Built for This
A Marine Story
• Special Thanks
  – Mr. Jon Levine
  – Florida Chapter – its where I got my HFMA start

Marines use curse words all day every day. Please accept my apologies in advance for any use of colorful language. My goal is to limit it to half-dozen and anything less is a win in my book!!!
Growing up Dirt Floor Poor

• Born and raised, small town of Scottsburg IN
• Hazard KY
• Morgan’s Foods
• Fire – living with Grandparents
• Clay Street – Dirt Floor Poor (1100 Sq)
  – Grandpa Skilled Contractor
  – Thomas Town Bottoms
  – Built 2 homes
My First Love

GROWING UP IN WONDERLAND
Parents

• Father – Lonnie White
  – Tough life, grew up a foster child living in roughly 19 different homes.
  – Cold Cheese Sandwiches
  – Basketball was his outlet

• Bill and Martha White
  – Pure Evil
  – Slip and Fall
  – Karma (all the kids she got rid of)
Momma White
Momma White

- Teresa White
  - 2nd born and only girl (3 Brothers)
  - Charismatic and Goofy
  - Full of Love and Devotion to her Children
  - Currently working for the VA
  - Loves to Dance
  - She is the reason our childhood was so amazing

I get it from my momma!
Not So Wonderful

• Mid to Late 90’s my Dad’s company folded
• Money was the root of OUR problems
• Rental homes / apartments
• The Divorce (1999)
  – Just entering my junior year of high school
• Janea Francis was born (oops)
  – She was the glue to keeping our family a family
  – Recent Graduate of class of 2018
WORK
James K. Burrell

- City of Scottsburg Parks Department
- Hired Jim during the start of my second summer
- 78 year old, WW2 Combat Veteran (Tail Gunner)
- Worked for 40+ ATT on cable lines
- I hated him (at first)
- He worked with us sun up to sun down (non-stop)

The most influential person I have ever met
James K. Burrell

- Value my work
- Importance of saving (Great Depression)
- Perseverance—never give an inch
- Perpetual motion—move or die
- Germs wont kill you—poop everywhere
First Time

• Shotgun—someone was trying to kick our front door down
• ”Grab your brothers gun”
• Jacob White – one of the best outdoorsman within southern Indiana
  – State Team
  – Hunter, Trapper
• Cut from same male gene-pool

I don’t hunt.....animals
Seventeen

- Graduation (June 2001)
  - Buddy Program was supposed to start 6/6—Marines
- Momma White said **NO**
- “Joshua you will go to war!”
  - She was right, I just didn’t know it at the time
- 18 years old to serve
- Meteorology was a no-go

Marines + College = US Marshall
College Sucks

• Indiana University Southeast
  – Same familiar faces, and I was just bored
• Couldn’t move, family needed my support
• Crestview Computer Lab
• Illegally downloading songs, and burning them to compact discs

This Happens...
Changed My Life

• We all remember that day
• Where you were at
• How you felt

These attacks brought our nation together

.....have we forgotten?
Something is Happening

- Our school went on lockdown
- Dustin Jones, “what are you going to do?”
- Friends in boot camp
- James’s Marine Corps Influence—I needed that!
- We went to the local recruiter & signed-up

Momma Cried...
Compromise

• Mom let my recruiter have the business
  – After speaking with the recruiter, he offered ”US” the reserves.
• One weekend a month, 2 weeks a year, continue my college
• Everyone Wins
• My Dad was pissed... why can’t you just go to work son
  – No member of my family had ever served
  – No member of my family has ever graduated from college

.... He didn’t understand, nobody did—I had to do this!
College would have to wait...

I solemnly swore to support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign or domestic
November 26, 2001

• Marine Corps has 2 recruit training depots
  – Most known – Parris Island
• Hollywood Marines are the very best
• November 26, I arrive at MCRD, San Diego
  – Next to the airport

GET OFF MY BUS
Receiving

Week 1

• 72 hours of chaos
  – No Sleep
  – Physical Fitness Test (20 pullups, 100 sit-ups, 3 mile run)
  – Paperwork
  – Haircuts
  – Gear
  – The Shot Gauntlet
• Bloody Underwear—Drill Instructors love to play games

Meet your actual drill instructors
Non Stop Chaos

• 13 weeks, what did I get myself into
  – Senior Drill Instructor SSGT Jaime
  – Drill Instructor SSGT Reid
  – Drill Instructor SSG Tran
  – Drill Instructor SSGT Evans

