

**When The Military Bares Its  
Breast, The Eagle Finds Its True  
Devotion**

by

Michael Bettencourt

67 Highwood Terrace #2, Weehawken NJ 07086  
201-770-0770 • 347-564-9998 • m.bett@verizon.net

<http://www.m-bettencourt.com>

(Copyright © by Michael Bettencourt)

# When The Military Bares Its Breast, The Eagle Finds Its True Devotion

## **BRIEF DESCRIPTION**

Carver is back home in the land she defended after doing her tours. It is not a place that necessarily has a place for her.

## **CHARACTERS**

- Carver
- Sindle and all the others

## **CLOTHING**

CARVER wears some combination of lace-up boots, camo or cargo pants, a sleeveless shirt, another overshirt, a hoodie -- all Salvation Army issue.

## **TECH**

It would nice if there was some way to batch dial a group of cellphones in the audience, arranged for beforehand with selected audience members.

# When The Military Bares Its Breast, The Eagle Finds Its True Devotion

## Scene 1

A space outside a city hall in a moderately sized city -- and two people who tumble into this space in great distress.

Well, CARVER is in distress, and SINDLE is in distress over CARVER's distress.

CARVER enters as if she's escaping from SINDLE's grasp, or as if SINDLE finally let her go when they reached this open place, wherever it is, whatever it is.

CARVER breathes deeply, ragged. SINDLE watches, waits.

SINDLE

You settled down?

CARVER

Sindle.

SINDLE

Are you?

SINDLE

I didn't hurt anyone.

SINDLE

No you didn't. Except for maybe some eardrums.

CARVER

Sometimes it takes a lot of volume to make sense.

SINDLE

What makes you think you were making sense?

CARVER half-laughs.

CARVER

Because I was loud.

SINDLE

You may need to re-think that equation.

CARVER

I may have to re-think that equation. But I was making sense.

SINDLE

But you never got to your point.

CARVER

Sindle -- was that a real taser he pulled on me?

SINDLE

Why do you think I wrestled you out of the meeting room?

CARVER

A taser, in this town.

SINDLE

You didn't need it.

CARVER

I've felt worse.

SINDLE

In-country, sure -- but this isn't Fallujah.

CARVER

Not on the outside, no it isn't. But that taser? Makes the places feel the same.

SINDLE

I don't know how to answer you.

CARVER

Thank me again for saving your life in the city of mosques.

SINDLE

Every day I breathe.

CARVER

Semper fee fi fo fum.

An active silence.

CARVER

I was loud. Too loud.

SINDLE

You were screaming "danger."

CARVER

Because the in-country over there has oozed to the in-country over here. I hate it.

SINDLE

You couldn't do it any other way, which is unfortunate.

CARVER

For their eardrums.

SINDLE

Yeah.

CARVER

They think they're safe. Safer, because now they've got this --

SINDLE

They hunger for "safe," sweetheart, but that's not what they think. You, loud loud loud, just remind them how scared they are and how deep they aren't admitting it.

CARVER

Fear makes them stupid.

SINDLE

The same way it makes you stupid.

CARVER

Different stupid.

SINDLE

That's what all good prophets say: my stupid is better than yours.

CARVER

Thanks for hustling me out of there.

SINDLE

I knew you could handle the taser -- I just didn't want to handle you after you handled it, so out we went.

CARVER

The things we've seen.

SINDLE

The things still yet to see.

CARVER

Think they'll let me back in? I wasn't finished.

SINDLE

A shared beer sounds like a better option.

CARVER hesitates.

SINDLE

Make it boilermakers.

CARVER goes back into the meeting. SINDLE follows.

Transition: "Fallujah" by Knut from Terraformer  
[<http://v1.audioo.com/t/fallujah--knut/591cf5979996f7f/> to hear the song]

\* \* \* \* \*

**Scene 2**

CARVER is arguing with a POLICE OFFICER.

CARVER

What the hell is this?

OFFICER

A 50-caliber gun. Machine gun.

CARVER

On top of an armored personnel carrier?

OFFICER

Yeah. Thanks to the Department of Defense.

CARVER

Who approved this?

OFFICER

The mayor. Looks pretty good in front of city hall.

CARVER

It never came up at the meeting.

OFFICER

Didn't have to -- mayor's got discretionary funds.

CARVER

But he's got no discretion.

OFFICER

Matter of opinion.

CARVER

We're just a podunk police department.

