

New Fiction by Josh Bates: Excerpt from The Baghdad Shuffle

The patrol was unsettling. The initial 'liberation' euphoria had soured. It was all bad vibes from the second we exited the Country Club. Hard brown faces casting the evil eye. Old men sitting in front of shuttered store fronts, sizing us up. We still didn't have an interpreter, but I tried to press a few locals anyway. I showed them Izzat's photo. I gauged reactions. No hints of recognition. Just hard stares and brusque wave-offs.