• Rare breeds
  – Sound Like Frogs
  – Super Funny
  – Marine Platoon Melting pot of diversity: White, Black, Italian, Hispanic, and Texan
  – 85+ and graduated in the low 60’s
Typical Day

- Reveille (wake up--zero dark thirty)
  - Make our racks
- Force Marched to Chow-Hall
  - Eat Quick
- Yelling
- Physical Training
- Extra Training (1 on 1 drill instructors)
- More Yelling
- Lights out when Taps Play
Semper Fidelis – Always Faithful

Weeks 2-3

- Customs & Courtesies
  - Importance of Saluting
  - Nautical Terms
  - Proper Formation
  - Hymn
  - Ranks

- History
  - November 10, 1775
  - Born in a Bar
  - Tun Tavern (Philly)

- Esprit de Corps
  - Pride that the Marine Corps instills, our conduct on the battlefield, that sets us apart from all other branches of the military
  - The Few, The Proud
Hand to Hand Combat

• Marine Corps Martial Arts
  – Mash-up of various martial arts
  – Each Marine Graduates with Tan Belt Certification
  – Weekly Training / Qualification
  – We beat the living tar out of one another

• Confidence Courses
  – Marine Corps meets American Ninja Warrior

….Everything is a weapon of opportunity
SSGT Evans

- Fire-watch
  - The most despised duty in all of the military
  - Team no sleep
  - Stand guard in case of fire in the barracks
  - In country, it’s to make sure you don’t get attacked
  - Always on guard

*Drill Instructors are not allowed to put hands on recruits
  - But they are savvy enough to find a way

**SSGT EVANS MADE MY LIFE A LIVING HELL....**
Men’s Department

• Marine Corps is a Department of the Navy
• Land, Air, and Sea

Week 4
• Entire week is devoted to learning how to swim
• Each Marine must pass the swim qualification
• Learn how to tread water for extended periods of time
Jingle Bells

Boot Camp Christmas

• Torture—looking up into the hills of San Diego, and seeing Christmas lights—Families enjoying the holiday
• Woke up one morning, singing Christmas carols in our underwear
• Special Meals

Oh you guys want to eat cake....
Team Week

Week 5

- Short break from non-stop training
- Broken up into small unit groups
  - Mess Hall
  - Maintenance
  - Supply Chain
  - Laundry

James had prepped me for team week—said its awesome!

SSGT Evans overheard me while cleaning under a rack...
Week 6

- MCRD San Diego is in the city
- Camp Pendleton (home of 1st Mar Div)
  - Mountains & Ocean

Every Marine is a Marksman

- Practice shooting techniques (all day, every day)
  - The hardest Marine to train, are those with prior hunting skills
- Learn to shoot from 25 yard to 500 yards (open sites),
- M16A2 Service Rifle is precision
- Learn how to breath and squeeze your trigger
Lots of Humps

When we aren’t shooting...
• Marines love to hump (hike)
  – Combat Rigs are very heavy 50-60 lbs.

Week 7
• Rifle Qualification (Live Rounds)
  – Basic Rifleman, Sharpshooter, Expert

*My eyes suck—BC’s*
Learn How to Kill People

Weeks 8 – 9

- Hump out into the middle of nowhere
- Eat MRE’s
- Paint our Faces (proper concealment)
- Get dirty
  - Low Crawl Exercises
- Learn how to kill people
  - Squad Movement tactics
- Gas Mask Training
  - That day sucks
Almost Marines

Week 10

• Practical Exams
• Final Fitness Test
• Advanced MCMAP Training & Qualifications
The Crucible

11 Weeks of pain and one last challenge remains
• Culmination of all our training
• 54 hour event
• 60+ miles humps, obstacles, and tests
• 2 meals
• 6 hours of sleep

Drill Instructors are with you every step of the way
• Shifting gears to more of a mentor role
• Teaching us about Medal of Honor recipients
• 7 mile hump out to the bivouac site
• 500 yards from the barracks...
• Injured
• My entire family is coming to graduation

I can't quit... NEVER GIVE AN INCH
The Reaper

- The final night of the crucible is awesome
  - Live Fire with Tracer Rounds

The Reaper Hike

- Hungry, Tired, Injured—all we had to do was make it up this mountain

“Leave no man behind, but do not offer assistance”
Preparation

Our entire 11 week Journey, the Crucible. It was preparing us for battle.
Every minute was prescribed: classes, exercises, drills, physical fitness.

*Imagine being this tired and having to fight...*

- Warriors Breakfast
Week 12

• Drill Instructors are treating us better
  – Teaching us about how to act when we get to the fleet

• Drill Instructor Event
  – Test of unit command and execution
    • Marine Corps Cadence

• Our platoon took first place
UNITED STATES MARINE...

