your wife?

Toby:
What about her?

Adam:
Have you told her?

Toby:
Yeah.

Adam:
What did she say?

Toby:
Well she said that If I go back that she will leave me.

Adam:
Are you willing take the risk of losing your wife?

Toby:
Yes, I'm willing to take the risk.

Adam:
Are sure this is a good idea?

Toby:
What choice do I have?

Adam:
Well you have a choice to stay with your wife and live a life with her.

Toby:
But my men, I can't leave them there alone

Start of Scene three:

Toby:
Honey

(She looks at him upset but she doesn't say anything)

Toby:
I'm going back to Afghanistan.

(She stopped doing the dishes and she drops a plate on the floor and its brakes)

Wife:
Why are you going back?

Toby:
I need to be with my men.

Wife:
What about me, I'm your wife.

Toby:
I know you're my wife.

Wife:
Then why are you going back?
(Toby is silent)

Wife:
I need you here with me.

Toby:
I know you need me here but they need me over there too. You need to understand that! What I do is **my passion**. It is more than a job. There are going be sacrifices that I need to make and this is one of those sacrifices, ok.

(The wife looks at Toby silently and she goes back doing the dishes and Toby goes to his room to get his gear, when he returns back to the kitchen, he goes straight to the door but his wife is in the way)

Wife:
If you go I'm not going to be here when you come back.

(Toby walks up to his wife)

Toby:
Move.

Wife:
Please stay.

Toby:
Move...now.

(She moves from the door slowly and upset. Toby looks back at her)

Toby:
I love you

[Toby walks out of the house to his car]

(Toby exits the stage)

(Wife stays and plays Carla's part of next scene.)

Start of Scene four:

(Mr. Fuller enters stage left)

Mr. Fuller

(Laying down in bed) I've been in this place for three months nowhere near home. I miss my family more with every day that passes. Last time I called my wife she told me that she was tired of being alone, without me. Everyday I wish I could go back home, but I also have to remind myself what I am here for.

I am a pilot and every time I have to go out to a mission, I think to myself of what would happen if something were to go wrong and my family loses me. Imagine how much my family would miss me. Imagine my wife doing everything alone for the rest of her life. Every time I go out there I make sure to do everything perfect to be able to come back home to my family safe and alive. Because I remember when my uncle died in a side bomb and I remember how much his wife and kids suffer without him, I don't want my family to go through that. When I think about my family. I always wonder what they are doing, how my kids are doing in school. I sometimes just want to go back to home to go

play with my kids football in the park, to have some father and son time with my kids. I also miss my wife, I miss her being next to me everytime I go to sleep. I miss her because she's the person I talk to when I need to talk with someone.

(Mr. Fuller takes seat once more)

Start of Scene five:

(Tara and Randy enter the stage looking away from one another)

Tara:
Hi Randy.

Randy:
How are you? How is our baby?

Tara:
I'm doing well, our baby, Molly, is great too, she weighs approximately 6 pounds.

Randy:
Great, I can't wait to see her, I miss you guys.

(Tara's voice sounds sad)

Tara:
We miss you too

Randy:
Tara are you ok? You sound sad.

Tara:
I am sad! I want you to be here. You've missed birthdays, holidays, even our anniversary, but this? Our child's birth.

Randy:
Tara, we've talked about this before, you know my job, you know this requires some sacrifices..

Tara:
Yes! I know, but I don't know if I can handle it! I'm living alone right now, yes I have the support of my family, but I need you, my husband, my baby's dad.

Randy:
I understand and..

Tara:
No, you don't understand. This is very hard for me. Thinking that in any moment I can receive a call from the base saying you got hurt, or, or something worse. Our child is born and you are not here to see how beautiful she is, you didn't get to carry her like other parents do. Why do I have to be part of the sacrifices? Why do you?

Randy:
Tara, I want you to understand that I love you and I love my daughter with all of my heart without even meeting her. I've loved you since I met you and I've loved my daughter since I knew she was on her way. But if I don't do this job, then who will? There are other people that need from us. I need to protect those people because no one else will. I need to deactivate those IED bombs in order to protect them. We are lucky my job protects us. Please understand my service, my calling to this job. Don't you think its hard for me too? Leaving you guys? But I didn't find a meaning to being a music teacher, that's why I quit and decided to join the service, to do something meaningful for me and others.

(Tara stays silent for one moment thinking, and then says...)

