

BOOT STATUS

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EXT. HELMAND PROVINCE - AIRFIELD - DAY

MARINES wearing tan MARPAT exit a C-130 loaded with packs onto an airfield tarmac. The sun beats down. Heat comes up in waves from the sand around them. Dust swirls in the air.

LANCE CORPORAL DORTON, 19, baby-faced, tall, tennis player build, glasses, quickens his pace to catch up to another Marine.

LCPL DORTON

What are we doing now, Sergeant?

SERGEANT PENA, average build, mid 20's, looks over to him while he continues to walk.

SGT PENA

We drop our shit off at the cans  
and head to the hangar to unload  
the gear and check out the birds.

LCpl Dorton looks across the tarmac and uses the back of his hand to wipe sweat from his brow.

LCPL DORTON

Pretty hot, isn't it?

Another Marine pushes the pack on LCpl Dorton's back, throwing him off balance. It is CORPORAL JOHNSON, early 20's, stocky, a look of permanent indignation on his face.

CPL JOHNSON

Of course it's hot, Boot. We're in  
the desert. What the hell did you  
expect?

LCPL DORTON

Sorry, Corporal.

CPL JOHNSON

I swear, you new guys get dumber  
and dumber every day.

SGT PENA

Can you both just shut up? I'm  
sweating my balls off and we still  
have to work today.

CPL JOHNSON

Aye, Sergeant.

LCPL DORTON

Aye, Sergeant.

INT. HANGAR - SEAT SHOP TENT - LATER

The tent is lined with makeshift desks and tool boxes. A thin layer of dust and sand cover everything inside. Seven Marines with their Flak Jackets and Kevlars sit around holding their M-16 rifles as they wait.

LCpl Dorton is sitting on the floor of the tent with his back against the leg of a desk. Beside him sits LANCE CORPORAL SKI, early 20's, fit, and a kind smile.

LCPL DORTON

When do you think Corporal Johnson will stop calling us "boots"? We're deployed now.

LCPL SKI

Who knows? The guy's a dick, man. I don't see why you let it get to you so much.

LCPL DORTON

I'm not.

LCpl Ski smirks and rubs his knuckles on LCpl Dorton's Kevlar. Sgt Pena walks into the tent just as LCpl Dorton pulls LCpl Ski's Kevlar down over his face and punches him in the arm.

SGT PENA

Can you two chill with the grab-ass long enough for me to pass word or do I need to wait on you?

LCPL DORTON

No, Sergeant.

LCPL SKI

Sorry about that, Sergeant.

Sgt Pena looks around the tent at his Marines.

SGT PENA

Alright, so 07 came in with a forward bay light and 11 has an ECS pressure surge gripe. Day crew, that's where we're at, night crew get back to the cans and get some sleep. I'll see you later.

Four Marines stand and head out of the tent. LCpl Dorton, LCpl Ski, Cpl Johnson, and Sgt Pena remain.

LCPL SKI

Want Dorton and I to head out to  
the jets, Sergeant?

Sgt Pena smiles.

SGT PENA

Not quite yet, Ski. Johnson and I  
have something special for you and  
Dorton with this being your first  
deployment and all.

LCpl Ski and LCpl Dorton look at each other, confused. A set  
of clippers begin BUZZING from behind Cpl Johnson. Cpl  
Johnson grabs LCpl Dorton by the shoulders and sets him down  
into an office chair, roughly massaging his shoulders.

CPL JOHNSON

(chuckling)

Don't worry, Boot. I'm much sweeter  
than the guys on Parris Island.

EXT. TARMAC - HARRIER 07 - LATER

LCpl Dorton and LCpl Ski sit on top of the Harrier near the  
cockpit. Both are wearing sweat stained tan coveralls, beads  
of sweat are dripping down their faces. Their hair is now  
shaved nearly bald.

LCpl Dorton rubs what is left of his dark stubble.

LCPL DORTON

Fuck. Now my neck is itching. They  
could have at least waited until  
the end of our shift so we could go  
shower.

LCpl Ski looks up at him.

LCPL SKI

I don't know, I kind of like it. It  
brings out your cheekbones. The  
Wookies are going to be all over  
you.

LCpl Ski winks at him. LCpl Dorton rolls his eyes.