- February 22, 2002
  - My entire family came (Parents, Siblings, Aunts, Uncles, Cousins, friends)

- Moto Run
  - Momma was worried (hairline fracture)

- Parade Deck
More Training

• 10 days leave

• Marine Combat Training (MCT)
  – School of Infantry
  – Condensed Infantry Training for everyone with an MOS of grunts (03xx)
  – I was set to go to Communications School

• Injured again
  – 0621 Field Radio Operator (grunt w/ target on my back)
  – 29 Palms
July 4th 2002

- Surprised my family with a homecoming
- Finally transitioning into the reserves
- September was my first drill weekend
- Met Brandon Nordhoff (inseparable)

*Work, School, Play Marines once a month, life is good*
Something is Happening

- October – USMC rolls out state of the art digital camo.
  - Our unit receives the desert color scheme???
- November – Marine Corps Birthday/ Ball
  - Drink Beer, Eat Cake
- December—deliver toys for “Toys for Tots”
  - Signed up for weird series of shots

*Anthrax Vaccine—which was to be taken over a course of several weekends, meaning we had to come back to Indy just for shots*
00:01

- Arrive in Indy for our last Anthrax Vaccine
- Met by our Company Brass

As of 00:01 last night, Communications Company HQ Battalion 4th Mar Div, has been activated to serve in direct support of Operation Enduring Freedom. You have 72 hours to get your affairs in order and report back to these orders....
Mom was RIGHT

• I was going to war...but which one
• My new GF—we were getting serious
  – She became my pen pal
• My family and friends were distraught

Orders
• Reporting back was difficult
• Nobody knew anything, and word constantly changed
• We got Small Pox Vaccines and packed our gear
• Given 1 last night
Awkward Goodbyes

- Nobody knows what to say or how to say it
- My dad had to walk me to the gate...he cried

Proper Send Off
- Our unit played songs, everyone waved flags
- Everyone Cries

*Remember how this makes you feel...bottle those feelings up and use it on the battlefield.*
Haters Gonna Hate

Marines

Families bid farewell with pride and prayers.

The question drew the mother out of the Marine.

“Let’s go,” she said, “already.”

Sgt. Tran, a radio operator, joined the reserve unit after spending four years on active duty. Last week, he was a student at Indiana University-Purdue University Columbus.

His father, Alan Tran, stood by quietly. A native of Saigon and now a designer for Cummins Inc., he said he was once a member of South Vietnam’s special forces. He and his wife, Kim, moved to the United States in 1975.

“I am very proud of him,” the father said as he hugged his wife. “I am worried but very, very proud.”

After a speech from their past chance to say a last goodbye. Moments later, Scottsburg students Lonnie White, 43, his wife Teresa, 39, and their family gathered around their son Lance Cpl. Joshua White, 18, for a tea hug.

Master Sgt. Anderson had a second send-off Monday. A mechanic at Penske Chevrolet in Indianapolis, he’ll be fixing vehicles for the Marines, too. As with reservists, his employer must give him a job for him until his return to active duty a year or more now.

On Sunday, his mother, Ruby Anderson Bilal, at St. David Community Worship Center, prayed for him and the nation, said his name, Ruby Anderson Bilal.

“I pray every day,” she said, “trusting in God.”
Operation Iraqi Freedom

• One last goodbye!
• February 22, 2003
  – Fly from North Carolina to Maine, to Frankfurt, to Kuwait
• Arrive in Kuwait under the cover of darkness
• Camp Matilda
  – Middle of nowhere, close to Iraq border
  – Tent City
Day 1

• First ones to get assigned
  – Gunnery Sgt. Trietch
  – LCpl. Scott Howard

• Combat Engineers (1st Mar Div)
  – They enjoyed abusing their weekend warriors
  – Immediate Fight
  – No respect
Fear of the Unknown

• We were here to fight...
• Nothing was happening
• Boredom
• Not enough training to pass the days fast enough
• Matilda was in a flat, so nightly we were battling these sand storms trying to save our tent.
• Helmets, googles, and hammers
• Limited Electricity
Lance Corporal Wire
  – Scuttlebutt suggests, Jennifer Lopez had died
  – This sent shockwaves throughout the camp
  – Our leaders had to follow up on this intel and squash the rumors

General James “Mad Dog” Mattis had arrived
  – Gathered all personnel for mission directive
  – Hands down, the best motivational speech ever!!!
March 2003

1st Marine Division (REIN)

Commanding General's Message to All Hands

For decades, Saddam Hussein has tortured, imprisoned, raped and murdered the Iraqi people; invaded neighboring countries without provocation; and threatened the world with weapons of mass destruction. The time has come to end his reign of terror. On your young shoulders rest the hopes of mankind.