Tara:
Randy, I'm sorry. I was being selfish, I understand you work and I'm very proud of you, Forget everything I told you, everything will be fine, me and Molly will be fine. We'll be waiting for you when you come back.

Start of Scene six:

(Randy stays to do Joe's part of the play)

JOE:

Ive just been told that I am coming home. I am so happy there are no words to describe how I feel, after barely being able to talk to my family I cant wait to finally see them. Being here made me realize how much love I have for the people at home who have shaped my life and who I am today. I am so grateful for the life my parents gave me and seeing how horrible the world is makes me think about how clueless I was in my younger days. Sitting on the plane knowing I am almost home made my stomach turn, what if things aren't the same with my family? What if I

lost the relationship I thought was so strong with the people that I have left? Getting off that plane I dropped to my knees, kissed the floor three times and said to myself "o'god, I made it". I thought things were gonna be normal again. Atleast thats what I was hoping for, but when I first got back I felt guilty, guilty that I wouldn't be there, be there for my men if something were to go wrong and I could have prevented it. But I also have two YOUNG men that are home that need me to support them and be there for them through the struggles of life, who were already being affected by my long absences. I had to put both my options on to the table and decide which one I could live without and I decided I would never leave my sons and wife with the intentions of not coming back.

(Joe picks up his rucksack slinging it over his back, the others stand and form a line behind him. Together they all march off stage right ready to go home.)

ACT FOUR: The Effects of War

CHARACTERS

Abdul: Kyla

Hina: Phyllis

Start of Scene one:

Narrator:

(ABDUL walks into bedroom, goes up to bed where HINA is sleeping and shakes his sister awake. HINA sits up.)

HINA:

(groggy) What's wrong?

ABDUL:

(sternly) We're leaving.

HINA:

(worried, sits up) What's happening?

ABDUL:

Don't bother grabbing anything, just put on your warmest clothes. (ABDUL turns to leave. HANNAH grabs his arm)

HINA

(frightened) Why are we going? Where are we going?

ABDUL:

The rest of our brothers and sisters are already waiting for us near the door. There is a war here in Afghanistan, you know that. It's unsafe for us to stay so we're moving to Pakistan where it's safer. If we don't leave now, we might not be able to leave at all.

(ABDUL exits quickly. HINA gets up and throws sweaters over her shoulder and rushes towards the door. She stops, puts her stuff

offstage and she steps to the front of center stage with a
spotlight on her)

HINA:

We made it safely across the mountains and I now live in Pakistan with my family. I'm not sure if I still consider Afghanistan home, it's probably a crumbled war scene now. After arriving in Pakistan, we were poverty stricken. Back in Afghanistan we were well off, I didn't have to worry about being denied an education, having to stay home to help my parents, or sharing a room with my brother Abdul. I miss those days. My family had to leave everything behind, including money, food, furniture, anything you can think of that belongs in a home. And then we had to start from scratch.

(End of Scene)

Start of Scene two:

(A couple months later they are adjusted to living in a new home. HINA is standing in her room frantically searching for her necklace.)

HINA

Has anyone seen my necklace?

ABDUL

What necklace?

HINA

The necklace I've had since I was born! It's silver with an emerald on it.

(HINA frantically searches all of the drawers.)

HINA

Where could it be? I thought I had it...

ABDUL

Well when was the last time you wore it? Retrace your steps.

(HINA walks around desperately trying to remember.)

HINA

Well.. I usually wear it everyday and take it off when I sleep.

ABDUL

When did you last wear it?

HINA

I don't remember.. I haven't worn it in a while..(HINA looks thoughtful and then her face falls when she realizes where it is) Oh no.

ABDUL

What happened?

HINA

(HINA puts her hands over her face in worry. Abdel comforts her.)I haven't worn it in three months. I must've left it back in Afghanistan!

ABDUL

Aww, I'm sorry.

HINA

(Sounds like HINA is about to cry) Gosh, I miss everything there, not only the necklace!

(HINA is sad, playing with her hands.)

HINA

I wonder what's it's like back in Afghanistan.. I wonder what I would be doing if I still went to school. I miss school. I miss my old life. I miss everything. I know we moved here for a good future, but I can't help but wonder what life would be like if we didn't move.

(HINA looks up.)

HINA:

We left everything behind! I want my past back.

ABDUL

Things will get better, it won't be the same for long. I promise you, Mother and Father know what they are doing.

(Looks up at ABDUL, sad look on her face.)