OFFICER  
Terror can strike anywhere.

CARVER  
You're right -- I'm terrified of you. Of that.

OFFICER  
Shouldn't be -- we're the good guys.

CARVER  
How can you be the good guys if you have that?  
Because once you have it, you'll want to use it.

OFFICER  
Naw.

CARVER  
Oh ye of little faith.

OFFICER  
We'll just run it in the July 4 parade.

CARVER  
No you won't. You're going to kill somebody with  
that.

OFFICER  
No we won't.

CARVER spreads open her arms.

OFFICER  
What are you doing now?

CARVER  
You should just shoot me now so we can get the  
blood sacrifice out of the way.

OFFICER  
You just should shut up and move on.

CARVER  
How can I do either one? Do it now -- don't  
leave me in suspense -- don't leave you in  
suspense.

OFFICER  
It doesn't have any bullets.

CARVER  
You mean in it?

OFFICER

It's not loaded.

CARVER

But it's got bullets?

OFFICER

Of course we got bullets.

CARVER

Would you shoot me if it was loaded?

OFFICER

I have no reason to shoot you.

CARVER

That's never stopped one of your tribe.

OFFICER

You should move the fuck along.

CARVER

You didn't answer my question.

OFFICER

I'm not answering your question.

CARVER

Do you know what a 50-caliber round can do to a body? It's five inches long. You know I know. What if the terrorists came down Main Street right now, you with no bullets and only your pistol and taser?

OFFICER

I'd throw you at them.

CARVER

Because I could explode.

OFFICER

You've been an IED ever since you got back from your tours.

CARVER

Get rid of it now and save your soul.

OFFICER

They won't take it back -- it's DoD surplus.

CARVER

Our tax dollars at work.

CARVER flings her arms open even more.

CARVER

Get rid of the surplus.

OFFICER gently pulls them down to her sides.

OFFICER

We gotta save the village idiot for something better.

CARVER

What's better than being a blood sacrifice?

OFFICER

Go home. Go find Sindle.

CARVER

I'll bring this up at the next meeting.

OFFICER

It's already been bought and paid for.

CARVER

You mean you're bought and paid for --

OFFICER

You're straining my patience.

CARVER

That's the real problem -- the whole department, him in the corner office, you're all bought, you're all paid for, no better than mercenaries.

OFFICER

My Christian duty tells me to ignore every word you're saying.

CARVER

Exactly.

CARVER grabs the grips of an imaginary .50-caliber Browning machine gun and lets fly several rounds at OFFICER, her body responding to the recoil, her voice mimicking the sharp crack of the rounds.

CARVER

Feel anything?

OFFICER

Go home.

CARVER

You need to begin to learn how to feel something about this.

OFFICER

You are now bordering on something I don't want you to border on. Go.

CARVER flings her arms open.

CARVER

Last chance.

OFFICER

Pass. Go.

CARVER

Get out of jail free.

CARVER spins in place like a Sufi.

CARVER

If only it was that eeeaaaassssyyyy. Save your soul!

CARVER folds over in mirthless laughter.

CARVER

Merrily merrily merrily merrily life is but a dream.

Transition: "The Massacre in Fallujah" by Avskum from Uppror Underifran.

\* \* \* \* \*

### Scene 3

OFFICER now becomes a WW II anti-aircraft gun aimed at the sky.

CARVER

Behold this hunk of crap. Ecce crap.

GUN

I'm not crap.

CARVER

Nothing but crap scrap metal.

GUN

As a veteran you should be more respectful.

CARVER

Of what?

GUN

I shot down lots of Jap planes.

CARVER

Jap planes.

GUN

I defended my country!

CARVER

You killed people. They were called Japs.

GUN

No choice.

CARVER

Should've melted you down, turned you into something useful. But no, in their infinite wisdom, they plant you here.

GUN

What's wrong with here?

CARVER

Look over there.

GUN

It's a nice park, soccer, dog run --

CARVER

You don't get it.

GUN

You're the one talking to a World War II anti-aircraft gun.

CARVER

They put you in front of the day care center.

GUN

So?

CARVER

The day care center.

GUN

So?

CARVER raises her arms.

CARVER

I wish they would shoot me now.

GUN

What's the problem?

CARVER

I wish they would shoot me now.

GUN

They've got me angled up nicely into the sky,  
they repaint me every year for veterans day --

CARVER

You're a weapon of destruction.

