

Ops
“Blood and Oil”
(Pilot, Feb. 15 revision)

Teaser / Act One

- We meet our guys, McGINTY and VANOWEN, in Afghanistan where they're playing 20 Questions while transporting a mysterious cargo.
- They hit a roadblock, make a valiant effort to escape, but are captured by gunmen who appear to be mujahadin insurgents.
- TITLE SEQUENCE
- Captured along with them is VOLTTOV, a chatty, likable and cheerfully unscrupulous Russian entrepreneur. His vague story fails to make clear what he's doing in Afghanistan. Their captors take them to a warehouse where the Big Boss will decide their fate. It looks like they're all going to die...
- Big Boss turns out to be BARKER, their former boss at SOS -- the larger private military company they quit to go into business for themselves. He's a blatant war profiteer, the kind of asshole that gives mercenaries a bad name. He unveils their valuable cargo, revealing it to be a high-end Viking range.
- Barker confiscates the range and lets McGinty and Vanowen go with a warning -- this time. They try to get Voltov released along with them, but Barker keeps him for questioning.
- Freed with their lives (but nothing else), our guys use the last of their cash to pay off their Afghani day-hires. A car bomb drops the answer to the 20 Questions in Vanowen's lap.
- They return to their home base in Connecticut, where their bookkeeper TINA (a single mom and Vanowen's sister) informs them they're broke. While Vanowen uses his Special Ops skills to keep their phone service from getting cut off, McGinty begs a loan from his soon-to-be-ex-wife BROOKE. Things look bleak for this little startup company. They need a new client...
- ...who comes knocking. It's Voltov, the Russian from Afghanistan. We learn his business: he sells blood and plasma, which is always in short supply in wartime. He liked Vanowen and McGinty's style and has a job for them... in Iraq!
- Cut to Turkey, as Voltov explains their mission: Transport forty crates of scarce type-O blood from Turkey to Coalition headquarters in northern Iraq. Voltov needs Americans to supervise the job, and grease the bureaucratic wheels in case there are obstacles.

- McGinty jumps at the job. Not just because they need the money, but because it's a chance for them to get their foot in the door in Iraq -- a modern gold rush, where the Coalition is spending billions on private contractors. Here's our guys' chance to get a piece of the action that, so far, has been hogged by more established companies like SOS.
 - The blood needs to be kept below 4°C at all times. The crates have temperature stickers that will permanently change color if the blood gets too warm, marking it as spoiled. It's a hot, ten-hour drive to the first refueling stop, so the refrigeration unit is essential.
 - Vanowen is less enthusiastic about the job than McGinty. For one thing, he would have preferred to hire his own driver. Voltov has provided DARKO -- a reckless young Croatian who (Voltov assures them) is the best there is.
- [Morning]
First gauntlet is the border crossing into Iraq. It's dicey, with different factions all having their own checkpoints. The papers that get you past one will get you into trouble at another. We see McGinty think on his feet, and why he and Vanowen make a good team.
 - Through conversation with their driver, Darko, we learn more about why Vanowen and McGinty left SOS and started their own firm.
 - They're just over halfway to the refueling stop when... The refrigeration unit cracks. Vanowen fixes it with duct tape, but it's not clear how much freon they've lost. They've come too far to turn back and be sure of saving the blood. They decide to go for it -- they'll try to fix the coolant leak at the fuel stop.
 - [Afternoon]
Meanwhile, to keep the blood cool, they have to run the compressor on full, which burns more gasoline. Now they have an additional risk -- running out of gas, which would be ironic considering the road runs along a major oil pipeline.
 - McGinty anxiously monitors the blood, watching the mercury climb: 2.4°, 2.7°, 3.1°. If it hits 4°, the temperature stickers will permanently change, and they'll be screwed.
 - As they approach the refueling stop, they find that the last bridge over the canyon is out -- it's been blown up by pipeline saboteurs. They have no way to get there.

Act Two

- Desperately improvising, our guys strike out across the desert. There's a town on the map, but they have no idea if it's survived the war with enough infrastructure to help them.

- [Late Afternoon]
The sun is blazing. The blood hits 3.8° as they reach the town.
- Luckily, the town has a hospital! And power! But as our guys drive through the town, they see something's not right... People flee when they see them coming. The townspeople are unusually hostile and wary even for Iraq.
- Parking the truck in the shade, McGinty tries to make a deal with HADIJA, the female director of the hospital, to store the blood while Vanowen repairs the A/C.
- But they're intercepted by ALI, the town police chief, who tells them to get the hell out of Dodge. Their coalition papers are no good here. Only now do they realize: This town is under the control of insurgents.
 - Police chief Ali is not one of the insurgents, but he has to play ball with them (the elected Iraqi government which has put him in charge is basically nonexistent here). Like a small-town sheriff, he's trying to do his job and protect the townsfolk the best he can.
 - Now that insurgents have infiltrated the town, there's concern that Coalition forces will attack in force and make it another Falluja. The presence of these American strangers is a new problem he doesn't want to have.
- McGinty persuades Ali to let them stay a few hours, just long enough to fix the compressor and refuel. Hospital director Hadija agrees to store the blood -- at the price of four crates, which she desperately needs in anticipation of the coming assault and casualties. McGinty bargains her down to two crates.
- [Sunset]
Vanowen works with Ali's brother (a local MECHANIC) to fix the truck's refrigeration unit. It will take a few hours and a lot of ingenuity, but they should be on the road by dawn.
- McGinty, Darko and Hadija pack the blood into the hospital fridge, only to encounter a new problem: The fridge isn't big enough. There are ten crates of blood left over, and they'll spoil.
- With Hadija's help, McGinty orchestrates a frantic rush from house to house, offering cash to every family that owns a refrigerator to store as much blood as it can hold. Amazingly, this catches on. It looks like they're going to find space for it all...
- Until, in the rush to load the fridges, one of the blood bags catches a sharp edge and breaks. To McGinty's astonishment, what spills out isn't blood. It's heroin.

