

TITLE: Brothers in Arms

AUTHOR: P. Morrigan

RATING: PG

WARNINGS: Adult language

DISCLAIMER: Characters belong to their corporate parents. I'm just playing with them and I have no money worth going to court over, though the zine collection might be worth something.

SUMMARY: A response to Sheila's challenge to write about the guys' worst fears.

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It was happening again, just like I'd dreamed over and over again for the last fifteen, twenty years. And this time it wasn't the jungle. Not that jungle. I wasn't face down in a place as alive as I was, as alive as any of the men in my unit. This time it was concrete and steel and the jungle that the city can be on a hot August afternoon. Sweltering heat. Sweat dripping into my eyes and stinging. I could taste the salt on my lips. I'd gone without the tee shirt and jeans this time. The jumpsuit itself was hot enough and the heavy canvas was sticking to my back. I knew the front of it, around my neck, was dark and damp, and long, wet shadows spread under my armpits. Sometimes worlds collide. I was wearing a uniform, lying in a jungle, melting in the heat, reeking from my own stink and trying to keep from dying. And I didn't know if it was then, now, or another of those godawful dreams that still come two, three times a week. Even after all this time.

It was big. We knew that when we got there and I hadn't liked it when Pete reluctantly suggested splitting up. But this place was big, too. It used to be a warehouse or something and now they were talking about converting it to a soundstage, to film some of the TV shows shot in New York City. Get out! A soundstage along the Brooklyn waterfront? I don't think too many Hollywood stars are going to be trooping around that neighborhood. It's one thing to do it in Chelsea where "Law and Order" has its offices. That's Manhattan and it's close to everything. You could walk to the Village, to TriBeCa where a lot of stars hangs at DeNiro's restaurant, around Chelsea itself, to Chinatown, Little Italy, pretty much all over downtown. But Brooklyn?

One problem with this grand scheme, well, besides the fact that they were building the soundstage in Brooklyn. Something had moved in and made itself at home while the warehouse sat abandoned. And now it didn't want to share quarters with a bunch of producers and directors and people with titles like gopher and best boy, and stuff even more ridiculous than that.

Egon and Ray said it wasn't a demon, just a Class Six but one at the more powerful end of the scale. Egon's gone over that Classification System until I can spit out most of it by rote but I just leave in their hands when it comes to levels within levels, the relative strength or manifestation of particular ghosts and so on. Just give me the facts: it's big, it's mean, it's ugly -- Pete usually does the color commentary -- and it didn't want to leave the warehouse. It wanted us to leave and since *that* wasn't in the game plan, it was playing hide and seek with us.

So we split, Ray and me, Pete and Egon. We try to balance how we pair off but it usually goes that way because sometimes Egon's the only one who can clobber Pete when he's in a particularly bouncy mood. Worried me though because there's no end to the amount of trouble the two of them can get into when they're paired. Trouble sniffs them out. That, or Pete trips over it. He's plenty accident-prone, that boy.

Not this time though. This time trouble was wearing a capital T and it came straight at Ray and me. Ray ducked and I peeled away to the left. We both had our throwers in our hands but that thing came down from the rafters so fast that I didn't have a chance to get off a shot. I made up for that pretty quickly. Damn thing was fast and he was -- Egon always reminds us that nether entities don't possess a gender identity so I guess I should say *it* was -- pissed. It shrugged off my stream like I was shooting silly string instead of a proton beam and dove at Ray. Ray dropped and rolled and the Six missed him completely.

The place was like a rabbit warren, if you could imagine one built with an erector set. The wall supports were steel but they weren't solid. Oh, there were some big steel and concrete columns, the ones really supporting the roof that were wide and solid, but scattered throughout the place were all these ones that looked like the steel you see in industrial shelving with square holes every inch or so. They must've used them to divide up the warehouse into separate storage rooms. The walls were long gone, only the steel supports remaining to set boundaries, and the Six was slipping in and out of them like it was a slalom course. It made it hell to try to track it or keep it in a stream.

And it was stream slipping with the best of them. Ray and I finally got both of our streams on it at the same time and it just laughed at us. Out and out laughed. Then it pulled away and started uprooting some of those steel shelving-unit type wall supports and throwing them at us. Tore up its own slalom course but by this time the Six had discovered a whole new game to play and it was a lot more fun: skewer a Ghostbuster. Ray dodged right and I dodged left but either I didn't move fast enough or the nasty bastard just got lucky.