GUN

Exactly.

CARVER

Planted outside the entrance to the place where  
dozens of kids pass you by every day.

GUN

I still don't get you. The kids should know.

CARVER

It's better if they're taught to forget.

GUN

I've got nothing to be ashamed of! And neither  
do the guys who kicked me back and poured fire  
into the sky.

CARVER drops her arms and hangs her head.

GUN

But you -- that's what it is, isn't it? You're  
ashamed.

CARVER

Every day.

GUN

Of what?

CARVER

Of what I caused.

GUN

You were in service, don't forget. In Fallujah,  
of all places.

CARVER  
In service to my own stupidity.

GUN  
The best the country has to offer --

CARVER  
Me?

GUN  
Protect and defend.

CARVER  
I'm the best this country has to offer to the world?

GUN  
You kept the nation safe.

CARVER  
The empire.

GUN  
You did your part.

CARVER  
I have been crippled, just like you, spiked at an impossible angle. My beliefs broke my bones. I am rusted into place.

GUN  
People think you talk too much.

CARVER  
I didn't pass by you every day, like the children that go into that building, but I got it injected into my veins just the same.

GUN  
You talk too much because you think too much.

CARVER  
The military needle in the veins every day, the patriotic Schedule 1 drug mainlined. Yellow ribbons. Decals on the cars. Support the troops.

GUN  
We shouldn't do this?

CARVER  
Army Strong. The few, the proud.

GUN  
So we shouldn't do this?

CARVER  
Always 100% on watch. Be all that you can [be] -  
-

GUN  
Answer me!

CARVER  
No we shouldn't.

GUN  
Yes we should.

CARVER  
No.

GUN  
Yes, because it's all good --

CARVER  
No.

GUN  
It's all for the good.

CARVER  
No it's not, I wish I could say yes, but I gotta say no. And they soak it up every day by looking at you as they walk into that building.

GUN  
So I'm turning 'em into little butchers, eh?

CARVER  
No, just softening 'em up, making the indoctrine part of the air they breathe.

GUN  
The indoctrine!

CARVER  
This is so exhausting.

GUN  
Then you should give it a rest, friend, like everyone suggests.

CARVER sits down, legs crossed.

GUN

I'd be careful doing that -- not every dog goes to the dog run.

CARVER

Good for them. They're my compatriots.

GUN

Your entourage of freely shitting dogs.

CARVER kneels, faces GUN.

CARVER

The indoctrine.

GUN

What.

CARVER

That dying for your country has more majesty than living for it. That the country, right or wrong, is always right, and if you don't think it's right, then you're wrong.

GUN

What did you see over there on your tours?

CARVER

Did you ever think of the Japs?

GUN

With every round.

CARVER

Did you ever think of the Japs' faces?

GUN

I could only give them one face. What did you see?

CARVER

Did you ever let your imagination fill in the spaces between the rounds?

GUN

I couldn't.

CARVER

I couldn't stop.

GUN

I couldn't ever.

CARVER

I couldn't stop seeing faces.

GUN

I think you should shut up now.

CARVER

I couldn't get enough patriotic needle in me to keep things faceless.

GUN

Japs attacked us, and so they deserved --

CARVER

We kill conscience to make killing possible.

GUN

We had the right to defend. The security of the nation.

CARVER

But where lived compassion in the Christian nation.

CARVER gives a mirthless laugh, makes some dismissive gestures.

CARVER

Oh, you should ignore me -- I am an unreliable veteran because conscience has turned me to the dark side. To a coward. A traitor. A treason. I am trying to be needle-free. I am boring and full of rage. I am exhausted.

CARVER climbs painfully to her feet, checks her pants for dog shit.

CARVER

Dog-poop-less, I believe.

GUN

How long a lifeline do you think you have?

CARVER

Not long if I let you sit pretty out here leaking all your Jap-plane greatest-generation memories.

GUN

No matter how loud you shout, you're not going to change anything.

CARVER

If I don't shout, I die even faster. I'm going to submit a petition to the council.

GUN

For what?

CARVER

For having you removed.

GUN

You wouldn't dare!

CARVER

I'll lose, like you suggest -- but then you never know.

GUN

You can't get rid of me!

CARVER

Maybe even the rest of the war memorials in this park, too.

GUN

You can't.

CARVER

"In perpetual memory of" -- it's horrible.

GUN

They won't.

CARVER

Probably.

