

Being john wades
tendency to get mad
drove



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Being married to a war veteran can be a very difficult task, often women must live in the fear of not knowing whether their significant other will ever come back alive. Living in fear can often give stress to anyone, but having your loved one's life hanging in a balance can cause people to go crazy.

Soldiers are usually sent away for a lengthy span, which can really hurt a relationship a husband and wife share. Being isolated from your loved ones, a lack of proper communication and an altered sense of normalcy often affects the soldiers directly leading to Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Post-traumatic stress disorder is a mental health condition that's triggered by a terrifying event — either experiencing it or witnessing it, and soldiers face terrifying events on a daily basis. This leads to veterans coming back and wanting to be alone and not talk about the traumatizing events they have witnessed. This is may be very difficult to cope with because veterans do not want to seek help from anyone, not even their wife. In, Susan L. Ray and Meredith Vanstones studies, " The Impact of PTSD on Veterans' Family Relationships: An Interpretative Phenomenological Inquiry", Rachel Dekel's studies in, " Being a Wife of a Veteran with Posttraumatic Stress Disorder", and Leah Wizelman novel, " When the War Never Ends", they all take about how PTSD has a lasting impact of the wives of veterans.

Likewise, in Tim O'Brien's novel " In the Lake of the Woods" John Wade is a war veteran who served in the Vietnam War, throughout the novel we see Wade show symptoms of PTSD. After the war John Wade was left unemployed and had nothing to take his mind of the traumas he faced in the war, that was when he began to show symptoms of PTSD. The effects of PTSD on Wade also started affecting Kathy, she gave him time to recover but

saw no progress. Kathy faced uncontrollable outburst from John, the lack of intimacy and communications between the two, and the loss of hope, that was when she decided to leave John and run away for a better life.

John Wades tendency to get mad drove Kathy away from him. John's wartime memories led to many angry outburst, petty things would get John triggered.

After the war, John pursued a career in politics. His career started off as a lieutenant governor and he thought he can advance to become a state senator. But when he lost by a landslide things started to fall in his marriage too. " It was more than a lost election.

It was something physical. Humiliation, that was part of it, and the wreckage in his chest and stomach, and then the rage" (O'Brien 5). The election triggered John, that was his shine of hope but losing that brought back bad memories. O'Brien includes an evidence that shows Wade might've done something he didn't want people to know, it states, " Even his wife, I don't think she knew the first damn thing about... well, any of it. The man just kept everything buried" (O'Brien 8). By showing his campaign manager saying John had secrets he shows that something may have come out causing him to get triggered.

When John would get angry it would distance him and Kathy, she would most likely want to be alone rather than confront him. When someone is mad any little thing can easily irritate them, and Kathy most likely didn't want to be the reason why John get angry. Psychologist Susan L. Ray shows how families can break, she says, " Emotional numbing and anger by veteran can push family members away" (Ray/ Vanstones 2). When veterans get angry,

they tend to break families and further distance families. That's what led to Kathy running away because John pushed her away with his anger and want to isolate her. Therefore, she probably thought it was better to give him space and run away. A husband and wife should always have some intimacy and communication between each other, and that's something Kathy and John did not share, causing her to run away from him.

After war many soldiers come back having a hard communicating with their loved ones. It can be very difficult for veterans to recover from all the petrifying events they saw during their time, they come back physically, but mentally they often need a little more time to adjust. John was never able to fully recover from his war-time events. In a cabin that is completely isolated from the outside world, you would expect a lot of love and communication between John and Kathy, but that wasn't the case. In O'Brien's novel he shows us how in the cabin John still wants to be alone, "What they needed, she thought, was to be honest.

Talk about everything they'd never talked about—trust and love and hurt, their truest feelings. Get him to open up" (O'Brien 112). Kathy may have assumed that being alone with her husband in a cabin in the middle of nowhere it would help reignite their relationship. She might've thought this would get John closer and the two could share their feelings, but even though they spent time together they still didn't talk much. They often spent days and nights in silence without saying much to each other.

Kathy was in a relationship with a man who didn't acknowledge her existence, Kathy repeatedly felt neglected and thought she would be better

off if John wasn't a part of her life. Rachel Dekel did a study to show the lives of the wives of victims of PTSD, she says, "When there is a moment that they do not need to care for him and cope with the home and outside fronts, these wives are confronted with the painful realization that they pay a heavy price for life with a husband whose personal world is lost. The women expressed profound loneliness" (Dekel 30). John felt lost in life after he came back from Vietnam and after he lost the election, and Kathy was paying the price. John would do his own thing making Kathy feel even more lonely, she had no one to depend on and thought it would be better if she ran away and lived without John. John had lost hope to lead a better life causing Kathy to run away to start her own life.

John's life was full of emotional meltdowns, there was a lot of ups and downs John faced. When he was a kid his dad died at an early age due to his alcohol problem. When he grew up and joined the force he saw death everyday and everywhere. And when he decided to get past all that and join politics he went through a humiliating loss to his running mate. At a certain point in life after you see all these devastating events people tend to give up, "Cause believe that he was not a monster but a man? That he was innocent of everything except his life" (O'Brien 303). When O'Brien says this he tries to show that John may have been guilty of the events that took place in his life.

John's PTSD caused him to feel hopeless and depressed which caused him to end up alone. That's why Kathy ran away because she saw that John lost hope and thought she was better off leading a life without John. Leah Wizelman says, "People with PTSD may suffer from additional symptoms,

like problems with self-esteem, self-blame, guilt, shame despair, hopelessness, and others" (Wizelman 189).

By saying this Wizelman shows that PTSD causes many veterans to come back hopeless, and the same happened to John. After suffering so much in life there is a point where you must give, and the election was this giving point in Johns life. This was when Kathy realized that she was better off alone too, because if John didn't have hope there was in point in her trying to force a better life upon him if he didn't want it. When you're married to a soldier you spend many days, sometimes years without your significant other, which can be very tough.

However, the hardest part is when they come back from war. Often times soldiers don't come back a 100%, many times they face mental health issues, also known as PTSD. When veterans have PTSD they come back very disturbed and frustrated. This causes veterans to be angry and take this anger out on their spouse, this causes the wives to slowly distance themselves, so they don't have to face this abuse. Soldiers also come back without the sense of normalcy, it takes them time to get used to the real world causing them to have a tough time communicating with their loved ones. A victim of PTSD doesn't share his feelings with his wife and this causes them to distance them from each other.

In Tim O'Brien's novel "In the Lake of the Woods" Johns wartime experience caused him to come back a different man, this was what drove his wife, Kathy away from him. Kathy grew tired of Johns random outbursts, his lack of

communication and intimacy, and the loss of hope and decided to run away and lead a better life for herself.