When I give you the word, together we will cross the Line of Departure, close with those forces that choose to fight, and destroy them. Our fight is not with the Iraqi people, nor is it with members of the Iraqi army who choose to surrender. While we will move swiftly and aggressively against those who resist, we will treat all others with decency, demonstrating chivalry and soldierly compassion for people who have endured a lifetime under Saddam’s oppression.

Chemical attack, treachery, and use of the innocent as human shields can be expected, as can other unethical tactics. Take it all in stride. Be the hunter, not the hunted: never allow your unit to be caught with its guard down. Use good judgement and act in best interests of our Nation.

You are part of the world’s most feared and trusted force. Engage your brain before you engage your weapon. Share your courage with each other as we enter the uncertain terrain north of the Line of Departure. Keep faith in your comrades on your left and right and Marine Air overhead. Fight with a happy heart and strong spirit.

For the mission’s sake, our country’s sake, and the sake of the men who carried the Division’s colors in past battles—who fought for life and never lost their nerve—carry out your mission and keep your honor clean. Demonstrate to the world there is “No Better Friend, No Worse Enemy” than a U.S. Marine.

J.N. Mattis
Major General, U.S. Marines
Commanding
“He told us to be polite, be professional, but have a plan to kill everyone you meet.”

My all-time favorite, to Iraqi tribal leaders once we liberated the country.

‘I come in peace. I didn’t bring artillery. But I’m pleading with you, with tears in my eyes: If you **** with me, I’ll kill you all.’
Shiite Just Got Real

• March 18th—Sgt says, “grab 3 days worth of gear”
  – Moving to the border, assist forward observers
• Seeing the enemy for the first time (51st Mech)

A few weeks back I’m sitting around playing Xbox with friends—and now I am on the border of Iraq...about to fight.
Shock and Awe

- March 19 – President Bush gives his warnings
- Entire coalition force descends on our position
  - *Now I am going to war with 3 days worth of skivvies!*
- Gas, Gas, Gas
  - *SCARED TO DEATH*
- Front Row Seat
• March 20\textsuperscript{th}, 2003
  – We make our move into Iraq

First Mission:
  – Clean up what the bombs didn’t get
  – Nothing left
  – Continue our push to Baghdad (snails pace)
  – Communication was an issue
Dressed for Battle

• Mop Level 4 (Woodland Green)
• Humvee’s (Woodland Green)
  – No armor, just sandbags
• 300 Rounds
• Flak Jacket, with no armor places
• Malaria Pills for 1 month
• Food for 2 weeks
• 3 Pairs of Socks and Undies
Fire Crackers

• Getting shot at is weird, scary, and intense
• Late into the first night, we received our first contact
• Yet, we didn’t stop to engage--orders were to get to Baghdad, let the Army handle these little fights
• Granted our designated security vehicles got hit them with the 50 cal
Messy Logistics

• We are moving at a crawl
• NVGs are difficult to use, and when we try to follow other vehicles that are completely blacked out
• People are rear-ending, running off roads, getting lost
Slow Motion

• My first fight
  – Everything was in slow motion
  – Come to my senses
  – Rounds down range

• 21 Days of Major Combat Operations
  – Drive, Engage, Rinse, Repeat

One intense battle, we had to take this bridge over the Euphrates. They were dug deep, and the bridge was damaged. The drive across was more nerve wrenching than the battle. Everyone earned some battle stripes that day.

   *We were all so tired, you never got a chance to relax...*
Combat Poop

- Marines don’t believe in Privacy
- Bootcamp – stalls have no doors
- Fleet, what are stalls?
  - Row of toilets
- Slit Trenches
- My First Combat Poop
  - You couldn’t step 3-4 feet from the vehicles unless we were changing positions in a fire fight
  - Ammo Box
  - Painful
Sand Storm

• Phone calls home were rare
  – We got one call, and it was supervised

• Sand Storm
  – Entire Sky turned Orange
  – We dug foxholes or shallow graves and hunkered down
  – Fearful our enemies would take advantage
Death is Everywhere

• War is not pretty and death is everywhere, it’s relative
• The sight, the sounds, the smell, the bugs—awful

Rules of Engagement
• Our enemies retired their uniforms and were giving up
• Hard to distinguish bad vs good
• Same guys shaking your hand during the day, would try and kill you at night
• Ignoring Roadblocks
Promises Kept

- Our enemies wanted to kill us, they were promised many great riches upon their arrival to heaven.
- We were Infidels and death dealers there to arrange the meetings, hopefully those promises were kept to them.
- Fedayeen—these groups of individuals with one goal. Kill Americans. They weren’t just from Iraq either. Enemies were trickling in from surrounding countries just to get their sights on Americans
The eve of Baghdad, we pull up next to an armored division.