GUN

They won't abandon me, abandon us.

CARVER

Probably. But shake things up! Spill the salt!

GUN

Families offended!

CARVER

Prick the slimy collective brain --

GUN

Like crapping on --

CARVER

-- rummage in its guttural id --

GUN

-- on a headstone!

CARVER

-- and we'll see what pops. Bam!

CARVER slaps her forehead.

CARVER

Like a damn Grand Central Station at rush hour up here -- all sorts of crack-ups and mash-ups in progress.

GUN

They'll just hear you insult them.

CARVER

If they love their children the way they say they love 'em, then we'll have no problem.

GUN

They say they do but they don't mean it, not down to the bone-marrow -- this is not a great world for children.

CARVER

So you agree with me? Eh?

GUN pulls back, falls silent.

CARVER

So you agree with me that they should demolish you? Demolish all these memorials to death and murder?

GUN stays silent.

CARVER

Then again, how could you agree, really? With your limited view of the horizon. Me? Beat you into ploughshares -- beat you thoroughly and forever into ploughshares. Isaiah is comin' to the city council!

CARVER embraces GUN.

CARVER

Goodbye.

GUN, angled to the sky, watches CARVER slouch away.

GUN ack-acks away, as if firing into its glory days.

GUN

Japs Japs Japs Japs Japs Japs Japs Japs

The glory days fade. GUN is heartbroken.

Transition: Cass Dillon, "Christmas in Fallujah" by Billy Joel.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### Scene 4

CARVER enters as if she's escaping from OFFICER's grasp. This time OFFICER carries an AR-15 or M-16 assault rifle.

OFFICER

I will taser you if you don't control yourself!

CARVER circles. OFFICER is wary.

CARVER

You wouldn't dare.

OFFICER

After what you said in there, you're lucky they still don't whip people in the public square.

CARVER

What did I say?

OFFICER

Go home.

CARVER

What did I say that swindled them out of their smug --

OFFICER

You don't even make half-sense on your best days. Go home.

CARVER

The coup d'état has happened.

OFFICER

Go home now.

CARVER stares at OFFICER.

CARVER

Even in a podunk city like this, it's happened.

OFFICER

Go home.

CARVER points at OFFICER.

CARVER

You had the riot mask on, but I knew it was you.

OFFICER

What's over is over.

CARVER

Just occupying the city hall steps.

OFFICER

Go --

CARVER

Well, 99% of the steps -- people still had to pay their parking tickets, wanted to respect the revenue stream. Does baton against bone feel manly? What does it feel like to beat up the people who pay your salary? Who know your face? What'd'ya think the chances are the city council will approve my petition?

OFFICER

Shut up. Go home and take your amendments with you.

OFFICER leaves but this doesn't stop CARVER.

CARVER

It's connected if you don't already know that I should have turned you in for what you did to me to the people next to me I'd even lie to get you canned say that you raped me say that you threatened to kill me which is not far off get you stripped of pay of pension of respect make you terrified of the screaming bomb raining down inject terror into your brain so that you would know what it's like to feel helpless and unprotected and exposed and drain you of the smug power infused in your guns pepper sprays restraints barricades rubber bullets tasers a death squad is all you've become paramilitary house pets praetorian guard a thin blue line wrapped around our necks choking us for law for order for property an unmanned drone an unmanly drone which is why you need such a big hard stick

--

OFFICE comes back in, wearing a riot mask, but this time as DRONE: a drone model hung by a line at the end of a stick. DRONE circles silently overhead, finally hovering over CARVER.

CARVER stops as DRONE enters the airspace -- even though she can't see the drone, she senses it. She moves, all stealth. DRONE moves.

Sound as underscore: wind, gear-whirr, photo shutter, hiss of garbled tech-talk.

DRONE stalks CARVER, even into the audience. DRONE also flies over the audience.

Selected cellphones in the audience go off, which are answered. DRONE sends a message, as part of the soundscape.

DRONE

You have been notified. You have been warned.  
You have been informed. You have been advised.

Cellphones out.

CARVER gets to the center of the stage, crouches. DRONE hovers overhead.

Sound: the sharp cracking hiss of taser electricity from the DRONE. (Yes, this is technically possible.) Appropriate lighting effect, appropriate physical pain.

CARVER, having been bolted from Zeus, is flat-out unconscious.

DRONE flies away. Sun sets on CARVER.

Transition: "Fallujah" from The Perimeter Road Show by City City City.