Something connected with my right jaw and shoulder and the next thing I knew I was on my belly and breathing in dust on a concrete floor while the world dipped and swayed around me. It was hellaciously noisy, people yelling and the earsplitting scream of metal tearing into pieces. When I tried to move my head, my stomach erupted and I spewed an orange stream of chunky bits that had tasted a lot better going down as breakfast than it did coming up. My hands slid on the floor as I pushed myself away, inch by inch, from my own vomit.

I was hurt. That was about the extent of my thinking ability. I did a physiology check. Arms okay, I could move them as long I didn't have to do it quickly. Legs okay, I could move them as long as I didn't have to try to stand any time soon. Torso? Nothing felt broken but when I dipped my head down to look, things faded a little in and out of focus. Definitely a head thing then.

I slumped back onto the floor because even propping myself up on my elbows made the floor rock under me and every time it shifted, my stomach threatened a repeat performance. I turned my head sideways and let it rest on my left forearm while I tried to focus my eyes on what was happening. There was one of those steel erector set supports in my way -- this one was still standing in place -- but I could see through the little holes into the area where the Six was still wreaking havoc.

Looked like the cavalry had come and gone down just as fast as I had. There was a pile of blue in the distance, near the bottom of one of those serious steel and concrete columns, and it was the same blue as Egon's uniform. He was down and though the floor under me was moving, Egon wasn't. I didn't know if he was dead, hurt, or just stunned. Pete was easy to pick out, even through the column and with my hazy vision. The Six had Pete in one of its massive lobster claws and as I watched, Pete stopped struggling. Just went limp and as still as Egon on the floor.

Amazingly enough Ray was still on his feet, still firing, trying to keep his proton stream aimed at the bottom of the Six so he didn't hit Pete by mistake. Ray was screaming at the Six to let Peter go, so it did. Pete's body poured out of that thing's claw like sand from a toddler's hand. He hit the floor hard.

Two down. Jesus, counting me, it was three down and that Six wasn't even winded. Not that I could tell because ugly orange and brown blobs of ectoplasm don't actually breathe, or so Egon and Ray tell me.

Every time I moved, I could feel consciousness sliding away from me, a dark curtain being drawn down over my eyes. I hurt. My head hurt so badly I couldn't have spelled my last name if anyone asked. I know I had to get up or Ray was going to go down too. I didn't think that I could even climb to my knees without passing out. And I knew that if I somehow miraculously made it to my feet, the Six would take me down just like it had Egon and Pete.

Ray and I had already tried two streams on the Six and that didn't hold it, so I wasn't fooling anyone that dragging myself back into the game would make a difference in the outcome. The way the cards were stacked right now, we couldn't even hold the Six much less beat it. It was pissed and it wasn't gonna leave, it'd made that clear from the start. This was its territory and it was swatting us like we were bugs that had invaded its home. So it was lie here quietly and maybe live or go out there and die with the other three guys. Not the first damn time I've been in that position. I figured it out once. Two, sometimes three times a week over more than fifteen years is more than 2000 times. Stay quiet and live; be a hero and die. I've been in that position more than 2000 times.

I was a pissing-my-pants scared teenager the first time. Face down in a shallow trench full of dead guys and my heart pounding so loud I was thinking someone was gonna dance to the beat. We were overrun. We were so far past overrun that we were behind their lines but there were still guys firing. There were a couple guys with machine guns but the rest just had their rifles. I could see Hammersmith lying behind this huge, spreading tree and popping off one shot after another. And then his head exploded. I ducked my head down and buried it back into the slimy mud; wet humus mixed with the blood of the guys around me.

I could smell it. I could smell how this jungle just absorbed you. Leaves and roots and food scraps and bones and human bodies would just feed it as it grew. I'd just lie there and the jungle would grow right over me and it would be green and as quiet as it ever got and no one would know how many men died here.

I could hear our platoon sergeant screaming hoarsely, trying to organize something, yelling because he knew that probably half of us had our heads buried between the roots of the trees hoping that the VC wouldn't notice us as they overran the place. Buried up our asses he would have said. I could see Lonsdale, that hoo-ah kid from Oklahoma crawl over towards the sergeant. He'd talked a lot of crap about how he wasn't afraid to die for his country and all that stuff that sounds so good on a recruiting poster but doesn't mean jack when you're watching your friends get turned inside out by landmines. He got his chance though. He and the sergeant both.

