

## It's tough for a Marine to say this out loud

**Mike:** Driving's an issue when you first get back. I mean, any little piece of garbage over in Iraq for a period of time could explode and blow up and kill you or your friends and, you know, guys who've seen or heard or been in the vicinity of something like that happening, you know, when you see garbage on the side of the roadway here, it doesn't change anything, and you know what I mean. I could go through a whole litany of stories. I won't obviously, but you know as far as just the little idiosyncrasies about life over there and how they translate to over here, it doesn't allow you to really act like a normal person. And so, I also guess I didn't want to be seen as you know being so much different than the person I was before I left. That people didn't want to spend time around me. So, I thought some time away would allow me to mend that, and it doesn't really.

I used to swerve under overpasses, because there was a tactic at that time when I was Fallujah where you know anybody from a young kid to you know a teenager or young adult were throwing explosives or other objects off of bridges, and I was a Machine Gunner when I went over there the first time. And so, because I was hanging out in the turret, I was you know the number one target for that kind of thing. And so, what we would do is swerve, you know, kind of back and forth to try to kind of avoid or at least lead them to believe that we were trying to get out of the way of anything that was being thrown. But so, you get so used to it, it's like second nature. You're just trying to... I don't even know if I was realizing that I was doing it at the time. It wasn't always the broadest the most dramatic change of lanes or what have you, but it's just these little tics that you get used to in that environment that don't go away just because you came home.



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