

Script 10 pages From The Neck UP

SCENE 9

(March, 2004. HILDA is at home. Her friends SHARON and ELLIE are visiting)

ELLIE

(holding up photo from the bookcase)
I always liked that picture of Steve. Very handsome in that uniform.

HILDA

I know. We heard from him a couple of weeks ago.

SHARON

You did such a great job with those boys. Funny, how different they are..

HILDA

Well, they both like the action. Steve didn't have to go back to Afghanistan. He actually met someone over there. Imagine that. Walking on land mines, all in the name of love.

SHARON

You know the Baileys. Their son lost half his leg in Iraq.

HILDA

Fred. Kevin played football with him. I'll have to tell him.

ELLIE

Kevin is so handsome. Lizzie had a big crush on him. I don't know if you knew that.

HILDA

(sits down)

Maybe we can talk about something else.

SHARON

Hilda, you're so pale. Let me get some water.

HILDA

Thanks. I'm just...you don't know the story and I don't really want to bore you with it, or even think about it...

ELLIE

Stop it. You stayed at my house for a week after Ted died. You put me back together. Talk. We're not leaving.

HILDA

(tearing up)

You probably don't know too many women who have a son in the Middle East and they're more concerned about the other son.

ELLIE

What do you mean?

HILDA

Steve knows what he's doing. He'll be back. I know that. But I don't think Kevin is coming back.

SHARON

I thought he was a big TV star in Minneapolis.

HILDA

He was. I mean, he might still be. I don't know. He's drunk most of the time but he's so messed up. His memory, his brain. He finally had a brain scan. Frontal lobe dementia.

ELLIE

At his age.

HILDA

Age has nothing to do with it. It's all that goddamn football. All those hard hits with his head.

SHARON

So he's still in Minneapolis.

HILDA

He's staying with his agent's family. He's had some girlfriends, some real sweet girls who I thought would look after him. He was too much for them. We're ready to take him back here if he wants to come. Ron Miller, he sells and installs solar panels. He knows Kevin. He asked about him. But I don't see a way out.

ELLIE

How's Forrest?

HILDA

He can push on, somehow. I really can't. I'm so angry at him sometimes because football was what he wanted for Kevin. But that's not fair to him. He couldn't have stopped Kevin from playing even if he wanted to. I mean, isn't it obvious? Damn it! They put those highlights of players getting their heads knocked off, practically, and then they make TV specials out of them. Football follies, they call it! Really funny stuff. So dehumanizing.

SHARON

(hugs Hilda)

Don't second-guess yourself.

HILDA

I used to go to those games. Even at Minnesota it was like the Romans and the Christians. Kevin would knock somebody's block off and the whole section we were in would go crazy, Forrest included, and I would just sit there. I couldn't watch. I tried to take a book one time and read it during the game and I just felt silly. It's just a damn game. We encouraged it because he was so active and had so much energy. We should have put a tennis racket in his hand. Then he went to Green Bay and they cut him loose and now he's just sinking. Gasping for air.

(phone rings)

HILDA

Yes, it's Hilda. Oh, hi, Taylor. How are you?....No, I haven't heard from him.

(looks up at her friends, shakes her head)

SCENE 10

(At River's Edge Golf Club in Marshfield, August 2006. KEVIN and FORREST are in the grill with FRED)

KEVIN

Damn, Fred. You were crushing it.

FRED

Yep. I'm King of the Range. Once I get on there on the actual course, it's not so easy.

FORREST

I don't remember you playing golf before you went away.

FRED

I didn't. I was a runner. I was almost doing marathons. Then I left my right shin on the road just outside Mosul.

KEVIN

I still don't know how you do it.

FRED

I asked some guys at VA what they do for exercise and they all play golf. We got a bunch of them within a 50-mile radius. We all played in Wausau last week.

KEVIN

In the cold.

FRED

Yep, that's the great thing about a metal leg. It doesn't feel a thing.

KEVIN

But I still don't see how you bend the knee and come back with it...

FRED

(stands up)

I just don't take it back very far. But you don't need to. I push off hard with my right heel. It got a lot stronger just having to do all the work of two.

KEVIN

Let me get another round and hit the little boy's room and I'll be back to tell some more lies...

(Kevin leaves)

(Fred looks at Forrest and shakes his head)

FORREST

I know. He did quit drinking for a while but when he got the diagnosis, that was it. He basically gave up. I kept after him, just to get him to hit some golf balls. This is easily the best he's been in weeks.

FRED

It's the same PTSD I've seen a million times. He needs a therapist. I mean, a mental therapist.

FORREST

I know. I've talked to a couple. I'd just like to see him come back home and live with us.

FRED

I don't know if you want that, Forrest.

(Kevin comes out, walks toward the front desk)

FORREST

Well, I don't know if he can live alone, and I think his agent has washed his hands of him. Kevin was living with him. He was scaring the kids.

FRED

I just wish he'd been in a war. He'd have terrific care.

FORREST

I hear you.

(Thirty minutes later. FORREST is driving KEVIN home)

KEVIN

The pro at the club...Nelson?

FORREST

Nelson, yeah.

KEVIN

I was talking to him about maybe having a weekly golf tournament with all of Fred's buddies. Have 'em come down and play, have trophies, maybe a cookout. If we can do it, can you help me?

FORREST

I'd be delighted. What a great idea.

KEVIN

Yeah, we could have a cart girl ride around with drinks and stuff while they're playing. Maybe I could do that.

FORREST

Oh, no. Anything involving wheels or fire, that's out.

KEVIN

(irritated)

Right. I forgot I was an invalid there for a second or two.

FORREST

That's not what I meant. I love the idea. I'll help you however I can.

KEVIN

Sure you will.

(pulls out cell phone, dials number)

Charlotte! Charlotte, what's happening? I'm in Wisconsin. Maybe you can get away. How long has it been?...What? Well, I didn't know you were working...Well, when can I call you?...You don't mean that. Come on, you don't --

(puts phone away)

FORREST

You want to stop and pick up some pork chops for tonight?

KEVIN

(puts head back)

Fuck you, old man. Just shut up and drive.