I started praying then 'cause it looked like everyone was dying and I knew that if I raised my head or even reached for my gun, I'd die too. But if T-Rex or Boomer or Jake were there, I know I would've done it anyway. They were my blood, my boys. No way I was gonna look like a chickenshit in front of my boys. Boomer was lying in some hospital tent somewhere getting his leg put back together and I didn't know where T-Rex or Jake were. We'd gotten separated when we started pulling back. I just hoped they had their heads down like I did. I hoped they weren't lying in pieces like half the guys I could see without raising my head.

I was shaking so hard I couldn't hear myself crying and I just kept praying. Praying for the VC to finish going through this area, for them to keep going and not stop. Praying for the reinforcements that Lt. Kursel screamed for about half a lifetime ago. Praying that the Colonel didn't give this up as lost ground and call in an air strike. If I tried to fight, I'd die, just like Hammersmith and Lonsdale and every other poor bastard spread out in the surrounding quarter mile. But I knew if I just stayed still and kept quiet, I had a chance of coming out it alive. So I did. That night and every night for the next twenty years or so.

I'd choked. We were under heavy fire, normal reaction, the only sane reaction in an insane war. All that rationalization didn't make up for the fact that I'd choked. Yeah it kept me alive, so I could look in the mirror for the rest of my life and remember burying my head in mud filled with blood and urine and body parts and hoping that my guys didn't know.

The dreams kept coming and it was always 'Nam, even after I joined the business, even after I let these guys get close. It was always 'Nam but sometimes Ray and Egon and Pete were there with me. I'd see

Pete behind that tree instead of Hammersmith or Ray crawling over to the Sergeant instead of Lonsdale. Sometimes I'd dream that I was lying in that trench and I pulled their bodies over me so the VC wouldn't know I was alive, so I'd have a barrier if they fired into the bodies hoping to take out the cowards who were hiding. Those were the worst. Those nights I woke up gasping for air and I'd sit in my bed and listen to the exhalations and the snores around me until my breathing slowed back down to normal.

I never wanted to choke again and here I was with those same voices whispering in my ear. "Winston, keep your head down, man, or it's gonna get shot off. Don't be a fool. Heroes go home in body bags so their mommas can cry over them." I'd been hearing those voices for half my life.

This time was the same and this time was different. This time, if the Six ran over us and kept going, there weren't gonna be any reinforcements coming in to stop it. We had no backup; there weren't any other units that might take it down tomorrow or next week. If Pete, Egon, and Ray died and I lived, it wouldn't be enough. I couldn't stop it by myself, even with all the cops and National Guard in New York backing me up.

We'd done some stupid shit, heroic the papers usually called it, but we always did it knowing we had a chance of coming out of it. Maybe that chance was small enough that Pete didn't want to know the exact probability, but we always knew there was a chance. It was twenty years later and I didn't want to die just as strongly as I didn't want to die in that sucking mud hellhole of a war. But, dear Lord, I didn't want to choke again. I didn't want to hide and watch them carry my buddies away the way I'd already seen once. A lot more than once.

I started praying but this time it wasn't just my own sorry ass I was praying for. "Heavenly Father, please give me the fortitude to fight your enemies, to protect your people, and to do your work. Grant your weak and cowardly servant the strength and courage to be a warrior in your service. Amen."

I'd always pictured God's warriors as knights, bright, radiant with His light, and clean. Above all, God's warriors would be clean. But here I was aspiring to that position, wearing a filthy and foul uniform that was spotted with my own vomit and soaked in sweat. Sweat from exertion, from chasing that Six through the warehouse, from the heat of an unventilated building during August. Sweat from fear, from the rank fear that still pulsed through my body and kept my joints and my limbs weak and far from steady. I didn't want to die. "Oh God, please give me courage," I prayed, because I didn't want to die.

And then I lifted myself onto my elbows, swayed a few times in rhythm with the floor, and heaved until my stomach was completely empty.

Ray was still on his feet -- God bless him, that boy was fast when he had to be -- and that pile of blue was starting to move. My eyes still weren't focusing too good but I could see Egon hugging his right arm to his body protectively. He was hurt but he was awake and moving. Suddenly we had that chance again. We were down but we weren't out of it any more.

Egon fired at the Six, left-handed and not so steadily, and it whirled in rage at the unexpected attack from behind. It gave Ray time to drag Pete out of the middle of the floor, towards me, as if Ray was going to be able to protect both of us.

