**Mishy Harman (narration):** Hey listeners, it's Mishy. So as you know, during these incredibly difficult days, we're trying to bring you voices we're hearing among and around us. Not stories, just quick conversations, postcards really, that try to capture slivers of life right now.

Yesterday, we heard from Ariel Markose, a mother of four little kids whose husband was called up to the reserves, and who's trying to learn how to both be there for her kids, and keep her own sanity during these crazy days. And today we'll hear from the other side of that story, from a reservist who dropped everything: family, work, life, and joined the war. Here's our producer, Mitch Ginsburg.

**Mitch Ginsburg (narration):** On Thursday night, I drove down to my old reserves base. I remember what it looked like on the eve of the Second Lebanon War in 2006. Now it was far more chaotic. I came to meet up with a former platoon mate of mine. We sat in the car with the engine off and the windows up. Back in the early 90s, we served together in the paratroopers recon unit. We're 50 now, and no longer obligated to serve in the reserves. But when he saw the news of the Hamas attack, he put in a call to a former commander of ours and asked if he could be of use. The commander said, “yes.” And my friend wrote back: “Coming.” During normal times he's a school principal. Today, he's back in uniform.

Okay, so here we are outside of an army base near the center of the country—absolutely lined with thousands of vehicles of reservists, and some singing, and some barbecuing, and I'm speaking to a reservist who is particularly close to my heart; a very close friend of mine.

**Mitch Ginsburg:** Would you introduce yourself please.

**Itai Kramer:** Hello, I’m Itai Kramer. For the last 10 years. I'm not in the military service. And I woke up on Saturday morning, see on the TV the vehicles in Sderot. I understand that the situation is pretty bad. I called some friends and found myself at 10 in the morning here in the base.

**Mitch Ginsburg:** Can you describe a little bit the thought process that you had that morning…like you haven't been to reserves in many years, What exactly went through your mind?

**Itai Kramer:** I really felt that this vehicle in Sderot could be in Givataim, in my house.

**Mitch Ginsburg:** When you say vehicles, you mean those pickup trucks?

**Itai Kramer:** The pickup trucks in Sderot that the Hamas brought inside Israel. I understand that the situation brings everybody to participate in fighting and keep our home safe.

**Mitch Ginsburg:** How did your family look…how did your wife react when you said you're joining up?

**Itai Kramer:** Very complicated: I have two boys in the army, and the family is in a situation that I'm not there for them. Very complicated. At the beginning she asked me: “What do you mean that you’re going…you're not a soldier anymore; you're 50 years old, what is the matter with you? And she actually tell me: “I want to see your phone. I want to see that this is really…that you're not making that up.” Actually, after 30 seconds she understand that this is my mission now, and I know to do some things that I've been through the years and this is the moment that every Israeli must do whatever he should do. If you know to fight, you need to fight; if you know to do things that will help the citizens you have to do it: this is our mission now. We're fighting on our home in the real meaning of that. It's the first time that I feel that it's really a moment that—to be or not to be. It's really the first time that I feel that we can lose the opportunity to be able to live as a Jewish people in our land. And we can lose it now. I feel that we can lose it now.

**Mitch Ginsburg:** Could you tell me a little bit what you saw.

**Itai Kramer:** When we came over there it was after special forces are inside, and it was horrible to see what happens over there. We saw the destruction, and the cars, and the bodies all around. I saw a body with no head—of a young lady. I saw a body of a child burned…his parents tied. Horrible things: they are things that we saw, and it was anger, real anger. The Holocaust was something that all my life…

**Mitch Ginsburg:** Accompanied me.

**Itai Kramer:** Yeah. And I think that what I saw, and what I felt at that moment, still now, that it's worse than it...I really think that Nazi soldiers needed alcohol to do things. Here, they did worse things, and didn't need no alcohol for that. I actually still trying to process what I've been through, because four days later we came here, and in this moment we are practicing to the next stage.

**Mitch Ginsburg:** And personally…I mean I think I also want to say that like on the day-to-day you're an educator, you are usually…you spend your days with children, you love children, you hug them all the time. I've seen you for years. And now you're switching gears really to something so different, but it feels right. I mean you told me you want to go to Gaza at this stage.

**Itai Kramer:** I think it's really strange because at regular times you think about life, you think about education, you think about the future, you think about building, about hope. When the fear is so high, and the anger is so high, you switch for surviving. This is what I feel. I think that I feel that Israel and the Jewish people here is in a situation of survival.

**Mitch Ginsburg:** Itai, I love you. Thank you for this. Thanks for for always being there for me and thanks for joining up for this as well.

**Itai Kramer:** Thank you, and sorry for the horrible English.