\* \* \* \* \*

### Scene 5

Barely visible in shadow sits SINDLE on a small stool, a bowl of water and a towel as well as another small stool to one side.

CARVER actually lets out a small humanizing snore, and her sleep is not, at the moment, the sleep of the damned but of the weary.

SINDLE places the bowl, towel, and stool close by to her, then goes back to sitting and waiting.

Sound: someone somewhere, on a just barely tuned piano, plays Debussy's "Clair de lune". As if on cue, a pale moonlight eases in.

CARVER lets out a quite larger snore, which brings her to.

SINDLE

Well. She snorts herself back into the land of the living.

CARVER sits up, still sleep-drowsed.

SINDLE

Next to you.

CARVER dips the fingers of one hand into the water bowl, rubs the water into her eyes to clean them, sits on the stool.

CARVER

I went lost again, didn't I?

SINDLE

I don't know.

CARVER

You found me, though.

SINDLE

Yes. I brought you back here. But I lost sight of you.

CARVER

You never lose sight of me.

SINDLE

But I did.

CARVER

I don't mean literally.

SINDLE

But I did.

CARVER

It was lightning from Zeus. Or an epileptic seizure. You couldn't have seen ahead on that.

CARVER shakes herself, a spastic puppet.

CARVER

Felt like a puppet at the end of electrified string.

Sound: the taser electricity. CARVER shakes herself, makes goofy sounds. SINDLE smiles.

CARVER

I was Punch. I was Judy. I was punching Judy, then Elmo, then Lambchop.

CARVER holds up her fingers.

CARVER

Even now -- tingling. Tingly. A visitation by the gods is my preference. Wandering on the shore of the river Styx is my preference.

CARVER goes to pull off the top layer of her clothing.

SINDLE

It might have been the new drone the police department just auditioned.

CARVER stops, gives SINDLE a look of astonishment.

SINDLE

You didn't know.

CARVER

No. Must've been too stunned by the 50-caliber machine gun.

SINDLE

On loan from the Department of Hopeless Security.

CARVER

Me?

SINDLE

You are a person of interest to the city police department.

CARVER pulls off the top layer of her clothing, folds it carefully.

CARVER

You mean I'm the only raving lunatic they have on call.

SINDLE

The experimented upon.

CARVER

Part of their coup d'état.

SINDLE

"Their" who?

CARVER pulls off her next layer, folds it.

CARVER

C'mon. The military. Our former employers of record. And their apologists, of course. Why take over the White House and then have to govern

when you can just give shit to police departments  
to do the work for you?

CARVER pulls off her next layer and folds it, leaving her only wearing  
a sleeveless shapeless shirt. She unlaces her boots.

CARVER

The creeping coup d'état. Like the frog in the  
hot water. We've been over this.

SINDLE

I'm not sure I can go over it again any more.

This brings CARVER to a halt. She may look at SINDLE, she may not.

The music shifts to Gershwin's Prelude No. 2.

CARVER wants to speak but dares not speak, afraid of lightning, afraid  
of loss.

Instead, she finishes unlacing the boots, takes them off, places them  
carefully.

Music drifts in.

CARVER

You said.

SINDLE

I know what I said.

CARVER

Now it sounds like you're unsaying it. No more?

SINDLE

No more like this.

CARVER

You not only said, you promised.

SINDLE

No more like this.

Instead of replying, CARVER strips off the rest of her clothes until  
she stands fully naked.

Music drifts in. If Gershwin is done, music changes to Erik Satie's  
Gnossienne No. 1.

SINDLE goes to stand next to her to hold the bowl and towel, but  
CARVER waves away the gesture.

On CARVER's right side, just below the ribs, is a scar in a particular shape. Around a defined circle the size of a half-dollar -- the entrance wound for a rifle round or shrapnel -- is a starburst of scarred lines, not part of the original wound but scored by hand into the flesh.

CARVER puts the bowl of water on the stool, wets the cloth and wrings it out, then washes herself everywhere.