"Ray, I'm up, man," I said and slowly pulled myself to my knees as visual evidence. I was up but I was nowhere near steady. I promptly sat down hard, but at least I wasn't lying on the floor.

Ray exhaled in stages, like bumping down a couple of stairs, and turned eyes that were ringed in white toward me. His hair was slick with sweat and plastered to his head; his jumpsuit was soaked, just totally soaked and he was breathing hard.

"Oh, thank God, Winston. I tried to hold it off as long as I could but I didn't know what I was going to do."

For a guy who says he doesn't believe in God, Ray thanks Him an awful lot whenever he's really, really been scared. Ray moved Pete behind the steel erector set column, as if that was any protection. Pete's face was dead white and covered with perspiration, but that bellows of a chest that makes him so loud was moving just fine. I said a quick thank you, too. I'd asked for strength and courage and He'd given me signs that Egon and Pete were still alive, that we could survive this, and that was enough to drown out those self-serving voices in my head.

"What's the game plan, Ray?" I asked, hoping, *hoping* like hell, that he had a game plan.

Ray climbed around Pete to the other side of the steel column and fired, just as that Six was getting a little too close to Egon. It roared, caught in two beams, and waved a lobster-claw into the steel and concrete column near Egon. So now we knew it was stupid as well as mean because that column didn't go anywhere and the Six let out a shriek, of pain or rage or whatever nether entities feel when they do something really dumb.

Egon scuttled sideways, still protecting his right side, just pushing with his legs to put some distance between him and the Six. He kept that thrower firing unerringly at the Six. The two streams, Egon's and Ray's slipped and swirled around the Six, wrapping him in a bright web of protons.

"Can you handle your thrower?" Ray shouted over his shoulder at me.

I pulled it in by its cord and gave it a quick once over. I'd never ever gotten out of the habit of checking my weapon; my weapon kept me alive over there because I took care of it.

"As long as I don't have to stand up. What's the plan, Ray?" My voice rose a little on his name, to let him know I was a little worried about whatever he was coming up with. Three busters down, and he'd been the only one standing; I knew he hadn't been coming up with anything conservative, not that he was known for being anywhere close to conservative under normal circumstances.

"Three streams on him, go to full power to lock him in place while I throw the trap."

I wasn't all that surprised that Ray sounded excited about it. I wanted to ask him how he knew that would work. They must have had three streams on it -- him, Pete, and Egon - at one point or another before Egon went down. What made him think it was gonna work now? But I didn't have an alternative and I'm a firm believer in that lead, follow, or get out of the way maxim.

"Egon know this plan?" I asked skeptically.

I kicked myself across the floor to where I'd have a shot at the Six. Ray was gonna have to move, triangulate, so we could get the Six pinned.

"No," Ray turned his head and grinned. "Don't worry, Winston, he'll figure it out. He's pretty smart."

"Uh-huh." I *knew* that, but I also knew that Egon was still half-lying on the floor and his thrower arm was out of commission.

But the time to go was now, before that Six managed to knock one of us out of the game again and reduced it back to two streams. Ray streaked across the floor, taking up a position diagonally opposite me. I flipped the switch on my pack and felt the vibration hum throughout my body as it cycled upward. It was familiar, almost soothing and its quiet squeal was music to my ears. I slid to the other side of Pete's

steel support column and rested my back against it as I threw the toggle on my thrower handle and held on for dear life.

The Six didn't go down easy. He bounced in and out of the streams, but every time he escaped one, another one caught him and held him, even if only for the fractional seconds it took for the other two to shift over. And then it clicked: all three beams in place, the Six roaring, and Ray yelling over the roar to go to full power, meaning take off that safety margin we usually keep in place. In my head I call it making the jump to hyperspace. I keep meaning to tell that to Ray; he'd get a kick out of it.

Ray was right. Egon figured it out and upped the power on his thrower for the ten seconds that Ray needed to throw the trap out. A cone of light pierced upward into the darkened rafter area and the shadow-shrouded roof of the warehouse. The trap made a hell of a noise, shrieking as it sucked that ugly bastard in and spitting out all sorts of fog like it was a special effects show at ILM or Disney or something. One good thing at least: the ozone smell of the trap overcame the pungent odor of four guys who stunk to high heaven.