Coalition forces had the city surrounded, and we were about to begin our assault.

Fix Bayonets—the enemy will be dug in.

Liberation Happens

Statues Fall

Iraqi’s Celebrate by Looting everything imaginable
Major Combat Operations have ended
But the war is still on—Saddam is still at large, and new enemies were arriving each day.
We set up shop inside of a hanger in Al Diwaniyah
  - Breaking up in small patrols day/night
  - Going on raids
  - Blowing up guns, ammo
  - Fixing Infrastructure

Clearing houses is single handedly the most intense thing you could ever do
Hell Week

- Lack of Hygiene
- Supplies lines got cut off
  - We ran out of food
  - Bottled Water
  - Malaria Pills

EVERYONE GETS SICK!!!
Certificate of Commendation

- Earned roughly 9 ribbons/medals
- Presidential Unit Citation
- Combat Action Ribbon

- Certificate of Commendation
  - Outstanding service during a particular mission
War Never Ends

- PTSD
  - Depression
  - Hypervigilance
  - Anxiety
- Living with Friends
  - Big Mistake
  - I was not in good place

*Meds didn’t work I felt mental...*
WORK

• Circuit City – Just What I needed...
  – INTERACTION WITH PEOPLE WAS HELPING ME...

• Printing Dog Food Bags, 3rd Shift
  – I quit and have never looked back

• Found work in Louisville for HCA
  – National Patient Account Services (NPAS)
  – Young Prince
  – Started out entry level and worked my way up through the ranks
Due to Rapid Growth, NPAS was hiring for a coveted position in Client Services

All the top-notched managers-supervisors applied

- NO way they would consider a junior supervisor with no college education

Learned something about myself

- Never discount real-life experience
- The WAR was helping me beat out the competition
- Earned that position, and they helped me finish by degree!!!
Volunteer (5 years)
- Chasing Adrenaline, running into burning buildings

Death & Destruction:
- Burn victims
- Terrible Wrecks
- Drownings
- Tornado’s
Fear. Hello Old Friend

• Late Spring 2012
  – Responded to an early morning fire
  – Limited on resources
  – Fire is beginning to get out of control, and we make entry to save the structure
  – Retired Fire Chief from Louisville Fire
  – Began to question my actions

I felt fear…but rightfully so, was about to become a father
I had been dead inside for many years
• Sales Needed Help—they started sending me out on the road to help (HFMA EVENTS)
• Florida Spring Meeting (Tampa)
  – Chad Preston’s List
  – Joe Bufano, couple folks from Hospitals, and Brad Haynes
• Joe was the very first person I ever met within HFMA
  – True to his word

Joe would eventually take a huge chance on me....
Remember Wonderland

• Factories left our town
  – Limited work
  – Middle class to unrecognizable

• Drugs are everywhere
  – 2016 Austin Indiana had the most new cases of HIV per capita in the entire world... BBC ran a story
  – State of Emergency
Drugs Destroyed My Family

• Brother vs Brother
• I am becoming everyone’s crutch
  – Bail me out of jail
  – Loaning out money
• My only Grandmother passes 2017
  – Our last year together was rocky
  – Family Needs Family...regardless of their issues
• Host Thanksgiving
  – My cousin, Morgan recently released from prison (23)
Worst Day of My Life

January 1\textsuperscript{st} 2018 (New Years Morning)

COLDEST NIGHT/DAY OF THE ENTIRE WINTER

My Mother calls...

Joshua.... Joshua.... Joshua...
They Got One of My Own

• Morgan was found on the side of a gravel road, (dumped) and left for dead on the coldest night of the year.

• 500 yards from my grandparents home.

• Her boyfriend was the last person with her
• My entire family is distraught
• Uncle Steve & Tyler are in bad shape
  – News helicopters are hovering over
  – Police is everywhere

Someone has to call Robyn....
Yesterday was the only easy day. Time is borrowed, we don’t own it.

Regardless of what ever challenges lie ahead, the past has given me enough confidence to know that I am truly built for this life…