

EMILY

Brilliant! And even if I send a friend request he won't know who I am — my name isn't Fox anymore! I'll give it a try.

BILL

Do you know where my jacket is?

EMILY

I think I saw it lying in the back yard.

(EMILY smiles, BILL looks sheepish, smiles and exits)

(EMILY pauses, thinking for a minute, then walks to her computer and sits down.)

(The lights shift back and forth depending on who is speaking or typing.)

START

EMILY

“Dear Mr Denny. My husband served with you and the Hornets. I have read your new book, Hornet 33, and I enjoyed it. I would like to be in touch with you.”

(A Facebook Messenger notification sounds)

ED DENNY

“I am pleased to have a connection to anyone who was involved with the old Hornets. What was your husband's name? What sort of job did he do in the Hornets?”

EMILY

Oh shit! Am I going to tell him, or not?

(Beat)

“Dear Mr Denny, I know there is no way you are ready to hear what I am about to say”....no.

“Hold on to your heart Mr Denny.... Craig Fox had a wife — it was me.”

ED DENNY

“Hold on to your heart Mr Denny”

(ED DENNY keeps reading silently then turns away from his computer and puts his head in his hands.)

(The lights dim and come back up and down on both EMILY and ED DENNY as time passes. EMILY keeps checking her computer. Then BILL enters and the lights come up on EMILY and BILL)

EMILY

I haven't heard from Ed for 9 days. Why would he get back to me? I should just forget it.

BILL

No way to be sure Em. But, I'm guessing you're not going to let it go.

EMILY

But you think I should?

BILL

Not really.

*(BILL picks up a newspaper and sits down. EMILY goes to her computer)
(Lights up on ED DENNY who is working at his computer when his
current wife JANICE walks in. She tries to act like she isn't going to
bother him but she looks over his shoulder to see what he is doing.)*

ED DENNY

OK, Janice, what is it? You know I'm working here.

(JANICE slaps ED DENNY on the shoulder.)

JANICE

Oh you're always workin'! I'm just wonderin' what you told that lady up in Washington. You haven't said anything 'bout her for days.

ED DENNY

I'm writing a book here, can't spend a bunch of time writing to everyone who read my last book. Besides, I'm thinking it was just some guy in Nigeria, sitting on his bed, typing on his computer, trying to run some sort of scam. The money pitch'll probably come next.

JANICE

Ed, I think you know it really is Craig Fox's wife.

ED DENNY

Oh dammit, Janice! What am I supposed to say to her? Her whole life has been colored by that damned crazy war! How can I relate to what she went through?

(JANICE goes to him but he stands up and walks across the stage.)

She has a new last name, so she must have married again — she's moved on, somehow. She read Craig's story in my book. Wow! That damned Old-Man-Death poking me with a sharp stick one more time. I hope that damned book didn't stir up bad dreams for her.

(JANICE exits. EMILY is typing on her computer)

EMILY

“Good Morning, Ed. I've been thinking about you since we were in touch a few weeks ago. I'm worried that my news may have sent you to a dark place. A quick note that you are fine would be wonderful.”

EMILY(CONT)

*(EMILY stands up and walks away from her computer.
A Facebook Messenger notification sounds.
EMILY hurries back and looks at her screen.
She speaks excitedly)*

It's him!

*(BILL puts down the newspaper and walks over to read over EMILY's
shoulder.)*

ED DENNY

(Typing)

“Hold on to my heart”, indeed. That was the last thing on earth I expected to hear. It was such a shock for me to learn who you are, and it stirred up a flood of memories. The wife of Craig Fox. Put me into tears for a long cry. Yes, I certainly knew your husband. He has remained in my memories all these years. The only comforting thought is that he went down fighting, and it was over very quickly. Even though the enemy got him, he balanced out the score by taking out the gun that killed him, so it could never harm another American soldier.”

ED DENNY and EMILY

(ED DENNY typing as EMILY reads aloud. They speak simultaneously.)

“His death was a great loss to the Hornets, and they always thought of him as a hero.”

EMILY

(Reading on with ED DENNY's message.)

“I'm sorry that my book included material that had to be painful for a wife to read. I know it is a long time later, but I send you my belated condolences for your loss. I'll never forget having heard from you, and you'll always be in my thoughts. Ed Denny”

(EMILY speaks to BILL)

Well that's pretty clear. You'll always be in my thoughts but LEAVE ME ALONE NOW!

(Lights dim on ED DENNY)

(EMILY thinks for a minute and then begins to type)

“I want to tell you how helpful your book has been to me. Your writing filled in all the unknowns— all the things I couldn't understand about Craig's experience. I need to thank you for the courage it took you to write it.”

(BILL gives her a thumbs up and exits)

(EMILY waits for a time for a response and then her lights dim)

(Time passes)

(Lights up on ED DENNY)

ED DENNY

“Emily — Sorry to be slow responding. I'm happy that my book was helpful to you. I've been all wound up writing a second book. It's about PTSD — I'm working on the chapter about being in the nut house at the VA Hospital in Dallas. I want you to know that if there is anything you

ED DENNY(CONT)

ever need from me, don't hesitate to reach out. If you ever get to the Dallas area, give me a heads up. Ed Denny.”

(JANICE walks in and looks over ED DENNY's shoulder. He lets her read what he has just written and she gives him a smooch on the cheek)

EMILY

(Lights up on EMILY reading ED DENNY's message.)

“If there is anything you ever need”....another please don't bother me line. But..

”If you get to the Dallas area, give me a heads up.”

(EMILY gets an idea and types back to ED DENNY)

“Say, if I was in Dallas at the end of March would you have coffee with me?”

ED DENNY

(Speaking to JANICE)

In Dallas? Must be a business trip or something. Just coming to see me? Couldn't be. That's no little trip, Seattle to Dallas. I hope she isn't coming to learn how to sell burial insurance. Maybe she just needs some Gomer to practice her sales pitch on while she's here.

(ED DENNY mumbles)

Hope this isn't some kind of cruel joke.

(Then ED DENNY smiles and types without reading aloud)

(Lights fade.)

END