In the sudden silence, I could clearly hear Pete's rasping breathing. I leaned back against the column. Egon just slid down onto his left side and lay still, panting. Ray walked out to the middle of the floor and bent over; rested his hands on his knees and just let his head hang down. He sucked in deep gulps of air and his sweat-soaked hair swung towards the floor, releasing little drips.

"Hey, Ray," called a weak voice from behind where I sat. "Now that you're done saving our asses, you think you might consider calling an ambulance."

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I woke, gasping for air, clawing at my blanket. My heart was pounding a disco beat in my chest and I put my hand over it, the way people do when they're having a heart attack. I sat up, let the blankets slip down to my waist and waited for my night vision to kick in.

As the throbbing pulse in my eardrums slowly quieted, I could hear the steady, sonorous breathing surrounding me. Usually that was enough but sometimes I needed visual confirmation and this was one of those times. It'd been a bad one tonight. Grenades and rocket launchers do horrible, indescribable things to a man's body but it's the odor that's the worst. Almost twenty years later and I can still smell burning flesh.

The blackness around me settled into shades of gray. Pete, buried under his comforter was barely visible. Only the paleness of his face stood out in the darkness but he was there, whole and alive. Egon's hair, usually identifiable by its signature style alone, was a soft glow in the room as moonlight reflected lightly off the pale blond strands. Ray ... Ray's bed was empty. And I guess that didn't surprise me all that much. After the day we'd had, after the day he'd had, it would have taken a lot more than a glass of milk and a glance through a few favorite comic books to settle him enough to sleep.

I shoved back the blanket and padded quietly across the room. I wasn't really worried about waking Egon or Pete. They were sleeping the sleep of the just, and in this case, the injured and drugged. Pete's two broken ribs and Egon's broken collarbone and wrist were going to force us to adjust and reschedule a couple of busts, which was good. It'd give me and give Ray a little time to recover, too.

Ray was downstairs, of course, in front of the television. I could see the blue light flickering from the top of the staircase. I walked loudly enough so I didn't startle him.

He smiled at me. Middle of the night and Ray can still flash a smile bright as daylight.

"Hey, Winston. Couldn't sleep either, huh?" he said sympathetically. He was curled up on the sofa, arms wrapped around his pillow from upstairs with an afghan covering his legs. There was a glass of milk on the coffee table and a package of Oreos that was just about gone.

"Uh-uh." I sank into the armchair with a soft sigh. "What'cha watching?"

Like I didn't recognize "Hogan's Heroes." Practically grew up watching it. It wasn't PBS, sure didn't stretch your mind, but it was funny most of the time and it was nice to see a black guy, Kinchloe, as part of the team. That and "Mission Impossible." Never missed them.

"Oh, just kind of flipping the channels." Ray shrugged. "Can't seem to get into anything."

I filched an Oreo from the package, pulled it apart, and licked the filling off the cookie. Just like a kid, I thought with some amusement. Hell, why not. Who said you have to be a kid to enjoy all the little things?

If Pete had been here, I bet he'd know how to approach Ray, get him to talk. It'd been a bad bust by anyone's standards, not just mine. Pete would probably jump right in, say something like "So, how'd it feel to own the whole company by yourself, Ray?" I shook my head slowly. It just wasn't my style.

"Ray, I know you don't believe in God or anything," I waited as he turned his head. I could see his eyes coming into sharp focus, giving me the total attention of that razor-sharp mind. "But sometimes, when I think about the business, about what we do, I see us as doing God's work."

"Because we fight demons and stuff?" His curiosity was piqued and he shifted on the couch to turn away from the TV and more towards me.

"Yeah, and sometimes we help spirits move on. But mostly it's because we're helping people, doing things to protect them from Evil that no one else can do, even when it's dangerous as all get out for us."

He retreated for a moment and there were shadows in his eyes. "I know, and it's important. I can't imagine anything more important and worthwhile, but sometimes it just totally sucks, you know."

Yeah, I knew. Probably more than he imagined.

"I was thinking about this today, you know, after, and I really believe that sometimes He gives us that extra strength to hang on when it's beyond our endurance. I know I called on Him today and prayed like I haven't prayed in a long while."

An eyebrow perked and Ray's head turned just a little.

"It was a bad one for me; brought up some stuff from the past, ugly stuff." I sat for a moment or two in silence, thinking about the bust, how quickly it had all gone down. It was nice just to be able to finally think clearly. The Emergency Room doctor said I'd suffered a mild concussion, made noises about keeping me overnight, but I needed to be where I was. And the headache had finally settled down to a steady throb so it was a little more manageable. "I was pretty scared there for a while."

