

SON OF A...

EXT. QUIET TOWN - STREET - EVENING

HENRY, 25--Native American wearing an Army Ranger uniform--a slight limp in his gait.

He walks toward a grocery store.

Henry sees his reflection in the window, looks himself over.

RACK FOCUS from his reflection to the b.g. reflection where...

SYBIL, 60, a religious woman wearing an Islamic HEADSCARF, seems startled to see Henry.

She watches as Henry checks his look, straightening his jacket, brushing lint from his uniform. He enters the store.

Sybil crosses the street.

TWO BOYS, 13, mock the way she looks by pulling their Metallica t-shirts over their heads and walking in step behind her.

INT. GROCERY STORE - EVENING

An aisle---Henry, surrounded on all sides by obscene towers of hyper-colorful boxes. His drab green uniform contrasting harshly, he appears overwhelmed by a carnival of color.

In the b.g. a group of neighborhood people watch baseball from a TV hanging from the ceiling.

TV BASEBALL ANNOUNCER (V.O.)  
Bonds, at the plate, 2 men on, the  
count 2 and 2--the pitch. Fastball,  
in on the hands--he just dodged a  
bullet there folks...

The small crowd "oooooohs".

Henry looks toward the TV and catches one of the check out girls staring at him, his Army uniform. She turns away, then glances back.

Self-consciously he goes back to the wall of cereal and slowly, almost reluctantly, fills his basket.

INT. SECOND AISLE

Henry takes a jar of peanut butter, inspects a box of taco shells.

TV BASEBALL ANNOUNCER (V.O.)  
 Bonds fouls another back to the  
 screen. Man, he's making Penney  
 really work for it. Full count.

His eyes move from rice to couscous, he follows that down the aisle to the Mediterranean food section.

At the end of the aisle Sybil stares intensely at him. She catches his eye, they lock. Two "alien" looking people in smalltown America. She walks away.

He looks down at his uniform.

TV BASEBALL ANNOUNCER (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 Penney out of the stretch. Fires  
 one over to first trying to pick  
 off Molina stealing...

INT. THIRD AISLE

Henry catches Sybil staring at him from behind a pile of potatoes. He smiles. Seemingly embarrassed, she moves on.

INT. FOURTH AISLE

Accidentally elbowing a stack of oranges, Henry bends down, quickly scooping them up--he sees a pair of feet: Sybil.

He stands, with an armload of oranges.

SYBIL  
 (Turkish accent)  
 I'm sorry. It just...  
 (beat)  
 You, you look like someone.

HENRY  
 I get that a lot--the uniform.

She smiles, taking his uniform in. Henry stacks the oranges back on the pile.

SYBIL  
 My son. You look exactly--exactly  
 like my son.

HENRY  
 Really? A handsome kid, huh?

Her face turns serious, wistful.

SYBIL  
They shot him... a week before he  
was to come home.

HENRY  
Jesus, I'm sorry.

SYBIL  
(she points to the TV)  
I found out about it from the CNN.

The TV Announcer echoes down the aisle.

HENRY  
A week before. That's...I'm sorry.  
A sniper? A lot of that in  
Fallujah. Fallujah?

She looks confused, then nods.

SYBIL  
I never saw his body--they wouldn't  
let me because of... he was shot in  
the face.

She gestures toward her face then stares long and hard at him  
across the aisle.

He can tell she's seeing him with a bullet in his face.

He looks at the last orange in his hand--split open from the  
fall, the juice running out of it.

HENRY  
I'll go back next month.

SYBIL  
You good boy. My Emir, he was a  
patriot too. I come from Istanbul  
in 1980. But he was born here. We  
love United States. He enlisted  
after 9/11. Probably you too?

HENRY  
(nods)  
That was a long time ago.

Uncomfortable, Henry, turns back to his shopping.

Then:

She leaves her cart, approaches.

SYBIL  
May I...May I touch your face?

HENRY  
Uh...

He freezes, looks around.

Henry instinctively SHRINKS BACK as her hand comes up to his face.

SYBIL  
Never mind. Silly. Mother. Can't  
stop being one, even if he's gone.

A CHEER from people at the TV--Henry turns, momentarily distracted.

He looks back at Sybil--she has a mist in her eyes.

SYBIL (CONT'D)  
It's like...seeing him again.  
Excuse me.

Sybil goes back to her cart and pushes on down the aisle.

Henry looks after her, opens his mouth to say something just as she turns the corner.

He touches his own face, regretting he didn't let her.

INT. CHECKOUT COUNTER - LATER

Henry gets in line. He sees Sybil who's second in line.

Sybil glances over her shoulder, seeing Henry.

TV BASEBALL ANNOUNCER (V.O.)  
Bonds stands in at the plate...he's  
gone 0 for 3 tonight...

The man in front of Sybil has trouble counting his money, making the CHECKOUT GIRL--who's trying to keep one eye on the TV-- impatient.

Sybil takes the moment to walk over to Henry.

SYBIL  
I just wanted to say I'm sorry--  
about before. It was just an old  
woman talking. I feel stupid for  
even asking.

HENRY

No, please. I understand. I shouldn't have backed away like that. I'm--I'm the one who should apologize.

He offers his face to her.

She, hesitates, then touches his cheek, looking at him fondly like he's the reincarnation of her dead son.

Then:

SYBIL

Please, it would mean a lot to me... when I leave the store... Would you just say, "Bye, mom"?

Henry looks around uncomfortably.

SYBIL (CONT'D)

Just, "Bye, Mom." It would mean so much. Would you do that for me?

HENRY

Of course. Of course I will.

Sybil looks at him again with those misty eyes and goes back.

Henry glimpses the tabloid headlines: dozens of different cover stories but only about two topics--CELEBRITIES and WAR.

He looks up--Checkout Girl has bagged Sybil's groceries.

Sybil picks up the bulging bags, turns and waves to Henry.

He blushes.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Bye, Mom!

He waves, she blows him a kiss and walks out.

Henry watches her, feels good. He turns back to the headlines.

The man ahead of Henry takes his change, leaves.

Henry puts his few things on the belt.

CHECKOUT GIRL

That comes to...

(beat)

\$65.68.

HENRY

What? This? You're kidding, right?

CHECKOUT GIRL

No. Your mother told me you were paying for her groceries too.

HENRY

What? My--?

Henry realizes he's been had.

Henry runs to the door.

TV BASEBALL ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Wind up, deals--Bonds hits a high fly ball--left field, Gonzalez back--on the track--to the wall--OUTTA HERE! NUMBER 756! BARRY BONDS HAS DONE IT...

The crowd ERUPTS around the TV.

EXT. GROCERY STORE - CONTINUOUS

As Henry bolts out of the grocery store whooping and hollering can be heard from the sportsbar down the street.

Henry looks up and down the street for Sybil--all he finds is her headscarf in the gutter.

The drunken fans cheering builds.

FADE TO BLACK.

TITLE CARD (OVER BLACK):

"Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel."  
--Samuel Johnson

THE END

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