CARVER

The berserkers the Norse warriors "soldier" is such an anemic word pussy word by comparison to "warrior" you remember this --

SINDLE

I watched you -- attended --

CARVER

Bled like a madonna parting the flesh on my right side by knife-edge the pain after the pain of the wound I took for the good of the country dulce et decorum est fuck that pain to signify that the good of my country was not any longer very good and it was time to admit the filth and emptiness of our "service" of our "duty" of our "love" of our "honor" of our "mission" admit to ourselves the murderous business we had become score into my flesh that we were nothing but berserkers in the bastard work of empire like the berserkers gone lunatic gone fey gone rhapsodic in rage that drove the knife forward and through incision into the hatred of what I had become we had become better to admit being "discarded" instead of numbed by some epic of purpose erecting memorials to the soldier dead in city parks makes me gag makes me spit vomit forth rage Achilles

CARVER has finished washing herself down. She throws the cloth at SINDLE.

CARVER

Sometimes it still bleeds. Weeps. No surprise for such a thing conceived in acid.

CARVER re-dresses herself.

The music ends with the player banging on the keyboard, which then just cuts out.

CARVER

We will not talk about this again. Either we are together or you are dead to me, just as if I had

left you at that checkpoint in Fallujah. I have no space for you being in-between -- that's what this coup d'état has done to me.

SINDLE watches her re-dress. He swipes the cloth across his face, folds it. Then he leaves.

CARVER takes her time to finish dressing. She reaches under her shirt to touch the wound. Her hand comes away wet.

The piano starts up again as if a child is playing "Chopsticks": hesitant and playful. Through the scene, the playing gets more and more frantic.

OFFICER enters, this time carrying a SURVEILLANCE CAMERA hanging from the end of a long pole. A red light on the camera blinks.

CARVER looks up at CAMERA.

CARVER

When did they put you up?

CAMERA

Can't tell you that -- matter of city security.

CARVER

My tax money paid for that.

CAMERA

Doesn't matter -- doesn't belong to you.

CARVER

So now you can watch the terrorists come down Main Street at any time night or day.

CAMERA

Nothing too small in the fight to protect our way of life.

CARVER

Machine guns, drones, cameras -- our way of life.

CAMERA

Protecting freedom.

CARVER

Except you're watching me.

CAMERA

Protecting you.

CARVER  
Invading me.

CAMERA  
For the greater good.

CARVER  
An ugly ugly phrase.

CARVER grabs a stool and places it underneath CAMERA, then stands on the stool and speaks to CAMERA.

CARVER  
Whoever's at the other end. Tonight I have been abandoned. After the second battle of Fallujah, Iraq, 2004, Operation Phantom Fury. I saved his ass. He promised to serve and protect. Me. Forever. No more forever as of tonight.

CAMERA  
Boo-hoo.

CARVER  
I'm watching you.

CAMERA  
I'm watching you back. The price of freedom is eternal vigilance.

CARVER  
You know nothing about the price of freedom.

CARVER reaches under her shirt to touch her wound.

CAMERA  
What are you doing?

CARVER smears her hand across the lens, re-wets it from her wound and does it again.

CAMERA  
Hey! What are you --

CARVER  
Extending the hand of freedom.

CAMERA  
I can't see!

CARVER  
For my greater good.

CARVER gets down, kicks away the stool.

CAMERA

I can't see! You've blinded me!

CARVER

So my day has not been wasted.

CARVER steps back and spreads her arms to the side. She spins and shouts. She jumps up and down. CAMERA keeps complaining.

CAMERA

What're you doing? I can't see! What're you doing?

CARVER

I am coming down Main Street! Making a list, checking it twice -- naughty or nice!

The person playing "Chopsticks" bangs on the keyboard again, then that goes to silence. Faint, then louder, a police cruiser approaching until it pulls up and stops. Its pulsing lights fill the space.

CARVER, breathless, stops, still smiling.

CARVER

The greater good now approaches. The raven caws. The night's mists boil away. Charon, take the abandoned one across the River Styx now!

The piano begins with Erik Satie's Gymnopédie No.1. Cruiser lights pulse, then stage goes to black. Music continues through transition.

\* \* \* \* \*

## Scene 6

Music out.

CARVER sits at a table, with a notebook, a la Spalding Grey. A digital voice recorder and a cellphone are also on the table. Perhaps a table lamp, making the lighting constricted.

She is nervous, agitated. She looks overhead: faint but noticeable, the rotors of helicopters. The sound is not imagined.

She touches, then pulls away, from the voice recorder, as if it were hot to the touch. Finally, she turns on the voice recorder.

CARVER

Dear Mr. President I've already sent you one of my broadcasts already but I don't think you really listened to it not really

CARVER pulls a letter from the back of the notebook, but before she says anything more, she looks overhead again.