"You were scared? Really?"

He seemed so surprised, as if Pete, Egon and I have some prescription for bravery that comes in pills or something and prevents that chill in your bowels when you are scared out of your mind.

"Yeah, Ray, I was scared," I laughed, a wry laugh. "Anyone who wasn't scared in that situation, I'd check 'em to see if they were missing a few screws or something."

"Well, yeah," he admitted with a little smile. "I mean, besides Peter because we already know he's missing a few screws."

I snorted appropriately, though I wasn't ready to just confine that description to Pete. Egon and Ray give me cause to wonder occasionally.

"I know I went down hard. Don't know how long I was out - I might have just been stunned and a little out of it -- but when I was finally able to pull it together, it was like something out of a bad dream." Truer than he'd ever know. "Egon was already down and the Six had Pete ... I kind of thought it was a miracle you were still on your feet, Ray, but it scared me when I realized the situation. I didn't think we were gonna get out of there."

"A bad dream? More like my worst nightmare," he said glumly.

I just tilted my head to tell him I wanted to listen.

"No, it's nothing," he smiled a little and shook his head. "It's just that when I think about the worst thing I can imagine, the absolute worst thing in the world, it would be to have a bust go bad. To have it go so horribly bad that you guys, all of you --- you know." He flushed. "To lose all of you, to not be able to stop it from happening, to see it happening."

But I'd bet in his wildest dreams, Ray couldn't imagine that scenario -- losing all your buddies, not being able to stop it, watching it happening -- and hiding. And I was pretty glad that it would never even occur to him that the possibility existed. I was a child when it happened to me, but I was a man now and I felt a frisson of shame run through me at the thought I'd even listened to those voices from the past today, even for a minute or two.

"Could've happened, Ray, but it didn't." I leaned over and rested a hand on his arm. "Because you kept that Six at bay, gave us time to recover, basically saved our bacon. There's no one I'd trust more. You know why?"

Thoughtful eyes gazed inward for a time in serious reflection and then came back to me. He shook his head.

"Because it *is* your worst nightmare. If anyone could possibly stop it from happening, I know there's no one gonna be trying harder than you. Just like you did today."

He gave me a half-smile, like he was going to that aw-shucks, you're giving me credit I don't deserve look, so I cut him off before he got there.

"It might take a little time to sink in, but it's okay 'cause we have the time right now. But it will sink in. You faced it, you fought it, you won. And that is something that makes me proud. It should make you proud too." I pulled back because I could see the red rising from his neck towards his face. "But that'll come with time, Ray. Right now, I think we should maybe skip the channel surfing and go straight to video."

"Star Wars?" he said with a delighted smile.

"Hey, you're the hero, man. You get to pick what you want."



I settled back into my chair and watched as Ray walked over the shelf where the videos are stored and grabbed one of his favorites. Good. "Return of the Jedi." I always like the ones where the good guys kick the bad guy's ass, especially when the bad guy is big and powerful. It was a good movie to watch, appropriate, fitting.

"Okay, Luke Skywalker, you want some popcorn or are you set with the Oreos?"

Ray grinned. "Definitely popcorn. Want me to pause it while you make it?"

I shook my head no. I'd seen this movie twenty, thirty times. I didn't think I'd miss much. The triumphant strains of John Williams' anthem followed me into the kitchen where I pulled out a package of microwave popcorn and placed it in the microwave.

Sounded like Ray and I both faced our worst nightmares during that bust from hell. But he'd gotten us through it and I might have to remind myself of it for a while, but I'd gotten up off the floor. Maybe I'd just raised myself up on my elbows and got sick, but I'd made the move, made the commitment to fight when I'd thought it was still just me and Ray fighting, when I'd thought it was hopeless. When it would have been easier to lie down and rest my spinning head. And I didn't believe for one minute, for one second, that it was a coincidence that right after I got up to fight, Egon started moving, and when Egon fired at the Six, Ray moved Pete to safety. It's just the way things happen. You make the choice and face your fears. You face it, you fight it, and then God gives you what you need. Amen.

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Note: "hoo-ah" is a US Army term, somewhat similar to the US Marine phrase gung-ho (which was the battle cry of the US Marine Raiders in WWII). It can be used respectfully or derisively and is applied to someone who is enthusiastic, eager or zealous, particularly in a patriotic manner.