LCPL DORTON

Do I need to stay up tonight to  
make sure you don't try sneaking in  
my rack?

LCPL SKI  
 Damn, you might. But I'm warning  
 you, I'm a little spoon.

INT. HANGAR - SEAT SHOP TENT - WEEKS LATER - EVENING

Day Crew Marines are wrapping up the work and talking to  
 Night Crew.

LCPL DORTON  
 Hey Sergeant, you mind if I hit the  
 port-o-john before we head back?

SGT PENA  
 Go for it.

CPL JOHNSON  
 I'll go with you Boot, I shouldn't  
 have eaten those eggs earlier.

LCpl Dorton and Cpl Johnson exit.

EXT. PORT-O-JOHN - MOMENTS LATER

The sun is setting. Three Port-O-Johns lined up in a row. Two  
 show occupied.

CPL JOHNSON  
 Hey, Boot! You got any hand  
 sanitizer on you?

LCPL DORTON  
 Uh, no Corporal. I've got some at  
 the shop though?

CPL JOHNSON  
 Good. This thing is disgusting.

A SIREN blares from the PA SYSTEM, and a robotic, English  
 accented voice comes out of the speakers.

PA SYSTEM  
 Rock-et Att-ack. Rock-et Att-ack.

LCpl Dorton runs out of the Port-O-John with his trousers  
 still down around his ankles. A loud, whirring sound can be  
 heard from somewhere over the base.

LCPL DORTON  
 (yelling)  
 We're getting attacked!

LCpl Dorton brings his rifle to his shoulder and aims at the sky. Cpl Johnson grabs the hand-guards of the rifle and pulls it away from LCpl Dorton's shoulder before shoving him to the ground.

Two BOOMS are heard from a distance. LCpl Dorton makes an awkward attempt to stand back up. Cpl Johnson pulls backward on LCpl Dorton's trousers that are still around his ankles. LCpl Dorton falls.

CPL JOHNSON  
Stay down idiot!

PA SYSTEM  
Rock-et Att-ack. Rock-et Att-ack.

Cpl Johnson low crawls up to LCpl Dorton.

LCPL DORTON  
Shouldn't we be doing something?

CPL JOHNSON  
This happens all the time. Those idiots couldn't hit the broad side of a barn.

Cpl Johnson looks behind them.

CPL JOHNSON (CONT'D)  
Pull up your damn pants, dude.

INT. HANGAR - SEAT SHOP TENT - LATER

Marines are all talking. Cpl Johnson and LCpl Dorton enter. Everyone goes quiet.

SGT PENA  
You guys good?

CPL JOHNSON  
Yeah, except Rambo here thought he was going to fight off rockets single-handedly.

SGT PENA  
What?

CPL JOHNSON  
Oh, didn't you know?

Cpl Johnson claps his arm around LCpl Dorton and smiles.

CPL JOHNSON (CONT'D)  
 Dorton's trying to be a god-damn  
 war hero. So we're in the head  
 doing our business, right? And the  
 sirens go off.

LCpl Dorton covers his face with his hands.

CPL JOHNSON (CONT'D)  
 Dorton here busts out of the  
 shitter with his pants still around  
 his ankles and his rifle up like  
 he's about to fight the entire  
 Taliban.

The other Marines laugh. They slap LCpl Dorton's shoulder.  
 Sgt Pena shakes his head, but laughs.

EXT. HANGAR - NIGHT

LCpl Dorton, LCpl Ski, Cpl Johnson, and Sgt Pena are walking  
 out. LCpl Dorton catches up with Cpl Johnson.

LCPL DORTON  
 Hey Corporal. I wanted to say  
 thanks for saving my ass earlier.

CPL JOHNSON  
 It's nothing Dorton.

LCPL DORTON  
 Dorton? Not Boot?

CPL JOHNSON  
 Listen, kid. You thought you were  
 straight up going to charge out of  
 there and take out some rockets  
 with your M-16. You might be dumb,  
 but you're good.

They both stand in silence.

SGT PENA  
 You two lovebirds coming or not?

CPL JOHNSON  
 Yeah, we're coming. Had to make  
 sure the Boot wasn't going to go  
 charging off into the night after  
 terrorists!  
 (to Dorton)  
 Come on, Rambo.

END