CARVER

Can you hear them the helicopters they pass themselves off as news copters the morning tunnel traffic etcetera but they're not I know this focus focus

CARVER punches the pause button, but it's too late since it's recorded what she said.

CARVER

Damn keep going keep going

She unpauses it. The helicopter sound does not go away but continues, subsonic, as an underscore, coming in and out as the helicopters change position.

CARVER opens the letter.

CARVER

Your response it's a form letter form letter and that's not your real signature I'm pretty sure you robosigned a bill from Europe so you can robosign from anywhere like operating a drone "Thank you for your communication" "I listened to it with interest" I don't think you did Mr. President I don't think you did either listen to it or with interest

A police siren approaches and passes. CARVER waits, gathers herself.

CARVER

Focus

Another police siren approaches and passes, trying to catch up to the previous cruiser. CARVER turns a page in her notebook. She turns pages as she needs to.

Helicopters still in the background.

CARVER

Mr. President this is my second communication to you I think your staff didn't really let you hear my first one which is why I'm sending you this second one because I think time is running short

is running out I really do for all of us for me and for all of us and that includes you and yours I was walking through the bus station the other day half a dozen soldiers in camo lined up on either side with pistols and AR-15s and for what some of the cops also had AR-15s and for what I didn't feel any safer with all of these weapons around all this testosterone in their fingers do you really think this scares the terrorists no because it's not about the terrorists it's about making all of us terrorized and keeping us in line because that's what governments do like to do that you like to do I have to say with regret because that's the kind of president you've turned into a scaremonger with an appetite for

Something that sounds like a footfall. CARVER stops to listen. A second footfall. Then nothing.

Helicopters still in the background.

CARVER

You've become a horrible president I say that with great respect I mean great regret and yes respect I guess not only about making promises and not keeping them but being worse than the person who came before you which is not easy I mean that non-elected one we carried on our backs for eight years you still don't think voting machines can be hacked and from a distance it's just like the way those drone operators kill at a distance you brought back military commissions and never closed Gitmo Gitmo so Marine and never rolled back all of the invasions of the fourth fifth sixth eighth amendments in the Patriot Act warrantless wiretaps still going on NSA Verizon

The cellphone vibrates. CARVER looks at it, puzzled, but does not pick it up. It buzzes and buzzes until it stops.

CARVER

Torture you're still doing torture it's still going on and you want the power to put Americans in Gitmo forever Gitmo if you think if you think they did something you didn't like that you didn't like ever hear of habeas corpus mister constitutional scholar but now to you habeas corpus is like we've got your body and who's to tell us we can't have it not the Supreme Court that's for sure it's not just the liberties stuff you should be ashamed of I mean you've turned the White House and Justice Department and the

Department of Hopeless Security into these  
machines these engines for making us slaves  
without putting any chains around us

The phone buzzes again. Two more footfalls. Helicopters still in the background.

CARVER

You and the non-elected guy before you just tell us to go shopping so that we can make the economy go north again that is just stupid when you don't do anything to put a muzzle on the Goldman Sucks and Citigropes and Bank of Charge 'Em Five Bucks To Use Their Debit Cards and put the wolves next door to your office who are only going to take care of their wolf buddies and when some people finally just can't take anymore how the game is just rigged against them and decide to do something pretty inoffensive like take over a public park and say the 99 percent is mad as hell and won't take it anymore and why should we and instead of respect from you for making sure the Constitution still works mister constitutional scholar by really testing it out they get torture done back to them by thugs paid for by public money our money in our name and there's no big vomit in the society about how they got smashed for speaking their minds because the stage set by you and the non-elected guy in front of you makes it okay the default option to use violence against something you don't like like Libya who gave you the right to start another war you should've been impeached and Afghanistan is like you have to prove to somebody that you're tough by making a lot of young men and women die on your watch that was the thing with Bin Laden wasn't it that you could say I can kill with the best of 'em this from the president who got the peace prize but who doesn't have the first idea of what a peaceful world would look like or to make it come home to roost I bet you got a hard-on

CARVER stops, looks abashed. She pauses the recorder. She gets up to pace -- her pacing is circumscribed, as if she were in a small room -- or thinks she's in a small room.

A footfall. Helicopters. Cellphone buzzes. She puts her fingertips on the phone.

CARVER

It's a burn phone no one's supposed to

She pulls back her fingers, as if singed.