HINA

How can you say that? We just lost everything! You can't tell me things will get better. None of us have any idea what's going to happen.

ABDUL

I know, it's hard, but at this point, we can only hope for a better tomorrow.

HINA

I guess..

ABDUL

Maybe someday, we'll have the opportunity to leave Pakistan for a better future as well.

HINA

Maybe someday.

(ABDUL exits and HINA steps to the front of center stage with the spotlight on her. She speaks calmly and seriously)

HINA

We arrived in America after four years as refugees in Pakistan.

I am humbled by the generosity of the Catholic church, who sponsored my family's immigration. Things were very difficult at first. I arrived without knowing a word of English and was unaware of different cultural norms. I am very grateful for the fact that I was able to escape so I worked hard to adjust and learn once I was here in America. I went after opportunities available to me and worked my way up until I was hired as the linguistics and cultural advisor for the navy seals. I am glad that even though I will never return to Afghanistan, I am able to make a positive impact on what was once my home.

ACT FIVE: Facing Guilty

CHARACTERS

Jack: Erica

Cross: Jesus

Mirror of Cross: Ceiley

Start of Scene 1:

Narrator:

JACK:

It was so dark, all of it. We were always hiding to avoid being seen. On christmas day we went out to look for a base camp, all of the troupe in high spirits. There was a trail of rice on the floor, clear against the sand. In the heat of the moment I decided to follow it, we all followed it. Shots and smoke. Coming from everywhere around us. The car tripped a wire. I was supposed to be looking out for it. The closest they got to us was a small bomb, which discharged under the vehicle, right behind the seat. A seconds difference, that's all it was, seconds between me and the guy behind. I got away with a small back injury because of the blast, but he wasn't so lucky. He lost his foot, and it was all because of my mistake.

Start of Scene two:

(JACK takes seat behind Cross and Reflection as they bring chairs to center stage. They face each other mirroring one another.)

CROSS:

Coming back... and they said I had to stare at you in the face. That I couldn't run from you anymore... Guilt. (beat.) Lets cut the crap huh? How can I even look at you, you're awful. They keep saying that I need to look at you, unpack you, whatever that bullshit means-

REFLECTION:

I'm not that bad.

CROSS:

Don't give me that crap!

REFLECTION:

IT'S NOWHY CAN'T YOU JUST GET OVER THIS HUH! WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU!

CROSS:

WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME? I REMEMBERED YOU THATS WHAT! (*shaking his head*) I...I CAN'T... (*Pointing his finger at his reflection*) I CAN'T EVEN FUNCTION WITHOUT BEING ON EDGE BECAUSE YOUR ALWAYS THERE!

REFLECTION:

Thats crap too! This is BULLSHIT!

CROSS:

NO ITS NOT... (*Shaking his head in frustration*)I have to forget this, it not that important...

REFLECTION:

You can't forget... that's not how it work's.... stupid...This is a part of you. It's baggage but it is a part of you..

CROSS:

And why does it have to be huh? Why am I stuck with it?

REFLECTION:

You keep acting like the whole worlds on your shoulders...even if it is you can't run from this.

CROSS:

(*shaking his head*)That so bull... I let them down. Family. Military family. I didn't want to let them down...

REFLECTION:

The only one you let down is you.

CROSS:

I don't wanna do this anymore...

REFLECTION:

Then look... accep-

CROSS:

I CAN'T CAN YOU NOT UNDERSTAND THAT. I let you get to me! Of all people! Here I am. Still alive when I shouldn't be!

REFLECTION:

You can't do anything now, don't you realise that.. the opportunity is gone.. missed out on.. that's what you're dealing with, everyday, every moment... That you couldn't fix anything...

CROSS:

Is that okay? Is it okay to only say that I could have?

No.

REFLECTION:

But this is what I am, and you have to accept that.. Because you can't hide from it. It will always be there.

CROSS:

I have to see it all.

REFLECTION:

The Good and the bad.

CROSS:

The past

REFLECTION:

Because I need to know that this is the present.

CROSS:

*(Drops his hands and slowly looks up)*I have to move forward

REFLECTION:

Because despite everything I tell myself.

(They begin to stand up, still facing each other)

CROSS:

I know. Every part of it.

REFLECTION:

War.

CROSS:

*(Shaking his head)*No.