Act Three

- Hadija immediately thinks the worst of McGinty: This American, whom she went out of her way to help, is actually a drug smuggler. McGinty pleads his innocence. After all, the blood is real -- the drugs were just hidden in the shipment to make it across the border. Always persuasive, he convinces her not to tell Ali about the heroin.
- [Night]
McGinty and Vanowen confront Darko, who knew about the heroin all the time. That's what Voltov was doing in Afghanistan in the first place: buying heroin. Voltov brought in McGinty and Vanowen because he needed Americans to help him smuggle it into Iraq -- a major new market. Darko claims not to know who was supposed to receive the heroin once it got to the Coalition headquarters.
 - Estimated value of the heroin? Half a million dollars.
- McGinty and Vanowen decide they'll deal with the drugs, and Darko, when they get to the destination. The priority is fixing the truck and getting on the road.
- And then the lights go out.
- The insurgents, who control the power plant, have blacked out the city in anticipation of a Coalition attack. The blood will spoil unless they get the power back on. Hadija has bigger concerns: patients in her hospital will die.
 - Irony alert: Yes, the hospital has a generator, but no fuel to power it. Gasoline is scarce, even though the town is built right beside the oil pipeline.
- Somehow, McGinty and Vanowen need to get the power turned back on. They don't have any bribe money left. But what they do have plenty of is...heroin.
- Ali -- who still doesn't know about the heroin -- arranges a meeting with the insurgents. It's a tense meeting, with a good chance the insurgents may kill our guys just on general principles. The INSURGENT LEADER is barely 20, but hardened far beyond his years. He's not swayed by talk of humanitarian need. He wants money. When McGinty offers him the heroin, he immediately grasps the value of it. He agrees to turn the power back on.
- As dawn approaches, the lights and power are back up and running.
- Ali is furious with McGinty and Vanowen: They brought drugs to his town. Ali argues -- quite rightly, perhaps -- that the true cost is much greater than 40 crates of blood. He is disgusted with McGinty and Vanowen, and hopes to never see them again.

- Vanowen gets the truck's refrigeration running. They're just loading in the last of their crates when...the Coalition attacks.

Act Four

- [Dawn]
Our guys are pinned down in the ground floor of the hospital as U.S. marines from the Fifth Division launch an assault on the town. Insurgent snipers are shooting from the second and third floors. Vanowen warns McGinty that the military is likely to target the building: they don't know it's a hospital, or that there are Americans inside.
- Using Ali's radio, Vanowen tries to communicate with the American forces. But the radios use completely different frequencies.
- Vanowen goes upstairs to take out the snipers.
- Meanwhile, McGinty uses their satt phone to call back to Connecticut. He first calls Tina, but the lines are literally crossed -- something about how Vanowen rewired the phones. He has no choice but to call Brooke, who's at the office. He gets her to look up the commanding officer of the Fifth Division. She tells him his name is Reyes.
- Using a cut blood pack, McGinty writes: "REYES - 88.97" on the outside wall. Eventually, Commander REYES calls in on that frequency. McGinty explains their situation.
- Reyes arranges safe passage, enabling our guys to drive the truck out of town and continue on their way. (The battle between the Coalition and the insurgents is still raging.)
- [That Afternoon]
With their truck held together by duct tape and prayer, Vanowen and McGinty reach the Coalition headquarters. The MEDICAL DIRECTOR is glad to see them, and surprised -- he wasn't expecting the shipment for another day or two. (He has no idea that they hit any obstacles along the way.)
- McGinty asks the director to keep them in mind for future contract work. The director is confused -- we already have a \$20 million contract with you. You work for SOS, right?
- Back in Turkey, McGinty and Vanowen go to confront Voltov. They find him meeting with Barker. The pieces fall in place: Barker wanted in on Voltov's heroin trade, but needed to keep his own hands clean. McGinty and Vanowen were unwitting sub-contractors. Barker warns them that no one ever really stops working for SOS.

- At the international airport, waiting for their flight home, McGinty and Vanowen watch a report on a cable news channel about how the Coalition has cleaned the small town of insurgents. Commanding officer Reyes is interviewed. He says that his troops discovered a major cache of heroin. Clearly, the insurgents have now taken to drug trafficking to fuel their terrorist activities.
- END.