

MARKINSON. I'm appalled, sir.

JESSEP. You're appalled?

MARKINSON. Yes sir.

JESSEP. That's pretty strong language, Matthew, I mean maybe you better cool off before you work yourself into a lather. You're appalled? Santiago's wrote letters to everyone but Santa Clause complaining about his treatment, he's broken the chain of command, he's threatened to rat out a member of his unit, a member of his squad for Christ's sake, to say nothing of the fact that he's a U.S. Marine and it would appear that he can't run from here to there without collapsing from heat exhaustion. What the hell's going on over at Windward, Matthew?

MARKINSON. Colonel, I think it might be more appropriate if this discussion were held in private.

KENDRICK. That won't be necessary, Colonel. I can handle the problem.

MARKINSON. The way you handled Cunis Barnes? You're doing something wrong, and-

KENDRICK. My methods of leadership are what brought me to this base.

MARKINSON. Don't interrupt. me, I'm still your superior officer.

JESSEP. And I'm yours, Matthew. Now what are we gonna do about this?

MARKINSON. I think we've got to transfer Santiago, sir. Right away. Now.

JESSEP. Transfer Santiago.

MARKINSON. Yes sir.

JESSEP. I suppose you're right. I suppose that's the thing to do. Wait. Wait. I've got a better idea. Let's transfer the whole squad off the base. We better do that. Let's - on second thought - Windward. The whole Windward division, let's transfer 'em off the base. Jon, go on out there and get those boys down off the fence, they're packin' their bags.

JESSEP. Jon, get me the President, we're surrendering our position in Cuba.

KENDRICK. Yes sir.

JESSEP. Wait a minute, Jon. Don't call the President. Maybe that's the wrong thing to do. Maybe you should let us consider this for a moment. Maybe, instead of giving up because a Marine made a mistake, maybe we should train Santiago. What do you think, I'm just spit balling, but maybe,

we as officers, have a responsibility to this country to see that the men and women charged with its security are properly trained professionals. And maybe we have that responsibility to the other members of the Corps. Yes. Yes. I'm certain I once read something like that. See? And now I'm trying to think of how I might feel if a Marine got hurt or killed because a PFC in my command didn't know what the fuck he was doing. And this brief meditation has brought me around to the thinking that your suggestion of transferring Private Santiago, while expeditious, and certainly painless, might not be, in a manner of speaking, the American way.

(beat)

Santiago stays where he is, we're gonna train the lad. Jon, you're in charge. Santiago doesn't make 4.6-4.6 on his next progress report, I'm gonna blame you. Then I'm gonna kill you.

MARKINSON. You're making a mistake, Colonel.

JESSEP. Matthew, I believe I will have that word in private with you now. Jon, that's all. Why don't you and I have lunch at the O Club, we can talk about how to train the Private.

KENDRICK. I'd be delighted sir.

JESSEP. Dismissed.

Matthew, sit, please.

(MARKINSON sits.)

What do you think of Kendrick?

MARKINSON. Nathan, this isn't personal. My opinion of Jon Kendrick isn't -

JESSEP. I think he's kind of weasel myself.

MARKINSON. Yes sir.

JESSEP. But he's an awfully good officer, and in the end we see eye to eye on the best way to run a Marine Corps unit. We're in the business of saving lives, Matthew. With every degree that we allow ourselves to fall off the mark of perfection, more people die. And I believe that taking a Marine who's a weak link and packing him off to another assignment without giving him the proper training is the same as sending a kid into the jungle with a weapon that backfires.