(Jack travels downstage to them coming between them as they all look out at the audience)

ALL:

Life

ACT SIX: The Aftermath

CHARACTERS

Jan: Mckinley

Carol: Jasmin

Margrete: Giselle

Paul: Jesus

Start of Scene one:

Narrator:

CAROL:

I have been a member of the Purple Heart for 10 years. To become a member you have to be associated with someone who has received a Purple Heart, like my husband. Unfortunately my husband has passed away. The Purple Heart medal is given to those soldiers that were awarded the title of officer by doing something meaningful. The Purple Heart is an organization that's mission is to assist Veterans in whatever way they can.

(Carol arrives at the Veterans center and is greeted by Margaret who is the event planner)

Margaret

Hey it's great to see you! I'm glad you could come out and help

Carol

Anything to help out my favorite organization (she said cheerfully)

Margaret

We could really use your help in making the nametags for our Veterans, all the stuff you'll need is on the table over there.
(she points to a table to the right in the back of the room)

Carol

Sure thing, I'll get to work.

Margaret

Thanks again for all your help.

Carol

No problem!

(Both Carol and Margaret walk off stage. Lights dim out.)

Start of Scene two:

*(The scene starts with the guests (Veterans) filling in)
(Carol passes out the nametags at the sign in table in the front of the room)*

Carol

Hi welcome whats your name?

JAN

Jan Smith

CAROL

Jan Smith?, alright here's your name tag. We're glad you could join us tonight. Enjoy your evening

JAN

-Thank you

*(The veterans fill in and take their seats including Jan)
(Margaret takes the stand and gives a brief speech)*

Margaret

Thank you all for joining us tonight we hope you all feel welcomed and are ready for tonight's event. Lets get started with tonight's presentation. To start off the evening we will have a guest speaker come up and share with you guys one of her experiences. Give it up for Jan Smith.

(crowd cheers as Jan stands up and walks to center stage)

JAN:

Hello everyone, thank you for having me. Lets jump right into this. I grew up in a family full of veterans. In my house there was a wall that was covered with pictures of all of my family members who had served. I never saw any women on that wall, which really made me curious and inspired me to look into joining the military myself. I graduated from school early, and instead of applying for colleges, I applied for the military. I entered, but it didn't result as I wanted. I ended up deploying people, and I seemingly never got deployed myself. My gender and age made it very difficult to be where I wanted, but I was determined. And as I became more of a senior, it got even harder. No men wanted to work for me. I struggled a lot with those men who thought they were stronger and better than I was. My objective wasn't complete, but obviously (pause) I am here. Just when I was losing all hope, I was deployed to Afghanistan with those men. WHO, by the way, soon realized I was more than they anticipated. My face is on the wall now. I am so proud to be one of those veterans. And I feel even more proud to be here today, with all of you guys. Finally as ONE of you guys. (Pause)
Thank you.

(The crowd cheers and they start giving out the merit awards to the honored veterans including Paul)

(CAROL looks off to PAUL handing him something before going to join the others around the tables at the Gala)

(PAUL thanks CAROL and walks toward center stage)

Start of Scene three:

PAUL:

It has been years since I stepped on the IED, and even though I lost both of my legs in the explosion, I haven't lost my positive spirit, strength, and persistence. I had worked so hard for so long to really learn how to work these prosthetic legs

(PAUL looks down towards his legs), and then I was headed to the top of this huge white covered hill, about the compete in the Paralympics.

I was skiing against people from so many countries, and so many cultures. We all had our own special stories, and that day we were all in the same place. And yet, we all came from so many different places.

It kind of brings me back to the war: the unity, the hardships, the friendship, and the support. The struggle of knowing inside your head that you are responsible, not only for yourself and the people fighting with you, but for the entire country you're fighting FOR. That day, we were competing in a team, again (pause) for our country. The pain, mental and physical, the ringing in your ear when the IED blast echoes through the field.

That was the crowd's cheers echoing through the slopes. The look in the other country's eyes..fear, strength, determination.

(PAUL looks around to look at everyone else on the stage) The same look is in the eyes of everyone around me. The way the noises are softer as I'm fighting than when I started. Same sensation as I began the race. The honor I felt while receiving my purple heart *(opens hand to reveal purple heart, pins to shirt)* is the same honor I felt as the gold medal was placed around my neck. The training. Boot camp to marathons to (pause) here. The feeling of returning home in time, healthy, safe. I crossed the finish line.

(ALL CAST returns to stage, lines up beside PAUL)

Narrator:

Paul:

We all did.