CARVER

Well of course they're doing it you idiot

CARVER sits back down, checks her notes, and unpauses the recorder.

CARVER

Sorry I shouldn't have said that about the hard-on

She pauses the recorder again. She chides herself silently but agitatedly for speaking this way.

She unpauses the recorder.

CARVER

Because this is not about making it personal or slander ad hominem

Cellphone buzzes.

CARVER

I don't think I have much time

She watches the phone until it stops.

CARVER

Regime change about Libya I was saying something I don't understand why we can't have it here because you're building a regime here that really should be changed that we should change but people are stupid about this they squeal about socialism and government control but they don't seem to mind being controlled by corporations this myth of the free market and business savvy and private is better really look at the poor the homeless the hungry the jobless the regime has taken such good care of us they give us Black Friday black all right like the death of sanity and reason and still people won't give it up the kool-aid Cyber Monday One-Day-Sale and then trample one of their own to death like the joke from the Catskills where one woman says how rotten the meals are and the other woman says yes and such small portions too amusing ourselves to death there is better there is better there is better

CARVER pauses the recorder again. This time she looks forlorn, forsaken. She paces again, looks up at the helicopter sound. Two footfalls. She unpauses the recorder.

CARVER

I am a patriot but not a patriot of the state a patriot of the heart not the flag-waving and bodily pain and punishment kind of patriot but a patriot of the it could be so much better so much better for everyone and my heart is my heart is my heart looks at actions your actions the actions of people you have trusted and shouldn't have and sees the road not taken and feels this really deep emptiness about how it could've been and wasn't and we fooled ourselves by placing all this hope in you even though you asked for it begged us to do it because we should never put hope in anyone hope is foolish we need to build a fire and keep your feet to it until they're fried and make sure that the game gets rigged our way for once and not be such suckers for stupidities like first black president and

CARVER stops, immensely sad. ARM OF THE GOVERNMENT, masked, steps into view, aims a high-powered rifle at CARVER.

CARVER

I could continue the list but you know what you haven't done I don't think there's any time left for you to do it right you've already wasted time and money and bodies it has cost us a lot and I don't think we should pay you anything like respect any more

CARVER turns and faces ARM OF THE GOVERNMENT.

CARVER

It's you, isn't it? Show me. Show me the one who's dead to me.

ARM OF THE GOVERNMENT takes off the mask, revealing SINDLE. SINDLE fires. The gun's report is amplified to a painful level. CARVER screams.

CARVER

Stop!!!!

Everything freezes: sound, light, bullet, SINDLE. CARVER faces the audience.

CARVER

You've gotta get out of here now. Get out! Get out! Now! Now!

Helicopter sounds rise. Police sirens rise. The cellphone buzzes on the desk. If possible, it would be great if cellphones in the

audience could also start ringing (arranged for beforehand, of course).

CARVER

Get out now! Get out now! Get out now! Get out now!

CARVER turns back to SINDLE. She throws open her arms. Time unfreezes. The bullet smashes through CARVER's heart and throws her to the floor.

SINDLE walks over to CARVER to make sure she's dead, then exits.

All sounds dwindle to silence.

The silence holds. And holds. And holds.

And then CARVER stirs. Sits up. Looks at everyone.

CARVER

Could happen that way. Already has in some places. The slow leak of freedom. The withering of compassion. The rise of a brutal individualism. The hardening of logic. The dictatorship of feeling. The triumph of the lie. When the chickens come home to roost, they always do so with this kind of vengeance in their gristly hearts. What need for invading armies or bomb vests if we will do the terrorizing to ourselves? Three planes crash into us, and we lose our nerve and turn into thugs.

CARVER gets up, goes to the desk, sits.

CARVER

Doesn't have to go that way.

CARVER turns the notebook back to the first page. She starts the recorder.

CARVER

Dear Mr. President --

Slowly rising the sound of helicopters. SINDLE appears, this time as SINDLE.

CARVER

I had the most horrible vision.

SINDLE

I will not lose sight of you again.

CARVER reaches under her shirt and wets her hand on her wound. She and SINDLE touch hands and then embrace, tight.

As they continue the embrace, the sounds of the approaching apocalypse play as a lullaby underneath.

**Other possible music:**

- Greg Smith's score to The Road to Fallujah:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LHIDpeygY-w>
- David Rovics, "Fallujah: The Song" -  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EM12793\\_0Yw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EM12793_0Yw)